

Guide of thoughts

The Borgerstraat studio complex in Rotterdam, embedded between Spartastadion, Melvlana Mosque and Spaansepolder in Rotterdam Spangen, is a place where artists met after the financial crisis and the cuts in the cultural budgets in 2010, when a lot of art institutions and art initiatives in the Netherlands had to close their doors and artists had to leave their studios to find new workplaces.

In 2013, within these common turbulences, approximately 20 national and international artists found a new stay there. Coming from different places and departments they work as individuals, mainly by coincidence, as a group in the same building.

In 2014 Art Rotterdam reached a new destination, the Van Nelle Fabriek, located in the neighbourhood of the Borgerstraat studio building, and injected the idea to initiate something as a group/ collective and to open the studios as a side program to the Art Rotterdam spectators. Moreover, a first magazine was edited in 2015 titled *by coincidence at the same place*, presenting the artists working there, formulating their positions and initiating a discourse about contemporary art contexts and conditions in our century of expanded arts and self-design debate of society.

In 2015 the open studio exhibition program started to open up to guest artists, and the decision was made to edit a follow-up magazine for the 2016 show - which you are holding in your hands right now. For the purpose of this second magazine the photographer Geisje van der Linden realised a photo shoot of the artists in their workplaces. It also includes guest artists in their studios at other collective studio buildings in Rotterdam, like "Kaus Australis", "B.A.D.", "Hammerstraat" and studio spaces run by SKAR (such as Borgerstraat 24 is). The inlays of this second magazine are again independently edited and individually designed by the artists.

The title for this second magazine, *by the artists themselves as responsible entity in the production of art*, is chosen from a dedicated text that underlines the importance of taking over individual and societal ethic responsibility, for artists as well as for the art system in general - and not to become just a hidden and inconsiderate, brilliant and pleasing but ignorant representative of the ongoing and repressing neo-liberalistic lining-up of societal conditions.

That text was written as a funding application for the Borgerstraat-initiative, suggesting a kind of parallel *multi-story writing* other than the ongoing expanding, restrictive neo-liberal competition-culture. It declares and defends the artist as individual and as societal

member, responsible for the direction of one's art and public discourse.

The text provides a dialogue about communication with audiences both in- and outside the art world and encourages open minded, engaged research and underlines the importance of smaller art-initiatives and artist run spaces in the Netherlands and abroad – organisation structures which are based on the disposition and motivation to present art in a self-conducted way, to enable and encourage experimental art-production and to spur an independent and flexible attitude towards integrating new positions in a lively discourse.

Of course all this points also to the reality of the flourishing art-industry and successfully conducted exhibition- and marketing circumstances, which are only true for an exclusive, small group of artists, presumably not more than 5% of the players in the broader field of art. For the majority of the artists reality appears to be different.

According to this situation the text suggests to invest in collaboration and exchange.

Promoting a discourse that should be an apparent part of the artist's practice - this way of thinking proposes to take the procedure of art-perception and presentation as far as possible in one's own and present-minded, engaged hands.

The Open-Studio Borgerstraat-magazine and the hopefully emerging dialogues with audience-as-performers within the exhibition open up such an opportunity.

In all this sense our second edition of the Borgerstraat-magazine is also dedicated to Chris Bouma, director of SKAR (an independent organisation that offers affordable studios to artists) who died in summer 2015. He is an example that initiatives which are important for societal others often stem from committed individuals/collectives that act on their convictions - also in the arts. We wish to thank Chris Bouma and SKAR and express our respect for their efforts for providing and organising good working places for artists and making it a reality in engaged collaboration with the authorities of Rotterdam. Furthermore, we would like to thank CBK Rotterdam for the financial support of this magazine.

As edition-collective and production-crew of this magazine we hope to contribute to the visual and contextual discourse about the wide field of contemporary positions related to art and society.

On behalf of the Borgerstraat-initiative,
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