

Dutch Pavilion 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *Prologue: Squat/Anti-Squat*, 2016
Film installation in two parts, 17 mins each

Cinema Olanda An installation by Wendelien van Oldenborgh

Curated by Lucy Cotter
Commissioned by Mondriaan Fund
Exhibition: 13 May – 26 November 2017
Preview: 10 – 12 May 2017 (opening Dutch Pavilion: 10 May 12:00 hrs.)

Cinema Olanda is a collaborative project by artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh and curator Lucy Cotter for the Dutch Pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale. *Cinema Olanda* goes against the current trend of downplaying the biennale as a national representation, proposing a different curatorial model by engaging with the Dutch pavilion as a projection of The Netherlands. It presents Van Oldenborgh's filmic engagement with (actively) forgotten aspects of modern Dutch history, sharing current transformations in Dutch society with an international audience.

Taking its conceptual starting point from Gerrit Rietveld's pavilion as a Modernist projection of The Netherlands, the exhibition reconsiders what lies beyond its aesthetic and ideological frame, both at the time of its design in 1953 and in the present. On entering the pavilion, the viewer is confronted by a site-specific architectural installation, which both houses and aesthetically resounds with three new 'films' by Van Oldenborgh. These works reveal an alternative narrative to the Netherlands' self-image as a transparent, progressive and tolerant nation, namely its reality today as a complex and rapidly transforming social, cultural and political space.

Shot in one uncut take, the title film, *Cinema Olanda* (2017, 15 mins), attempts to connect an architectural location, several individuals and past and current events, through a momentary filmic reality. Situated in urban planner Lotte Stam-Beese's acclaimed Pendrecht district in Rotterdam, the film seeks out multiple alternative voices behind Dutch postwar society, which was reimagining itself as a uniform modern State. References range from Dutch Caribbean revolutionary Otto Huiswoud, a key figure in race, class and anti-imperial issues worldwide, to the 1950's Indo-rock music associated with post-Independence immigration from Indonesia. Evoking the social and racial complexity of the 50's as an overlooked element in Dutch history, *Cinema Olanda* challenges this vision of unity and transparency manifest in Rietveld's pavilion.

Made in two parts that mirror each other in form and content, *Prologue: Squat/Anti-Squat* (2016, each 17 mins), engages with Team Ten architect Aldo van Eyck's building Tripolis, and revisits a

Dutch-Caribbean squatting action from the 1970's, juxtaposing it with two recent squatting episodes. The film brings together over a dozen individuals from different generations and backgrounds in activism and architecture, including the squatters of the 70's and those of today, whose fragmentary conversations offer a glimpse into rapidly changing and static conceptions of housing and belonging in Dutch society. Currently used as an 'anti-squat' (a term and practice originated in Holland) facility Van Eyck's empty building offers a provocative and visually arresting backdrop to the concerns and visions of young activist groups like the University of Colour, who set out to decolonize contemporary Dutch society.

The third filmic work, *Footnotes to Cinema Olanda #1 and #2* (2017), takes the form of two or three large-scale lenticular prints, consisting of layered images from the film shoot of *Cinema Olanda*. Conceived as a condensed filmic experience, the prints capture moments of production that are not contained in the film, presented in dynamic relationship to the body in space.

The exhibition forms part of Van Oldenborgh and Cotter's wider *Cinema Olanda* collaborative project that seeks to contribute towards the development of a new national self-image by bringing art, film and architecture in dynamic relationship with questions of social imagery and agency. This project extends beyond the Dutch pavilion to bring "home" the questions raised by the exhibition to a national audience through an extensive multidisciplinary programme that will take place in the Netherlands in June-August 2017.

Creating a platform for groups and individuals who have informed and inspired *Cinema Olanda*, this programme will consist of presentations of work and live events across a number of Holland's leading contemporary art institutions including: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Stedelijk Museum, and the EYE film museum in Amsterdam.

Publications:

Two publications will coincide with the opening of *Cinema Olanda* at the Venice Biennale: the official exhibition catalogue, *Cinema Olanda: Wendelien van Oldenborgh*, edited by Lucy Cotter and published by Hatje Cantz /Mondriaan Fund; a portfolio of images of the filmic works and exhibition accompanied by a series of essays by leading writers in the fields of art, film, architecture, social anthropology and critical race studies; and a special supplement of the Dutch news magazine *De Groene Amsterdammer* on *Cinema Olanda*, in keeping with the artist and curator's wish to extend the exhibition's underlying questions to a wider Dutch public.

Mondriaan Fund

The Mondriaan Fund, a publicly financed foundation for visual arts and cultural heritage, is responsible for the Dutch entry to the Venice Biennale. For the 57th edition the Mondriaan Fund again issued an open call to curators, who were asked to produce a plan together with one or more artists in keeping with a state event. *Cinema Olanda* was selected from 68 proposals with a unanimous jury vote. www.venicebiennial.nl

Cinema Olanda is partnered by Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), University of Amsterdam, Society of Arts (AvK), Wilfried Lentz, Rotterdam and Nuova Icona, Venice. Wendelien van Oldenborgh is represented by Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam.

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