

... collecting what? Play Van Abbe - Part 3: The Politics of Collecting – The Collecting of Politics 25/09 – January 2011



On 25 September, Part 3 of *Play Van Abbe: The Politics of Collecting – The Collecting of Politics*, opens in the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. In this third part of the series, the focus is on collecting as the core activity of museums and on what it means to collect and archive visual cultural memories. The museum maps out what a collection policy tells us about the time in which it is established. It also inquires what it means to collect “political moments”; moments that give meaning to developments in our contemporary culture.

This exhibition offers the opportunity to look again at works in the Van Abbemuseum collection and compare them with collections and archives created outside of museums by artists. For the latter, collecting is a strategy for creating an image of the social situation in which they live. Artists in the exhibition are Denmark, Michal Heiman, Hannah Hurtzig, Zofia Kulik, Lia Perjovschi, Sean Snyder, Lidwien van de Ven, and Akram Zaatari. In addition, the representative politics behind the Van Abbemuseum collection will be analysed visually, and the Eindhoven collection from the BKR will be addressed alongside works from the Contemporary Art Museum Palestine (CAMP), a collection of another entirely different geopolitical context.

The exhibition will be opened on 25 September, 4 pm, by Kader Abdolah, the Iranian-Dutch writer and columnist, and director Charles Esche. During the opening, a live broadcast dialogue will take place between Paul O'Neill, Research Fellow from the *Situations* art programme at the university in Bristol, and the Van Abbemuseum curator Annie Fletcher. This dialogue is part of the *KIOSK for Useful Knowledge* by the artist Hannah Hurtzig and The Mobile Academy.

Play Van Abbe Part 3 runs until the end of January 2011 and hosts a varied programme of talks, films and other events.

Personal view on historical moments

The exhibition features artists who have tried to wrest the possibility to be political from the mechanisms of collecting. In many artworks, historical moments will be seen through a personal eye and well known (media) images are combined with personal diaries, documents, and photos.

The artist **Sean Snyder** focuses in his research-oriented projects on image production and the representation of war, from the Cold War to the War in Afghanistan. He does not comment on geopolitical issues, but investigates the representation of events produced by the media and attempts to reveal some fundamental questions of representation.

Akram Zaatari's ongoing research project is unearthing a wide range of both public as well as personal documents that explore the current cultural and political conditions of Lebanon. By re-contextualising this material, Zaatari explores the dynamics of the production and circulation of images in situations of war or political instability and shows how different media apparatuses get employed in the service of power, resistance, and memory.

Michal Heiman returns to the scene of art over and over again as if it were a crime scene, to draw links. Her works comprise rich, diverse materials – from mundane incidents and autobiographical childhood memories to works by other artists, films, photographs, diaries, clinical studies, and psychoanalytic texts.

Works by **Lidwien van de Ven** are close to journalism, but she is on the borderline of reality and imagination. Her “behind-the-scenes” portrayal of the press conference of the European Parliament (2008) where Ayaan Hirsi Ali presents her case on the protection of freedom of expression, gives us another image than the one we know via the media.

Artists' collections

Given the lack of suitable institutes in some parts of the world that present a collective history, artists themselves are sometimes forced to create their own, partial, art narratives, archives and collections. They search for their own historical trajectories, piece together interrupted narratives and create their identities with these collections.

Since 1986 the artist **Lia Perjovschi** for example, a self-described “detective in art”, has been developing a

subjective art historical index which grew into the *Contemporary Art Archive/Centre for Analysis* (CAA/CfA). Ranging from pre-history to high modernism, Perjovschi uses hand-drawn mind maps and alternative classifications systems to structure a broad range of official as well as lesser known artistic, institutional, philosophical and socio-political trajectories from both "the West" and "the East".

The work of **Zofia Kulik**, of the KwieKulik duo, comprises the alternative story of (art in) Poland between the years 1971 and 1987.

Dramaturge and curator **Hannah Hurtzig** will present her *FCA - (Flight Case Archive)*, a mobile continuously growing archive, where one can sit, watch and listen to an audio-visual discussion archive with "Stories about places, cities and territories". The Archive will be filled with new material as well, via the project *KIOSK for Useful Knowledge*. In five different dialogues, specialists from the museum will meet practical experts.

The installation of the Belgian artist **Denmark** consists of newspapers, magazines and other sources of information from the art world, which he reworks, destroys and remakes into art. Denmark's individual artworks are archives in themselves. His work will be shown for the first time as a whole; forty roll containers that form Denmark's complete archive and provide a condensed overview of his oeuvre between 1974 and 2010.

Institutional collections

Next to works by individual artists, some collections by institutions are scrutinized. Visitors can see the **Van Abbemuseum collection** in a new light, as the representative policies behind this collection are analysed.

A part of the collection of the **Contemporary Art Museum Palestine (CAMP)** will be shown for the first time together with documentation on the motivations and possibilities for the future of a Palestinian museum. CAMP's main goal is to establish a national museum around this collection as soon as Palestine becomes a nation.

Another collection that falls under the spotlight is the Eindhoven **BKR collection** from the ICN (Instituut Collectie Nederland). BKR stands for "Beeldende Kunstenaars Regeling", an arrangement by the Dutch government from 1949 to 1987 to support artists. They received a financial contribution from social services if they submitted a work of art occasionally. This way, both the state as well as municipalities gathered a large contemporary art collection. The project in the museum attempts to temporarily "give back" a selection of the Eindhoven BKR collection to the inhabitants of Eindhoven, by placing it in people's homes and opening these homes on agreed times for the public.

Time Machines Reloaded

As part of *The Politics of Collecting - The Collecting of Politics* the exhibition *Museum Modules* will be reactivated, under the name *Time Machines - Reloaded*. Several artists are invited to do interventions during the time of *Play Van Abbe* Part 3 and they will readdress the issues of this exhibition that includes historical museum models.

Programme opening 25 September

16.00 - 16.45: Opening speech in auditorium by Kader Abdolah, the Iranian-Dutch writer and columnist, and Charles Esche, director Van Abbemuseum.

16.00 - 18.00: Tours by special guest guides

17.00 - 19.00: *KIOSK for Useful Knowledge*: Narratives about Places, Cities, Territories. The Museum: Live-dialogue Nr.1 between Paul O'Neill and the Van Abbemuseum curator Annie Fletcher. Archived by Hannah Hurtzig/ Mobile Academy. The dialogue can be followed in room B0-06. Paul O'Neill is a GWR Research Fellow at *Situations*, a commissioning and research programme based at the University of the West of England (UWE) in Bristol.

Participants / Curators

The Politics of Collecting, The Collecting of Politics

Denmark, Michal Heiman, Hannah Hurtzig, Zofia Kulik, Lia Perjovschi, Sean Snyder, Lidwien van de Ven, Akram Zaatari, Contemporary Art Museum Palestine (CAMP - collection), ICN (BKR collection).

Curators: Christiane Berndes, Remco de Blaaij, Galit Eilat, Diana Franssen.

Time Machines - Reloaded: Museum of American Art Berlin, Wendelien van Oldenborgh, Kai-Uwe Hemken, Jakob Gebert, Florian Schneider, Daniel Miller, Grant Watson.

Curators: Christiane Berndes, Galit Eilat, Diana Franssen, Steven ten Thije.

Subsidisers

The exhibition forms the third part of the eighteen-month running programme *Play Van Abbe*. The programme is made possible by contributions from The Mondriaan Foundation, BankGiro Loterij, Provincie Noord-Brabant, VSBfonds and SNS REAAL Fonds.



Press release
August 2010

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the first public museums for contemporary art to be established in Europe. The museum's collection of around 2700 works of art includes key works and archives by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. The museum has an experimental approach towards art's role in society. Openness, hospitality and knowledge exchange are important. We challenge ourselves and our visitors to think about art and its place in the world, covering a range of subjects, including the role of the collection as a cultural "memory" and the museum as a public site. International collaboration and exchange have made the Van Abbemuseum a place for creative cross-fertilisation and a source of surprise, inspiration and imagination for its visitors and participants.

Van Abbemuseum

Bilderdijklaan 10
Eindhoven

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11:00 – 17:00

Thursday 11:00 - 21:00

On Thursdays, entrance to the museum is free from 17:00

Entrance

Adults: € 9,00

Groups of 10 persons or more, senior citizens: € 6,50

Students; holders of the Dutch young people's cultural pass (CJP): € 4

Thursdays from 17:00 - 21:00: free entrance

For more information please look at our website www.vanabbemuseum.nl

For the editors

Press opening: Friday 4 September, 11:00–14:00.

More information and images can be downloaded from:
www.vanabbemuseum.nl/en/press.

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