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# The myth of corporate art: the start of the Peter Stuyvesant Collection and its alignment with public arts policy in the Netherlands, 1950–1960

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**ABSTRACT**

The Dutch Peter Stuyvesant art collection, started in 1960, seems to offer the archetypical success story of a private entrepreneur sharing his love of art with his employees. Yet this specific corporate art collection was not the brainchild of an enlightened director, but was initiated by two private foundations functioning as semi-governmental institutions that had been promoting art and culture amongst the Dutch working classes since 1950. The historical sources on this initiative also indicate that after 1945 corporate art collections were intended as an alternative way of implementing the arm's-length principle in Dutch cultural policy. This case study, and similar international examples, shows that first, corporate art collections should be explained within the broader political and cultural context, and that second, research on the history of cultural dissemination should include the private actors that aligned their goals with government policies towards the arts.

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On a spring night in 1960, Alexander Orlow (1918–2009), managing director of the Turmac cigarette factory in Zevenaar, a village in the eastern part of the Netherlands, had thirteen large format paintings hung on panels from the ceiling of the production hall (Maasbode 1960b).[1] The following morning, the factory workers were astonished to find large, colourful works of art hanging above their heads but soon became accustomed to this novelty (Figure 1). Indeed, they started to appreciate the initiative to such an extent that Orlow decided to continue in this vein. He added more works of art to the collection, procured with the name of one of the company's cigarette brands, Peter Stuyvesant. Part of this collection was on view in the factory itself, while other works were displayed in the company's offices in Amsterdam. As such, the Stuyvesant Collection became famous as the first corporate art collection in the Netherlands, and soon after was internationally heralded as an exemplary instance of private intervention in the arts (Höhler 1970).

Although the auctioning of the collection between 2010 and 2012 drew considerable attention to the collection's cultural significance in the Dutch and international press – though without leading to its hoped-for transfer to a museum – the initial phase of the collection has not yet been studied. As a result, its inception is generally ascribed to Orlow as an enlightened director-cum-art-lover who longed to share his love of art with his employees (de Gruyter 2010), sometimes even (erroneously) suggesting that he had donated his personal collection to the factory. This narrative, which imprints the mythical status ascribed to corporate founders (Basque and Langley 2018) upon the histories of many corporate art collections, ignores an intriguing fact mentioned in one of the earliest newspaper articles reporting on it – namely that the paintings were symbolically donated to the company in

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**Figure 1.** Interior of the Turmac Tobacco Factory in Zevenaar, with the work 'Joie de Vivre' by Ben Heyart, ca 1960. Photo: Nationaal Archief/Collectie Spaarnestad/Theo van Houts.

1960 by the secretary-general of the Dutch Ministry of Arts, Education and Sciences (Maasbode 1960a). If Orlow had arranged everything himself, why did this high official hand over these paintings?

This event in fact raises more general questions about the Stuyvesant collection's connections with public institutions and their policies towards the arts, and whether or not corporate art collections are indeed the sole initiative of 'inspired individuals'. Moreover, by means of buying and showing art, companies in the 1960s not only pursued strategic objectives such as increasing productivity or enhancing their corporate image (Jacobson 1993); they also aimed to support artists and galleries, and especially promote cultural participation (Martorella 1990; Witte et al. 2009, 33–53). With the latter objectives, corporate collections aligned very well with the cultural policy of many western countries, aimed at cultural dissemination. This article aims to unravel the history of the Stuyvesant collection, and through this case study to show how corporate collecting is, more often than is acknowledged, the result of close collaboration between private companies and public institutions. By means of this example, to which many cases in other countries can be added, we

also argue that the study of cultural policy should consider private and public actors as working in tandem, not as pursuing opposing goals.

## Curators of the Stuyvesant Collection, 1960–2008

After its well-publicized start in 1960, the Peter Stuyvesant Collection rapidly expanded, and increasing press attention turned it into an example for many other Dutch corporate art collections. The growth of the collection and its renown were the result of a clever strategy by Orlow; when it was agreed to continue collecting, he decided that an affiliation with high-profile figures from the art world would help to establish credibility for his 'adventure'. Artistic advice on acquisitions was thus sought from Willem Sandberg (1897–1984), then director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (Roodenburg-Schadd 2004, 74). Sandberg had already acted as an advisor on the art collection of the Bijenkorf department store since 1948 (which became overshadowed by the renown of the Stuyvesant collection; see Roodenburg-Schadd 1999), and he willingly accepted this task as well. His extensive contacts in the art world and especially his predilection for the artists of the CoBrA group led to the works of avant-garde artists in particular, both Dutch and foreign, being added to the collection.

When Sandberg stepped down as advisor in 1965, Orlow continued to be aided in expanding the collection by museum professionals with important positions in the art world – a strategy continued by later owners of the Turmac factory and their CEOs. For a period of approximately ten years there was an informal and possibly even incidental agreement with several individuals, including Herman Swart (who held several posts in the Dutch art world in the 1960s and 1970s, see also below),[2] Edy de Wilde (director of the Stedelijk Museum between 1963 and 1985) and Francois Mathey (curator and later director of the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris 1953–1985) (Sotheby's 2010). In July 1978, Renilde Hammacher-van den Brande (1913–2014), former curator of contemporary art and design at the Boijmans-van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam (and wife of the art critic and museum director A.M. Hammacher), was appointed regular advisor to the collection, a post that she held for the next fifteen years. Her artistic attention focused especially on the French and German schools. When she stepped down, she was succeeded in April 1993 by Wim Beeren, successor to Sandberg as director of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (between 1985 and 1993), and who in 1992 had curated an exhibition with works from the Stuyvesant collection in the Stedelijk Museum (Dagblad 1992). Beeren had already cooperated with other corporate collections – for example exhibiting works from the art collection of the Dutch Amro Bank at the Stedelijk Museum in 1989 (Beeren and Wolf 1989) – and he started as advisor to the Foundation two months after his retirement in late January 1993. He was initially contracted for two years, but remained in post until 2000. His focus was on contemporary American and German painting, but he also acquired works by Dutch artists (Beeren 2005).

In late 1999, the Rothmans International company was preparing its merger with British American Tobacco (BAT); after the takeover by the latter, the new owner decided to continue the collection, again with professional advice. After initially considering the former director of the Rijksmuseum, Henk van Os, from July 2001 onwards Martijn Sanders, former director of the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and himself a private collector, took up this task. He continued to act as advisor until Rothmans decided to sell the collection in 2008. His most conspicuous contribution to the collection consisted in acquisitions of contemporary Chinese art and modern (predominantly German) photography.

Sanders and all his predecessors almost exclusively acquired two-dimensional works of art, mainly paintings, selected with a view to their display in production halls. This criterion was explicitly mentioned in the contract with Renilde Hammacher-van den Brande, and it was repeated in all later publications on the collection. The majority of the works were therefore large-scale and colourful. This requirement sometimes prevented the acquisition of a work; for example, in a 1992 discussion over a painting by Jörg Immendorf it was remarked that his recent work had become predominantly 'black-white-grey' and that it would therefore not suit the purposes of the works in the factory (Hammacher-van den Brande 1992).

## The Stuyvesant Collection and corporate image

A second aspect of Orlow's strategy was to increase the corporate collection's renown thanks to an elaborate 'exhibition machine'. This started with a show based on the first works acquired by Willem Sandberg for the collection, held in 1962 at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. The exhibition presented the artworks to a broader public and described the initiative in the accompanying catalogue as a new start in the world of art collecting that warranted imitation (Schierbeek and Read 1962, preface). This attracted the attention of the press and subsequently led to the request from the Dutch government to display this same exhibition at the *Industrie-Ausstellung* held in the Summer of 1962 in Berlin (Read and Vredenburch 1962; Friese Koerier 1962). The invitation in turn ignited plans to exploit this success even further, and after Berlin the exhibition was sent on an extensive tour lasting several years, taking it to Australia, France, Belgium and Canada (Art Gallery in the Factory 1967; Scheepmaker 1969, 221–224). In all these countries, the shows were organised in collaboration with the partners of the international tobacco consortium to which Turmac belonged, and often presented local artists alongside the existing collection (Bowness 1968). It also led to similar initiatives by these partners, resulting in the accumulation of other corporate collections (Scheepmaker 1969).

In the Netherlands, too, the collection was turned into a publicity machine and this seems to have provided the true impetus for continuing the project. In 1966, BAT opened its newly built head office in Amsterdam, home to a genuine gallery intended to showcase works from the collection to the general public (Smit 2009, 146–150). It was probably with this in mind that, towards the end of 1965, a legal foundation was created to take care of the growing collection, which had hitherto not been given a formal structure (Statutes 1986). The opening of the new building was an event in itself: it consisted of a happening with the Dutch Cobra-artist Karel Appel (Figure 2) and a poetry performance by Cees Nooteboom, which received ample press coverage (De Tijd 1966). The press also invariably mentioned the remarkable fact that the building housed a gallery into which visitors could

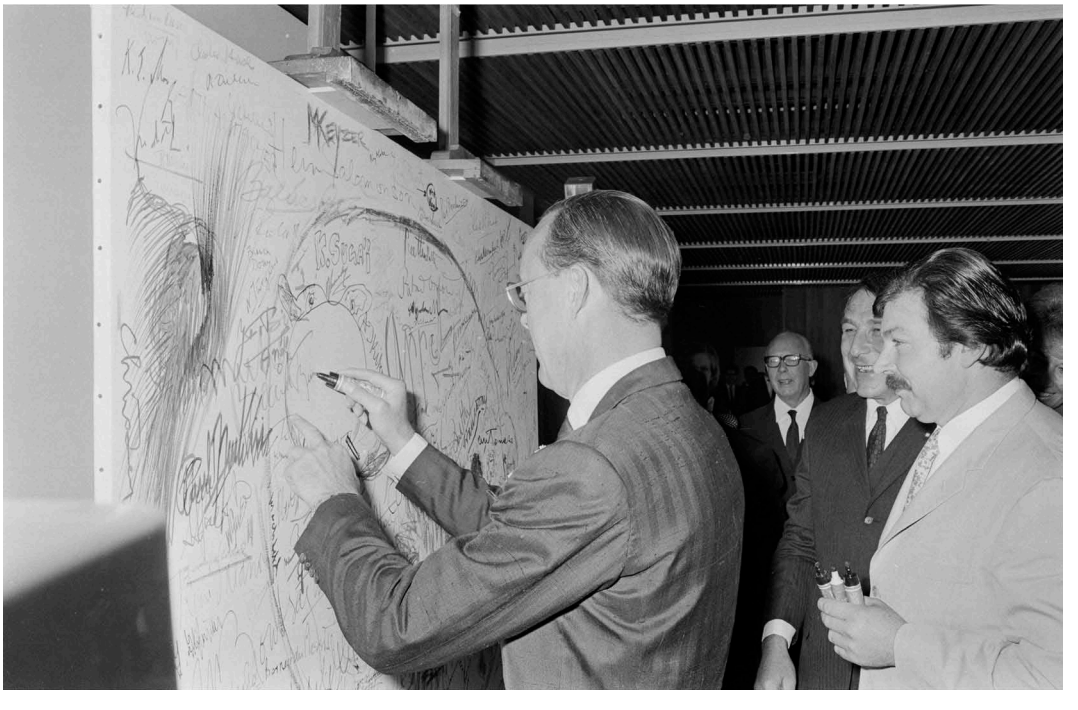

**Figure 2.** Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands signing the 'Guest book' at the opening of the Stuyvesant office building, 11 May 1966. © ANP 2019 / Photo: Andre van der Heuvel.

freely walk and admire parts of the collection (Duister 1966). Museum guides mentioned this art space as a place to view important modern and contemporary art in temporary shows (Nederlandse musea 1973, 15). Works were also hung in the building's offices and hallways, and from the early 1970s onwards, art tours around the building were offered. The factory premises at Zevenaar could also be visited by appointment. The company's subsequent rapid expansion led to further locations for the art collection; when the Kerckhof tobacco factories at Harderwijk (the Netherlands) joined the Dutch consortium in 1970, its production plant was also decorated with works of art; it was followed by international offices and production sites in Lausanne, Boncourt, Paris, Wetzikon and Athens, where works from the collection were on display until the early 2000s.

Part of the press coverage was explicitly targeted at the entrepreneurial reader: for example, the magazine *Elsevier* ran a lead-article on the collection (Huyskens, van der Molen, and Verspoor 1966) and the same issue had the portrait of Orlow on its cover (Figure 3). The article's title reads 'Art at Work', and it describes the positive effects of art on employees and their productivity at length, while also underlining the well-being experienced by the workers as they appreciated the paintings and considered the art objects almost to be their own. One female employee cited in the article told the reporter that she would spend her holiday in Paris, because part of the corporate collection was then on show at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs (whose director, Francois Mathey, incidentally also advised Orlow on acquisitions for the collection) and she longed to see 'her' paintings. Once again, the article underlines the personal involvement of the CEO (and his wife) with art and design, likening the interior decoration of their home to that of the offices and the factory, and thus stressing Orlow's love of art as a personal motivation behind this remarkable experiment.

When the Turmac company merged with the international cigarette and liquor company Rothmans (Dommisse and Esterhuyse 2005) in 1972, the art collection was expanded with several hundreds of artworks by well-known international artists (Werkt 1992; Sotheby's 2010, 2011a, 2011b). And when in 2000 British American Tobacco took over Rothmans, the future of the collection was initially a point of discussion for the managers in Amsterdam, and Anton Rupert, the majority shareholder in Rothmans (de Vos 1999); in the end the British CEO opted to intensify its activities (Hoeneveld 2000, 31). It was decided to involve yet another external advisor for the collection, in this case Martijn Sanders, discussed above. Even when the name of the collection had to be changed to the BAT Artventure collection in 2002, as a consequence of new Dutch and European laws on tobacco advertisements prohibiting the use of cigarette brands in any form of publicity, there was no discontinuity in collection policy.

It was only in 2008 that the company's management decided to 'dispose of' the art collection; the relocation of production from Zevenaar to Poland was given as the official reason (BAT 2008). By the time of the auction, an article in the *Financial Times* deemed it the largest and most valuable corporate collection in the Netherlands (De Burton 2010); an internal memo of 1999 had already calculated that it was worth three times the money spent on its acquisition (de Vos 1999). The result of the auction held in four instalments (Sotheby's 2010, 2011a, 2011b; AAG 2012) by far superseded even the most optimistic total estimates, rendering the event a great economic success (apart from repeating its renown as 'first Dutch corporate art collection'). In many discussions of the sale, this was again ascribed to Orlow's discerning eye for avant-garde art, repeating the mythical story of his 'visionary idea' as a means of founder consecration (De Burton 2010).

## The role of semi-public institutions in the creation of the Stuyvesant Collection

But Orlow had not been alone in starting the Stuyvesant collection; he was not even the main protagonist of this story, though he was usually presented as such in articles and interviews (Höhler 1970; Hieselaar 1971). One particular event in the history of the Stuyvesant Collection provides an interesting clue as to what was really happening in around 1960: the first exhibition held in 1962 at the Stedelijk Museum with 26 works recently acquired on the advice of Willem Sandberg. The design of the exhibition (staged in the new extension of the Stedelijk Museum, the so-called Sandberg-wing) was as noteworthy as its works of art. It was the work of the famous graphic designer Wim

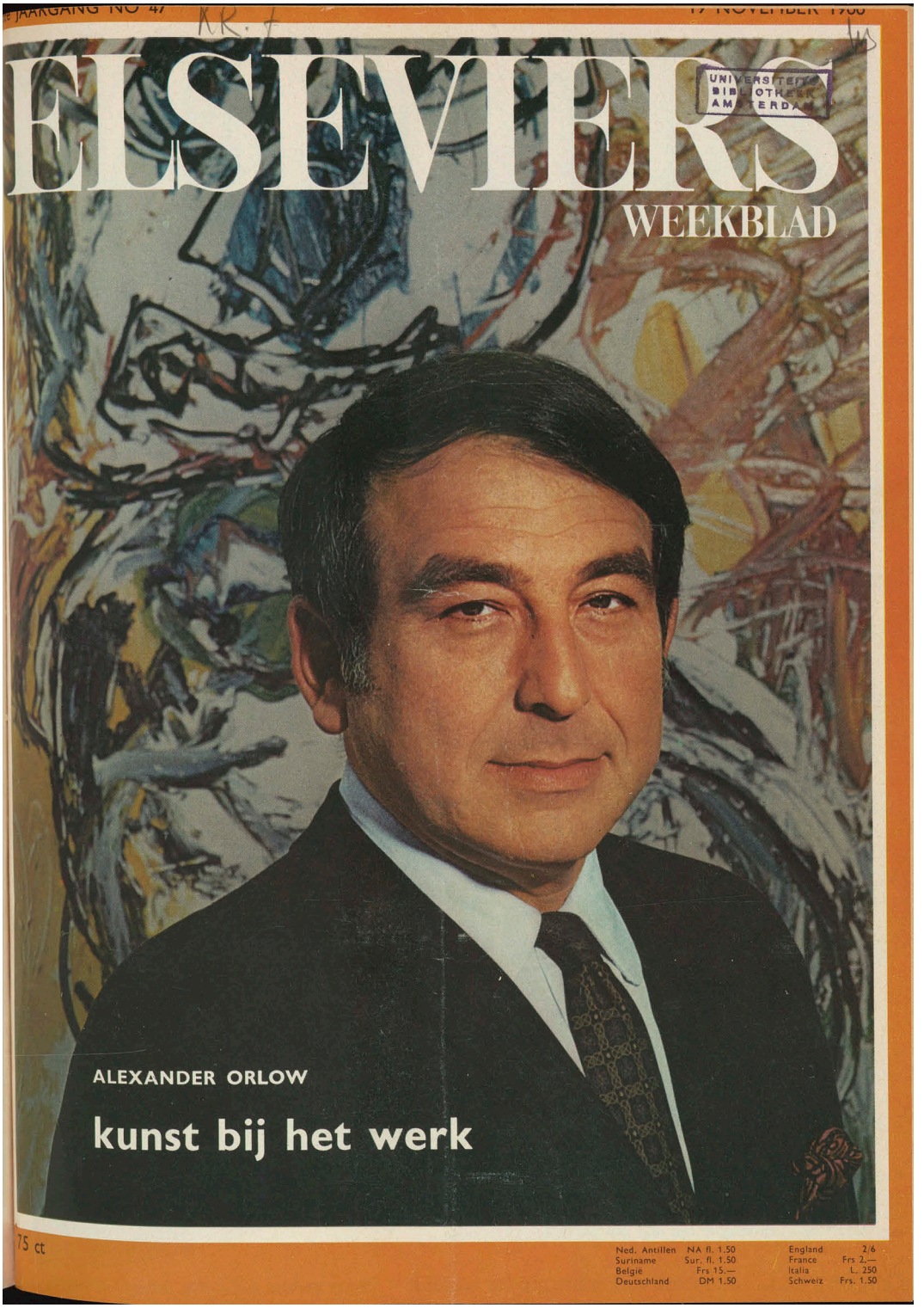


**Figure 3.** Cover of the 1966 Elsevier issue, with a portrait of Alexander Orlow. © Elsevier / Photo: University Library, Universiteit van Amsterdam, UBM: V.V. 9996.

Crouwel and intended not just to display the paintings but also to invoke their original setting in the factory (De Tijd-Maasbode 1962). Inside the museum, two circular walls with photos of the factory interior by the successful commercial photographer Paul Huf were erected, with the paintings hung on both sides; a soundscape of 'concrete music' was composed by Pierre Schaefer and Philippe Carson, giving the visitor an experience of industrial surroundings by means of shrill screeching sounds reminiscent of machines (Schierbeek and Read 1962; Haimon 1968).

The short catalogue of the 1962 exhibition merits special attention. It contained a foreword by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, consort of Queen Juliana (Aalders 2014, 329), who wrote: 'In 1960, the Fondation Européenne de la Culture cooperated on an initiative by the corporate world, which on the one hand offered new markets for painters from various European countries, and on the other hand awakened or stimulated interest in the arts among new groups of people. In coordination with the Nederlandse Kunststichting, a collection of paintings was assembled that was to be placed in the machine hall of the Peter Stuyvesant factory at Zevenaar. We hoped that this example would be followed by others and we still hope so' (Schierbeek and Read 1962, preface). This royal introduction indicated that at least two other organisations were involved in the 1960 initiative. In fact, they, and not Orlow, were probably responsible for introducing modern art to the factory at Zevenaar.

The first organization mentioned was the Fondation Européenne de la Culture, which was established in 1954 in Geneva and in 1960 moved its seat to Amsterdam (Chenal 1992; Autissier 2004, 4–8). Its aim was to strengthen international understanding and cultural cooperation with the express aim of avoiding a new upsurge in hostility between the various European nations. Prince Bernhard was chairman of this organisation until 1977, and was also very much involved in the business world. He was certainly acquainted with Orlow, whom he probably met during the Second World War in England; he actually performed the opening ceremony of the Stuyvesant head offices in 1966 (De Tijd 1966; see also Figure 3).

The involvement of the Fondation Européenne in the initiative at the Stuyvesant factory was doubtlessly related to a desire to extend their policy of international peace-support from the higher echelons of society to the working classes; the choice to involve thirteen painters from an equal number of European countries should also be attributed to them. It is likely that they formulated the main theme of these paintings – 'joie de vivre' – to counter post-war depression and cold-war tensions. In its annual report of 1959–1960, the Fondation Européenne noted that it had selected thirteen artists and covered the costs of producing the works. It aimed to 'encourager de jeunes artistes encore inconnus, et en même temps de soulever chez les ouvriers de l'usine un intérêt pour l'art moderne. On espérait que si ce plan réussissait, il pourrait conduire à d'autres expositions et collections de semblable nature.' (Fondation Européenne de la Culture 1960, 17). There are remarkable similarities between these two phrases and Bernhard's preface to the 1962 Stedelijk Museum exhibition catalogue cited above (Schierbeek and Read 1962, preface). The report also underlines that the Fondation combined the promotion of international peace and understanding with cultural dissemination, part of the Dutch cultural policy of that period and shared with the second organization involved in the initiative.

The Nederlandse Kunststichting ('Dutch Art Foundation') was originally a private institution with the name Stichting Kunst en Gezin ('Foundation for Art and the Family'), established in 1951 by Herman Swart (1911–1992). It was initially supported by Wilton-Feyenoord, a shipbuilding company in Schiedam (Kuyvenhoven 2007, 369–380). To begin with, the organization was intended to promote modern art for the employees of the company and their family members. When the Wilton company discontinued its financial support after just one year and the contributions of other private individuals declined, the Dutch state took over and became the sole source of funding. The foundation changed its name and expanded its field of action to the national level (Hermsen 1983; Kuyvenhoven 2007, 369).

From then onwards, the foundation's main mission was to create exhibitions for venues outside and beyond the museum world; the government's aim with the Kunststichting was cultural

dissemination – attempting to reach that part of the Dutch population which did not visit traditional cultural institutions, either because they lived too far from cultural centres, or because they were unfamiliar with the arts due to their social background. The Kunststichting therefore held yearly exhibitions of contemporary art at the Keukenhof, a very popular flower garden located at a former country estate. It also offered a new approach by creating travelling exhibitions sent to rural towns and to factories where they were displayed in canteens and office spaces, unexpectedly bringing employees face to face with works of art by contemporary artists.

These traveling exhibitions were intended to promote appreciation for the arts, especially contemporary art, among the working classes and beyond the urban centres (Havermans 1964, 12–13). At the same time, their aim was to offer a platform for young artists at the start of their career, in search of a new audience of potential buyers. From the outset the Kunststichting thus organized exhibitions in large factories in Dutch provincial towns, for example at the Hoogovens (steel mills) in IJmuiden, at Bruynzeel, a wood- and kitchen company, AaBe wool industry in Tilburg, and at the chemical plants of Akzo and Philips-Duphar in Weesp (Kunststichting 1960a). Various kinds of art, from sculptures to paintings and drawings were displayed; later, they even experimented with forms and techniques more accessible to the general public such as cartoon art (van den Boom 1974).

The fact that the Kunststichting was involved with the Peter Stuyvesant factory is not surprising, as they had by then been organizing similar events in just such venues for this kind of audience for several years. They also collaborated on other, later initiatives at the Turmac factory, such as public talks, film screenings, public tours for family members and friends of the workers, and many additional activities revolving around the Stuyvesant collection. They might even have suggested at one point that selling multiples such as prints to employees would be another successful way of spreading art among this group. Moreover, the founder and then director of the Kunststichting, Herman Swart, acted as artistic advisor for the acquisitions of the Stuyvesant Collection. In 1960, he proposed the acquisition of works by the Canadian painter Marcelle Ferron, the American Shirley Jaffé, and the Belgian Josef Ongenae (Kunststichting 1960b, 5), and he might have continued doing this throughout that decade (Sotheby's 2010). Swart surely offered the help of the Kunststichting (and its network in the art world) for additional activities. Already in early 1960, Orlow asked the Kunststichting to publicize the Stuyvesant Collection by means of a traveling exhibition, intended to be sent to various museums in the Netherlands; Swart proposed Wim Crouwel to make a lay-out for this (Kunststichting 1960a, 4). Since the 1962 show at the Stedelijk Museum was in fact designed by Crouwel, it must be assumed that the entire setup was the product of the Kunststichting.

This far-reaching involvement of these two organisations in the inception of the Stuyvesant collection was erased from memory as quickly as possible, in order to emphasise Orlow's 'genius' as managing director and turn his avant-garde idea of 'art at work' into the collection's foundational myth. This turned the art works into an asset for the corporate image. But it was through these two foundations that the original goal of cultural dissemination (which it adhered to until the end) of the Stuyvesant Collection and the means it employed to achieve them became aligned with contemporary Dutch cultural policy. This not only concerned its contents; the government's cultural policy during the 1950s also included the hoped-for collaboration of public and private organizations, and thus the involvement of non-governmental actors in a broader strategy towards culture in society.

## Public and private in post-war Dutch public policy

The intervention of two semi-governmental institutions means that the origin of the Stuyvesant collection cannot be ascribed to the idea of an individual. Their strategy was part and parcel of the post-war ideology underlying cultural policy, which in the aftermath of the Second World War was regarded as a so-called 'cultural rearmament'; art became a new 'weapon' in the promotion of 'freedom' as the foundation of liberal states (Vuyk 2010, 175–177). This was certainly one of the main reasons why Sandberg became involved with the Stuyvesant Collection: he believed that Fascism had been able to take root in society because of the closed character of the art institutions of pre-war

Europe, and that museums should investigate other ways of reaching the man in the street (Kempers 2010, 33). This concept materialized in a new wing for the Stedelijk Museum that deliberately had large display windows through which people on the adjacent street could see what was on view inside – and museum visitors could see the outside world (Sandberg in Blotkamp 1979, 329). However, this by no means meant that Sandberg thought museums were to be the sole actors in this project to engage the general public.

At a 1962 conference at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Sandberg expressed his opinion on collecting contemporary art and the division of labour between the public and private sector: 'For society, it is of great importance that this essence is to be assembled and kept, a task too manifold, too complex, to be carried out by official institutions' (Sandberg in Galloway 1962, 25). He reasoned that as long as contemporary art was bought and made available to museums, he did not object to private intervention in the art world; to the contrary, he hoped that the private collections he helped to build would one day be ceded to the state (Roodenburg-Schadd 1999, 63 and 73). This was seconded by another speaker at the same conference, Gordon Bailey Washburn, who referred more explicitly to corporate collecting when he stated that 'the liberal patrons from the business world who, with the devoted aid of museum directors, avidly acquire and present for our consideration the productions of contemporary artists' (Washburn in Galloway 1962, 34). This almost seems to be a covert reference to the way Sandberg dealt with the Bijenkorf and Stuyvesant collections.

Both Washburn's and Sandberg's views agreed with post-war Dutch state policy towards the arts, in which the government intended to occupy a not overly dominant position in the cultural field (Neij and Hueting 1988, 49 and 105). In the decade after 1945, several ministers of culture, and in particular the secretary-general of the Ministry of Culture, Hendrik Jan Reinink, had actually done their utmost to join forces with various private foundations active in the cultural sector in the Netherlands (Smiers 1977, 115). One of the parties involved was the Prince Bernhard Foundation, itself the result of attempts to create a non-governmental organization in support of culture (Berg 1965, 4). Its capital had actually come from the Spitfire Fund, set up during the Second World War to purchase fighter planes and supplied with donations from Dutch private individuals who had escaped to Great Britain (Smiers 1977, 181). When not all the contributions had been spent by 1945, it was decided to allocate the remainder to strengthening the morale of the Dutch population through culture, and it was rebaptized the Prince Bernhard Foundation. Interestingly, this Foundation was one of the main contributors to the Fondation Européenne de la Culture.

In 1951, the Dutch government attempted to create an umbrella organization comprising most private foundations active in the cultural sector; this 'National Institute' would take the lead in developing national cultural policies (Verheul 1990; Zaal 2009, 44–61). This plan to reduce state involvement in culture failed, however, as the directors of these various foundations attempted to gain the upper hand during the negotiations in order to strengthen their claims to the available state budget. Instead of collaboration, the project resulted in conflict, forcing the Dutch government to take the lead in cultural policy. And, from the late 1950s onwards, this became increasingly a part of welfare policy (Smithuijsen 2007, 35). Since in the meantime most of these private foundations had evolved into semi-governmental organizations thanks to financial support from the ministry of culture, it had a substantial impact on the goals of these organizations, as was the case with the Nederlandse Kunststichting (Kuyvenhoven 2007, 369). To put it differently, the Dutch government's failure to create an 'arm's length' cultural policy through an 'umbrella fund' led to the establishment of other institutions such as the Kunststichting to enact a different type of separation between cultural policy and its execution. However, the Prince Bernhard Foundation continued to promote collaboration between government, private individuals and companies in supporting the art world and artists in particular; in a report published in 1956, it proposed that, apart from the state and individuals, companies should also be encouraged to acquire works of art (Mulder 1956, 14). This probably also continued to be the strategy of the Dutch Ministry of Arts, Education and Sciences, and it explains why in 1960, it was Reinink who officially handed the thirteen paintings over to the Stuyvesant factory (Maasbode 1960a).

All these concerns and aims were included in the first publication on the Stuyvesant collection, the 1962 exhibition catalogue, whose contents were probably determined by Sandberg. For example, the preface by Herbert Read (1893–1968), a British Marxist art critic absorbed into the establishment in the 1950s (Goodway 2012, 183), agreed with the concepts underlying the welfare policies then adopted in Dutch government circles. Read interpreted the relationship between art and society along much more radical lines than the Turmac company might have done, arguing from the assumption that modern-day production methods and the 'growth of industrialised society' with its 'repetitive, monotonous' activities had created the 'mass neurosis of our own time' (Schierbeek and Read 1962, introduction). Although according to Read this necessitated a fundamental change in education and production systems, this was a long-term goal. A temporary solution to alleviate the situation involved providing art to remedy the lack of 'instinctive satisfaction' taken from the workers by the dullness of mechanized production.

Although Orlow certainly flirted with these avant-garde ideas on art and society, the Stuyvesant Collection never formulated its own aims through these radical concepts. Instead, the well-being of the employees of the Turmac factories and the identity of the company in particular increasingly merged, and the wider societal impact of corporate collecting as a phenomenon was replaced by a rhetoric of corporate social responsibility (Fooks et al. 2011). Most of all, the free publicity generated by the collection and its presumed positive effects on employees were fundamental to its longevity. Thus a general societal issue was reduced in the Stuyvesant Collection to a matter of corporate image.

## Cultural policy and private actors in the western world

The Stuyvesant Collection did in fact obtain a following in the Dutch context, where corporate collecting still has a substantial impact on the art market, the support of young artists, and the visibility of contemporary art in society (Witte et al. 2009, 36–38). However, corporate art collections only became a widespread phenomenon once the publicity value of these initiatives, and thus the strategic contribution to the company, was recognized by directors and CEOs. Initial collaborations between semi-governmental organizations and private companies had to be written out of the narrative to make it appear even more disinterested. Yet quite a few corporate art collections in the Netherlands – such as ING, KPN and others – can trace their beginnings to (semi-)governmental incentives to facilitate the dissemination of culture to the working classes. Most of these still cite cultural participation as one of their main legitimations. Similarly, most academic hospitals in the Netherlands also own a collection of contemporary art connected to the same ideology of emancipation by means of cultural dissemination.

The Netherlands were not unique in its government's approach, using semi-governmental organizations and corporations to promote the arts among the lower echelons of society; comparable developments can be observed for example in France, in Renault's interventions in the art world that were actively promoted by the government as its main shareholder (van Kleef 2012), and in Germany, where the organization of art exhibitions in factories can even be traced back to the 1930s, when the national-socialist 'Kraft durch Freude' state leisure organization arranged thousands of exhibitions of contemporary, avant-garde art in factories (Scholz 1999; Van Dyke 2007; Timpe 2017, 77–81). Also in Canada, from the 1960s onwards, the federal government of Quebec actively promoted the creation of corporate art collections as a means of supporting regional artists – most conspicuously through the Hydro-Quebec collection of Quebecois art, started after the nationalization of the company by René Levesque in 1963 (Dickinson and Young 2003, 372). Hydro-Quebec's corporate art collection was also intended to support the nascent policy towards the regional arts, boosted by the establishment of the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1961 (Handler 1987, 7). This converged with the democratization of culture, as expressed in 1963 by the Quebecois minister of culture Fregault (Handler 1988, 119–120).

As such, the post-war development of corporate intervention in the arts in the western world could be seen as a sequel to McIsaac's conclusions on German cultural policy around 1900, which he described as 'private support of the arts [that] formed part of a larger strategy designed to wrest control of arts institutions away from traditional elites' (2007, 371). After 1945, these new elites had taken the place of the traditional entrepreneurial families, and in turn felt a comparable obligation to use art to improve society. In their case, they applied it to 'heal' the wounds inflicted by the war; moreover, the intricate networks linking the private and public sectors in the pre- and post-war Netherlands (Deenik 2011, 31–60) were an ideal vehicle for promoting the same cultural ideals through diverse channels. This can also be observed in other countries where entrepreneurs, politicians and civil servants often worked together to implement policies, including those on the arts.

## Conclusion

The history of the Stuyvesant Collection is an ideal case study that shows how the post-war Dutch government developed a strategy to reach out to a new public, create a new demand for contemporary art, *and* support a liberalist strategy of cultural pluralism. In order to achieve this goal, semi-governmental organizations were used as a vehicle for organizing events and exhibitions, with the express additional aim of igniting interest from the private sector. Although the form of this cooperation between corporations and the state was dependent on particular circumstances in the Netherlands, the phenomenon was not specifically Dutch; it can also be observed in western countries, both in Europe and America.

In sum, the study of cultural policy between 1945 and the end of the twentieth century should consider that the arms-length-principle applied in many western countries did not just entail creating 'autonomous' state-funded bodies to implement the cultural policies of the respective governments. It is argued here that private organizations could be, and often were, involved in achieving goals such as cultural participation and dissemination. The latter organizations, especially the art collections of commercial companies, do not usually acknowledge this, since it devalues the publicity value and strategic impact of these initiatives. The mere fact that most corporate art collections are to be found in western liberal democracies that established welfare states with a government policy towards the arts – so-called 'patron states' (Cummings and Katz 1987) – intended to foster social inclusion, such as Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium, is a clear indication that the Stuyvesant case is not an isolated instance, but the expression of a broader phenomenon that deserves more attention.

## Notes

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2. Herman Swart's personal archive is preserved at the RKD, The Hague, but is not yet accessible due to privacy regulations.

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