

Press release

Heartland

From 4 October 2008 until 25 January 2009, the interdisciplinary project Heartland will take place in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Heartland focuses on the art and music of the geographical heart of the United States of America: the so-called Heartland. It consists of a major group exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum and a musical programme in Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, and includes debates, lectures, a photo exhibition, a magazine and publications. The Heartland project offers an introduction to a relatively unknown part of a very well known country, during a period when much of the world focuses in close up on the USA and its crucial presidential elections.

The exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum

The Heartland exhibition presents existing and newly commissioned works by artists from America and Europe. In our definition of the Heartland area, the exhibition roughly follows the Mississippi River and its tributaries from the south to the north, taking in an area from New Orleans up to Minneapolis, including Omaha, Kansas City, Detroit and Chicago. The exhibition has been compiled by staff at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago, who have made several research trips during which they established contacts and collaborations with local art scenes. They selected work by artists who live in the region—some for decades, some as newcomers—as well as work by artists who live elsewhere and have undertaken residencies in the region in order to produce new work. These varied positions yield a view of the area from both an American and a European perspective.

Artists included in the exhibition are: Juan William Chávez, Cody Critcheloe, Peter Friedl, Scott Hocking, Carol Jackson, Matthew Day Jackson, Seth Johnson, Kerry James Marshall, Greely Myatt, Dan Peterman, Marjetica Potrč, Ernesto Pujol, Michael Rakowitz, Wilhelm Sasnal, Artur Silva, Deb Sokolow, Alec Soth, Aaron Spangler, Design 99, Detroit Tree of Heaven Woodshop, Theaster Gates and the Black Monks of Mississippi, SIMPARCH, The New Kinomatographic Union, Jaimie Warren & Whoop Dee Doo Kansas City, as well as artists in residence Jeremiah Day and Julika Rudelius.

In collaboration with MU, Eindhoven, artists group Miss Rockaway Armada will present an exhibition and performance on 7, 8 and 9 November 2008 in Eindhoven.

The musical programme at Muziekcentrum Frits Philips

The melting pot of immigrants and cultures in the Heartland has been the basis for the impressive fusion and genesis of many popular musical genres, including Blues, Country, Soul, and, of course, Rock 'n Roll. The musical programme at the Muziekcentrum will shed light on (the development of) the musical culture of the Heartland through lectures, concerts, a 2-part listening course, a series of Heartland Cafés and the premiere of the documentary *Searchin' for the heart of the Heartland*.

Included in the musical programme are (amongst others): Boo Boo Davis Mississippi Blues band, Clare & The Reasons, Stacey Earle & Mark Stuart, Tim Easton & Leroy Stagger, Jeffrey Foucault, Peter Guralnick, LOW and special guests, Ad van Meurs, Frank de Munnik, David Olney & Tommy Womack, Woven Hand, Muzsikás & Zapp String Quartet, and Ben Weaver.

As part of the Heartland project, an exhibition of photos by Ernest C. Withers will be on view at Muziekcentrum Frits Philips from 4 October until 14 November 2008.

Artistic team Heartland

Charles Esche, Director Van Abbemuseum

Kerstin Niemann, Research Curator Van Abbemuseum

Stephanie Smith, Director of Collections and Exhibitions and Curator of Contemporary Art, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago

Frank Veenstra, Artistic Manager Muziekcentrum Frits Philips

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More information

For an overview of all activities and the most up-to-date programme, see heartlandeindhoven.nl. The Muziekcentrum and the Van Abbemuseum have issued a Heartland magazine, containing the programme of activities in Eindhoven, a general introduction to the project, and texts by US experts in the Netherlands as well as various authors, artists and musicians about artistic practice and music in the Heartland. On the weblog heartland.vanabbe.nl, the curators and other people involved in the project have reported on their research trips, studio visits and meetings with project partners and cultural activists. The interviews, photographs and essays reveal how they, other guest contributors and artists in the Heartland approach their research and arrive at choices.

Exhibition on tour

The Heartland exhibition will travel to the Smart Museum of Art, where it will be reconceived for presentation from October 2009 until January 2010.

Partners / collaborations / subsidizers

The Heartland project is an ambitious collaboration between the Van Abbemuseum and the Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, and the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago as an American partner. Other contributors are Rhodes College Center for the Outreach in the Development for the Arts, Memphis College of Art, Memphis, MU, Eindhoven. Heartland has been realised in part by a contribution of the city of Eindhoven, the Mondriaan Foundation and the American Embassy The Hague.

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