

JAHRBUCH FÜR EUROPÄISCHE ETHNOLOGIE 2017

JAHRBUCH
FÜR
EUROPÄISCHE
ETHNOLOGIE

DIE NIEDERLANDE

IM AUFTRAG DER GÖRRES-GESELLSCHAFT
HERAUSGEGEBEN VON:

Heidrun Alzheimer
Sabine Doering-Manteuffel
Daniel Drascek
Angela Treiber

DRITTE FOLGE 12·2017
VERLAG FERDINAND SCHÖNINGH

Redaktion

Angela Treiber

Andrea Maier, Louise Walker (Redaktionsassistentz)

Franziska Hodek, Gerhard J. Schönhofer

Doris Stocker (Layout)

Umschlagbild: "Rotterdam, Holland. 24th Sep, 2016. Shopping along the West-Kruiskade is like taking a trip around the world. Dim sum, swaying golden cats, Surinamese gilt, authentic Dutch" – Contributor: ZUMA Press, Inc./ Alamy Stock Photo.

Jahrbuch für Europäische Ethnologie

Dritte Folge des Jahrbuchs für Volkskunde im Auftrag der Görres-Gesellschaft

Herausgeberinnen und Herausgeber:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Heidrun Alzheimer, Universität Bamberg

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sabine Doering-Manteuffel, Universität Augsburg

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Daniel Drascek, Universität Regensburg

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Angela Treiber, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Redaktion:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Angela Treiber, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Universitätsallee 1, D – 85072 Eichstätt, Telefon: 08421 / 93-21502, Fax: 08421 / 93-21798, E-Mail: angela.treiber@ku.de

Doris Stocker (Layout), Alemannenstraße 78, 97318 Kitzingen, E-Mail: d.stocker@arcor.de

Das Jahrbuch für Europäische Ethnologie erscheint einmal jährlich im Umfang von ca. 240 Seiten zu den Generalversammlungen der Görres-Gesellschaft. Das Jahrbuch zahlt keine Honorare. Mitglieder der Görres-Gesellschaft erhalten 25 Prozent Nachlass auf den Ladenpreis bei Bestellung über die Geschäftsstelle: Görres-Gesellschaft zur Pflege der Wissenschaft: Collegium Albertinum, Adenauer Allee 17-19, 53113 Bonn

Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh

Auslieferung:

Brockhaus Commission, Kreidler Str. 9, 70806 Kornwestheim, 07154 / 13270
schoeningh@brocom.de

© Verlag Ferdinand Schöningh, ein Imprint der Brill-Gruppe (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, Niederlande; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Deutschland)

ISSN 1868-131X

ISBN 978-3-506-78875-7

Inhalt

ANGELA TREIBER: Editorial	
Europäische – Niederländische Ethnologie: Alltagskultur, Kulturelles Gedächtnis und Kulturelles Erbe in einer Diversen Gesellschaft	7
European – Dutch Ethnology: Everyday culture, cultural memory and cultural heritage in a diverse society	11
SOPHIE ELPERS: “Alledaagse cultuur” – A matter of opinion. The history and current state of European Ethnology in the Netherlands	15
ROB VAN GINKEL: ‘Quaint and picturesque’ Representing and appropriating Dutch fisher folk	39
LEONIE CORNIPS, VINCENT DE ROOIJ AND IRENE STENGES: Carnavalesque language use and the construction of local identities A plea for languageculture as a field of research	61
MARKUS BALKENHOL: Monuments, bodies, history Commemorating slavery in the Netherlands	91
ALBERT VAN DER ZEIJDEN: Intangible heritage as dialogue and as contestation West-Kruiskade, Rotterdam and the changing face of modern cultural memory	111
MARLEEN DE WITTE: Heritage, identity and the body in Afro-Dutch self-styling	127
HESTER DIBBITS AND NORAH KARROUCHE: Ticking the box? Material cultures of migration in Museum Rotterdam and the Netherlands Open Air Museum	147
HALLEH GHORASHI: Rethinking diversity beyond dichotomies of self-other	169

Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter

BALKENHOL, MARKUS, Dr., postdoc Ethnology, Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, M PO Box 10855, 1001 EW Amsterdam. Markus.Balkenhol@meertens.knaw.nl

CORNIPS, LEONIE, Dr., Prof., Department of Language Variation, Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, M PO Box 10855, 1001 EW Amsterdam. leonie.cornips@meertens.knaw.nl – Professor, Literature and Art, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS), Maastricht University, PO Box 616, 6200 MD Maastricht. leonie.cornips@maastrichtuniversity.nl

DE ROOIJ, VINCENT, Dr. MA, Assistant-Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. PO Box 15509, 1001 NA Amsterdam. V.A.deRooij@uva.nl

DE WITTE, MARLEEN, Dr., Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology, University of Amsterdam. PO Box 15509, 1001 NA Amsterdam. M.deWitte@uva.nl

DIBBITS, HESTER C., Dr. Prof., Head of the research group Cultural heritage & MA Museology programme director, Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts, Hortusplantsoen 1-3, 1018 TZ Amsterdam. – Endowed Professor, Historical Culture and Education, Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication, Erasmus University Rotterdam, PO Box 1738, 3000 DR Rotterdam. hester.dibbits@ahk.nl

ELPERS, SOPHIE, Dr. M.A., postdoc Ethnology, Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, M PO Box 10855, 1001 EW Amsterdam. Sophie.elpers@meertens.knaw.nl

GHORASHI, HALLEH, Dr. Prof., Professor, Diversity and Integration, Department of Sociology, VU University Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam. h.ghorashi@vu.nl

KARROUCHE, NORAH, Dr., Lecturer, History Department, VU University Amsterdam, De Boelelaan 1105, 1081 HV Amsterdam. n.f.f.karrouche@vu.nl

STENGs, IRENE, Dr., Researcher Ethnology – head of scientific board, Meertens Institute, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, M PO Box 10855, 1001 EW Amsterdam. Stengs@meertens.knaw.nl

VAN DER ZEIJDEN, ALBERT, Dr., Researcher, Dutch Center for Intangible Heritage/ Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Nederland. Multatulilaan 12, 4103 NM, Culemborg. – Visiting Researcher, Department of History and Art History – Cultural History University Utrecht, Drift 6, 3512 BS Utrecht. a.t.vanderzeijden@uu.nl

VAN GINKEL, ROB, Dr., Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Cultural Anthropology University of Amsterdam. PO Box 15509 1001 NA Amsterdam. R.J.vanGinkel@uva.nl

Ticking the box?

Material cultures of migration in Museum Rotterdam
and the Netherlands¹ Open Air Museum²

Hester Dibbits and Norah Karrouche

Introduction

For a few years now, Rotterdam's policy makers and cultural actors have been debating the possibility of establishing a new museum in the southern, demographically diverse part of the city that would both focus on the history of migration to Rotterdam and support research on Rotterdam as a site where multiple historical 'migration corridors' have resulted in a diverse contemporary cityscape. So far, plans for this 'Museum op Zuid' or 'MuZu', including a research centre for policy makers and researchers alike, have not materialized. Exactly the same debate also takes place in Amsterdam: from time to time professionals are invited to meetings to discuss plans for a migration museum in the Dutch capital. Although the question as to whether such a museum could be of significance for urban environments and local citizens is a highly valid and socially relevant discussion, we also wonder what this preoccupation with migration might signify for museums themselves as institutions that collect, curate, display and research material culture. But how does migration become a theme of interest and research in museums?

We will attempt to answer this question by closely examining the exhibition and collection policies and practices of two museums in the Netherlands that have made migration a focal point in the past decade: municipal Museum Rotterdam and the Netherlands Open Air Museum in Arnhem. The exhibition projects and collecting activities in Museum Rotterdam and the Open Air Museum in Arnhem will be contrasted with each other and discussed in a broader cultural and historical context. With our article, we hope to contribute to the idea that a network approach can be helpful in coming to a better understanding of why museums deal with migration in the ways they do. A network approach helps us to get some insight into the complex dynamics in which things just 'happen', into the dynamics between all the interconnected factors – timeframe, money, missions, etc. – and all the individual actors involved, with their distinct characters and professional backgrounds, their individual interests, passions and emotions. We believe that there is a need for more systematic and critical reflec-

¹ Visitors to the English version of the museum website will notice that the name of the Open Air Museum is currently translated as Holland Open Air Museum.

² We want to thank the following people for their input: JACQUES BÖRGER, ERNIE RUIGROK VAN DER WERVEN and INGRID DE JAGER from Museum Rotterdam, HERMS LUNENBORG and KLAARTJE SCHWEIZER from the Netherlands Open Air Museum and the participants of the Leiden/ Erasmus/ Delft seminar Heritage: Agency and Appropriation, organized by the Center for Historical Culture of the Erasmus University Rotterdam on 23 February 2017.

tion and more transparency in this respect, not only within the institutions. Who was/is in charge of what, when and how?

Our research focused on a city museum and a national museum. Whereas the city museum in question focuses almost exclusively on contemporary rather than historical collecting nowadays, the national museum positions itself explicitly as a historical museum. In both museums, migration was more or less absent as a topic until the mid-nineties. Since then, the theme of migration has become a rather pressing matter in both museums, with a remarkable increase in the number of projects related to the theme in the early 2000s.

Did this rise in interest in migration change the museums themselves? Hardly. In the Netherlands Open Air Museum the focus is still on diversity in a national context as a result of migration and ongoing global and local flows of people, commodities and ideas, *not* on the idea of transnational relations. For the Netherlands Open Air Museum, diversity is about different groups in society. The idea is that the Netherlands has always been a plural country, with more and more different groups and narratives arriving and settling throughout the years. In Rotterdam, the focus *is* on the *transnational*, but here we observe a discrepancy between what the museum says it is, collects and displays, and what the museum actually does in practice, which is to show the *diversity* of Rotterdam's inhabitants as a result of historical migrations.

Our discussion can be framed in a wider debate about how museums have handled the theme of migration and plural societies in the past two decades. There has been growing interest on this topic in the fields of both ethnology and museology, as in the wider heritage domain.³ As more and more museums have started to develop exhibitions on migration history and many local (social, cultural, etc.) organizations have set up immigrant heritage projects, often together with local migrant communities, a lively debate on these initiatives has developed. What were the motivations of the people involved and what were the actual implications? Reflecting on German museum practice in relation to the topic of migration, NATALIE BAYER noted no substantial change in the positioning of museums, despite longstanding discussions among professionals.⁴ When visiting various 'migration exhibitions' in different countries and reading the re-

³ See for example the four year research project MeLa – European Museums in an age of migrations (<http://www.mela-project.polimi.it>). – GOURIEVIDIS, LAURENCE (ed.): *Museums and Migration. History, memory and politics*. Abingdon, New York 2014. – KAISER, WOLFRAM/ KRANKENHAGEN, STEFAN/ POEHLIS, KERSTIN: *Exhibiting Europe in Museums. Transnational Networks, Collections, Narratives and Representations*. (= *Museums and Collections*, Vol. 6) Berghahn 2014. – BAYER, NATALIE: *Post the Museum! Anmerkungen zur Migrationsdebatte und Museumspraxis*. In: ELPERS, SOPHIE/ PALM, ANNA (eds.): *Die Musealisierung der Gegenwart. Von Grenzen und Chancen des Sammelns in Kulturhistorischen Museen*. Bielefeld 2014, pp. 63-83. – WHITEHEAD, CHRISTOPHER/ ECKERSLEY, SUSANNAH/ LLOYD, KATHERINE/ MASON, RHIANNON (eds.): *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe. People, Places and Identities*. Farham, Burlington 2015. – JOHANSSON, CHRISTINA: *Museums, Migration and Cultural Diversity. Swedish Museums in Tune with the Times?* (= *European History and Public Spheres*, Vol. 6) Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen 2015. – INNOCENTI, PERLA (ed.): *Migrating Heritage. Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe*. Farnham 2014.

⁴ BAYER 2014 (as annot. 3), p. 64.

ports and studies on these exhibitions both in Europe and in the US, one is inclined to conclude that Germany is not an exception. Yet the effort to address the theme in an innovative way is huge. To take two examples out of many: in 2003, the Folklore Museum in Norway reconstructed the apartment of a Pakistani immigrant family⁵ and in 2005, the Geffrye Museum in London invited MICHAEL MCMILLAN to make an installation of a typical 'West Indian Front Room' based on his own childhood memories and those of his peers.⁶

Museums are a prime site for the construction and dissemination of heritage and the performance of identities. In the case of Arnhem and Rotterdam, these 'performances' are concerned with national and local identities respectively. In understanding heritage, the concept of appropriation is key: collective and cultural heritage signify *processes* through which individuals and groups may appropriate, value and stage elements from the past and forget others. Heritage is a form of meaning making in the present. It provides individuals and self-proclaimed groups with a sense of history and identity. It is a mode of representing the past and creates a sense of place and belonging in the world. Change is, however, inherently tied to the way we think about the past in the present, even though its representation as being fixed and stable might suggest otherwise. The past is not given as such but rather the past is constructed in reference to the present and in light of current and future needs. In this sense, migration has become a pressing matter and topic of research for both academics and museum staff. Societal change challenged museum professionals to look for ways of connecting with new audiences, to find ways of relating to the world outside the institution. There was a shared concern that museums should become less inwardly focused and pay more attention to the expectations of visitors.

In the Netherlands, museum policies might have correlated with contemporary integration policies. For instance, in the past we have observed changes in cultural policies when migration and integration policies were questioned publicly and politically. This occurred in the period between 1994 and 1998 when the Dutch Mondriaan Foundation made funding multicultural projects one of its focal points.⁷ A second instance was the year 2003 when policies became more demanding after Dutch publicist PAUL SCHEFFER had renewed the multiculturalism debate in 2000 by stating it had failed. Multiculturalism was now a question of integration. Yet how did this observation and shift to integration policies influence museum policies on both the national and local level?

⁵ PARELI, LEIF: Et pakistansk hjem på museum. Den flerkulturelle samtidig ønsker velkommen inn. In: Tidsskrift for kulturforskning 2004 (3), pp. 47-65.

⁶ MCMILLAN, MICHAEL: The Front Room. Migrant Aesthetics in the Home. London 2009.

⁷ In 2000, the project 'Cultureel Erfgoed Minderheden' was launched, led by the Mondriaan Foundation and the Dutch Organisation for Museums. After the initial exploration of the status quo, museums and heritage organisations were invited to apply for funding in 2003 and 2004. As the number of responses was lower than expected, the call was extended. In 2006, the organisation Erfgoed Nederland took over the lead until it had to stop all its initiatives because of substantial budget cuts.

Our theoretical question hence addresses the relationship between cultural heritage and the integration paradigm and thus critically interrogates the representation of migration as a historical and contemporary phenomenon, as well as migrant identities in public museums as spaces where such heritage is produced, mediated and re-mediated.⁸ In the following paragraphs we therefore look at the interaction between policy, curators, exhibition makers and citizens with a migration background. From the early 2000s onwards, Museum Rotterdam wanted to show migration to the city, which it regards as exemplary of harbour cities and metropolises in general, and makes up the basis of 'Rotterdam identity', i.e. what it means to be a Rotterdammer. (see Figure 1) The Open Air Museum wanted to have the culture of everyday life in The Netherlands represented. For both museums, the period of the mid-1990s to the early 2000s can be seen as a key phase in their history.

On various occasions, staff members of both museums have reflected upon their own work in direct conversation with ethnologists and cultural historians. This happened for example within the framework of the so-called *Volkskundig Overleg*, periodical meetings of the department of *Volkskunde* (later the department of European Ethnology) of the Meertens Institute, the Dutch Centre for Folklore (NCV), the Netherlands Open Air Museum and the *Zuiderzeemuseum*. A special occasion was the *Studium Generale*, held in 1994 and 1995 and organised by the *Volkskundig Overleg*. The lectures were published afterwards.⁹ The debate also took place in scholarly publications, several of them with an outspoken ethnological signature. One of these publi-



Fig. 1: Statue of a local citizen representing Rotterdam as a 'city of arrival', Museum Rotterdam (photograph: Norah Karrouche, 22 February 2017)

⁸ On the mediation of memory as 'memory matters' that transform according to their changing social, political and cultural contexts see ERLI, ASTRID: Re-Writing as Re-Visioning. Modes of Representing the 'Indian Mutiny' in British Novels, 1857 to 2000. In: *European Journal of English Studies* 10 (2006), pp. 163-185. – ERLI, ASTRID: Remembering across time, space and cultures: Premediation, remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'. In: ERLI, ASTRID/ RIGNEY, ANN (eds.), *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*. Berlin, New York 2009, pp. 109-138.

⁹ *Studium Generale Volkskunde en Museum, 1994-1995*. Print.

cations was the yearbook of the Open Air Museum. From 1995 to 1999, this periodical functioned as a platform for academic ethnological/museological discussion. The other (much older) platform was the *Volkskundig Bulletin*, edited by and with financial support from the Meertens Institute until the board decided in 2001 that it was time to stop. It was only in 2006 that another alternative platform for ethnological/ museological reflection entered the scene: *Kleine C. Studies over de Cultuur van het dagelijks leven*, edited by GERARD ROOIJAKKERS and MARC JACOBS. This journal stopped after two volumes had been published. In 2009, three researchers (all three former students of Rooijackers) started a new journal called *Quotidian*, again with financial support from the Meertens Institute. In 2012, after three volumes had been published, this journal also ceased to exist. Not coincidentally, the journal *Volkskunde* announced in the same year that it had reinvented itself as an interdisciplinary platform for research, reflection and debate on everyday culture and heritage, with a new editorial board of both Flemish and Dutch ethnologists and museologists. For our kind of research, these yearbooks and journals, with their combined ethnological and museological focus, are extremely valuable, as they offer insights into institutional challenges and changes, and the complex character of museum work, while at the same time illustrating the urgent need for constant critical reflection in dialogue with both the general public and the academic world.¹⁰ We hope that our publication contributes to this ongoing conversation.

1992-2001: multiculturalism and migration on the agenda

The Open Air Museum in Arnhem was founded in 1912 in the context of rapid modernization. Fearing a loss of traditional customs and the disappearance of regional variation, a group of private individuals started buying old buildings from different regions in the Netherlands in order to rebuild them at ‘the Waterberg’ in Arnhem. Over the years, the museum became one of the most popular museums in the Netherlands, with visitor numbers rising from around 20,000 in the early 1930s to 300,000 in the late 1950s and more than 500,000 in 1980. A long period of growth came to an end in the mid-eighties, as the number of visitors dropped in 1986 to 337,384.¹¹ Because of this decline, the government decided to shut down the museum. However, thanks to impressive public support, the museum was allowed to stay open and continue as an independent organization. In 1990, JAN VAESSEN was appointed as director. Under his directorship the museum entered another phase. Aware that more fundamental changes were necessary for the museum in order to remain sustainable in the future, VAESSEN and his team started to look for ways to reposition the Netherlands Open Air Museum.

¹⁰ See for example REIJNDERS, STIJN: Collecting the Contemporary in the Imagined City. In: *Quotidian. Dutch Journal for the Study of Everyday Life* 2 (2010), pp. 104-110 and the responses to this critical essay by JACQUES BÖRGER and PIETER-MATTHIJS GUSBERS in the same volume.

¹¹ We want to thank KLAARTJE SCHWEIZER for the information on visitor numbers as they were mentioned in the annual reports of 1918-2011.

Although the museum had developed from a museum for rural folklore into a museum where visitors could also experience the period of industrialization, the general image had remained the same: it was considered a place where one would find Dutch country life with its traditional regional dwellings and customs. Moreover, after a period in which the visitor numbers had been rising, they started declining again from 370,000 in 1992 to 350,000 in 1993 and 315,000 in 1994. Furthermore, at the end of that year, the museum faced a structural deficit of 350,000 guilders (approximately 800,000 euros) on a budget of twelve million guilders.¹² It was in this period that VAESSEN decided to start the yearbook series. In his introduction to the first volume, published in 1995, he wrote: “It is essential for the future development of the Open Air Museum that there is a debate about the way in which scholarly – and in particular ethnological – insights are translated into museum presentation.”¹³ In his text, JAN VAESSEN stressed the need to be connected not only to the academic world but also to society in general in order to address basic questions about today’s society, about living together in what he called ‘by now multicultural Dutch society’ (‘inmiddels multiculturele Nederland’). In line with this, from September 1995 onwards the exhibition ‘Mensen van de Reis’, developed in collaboration with the Museon museum in The Hague and a team of migration historians, showed not only historical items that were part of the collection and historical pictures of travellers, but also contemporary ones. Three years later, in 1998, VAESSEN wrote a longer article focusing more specifically on the role of the museum ‘in a society with newcomers’. Those populations that had been regarded as ‘foreign’ or ‘outsiders’ now had to be included, he stated. A 1950s ‘Indisch’ interior and a 1960s Italian ice cream parlour were mentioned among the examples of items that would fit neatly in the collection.¹⁴

The same message can be found in the museum’s strategic policy report *Buitenkan- sen*, in which it was indicated that the museum wanted to do justice to the complex social fabric of the country, in line with developments in academia.¹⁵ The presence of different migrant groups in society was mentioned explicitly as being of growing importance. How much work there still was to do is illustrated by the internship report of MONIQUE VERWERS, a student at the Reinwardt Academy, in which she depicted a traditional image of the Open Air Museum as a museum that shows how people in the

¹² ‘Tekort Openluchtmuseum’. In: NRC Handelsblad (5. 11. 1994).

¹³ ‘Voor de verdere ontwikkeling van het Openluchtmuseum is het van wezenlijk belang, dat reflectie plaats vindt op de wijze waarop wetenschappelijk – in het bijzonder volkskundige – inzichten in museale presentatie worden ‘vertaald’. VAESSEN, JAN: Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1995. Nijmegen 1995, p. 268.

¹⁴ VAESSEN, JAN: Over grenzen heen...In: Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1998. Nijmegen 1998, pp. 10-21. A year later, in the yearbook of 1999, VAESSEN felt the need to revise that the museum was looking for a mosque and a ‘kebab joint’. – VAESSEN, JAN: ‘Bij het vijfde Jaarboek van het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum’. In: Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1999. Nijmegen 1999, p. 8.

¹⁵ Buitenkan- sen. Basisvisie Museum- park. Nederlands Openluchtmuseum, s.l s.d. (Arnhem 1999).

past used to live and work in the countryside.¹⁶ All museum activities mentioned in her report are in line with this apparent focus on daily life in the traditional Dutch countryside: a theatre piece called ‘De Aardappeleters’, ‘een Hollands stuk waarin het platteland centraal staat’, an exhibition presenting one hundred years of regional dress, and an educational event for primary school children, titled “Stimpstampen. Kom werken en eten op de boerderij!”. In this respect even the arrival of the new attraction HollandRama did not help to bring about more fundamental change. While the museum park offered a journey through the Netherlands, this high-tech installation, an immersive and theatrical ‘experience’, was developed to offer the possibility to take visitors on a journey through history.¹⁷ Content-wise, however, the installation presented rather static displays of typical and easily recognizable symbols of Dutchness.

Museum Rotterdam shares as a common ground with the Open Air Museum its preoccupation with displaying history, including both change and continuity, but in a local sense: who are or were the Rotterdammers of the present and the past? The history of Museum Rotterdam reaches back to 1905, when it was established as the Museum of Antiquities.¹⁸ Like the Open Air Museum in Arnhem, the institution has gone through different phases over the past century. What started out in the Schielandshuis, a 17th-century monumental building, and was conceived of as an instrument for the bourgeoisie to ‘civilize’ local working classes, has now been turned into a space where both in- and outsiders to the city can learn about Rotterdam as a ‘transnational city’. Along the way, the museum has been turned into a historical museum, dropping its primary interest in ‘antiquities’ and glorifying its ‘golden age’. In 2016, the museum lessened the aspect of history in its collections and exhibits by changing its name yet again to ‘Museum Rotterdam’, although the history of the city and its port are still at its core. Staff at Museum Rotterdam are very much aware of its past as an institution that adhered to a civilizing and glorifying mission, in particular up until the 1980s. When staff look back on the institution’s history, they will reflect on their displays as particularly ‘white’.

Before 1999, very little was being done on migration or migrants in Rotterdam, and when this topic was addressed, this was done so mostly outside of the museum building, the Schielandshuis, in the various neighbourhoods. During the nineties, individual staff every now and then noticed the citizenry’s diverse backgrounds, visible in exhibits like ‘Eten wat de pot schaft’, which focused on diverse cuisines, and ‘Jong in Crooswijk’, which aimed at representing and including youth in Crooswijk, one of the city’s most prominent ethnically diverse, albeit challenging, neighbourhoods. Moreover, on occasions when the topic was addressed, the issue was quickly relegated to the

¹⁶ VERWERS, MONIQUE: Kijk-op-PR. Stage in het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum. Internship report. Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts. Amsterdam 1998, p. 7: ‘Het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum laat haar bezoekers zien hoe de mensen vroeger woonden en werkten op het platteland.’

¹⁷ Buitenkansen 1999, p. 13.

¹⁸ See VAN DE LAAR, PAUL: The Contemporary City as Backbone. Museum Rotterdam Meets the Challenge. In: *Journal of Museum Education* 38 (2013), pp. 39-49 for a concise history of the museum.

realm of education, not collection practices. In other words: the city's migrant heritages did not significantly challenge the museum's practices with regard to collecting. Museum staff were more concerned with outreach towards migrants and their offspring. In fact, one can observe a clear difference in the content of the museum's – by then – two locations in the city: the Schielandshuis, the *locus* from which the museum had originated, on the one hand, and the De Dubbelde Palmboom, an old storage house in historic Delfshaven, a traditional working class neighbourhood which had become a focal point in the city planning department's policy of (architectural) renovation, on the other. In 1966, the municipality had purchased the old storage building, anticipating future maintenance at the Schielandshuis. This development also fits in well with the city's plans to 'upgrade' the Delfshaven neighbourhood. During the 1970s and 1980s, renovation work on the historic Schielandshuis in the city centre was going on almost constantly. This meant that at various times the museum as a whole or significant parts of it were closed down for maintenance purposes. For this reason, the museum sought out other locations which it could temporarily use to display part of its collection.

Moreover, when the shift towards a more open attitude towards migrants and migration as a key topic occurred, we can clearly see that yet again, the individual (educational) backgrounds of the museum's staff played a significant role in putting migration on the agenda. An examination of annual reports and policy planning shows this reluctance to treat the topic structurally and in depth.

The museum had had clear working agreements with other museums in Rotterdam and cultural institutions in order to avoid an overlap in collecting practices, including the municipality archive for historical records, and the Bureau Bodemkundig Onderzoek (BOOR) for archaeological findings. In addition, the museum worked with the Maritime Museum on matters of education. Only since 1998 did the city museum explicitly address the issue of migration to Rotterdam and collecting objects that were related to the diverse range of migrant communities in Rotterdam. They had reached a formal agreement with the Wereldmuseum (previously the Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam) that the Wereldmuseum would collect and exhibit objects related to the history of migration and newcomers' lives.¹⁹ Until 1995, these museums and institutions had all been part of the same municipal branch of administration, but they were now working as independent organizations. Traditionally, migration was an issue that was viewed as part of the ethnographic, not the historical realm. In 1993, for instance, the Museum voor Volkenkunde Rotterdam had organized a temporary exhibit on the multicultural background of Rotterdam that also addressed children's intercultural skills, and had hosted and supported a temporary exhibit on Islam in the Netherlands.²⁰

The working relationship between the city museum and the local ethnographic museum implicitly changed in 1999 when Museum Rotterdam decided it would organize a thematic temporary exhibit on festivities in the city called 'Rotterdam Feest'. This

¹⁹ Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1998, p. 10; Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1999, p. 7.

²⁰ Dienst Gemeentelijke Musea Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1993, p. 15.

was, in turn, explicitly addressed when the museum's new director discussed 'multi-culturalism' in Rotterdam and the role the museum could play in a multicultural city for the first time in 1999.

However, the theme was not only introduced in a top-down manner by the museum's director and management, but also markedly through a bottom-up process by the museum's staff itself. When in 1999 JACQUES BÖRGER, an anthropologist who had previously headed an ethnographic museum, joined the museum staff as head of communications and was tasked with supervising the organization of an exhibit on Oude Noorden, which was already underway at the time, he was surprised to find no reference whatsoever to the neighbourhood's demographically diverse composition. In his opinion, the exhibit had been conceived of as an historical exhibit that rather nostalgically focused on the neighbourhood's past. And although the curators and volunteers stressed that the Rotterdam area had attracted many migrants during the nineteenth century (predominantly Dutch people from the countryside), there was no attention given originally to the non-white and non-western migrants of the twentieth century. When BÖRGER looks back on this period in the museum today, he is baffled at the lack of attention that was being paid to this particular segment of the city's postcolonial migrants, guest labourers and the generation of 'post-migration'. For this reason, BÖRGER made sure that equal attention was paid to Oude Noorden's more recent migrants, including Moroccan guest workers. One of the ways to go about this, BÖRGER figured, was to reach out to local businesses. A Moroccan-Dutch woman who owned a bridal business was eager to cooperate.

Thus far, the projects described were more community-based than collection-based. The city museum in fact only started to actively acquire objects related to migration in 1999 when the museum decided to organize 'Rotterdam feest', focusing on five distinct migrant groups and cultures in Rotterdam. With the exhibit, the museum aimed at stressing both Rotterdam as a city that was known for its festivals and Rotterdam as a multicultural city. The organization of 'Rotterdam feest' laid bare the existence of two cultures of collecting within the museum, which may be described as an art historical approach and a cultural anthropological approach.

Intermezzo: migration and cultural politics

One might be surprised that for both the Open Air Museum and Museum Rotterdam the mid-nineties seem to be a turning point. But the national context was the same: the political climate, museum policies and academic discourse all changed significantly around that time. This intermezzo offers a brief overview, both as a contextualization of the previous section and as an introduction for the next one.

One of the key moments in the nineties was a conference organised by the NMV and the Rijksdienst voor Beeldende Kunst in The Hague titled 'Publiek in het Jaar

2000. *Musea in de Multiculturele Samenleving*.²¹ The conference took place in 1995. In the opening lecture, the secretary of the ministry of education, culture and sciences, AAD NUIS, explained why he did not want to use the word ‘allochtoon’: it creates a ‘them’ and ‘us’. He continued by putting questions to the fore concerning museums’ collection practices and agency. Were staff considering collecting heritage among other cultures? Who decided which topics to address in the museum? And what did curators contribute to this? He hoped to ‘renew the museum concept’ in order for the museum to gain more relevance for a broad public.²²

In addition to AAD NUIS, there was another politician at that time who is considered to have been quite influential when it comes to cultural politics: RICK VAN DER PLOEG. His reports *Ruim baan voor culturele diversiteit* and *Cultuur als confrontatie*, both from 1999, became an important point of reference in the years thereafter, if only because state funding for the museum world became dependent on visitor numbers and visitor characteristics: in particular for art museums it became mandatory to reach out to new visitors with a ‘multicultural background’. In the slipstream of the cultural government policy, two projects were funded: Intercultural (Museum) Programmes and CEM. The Intercultural (Museum) Programmes (IP) worked between 1998 and 2004 to recognize and acknowledge cultural diversity in the heritage sector. The project was based at the Netherlands Museum Association and worked with its sister project Cultural Heritage of Minorities (CEM).²³ As it was concluded that there was still a lot of work to be done, the decision was made to continue research. In addition, a new trans-sectorial collaborative initiative with heritage and cultural diversity as its focal point, Erfgoed Nederland (Heritage Netherlands), was established. In April 2007, more than 900 heritage institutions and museums were sent a questionnaire designed to monitor the situation regarding cultural diversity. With an overall response rate of 37 percent, the survey’s main conclusion was that one in three institutions had now strongly put cultural diversity on their policy agendas. Two thirds of these museums were turning this into concrete action by organizing exhibitions and other related public events on the theme. However, it turned out that almost 40 percent of these institutions had not

²¹ LEEUW, RIET DE (ed.): *Publiek in het jaar 2000. Musea in de multiculturele samenleving. Verslag van de NMV-Najaarsdag op 25 november 1995 in het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*. Amsterdam, Den Haag 1996.

²² Idem. In his speech NUIS advocates an approach where museums open up to intangible cultural heritage. The UK could serve as an inspiring example in this respect, according to NUIS.

²³ STAM, DINEKE: A clog dance with diversity. Past, present and future of the multicultural Netherlands. In: *L’Homme, Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 16 (2005), pp 105-112, here p. 105. The research reports about the presence of migrant heritage in Dutch heritage institutions were published in 2002: TUSKAN, ERHAN/ ÖZDOGAN, ZÜLFİGAR/ SCHROVER, MARLOU: *Collecties en beleid van openbare archiefinstellingen. Nederlandse museumvereniging; project cultureel erfgoed minderheden; werkgroep migratiegeschiedenis*. Amsterdam 2002. On behalf of the working group for Migration History, MIEKE BOER did research in 29 museums to see if and how migrants and refugees were represented in the collections. The Netherlands Open Air Museum was not included in her research. See – BOER, MIEKE: *Inventarisatieonderzoek bij 29 musea naar het cultureel erfgoed van migranten en vluchtelingen. Nederlandse Museumvereniging. Project Cultureel Erfgoed Minderheden, Werkgroep Migratiegeschiedenis*. Amsterdam 2002.

addressed the theme in their analyses of the public. Only 8 percent had defined ‘new-comers’ as a particular group of interest.²⁴

At the turn of the twenty first century, the debate about multicultural society intensified. One of the triggers was the publication of *Het Multiculturele Drama* by PAUL SCHEFFER in January 2000. After the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the murder of the right-wing Dutch politician PIM FORTUYN on 6 May 2002 the situation became more and more tense. In November 2004, the murder of THEO VAN GOGH in the streets of Amsterdam by a young Moroccan shook national media and politics. THEO VAN GOGH had become a contested public figure in the Netherlands because he was very critical of Dutch multicultural society, both in his written work as a journalist and as a documentary and film producer. Afterwards, journalists and politicians openly claimed that the story of the man accused of his murder, MOHAMMED BOUYERI, a member of the radical Islamist Hofstadt group, proved that Dutch integration policies had indeed failed, especially in the country’s impoverished and neglected suburbs. Journalists and politicians argued that the murder was yet another consequence of 9/11. The figure of BOUYERI spiked a wave of parliamentary debates on ‘related’ issues: the threat to ‘Dutch’ values and the protection of freedom of speech in the Netherlands, the possibility of new restrictions on Dutch immigration legislation, and also the integration of second generation youth in general, and the problematic status of holding dual citizenship and two passports.²⁵ How did these developments, severing the debate on national identity and belonging, influence and shape cultural policies in the following years?

2001-2013: looking for support, dealing with stakeholders

In a context of polarization and societal unrest, the Open Air Museum continued to work on the ambition of becoming more engaged. In 2003, the museum opened the ‘Moluccan Barack’, an original 1939 wooden barrack from the province of Noord-Brabant in which a theme closely linked to Dutch post-war decolonization is presented to the public, and in 2004, a so-called ‘Indisch Achtererf’ was established in one corner of the grounds. (see Figure 2a & 2b) While the first location presented the harsh conditions in which the Moluccan families lived, the second was an area full of nostalgia. In both cases, the focus was on the differences between the ‘typical Dutch way of living’, and daily life in the East Indies. Both projects can be regarded as innovative in

²⁴ RODINK, EVA: *Migrantenerfgoed in Nederland. Een onderzoek naar de huidige situatie van migrantenzelforganisaties in Nederland*. Bachelor’s thesis. Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts. Amsterdam 2016, p. 30.

²⁵ For a review of the impact of 9/11 and the murders of PIM FORTUYN and THEO VAN GOGH on Dutch politics, and political opinion regarding migration, see – PRINS, BAUKJE: *The Nerve to Break Taboos. New Realism in Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism*. In: *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 3 (2002) pp. 363-379 and – VAN DER VEER, PETER: *Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh, and the Politics of Tolerance in the Netherlands*. In: *Public Culture* 18 (2006), pp. 111-124.

the sense that the museum took a participative approach. In the case of the Moluccan Barack, representatives of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands were involved.



Fig. 2a: The indoor installation at the Indisch Achtererf, Netherlands Open Air Museum (photograph: Netherlands Open Air Museum)

The Indisch Achtererf was developed by the Stichting Indische Cultuur (SiC).²⁶ The participative approach was something which AD DE JONG, historian and member of the museums' management team, had pledged for in 2001 in his PhD thesis *Dirigenten van de Herinnering*.²⁷ In an appendix, in which he reflected on the situation at that time, DE JONG had stressed the need for the museum to develop into a 'werkplaats van het geheugen' (memory working space) by inviting 'mensen uit het veld' (people from the field, citizens) to become involved in museum work. And apparently, this is what actually happened. In 2005, the Open Air Museum celebrated its success as winner of the European Museum Award, with an impressive rise in visitor numbers as an immediate result. The jury praised the museum as an 'excellent example for classic museums who [sic] aim to take a new road and wish to integrate innovative, experimental and creative projects within the traditional structure of an open air museum that are based on the issues that play a role in contemporary society'.²⁸ But new challenges

²⁶ www.iwicollectie.nl The design of the Indisch Achtererf was based on the small backyard of the Dutch Indies Academic Institute in The Hague.

²⁷ DE JONG, AD: *De dirigenten van de herinnering. Musealisering en nationalisering van de volkscultuur in Nederland 1815-1940*. Nijmegen 2001.

²⁸ Jury quote found on: <http://www.museummanagement.nl/temp/en/actueel/european-museum-award-for-open-air-museum.html> (19. 7. 2017). The project management for the Moluccan

came along as the museum got stuck in a national debate about what was to be ‘a new National History Museum’. Our primary concern here is not this debate, but the implementation of the theme of migration in the museum’s presentations and collections.



Fig. 2b: The Indisch Achtererf, Netherlands Open Air Museum (photograph: Netherlands Open Air Museum)

On 1 April 2009, JAN VAESSEN retired and PIETER-MATTHIJS GIJSBERS took over.²⁹ At the time of GIJSBERS’ appointment, a team of researchers had already been working on a bigger project plan on the theme of migration for some time and as this project was implemented, the museum ‘breathed’ migration. The idea behind the project was that migration should not be approached as a separate topic, but as part of the history of the Netherlands.³⁰ The objective was to come to a better understanding of the cultural history of everyday life in the Netherlands by addressing the theme of migration in all sorts of activities. According to a position paper in which the first project ideas were outlined, the aim was to counteract negative feelings about ‘integration’. The museum stated that Dutch society was experiencing pressure and that differences between groups were growing larger. The general public was worried about Dutch identity, and

Baracks project was handled by Berns Museum Management on behalf of the Open Air Museum.

²⁹ GIJSBERS had been director of Orientalis, formerly known as the Bijbels Openluchtmuseum, since 2001.

³⁰ VAESSEN, JAN: Einschließen statt ausschließen.... In: KANIA-SCHÜTZ, Monika (ed.): In die Jahre gekommen? Chancen und Potenziale Kulturhistorischer Museen. Münster et al. 2009, pp. 26-45, here p. 44.

in particular its preservation of traditional Dutch values. Yet the museum was intent on overcoming these negative perceptions. The public, according to the museum, had to experience and learn about what binds them together as human beings. The Open Air Museum was very much interested in cooperating with and hiring partners who were intent on fulfilling this ambition. Migrants and their representatives, the paper stated, were of course part of this. Interestingly, the focus was heavily based on specific groups, depending on the projects on show. The groups mentioned were: Surinamese, Antilleans, Turkish and Kurdish citizens, Moroccans, Chinese and Moluccans. There is no explanation as to why these specific groups were chosen.³¹ Starting in 2009 with the theme of emigration, it was indicated that the presentations should be as clear as possible in making the connection between Dutch emigrants and Moroccan families coming to the Netherlands. The theme of 2010, initially labelled 'successful immigrants', turned into 'stories of immigrants', again aiming to show visitors that migration is a natural phenomenon that has been going on throughout the ages. In the report for the year 2010, the list of initiatives is impressive: video portraits, a family project, several temporary exhibitions and a brand new semi-permanent presentation of a Chinese restaurant from 1962 in the centre of what is considered a typical Dutch village: the Zaanse Buurt. Content-wise, the reconstruction was thoroughly researched by anthropologist ELSE GOOTJES who had been hired because of her knowledge of the history of Chinese migrants in the Netherlands. The presence of a Chinese restaurant in the museum was explained as a phenomenon that had become such a 'natural' element of Dutch culture that it was a logical step to make it part of the museum.³²

The topic of migration also became a focal area for the sector collections, culminating in 2011 with the recuperation and exhibition of a set of kotomisi's³³ which the museum had rejected in 1969, but welcomed forty years later. In that same year the Open Air Museum decided to collect the complete interior of a richly documented ice cream parlour, founded in the city of Utrecht by an Italian migrant family in the 1920s. The owner of the ice cream parlour, DE LORENZO, was planning to return to Italy, and having been in contact with one of the curators before (he had provided a set of ice cream cups on temporary loan for a small exhibition on the topic of migration at the entrance of the museum) he knew that the museum might be interested in acquiring some items. HESTER DIBBITS (one of the authors of this article) was involved in the acquisition of the ice cream parlour in her role as temporary head curator at the Open Air Museum. What struck her was the decisive role of emotions in the acquisition process: not only the man who had decided to sell his private belongings to the museum but also the curators were emotionally triggered, walking and talking with the owner and one of his sons. DE LORENZO proudly showed the curators around, both in the shop and backstage in the kitchen. Explaining the process of ice cream making, he showed them the

³¹ Nieuwe bureu. Kaders voor het jaarthema 2010. Arnhem, 27 April 2009.

³² HIU, PAY-UUN: 'Het is afgelopen met 'bamigoreng-sambal bij'. In: De Volkskrant (30. 3. 2010) <http://www.volkskrant.nl/magazine/het-is-afgelopen-met-bami-goreng-sambal-bij~a996587/> (19. 7. 2017)

³³ The kotomisi is a traditional dress from the Afro-Surinamese women in Suriname. The koto was developed during the slavery period.

certificates for the prizes he had won. Initially, he was surprised to hear that the museum was interested in everyday items such as a small, broken, old wooden cross from his father, the old wooden chairs that had recently been rejected, and an old newspaper. Later on, DE LORENZO started to think along with his guests, looking for more items and stories that might be of interest to the museum. Inviting the museum staff to come upstairs to his private house, he then offered the whole interior for sale.³⁴ After some discussion, it was decided, however, to document everything, but to only collect the shop interior, as collecting everything would have taken far too much space. At the time of writing, the ensemble is still being kept in storage.

The acquisition of the ice cream parlour was one of many milestones that took place during a period of four years in which migration was a special theme. While most activities during this period were planned a long time in advance, this acquisition took place rather unexpectedly, although the museum had been waiting for this moment for a long time. The acquisition of two city buildings on Westerstraat in Amsterdam followed a completely different track as the houses had already been offered to the museum in 2002 by the city of Amsterdam.³⁵ What was planned as the House of Migration opened ten years later, in 2012, as ‘The Westerstraat’. (see Figure 3) Where initially the visitor was to be invited to investigate the relationship between – historic as well as recent – migration and his or her daily life, this turned out to be only one of many ways in which the reconstructed buildings and installations could be approached.³⁶ The theme of migration was represented by the ‘Turkish guest house’ on the ground floor and a video about the history of migration in the Netherlands on the first floor. But apart from that, the migration narrative was not as dominant as one might have expected from the initial project plan. The typical Dutch café, a post office, the sound of church bells, a bike, a car, a lorry with vegetables: the Westerstraat offered not one, but many different stories, and on the day of the opening, the focus was on what was familiar, the well known, with a performance of typical Dutch songs. For the Open Air Museum, the 100th anniversary in 2012 was a reason to ask former director JAN VAESSEN to reflect on the dilemmas he had been confronted with during his directorship of almost twenty years (1990-2009). The request resulted in a richly illustrated book, opening with what VAESSEN considered one of the core dilemmas for the Open Air Museum: how to prevent the museum from becoming an amusement park. On the day of the opening of the Westerstraat some of the guests must have strongly felt this dilemma as they participated in the festivities.

³⁴ The NOM was not the only museum that acquired an ice cream parlour at that time. In 2009, there was an exhibition in Hannover: <https://www.lwl.org/industriemuseum/standorte/zeche-hannover/migration-ausstellen/sonderausstellungen/eiskalte-leidenschaft>. (19. 7. 2017).

While the exhibition in Hannover was initiated by and developed in close collaboration with the Italian community in the Ruhr area, in the case of the Utrecht ice cream parlour Venezia, the museum curators took the lead.

³⁵ <http://www.nieuwsbank.nl/inp/2002/09/26/M026.htm>

<http://www.nationalebouwgids.nl/woningbouw/nieuws/12-jordaan-nagebouwd-in-arnhem.html> (19. 7. 2017)

³⁶ GIJSBERS, PIETER-MATTHIJS: Balancing old and new. In: *Quotidian 2* (2010), pp. 121-124.



Fig. 3: The Westerstraat buildings, Netherlands Open Air Museum (photograph: Netherlands Open Air Museum)

The theme of migration was put on the agenda by director JAN VAESSEN and his staff in the mid-nineties, and further implemented in the decade thereafter in a long-term project with several smaller projects. Throughout that time, the mission of the Open Air Museum had stayed the same: to present authentic objects that tell true stories about daily life in the Netherlands while stimulating ‘respect for our cultural heritage and understanding of our own and others’ cultural identities.’ In 2014, the museum developed a new vision and mission: ‘by knowing your past, you learn to know yourself’. The focus was now on the diversity of lifestyles, traditions, visions and views. Migration was considered to be part of daily life. The museum was thought of as a place where identities could be both constructed and deconstructed, as a way to increase the visibility of migrants, to give them a sense of pride, and to deconstruct the notion of ‘the’ Dutch identity.³⁷ However, in doing so, again, the message still stayed the same: ‘unity in diversity’. The history of the Open Air Museum is far from unique in this respect. One can find a similar situation in Sweden, for example. As CHRISTINA JOHANSSON concludes in her book on how Swedish museums have been dealing with the topic of migration and cultural diversity:

[...] most of the exhibits with migration as their main theme primarily focus on the integration process in Swedish society. Also in the exhibitions focusing on certain ethnic groups, it is

³⁷ [http://www.mmnieuws.nl/article/de-museale-missie-van-pieter-matthijs-gijsbers/\(19.7.2017\)](http://www.mmnieuws.nl/article/de-museale-missie-van-pieter-matthijs-gijsbers/(19.7.2017))

*foremost the migrants' and minorities' lives in Sweden that are illuminated. What the museums are doing here is broadening the Swedish memory by including the stories of some migrants and domestic ethnic minorities in the narrative of Sweden.*³⁸

How did the local Museum Rotterdam develop in comparison to the national Open Air Museum?

In early 2016, Museum Rotterdam re-opened in its current location, the newly built Timmerhuis. The building houses not just the city museum, but also part of the city's administration, private businesses, and housing. To many museum staff and cultural critics, this reflects the museum's core message: to represent a dynamic city with a dynamic heritage, which might be contested. Moreover, more emphasis is put on the contemporary city, with less attention paid to the city's history. Objects are used not to reflect a static identity, but to tell stories. This correlates with recent developments in European city museums.³⁹ At the core of the site and museum are three distinct presentations. The first is a historical overview, retracing the city's ancient settlements up to the contemporary city. Several objects in this exhibit narrate the transnational character of Rotterdam as a port city in which the concept of transit is key, such as objects related to the sugar trade. Only the last part of the exhibition, which focuses on the end of the twentieth century up to the present day, explicitly engages with migration. It is not surprising that it is here that we find some objects representing the migrant worker mentality of some of the city's population, such as a guest worker's toolkit. (see Figure 4) When the museum opened in February 2016, a Bulgarian guest worker's van was put on display at the museum's entrance. Inside the van, visitors were invited to watch a short film on the van's – and its owner's – travels across national borders. Other objects, like a Turkish circumcision costume, remind the visitor of the migrant presence in the city, predominantly from the sixties onwards. Although the museum's collection practices have indirectly changed, one thus might argue that community dominates over collection: a changed perception of the museum visitor, together with the reality of the municipality's expectations with regard to visitor numbers, has caused a growing sensitivity towards Rotterdam's migration past and present (ethnic, religious) minority presence. The second part is a representation of 'the Rotterdammer', in which statues of various inhabitants aim to reflect on the city's diverse composition. Markedly, this part of the museum reflects Rotterdam as a city of migrants the most. (see Figure 1) A third space houses temporary exhibits. Because the new exhibition space is smaller than the Schielandshuis, this area in the museum allows visitors to re-visit the museum and find something new each time. Over the past year, these temporary exhibits have focused on the city's architectural history, and the role of women in Rotterdam, past and present. As VAN DE LAAR and BÖRGER have stated, Museum Rotterdam aims to be a dynamic museum, engaging with the city's various communities both in-

³⁸ JOHANSSON, 2015 (as annot. 3), p. 112.

³⁹ BÖRGER, JACQUES: The Contemporary, the City and the City Museum. In: *Quotidian. Dutch Journal for the Study of Everyday Life* 2 (2010), pp. 111-114. – HOGERVORST, SUSAN/ DE BRUIJN, PIETER: Verbindend erfgoed, vervreemdend verleden. In: *Stadsgeschiedenis* 11 (2016), pp. 88-89.

and outside the museum as an actual, physical space.⁴⁰ This aim is reflected in various community heritage projects run by Museum Rotterdam's staff, such as 'Roffa 5314' (slang for Rotterdam, and the south postal code), a youth outreach program in the impoverished southern part of the city, and a neighbourhood documentation project, a statistical analysis of the city's households designed to enable a better understanding of Rotterdam's population. Projects like these, which transcend the museum's physical boundaries, should all contribute to this current dynamic approach to heritage in city museums.



Fig. 4: 'Builder's toolkit', Museum Rotterdam 91208-1 (photograph: Museum Rotterdam)

Indeed, scholars in the humanities and social sciences all seem to be convinced that culture should be seen as something dynamic. On the other hand, people keep looking for the familiar, and more often than not their perception of culture is far more static and essentialist than one may try to believe. It is no use trying to eliminate essentialist notions. Here we agree with KEVIN MEETHAN, who wrote: '[...] we have to recognize that within any culture there will always be some element of essentialism at work. But perhaps it is not after all essentialism that is the problem, rather it is a case of recognizing that essentialism may in fact be the mechanism through which cultures are defined in the first place.'⁴¹ However, this is not the only thing we can do. We – cultural historians, ethnologists, museologists, museum professionals, but also other people – can show how identifications do change over time, and according to place and social groups.

⁴⁰ VAN DE LAAR, 2013 (see annot. 18) – BÖRGER, 2010 (see annot. 39).

⁴¹ MEETHAN, KEVIN: Mobile Cultures? Hybridity, Tourism and Cultural Change. In: *Tourism and Cultural Change* 1:1 (2003), pp. 11-28, here p. 23.

Over the past two decades, ethnologists and museologists have spilt plenty of ink on the matter of migration, material culture, and museum collections. Much of this debate was initiated in a political context in which migration and migrant lives gained growing importance. When museums and other actors involved in heritage realized the topic was indeed a pressing matter, policy changes occurred in the museums and institutions, spurred by these local and national debates. The discussion on the concept of the 'migration museum' and local plans on actually establishing such a conceptual museum in the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam are exemplary of this academic debate.

However, what did this policy actually change in the everyday practice of the museums as institutions that collect and display material culture, now increasingly of and on migration? Moreover, to what extent were other factors (other than top-down policymaking) relevant in bringing about this shift and change in the museum? In this paper, we attempted to answer these questions by looking closely at two museums, by not only scrutinizing policy documents but also zooming in on the practical organization of exhibits and other initiatives over the last two decades in the history of both museums. During our study, we noticed that while many of the initiatives arose out of a sense of urgency, they always seem to end in a kind of inconclusiveness. By ticking the box, things started moving in the Dutch landscape of museums, but not in a fundamental way. Both in the Open Air Museum and Museum Rotterdam, migration became a topic of concern. In Rotterdam, for instance, in the realization that migration patterns had profoundly changed the city's constituents, in combination with a European trend of engaging with community heritage and contemporary city life, a renewed concept of the city museum and its relevance for local society can be noticed. In choosing the theme of migration for the museum, both Museum Rotterdam and the Open Air Museum have started to take a fresh look at their own collections from a historical perspective. 'Migration' had never been a specific label, but as curators started 'ticking the boxes', new meanings were attributed to old objects, and objects that could have been used by migrants were framed in a migration context.

Having said this, no *real* or *fundamental* change took place, and one can question the extent to which both museums have been challenged to really take it in another direction. In Rotterdam, for instance, migration and the transnational are relegated to the realm of contemporary history, with little attention paid to the city's identity as an intercultural crossroads in the *longue durée*. It seems as if both museums are trapped and keep being trapped by trying to stay true to their own identity, true to their founders: collectors of objects that were representative of static and well-defined 'Dutch and Rotterdam' identity. Facing this, and discussing this issue not only within the academic world, but also with the general public, seems to be a necessary step forward. In the case of Rotterdam, efforts were made to transfer this ownership of objects to local citizens, but these never significantly challenged the very nature and identity of the museum. Transparency offers room for ownership, an invitation to take a share in the search for societal relevance. Our role as ethnologists or cultural historians is important here: making exhibition and collection histories shareable, and using the museum itself as a platform to present and discuss the results of research into the collections of the muse-

um, including the management archives, will bring up lots of individual and collective stories and memories. We can't wait to hear them all.

Sources

- Dienst Gemeentelijke Musea Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1993.
 Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1998.
 Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Jaarverslag 1999.
 Historisch Museum Rotterdam. Rotterdam feest, folder (2000).
 Historisch Museum Rotterdam. De nieuwe bewoners van het oude noorden. s.l. s.d.
 Buitenkansen. Basisvisie Museumpark. Nederlands Openluchtmuseum. s.l. s.d. (Arnhem 1999).
 Jaarboek van het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1998.
 Jaarboek van het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1999.
 Nederlands Openluchtmuseum. Jaarverslag 2010.
 Nieuwe bureu. Kaders voor het jaarthema 2010. Arnhem, 27 April 2009.
 Studium Generale Volkskunde en Museum, 1994-1995. Print.

References

- BAYER, NATALIE: Post the Museum! Anmerkungen zur Migrationsdebatte und Museumspraxis. In: ELPERS, SOPHIE/ PALM, ANNA (eds.): Die Musealisierung der Gegenwart. Von Grenzen und Chancen des Sammelns in Kulturhistorischen Museen. Bielefeld 2014, pp. 63-83.
- BOER, MIEKE: Inventarisatieonderzoek bij 29 musea naar het cultureel erfgoed van migranten en vluchtelingen. Nederlandse Museumvereniging. Project Cultureel Erfgoed Minderheden, Werkgroep Migratiegeschiedenis. Amsterdam 2002.
- BÖRGER, JACQUES: The Contemporary, the City and the City Museum. In: Quotidian. Dutch Journal for the Study of Everyday Life 2 (2010), pp. 111-114.
- BOUMA, GEPKE: Een gezond en opgewekt kunstleven. Een studie in kunstbeleid te Rotterdam 1946-2011. Rotterdam 2012.
- DE JONG, AD: De dirigenten van de herinnering. Musealisering en nationalisering van de volkscultuur in Nederland 1815-1940. Nijmegen 2001.
- ERLL, ASTRID: Re-Writing as Re-Visioning. Modes of Representing the 'Indian Mutiny' in British Novels, 1857 to 2000. In: European Journal of English Studies 10 (2006), pp. 163-185.

ERLL, ASTRID: Remembering across time, space and cultures: Premediation, remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'. In: ERLL, ASTRID/ RIGNEY, ANN (eds.): *Mediation, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*. Berlin, New York 2009, pp. 109-138.

GIJSBERS, PIETER-MATTHIJS: Balance Between Old and New. In response to Stijn Reijnders. In: *Quotidian. Dutch Journal for the Study of Everyday Life* 2 (2010), pp. 121-124.

GOURIEVIDIS, LAURENCE (ed.): *Museums and Migration: History, memory and politics*. Abingdon, New York 2014.

HOGERVORST, SUSAN/ DE BRUIJN, PIETER: 'Verbindend erfgoed, vervreemdend verleden'. In: *Stadsgeschiedenis* 11 (2016), pp. 78-89.

INNOCENTI, PERLA (ed.): *Migrating Heritage. Experiences of Cultural Networks and Cultural Dialogue in Europe*. Farnham 2014.

JOHANSSON, CHRISTINA: *Museums, Migration and Cultural Diversity. Swedish Museums in Tune with the Times? (= European History and Public Spheres, Vol. 6)* Innsbruck, Vienna, Bozen 2015.

KAISER, WOLFRAM/ KRANKENHAGEN, STEFAN/ POEHLS, KERSTIN: *Exhibiting Europe in Museums. Transnational Networks, Collections, Narratives and Representations (= Museums and Collections, Vol. 6)*. Berghahn 2014.

LEEUW, RIET DE (ed.): *Publiek in het jaar 2000. Musea in de multiculturele samenleving. Verslag van de NMV-Najaarsdag op 25 november 1995 in het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*. Amsterdam, Den Haag 1996.

McMILLAN, MICHAEL: *The Front Room. Migrant Aesthetics in the Home*. London 2009.

MEETHAN, KEVIN: Mobile Cultures? Hybridity, Tourism and Cultural Change. In: *Tourism and Cultural Change* 1:1 (2003), pp. 11-28.

PARELI, LEIF: Et pakistansk hjem pa museum. Den flerkulturelle samtid ønsker velkommen inn. In: *Tidsskrift for kulturforskning* 3 (2004), pp. 47-65.

REIJNDERS, STIJN: Collecting the Contemporary in the Imagined City. In: *Quotidian. Dutch Journal for the Study of Everyday Life* 2 (2010), pp. 104-110.

PRINS, BAUKJE: The Nerve to Break Taboos. New Realism in Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism. In: *Journal of International Migration and Integration* 3 (2002) pp. 363-379.

RODINK, EVA: *Migrantenerfgoed in Nederland. Een onderzoek naar de huidige situatie van migrantenzelforganisaties in Nederland*. Bachelor's thesis. Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts. Amsterdam 2016.

STAM, DINEKE: A clog dance with diversity. Past, present and future of the multicultural Netherlands. In: *L'Homme, Zeitschrift für Feministische Geschichtswissenschaft* 16 (2005), pp. 105-112.

TUSKAN, ERHAN/ ÖZDOĞAN, ZÜLFİKAR/ SCHROVER, MARLOU: *Collecties en beleid van openbare archiefinstellingen. Nederlandse museumvereniging; project cultureel erfgoed minderheden werkgroep migratiegeschiedenis*. Amsterdam 2002.

- VAN DE LAAR, PAUL: The Contemporary City as Backbone. Museum Rotterdam Meets the Challenge. In: *Journal of Museum Education* 38 (2013), pp. 39-49.
- VAN DER VEER, PETER: Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh, and the Politics of Tolerance in the Netherlands. In: *Public Culture* 18 (2006), pp. 111-124.
- VAESSEN, JAN: Over grenzen heen...In: *Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1998*. Nijmegen 1998, pp. 10-21.
- VAESSEN, JAN: 'Bij het vijfde Jaarboek van het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum'. In: *Jaarboek Nederlands Openluchtmuseum 1999*. Nijmegen 1999, pp. 7-9.
- VAESSEN, JAN: Einschließen statt ausschließen.... In: KANIA-SCHÜTZ, MONIKA (ed.): *In die Jahre Gekommen? Chancen und Potenziale Kulturhistorischer Museen*. Münster et al. 2009, pp. 26-45
- VAESSEN, JAN et al.: *Ervaring delen. Verhalen en beelden bij honderd jaar Nederlands Openluchtmuseum*. Arnhem 2012.
- VERWERS, MONIQUE: *Kijk-op-PR. Stage in het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum. Internship report*. Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts. Amsterdam 1998.
- WHITEHEAD, CHRISTOPHER/ ECKERSLEY, SUSANNAH/ LLOYD, KATHERINE/ MASON, RHIANNON (eds.): *Museums, Migration and Identity in Europe. People, Places and Identities*. Farham, Burlington 2015.