

Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam

2006 was a year of transition for Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam. As of 1 January, curator Martijn van Nieuwenhuyzen was succeeded by Jelle Bouwhuis, previously spokesman of the Stedelijk Museum and compiler of the lecture and activities programme 'SMCS on 11'. SMBA had a number of commitments to fulfill from the previous year and had to deal with some unfinished tasks of the Stedelijk Museum. For this reason, SMBA took over the job of advising Postivisme from the Mother Museum. Postivisme is an organisation which commissions artists to produce works for the video screens of Club 11 in the Post CS building. In 2006, this resulted in three new video projects by Amsterdam artists. Also during the year, the successful lecture series Right About Now (organised by SMBA and W139 in partnership with the University of Utrecht, the Stedelijk Museum and the Mondriaan Stichting) culminated in six evening lectures.

The project by Chris Evans (which had already been planned) consisting of a presentation in SMBA followed by a temporary 'artists residence' on location in Westpoort, played an important role for the entire duration of the year. Eventually, the exhibition was taken over by International Project Space in Birmingham. After being shown in SMBA, a slightly changed version of the group exhibition 'We All Laughed at Christopher Columbus', organised by guest curators Krist Gruijthuisen and November Paynter, travelled on to Platform Garanti in Istanbul. This provided an international platform for, among others, the two Amsterdam based artists contributing to the exhibition.

Equally important was the establishment of a new artist in residence programme (next to BijlmAIR) with a view to strengthening the international quality level of SMBA. The artists' residence was set up on the Prinses Irenestraat with support from Lectoraat Kunst & Publieke Ruimte and Virtueel Museum Zuidas. The first works will be on show in the spring of 2007 at SMBA.

Apart from the programming, the communication process underwent some changes as well. In September the first step was taken by introducing a new, free SMBA Newsletter. Preparations were also made for the updated, bilingual website which will go on-line in 2007. In addition, for the first time after a long period of drought, a large number of events took place in SMBA, as well as at other locations.

In all, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam organised six exhibitions on its own premises as well as the artists' retreat project in Westpoort. The three main projects of 2006 were BijlmAIR, the artist in residence project at the Zuidas and Postivisme. Fourteen lectures/debates took place in SMBA and on location, including the lecture series Right About Now. In the year 2006 the venues attracted a total of 9,800 visitors. In 2006, SMBA received support from, among others, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, Mondriaan Stichting, Lectoraat Kunst & Publieke Ruimte, Virtueel Museum Zuidas, Moderna Museet Stockholm, Iaspis and the Swedish embassy.

Exhibitions

'Roma Pas – Here, In China'

The year began with an exhibition of works by Roma Pas which she had just finished in the southern Chinese city of Xiamen. Unlike many other Western artists who visit China and return with semi-documentary work, Pas underlined the impossibility of capturing her experiences in China in unambiguous or epitomizing images. This idea was presented through the medium of photography in various forms: video, flash animations and prints on man-size canvasses, as well as by adding highly introspective elements.

'Hala Elkoussy – Peripheral (and other stories)'

Early April saw the opening of *Peripheral*, an exhibition of an essayistic video installation with accompanying wallpaper photographs. Elkoussy's work focuses on people migrating from the centre of Cairo to the many suburbs that spring up like mushrooms in this gigantic metropolis, sometimes only to disappear again as fast as they came. *Peripheral* was exhibited earlier on at the Biennale in Istanbul. SMBA also showed new work that reflected on (the desire for) consumerism in the predominantly Islamic capital.

'Chris Evans – Militant Bourgeois: An Existentialist Retreat'

As far back as 2005, Chris Evans was invited to create a work that would serve as a *pilot project* for the new Community Art programme of the Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst. The exhibition 'Militant Bourgeois: An Existentialist Retreat' was a prelude to the project which later took place at Westpoort: a retreat where artists could stay and reflect on their artistry.

Part of the exhibition featured a wood-burning stove, which would later be placed inside the retreat, as well as a film in which Rembrandt's famous 'Portret van Jan Six' played a key role. The painting is in the possession of a descendant of Jan Six, Jan Six van Hillegom, who gave his assistance to the project. At the beginning of 2007, the exhibition opened for a second time in the International Project Space in Birmingham. For the occasion a booklet was published that gives a complete overview of Evans' extensive background in studies of the arts.

'We All Laughed at Christopher Columbus'

As tradition goes, the summer exhibition is put together by a young guest curator. In 2006 the task was taken on by two curators: Krist Gruijthuisen and November Paynter. Six artists contributed to their exhibition, two of whom are from Amsterdam. All six, Jeremiah Day, Florian Wüst, Amalia Pica, Runo Lagomarsino, Roderick Buchanan and Ola Pehrson have their own personal, artistic way of using existing histories in their work. The work by Ola Pehrson consisted of 200 separate objects that re-interpreted a documentary on the Unabomber. The installation was loaned to SMBA by the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. It then travelled on to the Biennale in São Paulo. The exhibition also included a performance by Jeremiah Day in SMBA and a debate in SMCS op 11. The leading British magazine *Frieze* published a review of 'We All Laughed at Christopher Columbus'. In the autumn of 2006 an adapted version of the exhibition called 'Hepemiz Kristof Colomb'a Güldük' was staged in Platform Garanti in Istanbul, thanks to support given by the Mondriaan Stichting.

'Lucy Stein – Paintings and drawings'

'Anat Stainberg & Norberto Llopis Segarra - Now or Never'

The autumn of 2006 also saw the opening of a double exhibition with work by Lucy Stein and a continuous performance project by Stainberg and Llopis Segarra who were connected to the Amsterdam institute DasArts. Just as in a soap series, they gave a weekly performance that was a continuation of the previous one. Stein's work, which focuses on the physical body, formed a splendid backdrop. Her paintings and drawings are character sketches of women and femininity. Some depict an unmistakable self-mockery, others a heavy mood.

During the course of the exhibition Stein received the Koninklijke Prijs voor de Vrije Schilderkunst. Later in 2006, her work was shown at the exhibition of Gemeentelijke Kunstaankopen in the Stedelijk Museum.

'Chris Evans – Militant Bourgeois: An Existentialist Retreat' (at Westpoort)

Also in the autumn of 2006, Evans' project was running on location at Westpoort. The existentialist retreat was made possible with the assistance of, among others, the local city council. The retreat was built according to plan in the middle of a busy dual carriageway, Transformatorweg, in close proximity to ring road A10.

Inside the retreat artists could sit eye to eye with the wood-burning stove, a symbol of the patronage by the Six family. They could stay and work there for free, be it under harsh circumstances, and reflect on 'the warm climate of granting subsidies to artists in The Netherlands', Evans said.

A total of fifteen artists used the retreat. Some of them created extremely poignant work. Pedro Bakker, the 'cow philosopher' from Friesland, produced enough drawings for a complete exhibition to be staged later on in Expositieruimte Sign in Groningen.

'Guido van der Werve – The Clouds Are More Beautiful From Above'

The last exhibition in 2006 showed two new films by Holland's promising Guido van der Werve. A full-page preview was published about the exhibition in the new newspaper *NRC Next*: "Van der Werve combines experiences from his own life to create a total image which is at times alienating, poetic and associative. In his films, he attempts to achieve the same directness with which music appeals to the senses. Van der Werve dramatises the romantic position of the artist in a comical way. His aim is to set a tone, not to tell an unambiguous story. Sky-high ambitions and human impotence appear to be the recurrent theme."

(Manon Braat, 'Films of and about a hopeless romantic', in *NRC Next*, 16 November 2006).

Projects: BijlmAIR, Artists' Residence at Zuidas and Postivisme

BijlmAIR

In 2006, the five-year-old partnership with CBK Zuidoost (the artist in residence programme BijlmAIR) was continued with new enthusiasm. BijlmAIR was set up especially for artists who are at the beginning of their career.

Thomas Adolf and Jetske de Boer spent four months in the district Zuidoost, which resulted in a display of works in both the district's offices and the studio itself. In his installations, Thomas Adolf shaped the Bijlmer district as it once was, and as it is now, into images that can be construed as a proposal for a possible future Bijlmer. Jetske de Boer gave guided tours of the Bijlmer during which objects that at first seemed trivial were given a new and energetic value.

In 2006, the artists were selected on recommendation of five Dutch art academies but also the Committee in charge decided to use the old method of bringing in suitable candidates without external assistance. In addition, the Committee will play a more active role in supervising art projects on location. Besides the displays in Zuidoost, BijlmAIR will also be discussed in the SMBA Newsletter. Committee members for the year were Jelle Bouwhuis, Xander Karskens, Haco de Ridder and Patricia Kaarsenhout.

Artists' Residence at Zuidas

Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, in collaboration with the Lectoraat Kunst en Publieke Ruimte (a group in which the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, the University of Amsterdam, SKOR and the Virtual Museum Zuidas work closely together), took the initiative for a new artists' residence to be set up on the Zuidas in the former Sandberginstituut on the Prinses Irenestraat. The institute was especially converted for this purpose.

The idea is that every year an experienced artist from abroad will stay and work at the residency for a couple of months in order to reflect on the huge office blocks that are in the process of being constructed in the area. The artistic results will be exhibited at SMBA. The institutions involved, on recommendation of SMBA, will choose the residents.

In October 2006, the Berlin artistic duo Nina Fischer / Maroan el Sani set up shop on the Zuidas for a period of at least five months. They are currently working on a film installation that will show the relationship between the modern buildings and globalisation and the resulting fear of terrorism. At a later stage, the duo will show parts of their work in Platform 21 as well as on a large video screen near the WTC. The film will also be shown on various locations abroad.

Postivisme

Stichting Postivisme is a foundation initiated by Club 11 in order to commission artists to create work for the big panorama video screens in the clubroom of the Post CS building. In 2006, SMBA appointed three artists and supervised them during the creation process.

Rafael Rozendaal created a flash animation in which the colours and forms referred to the famous work by Matisse in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum. Joris Lindhout and Hayder Çakal put together their own Club 11 version of Fellini's film *8 1/2* about 'the director who has no ideas'.

Pantelis Makkas linked the idea of strolling in a crowd with that of criminal voyeurism in a video projection comprising of six different screens that were displayed simultaneously.

Events

Right About Now

Although the lecture series Right About Now was assembled by SMBA and W139 in 2005 it did not become fully effective until 2006 as a result of a partnership with the UvA and the Stedelijk Museum, as well as support given by the Mondriaan Stichting. Every evening, two speakers from abroad gave a lecture on a topic that had been previously agreed to. A debate between them and the audience followed. All lectures took place in the prestigious Aula, in what used to be the Lutheran Church on the Spui.

Right About Now was an overwhelming success. A total of 2,244 visitors attended the lectures (including the first lecture in November, 2005). A publication of the lectures will become available in 2007.

Close Connections

Within the framework of the Amsterdam Art Fair (previously known as KunstRai) and in collaboration with Ellen de Bruijne Projects, twenty international curators were invited to come to Amsterdam. Suzanne van de Ven was commissioned by SMBA to organise a debate, which took place on 3 May 2006 in SMBA. On 4 May some of the guests showed videos in SMCS op 11 at the invitation of SMBA.

Norman Klein

In October, SMBA – in partnership with Motive Gallery – presented the book 'Mr. Wood' by photographer Martine Stig and designer Vanessa van Dam.

The celebrated philosopher and culture theorist, Norman Klein of Los Angeles, was invited to help liven up the presentation. The night before, some artists took this special opportunity to present their work in his presence.

SMCS op 11

At the end of the year, freelance curator Krist Grijthuijsen organised a seminar in SMCS on 11 in collaboration with the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. The event was commissioned by SMBA. Theme of the seminar was artists who, at the height of their career, decide to end their studies of the arts. Attention was paid to, among others, Tehching Hsieh, Anna Winteler, Cady Noland and Laurie Parsons. The seminar was closed with a debate (led by Krist Grijthuijsen) on this extraordinary theme.

Communication

At the beginning of 2006, it was decided to spruce up the house style of Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, mainly because the website had become outdated and was due for a complete overhaul. This resulted, among other developments, in a new layout of the SMBA Newsletter. The invitations for exhibitions were combined with their accompanying texts so they no longer had to be mailed separately. Instead of being sent to its subscribers only, the new Newsletter is now mailed to all contacts. The Newsletter, which is published in Dutch and English, is freely available for visitors.

The young designer Jonathan Puckey was appointed on recommendation of Mevis en Van Deursen, the designers of SMBA's house style, to develop the new website. It went on-line on 20 January 2007. Early in 2007, the house style was further updated.

In 2006, SMBA, with its running programme, took part in Tijdelijk Museum Amsterdam, a partnership of contemporary art institutions for the duration of the Amsterdam Art Fair that aims to attract more visitors. TMA was designed by Annelys de Vet. In addition, SMBA contributed to the Atelierroute Jordaan with the exhibitions that were on show at the time. SMBA also had a stand on the Uitmarkt and joined the Museum Nacht with a performance by Stainberg / Segarra.

P & O, Accommodation

In the spring of 2006, a freelance project assistant was employed especially for the elaborate art project by Evans. In view of the large number of activities by SMBA the project assistant will stay on in 2007, budget permitting. SMBA had three staff members on a fixed contract (a total of approx 2,15 FTE). In addition, two volunteers, a temp and two trainees completed the work force of SMBA in 2006.

In 2006, the exhibition space was hindered by a substantial amount of water due to leakage. In the summer, the art works had to be protected from the heat waves by the installation of air conditioning.

Earlier in the year, the smoke exhaust system of the exhibition space had been accidentally shut down due to renovations in the apartments above SMBA. The consequences were quite unpleasant. In the course of 2006 this problem, and part of the leakage problem, were addressed. On another positive note, the limit imposed by Bouw & Woningtoezicht on the number of visitors allowed into SMBA was lifted, which made it possible for people to attend lectures again. Investigations as to whether the limited budget will allow for repairs of the damaged flooring are being made. Renovation of the roof is still something for the future. Because of the poor climactic

conditions and the permanent lack of space, SMBA is also investigating if perhaps moving into a bigger and better exhibition space might be a possibility.