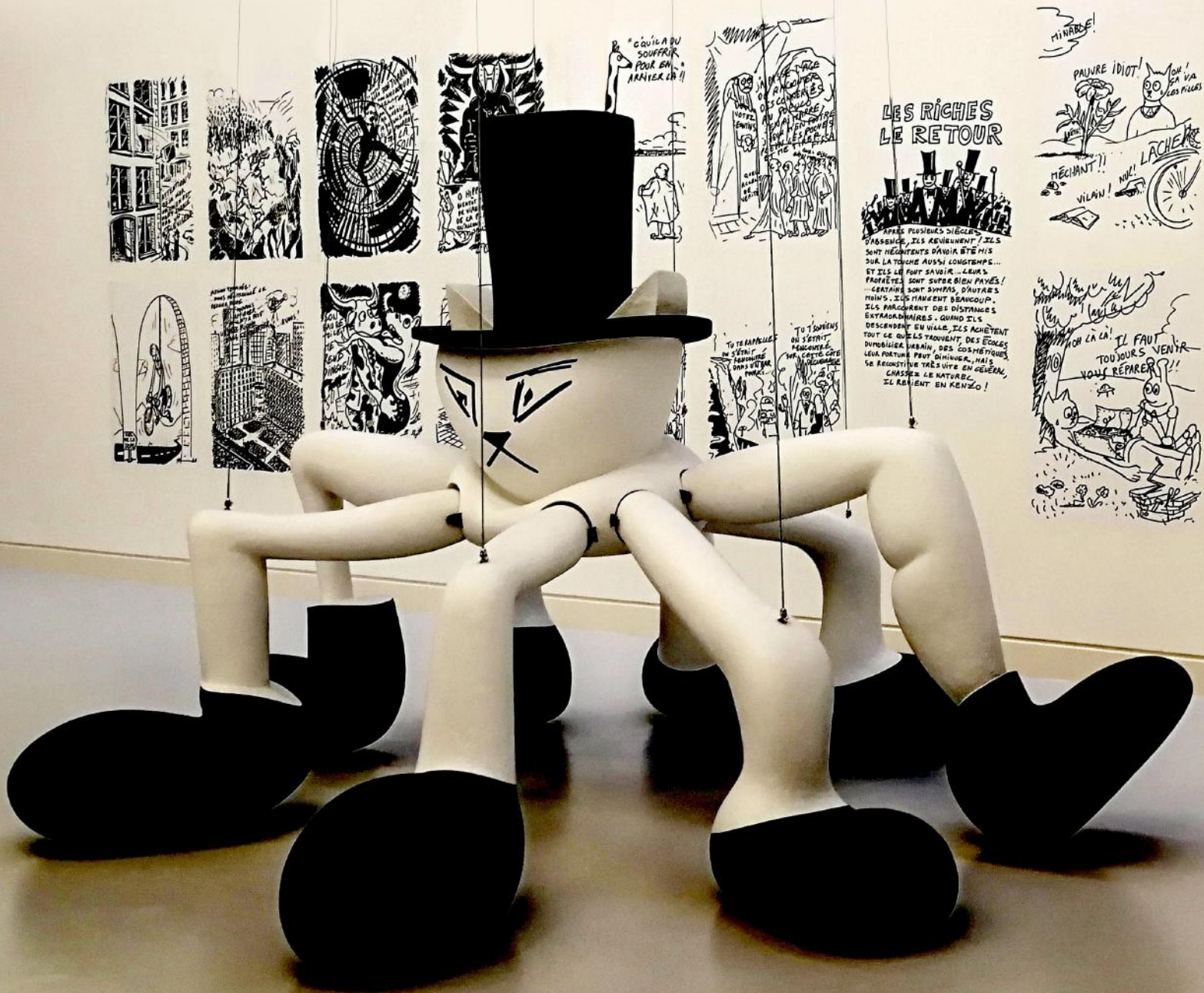


# ARTS TALK

## Colour Supplement

Number 10

August 2023



# ARTS TALK

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We have been in Delft quite a lot in the past month. We meet painter and gallery owner René Jacobs and talk about his unusual and rather eccentric work. We are also at Museum Prinsenhof for the exhibition *Lothar Wolleh sees Jan Schoonhoven* and, in the same building, the 2023 Delft Chamber Music Festival. Further afield we visit the Musée D'Art Moderne et Contemporain in Strasbourg.

There is a book review of *ARA GÜLER A Play of Light and Shadow* which compliments the exhibition of the same name at FOAM in Amsterdam. Souwie Buis makes a case for artists being guaranteed a minimum wage and Jacob John Shale has been looking at a painting by Dutch artist Jozef Israëls.

Michael HASTED  
Publisher & Editor

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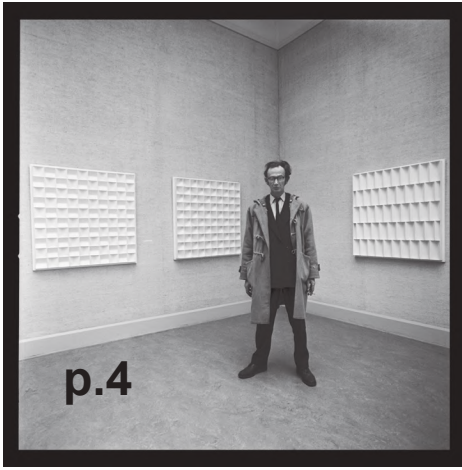
Marco de SWART  
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Cover shows:-

Alain SÉCHAS *L'Araignée - Les Riches, Le Retour*  
(*The Spider - The Rich Make Their Comeback*).  
Installation with 51 drawings at Musée d'Art  
Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg  
Photo by Michael Hasted

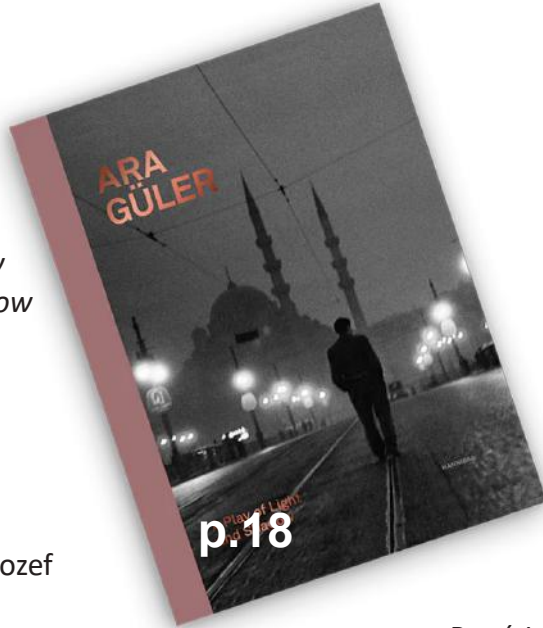


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"Should there be a basic  
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2023 Delft Chamber  
Music Festival



Photograph by Marco de Swart

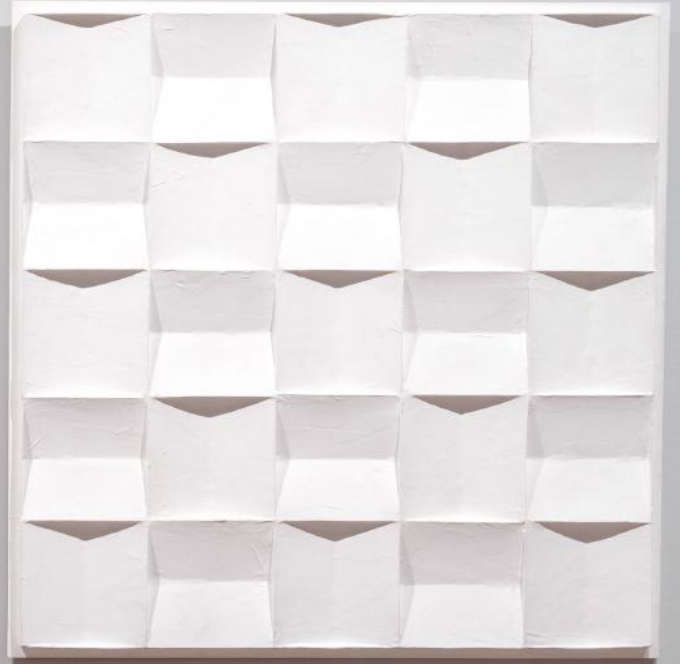
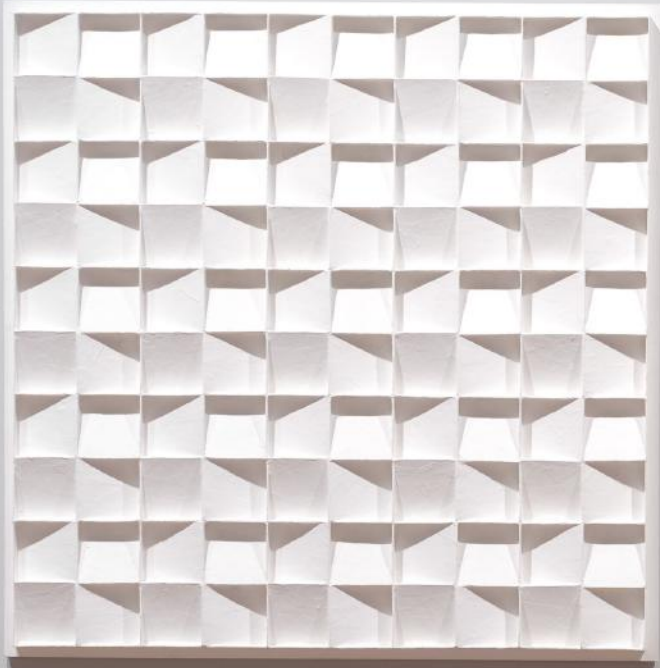
# LOTHAR WOLLEH SEES JAN SCHOONHOVEN

Masters in Rhythm and Light











The exhibition *Lothar Wolleh sees Jan Schoonhoven*, curated by Antoon Melissen at the splendid Prinsenhof Museum in Delft, gives us a fascinating insight into the life and work of an unconventional and eccentric Dutch artist through the lens of a very successful and fashionable German photographer.

Schoonhoven's work was always three dimensional, always on paper or cardboard, always symmetrical and always white. Imagine a sort of monochrome Mondrian in relief. He was born and lived all his life in Delft, his working life spent in an office of the Dutch post office. He created his art in the evenings on the dining table in the tiny first floor apartment he shared with his wife overlooking a canal a stone's throw from the Nieuwe Kerk in the centre of town. There is a photo of him sketching while sitting on his iron-farmed bed surrounded by piles of stuff in his minute bedroom.

We know a lot about where Schoonhoven lived and how he worked because of a strange friendship he had with German photographer Lothar Wolleh. The unlikely rapport between two completely opposite characters resulted in the former's life and work being documented over the course of several years until his untimely death, at the age of forty-nine, in 1979.

Wolleh always used a large format Hasselblad camera. The prints are square, always produced from the negative without any cropping or intervention. And although the camera is unwieldy, and the fact that Wolleh invariably used a heavy tripod, the pictures have a very informal, spontaneous feel to them. There was always a rapport, a symbiosis between the two artists. In the second room of the exhibition there are drawings by Schoonhoven made up of hundreds of thousands of tiny thin lines. Close by is a Wolleh photo

of the artist taken in the street from above showing the thousands of lines created by the cracks between the brick paving.

Schoonhoven had an obsessive personality, his work and the intricate preparation involved lots of precise measuring. But apart from his work he was equally fixated in his personal life, arranging fruit in order of size and lining up his roll-up cigarettes in a neat line before going off to work. He became obsessed by a single paving stone on one of the canals, constantly checking it and removing weed or rubbish. Despite a fairly impoverished cramped existence, diametrically opposed to that of Wolleh, his life was as ordered as his work, perhaps as a result of his pushing paper around a desk at the post office.

Wolleh's day job was as a top commercial photographer in Düsseldorf where he lived in a luxury loft apartment surrounded by designer furniture and art by friends and people he photographed – Josef Beuys, Immendorf, Baselitz and all the other German artists that would rule the art world in the 1980's. He also worked with painters to create pictures that were half photos, half paintings or collage and some of these are in the exhibition. But it his relationship with Schoonhoven and the resulting work on which this exhibition concentrates that demonstrates that opposites attract, often with surprising results.

There is an excellent book/catalogue to accompany the exhibition, written by Antoon Melissen, full of reproductions of Schoonhoven's work as well as the photographs of Lothar Wolleh □

*Lothar Wolleh ziet Jan Schoonhoven* continues at Museum Prinsenhof in Delft until 7th January 2024

*Extracurricular*

# MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE ET CONTEMPORAIN DE STRASBOURG

We visit a fine museum a long way from home

Text and photos by Michael HASTED







*The restaurant-café offers a magnificent view over the River Ill and La Petite France, all the way to the Cathedral . . .*



There is one thing that Strasbourg is not short of – museums. There are ten in all, ranging from the parochial half-timbered Musée Alsacien to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs housed in the sophisticated splendour of the Château Rohan in the shadow of the awe inspiring Cathedral. Splendid though all those museums are, it is the Musée D'Art Moderne et Contemporain overlooking *La Petite*

*France*, standing proudly on the banks of the River Ill, that is the jewel in the city's cultural crown.

Although created in 1973 the Musée and its substantial collection of late 19th century, modern and contemporary art had no real home. Exhibitions were held in the Ancienne Douane, but that was not really suitable so plans were soon laid for a permanent, prestigious new museum.



Georg Baselitz *Adler* 1980 Oil on canvas



Parisian architect Adrien Fainsilber, who had already been responsible for the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in the French capital, was given the job of designing it. Building started in 1995 adjacent to a site previously occupied by the covered market and across the road from the Brigade Motorisée division of the Gendarmerie Nationale.

Overlooking the Barrage Vauban and the Commanderie Saint-Jean de Strasbourg, the former women's prison now the Institut National Du Service Public, the Musée opened its doors in November 1998 instantly becoming one of the largest museums of its kind in France.

The collection provides a comprehensive overview of the great art movements going back to 1860. There are important paintings representing Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Art 1900, Fauvism, Expressionism, Surrealism etc. as well as important contemporary works by such artists as Georg Baselitz and Italian artist Mimmo Paladino whose four-meters-high horse sculpture, *Hortus conclusus* stands on the museum's roof, one of the



18,400 works in the collection. The museum regularly mounts ten displays new acquisitions which reflect current trends in the world of

Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg is one of the is worth visiting for the architecture alone. Its main central body is interior length of 104 meters and with a height of 22 meters, its soaring light to play on the polished marble walls. On the first floor of the museum offers a magnificent view over the River Ill and *La Petite France*. And a vibrant and busy city, the huge terrace, overlooking trees and the river rural feel to it □





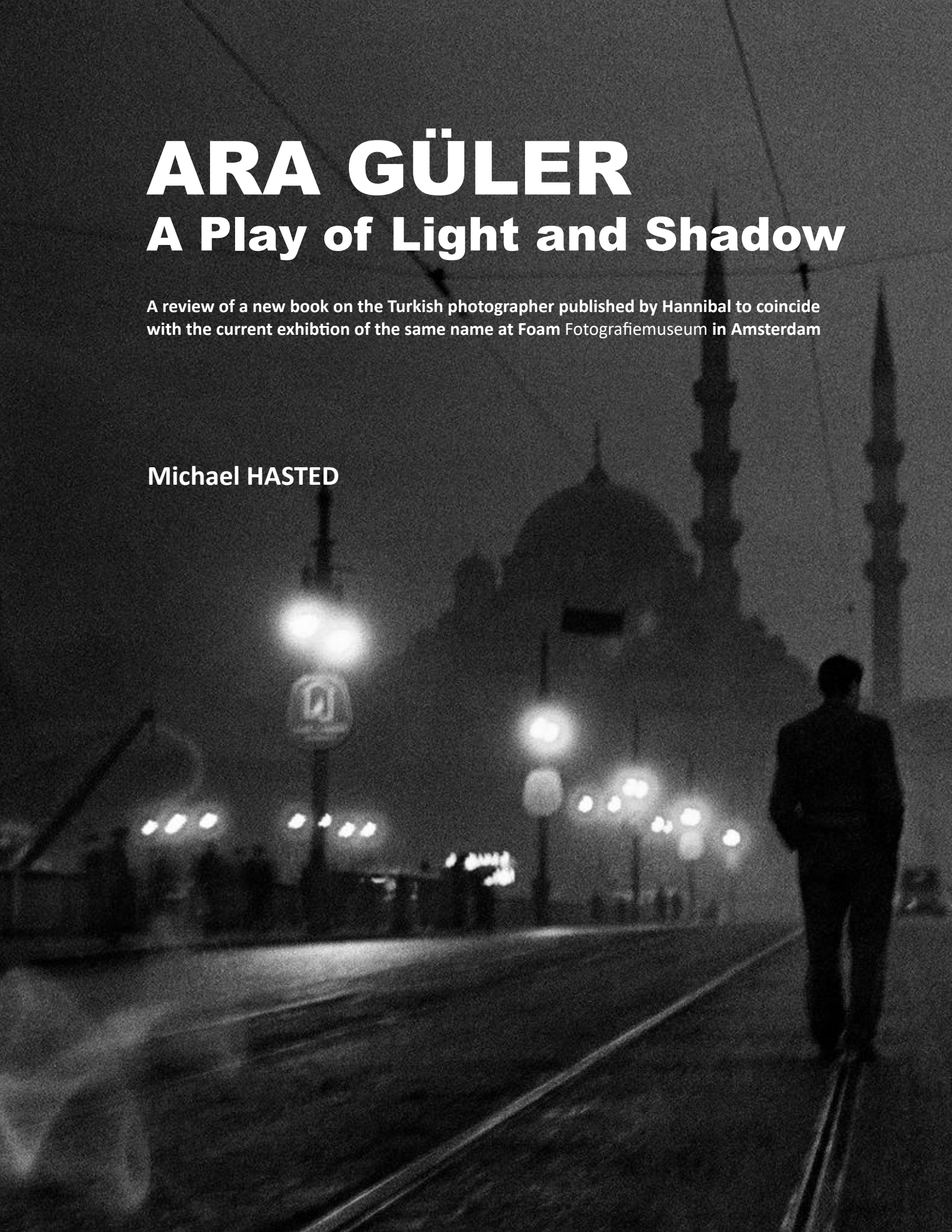
temporary exhibitions and art.  
These public buildings that  
like a cathedral. With an  
ing glass walls encourage  
museum the restaurant-café  
Although in the heart of a  
er has a tranquil, almost

# **ARA GÜLER**

## **A Play of Light and Shadow**

A review of a new book on the Turkish photographer published by Hannibal to coincide with the current exhibition of the same name at Foam Fotografiemuseum in Amsterdam

**Michael HASTED**

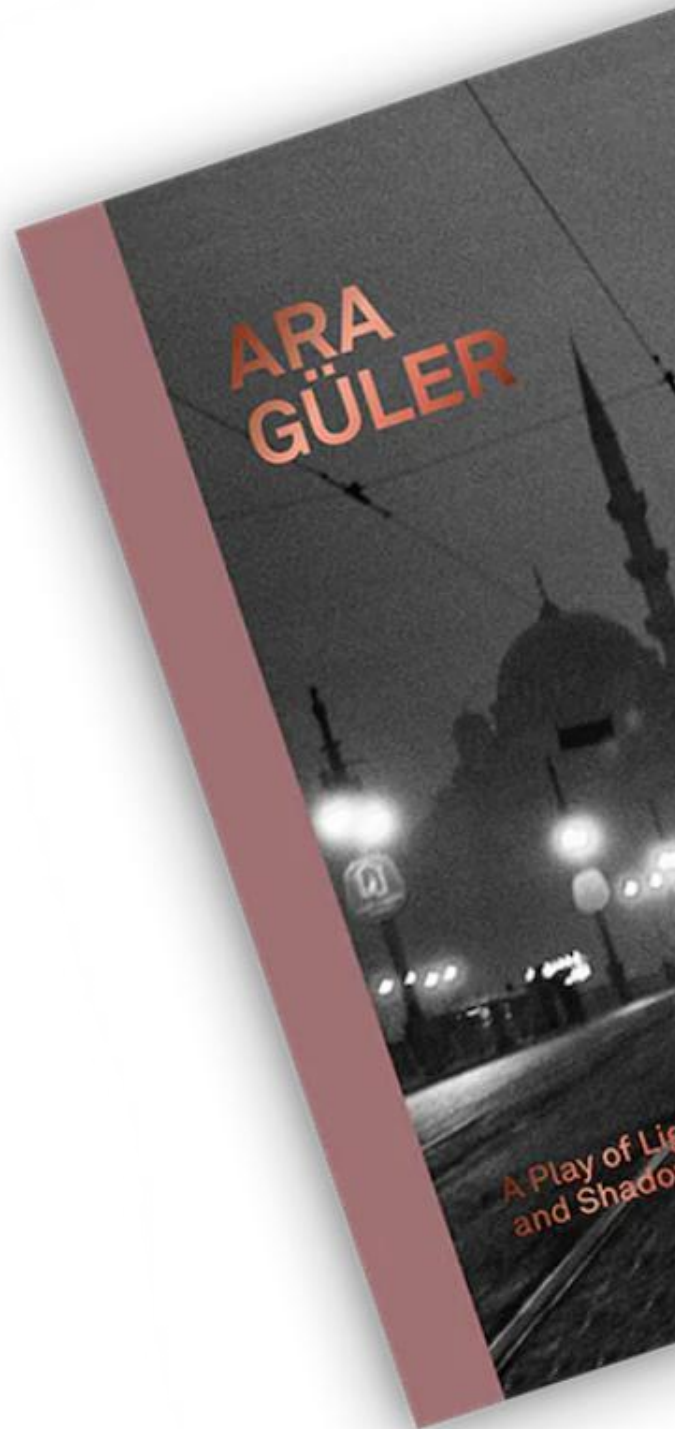




**K**nown as *The Eye of Istanbul*, Ara Güler is best known for, and the aspect on which the exhibition concentrates, his street photography, his photo journalism in Turkey, especially Istanbul. But there was much more to him than that, as the book reveals. He travelled the world taking photos, both as a straightforward travel photographer and as a war reporter, visiting conflict zones in Eritrea, Sudan, Afghanistan and Palestine. He also was a celebrity portrait photographer, taking pictures of Brigitte Bardot, Salvador Dali, Sophia Loren and Alfred Hitchcock, to name but a few. And, surprisingly, he also had time to create art photos, producing colour collages and pictures of moving light. All these wonderful pictures are in this excellent two hundred and eight page book.

But it is for the grainy black and white candid photos of everyday life in Turkey in the 1950s and 60s that Güler is best known. Concentrating on the grimy under belly of life on the streets, the first pictures date from when he was in his mid-twenties. The later ones, the art photography, were produced well into the 1980s and beyond. He left a legacy of hundreds of thousands of negatives, all of which have been carefully archived and preserved.

When in 1958 *Time-Life* opened its Turkish bureau, Ara Güler became its first correspondent. Commissions from other international publications such as *Stern*, *Paris Match* and *The Sunday Times* soon followed, as did his recruitment by the legendary Magnum Photos agency in the early sixties. While not achieving the household name status of, say, Henri Cartier-Bresson or Bill Brandt, Güler stands alongside them as a chronicler of times gone by that only photographers can achieve. The world that Cartier-Bresson and Brandt photographed was much more recognisable,





more romantic with images recalling places like Paris in its hey-day or post-war England with which we are all familiar. Güler's work eschewed the misplaced romanticism of the working classes and pulled no punches. Don't forget that until it emerged from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and the Republic was established in 1980, Turkey was, effectively, a third world country much more attune with north Africa and the Middle East than the Western Europe that it now embraces and aspires to join. Culturally and geographically neither East nor West, the differences were difficult to reconcile from either direction. This book, along with the exhibition, opens our eyes to a country that was largely ignored and consequently unknown until relatively recently.

A beautifully curated and produced book that is a must-have for anyone interested in photo journalism or, in fact, any type of photography. With notes, commentary and conversations from art historian Kim Knoppers; curator and head of photography department at Istanbul Modern, Demet Yildiz Dinçer; photographer and filmmaker Ahmet Polat and Claartje van Dijk, curator and head of exhibitions at Foam, we learn everything we need to know about this amazing and truly important photographer. Expensive, but worth every penny – or should that be cent? □

*ARA GÜLER A Play of Light and Shadow*

Published by Hannibal, Belgium

ISBN 9789464666298

Language English

Hardcover

700pp 215 x 140 x 27 mm.

The exhibition of the same name continues at Foam Fotografiemuseum in Amsterdam until 8th November 2023.

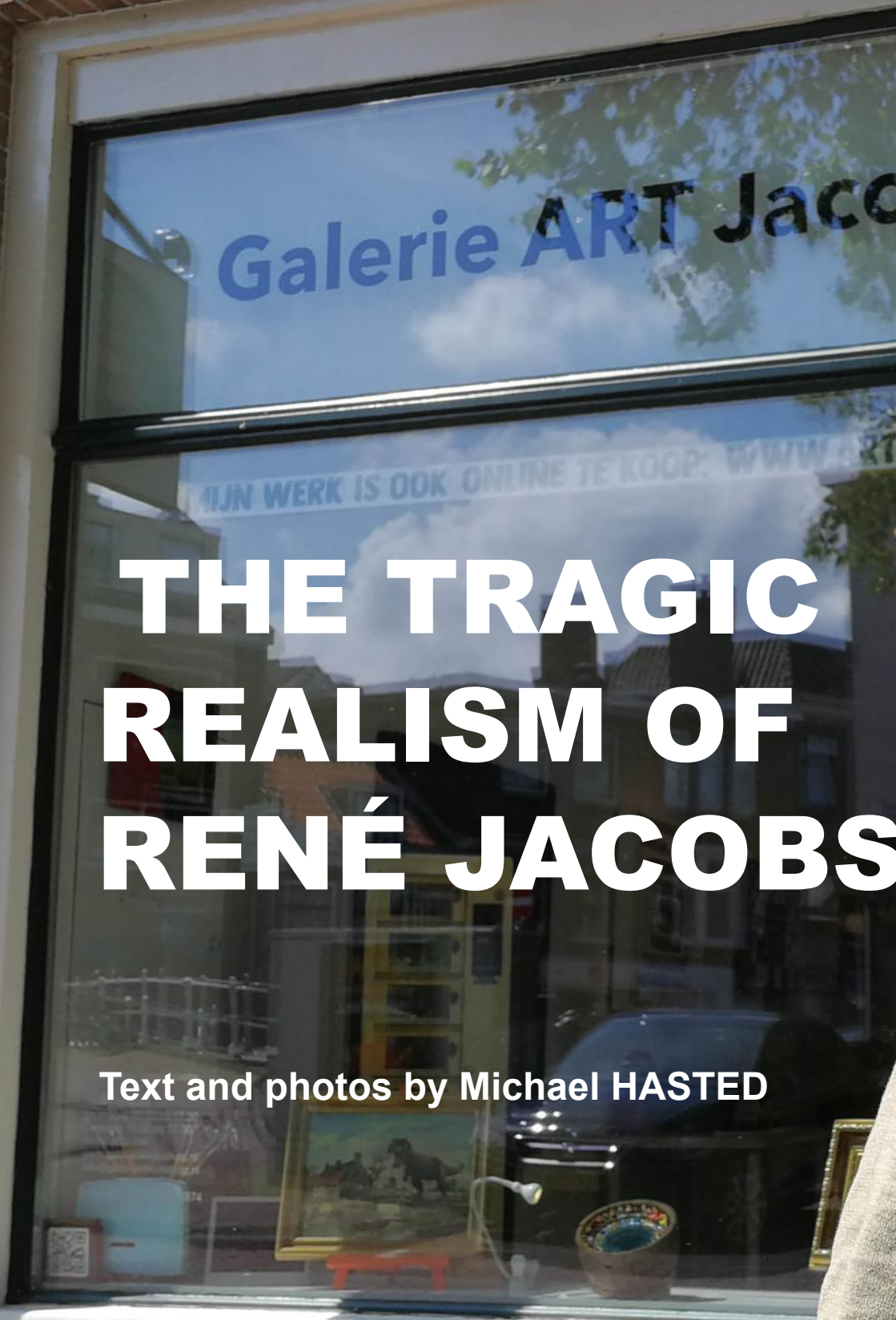


Galerie ART Jaco

MIJN WERK IS OOK ONLINE TE KOOP: WWW.ARTJACOBS.NL

# THE TRAGIC REALISM OF RENÉ JACOBS

Text and photos by Michael HASTED





obs

JACOBS.NL

In the old days, before the nineteenth century, art was very much a craft and painters were very much artisans rather than artists. Painters would have workshops, apprentices and a list of important clients who would commission paintings from them. René Jacobs is of the old school, using many skills and importing many others, in order to achieve his unique *oeuvres*. And it's not only his techniques that are idiosyncratic. His inspiration, his *raison d'être*, is also unique. His subject matter is satirical, rife with political and social observations, much like Hogarth or James Gilray. In fact, he describes his work as "tragic realism".

His eponymous gallery in Delft's Nieuwe Langendijk is also his studio where he can be seen at work. This is where the pictures are created, exhibited and sold. Very much the pragmatist, René is willing and happy to use any technique or expedient that is necessary to create his works. And it's not just pictorial. There are lots of three dimensional works included, repainted and recycled objets trouvés and painted wood blocks. His most recent innovation is using thousands of tiny plastic figures (I imagine originally intended for model railways or architects and suchlike) to create complex tableaux, often representing a maze of some sort, exploring the human condition and the herd instinct.

He buys these figures by the box load from China in different sizes in bags of 10,000 and spends hours gluing, and often individually painting, them in place. His recent work, a picture of Planet Earth, involved 25,000 tiny figures. Another one utilises an old wooden bowl to create a sort of treadmill with the figures circulating around real bank-notes with a face value value of €500. "I was bit worried because technically it's against the law to deface banknotes and, of course, there was the possibility that I would spoil the notes and make them worthless. I could



*Money Makes the World Go Round. 2023.*  
Plastic figures, banknotes and mixed media



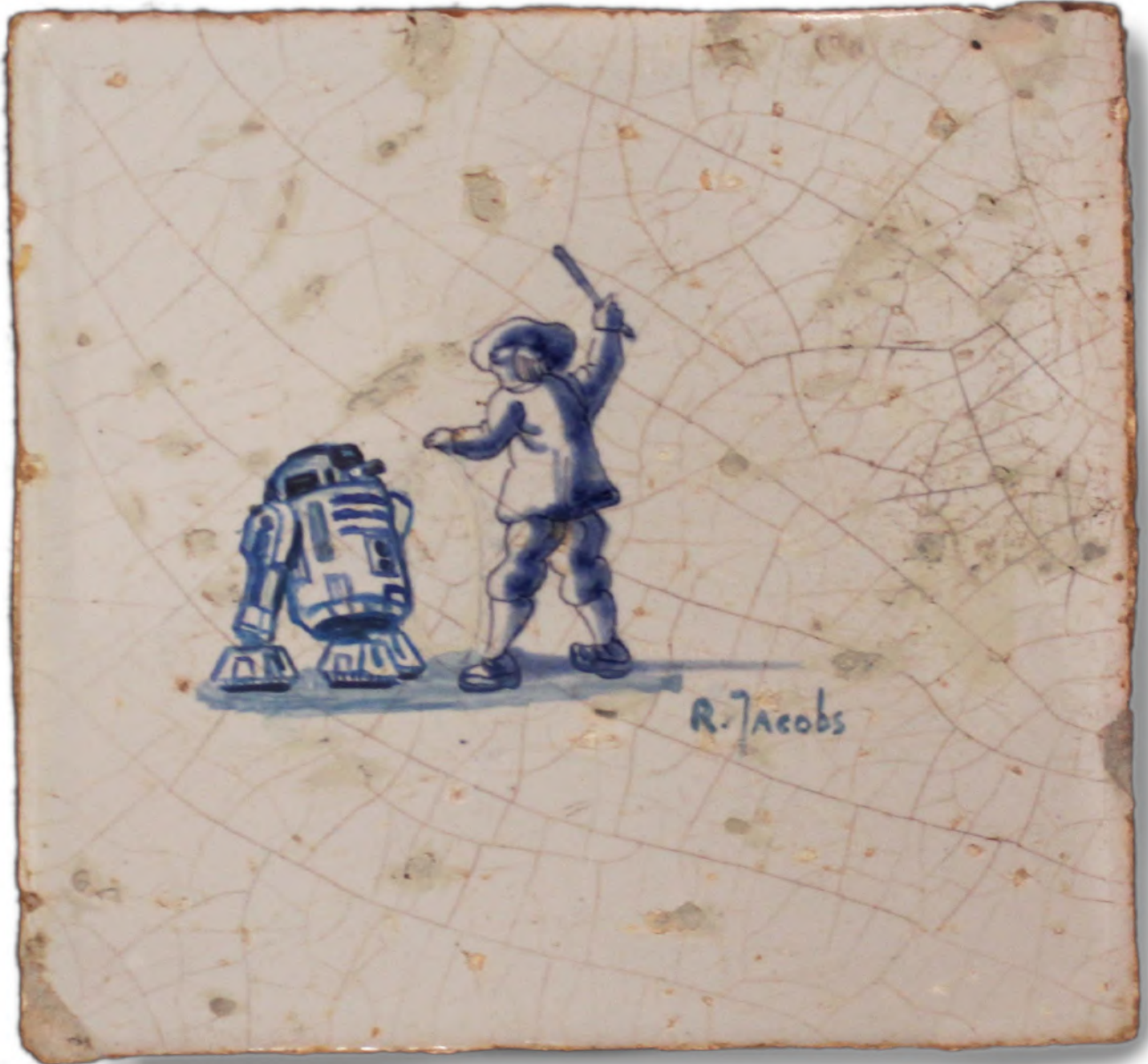






A topical/typical "intervention" at the height of the pandemic, *Mademoiselle Corona*

Rene creating a new work - gluing thousands of tiny figures emerging from a water buffalo horn



have used fewer if I cut them up, but I didn't, they are all whole. Because of that you can see they are three dimensional. If I'd cut them up they would have looked rather flat and I didn't want that. I wanted a pile of real money and people walking around it. I sold that quite quickly to a stock-broker in New York."

Jacobs has half a dozen distinct paths along which he regularly ventures in order to produce his work. As far as the paintings are concerned, there are the ones based on original, often Photoshopped, compositions and then there are the elements superimposed on other paintings – what he calls "interventions".

René will scour the flea markets, auctions and antique shops, finding old oil paintings, often of landscapes, sometimes of domestic scenes. He will paint over them, inserting strange elements like a huge MacDonald's sign on a picturesque country cottage, a motorway intersection set in a tranquil Dutch landscape or a huge container ship in the middle of a nineteenth century seascape and, very frequently, an incongruous robot or dinosaur. These, to me, are the wittiest of René's work. In a similar vein, he takes genuine old seventeenth century Dutch blue and white ceramic tiles and adapts the original design by over-painting a new one – like R2-D2 from *Star Wars* confronting a seventeenth-century peasant.

And, of course, Delft being the home of Vermeer, *Girl with a Pearl Earring* does not escape René's wicked eye. She is there, drunkenly downing a litre of beer and, in another, with braces on her teeth. In another she is wearing a gas mask. He even made one made up of thousands of the tiny plastic figures, each one hand painted before it was glued into place. He says, "I have been inspired a lot by the *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. I have made multiple versions of that. It is a figure that keeps

on coming back. I like it because it is such an icon and whatever I do, however much I change it, how much I transform it, translate it - it is always recognisable. It's like a Dutch *Mona Lisa*."

No one can hide from the painter's punishing, although affectionate scrutiny, not even King Willem-Alexander – especially King Willem-Alexander. There is a wonderful older painting by René of the King in the palace dressed in a sailor suit, riding a tricycle.

I wondered if he ever did any paintings that were completely original, all his own work? "Yes, I do" he replied. "If you talk specifically about paintings, I do a lot of landscapes, especially on driftwood that I find on the beach. I go to Texel a lot and I love walking on the beach at night. It's going back to my roots because I started as a landscape painter thirty years ago."

Now, maybe René's work is not art with a capital A but it is original, witty and beautifully executed. He sells the pieces at realistic, affordable prices and makes a good living. He studied economics so has a shrewd business brain. "One thing I learned is that it is more important to maximise your turnover than to maximise your price," he says.

However, money is not the object of the exercise. "I am always busy with money and people think I'm crazy about it, but money doesn't mean anything to me. It absolutely doesn't. For me money is purely a means to keep myself going in the way that I want to go. It makes my life possible. It makes it possible to make art, it makes it possible to invest a couple of thousand in an artwork or a couple of months of work. I make a decent living but I wouldn't have time to spend more money. Clothes don't look good on me, I don't go abroad, I'm a terrible driver and I don't have a mistress. What on earth am I going to do with more money?" □





# **FISHERMEN CARRYING A DROWNED MAN**

Jacob John SHALE reflects on the painting by Jozef Israëls

**W**e are told from our early years that drowning is among the most painless ways to die. At the swimming pool closest to my family home, I remember that I would sometimes try to test this claim, seeing how long I could linger at the bottom of the pool before panic set in. The coloured tiles made the water green-tinged, like diluted washing-up liquid. Down there, it was easy to entertain thoughts of shipwrecks and sea-creatures: frivolous fantasies of submarine life. Easy, that is, until your breath gave out and the universe suddenly started to contract, and it was necessary to kick yourself towards the surface and be returned to yelps and screams and laughter and a ceiling that was not a ceiling but an orgiastic chaos of exposed metal pipes.

This memory comes to me because my last few days have been spent thinking about Jozef Israëls' 1861 painting *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man*.

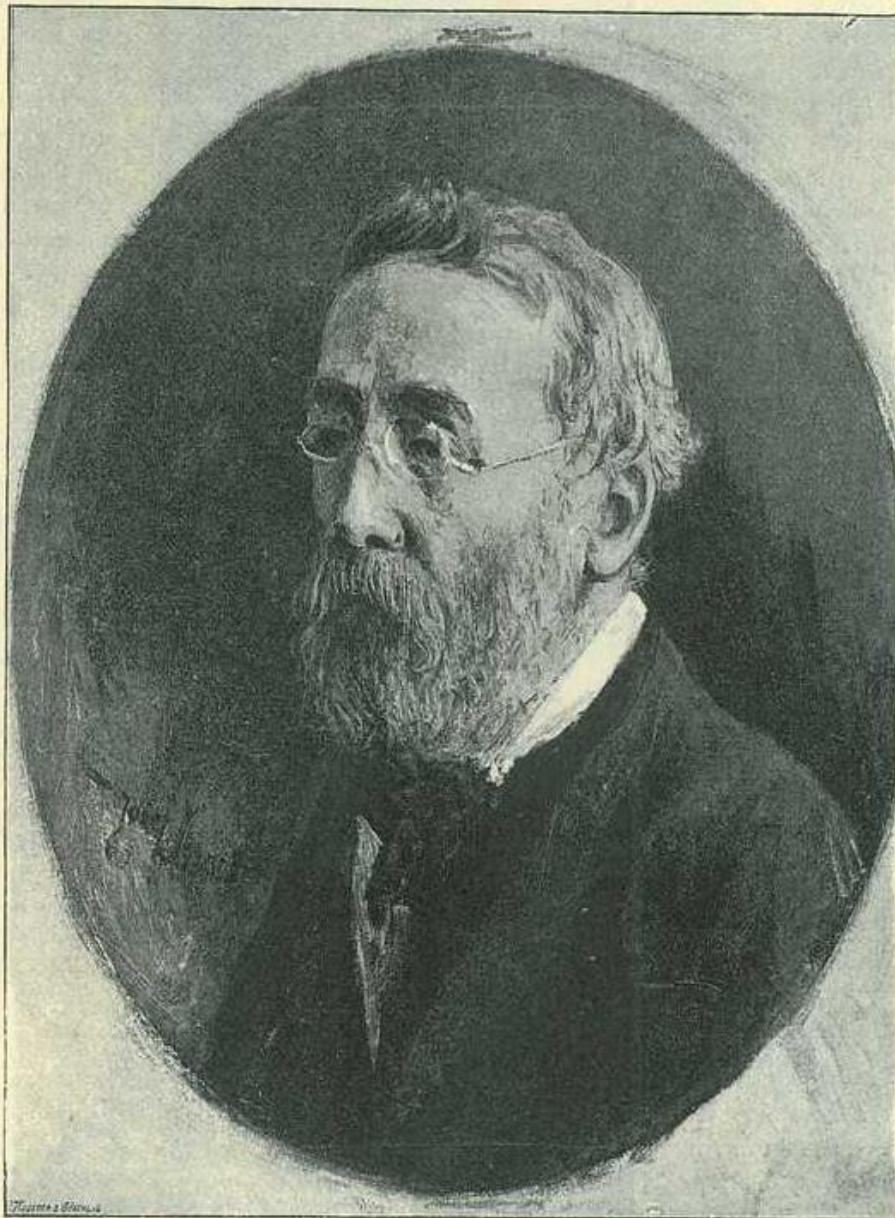
Born in Groningen in 1824 Israëls was one of the most significant painters of the Hague School. He died in Scheveningen on 12th August, 1911. What I like principally about the painting is how unromantic it is. None of the people carrying the corpse look anguished or alarmed; to judge by their expressions, for them this is not an irregular incident. We cannot see the face of the corpse, but his feet dangle in plain view: bare and wasted and grey. The fishermen are also barefoot; as are the drowned man's widow and two children, walking with linked hands and stooped posture several paces ahead. Everyone in the painting is attired in the same drab peasant clothing. The very landscape – the darkened dunes, the stony sea, the low sky

crammed with dirty clouds – looks to be imbued with an air of destitution, as if it had been designed by some spendthrift deity who has used up all of his brighter and more extravagant colours.

No other forms of death are idealised as drowning is. The immediate and instinctive association is of suicide, which is perhaps why we are so keen to peddle the idea that it is such a peaceful means of checking out – nobody wants to imagine an individual who is already in extreme pain having it added to in their final moments. The obvious reference here would be John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (1851-52), in which the forenamed character floats down a flower-fringed stream with eyes and mouth open, her skin blazing an immaculate white. Comparing Millais' painting with Israëls' makes you realise how dedicated the latter was, during this stage of his career, to a realist style of composition: it is unsurprising to learn that *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man* derives from Israëls' actual experiences gathered while living in the fishing village of Zaandvoort. By refusing to embroider his subject matter, Israëls allows the viewer to better appreciate the tragedy that lies at the heart of the painting, which is the horrifying ordinariness of what is being depicted. For impoverished Dutch fishermen of the mid-19th century, there must have been nothing strange or spectacular about gazing upon a water-logged corpse; it must have been an end that all of them contemplated for themselves □

Jozef Israëls *Fishermen Carrying a Drowned Man* 1861  
Oil on canvas 129 × 244 cm. Reproduced courtesy of  
The National Gallery, London





Jozef Israëls. (Door hemzelve.)



# **BASIC INCOME€**

**Should it be a fundamental right for artists?  
Souwie BUIS asks the question**

The idea of a basic income is not new. In the 16th century, British philosopher and statesman Sir Thomas More mentioned the idea in his book, Utopia. Martin Luther King Jr. proposed a guaranteed income for Americans. At its core is the idea that adult citizens receive a monthly payment from the government. The aim is not only to alleviate poverty but also to provide more freedom for individuals to pursue genuine interests without having to worry about making next month's rent payment.

As life after Corona made the following two years seem like a bad but fast-fading nightmare, it is easy to forget that many, including artists, are facing a long, hard road to recovery. Before the pandemic, Europe's cultural and creative sectors accounted for more than 4% of Europe's GDP. In 2019, more than 3.7% of Europe's workforce was employed in this sector. The pandemic caused the cultural and creative sectors to lose 80% of their turnover, according to estimates by the European Commission. A report for the European Visual Artists group estimates that one in eight museums in the EU may never re-open.

Calls by the European Parliament to allocate 2% of the EU recovery package to the creative and cultural sectors was rejected by the Council. Here in the Netherlands financial support for larger cultural institutions deemed to be "of vital importance" and rent suspension for state museums, has not directly addressed the struggles of smaller organisations and individual artists. Although relief has been offered to entrepreneurs more broadly, the hybrid practices of many artists often makes it difficult for them to meet the funding criteria, reports the Broekman Foundation. The stereotype of the struggling artist living in poverty in a garret gains renewed significance in this post-pandemic landscape.

So last month's announcement by the Irish government of the launch of a basic income for artists initiative is a beacon of hope for many in the industry. Artists in Ireland are being invited to apply for a basic income of €325 per week. This scheme will be available for up to 2000 artists over a period of three years. Applicants who meet the criteria will be selected randomly, those not selected will be invited to be part of a control group for the project. In launching the project, Irish prime minister, Micheál Martin, recognised the importance of the arts and culture as "the wellspring of our identity".

The strong link between the arts and our sense of cultural identity must not be forgotten as the world emerges from pandemic life. The arts have arguably helped many through the pandemic and will provide us with pathways toward future recovery. President of the UN General Assembly, Volkan Bozic recognised this in a recent comment, "Far too often society is blind to the socio-economic contributions of those in the creative and cultural spheres. This is a mistake." He pointed out too that the creative sectors are the largest employment sectors for young people.

Ireland's basic income for artists programme recognises this. Another promising idea is the European Status of the Artist concept. Proposed in a report adopted by the European Parliament toward the end of last year, such status would include freedom of expression, mobility, collective bargaining for self-employed professionals and access to social security, to name a few.

The pandemic doubtless caused untold suffering and material loss for artists globally but perhaps it will also prove to be a catalyst for the kinds of changes for which the cultural and creative industries have long been fighting □

# DELFT CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

The 2023 Festival took place over eight days in July/August in the impressive Van der Mandelezaal in the city's historic Prinsenhof. Astrid BURCHARDT was there for the *Colour Supplement*



Photo by Melle Meivogel



The Delft Chamber Music Festival, in its 26th edition, needs no introduction. Its new artistic director, Nino Gvetadze, is in her second year. She succeeded the splendid ten-year residency of Liza Ferschtman, a hard act to follow – and Nino is doing it brilliantly.

This year's theme was *Op reis*, meaning a journey, a time of travel, or on the road - in other words, a voyage in music. From music inspired the Roma to the Northern Lights and the Silk Road, the audience was invited to partake in a voyage. Also included were young musicians, as well as music to compliment the Dutch 17th century Golden Age paintings many of which are present in the wonderful Prinsenhof Museum in the same building. As usual, the musicians came from around the world to ensure the top class performances the public have become used to.

The Opening Concert, *Alla Zingarese*, on 28th July was loosely inspired by the music of the nomadic Roma. The five musicians of the opening concert - Nino Gvetadze on piano with violinists Frederieke Saeijs and Candida Thompson, Harriet Krijgh on cello and Gareth Lubbe on viola/violin, gave us three very different pieces: Hayden's *Piano Trio Hob.XV/25*, *Brahms Piano Quartet Nr. 1 op.25* and the *Red Violin Caprices* by John Corigliano from the film *Le Violon Rouge*.

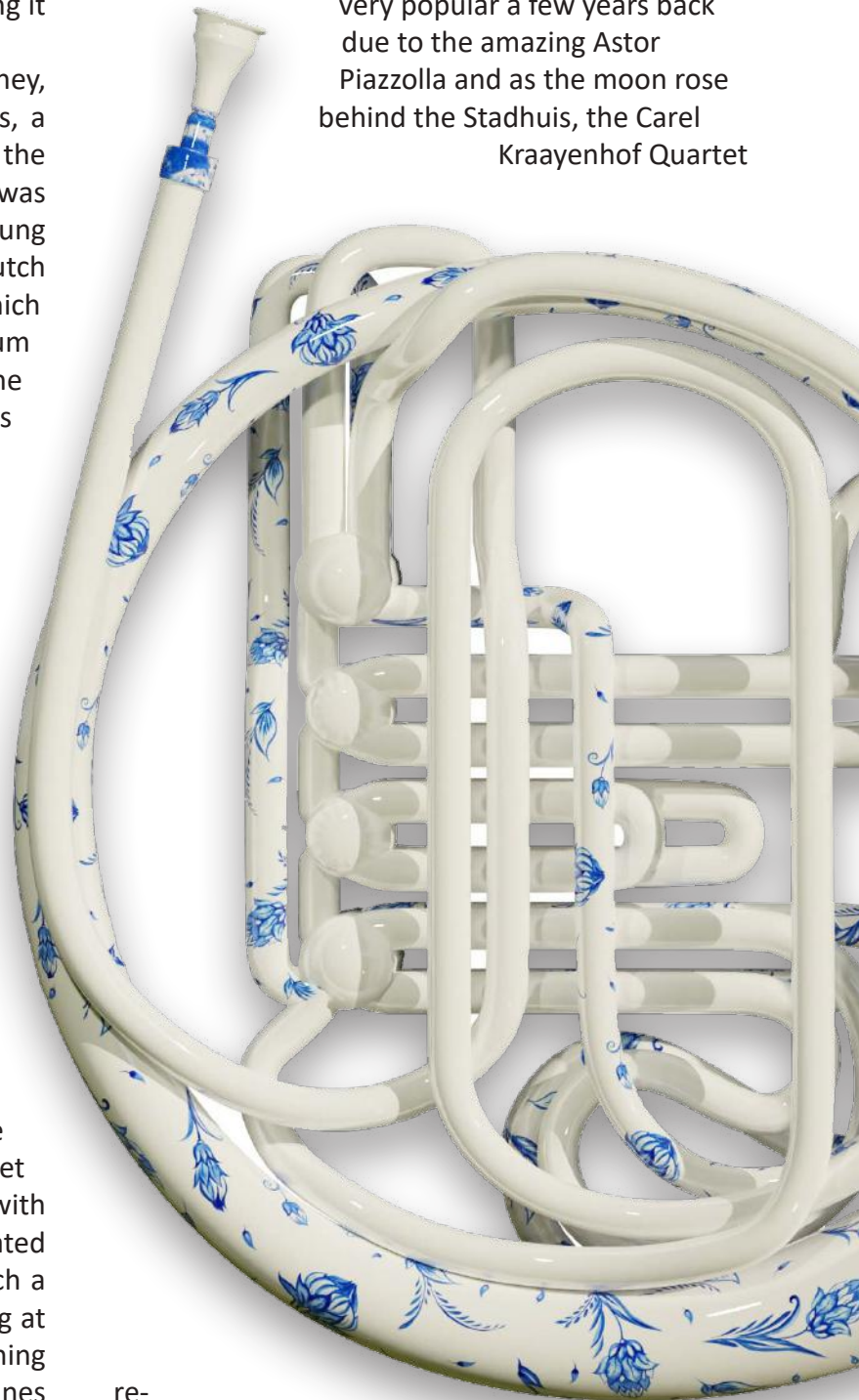
In its third movement Hayden's *Piano Trio*, rather sweet to start with, blossomed into a swirling finale in the third movement. The Brahms *Piano Quartet* escalated into an almost heart-breaking Roma motif by the end. Gripping stuff.

But for me the outstanding piece was the *Red Violin Caprices*, dramatically played by Gareth Lubbe on violin/mouth music, accompanied by Harriet Krijgh on cello. Jaws dropped when Lubbe began with what was described as a 'song' but what emanated from his mouth was a total surprise – not so much a song but a series of sounds, growling and whistling at the same time, produced by a method of breathing which resembled ritual sounds made by aborigines instruments. Utterly riveting.

At the end of the concert we made our way to Delft's Markt where we were treated to a free concert. These free *Marktconcerts* in the city's cobbled market place have become, if maybe not the high-spot, certainly one of the focal points of the Festival. In past years they have been a sort of showcase for the Festival as a whole with many of the participating musician turning

up to do a turn. This year was slightly different with most of the show being performed by a band that was not in the main Festival.

Argentinian tango music became very popular a few years back due to the amazing Astor Piazzolla and as the moon rose behind the Stadhuis, the Carel Kraayenhof Quartet



re-created that sound with Mr Kraayenhof himself on bandoneon accompanied by Juan Pablo Dobal on piano, Bert Vos on violin and Jaap Branderhorst on bass.

Their hour-long set was mesmerizing with traditional tunes and original compositions. The

audience may well have been tangoing in the aisle but, as we were at the front, we couldn't see them. Altogether a very entertaining start to the 2023 Festival where a good time was had by one and all.

The two concerts on the following day focused on two types of masters. If you mentor the young you will not only get respect but love and friendship, not to mention gratitude, for life – at least this is what I've always practised in my career. With *Jonge Meesters Concert (Young Masters)* Nino Gvetadze was obviously of the same mind and this concert amply demonstrated it by giving the younger generation a platform in this prestigious festival. First up was Mendelsohn's *String quartet in Fmin* brilliantly

played by  
Maja Horvat, first violin, Iris  
van Nuland, violin, Giulia  
Wechsler, viola and  
Stefano Bruno, cello.

The winner of many prizes and co-founder of the London based



### B r o m p t o n

Quartet, it is no exaggeration to say that Slovenian born Ms Horvat stole the show with her passionate style – wielding her violin she could squeeze blood from a stone.

For Shostakovich's *Piano Quintet in Gmin*, Sandro Nebieridze on piano joined the line-up. Shostakovich wrote this quintet in 1940 and the tension of the period was all too obvious. Once criticised for his unsentimental playing he excelled at a very descriptive ambiance in this piece – I could hear frenzied industrial

clanging alternating with frustration, anguish and resignation. Not surprisingly, just a short time after composing this, his work was condemned by the Soviet government, putting his career in peril. The performance of both pieces by these young musicians proved a raging success this year.

The second concert, *Hollandse Meesters Muziek en Verf (Dutch Masters Music and Colour)* called to mind the exquisite paintings of the Dutch Golden Age. The aim was to bring together, or contrast, Dutch composers of the 20th century and artworks in the Prinsenhof Museum, once the home and the scene of the murder of William of Orange. On the menu were a sonata and a sonatino by Willem Piper (1894-1947) as well as Leo Smit's *Piano Divertimento for Four Hands* composed in 1942, a year before his untimely death. Elegantly played by Frederieke Saeijs on violin, Ed Spanjaard on piano the WillemPiper piece was followed by Nino Gvetadze and Sandro Nebieridze's beautifully performed *Divertimento*.

But the outstanding piece was Vanessa Lann's world premiere of *And These Hands* for violin and viola, played by Tosca Opdam and Gareth Lubbe who once again produced his miraculous and earthy breath-singing. The line of eight music stands along which the musicians moved as they played, was a simple but very effective device to increase the tension, and attention, of the audience – simply ingenuous.

Last came Louis Andriessen's *Miserere strijkkwartet*. Andriessen was considered the most influential Dutch composer of his generation. This piece was composed in 2006 and was played by Candida Thompson and Frederieke Saeijs on violins with Gareth Lubbe on viola and the young Georgian cellist Ketevan who is a member of the

Roinishvilli Ferschtman cello quartet.

After the performance the audience was given the opportunity to visit the adjacent Prinsenhof Museum with a guided tour and, if so inclined, linger in the historic building for a little longer.

On Tuesday 1st August we were at two concerts *Noorderlicht (Northern Lights)* and *De Zijderoute (The Silk Road)*.




Photo by Melle Meivogel





*... for me the outstanding piece was the Red Violin Caprices, dramatically played by Gareth Lubbe on violin/mouth music, accompanied by Harriet Krijgh on cello. Jaws dropped when Lubbe began with what was described as a 'song' but what emanated from his mouth was a total surprise ...*

A portrait of Nino Gvetadze, the artistic director of the Festival, smiling and looking upwards against a blue background. She has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater and orange hoop earrings. The background is a solid blue wall with some vertical lines and a small metal fastener visible on the right side.

*The Festival's artistic director, Nino Gvetadze, is in her second year. She succeeded the splendid ten-year residency of Liza Ferschtman, a hard act to follow – and Nino is doing it brilliantly*

Northern countries such as Finland, Norway and Sweden are often thought of as dark and rather gloomy due to their very long winters. It is an established fact that human moods flourish the more light they are exposed to. Paintings of dark skies, snowed-in landscapes and dramatic fjords certainly prove this, but in music it seems to be a different story.

Sibelius' *Pianotrio nr. 4 in C* with violin and cello was the first in the programme. An energetic first movement was followed by a lovely melancholy one, ending with an upbeat, animated third part that coursed through the Mandelzaal concert hall. I especially enjoyed the cello playing by Gavriel Lipkind.

Danish composer Carl Nielsen's *Theme With Variations* was composed in 1917 and was very much in the spirit of the period. Colourful, pensive and fun in turn, at times eccentric and abstract, it reminded me of a musical version of Kandinsky's paintings. Severin von Eckardstein on piano was outstanding.

Last year, the traditional Swedish folksong *Värmlandsvisan* was specially arranged by Gareth Lubbe for the Swedish King and Queen and included his iconic and unusual technique of 'overtone singing' in which Lubbe seems to specialise. The brilliantly creative Mr Lubbe on altviola was accompanied by viola, violin, cello and double bass. Mysterious and intriguing how Lubbe can produce these extraordinary sounds and play his instrument at the same time.

There can hardly be a person alive who has not heard the opening bars of Edvard Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* from *Peer Gynt*. Tonight Grieg's *Holberg Suite* was the high point of this concert as eleven musicians marched onto the stage – two alto violas, two violas, three violins, two cellos and a double bass struck up. Led by Candida Thomson the lady musicians all donned splendid evening dress. The *Holberg Suite*, a truly beautiful piece, at times had quite an English feel, almost folkloric in places with a central theme laden with emotion.

We have the Chinese to thank for not only silk, but for the fact that paper on which our western civilisation has built its education, reached us by a dangerous, blood-drenched route, the Silk Road

*De Zijderoute (The Silk Road)* was a spectacular multi-media production – music blended with the images projected on a giant backdrop to trace the story of the Silk Road, with the images enveloping the musicians as it went. The pictorial and musical journey began in China and travelled through India, Egypt, Spain and finally to Delft itself.

Nino Gvetadze with her commanding mastery of the piano led the various musicians' interventions - Bram van Sambeek on fagot and Heiko Dijker on Indian tabla merged with the ever-moving giant illustrations created by Teus van der Stelt. Fredrieke Saeijs' extraordinary violin playing would have mesmerised the crowd of Glastonbury □

# ARTSTALK

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