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**PERSPECTIEVEN IN DE  
HEDENDAAGSE KUNST  
PERSPECTIVES IN  
CONTEMPORARY ART**

**Museum De Voorde**  
Over jou en mij, hier en nu  
About you and me, here and now

It's clear,  
Trust, the possibility of possibilities,  
Accepting that we don't know,  
That 'different' is not less,  
That it just is, not better.  
It's asking questions,  
and letting them play their part,  
It's listening to every voice  
that speaks from the heart.

It's admitting that the unknown  
leaves you unsettled,  
That you still need to find your place  
amongst the new voices.  
It's following the beat of your own drum,  
in an orchestra,  
It's Standing up for others,  
so they can sit down.  
It's considering those who came,  
and those to come,  
It's solely doing it, all, together.

Amara van der Elst



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# VOORWOORD

# FOREWORD

**“[...] Het is gaan staan voor en een ander op jouw plaats laten zitten [...]”, zo valt te lezen op de cover van onze nieuwste publicatie bij de gelijknamige tentoonstelling: *Respect! Perspectieven in de hedendaagse Kunst*. Het zijn de openingswoorden van *spoken word artist* Amara van der Elst waarmee zij de tentoonstelling opende op 4 februari 2022 in Museum De Voorde.**

Museum De Voorde in Zoetermeer is hét museum over identiteit en het dagelijks leven. Wij willen mensen laten ontdekken wie zij zelf zijn en wie de ander is. Hoe denk jij over bepaalde zaken en hoe denkt een ander daar over? Kun je begrip tonen voor elkaars visie? Museum De Voorde vindt dat hoe meer je van elkaar weet, hoe beter je elkaar begrijpt.

“[...] It’s standing up for others, so they can sit down [...],” announces the cover of our latest publication accompanying the eponymous exhibition *Respect! Perspectives in Contemporary Art* (in original Dutch: *Respect! Perspectieven in de hedendaagse Kunst*). It was with these words that spoken word artist Amara van der Elst opened this exhibition in Museum De Voorde on 4 February 2022.

Located in Zoetermeer, Museum De Voorde is unrivalled in matters relating to identity and daily life. We want to help people discover their own and others’ identities. What are your opinions about certain issues, and how do others see them? Can you understand each other’s points of view? Museum De Voorde believes that the more you know about each other, the better you can understand each other.

**Met deze publicatie gaan we dieper in op de motivatie en inspiratie van de achttien deelnemende kunstenaars. Hoe verhoudt het werk zich tot het thema respect? Wat heeft hem of haar bewogen om deel te nemen? Museum De Voorde heeft kunstjournalist Milo Vermeire bereid gevonden alle deelnemende kunstenaars te interviewen en zijn bevindingen in korte teksten in deze publicatie weer te geven. In de publicatie koppelt hij de individuele motivatie van de kunstenaar aan het thema respect. Hiermee hopen we de bezoekers te activeren om de kunstwerken met een nieuwe blik te bekijken. En zich te verwonderen over de totstandkoming van het kunstwerk en de boodschap van de maker. Al lezend geeft de publicatie inzicht in de beweegredenen van de kunstenaars en biedt het een verdiepende uitleg bij elk kunstwerk, begeleid door een foto van het werk. Soms zijn de boodschappen heel persoonlijk of universeel, soms met een knipoog of aandacht vragend voor een maatschappelijk thema. Weer andere werken zoeken grenzen op of houden ons een spiegel voor. Wat alle kunstwerken verbindt, is de boodschap 'respect tonen'.**

In de publicatie en tentoonstelling is werk opgenomen van: Amara van der Elst, André Pielage, Arno Coenen, Bilal Chahal, Emmy Dijkstra, Frode Bolhuis, Hans Muller, Hans van Houwelingen, Hans van Lunteren,

Our latest publication takes a closer look at the motivations and inspirations of the eighteen artists participating in our current exhibition. How do their works relate to the theme of respect? What made them decide to take part in the exhibition? On behalf of Museum De Voorde, art journalist Milo Vermeire interviewed all participating artists and summarised his findings in the brief vignettes that you will find in this publication. With the connections between each artist's individual motivations and the theme of respect that Vermeire reveals, we hope to inspire visitors to view the artworks with new eyes, contemplate what led to their creation and reflect on the message of the maker.

This publication offers insight into the motivations of the artists and discusses each artwork in more detail. These discussions are accompanied by photos of the relevant works. Sometimes, the artworks have messages that are highly personal, or universal, at other times they are tongue-in-cheek or a serious call for attention for an important social issue. Other works seek out boundaries, or hold up a mirror to ourselves. But what they all have in common is the message: "show respect".

The publication and exhibition include works by Amara van der Elst, André Pielage, Arno Coenen, Bilal Chahal, Emmy Dijkstra, Frode Bolhuis, Hans Muller, Hans van Houwelingen, Hans van Lunteren, Iriée Zamblé,

**Iriée Zamblé, Kamilė Česnavičiūtė, Lionel Plak, Marjolijn Mandersloot, Michiel Kluiters, Rob Sweere, Sanja Medić, Tobias Becker Hoff en Vincent de Kooker.**

**Uit zowel de kunstwerken als de begeleidende tekst in de publicatie spreekt de rijke diversiteit waarmee de kunstenaars het thema hebben benaderd. Die verscheidenheid uit zich ook in de middelen waarmee zij vorm hebben gegeven aan het eigen werk. In de selectiecommissie die de achttien kunstenaars selecteerde, werd vol lof gesproken over de ingediende werken. De tentoonstelling laat een spannende en veelzijdige selectie zien van werken die steeds een andere kant van het thema belichten. Om de tentoonstelling en de kunstwerken in deze context een meer blijvend karakter te geven, hebben we besloten deze publicatie samen te stellen.**

**Ik dank allereerst alle deelnemende kunstenaars die met hun werken en een goede dosis positieve energie de tentoonstelling tot een succes hebben gemaakt. Daarnaast dank ik alle leden van de selectiecommissie, de medewerkers en vrijwilligers voor hun bijdrage en Milo Vermeire voor het optekenen van de interviews in deze publicatie. Ik wens de lezer veel plezier bij het lezen.**

**Hans van de Bunte**

**Directeur a.i.  
Museum De Voorde  
Over jou en mij, hier en nu**

Kamilė Česnavičiūtė, Lionel Plak, Marjolijn Mandersloot, Michiel Kluiters, Rob Sweere, Sanja Medić, Tobias Becker Hoff and Vincent de Kooker.

Both the artworks and the accompanying texts in the publication reveal the rich diversity of the artists' approaches to the theme of respect. That diversity is also revealed in the variety of means used to give shape to their works. The selection committee had nothing but praise for the submitted works, and the exhibition comprises an exciting, diverse selection of works that each reveal a different facet of the central theme. We chose to compile this publication to preserve the exhibition and the works in their current context.

To begin with, I would like to thank all participating artists, whose works and positive energy really made the exhibition a success. My gratitude also goes out to the members of the selection committee, the staff and volunteers for their valuable contributions, and Milo Vermeire, for the interviews contained in this publication. May the readers find much enjoyment in it!

Hans van de Bunte

Interim Director  
**Museum De Voorde**  
**About you and me, here and now**

HET IS EEN OPEN  
HAND, VERTROUWEN  
OP DE HOEGELUFT  
VAN EEN ANDERE  
HANT.

**Amara van der Elst** (2001) uses rhythm and language to give spoken word performances. This time she chose to also give her words a material form by using a light box and directional speakers. It's a new way of working for her, which she wants to use more often.

As part of the selection committee, Van der Elst was closely involved in the creation of the exhibition. That's why she was asked to also provide the opening text, which you hear as soon as you walk up the stairs towards the hall. 'I have the expertise with text and, because I was on the selection committee, I had a really good idea of what the exhibition would look like and what I could possibly add to tie everything together', she says.

Van der Elst has a close connection with the concept of respect. She comes from an environment where respect is very important: 'It has always played a big role. As part of my upbringing, for instance, in which you have to respect your parents. So it's a big part of my daily life but it's not something I consciously pursue. I just do my thing and if someone then shows me respect, well that's really nice. But I do find it difficult when people are disrespectful.'

The fact that people can't always find it within themselves to be respectful is a thorn in her side: 'I belong to several minority groups and people sometimes say stupid things. At first I just took it on the chin, but I'm now able to really stand up for myself and no longer let it go if someone is disrespectful to me. Respect is therefore important to me, but it's definitely not a matter of course', says Van der Elst.

Her opening text is a plea to change this and make respect for others a matter of course. She makes a connection between respect and trust in the text: 'Trust in the possibility of another side', reads the second line. Respect can help create a connection between you and another person: 'Someone may lose your respect, but it should not be the case that someone only gets respect if they prove themselves', says the artist. That's why she asks you not to see respect as something that has to be earned, but instead see it as something everyone automatically gets if you 'speak from the heart'.



ANDRÉ PIELAGE  
**Het is OK, 2022**  
It's OK, 2022  
Betonverf  
Paint on concrete

**André Pielage** (1975) enjoys creating location-specific art with respect for the context. He uses his work to respond to the local surroundings and its users. This is also the case with *Het is OK*, which Pielage painted on the outer wall of the museum.

While Pielage was doing his research for the work he wanted to create for the exhibition, he came across the following phrase on Museum De Voorde's website: 'It's okay to be yourself.' He found that linguistically interesting. Pielage: 'As soon as you read somewhere "it's okay to", you know that what follows is something that the person in question actually sees as a weakness, as dictated by society. I think that such vulnerability should automatically be seen as a good thing.'

While Pielage was working on this, a #MeToo case appeared in the national news. 'In such a case, you often hear that someone "has definitely not been okay" in terms of unacceptable male behaviour, which has to do with respect as well as with the theme of toughness.' Pielage wanted to capture in one image these elements of 'okay' and 'not okay' and how being tough can lead to disrespectful behaviour. He used the *Jokerman* font for this. 'You can just find it in MS Word. I really wanted to use the cuteness of that font as a juxtaposition for the 'toughness', the masculine and the sexist. The innocent nature of the font turned out to lend itself well to distorting into a visual language with which I could look for the edge. The sweet, cheerful pink paint that I smeared on the walls forms a good contrast with the figuration in the text, which makes it easy to wrong-foot you.' Pielage left only the word 'tough' completely in its original font.

Pielage wants to use his work to reach the public outside the museum. 'A lot of school classes visit the museum, but the loitering, possibly more troubled, teens - for whom this is also a good theme - could likely be found at a construction site similar to where the work is located. That's why I wanted to use that location, even though I don't know if those teens will actually hang out there. So I play a game with a target group that I have more or less made up myself.'



ARNO COENEN  
**Worship thy transvestite god, 2022**  
Computer graphics, print, dibond

**Arno Coenen** (1972) is a jack-of-all-trades as an artist and eagerly uses both old symbolism and the latest Photoshop techniques. 'Respect' is a theme he definitely knows a thing or two about. For example, how its appearance has changed over the years, as has our understanding of 'cool', which is what his work in the exhibition is about.

Coenen: 'Being cool is actually universal, it just changes in appearance over the years. I am of course an example of old-fashioned 'cool'. I have tattoos on my head, go to the gym and love heavy metal. But that's not the cool of today.' Coenen thinks that today's cool is more about the malleability of your identity. Whether that's about your online profile or your gender. 'It's all about wanting to be yourself, which used to be expressed through things like punk and heavy metal. That's the most important thing, especially when you're young. I tried to incorporate this in my artwork, along with the pros and cons of that malleability.'

The specific consequences of the malleability of something such as gender identity does not matter that much to Coenen: 'I especially see that it's cool for today's youth to have something with a piece of the rainbow flag. LGBTQI+ is their punk. This represents a definitive breakthrough compared to how it was 50 years ago, when people hid in secret nightclubs and dark places.'

As an artist, Coenen sees it as his job to capture the things going on around him. 'Like the painters who used to travel with the ships to paint naval battles. So I thought: let me see what I can do with the present, without being cool myself, to capture this in a painting using contemporary technology.'

'I've been looting the huge database of Adobe Stock and putting those different elements together. Of course, that's also what you do to shape your identity when you're young. What music do you like? What do you want to look like? Nowadays you can also do that with filters, which is why I deliberately made those horns look unrealistic.' In this way, Coenen references the editing capabilities of apps like TikTok or Instagram and how it's sometimes difficult not to keep trying to improve your appearance. 'People who constantly tinker with their appearance sometimes don't know what they're doing anymore. I used to do an extreme amount of training for bodybuilding, but when you do that and then look in the mirror, you always think it has to be even better.'



BILAL CHAHAL  
**Untitled, 2016**  
Mixed media, canvas

**Bilal Chahal** (1978) is a multidisciplinary artist who, among other things, makes large, robust paintings. He precisely applies his self-mixed paint in endless layers to insert a reflection of himself in his work.

As a child, Chahal fled Lebanon with his family to Curaçao, where he received his first painting lessons. From the age of 12 he was able to work there in a small studio. At the age of 18 he broke with his friends and family and his development gained momentum. This directly influenced his work: 'I started all over again. First with monochromes that were often completely white. But at some point I noticed that you can't just erase and remove everything. You're still influenced by everything you have been taught, which is automatically reflected in your work. I started to give all my feelings a place in my art. The multiple layers of paint refer to how I see myself in the work. If you look very closely, you can also see that the painting is almost architecturally constructed. The lines are the patterns I've been taught, or the patterns I still need to relate to. So it's not action painting. To the contrary: it is slow and constructed with great precision, with respect for both my feelings and the material.'

Because Chahal's paintings are very personal, he likes to retain control of the entire process. That is why he mixes his paint himself. For him, it's about appreciation. 'I think the materials are associated with respect, because when you work on something, you have to accept the material as it is. How the paint and canvas interact has always been a game for me. You can see that in the layering of my art. They are almost 3D works, as if they were sculpted on the canvas. Through my knowledge and experience, I have been able to find a formula that ensures that everything stays in place and the work does not fall apart. That's often a problem if you are going to work three-dimensionally on a canvas. But to what extent should you respect it if you want to make something that is not physically possible? You have to accept the limits of the product you're making.'

Chahal sometimes has trouble with how the word 'respect' is used. The artist states: 'Respecting something often means that you are not 100% behind it and "just have to accept it", but isn't that rather tolerating something? There is a friction in that. I think you should let everything and everyone exist without value judgment. I have a hard time when people only tolerate something because it's expected of them.'



EMMY DIJKSTRA  
**De Reiziger, 2020**  
The Traveller, 2020  
Lichtprojectie  
Light projection

**Emmy Dijkstra** (1981) is a printmaker who has made four light projections based on her graphic work especially for Zoetermeer. Two of them can be seen simultaneously on the outside walls of the museum every night. Over time, the first two projections are exchanged for the other two.

In her oeuvre, Dijkstra uses the archetype of 'the traveller' to tell a story about how life itself is a constant quest. 'My images show people as travellers. As people trying to find their place in the world', she says. 'The traveller has many encounters in their journey around the world, and is also particularly curious about others. He or she is inspired by seeing how others live and can use the experience gained in their own life.'

Respect is not literally reflected as a theme in Dijkstra's prints. Yet, it's something she works with a lot as an artist: 'Through my work I try to create respect for where people come from and what they bring with them. I also try to see through prejudices and preconceived notions. For me, that's about respecting another person's path in life. Knowing a bit more about someone often generates more understanding', says Dijkstra. She also links this to refugees - those travellers who are forced on their journeys. 'There's always a chance that you could find yourself in a situation where you, as a person, need the help of someone else.'

Dijkstra's depiction of the traveller has a certain type of escapism. She talks about 'dreaming of other lives' and the 'journey of life'. She also connects it to concrete ideals. For example, she would prefer to do away with all the world's national borders: 'I think everyone has the right to try and find happiness elsewhere.' Something she has also put into practice in her personal life. She moved from the Netherlands to Sweden, where she continues to depict the traveller.



FRODE BOLHUIS

**An Ambiguous insight, 2020**

Polymeer klei, textiel, harsboard, nylon (3D print), verf  
 Polymer clay, textile, resin board, nylon (3D print), paint

**Frode Bolhuis** (1979) makes small, detailed sculptures with soft colours in a versatile visual language. Due to themes such as Covid-19, #MeToo and the Black Lives Matter movement, he has started to look differently at what respect means to him, both as a person and as an artist.

Bolhuis: 'I made *An Ambiguous Insight* during the first weeks of the Covid pandemic, right before the lockdown. It just so happens that all three sculptures are locked away to a certain extent. I don't do that very often in my work. In retrospect, I see a nice story within them about how we are all still a bit locked away after the lockdown. Not just in our own homes, but also in our opinions about how we should deal with something like Covid.'

All three *An Ambiguous Insight* sculptures stand on their own islands and are stuck in place with their backs turned to each other. This means that they fit well within the theme of respect, according to Bolhuis: 'I initially had a lot of difficulty with the whole Covid situation. I saw how people around me thought very differently about the situation. It was even evident within families or circles of friends. This requires extra empathy. The question is whether you respect the fact that everyone is on their own island and has their own ideas about something like Covid.' According to Bolhuis, themes such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter have also gained momentum, so that you sometimes have to try even harder to assume respect and listen to each other. 'Covid, #MeToo and the Black Lives Matter movement have a lot in common, because it's all about respect and being able to put yourself in someone else's shoes. And because these developments arose so quickly in succession, it sometimes requires more patience or adaptability.'

'For me as an artist, respect means that I have become aware that what I make is always about a specific part of the world. That's no big surprise, but it is perhaps important to express yourself more broadly in this day and age', says Bolhuis. That is why he has recently started trying to introduce more variation and diversity in his human figures. He doesn't just want to make 'white men doing white men's things' anymore. 'For example, I now very consciously and intentionally make as many men as women.' Because even though the artist sees all his sculptures as self-portraits to some extent, they do not all have to look exactly like him. The world has become too big for that.



**Hans van Houwelingen** (1957) has been making art in various forms and related to all kinds of subjects for decades. His 2009 film *Biokip* is a calm recording of how his beloved chicken dies.

'I had a really cool chicken', Van Houwelingen begins. 'I've had chickens walking around my studio in Amsterdam for 20 years, but this chicken was special - it was kind of like a dog. She always came up to greet me and lived an incredibly long time.'

At one point, Van Houwelingen's favourite chicken disappeared for a few days, until the bird suddenly reappeared lying in her coop and he could tell that she was dying. 'I put my camera on a tripod and filmed it. So there was no preconceived plan. I just saw how cinematic it was and noticed that it stirred up some emotions. At the same time, of course, I am an artist and that's why I just had to record it.'

Van Houwelingen initially did not link the work to respect, but it can be placed in that context. For example, you may wonder whether it is respectful to film something that is dying. 'You could even link it to the fact that we film everything with phones these days and how bizarre and strange that sometimes is. We film a lot of things that we maybe ought not to', says Van Houwelingen. Yet, the artist did not think about it that way at the time. He saw it mainly as a 'gesture from the chicken'. 'As if she had gifted me with a work of art. In a cowboy film, the highlight is often when the hero takes his last, dying breath after being shot. As a viewer, that has to really grab you and it was like the chicken was playing out that scene for me.' With a little good will, you could believe that the chicken crowned her relationship with the artist with this morbid encore.

The title of the work refers to two aspects: the bio-industry and cinema. 'We're used to seeing someone dying in a film. Someone says their last words, sighs once and dies. But watching that with a chicken is confronting. It's a bit of a gut-punch, precisely because you don't expect it in a film. You see the animal doing something that it is not supposed to do, because it's just a creature that we eat every day. That's not supposed to make people cry. I enjoyed experiencing and capturing that tension.'

HANS VAN HOUWELINGEN

**Biokip, 2009**

Bio-chicken, 2009

Film (10 minuten)

Video (10 minutes)



HANS VAN LUNTEREN  
**Zonder titel (Egeltje), 1990**  
Without title (Hedgehog), 1990  
IJzer, lasmateriaal  
Iron, welding material

**Hans van Lunteren** (1945) is known for his sculptures in public spaces, but he also creates sculptures without a permanent home. Nature regularly provides him with an impetus to create new work. His untitled sculpture from 1990, nicknamed 'Hedgehog', is also linked to nature and the respect for life.

*Hedgehog* is a robust and heavy work made of metal. Yet, it's also 'a very vulnerable work because it is a kind of egg', according to the artist. 'You could also call it a seed or hedgehog because it is about respect for life, about beginnings and growth. You also have to treat it with respect because if you drop it on your toes, you're guaranteed to break something.'

Van Lunteren often uses rigid, mathematical forms to create sculptures. Over the years, he has increasingly placed these forms in a natural environment to create a contrast between mathematical and organic shapes. Conversely, in urban environments he works more with an organic visual language, such as with plants themselves. He links rigid forms to the rational capacity of humans and the natural, organic forms to the intuitive capacity: 'It's a sign of a healthy human mind when these two sides are in dialogue. The beauty of the sculpture in the exhibition is that it has a very rigid form on the outside, but the inside is organically composed with sticks that seem to randomly stick out towards the inside. The natural completes the rational and vice versa.'

Van Lunteren does not want the work to be exhibited too formally or rigidly: 'You have to be able to get close and grasp it. It's also a sculpture without a permanent home. I don't want to isolate it from life itself. You should be able to encounter it anywhere, not just on a pedestal. That's what I also like about art in public spaces - the idea of unexpectedly encountering something.'

*Hedgehog* has a special origin and a special place in Van Lunteren's oeuvre: 'When you are making something, you often don't yet know what exactly you're making. The form gradually takes shape during the process. I was working on this sculpture in 1990, when my wife was pregnant with my son. In retrospect, I saw that the resulting form of the egg or hedgehog was not coincidental, because the upcoming birth was naturally on my mind. Afterwards, I associated the sculpture with my son and gave it to him. I asked him if I could use it for this exhibition because I think it can *shine* here for a while in the context of respect.'



HANS MULLER  
**Thinking outside the medicine box, 2022**  
Klei (3D-klei printer), keramiek  
Clay (3D clay printer), ceramics

**Hans Muller** (1956) had long had the idea of creating a sculpture about his ADD diagnosis and the experiences that resulted from it. Trying out medications and talking to experience experts inspired him to create *Thinking outside the medicine box*. He brought the sculpture directly from the workshop in the European Ceramic Work Centre to the museum.

Muller has had plenty of experience handling a lot of different boxes of medicine. The artist takes medication for his asthma and was diagnosed with ADD about 10 years ago. He experimented with Ritalin (a brand name of the non-addictive 'methylphenidate' that inhibits the reuptake of dopamine and norepinephrine) for a while to see if it could help him. In the end, talking to friends and acquaintances around him with the same diagnosis turned out to be the best medicine: 'Coincidentally, or maybe not such a coincidence, I have a lot of friends and acquaintances with ADHD, or ADD. Apparently, these people attract each other or understand each other well.'

Muller still uses his asthma medication, but reluctantly: 'I would prefer to get rid of all those medications. I know that's wishful thinking, but it's crazy that we are so dependent on all those pills.' He noticed that all those different medicine boxes have a lot of really beautiful colours and wanted to create a piece with them. During a residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre, Muller then discovered the possibilities of 3D printing of ceramics. He had himself scanned by a computer, along with a greatly enlarged medicine box made of wood, and then printed that image in clay. He applied the colours and inscription on the ceramic medicine box using transfers ('a kind of fake tattoo for glaze'). This allowed him to create a really accurate drawing on the ceramics.

Hans Muller uses his position as an artist and as a teacher in art education to talk a lot with others about ADD. 'I see many people struggling with ADD and ADHD. Students who have used medication to treat it, who stopped doing so and are then looking for alternative means of dealing with it. This is where I can draw on my own experience to help them.' In this way, Muller facilitates the dialogue about ADD, which not everyone always respects: 'There is a taboo around it, but if you have something like that, do you have to be branded for your whole life?'



IRIÉE ZAMBLÉ

**Drip too hard, don't stand too close, 2021**

Acrylverf, olie, canvas

Acrylic paint, oil, canvas

**Iriée Zamblé** (1995) paints portraits of people who have not typically been seen very often in Dutch museums. She thus claims space for them and herself in the museum and redefines the meaning of 'Blackness'.

*'Drip too hard, don't stand too close* is a song by Gunna and Lil baby and, for me, that sentence perfectly captures what this work is about: a group of people who look at the viewer a bit hesitantly. People who embrace their *coolness*, whereby you as a viewer may not want to get too close when walking past', says Zamblé. Her work often revolves around the gazes of the people in the portraits, who seem to expect something from the viewer or want to provoke a certain reaction. It's also about proudly expressing who you are: 'Not wanting to ask for respect, but embodying it yourself and just taking it. This is often shown in my paintings and this group also conveys that.'

Zamblé created this work with a specific goal in mind: 'I wanted to make one big work that can't be ignored and that takes up space. My work is always about Blackness that unapologetically takes up space. I think that's important because it's something that you don't often see in Dutch museums. In doing so, I always look for a balance between Blackness and 'Europeanness', because that's something that I myself embody, and how I can express that visually', says the artist. Claiming space and being unapologetically yourself has a lot to do with respect. 'Respect is very intangible, but I think you automatically invoke it by proudly stepping into a space and claiming your own authority - your own voice.'

Ultimately, it is especially important for Zamblé to connect people with each other. 'It doesn't always have to be complicated. You can make my work as political as you want, but this painting is also just a group of people. It is the context in which it is presented that determines a lot. I just went to Ghana and someone said to me: "Here you are not black, here you are just a human being." That is exactly what I want to introduce with my work. I try to visualize the Blackness and European side of the group depicted, but in the end it's just a group portrait. Of course, it says something else in the tradition of portraiture because this has always been something for the wealthy white elite. If Blackness now plays the leading role in that, then you build on something else. But you ultimately just want people to be able to "be".'



KAMILĖ ČESNAVIČIŪTĖ  
**Cleaner, 2021**  
Acrylverf, canvas  
Acrylic paint, canvas

**Attuning, 2022**  
Acrylverf, canvas  
Acrylic paint, canvas

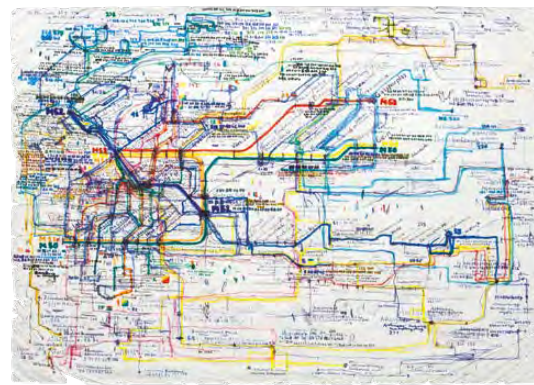
**Kamilė Česnavičiūtė** (1996) likes to create large and colourful paintings with eerie looking figures in surreal landscapes. In her work she reflects on current social issues and power dynamics.

Česnavičiūtė presents two works in the exhibition, *Cleaner* and *Attuning*. She made *Cleaner* in 2021 and saw a direct relation to the underlying themes of 'tough' and 'respect'. "The painting is about service workers, people who work as cleaners, in restaurants, supermarkets and so on. Those kinds of jobs are the foundation of basically everything that happens in society. I had a bunch of jobs like that and you really notice how people in service jobs are not respected at all by certain kinds of people. I feel that just because someone is not doing a manager job doesn't mean they shouldn't be respected."

The apron in the painting directly references to working in the service industry. However, there is another prominent feature in the painting that can't be missed: the head falling off the body. For Česnavičiūtė this relates to lost dreams: "I made this work in a hard time, when corona just began. A lot of people with service jobs lost their job, particularly people working in bars and restaurants. When you're working a job with low wages, you start dreaming so much about something to the point where your head could snap off. Dreams don't come true all the time and there's nothing you can do about it."

The second work, *Attuning*, relates to the previous painting and was made by the artist especially for this exhibition. She wanted to make something that embodies 'strength': "A valuable strength for me is flexibility. For example, if you have a part time job you have to be flexible. You have to try other things, to connect to people, ask for help. I can respect a person who is flexible and open minded."

Both figures in the paintings have a universal quality. They are human but they have no specific identity, gender or ethnicity. Česnavičiūtė explains: "I wanted to paint a person, a people, it doesn't matter who it is specifically. I didn't want to be forced to make a decision about a specific identity. That's something that I'm not really interested in so I chose to use colours that matched the atmosphere. It's a good way for me to paint and bring up the relations between people and society, and for that it doesn't matter if it's a woman or a man or what their ethnicity is. I also can't speak for somebody that doesn't really represent me completely. That's also why I don't show clothing, because clothing can be a way of showing your status or traditional gender. I do add a butt most of the time, because everybody has a butt."



LIONEL PLAK

**Geschreven routes, 2020**

Written routes, 2020

Pen, stift, papier

Pen, marker, paper

**Nederland trein route, 2015**

Netherlands train route, 2015

Pen, stift, papier

Pen, marker, paper

**Nederland trein route (geüpdatet), 2018**

Netherlands train route (updated), 2018

Pen, stift, papier

Pen, marker, paper

**GVB metro- tram- bus lijn in Amsterdam, 2015**

GVB metro- tram- bus line in Amsterdam, 2015

Pen, stift, papier

Pen, marker, paper

**Lionel Plak** (1980) creates highly accurate overviews of bus, tram, metro, train and flight routes. He memorizes the network of stops and records them with colourful handwriting in a minuscule format. It's hard to imagine anyone with more respect for public transportation.

Plak likes to travel. He regularly travels around Amsterdam on the metro and buses and also travels by plane with his parents almost every year. He has been to many countries so far but still enjoys watching the trains every day at Amsterdam Central Station. In between all that, he also travels thousands of kilometres every day on his computer. He uses his airplane simulator, train simulator or clicks on a random place on *Google Maps* to explore a new country, city or district. As a result, Plak is actually constantly travelling.

The enthusiasm with which he travels, both virtually and in real life, is also translated into his works of art. On paper, he writes the overviews of specific public transport lines with complete accuracy. He also regularly updates these overviews when something has changed in the service. Plak's work is special not only due to the incredible precision of the information, but also because of the very small handwriting he uses in his work. In order to fit the national railway network onto one A4, he writes so small that it can practically only be read using a magnifying glass. This creates a strangely beautiful effect. A world of time tables and location names captured on a single piece of paper.

Once Plak has mapped out a route, he also stores all the information in his head. This comes in handy when travelling with his parents because they never have to look up any routes. Although Plak travels a lot, he still has dreams. He would like to travel all by himself by train from Amsterdam to Maastricht one day. But he doesn't think he's ready for that yet: 'Maybe when I'm 50!'



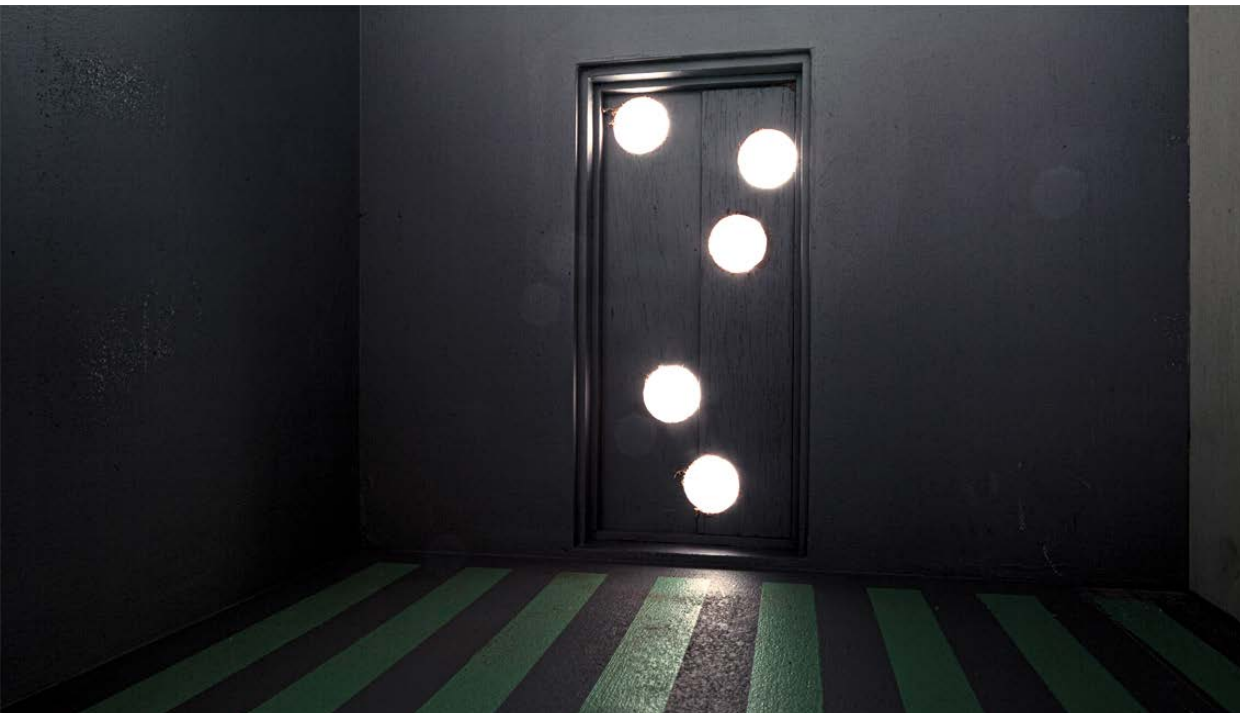
MARJOLIJN MANDERSLOOT  
**Beastie Boys, 2018**  
Leer, koehuid  
Leather, cowhide

**Marjolijn Mandersloot** (1959) works with her partner Hans van Wezel (1958) to create sculptures of all kinds of cuddly animals. Using unexpected materials, they transform the animals into distinct characters.

Mandersloot and Van Wezel love strangeness. They like it when their sculptures wrong-foot the viewer: 'We're definitely not trying to make an exact likeness of a meerkat. Our sculptures often lack certain details and, for example, we don't do eyes. We like it when something has a clear character from just a few lines and the animal becomes recognizable,' says Van Wezel. The duo also loves it when the sculptures have imperfections. 'We're sculptors. We do not create sketches in advance, but instead do the modelling together and consult during the creation. This is how the direction is created while working. The finish doesn't have to be perfect either. There may be a hook or eye loose and the clothing does not have to fit perfectly. Actually, we prefer it when it doesn't.'

Mandersloot loves the anthropomorphic nature of their sculptures, which is clearly reflected in the *Beastie Boys*. 'We really like animals and enjoy using them as metaphors. The *Beastie Boys* are like a bunch of overgrown teenagers. They're life-size, sort of laid-back and simultaneously tough yet not-so-tough,' says Mandersloot. Van Wezel adds: 'We see the kids you sometimes see hanging around outside reflected in it. There is usually not much going on. Meerkats are also outside a lot, but they have an alertness about them because they are always on the lookout. The *Beastie Boys*, on the other hand, are really laid-back. We like that our sculptures appear nonchalant.'

The theme of respect is also clearly highlighted in connection with the laid-back, loitering youths. The creators say: 'In the world of these young people, respect is a widely used term. The outfits that the sculptures wear also resemble what these kids often wear. They're similar to tracksuits.' The outfits also look soft and the sculptures seem easy to push into a different shape, while in reality they are very solid. That's because Mandersloot and Van Wezel love manipulating how the material appears. It adds to the strangeness they value so much: 'We also have bronze works that look soft but that are actually very hard. We like to play with that.'



MICHIEL KLUITERS

**Incandescence, 2022**

Fotoprint, doek, aluminiumprofiel, ledverlichting

Photo print, canvas, aluminium frame, LED lighting

In his work, **Michiel Kluiters** (1971) plays with the language of architecture and light in a respectful way. It's the way in which he tries to shape 'inner spaces'.

Kluiters' studio is full of individual objects and moulds that he keeps cutting apart and then reassembles in different ways: 'They're sort of scale models that I continuously recycle,' says the artist. While working on this, he constantly views the structures through the lens of his camera and plays with different lighting conditions. His final works of art are therefore not sculptures: 'I work like a sculptor, but what I ultimately show to the public are photo installations. This enables me to determine the point of view from which the audience will see the image and how it is illuminated. That's how I direct the audience to experience the work the way I want.'

Kluiters also thinks it's important to use a certain playfulness in his process by working intuitively: 'I have an idea in my head beforehand, but I let go of that as soon as I start building. I want to see what my hands are going to do. Sometimes you just have to go with the flow and tinker with it and allow the creativity in your process to make something original. There is also a kind of boyishness to it - to play with architecture freely, like a child building a den.'

Like many of Kluiters' other works, *Incandescence* (2022) does not demand attention with a big showy display. On the contrary, it's a respectful use of the language of architecture to invite the viewer to experience the work calmly. 'My work is not pictorial at all - there is no performance. I'm just showing a space. Some people really like that empty space because it becomes almost meditative. You can project your own things on it. Other people find it boring to not have anything or anyone in it. What I find exciting is that in-between area, in which the viewer does not immediately know exactly what they are looking at. It gives openness to the work. The viewer doesn't immediately have to think about whether they find it beautiful or ugly; it's simply about looking. As soon as you judge a work of art, it becomes difficult to really look closely at what you see. The longer you can postpone that moment of judgment, the more you can experience a work calmly.'

In Kluiters' view, what makes *Incandescence* so special is the fact that the artwork illuminates itself: 'The five prominent holes in the door are simultaneously the light source through which the work creates its own light and, by looking into the light, the space appears.'



ROB SWEERE  
*Interlocking (Kwanokkels)*, 2021  
Hout, verf  
Wood, paint

Although **Rob Sweere** (1963) isn't quick to use the word himself, he has a lot of respect for the profession of artist and his audience. It is partly for this reason that he's worried about the current state of the art world, which, according to him, has completely lost its connection with its audience. He himself actively connects with the viewer through his sculptures in the public space and with his *Kwanokkels*.

Sweere's *Kwanokkels* originated during the first year of Covid: 'Naturally, loneliness was one of the things that played a role. The government said we all had to keep our distance, which does not suit us humans at all. I see this as a broader phenomenon than just a consequence of Covid. Loneliness is problem number one in the Netherlands.' With this problem in mind, Sweere started on a series of masks with a strong community approach, the *Kwanokkels*.

'Worldwide, there are many ancient traditions regarding the use of masks', says Sweere. 'A mask is often about symbolic identities within a community. If someone puts one on, they take on the identity associated with that mask. Then, for example, you no longer have to adhere to the normal behaviours or applicable values and norms. African masks are the most well-known, but masks are actually used all over the world. So I thought it would be fun to make masks for the Netherlands about contemporary themes using a modern visual language', says Sweere.

'I created these *Kwanokkels* with what I think are current themes in today's society. When you put them on, you temporarily become the symbol of what they represent. The concept of *Interlocking* is that you both put one on and then connect them, so that you become one object. The lines that go around your head are sort of bloodstreams or energy pathways that connect you to each other. By working well together, two individuals become one being with shared energy pathways.'

With *Interlocking* as a symbol of connection, Sweere acts against loneliness and simultaneously presents a symbol that challenges current norms and values in society. According to Sweere, we are 'not a community that takes care of each other, but instead we live in the meritocratic neoliberalism in which every individual must be out for themselves.' His *Kwanokkels* provide the opportunity to imagine a rigorously different world for a while and to put connection above the individual.



SANJA MEDIĆ  
**Sloop zacht, 2002, 2022**  
Soft Demolition, 2002, 2022  
Gepigmenteerde inkjet print  
Pigmented inkjet print

**Sanja Medić** (1974) had herself photographed in 2002 after completing her artistic research entitled *Soft Demolition (Sloop Zacht)*. It then took years before she saw this photo not only as a record, but also as a work of art in its own right. A tough image that commands respect.

'This photo exactly fits with my ideas about toughness. When you see a woman in a pose like that with a mask and a large drill, it becomes a kind of *power image*', says Medić. Yet the artist originally had this photograph taken in a completely different context. In 2002, Medić was given the opportunity to work temporarily in a run-down building in The Hague. During this period she conducted research into repetition and patterns in interiors. She was curious about how repetition is reflected in physical space, as can often be seen in wallpaper, and how it can also be in our 'mind' as a mantra. 'I set out to determine whether I could become a pattern myself. That's a poetic concept, but by repeating an action over and over again, I wanted to see whether I could get into a trance state and thus completely immerse myself in the repetitive process to become a pattern myself'.

In the run-down building, Medić was able to do things with the space that are normally not possible: 'I went there with a simple stencil, a wallpaper pattern that I traced on the wall and then started drawing it with a huge drill. It was tough going. I literally made hundreds of holes in each wall and, after a while, you don't know what you're doing anymore. It was like working on automatic pilot.' Although people sometimes came to watch, Medić sees this work more as artistic research than as a performance. 'The emphasis was on my own experience, what happens when you repeat such an action endlessly? It wasn't so much about the result; it didn't have to be a pretty pattern.'

When someone came to inspect the building after five days, she was forced to stop. Safety had been compromised by all the holes in the walls. That's when she had the photo taken of herself. 'I didn't see that photo as a work in itself, but only as a record of what I had done there. But over the years, that photo has become a work in itself. Sometimes something starts as a sketch or record and when you see it again 10 years later, it has suddenly become a very important work. The element of time is crucial with this.'

'The interest within my practice has changed a lot since then, but I still like to work with repetitions. Someone once wrote that the beauty of repetition lies in the fact that no two repetitions are the same. Even if the shape is the same, there is still the difference in the moment of origin.'



## TOBIAS BECKER HOFF

In samenwerking met Eelco Metman en Vincent Schoonhoven  
 In collaboration with Eelco Metman and Vincent Schoonhoven  
**Post-graffiti, 2022**  
 Graffiti

**Tobias Becker Hoff** (1981) is a graffiti artist and regularly collaborates with colleagues Vincent Schoonhoven (1976) and Eelco Metman (1968). With *Post-graffiti*, the trio seek out the tension between graffiti's rebellious approach and the ever-controlling authorities who try to curb this art form.

Becker Hoff, Schoonhoven and Metman were born and raised in Zoetermeer and have known each other from early on. Schoonhoven: 'We share interests and views on what graffiti should be like.' The trio have seen Zoetermeer change over the years and believe that the city could use a cultural boost, something in which they want to actively participate. Becker Hoff: 'I think that the city can do better and that graffiti can contribute positively to that. It's a young art form that appeals to a large target group and can boost the area in a very direct way. Zoetermeer can use a little more character and identity, and artists who work in public spaces can contribute to that.'

The fact that graffiti art has to do with respect is a matter of course for Becker Hoff: 'We come from a graffiti and hip-hop subculture in which words like "respect" and "tough" are important themes. That's why, as an artist, this is automatically on your mind a lot, whether consciously or unconsciously. It has to do with how people view you and your work. For example, is it important that people accept or reject your work once it's on the wall?'

In *Post-graffiti*, the artists also play with the respect that graffiti artists have for each other. For example, it is an unwritten rule that you don't go over each other's work. Although they've done that here. Becker Hoff: 'For this abstract artwork, we used the game between the illegal graffiti practitioner and the authorities as a starting point. We looked at where we can intervene in each other's work. This involved wearing the hat of the graffiti artist, who sprays over someone else's work, and that of the authorities by removing parts of your own or someone else's work with latex paint. Together, we built the work layer by layer on the concrete catacombs of the old council chamber.'

Working over each other created a game of creation and erasure. That free approach took some getting used to for Schoonhoven: 'I normally work a lot with letters and Eelco is very fond of the defined frames. We only set the colour scheme in advance and just let it go from there. Sometimes we actually pushed each other away.' Becker Hoff: 'There's some rivalry in that, but also respect by not getting rid of certain parts of each other's work and giving everyone space to do their thing.'



VINCENT DE KOOKER  
**Lucht, 2021**  
Air, 2021  
Aluminium

**Vincent de Kooker** (1976) respects aluminium like no other. He paints, cuts, sands and polishes the shiny 'non-ferrous metal' to create un-commissioned work, such as the piece *Lucht* (Air). He also uses it to build entire theatre sets in his practice as a scenographer.

'I use aluminium because it provides a really nice greyscale. Polishing it adds particularly nice depth and beautiful shades of grey', says De Kooker. This is clearly reflected in his work *Lucht*. The daylight reflects in all directions and shows the many colour differences that are hidden in grey.

For the artist, however, the work is not just a colour or material study: 'For me, *Lucht* is about freedom. How can you give shape to the feeling of freedom in a two or three-dimensional way?' For De Kooker, this is about the viewer's freedom to interpret the work however they want. Elements such as the air vent serve as handles: 'The air vent sits in the middle of the work like an object taken out of context. Normally, everyone associates it with fresh air or ventilation. We also quite literally have a lot of grey skies in the Netherlands, with all the clouds. The work also refers to that. So it has a dual association with the Dutch sky on the one hand and the mechanical variant on the other.'

De Kooker started his career as a figurative painter. He painted with oil on canvas until something started to bother him: 'I noticed that my brush strokes were interrupted by the structure of the canvas, which was a pity. I'd rather see the pure stroke. That's why I started painting on aluminium, because your brush stroke won't be interrupted by the surface when painting on it. It's always smooth. The English painter Gary Hume did that too.' Not long after that, De Kooker increasingly left out the paint and started working solely with the base material. De Kooker: 'I really went from figurative to abstract. After my studies, I wanted to make a difference in the art world, so that's partly why I chose to limit myself and focus on aluminium. I've been creating works ever since, like some sort of blacksmith. I try to combine that traditional method with abstract elements.'

Interestingly, the artist often gets respect for his work from a specific group: 'My work is often bought by men and specifically by architects, which is funny. I think it's because my work has a certain toughness about it.'

# RESPECT!

Perspectieven in de hedendaagse Kunst

Perspectives in Contemporary Art

04-02-2022 – 04-09-2022

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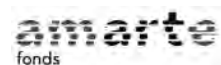
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