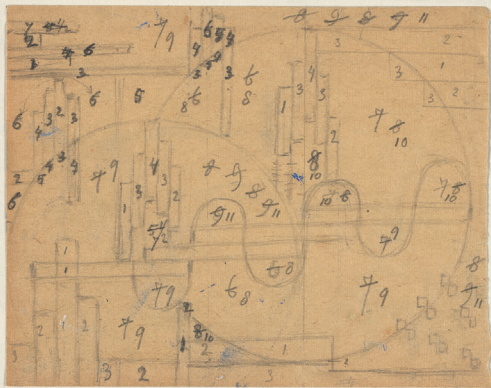
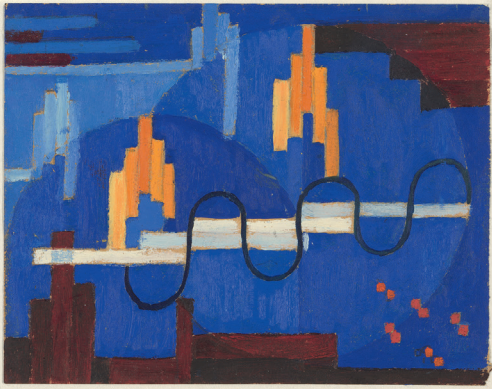




nr 146 "Musiek" 1962, 60,5 x 81, 1 ex. op hard board.
Dit is het eerste van begin tot eind non-figura-
tieve (voorstellingloze) schilderij dat ik ge-
maakt heb, er zijn er nog 4 gevolgd. Het is
ontstaan uit soortgelijke vorm- en kleur-
complexen als nr 120 "Land, lucht en water".
uit '49/51. Dat is ook non-figuraatief ontstaan,
maar ik heb er een naturalistische titel aan
gegeven. — De titel "Musiek" blijft heel
algemeen, ik heb hierin niet een bepaald mu-
ziekstuk verwerkt, maar al werkende aan het
ontwerp kreeg ik steeds meer de gedachte aan
een sonate in drie delen: een allegro een trio
(de geel tot oranje en de in lichtblauw her-
haalde verticale motieven) een largo (de
donker rode, voornamelijk langs de onderkant
van hoofdzakelijk horizontale
richting uitstrekkende vormen) en een Scherzo - Valse

dat zijn de onregelmatig gegroepde, telkens versprei-
genell bichtrode vierkanten in de rechter benedenhoek.
De doovers over het schilderij heen lopende baan van
witte en blauw-witte blokken die door de zwartelin-
gerlijn verdeeld en bijeen gehouden wordt is niet een
aanduiding van notenbalken, zoals sommigen
menen (zulk realistische elementen zitten er niet
in), maar een verbeelding van de thematische mu-
zikale verbondenheid van de drie delen. De diep-
blauwe cirkels die door de afzonderlijke motie-
ven heen zichtbaar blijven vormen de grond-
slag van de compositie, de plaatsing van de
verschillende motieven werd mede daardoor
bepaald. De kleuren van het schilderij zelf
komen wel ongesper overeen met die van de schets,
allem is het donkerste rood te donker, op de schets
is het bijna zwart. — Een voorstudietje voor het
hoofdmotief staat op de ommezijde van het
schetsje.



Lou Loeber: Archivist of her Own Oeuvre

• CERI-ANNE VAN DE GEER •

In 1983, artist Lou Loeber (1894-1983) donated over two hundred drawings and prints to the Rijksmuseum Print Room. In consultation with then curator Freek Heijbroek, Loeber provided a significant number of the donated works with her own personal commentary in the form of handwritten notes on notepaper, subsequently carefully affixed to the sketches by a museum conservator.¹ Evident from these annotations is that Loeber aimed to guide the interpretation of her work, as can be observed, for example, when reading the words that accompany her preparatory sketches for the painting *Muziek* (Music, fig. 1): 'The band of white and blue-white blocks, which diagonally traverses the painting and is simultaneously divided and held together by the meandering black line, is not an indication of musical staves, as some have surmised (it has no such realistic elements), but a visualization of the thematically musical interconnectedness of the three parts.'²

Loeber's work balances between figuration and abstraction. She is particularly known for the distinctive visual idiom – composed of clean lines and clearly delineated planes – she developed in the nineteen twenties

< Fig. 1
LOU LOEBER,
Music, 1960.
Sketch, finished
drawing and
annotations pasted
onto sheet.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. nos. RP-T-1983-169
and RP-T-1983-170
on sheet no. 66,
donated by the artist,
Louise Marie (Lou)
Koning-Loeber.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026

based on her own socialist perspective on the visual arts (fig. 2). In the literature on Loeber, the annotated sketches in the collection of the Rijksmuseum are chiefly used as a primary source for the interpretation of her work. They offer insight into her artistic practice, including the mathematical principles she applied to her compositional schemes, her use of colour and the replication process she applied in her paintings.³

Loeber's donation, including this personal 'catalogue raisonné', has therefore proven to be a valuable art historical source, though it has not yet been examined within the broader context of her artistic legacy. The Rijksmuseum initially held only three of Loeber's prints in its collection.⁴ With the 1983 donation, it now housed a representative part of her graphic oeuvre. In addition to the annotated sketches and designs, there were also dozens of prints and drawings, and three sketchbooks.⁵ The donation comprises not only preparatory studies for paintings but also fully realized (self-)portraits and prints executed in a variety of techniques, in which Loeber experimented with stylization, line work and contrast (e.g. fig. 3).

A survey of Dutch museums has revealed that Loeber made no donation comparable in scope or personal character to any other institution.⁶ This raises several important questions: Why did Loeber donate such a substantial part of her work to the Rijksmuseum Print Room? For what reason did she assume such a direct, personal role when it came to the interpretation of her work and how does this relate to the broader context of her remaining artistic legacy? To answer these questions, this article focusses approximately on the ten years preceding Loeber's donation, a period during which renewed appreciation for her work arose. I examine the role of the art market, the museum sector and feminist initiatives in shaping the public image that emerged during these years and her response to it. With this approach, Loeber's donation to the Rijksmuseum Print Room is interpreted as a testament to how she wished to be remembered: her artistic legacy as a form of autobiography.

Artistic Legacy as Autobiography

'This is nonsense', Lou Loeber bluntly wrote on a newspaper clipping of an article in which her socialist take on visual art was summed up in the maxim: 'art is a weapon in the class struggle'.⁷ This was precisely the current within the socialist movement of which she was not a proponent. On the contrary, Loeber's belief was that socialist art could be accessible and comprehensible without representing the subject of the class struggle.⁸

This newspaper clipping is today preserved in Loeber's artist's archive. Following her death and in accordance with her explicit wishes, her family transferred the archive to the RKD (Netherlands Institute for Art History) in The Hague.⁹ It was by no means exceptional that she had

written her personal commentary directly on a newspaper clipping: many of the documents, correspondence and books in the archive bear similar commentary, through which Loeber gave her own interpretation of her life and work, just as she did with the 'catalogue raisonné' at the Rijksmuseum Print Room. The overall impression is that of a sharp-witted individual fully aware that, one day, her words would come to be read in a very different era and context, and therefore potentially misunderstood.

In relative terms, a great deal of research has focussed on the autobiographical texts of women artists, because their work is often interpreted from the perspective of life events, more so than with the work of men.¹⁰ The underlying assumption is that women artists' work is, by nature, more personal, when in fact, the focus of many modernist artists, of all genders, lay on collective values and finding a new visual idiom.¹¹ Loeber purposely adopted, for instance, a smooth, impersonal brushstroke to realize her socialist artistic ideal.¹²

Fig. 2

ANONYMOUS,
Lou Loeber in
Studio with Painting
'Writing Desk'
behind her, 1973?
Photograph.
The Hague, RKD –
Netherlands Institute
for Art History,
image no. 3758454.



Research into an artist's representations of themselves can reveal historiographical patterns of this nature. In autobiographies and ego documents, along with a variety of other sources, artists of the twentieth century – in response to the rise of mass media – were beginning to relate more and more not just to their role as an artist but also to their public image.¹³ In this respect, women often face a tension between artistic identity and gender, as did Lou Loeber. As art historian Miriam van Rijnsingen observed: 'For [women], being an artist and being a woman is self-evident; however, the combination of the two is perceived as problematic, whether by the women themselves or by their surroundings.'¹⁴

Textual and visual forms of self-representation – e.g. memoirs, archival material and artworks – are valuable sources, but examining what ways women artists choose to donate their own work to public collections also provides insight.¹⁵ In recent years, a great deal of research has been published on the impact that women donors and custodians of artists' estates have had on museum collections.¹⁶ To date, however, less attention has been devoted to how women have managed their own artistic legacies.¹⁷ Past examples of women donating their own work – particularly when furnished with detailed explanatory annotations, as in Loeber's case – can tell us much about under what circumstances one woman's work becomes institutionalized while that of another does not.

Loeber's Career as an Artist

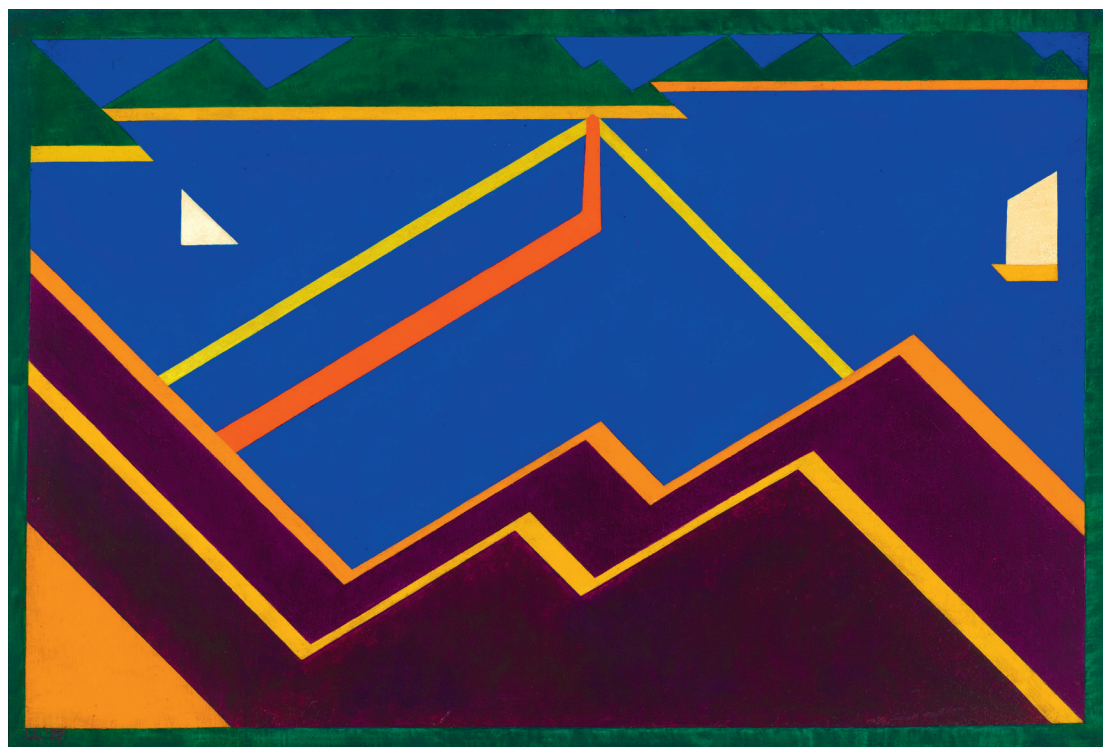
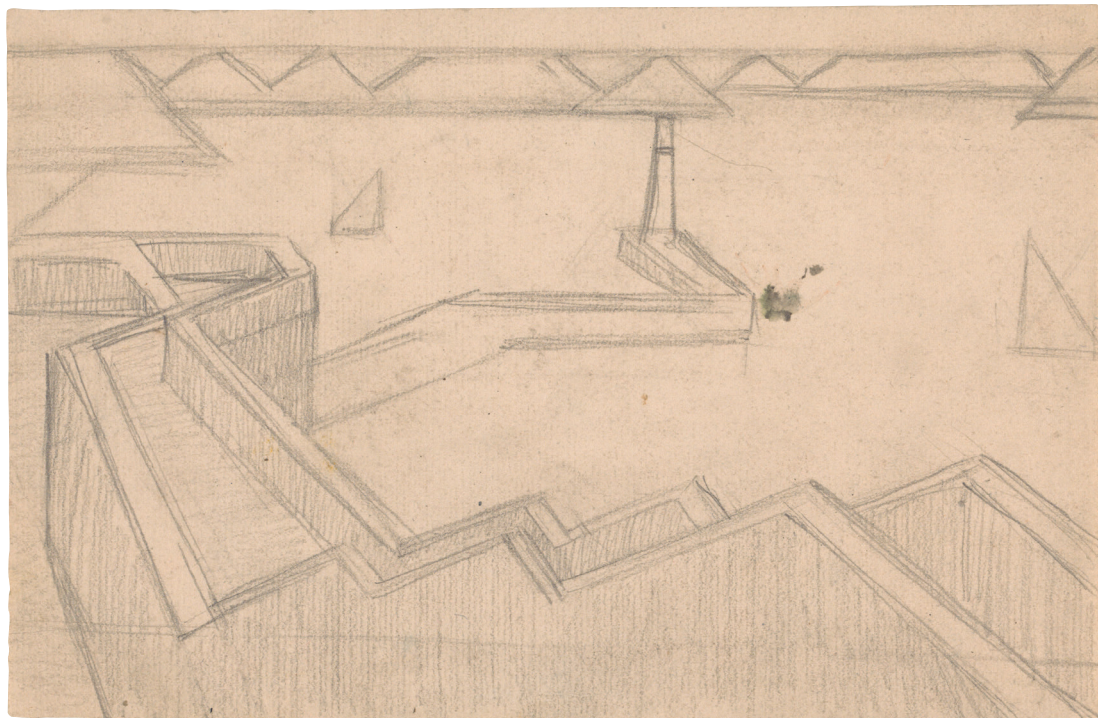
In 1974, at the age of eighty, Lou Loeber decided to stop painting.¹⁸ She was able to look back on a long career and a body of work that had begun to draw ever-greater interest. As early as the nineteen twenties, Loeber had developed a distinctive, visual idiom between figuration and abstraction;



throughout her life, this idiom served as a basis on which she continued to introduce new variations in her paintings. Typically, she began by selecting a subject taken from her immediate surroundings, which, step by step, she then abstracted. In her preliminary sketch for the painting *Landschap met vuurtoren* (Landscape with Lighthouse, 1929), for instance, one can clearly observe how a zigzagging pier with lighthouse became a straight line (figs. 4, 5).

The well-read Loeber thoroughly familiarized herself with various modern art theories. She regarded figures like Albert Gleizes, Piet Mondrian, Le Corbusier, and Wassily Kandinsky as seminal to her artistic development.¹⁹ Even in those works clearly related to Mondrian's total abstractions – such as her kitchen

Fig. 3
LOU LOEBER,
Self-Portrait, 1923.
Charcoal on brown
paper, 538 x 411 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-7,
donated by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026



< Fig. 4

LOU LOEBER,
*Boulevard along
 the Water*, undated.
 Pencil on paper,
 147 x 226 mm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum, inv. no.
 RP-T-1983-257,
 donated by the artist.
 © Heirs Lou Loeber
 c/o Pictoright
 Amsterdam 2026

sink compositions (e.g. fig. 6) – reality invariably remained her starting point. A central driving force motivating her approach was her socialist-based aspiration to make art accessible to as many people as possible: she deemed total abstraction as excessively elitist and believed it would have rendered her work incomprehensible. This conviction also led her to create multiple identical copies of her paintings to keep the price low.²⁰

In the years leading up to the Second World War, Loeber regularly organized exhibitions, was active in various artists' associations and participated in museum exhibitions, including *Onze kunst van heden* (1939-40) and *Kunst in vrijheid* (1945) in the Rijksmuseum.²¹ Together with her husband, Dirk Koning (1888-1978), she set up an art rental service. Throughout her career, Loeber employed various commercial strategies to place her work in the public eye: her socialist beliefs in no way prevented her from engaging with the art market in order to achieve her goal.²² Moving in a network of artists, art dealers and publishers, she actively sought out patrons in the Netherlands, England and Germany. Her work was frequently exhibited in Amsterdam and in the nearby region of Het Gooi. Even so, widespread acclaim and national recognition eluded her for quite some time. Critical reviews of the day characterized her work in largely negative terms, describing it as decorative, tentative and devoid of feeling – assessments faced by many women artists at this time.²³

Between 1950 and 1970, Loeber exhibited her work less frequently – partly for financial reasons – but she was still painting actively.²⁴ She had not yet achieved national renown. At the onset of the nineteen seventies, however, this situation changed. Loeber began to receive an increasing number of invitations to participate

in exhibitions. Despite her advanced age, she avidly embraced these opportunities, not just lending out her work, but also creating exhibition posters and silkscreens based on her existing designs.²⁵ She also gave interviews to national newspapers and magazines, including the Dutch fashion magazine *Avenue*, which even raffled off her painting *Kortenhoeft* (1928) among its readers.²⁶ By 1974, Loeber was no longer painting, but was still continuing other activities linked to her work. By no means, as is sometimes suggested in the literature, was Loeber leading a reclusive existence during these years.²⁷ While health issues indeed limited her movement to some degree, she continued to correspond with others extensively; right up until her death, she often received visitors, including friends and family, as well as professional contacts. When curator of the Rijksmuseum Print Room Freek Heijbroek showed up on her doorstep, he was not the only person knocking at her door.

A Unique Donation

Even prior to Loeber's donation, Heijbroek was in contact with the artist and her husband, Dirk Koning. He had visited the couple on several occasions and established a friendship in the mid-nineteen seventies while working on a research project that involved meeting with surviving members of the Socialistische Kunstenaarskring (SKK, Socialist Artists' Circle), to which both Loeber and Koning had belonged.²⁸ At this early stage, there was obviously no mention of a donation on Loeber's part, as Heijbroek was not employed with the Rijksmuseum until 1980.²⁹ As he later recounted in the *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum*, he remained in touch with Loeber after Koning's death in 1978, visiting her at the De Beukelaar nursing home in Blaricum.³⁰ On several of these

< Fig. 5

LOU LOEBER,
*Landscape with
 Lighthouse*, 1929.
 Oil on cardboard,
 50 x 73.5 cm.
 Amsterdam, Rijks-
 museum, inv. no.
 SK-A-5129, purchased
 with the support of
 the Vrouwen van het
 Rijksmuseum Fonds.
 © Heirs Lou Loeber
 c/o Pictoright
 Amsterdam 2026

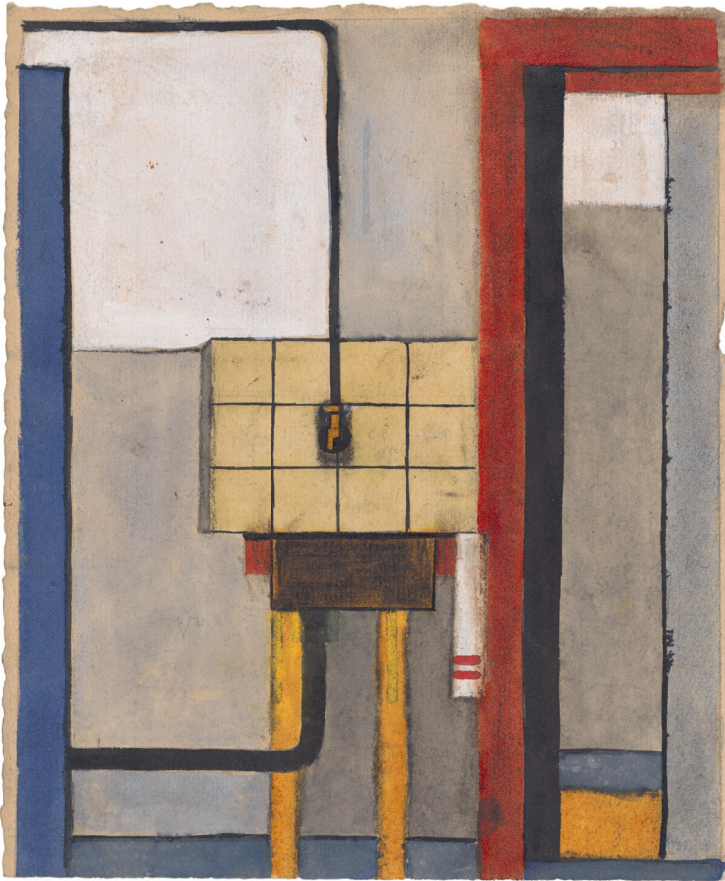


Fig. 6

LOU LOEBER,
*Composition with
Lines and Squares*,
1929-55.
Pencil, black chalk
and brush in colours,
223 x 185 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-267,
donated by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026

PAGES 248-49

Fig. 8

LOU LOEBER, *Rolling
Landscape*, 1959-61.
Drawings (chalk in
colours, over pencil)
and annotations
pasted onto sheet.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. nos. RP-T-1983-171
and RP-T-1983-172
on sheet no. 67,
donated by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026

Fig. 9

LOU LOEBER,
Reader I, 1926 and
1930.
Drawing (brush in
colours, over pencil,
upper left), ex libris
(woodcut), bookmark
(felt marker) and
annotations pasted
onto sheet.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. nos. RP-T-1983-118,
RP-T-1983-118a and
RP-T-1983-119 on
sheet no. 27, donated
by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026

occasions, he was accompanied by fellow Rijksmuseum curator Peter Schatborn.³¹

Heijbroek was intrigued by Loeber's reproduction method of painting, which entailed a system of successive sketches – preliminary studies with numbered colour notations – and working drawings on transparent paper with accompanying colour charts, both of which served as models for her paintings. These sketches and design drawings lay unorganized in boxes in her room. It was there that the plan to bring order to these works eventually arose, as well as the idea of furnishing them with notes describing Loeber's reproduction process and subsequently donating them to the Rijksmuseum Print Room (e.g. fig. 7).³²

What followed was a collaborative project spanning several years, which Loeber was unfortunately unable to complete before her death in 1983. In the end, she had composed handwritten annotations for 116 of the in total 224 sketches and design drawings.³³ Moreover, she herself had arranged the annotated sketches in chronological order for the period 1924 to 1974.³⁴ The work amounted to a veritable catalogue raisonné, with the title, date and number of versions of the final painting, but also a unique number prefixed with her initials, LL, personally recorded for almost every sketch. Specifically referring to one composition, many of these 'LL numbers' consequently appear multiple times and can also be found on archival documents.³⁵

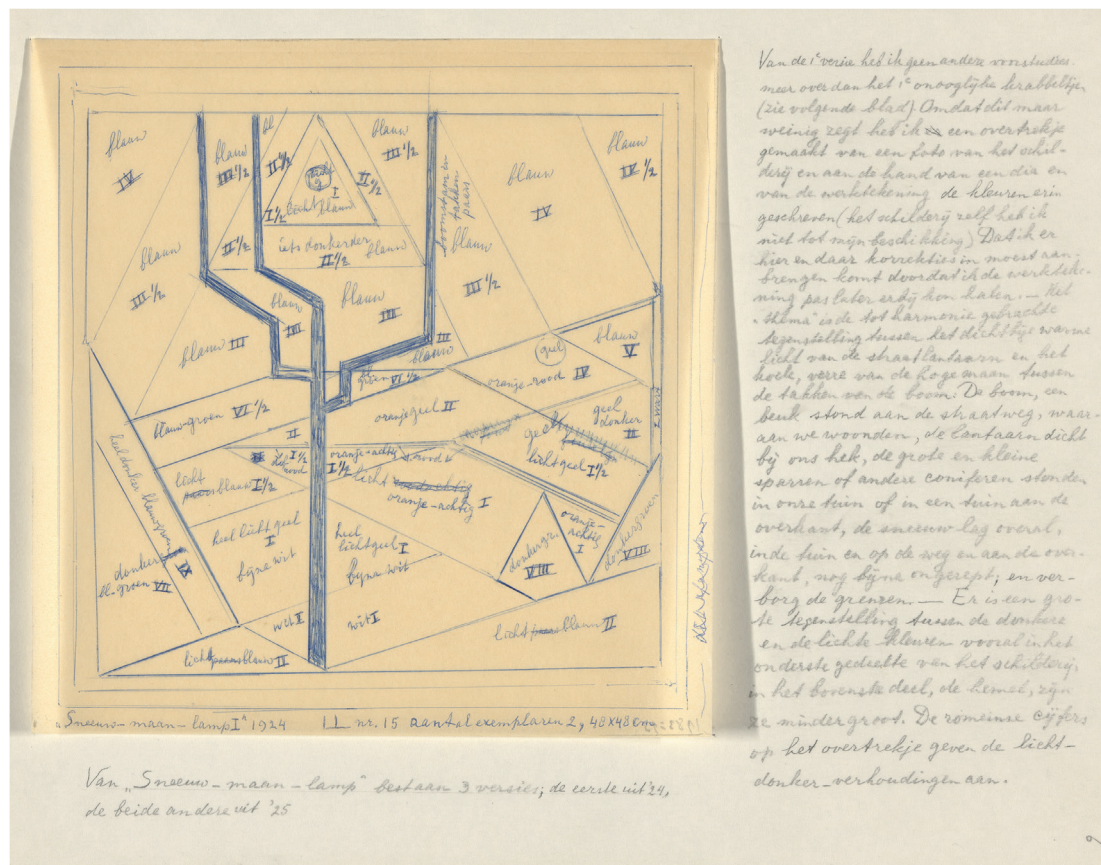
In her accompanying annotations, Loeber emphasized the origin and stages of development for each of her works. The figurative basis of her compositions is a recurring theme, in which she consistently highlighted the inspiration drawn from her immediate surroundings: e.g. an open door, a steaming teacup (fig. 8) or her own silhouette bending over a book (fig. 9).³⁶

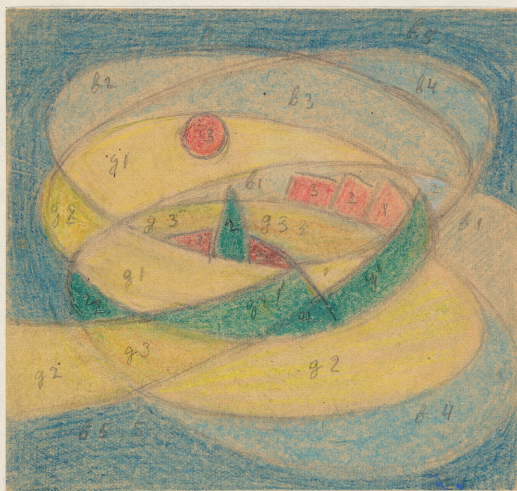
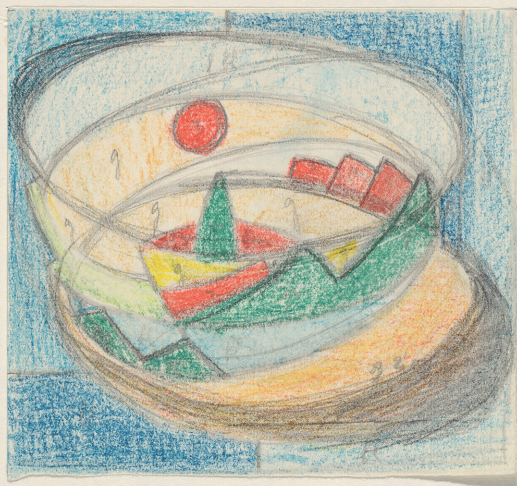
Loeber's donation was gratefully received. In the Rijksmuseum's annual report, the management noted just how remarkable it was that she had provided her own commentary on her work: 'In this way, these drawings can likely frequently form the key to interpreting the often rather abstracted images in her paintings.'³⁷ Although the Rijksmuseum Print

Room had indeed collected documentary material in the past, it had no formal policy nor any plan to request that other living artists annotate their work in the same manner.³⁸ The donation was considered so exceptional that it led to the museum's acquisition of artist Nel van Lith's bronze portrait of Loeber (fig. 10).³⁹

The scholarly nature of Loeber's donation aligned well with the profile of the Rijksmuseum Print Room, traditionally a study collection that had been acquiring contemporary works from the late nineteenth century onwards.⁴⁰ Throughout the museum's history, works have frequently been obtained directly from the living artists who made them. Even so, the number of women

Fig. 7
LOU LOEBER,
Snow-Moon-Lamp I,
1922-24.
Sketch (pen on
calque paper,
84 x 83 mm)
pasted onto sheet
with annotations.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-93
on sheet no. 06,
donated by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026





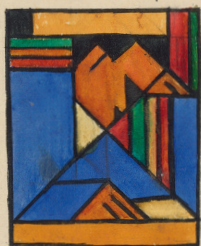
67

Het gegeven voor dit schilderijtje vond ik op een porcelainen kopje van Chinese makelij, beschilderd door een xoveldste rangs kunstenaar voor de export naar Europa. Als het volgeschonken met de doorschijnende kamillebladen thee die we toen dronken dempend voor me op tafel stond zag ik de schildering: een huisje met rood dakje met een paar bomen er naast en een rode zon erboven, in wisselende verschuivingen door de wisselende wasservolkjes, in vertekening door de ronding van het kopje en de oppervlakte van het inhoud in steeds verder uitdijende, elkaar oversnijden de ovalen bij de geringste schommeling door een stootje tegen de tafel of door roeren in de thee. — De werktekening is precies gelijk aan het 2^e schetsje, behalve dan dat de bochten zuiverder gekend zijn. De kleuren zijn natuurlijk helderder en sterker. De 1^e schets trok voor mijn gevoel te veel naar rechts, daarom heb ik in de 2^e die brede gele baan tot aan de zijhant van 't paneel laten doorlopen, waardoor het landschap meer wordt opgenomen in de ruimte waarin het door de draaiende, wervelende beweging blijft zweven.

no 147 „Wervelend Landschap“ 61, 57x57, 2 ex. op hard board
die nr 33

Fig. 8

27



nr 86 „Lezende I“ (26 cm) 30, 72 x 54, 2 ex b.b.
 In de jaren '26 tot '30 heb ik me beziggehouden met „Lezende I“ en „Lezende II“. Van beide heb ik een linoleumsede gemaakt en een schilderij.
 „Lezende II“ was eerder af. Het is er ook nog een ex libris van gemaakt, in hout gesneden (zie de afdruk rechts, boven), en in een eerder stadium komt het voor op ontwerpen voor boekenleggers, die nooit tot uitvoering gekomen zijn (rechts onder). Van „Lezende II“ heb ik eveneens een boekenleggerontwerp gemaakt en ook is er nog een krabbel waar in nog niet alle hoeken tot rechte zijn omgevormd. Het gegeven van „Lezende I“ is ontleend aan het interieur van mijn atelier met mijn refferen, lezende, en achter of naast me het boekenkastje met staande en liggende boeken. De kleuren van 'schilderij komen vrijwel overeen met die van bovenstaande schets, alleen het blauw en het bovenste geel zijn dieper. Een gekleurde afbeelding ervan staat in de katalogus van de Tentoonstelling in Galerie Brockstedt in Hamburg in maart-april 1973, afl. 1

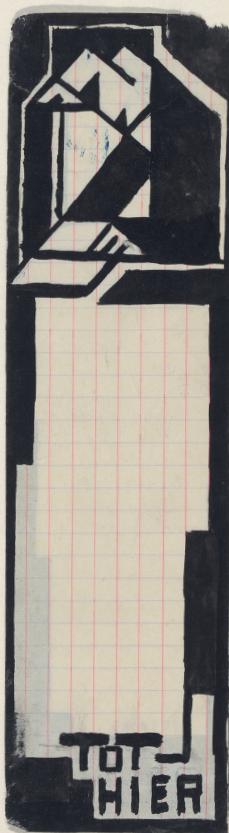


Fig. 9



Fig. 10

NEL VAN LITH,
Lou Loeber
 (1894-1983), 1982.
 Bronze, h. 31.8 cm.
 Amsterdam,
 Rijksmuseum,
 inv. no. BK-1982-30,
 donated by the
 George Hendrik
 Breitner Fonds
 (Fundatie Van den
 Santheuvel, Sobbe).

artists who donated their own work is significantly lower than the men who did so.⁴¹ In the nineteen seventies and eighties, several women artists from Loeber's generation – including Jeanne Bieruma Oosting and Roline Wichers Wierdsma – made major donations of their work to the museum.⁴² Unlike Loeber, however, both had donated works in the past, and their figurative art complemented the Print Room's existing collection. By contrast, Loeber's abstracted visual idiom was an exception to that collecting tradition, as was the emphasis she placed on her working method. Heijbroek's interest in this aspect, as well as the bond that he had established with Loeber, had played an essential role in bringing about the donation.⁴³ In the end, the arrangement was mutually beneficial for both the museum and the artist: the museum received a unique donation, while Loeber was given the opportunity to document her own vision of her body of work.

Renewed Appreciation and Image Formation

The renewed appreciation for Loeber's work towards the end of her life can be linked to the growing interest in the early twentieth-century origins of abstract art that arose in the nineteen sixties and seventies. Young artists working with geometric abstraction as well as the art trade contributed to this development.⁴⁴ In the Dutch gallery world, the rapid succession of modern art movements in the aftermath of the Second World War led to growth and greater diversity.⁴⁵ This spurred on galleries and auction houses to actively seek out works by relatively unknown artists to place in the spotlight.

A 1972 sales exhibition at the Amsterdam dealer Galerie d'Eendt marked a turning point in the visibility of Loeber's work. The positive publicity she received from this exhibition supplied her with a new network of private individuals, galleries and museums. Besides the Netherlands, much of this activity was also centred in Germany, where Loeber collaborated frequently with the Berlin galleries Werner Kunze and Brockstedt and the Cologne galleries Gmurzynska and Bar-Gera in the nineteen seventies.⁴⁶

Prior to this time, Loeber had organized most of her exhibitions herself, but now the initiative often lay with others. Her work was being shown both at sales and museum exhibitions, including the 1973 exhibition *Het nieuwe wereldbeeld: Het begin van de abstracte kunst in Nederland 1910-1925*, held at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, and a solo exhibition at the Singer Laren Museum in 1974.⁴⁷ Museums purchased Loeber's work on an incidental basis, such as two pieces acquired by the Centraal Museum, respectively in 1974 and 1975.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the majority of her paintings were disseminated across

the private market in the Netherlands and Germany through the network in the gallery world.

As Loeber was no longer organizing everything herself during this period, she had to find a way to deal with the fact that the narrative surrounding her work was being increasingly determined by others, particularly concerning her ties to De Stijl. The catalogue accompanying the D'Eendt exhibition introduced the staunch misconception that Loeber had been in regular contact with Bart van der Leek and other artists of De Stijl – a surmise that Loeber herself refuted on several occasions and with mild irritation, despite her admitted affinity with their work.⁴⁹ The German galleries regularly approached her for contact details of De Stijl artists and their family members, as well as collectors. They sometimes even competed for access to this network.⁵⁰

Especially in the early nineteen seventies, this situation resulted in a rather one-sided picture. In newspaper announcements and exhibition reviews, Loeber was commonly labelled as a hidden gem from the periphery of De Stijl.⁵¹ Moreover, several reviews resorted to stereotypical characterizations, describing De Stijl as 'masculine' and 'rigid' and Loeber's use of colour contrastingly as 'feminine ... leaning towards lyricism'.⁵² Less attention was devoted to the distinctiveness of her work and working method. While interest was unquestionably on the rise, at the same time this 'rhetoric of discovery' also relegated her to a position in the margin – an approach that has long excluded numerous women artists from the historiography of modern art movements.⁵³

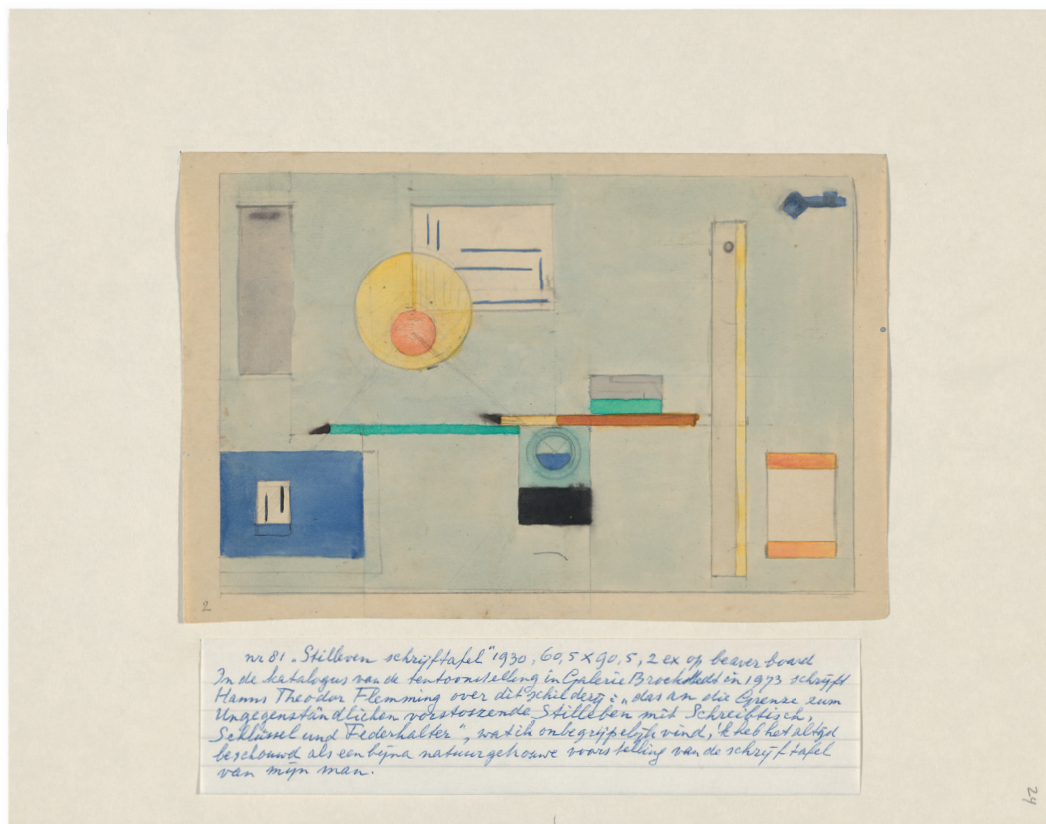
In her collaborations with galleries and museums, Loeber was open-minded, but also simultaneously steadfast in retaining her own personal vision, displaying a decisiveness

and precision that was characteristic for her. While preparing the *Galerie Werner Kunze '10 Jahre – Mappe II'* silkscreen portfolio, for which she also designed the cover, she corrected Werner Kunze multiple times on the correct spelling of her name.⁵⁴ Despite all her efforts, conclusions were drawn that she found unacceptable. In her 'catalogue raisonné' in the Rijksmuseum Print Room, Loeber pointed out various catalogues and articles that contained erroneous statements.⁵⁵ She found it incomprehensible, for instance, that a Galerie Brockstedt catalogue described her painting *Stilleven schrijftafel* (Still Life Writing Desk, 1930) as a work bordering on the abstract. This she hastened to correct in her own annotation (fig. 11), observing: 'I have always regarded it as an almost true-to-life depiction of my husband's writing desk.'⁵⁶

Also during interviews, Loeber set straight what she believed had been stated incorrectly.⁵⁷ The principle of reproducibility that holds such a prominent place in her donation to the Print Room was an aspect of her work that was not always well understood: 'I often made multiple copies of one painting after a working drawing. But now they come to me asking which one was the original, and then it says in the catalogue, when I have explicitly asked to explain how things work: "of some paintings there are variations". But they are exactly the same!'⁵⁸

Biography in her Own Hands

In May 1979, around the same time as Heijbroek's visits, Loeber was approached by the Centraal Museum in Utrecht to collaborate on an upcoming issue of *Mededelingen van het Centraal Museum*.⁵⁹ For every edition of this museum bulletin, published from 1972 to 1981, an artist was given virtually carte blanche to create its design.⁶⁰ In preparation for the magazine issue and a concurrent retrospective exhibition, editor Matty Veldkamp



visited Loeber at her home, an initial meeting from which an intensive exchange between the two women arose.⁶¹ Loeber's publication, titled *Herinneringen door Lou Loeber*, offers a richly illustrated overview of her artistic career, written in her own words.⁶²

That Loeber based her memoirs on the annotations for the Rijksmuseum Print Room, as some have stated in the literature, is only partly true. In actuality, she worked on both projects in parallel, together forming a unified, consistent story.⁶³ In the memoirs, Loeber devoted most of her attention to her artistic development prior to the Second World War and the various teachers, artists and ideas that influenced her during this period. Indeed, the pre-war years are central to the works she herself – in consultation with the curator – selected for donation to the Rijksmuseum.⁶⁴

Reflecting on her life in *Herinneringen*, Loeber established art historical connections to her work and positioned herself in an international, modernist context. She named virtually everyone to whom she felt indebted, such as artists Elly Tamminga and Toon Verhoef.⁶⁵ Moreover, she discussed her work in relation to that of Piet Mondrian and other well-known, often male modernists, but with clear emphasis on her own perspective.⁶⁶

In her memoirs, Loeber frequently referred to her catalogue raisonné – and vice versa – placing accents where she deemed relevant. For instance, in her annotation accompanying the drawing *Dessau II* (fig. 12) she wrote: 'In the *Mededelingen* ... I have tried to convey the deep impression the Meisterhäuser (the teachers' houses) had on me, as deep and intense, continuing up to the end of my development, as what

Fig. 11
LOU LOEBER,
*Still Life Writing
Desk*, 1928–30.
Painting (brush in
colours, over pencil,
132 x 202 mm) and
annotations pasted
onto sheet.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-114
on sheet no. 24,
donated by the artist.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026

I experienced in 1914 from 4 paintings by Kandinsky at the May-June exhibition of The Independents...'.⁶⁷ In a note concerning the same *Dessau II*, preserved in her archive at the RKD, Loeber imparts that, for her work, her visits to the Bauhaus and Berlin in 1927 marked the most important period in her life.⁶⁸

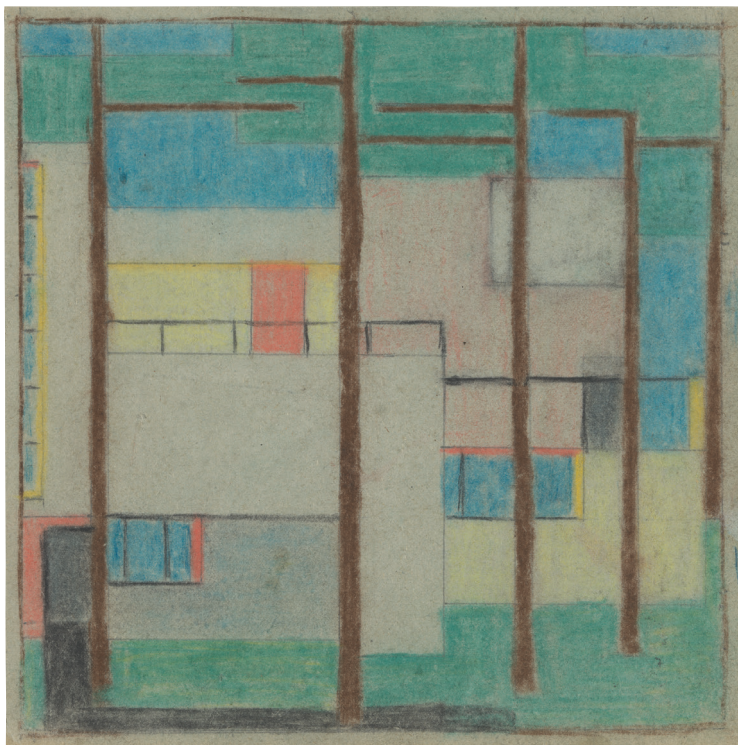
Equally intriguing are those aspects of Loeber's life that she chose not to mention. Applied works like book illustrations and stained glass, as well as her post-war paintings, received only summary attention. This was perhaps motivated by practical concerns: a portion of Loeber's applied work went to the Galerie Gmurzynska and was not included in the Print Room donation.⁶⁹ Another possible factor is her disappointment in the realization of a socialist society, for which reason she perhaps preferred to highlight the core of her work and artistic vision already formed prior to the war.

In *Herinneringen*, Loeber emerges as an artist with her own vision, independent but not working in isolation. Important personal life events received scant attention; even her marriage was described in only a few short lines.⁷⁰ While she was alive, no one was allowed to read her personal diary.⁷¹ Consequently, this and other documents more personal in nature are absent from her archive at the RKD. With her memoirs, Loeber therefore paradoxically chose an autobiographical genre to focus above all on her work. In this respect, she was not alone: in the twentieth century, more women artists made the same choice.⁷² As a result, another important topic was also scarcely addressed: her position as a woman in the art world.

More a Human than a Woman

In the literature on Loeber to date, less attention has been given to the fact that the renewed attention for her

Fig. 12
LOU LOEBER,
Dessau II, 1927-29.
Chalk in colours,
over pencil,
211 x 211 mm.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-105
(on sheet no. 17),
donated by the artist.
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work had gained momentum during the second wave of feminism, a time when a growing number of women artists, art historians and curators sought to secure a lasting place for women in art history. It was for this very reason that Loeber, too, was approached, with her work included in group exhibitions alongside that of other women.⁷³

Among these was a 1975 exhibition organized in observance of International Women's Year. Loeber was invited to contribute a work to the silkscreen portfolio *rechttoe-rechtaan* (meaning straightforward, plain and simple) of the Dutch artists' collective *9 konstruktivistische kunstenaressen*, shown at a series of exhibitions in Schiedam, Groningen, Paris and elsewhere.⁷⁴ Her submission was *Slapenden* (Sleepers, fig. 13), a design she had also shown decades before at an exhibition of the SKK.⁷⁵ The exhibition series brought Loeber both greater name recognition and numerous buyers of her work.⁷⁶ The collaboration with younger artists also gave her much satisfaction.⁷⁷

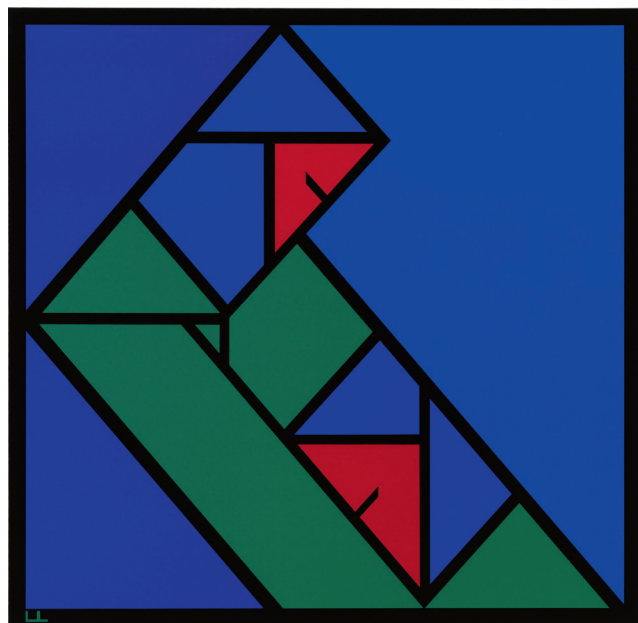
This group of 'constructivist women artists' would lead to the creation of a workgroup composed of feminist artists and art historians who set out to collect documentation on Dutch women artists. This initiative would manifest itself in the Stichting Vrouwen in de Beeldende Kunst (SVBK, Foundation for Women in the Visual Arts) in 1977.⁷⁸ Also involved in the group were Josine de Bruyn Kops and Liesbeth Brandt Corstius, two important advocates of women's standing in the Dutch museum sector and art world.

Brandt Corstius would play a key role in various projects in which Loeber also participated in the nineteen seventies. She interviewed Loeber on behalf of the feminist magazine *Opzij* and invited her to contribute to the journal *Mededelingen van het Centraal Museum*.⁷⁹ Brandt Corstius also visited the artist at her home, where she is likely to have mentioned the documentation workgroup.⁸⁰ During this time, Loeber was actively engaged in documenting her own work. Nevertheless, her name does not appear in the workgroup's archive.⁸¹

Given that Loeber had no feminist motivations for her involvement, this hardly comes as a surprise. On a handwritten note inserted into her personal copy of the catalogue *recht-toe-rechtaan*, she qualified the exhibition's feminist character, observing that the International Women's Year was 'not too overly anti-men'.⁸² Throughout her life, Loeber would remain a staunch socialist, on which basis she had the equality of all people in mind. This is also evident in her statement that she felt 'more like a human than a woman'.⁸³

This remark is simultaneously characteristic of Loeber's attitude towards her existence as an artist. Everything suggests she wished to be seen above all simply as an artist, not a woman artist. For Loeber, her artistry always came first; as a result, her choices – among them her oft-cited

Fig. 13
LOU LOEBER,
Sleepers, 1974.
Silkscreen, 65 x 65 cm.
Schiedam, Stedelijk
Museum, inv. no.
G-00000570.
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c/o Pictoright
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decision not to have children in order to continue painting – defied the traditional image of women.⁸⁴ In spite of her efforts, she was unable to escape being approached and judged as a woman. Although subjected to stereotyping and marginalization, this also brought her admiration and success. Her seemingly effortless independence and professionalism earned her recognition both in the nineteen seventies and during more recent exhibitions, precisely because she was a woman.⁸⁵

Inclusion in Public Collections

In the nineteen seventies, Loeber's work came to be increasingly viewed as an oeuvre in its own right, garnering positive reviews.⁸⁶ Gradually, she went from being perceived as

an obscure follower of De Stijl to a pioneer of Dutch Constructivism. Aspects emphasized by Loeber herself were regularly recounted in publications. A catalogue entry by art historian Hans Jaffé highlighted, among other things, Loeber's socialism and her connection with the Bauhaus. In her own estimation, this assessment was 'entirely in my spirit', with the same text later reused in a Galerie Gmurzynska catalogue in 1979.⁸⁷ Following her 1980 exhibition at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht and the publication of her memoirs, Loeber's words were being directly quoted in newspaper articles, with the artistic development she herself described largely adopted.⁸⁸ As a result, her planned donation to the Rijksmuseum Print Room also became more widely

Fig. 14
LOU LOEBER,
Signal Machines
Factory II, 1926-28.
Drawing (chalk
in colours, over
pencil, 212 x 171 mm)
pasted onto sheet
with annotations.
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum,
inv. no. RP-T-1983-100
on sheet no. 13,
donated by the artist.
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c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026



Fig. 15
LOU LOEBER,
*Head (Portrait of
Toon Verhoef)*, 1925.
Gouache on panel,
59.5 x 45.5 cm.
Singer Laren, loan
Cultural Heritage
Agency of the
Netherlands (RCE),
inv. no. 14-2-06.
© Heirs Lou Loeber
c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam

known.⁸⁹ Starting in 1982, a number of the annotated sketches designated for this purpose were included in a travelling retrospective exhibition of her work (e.g. fig. 14).⁹⁰

By the onset of the nineteen eighties, Loeber's name was established in the Dutch art world, with her voice also being heard. A growing number of Dutch museums were choosing to include works of abstract and modernist art in their collection policy and showing interest in Loeber's work.⁹¹ Furthermore, the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands) also began to focus on building a representative collection of twentieth-century art, on which basis it acquired an astonishing eight paintings, purchased directly from Loeber herself (e.g. figs. 15, 16).⁹² There are no indications that she wished to keep her

works of art together; nor had she expressed any desire to have them preserved in one specific collection. The incidental donations and sales she made to museums suggest the deciding factor was the initiatives taken by those institutions and her personal involvement in them, rather than a desire on her part to have her work be held in public collections. In most cases, these donations and sales stemmed from the projects or exhibitions in which she participated: the donation of a silkscreen to Singer Laren and the sale of five sketchbooks to the Centraal Museum occurred after the solo exhibitions respectively held in these institutions.⁹³ Loeber's archive at the RKD and her donation to the Rijksmuseum Print Room are parts of her artistic legacy for which she expressly provided her own interpretation. It was therefore mainly her ideas that she chose to preserve institutionally, while much of her work, in accordance with her ideals, found their way into people's homes.

Conclusion

Towards the end of Lou Loeber's life, a renewed appreciation for her art emerged. As this article has shown, this was due to both a growing, general interest in modern art, and to the activities of various actors in the art trade, artists' collectives and museums, each motivated by their own specific interests. Amidst the different approaches to her work and artistry, Loeber always remained true to her personal autonomy and vision. Although she herself took few initiatives to ensure her work was held in public collections, when approached by others and a bond emerged based on genuine interest, she then steered the interpretation of her work in the direction she desired – a strategy that would prove highly effective in shaping the way her work was understood.

Rather than focussing on her private life or her status as a woman,

Loeber chose to highlight her painting, her pre-war work and her career. This approach allowed her to circumvent, at least in part, the all-too-well-known mechanisms of exclusion – accusations of having an ‘inconsistent’ or ‘overly personal’ oeuvre – that many women artists come to face. Even if this did not earn Loeber an undisputed place in the art historical canon, her efforts would ensure the broader recognition of her work. Through her work, her idealism and her attitude as an artist, Loeber was perfectly aligned with the modernism of her time. The fact that gender continues to be a recurring theme in relation to her artistic practice – likewise in the present article – only underscores just how much that modernism is still held to an unspoken male norm.

This case study also demonstrates the importance of networks in determining whether or not an artist’s legacy finds its way into public collections. This is particularly the case

for artists like Loeber, who are less inclined to initiate donations themselves or continue working up until the very end of their life. In the case of the Rijksmuseum, this led to a remarkable donation, while Loeber emerged as a veritable archivist of her own oeuvre, in possession of a keen art historical awareness of the potential impact her words might carry. The result is not just a deeper understanding of the artist’s work, but also insight into how she looked at life and at being an artist. When asked, in the final year of her life, how she felt about the great interest in her work, Loeber responded in a manner that also captures the essence of her approach to preserving her artistic legacy: ‘It’s nice, but it must not begin to look like personal glorification.’⁹⁴

Fig. 16

LOU LOEBER,
*Wheat Fields near
Huizen*, 1921.
Oil on canvas,
39.5 × 63 cm
(excl. frame).
Dordrechts Museum,
loan Cultural Heritage
Agency of the
Netherlands (RCE)
2015, inv. no.
DM/015/1133.
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c/o Pictoright
Amsterdam 2026



ABSTRACT

In 1983, the artist Lou Loeber (1894-1983) donated over two hundred of her own characteristically abstracted and constructivist prints and drawings to the Rijksmuseum Print Room. In close consultation with museum curators, she provided handwritten annotations for a significant number of her sketches, which at the time and still today provide insight into the interpretation of her work. The present article situates this unique donation within the context of the renewed appreciation for Loeber's work that emerged in the nineteen seventies, arising from a growing interest in both interwar abstract art and women artists. It shows how Loeber navigated a new network of artists, galleries and museums, and how – when confronted with various interpretations of her work – she consistently returned to her own socialist vision of art. Only very rarely did Loeber herself take steps for her artworks to be acquired in public collections. By means of her donation to the Print Room, the publication of her memoirs and bequeathing her artist's archive, Loeber lent her artistic legacy an autobiographical quality, enabling her to shape the public perception of her person and her existence as an artist effectively. This case study therefore contributes to our knowledge of women acting as custodians and donors of artists' legacies, on their own behalf as well as that of others.

NOTES

* I wish to thank Freek Heijbroek, Jenny Reynaerts, Marion Anker and Cornelië Lagerwaard. I also wish to extend my thanks to the Loeber family.

- 1 J.F. (Freek) Heijbroek, 'Een weerzien met het Gooi: De bezoeken aan Lou Loeber', in 'Aanwinsten', *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 49 (2001), no. 2-3, pp. 280-91, esp. 289-90.
- 2 'De dwars over het schilderij heenlopende baan van witte en blauwwitte blokken die door de zwarte slingerlijn verdeeld en bijeengehouden wordt is niet een aanduiding van notenbalken, zoals sommigen menen (zulke realistische elementen zitten er niet in), maar een verbeelding van de thematische muzikale verbondenheid van de drie delen.' Lou Loeber's annotation accompanying inv. nos. RP-T-1983-169 and RP-T-1983-170, see fig. 1.
- 3 Marente Bloemheuvel, *Lou Loeber: Utopie en werkelijkheid*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Singer Museum) 1993, pp. 32-37.
- 4 The three prints in the collection were inv. nos. RP-P-1936-394, RP-P-1936-395 and RP-P-1936-413, all originating from the F.G. Waller bequest, 1936.
- 5 Loeber's donation of her own work comprises thirty-four prints, twenty-one drawings, three sketchbooks and three folders with sketches and design drawings. One of these folders contains 116 sketches on eighty-four pages which Loeber herself has furnished with annotations (inv. no. RP-T-1983-85A). The other folders contain respectively fifty (inv. no. RP-T-1983-193A) and fifty-eight (inv. no. RP-T-1983-243A)

drawings. She also donated eleven drawings and seventy prints by her husband, Dirk Koning. Additionally, Loeber donated two prints by John Hamilton Mortimer and sold a medieval print after a design by Martin Schongauer to the Rijksmuseum.

- 6 One or several objects were acquired directly from Loeber by the following institutions: the Centraal Museum, Gemeente Blaricum, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Singer Laren and Stedelijk Museum Schiedam. The Dordrechts Museum, Fries Museum, Museum Belvédère, Museum DR8888, Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Teylers Museum and the Valkhof Museum acquired works by the artist after Loeber's death.
- 7 The Hague, RKD – Netherlands Institute for Art History, Kunstenaarsarchief Lou Loeber (acc. no. 0367, henceforth NL-HAKD-0367), box 30: 'Maak kennis met Lou Loeber', *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 4 April 1980.
- 8 Bloemheuvel 1993 (note 3), pp. 20, 24.
- 9 Annual Report RKD, The Hague 1983, p. 282.
- 10 See for example Mara Rose Witzling (ed.), *Voicing our Visions: Writings by Women Artists*, London 1992; Wendy Slatkin (ed.), *In Her Own Words: A Primary Source Book of Autobiographical Texts by Women Artists in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, San Diego 2019; Morganne Conti, *Self-Making in Autobiographical Narratives: How Women Artists Negotiate Gender and Creative Roles through Domestic Spaces*, diss. London (Goldsmiths, University of London) 2019.
- 11 Ruth Hemus, *Dada's Women*, New Haven 2009, p. 201.

- 12 Lou Loeber, contribution to the unpublished book of the Socialistische Kunstenaarskring, 1930, in Cornelieke Lagerwaard, *Lou Loeber en de socialistische kunstenaarskring*, thesis Amsterdam (University of Amsterdam) 1979, p. 43.
- 13 Sandra Kisters, *The Lure of the Biographical: On the (Self-)Representation of Modern Artists*, Amsterdam 2017, pp. 76-77.
- 14 'Zowel het kunstenaarschap als het vrouw-zijn is voor hen vanzelfsprekend, de combinatie van die twee wordt echter als problematisch ervaren, ofwel door henzelf, ofwel door hun omgeving.' Miriam van Rijnsingen, 'Inleiding', in Nio Hermes et al. (eds.), *Met verve: Charley Toorop, Lizzy Ansingh, Jacoba van Heemskerck, Lou Loeber, Sorella, Adya van Rees-Dutilh*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Stichting Amazone) 1991, p. 15.
- 15 For a delineation of textual and visual means in respect to the (self-)representation of artists, see Kisters 2017 (note 13), pp. 71-143.
- 16 On donors, see for example Kate Hill, *Women and Museums, 1850-1914: Modernity and the Gendering of Knowledge*, Manchester 2016; Susanna Avery-Quash with Christine Riding, 'Two Hundred Years of Women Benefactors at the National Gallery: An Exercise in Mapping Uncharted Territory', *Journal of Art Historiography* 23 (2020), no. 23 (online). On custodians of artists' legacies, see for example Doris Wintgens Hötte, *Peggy Guggenheim en Nelly van Doesburg: Voorvechters van De Stijl*, Amsterdam 2017; Hans Luijten, *Alles voor Vincent: Het leven van Jo van Gogh-Bonger*, Amsterdam 2019. In the Netherlands, recent research in this area is being assembled via *The Other Half: Platform about women actors in the Dutch art world 1780-1980*.
- 17 One exception, for example, is Lies Netel, *Marianne van der Heijden (1922-1998): Het archief als bron van (kunst)historische herinnering*, diss. Maastricht (Maastricht University) 2017.
- 18 Désirée Koninkx, *De Stijl van Lou Loeber*, exh. cat. Kortenhoef (Kunst aan de Dijk) 2017, p. 63.
- 19 Lou Loeber, 'Herinneringen door Lou Loeber', *Mededelingen van het Centraal Museum* 28-29 (1980), p. 18.
- 20 Bloemheuvel 1993 (note 3), pp. 21, 24.
- 21 Bloemheuvel 1993 (note 3), p. 25. Frederik Schmidt Degener, *Tentoonstelling: Onze kunst van heden: Rijksmuseum, winter 1939-1940*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1939, unpaginated, nos. 1717-1720; Max Nauta, *Kunst in vrijheid*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1945, unpaginated, nos. 430-434.
- 22 Rebekka van den Berg, *Op zoek naar een evenwichtige eenheid: Loebers artistieke en zakelijke methodes*, thesis Nijmegen (Radboud University) 2024, p. 49.
- 23 R.W.P. de Vries Jr, 'Lou Loeber bij Buffa te Amsterdam', *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift* 33 (1923), no. 66, pp. 140-42; Herluf van Merlet, 'Lou Loeber', *De Tijd*, 22 juni 1923; 'Uit het Gooi', *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, 23 July 1927; Henri van Calker, 'Tentoonstelling van kunst voor de kinderkamer door Co Egelie en schilderijen van Lou Loeber', *De Gooi- en Eemlander: Nieuws- en advertentieblad*, 22 November 1934. Frédérique van Duppen points out that women were more often subject to this kind of critique; see Frédérique van Duppen, 'Lou Loeber', in Karlijn de Jong et al., *Vrouwenpalet: Haar kunst, haar verhaal 1900-1950*, exh. cat. Drachten (Museum Dr8888)/Deurne (De Wieger) 2022, p. 97. Her being female may have played a role, but also male colleagues of Loeber's were strongly criticized, as some critics felt an aversion to the abstractions of modernist artists in general.
- 24 Van den Berg 2024 (note 22), p. 50.
- 25 NL-HAKKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Correspondence with Werner Kunze regarding publication silkscreens, period 1973-76. She also reused *Man bij de kachel* (Man near a Stove, 1946-47) for the poster of the 1974 solo exhibition at Singer Laren (inv. no. RP-P-RMA5126).
- 26 Nico Scheepmaker, 'Loeber na een halve eeuw ontdekt', *Avenue* (1972), pp. 162-65.
- 27 Tatja Scholte, 'Lou Loeber', in Hermes et al. (eds.) 1991 (note 14), p. 70; Van Duppen 2022 (note 23), p. 97; Sikke Doele, 'Een witte vlek uit de jaren vijftig ingevuld', *Leeuwarder Courant: Hoofdblad van Friesland*, 24 June 1988.
- 28 Telephone communication Freek Heijbroek, 30 August 2024.
- 29 Freek Heijbroek was employed with the historical-documentary print collections as of 1 June 1980; see Annual Report Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam 1980, p. 46.
- 30 Heijbroek 2001 (note 1), p. 289.
- 31 Loeber recorded multiple visits made by Heijbroek in 1979, 1980 and 1981, and by Schatborn in 1982; see NL-HAKKD-0367 (note 7), box 30.
- 32 Heijbroek 2001 (note 1).
- 33 See note 5.
- 34 Loeber grouped her paintings on various lists, also according to subject, composi-

- tion, colour and level of abstraction;
see Haarlem, Noord-Hollands Archief,
Archief van het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam
1946-1995, Afstand en verwerving,
dossier Lou Loeber, 1983 (this dossier will
be transferred here in the course of 2026).
- 35 The lowest number is 14, the highest 157,
also including gaps in the numbering.
 - 36 Respectively *Vensters* (Windows, inv. nos.
RP-T-1983-161 en -162), *Wervelend Land-
schap* (Swirling Landscape, inv. nos.
RP-T-1983-171 and -172) and *Lezende 1*
(Reader 1, inv. nos. RP-T-1983-118, -118A
and -119; RP-P-1983-89 and -90), see fig. 9.
 - 37 'Zo kunnen deze tekeningen waarschijnlijk
vaak de sleutel vormen tot de interpretatie
van de vaak nogal geabstraheerde voor-
stellingen op haar schilderijen.' Annual
report Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam 1983, p. 38.
 - 38 Telephone communication Freek Heijbroek,
30 August 2024.
 - 39 Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, verwervings-
dossier D075406, document no.
INK23015879, Letter Dr. S.H. Levie to the
Board of Regents of the G.H. Breitner-
fonds, 8 June 1982.
 - 40 Gijs van der Ham, *200 jaar Rijksmuseum:
Geschiedenis van een nationaal symbool*,
Zwolle/Amsterdam 2000, pp. 163-65. In
the nineteen eighties, the Department of
Paintings was not yet collecting art made
after 1920.
 - 41 A survey based on annual reports and
inventories reveals that between 1877-2000
approximately 225 men and 44 women
donated their own work to the Rijksmuseum
Print Room.
 - 42 Annual report Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
1982, p. 48. Annual report Rijksmuseum,
Amsterdam 1970, p. 88.
 - 43 'Lou Loeber', *Gooi- en Eemlander*,
30 January 1993.
 - 44 Veron Nieuwendijk, 'Lou Loeber', in Jonneke
Fritz-Jobse et al. (eds.), *Een nieuwe synthese:
Geometrisch-abstracte kunst in Nederland
1945-1960*, exh. cat. Enschede (Rijksmuseum
Twenthe)/Leiden (Stedelijk Museum de
Lakenhal)/Leeuwarden (Keramiekmuseum
Prinsessehof) 1988, p. 219.
 - 45 Truus Gubbels, *Passie of professie: Galeriers
en kunsthandel in Nederland*, Abcoude
1999, pp. 77-78.
 - 46 Michel Seuphor et al., *Konstruktivismus:
Entwicklungen und Tendenzen seit 1913*,
exh. cat. Cologne (Galerie Gmurzynska-
Bargera) 1972; C. Richartz, *Lou Loeber:
Oelbilder der 20er Jahre*, exh. cat. Hamburg
(Galerie Brockstedt) 1973; Michel Seuphor
and Alberto Sartoris, *De Stijl – Cercle et*
*Carré: Entwicklungen des Konstruktivismus
in Europa ab 1917*, exh. cat. Cologne
(Galerie Gmurzynska) 1974; Krystyna
Rubinger (ed.), *Mondrian und De Stijl*,
exh. cat. Cologne (Galerie Gmurzynska)
1979.
 - 47 Evert van Uitert et al., *Het nieuwe wereld-
beeld: Het begin van de abstracte kunst in
Nederland, 1910-1925*, exh. cat. Utrecht
(Centraal Museum) 1973; Hans Jaffé,
Lou Loeber, exh. cat. Laren (Singer
Museum) 1974.
 - 48 'Aanwinsten', *Museumjournaal* 20 (1975),
no. 2, p. 87; The Utrecht Archives,
Gemeentebestuur van Utrecht 1970-1989
(acc. no. 1338), inv. no. 14891: Acquisition
of artworks, with photos, 1976-1981, Letter
A.M. Janssens, director Centraal Museum,
to T. Harteveld, councillor cultural affairs,
Utrecht, 25 October 1976.
 - 49 Hans Redeker, *Lou Loeber*, exh. cat. Amster-
dam (Galerie d'Eendt) 1972; NL-HAKKD
library, annotated copy of the D'Eendt
exhibition catalogue; Loeber 1980 (note
19), p. 16. She also hastened to correct
misstatements when the opposite was said,
i.e. that she had no contact with Van der
Leek whatsoever; see NL-HAKKD-0367
(note 7), box 30: Lilly van Ginneken,
'Socialisme de drijfveer voor schilderes
Loeber', *De Volkskrant*, 12 April 1980.
 - 50 Loeber was asked to provide the contact
information of people close to the artists
Vilmos Huszar, César Domela, Bart van der
Leek, J.J.P. Oud, and Sal Slijper, a collector
of Mondrian's works. NL-HAKKD-0367
(note 7), box 30: Various correspondence,
including enquiries regarding contacts
(Letters Antonina Gmurzynska to Lou
Loeber, 30 April 1973, 9 Januari 1979),
the competition (Letter Antonina
Gmurzynska to Lou Loeber, 3 July 1973)
and drafts (Letters Lou Loeber to Antonina
Gmurzynska, 27 June 1973, 21 August 1973).
 - 51 See also 'Voorkeur: exposities', *NRC
Handelsblad*, 4 February 1972; Lambert
Tegenbosch, 'Lou Loeber', *De Volkskrant*,
14 February 1972; Ed Wingen, 'Cora
de Vries vindt spoor naar Nul terug',
De Telegraaf, 12 September 1974.
 - 52 Hans Redeker, 'Galeriers', *NRC Handelsblad*,
4 February 1972; Frans Duister, 'Caroline
Lee en Alfred Aschauer: Twee werelden
van twee beeldhouwers', *De Tijd: Dagblad
voor Nederland*, 1 February 1972.
 - 53 See for example Katy Deepwell (ed.), *Women
Artists and Modernism*, Manchester/New
York 1998; Patricia Allmer, 'Of Fallen
Angels and Angels of Anarchy', in idem

- (ed.), *Angels of Anarchy: Women Artists and Surrealism*, exh. cat. Manchester (Manchester Art Gallery) 2009, p. 13.
- 54 NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Draft letter Lou Loeber aan Werner Kunze, 7 January 1974. For the cover, Loeber reused the composition *Lezende 11* (Reader 11) from 1926-30 (inv. nos. RP-P-1983-91 and RP-T-1983-115).
- 55 See Lou Loeber's annotations accompanying inv. nos. RP-T-1983-90, -91, -92, -96, -105, -113 and -114.
- 56 "Ik heb het altijd beschouwd als een bijna natuurgetrouwe voorstelling van de schrijftafel van mijn man." Lou Loeber's annotation accompanying inv. no. RP-T-1983-114.
- 57 See also Liesbeth Brandt Corstius, 'Tien Nederlandse kunstenaressen', *Opzij* 5 (1977), pp. 27-28; Betty van Garrel, 'Het menselijke in vormen en kleuren', *NRC Handelsblad*, 24 December 1982.
- 58 'Ik maakte vaak meerdere exemplaren van één schilderij naar een werktekening. Maar nu komen ze me vragen wat het origineel was en in de catalogus staat dan, als ik uitdrukkelijk gevraagd heb om uit te leggen hoe de vork in de steel zit: "van enkele schilderijen bestaan variaties", maar ze zijn precies hetzelfde!' Brandt Corstius 1977 (note 57), pp. 27-28.
- 59 NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Letter Lydia van Oosten to Lou Loeber, Utrecht, 1 May 1979.
- 60 This freedom of choice is apparent from various letters of invitation sent to artists kept in The Utrecht Archives, Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1970-1994 (acc. no. 1823), inv. no. 40: Ingekomen en minuten van uitgegane stukken, 1980. The consulted archive is solely accessible with the administrator's approval.
- 61 Exhibition *Keuze uit het werk van Lou Loeber*, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, 28 March-21 April 1980. NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Handwritten annotation Lou Loeber about first visit Matty Veldkamp and Liesbeth Brandt Corstius on 19 October 1979. Idem, boxes 30 and 31: correspondence between Matty Veldkamp and Lou Loeber, period October 1979-March 1980. The Utrecht Archives, Centraal Museum in Utrecht 1970-1994 (acc. no. 1823), inv. no. 378: *Keuze uit het werk van Lou Loeber*, 1980; Various letters from Lou Loeber to Matty Veldkamp, period December 1979-March 1980.
- 62 Loeber 1980 (note 19).
- 63 Scholte 1991 (note 27), p. 94. Koninkx 2017 (note 18), p. 12.
- 64 Telephone communication with Freek Heijbroek, 30 August 2024.
- 65 Loeber 1980 (note 19), p. 15.
- 66 Loeber 1980 (note 19), pp. 16-18.
- 67 'In de Mededelingen ... heb ik getracht de diepe indruk weer te geven die de Meisterhäuser (de woonhuizen van de leraren) op me gemaakt hebben, een even diep ingrijpende en tot het eind van mijn ontwikkeling doorwerkende als ik in 1914 gekregen heb van 4 schilderijen van Kandinsky op de mei-juni tentoonst. van De Onafhankelijken'. Annotation Lou Loeber accompanying inv. no. RP-T-1983-105.
- 68 NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 31: Handwritten annotation Lou Loeber with LL no. 63.
- 69 Rubinger (ed.) 1979 (note 46). Telephone communication with Freek Heijbroek, 23 April 2026.
- 70 Loeber 1980 (note 19), p. 31.
- 71 Scheepmaker 1972 (note 26), p. 164.
- 72 Kisters 2017 (note 13), p. 281.
- 73 See also 100 vrouwen in *Galerie d'Eendt*, August-September 1975. *Vrouwen + beeldende kunst*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksacademie van Beeldende Kunsten) 1980.
- 74 Liesbeth Brandt Corstius, *Rechttoe-rechtaan: 9 Nederlandse konstruktivistes*, s.l. 1974; Hans Paalman, *Tout droit, droit au but: neuf femmes constructivistes: Christa van Santen, Lou Loeber, Els de Groot, Karin Daan, Sonja Vincent, Ria van Eyk, Yvonne Kracht, Truus Wilmink, Neeltje Korteweg*, exh. cat. Paris (Institut Néerlandais)/Schiedam (Stedelijk Museum Schiedam) 1976.
- 75 Koninkx 2017 (note 18), p. 44.
- 76 NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Draft letter Lou Loeber to Antonina Gmurzynska, 12 September 1975.
- 77 Christa van Santen and Truus Wilmink, 'Lou Loeber en rechttoe-rechtaan', in Lida Calis et al., *Lou Loeber op Zonnenhoef*, Blaricum 1994, p. 7.
- 78 Paulien Franken, *Feminisme, overheidsbeleid, vrouwelijke beeldende kunstenaars: De geschiedenis van de Stichting Vrouwen in de Beeldende Kunst (SVBK) 1977-1996*, thesis Utrecht (Utrecht University) 1997, p. 5.
- 79 Brandt Corstius 1977 (note 57), pp. 27-28. NL-HARKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Letter Lydia van Oosten to Lou Loeber, Utrecht, 1 May 1979, in which reference is made to Loeber's contact with Liesbeth Brandt Corstius.

- 80 NL-HAKKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Hand-written annotation Lou Loeber, undated; in which she recorded a visit from Liesbeth Brandt Corstius and an appeal from the SVBK in *Museumjournaal*.
- 81 The archive sectors consulted are: Utrecht, Atria, Kennisinstituut voor Emancipatie en Vrouwengeschiedenis, collectie Internationaal Archief voor de Vrouwenbeweging (IaV), Archief Stichting Vrouwen in de Beeldende Kunst (SVBK), inv. nos. 1-4, 14-16, 21, 50, 52, 66, 149-58, 223, 333 and 334.
- 82 'niet zo heel erg anti-mannen'; NL-HAKKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Hand-written annotation Lou Loeber, undated.
- 83 Lagerwaard 1979 (note 12), p. 31. That Lou Loeber felt more like an individual than a woman is what she told Cornelieke Lagerwaard, who, as a student, visited her on multiple occasions. I have verified Loeber's statement in various conversations with Lagerwaard in 2024.
- 84 Van Garrel 1982 (note 57). See also Rebekka van den Berg, 'Lou Loeber en haar inzet voor socialistische kunst', *Rode Haring* 17 (2026), p. 5; Koninkx 2017 (note 18), p. 53; Scholte 1991 (note 27), p. 68.
- 85 See for example Maaïke Rikhof, *De nieuwe vrouw*, exh. cat. Laren (Singer Laren) 2022; De Jong et al. 2022 (note 23); Stella Rollig (ed.), *Radical! Women Artists and Modernism, 1910-1950*, exh. cat. Arnhem (Museum Arnhem)/Cologne (Saarlandmuseum)/Vienna (Österreichische Galerie Belvedere) 2024. In the recent monographic exhibition *Lou Loeber, kunstenaar en idealist*, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam 16 May-27 September 2026, the focus is on Loeber's work rather than her position as a woman.
- 86 Van Duppen 2022 (note 23), p. 97; Koninkx 2017 (note 18), p. 70.
- 87 NL-HAKKD-0367 (note 7), box 30: Draft letter Lou Loeber to Hans Jaffé, undated. Rubinger (ed.) 1979 (note 46), pp. 78-83.
- 88 Betty van Garrel, 'Lou Loeber', *NRC Handelsblad*, 9 mei 1980; Rudy Hodel, 'Fascinerende Lou Loeber in Franeker: De innerlijke harmonie', *Leeuwarder Courant: Hoofdblad van Friesland*, 10 December 1982; Van Ginneken 1980 (note 49).
- 89 Van Garrel 1982 (note 57).
- 90 Adri den Oudsten, 'Voorwoord', in Frits Bless and N.T. Scheeres, *Lou Loeber: overzichtstentoonstelling*, exh. cat. Franeker (Museum 't Coopmanshûs)/Nijmegen (Commanderie van St. Jan)/Haarlem (Frans Halsmuseum) 1982, p. 3.
- 91 For example, in 1982 Loeber's name appears on the Centraal Museum's list of 'Prioriteiten inzake verwerving voor de afdeling tekeningen en grafiek alsmede moderne schilderijen' (Priorities regarding the acquisition for the department of drawings and graphic art as well as modern paintings). See The Utrecht Archives, Centraal Museum te Utrecht 1970-1994 (acc. no. 1823), inv. no. 172: Stukken betreffende de vaststelling en uitvoering van aankoop- en verzamelbeleid, 1977-1994.
- 92 Fransje Kuyvenhoven, *De Staat koopt kunst: De geschiedenis van de collectie 20ste-eeuwse kunst van het ministerie van OCW 1932-1992*, Amsterdam 2007, p. 272. Verslag van de Rijksinspecteur voor roerende monumenten over het jaar 1982, p. 320.
- 93 Email Roby Boes, curator Singer Laren, 24 June 2024. Email Chantal Perlee, senior employee Documentatie & Onderzoek Centraal Museum Utrecht, 21 May 2024. Loeber also sold a silkscreen to the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam following the exhibition *rechttoe-rechtaan*; email Lieke Wijnia, senior curator Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 22 March 2025.
- 94 'Het is leuk maar het moet niet op persoons-verheerlijking gaan lijken.' Van Garrel 1982 (note 57).

