

"Work hard, stay true to yourself and fully committed to your practice. His advice for a beginning artist is typical for the freelance curator and art critical Lennard Dost from Groningen. In the past 10 years he developed about thirty projects and wrote 200 articles, and became in 2015 director of Nieuwe Vide in Haarlem.

Dost has been invited as a curator for the annual Stroom Invest Week, which takes place from 11 to 15 September in 2017. It consists of a program of studio visits, a public discussion evening, visits to The Hague's art venues and informal meetings. The purpose of the Invest program is to stimulate art practice by reflecting on the work and giving the artists the opportunity to build a national and international network. What does Dost has to offer as a curator? And how did his career start?

He was born in Veendam and grew up in Winschoten, in a family where sports were the main topic at the kitchen table; the laps of Rintje Ritsma (a Dutch long track speed skater), football club BV Veendam and basketball. It comes as no surprise that Arjen Robben (on the cover of Voetbal International) and Wendelien van Oldenborgh (on the cover of Metropolis M) are prominent on Dost's salon table in Leiden, his home town now.

The Dost family is filled with entrepreneurs and in 1997 Lennard started the study Management, Economics and Law in Groningen. Lennard was an avid strip reader and collector, he came increasingly interested in the images, graphics and art. After completing MER, he studies Art History at the University of Groningen.

Lennard was always busy; he studies fulltime, was volunteer at the Vera in Groningen, played guitar in a local (and unknown) band and became a reviewer of music and comics at 8weekly.nl. Lennard can spot an opportunity from miles away;

Does 8weekly have no art department? Lennard establishes one and becomes head of the department. And when he finds out that "Art History" pays no attention to the visual comics, he organizes with classmate Tsjalling Venema (no owns the gallery With Tsjalling) an exhibition in SIGN, Groningen, called *Reading the Drawing - Narrative in Contemporary Art and Comics*.

Lennard was very open – naïve perhaps – he wasn't from or in the art world, he followed his gut and worked (and works) closely with artists. He became an art critic at De Volkskrant, HART (from Belgium) and Het Financieele Dagblad and he was advisor at the Mondriaan Fund, member of the Minerva Academic Advisory Council, member of the Stichting Beeldverhaal The Netherlands. In may 2015 he became artistic director at Nieuwe Vide in Haarlem.

Although Lennard initially operated at the verge of the visual arts, by organizing activities around comics and music photography, he is now – being a curator for 11 years - up to his ears in the art world. Yet he remains an 'outsider': someone outside the Randstad, not using the 'artistic jargon' and isn't impressed by 'big artists'. His first step (in curating an exhibition) remains looking at a work and asking himself: "Does the work appeal to me?"

He still works closely with artists and remains attracted to engaged or naïve art with a romantic or melancholic tone. His preferences have also changed, he had learned to love performance art.

"In Search Of ..." (2012) was a big and versatile project that typifies the method and identity of Dost, even though identity - in his eyes - is not fixed but flexible. This project began with Dost's astonishment: Bas Jan Ader is a well known Dutch conceptual artist (also internationally well known), but Winschoten – the city in which the world-famous artist was born and grew up, and where Dost himself came from – was never mentioned.

The starting point for "In Search Of ..." was twofold: the audience got to see the East Groningen region where Bas Jan Ader grew up and the region was given the opportunity to re-experience a part of its own history. Not only was the city of Winschoten involved (an artist's residency to do research in the area), but project exhibitions were also created in places that were of significance to Bas Jan Ader. Like the reformed church in Nieuw Beerta, where his father was a preacher, and the old Groninger Museum (now Academy Minerva) where Ader would receive a solo exhibition but Ader was lost at sea in 1975, attempting to cross the Atlantic Ocean from the US to England in the smallest boat (Guppy 13) ever. (His deserted vessel was found off the coast of Ireland on 18 April 1976) Exhibitions, film programs, educational projects, interviews, lectures, music and a newspaper ... the *search for Bas Jan Ader* in 2012 became quite extensive.

Mare van Koningsveld and Lennard – living together – form a 'curator' couple. This couple was forged in the project Young Collectors - three exhibitions and a symposium about art collectors from the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium - in SIGN Groningen (2009-2011). In 2014 they were a curatorial resident in Valletta, in 2015 in Dublin. In addition, Dost was a resident of Vienna in 2015 and went on a curator trip in Israel in 2017.

"The foreign experiences especially are good test cases for you how you, as a human and curator, should relate to the other and the other culture. Vienna was still the most 'occidental' or 'western', but for a curator, deriving from Dutch peat, it was a challenge to get what you want, without being too direct or blunt."

In Valletta, what struck Dost the most, was the ambivalence of the will to thrive and the subordination of the country of Malta, that always belonged to other countries. And in Jerusalem Lennard was admiring art in several raid shelters, because those places are the most inexpensive exhibition spaces in Jerusalem. It was sobering, standing in a raid shelter.

Lennard has a ton of experience, but is the first one to put this into perspective. Work very hard (keep yourself busy with all sorts of aspects of your professional life), be true to yourself and – off course – a little bit of luck. Those ingredients brought Lennard from Winschoten to Valletta and from the sports to the arts, and vice versa.