

# ARTSTALK

## *Colour Supplement*

Number 3

January 2023

- BALENCIAGA in The Hague
- AMALIA - AMBITION WITH ALLURE in Delft
- HERE WE LIVE AND NOW at Korzo, The Hague
- KATE'S CAFE at Museum Rijswijk
- plus lots, lots more . . .



# ARTSTALK

## Colour Supplement

One of the advantages with the new *Colour Supplement* is that we are able to cover subjects that do not really fit in the ArtsTalk Magazine remit. One of those is architecture. This month we have an article on American architect Jeanne Gang's first major European project in Amsterdam.

Regular ArtsTalk Magazine contributors join us for the first time. Wendy Fossen was at the Balenciaga exhibition in The Hague, Jacob John Shale was on Yuletide duties when he visited Orange Theatre's *A Christmas Carol* in December and Souwie Buis writes on the thorny question of who betrayed Anne Frank. As for myself, I saw an unusual and fun show at Museum Rijswijk by English artist Kate Jenkins whose work looks good enough to eat.

**Michael HASTED**  
Editor & Publisher



Contributors this month include:-

**Astrid BURCHARDT**

**Souwie BUIS**

**Jacob John SHALE**

**Wendy FOSSEN**

Cover shows  
Keren Leiman in the piece by Paxton Ricketts  
from *Here We Live and Now* at  
the Korzo Theater in The Hague in December.  
Photo by Sjoerd Derine

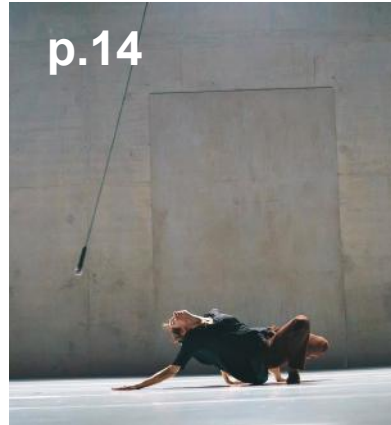


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**KATE'S CAFE** at Museum Rijswijk





Photo by Louise Dahl-Wolfe





# BALENCIAGA IN BLACK

at Kunstmuseum, The Hague

Wendy FOSSEN

**W**hen Cristóbal Balenciaga abruptly closed his fashion house in 1968 it meant the end of an era of sculptural designs. Who would have thought that 50 years later, the fashion house would be revived by a pair of sneakers?


You may not like them (or even have stronger feelings of distaste) but they did the job. Today's generation loves Balenciaga! However, when asked about the age of the fashion house, they have no clue and guess it is only a decade old . . . You can add a century to that number and you are at the beginning of Balenciaga's training as a tailor.

Cristóbal Balenciaga was born in 1895 on the coast of Spanish Basque region. His father was a fisherman who sailed the Spanish royal family around when they were holidaying in San Sebastián. He undoubtedly brought the young Cristóbal along to do the chores. The boy's mother, being a seamstress, also rubbed shoulders with the rich and famous. Having a talent for needle work he helped her out when his father died. This talent was noted by Marquise de Casa Torres who was so enthralled she financed his apprenticeship to a tailor in San Sebastián.

Climbing the ladder of the Au Louvre department store resulted in Balenciaga opening his own fashion house in 1917. He was only 22 years old. Thanks to his contacts in society the house thrived allowing him to open a haute couture fashion house in 1924, followed by branches in Madrid and Barcelona in 1933 and 1935 respectively, only to close his entire fashion house in 1937 as a result of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Balenciaga then moved to Paris and his first show was an immediate success even though his creations cost about FF3500 each.







Even before he went to Paris, Spanish culture was apparent in Balenciaga's designs. For instance, he didn't like the bull fights. He only went to accompany clients who wanted to be taken there but then spent all his time studying the beautiful jackets of the matadors. One of them is included in the exhibition and is, of course, black. Another example of the Spanish vibe are the dresses with loads of lace, referring to the mantillas and flamenco dresses.

Black is his second reference to his Spanish roots. Balenciaga was an avid admirer of Spanish 17th century painters Velasquez and Goya, and their subjects supplied him with ample inspiration for his designs. The Thyssen-Bornemisza museum in Madrid picked this up a couple of years ago and devoted an exhibition to this connection. Black dress is often seen in portraits of important men like the kings of Spain a style which was copied by the wealthy merchants of the Dutch Republic. With this connection in mind, Madelief Hohé, fashion curator of the Kunstmuseum, contacted Palais Galliera and asked if the exhibition *L'Oeuvre Noir* at the Musée Bourdelle in Paris and focused on Balenciaga's black designs could transfer to at the Kunstmuseum.

It could and it does. Under the title *Balenciaga in Black* the museum's rooms are filled with iconic black designs by Balenciaga: the Baby Doll Dress, the Sack Dress and the Balloon Dress. All these designs show why Balenciaga was such a trendsetting designer, or as Christian Dior put it: 'Haute Couture is like an orchestra whose conductor is Balenciaga. We other couturiers are the musicians and we follow the direction he gives'. It is remarkable that Dior was in such awe for the Spanish designer who did the antithesis of his own *New Look* known for its iconic hourglass silhouette. Balenciaga created sculptures and did not care so much for the shoulder-breast-waist shape. He preferred space around the body without turning the body into a lump. His 'sacks' emphasized the legs and were extremely wearable at the same time.

The most interesting part of the exhibition at the Kunstmuseum are the two toiles which explain how Balenciaga worked. He didn't draw his designs, he created them on a doll in a three dimensional way, just as sculptures do. And since Balenciaga never gave interviews (apart from one in 1971) and never gave a glimpse behind the scenes, this is the closest you ever get to the creative genius of Cristóbal Balenciaga whose sculptural designs ultimately lead to the sox shoe of his successor □

*Balenciaga in Black* continues at the Kunstmuseum in The Hague until 5th March

22 JAAR • AGE 22







# AMALIA Ambition *with* Allure

at Museum Prinsenhof  
in Delft

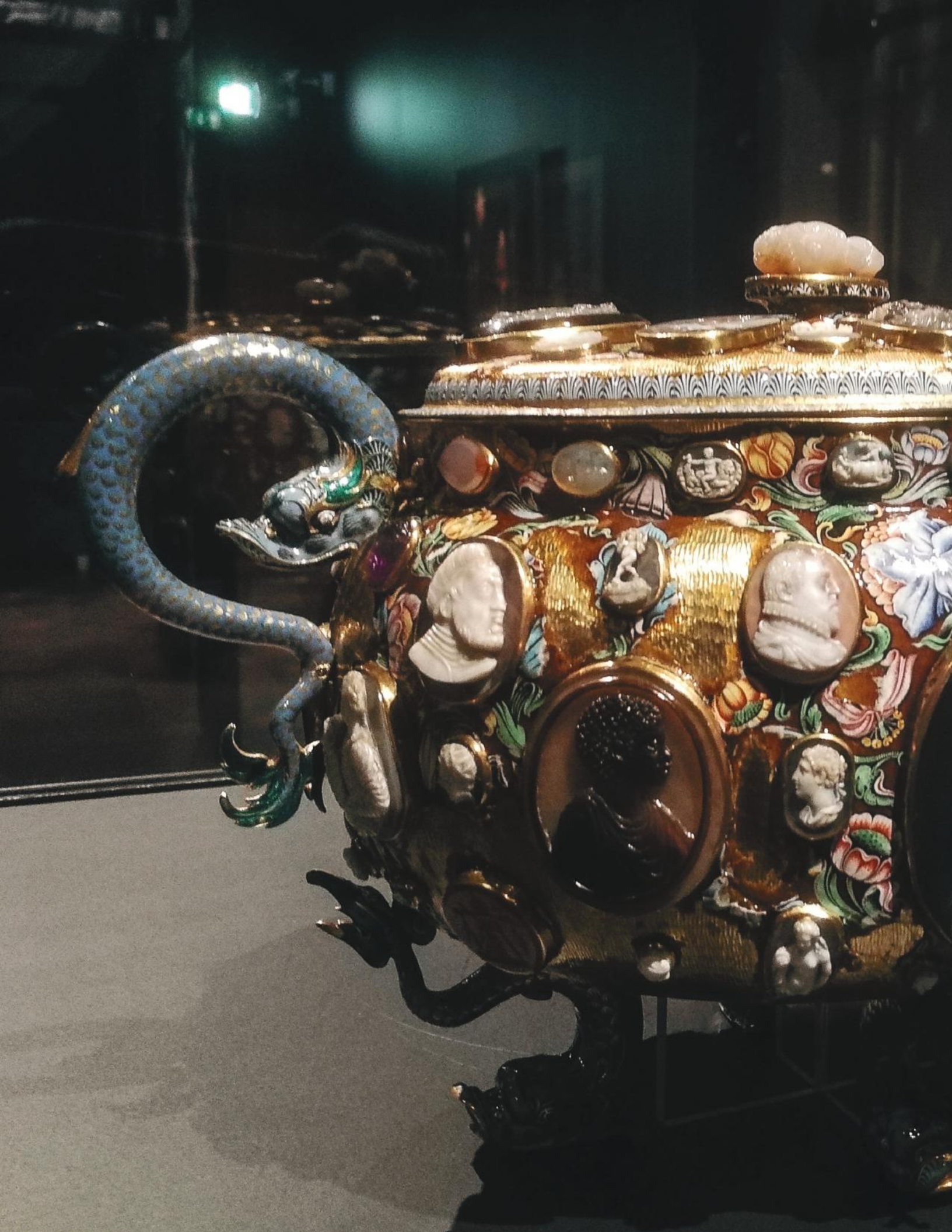
Michael HASTED

**I**n the six years since I moved to Holland I have discovered lots of new artists, lots of beautiful small towns and learned a lot of Dutch history. Today I learned some more.

The Prinsenhof in Delft could be said to be the most important building in the country. It was there that William of Orange was assassinated, an event which led directly to the creation of the state of The Netherlands. This building currently houses an exhibition, *Amalia - Ambitie met Allure* (Amalia - Ambition with Allure), about a woman who could be described as the most important female figure in Dutch history.

I know a little of the history of this country but I must confess to never having heard of Amalia van Solms. However, after asking a few Dutch friends about her, I discovered I was not the only one. My enquiries produced more than a few blank stares and guilty admissions.









*“For a woman was so important to the nation’s history it’s surprising that she is not better known . . .”*





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*“From the beginning it becomes clear that the Princess is a woman to be reckoned with . . .”*

Amalia was born in Braunfels Germany in 1602 and became Princess of Orange by marriage to Frederik Henrik, Prince of Orange. She acted as the political adviser to the Prince during his reign and acted as his de facto deputy and regent during his infirmity from 1640 to 1647. She was the grandmother of William III of England.

This beautiful exhibition follows chronologically the rise and rise of Amalia using paintings, engravings, documents and even pieces of furniture and household items, many of which are kept in Delft. From the beginning it becomes clear that the Princess is a woman to be reckoned with.

I have been to the Prinsenhof many times as I live only five minutes' walk away and I am always in awe of the building and its history. The exhibitions it puts on are always beautifully mounted and *Amalia - Ambition with Allure* is no exception.

The show is dominated by a series of huge discs suspended from the ceiling or mounted on wooden frames onto which various images are projected. They are maybe a bit too imposing but the exhibits more than hold their own. The first painting in the exhibition is possibly the most imposing of them all. The fine portrait of Frederik Hendrik by Michiel van Mierevelt shows the Prince in armour with the most elaborate ruff collar you have ever seen. There are lots of excellent duel portraits of the Royal couple as well as some unusual items like the portrait painted on a giant tortoise shell, a print of a tame elephant going through its paces and a doll's house type maquette of Amalia's bed chamber in Huis ten Bosch.

I liked the many landscapes, cityscapes and tableaux of historical events which put the life of Amalia into context, including an engraving of a French-style palace, Huis ter Nieuburch, built at Rijswijk in 1697 and orientated so it had a view over the spires of nearby Delft to the south.

This is a fascinating exhibition on many levels. There are some wonderful paintings and artefacts and the show has been lovingly curated and designed, but for me it was almost the story of Amalia herself that impressed the most. For a woman of such importance to the nation's history it is surprising that she is not better known. *Amalia - Ambition with Allure* will hopefully rectify that situation and throw light onto the life and times of a woman who was instrumental in making The Netherlands the nation it is today ☐

*Amalia - Ambition with Allure* continues at Museum Prinsenhof in Delft until 8th January.





Keren Leiman in the piece by Paxton Ricketts  
Photo by Sjoerd Derine



# HERE WE LIVE AND NOW

at the Korzo Theater in The Hague

Michael HASTED

The Netherlands, *pro capita*, is almost certainly the leading country in the world for contemporary dance and a lot of the focus for that is concentrated on The Hague. Not only is it home to the world class Nederlands Dans Theater (NDT) but it also, in the form of the Korzo Theater, a place where, alongside established performers, new talent can be discovered, encouraged and allowed to develop.

Each year in *Here we live and now* Korzo and NDT give three makers the freedom to create a short piece. This year the three choreographers were Faizah Grootens, Spencer Dickhaus and Paxton Ricketts.

Contemporary dance is very much dependent on creating an atmosphere, a vibe as we used to call it. Apart from the movement itself it depends on lighting, costume and music or soundscape to establish a mood in order to create contact, empathise even, with its audience.

From the moment we entered the auditorium, Spencer Dickhaus's *Recess* had us hooked. On the cold, grey, misty stage, a naked man leaned motionless against the back wall as the second man arrived, arranging the lights and a small pile of bricks. There were long periods of silence punctuated by some excellent music – I thought the early sequence to Wagner's *Parsifal* was particularly effective.

Silence was not one of the elements in *Live! Not to be Missed, Touring Regionally* by NDT1 dancer Paxton Ricketts. It was almost like a pastiche of a Dolly Parton concert with dancer Keren Leiman welcoming the audience in schmaltzy, American showbusinessy style. Her partner on stage was a live microphone hanging, central stage, from its cable.

The final piece of the evening was an exercise in simple, stylish elegance. In *While you're here –Tanten bo t'aki* by Curaçao born Faizah Grootens, two dancers – Justin Brown and Evelien Jansen – dressed identically in loose fitting orange costumes explored the relationship between synchronicity and individuality to a nice soundtrack by Michael Lampe,

This year's *Here we live and now* establishes beyond doubt that, post pandemic, contemporary dance is alive and well in The Netherlands and in very good hands to insure that it continues to be so. □









# Q RESIDENCES

## **Award winning architect Jeanne Gang's first construction project in Europe**

**W**ith the brand new apartment complex Q Residences in Amsterdam, Jeanne Gang is realizing her first construction project in Europe - but Gang's name and fame preceded her. In 2019, *Time Magazine* named her the World's Most Influential Architect. Some ten years earlier, her award-winning firm, Studio Gang Architects, designed the undulating Aqua Tower in Chicago. With 82 floors, Aqua was the tallest residential tower in the world at the time, designed by a woman. But not for long. In close proximity to Aqua, Gang built the 101-story Vista Tower, now St. Regis, in 2020.

Gang was born in Illinois, USA in 1964 and began her successful career in the mid-1990s at the Dutch architectural firm OMA in Rotterdam.

Before even making a sketch for Q Residences, she immersed herself in the history of the Buitenveldert district, "Our starting point is always to see what we can add to a specific location. A building never stands alone."

Q Residences, a project of Kroonenberg Groep, is situated in the green Buitenveldert on the corner of the Buitenveldertselaan and the Van Nijenrodeweg. In the immediate vicinity are the Gijsbrecht van Aemstelpark



and the extensive Amsterdamse Bos. Buitenveldert is part of the world famous General Expansion Plan (AUP) of Cornelis van Eesteren. The plan dates from 1935 and has a relatively uniform structure of low and medium-rise buildings. While Gang's design is purposefully aligned with this, it is at the same time, highly distinctive and different. Kroonenberg Groep enlisted the services of the Amsterdam architectural firm Rijnboutt for the urban integration of the project and the technical elaboration.

Q Residences consists of two buildings: the elegant, imposing Quartz and the significantly lower and less striking Qube. Quartz has 23 floors, Qube has eight. Together these are 248 homes. The rectangular Qube has spacious balconies with ingenious boundaries in the form of slanted windows. This building combines exemplarily with the mid-rise next to it.

The situation is different with the graceful, 75-metre-high Quartz: a residential tower that gains in dynamism as the floors pile up. Quartz, constructed of exposed concrete with white cement and natural stone granulate, positions itself as a sculpture. In this special place, the intersection of two roads, in this special and beautiful district, it functions as a landmark and as a springboard to the high-rise buildings on the Zuidas. Quartz's lines are a playful variation on the repetitive linearity of the surrounding architecture. Although the tower shell is actually rectangular, its undulating balconies irresistibly create the impression of a winding dance.

The ambitious, high-quality development of Q Residences would have been unthinkable without the input of designers and artists. For example, Piet Boon, internationally known for his typical style of robust luxury, played an important role in the visual appeal of the interior of Q Residences.

"What you want," he says, "is to create a place that remains attractive for a long time. You achieve that by working with high-quality materials. And by looking smart at how each space will be used." □











# WHO BETRAYED ANNE FRANK?

Why big data and big egos failed to find the truth

Souwie BUIS

Some five years ago a crack team of worldwide experts was assembled to solve one of modern history's biggest cold cases: the betrayal of Anne Frank and her family to the Nazis. Hidden for almost two years in a canal side warehouse in the Jordaan district of Amsterdam, Frank and her family were discovered on 4th of August, 1944.

Anne was taken to Auschwitz concentration camp and finally taken to the Bergen-Belsen camp where she died in February, 1945. The tragic ending of a young life so full of hope and optimism makes Anne Frank's diary one of the most poignantly popular accounts of Jewish life in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Anne Frank's father, Otto, who died in 1980, was thought to have had a strong suspicion of their betrayer but never shared the person's identity publicly. An investigation by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation in 2003 looked into claims against two suspects but concluded that it was not possible to reconstruct the events of that period.

That was then, now we live in an era of big data, DNA testing and powerful algorithms whose number-crunching abilities are irresistible. Dutch filmmaker, Thijs Bayans, described the amount of relevant data as "overwhelming" and "at least 20 to 25km of files". With the help of Amsterdam-based big data company, Xomnia and a team of forensic experts lead by retired FBI agent, Vince Pankoke, the truth appeared closer than it had in decades. "We are not trying to point fingers or prosecute. I am just trying to solve the last case of my career. There is no statute of limitation on the truth."

Yet, over 4 years later, the conclusions drawn by Pankoke and the team, published amid much fanfare in a book titled, *The Betrayal of Anne Frank* – a cold case investigation, have raised more questions than they have answered. The truth was watered down to 85% and came in the form of a Dutch Jewish notary, Arnold van den Bergh, who died of throat cancer in 1950. As

a member of the Jewish council in Amsterdam, an administrative body through which the Nazis forced Jews to establish, Van den Bergh, so the reasoning goes, would have had access to the names and hiding places of fellow Jews.

One doesn't need big data or number crunching to understand that according to a number of Holocaust historians, there is no evidence that the Jewish Council drew up such a list of addresses of hiding places. Clearly, there were good reasons not to do so and even stronger reasons for Jews in hiding not to provide this highly monitored body with information of their whereabouts.

Johannes Houwink ten Cate, a professor of Holocaust and genocide studies in Amsterdam, told the Dutch daily newspaper NRC Handelsblad that he had never seen any evidence of such a list in 35 years of research and that Van den Bergh himself was in hiding for much of 1944. Bart van der Boom of Leiden University called the findings "slanderous nonsense."

Dutch publishers, Ambo Anthos, have now suspended publication of the book. Harper Collins Germany have cancelled release of the book and are reviewing the manuscript.

Where did it all go so wrong? Perhaps the answer lies with an investigation by the Anne Frank House museum, published in December 2016 which concluded that the Franks may have been discovered by chance instead of being betrayed. "Despite decades of research, betrayal as a point of departure has delivered nothing conclusive.", said Ronald Leopold, the executive director of the Anne Frank House.

Is it time to let the matter rest? To leave history with its secrets of betrayal and retribution and remember instead the courage and optimism of Anne Frank. A young woman, who's unstinting faith in humankind is so movingly captured in one of her last diary entries, "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart." □





Photo by Michael Hasted





# CAFÉ KATE at Museum Rijswijk

Michael HASTED

Soft art is not uncommon. Claes Oldenburg is perhaps the most obvious exponent but Joseph Beuys often included large pieces of felt in his work. Museum Rijswijk itself has its important textile show every couple of years and it was here, at the 2021 show, that we first saw the work of British artist Kate Jenkins who makes cakes and bread and other food stuff.

Now although a lot of Oldenburg's soft sculptures involved confectionary, it was on a giant scale in which the piece of cake, or whatever, took on a whole new identity. Ms Jenkins' work is all same-size and, from not very far away, indistinguishable from the real thing. So you have a variety of delicious buns and biscuits and a whole range of bread which any German baker would be proud to display. Good though they look, they would not be so good to eat, they would make a very chewy and indigestible tea time. And why? Because they are all made of wool, all knitted. So you have knitted bagels, knitted Danish pastries, knitted croissants, knitted profiteroles and knitted jam Swiss rolls. On a more savoury note there are knitted sardines on toast and knitted Dutch herrings, complete with knitted chopped onion. There are even knitted ice-creams.

The main part of the exhibition is laid out like a café with tables and chairs (not knitted) and crisp white table-cloths. You can choose your inedible meal from the counter stacked high with tea-time treats, some on cake stands, some under a glass dome, all looking absolutely delicious.

In the other main area is Kate's Cones, the ice cream parlour whose gaudy wares I wouldn't fancy even if it was real. Around the walls are small individual pieces and lots of photographic blow-ups. Great fun and well worth a visit ☐

# Orange Theatre's A CHRISTMAS CAROL

at Het Amsterdams Theaterhuis

Jacob John SHALE

The people responsible for adapting Dickens' novella into a play, James Johnson and Hugh Mackay, made the wise choice of minimising the amount of narration in it. This was not one of those productions where you leave the theatre feeling cheated, reflecting that you would have been better served by simply staying home and rereading the original text.

Casey Goodman, the actor playing Ebenezer Scrooge, was superb, particularly at the beginning of the play: he chose to depict the character as twitchy and irate rather than the more conventional monster of vituperation to which we have become accustomed. The ghosts – all played by the same man, Eli Thorne – were a triumph. The Ghost of Christmas Past was faceless, his entire form shrouded in a white veil, and he spoke with a voice that was both amplified and distorted by special effects. The Ghost of Christmas Present was a garrulous, cheerful, sybaritic figure; the audience seemed to enjoy Eli's performance here more than any other in the play. The Ghost of Christmas Future was also faceless, also veiled (in black, not white), and he entered the stage on all-fours – an artistic decision that succeeded in making his inhumanity seem bestial as well as spectral.

It is a sad fact that most people are now familiar with *A Christmas Carol* through the Muppets' 1993 film adaptation. Last night's production paid an acknowledgement to this by way of an opening joke in which a muppet was ousted from the stage. In the play's concluding scene, after Scrooge has been purged of his miserliness and has set about organising a Christmas feast for the various people whom he has previously mistreated (Martin Amis once accurately remarked that is the fate of all of Dickens' villains to be either 'tritely punished or implausibly converted'), one of Bob Cratchit's children discovers this same muppet lying beneath the Christmas tree. A nice dig, I thought □





# OPEN CALL for Choreographers

RIDCC (Rotterdam International Duet Choreography Competition) is the springboard for international choreographic talent. Registration for the duet competition 2023 is open!  
More details at [RIDCC.com](https://RIDCC.com)



INTROTENTION CODA by Anat Oz  
seen here with ShaniLicht