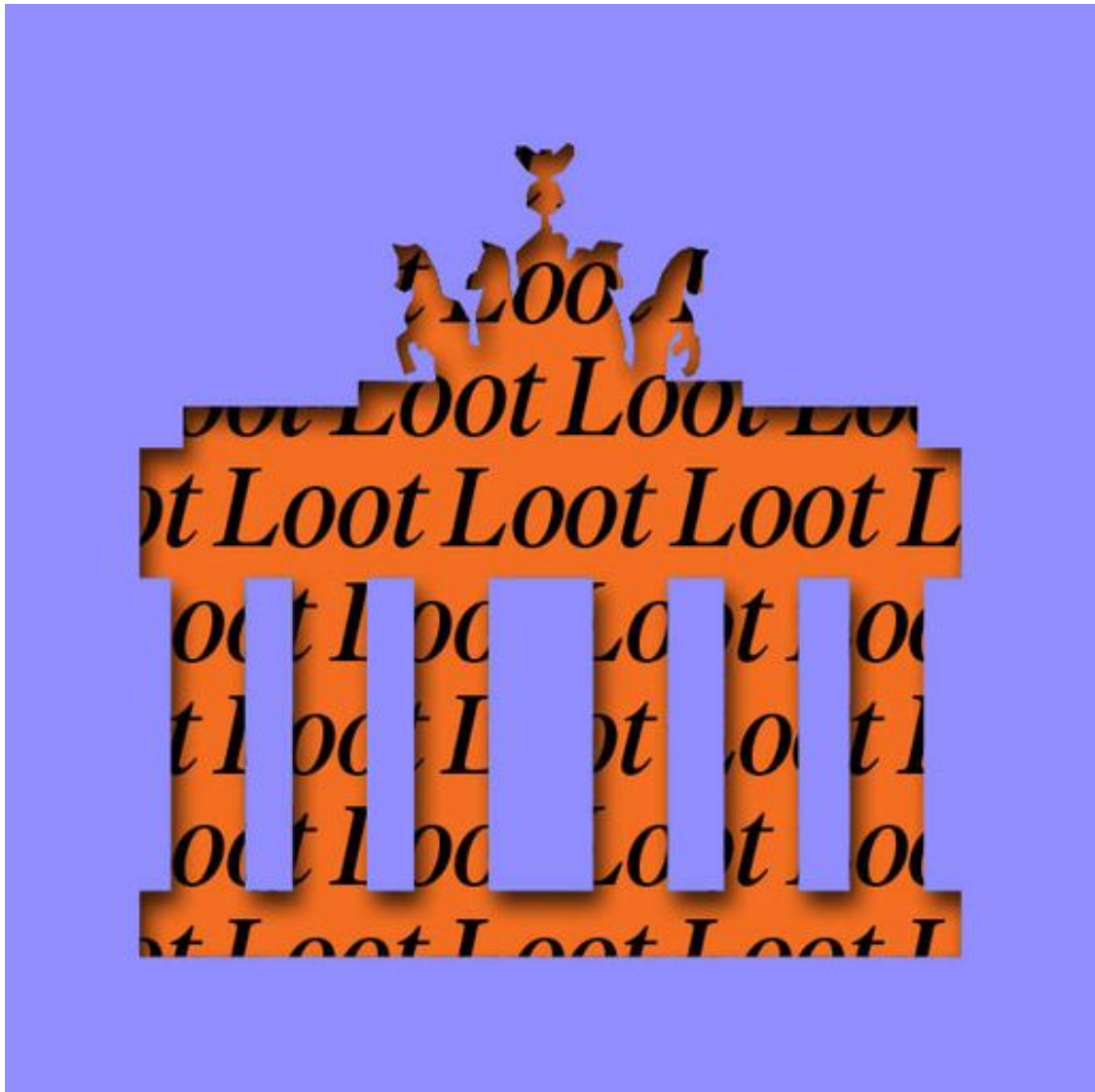


Mauritshuis The Hague



THE FUTURE OF LOOT

An innovative exhibition featuring original objects, physical and digital replica's, plus film and virtual reality experiences.

From 14 September 2023 to 7 January 2024 the Mauritshuis will present *Loot – 10 Stories*, in collaboration with the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss, the Stadtmuseum Berlin and the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz. Visitors to this innovative exhibition will be immersed in the compelling stories of looted art from three periods in history: art looted in the colonial period, art looted by French in 1795 and art stolen from its Jewish owners by the Nazis. Ten case studies will explore the past and future of objects in the collections of the Mauritshuis, three Berlin museums (Ethnologisches Museum, Stadtmuseum and *Gipsformere*), and the Musée des beaux-arts (Rennes,

France). The exhibition will open at the Humboldt Forum in Berlin in spring 2024.

Guest curators

Loot – 10 Stories is a Mauritshuis initiative. Director Martine Gosselink had the idea of making an exhibition about the relationship between the Mauritshuis and the subject of looted art, in which various European institutions would work together to compare views and approaches, and learn from each other.

Eline Jongsma and Kel O’Neill of **Jongsma + O’Neill** were invited to join the project at an early stage as creative leads and guest curators, to develop the framing and storytelling in collaboration with other curators and researchers. The artistic and filmmaking duo have more than ten years’ experience with non-fiction projects, including films, interactive documentaries and VR experiences. **Jongsma + O’Neill** will use highly innovative methods of presentation in the exhibition to tell the stories of the objects. This will include virtual reality experiences and 3D models, which will prompt visitors to think about the questions that lie at the centre of the exhibition. How and why were these objects looted? How do we respond to this as a museum? What, ideally, should be the future of these objects?

Guest curators Eline Jongsma and Kel O’Neill: *LOOT is both a collection of contested objects, and a vision of a possible future. In this vision, museums openly confront the topics of theft and restitution. All aspects of the discussion—from the personal and political impact of retaining looted works in museum collections to the philosophical and ethical quandaries unleashed by creating and displaying digital replicas—are addressed fearlessly and in public. The museum of our imagination is at once radical and balanced: form and content are inseparable, and justice and beauty both receive their due.*

Another world

Visitors to the exhibition will encounter three assemblages of objects, three virtual reality experiences and three video installations. The presentation methods in *Loot* will underline the aim of making the controversial histories of these museum objects clearly visible to the public. The exhibition design by Trapped in Suburbia will take visitors to another world, a world that resembles a museum depot.

Both the design and the storytelling itself are essential to the underlying idea of the exhibition: to give visitors a glimpse of the possible future of looted art and restitution. Jongsma + O’Neill investigate what the museum of the future could look like if and when the repatriation of looted objects becomes common practice. The exhibition also considers objects that are unlikely to be restituted, objects whose history cannot be traced in its entirety, or for whom no rightful owner can be found.

Borders

Art has always been looted. It has served as payment for soldiers, as a way of humiliating the defeated, or as a display of power. Napoleon strengthened his position by displaying looted art treasures at his *Musée Napoleon*. Hitler had art confiscated for the museum he dreamed of establishing. But however megalomaniacal these projects may have been, they are as nothing compared to the huge quantity of objects that, during the course of many centuries, the colonial powers shipped to Europe from all over the world. Each of these objects has its own story. They are, as it were, witnesses to the act of looting. Each therefore has its own history, and requires its own research, approach and its own future. Restitution of stolen items sounds so simple, but this is often not the

case. The Mauritshuis also hopes to show in this exhibition that looted art transcends boundaries, both literally and figuratively.

Objects in the exhibition (selection)

The stories in the exhibition are the result of recent investigations by curators and researchers at the museums involved. Existing research by international experts has also been used, including the reports drafted by restitution committees for art looted by the Nazis and the colonial powers.

Loot – 10 Stories will include a Balinese **kris** from circa 1800-1850. In 1851 this dagger was gifted to the Preußische Kunstkammer, the forerunner of the Ethnologisches Museum in Berlin. “Carried by a high-ranking person, conquered in Kasumba” was the description of the object, referring to its confiscation by Dutch soldiers in Kasumba [now Kusamba] during the Third Bali War in 1849.

The VR experience by *Jongsma + O’Neill* will take visitors to the aftermath of a violent offensive by Dutch troops that killed hundreds of Balinese at a temple complex, when they most likely also looted the kris.

In 1806 French troops under the command of Napoleon entered Berlin and seized the *quadriga*, a sculpture of a Roman chariot drawn by four horses abreast, symbolising peace, which stood on top of the Brandenburg Gate. It was returned to Berlin in 1814, and was damaged by bombing in the Second World War. Only one remaining **horse’s head** is now at the Stadtmuseum Berlin, and it will also feature in the exhibition in The Hague.

In the VR experience by *Jongsma + O’Neill* visitors will have an overview of the impressive victory parade of Napoleon’s armies from the top of the Brandenburg Gate.

A **staff** featuring a female figure (c. 1900) from Suriname is one of a group of Surinamese objects that the Ethnologisches Museum purchased from a German collector in 1903. It originally belonged to the Maroons (specifically, the Ndyuka), a group of people of African origin who fled slavery on the plantations and went to live in the hinterland of Suriname. The staff was looted from its original owners during the time when Suriname was under Dutch colonial rule. The looting of cultural items has a lasting impact on the collective memory of the customs and traditions of the original owners.

Jongsma + O’Neill have made a documentary for the exhibition in collaboration with poet Onias Landveld, whose Ndyuka relatives have strong ties with the region where the staff was stolen.

The Mauritshuis has in its collection a **painting** by Rembrandt (*Late Self-Portrait*, 1669) which was stolen from the Rathenaus, a Jewish family, in the Second World War. The idea was that it would be displayed in Adolf Hitler’s *Führermuseum*, which was never actually constructed. After liberation, the allies found the painting in the salt mines of Altaussee in Austria, where the Nazis stored a huge quantity of looted art treasures in the underground tunnels. The Rembrandt was returned to the Rathenau family after the Second World War and the Mauritshuis purchased it in 1947, with the support of the Rembrandt Association and a number of private individuals.

The VR experience by *Jongsma + O’Neill* will take visitors deep into the Altaussee mine where the art treasures were hidden.

The other objects in the exhibition will be on view later on the website:

www.mauritshuis.nl/loot



A point cloud render of the Brandenburger Tor, used in the process of creating the virtual reality experience about the Quadriga



A video still from the documentary about the Surnames staff;

Loot – 10 stories exhibition partners

Martine Gosselink

Martine Gosselink, who has been general director of the Mauritshuis since 2020, has been concerned with the subject of looted art for many years. She was one of the initiators of the first structured study of potentially looted colonial objects at the Rijksmuseum, where she was head of the History Department from 2009. Along with colleagues at the Rijksmuseum, and staff of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the National Museum of World Cultures, she established the PPROCE project (Provenance Research on Objects of the Colonial Era Pilot Project), and was part of the project's steering committee. The PPROCE published its [final](#) report in 2022. In 2020 Gosselink was a member of the Advisory Committee on a National Policy Framework for Colonial Collections, established by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science to advise on policy on looted art and restitution. Its recommendations can be found [here](#).

Jongsma+O'Neill

Creative duo Eline Jongsma and Kel O'Neill (NL-US) use innovative storytelling methods to explore history's impact on contemporary society. Their Emmy-nominated, Webby-honored immersive works and documentaries screen at world-renowned venues including Tribeca, SXSW, The New York Film Festival,

and Rencontres d'Arles. They've received fellowships from the Sundance Institute, the Eisenhower Fellowships and the Economist Media Lab, and won the Tim Hetherington Visionary Award and the IDFA DocLab Special Jury Award for Creative Technology. www.jongsmaloneill.com

Humboldt Forum

One building, four partners: The Humboldt Forum, which opened to the public in 2021, is a collaboration between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss; the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz for collections from the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the Humboldt Labor; and the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the BERLIN GLOBAL exhibition. While the Mauritshuis no longer has any colonial objects in its collection, the Humboldt Forum has a very extensive collection of objects from former colonies, administered by the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum of Asian Art. www.humboldtforum.org

HP Benelux

HP Inc. Benelux is the Mauritshuis's new Creative Digital Project Partner. HP provides knowledge and technology to help the Mauritshuis provide digital access to art that is hundreds of years old, using various creative and virtual technologies. www.hp.nl

The exhibition is sponsored by

- Friends of the Mauritshuis
- Mondriaan Fund
- VriendenLoterij
- Stichting de Johan Maurits Compagnie
- Nationale-Nederlanden
- Dutch Masters Foundation

Loot – 10 Stories: 14 September 2023 – 7 January 2024

Save the date: the press conference for this exhibition will be held on Tuesday September 12.

Mauritshuis The Hague

14 Sep 2023
07 Jan 2024



Loot 10 stories

Mh

Guest curators and creative leads
JONGSMA + O'NEILL

Exhibition partners



Partners



Information

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VRIENDENLOTERIJ



Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en
Wetenschap

