

SURINAMESE SCHOOL

The background of the cover is a collage of various colored blocks and a map of Suriname. The map is rendered in a dark, textured style, showing the outline of the country. The colors used include shades of blue, green, yellow, orange, red, and grey. The text is overlaid on these elements.

*Painting from
Paramaribo to Amsterdam*

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

READER

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PREFACE

In the coming years, the Stedelijk Museum aims to develop into an institution guided not only by art and artists but also by social and socio-political developments—and, in a broader sense, by the public. Contextualizing developments in society through art is a way of bringing to the fore the framework within which art is manifested.

The *Surinamese School* exhibition reflects this intention. It features work by 35 artists dating roughly from 1910 to 1985, and examines the contributions of individual artists as well as thematic developments in Surinamese painting. Works by Nola Hatterman and Armand Baag from the Stedelijk collection are also presented in a context that is new to the museum. *Surinamese School* thus focuses on an art history that is intertwined with that of the Netherlands, giving it a unique place in the program. About 25 years ago the Stedelijk presented *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975-1995*. This exhibition was curated by Chandra van Binnendijk and Paul Faber and traveled from the Surinaams Museum in Paramaribo to Amsterdam. Moreover, the exhibition complements the various critical projects that are included in the current program, such as *In the Presence of Absence* (2020–2021) and, scheduled for 2021, *Kirchner and Nolde. Expressionism. Colonialism*.

With respect to the future of the collection, which will form a key source for new programming, the museum is also planning to acquire a number of paintings by Surinamese artists. This ambition is in line with the new vision on the collection. Caribbean art is also being considered in the development of new ideas for future exhibitions.

I would like to express my appreciation to the working group of in-house and guest curators responsible for the *Surinamese School* exhibition: Jessica de Abreu, Claire van Els, Mitchell Esajas, Bart Krieger, Carlien Lammers, Inez Blanca van der Scheer and Ellen de Vries. In their particularly close collaboration, they have made optimum use of their knowledge of Surinamese art and history and of their network of artists and collectors, and have developed an inclusive way of working

together that is new to the museum and points an important way to the future that has already proved its value.

I would also like to thank the lenders in Suriname and the Netherlands for their cooperation with the exhibition, and I am grateful to adviser Chandra van Binnendijk for her role in the project. In Suriname, the team has also been supported by Aruna Mungra, and both in Suriname and the Netherlands many experts, artists, collectors, cultural institutions, and galleries have shared their knowledge and networks, and thereby made an important contribution to the realization of the exhibition. I would like to thank everyone concerned and hope to continue the cooperation in the future.

Rein Wolfs
Director Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SURINAMESE SCHOOL EXHIBITION

Bart Krieger &
Claire van Els

Like any other form of creative production, the exhibition format has a start point, a developmental phase, and an end result. Putting together an exhibition involves taking decisions on a range of matters, prompted by research, reflection, discussion, and pragmatic considerations. This essay focuses on the creation of *Surinamese School* to provide insights into the central considerations during what is in many regards an exceptional project for the Stedelijk Museum.

Since 2017 the Stedelijk has been making ongoing and concerted efforts to take specific works in its collection as departure points for broadening the gaze on geographical regions to which the museum had hitherto rarely, or never, devoted attention. In 2018, for example, the independent curator and researcher Kerstin Winking presented *The Djaya Brothers: Revolusi in the Stedelijk*, an exhibition on Agus and Otto Djaya, two Indonesian brothers whose work has been part of the museum's collection since 1947.¹ The starting point for the *Surinamese School* exhibition was a proposal by Ellen de Vries, an

independent researcher and biographer of Nola Hatterman.² The decision was taken to broaden the concept of the exhibition to encompass developments in Surinamese painting from around 1910 to the mid-1980s, in which artists such as George Gerhardus Theodorus Rustwijk, Wim Bos Verschuur, Nola Hatterman, Quintus Jan Telting, Armand Baag, Jules Chin A Foeng and Rihana Jamaludin had all played their part.

Many of the sitters for portraits by Amsterdam-born artist Nola Hatterman were Surinamese. She is one of the first female artists whose work the Stedelijk collected from an early stage in her career, in this case from the 1930s. The museum owns nine paintings and three works on paper by Hatterman, all of which were made before the artist emigrated to Suriname in 1953. The collection does not include any pre-war works by Surinamese artists—the first was *Het magische oog* ("The magic eye," 1963) by Erwin de Vries, which the Stedelijk acquired in 1963. Hatterman was not Surinamese by birth³ and her work in the collection would have been too mono-

dimensional and limited to serve as a basis for this exhibition. For this reason, the museum assembled a working group of guest curators to broaden and deepen research into Surinamese art. External experts Jessica de Abreu, Mitchell Esajas, Bart Krieger, and Ellen de Vries joined forces with the Stedelijk's Claire van Els, Carlien Lammers, and Inez Blanca van der Scheer to work on the concept and execution of the exhibition.⁴ The make-up of this working group made it possible to reflect on the content and meaning of Surinamese art and art history—in Suriname, the Netherlands, and elsewhere—from the perspective of various professional and personal areas of interest and experience. Several of the guest curators in this working group with roots in Dutch, Surinamese and Caribbean communities, put forward their in-depth knowledge of the shared cultural heritage of Suriname and the Netherlands, and its significance in the Dutch context. The working group received advice on the exhibition concept and accompanying texts by independent writer and editor Chandra van Binnendijk, who lives and works in Paramaribo. Van Binnendijk and Paul Faber organized *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995*, an exhibition in Paramaribo in 1995–1996 that travelled to the Stedelijk Museum in 1996–1997 and was presented with additions by Rudi Fuchs.⁵ A Surinamese partner or a guest curator living in Suriname would be a complement to any future exhibition project, and it would be important for the exhibition to be mounted in both countries.

The working group of guest curators set about studying the broader developments in Surinamese painting through the activities of artists such as George Gerhardus Theodorus Rustwijk, Wim Bos Verschuur, Leo Glans and Govert Jan Telting. It was an ambitious plan that had to be completed in a limited amount of time. The lack of balance in the Stedelijk's past collecting policy meant the museum's collection could not serve as a reference or departure point for the curation of a historic exhibition on Surinamese painting. As a result, the main activities of the working group comprised object-based research, involving the tracing, study, and inventorization of individual artworks for the exhibition. For a large part, the broadening and deepening of knowledge on Surinamese painting came about through conversations with artists and visits to artist's studios, as well as countless collection viewings in Suriname and the Netherlands, and discussions with art historians, exhibition makers, and researchers in both countries. A research trip to Paramaribo in December 2019

was an essential component of the project that shaped the concept of the exhibition and the selection of individual works.

In both countries, the focus of the research soon closed in on private collections and estates, many of which were managed by family members. Dutch public institutions own relatively few 20th-century Surinamese paintings.⁶ Although Suriname has no dedicated museum of fine arts, Paramaribo's Surinaams Museum, which was founded in 1947, has a broad historical collection and a modest but interesting collection of paintings. Another organization to have built up a collection of modern painting by Surinamese and other artists is Sticusa, a nonprofit founded in 1948 to stimulate and promote cultural activities between Indonesia, the Dutch Antilles, Suriname, and the Netherlands.⁷

Part of the Suriname state collection is on display at the presidential palace, and two paintings from this collection, by Rinaldo Klas and Paul Woei, are included in the exhibition. Numerous renowned artists are also represented in corporate collections such as those belonging to De Surinaamsche Bank (DSB) and the Central Bank of Suriname (CBvS) in Paramaribo. They include artworks from Erwin de Vries, Robbert Doelwilt, Cliff San A Jong, and Soeki Irodikromo. And the fact that Surinamese paintings could be traced, presented, and collected is furthermore thanks to disparate components of Paramaribo's cultural infrastructure such as Nationale Kunstbeurs, Readytex Art Gallery, Gallery Eegi Du, as well as the former Galerie Nola Hatterman and Galerie Srefidensi in Amsterdam, and the activities in the Netherlands of the likes of Galerie 23, CBK Zuidoost, CBK Oost, Natasha Knoppel Art Galleries and Kunstgalerij Lenten. As part of the broader exhibition project, the Stedelijk is intending to acquire several works to ensure a future in which Surinamese art has a permanent and visible presence in its displays. This will also make it possible to establish interesting relationships with other artists and ongoing artistic developments.

The research conducted for the exhibition exposed the neglect of Surinamese art in museum exhibition practice and in art historical literature, where the focus tends to be on individual artists rather than broader artistic tendencies. Notable exceptions are, for example, the 1979 study by the Surinamese art historian Gloria Leurs, who draws on stylistic and thematic methods of categorization to chronicle artistic developments in Suriname from 1900 onwards, and the essay of Van

Binnendijk and Faber in the exhibition catalog of *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995*.⁸ And in the last decades of the 20th century,⁹ several group exhibitions were staged that presented a broader view of Surinamese art, including *Hedendaagse kunst uit Suriname* (“Contemporary art from Suriname,” 1967–1968), which travelled around the Netherlands; *Farawe* (1986) in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam; an exhibition on ten Surinamese artists at *Vereniging Ons Suriname* (VOS, “Our Suriname Society”) in Amsterdam (1989); *De zes uit Suriname* (“The six from Suriname,” 1990), organized by the Surinamese in Groningen foundation; and the previously mentioned *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995* (1996–1997) at the Stedelijk Museum, all of which were extensive presentations of contemporary developments in Surinamese art. Recent years have seen the publication of several important monographs on artists whose work appears in *Surinamese School*, including René Tosari, Stuart Robles de Medina, Erwin de Vries, Jules Chin A Foeng, Anna and Augusta Curiel, and Soeki Irodikromo.¹⁰

The decision to focus the research on painting was motivated by the fact that until the 1980s, this was the main medium in which Surinamese artists experimented. Nonetheless, the perspective of the exhibition is based to an extent on the European / North American tradition. The history of Surinamese sculpture in general, and woodcarving in particular, would be an equally interesting focus for a contemporary art museum, but this is a medium that warrants its own research, which could not be conducted within the framework of the concept for this exhibition. *Surinamese School* does include some photographic work, due to the exceptional position and quality of the work of its makers: the sisters Anna and Augusta Curiel, who worked in Paramaribo in the first decades of the 20th century. It also features graphic work, drawings, documentation, and archival material. The exhibition starts with a 1839 “diorama” by Gerrit Schouten (1779–1839), as a tribute (*grani* in Sranan) to the first professional Surinamese artist, whose legacy is a remarkable body of work found in both Suriname and the Netherlands.

Particular attention was paid in the research to those Surinamese pioneers who, from the early 20th century onwards, served as an inspiration to other artists, because the development of education in the arts has had an influence on the professionalization of artistic practice, and hence the development

of painting. At first, individual artists would teach at their own studio or workshop, using the master-apprentice model to foster talented young painters. Hereafter, opportunities gradually grew for those wishing to attend formal drawing classes at secondary schools, and from 1950s onwards classes were held at art centers and increasing numbers of arts courses in schools were established. Some artists engaged in sociopolitical activism in parallel with their artistic work, in pursuit of a (culturally) independent Suriname.¹¹

The studies carried out in preparation for the exhibition sought to do justice to the richly heterogeneous composition of the Suriname population, and the variety of religions and aesthetic ideals. This proved something of a challenge, certainly when it came to work from the first half of the 20th century, when the arts world in Paramaribo was fragmented and limited in scale – apart from a few exceptions in photography, as far as we know, most of the modest number of active professional artists were Creole men from the upper and middle socio-economic strata. The number of female artists gaining an arts education increased during the 1960s and 1970s, but few of them went on to become professional artists—some did make the switch to applied arts and became illustrators and graphic designers. This meant that the work of female artists was far less readily available, with the result that the collecting of their work took place on a more limited scale, and they are underrepresented in this exhibition. To establish and maintain a balance in this regard, within the broader frame of this exhibition the Stedelijk intends to acquire recent work by female artists, for example.

The chronological and thematic format of the exhibition plainly reveals that there can be no single definition of “Surinamese” painting, and despite the recurring genres and themes, there is no uniform or “typical” Surinamese School; to impose one would not do justice to either the multiplicity of styles or the artistic ideas. The exhibition features work by both artists who were born and/or active in Suriname and Surinamese-Dutch who were either born in the Netherlands or emigrated to the country.¹² The exhibition ends in the mid-1980s—although a small number of the works were made later—because it was in this phase that the focus in terms of education and presentation increasingly shifted from the Netherlands to the Caribbean, North America, and Latin America.

The exhibition’s title, *Surinamese School*, is a reference to the variety of forms

of art education in Suriname, ranging from the promotion of knowledge exchange between individual artists to the founding of independent schools. Some artists studied at Dutch art academies and remained active as artists in the Netherlands, while others shuttled between the two countries or traveled to other places in the world. These dynamics between Suriname and the Netherlands, which influenced the work and life of several of the artists in the exhibition, existed in parallel to artistic developments in Suriname, which took place against a backdrop of burgeoning nationalism, decolonization processes, and nation forming. Although there are certain themes and narratives that underlie 20th-century Surinamese painting, there is no evidence of artistic group formation. *Surinamese School* is therefore not intended as a presentation of Surinamese artists as an art-historical movement. Its purpose is instead to offer a platform for Surinamese visual arts as viewed from the Netherlands, by showing both the correlations and the dynamics in the work of several generations of painters.

- 1 For more information, see www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/the-djaya-brothers-revolusi-at-the-stedelijk
- 2 Ellen de Vries's research resulted in her 2008 biography of Nola Hatterman, various articles, and the website www.nolahatterman.nl, where she posts new information and research results. De Vries has also made an international inventory of Hatterman's work through her project *De nalaten-schap van Nola Hatterman* (2018). Her proposal was for an exhibition devoted to the work of Hatterman and her students, to draw attention to the position of Dutch female artists in the first half of the 20th century and to the shared cultural heritage of the Netherlands and Suriname, which is embodied by Hatterman and her students.
- 3 Opinions differ on the subject of which artists are part of Surinamese art history, as illustrated by the fact that no work by Nola Hatterman or Armand Baag—who settled permanently in Amsterdam in 1968—were included in *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995*. In Suriname, Hatterman is regarded as a Surinamese artist in the context of the work she produced in the country. In *Surinamese School*, no distinction is made between those Surinamese artists who worked in Suriname, and those who worked in the Netherlands.
- 4 For more information on this collaboration, see the essay by Carlien Lammers and Inez Blanca van der Scheer in this reader.
- 5 Van Binnendijk has contributed to various exhibitions and publications on Surinamese art, including Soeki Irodikromo and the artists' collective Waka Tjopu.
- 6 The Stedelijk Museum, too, owns very few Surinamese paintings until the 1980s. Its collection includes paintings and works on paper by Guillaume Lo-A-Njoe and by Erwin de Vries, whose first solo exhibition was staged at the Stedelijk in 1970. The museum has been collecting the conceptual work of Stanley Brown since 1969, and the first solo presentation of his work took place in 1971.
- 7 Following the closure of Sticusa, in 1990 Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum acquired the Surinamese artworks in this collection. In 2006 the museum transferred these works to the Surinaams Museum.
- 8 Leurs, G., "Sticusa-kollektie van moderne Surinaamse beeldende kunst" (MA thesis), University of Amsterdam, 1979. Leurs was the director of the Surinaams Museum from 1982 to 1987. Binnendijk, C. van, and Faber P., *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995*, exh.cat. Paramaribo: Stichting Surinaams Museum, 1995. The exhibition marked the 20th anniversary of Surinamese independence on 25 November 1995.
- 9 Interest in the cultural history of Suriname has grown in the 21st century, and especially in recent years. In 2019–2020, the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam staged *The Great Suriname Exhibition*, which included work by contemporary artists. In 2020, The Black Archives and Vereniging Ons Suriname (VOS) presented *Surinamers in Nederland: 100 jaar emancipatie en strijd*, which included work by Raul Balai, Patricia Kaersenhout and Shertise Solano. Other cultural institutions in Amsterdam—such as the Tropenmuseum, Museum van Loon, Arti et Amicitiae, and the Amstelkerk—all hosted exhibitions about Suriname, as did the Prinsenkwartier in Delft.
- 10 See the bibliography for details of these publications.
- 11 For example, George Gerhardus Theodorus Rustwijk (1862–1914) and Jules Chin A Foeng (1944–1983).
- 12 Exceptions include works by the Greek artist John Pandellis; one work by Dutch drawing teacher Nic Loning; and Felix de Rooy, who was born in Curaçao to Surinamese parents and now lives in Amsterdam.

A DIFFERENT ANGLE ON THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF THE CURIEL SISTERS

Jessica de Abreu



Augusta Curiel, *Groepsportret met missiezusters* (Group Portrait with Missionaries), ca. 1910, photograph, 12 x 17.3 cm. Collection National Museum of World Cultures, © Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures.

In the early 20th century, the photographic studio of Augusta Cornelia Petronella Curiel (1873–1937) and Anna Jacoba Curiel (1875–1958) was one of the most important in Suriname. Even today, their work is regarded as exceptional for its sharpness and clarity, certainly when placed in the context of its time. The body of work left by the sisters embraces images from not only Suriname, where they were born, but also from their travels elsewhere in the Caribbean region and in Europe. No examples have been found of self-instigated work by the Curiel sisters, and it is therefore likely that they primarily worked for private clients, businesses, and governmental bodies. Augusta Curiel was even the first Surinamese photographer to be appointed as an official purveyor to the Dutch royal household, in 1929, and the Curiels would regularly capture official colonial government ceremonies such as the unveiling of the statue of Queen Wilhelmina on Gouvernement Square (now Independence Square) in 1923.

The Curiel archive mostly comprises commissioned photographs, and hence presents a rose-tinted view of Surinamese colonial society, with the streets tidied and cleaned for stately and royal occasions, staff perfectly posed rather than at work, and missionaries displaying how the dissemination of the Christian faith is progressing in a peaceable manner.

PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL CONTEXT

In her books *Potential History. Unlearning Imperialism* and *The Civil Contract of Photography*, political scientist and filmmaker Ariella Aïsha Azoulay examines the colonial and imperial context in which photography evolved. In an interview, she said:

Photography was invented as an imperial practice and it was thus a productive practice—geared toward the production of images, and, in a broader sense, commodities. This valorized photography’s products, meaning photographs, and enabled the undisputed use of others’ free labor—those being photographed—as raw material.¹

Photography contributed to the reproduction and normalization of colonial and imperial relations. A photograph is a staged snapshot of a moment in which the photographer captures people or objects for a specific viewership. Photographs such as these were taken in a

context of inequality and exploitative patterns of labor and natural resources. Often, however, this colonial context and the perceptions and perspectives of the human subjects of these photographs have been erased.

TURNING THE CRITICAL GAZE ON THE IMAGES MADE BY THE CURIEL SISTERS

Augusta Curiel was regarded as a virtuosic photographer, but she received a great deal of support from her younger sister Anna. The studio was located in the backyard of their shared home at 28 Domineestraat in Paramaribo. Augusta used a heavy plate camera mounted on a wooden tripod, and Anna would assist her with the composition and lighting. Anna also processed the glass negatives and developed and printed the images. The professionalism of the photographer is clearly evidenced by the quality of the final result: there is remarkably little motion blur in the action shots, and the portraits, work photos, and photographs of groups, school classes and weddings are all effectively composed. The sisters’ colonial clients were keen to be presented in a decent and respectable manner in photographs, and naturally wished to leave a positive impression of their activities, festivities, and ceremonies. Photography was an eminently suitable medium for capturing such events and memories for posterity. The people who commissioned these photographs were also determining what was photographed and when it was photographed, and in so doing they defined perceptions of the colonies. Other archives, however, bear witness to other events and representations, and examining the photographs with a critical gaze and raising questions about what they do and do not show enables us to gain greater clarity on colonial relations, despite the measured nature of the compositions.

This phenomenon is well illustrated by a series of photographs that depict the activities of mission sisters in Suriname, and testify—implicitly and explicitly—to colonial power relations. This group photograph shows three mission sisters seated outdoors, surrounded by Surinamese children. Although the archive does not include a description, the photograph itself incorporates a number of signals that bear clear witness to a colonial relationship. The literally central position of the mission sisters, for example, is sufficient to suggest the “importance” of their role. The arrangement of the children around them amplifies that suggestion, because the goal of missionary work was to “civilize” and “educate” people who

were regarded as “uncivilized” and “childlike.”

The book accompanying the eponymous exhibition *Wit over zwart* (*White on Black*, 1990) includes a description of the way in which the focus of Christian “civilizing missions” on the inhabitants of colonized territories went hand-in-hand with colonial and imperial expansion and the pacification of subjugated peoples. A member of the anticolonial Mau Mau movement in Kenya had this to say on the subject:

In the past, we owned the land and the whites had the gospel. Then the missionaries came, taught us to pray and close our eyes, while the whites took over our country. Now we have the gospel, and they have the country.²

As in other territories colonized by Europeans, Christian missions in Suriname were instruments of pacification. Their activities were accompanied by suppression of the African-Surinamese religion Winti—the colonial government punished those who practiced it by flogging them.³

Even the position of the mission sisters’ hands on the children was not left to chance. Poses of this type symbolize a parental relationship, and in many colonial era photographs of mission work it therefore re-emphasizes the “crucial” nature of the European, i.e. Christian, intervention. The “culture-based” costume worn by the children is also worthy of closer examination. Was this their everyday clothing, or a component in a staged presentation? In this period, images such as these—portraying nonwhite people living in colonized territories as “exotic,” “traditional,” and fundamentally “other”—were necessary for the preservation of the European self-image as superior, and to justify imperial relations.

Similar analyses can be carried out on the photographs of workers at rubber, coffee, and sugar plantations such as Mariënborg, and the images of indentured laborers arriving in Suriname by ship. In the same period that the Curiel sisters were capturing their version of Suriname, there were numerous revolts by unemployed laborers in Suriname and elsewhere in the Caribbean region. In 1933 the growing workers’ movement met with great violence, and the arrest of writer and anticolonial activist Anton de Kom. When De Kom’s supporters went to Gouvernement Square to protest and demand his release, and then refused to leave the square, two were shot dead and 30 wounded. De Kom wrote

about the wretched conditions in which many indentured laborers worked:

Complaints of maltreatment, of exhausting labor, of inhuman wages have until now fallen on deaf ears at the colonial government building, and could of course not be read at these addresses. All the more clearly were they expressed, then, by the resistance of the coolies themselves, who went to various plantations and, in their embitterment, uprooted more than 1,000 coffee plants.⁴

De Kom and the Curiel sisters were contemporaries of each other. Placing De Kom’s descriptions of the working and living conditions of indentured workers alongside the photographs of the Curiel sisters, generates an intriguing insight into what the images do—and do not—depict.

LEGACY

Given the status of photography as an instrument of power that was used to preserve colonial order, the Curiel sisters were in an intriguing position.⁵ In the colonial context it is important that we gain an understanding of the lives of Surinamese women who stood behind the camera, rather than in front of it: how is it that these Surinamese sisters managed to attain and preserve for so many years such an important position in a society dominated by Europeans? Many of the questions pertaining to their intentions and goals cannot be answered with the information currently available to us.⁶

After Augusta Curiel died in 1937, her sister Anna continued to run the photographic studio with the help of an assistant named L. Duttenhöfer. While Anna focused on developing the images, Duttenhöfer took the exposures. Unfortunately, the results were not of high quality, and the studio went increasingly downhill. To keep her financial head above water, in 1952 Anna sold her land and home in Domineestraat to Duttenhöfer. It seems likely that a portion of the accounts, documents, and photographs were lost; it is possible that the 1,200 surviving photos represent just a fraction of what the sisters actually produced.

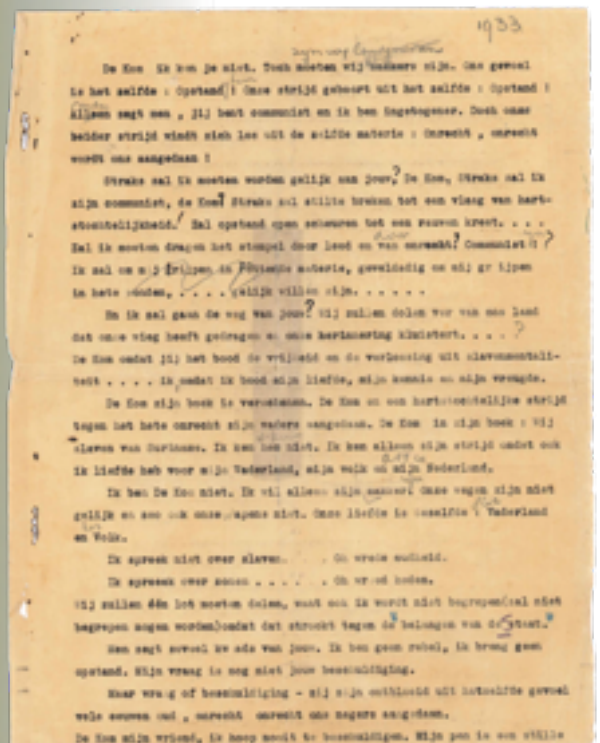
- 1 Alli, S. 'Ariella Aïsha Azoulay: "It is not possible to decolonize the museum without decolonizing the world."', www.guernicamag.com/miscellaneous-files-ariella-aisha-azoulay
- 2 Nederveen Pieterse, J., *Wit over zwart. Beelden van Afrika en zwarten in de westerse populaire cultuur*, exh.cat. Amsterdam (Tropenmuseum) 1990, p. 68, www.dbnl.org/tekst/nede008wito01_01
- 3 Kempen, M. van, *Een geschiedenis van de Surinaamse literatuur*, Breda 2003, part 2, p. 454-455: '(W)ithout some understanding of Winti, the culture of the Creoles is not interpretable in a meaningful sense. In a religious, magical, medical, psychological, and social sense, Winti defined life and death for the Creoles until Christianization, and equally those who have (also) accepted Christianity. The colonial government regarded Winti and idolatry as synonymous, but for pragmatic reasons the Black people were left to practice their religion as long as it was not expressed in an overtly public manner. The "diabolical" Watramama dance was banned in 1776, the punishment being that notorious form of flogging known as the "Spanish buck." The ban was enforced until 1828. In 1874 Winti was criminalized. A century later, in 1971, this legislative article was removed from the penal code.'
- 4 Kom, A. de, *Wij slaven van Suriname*, Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2020 (first published in 1934), p. 154.
- 5 See for example Cole, T., 'When the Camera Was a Weapon of Imperialism. (And When It Still Is.)', *The New York Times Magazine*, 2 February 2019.
- 6 On the Curiel sisters and photography in Suriname the following books have been published: Dijk, J. van, H. van Petten-Van Charante and L. van Putten, *Augusta Curiel. Fotografie in Suriname (1904–1937)*, Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2007, and Groeneveld, A., a.o., *Fotografie in Suriname/ Photography in Surinam 1839–1939*, Rotterdam (Museum voor Volkenkunde), 1990.



Augusta Curiel, *Javaans gamelanorkest* (Javanese Gamelan Ensemble), ca. 1915, photograph, 11.9 x 17.2 cm. Collection National Museum of World Cultures, © Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures.

IN SEARCH OF “OWNNESS”. CRITICAL QUESTIONS BASED ON THE WORK OF BOS VERSCHUUR, HATTERMAN AND BAAG

Mitchell Esajas



Wim Bos Verschuur, *Letter to Anton de Kom*, 1933.
Collection Suriname Museum Foundation, Paramaribo.

In an interview with “decolonial thinker” Rolando Vázquez Melken for the online academic journal *Stedelijk Studies*, Vázquez argues that there is no history of Western civilization without enslavement. From the perspective of decolonial thinking, he also criticizes the role that museums have historically played in reproducing “coloniality.”¹ He poses critical questions about the Eurocentric canon of art history, and the role of “the white gaze” in objectifying “the other.” He also argues that curators can contribute to questioning the position of the museum by asking simple questions such as: Who is looking, and who is being looked at? Who is being represented and who is representing?

Suriname was a Dutch colony for more than 300 years. As Gloria Wekker describes in *White Innocence*, centuries of colonialism have left their mark on the way we look at ourselves and at the other.² As a member of the working group that curated the *Surinamese School* exhibition, I made Vázquez’s questions essential to my research on the artists Wim Bos Verschuur, Nola Hatterman and Armand Baag, who each in their own way oppose the colonial norm and thus arrived at a vision of “ownness” for Suriname. It is from this perspective that I reflect on their work in this essay.

WIM BOS VERSCHUUR AND ANTON DE KOM

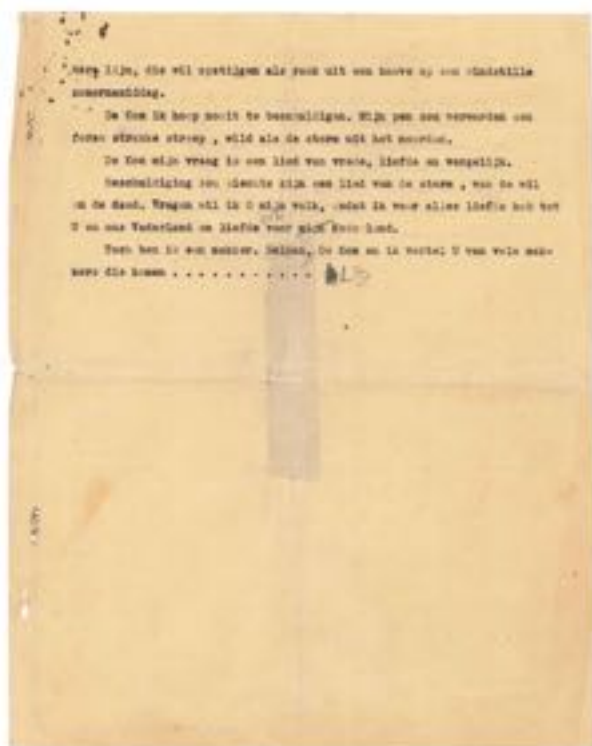
Wim Bos Verschuur (1904–1985) is known as one of the founders of Surinamese nationalism. Although Bos Verschuur himself came from the “light-skinned elite,” as an art teacher, trade union leader and political activist he strove for a more autonomous Suriname. His archive contains a letter addressed to the anticolonial activist, writer and poet Anton de Kom (1898–1945), in which he writes:

De Kom, I don’t know you. Yet we should be pals. Our feeling is the same: Revolt! Our struggle is born from the same: Revolt! Only they say you are a communist and I am more restrained. But both our struggles unfold from the same matter: Injustice, injustice done to us!

The two men were never to meet personally, but Bos Verschuur evidently recognized in De Kom a kindred spirit with whom he shared a sense of injustice about inequality in Suriname. Despite the abolition of slavery in 1863–73, the degrading conditions continued with the arrival of indentured laborers from other colonies. De Kom described in his famous book *We Slaves of Suriname* how colonial education contributed to this inequality and to internalized racism:

No better means to cultivate the inferiority complex of a race than these history lessons exclusively dedicated to the naming and praising of the sons of another people. It took a long time before I had freed myself completely from the obsession that a n***o must always and unconditionally be the inferior of every white man.

Bos Verschuur did not directly address the theme of “internalized racism” in his art, perhaps because he did not belong to the Black underclass himself. However, he did pass on his nationalist ideas about autonomy and “ownness” to his students during his drawing lessons. He was known to students as “Uncle Wim,” and spoke passionately about “the social injustice in the colony and the political interference of the rulers from Holland.”³ Bos Verschuur was the spiritual father of the movement known as *baas in eigen huis* (“master in one’s own house”). He thus influenced many Surinamese people who would go on to play an important role in political history. One of these students was Eddy Bruma (1925–2000).



WIE EEGIE SANI, BRUMA AND HATTERMAN

Bruma was one of the co-founders of the cultural association *Wie Eegie Sani* (WES, “Our Own Thing”). WES was founded in the early 1950s by Surinamese students in Amsterdam. In the colony they had been taught that anything European was superior to their own language and cultural traditions. They were to be humble (*sakafasi*). The Surinamese language Sranan Tongo was labelled “N***o English,” and the Winti spiritual tradition was prohibited by law. In the Netherlands, the students realized that this view was wrong. They saw the need to search for “ownness” through a reappraisal of their own language and culture. Literary and artistic activities were organized, often in conjunction with Vereniging Ons Suriname (VOS, “Our Suriname Society”). Bruma wrote the play *De geboorte van Boni* (“The Birth of Boni”) based on De Kom’s description of this hero of the resistance, who fled the plantations and fought the white plantation owners. Where Bos Verschuur still focused on political autonomy, Bruma went a step further by focusing on a form of decolonization of the mind and culture. The home of the artist Nola Hatterman was an important meeting place for the members of WES and VOS. She helped design the set and costumes and made her studio available for rehearsals. Hatterman immortalized this movement in the artwork *Na Fesie*, a dignified portrayal of WES members.



Nola Hatterman, *Na Fesie* (The Future), 1953, oil on canvas, 93 x 121 cm. Private collection, Suriname. Photo: Ellis Doeven © Estate Nola Hatterman.

WES’s activities were comparable to developments in the 1930s such as *Négritude* in Paris and the Harlem Renaissance in New York. *Négritude* was a cultural, intellectual, and literary movement that arose in Paris among

Caribbean and African writers and thinkers. Writers such as Aimé and Suzanne Césaire, Léopold Senghor, Léon Dames and the Nardal sisters rebelled against the dominant colonial way of thinking by manifesting their own Black identity through literature and art.⁴ The *Négritude* movement drew inspiration from the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural movement in New York in which African-Americans put racial systems of enslavement and segregation behind them through culture, literature, and art, and by developing an intrinsic identity in which pride and emancipation were central.⁵ The ideas of WES and the *Négritude* movement were congruent with Hatterman’s fascination with the Black body. Although Hatterman herself was a white Dutch woman whose family had amassed wealth in the colony of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), she said she “felt Black inside.”⁶ She also believed that “ownness” had to be rediscovered, and this included developing a Black ideal of beauty and a Surinamese art academy.

But Hatterman’s work and attitude also informs us about privilege, the white gaze, representation, and power relations in Dutch and Surinamese art history. Because although she undeniably made a major contribution to Surinamese art, it is also important to critically examine her position as a white woman in the context of colonial power relations.⁷ On the one hand, Hatterman made the painting *Na Fesie* and the historical works about Boni, which combated stereotypical images of Surinamese people. On the other hand, she reproduced narratives objectifying Black people, for example by developing a theory in which “the head of the n***o” should be drawn according to a certain template—a theory that was critically questioned at the time by Surinamese artists such as Jules Chin A Foeng (1944–1983). In conclusion, then, from a post-colonial perspective Hatterman occupied a somewhat problematic, complex, and ambivalent position.

BAAG

We see this ambivalent position reflected in her relationship with Armand Baag (1941–2001), who was one of her students. While Hatterman’s work is well known, Baag’s has remained relatively neglected. It was not included in the Stedelijk Museum’s exhibition *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995* and has rarely been exhibited in museums either in the Netherlands or elsewhere. Baag did not complete his training at the Rijksakademie because he disagreed with the Western standards that were taught as “universal art.”⁸ He came from the Black

working class and in his work he was also looking for “ownness,” among other things to counteract the mental legacy of colonialism: “I want to give my people back their ideal of beauty. They have been ruined over the centuries.” Baag developed outside the academy as a versatile artist and composer with his own style and vision in which African-Surinamese and Caribbean cultural elements come to the fore in a unique way:

I call my work Baagism. Through my work I want to express the relationship between people and things: the fine things which the eye cannot see, but which can still be perceived in other ways. I try to give color to it and make it discernable to the eye. I do so partly on the basis of my “being Surinamese.” In my expressions as a Surinamese artist I try to emphasize “ownness”; the love for each other in the broadest sense of the word. But also the misery and tragedy of the people in their daily demand for an improvement of their lot.⁹

Baag’s work thus informs us about inclusion and exclusion, representation, and power relations within Surinamese and Dutch art history. You might argue that the “ownness” which Wie Eegie Sani was seeking reaches full maturity in Baag’s work.



Armand Baag, Zapata Jaw, Ronald Snijders and Judith de Kom Performing at Vereniging Ons Suriname with a Portrait of Anton de Kom Hanging on the Wall, 1970s. © The Black Archives.

- 1 “Museums, and here the ethnographic museum is a clear example, are representing the others at the other side of the colonial difference, classifying them, speaking about them, but not serving them and considering them as spectators: they are the ones that are seen, not the ones that are privileged to see.” Wevers, R., “Decolonial Aesthetics and the Museum. An Interview with Rolando Vázquez Melken,” *Stedelijk Studies*, www.stedelijkstudies.com/journal/decolonial-aesthetics-and-the-museum.
- 2 Wekker, G., *Witte onschuld: paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras (White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race)*. Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
- 3 Van Galen, J. J., *Hetenachtsdroom: Suriname, erfenis van de slavernij*. Amsterdam: Contact, 2000, p. 58.
- 4 Edwards, B. H. *The Practice of Diaspora. Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- 5 Moor Turner, J. *Caribbean Crusaders and the Harlem Renaissance*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005.
- 6 Vries, E. de, Nola. *Portret van een eigenzinnige kunstenaars*, Amersfoort: Klapwijk & Keijzers Uitgevers, 2009, p. 94 “According to Nola, because she had started to feel more and more ‘a n***o’ inside.”
- 7 Jansen, C. “The Gaze of White Women Artists on Black Subjects.” *Elephant*, 12 March 2020. www.elephant.art/gaze-white-women-artists-black-subjects-alice-neel-suriname-nola-hatterman-charlotte-jansen-12032020 and “In conversation with Astrid Kerchman, Politics of Representation: The Cases of Nola Hatterman and Jan Sluyters,” *MOED*, 8 February 2019. moed.online/politics-of-representation-nola-hatterman-jan-sluyters
- 8 De Jong, J.D., *De Onzichtbare Visionair*. On the life and work of the Surinamese-Dutch artist and musician Armand Baag (1941–2001), also known as Armand Parden (his birth name), to be published, p. 33: “You could call him a very conscious nationalist: ‘I became more and more aware of my African ancestry the more I

developed,’ he says. To him, as long as the standards remain strictly Western the concept of ‘universal art’ is not a given. He also believes that Afro art is still not receiving the recognition that modern Western art has long enjoyed.” Armand Baag also explains elsewhere how he has always experienced this clash between his Caribbean background and Western standards: “All my life I have been aware of the fact that I am Surinamese, that I am a n***o. I come from a different country, a country that has a different geographic location in this world. I have a different sense of color. What I always admired were African and Mexican paintings and sculptures. In the Netherlands I got the feeling that I had to become a little Rembrandt. I want to paint Black people, portray my own life, fight for my people. But I was on the wrong track. Western European art is used as a means of power. It is normative. Europe determines for you what is good and bad and leaves no space for your own ideas. Just as young countries are contained in either capitalism or communism. There is no other choice.”

9 De Jong, J.D. *De Onzichtbare Visionair*, to be published, p. 40.

THE POWER OF THE MUSEUM LABEL

Ellen de Vries with
Eline de Jong

STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM



Letty Robben (right) and Maja Drenthe Take the Time to Take a Good Look at Grandpa and Uncle Lou. Photo: Jacob van Vliet.

You can bet that when this work was first exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum in 1930 the label next to it will have given no more than the name of the artist, the title and year of the work: “Nola Hatterman, *On the terrace*, 1930.”¹ The museumgoer would have seen a distinguished-looking Black man drinking a cold Amstel beer on a languid *Vacation Afternoon* (an alternative title, used only once). On the face of it, he appears to be leading a carefree life.

Museum labels have become increasingly important. The text directs the viewer’s gaze. In the past, this role was reserved for the art critic. “A clever figure painting by Nola Hatterman,” wrote a critic in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* newspaper of 23 May 1930 when the work was first exhibited. *De Indische Courant* referred to Hatterman’s “personal preference for semi-Eastern types, whom she observes keenly and paints with objectivity.” Hatterman’s restrained and realistic style put her on the map as a New Objectivity painter.

After this, the painting was exhibited a few more times, and in 1939 it featured in the artist’s solo exhibition *West-Indische Portretten door Nola Hatterman bij de Koninklijke Vereniging Oost en West* (“West Indian Portraits by Nola Hatterman at the Royal East and West Society”) at the Victoria Hotel in Amsterdam. Hatterman had meanwhile gained a reputation as a painter of “West Indians” (in the Dutch context, Surinamese people).

The portrait of the Black man “dandy-like in European dress,”² “the worldly” Black man seated on a terrace,³ garnered praise. “The large portrait of a man in front of a cafe is, both in its expression and in its composition and color combination, a testimony to deep inner civilization and good taste,” the *Algemeen Handelsblad* of 8 March 1939 noted. The comment that Hatterman’s portraits successfully captured “the strange mixture of the cheerfully childlike and Black melancholy ... legacy of the jungle that is characteristic of these people” clearly reflects the extent to which prejudice was rampant. However, the socialist *Volksdagblad* of 24 March 1939 used different language. The reviewer thought that the painter was once again reminding us of “how in the Black race the full variety of humanity and human problems are found, which we whites in our delusion of superiority so often claim for ourselves alone.” The exhibition was to be regarded as “a powerful blow against all the racial lies and hatred of our time.”

The Amsterdam artist Nola Hatterman (1899–1984) became friends with the

Surinamese people whom she portrayed. She identified with their struggle for independence and emigrated to Suriname in 1953. In the Netherlands she was forgotten—as was the painting.

On the Terrace is now regarded a major work in the museum’s collection, so it is difficult to imagine that it was once lost, somewhere among the corridors of the University of Amsterdam, where it was finally found by art historian Karin Söhnngen. The *Vereniging Ons Suriname* (VOS, “Our Suriname Society”) at last discovered the identity of the person in the painting: Jimmy van der Lak (1903–1990). The work was selected for the exhibition *Magie en Zakelijkheid. Realistische schilderkunst in Nederland 1925–1945* (*Magic and Objectivity: Realist Painting in the Netherlands, 1925–1945*) at the Museum of Modern Art Arnhem, and was even used as a cover image. In 1999, Hatterman thus made her posthumous return to the Dutch art world and her model Van der Lak experienced a renaissance, as it were. This man who had made the crossing from Suriname to the Netherlands as a stowaway on board an ocean liner and earned a living here as a tap dancer, boxer, artist’s model at the Rijksakademie, bartender and restaurant manager, appealed to the imagination. *On the Terrace* went on a successful tour of exhibitions like *Black is Beautiful. Rubens to Dumas* at De Nieuwe Kerk in 2008 and museums like Amsterdam Museum before returning in 2017 to its permanent home, the Stedelijk Museum, where it is now on permanent display.

Needless to say, the days of the minimal, one-line museum label are over. In a caption from 2019, the Stedelijk pointed out that Van der Lak’s life was less carefree than might be assumed. The story that the painting was commissioned by Amstel Beer, but then rejected “because of the skin color of the model,” was cited to denote the racism to which Van der Lak and others like him were exposed at the time.⁴ The *Blikopeners*, the Stedelijk’s youth panel engaged to offer a fresh perspective on art, saw the painting primarily as an example of a portrayal of a Black man “in a proud and positive way.”⁵ It enabled to the museum to tell present a narrative about discrimination, as well as inclusivity and emancipation.

It came as a great surprise when in 2019 a letter from Hatterman surfaced which showed that the model for the painting was not Jimmy van der Lak but Louis “Lou” Drenthe (1901–1990). His career was as varied as that of Van der Lak: he was an actor and waiter, but above all else he was a trumpet player

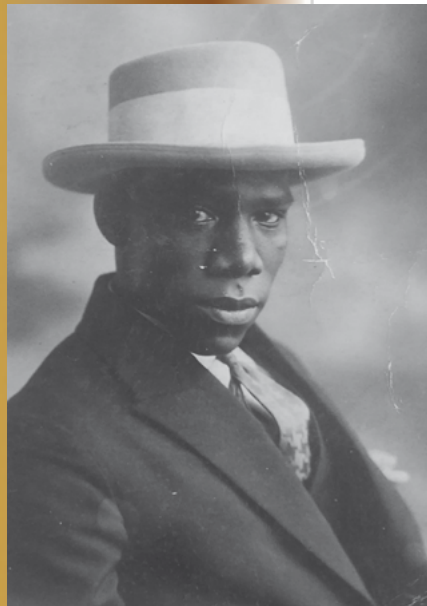
and band leader. In keeping with a time in which colonialism is a prominent theme, the current caption refers to the history of enslavement of the model's ancestors. But it is this sentence that is most striking: "He opened Nola Hatterman's eyes to the abuses in the colony." From the letter we learn that "Working with Lou Drenthe was very pleasant. He was a nice guy. It was a business relationship at first—he earned money by posing for me—but we developed a pleasant, companionable relationship". He was the first to tell her about the conditions and relations in Suriname seen from the perspective of the Surinamese. Drenthe would often ring at Hatterman's door accompanied by other Surinamese people he had enticed along to show them the painting, and to hear that it was "beautiful, and a good likeness."

The sentence in which Hatterman suggests it was Drenthe who broadened her represents a break with the classic hierarchical relationship between painter and model, and makes Drenthe a critical, active character who, indirectly, also addresses the museum visitor.

Members of Drenthe's family got a chance to share their thoughts in the 23 July 2020 edition of *Het Parool*, with his niece Maja Drenthe commenting that "Through his stories Nola became aware of what it must have been like to live as a dark-skinned person in a white world. ... It really moved her. And when I read it, it moved me, too." And on seeing Drenthe's portrait, his granddaughter Letty Robben reflected: "I don't think Amsterdam ever quite gave him what he was looking for. That's precisely why I think it's so nice that he's now in the Stedelijk."

The title also directs the gaze. It was time to put the man who went through life unnamed for so long in the limelight: *Louis Richard Drenthe / On the Terrace*. No doubt Hatterman would have wholeheartedly agreed to such a new title.

- 1 The Stedelijk Museum's inventory card states that this work, purchased by the Stedelijk in 1931, was briefly called *Een vacantiemiddag* ("A Vacation Afternoon").
- 2 *Het Volksdagblad*, 24 March 1939.
- 3 *De Telegraaf*, 14 March 1939.
- 4 This story has never actually been confirmed.
- 5 It has not been possible to establish the year in which this observation was made.



Portrait of Lou Drenthe. Photo: Ellen de Vries. Collection Drenthe Family.



Nola Hatterman, *Louis Richard Drenthe / On the Terrace*, 1930, oil on canvas, 100 x 90 cm. Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, © Estate Nola Hatterman.



St. Louis Rhythm Kings, Third Person from the Right is Trumpet Player and Band Leader Louis Drenthe. Photo: Maja Drenthe. Collection Drenthe Family and Special Collections, University of Amsterdam.

THE SURINAMESE SCHOOL EXHIBITION: AN IMPULSE FOR THE FUTURE

Carlien Lammers &
Inez Blanca van der Scheer

The *Surinamese School* exhibition originated in plans for a project about Nola Hatterman. It was the Hatterman researcher, expert, and biographer Ellen de Vries who proposed the idea at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, which has had Hatterman's works in its collection since the 1930s. De Vries argued that an exhibition about Hatterman and her students would offer the opportunity to draw attention to two neglected themes within the Dutch museum world: Dutch women artists such as Hatterman from the first half of the 20th century, and art from Suriname, given that "Hatterman and her students embody the shared cultural heritage of the Netherlands and Suriname, which was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands until 1975." An exhibition about the work of Hatterman, however, also raises the sensitive issues of race and colonialism and the question of power relations in connection with her authorship. The Stedelijk quickly concluded that the museum itself had insufficient knowledge in-house to do justice to this theme. The development from a concept

focusing on Hatterman into a broader exhibition on Surinamese art is exemplary of the kind of self-knowledge and open attitude expected of a contemporary museum. The Stedelijk decided to take a democratic approach to curating the exhibition: Jessica de Abreu, Mitchell Esajas, Ellen de Vries and Bart Krieger formed a working group with curator Claire van Els, Carlien Lammers, who is responsible for inclusion and diversity at the Stedelijk, and Inez Blanca van der Scheer, who is the project leader of the STUDIO i platform for inclusivity. The frame of the concept shifted from the teacher-pupil relationship to encompass a less hierarchical collective, and "Hatterman and pupils" became the "Surinamese School." This meant a new composition, a new frame, and a new method, too: some 100 works by 35 artists were borrowed for the exhibition through a wide network of collectors, because the work of underexposed artists of color is hardly represented in institutional collections. This was a learning process for the Stedelijk. At the same time, it also represents a challenge for a

future in which we need to adopt a continuously active and curious attitude, instead of resigning ourselves to the purchasing policy of the past. Our collection is not yet as diverse as we would like it to be, but there are numerous established artists like Hatterman who can be seen—on further investigation—as beacons in vast constellations of diverse and under-represented artists.

Surinamese School has only been possible thanks to the knowledge and networks of its guest curators, the cooperation of many private lenders, and other experts in both Suriname and the Netherlands. It has become clear that the Stedelijk Museum has omissions both in its collection and in its staffing. In mounting their exhibitions, museums are increasingly drawing on feedback groups, guest curators, and curators-at-large to supplement or adjust their knowledge and attitude. These external experts thus acquire ownership of their area of expertise, and introduce new angles, perspectives, and stories in relation to existing narratives. Thus far, however, these experts form a ‘flexible shell’ around museum institutions, and their pluralist vision is not always included in the program on a structural basis. The Stedelijk is indicating that it strives to be pluralist and inclusive at its core, and to make room for a wider variety of voices in key positions. In time, this changing practice will ensure that exhibitions can be realized more sustainably and with much additional and “new” expertise. This widening will also have to be reflected in an expansion in research areas and purchasing policy in order to embed the knowledge within the organization.

Surinamese School is new to the Stedelijk in many ways. But the fact that it is new to the Stedelijk should not suggest that the content of the exhibition has not been there all that time. Beyond the confines of the established institutions and the Dutch canon they represent, a wide diversity of art histories and narratives have been collected in alternative ways. Oral histories, grassroots archives, private collections, local foundations and specialized organizations have preserved and disseminated this knowledge. These stories reach a wider audience when they are established within major institutions, often thanks to the efforts of activists. A prime example of this phenomenon is the inclusion in the Canon of the Netherlands in 2020 of Anton de Kom. He is the first Surinamese writer in the canon, while he has been an anticolonial icon in the Surinamese community for decades. But for every single “new” story that is

recognized and included at the institutional level, there are countless stories that remain underexposed. And this applies equally to the exhibition at hand. Although this is only the Stedelijk’s first exploration of many of the artists on display, and the exhibition comprises a wide diversity of backgrounds and disciplines, significant sections of Surinamese society are not covered. As a result of the limited collecting here, the work of women artists is underrepresented, for example. But the fact that it has not been detected does not mean it does not exist, and more concentrated research and mediation is needed to find and share these stories.

Surinamese School focuses on the 1910–1985 period and can be seen as the long-awaited successor to *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995*, the group exhibition that travelled to the Stedelijk Museum in 1996–1997. *Surinamese School* will, like its predecessor, be an impulse to chart artistic developments in Suriname that, for too long, have not been described. This time, however, the ambition is greater. Through its extensive research, fresh insights, acquisitions, and an expanded network, this exhibition has the potential to catalyze a more enduring addition of art from Suriname to the canon of Dutch art. With the result that there will be more solo exhibitions by contemporary and modern artists from the Caribbean; that it will no longer be necessary to place so much thematic emphasis on Surinamese-Dutch makers; that the artistic appreciation of the work will be celebrated more often without its having to appear in an exhibition labeled as “inclusive;” that there will be more frequent contextualization of work within the Caribbean. This is why the Stedelijk Museum has announced that it will be investing in the modern and contemporary art which is being highlighted through this exhibition. Moreover, the impetus to show Caribbean artistic developments will in the future be reflected in the museum’s programming, in order that all the knowledge we have gained in developing the *Surinamese School* exhibition is given a prominent place at the heart of the Stedelijk Museum, in its collection. In this way we will be able to stage pluralist exhibitions more often and with more internal knowledge and expertise. *To be continued.*

JESSICA DE ABREU

Jessica de Abreu is an anthropologist and curator. She studied Social and Cultural Anthropology, and Culture, Organization and Management at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her work concentrates on the fields of the African diaspora, anti-black racism, and post- and decolonial perspectives. She is a co-founder of The Black Archives, which focuses on the history, culture and literature of black people inside and outside the Netherlands

INEZ BLANCA VAN DER SCHEER

Inez Blanca van der Scheer is the project leader of STUDIO i at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and since 2020 she has been a researcher at Hama Gallery, Amsterdam. She is a PhD student in Caribbean philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and a co-founder of the University of Colour, a grassroots collective that strives to raise awareness on the themes of decolonization and intersectionality.

CLAIRE VAN ELS

Claire van Els studied art history at the University of Amsterdam, specializing in contemporary art and feminist exhibition history. As a curator at the Stedelijk Museum

Amsterdam, Van Els recently worked on the *Prix de Rome* (2019–2020) and the development of collection presentations (2020–2021).

MITCHELL ESAJAS

Mitchell Esajas studied business administration and anthropology. He is a co-founder of The Black Archives, and of New Urban Collective, a network for students and young professionals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Through these organizations, he is involved in initiatives that contribute to the decolonization of education and heritage.

ELINE DE JONG

Eline de Jong studied Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam. As an intern she worked on the project *De nalatenschap van Nola Hatterman* ("The Legacy of Nola Hatterman") by Ellen de Vries, during which she conducted research on Hatterman's painting *Louis Richard Drenthe / On the Terrace* (1930) and the role of this work in the cultural and political debate in relation to museums. She went on to gain a master's degree with distinction in social anthropology at the University of Oxford.

BART KRIEGER

Bart Krieger studied art history and architecture at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and began writing on and reviewing exhibitions, dance and theater. For more than four years, he wrote monthly columns for the Surinamese monthly magazine *Parbode* under the title “Surinaamse kunstschaten” (“Art Treasures from Suriname”), which were published as a collection in 2015 as *50 Surinaamse Kunstschaten*. Krieger has curated exhibitions for CBK Zuidoost and the Readytex Art Gallery in Paramaribo. He is the owner of “BAM! De Kunst Toko,” and a member of the expertise group of the national platform “Museum Bekennen Kleur,” which promotes diversity in museums at all levels.

CARLIEN LAMMERS

Carlien Lammers studied cultural heritage at the Reinwardt Academy, and has since focused on embedding pluralism, diversity, and accessibility in the cultural sector. Since 2015 she has worked at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, where she is currently responsible for inclusion and diversity, and chairs the Advisory Board for Inclusion & Accessibility. Previously, she was the project leader for the STUDIO i platform for inclusive culture, an initiative of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven.

She was also involved as an expert in the development of the Diversity & Inclusion Code published in 2019. Lammers has written several articles for the online art platform De Kunstmeisjes. In 2019, as a panel member she contributed to the development of the exhibition *HERE. Black in Rembrandt's Time* at the Rembrandt House Museum.

ELLEN DE VRIES

Ellen de Vries is a writer and independent researcher in the field of postcolonial history and representation. She is the author of a biography of Nola Hatterman, *Nola: Portret van een eigenninnig kunstenaar* (“Nola: Portrait of an idiosyncratic artist,” 2008), and is compiling *Nola Hatterman. ‘Geen kunst zonder kunnen’*, to be published in 2021, with contributions by Bart Krieger, Lizzy van Leeuwen, Stephan Sanders, Esther Schreuder, Priscilla Tosari, Marieke Visser, Myra Winter and Kitty Zijlmans. www.ellendevries.nl

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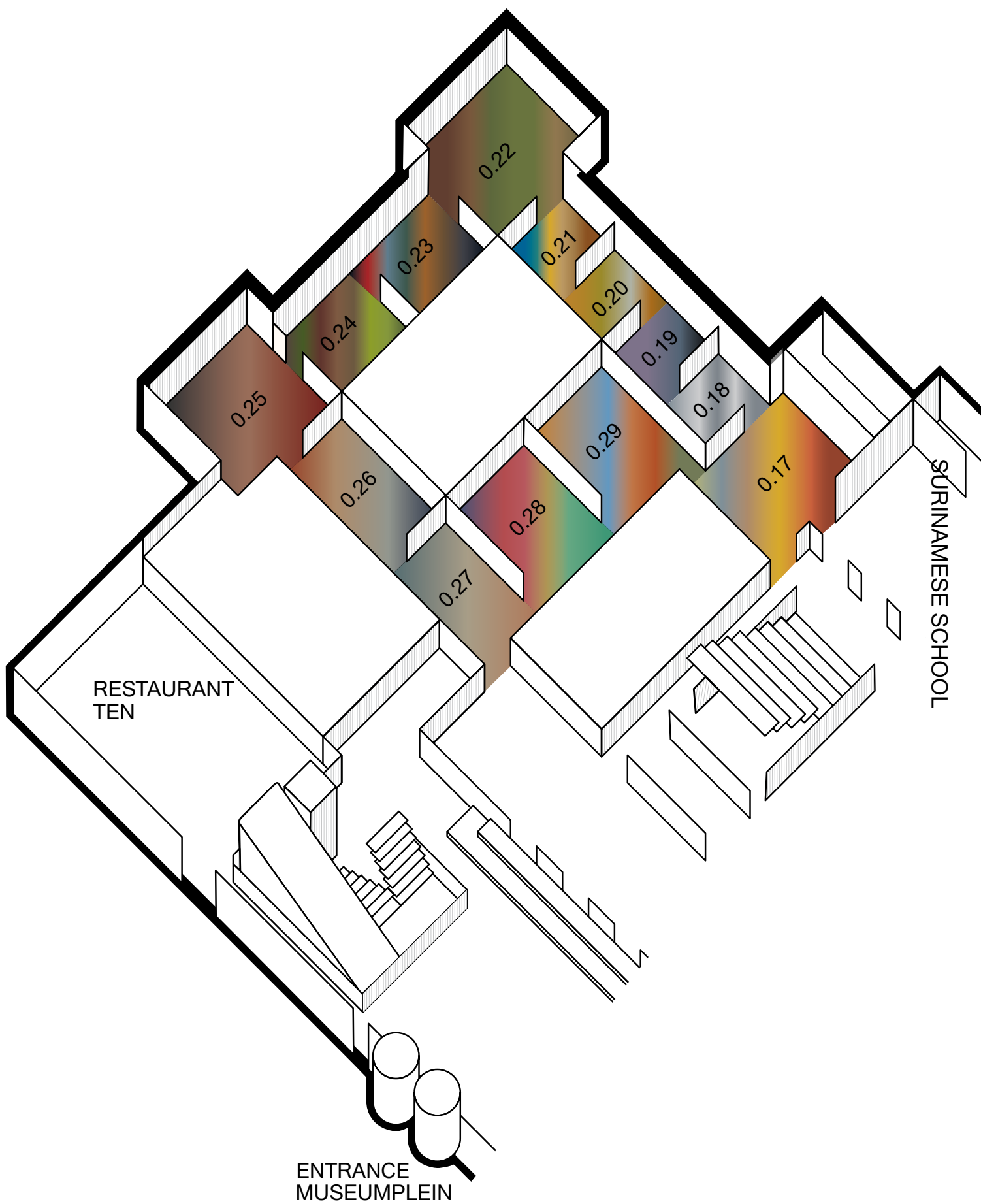
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EXHIBITION TEXTS & FLOOR PLAN

The following pages contain the exhibition texts. Each room has one or more introductory texts, about a person or a theme, for example, supplemented with texts about individual works. These texts also include details about the artist and the work concerned, such as year and place of birth, material, technique and the collection in which it is held.



INTRODUCTION

Surinamese School presents a range of important themes and genres of Surinamese painting from around 1910 to 1985 in over 100 works by 35 artists. Besides painting—the main medium in which artists experimented—the exhibition also includes photographic and graphic work, work on paper, and documentation.

The title is a reference to the variety of art education practices in the country, and the exhibition examines both the cohesion and dynamics among different generations. The development of art education in Suriname over the course of the 20th century fed into the professionalization of artistic practice and, by extension, painting as an art form. The exhibition devotes particular attention to those Surinamese pioneers who had a significant motivating influence on fellow artists.

Key subject matter includes historical narratives, spiritualities, and everyday experiences, brought to life in styles ranging from realistic to abstract and expressionist. Some of the artists were committed to activism that sought to promote the cultural and political independence of Suriname.

Work from this period resonates with contemporary art from the Caribbean region, and Indonesia, and was developed against the backdrop of growing nationalism, decolonization, and nation-forming. In addition, the dynamics between Suriname and the Netherlands were influential. From the 1980s onwards, the focus in terms of education and presentation increasingly shifted from the Netherlands to the neighboring region of the Caribbean, Latin America, and the USA.

25 years after the exhibition *Twenty Years of Visual Art in Suriname, 1975–1995* the Stedelijk again celebrates Surinamese painting. At the same time, the exhibition is an invitation to conduct further research focusing on female practitioners and artists from Suriname's many cultural groups.

GALLERY 0.17

GERRIT SCHOUTEN

Paramaribo (SR), 1779 – Paramaribo (SR), 1839

Butterfly display with paper butterflies, 1839

paper

collection Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, Leiden

Gerrit Schouten is regarded by many as the first Surinamese artist, and this gallery is hosting a *grani* (tribute) to him. Schouten's parents were Hendrik Schouten, who was Dutch, and Suzanna Johanna Hanssen, who was a freeborn woman of mixed heritage. He taught himself to draw and paint, and specialized in making 'dioramas': showcases containing painted paper models of vivid scenes. Schouten was also commissioned by researchers and collectors to make botanical and zoological illustrations that were true to nature.

The work on display in this gallery is unique in Schouten's oeuvre. At first sight it appears to be a collection of mounted butterflies, but closer inspection reveals it to be a highly detailed work of paper that is in line with the three-dimensional scenes for which Schouten was renowned even in his lifetime. All of the 100 or so paper objects depict South American species of butterfly. Schouten donated the work to Prince William Frederick Henry of the Netherlands after he visited Suriname in 1835. Schouten's artistic work was held in such high regard that William I of the Netherlands awarded him a gold medal in 1828.

PHOTOGRAPHERS ANNA AND AUGUSTA CUIRIEL

STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM

Through photography, the Curiel sisters visualized their artistic vision. In the early part of the 20th century, they were among the most important photographers in Suriname. Augusta shot the actual photographs, and her sister Anna assisted on location and developed and printed them. From 1904 to 1937 they photographed scenes from everyday life, mainly in Suriname but also the wider Caribbean region, and Europe. Photographs by the Curiel sisters are exceptionally sharp and clear, especially for the period in which they were taken. Even the action shots are largely free of motion blur. The portraits and the group and work photographs are tightly stage-managed. Augusta used a plate camera on a wooden tripod and Anna assisted with the composition and lighting, and processing the glass negatives.

Photography was the main source of income for the Curiels, and all their work was commissioned—by private individuals, businesses, government bodies, and even the Dutch royal family. Their almost exclusively wealthy clients had a say in who and what was photographed, and when they were taken. Consequently, these images give a specific impression, wherein repressive aspects of the Dutch colonial presence were kept out of the picture.

Following Augusta's death in 1937, Anna continued to run the studio until 1952.

PICTURE POSTCARDS

Around 1860 the first photographers began to open temporary studios in Paramaribo offering daguerreotype portraits and business cards for sale. In the same period, photographers such as Selomoh del Castilho produced work for the open market, including portraits of the

GALLERY 0.18

governors of Suriname, stereotypical portrayals of various population groups, and city views. Photographic picture postcards became popular collectors' items in the period around 1890. Eugen Klein was one of the photographers to introduce them to Suriname before the turn of the century, and soon others—including the Curiel sisters—followed suit and had picture-postcard copies made of their most popular photographs. It was through these images, alongside the appearance of photographs in magazines, that depictions of Suriname came to be more broadly distributed, among others to the Netherlands, where they helped shape colonial perceptions.

AUGUSTA CURIEL

Paramaribo (SR), 1873 – Paramaribo (SR), 1937

Paramaribo, group portrait with Apetina (a local governor at the Wayana) and his retinue at the Cultuurtuin, 1937

gelatin silver print

collection Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

While on border expeditions (1935-1938) in Suriname, the Curiel sisters photographed members of the indigenous Wayana people, living in communities in the highlands of Guyana, a region overlapping parts of Suriname, Brazil and French Guiana.

The group photo shows the local administrator Apetina and fellow inhabitants of Palumeu village during their first visit to Paramaribo. Indigenous communities like the Wayana have greatly suffered from the consequences of colonial expansion: the arrival of the Dutch among others introduced the spread of harmful diseases. To this day, indigenous groups continue to fight for their civil rights.

AUGUSTA CURIEL

Paramaribo (SR), 1873 – Paramaribo (SR), 1937

Group portrait of mission sisters, ca. 1910

reproduction

courtesy Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

The Curiel sisters also photographed the so-called “civilizing missions” and missionary work carried out in Suriname by a variety of Christian denominations. This group photo shows three white mission sisters, probably Sisters of Saint Francis, posing outdoors, surrounded by Surinamese children dressed in “cultural” attire.

In practice, bringing “civilization” often meant propagating the Christian faith at the expense of own religious and spiritual traditions, as well as cultural expressions.

AUGUSTA CURIEL

Paramaribo (SR), 1873 – Paramaribo (SR), 1937

Paramaribo, the sales room at the Maria Patronaat wicker-working school, ca. 1925

collodion printing-out paper

collection Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

The Curiel sisters made a series of photographs about women at the Maria Patronaat institute for development and training in Paramaribo, where wicker hats were made and sold. This photograph shows several young women surrounding a table piled with hats in the salesroom of the wickerworking school. They are being taught how to weave the hats by white mission sisters. This workshop had been run since 1913 by the Sisters of Saint Francis from the Dutch city of Roosendaal. Often the people employed at workshops such as this one would only partially profit from their work.

RUSTWIJK & PANDELLIS

George Gerhardus Theodorus Rustwijk was the quintessential polymath, a man whose interests included theatre, poetry, writing, music, photography, set design, drawing and painting. He also taught at New Town Studio in Georgetown, British Guiana, and was appointed professor there. Rustwijk fostered cultural awareness in Suriname and exposed societal problems, such as the inadequate supply of drinking water in the capital Paramaribo. Activities such as this constituted a turn against the Dutch regime, and he did encounter opposition. Rustwijk's studio on Waterkant, which was a gathering place for artists, burned down due to an unknown cause.

The Greek artist Jean Georges Pandellis went to Suriname in 1922, traveling by way of England, Paris, British Guiana and French Guiana. It was unusual for an international artist to settle in Paramaribo in this period. Pandellis gave drawing classes at the city's craft school, the Ambachtsschool, and taught stenciling, batik, painting, and drawing at his own studio. In 1927 he and his pupils exhibited works including painted copies of art plates and photographs in Paramaribo. Several of Pandellis's students would later become successful artists, including Wim Bos Verschuur and Leo Glans. In 1928 he left Suriname for Curaçao, and in 1936 moved on to Aruba, where he remained for the rest of his life. He was dedicated to the development of artistic talent on both of these islands.

LEO GLANS

Leo Glans, who was born into a middle class Creole family, learned to draw and paint in European style in Paramaribo during the 1920s, at classes taught by Dutch religious brothers and based on Dutch teaching methods and examples. Glans also attended drawing and painting classes led by the Greek artist Pandellis, and the Surinamese artist Wim Bos Verschuur taught him how to paint reproductions of Biblical and other scenes. There was no officially accredited art school in Suriname at this time, so in 1929 he and Bos Verschuur left for the Netherlands. In 1934, Glans was the first Surinamese person to graduate from Amsterdam's Rijksakademie, where he concentrated

GALLERY 0.19

on portraiture and figure study. In the early 1940s, leprosy caused Glans to go blind, halting his career prematurely.

ART PRACTICE FROM AROUND 1900

Opportunities to take drawing and painting classes in Suriname gradually increased from the late 19th century onwards. Artists would teach privately in their own home or studio, and organize small-scale exhibitions of their own work and that of their students. Fine art was produced mainly in people's spare time, and by members of the middle and upper socio-economic strata. Art prints and photographs served as the basis for many of their painting and drawing experiments, with a focus on examples of European art and the depiction of Surinamese themes, such as the local landscape, and city streets and markets. In the main, these paintings were figurative. As well as painting and drawing, crafts such as batik and stencilling were practiced.

GEORGE GERHARDUS THEODORUS RUSTWIJK

Paramaribo (SR), 1862 – Paramaribo (SR), 1914

The Halley Comet, date unknown
print

on loan from Maarten van Hinte, Amsterdam

In 1910 Rustwijk depicted Halley's Comet from Mahaicony Creek in British Guiana. The comet has an orbital period of approximately 76 years, and the rarity of its appearance meant it attracted global attention. The artist used a photograph as the basis for a painting that was probably sold to an American collector, after which it was reportedly destroyed in a fire. The painting is still known today because Rustwijk made prints and picture postcards of his work and offered them for sale in newspaper advertisements.

EDWARD A. VAN ROSSUM

50. *Emancipation Jubilee in Surinam, Dutch Guiana*, on 1st and 2nd July 1913. Paramaribo, printed by H.B. Heide, 1914
collection The Black Archives

In May 1913, Rustwijk gave a lecture titled 'An invitation to a party' at the Hernhutter Voorzorg building in Paramaribo in which he proposed holding celebrations for the 50th anniversary of emancipation; the abolition of slavery was commemorated and celebrated on 1 and 2 July 1913. A Surinamese committee compiled the program events, which included a ceremony, church services and a parade. Rustwijk was seriously ill and unable to attend the jubilee celebrations, but his contribution was included in the anthology *Emancipation Jubilee in Surinam, Dutch Guiana*, edited by E.A. van Rossum.

WIM BOS VERSCHUUR

STEDELIJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM

Wim Bos Verschuur was a pioneering figure in the art history of Suriname, as well as in the country's political history. His modest body of artistic work mainly comprises landscapes and still lifes. He was taught drawing in Paramaribo by George Pandellis and J. Booms. In 1933 Bos Verschuur qualified as a drawing teacher in Amsterdam and returned to Suriname. He had already set up his own studio in Paramaribo in 1925, and he later taught drawing at secondary schools in Suriname. During his lessons he would also address social issues, thereby making a contribution to raising the political consciousness of the students. In Surinamese circles he was popularly known as oom Wim, or Uncle Wim. His students include the nationalist and politician Eddy Bruma, the prime minister Jopie Pengel, and the artists Leo Glans and Erwin de Vries.

As well as being an artist, Bos Verschuur was a political activist. Despite having been born into colonial society's light-skinned elite, he devoted his life to the struggle for greater equality in the country. He was a trade union leader and a nationalist—many regard him as one of the founders of Surinamese nationalism. During the Second World War, Bos Verschuur and his slogan *Baas in eigen huis* ("Master of your own home") helped define the growing aspirations among the population for political autonomy.

WIM BOS VERSCHUUR, ARCHIVE

Wim Bos Verschuur was committed to achieving autonomy for Suriname, albeit as part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Between 1942 and 1952 he was a member of the States of Suriname: the first form of self-government on the path to full independence. Items found in Bos Verschuur's personal archive testify to his patriotic, nationalist ideology. In a letter to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, he criticizes the authoritarian rule of the colonial governor, Kielstra, and calls on her to dismiss him. He also wrote to the anticolonial resistance fighter Anton de Kom, although they never met. Bos Verschuur's nationalist ideas and the criticism he voiced even led to his internment during the Second World War—on Kielstra's orders.

GALLERY 0.20

A notable photo from his archive shows him dressed in a suit, with a vase filled with flowers in one hand, and a dagger in the other. The photo was printed on a pamphlet alongside the caption: “A flower for a flower, a sword for a sword.” Do the flowers express his affection for Suriname and does the dagger refer to the struggle for equality? Or do they reference the peaceful way in which he practices politics, and how this jars with the harm that the Dutch colonial policies have incurred?

GOVERT JAN TELTING

Paramaribo (SR), 1905 – Paramaribo (SR), 1988

Curaçao, 1942

oil on canvas

on loan from C.J. Telting, Amsterdam

1942 saw the staging of one of Paramaribo’s first major exhibitions of fine art: a retrospective of paintings by Govert Jan Telting at the civil registry. Telting painted this Curaçao landscape in an Impressionist style after moving to the island from Paramaribo in the 1930s. The artist passed on his skill to his son Quintus Jan Telting, several of whose paintings are also included in this exhibition.

JACQUES ANTON PHILIPSZOON

Paramaribo (SR), 1905 – Amsterdam (NL), 1987

Soela’s, 1966

Rapids

pen-and-wash drawing on watercolor paper

collection Niemel, Rotterdam

Jacques Anton Philipszoon, one of Wim Bos Verschuur’s students, moved around 1940 to Amsterdam, where he worked as a family doctor. He was also a painter, draughtsman, and watercolorist specializing in landscapes. As a member of the Sint Lucas artists’ society, in among others 1965 and 1967 his work was included in group exhibitions at the Stedelijk, and in 1968 Amsterdam’s

Tropenmuseum staged a solo exhibition of his work. This work on paper depicts rapids, or *soela* in Surinamese.

LEO GLANS

Paramaribo (SR), 1911 – Wassenaar (NL), 1980

Banana Plantation, 1937–1938

oil on canvas

on loan from Stichting Kunstwerken Leo Glans

Several European artists traveled to Suriname during the colonial period to paint landscapes of the country, some of them commissioned by Dutch plantation owners. Over the course of the first half of the 20th century, increasing numbers of Surinamese artists also turned their attention to capturing the beauty of their surroundings. This gave new impetus to the painting of the natural environment. Subjects include the current and former plantations, in landscapes that are charged with the history of slavery. On display in this gallery is work showing a banana plantation in a loose, impressionistic style, by Glans, who was intrigued by the colors and light of Suriname.

NOLA HATTERMAN

In 1953, Hatterman started teaching in Suriname at Cultureel Centrum Suriname (CCS) in Paramaribo, and was appointed director of its School of Fine Arts in 1961. Hatterman prioritized realism over abstract art. She advocated establishing an identifiable Surinamese style, but young experimental artists such as Jules Chin A Foeng had other ideas about what a national Surinamese art should look like. They founded their own schools, and in 1971 Hatterman set up the New School for Fine Arts. She passed away in 1984, upon which the current Nola Hatterman Art Academy was founded in Paramaribo. Many of its students went on to become influential artists, including Soeki Irodikromo, Ruben Karsters, Jules Brand-Flu, Rinaldo Klas, George Ramjiawansingh and Wilgo Elschot. Hatterman's contribution to the development of art education in Suriname can still be perceived, even amongst a third generation of students at the Academy. In the Netherlands, perspectives on her life's work vary. On the one hand people look back with appreciation, and recently, as a *black is beautiful* activist in an art world rife with racism and patriarchal tendencies. On the other hand, the current postcolonial debate questions her position. What is, or could be the role of (white) Dutch people and Dutch institutions in the decolonization of Surinamese art? And how is the shared art history approached?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the 1930s, Nola Hatterman became friends with the Surinamese activists Otto and Hermina Huiswoud and Anton de Kom, all of whom were active in the antifascist and anti-colonialist Surinamese workers movement in Amsterdam. Hatterman illustrated the banned monthly publication *The N*gr* Worker* (1934), which was edited by the Huiswouds. Hatterman despised the racial doctrine of the Nazis, and during the war she refused to register with the Kultuurkamer, the ideological Nazi government body responsible for controlling cultural life in the occupied Netherlands. After the war, she supported the efforts of the "Our Suriname Society" in Amsterdam and "Our own things" (Wie Eegie Sanie), led by figurehead Eddy Bruma, to gain independence for Suriname and raise cultural

GALLERY 0.21

consciousness. In 1953, Hatterman moved to Suriname, where in 1982 she completed her series of four works on slavery and *marronage* inspired by De Kom's book *We Slaves of Suriname*.

NOLA HATTERMAN

Amsterdam (NL), 1899 – Paramaribo (SR), 1984

Still Life with Red Comb, 1929

oil on canvas

acquired in 1929

Nola Hatterman was born in Amsterdam and grew up in colonial circles, against which she rebelled. She learned painting from two private teachers, Vittorio Schiavon and Charles Haak. Her work was exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum for the first time in 1919. With time, Hatterman emerged as a painter of portraits of her Surinamese friends and promoted a black beauty ideal. She also made many drawings and illustrations, which frequently appeared in magazines, books, and postcards. The artist worked in the spare and realistic style known in Dutch as *Nieuwe Zakelijkheid*, "New Objectivity."

NOLA HATTERMAN

Amsterdam (NL), 1899 – Paramaribo (SR), 1984

Louis Richard Drenthe / On the Terrace, 1930

oil on canvas

acquired in 1931

The subject of this portrait is Louis "Lou" Richard Drenthe (1901–1990), who was born in Paramaribo and arrived in Amsterdam in 1925. His paternal ancestors were enslaved laborers on a sugar plantation named Guineesche Vriendschap ("Guinean friendship"). Drenthe was a gas fitter, but he also sat as a painter's model in Amsterdam, worked in hospitality, and appeared on stage. He made his name as trumpeter and orchestra leader for the St. Louis Rhythm Kings. Drenthe opened

Hatterman's eyes to the injustices taking place in colonial Suriname.

NOLA HATTERMAN

Amsterdam (NL), 1899 – Paramaribo (SR), 1984

David Cornelis Artist / Laborer, 1939

oil on canvas

acquired in 1939

The sitter is David Cornelis Artist (1903–unknown), who was born in Paramaribo. In 1931, he arrived in Amsterdam, where the municipality registered him as a seaman. Nola Hatterman noted his occupation as “laborer”. The artist earned extra income as a life-drawing model at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, and he was one of a number of Surinamese people who rented a room at Hatterman's home on Falckstraat. He is also identifiable as the subject of Hatterman's chalk drawing *Portrait of a young man* (ca. 1939), which is part of the Rijksmuseum collection.

THE PORTRAIT

Many artists in Suriname have portrait paintings to their name. The display in this gallery comprises examples of portraits painted in the period spanning from approximately 1940 to 1990. Those portrayed have their origins in a variety of eras, cultures, and social circles, and include heroes, such as Anton de Kom; important figures in the artist's own life, such as family members or friends; and even passers-by.

The majority of portrait paintings are commissioned works, but the display also includes self-portraits and paintings that capture the intimate connection between artist and subject—an example being the painting of Armand Baag and Wilgo Elshot surrounded by their family and the *faya lobi*, the flower of fiery love. This gallery presents a wide range of styles and interpretations of portraiture—an accessible genre that literally gives a face to the diversity of Surinamese society.

The information available on the sitters in this display varies greatly: while only a first name is known of some, biographies have been published about others.

WILGO ELSHOT
Paramaribo (SR), 1953

Muriël, 1982
oil on canvas
on loan from Wilgo P.F. Elshot, Amsterdam

The artist met "Muriël" at a party, and was impressed by her powerful presence. She sat as a model for him for three days. Elshot belongs to the first generation of artists who completed their art training in Suriname.

GALLERY 0.22

WILGO ELSHOT
Paramaribo (SR), 1953

Mom, 1980
sepia, watercolor on paper
on loan from Wilgo P.F. Elshot, Amsterdam

The artist painted this portrait of a mother and child in a Maroon village from memory after his graduation trip to inland Suriname. From a series of ten sepia works.

WILGO ELSHOT
Paramaribo (SR), 1953

Harold, 1982
pastel on paper
on loan from Wilgo P.F. Elshot, Amsterdam

Harold Esajas (Paramaribo (SR), 1956– Amsterdam (NL), 2020) posed for the artist several times. They knew each other from Paramaribo. Esajas, who lived in Amsterdam and worked at a printer's in the city, bought two of the portraits from this series of four.

WILGO ELSHOT
Paramaribo (SR), 1953

Cynthia, 1983
pastel, chalk on paper
on loan from Wilgo P.F. Elshot, Amsterdam

This is a family portrait: Cynthia Samson (Paramaribo (SR), 1955), pregnant with her daughter Angelle (Amsterdam (NL), 1983), is the wife of the artist, who is portrayed on the cover of the book. In 2021 they will have been married for 40 years.

JULES CHIN A FOENG

Paramaribo (SR), 1944 – Paramaribo (SR), 1983

Portrait of the Artist's Grandmother, 1973

oil on canvas

on loan from Patrick Chin A Foeng, Leiderdorp

Anna Jap A Mooy (Kanton (CN), 1898 – Albina (SR), 1965)

was the grandmother of the artist. She arrived by ship in Suriname at the age of 18, and ran a bakery in Albina together with her husband. Jules Chin A Foeng painted his grandparent's portraits for his father.

JULES CHIN A FOENG

Paramaribo (SR), 1944 – Paramaribo (SR), 1983

Portrait of the Artist's Grandfather, 1973

oil on canvas

on loan from Patrick Chin A Foeng, Leiderdorp

Jozef Chin A Foeng (Kanton (CN), 1884 – Albina (SR), 1948)

is the grandfather of the artist, who based this portrait and that of his grandmother on two black-and-white photographs.

NOLA HATTERMAN

Amsterdam (NL), 1899 – Paramaribo (SR), 1984

Portrait of Agnes Guardiola, 1974 or earlier

oil on canvas

collection De Surinaamsche Bank N.V., Paramaribo

Agnes Guardiola (Mariënborg (SR), ca. 1924 – Mariënborg (SR), 1983)

studied economics in Switzerland. As the deputy director of international business at the Bank of Suriname (DSB), she earned more than the country's prime minister. Guardiola loved to travel, and she traveled around the world independently in the 1950s and 60s.

NOLA HATTERMAN

Amsterdam (NL), 1899 – Paramaribo (SR), 1984

Rinia Klokke-Moll, 1943

oil on canvas

collection Stichting Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen

In 1943, Nola Hatterman painted this portrait of Rinia Cecil Klokke-Moll (Paramaribo (SR), 1914 – Bilthoven (NL),

2013). It was commissioned by the subject's husband Willem Hendrik Frederik Klokke, a doctor in Amsterdam.

ROBERT BOSARI
Paramaribo (SR), 1950

Untitled, 1985
charcoal on paper
collection Michiel van Kempen, Amsterdam

Anton de Kom (Paramaribo (SR), 1898 – Sandbostel (DE), 1945) was an influential activist and writer. His groundbreaking anticolonial book *We Slaves of Surinam* was published in 1934. De Kom was active in the Dutch resistance during the Second World War, towards the end of which he died in a German concentration camp. This painting is part of a series of portraits by painter and sculptor Robert Bosari.

CLIFF SAN A JONG
Paramaribo (SR), 1948

Zelfportet, 1983
Self-Portrait
oil on canvas
on loan from Cliff San A Jong, Wanica

Cliff San A Jong was 34 when he painted this self-portrait, in which he places himself in the setting of a 17th-century interior. The parrot and skull are symbols of mortality.

ERWIN DE VRIES
Paramaribo (SR), 1926 – Paramaribo (SR), 2018

Untitled, 1977
oil on canvas
collection Michiel van Kempen, Amsterdam

Albert Helman (Paramaribo (SR), 1903 – Amsterdam (NL), 1996) is the artistic pseudonym of Lodewijk Alphonsus Maria Lichtveld, who studied musicology and was gifted in a variety of fields. During the Second World War he was an active member of the resistance in the Netherlands against the German occupiers. In 1949 he returned to Suriname, where he was briefly Minister of Education and National Development. Helman wrote 130 books, including *De stille plantage* ("The silent plantation," 1931), and the University of Amsterdam

awarded him an honorary doctorate for his linguistic work.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SU), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Familieportret Baag, 1989

Family Portrait Baag

oil on canvas

on loan from Joyce, Sura and Surina Baag

This portrait shows, from left to right, Armand Baag's stepfather George Baag (Paramaribo (SR), 1917 – Amsterdam (NL), 1991); in the center his mother Françoise Vianen (Saramaka (SR), 1923 – Amsterdam (NL), 1990), and on the right his sister Joyce Baag (Paramaribo (SR), 1946). The artist himself appears in the mirror, completing the family portrait.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SU), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Mr. Moody, date unknown

oil on canvas

on loan from Sura and Surina Baag, Amsterdam

Paul Richenel "Moody" Moedig (Paramaribo (SR), 1946 – Amsterdam (NL), 2011) was a Surinamese artist and friend of Armand Baag. Moedig's own work was exhibited at various locations, including Amsterdam's Galerie Srefidensi, which was set up by Baag and others in 1971 to present art from the Caribbean region.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SU), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Mammie / Miss Anna, 1981 (possibly)

oil on board

on loan from Sura and Surina Baag, Amsterdam

Armand Baag's grandmother Miss Anna Cummingsborg (Saramaka, 1898–1983, Paramaribo) is portrayed in front of a plantation. This work stood on the mantelpiece in Baag's studio on Lauriergracht in Amsterdam, surrounded by relics and dried flowers. From there, she watched over her grandson.

STUART ROBLES DE MEDINA

Paramaribo (SR), 1930 – Eindhoven, (NL), 2006

Woman, 1972

oil on canvas

collection De Surinaamsche Bank N.V., Paramaribo

Painter and sculptor Stuart Robles de Medina made portraits throughout his career, often of friends and family, sometimes for clients. He painted this portrait of a young woman in sketch style. The model is unknown.

PAUL WOEI

Paramaribo (SR), 1938

Portrait of Karsimen, 81 years, 1991

chalk on papier

collection Niemel, Rotterdam

The woman portrayed in this painting is 81-year-old Karsimen, who was born in Indonesia and, like many others, was recruited there to work on a plantation in Suriname. Paul Woei first encountered her when she was seated on a bench in front of her house, and he asked her to sit as a model for him.

ROBBERT DOELWIJT

Paramaribo (SR), 1951

My Beautiful Little Sister, 1975

oil on canvas

on loan from Thea Doelwijt and Marijke van Geest, Amsterdam

The most important sources of inspiration for Robbert Doelwijt was the reality of daily life in Suriname, and Surinamese cultures. The artist has been living and working in Amsterdam since 1990. Most of his paintings are vibrant and figurative.

NIC LONING

Amsterdam (NL), 1925 –Amsterdam (NL), 1984

MAXIE Queen of Paramaribo, 1967

oil on linen

collection Stichting Surinaams Museum, Paramaribo

The subject of this painting is Wilhelmina Angelica Adriana Merian Rijburg (Paramaribo (SR), 1902 – Paramaribo (SR), 1981), a.k.a. Maxi Linder, a popular hero who was a legend in her own lifetime. In the 1930s she was a sex worker in Paramaribo, and a pioneering advocate for the rights of this occupational group. She used the money she earned to finance the education of young Surinamese people in the Netherlands.

In 1951, the Foundation for Cultural Cooperation with Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles (Sticusa) asked the Dutch art teacher Nic Loning to arrange classes at the Cultureel Centrum Suriname (CCS) in Paramaribo. Nola Hatterman took over this role in 1953.

RELIGION IN THE PICTURE

For some Surinamese artists, biblical events serve as a source of inspiration and experimentation. The paintings in this gallery could be regarded as manifestations of the attempt to present a new, local interpretation of Christian iconography. The painting by Quintus Jan Telting, for example, shows a white cross piercing the body of a Black Christ. This work appears to symbolize the mission of the Christian churches, which supported colonial rule and from the 19th century onwards made efforts to convert “dissenters.” After slavery was abolished, conversion was made compulsory for all formerly enslaved persons.

Suriname is home to a wide variety of religious traditions and organizations whose origins can be traced back to numerous African and South American countries, as well as among others China, India and Indonesia. One example is Winti culture, the origins of which lie among enslaved people who were taken from various parts of West Africa to Suriname. In Suriname, religious traditions—in which rituals and nature gods are prominent—coalesced into a new religious culture. The colonial government suppressed Winti culture, as has the church to this day. The practice was made punishable under law from 1874 to 1971. The practice of Winti was widespread, however, and it has continued to be important for many enslaved people and their descendants. Practicing and depicting Winti can be regarded as an emancipatory gesture, and an act of decolonization of Surinamese culture.

RITUALS ASSOCIATED WITH DEATH IN AFRICAN-SURINAMESE CULTURE

Rituals associated with death have an important place in African Surinamese culture. In accordance with tradition, funerals comprise a set sequence of events, the essential ones being the *dede oso* (wake), the dance around the coffin, and the funeral procession. The eighth day and the sixth week after a death are also marked, which can be seen as deriving from the West-African tradition of ancestor worship. The rituals have been captured in a variety of styles, from figurative to abstract. The color white, symbolizing mourning, is a recurring element in these paintings.

GALLERY 0.23

NONI LICHTVELD

Abcoude (NL), 1929 – Laren (NL), 2017

Moeder met kind (Zwarte Madonna), ca. 1963–1964

Mother with Child (Black Madonna)

watercolor on paper

collection Niemel, Rotterdam

This painting on paper shows a woman holding her child and gazing at it. Noni Lichtveld, who is primarily known as an illustrator and writer of Anansi stories, painted this Black Madonna with her son. In so doing she takes ownership of a Christian iconographic tradition in which Mary is often portrayed as white.

This work was for a series of Christmas cards, each one portraying Mary as a member of a different Surinamese community. One of Lichtveld's best known works is the wooden group sculpture of Suriname's indigenous communities at the entrance to Paramaribo's Hotel Torarica.

LEO WONG LOI SING

Saramacca (SR), 1943

The Call, 1965

oil on canvas

courtesy Natasha Knoppel Art Galleries, Vleuten

Leo Wong Loi Sing comes from a family of artists and Roman Catholic priests. He started drawing and painting at the age of 19, while teaching children. One of the figures in this portrait represents Jesus, while the other is the artist himself. This work was made while at the seminary in Galibi, where he was a student priest and trainee teacher. Shortly afterwards he became a student of the artist Jules Chin A Foeng. In 1967 he left Suriname for The Hague to study at the Free Academy of Visual Art, before returning to Suriname in 1975.

FELIX DE ROOY
Willemstad (CR), 1952

Karma na Kòrsou, 1976
Karma on Curaçao
oil on canvas
on loan from Felix de Rooy, Amsterdam

Felix de Rooy was born in Curaçao to Surinamese parents. He lives in Amsterdam and regularly works in the Caribbean region. More often than other artists in this exhibition, De Rooy gives eroticism and sexuality a central role in his work. The Christ figure is of mixed origin, has afro hair and is “nailed” to the cross with artists’ paintbrushes. The woman at his feet personifies the Buddha. They come together in an apocalypse of enlightenment. In the background we see a Curaçao landscape.

HISTORY IN THE PICTURE

In the 20th century, interest grew in Suriname in the “history painting” genre, for the depiction of important moments in national history, such as the infamous rebellions by enslaved people on plantations, and the arrival in the country of the first indentured Hindustani workers in 1873.

One outstanding example of the genre is the monumental depiction of the arrival in Suriname of the *Lalla Rookh*, the first ship from the port of Kolkotta (then Calcutta), which now hangs in the Lalla Rookh Museum in Paramaribo. Other paintings record the phenomenon of *marronage*: the resistance of enslaved people and their flight inland. This gallery also contains Nola Hatterman’s preliminary study for a series of four paintings on *marronage* that she completed in 1982, as well as sketches by Armand Baag depicting events from recent Surinamese history such as the 1982 “December murders” (*Decembermoorden*).

ARMAND BAAG

Armand Baag was born in Paramaribo, and at the age of four went with his father to Curaçao. From 1955 he attended drawing classes at the school of the Cultureel Centrum Suriname (CCS) in Paramaribo. In 1961 he went to the Netherlands, where he attended the art academy in Tilburg before continuing his studies at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. He and his wife, ballet dancer Willy Collewyn, formed a dance duo and performed all over Europe. Baag continued painting throughout these tours. After spending time in various European cities, in 1968 he settled permanently in Amsterdam. His work was exhibited and he became friends with other Surinamese artists, including Erwin de Vries, Quintus Jan Telting, and Frank Creton. One of their regular meeting places was Café Reynders on Amsterdam’s Leidseplein.

In 1970 Baag and Collewyn founded Maysa in the Jordaan district of Amsterdam, a cultural center for nurturing artistic talent. He was also involved in setting up Galerie Srefidensi (‘independence’) in Amsterdam in 1971. The gallery focused on presenting Caribbean artists, who had barely

GALLERY 0.24

any opportunities to exhibit their work to a Dutch audience. In Baag's figurative paintings Black people take centre stage. Many of his paintings are narrative works in which religion, culture, and identity have important parts to play.

RINALDO KLAS

Rinaldo Klas studied at Paramaribo's New School for Visual Arts in the 1970s, and at the end of the 1980s he became the first Surinamese artist to attend the Edna Manley College of the Visual and Performing Arts in Jamaica. In the years that followed, increasing numbers of Surinamese artists studied art in their own region, the Caribbean. Klas made paintings, monoprints, and works on paper, and experimented with figurative, expressionist, and abstract styles. His colorful compositions testify to a close affinity with the fragile flora and fauna of Suriname, including the tropical rainforest. A co-founder of the Nola Hatterman Art Academy in Paramaribo, he taught there and was its director until 2014. While still a student, Klas made this painting of escaped enslaved workers who initially founded group settlements in inland Suriname.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SR), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Abaysa e go na maysa, ca. 1973

Abaysa Goes to Mother Earth

oil on canvas

on loan from Sura and Surina Baag, Amsterdam

The man that is being brought down to *Maysa*, or Mother Earth, is the resistance hero Boni. Possibly depicted here as an Afro-Surinamese interpretation of the ascension of Christ. According to the Bible, Jezus is the first to return to paradise following his death at the cross. In this painting Boni is the first to return to the kingdom of ancestors, a belief that is part of Winti culture.

The title refers to the marron Ronald Abaisa who was shot dead by police during the strike movement of 1973, which

saw the arrest of several union leaders who called on the people to oppose government policies. In his poetry book *A no mena, a no boboi, ma...* (1979), ("It is Not Coddling, It is Not Rocking, But...") Michaël Slory places Abaisa in a lineage of Afro-Surinamese resistance fighters.

An essay about among others this painting by Bart Krieger will appear in a monograph on Nola Hatterman, expected early 2021, edited by Ellen de Vries.

FORM EXPERIMENTATION

The 1950s saw the advent of new opportunities for studying art in Suriname, such as those offered by Cultureel Centrum Suriname (CCS). Continuing colonial relations with the Netherlands meant artists who wanted to pursue their further education at accredited institutions were still reliant on academies there. In 1949, Erwin de Vries and Rudi Getrouw went to study at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, while Robles de Medina attended the art academy in Tilburg. In the Netherlands they experimented with an abstract visual language that frequently incorporated elements of figurative and expressionist styles.

After these artists had completed their studies, Getrouw returned permanently to Suriname, while De Vries and Robles de Medina shuttled between Suriname and Netherlands. All three also worked as teachers. Besides paintings and works on paper, De Vries and Robles de Medina made sculptures, which were often commissioned works—an example being Robles de Medina's prestigious statue of Suriname's former prime minister Johan Adolf Pengel on Independence Square in Paramaribo, which the artist made after Pengel's death. The trios continued formal experiments resulted in them becoming leading modern artists in the 1960s. Like the subsequent generation of Expressionists—Hans Lie, Soeki Irodikromo, and Guillaume Lo-A-Njoe—they responded to international developments in art.

STUART ROBLES DE MEDINA

Paramaribo (SR), 1930 – Eindhoven (NL), 2006

Abstract Composition, 1957

oil on canvas

on loan from Maria Concepcion Robles de Medina,
Leusden

Towards the end of the 1950s, Stuart Robles de Medina's formal experiments grew increasingly abstract. The painting in this gallery dates from 1957, when the artist had already been back in Suriname for several years. In this

GALLERY 0.25

period his modern paintings were exhibited in Paramaribo and abroad, including at the 1956 *Gulf-Caribbean Art Exhibition* in Houston, Texas. A certain sense of playfulness invariably suffuses these compositions, which form the high point of his artistic output.

SOEKI IRODIKROMO

Commewijne (SR), 1945 – Paramaribo (SR), 2020

Untitled, 1969

oil on canvas

collection Niemel, Rotterdam

Soeki Irodikromo's expressive paintings, batik fabrics, and ceramic sculptures depict themes and forms from Javan mythology. Irodikromo studied in Paramaribo in the 1960s and from 1967 he continued his art education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rotterdam. One of his fields of study while in Europe was the CoBrA movement and its exponents such as Karel Appel, because of their free approach to expression, and experimentation with techniques and materials. Irodikromo made this painting in the Netherlands. The horse is a reference to *Djaran Kepang* ("Flat horse"), a Javan cultural tradition in which participants dance astride flat model horses made of leather or bamboo and enter into a trance.

GUILLAUME LO-A-NJOE

Amsterdam (NL), 1937

Child Born in the Month of Pisces, 1961

oil on canvas

on loan from Guillaume Lo-A-Njoe, Amsterdam

Guillaume Lo-A-Njoe's artistic oeuvre spans a period of 60 years and comprises mostly paintings and sculptures. The artist studied in Amsterdam in the 1950s, where he was awarded a royal grant for autonomous painting in 1959.

In the 1960s and 70s he worked in the Caribbean region and Latin America. This painting is an early work by Lo-A-Njoe depicting abstract figures in a dynamic and vivid style that is characteristic of the period. As early as 1961 his work was included in the first of several group exhibitions at the Stedelijk, which owns several of his works.

ERWIN DE VRIES

Paramaribo (SR), 1926 – Paramaribo (SR), 2018

The Magic Eye, 1963

oil on canvas

acquired in 1963

Towards the end of the 1940s, Erwin de Vries started working at a rapid pace on a body of work comprising paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. Eroticism, particularly the female nude, is a central theme in his work. His work was exhibited all over the world, including in Paramaribo as early as 1948, and later in the United States and Curaçao in the 1950s. He has had two solo exhibitions at the Stedelijk, in 1970 and 1998. His 2002 National Slavery Monument in Amsterdam's Oosterpark is one of the most famous of his sculptures in the Netherlands. This painting in the artist's characteristic Expressionist style features two eyes at the center.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

As the 1960s progressed, Suriname witnessed a growing need for cultural independence. Up to this point, the country had been rather isolated artistically, and artists tended to rely on the colonial tie with the Netherlands, for example for their studies at Dutch art academies. In 1967, Jules Chin A Foeng set up the National Institute for Arts and Culture (NIKK), positioning himself in opposition to the established art schools due to their conservative artistic mindset and neocolonial outlook. The 1960s also saw a growth in the number of locations in Paramaribo where visual arts could be presented. They included Buiten-Sociëteit 'Het Park' and, from 1966 onwards, the annual national art fair.

The 1970s saw increasing numbers of Surinamese artists establishing connections in the Caribbean region, South America and Asia, and taking part in international art events such as the São Paulo Biennial. Several Surinamese artists attached themselves to international cultural and political movements, and fought for independence and social justice in the country. The founding in 1977 of a sectoral interest group, the Association of Visual Workers, made it possible to facilitate collaborations between artists aimed at social renewal. The various cultural backgrounds of Suriname's communities were recognized and supported by art scholarships.

QUINTUS JAN TELTING

Quintus Jan Telting is a Surinamese artist born in Curaçao who learned painting through play with his father Govert Jan Telting. At the age of 16 he joined the merchant navy and traveled the world, before staying in Amsterdam to study music in 1956. Three years later he moved to New York, where he was active in the jazz scene. Following a number of disappointing experiences in the music world and having already been drawing for many years, he took up painting seriously in New York. He produced new work with increasing frequency, capturing New York street scenes and other settings in his distinctive and colorful style. The artist lived and worked in the United States at the height of the country's

GALLERY 0.26

civil rights movement, and acquainted Black activist writers, among whom Amiri Baraka.

In 1970, Telting settled in Amsterdam. A common thread running through the artist's extensive oeuvre spanning a period of 40 years is his strong commitment to the Black emancipation movement and the struggle for universal human dignity. In the 1980s, his paintings became more graphical and abstract. Two examples of this later work are displayed in this gallery.

RON FLU
Singapore, 1934

Vietnam, 1966
oil on canvas
on loan from M.R. Flu (son), Rijswijk

Ron Flu moved from Paramaribo to Amsterdam in 1957 to study architecture, and returned to Paramaribo in the 1970s. Flu's work testifies to his keen eye for social injustice, whether in Suriname or beyond its borders, with a uniquely stylized realistic approach to thematizing subjects such as prostitution, poverty, and political events. This early painting is the artist's response to the Vietnam War, in which a disproportionate number of Black soldiers were killed.

SOEKI IRODIKROMO
Commewijne (SR), 1945 – Paramaribo (SR), 2020

Lebusuro, 1971
oil on canvas
on loan from Egger Family, Amsterdam

After studying in the Netherlands, in 1972 Soeki Irodikromo returned to Suriname. At the end of the 1970s, he moved to Yogyakarta to study the batik technique, which he then taught artists in Suriname. The Indonesian embassy granted him a scholarship that befitted a period in which Surinamese

art was internationalizing. This painting shows a scene from the Ramayana in which two monkey figures named Sugreev and Vali fight over a woman, and general Hanuman holds them apart.

LIFE

Artists throughout history have sought to capture scenes from daily life, and this is also a popular theme in Surinamese art. The works in this gallery are from various periods, and many of them depict everyday scenes of the city, from the market to nightlife. These largely realistic representations were made using a wide variety of techniques. The two works by Ron Flu, for example, range from a dreamlike kaleidoscopic street scene to a Cubist-style painting with an exceptionally dynamic division of the planar surface.

Other works in this gallery include paintings in which Armand Baag and Cliff San A Jong respond to the independence of Suriname and military rule of the country in the 1980s. Dutch colonial rule of Suriname spanned from 1667 to 1954, when the country gained a degree of autonomy. In 1975 Suriname was recognized as an independent republic. Independence and ensuing sociopolitical developments resonated in the practice of individual artists rather than in a new and broad-based movement in the visual arts.

GEORGE RAMJIAWANSINGH

After the factual abolishment of slavery in 1873, the resulting demand for a labor force to continue production on the plantations led to the recruitment of indentured workers in South Asia. Members of this Indo-Surinamese community often used the donkey and cart both in their working life and to provide for their subsistence. For this scene from daily life, George Ramjiawansingh has used the city as the backdrop to his brisk and fluent depiction of a mixed company heading to the market. Ramjiawansingh was one of the second generation of artists to graduate at the CCS School in Suriname. He and his wife Usha Ramjiawansingh have been running Gallery Singh in Paramaribo since 1985, with a focus on Surinamese art and art education.

GALLERY 0.27

CLIFF SAN A JONG

Cliff San A Jong studied in the 1960s in Paramaribo and continued his education in The Hague and Amsterdam. In 1974 he returned to Suriname, where he still lives. His often symbolic scenes are painted in a realistic style. The beached woman in this painting may be a reference to the end of Dutch rule. The newborn baby, which has yet to inhale its first breath, represents a new beginning. The five roses surrounding the child relate to the former flag of Suriname, and refer to the various communities in the country. The equestrian statue and fluttering pennant express the fighting spirit of the nation of Suriname.

JULES CHIN A FOENG

Jules Chin A Foeng was a painter, activist, teacher, and poet who made a major contribution to the development of Surinamese art. He attended the CCS School of Fine Arts in Paramaribo before continuing his studies in the Netherlands, first at the art academy in Tilburg and then briefly at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. In 1965, he returned to Paramaribo, convinced of the need for a homegrown Surinamese art academy. In 1966 he and Alphons Maynard founded the Surinamese Academy of Fine Arts (SABK). Due to internal conflicts, however, he left the school, and a year later he and Victor de La Fuente founded the National Institute of Arts and Culture (NIKK). His revitalization of graphic techniques inspired and influenced artists such as René Tosari, who was among the first intake of NIKK students. This gallery contains examples of Tosari's graphic work.

Chin A Foeng and other teachers at the NIKK held nationalist aspirations, and they promoted Surinamism as an ideology, one on which Foeng elaborated in a 1970 article: "People need to have more belief in their own achievements, their own value, and their own people." The artist rejected Nola Hatterman's approach to art education on both ideological and thematic grounds. In 1981 he founded another art academy, in this case the Academy for Arts and Cultural Education (AHKCO).

'WAKA TJOPU'

In 1984 René Tosari founded Suriname's first artists' collective Waka Tjopu, which took its name from the classic Surinamese game of marbles. The aim of the collective was to boost cultural identity and self-respect. Its members included Winston van der Bok, Soeki Irodikromo, Ray Daal, Steve Ammersingh, John Djojo, Robert Bosari, Wagino Djamin, Kenneth Flijders, Hendrik Samingoen, Ruben Sonotaroeno and Ramin Wirjomenggolo. Waka Tjopu sought to contribute to cultural consciousness and initiate social renewal through artistic productions. In 1985 the collective participated in the 18th São Paulo Art Biennial. The group split up in 1990 and the members continued their work individually.

GALLERY 0.28

RIHANA JAMALUDIN

Rihana Jamaludin studied towards the end of the 1970s at the Teacher Training Institute in Paramaribo, where one of her lecturers was Jules Chin A Foeng. In 1983 she moved to the Netherlands, where she attended the Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam for some time. Jamaludin experimented mainly with graphic media such as linocuts, which she often developed in thematic series. At the end of the 1980s she turned her attention to the subject of the city, exploring its use as a setting and metaphor. In the corporate chill of the city, refugees and migrants wander in the night, urgently seeking sanctuary. Their “primal spirit” has a questionable past—she plays on deserted squares, issuing a challenge to the city. Since 2008, Jamaludin has been best known as a writer.

JULES CHIN A FOENG

Paramaribo (SR), 1944 – Paramaribo (SR), 1983

Vrouw met mand, 1972

Woman with Basket

lithography

on loan from Patrick Chin A Foeng, Leiderdorp

Jules Chin A Foeng became active as an artist in the mid-1960s, working in cubist, figurative, “archaist,” and other styles, predominantly in painting, graphic work, and work on paper. He also illustrated publications, and wrote a collection of poetry. He experimented with graphic techniques such as woodcuts and linocuts, partly because graphic work could be produced in volume and sold at affordable prices, making art accessible to a broader public. He probably first encountered the model for this expressive work on the street.

JULES CHIN A FOENG

Paramaribo (SR), 1944 – Paramaribo (SR), 1983

Chinese Flip-Flops, 1980–1983

oil on canvas

on loan from Patrick Chin A Foeng, Leiderdorp

A year after Suriname became independent in 1975, Jules Chin A Foeng became the first Surinamese artist to gain a Master of Arts degree at New York University. Here, he immersed himself in photorealism, a genre for which the artist uses paint on canvas to make work that emulates characteristics of photographic images. One of the artist's most important exhibitions of photorealistic work was staged at Galería Durban in Caracas, Venezuela in 1981. In this painting, Chin A Foeng depicts the colorful Chinese flip-flops that belong to his brother Allan in a hyper-realistic style.

RENÉ TOSARI

Suriname District (SR), 1948

Untitled (400 Jaar Verzet en Strijd Suriname), 1981

400 years of Resistance and Fight Suriname

linocut on paper

on loan from René Tosari, Paramaribo

In 1981 the Amsterdam society Februari Collectief invited René Tosari to participate in “Oppression and resistance” (*Onderdrukking en Verzet*), an exhibition that critically engaged with domestic and international injustice and terror. The message of Tosari's series *Libertad*—freedom—was political and unequivocally progressive; he applied a graphic language that drew inspiration from art from communist countries such as the former Soviet Union and Cuba to unite Surinamese freedom fighters from across the cultural board, among whom Boni, Baron, Ramjane, Mathura, and Anton de Kom.

SPIRITUALITY IN ART

The importance of cultural, spiritual, and religious life in Suriname led many of the country's artists to represent spirituality and its practice in their work. Their sources of inspiration included traditions associated with the original inhabitants of inland Suriname, the Winti culture that enslaved people brought from West-Africa, and stories from the Mahabharata and Ramayana epics that underlie Hinduism; within the Islamic tradition the afterlife, angels and the prophet are not portrayed. Artists such as Paul Woei and Soeki Irodikromo depicted the higher power of their own and other cultural groups. Spirituality is a factor that connects the Surinamese community.

WINTI

The word Winti is used to designate both a specific religious culture and the various nature gods that are part of it. Adherents to this culture believe in a supreme deity, the presence of ancestral spirits, and the power of *Maysa* (Mother Earth), and also that natural elements such as air, earth, water, fire, and forest embody forces that affect the human body and soul. Winti is a major source of imaginative inspiration for numerous Surinamese artists, depicting among others rituals surrounding death, or the power of the nature gods.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SR), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Rasta Morning, 1980

oil on canvas

acquired in 2017

This painting is typical of Armand Baag's oeuvre, in which he prioritizes spirituality. It shows several Rastafarians, whose religion has its roots in Jamaica. Two wintis, or nature spirits, can also be seen on the painting, and the hemp plants appear to be a reference to a method of contacting high realms. The figure to the bottom right is playing the xylofoon. Baag also masters this instrument and has possibly portrayed himself here.

GALLERY 0.29

SOEKI IRODIKROMO

Commewijne (SR), 1945 – Paramaribo (SR), 2020

Title unknown, 1971

oil on canvas

on loan from Egger Family, Amsterdam

Soeki Irodikromo's oeuvre incorporates work that reflects on everyday life in Suriname, as well as depictions of stories, forms, and events from Javan mythology. In this painting, he presents the character Bhima, one of the five Pandava brothers who fight for the kingdom against Kaurava in the story from the Indian *Mahabharata* epic. This story is also performed in Wayang puppet theatre plays. Irodikromo's reason for choosing Bhima is that "he is big and strong, he protects his family, and drives all evil away."

PAUL WOEI

Paramaribo (SR), 1938

Malake Dance, 1970

oil on canvas

collection Ministry of Education, Science and Culture,
Directorate Culture, Suriname

After studying drawing in Hong Kong around 1950, in the late 1950s Paul Woei attended the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague, and continued his education in Amsterdam. Since 1966 he has lived in Suriname, where he has embarked on several research trips inland, drawing inspiration from the local nature and culture. This painting offers a glimpse into the culture of the Wayana, who live in southeast Suriname; Woei has captured the moment from a ceremony when the dancers wear decorated headdresses.

ARMAND BAAG

Paramaribo (SR), 1941 – Amsterdam (NL), 2001

Joe firi na mi firi, 1990

Your Feelings are My Feelings

oil on canvas

on loan from Sura and Surina Baag, Amsterdam

The themes in Baag's work, which the artist himself called 'Baagism', manifest his love particularly of the (Afro) Surinamese culture, people, and traditions. The painting in this room shows a funeral cortege situated in an unmistakably Surinamese landscape. The three figures at the front appear to represent faith (hands in prayer), hope (floral wreath), and love (*faja lobi*). The two glowing red orbs in the background symbolize the *yorka*, the spirit of the person that is carried to the grave.

CREDITS

This reader was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Surinamese School. Painting from Paramaribo to Amsterdam* at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam from December 12, 2020 to May 31, 2021.

The exhibition is curated by guest curators Jessica de Abreu (anthropologist and co-founder of The Black Archives), Mitchell Esajas (anthropologist and co-founder of New Urban Collective and The Black Archives), Bart Krieger (publicist, independent art historical researcher and founder of “BAM! De Kunst Toko”) and Ellen de Vries (publicist and independent researcher) in collaboration with Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam staff members Inez Blanca van der Scheer (project leader STUDIO i), Claire van Els (curator) and Carlien Lammers (diversity officer). Ellen de Vries is the initiator of the project proposal. The exhibition concept was developed by the working group of (guest) curators. Chandra van Binnendijk (independent publicist and editor in Suriname) is involved as content editor and as consultant advising on the exhibition concept.

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Wim Bos Verschuur, *Letter to Anton de Kom*, 1933. Collection Suriname Museum Foundation, Paramaribo.

Nola Hatterman, *Na Fesie* (The Future), 1953, oil on canvas, 93 x 121 cm. Private collection, Suriname. Photo: Ellis Doeve © Estate Nola Hatterman.

Armand Baag, *Zapata Jaw*, Ronald Snijders and Judith de Kom *Performing at Vereniging Ons Suriname with a Portrait of Anton de Kom Hanging on the Wall*, 1970s.

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Augusta Curiel, *Groepsportret met missiezusters* (Group Portrait with Missionaries), ca. 1910, photograph, 12 x 17.3 cm. Collection National Museum of World Cultures, © Tropenmuseum, part of the National Museum of World Cultures.

Augusta Curiel, *Javaans gamelanorkest* (Javanese Gamelan Ensemble), ca. 1915, photograph, 11.9 x 17.2 cm. Collection National Museum of World Cultures,

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Letty Robben (right) and Maja Drenthe take the time to take a good look at Grandpa and Uncle Lou. Photo: Jacob van Vliet.

Portrait of Lou Drenthe. Photo: Ellen de Vries. Collection Drenthe Family.

Nola Hatterman, *Louis Richard Drenthe / On the Terrace*, 1930, oil on canvas, 100 x 90 cm. Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

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St. Louis Rhythm Kings, Third Person from the Right is Trumpet Player and Band Leader Louis Drenthe. Photo: Maja Drenthe. Collection Drenthe Family and Special Collections, University of Amsterdam.

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