

November 25, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

With the conclusion of my tenure as Director of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam on 1 December 2013, I wanted to extend my deepest appreciation and personal gratitude for your warm support of the Museum.

While four years is a relatively short period, it has truly been an extraordinary one – including not only the long-awaited reopening of the museum in September 2012 in our beautifully renovated and expanded facility by Benthem Crouwel, but also the numerous achievements along the way, especially over the past year.

Joining a museum that had been closed for so many years was a profoundly affecting experience for me. As difficult and challenging as it was, it was also an opportunity – if not an inspiration; I will never forget how much people missed the vital presence of the Stedelijk Museum in their lives. The unique emotional bond that people have with this museum was my motivation to organize the Temporary Stedelijk (2010–2012) program as a way to bring it back into people’s lives, even before the construction project was finished.

While we did not wait for the completion of the building project to fulfill our mission to serve art, artists and our publics alike, we also took it as an opportunity to reflect upon and reconsider what a museum can be during times of challenge. This was not only important to us, but also to the greater cultural community of Amsterdam and the Netherlands at time of profound change.

Of course, the ultimate goal was to have an OPEN, fully-functioning, vibrant Stedelijk. There was nothing more gratifying during my tenure than bringing this great museum back into the lives of those who missed it so much during its closure, and also into the lives of thousands of first-time visitors, on the occasion of our grand reopening in September 2012 in the presence of Her Royal Highness Queen Beatrix.

Since our reopening last year we have welcomed nearly one million visitors – unprecedented for this museum – and our galleries have been enlivened by our renowned collections and a dynamic program of changing exhibitions, including Beyond Imagination, Works in Place, Mike Kelley, Aernout Mik, Lucy McKenzie, Jo Baer, and our current exhibitions Kazimir Malevich, Paulina Olowaska, Lawrence Weiner, and Jurriaan Schrofer, as well as our rich education initiatives, Family Lab, Blikopeners Spot, Public Programs, Library, and enhanced public services such as Walther Koenig Bookstore and two restaurants. It was also a tremendous honor that we could open our truly extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime Malevich exhibition in the presence of Her Royal Highness Queen Maxima.

We live in a world in which a museum's success is judged by what can be tangibly quantified, such as attendance and press. But one of the things that is most rewarding about working in museums is that you don't always know who you have touched, nor as visitors do we always immediately realize that we have been touched by the experience – particularly one that may have been confusing to us. I first visited a museum as a child in Los Angeles with my class from elementary school. I don't know why, but I immediately felt comfortable in these types of environments, undoubtedly affected by the scale of the space and the encounter with works of art, none of which I immediately understood. I know those early experiences were critical to the direction I took in my life and career. What an incredible opportunity it has been to work in museums for over thirty years and to serve the Stedelijk Museum – this legendary museum that was so important to me as a beacon from afar – for the past four.

I have enormous affection for the museum and a truly heartfelt appreciation for everyone who worked tirelessly and with enormous dedication to bring us to this point, including our extraordinary Stedelijk staff colleagues, dedicated supervisory board, enthusiastic volunteers, energetic Blikopeners, generous stakeholders, and a deeply supportive local, national, and international cultural community. To all of them, and to you, I offer my deepest thanks.

From the beginning, my vision for the Stedelijk was to transform it from a closed museum to one that was characterized by four "A's" – alive, active, artist-centered, and anticipated – and one that was international but rooted in Amsterdam. It is my great pride that an open Stedelijk is now back in our lives.

There is so much to look forward to in the coming years, and with all eyes now firmly set on the future, I wish you all my best. I will not say farewell, but simply, *heel veel dank en tot ziens!*

With all my very best wishes,



Ann Goldstein
Director