



Our man in Paris. Bogart's influence on Schoonhoven and his friends

18 February to 7 August 2022

From 18 February 2022, the presentation *Our man in Paris*, on the influence of the internationally renowned Delft master Bram Bogart on the artists Jan Schoonhoven, Armando, Kees van Bohemen, Jan Henderikse and Henk Peeters, will be on at the Museum Prinsenhof Delft. Starting in the mid-1950s, they formed a circle of artist friends in search of 'new' art. Bram Bogart, who had been living in Paris since 1951, was a model and an important source of inspiration to them. *Art informel* broke through in the French capital that same year and 'their man in Paris' reported on it. This presentation, compiled by guest curator Antoon Melissen, displays a selection of twelve works from 1956 to 1959, marking the emergence of the Dutch informal art, founded by Bogart.

The 'Paris influence' is unmistakable, as is Bram Bogart's. The presentation *Our man in Paris* makes clear how each of the five artists was influenced in his own way. Bogart's thick layers of paint, for example, inspired Schoonhoven's first reliefs, including *Crypta* (1956, private collection), while Henderikse set to work with unconventional painting materials, rendering his paintings abstract and monochromatic. For *223.58.35* (1958, Museum Prinsenhof Delft), he used dregs of house paint mixed with plaster and sand. The expressive work *Confrontatie* (1959, Museum Prinsenhof Delft) also recalls the painterly strokes from Bogart's work. Henk Peeters made the transition from figuration to abstraction partly thanks to Bogart, and Armando's pasty canvases, like *Peinture criminelle* (1956, Armando Foundation), also owe a debt to the 'Parisian from Delft'. However different from each other the works by these artists were in those years, Bogart is the 'constant in the background' in imagery, use of materials and genesis.

Unique sketchbooks

Between 1955 and 1958, the Schoonhoven residence was a hang-out for young artists. Every week, they kept open house and discussed art, made music and recited their work. Anita Schoonhoven would always put out notebooks, in which guests wrote, drew and painted criss-cross. From brightly coloured sketches, pen and ink drawings and stories written in block letters to paintings on the page. Two of these unique sketchbooks, still part of the family estate, have been included in the presentation *Our man in Paris*. The books show these evenings made the house the 'biggest smallest centre' of Dutch art.

Origin of the Nul Group

In the late 1950s, as the Dutch Informal Group, the circle of friends organized their own exhibitions at alternative venues – museums and galleries still expressed little interest in this new art. Bogart took part in their first exhibition of informal art, in the canteen of the Delft Institute of Technology, as a guest of honour. Outside of the Netherlands, young artists also exhibited their work in their own studios, basements and staircases. Their exhibitions mark the birth of a new direction in art: the international ZERO movement. The

Dutchmen joined in. Between 1961 and 1965, they presented themselves as the Nul (zero) Group. For them, the story began in Delft, with their admiration for Bram Bogart, at home with the Schoonhovens.

Bram Bogart. Painter of measure

The retrospective *Bram Bogart. Painter of measure* will open concurrently with this presentation. The exhibition pays tribute to Bram Bogart more than a hundred years after his birth, in the city of his birth. The retrospective presents a cross section of Bogart's idiosyncratic oeuvre, in which the city of Delft continued to play a significant role. Download the press release [here](#).

Captions (left to right):

1. Jan Schoonhoven, *Crypta*, 1956, private collection
2. Jan Schoonhoven at home in Delft with Jan Hendrikse in the background, 1959, photo by Anthony Verkroost

Notes to editors (not for publication):

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