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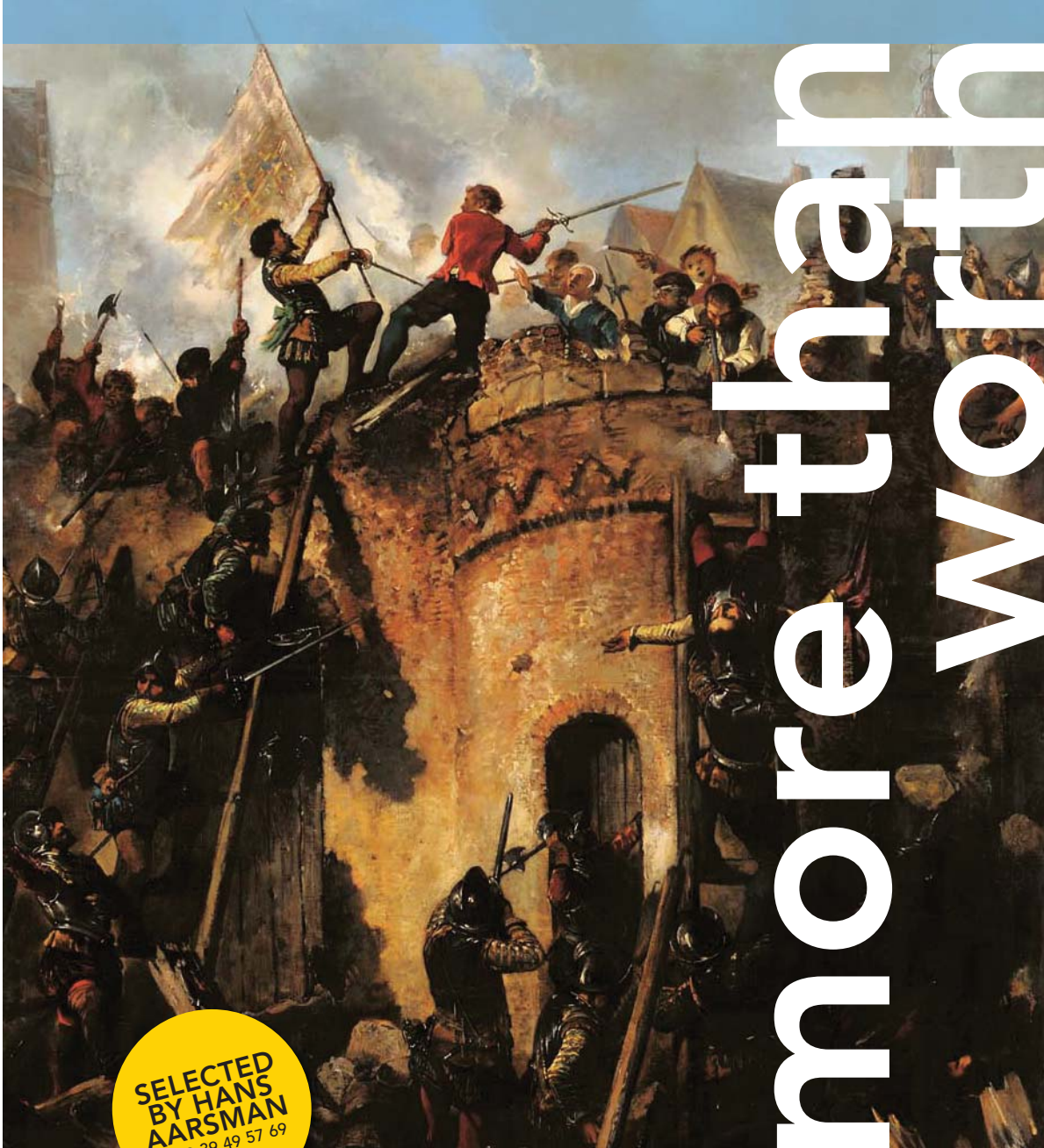
connecting  
value

educational  
value

experience  
value

economic  
value

## *The Social Significance of Museums*



more than it

SELECTED  
BY HANS  
AARSMAN  
P 29 39 49 57 69

collection  
value

connecting  
value

educational  
value

experience  
value

economic  
value

## *The Social Significance of Museums*

DSP-groep on behalf of the  
Netherlands Museums Association

April 2011

more than  
worth it

## Preface

The popular and long-running Dutch TV sports show Studio Sport once used the slogan 'Of everyone, for everyone' in support of its argument that premier league football belongs on public television. And while that might be open to debate, there is undeniably something that unites us when we collectively sit down on a Sunday night to watch the match of the week – it's something we can all share.

Another resource that certainly belongs to us all is our country's museum collections. Objects and stories – accounts from the past, often provided by private individuals – have been accumulated over the centuries and are now in the public domain. Museums have been designated by the government as the custodians of this public heritage, in order to carefully preserve it and make it accessible to a wide audience – both now and for future generations. These collections allow us to interpret the present and future by delving into the past. If you visit a museum, you'll find that you always learn something, with the bonus of spending an enjoyable afternoon – alone, together with a friend, with family members or with your class.

### 'Of everyone and for everyone?'

If museums belong to all of us, does that mean they are for all of us as well?

With public funds in the Netherlands declining, this question has become increasingly pressing. Certainly, museums rely on public funding, but how much are they really worth to us?

In this publication, the Dutch museums, which are united in the sector organisation the Netherlands Museums Association, present their five social values: collection value, connecting value, educational value, experience value and economic value. Through these five values, museums contribute in a number of public domains: as a sector, and in partnership with governments, educational institutions, media, and the private sector. Together, we can seize these opportunities and benefit from them, as we believe museums are more than worth it.

We hope you enjoy this publication.

Netherlands Museums Association

Hans Kamps  
Chairman

Siebe Weide  
Director



Cover image: Herman F.C. ten Kate (1862), *Beleg van Alkmaar (Siege of Alkmaar)*: Spanish troops attack the city, 18 September 1573, collection of Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar.

Museums are the stewards of our collective memory and provide significant social value – value that we believe is worth fighting for. As the title of this publication puts it, museums are 'more than worth it'.

As Winston Churchill replied when he was asked to sell Britain's national treasures to finance the war effort: "Hell no – what do you think we are fighting for?"



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**‘Dutch museums will proactively interact with political leaders and the public in order to develop plans and programmes to support social initiatives and projects, based on our core responsibilities and with respect for our authenticity. In so doing, the museum sector expects to establish a reciprocal relationship with the public and political parties; in other words, it expects that politicians think along with shared initiatives and create the conditions necessary to facilitate these initiatives.’ (Middelburg Resolution, 2009)**

One of the items on the agenda at the 2009 annual Museums Conference was the significance of museums for cities and regions. The conclusions of the Conference are outlined in the Middelburg Resolution. The Netherlands Museums Association subsequently set out to determine the social significance of the museum sector. It commissioned DSP-groep to do this on its behalf by conducting interviews with representatives of various public sectors and analysing national and international research. In addition, the agency Atlas voor Gemeenten was asked to quantify the social value of museums. A consultative group/editorial board comprised of six museum directors and the Netherlands Museums Association used their expertise for the study and provided valuable feedback. DSP-groep has summarised the results of the survey in this publication. These results include examples, pictures and comments (including images) by journalist Hans Aarsman.

Museums are a public resource, owing their existence to private initiative and public funds. In recent years, they have also established closer ties with the market. As the stewards of our public heritage, museums contribute significantly to Dutch society, which justifies their reliance on public funds. Impelled by the current government's austerity measures and general social changes, museums are looking to form new alliances with the community, in order to find a new balance between private initiative, government and the market.

An understanding of the actual significance of the museum sector to society is essential to this mission. This publication describes five core values that together make up the social significance of museums. These descriptions are preceded by an outline of the Dutch museum sector in facts and figures. In addition, the publication also provides an understanding of how we can all use, and benefit from, the social values of museums.

# museum sector

Students at the  
Amsterdam Museum

Photo credit: Jeroen Oerlemans.

The museum sector: facts and figures

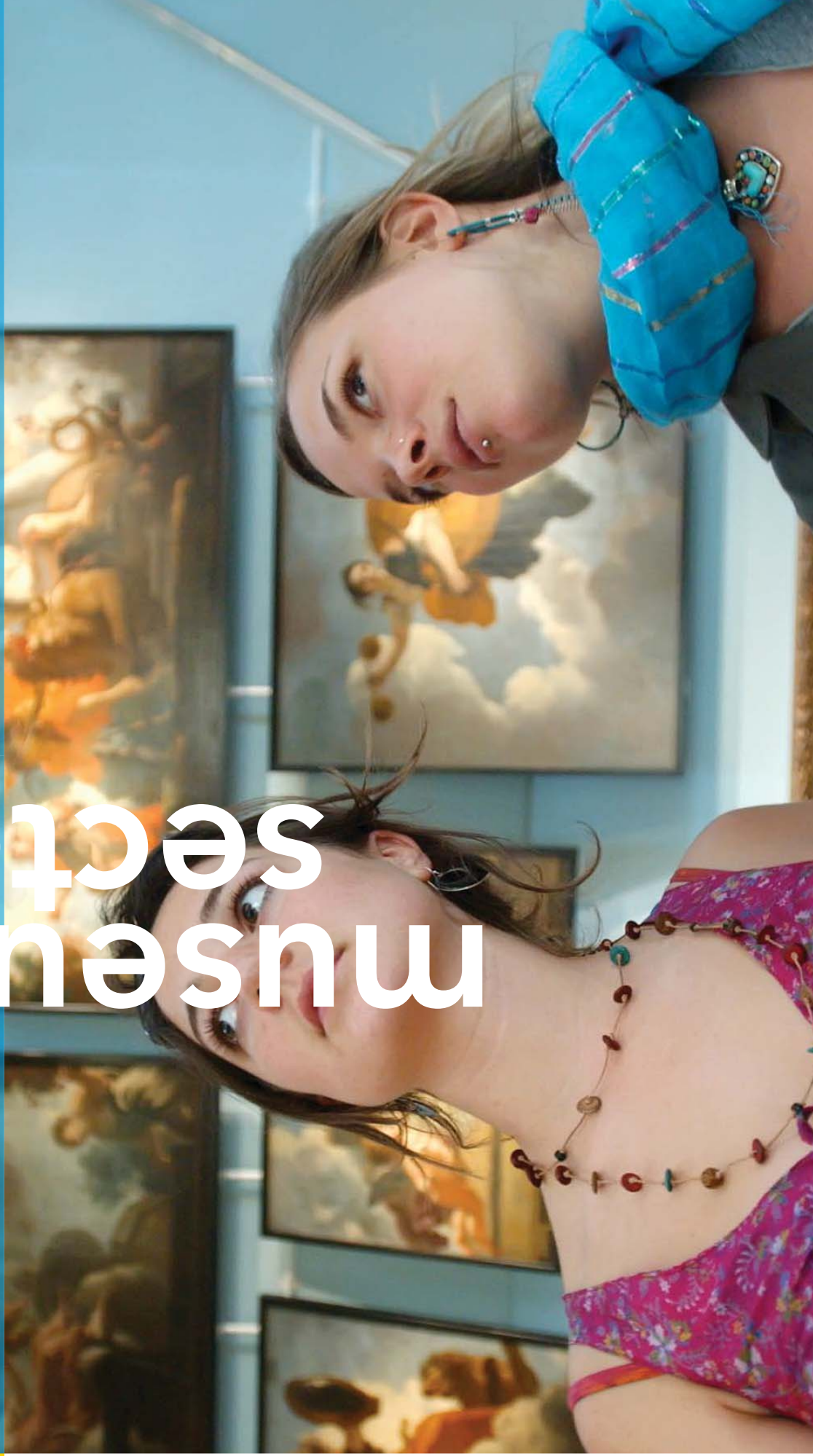
collection  
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# Museum sector



The first and oldest museum in the Netherlands, the Teylers Museum has been welcoming visitors to view its art and science collections since 1784. Photo credit: Kees Hageman.

## The museum sector: facts and figures

**In order to assess the social values of museums, we must first establish what museums are and what they do: a brief introduction outlining the history and background of museums, their core responsibilities and their ties to governments.**

### Origins: the first museums

If we define a museum simply as a collection of meaningful objects and the stories behind them, then museums have been around since ancient times. For centuries, valuable collections were accessible only to small elites; the first museums that were open to the public were established in the 18th century. The British Museum in London, founded in 1759, was the first national public museum in the world. Teylers Museum in Haarlem, which has been in continuous operation since 1784, has the distinction of being the oldest museum in the Netherlands.

### Definitions and numbers

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) has defined museums as follows: 'A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment, for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment'. (ICOM, 2006).

The fact that the term 'museum' is not protected leads to confusion

regarding the number of museums and museum visits. The Netherlands Museums Association, the sector organisation of Dutch museums, believes it is one of its duties to make this information available.

The Association uses the Museum Register as a quality standard for museums. In order to be included in this register, museums must satisfy a number of criteria, based on the ICOM's international definition of museums. According to the Museum Association, there were a total of 547

museums in the Netherlands at the end of 2010. This includes museums that are either already included in the register or will become eligible for inclusion in the foreseeable future.

Since 2009, museums seeking membership of the Netherlands Museums Association must meet the quality standard of the Museum Register.

### Netherlands Museums Association

The Netherlands Museums Association is the national association for the museum sector. It represents the

>>

## Number of museums and museum visits

according to different definitions

2010	Museums	Visits	Source
Museums	1,254	Unknown	Museum.nl
Museums	773	20,800,000	CBS statline*
Registered museums (including pending applications)**	547	18,450,000	Museum Association & Museum Register
Members of the Netherlands Museum Association	465	17,600,000	Museum Association
Museum Pass holders	382	16,500,000	Museum Association
Top 55 largest museums	55	12,500,000	Museum Association

\* Every two years, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) publishes statistics for museums. The data for 2007 were released in 2010 (2009 study; please refer to CBS.nl). Statistics Netherlands and the Netherlands Museums Association are in talks to have the research group focus on museums that meet the requirements of the Museum Register.

\*\* This number also includes the museums that have submitted an application and/or that are likely to become eligible for inclusion in the Museum Register.



Rabbi Awraham Soetendorp and a group of primary school pupils looking at photos from the exhibition 'Tot Zover Dafur' ('Reporting from Darfur') in November 2007. Photo credit: Jan Bouwman/ANP.

>> collective interests of Dutch museums and provides services that contribute to the development of the sector in its quest to increase professionalism and quality.

In addition, the association provides a forum to build a strong network of museum professionals, ensuring that knowledge can be efficiently shared in order to create new insights. The association is also committed to promoting the image of museums and to increasing and extending the public interest in museums.

One of the ways in which it achieves this is by organising the Museum Weekend, which is held annually during the first weekend in April. This event is celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2011. Museums participating in the event provide discounts or free entrance to visitors and organise special activities. The purpose is to attract occasional museum visitors; people who might visit a museum while on holiday, but rarely or never on other occasions. The Museum Association organises na-

## Museums and the government

Dutch museums have traditionally maintained close ties with the government, which acquired collections, funded museums and provided suitable accommodation. Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, which has been located in a specially designed museum building since 1885, is a fine example of this alliance. To this day, the government owns the majority of museum buildings in the Netherlands (many of which have landmark status).

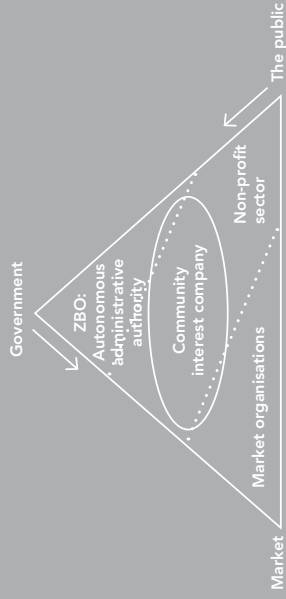
Governments own collections that were usually acquired in the past by >>

tional promotional campaigns and provides free publicity.

The Association, which was founded in 1926, also issues the Museumkaart (Museum Pass), which provides holders free access to 372 museums. The pass is a major success: on 1 December 2010, there were a total of 738,500 Museum Passes in circulation, which holders used for approximately 3,700,000 museum visits – 22.9% of the total number of visits.



## The positioning of community interest companies



A model developed by Dr. Kees Mouwen of the Centre for Governance of the Private Public-Sector Enterprise (CBMO) in Tilburg, effectively illustrates the position of museums (as community interest companies) in relation to the public, the government and the market. The majority of community interest companies, including museums, health organisations, public transport companies and utility companies were founded by members of the public. The government eventually assumed responsibility for these organisations in the public interest. The Dutch government is currently reducing its involvement, attempting to transfer some of its duties to the private sector. Ideally, museums should be positioned in the centre of the model, indicating clear ties to the government (i.e. funding), the market (i.e. visitors, sponsorships and commercial activities) and the public (i.e. volunteers and associations of friends).

- >> private individuals who donated these objects and other valuable resources on the assumption that governments would preserve this heritage and exhibit it to the public. Governments, in turn, have entrusted these duties to museums, having established clear guidelines on how this should be accomplished. The bulk of government grants are used to manage, conserve and exhibit the collections; when it comes to expanding their collections through acquisitions, museums depend mostly on private funds, as public grants only cover a portion of these expenses. In recent years, the Dutch government has sought to downsize and has implemented austerity measures in a number of areas. This is prompted in part by the current economic climate and the ageing population, and the attendant increase in costs for healthcare and pensions. As a result, the government intends to transfer some of its duties to the private sector, making it important for museums to



Visitors queuing to enter the Philips Wing at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, 2010.  
Photo credit: Hans Tak.

form new alliances with a variety of partners, in order to find a new balance between government, the market and private individuals.

### Visitors and audience reach

According to the definition of Statistics Netherlands, there are a total of 4.7 museums for every 100,000 inhabitants, putting the Netherlands in the number 9 position in Europe in terms of the number of museums per inhabitant. Dutch museums are attracting an increasing number of visitors: in 2007, 41% of Dutch

people visited at least one museum, compared to 35% in 1997.

In 2010, the 547 registered museums and museums eligible for registration received a total of 16.1 million visits. Approximately one quarter of those visits were from tourists.

Museum visitors generally have a high level of education, are of Dutch origin, largely female and (to a lesser extent) residents of one of the four major Dutch cities. The total Dutch cultural heritage (including >>



## Top 10 museum visits in 2010

Museums	City	Visits
Van Gogh Museum	Amsterdam	1,429,854
Anne Frank Museum	Amsterdam	1,050,300
Rijksmuseum	Amsterdam	900,000
Hermitage Amsterdam	Amsterdam	650,000
NEMO	Amsterdam	504,000
Open Air Museum (Het Nederlands Openluchtmuseum)	Arnhem	440,000
Railway Museum (Het Spoorwegmuseum)	Utrecht	354,000
Palais Het Loo Nationaal Museum	Apeldoorn	320,900
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen	Rotterdam	300,000
Gemeentemuseum Den Haag	Den Haag	290,000

The number one museum in the Netherlands in terms of the number of visitors, Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum, ranks 24th in Europe. The European Top 5: Louvre, Paris (8.2 million visitors), Versailles Castle, Paris (5.3 million), British Museum, London (4.5 million), Coliseum, Rome (4.4 million), Vatican Museum (4.4 million). (Source: Egimus 2008)

## Costs and benefits in the museum sector

Benefits	€ Million	%	Costs	€ Million	%
Central government grants	213	34.9%	Personnel	267	43.7%
Provincial government grants	34	5.6%	Buildings	121	19.8%
Municipal government grants	132	21.6%	Exhibitions	52	8.5%
<b>Total government grants</b>		<b>62.1%</b>	Collection maintenance	8	1.3%
Other contributions (funds)	52	8.5%	Insurance	9	1.5%
Ticket sales *	82	13.4%	Procurement of goods	15	2.5%
Museum shop	23	3.8%	Procurement of food/drink	6	1.0%
Sponsors	15	2.5%	Depreciation & interest	32	5.2%
Restaurants/cafes	12	2.0%	Other	90	14.7%
<b>Total operations</b>		<b>30.2%</b>	Profit/loss	11	1.8%
<b>Other</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>7.7%</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>100%</b>
			Acquisition/disposal	(91)	

\* Weighted average ticket price for museums:

Children 4-12: € 3,76

Youths 13-18: € 4,19

Adults (19+): € 6,90

Source: 2009 survey by Statistics Netherlands, including data for 2007.

## Costs and benefits

>> museums, monuments and archives) attracts a relatively large number of visitors in the 50-64 age bracket, as well as those in the 65-79 age group and children up to age 12. In 2009, a total of 990,000 visits were from schoolchildren, while families accounted for 2.6 million visits. Museums housing historical collections and art museums attract the most visitors. In 2010, the 55 largest museums combined welcomed more than 12.5 million guests, representing 77.4% of the total number of visitors.

## Assessing duties; measuring values

How do we measure if a museum is performing its duties properly and efficiently? And what is the social value of museums? These are important questions in times when there is a significant focus on responsibility and accountability. The 36 national museums in the Netherlands (united in the Association of State-Subsidised Museums) are currently exploring how their value to the public and the government can be highlighted in a more inspiring way. Their study

focuses on three main duties of museums: audience reach, collection management and knowledge exchange. Measuring tools are being developed for each of these duties, which will quantify the value of museums in a number of areas. The social values discussed in this publication will be reflected in these measurable targets. The Association of State-Subsidised Museums expects the initial results of the study to be published in the course of 2011. ■

# seizing opportunities

Museum Night Amsterdam, 6 November 2010  
Yoga workshop at the Stedelijk Museum.  
Photo credit: Elmer van der Mare/HH.

Capitalising on social value

collection  
value

connecting  
value

educational  
value

experience  
value

economic  
value





# Seizing opportunities

How can we collectively take maximum advantage of the social significance of museums, and what types of partnerships can governments, the private sector and civic organisations enter into with museums?

## Museums have social significance

Museums have considerable social significance. First of all, they play an important cultural role, as they manage our cultural heritage and exhibit it to a wide audience.

In addition, their visitors include almost half the Dutch population.

However, museums are much more than cultural resources that attract large numbers of visitors. In terms of the five social values described in this publication, museums play a key role:

■ **Collection value**

■ **Connecting value**

■ **Educational value**

■ **Experience value**

■ **Economic value**

## Capitalising on social values

All museums generate collection value, as collecting, conserving, managing and exhibiting objects and other resources is the main responsibility of museums.

In addition, museums also produce other values – but how can museums take advantage of these social values?

**Focus** on the five social values in the museum's policy. **Define** how the museum embodies those values, in order that the museum can present itself as a social organisation.

As a museum, **choose** values with a specific focus. The choice of this value (or values) is related to the question 'what type of museum are we, and what do we aim to be?' This is how a museum chooses a profile.



'Catwalk De Wereld van Witte de With', Rotterdam, 2008. Onsite fashion show at the Zeeuws Museum in Middelburg. Photo credit: Anda van Riet.

**Position** the museum in the current debate and link the profile to social trends and policy issues.

As public organisations with a recognisable profile, museums are serious partners of governments, the private sector and non-governmental organisations.

## Public alliances

Besides private individuals (who provide donations, work as volunteers and are members of associati-

ons of friends), national, provincial and municipal governments (which provide funding), cultural funds and the private sector are the main partners of museums. In order to maintain and further expand these relationships, museums propose plans related to one or more social values, in line with their partner's policy. This also allows new partners to become involved in museums and bring in new categories of visitors.

>>

'Stakeholders, including some museums themselves, underestimate the value of museums and new connections with other sectors ~ Jos Vranken, Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions



Taping of the TV show *Museumgasten* by Dutch public broadcaster AVRO, featuring singer Hind, TV presenter Ad Visser and former Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman, 2009. Image courtesy of: Coda.

## Possible issues and alliances for the five values:

>> **Collection value** is in line with governments' cultural policies, for example social issues such as stewardship, acquisition and disposal, digitisation, and visitor profiles. Potential alliances: other museums, libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions.

**Connecting value** relates to the government's social policies, including issues such as civic participation, volunteer policy, democratisation and social cohesion, volunteer organisations, service organisations and social

and professional networks.

**Educational value** is directly related to educational policies and issues such as the extent to which the education system meets the demands of the labour market, adult education, life-long learning, talent development, work placements at non-profit-organisations, civic integration, and the knowledge economy. Potential alliances: all forms of education from primary schools to scientific institutes, along with the private sector.



Assembly line: part of the research project *Werk in Uitvoering* ('Work in Progress'), Museum De Lakenhal, 2010. Photo credit: Marc de Haan.

**Experience value** involves a relationship with leisure policies, welfare policies and healthcare, including issues such as fulfilment, tolerance, leadership, relaxation and mental health care. Potential alliances: health centres, the wellness industry, patient organisations and event organisations.

**Economic value** relates to governments' economic policies and town and country planning, with issues including tourism, city marketing,

merchandising, area development and quality of life. Potential alliances: property developers, architects, contractors, the hotel industry and tourist and recreational organisations.

In discussions between museums and their partners, it must be clear what social values they share, which requires that all parties assign the same meaning to those values. The five values must therefore be further defined. ■



# collection value

Workshop for companies, where participants use replicas to stage their own exhibitions. Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven. Photo credit: Boudewijn Bollmann.

collection value

connecting value

educational value

experience value

economic value

*'Treasure chests of objects and documents of national, international, regional and local relevance'*



## Collection value

**'Treasure chests containing objects and documents of national, international, regional and local relevance'**

**Managing and exhibiting objects and the stories behind them is a core responsibility with major social significance. The items contained in museums are important to us all, irrespective of whether they have local, regional, national or international significance. They embody our shared history and our identity, a core value that creates other social values.**

### **Museums represent the memory of cities, regions and countries**

Although the government owns a large number of museum collections, it has entrusted the management of these collections to museums, which acquire and conserve the collections for and on behalf of the public. Together, all these objects and documents represent the collective memory of the Netherlands: of towns, cities and provinces, now and in the future. Museums also conserve objects and other resources that we are all proud of, such as The

Night Watch: an iconic painting that enhances our national identity. The collections held by Dutch museums have both a financial and a non-financial value. However, since many objects are unique and therefore without comparison and irreplaceable, this value cannot be expressed in monetary terms. In 1998, the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science nevertheless made an attempt: at the time, he estimated the collection value to be around 20 billion euros.



Tour of the depot of Naturalis National Museum of Natural History, Leiden.  
Photo credit: Herman Wouters/HH.

### **Museums exhibit objects and tell stories**

In addition to telling stories that are directly related to the museum's objects, museums also provide a narrative through their collections. By combining objects in a certain way and choosing a specific approach, museums comment on the times we live in, showing social relationships and placing them in context. Alternatively, they can show the background to a specific cultural or scientific trend or development.

Museums borrow items (loans) from other museums and from private individuals in order to give new layers of meaning. Through these objects and stories, the museum, along with the public, provides new answers each time, as each era engages in its own debate with the past.





*'The significance of provincial and municipal museums should not be underestimated – these are the museums that are part of us, that we can be proud of. They represent residents and administrators alike'*  
~ Jeroen Branderhorst, BankGiro Loterij



The Netherlands Audio-visual Institute, Mediapark, Hilversum, manages 70% of the Dutch audio-visual heritage. The collections contain more than 700,000 hours of radio, television, film and music, and continue to expand each day, making the Institute one of Europe's largest audio-visual archives. Image courtesy of: Netherlands Audio-visual Institute.

2008 to the museum and the public.

### New forms of presentation

An increasing number of museums are making their collections accessible to the public by opting for alternative and innovative ways to exhibit them. Content and target audience are always key factors in choosing an exhibition method.

Museums can reach a much wider audience by exhibiting their collections in digital format, through their own websites, or through a portal shared with other museums.

Example: In 2008, **Stadsmuseum Zoetermeer** held the exhibition 'Give and Take', as part of which it asked the residents of Zoetermeer to donate an object to the museum that they felt embodied the special character of their hometown. The museum exhibited the objects – including the personal accounts of the donors – and included them in the Zoetermeer Collection. In a follow-up project, the museum, together with experts and working in open studios, explored the significance of the Zoetermeer Collection



The Kinderboekenmuseum (Children's Book Museum) is part of the Letterkundig Museum (Museum of Literature) in The Hague, which is dedicated to increasing interest in general literature and children's literature and the Dutch literary heritage. Photo credit: Mike Bink.

According to a sample taken in 2010, museums annually attract approximately 3.8 more virtual visitors than physical visitors. In addition, museums also use other digital technologies, including apps and widgets, to allow website visitors to discover their collections.

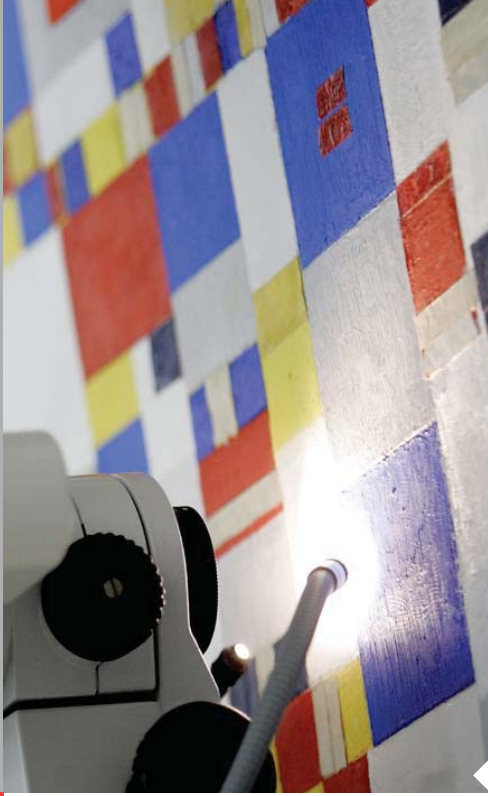
Example: Since February 2011, fifteen international museums, including Amsterdam's **Van Gogh Museum** and **Rijksmuseum**, are accessible to online

visitors through the Google Art Project. Internet users gain access to the museum and can view one work in detail at each museum. The director of the Van Gogh Museum, speaking in a newspaper interview: 'Through the website, social media, and now, the Google Art Project, we have opened up our museum, our collection and our knowledge to a wide audience. People all over the world share our passion for the life and work of Vincent van Gogh.'

>>



'Since you can preserve everything, but you can't make everything accessible, we assign people to build collections for us. These are professionals with extensive knowledge and experience, who know how to assess a decision against previous decisions and who also have the vision to think 50 years ahead' ~ Toine Berbers, Vereniging van Rijksge subsidieerde Musea (Association of State-subsidised Museums).



The 1944 painting 'Victory Boogie Woogie' by Piet Mondrian, being investigated by Gemeentemuseum Den Haag (The Hague Municipal Museum). In order to gather more information about the origins of the painting, the Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN) has been researching the painting in conjunction with Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. September 2007. Photo credit: Evert-Jan Daniels/ANP.

>> Additionally, museums have partnered with television programmes, organise exhibitions outside the museum along with itinerant exhibitions, offer tours of depots, organise projects at schools and provide objects on loan, sometimes for extended periods of time. This allows a growing number of people to discover the countless museum collections.

Example: Believing it is important to display the clothing in all its detail, the **Zeeuws Museum** in Middelburg commissioned artists Paul and Menno de Nooijer to exhibit its collection of traditional costumes. Father and son created the film *Stripshow 1850*, which features a man and a woman removing each other's traditional garb, layer by layer. The film was screened at the museum and distributed online. ■

collection value

connecting value

educational value

experience value

economic value



Bergen op Zoom, commemoration of the liberation of Central and South Zeeland after World War II. Photo credit: Erald van der Aar/ANP.

**By Hans Aarsman:** Whenever someone in a motion picture has to use the bathroom, you can be sure someone's going to get killed. Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* and Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* are just two examples of movies that feature such scenes. Other than that, characters in films never have to use the toilet, just like tanks in war movies never need to refuel. And yet, in military logistics provisions for the troops are just as high on the list of priorities as the supply of fuel for tanks. Tanks are real fuel guzzlers, burning three litres per kilometre. If those are two 25-litre jerry cans in the foreground of the picture, they will be able to travel exactly 16 kilometres. Where do you think tanks got their name?

Is that what makes this picture so ordinary and yet so special? It is thanks to the efforts of a group of amateurs that we finally get to see how things really are. As members of the group 'Keep 'em Rollin', they maintain all sorts of weaponry from World War II. Should we regard them as amateur historians? They are amateurs in the traditional sense – history lovers with an expensive pastime. Once they're done refuelling, they'll go up to the cash register to pay. All three of them, as one wallet is not enough. It just goes to show that if soldiers had to fund their own gear, there would be no more war in the world.



# connecting value

The Dutch Water Museum in Arnhem  
– a real family museum!  
Photo credit: Jurjen Poeles.

collection  
value

connecting  
value

educational  
value

experience  
value

economic  
value

*'Meeting place and platform  
for the present,  
past and future'*



## Connecting value

### 'Meeting place and platform for the present, past and future'

**Museums are ideal platforms for communication and debate, and they enter into partnerships with the private sector, educational institutions, the public, and professional and amateur artists. Museums serve as networkers and mediators between various groups in society; they provide current issues with a context, thereby facilitating debate. The thousands of people who join the museum as volunteers or friends are an extremely valuable asset.**



The Museum Plus Bus caters to senior citizens who would otherwise not be able to visit a museum. Photo credit: Maarten van Haaff.

### Connecting generations and cultures

Museum collections represent a rich blend of generations, cultures, religions, sciences and opinions, thus presenting an image of society – in the past, present and future. This encourages people to keep an open-minded and curious attitude. Museums help create a shared identity, a mutual understanding of each other's past and, by extension, each other's shared future. By literally bringing culture closer to home, differences between population groups become smaller.

Museums provide an ideal platform for discussing current affairs and placing them in context. Using their collections as background, they can invite discussion of events in the community, the city and the world at large, as well as encourage debate on social and political issues. Exhibitions and the use of new media further enhance this debate.

This role as a platform also appeals to new audiences: people

who don't ordinarily visit museums but who are interested in the issue being discussed will be drawn to the museum.

Example: In a project titled Gedachten-gang ('Line of Reasoning'), Museum **Het Prinsenhof** in Delft focussed on the issue of 'Freedom of thought and opinion', using the ideas of William of Orange as a central theme. The museum addressed the theme based on different perspectives, and invited audiences to answer questions. One of the perspectives discussed was the murder of Theo van Gogh (Dutch filmmaker, 2004†).





'The best museums do more than just cherish the past  
– they prepare people for the future'  
~ Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven/Mensen en cijfers



Jonkheer Jan Six van Hillegom (b. 1947), custodian of the Six Collection, posing in front of Rembrandt's portrait of his ancestor Jan Six, dating from 1654. The painting was on loan to Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum in 2010. Photo credit: Vincent Mentzel/HH.

## The museum in a social network

>> Museums operate within an extensive network: a growing number of museums involve large numbers of people – ranging from the local community to the private sector to government – in their development and activities. Museums are united in the Netherlands Museums Association and provide each other with support. They work together with libraries, archives, educational institutions, civic organisations and companies, as well as contributing to international networks by working with partners

on transnational projects, exhibitions and knowledge exchange. In so doing, they help people realise that they are citizens of the world.

Example: **Van Abbemuseum** in Eindhoven organises debates on art and society and invites visitors, institutions and companies to reflect on fundamental issues that affect us all. In association with Philips Research, the museum organised 'Connection Day', a conference devoted to new networks of industrial and artistic creativity.



Opening of an exhibition on the Maori.

The Wakas (Maori canoes) shown in the picture, which were created especially for the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, were officially donated to the museum after many months of preparation. A delegation of Maori canoeists travelled to the Netherlands especially for the occasion. 18 October 2010. Photo credit: Peter Hiltz/HH.

## Museums attract and retain volunteers

In 2007 (based on data provided by Statistics Netherlands in 2009), more than 21,000 volunteers were employed in the museum sector (along with 8,500 professionals). Volunteers feel connected to 'their' museum, its visitors and its collection. They increase the accessibility of museums and make them more welcoming to the public. Many museums would not be able to survive without volunteer staff, with almost one-third of Dutch museums even relying completely on volunteers. >>

Example: Every six months, **Gemeentemuseum Den Haag** highlights a different urban district. The museum establishes a presence in the district and invites its residents to participate in a free programme including tours and workshops. The programme is designed in association with retailers, church congregations, community organisations, and local schools and cafés.

## Staff and volunteers – museum sector

	Staff		Volunteers	
	Persons	Man years	Persons	Man years
2001	8,285	5,478	17,888	2,330
2003	8,496	5,837	19,693	2,357
2005	8,143	5,696	19,667	2,670
2007	8,598	6,016	21,329	3,015

One-third of the work in the sector is performed by more than 21,000 volunteers = contribution by individuals of 22%. Source: Survey by Statistics Netherlands for 2009, including data for 2007.

## Top 3 activities of museum volunteers

**Education and presentation** (e.g. guide, museum lecturer or staff member)

**Services to the public** (e.g. cash register, restaurant or shop)

**Collection conservation and management**



Students playing an educational game, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 2010. Photo credit: Fried Ernst.

>> Working with volunteers is a tradition within the museum world. Volunteers work mostly at the local and regional levels, building strong ties between the museum and the community. For these reasons alone, volunteers are an extremely valuable asset.

Museums have extensive experience in managing and training volunteers, thereby helping them to gain new skills and work experience. Volunteer work allows senior

## Museums have Friends

Dutch museums maintain more than 200 associations of friends, whose members are private individuals, companies and non-governmental organisations. These 'members of the friends' (**official name**) generate funds and supply volunteers, as well as being involved in promotion and a variety of other activities. The associations of friends create their own programmes, focusing on interaction between the friends and on sharing ideas and interests.

Associations of friends provide valuable feedback to museums, increasing their awareness of issues that matter to the public. The associations of friends help increase public support for museums, as well as connecting the museum with new networks.

Museums also have an increasing number of online friends, with many Dutch museums using social media such as Twitter and Facebook. According to the Twitter Top >>



'A museum can offer the community co-ownership by establishing ties with the neighbourhood, city, region, administrators and governments. This helps the museum increase its social relevance'

~ Lejo Schenk, Council for Culture



Facebook page of the Centraal Museum.

>> 100, the Van Gogh Museum has the largest number of followers (9,609), followed by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (5,243 followers) and Rotterdam's Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (3,752 followers). Museums use Twitter to raise awareness of their activities, as well as to share interests, news and knowledge.

Example: 'Give Dordrecht its view back' is the name of a major fundraising campaign launched by the Dordrechts Museum. Supported by friends, businesses, cultural funds and the municipal government, the museum was able to reacquire the 1651 painting Gezicht op Dordrecht ('View of Dordrecht') by Jan van Goyen. For many years, the painting was a public favourite at the museum, but it was returned to its owner in 2006. The successful initiative ensured that the artwork returned to the museum in 2008.



Stones found in front of a chimpanzee enclosure, Furuvik, Sweden, 19 March 2009. Image courtesy of: Neurology/PA/AFP.

**By Hans Aarsman:** Two stones and a slab of cement – why would anyone want to keep those? And why would they want to take a picture of them? These stones were found in the enclosure of Santino, the alpha male of a group of chimpanzees in Sweden's Furuvik Zoo. Santino threw these stones to visitors who were taunting him. We have all seen how annoying people can get when they're jeering at apes, and we know that those apes will pester them right back, by throwing sand, water, pebbles, and just about anything else they can get their hands on. But we did not know that apes can build up ammunition, just in case they might need it later.

Santino is number one: as the top dog, so to speak, he has a reputation to protect. He gathers the stones early in the morning and puts them all in one place. When the crowds on the other side of the gate get a little too carried away, he knows where to find his stash. Biologists who observed Santino's behaviour regard it as evidence that apes have the capacity to plan ahead. However, zoo visitors have no reason to fear Santino's premeditation just yet, as he throws the stones underhand. The next step would be for him to master overarm throwing. Or could it be that he's perfectly capable of that, but doesn't want to, just so as to avoid an arms race? Now that would be true premeditation...

# educational value

collection  
value

connecting  
value

educational  
value

experience  
value

economic  
value

Pupils visiting Museum Boijmans  
van Beuningen Rotterdam.  
Photo credit: Fred Ernst.

*'A learning environment for all'*





## Educational value



Hot water art at the Water Lab at Arnhem's Water Museum. Photo credit: Jurjen Poelies.

### 'A learning environment for all'

**You always learn something new by visiting a museum, making it the perfect environment for learning, both for younger people to learn about culture and for older people, as part of life-long learning. Museums can serve as schools in a literal sense as well: for young people to complete work placements and for academics to conduct research. Visiting a museum means learning, whether it's consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally.**

### Informal learning and discovery

Some people are allergic to the structure and rigidity of regular education. Museums offer these people the opportunity to learn informally, something they can do on a voluntary basis and that they can organise themselves. This is particularly appealing to this group. They learn to view objects with their own eyes, find out more about it and actually use them, by feeling, tasting, smelling or playing. They find out they can learn more in a museum than in a classroom.

People cite 'improving general knowledge' and the 'informal learning experience' as major reasons to visit a museum. They describe this learning experience as gathering information and acquiring knowledge, and regard it as a useful way to spend their leisure time. This learning experience fills a personal need and increases their self-esteem. For children, informal learning, alongside regular education, is important in developing their worldview and self-image,

along with their personalities, identities and social awareness.

Example: In its permanent exhibition, **De Twentse Welle** in Enschede focuses on science in Twente. The museum screened a film in which Dave Blank, a Professor of Nanotechnology, explained to visitors what nanotechnology involves and how it can be applied.

### Museums provide education

Educational programmes and projects organised by museums contribute to children's education. Museums attract 400,000 primary and secondary school students annually, as part of their cultural education programmes. Cultural education is very important to children's development, teaching them to collaborate and understand each other, as well as increasing their sense of responsibility. In addition, cultural education improves children's school performance in general, which in turn re- >>

'Cultural education is important, and the museum should be made a permanent part of schools' curriculums' ~ Joost van Lanschoot, VSB-fonds

### The effect of museum education

% = percentage of teachers who have indicated they identify this effect  
Primary & Secondary Education

- Improved knowledge about other people and cultures 81%
- More imagination and originality 72%
- Improved collaboration at school 68%
- Improved communication skills/expressive ability 63%
- More positive self-image 58%
- Link to our cultural past 30%



A tour guide tells a primary school class a story about a self-portrait by the artist Maurizio Cattelan, which rises up from a hole in the floor at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen Rotterdam, 2010.  
Photo credit: Fred Ernst.

>> suits in lower school dropout rates, reduces the chance of unemployment, and increases labour productivity. For museums, it is particularly important that children discover this sector, because if a child learns to enjoy visiting museums before the age of 15, he or she is more likely to return after the age of 30.

Primary and secondary school teachers have indicated that museum education gives their pupils a sense of pride and enjoyment.

Museum collections are eclectic, ranging from household appliances to visual art and from local history to nature and technology.

Some of the collections are based on academic and scientific research and continue to be the subject of investigation. Many museum directors are scholars, who share their knowledge with the public through presentations, catalogues, the museum's website, and other initiatives, including public lectures.

### Scientific knowledge and research

Many also work outside of the museum on a part-time basis, holding jobs as teachers, college lecturers, journalists or tour guides, where they share their knowledge with an even wider audience.

Experimentation and creativity contribute to scientific development and innovation. Museums show what role experiments and creativity have played over the centuries, and what results this has produced. In addition, museums >>

Example: **MuseumJeugd-Universiteit** is an initiative of the **Dutch National Museum of Antiquities** in Leiden. The 'lectures' allow children between the ages of 8 and 12 to discover the museum's collection from a different perspective and offer them a new learning experience. The first series of lectures, held in 2009, was a major success, and other museums in Leiden, as well as in Utrecht and Amsterdam, have since joined the initiative. Other cities are expected to follow suit. The project receives financial support from Shell.



'People who read books on a specific topic and study the subject matter also tend to visit museums devoted to that subject' ~ Jos de Haan, SCP



Queen Beatrix and Benno Tempel, the director of the Haags Gemeentemuseum, review the catalogue for the exhibition 'Cézanne-Picasso-Mondrian: A New Perspective'. 16 October 2009.  
Photo credit: Frank van Beek/ANP.

>> also stimulate experimentation and creativity by challenging their visitors and inspiring them with activities (some of them interactive) and new forms of presentation.

Example: **Museum Sterrenwacht**

**Sonnenborgh** in Utrecht teaches classes about the universe and has made astronomy and meteorology accessible to a general audience.

## Museums stimulate cultural citizenship and talent

Museums contribute to the cultural citizenship of millions of visitors. Children learn to form their own opinions in creative ways, young people complete work placements, and those aged 55 and over work as volunteers and acquire new knowledge, while immigrants to the Netherlands learn about the country's culture and history. Through volunteer work, work placements and educational projects, people are given the opportunity to develop their skills and talents.



Children taking part in a scavenger hunt, as part of which they must complete a number of assignments. In front of a Van Gogh painting, they have to express an emotion. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterloo. Photo credit: Marcel van den Bergh/HH.

Museums provide an inspiring environment for amateur artists. Eight million Dutch people are involved in some form of amateur art, including more than five million in visual art and new media. Museums work in partnership with amateur art organisations, organising workshops and exhibitions.

Example: **Museum Bommel Van Dam**

works in association with **Kunsten-entrum Venlo**. The latter organises some of its activities in the museum, and sometimes as part of an exhibition. One example is the master class in drawing taught by Frank van Hemert during the period when the museum was exhibiting his work. Under his guidance, participants in the class worked on their own drawings in the middle of the exhibition.





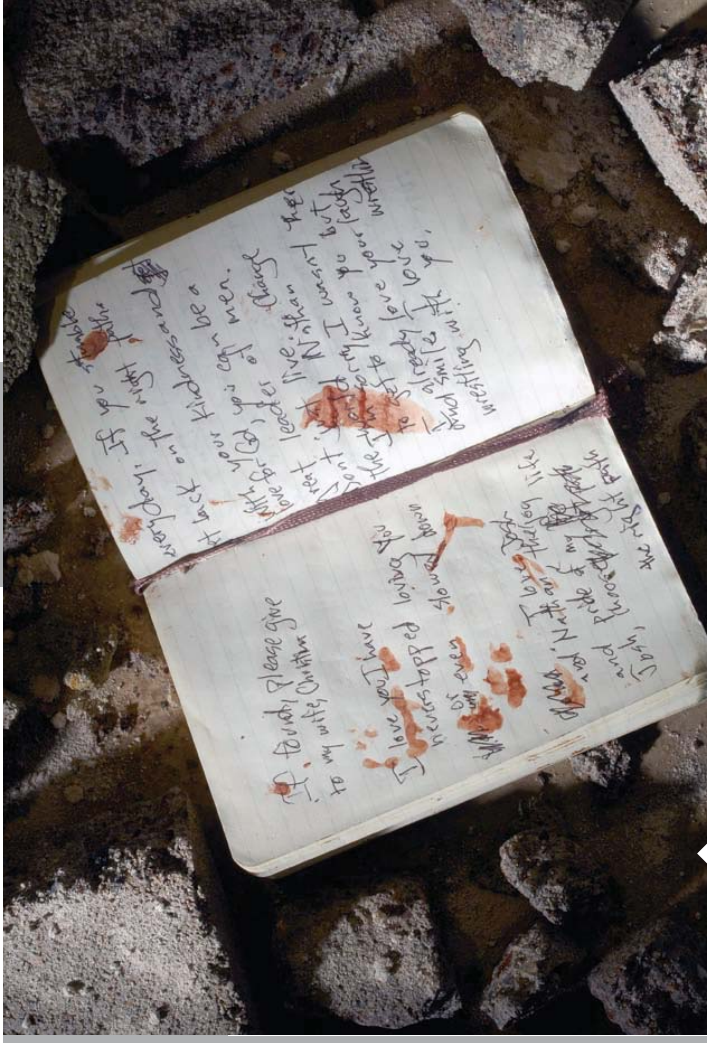


The homepage of [www.mijnTIKKIT.nl](http://www.mijnTIKKIT.nl)

>> Example: As part of seven experiments to allow more children to discover museums, the Netherlands Museum Association created the website [www.mijnTIKKIT.nl](http://www.mijnTIKKIT.nl). The purpose of the website is to reach children in the 8-12 age range through their favourite media. Social media website Hyves and several games sites feature a number of beautifully designed museum games. While playing, children discover that the cartiages they are using for a race actually exist 'in real life' and that they can view them at the Amsterdam Museum. They

also have the option to get dressed up in gowns they can admire at Paleis het Loo. The [www.mijnTIKKIT.nl](http://www.mijnTIKKIT.nl) website also serves as a digital portal where children can discover many other museum games.

By engaging with art in this way, children playfully discover the cultural heritage that they would not usually seek out on their own. If they decide to visit a museum, they can collect 'mystery' cards that give them additional points in the game. The games, which are designed to appeal to children, were played more than 100,000 times within two weeks. ■



Notes from Dan Wooley, who survived the Haiti earthquake, 12 January 2010, Port-au-Prince. Photo credit: Dan Wooley/EPA.

>> **By Hans Aarsman:** A man lying beneath the rubble of a collapsed hotel. He scribbles down his observations in a notebook, which provides a modicum of comfort. Although writing down his thoughts does not take away his fear and worries, it does help him make more sense of things. It may be too dark for him to read, which means he has to use his other senses. There is always the encouraging thought that others will eventually read what he was thinking.

After 48 hours beneath the debris, the man decides to say goodbye to his wife and children. He is about to be saved when he writes these words, but he has no way of knowing that. He gives his oldest son, John, some sound advice: 'You can be a great leader of men. Don't just live; change the world. Having a father who burdens you with such a task right before his death would be hard for any young person. Josh should be grateful that his dad survived. Dan's tone in addressing his youngest son, Nash, is more light-hearted. Nash must have been born quite recently: 'I am sorry that I will be not here to get to know you, but I already love your laugh and your smile. I love wrestling with you'. There is no picture, no video footage of some spectacular rescue operation that could ever be as impactful as these two blood-smear pages.



No barrier to fun: a young visitor discovers what it's like to be inside a cell at the National Prison Museum [Nationaal Gevangenismuseum] in Veenhuizen. Photo credit: Henx Fotografie.

# experience

collection value

connecting value

educational value

experience value

economic value

*Opportunities for enjoyment, experience and adventure'*



# Experience value



'Children on the train to Bombay': from the exhibition *Ster in de Stad – Bombaytour* in 90 minuten, 30 September 2006 to spring 2009, Tropenmuseum Junior, Amsterdam. Image courtesy of: Tropenmuseum.

## Opportunities for enjoyment, experience and adventure'

Museums make us think, and sometimes they inspire us to take action. Museums provide the tranquility and freedom to reflect and think critically, as well as being an ideal environment for personal development and fulfilment. However, museums are also enjoyable places to visit: to relax, to enjoy beautiful objects and fascinating stories – even to experience happiness. Museums also provide freedom of movement and experience, both literally and figuratively.

### Visiting museums is fun

a museum environment is pleasurable and relaxing, inspires and challenges you, makes you think or makes you laugh. If a museum includes a café or restaurant, a museum visit can be a social, fun activity. Visiting a museum with friends or family and discussing what you saw is a bonding experience. Visiting museums is interesting. When asked to describe what value art and culture have for them, many people use words like 'relaxation' and 'beauty'. This experience

experience of museum visits stimulates our imagination and allows us to make new discoveries. Over time, visiting museums can therefore make us change our opinions and insights.

### Museums provide us with the freedom to think and reflect

In our fast-paced, busy world, museums are havens of peace and serenity, where we can find time for contemplation, intellectual stimulation and fulfilment. Museums provide perspective, an understanding of backgrounds and a context for social trends and developments.

Museum visitors can completely lose themselves in an exhibition, forgetting about the world for a moment. It is an almost transcendent

mental experience, creating mental space for new experiences and discoveries. Research has shown that art lovers score relatively high in areas such as tolerance, empathy and respect for alternative lifestyles.





*'The ability to make people view the world from a different perspective is what constitutes the museum's fundamental right to exist'*  
~ Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven/Mensen en cijfers



People of all ages working in the Rietveld workshop at Centraal Museum Utrecht.  
Photo credit: Ernst Moritz.

### >> Identity, order and memory

museums mirror your own life with those of others, now or in the past, and allow you to strengthen your identity.

Museum objects – and the stories behind those objects – both bring back memories and create new experiences. They tell you who you are (present), where you came from (past) and they provide you with new insights (future). Through the structure of the presentation (i.e. chronological, thematic or nar-

rative), the museum offers visitors order, background and context – something that people are searching for in their lives, either consciously or unconsciously.

Example: At Het Dolhuys, the National Museum of Psychiatry in Haarlem, visitors learn about mental disorders and the history of mental health care in the Netherlands. In the 'Brain Lab', kids can take personality tests, giving their teachers some insight into what makes them



View of the exhibition hall, Bonnefantenmuseum Maastricht. Photo credit: Harry Heuts.

### Museums offer adventure and entertainment

Increasingly, museums use their buildings and collections for adventures and entertainment. Museums undergo temporary transformations, as during local 'Museum Nights'. Using their collections as background, museum offer exciting or festive entertainment on those occasions. The openings of exhibitions and the Museum Weekend feature performances and other special activities for visitors.

'tick'. The museum confronts visitors with the blurred line between 'normal' and 'abnormal'. At the museum, young people learn how their and other people's brains work: 'Why are teenagers, of all age groups, so impulsive, emotional and prone to addiction?'



*'In a museum, you can suddenly find yourself in front of a 15th century painting: that's six hundred years of history, right before your eyes! I think that's simply amazing. Hearing stories that you've never heard before, about your history, where you came from... It's both fun and educational' ~ Jeroen Brandenhorst, BankGiroLoterij*



Olympic Experience Amsterdam: perfect for children's parties! Image courtesy of: Pure Eva.

>> Museums devoted to mobile heritage and museums located in castles don't have to exert much effort to guarantee an interesting experience: their buildings and collections already ensure this. Special – usually old – museum buildings that house 'regular' museums are also an experience in themselves, regardless of their actual roles as museums.

Example: Soldiers of the Napoleonic Association of the Netherlands re-enact a historic battle during a weekend at Slot Loevestein in Poederloijen, inspired by the Napoleonic Era. 'Real winter encampments are hubs of activity. Soldiers prepare for battle, exercise, clean their rifles and tell each other jokes. The followers in the encampment can feel the tension. Women, merchants and surgeons add some variety to the proceedings. And then: it's battle time!' ■

collection value

connecting value

educational value

experience value

economic value



Prisoner Claude Jones receives a visitor at the Texas State Penitentiary in Huntsville, Texas on 6 December 2000. Photo credit: Pat Sullivan/AP Photo.

**By Hans Aarsman:** It's his last day. By the look of him, you'd almost think they mean his last day in prison – he is all smiles. Tomorrow, he will be free – free from everything, for eternity.

Claude Jones was convicted of armed robbery of a liquor store, shooting the owner and grabbing \$900 from the till. Now he's on death row and is set to be executed tomorrow. In the Polaroid on the left, Claude appears to be standing in front of a mirror. We see two telephone receivers, face down, and two cans of Coke. But one of the phone jacks is plugged into the left outlet... and so is the other. If this were a mirror, one would be plugged into the right socket.

Sometimes when you photograph someone the person grimaces instead of smiling, even though it appears to be a smile in the picture. But these are two different photos, and Claude is smiling in both of them. He may be relieved that the wait is finally over. Or he may simply be under the influence: drugs are readily available in prison. Then again, Claude Jones may simply not care about life or death at all – neither that of others nor his own. Whatever we are seeing is beyond our comprehension. We are alive and well, and he is about to be put to death. Have you ever seen two such small photographs that brought you so close to the mystery of life?



# economic value

The Anne Frank Museum attracted more than 1 million visitors in 2010 – a record number in its 50-year history.

Photo credit: Hans Tak

*'Economic strength and tourist attraction'*

collection value

connecting value

educational value

experience value

economic value





# Economic value



## 'Economic strength and tourist attraction'

Museums are full of activity, life and appeal – places in the heart of the community that have economic significance as well. Just think of the large numbers of tourists that museums attract, the jobs they create directly and indirectly, the capital represented by the thousands of volunteers, museums' appeal to businesses and to families with high levels of education, and the cachet and character a museum and its building can give a city or region.

## Museums attract large numbers of tourists

Many people travel to the Netherlands for shorter or longer periods to visit museums. The large museums, in particular, such as the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum, attract many visitors. But museums outside Amsterdam are also popular destinations for city trips, hotel packages or daytrips. Tourists who visit museums tend to spend more money during their visit than tourists who don't.

In 2009, a total of 9.92 million foreign tourists visited the Netherlands, 41% of whom visited one or more museums (compared to 31% ten years ago). This makes museums the sixth most popular major tourist attraction in the Netherlands. The number of tourists is expected to increase, which means the importance of museums will as well. A total of 14 million tourists are expected to visit the Netherlands in 2020.

## Museums give the 'Holland' brand an identity

They are indispensable when it comes to promoting the Netherlands abroad. Dutch museum collections tell the story of the Netherlands, which is an essential part of the 'Holland' brand. In addition, exhibitions held abroad also attract attention to the Netherlands and its museums.

Outside the Netherlands, Dutch museums are known for their quality and diversity, which appeals to a broad audience and encourages people to visit and revisit the country.

Rijksmuseum Amsterdam Schiphol, the airport satellite of the celebrated museum, is located on Holland Boulevard in the section behind passport control, between the E and F piers. The museum features a permanent exhibition of ten works by Dutch Masters from the seventeenth century. Photo credit: Gerald van Daalen/Capital Photos.

Example: In spring 2011, the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, exhibited 44 paintings by Dutch Masters from the collection of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, giving the public the opportunity to discover the Netherlands and the Golden Age. It is the first time that parts of the collection are being exhibited in the Middle East. Queen Beatrix visited the museum prior to the opening of the exhibition, as part of her state visit to Qatar in March 2011.





*'Vladimir Putin told me that every Russian has heard of the Czar Peter House in Zaandam' ~ Bernard Wientjes, Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers VNO-NCW*



Annual dinner of the Business Club of the Cobra Museum Amstelveen. Image courtesy of: Cobra Museum.

### Museums play a direct and indirect role in employment

>> Museums enhance the appeal of a particular area to businesses and families, as well as increasing the number of jobs. They provide work to more than 8,500 professionals and a large number of volunteers (based on 2009 data from Statistics Netherlands) and many museums are also approved work placement companies or workplace training companies for a variety of professionals, ranging from designers to accountants. Cities that are home to museums are also more likely to attract busi-

nesses, which in turn boosts economic growth and creates new jobs. This is because for many people museums, along with theatres and concert halls, are important resources that enhance the appeal of the town where they live or work. The opportunities that museums provide for talent development are important as well, since the competitive positions of the Netherlands and Europe rely to an important extent on creativity and innovative strength.



Grand celebration of World Animal Day to tie in with the Beesten aan Boord ('Animals on Board') exhibition at the Rotterdam Maritime Museum, 2009. Photo credit: Fred Ernst.

### Museums improve the quality of the living environment.

A museum is a building as well as an institution, and this building sometimes enhances the image of the museum and always has an impact on the quality of the location and the environment. New museums sometimes feature spectacular architecture that attracts international attention. Many buildings that house museums are landmark buildings in their own right, and thanks to their purpose as museums they are well maintained and preserved. Museums increasingly play a role in developing

the area around the building, as well as having an impact on the planning decisions made in that area. The presence of museums generates quality and revenue and attracts people, as well as contributing to a region's revitalisation. Museums and their cafés and restaurants attract large numbers of visitors and make the community a livelier place. The arrival of a museum often guarantees better infrastructure and improved public transport services. >>

## Average ticket prices for museums

(source: Statistics Netherlands)

	Children (4-12)	Youths (13-18)	Adults (18+)
2003	€ 2.84	€ 3.27	€ 5.66
2005	€ 3.30	€ 3.54	€ 6.20
2007	€ 3.76	€ 4.19	€ 6.90

## Average travel time/length of stay for museum visit

Museum visit	Average travel time (one way)	Average length of stay
	63 min	124 min

Source: Museummonitor/museumkaart.



A Chinese girl playing a barrel organ at an exhibition by Museum Speelklok in Guangzhou 2007.  
Image courtesy of: Museum Speelklok.

## The value of museums expressed in euros

The Netherlands Museums Association commissioned Atlas voor Generation to calculate the value of Dutch museums in euros, based on the increase in prosperity driven by the presence of museums. This increase, which includes five components, amounted to 3.5 million to 6.4 million euros in 2010. The increase consists of five variables:

**Increased prosperity due to the use of museums**

This represents the value people

A similar initiative is underway in North Amsterdam: behind the Central Station, on the other side of the IJ River, the new **Film Museum** is currently being constructed, based on a design by Delugan Meissl. The museum, which is part of the new urban district Overhoeks, features a blend of residential, leisure and cultural facilities. The museum is the main attraction of the new district and is expected to draw 225,000 visitors following its opening in 2011. This will give the relatively remote area of North Amsterdam a tourist attraction that connects both banks of the IJ River.

Examples: **Groninger Museum** is a perfect example of the impact of museum architecture on the quality of the environment and appeal of a city. In 1994, a century after its establishment, this museum relocated to an artificial island in Verbindingskanaal right across from Groningen's railway station. Located in a postmodern building designed by Alessandro Mendini, Groninger Museum has become one of the main attractions in the north of the country in a short space of time.

assign to their museum visits, which is significantly higher than the museum's revenues from ticket sales would suggest. For example, people are willing to incur travel expenses to get to the museum and spend a considerable amount of time there.

People's total expenses and accommodation costs are more than ten times higher than the average price of a museum ticket. The surplus value of the visit in relation to the



*'Museums are important to brand value and the image of the Netherlands, as many of the collections are unique and different – they tell 'our story' and cannot be copied' – Jos Vranken, NBTC*

>> travel and accommodation costs incurred results in an increase in prosperity of 1 to 1.3 billion euros. The calculation shows that, in addition to generating physical visitors, museums are also increasingly attracting visitors online. For a number of museums, website visits and average length of stay (ALOS) are documented. Somewhat cautiously, we can state that each physical internet user visited the website 3.8 times, remaining on the site for an average of approximately four minutes.

**Increased prosperity due to tourism**  
In 2009, a total of 9.92 million foreign tourists visited the Netherlands. Of this group, approximately 41% visited at least one museum. For 7.8%, the equivalent of just under 8,000 people, visiting museums was even the most important reason to travel to the Netherlands. The average amount spent per person per stay is €544. Based on these data and an assumed public profit margin of 10% on tourist expenses, we can calculate the annual increase in prosperity at 42.1 million euros in 2010. Measured over

a 30-year period, this amounts to a total of 0.7 billion euros.

**Increased prosperity due to the option to use museums**

This represents the value that people attach to the option to visit a museum in their city or neighbourhood. This may be related to museums' purpose as meeting places and the impact this has on social cohesion and the quality of life in a city or region. In addition, people who love going to museums will want to live close by. The presence of a museum can also enhance the status of a neighbourhood or city, giving residents a sense of pride to live in that city. Property values are higher in the vicinity of museums. House prices per square metre were studied in relation to the proximity of a museum. The result is an estimate of the option value of museums: 1.8 – 3.4 billion euros.

**Increased prosperity due to the educational role of museums**

Museums contribute to cultural education in the Netherlands, both through museum visits and through online visits and images

used for class materials. The calculation of the value is based on existing research by Brede School into the social value.

The results: schools engage in cultural education for 30 weeks each year, with 1/30th of the curriculum being provided by museums. Of the public benefit from cultural education, a maximum of approximately €50 per student can be attributed to museums. If we include the 900,000 students who visit a museum each year, the additional educational value comes to a maximum of 45 million euro per year. Measured over a 30-year period, this is equivalent to approximately 0.7 billion euros.

**Increased prosperity due to the existence of museums**

Museums have public value due to their appeal, but according to Atlas voor Gemeenten, it may have additional value as well: existence value – the existence of a collection. Even if The Night Watch were not accessible to the public, many Dutch people would presumably still value the fact that the painting

exists and is held by the Rijksmuseum. The artwork enhances our national identity and our shared past, and people may even be proud of the fact that this celebrated work was created in the Netherlands, just like many are proud of the athletic achievements of their fellow countrymen. This is true not just at the national level, but at the provincial and local levels as well.

This value is not related to the collection's assessed value or market value; although this value is considerable, this is offset by costs related to capital demands. The study has calculated that the expected increase in value of the collections is identical to the costs.

It is very difficult to properly assess the existence value – this requires a more detailed investigation. Meanwhile, the existence value can be assessed based on key figures from a Finnish study, which showed that the existence value amounted to a maximum of 10% of the museum's option value, the equivalent of 0.3 billion euro

>>

'Museums have undergone rapid development over the past 25 years; from stuffy, elitist institutions to places that provide interesting experience and have social relevance and value to the public'

~ Cees van 't Veen, National Service for Cultural Heritage

### >> Costs and benefits

The question is how the amount of the grants provided by the Dutch government relate to the total public value of museums. Despite uncertainty regarding a number of items entered, this public value represents a maximum of 6 billion euro (based on a range from 3.5 billion to 6.4 billion euros).

In 2007, the total amount in grants provided to Dutch museums was 379 million euros. A portion of these funds is allocated for the acquisition of museum objects. This portion should not be included in a possible public cost-benefit analysis, as an expansion of the collection might be regarded as an investment. Based on the assumption that the total remaining amount in grants provided is 350 million euro per year, this amounts to around 6 billion euro over a 30-year period. This is approximately equal to the public value of Dutch museums to which the grant relates. This value would justify the current amount provided in government grants.

### More detailed information

(including supporting figures) is included in the publication *Schat van de stad, welvaartseffecten van de Nederlandse musea* by G. Marlet, J. Poort and C. van Woerkens. *Atlas voor Gemeenten, Utrecht*. ■



Child labour, Jammu, 13 November 2007.

**By Hans Aarsman:** Her name is Gudia – no surname provided. In a garage, she wipes off any spilled diesel oil with a rag. When the rag is dripping with oil, she squeezes it out in her tin. When the tin is full, she empties it in an oil drum. This goes on throughout the day; it's how she makes her money. Gudia is just eight years old. She needs to use a lot of pressure to squeeze the rag, which is why she's showing her teeth.

Do you reckon that, when she comes home at night, she'll wash the oil off her body, her face, her feet? Or do you imagine she'll just flop into bed? That is, if there is a bed – chances are she doesn't even have a roof over her head. Judging from this picture, she does have someone in her life who lovingly braids her hair. Funny how, for a child, that can be an indication that somebody loves her. Gudia is also wearing earrings. The rag, the earrings, the slippers and the oil can – what if we bought them from her for a tidy sum and displayed them in a showcase? We could add some information about Gudia and demonstrate what the 'global economy' involves for some people.



## Capitalising on opportunities



Visitors queuing for the Mauritshuis, The Hague on Museum Night, 4 September 2010.  
Photo credit: Bastiaan van Musscher.

**'More than worth it'** demonstrates that the social significance of the museum sector cannot be underestimated. In times of austerity, we tend to express everything in monetary terms and be scornful of anything that is not first and foremost about financial gain.

Oscar Wilde famously wrote that a cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. He was right on the mark: not everything of value can be expressed in financial terms, and museums demonstrate that arguably more than any other sector. After all, who could fail to be impressed by all the beautiful, unique, exquisite and fascinating objects that museums collect, conserve and exhibit? Like Wilde's cynic, museum visitors may also wonder what the value is of a particular collection or world-class work of art. This publication aims to highlight the other side of the value of the museum sector: the value of museums as depositories and exhibition areas for collections of which we, as a society, can be proud. Museums are also valuable because they attract visitors and tourists, many of whom want to enjoy these collections and learn more about them. Museums connect people in a variety of ways – people who share

a common interest and passion, which is a social value in itself. This value is evident every day, in the sense that visiting a museum – alone, with friends, family members or a school class – is also a day out – a day to travel to the city centre, another city or another village and immerse yourself in a collection you are eager to explore. When we use policy terms such as 'participation' and 'education', 'entrepreneurship' and 'involvement', we are really talking about

a group of children from the local primary school who go to see a Van Gogh painting for the first time and wonder how the painter was able to create such a masterpiece using all those little dots. We are also thinking of senior citizens from a nearby care home who visit the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum (Open Air Museum) to experience again what the Netherlands was like when they were growing up.



*'The public value of museums increases if the collection, rather than the museum itself, is the point of departure. The collection allows us to provide a perspective on our times. We can also shed light on social relationships by placing them in a context. That is what justifies the existence of museums in our society' ~ Gitta Luiten, Mondriaanstichting*



UAR, the mobile architecture application designed by the NAI, provides information about the built environment through text, image, stock footage and video using an iPhone or Google Android device. Image courtesy of: INIOcommunicatie.

>> Identifying and promoting the public value of museums is a beginning – the next step is for the museum sector, government and the private sector to join forces and invest in the value of museums, in order to capitalise on this value in a modern and innovative way. Partnership is vital to this process. Museums are venturing beyond their own gates and are forming alliances with civil organisations that are somehow linked to the five values. This is important,

as museums, their buildings, their collections and their resources are at the heart of the community.

The heritage entrusted to museums is not for sale, which is why we can all be part of it. This is how our heritage connects us, from generation to generation, visit after visit, story after story. This opens up enormous potential, from which we intend to benefit.



Museums and society: the sector provides many opportunities. We are reaching out to governments, civil organisations, education, cultural funds, the media and the private sector to seize these social values together and capitalise on them. ■



## Sources

### The following individuals were interviewed for this publication:

**Toine Berbers** (Director, Association of State-subsidised Museums)

**Jeroen Branderhorst** (Account Manager, Museums, BankGiroLoterij)

**Jos de Haan** (Head of the Research Group 'Time, Media and Culture' at the Netherlands Institute for Professor of IT, Culture and Information Society, Erasmus University Rotterdam)

**Richard Hermans** (Director, Heritage Netherlands)

**Bram Kempers** (Professor, Sociology of Art, University of Amsterdam)

**Joost van Lanschot** (Director, VSB-fonds)

**Gitta Luiten** (Director, Mondriaan Stichting)

**Lejo Schenk** (Chairman, Council Committee for Museums; Chairman, Council for Culture; Director, Tropenmuseum)

**Cees van 't Veen** (Director, National Service for Cultural Heritage)

**Jos Vranken** (Director, Netherlands Board for Tourism & Conventions)

**Bernard Wientjes** (Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers VNO-NCW)

The following organisations and individuals were consulted by telephone: Boekmansstichting, Cultuurnetwerk Nederland, Young Works, the Netherlands Federation of Friends of Museums, Stacey Arnold of the Museums Associations in the UK, Saskia Brocx of TNS NIPO and Jacquielien Lorkeers of the Netherlands Board for Tourism & Conventions.

Various museum websites were consulted for the descriptions of projects and other examples.

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## Colofon

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**Monitoring Committee Research and copy:**

Edwin Jacobs (Centraal Museum, Utrecht)  
Lidewij de Koekkoek (Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar)  
Carin Reinders (CODA, Apeldoorn)  
Marjan Scharloo (Teylers Museum, Haarlem)  
Paul Spies (Amsterdam Museum)  
Wim Weijland (Dutch National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden)  
Netherlands Museums Association (Amsterdam)

**Commissioned by:**

Bert Boer (Netherlands Museums Association)

**Research and copy:**

Annelies van der Horst, Marieke de Groot and Eric Lagendijk (DSP-groep)

**Selections by Hans Aarsman:**

Hans Aarsman

**Photo editing:**

Hans Tak and Janneke van Hardeveld

**Final editing:**

Désirée Raemaekers

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Josta Bischoff Tulleken (jbt ontwerp+)

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What is the public value of museums? 'More than worth it' demonstrates that museums have great significance to society and are indeed worth fighting for. As Winston Churchill replied when he was asked to sell Britain's national treasures in order to finance the war effort during World War II: 'Hell no – what do you think we are fighting for?'

This publication makes a case for the five social values of museums, and shows how much benefit museums provide to Dutch society. This is important knowledge, but what is even more important is the awareness that not all value can be expressed in monetary terms.

Museums belong to us all – through unique objects and compelling stories, they show us how we came to be and provide a perspective on the past and future.

'More than worth it' also calls attention to the social opportunities of the sector. Now is the time for the museum sector, governments, civic organisations, educational institutions, funds, the media and the private sector to seize these opportunities and benefit from them. We believe the challenge involved is more than worth it!

This publication is essential reading for anyone interested in Dutch museums and museum policy.



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