

Melanchotopia exhibition
3 Sep 2011 – 27 Nov 2011

Melanchotopia epicenter
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Melanchotopia – between melancholy and utopia



Witte de With's *Melanchotopia* is an exhibition that invites more than forty international artists to work with private and semi-public venues in the city-center of Rotterdam – places where people live, learn and work – to activate their potential as spaces for ideas, debate and invention. The exhibition addresses the very fundamental question: What makes a city livable? With this project, we invite the inhabitants of Rotterdam and their guests to join us in exploring new ways of experiencing public life today.

Transcending traditional venues for public art – such as squares, crossroads, station plazas, canal banks etc – the show reaches out and provokes dialogue by inserting art in everyday contexts: in supermarkets, offices, schools. By deliberately choosing such familiar environments, the project reinforces or reiterates the vital role that art can play in shaping a thriving civil society.

From large-scale interventions to very simple gestures, *Melanchotopia* supports a range of artistic practices that go beyond the classic approach of displaying art in public space. Working with the existing dynamics of the

city, Witte de With's intention is to reveal and highlight the many layers of daily life in Rotterdam, creating a rich framework for subjective encounters. *Melanchotopia* is an exhibition about the multiple individual realities of Rotterdam.

Today, this city seems to be on hold, caught somewhere between its past and its future: filled with nostalgia for the pre-war city, while waiting for the completion of the utopian future, which is perpetually stalled in unfinished developments and reconstructions. Projections about yesterday and tomorrow drive the image of the city. *Melanchotopia* interprets Rotterdam's present moment through the specific practice of each artist.

At Witte de With, as in other major European cultural institutions, we are constantly asking ourselves: Who is our audience? Who are we talking to? How do we become a *more* public institution, a place that is not afraid to play a difficult role? We are deeply committed to fulfilling our crucial function by reaching out into the community and furthering cultural dialogue in all layers of society. In this ambition, *Melanchotopia* is a utopian experiment in bringing art to everyday public life.

While the symbolic and physical space of our institution is developed as a public place where critical discourse occurs, the exhibition reveals these same qualities within the fabric of the city. In the preparation of this exhibition, the enthusiasm shown by the proprietors and employees of the various venues has been overwhelming. We hope that their very different publics will join our publics in exploring these various spaces of ideas.

Nicolaus Schafhausen and
Anne-Claire Schmitz



The bombed-out center of Rotterdam after the rubble was cleared away, 1940.
Photography by KLM Aerocarto. Copyright: Aviodrome Lelystad.
From the collection of the Gemeentearchief Rotterdam (City archive).

1 Minouk Lim

Born 1968 in Daejeon, Korea. Lives and works in Seoul.



Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
(*Melanchotopia* epicenter, 3rd floor)
Witte de Withstraat 50
Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 18:00

Witte de With started as a radical alternative to existing institutional models in Rotterdam at a time when museums and artist initiatives were the only things around. Since its inception, it has kept something of those defining elements: flexible thinking and a theoretical restlessness that is as conceptually faithful as it is daring. It is, for all of the shows it has housed, an institution that keeps something of its youth: it (rarely) accepts traveling shows – instead it generates ideas that travel.

Minouk Lim's work is often a satire of the reckless development and money-driven landscape of contemporary society. Through installation and performance, the artist interrogates the collective memory of communities in an effort to recover realities that have been suppressed or plunged into oblivion. Lim is also an active community organizer who collaborates with different groups through her Pidgin Collective, founded in 2003.

In the *Melanchotopia* epicenter, Lim presents *International Calling Frequency* (2011), a video of the eponymous performance. This performance took place in August 2011 in Seoul and featured a group of singers, all of whom have been fired from the National Opera of Korea. Lim groups these performers together for a moment of poetic protest, creating a temporary community. They sing a version of the *Internationale*, the socialist/communist call to arms which became the anthem of the Soviet Union from 1922 to 1944. In order for the performance to take place, it must abide by the laws governing public space in Seoul, but Lim adopts these rules to provide the structure of the work itself. First, it has no lyrics, but retains the melody of the *Internationale*. Secondly, the singers stand at a distance of twenty meters from one another; any closer and their gathering would legally be declared a protest and therefore banned. Thirdly, to distort the melody and effectively present a different song, Lim collaborated with composer, musician and singer Minhui Lee, who scored a stretched version of the famous tune, making it slower, somewhat melancholic, closer in structure to a *ritornello*. Disassociating itself from a call to protest, the romantic humming resonates in one's mind and brings people together through collective memory. In distancing itself from the song's political content, Lim's work subversively reasserts its political power. At Witte de With, in addition to the video of *International Calling Frequency*, the score is available for visitors to take away, in printed form and electronically, thus furthering the dissemination of this powerful, understated protest. And in December, Lim and Lee will come to Rotterdam to carry out a workshop with singers here and to create a live version of the piece.

Born 1971 in Le Mans, France. Lives and works in Berlin.



Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
 (*Melanchotopia* epicenter, 3rd floor)
 Witte de Withstraat 50
 Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 18:00

Jean-Pascal Flavien's work encompasses a wide range of forms and combines architectural experiment, book publishing and performance with other media, such as video, drawing, installation and sculpture. For example, writing of his project *No Drama House* (2009), which saw him construct a very narrow house in the courtyard of his Berlin gallery, critic Vanessa Desclaux states: "Flavien's artistic approach [...] puts in parallel the physical arrangement of the house (its outside shape, internal organization and furniture) with minimal sculptures from the 1960s. [It] is an organization of space whose main concern isn't the functionality of a domestic space to be inhabited, but the creation of a series of situations which requires new gestures, movements, arrangement of the furniture, modes of use and narrations of the place." His practice in general raises "the questions of the aesthetics of existence and the nature of happiness in relation to art" (*Catalogue magazine*, issue 4).

Flavien's proposal for *Melanchotopia* is to swap the furniture – the basic practical reality – of two locations in Rotterdam. This could be a swap between a private space and a public space, for example between a home and a library, or between two private or two public spaces. He is interested in how this transfer alters the status of both places – both becoming private or both becoming public to some degree – and how it allows visitors to consider the space they are in, while also considering the reality and conditions of the other. For Flavien, the difficulty in finding two spaces willing to make this exchange is also interesting, the fact that there is a resistance to what is essentially a simple and reversible act. He will present his ideas around this project in person at Witte de With, whether the project is ultimately enacted or not.

3 Octavian Trauttmansdorff

Born 1965 in Vienna, Austria. Lives and works in Vienna.



Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
(*Melanchotopia* epicenter, 3rd floor)
Witte de Withstraat 50
Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 18:00

Coming from a position of institutional critique, Octavian Trauttmansdorff works in a multi-layered way, enfolding a wide range of aesthetic, social and political references into his multiform projects. He is creating a new work for *Melanchotopia*, titled *AUTO BIO* (2011), centered around the choreography of police regulating rush-hour traffic at key points in the city of Naples. It focuses on their gesticulation, which is intuitively connected to performance and dance, but with one major difference: their aim is to bring order to the traffic. The artist has interviewed instructors at the academy where the *carabinieri* are trained in traffic control, and includes quotations from these conversations as subtitles in his silent film. Trauttmansdorff writes: “my interest is in the methods used to establish order with specific, studied gestures, while representing government control in the midst of what is mostly totally dysfunctional chaos. The film is primarily about bodily movements [...] inserted within a disciplined introspection – like dancing for hours on a pedestal while trying to bring order into the traffic as a representative of the state.” He is influenced in this work by the artist / photographer / journalist Ugo Mulas and his exploration of film editing in relation to the speed of perception and to media reporting in post-war Italy.

Trauttmansdorff emphasizes that his work is not specifically about Naples, but he sees certain parallels between that city and the city in which the work will be shown. For him, while Rotterdam is a city that was destroyed and rebuilt, Naples is a city in the process of self-destruction. He writes: “[the film] is the product of my interest in political processes and the ways in which (abstract) art can impact positively on these.”

4 Tomo Savić-Gecan

Born 1967 in Zagreb, Croatia. Lives and works in Zagreb and Amsterdam.



Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
(2nd floor)
Witte de Withstraat 50
3012 BR Rotterdam
Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 18:00

Regulations often affect areas where their effects are not immediately visible. The consequences of actions sometimes only become obvious with a delay and may reach beyond the borders of the intended framework. The connection of cause and effect is rarely evident in our globalized and intertwined times. The works of Tomo Savić-Gecan appear to continue the tradition of conceptual art's denial of the primacy of the visual in favor of the idea. Conceived as interactions between different places that are brought into a complex relationship of cause and effect, his projects are intensive reflections on the visibility of causalities and on the commodification of art work.

Savić-Gecan creates minimal shifts within the exhibition space, or adds an almost impalpable element that subtly alters our sensorial perception, for example the minor alteration of a room's temperature or the intensity of light. All his works are *Untitled*. They are about specific experiences of an immaterial kind, which mostly unfold at two different places or two different moments. Within the framework of *Melanchotopia* the empty exhibition space of Witte de With (2nd floor) becomes the site of almost invisible changes, initiated and driven by activities in different locations in Rotterdam. Such changes can be articulated by the rising of the temperature of a room, but also by the rising of the entrance fee, the accessibility of certain rooms or their humidity. They may be triggered by the movement of a tram, the number of people entering a certain building, or the direct intervention of the exhibition's curators. The work thus highlights the way in which the institution of Witte de With is influenced by external parameters, and intertwined far beyond its locality.

5 Alex Morrison

Born 1971 in Redruth, England. Lives and works in Vancouver and Düsseldorf.



**Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
(façade)
Witte de Withstraat 50
7 days a week, 24 hours a day**

Alex Morrison, a former professional skateboarder, uses in his artistic work elements of political and cultural movements that aim for self-empowerment and for changes in society. Questions of the appropriation and commercialization of subculture are as important as the subculture's own potential in regard to a present dominated by conformity. The question of an alternative way to deal with urban space concerns Morrison in his videos, installations and interventions. His artistic practice combines an interest in private and public space and the negotiations resulting from the separation of these terms. Mechanisms of control, but also alternative modes for the use and the appropriation of commercialized spaces within the urban realm provide the basis of his often site-specific works. Referring to the actions and aesthetic of the grassroots movement, the artist tries to defend them from commercial adoption, to reactivate their subversive potential.

For *Melanchotopia*, Morrison designs an outdoor lamp that resembles an old gaslight, titled *A kernel of doubt in the mind of the banqueter hurrying home in the gaslit dark* (2011). The glass in the lantern is alternately blue and white, referring to the symbol of a Unesco heritage label, a blue and white shield. This official label is designed to protect important monuments or objects of cultural value from destruction even in times of armed conflict. Morrison uses this symbol within the context of the current cuts to cultural funding in the Netherlands. It refers not only to a conflict between past and present, but also to a protection against anti-cultural or anti-intellectual tendencies. The “kernel of doubt” of the title suggests that the route society has chosen to take might not be the best one. The lamp post also serves as the starting point for midnight bike rides, announced via enigmatic posters spread through the city, a subtle attempt of the artist to activate the local population.

6 Slavs and Tatars

Founded in 2005



6.1. SPAR Corandewal
Witte de Withstraat 32 - 34
Monday – Friday: 08:00 – 20:00
Saturday: 08:30 – 18:00

Convenience, convenience. This grab and go supermarket is the only one of its kind around Witte de With street, and during the workday, traffic moves through it at a pretty swift pace, mainly from those seeking fast lunch options or last minute items. A new addition in the back now serves sandwiches and freshly sliced bread.

6.2. Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
(*Melanchotopia* epicenter, 3rd floor)
Witte de Withstraat 50
Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 18:00

6.3. Pathé Schouwburgplein
(façade)
Schouwburgplein 101
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

The Pathé Schouwburgplein multiplex is part of the largest chain of cinemas in The Netherlands and evenings see it heavily trafficked by a young and diverse crowd of students, couples and professionals kicking back after the working day.

Slavs and Tatars is a collective devoted to an area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia. Their work spans several media, disciplines, and a broad spectrum of cultural registers (high and low) focusing on an oft-forgotten sphere of influence between Slavs, Caucasians and Central Asians. For *Melanchotopia*, Slavs and Tatars propose a project centered around the figure of Molla Nasreddin, a thirteenth century Sufi wiseman-cum-fool. Nasreddin is a popular folk character who can be found in children's tales and allegories across Eurasia, from Bulgaria to China. Using humor as disarming critique – riding backwards on a donkey – Nasreddin is an exemplary anti-modernist, as defined by Antoine Compagnon in *Les Antimodernes* (2005). Compagnon describes the true modernist not as the Utopian who only looks forward, but rather as the “anti-modernist,” the conflicted visionary deeply affected by the passing of the pre-modern age.

The project *Molla Nasreddin: Embrace Your Antithesis* comprises three elements: a souvenir available to buy from the SPAR supermarket, a platform for reading and discussion, and a text displayed in public space. Inside Witte de With's *Melanchotopia* epicenter, Slavs and Tatars present two river beds, large carpet-covered wooden benches much like those that can be found in tea house across Iran and the Caucasus. These act as a makeshift salon of sorts in that region, an unregulated space where friends can mingle and where people can talk freely. They house the Library of Equivocation, an edited selection of books available for the visitors' perusal. Finally, in cut-out lettering usually associated with local fêtes or birthday celebrations, the following phrase is presented to the Rotterdam public: “Keep your majorities close but your minorities closer.”

7 Zin Taylor

Born 1978 in Calgary, Canada. Lives and works in Brussels.



Weenink Bedrijfskleding

Westblaak 13

Tuesday – Friday: 09:15 – 17:30

Saturday: 09:15 – 17:00

This shop for workers' clothing sells across the board uniform attire for nurses, hotel staff chefs, cleaners. Team playing is the aim here, and personalized uniforms in corporate colors (with or without logos) are all possible.

Zin Talyor's contribution to *Melanchotopia* is installed in the Weenink Bedrijfskleding, a work-wear shop now owned by the Kattenburgs, a well-known family in the Dutch tailoring sector which has been active in the business for over five generations. As Taylor discovered during his visits to Weenink, the family has kept a sort of "record" of its tailoring activities. This record includes several unsold items from old "collections" (if this fashion term applies to the more functional aspects of this company's endeavors) which jointly provide a partial history of the social conditions of labor in 20th century Rotterdam.

As with his work in general, Taylor's approach to these collections is, strictly speaking, that of a material historian's: a particular concern for the development of forms, and the more or less esoteric moments in which these forms develop through social practices and historical necessity. Earlier works have addressed similar issues, through other references: eg. bread making and the shape of bread loaves. For this piece, Taylor has produced a set of altered pieces from these unsold "collections" which are being exhibited at the shop.

8 Erik van Lieshout

Born 1968 in Deurne, The Netherlands.
Lives and works in Rotterdam.



ROTTERDAM.INFO

Coolsingel 195 - 197

Monday – Friday: 10:00 – 19:00

Saturday: 09:30 – 18:00

Sunday: 10:00 – 17:00

This information hub is Rotterdam's city promotion center. At the service desks, city maps for visitors to town are readily available, but so are building plans and architectural models of new city developments, and tickets to local concerts, plays or festivals.

In the past few years, Erik van Lieshout has based his drawings and video installations on highly personal excursions that delight in opening one can of “socio-political” worms after another. He makes poignant films that represent the pulsing rhythm of his life today. His protagonists are Germany's unemployed, “soft” therapists, Theo van Gogh sympathizers and opponents, Chinese girls, junkies in Rotterdam and Ghanaian rappers. Yet the artist always casts himself in the leading role.

For his contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Van Lieshout presents a video installation of his film *Commission* at ROTTERDAM.INFO. The work, a commission by Sculpture International Rotterdam and Hart van Zuid, is part of Van Lieshout's long-term art project at Zuidplein in Rotterdam. It documents the artist's process of running, for a period of six weeks, a shop in Winkelcentrum Zuidplein, a popular shopping mall located in the “underprivileged” south of Rotterdam. While the shop did not sell anything, it presented a collection of junk and found items and included monumental-sized images of Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn and architect Rem Koolhaas as one all-encompassing art installation. The objective of the shop was to both draw the attention of passersby and for Van Lieshout to experience being a shopkeeper. During this period, he met with other shopkeepers, the mall's security team, passersby and friends who came to visit, recording it all on video. There is a potential clash of visions of Rotterdam between that projected by Van Lieshout's film and the one promoted by the tourist office. His artwork offers a more crude yet realistic view of the city as it delves into a more personal and human aspect of life in Rotterdam. In an open and comical manner, the film exposes the mindset of the community, thoughts on consumerist society and the rise of the extreme right in the Netherlands. It is both a portrait of a place where Van Lieshout's practice and life is interwoven, and an attempt to capture how artists are perceived in society.

Jos de Gruyter, born 1965 in Geel, Belgium. Harald Thys, born 1966 in Wilrijk, Belgium. Both live and work in Brussels.



Museum Rotterdam
Korte Hoogstraat 31
Tuesday – Sunday: 11:00 – 17:00

The vaguely baroque Schielandshuis is home to Museum Rotterdam. Alongside a permanent exhibition of the city's history, a program of changing exhibitions focuses on city concerns. For example, a recent exhibition taking place in its opulent interior has tried to situate the role of ritual in city life. The Schielandshuis is the only remaining 17th century building in Rotterdam's city center, and as such takes on a socio-spiritual relevance.

Collaborating since the end of the 1980s, the artists have developed an intriguing body of work, consisting of films, photographs, drawings and performances. The figures in their films and photographs share a condition of autistic detachment from each other and from their surroundings. Trapped by their actions and acting without empathy, they have reached another level of interaction, one in which spiritual powers prevail. They have engaged a recurring cast of non-professional actors, often members of their own families, together with puppets, dummies, plush animals, makeshift robots and rejected toys. These characters continually rehearse power dynamics and emotional entanglements, creating worlds not unlike our own, yet more intense and bleak, cut through with ghoulish humor.

For *Melanchotopia*, they present an existing film, *Der Schlamm von Branst* (2008, 20 min.), which literally translates as the Clay from Branst, which is a Flemish village. It features a group of people locked in a clay studio where they engage in a strange interaction, creating naïve or folkloristic forms, representing body parts, a horse's head, sculptures which the artists occasionally exhibit also. As critic Dieter Roelstraete has noted, the work is "De Gruyter and Thys' hilarious take on the age-old Golem myth, their jab at retelling the classic story of Frankenstein, with the workshop serving as a crude metaphor for the laboratory context of social engineering" (*Mousse Magazine*, issue 16).

10 Leon Kahane

Born 1985 in Berlin, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin.



Robeco
(lobby area)
Coolsingel 120
Monday – Friday: 09:00 – 17:00

As the world headquarters of a company that began in Rotterdam, this building houses over one thousand employees. Between working, they enjoy one of the best views of Rotterdam. The lobby is almost the archetype of an understatedly chic corporate entrance hall: a Warhol portrait of the Queen, potted plants, black leather sofas, black marble, and the company motto: “To deliver superior results through inspired investing.”

Though seemingly subtle, Leon Kahane’s photographs and installations are often loaded with socio-political comment. In 2005, he interned at the Israel Sun, a news photography agency where he worked as a photojournalist documenting events such as the demonstrations held at Abud, near Ramallah. More recently, Kahane developed a range of projects exploring Frontex’s activities, an EU agency based in Warsaw founded in 2005 to coordinate cooperation between Member States in the field of border security.

On the occasion of *Melanchotopia*, Kahane focuses on Rotterdam, and more specifically Maasvlakte 2, the expansion of its port. Maasvlakte 2 is a construction project that began in 2008 with the aim to create a new top European location for port activities, responding to the increasing demands of a global market and thus maintaining the leading role of Rotterdam’s port. It will eventually encompass 1,000 hectares of industrial ground, located directly on deep water. In August 2011, the artist visited Maasvlakte 2 and saw the Blockbuster, a special crane for lifting the enormous concrete blocks used in wave protection for shores. Kahane’s interest lies in how Maasvlakte 2 can function as a symbol of controlled nature and of prosperity, in the role it plays in profiling Rotterdam within Europe and the global market. Kahane’s contribution to the exhibition comprises film and the placing of a concrete so-called Xbloc, usually used in breakwaters, in front of the Robeco head office.

11 Monica Bonvicini

Born 1965 in Venice, Italy. Lives and works in Berlin.



11.1. Bar Mon Cheri
Westzeedijk 68 A
Every day: 21:00 – 06:00

This red-curtained bar has a good whisky list and the décor of a port-side tavern. Black and white photos of American musicians and actors line the wall, as does one of The Beatles. They say that on any given night, there are ladies who don't mind sharing their time at the bar. Respectful, they also make great conversation-alists for all kinds of sailors, not just those coming in port-side...

11.2. Shop Erotica
Schiedamsedijk 5
Monday – Friday: 11:00 – 21:00
Saturday: 11:00 – 20:00
Sunday: 12:00 – 18:00

Not for the faint of heart, perhaps, this local shop sells sex toys, lingerie, and items for mixed or personal use and pleasure. Its website claims it has everything that the experienced user might need, including pills that get the libido going, but it also says that virgins are welcome as well. And it keeps pretty considerate hours: it's even open on Sundays.

“In her art, Monica Bonvicini raises issues regarding gender and power relationships in all kinds of contexts,” wrote the curators of her recent solo show at the Kunsthalle Fridericianum (*Both Ends*, Kassel, 2010). “At the center of her work are architecture and public spaces, the world of labor, sexuality, as well as politics and representation, whose close connections she reveals. [...] In Bonvicini's eyes, buildings as well as urban and suburban infrastructure are by no means neutral, but on the contrary obsessive, politically ideological, and sexualized.”

For *Melanchotopia*, Bonvicini presents two works. The first – *Tears* (2011) – is a hollow extender for men, made from Murano glass, shown at a Rotterdam sex shop. The second piece is a site-specific intervention in the bar Mon Cheri. Here, Bonvicini replaces the existing curtains around the stage with mirrored material that reflects the light. Within the rather secret world of the bar, the colored lights and reflections of the disco ball are refracted and doubled by the mirroring, as are the members of the audience sat around the stage.

12 Sven Augustijnen

Born 1970 in Mechelen, Belgium. Lives and works in Brussels.



Avondwinkel Alexia
Schiedamsedijk 6a
Monday – Friday: 17:00 – 01:00
Saturday: 15:00 – 01:00
Sunday: 15:00 – 24:00

With a shop for erotic goods on one side and a video store on the other, late nights see this shop off Blaak stay open. The lights are always on for grab-and-go goods, and it stocks snacks, cigarettes and tobacco: basics for late-night life.

Sven Augustijnen's work concentrates mainly on the tradition of portraiture and the porous boundaries between fiction and reality, using a hybrid of genres and techniques to disorienting effect. In his videos, Augustijnen has developed a particular style of showing people's behavior and mannerisms in speech. On the edge of the documentary genre, due to the nature of recording the evolution of characters, his films stage the rhetorics of everyday situations. His approach conveys an extreme realism, in which the viewer is seduced and drawn into a voyeuristic, obsessive analysis and a particular perception of human behavior, body language, and linguistics.

For *Melanchotopia*, Augustijnen presents his film *L'école des pickpockets* (2000, 52 min) at the night-shop Avondwinkel Alexia in Rotterdam. The film shows two professional thieves giving a master class in the art of stealing, in front of a camera. It follows the process of two experienced pickpockets transforming an aspiring talent in the span of just a few hours of training. The student is initiated step by step into the philosophy of the trade, whereby the various moves that constitute this "handicraft" are demonstrated and practised. Several trial runs are also carried out on willing volunteers, picked by chance from an adjacent street.

13 Michael Van den Abeele

Born 1974 in Brussels, Belgium. Lives and works in Brussels.



Galerie VIVID

Red Apple building

Scheepmakershaven 17

Tuesday – Sunday: 12:00 – 18:00

Located on the ground floor of the Red Apple building at Wijnhaven, this international design gallery is an important presenter of unique works and functional design objects as well as exhibitions that integrate elements of art and architecture. When founded in 1999, it became one of the first galleries dedicated to presenting design in an art context, and since then it has organized exhibitions of work by Ettore Sottsass, Atelier Van Lieshout and other important and emerging makers in the field of 20th century and contemporary design.

Notions such as space, territories and imaginary geographies are at the core of Michael Van den Abeele's work. Through his practice, Van den Abeele reinvents the frameworks and references that define our existence. He works in a stylistically diverse manner, shifting from formalist to narrative, from intuitive drawings via dead-pan computer animation to commodity-like sculptures or cabaret song-performances. Van den Abeele is interested in the diverse array of activities that form part of our existence, and conceives them within his practice as a homogenous yet paradoxical entity.

For his contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Van den Abeele presents an installation including sound and a lead sculpture. The sculpture, an object reminiscent of a small, amorphous creature, is placed within VIVID design gallery. It is resting on a concrete pedestal placed on a wall, like a bird or even a seated silhouette. The sound piece was originally composed by the artist for the *Perennial* project in Wiels, Brussels (2011). The narrative adopts a contemplative and romantic tone, providing an informative observation of stones as an insight into how the Universe came about. It makes references to ontological, aesthetic, historical as well as literary understandings of the Universe. Notions such as fundamental understandings of the Cosmos, along with our perception of time, and a sense of melancholy are combined into a sober, almost scientific narrative, which gives way to an underlying critique of how we perceive and understand our existence.

14 **Kate Newby**

Born 1979 in Auckland, New Zealand.
Lives and works in Auckland.



Willibrordschool
Nieuwstraat 15
Monday – Friday: 08:30 – 17:00

This Catholic primary school has a great playground on its roof. Inside, students from Rotterdam's center as well as its outer boroughs are taught subjects from reading to math. It is a modern school in every sense, and the building won the Rotterdam Architecture Prize 2010.

There is a wry poetry to Kate Newby's works, many of which are modest interventions or casual-seeming collections of mysterious yet commonplace materials. Her working method is often spontaneous, as she reacts to a given space to undermine its dominant aspect, or to reveal hidden qualities of the exhibition context, whether inside a gallery or in public space, through both physical means or words. For her contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Newby develops a site-specific work that is drawing upon the conditions of her chosen site, a primary school in the center of Rotterdam.

Previous works have taken a similarly ephemeral or restrained approach. For example, for *Show Me Don't Tell Me* (Witte de With, 2008 Brussels Biennial), Newby hung a banner daubed with the words "AT LAST" from the window of the building, to be read by bemused passengers who happened to look up as their trains passed by. It was titled *The ability to absorb attention when no one is there* (2008), and is typical of the understated humor of her titles and of her modest approach to art making. For her recent solo exhibition *I'll follow you down the road* (2011) at Hopkinson Cundy (Auckland), Newby commissioned a short text titled *Let's get out* by Paul Elliman. It concludes: "Guess what guys, the Renaissance ended. The cosmogony of the universe may have been privatized but most of it's outside anyway. Public space, right? Keep your eyes open and try not to get bumped by a car as you step out into the street for a closer look."

15 **Saâdane Afif**

Born 1970 in Vendôme, France. Lives and works in Berlin.



Rotterdamse centrum markt
Hoogstraat – Binnenrotte
Every Tuesday and Saturday: 13:00

On Tuesdays and Saturdays, market stalls descend and unfold on this centrally-located site. The open-air market sells typical bric-a-brac fare, but also addresses the necessities for day-to-day living. Among the goods that can be had for a small price: fabric, bike parts, electronics and tools, fur hats, fish, cheese, flowers and fruit. Families and couples like to stroll here; there is something for everyone.

Saâdane Afif is most definitely a melanchotopian. In his multifaceted, open-ended, cross-disciplinary practice, motifs of melancholy emerge frequently, taking the form of skulls or other *memento mori*. A melancholic register can also be detected in many of the poems and songs that Afif commissions to extend his works. Despite the undercurrent of *tristesse* that one can detect running through his oeuvre, his method of working – which incorporates multiple voices, ideas and creators into his practice – is inherently utopian.

For his contribution to this exhibition, Afif presents a performative project that stems from his solo show at Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010) and the recent performance *The Speaker's Corner of Hamra Street* (Beirut, 2011). Twice weekly in Rotterdam's main market, standing on a typical soapbox – so beloved of speakers wanting to share their political message or religious beliefs – an actor will read aloud a sequence of poems written by friends and colleagues of Afif, inspired by his works. To speak out, to read aloud poetry in public – especially in the context of a bustling market – is a fleeting moment of exposure and fragility. Through the repeated appearance of this figure over the course of three months, the performance begins to take on the same permanence as a piece of public sculpture, a fixed feature of the market that starts to influence its reality.

16 Murray Gaylard

Born 1974 in Queenstown, South Africa.
Lives and works in Berlin.



Grotekerkplein
(along the water)
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

Far less trafficked than the streets it connects, this fairly new no-frills square faces the Laurenskerk, a late Gothic basilica – the only existing medieval building in Rotterdam’s center – and connects Rotterdam’s busy high street (Hoogstraat) with the slightly more chic shopping street called Meent. Born during the post-war reconstruction period after the city’s bombing, it is a rather hidden space, despite its central location, and has a peaceful yet somewhat sad quality.

Employing elements of performance, video, sound, and also studio practice, Murray Gaylard’s work has been oriented towards bridging the spheres of aesthetic sensibility and political necessity.

For *Melanchotopia* he alters an existing streetlamp that stands in front of the Laurenskerk, a church near the Binnenrotte, turning it into an audio-visual installation. Passersby trigger a spotlight and hear the sentence “even in this most unflattering light you’re beautiful” emitted from a concealed speaker. The streetlamp is located at the foot of a short flight of steps that descend from a busy shopping street onto a square in which the city has built a stage for hosting open-air events. Most of the time, however, the square remains relatively unused – a “lonely church plaza with a very romantic piece of river,” as the artist describes it. With this minimal gesture, Gaylard’s streetlamp emphasizes the passerby’s transition between two different kinds of public space: one destined for leisure, the other for commercial activities.

17 Arnoud Holleman

Born 1964 in Haarlem, the Netherlands.
Lives and works in Amsterdam.



Beurs – World Trade Center
(entrance hall)
Beursplein 37
Every day: 09:00 – 18:00

Beurs-World Trade Center is composed of two main parts. The iron armature of the former exchange hall designed in the early 1930s by Jan Frederik Staal was joined by a more contemporary tower structure in the 1980s. The building is home to over two hundred companies, and offers spaces for rent to outside businesses and individuals for conferences, events, or meetings. It also has an art collection and a gallery.

Arnoud Holleman's artistic practice is one that plays with notions of chance and blurs the boundaries between fiction, reality and fantasy. His works incorporate a broad range of media, and he adopts strategies of quoting, borrowing and appropriating from a wide array of disciplines. Subsequently, questions about the nature of all media and the notion of authorship emerge in almost all his works, carefully adjusting to each new context with a certain degree of irony. Often led by opportunities, the artist has a tendency to skip from one subject to another. As such, he displays no urge to establish definite links between things, reminding us that there is not only one outlook on life. The inherent absence of clarity in his hybrid productions reveals an implicit criticism of how we define and perceive our existence.

For his contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Holleman presents an installation inside the Beurs – World Trade Center building. His work is comprised of two digital billboards, on which two different years appear in parallel and change constantly. At one instance, the years 1945 and 2036 may appear, indicating past and future years. Through these random parallelisms of years, Holleman plays with one's collective and individual memories, and imposes associations where perhaps none should be made. His melancholic works consider memory and the passage of time, constantly oscillating from collective to individual forms of expression.

Born 1974 in Barcelona, Spain. Lives and works in Los Angeles.



Stadswinkel Centrum, Stadhuis
(entrance via side street Doelwater,
opposite Hoofdbureau Politie)
Coolsingel 40

Monday – Wednesday: 08:00 – 16:00

Thursday: 08:00 – 13:30

Friday: 08:00 – 20:00

Saturday: 10:00 – 12:30

(No more than six visitors are allowed access
at any one time.)

1920 saw the completion of this Beaux-Arts building, with its yellow-colored stained glass detailing, under which all the administrative aspects of municipal life take place. Here, the day-to-day dealings of official life are managed, for newcomers to the city and long-time residents: housing registration is filed, passports are applied for, records of birth and death are issued, or certificates to prove you have never been incarcerated. Take the appropriate ticket and you're on your way.

Adrià Julià's artistic practice is one that plays with the ambiguities between the visible and the invisible, between truth and belief. Interested in interruptions and natural imperfections, his projects are often linked to stories rooted in a specific historical event.

For *Melanchotopia*, Julià presents an adaptation of his installation piece *Sunken Rooms* (2011) at Rotterdam town hall. More specifically, the work is installed at the Stadswinkel, literally translated as the "the municipality store," which is where Rotterdam residents can purchase various legal papers. Julià's installation – comprising constructions, texts, film, and sound – evokes the disappearance of a 19th century community, the Utopians (located near Cincinnati, USA), which was wiped out by flood on 13 December 1847. The community had constructed a phalanstère from bricks, a building based on the ideas of French utopian socialist and philosopher Charles Fourier. In 1846, they sold the building to a group of Spiritualists, who in turn decided to relocate it, brick by brick, to the banks of the Ohio River. The following year, as the Spiritualists were holding a ritual to celebrate the opening of the reconstructed building, heavy rains caused the river to rise, leading to the greatest flood in 100 years, which swept away the whole community. As Utopia's current residents claim to have seen ghosts of this lost community, Julià – along with Melinda Smith, a leading researcher of paranormal activity in Eastern Ohio – carried out an investigation in an area below the ground that belonged to the Utopians, which forms part of the material included in the artist's installation. The location chosen for this installation brings an additional layer to the work, as the town hall is a monumental brick building that was one of the few buildings to be spared during the bombings of 14 May 1940.

19 Dirk Bell

Born 1969 in Munich, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin.



GRAND HOTEL CENTRAL
(hotel bar)
Kruiskade 12
Every day: 11:00 – 02:00

During the Rotterdam blitz of the Second World War, bombs struck nearly everything around this seemingly invincible hotel. Its rich wood interior, its intimate bar with red walls, low ceilings and a white piano lend themselves to late night drinks and late night talks, as well as the occasional art party. Something of a neighborhood legend, this grand hotel is the kind of place where it's easy to imagine unexpected things lurking at the corner of the bar, even when you're the only one there.

In Dirk Bell's artistic practice, the correlations between concepts and symbols acquire multiple meanings. In his work – which ranges from videos, drawings, paintings, sculptures and installations – Bell employs seemingly conflicting references to pop culture, art history and literature, through which criticisms of these references are suggested. Bell's interest lies in the free associations that can be created between symbols and words, and how these, in turn, may create ambivalent meanings, leaving us in a state of uncertainty.

Bell makes us question our acquired knowledge, and forces us to look beyond it to achieve a rather stripped-down or radical understanding of our existence and the essences of life. He is interested in notions of freedom and limitations, of how in seeking to go beyond boundaries we build our own boundaries. Although he uses a pictorial language that is familiar to us, his aesthetic is hard to pin down and includes elements as diverse as quotations to Surrealism or references to New Age ideas and esoteric thinking. His work brings us into a world where we are confronted with dualities, or offered two apparently conflicting options. Bell stages a gray zone in which neither right nor wrong, Yin nor Yang, are clearly distinguishable.

20 Nina Pohl

Born 1968 in Berlin, Germany. Lives and works in Berlin.



Q-Park Weena
(Level – 1)
Karel Doormanstraat 10
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

This 24-hour parking garage can accommodate up to 480 vehicles and at any given moment it can give that many access to downtown Rotterdam. Just a quick walk from here: theaters and casinos, various forms of entertainment, shopping and work, all the extraordinary aspects of the city's existence.

Nina Pohl is interested in representing the spectacle of nature, and uses the mediums of photography and film to explore the potential of illusion. She creates assemblages of different depictions of landscape, her references ranging from Old Master paintings to the her own physical experience. Pohl's works reveal the dynamics between surface and depth, and examine possibilities of the image, questioning the promise of eternity that can be generated by visual media.

For *Melanchotopia*, Pohl presents her new film *UNKNOWN I* (2011), of which Timothee Ingen-Housz writes: "Thousands of birds flocking about in the twilight skies, forming exquisite shape-shifting assemblages. This flying congregation almost turns the picture to noise, erasing any sense of depth, scale, space and measure. A mass without a leader morphing in an entity greater than the sum of its parts, a creature harmoniously moving without any direction – yet in all directions at once. Is this a reassuring picture of masses in choreographic bliss – an ideal form of harmonious anarchy, or is this self-organized chaos the picture of our last utopia? Free as a bird, free as a herd? What to do but to stare at the multitudes in motion, and let the massive swarm disrupt perceptual habits just as it seemingly bends the laws of gravity. There is no central character here, no protagonist: the crowd is the star. As a distant echo of Eisenstein's revolutionary stagings, the masses filmed here may well evoke something of an uprising, a revolutionary fight. This levitating crowd's motion, however fluid it may be, appears no less conflictual than it seems comfortable in the midst of chaos."

21 Nasrin Tabatabai & Babak Afrassiabi

Nasrin Tabatabai, born 1961 in Tehran, Iran. Babak Afrassiabi, born 1969 in Tehran, Iran. Both live and work in Rotterdam.



Het Schieblock
(dépendance, ground floor)
Schiekade 189
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

Established to function as a creative hub for Rotterdam, het Schieblock looks for new strategies to propose an alternative economy and energy in the city center. A decade from now, the building will be entirely destroyed to make way for new constructions. Its inhabitants want to use the period until then to create a city laboratory, a meeting place for everyone involved in urban development: architects, economists, cultural entrepreneurs, biologists, engineers, artists, designers, filmmakers and programmers. From this interdisciplinary starting point, they seek to develop new ways of looking at a city.

In 2004, the artist duo started *Pages*, an ongoing project consisting of a bilingual Farsi/English magazine, architectural proposals, video documentation and installation works. Their aim with *Pages* is to create possibilities for reflecting on socio-political conditions of cultural practice, in order to generate a space of criticality. They seek to undermine predefined and geographically-bound notions of subjectivity, triggering discussions of the social and political within a broader, global context.

For their contribution to *Melanchotopia* at het Schieblock, the duo showcase display furniture developed by art and cultural institutions in Rotterdam. This furniture ranges from tables, benches, pedestals, to vitrines and other structures purpose-built for the display of art and artefacts. This project considers the material infrastructure of exhibition-making from different art institutes in Rotterdam as potential cultural assets in a period of economic and cultural crisis. It explores how the making use of the means at one's disposal can lead to an entrepreneurial approach. The display furniture is also a testament for the history of the given institution, as much as it testifies to a history of the display of art.

22 Peter Hutton

Born 1944 in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.
Lives and works in Tivoli, New York.



The Manhattan Hotel
(lobby and restaurant)
Weena 686
Every day: 09:00 – 17:00

As the brochure to Rotterdam's only five star hotel will tell you, this hotel offers luxury, the latest technology as well as convenience to weary travelers and those coming from abroad. Facing the railway station, it is frequented most often by businessmen and women coming in from out of town, and it welcomes visitors from every corner of the world. One imagines that the upper floors offer an impressive view of the city center.

Peter Hutton is a filmmaker who produces and directs poetic portraits of cities and land sailor, he spent nearly forty years traveling the world (often by cargo ship), which enabled him to create meditative and intimately diaristic studies of places, from the Yangtze River to the Polish industrial city of Łódź, or from northern Iceland to a ship graveyard on the Bangladeshi shore. Whether seeking to record a city's fading past, or reflecting on nature's fugitive atmospheric effects, Hutton plays with the notion of time. Each film unfolds with a series of extended single shots taken from a fixed position, in reference to cinema's origins and to traditions of painting and still photography.

For his contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Peter Hutton presents a selection of his films in the lobby of The Manhattan Hotel. Hutton's hour-long film *At Sea* (2007) tracks the history of a container ship, beginning with its construction in South Korea, to the journey of another ship as it crosses the ocean from Montreal to Hamburg, and ending on a shore in Bangladesh. While the film suggests a sense of reverie and voyage, it also unfolds a comment on capitalism and trade. The context of waiting in a hotel lobby heightens Hutton's exploration of notions of time and anticipation, and its location as a mere pit-stop emphasizes the ideas of travel and movement discernible through his work. Hutton's seemingly simple, silent films reveal an artist dedicated to re-awakening a more contemplative way of observing and envisioning the world.

23 Tobias Spichtig

Born 1982 in Lucerne, Switzerland.
Lives and works in Zurich.



Nationale–Nederlanden
(lobby area)

Weena 505

Monday – Friday: 07:00 – 19:00

Untitled (film set) is illuminated from
12:00 – 13:00 and 17:00 – 18:00

It's impossible to exit or approach the central station without seeing this leviathan building – one of Rotterdam's tallest – and its shorter twin. Also from outside of the city, this black monolithic tower is one of the defining architectural landmarks of Rotterdam. It even sparkles at night. The black marble sculpture outside is the last thing you'll pass when biking west past the station. Mind the tram crossing.

Tobias Spichtig usually says his practice is “about nothing,” but nothing in a very precise manner. “I look for a vacuum, a position that is neither one nor zero.” His absorption with nothingness often manifests itself as an exploration of the emptiness of the icon, which he compares to “the nothingness of a movie star in his physical absence on screen, which we fill with images, mythologies and scandals.” For *Melanchotopia*, Spichtig is staging nothing, but in a very precise manner. Titled *Untitled (film set)* (2011), his work consists of several film lights, installed to dramatically illuminate a corner of a room, creating the suggestion of a film set, albeit one without cameras. These lamps will – quite literally – highlight the architecture of the space, but also the movements of the people inhabiting it. Spichtig aims to “impose another layer of reality onto a standard situation by simply using light.” The work emerged from his experience of coming across film shoots in New York and Los Angeles, which always attract a crowd in the same way that an accident or crime scene might. The day-to-day environment of an unremarkable location suddenly becomes special, the bright lights revealing details that would otherwise go unnoticed. As Spichtig puts it, these film sets draw attention to “something that we might call reality.” For him, the use of light in film and television is comparable to the painted light in the works of masters such as Tintoretto and Rembrandt. It is used to focus our attention.

In response to an invitation from *Melanchotopia*'s curators, Spichtig has also worked with ING's art collection. He received images of the entire collection via email and selected three jpegs of pieces – a vase, a painted landscape and a sculpture – which he found intriguing. He then added a picture of a sports car and had them printed on canvas. These are hung in the foyer and semi-public spaces of the Nationale-Nederlanden building, and the rest of the collection is temporarily removed from display. The project – titled *The best pieces* (2011) – plays with the value of works on canvas, toys with the clichéd idea of corporate collections, and parodies the habit of framing and hanging reproductions as if they were originals.

24 Harold Ancart

Born 1980 in Brussels, Belgium. Lives and works in Brussels and New York.



Rotterdam Centraal Station
(walls of the blue containers,
temporary station buildings)
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

For many visitors, this railway station serves as a first introduction to the city of Rotterdam. The eclectic view of new office buildings and postmodern high-rises surrounding this thoroughfare – itself under (re)construction since 2007 – says it all: Rotterdam is a city rebuilt, and its spaces are continuously being reworked and reinterpreted.

Harold Ancart describes himself as a draftsman, yet his is a draftsmanship that mocks its own precision with errors, stains, traces and burns. In a series of recent works, he draws through space with fishing line painted with black pigment, as if conjuring shapes in mid-air. Other recent works have been made with soot and ash, either thrown against gallery walls (perhaps in gentle mockery of the macho-heroics of Richard Serra) or left as the traces of burnt materials.

For his solo exhibition at La Chaussette (Brussels), Ancart used the seemingly innocuous title *Sous les palmiers, la plage* (Under the palm trees, the beach). The phrase evokes the rallying cry of Mai '68, "Sous les pavés, la plage" (Under the paving stones, the beach), while rendering the phrase almost tautological, emptied of utopian metaphor and now merely descriptive. The show featured – among other works – an image taken from the popular culture of tourism, of a typical beach paradise. Ancart found this postcard image from the Internet, printed it on a large scale, and then altered it by burning raffia strings dunked in turpentine laid along the depicted tree-line. The same image appears in his work for *Melanchotopia*. The result is simultaneously picturesque and disconcerting. Of his postcard images, Ancart says: "They are imaginary spaces, impossible spaces, idealized spaces. They are the postcards underneath the visor shades of cab drivers, the posters in the lockers of construction workers – the sports cars, the super hot babes in swimsuits perched on high heels, the possibility of an island where one could escape, the dream of a common consciousness that is subtly burning. Such images are necessary because they maintain the illusion of a better becoming, even though one is aware of their unattainability. One has to dream of something positive, one has to live in the illusion that one's own condition is just a transition."

25 Lawrence Weiner

Born 1942 in New York, US. Lives and works in Amsterdam and New York.



**Rotterdam Centraal Station
(tunnel)**

7 days a week, 24 hours a day

While it is under construction, the tunnel that connects Rotterdam Centraal's train platforms is the only reminder, besides the notice boards at either end, that this station receives such heavy usage. Passengers spill out at either end, or run to catch trains. Above them, with the rebuilding in full swing, "beats the new heart of Rotterdam," as the developers tell us.

A part-time citizen of Amsterdam, Lawrence Weiner may not require an introduction in the Dutch context, where he has been active for over three decades. Among the long, international list of his interventions in public space, a particularly relevant one took place here in 1993, when he famously had the phrase "AS LONG AS IT LASTS" inscribed along the shaft of the Euromast, in Rotterdam. Since the 1960s, Weiner's work has been actively redefining the conditions of viewership in relation to the nature of the art object and, more precisely, the conditions of viewership that an artistic intervention involves.

For *Melanchotopia*, Weiner proposes to re-locate his original intervention, placing the sentence "AS LONG AS IT LASTS" in the tunnel of Rotterdam's central station. In its reiteration, Weiner's sentence frames a recent history of Rotterdam, collapsing the range of events (political and otherwise) that have taken place here between 1993 and the present.

26 Henrik Plenge Jakobsen

Born 1967 in Copenhagen, Denmark.
Lives and works in Copenhagen.



**Rotterdam Centraal Station
(Platform 3-4)**

7 days a week, 24 hours a day

International and local trains arrive at and depart from Platforms 3 & 4 of Rotterdam Centraal Station. It is a platform of expectation, of wheeled suitcases and hastily checked tickets, complete with its own shop for that last minute packet of sweets.

Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's installations alternate between entertainment and distraction, seduction and estrangement. He often uses the language and the formal structure of popular culture, but his works express open dissonance with today's entertainment industry and event culture, with our virtual economies and social hierarchies. His works are socio-critical in the sense of examining and discussing political, economic, and social structures that form the foundation of our modern life. Whether exploring economy-driven ideology or religious/magical practices, Plenge Jakobsen's works provoke intense feelings. They confront the viewer with their own fixed framework of interpretation, revealing its historical or social determination.

For *Melanchotopia*, Plenge Jakobsen places a Catherine Wheel on one of the platforms of Rotterdam's central train station. Catherine Wheels or Breaking Wheels were used during the Middle Ages and Renaissance as a torture instrument, or to display body parts from corpses after capital punishment. Placed in a space of urban transition, Plenge Jakobsen's contemporary version of this medieval object is detached from reality, but still has the power to bring to mind ancient forms of public punishment that were designed to frighten people, prevent them from committing similar deeds and thus consolidate the ruling order. A simple installation, the Catherine Wheel adds a Brueghel-like darkness to Rotterdam's brightly lit city center, raising questions about the visibility of today's mechanisms of control and punishment.

27 Thea Djordjadze

Born 1971 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Lives and works in Berlin.



**Groot Handelsgebouw & Engels
Grandcafé Restaurant Zalen**
(access via entrance A)
Stationsplein 45
Every day: 08:30 – 17:00

The Groot Handelsgebouw is a grandiose business complex, designed in the time of utopian post-war architecture, with a future of commerce in mind. It contains more than simply offices, featuring many hidden gems: for example, a gallery, a photo academy, and a panoramic roof deck. The latter is part-managed by Engels Grandcafé Restaurant Zalen, which also occupies a corner of the ground floor. This establishment is highly esteemed, even by the Dutch monarchy, who have accorded it the special status of *hofleverancier*, or “purveyor of the royal court.” Travelers and regulars meet over meals inside its 1950’s interior, which is also the site for many after-work drinks.

Thea Djordjadze’s fascination with the functional and the formal is evident in her practice. Working with everyday materials such as plaster, wood, textiles, or wire, her installations evoke the domestic realm. This is emphasized by the use of found objects such as carpets and lamps, which often act as a makeshift shelf or table on which she presents other sculptural elements. Influenced by the legacy of Minimalism, but also by the aesthetic and theory of Postmodernism, Djordjadze deconstructs her chosen materials into their ideological components in order to reveal the social utility that was rendered invisible by architecture and design.

As Mel Trad, curator of her current solo show at Glasgow’s The Common Guild states: “Djordjadze’s sculptures range from intimate hand-held objects to large architectural forms. Often referencing the body through the suggestion of clothing or furniture, her sculptures allude to familiar forms through their scale, shape and surface. Despite this familiarity, her work often appears to come from another time or place, or to suggest a previous existence or forthcoming use. [...] By utilizing display mechanisms like shelves, plinths, tables and cabinets within the work she aligns the objects with something between the ethnographic museum and the fetishized collection.” For *Melanchotopia*, Djordjadze continues her practice of creating site-specific sculpture, using the existing display cases inside the Groot Handelsgebouw and other aspects of this complex building.

28 Mårten Spångberg

Born 1968 in Kallinge, Sweden. Lives and works in Stockholm.



Pathé Schouwburgplein
Schouwburgplein 101
Every day: 09:00 – 22:00
(open until 00:30 on Friday and Saturday)

The Pathé Schouwburgplein multiplex is part of the largest chain of cinemas in The Netherlands and evenings see it heavily trafficked by a young and diverse crowd of students, couples and professionals kicking back after the working day.

With a background in choreography and a long-term collaboration with the architect Tor Lindstrand under the name International Festival, Mårten Spångberg's recent work explores the structural foundations for aesthetic experience.

Spångberg is interested in how to “empower” both the artist and the institution “against policy.” He is interested in exploring the way in which value is ascribed to cultural institutions. In his opinion, politicians understand culture in terms of corporate relations and activation (the visitor should not just look at something, but be activated with all his senses), and in terms of efficiency (hence the argument that culture does not produce value but is a parasite on society). For him, the intentional conflation of various (often contradictory) practices under the heading of “culture” means “that culture is whatever politicians decide it to be.” He continues: “This implies that there can be one policy for culture, which incorporates everything from museums to rock-festivals.” It is problematic that all aspects of the cultural sector are measured with the same instruments and that art is expected to fulfill the same goals as these other practices, when instead artistic work needs to be measured *vis a vis* completely different parameters.” Spångberg therefore believes that the artistic domain needs to disconnect itself from the so-called creative sector: “New alliances must be formed [...] that engage in the production of the possibility of new forms of autonomy.”

29 George van Dam

Born 1964 in Windhoek, Namibia. Lives and works in Brussels.



Rotterdamse Schouwburg
(Kleine Zaal)
Schouwburgplein 25
Melanchotopia opening – concert on
Friday 2 September at 19:00

This city theater hosts an ambitious 500 performances a year. They say there's a chain of tunnels underneath it, from which one can hear the orchestras rehearsing. Visitors walking in from the square outside – once a derelict area, unused, and now something like a stage for modern life – can catch performances by international performers as well as by major Dutch theater, opera and dance companies.

George van Dam started his career as violinist aged seven and made his début as soloist in Saint-Saëns' Third Violin Concerto at the age of sixteen. After his studies in southern Africa and North America he settled in Brussels, where he graduated from the Royal Conservatory. Since the end of the eighties, Van Dam has gained increasing recognition for his work in the contemporary music world. He regularly collaborates with some of the most prominent contemporary composers and has premiered several works specially written for him. He has also composed music for dance and theater, as well as film scores and chamber music and he has collaborated with visual artists also. For example, Van Dam appeared in Manon de Boer's film *Presto, Perfect Sound* (2006) that was shown as part of her solo exhibition at Witte de With in 2008.

Specifically for the occasion of the current exhibition, Van Dam has created *Music for Melanchotopia*, for a soprano, string ensemble and electronics. Inspired by the cacophonous and fragmentized nature of the city, the work draws upon the space, time and rhythm of Rotterdam, which Van Dam experiences as a form of melancholy. For the opening, the fully orchestrated piece is premiered live at the Rotterdamse Schouwburg. For the duration of the exhibition, it is audible in fragments at the *Melanchotopia* epicenter, via the website www.wdw.nl and as a teaser for the *Melanchotopia* audio tour. These fragments in turn establish their own time-spaces and will eventually come together in a composite time-frame, the music bringing these fragmented elements into a new entity.

Music by George van Dam & Claron McFadden.
Performers: Claron McFadden, soprano;
George van Dam, violin & keyboard; Jeroen Robbrecht, viola; Hans Vandaele, cello;
Aleksander Gabrys, double-bass.
Bastien Gilson, sound engineer, and Tom Bruwier, lighting designer.

30 Olivier Foulon

Born 1976 in Brussels, Belgium. Lives and works in Berlin.



Location of investigation: Mauritsplaats

This passageway, connecting the Mauritsweg with the Schouwburgplein is really not a plaza or square, but it does contain one of Rotterdam's best gay bars, snuggled next to a Greek restaurant. Formerly known as a place for junkies on the search for heroin, it remains as a distant reminder of the extremes that exist in the city's society, the theater-going public mixing with the skateboarders heading for tempting flat surfaces of the Schouwburgplein.

For *Melanchotopia*, Olivier Foulon dives into Rotterdam's history of public art commissions. His contribution to the exhibition involves an interpretation of the history of *Ring*, a work by German artist Isa Genzken commissioned by Commissie Beelden in de stad [Commission Sculptures in the city] in 1988. Genzken intended to install a monumental ring sculpture, made of steel, in the city center of Rotterdam. The ring would have been installed at an angle, leaning on two buildings separated by a street (the Mauritsplaats). Although production had started, the sculpture was never completed, allegedly because some inhabitants of the concerned buildings believed that the sound of the wind blowing through the empty ring would be too disturbing. Genzken's sculpture was thus abandoned and discarded in parts.

The form Foulon's investigation takes will emerge over the course of *Melanchotopia*.

31 Michael Beutler

Born 1976 in Oldenburg, Germany.
Lives and works in Berlin.



Pauluskerk
Westersingel 7A,
7 days a week, 09:00 – 21:00

The ethos of Pauluskerk is that “everyone strengthens each other.” Presently housed in a temporary building, as it awaits its new home under construction just across the street, the Pauluskerk offers a sympathetic ear and a convivial atmosphere. Open to everyone, especially people living on the margins of society, it offers a refuge to those in need, but also acts as a welcoming spot for people to hang out.

Michael Beutler is very good at spotting possibilities in unexpected materials. In his sculptural practice, he often creates large-scale context-specific installations. The construction process is as important as the outcome, and many of the installations are built using hand-made, hand-operated machines that the artist designs and subsequently exhibits. In the recent exhibition *Manufacture* (Parc Saint Leger, 2011), for example, Beutler created a system for dyeing, corrugating and gluing long lengths of paper. With this specially adapted material, the artist then set about making workbenches, typically the first act of a woodwork hobbyist. The seemingly simple idea – to make a workbench and thus establish the ideal space for working – becomes somewhat absurd when one considers the time and effort he invests in the process. For Beutler, there is a perverse enjoyment to be had from reinventing the wheel.

For *Melanchotopia*, Beutler is working with the Pauluskerk, a church that operates as a community drop-in center, welcoming around 1500 visitors per week. The artist aims to make a modest work with some kind of use value, without taking over the space or acting as a sort of pseudo social worker. He creates a workstation inside the church to produce personalized cushions, based on the traditional hassocks that one sees piled in churches and used on pews or for kneeling on the floor. Adopting a typically low-tech technique and using simple materials like foam and fabric, the artist makes these small portable sculptures with the interested members of this loose congregation, who can then also take them. Whilst each design is different, they may all feature an invented logo of the new Pauluskerk – currently under construction as part of a major real estate development across the street – as an informal, and gently ironic branding campaign.

32 Danaï Anesiadou

Born 1975 in Pirmasens, Germany.
Lives and works in Brussels and
New York.



Danaï Anesiadou's artistic practice is centered on live events, staged or otherwise, in which autobiographical representations become a platform for the search of aesthetic and political metaphors. Operating in the expanded field of performance, her theatrical actions and installations invest images of "high" and "low" culture with confessional, mystical and surrealistic motifs, often using elements that the baroque theater rescued from Greek Tragedy: doubling of bodies and personae, falsifications of death and deception, masks, and so on. Infused with the combined aesthetics of a séance and a magic show, her actions stage these motifs in the space of suspense, folding them into each other, and refracting them through the crystals of autobiographical reflection.

Van Urk – Piano's & Vleugels

Westersingel 42

Monday – Thursday: 09:00 – 17:30

Friday: 09:00 – 21:00

Saturday: 10:00 – 17:30

This three-storey retailer sells new, used, classical, digital and antique refurbished pianos, from Grand pianos and Steinways, to more affordable uprights. Operated by the Van Urks for four generations, it bridges the gap between ancient and modern, or classical and contemporary. Amongst prospective customers tickling the ivory is the occasional piano tuner, and if you're lucky, you might even catch an impromptu concert.

33 Peter Wächtler

Born 1979 in Hannover, Germany. Lives and works in Brussels



Rotown
(entrance area)
Nieuwe Binnenweg 17-19
Every day: 11:00 – 02:00

Rotown is one of the biggest bars on Rotterdam's Nieuwe Binnenweg, an old street, already part of the town in the 15th century. On any given night, a famous band from another land might perform, special films might be screened, or a DJ from out of town might play in this performance venue / dance club / restaurant. In good weather, its sidewalk terrace is the first to fill with a mixed crowd, taking a beer in the last rays of the setting sun.

Peter Wächtler is interested in how specific groups within society create their own rules for social interaction, and the impact this has on society at large. His approach is neither cynical, nor that of the “objective” ethnographer. He creates group portraits in video, photographs, drawings or text which function as X-ray images of their hidden dynamics. The groups that Wächtler has “followed” – for example, Green Party speed meetings in Brussels; Medievalist weekends in Northern Germany; or the film set culture of a large Hollywood production – all have a certain cultish factor that disturbingly appears to be redefining contemporary forms of socialization.

For *Melanchotopia*, Wächtler has produced a script for a theater play that has been staged in collaboration with the students of the Rotterdam-based student fraternity Sanctus Laurentius. Written by the artist, and acted by the students, *Tim and Racky* (2011) is a tragic love story that intersects with several motifs of daily life: work, love, ambition, friendship and death. In the resulting video, although the students play themselves in their own environment, they appear somehow stripped of the day-to-day power-play of fraternity life. As in earlier instances of Wächtler's work, in *Tim and Racky* play becomes a form of representing and idealizing forms of social engagement and interaction.

34 Guillaume Bijl

Born 1946 in Antwerp, Belgium. Lives and works in Antwerp.



Jan Segeren herenmode
Mauritsweg 41a
Tuesday – Saturday: 09:30 – 17:30

In a 19th century house on the Mauritsweg is Jan Segeren herenmode (menswear). Begun four generations ago as a tailors, this chic shop now specializes in classic, stylish designs, also offering bespoke suits for the modern man.

For *Melanchotopia*, Guillaume Bijl presents a series of five hats belonging to historical figures, installed according to a well-known museum convention: on pedestals, protected by cubic vitrines. The deceptively descriptive title of the work is *Five Historical Hats*. Once a quotidian image, and even an obligatory element of one's daily attire, the hat (particularly the felt and feather hat) has become a somewhat historical, somewhat theatrical image. The proposal is characteristic of Bijl's oeuvre, which has consistently approached the social reality of "our" time through the incidence of these two categories (historical, theatrical) of aesthetic understanding.

The artist himself has classified his approach into four separate "gestures": 1) Transformation Installations, in which reality is placed in unreality; 2) Situation Installations, which effect the inverse gesture (unreality in reality); 3) Sorry Installations, in which random objects are arranged in absurdist fashion, teasing the viewer; and 4) Compositions Trouvées or found compositions. Clearly there is no direct correspondence between each of these categories and the actual works, which often fit into several of these, but they do provide a sense of the artist's methodology when approaching his subjects, and of the transformations that these subjects suffer under the artist's hand.

35 Filip Gilissen

Born 1980 in Brussels, Belgium. Lives and works in Brussels.



De Karel Doorman
(on the corner of Karel Doormanstraat and Crispijnstraat)

Melanchotopia opening – on Friday
2 September from sunset till sunrise

This soon-to-be residential building on the edges of the Lijnbaan – a busy shopping district built in the early 1950s – is presently midway through construction. It offers over a hundred units, in close proximity to the city's center. Although the units are not yet inhabited, visits to a sample apartment are made possible by its management company on Thursday evenings, when its luxury interior and views of the city can be enjoyed free of charge.

Filip Gilissen is drawn to gold, a glittering color that he uses in many of his works to reflect upon representations of wealth, happiness, on – as he puts it, “the overstatement of signs of thrill and celebration in a success driven society.” “It’s not gold on which you can build cities or futures,” said the artist in a recent interview, “It’s gold that makes you happy for one night – and then it’s gone.” For the Liverpool Biennial, Gilissen presented *The Winner Takes It All* (2009-2010), a group of glitter cannons in the gallery space that were rigged to go off when the thousandth visitor entered the exhibition. After the explosion, the resulting carpet of glitter was traipsed through the rest of the museum, a wry comment upon the way in which entertainment culture is infiltrating the spaces of “high” culture.

Continuing his line of sarcastic celebration, Gilissen created a massive illuminated sign designed to broadcast the truism “It’s All Downhill From Here On.” Measuring 9.5 x 12 meters and featuring one thousand light bulbs, this rotating, flashing light sculpture has been shown in the night sky of Brussels and Ostend, and will appear, for one night only, in Rotterdam. In the Belgian context, it was read as a comment upon the political stalemate that is crippling the country, but the work’s message is more enigmatic than a purely political reading could allow. Suspended from a massive crane – usually an icon of construction and progress – the cross-shaped text references the current day confusion between religion and marketing, and offers a new form of surprisingly silent protest.

36 Markus Schinwald

Born 1973 in Salzburg, Austria. Lives and works in Vienna and Los Angeles.



Queens of Rings

Eendrachtsplein 12c

Monday – Wednesday: 11:00 – 19:00

Thursday – Friday: 11:00 – 21:00

Saturday: 11:00 – 18:00

Sunday: 12:00 – 18:00

This Rotterdam tattoo parlor has a team of artists who use state of the art equipment to ink high quality images on your skin, or place piercings of your choice through any part of your body. The shop's interior features many tattoo illustrations and shiny surfaces in black, white and cream, emitting a rockabilly sort of vibe. In contrast with the busy flux of customers, the shop's permanent inhabitants include a tank of fish, quietly surveying proceedings.

In his work, Markus Schinwald seeks to engage the viewer in an active construction of multiple storylines, transforming a passive visitor into an active protagonist. He often investigates the psychological relationship between space and the human body.

His interests include the uncanny and the discomfiting, focusing on the idiosyncrasies of the human body. For example, since 2008 he has been developing a series of portraits which flirt with fetishism and evoke an extreme feeling of alienation. As Jeffrey Kastner writes, Schinwald “locates the potential for menace in the unlikely setting of classic portraiture. His paintings begin with appropriated oils of indeterminate provenance – competently painted if unremarkable canvases, probably eighteenth- or nineteenth-century – which he first has restored and then slyly deforms, typically through the addition of delicately rendered forms of cryptic prosthesis: Peculiar little bandages, slings, splints, braces, and other obscure, quasi-medical paraphernalia are insinuated into their otherwise calmly quotidian representational environments” (*Artforum*, March 2010). For *Melanchotopia*, he presents a selection of work building upon his investigation of the human figure and the dynamics at work behind its distortion and representation.

37 Ricardo Okaranza

Born 1959 in San Sebastian, Spain.
Lives and works in Berlin.



Bilderberg Parkhotel
(lobby area)
Westersingel 70
Every day: 09:00 – 23:00

What started as a sea captain's house on Westersingel and accommodation for sailors, has turned into one of the few inner-city hotels to boast an elegant garden, indeed one of the very few green spaces in the so-called *binnenstad*. Comprised of several different buildings from different periods, the hotel was renovated in the 1990s to give it an overall design.

Ricardo Okaranza is fascinated by the way in which everyday objects speak about the time of their fabrication. On a micro level, the politics of that time has been inscribed into their design, translated into an aesthetic concept. For example, in Germany, the Adenauer-era's (1949-1963) conservatism is reflected in designs characteristic of the 1950s, which transformed the purism of the pre-war era into something more popular. Similarly inscribed with the ideology of its period is the still life genre of painting. This medium of bourgeois representation depicts arrangements of objects with a multi-layered semantic as well as symbolic charge. The language of flowers, its religious symbolism and the displaying of exotic things as insignia of wealth and power find expression in this genre. The Dutch still life of the Baroque is also famous for its realistic depiction. It became a medium of painterly excellence with which the aspiring bourgeoisie who had gained their riches from international trade displayed their new social status.

For *Melanchotopia*, Okaranza brings together his interest in design and still life painting in a work titled *Still Alive* (2011). He collaborates with the official florist of the Bilderberg Park Hotel to present a selection of floral arrangements in vases from the Okaranza-Mendibe Collection. This is the artist's own collection, which features over 3000 mass-produced ceramic vases manufactured in Germany between 1955 and 1968. Photographs of the first installed bouquets are displayed alongside their real-life counterparts in the hotel's lobby. Reality and its representation thus enter a realm of subtle tension where the real flowers, exchanged for new ones as they fade, differ from their photographically conserved representations.

Born 1963 in Paris, France. Lives and works in Brussels.



Buro Rietveld / Dutch Style Company
(garden, visible from the street)
Jongkindstraat 16
7 days a week, 24 hours a day

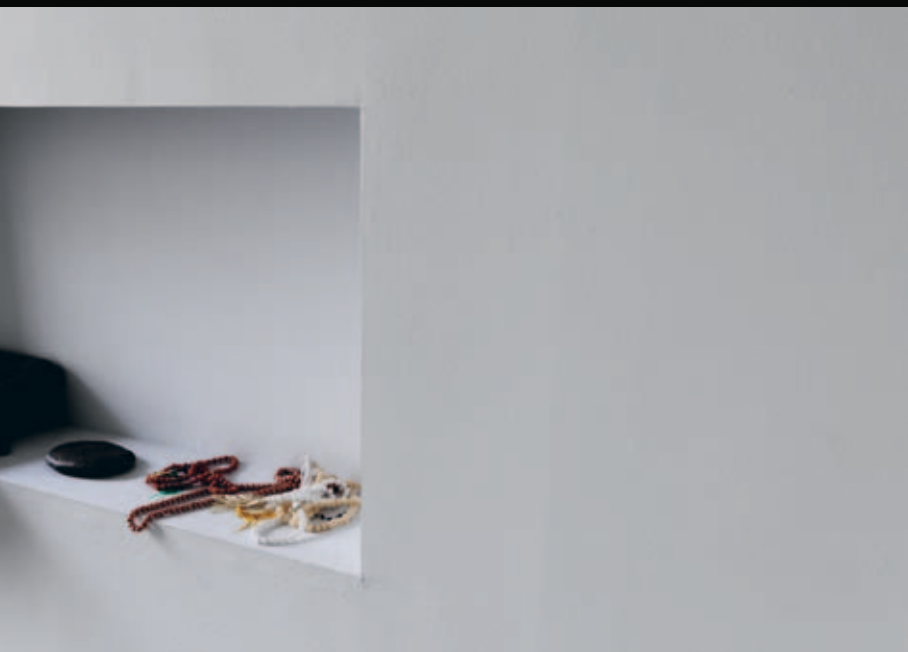
Lying in a green square of land are six unique villas. First constructed as private houses, they have since taken on different functions. The ground on which they are built was known as the Land of Hoboken, named after the land's proprietor, a wealthy ship owner. In the 1920s, the city bought the land and constructed the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and numerous blocks of flats. The latter were soon thought to be a blot on the urban landscape and were demolished, with private villas and gardens constructed in their wake. This house was built somewhat later, at the end of the 1950s, commissioned by Van der Meer, who was also involved in the design of neighboring Huis Sonneveld and of the famous Van Nelle factory. His brief: to create a luxurious house for a rich Rotterdam industrialist, who need no longer be envious of Wassenaar, Berlin or Düsseldorf!

Pierre Bismuth's work explores the multiple manifestations and products of knowledge and culture. Through a practice of inversion, proliferation and repetition, Bismuth challenges any logic of efficiency and usefulness, and gives a critical look at our contemporary condition.

For *Melanchotopia*, he bases his work on Rotterdam's reputation for creating ambitious urban projects. Similar to the short term projection in his synopsis for the film "Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind," Bismuth proposes here a vision of how commercial zones will become the only public spaces of the near future. Starting from the observation that technology seems to federate an extensive part of the population – incorporating all cultural, religious and social groups – he is mapping out the possibility to create a hub that would bring together a supermarket for electronics, a sports center, and several places of worship for Rotterdam's most represented ethnic groups. This is a combination concept that feeds the political dream of a unifying and pacifying tool, both healthy and spiritual, which moves towards the future, and – last but not least – is good for the economy. Bismuth's piece was developed as a real architectural project, in collaboration with the international, Brussels-based architecture practice NFA (Nicolas Firket Architects) and brought together an actual team of construction experts. It takes the form of a standard contractor's building-site billboard, announcing the imminent construction of the new commercial complex. This announcement is placed in the garden of one of the few historical houses in the city, a Modernist villa on the edge of the Museumpark and facing the NAI. In order to build Bismuth's building, this example of Rotterdam's architectural heritage would have to be destroyed, continuing the cycle of destruction and reconstruction that so strongly shapes the identity of the city. To the passerby, unaware of its fictional anti-utopian nature, it gives a sense of reality and possibly danger; in other words, a truly *public* dimension.

39 Kostis Velonis

Born 1968 in Athens, Greece. Lives and works in Athens.



Erasmus MC

(Stiltecentrum, follow signs from the main entrance)

's-Gravendijkwal 230

Every day: 07:00 – 20:30

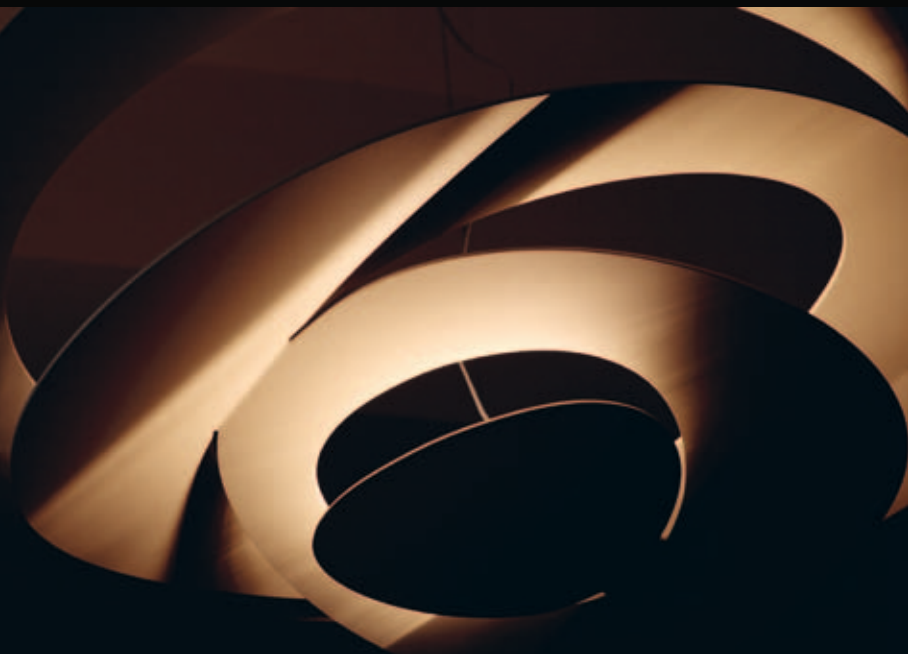
This meditation center for patients and visitors to the Erasmus hospital is a place that anyone can enter. Prayer mats, fountains, and statues alongside key texts related to Hindu, Christian and Islamic traditions. All are welcome regardless of beliefs or religious affiliation, and non-believers or Atheists are welcome here too.

Kostis Velonis' works combine personal stories with the reworking of historical events, marrying elements of domesticity and revolution. His sculptural compositions are "small environments built to host loneliness," as XYZ (curators of the Athens Biennial) once so aptly described them. According to a recent review, Velonis manages to diagnose his melancholia without disowning it. Instead, he preserves this melancholy as a force of potential in his sculptures (see *Artforum*, April 2011, p.236).

For *Melanchotopia*, Velonis presents three works in the "Stiltecentrum" (literally the silence center), a pray center within the Erasmus hospital. This is a space of retreat, which is divided into three orientations. In the room for Atheists, Velonis presents *The Holy Mountain (The White Geometry of Winter)* (2011), of which he says "Its form is heretical in relation to Masonic symbolism and represents a pantheistic will." In the Catholic room, he presents *Set Design for Praying* (2002) and in the Muslim room *Swedish Flying Carpet* (2002). These are both pieces that reference the exact location of prayer for each faith – the former evoking a hassock or prayer-cushion, divided by a red cross, the latter a whimsical *musallah* or prayer mat, made of pale pine and seeming to be in mid take-off. Of these slightly tongue-in-cheek sculptures, Velonis says "on first sight, the visitors and the patients might possibly feel embarrassed, but in a positive way."

40 Adam Gillam

Born 1970 East Farleigh, England. Lives and works in London.



Hartman Binnenhuisadviseurs
Mathenesserlaan 190

Tuesday – Saturday: 09:30 – 17:30
(open until 21:00 on Friday)

Laid out like several living rooms in one, this interior design shop sells furniture pieces by major Dutch brands. Clean lines, finished surfaces, the pure simplicity of Modernist design elements are distilled into tables, armchairs, couches, shelves, stools and lamps. The building that houses this store, designed by Johannes Hendrik van den Broek, was built in the early thirties, in the same period as many of these designs were first being developed.

Adam Gillam develops a sculptural practice that uses everyday materials to create open, sometimes deliberately obtuse compositions. As the description of his work included in the 2008 Brussels Biennial stated: “The sculptures attempt to capture the moment where everything is about to make sense or immediately prior to things falling apart, preferring instability above clarity of meaning.” His works are structurally light, unobtrusive, sometimes verging on self-effacing. For example, some of his recent sculptures have started to act as a means to view the wall behind the work itself.

For his contribution to *Melanchotopia*, Gillam continues this approach further and explores the idea of a window, as a transparent plane, as a form reminiscent of a painting, and in its interaction between an object and a wall. Adopting a practice of gentle interference, he proposes a sequence of gestures within a shop window, as a site that offers a very direct engagement with the audience, while remaining transparent and unintrusive. His project references the way in which the windows of unused shops are often “painted” with Windowlene, an opaque temporary polish that blocks off the view from outside. As with net curtains – which offer privacy but reduce the light that can enter a space – these forms of surface intervention provoke a sense of everyday melancholy.

41 Lidwien van de Ven

Born 1963 in Hulst, The Netherlands.
Lives and works in Rotterdam and Berlin.



De Havenloods
Every Wednesday, 1 newspaper spread

Founded in the 1950's by Rotterdam pastor Jos van Krimpen, the father of gallery and museum director, Wim van Krimpen, Rotterdam's free newspaper, *de Havenloods* [The Harbor Pilot], comes out on a weekly basis and delivers coverage of the city's current events. Local news for a global city.

Lidwien van de Ven is an artist who works in the realm of political and religious subjects. In her research, she takes a rather journalistic approach by occupying the same sites of investigation as journalists. While her images are not photojournalistic *per se*, they instead record that which is outside the frame of news stories and question the unseen in events covered by the media.

For her participation in *Melanchotopia*, Van de Ven defies the conventional way of presenting photography in an art setting and re-enacts her photojournalistic approach by inserting a series of her photographs in Rotterdam's local newspaper *de Havenloods*. Published every Wednesday (starting from 31 August 2011) during the duration of the exhibition, readers and the local audience are confronted with a different take on the media. Van de Ven will also produce the fourth artist book of Witte de With publishers' *Rotterdam* series that cast a view on the city of Rotterdam through the medium of photography. For her publication, Van de Ven decided to mirror Rotterdam and its socio-political development as part of a global international phenomenon.

42 Sarah Morris

Born 1967 in Sevenoaks, U.K. Lives and works in New York and London.



The *Melanchotopia* rain forms the base of the exhibiton's logo, as such it is spread throughout the city of Rotterdam in every participating location.

Visitors may notice that Rotterdam is a city with lots of wind, cloud cover, and rain. Its skies are typically a neutral kind of gray. The weather reminds us that this is a land in constant battle with the sea. Like the movement of traffic, the fast pace of work, the wind that howls, the splashes and dots and dashes of rain are percussive elements drumming the beat of a life that just keeps on going.

Since the mid-1990s, Sarah Morris has been making complex abstract paintings and films. These works, based on different cities, are derived from close inspection of architectural details combined with a critical sensitivity to the psychology of a city and its key protagonists. In her film work, Morris both seduces and alienates the viewer, employing different kinds of cinematography, from documentary recording to seemingly set-up narrative scenarios. The films focusing primarily on heavily populated cities, from *Miami* (2002), *Los Angeles* (2005), to *Beijing* (2008) to her most recent *Chicago* (2011), draw an intricate and intimate portraiture of the city from the inside out. In *Los Angeles*, for instance, Morris explores an industry fuelled by fantasy and examines the trenchant relationship between studio, producer, director and talent. *Chicago*, however, shifts the lens to a panorama of an American city in transition.

For *Melanchotopia*, Sarah Morris contributes to the visual identity of the exhibition with her specifically designed *Melanchotopia*-rain logo. The logo is a hybrid composition arranged by Markus Weisbeck (Surface) which consists of Morris' design and Witte de With's logo, a cloud designed by Gerard Hadders (Hard Werken). Morris' design, a graphic interpretation of rain, is inspired by the logo which appears on the packaging of the American product Morton Salt, whose headquarters are based in Chicago. Through her design, Morris also makes a reference to her latest film *Chicago*, which features shots of one of Morton Salt's factories. This reference is a critical addition to *Melanchotopia*'s visual identity as she associates the psychology of the city of Chicago with that of Rotterdam. While her film *Chicago* looks at an American city in transition, by association Rotterdam is also viewed as a city in transition through the lens of this exhibition.

***Melanchotopia* audio tour**

***Melanchotopia's* sphere of activity – the streets, squares and corners of central Rotterdam – conceal a number of remarkable tales of the city. Veldwerk film + educatie + beleid has developed an audio tour especially for *Melanchotopia* to encourage the listener to pause and reflect on the here and now of the city and the personal experiences of its residents and users.**

From the stories – some ordinary and some less ordinary – of old and new Rotterdammers and artists, the listener discovers alternative and hidden dimensions of the city. Some audio clips directly connect to an artwork and artist, others refer to the themes explored in the exhibition. With a mix of stories and unique neighborhood sounds, the tour offers confrontations with and intrusions into the typical home-work rhythm of everyday life: it halts the flow, pricks the ears, focuses the eyes and meshes with the texture of the city.

How it works

The audio tour consists of twelve audio clips that can be heard separately, in random order. Like the exhibition, the audio tour has no fixed route or sequence, so you can create your own route through the various art works and audio sites.

- The audio clips are free to download as an MP3 file from the Witte de With website, www.wdw.nl.**
- An audio clip can also be downloaded on location by scanning the provided QR-code with a smart phone.**
- An MP3-player containing the audio tour can be borrowed during opening hours from the Witte de With building, the epicenter of *Melanchotopia*.**

Please note that these audio clips are predominantly in Dutch.

QR-codes for audio tour

Scan with a smart phone to hear the audio clips, or go to www.wdw.nl

Each clip runs for approximately 4 minutes.

A

audiotour



B

audiotour



C

audiotour



D

audiotour



E

audiotour



F

audiotour



G

audiotour



H

audiotour



I

audiotour



J

audiotour



K

audiotour



L

audiotour



- A**

Introduction: sounds like *Melanchotopia*
Listen to the ins and outs of the audio tour.

Location: No fixed location.
Language: English / Dutch
- B**

24/7 out of key
This police station may look empty but here the beating heart of Rotterdam's CCTV is concealed. In the non-stop rhythm of the city, ten pairs of eyes search 24/7 in real time for people who step out of line. Police officer Ronald Roskam and operator Evert Visser talk about their special work.

Location: Corner of Witte de Withstraat (number 25) and Hartmansstraat.
Language: Dutch
Recorded at 05:00
- C**

Welcome to Rotterdam
Your guide to Rotterdam today is neither a historian nor a born Rotterdammer. Students of the ITHA Dutch Language Institute have put together a special schedule. Experience the city through a newcomer's eyes, those of an expat who is still getting to know Rotterdam.

Location: ROTTERDAM.INFO, Binnenwegplein / Coolsingel 195-197
Language: Dutch
Recorded at 17:00
- D**

No Man's Land
What is your relation to public space and what is public space's relation to you? According to artist Murray Gaylard, the Grotekerkplein [Great Church Square] suffers from a severe case of schizophrenia. And that feels uncomfortable. What should you do? How should you behave? Murray presents a new way to move through this space.

Location: Middle of the Grotekerkplein.
Language: English
Recorded at 21:00

E**Before after**

Where were you and what did you do when the news hit like a bomb? How long was that moment? What is eternity? How tangible is your memory? Artist Arnoud Holleman sweeps you along in his memory to the moment when he was shaken to the core.

Location: Entrance hall of the Beurs World Trade Center, 37 Beursplein.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 14:00

F**But wait...**

On average, a person spends one year of their life queuing. Supermarket, fitting room, airport. Waiting is a particular experience. Step into the nighttime queue with Rotterdam's philosopher and criminologist Marc Schuilenburg, experience time and listen to his strategies to make the queue significantly shorter.

Location: Off Corso, 22 Kruiskade.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 02:26

G**City sounds**

Listen with the ears of the composer George van Dam to the sound of the city of Rotterdam where the noise of the wind always dominates. How can the wind be caught? Where is it going so urgently?

Location: Station Square / Weena.

Language: English

Recorded at 08:45

H**Core Business**

City map, calendar, menu. More than half of the printed matter to be seen in Chinese restaurants rolls off these presses. But there is a generation conflict going on. Printer Chiu Wah Li guides you through trend and tradition in the Chinese characters. Walk down the street, look and compare.

Location: Sidewalk outside Skyland, offset printers, 31 Mauritsweg.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 10:33

I**According to the rules**

Jan Ebeltjes knows the rules and so knows how to skirt the city laws. This subversive citizen wears clogs, is a farmer deep down and parks his tractor where he can. He squats, wanders, builds, demolishes and enjoys. Park yourself at the parking meter, listen and try it out at your own risk.

Location: Parking meter at house number 146 -149 on the Nieuwe Binnenweg.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 23:00

J**Inside Out**

Anatomist Gert-Jan Kleinrensink takes you from his office in the tall white tower of the Erasmus hospital to the dissecting room on the ground floor where city dwellers donate their bodies to science. Go with him past nerves, blood vessels, organs, and joints and get to know the body of the city.

Location: Main entrance or the courtyard of the Erasmus Medical Center, 230 's-Gravendijkwal.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 15:05

K**One square meter of urban nature**

Harbor residents Hannie and Daan cast a glance from their boat in the ferry port over their dynamic back garden on the waterfront and the strange birds on the dock. Urban ecologist Remko Andeweg takes a close look at the plants on the bank. Something remarkable is going on across from the municipality's orderly plant containers and benches.

Location: Dock of the ferry port,
15 Veerkade.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 12:00

L**Grid**

At this spot, the paths of several city users cross on their way to work and home, shopping and promenading, then the bike courier races through, and momentarily cuts everyone off. Jorrit Spoelstra delivers his packages to the top floors of various office buildings in the city. But the bike is more than simply efficient; it is part of his urban experience.

Location: Foot of the Erasmus Bridge at the junction of the Boompjes and Vasteland.

Language: Dutch

Recorded at 10:10

***Melanchotopia* epicenter**

3 Sep – 31 Dec 2011

During *Melanchotopia*, and remaining active until 31 December, Witte de With's galleries are reconfigured to become the *Melanchotopia* epicenter. Here you can find out more about all the participating artists and their projects for the different venues of the exhibition. Several art works and installations are also on show inside the epicenter and it is the site for numerous events.

Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art
Witte de Withstraat 50, 3rd floor

Opening hours: Tuesday through Sunday
11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed on Mondays)

Admission prices

€ 5,00	<i>Melanchotopia</i> epicenter at Witte de With including exhibition guide
€ 2,50	under 18 / students / CJP / seniors / groups > 10
€ 10,00	Passepartout valid the entire exhibition period including admission to all lectures and artist talks
Free	under 12 / CKV / Rotterdampas / MJK

Access by public transport from Rotterdam Centraal Station

tram 20 direction Lombardijen, stop Museumpark

tram 7 direction Willesplein / Nesserdijk, stop Museumpark

bus 46 stop Westblaak

metro lines A / B / C, stop Eendrachtsplein

Guided tours

Every Wednesday and Sunday at 3 p.m. there are free guided tours of the exhibition.

On Wednesdays, after a brief introduction inside the *Melanchotopia* epicenter, the guide will lead you to a number of venues outside Witte de With.

On Sundays, the tour consists of a comprehensive introduction to the exhibition, and a closer look at the projects, works and installations that are to be seen in the epicenter, after which you are free to visit other *Melanchotopia* locations at your own speed.

Duration: approximately 1 hour.

Reservations are not necessary.

These tours are designed for individual visitors and not for large (school) groups.

Group visits

For groups of 10 persons and over, a tour can be booked for € 60 via reservations@wdw.nl.

For schools, there is a reduced rate. Groups pay the discounted entry fee to the *Melanchotopia* epicenter.

Art Confrontations

Groups of (young) adults, students and secondary school students have the possibility to take part in an art confrontation as part of *Melanchotopia*. During an art confrontation, the group will view and discuss the exhibition together with an educator of Witte de With, who will encourage the group to look carefully at the works on display and form their own opinions of them. Art confrontations are designed to be accessible to all levels of education.

An art confrontation takes 1 hour and costs € 2.50 per person (cash or cultuurkaart). A maximum of 30 persons can take part at any one time.

Reservations via reservations@wdw.nl or more information via karin@wdw.nl

Side program

On an almost daily basis throughout the exhibition, the *Melanchotopia* epicenter hosts a variety of events. These include talks, lectures, book launches, film screenings and performances, all exploring different aspects of *Melanchotopia*'s themes. The timetable for these informal and informative events is available online, on our new website www.wdw.nl.

Workshops & master classes

The *Melanchotopia* epicenter also hosts several workshops and master classes, by artists from the exhibition and by invited professionals, including

- Stefan Kalmár & Richard Birkett (Artists Space, New York)
- Nicolaus Schafhausen, director, Witte de With
- Zoë Gray, curator, & Belinda Hak, business coordinator, Witte de With

These are open to specific groups. Details of the master class topics can also be found at www.wdw.nl and you can email karin@wdw.nl for more information.

Bookshop

For the duration of *Melanchotopia*, Witte de With will be home to Pro qm, a specialized art and architecture bookshop from Berlin. The owners of Pro qm have curated a special selection of titles to further explore the themes of *Melanchotopia* and will include these together with books of the artists represented in the exhibition.

The many books, records and posters created by Witte de With Publishers will also be available for sale within this pop-up bookstore, and are now available for purchase from our new online shop www.wdw.nl.

Colophon

This publication appears on the occasion of the exhibition *Melanchotopia*, at Witte de With and across the city of Rotterdam, 2011.

Curators

Nicolaus Schafhausen, Anne-Claire Schmitz

Assistant curators

Thomas Cuckle, Amira Gad, Fabian Schöneich, Sam Sterckx

Editors

Zoë Gray, Jessie Hocks, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Anne-Claire Schmitz

Writers

Artist texts: Amira Gad, Juan Gaitán, Zoë Gray, Jessie Hocks,

Vanessa J. Müller

Locations: Esperanza Rozales

Translators

Linke & Schreier

Proofreader

Pauline Kleijer

Graphic Design

Surface; Tobias Donat, Max Nestor, Markus Weisbeck
www.surface.de

Mapping

Studio Matthias Görlich
www.mgoerlich.com

Photographs

Steffen Jagenburg
www.jagenburg.net

Publisher

Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art

Printed by

Henrich Druck + Medien GmbH

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Special thanks to:

Joachim Abrell, Linda Alonso, Remko Andeweg, Mary Andriesse, Robert Anemaet, Art & Flywork, Avondwinkel Alexia, Gijs Bakker, Bar Mon Cheri, Rob Barendse, Fabian Bechtle, Herman Bekker, Milo Bellaar Spruijt, Berlage Institute, Beurs - World Trade Center, Bilderberg Parkhotel Rotterdam, Esther Blankers, Jeroen Boomgaard, Anne Boomsluiter, Dora Borst, Frank Bot, Jörn Bötnagel, BQ Gallery, Stanley Bremer, Martijn Brenninkmeijer, Tom Bruwier, Bureau Stadsnatuur Rotterdam, Buro Rietveld, Catriona Jeffries Gallery, Centrum Beeldende Kunst Rotterdam, CityTec, Saskia Copper, Kevin Corandewal, Dick Couvée, Dagopvang Couwenburg, Aurélie de Gerlache, Oscar de Grave, Bart de Haan, Patrick de Haas, de Havenloods, Simon de Jong, Warner de Leeuw, Esther de Rooij, Mignon de Veer, Hannie De Vries, Karen de Weerdt, de Wilgen Vastgoed, de+ge architecten, Delta Marine Consultants, Janneke Dijkstra, Paul Dijkstra, Tobias Donat, Sybille du Roy, Dutch Language Institute ITHA, Dutch Style Company, Jan Ebeltsjes, EIDOTECH GmbH, Gwénolé Emery, Frans Engels, Engels Grandcafé Restaurant Zalen, Erasmus MC, Etablissement d'en face projects, Sjarel Ex, Florian Feineis, Marcus Fernhout, Jesko Fezer, Miranda Filius, Nicolas Firket, Ronald Florisson, Renée Freriks, Aleksander Gabrys, Galerie De Aanschouw, Fabian Gawlik, Gemeente Rotterdam, Gemeente Rotterdam Bestuursdienst, Gemeente Rotterdam Bureau Binnestad, Gemeente Rotterdam Publiekszaken, Gemeentewerken Rotterdam, Ramon 'Tappie' Gielen, Bastien Gilson, Matthias Görlich, Jochem Gottmers, Grand Hotel Central, Raoul Grobben, Céline Groen, Groothandelsgebouw, Gypex vzw, Ria Haagsma, Ralf Handwerk, Hartman Binnenhuisadviseurs, Havenbedrijf Rotterdam N.V., Conrad Heilmann, het Schieblock, Jessica Hogerhuis, Holland Casino, Fred Hoogsteder, Anne-Wil Hop, Sarah Hopkinson, Thea Houkamp, Joekjan Höweler, Impulse Art Management, ING Art Collection, ING Real Estate, Timothee Ingen-Housz, Cathy Jacob, Martijn Jacobus, Steffen Jagenburg, Jan Prins Openbare Montessori School, Gareth Jeans, Toni Kattenburg, Esther Klein, Gert Jan Klein-Rensink, Henk Koek, Kristian Koreman, Aad Krol, Richard Kruijthof, Monique Lambie, Minhui Lee, Chiu Wah Li, Margôt Lindeman-Pool, Dees Linders, Eeva Liukku, Frits Loomeijer, Hans-Christian Lotz, Lydia, Monique Marijnissen, Maritiem Museum, Boudewijn Martens, Claron McFadden, Suzanne Metman, Marius Meurs, Sjany Middelkoop, Vedran Mimica, Gareth Moore, Martin Mossink, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Museum Rotterdam, Marita Muukkonen, Nai, Nationale-Nederlanden, NEONWorks.ca, Nicolas Firket Architects, NS, off_corso, Vanessa Ohlraun, Kathryn Park, Pathé Schouwburgplein, Pauluskerk, Rob Peters, Anne Petre, Mark Phillips, Piet Zwart Institute, Politie Rotterdam-Rijnmond, Pro qm, ProRail, Q-Park, Queen of Rings, R.S.C. Sanctus-Laurentius, Rupesh, Ramkisoensing, J.S. (Bas) Reedijk, Kees Reedijk, Regionaal Cameratoezicht, Henk Rehorst, Katja Reichard, Richard Rijks, Marta Rincón, Jeroen Robbrecht, Robeco, Robert, Charlotte Rommerts, Joanne Roozenburg, Ronald Roskam, Martha Rosler, Rotown, Rotterdam Centraal, ROTTERDAM.INFO, Rotterdamse Schouwburg, Royal BAM Group, RTC, Fabrice Samyn, San, Tanguy Schmitz, Felix Schoeneich, Marc Schuilenburg, Dominik Schumacher, Sculpture International Rotterdam, Dave Schwab, Jan Segeren, Lodder Sfeermakers, Rob Shantz, Shop Erotica, Dirk Simkens, Skyland offsetdrukkerij, Iris Smid, Stef Snakkers, Dewi Soerodongso, SPAR Corandewal, Jorrit Spoelstra, Sprüth Magers Berlin, Angela Stauch, Goos Stavenuiter, Stichting Kaus Australis, Stichting Veerhaven Rotterdam, Frank Taal, Michel Teeuwisse, The After Lucy Experiment, The Manhattan Hotel, TheGreenEyl, Siebe Thissen, Wendeline Thole, Milan Tilder, Anja Trudel, Ariadne Urlus, Tom van Baarle, Elma van Boxel, Paul van de Laar, Sonja van de Laarschot, Ilse Van den Bosch, Henk van den Broek, Anco van Dendool, Marja van der Burgh, Rob van der Meer, Jeanne-Françoise van der Stegen, Els van der Vloed-Engels, Sabina van Dorst, Sara Van Eijk, Yves Van Erp, Suzanne Van Essen, Frans van Etten, Carolien van Eykelen, Daan van Golden, Karlijn van Halewijn, Teije van Hall, Miriam van Lierop, Leo van Marion, Cathelyne van Mil, Chris Van Mulligen, Charlotte van Peski, Lieke van Pruijsen, Gerhard Van Urk, Van Urk Piano's & Vleugels, Matthijs van Velzen, Van Wijnen, Stijn van Zon, Rinus van Zwam, Annemie Vanackere, Hans Vandaele, Margot Vanheusden, Wouter Vanstiphout, Caspar Vehmeijer, Hitomi Veldman, Jur Verbeek, Peter Verhoeven, Tom Verhorst, Bieke Versloot, Via Kunst, VIVID Galerie, Linda Vlassenrood, Franziska von Hasselbach, Maren von Stockhausen, Daan Vrouwdeunt, Martijn Waalboer, Jan Wagner, Hans Walgenbach, Gijs Warmenhoven, Wegener Huis-aan-huisMedia, Suzanne Weenink, Weenink Bedrijfskleding, Markus Weisbeck, Willie Wemering, Wereldmuseum, Axel Wieder, Renee Willeman, Willibrordschool, Christian Wirtz, Etienne Wynants, Youssef, ZUS.

Melanchotopia is supported by



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Witte de With is supported by the City of Rotterdam and the Dutch Ministry of Culture

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Business advice: Chris de Jong

Additional PR & Communication for *Melanchotopia*: Josje Stael

Witte de With

Center for Contemporary Art

Witte de Withstraat 50

3012 BR Rotterdam

The Netherlands

phone +31 (0)10 4110144

fax +31 (0)10 4117924

info@wdw.nl – www.wdw.nl