

**Musebooks** is a  
totally new way of  
reading digital art  
books.

IIIuseBooks





# Musebooks

Musebooks is the first digital reading experience specially designed and developed for art-lovers.



# Musebooks

Musebooks is an innovative alternative to e-books, specially designed and developed for the art and museum world.



## THE BIRTH OF AN IDEA

Sometimes the best ideas strike at the most unusual of times. Maybe an idea occurs while you are while engrossed in a task. Or perhaps inspiration strikes as your mind wanders between projects. Such was the case with our idea for Musebooks, which began over a casual cup of coffee.

*“Had I known the compelling turn our discussion would take, I would have ordered a bigger coffee.”*

How does coffee lead to a new reading experience for art books, you might ask? Our inspiration for Musebooks stems from the disconnect we realized was occurring between those who love

art and those who purchase art books. This awareness was driven home one fall day last year, as we lingered over a coffee after a museum visit.

*4,248,000: The average number of visitors to each of the top 20 art museums in the world (85 million visitors total!) as reported in 2015*

Major museum exhibitions can receive up to 10,000 visitors every day. These exhibitions are often accompanied by beautiful catalogues filled with high-quality images and insightful commentary. Yet notoriously high prices and heavy, unwieldy volumes discourage museumgoers from coming home with a catalogue. At the same time, we recognized the growing popularity of e-books. With e-book readership breaking records on an annual basis, we deduced that the answer to this art book-collecting conundrum was greater accessibility

to art-friendly digital book formats which were absent from the market.

*“All we had to do was imagine the possibilities stemming from this new approach to art books and we were hooked.”*

That's why we developed a platform with three reading modes and the ability to zoom in to the works of art. At Musebooks, our goal is to provide the reader with an exceptional and unprecedented digital reading experience, as if you are in front of the art itself.

# Why?

All over the world people are now enjoying books digitally. Many people are familiar with e-books, and even comic books are read in a digital way on a massive scale.

**Art books**, however, have been all but absent from the digital world – until now.

## **WHY MUSEBOOKS?**

E-book sales are rising all over the world and the publishing industry is moving more and more to digital formats. The e-book market now has a value of US\$11.32 billion.

While the e-book format works for text-heavy books, it doesn't work well for reading books with a lot of images. For years, art book publishers have been looking for a digital format that could translate the tangible excitement of leafing through some of the world's finest art books and museum catalogues into an equally rich

digital experience. Musebooks offers the answer in an attractive, interactive and multifunctional reading experience. If e-books were DVDs, then Musebooks would be the Blu-Ray standard the art world was waiting for.

The Musebooks format was designed with art books in mind and is perfectly suited for books where the images are as important as the text: exhibition catalogues, art books, monographs, catalogues raisonné, art magazines, art fair catalogues and educational art books.

"OUR SUPES HAD GONE SO LONG  
WITHOUT A REAL CHALLENGE, HE  
ASSUMED HE HAD IT ALL SEWN UP.

**Comixology**  
has over 200 million downloads a  
year and was purchased by Amazon.  
Musebooks will be the Comixology of  
the art world.

"COULDA SEEN THE  
DUMB LOOK ON  
HIS DUMB FACE."

## A MODEL OF SUCCESS

Our leading example is Comixology, a successful digital platform for reading comics. Comixology started in 2007 and in 2009 they launched a new reading experience for comics. During the first few years, readers had to become familiar with this new digital experience as an alternative to traditional PDF files. Comixology had already built a user base in the first two years when they were a site for

information and a brick-and-mortar buying tool.

Initially, the market for digital comics was only US\$1 million in value. Thanks to Comixology, this market increased, first gradually, then accelerating in 2012. In 2013, Comixology had 200 million downloads and 50,000 titles. In 2014, Amazon bought Comixology. The price was not disclosed.

Musebooks will be the Comixology of the art world.



Book publishing generates over  
**\$150 billion** per year.  
In English-speaking markets,  
e-books represent up to **24%** of  
total book sales.

## **THE THRIVING E-BOOK MARKET**

The global book publishing industry is a huge market, generating more than US\$150 billion per year. E-books are rising in popularity, taking an ever-greater share of the book market. In 2017, the e-book industry is calculated at US\$11.32 billion. Half of this is concentrated in the US, where e-book sales represent an impressive 24% of total book sales – double what it was in

2013. Notably, the proportion of sales of e-books for dedicated e-readers (e.g. Kindle, Nook, etc.) is falling dramatically, while the proportion of e-books being read on tablets, computers and mobile devices – all of which are suited for musebook reading – is rapidly rising.

The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric painting of a stormy sea. In the center-left, a small, dark boat with several figures is visible on the choppy water. The sky above is filled with heavy, dark clouds, suggesting a severe storm. The overall mood is somber and dramatic.

**Most people think the art  
world is small. Think again.**

Over **10,000** new titles in the arts are  
published each year in the US alone.

And the top 20 museums in the world  
each average **4.25 million visitors** per  
year.

## **ART BOOKS AND THE DIGITAL WORLD**

In 2014 in the US, UK and Flanders – all primary markets for Musebooks – art books represented ± 2% of the total book market in terms of units sold and ± 4% in terms of revenue. The US book market alone sees over 10,000 new titles in the arts every year yet the genre is notably missing from the digital book market. At a time when 80% of US publishers offer their titles digitally, art book publishers have been missing out on reaching their readers in new formats and connecting with wider and more

diverse audiences for lack of a suitable digital reading format.

This problem has not gone unnoticed, and arts professionals have spent significant time and money trying to find a solution. The Getty Foundation has granted \$4.85 million in total to 9 museums to develop online scholarly catalogues, the result of which is 9 unique, single-catalogue platforms. The Mellon Foundation awarded the Yale University Press \$840,000 in December 2014 to develop an online platform for art books; the platform is yet to launch. Yet, with an investment of €500k

Musebooks has built a dynamic, user-proven reading experience for art books of all kinds, in under two-years time.

To recap: Art books make up 2-4% of the total book market. E-books already have a global market volume of \$11.3 billion. This means a potential market of up to \$450 million for digital art books.

And this market is virtually untapped.

# The musebook experience

A musebook offers 3 compelling reading modes and gives a lot of detail by letting users zoom in to the works of art.



## **THREE READING EXPERIENCES**

In a musebook you can easily switch between 3 reading experiences, and when you do so, you keep your spot in the book.

Even if you leave the site, when you come back the system will remember your place in the book no matter which view you choose to re-enter the book.

In **text-view** you can read the text,  
just as you would any e-book.



Where the tree-man in Bosch's famous Vienna drawing wears a jug on his head, his counterpart in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* has a bagpipe for a hat. Damned souls dance to its music, led around by demonic chimeras. The dance is also accompanied by a sinister creature that crouches on top of the bagpipe and plays a lute out of all proportion to its body. Bosch succeeds once again in capturing the infernal music and hellish din in a compelling, unforgettable image.

## READ THE TEXT

In **text-view** you can read the text, just as you would read any e-book. The document is reflowable to adjust to any screen, and you can change font size using the icons at the top right.

To switch between chapters, you can use the arrows at the sides of the screen, use the links at the top and bottom or navigate through the table of contents.

Footnotes are embedded and can be made visible or hidden by selecting the caret.

In text-view, images are visible in thumbnail format. Click on them at any time to see them full-size and switch to image-view.

In **image-view** you can focus on the works of art, zoom in and discover the details, navigate to a mosaic overview of all the images, or even play them as a full-screen slideshow.

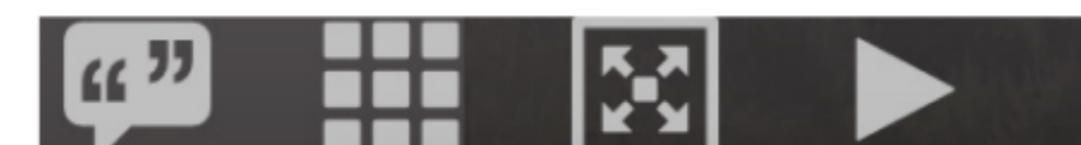


## **VIEW THE IMAGES AND ZOOM**

Using **image-view** you can scroll through the images without the text. And a particularly new feature allows you to do something you cannot do with a printed book: you can zoom in and look at the details and texture of the work of art, close up, with a resolution that exceeds most online experiences.

Double-clicking resets zoom levels. Move through the images by swiping, clicking on the arrows at the side of the screen or using your keyboard's arrows. You can also zoom out to a mosaic overview of all the images.

Additional controls are located at the bottom of the screen.



- Click on the quotation-marks icon to show or hide the image caption.
- Show a gallery of thumbnails in mosaic view.
- Switch between regular and full-screen view.
- Start and stop the automatic slideshow.

In **page-view** you can leaf through the pages of the book, or choose to see a mosaic overview of the whole book.

**Click or swipe** to go to the next page.

## PAGE-VIEW AND GET AN OVERVIEW

With **page-view** you can simply leaf through the pages. Navigate through the pages by swiping, clicking on the arrows at the side of the screen or using your keyboard's arrows. Using the controls at the bottom of the screen, you can enter fullscreen mode, start and stop an automatic slideshow, zoom in and out or switch to a mosaic overview. The mosaic gives you an overview of all the pages. It works as a perfect alternative for navigating through the book.

[PAGE 1](#)[PAGE 1](#)

## THE MAGRITTE MUSEUM

# The software

Art books are transformed into  
musebooks using new technology,  
developed by **Musebooks Ltd.**

[Open Hi-Res](#)[Replace Hi-Res Image](#)[Delete all text](#)

Our system automatically converts  
publisher printing files into the  
**3 reading experiences**, involving a  
very limited amount of work.

[PAGE 2](#)[PAGE 2](#)

## **GROUNDBREAKING CONVERTING TECHNOLOGY**

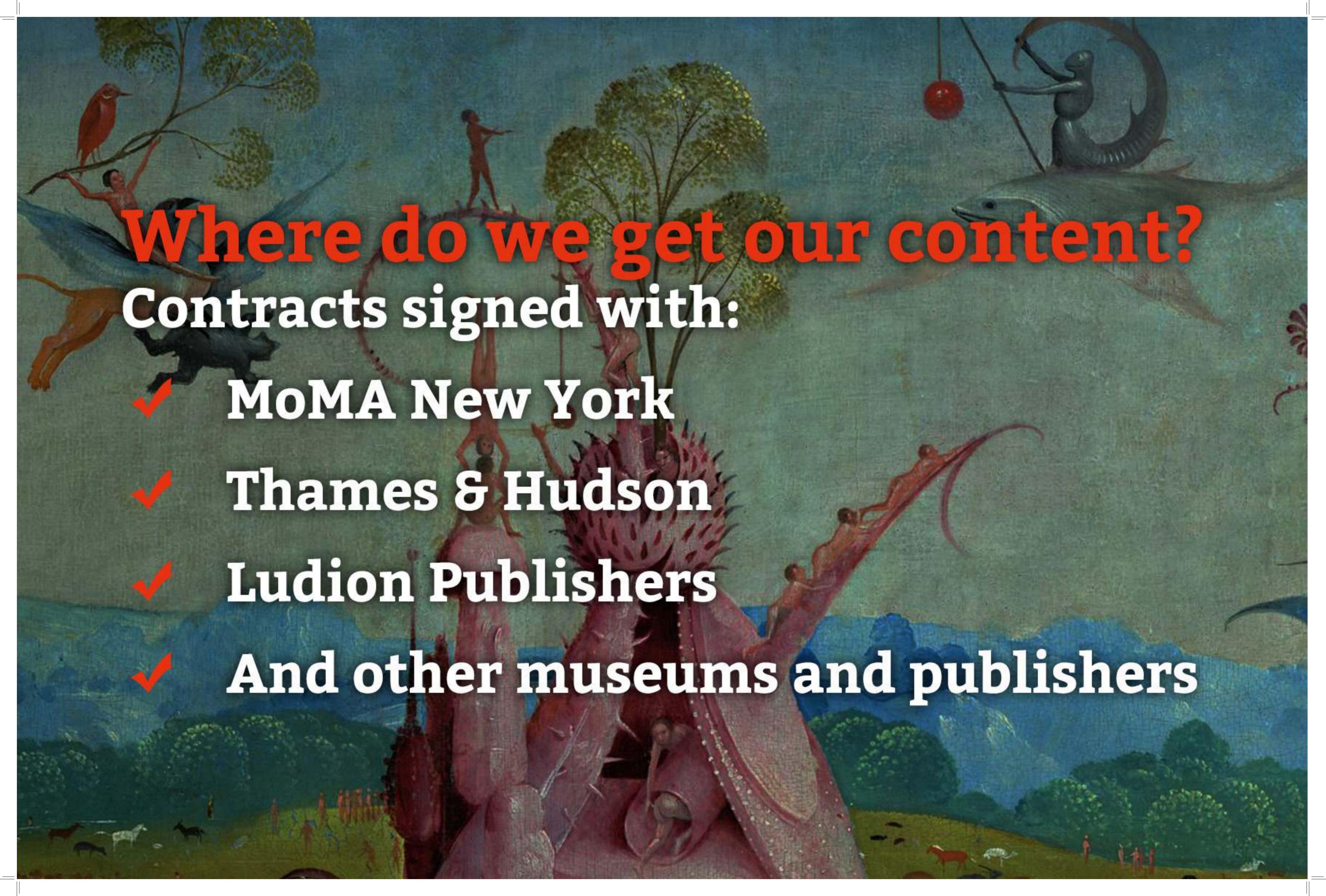
Musebooks.world has developed software to convert a pdf into the three reading experiences. We start from the same high-resolution file that the publisher provides to the printer.

The software automatically deconstructs this file and sorts the texts and images into different files. This means that text, visuals and formatting are automatically stored in different text and image databases, storing information in different resolutions. Algorithms were developed to interpret the

order of the texts regarding the non-standard designs of art books. In the back office, the text-view is adjusted using intuitive styles and elements are re-ordered and corrected in an easy-to-use drag-and-drop environment with our closed user interface application.

Most of the process does not involve human work. Only the text view has to be edited by our team. We make sure the images and texts are in the right order and footnotes are properly embedded in the text.

That means no extra work for the museum or publisher.



# **Where do we get our content?**

**Contracts signed with:**

- ✓ MoMA New York
- ✓ Thames & Hudson
- ✓ Ludion Publishers
- ✓ And other museums and publishers

## **HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT**

We work with museums and art book publishers to convert their titles to digital musebooks. We have signed agreements with MoMA New York, Thames & Hudson, the Royal Museums of Brussels, Ludion Publishers and Unicorn Press. We have reached principal agreements with Tate London, the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery in London and Parkstone International. We are in negotiations with several other world-class museums and publishers, including

the Metropolitan Museum New York, Getty Museum Los Angeles, Taschen, Laurence King Publishers, Mercator Press and Lannoo Publishers in Belgium, and others.

Musebooks also experiments with the willingness to pay to use the technology. We transformed for example a tourism guide into the musebook format. We charged €12,000 with an external working labor cost of €600. This project has resulted in further inquiries within the tourism industry.

# Milestones reached

- ✓ Launched beta version in October '15
- ✓ Made first \$25,000 revenue by December '16
- ✓ Launched mobile app: February '17
- ✓ Reached 10,000 users: April '17

## WHAT WE'VE ACCOMPLISHED

Since launching the beta version of Musebooks at the Frankfurter Buchmesse in October 2015, we have already reached many milestones and made improvements to our website, webshop and reading experiences.

We earned our first \$25,000 **revenue** (end 2016) and gathered our first 10k **users** (April 2017).

In one year, our **Facebook** campaigns have greatly improved and now cost an average of €1.00

per sign up for all regions. Our social media account presence has also grown, and we have 9k followers on Facebook as of April 2017.

Our biweekly **newsletter** has grown to 8.7k subscribers and it has an exceptional 30%+ open-rate and a remarkably low average unsubscribe rate of 0.5%.

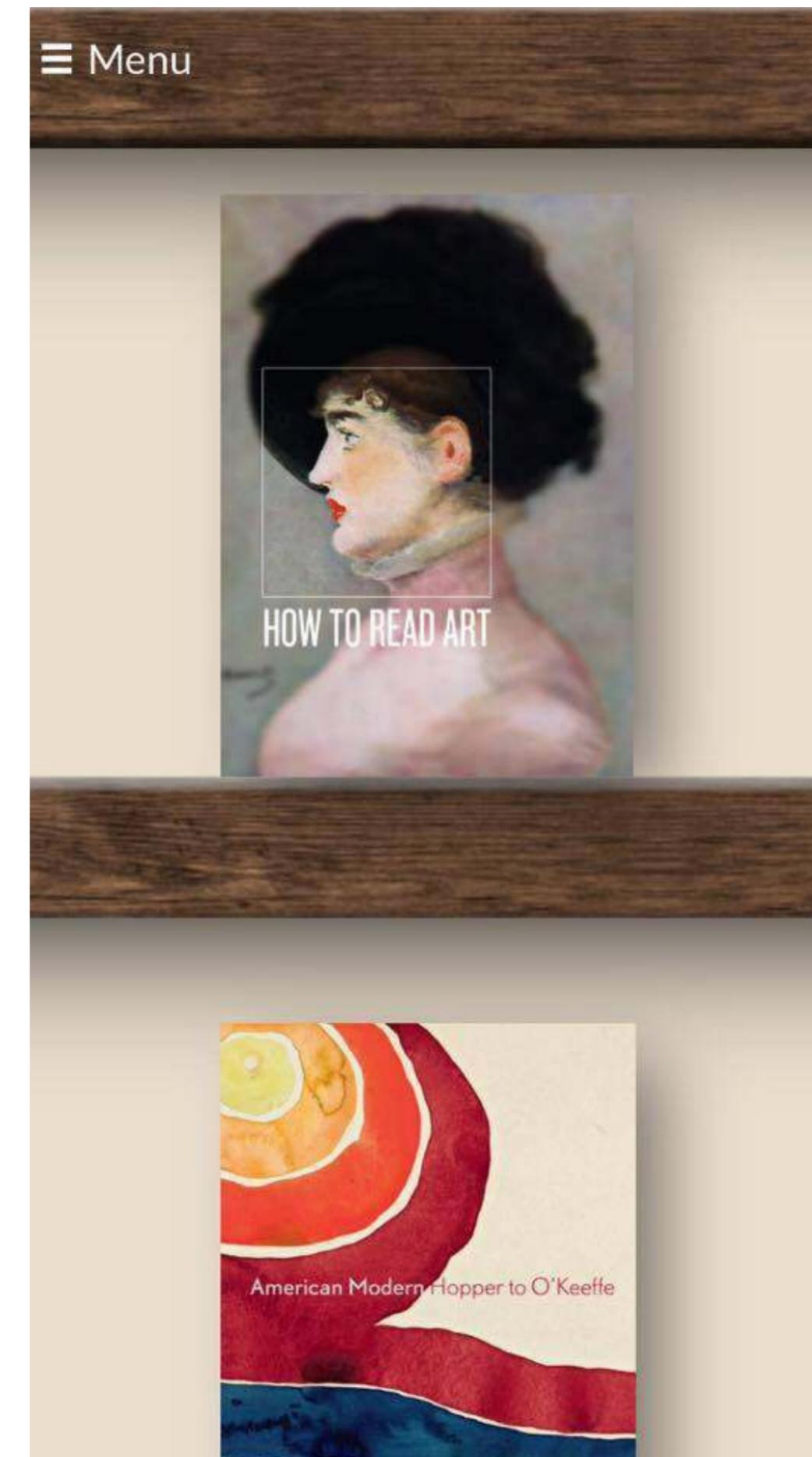
Our **website**, which now has 14,000 visitors per month, has been expanded to include a **News page** where we share the latest news about Musebooks and books in our shop, and an **Exhibitions page** where you'll

find information about the most exciting current exhibitions from the top museums and galleries all over the world. We also added a handy **preview** feature to all our digital titles in the shop so users can explore our reading experiences.

To welcome our readers from all over the world, we established a **helpdesk** in 5 languages (English, French, Dutch, German and Spanish) and translated our **reading environment** into French, Dutch and German.

**Musebooks is also optimized for mobile,  
so you can take your library with you.**

**There's a free Musebooks mobile app,  
available for Apple and Android devices.**



## MOBILE APP

In February 2017 we launched the Musebooks mobile app for Apple and Android, creating another handy avenue for readers to access their libraries from all their devices. Our analytics show that 1/3 of our visitors come to us via a mobile device and our responsive design is optimized for mobile. The reflowable text adjusts to the screen and the book adapts to both portrait and landscape orientation. Our newly introduced 'tile-view' library design is especially beneficial for mobile users.



# What are our next steps?

Flagship project:  
Magritte catalogue raisonné

Gather 50,000 users

Double every marketing dollar into  
two dollars

Compile 300 strong digital titles

Have 50 new strong titles coming

## **OUR NEXT STEPS**

Our next steps include gathering 50,000 users, doubling every marketing dollar into two dollars, and expanding our offerings to include 300 strong digital books. Of these, we plan to have 50 newly released titles.

We also continue to improve the reading experience. We are adding a smart search function to increase the usefulness of the reading experience. We are also developing an annotation function as part of our Magritte catalogue raisonné project. Annotations will allow readers to track and cite updates and changes to the text, especially useful for readers in a professional, educational and scholarly environment.

A dark, Renaissance-style painting of a garden scene. In the center, a woman in a red dress stands looking down. To her right, another woman holds a large basket overflowing with flowers. In the background, a man plays a harp. Several other figures are partially visible, some in red and gold robes. A golden cherub flies in the upper left, and falling petals or leaves drift through the air.

# What are our goals for 2023?

- ✓ 2 million users
- ✓ 20 million digital books sold each year
- ✓ €12.45 million annual revenue

## **LONG-TERM GOALS**

Once we establish a solid offering of 300 digital titles and a strong user base from B2C and B2B marketing (2017-2018), we can scale and build our sales. At the same time we are building our white-label solution market beyond the tourism industry. As our use of the platform grows, so too will demand for services from the art world and corporate partners. Our long-term aim is to reach 2 million users, 20 million units sold per year, 1000 institutional subscriptions and 200 corporate partners. In this way – through sales of books and subscriptions alongside services and partnerships – we can reach our long-term goal of €12.45 million in annual revenue.



In the future we will expand  
our market reach to:

Catalogues raisonné

Professional world

Educational environments

## **MARKET REACH**

We are expanding our impact in the educational and professional markets, segments where there is great potential for Musebooks.

### **Catalogues raisonné**

The musebooks format is perfect for catalogues raisonné. Our first will be the prestigious René Magritte project. As part of this project, we are developing several useful features, including:

- ✓ Intelligent search function
- ✓ Annotated updates
- ✓ Internal and external hyperlinks embedded in the text

### **Professional world**

Our titles will reach a wider audience of art world professionals via these additional venues for digital publishing:

- ✓ Art fair catalogues
- ✓ Art magazines
- ✓ Private gallery publishing

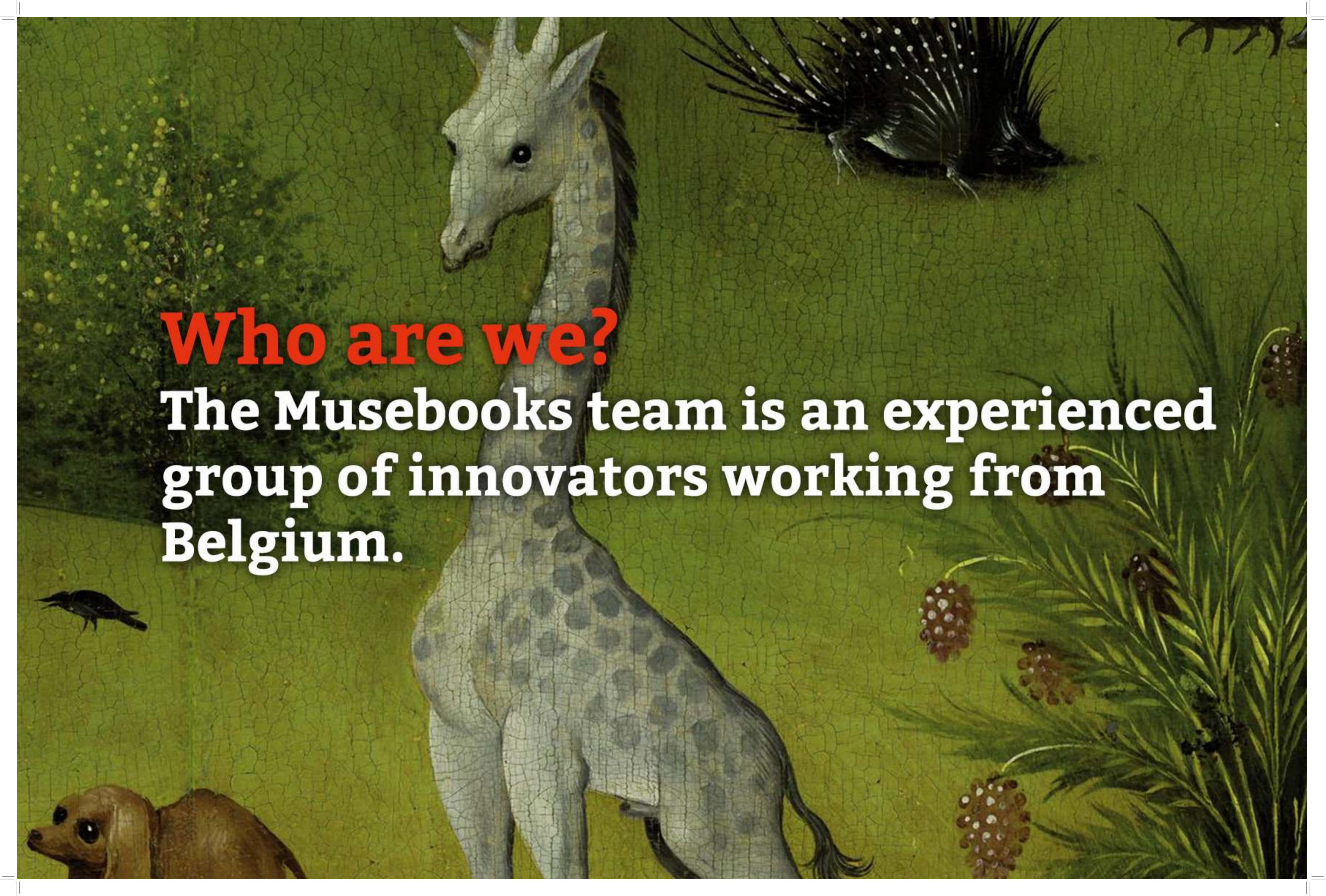
### **Education**

Our greatest potential is in the educational world. We are developing an institutional access revenue model to reach students, educators and researchers via these channels:

- ✓ University libraries
- ✓ Public libraries
- ✓ Online art history educational resources (e.g. Smarthistory.org)

### **Libraries Go Digital**

Public, institutional and academic libraries are rapidly moving into the digital world, keeping up with the latest resources for patrons and students and spending more on acquiring digital rather than printed content. In 2015, an average 59% of the acquisitions budget of institutional libraries worldwide was spent on electronic resources. In North America, this was a whopping 72%. Digital educational materials are available for libraries to purchase in nearly every discipline. Educational arts resources, however, are noticeably absent. Musebooks will fill that gap.



## **Who are we?**

The Musebooks team is an experienced group of innovators working from Belgium.

## OUR TEAM

Many museums and book publishers have tried to transform their texts into digital editions in the past, but their success rate has been dismally low. The limitation in most of these cases was not consumer demand but rather the missing combination of talents in publishing, marketing, and information technology to make such a venture thrive. The majority of these pioneers, for example, lacked proficiency in the field of information technology and thus did not fully understand nor utilize the potential capabilities of an Internet forum. Those with some IT expertise were limited by their abilities to market their books effectively online, and others struggled with how to secure copyrights for these digital books in a cost-effective manner.

As we contemplated these failed attempts, we realized that, unlike these predecessors, we as a team embodied this triad of essential skill sets.

The trio of Belgian innovators behind Musebooks.world are publishing professional Peter Ruyffelaere, marketing mastermind Noël Slangen, and information technology ingénue Dominique de Rijcke.

Peter's expertise in art book publishing gave us the knowledge of the publishing process as well as connections with some of the finest museums in the world. Noël's background in communications allowed him to contribute his ideas of how to market and promote this new venture, and Dominique's skill as a web developer was integral in

the online implementation of our ideas.

We expanded our team in September 2016 with Kutlu Taskin Tuna, Head of Digital Management. Kutlu teaches Digital Marketing technologies to university students and has several years of digital media experience working at top media companies in Ireland and Spain. Sophia Rochmes, Head of Art Partnerships, came on board in December 2016. Sophia has a PhD in art history and several years of experience working at top museums in the US.

Rounding out the team are Erik Gos, Head Developer, Jasmien Maes, Digital Art Coordinator, Joni Fory, Digital Developer, and a global network of freelancers.



# Where did we get our seed money?

- ✓ 63k owners
- ✓ 500k convertible loans
- ✓ 100k grants and income

Total: €663k

## **SEED FUNDING**

This project has been funded until now by the founders – who provided the initial capital of €63k and forego a salary – and investors with convertible loans. A convertible loan is a bond the holder can convert into shares in the company. One convertible loan of €250k was provided by 16M, an investment firm of one of the founders. A second convertible loan of €250k was provided by investment company LRM, a regional development agency.

# **Investment Opportunity**

**Musebooks offers you the opportunity to  
invest in the digital future of art books  
with a convertible loan**

## **PARTNERS IN ART**

Musebooks has made significant progress and needs to reach additional goals in 2017 and 2018 in order to scale internationally.

Therefore we are seeking a third convertible loan of €250k. This opportunity is open to investors with a passion for art and interest in an attractive investment opportunity.

When Musebooks has reached its goals for building content, creating further technical excellence and scalable client acquisition and B2C sales, it will go into a series A-funding. The plan is to start this next phase in 2018.

# Contact

For more information and any questions, contact:

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## **CONTACT**

Contact Co-founder Noël Slangen at  
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more information.

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# Musebooks

