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Krijn Christiaansen and Cathelijne Montens

Research: How devices define a landscape

The Hogeveense Polder between Noordwijkerhout and Lisse is by origin a sandy plain between different ramparts, on which a layer of peat developed. This fertile land had been brought into culture as meadows for cattle breeding. During the course of the last century almost every meadow has been changed and cultivated into an open flower bulb region. To the present day, this polder is in constant transformation due to developments in the horticultural business or under the pressure of forces outside the polder, like the local and national government.

In the eighties, investing in moving glasshouses (glasshouses that slide on rails) became popular amongst the bulb farmers because it meant that they could sell their flowers at an earlier stage than their competitors. Nowadays, policymakers are promoting an open landscape and like to get rid of these glasshouses as they 'block' the open view into the landscape.

Smaller flower bulb production tools for harvesting crops also – in part – determine the physical appearance and design of the Hogeveense Polder. The width of the flowerbeds is adapted to the length of the axletree of a tractor; the popularity of a flower determines the colour of the landscape of the bulb region in spring.

Behind the scene, a technocratic and economical landscape produces the flowers that we buy in the flower shop. A landscape created by the growers and their machinery. In a landscape that is optimised for efficiency, [Krijn Christiaansen and Cathelijne Montens](#) would like to find the non-efficient and non-rational elements of the industry. In their research they to unveil the largely appreciated landscape displayed on so many postcards and in so many photo books. They analyse the processes and the people needed for the bouquet of flowers in a vase.

Last year Christiaansen and Montens initiated a Research Lab at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague. For half a year they worked with 12 students from the departments of Fine Arts, Interior Architecture and Furniture Design and Graphic Design in the Hogeveense Polder. The results of this fieldwork were displayed in the KABK Gallery in June 2014. Especially the participation of students from different departments and working on the site gave a lot of new insights.

During the second semester in 2015 Christiaansen and Montens will again initiate this Research Lab at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague in combination with two internships that relate to this topic. They hope that this time also students from the departments of Photography, ArtScience, and Fashion will participate in the Lab. The lab will be open to a selection of students of designLAB of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie.

Christiaansen and Montens aim is to have a presentation on their research in Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam. To present the townsfolk the industry that is hidden behind a bunch of flowers. Furthermore they hope they can develop a park landscape with production tools from the bulb farmers for the [Floriade 2022](#) in Almere.

Related presentations in the near future:

'Selected Flowers 1972 – 2022' (May-August 2015), [Zone2Source](#)

A presentation in the Amstelpark in Amsterdam about the Floriade of 1972 and the upcoming Floriade in 2022. Christiaansen and Montens will present a model of a park all made by production tools from the bulb farmers. And we will analyse the flower residues of the 1972 Floriade that are still present in the Amstelpark. Are these flowers (or its new breeds) presented at the Floriade 2022?

Flower Commons 2015: a Greenhouse laboratory on Aesthetics and Biology (May-June 2015), Waag Society/ Open Wetlab

A three-week research project with scientists and artist in a glasshouse in Aalsmeer. In a do-it-yourself field research laboratory Christiaansen en Montens will work on the practical production of (the aesthetics of) a flower. Improvised tissue growing will be used and discussed. The results will be presented in Aalsmeer and Amsterdam.

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