

STEDELIJK MUSEUM

ESSENTIALS

TOUR

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AMSTERDAM

# WELCOME!

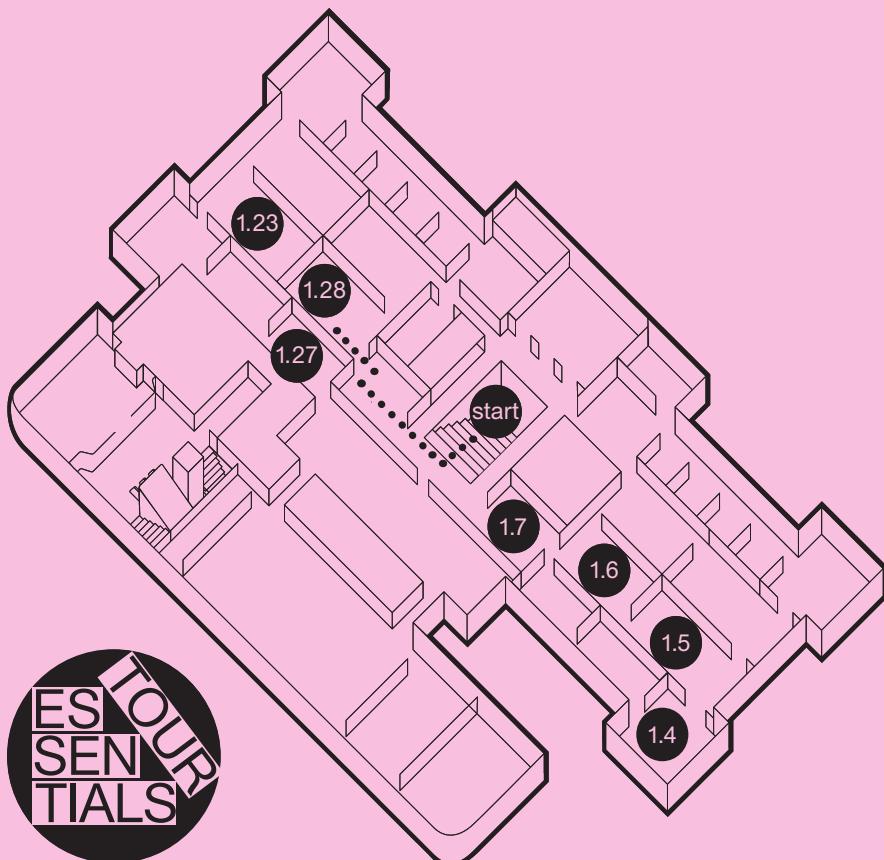
Hey you, welcome to the Stedelijk!

Here you will find world-famous artworks, but you can also discover new treasures.

With this tour, you will visit must-see highlights from the collection, learn about art and design in an easygoing way and make your new most-liked pic!

# ROUTE 1ST FLOOR

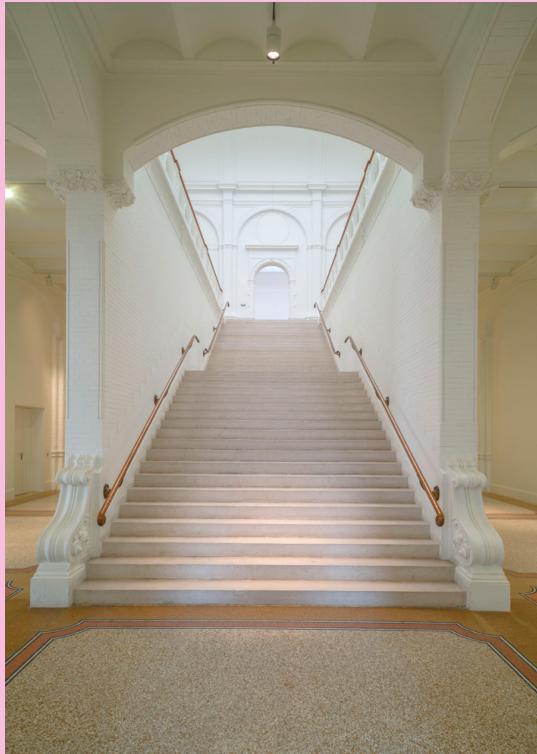
Once you have hung up your coat, walk past the ticket scan and take the small stairs on your right under the arches, straight ahead. The *Essentials Tour* starts at the old staircase. Then follow the little dots on the map up and turn right. Clicking on the big dots will take you to the right text/question about the artwork. You can also recognize each work from the tour in the museum by an *Essentials Tour* sticker on the wall.



# STAIRS



Ad Petersen, *Gilbert & George: Living Sculpture*, 1969



Monumental staircase. Photo: John Lewis Marshall

The staircase has become an iconic spot in the museum. Rumour has it that this is the best spot in the museum to pose for photos. Artist duo Gilbert & George were ahead of this in 1969 by posing as a 'living statue' for five hours. They painted their faces and hands bronze and didn't move at all!

- *Strike a pose!*

# MARTIAL RAYSSE

## Peinture à haute tension



Martial Raysse, *Peinture à haute tension*, 1965.  
Photo: Nina Schollaardt

(Gallery 1.28)

Hey! Did you notice anything? Yes, you just walked past a work that looked exactly like this one. In fact, Martial Raysse's work, which you are standing in front of right now, was reproduced by Elaine Sturtevant. And completely from memory! At the same time, Raysse's work is based on an existing photograph – so it's a double duplication.

Sturtevant recreated iconic works by famous artists to explore their fame, authenticity and creative process. Andy Warhol liked that idea; he even lent her a work for reproduction once.

- Do you think an artist should be allowed to use other people's work?

Before moving on to the next work, look to the left for a real Warhol!

# ANDY WARHOL

## Bellevue II



Andy Warhol, *Bellevue II*, 1963. Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

(Gallery 1.28)

With *Bellevue II*, Andy Warhol questioned how we process violence and death in the media. He used a repeating technique where the image gets darker each time, making it seem like the news slowly fades and becomes impersonal. Did you know Warhol based this image on a real newspaper photo of a tragic accident? Through repetition, he shows how the media makes us feel less and less about such events. The artwork makes us reflect on how distant we sometimes become toward violence.

- What's the first news event you remember hearing about?

# BARNETT NEWMAN

## Cathedra



Barnett Newman, *Cathedra*, 1951. Photo: Nina Schollhardt

(Gallery 1.27)

The enormous painting *Cathedra* contains 50 liters of paint. The artist painted as many as 7 separate layers to make the work this blue. You might be tempted to look at the work from a distance but that is actually not quite the way it was intended. According to the artist, you'll feel completely immersed in the blue when you look at it up close.

- Try looking closely at the painting for a whole minute. Feeling blue?

# PROTEST AND REVOLUTION



Protest and revolution wall. Photo: Nina Scholteardt

## (Gallery 1.23)

Here you can see the changes in society after World War II through colorful posters. Because of the cheap and easy printing techniques, posters quickly became the medium to spread messages of the 'protest generation' at the time. Nowadays, you see critical voices increasingly appearing on social media, which shows that protest and imagery still go hand in hand.

- Is there a poster among them with a message that you find relevant today and that appeals to you?

# BREAK



Stairwell. Photo: Nina Schollaardt

## (Stairwell)

Time for a break! Take a lap around the stairs and the hall, and don't forget to look up. The skylights are an iconic feature of the building, designed by municipal architect Adriaan Weissman. They provide optimal light, which perfectly highlights the art. This unique play of light even gave the Stedelijk worldwide fame.

Ready for more *essentials*? When you're at the top of the stairs, walk to the left, under the arch, and discover the next work.

# MARLENE DUMAS

## Big Artists



Marlene Dumas, *Big Artists*, 1991.  
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

(Gallery 1.7)

Marlene Dumas uses humor in *Big Artists* to show how power and sexuality play a big role in the art world. She shows that we often judge art as if it were people: strong or weak, good or bad. With this work, she jokes about how famous white men mostly dominate the art world. She challenges us to think about how we judge art and who really decides what good art is. Did you know Dumas used photos of famous artists as inspiration for this piece?

- Imagine you're painting a portrait of the 'great artists' of our time. Which musician, artist, or actor/actress would you choose to portray? And how would you depict them?

# JEFF KOONS Ushering in Banality



Zaalopname Tomorrow is a Different Day. Collectie 1980—Nu.  
Photo: Gert-Jan van Rooij

(Gallery 1.7)

In this room, the piggy by Jeff Koons is surrounded by feminist criticism. With the naked little men portrayed in her work, Marlene Dumas criticizes the fact that it's usually women who are depicted naked in art. The big picture of Koons' piglet on the wall was also taken by a female artist. Koons is a big name within the art world, so in this way, the room humorously comments on the balance of power in the art world.

- Do you know any musical artist who also comments on inequality? Who?

# MARTINE SYMS GIRRRLGIRLLLGIRL- GIIIRL



Martine Syms, GIRRRLGIRLLLGIRL-GIIIRL, 2017. Photo: Nina Schielaard

(Gallery 1.6)

In this work, Martine Syms explores feminist thinking and the identity of people of color by looking at everyday language. By writing out the word 'girl' in different ways, Syms tries to capture the verbal dimensions of language.

Feminist literature is an important reference point for Syms; the color purple in the mural is a nod to Alice Walker's book *The Color Purple* (1982). She was the first black woman to win the Pulitzer Prize.

- Do you and your friends use a word specifically very often?

# IGSHAAN ADAMS

## Nama stap



Igshaan Adams, *Nama stap*, 2023. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

(Gallery 1.4)

This installation by Igshaan Adams is based on drone photographs of Namaqualand, South Africa. Normally this region is extremely dry but because of a special phenomenon once a year, beautiful, brightly colored flowers bloom. Between the flowers, you can see paths created over the years by footsteps.

The object hanging in front of the work symbolizes a dust cloud. This refers to the Riel, one of the oldest Indigenous dance styles in Southern Africa, also known as 'dancing in the dust'. For Adams, recreating the footpaths and dust clouds is a way to reconnect with his ancestors.

- What elements of your own culture make you feel connected to your ancestors?

# STEVE MCQUEEN

## Broken Column



Steve McQueen, *Broken Column*, 2014. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij

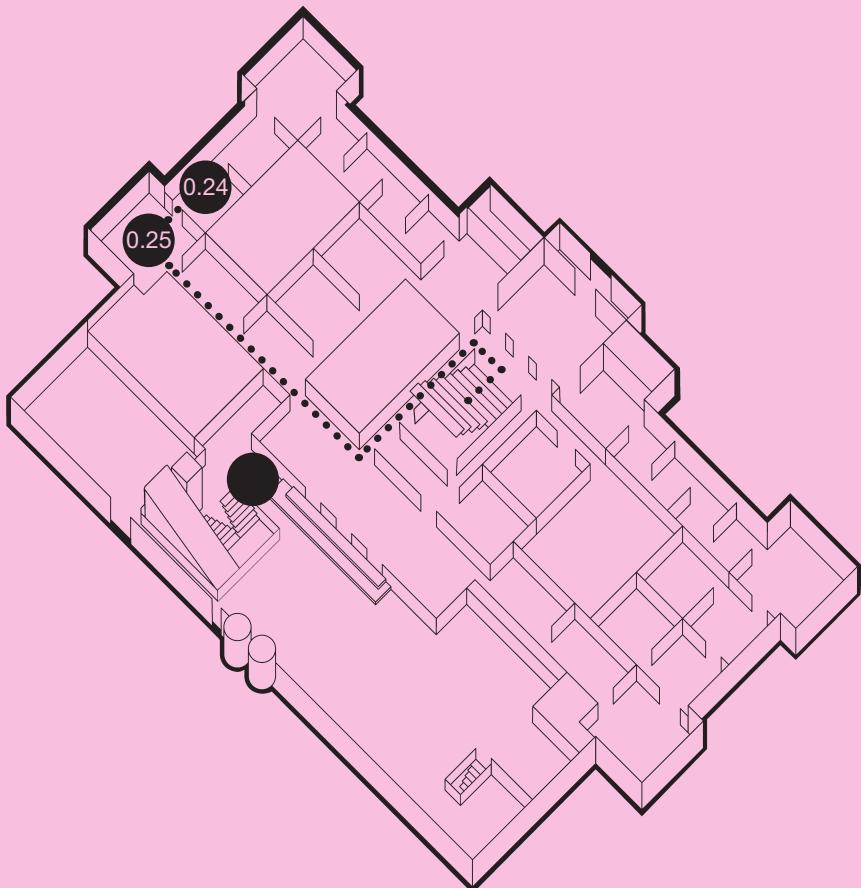
(Gallery 1.5)

This imposing pillar created by Steve McQueen is carved from black Zimbabwean granite. The shape echoes Victorian funeral memorials, referencing the tradition of obliquely truncating a tree in tribute to a young man's untimely death. McQueen considers the work to be a monument to premature and avoidable deaths in Black communities worldwide.

- *Fun fact:* Steve McQueen is also a screenwriter and film director. One of his films, *12 Years a Slave* (2013), even received an Oscar.

# ROUTE GROUND FLOOR

The *Essentials* Tour continues downstairs. Walk down the stairs again and return to the room you entered after scanning your ticket. Then take an immediate right and follow the dots to the next work.



# PIET MONDRIAN

## Ruitvormige compositie met twee lijnen



Piet Mondrian, Lozenge Composition with Two Lines, 1931.  
Photo: Nina Schollaardt

(Gallery 0.25)

In his art, Mondrian wanted to capture the essence behind the visible world. To portray this, he said, you need the most essential elements of visual language: primary colors (red, blue, and yellow) and horizontal and vertical lines.

Because Mondrian did not use green, a rumor started that he did not like nature. He found this funny himself and fueled it on purpose by sitting with his back to the window while visiting a friend. He supposedly did this to not have to look at the green trees!

- *Fun fact:* Mondrian never used a ruler for his straight lines.

# KAZIMIR MALEVICH

## An Englishman in Moscow



Kazimir Malevich, *An Englishman in Moscow*, 1914.  
Photo: Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

(Gallery 0.24)

Kazimir Malevich painted *An Englishman in Moscow* in 1914, at an important point in his career. In this painting, he almost completely moves away from showing reality. The 'Englishman' is barely recognizable as a person—and that's exactly what he wanted. You can still see clear shapes, like a pipe, and even hidden letters and numbers, as if he left a secret message. What do they mean? Nobody really knows.

- Think back to a travel moment that made a strong impact on you—what comes to mind? Think of a place that amazed you, or perhaps unsettled you. Anything goes. What images or elements would you include in a painting, like Malevich did?

# MARTIAL RAYSSE

## Encore un instant de bonheur (sculpture moderne)



Martial Raysse, *Encore un instant de bonheur*  
(sculpture moderne), 1965

(the Don Quixote Sculpture Hall)

This sculpture from 1965 by Martial Raysse stood previously in the museum in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, the work has a place in our new Sculpture Hall. The work's English title is *Still a Moment of Happiness (Modern Sculpture)*. By 'modern', Raysse was referring to showing the immaculate, ideal side of consumer society: 'I wanted a new world, sterile and pure, one that seamlessly matched the technical achievements of the new age in the techniques used'.

- If you could design a new world, what would you add to it first?

The tour is over, but don't forget to admire the other sculptures in the Don Quixote Sculpture Hall. Why not take a moment to unwind with a coffee at the Fonda Bar? It's the perfect spot to enjoy the view!

We are really curious about your thoughts on the tour. Would you mind answering [four](#) questions so we can improve your experience? Please enter our survey [here](#).

Keep an eye on your email when you have ordered your ticket online. You will receive an e-mail with information about obtaining a 20% discount on your next visit shortly.