



## National museums in the Netherlands

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### Summary

Geographically speaking, national museums in the Netherlands constitute of a group that is, comparative to other countries, more evenly distributed between the country's major cities than is generally the case - reflecting, to a certain extent, the nation's origins in a union of individual provinces. Although an important branch of national museums developed in the Hague in the nineteenth century as the direct initiative of the monarchy founded in 1815, this has not been, as in Belgium, the unique driving force of nationally representative museums – and there has been no concentration of national museums in the capital – as Amsterdam was not the main seat of the royal house. So it is that some of the oldest museums, related to the monarchy, are situated in The Hague, but that Amsterdam and Leiden both constitute important centres for national museums. The creation of the museums in each of these cities is related to different forms of initiative and origins. One can, in a sense, historically relate more civic and private initiatives to certain museums in Amsterdam, in the case of The Hague, the most important museums relate directly to the projects of the monarchy and in Leiden, to the development of the University. This is something we will show in our twinned case studies, by considering in parallel the evolution of the national beaux-arts museums in Amsterdam and in The Hague and museums related to ethnography and the colonial enterprise in Amsterdam and in Leiden.

The Dutch central government developed a generous though somewhat uncoordinated system of museum subsidisation in the twentieth century and the network of national museums was very much expanded during this time thanks to the initiative and generosity of private collectors (Rovers, 2009). Indeed, a strong tradition of private patronage has helped the national museums develop since the beginning of the nineteenth century and one might mention Teylers Museum or *Tropenmuseum* but it is also the case of certain art collections (Krul, 2009).

The number of museums currently under the administration of a central government agency is about 50 in total (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2006: 75). Of these, 30 are related to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 11 to the Ministry of Defence and others, such as the Ministry of Finance, run the Dutch coin museum in Utrecht or the Tax Museum in Rotterdam for example, whilst the Ministry for Foreign Affairs finances the *Tropenmuseum* in Amsterdam (cf. table).

A plan for the modernisation of collection management of Dutch museums called the *Deltaplan* (1992) has been implemented since 1988 to achieve greater efficiency in terms of museum and collection management, initiating major renovation and inventory schemes. In parallel, a plan was implemented to completely reorganise state museum financing in a way that has led to increasing financial autonomy and also independence of management generally. Since 2005 however, the state has gone back to a more general system of subsidisation that allows for any museum (be they attached to a central government ministry or not) to apply for state funding.

Out of the thirty nationally-owned state museums, our choice of the most important museums in the Netherlands was made to reflect the geographical spread of these institutions and the principal values that they tend to project. Indeed, as shown by our short study of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and the Mauritshuis in The Hague (two of the most frequently visited Dutch museums), Dutch national culture seems to be predominantly represented by the paintings of the Golden Age. The rising sense of nationalism related to the First World War is considered with the case of the Open Air Museum of Arnhem, all the more interesting as it has tried to modernise its foundational concept, moving from a nostalgic vision of country life, to a museology that also uses recent developments in habitat as a means to address social and political issues more pertinent and relevant to contemporary Dutch society. Generally speaking, one finds few museums dealing with issues of religious conflicts – although this might be expected given Dutch history. Dutch relations to its very important colonial past, which formed the basis for the country's wealth and economic growth up until the decolonization that followed the Second World War, will be considered in a parallel study of the two principal ethnology museums in the Netherlands. The most recent creation in terms of national museums, the Zuiderzee Museum deals with more politically neutral but important environmental issues. Not all museums of importance for national identity can be dealt with in the context of this report, such as the Vincent Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, one of the most frequented museums in Holland. In the category of small museums, which however do seem to relate to essential aspects of Dutch history, one should mention: Anne Frank House and the Dutch Resistance Museum (see Annex table).

## Summary table, The Netherlands

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Actors	Ownership	Type	Values	Temporal reach	Style Location
<p>The State Museum in Amsterdam</p> <p><i>Rijksmuseum</i></p>	<p>1800-1808 (Amsterdam)</p> <p>1815 (Rijksmuseum)</p> <p>1885 (current building)</p>	1798	Monarchy, City of Amsterdam	State-owned building, collections, administered by private foundation since 1996.	Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, National History	Dutch 17 <sup>th</sup> c. painting, Asian Art, Applied Arts.	1100 - 1900	<p>Current building from 1885 (Pierre Cuypers) combines Gothic and Renaissance Architecture, decorated with references to Dutch art history.</p> <p>Originally in The Hague (1800), now Amsterdam, moved by royal order (1808).</p>
<p>The Royal Picture Gallery (Maurice House)</p> <p><i>Mauritsbuis</i></p>	1822	1820	Monarchy	State museum, privatised in 1995.	Fine Arts	Flemish and Dutch painting, Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt van Rijn, Jan Steen, Paulus Potter and Frans Hals and works by German painter Hans Holbein the Younger.	14 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> c.	Classical Architecture, The Hague.

The National Museum of Ethnography  <i>Museum Volkenkunde</i>	1832 (As branch of Cabinet).  1883 (Institutions united)	1816 (Royal Cabinet of Rarities in the Hague)	Monarchy	State-owned building and collections, administered by private foundation since 1995. Ministry of Education and Science, privatised in 1995.	Ethnography, Zoology	Asia, China Indonesia, South Pacific, Africa, Americas, Greenland.	1500-1900	18 <sup>th</sup> c. classical town house. Leiden.
The Tropical Museum Amsterdam  <i>Tropenmuseum</i>	1926 (Amsterdam)	1871 (colonial museum in Haarlem)	Private 'Netherlands Society for Industry'	Non-profit organization, autonomous national museum.	Ethnography	Created to collect colonial productions and Applied Arts in the colonies.	19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	Purpose built colonial style building. Amsterdam.
The Dutch Open-Air Museum	1942 (National Folk Museum), 1991 (Netherlands Open Air Museum Foundation)	1912	Private initiative	State-owned, administered by the 'Netherlands Open-Air Museum Foundation'.	Country Life, Architecture	Reconstructions of typical farm architecture from all over the country, local craft traditions and costumes.	18 to 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	Reconstruction of farm architecture, Arnhem.
The Zuiderzee Museum  <i>Zuiderzeemuseum</i>	1983	1948	Local initiative	Run as a private foundation, funded by state.	Cultural History, Modern and Contemporary Art	History of the Zuiderzee area, art, culture and heritage at the interface of land and water.	20 <sup>th</sup> c.	Reconstitution of a fishing village, Enkuizen.

## Introduction:

### History and geography of national museums in the Netherlands

The first national museum in the Netherlands was conceived of in 1798 as a reaction to the loss of collections of the former *Stadholders* residing mainly in The Hague and as a result of a patriotic movement already underway in the Netherlands since 1780. When the Republic of United Provinces was, so to speak, 'liberated' from the despotism of its ruler by the French revolutionary army in 1795, one of their first acts was to transport the cabinet of paintings of the *Stadholder* William V, who had fled to England, back to Paris. The French armies did not take collections from any other social group or institution, as they had done in other countries such as Belgium or Italy, where church properties had also been confiscated. The French having declared war on the *Stadholder* but not on the Dutch Republic itself, refrained from confiscating the municipal collections, which in many cities could be visited in the town halls.

In the new Republic with its unitary state, Finance Minister Gogel created the very first '*Nationale Konst-Gallerij*' in the *Huis ten Bosch* near The Hague, as a means of saving the last elements of the *Stadholders* collections that the state had begun auctioning away, mainly to foreign bidders. As the ancestor of the future *Rijksmuseum*, its objective was to create a place where the history and identity of the Netherlands might find expression and where its glorious old Republic would be celebrated as a means of underlining the common culture of the United Provinces (Bley, 2004: 12). The paintings presented there were mainly portraits of members of the house of Orange on the one hand and also important figures in the Batavian Republic. These portraits were accompanied by the display of objects having belonged to these important personalities. Interestingly, this collection of paintings was considered to be as much a representation of Dutch art as of its history. Dutch painters from the Golden Age were highly regarded for their ability to document their own present time, a past that came to be considered as exemplary, making these paintings important as artworks but also as documents.

Named king of the Netherlands, Louis Napoleon, Napoleon's brother, chose Amsterdam (moving from Utrecht) as his residence and decided to promote its existence as a cultural centre, in opposition to the *Stadholders'* city, The Hague; a movement that would be reinforced after the formation of the Low Countries as a constitutional monarchy with Amsterdam as its capital (although The Hague became the seat of parliament). The 'Royal Museum of paintings, drawings, various statuary and chiselled work, cut stones, antiquities, art objects and rarities of all sorts' was created by the French ruler in 1808 out of the collections of the '*Nationale Konst-Gallerij*' of 1800 that he had transported to Amsterdam. Interestingly, some other pieces were also taken from public buildings and already existing municipal collections of paintings whose tradition goes back to the beginning of the seventeenth century (i.e. 5 paintings were taken from the town hall of Haarlem). Louis Napoleon's museum opened in what was the former town hall of Amsterdam. Its collections, including the famous *Nightwatch* by Rembrandt, though originally municipal, were thus presented as those of what was henceforth to be considered of as a national royal museum (Meijers, 2009: 46). Generally speaking, such collections originating in a local tradition, were attributed a national (even nationalist) meaning in the course of the nineteenth century, often through the reallocation of a certain number of paintings. Meijers (2009: 43) develops the idea of 'the domestic appropriation of municipal artefacts, by the new central government'. The tradition

of patronage for municipal collections was already very strong before the Revolution and the French confiscations, with Dutch Republican powers being concentrated in the most important towns of the provinces. Even after a 'National' museum had been founded in 1800; 'one gets the impression that the far more generously filled municipal collections continued to play an important role in representing the Netherlands, especially after their transformation into municipal museums in the nineteenth century.' A good example of this phenomenon is the municipally-owned Franz Hals museum in Harlem. The presentation of the artist's paintings there gradually led him to be considered a 'national' painter. The glorification of certain important artistic figures lets us take into consideration a limited number of municipal collections as having national resonance and relating to national identity.

When the Netherlands was annexed to France in 1810, Louis Napoleon's museum, which had already been national, was renamed as royal although it was taken over by the municipality of Amsterdam. It became a national museum again in 1815, when the collections moved to the 'Trippenbuis' and opened as the *Rijksmuseum*, that is to say, a state museum not under the direct tutelage of the king, but of the government.

Indeed, when in 1814 the new kingdom was formed, the appointment of Amsterdam, the most prominent city in the kingdom, as capital city was very much a conciliatory gesture of the new king, Willem I, towards the town that had been home to the most important republican political faction. However, the king, son of a former *Stadholder* was quite naturally inclined to create his own 'national' museum *ensemble* in The Hague. The Royal Cabinets created from 1816 onwards 'symbolized the power of the royal family, the unity of the kingdom and underscored its place in a larger context' (Effert, 2008 : 2).

The different museums or *Royal Cabinets* were formed on the basis of the curiosity cabinets (including all forms of *Artificialia* and *Naturalia*) united by the two successive *Stadholders*, Willem IV (1711-1751) who had collected mainly paintings, prints, manuscripts, books, coins, medals, cut stones and antiquities; whilst Willem V (1748-1806) had expanded the collection to include natural history. They had been confiscated by the French, but returned after 1815. The creation of the *Royal Cabinets* in The Hague around 1816 meant negotiations and exchanges with Amsterdam, settling a kind of distribution of heritage between the two towns. The king's objective was to create an encyclopaedic museum in The Hague that would also make room for a section dedicated to the history of the Fatherland, displaying objects of patriotic value, such as objects of Dutch naval lieutenant Jan van Speyk, a hero of the effort to suppress the Belgian independence movement (Effert, 2008: 2).

The king was actively invested in the expansion of these collections, which flourished until 1830. He financed certain acquisitions himself, and directly approved of all the acquisitions financed by the government but he transferred the control of the whole collection to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences. 'With this, the king gave a powerful impulse to the development of collections in the Netherlands.' (Effert, 2008: 22) The royal cabinets of paintings and of rarities moved into the *Mauritsbuis* in 1820; the painting collection alone has remained there since 1883, whilst the rest of the collections went to Leiden where they were united with other national museums which had been developing there around the University's own collections. As can be seen below in the case study concerning the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam, the period between 1830 and 1870 was a time of relative stagnation in terms of initiatives related to museums and,

more generally, heritage. After the Belgian revolt in 1830, acquisitions both in the *Rijksmuseum* and the *Mauritshuis* came to a halt, as did donations, with collectors favouring municipal collections over national ones (Bergvelt, 2010, 189). Rapid economic growth coupled with a new national awareness for heritage lead to changes in government policy from the 1870s as illustrated by the building of a new *Rijksmuseum*.

In terms of national scientific museums, Leiden became the main pole for the Netherlands. In 1818, King William I had established the *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden* or National museum of Antiquities in Leiden, which was subsequently greatly developed because of, and in relation to, the creation of a professorship for archaeology at the University. And throughout the century, certain elements from the royal cabinet, notably ethnographic objects started to leave The Hague for Leiden, until the main transfer in the 1870s. The situation of these scientific museums will allow us to consider the question of professionalization of the museum and it's staff in relation to university research.

The first public science museum in the Netherlands was a private undertaking; Teylers Museum in Haarlem opened its doors in 1784 with departments for physics, history, drawing, minting and a library established by private initiative. It is, today, a nationally funded public institution that tells a kind of history of the museum's collections since the Enlightenment. Today, it is run as a foundation but its main source of financing is governmental.

Dutch museum geography has been very much conditioned by the nation's origins as a union of provinces. In marked contrast to its neighbour, Belgium, also a nation whose historical origins are based on a group of provinces, national museums did not develop in the nineteenth century according to a unique principle of centralised cultural heritage in the capital city. Debora Meijers writes that from the period of French rule and the creation of the first national museum in 1800 and onwards: 'further vicissitudes of the Dutch national art museum seem also to be marked by the specific relationship between the municipal/provincial power and the central government' (Meijers, 2009: 53). Indeed, the early history of these different institutions shows a form of mobility in the distribution and redistribution of cultural heritage that is relatively uncommon in the realm of national museums. Certain national museums/collections have moved from city to city up to four times (i.e. the national coin museum has been in The Hague, Amsterdam, Leiden and is today in Utrecht). Even though Amsterdam has come to house the most famous collections of fine arts, with the *Rijksmuseum* and *The Vincent Van Gogh Museum*, it is in The Hague that we can find the *Mauritshuis*, *Royal Cabinet of Paintings* and the *Meermano-Westreenianum*. In terms of archaeological and scientific collections however, Leiden is home to *Naturalis* or *National Museum of Natural History*, to the *Museum Volkenkunde*, *The National Museum of Ethnography* and to the *Rijksmuseum van Oudheden* or National Museum of Antiquities.

There are two divergent and often competing principles at work in the realm of cultural promotion in the Netherlands (D'Angelo, 2000: 174) as has been clearly demonstrated by the recent discussions and debates surrounding the central government's project for a central National Historical Museum in the Netherlands, to become the newest national museum in the country. A state-organised competition recently pitted town councils of The Hague, Amsterdam and Arnhem against each other in order to decide on the location for this new institution. Yet a great number of other existing municipal historical museums (Prinsenhof in Delft, The Hague Historical Museum, Valkhof in Nijmegen, and others) expressed themselves against such a

project claiming that ‘each one of them could be considered as part of such a museum and therefore collectively they were already catering for such a need.’ (Meijers, 2009: 41) In 2009, a parliamentary majority decided to locate it in the city of Arnhem next to the current Open-Air Museum. We might add that, in October 2010, the decision was taken to discontinue the 50 million euros project for the museum in light of the governmental decision to cut the arts budget by a total of 200 million (DutchNews.nl, 2010).

## **National museums and cultural policy in the Netherlands**

For a relatively small country, the Netherlands boasts a high number of museums, a fact that is regularly recited and underlined in all general documents concerning Dutch museums (873 according to the report *Cultural Policy in the Netherlands*, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2006). Especially since the beginning of the 1970s, the country has experienced a rapid growth of small historical and thematic museums, with new collections based very much on objects of everyday life, and exhibits that deal with societal and anthropological perspectives. So much so that in 1989, Peter van Mensch wrote an article warning against the dangers of an ‘embarrassment of riches’ in museum terms (Mensch, 1989b).

It would appear that a high percentage of Dutch museums receive government funding. Many of these (about 100) were created in the first half of the twentieth century and were the direct result of a donation by private individuals to the state or the community (Ministry of Culture, Education and Science, 2006: 74). During the same period, the Dutch government established administrative bodies to organise a system of state subsidies for museums that appears to have been more evenly distributed than in other countries we have looked at, such as Belgium.

This being said, the number of museums financed by the state has been drastically reduced since 1985. Before the new *Museum policy document* in 1985, all museums, even those that were not state-owned, were subsidised to cover their operating losses. The 1985 document established a set of criteria to define the choice of museums to be kept under the responsibility of the central government. They were based on an appreciation of the extent and range of their collections and the degree to which they represent their speciality. The museums that did not correspond to these criteria were transferred to the provinces and municipalities.

Additionally, the organisation of Dutch national museums underwent a profound mutation during the period 1988-1994. A complete reformation of their administrative status was implemented to transform state museums into self-governing foundations. In 1992, the concept of the Netherlands Cultural Heritage *Collectie Nederland* was introduced, stipulating that objects, collections and buildings considered to be of national importance are to remain in state ownership, but that administratively, the national museums as institutions, are to be given a new legal status under private law.

Up until then, museum directors had only been responsible for the ‘institution’s programme and activities budget; larger questions of policy were decided with the ministry of culture, questions of finance with the treasury, questions of personnel with the home office, and questions about premises with the ministry of the built environment’ (Schuster, 1998: 58). The new ‘privatisation’ scheme or autonomy system, in a sense, maintains the idea of the national museum as ownership and financing is maintained by the state (Engelsman, 1996) but it transfers decisional elements to the museum. However, museums are free to either use their title as

national museums (*rijksmuseum*) or decide to drop it – they must also manage their own budget and make autonomous business decisions (Ministry of Culture, 1994: 9). This project was accompanied by the ‘*Deltaplan*’ which included a comprehensive program of renovation and reorganisation of the collections and was one of the most comprehensive manifestations of state policy concerning national museums ever to have been seen in the Netherlands, a country which, in the past, had sometimes been accused of having an incoherent cultural policy on a national level (Poulot and Ballé, 2004: 73).

In 2005, a policy paper on museums was presented to Parliament entitled ‘the Future of the Past’ (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2006: 75), this mainly seems to revise the decentralised and liberal financing strategy developed in the 1980s: museums can apply for a long term financing budget and all museums (not only the 30 museums directly subsidised by the Ministry) may apply directly for grants from this budget, meaning that they no longer appear as the sole responsibility of municipal and provincial administrations. The museums that have been allocated these budgets will undergo regular assessments.

The thought process that has accompanied this reform, especially concerning the role of the public in the museum developed during the 1980s and the debates that it has provoked both in the Netherlands but also abroad, concerning the legal status of national institutions, means that there is a relatively abundant and recent literature on the subject of state museum policy, professionalization, democratisation and optimisation of the national museum’s relation to the public (Mensch, P. van (ed.), 1989 ; Ganzeboom and Haanstra, 1989 ; Boorsma, 1998).

The new autonomy that this reform has given to the largest institutions seems also to have sparked off an important historiographical effort to document their pasts, as Dutch museums seek to redefine and perhaps even to justify their existence in the new context of independent funding. This movement has provided us with a good series of precious historical studies concentrating on the origins of Dutch museums. In the last ten years, an important series of monographic works has been published (Bergvelt, 1998; Van der Ham, 2000; Halbertsma, 2003; Jong, 2001; Effert, 2008; Ploeg, 2006).

## **Case studies in chronological order**

### **Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam/ Mauritshuis, The Hague**

As already mentioned above, due to the initiative of King Louis Napoleon (1806-1810), Amsterdam came to house the most famous of the national museums in the Netherlands: the *Rijksmuseum*. Housed at first in the *Trippenbuis*, the collections flourished until 1830 but after this, a period of stagnation ensued until a new awareness for the need of an improvement in terms of the management of artistic heritage in the 1870s fuelled renewed government input and financing with a clear acquisition policy and a project for a new national museum. This revival of interest for national art and heritage was related to a movement for the protection and care of collections brought into motion by an article published in 1873 ‘*Holland op zijn smals!*’, in *De Gids*. ‘It was an attack on the disgraceful carelessness with which the Dutch treated their artistic treasures, from historic buildings to art collections in museums. The article brought about a revolution. It gave rise to a policy that resulted in the concern for and preservation of the national heritage that

exists in the Netherlands today. It also impelled the energetic management of the national art collections.’ (Bank and Buuren, 2004: 164).

The most important result of this new policy was the opening of the *Rijksmuseum* in 1885 in a neo-gothic building by Pierre Cuypers, constructed on a piece of land offered by the city of Amsterdam to the state. The style of this building might be read as an expression of the tensions that religious adherence produced in the make-up of Dutch national identity. Although, in many countries, such as Germany, Protestantism was often closely connected to growing nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century, the rise of the liberal party in Holland from 1848 onwards resulted in the ‘deemphasizing of the state’s confessional character’ (Steinhoff, 2006: 256) and thus in increasing secularisation. Ironically, in the building of the national museum, we find an architectural reference to the reinforced position of the Catholic Church in the Netherlands since its reorganisation in 1853. This is mainly due to the fact that its architect was himself a Catholic, influenced by the Gothic revival movement. He had participated in the building of new-Romanesque churches across the Netherlands. This reference to Romanesque religious architecture, visible in the architecture of the *Rijksmuseum* led King William III to refuse attending the opening ceremony, nevertheless held in his name. The museum’s ground plan however, is a reference to the town hall of Amsterdam, built by Jacob van Campen and, according to Jenny Reynaerts, its elevation refers to the Dutch Golden Age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. She has shown that the museum’s decorative program was developed to demonstrate the glory of the Dutch nation as expressed by the art of that period<sup>i</sup>. The museum was constituted by the reunion of several already national collections whose common denominator was that they were considered to relate to the history of the Netherlands. It included paintings and a collection of drawings and engravings from the Dutch Museum for History and Art, formerly established at The Hague; the public collection of works of art by modern masters, formerly established in the Pavilion ‘Welgelegen’ in Harlem; the Museum Van der Hoop belonging to the city of Amsterdam, lodged before in the former Hospital for Old Men at Amsterdam; the objects of art and antiquities received as a loan from the city and finally, a collection of plaster casts of sculpture in the library of the museum.

This brings us to one of the most salient characteristics of national museums in the Netherlands: the proportionately huge representation and importance of the National school of painting. In a report issued by the Dutch Ministry of Cultural Affairs one reads: ‘One striking fact, however, is that the national character of our museums, and in particular that of the *Rijksmuseum*, is strongly emphasized. This contrasts with the way most of the big foreign museums have developed, with their collections specializing in international schools (Ministry of Cultural Affairs 1968: 3)’. It is particularly interesting to see that the *Rijksmuseum* so famous for its masterpieces of Dutch painting was, from the beginning, considered to be a history museum more than a museum of fine arts. When R. van Luttervelt of the *Rijksmuseum* titled his 1969 book, *Dutch Museums*, it seemed to go without saying that it was to be a book uniquely dedicated to the evolution of painting collections in the Netherlands. In order to understand how the national museum, that might at first glance be considered first and foremost as a museum of fine arts, was considered to be a national ‘history’ museum one might consider the following statement by Carel Blotkamp: ‘Painting was prototypical of Dutch culture as such: it was seen as a faithful reflection of a self-confident bourgeois society, founded on the pillars of realism, industry,

domesticity, neatness, and liberal attitudes in religious and political matters. (...) Painting is in the blood of the Dutch; painting is their principal contribution to European culture. The clichéd view, formed in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is stubbornly persistent' (2004: 295). This conception appears to have greatly conditioned Dutch museum culture and it seems to have found continuity through such new museums as the *Rijksmuseum Vincent Van Gogh* in Amsterdam. This museum opened in 1973 thanks to the donation of the collection of the Van Gogh family and the management of the Van Gogh foundation and it has developed into an important museum and research centre for nineteenth century painting. It is, after the Rijksmuseum itself, the most frequented of Amsterdam's museums.

The Rijksmuseum has distinguished itself in its use of new technology and the Internet to make its collections more accessible. The museum's website boasts one of the most developed virtual tours of any European museum (McTavish, 2006: 230). The museum has shown its interest in new online initiatives through its cooperation with the so-called CHIP project (Cultural Heritage Information Presentation) to develop an internet interface that allows users personalised access, giving them the opportunity to discover the collections in terms of their own tastes and interests via an interactive questionnaire (Wang, Y.; Aroyo, L.; Stash, N. and Rutledge, L., 2007).

It is interesting to discuss the history of the *Mauritsbuis* as a counterpoint to the *Rijksmuseum* as they neatly illustrate the geographic distribution of Dutch national museums, but one might also dare say that the *Mauritsbuis* illustrates a more conservative approach to the museum. The *Mauritsbuis* is part of the classic genealogy of state museums that developed out of the initiatives of king Willem I (1772-1843). As already mentioned, he revived the tradition of the *Stadholder* collections in The Hague as an opposition to those developed in Amsterdam by Louis Napoleon. The *Mauritsbuis* had already housed the National Library from 1807 onwards, again created by Louis Napoleon. In 1820, it was bought by the state and a royal decree in July 1820 designated the house as the premises for the Royal Cabinet of Paintings and Curiosities (now The Royal Picture Gallery), which had been constituted in 1816 (Hoetnik, 1977: 2). The collections were opened to the public in 1822 and displayed over a hundred works which had previously formed part of the collections of the *Stadholders*: Rembrandts, Holbeins, Rubens, Van Dyck, Jan Steen etc. Many of these paintings had left the country in 1795, confiscated by the French as the 'artistic conquest' to be returned in autumn 1815 (Hoetink, 1977: 12). The building itself had been constructed in the seventeenth century to be the home of a member of the *Stadholder's* family, Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, the governor of the Dutch colony in Brazil from 1636 to 1644, and could thus fully represent the heritage of the *Stadholders* of the Netherlands, ancestors of the new monarchy. The collections developed considerably due to the implication of the king and, not without a certain degree of rivalry, with the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam concerning some particularly important paintings such as Vermeer's *View of Delft*. Although the director of the museum in Amsterdam had instigated its acquisition, at Willem I's bequest it was hung in the *Mauritsbuis*, and a similar situation arose around Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* (Hoetink, 1977: 14). With the Belgian revolution of 1830 and the increasingly difficult financial situation, the museum hardly made any acquisitions over the next forty years (not even when the important personal collection of Willem II was sold in 1850). Just like the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam, it experienced

a period of stagnation that ended in the 1880s with the professionalization of its staff and the publication of its first real catalogue.

The other collection of ethnographic curiosities and antiquities that Willem I had also installed in the *Mauritsbuis* was transported to Leiden in 1875 and the building was devoted to paintings from then on: 'Thus by the end of the nineteenth century the interior had reached the state in which it is to be found today.' (Hoetnik, 1977: 3). It has indeed maintained a slightly old-fashioned charm and its attraction resides in the intimacy of a museum that has the dimensions of a large manor house and in the unmistakable masterpieces on display there. Hoetink points out however, the danger of the museum becoming a kind of 'monument', 'contrived as it is in accordance with refined aesthetic criteria' (Hoetnik, 1977: 23). However, in recent years, the museum seems to have literally styled itself on this princely heritage and, in September 2010, opened the 'Prince William V Gallery', reinstated as the reflection of the first public gallery of the Netherlands where visitors are to 'encounter an eighteenth-century royal collection of paintings: the elegant and impressive collection of the Stadholder William V (1748-1806)' (<http://www.mauritshuis.nl/index.aspx?SiteID=106>, accessed online November 10, 2010). This reflects the museum's general policy which, according to the website: 'has never had the intention to form a collection that represents an art-historical overview. The museum strives chiefly to round out its strong suits by enlarging the collection with important paintings by leading artists, concentrating on the areas of the stadholder's collection that were already the best represented: Dutch and Flemish painting.'

(<http://www.mauritshuis.nl/index.aspx?ChapterID=2429&ContentID=19484>, accessed online November 10, 2010).

So it has come to offer a very different cultural programme to that of the *Rijksmuseum*, which is far more comprehensive in its representation of Dutch art and history, however neither has striven to give encyclopaedic overviews of other schools. It might be added though, that in the 1950s the *Mauritsbuis* restricted its scope very clearly to 'Netherlandish and German art of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and Flemish and Dutch art of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries' (Hoetink, 1977: 21). This was a policy that was marked by a series of exchanges with the *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam, to which it sent its Spanish and Italian collections. Although the *Rijksmuseum* has maintained a clear priority in the field of Dutch art, its mission statement today, does add that it aims to show 'key aspects of European and Asian art' (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 1997, 43).

Both museums valorise what transpires as the most important Dutch national master narrative, the genius of artistic expression related to the rendering of liberal, bourgeois, industrious and civically democratic values considered as inherent to the most famous themes of Dutch golden age painting.

### **Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden/National Ethnology Museum and the *Tropenmuseum*, Amsterdam**

Just as is in the case of the *Mauritsbuis*, the history of the collection of the *Museum Volkenkunde* is closely related to that of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and developed in parallel to the painting collections, first housed in the same building: the Royal Cabinet of Chinese Rarities was founded in 1816, and in 1822, the Royal Cabinet of Rarities opened at the same time as the painting collection. Despite control of the Netherlands by the French, the former aristocratic

elite of the *Stadholders* had maintained control throughout this period over foreign Dutch territories, a fact that, according to Legêne (2000: 90), allowed them to easily recuperate their position of power after 1815. Contact with the overseas colonies was extremely important for Dutch politics and economics. So as the Netherlands quite aggressively developed its colonial empire in the Dutch East Indies, Surinam and the Antilles, transforming commercial expansion into territorial expansion, often in conflict with the British - Willem I, who had constitutionally unique power over the colonies, sent scholars to collect materials and information for Dutch museums that he founded. According to Legêne again, the Royal Cabinet of curiosities that was founded by Willem I in 1816 was a showcase for Dutch maritime politics of expansion – and so may not be interpreted as an ethnographic collection whose mission was solely scientific. Legêne (2000: 95) points to a fact that she considers to be characteristic of the Dutch case in terms of the interpretation of ethnographic museums. She claims that, despite this obvious relationship between Dutch overseas expansion and the development of Dutch ethnographic collections, neither the collections in the *Mauritsbuis* nor later in Leiden were ever interpreted as expressions of Dutch colonialism, whilst the *Tropenmuseum* clearly was - we will come back to this point.

One may add that, whilst the Royal Cabinet and the museum in Leiden (1832) both gained much from colonial collecting, they also pursued interests outside of the field of Dutch colonial territories *stricto sensu*, notably in relation to Japanese art and culture (one should add that in its ties with Japan, Holland did profit from a kind of commercial monopoly from a European perspective). The ethnographic collection that developed at the University of Leiden from 1832 onwards may claim to be one of the first in Europe to have been developed in a relatively systematic, scientific fashion. Effert (2008) has looked at how ethnology evolved as a discipline in what may have been considered as two related collections, those of the Royal Cabinet in the Hague and those at the University of Leiden until they were united in 1883. The museum was very much influenced in these years by the displays being organised for the International Colonial Exhibition in Amsterdam (1883) from which it acquired an important number of exhibits. In 1885, the *Kampong* was established on grounds juxtaposing the university: ‘perhaps the first open-air museum in the world. It consisted of a number of houses from different parts of Indonesia which were transported from the Colonial Exhibition. The collections were greatly expanded during the second half of the nineteenth century, and rebuilt (the exhibits suffered greatly from conservation problems and were closed in 1903 (Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences, 1962: 3). In general though, the collection pertaining to Indonesia increased notably during the first decade of the twentieth century. The museum also managed to acquire a more universal scope by acquiring pieces from the South Pacific to Africa (including Benin bronzes), America (Peruvian pottery) to Tibet, Siberia, New Guinea, and Greenland etc. The museum also received a series of collections from the National Museum of Antiquities (Leiden) whose objects fell outside the domain of the classical cultures, such as a Hindu-Javanese collection and a collection of American antiquities.

The remarks by Legêne (2000) and Effert (2008: 7) show that the ethnology museums of the Netherlands may not be classified simply as scientific in terms of the typology established by H. H. Frese dividing ethnology museums into colonial, scientific and missionary institutions. However, the presentation of the ethnology collections developed in The Hague and Leiden

neutralized the colonial and commercial activities that veritably founded them by excluding all forms of discourse that could refer back to the origins of the collection.

In parallel to the National Ethnography Museum based on the royal collection discussed above, it is interesting to discuss the case of what might, from its origins, be clearly defined as a colonial museum, founded on the initiative of an association of traders and bankers; today called the *Tropenmuseum* in Amsterdam (Legêne, 2000). The *Tropenmuseum* goes back to the Colonial Museum of Haarlem founded in 1864 by a botanist, F. W. van Eeden, secretary of a private *Society for the Promotion of Trade and Industry* made up of bankers and businessmen who all had interests or responsibilities in the Dutch colonies. According to Legêne, the Dutch were more consciously recognizing and aware of their activities in the colonies by this time. The violence of certain colonial practices, such as slavery, had made their way into the sphere of public debate, notably through such novels as *Max Havelaar: Or the Coffee Auctions of the Dutch Trading Company* published in 1860. Generally speaking, colonialism and the colonized populations became a much more real dimension in Dutch society than they had been in the first half of the century. The development of the museum was certainly intended to place the colonial enterprise in a favourable light and it was clearly defined, from the beginning, as a museum of colonial products and the direct expression of the economic and social interests of the Dutch elite. Accordingly, this differentiates it from the Museum of the Congo at Tervuren in Belgium for example, that was directly related to the interests of the Belgian monarchy (Legêne, 2000: 98).

By 1910, the government and the colonial administrations were supporting this initially private initiative that was to be pursued in Amsterdam in the form of a more comprehensive institute. Its objectives were to fund applied research in the field of agriculture and tropical diseases. The institute was set up in a very monumental and specially decorated building with a richly inspired colonial iconography (Woudsma, 2004). Queen Wilhelmina ceremoniously opened its doors to the public in Amsterdam in 1926 at a time when the ideology of Holland as an enlightened colonial power was running thin (Legêne, 2000: 88). A Dutch weekly paper *Eigen Haard*, brought out a special edition dedicated to the opening, where one could read: 'This is an important event not only as is it concerns the Institute's official inauguration, although this is memorable and joyful, but also because this building will be a reminder every day, every hour, to the Dutch people of the Dutch possession of 'Insulinde', the magnificent group of islands that places this small nation, situated between the Dollard and Schelde rivers, among the ranks of the great nations of the world' (Woudsma, 2004: 7). With the dissolution of the colonies and the recognition of Indonesian independence in 1949, the Colonial Institute came to be known as the Royal Institute of the Tropics and the museum as the *Tropenmuseum* (The Tropical museum), a name that it has kept to this day. Since 1992, it is run as an autonomous national museum.

Legêne has tried to examine the history of the museum in the context of its role in constructing national identity since the end of the nineteenth century but also considers its universalizing discourse on the 'other' as an element of the formation of a European identity (2000: 90). She sees it as a complement to the national ethnology museum in Leiden: whilst the later concentrated on art and history of ancient foreign civilizations, the former was oriented to the applied arts that used techniques and materials from the colonies. Both had in common the fact that they did not question Dutch colonialism, but in different ways sought to promote it,

thus reinforcing the Dutch identity of an international player and economic force that could largely be considered as positive.

Today, the *Tropenmuseum* defines its mission as that of 'a meeting-place between western and non-western cultures' (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 1997: 59). The museum's website claims, in relation to one of the newest permanent galleries,

The Tropenmuseum has taken a new, post-colonial perspective in 'Eastward Bound!' The displays tell their own story. Who collected them, and why? What does that tell us about our relationship with the East Indies then and Indonesia now? Ideas about culture and cultural differences are also dealt with. Out East, the Dutch became aware of their own national identity. Yet there were also people who felt at home in different cultures and learned to adapt to life between two cultures. Today this is more relevant than ever. (<http://tropenmuseum.nl/smartsite.shtml?ch=TMU&id=5870>)

The museum is obviously promoting an analysis of the colonial past as key to understanding the issues raised by multiculturalism in contemporary Netherlands. In a sense, its policy reads very much like that of Leiden's Ethnology museum which intends 'to give present and future generations an insight into the history and development of non-Western cultures and in particular to draw attention to the interplay between these cultures and their contact with the Netherlands' (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 1997: 47). Both museums have distanced themselves from a typology defined in the 1960s by Frese and which is no longer truly applicable, the historical studies by Effert and Legêne, show that they may never have been.

### **Arnhem: Open-Air Museum (1912)**

Created in 1912, from its beginnings the museum has grown to cover a large park of 44 hectares including over 130 buildings representative of the architectural styles of all the provinces since 1600. Founded by the Society of the 'Netherlands Open-Air Museum' it was taken over by the state in 1941.

The Open-Air museum of Arnhem was one of the first open air museums to be established in continental Europe (just after the Lyngby Danish open-air museum that opened in 1897 near Copenhagen). Both were based on the model established in the 1891 by Artur Hazelius at Skansen near Stockholm. The model of open-air museums quickly spread across northern Europe. Developed out of displays organised for the Universal Exhibitions, it was established in the context of a nostalgic movement to preserve pre-industrial cultural objects and document lifestyles that seemed to be rapidly disappearing at the end of the nineteenth century. The founder of the Dutch open air museum, F. A. Hofer, wrote: 'But who can dam the flood of modernity and of monotony. In certain regions one may still use some characteristic furniture and utensils but, little by little the uniform productions of industry are taking over' (quoted Jong and Skougaard, 1992: 154). The objective of these museums was often to preserve a cultural identity, in many cases equated with the idea of a true 'national' identity (although it must be underlined that it also very often served regional identities as well). Jong remarks that, even in the case of countries like the Netherlands, where nationalist feeling was never a strong force, 'the museum sometimes took on the function of being a national symbol' (Jong, 1996: 96). This was especially true in the period following the First World War, when the museum became the backdrop for events such as the National Historical Folk Festival in 1919, organised by Dirk Jan

van der Van. 'The whole festival was dominated by national sentiments with the aim of focussing attention on the Netherlands Open-Air Museum 'as central monument for true love of our country and genuine national esteem' and 'a demonstration of the unbreakable solidarity of our eleven provinces' (Jong, 1996: 97).

This more nationalist perspective, Jong claims, influenced the museum in the inter-war period and in the 1920s it also concentrated very exclusively on rural culture or what he terms as the 'archaic countryside' (Jong, 2001: 623). This narrow perspective combined with the sympathies of its principal promoter, Van der Van, for the fascist Nazi regime formed a conservative vision that was held against the museum later – the Dutch citizen as more inclined to identify with modern values than 'the clog wearing Volendam fisherman', (Jong, 2001: 624).

However, the museum of folklore has been changing perspective since the 1960s, shaking off the tendencies that developed during the 1920s and 1930s. The museum quickly expanded in the years following the Second World War with 'farms, windmills, and industries from all parts of the country' (Guide, 1990: 11). The museum's collections have thus widened their field of interest to urban lifestyles, industries and technology. Accordingly, the 'Netherlands Open-Air Museum for instance can pre-eminently show through its collections how our identity is a product of interaction with other cultures through the ages' (Jong, 1996: 100). This, he claims, may be done by showing the regional and international influences and inspirations that have influenced cultural and material productions of the Netherlands and also by showing how Dutch culture has been an influence elsewhere. His text advocates a different approach to the study of folklore that 'may very well start with one's own culture but not end with it. For at the end there should be the wider perspective, which I would like to qualify as the cosmopolitan perspective.' (Jong, 1996: 100). One particular initiative can be mentioned as illustrative of the tendency to deal with more clearly contemporary aspects: the complex story of the Molukken (the Molukka islands or Spice islands, today are part of Indonesia) community residing in the Netherlands since the 1950s is represented at Arnhem since 2003 with the rebuilding of a camp home inhabited by the so-called Molukken in Lake Mierde. The soldiers and family members of this special contingent of the Dutch army was historically made up of men of both European and native descent, 12,000 of them were repatriated to the Netherlands after the unsuccessful war of independence of the Islands against Indonesia. The Royal Netherlands Indies Army, usually referred to as KNIL had, since the nineteenth century, kept order on the islands and had fought in the Dutch resistance during the World War. Arriving in the Netherlands, where they were immediately stripped of their military status, they became very unsatisfied with the life that they found there and which they had believed would be temporary. During the 1970s, young Molukkens expressed their dissatisfaction in a series of severe terrorist acts – making the subject of Molukken identity in Holland a particularly sensitive one.

### **The Zuiderzee Museum/the most recent of Dutch national museums<sup>ii</sup>**

The Zuiderzee Museum is one of the latest national museums to have opened in the Netherlands. After years of building and collecting, the Museum Park finally opened in 1983, today it is run as an autonomous national museum but the idea and impetus for its creation go back to 1932. Its impetus came from an important environmental change around the Zuiderzee, an important salt-water fishing lake whose eco-system was radically modified by the decision to build a long barrier

dam between Noord-Holland and Friesland: the *Afsluitdijk* (1918-32). The saltwater lake became fresh water and fishing diminished considerably and the land reclamation that followed completely changed the countryside: the Zuiderzee thus changed into the IJsselmeer and the Waddenzee.

For the local community, an entire culture had been eliminated and it was experienced as a highly regrettable loss. The idea was born that this lost culture had to be preserved in a real museum. In 1934, the Zuiderzee Museum Foundation was established and there ensued long years of meetings and negotiations concerning the location of the museum: Harderwijk or Enkhuizen. During the 1940s, a project evolved towards a museum that would consist of two sections: a more classical indoor presentation and an open-air museum realized beyond the dike. Throughout this period, the foundation had been collecting objects with the slogan *Give what you can do without, even if it seems worthless*.

During the official opening that took place in 1950, before the outdoor Museum Park had been built, former Cabinet Minister Van der Leeuw remarked: ‘Museums are always rather strange things in a certain sense – they signify something that has been concluded, or at least largely concluded, and people have done their best to keep alive what can be kept alive. They have compiled this at places where it doesn’t really belong. You will soon be able to see all kinds of marvellous things here in the museum. They actually belong on a ship, on the high seas, or in a kitchen – splendid copper pans and suchlike – but they were never intended to be lined up in one another’s vicinity to be viewed. On the contrary, no one has ever thought of viewing them.’

The museum park grew over the next few decades, named ‘*Kooizand*’ after the sandbank off Enkhuizen. Its designer conceived of it as a fictitious village around a fishing harbour and an inner harbour, with houses, small-scale companies and a church. In his own words: ‘A grouping around a harbour basin, whether artificial or not, is seen as the basic form of the Zuiderzee Museum. Here the various buildings and sheds, which formed the picturesque constituent elements of our coastal villages on the Zuiderzee, can be set up in an unforced rhythm. It will be self-evident that the harbour basin ought to be populated with a large collection of boats.’

In 1968, the architect Heyligenberg elaborated a plan that organized the village into neighbourhoods or districts. The government approved this plan (the museum was classed as a national institution), although it specifically reproduces a local environment that is nevertheless representative of a national problem; the difficult but essential relationship between land and water that structures the national territory.

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> The author would like to thank Jenny Reynaerts, curator of paintings at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam for this information provided during a talk, not currently published: ‘Back in the Future: The Georg Sturm Murals in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.’, given at the CAA conference in New York City, 11 February, 2011.

<sup>ii</sup> I would like to thank the employees of the Zuiderzee Museum for the information kindly supplied in English on the history and background of the institution.

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Tropenmuseum:

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Zuiderzeemuseum:

<http://www.zuiderzeemuseum.nl/en/4/the-museum/>

## Annex table, The Netherlands

Name	Inaugurated	Initiated	Actors	Ownership	Type	Values	Style Location
<i>Nationally funded museums, privatised under the 1995 museum reform</i>							
Teyler's museum	1798	1784		Established by the Pieter Teyler van der Hulst legacy to the city of Haarlem, it was for a time national, but was privatised under the 1995 museum autonomy act.	Geology, Numismatics, History, History of Science, Arts	Curiosity cabinet type of collections: coin cabinet, fossils gallery, instrument gallery, painting gallery, prints and drawings, library of natural history	Haarlem
Rijksmuseum	1800 (first opening) 1808 move to Amsterdam, 1815, the Rijksmuseum, 1885 (current building)	1798		State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1996.	Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, National History	Large collection of dutch 17th century painting, good collection of Asian art. In 1885 the Netherlands Museum for History and Art, formerly in The Hague, was added, forming the basis for the collections of Dutch History and Sculpture and Applied Art departments.	Amsterdam, originally in the Hague in 1800 moved by royal orders in 1808. The current building from 1885 (Pierre Cuypers) combines gothic and renaissance architecture and is decorated with references to Dutch art history.

The National Antiquities Museum	1821	1818		Ministry of education and science, also privatised in 1995.	Archaeology	Eastern, Egyptian, Greco-Roman antiquities, but also national antiquities, medieval history (At the end of the nineteenth c., professional excavations were more commonly organised on Dutch soil, mainly by the museum itself. The museum's collection was further expanded with the most important inland finds.	Leiden
Museum Volkenkunde. (The National Museum of Ethnography)	1832 creation of a branch of the Cabinet in Leiden. Both institutions united in Leiden in 1883.	1816, creation of the Royal Cabinet of Rarities in the Hague.		State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1995. Ministry of education and science, privatised in 1995.	Ethnography, Zoology	Collections relating to Asia, mainly China and Indonesia, South Pacific, Africa, maericas, Greenland.	Leiden
Naturalis (The National Museum of Geology and Minerology)	1820	18c	Founded by royal decree	Ministry of education, culture and science. State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1995.	Geology, Mineralogy, Biology,		Leiden

Mauritshuis (Royal Cabinet of Paintings)	1822	1820		The Mauritshuis was a state museum until it was privatised in 1995. The foundation set up at that time took charge of both the building and the collection, which it was given on long-term loan. This building, which is the property of the state, is rented by the museum.	Fine Arts	Mainly Flemish and Dutch painting: Johannes Vermeer, Rembrandt van Rijn, Jan Steen, Paulus Potter and Frans Hals and works of the German painter Hans Holbein the Younger.	The Hague
Meermano-Westreenianum	1848			Former national museum, now run as a private foundation.		Manuscripts, printing books	The Hague
Bronbeek	1863	1859		Ministry of Defense	Colonial History	Collections related to the colonial presence in the Indies, from a military point of view.	Former royal palace in Arnhem
Tropenmuseum Amsterdam (Royal Tropical Institute)	1926 (opening in Amsterdam)	1871 opened its doors as the colonial museum in Haarlem.	Initiative of the private 'Netherlands Society for Industry', 1910 creation of a colonial institut, supported by the government and the town of Amsterdam.	Institute is a not-for-profit organization that works for both the public and the private sector. The museum is defined as an autonomous national museum.	Ethnography	Created to collect and display colonial productions. Applied arts in the colonies.	Amsterdam

H. W. Mesdag	1903 Mesdag donated house and collection to state			Joined to the administration of the Vincent Van Gogh Museum in 1990, today it is state owned but administered and run as a private foundation since 1995.		Based around the art collection of the Hague marine painter Hendrik Willem Mesdag: 800.	The Hague
The Boerhaave Museum of Physical and Natural sciences	1907	1907	Academy Building of Leiden University	Ministry of education and science, but independent foundations since 1994	History of Science, Medecine	One of the most comprehensive collections for the history of science and medicine in the world with objects since the 16c.	Leiden
The Dutch Open Air Museum	1942 'national folk museum', 1991 'Netherlands Open Air Museum Foundation'	1912	Private initiative at the beginning.	State owned and financed but administered autonomously by the 'Netherlands Open Air Museum Foundation'	Country Life, Architecture	Reconstructions of typical farm architecture from all over the country, local craft traditions and costumes.	Arnhem
Rijksmuseum Twenthe	1927	1927	Private donation to the state by the industry baron Jan Bernard Van Heek	State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1996.	Fine Arts	18 <sup>th</sup> c., 17 <sup>th</sup> c. and 19 <sup>th</sup> c. religious medieval art, modern art	Enschede

Jewish Historical Museum		1930	Private foundation initially. National funding	Former national museum, now run as a private foundation with national funding.	History, Religious, Cultural History	Religion, culture and history of the Jews in the Netherlands	Amsterdam
Tax Museum (Belasting en Douanemuseum)	1937			Ministry of Finance			Rotterdam
National Museum Kröller-Müller	1938		Based on the collections Helene Kröller Müller	State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1995.	Fine arts	Collection of mainly 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> c. visual art, large collection of Vincent Van Gogh paintings	Otterlo
Afrika Museum	1956	1954	Private initiative of the missionary Pater P. Bukkems	Former national museum, now run as a private foundation.	Art, Ethnology	Contemporary African art, and building and housing in Africa and African societies, outdoor museum, African village reconstructions	Berg en Dal
Anne Frank Huis	1960	1960		Autonomous national museum	Biography	Museum mission: to maintain the house on Prinsengracht 263 and open it to the public, and to propagate the ideals of Anne Frank as expressed in her diary. It is also committed to combating racism and anti-semitism and to promoting a democratic pluralist society.	Amsterdam

Hollandsche Schouwburg (Dutch Theatre)	1962			Former national museum, now run as a private foundation with national funding.	History, Memorial	The Dutch Theatre, built in 1892 was a former deportation centre for Jews, became a war memorial in 1962	Amsterdam, Jewish Quarter
Netherlands Maritime Museum (Ned. Scheepv. Museum)	1968	1922	Began as private initiative, from	Ministry of Defense	Military History	The Dutch Navy Museum is dedicated mainly to the history of the Royal Netherlands Navy, who gained their 'Royal' status after the Netherlands became a kingdom in 1815. The history prior to 1815 is shown in brief. It is further illustrated by countless ship models, paintings, weapons and uniforms sporting epaulettes and decorations.	Amsterdam, national naval depot , former arsenal of the Dutch Navy
Military Aviation Museum	1968			Ministry of Defense		Presentation of military aviation machines from 1950 to the present day.	Soesterberg
Dutch Naval museum		1973		Ministry of Defense	Maritime History	One of the largest collection of ships and maritime memorabilia.	Amsterdam
The Vincent Van Gogh Museum	1973		Collection of the Van Gogh family: In 1962, on the initiative of the Dutch state, the heir transferred the works to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation	State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1995.		Houses the world's largest collection of works by Vincent van Gogh: some 200 paintings, 500 drawings and 700 letters, as well as the artist's own collection of Japanese prints.	Amsterdam

Saint Catherine's convent	1979			Former national museum, now run as a private foundation. (autonomous national museum)	Art, History	History and art of christianity in the Netherlands	Utrecht
Zuiderzeemuseum	1983	1948		Former national museum, now run as a private foundation, but main funding is state.	Cultural History, Modern and Contemporary Art	Related to the history of the Zuiderzee area. "Today the Museum presents art, culture and heritage at the interface of land and water."	Enkhuizen
Paleis Het Loo	1984	(1684: first constructions by Stadhouder William III)		State owned building and collections but administered and run as a private foundation since 1996.	History, Art	Former royal palace, illustrates 3000 years of royal lifestyle	Former royal palace in Apeldoorn
The Dutch Resistance museum/Verzets museum	1999				Military History	Photographs, old posters, objects, films and sounds tell the story of the occupation of Holland by the Nazis during WWII.	Amsterdam
Geldmuseum/Moneymuseum	2004		Nederlandsche Bank (Dutch Central Bank) in Amsterdam; Rijks Munt (Royal Dutch Mint) in Utrecht.	Department of Education, Culture and Science and its numismatic repository the Rijksmuseum Het Koninklijk Penningkabinet ; Ministry of finance	Numismatics	Museum of the Dutch Mint located in the building where the coins are minted. social history of monetary culture.	Utrecht

National Museum from Musical clock to Street Organ				Ministry	Cultural History	The museum collection consists of automatically playing musical instruments from the 15th century to the present day, together with their music programmes and documentation.	Utrecht
Liberty Park: National war and resistance museum/Marshall Museum					Military History	History of WWII and particularly the battle of Overloon.	Overloon
<i>Museums of national significance but which have never been state owned or are municipal</i>							
Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum	1895 (opening for the Universal Exhibition)	1874	Association for Forming a Public Collection of Contemporary Art, built by the financing of a private collector.	Municipal Museum	Modern and Contemporary Art and Design	Formed as a collection for contemporary dutch artists.	Amsterdam, situated beside the musée Van Gogh.
Museum Frans Hals	1913	1862		Municipal museum	Art	Dutch painting of the 17c.	Haarlem, in a 17 <sup>th</sup> c. building.

H. W. Mesdag panorama		1881		Privately owned by the descendants of the Mesdag family.	Art of the panorama	"Steps into Hollands largest painting": panoramic painting that represents Dutch marine landscape, a fixed exhibition of Mesdag's work and an alternating exhibition of fine art related to Mesdag, panoramic images or The Hague and local artists.	The Hague, it is situated within the seaside resort of Scheveningen, on the northern side of the Noordeinde.
Museum Het Valkhof-Kam				Financed by the the commune of Nimègue and the province of Gelderland.	Archaeology, Art	Archaeological objects from all ages discovered in the area.	Nimègue, located at the edge of the historic Valkhof Park, which was once the site of a Roman encampment and, many centuries later, the residence of Charlemagne.