

# Ludic Exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum:

## *Die Welt als Labyrinth, Bewogen Beweging, and Dylaby*

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This paper examines three exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam that are related through their ludic art and exhibition tactics: *Die Welt als Labyrinth* (1960, canceled before it opened), *Bewogen Beweging* (1961), and *Dylaby* (1962). Despite never having been realized, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* provided a basis for experimental exhibition strategies that focused on artistic intervention in the Stedelijk's galleries; subsequent ludic exhibitions built upon their predecessor's innovations. By narrowing the focus on one institution over a short period of time, we can survey the development of playful exhibition strategies, as well as reveal a glimpse of the social, historical, and political conditions of Amsterdam in the early 1960s. In this article, I will turn my attention to audiences' responses to the exhibitions, largely drawing upon contemporary reviews. My aim is to understand how ludic exhibitions operated at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, exploring the meaning and resonance of this practice. The exhibitions demonstrate the limitations of play: viewers and critics can misread them as mere amusement lacking any value as social commentary. I argue that the ludic exhibition is paradoxical in that it presents critique indirectly, making it palatable, but its implicit critique risks misinterpretation.

The exhibitions in this article—and their critical and popular reception—reflect the Dutch anxiety over rapid modernization in the 1960s; while artists' responses to technological advances and industrialization were not limited to the Netherlands, a close examination of the local historical context will make evident that the exhibitions at the

Stedelijk manifested a particularly Dutch social and cultural ideal of the late 1950s and 1960s (i.e., the pursuit of individual freedom by artists and curators). The Stedelijk was a logical site for such artistic experiments, not least because it had been occupied by the Germans during World War II, who controlled the exhibition program for propagandistic purposes, such as mandating two exhibitions in 1943: *Kunstenaar zien der Arbeidsdienst (Artists' Views of the Labor Service)* and *De Jeugherberg van Morgen (The Youth of Tomorrow)*.<sup>1</sup> As the first venue to exhibit Constant Nieuwenhuys's *New Babylon* in 1959, the Stedelijk was a crucial supporter of the innovative incorporation of play in art and a center for ludic exhibitions in the 1960s.

The term "ludic" may be traced to the work of Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945), with his 1938 book *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*.<sup>2</sup> An ambitious interdisciplinary study devoted to the concept of play across cultures and time, *Homo Ludens* remains invaluable for its definition and analysis of play's function in society.<sup>3</sup> For Huizinga, play is a crucial formative element of civilization; it is a free activity, with no material interest, and can be utterly serious.<sup>4</sup> Huizinga's utopian thesis provided a model for artistic production in the post-World War II era, when artists had his ideas in mind during the reconstruction of Europe. Constant, in particular, was strongly influenced by *Homo Ludens*, incorporating play as defined by Huizinga into his work. *New Babylon*, a plan for a utopian city as an unending playground, was the main source of the ludic exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum in the 1960s. In this paper, I define a "ludic exhibition" as a coherent display of playful works of art, characterized by absurdity, and the deployment of the strategy of oblique social critique.

A careful balance of desires and forces seems to have been necessary for the ludic exhibition to be realized. Confrontational approaches prevent a show from materializing. In *Die Welt als Labyrinth*, the artists were too rigid in their demands, unwilling to negotiate or collaborate with the museum. *Bewogen Beweging* and *Dylaby* represent moments of perfect tension between artists and institution, each of whom moderated their desires and demands just enough for ludic exhibitions to be staged: the artists masked their critique of social norms with fun and humor, while the institution relinquished control over the exhibition space. These shows illustrate how the ludic exhibition is the result of negotiation between artists and the institution.

## Die Welt als Labyrinth

*Die Welt als Labyrinth (The World as a Labyrinth)* was an exhibition planned by the Situationist International (SI) to open at the Stedelijk on May 30, 1960. Rather than curators selecting completed works of art to fill the galleries, artists were to be given space in which to create a site-specific intervention.<sup>5</sup> Despite the fact that the show was canceled before it opened, the plans laid the groundwork for future

ludic exhibitions at the museum with respect to content and exhibition design. For example, Constant contributed a plan for a labyrinth intended to disorient the viewer that reappeared in *Bewogen Beweging* and *Dylaby*. However, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* was explicitly political and anti-institutional, which led to insurmountable confrontations with the museum director and eventually ensured the exhibition's demise.

Much of what we know about the history of *Die Welt als Labyrinth* comes from an unsigned editorial of the same title published in the journal *Internationale Situationniste* in June 1960.<sup>6</sup> The exhibition plans consisted of two integrally related components: a labyrinth in the museum and a three-day *dérive* through the streets of Amsterdam. The SI planned to amplify recorded lectures from audio speakers placed in the galleries, and to post on the gallery walls a changing roster of texts espousing the group's Neo-Marxist beliefs.<sup>7</sup> The "Dutch section" of the SI, spearheaded by Constant, proposed the construction of a labyrinth based on the artist's earlier plans for *New Babylon*.<sup>8</sup> The labyrinth was intended to evoke a variety of environments, from a furnished apartment to an exterior urban space. The plan called for artificial rain, fog, and wind. Heat, light, ambient noises, and dialogue would be introduced at various points, and a system of doors operable from one side only, so that visitors could not retrace their steps, was designed to disorient the viewer.

These elements recall Constant's *New Babylon* plans as an interconnected space wherein light, sound, and climate conditions could be changed at will, stimulating anti-rational play and thereby linking his proposal for *Die Welt als Labyrinth* to the design of his future city. Where *New Babylon* was utopian, *Die Welt als Labyrinth* was impractical, given the technological and financial limitations (the suggestion to simulate weather conditions, for example, speaks to the divide between concept and feasibility).<sup>9</sup> The description of *Die Welt als Labyrinth* included no concrete information on how to implement the design, so the proposal could never function as an executable scheme.

The SI canceled its exhibition shortly before it was scheduled to open.<sup>10</sup> In their editorial, the SI explained that they intended to be provocative and wanted to test director Willem Sandberg's limits by insisting on salaries during the *dérive*, which came on top of the exorbitant fees necessary to stage the exhibition. In light of the SI's unreasonable demands and vague proposal, it is possible that the SI may never have intended to realize *Die Welt als Labyrinth*, but rather sought to create an exhibition on paper in order to provoke controversy and draw attention to their politics—an effort that failed in the short term, as the SI show was quickly replaced with Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio's machine-made "industrial paintings."<sup>11</sup>

*Die Welt als Labyrinth* reflects the SI's ambiguous position with regard to art in a capitalist society, in line with their 1957 "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency"; this text explains their ambivalent relationship to existing "aesthetic structures," that is, the entities that support art and artists, such as museums and collectors.<sup>12</sup> Debord claims that the SI wanted to construct situations and "discard the relics of the recent past," such as the art museum, but in order to do so, the SI had to rely on individuals and institutions for the resources they lacked; ergo, they engaged Sandberg and the Stedelijk, even while their aggressive approach left both parties without an exhibition.<sup>13</sup> The SI's confrontation with Sandberg is emblematic of their conflicted goals: working against and superseding established institutions while at the same time depending on their generosity. Their possibly disingenuous negotiations and obstinate stance produced an intellectual statement rather than a realized manifestation of artistic practice.

## Bewogen Beweging

About a year after the SI show was canceled, the Stedelijk staged *Bewogen Beweging (Moved Movement)*, an extension of the concepts proposed in *Die Welt als Labyrinth*. *Bewogen Beweging* was held at the Stedelijk from March 10 to April 17, 1961, after which it traveled to the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, under the title *Rörelse Konst (Movement in Art)*. Curatorial authorship has been attributed to both Pontus Hultén, director of the Moderna Museet, and the artist Daniel Spoerri, who likely had a central role in the Stedelijk iteration.<sup>14</sup> Sandberg provided space, stepping aside and giving freedom for experimentation.<sup>15</sup> Jean Tinguely had a strong influence as well: he was represented with twenty-eight works, significantly more than the other artists on view, and he led tours of the show.<sup>16</sup> *Bewogen Beweging* featured nearly two hundred works by over seventy artists from the United States and Europe, all of whom contributed art that either moved or addressed movement, constituting a survey of Kinetic art.<sup>17</sup> The exhibition also marks the first time that a major museum recognized Nouveau Réalisme.<sup>18</sup> It provided museumgoers with the novel spectacle of rusty wheels, chains, broken typewriters, strollers, and alarm clocks that moved and made noises. *Bewogen Beweging* was a ludic exhibition that served as a forum in which to question an indiscriminate embrace of machines.<sup>19</sup> The artists' playful critique incorporated illogical movements of mechanical components, demonstrating that play could be a serious response to and a questioning of the rapid industrialization and modernization in the Netherlands after World War II.

*Bewogen Beweging* honored Duchamp's work as a precursor to Kinetic art, exhibiting a version of the *Bicycle Wheel* (1913) and reproducing an image of it on the cover of the catalogue. Tinguely, presented as Duchamp's heir, monopolized the exhibition with his humorous, elaborate

mechanical sculptures.<sup>20</sup> His *Cyclograveur* (1961, fig. 1) is an anti-machine constructed from rusty parts scavenged from bicycles, cars, and baby carriages.<sup>21</sup> The saddle, originally a two-person motorcycle seat installed sideways, was attached to a seat post twice the height of a typical bicycle's, while the pedals were connected to several gears and four wheels. A large drawing board was positioned about a meter beyond the pedals. When a participant climbed on the bicycle to push the pedals, a fifth wheel, hidden behind the drawing board, rotated its surface via lanky, arm-like metal rods, while another rod positioned in front of the board held a functioning marker or pencil. A bookstand in front of the handlebars allowed the subject to read while pedaling, distracting the visitor from the creative process of the drawing and leaving the contraption to make artistic "decisions"; the participant was needed only to power the machine. Tinguely attached a cymbal and an upside-down metal bucket drum that were struck by mallets in the style of a one-man band to augment the already ridiculous clamor of the rickety machine. The bare bones of a toy car were towed behind *Cyclograveur*, as if from an appendage—a metaphor of subordination that mocked the ascendancy of the automobile.



Fig. 1. Jean Tinguely, *Cyclograveur*, 1961. Photo: Christian Baur. © Museum Tinguely, Basel. Courtesy of Pictoright Amsterdam 2018.

For example, rather than explicitly condemning the Dutch embrace of machines, as exemplified by the recent widespread ownership of cars in the Netherlands, Tinguely created an anti-machine, with a thick veneer of fun, in order to soften his critique of industrialization.<sup>22</sup> His machine did not fabricate much, except an ostensible work of art, which had little to do with the person operating the machine, thus *Cyclograveur* questions the authorial role of the artist. Duchamp's *Bicycle Wheel*, too, had questioned the artist's status, but in a different tone: unlike Duchamp's work, Tinguely's wonky machine made people laugh. We usually expect a machine to function and to serve a purpose, but Tinguely's machines rattled along uselessly until they broke (and they often did). They were also anthropomorphic, transposing physical humor of the human body onto contraptions: "His machines are as messy as people, but they still work miraculously and present a balanced slapstick," wrote one reviewer, further observing that "there are a lot of laughs at 'Bewogen Beweging', and not laughing at but laughing with the exhibition."<sup>23</sup>

Nearly all the reviews of *Bewogen Beweging* mention Tinguely, and frequently *Cyclograveur*, either in their texts, in accompanying photographs, or both, and many articles led with a description of one of Tinguely's works.<sup>24</sup> The reviews were largely positive, for example, observing the audience's pleasure while walking through the exhibition as well as the critic announcing his own amusement.<sup>25</sup> One writer who compares *Bewogen Beweging* to a carnival concludes that most people will be entertained, yet the *homo ludens* knows that there is no "play without seriousness."<sup>26</sup> Reviewers thus sensed the complexity behind staging a fair within the museum walls. For Spoerri, this type of exhibition is a critical act in itself: the artist writes that such an environment could trigger "new behavior patterns" that

would allow the museumgoer to reevaluate works of art.<sup>27</sup> Spoerri's intentions, however, remained enigmatic to many: one critic writes, "it's not clear what these artists are trying to prove, but it appears to have something to do with a rebellion against the established order."<sup>28</sup>

Ultimately, the show's playfulness worked against the artists' parodic but critical views of machinery, which points to one of the paradoxes of ludic exhibitions: *Bewogen Bewegung's* lighthearted play and invitation to viewers to participate concealed its critique to the point of being misunderstood as mere amusement rather than as a serious critique of the machine age or of high art. In contrast, *Die Welt als Labyrinth's* aggressive stance had been clear, but also sabotaged the realization of the show.<sup>29</sup> In the case of *Bewogen Bewegung*, the abundant public attention and media friendliness served to de-radicalize the exhibition, working against the organizers' aims.

In her 2006 study of postwar art, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s*, art historian Pamela Lee examines Tinguely's *Meta-matics*, or drawing machines, of which *Cyclograveur* is one example.<sup>30</sup> Lee views Tinguely's *Meta-matics* as absurd, with a focus on irrational movement: "Tinguely's apparent indebtedness to the prewar iconography of the machine centered less on its promise as a bearer of standardization than in its capacity to invert such ideals."<sup>31</sup> The curators of *Bewogen Bewegung* were well aware of the socio-critical import of the exhibition and Tinguely's work, warning readers of the catalogue that, "if you consider this art to be harmless, then you misunderstand it. It is a veiled attack on the established order. These machines are anti-machines rather than machines."<sup>32</sup>

Although the public may have paid more attention to the spectacle in *Bewogen Bewegung*, a sophisticated and informed view also emerged. A pointed review in the leftist newspaper *De Volkskrant* focuses on the idea of the anti-machine, and understood the exhibition to be "an attack on the technocracy of our time."<sup>33</sup> As the anonymous *De Volkskrant* reviewer argues, exhibiting nonfunctional machines, or anti-machines, constitutes a critique of postwar functionalism and suggests an alternative to the social norms of the previous decade. The review continues by singling out the lightheartedness of *Bewogen Bewegung's* critique: "The grotesque and utterly useless, but diligently moving constructions, which you bump into here, are trying to be a witty provocation—certainly a challenge to the mechanization of all that is human."<sup>34</sup> The majority of critics, however, failed to pick up on the political import of the exhibition, treating it as innocuous carnivalesque fun.

*Bewogen Bewegung's* preoccupation with freedom was explicit in the catalogue. Its artists are presented as being at the forefront of a new society based on anarchist freedom rather than on socialist politics: "The art in this exhibition is

on its way to becoming active and dynamic. It leaves behind old forms in a static world that was seeking stability in society. ...[The artists] are outside all laws and are not bound to one system. They represent a freedom that would not exist without them. ...This art is an example of pure anarchy in its most beautiful form."<sup>35</sup> The organizers explain that the artists represent the post-World War II cultural climate that values personal liberty, thus reflecting the desire to create and support a society free from the fascism of the war period.

*Bewogen Beweging* offset the artists' critique of rapid industrialization with the desire to stage a well-attended exhibition; this delicate balance could occur because the artists masked their critique with carnivalesque fun, while Sandberg relinquished administrative constraints that allowed the artists to experiment. Of course, in order to have an impact, an exhibition needs to be seen: *Die Welt als Labyrinth* missed such an opportunity. Yet the seriousness of *Bewogen Beweging's* critique was largely unrecognizable because the exhibition was disjointed: it was simultaneously a history of Kinetic art, a presentation of contemporary Kineticism, and an introduction to Nouveau Réalisme in the Netherlands. Some works, such as *Cyclografeur*, were created specifically for the show, while others, like Duchamp's contributions, were more than forty years old. Was it historical or contemporary? Or was it announcing a new French art movement? The expansive list of artists and the large number of works on display contributed to the lack of focus, precluding the coherent political or social commentary they intended to convey, as based on the exhibition catalogue essay cited above. *Bewogen Beweging* nevertheless laid the groundwork for *Dylaby's* more concise and legible statement.

## Dylaby

*Dylaby* (the title is a portmanteau of "Dynamic Labyrinth") can be seen as a belated manifestation of Constant's original plans for *Die Welt als Labyrinth*. The exhibition was held at the Stedelijk, from August 30 to September 30, 1962, about a year and a half after *Bewogen Beweging* closed.<sup>36</sup> The exhibition was largely Tinguely's initiative, coordinated by Sandberg and curator Ad Petersen.<sup>37</sup> In a 1991 article recollecting his experience of organizing *Dylaby*, Petersen recounts that Sandberg reached out to Tinguely in 1960, while *Bewogen Beweging* was on view in Stockholm. The director wanted to realize his "dream" of staging a "labyrinthine construction, with elements from the amusement park and theater, combining an exhibition and a haunted house," with the intention of "tear(ing) the viewer out of passivity."<sup>38</sup> The show would surround the viewer "with an exciting mix of visual, physical, and psychological sensations."<sup>39</sup>

Building on *Bewogen Beweging's* foundation, *Dylaby* represented a dialectic of fun and earnestness. Six artists,

all born in either the 1920s or '30s, were included: Per Olof Ultvedt, Robert Rauschenberg, Martial Raysse, Niki de Saint Phalle (the only woman in the group), Spoerri, and Tinguely. Each artist was assigned a gallery, although they collaborated on each other's works. The exhibition consisted of seven rooms, laid out in a linear route, beginning with a labyrinth, followed by Ultvedt's wooden constructions, Spoerri's sideways museum gallery, Raysse's beach, Saint Phalle's shooting gallery, Rauschenberg's immense combines, and finally, Tinguely's balloon room. Rather than choosing completed works, the curators asked the artists to produce installations in situ, in less than a month's time. This arrangement by the director and curator to cede control placed an extraordinary degree of trust and freedom in the hands of the artists. The liberating potential of play evident in the ludic nature of the resulting works and in the exhibition as a whole can be traced back to *Die Welt als Labyrinth's* ideas for a *New Babylon*-esque labyrinth. However, *Dylaby's* critique of society—more explicit than that of the earlier *Bewogen Bewegung*—demonstrates that play can be not only serious, but can even be dark, for example, with artists invading the museum for a short period of time, forcing viewers through a precarious labyrinth, and arming participants with (BB) guns.

The manner of financing *Dylaby* also reflects the artists' willingness to compromise. For example, whereas the SI had demanded salaries and inordinate sums to stage their show, Spoerri, in need of expensive mirrors, suggested asking a mirror manufacturer to donate discarded pieces in exchange for displaying its corporate logo and acknowledgement of their generosity in the catalogue.<sup>40</sup> The SI's combative and threatening position led to a failure of their show, whereas Spoerri's conciliatory approach facilitated *Dylaby's* staging.

Spoerri and Tinguely jointly created the first installation—a labyrinth resembling a funhouse; this work closely adhered to Constant's proposal in *Die Welt als Labyrinth*, in that it intentionally created disorientation through the use of dim lighting and narrow corridors (fig. 2). Dutch photographer and filmmaker Ed van der Elsken documented *Dylaby* in a ten-minute film, capturing the experience of moving through the exhibition.<sup>41</sup> Visitors describe getting lost and feeling their way through the dark space, unsure where to proceed.<sup>42</sup> Some visitors shriek and run and wonder aloud whether the labyrinth might collapse as they move through it; lights flash on and off. In a voiceover, a child compares the space to an attic because "every once in a while you would feel something bump your head."<sup>43</sup> Groping visitors encountered wool, fur, foam, and chairs and shoes suspended from the ceiling by ropes.<sup>44</sup> For one reviewer, the labyrinth provides the possibility to "break your legs, or at the very least, sprain your ankles."<sup>45</sup> The chance of encountering physical danger was not lost on the writer. The emphasis on sensory experience was intensified by an ironic offer to wear eyeglasses designed by Spoerri called *Lunettes noires* (*Black Eyeglasses*, 1961), outfitted with needles pointing towards the wearer's eyes.<sup>46</sup> This

mischievous accessory hinted at the dark and threatening atmosphere permeating *Dylaby*.

The fifth room, the largest in the exhibition, contained Saint Phalle's celebrated shooting gallery, where she had fabricated several fantastical, white plaster creatures resembling dinosaurs. Small bags of paint were attached to a windmill suspended above the sculptures.<sup>47</sup> Viewers were invited to shoot the moving bags so that paint would splatter over the bare works (fig. 3). In a reference to big game hunting, a museum guard wearing a safari jacket supervised the carnivalesque installation.<sup>48</sup>

The shooting gallery received the most attention in the press, and perhaps best characterizes *Dylaby's* tone. The amusement-park atmosphere was often highlighted in reviews, and several writers drew a comparison between *Dylaby's* shooting gallery and those found at county fairs. Occasionally, reviewers managed to look beyond the funhouse angle and focused instead on the fact that museumgoers were active participants helping to cover the sculptures in paint (fig. 4).<sup>49</sup> A review in the Jesuit weekly *De Linie* describes how Sandberg extended the participatory element of *Bewogen Beweging* by involving the public in painting sculptures.<sup>50</sup> But while *Dylaby* appeared to be a continuation of *Bewogen Beweging* in terms of the viewer participation, the tenor of the later exhibition can be best seen in this work. Shooting at bags of paint is simultaneously silly and sinister, both in the superficial risk of getting splattered with paint and in the danger of firing a gun (albeit a BB gun) in a crowded, enclosed space. Unlike *Bewogen Beweging*, *Dylaby* maintained a dark undertone between Tinguely and Spoerri's labyrinth and Saint Phalle's shooting gallery, conveying to audiences that play is more than mere fun.

In his essay "Forms of Violence: Neo-Dada Performance," curator and art historian Maurice Berger addresses the aggressive traces in the art of the Nouveaux Réalistes by focusing on Saint Phalle's shooting pieces. The works can be understood as a response to the machismo of Abstract Expressionism and to Saint Phalle's circle of male artists. They can also be seen as injecting an element of experiential fun into the gallery space. Moreover, playfully enacting violence can have a cathartic effect. Berger cites Saint Phalle, who identifies her target: her father, whom she accused of incest. Saint Phalle's destructive art provided an opportunity to transform an act of aggression into a moment of liberation.<sup>51</sup> And as Saint Phalle's action of shooting a gun had a cathartic effect on the artist, so could *Dylaby* be therapeutic for Dutch audiences in 1962, whose memory of the occupation was still fresh.

Perhaps unexpectedly, the exhibition brought up memories of World War II. A reporter for the Communist newspaper *De Waarheid* referred to the German occupation in his review: "It is a manifestation of maniacs and maniacs always exceed



Fig. 2. *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1962. Photo: Ed van der Elsken. Credit: Nederlands Fotomuseum / © Ed van der Elsken.



Fig. 3. *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1962. Photo: Ed van der Elsken. Credit: Nederlands Fotomuseum / © Ed van der Elsken.



Fig. 4. *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1962. Photo: Ed van der Elsken. Credit: Nederlands Fotomuseum / © Ed van der Elsken.

the limit of what is human. ...They are maniacal in the elimination of reason. And there is danger in the irrationalism of maniacs: we were in the middle of that situation exactly twenty years ago."<sup>52</sup> Here, the reviewer is close to claiming that *Dylaby* could lead to fascism; the freedom to try anything, once begun, has no end, and results in no rules and no morals. By contrast, George Lampe, writing in *Vrij Nederland*, saw the exhibition as anti-fascist, challenging (and playing with) the boundaries of what is art rather than delineating them. Lampe, alluding to the German hegemony over arts and culture, argued that "since the Nazi occupation we don't have a need to declare what an artist can and cannot do and what a museum should or should not exhibit."<sup>53</sup>

Tinguely's initial idea for the seventh and final room was destructive, evincing the darker mood of the exhibition. The plan called for a machine that would smash tulips, wooden shoes, cups, and saucers, but the plan was not executed due to the unavailability of tulips in September and the prohibitive cost of destroying the other objects.<sup>54</sup> In its place, Tinguely constructed a tunnel under a raised floor drilled with holes under which fans blew air, and filled the space with colorful balloons printed with the show's title; a photograph of this room with two children running between the balloons became one of most reproduced and emblematic images of the exhibition, emphasizing the playful and seemingly purposeless aspect of the show (fig. 5). Could *Dylaby's* success be attributed to the artists' decision to mask their critical intentions with play? Or to Tinguely filling the final room with balloons instead of broken dishes? Yet critics used the metaphor of a nightmare to describe *Dylaby*, thus suggesting that they recognized an ominous tone in the subtext of the show.<sup>55</sup>

*Bewogen Beweging* established the dialectical relationship between play and seriousness; *Dylaby* built on the earlier exhibition's foundation. In *Dylaby*, artists employed a more sophisticated critique that was better understood by audiences, as evidenced by the response to the show: fewer reviewers equated the exhibition with a funhouse, and more drew connections between artistic freedom and the history of the Netherlands during World War II. While the individual artists had autonomy, Tinguely assumed responsibility for unifying the show and collaborating with the artists, which resulted in a coherent program. For example, Saint Phalle's shooting gallery, in which balloons filled with paint acted as targets for viewers, relates to the last room, in which balloons were trampled on by visitors. The two spaces address play, one with a more innocent action than the other, although both require a degree of destruction on the audience's part—popping balloons—for their realization.

Another reason for *Dylaby's* success was the nature of its critique. *Dylaby* may have suggested the Stedelijk's complicity in the German occupation of the museum by staging a mock occupation by artists who invaded the museum for three weeks. Artists were allowed free reign,



Fig. 5. *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 1962. Photo: Ed van der Elsken. Credit: Nederlands Fotomuseum / © Ed van der Elsken.

which can be understood politically as a guarantee of the freedom jeopardized during the occupation, and as a potential means of healing. Yet *Dylaby's* critical position was also left open to interpretation, allowing for multiple viewpoints: the shooting gallery, for example, could be experienced as a game or a catharsis or a new trauma, or as a combination of all three. In this ambiguity lay freedom for the viewer, and success for the exhibition.

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Unless otherwise indicated, translations are the author's.

1. In 1942 the Stedelijk Museum staged *Stad en land (Town and Country)*, an exhibition that Margreeth Soeting describes as a "smokescreen to help the resistance." The museum commissioned photographs from artists who were forbidden to work, either because they were Jewish or because they had not registered with the *Kultuurkamer* (Chamber of Culture), thus providing subsistence income to destitute artists. Soeting surmises that photographic paper and supplies that were given to artists who served in the resistance were used to forge identity papers. Margreeth Soeting, "Museum in Wartime," in *The Stedelijk Museum and the Second World War*, eds. Gregor Langfeld, Margriet Schavemaker, and Margreeth Soeting (Meppel: Uitgeverij Bas Lubberhuizen and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2015), 54–56.
2. The book first appeared in Dutch as *Homo ludens: Proeve eener bepaling van het spel-element der cultuur*; Routledge & Kegan Paul published it in English in 1949, as did Beacon Press in 1950, which issued a paperback edition in 1955. I rely on the 1955 first paperback edition from Beacon Press, a synthesis of Huizinga's 1944 German and English translations. In the foreword Huizinga clarifies that the subtitle should read, "The Play Element of Culture," but in a footnote the anonymous translator explains that "The Play Element in Culture" is "more euphonious." Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), ix.
3. Second to Huizinga's influence on the study of play is Roger Caillois's *Lex jeux et les hommes* (translated as *Man, Play and Games*), trans. Meyer Barash (1958; repr. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001). In the Dutch context, however, Huizinga is the more important theorist for understanding play and the ludic.
4. Huizinga argues that a civilization lacking play is one that is "on the wane," such as late Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries, but that the play element is strikingly manifested in the Baroque period, more so than in the Renaissance. Another decline of play in civilization began in the nineteenth century, when "Culture ceased to be play." Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, 176–82; 191–92.

5. Although *Die Welt als Labyrinth* was the first proposed ludic exhibition, it was not the first time artists were given freedom to experiment in the museum. Sandberg allowed Cobra artists complete control of the organization and layout of their November 1949 *International Exhibition of Experimental Art*, but the show did not deviate from conventional staging. Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra: The Last Avant-Garde Movement of the Twentieth Century* (Hampshire, UK, and Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2004), 203.
6. "Die Welt als Labyrinth," *Internationale Situationniste*, no. 4 (June 1960): 5–7.
7. In her study of participatory art, Claire Bishop noted that *Die Welt als Labyrinth* was SI's only significant effort to clearly articulate a "constructed situation" for a broader public beyond the group. As noted, neither the exhibition nor the *dérive* was executed; as a result, the ideas remained on paper. Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London and New York: Verso, 2012), 87; "Die Welt als Labyrinth," 5–7.
8. "Die Welt als Labyrinth," 6.
9. Constat may have anticipated contemporary installations that simulate weather conditions. For example, the collaborative studio Random International created *Rain Room* (2012), which creates a rainy day within a gallery space.
10. According to the SI's editorial, the exhibition was canceled in March. However, in a letter from Sandberg to Jorn, the exhibition was called off in May. "Die Welt als Labyrinth," 5; Willem Sandberg, "Letter from Sandberg to Asger Jorn," July 29, 1960, File 5512, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
11. Sandberg had discussed staging a solo exhibition with Gallizio throughout 1959. Willem Sandberg, "Letter Form Sandberg to Gallizio," June 12, 1959, File 3982, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
12. Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and Action of the International Situationist Tendency (1957)," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. and trans. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2004), 29–50.
13. *Ibid.*, 49–50.
14. Andres Pardey attributes curatorial authorship to Daniel Spoerri for the Amsterdam version of *Bewogen Beweging* based on letters exchanged between Spoerri and Sandberg. Andres Pardey, "Curating *Bewogen Beweging*: The Exchange between Daniel Spoerri, Jean Tinguely, Pontus Hultén, and Willem Sandberg," in *The Artist as Curator: Collaborative Initiatives in the International Zero Movement 1957–1967*, eds. Tiziana Cainaiello and Mattijs Vissert, trans. Steven Lindberg (Ghent and Düsseldorf: AsaMer; ZERO foundation, 2015), 225; 234. Caroline Roodenburg-Schadd recognizes Spoerri's pivotal role in conceiving *Bewogen Beweging* and asserts that the artist collaborated with Pontus Hultén in the design and execution of the show. Caroline Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening: Het verzamelbeleid van Willem Sandberg voor het Stedelijk Museum* (Amsterdam and Rotterdam: Stedelijk Museum and NAI Uitgevers, 2004), 661. *Rörelse Konsten* at the Moderna Museet included Tinguely's *Ballet des Pauvres* (*Ballet of the Poor*), 1961.
15. Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening*, 661.
16. Ad Petersen, "Dylaby Im Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam," in *L'esprit de Jean Tinguely* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 154. Most of the artists were represented by one to three works, but a few showed more, including Pol Bury (7), Alexander Calder (8), Marcel Duchamp (7), Robert Müller, (6), Bruno Munari, (6), Man Ray (9), Dieter Roth (8), Nicolas Schöffer (7), and Raphael Soto (10). These figures reflect these artists' association with the avant-garde or Kinetic art, or both.
17. The exhibition attracted over 50,000 viewers in its short run. Jannet De Goede, et al., *Jean Tinguely alles beweegt!*, ed. Jannet De Goede (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij Thoth Bussum, 2007), 57.

18. Julia Robinson, "Before Attitudes Became Form – New Realisms: 1957–1962," in *New Realisms: 1957–1962 Object Strategies Between Readymade and Spectacle*, ed. Julia Robinson (Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press, 2010), 24.
19. My research on *Bewogen Beweging*, specifically an essay on Jean Tinguely's *Cyclograveur*, has previously been published; see Janna Schoenberger, "Jean Tinguely's *Cyclograveur*: The Ludic Anti-Machine of *Bewogen Beweging*," *Sequitur* 3, no. 2, accessed July 18, 2017, <https://www.bu.edu/sequitur/2016/04/29/schoenberger-tinguely>.
20. The list of Duchamp's works on view as listed in the exhibition catalogue are: *Replica of the Bicycle Wheel*, 1913; *Duplicate of the Rotary Glass Plaques (Optique de precision)*, 1920; *Writing with Word Games*, 1926; *Replica Door: 11 rue Larrey, Paris*, 1927; *Rotating Half Ball*, 1922; *12 Rotoreliefs*, 1935; *2 Valises*, 1938.
21. The work is described in great detail in the review: "Pijltje gooien naar een vast gespijkerd overhemd," *Het Binnenhof*, March 9, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
22. Kees Schuyt and Ed Taverne, *Dutch Culture in a European Perspective: 1950 – Prosperity and Welfare*, vol. 4 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 155.
23. J. Kijkelboom, "'Bewogen Beweging': Werk van gedreven grapjassen," *Vrij Nederland*, April 8, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
24. Not all the attention was positive. One article was titled, "The Bicycle Repairman's Nightmare": the author admits that he does not understand the art, and then proceeds with a detailed, earnest mechanical analysis of *Cyclograveur*, explaining the flaws in the working of the wheel and chain. This review, while perhaps not enlightening from an art-critical standpoint, shows how the formal qualities of Tinguely's work attracted the attention of a wide audience. Moreover, it underscores the seriousness with which the Dutch audiences treated their bicycles. "De Nachtmerrrie van een fietsenmaker," *Zwolse Courant*, March 17, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
25. Kijkelboom, "'Bewogen Beweging': Werk van gedreven grapjassen"; "Potsierlijke Anti-Machines in Stedelijk Museum," *Volkscrant*, March 15, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
26. V. d. W., "Bewogen Beweging," *Arnhems Dagblad* April 13, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
27. See Daniel Spoerri's letter to Sandberg published in Pardey, "Curating *Bewogen Beweging*," 224–25.
28. "De Nachtmerrrie van een fietsenmaker."
29. *Bewogen Beweging's* oblique commentary on the modern machine age was naively read as fairground fun. For example, one reviewer referred to art as "carnival equipment." G. K., "Stedelijk Museum te Amsterdam thans vrolijkste aller keukens," *Trouw*, March 11, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
30. *Cyclograveur* belongs to the Museum Tinguely's collection in Basel. It is presented as a *Meta-matic* (a drawing machine), however the title indicates that the machine would create prints as opposed to drawings, thus not deserving the title "meta-matic."
31. Pamela M. Lee, *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 113.
32. K.G. Hultén, ed., *Bewogen Beweging*, trans. Hugo Govers (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1961), 38.
33. "Potsierlijke anti-machines in Stedelijk Museum," *Volkscrant*, March 15, 1961, Knipselmap *Bewogen Beweging*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
34. "Potsierlijke Anti-Machines in Stedelijk Museum."
35. Hultén, *Bewogen Beweging*, 38.
36. During the period between *Bewogen Beweging* and *Dylaby*, the Stedelijk Museum organized the first major exhibition of the

- international ZERO movement, *Nul*, held from March 9 to 25, 1962.
37. Petersen recognizes Tinguely as being the driving force behind *Dylaby*. Petersen, "Dylaby im Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam," 160.
  38. Critics, artists, and historians have identified *Dylaby's* labyrinth indebtedness to the proposal for *Die Welt als Labyrinth*. Gerrit Kouwenaar, Dutch poet and journalist, and a reviewer for the social-democratic daily newspaper, *Het Vrije Volk*, explains that *Dylaby* was unique for being a "one-time-only" manifestation of art, although he remarks that the labyrinth came from Sl's proposal. Dutch artist Jacqueline de Jong, who published the *Situationist Times*, which was conceived as an English-language counterpart to the French *Internationale Situationniste*, supports this connection between *Dylaby* and *Die Welt als Labyrinth*. The *Situationist Times* issue number four from October 1963, dedicated to labyrinths, included *Dylaby's* map, and under the "Illustration-Index," De Jong writes that Sandberg decided that *Die Welt als Labyrinth* was not feasible, and states that it was the same director who approved "the 'Restany' group to develop 'their' labyrinth," implying that *Dylaby's* labyrinth was a mere adaptation of the Sl's. Most recently, in his book *Biennials and Beyond – Exhibitions That Made Art History*, Bruce Altshuler writes that the foundation of *Dylaby* can be traced to *Bewogen Beweging* and *Die Welt als Labyrinth*, explaining that in the latter show there was an underlying tension between Sl's demand for "total freedom" that grew in the confrontation between the institution and artists. Moreover, he writes that *Dylaby* "might be seen as a reconciliation between the claims of the institution and those of advanced art." Ad Petersen, "Dylaby, Ein Dynamische Labyrinth im Stedelijk Museum 1962," in *Die Kunst Der Ausstellung: Eine Dokumentation Dreißig Exemplarischer Kunstaussstellungen Dieses Jahrhunderts*, eds. Bernd Klüser and Katharina Hegewisch, trans. Anne Stolz (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1991), 160; Gerrit Kouwenaar, "Publiek is meemaker aan *Dylaby* in het Stedelijk Museum," *Het Vrije Volk*, September 8, 1962, Knipselmap *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Jacqueline De Jong, "Illustration-Index," *Situationist Times*, October 1963, 180; Bruce Altshuler, *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History: 1962–2002* (London: Phaidon Press, 2013), 27.
  39. Notably, Petersen credits Sandberg as the source of *Dylaby's* labyrinth. Petersen, "Dylaby, Ein Dynamische Labyrinth im Stedelijk Museum 1962," 160.
  40. Daniel Spoerri, "Letter from Spoerri to Sandberg," June 12, 1962, Box 4160, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
  41. Ed van der Elsken, *Dylaby*, 16 mm, 1962.
  42. Ibid.
  43. In the film, the child, acting as a guide, explains that, after passing through the labyrinth, one could choose among three doors. He describes what happens when you try them: open the first and a kettle would fall on your head; open the second door and a coffee pot would drop from the ceiling; the third door would not move at first, but finally would open with a jerk, so that he flew through, laughing. Confounding doors were introduced by Constant, then incorporated into *Bewogen Beweging* with Duchamp's *Door, 11 rue Larrey*; finally, they were put to absurd use in *Dylaby*. Van der Elsken, *Dylaby*.
  44. Ibid.
  45. "Schieten op verpakjes op duistere expositie," *Het Parool*, August 31, 1962, Knipselmap *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
  46. Ibid.
  47. W. Pisa, "Dylaby: Woede en vreugde om een getimmerte," *De Linie*, September 8, 1962, Knipselmap *Dylaby*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
  48. Van der Elsken, *Dylaby*.
  49. Pisa, "Dylaby: Woede en vreugde om een getimmerte."
  50. Ibid..

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51. The piece of writing is an "imaginary letter" written by Saint Phalle, addressed to her granddaughter. Berger, "Forms of Violence: Neo-Dada Performance," 79.
  52. Ibid.
  53. George Lampe, "Dylaby: Spektakel ten afschied," *Vrij Nederland*, September 15, 1962, 5.
  54. The idea of destruction is reminiscent of Tinguely's violent machines, such as his *Homage to New York*, 1960, which was performed and self-destructed in the Museum of Modern Art's sculpture garden. Petersen, "Dylaby im Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam," 207.
  55. D. Hillenius, "De Kermis van de Saint Phalle," *Hollands Weekblad*, September 5, 1962, 16; "Dylaby' – Dolste expositie in Stedelijk Museum," *Hengelosch Dagblad*, September 4, 1962, Knipselmap Dylaby, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; R. E. Penning, "Jhr. Sandberg halt kermis binnen in het Stedelijk Museum" *Haagsche Courant*, August 31, 1962, Knipselmap Dylaby, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.