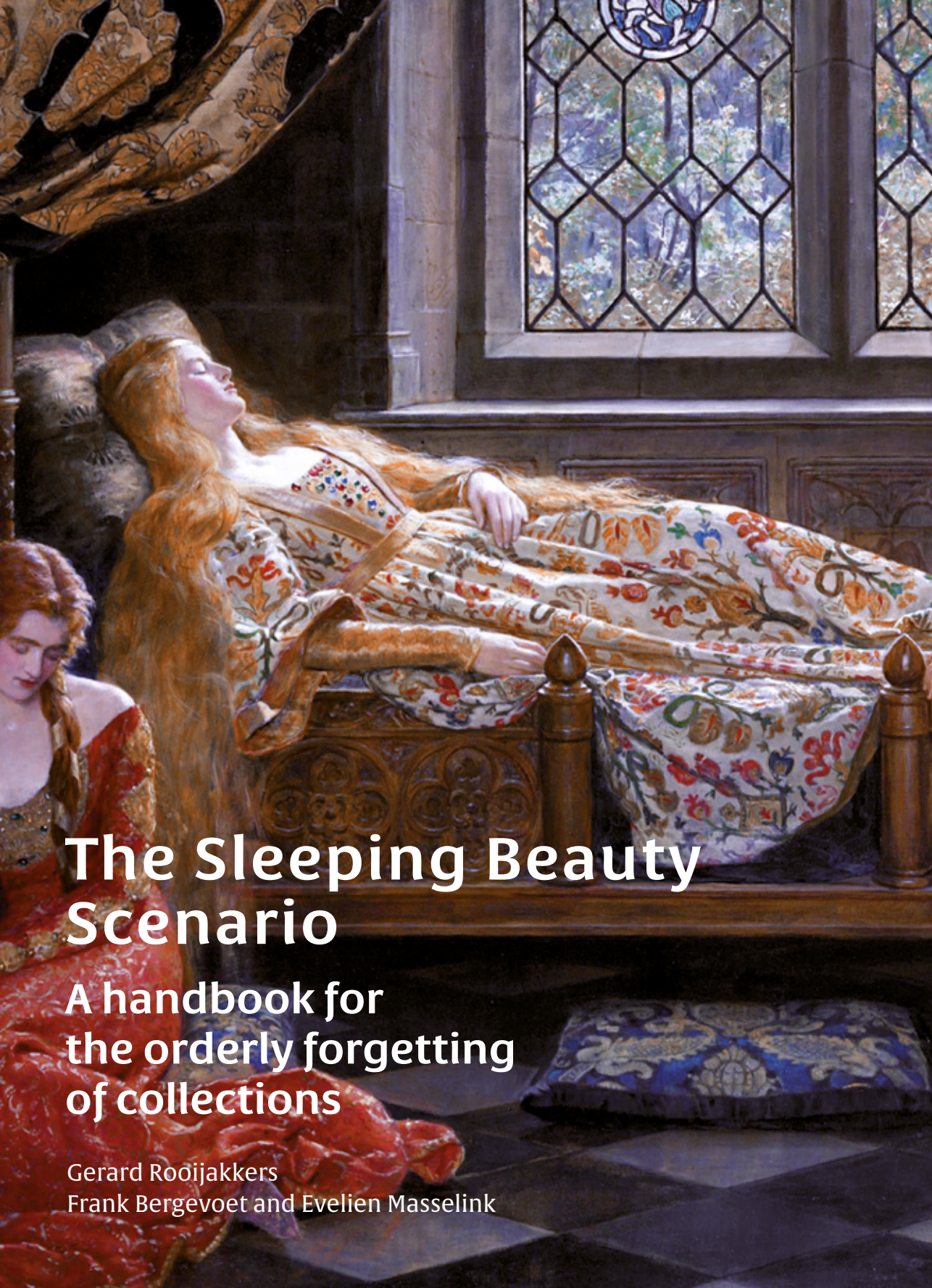

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario

A handbook for the orderly forgetting of collections

Gerard Rooijakkers
Frank Bergevoet and Evelien Masselink

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for the orderly forgetting
of collections

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The Sleeping Beauty Scenario is a concept by Gerard Rooijakkers. The texts in this publication are his own, unless otherwise stated.

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English translation: Jane Szita, Jason Coburn

Parallel to this project is the documentary by Van Paridon Films *Doornroosje, de tijd als vriend, the Sleeping Beauty, Time as a Friend*

→
Over time, the naked truth comes to light from the depths of oblivion. Painting in oil on canvas by Jean-Léon Gérôme from 1896. (Musée Anne de Beaujeu in Moulins, Allier department, France)

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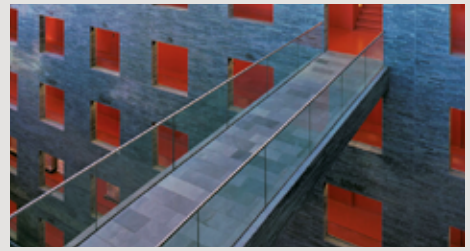


Introduction

Jan Anderson and the problem of long-term preservation

Anticipation is not the greatest strength of our society. We prefer to look back, especially at whatever has gone well. Foresight is difficult, and unless forced, we prefer to ignore it. Whether problems are big or small, if our politicians can put them off to the next policy term, they are happy to do so. Their attention span isn't usually as long as four years. And in the meantime, life goes on. Whoever is around later can sort it out then. Maybe the market will solve the problem. You cannot say that this is good stewardship, or that we are dealing adequately with future generations. All in all, in all sorts of areas, we are doing a poor job of looking after the interests of future generations.

Time management for collections

In this book, we focus on heritage, not only in terms of theoretical reflection, but especially in terms of practical action based on it, with a view to the long term. We think in terms of generations rather than years.

What practical measures can we take to preserve things in the long term? Ironically, we advocate forgetting and inaction. Do not select, do not enhance, do not discard. Do not restore beyond repair, do not fight time and decay. Remembering, then, in the form of inaction. And instead of remembering in the sense of memorialising, we will instrumentalise "forgetting" as a memory strategy. This is difficult and requires a completely different attitude, a different way of thinking, a different paradigm for dealing with collections. We humans are simply better conditioned for orderly preservation than for orderly forgetting.

Towards a new tool set

Cultural amnesia combined with an ethic of remembering through loving neglect is not the only solution to the problem of long-term conservation, or necessarily the best course of action. We have to look at it on a case-by-case basis. Also, isn't it true that we should forget about collections as a whole? If you want, you can also put parts of collections in a museum "pit of oblivion". In this way, we increase the applicability, scope and relevance of this method. We therefore see the development of a new set of tools for orderly forgetting, rather than orderly conservation, as an important addition to the toolbox of museologists and policy makers.

Anticipating collections in need

A sense of urgency is felt only when a need arises for immediate action to be taken regarding collections, whereas in fact in almost all cases it could have been foreseen. You can usually see the emergency coming from a mile away. But again, we close our eyes, it is not our problem, which is a shame. It is only when the collector closes his eyes for good that ours open. By the time the alarm is sounded – and we have seen this on several occasions – it is often too late to do any damage control, let alone stop the disintegration and alienation of a private collection.

Of course, this is how collections have often developed over time. However, given the dynamics of these things, in some cases one would like to have some time and space for reflection by reducing the turnover rate.

Un-collecting as a panacea

Why do we opt for the closure or, in the case of public collections, the procedural disposing of museum objects, when we no longer know how to deal with collections that fall outside a current paradigm? As if collecting were a panacea, a cure-all for all kinds of museum ailments.

There is nothing wrong with decollection, but the question is whether it is an appropriate tool in all cases. Decollection is often an institutional weakness to make collections that fall outside the time-bound paradigm manageable. Think of the mandatory collection plan in the museum sector, which, despite appearances, is never fixed forever and can sometimes do more harm than good in terms of future generations. Especially when applied rigidly to old collections and categories. A plan that shows little respect for the genesis, coherence and continuity of collections can have almost irreparable consequences in a dynamic organisation.

Collection management is time management

It seems that we in the museum world are so used to the temporary nature of the construction and dismantling of public presentations that we don't take the long view. Objects are not just utilitarian objects in a museum's choreography of display. Why keep what you don't show? In the Netherlands, buildings that have fallen into disuse (we aptly speak of 'becoming obsolete') have usually been demolished quickly, before they have had time to demonstrate their other, real values. It is either the wrecking ball or irreparable restoration: a patient culture of slowness is alien to us. Even what you do not show in the short or long term has value for future generations. The significance of this goes far beyond our exhibition policy and is not about showing, but about hiding. Museums see collection management as an essential task. The museum's Sleeping Beauty Scenario, on the other hand, focuses primarily on time management. After all, collection management is all about managing time.

What to do about Jan Anderson?

In September 2020, Gerard Rooijakkers received one of those urgent collection calls from Marielle Hendriks, director of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland [Heritage House South Holland) regarding the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum] in Vlaardingen. Yes, he knew Anderson. Was the collector dead then? No, fortunately not, but born in 1936 he had now reached an advanced age, although he was far from tired of life. What to do with his private collection of some 150,000 objects?

It is unusual for a provincial institution to take care of a private collection, which, strictly speaking, is not the direct responsibility of the local government. But there is a wider public interest at stake here. Gerard's suggestion was to explore an alternative scenario – instead of the familiar one of collection and cherry picking by public museums. So, no cherry picking but a "pit of oblivion" with an information dossier for future generations. Starting from the three Kantian questions (What can I know? What ought I to do? What can I hope for?), we got down to work.

Sleeping Beauty is adopted

The Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland turned it into a project under the inspiring leadership of Evelien Masselink, who soon involved the national Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Cultural Heritage Agency] in the person of Frank Bergevoet. The time seemed ripe for a combination of reflection and determination to use the Anderson case for the development of a new museological tool. Evelien introduced the poetic name for this, *the Sleeping Beauty Scenario*.

Frank Bergevoet enriched the concept with a Refugium and a Collection Lab, among other things. In the Refugium, a refuge for collections, endangered collections can be taken out of circulation for a short time. Reducing the rate of turnover allows for reflection on the best collection strategy – a decompression room as first aid for orphaned collections. In this way, we enrich the museum infrastructure with a quarantine tool that can also be used for private collections.

In the Collection Lab we monitor decay and we give students and professionals the opportunity to carry out experiments that would be taboo in any other museum depot. Learning, acquiring and sharing knowledge are central to this. The Reinwardt Academy has, as it were, adopted the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, including the Collection Lab and the Refugium, to involve students from all years. In this way, we continue to speak to future generations with a determination that is based on non-intervention. We are advocating a culture of slowness, in which we want memory to honestly resist transience.

Daan van Paridon's team films Gerard Rooijakkers during the mould-free packaging and storage of the textile collection in the Rederijpakhuis, currently a depot in Vlaardingen, October 2022.

Communication and storytelling techniques

Much attention has been paid to communication in the project. There was consultation with partners and dialogue with those that support heritage communities as well as with volunteers involved with the museum, the residents of Vlaardingen, the students of the Reinwardt Academy and not forgetting the general public, society as a whole. We deliberately communicate using a variety of media and storytelling techniques in order to anticipate the future as best we can. Filmmaker Daan van Paridon, for example, was asked to film the various stages in the process over a number of years and edit them into a documentary. Stills from his rich visual material are included in this publication for the first time. We are adding not only the documentary, but also all the unused fragments, to Sleeping Beauty's dormant dowry. We believe in the power of the imagination. In the future, we also want to use artistic storytelling techniques to convey the unseen.

↗ Jan Anderson (b. The Hague, 1936) in 2022.

Handbook, manual, accountability and manifesto

We are only at the beginning of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario. It is not yet entirely clear how communication will take place, and that is not a problem. We don't know that much yet! We will have a lot to think about in the coming years, also in response to society's reactions. But in this book we are sharing with heritage professionals what we know and think, the knowledge and experience we have gained. We have called it a handbook because it provides an overview of the knowledge and state of an unexplored subfield within the discipline of museology, namely the orderly forgetting of collections. Let ours be the first, but not the last, word on putting collections to sleep.

We talk to colleagues, for example at the symposium on *Sleeping Beauty* and *Orderly Forgetting* in the Grote Kerk of Vlaardingen on 9 June 2023, very appropriate in the context of the city's 750th anniversary. Seven heritage professionals from the Netherlands and Flanders have reflected on the draft of this book. Their contributions are included here to record this exchange of thoughts, knowledge and experience.

Therefore, this publication is more than a smooth, inventory-based handbook; it is also an exploration, developed through progressive insights, to become uncertainty tolerant and to better engage in discussions with future generations. This book can also be seen as a comprehensive justification with reflective, process-based documentation of what we have done and not done. And yes, it is also a manifesto, a plea to practice abstinence and embrace the culture of slowness.

↑ Performance of the Amazing Stroopwafels in Vlaardingen during the symposium on 9 June 2023.

↑ Political cartoon from around 1890 depicting the mythical figure of Procrustes, here as an incarnation of the state government restricting the freedom of a socialist by cutting off his legs. The proverbial Procrustean bed is a nice metaphor for the paradigms in which we mutilate collectors and their collections by stretching, cramming or discarding parts of them.

Never seen before

But without Jan Anderson, the veteran collector from Vlaardingen, now well over 85 years old, the paper would have remained purely academic. Now, thanks to Jan's flexibility of mind and the legacy he has reserved for the collection and the museum, we have the unique opportunity to actually develop the scenario in practice.

Don't underestimate what it means to a collector and a museum man to know that after your death the whole place will be 'put in a box' and sealed 'forever'. Most private museum owners wouldn't even think about it. Realising the unthinkable suits Jan Anderson, as his life story shows.

During the preparations for the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, a second candidate emerged: the recently closed Museum De Voorde in Zoetermeer, where an innovative project on participatory collecting took place in 2008. The question is what will happen to the collection, and in particular to the Zoetermeer 2008 sub-collection. The unfortunate fate of this museum shows the vulnerability of instruments such as the Guidelines for the Rejection of Museum Objects [Leidraad voor het afstoten van Museale Objecten/LAMO] which do not seem to be impervious to disruption and reluctance. Like the adventures of the Van den Bogaerde collection in Heeswijk Castle, the Zoetermeer problem will be discussed in this handbook as a case of failure from which much can be learned.

In combination with the Refugium and the Collection Lab, the Sleeping Beauty Scenario is also internationally remarkable as a thought experiment. But the actual methodical implementation in museum practice is unique. The Vlaardingen experiment is a world first. As such, Sleeping Beauty is included in the international portal *Heritage Futures – Assembling Alternative Futures for Heritage: Exploring ways of shaping future legacies and common worlds across different fields of conservation practice*. In the final chapter on leaving things (understood as both passing on to succeeding generations and practicing abstinence), we will discuss this in more detail, linking the project internationally to the Declaration on the Responsibilities of Present Generations towards Future Generations, adopted by Unesco in Paris in 1997, in the light of the new millennium.

Become an uncertainty-savvy testator

In the world of heritage, we are so preoccupied with

the past and being good heirs that the interpretation of the role of a good legacy is not given the consideration it deserves. As if it were just a matter of passing on what we think is important here and now. What is the best way to leave a lasting legacy?

There are colleagues who believe that with the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, we are passing on the problems of collections to the next generation: "Nice and easy". But that's not the case. We are giving future generations the freedom to keep or throw away, to use or forget. The choice is theirs. We do not saddle future generations with hermetic problems, but offer transparent options with no strings attached. We also provide an information dossier – which our ancestors usually failed to think about – that will remain readable and freely accessible in the long term.

If we tried to solve all this from our limited perspective (after all, paradigms can change quickly), we would be doing both the collections and our descendants a disservice. The problem is not the collection, as is often thought, but the lack of strategies for informal, large-scale, long-term preservation. Instead of making everything fit like the ancient Greek Procrustes, by cutting off and rejecting what protrudes from the paradigmatic bed, we let Sleeping Beauty lie quietly and unmutilated in her bower.

Heritage-community interests as a dilemma

That's easier said than done. In daily practice, the dilemmas pile up. Every pragmatic and/or ethical decision has its pros and cons. What do you do about a mould explosion in the depot before Sleeping Beauty goes to sleep? Can you expose volunteers and students to it? How do you balance the legitimate interests of a heritage community, such as a living culture of remembrance around the Second World War? The Anderson collection contains unique testimonies of members of the resistance, such as the so-called Geuzen. Do we exclude these pieces or do they lie dormant while we make high-quality educational replicas for the youth of Vlaardingen?

Is it better to keep the papers as a closed resource in the Vlaardingen municipal archives? What to do with the papers and books that the archive is not interested in? Should we leave those cupboards with their lead book shelves on the sagging beams of the attic? After all, haven't they been there since who knows when? And what if they start driving piles nearby and the whole building shakes? The bottom line is that the intention to abstain requires the necessary action. If you do nothing beforehand, abstinence will not come to fruition later, when the Sleeping Beauty Scenario really begins with the demise of the collector.

Crooked stick, straight hit

Sleeping Beauty's radical, irreversible amnesia bears little relation to the information dossier under her bed. But no archaeologist, given a say in the matter, would want us to deny the future the vulnerable context information that we currently have. Are we putting too much of our own values and preferences in that information dossier? Doubtlessly. We are children of our time. But – as the Dutch saying goes – a crooked stick can still deliver a straight hit. That is exactly what we try to do inventively in this book. The method is still under development and will have imperfections, but that does not mean that it can't be applied.

If you try to straighten a crooked stick, it breaks, or you have to whittle it down until a helpless, deconstructed sprig remains. We're not going to do either. Reality is crooked and unruly, and you will need to find a custom stick for every Sleeping Beauty project. With the help of this manual you can see from which wood and how to best cut the stick, and how to use it optimally.

You can look at it for a long time – you have to know it from now on – and put it away in the museum toolbox until further notice, next to all those other useful instruments. Perhaps one day you will use it responsibly, if the opportunity arises. Anticipate and be prepared. With a stick – a wand! – like this you can magic, as it were, collections from the present professionally to sleep, on the way to an unknown future.

We humans have a nasty habit of appropriating not only the past, but also the future. Both belong equally to our grandchildren's children. Let's not decide everything in advance through selection and rejection, but let's leave them as much as possible to make their own choices later on, based on paradigms of which we currently have no idea. In short, let us become uncertain tolerant in the world of heritage, with a view to the future based on best practice and reflection.

Evelien Masselink

No cherry picking

Over the course of their existence, regional museums often become veritable repositories of objects from many different origins. This can work well for years. But then the volunteers can no longer find their own successors, or the director himself is getting too old. What to do with all these objects? The challenge is obvious: the most beautiful commemorative plate, the oldest scales… they can't be lost! No, but what then? And where does the story of the collection end up if you donate a showpiece to another museum? How will future generations know which ensemble it once belonged to?

The methodology of conservation, thanks to a good museum system, offers sufficient tools. As a result, not all orphaned collections are lost. But sometimes a regional museum has too many objects and too few hands to 'digitise' them, or a building is given a new purpose and the collection has to be (partially) removed. These are real dilemmas, because who can say whether we have made the right choice in selecting and keeping what is good?

Streekmuseum Jan Anderson

Time for a radically different approach, together with a museum that can handle such an experimental approach. The Streekmuseum Jan Anderson takes a broad view of the past and an open look at the future. Since 1975, this private regional museum has been housed in the stables of an old farmhouse in Vlaardingen. School classes, private individuals and companies can visit the collection and temporary exhibitions.

The 150,000 objects can be divided into 150 sub-collections and ensembles, ranging from commemorative scarves, glasses, tabaccology, Second World War objects, samplers, medals and children's toys to a fully furnished schoolroom and shopping street.

Jan Anderson, a collector par excellence with a keen interest in the story behind each object, is getting on in years and has been thinking for some time about what to do next with his precious collections and his museum. He has no heir, but he does have an army of volunteers and a flexible attitude. Jan wants others to gain as much knowledge and enjoyment as he has from these collections. Which is why he approached Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland with the question of what the future of this museum could look like.

Saving everything by temporarily forgetting

The Erfgoedhuis contacted cultural historian and ethnologist Gerard Rooijakkers, who came up with an innovative proposal: the methodology of non-intervention. Keep everything and put the collection in a "pit of oblivion", let it go to sleep like Sleeping Beauty, and only wake it up again many decades later. By then another generation will have come along to appreciate the collection according to the standards of its own time.

↑
From left to right: Nel van Dijk (director of the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam), Jan Anderson, Susan Lammers (director of the Cultural Heritage Agency in Amersfoort) and Marielle Hendriks (director of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland) in front of the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson in Vlaardingen after signing their cooperation agreement on 3 November 2021.

↓
Evelien Masselink of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland and Frank Bergevoet of the Cultural Heritage Agency flank a satisfied Jan Anderson in his museum in Vlaardingen in the autumn of 2021.

How? And why? Rooijakkers says that, despite all our good intentions, we often keep the wrong things. Just take a look at the regional museums that have started to clean up their act, or that have transferred their collection. Often it is only the most expensive, the most beautiful, the oldest or the most unique objects, the cherries on the cake, that move. What remains are defective collections. The tactic of abstinence reduces our time-bound fingerprint. This radical approach of "preserving everything by temporarily forgetting" has never before been consciously and methodically applied.

"Our society cannot fully assess what will be valuable in the future," says Rooijakkers. You slow down the turnover of the collection as much as possible by removing it completely from regular museum circulation. What we add is the information dossier that's lacking in archaeology: as much information as possible about the provenance of the objects, so that future generations can also validate the collection.

We always want to do something: save, discard, restore, demolish, but sometimes doing nothing is better! Take the mining history of the Dutch province of south-east Limburg, for example. After the mines closed in the 1970s, almost all the infrastructure of the

mining past was demolished. “Green for black” was the name of this rigorous clean-up campaign. And now there is a collective trauma, because the past is no longer tangible. Identity and pride have been taken away from the people of the mining area. Bonding in time and space is important. If you clean up too enthusiastically, you take the soul out of the heritage. To prevent this, you need a good working method, a radically new museum instrument. This is what we are working on at the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson.

National attention

The national Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) and the Reinwardt Academy, part of the Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK), were interested in Gerard Rooijakkers’ ideas. This accelerated the project. The RCE is supporting the project with money and extra hands. The agency is interested in the question of whether the Sleeping Beauty Scenario offers tools for dealing with collections that are at risk of being transferred because not everyone recognises them as cultural heritage. The RCE is also interested in recording stories from private collectors about their collections. Passive (rather than preventive) long-term conservation is also a point of attention for the agency.

New generations

This project is about the day after tomorrow. The Reinwardt Academy is training people who will be working in museums a generation from now and who will have to deal with collections such as Jan Anderson’s. The fact that this academy is now giving its students the opportunity, through work projects, to think about what it means to put a collection under a bell jar for a generation or two, is of great value. The students are asked questions such as: Who will describe to the next generations what our society looks like? What media will people use to consume information? And how will a collection fare physically if there is no intervention for so long?

There is a lot to do: all the intangible provenance information, uses and customs, folk wisdom and other information about each object is in the head of the director, who is vulnerable because of his age. That's why we are now recording all his knowledge on audio and video media as a priority, wherever possible linked to object numbers already in the Axiell museum registration system. But even though we will be interviewing with the man for about two years, and his volunteers will be saving the – interesting and rich! –fragments digitally, we are not there yet.

We also need to think about the long-term security of the buildings in which the collections are housed. Someone will have to monitor the conservation conditions on a regular basis. It will also help everyone if you decide now who can – and will – intervene in the event of a disaster, and who will monitor whether all the digital media have stood the test of time. What is digitally visible to the online visitor? Is it still possible to borrow from this collection? And what happens in the event of a natural disaster, fire, flooding or theft?

Scenarios and dilemmas

We identify and work through many scenarios. How much do you give to the next generation, and how much do you let go? These kinds of dilemmas ensure that all the parties feel very committed and have in-depth discussions. You don’t know if you’re doing the right thing, because you’re developing the guidelines that will help you to do it, according to a step-by-step plan. What a lot to do for effective abstinence!

The national interest is a boost for Jan Anderson, but also for the museum field. Because the Sleeping Beauty Scenario adds an additional method, and that is why we are sharing all the knowledge we have acquired in this book: it will benefit the museum field. This handbook is designed to be practical. For this reason, we have included instructive infographics to illustrate the main points of the content. These diagrams allow the text to be read as a comprehensive explanation. It also contains protocols of the methods used. This is not only to justify the method, but also to help others in the further application and development of this method.

→
Students of the Reinwardt Academy visit Jan Anderson’s depot in the Rederijpakhuis in Vlaardingen.

1

Hide

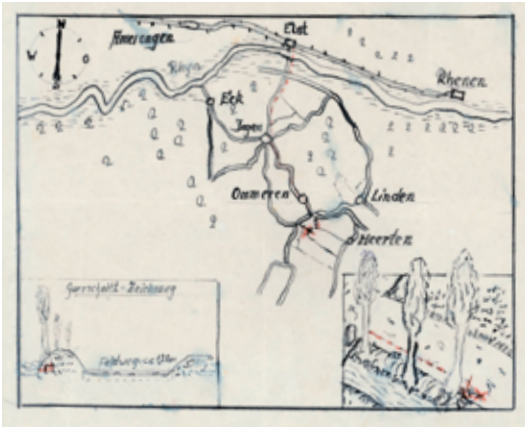
Concealment as a preservation strategy

Before we look at cultural forms of concealment, we will discuss conservation strategies in nature, where hiding and patient waiting play a role in both fauna and flora. In culture, we distinguish between permanent and temporary forms of hiding. Permanent deposits are not intended to be recovered. Temporary deposits (such as time capsules) are, of course, the most interesting for our argument. The explicit intention is that they should be found. We conclude with an example from the world of the outsider, where hiding is an effective way of preserving artefacts. "Hide and seek" is also a well-known game in the world of children. Hiding is a strategy in visual culture too, to pass on all kinds of messages to those who are aware of them. However, we will not consider these playful elements of culture here, as they do not imply a preservation strategy.

A secret treasure map

The Nationaal Archief [National Archives] in The Hague is an institution that specialises in the long-term preservation of documents. At the beginning of January 2023, the archive released a document from the Second World War. In itself, this was nothing special, because in accordance with good Western European practice, the archive releases new documents to the public every year, once the period of confidentiality has expired. Usually it is short-lived and unspectacular news, fodder for historians.

This time, among the items released was a hand-drawn map on which a German soldier in Ommeren (Gelderland province) had marked the secret location of some valuable war booty. This immediately captured everyone's imagination and even made it onto the national eight o'clock news. Nice publicity for the archive, but the effects on the ground were not fully anticipated.



The treasure map published by the National Archives in The Hague on 1 January 2023.

↑ Hart van Nederland reported in a news story in January 2023: "Search for the hidden Nazi treasure in Ommeren: jewellery, precious stones and gold watches."

↓ Treasure hunting with a metal detector is officially not allowed. Collecting surface finds is allowed, but is subject to strict rules. In practice, it is an exciting Wild West hobby for enthusiasts in which a lot of archaeological information is lost and the ultimate repository for long-term preservation, namely the Dutch soil archive, is rapidly degraded for greed and silly entertainment.

The treasure as a trophy

The "Nazi treasure", as the spoils of war were immediately dubbed, kept people busy for weeks. The buried valuables, consisting of jewellery set with precious stones, gold watches and coins, were said to have come from a bank building that was destroyed by a direct hit in Arnhem in August 1944. The Den Engh country house in Ommeren, the location of General Blaskovitz's German headquarters in the last years of the war, was the scene of a much to-ing and fro-ing by unannounced treasure hunters. It is a punishable offence to disturb the soil archive without a permit for the purpose of collecting archaeological finds. But public order was also at stake, so much so that enforcement officers and special investigation officers issued nine warnings in a single afternoon. Not that it helped much – the urge to search was unstoppable.

Many people's imaginations ran wild, as did sensationalism and greed. A buried treasure appeals to deep, primal feelings in many people, with stimuli that seem difficult to ignore. References to popular

film culture are never far away; characters like Indiana Jones are embedded in humanity's collective memory, as are implicit references to the fairytale motif of a treasure, guarded by a slumbering dragon as the embodiment of evil. To steal treasure from this Nazi dragon is not a crime, but an act of heroism, if not a belated act of resistance. The treasure as a trophy. These are poetic images that fascinate young and old.

Instructions for orderly forgetting

The Streekmuseum [Regional Museum] Baron van Brakell also coordinated a search campaign, involving a "recognised searcher" from Ochten who had previously found a hoard of Roman coins in the same area. As a museum, of course, you can't let any old pirate into your backyard to get away with a Nazi treasure like this: that would result in a Wild West scenario. The Gelderse Veluwerand area remained unsettled for a long while. Nothing has been found yet, and it is assumed that the loot was dug up again soon after the treasure map was drawn. Bad luck. But it did give us a nice insight into the emotions and behaviour surrounding a long-secret treasure map!

Hiding something is a very effective preservation strategy, especially to prevent someone else from finding it. Of course, the German soldier of 1944 also knew this. To help him remember where it was, he made himself a map, and possibly left an inconspicuous marker in the field. In fact, such a treasure map can be seen as a manual for orderly forgetting.

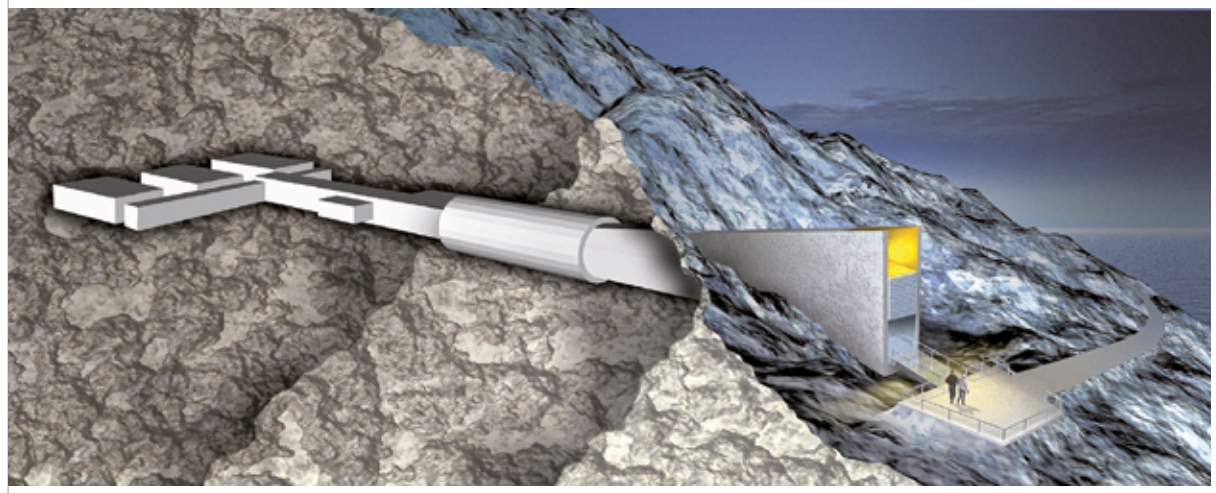
Apparently, he was able to live long enough to be able to dig up his secret treasure again. Today's treasure hunters could not and did not want to assume this, against their better judgement. Apart from all the juicy anecdotal facts – and I predict that the Ommeren treasure map will continue to appear in the years to come – it is worth analysing this case further below in the context of this *Handbook on the Orderly Forgetting of Collections*.

Hiding in nature

Just as instinct is not the exclusive preserve of animals, so too is ritual behaviour not the exclusive preserve of humans. Even in the animal world we can find fixed, formalised patterns of action with a repetitive character and a communicative meaning. Think of the behaviour associated with courtship, the demarcation

↑ The acorn woodpecker (Melanerpes formicivorus), which lives in the western part of the Americas, keeps a well-organised store of nuts in a specially built depot. These "granaries", managed in groups and passed down from generation to generation, can contain as many as 50,000 drilled holes in which almonds, walnuts and pecans are firmly clamped. This prevents theft by competitors with less powerful beaks.

of territories or the confirmation or challenge of hierarchies within and between groups. Even the storage of vital items such as food in caches that need to be found is, so to speak, an everyday practice in the animal kingdom. Some species are better at this than others. The American acorn woodpecker very systematically carves out a cavity in a tree for each acorn, making it almost like a miniature depot of vertically stored nuclear rods. Birds in the crow family are known to exhibit intelligent behaviour in all sorts of ways. Grey nutcrackers are masters at hiding large quantities of pine nuts, which they can easily find later. They use tools, maintain friendships and even recognise identical photographs. Closer to home, the wood mouse roams around hiding not only its acorns, but also all kinds of grains and seeds in specially constructed holes. This behaviour requires a well-functioning memory in order to find the hidden item and survive. In short, memory is evolutionarily important.



Long-term storage of seeds

It is a strategy for nuts and seeds to spread effectively and germinate in other places, because a squirrel sometimes forgets them or, more often, does not make it to the end of winter.

Fauna and flora therefore work closely together. Seeds are particularly interesting here, as they are characterised by a long-term strategy. With their enormous ability to germinate, they can, under the right conditions, wait in secret for better times for tens, hundreds and sometimes even thousands of years. This property also makes it possible to create artificial seed banks and thus guarantee biodiversity in the future, for example after a possible nuclear disaster.

Noah's Ark on Spitsbergen

Noah's Ark is the unofficial name given to the World Seed Bank, which was built in 2006 on the island of Spitsbergen. The Global Seed Vault, an underground bunker that can store four and a half million samples of agricultural seeds, is designed to prevent the loss of genetic heritage in the event of catastrophes such as large-scale military conflicts or nuclear accidents.

It is essentially a back-up for other seed banks around the world. For example, the Aleppo Seed Bank – in one of the oldest, most fertile and genetically rich agricultural areas on earth – had to rely on the Spitsbergen Seed Vault because of the civil war in Syria in 2015.

The World Seed Bank is like an Arctic version of the Egyptian pyramids. The three concrete vaults lie

↑ Schematic cross-section of the World Seed Bank on Spitsbergen. The Global Seed Vault, or "Noah's Ark", makes use of the natural conditions and is monumentally marked in the landscape by a work of art reflecting the Northern Lights (see also p.165).

120 metres deep in a sandstone formation, 130 metres above sea level. Only a long corridor with airlocks provides access to this depot, which is permanently cooled to -18°C. Because of the permafrost, loss of refrigeration is not an immediate problem. The depot is monumentally marked in the landscape by a work of art by Dyveke Sanne, which in many ways reflects the Northern Lights.

As the ability of seeds to germinate diminishes over time, they are periodically refreshed. Nevertheless, seeds can still germinate after hundreds or thousands of years. At the National Archives in London, Roelof van Gelder happened to find preserved seeds from South Africa in a Vlissingen purse, among the letters captured by English privateers in 1803. Some of the seeds proved to be viable and were successfully cultivated.

Biological back-ups: DNA and fossils

For preservation, nature itself cannot be surpassed, given the abundant production of biological back-ups in the form of DNA and seeds. The strategy is to copy cells until the species becomes extinct and reproduction stops. However, this is not an unchanging storage, because of course there is mutation and evolution. And when a species goes extinct, nature has other storage tricks up its

sleeve, like insects trapped in fossilised amber. The mosasaurs in the limestone of a Cretaceous sea date from 66 million years ago. These are natural, not cultural, deposits. Mother Nature is much better at preserving things than humans are.

Permanent deposits

Hiding something forever is a common occurrence. This hiding can be of the nature of getting rid of something, such as throwing away rubbish. But now we are concerned with permanent hiding, with the aim of preservation. Practical examples from the past can teach us how best to do this.

↑ The Rijkszaadeest in Stroe from 1913 contains all kinds of tools for extracting seeds from pine cones. It is an example of an unprotected collection of national importance, owned by the Staatsbosbeheer forestry management organisation and lovingly looked after by volunteers.

↗ Fossil insect trapped in fossilised resin (amber), a storage trick of Mother Nature.

Permanent hiding: discarding

Even in nature, human culture is never far away. The Anthropocene, the geological epoch in which we now live, is characterised by global traces of the most invasive animal species on Earth. Human footprints serve as guide fossils. Waste is a marker of human presence, out into the cosmos. Wherever humans go, they leave waste behind. They don't like to be reminded of it, so they destroy their waste by burning it or dumping it out of sight. The result is not only illegal dumping in nature, but also huge piles of rubbish like postmodern Calvary mountains of the consumer society. In many cases, this is neatly disguised in the landscape by hiding the mountain of rubbish under a layer of earth on which a golf course or wildlife park is then built. Sand over it and forget it. Turning a no-go area into a tourist area is only possible if you know how to hide it well.

These are permanent deposits and there is no intention of finding or retrieving them. In these cases, the intention is to throw it away and forget it. However, the subject of this manual has been forgotten and kept.

Permanent hiding: saving

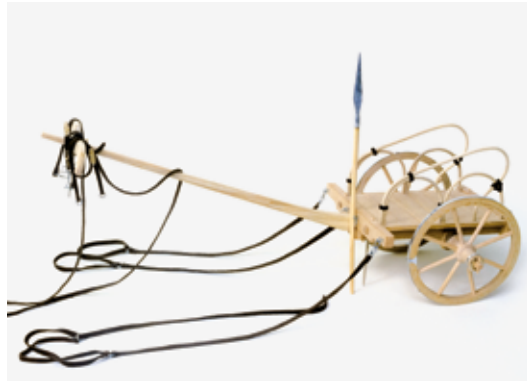
When it comes to permanent deposits for preservation, we know many examples: archaeology

is full of them. They are mainly related to the ritual practice of grave goods, in which the dead travelled to the afterlife with all kinds of objects. Apart from the religious aspects, the most important thing for us is that the objects given had to be kept secret and were the inalienable property of the deceased.

Ancestral rights

We find household goods, weapons and sometimes even whole chariots, complete with harness (in the case of royal graves). A few years ago, treasure hunters in Heumen near Nijmegen "spotted" an example from the Iron Age, when they were – illegally – using a metal detector to look for objects from the Second World War. Professional archaeology can only watch, wringing its hands and gnashing its teeth, because the legal instruments are inadequate and the damage caused by the disruption and destruction of information is already irreversible.

Also, from a moral point of view we could say that such treasure hunters violate the inalienability and the grave peace of our ancestors. Who gives them the right to do this? Is a cultural and social interest subordinate to the pleasure of a private hobby? But ancestors are no longer part of the conversation in our Western culture, we only talk about them in terms of heritage. Legally speaking, ancestors have no rights in our Western world system. The advocates and spokespersons of the ancestors, as heritage professionals can also be called, are often left empty-handed when it comes to enforcement and sanctions. Given the enormous rate of soil erosion and the social importance of long-term conservation, a ban on metal detecting in undisturbed soil is desirable and urgently needed.



↑ Reconstruction of the chariot from the Nijmegen chariot grave. The chariot grave from the 5th century BC at Heumen, south of Nijmegen, which was illegally excavated with metal detectors in 2018, is of the same type. The grave goods were ritually destroyed in order to preserve them for eternity. The government had the finds confiscated. The criminal investigation has not led to any further sanctions or measures.

The desire to preserve in a grave

Every grave is a ritual depository for a body. In addition, the grave can be used as a depository for the precious belongings of the deceased, or for symbolic gifts. The custom of giving the deceased food and money for the journey is ancient and widespread, especially in non-Christian cultures. The Romans spoke of the viaticum, the way of life on the road, with a coin to pay the ferryman Charon for the crossing of the Styx, the river of the realm of the dead in classical mythology. In Christianity, the *viaticum* now exists only metaphorically in the form of the sacrament of last rites. This does not mean, however, that grave goods are unusual in everyday practice among Christians. In particular, devotional medals, rosaries and crucifixes have been found in large numbers during excavations of 19th- and 20th-century cemeteries.

In recent decades, the body has increasingly been accompanied on its final journey with: objects and wishes deposited in the coffin. This is not a problem with burials in the Netherlands, provided that the coffin is not completely filled with items. Environmentally harmful additions such as batteries and electronics are prohibited. Glassware in the form of drink bottles and framed photos are also officially prohibited, with a view to possible subsequent clearances, but hey, who checks that? Practice is stronger than the prescribed order.

However, this can cause problems with cremations. Crematoria Twente, which has branches in Almelo and Enschede, was even forced to issue a press release in December 2012 advising people not to place mobile phones and drink bottles in the coffin, because of the risk of explosion in the furnace.

Placing cherished items in the grave is an irrevocable act, provided that the grave is not disturbed. When pop artist Michael Jackson was laid to rest in a gold-plated coffin in a mausoleum at Forest Lawn Memorial Park near Los Angeles in September 2009, his famous white gloves were with him, along with notes from his children.

Popular fascination: Nazi treasures

The art collector Cornelis Gurlitt, whose apartment in 2012 contained more than 1,400 works of art, alleged Nazi loot, was buried in Düsseldorf in May 2014 with 11 replicas of his favourite works.

What is it with this fascination with Nazi loot? Think of the ineradicable conspiracy theories about alleged underground railway carriages full of loot in former Eastern Bloc countries. The recent treasure map of Ommeren also appeals to the irresistible urge to dig for treasure among a certain group of enthusiasts. They see it as an innocent hobby, but from a cultural-historical point of view, the treasure hunt for war booty causes a lot of post-war collateral damage.

The Second World War is far from over when it comes to collecting and preserving. This observation also applies to the Jan Anderson Collection. With a view to unwanted visitors and possible consultation from extreme circles, it has been decided not to make a large number of collection items available online. They will go, information files and all, into Sleeping Beauty's "pit of oblivion". In this sense, parts of the Anderson Collection can ironically also be considered a Nazi treasure.

Hair pieces

And what about the daughter who placed her childhood pigtail in the coffin of her old father, who had regretted her cutting it off? She had never been able to throw the pigtail away – this was the moment. Thousands of years ago, in the Drenthe peat bog, two beautifully knotted braids of red hair were placed in a bag and (we assume) sacrificed. A gift could not be more personal than your own hair. In the past, the hair of the dead was often used for scenes in the form of framed "hair art" and hair jewellery that physically commemorated the deceased.

Hidden messages and helpers

Nowadays, people like to use the inside of the coffin lid as a hidden place for personal messages intended only for the deceased. We also know this use from the past, although the intention was different. For example, in the Middle Ages the tombs of important people were decorated with scenes of saints, invisible to mortals and therefore hidden, intended to accompany them personally while they waited for the Resurrection and the Last Judgment.

↑ The Yde Girl, remarkably well preserved by the peat, did not die of natural causes. We do not know her name, but we identify this unfortunate ancestor from the beginning of our era by the ugly term "bog body". Discovered in the ground in Yde in 1897. A good example of permanent deposit where preservation may not have been the intention. After its discovery, the body was severely mutilated by the local population, who were unaware of its true age, and all but one of the teeth were removed and the red hair, "as much as one and a half feet long" (approximately 45 cm) was pulled from the skull.

↓ Contemporary press cutting about the discovery of the Yde Girl.

Nederland.

ARIES, 18 Mei. Door 't werkvolk van den heer L. Popken te IJde werd Woensdag jl. in een veentje tusschen Vries en IJde een volledig menschengeraamte gevonden. 't Haar, ter lengte van wel anderhalven voet, bedekte nog den schedel. Overblijfselen van kleeren waren nog aanwezig. Daar voorwerpen in veen niet dan hoogst langzaam vergaan kan genoemd lichaam wel al menig dozijn jaren in 't veen hebben gezeten.

← Ephemeral, inalienable grave goods: honour your ancestors, make sure they lack nothing!

In Asia you can buy sets like this one on every street corner: with a paper watch, a mobile phone and a registered charger included in the box, without which it is difficult to make calls, and a pen to take notes. Nothing is forgotten.

Together with fake dollars and a razor, you are sincerely trying to provide your deceased father in the afterlife with things that he cannot live without…

Not in the photo, but also for sale everywhere: cardboard scooters, cars, costumes, etc.

And then: everything goes up in flames!

Popular fascination: The curse of the pharaoh

Inalienable preservation leads to careful burials with sometimes exceptionally durable architectural constructions, such as dolmens or pyramids, which protect the contents and mark the site in the landscape. The latter detracts from the element of concealment, but in the case of the Egyptian pyramids we know that the precious contents were hidden both practically and symbolically, with secret passageways, the destruction of information carriers, such as enslaved construction workers, and the incantations of curse tablets.

As with treasure maps, we also see public fascination fed by mass media, as in 2023 with the "spectacular" discovery of (yet another) new corridor in the pyramid of Cheops. The "curse of the pharaoh", for those who violate the secret peace of the tomb, has become proverbial. This folklorisation of the world of the pharaohs in popular culture does not alter the fact that the ancient Egyptians, in many ways, developed a very good strategy for long-term preservation. Ancient best practice from which we can learn.

Best practice 1: Hide and mark

First of all, we see the fascinating paradox of hiding and marking in landscape architecture. An apparent contradiction that is very effective. On the one hand, the social significance of the content of the structure is communicated. On the other hand, the structure is designed to protect the contents from grave robbers by hiding them. And if it is unexpectedly found and violated, there are always magical curses and incantations that also seem to have a long shelf life.

Best practice 2: Prevent alienation

The contents of the grave are the inalienable property of the deceased and, more generally, of the deceased's group culture. This inalienability is an important concept that recurs throughout this handbook. We will discuss it in more detail in Chapter 6, which is devoted to forgetting. In grave robbery, the grave gift is literally, practically and legally condemned into the hands of a disenfranchised stranger. We can also speak of alienation here in a symbolic sense, since the object no longer functions in the context for which it was intended at the time of deposition: to be available to the deceased during their stay in the realm of the dead.

↑ The royal tomb at Oss, discovered in the 1930s, contained a bucket (*situla*) with a rolled up sword, which was unusable and therefore inalienable. The find belongs to the collection of the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden [National Museum of Antiquities] in Leiden and is on permanent display there. The grave good, which was kept secret, is now seen as a driving force of local identity and, in an enlarged form, adorns the streets of Oss as "roundabout art". On the occasion of the opening of the roundabout in 2019, the Stichting Vrijstaat Land van Ravenstein [Free State Land of Ravenstein Foundation] "seized" the 2,700-year-old coat of arms in a playful but no less serious action. Local communities (now: heritage communities) are thus making their *cultural property rights* (CPR) known.

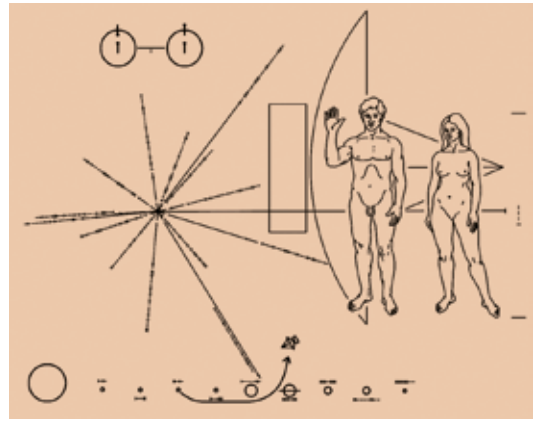
If the archaeological find takes place in a colonial context, the physical object may disappear in a Western museum context, but the symbolic inalienability remains intact. The mummies and sarcophagi in the Rijkmuseum van Oudheden [National Museum of Antiquities] in Leiden also testify to the inalienable link with the ancient Egyptian empires.

To consolidate this inalienability, there were also strategies other than concealment, such as making the donations practically unusable. We see this in the European Bronze and Iron Ages, for example when weapons were disabled. For example, in the so-called Prince's Grave in Oss, a skilfully curled-up sword was placed in a bronze bucket as a gift. Regardless of all taboos, the potential grave robber could have known at the time that there was no point in searching the landscaped burial mounds for valuable, usable weapons.

This practice was also common with devotional gifts, offered to a deity according to a vow (ex-voto). The gift was intended as a votive exclusively for the sacred person. Impact and stabbing weapons were disabled by bending or rolling up the blade. After the sacrifice in the water of a river or marshy fen, the object remained effectively hidden and irretrievably preserved.

In an old bed of the Meuse from the late Iron Age (250-12 BC), many iron swords were found near Kessel/Lith in Brabant that had been ritually disabled by bending them, with bronze sheath and all. We even speak of long swords of the Kessel type. A sword was a personal possession, a kind of life companion, which could be offered in gratitude to native gods after services had been rendered by ritually depositing it in the river. The offering was not only inalienable, but also strictly personal, which is why the ritual was to disable it. The gift was irrevocable and eternal – hence the irreversible act in an inaccessible depository.

With the graves, this retrieval was culturally taboo; with the votive gifts in rivers and swamps, there was also a physical-technical impossibility. Combating alienation by rendering the object unusable and blocking retrievability are very effective strategies indeed. However, in the world of archives and museums, the crucial elements of consultation and authentic, physical integrity apply. We will therefore have to organise other safeguards to prevent museological alienation.



The Golden Record with accompanying illustrated gold sleeve containing information about the Earth, intended for extra-terrestrial life, sent by NASA with the Voyager spacecraft in 1973.

Return address: "United States of America, Planet Earth". Extra-terrestrial intelligence may be surprised at the American prudishness in depicting the naked human body. The theft-prone disadvantage of gold as a sustainable carrier is not an issue in space.

Best practice 3: Communicate sustainably

In addition to the paradoxical marking and hiding and making the objects inalienable, distant ancestors thirdly show us the importance of sustainable communication. Sustainable in a material, practical sense, by using materials that can stand the test of time. Few people realise that "our" dolmens are older than many Egyptian pyramids. Natural stone is therefore very suitable in principle, unless it is considered a valuable building material and is reused (the so-called *spolia*). Then the structure becomes a quarry for future generations. It is therefore important to use relatively worthless materials, even as carriers of images and texts, as in the case of Egyptian hieroglyphics. The extremely durable, non-corrosive gold tablets on which the most important information was written were the first to be stolen and melted down.

But sustainable communication also means that we have to try to neutralise the cultural categories of a society. This is very difficult and is the real challenge when it comes to communicating in what we call deep time. Because those same Egyptians could not imagine at the time that their hieroglyphic writing would one day be lost and no longer understood. Communicating in deep time therefore requires transcending our ideas. The Voyager spacecraft, which was sent on a long journey through time to other solar systems 50 years ago, also faced this problem. No texts, but life-size images of a human couple like

a (prudish, because it's the USA after all) mythical Adam and Eve in space, and a whole lot of information on data carriers, leading one to hope that another intelligence will one day hold the key to the contents, as happened with the Rosetta Stone.

The same applies to our distant descendants, whom we will have to inform – as responsible human beings – about the life-threatening status of our nuclear waste, which will remain radioactive for an unimaginable number of generations. This waste is essentially the heritage of the Anthropocene, for which our culture will be remembered in the long term, comparable to geological timescales.

All those beautiful, precious works of art that we would like to pass on to distant, distant posterity – and for which we would much rather be remembered – will surely not survive those long periods of time unless we in the heritage world dare to choose alternative conservation strategies and shift heritage management from collections to time.

Best practice 4: Use the laws of nature

Ensure that long-term storage is possible without human intervention as much as possible. Use natural overpressure, for example to keep out oxygen, use gravity to cover things, use height differences against the risk of flooding, slow down processes in organic material due to cold conditions, limit UV light and use sun and wind as energy sources. The more natural and less managed, the better. Nature, which also includes time, is our best and most reliable friend in this respect.

Shallow time: Building sacrifices

Time does not always have to be so very deep for a break in the information chain between generations. A ritual practice that we know not only from an archaeological context, but also from written sources in the historical period, concerns the ritual deposition of objects during the construction of a house. This sometimes still happens today, when a coin is thrown into the foundations or a time capsule is used as a foundation stone. But such a building sacrifice is also about the religious intention to protect the house and its inhabitants against disaster.

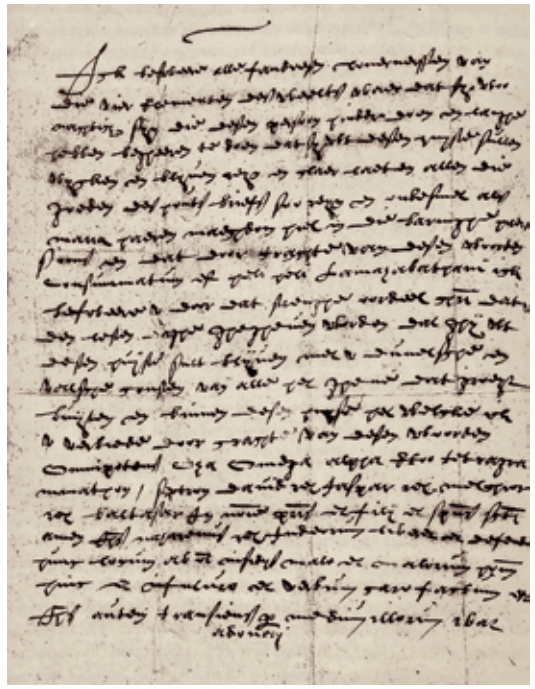
This disaster was thought to come from the outside. This is why many building sacrifices are placed at openings in the house, such as doors and chimneys. By ritually depositing repellents, the vulnerable entrances, open to the outside air, were magically strengthened. The carving of the cross on a door threshold, the painting of a cross over the cellar door, and the preference for hanging crucifixes over doorways and chimneys to protect these open connections between inside and outside are all in keeping with the ritual depositions.

Such an offering usually consisted of a bowl or pot filled with grain, seeds, herbs and often iron. But we also know sacrificial offerings in the form of cats, deposited in niches or cavity walls and found mummified. Also noteworthy are the many leather shoes, never a pair, but always just one, hidden in a building context. These quite recent, but still mysterious, deposits require a lot of research to explain.

In a clearly Christian context we also find medals, metal crucifixes and pipe-clay statues of saints. Such construction offerings are usually buried under the threshold or under the hearth. But there are also examples of texts neatly rolled up and hidden in a hole drilled in a house beam. In 1958, in the Kempen village of Steensel, a rolled-up 16th-century note was found in a hole sealed with a plug in a heavy wooden beam in a farmhouse, containing a text in which the *fandreesen* was exorcised. What exactly this means is unknown, but we assume that it must have been evil forces.

Our ancestors – in the world of heritage we use the term "we" fondly and lightly – are alien to us. The practice of building sacrifices is not appropriate in the current worldview, and even the text, which we can read well, is foreign to us. In other words, the placing of building sacrifices no longer fits into our paradigm, and the "fandreesen" have completely disappeared from the collective memory. This incantation, with all kinds of mysterious formulae, was meant as a permanent deposit and not for our eyes and ears. An abundance of unorthodox information. In this case there is a physical transmission, but the transmission of meaning is largely broken due to contextual amnesia.

So, if we want to communicate with our future descendants, distant or near, it is important not only to add the information dossier that our prehistoric ancestors forgot by default, but also to opt for sustainable carriers and forms of information to establish basic context. Remember that we can still read the words on a rolled-up piece of paper from 450 years ago, but not a floppy disk from 30 years ago. Remember that objects without contextual data quickly become accidental mysteries to later generations.



↑ "Wood letter" with written incantation text, beginning: "I conjure all the fandreesen sorceresses of the four Elements of the world in which they live." It comes from a hollow in a beam in Steensel (North Brabant), c. 1600.

↓ An account from 1815 of the ransom of Vlaardingen fishermen who had been made Christian slaves in Algiers. Coincidentally preserved as a book cover in the Jan Anderson Collection.

Permanent concealment: Re-use

As well as being hidden in wooden beams, ancient texts can also be preserved as recycled bookbinding material, hidden in the covers and spines of books. Fragments of literary texts thought to be lost or completely unknown have been preserved in this way, not for their content, but for the residual value of the parchment as a carrier. They are reused waste, fragments of a greater whole. This is why we also speak of scattered fragments, in Latin *membra disiecta*, like the limbs cut off by Procrustes.

Books from the first millennium have rarely survived in their entirety. Most of what we know about them comes from scraps that have been preserved by chance through reuse.

Permanent concealment: Fate

So far we have been talking about actions that were intended to be concealed, i.e. deliberate concealment. But much of what has been preserved in the long term concerns matters that have been handed down accidentally, i.e. unintentionally. "Accidentally preserved" is the right term here, because in many cases it is a catastrophe that causes the shifting or collapse of the entrance to a cave. Or a shipwreck at sea that results from a storm or other accident. The preserved object becomes inaccessible to contemporaries, disappears from memory and is sometimes found again by descendants through the same kind of coincidence. For long-lasting, sometimes even pristine and long-preserved objects, this is not always a party. For destiny is not only inherent in concealment, but is sometimes even mirrored in the act of discovery…

The Palmhout Wreck off Texel

One example of this is the so-called Palmhout Wreck, which was hidden on the bottom of the Wadden Sea off the coast of Texel as an underwater national monument. Until 2014, when a group of amateur divers had the unfortunate idea of digging up some 1500 objects from the ship. An illegal adventure that would not be out of place in a children's adventure book and has now been turned into a documentary.

The unbridled consumption of the past is both

shocking and instructive for heritage professionals. What was once technically and socially impossible, due to a lack of free time and wealth, is now within reach of anyone who wants it: with advanced equipment, it is possible to trace and excavate historic shipwrecks, which prove to be a magnet for greed and curiosity. Huizinga's historical sensation, yes, but something different from what he had in mind at the time. It is described as a sport, highly exciting and better than a rollercoaster in a theme park.

Things are disturbed and brought to the surface out of context. Vulnerable objects are lost underwater or, as in this case, barely escape, such as a rare dress that was surprisingly well preserved in a ship's chest. So well-preserved and fresh that, according to one treasure diver, it could still be worn. This best-hidden national monument has been desecrated once and for all as a time capsule, because a group of amateur Texel divers like to hunt for treasure in their spare time.

The dress, which has now been examined and conserved, is – apart from a possible criminal prosecution – the new bone of contention also involving Museum Kaap Skil on Texel. The dress is so famous that it will become an iconic crowd pleaser. It would be hard to find a better example of heritage consuming history, as it were. In other words: the destructive way of dealing with the past demonstrated by the shipwreck (worst practice) is rewarded in heritage terms with public attention and museum exploitation. The documentary maker is now advocating for all shipwrecks in the Wadden Sea near Texel to be salvaged, for a fraction of what the recent purchase of Rembrandt's Standard Bearer cost, to enrich "our knowledge of the 17th century". A case of heritage hunger.

"Everything found on Texel belongs to us," claims a member of the diving group in the documentary. This not only refers to the storage of the finds in the local museum, but also to cultural property rights. Can this CPR be applied to brazenly, illegally acquired goods? There is also the question of whether the finder can also represent the supporting cultural heritage community. The application of the Faro Convention, which takes participation as its starting point, will lead to interesting discussions in this respect.

The silk dress from the wreck of De Palmhout, c. 1650. Textiles from shipwrecks are extremely rare. In addition to this dress, an oriental caftan, an oriental carpet and a silk wedding dress (see p. 167) were also preserved. The precious garment has remained virtually intact, despite or perhaps because of its almost four centuries on the seabed. It is a unique find in the world.

Lascaux IV: The importance of a copy

Discovered by chance in 1940 by four teenagers, the Lascaux cave in the Dordogne was a revelation that attracted a huge public thanks to its fantastically fresh drawings and paintings that are about 15,000 years old. It turned out that the prehistoric hidden masterpieces had been perfectly preserved in the stable climate of the caves for many millennia. But within two decades, the many visitors had destabilised the climate, causing the works to deteriorate rapidly.

Heritage was literally being consumed here. This solution, after closing the cave in the 1960s, was to make a faithful copy: Lascaux II, opened in 1983. We are now ready for Lascaux IV with a state-of-the-art reconstruction. The latest news is that the original cave has been holding up very well since then, and conditions have stabilised at previous levels. What matters to visitors now is the authenticity not of the cave, but of the place, knowing that the original is located a little further away. Despite the experience and all the snobbery of those who have seen the original, this does not detract from it.

Lascaux, like the Le Chauvet cave in the Ardèche, which was only discovered in 1994 and is twice as old and can only be visited as a reconstruction, is therefore an example of best practice, in which advancing insight has also played a role. If amateur divers want to empty shipwrecks so badly, why not make good copies and fill them with stuff, with antiques as props for all I care? Diving itself is a legitimate pursuit, but desecrating and plundering seafarers' graves is not.

Think of it as a form of geocaching, treasure hunting as harmless fun with things that are hidden in the ground that can be detected with metal detectors – but underwater. The question is whether the divers are willing to pay for this, but the enormous cost of their free entertainment is now being borne by society. As the damage is irreparable, the cost cannot really be expressed in monetary terms.

↓ At Lascaux IV, as the third and most recent reconstruction of the famous cave near Montignac (Dordogne, France) is called, the visitor comes close to experiencing the original cave.

Good copies and reconstructions can also be useful in the Anderson Collection. The so-called *Geuzen Collection*, unique and irreplaceable documents from an executed Vlaardingen resistance group, contains historical and educational material that people understandably do not want to see forgotten. What should we do? Do we exclude this sub-collection from the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, or do we make high-quality copies available for educational purposes, so that we can continue to tell the story with documents? With Lascaux in mind, the latter option is attractive. But the community of Vlaardingen, which annually awards a Geuzen medal in the Grote Kerk there, must also have its say.

The erosion of cultural deep time

It is safe to say that an unprecedented attack on the archives of the soil is seriously threatening accidental, but very effective, long-term preservation in our country. This is due not only to illegal disruption, but also to the urgency of large-scale construction activities, which push other values into the background. It is no exaggeration to say that we represent the last generations able to view the soil archive in the Netherlands on such a large scale.

At a certain point, this archive was exhausted, except for the parts that we have designated as archaeological national monuments, such as shipwrecks. But what has not been forgotten is, as we have seen, not the best preserved. The current state of the Dutch national archaeological monuments is certainly worrying, as a recent report has shown. Here too, conservation will have to go further than regulations, and the greater involvement and participatory appreciation of supporting heritage communities, in order to be able to properly engage in discussions with future generations. in other words, the progressive erosion of the cultural deep time in the soil archive is an additional argument for the development of a new museological instrument for long-term preservation.

Temporary deposits

In the case of permanent concealment for conservation, an important museological element is missing, namely the retrievability of the artefacts. This is not even a question of accessibility, which requires a certain degree of disclosure, but simply of guaranteeing the methodical recovery of the hidden, and thus not of finding it by chance. Temporary concealment, in short, as a storage system.

Temporarily hidden: Time capsules

Hiding something so that other generations can find it later appeals to the imagination. For example, when laying the foundation stone of a building, a certificate, with or without a current coin, is sometimes buried in a lead tube behind the commemoration stone. This can be seen as a time capsule, a message to future generations.

Memorable moments are sometimes marked with a cylinder or box that must stand the test of time and is therefore often made of lead or stainless steel. The container is filled with objects and thoughts typical of the moment when the capsule is assembled, sealed and placed. Hence the term time capsule. Time is stopped, so to speak. The objects are literally taken out of circulation and buried in the ground or cemented into a wall, foundation or pillar. Time capsules should rotate very slowly in the cycle of objects.

Time capsules come in all shapes and sizes. In recent decades, especially with a magical year like 2000, they seem to be growing in popularity and size. The idea is to bury a container full of items characteristic of a society in a particular period, stored at a significant moment, such as an anniversary year. Unlike a treasure, the container is not placed in a secret location, but in a public place marked by a monument. Here, a group takes into account time in the present and future. A festive burial ritual with a happy mayor and happy schoolchildren, surrounded by parents and grandparents.

What are we hiding in them?

I am much less optimistic about the significance of the contents of such containers. When the municipality of Veldhoven celebrated its centenary during the Coronavirus pandemic, a local resident took the initiative and welded a time capsule shut and buried it in the museum grounds. A significant location in itself. However, the relevant question of how this “depot” relates to the museum’s depots is not addressed for the public. It’s in the ground for later, that’s all. But what is in the ground?

In September 2021, a time capsule was welded shut on the grounds of Museum ’t Oude Slot in Veldhoven to mark the town’s centenary. It can only be opened again 100 years after it was deposited. The local *schuttersgilden* (the traditional village militia) ritually mark the occasion with their banners.

Everything was carefully thought out, except for what actually had to go into the container. Everyone was allowed to contribute something typical of Veldhoven at that time. This resulted in a lot of discarded items – anything of value was completely missing, as if they had learned their lesson from the ancient Egyptians – including an old computer and a carnival costume as artefacts for the future. But, of course, the point of such a capsule is not to hold things of physical value, but how we want to be remembered.

In practice, it turns out not to be so simple to determine what is indicative of our time now, the things we think will be indicative of our time in the future. I am afraid that if we open this capsule in 100 years’ time, it will be a deception and will actually say a lot about the lack of vision and reflection about our own time. And that’s useful, don’t get me wrong, because every society gets the culture it deserves.

In short, it is the problem of contemporary collecting that many museums struggle with. It is much easier to collect retrospectively than to determine here and now what will be important as future heritage. But even in historical collecting, questions of selection and validation inevitably emerge as a many-headed monster that both guards and devours treasures. We will return to this in the fourth chapter, which is devoted to collecting.

Sleeping Beauty as a time capsule

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario in the regional museum is a variant of the time capsule. We also seal a container with its contents to take it out of circulation and allow it to be opened again generations later. But there are important differences.

The size – 150,000 objects – is incomparable to the average time capsule. The objects are largely registered and contextualised. The site is not an underground container, but a building complex that requires maintenance. So there is governance and key management, and the condition of Sleeping Beauty is monitored regularly. We are well aware that these aspects also make the Vlaardingen project vulnerable.

However, we have not chosen to hide everything in a large underground bunker. One reason for this is that we are also taking the house and the museum presentation, which have hardly changed in the last 30 years, out of circulation as a "by-catch" of Sleeping Beauty and placing them under a bell jar.

Temporary Hiding: Outsiders

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario is already a step outside the comfort zone for many heritage professionals. But there is a danger of complete disorientation when the hidden heritage in question is a collection that is not only completely out of order, but is not even recognised as such.

Frans's tools were tucked away in all sorts of nooks and crannies around the immense factory site. It all started with a cart that the artist saw standing in the almost deserted factory complex where she had a studio. She was immediately struck by it: a kind of prehistoric monster on wheels, made up of countless pieces of wood nailed together. The cart, though sturdy, had acquired an almost black patina, soaked as the wood was in oil, dirt and dust. When she asked about it, the answer was casual: "Oh, that's Franske's cart."

Hidden presence

The cart was abandoned in a deserted boiler house and, like most of the inventory, was destined for the rubbish bin – at least as far as the non-saleable

material was concerned. Then the artist showed an interest in the object, and the curator of the bankrupt factory's estate became suspicious. No, the cart was company property and could not simply be taken away, even if it was junk. In the end, the management didn't know what to do with it either: an obsolete piece of business for which only an eccentric artist, an edgy artistic type, would have money. So the cart was sold to her.

In the meantime, the buyer – Dianne Merks – had gathered all sorts of information from former employees about the maker of the cart. His name was Frans Stokkermans (1931-2010), born in the North Brabant village of Haaren, near Tilburg. Frans was mentally handicapped, but physically as strong as a bear. When he lived at home with his parents, he was always tinkering, fascinated by machines and technology. Whatever he made had to be practical.

→
A kind of prehistoric monster, Franske's *kiest*, with which he roamed the grounds of the KVL [Royal United Leather Factory] in Oisterwijk in the 1980s. The cart, which he made with his own hands from waste material bound and nailed together, was used to clean up more waste.

↗
Detail of Franske's cart, which he called the *kiest* [coffin]. Characteristic of outsider art is its ritual, repetitive nature. An almost endless manic repetition that leads to an inimitable overall image.

He learned many skills playfully, at the forge of a neighbouring blacksmith, where he liked to spend time. As an adult, he never lived in a closed institution. He always worked outside the home, latterly for more than 15 years in the KVL tannery in Oisterwijk. There he was a jack of all trades. When there was no work for him to do, he would wander around the factory complex collecting waste in a homemade cart he called the *kiest* (the coffin).

Franske, as he was known, was well liked by the workers. Although they sometimes made fun of him, they accepted him fully and appreciated his discipline and work ethic. Some of the workers admired him, or rather marvelled at his ingenuity in making tools. Frans had a special tool for every job.

↑ Frans was a master at hiding tools inconspicuously where he needed them. They were often also specially made for cleaning corners and profiles in a room. Hiding them on location saved a lot of carrying and prevented them from getting lost.

← Once the hidden world of Frans Stokkermans was discovered, it became a sport to find traces of his tools in the factory complex, such as in the old boiler house. No fewer than 125 tools were discovered in this way. This "act of discovery" transformed anonymous waste into meaningful heritage. Many of Frans Stokkermans' homemade tools, which had been carelessly thrown away and often not even recognised as tools, were recovered from the waste containers on the factory site. This was the reason why he had to hide his tools on the factory premises. The outsider lives up to his name here.

A hidden universe

Along with Frans, all these things would have disappeared without a trace. Inspired by these stories, our artist kept a close eye on the waste bins on the factory site and it wasn't long before she found all sorts of strange sticks and poles with nailed-on attributes whose function was a mystery. At first glance they looked like scrap wood, but on closer inspection they turned out to be tools deliberately made by Frans, who always reused old materials.

He made his tools from waste and leftover materials, including straightened rusty nails. A targeted search of the various buildings on the factory site revealed all sorts of secret stashes of tools, or at least objects that could be interpreted as artefacts with an apparently specific function, which had also been deliberately hidden and stashed away. After all, experience had taught him that others did not recognise his tools when they were clearing away rubbish. His idea of a tool was not up to standard.

He also had different versions of almost every type of tool, making it a collection of tools. The factory site

All of Frans Stokkermans' tools are made from waste materials. As with the rake, not a single new nail has been used. The shovel for liquids, of which Frans had an arsenal of all shapes and sizes in the most unexpected places, is made from a cut and reshaped plastic barrel. "Long live the idiot! He is our man!" said Jean Dubuffet in 1948. In the year 2023, in the current heritage cult of safe stories and stereotypical designer antics, it still seems impossible to professionally preserve this hidden history of the KVL factory, which has now been transformed into an industrial-archaeological monument of excellence. What could be better than to hide these tools again as outsider art to introduce visitors to the special life story of Frans Stokkermans? "Where is he, your normal man? Let us see him!"

was a world full of hidden places that Frans inspected with iron regularity. In addition to the dominant, visible and above all efficient world of the economic factory, there was a parallel, invisible universe with faint signals from a creative loner and his tools.

The extent of this world only became clear when it was dismantled at the end of the 1990s. Frans could never have imagined that this impressive, but also familiar and taken-for-granted factory complex would ever disappear. His intuitive storage strategy was not designed for this.

The outsider defies all categories

"True art is never where it is expected: it is in a place where no one pays attention to it or gives it a name," said Jean Dubuffet in the introduction to his 1948 Paris catalogue *L'art brut preféré aux arts culturels*, later interpreted as a manifesto.

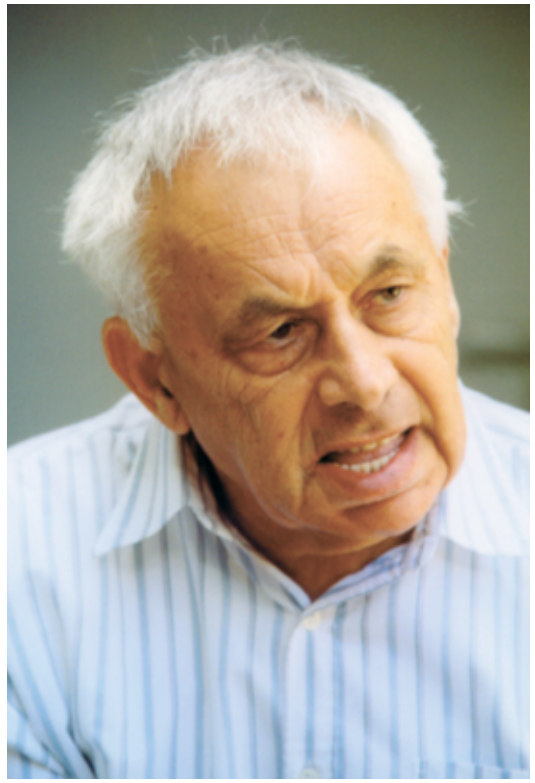
"Art hates to be recognised and greeted by name. It immediately runs away. Art is someone who loves anonymity. As soon as it is exposed, as soon as someone points a finger at it, it runs away. In her place she leaves a straw man (with a big sign on his back that says ART) who is immediately showered with champagne by everyone and carried from one city to another with a ring through his nose to give lectures. This is the false art. This is the art that the public knows, the art of the prize and the billboard. The real Mr Art is not recognised by anyone."

In the end, Frans's equipment, not including the cart, amounts to 125 tools. It is far from complete, as much of it was not recognised and was thrown away. It was Dianne Merks who identified this "Mr Art" and saved the objects from certain destruction. However, the objects remained hidden in storage for a generation.

Attempts to relocate the tools in the complex, now used by the Brabant Heritage Factory (which has already been dismantled as an institution), have come to nothing, despite all the alluring tales about

how stories that would give life to the bricks again. With his story, the outsider pokes a big hole in the safe clichés of industrial-archaeological discourse. Nobody wants that.

Repurposed industrial heritage must fit a hip and happening paradigm, preferably with lots of rusty iron, rough walls, pallet furniture, recycled carpets and oil barrels as side tables. The factory no longer produces leather but endless modern nostalgia. The trendy visitors drink tea and craft beer and imagine themselves in the old world of a factory, while the stories outside the stereotypical pattern are completely ignored. The unique works of the outsider Frans Stokkermans have been largely ignored until now, in keeping with the story of his life. It would be nice to reinstall this parallel world with a big and meaningful story by metaphorically hiding the work again. "No, thank you." It simply falls outside the current paradigm of repurposers with their design exercises. It's a lot of hassle that people don't want, and it requires far too much explanation. That's why all those industrial heritage complexes are so similar; the fingerprint of our contemporary historical illusions dominates them. The assignment is to keep Frans's things long enough until they are recognised and fit into a paradigm.



Frans Stokkermans from Haaren (1931-2010), from a time when a mentally handicapped outsider could function as an employee in the labour process without special arrangements. His hidden world came to light by chance during the dismantling of the factory in 2001...

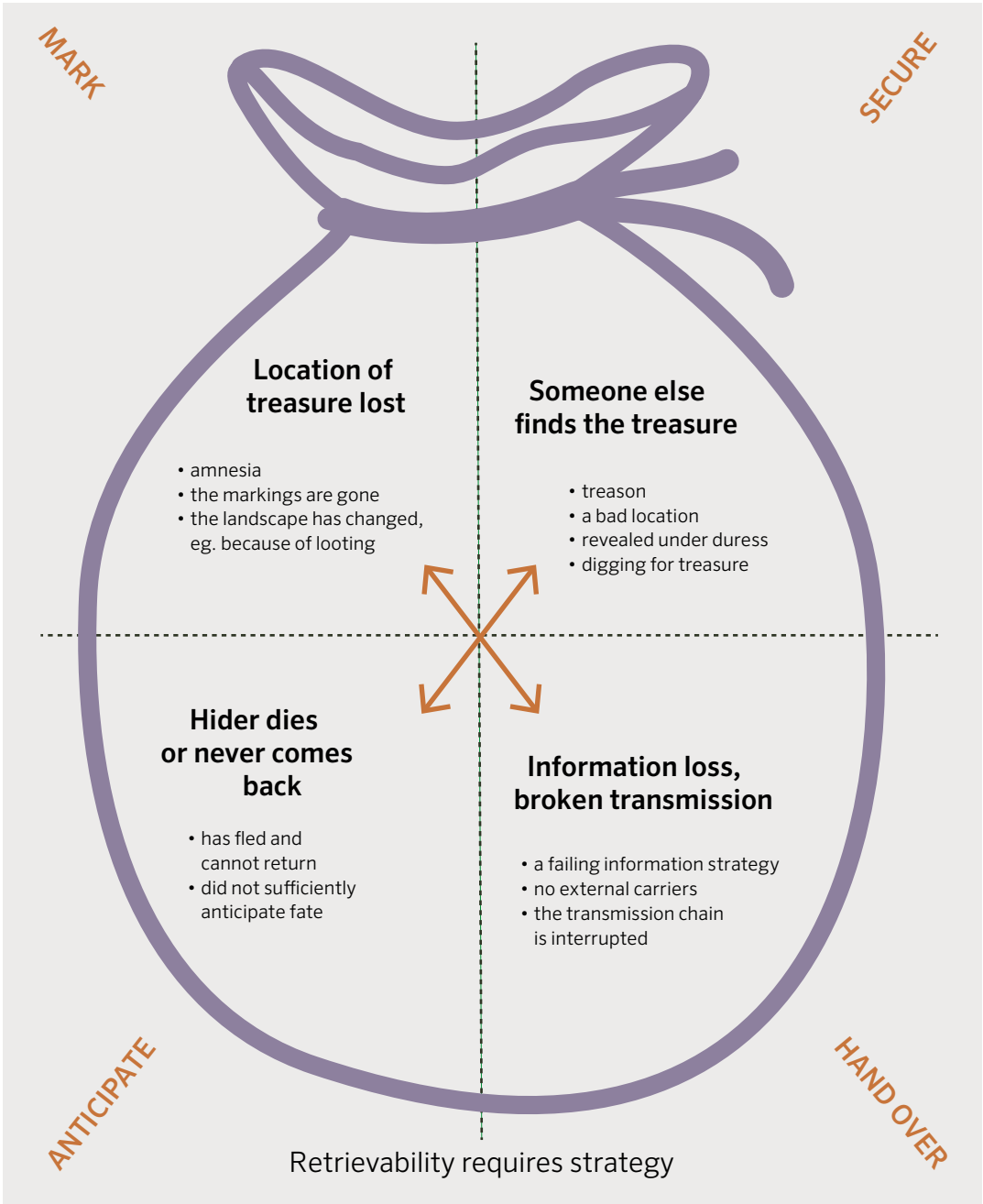
Otherness and paradigm shifts

"Where is he, your normal man? Let us see him!" Dubuffet provocatively declared in 1948. "Our position is that art is the same in all cases and that there is no such thing as the art of the insane, just as there is no such thing as the art of indigestion or the art of people with bad knees (...) Long live the idiot! He is our man!" In the discourse of heritage, there is a strong emphasis on the self and one's own. And the self and one's own are not mad after all!

In a museumified context, this is a form of literally and figuratively appropriated culture. Outsiders bring in the much-needed element of the other and the foreign. In other words, they offer a welcome shift in the way we look at things, at the cultural categories with which we are used to naming and interpreting our everyday lives. Most works by outsiders are made by "clients" in a studio that is often attached to a healthcare institution. Almost always two-dimensional work with a frame around it and as such easily recognisable to the public within the conventions of art. But what if it's about working with "normal" objects? I would like to expand the category of outsider art to outsider artefacts.

Many large private collections have an outsider character. It is somewhat taboo to broach the subject in this way, but it cannot be said that it is "normal" for a private individual to build up a collection of 150,000 everyday objects, as Jan Anderson, who is otherwise perfectly sane, has done. The same goes for Jaap Kruithof, the cultural philosopher and professor from Ghent, who has turned his house into a bizarre museum of some 10,000 disposable objects from post-war consumer society. Anderson and Kruithof are the sort of outsider collectors that the established order usually does not know what to do with. But, to paraphrase Dubuffet, they are our heroes.

Failure factors in temporary deposits



Temporary deposits: treasure keeping

Those who wish to keep a treasure for themselves or their own group would do well to anticipate the disaster of loss. Archaeology shows that people in the past, whether in times of crisis or not, hid valuable possessions in secret places in the house or in the ground. If all went well, we would never find it as the owner or group would have dug it up and retrieved what was hidden, as may have been the case with the Nazi treasure in Ommeren, with which we began this chapter. But it's equally possible that a rival would have found and removed the treasure earlier. In short, there are several failure factors for those who want to store a treasure temporarily. Crooks and museums would do well to take this into account.

The failure factors

The diagram opposite shows the various failure factors for temporary, retrievable deposits. Everything here revolves around the preservation of treasure, be it loot or a collection. It also aims to counteract the disastrous consequences of fate, which can take many forms.

It starts with a location that is easy to secure. In many cases, things go wrong immediately because of looting, a washout or visibility. Then you memorise the secret location. You can also use some aids to memory, such as inconspicuous markings in the landscape. In the museum sense, the treasure location is an appropriate depot, hidden or otherwise.

An external memory, in the form of a detailed treasure map with clues, is very practical, especially if you want to share the secret information with insiders. It protects you against both memory loss and the breaking of any chains in the transfer of information. External memory is therefore part of a good information strategy. It overcomes the consequences of amnesia, the unforeseen removal of markings and, last but not least, the sudden death of the hider.

From a museum's point of view, this is about information management in terms of registering objects and places. Every museum worker knows from experience how important and vulnerable the registration of the location of objects is. No one likes to talk about the many hours spent behind the scenes in museums and archives looking for lost objects.

A double moment of truth

A good treasure hunter or museologist will take steps to ensure the recoverability of the treasure or collection by marking it, providing security and ensuring a good strategy for the transfer of information. One point where many treasure keepers ultimately fail (in retrospect) is in not anticipating unimaginable (i.e. more than just unforeseen) circumstances, such as terrorist attacks or floods and fires as a result of the pace of climate change.

Retrievability is the complicating factor for temporary deposits. We could therefore say that in the case of temporary concealment, as in the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, there are two crucial moments: the moment of truth of concealment and the moment of awakening.

2

Bequeath

Legacies as a preservation strategy

The most common way to preserve things after death is to make a will. Everything is clearly laid down in the Dutch Civil Code and any notary can help. There is an official register of wills and no one can plead ignorance. So far, no problem. Yes, inheritance law itself is a source of fascinating problems, but that that's another story.

But what do you do if you want to bequeath with the condition that your estate must remain together for an (in)definite period of time? We discuss a complete failure and a success story. We then discuss bequests held by a "dead hand", which includes museums. Finally, we discuss just how dead the hand really is with the Wheel of Misfortune: a schematic overview of the failure factors in organising long-term preservation.

The deceased, the heir and the spoiler

Museum Van den Bogaerde in Heeswijk Castle

In 1835, André van den Bogaerde van Terbrugge (1787-1855) bought the castle of Heeswijk near 's-Hertogenbosch, where he had worked as King Willem I's governor of the province of Noord-Brabant. A man of good standing and social merit, he was given the noble title of baron by the king. He had already distinguished himself in Ghent for his great interest in culture and science. In Noord-Brabant, he was one of the founders of the Provinciaal Genootschap voor Kunsten en Wetenschappen [Provincial Society of Arts and Sciences], which at that time was still a fraternal society.

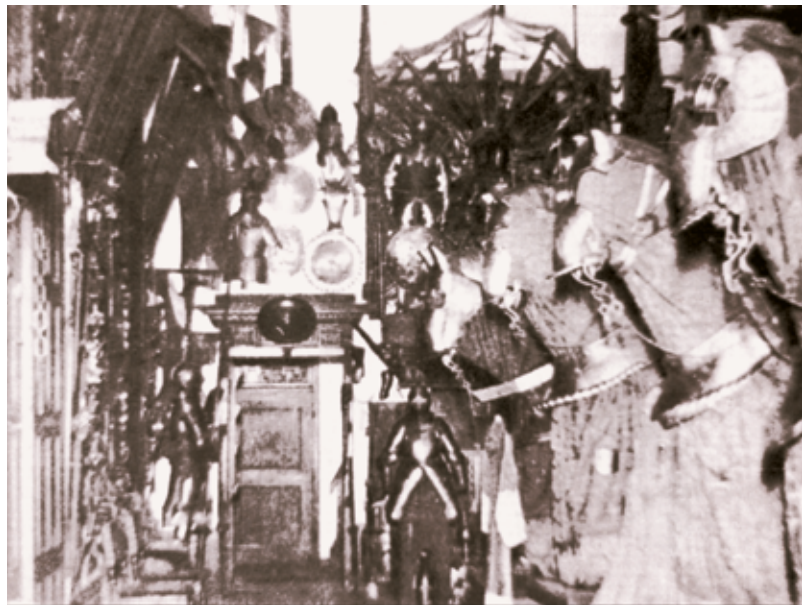
He bought Heeswijk Castle not only as a home, but also to store and display his ever-growing collection of antiques. So he had plenty of space. Add to that an almost unlimited budget, an influential network, an almost endless supply of the most fantastic "antiquities" without much competition from other collectors, and an unconventional interest, and you have all the ingredients for a very special collection.

A baron with three notorious sons

The baron had three sons. The eldest inherited the title of baron while the others had the title of *jonkheer*. The eldest, Amadée (1823-1874), was a libertine who, as chamberlain to King William II, became involved in court life (including a palace in Tilburg) and ran up huge debts. He regularly embarrassed his father and brothers, who eventually distanced themselves from him.

When father André died in 1855, the estate was divided equally between the three brothers, but the eldest son's debts, which amounted to the astronomical sum of more than 200,000 guilders, were deducted. The middle son Louis (1826-1890) lived at Heeswijk Castle until his death. The youngest son, Albéric (1829-1895), lived at another family estate, the nearby Nemerlaer Castle in Haaren. Unlike Amadée, they both continued their father's collection.

Amadée, who, after a "hard life" died at the age of 47, had married and had a son, Henri. His two brothers, remarkably, remain unmarried and childless. The youngest lived together with a "bourgeois woman" in the castle in Haaren. She also had a very bourgeois name for aristocratic ears: Miss Koosje Jansen. True love, no doubt, but this relationship went against all the codes of the time – especially for such an old, good Catholic family as the Van den Bogaerde van Terbrugges.



← A rare photograph of the installation in the Museum van den Bogaerde in Heeswijk, as depicted in the seven-part auction catalogue, the first part of which was published in 1899.

We can see both brothers – unlike their father – as outsiders, who did not fit into the aristocratic subculture in terms of lifestyle, nor conform to the strict Catholic morality of the time. Moreover, as will become clear, their taste and choice of collectible objects was largely outside the paradigm of Dutch art lovers, and certainly outside that of the Brabant community. Both brothers were fully aware of this and took no further notice of it.

Musée Van den Bogaerde

Not only their lives, but also their history was and remains unconventional. Both brothers held no offices, managed their properties and had their hands and fortunes free to continue their father's work with an enormous passion for collecting. Château Heeswijk became a household name for lovers of old art and antiques. Louis renovated the castle in neo-Gothic style and even built a new tower (the Ijzertoren) to house the collection of medieval ironwork. They also filled Albéric's castle residence in Haaren with old art and antiques.

The imposing castle of Heeswijk remains the flagship of the family, with an armoury (Salle des Armes) where the 15th-century equestrian armour is displayed on rare horse barding arranged in rows. The brothers did not keep the collection for themselves, but opened the Museum Van den Bogaerde to the public. The travel guides of the time were at a loss for words to describe what there was to see. But it was mainly travellers from outside the region who saw its value.

Louis and Albéric knew very well that they were operating in the land of the blind, because people in the region shook their heads at their collecting frenzy. Everyone had an opinion about it, and profiteers were happy to get a piece of the action. Undeterred, the two brothers continued to collect along the lines set out by their father.

The will

As the only heir, nephew Henri tried to remain on good terms with both his uncles. Although he was warmly welcomed at Heeswijk, elsewhere in the eldest son's branch there was discontent –especially from Amadée's widow and Henri's wife, who were dissatisfied about the "bad behaviour" of both brothers, who had allegedly taken the a-cultural wastrel Amadée "to the cleaners" for their own benefit, or rather: that of the Van den Bogaerde van Terbrugge Collection.

Louis (who later lost his eyesight) died in 1890, leaving his youngest brother Albéric as the sole and entire heir. Shortly afterwards, Albéric drew up a will to ensure the continuity of the collections. He lived an unconventional life, and so did his will. Albéric

← ↑ Displays in the Musée van den Bogaerde in 1897. On the left the work of ecclesiastical goldsmiths and on the right the collection of miniatures and snuff boxes in the so-called Chambre Henri II.

The deceased, the heirs & the spoiler

André
Baron van den Bogaerde
van Terbrugge
(1787-1855)

Governor of King William I
in Noord-Brabant,
collector of Heeswijk Castle

THE DECEASED

Amadée
(1823-1874)
Baron and chamberlain
to King William II

After the death of André,
the outstanding debts of Amadée,
which had embarrassed the family,
were paid off with the inheritance.

Louis
(1826-1890)
Jonkheer

Collector of Castle Heeswijk
Museé Van den Bogaerde
à Château Heeswijk

Albéric
(1829-1895)
Jonkheer

Collector Castle Nemerlaer in
Haaren, who wanted to preserve
the collections in the long term
as a Sleeping Beauty, with a will
that forbids the sale of the
collections and occupation of
both Castle Heeswijk and
Castle Nemerlaer until
Henri's children have reached
the age of 80.

THE HEIRS

Henri
(1849-1896)
Baron

×

Manuela
Princess of Looz-Corswarem
(1861-1919)

who, as a widow, successfully
contested Albéric's will and
the collections, against the express
wishes of the bequeathers,
and had them auctioned off
for a record sum.

THE SPOILER

knew full well that, if he did nothing, the entire inheritance would fall into the hands of the eldest son of Amadée, who would do nothing more than liquidate the movable property for his own benefit. And father André and brothers Louis and Albéric had not spent their lives collecting, restoring, describing and exhibiting for that.

Faced with the destruction of his entire life's work, Albéric decided, among other things, that the furnishings of the castles of Heeswijk and Haaren should remain untouched after his death. Both castles were to remain unoccupied until Henri's children reached the age of 80. In this way, the heir wanted to prevent the objects from being alienated or losing their coherence, and the sub-collections from being dispersed.

Everything had to be kept in its place for about three generations. This would make it easier to see and appreciate the importance of the collection as a whole, which was undoubtedly Albéric's idea. A dowry was provided in the form of rents from no less than 77 castle farms. Here is a spread-out bed for Sleeping Beauty, who would be able to sleep peacefully for some 70 years in real fairy-tale castles.

The fiasco

Amadée's family was in shock when Uncle Albéric closed his eyes for good in 1895. The eldest child was twelve years old at the time. Although strictly speaking they were not disinherited, on the contrary in fact, cousin Henri, his wife and children did not immediately gain anything from it. They received an enormous amount of real estate, but were also bound by the strict provisions of the bequest. The restrictions prevented the sale of the collection and the occupancy of both castles.

Nephew Henri died shortly afterwards at the age of 47, in 1896. His widow Manuela de Looz-Corswarem contested what she considered to be a bizarre will, even though it was supposedly well arranged through the family notary according to the rules of the art. Various legal cases follow, up to the Supreme Court, because the widow had impressive legal power and fought like a lioness for her private interests and those of her two children.

To the amazement of the notary – you may say of the notarial profession as a professional group, because the case was a cause célèbre at the time – the provision that the Van den Bogaerde Museum could not be alienated was annulled. Jurisprudence prevailed over the evident intentions of the testator. Short-term private interest trumps long-term public interest.

Seven auctions and a forerunner

Henri's widow made short work of it: the entire collection went under the hammer at the Muller auction house in Amsterdam. Muller produced a seven-part, thematically arranged catalogue in French, which was distributed internationally. The auctions took place in the Casino Hall in 's-Hertogenbosch, in several sessions spread over several years. They involved an enormous amount of goods.

↑ The spoiler: The widow of Henri van den Bogaerde (1849-1896), Manuela, Princess de Looz-Corswarem (1861-1919), around 1910 in Monte Carlo, where she lived on the proceeds from the collection auctions, among other things.

But even before the dispute over the will had been settled, the widow had "all kinds of rubbish" that, it was expressly stated, did NOT belong to the Museum Van den Bogaerde, auctioned in Den Bosch in 1896. These were items, often "broken and incomplete" that were in a storage depot and therefore not in the museum itself. The material clearly belonged to the collection, but the heirs played down its importance.

Many masterpieces were already sold at bargain prices during this sale, such as the Gothic rood screen from Helvoirt that is now in the Rijksmuseum. The Dutch government advisors, who purchased it for the then Nederlandsch Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst [Dutch Museum for History and Art], later the Rijksmuseum, not only had a great success there, but also made the first breach in the Heeswijk collection.

Failing cultural policy

The matter did not go unnoticed in political circles in The Hague, although at the time art and archaeology were still not considered a matter of state. Holland remained at its most narrow-minded. Victor de Stuers even organised a visit by a large parliamentary delegation to Heeswijk to convince parliament of the unique importance of this ensemble. They were also aware that they were acting against the express wishes of the deceased.

The Tweede Kamer [House of Representatives] and the proceedings provide a revealing insight into cultural attitudes at the time. There was no question of buying the collection en bloc. The disgraceful sale of Willem II's art collection was mentioned. On the initiative of Minister De Stuers, the budget for the purchase of works of art, which could be used in exceptional cases, is increased by 10,000 guilders to 30,000 guilders, partly as a result of this regrettable incident, until a motion by Knor was adopted, which was supported by a majority in parliament, arguing that the Dutch state could spend its money on more important matters. De Stuers was left wringing his hands as he watched parliament fail to act.

Unexpectedly high returns

Art expert Adriaan Pit, who advised the government on the collection, played a questionable role. He saw little of value there, and with the arrogance that often accompanies ignorance, spoke of a trivial, even blind passion for collecting. There was hardly anything of public interest in it for the state.

This unprecedented reduction of the collection was grist to the family mill. They had previously invited a French art expert, who wanted to buy the entire collection, to give it a valuation.

That was 250,000 francs and not a cent more. If the family had had their way, this would have happened, but parts of the will had not yet been revoked. This gave an extra impetus to continue with the proceedings. All in all, the auctions raised more than 650,000 francs, an amount that surprised not only the family, but also Dutch art connoisseurs.

Asked about this unexpectedly high return, government adviser Pit said he shook his head as

↑↑ One of the 15th-century suits of armour for man and horse depicted in the first auction catalogue of the Van den Bogaerde collection in Heeswijk, dating from 1899.
↑ The suits of armour were acquired by the Tower of London, where they form part of the famous *Line of Kings* in the White Tower, the oldest "museum attraction" in the world.

international collectors and museums outbid each other at auction. The Brabant horse armour went to the Tower of London, where it still shines as a masterpiece of the *Line of Kings*, the oldest museum exhibition in the world. The forerunner of the Victoria & Albert Museum bought the finest pieces of craftsmanship – medieval goldsmith's art, but also the beautifully forged 15th-century crown with weather vane from the town well of 's-Hertogenbosch. The well was demolished and later reconstructed several times, but it was only recently discovered that the most important parts were originally part of the Heeswijk collection.

It is safe to say that almost all early collections of medieval and early modern art and crafts worldwide contain pieces with the Heeswijk pedigree. Unfortunately, the archives of the Muller auction house in Amsterdam have not been preserved, which makes it difficult to reconstruct the Van den Bogaerde collection. Nevertheless, it is possible to trace and identify many pieces through the purchase records of museums around the world. This research simply needs to be repeated.

Limited by taste and paradigm

Expert Pit explained the unexpectedly high amounts paid by foreigners not as a sign of underestimated quality, but as a sales frenzy that had been stirred up by foreign, especially American collectors, who had wanted to compensate for their unnecessary or futile journey by – admittedly rather expensively – still coming home with 'something'.

Until the 1980s, descendants of the family flirted with these statements by a humbled, perhaps even frustrated art connoisseur who – I don't exclude unwillingness and envy either – let his own taste and judgment be decisive in his advice. The truly visionary collection fell prey to a narrow-minded art-historical paradigm, which ignored the significance of applied arts and was only interested in masterpieces, like individual stamps in some fictional album.

In any case, the disdain of government advisor Pit provided the descendants of the Van den Bogaerde van Terbrugge family with a nice cloth to wipe away this family disgrace. People also continued to criticize Albéric's "bizarre will", which no right-thinking person could have taken seriously. As if the testator were only driven by malicious intent and the heirs had been deprived of their rights. As if the family had still suffered great injustice a century later. The phrase "the deceased, the heir and the spoiler", used in the notarial profession to indicate the three successive generations of a fortune, could have been coined on the basis of the Heeswijk case.

Haunted castles, last remnants

Looking through the auction catalogues today, we can see the sharp contours of the cultural-historical disaster that occurred at that time. The collection, which according to contemporaries was a junk shop, turned out to be made up of purchases from art dealers in Amsterdam, The Hague and Brussels, including works by Rembrandt and Frans Hals. Medieval craftsmanship in the form of goldsmith's work, beautifully forged locks and caskets, in short, everything we know from the top collections for which we now have to cross the border. The forging in particular was extremely unconventional and rare – so outside the established order that it is rarely described in the auction catalogues.

Movable items directly related to the family, such as portraits and items with family crests, were excluded from the auction, partly due to provisions in the will. The more permanent objects also remained indoors.

Heeswijk and Haaren became ghost castles, uninhabited until 1963. This was pointless, as Sleeping Beauty had already been auctioned off. Albéric's plan had failed and 75 years of collecting had been destroyed in just a few years. The family, triumphant and gloating, lived well, without a trace of pride in the work of the older generations.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s (when the castles were once again inhabited), the descendants auctioned off the last remnants of the Van den Bogaerde collection that had been found when the castles in Heeswijk and Haaren were cleared. It couldn't be otherwise, as there was still a lot to be found in the many nooks and crannies of the castle. The Vught priest and collector Kees Maas (1918-1992) bought as many of the last remnants of early ironwork from the Heeswijk collection as he could. His collection is housed in Museum 't Oude Slot in Veldhoven. These included a rare man trap, handcuffs for enslaved people (the family did indeed have interests in plantations) and anvils. All from an obsolete trade that was not considered important in the auctions around 1900.

An effective legacy

Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp

That things could turn out differently for 19th-century collections of predominantly medieval objects is evident from the collection of the *ridder* Fritz Mayer van den Bergh (1858-1901) in Antwerp. As the eldest son of a wealthy merchant family of German origin, he had the time and money to devote to collecting items that were largely missed by his contemporaries. In Antwerp, attention was mainly focused on big names such as Rubens and Van Dyck. The Flemish Primitives had yet to be "discovered", so to speak, nor was there yet any widespread appreciation for the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his followers.

A visionary collector

Fritz was therefore a visionary collector who, through good research and a far-flung network, managed to acquire, among other things, *Dulle Griet*, an Antwerp masterpiece by the Bruegel the Elder. He also knew how to identify work: collecting well also means recognising. But he also bought, for what was then a record price, a 15th-century string of cherry stones carved with 40 high-quality human heads. It really is a top collection from beginning to end, including pieces that were hardly recognised as valuable heritage at the time.

Fritz sometimes bought entire collections assembled by a fellow collector, such as the 451 works from the collection of Carlo Micheli in Paris in 1898, who, like himself, had a taste for "unfashionable things". He traded just under 300 of these, but the core consisted of the pinnacle of Dutch and French sculpture. Fritz was one of the buyers at the first auctions at Château Heeswijk.

But disaster also struck Fritz. He died in 1901, aged 43, after an unfortunate fall from his horse. On his deathbed, he was still organising his last purchases. Just like the two brothers in Heeswijk, he was not married. His mother Henriëtte was the sole heiress. And she supported her beloved son's collecting activities to such an extent that, after his death, she set up a house museum as a mausoleum. The rest of her life was devoted to Fritz's collection and the museum.

↑ The Christ and St John the Apostle group from the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp, now a world-famous statue from around 1300, of which we know not only the maker (Master Heinrich von Konstanz), but also the patron (the Dominican convent of Sankt Katharinenthal in Switzerland), so that we know that it functioned as an image of devotion in the mystical spirituality of the sisters in whose church the statue originally stood. Traces of wear on the statue testify to devotional touches.

An efficient construction

The Museum Mayer van den Berg, in the Hof van Arenberg on the Lange Gasthuisstraat, was founded in 1903 by way of a bequest with a special legal structure which stipulated, among other things, that the collection and the house museum should remain as one and inseparable, very much in line with the testator's intentions in the case of the castles of Heeswijk and Haaren.

The collection must not, therefore, be transferred to another institution. Pieces may occasionally leave the house on loan, but with caution and certainly not permanently. A board of regents is appointed to govern the collection, with a number of prestigious

seats for the family. A dowry is provided for these operations.

Setting up a private museum is one thing, but to run such a museum independently for more than a century is a major achievement, and Henriëtte arranged it beautifully. It is a best practice from which we can learn, as Carl Depauw also argues in his contribution below. The museum works closely with other institutions in Antwerp and is part of the city's basic infrastructure. It will flourish again in the coming years with a major extension that will retain its homely character and reintegrate the collection into an international network of drifting, museumified objects. Mayer van den Bergh demonstrates the power of the private museum, a genre that, like the private collector, has great social significance.

← Pulpit, from the old Bridgettine convent of Mariënwater near Den Bosch, around 1500. Possibly donated by Bianca Sforza, wife of Maximilian I, the Holy Roman Emperor. She visited the convent several times in 1496. Purchased in 1875 by the government advisors of the College van Rijksadviseurs for the Dutch Museum of History and Art, now the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

← Saint Bridget of Sweden, sculpture by Master van Soeterbeeck, c.1470-1480. After four centuries, this foundational image was sold to the American businessman J. Piermont Morgan for just a few hundred guilders.

↓ Brass missal fittings from the second half of the 15th century, bought in 1875 by the government advisors who had enjoyed such great success in Uden (photo: Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).

Bequests to dead hands

The Bridgettine convent in Uden

By "goods in dead hands" we mean things that no person can own, but which belong to a church or monastic community. They therefore cannot be inherited like property by living hands. This led to a great accumulation of property, especially as pious people liked to donate to these religious institutions as a "passport to heaven". Even children could be donated to the monasteries as "oblates" to do good works.

The religious were bound to celibacy, which also severely limited the inheritance of their (potential) property. During life, one gives with a warm hand; after death, one bequeaths one's possessions with a cold hand.

The dead hand is therefore a very effective strategy for the long-term preservation of goods. This is why many monasteries, cathedrals and churches originally had rich and ancient assets, including treasuries. It is no coincidence that the past tense is used here, for in many cases the iron dead hand was lifted from above.

The Reformation in the 16th century, for example, led to a drastic reduction in property in dead hands. The goods of the closed monasteries were largely sold by the government and thus ended up in private, living hands. The 18th century saw a wave of secularisation of church property, particularly as a result of the French Revolution in 1789. In most European countries, there are provisions to prevent excessive growth of property in the hands of the deceased. For example, Articles 947 and 1717 of the Dutch Civil Code. After all, the state benefits fiscally from inheritance.

The dead hand fails

The Reformation and the French Revolution were major paradigm shifts in European history, and few monasteries were spared. One that was is the surviving convent of the Bridgettine Sisters in Uden. It is located in Ravenstein, a former Catholic enclave within the Calvinist Republic of the United Netherlands, where the sisters had fled from their medieval convent of Mariënwater in Koudewater in Rosmalen near Den Bosch, taking all their possessions with them, after Prince Frederik Hendrik had invaded the city in 1629. In Uden, the property of all the dissolved convents of the order in the Netherlands accumulated as a dead hand. This community of sisters in Uden also survived the Enlightenment and the Revolution with remarkable continuity.

So far, so good. You might think that the monastery property continues to exist inalienably, safely in the dead hand. Not so. During the Catholic emancipation movement in the second half of the 19th century, a neo-Gothic building frenzy broke out. The number of brothers and sisters also increased.

The Bridgettines wanted to renovate. They had no money, but they did have property. Art dealers in The Hague discovered this medieval treasure trove and rushed to visit around 1875. The old Koudewater convent not only housed a scriptorium; a carver, later known as the Master of Koudewater, was also active, as was the Master of Soeterbeeck who worked for the monastery near Nuenen. High quality was the standard here.

Paradigm blindness as a killer

The sisters were worried about having to sell the manuscripts and sculptures, which had been well preserved as cultic objects in the monastic context for five centuries. But the diocese of 's-Hertogenbosch was only too happy to give permission: after all, it was more concerned with strict morality than with culture. A few years earlier, in 1868, it had had no objection whatsoever to the demolition and loss of the valuable Renaissance screen from St John's Cathedral in Den Bosch, now a prized piece in the current Victoria & Albert Museum in London, which obviously knew its way around Brabant well.

After all, according to the church administrators, such a profane choir end did not fit into the paradigm of the (neo-)Gothic. This was the ignominious end of a piece of church furniture that had survived the Reformation unscathed. In response to this scandal, Victor de Stuers wrote his pamphlet *Holland op zijn*

smalst [Holland at its narrowest], which marked the (late) beginning of Dutch heritage policy. In addition to the unfortunate fate of many plaster models in the Rijksmuseum, Riemer Knoop cited this striking example in a lecture in 2015, in which he argued for restraint in decollecting due to disastrous, shifting paradigms in collection conservation.

From devotional to museum practice

The sisters seemed to have the least problem with the sale of embroidered 14th- and 15th-century vestments (sold "at bargain prices" to dealers in The Hague), book trimmings and beautifully illuminated manuscripts. After all, they no longer functioned in devotional practice. The situation was different with the medieval statue of Christ stretched out in the tomb, which played an important role in the spirituality of suffering. The sculpture, comparable to the Christ and St John the Apostle group from the Museum Mayer van den Bergh, was not sold. It is now one of the highlights of the museum, which is located in a part of the convent.

But another important statue depicting St Bridget of Sweden, a foundational sculpture of the order's founder, was finally sold reluctantly. For far less than its true value, as the sisters regrettably discovered a short time later. Out of ignorance and for next to nothing, it went to misleading dealers. St Bridget is now one of the star pieces of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, a gift from J. Piermont Morgan, who bought the statue from the art dealer.

The analysis:

The wheel of misfortune

In the end, only a small part of the Heeswijk collection remained in the Netherlands. Parts of the important manuscript library and the topographical-historical atlas were incorporated into the collection of the Provinciaal Genootschap [Provincial Society], founded in 1837 by André van den Bogaerde, former governor of the province of Noord-Brabant. There are also objects that were considered to be of regional importance and were unsold, or sold at a bargain price, that were included in the collection of the society, which is now part of the Noordbrabants Museum. All things considered, they didn't have much money for the collection here either. Here, too, there was a lack of interest and an underestimation of its artistic and cultural importance.

It is no exaggeration to say that if the Van den Bogaerde collection in Heeswijk and Haaren had remained together and, for example, the Bridgettines had not held a sale, North Brabant would have had its "own Rijksmuseum" early on – a political anti-Randstad lament of perceived deprivation that can still be heard today. Not only the province, but also the Netherlands, which was and still is fixated on the Golden Age, would have achieved a top place in the list of world-famous medieval collections, such as the Piermont Morgan in New York, the Musée de Cluny in Paris or, when it comes to ironwork, Le Secq des Tournelles in Rouen. Closer to home, we have already mentioned the collection of Fritz Mayer van den Bergh and the collection of Floris Ertborn in Antwerp, which is housed in the KMSKA [Royal Museum of Fine Arts].

I don't get the impression that Noord Brabant is in mourning. Castle Heeswijk can now be visited as a party centre and museum, where the collection consists of an interior with family heirlooms – important and valuable, but not distinctive. No attempt has yet been made to reconstruct this collection with loans from around the world for a temporary exhibition. It would be a meaningful project that would give the cultural miracle and cultural disaster that occurred at Heeswijk a place in the collective memory of our society.

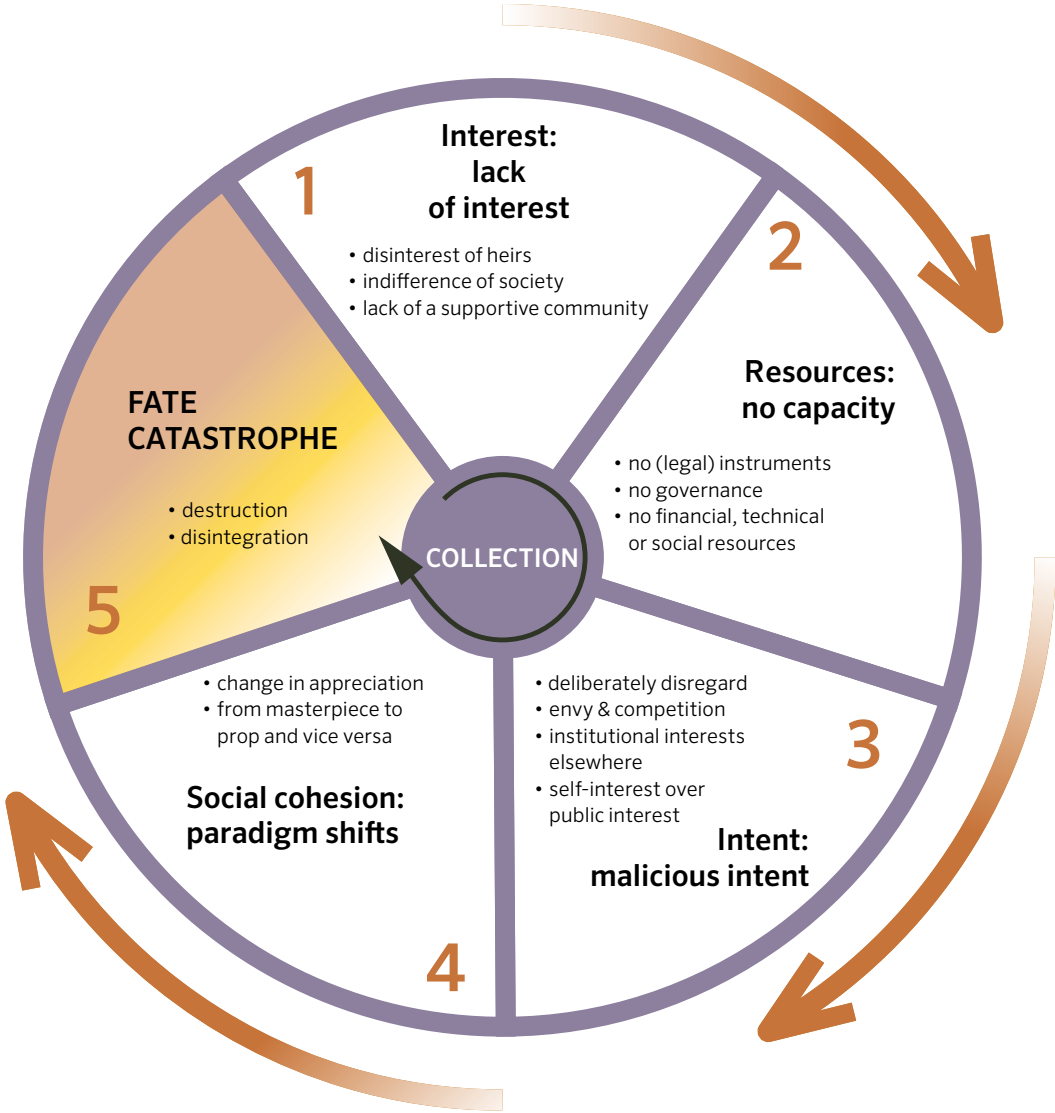
Because we think this is necessary. Since this failure, little has been done to develop instruments for the long-term preservation of private collections, which is the subject of this book. Let us at least try to learn from what has failed so catastrophically here, against the will and good intentions of the testator.

The Heeswijk catastrophe is of course a specific case, but we can certainly draw more general conclusions about long-term conservation strategies from it. Albéric van den Bogaerde thought he had everything well organised, but in the end his plan failed.

Failure factor 1: Lack of interest

The lack of a supportive community is the first failure factor. The brothers Louis and Albéric, much more than their father, worked in isolation in a society that was indifferent to their efforts, with an immediate family that felt constantly deprived. A supportive

Failure factors in long-term preservation



The Wheel of Misfortune

community in everyday life, which takes a genuine interest, is therefore essential. Reliance on the legal system proved to be unjustified, not only in terms of the letter, but certainly in terms of the spirit and intentions of the will.

Failure factor: 2: Inadequate resources

Successful long-term conservation requires resources in the form of economic, social and cultural capital. In practical terms: money and space. There was no lack of either in Heeswijk. But there was a lack of legal capacity to draw up a watertight will that could withstand the malicious intentions of the heirs. In the absence of a supportive community, there was also a lack of continuity and good management.

Failure factor 3: Conflict of interest

Maintaining a collection over the long term is not something that everyone wants to do. In Heeswijk, the family was greedy for money and society proved unable to counteract this private evil with a public interest. But there were also competing interests, such as art dealers and government advisors, who did not always act impartially and independently. Pit, for example, had a direct interest in the success of his "own" Nederlandsch Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst [Dutch Museum of History and Art], which later became the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. In the hierarchical world of museums, where there is much talk of collaboration and collegiality, there is still plenty of rivalry with (inter)national blockbuster exhibitions and purchases at major art fairs such as TEFAF in Maastricht. The art trade responds to this perfectly, wrapping hard commercialism in an aura of cultural heritage.

There can also be a conflict of interest with the inspection committees of the museum world, inadequate research into the provenance of coveted masterpieces (see the Bonnefanten Museum's recent purchase of a sculpture from a contaminated Nazi collection) and manipulated price inflation. The museum world sometimes shows signs of a cultural form of whitewashing.

Failure factor 4: Paradigm shifts

The lords of the castles of Heeswijk and Haaren had the misfortune to be far ahead of their time. They knew this perfectly well, which is why they tried to stop time so that we could catch up with them in a few generations. They, and the rest of us, were unlucky. In Antwerp, Henriëtte Mayer van den Bergh, a strong woman, managed to raise the collection above time and misunderstandings: the fame of the collection and the museum grew over the years. A vulnerable outsider like Frans Stokkermans also feels very much left out, and uses his own strategy of preservation by hiding – until the paradigm of his factory world also changes. The question, then, is how to make important collections paradigm-proof. How do we rescue them from the delusions of the moment, from the coherence of things that seems so self-evident today, but will fall apart the day after tomorrow in the face of a new paradigm? How do we, as heritage professionals, avoid being left with the pieces? That is what this handbook is about.

Failure factor 5: Fate

No matter how well you think you have everything under control, disaster can still strike. In fact, what we value most as iconic objects have the greatest chance of being stolen and destroyed. Acts of war tend to focus on the destruction of identity in the form of heritage. In the next chapter we will see how important heritage was to the German occupiers, who, in addition to all their war efforts, invested heavily in building art bunkers to protect Dutch art from Allied attack. Forgetting and hiding is the best long-term strategy against fate, as archaeological best practice shows.

The factors of failure accumulate in the order given. There is a cumulative effect, starting with disinterest and inability, and then progressing through conflicts of interest and changing social paradigms. This accumulation is already catastrophic, but it can always get worse, up to and including fire and embezzlement.

Dead hand from monastery to museum

The concept of the dead hand is hardly relevant today in religious terms, but it is certainly relevant in the museum business. Donors with a warm or cold hand rightly assume that their gifts will be preserved in the collections forever. If the institution thinks otherwise, it should not have accepted the donation in the first place. Receiving and then disposing of, or even selling, is not the intention. The legitimacy and credibility of the museum as a repository stands or falls on this.

But does the closure (from above) of a museum like De Voorde in Zoetermeer also mean the closure of the collection? Does the dead hand disappear? Will the donor or their descendants get the works back? These are questions that the sector does not know how to answer. In all cases, the outcome is not pleasant and the museum and the society fail in their mission of preservation.

Best practice:

The 1756 will of Pieter Teyler in Haarlem

In his will, Teyler appointed five directors, whose successors continue to manage his estate as the Teylers Museum in Haarlem. He also established two perpetual societies (the *Collegien*) in his will, and wanted his house to be occupied by a painter or other lover of the arts and sciences after his death. This "resident" was to look after Teyler's collection.

Furthermore, Mr Testator declares that it is his will and desire that the house [...] with its venerable library and collection of medals, prints and drawings and everything that in any way belongs to it and can be made to belong to it, should be preserved forever and ever and should remain in its entirety and unsold [...]. Mr Testator intends to found, establish and equip two Collegien, and to create a library and a collection of medals, prints and drawings for the use of the persons of the Collegien community, and for the end of which all this shall in no way be diminished, but shall be increased, enlarged and brought to greater perfection by the gentlemen directors, with the communication and consultation of the members of these Collegien. And finally, all members of these Collegien will always have free access and use, provided the treatment and use, but only indoors, without being allowed to take the slightest thing outside [...].

↗ The Ovale Room of 1784, the heart of Teylers Museum, is unique and authentic. Nowhere else has a complete museum interior with display cases and objects from that period been preserved. This is all thanks to Pieter Teyler's 1756 will, which stipulated that the collections "shall remain in their entirety and unsold forever and ever".

Carl Depauw commentary

23 June 1906:

A Sleeping Beauty scenario in Antwerp

In 1849, Emil Mayer, a businessman and entrepreneur with Cologne roots, settles in Antwerp. He is 29 years old. The city on the Scheldt is undergoing significant economic and cultural growth. This development is fuelled by the port's expansion efforts – which find increasing space – a booming trade in goods from across the globe and the city's geographical position, facilitating perfect connections to a hinterland. Art, culture and prosperity thrive as evidence of this elan.

In 1857, Emil marries nineteen-year-old Henriëtte van den Bergh, the daughter of Jan van den Bergh, a senator, brewer, and briefly the mayor of Antwerp. Three children come from this marriage: two sons and a daughter. The family needs a spacious home and purchases the Hof van Arenberg, an imposing city palace with a courtyard. The eldest son, Fritz, begins studying law in Ghent in 1878. However, when his father dies the following year, he discontinues his studies and moves in with his mother at the Hof van Arenberg. They reside there for the remainder of their years: Fritz, an unmarried bachelor, and Henriëtte, a widow.

In the meantime, the Steen in Antwerp opens as a museum for antiquities in 1864, followed by the establishment of the Museum Plantin-Moretus as a printing museum in 1877, with the notorious Max Rooses as its first curator. Later, the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten [Royal Museum of Fine Arts] also opens. Many wealthy Antwerp residents also venture into the art market and start collecting. In 1890, Fritz begins collecting and must have acquired an average of two works daily for a decade. He carefully examines and values each purchase, deliberating whether to retain or sell based on its merit. As a self-taught enthusiast, he avidly corresponds with collectors, dealers, art connoisseurs and directors of prominent European museums. They highly value his knowledge and skills and often call upon them. Fritz's sudden passing in 1901 leaves behind a diverse collection exceeding 5,700 objects.

Untimeliness

Untimeliness is an inescapable concept in a Sleeping Beauty scenario. Past, present and future are enshrined in an all-encompassing and interconnecting process. This idea is vividly illustrated in the story of Henriëtte and Fritz. Henriëtte, who survived her husband and three children, grappled with the untimeliness of life and the timelessness of art. The question of how to preserve and connect the artistic legacy and the reflection on the work and life of her son Fritz weighed heavily on Henriëtte's mind, especially knowing she wouldn't be there to ensure this after her passing. With foresight, she chose to entrust the collection and the house she had erected between 1901 and 1904 to a bequest overseen by a Board of Trustees. This testamentary decision was formalised on 23 June 1906 before a notary, in the presence of trustees appointed from her family and circle of friends.

←←
Knight Fritz Mayer van den Bergh (1858–1901), portrait by Jozef Janssens de Varebeke.
←
Portrait of Henriëtte Mayer van den Bergh (1838–1920), Fritz's mother, as a girl by Jozef van Lerius.

Henriëtte decided not to donate the house and collection to the city, wary of the volatile nature of political fortunes. Even today, the objectives she instilled in this Board remain applicable. These objectives are clear and concise: no additions to or subtractions from the collection are permitted, ensuring it remains whole and inseparable from the house. Over 117 years later, this decision maintains its influence, guaranteeing safety and consistency. Such scenarios are rare; a comparable equivalent is found in the story of the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, where five directors were appointed as testamentary executors. Conversely, missed opportunities are common: the tearing apart of the Heeswijk Castle collection (where Fritz made purchases!) is a compelling example.

Concealing and awakening

A Sleeping Beauty scenario also implies concealing the collection. Mother and son may have planned to establish a museum for the collection, but Fritz's sudden death thwarted this. Henriëtte acted swiftly, and within four years, she had realised a veritable time capsule: a museum built around the collection, honouring Fritz while exemplifying what a museum should be through taste and insight. Her ambition wasn't to open it to the public. Visits were by appointment only. All the while, a restorer carefully maintained the concealed collection in accordance with the goals set forth in the bequest.

The Museum Mayer van den Bergh opened in 1904 and was effectively in a Sleeping Beauty scenario until 1951, when the city and trustees agreed to open it on select days, slowly bringing it to life.

However, in 2022, a partnership agreement and a ground lease offered a solution to the pivotal question in a Sleeping Beauty scenario: how do we manage the collection's awakening? While the bequest's goals are an absolute safeguard and provide direction, what steps should we take next? How can we invigorate the operation to align with the modern expectations of a museum? How can we interconnect collections, stories and people? How do we honour and uphold Henriëtte's wishes? Should we unquestionably adhere to them? Can we convey our differing perspectives on the bequest's goals to her after the fact and without shame? How can we validate all of this? After all, Henriëtte established a stringent framework for those engaging with the house and collection, compelling trustees, the city and the museum to collaborate. This framework also offers a forward-looking perspective with no loopholes for those involved.

In 2022, the house, owned by the trustees, and the Hof van Arenberg, owned by the city, were reunited within a single site. Management is entrusted to the city, with a perpetual commitment to develop it as a museum spearheaded by the collection.

This museum's operation is defined by the five core museum functions outlined by the International Council of Museums (ICOM): acquisition, preservation, presentation, research and participation.

Within the contours of the bequest, where no additions to or subtractions from the collection are permitted, ICOM's core objective pertaining to collecting prompts questions and requires further exploration. How can we augment the collection while adhering to the ICOM objectives? What, then, defines the collection's profile, and what is the legal status of newly acquired items? Henriëtte envisioned the museum as a time capsule where decoration, collection and presentation converge in a Gesamtkunstwerk: rooms in a house, crammed full like a depot, inviting unhurried perusal. How do we address these challenges?

Awakening from a Sleeping Beauty scenario is a breathtaking task. It presents itself as a journey in which one can establish positions and perspectives years in advance. On the eve of putting a collection to sleep, perhaps more crucial is asking whether engaging in this process is relevant and meaningful, especially when it could be for 30 years. In this regard, the scenario surrounding the Museum Mayer van den Bergh can serve as inspiration.

3

Deposit

A visual essay on depots

A depot is a place where goods are stored. These are usually physical items, such as collections or stock. But in the Netherlands a depot can also hold non-material items, such as securities or money in a “bouwdepot” [construction depot], for example. Cultural institutions that manage collections usually have a warehouse. Because special rules apply regarding climate, registration and accessibility, we call this a depot in which collections are kept. Things are kept in every depot, but it is not the case that the intention of every depot is to get things back to act as reminders. We put things in a waste depot; we throw them away and prefer to forget them. But throwing things away can also be a form of storage. And storing is not always a form of remembering. Following Julian Spalding, who wrote of the poetic museum with deeper layers of experience, here we make a warm plea for the poetic depot.

Frank Bergevoet

The Poetic Depot

Museum depots are super boring these days. They have the order of an efficiently designed warehouse, with neat rows of shelves, cupboards and racks. In these cabinets, objects are neatly labelled and arranged side by side, supported where necessary with acid-free packing material. The vaults are clean, well-lit even in the smallest corners, and there is always a constant climate. There is nothing in the spacious aisles between the shelves. The glossy cast floor reflects the low UV LED lighting.

The most boring museum depots are those where the objects are stored in chests of drawers or in acid-free boxes, which in turn are stored on shelves. I always tend to turn around to leave as soon as I enter such a depot. Such a museum depot has nothing to do with the romantic image of the attic filled with junk or the overcrowded basement.

The modern museum depot shows how much the conservation and management of museum objects has improved. Under current conditions, objects seem to be preserved for eternity, and that is the intention. Many historic objects were in less than ideal conditions for a long time before they arrived in the modern depot. And yet they are still here.

Wonder as marketing

Marketing messages often present museums as institutions where there is much to discover and where you are constantly surprised by your own wonder. The reality is rather disappointing. I dare say that many professional museums have become predictable presentation platforms, offering something to you in a manner that you already knew or suspected. Modern museum depots have been stripped of any form of nostalgia and "treasure". The exciting experience of awe-inspiring disarray has been subordinated to the primacy of efficient and effective conservation and management of objects.

The charm of chaos

In the depot of the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum], on the other hand, the charm of junk is still intact. Things are piled up in orderly disarray on poorly lit floors, covered in dust and decay. Wooden floors, dark beams and narrow, steep staircases add to the feeling of attics full of undiscovered objects. I love it. You don't find that anywhere else in museum land anymore.

We are not going to tidy up and professionalise Jan Anderson's depot, no; we are not going to do that. We embrace the charm of chaos and accept decay. We let the cobwebs fall over the depot collection, just as the cobwebs spread over the halls and chambers of Sleeping Beauty's castle. This enhances the romance of the attic filled with junk, and so Jan Anderson's depot is preserved as an unlikely and well-preserved fairy tale.

CC NL: The Dutch Collection Centre

In 2020, the national collections of the Rijksmuseum, the Nederlands Openluchtmuseum [Netherlands Open Air Museum], Het Loo Palace and the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency] were housed in a new joint depot in Amersfoort Vathorst. The CC NL, as this CollectieCentrum Nederland [Dutch Collection Centre] is known, replaces the existing depots of these institutions, thus enabling sustainable and efficient management and conservation. The depot has a surface area of more than 20,000 m^2.

At the end of the 20th century, a new depot paradigm emerged: the clean-room typology with concrete walls, concrete floors and lots of boring grey cabinets and shelves. Compact cabinets, which can be moved on rails, ensure optimum use of space. There is plenty of room between the shelves and racks. The depot paradigm of the 20th century has found its apotheosis in the CC NL.

It has become the country's benchmark: the most standard of the standard. It's the depot-at-a-glance storage. When you enter, you immediately see the entire space, which is sterile and organised systematically. This rationalisation immediately destroys any expectation that the depot is a treasure trove.

This depot experience is completely at odds with the one in Jan Anderson's shipping company warehouse. You wish everyone could share such a depot experience – there is still that treasure trove feeling: the romantic Indiana Jones atmosphere, but real and authentic. There is so much to discover. The charm of messiness and the beauty of chaos ensure that the objects are hidden in disorder. In fact they

The CC NL (CollectieCentrum Nederland) in Amersfoort.

blend into the chaos and "use" it as camouflage: hiding as a brilliant preservation strategy.

The Paasloo Pantheon

The Rijksluis [state vault] for art treasures in the woods of Paasloo, in the municipality of Steenwijkerland, was built above ground, unlike other state vaults, requiring an exceptionally heavy construction of concrete and reinforcing steel. To be on the safe side, a fire-fighting pond was also dug there. The vault, built by the Dutch government in the 1940s with the approval of the German occupiers, was able to store some 3000 objects in anticipation of the final victory, to the greater honour and glory of a future Netherlands as part of the Third Reich. Ironically, the depot itself is now a national monument, known as the Paasloo Pantheon. Below I quote the accompanying description, which gives an impressive picture of the solid execution of this depot, which was built in a short time.

"The storage facility has a circular form with a 4.5-metre thick continuous concrete wall covered with sintered paving stones laid on their sides, with a polygonal brick gutter edge. On the façade is a metre-wide majolica tableau with a coat of arms between two heraldic lions. On the wall to the left of the entrance, the following Latin text is written in letters baked into the bricks: "ANNO DOMINI MCMXLII EGREGIIS ARTIS PATRIAE MONUMENTIS INGENTIBUS BELLI PERICULIS DEO JUVANTE ERIPIENDIS FIRMISSIMUM HOC REFUGIUM AEDIFICANDUM CURAVIT POPULUS BATAVUS". The presence of the tableau and this text can be interpreted as an act of resistance against the occupiers who supervised the construction.

The wall rests on a massive conical roof, nine metres thick at its highest point, covered with concave and convex tiles know as monks and nuns. The only opening in the wall is shielded by a four-metre thick concrete screen wall with a semicircular porch and a broken round arch corridor, shielded by a steel plate, which runs as an extension of the entrance to the facility. The access consists of this porch, closed by iron gates, leading to a strong room with two sets of 17cm thick steel vault doors.

The circular, two-storey interior of the storage area is divided on the ground floor by the walls, between which is the access strong room. Sliding steel rails (around 60 at the bottom, around 80 at the top) are used for hanging paintings. The living areas are arranged in the form of a circular segment against the screen wall, in front of which there is a terrace with brick walls. (...)"

The complex, which is not open to the public, is currently owned by the Province of Overijssel and is once again used for the storage of museum collections.

Hiding *The Night Watch* in a cave

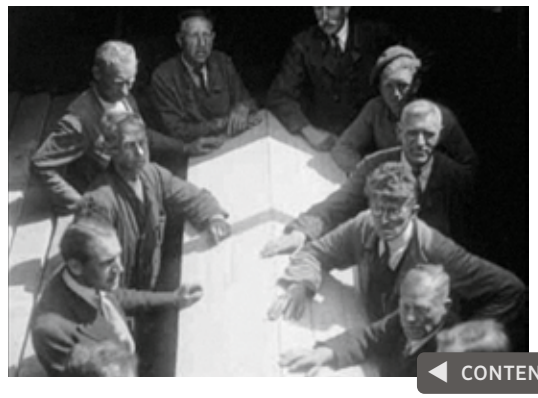
Rembrandt's *Night Watch* is the inalienable property of the city of Amsterdam. Unfortunately, it is also unsellable for the Dutch capital because it is a national totem. In fact, the Rijksmuseum was built around this painting in the Erezaal [Hall of Honour] by the architect Cuijpers. In order to be able to move this masterpiece quickly and safely in times of danger, this room is equipped with a vertical "letterbox" through which the large painting can be easily moved to the underpass. This was used both during the recent restoration and in the run-up to the Second World War. After first being stored at Radboud Castle in Medemblik in September 1939, in May 1940 the painting was moved to a bunker in the dunes on the coast near Castricum. Although this bunker was built specifically for art treasures, the size of *The Night Watch* meant that the painting had to be removed from its frame and the canvas rolled up. The German occupiers then kept the painting in the state vault in Heemskerk.

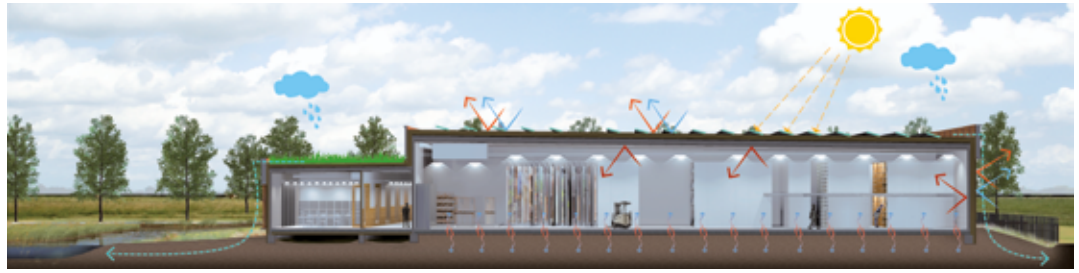
In mid-1941, fearing British air raids in Noord-Holland, the Germans decided to build two large government vaults: one in Paasloo in Overijssel and the other in the Sint-Pietersberg in Maastricht. In April 1942, *The Night Watch* was moved to the now completed government vault in the marl caves there. This is not a natural cave, but a limestone quarry in which 800 works of art were stored. The package containing *The Night Watch*, which was rolled on a cylinder, had to be turned a little each day to prevent it from sticking together or being damaged. The vault was crammed with valuables and consisted of a 360-m^3 concrete structure with a one-metre thick ceiling under a 30-metre layer of marl. The vault was guarded day and night and was under government administration until 1995. The empty depot is now a tourist attraction as the "National War Treasury" of the Second World War.

←
The depot in a former shipping company warehouse on Beukelszoonstraat in Vlaardingen. The warehouse also served as a herring storage facility, in a street named after the inventor of the herring gibbing process.

→
The Rijkskluis (national vault) from 1942 with the coat of arms with the Dutch lion for the storage of inalienable museum property during the war in Paasloo (Overijssel). The text at the entrance uses the term *Refugium* (place of refuge).

The *Night Watch*, taken out of its frame for protection during the war and rolled up on a drum, hidden in the national vault in a former marl quarry in the Sint Pietersberg in Maastricht, April 1942 (above). In 1945, the canvas sailed on the inland vessel called Van God Gegeven [Given by God] from Maastricht back to Amsterdam, where it was had a joyous reception. Even more so than in the "hall of honour" in the Rijksmuseum, we see the almost dazzling effect of *The Night Watch* as a national totem. Rolled up in its wooden box, it looks like a sacred reliquary with aura, a true emergency shrine from the Second World War, which everyone wants to touch upon its return.





↑ Design of the Kolleksjesintrum Fryslân by LEVS architects in Amsterdam.

Kolleksjesintrum Fryslân in Leeuwarden

Since 2016, the Fries Museum, Tresoar (which references "treasure keeping" – a great name for an institution that preserves the historical and literary heritage of Friesland) and the Natuur-, Scheepvaart- en Landbouwmuseum [Nature, Maritime and Agricultural Museum] have shared a depot in Leeuwarden. Compared to traditional depots, the Kolleksjesintrum Fryslân [Frisian Collection Centre] is particularly small. The building consists of a compact square box for the storage of collections, connected by a central corridor to a strip of workspaces. Built on a mound, the depot not only keeps the collection safe above ground, but also references Frisian history, along with practical advantages such as the height of the loading ramp and the protection of the façade against vandalism. The design is based on concrete depots with an airtight shell and a deliberately non-insulated concrete floor. This acts as a geothermal heat and cold store, ensuring a consistent indoor temperature and humidity throughout the year, both day and night.

The depot as striking architecture

One of the most remarkable depots in the Netherlands is the "Grand Canyon" at Beeld & Geluid [the Institute for Sound and Vision] in Hilversum. The Rotterdam architects Neutelings and Riedijk, who also designed the storage concept for the Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) in Antwerp, have placed the archive in a deep cavern behind the entrance. I share the enthusiasm of the critic Bernard Hulsman, who speaks of Las Vegas architecture or *architecture parlante*, whereby the Institute for Sound and Vision has the shape of a gigantic old-fashioned diorama box covered with TV images. Here we see that the building's function as a depot has not been disguised but taken as a starting point for the design. The use of the national colour orange is also reflected here, a signal colour that is also used extensively in the panels on the outside of the building.

"Usually archives are boring storage spaces, but in the Institute for Sound and Vision they are housed in a deep gorge that the visitor must cross after entering. The gorge has a rocky wall made of natural stone, in which rectangular openings have been cut out. Because the floors and walls of the spaces behind the wall are bright orange, the openings in the walls light up brightly. The archive has also become a strong example of Las Vegas architecture: it is an underworld for old film and TV images. But above all, even more fittingly, it resembles *The Memory*, a drawing by the cartoonist-architect Joost Swarte from 1993. This drawing shows a man sitting and reading in the underworld of the Institute for Sound and Vision." (Hulsman writing in *NRC Handelsblad*, 1 February 2011)

←
Since 2006, the Dutch Institute for Sound and Vision in Hilversum has occupied a spectacular building by the Rotterdam architects Neutelings & Riedijk.

↓ →
The Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) in Antwerp (opened in 2011), also designed by the Rotterdam office Neutelings & Riedijk, as a warehouse that literally refers to the former entrepôt warehouse at this location. This museum also has an open depot accessible to the public: the MAS-Kijkdepot.

Boijmans: the depot as open collection building

The Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam often seemed to be more in the news for its storage than for its exhibitions. When it rains, as it often does in the Netherlands, the museum's cellars were always flooded – an obvious design flaw for a building with a museum function. Depots are usually located in basements or attics, which are by definition vulnerable to water and are actually the least suitable locations for a depot. But as they are also the least desirable locations, depots – which people would prefer to hide from view – are placed here even against their better judgement.

Boijmans has made a virtue of necessity: the museum commissioned Winy Maas of the Rotterdam-based architecture firm MVRDV to design a fantastic new depot in the form of a publicly accessible collection building. It houses the museum's own collection and restoration facilities, and private collectors are able to rent professional storage space. It is a towering building with a volume of no less than 15,000 m3. Although the depot is the main function, there is also space for exhibitions, a coffee bar and a roof garden with a restaurant. The building cost €92 million, which is exorbitant for a depot. Now in use since 2021, the building was soon dubbed "De Pot" (The Pot or depot) in Rotterdam's creative vernacular.

Visitors can see the results of 173 years of collecting. More than 152,000 works of art are stored, arranged and structured in 14 depot areas with five climate zones. It is a depot of large numbers, in every respect. In addition to the objects, all the work involved in the management and maintenance of a collection can be viewed.

Storage depot for radioactive waste and heritage

In the depots of COVRA, the Central Organisation for Radioactive Waste in Borssele, the waste, in fact the heritage of our society, is temporarily stored for 100 years with a view to final disposal. It also opens up its space, where available, to museum institutions in the province of Zeeland.

The sundial on the uranium storage building, designed by artist William Verstraeten, refers to the passage of time. After all, managing radioactive waste with half-lives is curated decay with time management.

Simone Vermaat commentary

Reflections on collections

The Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Cultural Heritage Agency, RCE] is a recognised institution operating under the Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science]. It's worth noting that the RCE also oversees a substantial portion, comprising approximately 120,000 objects, of the national collection. Unlike my colleague Frank Bergevoet, who, like many fellow RCE advisors and specialists, travels the country extensively to discover unexpected and remarkable places, I, as a curator, have journeyed nowhere beyond the depot for years (though I am slightly exaggerating).

In early 2023, I marked a whopping 25 years of service as a curator at the RCE, which was quite a shock. Throughout those 25 years, my role, department and organisation underwent several changes to its name, structure and whereabouts. Amid these changes, the collection remained a constant. While this quarter-century of dedication may reveal more about me than my work – perhaps hinting at resistance to change or a lack of interest from other employers – it's safe to say that working with this collection is, colloquially speaking, "my thing". Moreover, I take comfort in knowing that spending 25, 30 or 40 years with the same collection is common for curators. Regardless, working with this national collection, which I will never get to know fully, continues to surprise and amaze me. So, of course, I said yes to providing my reflections on the Sleeping Beauty scenario and the Jan Anderson collection. However, I cannot do so without drawing from my extensive experience as a curator of a national collection consisting of all sorts of things.

Sleeping Beauties in storage

Let me begin by noting that using the term "Sleeping Beauty" in museums is not unfamiliar to me. We use this term among colleagues to refer to certain items in the collection. However, unlike the scenario discussed here, we do not put these Sleeping Beauties to sleep. On the contrary, we try to kiss them awake by shaking them up, dusting them off and drawing attention to them. For several years, our Kunst zoekt plek [Art seeks a place] column in the RCE magazine has been offering these objects on loan. Some Sleeping Beauties

merely require a gentle nudge to shine in a suitable context, be it for a shorter or longer duration. Others demand considerably more effort, such as the UNESCO press room by none other than Gerrit Rietveld or Jacoba van Heemskerck's extraordinary stained-glass windows for the former naval barracks in Amsterdam. Finding a place in the Collectie Nederland [The Netherland's Collection, which encompasses more than just the museum items in the Rijkscollectie [National Collection] and includes collections from various local governments, such as art in town halls and paintings, books, and artefacts in provincial museums] for these Sleeping Beauties entails significant effort. Witnessing an object we have unearthed in the depot being utilised elsewhere is always immensely satisfying.

To paraphrase anthropologist Paul van der Grijp, he describes collecting as "a complex cultural phenomenon. The practice of collecting consists of assembling a series of objects outside of a utilitarian context, where a personal leitmotif defines the collection. In doing so, the whole is more than the sum of its parts." I believe this definition applies seamlessly to Jan Anderson's collection and persona. He began collecting out of intrinsic curiosity, almost out of necessity, and developed into a connoisseur in addition to being a collector.

Without intending to disparage Paul van der Grijp's words, I find his definition inadequate for the RCE collection. Two essential elements are missing: 1. the government isn't an inherently motivated collector, and 2. there is clearly no leitmotif. Nevertheless, a considerable collection has emerged. The RCE, along with its predecessors, consists of collections that owe their existence to executing statutory functions and government policy at one time or another. In essence, the collection embodies the materialisation of the arts and culture policy over the past century. Examples include the state acquisitions collection, the remnants of the Beeldende Kunstenaars Regeling [Visual Arts Scheme, BKR], and the rijksbezit [state property] collection of objects that has "washed ashore" in our depot from various government buildings and organisations. Additionally, there are collections that, over the years, have been donated, transferred, bequeathed, recovered or temporarily parked. The collection has weathered various policy storms: many directors have tried to dispose of it, only for subsequent ones to embrace it anew.

Since 2021, this collection has resided alongside three other state museum collections in the Collectie Centrum Nederland [Collection Centre of the Netherlands, CC NL]. The absence of a leitmotif in our national collection becomes apparent upon entering a depot. The perplexing and peculiar objects that stand out among the beautiful and orderly rows of cabinets, tables and chairs belong to the RCE. Our collection is the CC NL's odd one out. Unsurprisingly, this, along with our somewhat unconventional loan activities, causes friction and discomfort with our partners; it is a situation familiar to anyone who has recently started living together.

According to the authors of this book, the CC NL epitomises the 20th-century depot paradigm – a clean room devoid of charm and romance, lacking the sense of a "treasure trove". It is cold, sterile and dreadfully dull. "The exhilarating chaos of an awe-inspiring collection has been entirely sacrificed for the sake of efficient preservation and management of objects." I largely concur with this reasoning, and perhaps, following up on the Delta Plan for Cultural Heritage Preservation, we have gone a bit overboard with efficient collection management.

On the other hand, it is my workplace they criticise! I dare say that the CC NL is a vast museological well of forgetting despite its clean-room appearance. Due to the size of the collections, many thousands of objects will be lovingly neglected under perfect conditions in the coming years. While conspicuous objects tend to be considered more beautiful, significant, superior and interesting, other objects can, in the meantime, continue to find a bolthole and await rediscovery by present and future generations. (We recently discovered three lost ceiling paintings by Gerard de Lairesse.)

Drawing from my experience, I propose that appreciation and interest follow a 25-year cycle. Put another way, this roughly coincides with the timespan between two Vermeer blockbuster exhibitions.

The once dismissed textile collection (including by myself as a novice curator) is now "hot", rich with works by pioneering female artists in textiles. Fortunately, against strong advice, we didn't dispose of this collection. Other collection items, such as antique furniture, have seen their economic value decimated in recent years. Conversely, a less art-historically interesting collection of portrait paintings has gained historical intrigue. We've identified various West India Company and Dutch East India Company directors and plantation owners among the sitters. Despite our cold and mundane depot, ample discoveries await, both within the objects themselves and through the evolving perspectives we bring to these collections.

Museumification

The CC NL is a large, professional museumification machine. Each incoming item, whether a farm tool, a carriage, a child's drawing or a teacup, undergoes meticulous museological processing. After that, stripped of dust and tagged with a barcode, it will go through life physically and digitally as an inventory number. All attributes and peculiarities are assimilated into a unified classification system – the Collection Registration System – into which, figuratively speaking, the entire world must fit. Subsequently, the object is placed on a shelf, in a drawer, on a rack or in a storage unit amid the 20,000 square metres of efficient and sustainable storage space above sea level in Vathorst, Amersfoort.

Over time, we have discovered that we've recorded everything about the objects in our collections systems, except for the answer to today's question, which museums have been grappling with for several years: "Where did this object/collection come from and how did it enter the collection?" Our collection registration systems often cannot provide a comprehensive answer. Who could have predicted 30 years ago that today we would mainly be looking at the backs of paintings, hoping to find clues about provenance? This issue has become so socially pressing that many museums have justifiably assigned a new role: the provenance researcher. Initially temporary, this role will soon be indispensable in the museum sector. I predict that in 20 or 30 years, a similar need will arise on a different subject, unforeseen by today's museum professionals. This isn't a threat, a doomsday scenario, or a shortcoming of current collection managers, curators and conservators. Different times and different generations ask different questions. We must recognise that we cannot predict what the next generation will deem important, interesting or urgent. We preserve to pass on, leaving judgment to the next generation.

Slow heritage

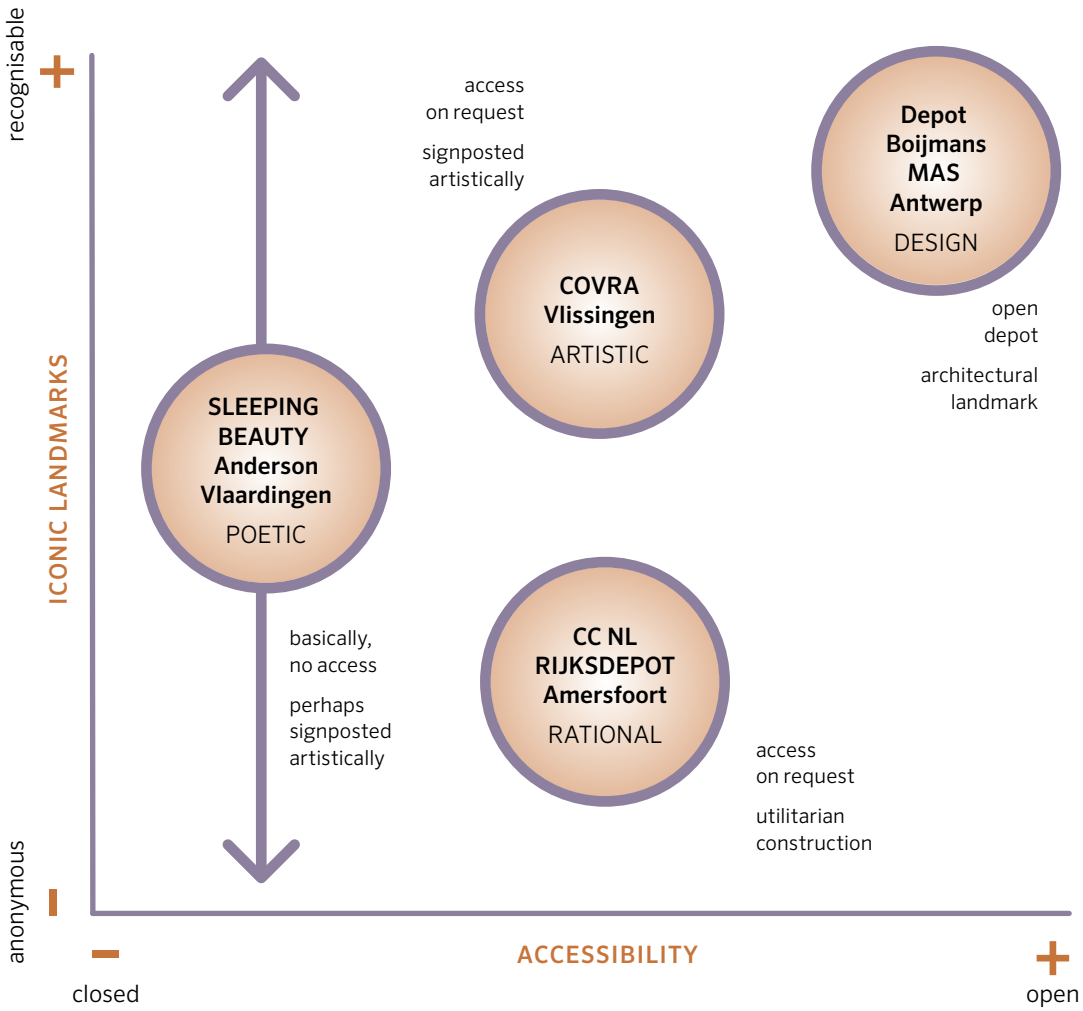
I'm all for it! I'm for abstaining and delay, for the museological pit of oblivion with an information dossier, for collection time-management, for the Sleeping Beauty scenario, for a Collection Lab and for a Refugium. Why shouldn't museums have an archival function? And who decided that the limited display of museum collections is problematic or that museums should draft a new collection plan every four years? In a world where people and things are becoming outdated increasingly faster, slowing down is the big trend. Slow living, slow dating and slow food – so why not embrace "slow heritage" too? The Sleeping Beauty scenario is timely.

I can only confirm the necessity for a Refugium, a safety net for endangered and orphaned collections. Today's baby boomer generation of collectors and artists is fading out. Estates, sometimes desperate, seek assistance from the RCE to care for their collection or find a new home for it. The Collection Lab also sounds promising as a place to monitor and experiment with decay, something previously unimaginable in museums in the Netherlands, thanks to the achievements of the Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation. It seems extremely exciting to compare natural decay with the deterioration that RCE researchers simulate in the ageing machines at the National Heritage Laboratory.

Gerard Rooijakkers' cautionary words will be my motto when creating our next collection plan and subsequent iterations: "A collection plan that shows little respect for the genesis, coherence and continuity of collections can have irreparable consequences in an effective organisation."

Finally, a quote from Willard Boyd, who may be less familiar in the Netherlands but was a legal scholar and former director of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago: "What one generation esteems, the next deplores, and so forth ad infinitum."

Long-term storage depots
Signposting & accessibility



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Depots for long-term storage: Signposting and accessibility
On the horizontal axis we can see the degree of accessibility of a depot type, with open public depots such as those in Rotterdam and Antwerp being the most accessible to the public. The museum-like forgotten depot of Sleeping Beauty is at the opposite end of the spectrum. The Netherlands Collection Centre (CC NL) in Amersfoort (province of Utrecht) is reasonably accessible as a government depot with visitor registration, as is the Central Storage Facility for Radioactive Waste (COVRA) in Borssele (Zeeland).

The vertical axis shows the signposting in the landscape, with the CC NL being the most anonymous and the COVRA, MAS in Antwerp and especially the Boijmans Depot in Rotterdam being the most iconic depots.

For the Sleeping Beauty depot in Vlaardingen, the position on the vertical axis of the iconic or non-iconic landmark has yet to be determined in consultation with the local community of Vlaardingen. We are in favour of a depot that is marked by artistic imagination and that metaphorically communicates on the outside what is happening on the inside.

Sven Lütticken

Andy Warhol's Time Capsules

For over two decades, Andy Warhol packed various paraphernalia into cardboard boxes. Once full, each box was designated as a *Time Capsule* and taken to a storage facility, where they would patiently await an undetermined resurrection in the future. While initially a sporadic endeavour beginning in the 1960s, this practice gained momentum in the early 1970s. From the more than 600 time capsules, the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt exhibited fifteen in 2004 in collaboration with the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, which, in a long-term project, aims to catalogue all the capsules' contents. The accompanying publication already includes the inventory of one box: *TC21*.

The term "time capsule" refers, somewhat ironically, to a distinctly modern phenomenon: filling a typically metal capsule with items deemed representative of its era. In 1900, time capsules were buried underground or ensconced in buildings, particularly in the US. The decades after that marked a heyday for this phenomenon, often undertaken to coincide with world fairs or major construction projects. While ancient cultures buried treasures for practical or sacred reasons, such as providing a ruler with riches in the afterlife, the modern time capsule symbolises a reverence for history. Time capsules are made for the future, for posterity. They are instruments of a dynamic culture aware of its ability to constantly destroy things, aiming to preserve a set of artefacts in a compact package for the future – often for only a few decades or a century, but sometimes their creators have much longer timespans in mind. Another concern looming in the background is the fear of Western society's possible self-destruction. In such a scenario, the capsule ceases to be intended for the culture's descendants but instead for potential successors or even extraterrestrial civilisations. Like the time traveller in a time machine (which, as a modern fictional device, shares close ties with the time capsule), wending unscathed through time, witnessing future utopian or apocalyptic scenes, the sealed containers exist, as it were, outside the normal flow of time. They are rarely opened, and experts suggest most are soon forgotten, vanishing without a trace.

Warhol's artistic prowess and celebrity shielded his cardboard boxes from such a fate. Despite his unrealised ambition to monetise them as works of art, they were clearly an important side effect of one of the 20th century's preeminent artists, and, as such, they were unlikely to end up in the garbage. The contents of his time capsules are richly varied, encompassing junk and ephemera, such as invitations, fan letters (sometimes unsettling), stamps, promotional material from his films, gay porn and children's books, alongside Warhol drawings from the fifties. Moreover, there's the memorabilia: a ball gown belonging to Ava Gardner, a pair of Clark Gable's shoes, and pilfered trinkets from Concorde.

Surprisingly, Warhol's time capsules rarely capture a snapshot in time but consist of multiple layers, juxtaposing "current" items from the 1970s and 80s with older items from the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Each box is historically stratified, perhaps reflecting Warhol's encounters with older material during his clean-up efforts. Yet, he appears to have curated the contents to a degree. For example, *TC69* contains many children's books from the *Big Little Books* series (but also a catalogue of the Playboy art collection), while *TC31* contains numerous gramophone records.

Remarkably, Warhol put a mixture of objects he likely regarded with indifference and items with significant emotional resonance into his time capsules. Colacello recounts how, during a Christmas office party, Warhol immediately tossed "funny" gifts from colleagues into a time capsule. On the other hand, there are also emotionally charged items, such as letters from lovers and friends. Exceptional in this regard is TC27, which is full of memorabilia from his mother, suggesting this time capsule served as a convenient means of detachment. With its clothes, drawings, letters, and kitsch religious postcards, TC27 is truly poignant.

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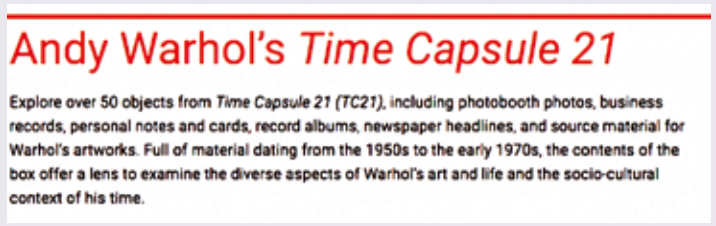

Andy Warhol's *Time Capsule 21*

Explore over 50 objects from *Time Capsule 21 (TC21)*, including photobooth photos, business records, personal notes and cards, record albums, newspaper headlines, and source material for Warhol's artworks. Full of material dating from the 1950s to the early 1970s, the contents of the box offer a lens to examine the diverse aspects of Warhol's art and life and the socio-cultural context of his time.

https://www.warhol.org/timecapsule/time-capsules/

4

Collect

Stages of cultural biography

The reasons for collecting vary widely, especially between private individuals and museums. Cultural history museums collect primarily to document the world around them. Getting to grips with the complexity of the past and present is often one of the implicit, general and usually unattainable goals. Collecting forces selection and ordering, which in turn leads to structuring, which provides orientation. Organising the chaos of the material world around us into headings and cultural categories is one of the things that happens in museums, both behind the scenes and frontstage. Cultural-historical public collections and museums enable people to settle in time and space. This is not an unimportant cultural, sometimes even therapeutic, function – especially as the question of the identity of a place or a society becomes ever more pressing.

The triad of keeping, saving, collecting

Collections are relational and performative

Private collections and private museums are about coming to terms with the world around us, but they are also about defining our place in that chaotic world. Every collection has relational and performative aspects, which are most evident in private collecting. For the private collector, the collection is an extension of his person, or rather his personality.

Most collections stem in some way from a biographical circumstance, such as the fact that Jan Anderson owned a chain of drugstores. But even as a child he loved collecting, observing, interpreting and communicating about it in a performance. The objects are, so to speak, mediators between the collector and the world. With "closed" collections such as coins and stamps, which can theoretically be completed, this arrangement has been taken so far that collecting has become a reassuring exercise.

The urge for completeness is inherent in collectors, even in "open" collections. The possibility of finding an unknown variant, a missing type, leads to serial collections (many of one type) and sub-collections (many of one category). We see all this in the Anderson collection. Not a fill-in-the-blank exercise, but a much "wilder" kind of tactile and intuitive collecting. It is a strategy that institutional collectors such as public museums cannot afford – they are, after all, bound by collection plans and external accountability.

The triad of collecting

"Saving is Gathering" is the apt title of one of Jan Anderson's publications on Vlaardingen savings history. Here alone, it is amazing that a private individual can collect, research, present and publish the history of saving for a specific place. Even if that were the only subject Jan had been working on all his life... In fact, he has already published around 100 pamphlets on a wide range of subjects.

As a collector, Jan reflects on his own actions in an inimitable way. This includes a good dose of stubbornness, which is also necessary when working against prevailing paradigms. "As far as I'm concerned, Jan Anderson belongs to the post-war generation of collectors. Jan began by collecting shells and all kinds of natural objects. This keeping evolved into saving, and eventually Jan started to really collect, having his collection carefully registered by volunteers. I learnt the triad of keeping, saving and collecting from Jan, and it is a useful triad to indicate the degree of professionalism in collection management."

↑ Saving is Gathering: long before the establishment of the savings bank, money was collected for the widows of Vlaardingen's fishermen when their wages were paid. One of the many brochures published by the Jan Anderson Regional Museum.

These are the words of Frank Bergevoet, an expert in the world of collections, who learned from Jan the simple art of keeping, saving and collecting, the characteristics of which we have further elaborated schematically by genre, character, location, term and trace.

Keeping

Keeping concerns the genre of children's collections, which often consist of found objects (bird feathers, shells and other natural objects), compulsively

Collecting

	KEEPING	SAVING	COLLECTING
GENRE	**Children's collections** • bird feathers • car emblems • shells, naturalia • plastic cutlery sets aeroplanes	**Amateur collections** • coins & stamps • militaria • naturalia • historical objects • archaeology	**(Semi-)professional collections** • art • ethnographica • books and pictures • historical objects
CHARACTER	**Intuitive** • "natural" • adventurous	**Conscious, but also impulsive** • hobby • spare time • aficionado	**Considered, strategic** • developing into full-time • "academic"
PLACE	**Improvised repositories** • box under the bed • windowsill • small cabinet	**Decompression spaces** • attic • shed • cellar • own separate room or around the house	**Depot(s)** • private museum • rented or purchased spaces, sometimes external
TERM	**Stage of life** • youth	**Lifetime or otherwise** • usually until death • the span of a single lifetime	**Ideally continued after death** • many years of parallel and cumulative lives
TRACES	**"Is lost"** • dissolves without leaving a trace	**Collection is scattered among other collections** • leaves a trace in other collections	**"Cherry picking"** • by other collectors and museums unless ENSEMBLE VALUE takes precedence

REFUGIUM

Buying time for a responsible, sustainable solution

"acquired" objects (such as autographs or plastic cutlery sets from airline companies), and more or less stolen objects (such as car emblems and hubcaps). Keeping is also about filling albums (football cards and stamps).

Apart from this last category, keeping has an intuitive and adventurous character (climbing over fences, going on safari, hunting for fossils) with improvised storage places (the box under the bed and the windowsill) that are very temporary and usually last no longer than one phase of life (childhood, adolescence). They disintegrate without leaving any significant trace.

Saving

Saving is where the amateur comes in: an enthusiast who invests a great deal of time and money in his or her hobby. These amateur collections are often built around a single theme. They can range from very conventional "dull" themes such as beer coasters, football memorabilia, militaria, devotional items, artefacts, tools, KLM houses or fossils and minerals, to creative and "exciting" unusual themes such as tattoos with pieces of skin preserved in ethanol, and anything from Sleeping Beauty to erotic pulp literature.

These amateurs build their collections deliberately, but not without impulsiveness, in their spare time. They store them in decompression zones such as a separate room, an attic, a cellar or a shed, where everything is on display. Collecting in order not to display does not fit in with this genre of collections, which often have an overwhelming character: the owner is bathed, so to speak, in the multitude of favourite objects.

These collections begin at a certain age, and often a certain moment can be identified with the very first piece that "started it all". Many of these collectors do not start collecting until after the age of 30, and often not until around the age of 50.The collection as an ensemble rarely or never survives the collector, but dissolves after their death into the collections of fellow collectors. Very occasionally, such a unique, creative, conceptual collection, based on a good idea with rare pieces, is donated or sold to an institution during the collector's lifetime or by descendants.

Collecting

An amateur collection like this then ends up with institutional collectors such as museums, archives and specialist libraries. These are professional – and in the case of private institutions, semi-professional - collections, usually of considerable value, for example in the field of ancient and contemporary art, ethnography or antiquarian books and prints. Collecting is based on a well-thought-out policy, such

Ria Wijnker poses in front of her collection of holy water vessels "full of bed secrets" in Anna Paulowna (Noord-Holland) in 2017.

as a collection plan. The objects and collections are registered and examined during working hours by full-time, trained staff.

We are talking about collecting with storage facilities that are inaccessible to the public, in the form of separate depots and sometimes even separate buildings. Characteristically, the objects are not on display, but are stored in boxes, cupboards and drawers. The open depot or public depot is a relatively new intermediate form, where the public can see the collections "behind the scenes".

Public collections are institutionally passed on from one generation to the next in a society. They are therefore "in the dead hand" and in principle cannot go to an heir or be broken up, like private collections and holdings. Institutional collections have great continuity and a strong accumulative character, far outliving individual collectors. They therefore leave deep traces in time and society.

Collection triage

In semi-professional private collections, continuity is always a concern. They rarely pass *en bloc* into institutional hands. Usually the collections are broken up and diminished at the auction, where not only institutional collectors but also private collectors can take advantage. The collection is then a value in economic transactions; other values are often lost,

↑↑
There are also pathological forms of collecting, called compulsive collecting or "hoarding", which come to dominate life and home. José van Beers, GGD social nurse for domestic pollution, on problematic collectors: "Treat a hoarder like the owner of the Stedelijk Museum. Do not argue about the usefulness of the objects and do not pass judgement on what should be considered valuable. Does a collector want help clearing out? Then start where the collector would like more space. Let him or her imagine it and list the benefits. Keep it small. For example, clear the countertop of items together. Divide the items into things that can go, things that are in doubt and things that must stay. Give things that are permanent their own permanent place."

←
One of the characteristics of (semi-) professional collections is the extensive registration and research of the objects. Here Jan Anderson shows his collection documentation to Nel van Dijk, director of the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam.

such as ensemble value, contextual information and emotional, participatory value.

With exceptional private collections, in an emergency we could wish that society would have more time to investigate whether preservation of (parts of) these collections, including all their values, is desirable and possible. To this end we have developed the instrument of the Refugium, which is discussed in Chapter 8. We temporarily reduce the turnover rate of the objects, as an appropriate response to the current practice of institutional collectors, who like scavengers cream off the finest pieces by way of museum cherry picking. In this "orphanage of objects" we are looking for a responsible, sustainable solution for collections or parts of them. The reflection may also reveal that (parts of) the collection are not eligible for preservation as an ensemble or individual pieces. Such a broadly supported collection triage is currently completely lacking in the Dutch museum system.

Experiments with participatory collecting in Vlaardingen and Zoetermeer

We see an increasing professionalisation of the collecting process of keeping, saving and collecting – to such an extent that institutional collections seem almost disconnected from social practice and people's social lives. At the beginning of this millennium, a counter-movement emerged from both a museological and an artistic point of view, by allowing into the sacred domain of the museum non-professional people, who until then had only been welcome as paying visitors.

Residents and visitors were allowed to not only participate passively, as participation has often been seen, but also to participate actively by influencing what is collected and why. Participation became participation 2.0. These approaches are now accepted museum practice, partly due to the Faro Convention drawn up by the Council of Europe in 2005, although they are hardly ever actually applied. The Netherlands will not ratify this convention until 2024, and current projects are still at a rather experimental stage.

In 2003, the artist Jacqueline Heerema organised the first Dutch project of participatory collecting and co-evaluation in Vlaardingen, of all places. Later, in 2008, this experiment was repeated in the new town of Zoetermeer. Both projects, in which Gerard Rooijakkers was also involved, have exemplary museological documentation.

Museum Oostwijk

In 2003, visual artist Jacqueline Heerema, together with local residents, launched the concept of "Museum Oostwijk", declaring the Vlaardingen area of Oostwijk to be a museum. Everything and everyone, then and now, is part of the museum's collection. Museum Oostwijk collects objects, places and people with the aim of connecting them. Artists and residents explore and map the rich collection of this socially diverse and multicultural neighbourhood. The research, selection and arrangement of the collection is leading to a new perspective on the residents' cultural identity and experiences. Surprising connections are made beyond the neighbourhood and existing conventions, based on shared passions and qualities.

In 2002, Heerema was commissioned by the municipality of Vlaardingen to visualise the cultural identity and experiences of the residents of Oostwijk. Under the working title "You only know where you are when you know the stories", she invited residents to tell their stories about the neighbourhood. Jacqueline had an office in the Vrije Academie, but many residents invited her to their homes. Everywhere, she was warmly welcomed with coffee and biscuits, and photo albums were out on the table. Social life here does not take place on the street, but at home, at school or in a club. While sweeping with the street sweepers and walking with the local police officer, during photo and pottery workshops with the schoolchildren, "Colour your house" and "Find the heart of your neighbourhood", and in numerous interviews with residents in their homes, people talked about the experience of collective memory, local feeling and the importance of individuals, places and moments in the neighbourhood.

The inhabitants feel a strong bond, but this has never acquired a physical shape. The concept of

← The corporate identity of Museum Oostwijk in Vlaardingen was designed in 2003 by graphic designers Marie-Jose Sondeijker and Cunera Joosten. With the painting stickers, residents could remove objects from their everyday environment and mark them as part of the Oostwijk Collection.

↗ The auction items as they were offered for sale at the "dissolution" of the participatory and temporary Museum Oostwijk in Vlaardingen in 2009.

Museum Oostwijk gives it such a form. After a year of preparation, Oostwijk became a museum in 2003. Residents take care of the physical and narrative collection of Museum Oostwijk. Together with artists and scientists, they open it up.

Projects show its diversity: *Oostwijk Cookie Jars, Winter Photo Competition, Best Kept Treasures, Heroes, Meet and Greets* with animal lovers, scooter fanatics and favourite objects, the Collect Call for collectors and the residents' curation game *Tamtam* make surprising connections across the neighbourhood and existing conventions, based on shared passions and qualities.

Tools were developed for the museum. The logo, in the form of a painting sticker, is the basic element. Any resident can use the sticker to take any object

from everyday life and give it the status of a museum object. The second and third layers of the corporate identity are the homely wallpaper patterns, combined with recurring white frames, with which residents free objects from their environment and create space for new meanings.

The map of Oostwijk plays an important role in many of the museum's projects. New virtual and historical maps show the development of Oostwijk as mind maps. In the spring of 2009, the material and immaterial archives of Museum Oostwijk were offered for sale during the Green Elephant Sale, one part per week. Money was not an issue. The works could be exchanged for immaterial jewels. If you had a good story, a great joke, a brilliant invention, a delicious recipe or something else to offer, you could exchange it for one of the showpieces from the collection of Museum Oostwijk. In this way, the collection was lifted up again, so to speak, and dissolved in everyday life. The traces were documented, published and, together with the project archive, included in the Vlaardingen municipal archive.

Wonderkamer Zoetermeer

In 2009, Zoetermeer took up the baton of participatory collecting, with a follow-up project by guest curator Jacqueline Heerema, entitled Wonderkamer [Cabinet of Curiosities] Zoetermeer, commissioned by Jouetta van der Ploeg and Marjonne Kube van Dijk, director and curator respectively of the former Stadsmuseum [City Museum]. They carried out a multi-layered museological experiment in four phases, starting with The Naked Object: What do you actually see?, including a masterclass in Looking by the poet and writer K. Schippers. The Speaking Object followed, focusing on adding context, including a lecture by museologist Peter van Mensch, and a masterclass on Value and Appreciation by Arjen Kok and Tessa Luger of the Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN, now merged with the RCE). The third phase involved Object Speed Dating, focusing on the interrelationships between objects. Master classes were given here by ethnologist Gerard Rooijakkers and visual artist Birthe Leemeijer.

Also worth mentioning is the lecture Crammed Spaces, Proliferating Stacks by artist and curator Marjan Teeuwen. The final debate, chaired by museologist Max Meijer, formed the fourth and final phase, reflecting on contemporary collecting in a new city with a large number of newcomers who want to establish themselves in time and space.

The participatorily collected and cooperatively valued objects were registered as a museum and added to the museum as the Zoetermeer Collection 2008. This is an essential difference from the Museum Oostwijk project in Vlaardingen, which was an imaginary museum that "dissolved" over time and left a meaningful trace. In Zoetermeer, the 88 objects are secured for future generations by being placed

↑ Publicity materials from Zoetermeer's participatory collecting project offer local residents "a place in history" and announce 86 "extra curators" who are members of the public.

↑ An energy-saving light bulb, included in the Zoetermeer 2008 collection as inventory number 4265, not so much because of its special design, but because the donor had received it as a gift when he settled in Zoetermeer as a new immigrant. For him, it symbolised "home in a new, strange, modern world".

in the collection of an institutional collector as a "dead hand". At least, that's what everyone thought in 2009. Until the politicians in Zoetermeer decided to close Museum De Voorde in 2023. Closing a museum is one thing, but what do you do with the collection, including the small experimental, participatory and contemporary sub-collection? Will everything be deaccessioned using the Guidelines for the Disposal of Museum Objects (LAMO)? This is an extremely time-consuming and complex task. Or do we put everything in the Sleeping Beauty pit of oblivion, as in Vlaardingen? The museum board was very much in favour of the latter option. The alderman in charge did not want this and opted for dismantling first.

During a debate on the Zoetermeer Collection 2008 revisited after its closure on 12 March 2023, again led by museologist Max Meijer with the participation of many of those involved at the time, people spoke about the importance of the experiment and were amazed at the lack of continuity (in the meantime the old monumental museum building had also been sold by the municipality and the museum moved to an anonymous shopping centre), which led to a crisis situation within a generation. What had the children of Zoetermeer done wrong in the eyes of this council to permanently disinherit their children and grandchildren, the generations of the future?

Partly as a result of these initiatives, organised by interim director Hans van de Bunte, the city council made some adjustments: the museum was closed and the collection was preserved as much as possible for Zoetermeer without disposing of it. It is not yet clear what this will mean in practice. As things stand, the entire collection of around 5,000 objects will be dismantled, but in a way that has yet to be developed as an experimental guideline for participatory reuse. How do you responsibly dismantle a collection in a society with the say of the supporting community, as happened informally on a small scale in Oostwijk in Vlaardingen? In the end, Zoetermeer did not dare to ingloriously erase an experiment that belongs to the recent history of Dutch museology. This also illustrates the power of participatory collecting.

Frank Bergevoet

Questions to the government arising from necessity and concern

Almost every month, private owners or managers of cultural property approach me, as senior advisor for movable heritage at the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [RCE; Cultural Heritage Agency], asking what to do with their sugar packets, wax seal stamps, agricultural machinery and accordions. The question is usually born of necessity or concern.

The need arises from the fact that owners or managers actually want to (one day) stop collecting or managing, often due to a lack of successors. In many cases, we're talking about older owners and managers. Owners and managers also experience distress when their collection has become so large that proper management is no longer possible. Unintended neglect then looms.

A third form of distress is experienced by owners and managers when they suddenly have to change the location of their collection.

The cry for help, then, arises from three problems: too much stuff, no space and no future. These problems turn into worries: what will happen to all these things when I can no longer look after them?

How great it would be if I, as an advisor, could alleviate this need and take away all the worries. But that is almost never the case. I can however think along about solutions.

What should be preserved in the public interest?

The transmission of cultural goods is timeless. A long and documented history of origin contributes to the valuation (by experts) of art and heritage. Cultural objects that are considered important will be preserved, regardless of whose hands they end up in.

Before the rise of modern museums at the end of the 19th century, collecting was the domain of private individuals. After the collector's death, the collection would pass into the hands of another

↑ Bulletin of the Cultural Heritage Agency (2023) no. 1, 16-17.

In veel gevallen beheren de eigenaren en betrokken vrijwilligers dit erfgoed liefdevol

private individual (possibly family) or many other private individuals (if the collection disintegrated). In the last quarter of the 19th century, the preservation of art and cultural heritage became a matter of national importance and, increasingly, a matter for governments and museums, initiated by Victor de Stuers in response to the loss of the choir screen of St. John's Cathedral in Den Bosch, already discussed in the argument of the "dead hand" in chapter 2. In most cases, the latter are private organisations, but they have served the public interest since their inception.

The question of which cultural objects should be preserved as public heritage is now being asked more and more often. This has to do with the increasing speed of development of our society, which also requires a constant reassessment of what constitutes cultural heritage. In recent decades, this has led, among other things, to the liberation and valuation of university heritage, mobile heritage (historic aircraft, trains, trams, cars and ships) and historic interiors.

State versus private collections

With the passing of the post-war generation of private collectors and the further development of the data-driven information society, in which the physical object seems less and less important, the question of the value of cultural objects in private hands is becoming topical once more. What should be preserved for society? More and more often, this question ends up on the plate of central government as the last refuge for endangered heritage.

For a long time, the central government saw no role in answering questions from private individuals about the preservation and management of cultural objects – after all, the government serves the public interest. It made an exception for privately owned objects and collections that it considered irreplaceable and indispensable to Dutch cultural heritage. This select group of objects and collections has been included in the Dutch Protected Objects and Collections Register under the Dutch Heritage Act (formerly as goods on the so-called WBC register of the Heritage Preservation Act).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the government's response was mainly based on a selection reflex. The idea was that not everything could be saved, so if private collections were in danger of becoming orphaned, the best way to reduce them was to select only the best objects and place them in public museum collections. In this common practice, context and ensemble value are of secondary importance.

LAMO

The above-mentioned reflex resulted from the development of the *Leidraad voor het Afstoten van Museale Objecten* [LAMO; Guidelines for the Disposal of Museum Objects] and the publication *Op de Museale Weegschaal* [On the Museum Scales]. These tools, developed for museum collections, could also be applied to private collections.

In addition to the selection tool, the idea of digitisation also became popular around 2010. It may not be possible to preserve everything physically, but we can digitally "preserve" many cultural objects online. Here the desire to preserve the physical object is exchanged for the preservation of information "about" the object.

The traditional toolbox

Here is the traditional central government toolbox when a private individual comes forward to ask how best to preserve their collection for the future:
A. The government does not respond to the request;
B. The government recommends reducing the collection by critically selecting and placing objects in a public collection of a museum;
C. The government designates objects or collections as protected cultural property and enters them in the Dutch Protected Objects and Collections Register;
D. The government recommends that the collection be digitised; or
E. The combination of B and D.

New conservation strategies

In 2022, however, there was an important change in the attitude of the central government towards the private collector. First of all, through the RCE, it became involved in the Sleeping Beauty Scenario for the Streek Museum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum]. The instrument of non-intervention not only helps with the future development of this regional museum, but is also important for the development of new conservation strategies for collections. The involvement of the RCE is no coincidence: the Sleeping Beauty Scenario has generic validity for the entire heritage sector.

Government reaches out to private collectors

The other major change in 2022 was a political one. On 27 December 2022, State Secretary Gunay Uslu wrote to the Dutch House of Representatives in response to the advice of the Netherlands Collections Committee of the Raad voor Cultuur [Council for Culture]:

"I think it is important to support and appreciate the efforts of private individuals and private organisations. Preserving cultural objects for future generations is a task that we – private individuals, museums and governments – can only undertake together. A collection may originate with a private individual or organisation, but at any time the private individual may decide to transfer it to a public collection owned by a government. Obviously, this requires good cooperation and exchange of knowledge on an equal footing. I am therefore committed to recognising the private owner by assisting him in the management and conservation of his collection [...]."

The Secretary of State thus acknowledged that central government has become too distant from private collectors and committed herself to improving the possibilities of support for private cultural property.

It is becoming increasingly clear that much of the heritage held by private individuals and organisations is not, or hardly ever, represented in the collections of professional museums. I am thinking of technical heritage, health heritage, sports heritage and historical musical instruments. For a balanced structure in Dutch collections, it is important to take seriously the cultural-historically rich, encyclopaedic, unusual, complete and semi-professional collections of private individuals.

Delta plan for cultural preservation

In the last decade of the 20th century, there was a huge backlog in the management and conservation of museum collections. This period is known as the Delta Plan period. The central government invested more than 235 million euros to improve the registration, storage and conservation of museum collections.

For the first time in the Deltaplan voor het Cultuurbehoud [Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation], collections were given a cultural-historical value using the so-called Delta Plan criteria. It turned out that not all museum objects were equally important and that some objects could be disposed of. To make this possible, the LAMO guidelines for disposing of objects were developed. The museum sector adopted these guidelines almost unanimously in 1999 at the Grenzen aan de Groei [Limits to Growth] conference.

In the wake of LAMO, a selection method was also developed that became known as Op de Museale Weegschaal [On the Museum Scales]. At the same time

←
The 2016 (top) and 2023 (bottom) versions of the LAMO by the Dutch Museum Association (NMV).
The very first version of the Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst (RBK, Netherlands Office for Fine Arts) dates from 1996.

←←
On the museum scales: collection appreciation in six steps (Amersfoort: RCE, 2013)

as these instruments, museums became aware of the need for gatekeeping. This means that they only select the best objects when (a collection of) objects are offered.

→
Irreplaceable and indispensable. Towards a dynamic protection model for the Netherlands Collection (The Hague: Council for Culture, 2022)

In 2022, the Committee on the Netherlands Collection of the Council for Culture provided advice on the protection of the dynamic Netherlands Collection. The committee recommended the introduction of a national licensing system for the conservation of cultural objects.

According to the committee, the Cultural Heritage Act should also be amended in a number of respects. This legislation includes the old Cultural Heritage Preservation

Act (WBC) of 1985: "Our Minister may, after consulting the council, designate as protected objects movable objects of special cultural, historical or scientific significance which should be preserved as irreplaceable and indispensable to the Dutch cultural heritage."

Selection as a guiding principle

Since the beginning of the 21st century, selection has therefore become a guiding principle in museums collection building. Selection is an entirely object-oriented activity. The cultural-historical or scientific value of the object is decisive for the selection. Various criteria are used to determine this. In this way, the most important objects can be selected from a group of objects. Selection is a useful tool for museums to make choices about how to spend their scarce resources for collection and depot management. Selection is based on the premise that not everything can be saved.

Ignoring ensemble values

However, there is an important downside, especially when it comes to private collections where the objects have a strong coherence and have been brought together by the personal vision of a collector. Selection tends to ignore the collection and the collector altogether.

When selecting within a coherent collection, the best bits are taken out of the mix: the infamous cherry picking. In other words, the collection is selected into pieces because the collection cannot stay together. The effort that went into putting the collection together in the first place seems to have no value, although it was precisely this energy that led to the collection.

The collecting effort

I believe that a serious collecting effort by a collector over a long period of time – and I am talking about decades – usually leads to significant collections. In such a case, collecting effort must be included in the valuation of collections.

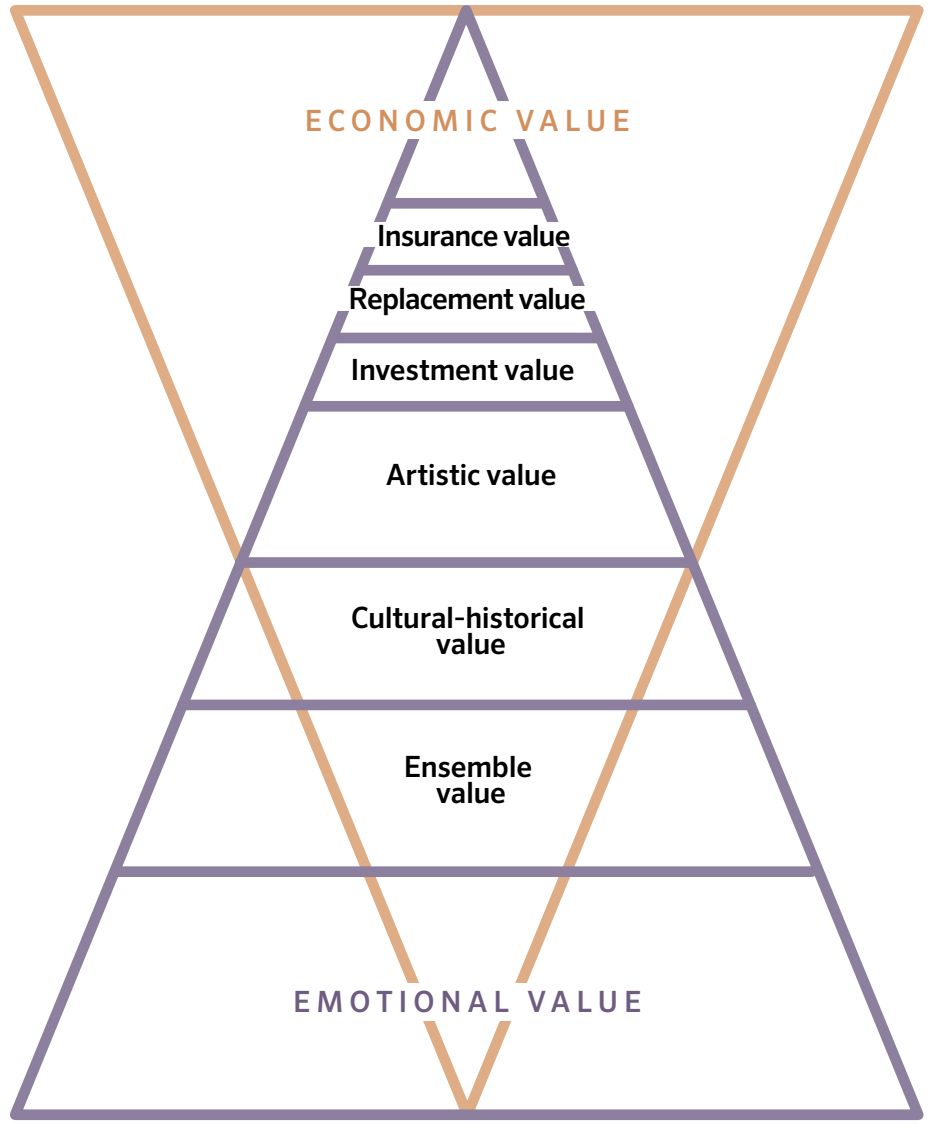
Ignoring the collector's vision

The collector's vision is also largely ignored in the selection process. Their views are subordinated to the collecting objectives of the receiving museum. Objects that do not fit in with the collecting aims of the receiving museum are selected and disposed of, leaving only a core collection or set of core objects. These must then reflect the vision of the original collector. The question is whether this is possible, especially if the original collector used encyclopaedic completeness, serial diversity and immersive multiplicity (a collection as a form of immersion) as starting points for their collecting passion.

→
The hourglass of values
Many values that are important in collections have little or no financial value. These values therefore do not contribute to the economic value added (the orange triangle).

The "economic value", as used by the Dutch tax authorities, for example in the context of the Donation Act, regards collection objects as separate items to be valued by a certified appraiser. This professional group, which does not consider the ensemble value, is not really equipped to do so. The Donation Act, which was introduced in 2012 to encourage private patronage, does not work sufficiently in practice. The overburdened tax authorities use legal advice to discourage willing individuals from donating. Only wealthy donors benefit from the law.

The Values Hourglass



The intersection of the two pyramids marks the layers that add little or nothing to the economic value.

The difference in the thickness of the layers indicates the broad social importance of the value in question.

The accumulation of values
does not translate into economic value.

Non-intervention versus selection

The non-intervention methodology provides a healthy counterbalance to the primacy of selection. It also fully respects the collection and honours the collector. Then we could also speak of the Jan Anderson method, because it is thanks to this private collector that we, as a government, are able to take decisive steps in the development of new instruments in museum practice.

Divestment from the Dutch collection

Movable heritage is difficult to quantify. This has to do with definition, the way objects are registered and the lack of data.

Definition

We could make a list of all the museums in the Netherlands and then count how many objects they manage. But the term “museum” is not protected. Anyone can put a sign with the word “museum” on their door. Do these “museums” also belong on the list?

Many museum collections are hybrid and consist of objects, archives, books and documentation – see the Jan Anderson Regional Museum. Do archives, books and documentation count as “movable heritage” or is this material the domain of archives or libraries? The same goes for excavated archaeological objects. Do we count all shards as movable heritage, or do they belong to archaeology?

Method of registration

Professional museums typically assign a number to each object in the collection and then register the object in a database. However, there are many museums that have not yet registered their objects, simply because they have not had the time to describe their sub-collections. So there’s a lot more out there than we know.

In addition, sub-collections – consisting of several objects – are sometimes registered under one number, but are also “sub-numbered”. A good example is a set of ten pieces of crockery. You can register this under one number, or you can number all the pieces separately. How many items do you have?

Lack of data

We can still count the movable heritage in museums. The situation is very different for movable heritage held by private individuals. Extensive collections of World War II heritage, agricultural machinery, technical equipment and utensils in private hands are completely out of the picture and no figures are available. It is difficult to quantify movable heritage.

For the Erfgoed Monitor [Dutch National Heritage Monitor] it has been calculated that all public movable collections in the Netherlands together comprise approximately 80 million objects. More than 40% of these are naturalia, i.e. drawers with beetles, flies and butterflies. Most of these 80 million objects are managed by museums. The ownership of these objects is held, in decreasing order, by the national government, municipalities, private museum foundations and the provinces.

No one can claim that these 80 million objects are all important. For a long time, it was thought that this incredible mountain of stuff would eventually be disposed of. In fact, when the first LAMO guidelines for disposal were published in 1996, people in the museum world feared for a while that there would be a tsunami of objects to be disposed of. However, this tsunami has not materialised and it seems that the inflow of objects into museum collections has always been greater than the outflow through disposal.

This outflow is a drop in the ocean. Museums close, but parts of the collection of the closed institution often quickly find a home in another museum. The fact that divestment is a drop in the ocean can be seen from the fact that museums must, in principle, submit objects for disposal individually to the national deaccessioning database of the Museumvereniging [Dutch Museum Association]. Everyone seems to be able to work with this method because the volumes are small.

However, if we were to reduce the movable Netherlands Collection by just 1 per cent, we would have to offer 800,000 objects via the deaccessioning database. This tool is completely unsuitable for that.

The fact that few steps are being taken to dispose of objects is also evident from the official publications of the various public authorities. The relevant public authorities are obliged to publish proposed disposals from their collections in the Government Gazette, the Provincial Gazette or the Municipal Gazette. At most, these publications concern the disposal of 4,000 objects per year.

As far as is known, the various public authorities together own most of the movable cultural heritage in the Netherlands. Even if other owners also make significant disposals, the volume of disposals in the Netherlands is likely to remain below 10,000 objects per year. This is only 0.01 per cent of the total publicly accessible collection of movable cultural heritage.

Guidelines against the disposal of museum objects (the anti-LAMO)

It became clear in the 1990s, as a consequence of the Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation, that many museum collections had become too large to be managed adequately with the available resources.

Armour or spine: selection

In 1996, the then Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst [Netherlands Office for Fine Arts, RBK] published the first guide to the disposal of museum collections. State Secretary Aad Nuis wrote in his cultural memorandum *Armour or Spine 1997-2000: Selection is necessary not only with a view to making the Collectie Nederland more accessible. Storage space is finite and so are the resources for preserving the collections according to today’s high standards. This is another reason why I want to stimulate the selection process at institutional level.*

In 2000, under the auspices of the Nederlandse Museumvereniging [Dutch Museum Association, NVM],

Pantser of ruggengraat

Cultuurnota 1997-2000

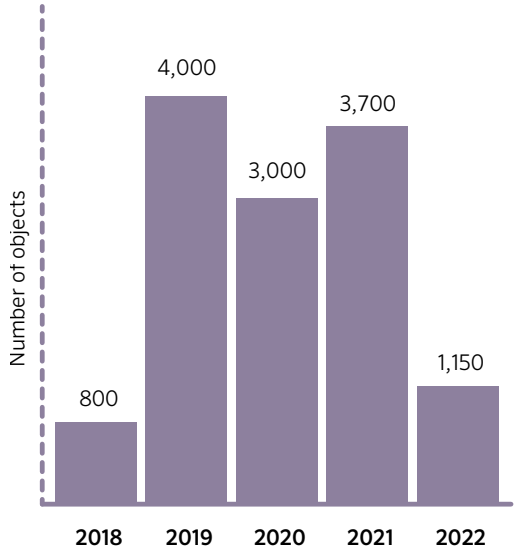
→
The decollecting diagram, as drawn up by the online art magazine *Kunstvensters* on 15 May 2018.

↖
Jan Anderson is a serial collector.

In this example, a wooden case contains a lavishly decorated clay pipe, a traditional wedding gift to the groom.

Disposal of collections by public authorities

Number of cultural objects removed by the state, provinces and municipalities, 2018-2022



← Traditional folk art is well represented in the Jan Anderson Collection.

the first guidelines for the deaccessioning of museum objects were published. This work is now better known as the LAMO. After revisions in 2000, 2006 and 2016 (2019), as of 2023 we are dealing with the fourth revised version. Since 2000, the LAMO has grown from an eight-page fact sheet to a 20-page document.

Hardly any alienation

Disposal or alienation, as it is now known, does not seem to have become any easier. More and more specific collection components require attention in the alienation process: digital material, serially produced objects, naturalia, heritage from a colonial context and works by living artists. Anyone reading the new LAMO will lose the desire to have anything to do with alienation; the process stifles any initiative.

The LAMO was developed by the museum sector itself. I cannot imagine that, in 2024, the field will be waiting for yet more procedures and administrative burdens. Is the museum sector perhaps masking a deep-seated reluctance to alienate, by erecting an unwieldy set of guidelines as a smokescreen? Is enthusiasm for divestment waning?

Perhaps, in the end, we just don't want to do it. Anyone who looks at the figures for the outflow of objects from the Dutch National Collections, as they can be derived from the divestment database, the Government Gazette and the Municipal Gazette, can see that in recent years these figures have been low in terms of volume, out of a total of 80 million objects in the Netherlands collection.

Don't select, don't alienate

Perhaps we should adopt a clear and radical position, as in the case of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum: we do not select and we do not alienate. This saves us a tedious administrative procedure and we do not spend time and money on objects that we actually want to get rid of. Until 2006, the arguments for and against deaccessioning were included in the LAMO.

←
On 23 March 2023, Museum Vlaardingen will offer 1,422 objects to the national deaccessioning database of the Museum Association. These are objects that are difficult to place, such as crockery with the Vlaardingen coat of arms or emblems of Vlaardingen ships, and natural objects such as pieces of eel skin or barnacles. All neatly described, photographed and registered. Whichever way you look at it, such a disposal is often a form of capital destruction.
Ten years ago, the former Visserijmuseum [Fishing Museum] Vlaardingen received a new mandate from the municipality to tell the story of fishing, but in a building that was open to all Vlaardingen residents. This meant that the museum had to make a number of very different choices. The question arises as to whether the community of Vlaardingen will soon be deprived of something by the removal of parts of the collection. Instead of a costly process of alienation, it is also possible to create a pit of oblivion in which the objects are hidden.

On the basis of these arguments, it was possible for individual museums to discuss the usefulness and necessity of deaccessioning. In practice, this discussion rarely took place, and the arguments against deaccessioning were often put aside in favour of that new, exciting deaccessioning instrument, the LAMO.

The arguments against divestment

In the light of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, it is useful to consider some of these counter-arguments. It turns out that there is some room for compromise on the primacy of divestment:

1 *Coherence*
A collection is more than the sum of its parts. It is a coherent whole with its own history that must be respected.

2 *History of the collection*
The way a collection has been built reflects the views of generations before us. These views are important.

3 *Loss of memory*
Rejection leads to collective amnesia.

4 *Time-bound*
Decisions about divestment are too dependent on the issues of the day, prevailing views (the prevailing paradigm) or the state of research. Today's depot piece may be tomorrow's masterpiece.

5 *Archive function*
Collections have an archival function. The touchstone for the value of objects is not only their current utility value.

All these arguments apply without exception to the collection of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum. The objects that Jan has collected often have a limited intrinsic value, but they reflect a consistent vision of an idiosyncratic collector who has built a diverse collection against the grain of the times. Here, the instrument of deaccession should be used with caution, and we advocate an anti-LAMO.

Evelien Masselink

The involvement of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland

What, as the Erfgoedhuis [Heritage House], do we do with private collections? Support is not a matter of course. So why in the case of Anderson? Criteria such as public interest, collective memory and supportive community play a role in this.

Ordinary

Most volunteer-run regional museums do not build the building or collect the collection themselves. Among the volunteers who once joined out of passion and commitment – to do something for the local community, to make good use of the time freed up by retirement – there are born administrators, or people who are really good with databases and computers and can help the museum with the collection registration database, or marketers who can use their knowledge for a well-oiled social media campaign or a slick website. And there are volunteers with golden hands, who are good with tools and who feel at home in a museum where there is a lot to restore.

But hardly any of the volunteers have been trained in the management and promotion of a museum with a fragile heritage, or in how to present it to the public. This is often reflected in the way tours and presentations are given: inspired, heartfelt, committed (occasionally overdone) and sometimes with a lot of missionary zeal. But yes, someone signs up as a volunteer without any prior knowledge. On arrival, they are given no training in the capacity of the individual visitor's brain to absorb information, or the psychology of the busy school class.

If such a museum feels that more guidance, training and planning is needed in this area, then it arranges that. The directors who founded that museum are often motivated enough to fill in the gaps. And if the provincial heritage houses do not offer a training programme, much can be learned and shared through the websites of the collaborating heritage institutions through all kinds of e-learning, (digital) courses and fact sheets.

When such a museum reaches maturity, with a healthy budget and a good group of volunteers, it often becomes a place where up to a hundred people are willing to give their time, a place that a community is proud of, a place which attracts visitors, but also where a connection and social cohesion with the past are created. Such a place becomes much more than a repository of objects. So much for the overlap with the Jan Anderson Regional Museum.

Extraordinary

But Jan Anderson can't be pigeonholed as "a committed older white man with an excessive interest in the past and a desire to pass it on". Jan is, and does, more than that. For decades, he has actively contributed to the way Zuid-Holland, and Vlaardingen in particular, is remembered. This means that he has been a player in the field of Zuid-Holland heritage since the 1990s, not only visibly in his own museum, but also through his involvement in wider discussions and ideas, and constant readiness to share his knowledge and network with a wide base.

The museum is characterised by its extensive collection, with a relatively large number of objects that other museums do not have. If, on your first tour of the depot, you think: "Why does he keep the free pamphlets that came through the letterbox between 1970 and 1980?", the answer will soon come. You will see the development of printing, fonts, paper types, colour schemes, prices, language; you will see the change in that decade. This way of thinking about series can be applied to all his collections: children's toys, mousetraps, knitting needle cases, plumber's tool bags, bicycles, work clothes and so on. Because he collected in series, you can see the development of each sub-collection. Jan never kept only the most beautiful or the most expensive or the most unique of anything. As far as possible, Jan kept *everything*.

In addition, he owns his own mortgage-free storage building, his museum and all the furnishings in it and in his home. This is something special, as there are often several owners.

What also sets Jan apart is that not only has he been collecting new objects and curating exhibitions every day for the past 65 years or so, but his age and good memory mean that he can describe the function and origin of his objects. This distinguishes Jan from other regional museums, which often pass on their history to new volunteers on the basis of the objects they have acquired. There is nothing wrong with this; but the closer the source, the better the tradition.

Graphic

Because Jan collected (and still collects) himself, his museum is not only the place for his own collections, but also the place for graphic history education. Every year, Jan welcomes many residents to his lectures on the origins of Vlaardingen, the Second World War and topics such as urban expansion and new building at the end of the last century. On weekday evenings, he invites Vlaardingen residents to sit at his old school desks, and during primary school hours he receives school classes at Kethelweg 50. He talks about the Second World War and the Vlaardingen resistance fighters, and he knows how to put a story into context by using old cigarette packets, uniforms, smuggled bicycles, hiding places, food stamps and weapons. So that we, and especially the students, the heirs of the future, do not forget.

Isn't that a logical task for a museum? Yes, but Jan's drive and will mean that the execution of this task are impossible to compare to what happens in other museums. And so the radical closure of the museum when Jan is no longer there is easy: without Jan, its soul will be gone. Even if everything is on video, it will never be the same again. It's the right moment to start a new future for his collections and his way of exhibiting.

The museum squared

Another difference between this museum and other regional museums, where life in an old farmhouse is presented through old crafts, is that often a third generation of directors has taken over, changing the presentation into a contemporary story of life in the past. This leads to interventions in the arrangement and presentation – a conscious choice that can be appreciated and justified with today's knowledge.

This is not the case at the Jan Anderson Regional Museum. Here, the presentation itself has become museum-like, because it has not been adapted, modernised or dismantled. Apart from the registration of the collection behind the scenes, nothing has been added to the digital presentation. People describe the Oval Room in the Teylers Museum as a museum of a museum. The same is true of the presentation of Jan Anderson.

Jan will not retire, because his collections, his museum and the depot are his life. Due to his wide range of interests and his advanced age, he not only knows the origin and use of an object, but can also give you very practical information about the location of an object in a house, workshop, shed or factory, how it was used, how it was taken out of circulation and what happened to it. Then he takes you to his depot, where, for example, there are not two vacuum cleaners from 1930 to 1960, but dozens, so that you can really see the evolution of the series, especially when

he points out details in a casual remark. You will have the same experience with any other of his collections.

Public interest

Heritage House Zuid-Holland, an institution subsidised by the province of Zuid-Holland for the implementation of heritage policy, puts Jan Anderson's collection and the man himself into a different perspective. Through Jan, you gain access to a collective memory; you see how ordinary families lived in the last century, and you realise that his collection and its presentation, both in the depot and in the museum, serve a wider public interest. You enter the last century. You get an insight not only into how people lived, but also into how they collected and presented collections.

It is a conscious choice (which is almost no choice at all) to co-direct, to participate in a plan to safeguard this heritage by significantly slowing down the rate of turnover, so that his unique collection does not disappear or wither away after his death. If such a situation occurs in a neighbouring museum, one can only be happy. By contributing to the radically different approach proposed in this

↑ Precious, curious, kitsch, worthless and ephemeral: Jan keeps them all.

book, the Heritage House contributes to a new tool for collection management. And many (regional) museums currently in the Netherlands and Flanders can benefit from it. They can be inspired by it.

We try to imagine how the generation of 30 or 50 years from now, when the public "receives" this collection, will deal with it. Will they be happy? Will they understand all the digital information that we are now providing as digital instructions on how to use this museum treasure chest? Will they appreciate it, will they use it as a starting point? Or will the collection still be partially lost because no one feels a connection to it? How much influence can the Board of the dormant collection and the Advisory Council have over the next 30 years? Should they have any influence at all?

Jan Anderson in person

Jan started collecting at the age of six. Before he was ten, he was charging his school friends to look at his collection. Every time his mother had cleared out and thrown away all the "junk" under his bed, he would start again with his collection of dead, dried sea creatures. It was just a hobby at the time, but soon the idea of collecting became bigger and more serious. Jan had an unquenchable interest in everything around him and wanted to be able to put his finds and collections into perspective.

You can become a historian at university, but you can also become one by reading everything in your life. And Jan started very early. For instance, in January 1945 (he was eight years old at the time), he knew which towns the truck carrying Jan and other pale-faced kids from the west passed through on its way to a food-rich Drenthe, because he had collected the pen and ink drawings of the church towers of all these towns. Looking out from the tailgate, he could recite them in an instant. His collection of books grew: about the development of agricultural tools, farms, breeds of dairy cattle, old crafts, the companies established in Vlaardingen, coins, folkloric subjects such as folk costumes, dialects, customs, and so on. Jan ran a kind of private Meertens Institute [the Dutch dialect and popular culture institute – ed].

Drugstore chain and museum

Until 1995, he combined his interest in collecting and history with running a chain of 58 drugstores. He lived in a relatively large building, with a big stable and attic next to his farmhouse. The couple had no children and he spent most of his free time on the increasingly professional organisation of his museum and his passion: learning about the past by collecting everyday things and special objects. And where Jan

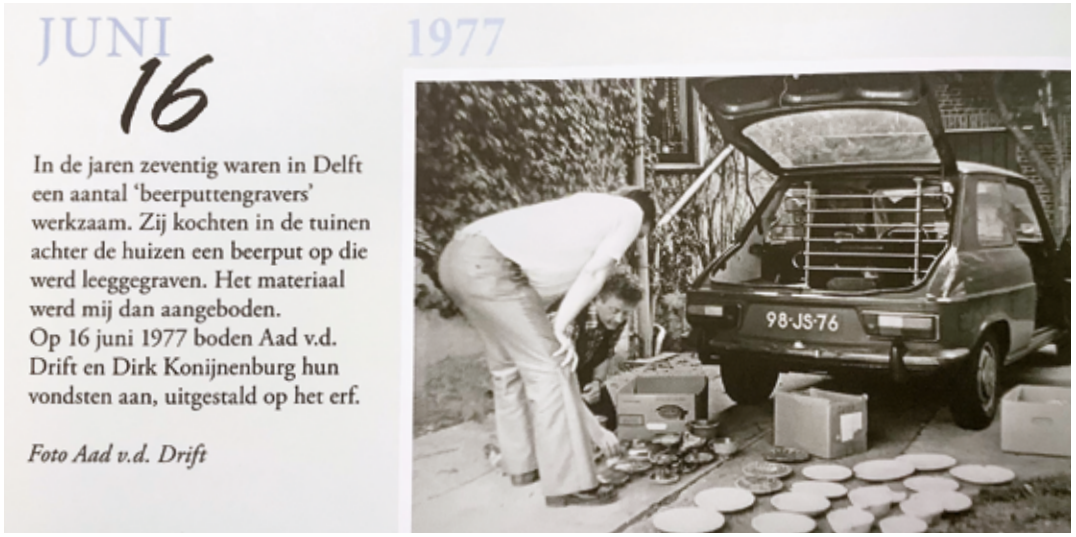
Not everyone appreciates a birthday with the in-laws, but Jan Anderson loves it. The more often, the better.

"Then all the brothers and sisters of Rita's father and mother got together. I was there as a non-Vlaardinger and I heard all kinds of words I didn't know. And I kept saying: 'What do you mean, uncle Arie?' Then I wrote it down. They asked my mother-in-law: 'What kind of a man is this, writing down our words all the time?' That was the beginning of my notes on the Vlaardingen language. It's quite strange at that age to be researching the customs and language of a town in which you weren't even born."

↗ Booklet on the Vlaardingen language.

↑ The Rockerfeller coat arrived in Vlaardingen as a donation to the Red Cross.

↑Jan Anderson, former owner of a dugstore chain, in his museum drugstore.



↑ Moments from 40 years of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum.

knew of gaps in his knowledge or his collection, he kept his eyes and ears open until the missing piece of information or physical object came his way. He worked in a unique way: he organised fairs for historical societies, where he exchanged items at stalls and tables.

He was also co-founder of the Vereniging voor Musea [Association of Museums] in Zuid-Holland. As a result, he had access to most of the museums, which he often used to put together exhibitions in his own museum and borrow objects from other museums. The relationship he built up with many museum directors only benefited his collection and his knowledge.

What was also special was that he travelled a lot because he managed 58 drugstores in the Netherlands. And after work at the store, he would always visit the local antique shop, where of course he was well known. Many collectors knew what Jan was looking for and helped him find all sorts of missing pearls in his collection. By the time he visited the next time, his requested order would sometimes be ready.

Jan also visited the Openluchtmuseum [Netherlands Open Air Museum] twice a year: if he didn't know enough about an object, he would ask all his questions about its origin, use and background. If the museum director had no answers, he would put the question on the museum's notice board. On his next visit, six months later, Jan would get an answer. Crowdsourcing *avant la lettre*, because this took place between 1966 and 1995.

Scaling up after 1995

Since Jan began collecting and arranging in 1946, and was able to continue on a larger scale after the sale of his of his drugstore chain (1995), the number of objects and sub-collections grew ever more impressively. And not only the collections, but also the professional skills of the collector. It is clear that he had an eye, but what choices did he make? What did he accept, and what did he refuse? What did he opt to pay a lot of money for, and what did people bring him?

When the number of objects approached 150,000, his museum ran out of space. Jan spotted a former shipping company warehouse in the old centre of Vlaardingen, bought it in 2011, and found a volunteer to help him install shelves on the 35 x 8.5m floor space on each of the four floors. He then made 210 trips in his Volvo estate car to bring some of the museum's items to his warehouse. The result: space in the museum, a room for the Second World War collection, a reception for school classes and a warehouse full of collections.

Jan Anderon's museum was opened on 27 April 1975 and is in a class of its own in and outside Vlaardingen. There are many regional museums, including decorated streets from the past, but the combination with an extensive library and so many collections means that not only Jan is thinking about what should happen when he can no longer be director.

When he approached the Heritage House to ask if we would consider what would be the best destination for his mostly historical collections if he could no longer look after them himself, we thought it more than appropriate to offer him a helping hand. After all, 150,000 objects in many sub-collections is a life's work that no committee of volunteers can easily take over.

↑ Biography of Anderson, titled *A Life Full of Coincidences*, 2021

Supporting communities

There were a number of factors that led the Heritage House to become involved in the issue of succession. First of all, there is a common interest. Everyone in Vlaardingen has enjoyed a visit to Jan's museum to reminisce about the past, and Jan Anderson is a household name in the area. As a child of the war, Jan always felt it was important for the post-war generations to know how he experienced the time of fear, resistance and hunger as a child and the joy after liberation. You would like to continue hearing the story of the Geuzen, Vlaardingen's resistance movement during the Second World War, which Jan tells the Vlaardingen schoolchildren year after year, in the midst of his own impressive collection. And how do you do that when the inventor can no longer do it himself? Technology allows us to tell his story digitally, but is that enough?

For each collection, display case and shelf, Jan has recorded stories with information about the objects' origin and use. We add this information to the collection registration system, as well as photos of the objects. In this way we ensure digital security, which is also in the public interest. If the museum can no longer be visited, the objects can still be viewed digitally.

There is a public interest: Jan's collections do not contain works of art on the level of the Rijksmuseum, but they contribute to our collective memory through their everyday use. With Jan, you step into the last century. And if you keep the ensembles together, the whole thing remains as a Sleeping Beauty, which will later serve the next generation in its entirety, with its accompanying information files. The community of Vlaardingen will hear that this Sleeping Beauty has come to rest. Perhaps the residents will be allowed to peek around the corner now and then, if they are quiet.

In addition to the public attention for Jan Anderson's things, there is a lot of attention for this special storage method, and the people of Vlaardingen will look at it with pride.

The supporting community goes further than Vlaardingen: on a national level, through the unique combination of the Collection Lab, the Refugium and the Sleeping Beauty, it is possible to follow the development of such a collection, the people who want to do research and the rate of deterioration. Nationally, people will also be able to follow how the board has managed a dormant collection in a closed building for years, because they are the first to work with this method. You can try to make a script for this, but as with other longer term events, you know that most of the action points and timetables will be different. A guide and checklist will be more helpful than a strict script.

Pooling expertise

Heritage House Zuid-Holland also asked for help in drawing up such a guideline and checklist, and the cooperation resulted from the pooling of professional resources. The knowledge, network and ideas of the RCE were added to those of the ethnologist Gerard Rooijakkers, and we also managed early on to involve the generation that will still be active in the heritage field in 30 years' time in our adventurous fairy tale, namely the students of the Reinwardt Academy (and their teachers).

Jan has always worked independently and self-sufficiently. We consider it an honour and a compliment that he has dared to collaborate with Gerard Rooijakkers, Frank Bergevoet and, in our wake, the Reinwardt Academy. In this way, we are passing on his unique collection to the next generation in an innovative way.

A tobacco box depicting the transport of the season's first herring to the *stadhouder* of the Hague, c. 1780. Jan discovered it in an office where it was used to keep stamps in.

The power of the collector: Looking beyond time

Since 1975, the private Jan Anderson Regional Museum has been housed in the stables of an old farm in Vlaardingen. School classes and interested visitors come to see his "shopping street" from the 1950s, including a furnished drugstore, a shoemaker's shop and a classroom. The museum exudes nostalgia and the atmosphere of "the good old days". It offers a vivid insight into a world of crafts, traditions and customs that is becoming less and less known to the public. It also houses an exceptional collection from the Second World War.

Jan Anderson (born 1936) began collecting at the age of six. His first objects were the editions of *Eigen Volk*, volumes 1929-1939, which he found in an antiquarian bookshop in The Hague. These magazines aroused his extraordinary interest in folkloristic subjects. He started reading about folk culture, and then collecting came naturally. His visit to the Netherlands Open Air Museum in 1948

Geen letterboek

Goed nadenken over het verzamelen begint bij hem pas in 1990 tijdens het maken van het boek 'Verzamelen gaat vanzelf,' geschreven door Dick van der Lugt.

„Dick van der Lugt kende ik al als verslaggever van eerst de Havenloods en later van Het Vrije Volk. Ik wilde een boek uitbrengen, maar ik zei tegen hem dat ik wel een boek wilde met foto's. Het moest geen letterboek worden. We hebben toen in een half jaar tijd 'Verzamelen gaat vanzelf' gemaakt. Arie Wapenaar heeft de foto's gemaakt. Ik zocht iedere keer een paar collecties uit, daar maakte Arie foto's van en dan ging ik met Dick van der Lugt, meestal op zaterdagmorgen, de tekstjes schrijven. Dat boek zorgde ervoor dat ik dieper in mijn collecties ging duiken, meer op inhoud. Ik had eerst alleen het doel 'het hebben' en zorgen dat het wordt opgeborgen in je verzameling."

ABC-plank

Verzamelen, zegt Jan, heeft als 'hobby' een groot aantal voordelen. Het is meer dan alleen een object kopen of ruilen. „Je moet er op uit om het materiaal te zoeken. Er liggen dan duizend dingen op de tafel, sommige heel kostbaar, maar die interesseren je niet, dat ligt buiten jouw interesse. Maar dan zie je iets wat je nog niet hebt en dan begint er iets… en dan ga je onderhandelen."

Een van de meest intense ervaringen maakt Anderson mee tijdens een beurs in de Lijnbaanhal. „Ik zag daar een ABC-plank van 'Aap, Noot, Mies,' als ik me goed herinner op Hemelvaartsdag, dat was een bijzondere beurs. Ik bepaalde als bestuurslid van De Verzamelaar wie waar kwam te staan. Dus zo'n man komt dan naar me toe 's morgens om half 8, ik geloof uit Zeeland, en die vraagt mij: 'Welke tafel heb ik, meneer Anderson?' Ik zeg: 'Tafel 33. Maar wat heb je onder je arm?' Die man houdt een heel groot ding onder zijn arm. 'Dat is een Aap Noot Mies-bord'. Ik zeg tegen hem: 'Heb je ook de lettertjes erbij?' Want ik had dat ding wel eens

meer kunnen kopen, maar dan zaten er niet de goede lettertjes bij. Hij zegt: 'Ja natuurlijk'. Ik reageer: 'Ik loop wel even met je mee. Wat moet dat bord gaan kosten?' Zijn reactie: '500 gulden maar ik verkoop het nu nog niet want het is een pièce de résistance, het is een prachtig stuk op mijn stand'."

„Al járen zocht ik daarnaar: dadelijk komen er andere geïnteresseerden en die gaan dan natuurlijk hoger bieden dan die 500 gulden. Dus ik zeg tegen hem: 'Maar je weet toch dat je bij mij altijd een goede plek krijgt?' 'Aan het eind van de dag mag u het van mij kopen'. 'En toch wil ik het nu hebben'. Het is een soort fanatisme dat je dan hebt. En op dat moment heb ik het kunnen kopen, ik had er járen naar gezocht en het was compleet! Ik heb het gelijk in mijn auto gelegd. Hij heeft nog aan mij gevraagd: 'Mag het vandaag nog op de stand blijven staan?' 'Nee, ik neem het gelijk mee'. Het idee dat het dan van jou is, dat is denk ik een heel slechte eigenschap van verzamelaars." Een paar minuten daarna heeft Jan de ABC-plank veilig opgeborgen.

completed his vocation: to preserve and collect, that was what he would do. But not only collecting was a passion, knowing everything about everything was also a way of life that he never had to "switch on": "I always threw myself into the thick of everything in life. Wherever I went, I soaked up the local regional culture." With foresight and against the prevailing collecting conventions, Anderson has acquired all kinds of things.

The result is an encyclopaedic collection of 150,000 historical objects, reference works, books and publications, mostly about the folk culture and customs, history and topography of the Netherlands, often with a special focus on Vlaardingen. These objects can be divided into 150 subgroups and ensembles: from commemorative scarves, glasses, tabaccology, objects from the Second World War, samplers and medals to children's toys.

In 2009, Anderson bought a monumental shipping company warehouse in Vlaardingen, which has since served as a depot for much of his collection.

For more than 20 years, Anderson has worked full-time at his museum. He is assisted by his board of trustees and some 30 volunteers. Six volunteers work on the digital registration of the collection in Axiell Collections. Of the 150,000 objects, 20,000 have now been digitised and photographed. Stories and publications about his collection – the transfer of knowledge – keep Anderson busy day and night. He has about 100 publications to his name.

Frank Bergevoet

The universe of Jan Anderson

The Jan Anderson Regional Museum is a parallel world for me. It exists next to reality, or deep inside reality. Every time I enter the museum, I step into the past, and the Kethelweg, the district and the city behind me are immediately forgotten. In the museum, the past is so close that I almost become part of it.

As a result of this project, I was often (almost) alone in the "museum street". You no longer feel like a visitor to a museum, but like a visitor to the past. And you don't get that feeling in every cultural history museum.

As a museum consultant, I often visit museums and their depots. I've been doing this for 30 years, so I've seen a lot. I have a good frame of reference for what collections are kept in the Netherlands.

I would like to use this frame of reference to give meaning to Jan Anderson's collection, using the term "biography".

The biography of the collector

The collection can be read first and foremost as a biography of the collector: Jan Anderson. The collection clearly bears his idiosyncratic stamp and shows his private interest in a wide variety of subjects. The collection as a whole is a personal document and by definition unique.

Let me make a plea here for private initiative as the best guarantee of individuality and originality. Where museums are collectivised (and thus communalised) and institutionalised, they become more and more like other museums. They become mainstream and, as organisations, they become increasingly boring. If you've seen one, you've seen them all. Jan's museum is unaffected by this.

Jan collects things that have disappeared everywhere else. Posters, for example, are collected everywhere, but who collects all the ephemeral advertising material that has almost accidentally slipped through the letterbox over the past few decades? And we all know World War II collections full of weapons and uniforms, but who has such a beautiful collection of cigarette packets from the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands? And you probably remember the big – almost obvious – aerial photographs of factories that used to hang on the wall behind the director's desk or in the reception of such a factory. Jan has them too.

Many of the objects in Jan's museum have little value in themselves. There are plumber's bags full of tools, wicker baskets for transporting things and mousetraps. These are not objects of great artistic or scientific value, and not necessarily things of beauty either.

The mortar between the bricks

Let me use a metaphor to illustrate what makes Jan Anderson's collection so special. If we think of the past as a wall, we could say that museums preserve the individual bricks of that structure, the objects of our past. What Jan does is something more. Not only does he preserve the bricks, but he also seems to have managed to preserve the mortar, the cement between the bricks. And that immediately makes it clear why everything in Jan's collection is connected.

It is not easy to explain what exactly this glue is made of. First and foremost, it is the stories that Jan never tires of telling about the objects. Let's call this the immaterial heritage. In addition, many objects are linked to documents, photos, archives, letters, diaries and literature, all of which Jan also has.

This brings together the traditionally separate heritage sectors represented by museums, archives and libraries. All these institutions manage heritage, but in practice they have less to do with each other than you might think. Not so with Jan. Jan takes the information from these different heritage domains, throws it together, spits on it and kneads it into a ball of cement that he uses to glue everything together. We could call Jan's approach the integrated heritage approach. This integrated approach is super hip in heritage land these days, but Jan has been doing it for 75 years.

The biography of the object

And then there is the biography of each individual object that gives Jan Anderson's collection its meaning. Objects have an origin and – before they ended up in Jan's museum – were owned by someone, used by someone. They had a purpose and found their way into Jan's museum. The objects carry stories. The origin and the stories are all in Jan's head.

This 19th-century sledge, which once belonged to Henderina Hopman, is another of Jan's finds from 40 years ago. It later featured in the catalogue of the Noord Brabants Museum.

Much of his knowledge about the objects is written down in books. The rest, thank God, is now all captured in interviews. Now he can pass this information on to the next generation. Jan kept meticulous records of what he received and from whom. We cannot emphasise enough the importance of this primary documentation of objects. It makes objects personal and gives them context. You look at an ugly bench in the museum very differently if you know that it was used by Vlaardingen's fishing-net menders.

This documentation has made the miscellany of the Jan Anderson Museum a true collection. This goes much further than saving cigar bands or items from WWII. It has become collecting.

The biography of society

The cultural-historical collection of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum also reveals the biography of our society in the 19th and 20th centuries. Far more than in art museums, it is in a cultural history museum like Jan's that you will find the material reflection of our recent past. In these museums you can see the development of industrialisation, electrification, mechanisation, standardisation, upscaling and the introduction of new materials and techniques.

The importance of Jan's collection therefore lies in its biographical richness and the biographical stratification of the whole. Furthermore, the collection is important because it is a collection and not an assemblage. The difference lies in the documentation and the "scholarly" use of the objects. Jan publishes widely and often about the objects in his collection, thus ensuring the transfer of knowledge.

I find the collection decidedly unpretentious. Jan does not shout: "Look what spectacular things I've got!" The collection is not a showcase of masterpieces, on the contrary. The power of this collection lies in the ordinary, the everyday, the ugly. Jan collects what people everywhere else turn up their noses at. We can only hope that in a generation or two this will prove to be of particular value.

Proximity to the past

Then there's the proximity to the past. In many museums the past is kept at a distance. This is because: 1) there is a lot in the display cases; 2) the visitor has to keep a distance from the objects; 3) there are mandatory walking routes; and 4) individual objects are highlighted as treasures. With Jan, everything is nice and full, you can touch objects as you pass them, and it makes little difference what you see and in what order. There is still a lot of contact possible between the visitor and the objects. I'm convinced that this makes for a deeper museum experience. If you're lucky enough to be accompanied by Jan in person as a walking audio guide, you'll have an unforgettable afternoon.

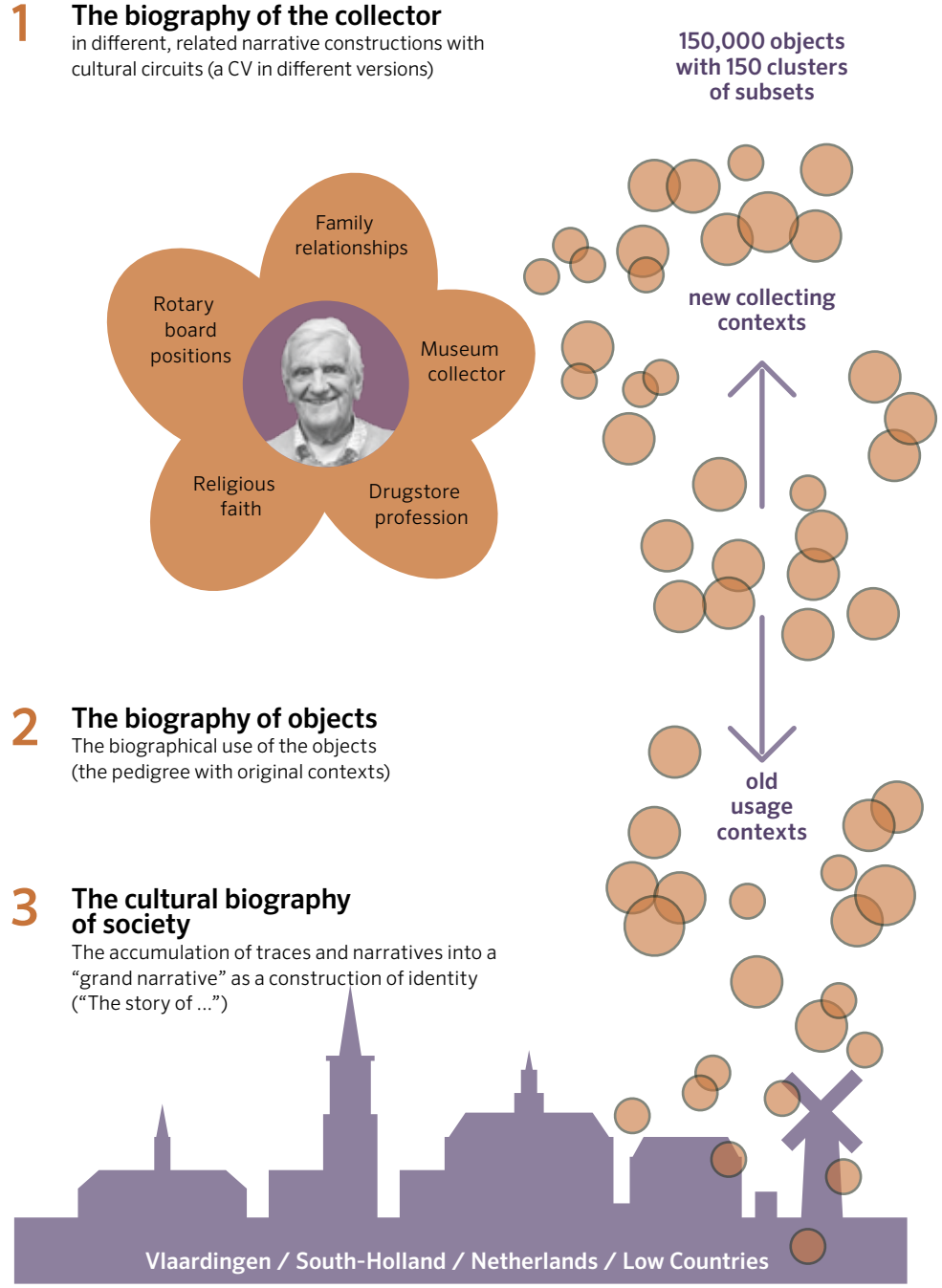
Jan acquired this 18th-century horn book after it was excavated in Delft.

Cabinets of Wonder

The first cabinets of curiosities were created when people began to take a scientific interest in the world around them during the Renaissance. These were collections – created by princes or wealthy merchants – of natural objects and curiosities that the earth had produced, as well as objects of exceptional craftsmanship and special beauty. Valuable books and prints were also included. They were the basis for the first museums. The cabinets of curiosities were the world in miniature. Echoes of such cabinets can still be found at the Zeeuws Oudheidkundig Genootschap [Zeeland Society of Antiquities] and in Teylers Museum in Haarlem.

The cultural biography

With interaction on three levels in the case of Jan Anderson



↑ The coronavirus provided Jan Anderson with a separate sub-collection. His was the first museum in the Netherlands to present and publish it in a booklet.
↗ A message reminding people to keep a distance of 1.5 metres was frequently painted on the street. And how better to do that, in the fishing port of Vlaardingen, than with herrings! Keep a five-herring distance!

The Jan Anderson Regional Museum is also a cabinet of curiosities: a cabinet full of the wonders of human ingenuity, a space of amazement. It is a museum, an archive, a print room and library all in one. And, just like the cabinets of curiosities of the Renaissance, the Jan Anderson Regional Museum is the brainchild of one person. In that sense, we are part of a wonderful tradition here.

Leen Beyers commentary

Bold imagination

Contemplating preservation

It was truly delightful to read the book *The Sleeping Beauty Scenario* and be able to reflect again on preservation. It is particularly compelling that this book explores dispositions around preservation and concealment in nature, broader society and the heritage sector, aiming to develop a new approach. Such broad reflections on preservation are rare. In museological research, comparisons are typically limited to those between museums and cultural institutions.

Moral philosopher Jaap Kruithof, whose extensive collection we examined four years ago at the MAS|Museum aan de Stroom in Antwerp, did just that by connecting preservation in museums, society and nature. His 1992 essay, Bewaren [To Keep], still holds relevance today. Maybe it inspired the authors of The Sleeping Beauty Scenario?

"The reality in which we live is a combination of continuity and change … There are things that persist without our intervention. […] Other data cease to exist but will resurface later. They were not irreversibly lost.", begins the essay.

As an activist philosopher, Jaap Kruithof wrote about preservation from a sense of urgency: "Here, we get to the very heart of preservation: nature must retain within itself the possibility to undo the damage inflicted upon it by humans."

In a sense, Jaap Kruithof was visionary. Today, more than ever, the heritage sector acknowledges that preserving collections according to the highest museum standards can harm the planet, making it increasingly futile. This planetary awareness is also present in the Heritage Futures project. Its initiators emphasise that we need imagination to shape the long-term future.

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario book and plan stem from imagination, bold imagination, and rightly challenge the one-sided treatment of collections. This includes everything from acquisition proposals to the isolated preservation in a hermetic depot, sealed off from society, and the opposite: removal and disposal. Indeed, there are too few intermediary options. For instance, what should we do with objects tied to intangible heritage practices – objects better suited for performances than storage in a climate-controlled depot? Or why do curators, myself included, sigh when offered vast collections or very large objects?

The museum depot has become too much of an end in itself, whereas our true objective as heritage professionals should be to ensure that heritage remains or becomes relevant. Therefore, I warmly welcome the approach of the Sleeping Beauty scenario conceived in Vlaardingen. Putting collections in a time capsule for a holding period before deciding on their fate could possibly clarify and increase the relevance of heritage. Possibly …

Exciting heritage … of everyday things

What the initiators of the Sleeping Beauty scenario seem to hope is that temporarily concealing collections will make them more exciting. It would be good to add that especially vast collections of everyday objects from recent history, like Jan Anderson's, could greatly benefit from this approach. Starting with the late 19th-century folklore pioneers, private and public collections of everyday items have been steadily emerging since the 1950s, influenced by mass consumption and a broadening heritage concept. Despite this, these collections often lack widely recognised heritage value. Society fails to recognise how visionary these collectors are. Will this be the case in 30 or 50 years, when these collected everyday items acquire the status of rare heritage? Could everyday collections become archaeology, so to speak, through a time capsule?

Distrust of the prevailing ethos

Although the Sleeping Beauty scenario may offer a caring approach to heritage preservation for certain collections – essentially, it functions as a specialised depot – I find the authors' distrust of the prevailing ethos somewhat excessive. What about contemporary collecting? At the MAS and within the ICOM COMCOL, the International Council of Museums' International Committee for Collecting, of which I am a board member, contemporary collecting is a priority. Given the one-sided paradigms of the past decades and the repetitive acquisition of the same objects, we are striving to identify and collect new heritage through co-creation and networking with various social groups. The prevailing ethos is less homogenous than the authors claim. Besides, there will always be a prevailing ethos. To protect the collection against paradigms by using a time capsule and completely remove it from the prevailing ethos, as they suggest, seems somewhat naive. Even within the next 30 or 50 years, prevailing paradigms will influence the collection's future.

Ensemble value

I therefore question the idea of "paradigm-proofing". The proponents of the Sleeping Beauty scenario cannot entirely shield the Jan Anderson Collection from paradigms by sealing it in a time capsule. The absence of paradigms is a fallacy. Essentially, the authors are emphasising the collection's ensemble value, bolstered by their plan and associated rhetoric. They are now ensuring the concealment of the ensemble and tasking future generations not to think about its parts but about the ensemble as a whole. That being said, the ensemble value of collections should receive greater attention in the heritage sector. We should more fully embrace the outsider perspective of large collections and all the seemingly meaningless objects that come with them.

I encourage the initiators to maintain consistency regarding the ensemble value of the Jan Anderson Collection. Apparently, there is a plan to separate Vlaardingen's Second World War resistance heritage from the collection. This isn't surprising given the widely recognised cultural significance of war heritage and Vlaardingen's active culture of remembrance. If they are steadfast about the ensemble value, they must justify these and other removals convincingly.

Likewise, including heritage discarded by other museums in the Jan Anderson collection seems peculiar. Doesn't this also compromise the ensemble value? Unless, of course, it aligns with Jan Anderson's preferences as a collector. (Editor's note: Objects in the Refugium will only temporarily stay in the depot and will not be added to the Jan Anderson Collection.) Even the flat archives about Vlaardingen have already been removed from the collection and transferred to the Stadsarchief Vlaardingen [Vlaardingen City Archives]. Hence, the intention appears to be to preserve the Jan Anderson Collection selectively rather than entirely. While not disastrous, careful consideration is needed to determine which ensembles should and shouldn't be preserved and why.

How does the local community participate in the time capsule?

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario book offers a robust manifesto but, in some areas, lacks a clear plan. Networking with the local community should be more thoughtful and explicit. Although closure and forgetting are discussed, there's also an emphasis on stimulating networks around the collection. And while the participation of national networks is clear, especially the Reinwardt Academy and the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Cultural Heritage Agency], the extent to which local networks should be pursued remains uncertain. What are the views of Stichting Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Foundation] on this matter? While the solution does not need to be black and white (completely closed or completely open), the plan regarding the degree of closure should be more precise. A tailored plan endorsed by Stichting Jan Anderson and, ideally, other stakeholders in the local heritage field is essential.

Generic method or inspirational approach?

Is the Sleeping Beauty scenario a generic method? A new procedure? While the preceding pages emphasise the outsider nature of collections and collectors, the book concludes by formulating a generic method. In the heritage sector, we need fewer new generic methods and more inspiring approaches. When we examined the values of the Jaap Kruithof Collection to shape its future at the MAS, his writings and those of some interlocutors encouraged us to question the collection's values with an open mind and look beyond the customary categories of museum significance research. This process led us to the proposition that this collection's greatest value currently lies in its philosophical significance, which could be considered radical. Consequently, a rather radical plan emerged that truly fits this collection.

We decided to retain half of the 10,000 Kruithof items at the MAS, forming a collection intended for projects that stimulate thoughts and feelings around preservation. The rest is returned to society as raw material for the future through non-commercial upcycling. This separation of the Jaap Kruithof Collection isn't based on cultural-historical criteria. We preserved the collection's eclectic composition in both halves because it significantly contributes to its philosophical value. I wouldn't devise this plan for any other collection. Therefore, I suggest the creators of the Sleeping Beauty scenario avoid unthinkingly applying it to other collections, as it may contradict the respective uniqueness of each ensemble's value. Nonetheless, the Sleeping Beauty scenario can serve as an inspiring approach.

In conclusion

I'd like to end by again returning to Jaap Kruithof: "Those who wish to preserve must decide what is eligible for preservation and what is not. … This choice, when thoroughly considered, is so weighty that it is of a religious nature. …

Ultimately, we humans are at our own mercy. We depend on what we, and millions of others, judge to be negative and positive."

References:

Jaap Kruithof, Benjamin Verdonck, Guy Rombouts, Octave Debary, Leen Beyers. *Bewaren*. Antwerpen, MAS, 2020.
On the significance research project for the Jaap Kruithof collection: https://mas.be/nl/kruithof

ICOM COMCOL: https://comcol.mini.icom.museum/
https://comcol.mini.icom.museum/news/
HERITAGE FUTURES project: https://heritage-futures.org/

Choreographies of artefacts

← Jaap Kruithof's collection as displayed in his private museum Primrose in Mortsel, c. 2009.

↓ A display case in the Jan Anderson Regional Museum with advertising material from Vlaardingen companies.

5

Museumify

A visual essay on preventing loss

In the culture of everyday life, things are constantly being "magicked away". They continue to exist, but with a different meaning: the everyday object becomes a museum piece. Sometimes, this even happens to houses and their entire contents. This process of *museumification*, as coined by the German philosopher Hermann Lübbe, has four phases. First, there must be loss, or at least the perception of (possible) loss. This motivates people and organisations to take urgent action in the second phase, based on the idea of "five to twelve", through foundations and committees for preservation and protection. In the third phase, we see the cultural object in question being demonstratively displayed: in a showcase under a spotlight (in the case of museum pieces) or illuminated by a floodlight (in the case of monuments). In both cases, text labels are rarely missing. In the fourth and final phase, the object in question is transformed from an everyday commodity into a "sacred" heritage that stands apart from the circulation of daily traffic. But how do you preserve the trivial and the banal in its shocking ordinariness? The magic of preservation is the domain of the demiurge, who transforms chaos into cosmos.

The process of museumification takes place around us every day. The presence of heritage seems so self-evident that we hardly think about the underlying mechanisms. For most people, a tiger is a tiger, whether it is roaming free in the wild, imprisoned in a zoo or stuffed up in a museum. But, as the museologist Kenneth Hudson rightly points out, a tiger in a museum is a tiger in a museum and not a tiger. The meaning of animals and things is therefore contextual, even if we do not always want to acknowledge this. In the museum, the tiger is staged with attributes such as display cases, text and lighting in a choreography of objects. In other words, we are playing a dangerous game with the tiger.

The Jaap Kruithof collection in the Museum Primrose in Mortsel and the MAS in Antwerp

One such social shaman or demiurge was the Flemish philosopher Jaap Kruithof (1929-2009). He collected around 10,000 objects from 1973 onwards, with a preference for dirt-cheap, discarded things, especially in his later years. It was a thoroughly atypical collection that he built up in his own house in Mortsel, Museum Primrose. "We throw away too much and we throw away the wrong things," was one of his radical statements.

↑↗ At the invitation of the MAS in Antwerp, artists Benjamin Verdonck and Guy Rombouts created an associative installation with a choreography of objects from the Kruithof Collection (2020-2022).

Ten years after his death, the Museum aan de Stroom (MAS) in Antwerp presented an evaluation of the Jaap Kruithof Collection – in which the greatest value is its philosophical significance – as food for thought, which makes the collection unique in Belgium (see also Leen Beyers' contribution to this book). This is reinforced by the visual power of the collection as an ensemble, which also has a strong emotional potential. However, its cultural-historical value as an ensemble is considered to be limited, partly due to the lack of contextual information: after all, the partly completed object index cards were destroyed after his death! It is interesting to note that the multitude of things is considered more significant than the individual objects.

Half of the 160 boxes have been incorporated into the MAS as a philosophical collection and will be made available to creatives, rather than – like a dead body – to scientists. Artists can use them to create new, temporary installations. The objects are only passively conserved and not restored – for Kruithof, ephemerality could and should be visible.
The other half, 80 boxes or about 5,000 objects, will be distributed to individuals or organisations in society on the condition that they reuse everything, in the spirit of Kruithof, as the upcycling of a collection.

The religious aspect is in the preservation
That's part of me
but I can't really explain it all
but I want something somewhere that I think is very valuable in the cosmos or for the planet
so I don't want to be the destroyer.

Jaap Kruithof on the value of things.

↑
Collect and recognise, preserve and protect, research, present and participate:
in ecclesiastical collections of relics, identified and safely stored, (partially) hidden or not, with certificates of authenticity after "examination", and ostentatiously presented as an element of living worship, we encounter all five museum functions "in the wild". Transience is not a taboo here, but a theme.

↑
The museum and the treasury metaphor
The new extension of Museum W in Weert (Limburg), designed by Maurice Mentjens in 2022, is in the shape of a golden box, metaphorically referring to medieval reliquaries such as the "Noodschrijn" of Saint Servaas in Maastricht (below).

House museums
The illusion that everything is still the same. Madam or Sir is away for a while, but can come home at any moment: a museum-style denial of time.

← ↙
Museum Paulina Bisdom van Vliet in Haastrecht (Zuid-Holland), established by a will in 1923.

→
The Mastboomhuis in Oud-Gastel (Noord-Brabant), which was bequeathed in 1999. Deterioration is taboo here, as if not only the house but also the museology has come to a standstill.

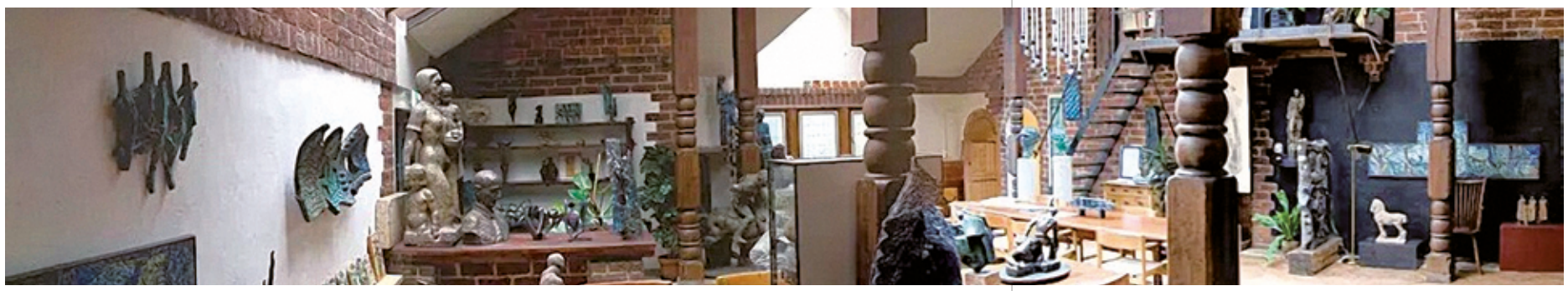
↑
Doctor Moerman's practice in Vlaardingen
After the death of the Vlaardingen general practitioner and alternative cancer therapist Cornelis Moerman (1893-1988), the municipality of Vlaardingen acquired the monumental Hoogstad estate. The purchase was based on an agreement that gave the municipality the right to buy the estate after Moerman's death, on the condition that the complex would be maintained for at least 25 years as the lasting legacy of Doctor Moerman and the therapy he developed. The practice rooms, especially the pharmacy, consulting room and treatment room, were furnished around 1930 and are almost completely intact, including the furniture and medical instruments. Moerman based his therapy on experiments with homing pigeons, which he initially housed in the attic of the stable. For years he used the pigeon experiments as an argument to stop the expansion of the town, and even after his death he wanted Hoogstad to remain unspoilt.

However, the land was quickly and unceremoniously transformed into a business park and swimming pool. The buildings had new users: for example, the attic was used as a storage space for Vlaardingen Museum, which also wanted to open the house to the public. The municipal council decided against this at the very last moment, when anti-Semitic statements by Dr Moerman received widespread media attention in 1996. Since then, this space has been kept intact and maintained by Vlaardingen Museum and is open to the public. Today, the Soete Suikerbol pancake house occupies the stables of the farm. When the buildings were sold, it was once again stipulated that the doctor's surgery, now a municipal monument, should be preserved intact. It can be visited by appointment with the owner. A museumified interior as a separate relic, valuable in its own right, does not do justice to the intentions of Dr Moerman, who envisioned an unspoilt estate and a lively centre for his therapy. In short, it is extremely difficult to prescribe beyond the grave.

Artist's houses
These are usually studio residences, including artist's estates.

↑ The Ruurd Wiersma Museum in Burdaard (Friesland), as the home of an outsider with a *horror vacui*, is an oddity among the predominantly bourgeois and aristocratic house museums.

See also the contrast between:
→ Museum Paul Tetar van Elven in Delft (Zuid-Holland).
↓ Atelier Museum Jac Maris in Heumen (Gelderland).



Collector's houses
↑
Collector's houses, such as the Museum Mayer van den Bergh in Antwerp, form a separate category of house museums at the top of the segment.

→→
In contrast, there is the fictional junk shop of Malle Pietje, who has become a legend in the collective memory of the Netherlands thanks to the television series *Swiebertje* in the 1960s and 1970s. A hoarder avant la lettre, recognisable to everyone.

The museumification of everyday life
The most beautiful day of your life with a wedding shoot in the museum as a "never to be forgotten" souvenir.

Left: a bride photographed at the Meierijsche Museum Farm in Heeswijk (Noord-Brabant) against a wall hung with mostly unusable tools.

Right: a bridal couple in the Jan Anderson Regional Museum in Vlaardingen. Here the photographer is taking pictures of the groom, who is supposedly taking an "antique" picture of the bride.

Daan Heerma van Voss

Storage

After his father's death, Daan Heerma van Voss discovered that not only had his father been a hoarder but also that he had rented a storage unit that nobody knew about for almost three decades. His father had created his own museum chronicling his modest history.

How my father taught me to love stuff after his death

My aunt's comment caught us completely off guard, leaving us unsure whether to laugh or cry. Three days after Dad's passing, my brother and I drove to Haarlem to visit our aunt, his sister. The drive felt awkward and surreal because we remembered every bridge and bend. The big difference between memory and the present was that back then, my father was behind the wheel instead of my brother, and we drove the red family car, which had recently been towed away by the ANWB road assistance, ready for scrapping.

It was the first time we had seen her since father's death. In recent months, we had been on the phone frequently. Dad, ever reticent about his illness, even with his sister, relied on me as his intermediary. I voiced the words he wouldn't: liver, cancer, metastasised. Upon opening the door, our aunt ushered us into the living room, where slices of fridge-cold Dutch apple pie awaited us. After agreeing on a music programme for the service (blues, gospel, no classical) and chatting about his excessive belongings, she casually remarked, "And to think most of it is in storage."

We stared at her. Apart from his study, piled from floor to ceiling with archive folders, picture frames, newspapers, chairs and old toys, was there another storage space? "Yes," our aunt confirmed. "I told him many times: don't do that now. Throw some away! He knew how dreadful it was to empty our parents' house and how much we had to clear out every week for a year, didn't he? 'Yes, yes, yes, yes,' he would say. 'Yes, yes, yes, yes.' I knew that line. He'd said it often over the past few months when I said he was doing well, that it was difficult being ill and that I understood. 'Yes, yes, yes, yes.'"

Unfortunately, our aunt had no clue: not what was in the storage, not its location, not how to find it, not how long Dad had rented it, and certainly not why he kept it a secret from his family – his wife and children. "Maybe he didn't want someone again saying, 'For God's sake, throw it away,'" she finally said. "Maybe he was ashamed." We ate our apple pie in silence.

Miscellany

A week later, buried among his old bank statements, we unearthed a monthly 60-euro debit for a moving company, which Google confirmed also provided storage. "Yes, Mr. Heerma van Voss," a voice on the telephone said to my brother, "you've been renting from us since 1993." No, my brother interjected; that was our father. Our father had been renting storage for almost thirty years. 1993. That coincided with his parents' passing. Belongings from his childhood home always lugged along. Furniture, toys? What's in it? My brother asked on the phone. "Miscellany," replied the voice. We made an appointment to visit Dad's storage the following week.

Miscellany. One could hardly come up with a more apt description of what we found in his study after his death, a room virtually forbidden to us until his illness. There, meticulously arranged, lay his alphabetically organised library, boasting first editions by Gerard Reve from when he was still known as "Simon" and weighty special editions by Hermans, outweighing – figuratively and literally – the *Statenbijbel* (of which there was also one, bulky, with lead locks, from 1785). And what about the chests filled with articles from his journalist days, penned by him and others insignificant to us? Or the mountains of yellowed *Algemeen Handelsblad* newspaper pages, including one with the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis splashed across its cover. Better still, piles of mental health reports he often wrote about. A scrapbook full of photos of car wrecks, mangled bodies and blood trails, kept and captioned by my police photographer grandfather. Five pairs of now-toughened leather children's shoes that once fit my father's feet. Toy figures he played with as a child, Cowboys & Indians and Allies & Krauts, made of Elastolin: pressed sawdust and glue. This had long since ceased to be a study. It was a museum. A museum with one curator, where the public was unwelcome. How had a precise, wise and capable person like him let this happen?

Hidden behind stacks and boxes

While sorting through his belongings during his illness and after his death, I realised that a singular event didn't mark the creation of this museum. Rather, his lifelong tendency to hoard went unchallenged at countless moments. The last two decades, in particular, saw it flourish unchecked. With my brother and I moving out, space for his possessions multiplied. Once he retired, his study increasingly became the centre of his universe. My mother spent half the week in her small cottage and sometimes felt her authority to speak about the house was eclipsed by his. Stuff piled up, rooms became impassable, and bare walls from photos past were now hidden behind stacks and boxes. If you throw nothing away, you end up dragging a giant net full of objects behind you. And I mean "nothing" quite literally: when we'd attempt to discard our old belongings (clothes, a malfunctioning clock, a laminator), he would open the rubbish bags later and return items to their "normal place" where they "belonged." ("Don't you remember how many CD

covers you made with that? And what if you ever need to laminate something?") Once, during King's Day, my brother sold our parents' old books, and my father spent the entire afternoon on a chair beside them, perusing titles he might buy back. Occasionally, I'd share an article about hoarders, to which he'd respond insulted: "That's not me." Incidentally, I didn't think so either. I only hoped that he would start tidying up out of indignation at the allegation.

The importance of belongings

As Dad's illness progressed and his strength waned, my brother, half-sisters and I found ourselves able to roam freely in his study for the first time. Previously concealed behind sliding doors with nicotine-tinted stained glass, the room had been perpetually shrouded in a semi-permanent Dunhill cloud. However, he no longer had the energy to shuffle to his small desk, and constant access to information was needed for orders and care applications. By February, the need for overnight care became clear. We had to make space for a bed in his study, a tidying-up measure he'd vehemently opposed in the weeks before ("No way!"), but now he reluctantly and lifelessly acquiesced. Often with tears in our eyes, we secretly stowed duplicate books, videotapes and weathered toys into rubbish bags.

Throughout our conversations at his sickbed, the underestimated importance of belongings became one of his hobby horses. These discussions were brief, with me seated on the sofa and him reclining in the hospital bed in the living room watching television (and disparaging Hugo de Jonge). If my tone grew too serious, he would steer the conversation toward a recent episode of *M* he had found abominable or simply fall silent. Eventually, he'd be too tired to continue talking. We never managed to discuss the illness or the impending death. But we talked plenty about belongings. "Toys mean more to me than all visual art combined," he repeatedly said. Why? I asked. "Because you can touch toys, you can play with them for as long as you want. Objects don't run away, and they never die. Without my toys, without my records… I shudder to think." He didn't mention his own father, a man of few words who spent all his free time building intricate, beautiful miniature houses for his son to play with his toy figures.

Elastolin soldiers and Star Wars figures

Toys held a special place in his system of meaning. Whereas my grandfather acquired large batches of German Elastolin soldiers after the war, transforming them into allies for my father to play with, my father would venture into the neighbourhood in the early hours of the annual Queen's Day market to buy Star Wars figures for my brother and me. When I came downstairs (and he was already back in bed), a legion awaited me. Sometimes, I lamented the absence of a father who would say, "I love you" or "I'm proud of you." At other times, I thought, as long as he seeks alternatives to show his feelings, even if it's with toys, I'm okay with that.

During our conversations at his sickbed, it became clear to me that discarding things that were once cherished or had been of comfort was tantamount to betrayal for him. Perhaps, I reflected, his reluctance to discard had more to do with solidarity than love. He was a man of solidarity, my father.

The first moment I felt solidarity with his museum was about eight years ago when my then-girlfriend and I were having dinner at my parents' house. It was one of our first visits there because I kept postponing partly out of embarrassment at the state of the house and how it would look to someone as orderly and meticulous as her. It didn't take a mind reader to see that the bazaar-like interior shocked her. "It's fine," she said to my parents after a while, "Just don't expect us to clean this up when you're gone." A heavy silence descended, like the calm before a storm. My father got up from the table and didn't return. "What were you thinking?" I asked my girlfriend on the bike ride home. A heated argument ensued. Our backs didn't touch as we fell asleep. Later, she tried to make up for it by giving my parents a Marie Kondo book. It went straight on the book pile.

Evidence, testimonies

Marie Kondo. The name has been mentioned. Born in Japan in 1984, Kondo soared to global fame as a decluttering guru in the 2010s. In 2015, TIME Magazine recognised her as one of the world's hundred most influential people. Her decluttering doctrine, advocating discarding something every day and keeping only items that bring happiness and "spark joy", seamlessly aligned with broader consumer trends, swiftly transforming our collective interior ideal into something more minimalist.

As a child growing up in an overcrowded, cluttered, chaotic home, I embraced this trend. My apartments were tidy or even bare. Visitors would wonder where my furniture was or if I had just moved in.

However, spending more time in my father's museum changed my perspective. Joy isn't the sole criterion when considering which items to discard. What about understanding? In this room, I can reconstruct my father's life; I find old class photos, the aforementioned children's shoes and family portraits filled with sepia-toned faces I've never seen before but where his shines through. The Star Wars figures he scored for us at the Queen's Day market stored in Brabantia-branded boxes. Old drawings from one of his children, old passport photos and our old school reports by his desk. Adoring photos he took of my mother; or pictures of us together where he lovingly picks me up and we smile at each other. They are evidence, or testimonies. Not only of facts but also of love that once existed, even if there were no words for it. I don't know if it's what he intended, but at times, I see this museum as a collection of invitations in object form: get to know me, understand me, touch me as the one who bought me has touched me, learn about them through me.

This excavation is how I get to know my father again, on his terms, without being able to contradict or reject him. Do all these things we find spark and bring joy? No. Their value extends beyond joy, beyond sorrow. Occasionally, I find myself entertaining a thought that once would have been inconceivable: if only he had left more behind.

The death warrant of an object

Berlin's Kreuzberg district is home to the Museum der Dinge, a museum filled with everyday objects – hairdryers, mobile phones, furniture, clothes – through which the past is made tangible and relatable. I don't think my father ever visited this museum. Why would he? He created his own, which is not so much about our grand history but rather his modest past, which nobody knows as well as he does.

Unfortunately, instructions regarding what to do with his stuff after his death were not made clear to us. Perhaps I'm deceiving myself, but this seemed intentional. True, he couldn't bring himself to sign any object's death warrant, but then again, he was the curator. As I mentioned, belongings are invitations – once revealed and touched, once we have engaged with them, we are free to bid them farewell. Some items have already undergone this process. Before closing the coffin, I placed his feet into his slippers, well-worn sandals that had shuffled across our floors for years. I had to. I couldn't bear the thought of his feet being cold. There will be items that held a prominent place in his museum but which mean little to us. Those can go. We shall seek out good new homes for some. Still, there are others we shall keep for ourselves. Now, we shall create our own museums.

Our father's box

Today is the day. My brother and I stand in a large warehouse full of numbered wooden "boxes", essentially wooden containers, stacked to the ceiling. Our father's box is all the way to the side, his name written on a curling piece of tape. The locks are opened, and the wooden door panel is removed. What do we find? Nothing unexpected, nothing new, just more of the same. A wooden container crammed full of furniture, toy houses and hundreds of toy soldiers, each wrapped in protective newspaper. What a chore, what attention to detail. Dad, I wish to say. Dad, we've found your belongings.

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Forget

Cultural amnesia as a preservation strategy

Sometimes, you're surprised to discover that you have something you'd long forgotten, something that you didn't know you still had. In a hidden corner, a kind of pit of oblivion, it has been living a dormant existence. The metaphorical states of sleeping, resting and waking or being *woke* are therefore highly appropriate in the world of heritage. Going against the grain, we do not advocate being awake, but going to sleep. It is a provocation that does not detract from the importance of being awake, where forgetting the "dark pages" of the past is rightly considered a vice. All the more reason why we need the virtue of orderly forgetting, whereby we use amnesia to better engage in conversations with future generations and to transcend the issues of the day in terms of selection and validation. However, forgetting is no small taboo: after all, the fear of death is linked to our fear of being forgotten.

Forgetting and remembering are both necessary as basic operations and as moral categories in accessing the past, as the great master in this field, the French philosopher of history Paul Ricœur (1913-2005), also argues. In his voluminous retrospective from the "magical year of remembrance" 2000, with its staccato title – *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* – that leaves nothing to be guessed, he discusses the relationships between remembering and forgetting with regard to history and heritage as separate entities. We have presented his philosophical construction in a diagram, which of course offers a reduced picture of reality. Because Ricœur's work is notoriously complex and linguistically impenetrable. Anglo-Saxon and German writers, I mention Paul Connerton and Aleida Assmann, are indebted to his work and reach a wider audience, including in the academic world. But let us not forget Sleeping Beauty herself.

Fairy tale variants of Sleeping Beauty

The Masselink version of Sleeping Beauty, (2023)

Once upon a time there was a king who lived in a beautiful castle with his lovely wife and their ladies-in-waiting and footmen, cooks and bakers, knights, horsemen and craftsmen. They had everything they needed; only, they desperately wanted a child. And their wish came true: a girl, a princess, was born in the castle! They called her Briar Rose, and the whole land celebrated.

All the fairies in the land were invited to her christening to cast a spell to ensure a bright future for the little girl. Only the wicked fairy was not allowed to come. She was so angry that she sneaked into the party. There, most of the fairies had already offered their good gifts and wishes to the overjoyed royal couple.

Everyone was happy... until suddenly the wicked fairy jumped out and pronounced a curse: this beautiful little princess would prick her finger on a spinning wheel at the age of 15 and would die. Everyone was shocked and horrified, but fortunately one fairy had not yet made her wish. Although she could not undo the wicked fairy's curse, she could ease it. So she turned the wicked fairy's curse into a prediction that Briar Rose would prick her finger on a spinning wheel at the age of 15, and fall into a deep sleep for many years – until a prince would kiss her awake.

The king had all spinning wheels removed from miles around; the little princess was never allowed to go out unattended; everything was done to protect Briar Rose from this prediction.

... But of course, by the age of 15 the young lady knew her way around the big castle, and when she got bored and went out alone, she found a forgotten (!) spinning wheel in an abandoned tower room. She tried to spin a thread, pricked herself... and fell asleep. And not just her: her parents, the footmen and ladies-in-waiting, the cooks and bakers, the knights and horses, in fact the whole castle, fell into a deep sleep.

The castle was overgrown with everything that grew, and the people of the town forgot all about it – all they knew was that a beautiful princess had been asleep there for a long time.

Of course, a prince came along, cut down all the overgrown bushes with his sword and gained access to the castle, where he found Briar Rose, now Sleeping Beauty, in the tower room. And with a kiss he brought her back to the waking world as if she had fallen asleep yesterday... And all the inhabitants of the castle woke up too. They threw another big party and Sleeping Beauty lived happily ever after with her prince by her side.

A fairytale scenario

In the Sleeping Beauty Scenario project for the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum], we are dealing with a fairytale reality: it's an exciting concept that immediately commands attention. It was not without reason that we chose Sleeping Beauty as the name of the project. And it is not for nothing that we have often imagined ourselves in a fairy tale during the project: the actors and decision-makers of the museum itself, the inhabitants and administrators of Vlaardingen, the world of heritage – they were all ears when we told our story. Even though the idea we presented was somewhat unrealistic, it was nevertheless embraced and believed.

We also worked in a team that believed in this approach from day one, and although we had to deal with conventions, euros, deadlines, performance, management, and so on, along the way, the content,

↑ Popular print of *The Sleeping Beauty* after Perrault, published for the Dutch-speaking market by the Pellerin company in Épinal (Vosges, France), around 1890.

the approach and the idea behind the Sleeping Beauty Scenario were always leading, and not the rules. How was this possible? It happens in fairy tales. And in this project.

Let's look at the differences: fortunately, Jan Anderson has not received a curse, but something much better – a joint agreement between important actors such as the Reinwardt Academy, the RCE [Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands], the Erfgoedhuis [Heritage House] and Jan Anderson himself.

When Jan Anderson dies and is no longer there to look after the collection, it will be put to sleep for a period of at least 30 years. Will climbing plants and thorn bushes overgrow the museum and depot like Sleeping Beauty's castle? Perhaps we hope so, so that the collection is left alone and has plenty of time to remain in a comatose state.

There are, of course, parallels with the fairy tale. Our generation and the next are the good fairies: we will keep an eye on things. At the time of writing, that's still an understatement, because what we have to do to implement the approach properly is no easy task.

We put the house and the stables to sleep, with the attics and everything in the collection, so that it will look good in the next period. A certain amount of decay is inevitable with such an approach; the castle is overgrown with thorns. This is blasphemy according to the current doctrine of the heritage religion. But we are also providing a handbook containing a large number of object registrations, photos, audio and video material, interviews, location data, provenance information and much more. The future prince will get his reward on a silver platter.

Imagine sleeping for 30 years or more and then awakening as a shining star: this is what happened to Sleeping Beauty and will hopefully happen in the future to Jan's collections. The princess awoke from her sleep unchanged and still beautiful. Jan's collection will deteriorate in 30 years (or perhaps much later) as a result of natural decay. The shining star could then look like the back cover of this manual. It will be interesting to observe how decay occurs in a Collection Lab, when you don't intervene for a generation or more.

By reducing the turnover rate of the collection – so no more loans, no more daily temperatures, no more natural changes – you're not just slowing down the decline. By keeping it in one place for a generation, it also stays together as a complete collection. With this approach, Jan Anderson's collections do not run the risk of being cherry picked. When the next generation wakes up to this darling, when the collection becomes woke, they will get a thorough insight into the 20th century, where the objects can tell them about the development of, for example, vacuum cleaners, mousetraps, pipes and plumber's tool bags, the layout and design of advertising materials, and all the other 150 sub-collections. But perhaps most interesting, rare and informative are the recycled cardboard retail boxes in which the collection is packaged. As humans, we are very good at overlooking the essential...

From this slumbering castle, a number of series and ensembles will soon emerge that rightly deserve the name Sleeping Beauty. Was the prince a lucky guy? The next generation that gets to see Jan's collection will be, too.

Briar Rose in the Brothers Grimm version of Sleeping Beauty (1815, KHM 50)

A king and queen have long wanted a child, but remain childless. One day a frog hops out of the water and tells the queen that she will have a daughter within a year. The daughter is born and the king throws a big party to which he invites the fairies. But because there are 13 fairies and he only has 12 gold plates, he leaves one fairy out of the invitation. At the feast, the 12 fairies each make a wish for a wonderful gift, such as virtue, beauty and wealth. After the 11th fairy has made her wish, the 13th fairy, who was not invited, suddenly appears. She prophesies that on the girl's 15th birthday she will prick her finger on a spindle and die. The 12th fairy cannot undo this wish, but she can mitigate it: the king's daughter will fall into a 100-year sleep as the result of pricking her finger. The king has all the spindles in the land burned to prevent the fairy's curse from being fulfilled.

On Briar Rose's 15th birthday, she is alone in the palace and looks into every chamber. Finally, she comes to a room in an ancient tower where an old woman is spinning flax. Curious about the spindle, Briar Rose grabs it and pricks her finger on it. Everything in the palace falls asleep; even the wind ceases. A hedge of thorns begins to grow around the palace, impenetrable and hiding everything.

Because word is now going around that Sleeping Beauty is behind that hedge, every now and then a

prince tries to force his way in, but that always ends fatally. After 100 years, a king's son makes another attempt, and this time he succeeds. He enters Sleeping Beauty's chamber and she awakens with his kiss. Everyone in the palace wakes up and Sleeping Beauty marries her prince.

La belle au bois dormant in the Perrault version: (1697)

Although the Grimm brothers' version has many similarities with Perrault's older version, there are two important differences at the beginning and end. For example, in Perrault the opening motif of the prophetic frog is missing. At the end, in Perrault too Sleeping Beauty marries her awakener the prince, but not before his father dies and he inherits the throne. The Queen Mother comes from a family of giants and has a tendency to eat children. When the king is away for a long time, the palace staff are ordered to kill Sleeping Beauty and her two children and serve them up for dinner. However, the Queen Mother is tricked and ends up dead herself. This is the end of the story for Perrault, as we can also see in the popular print "The Sleeping Damsel in the Forest" by the Pellerin company of Épinal, around 1890.

Sacred and museological pits of oblivion

In the long term, a good way of communicating with our descendants about important matters is to maintain material structures, if necessary as anti-monuments. This is one of the reasons why we like to build new museums and depots. It is no coincidence that the buildings in this sector seem to be almost more important than their contents. In our culture, the museum has become first and foremost a building. The façade of the museum seems to be more important than its museological foundations. A greater contrast to the pit of oblivion is inconceivable. Unsexy, invisible and inaccessible: who would voluntarily invest time and money in that?

Hazardous waste in pits of oblivion

Compared to the radioactive waste of the current Anthropocene, there are historically more examples of dangerous residues that are difficult to deal with. Think of sacred objects that have been taken out of circulation. Objects of worship, charged with numinous power, were both a powerful and a dangerous material. What to do with a discarded cult statue, worn out, deemed unorthodox by the church authorities, or hopelessly out of fashion? How many old statues of the Madonna have ended up in a sacred pit of oblivion, the infamous holy well. They are often built into church walls, kept in inaccessible niches behind altarpieces or buried in tombs. What also happens is that the old cult image is incorporated into a new, modern image, which is thus given a sacred injection, a magical core.

Sacred charnel pits with saints

In the village of Okáriz, near Salvatierra in the Basque Country in Spain, *a fosa de las animas*, or burial pit for poor souls, was uncovered during restoration work in the 1970s. In addition to skeletal remains, a large number of polychrome wooden statues were found in this charnel pit. The softwood specimens disintegrated into dust and crumbs when touched. In addition to remarkable Gothic figures such as the Archangel Michael, St John the Baptist and a truly resurrected Christ, an impressive oak Madonna and Child also emerged. The sculptures found in these and other forgotten pits are now among the unsuspected masterpieces of early, almost forgotten Basque Navarrese sculpture.

The recovered statues were reinstalled in the parish church, where they now occupy a place of honour. According to church law, the statues could have been safely burned at the time, but – fortunately in retrospect – this was often not done. It might have seemed too much like a holy humiliation or execution. That punishment, by the way, was for the statues of saints who did not live up to their holy status and thus "failed" the faithful. The saint was then publicly humiliated. In the case of the images found in the charnel pits, forgetting was considered a respectful and safe interaction.

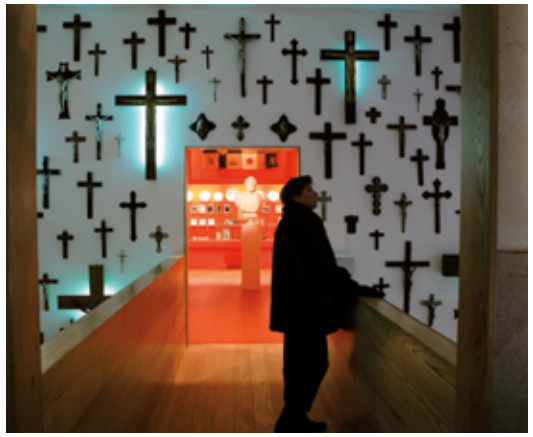
Hidden and buried debris

This is an example from Spain, but sacred shards can also be found closer to home. In many churches in the Low Countries, 16th-century iconoclasts smashed sculptures and buried the debris. Some of these have been recovered. The same is true of images that were destroyed by the Catholic urge for reform after the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Bishops who

↑ The Asunción de Nuestra Señora church in Okáriz in the Spanish Basque Country, where in the 1970s a forgetting pit in the form of a "fosa de las animas", or charnel pit, was discovered, containing a large number of discarded Romanesque cult statues from the period 900-1200. When the images went out of fashion, they became dangerous sacred waste. They were treated with caution and respectfully forgotten.

↑ Charnel pit (below) and holy well, dated 1531 (above), in the church of Notre Dame du Château in Sainte-Menehould, Marne department, France.

visited parish churches complained in their visitation reports that the authorities should remove images as superstitious excesses. For the faithful, however, they were dangerous sacred objects that were reluctantly removed and consigned to safe, holy pits of oblivion.



↑ The Spaarstation Dingenliefde in the Dutch Open Air Museum in Arnhem displays private and institutional collections. It is not an open depot in the strict sense of the word (as it is more of a presentation space than a depot), but it does provide an insight into everyday processes such as collection, storage and management. One of the private collections consists of crucifixes of all shapes and sizes, as a kind of post-modern Calvary (literally, place of the skull) and charnel pit at the same time.

Treasurers of sacred remains

This approach may seem far removed from us modern folk, but after the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962-1965), many priests were able to build up an impressive collection of devotional objects if they so wished, because the faithful did not dare to throw away previously venerated devotional images and relics. The latter were safely stored in a special depot of relics, as was the case with the Augustinians in Eindhoven, where Father Leopold Verhagen was the official *custos reliquiarum*, literally the treasurer of holy relics – a function that every cathedral treasury had in the Middle Ages.

After the Second Vatican Council, the safekeeping of sacred remains by priests, as technical specialists in the handling of the sacred, also applied to crucifixes, which are both images and symbols of protection. Of course, countless plaster statues were broken by children in order to chalk the pavement. But there were many who did not have the heart to give the statue of the Sacred Heart to the rubbish collector. The obvious solution was to take it to the clergy house, where the expert in ritual matters lived. Sometimes it might still end up in the rubbish dump, but then in a safe and conscientious way. With the museumification of our society, however, other, new ritual depots have sprung up where these obsolete objects have found a safe haven.

Museum forgetting pits

Almost every region in the Netherlands now has a museum farm. In Catholic regions such as Twente, the Achterhoek, Brabant and Limburg, the saints seem to crawl up the walls of these farm museums. Not infrequently, they are adorned with more devotional objects than could ever hang or stand in such a farm. The same goes for everyday objects. Anything that could not accommodate an ornamental plant was given to a local museum. They are the ritual repositories of the local society when it comes to keeping-while-giving.

The problems are obvious. Many of these small museums do not have a good depot and display everything they have. Without a selective collecting policy, there is a lot of duplication: collection pollution, as it is called. You can't sell it, you can't throw it away. Even if you collect according to museum rules, you can easily offend the (families of) donors in such a small society.

Most local museums with this problem make a strict selection at the gate. This is good in itself, but in fact it deprives local society of the ritual depot function where they can safely dispose of objects. After all, potential donors could throw them away or take to the second-hand store themselves. In other words, people need a museum specialist to deal with "sacred" heritage issues. After all, they consider the objects they want to donate to be inalienable. It is about the paradox of keeping-while-giving, as the American anthropologist Anette Weiner so beautifully puts it. Donating objects to a museum is a form of keeping.

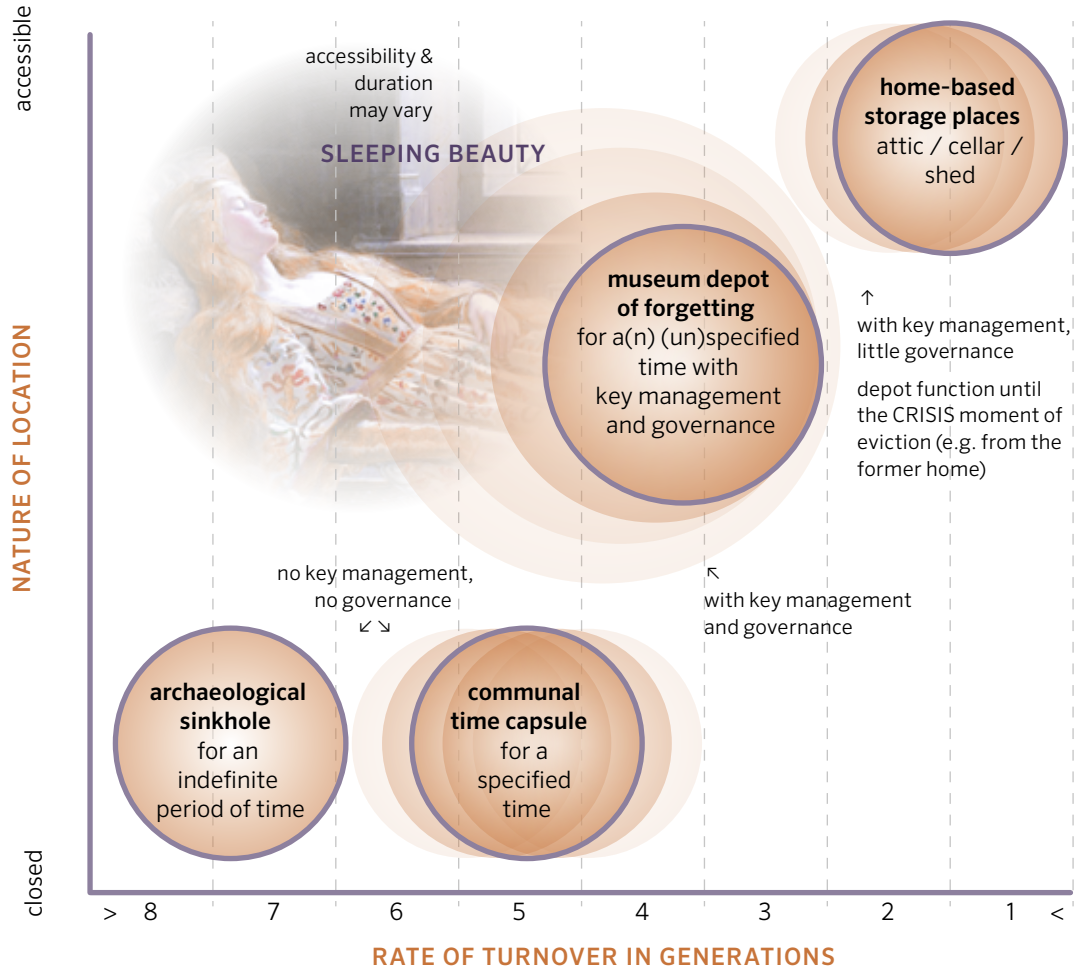
The Sleeping Beauty Scenario

The solution we advocate here is the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, with a museum pit of oblivion in the form of a depot that hardly any mortal visits. And no matter how you look at it, such a tiny museum fulfils a very useful function in society: on the one hand, as an identity factory and, on the other, as a safe depot for things you want to get rid of but don't have the heart to throw away.

It is not only the practical function, but above all the symbolic function of the ritual deposit that many professional institutions – be they museums or archives – have completely lost sight of: offering a safe alternative. It is rarely found in a policy plan. A museum ritual depot as an island in time and space, set adrift, where obsolete objects can be landed safely and without fuss. A museum waste mountain, in other words.

Forgetting Pits

Time, access, key management & governance



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Forgetting pits: time, access, key management and governance
The rate of turnover of goods, shown here in generations, can vary greatly, with the extremes – recognisable to everyone from everyday life – being domestic storage places such as attics, cellars and sheds, and archaeological pits dug for an indefinite period. In between are the time capsule and the museum depot of forgetting. The degree of accessibility is indicated by the position on the vertical axis. The Sleeping Beauty scenario moves to the centre of this field.

The Faro Convention can be of great importance in this respect by promoting participation with a voice in the world of heritage. This is not a violation of the authority of the museum and the curator, as the sector sometimes convulsively sees it, but rather a much-needed interaction with society that introduces very different, often unsuspected elements around preservation, appreciation and forgetting.

Low turnover rate

This invariably concerns things that are considered inalienable, which does not mean that they cannot change hands. But they continue to circulate within a group culture, albeit with a low turnover rate. This is the world of heritage, handed down from generation to generation. It has everything to do with the way we are used to describing everyday life, the categories we create to keep or throw things away. These are everyday activities in the home, garden and kitchen. After all, everyone throws something away or puts something back to keep every day.

The cycle of objects

The creation and destruction of value is the central theme of so-called rubbish theory. Through it, conventional economic theory, which is strongly oriented towards the mechanisms of scarcity and abundance rather than waste and worthlessness, acquires contrasting anthropological components. You cannot create value without creating non-value at the same time. This may sound cryptic, but most goods depreciate over time; they literally depreciate to zero value. This is the normal state of affairs in a consumer society. In addition, there are goods, such as cultural heritage, which increase in value over time. This is difficult to measure economically: we have rules for depreciation, but not for appreciation. It is difficult to capture this complex social process in algorithms.

In museological terms, the current practice is to write off collection objects that have no value or are unlikely to increase in value, destroying them as a last resort. From waste theory we can learn that the creation of value in museums by definition also creates non-value, which we apparently do not know how to deal with. This is the fascinating domain of museum waste, or the world of Sleeping Beauty's pit of oblivion.

Garbaeology

Unless it has depreciated, heritage increases in value over time, which is difficult to measure. But what about waste? It has neither a value nor a turnover rate. Waste does not increase in value over time unless someone discovers it. The act of discovery can transform anonymous waste into identity-laden heritage. Archaeology offers many striking examples of this. In the 1980s, the University of Arizona, led by "garbologist" William Rathje, undertook the Garbage Project, dedicated to the "archaeology of us" through the archaeological study of modern landfills. Archaeology became garbaeology. Over the years, 30 tonnes of waste from 15 American landfills were systematically excavated, sorted, measured and documented with a wealth of information.

Archaeology: excavation and burial

The excavation of rubbish, which is transformed into heritage through the act of discovery, is part of normal heritage practice. But the reverse movement also exists, and not just in theory. The transformation of heritage into waste does indeed occur in practice, albeit relatively rarely in our contemporary culture. It is highly unusual and even considered a disturbing taboo. After all, ethics and morality are never far away in the world of heritage.

In 2003, the Oerle archaeological group, made up of amateur archaeologists from this town south of Eindhoven, put a number of finds back in the ground, much to the annoyance of the municipal archaeologist at the time, Nico Arts. Prehistoric tools such as Neolithic hand axes, Iron Age urns and medieval pottery, packed in two barrels, are in fact buried in a deep hole behind the church, as it were in a sacred pit of oblivion. The professional archaeologist reported that "the ethics of our profession" forced him to say that he totally disagreed with this.

The president of the amateur archaeologists disagreed: "We are mainly concerned with fragments that have been described and studied in detail, but for which you can't build a museum. The finds aren't important enough for museums, and if we send them to a university, they will go to the basement and be lost. You can't put them in the rubbish bin. As local archaeologists, we believe that finds belong where they were found. They have to stay with their own people. That's why the finds were exhibited last weekend and will now be buried. They can always be dug up again."

So the chances of finding this cultural waste are good. The municipal archaeologist saw all this as evidence of irresponsible chauvinism. "Soil finds," he said, "must be stored in legally recognised depots, such as those in Eindhoven and Den Bosch. Scientists should always be able to look at them if they want to."

But the local amateur archaeologists had no interest in alienating the finds and handing them out to interested parties. "Make their mouths water. We don't want a few people to get away with it all. Besides, when we distribute the finds, it is impossible to keep track of where everything goes. In fact, we are now creating a depot in the ground for the excavated material." The amateur archaeologists who buried the finds behind the church understand better than anyone how the cycle of objects works.

Inalienability and identity

In both everyday life and scientific practice, reality is constantly being named and categorised. Objects can change their use and meaning profoundly without changing their intrinsic value. Why is one object considered more authentic than another? Why is one building protected and restored as a monument, and another abandoned or demolished? These may seem trivial questions, but they refer to cultural practices that greatly influence the experience of everyday life.

Essential to this description of everyday life is the implicit notion of inalienability. By this, we mean things that should continue to circulate at a slow pace within a particular group. They are not to be alienated; they are not to circulate outside that group. So, for example, they cannot be donated to outsiders.

Selling inalienable objects is taboo because they embody important group values that determine identity. Things like territory, crown jewels and totems come to mind. Don't you dare alienate a piece of Dutch territory – we even fight wars over it. The Dutch crown jewels, however little they may be compared to, say, the British regalia, are also an immaterial asset of the national group.

Important totems, whether relics such as that of St Servatius in Maastricht or a painting such as The *Night Watch* by Rembrandt, are inalienable. They have circulated for centuries, slowly passing from generation to generation within the same society. Relics from Maastricht, such as the golden key of St Servatius, have been passed on in this way through treasuries since the early Middle Ages, with exceptional continuity in deep time.

As a result, there was zero credit for the Amsterdam alderman who wanted to cover his budget deficit by selling Rembrandt's masterpiece, which after all belongs to the city of Amsterdam. The sale of museum pieces is taboo anyway, precisely because they have been symbolically removed from normal circulation as the inalienable heirlooms of a society.

In other words, inalienable objects are a motor of identity. They embody essential values for a group and refer to origin, genealogy and therefore power, such as claims to territory and cultural identity. While these values are by no means immutable or static, they are not interchangeable. They are managed and nurtured by dedicated specialists such as church treasurers and museum curators. The inalienable objects are safely stored in treasuries, archives and museums, preferably to be displayed to the public from time to time.

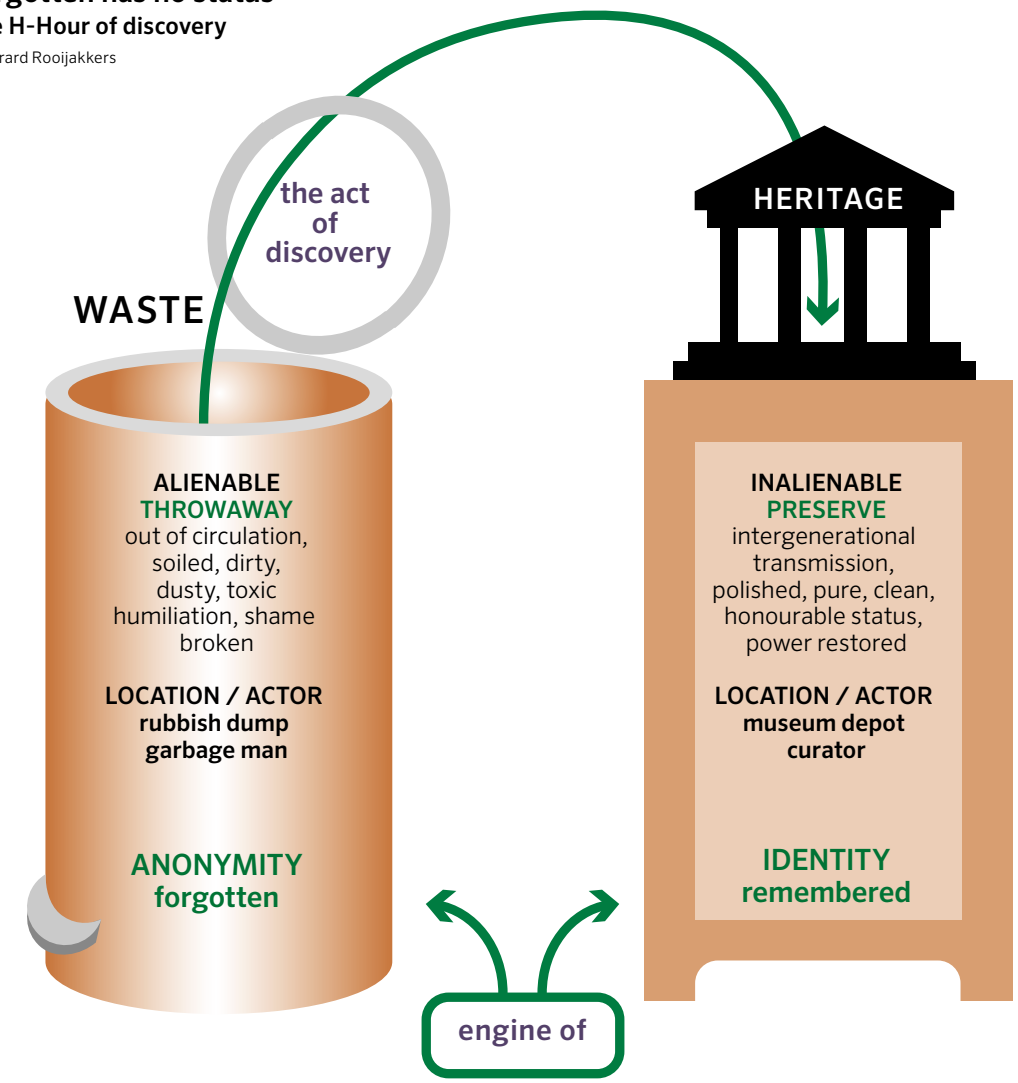
Anonymous alienability

In contrast are the so-called alienable objects. The question of what is most alienable in a society usually goes unanswered. This would, of course, seem to apply to things that circulate rapidly within a group, such as food or money. But food itself, apart from biological processes, is, from a symbolic point of view, by no means as inalienable as it seems. Think of the cultural significance attached to dishes and foods that are considered typically Dutch. And don't you dare touch French or Italian cuisine. A movement like Slow Food emphasises the inalienability of the typical individuality of dishes that are in danger of being lost in the globalising violence of fast food. Here, too, the notion of threat is at play.

These cultural interests are just as important when it comes to money. With the introduction of the euro, all the European member states seemed to want to retain the image of a national symbol on their coins. The monarch is still pontifically depicted on Dutch euro coins, which means that this money will forever be inextricably linked to the group that belongs to that nation. And this is true of all the physical money in the world, no matter how rapidly it now circulates.

In contrast, the most alienable objects within a group are called waste. Legally speaking, current money is never waste, even if it has been deliberately

Forgotten has no status
The H-Hour of discovery



The dynamic between inalienable heritage and alienable waste as poles of material culture

thrown away and found among the rubbish. In practice, we are naming and selecting objects every day, usually unconsciously. Each of us decides what to keep and what to throw away.

Waste belongs to the realm of forgetting. Whereas heritage, which in our culture must be preserved like no other object, refers to the identity of a group ranging from a nation to a family, we associate waste with anonymity. That's why we put our rubbish in an opaque grey bag or a black dustbin on the side of the road, or in an anonymous container. You won't find an address label with personal details. In fact, we often find it embarrassing if people know whose rubbish it is, let alone appreciate it when someone goes through our rubbish. Because not only the things we take out of circulation as a legacy to pass on to our heirs, but also the waste we want to forget, ultimately reveal a lot about who we are, and what our identity is.

The act of discovery

Basically, we don't like to be reminded of our rubbish. So it is safely tucked away in rubbish dumps, managed by rubbish collectors who are the counterparts of museum curators. Yet much of our historical knowledge, especially when it comes to long periods of time such as the Middle Ages and prehistory, is based on the interpretation of the waste that our ancestors threw away. Even though they didn't want to be remembered that way.

But the objects which they considered to be their inalienable heritage, and which were set aside to be passed down through the generations as gifts, have usually simply not stood the test of time, or have been deliberately destroyed or stolen as the Achilles' heel of culture. We therefore often have to make do with the rubbish of these groups, which, ironically, gives a very apt picture of the societies in question. Essential here is the act of finding, by which the finder, in an archaeological context, transforms the waste into a soil find to be cherished as heritage. A find that is then stored in a depot or displayed in a museum showcase. The object takes on a completely different meaning through this nomination process: it changes from alienable waste to inalienable heritage.

Heritage is vulnerable, waste is not

The irony is that what is thrown away escapes the vulnerability inherent in heritage. Thus, in the long run, rubbish is better preserved precisely because it becomes part of the domain of forgetting. All in all, the dustman is culture's best friend. Instead of orderly storage, we as a society would actually be better off with orderly forgetting, but unfortunately that is not given to us as human beings.

This also explains why our western society is so focused on preserving objects and setting them apart as a legacy for posterity. This is fine in itself, we have no choice; but we argue here for more reflection on the underlying, often implicit actions that guide the process of identity construction in which heritage plays a leading role. How do we continually categorise our everyday environment into alienable waste and inalienable heritage?

Memory and preservation have status

Memory is the ability of living things to remember information by storing, retaining and retrieving it. Without a working memory, you are sick. A well-functioning memory is a universally valued success factor that people take pride in. Forgetting something or a lot is seen as a human failure, a form of shortcoming. Memory, seen in this way, determines the status of people in a society.

Humans have developed all kinds of technical aids to support biological memory, from the knot in a handkerchief to computer chips. These so-called external memories greatly simplify storage, preservation and retrieval. They also have a major impact on our everyday handling of memory, which is, after all, time-bound and culturally determined. When something escapes us, we can now use the figure of speech of "our hard drive", on which the thing isn't stored – a metaphor unthinkable 50 years ago. Images drive perception and communication.

Memories come in all shapes and sizes. They come in short and long durations, and sensory perception can determine their strength. We call this sensory memory, with sounds, smells, tastes, touches and images that nestle in our brain. The sense of smell, for example, is closely linked to the limbic system – our oldest reptilian brain – with great power of recall. By reminiscence, we mean the ability to recall memories from long-term memory (the mothballs of your youth) based on a current perception (the smell of camphor).

Given the status given to absolute memory, one might say that someone who forgets nothing is perfect. Unfortunately, people who remember everything are also sick. They suffer from a rare disease called hyperthymesia. Those who cannot forget suffer from an unlivable existence with a chaos of individual moments without selection, hierarchy and coherence, in short, without meaning. The other extreme is the much-feared disease of dementia.

One of the problems with depots is that we humans can only really preserve things in an orderly way, whereas an orderly forgetting would often be much more effective for preserving things. Only Alzheimer's patients are capable of systematic, orderly forgetting. They forget the most recent information first. But the essential ability to forget does not confer status in our culture.

The memorial function of church and pub

Church buildings have traditionally had a strong memorial function. They are, in fact, ritual repositories of memory. This is clearly expressed,

↗ A brown café with a strongly commemorative function in the busy city of Eindhoven: the almost museum-like interior of Café De Gouden Bal with its memorabilia. The pool table has not been removed as a supposed obstacle taking up unprofitable square metres, but functions as a motor of group identity and solidarity.

for example, in the form of ex-votos, which pilgrims give to a saint in gratitude for a favour they have received. As well as being a ritual gift, they testify to the memory of a miraculous power, for the greater honour and glory of the holy miracle worker.

Churches contain many material reminders of the past, from tombstones and plaques to images and representations such as wall paintings and stained glass, which may no longer play a role in current religious experience. We look at them with wonder, respect their presence as a matter of course, or simply overlook them as objects fused with the church building.

With the alienation of churches by withdrawing them from Roman Catholic worship, selling and repurposing them, not infrequently this memorial function is compromised or lost. What is left is an empty stone shell, to be reused for other purposes. The furnishings are sold to a church property buyer who makes a killing on high value items for next to nothing, or they are moved to the local museum. The irony is that such churches have themselves now discovered the museum as a ritual depot for discarded sacred objects.
The devil has always founded a pub near any old church, which also has an important, if profane, memorial function. The village tavern and the Dutch neighbourhood "brown bar" act as repositories of the memory of local societies and group cultures. The walls are covered with photos of anniversaries and deceased regulars in yellowed frames. All sorts of memorabilia hang from the walls and sometimes even from the ceiling. Clubs keep their banners in special

large wall cabinets and often even have showcases to display their trophies. This is the commemorative function of the rapidly disappearing family businesses in the "beverage" arm of the catering industry.
These are important collections with a low turnover rate – the brown bar is an anachronistic friend and contemporary – which should be able to count on more museum interest. Rather than promoting the catering function of museums, we emphasise here the socio-cultural importance and museum function of the traditional establishment, better known in the Netherlands as the *stamkroeg* [local pub] or bruin café [brown bar].

Selective forgetting: Information is also low-status

Although the volume of archives in linear metres is decreasing, the overall information density is increasing. This makes it all the more important to be able to find the relevant information quickly. Professional retrieval is important to prevent each search from producing countless hits (think of Google's search results). Storage costs play up to now a minimal role in this. It is the necessary care for digital access and keeping the data "alive" that runs the meter up. In the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, the status and transfer of information is of crucial importance in the long term. The lack of attention and care in most organisations, especially in the government, is a textbook example of worst practice. It's a bad habit for anyone wanting to start a conversation with future generations.

Information management by Jan Steen

Digital information is ephemeral and requires cradle-to-grave care. This concern means that we need to assign metadata to digital information when it is received or created to ensure its retrievability. Technical measures are also required to ensure that the information remains readable throughout the retention period. The cost per unit of digital information is expected to exceed the cost of storing paper in the coming years. However, this widespread concern does not apply to paper. Paper documents can be forgotten for decades after being received or created, as long as they are stored in dry, mould-free and fire-safe conditions.

Structurally, the government pays too little attention to proper information management. This was the conclusion of the Dutch Algemene Rekenkamer [Court of Audit] in 1988, and current policies do not guarantee that things will be any different in 2025. Corporate culture is a key factor. This is reflected in the lack of appreciation of information and the information process by everyone involved, from policy makers to top managers. It is also reflected in the way information is prepared and processed, with little attention paid to archiving aspects.

This low status is apparently manageable (the problem is at least 35 years old), but the move to a digital information system makes the consequences of a lack of clear policy and good management much more drastic. Not only because digital chaos is easier to create than paper chaos, and can be exponentially greater; but mainly because digital chaos does not give you a second chance. Paper is patient, sometimes for hundreds of years, while digital data evaporates before your eyes.

Digital, but not yet sustainable: Recommendation 2018
A government grows demented 2.0? Recommendation 2021

Methodical not moral

The picture for the future is bleak: continuing along the same path will inevitably mean compromising important foundations of the rule of law, such as transparency, diligence, accessibility, accountability and responsibility. That's black and white, but it's impossible to nuance the orderliness of information management.

Orderliness is applicable here in two ways: in Dutch it means both decency and order. *Ordentelijk* storage is decent, tidy storage. *Ordelijk* storage – to use a similar but different Dutch word – means systematic, methodical storage, without any moral connotations. That is why this manual is not called *Ordentelijk Vergeten* in Dutch, but *Ordelijk Vergeten* – Orderly Forgetting in a methodical, not moral, sense.

The government must ensure the orderliness of its information management, regardless of the future scenario. The low status of preservation in (official) corporate cultures is in stark contrast to the high status of heritage in the cultural world.

Cultural amnesia: Government dementia

Saving is not throwing away. But throwing away without destroying is also a form of preservation. In the digital domain, cultural amnesia still reigns: we no longer know what we have forgotten. The question is whether this is a problem. With the passage of time, hardly anything remains of almost everything our ancestors took out of circulation as important and inalienable for safekeeping. Ironically, it is what was thrown away with the intention of forgetting that later provides the most information. An archivist or curator would not be happy about this, you might say. But they understand better than anyone else that human beings are not capable of orderly forgetting, but only of orderly preservation – with all the consequences this has for our repositories.

If our society does not learn to forget in an orderly way, then the dementia-stricken government will be problematic, because we will have no idea of (let alone control over) what we are forgetting. This not only has cultural-historical consequences for the information about our society in the future ("that's a shame"), but above all it has consequences for the proper functioning of a transparent democratic system for citizens seeking justice and evidence. This is inexcusable. It seems no coincidence that the Dutch parliament regularly talks about "forgotten" things, deleted messages, selective memory and a chronic lack of "active memory", "without lying".

→

Preservative and prescriptive forgetting

The left field concerns the domain of memory, where Paul Ricœur distinguishes between passive, unconscious remembering (*mnémé*) of, for example, smells, and conscious remembering or active forgetting (*anamésis*): "le devoir de mémoire est le devoir de ne pas oublier."

In addition, Ricœur distinguishes between the souvenir as the memory of something that has been and the imagination as the imagined memory of something that has never been and is absent. The only things that people remember of the past, of history, are those which fall within the dominant paradigm of heritage. This means that what is not named and recognised is not actively remembered.

The right side of the spectrum concerns the realm of forgetting, which includes everything outside the dominant paradigm. Forgotten history is therefore not heritage. Ricœur distinguishes "forgetting" as a negative phenomenon, where the erasure of traces is a spectre that people resist. Time is an enemy that people fight against. On the other hand, "forgetting" is seen as something positive. Ricœur speaks very aptly of preservative forgetting, or "oubli de resérve": allowing forgetting in order to (better) preserve. This is the world of Sleeping Beauty.

Forgetting, of course, includes unintentional loss of memory (*amnesie*). What is important for us is positive and conscious forgetting, such as therapeutic catharsis, and institutional forgetting, such as amnesty. The denial of memory, the refusal to know as a society, ultimately leads to social trauma and irreconcilability, as well as the inability to forget. Wanting to forget what has previously been remembered can have a legitimate and socially beneficial function (*devoir de l'oubli*), leading to forgiveness and reconciliation (*le pardon*).

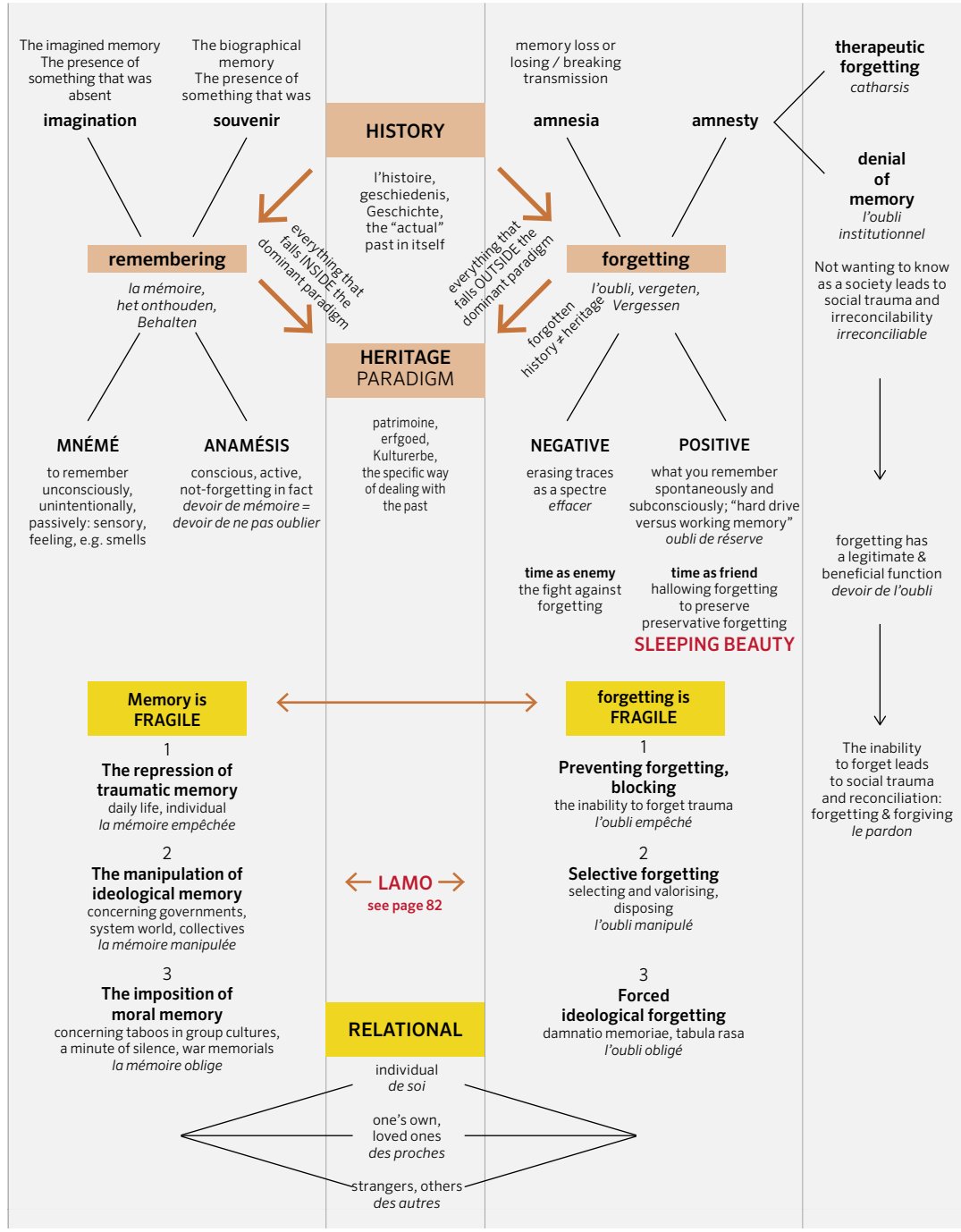
The bottom field shows the vulnerability of "remembering" and "forgetting", where Ricœur distinguishes between preventing (*empêcher*), manipulating (*manipuler*) and imposing (*obliger*). The LAMO guidelines for the disposal of museum objects operate in the manipulative realm of selective storage and forgetting. All of this is also relationally differentiated: remembering and forgetting in relation to the self (the individual), loved ones (the established) and strangers (outsiders).

It is interesting to add to this table the seven forms of forgetting that Paul Connerton defines in his opening article, "Seven Types of Forgetting", for the journal *Memory Studies* (2008). The *repressive erasure* of memory (*damnatio memoriae*) and relegation to oblivion (*prescriptive forgetting*) belong to the domain of the state. Forgetting as an identity construction (*forgetting that is constitutive in the formation of a new identity*) or medical, *structural amnesia* concerns the individual. Unconscious forgetting and nullification of what falls outside the paradigm (*forgetting as annulment*) and deliberate ignoring (*forgetting as planned obsolescence*) are more socio-economic processes. Forgetting as a form of silence about things that are not talked about (*forgetting as humiliated silence*) belongs to the moral domain of the social taboo.

Where Ricœur speaks of preservative forgetting, Sleeping Beauty belongs here to prescribed or prescriptive forgetting.

Gateways to the past

Remembering & forgetting versus history & heritage



Frank Bergevoet

Deliberately forgotten: a Nazi desk

Some time ago, an architectural historian approached me. He had found a wooden dropleaf writing desk in the barn of a farm, inlaid with Nazi texts. The owners of the farm were emigrating and were looking for a suitable home for it. The desk was said to have come from the previous occupants. Due to its sensitive nature, no one had ever dared to remove it and show it to the public. It was a well-kept secret. In a metaphorical sense, a *secretaire* too, that should not fall into the wrong hands. Could I mediate for it? When I saw pictures of the cabinet, I was immediately interested. I had never seen anything like it before. The following texts were inlaid in wood on the writing panel of the desk:

Liebe ist Sonnenschein
allbelebende Flamme
und Treue soll die Würze sein
Am deutschen Lebensstamme
Arbeiten
Ehrlich schaffen
Sind die besten
Friedenswaffen

After I e-mailed around, the Oorlogsmuseum [War Museum] in Overloon wanted to add the cabinet to its collection. The owners donated the cabinet to the museum. The museum soon discovered that the cabinet had been made to glorify the DAF (German Labour Front), a Nazi-controlled trade union. The DAF logo can be seen on the desk: a cogwheel with a swastika in it. Below it is the text: *Ein Volk sind wir!* Contacts between the War Museum in Overloon and other museums in Germany have now revealed that the cabinet is a remarkable piece. How it ended up in the Netherlands is still unknown.

A loaded secretaire, hidden away in the home for a long time after the war as a form of selective forgetting. The desk was not destroyed for whatever reason, but preserved, including the dilemmas that go with it: still problematic despite the passage of time. A piece of the "wrong" heritage on the verge of becoming rubbish. A rare piece of intrinsically high quality, passed on like a hot potato through the RCE. There are specialised, "safe" institutions for the sort of dangerous heritage to which no right-thinking person would dare to expose themselves.

Riemer Knoop commentary

Message in a bottle

The Anderson Collection is nothing short of a phenomenon, comprising a complex entity consisting of a person, a museum and a depot. Together, I believe it is more an installation than anything else. The museum predominantly features localised collections about the city and its region in a triptych format. It includes a cluttered room featuring items from public and semi-public life, such as dioramas depicting retail, craft and education; a typical local war memorial museum, like so many others elsewhere (and why not? Every place deserves its own WWII museum); and a remarkable Local Antiquities Room, offering a temporary exhibition tracing Vlaardingen's entire history. The linchpin is Jan Anderson, who lives among it all, knowing and organising everything and everyone involved. Without his role as the beating heart of this installation, the black hole in this universe as it were, all that would remain is a lifeless whole. Recognising this, we must act; doing nothing is simply not an option.

A guiding principle

The direction of Jan's installation appears vague, lacking a discernible focus or guiding principle. What distinguishes other curated collections and examples of curated decay is the underlying thought expressed underneath, behind and in between them, whether it's a reflection or a dream (Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence*), social criticism (Georges Perec's *Things* and *Life: A User's Manual*) or the meticulous documentation of a broad stream of material culture (as demonstrated by the German labour movement in Berlin's Museum der Dinge). The most captivating is the Museum of Broken Relationships, located in Belgrade and elsewhere, in which stories of loss are conveyed through a series of isolated objects, tangents to absences that nevertheless manifest vividly in the mind's eye. Yet, this doesn't seem to be the case with Jan. It is what it is. Things are what they are.

But beware. Upon closer inspection, I sense a guiding principle that puts the installation within a much broader context. Specifically, Jan's collection, like many others that have emerged over the past two centuries in the Netherlands and abroad, particularly those outside the realms of art or science, conveys a poignant sense of loss and nostalgia for a bygone era: the way things were preceding the Industrial Revolution. In the Netherlands, such collections mark the transition from the world before 1875: the reality depicted in children's books such as Swiebertje, Ot and Sien, and Peerke and his comrades. The material culture of that lost Eden, of innocence long gone, serves as a symbol of Dutch identity. This observation extends to the numerous antiquity rooms or associated collections, even if the institution has vanished, and to esteemed institutions such as the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Established in 1895 by enthusiasts of the fading culture before the second Golden Age, it was initially known as the Suasso Museum, a cabinet of curiosities whose exhibits ranged from militia banners to dolls, an eighteenth-century kitchen, and an old pharmacy. The museum also included interiors from the old canal mansions that had to make way for the construction of the Raadhuisstraat – a development at the time perceived as detestable.

Princess or frog?

The Sleeping Beauty metaphor doesn't resonate with me. Whether she awakens, and if so, in what form, depends entirely on who kisses her and when. Perhaps there's a frog in her bed. I find the message in a bottle metaphor more fitting. We're unsure who will discover the Anderson universe, what their perception of it will be, or what actions they may take (as UNESCO consistently emphasises). Therefore, I shall avoid using the term "heritage". It only earns that title once a community on that distant temporal coastline has earnestly examined Jan's artefacts washed ashore. Uncertainty surrounds how this will unfold or how to investigate it. This perspective of an unknown future leads me to the following considerations.

Just like the memory of WWII, "stuff" is also subject to changing appreciation. Indeed, appreciation is intertwined with a broader framework of thinking, speaking and doing. Forty years from now, people may not fully grasp all of Anderson's reasons and motives for collecting and preserving, no matter how well-documented they may be. These reasons and motives themselves evolve into "heritage" that future generations will look upon with wonder. Understanding the nostalgia for the pre-industrial or pre-war eras expressed in Jan's dioramas of daily life may become increasingly difficult over time. This is what Foucault's concept of *episteme* addresses: a value system (of

knowing, speaking and acting) that undergoes such profound changes over time that (a) museum depots become cluttered with incomprehensible artefacts and (b) conversations with past generations may cease altogether. Below, I provide examples illustrating the inaccessibility, unknowability and even the unfathomability of many pasts that are separated from us by shifts in *episteme*.

My grandmother was born in 1900, the youngest daughter of a then 75-year-old innkeeper. Her sole ambition in life was to attain the social status known in Dutch society as mevrouw, or lady. The tragedy is that when she finally achieved this, half a century later, the status distinctions of *meiden, meisjes, mejuffrouwen* and *mevrouwen* [maids, girls, misses, and ladies] had become meaningless. It is difficult for us now to imagine how such values were entrenched in the material world of everyday life, from the parlour to the antimacassar.

Another such category is formed by the once widespread "sculptures" – like those of the 16th-century Viennese goldsmith Clement Kicklinger – of a miniature ostrich set in blood coral, with a horseshoe in its mouth, carrying an ostrich egg and led by an African. Now perceived as exotic and extravagant showpieces typical of a Wunderkammer, these sculptures initially held a more profound symbolism for Renaissance people, representing immaculate motherhood and God's wisdom hidden in nature. "Knowing her time has come", the mother bird abandons the egg, which hatches by itself in the sand, symbolising the cosmos and foreshadowing the parthenogenesis of Jesus. According to Foucault, this would represent not just a different paradigm but an entirely different world of thinking, speaking and acting – a chasm of epistemic knowledge. Let's acknowledge that for the discoverers in 2055, a similar disparity in values may arise concerning Jan's message in a bottle.

↑ Sculpture, set in blood coral, of an ostrich egg on the back of a miniature ostrich with a horseshoe in its mouth, led by an African by 16th-century Viennese goldsmith Clement Kicklinger.

Legacy conditions

There is also something to be said about how we handle acquisitions in general. For instance, Adriaan van der Hoop's remarkable bequest to the city of Amsterdam in 1847 included around 250 paintings from the 17th century. Among these were some truly iconic pieces that still exist today. The bequest's conditions stipulated that its contents must remain together, always be visible, preferably in the buildings of the Academy of Fine Arts, be identifiable as originating from Van der Hoop and that the entrance fees for viewing them should benefit the city's poor (if not, it would go to Teylers Fundatie). In 1885, following 30 years at the Oude Manhuispoort as the "Van der Hoop Museum", the collection moved to the Rijksmuseum, occupying part of the upper wing adjacent to the Gallery of Honour. Old floorplans still depict dozens of rooms organised by bequest, not by subject, period, material, genre, school or artist. Today, we no longer prioritise adherence to the original legacy's conditions, nor are we interested in remaining aware of its origin – because, ultimately, who cares? It remains to be seen how robust the research framework for handling the dormant Anderson collection will be in the future.

Forgetting is liberating

Finally, it isn't necessarily wrong to refrain from preserving something. Our museums already harbour a vast array of neglected, reviled, forgotten, dusty and, above all, misunderstood items (as discussed above). For further insight on this matter, consult Paul Schnabel's 2012 Ottema-Kingma Lecture. Storage depots are indeed quite dreadful. Due to the aforementioned epistemic shift, they are filled with unknown stuff. Fortunately, we do not see much of them, not because there isn't space in the exhibition halls but because they are neither presentable nor understandable. The Boijmans Depot in Rotterdam stands as a rare and, indeed, theatrical exception.

It's worth remembering that not preserving something doesn't mean it disappears or is immediately tossed onto the fire. Sometimes, it's even nice not to have to carry everything around. Forgetting can be liberating. The outcry concerning the private sale of the Rubens drawing belonging to the House of Orange ("Deaccessioning! Shame!") partly stemmed from the stubborn assumption that the work would cease to exist if we didn't "preserve" it. By this, people usually mean keeping it in the public domain, preferably within Dutch territory, because the drawing is felt to belong on the list associated with the Cultural Heritage Preservation Act, now incorporated into the Heritage Act. Oh, come on! What a travesty. The paradox lies elsewhere: they say you need to know where you come from to know where you're going. But this might as well be nonsense. Clinging to things is a desperate struggle against mortality, denying the human condition.

Listen to what writer, playwright and columnist Sara Sluimer has to say in her column in *NRC Handelsblad* from 10 May 2023. She recounts an emotionally charged vacation where she discovers remnants of past lives at an old French country house where she and her family are guests. Confronted with the discovery, the hosting family reacts with brazen indifference: it's "old junk". They aren't going to throw it away (at this moment in time), but it doesn't matter to them (at this moment in time) either. Nor did they forget to clean it up before the guests arrived. It is part of the house, which itself is a "forgetting machine". That others feel no connection to such treasures from the past is difficult for heritage guardians to digest. But isn't it precisely those who find contentment in the present who can help us struggle through the vast accumulations of the past?

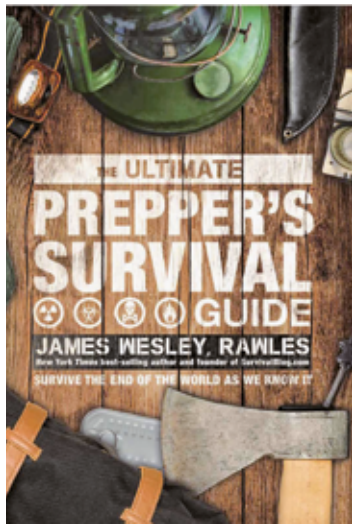
De génération en génération, bronze sculpture, 1999, by Bruce Krebs in the old port of La Rochelle (department of Charente-Maritime, France). Columns of heads with minds represented as open books are pored over by consecutive generations, reading their ancestors' thoughts as a selective memory transfer.

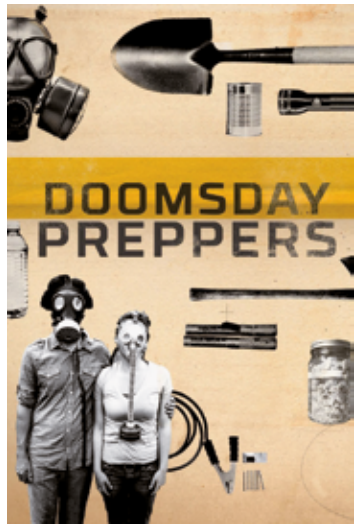
7

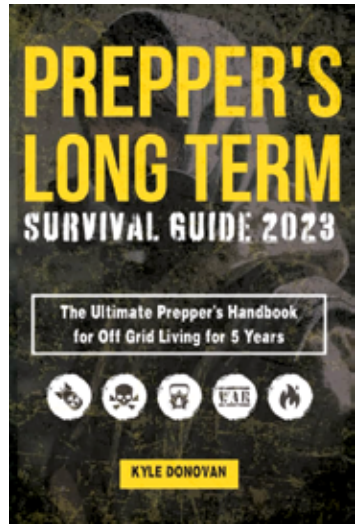
Prepare

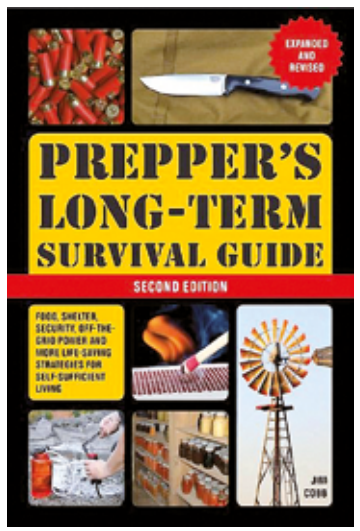
A visual essay on anticipation

Doing nothing calls for a lot of work at the “front end” of the process. Anyone who thinks that the Sleeping Beauty Scenario means that they can sit back and let time do its work is mistaken. There is much work to be done to provide items with the information files that our archaeological ancestors forgot to include. We prefer not to do anything to the objects themselves. The Sleeping Beauty is subject to a number of guidelines, such as safety for the environment and human health (fungi, vermin, fire hazard) and governance, such as access management along with maintenance and supervision (wind- and waterproofing, burglary protection, installations).









Instead of preserving, this is more about preserving and preparing, or "prepping". A prepper actively prepares for possible social, financial, political and environmental disruptions. These so-called doomsday preppers strive to be as self-sufficient as possible – with food supplies, means of exchange, tools and (medical) resources – in order to be as independent as possible from the state or the established order in the event of a crisis. That's called self-reliance.

For the purposes of our argument, preppers are interesting in two ways. First, they build private shelters to temporarily hide themselves and their families in the event of an emergency, including stockpiles of food and other essentials. During the Cold War (1950-1989), governments also provided such shelters, such as the Dutch nuclear fallout shelters (no longer maintained) and organisations such as the Bescherming Bevolking [Population Protection], the now defunct BB. In addition to the depot function of these storage areas, preppers are also concerned with autonomy: as little dependence on infrastructure as possible (off-grid), based on worst-case scenarios regarding human actions. Here too, the laws of nature are used as much as possible.

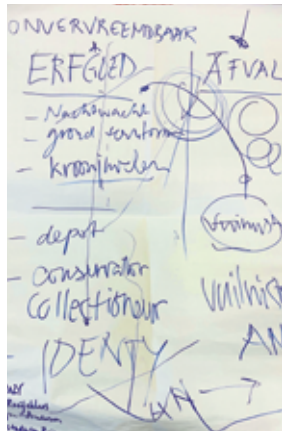
However, the catastrophe for which the preppers are preparing is of a different order to that in our Sleeping Beauty Scenario, where anything that undermines the intended time management is seen as a threat, such as the sleeping woman waking up too soon or disasters around the depot.

Prepping for Sleeping Beauty in Vlaardingen

We had to intervene in Jan Anderson's shipping company warehouse depot when students from the Reinwardt Academy discovered an explosion of mould in objects made of organic materials, especially textiles and leather.

Mould outbreak in the textile depot
Students from the Reinwardt Academy discovered a fungal outbreak that posed a health risk. This made it necessary to carry out some preventive conservation work before the Sleeping Beauty Scenario. After the extent of the fungus and the approach to be taken became clearer in the summer of 2022, in a matter of days between October 2022 and February 2023 each garment was collected, assessed, cleaned, photographed and placed in acid-free paper in a good storage box or on a hanger under museum Tyvek at another location in the Netherlands. It was an operation in which almost everyone involved from the beginning, and some students, participated.

Preparation also means recording contextual information and documenting the Sleeping Beauty Scenario as a museological process in a film for the records.



8

Abstain

Doing nothing requires action

In the Dutch language, the word *onthouden* has an interesting double meaning. On the one hand, it means to remember; but at the same time, it can also mean to do nothing – to abstain or refrain from commenting, for example. In the context of this handbook, which deals with the world of heritage, *onthouding* is a very appropriate word to refer to the ethics of remembering through abstention that we are promoting here. But doing nothing is harder than we think. The world of museums is full of well-intentioned actions that do not always benefit the conservation of objects. Some things are subjected to rescue missions, not to mention the hands of many well-meaning volunteers are itching to restore items beyond repair.

What will certainly benefit the museum world is to embrace what we call the culture of slowness. Turnover is a recurring concept in this book. Sleeping Beauty is not about collection management, it is about time management. The speed at which objects circulate in our society is often too fast to preserve them properly over time. Slowness also means attention and quality: slow food, slow fashion and, yes, slow sex.

Fossil abstinence

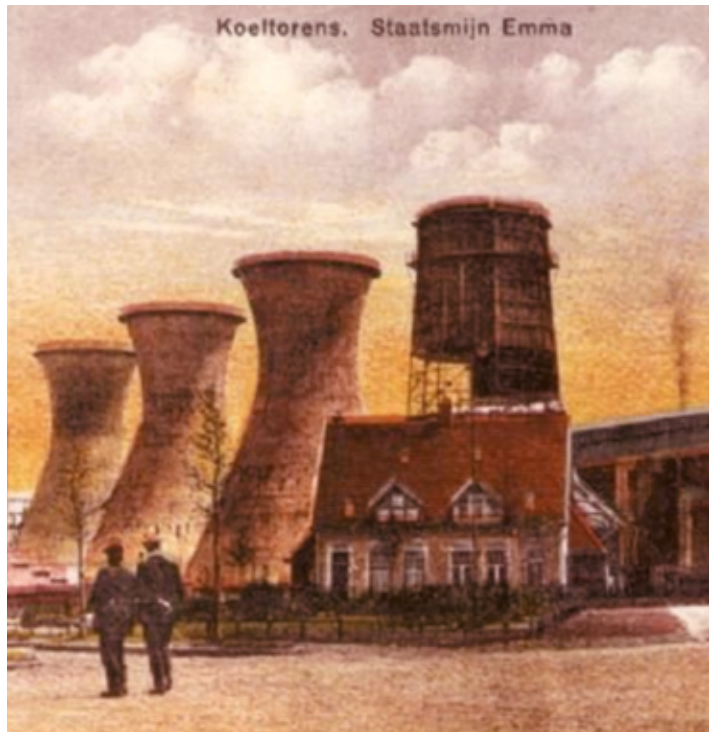
History and heritage are two different things. History concerns the actual past itself, with the course of all past events that we call history. Heritage concerns the way we deal with the past and those facts here and now. The Dutch mining region of Zuid-Limburg is teeming with history (per square kilometre, it is one of the best-researched mining regions in the world since its closure in 1975), but notoriously weak in the transmission and appropriation of that past in the form of heritage.

The Dutch Year of Mining, celebrated in 2015, marked the essential transition from history (the story of an old generation) to heritage (the making of meaning and the experience of that past by new generations). Were this not to happen, the mining past would become a historical relic without meaning for the present and future inhabitants of the eastern (Heerlen-Kerkrade region) and western (Sittard-Geleen region) mining areas.

The lament is that almost nothing remains of the Dutch mining past. “From black to green” was the slogan of the 1970s, and it was put into practice in a crippling way. For example, the world’s first cooling towers, a Dutch invention by Frederik van Iterson from 1918, were completely demolished. Yet if you look closely, you will also find many reminders of the mining past. Even if you wanted to, you could never wipe the slate clean.

Underground – and unknown to almost everyone – the history of mining has been preserved like an enormous time capsule. When the mine closed, most of the material was simply left behind, hundreds of metres down in kilometres of tunnels. There is a whole world here, even an underground mining school, hidden away like an industrial Pompeii. But it is virtually inaccessible: because the groundwater and mine water has not been pumped out for decades, everything is well preserved under water.

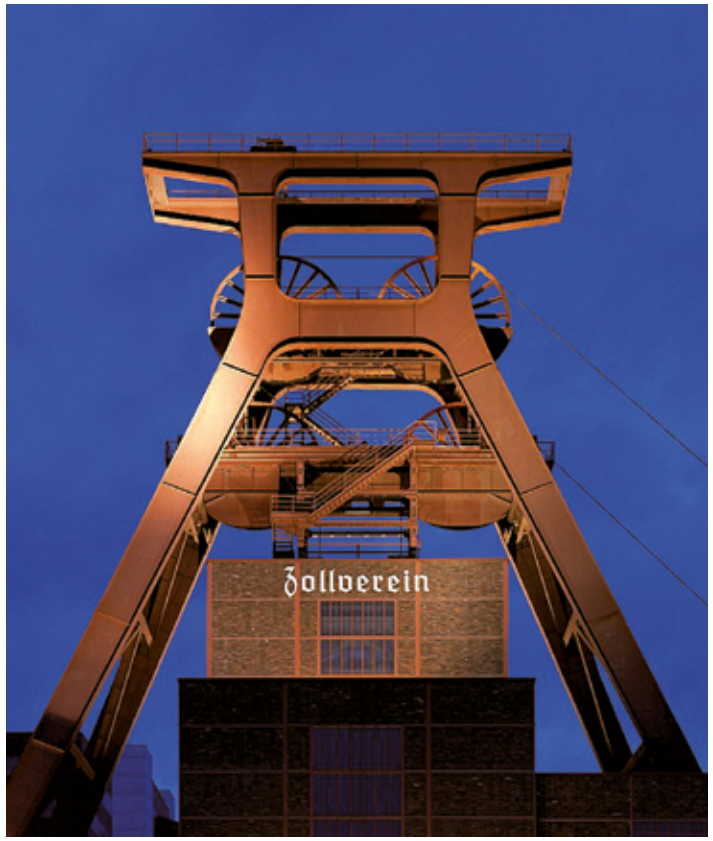
By doing nothing, a perfect time capsule has inadvertently been created here, geologically hidden among the other fossils of Mother Earth: 100% history, but 0% heritage. The irony is that it is the things we forget that are best preserved – as the reader now knows. And what we want to preserve and pass on to subsequent generations is usually highly vulnerable to damage, theft and destruction.



← The world’s first cooling towers, lined up in a monumental row on the grounds of Staatsmijn Emma in Heerlen (Limburg). A Dutch invention from 1918 by Frederik van Iterson, which is still used all over the world, including in nuclear power stations.

All this was swept away in the 1970s in the clean-up frenzy that accompanied the “green for black” programme to reorganise the mining industry. It’s a textbook example of the traumatic consequences of imposed forgetting (according to Ricoeur) in the form of a tabula rasa (clean sweep). “As if all this had never happened, as if the dead had never lived,” as Bart Verschaffel aptly puts it.

More generally, it is indicative of the Dutch way of dealing with the past. Something is either irreparably restored or immediately demolished. There is nothing in between. In the neighbouring Belgian and German mining regions, things were different. So the people of South Limburg have to cross the border to really experience something of this mining past, the so-called coal mining heritage of Flanders.



← The Zollverein colliery in Essen. In Germany's Ruhr region, large mine shafts and factory cathedrals were not demolished, but forgotten for several generations. The buildings were made inaccessible to demolition workers and material strippers. So responsibility was taken in the form of loving neglect. The method of consolidated decay was also applied here: holes in the roofs and walls were sealed with corrugated iron and plastic sheeting, in anticipation of a possible fate in better times. The selection and validation of buildings to be demolished or preserved was postponed. In many cases, complexes were given a new purpose in the 1990s, with the spectacular Gashouder in Oberhausen and the iconic complex of the Zollverein colliery near Essen, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as showpieces. In the early 1990s, Karl Gauser, director of the Internationale Bauaustellung (IBA-Emscher Park), rejected the prevailing extremist attitude: no tabula rasa, but no total museumification. Here, long before Faro, ethnological experiments with participatory appreciation were taking place.

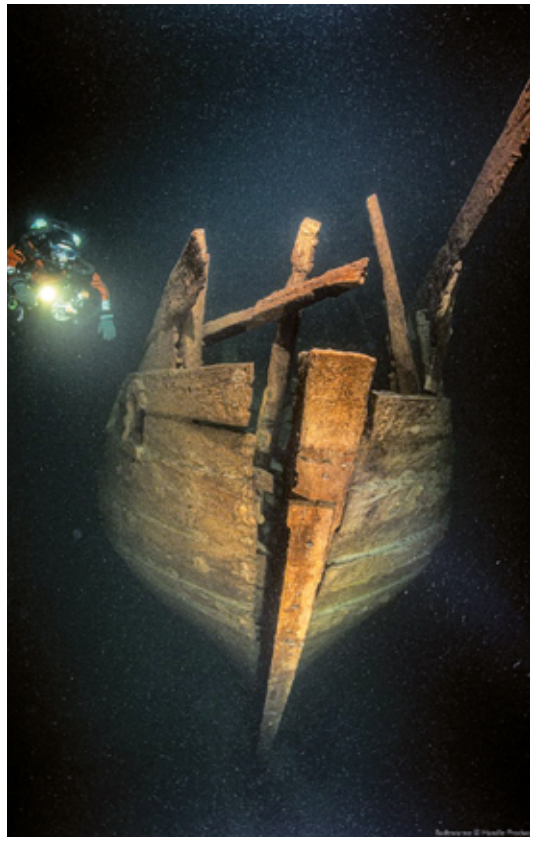
The underground factory, which actually comprised all 12 pits, is a huge industrial monument that, at its peak, employed around 70,000 workers. The complex is constantly present hundreds of metres beneath the feet of the local population. The mine shafts and corridors, including equipment and inventory, were "packaged", airtight and underwater after closure. As with shipwrecks, there will come a day in the future when modern techniques can be used to make this forgotten depot visible and accessible again. The act of this future discovery will transform these anonymous objects of history into bearers of identity in the form of long-lost heritage.

Wrecked, but not wrecked

Fortunately, flooded coal mines are not usually as catastrophic as shipwrecks, excepting deliberately sunk ships. Again, these are accidental deposits that are virtually inaccessible. Abstinence is dictated by ethical codes in the management of underwater archaeological monuments. In practice, abstinence was mainly due to a lack of technical and financial capacity. However, this has changed in a short time due to the development of diving technology, which has become accessible to unauthorised amateur divers who enjoy diving as a leisure activity.

Exciting documentaries allow fascinated viewers to share in such discoveries, which are really looting under the guise of maritime heritage. The TV rights are usually worth more than the "treasures" themselves, but of course the viewer doesn't know that. In the first chapter, dedicated to hiding, we mentioned the fate of the Palmhout wreck off the coast of Texel.

Shipwrecks are true time capsules, especially when they are unexpectedly destroyed by a storm or by war. That is why they are sought-after objects for treasure divers all over the world. In the Netherlands, there are two or three professional divers who work according to the rules of maritime archaeology as laid down in the Dutch Heritage Act.



↑ The land of the Meuse and the Waal is home to one of the few ruins in the Netherlands. The Rijksche Sluis steam pumping station, built in 1913, is a shell waiting to be turned into apartments or holiday homes for tourists. Jan Reijnen of the Heemschut association has good reason to want to prevent this bloodless standard scenario in the treatment of monuments: no restoration, no conversion, but respect for the ruin and the status of a protected monument.

↖ Wreck of the exceptionally well-preserved 1636 Dutch *fluyt* De Zwaan, at a depth of 85 metres in the Baltic Sea.

There are also many amateurs, who even have their own magazine for hobby divers, and who illegally take souvenirs from the 2,000 to 3,000 wreck sites in the 24-mile zone along the Dutch coast. Due to a loophole in the Dutch Monuments Act, underwater archaeology, where shipwrecks often rise above the seabed, often fell outside the definition of excavation. This issue was resolved in 2016 with the new Heritage Act, although the monitoring and prosecution of illegal underwater activities remains particularly problematic.

Both the unexpected wrecking and sinking with its resultant inaccessibility, and the subsequent lack of decay due to good conditions for preservation underwater, ensure that shipwreck depots become unintended time capsules. Of course, the adventurous and poetic aspects of such a depot do not leave anyone unmoved. That emotion is valuable, especially if we can also ensure that future generations can experience their own, perhaps very different, feelings.

The ethics of abstinence

A modern pedagogical concept in response to parents' overprotection of their children is "loving neglect". After all, even positive traumatisation, such as falling out of a tree, is part of growing up. These are beautiful paradoxes that contain a great deal of wisdom. When it comes to preserving extensive collections from the realm of everyday life, loving neglect with non-intervention is perhaps preferable to trying to preserve everything meticulously and over-cautiously according to protocol. After all, things are temporary arrangements of materials, always on their way to becoming something else, as Caitlin DeSilvey says. In this sense, decay is not just loss. Let it happen and intervene only when there is no other option.

Monitoring decay

Rather than trying to work against nature, it is better to work with it, says the English cultural geographer Caitlin DeSilvey in her book *Curated Decay*. According to her, things are temporary arrangements of materials, always on their way to transformation. Above all, use time. Process is time. Decay is an autonomous process. Finally, passivity – a curse in the Western Christian culture inspired by the Bible, where everyone lives by the sweat of their brow and laziness is one of the deadly sins – can also be valued positively.

The author is particularly interested in what she calls "orderly decay", based on the philosophy of non-intervention and "care without conservation". Objects produce meaning even when they are in a state of progressive decay. Who has the authority, and on what basis, to stop this decay and unilaterally remove these layers of meaning? We can easily counter our obsession with stability and monumentality, in museological terms too, with ephemeral, temporary and transitory objects. Don't forget: every monumental stunner will be damaged by the ravages of time.

Artefacts become ecofacts

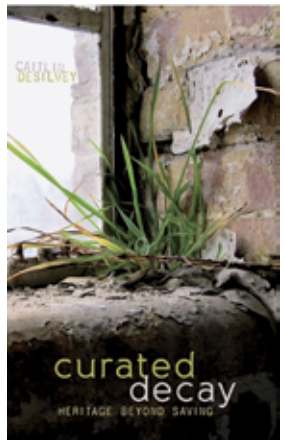
The common thread in Caitlin DeSilvey's argument is the Greek concept of entropy (literally "a turning in"), which refers to the change in state of matter. Whether or not in a specific choreography of ensembles, human artefacts are compositions of materials: nothing more, nothing less. The material composition is not stable, it decays and falls apart. Nature sets the pace, as with the nature of things and climatic conditions.

These entropic processes take place outside humanity. In this way, an overgrown artefact, or a piece of barbed wire that a tree has grown around, automatically becomes an *ecofact*. Nature effortlessly takes over from humans, who sometimes want to "reclaim" the object by cutting down the trees growing through the roof and eradicating the fungi.

We usually refer to the material recovered from nature as heritage. In conservation, entropy is slowed down and preferably stopped. In fact, we prefer to "restore" the object to a glorious former state that may never have actually existed. Or, more often, we stop the clock of time at a particular moment, freezing

↑ Abstinence practised on a monument in a cemetery in Lisbon, Portugal, c. 2005.

↗ The ruins of the Château de Bruzac in the French Dordogne are becoming an ecofact.



entropy in a romantic ideal, as with ruins. In today's medieval Gothic cathedrals, which for the most part appear to be 19th-century neo-Gothic, we can see both normative interventions. A return to grandeur and splendour, whereby any decay is countered as an eternal struggle in the cathedral building sheds. This is how we do things in the subsidised heritage world, where people roll up their sleeves and refuse to throw in the towel.

Multivocality and diversity

Uniformity is not only at odds with multivocality and diversity, but also with responsible long-term transmission. What use is a reduced version of the world to our distant descendants, a question that is more relevant than ever given the worrying loss of biodiversity and (e.g. linguistic) cultural diversity in the geological epoch of the Anthropocene in which we live.

For reviewer Nico de Klerk, who is familiar with Dutch restoration practice (Boekman 114, April 2018), DeSilvey's book was quite disruptive. Her argument is certainly sympathetic, but it takes a while before you want to take it seriously. The reviewer's first thought was that "we are dealing with a rather vague New Age type who not only shamelessly includes their own poem in the text, but claims to want to share its authorship with … mice!" People in the world of academia and heritage care are not very familiar with this more poetic approach. So Sleeping Beauty still has something to wait a bit longer for, but that's beside the point.

Those mice refer to the entropy of an 1888 encyclopaedia that the young DeSilvey once found in a dilapidated shed, among scraps of fabric and a mouse nest. As a temporary arrangement of matter, the artefact was on its way to becoming an ecofact. And yes, those mice, as non-human actors (Bruno Latour), also play a crucial role.

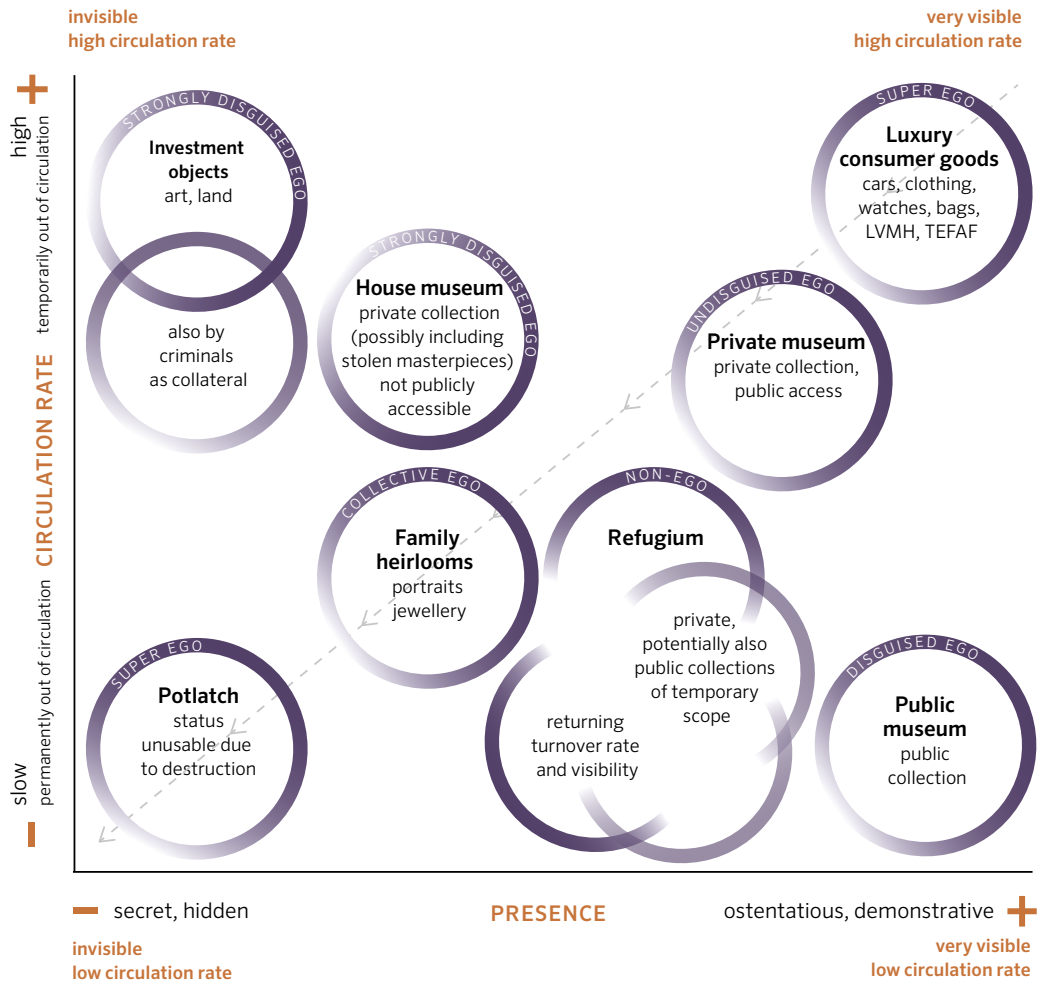
Overturning heritage paradigms

"Over time, the author has read up on it," the reviewer notes reassuringly when he encounters the familiar views of 19th-century art historian Alois Riegl on conservation practices. But DeSilvey makes provocative mincemeat of them, and that makes it difficult for him (and many of his colleagues around the world) to feel the persuasive power of the argument.

It is fascinating to see how much DeSilvey's vision is at odds with current heritage practice in terms of restoration and museumification. Look at how the sector presents itself at a restoration fair, where heritage has become an industry. Heritage for which the value of the object must always be externally sanctioned: "Unless there is a sign that says 'controlled decay' with a description of the biological, physical and chemical processes that have been allowed to take possession of it, there is a good chance that no one will even think about it."

What is meant by participatory co-evaluation, one might ask (see Chapter 4). It is not a poetic question, but this reviewer makes a decent effort and is open to the arguments – which are, however, completely outside his heritage paradigm: "Heritage is, by definition, a matter of framing." He finds the experimental method of curated decay neither realistic nor practically applicable.

Egos and the status of their objects



↑
The positioning of status objects between presentation and circulation rate.

The horizontal axis shows the degree of presentation, with the public museum with public collections (right) and the objects invisibly destroyed or rendered unusable (left) at the extremes.

We should think of the ritual destruction or mutilation of objects when people or groups compete against each other. If, in the rituals of reciprocity, one cannot compensate and surpass gifts with more goods, one can destroy them: the ultimate sign of power and wealth. Compare this to the proverbial lighting of a cigar with a 100 dollar bill. We call this ritual *potlatch*, after a custom of the Indigenous peoples of North America and Canada.

The Refugium is between these two extremes, and can shift back and forth in this continuum. Also, a small upward movement – which represents the circulation speed on the y-axis – is possible, but in the Refugium the aim is for the lowest possible circulation and visibility.

Luxury consumer goods that people want to show everywhere have the greatest, most demonstrative visibility (they are ostentatious). The private museum, also often a status symbol, is somewhere in between, in contrast to family heirlooms, which circulate slowly between generations and are usually only visible in the private domain. Related to this are the collection items in a house museum, which has an even slower circulation rate, but in principle greater visibility.

Investment objects and works of art stolen as possible collateral in negotiations with the judiciary may be secretly hidden, but they have a high circulation rate.

Well, with Sleeping Beauty we will experiment in Dutch heritage practice, with no guarantees in advance, but with thorough theoretical and practical preparation to deal with uncertainty. In the Collection Lab and Jan Anderson's depots, we will see how artefacts move entropically towards becoming ecofacts.

↑
Loving neglect is also "saving" objects by making them part of a museum collection, museumifying them, and then – usually slowly – neglecting them by not giving them the attention and care they deserve/need. The latter is due to a lack of time, money, other priorities or a collection that is too large for the size of the museum organisation. Just think of the collections of agricultural machinery that are rusting away all over the Netherlands (often in partially covered sheds).

For me, curated decay is also about the beauty/aesthetics of decay. I once spoke to a restorer with whom I was looking at an 18th-century wooden chest that contained sabres. The chest had been found in a shipwreck years before and had never been preserved. The wood of the chest was beginning to disintegrate. The sabres had corroded into a reddish-brown lump of rust, and the entire find was covered in concretions. The restorer was moved and exclaimed that she had never seen such an obvious deterioration of a maritime archaeological find before.

Because in our orderly society everything is immediately restored and preserved, the decay is nowhere to be seen. Decay is not only beautiful, it is also educational. Just as we can learn from a collection of pathological specimens about syndromes that no longer exist.

Frank Bergevoet

An untouched poetic depot

Jan Anderson's depot collection derives its cultural-historical value mainly from the fact that it consists of everyday objects. If you collect everyday things long enough, they will automatically become unusual when they have disappeared from everywhere else because they are so very everyday. The slogan from a Dutch TV commercial, "If you stay ordinary long enough, you'll automatically become special", is fully applicable to Jan Anderson's collection. By analogy with Julian Spalding's book on *The Poetic Museum*, we use here the notion of the poetic depot.

Shocking ordinariness

The mundanity or ordinariness of the depot objects in Jan's collection is so shocking (such as the outrageous Belgian collection of Jaap Kruithof, see Chapter 5 on museumification) that it is hard to understand how the collector (Jan) ever noticed them. You yourself have never given these objects a second glance, but now that they are in front of you, you think: "How is it possible that I've never seen these?" Anyone who goes through Jan's collection learns to look again. It's as if someone is giving you a new sense, allowing you to notice things that were previously out of sight. Advertising material that falls through my letterbox goes straight into the wastepaper basket. But not with Jan. He collects everything that falls through his letterbox. As a result, he has a fascinating collection of 50 years' worth of local advertising. In academic terms, this is what we call ephemeral printed matter, which is subject to the so-called graphic paradox: the larger the print run, the less likely it is that someone will keep it.

Baby blankets are another example of historical ordinariness. I once unpacked a box of baby blankets that was about 50 years old in Jan's depot in the shipping company's warehouse. The sight of the blankets immediately took me back to my youth, when woollen blankets in such pastel shades and with such patterns were used everywhere. I also realised that they had disappeared quietly and unnoticed. I had never consciously looked for them.

↑ The restoration workshop of the National Museum of Photography in Rotterdam.

Another example of everyday objects: rolls of unused, colourful cupboard paper. I saw them in a corner of Jan's depot. Who collects cupboard paper from the 1970s, when there were no tightly veneered Ikea cupboards and we covered the shelves of our kitchen cupboards with such foil paper to stop them getting dirty?

Intrinsic worthlessness and the beauty of chaos

The intrinsic worthlessness of Jan's collection takes on a certain magic, because it seems to have been untouched for so long. It's like entering a pharaoh's tomb after many centuries. Jan's attics are dusty and dimly lit. The shelves are overflowing, and the corridors are piled high with all kinds of things. You can't immediately tell what you're looking at. Your eyes have to get used to the twilight, the seemingly disorderly appearance and the nature of the objects. Is that an old vacuum cleaner? Is that an army crate? Is that a fishing basket and is that a plumber's tool bag? And is that a child's tricycle with an old coffee can next to it? The magic lies in the charm of the clutter, in the beauty of the chaos.

In an industry where warehouses have been transformed over the past 35 years from dusty attics and damp basements into sterile rooms full of grey cupboards and shiny concrete floors, Jan's warehouse is a rare remnant from before the Delta Plan for Cultural Preservation (1990-2000). I wish everyone could visit such a pre-Delta Plan curiosity. You'll feel like a treasure hunter. You might be surprised. There is still a lot to discover.

A collection laboratory for studying decay

Because the depot is not perfect and because the objects have little financial value, Jan's shipping company warehouse is a perfect place for research and experimentation: a testing ground. Here, heritage professionals (in training) can research objects to their heart's content and experiment with object management. Many questions can be asked about Jan's depot collection. For example: What's the best way to store objects? What happens if you do this sub-optimally? What signs of damage do we see?

There is no museum depot in the Netherlands where you can study decay. But you can at Jan's. The warehouse is ideal for taking climate measurements, thinking about improving packaging materials and studying selection issues. Registration projects can be set up, street clean-ups organised and provenance research carried out. Students from heritage courses such as the Reinwardt Academy can, not only theoretically but also practically, translate an "is now" situation into a future "should be" situation based on Jan's warehouse.

This is a gain, because more and more museum depots in the Netherlands are being streamlined and professionalised. The pre-Delta Plan depot is nowhere to be found. No depot is consciously preserved as an unchanging historical entity for the long term. Heritage professionals no longer visit messy, dusty depots, simply because they no longer exist.

We must be careful not to measure Jan's depot against modern management standards. It makes much more sense to keep Jan's depot as it is and pass it on to the next generation. The best way to do this is by turning it into a collection laboratory. The condition is that the ethic of abstinence also applies to this studio. Everything must remain as it is, as Jan has arranged it. Objects may be handled, described, registered, digitised and cleaned, but they must not be repacked, rearranged or removed.

The Jan Anderson Collection Lab

The Jan Anderson Collection Lab is aimed at heritage professionals, interns, conservators, students and academics. For the time being, for a period of eight years from the moment Jan is no longer able to look after it. With the Collection Lab, Jan Anderson is donating a unique, (for the time being) temporary facility to the heritage field, where studies and experiments can be carried out with the existing collection. The studies and experiments must fit into and contribute to the ethic of abstinence that is the guiding principle. The laboratory will not only be able to carry out experiments in the field of collection management and conservation, but will also be able to study natural decay phenomena. The knowledge gained must be shared with the heritage sector and society at large.

The Refugium Orphanorum

As a child I collected bird feathers, car emblems (I used to climb over the fence of a scrapyard to get them) and plastic airline cutlery sets. I probably still have some of my collections in a box somewhere. They reflect the carelessness and adventurousness of my youth. Collecting had a certain naturalness about it when I was young; everyone did it.

My father was a fanatical collector of rocks and fossils. My brothers and I often accompanied him on his forays into dredging sites. The sand pits were in areas where people used to walk. Nowadays they are protected by high fences with large signs warning of the dangers of quicksand.

In the shed – where he liked to do odd jobs – my father had a shelf above his workbench with jam-jar lids underneath. You could screw a glass jar under each lid.

For me, the jam jars with nails and screws symbolise the post-war generation of collectors. They were careful with things. For my father, it was unthinkable to throw away surplus wood screws. Nowadays, those who say they are careful with things are looked at with pity and accused of being miserly.

Not a seal centre

As far as I'm concerned, Jan Anderson also belongs to the post-war generation of collectors. Jan started keeping shells and all kinds of natural objects. Saving developed into collecting, and eventually Jan began to collect seriously, having his collection carefully registered by volunteers. I learned the triad of keeping, saving, and collecting from Jan (see also Chapter 4) and it is a useful triad to indicate the degree of professionalism in collection management.

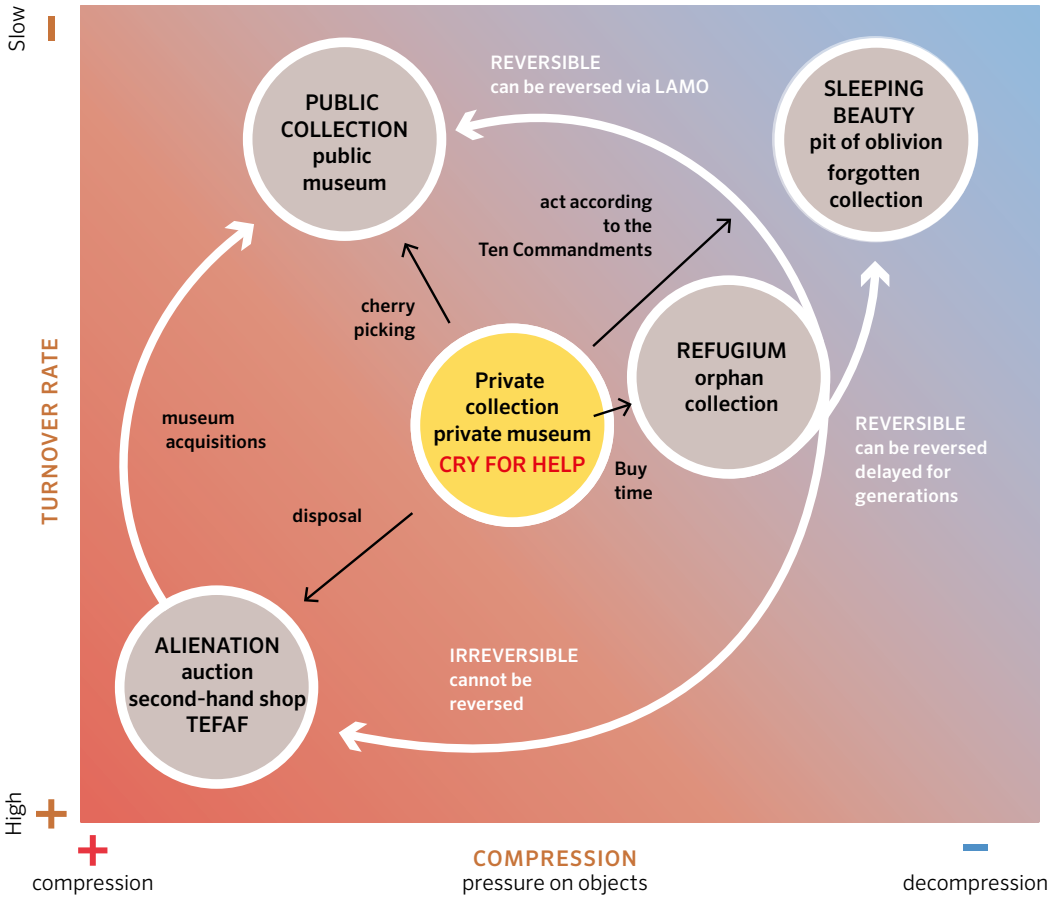
When I visit small volunteer museums – of which there are hundreds in the Netherlands – I meet Jan's contemporaries everywhere. Everywhere I meet older men and women trying to maintain collections with a lot of knowledge and tireless effort.

But this generation is dying out and has few successors. With the death of this post-war generation of collectors, the knowledge, experience and commitment to collections is rapidly disappearing. Collections are in danger of becoming orphaned. Sometimes, a hasty decision has to be made about a collection that has been built up over decades.

This is the case, for example, with the unexpected death of a collector, the dissolution of a board of trustees, or the withdrawal of funding by the (often sole) donor. It also happens regularly that the owners/caretakers of a collection suddenly have to find a new home for the objects. In such cases, a decision about the future of a collection has to be made under time pressure. I often receive a call asking if the RCE has any room for the items in the Netherlands Collection Centre (CC NL). Although the CC NL is large, it does not have the function of the Seal Centre in Pieterburen, where orphaned seals can regain their strength.

The Refugium

The dynamics of orphan collections



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Refugium: The dynamics of orphaned collections
The horizontal axis shows the degree of compression, the social pressure, that objects experience. Sleeping Beauty's pit of oblivion represents decompression on the far right (blue); collections at auction are under high pressure on the far left (red).

The vertical axis shows the turnover rate. At the bottom left, it is high for objects in an art and antiques fair, a second-hand shop or an auction house, and very low for a collection in a public museum. Private collections are somewhere in between.

If necessary, we can buy time through the Refugium (decompression with the slowed circulation of orphaned collections) to eventually end up in a museum pit of oblivion à la Sleeping Beauty (decompression with no circulation rate).

The Refugium also allows us to see whether (parts of) collections are being disposed of by sale (i.e. towards compression with a high circulation rate), or being offered to an institutional collector in the form of a museum, library or archive (relative compression without circulation), without there being any immediate cherry-picking by including the entire spectrum of values (ensemble, context) in the assessment.

← Refugium in 's-Hertogenbosch of the former Mariënhage monastery in Woensel near Eindhoven. In times of need and danger, the Augustinians could take refuge in this house, which was later used as the parsonage of the Pieterskerk. The church has now been (unnecessarily) demolished, but the 16th-century refuge remains.

A temporary refuge for orphaned collections

Ever since I started working as a museum consultant, I have thought that it would be a good thing if the Netherlands had a national safety net: a collection refugium or refugium orphanorum. This would be a place where orphaned collections could be temporarily housed here to allow time to decide what to do next. It would have to be a safe place where collections with management problems could find temporary shelter.

I envisage a warehouse, somewhere centrally located in the Netherlands, where collections can be temporarily stored. During this period, the owners will be given the opportunity to develop action plans for the future of their collections. Experts – who are linked to the Refugium – can help the owners with decisions and scenarios. There is, of course, a reasonable charge for the use of such a refuge, the period of refuge is limited and the owner retains ownership of the items at all times.

Sleeping Beauty gets a refuge

When we were developing the Sleeping Beauty Scenario for Jan Anderson's collection, the old idea of a collection refuge came back to me. The basic principle of a refuge is that you take a collection out of circulation for a while and try to slow down time. Sleeping Beauty's castle is a place of oblivion, and that is exactly what collections in danger of being orphaned need. It is important to create peace around an endangered collection. In this sense, the dynamics of the Refugium fit the Sleeping Beauty Scenario perfectly.

It quickly became clear that we could support the Sleeping Beauty scenario with both a Collection Lab and a Refugium. Jan Anderson also saw something in it. So we were able to make both initiatives concrete. The idea is now to create a space in Jan Anderson's depot where drifting collections can be housed for a period of up to 18 months. During this time the owner must find a permanent solution for the collection. Space in Jan's depot is limited. For the time being, therefore, only manageable collections and no large objects can be stored. The Jan Anderson Collections Foundation will use a protocol to determine which collections are suitable for inclusion in the future.

In this way, Jan bequeaths the museum world not only a method – the Sleeping Beauty Scenario – but also a collection sanctuary. Perhaps we should call it the Jan Anderson Refugium (JAR). A kind of safe haven, but for things. And, as with so much of Jan's legacy, the extremes of emotional life compete for precedence. After all, you should want such a Refugium to succeed, shouldn't you?

Manuela Friedrich commentary

A slowly detaching collection

The formidable *Handbook of orderly forgetting* is more than just a manual. Primarily, it is an exposition of a groundbreaking idea to apply consciously forgetting and deliberate non-intervention to preserve and manage cultural heritage. This sounds – let it sink in – somewhat paradoxical. An unwritten rule of Western heritage management is that it involves deliberate and professional care, selection, validation, active or preventive conservation and targeted communication with the public. These actions aim to transmit tangible and intangible heritage as effectively and meaningfully as possible to future generations. So, how can deliberate non-intervention, which could lead to material decay and collective forgetting, contribute to preservation?

Gerard Rooijakkers convinces us that actively intervening in cultural heritage, including its designation and marking, also, strangely enough, presents a threat. Discarding items currently deemed worthless and insignificant risks their permanent loss. Museum and private collections currently regarded as unimportant or ineligible for subsidies become estranged and vanish permanently. Marking heritage can often make cultural artefacts prime targets for destruction in wartime because obliterating cultural heritage erases the adversary's cultural identity. Active intervention, designation and marking thus render cultural heritage vulnerable. Therefore, orderly forgetting, albeit through policy, seems preferable.

Palliative heritage care

The Jan Anderson case offers the opportunity to contemplate orderly forgetting as a strategy for managing and preserving cultural heritage. As Evelien Masselink explains, the entire project has unfolded almost like a fairy tale, with the authors often using symbolic language, such as Sleeping Beauty, well of forgetfulness, bell jar, collection drainage and refugium. Inspired by this figurative tone and in preparation for the symposium in Vlaardingen on 9 June 2023, I ponder the possible symbolism of this gathering. It seems to bear similarities to modern funeral practices. Nowadays, it's quite common to plan your own funeral and tailor it to your individual needs. The symposium convenes to explore the proper farewell to Jan Anderson's collection before it enters dormancy. It's a kind of palliative heritage care.

Gerard Rooijakkers emphasises the imperative of respecting the collection in all Sleeping Beauty scenarios, highlighting its inseparability from respect and care for the collector. I believe employing symbolic, partly poetic language arises from the need to treat both the collection and the collector with care and respect. Ultimately, putting the collection to sleep seems more humane than merely stating our intention to neglect and wash our hands of it temporarily. This handbook has provoked my thoughts as a teacher of heritage theory. There are several aspects I would like to discuss.

Heritage relationships

The first aspect concerns the application of the word "forgetting". In the Sleeping Beauty scenario, the bell jar, the pit of oblivion and the refugium present paradoxes regarding who or what is forgotten. Is it even plausible to discuss forgetting when an entire organisation is dedicated to the practical and organisational setup of Sleeping Beauty? The foundation tasked with managing Sleeping Beauty for future generations is diligently ensuring that the dormant collection is not forgotten. Hence, what exactly are we forgetting?

In my opinion, the aspect of forgetting pertains to what renders a private collection, such as Jan Anderson's, truly unique: the private collector's personal attachment to individual objects and the collection as a whole. The collection becomes an extension, so to speak, of the collector's entire being, which is personally woven and inscribed into everything. Without the collector, the ensemble is incomplete.

Upon the collector's passing, a vital part of the ensemble also perishes, including the key to understanding the collection and uncovering its value and significance. Consequently, validating such a collection posthumously invariably poses challenges. Sleeping Beauty might signify that the collection can slowly detach itself from its original "creator". What is deliberately forgotten is the original collector, the key to understanding the collection. Upon the collection's awakening, this gap enables the new generation to form new attachments. Therefore, Sleeping Beauty primarily marks the end of a heritage relationship and lays the groundwork for new ones. Forgetting is not the focus; rather, the process entails a ritual farewell and orchestrating new encounters "in the spirit" of Jan, where his persona and his relationships with the objects and the city take centre stage.

Irreversible radical amnesia

This brings me to the "information dossier". I understand the appeal of using this dossier to pre-emptively address some factors contributing to failure and risk. However, staying with the Sleeping Beauty metaphor, I also advocate for her to have irreversible amnesia. Though they may be physical equals when the young prince kisses her awake – both young and strikingly attractive – Sleeping Beauty is 100 years older than her handsome prince. Such a significant disparity in thought and action is almost certain to doom any marriage. Therefore, Sleeping Beauty should be granted no memory when she awakens, allowing her and her prince to truly live happily ever after.

By incorporating an information dossier, including audio recordings and collection registration, we effectively inscribe "our" intentions into the collection. Inevitably, future generations will perceive the collection 30 to 50 years from now according to our vision. However, why impose our interpretation? Why not allow the collection to remain untethered, granting future generations the freedom to explore its value autonomously? This approach would spark a fresh process of appropriation and attachment. Therefore, I propose embracing radical amnesia.

Are you overdoing it?

Aspect three concerns postponing validation. The Sleeping Beauty scenario offers a notable benefit: deferring current validation enables future generations to potentially provide a better and more suitable assessment of the collection. I question whether the current validation and selection processes, conducted before the collection is placed in an oubliette, are already abundantly sufficient in the scenario's current design. Various actions involving validation and selection, such as logging information, preventive conservation of textiles and selecting between different collection parts, are underway. I urge a more critical look at this.

Compassionate witnesses

Consider this final thought: Every Sleeping Beauty scenario begins with acknowledging that private collections are inherently intertwined with their collectors. Consequently, caring for the collection involves looking after the collector and all those connected to the collection, including the residents of Vlaardingen. The Sleeping Beauty scenario presents a beautiful and humane approach to providing respectful care for the collection and the collector. Before the collection enters dormancy, I recommend fostering a deeper awareness of what caring for the collection and everyone who feels attached and connected to it entails. These two aspects of care can coincide: through documentation, Vlaardingen's residents can see the objects and the city through Anderson's eyes and lay his belongings to rest. They can act as compassionate witnesses to this farewell and designate themselves and their city as heirs, understanding that their descendants, not themselves, will ultimately assume control and bring this performance to its conclusion.

It is my responsibility to integrate Sleeping Beauty into the Reinwardt Academy's curriculum. Since our students are likely to be the witnesses of Sleeping Beauty's awakening, they are the ones who can judge whether the experiment is a success or not.

9

Communicate

A visual essay on time and imagination

How do we explain to the people of 4016 what substances are where, what their status is and what they were used for? The discovery of the HABOG building for the treatment and storage of radioactive waste in Vlissingen-Oost, or the nuclear power plant in Borssele, can be compared to the discovery of the pyramid of Cheops. Of course, the pyramids themselves were hard to miss, even though they had largely disappeared under the desert sands over time. But for generations, right up to today's Discovery documentaries, we've puzzled over what the Egyptians of the Old and New Kingdoms meant by them, and we still don't know the finer details. And yet even these educated Egyptians could not have imagined that their chains of information would one day be hopelessly broken. They really did everything they could to preserve the significance of their mummified pharaohs and noble families in an advanced system of communication using hieroglyphs – not only on papyrus, but also carved in stone and engraved in gold.

Information transmission chains

So here we are today, Egyptians of the Netherlands, with vital information about deadly materials. We have superior word processors and digital media. But nowhere can I access my flabby floppy disks of who knows how many inches and bytes, let alone the tapes from my Atari of 30 years ago, and there's probably not much left on them either. We can provide a Rosetta Stone as a courtesy – also best practice in ancient Egypt. But it will be and remain a hyper-transitory mess. The nuclear engineers know this too. And so that's where we end up with the permanent transfer of information when our transmission chains fail, and Murphy's Law is almost a law of nature: with instructions and translation keys carved in stone. Gold tablets are also very suitable because they do not corrode, but they are extremely vulnerable to theft and melting down – as the Egyptians experienced in their lifetime. Parchment or rag paper written in waterproof ink – preferably with a fountain pen – is also extremely durable. Archivists would know this. After all, they preserve documents dating back to the early Middle Ages, not to mention the papyri and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Vulnerable to fire and moisture, yes, but still unsurpassed as a carrier of information. The clay tablets of Mesopotamia, dating back more than six millennia, were the first archives and libraries known to the world. And the cave paintings of Le Chauvet, discovered only in 1994 in the Ardèche region of France, have no writing but are highly artistic and communicative. They are 30,000 years old and give us new information about the fauna of the Ice Age.

Depots as landmarks

When it comes to depots, the Egyptian pyramids are unsurpassed in design and execution. Almost impenetrable, they have no windows, only secret passages filled with sand. The contents are inaccessible to mortals, and all manner of curses await the explorer who ventures inside. Although the material stored within is taboo, the depots themselves are powerful monuments. They are the ultimate landmarks of a culture.

The pyramids contain precious remains, not waste. That's a big difference. But whether it is the precious remains of royal dynasties or worthless waste with an enormous half-life, the contents are equally taboo. Without exaggeration, the pyramid complexes can be seen as ancient nuclear power stations, producing and radiating the inalienable core values of a society. Our modern nuclear power stations are just as much landmarks; we just don't want to see them as such, and they certainly weren't built with that intention. But if we pass over that and really delve into the implicit symbolic motivations

← The 30,000-year-old Chauvet-Pont d'Arc cave in the Ardèche region of France is a vivid reminder of what was important to the Cro-Magnon people. Discovered only in 1994, this late Palaeolithic cave, with its pristine Ice Age paintings, also points to the drastic changes in habitat and climate that will determine the fate of cultural heritage artefacts in the future. Society, let alone the world of cultural heritage, is ill-prepared for this, especially as deep time does not mean that change is relatively slow.

behind the architectural design of these plants, it becomes clear that here too, pride in technological progress has found a radioactive fallout. The Atomium of the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels gives us just enough distance in time to appreciate this again. An analysis of the formal language of power stations is revealing in this respect: from quasi-medieval castles with classical goddesses such as Elektra, to the glass production halls of New Objectivity, like anti-spaces in the most remote places. The fingerprint of time is clearly present, whether consciously or not.

↑ The Atomium still conveys the atomic optimism of the 1958 World Fair in Brussels with monumental imagination.

An orange waste depot

COVRA, the Dutch nuclear waste processing and storage company, has housed storage facilities for low and intermediate level radioactive waste since 1992. Since 2003, the Netherlands as also acquired a HABOG (a building for highly active treatment and storage), which has the capacity to store 190,000 m3 of waste. The HABOG has 1.70 m thick concrete floors, walls and roofs and is resistant to earthquakes, explosions and violent impacts. The waste will be stored there for at least 100 years. The building is painted a striking orange, not coincidentally the signal colour of the Dutch royal family. Famous formulae of the physicists Albert Einstein and Max Planck are written in green on the outer walls. During the storage period of a century, the activity and therefore the temperature of the waste will gradually decrease. This will be visible on the outside of the building. With each painting, the storage bunker will become lighter in colour, so that in 100 years' time, it will be a white building with green lettering.

Monumental marking: Duvelskut dolmen

The many burial mounds, and in particular the well-preserved dolmens (known in Dutch as *hunebedden*) prove that in prehistoric times no effort was spared to create ritual repositories for the bodies of people with high social status. These *hunebedden* consist of an elongated stone chamber formed by upright supporting stones and horizontal covering stones. The whole was originally covered with a mound of sand or turf, which in turn was marked with crown stones. The *hunebedden* as we know them in Drenthe in the Netherlands date back to the New Stone Age, more than 5000 years ago. These megaliths are among the oldest monumental structures in Europe.

As with the more recent pyramids in Egypt, the builders of the *hunebedden* decided to erect an imposing and permanent monument to their important dead. For this purpose they used natural stones, rare in our region, which had travelled with the ice from Scandinavia as glacial erratics. The Reverend Johan Picardt from Coevorden, in his 1660 *Short description of some forgotten and hidden antiquities of the provinces and countries between the North Sea, the Yssel, Emse and Lippe*, assumed that this must have been the work of giants or demons. Another author even referred to Tacitus' description of

The *hunebed* or dolmen of Duvelskut on Ortelius' map of 1571.

the Pillars of Hercules. This wonder of the world, now thought to have been located in the Strait of Gibraltar, was said to have stood in Rolde in Drenthe. The *hunnebed*, first mentioned in 1547, with the intriguing folk name of Duvelskut, was thought to be its remains. In his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1571), Abraham Ortelius shows a section of the area in Roman times on the map of Friesland. This shows *hunebed* D-17-18 with a picture of the legendary columns and the caption *Columnae Herculis hodie [now called] Duvels Cutz*.

In Christian cosmology, the sacred was concentrated in and around the church, at the centre of the human community. In the non-Christian worldview, sacred places were usually located outside civilisation, in forests, swamps and near rivers. Prehistoric places of worship were so monumental in the landscape that later inhabitants had to give them meaning, whatever their forgotten original function. They were the work of giants, pagan demons or the Christian devil. The dolmen at Rolde, known as Duivelskut, combines these interpretations as a dangerous place that provided access to the underworld. It is fascinating that these structures still exist and that they still have meaning for us modern people in the form of ritual burial sites. If you want to preserve something well and ultimately pass on its meaning over many generations, you should not create an anonymous, invisible depository, but mark it in the landscape in a lasting way. This is the lesson of the pyramids and dolmens.

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Tree Trunk Chair by Dutch artist and designer Maarten Baas (1978), who was inspired by games such as hide and seek. The chair is created through the patient use of time. A fast-growing tree will take 40 to 60years to form into a shape. The more patience, the better the result. Similarly, in the "wooden age" of the late Middle Ages and early modern period, nature was forced into the curved shapes needed for the frames of ship hulls.

Baas refers to the culture of slowness, with the added idea that something that has taken a lot of time and attention to create should not be thrown away so quickly. A form of eco-design with optimal storage, it is also a form of design for future generations – the ones who will be able to reap the benefits.

↑
An imaginary climate conference in Munich in the year 2051 as a visually powerful confrontational statement aimed at the short-term thinking of politicians and policy-makers. In addition to a growing contradiction between scientists and populists, there is a broken conversation with young and future generations with Greta Thunberg as a global icon. Out of frustration at not being listened to and the denial of the conceivable in the future, which turns out to be much closer than expected, scientists are also resorting to action.

↗
The Italian artist Giuseppe Penone (1947) peels trees by removing the annual rings, revealing the young tree of 40 years ago, hidden inside the trunk. These are works about time and nature. In addition to their poetic beauty, they also convey an important message: that what is contains everything that was.

Evelien Masselink

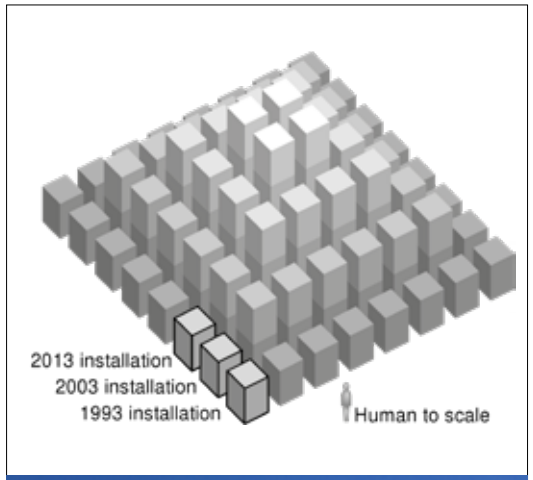
The documentary by Daan van Paridon

The way Jan Anderson collects, exhibits and tells stories is unique. You can let others talk about it, you can capture his voice, you can see him at work in photos and films. Capturing this and later sharing it with everyone through a documentary is not only a tribute to his tireless efforts in building his collection, but also a guarantee of participation. Jan appears in the Vlaardingen newspapers at least three times a quarter, and this will be very different when Jan is no longer there and the museum no longer has any public activities. How will we keep Jan's memory alive? How long will it take? And how much effort should we put into keeping people involved during the period of rest, without being able to offer much in return?

It's about responsibility. By recording things now, by showing Jan's own version of his life as a collector, and by taking the steps we have taken to carefully enable the implementation of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, we are contributing to the success of the project. As this approach has not been used before for such collections, the images and film material fit well with their explanation.

We are considering offering the municipality of Vlaardingen a look at the collection from time to time, for example on Open Monument Day. How is the sleeping lady? Not being able to enter a place makes heritage even more desirable. Vlaardingen is the first municipality to try such an exciting experiment. But it requires good communication. And that, in turn, means responsibility for registration before the closure and for communicating the status quo afterwards. This task will fall on the shoulders of the board of the soon-to-be-dormant collection.

Playing with deep time



Wemdinger Zeitpyramide

In 1993, on the occasion of the 1200th anniversary of the town of Wemding in Germany, the artist Manfred Laber laid the foundation stone for a "time pyramid" to be completed in 1200 years, i.e. in 3193, in order to make people aware of the importance of deep time. The time pyramid is a heavy monument of 120 concrete blocks, placed at ten-year intervals. The fourth "decade stone" was placed on 9 September 2023, to great public interest.

The Ecocathedral

In the 1970s, the philosopher and "ecotect" Louis le Roy (1924-2012) started a land art project in the Friesian town of Mildam (in the municipality of Heerenveen), in which the processes between nature and humanity are to be studied over a long period of time, with the intention of lasting until the year 3000. Surplus building materials are reused, allowing flora and fauna to flourish.

Future Library Project

Scottish artist Katie Paterson's *Framtidsbiblioteket* in Oslo consists of a specially designed room in which a writer's manuscript is deposited every year for a century. The manuscripts will not be read until 2114. The selected authors will therefore be writing for an unknown future audience. The paper for the editions will be provided by a specially planted forest of 1,000 trees with 100 annual rings, like chapters in a book.

Clock of the Long Now

Danny Hills has been developing a mechanical clock since 1986. It was inaugurated on 31 December 1999. The clock ticks only once a year, the hands move every century and the cuckoo calls every millennium. The creator was able to see this at the turn of the millennium, knowing and expecting that the cuckoo would only reappear 1,000 years later. The "magical" year 2000 has not only given rise to watches and time capsules, but also to long-lasting musical performances.

↑ The northern lights are reflected in the Global Seed Vault on Spitsbergen (see p. 21).

Longplayer

On 1 January 2000 in London's Millennium Dome, British composer Jem Finer launched *Longplayer*, with a nod to the long-playing vinyl record, which, using algorithms, will play uninterrupted for 1,000 years. The performance is not tied to any particular technology, old or yet to be invented, and can currently be heard as an internet stream or occasional live performance.

The Halberstadt performance

The first mention of an organ in the Sankt Buchardi church in Halberstadt (Germany) was in 1361. In the year 2000, a performance of John Cage's piece *As Slow as Possible (ASLSP)* began, which will end in the year 2640. For the piece, which lasts 639 years, a special organ was built to produce a very long and slow tone using bellows and sandbags on the pedals. The next note will be played on 5 August 2026.

Max Meijer commentary

A worst case might be the best case

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario is a publication full of unabashed enthusiasm for both Jan Anderson and Sleeping Beauty and testifies to an infectious belief in this distinctive, radical and thus innovative approach. The inspired authors eagerly employ metaphors in their handbook – which, in my opinion, is more of a manifesto – utilising flowery language that is often helpful but sometimes obfuscating. In the land of Sleeping Beauty, items are either put to sleep or awakened; objects have drifted, historical shipwrecks prove to be magnets of greed, and fate often lurks, sometimes in the form of a monster that guards and devours treasures. Regardless, the tone is original and accessible – qualities that most policy texts lack entirely.

I have no comments regarding the method. Will it all work? Will Sleeping Beauty be a game changer, challenging the Guidelines for the Rejection of Museum Objects? For now, the expertise, thoroughness and breadth of the initiating coalition of the willing give me no pause for doubt. It is a scenario where practically any outcome will be a success. Time, not us, will tell. Non-intervention, orderly forgetting… Whatever emerges from the museum pit of oblivion in 30 years, whatever life Sleeping Beauty may have been granted, every outcome will be the right one by then. So, don't expect heritage-theoretical or methodological reflections from me – I'm sharing observations on Sleeping Beauty's social embedding.

The Faro Convention

Ownership, representation and accessibility are concepts that closely align with the Faro Convention, which the Netherlands ratified in January 2024. The Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum] has achieved a beautiful balance of ownership, representation and accessibility. And that balance is called Jan Anderson. Legally, it may be more complicated, and I know indispensable others are involved. However, for me, Anderson is unequivocally the owner (observation 1). Autonomous and idiosyncratic, he acts as the voice of the local heritage community. Everything he has collected represents his vision and passion (observation 2). Visitors to the collection see it through his eyes and understand how he perceived and perceives the world. Anderson also provides access to and unlocks his collections (observation 3).

At a time to be determined, this will change. The representation will remain intact, but public accessibility will disappear, and ownership will shift (not so much de jure, but de facto) from Anderson to external institutional parties. This transition serves as a prerequisite for orderly forgetting.

Why do the directors of Sleeping Beauty associate "forgetting" with simultaneous "investment in supportive communities"? After all, this isn't about "paternalistically passing on" but about "supporting and transferring", emphasising active participation rather than passive involvement. Supporting and transferring is especially required regarding future preservation through development, as correctly argued on page 170.

While it's understandable to try to win over the local heritage community in the context of publicly accessible heritage, the situation becomes more complex when dealing with a collection that will undergo radical abstinence. Nonetheless, the *Sleeping Beauty Scenario* desires "lasting attention for communication and storytelling… dialogue with those that support heritage communities as well as with volunteers involved with the museum, the residents of Vlaardingen, the students of the Reinwardt Academy and not forgetting the general public, society as a whole. […] After all, just like in the fairy tale, the inhabitants need to know that behind those impassable thickets is a sleeping lady who has been deliberately forgotten to preserve her better." Despite this, we are left guessing about why communication is needed, how often it should happen or what methods will be used.

Silence, please, but not entirely.

Communication, whether information, public relations or public affairs, is inherently obligating and therefore always serves the sender's interest. Is the goal to anticipate a favourable outcome? To build support? While these goals appear straightforward, are they appropriate in this context? The outcome isn't ours to decide; it rests with future generations. Support seems primarily secured through the – hopefully sustainable – involvement of the municipality and some of the Netherlands' largest and most respected professional heritage institutions.

Regarding public communication, I only perceive two crucial moments in the Sleeping Beauty scenario: the moments of truth concerning concealment and awakening. Beyond these, there should be no further public discourse, no news-making, no noise. However, what happens if recipients react, express opinions, or make demands? What if they seek visibility, exhibitions, loans or additions? What if the dream of every heritage manager who works in the public domain emerges: the manifest will to own? In such a scenario, a premature end to the formulated ambitions will loom large. The handbook seems to confirm this: "Sealing and unsealing are the primary interventions. In the meantime, orderly forgetting is imperative." As mentioned, this radical approach mandates keeping the door shut firmly, even on Open Monument Day, held annually nationwide. Disturbing the silence risks undermining the very principle we seek to uphold.

Does this mean complete silence? No, not at all. I suggest directing communication towards sharing the relevant results stemming from the project's dynamic components. Share research findings from the Heritage Lab and case studies from the Refugium. Additionally, consider referring to the city's other museum, Museum Vlaardingen, which is described as the "reliable custodian of the city's historical heritage" in its mission statement. Despite its notable absence from the handbook and scenario, it seems to be the appropriate place to educate and keep future generations curious about heritage.

BZN 17: the museum as an intermediary

Finally, I want to reference a case study in which I was personally involved and The *Sleeping Beauty Scenario* presents as an example of poor practice: The BZN 17 Case, also known as the 17th-century "Palmwood shipwreck" off the coast of Texel. It involved excessive local community involvement and ownership, leading to the recovery of artefacts by divers from Texel between 2015 and 2019, despite this being prohibited. Notably, it brought The Dress to the surface. In 2017, the province of North Holland commissioned Birgitta Feijen and me to investigate the best museum for presenting these finds. Our conclusion became a reality, and the artefacts are now on display at Museum Kaap Skil on the small island of Texel.

The one-sided labelling as poor practice disregards the potential tension between stakeholders and rights holders, emotion and policy, and perspectives and motives. It's essential to seek connections in such cases, mindful of the Faro Convention principles. Museum Kaap Skil, rooted in the Texel community and originating as a beachcomber museum, consistently played such an intermediary role. In the hefty publication Wereldvondsten uit een Hollands schip [World Discoveries from a Dutch Ship] by, among others, Arent Vos, a researcher for the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, the focus thankfully isn't on magnifying initial missteps but on highlighting outcomes: "an unprecedented collaboration between disciplines and an intensive discussion […] where old and new knowledge and networks converged." I hope for a similar result in the Sleeping Beauty case.

↑ The "wedding dress" from the Palmwood shipwreck at Museum Kaap Skil in Oudeschild. Initially, the dress was likely made of light-coloured silk. Its current brownish colour results from nearly four centuries on the seabed. The dress is covered with silver decorations, consisting of small silver plates woven into the silk, forming love knots in a repeating pattern of intertwined hearts (see also p. 30).

10

Hand down

The discipline of inheritance

In Dutch, the so-called Uur U [the H-hour] refers to the moment of truth. The moment when, after much preparation, something important happens. The phrase is best known as the title of a famous poem, written in 1936: *Het Uur U [The H-hour]* by Martinus Nijhoff. He used the term in the context of the indefinite threat of war. The U-hour comes from the military world and denotes the moment of action. In France they speak of the *heure H* and the British have their *H-hour*. The repeated letter H – or U in Dutch – linguistically reinforces the crucial importance of the concept of the hour.

When clearing out the parental home, the H-hour for children is the final departure or death of the surviving parent: an uncomfortable experience that many people of a certain age will share. Now you have at your disposal, literally and figuratively, all the things that you were not even allowed to touch as a child. An inheritance can be both a burden and a blessing. Do you really want to know your parents' secrets, and can the self be a stranger too? And if you don't want them out of embarrassment, do you keep them anyway, tucked away in a box, or do you – if you can bear it – throw them away?

Sleeping Beauty has two key moments. The first H-hour is the sealing of the collections, when the owner-collector closes his eyes for the last time. Here, bequeathing is not only about handing down to future generations, but is also about practicing abstinence. The second H-hour is the collection's "wake-up kiss". For the sake of future generations, Sleeping Beauty doesn't have an alarm clock.

↑ Of course, the Anderson Collection contains items that can be valued very differently. In the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, both so-called "woke objects" and controversial heritage go to sleep for a generation or more, only to be awakened and renewed.

On the transmission of heritage through time

The future is uncertain, a strange and uncharted territory. Even the course of the near future seems to overwhelm society. On the other hand, we believe we have mastered the past, which seems so familiar that we unthinkingly refer to it as "heritage", and regard ourselves, generation after generation, as the natural heirs of distant ancestors, about whom we usually know little or nothing. Their cultural categories (beautiful-ugly, nice-nasty, etc.) are so different from ours, and we wouldn't even be able to understand their colloquialisms. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to our future descendants. An underestimated quality of the past is that it is profoundly alien to us. And it is precisely this essential experience of foreignness that we neutralise by reducing the past to a safe, trustworthy heritage that is "ours".

The experience of foreignness

The reliability of safe stories from the past has looked shaky lately, with discussions about the darker sides of our Western past, about slavery and colonialism and witch-burning – things for which governments sooner or later apologise. Even unpleasant legacies are heritage. But the cult of the local and familiar is still widely practiced within (and especially outside) the world of heritage. See for example the persistent political demand for a national history museum. We easily appropriate a foreign past, be it dolmens or the recently discovered Doggerland in what is now the North Sea.

What is the Rijksmuseum van Oudheden [the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities] actually supposed to do with an Egyptian temple? Would we still accept such a "poisoned chalice" today? Probably not. This is something that has changed in the world of museum heritage in a relatively short period of time. The temple in question doesn't even come from a colonial context, because that would have completely different connotations. By definition, museumification means detaching. Heritage always implies appropriation. As a result, we find a dark past disturbing.

History shares this strangeness with the future. Both are terra incognita, a largely unknown territory – despite the best efforts of historians and futurologists. Just as we reduce the past to "our own" when we create heritage, so we try to appropriate the future by determining now what "our" heritage will be. We have an incessant tendency to appropriate not only the past, but also the future.

In everything we do, nothing is ever free or easy. Although it often doesn't seem so in the hustle and bustle of everyday life, time is our greatest friend. It is pointless to deny or to resist time, either as an individual or as a society. You have to use time as a force that works for you. One quality of the future, as the present tense of desire, is that it will be alien anyway.

Holding and handing down

When we discuss the value and significance of heritage for the future, we always talk very

instrumentally about “passing it on”. But for those who really want to preserve elements of culture for the future, cultural policy should be based less on institutions and more on supporting communities: the groups that are the bearers of rituals and traditions, of knowledge and skills. They are the ones who give meaning to objects, landscapes and heritage, and thus preserve them on their own initiative. In 2022, the capitalised value of volunteer work in the heritage sector in Zuid-Holland was calculated to be at least 124 million euros per year.

However, we need a much wider community of support than just the volunteers in the heritage sector. Without a heritage community, the strategy of creating an institution (a museum, a foundation or an association) for the purpose of preservation is doomed in the long run. The tendency is to continue to reinforce the institutions. But it is better to invest in the communities that sustain them, to give them control so that they can be taken seriously, to make them vital and resilient and able to adapt to an uncertain, alien future. For those who cannot adapt in this cultural ecosystem are evolutionarily doomed to extinction.

It's not about paternalistic passing on, but about holding and handing down. We therefore propose that, from now on, instead of talking about non-commital *participation*, we talk about *having a part in*, when it’s about participation with control, and about *holding and handing down* when it comes to future conservation through development. This is entirely in the spirit of the Faro Treaty, which the Council of Europe set up in Portugal in 2005. The Dutch government finally ratified this treaty in 2024 and has gave it substance in cultural practice. It was about time, in view of the future.

Evelien Masselink

Guidelines for the support and management of volunteers

A heritage volunteer is someone who is committed to supporting the management, conservation and experience of heritage for the general audience. That’s what the volunteer does for an organisation or initiative, in a structured way and on a structural or temporary basis, out of their own motivation and with limited financial compensation. But how many volunteers are there in the heritage sector? What do they do, and in what categories? And what motivates them?

Zuid-Holland’s heritage volunteers in focus

In 2021, the Erfgoedhuis [Heritage House] Zuid-Holland carried out a study in order to get a better picture of the heritage volunteers. The following findings came to the fore:

A. The role of the heritage volunteer is changing. In 2005, the European Convention of Faro was established, which laid the foundation for a policy on the socialisation of heritage. In the Netherlands too, the implementation of this convention has attracted attention in national and local heritage policy, in which heritage volunteers have a prominent place.

B. There are more than 40,000 active heritage volunteers in Zuid-Holland. More than 37,000 of them work in the field of material heritage, spread over more than 1,100 organisations: museums, country estates, archives and churches; and more than 3,400 in the field of immaterial heritage, spread over almost 50 organisations), such as windmills, flower parades and horse markets. The majority of heritage volunteers (62%) are aged 65 or older. There are more male (55%) than female (45%) volunteers. Their cultural background is predominantly Dutch (98%). They mainly carry out structural work (89%). The research also shows that heritage volunteers are particularly active in passing on heritage to younger generations (82%) and in telling historical stories (73%). Organisations themselves work with heritage volunteers out of financial necessity (56%) and because of the need for specific knowledge and skills (52%).

C. Heritage volunteers in the surveyed institutions carry out a wide range of activities, particularly in education (70%), archiving or recording tasks and assisting with public relations or welcoming and guiding visitors (69%). In addition, around half of the institutions report that volunteers are involved in policy or governance, digitisation, public activation or heritage management. Activities such as organising events, catering, walking tours, indexing of archives, maintenance and administration, financial support, catering, etc., are also reported.

D. The use of volunteers by heritage organisations seems to have two main reasons. The most commonly cited is financial need. Almost as many cite the specific expertise or skills of volunteers, as well as the fact that volunteering is a social responsibility of the organisation (44%), and that it promotes a sense of community and social cohesion (41%). Bringing people together is therefore seen as important. Finally, other reasons given are that the organisation was set up and organised by volunteers, that the organisation is not viable with paid staff, or that the organisation is too small for permanent staff.

Volunteers at the Jan Anderson Regional Museum in Vlaardingen

Most of the above conclusions and findings can be seen at the Streekmuseum [Jan Anderson Regional Museum]. The commitment, the desire to take care of things properly, to maintain and digitally record them, is enormous, and the involvement is correspondingly high. During the preparations for the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, the volunteers were given a number of new activities, which meant that most felt an extra incentive to continue. These included adapting the facilities in the shipping company warehouse (Jan Doets installed and moved metres of shelving) and a major cleaning initiative in the clothing and textiles collection when mould was found there. Students from the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam, who were documenting the condition of the inventory in the depot as part of a study assignment, quickly came across the mould outbreak in the clothing collection. The clothes, not wrapped in plastic, were hanging too close together in a room with inadequate ventilation.

↑ On 9 June 2023, during the symposium Sleeping Beauty: Orderly Forgetting in the Grote Kerk, Hans Bakker was honoured by Lianne van Kalken, Vlaardingen’s alderman for culture, for his work as a volunteer at the Jan Anderson Regional Museum. The photographs of the objects from the Anderson Collection in this book were taken by him.

Removing mould from the textile collection

Although the Sleeping Beauty Scenario means that, in principle, there is no intervention during the dormant period, it proved desirable to clean the clothing collection properly before the forthcoming sealing. With advice from the RCE, we were able to draw up a plan to invest in the cleaning and storage of the extensive clothing collection.

This resulted in a large sub-project to which everyone contributed. Jan Anderson funded the purchase of vacuum cleaners with HEPA filters, rolls of museum Tyvek and new hangers, acid-free boxes, acid-free wrapping paper, gloves, FFP2 face masks, Tyvek overalls for all staff and related items to move the clothes to a higher floor. And Jan called the press.

The initiators of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario (sometimes with their partners), the volunteers from the collection team of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum and students from the Reinwardt Academy all volunteered to clean the clothes, photograph them again, (better) digitally record them and store them in improved conditions in no more than a week. Enormous effort, the will to get this sub-project right, and the satisfying feeling that it was important work marked this week. It helped that Jan Anderson invited a journalist and photographer twice during the cleaning sessions to underline the recognition of this work, and others provided good food and treats. They may seem like small details, but these and related actions have a positive impact and keep spirits high.

Emptying Jan's hard drive

Another additional sub-project in preparation for the dormant period was the recording of Jan's knowledge of the origins of the objects. The collection registration volunteers hung an audio device around Jan's neck into which he recorded his information verbally so that it could be added to the database as an audio file. The volunteers had to be able to operate the recorder and were given a short training session by Gerard Rooijakkers on how to ask Jan the right questions as he described the objects. We jokingly called it "emptying Jan's hard drive", but this information is still available today, and not for much longer. We can still add the kind of information that our ancestors forgot to leave with their own bequeathed objects. It is important that the volunteers are willing and able to do this. Jan does not provide contextual information in a vacuum, but in a specific narrative situation, where the status of the listener partly determines the quality of the information. Again, this is the sum of time and knowledge that continues to come from commitment and responsibility. What would Jan be without his volunteers?

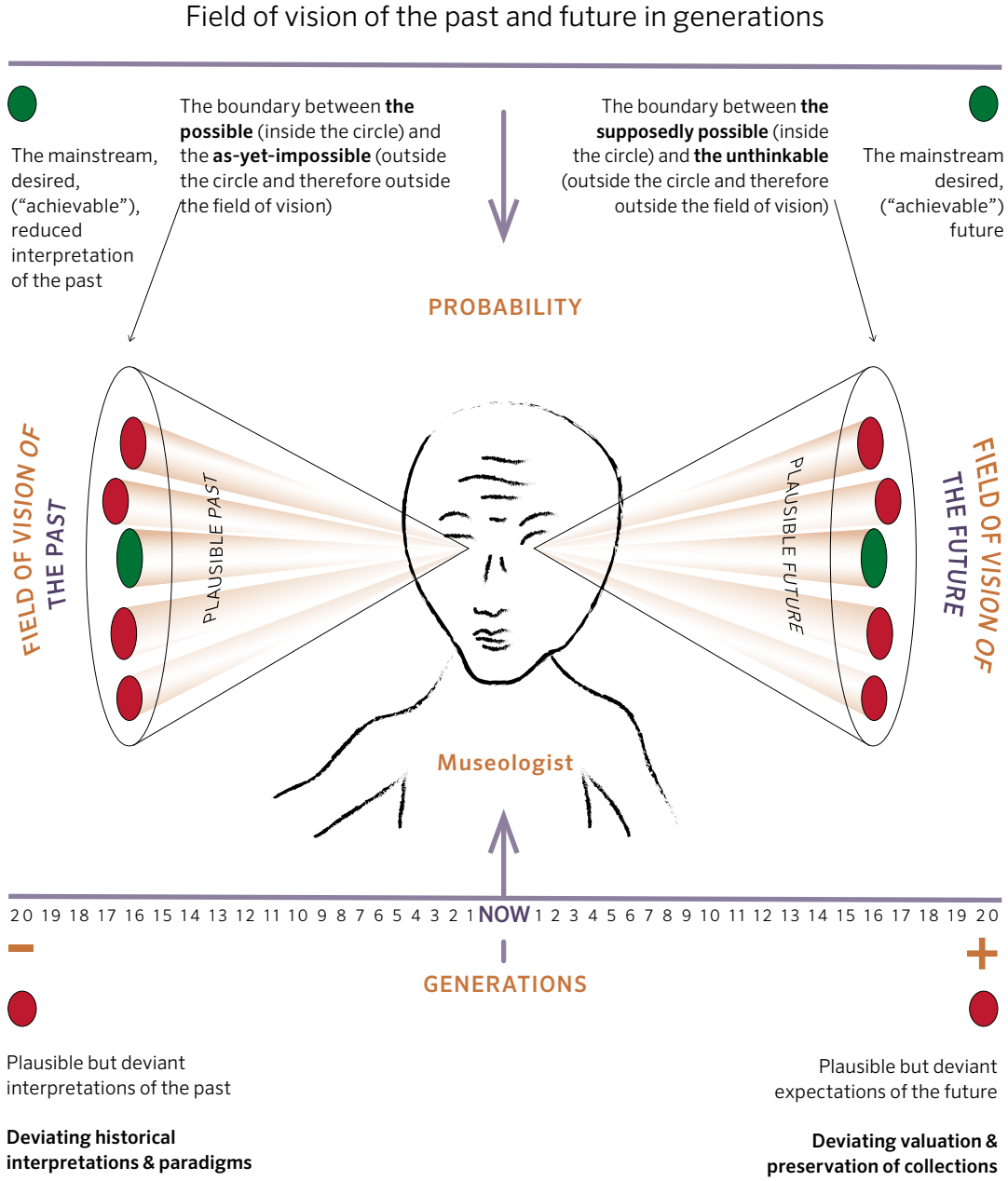
→
We are the times: The field of vision with probabilities of the past and future in generations (freely adapted from Anders Högberg).
The ancient church father Augustine said: "We are the times. As we are, so are the times." For Augustine, the past is the present tense of the memory. The future, then, is the present tense of expectation. This ancient philosophical idea is still valid and relevant. The museologist in this diagram, including rods and cones, looks back in time with one eye, and into the future with the other. The green bar in the historical eye represents the authorised view of history, in the current historical paradigm. But as we go back in generations (on the x-axis), the uncertainty factor about plausible versions of the past increases: these are divergent historical interpretations and paradigms. Whatever falls outside the cone we consider impossible, but this says more about our limited field of vision than about reality.

Probability becomes negative here. The same applies to plausible visions of the future. The most likely future within the current paradigm is centrally located and is green; the unthinkable and deviant expectations things are red, but still plausible. This is the domain of the deviant valuation and preservation of collections based on non-intervention.

Working with the next generation

Who better to add to this experiment than the people who will be working in the heritage sector in 30 years' time? This thought, and to be honest the need for extra hands, led us to contact the Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam at an early stage. The tutors visited Jan, saw his working methods, his museum and his depot, and looked for a place for the Jan Anderson Regional Museum and the Sleeping Beauty Method in the curriculum from year one to year four. It took some time to find suitable subjects and space, because education at the Reinwardt follows a fixed annual plan. Within this plan there is plenty of room for practical work. But changes in time are difficult. So what was appropriate in terms of content, suitable for the students and as input for this project? In the third year, a six-week block in which students work on more complex practical projects, proved to be highly appropriate. A group of 15 students came to the museum for six weeks as reinforcements. The students worked in three sub-groups on information, conservation and communication topics.

We are the times



How to organise a Sleeping Beauty Scenario for two generations?

Jan Anderson's collections will be stored for 30 years (or more) in a depot where they will be museologically forgotten. Experience shows that forgotten things are, in the end, the best preserved. A basic repository, where we can choose a certain degree of accessibility (from full retrieval and thus location registration, to a full-fledged pit of oblivion as a ritual depot). We will let time do its work, as far as validation is concerned.

In addition to all sorts of fundamental issues that we need to explore, it is important to fully develop the concept of the "museological pit of oblivion" in practical terms. In order to put a bell jar over the collection (both in the warehouse/depot and in the museum and its outbuildings), we need to solve a lot of practical problems.

The task for the students is: how to organise a Sleeping Beauty Scenario for 150,000 objects, for two generations? Within this main question each group focuses on one theme: information, conservation or communication. The camera crew recorded their motivation for taking part and their thoughts on the experiment.

A cooperation agreement

The Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland then proposed a cooperation agreement – independent of the subjects, students and sub-assignments – because we wanted to formalise and secure the cooperation on the management level as well. This will ensure the continuity of the project. The parties to the agreement are: the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, RCE], the Reinwardt Academy, the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland and, of course, Jan Anderson himself, as director of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum.

The RCE is a party that was already involved in the process, through the contribution of senior advisor Frank Bergevoet, as was the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland. The arrival of three directors of heritage institutions, each with their own part to play in saving for the future, is also an important step. The agreement was signed on 10 November 2021. The Alderman and Mayor of Vlaardingen were also present.

Press release on the signing

With the signing of a letter of intent on 10 November 2021, four heritage institutions will start an experimental project to develop a conservation strategy for this museum. The Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland, the Reinwardt Academy (AHK) and the Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) will work together with the initiators Jan Anderson and ethnologist Gerard Rooijakkers, to determine how the museum's collection can be passed down through generations and rediscovered in the future.

The approach is called the Sleeping Beauty Scenario. Like Sleeping Beauty, the collection is seen as "sleeping", only to "awaken" many decades from now. The intention is that there will be there no active human intervention during this dormant phase, so that our descendants will find the collection in its original state. They will also find an instruction manual that is being developed as part of this project.

↑ Example of a project contract and implementation plan as prepared by the students of the Reinwardt Academy. The plans are taken from the final reports submitted.

↗ The signing of the letter of intent in the Jan Anderson Regional Museum in Vlaardingen on 10 November 2021. From left to right: Jan Anderson; Susan Lammers, director of the Cultural Heritage Agency; Marielle Hendriks, director of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland; and Nel van Dijk, director of the Reinwardt Academy.

Fairy tale or reality?

The museum is being put into a time capsule, so to speak. That doesn't mean that nothing will happen. Even this period of inactivity, which can last for a generation, requires careful preparation. A number of museum experts are working on a strategy to preserve the vast collection in its entirety for the future, without any interim decollection or museum presentation. The objects will be kept in stable climatic conditions and as much information about the collection as possible will be preserved in a permanent way. The approach to this type of collection is new in the Netherlands and may be of value to other actors in the cultural-historical field. The heritage sector will be kept informed about the Sleeping Beauty Scenario and the preparatory steps through workshops and publications.

The aim of the collaborative project is to develop a durable and innovative method of preservation that will enable not only the heritage, but also the related decision-making, to be transferred to a future society.

Adoption

Now that the directors have agreed to work together to secure a permanent place for the Sleeping Beauty Scenario on the curriculum of the Reinwardt Academy, the board of the Stichting Collecties Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Collections Foundation] wishes to appoint a Reinwardt lecturer as a board member once the museum closes its doors. This board member will be in contact with the tutors and the director of the Reinwardt Academy about the implementation of the subjects and the presence of the students in Jan's depot and house. With a good programme, clearly stating which tutor comes to Vlaardingen, in which year and with how many students, only "hands off" monitoring is important. Sometimes, however, we will have to think along about whether the students' task is still relevant and up-to-date when they enter the depot and the museum. In the event of adjustment, the Reinwardt Academy team will be consulted. Ideally, there will always be a Reinwardt tutor on the board to ensure continuity in the cooperation with this training institute.

Uncertainty savvy

The aim of Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland is not just to carry out procedural fill-in-the-blank exercises, (think of those anaemic strategic vision plans for churches), but to focus on the development of new visions and strategies (through a business case developer; business product development is always also content development).

The Sleeping Beauty working method will be established during the journey, rather than being set in stone from the outset. After all, by discussing the idea first with Jan Anderson and his board, and then with our colleagues in the heritage field, it has grown from a thought to a possible case study, and from there to a project plan, a guide or an approach with an "instruction manual". And although 2020-2023 was all about the start, the kick-off, we are still at the beginning of an exciting journey, in which the exact start date, let alone the outcome, is not certain.

The future is still uncertain, but as an initiator we have a responsibility. That is why we are providing the next generation with digital background information and making it as easy as possible for them to use it, for example by involving tomorrow's generation in this process. Jan Anderson's involvement in this new approach shows that he can think outside the box.

In addition to the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency, which receives a call every week asking for help with a collection that needs to be preserved for future generations, the consultants at the Erfgoedhuis are also frequently confronted with this problem. The Sleeping Beauty Method provides a new toolbox, but it cannot be applied universally. Nevertheless, by applying it to other collections, we can formulate principles that will enable such an approach to get off to a good start and be used by others in the heritage field.

But at the same time, we don't know what will happen in 30 years' time – whether the method will have been imitated in the Netherlands and the Flemish Region under the same name, or whether some of the demarcation lines will have had to be moved along the way, because of changes in the times, the administrative field or the vision of heritage. Not to mention the fact that we can now see the effects of climate change on our repositories of heritage.

So we are providing practical tools so that other museums and local history groups can use them in order to consider or start using the method. At the same time, we recognise that the approach will never be 100% complete. Therefore, we cannot provide an exercise in completing the process, but only tailored advice.

Evelien Masselink

A generic method

The Jan Anderson Regional Museum is the first "client" to apply this method. This is why the Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland and Gerard Rooijakkers will all be at the coalface, helping to implement parts of the method. Other museums and collections managers will be able to benefit from their insights.

There are also special circumstances that apply to the Jan Anderson Regional Museum that don't apply to other museums. Specific adaptations are therefore needed. Consider the following questions.

The buildings

Jan's depot, a national monument dating from 1880, was once a shipping company warehouse. It's an old relic, with all the charm and the technical shortcomings of an uninhabited listed building. This warehouse doesn't have the best storage conditions to house a collection for 30 years. As it is too expensive for all concerned to work with these conditions, it was therefore decided to use the Sleeping Beauty Method only in the private house and the adjacent museum. A different solution was found for the depot, which will provide two unique functions for the heritage world: the Refugium and the Collection Lab (see Chapter 8).

The archive

The Vlaardingen Stadsarchief [City Archives] would like to take a number of collection items on long-term loan before the Sleeping Beauty Scenario comes into effect. As the initiators, we would like to be able to justify this, because the non-intervention approach would change as a result of this cooperation. We discussed the possibilities and consequences of this choice, and weighed up the pros and cons of the participation of the Vlaardingen's city archives in the future scenario of the Jan Anderson Regional Museum. In terms of support, we would like to have a local

base, and by making part of Jan's archive searchable, the community will also get something that was previously unsearchable in Jan's attic.

What will soon become the archivalia *cum annexis* to the city archives, will remain recognisable as the Jan Anderson corpus, and will not be dismantled, divided or de-duplicated. This applies to the archives, documentation and topographical-historical images (photographs, prints, glass plates, audio-visual material and negatives), both analogue and digital, which complement the collections and archives of the Vlaardingen city archives. Contrary to the usual practice, the principle of *respect des fonds* is not applied here. Everything therefore remains together as an ensemble.

Vlaardingen's city archives will preserve these pieces in such a way that they will last longer than 30 years. The archival documents that have been transferred from the Regional Museum to the city archives remain the property of the Jan Anderson Collections foundation, but their transfer for an indefinite period of time to the municipal archives means that they can be researched and consulted. This decision may be at odds with the Sleeping Beauty Scenario, but as this plan was made before the scenario began, and the Vlaardingen community values it and will remain involved for the next 30 years, all parties could agree to this outcome.

Vlaardingen as a heritage community

The municipality of Vlaardingen is a great ambassador, even though the famous museum will be closed for a long time. Working with the municipality was an important starting point. In municipalities, the councillors, mayors, the political climate and programmes to support heritage are all subject to change. This means that today's officials cannot make promises about such a long period of non-intervention. This makes it all the more important to nurture the commitment of a congregation and a community over the decades when the Sleeping Beauty is active, and the collection is passive.

In the short term, everything revolves around preparing Sleeping Beauty for the H-hour, when she can close her eyes for a long time. When will you be able to close the door with complete peace of mind? We have decided together that we will accept the decay of things. It is part of the experiment, and not a problem unless it is a health hazard, like a fungus that grows during these 30 years and affects everything.

In the long run, it is about the second H-hour: the kiss that awakens the Sleeping Beauty. Sealing and unsealing are the primary interventions. In the meantime, orderly forgetting is imperative. How to do this responsibly, that's what this book is about. For those who want to know how best to do this in practice, there is a road map – and stone tablets – for inspiration.

Road map for museums considering a Sleeping Beauty Scenario

1. Assemble a working group and anticipate at least two years of preparation before Sleeping Beauty can go to sleep. Make a step-by-step plan for the period when the collection will be out of circulation and discuss the following questions:

- How much physical deterioration of the collection are you prepared to accept, if there is no intervention for that long?
- Can you secure the premises where these collections will be housed in the long term?
- Are there people willing to help who can intervene in the event of an unexpected emergency?
- Is there a sufficient financial buffer to ensure that the method, location and collection can continue for decades to come?

Can you answer the above questions in the affirmative and with sufficient confidence? Then take the next steps:

2. Ensure that you have regular contact with the museum, the board, the local officials and the councillors over the next two years.

3. In the run-up to Sleeping Beauty, draw up a generous budget that includes the following costs:

a. digitising the collection;

b. filming the work, the museum and the people, recording the stories and origins of the collection (this can be done with your own resources, there is no need for a professional film crew);

c. legal costs of amending the articles of association;

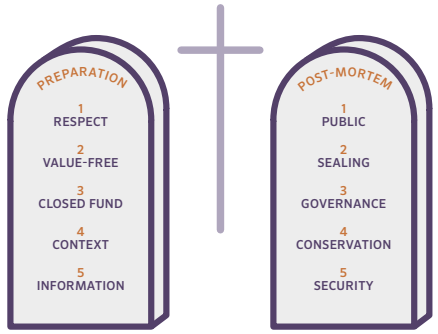
d. the cost of any alterations to the physical location;

e. from the moment that the Sleeping Beauty Scenario becomes active: estimate the costs for:

- utilities for the “dormant period”
- annual checks on the collection, possibly in collaboration with Reinwardt students
- minor building work (as a result of damage).

4. Liaise with the local archive from the outset and check that all the records are in the desired location.
5. Contact a college or university, try to involve students in the work and the Sleeping Beauty Scenario on a regular and short-term project basis, but guaranteed for the long term.
6. Invite and regularly update the press, in consultation with the board, the museum and the local municipality. Aim for a series of contacts that will continue during the dormancy period, so that the flame is occasionally fed by press attention and the local community doesn’t forget the project.
7. Work with volunteer groups during the preparation period on:
   - Registering and documenting the collection.
   - Recording details of the origins and other information and stories about the collections or objects in words, sound and images.
8. Ensure that the documentation remains accessible in perpetuity. Agree who will check the accessibility of the digital information, and how often.
9. Who will regularly monitor the climate, the decay, the presence of pests, in short, the condition of the collection? What is the baseline?
10. Accept a different vision of conservation and limit interventions in the area of storage conditions and climate, but intervene if the preservation of the collection leads to a health hazard, for example if mould spreads on clothing.
11. Agree with board members on a long-term commitment to oversight and key management.
12. Make a list of contacts, positions and relationships with the collections. Who is the caretaker, who has the alarm code, who has worked on the property in the past, who signed the contract with the registration systems, who has what login codes, who is the contact person for banking and insurance matters, etc? Review this list annually.
13. Limit public access. Agree on the frequency of public access, if this helps the community to embrace the Sleeping Beauty Scenario.
14. Review the articles of association and amend if necessary. The public function disappears in this scenario, so it should be removed from the articles. This means a visit to the solicitors before Sleeping Beauty settles down.
15. Discuss who should ideally sit on the board from the start of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario. Will an advisory board be needed?
16. Involve the local authority, for example by making the mayor the patron of the dormant collection.

The Ten Commandments for a good legator

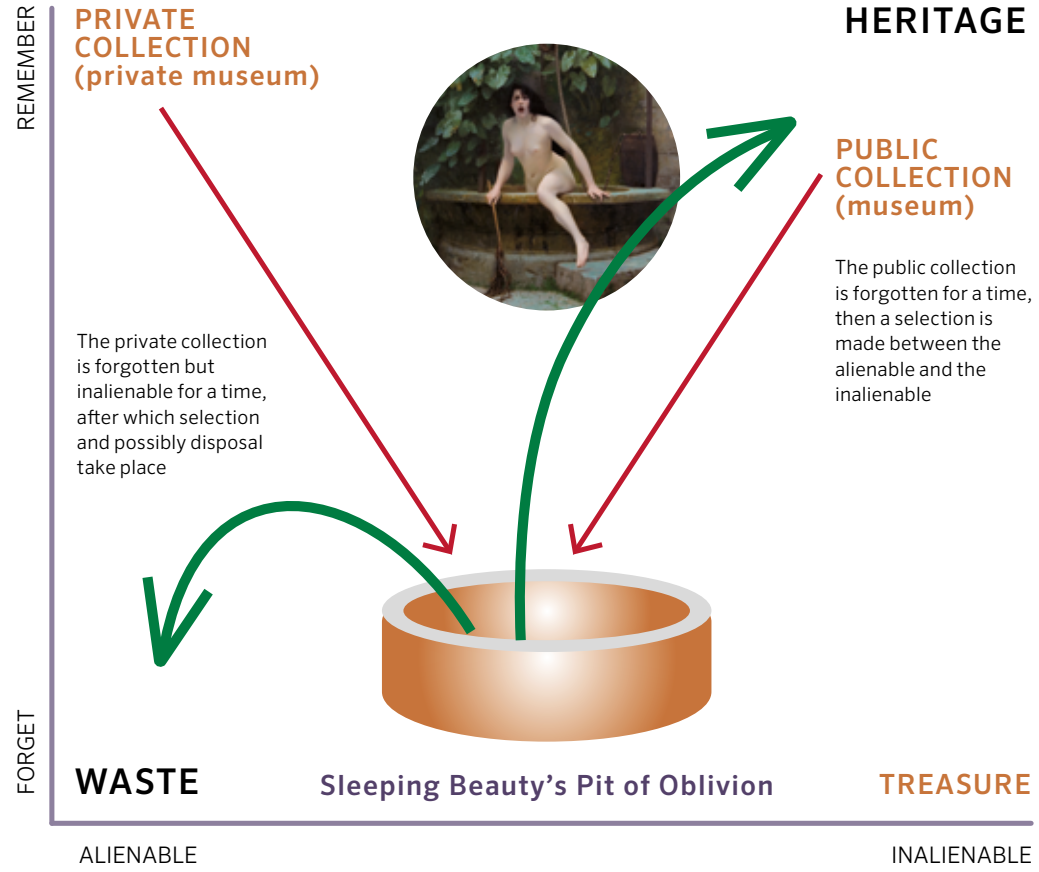


How can you be sure you’re a good legator? This doesn’t really fit into a definition of the Sleeping Beauty Scenario. But because of the responsibility you’re taking on by allowing future generations to validate and select, here’s a checklist to help you implement the method.

A. Respect the collection and work together to preserve its existing categories.
B. Don’t validate and select, don’t reject.
C. Accept a different vision of conservation that includes decay, and limit interventions in conservation conditions and climate.
D. Record, document and capture stories in words, sound and images.
E. Keep this contextual documentation as an “information manual”, permanently accessible.
F. Cease or drastically limit the public function.
G. After sealing, provide long-term security for monitoring and key management.
H. Only intervene if the storage of the collection poses a health risk (fungi), or safety risks (building

Sleeping Beauty’s Pit of Oblivion

In the twilight zone between suspended storage and disposal



The General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), meeting in Paris, solemnly proclaims on the twelfth day of November 1997 this Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations Towards Future Generations

Article 1 - Needs and interests of future generations
Article 2 - Freedom of choice
Article 3 - Maintenance and perpetuation of humankind
Article 4 - Preservation of life on Earth
Article 5 - Protection of the environment
Article 6 - Human genome and biodiversity
Article 7 - Cultural diversity and cultural heritage
Article 8 - Common heritage of humankind
Article 9 - Peace
Article 10 - Development and education
Article 11 - Non-discrimination
Article 12 - Implementation

condition, storage, fire safety) that affects the support for the project.

I. No preconditions: Give full freedom to the generation doing the unsealing.

J. Forget in an orderly way and communicate this poetically and imaginatively.

Heritage futures

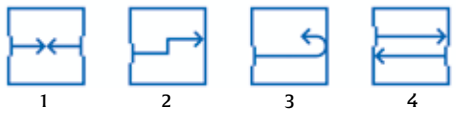
The Sleeping Beauty Scenario, with Jan Anderson's museum in Vlaardingen as the first case study, fits in the portal *Heritage Futures* as an experimental, globally unprecedented museum method that gives shape to the four focal points *(uncertainty, transformation, profusion and diversity)* for alternative conservation methods for long-term social practice.

UNESCO 1997

We endorse the 1997 UNESCO Declaration on the responsibilities of present generations towards future generations. The Sleeping Beauty Scenario aims to make an important contribution to the practical implementation of this relatively unknown declaration.

The Heritage Futures portal brings together initiatives from around the world on the theme of alternative ways to leave a legacy for the long term, and brings together expertise on long-term conservation from a wide range of very different fields.

Four icons are used to indicate key interventions.



1 Uncertainty tolerant

First and foremost, it's about cultivating uncertainty competence: how do we deal with uncertainty about the deep future? The only thing we can be sure of is that the future is uncertain. Western societies are ill-equipped to deal with uncertainty, which is not accepted, and preferably eliminated.

2 Values and transformations

Next, transformations are important, or rather the fragile underlying values that exist in are often crushed in the process of change, but which may be of great unrecognised value for the future. Make sure that these meanings are captured and passed on.

3 Abundance and choice

Third, in a world of mass consumption, abundance deserves attention: what of it do you want to preserve for the future? For individuals, this is a dilemma (keep or throw away?) without major consequences, but for societies, it is an issue that cannot be ignored and is the subject of constant reflection. Are there ways of generously passing on abundance, without prior selection?

4 Diversity

How do we counter the ideological authority of government and museums in determining what is important? What we want to pass on is not a single authorised version of our society, with a canon that everyone must know. Again, pre-selection and evaluation should be handled with care. When it comes to legacies for the deep time of the future, biodiversity and cultural diversity are crucial to communicating who we were and are.

Joke Bosch commentary

Uncertainty-savvy decision-makers of the future

In early 2021, my colleagues Gerdie Borghuis and Manuela Friedrich came into contact with Evelien Masselink regarding the case of the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum]. Could we leverage it in education, and how might we collaborate? My study-leader colleague and I visit the museum and speak with Evelien. We meet Gerard Rooijakkers and Frank Bergevoet. But most importantly, we talk to Jan Anderson and tour the museum with him. Following this, it is difficult to resist getting involved in this endeavour. This sentiment is largely attributable to Jan, his collection and his extraordinary expertise. Moreover, this case offers practical educational opportunities for our students to work with the collection. Above all, witnessing the learning and growth among our students and colleagues has been truly inspiring. Being involved in and constructively contributing to this case has been immensely rewarding.

Consequently, my director signs an intention statement to contribute to this case. Students from the Reinwardt Academy get to work, brainstorming under the guidance of Gerdie Borghuis and Marjan Otter about the Sleeping Beauty scenario. In addition to contributing ideas and sharing their findings, they uncover a mould outbreak in the storage depot. This issue is quickly addressed, allowing our students to provide valuable assistance and gain first-hand experience managing such situations. My colleague Manuela examines the case with students in a third-year elective course.

Capable, skilled and … uncertainty-savvy

The term that has resonated most with me is "uncertainty-savvy". It lingers in my thoughts, both concerning the project and the Reinwardt Academy. The handbook's authors offer strong recommendations on the human resources and intellectual capacity needed. The book outlines ten commandments for institutions embarking on a Sleeping Beauty scenario. It includes a manual and a list of character traits for those navigating such scenarios. Step by step, it reveals a way forward.

At the Reinwardt, we train students to become heritage professionals, ensuring they have the skills and aptitude for entering the field. Our bachelor's or master's courses provide them with comprehensive knowledge and proficiencies. Students engage with the practice through excursions, guest lectures and internships. With all this baggage, they can begin their careers. Step by step, we introduce them to the world of heritage.

There is a connection between the students and the future of a collection we intend to forget in an orderly fashion. And that is implied by this term. Given all we offer the students, developing uncertainty-savviness could be something we prioritise more emphatically. The foundation we provide our students instils the confidence to address unforeseen issues. However, this foundation may not always suffice. And if one thing is certain, unexpected events will arise during the timeframe of orderly forgetting. Let's ensure that future decision-makers, 30 or 40 years from now, possess the skill of uncertainty-savviness.

After speaking to several students recently, I would especially like to advocate for embracing this term even more. Question every aspect, including how knowledge is shared. Can the handbook be issued in pencil with an eraser? Will there be blank pages? Is a handbook the right tool for a journey lasting 30 years or more?

Involve younger generations

We find ourselves in a diverse group of experts and enthusiasts. The Reinwardt Academy has been given ample room throughout this process. Our colleagues and students observe, think and participate. I've read that our participation is also very welcome. To consolidate the Reinwardt Academy's involvement, a tutor from the academy is proposed to join a foundation still to be formed. We are still discussing this. In all honesty, it is also valued that students can pitch in when required. It's heartening to see emerging practitioners partake alongside seasoned professionals. Their involvement brings that fresh and innovative perspective to the research field.

In 30 years, they will open the time capsule, likely in their 50s, and prepare to pass the torch to younger colleagues. They already have opinions and are providing diverse perspectives. I come from an era of consumption, while they embrace online second-hand marketplaces and reusability.

Our students have actively participated and contributed their thoughts. Speaking of Sleeping Beauty, not only did they awaken, but they also brainstormed, voiced opinions and provided recommendations, fully aware that their advice might evoke mixed feelings. One student told me, "I never wanted to present during assignments. But here I want to because I have something to say."

Keep these and future students involved. Give them a seat at the table and empower them and young professionals to contribute actively. Their future decision-making warrants complete trust.

What we did
A chronological account

Evelien Masselink

When Marielle Hendriks was appointed as the new director of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland [Heritage House South Holland] in late 2018, Jan Anderson was the first museum director to congratulate her and invite her to his museum. There is too much to see ("There's even a storage depot!"), and at a second appointment in 2019, Jan seeks advice on ensuring his collections remain intact after his passing.

Jan's questions reach business development coordinator Evelien Masselink and cultural historian and ethnologist Gerard Rooijakkers. Together with Marielle Hendriks, they visit Jan Anderson. After a first walkthrough of the museum, Gerard outlines a potential approach to Jan's dilemma for the group. This approach is rooted in Kant's philosophical questions:

A. *What can I hope for?*
B. *What can I know?*
C. *What ought I to do?*

Jan's wish to preserve his collection fits an approach of long-term forgetting. There is much we can know and even more we ought to do: engaging stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and progressing with the idea of preserving and concealing the collection entirely.

Evelien also serves on the board of the Landelijk Contact Museumconsulenten [National Network of Museum Consultants, LCM], which holds annual meetings with the collection advisors of the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [Cultural Heritage Agency, RCE]. Evelien introduces Jan Anderson's question at one such meeting, seeking discussion and input. Klaas Jan van den Berg mentions his colleagues Frank Bergevoet and Bart Ankersmit, and in late 2020, Marielle, Frank, Gerard and Evelien meet. Despite the stillness of the COVID-19 lockdowns, this working group galvanises an irrepressible energy.

Gerard introduces a radically different method for responsibly preserving, in their entirety for the future, the 150 different subsets of the entire Streekmuseum Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Regional Museum] collection: storing the 150,000 objects for at least one generation in a museological "pit of oblivion", devoid of any display function.

Evelien and Marielle draft a funding application and approach the municipality of Vlaardingen, which expresses interest in remaining involved and hopes to host a symposium on the subject. The project requires a five-level approach:

1. Biography of the collector
2. Biography of the object subsets
3. Cultural biography of society (this step includes a public assembly)
4. Passive conservation of the collection for the next generation
5. Concept development (including a publication about the entire process).

Now named the Sleeping Beauty scenario (with other contenders being Pit of Oblivion, Crating, and Non-Intervention), significant financial investment is required to record the project's different phases in a documentary and a publication. However, we must urgently "empty Jan's head and personal hard drive". Daan van Paridon joins as the project's documentary maker.

Frank Bergevoet arranges a financial injection from the RCE while the Erfgoedhuis pledges time and money, encouraging Jan Anderson to contribute financially to the project. Funding is later needed to engage the professional community, culminating in a national symposium and the publication of this handbook. The RCE, Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland, Reinwardt Academy and Vlaardingen municipality all provide funding. Fortunately, we do not invoice for all the hours we devote to this inspiring collaboration. To move forward requires everyone to dedicate time to think, innovate and, if necessary, return to the drawing board.

Evelien becomes the business leader and coordinates consultations digitally at the Erfgoedhuis office in Delft and the museum and depot in Vlaardingen. Gerard and Frank are closely involved in the project. Meanwhile, Daan's film crew commences filming.

In 2020 and 2021, we strive to involve three parties in the project:

- The board of Jan's museum, officially known as Stichting Kollekties Jan Anderson [Jan Anderson Collection Foundation], established by statute in the 1970s, and Jan's financial advisor, Jos Klaasse;
- The Stadsarchief Vlaardingen [Vlaardingen City Archive], which is interested in acquiring Jan's so-called flat archive, but only items associated with Vlaardingen, and preserving them as a corpus permanently recognisable as belonging to Jan Anderson.
- The Reinwardt Academy in Amsterdam, which trains the next generation of collection managers. Ideally, they will be involved for an extended period during the Sleeping Beauty scenario, but how?

It is now 2021

Gerard introduces the concept of the loving neglect of a collection. He presents the Sleeping Beauty scenario with Jan Anderson during a broadcast of OVT, the VPRO broadcaster's history programme, which airs on NPO Radio 1 on 7 November 2021.

Frank addresses Jan while presenting a book about him, honouring his 85th birthday. (Mayor Bert Wijbenga remarks, "Normally, one waits for a book to be published about oneself, but Jan prefers taking control of this process.")

The directors of the four member organisations, namely Jan Anderson and the directors of the RCE, the Reinwardt Academy and the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland, have yet to become officially involved. On 10 November 2021, Jan Anderson, Susan Lammers, Nel van Dijk and Marielle Hendriks sign a declaration of intent, pledging to cooperate, share knowledge and deploy their network and time (and, in some cases, money), thereby ensuring their long-term participation in the Sleeping Beauty scenario. At this point, the Reinwardt Academy becomes involved. Led by lecturers Gerdie Borghuis and Marjan Otter, the students work in three groups on the following research assignments:

- How do you physically prepare the collection for prolonged "dormancy"?
- What digital preparations are necessary for the Sleeping Beauty scenario?
- Regarding communication, what steps must be taken now and in the future to ensure ongoing attention?

We welcome the students on the starting day, who subsequently often visit Vlaardingen, where volunteers Rita Vastenholt and Marja Schrijver assist them. We also hold weekly digital consultations led by Gerard and Evelien.

During this period, Group A uncovers a significant mould outbreak in the textile collection housed in the depot. Group B proposes a digital cleansing process to catalogue 130,000 objects. However, due to insufficient capacity, this idea remains a proposal. Group C presents various ideas, including hosting an annual opening during Open Monument Day and sporadically revitalising the emotional connection between Jan, his collection and the people of Vlaardingen. They also suggest creating a hologram of Jan.

The Reinwardt Academy positively evaluates the reports, which produce some immediately actionable suggestions.

In addition, we had hoped to receive on-call assistance from the Reinwardt Academy: *Do you know any students who would like to assist with…?* Unfortunately, this does not align with their curriculum's schedule and content. However, an enthusiastic group of teachers is considering how students can conduct annual or biannual checks of the depot and the (then closed) museum. Other subjects, such as ethics and collection handling, also offer avenues for student participation. This is vital because they will be working in the heritage profession in 30 years, inheriting the sleeping treasure, and underscores why they are featured in the documentary.

It is 2022

As we progress, various issues arise that require our decisions.

- We reach a kind of agreement with the Vlaardings Archief about the inclusion of Jan's "flat archive".
- The condition of the property at Willem Beukelszoonstraat 2, an old shipping company warehouse that houses the depot, may not withstand 30 years of loving neglect. During a consultation in Delft, Frank presents a compelling alternative: alongside storing much of Jan's collections, we can utilise the depot as a *Collection Lab* for the entire heritage field – scientists, students, advisers, colleagues, and so forth – and partly as a *Refugium* for orphaned collections in need of temporary shelter. If this arrangement lasts less than 30 years, Sleeping Beauty will easily remain dormant in the museum and the residential attic.

↑ November 2021: Those involved from the beginning gather in preparation for the initial zero-hour event that will take effect when Jan Anderson, prominently positioned in the centre, finally closes his eyes. We will unlikely experience the project's second zero-hour event when Sleeping Beauty awakes.

- Jan Anderson's financial adviser suggests that, following Jan's death, the board of the Stichting Kollekties Jan Anderson should inherit all the premises and property within them and be given a dowry to cover expenses such as utilities and necessary alterations. The foundation's purpose is now to maintain and share a collection with the public, which means amending the statutes. Evelien tackles this with newly appointed chairperson Vincent Kevenaar and the legal advisor of the Erfgoedhuis.
- Although the board of a dormant collection has fewer activities, it should be able to operate and decide differently. We suggest adding a representative from the Reinwardt Academy and, ideally, one from Vlaardingen's governance community. In the event of Jan's passing, only the executive board will remain, with two new members ideally joining from these two backgrounds. Furthermore, Frank Bergevoet, Evelien Masselink and Gerard Rooijakkers commit to joining the advisory board (which is not a legal entity).
- Frank invites his colleague, Agnes Brokerhof, to the depot to address the mould outbreak. Her action plan includes a considerable shopping list, ranging from HEPA vacuum cleaners to museum-grade Tyvek and acid-free paper. We hold several cleaning days, and Jan's volunteers assist. We want first-hand experience of the process; some of our partners even don protective suits. The Reinwardt students also help for a day. As well as adding the site to the database, we de-mould, repack, redecorate, photograph, dust, stick, lift and carry. Jan arrives to observe but promptly leaves. Is all this interference overwhelming? No. He calls the press, which arrives an hour later and the local newspaper, *Vlaardings Dagblad*, runs a photo feature.
- In 2022, we meet Erfgoedhuis supporters at the annual Heritage Day. We have a clear idea for the 2023 Symposium and proceed with production. The professional field can contribute experts and respond through audience discussions. We aim to include this input in *The Sleeping Beauty Scenario: A handbook of orderly forgetting*. While Jan's questions initiated this whole process, we want to provide the field with a decision-making tool

for collections where succession is an issue.
- With the imminent closure of Museum De Voorde in Zoetermeer, interim director Hans van de Bunte seeks our assistance. He explores whether the Sleeping Beauty scenario best suits the Zoetermeer collection. We visit the museum and involve Zoetermeer in our plans, but the municipality of Zoetermeer's cooperation isn't guaranteed. Ultimately, Museum De Voorde fails to secure municipality approval for the Sleeping Beauty approach, resulting in the dismantling of the collection through participatory repurposing.

It is 2023

Gerard prepares the publication's content and outline, assigning writing tasks to Frank and Evelien while doing the majority himself. We arrange for a printer and designer, manage all necessary preparations for the publication and provide feedback on one another's submissions.

We address some challenges: How can we effectively narrate the story of the Vlaardingse Geuzen, the WWII resistance fighters? How can we help Vlaardingen preserve this story through Jan's collection? More mundane matters also arise. The attic above Jan's house is overloaded, and construction and piling are underway across the street. Can his old house withstand all this? Additionally, Jan's garage is overflowing with items one might find in a local thrift shop. What are we supposed to do with it all? There's always something to do.

The municipality will also have to tell its future mayors about the world-first experiment taking place in Vlaardingen. You hope for continuing pride in this experiment in which a slumbering Sleeping Beauty will awaken one day, safe in the arms of Vlaardingen's executive branch. Do you make the mayor a patron by default? Can you rely on long-term acceptance, appreciation and cooperation?

On 9 June 2023, the symposium *Doornroosje: ordelijk vergeten* [Sleeping Beauty: Orderly Forgetting] takes place at the Grote Kerk of Vlaardingen, with seven referees reviewing draft texts for this book. In the interest of effectively exchanging views, the debate in this book has not been smoothed out but instead opened up. After all, in terms of both a generic method and specific customisations, the final word on such an approach to conserving collections has yet to be determined. How do you pilot collections through time in a paradigm-proof way? Is this even possible? Isn't everything you do already too much? Jan Anderson offers a textbook example of contemporary collecting, adding items daily. These new inclusions will also be part of the approach. But can we exclude pieces like the famous Geuzen collection from WWII? It is decided, drawing on the Lascaux IV model, to create high-quality replicas (facsimiles) for public educational purposes and retain the original artefacts in the treasure trove that is the Jan Anderson collection. We are also engaging with future generations. In the long term, the Reinwardt Academy will continue introducing its students to the content of the Vlaardingen Sleeping Beauty project. Therefore, we want a representative from the Reinwardt Academy on the foundation's board. The Cultural Heritage Agency will establish a Collections Lab and Refugium in the coming years. Once the public function of the Streekmuseum Jan Anderson ends, leading to the implementation of the Sleeping Beauty scenario in which it is left largely undisturbed, the municipality, particularly Museum Vlaardingen, will play a pivotal role. As a sustaining community, the public can occasionally peek through an outside door to glimpse the Sleeping Beauty behind glass – not entirely forgotten, but an orderly forgetting.

How does one end up dedicating relatively so much attention and assistance to a museum in South Holland whose director is not used to hearing about new and different ways of doing things? Jan is an old-fashioned director who rarely faces opposition and is always in charge. For the most part, what he says goes. This is a rare instance where he takes instruction and can demonstrate his flexibility. It seems he has little choice. With no heir and no paid staff, finding help is essential.

At the same time, we must maintain an overview. Jan is good at many things and is passionate about his collections and the stories behind his carefully amassed items. However, he appears less interested in the fact that company calendars from the 1960s endure longer on acid-free paper than in pizza boxes. Jan's self-styled charm is all part and parcel of the process. Drawing from a rich tapestry of disciplines, the following attributes are not just important but essential for effectively guiding and realising such a project.

Necessary attributes

Trust is paramount, especially regarding the best interests of Jan's objects and buildings. Jan must also trust that the Sleeping Beauty scenario will ensure his name and reputation endure. However, despite him being behind the whole process, progress sometimes encounters setbacks. Jan recently contacted the press and provided significantly different accounts of the Sleeping Beauty scenario than we had outlined, which were then published in the newspaper. Moving forward, we hope Jan will coordinate with us concerning the press. However, we acknowledge his capacity for indifference, and he may simply shrug his shoulders once we've left.

We must have faith in the future because making a publication entails planning ahead. However, if the 30-year dormancy has not even begun in 2023, unforeseen events will arise, requiring different approaches. At what point do we relinquish control? Can we slightly loosen our grip on the nascent Sleeping Beauty? Doesn't the *Handbook of orderly forgetting* require its editors to remain confident?

The first time we entered Jan's depot, we were emotionally struck by a profound sense of wonder. This same feeling inspires us when de-moulding the clothes collection. However, we also learn that putting a figurative bell jar over something whose poor condition is known in advance not only detracts from the essence of the Sleeping Beauty scenario but also our credibility.

Sometimes, we are astonished when Jan's stories turn out to be only partially true. We find this out by accident, and we wonder whether he is engaged in a process of disorderly forgetting. Again and again, we marvel at his vast knowledge and selection criteria, which are inimitably special, especially at Jan's advanced age.

Perseverance

Patience is crucial, and so we must avoid hasty changes. Jan's collecting journey spans decades, and rushing him into a radically different approach, particularly given his age, would be unwise. Thus, it is evident that only Jan can decide when the Sleeping Beauty scenario begins. In the meantime, we'll continue positioning all the chess pieces. Given the novelty of this approach, we are often uncertain about the next steps and when to take them, let alone what unexpected events may arise.

Navigating these uncharted territories together requires chemistry to ensure the different characters get along. We are a dream team that brings out the best in one another. Enthusiastically cooperating and discussing this project are indispensable ingredients for a good result. This approach has proven infectious, inspiring our project partners and engaging authorities, students and volunteers alike. While Sleeping Beauty is poised and ready, fortunately for Jan, she is not in a hurry.

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Daan Heerma van Voss (Amsterdam 1986) is a historian and writer. His books have been nominated for various awards and have been translated into English, Chinese, German, Swedish, Spanish, Polish and Russian. He is a regular contributor to the *NRC* newspaper. The father he writes about in his essay included is the editor-in-chief and director of VPRO broadcast, Arend Jan Heerma van Voss (1942-2022).

Riemer Knoop (The Hague 1955) is the owner of the Gordion consultancy and a jack of all trades. He is a classicist, archaeologist, programme maker, essayist, thinker, debater, moderator and advisor to governments, cultural institutions and private parties at home and abroad. For many years he was associated with the Reinwardt Academy (Amsterdam University of the Arts) as a lecturer in cultural heritage. He has a broad professional background in the field of archaeology, monument conservation, museums and heritage. He has worked at the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities, the Vrije Universiteit and the University of Amsterdam, among others. He holds a master's and doctorate in classical archaeology, chairs the Document Our History Now foundation and is a member of the Queering the Collections steering committee.

Sven Lütticken (Kempen, Germany 1971) studied art history at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and the Freie Universität in Berlin, and received his doctorate in 2002 with a dissertation entitled Allegories of Abstraction. In 2004 he was awarded the Prize for Art Criticism of the BKVB Fund, Amsterdam. Lütticken teaches at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam and the University of Leiden. He publishes in art magazines such as *Jong Holland, Artforum, New Left Review, Afterimage, Texte zur Kunst and Camera Austria*, and regularly contributes to catalogues and exhibitions.

Evelien Masselink (Zeist 1966) is business coordinator at the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland. Previously, she was responsible for communications and PR at the Erfgoedhuis, and then Senior Advisor Museums and the Public. During her studies, she focused on sponsorship and altruism in the cultural sector. Evelien visits small and medium-sized museums every week, knows the needs of the people who manage them and the collections, and recognises the difficult choices that museums and their often unpaid directors have to make.

Max Meijer(Arnhem 1959) is a partner in TiMe Amsterdam and a consultant to the museum and heritage sector. He studied at the Reinwardt Academy and has been working in the Dutch museum sector since 1982, initially as a policy officer for the Museum Association and as a member of the MT of the Kunstmuseum Den Haag. He then worked at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Instituut Collectie Nederland and finally as director of the Arnhem Museum. Since 2007, together with Petra Timmer, he has shaped TiMe Amsterdam, an international consultancy for the museum and heritage sector.

Gerard Rooijakkers (Eindhoven 1962) studied history in Nijmegen and European ethnology in Münster (Germany). He obtained his doctorate in 1994 with a historical study of ritual. He was a member of the Meertens Institute of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and from 2000 to 2010 he was a special professor of Dutch ethnology at the UvA. He was awarded the Prince Bernard Cultural Fund Prize for the Humanities in 2002. He was a member of the Council for Culture until 2021. In addition to popular culture and museology, he focuses on the importance of commons in cultural ecosystems in the context of the Faro Treaty. He currently lives in France.

Toon Tellegen (Brielle 1941) is a Dutch writer, doctor and poet known for his children's books. His animal stories about the ant and the squirrel are particularly popular and are also read by adults because of their amusing, bizarre situations and philosophical depth. His work has won many awards. In 2007, he was awarded the Constantijn Huygens Prize for his life's work.

Simone Vermaat (The Hague 1968) works at the RCE as curator of the National Collection and contact person for art in public space. She studied art history at the University of Leiden and works in the RCE's art collections department as a collection advisor/curator, with a special focus on 20th-century visual art. She is an advisor to the Advisory Committee for the Valuation of Cultural Property from Bequests on behalf of the Rijksdienst. She has been involved in research projects such as Conservation of Video Art and Inside Installations and has published on the RCE collection, Dutch monumental art from the post-war period, post-1965 heritage, art in public spaces and on traces of the Dutch colonial past in the RCE national collection.

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Tailor-made

As in Toon Tellegen's poem, we also do not know what Vlaardingen's Sleeping Beauty ultimately wants with her dormant collection, or when the best time is to be kissed awake. And mind you, when the castle was cleaned up, a spinning wheel was forgotten (and thus well preserved), which proved fatal to the inquisitive girl. The dilemma of prior instructions also plays a role in Vlaardingen; the information provided can also work against you in the long run. The poem (see also his *Letters to Sleeping Beauty* from 2002) is particularly appropriate, because the theme of preservation by forgetting is itself very poetic. It is a theme that lends itself to being explored by touch with an uncertain imagination.

Sleeping Beauty was asleep.
Beside her lay a letter:
'Don't kiss me awake.
Under no circumstances.
Not even after a hundred years.'

What shall I do? the prince thought. Shall I leave?
Or shall I kiss her, thinking she doesn't mean it?
I'm so tired, so dead-tired...

Sleeping Beauty peeked through her eyelashes.
With the greatest effort she took slow,
regular breaths.
She saw the door close,
heard the steps on the staircase –
so tired, so dead-tired, his every step –

and her heart broke.

SLEEPING BEAUTY by Toon Tellegen
From: *About Love and About Nothing Else*
Translated by Judith Wilkinson
(Beeston: Shoestring Press, 2008).

The project is an initiative of the Erfgoedhuis Zuid-Holland (Delft) in cooperation with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (Amersfoort) and the Reinwardt Academy (Amsterdam) based on an idea by Gerard Rooijakkers. In addition to a long-term solution for the Anderson Collection, a museological tool has been developed that can serve as an inspiring working method for other collections. In addition, unique facilities have been developed in Vlaardingen for the cultural heritage sector in the form of a Collection Lab, where everything is allowed that is forbidden in a normal depot, and a Refugium, where collections that are in danger of becoming orphaned can be temporarily removed from circulation.

"What an enjoyable, explosive and rich work this book has become, like a kind of miraculous collection à la Jan. It contains everything from rock-solid facts to joyfully imaginative ideas, with intense contemporary discussions, fascinating anecdotes, fantastic images and surprisingly critical and informative contributions from pretty much all the leading lights of Dutch and Flemish museology." [Riemer Knoop]

Vincent Kevenaar, chairman of the Jan Anderson Collections Foundation, and Jan Anderson with a Sleeping Beauty from his own collection.

Scene from a children's catchpenny print of *The Tales of Mother Goose* by Charles Perrault, published by Gangel in Metz around 1845.

The Streekmuseum Jan Anderson in Vlaardingen is the life's work of its namesake, who has collected more than 150,000 objects in 150 sub-collections during his long life.

The Sleeping Beauty Scenario implements a museum experiment: when the owner can no longer care for it, the entire collection is put to sleep for at least a generation. Our children and (great) grandchildren will be able to judge what is of value to them much better than we can today. Instead of picking the usual choice pieces from the museum mix, we are postponing the selection through orderly forgetting. Collection management is, at its heart, time management. Based on the ethics of abstinence, we advocate non-intervention. The ensemble value of the collection is paramount, and we accept curated decay. This can be studied in a Collection Lab. Third-party collections in distress may be temporarily housed in a Refugium to allow time for reflection on options for action.

This is a radical approach, well-founded in terms of cultural history and museology, but one that has not yet been put into practice, either in the Netherlands or abroad. This publication documents the working process and the resulting findings, which were tested at a symposium in Vlaardingen in June 2023.

St Theodosius in the Basilica of Waldsassen (Bavaria, Germany). The skeleton of a supposed Christian soldier from the Roman catacombs was elaborately dressed and placed on an altar in the monastery church in the early 18th century. Please note: this is what Sleeping Beauty may eventually look like in Vlaardingen, when she is kissed awake after one or more generations.