



Charles van Otterdijk
Double Centre
Situation reports from a twilight zone

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Introduction

Stroom Den Haag and Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven jointly present the exhibition *Double Centre* by Charles van Otterdijk. With this presentation Van Otterdijk comes out in the open again after a period of many years. In 2009 he withdrew from public life to dedicate himself fully to *Double Centre*. This long-term project originated from his search

Hidden mast near
Ausweichsitz
Nordrhein-
Westfalen (G)



Charles van Otterdijk *Double Centre* Situation reports from a twilight zone

7 September - 17 November 2013
Opening: Saturday 7 September, 20 hrs
Location: Hogewal 1-9, The Hague
Basic guide design: Thonik, Amsterdam
Photo on cover: Charles van Otterdijk, *L02.#16 (location 2)*



Charles van Otterdijk,
L01.#02
(location 1)

for secluded and hidden places, where people live in isolation from the world outside.

While roaming the thick forest in the border area between Germany and Poland, where some members of his family reside, Charles van Otterdijk unexpectedly came upon two mysterious buildings. For many years he worked in complete secrecy on his research into the function and meaning of these two locations.

In late 2010 he decided the time had come to reveal his 'discovery' to the world. He took two people into his confidence (Arno van Roosmalen, director Stroom Den Haag and Charles Esche, director Van Abbemuseum

Eindhoven) and gave them a short summary of the content and progress of his project. Both directors got fascinated by the project and acknowledged its relevance at this specific point in time, in a post 9/11 world that has been increasingly dominated by social, economic and political crises, by state control and secrecy with regard to much talked about and salient revelations.

What convinced them further, was the urgency Charles van Otterdijk felt to dedicate himself to his research for many years, in complete anonymity, and to finish it at any cost, with total disregard for the consequences it might have for his position in the art world.

Charles van Otterdijk,
L01.#07
(location 1)



In spite of a number of exhibitions in the past, Van Otterdijk considers his two consecutive exhibitions at Stroom Den Haag (2013) and Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven (2014) his real debut as an artist. The publication *Double Centre*, which will be released in October 2013 by Book Works (London), is a report in photographs and documents of what he found at the two locations (more info on page 19).

The exhibition *Double Centre* shows photographic registrations of both buildings and the surrounding area, and also found CCTV footage. Van Otterdijk will also present reconstructions he made of furniture and objects. These reconstructions enable Van Otterdijk to come to grips with the meaning and function of the two locations. For the same reason he is extending his research to similar locations and hidden places. Some of these findings will also be included in the presentation. The exhibitions at Stroom Den Haag and the Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven are snapshots of a continuing and growing research that will gradually reveal and clarify more. They are two independent exhibitions, which Van Otterdijk himself describes as 'Situation Reports'.

Double Centre Theme

Double Centre marks the start of the program *See You in The Hague*. "See You in The Hague," the Palestinians yell threateningly at Israeli border guards who behave badly. "See You in The Hague," could also be the slogan of The Hague City Marketing, in the hope of luring tourists to the royal city by the sea. *See You in The Hague* sheds light on both the bright and dark side of a city that not only is the royal capital and seat of the Dutch government, but since 2012 also bears the motto of 'Peace and Justice' in its coat of arms. One hundred years after the opening of the Peace Palace and fifteen years after the ratification of the Rome Statute, that led to the foundation of the International Criminal Court in 2002, The Hague is ready for a multifaceted

On 27 September 2012 the city of The Hague was granted the right to use the motto of 'Peace and Justice' in its coat of arms



narrative about a city that not only evokes feelings of hope and freedom throughout the entire world, but also of fear and conflict.

With *See You in The Hague* Stroom Den Haag organizes a comprehensive program aimed at improving and refining the way we think about the ambitions of a city that wants to be the International City of Peace and Justice. *See You in The Hague* features exhibitions, art projects in public space, lectures, festivals and debates and is marked by three main themes:

1. The (in)visible world of peace, justice and security
2. The political role of art, architecture and culture in (former) conflict areas
3. Democracy, national administration of justice and international criminal law

The exhibition *Double Centre* is the kick-off of *See You in The Hague*. This program runs from fall 2013 into fall 2014, both at Stroom Den Haag and on various locations in The Hague (see page 20). In October 2013 the exhibition *Architecture of Peace - The Good Cause* by Archis/Volume will open and the sculpture *Scaffold* by the American artist Sam Durant will be installed in the centre of the International Zone of The Hague, near ICC (International Criminal Court) and OPCW (Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons).

A twilight zone removed from judicial or parliamentary control: fact or fiction? *Double Centre* touches upon the first theme of *See You in The Hague*: the (in)visible world of peace, justice and security. In his exhibition Charles van Otterdijk does not refer explicitly to factual situations in The Hague or elsewhere, or to real current or historical events. The viewer is kept in the dark about the exact locations of the spaces he photographed.

Yet the pictures of the bleak, functional spaces and the objects Charles van Otterdijk shows, whether intentionally or not, bring up themes and associations like detention, the armed forces, security, terrorism, (state) control, (il)legality, justice and threat. Maybe

Charles van
Otterdijk,
LOI.#5
(location 1)





Jill Magid, *I Can Burn Your Face*, exhibition *Article 12* at Stroom Den Haag, 2008
Photo: Rob Kollaard

even torture. The things we learn through the media suddenly are given a credible visual representation. Instinctively you pose yourself the question: do dubious places like this really exist within our constitutional state? Or is it fiction? Who owns these spaces and these objects? The state with its secret service and intelligence services? Terrorist organizations? And if so, who are the people behind it all?

This is not the first time Stroom Den Haag presents work by artists who are involved with similar themes. For her exhibition *Article 12* (2008) Jill Magid, for example, researched the human face of the General Intelligence and Security Service of the

Netherlands (AIVD). This brought her into contact with various employees who are vital to the organization and whom she interviewed without revealing their true identity. On the basis of these interviews she made a number of artworks. In his exhibition *Visitor* (2005-2006) the Serbian artist Ivan Grubanov – among other things – presented the drawings he made over a period of two years (2002/2003) in the courtroom of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, during the trial against his former president, Slobodan Milosevic.

In The Hague, a city that hosts the ICC (International Criminal Court), various United Nations Tribunals and more than 130 other international organizations, security has an indelible presence, both visible and behind the scenes. The so-called International Zone in The Hague, which hosts the majority of

Ivan Grubanov, *Visitor* (2003-2004), exhibition *Ivan Grubanov* at Stroom Den Haag, 2005-2006





Charles van Otterdijk, *CC01.#06*, still from CCTV footage found on location 1

these institutions, is marked by closed-off strongholds, high fences, cameras and police observation posts with mirror glass. It is the same all over the world: in the surveillance of their own citizens (and those of others countries) democratic states go further and further in order to protect their own existence. In the process, the boundaries of what is parliamentary or judicially allowed are continually stretched and transgressed. Recent wiretapping scandals in the international news are proof of this. What is happening in the Netherlands in this field and how far does our state permit itself to go?

Poster TodaysArt
Festival 2009
Design: Peter
Zuiderwijk and
Karin Mientjes



In a political climate like this the blending of fact and fiction can have a far-reaching result, as illustrated by the arrest in 2009 of Olof van Winden, director of the TodaysArt festival in The Hague. To promote the festival he had distributed a number of posters depicting famous buildings in The Hague on fire. In addition a clip was put online featuring Dutch news anchor Sascha de Boer. The police did not immediately see the difference between socially engaged art and a terrorist threat. In the end the charges against Van Winden were dropped for lack of evidence concerning his alleged criminal activities.

Let us return to the exhibition *Double Centre*. Photography plays a prominent role in Van Otterdijk's work. Of old we are used to connect photography with reality and truth, but modern digital techniques have shattered the truth claim of photography once and for all. These days you have to be a real expert to be able to judge the information and level of reality of what a photograph show us.

The truth claim of photography works in yet another way: if the subject is photographed, staged and printed in a clever way the photographer can manipulate the viewer into seeing what he wants him to see. A suggestively lit photograph of a car wreck can turn into a piece of 'evidence' of a crime; or a picture of a mob of angry people who were actually paid to shout, can become proof of a demonstration against a criminal regime.

We are talking about the 'framing' of images. Wikipedia writes about this: "*Framing is a persuasion technique used in communications. The technique consists of choosing words and images in a specific way, implicitly focusing on a number of specific aspects of the topic. These aspects serve to promote a specific interpretation of the topic or a specific meaning. Framing is used in politics and in advertising, both actively and subconsciously*".

In this sense the way Van Otterdijk presents the results of his research could be seen as a way of 'framing': the selection of the photographic images, the staging and the setting of the exhibition space, the lighting, the colour and the placement of the walls, the routing, the explanatory text and lastly the display cases with documentary material (including photographs, both his own and from various media sources). He leaves it entirely up to the viewer, to give meaning to and interpret what he or she sees. And to think about what it might tell us about our society and about our position as citizens in a democratic constitutional state.



Hidden entrance
Ausweichsitz
Nordrhein-
Westfalen (G)

Charles van Otterdijk studied economics, communication studies and visual art. In 2009 he withdrew from public life to dedicate himself to his research project *Double Centre*. Before this self-imposed retreat he exhibited in a.o. Künstlerhaus Dortmund, NICC Antwerp and TENT. Rotterdam. Charles van Otterdijk alternately lives and works in the Netherlands and Germany.

Stroom School

Stroom School is the umbrella term for the side program accompanying exhibitions. Themes are highlighted and more profoundly explored

The Stroom School of *Double Centre* consists of guided tours, a book presentation and a number of lunch tours.

Guided tours

On a number of Sundays during the run of the exhibition there will be guided tours by experts from various disciplines who will present their personal view of the exhibition and its underlying theme. Reservations not needed.

Sunday 8 September 2013, 15 hrs
Buro Jansen & Janssen, a research agency that looks at the police, the justice department and the secret service from a critical perspective and gives an (unsolicited) view on this topic.

Sunday 6 October 2013, 15 hrs
Name of guest to be announced

Sunday 3 November 2013, 15 hrs
Willem van Zoetendaal, publisher, gallerist and designer in Amsterdam.

Guide tours for students

For groups of students it also possible to sign up for a guided tour on weekdays. For more information please contact Stroom: info@stroom.nl

Lunch + guided tour on Fridays
Specific groups can sign up for a guided tour plus lunch on Friday afternoon. For more information please contact Stroom: info@stroom.nl

Up-to-date information:
www.stroom.nl



Book presentation Double Centre

Sunday 20 October 2013, 13-14 hrs
Stroom Den Haag, Hogewal 1-9
Reservations not needed

On Sunday 20 October the new publication *Double Centre* will be launched at Stroom Den Haag. The book features photographs and a short text by Charles van Otterdijk. It is an independent publication and not a catalogue of the two exhibitions at Stroom Den Haag and Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven.

The book is co-published by Book Works (London), Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven and Stroom Den Haag, as part of Book Works Co-Series.

Design: Remco van Bladel
Size: 240 x 170 mm
Pages: 80
Edition: 1000 copies
Full colour
ISBN: 978 1 906012 60 1
Price: € 17,- (*on Sunday 20 October the publication will be for sale for the reduced price of € 15,-*)

More information:
www.bookworks.org.uk
www.stroom.nl

SEE YOU IN THE HAGUE

A multifaceted narrative about the bright and dark side of The Hague as International City of Peace and Justice. In 2013 and 2014 Stroom Den Haag, in collaboration with many other institutes, will organize a comprehensive program of exhibitions, art projects in public space, lectures and debates.

Lecture Marco Scotini
Sunday 29 September 2013

Peace Palace Library Lecture
November 2013

Up-to-date information:
www.stroom.nl



Architecture of Peace - The Good Cause

Date and location to be announced
This exhibition by Archis/Volume will show how architecture and design can contribute to sustainable world peace.

Left: Architecture of Peace - The Good Cause
Top: Scaffold by Sam Durant

Sam Durant - Scaffold

20 October 2013 - October 2014

The sculpture *Scaffold* by Sam Durant will be on view in the International Zone of The Hague. This construction may look like a harmless viewing platform, its true meaning is revealed once you climb the stairs.

The kick-off is on Sunday 20 October with the concert *Murder Songs*. Bands from The Hague will perform songs about the death penalty.

The Hague as World Capital

Library and library window Stroom
7 September - 17 November 2013

The first Peace Conference (1899) in The Hague led to the foundation of the International Court of Arbitration in The Hague, for which appropriate housing was needed. Early 1905, while the discussion about the best location for this Peace Palace was still going on, the famous radiographer, physician, hygienist, anthropologist and pacifist Pieter Eijkman and his private secretary, freethinker, pacifist and spiritualist Paul Horrix founded a 'Preliminary Office of the Foundation of Internationalism'. They were driven by pure idealism.

It was a private enterprise aimed at increasing mutual understanding between people and nations. They tried to achieve their lofty ideals by concentrating a number of international academies around a peace palace in The Hague, and by collecting documentation about international organizations and peace movements. The principal aim of the Preliminary Office was the foundation of a 'World Capital of Internationalism' in the dunes of The Hague, as a realization



of their ideas to promote world peace. They expected the architect Karel de Bazel to design this 'City of Peace'.

The presentation in the library window features drawings and drafts of the World Capital, brochures, photographs, and a specially commissioned drawing by artist Marjolijn van der Meij. In the library itself the audience can consult and browse a large collection of texts dedicated to the plans for the World Capital and to the concept of Internationalism.

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Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven

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Carnegie Foundation - Peace Palace



vanabbemuseum

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'I don't think Snowden spied for the money, and he probably did not spy for the power. He seems to have revealed this information because of his ideological embrace of transparency as a virtue. [...] And we Americans and Australians need to recruit from Edward Snowden's generation. The problem is that this is a generation of people whose views on secrecy, privacy, transparency, and government accountability are a bit different from the folks supervising them, and certainly different from my generation.' [...] It is a little like the Boston bombers. The issue is at what point does Islamic fundamentalism flip-over and become a genuine national security threat? Likewise, at what point does a cultural tendency towards transparency flip-over to become a deep threat inside your system? They are similar issues.'

Michael Hayden (ex-director of the American surveillance agency NSA and of the CIA) commenting on revelations by Edward Snowden about worldwide online data collection by the USA.

- The Australian Financial Review,
19 July 2013

Den Haag