

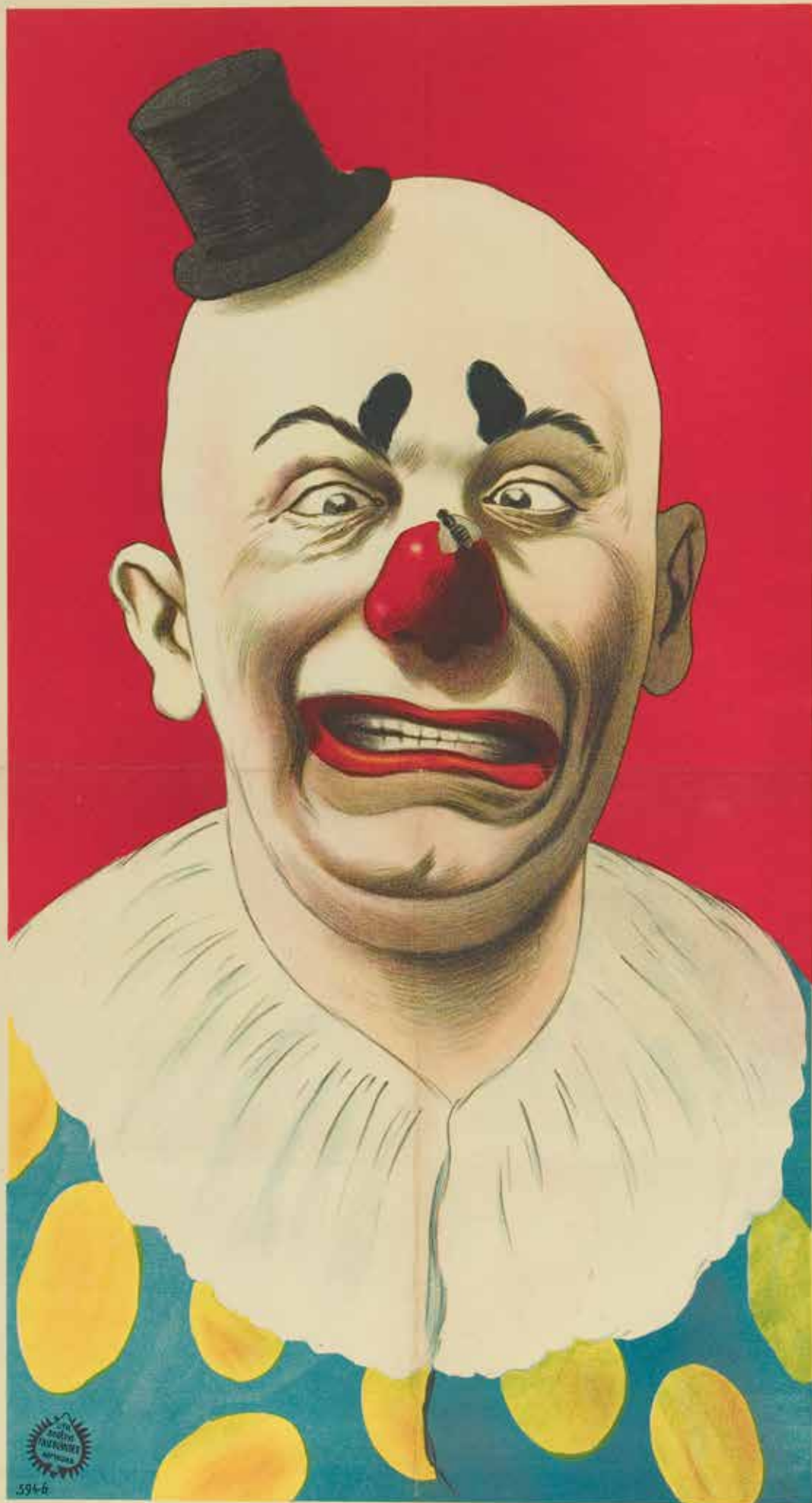
Collecting

Theatre



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ALLARDPIERSON



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HET HEMELSCH GERECHT HEFT ZICH TEN LANCE  
LESTEN, ERBARRENT OVER MY.....

# Preface

*Collecting theatre — (in)tangible heritage* is published to mark the centenary of our Theatre Collection. This beautiful and impressive collection has been part of the Allard Pierson, the place where the heritage collections of the University of Amsterdam are housed, since 2013. This is the first time in those hundred years that the versatility and the history of the Theatre Collection are fully highlighted. The journey began in 1924 with the founding of the Toneelmuseum (Theatre Museum), which brought together several private collections. I am proud to present this comprehensive overview.

As highlighted in one of our introductory essays, the Theatre Collection has had a turbulent history, struggling for a long time to find a permanent home; plus, theatre heritage had not always been a priority in a sector with scarce resources. Now that this heritage is part of the Allard Pierson, its future is secured, supported by multi-year funding from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science through the Cultural Basic Infrastructure (BIS) programme for the management, preservation, and accessibility of this collection and others. We will continue to facilitate research and education through the collection and inform the broad and diverse public about theatre culture in the Netherlands. Moreover, we aim to keep reintroducing theatre makers to 'their' history and to continue inspiring them, just as they inspire us. To do so, this collection is indispensable.

The Allard Pierson owns internationally renowned collections in — among other things — archaeology, gastronomy, book history, graphic design, cartography, Jewish culture, church history, and natural history, making it one of the most important heritage collections in Europe. It is the only place in the Netherlands where theatre-related data, documentation, and objects are structurally collected — from costumes to programme booklets, from models to libretti, from 78 rpm records to born-digital material. Such a possession creates obligations and makes the collection vulnerable. The Allard Pierson is a crucial repository for the performing arts: in addition to this theatre heritage, it houses a rich and diverse music collection that is managed, preserved, and presented with the same level of care and expertise.

We fully recognise the value of this collection, both for the Netherlands and internationally, and are aware of the paradox between the fleeting vibrancy of the performing arts and the 'static' permanence of heritage; after a performance, only memories and artefacts remain. We see this as a challenge. We tell stories that have not yet been told, emphasising the influence of gender, colonial history, and digital innovation in the sector. We aim to expand awareness of this heritage among a broader and more diverse group of stakeholders. We also support the call for a dedicated 'theatre space' in the Netherlands for professionals and enthusiasts, and we actively contribute to its realisation.

This book is a result of all of this. It showcases only a selection from the vast collection of over 250,000 objects in our possession, with just over a hundred explained. *Collecting theatre — (in)tangible heritage* is a tribute to the theatre profession, the theatre professionals, and all those who have cared for the collection over the past hundred years, up to and including the current team.

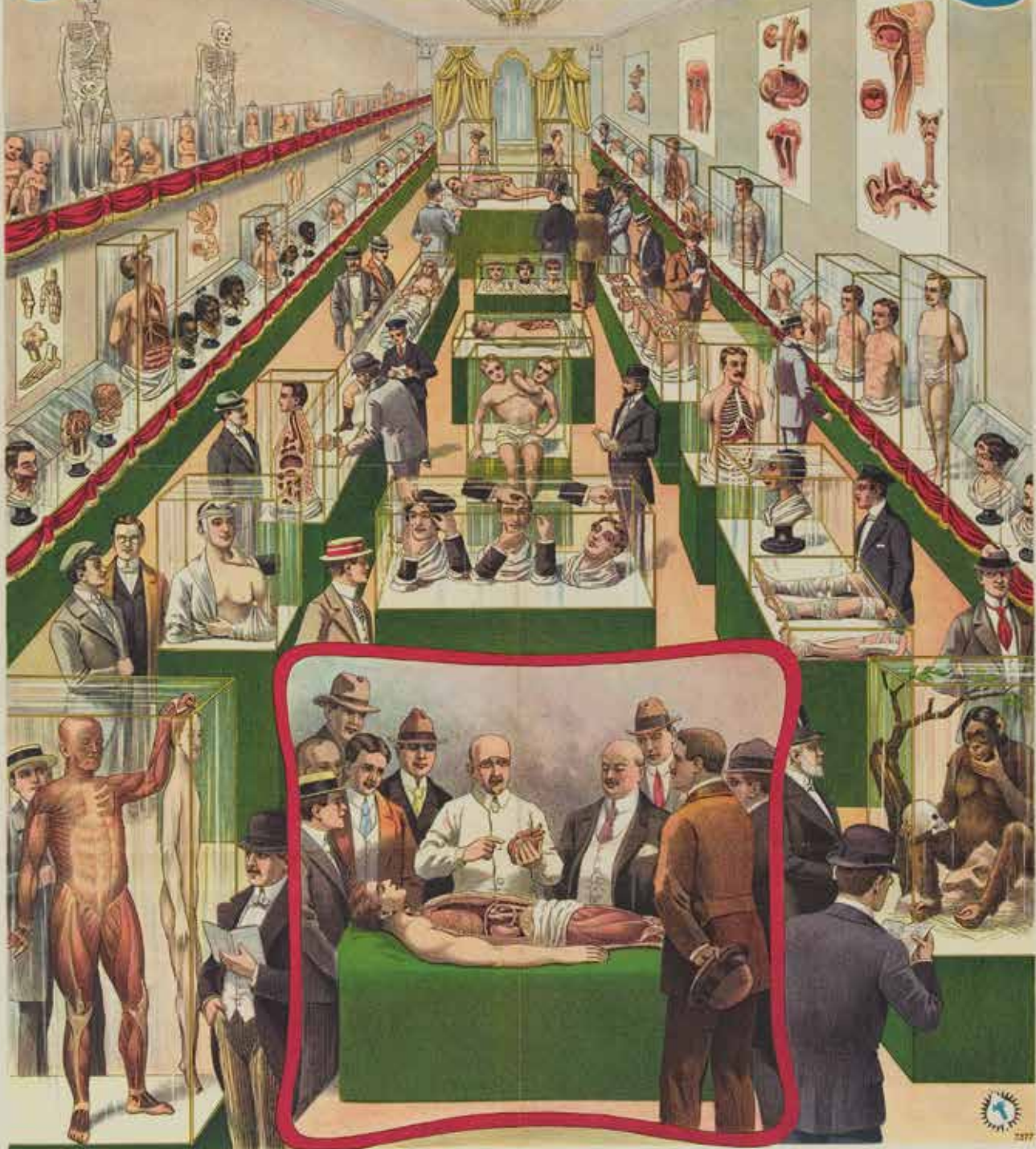
The Allard Pierson will expand its Theatre Collection through exhibitions, podcasts, and online publications in the coming years. It will continue to highlight all the (hidden) stories of theatre makers and enthusiasts. This book is an example of that effort. This publication was made possible by a grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in 2019. I would like to thank the editors, the publication team, the Performing Arts team, and the other colleagues of the Allard Pierson, as well as the authors, photographer, editor and translator, the designers, and publisher WBOOKS.

Be inspired by over four hundred years of Dutch theatre history through words and imagery. Here's to the next four centuries of theatre!

Els van der Plas

Director Allard Pierson — The Collections of the University of Amsterdam

# TENTOONSTELLING „DE MENSCH“



# Introduction

Create a book featuring a selection of (approximately) one hundred objects from the Allard Pierson Theatre Collection. Make sure this selection reflects the Dutch theatre landscape, both past and present, but above all, make sure it is visually appealing and showcases all the beautiful and intriguing items that can be found in the Theatre Collection. In other words, start by exploring the various types of materials and objects preserved in the collection, but also consider the different forms of theatre (disciplines) that have captivated the Dutch public since the seventeenth century. Then, look for authors who can draw on their experience to describe one or more objects and their creators, placing them in their historical context and linking them to a theme or common thread from Dutch theatre history.

That was the assignment, about two years ago, for an editorial team of three Allard Pierson employees, alongside four specialists, on the occasion of the centenary of the collection, which was established between October 1924 and February 1925. Over these hundred years, much has been written about it — articles discussing its creation, monographs on certain masterpieces (the Slingelandt theatre, the nineteenth-century backdrops), as well as publications for exhibitions (covering topics such as theatre photography, the works of designers Frits Lensvelt and Nell Bronger, Aktie Toota, and theatre posters). The Theater Instituut Nederland (Dutch Theatre Institute), which managed the collection for many years, even had its own publishing house. However, a comprehensive overview of the Theatre Collection and the rich stories it holds had never been created.

## Captivating and intriguing

There is no doubt that the Theatre Collection deserves such a publication. Over the past century, it has evolved into one of Europe's largest (if not the largest) theatre collections, featuring a diverse array of beautiful, captivating, and intriguing items and collections. It encompasses approximately 250,000 items, including costumes, models, posters, photos, puppets, programme booklets, graphic designs, books, scripts, audio and video recordings, and archives. These items are divided into six disciplines:

entertainment, dance, mime, musical theatre, puppetry, and drama. Together, they cover more than four centuries of Dutch theatre history, from the parades and performances of chambers of rhetoric around 1600 to the most recent photos, posters, programmes and text booklets from (professional) performances that premiered in the Netherlands in the past few seasons.

The collection's vast size quickly posed a challenge for the editors: how to make a selection from such an abundance of stunning designs, photos, drawings, posters, models, costumes, and so on? The requirement that the final selection had to reflect four centuries of Dutch theatre history did not make it easier. The Theatre Collection is the culmination of everything that private collectors and employees of the various institutions have assembled and managed over the past hundred years, each with their own perspective on what was important and worthy of preserving. This applies to the types of materials and objects collected and the different disciplines represented. In other words, over time, the focus and emphasis have shifted, affecting the composition of the collection and leading to gaps.

With this in mind, we focused on what had been collected from each period and selected the most striking objects. Not only are the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries — when the theatre in the Netherlands slowly began to professionalise — somewhat underrepresented in this book, but the same applies to the last three decades, during which the emphasis has primarily been on acquiring and digitising documentation, archives, and audio and video material. Visually, there's not much to showcase from that time.

Regarding the distribution across various disciplines, our guiding principle was that the number of items should roughly reflect the prominence of each discipline within the Dutch theatre landscape.

A second challenge was the fact that the most beautiful and captivating objects are not always associated with key moments in theatre history or with the most famous companies, choreographers, actors, scripts, musicals, et cetera. Consequently, many of these critical moments, names, and titles are absent from this book. As difficult as this sometimes was, our priority was to honour the

# HAMLET



**DIE HAGHESPELERS V**

ONTW'EN ILTHO VAN CHRIS'IEBEAU

DRUK VAN MORTELMANS' DRUKKERIJ



# The Age of the Theatre Collection – From cellars, attics, and stables to modern collection management

Hans van Keulen



First exhibition of Vereniging Het Tooneelmuseum, about Louis Bouwmeester and held in the rooms of publisher/book dealer R.W.P. de Vries, Singel 146 in Amsterdam, photographer unknown, 1925.

On 17 May 1924, halfway through an undoubtedly long general meeting of the Nederlandsch Toneelverbond (Dutch Theatre Association) in Rotterdam, Mr Jac. Rinse asked to speak. As a member of the association, Rinse had advocated for the establishment of a theatre museum, but this time, he was able to reinforce his plea with a unique opportunity.

A few days earlier, one of the greatest collectors in the Netherlands, A.Th. Hartkamp, had passed away. His vast collection of newspapers and magazines had already led to the establishment of the Persmuseum (Press Museum), and in 1901, the Vondelmuseum was founded based on his collection. But as Rinse told his audience, Hartkamp's theatre collection — consisting of hundreds of prints, photos and illustrations, dozens of albums containing information about theatre costumes, 1,720 plays, countless posters and programme booklets, hundreds of books, and an unknown number of curiosities — would be an excellent start for a 'repository for the history of Dutch theatre'.

If this collection were to be auctioned, it would be dispersed, and the Toneelverbond did not want to be responsible for that. To remind those present, Rinse briefly recalled what the association — founded in 1870 — stood for: the elevation of Dutch theatre from the swamp of mediocrity, cheap entertainment, and profit-seeking of theatre operators, who had only one goal: 'How do I fill the auditorium and therefore my pockets?'

The Toneelverbond had tried to achieve these objectives by establishing a drama school, publishing



Portrait of lawyer Mr. A.Th. Hartkamp, Rie de Balbian Verster-Bolderheij, 1915, scho0070.000, oil paint, h 91 cm, w 70 cm.

a magazine, and promoting theatre in the broadest sense of the word, in the hope that theatre directors would see it as their sublime task to civilise the public with a responsible repertoire, instead of staging cheap spectacles.

According to Rinse, the association faced a new challenge: saving the Hartkamp collection and housing it in a museum. This time, he succeeded. A committee was appointed, and a new association was founded, which was soon able to purchase the collection for a 'mere' 4,000 guilders. The meeting on 25 February 1925 not only commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the Toneelschool (drama school) but also established the Tooneelmuseum (Theatre Museum), with a small exhibition about stage and film actor Louis Bouwmeester (1842—1925) in the 'art galleries' of publisher/bookseller R.W.P. de Vries on Singel 146 in Amsterdam. Alderman Floor Wibaut (1859—1936) promised the twenty-nine founders a donation of 2,000 guilders.

That meeting marked the formal start of the Tooneelmuseum, revealing its key priorities: collecting and displaying items specifically for the theatre community, not the public. The collection was purchased before the museum's location or structure was determined, with a clear mission to elevate the art of theatre. From the beginning, the focus was strictly on theatre, deliberately excluding entertainment, cabaret, and dance.



# A step forward for Dutch musical theatre

1995

Costume for *Zzinderella*, Jan Aarntzen, kko0405.000, cotton, silk, synthetic materials, h 145 cm, w 59 cm, d 40 cm.

With the musical *Zzinderella*, which premiered in 1995, Jos Brink (1942–2007) and Frank Sanders (1946) celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of their theatre company Tekstpiement. The performance, in which two storylines intertwine, involves lightning-fast costume changes. This allowed designer Jan Aarntzen to go all out with his costumes. He designed this dress, finished with gold thread, tulle and velvet, for Jos Brink as the evil stepmother.

The collaboration between Brink and Sanders started in 1972 when Sanders, who had been creating cabaret performances with his group Tekstpiement for several years, was looking for a new member. Brink was interested, and the successful professional collaboration soon became a personal relationship.

After a few cabaret shows, the urge to do more acting started to arise in the late 1970s: the musical genre beckoned. It led to their first self-written musical, *Maskerade*, in 1979. As with the cabaret shows, Henk Bokkinga composed the music.

Where writer Annie M.G. Schmidt and composer Harry Bannink left their first mark on 'the Dutch musical' in the mid-1960s, Brink and Sanders took the next step in developing the genre in the Netherlands. After visits to shows in New York and London, Sanders wrote notebooks full of elements that were not yet being (fully) applied in the Dutch musical scene of that time, which was still based on the cabaret tradition. Brink and Sanders create more momentum in their musicals by having set changes during a scene. They also use musical scene songs, in which a song is interrupted by short dialogues, providing a lot of information and allowing quick time jumps. Moreover, they ensure that each song adds something essential to the action or depth of a character and reduce the step from talking to singing by starting the music during the dialogue.

They combine these elements with the theme of general social injustices. Themes that are important to Brink, such as Catholicism, the Second World War and the emancipation of women and homosexuals, regularly recur in their performances. For example, *Amerika Amerika* (1981) tells the story of a Jewish magician who escapes the consequences of the Second World War thanks to a job on a ship, the Nieuw-Amsterdam. In *Madame Arthur* (1985),

about an unemployed man who is offered a job in a drag club, the war is tangible in the background. Moreover, it centres around the right to be who you want to be. Crossdressing as an expression of that idea had previously been featured in their cabaret show *Wit op Zwart* (*White on Black*) and the musical *Maskerade*, and it is also an essential part of *Zzinderella*.

Most new performances are created during their holidays, when Brink writes a first draft of the script, and Sanders starts preparing the design. Because the duo has three different roles — author, producer and actor — their views seep into many aspects of the production process. At the same time, they ensure that all actors have an interesting part so that the atmosphere on tour remains pleasant.

Because Sanders' joy in performing diminishes and the desire to start his own education programme increases, *Zzinderella* is the duo's last musical. The end comes sooner than expected. Sanders is diagnosed with lung cancer in early 1997. The performances are abruptly cancelled, and the final eight shows are never performed. Fortunately, the treatment is successful, and he continues his dream: on 1 September 1998, the first students enrol in the Frank Sanders Akademie. Brink keeps performing in theatres, playing Wim Sonneveld and Jacques van Tol, among others, in plays about their lives.

—Milco Feijnenbuik



Costume design for Jos Brink as Boze Stiefmoeder in *Zzinderella*, Jan Aarntzen, 1995, too11090.003, gouache, pencil, felt-tip pen, h 48 cm, w 32 cm.

N<sup>o</sup> 4. -

N<sup>o</sup> 5

N<sup>o</sup> 6 lie N<sup>o</sup> 5

HATTO-ERZBISCHOP V. MAINZ

MÖNCH HILARIUS-  
THESAURIER-GENERAL

N<sup>o</sup> 49. MÖNCH GERMART VON ST. GALLEN  
KONFESSIONARIUS DES KÖNIGS

N<sup>o</sup> 50 MÖNCH SESARIUS VON IRMENLO  
LEHARZT DES KÖNIGS

N<sup>o</sup> 51 MÖNCH BERNARDUS-SCHREIBER  
DES KÖNIGS

Hollen Bekement draps  
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- het eenig vrschil onder  
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klein, langel, luttelijc  
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de thesaurier- scelster  
helfdener - funder  
Kruis om funder  
1/2 d. 22. acht die volger  
teeken

Costume designs for Hatto, Archbishop of Mainz, and the monks Hilarius, Gerhart von St. Gallen, Cesarius von Irmenlo and Bernardus from *Lohengrin*, Antoon Molkenboer, too2365.000, pen, pencil and watercolour on paper, h 48.1 cm, b 31.8 cm.

'The wigs. It is difficult to decide this by letter, but I will say now that I am of the positive opinion that we certainly should not let those soloists bring their own things [...], after all, one or two wigs taken from our entire plan, who will understand from those what the character and style should be — certainly not a German stage hairdresser who will follow his own idea anyway — [...] besides, I fear very much that if they receive a single drawing of a wig, they will get a strange notion of our plan (after all, it is taken completely out of context and should not be seen separately). [...] Seeing just one wig, they might say: was ist das jetzt? (What is that?)'

(Antoon Molkenboer, 8 April 1901, written on his way to a performance of *Lohengrin* in Darmstadt).

Antoon Molkenboer (1872—1960) grew up in an artistic environment. His father, Willem, had innovated art education, his uncle Antoon Derkinderen was an artist, and composer Alphons Diepenbrock was a family friend. The Molkenboer children — Theo, Antoon and Phemia — would all become innovators of the applied arts in particular.

*Gesamtkunst* was an important concept around 1900. All art — architecture, visual and applied art, as well as literature, music and theatre — had to form a unified whole. Only one artist could take the lead on this. Antoon Molkenboer wanted to be such an artist; he felt drawn to the theatre, wrote a few plays himself and designed all the components, from backdrops to programme booklets. His best-known play, *Mincelyn*, performed in 1898, received mixed reviews. Everything was imbued with Symbolism; every colour and motif was well thought out, but not everyone understood that.

However, it was precisely this approach that attracted the board of the Wagnervereeniging (founded 18830; costumes could reinforce the leitmotifs in Richard Wagner's operas. Fanatical Wagner followers, like composer Alphons Diepenbrock and composer-conductor Henri Viotta, and a few extremely wealthy businessmen such as Julius Carl Bunge, strove for a fully staged production of Wagner's work in the Netherlands. In 1900, Molkenboer was contacted. He was told not to interfere with the backdrops but was allowed to do so with the costumes. He made designs for

*Lohengrin* (1901 and 1904), *Siegfried* (1901), *Das Rheingold* (1901, not performed), *Götterdämmerung* (1902), *Tristan und Isolde* (1902) and *Die Walküre* (1903, not performed).

Molkenboer developed into a costume historian for this purpose. Although he did not aim for realistic costumes, he sought to understand the underlying concepts and grasp the 'mythical symbolism'. It was a mad project. While the first discussions of *Lohengrin* mentioned a 'good hundred figures', by the end of the year, that number had increased to two hundred, and by the time the performance premiered in 1904, the number of costumes had grown to 352. From fabrics to weapons, from stockings to wigs, everything was essential and Molkenboer wanted to control everything. This is evident from the quote above, and his design drawings are also full of instructions.

The ambitious series would end after the last *Lohengrin* due to lack of funds. Molkenboer then started designing costumes for grandly adapted student masquerades, but after 1910, he devoted himself to another *gesamtkunstwerk*: the monumental interior.

—Marika van Roon



Costume design for Adrienne von Peronne und Corbie from *Lohengrin*, Antoon Molkenboer, 1901, pen, pencil and watercolour on paper, too2387.000, h 51.5 cm, w 36 cm.



Reservation plan of Stadsschouwburg  
Amsterdam, unknown maker, unknown date,  
qm00205.000, wood, paper, paint, h 57.5 cm,  
w 66 cm, d 81 cm.

According to the Theatre Collection database, this model dates from the nineteenth century and is a so-called 'reservation plan' of the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam. At the time, it was placed at the box office to help visitors choose a seat. The available documentation about the theatre cannot determine this with certainty.

In any case, it would be how this theatre looked after the renovation of 1790, during which a third balcony for standing visitors was added. Benches, and later chairs, were not installed until the nineteenth century. Whether those seats were good is debatable: the view must have been appalling. In 'the pit' (downstairs in the auditorium), the original standing places had already been replaced by seats: first partly by benches, followed by separate chairs.

This development would mean that this model, with all those separate, numbered seats, shows the situation just before the entire building went up in flames in 1890. But that is not certain. The new theatre, built on the same spot and still a dominant feature on the square, has a rounder shape, and the balconies are arranged differently.

The Theatre Collection has other auditorium floor plans on which the occupied seats in a theatre hall could be indicated at the box office, but this model is unique. The question is, at which box office was it located, and when? The considerations above also reveal a trend: since the opening of the first standard theatres in the seventeenth century, visitors have had increasingly less freedom of movement. In the nineteenth century, gas lighting made it possible to dim the light in the auditorium during the performance and — after the invention of the electric light — to switch it off completely. This also made the vendors, who walked around during the performance whilst loudly trying to sell programmes, drinks and snacks, redundant. Instead of moving around the room now and then, having a chat with other visitors, walking into a box or sitting down on a bench with acquaintances and eating a bag of nuts together, every theatregoer now sat alone, pinned to their seat, in a darkened auditorium, quietly focusing on the performance.

In this context, some cultural scientists speak of a 'viewing regime' that was imposed on the spectator. They see a connection with the modernisation and industrialisation of nineteenth-century society. It needed employees, or production staff, who were not distracted by all sorts of things but who, in other words, could concentrate on their tasks. This was the only way to optimise their productivity. In this vision, theatres were a link in that process, an exercise in attention.

This viewing regime remained the standard in Dutch theatres for a long time. In recent years, it has gradually changed: drinks are allowed in again, the lights in the auditorium are sometimes left on low, theatres are experimenting with seating arrangements or even removing all the chairs from the hall, and lying-down concerts are now being organised. All this leaves us with an obvious question: what does this new trend say about us and the society of the early twenty-first century?

—Rob van der Zalm

Hoe krijg ik  
dit + leven  
voor elkaar  
er is geen  
antwoord op.

Ik ben  
altijd zo  
schroomvallig  
en ja aan het  
en ik weet het  
dan glimlachen  
we tegen  
elkaar



Notes on two coasters, Ramses Shaffy, 200000441001, paper, ink, pencil, h 0.2 cm, diameter c. 10 cm.

These two Heineken coasters are part of the archive of Dutch chansonnier and actor Ramses Shaffy (1933—2009). Shaffy had the habit of writing notes on all kinds of objects: opened and unopened envelopes, cassette tape packaging, bar receipts from De Kring social club and café Eik & Linde, and over forty warped and alcohol-stained notebooks from beer and cigarette brands such as Amstel and Camel.

And on the back of coasters. Shaffy quickly jotted down some song lyrics and other figments of his imagination: 'How do I make this life happen/There's no answer to this.' And: 'I'm always so timid and you, in the end, know it/Then we smile at each other.' These notes usually remained scribbles; he rarely developed them into full-fledged song lyrics.

Shaffy left the Toneelschool (Theatre Academy) in Amsterdam in 1955 without graduating. However, he did make an impression and was asked to join the theatre company De Nederlandse Comedie. He performed various leading roles in more than twenty-five productions in quick succession. One critic described him as 'a young gun in whom one clearly recognises the breed of a good actor'. After leaving the company in 1963, Shaffy regularly performed in theatre productions by Ensemble, the Amsterdams Volkstoneel, and Toneelgroep Amsterdam.

In 1964, Shaffy started making a name for himself with his own work, combining high art with entertainment. His show *Shaffy Chantant* (1964—1965) was a mix of French and Dutch chansons, literature, poetry and modern music, with Liesbeth List, pianist Polo de Haas and himself as the permanent artists. The formula resembled that of the nightly gatherings that Shaffy had previously organised at his home at Derde Weteringdwarsstraat 42 in Amsterdam and which — like *Shaffy Chantant* — only started after the regular theatre performances had ended. *Chantant* quickly gained fame amongst the socialites of Amsterdam, and in 1965 the show reached a national audience thanks to a television broadcast.

After a successful start, De Haas was replaced by the Trio Louis van Dijk, and with the arrival of a producer, the marketing was approached more professionally. The concept was successfully varied,

for example, with *Tour the Chant* (1966—1968), *Shaffychantate* (1968), and *Shaffy verkeerd* (1969). The latter performance premiered at Felix Meritis, the theatre where Shaffy often performed, and which was subsequently renamed Shaffy Theatre. 'The Shaffy' was the centre of the emerging 'flat-floor theatre' for about twenty years and provided a space for leading companies such as Baal, Hauser Orkater, and Maatschappij Discordia. They were given the opportunity to develop themselves in front of an artistically open-minded audience.

Shaffy's performances are part of a longer tradition of romantic, literary-musical cabaret, such as existed in Paris and other European cities before the war. He grew into a cultural icon, a bohemian who sang about life in a grand and compelling way in well-known songs such as 'Laat me' ('Leave Me Be'). The two Heineken coasters, which ended up in the collection through Shaffy's former manager Eva van Slooten, represent the two worlds where Ramses preferred to reside: the pub and the stage.

Cédric Rath and Dick Zijp



Portrait of Ramses Shaffy, unknown maker, 1975, 51xxx1475.012, h 24 cm, w 18 cm.

This book is published on the occasion of the centenary of the Theatre Collection of the Allard Pierson – The Collections of the University of Amsterdam. Its publication has been made possible with a contribution from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.



#### Captions:

Front cover: USB stick containing publicity material for *Showponies 2* (see p. 166).

Front flap: Glove made and worn by Enny Mols-de Leeuwe, 1969, ktoo050.00e, tricot, l 30 cm, w 30 cm.

Back flap: Evening glove worn by Ingrid Valerius as an ice-cream in *A la Carte* by Wim Sonneveld, Friso Wieggersma, 1957, kko0285.00d, lycra and synthetic materials, l 35 cm, w 15 cm.

The photos on pages 16–17, 18, 21, 22, 26, 30–31 and 244 give an impression of the Theatre Collection in the Allard Pierson depot behind the Universitair Medisch Centrum in Amsterdam.

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After the final curtain call and one last round of applause, everything is gone, the performance a mere memory. Or is it? Since 1925, the Dutch Theatre Collection has collected what is left behind: thousands of design sketches, programmes, recordings, texts, costumes, letters, and much more. At the Allard Pierson – The Collections of the University of Amsterdam, this extensive theatre history – with objects ranging from drama to dance, from puppetry to musicals – is preserved for posterity.

*Collecting Theatre* offers a selection from one hundred years of the Theatre Collection. The book showcases the most beautiful, unique and fascinating objects. It gives the reader a rich insight into four centuries of Dutch theatre history and what remains after the curtain comes down for the last time.

