

FOREIGN VISITORS PROGRAM

Five Dutch Days Five Boroughs: Dutch Arts and Culture Past and Present

PARTICIPANTS Two of the three Co-Coordinator of 5 Dutch Days
Susan de Vries, Dyckman Farmhouse Museum (SICA)
Sean Sawyer, Department of History, Columbia University

TRIP DATES December 11-19, 2008

SUMMARY

Over nine days Ms. de Vries and Dr. Sawyer met with sixteen cultural organizations in the Netherlands and also attended portions of the Dutch Jazz Meeting in Amsterdam. The goal of the trip was to begin to build relationships that will facilitate future partnerships between Dutch cultural organizations and artists and New York City-based organizations participating in the 5 Dutch Days 5 Boroughs event. In particular the meetings focused on developing collaborative partnerships with organizations in the historic preservation and contemporary art fields since a core component of the 5 Dutch Days project is to present contemporary Dutch art and culture at Dutch-related historic sites within New York City. The visits to the Kasteel Groeneveld, the Openluchtmuseum, and Zuiderzeemuseum were particularly beneficial in providing Ms. de Vries and Dr. Sawyer with a broader understanding of the diversity of approaches to the presentation of contemporary arts and culture at historic sites in the Netherlands. Kasteel Groeneveld provided a case-study on how a historic site can integrate contemporary arts with its core mission, while discussions with staff at the Arnhem and Enkhuizen sites illuminated distinctly different views of the role of contemporary arts at historic sites. All the meetings with contemporary arts organizations helped to broaden the visitors' understanding of the substance and structure of the Dutch contemporary art world and to provide specific inspiration for how a variety of arts, from theater, film and photography to the fine arts and design, might be integrated into the 5 Dutch Days event. At every visit, the hosting organization's staff were gracious with their time and the conversations were friendly and enthusiastic. These conversations also provided the Dutch organizations with an introduction to the 5 Dutch Days project and its goals as well as an overview of some of the small Dutch related historic sites in New York City.

In addition to opening up dialogue and paving the way to potential collaboration, the meetings also resulted in very concrete lists of artists and projects that could be part of the 5 Dutch Days program in 2009 or future years. A few immediate key opportunities emerged:

In November 2009, it is hoped that the kick-off for 5 Dutch Days will be a skating event at one of the major outdoor rinks in Manhattan. 5 Dutch Days organizers will be looking for a Dutch music group to perform, most likely from the list of those whom Ms. de Vries met at the Dutch Jazz meeting or garnered from suggestions by the Dutch Jazz meeting organizers.

Additional photos are available at www.flickr.com/photos/5dutchdays5boroughs/



The Openluchtmuseum is currently working on an exhibit on Dutch immigration to the US and Canada, which will open in April 2009. As part of the exhibit a film was developed and it was discussed that the film might have a New York “premiere” during 5 Dutch Days.

It is hoped that there might be a longer term collaboration with The Atlantic World and the Dutch Project (AWAD) as both organizations are tracking information and resources that might be of benefit to the other project. Barbara Consolini already graciously included 5 Dutch Days on the project list of the AWAD website.

In the spring, the Von Abbe Museum will be presenting its *Becoming Dutch Exhibit* at the New Museum in Manhattan. While the dates don't coincide with the 5 Dutch Days event, it does fit in with the larger NY400/2009 celebrations and 5 Dutch Days would encourage that the event be included in listings. Kerstin Neiman at the Von Abbe was very helpful and immediately provided suggestions of artists who were involved with the show that might be appropriate for inclusion in 5 Dutch Days in this or future years.

As 5 Dutch Days is developing its own graphic materials and looking for emerging young artists, the Design Academy Eindhoven is a logical resource. Already organizers are hoping to approach Henri Beelen about a small design competition open to students at the Academy in spring 2009.

The Nederlands Fotomuseum collection emerged as a logical option for potential exhibit collaboration. The range of the collection is extensive and the very format of photographs makes them a very compatible medium for the constraints of the small historic houses. At the suggestion of Ruud Vissechedijk we will be reviewing their thorough online database to see what possible themes might emerge that would support the vision of 5 Dutch Days.

Those listed above represent just a few of the immediate opportunities, in addition, it is hoped that many of the meetings will produce longer term collaborations. The challenge in moving forward will be to stay connected with all of the contacts that were made in the Netherlands and keep the momentum of the trip. 5 Dutch Days will be launching a monthly E-newsletter in February to stay better connected with potential partners and ensure that the contacts made in December are cultivated. In sum, the trip was enormously important to the larger goals of 5 Dutch Days and the cross cultural exchange between the Netherlands and New York City. We are extremely grateful for the financial support that assisted with Ms. de Vries' portion of the trip and the tremendous amount of planning that was undertaken to coordinate so many successful meetings.