

The Embassy of the Kingdom of  
the Netherlands in the United Arab Emirates  
presents

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# Art and Design

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# Highlights from Holland



## Crossing disciplines 1

A painter who enjoys experimenting with sculptures. Designers who not only create useful objects but are innovators developing new technology or flirting with the use of conceptual ideas. Photography as an art, which surpasses the act of pure registration and refers to the tradition of the painted, symbolic still life of Holland's 'Golden' 17th century.

This constant intersection between disciplines typifies art and design from Holland. Internationally acclaimed art schools such as the Design Academy, Rietveld Academie and Rijksakademie encourage this intersection and are open to both Dutch and foreign students.

01 As a designer, **Jólan van der Wiel** experiments with technology and natural forces. His inimitable stools and candlesticks literally take shape as the tangible result of reacting gravity, centrifugal force, static force and Aeolian (wind-blown) energy. For this method Van der Wiel developed a machine in which resin and iron particles are put into a magnetic field, resulting in these characteristic, solidified stalactite-like shapes.

02 **Jean-Marc Spaans** creates photographs of light. He captures the trace of moving light by photography without showing its source. These traces of light appear as if they are part of architecture or objects actually constructed or installed in space. Some of them look like still, geometric structures while others resemble dynamic, organic life. Here we see his 'paintings with light' in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, the foremost national museum of Holland.

03 The small sculptures of **Ingrid van der Hoeven** show female appearances between realistic figuration and abstract. Still, the shapes also refer to urns, used in China. Van der Hoeven used layers of mid-plywood instead of clay, carefully glued together. Saw cuts suggest the cut of clothing.

04 All-round designer **Edward van Vliet** finds inspiration in exotic influences. 'I like the blend between east and west,' he says. His geosphere Rontonton lamps are made out of plastic and aluminium perforated sandwich sheets. The fairy tale like radiation through the perforated sheets adds an additional layer.

Other products of Van Vliet are his custom-designed carpets, which are being produced by **ICE International**, a company in Holland. ICE specialises in high-end residential and hospitality projects and is also responsible for the carpets in the lobby of the St Regis Hotel in Abu Dhabi, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Jumeirah Emirates Towers, and the Burj Al Arab in Dubai.

05 **Henk Ovink**, represented here by a 'pebble-sculpture' and the hat-like object 'Pearls', started as a monument artist, making sculptures for public spaces. However, he later made a radical career change. Ovink now is the first special envoy for International Water Affairs for the Netherlands – 'With its integrated approach

to water shortages, water safety, water quality, logistics and transport, the Netherlands make the difference across the globe. We are leaders in the field, which obliges us to continue to invest and innovate with our know-how and expertise.'

06 **Willem Hussem** found the motives for his colourful, abstract geometric paintings in the green polder landscapes of Holland. After 1967, Hussem translated his paintings into geometric sculptures. Two big and two small horizontals cross two verticals, as simple and straightforward as our low country and the sea they depict. Hussem has also authored some austere poems.

07 **Oijs Bakker** can be considered as an experienced, highly versatile conceptual designer, jewellery artist and teacher. 'Designing always starts with the same questions: What does it add to the world of design? states Bakker. 'Does it introduce something new – an idea or approach, a way of using or experiencing?' This amusing umbrella lamp, already designed in 1973, typifies Bakker's multi-style way of thinking and playing with existing shapes as its white (un) folding cap is similar to those used in photography.

08 **Guido Geelen** works in various applied arts: ceramics, textiles, bronze casting like this 'forever solidified' bouquet with pompom dahlias, an important Dutch export product.

The object looks ambiguous. 'Flowers in a vase constantly are changing. In the beginning they look fresh and tempting, gradually they deteriorate and become a symbol of transience,' Geelen says.

An interesting technical detail: the artist deliberately did not remove the construction, which was needed to keep the cast flower stems in their place. As a result the quasi-natural bouquet turns into an abstract table sculpture.

09 Artistically speaking, ceramist **Esther Stasse** feels related to the Calvinist, 'less is more' geometric art tradition of the Netherlands: 'I construct my vases from moulded parts; as an architect designing his buildings. My objects are autonomous as its function – placing flowers in them – is secondary,' she explains.

10 'I like to communicate through images as an independent film director would do,' states **Maarten Baas**. Autonomous designer Baas pokes fun with expectations of what functionality should look like. This working electric fan seems to be designed for a cartoon set in prehistoric times. Nevertheless Baas sculpted it by hand in synthetic clay around a traditional iron frame and mechanism. Here (at the embassy) it suggests how the heat in the UAE even starts to melt a fan.







## Crossing disciplines 2

- 11 Are robotic paintings emotive in their own manner? The 'Matching Emotion' project intends to establish a mutual relationship between human emotions and robotic machines. Fast and intuitive gestures by visual artist **Rena Léniard** form the genetic material. These initial sketches are executed with an acrylic brush fixed to a 3D digitizer stylus pen, while the varying orientations of the stylus and the changing pressures of the marker tip are monitored as to serve as the input data for the code written by **Ana Maria Antea** and **Serban Bodea**. Within the computational process algorithms are mapping fractal self-similarity on the initial emotive curve. The compiled code instructs the **ABB** robot that executes its seemingly bizarre task with extreme precision. The overall process was curated by **Kas Oosterhuis**.
- 12 Educated in Holland, Swiss born **Evo-Flore Kivencovsky** plays with the idea of a photograph as a 'frozen moment in time'. Her series 'Frozen Still Life' is 'an attempt to reflect on that specific quality of photography... to literally stop the time. Based on the Dutch still life paintings tradition of the symbolic Golden 17th century, she captured the absurd images of frozen food that normally is not meant to be frozen.
- 13 Imagine a sentimental movie where the camera discreetly moves away from the main characters, caught in a painful moment. Now we watch a vase, which seems to carry all the human emotions of the previous scene. This describes the idea of the still life photography made by **Erwin Olaf**, one of Holland's most important photo-artists. 'I create a highly stylized look in photography, which draws in the viewer [...] What I would like to achieve is to create emotions in one bit of a second, no longer. Looking into a world, which has been created in one bit of a second, one minute before and one minute after.'
- 14 Second to being a designer, **Marcel Wanders** is a design entrepreneur. In 2001 Wanders founded the successful label **Moooi**, also represented through a dealer in the UAC. Wanders cherishes inconsistency and turns against dogmas about use of materials or dimensions. Here the bell shape, used for a lamp, represents an early, essential form of communication: '...a welcoming ring that brings people together' explains Wanders. The **Cloud Sofa** suggests how sitting on a soft white cloud would be.
- 15 **Wartfleminx**, trained as a painter, creates a strong image by using only a few sober forms, which make repeat appearances in his work. He depicts mostly nature, concentrating on trees and plants as 'shy and delicate layered symbols of life'. This bronze steel sculpture is a half realistic, half abstract, monumental interpretation of a tree. The bronze sculpture was cast in **Kuamen, PR China**.
- 16 Next to the bronze tree we find a ceramic sculpture – that looks like a sphere, clad in 'brussels' – made by the rather unknown artist **A. Spreuk**. With its delicate organic shape, it connects the similar partly abstract and figurative objects of **Ignat van der Horst** and **Hank Donik**, mentioned somewhere else.
- 17 The strict reality of **Neer Dames**'s photographs is disturbing. Is there another, symbolic, meaning in her extraordinary images of the ordinary? A man with an **Appanatus** plant, originally from South Africa, now growing in the lakeside polder where Dames lives. Look, the happy boy showing off his new yellow wooden shoes. He fits perfectly in the – now defunct – tradition of Dutch constantly wearing wooden shoes.
- 18 The sheer magnitude and force of clouds, released into the sky is mesmerizing and leaves me feeling really small and insignificant,' says **Spreuk Knibbe**. Both in reality as in landscape-art, big white (and) clouds are prominent in Holland. Nevertheless the impressive clouds on Knibbe's photos are by no means realistic. The artist created artificial water vapour in his studio and photographed these **limbo** clouds.
- 19 **Elisabeth Diederix** likes to capture the moment when everyday objects lose their sense of familiarity, acquire another meaning and seem to become almost abstract. In this hardly visible still life, Diederix not only creates a sense of alienation, she also refers to the classic idea of 'vanitas': the awareness that all biological life comes to an end.
- 20 With her peculiar fruit still life, **Krista van der Niet** refers to the old Dutch art of still life painting, though she uses her own symbols. She says, 'My work does not communicate important messages. It ensures relaxation and confronts viewers with their oversight and impatience.'
- 21 The breakfast table, photographed by **Uta Eisenreich**, is meticulously organized... but why the toast and bread together with a hammer, fly, clothes peg and a burnt match? Eisenreich, a German born but Holland trained artist, explains her game-like hotchpotch of things: 'I like to examine geometric shapes in combinations of everyday objects. How do systems outside of our cognitive monitoring hold possibly function?' So while we think the photographed **Newtonian apple** is falling because of gravity, it in fact is suspended by a single thread.