

Factsheet Plug In #50 Collection Henri van Abbe

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Cornelis Johannes Moks, *Thee-uurtje*, 1910 . Photo Peter Cox

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On 18 April 1936, the Van Abbemuseum opened its doors to the public. The building was a gift from industrialist and art collector Henri van Abbe to the city of Eindhoven. Apart from A.J. Kropholler's building, the current Oudbouw (old building), Van Abbe donated an acquisitions budget and a contribution towards the museum's maintenance costs during the first three years of its existence. Using the acquisitions budget, 26 paintings were acquired from Henri van Abbe's private collection. This collection consisted mainly of paintings by contemporary Dutch and Flemish artists. It was Van Abbe's wish for the museum to focus on contemporary art. In industry- and technology-driven Eindhoven, he hoped to accomplish that 'in this city, many will learn to appreciate and value the joy and nobility of fine art.' The ensemble of 26 paintings on which the Van Abbemuseum collection was based is displayed in its

entirety in the gallery on the second floor of the Nieuwbouw (new building).

Although many developments were afoot in the Netherlands and in other parts of Europe in the early 20th century that led to art steadily becoming more abstract, this movement was apparently not to Henri van Abbe's liking. All the works that are shown here are figurative. Subject-wise, they all connect with the tradition of landscape, still life and portrait painting. Various works reveal the influence of the French Impressionists. This group of artists that had its first joint exhibition in Paris in 1874 uses a light palette and fluent brush strokes. They often cut off the picture to let the viewer be witness to a brief, almost chance moment. In the painting *Toilet maken* (Dressing) by Willem Dooyewaard, the cut-off mirror in the foreground guides the viewer's eyes into the picture. The motif of the oriental woman that can also be seen in the other painting by W. Dooyewaard indicates that he, like many other artists of the late 19th century, is interested in Japanese art. The still life with books by Bart Peizel shows the attention paid to Western art from the early Renaissance to Impressionism. The picture of two

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figures on the beach in Peizel's painting is a copy of a painting by Manet, the 'father' of Impressionism. *Thee-uurtje* (Teatime) by Cees Maks can also be traced back to this movement. The attention to light in this sunny scene is typical of impressionism, but Maks paints with a firmer touch.

The tone of the works of Dirk Nijland and Wim Schuhmacher is less light-hearted, typical of Dutch art in the interwar period. This turbulent period is discernible in paintings with subdued colours and a hushed or alienating appearance. Wim Schuhmacher's *Stilleven met vogels* (Still life with birds) is a very true-to-life painting with meticulous attention to detail. The whole, however, looks a little pale and the background is undefined. The light is diffuse and seems to shine out of rather than onto the depicted objects. The dead birds symbolise mortality, but the two eggs and the sprig of green can be interpreted as signs of hope and life. To Schuhmacher, grey is the colour of sublime and unearthly silence. His landscape and view of a harbour are also bathed in a peculiar grey light.

Jan Sluijters experimented with the colourful styles of Neo-Impressionism and Fauvism after he visited Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century. There are still traces of this in *Vaas met bloemen* (Vase with flowers). For his *Reclining Nude* and *Vrouwenportret* (Woman's portrait), Sluijters returned to a more realistic style. These works fit perfectly into Henri van Abbe's collection. The paintings in his collection are hushed, subdued or intimate. Influenced by modern movements, they are, each in their own way, part of a long tradition.

Art works

Arthur Briët

Binnenhuis Kempen, 1936
Oil on canvas

Arnout Colnot

Stilleven met korhanen, z.j.
Oil on canvas

Jacob Dooyewaard

Stilleven met tinnen kan, 1935
Oil on canvas

Willem Dooyewaard

Zittende Tago, z.j.
Gouache on paper

Willem Dooyewaard

Toilet maken, z.j.
Gouache on paper

Jan van Herwijnen

Bosgezicht, 1936
Oil on canvas

Isaac Israëls

Javaanse danser, ca.1921-1922
Oil on canvas

Eduard Karsen

Begijnhof in de herfst, z.j.
Oil on canvas

Willem Knip

Les matiques bij avond, 1933
Oil on canvas

Cornelis Johannes Maks

Thee-uurtje, 1910
Oil on canvas

Sal Meyer

Torensluit, z.j.
Oil on panel

Dirk Nijland

Stilleven met schedel, 1932
Oil on canvas

Dirk Nijland

Hommage à Conrad, 1935
Oil on canvas

Bart Peizel

Stilleven, 1933
Oil on canvas

Egbert Rubertus Derk Schaap

Landschap met bloeiende bomen, z.j.
Oil on canvas

Wout Schram

Stilleven/witte tafel, z.j.
Oil on canvas

Wim Schuhmacher

Gezicht op Toledo, 1933-1934
Oil on canvas

Wim Schuhmacher

Stilleven met vogels, 1934
Oil on canvas

Wim Schuhmacher

Haven van Palma, ca.1933
Oil on canvas

William Henry Singer

Zomerdag, 1929
Oil on canvas

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William Henry Singer

Vallei in de winter, z.j.

Oil on panel

Jan Sluijters

Liggend naakt, 1931

Oil on canvas

Jan Sluijters

Vaas met bloemen, 1929

Oil on canvas

Jan Sluijters

Vrouwenportret, 1929

Oil on canvas

Cornelis Vreedenburgh

Polderlandschap, 1931

Oil on canvas

Carel Willink

Schilder met zijn vrouw, 1934

Oil on canvas