

ARTS TALK Colour Supplement

Cover shows

Bram Zwartjens
Self portrait with mask of Eric Vloeima
2017 Oil on canvas 34 x 24 cms

at Galerie De Zaal in Delft until 18th December recently so several of the articles in this month's *Colour Supplement* come from there. One exception is the excellent *Wonderful Things* exhibition at the Kunsthal in Rotterdam showing the work of British photographer Tim Walker.

While we were in Amsterdam reviewing QETC's *Cabaret* we stayed at a brand new luxury hotel, the Pillows Maurits at the Park and we report from there.

Mrudula Tatavarthi discovered one of the city's least known museums, the Ons Lieve Heer Op Solder (Our Lord in the Attic) and Silvia Zanni was at the Theater Carré to see Marina Abramovic. There is also a piece on one of Amsterdam's most famous landmarks, the Pathé Tuschinski cinema and, with it being the Christmas, we take a look at the Light Festival which illuminates the canals during the festive season. All this, and lots more besides, can be found in the December ArtsTalk Colour Supplement.



Michael Hasted Publisher and Editor

Contributors this month include

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Tim Walker's WONDERFUL THINGS at Kunsthal Rotterdam

Michael HASTED

reat photographers don't just take pictures, they tell stories. Whether, like Cartier Bresson who tells the story of ordinary people in the street, or Man Ray whose stories came from his surreal imagination, they all have something to say and, like great painters, a unique, identifiable way of saying it. You can always recognize a Cartier Bresson and you can always identify a Man Ray.

The stories Tim Walker tells are complex and the sources of their inspiration are diverse and complicated. Sometimes he takes fashion shots for the world's top designers; sometimes he takes portraits of celebrities; sometimes his work recreates or takes inspiration from stories of the past. In all cases the photographs are multifarious, very colourful and have an air of mystery about them, always giving the impression that there is more to them than meets the eye.

The fifty-two-year-old British photographer started his career as an eighteen-year-old working for Vogue magazine in London, sorting through the archive of Cecil Beaton whose work inspired the young Walker to take up the camera. Along with another English photographer of the time, Angus McBean, Beaton's portraits and fashion shoots created ephemeral spaces, imaginary worlds around his subjects where time stood still. Walker's photographs are often based on complex sets with elaborate props and dressing and, as with Beaton and McBean, the work is nothing if not very camp and theatrical.

The current exhibition at Rotterdam's Kunsthal hotfoot from comes London's Victoria and Albert Museum and that establishment plays an important part in this show. Walker was allowed access all areas at the V&A and its myriad storage spaces and nooks and crannies to search for objects that would inspire him to create work for Wonderful Things. The resulting photos form the hub, the raison d'être, of the exhibition. So, there is work based on stained gothic glass windows, the pen and ink drawings of Aubrey Beardsley, jewelled snuff boxes and, most spectacularly, the 65m long photo of the Bayeux Tapestry.

Each room has its own theme and there are lots

of them, ranging in style from stately home to shiny black-floored seventies disco, lacking only a mirror ball, and a room full of packing cases onto which the pictures are attached.

Many of the spaces at the start of the show are jampacked with photographs, often small in small frames and hung close together like a grand salon. Because the spaces are compact and the photos small it is necessary to get up close and personal and, if the exhibition is busy, this may prove frustrating. It's almost a case of not being able to see the wood for the trees. I would

have preferred maybe fewer, but certainly much bigger, photographs so that one could have admired them individually rather than being overpowered by the ensemble. The rich, heady and very histrionic mixture make it a little hard to digest and I sometimes found myself hurrying to the next room in search of calmer, less turbulent waters. That said, there were two rooms I liked very much and lingered a while.

There is a nicely presented dark gallery of nudes and I particularly liked the row of very small, about 5 cms square, photos of naked ladies which put me in mind of the equally small square Rembrandt etchings

 although I did feel a little self-conscious, having to peer quite so closely at them.

But I think my favourite was the room dedicated to the Bayeux Tapestry. Discovered by the photographer during one of his many forays into the bowels of the V&A, the photo of this huge piece of cloth inspired him to recreate his own version of it, à la Walker. The result is a modern, rather decadent and much smaller take on the masterpiece of mediaeval needlework, perhaps owing as much to Boccaccio, which often concentrates on the chain male [sic].

This is an important and enlightening exhibition of an important creative photographer of our

time but I think I would have enjoyed it more had the emphasis been more on the work rather than its presentation. Tim Walker's *Wonderful Things* goes a long way to confirm the old adage that one can perhaps have too much of a good thing, wonderful or not. Nevertheless, as a spectacular exercise in high camp, it is well worth seeing.

Tim Walker's *Wonderful Things* continues at Kunsthal in Rotterdam until 29th January 2023

CABARET

by QETC at the CC Amstel Theater in Amsterdam

his was a very ambitious show for a small company to take on but director Mark Winstanley, with choreographer Carolien Canters, managed to present a production that had been simplified without cutting any corners. There were, of course, lots of suspender belts and bare thighs on show from the ladies at the KitKat Klub.

But *Cabaret* is more than a bit of fun. There are parts which are very serious indeed, not least seeing Ernst Ludwig, nicely play by Tony Sal, metamorphosing from a friend into a swaggering Nazi thug and the old Jewish neighbour (Ties Jansen) sure that the brick through window was a prank by mischievous children. Herr Schultz is convinced that fascism is passing phase

which will soon blow over, not realising that what would soon be blowing over would be the smoke from concentration camp crematoria.

The performance garlands must go to Jonas Boukaert and Mimi van Ameronger. Boukaert's pivotal Emcee was both sinister and endearing. He sang beautifully and commanded the stage whenever he was on. Ms van Amerongen, as landlady Fräulein Schneider, gave a beautifully judged peformance. Her rendition of *What Would You Do?* summed up perfectly the attitude of the German people that allowed Hitler's rise to power.

QETC's *Cabaret* returns to the CC Amstel in mid-December



Alida Dors' PRIMISI premières at Theater Rotterdam

In this new piece which premiered at Theater Rotterdam on 9th November, we see the brilliance of love, but also its darker sides. Dors dissects love in an intimate way and lets the sweet water flow. In Primisi (Surinamese for "permission"), we experience love as a ritual washing.

The choreography interweaves a rich palette of dance forms such as Hiphop, Vogue and Krump with contemporary dance. Set to live music by four musicians, the relationships between the performers develops, taking shape, as does everyone's relationship with their own femininity. A landscape of ropes gives the story of interconnections and commitments an earthly foundation.

As Dors says in her *State of the Theatre* and her *State of Dance*, "We must be unashamedly hopeful and assiduously searching for our individual and our collective heartbeat".

Alida Dors' Primisi continues on tour until 12th January











Amsterdam has the advantage of not being a large city on the scale of Paris or London. Most of the museums, concert halls and theatres are within walking distance or a short tram ride away. The downside is that the historic centre gets over-crowded and it can be difficult to find a quiet spot which is not over-run by tourism.

The new Pillows Maurits at the Park had its grand opening at the beginning of November. It is perfectly situated just a short tram ride to all the places you may want to visit. Surrounded by ancient trees, it is a haven of tranquility in a smart upmarket part of town, well away from the tourist routes.

We had travelled up to Amsterdam from Delft to see *Cabaret* at the CC Amstel Theater and we were delighted to be able to stay at the Maurits before heading back home the next day.

The sixth hotel added to the portfolio of Alex Mulder's prestigious Pillows group, the Maurits at the Park is an impressive establishment by any standard. Backing on to the lusciously green Oosterpark, next to the Tropenmuseum and just a short walk from Artis Amsterdam Zoo, this imposing 1908 red-brick listed edifice was originally part of Amsterdam University.

Mr Mulder specializes in bringing old buildings back to life and under his direction this abandoned structure was lovingly converted into a luxury five-star hotel by the award-winning Amsterdam architects Office Winhov. They skillfully preserved many of the original features with some of the ground floor corridors and stairs retaining the coloured wall tiles so typical of Dutch public buildings at the beginning of the last century. In contrast, the eighty-eight rooms and suites and the residents' lounge are bright and airy, tastefully decorated in pastel shades with fine artworks in evidence. The high ceilings and tall windows throughout the Maurits allow the light to pour in from every direction.

The hotel being closer than we had anticipated, and being just two minutes from the nearby tram stops, we arrived at the Maurits very early. But that did not present a problem for the young, smiling, very welcoming staff. For our check-in, rather than standing at the desk, Nina took us into the sun-lit, very comfortable lounge. After concierge Joekie Genet brought us coffee, we got talking and discovered that, as a book lover, he also presides over a large, multi-lingual library which covers an entire wall giving the room an intimate, homely feel. With the formalities and a friendly chat completed we were met by Carles Gallego Hervas, the Guest Relations Manager, who took us to our Grand Luxury room.

Although the room was not large, the high ceiling and huge, double-height windows gave the impression of a bright and airy space. The finely tuned colour scheme in soft eau-de-nil and greys was of laid-back, simple elegance and the dazzlingly white linen and huge fluffy pillows on the bed ensured that we had a very comfortable night. All the rooms have cleverly concealed tea and coffee making facilities and a well-stocked mini-bar. Having a hand-written welcome note and some chocolate wrapped in silk ribbon on the side table was a nice personal touch.

As we had arrived early, some of the rooms were not yet occupied so Carles gave us quick tour of the hotel. The rooms are much the same, varying only in In the bar and main restaurant, in contrast to the rooms, the colour palette is darker, richer with seductive low lighting. The VanOost restaurant is the domain of chef Floris van Straalen and enjoys the best of both worlds with dark furniture and fittings and a spectacular, church-like fifteen meter high vaulted wooden ceiling. The restaurant occupies a corner of the first floor with the grandiose, high windows on two sides overlooking the park, ensuring an open, relaxed feel while retaining an intimate fine dining ambiance.

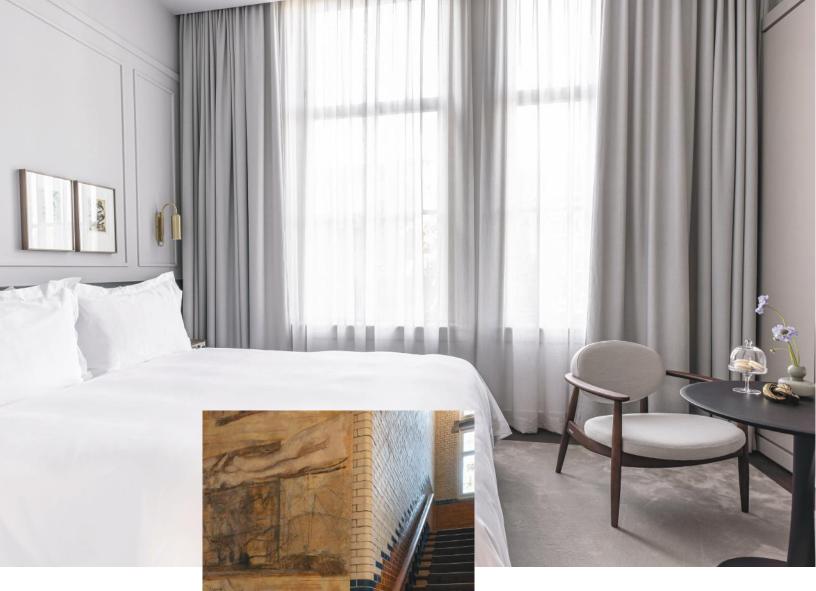
The second eating space, Luigi di Benedetto's Spring Café Brasserie, already getting rave reviews on social media, serves up mainly Italian and French influenced dishes. The Brasserie also doubles as a bright and



size with an extra sofa or table and so on. Unlike in George Orwell's dystopian novel 1984 where room 101 contains your worst fears, at the Maurits room 101 is the best in the house. Not only is it the best, it is in fact a luxurious, well appointed suite, uniquely boasting its own gleaming grand piano.

Carles took us up to the roof terrace with views over the city. It was not open yet — this was the start of winter and there were still a few finishing touches to be made, but it promises to be the jewel in the hotel's crown on fine sunny days. sunny breakfast room adjoining one of the terraces with views into the park beyond. The Étagère breakfast has a comprehensive, very tempting menu that allows you to put together the breakfast of your choice with all possible food preferences or intolerances catered for. If you want something slightly more exotic like Eggs Benedict or Lobster Roll, you are able to order à la carte.

The 1920s inspired Fitz's Bar, in contrast, is furnished in leather and dark wood panelling, which cleverly creates such a cozy, intimate environment that one



could easily imagine oneself aboard a luxury yacht cruising the Mediterranean. Guests can experience signature cocktails conjured up by manager Nick Vrielink, the Dutch cocktail champion.

We were also

impressed to discover, throughout the hotel, pieces of original art by well-known artists, some coming from Alex Mulder's collection - in one corner of the bar hangs a signed Picasso coloured etching. Should you feel the need to raise or maintain your fitness level before venturing out, the Maurits has a small but fully equipped gym and urban spa. If you like to take your exercise less mechanically with the benefit of fresh air, you could also step outside for a morning run around the lake in the Oosterpark before returning to the warm and welcoming Maurits

Business needs are also catered for with well-appointed meeting and conference rooms and one can well imagine grand weddings, both inside and, in warm weather, on the lovely terraces surrounded by trees.

When we left the hotel in the early evening on our way to see *Cabaret*, the reception was teaming with guests and when we returned from the theatre at about 23.45 we were pleased to find the reception area still fully-manned.

We were really glad we had decided to stay in Amsterdam overnight, not just because it saved a late night train journey, but because the Maurits is such a wonderful place to be. The staff were all exceptionally helpful – nothing was too much trouble.

One small issue - you may well find that the Pillows Maurits at the Park is so comfortable, so enticing, so luxurious that you'll be tempted to give visiting the Amsterdam sites a miss and just spend all your time there.



Ons Lieve Heer Op Solder

One of Amsterdam's least known museums revealed

Mrudula TATAVARTHI

ituated in De Wallen, near the Oude Kerk and the Red-Light District by the famous Amsterdam canals, is the Ons Lieve Heer Op Solder (Our Lord in the Attic). It is a complex made of three canal houses which were combined to make a House Church in the 17th Century.

The need of House Churches or "clandestine churches" came about due to the Alteration of 1578 which prohibited public worship of religious dissenters, including Catholics. Ons Lieve Heer Op Solder was built by Jan Hartman, a linen merchant of German descent. He was a devout Catholic who wanted to create a space for his community to worship in private. He took on the massive undertaking of combining the attics of three canals houses to make space for the Church. It is an architectural marvel considering the engineering methods and technology of the time.

The house is a portal to the past. One feels like they've entered the Dutch Golden Age. The furniture, the paintings and interiors of the house gives you the feeling that you are visiting a 17th Century aristocrat's home. The space has been painstakingly restored to its state in the 19th century when it was still a functioning

church. This disparity in time periods of certain elements of the house is to restore authentically, is based on the available documents and resources describing the home and the church. This prevents false imitation or 'Disneyfication' as it is known in the heritage industry.

An audio tour is available for hire in various languages. It describes important elements of the house and gives the visitors a choice to gain further information on stories behind the paintings, the house's history and insight into architectural features such as the alignment of the tiles design to the ceiling and the focus on symmetry. This typically traditional Dutch house has steep staircases making it difficult for some visitors to move around the building.

It is also imperative to book a time slot for your visit. This prevents crowding. The museum staff is friendly and helpful. They're available to answer any further questions you might have during your visit and helpfully turn on lights while you admire the paintings.

So, if you are looking for a quaint place in the city to visit, and want to see a canal house from the inside, head to this museum, it's killing two birds with one stone!







Pathé Tuschinski, originally Theater Tuschinski, in Amsterdam is near the Rembrandtplein in the heart of the city. It was elected the most beautiful cinema in the world by London's *Time Out* magazine in February 2021.

The Art Nouveau building was commissioned by businessman Abraham Icek Tuschinski at a cost of 4 million guilders. Construction was carried out by architect Hijman Louis de Jong and started in 1918.

When the building was finished in 1921 a Wurlitzer-Strunk theatre organ was installed, along with a Wurlitzer model 160. The Tuschinski Theater opened on 28th October, 1921.

During the German occupation of the Netherlands in the Second World War, the Tuschinski Theater was given the non-Jewish name *Tivoli* by the Nazis. After the war in 1945, the original name was restored.

Tuschinski lost all his cinemas in Rotterdam when the city was bombed by the Germans on 14th May 1940. On 1st July 1942 he was deported to the Westerbork concentration camp in the northeast of the Netherlands, and from there to Auschwitz, where he was murdered on 17th September 1942.

In 1967, the Tuschinski Amsterdam was designated as historical cultural site because of its unique architecture.



When it first opened, the theatre contained electrotechnical features, then considered revolutionary. Its unique heating and ventilation system kept the temperature even throughout the building.

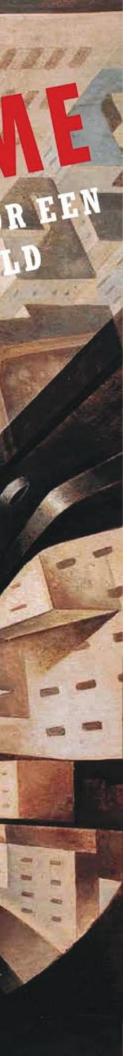
Abraham Icek Tuschinski was born in Brzeziny near Łódź in Poland in 1886. While en route to the USA in 1903 to where he inteded to emmigrate Tuschinski decided to remain in Rotterdam during a stopover there. He found success as a cinema owner, opening his first four cinemas in 1911: the Thalia, Cinema Royal, Scala and Olympia. His most luxurious cinema in Rotterdam, the Grand Theater, opened in 1928.

From 1998 to 2002, the theatre was renovated in its original style. It was also expanded, with a new, more modern wing that connects to the original building via a corridor. The new wing added three extra auditoria to the Tuschinski.

The western facade is flanked by two towers. It combines several architectural styles: Art Deco, Art Nouveau and the Amsterdam School and in doing so creates a distinctive and unforgettable cinema.

The building contains Asian influences while the lobby was designed in a way to offer theatre-goers the feeling that they are stepping into an illusion.





MARINETTI FUTURISM

Manifesto for a New World

Astrid BURCHARDT

n 20th February, 1909, the Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti ushered in a new artistic era with his futuristic manifesto in the French newspaper *Le Figaro*. In the manifesto he sings about speed, the future, aggressiveness and activism, and he resolutely rejects the past. These energetic principles appeal to many young artists and intellectuals, so that he quickly gathers a group of young futurists around him. In the three decades that follow, the futurists use their imaginations to shape a radical new future. In the exhibition *Marinetti and Futurism: Manifesto for a New World*, Rijksmuseum Twenthe follows the artistic development of Futurism through its charismatic leader Marinetti.

In those early decades of the twentieth century art and politics are much more closely linked than today. They attract and repel each other. This is happening, for example, in Germany, in Russia and also in Italy. In the ideology of the avant-garde we recognize an optimistic wishful thinking, in which artists dream of a new world. Today, Futurism is not only an artistic avant-garde, but for many it is also inextricably linked with fascism. Marinetti is seen as a follower of Mussolini. However, looking back on his life, we see the story of a man who vacillates between his ideals and reality. In order to keep his beloved futuristic movement alive, he navigates between fascism and his own revolutionary ideals.

Sometimes outspoken for or against, but often pragmatically looking for the right way to his dreamed new world, which in reality turns out to be much more complex than imagined.

The eleven point Manifesto read as follows:-

- **1.** We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
- **2.** Courage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry.
- **3.** Up to now literature has exalted a pensive immobility, ecstasy, and sleep. We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.
- **4.** We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath—a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace.
- **5.** We want to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit.
- **6.** The poet must spend himself with ardour, splendour, and generosity, to swell the enthusiastic fervour of the primordial elements.
- **7.** Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece. Poetry must be conceived as a violent attack on unknown forces, to reduce and prostrate them before man.
- **8.** We stand on the last promontory of the centuries!... Why should we look back, when what we want is to break down the mysterious doors of the Impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. We already live in the absolute, because we have created eternal, omnipresent speed.
- **9.** We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman.

- **10.** We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice.
- 11. We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multi-coloured, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitals; we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervour of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons; greedy railway stations that devour smoke-plumed serpents; factories hung on clouds by the crooked lines of their smoke; bridges that stride the rivers like giant gymnasts, flashing in the sun with a glitter of knives; adventurous steamers that sniff the horizon; deep-chested locomotives whose wheels paw the tracks like the hooves of enormous steel horses bridled by tubing; and the sleek flight of planes whose propellers chatter in the wind like banners and seem to cheer like an enthusiastic crowd.

Political circumstances mean that Futurism has to constantly reinvent itself, with all the artistic consequences that entails. This makes the life of Marinetti and avant-garde futurism complex, sometimes diffuse and often paradoxical. Is Futurism a progressive and utopian ideology, or flat propaganda for a fascist regime, wrapped in modernist formal language? It is partly these contradictions in the life of Marinetti that make futurism so interesting.

Using works by the "first generation" of futurists: Gino Severini, Umberto Boccioni, Giacomo Balla, as well as the works of later futurists such as Roberto Marcello Baldessari, Fortunato Depero, Tato and Benedetta, the exhibition traces the evolution of Italian futurism.

Richly supplemented with texts and documentation material, Rijksmuseum Twenthe shows futurism as a manifesto for a new world.

Marinetti & Futurism: Manifesto for a New World continues at Rijksmuseum Twenthe until 19th February, 2023.



Marina Abramovic NO INTERMISSION

at Theater Carré in Amsterdam

Silvia ZANNI

It's like going to the theatre for the first time. And it has nothing to do with the place where people flock to watch stories unfold that we all know.

No fiction is required, and visitors, as conduits of the everyday, make things happen all around the theatre: they transport bricks that have recently flooded the foyer (Maria Stamenkovic Herranz Building 2 performance); their naked feet move around the sand that covers the elegant rooms, while their shoes lie haphazardly in red-carpet corridors as if they were changing in a gym dressing room.

During this six hour event, Theater Carré becomes a place of infinite possibilities.

Marina Abramovic captivates her audience from the first minute she steps on to the stage, giving a taste of her famous method: breathing exercises soothe the hyperactive rhythm of our lives, eye-connection with strangers reawakens us to unconditional love and attention.

At the end of the first hour-long masterclass, provided with a serene calm I personally haven't experienced in a long time, we are asked to freely move around the theatre to discover performances tucked away in every nook and cranny. As if relinquishing the ordinary

in exchange for a temporary experimental space, it's like entering a modern Bacchanale where personal moods change and liberating practices emerge.

A group gather around an actor (Abel Azcona) seated on a chair: a girl is gazing at him intently, while a tangible story emerges between

the two, resulting in a visually impactful artistic composition. He slowly collapses, descending from the chair. This is when people rush to his assistance, reviving and supporting him and his body, which ends up being transported throughout the theatre.

Behind the scenes, a spontaneous orchestra plays a cacophony of sounds while hung loudspeakers blare engaged statements. In each loggia there's a typewriter on which visitors are asked to write down their thoughts about social justice, rights, freedom, and environmental degradation. This is Yannis Pappas' *The Revise*, which "allows collective or individual working and reworking on concepts of rights and wrongs while protesting our freedom of expression", according to the artist's words.

Funny fact: clumsy Gen Z members struggle to make typewriters work, while their boomer mums, dads and even grandparents demonstrate innate expertise in inserting ink and paper.

A quick stop at the toilet. In this anti-scenic place par excellence, a megaphone shouts the irrelevance of gender distinction and the fact that genitals do not define gender. Meanwhile, in the labyrinthine corridors of the neo-Renaissance-style theatre, someone plays exotic/disco-pop music at the first-floor bar. Berlinbased artist Anthony Hüseyin is a wild surprise in the way he engages his audience and reveals music as a simple means to move beyond barriers.

I'm now running out of space to recount all the performances that made the Marina Abramovic nights in Amsterdam unique.

Oh, and one last thing, go see it!



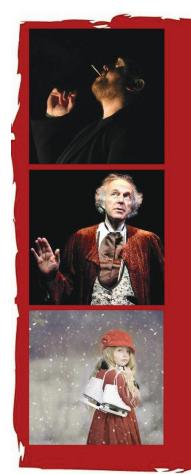
invites you to the world of imagination

rom 1st December to 22nd January the Amsterdam Light Festival will take place for the eleventh time. The popular winter event, one of the leading light art festivals in the world, connects and enriches residents and visitors with light art against the backdrop of photogenic Amsterdam. The theme of this edition, with twenty inspiring works of art is *Imagine Beyond*.

The world around us is temporary and can suddenly be completely different. We have experienced that

recently. But the power of our imagination remains. With our imagination we can transcend the here and now and imagine tomorrow without limits. Let the light artworks transport you to other worlds. Look through the light and let your imagination run wild. What do you see? Are we talking lamps? Do we only have virtual bridges left? Does the water flow up? Join us on a journey and experience it for yourself. The twenty specially selected works are by twelve Dutch and eight international artists from France, Great Britain, Italy,





STET The English Theatre

in the Netherlands!





BILDHALLE ZURICH+AMSTERDAM





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