



Harmen de Hoop
**PUBLIC SCULPTURE,
AMSTERDAM**



Harmen de Hoop is a true master in site-specific art. For many years he invades and disrupts daily surroundings and routines. His work ranges from painting basketball court lines on a busy street intersection to putting plates of dog food in the underground. De Hoop makes people look differently at things that have become normal for them. In Public Sculpture, de Hoop's work immediately becomes part of the neighbourhood and lives on the podium as if it has been there for years and not minutes.



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FIVE GALLERIES FIVE ARTISTS

HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

TEXT - **Nina Folkersma** is an independent curator, critic and consultant in the field of contemporary art. Currently, she is the chair of the board of ArtTable The Netherlands and a member of the art advisory committee of the City of Amsterdam for the new North South subway line.

For a small country with less of a longstanding tradition of collecting contemporary art, the Dutch galleries don't do so badly. The gallery world in the urban conglomeration of western Holland is highly dynamic and self-aware – and strikingly international.

Arts Holland Magazine visited five galleries in the cities of Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht and asked the gallerists about their personal motivations. What criteria do they use in selecting their artists? How do they relate to ideals about content and to commercial imperatives? How do the galleries function in the international arena and which interests and contacts are involved? What are their plans for the future?

These five inspiring talks show that a gallery is like a spider at the centre of the web of the art world.

They function as an intermediary between artists and collectors, curators, art institutions and the public. In the process, a gallerist assumes various roles: as the artist's confidant, as a mediator for the public, as an international entrepreneur, or as a fundraiser and producer of new work.

The degree of importance that the five gallery owners place on these separate activities is reflected in their policies and gives each gallery a distinct identity. One may function as a springboard for young international talent, while another provides an international platform for established Dutch talent. Another focuses on an informed public of art connoisseurs, and yet another aims at a large, mixed public. But no matter how disparate, all of the gallerists interviewed have an irrepressible enthusiasm for their profession in common.



ANNET GELINK GALLERY

Ed van der Elsen was a talented photographer and filmmaker who for over forty years captured his encounters with people in photographs, photographic books and films. Traipsing through metropolitan Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Amsterdam or travelling through Africa and Japan, he liked to aim his camera at individuals who were striking and full of character. He made his debut in 1956 with his

book of photographs *Love on the Left Bank*, which instantly made him internationally famous. After that came some twenty photobooks. He made several television films, often on subjects related to his own life.

Belgium (Twins), 1968, copyright Ed van der Elsen / Nederlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam



GALERIE GABRIEL ROLT

Marijn Akkermans often makes large drawings in pencil, ink and gouache. On the white surface of the paper, remarkable scenes full of dramatic and narrative suggestion unfold. Akkermans combines a spontaneous drawing movement with extremely detailed and concentrated brushwork. On closer inspection the many gradations of gray turn out to be built up of finely drawn layers of ink. In his most recent series of erotic drawings the oppressive atmosphere of his earlier work seems to have made way for a lighter, softer view of the world. The use of aquarelle gives the drawings a transparency that emphasizes their sensitive quality.

Dial M for Mapplethorpe, 2012, watercolor on paper. PHOTO - PETER TIJHUIS

FLATLAND GALLERY
Utrecht, Amsterdam, Paris

Martin Rogge, founder and owner of Flatland Gallery, has just come back from Paris Photo, the most important photography fair in Europe.

‘Especially for the fair, we printed a bulletin on *The Sochi Project* by Rob Hornstra, a documentary photographer who has been with our gallery since 2007. Then we covered all the walls of our stand with those bulletins. At such a fair, which is extraordinarily expensive and primarily focused on beautifully framed prints, that’s rather daring.

‘Rob Hornstra fits in very well with our gallery because he knows how to finance and publicize his projects in an exceptional way. As do Erwin Olaf, Ruud van Empel and Carolein Smit – all of them artists who have their own specialty and have already built up an entire oeuvre. The artists we take chances on do have to be reasonably mature, with work that has more

MY AMBITION IS SUPERVISING THE EXHIBITIONS OF OUR ARTISTS AROUND THE WORLD.

or less crystallized. If they don’t yet have an oeuvre and they’re suddenly successful, there’s very soon nothing left. What I like best is helping artists with the next step, by showing their work at international fairs. And that proves very successful, too.

‘So I don’t focus on Holland at all. Everything is much bigger and more interesting abroad. Besides the gallery in Utrecht, where I started out in 1983, and the recently opened branch in Amsterdam, I’ve been working out of Paris for six years

now. I have three hundred square metres there in the gallery of Magda Danysz, a relatively young gallery with which I also do projects in Shanghai. In addition to that, I attend six or seven international fairs, such as SCOPE Basel, Madrid Photo, Photo London and Art Brussels. But I don’t have the ambition of becoming a Gagosian with an establishment in every metropolis. My plans for the future are mainly focused on supervising the exhibitions of our artists around the world and on the gallery programme. For now, I have a programme until the end of 2015. In the meantime, I will be thinking up new things.’

WILFRIED LENTZ
Rotterdam

‘A gallery is a kind of self portrait. The work of each artist reflects some aspect of my personal interests and background, as does the work of Wendelien van Oldenborgh. Her video installations are always about people who act as individuals and initiate changes. Architecture is often important to her work, as a mirror that shows how people move and live together.’ So says Wilfried Lentz, an engineer, former director of SKOR and since 2008 a gallery owner in Rotterdam.

‘In general, you could say that all of the artists affiliated with the gallery have an interest in the world around us, a fascination for socio-political changes. A certain substantiality is also important for me; I’d rather have a large and complicated work than all sorts of small separate pieces.

‘My gallery is not in a very easily accessible place. And my Dutch public is indeed relatively limited; it consists of a small circle of professionals. I mainly sell abroad, to large museum collections in the United States and a bit in Europe, but practically nothing in Holland. I follow my artists around a lot and often sell their work where it is presented, in museums, at fairs, at biennials. In fact, my shop is everywhere; sometimes I simply have it tucked under my arm, in my iPad.

‘Yet the physical place in Rotterdam is very important, as somewhere to experiment and produce things. I always help my artists when it comes to financing new productions. So the gallery is where the final production takes place; it’s the back office. It is very important for me to have produced the work, so that I can talk about it in a meaningful way and it’s not a totally virtual world that you’re starting from.

‘How do I envision the gallery’s future? I only started four years ago, but my programme is already pretty good, even though I say so myself. My artists need to become a bit better known and there should also be a few more of them. I now represent eleven artists, including Hito Steyerl, Matts Leiderstam, James Beckett and Rosella Biscotti, but I would like to have fourteen or fifteen artists eventually. Not too many; I want to stay small and be able to keep giving them personal attention, which is much more fun.’

ANNET GELINK GALLERY
Amsterdam

‘When we started out twelve years ago, we were primarily a gallery for young artists, but some of them, like David Malkovic, Yael Bartana and Ryan Gander have already become quite renowned artists now in midcareer, and their prices have risen accordingly.’ Annet Gelink, founder and director of her own gallery in the heart of Amsterdam says that the tricky bit now is to keep these artists with the gallery.

‘David, Yael and Ryan have all been acquiring large galleries abroad, some of which have twenty or thirty people on the payroll. We might be the biggest gallery in Holland, but of course that doesn’t count for anything internationally.

‘Holland has only a limited number of collectors who are prepared to spend big sums of money on art, so pretty soon we might become too expensive for the Dutch market. In order for us not to be alienated from our Dutch public, it’s important to

THE GALLERY IN ROTTERDAM IS IMPORTANT TO ME AS A PLACE TO EXPERIMENT AND PRODUCE THINGS.

OUR ARTISTS ARE DEVELOPING AND AS A RESULT WE ARE GROWING TOO.

WEST

Lotte Geeven uses extremely diverse materials and media – drawings, objects, installations, photography – with which she reacts to the world around her or to a specific context. She observes every aspect of her surroundings, leaving out elements that catch the eye and then focusing on seemingly unimportant details. Geeven calls herself a storyteller. She starts out from the actual reality of the surrounding world

but she also focuses on personal experience to search for hidden relations. She made the work *Resonance* (2012) especially for Huize Frankendael, an eighteenth-century country house in the Watergraafsmeer district of Amsterdam, within the scope of a project about the fading boundaries between city and nature.

Resonance, 2012



WILFRIED LENTZ

Wendelien van Oldenborgh addresses the question of how social issues that remain hidden or have been taken hostage by repetitive rhetoric can be introduced into the public discussion in another manner. In her recent work *Supposing I Love You. And You Also Love Me* (2011), she stages a dialogue between Tariq Ramadan, the discredited visiting professor and once integration advisor for the City of Rotterdam, and five young adults with multicultural backgrounds. Filmed in a sound studio inspired by De Sijl, the adolescents function as a chorus in a playful interchange with Ramadan's ideas about diversity, fear, conflict and his own discontinued engagement with the City of Rotterdam.

Supposing I Love You. And You Also Love Me, 2011



FLATLAND GALLERY

Photographer **Rob Hornstra** and writer/filmmaker **Arnold van Bruggen** are conducting a five-year project on the dramatic changes in the area around the Russian city of Sochi, where the Winter Olympics will be held in 2014. Never before have the Games taken place in an area that contrasts more sharply with the glamour of the Olympics than Sochi. Hornstra and Van Bruggen are documenting the extreme makeover of this area with photographs, film, reportage and a website, under the title *The Sochi Project*. *Ljudmila*, Grozny, Russia, 2011 (part of the series *Safety First*)

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keep presenting younger artists. The Bakery, our project space in the basement, is important for that. But the new photography fair, UNSEEN, and the new Drawing Amsterdam fair were both very good for us; we were able to attract a new clientele.'

'Besides young artists, we represent and manage some of the photographs by Ed van der Elsken. Ed is actually a bit of an odd man out in the gallery, yet at the same time he is a reference point for the other artists. Recently we organized an exhibition for which we asked three artists – Rineke Dijkstra, Marlene Dumas and Marijke van Warmerdam – to make a selection from his work. That's when you notice just how contemporary Ed's work still is. His free approach to the medium of photography, the travelling, the personal aspect, the making of films and special photography books – all of these are things you see in the work of our other artists.'

'The artists are developing and as a result we are growing too. The foreign collectors and museums that we deal with now are of a different calibre to those of ten years ago. International fairs remain important for us, but we do limit them. At the last Frieze London we noticed that other galleries were feeling a certain amount of fair fatigue. Now we're thinking about other ways of being at important biennials and fairs abroad, so we can initiate something there ourselves. That's more the direction of the future, in any case.'

WEST
The Hague

'I'm attracted by obsession, the ability to think outside the box without worrying about how things ought to be or have to be. I see that in the work of Lotte Geeven, a young artist who makes objects and drawings, books, photographs and installations. She lets nothing get in her way and could provide an entire city with art.'

With this description of her preference in artists, gallery founder Marie-José Sondejker simultaneously characterizes the identity of West: a place for contemporary art that is averse to existing models and lies somewhere between a gallery, artists' initiative and presentation institute. 'I started West five years

ago because I am interested in how you can present art and what is best for each artist: one artist will have more to gain from a presentation at an international fair, while another will get more out of having a book published, or from an exhibition in the Grote Kerk, the big church in The Hague. I did the latter this past summer with a number of my artists and very many people came to it. I think the public is crucial. In Holland, art has lost contact with its public, and I must say I feel a missionary zeal about that. Which doesn't mean that I programme 'accessible' exhibitions, by the way. I want to present top quality art to a large audience.

'The international and the local are equally important for West. We regularly take part in fairs abroad, because we want to reach a big public and because the artist will also benefit from sales. Selling comes after everything else, it's the last little step. West isn't commercial, you see; all the money we earn goes right back into the association.

'I'm now putting a lot of time into thinking about the form of my programme. Last week I organized the first *Club Null*, a hybrid evening with a serious lecture followed by a full-tilt rock show and various presentations and discussions. That's a nice break from the routine of making exhibitions. The best part was that it attracted such a mixed audience; there were artists, collectors, music lovers and local residents. Lots of galleries only focus on collectors, but someone who happens to live nearby can have just as great a passion for art as a collector with a top-notch collection.'

GALERIE GABRIEL ROLT
Amsterdam

'Starting a gallery was a logical step for me. My father owned a gallery and my mother is an antiques dealer in Barcelona, so I have always been confronted with art.' Gabriel Rolt, after first having worked in a small gallery in The Hague, started his own gallery in Amsterdam in 2006. 'Around that time a lot of new galleries suddenly opened in Amsterdam: Martin van Zomerén, Diana Stigter, Juliette Jongma, Upstream – a very ambitious movement, and very international. It was still in the period of the economic boom, but only just. Amsterdam was already having difficulties, with the Stedelijk Museum and de Appel arts centre closed for renovation. Now it's the other way around: monetarily it's more complicated, but more international visitors are coming to the city again.

'Photography and drawing are two mediums that I like a lot. Marijn Akkermans, an artist who makes figurative drawings, was one of my first artists. His work is not just about the figures in an image, it's also about how the viewer looks at it, about the function of an image. Marijn often makes things quite difficult for himself; he imposes certain dogmas or limitations on himself in his work. But recently that seems to be changing. He's just made a new series of erotic drawings, almost pornographic work, and you feel much more freedom in them. It's still very early – I saw them yesterday for the first time! – but I think it's very exciting.' 'I usually work with artists from my own generation, so they'll mostly be in their mid-thirties. A gallery is closely connected with the gallerist, it's always very personal. For me it's very much about understanding the present, trying to capture the feeling of what's going on now. You work with living artists, you go through a certain development together. The best part of all is designing an exhibition together, that's what you do it for.'

A GALLERY IS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE GALLERIST, IT'S ALWAYS VERY PERSONAL.

WEST PRESENTS TOP QUALITY ART TO A LARGE AUDIENCE.

NEW MUSEUM SPACES

— In a time of economic crisis, museums have to devise new ways to hold the public's attention. Big blockbusters and state-of-the-art experience centers have become too costly and often prove unsustainable. A promising new trend in museums is to devote spaces to re-installing elements of their collections, often with the help of local artists and designers. In this article, five inspiring examples.

TEXT – Valentijn Byvanck is a critic, curator, museum innovator, and television presenter. Formerly director of the Dutch National Historical Museum, he recently became director of Marres, Centre for Contemporary Culture in Maastricht.



Installation photo of the exhibition Mondrian & De Stijl. On the left Dessin B53 by Sonia Delaunay from 1934 and on the right spaces getting smaller and smaller at the heart of the exhibition; designed by Krijn de Koning and Anne Holtrop. PHOTO – GERRIT SCHREURS

GEMEENTEMUSEUM DEN HAAG

De Stijl installation

The Gemeentemuseum in The Hague recently opened a series of galleries entirely devoted to De Stijl. De Stijl sustains the most convincing Dutch claim to having spawned a twentieth century art movement of great international significance. The movement that existed from roughly 1917 to 1931 counted among its protagonists the artists Bart van der Leek and Piet Mondrian, the designer Gerrit Rietveld and the architect J.J.P. Oud. The artist Theo van Doesburg, chief editor of the magazine *De Stijl*, from which the movement derived its name, was its ardent promoter and ideologue. Protagonists of De Stijl shared the ambition to bring art and architecture back to its basics: abstraction in clear, geometrical lines and surfaces, and primary colors. Scholars debate whether De Stijl was a movement, a group or a myth. School children and the general public learn, at the very least, what it literally means: a style. The 750m² installation at the Gemeentemuseum encourages visitors to decide for themselves.