

SPECULATIVE SALON 2.0

Reflections on the Research Process

Throughout the research process, one of the most striking observations was the lack of a clear, accessible overview of the number of women artists represented in the collections of the six institutions involved. Despite each organisation's commitment to digital accessibility and public engagement, gender metadata remains inconsistent, incomplete, or altogether absent. This made the process of identifying and tracing women artists across collections far more complex than anticipated.

The six institutions in focus were:

- RKD Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague
- Eye Filmmuseum (originally the Nederlands Historisch Filmarchief)
- Rijksmuseum's digital collection Rijksstudio
- Stedelijk Museum's Collection Online
- LI-MA, a platform for media art based in Amsterdam
- Nieuwe Instituut's collection

Each of these collections presents its own logic of categorisation and access. While some, like the Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk, offer visually engaging and relatively user-friendly platforms, their search functionalities are not consistently optimised for research by gender or retrieve any information on the representation of it. Others, such as the RKD or LI-MA, are rich in scholarly resources but still present barriers when seeking to filter by gender or retrieve nuanced historical data on women artists.

This gap highlights a broader issue: the need for institutions to critically revisit their digital infrastructures and metadata practices if they are to support more inclusive and feminist modes of research. It also reinforces the necessity of speculative methodologies like the one adopted in Speculative Salon 2.0, which actively imagines and enacts alternative ways of accessing, interpreting, and extending the archive.

In response to my inquiry regarding gender representation within the Stedelijk Museum's collection of over 100,000 works, I received an informative explanation outlining the complexities involved in retrieving such data. While the relevance of my question was acknowledged, the museum explained that providing a straightforward overview is currently not feasible.

The core issue lies in the inconsistencies and limitations of the online collection system. Records dating back to 1890 have not always been maintained with uniform standards, particularly regarding gender metadata. Even seemingly simple questions – such as how to count works with multiple makers, or how to categorize split records of multi-part objects – pose methodological challenges. These inconsistencies complicate attempts to calculate accurate statistics about the representation of women artists.

The museum emphasized that they are currently investigating standardised calculation methods and working toward improving the integrity and accessibility of their metadata. In the meantime, although detailed statistics are not yet available, the complete digital collection can be accessed via the museum's reading room, allowing researchers to conduct their investigations.

This response illustrates a broader issue: how institutional infrastructures and archival practices continue to shape what and who becomes visible within cultural memory. It also reinforces the importance of critical engagement with metadata and of developing feminist research strategies that acknowledge and respond to these archival gaps.

Collection
(the exhibition)
more than 500
works from
1870 until now



S www.stedelijk.nl
Collection Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
The Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam showcases world-famous works and new discoveries in modern and contemporary art and design. Experience the collection in three parts, based on current themes through the years.

Stedelijk Studies-
The Journal



S www.stedelijk.nl

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

Het Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam is het museum voor moderne en hedendaagse kunst en vormgeving.



The collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam features 100.000 works. We are working hard to make our entire collection accessible online. At the moment more than a third of the collection is available through our online collection.

S www.stedelijk.nl
Collection Online | Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

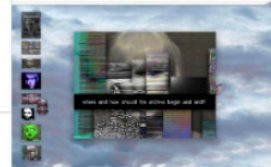
The collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam features 100.000 works. We are working hard to make our entire collection accessible online. At the moment more than a third of the collection is available through our online collection.

S stedelijkstudies.com



Issue #05 - Curating the Collection - Stedelijk Studies

Edited by Rachel Esner and Fieke Konijn



S stedelijkstudies.com

Imagining the Future of Digital Archives and Collections

This issue of Stedelijk Studies investigates how we imagine ongoing digital transformations, and how this affects museological, artistic, and academic practices.

english.cultureel...



Home

Sixteen international research proposals will be financed to conduct research at the interface between cultural heritage and ...

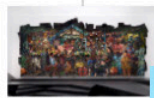
Have any studies been done on the collection in terms of representation of female artists?



S stedelijkstudies.com

Stedelijk Studies - Algorithm as Curator: Non-narrated Collection Presentation

Thinking about the museum as a database and collection presentations made by algorithms enables new ways of thinking about current practices. M. Hendricks.



S www.stedelijk.nl

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam intensifies focus on women artists

The Stedelijk Museum announces new acquisitions of works by Rachel van Haften and Jacqueline du Jan. Both artists are currently featured in solo shows at the Stedelijk. The works were acquired with the generous support of the Bertelsmann Foundation.

At the Stedelijk Museum, the same disparity between the collection and the focus on women artists is by no means new.

M moed.online

About MOED - Museum of Equality and Difference

With exhibitions, events and education, MOED brings together cultural institutions to work around common and decolonial stories.

MOED x Stedelijk Museum Exhibition: This online exhibition showcases works by female artists, highlighting their perspectives on equality and difference.



S www.gbrn.nl

Artprize kurtprize

Artprize kurtprize

IT'S EVEN WORSE IN EUROPE

Count Me In: Taking the Guerrilla Girls to Dutch Museums - MOED

Following the Guerrilla Girls' 2018, Pauline Salet's research book 'It's Even Worse in Europe' is a response to the lack of representation of female artists in museums.

Pauline Salet - Count Me In: a Feminist Critique on the State of the Art in Eight Dutch Museums' (2018) (thesis)

Combining the collections of all eight museums, these museums show the work of 926 artists, of which 779 are male artists and 124 are female artists. This translates into an 84.1% of the artists being male, and female artists making up only 13.4% of the total number of artists.



Home - Mama Cash



S www.the-low-countries.com

In The Uncomfortable Documentary 'White Balls On Walls', The Stedelijk Museum Looks In The Mirror - the low countries

Sarah Vus follows how under new directorship, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam is wrestling with a more diverse and inclusive trajectory.



WHITE BALLS ON WALLS



S landnavig.com

(no title)

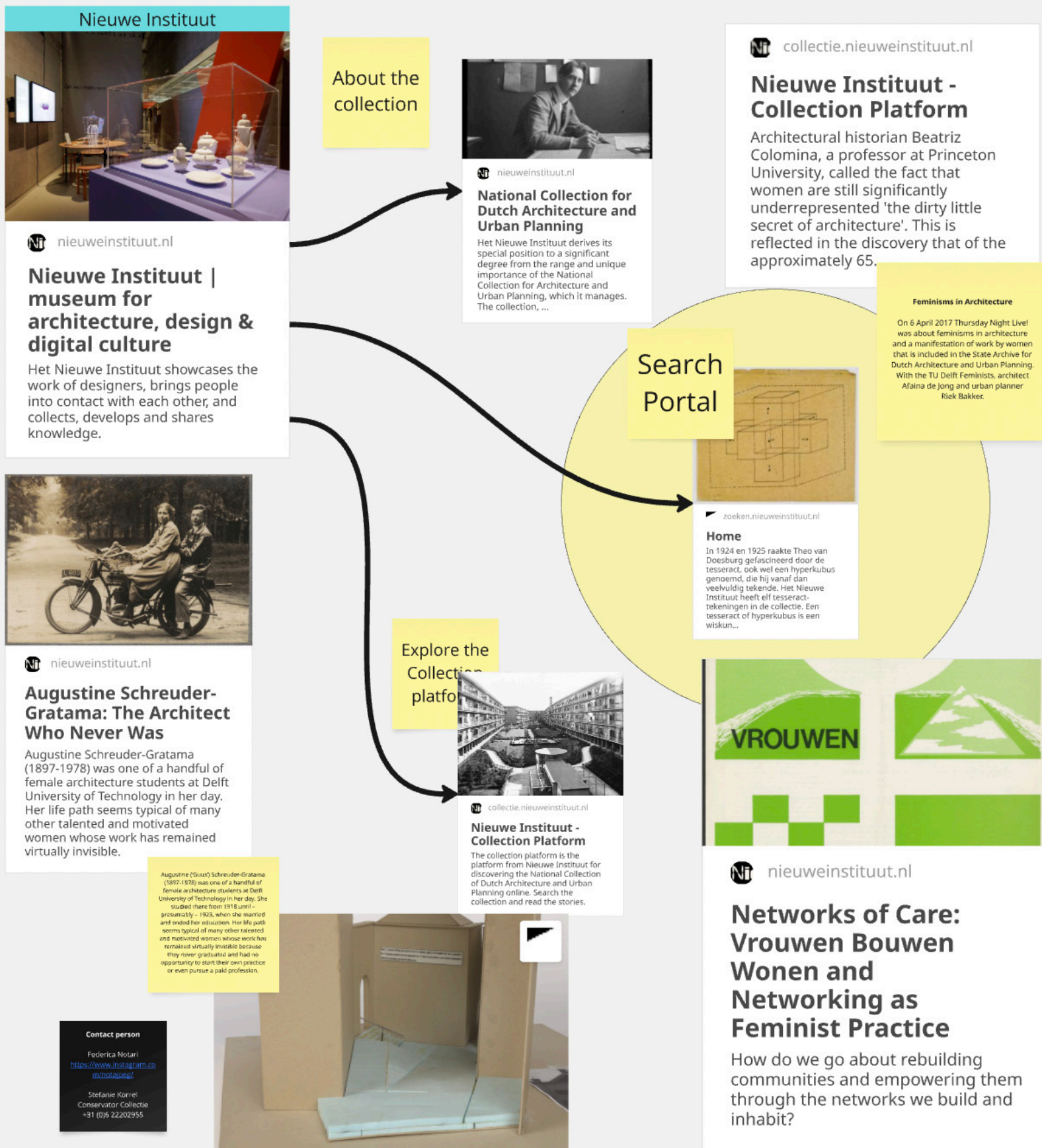
Stello Landnavig

Museums are spaces where the canon of art history is displayed, as well as places where the canon is negotiated. However, this canon is not unproblematic or neutral in itself. It is a system based on exclusion of some and, more importantly, the inclusion of many others. This might be taken as a reason for the lack of visibility of artists by female artists, whose work has been historically excluded from art spaces such as museums and academies. However, the canon is not unproblematic, what is part of a museum's collection has often been marked by what has been called 'the quality problem'. This quality problem concerns a question of value and not just towards certain artists. Through this debate, the problem of unequal representation is taken away from the individual position of power and inclusion practices. Instead, the assumption is made that art of equal quality will reveal itself and that the work that will be shown will be chosen purely based on its quality, disregarding any prior prejudices, institutional biases, and differences in social opportunities for artists.


The lack of representation is not in the work with what museums propose in their policy plans, where their aim is to research, learning, move, include, create, that not different and clear agendas, and where the artwork shown are a means of connecting between different parts of society.

This research is limited in its data. It explores sexism, but not racism, and is not sufficient for mapping out other aspects of identity formations that might be present in a museum space. Counting male and female artists categorizes people according to binary notions of gender. While this is useful for exposing systematic differences, there is a need for developing tools that incorporate a more intersectional approach towards mapping out inequalities.

At the Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, I received a generous and detailed response regarding their holdings in female architects. While they confirmed the presence of substantial archival material from several women – including Riné Boeree, Lotte Stam-Beese, Margaret Staal-Kropholler, and others – they emphasized the importance of defining specific research parameters such as period, theme, or type of material (e.g., digitally born vs. scanned archival content). I was invited to explore their search portal, corporate site, and collection platform to gain a more straightforward overview of the available materials, including digitized archives and related publications, such as Erica Smeets-Klokgieters' research on early female architects in the Netherlands. Given my focus on images as source material, I concentrated on collecting visual documentation – primarily photographs of architectural objects and scale models. Overall, this interaction revealed both the breadth of material preserved and the institution's openness to collaborative, researcher-led exploration – while also highlighting the necessity of a well-scoped inquiry to navigate and access the archives effectively. However, exact figures or a clear overview of gender representation within the collection are not currently available.



LI-MA, the Amsterdam-based platform for media art, offers access to a rich and diverse collection that can be explored through its online catalogue. The search functionality allows users to browse by artist, providing a helpful entry point into the archive. While full works are not publicly available online, 30-second excerpts of the original media pieces are accessible for preview, offering a glimpse into the aesthetic and conceptual breadth of the collection. This system serves as a valuable tool for identifying relevant works and artists for further research. However, for in-depth study or full-length viewing, a visit to LI-MA's physical archive or coordination with their team may be necessary. The platform's commitment to the preservation and distribution of media art, coupled with its user-friendly access model, makes it a significant resource for researchers exploring experimental film, video art, and digital media – particularly when investigating underrepresented voices within these domains. In response to the nature of the video material available, I adapted the way speculative collaborations are conceived in this context: rather than merging the styles of two artists, I now generate a new version of the available work by prompting it myself. This shift emphasizes the subjectivity inherent in viewing art and underscores how each individual interpretation can render a work anew – highlighting the personal lens through which we engage with and reimagine existing cultural artifacts.


li-ma.nl

LI-MA - Living Media Art

Living Media Art

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The online catalogue comprises the largest media art collection in the Netherlands. Search through more than 3,500 works of art, from video-art pioneers from the 1960s to up-and-coming talents and well-known contemporary artists working with the latest technologies. New works are continuously added. The works are available for screenings, exhibitions and research.

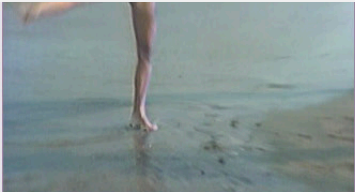
LI-MA - Living Media Art

Living Media Art


L M N O P




2005
Wet
Erwin Olaf




1983
The Aral See
E.S.I. Vidago



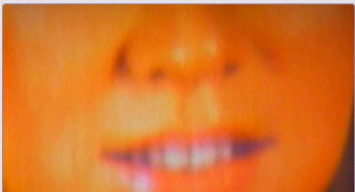
1984
Veneno Puro
Xavier Villaverde




1986
Kobold's Gesänge
Klaus vom Bruch



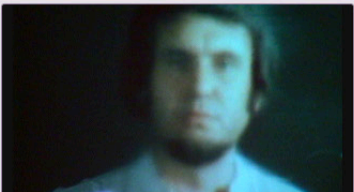
1977
The Chance of Meeting John Cage
Bram Geerlings




1984
Radio Images
SERVAAS




1984
Neige à Louveciennes
Bert Schutter



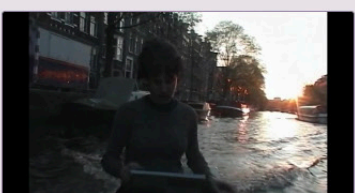
1971
Het beedemen van de beeldbuis
Marinus Boezem



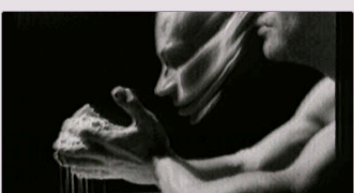
1975
Slow Motions
Arnulf Rainer



1984
Video Bewegingen
Frank Vrancx



1998
the_living - Boot Amsterdam #3
Debra Solomon

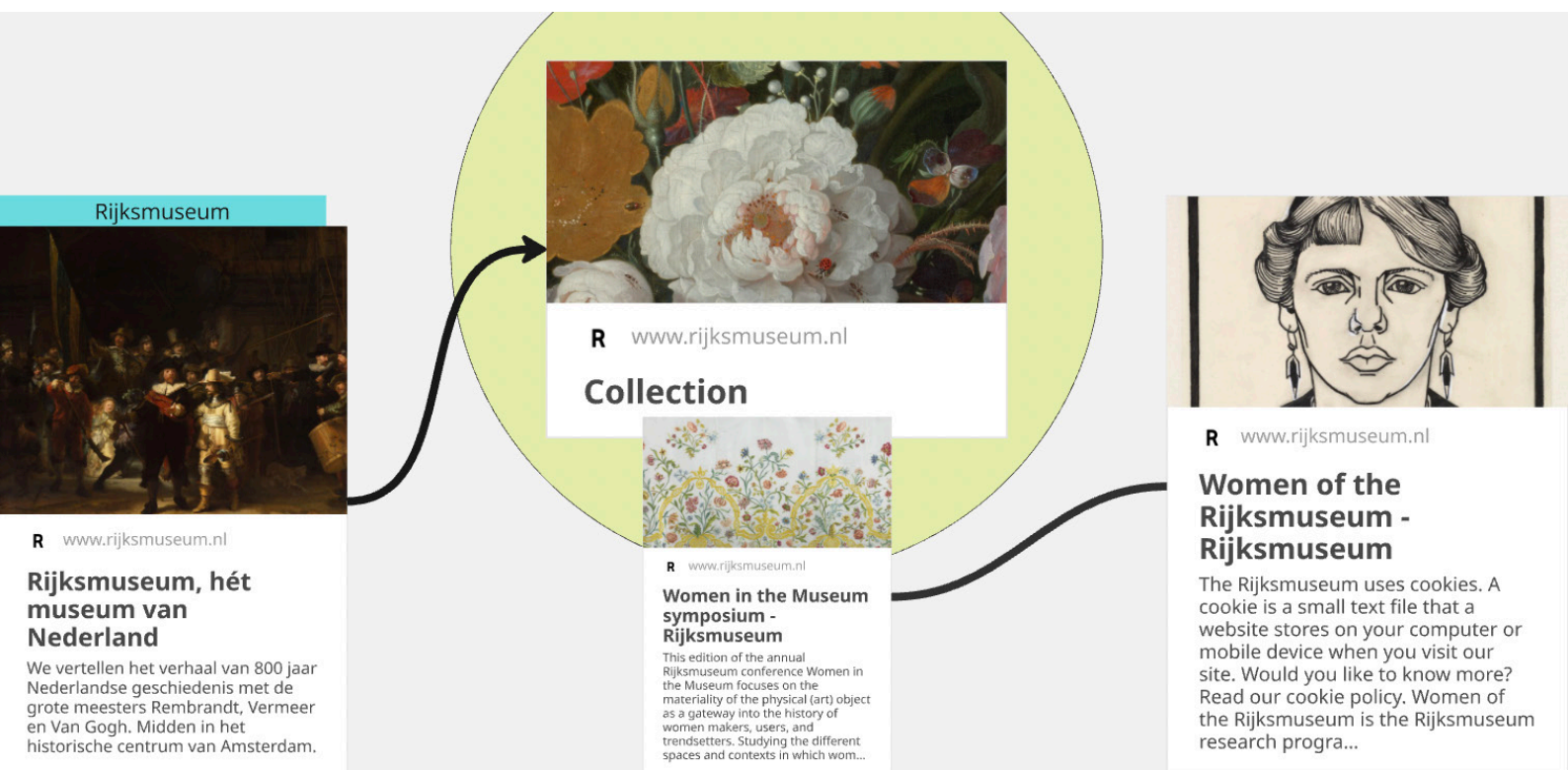


1990
Inside Out
John Sturgeon

The Rijksmuseum's digital platform, Rijksstudio, offers one of the most advanced and user-friendly interfaces for exploring a national collection. With over 700,000 high-resolution images available for free download and reuse, it stands out in terms of both accessibility and functionality. Users can search and filter by a wide range of categories, including Artists, Historical Figures, Arts and Culture, Politics and Economy, City and Country, and Life, allowing for nuanced and thematic research journeys.

Each artwork is accompanied by detailed metadata, including creator, date, medium, and provenance, and users can create their own collections, download images, or even order prints. While gender-specific filters are not embedded in the system, the platform's categorization allows researchers to construct custom search paths that help surface works by lesser-known or underrepresented figures, including women artists.

As a digital collection model, Rijksstudio excels in openness, creative reuse, and search precision, making it a leading resource for art historical research, curatorial exploration, and speculative digital projects alike.



TELL YOUR STORY



The RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History in The Hague holds one of the world's largest and most comprehensive art historical databases, particularly focused on Dutch art and artists. Its online portal, RKDartists&, provides access to detailed records on over 300,000 artists, along with exhibition histories, bibliographic references, artworks, and archival materials.

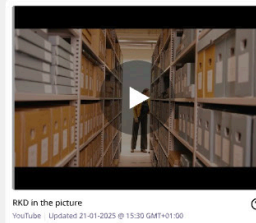
Users can explore by artist name, location, period, technique, or keyword. While the RKD's strength lies in the depth of biographical and contextual data, there is currently no dedicated filter for gender, making it difficult to gain an overview of the representation of women in the collection. This limits the visibility of female artists unless one knows exactly who to search for. However, I found valuable information in their archive via the podcast they published on female collectors in art.

Despite the search disadvantages, the RKD remains an essential research tool, especially for in-depth biographical and provenance research. It is particularly valuable for tracing connections between artists, artworks, and institutions across time. Many entries are richly annotated, including links to digitized archival material, museum collections, and literature. For researchers focused on gender or historiographic gaps, the RKD offers rich data and an opportunity to highlight the absences still in canonical archives.

Artists who also collected art ?



Home
The RKD - Netherlands Institute for Art History offers museums, academic community and the public a wealth of collections, knowledge and publications for extensive research and inspiration. About the RKD COLLECTION Our collection includes the world's lar...



RKD in the picture
YouTube · Updated 21-01-2025 @ 15:30 GMT+01:00

RKD Research
Het RKD beheert, behoudt, onderzoekt en ontsluit kunsthistorische kennis en informatie voor musea, wetenschap en publiek.



www.rkd.nl

Women collectors in art 1780-1980

The RKD is examining the underexposed role of women collectors in the Netherlands in the period 1780-1980. The results of the research will be presented in a digital publication in the RKD Studies series, to be published in autumn 2025.

The sixth episode in the podcast series on women collectors



RKD Podcast: Hélène de Rothschild
Hélène de Rothschild (1850-1925) was a French art collector and patron. She was a key figure in the art world, and her collection of French Impressionist and Modernist art is now housed in the Louvre Museum.



RKD Podcast: Helene Schemel
Helene Schemel was born into a wealthy German family in 1850. She was interested in visual art and music from a young age, which led her to study at the conservatory to become a pianist and singer. This is where she meets Dutch student Anna Mouton.



RKD podcast: Lucretia Johanna van Winter
Lucretia Johanna van Winter was known within the cultural circles of Amsterdam's elite as an important collector of paintings. She owned and bought absolute masterpieces, including Johannes Vermeer's 'The Milkmaid'. Van Winter's collection grew along with...



RKD podcast: Betsy Westendorp-Osieck
Merchant's daughter Betsy Osieck loved drawing from an early age and enjoyed a considerable drawing education. During her studies, she befriended Lucy Assingh, whom she became an apprentice to. Like Assingh, Osieck became a member of the Amsterdam Joff...



RKD Podcast: Sophia Adriana Lopez Suasso-de Bruijn
The Amsterdam merchant's daughter Sophia Adriana de Bruijn remained unmarried for a long time, although in 1851 she was already registered at the same address as her later husband Augustus Pieter Lopez Suasso (1804-1877). They marry in 1860 and they rem...

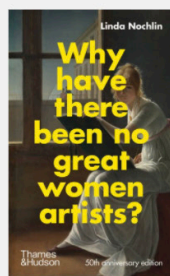


RKD podcast: Margaretha Cornelia Boellaard
Until now, the role of female collectors, artists, connoisseurs, art historians and other art mediators has been greatly overlooked, especially when compared to their male colleagues. The collaborative project The Other Half. The share of women in the Dutch...



De Vrouw 1813-1913 - Wikipedia

De Vrouw 1813-1913 was een tentoonstelling die van 2 mei tot 30 september 1913 werd gehouden op het terrein van Meerlust aan de Amstel in Amsterdam. In 1913 was het 100 jaar geleden dat Nederland was bevrijd van de Franse bezetters en er werden di...



50th Anniversary Edition



www.rkd.nl

The Other Half

The platform The Other Half - Women in the Dutch Art World 1780-1980 puts the role of women in the art world under the microscope, with special attention to the holdings of Dutch museums from the period 1780-1980.

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The actors on whom this project focuses are all of those women who have been involved in selecting, collecting, managing, maintaining, repairing, presenting and promoting works of art including sculpture and design in the collection. Of course, makers are also actors in the art world, but they are not within the scope of the project because they already receive due attention in other contexts.

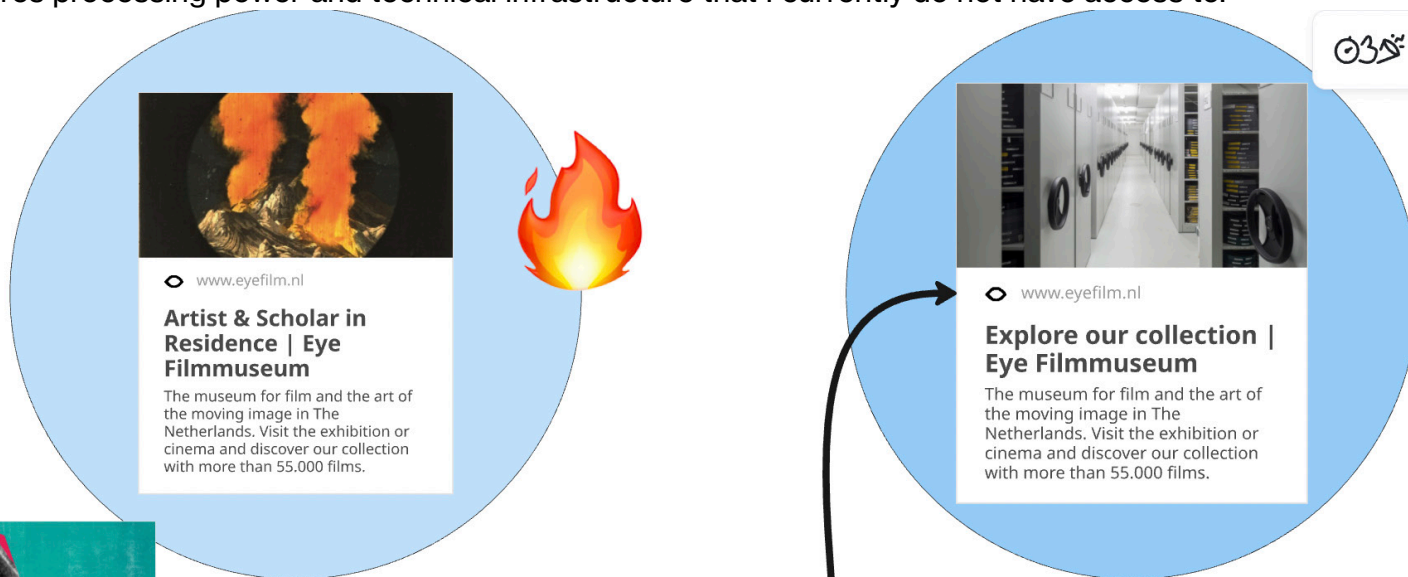


home
Wilhelmina Drucker, date unknown, collection IAW at Aris. Wilhelmina Drucker (1847-1925) was by far the most radical, most interesting, influential, and intriguing...

The Wilhelmina Drucker Foundation (WDF) supports initiatives that contribute to preserving, studying, and exhibiting the 19th and 20th-century heritage of the women's movement, especially the role and work of Wilhelmina Drucker (1847-1925). Although the WDF does not carry on any research, you can contact the foundation for more information about executing a funding request via email: info@wilhelminadrucker.nl.

The Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam holds a nationally significant film collection, encompassing experimental cinema, animation, documentaries, and Dutch film heritage dating back to the early 20th century. Originally founded as the Nederlands Historisch Filmarchief, Eye has since become a central institution for the preservation, restoration, and contextualization of moving image works. Its online catalogue offers searchable access to a selection of the collection. Users can browse by filmmaker, title, year, genre, or keywords. Each entry typically includes production details along with a 30-second video excerpt – a valuable feature for gaining a quick sense of the work. However, the system currently lacks filters for gender or other metadata categories that would allow for more targeted exploration of underrepresented groups, including women filmmakers. While the catalogue is a useful entry point, a large portion of the material remains undigitized or under-documented. Consequently, the visibility of female creators within the collection is not easily quantifiable. Deeper insights often require archival research and direct communication with Eye's staff.

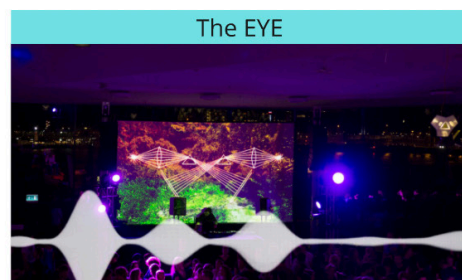
At this stage, my exploration of the Eye collection is temporarily on hold – both due to limited access and the ongoing development of a machine learning model for analyzing moving images. The model requires processing power and technical infrastructure that I currently do not have access to.




www.eyefilm.nl

Women Make Film | Eye Filmmuseum

The museum for film and the art of the moving image in The Netherlands. Visit the exhibition or cinema and discover our collection with more than 55,000 films.



www.eyefilm.nl

Eye on Sound | Eye Filmmuseum

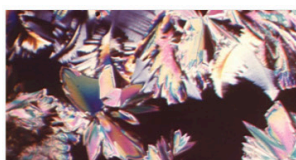
Eye Filmmuseum is hét museum voor film en de kunst van bewegend beeld. Bezoek een film of tentoonstelling en ontdek onze collectie met meer dan 55.000 films.



www.eyefilm.nl

Female Gaze: Iris Otten | Eye Filmmuseum

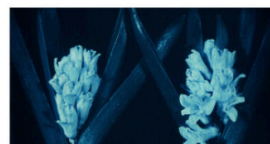
"My profession requires an immense sense of responsibility."



www.eyefilm.nl

Eye International Conference 2025 | Eye Filmmuseum

The museum for film and the art of the moving image in The Netherlands. Visit the exhibition or cinema and discover our collection with more than 55,000 films.



www.eyefilm.nl

Research projects | Eye Filmmuseum

The museum for film and the art of the moving image in The Netherlands. Visit the exhibition or cinema and discover our collection with more than 55,000 films.



Feministisch Filmcollectief (Feminist Film Collective) Cinemien was founded fifty years ago, at the height of second-wave feminism. At that time, activist women's groups sprung up in many cities, striving to change the portrayal of women in films by showing films by and for women.

Contact person

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<https://www.instagram.com/juliasa.koz/>

EVENT