



MUSEUM DE LAKENHAL PRESENTS

GLOBAL IMAGINATIONS

DE MEELFABRIEK LEIDEN | 27.06.15 - 04.10.15 | GLOBALIMAGINATIONS.COM

Curatorial Statement

By Anke Bangma, Manon Braat, Meta Knol, Nicole Roepers and Kitty Zijlmans

How do we take a new look at today's complex world? That question is at the heart of the *Global Imaginations* exhibition. People in today's world are more connected than ever before. Through flows of information and migration. Through the histories we share and the conflicts that divide us. Through the increasing intertwinement of economies and our shared dependence on limited natural resources. Through cultures that influence one another. This complex reality demands that we find new ways to interpret the world around us, which will help us find our own place within it. *Global Imaginations* is an exhibition in which contemporary artists from all corners of the globe share their vision on that world. They bring new concepts to the table that, through very diverse perspectives and unexpected links, encourage new ideas and ways of thinking.

Global Imaginations consists of thirty works of art and as many idiosyncratic visions that provide a mirror for your own worldview. The sculpture *Back to Fullness, Face to Emptiness* by Chen Zhen in the courtyard of De Meelfabriek, is a beacon and a pars pro toto for the exhibition. In its centre, the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man can be found. Blowing in the wind between the tall structures of De Meelfabriek is the flag of Meschac Gaba, who has united all flags of the world's nations into a single piece of fabric. These two optimistic images stand in contrast to several more pessimistic installations in the exhibition, such as the apocalyptic film installation of Tsang King-wah or the work of the Raqs Media Collective, which critically questions the rate at which we exhaust the world's supply of fossil fuels. Critical questions are also being asked by the American artist collective Ghana ThinkTank, who wonder about the state of the internationally renowned Dutch tolerance.

Among the artists presenting solutions, you can find Lucy and Jorge Orta, who draw attention to the world's worrying lack of clean drinking water by purifying water from the Zijlsingel, that runs past De Meelfabriek. Other artists have been specifically invited to look back at worldviews that have lost their currency. They connected with Leiden's many museum collections. As the oldest academic city of the country, Leiden has long held a tradition of collecting and studying worldviews from all cultures and periods in history. Leiden's collections thus reflect the particular

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ways the global landscape has been imagined before. Mark Dion, Marjolijn Dijkman, Georges Adéagbo, Tintin Wulia and Raqs Media Collective researched these collections in original ways, partly in collaboration with Leiden scientists. In the Old University Library at the Rapenburg, maps from the Special Collections of the university library are exhibited alongside works by contemporary artists interested in cartography. All these different worldviews, which are rooted in all corners of the globe and touch the past, present and the future, have resulted in artistic perspectives on the world we share.

The size and scale of De Meelfabriek was also a factor considered during the organization of this exhibition, which has been spread out over four areas: the courtyard, the Meelmagazijn, the Schoonmakerij and the Ketelhuis. Five works of art by Chen Zhen, Meschac Gaba, Tintin Wulia, Ghana ThinkTank and Brook Andrew can be seen on the courtyard. The monumental Meelmagazijn has its very own look and atmosphere; every level of the building houses the installation of one artist, with the monumental sculpture of Pascale Marthine Tayou acting as the glue that binds all floors together. Exhibited here are installations by the Ghana ThinkTank, Marjolijn Dijkman, Raqs Media Collective, Andrea Stultiens, Simryn Gill, Taryn Simon and Femke Herregraven. The dark floor of the Schoonmakerij, meanwhile, houses two film projects by Rivane Neuenschwander. The oldest and final part of De Meelfabriek, the awe-inspiring Ketelhuis, houses works by Mark Dion, Georges Adéagbo, Romuald Hazoumè, Mona Hatoum, Batoul S'Himi and Tsang Kin-wah. The routes taking visitors through the Meelmagazijn and the Ketelhuis start at the ground floor and move upwards. Both are journeys that start with more grounded and concrete concepts, with the exhibition becoming more poetic and spiritual as you move from floor to floor.

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- Anke Bangma, curator contemporary art and photography Tropenmuseum, Afrika Museum and Museum Volkenkunde – recently fused together into the National Museum of World Cultures
- Manon Braat, art historian and project leader for *Global Imaginations*
- Meta Knol, director Museum De Lakenhal
- Nicole Roepers, curator contemporary art Museum De Lakenhal
- Kitty Zijlmans, professor of Art History at Leiden University

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