



LITERATURE:

International Style: Selections from the Boyd Collection, sale cat. Chicago (Wright), 8 November 2018, vol. 1: *Masterworks*, no. 30 (repr.)
Wim de Wagt, *Piet Elling (1897-1962): Een samenstemmende eenheid*, Bussum 2008, p. 69
Michael Webb, *Modernist Paradise: Niemeyer House, Boyd Collection*, New York 2007, pp. 132-33 (repr.)
Twentieth Century Decorative Arts, sale cat. Amsterdam (Christie's), 21 December 1999, pp. 74-75, no. 240 (repr.)

PROVENANCE:

Commissioned by Mrs L.H. van Groningen-Koningsveld (1888?-1969), Laren, 1927; her heirs; their sale, Amsterdam (Christie's), 21 December 1999, no. 240, to Michael and Gabrielle Boyd, Santa Monica (CA); their sale, Chicago (Wright), 8 November 2018, no. 30; purchased jointly by the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, and the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, with the support of Pon Holdings BV and the BankGiro Lottery respectively, 2018
(inv. no. BK-2019-1/Centraal Museum inv. no. 34929).

Acquisitions: Twentieth-Century Fine and Applied Arts

• PIM ARTS, ROBY BOES, OSCAR EKKElBOOM,
LUDO VAN HALEM, SUZANNE VAN LEEUWEN,
BIANCA M. DU MORTIER AND HARM STEVENS •

- 1 Piet Elling (Utrecht 1897-1962 Amsterdam) and Bart van der Leck (Utrecht 1876-1958 Blaricum)
Writing Desk for Mrs L.H. van Groningen-Koningsveld, 1927
Beech, plywood, screws and paint, 93 x 58 x 103 cm

The writing desk Piet Elling and Bart van der Leck made for Mrs Van Groningen in 1927 is an outstanding piece of furniture in the history of the *De Stijl* movement. Elling constructed it in the spirit of the 'slat furniture' made by Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964), whom he met in 1919. He was delighted to join him in his workshop and while there he probably witnessed the creation of the Red and Blue Chair and other slat furniture with which Rietveld made his name through *De Stijl* magazine.

Elling, who had trained as a carpenter but aspired to a career in the arts and, like Rietveld, would ultimately become an architect, was one of the very first buyers of this furniture. He used two of Rietveld's chairs and a sideboard to furnish his rented room in 1921. Above the sideboard he hung a lithograph by Bart van der Leck, whose simplified motifs in red, yellow and blue had played a pivotal role in the creation of the pictorial language of *De Stijl*. Elling had also become acquainted with Van der Leck around 1920.

In 1927 Elling and his wife Diek Nijland moved into the Van der Leck family's vacated house in Laren. His career in architecture had stalled temporarily, which meant that he spent a lot of time at home. He built a writing desk for the next-door neighbour and Van der Leck was consulted about the colour combination. Later Elling's wife remembered it vividly: 'It got to the point where

it had to be painted. White, of course! Good, it was painted and v.d Leck came to see if the white was all right. No – it still had to be a little more this, a little more that. So – it was painted again and again and again. Finally, it was approved. Then another colour on it – red – but watch out – that particular red, not something that was also red but not right. I was so happy when that piece of furniture finally went out the door and moved to our neighbour's' (*De Wagt* 2008, p. 69).

The collaboration with Van der Leck was renewed when Elling established his practice as an architect. On several occasions Van der Leck made the colour compositions for the interiors of the houses and buildings designed by Elling, such as the apartment for C.H. van der Leeuw (1949-50) in the Carlton Building and the canteen of the Royal Ketjen Sulphur Works (1953), both in Amsterdam.

LVH

- 2 Design: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Aachen 1886-1969 Chicago) and Lilly Reich (Berlin 1885-1947 Berlin), 1927
 Manufacture: Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller, c. 1930
Two Weissenhof Chairs
 Nickel-plated steel, woven cane and paint, each 82 x 57 x 82 cm

The Weissenhof Chair or *MR Stuhl* was shown for the first time in one of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's model homes at *Die Wohnung*, a Deutscher Werkbund exhibition in Stuttgart in 1927. Mies was in charge of this exhibition and along with sixteen other architects, including the Dutchmen J.J.P. Oud and Mart Stam, designed modern dwellings that together make up the Weissenhof Estate. It showcased the latest developments in housing layouts, building methods and furniture design. The various chairs without back legs in the exhibition were revolutionary: it was the first time that anyone had been able to sit on a 'floating' chair.

Mies's Weissenhof Chair was based on an idea by Stam, who had tried to construct a similar chair from gas pipes the year before. Mies gave Stam's idea his own interpretation in two variations, the *Sessel* (MR20) and the *Stuhl* (MR10), with and without armrests respectively. Unlike the more angular chair that Stam presented in the Weissenhof Estate, Mies's design is more elegant and more refined because of the graceful curve of the bent metal tubes at the front. This makes it the trendsetter of its kind and also provides more comfortable suspension.

The Berliner Metallgewerbe Jos. Müller (from 1930 continued as the Bamberg Metallwerkstätten) could supply the Weissenhof Chair with lacquered, nickel-plated or chromium-plated metal tubes and a seat made of *Eisengarn* (see no. 3), leather or woven cane. The woven cane seat was developed by the designer Lilly Reich, who was also Mies's partner. Unlike the other two materials, the cane ran through from the seat to the back.

The two Weissenhof Chairs the Rijksmuseum has purchased have a fascinating provenance. They belonged to Marcel van Grunsven and his wife Gertie, who had been given both chairs by her parents as a wedding present on their marriage in 1930. From 1926 to 1961 Marcel van Grunsven was mayor of Heerlen and he worked hard on the modernization of the town. He championed, for example, the construction of the modern Schunck department store designed by the architect Frits Peutz in 1933. Van Grunsven

may have visited the Werkbund exhibition in 1927 and seen a Weissenhof chair there for the first time.

RB

LITERATURE:

- Otakar Máčel, *2100 Metal Tubular Chairs*, Rotterdam 2006, p. 109
 Nic H.M. Tummers, 'Frederikus (Frits) Josephus Peutz (1896-1974)', *Het huis van de architect*, 1999 (*Jaarboek De Sluitsteen*, vol. 15), pp. 82-83, esp. 82
Het centrum van de mijnstreek en het spoor van de avant-garde. Heerlen tijdens het burgemeesterschap van Marcel van Grunsven 1926-1962, exh. cat. Heerlen (Stadsgalerij) 1996, pp. 10, 36
 Nic H.M. Tummers (ed.), *110 voorbeelden in het spoor van de internationale avant-garde*, Heerlen 1994, unpagged (pp. 12-13; repr. p. 12)
 Werner Möller and Otakar Máčel, *Ein Stuhl macht Geschichte*, Munich 1992, pp. 27-28 and passim
 Alexander von Vegesack, *Deutsche Stahlrohrmöbel: 650 Modelle aus Katalogen von 1927-1958*, Munich 1986, pp. 62-67
Bau und Wohnung, exh. cat. Stuttgart (Weissenhofsiedlung) 1927, reprinted Stuttgart/Zürich 2011, pp. 76-85

PROVENANCE:

- Acquired by Marcel van Grunsven (1896-1969) and Gertie Van Grunsven-Janssen (1908-1994) on the occasion of their wedding, Heerlen, 1930; by descent to Gerty Bongaerts-Van Grunsven, Rosmalen; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of Pon Holdings BV, 2017
 (inv. nos. BK-2017-1-1, 2).



- 3 Design: Marcel Breuer (Pécs 1902-1981 New York), 1930
 Manufacture: Thonet, 1931
Two B35 Armchairs
 Steel, chrome, wood, paint and Eisengarn, each 77 x 56 x 90 cm

The club chair with the model number B35 was shown for the first time in 1930 as an exhibit at the Deutscher Werkbund for the Salon des Artistes décorateurs in Paris. From that year on, the chair was produced by the firm of Thonet, which had gone into partnership with the furniture designer and architect Marcel Breuer. The tubular metal furniture he had designed when he was head of the Bauhaus furniture workshop, and later as an independent architect, rapidly became popular in the Netherlands. It was sold in modernist furniture shops like the Metz & Co department store and Thonet's own retail outlet in Amsterdam.

Mr J. Bergmans from Waalwijk ordered two chairs 'nickel-chromed with blue material' from Thonet's shop at 231 Keizersgracht, for which he had to pay 124 guilders. According to the surviving invoice dated 7 August 1931 he was given a one percent discount for prompt payment (inv. no. BK-2018-108). From the date of the invoice it is clear that these armchairs were two of the earliest examples of the model. The 'blue material' referred to a seat made of *Eisengarn*, which was developed around 1926 at the Bauhaus in Dessau for covering Breuer's chairs; *Eisengarn* was made of cotton threads immersed in starch and wax, making them hard-wearing and 'strong as iron'.

Bergmans may have ordered this pair of chairs because he was getting married and moving to a new house. He came from a family of shoemakers and designers (Waalwijk and the surrounding area has long been the centre of the Dutch leather and shoe industry) and had his own factory after the Second World War. He also taught drawing from models as part of a shoemaker's professional training. In 1939 he commissioned the functionalist architect Gerard Holt (1904-1988) to build a villa for his family. The two armchairs had always stayed in the family.

The design of Breuer's armchair was based on the principle of the 'free-floating' tubular chair after an idea the Dutch architect Mart Stam had come up with in 1926. His chair without back legs was a revolution in furniture design. Breuer reinterpreted Stam's earlier idea for the B35 and executed it in an inventive, original and attractive way. The armrests are connected to the back legs

of the chair and underneath to the front legs, but not to the seat. This makes the seat and back 'float'. The continuous line of the metal tubing makes the design even more modern and more elegant.

LVH/PA

LITERATURE:

- Otakar Máčel, *2100 Metal Tubular Chairs*, Rotterdam 2006, pp. 139, 234
 Magdalena Droste and Peter Hahn, *Marcel Breuer: Design*, Cologne 2001, pp. 16-24, 95
 Alexander von Vegesack, *Deutsche Stahlrohrmöbel: 650 Modelle aus Katalogen von 1927-1958*, Munich 1986, pp. 22, 71, 75
 Christopher Wilk, *Marcel Breuer: Furniture and Interiors*, New York 1981, pp. 82-107

PROVENANCE:

- Mr J. Bergmans (1906-1999), Waalwijk, 1931; by descent to his daughter Mrs. Van Tilburg-Bergmans, Waalwijk; from whom to Galerie Van den Bruinhorst, Kampen, 2010; from which purchased by the museum with the support of Pon Holdings BV, 2018
 (inv. nos. BK-2018-106, 107).



Photo: Galerie VAN DEN BRUINHORST

- 4 Design: Brinkman & Van der Vlugt Architecten, 1932-33
 Manufacture: Gispens's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking N.V., after 1933
Gispens Type Telephone Box
 Steel, glass, Bakelite, 254 x 90 x 100 cm

A characteristic feature in the Dutch street scene of the twentieth century was the silver-grey phone box with the word 'telefoon' in white letters against a blue background: a small public building with a telephone inside for everyone to use. By comparison with Great Britain and Germany, the Nederlandse Staatsbedrijf der Post Telegraaf en Telefoniedienst (PTT) was late in introducing a standardized telephone box nationally. Whereas telephone boxes had already been installed in public spaces on a small scale by municipal telephone services in The Hague and Amsterdam, the management of the state-owned PTT did not begin to make plans for its own telephone boxes until 1930. The PTT's installation of telephone boxes in the country was seen as a service, but its main purpose was to ensure that telephone use was generally adopted. The PTT telephone boxes were designed to promote telephone use through public channels.

Entirely in accordance with the ideals of the Nieuwe Bouwen, the PTT came up with the idea of a glass column, free of private advertising and lit after sunset. In 1931 the contract for the design was awarded to the Rotterdam firm of Brinkman & Van der Vlugt Architecten. Jan Brinkman (1902-1949) and Leen van der Vlugt (1894-1936) had just made their names as the architects of the Van Nelle Factory in Rotterdam, the hyper-modern glass and steel building that acquired international acclaim as the epitome of the Nieuwe Bouwen in the Netherlands. The first design for the little telephone building had man-high plates of expensive wired plate glass, but to save money a version where the glass walls were divided by four horizontal bars was chosen. In 1933 the commission for the industrial production of the PTT's telephone box was given to Gispens's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking N.V., which made them until 1950.

After the Second World War, a telephone directory rack, operating instructions, and a cigar tray interrupted the transparency of the box. But around 1936 the interior components were still limited to the telephone and two terminal boxes suspended on two tubes that protected the wiring for the telephone and the ceiling light. A bag

rack, a writing pad and an alarm notice completed the pre-war interior. The sans serif, lower-case lettering used for the word 'telefoon' four times in the characteristic blue glass on top and the words 'ook telegrammen' were also part of the original design.

The telephone box, which was transferred to the Rijksmuseum by the Museum voor Communicatie, was thoroughly restored in 2014 and 2015. The result is a museological *Gispens Type Telephone Box* like those the PTT installed in the Netherlands around 1936. The telephone (a *Münzfernsprecher 28c*) is a replica, apart from the receiver and the dial. The same applies to the shelf and the bag rack.

HS

LITERATURE:

Joris Molenaar, 'Het ideaal van de glazen zuil. De Nederlandse telefooncél 1931-1984', *Wonen TABK* 20 (1984), pp. 8-15

PROVENANCE:

Staatsbedrijf der Post Telegraaf en Telefoniedienst (PTT); ...; Museum voor Communicatie, The Hague, on loan to the Rijksmuseum 2013-18; donated by the Museum voor Communicatie, The Hague, 2018 (inv. no. NG-2018-490).



- 5 Ossip Zadkine (Vitebsk 1890-1967 Paris)
Design for a Monument to a Devastated City (The Destroyed City), 1947
 Plaster, 128.5 x 58.5 x 59 cm

The Destroyed City by the French sculptor Ossip Zadkine is an extraordinary monument commemorating a unique event in Dutch history: the destruction of the centre of Rotterdam by German Luftwaffe bombers on 14 May 1940. Nazi troops had invaded the country four days previously. The aerial bombardment breached the country's defences and led to its immediate capitulation.

Zadkine had been well regarded in the Netherlands since before the Second World War; he exhibited regularly as a guest of the *De Onafhankelijken* (The Independents) artists' society in Amsterdam and his work was bought by a number of private collectors. Shortly after the war, from 2 April to 4 July 1948, the Stedelijk Museum staged a retrospective of Zadkine's work with fifty-six statues made between 1913 and 1947. The small catalogue lists a *Design for a Monument to a Devastated City* as number 50. Zadkine had made this plaster model in 1947 after a smaller version in terracotta had come back from exhibitions in Munich and Berlin in pieces.

At the exhibition this representation of a pierced figure with its open mouth and arms raised to heaven attracted the attention of Gerrit van der Wal, the director of De Bijenkorf department store. In conversation with Willem Sandberg, the director of the Stedelijk, who also purchased art for the department store's collection, he conceived a plan to offer this statue to the city of Rotterdam, as a memorial to the bombardment. The Amsterdam-based company felt very involved with this because their local branch, located in a modern building designed by Willem Dudok (1884-1974), had been among those hit.

On 21 April 1948 Sandberg informed Zadkine that the *Design for a Monument to a Devastated City* had been sold. No names were mentioned but he was speaking – as we know now – on behalf of De Bijenkorf. After the exhibition two plaster copies were made. One of them may have served as the model for a bronze version made by the Binder foundry in Haarlem; the other was probably for Zadkine himself. The original *Design* remained in the Stedelijk Museum's collection on loan from De Bijenkorf until 1974 (inv. no. bb88).

The bronze cast, almost the same size as the plaster model, was shown to the people of Rotterdam at an exhibition in Museum Boijmans and at the *Rotterdam Ahoy*' redevelopment presentation in 1949-50 as an example of the monument that was to be erected. After Rotterdam city council had accepted the gift from the then anonymous donor, Zadkine was commissioned to execute the monument in bronze with an intended height of six metres.

The Destroyed City was unveiled on 15 May 1953 in Rotterdam on the north bank of the Leuvehaven, close to Dudok's damaged De Bijenkorf. It was not until 1978 that the department store admitted publicly that it had been the donor. A plaque was then affixed to the base bearing the words: 'In 1953 offered to Rotterdam, like us hit in the heart in the 1940-1945 war – De Bijenkorf'. In veiled terms this was also referring to the many Jewish members of staff whom the originally Jewish-owned department store had lost because of the Holocaust (Susan Hogervorst and Patricia van Ulzen, *Rotterdam en het bombardement: 75 jaar herinneren en vergeten*, Amsterdam 2015, pp. 68-115).

LVH

LITERATURE:

- Siebe Thissen, 'De verwoeste stad', in *Zadkine: Aan zee / By the Sea*, exh. cat. The Hague (Museum Beelden aan Zee) 2018, pp. 106-23, esp. pp. 110ff.
 Siebe Thissen, *Beelden: Stadsverfraaiing in Rotterdam sinds 1940*, s.l. 2016, pp. 166-67 and passim
 Ingrid Brons and Miep Vlag, *Zadkine en zijn Nederlandse leerlingen*, exh. cat. Laren (Museum Singer) 2003, pp. 34-39
 Sylvain Lecombe, *Ossip Zadkine: L'oeuvre sculpté*, Paris 1994, pp. 457-60
 Jana Beranová and Jim Postma, *Zadkine*, [Rotterdam 1985], passim
 J. Blom, *Zadkine's Monument*, [Amsterdam] 1953 (*Actuele Onderwerpen*, vol. 459), p. 16 (repr.)
Zadkine, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Stedelijk Museum) 1948, no. 50
Zadkine: Oeuvres récentes, exh. cat. Brussels (Palais des Beaux Arts) 1948, no. 43 (repr.)

PROVENANCE:

- The artist, 1947-48; from whom purchased by De Bijenkorf, 1948; on loan to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1948-74; on loan from De Bijenkorf to the museum, since 2018 (inv. no. BK-2018-99).



6 Design: Dom Hans van der Laan (Leiden 1904-1991 Mamelis)

Execution: Jan Noyons (Utrecht 1918-1982 Utrecht)

Silver Ciborium, 1966

Silver, parcel gilt, h. 7.6 x diam. 23.4 cm

Execution: Jan Noyons

Chalice, with Paten and Spoon in a Case, 1949

Silver, parcel gilt; leather, fabric and metal

Chalice: h. 15 cm; paten: diam. 17.4 cm;

spoon: l. 9 cm; case 18.6 x 18.6 x 23.2 cm

Execution: Willem Noyons (Utrecht 1956)

Silver-Plated Chalice, 1986

Silver-plated brass, h. 14.3 x diam. 16.4 cm

Dom Hans van der Laan was an architect and Benedictine monk who developed a theory of the plastic number. It consists of a mathematical series where each measurement is 1.3247 times as large as the previous one. Van der Laan maintained that harmonious rooms and objects could be designed by consistently applying this ratio. He attributed the same significance to the plastic number for architecture and design as the golden ratio has for two-dimensional art.

Van der Laan not only designed monasteries based on this plastic number, but everything inside them as well: furniture, liturgical vestments, church silver and so on. The dimensions of a monastery cell, which also served as the basis for the entire building, was reduced by the plastic number to calculate the appropriate measurements for these items. This gave rise to a true *Gesamtkunstwerk*. But the theory of the plastic number was not conceived overnight. As Van der Laan grew older, so it became more and more refined. This is evident in the small collection of liturgical silverware the Rijksmuseum recently acquired.

The set comprising the chalice, paten and spoon is wholly classical and was made for Father Quaaden as a gift from his family on the occasion of his ordination in 1949. He took the set with him to Indonesia, where it was used until recently in a church on the island of Flores (inv. no. BK-2018-98-1).

The ciborium, made for the canonesses of the Emmaus Priory in Maarssen, was designed in 1966. Van der Laan made innovations in its design that were entirely in the spirit of modernization in the Roman Catholic Church, as prescribed by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Whereas a ciborium is traditionally much taller and has

a cover, this modern variation looks more like a paten, a plate which bears the host. Van der Laan not only simplified his design by concentrating on the liturgical function of the object and less on its historical styling; he also tried to give the ciborium a more universal religious form by making a study of similar ritual objects from all over the world (inv. no. BK-2018-98-3).

Van der Laan wanted to have the last chalice that he designed made in a material other than silver. When the requirement that only silver and gold should come into contact with the host and wine was abolished, he discussed the use of stainless steel and nickel-plated brass with the silversmith Willem Noyons. In the end, silver-plated brass was chosen. The design was not only more simplified than that of the ciborium, it was also based entirely on the principle of the plastic number. The width of the foot, length of the handles, the width and the depth of the cuppa – all the measurements were derived from the plastic number (inv. no. BK-2018-98-2).

PA

LITERATURE:

- Michel Remery, *Mystery and Matter: On the Relationship between Liturgy and Architecture in the Thought of Dom Hans van der Laan OSB (1904-1991)*, Leiden 2011, table 2, fig. 2 (repr. BK-2018-98-1) and fig. 20 (repr. BK-2018-98-2)
- Michel Remery, *Katholieke architectuur in de twintigste eeuw: De vier architecten van de Leidse familie Van der Laan*, Hilversum 2008, pp. 280-81 (repr. BK-2018-98-3)
- Willem Noyons and Geesje Haensel (eds.), *Jan Noyons: Edelsmid*, Utrecht 2006, p. 78 (repr. BK-2018-98-2)



BK-2018-98-3

PROVENANCE:

Commissioned by the family of and donated to Lambert T. Quaaden (1924), Teteringen?, 1949; by whom sold to Willem Noyons, Utrecht, 2013; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Ambaum Haks Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2018
(inv. no. BK-2018-98-1).

Commissioned by the canonesses of the Emmaus Priory, Maarsse, 1966; by whom donated to Willem Noyons, 2017; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Ambaum Haks Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2018
(inv. no. BK-2018-98-3).

Willem Noyons, Utrecht, 1986; from whom purchased by the museum with the support of the Ambaum Haks Fonds/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2018
(inv. no. BK-2018-98-2).



BK-2018-98-1



BK-2018-98-2

- 7 Design: Wim Rietveld (Utrecht 1924-1985 Badhoevedorp), 1953
 Manufacture: Gispén's Fabriek voor Metaalbewerking N.V., 1954-59
Wall Unit no. 663
 Steel and paint, 136 x 122 x 33 cm

In 1954 the firm of Gispén introduced a set of 'furniture for the simple interior'. As was the company's usual practice, it did not give names to the individual items of furniture, just a model number. Number 663 was a 'made-to-measure wall unit' which could be built up from nine different components. With standardized uprights, braces, supports, shelves, panels and flaps, it was possible to put together a wall unit to suit; if it was an open configuration it could be used as a free-standing room divider. The colour was praised as the tenth 'component'. Flaps, shelves and panels were available in red, yellow, blue and cream, which harmonized with the grey of the uprights, braces and supports. The primary colour palette was a specific reference to the visual language of the *De Stijl* movement (1917-31) which had again been brought to the public's attention in a retrospective staged in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 1951.

The designer at Gispén who was responsible for this model had known the history of *De Stijl* from an early age; Wim Rietveld was the youngest son of *Stijl* architect and furniture designer Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964). After training as an instrument maker, he spent a short time working in his father's office. In 1950 he was a member of the select group of eighteen students at the Royal Academy for Fine Arts in The Hague who were allowed to take the very first Dutch course in industrial design.

The talent he demonstrated prompted Gispén to employ him as a designer after he graduated in 1953. His 'furniture for the simple interior' is still seen as characteristic of the post-war recovery in the Netherlands. It combines inventive constructions with economical use of materials to make industrial mass production possible in times of scarcity.

After Rietveld left Gispén in the late nineteen-fifties he spent some time working for the office furniture manufacturer Ahrend-De Cirkel; he designed agricultural vehicles for Vicon, scales for Van Berkel and domestic electrical appliances for Inventum. While at Werkspoor, he worked on the standard local bus and on the first metro carriages for the Gemeentelijk Vervoerbedrijf, Amsterdam's

public transport provider. In 1960 he became a lecturer in industrial design at the Hague academy and then an extraordinary professor at the University of Technology in Delft.

For Gispén, *Wall Unit no. 663* was the first fully developed furniture system. The company had already been experimenting with a series of modular storage cabinets in the early nineteen-thirties; *Sideboard no. 706* in the Rijksmuseum's collection is a rare and early example (inv. no. BK-2011-56). Only a few were sold, and the model was quickly dropped from their range. Things changed, however, immediately after the Second World War. There was a market for flexible, practical and cheap furniture systems that could be configured as required. Countless manufacturers started making this system furniture, some of which is still being produced.

LVH

LITERATURE:

- André Koch and Sylvia van Schaik, *Gispén*, [Zwolle] 2011, pp. 123-31, p. 141 (repr.)
 Sylvia van Schaik, *Het bedrijf Gispén: Door de jaren heen, 1916-1991*, Culemborg 2009, pp. 20, 22
 Barbara Laan and André Koch (eds.), *Collectie Gispén: Meubels, lampen en archivalia in het NAI 1916-1980*, Rotterdam [1996], pp. 120-21
 Ed van Hinte, *Wim Rietveld: Industrieel ontwerper*, Rotterdam 1996, pp. 76-77
Gispén: Meubelen voor het eenvoudige interieur. Cat. 0/1-6, sale cat. Culemborg (c. 1954), unpagéd

PROVENANCE:

- ...; Stichting Gispén Collection, Culemborg; by which donated to the Instituut Collectie Nederland (merged into Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, RCE), Rijswijk, 2011; transferred from stewardship of the RCE to the museum, 2017 (inv. no. BK-2017-36).



- 8 Armando, pseudonym of Herman Dirk van Dodeweerd (Amsterdam 1929-2018 Potsdam)
Peinture criminelle 4-1956, 1956
 Oil on hardboard, 122 x 91.8 cm

Armando occupies a special place in the history of Dutch art in the second half of the twentieth century. Aside from being an artist who left a substantial oeuvre of drawings, paintings and sculptures, he worked as a journalist, poet, actor and violinist. A core feature of his work involved processing the events of the Second World War. He was fascinated by problems of guilt and wrongdoing and the beauty of evil throughout his life.

Armando made his debut as an artist in 1954 with a solo exhibition of drawings in Le Canard Gallery in Amsterdam. The Rijksmuseum Print Room bought one of his drawings in that same year (inv. no. RP-T-1954-176), and was probably one of the first museums to acquire his work.

Peinture criminelle 4-1956 is one of a group of paintings that all have the same title. Most of them feature a head (or an entire body) in profile, with a malevolent eye and a grinning mouth concealed in the crusty layer of paint. Other groups that Armando worked on in the mid-nineteen-fifties have titles such as *Paysage criminelle* and *Espace criminelle*. He restricted his palette to ochre, grey, red, and black (with green and blue as exceptions), which at the time evoked associations with the mud and the blood of the battlefield. The coarse texture was achieved by adding sand and plaster to the oil paint and applying it with a filling knife or palette knife.

Armando's rough textures chimed with the matter painting that was in the ascendant in Europe in the nineteen-fifties. But unlike his – mostly rather older – contemporaries, who sought expressiveness of the material itself, his paintings also contained an element of provocation. At any rate this was how some people interpreted it after they had seen his paintings in 1956. The *Peintures criminelles* series appeared for the first time in two group exhibitions of the work of the *Liga Nieuw Beelden* artists' society in the Dordrechts Museum and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. A virtually monochrome red painting acted almost literally like a red rag to a bull, inflaming opinion which was dominated that autumn by the Hungarian uprising and its suppression by the Soviet Union. Armando's work was the focal point of a discussion in the Amsterdam newspaper *Het Parool*

about 'dangerous Communism' and a 'nihilistic, anti-democratic' mentality which might be propagated by these 'criminal' paintings. Even though he categorically denied that art like Armando's had to be banned, the writer of the most notorious article, the art critic J.M. Prange, aired his view under the headline 'Degenerate Art' – in quotation marks, it is true, but the emotionally charged term nevertheless hit home.

Insinuations of undesirable political leanings or a reprehensible mentality did not prevent Hans Rooduijn, the owner of Le Canard, from staging another one-man exhibition of Armando's work there in early 1957, this time of his paintings. The *Peintures criminelles*, all on the same sized standard sheets of hardboard that Armando used as his supports, were hung close together in the small gallery space. The writer and artist Jan Elburg (1919-1992), a prominent representative of the *Vijftigers*, a loose group of experimental Dutch writers, made the opening speech, standing in front of *Peinture criminelle 4-1956*. Elburg did not think that the paintings were 'criminal' at all, but rather the opposite. In his eyes they were an absolutely vital, almost moralistic warning against the evil that lurked in the mind of man: 'That's why there are artists who paint with colours of your blood and your turned-over soil, that's why we work with cinders and plaster of Paris. They are your true artists: artists who show you your emptiness and rubbish and blood.'*

LVH

* Typescript (in Dutch) in the collection of the Armando Foundation, viewed thanks to the kind offices of Tom Rooduijn.

LITERATURE:

Armando: Pictor Pictura, exh. cat. Oss (Museum Jan Cunen)/The Hague (Galerie Nouvelles Images) 1994, no. 2 (repr.)
 Louis Ferron (ed.), *Armando: Schilder – schrijver*, Weesp 1985, p. 22 (repr.), pp. 36-37 (repr.)

PROVENANCE:

The artist; Tony de Meijere, Amstelveen; on loan to the Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo, 2010-17; gift of Tony de Meijere to the museum, 2017
 (inv. no. SK-A-5047).



- 9 Jan Noyons (Utrecht 1918-1982 Utrecht)
Silver and Gold Oil Vessel, 1962
 Silver, gold; h. 11.4 x diam. 10.4 cm

Jan Noyons was a silversmith in Utrecht. He trained at the workshop of Nico Witteman (1900-1982) in Amsterdam, where he not only learned the trade, but became acquainted with antique and medieval art and design. Following Witteman, Noyons would initially specialize in Catholic precious metal work in his own workshop, where he was able to work in any size imaginable: from liturgical vessels to complete altars and even church doors.

Noyons benefited from the boom in church building that accompanied the growth in population and the post-war reconstruction. His designs are characterized by clear shapes, rhythmic patterns and harmonious proportions. Although often inspired by classical forms, his designs were nonetheless essentially modern. But in the early nineteen-sixties commissions from the Catholic Church took a downturn, in part because the Second Vatican Council had ruled that many rituals, and the liturgical trappings that accompanied them, were no longer compulsory. The workshop's secular production then gained the upper hand and jewellery and autonomous art became more important to Noyons. He also increasingly concentrated on making designs and left the execution to his employees.

During his time with Witteman, Noyons got to know the monk, architect and designer Dom Hans van der Laan (see no. 6). As soon as he set up his own workshop, he began executing Van der Laan's designs. They frequently talked about their designs and influenced one another. Noyons had no difficulty working to Van der Laan's strict principles of proportion, but he was more free-thinking in his own designs.

The silver oil vessel the Rijksmuseum received as a gift was designed by Noyons in 1962 for the chapel of the Anthonius Hospital in Utrecht. It has applications of gold and is striking in its distinguished yet simple style. The line decoration on the cup is a stylized continuation of the meander motif which the silversmith had used in previous work. He had taken this meander from Byzantine art, which was also a great source of inspiration for architects like Van der Laan. Noyons would also often use the combination of silver and gold in his ornaments. He believed that

the two materials complemented one another and at the same time made a beautiful contrast.

PA

LITERATURE:

Willem Noyons and Geesje Haensel (eds.), *Jan Noyons: Edelsmid*, Utrecht 2006, p. 7 (repr. on dustcover)
 Maarten Vrolijk & B.W. Buenk, *Europees handgedreven zilver*, exh. cat. Zeist (Koninklijke van Kempen & Begeer) 1965-66, unpagged (repr.)

PROVENANCE:

Commissioned by the Anthonius Hospital, Utrecht, 1962; sale, Dordrecht (Mak), 14-17 December 1982, no. 2091; from which acquired by Annelies Kregel, Amersfoort, 1982; acquired by Mrs C.T. Bonebakker-Maas, Utrecht 2016; by whom donated to the museum, 2018
 (inv. no. BK-2018-96).



10 Armando, pseudonym of Herman Dirk van Dodeweerd (Amsterdam 1929-2018 Potsdam)
Four Times Black, 1963
 Tinplate, hobnails and enamel paint on panel, 54 x 60 cm

In the early nineteen-sixties there was a short interlude in Armando's oeuvre. Expressive paintings, which explored the themes of guilt and wrongdoing after the Second World War, made way for anti-artistic artworks – a contradiction in terms.

In 1960, influenced by the German Zero group based in Düsseldorf, Armando, Jan Schoonhoven, Henk Peeters and Jan Henderikse founded the Nul group. In an attempt to give a genuine representation of reality they used industrially produced materials or found objects and applied them in a repetitive manner. All of this stemmed from the objective of capturing 'reality', and in the early nineteen-sixties this reality was the advancing consumer society. This method resulted in many monochrome artworks, most of them in white or black. In this respect, the work of Piero Manzoni (1933-1963) greatly influenced the Nul group. In 1958 the Italian artist showed his white *Achromes* in the Rotterdam Kunstkring and was then invited to take part in the large *Nul* exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1962.

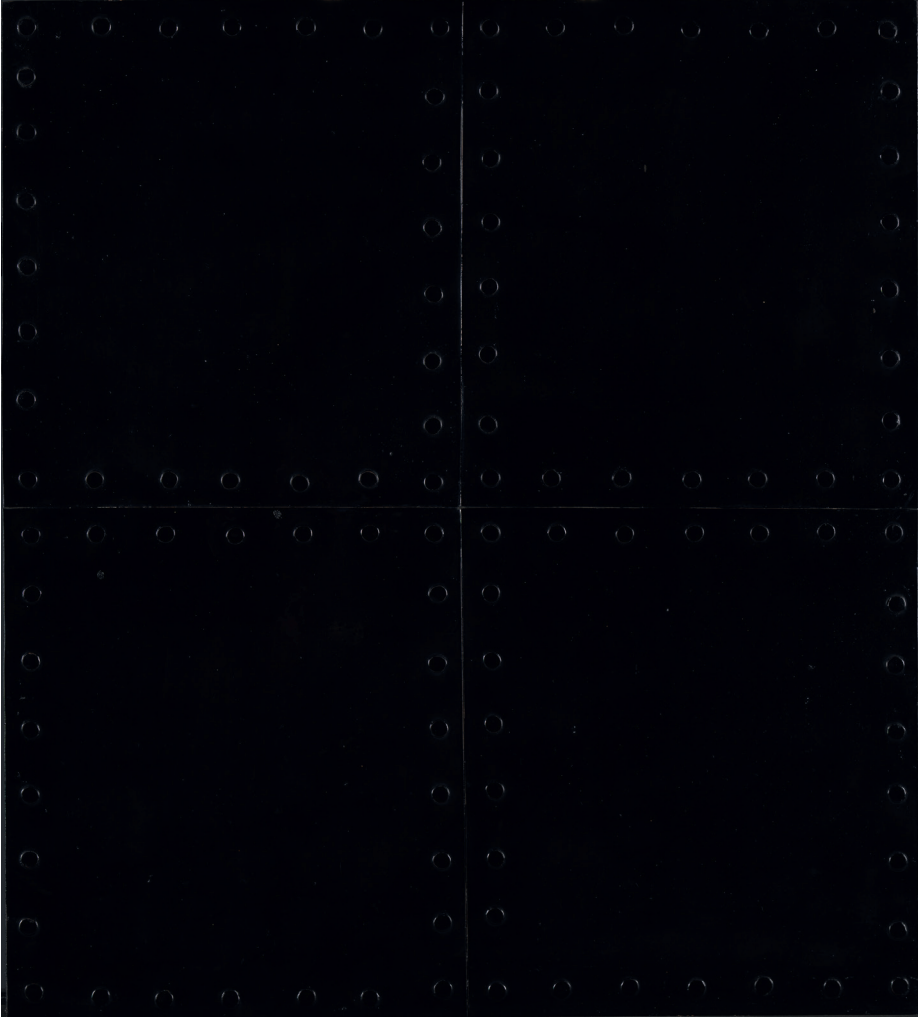
For *Four Times Black* Armando fixed four metal plates of the same size to a panel, which he bought from the ironmongers, as usual. The hobnails, which are hammered in at the same distance apart along the edges of the plates, reinforce the formal characteristic of repetition. It was then given a finishing coat of black house paint. The object was created in a series of similar artworks in 1963, such as *Six Times Red* and *Six Times White*. The seriality of these works emphasizes Armando's view of art in this period. Authenticity and artistry didn't matter anymore; the artist's hand no longer needed to be recognizable.

This 'unartistic' interruption in Armando's oeuvre ended in 1965. Although his work was shown in *Nul negentienhonderd vijf en zestig* (1965), the last Nul exhibition, Armando actually walked out of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam during the official opening and distanced himself from the group. He returned to a personal and expressive approach. *Four Times Black* and other works in this series contrast sharply with Armando's visual idiom before and after the Nul period 1960-65.

OE

PROVENANCE:

The artist; Tony de Meijere, Amstelveen; by whom donated to the museum, 2017
 (inv. no. SK-A-5048).



- 11 Paco Rabanne (San Sebastian 1934)
Mini Dress, 1966
 Aluminium and iron, l. 73 cm

In August 1966 the fashion designer of Basque origin, Paco Rabanne, presented his futuristic metal and plastic designs at the Iris Clert Gallery in Paris. In February of that same year Rabanne had already shown his very first collection, appropriately named *Manifesto*, in the famous Hotel George V, where his *Twelve Unwearable Dresses in Contemporary Materials* immediately attracted worldwide attention. Not surprising, then, that Clert offered him a stage in her small but eminent gallery in the heart of the Parisian art scene.

Rabanne had studied architecture at the *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris and graduated from there in 1963. Shortly afterwards he worked for the Parisian fashion houses of Balenciaga, Courrèges and Pierre Cardin, for whom he designed accessories and embroidery. His decision to work for these fashion houses reflects his interest in a new design idiom and the use of 'modern' materials. Whereas Balenciaga was a master in understanding the potential of a fabric and flawlessly adapted his patterns to it, Courrèges and Cardin looked to the future and what this could possibly bring in terms of shapes and materials. After these 'learning years', Rabanne started to work for himself in 1966.

The mini dress purchased by the Rijksmuseum is a clear example of Rabanne's 'unwearable dresses'; it is made from aluminium plates (rectangular and square), some with hemispheres, linked together with metal rings. On the one hand it is reminiscent of the metal cuirasses worn by Roman soldiers, and on the other a reference to a future with space travel and new forms of clothes. The hemispheres are fastened with a double pin through a small hole in the plate, then the pins are bent to the outside (like a split pin) and topped off with a measured piece of tape as protection. The dress has a split back and closes with a metal hook and eye fastener on a chain. Traces of corrosion from wear were found in places on the inside of the dress, and a couple of plates at the back are slightly bent, most probably because the wearer sat down in it. According to newspaper reports a body stocking – also a new phenomenon at that time – was worn underneath. Even so, it would have been extremely uncomfortable.

The up-market Metz & Co store in Amsterdam had bought in a number of plastic versions but none of them sold. A journalist from *De Tijd* had received 'a kind of hard aluminium foil' printed invitation for the presentation at the Iris Clert Gallery and travelled to Paris: 'He [Rabanne] exhibited his dresses riveted together from little plates in the small avant-garde Iris Clert gallery at 28 Faubourg Saint Honoré. There were crazy and shabby things all over the place and among them dolls wearing chain-mail-like clothes made from plates, metal, leather or plastic. Mainly plastic. A film star who had worn a plastic dress like this over her bare skin on a sunny beach seems to have been burnt in places by the effect of the sun on the plastic!' The Netherlands was clearly not yet ready for Paco Rabanne's vision.

BMDM

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, United Kingdom; sale, London (Kerry Tailor Auctions), 20 December 2018, no. 2, to the museum with the support of the Fonds Haute Couture/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2018

(inv. no. BK-2019-13).



12 Emmy van Leersum (Hilversum 1930-1984 Amersfoort)

Collar with Clasp, 1967

Aluminium, silver, 29 x 18 cm

Wedding Dress in Sage Green Raw Silk, 1974

Silk or artificial silk, l. 140 cm

The Rijksmuseum has acquired an iconic ensemble from the late nineteen-sixties by the designer Emmy van Leersum. The aluminium collar was donated in 2017, and the accompanying wedding gown was purchased this year. Her work, which had yet to be represented in the collection, was of great influence in the Netherlands and was part of the international developments in decorative art and fashion. The collar and the wedding dress are one of the few complete and original ensembles. There is also a white mini dress with a silver collar in the collection of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht (inv. no. 16708/001-002).

Emmy van Leersum studied at the Institute for Applied Arts Education (IVKNO) – later the Gerrit Rietveld Academy – between 1958 and 1962. In her last year at the academy, influenced by her lecturer Marinus Zwollo (1903-1983), Van Leersum became fascinated by the concept of the single, flowing form: jewellery that consisted of a single form, usually chased, which was not built up by soldering several parts together or linked with a traditional clasp. The developments Van Leersum made in the years that followed led to a chased silver bracelet in 1966. This spiral bracelet formed the basis for the series of aluminium collars Van Leersum and her husband, the designer Gijs Bakker (1942), made in 1966-67 for an exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Van Leersum preferred not to use the term ‘jewellery’, however. For her it was all about the relationship between her designs, the body and clothes, which is why the collars were shown in combination with dresses in the Stedelijk Museum.

The spectacular designs soon attracted attention abroad. In 1968 one of the ensembles was exhibited in the Museum for Contemporary Crafts in New York, the present Museum of Arts and Design (MAD). The pieces were displayed alongside an aluminium mini dress by Paco Rabanne (1934; cf. no. 11).

The aluminium collar in the Rijksmuseum’s collection was directly influenced by the silver bracelet and illustrates the change of material

and increase in scale that was to typify Van Leersum’s work in those years. Aluminium enabled Van Leersum and Bakker to present their ideas and design idiom on a larger scale. The material was affordable, and endless polishing created the mirrored surface that gave the collars their futuristic appearance. The choice of this lightweight material was also a practical one; silver would have made the large collars far too heavy.

In 1974 the collar was bought by Mrs M.H. van der Horst at Van Leersum and Bakker’s studio in Utrecht, the ‘Werfkelder voor Multipliceerbare Objecten’. When she asked Van Leersum if she would design a wedding dress to go with it, this was wholly in line with the artist’s idea of creating a total design. The wedding dress echoes the lines of the dresses made in 1967 for the exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum, but is considerably longer. This ensemble took Van Leersum’s designs beyond the art circuit in which they were originally presented.

SVL

PROVENANCE:

The artist; from whom purchased by Mrs M.H. van der Horst, 1974; her sale, The Hague (Venduehuis der Notarissen), June 2017, no. 2122, to Mr H.B. van der Ven, The Hague; by whom donated to the museum, 2017 (inv. no. BK-2017-8).

Commissioned by Mrs M.H. van der Horst, 1974; from whom purchased by the museum, 2019 (inv. no. BK-2019-22).



- 13 René Daniëls (Eindhoven 1950)
Cocoanuts, 1982
 Oil on canvas, 200 x 140 cm

René Daniëls shares with Magritte (1898-1967) not just his first name, but his delight in playing with the ambiguity of language and image. But where Magritte persuades the viewer with precision, Daniëls seduces us with a light-hearted, carefree manner, as if the composition is created *aus einem Guß* – a casualness which chimed with the ‘wild painting’ that was all the rage internationally around 1980.

The fact that this carelessness is a pretence is evident from the story of the creation of the painting *Cocoanuts*, which is documented in photographs from the nineteen-eighties. The painting is one of the works in the selection chosen for the seventh *documenta* in 1982 in Kassel, the leading event that takes stock of contemporary art every five years. It was still unfinished when the catalogue went to the printer’s, however, so the illustration was just the man with the upside-down beard against a light background. Studio photographs (reproduced in later exhibition catalogues) show that the man was reversed in an earlier design. Shortly before the *documenta* Daniëls must have painted the orange background and the branches of ‘fruit’. At that time the ‘nuts’ were still open, with vulva-like contours, as the counterpart to the green ‘bananas’ on the same branch. Later (before mid-1985) they were painted over with brown, making the composition more tranquil and reinforcing the contrast between the finished left side and the empty, ‘incomplete’ section on the right. This is the second, final state of the painting.*

In the title Daniëls plays with the words *coconut* and *cocoa*, which appear to refer to the branches with the brown coconuts or cocoa beans. But the word ‘nuts’ in the title can equally well be a reference to the silliness of the fishtail-like beard that flutters upwards against the laws of gravity, or to the male sexual organ with underlying scrotum painted lower left in outline against the orange background. And finally, bearing in mind the painted-out shape of the vulva, there is a possibility that the vertical beard symbolizes an erection that the man is trying to hide with both hands in front of his crutch.

In Daniëls’s work titles are inextricably linked with the ‘reading’ of the image. The essential but confusing role of double entendres, puns and

word-image associations lead to a confusion of possible interpretations, but nevertheless language did not gain the upper hand in his work. *Cocoanuts* also shows that Daniëls’s fame as the innovator of Dutch painting of the nineteen-eighties is based on his phenomenal and surprising use of colour and his ability to leave an indelible impression with enigmatic images.

LVH

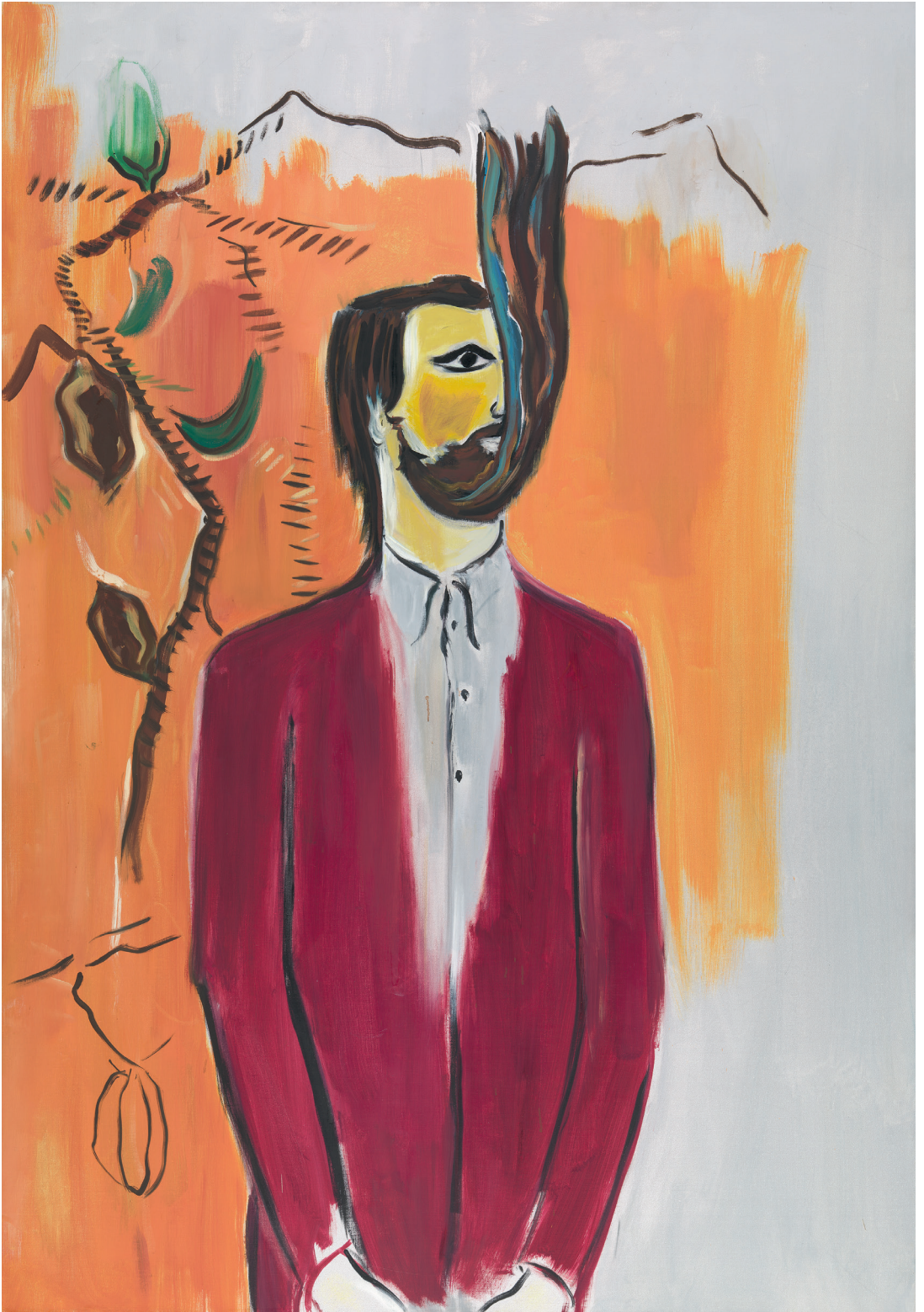
* With thanks to Paul Andriess.

LITERATURE:

Dominic van den Boogerd, *Grote verleidingen: De onweersaanbare schilderkunst*, Amsterdam 2018 (repr. cover)
 Devrim Bayer (ed.), *René Daniëls: Fragmenten uit een onvoltooide roman*, exh. cat. Brussels (Wiels)/Geneva (Musée d’art Moderne et Contemporain) 2018, pp. 94 (repr.), 236
René Daniëls: De woorden staan niet op hun juiste plaats, exh. cat. Eindhoven (Van Abbemuseum)/Madrid (Museo Nacional Centro de Art Reina Sofía) 2012, pp. 47, 59 (repr.), 181
René Daniëls: Painting on Unknown Languages, exh. cat. London (Camden Arts Centre) (File Note #55) 2010 (repr. cover)
René Daniëls, exh. cat. Eindhoven (Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum)/Wolfsburg (Kunstmuseum)/Basel (Kunsthalle) 1998-99, pp. 25, 61, 138 (repr.), 181
Sammlung Garnatz, Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, exh. cat. Karlsruhe (Städtische Galerie) 1996, pp. 102 (repr.), 142 (repr.)
René Daniëls: Schilderijen en tekeningen 1976-1986, exh. cat. Eindhoven (Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum) 1986, p. 32 (repr.)
documenta 7, exh. cat. Kassel 1982, vol. 11, p. 97 (repr. in unfinished state)

PROVENANCE:

The artist; sold through Paul Andriess Gallery, 1985 or 1986; ...; Jule Kewenig, Cologne; ...; Ute and Eberhard Garnatz, Cologne; on loan to the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, 1996-2003; sold to Paul Andriess Gallery, Amsterdam, from which purchased by Jan Maarten Boll, 2003; on loan to De Pont, Tilburg, 2003-14; on loan to the museum, 2014-18; gift of Jan Maarten and Pauline Boll-Kruseman to the museum, 2018 (inv. no. SK-A-5056).



- 14 Carel Visser (Papendrecht 1928-2015 Le Fousseret)
Speed Six Hat Stand, 1988
 Brass, copper and horses' hooves, h. 180 x diam. 74 cm
 edition no. 6/6

Speed Six Table, 1988
 Brass, copper, glass and marble, h. 72 x diam. 125 cm

Lamp, 1989
 Brass, copper, cow horns, glass and electric cable, h. 56.1 x diam. 59 cm

Carel Visser ranks as one of the Netherlands' most high-profile post-war sculptors. His artistic career covered a period of more than half a century in which he constantly reinvented himself without losing his own signature. The 1964 sculpture *Eight Stacked Beams* made of welded iron, which the Rijksmuseum acquired in 2008, can certainly be seen as representative of the early phase of Visser's work (inv. no. BK-2008-4). Its formal geometric abstraction was rooted in the structures of nature.

Around 1980 Visser took a new direction and moved away from both geometry and his frequent use of iron. Instead, he moved to a much looser, almost collage-like way of composing with all kinds of materials and objects he found around him – at the time he was living and working in a farmhouse in the Betuwe. He combined parts of wrecked cars, such as tyres, windows and sawn-off roofs, with sheep's wool, feathers, wings and bones in a surprising and almost narrative way.

Alongside his one-off sculptures (and works on paper) he also created ornaments and table sculptures that could sometimes also serve as fruit bowls or serving trays. They were always unique pieces which featured animal bones, teeth and horns in custom-made frames of silver, copper and brass.

Following on from these objects, in the mid-nineteen-eighties Visser made some furniture designs at the request of the Italian curator Luca Dosi Delfini, who worked at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag and then at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Dosi Delfini had previously collaborated with the American artist and theatre director Robert Wilson (1941) and had produced some of his furniture under the name Editions Dosi Delfini.

The hat stand and table produced in 1988 seem to be based on (outdoor) furniture of bent iron from the nineteenth century. The shapes were tautened to form perfect (semi) circles of high-

gloss brass tubes that were given a post-modern twist by a combination of heart-shaped marble feet (table) or horses' hooves as feet (hat stand). When both pieces came to be named, Visser, a great car enthusiast, expressed his admiration for the legendary 1928 Bentley Speed Six racing car and the impressive interplay of lines of its formidable six-cylinder engine.

The Editions Dosi Delfini was not a commercial success. Dosi Delfini sold the first five hat stands of the six which were made, but the table was a one-off – he kept it for himself. A year later Visser designed a large table lamp very much along the lines of the Speed Six furniture, with the same combination of brass, with cow horns as uprights.

LVH

LITERATURE:

Carel Blotkamp, *Carel Visser: Genesis*, exh. cat. The Hague (Museum Beelden aan Zee) 2019, pp. 116 (repr. BK-2014-2-5), 117 (repr. BK-2017-33)
Het meubel verbeeld | Furniture as Art, exh. cat. Rotterdam (Museum Boymans-van Beuningen) 1988, p. 53 (repr. BK-2014-2-5, 6)

PROVENANCE:

Luca Dosi Delfini (1939-2011), Amsterdam, 1988-2011; his heirs; transfer of ownership as settlement of inheritance tax, placed in the museum, 2014
 (inv. nos. BK-2014-2-5, 6).

...; transfer of stewardship from the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), 2017
 (inv. no. BK-2017-33).



BK-2014-2-5



BK-2014-2-6



BK-2017-33

15 Erik Andriesse (1957-1993)
Dooie dierentuin (Dead Zoo), 1990-91
 Acrylic paint on linen, 250 x 365 cm

Erik Andriesse belonged to the generation of artists who rediscovered expressive and figurative painting in the nineteen-eighties – in response to the conceptual art that dominated the nineteen-sixties and seventies. Andriesse's talent as a teenager caught the eye of collectors and museums, and he was soon regarded as a prodigy. His sudden death in 1993 put an end to a promising career. Nevertheless, Andriesse left an oeuvre worthy of mention. The painting *Dooie dierentuin (Dead Zoo)*, both in terms of size and artistry, can be regarded as his magnum opus.

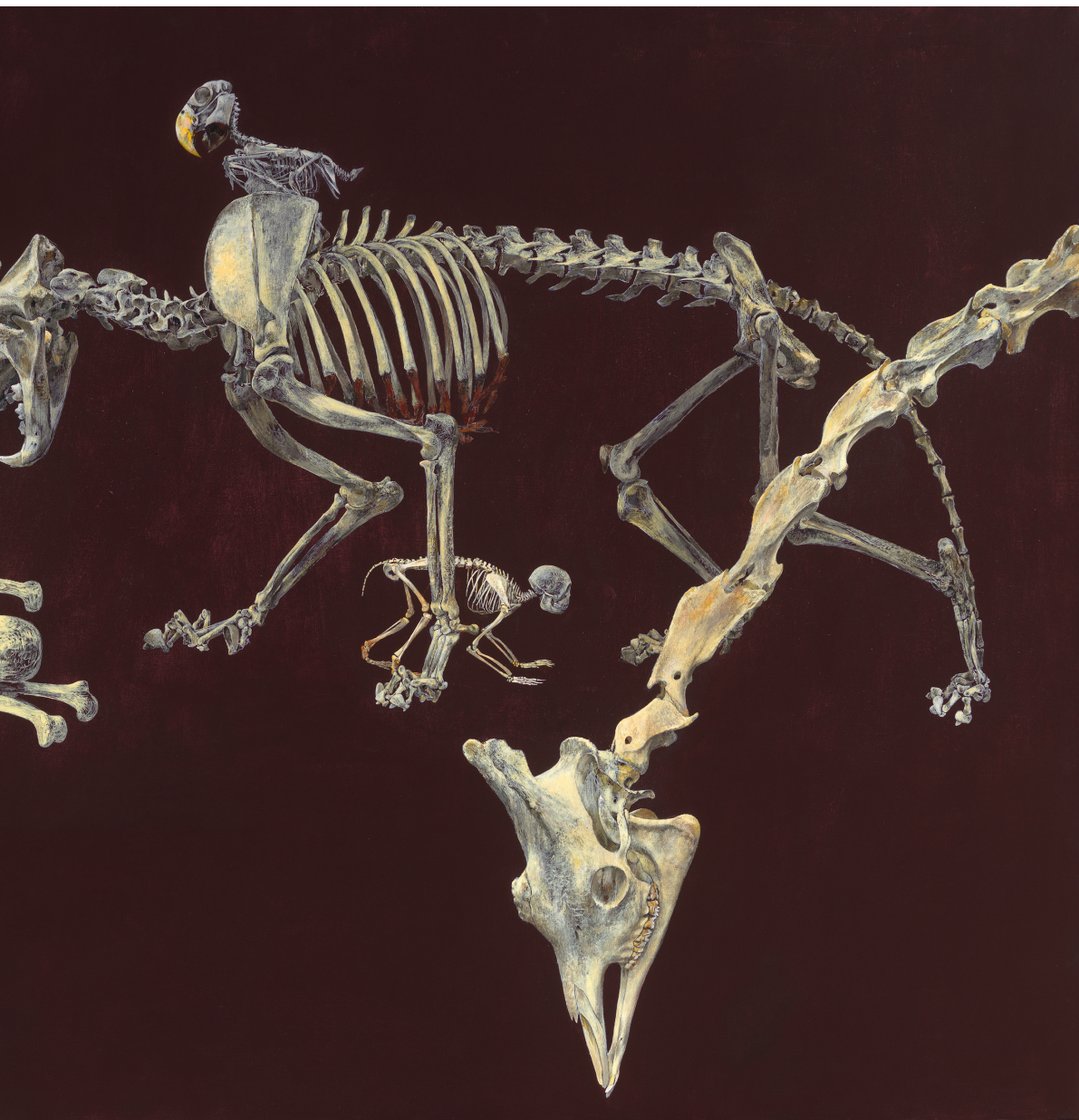
Andriesse made the painting during a residence at Artis Zoo that culminated in a solo exhibition in the Zoological Museum of the University of Amsterdam (ZMA). The museum was part of the university's Faculty of Biology and was located in the Aquarium Building in Artis. The ZMA had a sizeable collection of stuffed animals, skeletons and shells that Andriesse was keen to study. He also watched with fascination when the taxidermists dissected dead animals. The fact that a parallel world of dead animals existed in Artis alongside the living, led to the idea of a 'zoo of dead animals', for which he used various skeletons he had previously found in the attics of the Rijksakademie and new ones from Artis.

Fred Leeman, then head curator of the Van Gogh Museum, saw the still unfinished *Dooie dierentuin* during a visit to Andriesse's studio. In the exhibition catalogue *Erik Andriesse (1991)* Leeman remarked that the dark reddish-brown painted canvas had a bright pink ground. In some places this ground colour is still visible today. At the time of Leeman's visit the composition was not yet finished, but he presumed that a crocodile skull that was lying in the studio, but had yet to be given a place on the canvas, perhaps 'will glide noiselessly – as is the wont of the crocodiles – from left to right through the lower edge of the painting, towards the giraffe'. However, Andriesse did something entirely different. He depicted the crocodile with its wide-open jaws in the lower left-hand corner of the painting. All the skeletons have thus become the prey of this predator and are caught in its grip, even though they may not have noticed that themselves.



The skeletons are very detailed and set on the canvas in a natural way as if Andriesse had drawn them rather than painted them. The monochrome background suggests an indeterminate space in which the skeletons have acquired a certain weightlessness, as if they are floating, giving the enormous painting the macabre yet witty quality of a dance of death.

OE



LITERATURE:

Erik Amaryllis Ananas Andriessse, exh. cat. *Wijlre* (Hedge House) 2009, (p. 11) (repr.)
 Paul Andriessse (ed.), *Erik Andriessse polaroids*, Bussum 2003, pp. 4-5 (repr.)
 Robert-Jan Muller and Saskia Wijne, *Erik Andriessse*, Zwolle 2003, pp. 104, 111 (repr.), 155 (lit.)
 Bianca Stigter, 'De dode dieren tuin', in idem, *Goud uit stro*, Amsterdam 2002, pp. 174-78
 Robert-Jan Muller and Paul Andriessse (eds.), *Erik Andriessse*,

Bussum 1998, pp. 48-49 (repr.)

Erik Andriessse: Schilderijen/paintings 1989-1991, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Zoological Museum of the University of Amsterdam)/New York (Jack Tilton Gallery) 1991, [pp. 25-26]

PROVENANCE:

The artist; his heirs, 1993-2018; on loan to De Pont, Tilburg, 1994-2013; donated in memory of Sonja van Asselt (1923-2017), mother of the artist, to the museum, 2018
 (inv. no. SK-A-5054).