

Play Van Abbe

Part 1: The Game and the Players 28/11/2009 – March 2010

On Saturday 28 November 2009 at 16:00 the opening of the 18-month programme *Play Van Abbe* takes place at the Van Abbemuseum. The programme consists of exhibitions, projects, performances, lectures and discussions, taking the collection of the Van Abbemuseum as a starting point. *Play Van Abbe* is subdivided into four parts, each with its own theme. Part 1, *The Game and the Players*, begins on Saturday 28 November 2009 and runs until March 2010.

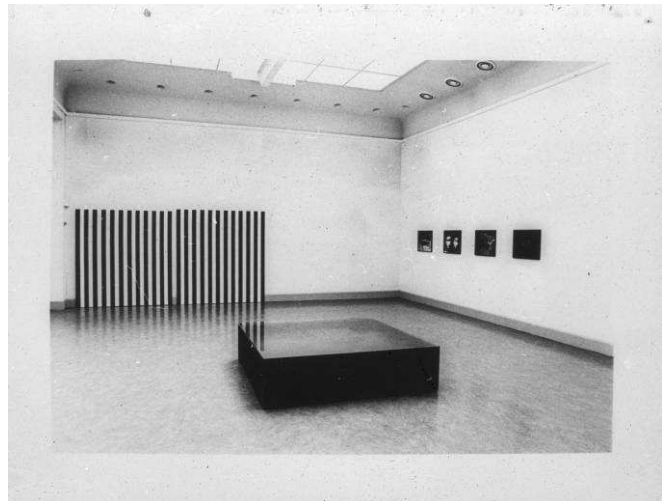
In this first part the museum focuses on the stories of artists and exhibition makers. Who are these 'players' within a museum and which stories do they tell? How was the collection presented in 1983 and how is this perceived in 2009? How does the current director present the collection? In what way does an art museum position itself

– both in the present and in the past? These questions will be put up for discussion in *The Game and the Players* in three exhibitions: *Repetition: Summer Display 1983*, *Strange and Close* and *Rien ne va plus*. Part 1 of *Play Van Abbe* will close in March 2010 with the project *If I Can't Dance... Edition III - Masquerade*.

On Saturday 28 November 2009 at 16:00, Minister for European Affairs Frans Timmermans will open *Play Van Abbe* in the Auditorium of the Van Abbemuseum. After the opening speeches there will be performances and guided tours by special guides.

Part 1: *The Game and the Players*

Repetition: Summer Display 1983 is a reconstruction of *Zomeropstelling van de eigen collectie* (*Summer Display of the Museum's Collection*), a collection presentation in 1983 which was curated by Rudi Fuchs, the director of the Van Abbemuseum at that time, and his curators. Fuchs made the exhibition after his return from Kassel, where he organised *documenta 7*. He presented a number of new purchases in this summer display, including works by Georg Baselitz, Alighiero e Boetti, Daniel Buren, Luciano Fabro, Gilbert & George, Rebecca Horn, Hermann Nitsch, Sigmar Polke, Lawrence Weiner, and Ian Wilson. An audio tour by Willem de Ridder was part of the exhibition. This audio tour will be made available in its original form for visitors of the reconstruction. *Repetition: Summer Display 1983* raises questions such as: Which story did the original curators want to tell and how do we perceive this part of history in our time? Does the presentation in this new context become a new exhibition or a copy of an exhibition? Archival materials about the display in 1983 provide extra information on the reconstruction process and the history of some of the works in the exhibition during the past 26 years.

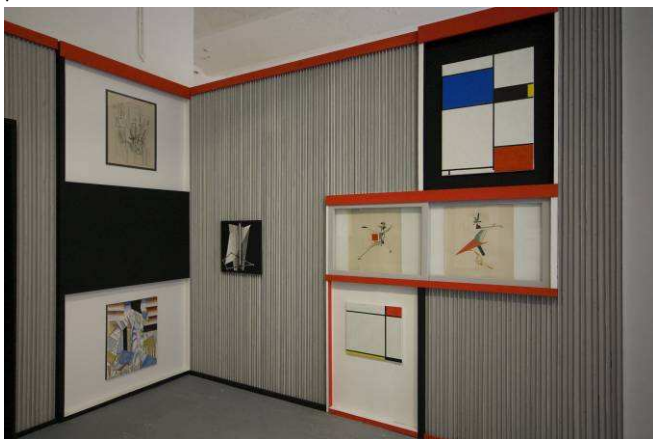


Installation view *Zomeropstelling van de eigen collectie* (*Summer Display of the Museum's Collection*), Van Abbemuseum, 1983. Photo Hans Biezen. Works on display: Daniel Buren, Rebecca Horn, Lothar Baumgarten

Parallel to the reconstructed exhibition, current director Charles Esche curated *Strange and Close*, a presentation of recent purchases by the museum. Esche presents in this exhibition a view on the history of the period after 1989,

the year of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the protests on the Tiananmen Square in China and the beginning of the end of apartheid in South-Africa. The exhibition, in which many new purchases are on view in the museum for the first time, invites the visitor to discover new relations between art and its various contexts. *Strange and Close* is a complement to *Repetition: Summer Display 1983*, showing the much broader geographical area that contemporary art now covers. Moreover, *Strange and Close* signals a shift in collecting: from the autonomous art work towards an entangled variety of objects, archives, (documentary) sources and stories. The exhibition features works by Hüseyin Alptekin, Yael Bartana, Harun Farocki, Dan Flavin, Gülsün Karamustafa, Dan Peterman and Nedko Solakov.

The presentation *Rien ne va plus*, curated by Christiane Berndes, Diana Franssen and Steven ten Thije in collaboration with guest curators, exhibits a number of installations and projects from the collection of the museum during the period from 1966 to the present by artists who tackle social issues in an explicit dialogue with the museum context. Here the emphasis is put on the story of artists that involve the visitor in their 'play'. The title is taken from the signal for players of a roulette game indicating that the taken positions can no longer be changed and that chance will determine who wins and who loses. The artists in *Rien ne va plus* do not play for 'profit', but to put up for discussion the rules within the museum, the art world or society. They draw our attention to codes that in many cases are so self-evident for us that we are even no longer aware of them. Is it possible to reveal these codes? The exhibition contains works by Marcel Broodthaers, Chto Delat, Tino Sehgal, Maria Eichhorn, and Franz Erhard Walther. The Museum of American Art Berlin is a guest of the Van Abbemuseum with the work *Kabinett der Abstrakten*. The series *Lily van der Stokker and guest...* will be concluded with a presentation of Works from the collection, selected by Van der Stokker. She shows them in the room with the self-designed wallpaper and gives them a compliant 'frame'.



Alexander Dorner & El Lissitzky, *Kabinett der Abstrakten*, Halle für Kunst Lüneburg 2009, collection of the Museum of American Art Berlin. Photo Julian Boy, Hamburg



Wilhelm Sasnal, *Wojtek*, 2005. Photo Peter Cox

The closing act of Part 1 of *Play Van Abbe* will be performed by the curatorial platform *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want To Be Part of Your Revolution*. From 8 until 21 March 2010 they will present the project *Edition III - Masquerade* at the Van Abbemuseum, simultaneously concluding their long term project *Masquerade* with this fourth and final episode. Serving as an 'interruption' into the programme of *Play Van Abbe, Edition III - Masquerade* temporarily interrupts the exhibitions regime with a presentation by six invited artists. The presentation at the Van Abbemuseum, curated by Frederique Bergholz and Annie Fletcher, consists of a series of new performances and projects by Keren Cytter, Jon Mikel Euba, Olivier Foulon, Suchan Kinoshita, Joachim Koester and Sarah Pierce. *Edition III - Masquerade* will culminate in a performance event during the weekend of 20 March 2010. During this event, *If I Can't Dance...* receives the keys to the museum for 24 hours and will temporarily take control of the museum.

Programme opening 28 November 2009

Location: Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

- 16:00-16:30 opening speeches:
Frans Timmermans
(Minister for European Affairs)
Charles Esche
(director Van Abbemuseum)
- 16:30-19:30 guided tours
by special guides
- 17:00-17:45 Nicoline van Harskamp
The Democratic Possibilities of Conflict
a scripted panel discussion

Location: Stadhuisplein, Eindhoven

- 19:00-20:00 Public Movement, *Also Thus!*
a ceremony at the Stadhuisplein

The next parts of *Play Van Abbe*

The second part of *Play Van Abbe*, called *Time Machines*, begins in March 2010 and will be on view until the end of August 2010. In this chapter museum models from the past are viewed. How does the museum use presentation techniques to tell a story and what are the hidden assumptions?

From September 2010 until January 2011, the act of collecting will be the central theme of part 3: *The Politics of Collecting/ The Collecting of Politics*. What does it mean to collect and keep works of art? What kind of world is perceived when viewing a collection? Who decides and why? For answering these questions, both the Van Abbemuseum's own public collection and other collections from other contexts will be used. Archival materials and documentation also play an important role in gaining insight into the motives for collecting in the past and in the present.

Until June 2011, *The Tourist, the Pilgrim, the Flaneur (and the worker)*, the fourth and final part of *Play Van Abbe*, investigates the role of the public and the expectations it has, the pleasure of a visit to the museum and how that experience can be intensified further. Are there new roles that the museum can develop for and with the public, in such a way that the museum becomes a genuine platform for exchange and inspiration?

The background of *Play Van Abbe*

Play Van Abbe evolved from the *Plug In* programme at the Van Abbemuseum which ran between 2006 and 2009. Also, it is a response to the challenges within a variety of disciplines, including art, art history, cultural studies and sociology, and within the daily practice of the museum and the visitors of museums. The questions raised in *Play Van Abbe* relate to the work of art as a material object and to the museum as the context in which the work of art is positioned and identified.

With the social and political changes of the last 20 years in mind, the museum uses *Play Van Abbe* to pose topical questions about the identity and objectives of museums and cultural heritage organizations in general. It aims to focus not only on the artworks themselves but also on the way we look at and talk about them in a museum. Questions about form and content, copy and original, good and bad are put up for argument. *Play Van Abbe* is a 'game' or 'role-play' in which the visitors, the artists and the museum workers can play an active role.

Together with interdisciplinary and international forms of collaboration, *Play Van Abbe* investigates how to position a museum as a knowledge institution that tries to preserve a 'collective cultural memory'. It seeks to surprise and inspire a public, while promoting critical, long term thinking about the role of art in the contemporary world.

Christiane Berndes, curator of the collection at the Van Abbemuseum: *'We want to visualise the museum in relation to day-to-day life and the world around us in a different way. We want visitors to stop and think 'we never looked at it this way'. I'd like them to be inspired!'*

Charles Esche, director of the Van Abbemuseum: *"Art can help us to further develop the power of imagination. We need the force of imagination in order to live together in a good way and to collectively move forward in our society."*

***Play Van Abbe* Curators**

Christiane Berndes
Charles Esche
Annie Fletcher
Diana Franssen

Research curator

Steven ten Thije

In collaboration with

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Prof. Irit Rogoff, Professor of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths University of London, United Kingdom
Shepherd Steiner, Art Critic, Visiting Assistant Professor in Modern and Contemporary Art, University of Florida, United States of America
Dr. John Byrne, Head of Masters Studies Fine Arts, Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

Subsidisers

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Provincie Noord-Brabant



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 Kórmeling. 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, The Netherlands

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: € 8,50
Groups of 15 persons or more, senior citizens: € 6
Students; holders of the Dutch young people's cultural pass (CJP): € 4
Thursdays from 17:00 - 21:00: free entrance (until 31/12/2010)

For more information, please visit www.vanabbemuseum.nl

For the editors:

For more information and photographs, please visit:
www.vanabbemuseum.nl/press

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