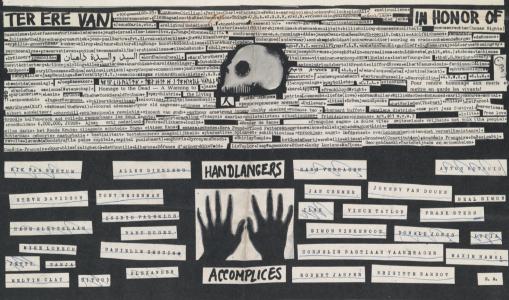
# OPEN-I-JET-GRAF

HAPPENING ORGANIZED BY MELVIN CLAY, FRANK STERN & SIMON VINKENOOG





ZONDAG.9.DECEMBER. 22 U.NM. PRINSENGRACHT.146.AMSTERDAM

## Acquisitions: Dutch Counter Culture 1960-70

HARM STEVENS

Poster 'Open het graf'
Amsterdam, 1962
Photo montage, 574 x 403 mm

'Open het graf' (Open the grave), a happening on the evening of 9 December 1962 in the studio of Rik van Bentum (1936-1994) at 146 Prinsengracht, is recorded as the first happening in the Netherlands – an important moment. The driving force behind 'Open het graf' was the poet Simon Vinkenoog (1928-2009). From the nineteen-fifties onwards Vinkenoog kept in touch with foreign artists who were familiar with the new creative phenomenon of happenings. Actor and coorganizer Melvin Clay of the New York Living Theatre was part of the scene that converged on Ibiza not long before 'Open het graf'. The French participant Jean Jacques Lebel (1936) was also a member of Vinkenoog's circle. Far more important than that foreign presence, though, was the remarkable gathering at this happening of Dutch 'happeners', who had come from impoverished artistic environments and the underground of the Leidseplein Youth, including Gerrit 'the ether sniffer' Lakmaaker (1938-1995) and a very young Johnny 'the Selfkicker' van Doorn (1944-1991).

The poster, which is a collage of names and faces – some world famous, others less well-known – with the programme book (inv. no. GF 386 H 8) and several photographs (inv. no. NG-2016-67-1 to 15) are the important documentation of the happening. It consisted of a series of interwoven performances by Gerrit Lakmaker ('dance and pace-setting'), Jean Jacques Lebel ('parody on the spectacle of television and the consumer society'), Johnny the Selfkicker ('electric act') and Robert Jasper Grootveld (1932-2009), who as part of his

anti-smoking campaign handed out illegal marijuana. A 'mobile art group' made a structure out of dismantled chairs and tables and painted it red in situ. Art manifested itself here extremely expressively and loudly as an event, not as an object, outside the walls of institutions and museums, and was mixed with forms of social activism. These were defining elements for the anarcho-playful counter-culture that grew remarkably in strength in the Netherlands over the course of the nineteen-sixties and made Amsterdam a progressive and spirited hotspot known throughout the world.

#### LITERATURE:

Randstad 11-12 (1966), Amsterdam/Antwerp, pp. 312-16 Wim A.L. Beeren et al., Actie, werkelijkheid en fictie in de kunst van de jaren '60 in Nederland, The Hague 1979, pp. 54-59

#### PROVENANCE:

...; purchased from John Benjamins Antiquariat, Amsterdam, by the museum with the support of Pon Holdings B.V., 2016 (inv. no. NG-2016-52-11).

2 ROBERT JASPER GROOTVELD (1932-2009) and various photographers Scrapbook, 1955-62 Gelatin silver print, paper, plastic, metal, ballpoint pen, 200 x 150 mm (closed)

This scrapbook, a small ring binder with a green plastic cover, was compiled by Robert Jasper Grootveld. We do not know when Grootveld began to put it together, but we may assume that Grootveld created this collection of images and cuttings as an overview of the earliest years of his creative life as an exhibitionist/ 'happener' or (as we would say now) performer. The newspaper and magazine cuttings and photographs cover the 1955-62 period.

In ballpoint pen, Grootveld wrote lines from Lucebert's poem *Hoop op iwosyg*, which was published in 1952, one or two lines on each page, beginning on page two with the poem's first line: 'daar zit de kleine iwosyg' (there's the little iwosyg). Above the line Grootveld stuck three small photographs of himself in women's clothes, sitting with his legs crossed. On other pages, too, Grootveld seems to have adapted his appearance to the lines from the poem. It is likely that Grootveld recog-



#### LITERATURE:

Eric Duivenvoorden, Magiër van een nieuwe tijd. Het leven van Robert Jasper Grootveld, Amsterdam 2009, pp. 111-14

PROVENANCE: Purchased from the Fonds 1975/Rijksmuseum Fonds, 2017

(inv. no. NG-2017-2).

nised himself in Lucebert's poem about 'de kleine iwosyg/een giftige walgvogel/in zijn fris gewassen doedelzak' (the little iwosyg/ a poisonous dodo/ in his freshly washed bagpipes). In it he found the language that befitted the confused image or 'imaazje' that he had created of himself as a man in his twenties inclined towards transvestism and exhibitionism. As strange and associative as the poem is, the game that Grootveld plays in this self-portrait in fragments with his own transformations and get-ups is just as peculiar.

In addition to the photographs and lines of poetry, Grootveld also covered the pages in the ring binder with newspaper and magazine articles,

an invitation to a 'robert jasper exhibitie' and short letters addressed to Grootveld. The articles review Grootveld's proto-happenings, including eating a breakfast on a raft on an Amsterdam canal in 1955 and a fashion show in 1957. There are also reports about the anti-smoking campaign that Grootveld conducted in the street, in his anti-smoking temple and as part of the 'Open het graf' (Open the Grave) happening (1962). The media attention or 'publicity' (which Grootveld pronounced in his coarse Amsterdam accent) confirms that Grootveld was regarded as an exhibitionist and a 'happener' in the making.



3 ROBERT JASPER GROOTVELD (1932-2009)

Klaas is Coming, 1964

Paper, plywood, paint, chalk, metal, lacquer, approx. 700 x 500 mm

Around 1960, Robert Jasper Grootveld began to develop a highly idiosyncratic repertoire in Amsterdam which consisted of illegal street activism – he chalked the word 'Cancer' on tobacco advertisements – and happenings. Grootveld railed against the false temptation of advertising and warned against addiction. As a fervent anti-smoker, the self-styled 'anti-smoking magician', Grootveld sprang into the breach for 'the addicted consumer of tomorrow'. Grootveld's alliance with the anarchist Provo youth movement in 1965 saw him emerge in the next few years as the face of the rebellious and playful 'Magisch Centrum Amsterdam', a slogan Grootveld had coined in 1962.

After the anti-smoking temple, a shack in Korte Leidsedwarsstraat which Grootveld had furnished as a collage of advertising and anti-advertising images for his anti-smoking seances, had burned down in 1962, he temporarily concentrated on making 'anti-smoking paintings'. These collages or decollages, which betray the influence of the German artist Wolf Vostell (1932-1998), frequently appear in photographs from 1963-64 in which Grootveld can be seen in different get-ups. This work entitled 'Klaas is Coming' is probably Grootveld's only surviving work from the heyday of his anti-smoking campaign, which until 1967 formed the basis of Grootveld's disruptive happenings.

'Klaas is Coming' consists of a sheet of plywood with a cigarette advertisement poster stuck on it with other tobacco adverts on top of it. There are also cuttings of articles about the harmful effects of smoking on health. Anti-smoking slogans are written on the layer of tears: 'HAHA' and 'KANKER'. The 'gnot' symbol has been added with green paint lower right. The central point of this Magisch Centrum Amsterdam symbol is a drawing pin. Upper right a dollar bill has been attached with a profusion of staples.

The layer of lacquer applied to the work has become dirty, possibly because the anti-smoking painting has been exposed to tobacco smoke. In the nineteen-seventies the work hung on the wall of the treatment room of the psychotherapist Joost Mathijsen, to whom Grootveld had given the painting.

#### PROVENANCE:

Gift from the artist to J. Mathijsen; donated to the museum by his wife R. Mathijsen, Amsterdam, 2016 (inv. no. NG-2016-7).



4 BART HUGES (1934-2004) Scroll 'Homo Sapiens Correctus', 1964 Planography, felt tip and ballpoint pen, 2000 x 400 mm

From around 1963 the former medical student, semi-qualified doctor and marijuana smoker Bart Huges, who initially assisted Robert Jasper Grootveld as his medical adviser in his antismoking campaign, promoted boring holes in the skull by trepanning. Huges thought that anatomical procedure would increase the volume of blood in the brain. This could subsequently make someone constantly 'high', a condition that is desirable in order to return to the creative inner child.

In 1964 Huges distributed this printed scroll entitled *Homo Sapiens Correctus* (freely translated: the improved man) to promote this revolutionary idea for permanent mind-expansion. Huges must have deliberately chosen an antique-looking roll of paper: it gave his pseudoscientific manuscript the cachet of centuries-old wisdom. The layout with oval cut-outs containing scientific-looking drawings in felt tip pen meant that anyone reading it had to make an effort to follow the text line by line. The scroll, which was also published in slightly different versions in English and German, was on sale for twenty-five guilders.

On 6 January1965 Huges tried to put his idea into practice; attempting to bore a hole in his skull with a dentist's drill. A day later, the procedure was captured by the photographer Cor Jaring (1936-2013). The act had much in common with a performance and was continued some days later during the 'Stoned in the streets' happening when Grootveld unveiled Huges' 'third eye', announcing 'If something was going to happen here, it has already. Bart has done it!' Huges gained even more publicity some weeks later by making a guest appearance on the popular TV talk show *Voor de vuist weg* presented by Willem 'O.' Duys.

#### LITERATURE:

Dick P.J. van Reeuwijk, *Damsterdamse extremisten*, Amsterdam 1965, pp. 26-34

Wim A.L. Beeren et al., Actie, werkelijkheid en fictie in de kunst van de jaren '60 in Nederland, The Hague 1979, pp. 96-101

#### PROVENANCE:

...; donated to the museum by Wim de Bie, 2016 (inv. no. NG-2016-6).



### Homo sapiens correctus. Isychoviraminen 1)

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De hersenstofwisseling.

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5 HUMPHREY BENNETT (1948) and ARPAD SCHIEMANDL (photo montage) Cover design 'Alice-D-Day', 1967 Offset, 273 x 420 mm

The title of the tabloid-format magazine Alice-D-Day held no secrets for readers in the know. Alice-D-Day was a thinly disguised reference to the psychedelic drug LSD, which was placed on the list of 'banned substances' by law in February 1966. The editorial penned by the 'mind-expanding working group' reports that Alice-D-Day 'is the magazine of the psychedelic community, in which the consciousness-expanding substance has opened up the path to the total liberation of the personality and to communication possibilities.' It also states that the magazine was specially launched at the Utrecht pop festival 'Flight to Lowlands Paradise' on 24 November 1967. The idea was that *Alice-D-Day* would appear monthly, but this was the only issue.

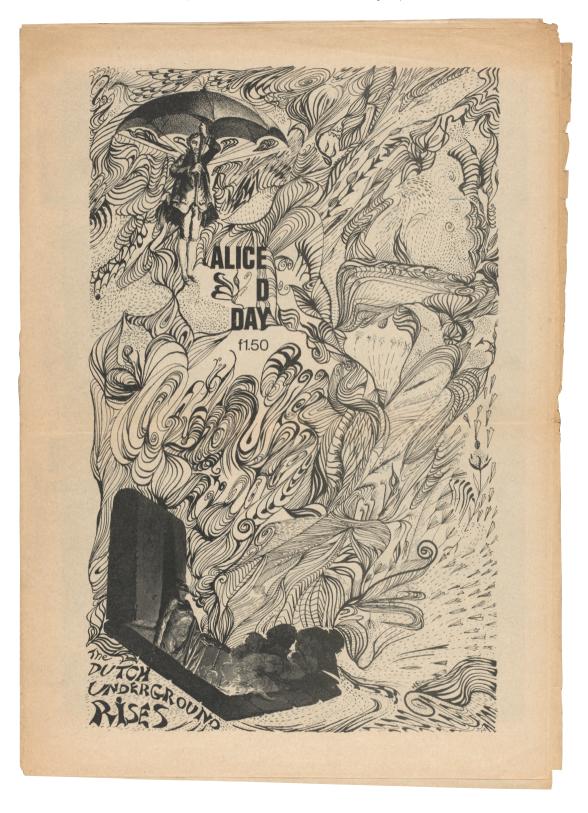
The drawing on the cover is by the English graphic artist Humphrey Bennett. It shows a figure rising from its grave under the motto 'The Dutch underground rises' looking up at a swirling and flowing world in which a 'psychonaut' in eighteenth-century dress floats on an umbrella. On the back cover there is a photo montage of the American rock group 'The Mothers of Invention', Frank Zappa's band. 'A masterful, radiant sun', Johnny the Selfkicker's poem 'about a psychedelic boy scout searching for the light', appears on page fifteen. There are also illustrations by Jean Paul Vroom (1922-2006) and Peter Vos (1935-2010).

The magazine was also assured of contributions from two prominent LSD advocates in the Netherlands: the poet and counter culture guru Simon Vinkenoog, who was called an 'inner space consultant' for the occasion, and Peter 'King Acid' ten Hoopen (1944), who in 1965 had supplied the Amsterdam scene with the (then still legal) hallucinatory drug and had provided the magazine with a stencilled insert with the chemical formula for LSD.

PROVENANCE:
...; purchased with the support of Pon Holdings B.v.,
for the Rijksmuseum Library, 2016
(inv. no. BI-2016-5121).



Back cover of inv. no. BL-2016-5121



6 LUUKS LABORATORY/IRIS DE LEEUW (1944)

Speespak, cotton and iron, approx. 150 x 50 cm

Speespak Certificate of Authenticity, silk-screen print, 700 x 500 mm

Speespak Order Form, silk-screen print, 510 x 220 mm

1966-67

The 'speespakken' (spacesuits), the accompanying certificate of authenticity and the order form come from Luuks Laboratory, an artists' collective from Maastricht which is often associated with the Amsterdam Provo movement, but nonetheless generated a totally individual image. Luuks Laboratory was also known as the *Ontbijt op bed-groep* (Breakfast in Bed Group), named after the title of the magazine the group published in 1966 and 1967. Luuks offered – in the phrase-ology of that time – 'the working space in which creative behaviour is evoked in a totally new environment....' The spacesuit was an avantgarde suit designed for a new age. It was a leisure suit, clothing for *homo ludens*.

The distinctive feature of the suit is the zip that runs crosswise over both trouser legs and allows the legs to be zipped off. The 'leg advantages' are explained in the certificate: 'If you come across someone with different Luuks legs – you can just swap them (once given, they remain given) – great communication activities in the street – help one another with the unzipping and zipping up'. The idea was that this zipping and unzipping would break the taboo of touching the intimate space, close to the body, even close to the erogenous zones, as that was where it needed to be zipped. The certificate, which was meant to be kept in a trouser pocket especially designed for it, propagated the adaptation and play opportunities the suit offered: 'Luuks adapts to the circumstances. ... This suit in which you can move endlessly until the homo ludens or 'Luuks person' gets the chance to play with his own clothes. Within the apparent limitations of this prototype suit there are countless possibilities for combining and, moreover - and that's what it's all about - communication possibilities.'

In early 1967, Iris de Leeuw, the inventor and maker of the first suits, along with Luud Schimmelpennink (1935), the Amsterdam Provo known for the White Bicycle Plan, established a spacesuit working community. A modest production of spacesuits in all kinds of colours was started. Later there were also spacesuits with 'demonstration legs'. Prints were affixed to the

legs in the form of the national flags of Vietnam, Greece and Spain, intended to demonstrate against war and dictatorship in those countries. Alongside the certificate of authenticity, De Leeuw also made a screen-printed order form featuring the modularity of the zipped clothes.

#### PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the artist, 2013 and 2016
(inv. no. NG-2016-57-1 to 4 spacesuits, inv. no. NG-2013-I-I
certificate and inv. no. NG-2013-I-2 order form).







7 IRIS DE LEEUW (1944)
Extra-Parliamentary Student Opposition (Buitenparlementaire studentenoppositie), 1968
Silk-screen print, 330 x 693 mm

Iris de Leeuw trained as sculptor at the art academy in Arnhem. When she moved to Nijmegen in 1967, and then to Utrecht, to start work as a silk-screen printer, she was trained in the art of protest, actions and happenings thanks to her link in the preceding years to Luuks Laboratory, the lively artists' collective in Maastricht. De Leeuw learned silk-screen printing from the Luuks graphic artist Kees Graaf (1930-2013). With no liking for the 'elitist' art world with its one-sided focus on aesthetics, De Leeuw rejected art (sculpture) for art's sake. In its stead she developed an artistic practice focused on politically engaged images. The poster, which had a considerable reach thanks to its distribution in the streets, was the right medium for De Leeuw. In Nijmegen and Utrecht, cities with large and vibrant student populations, there were enough clients who wanted to announce their teach-ins, debates, beat parties, film evenings and other usually 'critical' gatherings on posters.

Student protest, protest against the Vietnam War and the dictatorship in Greece, solidarity with the world's oppressed, feminism, homosexuality: together the thirty-four posters by De Leeuw acquired by the Rijksmuseum create a telling Dutch portrait of the late nineteen-sixties and early seventies (inv. nos. NG-2017-21 to 55). During that time the Netherlands established its name worldwide as a progressive, 'new left' country.

By 1970 De Leeuw had become one of the major poster producers in the Netherlands in the circles of the protest culture and student opposition. She was the only woman working in that area. The style of her work, particularly the posters from 1967-68, in part echoed the international flower power style. The posters show sixties idols like Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and Herbert Marcuse, but in a way often poke subtle fun with their likenesses, such as the poster showing the head of the uniformed German student leader Rudi Dutschke with a dazzling 'saint's' halo. The bright colours give the posters a spirited, informal character, but for all that, certainly in the case of the protest posters, they send a harsh message. De Leeuw did not shy away from confrontational images and symbolism. This combination of

playful and cheery idealism and critical, in-yourface opposition to the injustice in the world, is characteristic of an era when this street propaganda for an alternative world came about.

#### PROVENANCE:

Purchased from the artist with the support of Pon Holdings B.V., 2017

(inv. no. NG-2017-32).



#### 8 Laboratory for Instant Art

Text: PAUL PANHUYSEN (1934-2015), HENK PEETERS (1925-2013) Henceforth Art Is Non Object Art (Kunst is voortaan non objekt kunst), 1967 Silk-screen print, 880 x 306 mm

We would be well advised to consider this poster not so much as art, because it makes the proposition in giant letters that henceforth art is 'effect', 'not object'. From 25 January 1967 onwards, this was true – if we are to believe what was written on the poster. From then on 'art' was 'exclusively the offering of information in an effective way'. This poster is therefore in any event a historical (and indeed effective and informative) document that gives some insight into a movement which from 1965 staged 'situation art' in various places in the Netherlands. All forms of media were used based on the assumption that there were 'more possibilities for art than paintings and images of the old art', as was stated in the article 'Situasies' published in 1967 in Museumjournaal which was written by the editor Paul Panhuysen.

Panhuysen, along with ZERO artist Henk Peeters, also wrote the wording on the poster, which was made by the Maastricht-based Laboratory for Instant Art (formerly the Luuks Laboratory). Attached to it were sheets of paper with a series of quotes from the Canadian media professor Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980), the artist Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946) and others that interested passers-by could take. By involving Moholy the Neo-avant-gardists of 1967 showed that they were indebted to the pre-war avant-garde.

This manifesto was published to coincide with the 'situasie' in the Haags Gemeentemuseum on I February 1967. This 'situasie' in an upstairs room in the new museum wing offered a programme, which with light projections, bubble blowers, rotating aluminium discs, a fluorescent light wall, flashing lights, continuous drawing, plastic inflatable tubes, 'electro-pneumatic' music and the exhibition of a family was at least something different from the traditional display of static art seen in museums in those days (and now?). According to the newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* the statement 'art is effect' which was proclaimed on the poster, was fully substantiated in The Hague judging by the headline 'Art as a Headbutt.'

#### LITERATURE:

Paul Panhuysen, 'situatsies', Museumjournaal van het Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum te Eindhoven, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller te Otterlo, Stedelijk Museum te Amsterdam 12 (December 1967), pp. 176-85

#### PROVENANCE:

...; purchased from Iris de Leeuw (1944), 2013 (inv. no. NG-2013-1-8).

IN AN INDUSTRIAL AGE, THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ART AND NON-ART, BETWEEN MANUAL CRAFTMANSHIP AND MECHANICAL TECHNOLOGY IS NO LONGER AN ABSOLUTE ONE. / LASTLO MOHOLY NAGY **VANAF 25 JANUARI 1967 IS KUNST UITSLUITEND HET BIEDEN VAN** INFORMATIE OP EFFEKTIEVE WIJZE KUNST IS SOCIALE KOMMUNIKATIE KUNSTIS EFFEKT. ALET OBJEKT KUNST IS VOORTAAN BJEKT KUNST My desire was to go beyond varily into the realm of objective validity, serving the public as an anonymous agent. Lastio Moholy Nagy KUNST is INDOKTRINASIE KUNST IS EEN LEGITIEME AANTAS-TING VAN DE BESTAANDE ORDE DE STRATEGIE VAN DE KUNST BEWEEGT TOT MAXIMALE MOBILITEIT EN TAST STATIESE STRUKTUREN AAN