In Defiance of the Building

Art Related to the Stedelijk Museum's Architecture

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When the Stedelijk Museum opened in 1895, its structure comprised merely a simple entity in comparison to that of the Rijksmuseum, which had already been in existence for ten years. While the exterior of the Rijksmuseum had an ornate, well-developed decorative plan conceived by architect Pierre Cuypers and his client Victor de Stuers – one in which Dutch history and paintings from the Golden Age were praised in sculptures and tile pictures – the façade of the Stedelijk Museum had only a limited number of niches for sculpture. Several of these were furnished with statues of famous and lesser known seventeenth-century painters and architects, who represented Amsterdam's greatest period of cultural prosperity. This programme of decoration had little priority. Statues of Jacob van Campen, Hendrick de Keyser and less prominent artists such as Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen and Joost Jansz Bilhamer were placed years later due to a lack of funds, and some of the niches would even remain permanently unoccupied (fig. 1).(1) In that respect the building illustrates a changing outlook, during the last decade of the nineteenth century, on the monumental edifices' obligation to provide representation. Compared to the Rijksmuseum, the Stedelijk Museum constitutes a step towards the more subdued decoration of the Beurs van Berlage, built in 1903. But this reticence in decoration also shows what sorts of problems were being faced by the architect of a museum building for contemporary art. A.W. Weissman, architect of the Stedelijk Museum, wrote the following when it opened: 'throughout the building, the architecture has had to comply with the demands set by a proper presentation of works of art.'(2) He thereby not only distanced himself from the Rijksmuseum, which had been greatly criticized during those very years due to the fact that the presentation of art and historical objects had become secondary to the building, but he also articulated a stance that was much more relevant for a museum of contemporary art than for a museum with a more historic orientation. At the Rijksmuseum, the complex abundance of older art and historical objects from defined periods was offset and presented in an orderly manner, on the outside of the building, by a synthesis of depictions from the nation's (art) history.(3) But a museum of contemporary art – as the Stedelijk Museum was for the most part – had to show something else, mainly something that had just taken place, or which was even happening in the present. The art-historical ordering of contemporary visual art still hadn't actually taken shape yet, and so a programme of decoration that could reflect the history of its development did not exist either.

The sculptures in the niches of the Stedelijk show more, however, than changing views on decoration and the problems related to decoration schemes among various types of art museums. They also point to the awkward position held by visual art which is permanently connected to the building of an art museum. The sculptures in the niches serve the architecture by underscoring its function, even though this could – in the words of Weissman – be described as one which is practically self-effacing in order to do justice to the art. This gives rise to the question as to what relationship exists between those works, which once became a lasting part of the architecture, and the art put on display in the museum's galleries. The matter plays a role, too, with other works that became permanently linked to the Stedelijk Museum's building through the course of time and which

attest to the strained relationship between its architecture, its function and the works of art themselves. That relationship has moreover changed over the years, since both the theoretical basis of the works applied to the building and the principles on which the museum operates have changed. In order to grasp the nature of the immovable works of art – as opposed to the movable ones in the galleries – and the problems that arise with this category, we shall explore the museum from its exterior to its interior, and from room to room.

Inscribed on a bronze plaque that Lawrence Weiner had attached, in 1988, to the outside wall of the museum, next to its entrance, are the words: 'EEN VOORWERP GEWMAAKT OM OP EEN ANDER TE LIJKEN DOOR TOEVOEGING VAN EEN VOLDOENDE HOEVEELHEID UITWENDIGE KWALITEITEN / AN OBJECT MADE TO RESEMBLE ANOTHER BY THE ADDITION OF A SUFFICIENT QUANTITY OF EXTERNAL QUALITIES' (fig. 2). As is so often the case with Weiner, this textual work deals with the issue of the object's – and the art object's – intrinsic visual character. Weiner raises the matter of the added qualities, needed to provide a work of art with its expressiveness.(4) What causes the plaque to become more than an ordinary commemorative plaque?(5) By way of the text Weiner points out that the intention of the work is different: a particular event, such as the opening of the Stedelijk Museum, or a benefactor is not being commemorated here. Weiner is hereby offering his own definition of the prevailing notion of art, and he links it to the moment at which the art museum, in the general sense, was established. Once art museums came into being during the eighteenth century, the nature of visual art was drastically altered: art became autonomous and was thereby assigned the 'external qualities' that make it Art. But just as the visual arts have, since then, needed the museum in order to be defined, the art museum could not do without works of art. In that sense the work by Weiner underscores its own presence on the façade of the Stedelijk. The museum makes the existence of art possible, but at the same time it does depend on art for its own existence. By setting off with brackets the bold line bearing his message, Weiner alludes to the ambiguity and hesitation inherent in this reciprocal formation. Weiner's work on the Stedelijk's façade characterizes the manner in which art has both confirmed and questioned the museum's stance since the 1960s. But it also emphasizes the interdependence that had already become apparent in the sculptures for the façade: the work of art continues to comply with the museum building, although that building fully serves the presentation of visual art.

The way in which a museum building serves art as well as possible has been an issue ever since the Stedelijk opened its doors. Illustrative of the changing outlook on this was director David Röell's decision, in 1938, to allow its monumental staircase to be whitewashed and the yellowish glass of the skylight to be replaced with clear glass. this decision has now assumed legendary importance.(6) Yet the gesture, which made the upper hall suitable for the display of visual art, was not as revolutionary as legend would have us believe. The Rijksmuseum had, in fact, preceded the Stedelijk in this when its new director Frederik Schmidt-Degener whitewashed away a large part of the interior decorations in 1921.(7) At the Stedelijk, however, the idea was not only to relate to the international tendency of expanding the potential for aesthetic contemplation by banishing superfluous decoration and colour. The main problem was the light in the hall; it was yellowish – which was why Röell referred to the space as 'the piss pool'. As Sandberg said, it prevented 'anything decent from being placed or hung there, because all the colours were distorted or contaminated by that ghastly yellow.'(8) By making that statement he dismissed the fact that the yellow light and the polychrome brick walls were meant, on the contrary, to indicate the hall's separate function as something other than an exhibition space.(9)

By whitewashing the walls and brightening the light, Röell and Sandberg emphatically included the hall in the route of exhibition rooms. From this point on, the stairwell was no longer an approach to the galleries but the very heart of the museum, where all activities converged and where the creative force of art could become visible. Fairly soon after this was done, Sandberg and Röell were given the chance to underscore the hall's new function. The light cast in through the clear glass was, in fact, so bright that it became necessary to introduce a velum (a suspended layer of cloth). They used the opportunity to grant the commission of its design to Johannes

Itten, who happened to be in the Netherlands at that time due to the political situation in Germany. Sandberg knew Itten from Switzerland; both were drawn to the teachings of the Mazdaznan movement, but Itten's views on art, in which abstraction is seen as a form of ascetism, must also have appealed to Sandberg.(10) In their correspondence it remains unclear whether the depiction designed for the velum came about in collaboration with Sandberg, but Itten's decision to use the theme of the Creation does correspond to the new meaning that Sandberg and Röell wished to give the museum (fig. 3). On this translucent cloth itten portrayed a variation on the Creation story. with rune-like characters he depicted a man, a woman and a child, surrounded by figures meant to express human activities and emotional states. A few animals and a tree – symbolizing the beginning of all life – completed the scene.(11) The simple figures, rendered in red and blue lines, seemed to hover on the cloth. Their limbs were extended, as though balancing the bodies in space. this effect was heightened by the way in which the depiction was cut off at the edges: the large skylight literally framed a piece of the sky (fig. 4).

Itten was more concerned with the moment of creation than with a depiction of the Genesis narrative. In order to make the image on the velum less literal, he used abstracted figures and added figurative elements. In his view the work of art served as a means to show the energy contained in its material; by introducing the image in this place, the idea of creation became directly linked to the accent that the museum's management wished to give to the museum as a place where art's creative power became visible.(12) Although it has recently been established that Sandberg did not, as is often assumed, focus solely on exhibiting and thereby neglect collection and conservation activities, he did little to prevent that misconception during his directorship, which began in 1945.(13) Sandberg gave the museum the image of being a place where new things were made possible, rather than an institution dedicated to the preservation of the existent. Itten's velum had, in fact, conveyed that message previously.

The idea of the museum as a place concerned with the 'creative moment' continues to surface in the relationship between the building and its contents. Time and again, the museum emphasizes the fact that it is no mausoleum, but an environment in which art is born. long after itten's velum was gone, graffiti artist Keith Haring painted a new velum for the central hall in 1986 (fig. 5). Haring produced a form of street art that was brought into museums during the 1980s; it played a role in aestheticizing day-to- day life as well as popularizing art museums.(14) Haring was invited to paint, in the form of a performance, a cloth for the stairwell.(15) His approach to painting had had great success in the media during the years prior to this: with music playing and an audience looking on as he worked, painting as though in a trance and with increasing rhythmic speed, he rendered his cheerful yet sometimes disturbing symbols of contemporary life.(16) His performance was held in the Stedelijk's new wing, and the result of this was suspended above the main staircase. And so, once again, a story of creation was presented in the heart of the museum – this one, however, not being an image of the Creation itself, but the marks left by an artist's creative process.

Moments of origin last only a short while. Although the museum does aim to bring new life into its rooms by celebrating the birth of art itself, a work cannot grow there and must therefore be replaced by new creations. Haring's work did not remain permanently: the velum was considered part of his exhibition and was removed shortly after it came to an end. Itten's velum was a different story. Despite the image's abstract character, it played a role comparable to that of ceiling frescoes in baroque churches. It conveyed a semi-religious depiction which seemed to go beyond the limits of the building; and, ideologically, it was so strongly allied with the purpose of the museum building that its own visual power served the building. whereas Haring produced a painting that could be viewed from below, Itten invented a depiction that could also be interpreted as an integral part of the decoration scheme for a museum of modern art. The work consequently underwent the fate of so many decorative paintings: once it had been damaged by shattering glass during the Second World War, the decision was made to dispose of it rather than to repair it. Perhaps the consideration that it no longer seemed

consistent with the ideas concerning the museum did play some role here: after the occupation Sandberg wanted to create a neutral, white, transparent space in which the visitor would be unhampered by superfluous decoration and where the creative force of the present time could be voiced more directly. A painting in which the power of creation was proclaimed in a programmatic and symbolic manner stood in the way of this.

Just as the art museum constitutes the context of visual art, yet also stresses that art is actually far removed from our day-to-day existence, a wall in a museum seems to possess a certain matter-of-factness, while its status is actually complex. That wall holds works of art, presents them and protects them; but it can also be seen as the wall of a cell where the work of art chalks off its days.(17) To Röell and Sandberg, the wall represented a problem that they resolved to tackle soon after being appointed, in 1936 and 1938 respectively. In a number of the galleries they had wainscoting removed and had the walls covered with jute that was then whitewashed. This solution closely resembled a sanded white wall, which they considered the ideal, objectifying background for paintings. Furthermore, it allowed for a limitless hammering of nails, since no marks were visible.(18) Even so, as early as the 1950s Sandberg found this solution inadequate, because the sealed-off walls made the connection with life, as he pictured it, impossible. Not until the completion of the Stedelijk's new wing, in 1954, could he display art in the manner that he had envisaged: from the street this wing's large windows provided an open view of the art indoors, and visitors in the museum space could look out (fig. 6). Consequently, art and society had a much more direct relationship with each other than elsewhere in the building. Sandberg's decision to have oblique light and a system of individual panels, which made it possible to alter the direction of the space with each presentation, was also aimed at making it seem that the art had actually come about in this space. The museum was to be a place of production, a studio; and the static wall literally obstructed that aim.(19)

Although Sandberg's ideals were no longer fostered, the museum's emphasis continued to lie with the moment of artistic production.(20) Toroni, for instance, carried out one of his *Faux Tableaus, Vraie Peinture* (False Picture, Real Painting) works, *Empreintes de pinceau no. 50, répétées à intervalles réguliers de 30 cm* (Imprints of Paintbrush no. 50, Repeated at Regular intervals of 30 cm), on the wall of the corridor to the new wing in 1994. This is one of his characteristic 'INTERVENTIONS', as he has been calling them since 1966 (fig. 7).(21) Four areas on the wall of the corridor were masked off with tape; inside each of these Toroni applied 27 brush marks with red-orange paint. These minimal interventions, which he produced throughout the greater part of his life as a painter, are actually the consequence of his refusal to comply with certain expectations with respect to painting and its context. A pamphlet published in connection with a 1967 exhibition, in which work by toroni was brought together with that of Daniel Buren, Olivier Mosset and Michel Parmentier, contains the artists' detailed explanation of why they chose not to be painters in the ordinary sense. The illusions that painting tries to offer, the 'false' aims for which it could be used, were radically dismissed.(22) What remained for Toroni was the 'handwriting' of the act of painting itself, which refused to become a painting. His work therefore involves no depiction, scarcely has any composition and is always applied directly to the wall, so that it cannot be moved or sold. The work shows only the most fundamental gesture of painting and attests to the fact that the artist was once present. It is not meant to be decoration either; the work is too emphatically independent to be regarded as such. By way of this position between the mural and the painting, Toroni points to the essence of what our society calls visual art: it is a concept, the trace of a gesture, a longing free of illusion. And this art is inextricably bound to the wall of the museum.

In 2003 one of Sol LeWitt's paintings was realized, according to his instructions, by his assistants in one of the Stedelijk's upstairs galleries. the work consists of four rectangles, roughly equal in size and containing parallel bands in seven colors yellow, green, red, purple, orange, blue and silver grey (fig. 7). The rectangles have been outlined in black, smoothly and opaquely painted and precisely delineated.(23) The title – *Wall Drawing #1084* – makes it clear that this is not, as with Toroni, a repeated gesture but a single example from a sequence of wall

works, which have displayed a development over the four decades during which LeWitt produced them. After their beginnings in the late 1960s, they became increasingly rich in colour and form. In addition to this, their execution was recorded with increasing frequency by means of instructions, descriptions, explanations and with the aid of full-time assistants who represent the hand of the master.(24) LeWitt's work began as a delight to the mind and grew into a delight to the eye. Throughout this process, certain points of departure from Minimal Art and Conceptual Art that are considered part of LeWitt's work became less pronounced. the emphasis with which that earlier work initially related to the white exhibition space and the concept has lessened in *Wall Drawing #1084*. Here the gesture by which LeWitt appropriates and commands the space – the wall is entirely occupied by the prominently present colours and lines – becomes much more significant. In this work the wall has become the painting, and the room the frame that gives our gaze a context. Thus the wall of the museum is the work's final destination; any suggestion of a temporary stay has ended. The fact, however, that the painting has been applied directly to the wall of an exhibition space makes *Wall Drawing #1084* like a child who doesn't want to leave home: the work gets in the way. Whereas the wall of the museum generally remains white and invisible in order to provide us – through works hung on them – with a view of a different reality, wall paintings can ultimately only remain in places not suitable for other art: in spaces where the art has secondary importance.

For the Stedelijk's permanent murals we therefore need to go to the places that are less important to a museum. One example of such a place is the buffet area next to the auditorium. In 1951 the advisory committee concerned with commissions of murals, which included Sandberg, asked Karel Appel to paint that space shortly after its construction. The decision to choose Appel had partly to do with a previous assignment, his painting for the staff cafeteria in Amsterdam's town hall. Due to action taken by protesting civil servants, who found the work of art intolerable, this work was soon kept from view. The official reason given for granting the Stedelijk assignment to Appel was his deemed ability to transform the buffet area by means of a painting. The wish to introduce a painting here had to do with the auditorium and buffet area becoming a new 'traffic junction' in the museum, while the buffet area itself still lacked a certain amount of character.

Appel performed his task well: on the walls, the ceiling, the doors and even on the roll-down shutter used to close off the buffet, he painted depictions of flowers, birds, fish and children (figs. 8, 9). Originally he also wanted to involve the floor in the image but refrained from doing so at the committee's request. The work that was carried out did, however, give the committee some headaches, since the commotion related to his mural at the town hall had just taken place and an acceptance of work by the 'experimental Group in the Netherlands' was not yet widespread. Although the committee was pleased with the result – so pleased, in fact, that architect Merkelbach remarked that the painting had 'demolished' the space – its justification, and particularly the artist's honorarium, raised problems.(25)

Choosing Appel meant choosing the Experimentelen and post-Cobra art, movements from which Sandberg expected a great deal.(26) But choosing this form of painting also made a statement about the relationship between the building and the art in it: the architecture was literally overgrown by the art; by no means does this art serve the architecture. As a result the buffet area was no longer a minor issue; it became part of the museum's approach to presenting contemporary art. Strikingly, though, the 'Appel bar' was already shut down and kept from view in 1956, once the new restaurant in the garden room opened. Sandberg thereby displayed, once again – as with the velum by Itten – a certain indifference with respect to works of art that became too closely associated with the building. This nonchalance had nothing to do with a waning interest in Appel's work, since Appel was also asked to produce a mural for the new restaurant. In Sandberg's view he was the artist most capable of creating the right atmosphere:

I have a mental picture of this room: full of light, with doors opening onto the garden, enclosed alongside the museum, simply and, if possible, comfortably furnished, with the character of a museum space used for

relaxation. Quite some demands are to be made of this space: the visitor, having just admired work by Van Gogh or another modern master, should feel welcomed by the surroundings – and yet the atmosphere should not be high-brow. A strong and vivid painting on the only uninterrupted wall could create the right atmosphere.(27)

Again there was some resistance to the idea of having Appel do the painting.(28) The advisory committee for commissions of murals had little desire to grant Appel yet another major assignment, and the Alderman dismissed the idea with the argument that the painter was no longer registered as a resident of Amsterdam.(29) Eventually, the assignment was nonetheless granted to him, because the Theo van Gogh foundation donated the painting to the museum (fig. 10). The atmosphere envisaged by Sandberg was thus realized, and the mural contributed significantly to this as a dominant factor in the space. For the image Appel used elements that he had worked with previously: a bird, a child and a plant. But the way in which the painting conquers the space, as it were, by extending around the corner, and the way the work is crowned by a bright orange window in the form of a sun, gave the mural an overwhelming presence.

During the 1960s and 1970s the Stedelijk's restaurant may have been one of the most beautiful and upbeat places to go in Amsterdam. It was a space where everything seemed to fall into place: the museum's more serious responsibilities were put aside there, yet the relaxation had cultural distinction. The work of art and the architecture jointly created a sense of harmony free of any form of hierarchy. This successful linking of art and relaxation reveals the questionable nature of resolutely regarding non-museum spaces, and programming not solely related to the display of art, as factors 'irrelevant' to the museum programme.(30) The museum of contemporary art – as envisaged by Sandberg (and other prominent museum figures throughout the world) – was definitely aiming for a mix of functions in order to promote a more relaxed approach to art. Problems, therefore, lie not so much with the presence of places that seem irrelevant to the museum's main task. Difficulties only arise once increasing numbers of visitors boost consumer demand, along with the potential for profit, and thereby put constant pressure on the nature, size and experiential value of these spaces. During the 1980s, when visitor attendance rose sharply at the Stedelijk, the restaurant lost much of its special character; Appel's mural became background. Massive crowds turned the room into a space that could no longer be distinguished from other places of enjoyment. The museum's role as an ideological stronghold for the progressive middle class was played out.(31) In order to be different, the museum returned to a more strict division between the expanding peripheral areas and the rooms for art. In 1980 the 'Appel bar' was made accessible to the public again, though it was no longer used as a bar.

At one time the exterior walls of a museum were like an envelope, carefully folded around the quiet and rhythmic spaces for art. The size and lighting of these spaces, their succession and coherence were the subject of study and calculation. In the present-day museum of modern art, more emphasis seems to be placed on the exterior.(32) The ambiguous position of the museum's façade sculpture no longer exists: the façade itself has become an image. At the Stedelijk, this reversal has been given an interpretation through the switched location of the front and the back of the museum building. On Museumplein the museum seeks, as it were, room to grow; for if today's museum wants to survive, it will need to expand – not only to make more room for the display of its treasures, but also to give lasting emphasis to its spectacular force as a platform for art.

The original entrance side, located on Paulus Potterstraat, shows an accent that has drawn attention from the outside to the inside for years now. This intervention was carried out by Daniel Buren in 1982. With his well-known vertical stripes, he managed to establish a connection between the exterior wall, the entrance, the entrance hall, the main staircase and finally the surrounding upper hall, where his choice of specific colours relates to one of the highlights of the collection, Matisse's *La perruche et la sirène* (the Parakeet and the Mermaid, 1952–1953) , then on view in an adjoining gallery.(33) Unlike many of the works permanently attached to the building, Buren's *Kaléidoscope, un travail in situ* (Kaleidoscope, A work in Situ, 1976) does not

attempt to contradict the architecture. By applying his pattern of stripes in the spandrels, the corners remaining between the arched form above the passageways and the surrounding rectangle of the door frame, he emphasizes a characteristic detail of the building, which plays no role whatsoever in its function as a platform for contemporary art. The projection of this form on the glass wall at the front entrance establishes a link with the collection, but also shows that the museum is a building, a formal context that enables us to look at art. Buren considers his work 'mere decoration' and thus neutralizes the tension inherent in the works of art related to the building.(34) but even though the decorative intervention is meant to expose the conditions for observing visual art, and to liberate art from its lofty isolation, Buren's stroke of genius moreover implies that art comments on the museum and places the institution itself in a context. In a letter to Stedelijk Museum director De Wilde, Buren made the following remark about the work:

As such, therefore, we have a work that has been introduced in the building entirely IN SITU, specifically in accordance with its structure and, in a certain way, also constituting a direct 'memory' of this building. A formal memory and a cultural, tangible memory.(35)

By this Buren means, of course, that *Kaléidoscope, un travail in situ* mostly reminds us that it is both a building and a museum to which the work relates and with which we find ourselves confronted. But it is also possible to interpret this quote as an indication of the museum itself being reminded of its previous purpose, namely to make art autonomous. The increasing popularity of museums throughout the 1980s brought, in any case, a radical change in status. Since the museum was no longer a stronghold of cultural ideology, its ideological function could no longer be exposed by way of in situ interventions like those of Buren. The assault on the museum carried out by artists had been replaced by a general taste that developed in mass media; its basic assumption was that the museum could no longer avoid the dictates of a widely shared preference.(36)

Buren's *Kaléidoscope, un travail in situ* is consequently not only a memory of the time when the museum was a place for visual experimentation and institutional criticism; the work points to the future as well, to the building's mediagenic new front entrance that attests to a permanent reversal: no work of art can disrupt that new façade, because the façade itself has become one complete image. That, however, will not conceal the tension between the building and its contents, a tension essential to the workings of visual art. Whether works of art will once again, either temporarily or permanently, rise in defiance of the building remains to be seen.

(1) M. Vellekoop, *Het Stedelijk Museum. Oprichting, bouw en opening* (Amsterdam, 1996), 12–14; see also: *Het Stedelijk Museum. Archi- tectuur in dienst van de kunst*, jaarboek Monumenten & Archeologie 3 (Amsterdam, 2004), 29; the statue of thomas de keyser was not installed until 1924, see *Stedelijke Jaarverslagen* [1924] 328. The building's exterior was moreover decorated with plant and animal motifs.

(2) A.W. Weissman, *Het Gemeente-Museum te Amsterdam. Geschiedenis. Inrichting en Versiering. Verlichting* (Amsterdam, 1895), 44, quoted in Vellekoop, *Het Stedelijk Museum*, op. cit. (note 1), 20. Weissman was very critical of the Rijksmuseum's design, particularly with respect to its excessive use of decoration; see A.W. Weissman, *Het Rijks-Museum te Amsterdam. Geschiedenis. In- en Uitwendige Versiering*. Bouwstijl (Arnhem, 1885), 80–81, quoted in: *Het Stedelijk Museum. Architectuur in dienst van de kunst*, op. cit. (note 1), 25.

(3) For the range and complexity of the Rijksmuseum's iconography, see J. Becker, '"Ons Rijksmuseum wordt een temple": zur ikonogra- phie des Amsterdamer Rijksmuseums', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* (35) 1984. From the very start, endeavours to assemble art in the museums of the nineteenth century led to

complaints about a lack of context and about the chaos that resulted from this. In 1923 that complaint is sharply articulated by Paul Valéry in *Le problème des musées*; see W. Davidts, *Bouwen voor de kunst? Museumarchitectuur van Centre Pompidou tot Tate Modern* (Ghent, 2006), 49–72; for a discussion of these problems, see also H. Foster, 'Archives of Modern Art', in: H. Foster, *Design and Crime and other Diatribes* (London/New York, 2002), 65–82.

(4) 'In Weiner's work, it is the function of language to contest the supremacy of the visual as constituting aesthetic experience, thus continuing the contestation of the hegemony of the "retinal principle", as Duchamp had called it.' in: B.H.D. Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry. Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2000), 556.

(5) For years Weiner had been fascinated by an empty sandstone frame attached to the Stedelijk's exterior wall, see M. Bloem, *Lawrence Weiner. Works from the Beginnings of the Sixties Towards the End of the Eighties*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1988), 59–61.

(6) See C. Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening. Het verzamelbeleid van Willem Sandberg voor het Stedelijk Museum 1945–1962* (Amsterdam/Rotterdam, 2004).

(7) J. Boomgaard, *De verloren zoon. Rembrandt en de Nederlandse kunstgeschiedschrijving* (Amsterdam, 1995), 177.

(8) A. Leeuw Marcar, Willem Sandberg. *Portret van een kunstenaar* (Amsterdam, 2004), 75.

(9) Vellekoop, *Het Stedelijk Museum. Architectuur in dienst van de kunst*, op. cit. (note 1), 15.

(10) 'In der Entsagung, die mit der Askese zu vergleichen ist, erlebt der abstrakt Schaffende rein und stark, mittels äusserlich wahrnehmbarer Formen und Farben, das Wirken der Kräfte des Kosmisch-Universellen.' Quote from J. Itten, *Johannes Itten. Werke und Schriften*, ed. W. Rotzler (zurich, 1978), 240–241. Sandberg wrote an introduction to Itten's book on colour theory, published by Uitgeverij Cantecleer.

(11) J. Poot, *Johannes Itten. Velum voor het Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1991), 53–54.

(12) See also: R. Zimmermann, 'Von kandinsky zu itten. Dispositionen einer Kunsttheorie', in: Ch. Lichtenstern and Ch. Wagner (eds.), *Johannes Itten und die Moderne* (Ostfildern-Ruit, 2003), 117–137

(13) See: Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening*, op. cit. (note 6), 13–14.

(14) The legitimizing embrace in which the graffiti movement and the art scene were locked during those years has been sufficiently documented and need not be explained here. Particularly in the Netherlands, it becomes clear that graffiti art did not appear on the street until American examples of it had already been shown in exhibitions. See, for instance, S. Thissen, *Mooi van ver. Muurschilderingen in Rotterdam / Stand Well Back. Murals in Rotterdam* (Rotterdam, 2007), 29–34.

(15) W. Beeren, 'Voorwoord / Preface', *Keith Haring*, exh. cat. (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1986), 3.

(16) J. Deitch, 'the Radioactive Child', in: ibid., 11.

(17) See also Davidts, *Bouwen voor de kunst?*, op. cit. (note 3), 51–58.

(18) Leeuw Marcar, *Willem Sandberg*, op. cit. (note 8), 74.

(19) On the museum as a place of production, see: Davidts, *Bouwen voor de kunst?*, op. cit. (note 3), 26. The desire to equate the museum with the studio arose a half century earlier when, due to a dissatisfaction with the lighting for *The Nightwatch* in the new Rijksmuseum, an extension was created behind the existing building. here the painting would be displayed in oblique light, a situation similar to that in which Rembrandt is thought to have produced the masterpiece. In the debate on this subject, Jozef Israels even argued that the work should be placed on an easel, See Boomgaard, *De verloren zoon*, op. cit. (note 7), 90.

(20) Davidts, *Bouwen voor de kunst?*, op. cit. (note 3), 30.

(21) Stedelijk Museum inventory number 1995.1.0004 (former coll.). The wall in question was debolished in favor of a new wing for the museum.

(22) 'Daniel Buren (b. 1938), Olivier Mosset (b. 1944), Michel Parmentier (b. 1938) and Niele Toroni (b. 1937) Statement', in: Ch. Harrison and P. Wood (eds.), *Art in Theory 1900–1990. An Anthology of Changing Ideas* (Oxford/Cambridge, MA, 1993), 850.

(23) Stedelijk Museum inventory number 2003.2.0102.

(24) J. Bouwhuis, 'Sol LeWitt. The Concept and "the Art Part"', *Stedelijk Museum Bulletin*, 3 (2003), 4–11.

(25) See: M. Bax, 'de Appelbar', *Jong Holland*, 3 (1987) 3, 4–13. In a typically Dutch manner, committee members comment on the amount of white in the painting which is not actually painted, and about the amount of time that the artist spent making the work.

(26) In his recommendation of the painting to the alderman on 22 November 1951, Sandberg writes: 'the painting's character is of an "experimental nature". that, however, does not mean to say that this is an experiment in the sense of a test, to see whether it works out or not. the word "experimental" is a concept, perhaps a kind of slogan, used by a gradually internationally collaborative group of young artists, whose meaning is gaining recognition especially in relation to modern painting and sculpture, but also in the realm of music and literature.' Stedelijk Museum archives.

(27) Sandberg's letter to the alderman for the arts, dated 28 december 1955, Stedelijk Museum archives.

(28) Sandberg proposed the matter as though it was renovating architect bart van kasteel's idea to grant Appel the assignment. This came directly from Sandberg however. On 2 december 1955, Sandberg wrote a letter to Van Kasteel, asking him to request a mural from the municipal department for the arts and to propose Appel as the artist; Stedelijk Museum archives. Sandberg had a preference for the work of Appel and showed less interest in the work of other ex-Cobra artists; see Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening*, op. cit. (note 6), 339–343.

(29) Letter from Alderman A. de Roos, dated 28 december 1955; Stedelijk Museum archives.

(30) Davidts, *Bouwen voor de kunst?*, op. cit. (note 3), 18. It would be interesting to investigate the way inwhich coffee shops, restaurants and reception areas, not to speak of stores and other consumer options, played arole in shaping the museum from the start.

(31) See also: J. Boomgaard, 'Het museum als ideologisch instrument', *Kunstlicht*, 29 (2008) 1–2, 6–9.

(32) See also: Foster, 'Archives of Modern Art', op. cit. (note 3), 81.

(33) For a detailed description of the work, see: Stedelijk Museum inventory number A 38859.

(34) Bouwhuis, 'Sol LeWitt', op. cit (note 24), 6.

(35) 'Nous aurons donc ainsi une oeuvre totalement IN SITU dans le corps d'un bâtiment et en même temps et d'une certaine façon une 'mémoire' directe de ce bâtiment. Mémoire formelle et mémoire culturelle et sensible.' Letter dated 14 january 1982, Stedelijk Museum archives.

(36) See also: B. Groys, 'Das Museum im Zeitalter der Medien', in: *Topologie der Kunst* (Munich/ Vienna, 2003), 175–186.

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