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Art History and Visual Studies in Europe

Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks

Edited by

Matthew Rampley
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ART HISTORY IN THE NETHERLANDS:
THE PAST AND PRESENT OF THE DISCIPLINE

Marga van Mechelen and Kitty Zijlmans

In 2007 the Universities of Utrecht and Leiden celebrated the centennial of the study of art history in the Netherlands. One century before, Willem Vogelsang was appointed as the first professor of art history in Utrecht and Wilhelm Martin as extraordinary professor in Leiden. During the one hundred years in between, academic art history has evolved into a wide field that comprises visual art, design, architecture and archaeology and that extends to universities, fine art academies and post-academic institutions; to the domain of museums, art centres, and presentational institutions; and to organizations geared to the preservation of historical buildings and cultural heritage. Over the years, the size of the field has strongly increased. Furthermore, the earlier mono-disciplinary approach has been more and more replaced with an interdisciplinary orientation. In the last few years, interest in the art (exchanges) of the Netherlands' former colonies and the debate on art and globalization have grown. Related disciplines such as cultural studies, cultural analysis, heritage studies and media studies have enriched the field of art history, while international exchange and collaboration are increasingly pursued. Today's practice of art history has many flavours and colours. This chapter sketches the general outlines of the history of the discipline as it developed in the Netherlands, devoting attention in particular to the significance of seventeenth-century art for Dutch art history, research into De Stijl, the fruitful relation in the Netherlands between architectural history and art history, the innovative turn of the 1970s, and the current state of affairs.

Art History in the Netherlands. Early Beginnings

The actual start of art history as a discipline in the Netherlands is a subject of debate. Some art historians refer back to Carel van Mander, who in 1604 wrote the first documentation of Dutch art, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, or to Arnold Houbraken, who in 1718 published *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlandsche konstschilders en schilderessen*, a compendium of Dutch artists. Another point of reference is the founding of the chairs of aesthetics and

art history at Dutch universities. The need to appoint these specific chairs dates from 1876 due to the newly adopted Higher Education Act, but it would be another thirty-one years before academic appointments were finally realized with the establishment of the chairs in Utrecht and Leiden in 1907.

When studying the development of art history in the Netherlands it is important to look beyond the universities. Before the establishment of chairs, there was already a tradition in the Netherlands of scholarly art-historical publications, mainly through the efforts of eighteenth-century societies and early nineteenth-century institutes such as Felix Merites and the *Amsterdamsche Stadsteekenakademie* ('Amsterdam Drawing Academy'). In the nineteenth century, lectures on art history were delivered in various places, such as at the Koninklijk Nederlands Instituut, and many of these were published in, for instance, *Kunstkroneijk*, a journal set up in 1840. The first professor of art history, C. Lemke, was not appointed at a university but, in 1870, at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten ('Royal Academy of Fine Arts') in Amsterdam.¹ In contrast to the archival study and emphasis on connoisseurship that prevailed in the Dutch museum sector around 1900, those in art-historical circles outside of museums and universities mainly had an interest in art criticism and visual perception.

An important incentive for art history's expansion developed within the context of museums and art-historical archives, above all the activities and efforts of two scholars: Abraham Bredius (1855–1946) and Cornelis Hofstede de Groot (1863–1930). Both were pioneers of the systematic study of art and the archiving of art-historical data, in particular, Dutch sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painting. As such they served as founders of the Dutch documentary art-historical apparatus. Bredius, who from 1899 to 1909 was director of the Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague, had no academic training and is best characterized as a connoisseur. His collection of artists' records and archival materials formed the basis of a stream of publications (mainly source material), 300 of which appeared in the renowned Dutch art history magazine *Oud Holland*, founded in 1883. Next to his eight-volume *Künstler-Inventare*, 1915–22, Bredius made valuable contributions to the development of the scholarly museum cata-

¹ Lemke, who had a German background, was succeeded by the better known Joseph Albert Alberdingk Thijm (from 1876), who combined stylistic analysis with his own Catholic aesthetics. Jan Six, who in turn succeeded Alberdingk Thijm, was also appointed, in 1906, as lecturer in art history and archaeology at the University of Amsterdam.

logue. His younger colleague, Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, was the first art historian in the Netherlands with a university education (doctoral degree at Leipzig 1891). In 1926, their private archive was donated to the Dutch state and became the foundation of the Netherlands Institute for Art Historical Documentation ('Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, RKD'), which has been open to the public since 1932. To this day, the RKD is one of the largest art-historical institutions of its kind and the largest art history library in the Netherlands. The activities of Bredius and Hofstede de Groot have long been exemplary for the practice of art history in the Netherlands, dominated by the interest in Holland's 'Golden Age', the seventeenth century. They concentrated on the systematic description, attribution and cataloguing of museum holdings, resulting in a plethora of monographic works based on these collections and archives. Another major stimulus for art-historical research was the establishment of the Royal Netherlands Institute in Rome in 1903, followed in 1955 by a second institute in Florence. Both institutes have significantly contributed to the production of research into Italian art and classical archaeology by Dutch art historians.

The Founding of National Museums and Heritage Societies

In the context of an emergent sense of Dutch national cultural identity, which, together with the rise of Dutch nationalism, occurred predominantly in the second half of the nineteenth century, museums were founded for the preservation of Dutch art, particularly that of the 'Golden Age'. Strikingly, the Netherlands owes its first museum concerned with storing artistic artefacts to Louis Napoleon, who in 1806 became king of Holland. In 1808, he moved the stadtholder family's art collection to Amsterdam, where it would eventually be housed in the Rijksmuseum, completed in 1885 after a design by P.J.H. Cuypers. The building of the Rijksmuseum was not an isolated case: in the decades around 1900 the number of museums grew rapidly and so did the attention to preserving Dutch cultural heritage. In this respect, a major incentive was given by Victor de Stuers, who, as the all-powerful and rather feared Head of the Department of Arts and Sciences of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (1875–1901), had commissioned the building of the Rijksmuseum.

A major role in inventorying and cataloguing national historical buildings was played by the Royal Dutch Archaeological Society ('Koninklijke Nederlandse Oudheidkundige Bond, KNOB'), founded in 1899, with the

Bulletin van de KNOB as its journal. The KNOB promoted the establishment of first the Bureau, and later, in 1947, the National Institute for the Preservation of Historical Monuments ('Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg'). The concern over the loss and destruction of Dutch art treasures can be seen in the light of an increasing national and historical awareness of the nation's past and its position as a colonial power. Remarkably, this interest did not include the art of the colonies; but for a few exceptions, it was only in the late twentieth century that art historians and art museums started to devote attention to this overlooked part of art history.

In the search for 'Great Historical Figures', Rembrandt became the national symbol of the great Dutch past, in particular the seventeenth century, and consequently, the concept and ideology of the 'Golden Age' was born. Dutch art and its preservation became government business and this was widely propagated. The effect has been that generations of art historians have predominantly studied Dutch sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art and architecture. Often, this research was performed in close collaboration with Dutch museums and archives, resulting in the establishment of verifiable *catalogues raisonnés* of individual artists on the one hand, and a focus on iconographical research geared towards unveiling hidden moralizing meanings on the other. In the 1960s archival research gained renewed prominence when the Rembrandt Research Project (RRP) was set up with the aim of attributing Rembrandt's paintings to the artist once and for all, by also using scientific research methods. The RRP's attributions are based on an interdisciplinary approach, while a team of experts decides in individual cases.²

At the Universities: Consolidation and Innovation

Until recently, methodological innovations—often fostered by insights from abroad—mainly came from the generations of art historians after Vogelsang and Martin, who in 1946 were succeeded by, respectively, Jan Gerrit van Gelder in Utrecht and Henri van de Waal in Leiden. Martin had been a specialist in the field of seventeenth-century Dutch art, a representative of austere, factual, 'exact' art-historical research in the tradition of

² Equally in-depth research has been conducted regarding the publication and annotation of the letters of Vincent van Gogh. See Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten, Nienke Bakker, eds., *Vincent van Gogh—De brieven: De volledige uitgave* (Amsterdam, 2009). Co-edition: *Vincent van Gogh—The Letters: The Complete Edition*, 6 vols. (London, 2009).

Bredius. Vogelsang had been a convinced proponent of stylistic analysis in the manner of Wölfflin, not only with an eye to Dutch art but also based on interest in international developments and other genres such as sculpture and the applied arts. He viewed iconography (which would flourish from the mid-twentieth century onwards) mainly as an auxiliary discipline. So the practice of art history in the Netherlands prior to the Second World War mainly concentrated on Dutch art from either an archival or a stylistic-analytical perspective. An exception was the Catholic priest and major expert on Christian liturgy, Frederik G.L. van der Meer, who in 1934 earned his PhD on the basis of an iconographical study of the Apocalypse.³ Later, he became a professor at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, and in this period he published his widely translated 'Atlases' of Christian and Western civilization.

After 1946 a broader and more sustained interest in iconography and iconology developed in the wake of the appointment of the above-mentioned H. van de Waal in Leiden and a series of appointments in Utrecht.⁴ Van de Waal developed the well-known classification system Iconclass, which many scholars would later refine and expand. Although Panofsky had received an honorary doctorate at the University of Utrecht as early as 1938, his influence was not immediately noticeable. Iconological study according to Panofsky's method only became a central concern for the generation of art historians such as Josua Bruyn (co-founder of the Rembrandt Research Project), Jan A. Emmens and Edy de Jongh. For them, Panofsky's 'disguised symbolism' served as a starting point for iconological interpretations of Dutch seventeenth-century art. Until the late 1980s, articles on iconographical research were dominant in *Simiolus*, a journal in English set up in 1969. Most Dutch universities undertook iconographical research in the field of medieval art, notably that of the Low Countries. The strong emphasis on interpreting hidden meanings was subsequently replaced by the study of pictorial traditions in connection with cultural-historical, social-cultural and social-economic contexts.⁵ Outside Utrecht

³ This study was not based on Panofsky's iconology but was inspired mainly by nineteenth-century iconography.

⁴ These included the appointment of Jan Gerrit van Gelder in 1946, Godefridus Johannes Hoogewerff in 1950 and, in 1955, of William S. Heckscher, a student of Panofsky; on Heckscher see Charlotte Schoell-Glass and Elizabeth Sears, *Verzettehn als Methode. Der humanistische Ikonologe William S. Heckscher (1904–1999)*; *Hamburger Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte* 6 (Berlin, 2008).

⁵ See in particular studies by Eric Jan Sluijter, Christian Tümpel, Reindert Falkenburg and Marten Jan Bok; Bram Kempers's sociology of Italian art, though not directly comparable

and Leiden, Henk W. van Os, professor at the University of Groningen and later director of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, was known for his study of Siene painting of the late-medieval period.

The 1960s and 1970s also brought changes in architectural history. It managed to move away from the tight embrace of the preservation ethic and began to concentrate on social-economic and cultural-historical approaches. These were developed mainly in departments of architecture at the Polytechnic Schools in Delft and Eindhoven, rather than in conventional art history departments. The journal *Wonen TABK*, the product of a 1973 merger of two older journals geared to housing and interior design (*Wonen*) and construction (*Bouwen*), provides good insight into major developments of this field. In the 1980s the new journal's focus widened towards urban design.⁶ In particular the writings of Ed Taverne and Auke van der Woud have contributed to the field's methodological innovation and the broadening of its subject matter. Much research in the Netherlands is also undertaken in applied arts and modern design, formerly mainly in Leiden and now also elsewhere, with special attention to the famed tradition of Dutch typography.⁷

For the advancement of research into more recent art traditions, the establishment of a chair in modern art in 1963 was a milestone. The first *extraordinarius* professor, Hans Jaffé, began his post-war career as curator of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. In 1953, he became deputy director under Willem Sandberg (1897–1984) and three years later obtained a doctoral degree with his dissertation *De Stijl 1917–1931: The Dutch Contribution to Modern Art*, which has been of inestimable value for later national and international research on De Stijl. For a long time he was the only professor of modern art. From the 1980s many studies on De Stijl would appear, most notably by Carel Blotkamp, who held the chair in modern art at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam from 1982 to 2007. A major platform for art historians in the field of contemporary art at that time was *Museumjournaal* (1955–1996), a journal issued by several Dutch modern

to the aforementioned studies, should be mentioned also: see Kempers, *Painting, Power and Patronage: the Rise of the Professional Artist in the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Bev Jackson (London, 1992).

⁶ It also received a new name, *Archis*, which was published in two languages, English and Dutch. Since 2003 it has been appearing as *Volume*, this time only in English.

⁷ Theodor Lunsingh Scheurleer, formerly curator at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, held the first chair in applied arts in Leiden, succeeded in 1984 by Willemijn Fock. They opened up an entirely new field of research, however, from a theoretical and methodological angle, this field has provided little direct stimulus for renewal.

art museums that published articles by museum curators, art historians, and artists. Although this journal did not publish scholarly articles of sizeable length, it well reflected the field's changing views.⁸ In 1984 a more independent, new journal, *Jong Holland*, was founded that served as a platform for scholarly articles by (if possible) young art historians on subjects mainly related to Dutch Art.

The Popularization of Art History

The journals mentioned so far were—or are—largely geared towards an audience of those with a professional interest in art. In addition, there has always been a wide selection of Dutch art journals that cater to a larger audience. Many art historians have actively pursued these more general platforms, which also included journals such as *Heemschut* and *Palet*, as well as overviews of Dutch art history and, later, specific television programmes, sometimes linked to a printed periodical. One example is *Openbaar Kunstbezit*, a TV programme that was initially accompanied by a loose-leaf journal that gave countless viewers a better understanding of art and also made them more interested in it. The AVRO programme *Kunstgrepen* owed its popularity to its presenter Pierre Janssen. Between 1959 and 1972 there have been some one hundred broadcasts of this extremely popular series. Likewise, another AVRO series, *Beeldenstorm*, hosted by Henk van Os and broadcast from 1996, has reached an equally large audience. Both presenters also served a good part of their career as museum directors, whereby they put much effort into lowering the threshold of museums. More art historians have chosen the art exhibition as a way of presenting their research and specific subjects, as, for example, the Vermeer expert Albert Blankert in his exhibition of 'Caravaggists' and 'Italianisanten' (seventeenth-century Northern European landscape painters who travelled to Italy). Meanwhile, the number of popular art magazines has increased and magazines such as *Kunstbeeld*, *Items*, *Kunst & Antiek-journaal (Collect)*, *Kunstschrift*, *Museumvisie*, and *Tableau* have healthy numbers of subscribers.

⁸ See the dissertation by Rogier Schumacher, *Museumjournaal en de ontvangst van de neo-avant-garde in Nederland 1961–1973* (PhD Dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2007).

The 1970s and 1980s: The Shifting Object of Art History

The high point of the public popularity of iconographical research, as reflected by the 1976 exhibition *Tot Lering en Vermaak* ('For Learning and Pleasure') at the same time marked the start of the decline of iconography/iconology as the most current art-historical approach. Around the mid-1970s, the first signals could be noted of what later would be called the 'new art history'. Issues such as authorship—the 'death of the author' followed by the 'birth of the viewer'—as well as (social) context and ideological factors were increasingly explored. While iconographical inquiry prevailed at all Dutch universities, at first these new signals could be observed only in two or three places: the Polytechnic School in Delft and the University of Amsterdam, soon followed by the Catholic University of Nijmegen. In the 1970s the pressure to renew art history mainly came from students, notably in Amsterdam and Nijmegen. From that time, the mutual inspiration of architectural theory and art history of the modern period has defined the further development of the 'new' art history. This is hardly surprising, given the Dutch tradition of including the study of architectural history and theory within art history programmes.

In the 1970s students of modern art history were initially oriented mainly towards theoretical developments in England and Germany. Timothy Clark, through his contacts with the leftist movement in France and his new approach to social art history, set an important example. Another influence of note was the Ulmer Verein, an alliance of leftist-critical scholars of art and culture set up in Germany in 1968. Their first publications appeared in 1973 and they were soon much read and debated in the Netherlands. Partly influenced by the publications of the SUN (Socialistische Uitgeverij Nijmegen), students in Nijmegen were also geared to neo-Marxist and poststructuralist debate in France and Italy.⁹ This led to a memorable conference in 1978, occasioned by the publication of the Dutch translation of Nicos Hadjinicolaou's *Art History and Class Struggle*, a practical elaboration of the Marxist art-historical method of the

⁹ The SUN in Nijmegen and the SUA in Amsterdam, publisher of *De Kunstreeks*, were both initially geared to the reconstruction of Marxism as theory. In 1990, the SUN became the publisher of *OASE*, an architectural periodical of design, research and education, which had started as a student publication in 1981 at the faculty of Architecture of the Delft University of Technology, in collaboration with other architecture departments at universities and art schools. The first publication in *De Kunstreeks*, in 1984, was the dissertation of Frank Reijnders, who was the first of the new generation to consider the discipline's history, as well as theory and methodology, from a critical position.

Hungarian art historian Frederick Antal, based on Louis Althusser's theory of ideology.¹⁰ The conference was dominated, however, by architectural historians, who had also set the tone two years before at the symposium *Architectural History. A Social Science?*¹¹

While interest in Althusserian art history seemed to have dwindled among the organizers and participants of the Nijmegen conference—they had already shifted their gaze more towards Foucault and the Venetian School (Tafuri, Dal Co, Cacciari)—the appearance of the book by Hadjini-colaou caused quite a stir in the wider circle of Dutch art historians. Over the next decade and a half, two other publications would have a similar effect: *The Art of Describing. Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (1983) by Svetlana Alpers and *Reading Rembrandt* (1991) by the literary theorist Mieke Bal. Both studies challenged major views of a firmly established tradition in art history; seventeenth-century Dutch art, and both were hotly debated and contested among art historians of the early modern period. Meanwhile most scholars of modern and contemporary art and historians of architecture continued to employ various approaches, covered by the notion of 'new art history'.¹²

In the course of the 1980s the direct influence of new developments from Germany, France and Italy gradually grew weaker. This had a 'practical' reason rather than an intrinsic one: the reduced skills of students when it came to reading texts in Italian, French and German. Other relevant factors pertained to cuts in the duration of degree programmes and the overall broadening of the scope in art history. Interest in French thinkers like Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva and Jean Baudrillard continued to be substantial, though, also because of their reception in the United States—and, to a lesser degree, England—where their work was widely translated and published in anthologies, and where neo-Marxist,

¹⁰ In Dutch translation as *Kunstgeschiedenis en Ideologie* (Art History and Ideology) (Nijmegen, 1978). It was translated by Piet Berkens and Pieter Jan Gijberts, organizers of the conference.

¹¹ Most notably Michael Müller and Francesco dal Co, as well as Jan de Heer and Kees Vollemans, who were both teaching at the Polytechnic School in Delft.

¹² Many dissertations would follow the one of Frank Reijnders that represent the New Art History, including those of Marlite Halbertsma (on Wilhelm Pinder), Marga van Mechelen (on semiotics), Debora Meijers (on conceptions of display in museums), Mirjam van Rijsingen (on gender) and Kitty Zijlmans (art history and systems theory). To this day most of them, who all have their roots in the critical 1970s and the New Art History, teach in one of the Dutch academic art history curriculums, notably in Amsterdam but also in Leiden, Rotterdam and Nijmegen.

feminist, semiotic, structuralist and post-structuralist approaches in art history gained ground.

In the area of the study of Dutch art in the ('long') seventeenth century (1566–1700) a number of things changed as well. More attention was paid to the role of social class, ideology, national identity and gender in the art history concerned with that period. This change was also reflected by international scholarship, most notably Svetlana Alpers's *The Art of Describing* and Simon Schama's *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (1987, translated into Dutch the following year).¹³ One reason for the negative assessment and the rather limited influence of these scholars on art-historical practice in the Netherlands is the undervaluation of the exceptionality of seventeenth-century art and of older Dutch art historiography on that period. Among Dutch scholars of the post-war era, there has long been a fear of 'nineteenth-century' glorification, an attitude at odds with that among foreign experts. The renewal of the study of seventeenth-century art followed only after art historians such as Wilhelm Martin were read again and, as a consequence, a positive interest emerged in artistic training in the seventeenth century, in studio practices, buyers of art, the art market, art collecting and contemporary response. This development is reflected in the more recent research of Marten Jan Bok. Next to the re-evaluation of Martin's work, Abraham Bredius' archival studies gained renewed interest. In the 1990s publications of John Michael Montias, such as those on Johannes Vermeer and Rembrandt, became influential in particular.¹⁴ Together with current results from social-economic research by economists and historians, this has provided a major stimulus for current, interdisciplinary art-historical research. The *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* ('Netherlands Art History Yearbook', since 1947) provides a good insight into the topicality of subjects.

By far the largest research project in the 1970s and 1980s in the field of early modern studies was the Rembrandt Research Project. The publication of the third volume of *A Corpus of Rembrandt Paintings* in 1989 marked the end of an era, and under the supervision of Ernst van de Wetering the RRP entered a new phase. This was characterized on the one hand by

¹³ Their influence on the younger generation of Dutch art historians would eventually remain limited, however. The same applies for the studies of Mieke Bal, written from a semiotic, psychoanalytical and gender-theoretical perspective—approaches practiced fairly little by Dutch art historians of the early-modern era.

¹⁴ The first publications of John Michael Montias appeared in the late 1970s in *Simiolus*.

more public debate on the attribution of works to Rembrandt and the involvement of expertise and opinions from outside the RRP. On the other hand, the 'Rembrandt story' now clearly bears the stamp of Ernst van de Wetering, as the forth volume of the *Corpus*, published in 2005, shows.

Art History in the Netherlands Today

A tour of institutions, where, at the start of the twenty-first century, art history is taught, will include six universities with graduate and undergraduate programmes in art history,¹⁵ as well as a similar number of related programmes in cultural studies, cultural analysis, museum studies and media studies. Each year hundreds of students enter graduate and undergraduate programmes. We also find art history in the Bachelor and Master programmes at the Schools of Art (both art academies and 'Hogescholen voor de Kunsten'), and in the three post-academic institutes in the Netherlands.¹⁶

As to the organization of the research, much has changed in the past twenty-five years. Many, mostly multidisciplinary, (post)graduate schools and research institutions have been set up, whereby the first operate nationally or internationally and the second locally, meaning that they are linked to one specific university, faculty or research institute. The three main research facilities for art historians are the Postgraduate School for Art History (Onderzoekschool Kunstgeschiedenis), the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the Huizinga Institute (Graduate School for Cultural History). Moreover, several art museums, such as the Van Gogh Museum and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam play a role in art-historical research that stretches beyond issuing collection or exhibition catalogues. Major spawning grounds for reflection on contemporary art are several internationally oriented arts centres such as De Appel in Amsterdam, BAK (Basis voor Actuele Kunst) in Utrecht and Witte de With in Rotterdam. In addition, the Netherlands has a number of art magazines of which currently *Metropolis M* seems to link up with debates conducted in the academic world. *Jong Holland* that existed from 1984–2006 has

¹⁵ University of Amsterdam, Free University Amsterdam, Leiden University, Utrecht University, State University of Groningen, Radboud University Nijmegen, as well as Open University Heerlen and the Polytechnic Schools, now universities, in Delft and Eindhoven.

¹⁶ The Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, and De Ateliers in Amsterdam.

already been mentioned. A final major publication is the Belgian art journal in newspaper format, *De Witte Raaf*, in which Dutch art historians and critics publish and which is also funded in part by the Dutch government through the Mondrian Foundation. For nearly a decade NWO/Humanities (the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research) has been sponsoring thematic research programmes in the field of the arts and culture, and it is the explicit intention to move beyond the boundaries of the disciplines.¹⁷ They promote interdisciplinary research and, more than before, they place emphasis on what is regarded in contemporary art and culture as current concerns.

In the last decade, heritage preservation has increasingly become a central focal point.¹⁸ The RCE (Cultural Heritage Agency), a section of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, came into being in 2011 after a merger of several institutions; its task is to improve the quality of management and conservation of Dutch cultural heritage. In the area of heritage studies it is also important to note innovations in archaeological research. In archaeology the integration of heritage approaches and cultural historical approaches and Dutch archaeology, which has always been embedded more in the social and natural sciences, has proven to be very productive, not only because of the cross-fertilization between these disciplines, but also because it has stimulated reflection on other approaches (inspired by Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Bruno Latour and others).

A last recent trend in research is the development of a PhD in the creative arts, in close interaction with the realization of MA programmes in artistic research, which seeks to form a bridge between art and standard scholarly research by offering insight into and training in new forms of research. The PhD in the creative arts involves a specific format, as it comprises not only an artistic component, but also a related discursive-reflective part. Through establishing lectureships in institutions of higher

¹⁷ Examples include the interdisciplinary research programmes *Transformations in Art and Culture* and *The Future of the Religious Past*, and for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries *Artistic and Economic Competition in the Amsterdam Art Market c. 1630–1690; The Impact of Oil, Cultural Transmission and Artistic Exchange in the Low Countries 1577–1672: Mobility of Artists, Works of Art and Artistic Knowledge*.

¹⁸ In this area the Cultural Heritage Agency (Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed, RCE) and the Netherlands Institute for Art History (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, RKD) are active.

education, amongst them schools of art since 2001, the government has tried to connect education, practice and applied research. Both initiatives seem to be a logical effect of this effort.¹⁹

Despite attempts on the part of the government to stimulate art museums to pay more attention to art of the former Dutch colonies, such efforts were until recently not very successful. The activities of the Gate Foundation, set up in 1988 in Amsterdam (and government funded until 2006) to promote intercultural exchange between the Western and non-Western world, have improved this situation.²⁰ Furthermore, as author and curator, Adi Martis—former lecturer at Utrecht University who has Aruban roots—has managed to raise attention for art in this region.²¹ In addition, the Dutch government has put in efforts aimed at preserving the cultural heritage of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba. With respect to attention for art in Indonesia, another important former colony of the Netherlands, the situation has hardly been better. In 1998 the first dissertation on modern Indonesian art appeared, after earlier, in 1988, another dissertation examined art education in Indonesia.²² In today's academic and museum circles, however, the interest for global art is gradually increasing.²³

As in many other places, art history in the Netherlands developed from a mono-disciplinary, archive-based discipline into a multidisciplinary field

¹⁹ A lectureship is led by a lecturer (referred to as professor elsewhere) and on average comprises ten instructor-researchers and external experts. Lectureships engage in collaborative efforts with businesses and institutions at a local, regional, national and international level.

²⁰ From 1988 to 1996 Els van der Plas served as the Gate Foundation's first director, and to this day she is director of the Prince Claus Fund, a platform for intercultural exchange. This Fund's activities and publications are realized in cooperation with individuals and organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

²¹ See Adi Martis and Jennifer Smit, *Arte, Dutch Caribbean Art. Beeldende kunst van de Nederlandse Antillen en Aruba* (Amsterdam, 2002). For many years the Dutch anthropological museums, notably the Tropen Museum/Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam, have been promoting debate on the integration of Western and non-Western art. See Harrie Leyten and Bibi Damen, eds., *Art, Anthropology and the Modes of Re-presentation: Museums and Contemporary Non-Western Art* (Amsterdam, 1993); Chandra Van Binnendijk and Paul Faber, *Beeldende kunst in Suriname: De twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2000).

²² Helena Spanjaard, *Het ideaal van een moderne Indonesische schilderkunst 1900–1995: De creatie van een nationale culturele identiteit* (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Leiden, 1998); Herbert van Rheeden, *Om de vorm: Een eeuw teken-, handenarbeid- en kunstnijverheidsonderwijs in Nederland* (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 1988).

²³ An increasing number of debates and symposia are being organized in universities, museums and art venues to discuss art (history) in a globalizing world. See also Wilfried van Damme and Kitty Zijlmans, 'Art History in a Global Frame: World Art Studies', 217–229 in this volume.

of expertise, engaged in the study of art, design, and architecture of both past and present, and in theory and methodology. The emphasis on the art of the Western world, and in our case the Netherlands, has also given way to a more global awareness. Art history in the Netherlands is concerned with a wealth of cultural heritage that needs to be preserved, interpreted and presented, and there is vibrant activity in the area of art, design and architecture that needs to be followed critically and translated for wider audiences, as interest for these areas in society at large is increasing. A sustainable art history will be more and more geared towards reflection on what role the discipline can play in the changing society of the twenty-first century. It is certainly something the Dutch authorities, as well as the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, are seeking.