

Saskia Janssen

('s-Hertogenbosch, 1968)

lives and works in Amsterdam

www.saskiajanssen.com, www.rainbowsoulclub.nl

Saskia Janssen mixes performance, documentary and sociology in her- mostly socially engaged- works that are made for specific sites.

Janssen studied from 90–95 at the Royal Academy in The Hague and in 96–97 at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam.

She currently teaches at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and is represented by Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS.

Exhibitions / Presentations (selection)

2011 'Mutualisms', Co-Prosperity Sphere, Chicago, USA

2010 'The Stability of Objects', Geumcheon Art Space, Seoul, South-Korea

2010 'Fare-Well', Brain Factory Gallery, Seoul, South-Korea

2010 'De piramide van IJmuiden – I hear a new world', RC De Ruimte, IJmuiden

2010 'Kaap', kindertentoonstelling in Fort Ruigenhoek (+ catalogue)

2009 'Windows', Fries Museum, Leeuwarden

2009 'Me & You on a Golden Avenue', Amsterdam, Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam (solo)

2009 'Everybody Here Comes From Somewhere', Montserrat Gallery, Beverly MA, USA
(together with Jonas Ohlsson)

2009 'Another China', Meta House, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (+ catalogue)

2008 'Blaka Watra Spiders' Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS (solo)

2008 'Imagen Latente', Galeria Cerro Nutibara Medellin, Colombia

2008 'Another China', Kunstverein Tiergarten, Galerie Nord, Berlin (+ catalogue)

2007 'To Raise One Question after Another', Songzhuang Art Center, Beijing, China

2007 'One Year of Experimental Art at Lashihai', Lashihai Haidong Art Center, Yunnan, China (+ catalogue)

2007 'Liefde in de Stad', W139, Amsterdam

2007 'Sound of Haarlemmermeer', Kunstfort bij Vijfhuizen, Vijfhuizen (+ publication)

2007 'Nieuwe Gezichten' selectie aankopen 2004–2006, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden

2007 'EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse', Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (solo)

2006 'Peter Stuyvesant's Ghost', public Space, East-Village, New York City (+ catalogue)

2006 'World Unlimited', Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Arnhem

2005 'Pulse Video Festival', Durban Art Gallery, South-Africa (+ catalogue)

2005 'EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam (solo)

2005 Art Cologne, Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, solo presentation (+ catalogue)

2005 'Social Sculpture', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS (with Jean-Baptiste Ganne and Carey Young)

2005 'The Blue Comets', HCBK Stroom, Den Haag (+ publication)

2005 'Jianghu' public space, Kunming, China

2004 Art Cologne, Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS (+ catalogue)

2004 'Situations', Museum de Paviljoens, Almere (+ publication and DVD)

2004 'Smog, Smoke & Fortune' Fries Museum/ Buro Leeuwarden (solo)

2004 ARCO, Madrid, Spain / Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS (+ catalogue)

2004 'Straal', Outdoor projection programme De Balie/AFK, Amsterdam

2003 SKOR, De Inkijk, Ruysdaelkade 2, Amsterdam

2003 Art Forum Berlin, Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS (+ catalogue)

2003 'Chock-a-block-stock 2', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam

2003 'Smog, Smoke & Fortune', House of Arts, Brno, Tsjechië, (solo)

2003 Art Rotterdam / Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Rotterdam Cruise Terminal

2002 'Upstream', de Bazel / temporary project in public space, Amsterdam (+ catalogue)

2002 'Super Stage', Display Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic (solo)

2002 Art Rotterdam / Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Rotterdam

2001 'Grass Plot Shoot', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam (solo)

2001 Internationales Foto Festival Herten (+ catalogue)

2001 'House of Games', Festival aan de Werf, Utrecht

2001 Amsterdams Centrum voor Fotografie

2001 'Kaleidoscopic Eye', Museum für Photographie, Braunschweig (+ catalogue)

2000 'P'rend', Museum waterland (+ catalogue)

2000 'En Bloc', MK-expositieruimte, Rotterdam

2000 World Wide Video Festival, Planetarium Artis, Amsterdam (+ catalogue)

2000 PARTIE 8, Brandenburgische Kunsttage / Internationales Kunst Forum DREWEN, Duitsland
(site specific installation+catalogue)

2000 'Chock-A-Block', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam

1999 'Slick, Bang & Doo wops', Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, Amsterdam (solo)

1997 'Hong kong etc.', 2e Biënnale Johannesburg, South Africa (+ catalogue)

1997 'Jus Primae Noctis', Lumen Travo gallery, Amsterdam

1997 'Hong kong, Perfumed Harbour', De Appel, Amsterdam

Catalogues / Articles / other publications (selection)

2011 'Fare Well', collaborative artist publication, published by Brain Factory Gallery, Seoul, South-Korea

2011 'Blind date with experts in future', (Graphic #18, summer 2011, pp. 175–188)

2010 'Fare Well', (Top Class Magazine, December 2010, pp. 44–47)

2010 'Exoten Act', (Mister Motley #25 on 'Fear', September 2010)

2010 'Een bioscoop voor vogels op Fort Ruigenhoek', (NRC, 11-6-2010, Dana Linssen)

2010 'Als je niet durft: tanden op elkaar en er doorheen !'
(Trouw, Anita Twaalfhoven, 2-6-2010)

2009 'Saskia Janssen, Me & You on A Golden Avenue', (Kunstbeeld nr. 3-2009, Anna van Leeuwen)

2009 'Het spinnen van een mensenweb' (Tubelight, 23-4-2009, Maarten Steenhagen)

2009 'Die webben zijn zelfportretten voor mij', (Parool, 17-3-2009, Liedewij Loorbach)

2009 'Blaka Watra Spiders', artist's publication published by Roma Publications

2009 'Spinnenportretten van verslaafden' (De Wereldomroep 26-3-2009, Jan-Willem Oomen)

2008 'Inloophuiscasten ontmoeten wereld van verschil' (De Ware Tijd, Suriname 11-10-2008, Gracia Nelson)

2008 'Another China, Das Lijiang Studio in Yunnan', (KunstForum International nr 92/ p. 267–269, Hermann Pfütze)

2008 Mister Motley nr.18 Imago, 'Altijd in een Outfit' p. 5–7, 'Annemieke' p. 22, 'Alexis' p. 24–25

2008 'Gimme Shelter' #5

2007 'Twee leefwerelden vinden elkaar in kunst' (Het Parool 20-9-2007, Marco van der Heijden)

2007 'Liefde in de Stad' (Trouw, 31-8-2007, Hans Nauta)

2007 'Blaka Watra Spiders' 'Gray Magazine' #3 , p. 42–51

2007 'Gimme Shelter' #3 and #4

2006 'Gimme Shelter' #1 and #2, a publication/newspaper in collaboration with De Regenboog Foundation and Students of the Gerrit Rietveld Akademie and AKV St.Joost.

2005 'Een Grens van Bloemen', (NRC, 21-10-2005, Machteld Leij)

2005 'Plumpuddingtapijt', (NRC, 10-6-2005, Hans den Hartog Jager)

2005 'Politiek en Vermaak verenigd in kunst' (Volkskrant, Wieteke van Zeil, 8-6-2005)

2004 'Saskia Janssen, tussen Engagement en Mysterie'(Han Schoonhoven, PhotoQ, 10-2004)

2004 'Een hangplek tussen kassen, hokken en rode kolen' (Mr. Motley, issue#03, Mireille de Putter)

2004 'Scene Shifters', artist's publication, published by Artimo Publishers, Amsterdam

2004 'Soundtrack van een Almeerse woonwijk' (NRC, 19-5-2004, Edo Dijksterhuis)

2004 'Saskia Janssen legt zwartwerkers in de watten' (SKRIEN, may 2004, Jacqueline van de Elzen)

2003 'Exedra 1997–2001, tussen feit lijn en fictie'(p. 17, p. 64) published by Exedra Foundation, Hilversum.

2002 'Superstage', Umelec Vol.6, 2002/2, Michaela Ivaniskova.

2002 'Lidska dramata ve fotografich Saskie Janssenové' (Lidové Noviny Kultura, 14-06-2 Michaela Ivaniskina)

2002 'The three-ring circus of life ; artist explores contemporary displacement of ordinary people'
(Prague Post, 22-6-2001, Mimi Rogers)

2002 Catalogue Prix de Rome Photography / Film 2002

2001 'Hangjongeren in Purmerend' (Het Parool, 24-11-2001, Kees Keijer)

2001 'Als opgeprikte vlinders, over de portretten van Saskia Janssen', (Kunstblad, feb.2001, Claudine Hellweg)

2000 'Straten, pleinen en schooljeugd in Purmerend', (NRC, 14-12-2000, Eddie Marsman)
 2000 Catalogue 18th World Wide Video Festival, (tekst by Nathalie Zonnenberg)
 2000 'Kunst abladen verboden', (Der Tagesspiegel, 16-9-2000, Christophe Tannert)

1999 'De Amsterdamse Kunstprijzen', AT5 broadcast nov. 1999
 1999 'Maritiem Epos', (Het Financieële Dagblad, Mirelle Thijssen)

1998 'Cliché op cliché is geen cliché meer' (Volkskrant, 16-9-'98, Anne van Driel)
 1998 'Een machinekamer als circuspiste' (Volkskrant, 25-2-'98, Erik Hagoort)

1997 'Traderoutes', catalogue 2e Biennale Johannesburg, Zuid-Afrika
 1997 'Hongkong etc.', artist's publication, published by Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten & Hou Hanrou, Amsterdam

Teaching & lectures

2002 – present lecturer Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam
 2009 – present lecturer ArtEZ academy, Zwolle
 2009 guest lecturer AKV St. Joost, MFA Photography
 2009 lecture Blaka Watra Spiders for Studium Generale Rietveld Academy
 2008 – 2009 Visiting Artist for Montserrat College of Art, Beverly MA, U.S.A.
 2008 guest lecturer Artez conservatory, Arnhem
 2006 – 2009 Member of Research Group Professorship of Art and Public Space, Gerrit Rietveld Academy
 2006 guest lecturer Artez conservatory Zwolle / lecture and workshop for Lectoraat Popkunst
 2004 lecture and workshop for Mr.Motley magazine, 18-11-2004, at Post C.S.
 2002 guest lecturer Frank Mohr Institute, Groningen. (MFA Minerva academy)
 2002 guest lecturer Royal Academy for Visual Arts, The Hague
 2001/2002 lecturer Academy St.Joost, Breda
 2000 lecture /visiting photographer, Amsterdam Centre for Photography
 2000 guest lecturer Académie des Beaux Arts Régionale, Rouen, Frankrijk
 2001 lecture & workshop for Studium Generale Akademie Kunst en Vormgeving, Den Bosch
 1999 visiting artist at Washington University, St.Louis, U.S.A. (with George Korsmit)
 1998 – 2004 lecturer Akademie Kunst en Vormgeving, 's-Hertogenbosch

Commissions in Public Space

2010 Commission Atelier Rijksbouwmeester for tax office Bonaire
 2010 Research commision for Poelenburg, Gemeente Zaanstad
 2006/2007 Commission Public Space, Gemeente Haarlemmermeer
 2004 Commission Public Space Staatsliedenwijk, Museum De Paviljoens / Gemeente Almere
 2003 Commission for new school building ISW college, 's-Gravenzande

Other

2010 AIR at the Geumcheon Art Space, Seoul, South-Korea (okt – dec.2010)
 2009 Loko09, presentation and lecture for SKOR in schouwburg Almere,
 2007 three-day-workshop and performance at popfestival Lowlands for Mr.Motley
 2005 Residency period at Lijiang Studios, Yunan, China
 2004 – 2009 board member Stichting Materiaalfonds voor Beeldend Kunstenaars
 2003 – 2004 board member of Stichting de Veermvloer
 2000 member of editorial board "Lost & Found", de Waag
 1999 Incentive Price Photography 1999, Amsterdam Foundation for the Arts



Smog, Smoke & Fortune

Installation, produced for the House of Arts, Brno, Czech Republic, 2003–2004.

Smog, Smoke & Fortune presents a portrait of six Ukrainian builders in the Czech Republic that was made for a solo exhibition at the House of Arts in Brno, the Czech Republic. Ukrainians are the largest group of migrant workers in the Czech Republic. Their contribution to the Czech economy is vitally important, yet as a social group they have remained a hidden community. The builders work behind the scenes at the House of Arts, setting up exhibitions, building plinths, whitewashing the walls and so on. The idea for the exhibition was to bring these

builders out from behind the screens and make them the main subject of the exhibition, rendering them visible. It evolved into a portrait in two parts: the first part was a physical (sleeping) portrait of them as a group. Six hammocks were hung up in the park behind the museum with a supply of food and drink. The men slept in the hammocks throughout their normal working day, while people in the park walked around this 'living sculpture'. The second part was more of an individual 'mind' portrait of each of the men. Janssen enlisted the help of a professional tarot reader, who offered insight into their future situation of each of them as a migrant worker in the Czech Republic for each of the men. This took place during one-on-one sessions on the roof of the Raiffaisen Bank,

a means of emphasising the men's status as economic outsiders. All the sessions were recorded on video. The presentation in the House of Arts consisted of a large video projection in colour, six B&W videos on monitors, and various photos of the set, props and leftovers from the shoots. The project was presented at the Fries Museum / Buro Leeuwarden, Arco Madrid, Art Forum Berlin and Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS. For each presentation the material was rearranged and was sometimes complemented by large-format B&W prints.

Smog, Smoke & Fortune was acquired by the Museum voor Moderne Kunst (Museum of Modern Art) in Arnhem in 2006.





Casting Fortune (remarkable moments and spiritual predictions in Almere)

Portrait of the Staatsliedenwijk
in Almere, commissioned by Museum
De Paviljoens and the City of Almere,
2004.

Behind the station in Almere lies the
Staatsliedenwijk – the Statesmen's
Quarter. It is an area with a reputation:
high unemployment, criminality,
anonymity and 41 different nationalities,
people who do not live in harmony with
each other. For the commission, Janssen
made a neighbourhood portrait with
and about the inhabitants, in the process
dispelling prejudices and revealing the
neighbourhood's hidden 'gems'. The
project developed into a neighbourhood

portrait in the form of six short films
with local residents in the leading roles.
A 'casting' was held on the streets,
where local residents could register as
participants and could submit a plan for
a short film. Then a practice space and
film lab / preview space was fitted out
within Museum De Paviljoens, a place
where local residents met regularly to
rehearse the acts they had proposed.
All the short films were recorded on the
streets of the Staatsliedenwijk between
February and April 2004. The films were
shot on super 8 film, in order to produce
an instant historical document in this
city that is lacking a collective 'history'.
(Almere is a newly built city which was
only begun in the 1970s.) The short films
are interlinked by street scenes from the
neighbourhood. Three local fortune tellers
shared their visions for these streets in
statements and gave their tips on how
to improve the neighbourhood. This

served as a counterpart to municipal
policymakers who, with their graphs and
tables, 'know' what is good for the future
of a neighbourhood. The whole film was
transferred to DVD and provided with
a soundtrack and subtitles, then screened
at the annual neighbourhood party in
September 2004. Every household in the
neighbourhood received one free copy.
Casting Fortune was shown at Museum
De Paviljoens in 2004, at Art Cologne
in 2005, and at various film festivals.

*Casting Fortune: super 8 film transferred
to DVD (28 mins), subtitles in 10
different languages / edition of 2,000,
various photos of the sets and a banner.
Soundtrack by David Hollestelle.*





Scene Shifters

Artist's book, published by Artimo, 2004, Saskia Janssen.

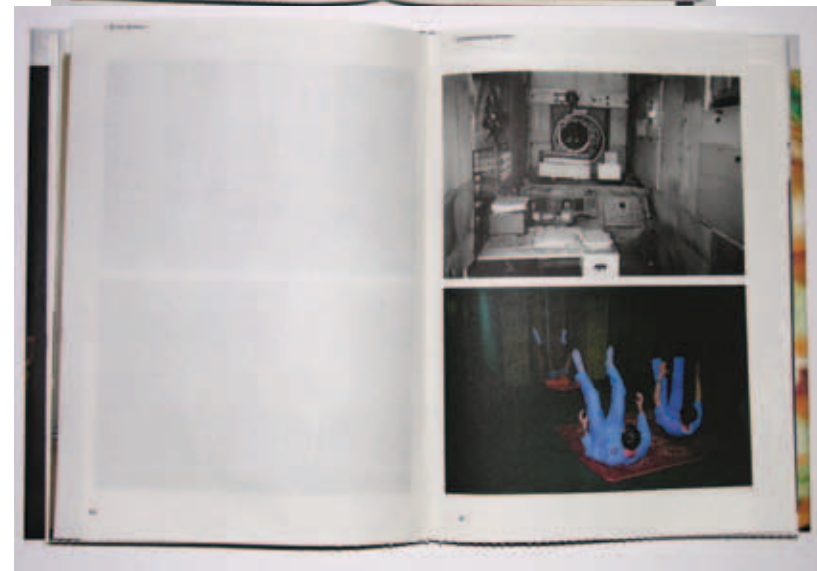
When Saskia Janssen turned 21 she joined the circus. Working as a snake charmer she travelled from town to town throughout Europe, but after a while, not having traditional circus roots and feeling that she was the only outsider in a tight-knit family, she swapped the continual displacement of travelling life for art college. Studying first at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in The Hague and then at the Rijksakademie (State Academy of Fine Arts) in Amsterdam, Janssen began making photographs:

she directed 'real people' – friends, acquaintances and strangers she met on the street – to perform in front of her lens in a diversity of locations. Sometimes low-key and intimate and at other times spectacular and complex, Saskia Janssen's work is fascinating for its enigmatic combination of performance, sculpture and photo shoot. Turning ordinary people into models and creating drama out of documentary, Janssen examines contemporary displacement on macro and micro levels. In the publication *Super Stage*, Janssen invites us to join her on a journey to the various locations she has used as stages, from a hotel room in Moscow, via a caravan in Belgium, and into the hull of a container ship

on the Yellow River. On the way we are introduced to Janssen's cast of 'performers', including sailors, nightclub bouncers, lawyers and cosmonauts....

Scene Shifters

Artist's book, Artimo, 2004, Saskia Janssen.
texts: Hans Aarsman, Sophie Berrebi, Saskia Janssen, Owen Oppenheimer
translation: Andrew May,
design: Mevis & Van Deursen,
English, 192 pages, paperback,
22.5 x 16.5 cm,
ISBN 90-75380-83-6





The Blue Comets

Commission for public space in
The Hague/Kijkduin region, 2005.

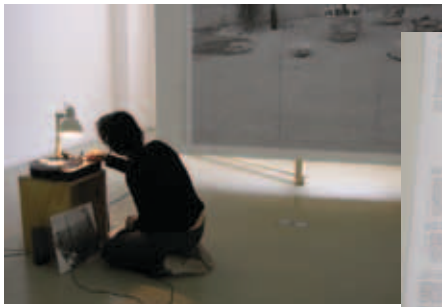
For the new bicycle route between The Hague and Rotterdam, six artists were asked to make a work that referred to the region's cultural history which cyclists could take along with them on the route. Janssen used the history of Indo-rock music as her point of departure. The Hague was the birthplace of this genre in the 1950s and '60s, after the end of the colonisation of the Dutch East Indies in 1950 and the repatriation of Dutch Indonesians. Indo-rock is a mixture of American rock music and Indonesian *Kronjong* influences. *Kronjong* songs were traditionally accompanied by ukulele, violin and flute, which characteristically spoke back and forth to each other individually, as opposed to playing at the same time. These

traditional instruments were replaced by electric guitars and a new genre was born: 'Indo-rock', a melancholic genre that conveyed the longing for Indonesia. While the Indonesians walked in the footsteps of their idols from the USA, it became fashionable for The Hague's youth to dress 'Indo', which included dyeing their hair black and tinting their faces a darker shade with iodine! The golden years of Indo-rock were from 1958 to 1964. Hundreds of bands were formed, not only by Indonesian musicians but also by Dutch musicians, mainly in and around The Hague. In the Netherlands the older generation rejected this new 'wild' and 'black' music, but in Germany these bands were in popular demand to perform in clubs, at talent shows and on American military bases. Within a few years the Netherlands had 'lost' all its good Indo-rock bands to Germany. There are still several Indo-rock bands in The Hague region today. Most of the

musicians are now 60 years of age or older. Janssen recorded a CD with typical music from this slowly disappearing genre with The Blue Comets, for which the band members reunited. The CD was recorded at Villa Ockenburgh (temporarily transformed into a recording studio) in Kijkduin and was presented on 25 May 2005 at the HCBK Stroom centre for the visual arts together with the original scrapbooks of the band members. Cyclists could listen to the music *en route* on a discman. For further information see the CD's printed insert.

The Blue Comets:
Audio CD, printed matter, pin buttons,
original Blue Comets scrapbooks.





EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse

The town of Lijiang was first ‘discovered’ in 1922 by Joseph F. Rock, an Australian/American botanist, writer and explorer, during one of his expeditions to the mountainous regions of China. He fell in love with the place and remained there, spending 27 years of his life studying and documenting the isolated animistic culture of the Naxi people, a minority tribe. In the Western world, the town became famous thanks to the many articles Rock wrote about it for *National Geographic*. Lijiang gained official recognition as a national tourist site in the late 1980s. A new town and an airport were built alongside the old town. Mass tourism followed. Lijiang saw not only the arrival of tourists, but also of

Han Chinese entrepreneurs, who rented traditional wooden houses from the Naxi and transformed them into hotels, cafés and souvenir shops. Many of the Naxi became landlords. The rental income that this generated allowed them to ‘upgrade’ their lifestyles and move to apartments in the new town. Today the roles have been reversed. Walking through the old town one sees the Han dressed in Naxi costume and playing Naxi music, while in the new town the Naxi wear modern clothes and listen to Han music. For *EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse*, Janssen produced ‘small ritualistic acts’ with the help of Lijiang’s inhabitants, as odes to the old and new town: a ‘flower border’ that ran between the two towns, a sung tribute to the old town, and a reconstruction of a photograph from a 1920s edition of *National Geographic* that showed a shaman altar to appease

the gods for the new year. Janssen also recorded music in the two towns, as a document of a changing culture, and used this material to produce an album on vinyl: *EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse*, music from the two towns of Lijiang

The *EAST/WEST, Paradise in Reverse* installation consists of an LP (500 copies), a gramophone player on a wooden stool + a small lamp, 2x video, 3x B&W print (2.70 × 3.60m), 2x wooden billboard (2.70 × 3.60m).

In 2010 the installation was acquired by the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden.



Songs, Texts and Rhythms by Ebby Addo and Totty Telgt

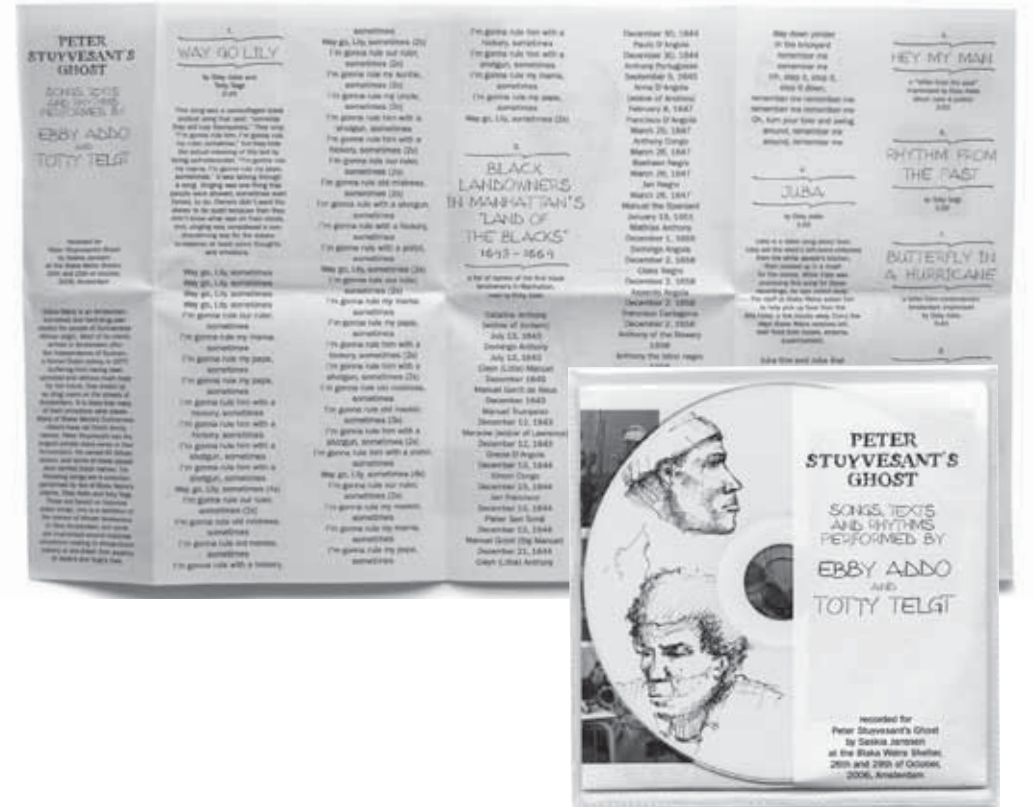
Songs, Texts and Rhythms by Ebby Addo and Totty Telgt was produced for 'Peter Stuyvesant's Ghost', a group exhibition about Dutch colonial history on Manhattan Island, NYC 2006.

The exhibition took place in public space in the East Village, exactly at the place where the farm of Peter Stuyvesant, the former governor of New Amsterdam, once stood. The works were all sound recordings that could be listened to at telephone booths in the streets. Visitors received a map and a bag of quarters for their telephone tour. The telephones, superfluous and unused in this age of mobile phones, functioned as voices from the past. Peter Stuyvesant was the largest

private slave owner in New Amsterdam: he owned 40 slaves. Some of these slaves were given Dutch names. For the 'Peter Stuyvesant's Ghost' exhibition, Janssen connected the history of Manhattan with the here and now in Amsterdam. She recorded a CD with two visitors from the Blaka Watra walk-in centre, a shelter in Amsterdam for homeless people of Surinamese-African origin. Most of Blaka Watra's clients have old Dutch names as surnames. It is likely that their forefathers crossed the ocean as slaves from Africa. The visitors themselves arrived in Amsterdam after the former Dutch colony of Suriname gained its independence in 1975. Suffering from having been uprooted and without much hope for the future, they ended up as drug users on the streets of Amsterdam. The songs on the CD are a collection performed by two of Blaka Watra's clients, Ebby Addo and Totty Telgt. Three

songs are based on historical slave songs, one is a recitation of the names of the first African landowners in New Amsterdam, and some are improvised around historical situations relating to African-Dutch slavery or are drawn from aspects of Addo's and Telgt's lives. For further information see the CD booklet.

Songs, Texts and Rhythms by Ebby Addo and Totty Telgt consists of an audio CD + printed material and audio material on a telephone server, and public space in the East Village, New York City. All sound was recorded at the Blaka Watra Shelter in Amsterdam on 26 and 29 October 2006.





Sound of Haarlemmermeer

Temporary project in the public space, commissioned by the Municipality of Haarlemmermeer, 2006–2007.

Sound of Haarlemmermeer is an audio archive of the Haarlemmermeer Polder that was recorded in a local bus converted into a recording studio. Over the last 150 years, the Haarlemmermeer Polder has undergone a transformation from a quiet natural area into one that is subject to the highest number of decibels per square kilometre in the Netherlands,

namely because of the arrival of Schiphol Airport. Via an appeal in local media, local inhabitants were invited to propose sounds that they wanted to have recorded for an audio archive of the polder in the year 2006. Wherever possible, sounds were recorded on location using the mobile studio. This document was released in March 2007, in the form of a double LP and a publication, which were made available to the polder's inhabitants. The recorded material included a heavy metal band, various aeroplanes, a choir of left-wing activists, crickets, sounds of harvest, a female Philippine singer, and the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Haarlemmermeer Polder. The original

sound recordings have been preserved for posterity in the municipal archives. For further information see the booklet that accompanies the LP. Images: set photos, LP + printed materials and the *Sound of Haarlemmermeer* project presentation at the Kunstfort bij Vijfhuizen centre for contemporary art in March 2007.

Sound of Haarlemmermeer consists of a double LP, printed matter, posters, advertisements in local newspapers, a series of diverse photos, 2x 80 slides in a carousel.





Rainbow Soulclub / Gimme Shelter

A collaborative project with Stichting De Regenboog (the Rainbow Foundation) and art academy students, 2005–present.

The Rainbow Soulclub, an initiative of Saskia Janssen and George Korsmit, was established in September 2005 and involves meetings and collaborative projects between art students and visitors to De Regenboog Groep (The Rainbow Group), a foundation that provides shelter and care for homeless people and for users of hard drugs in Amsterdam. The encounters take place in the foundation's walk-in shelters and drug-users' spaces. During their training, students spend most of their time in the protected, safe surroundings of the academy and their social circles primarily consist of fellow students. By contrast, the social environment of the clients of the walk-in shelters and drug-users' spaces is primarily composed of fellow users, homeless people and social workers. Both groups meet people who they would not normally associate with, something which can broaden and enrich their way of thinking. The meetings and collaborations are based on equality and mutual respect, rather than being aimed at 'helping' or 'healing' the visitors: the interchange of ideas and thoughts is the key objective.

Wherever possible, ideas are also actually implemented. A great diversity of projects have sprung from these 'blind dates' over the last two years: painting bikes in the Vondelpark, distributing soup at Dam Square, pasting up posters in the city, drawing, painting, pottery, producing films, writing, cooking, creating collages, designing typefaces, recording music, making clothing, launching campaigns and even transmitting 'cosmic energy'. The highly varied collection of ever-changing activities has become a refreshing component as well as a welcome addition to the everyday activities of both students and visitors. A report on these projects appears every six months in the publication *Gimme Shelter*, which is posted on the walls of the walk-in centres as well as on the website www.rainbowsoulclub.nl. This site also serves as an archive for the drawings, photos, videos and documentation. For homeless people it is often difficult to store things, but on the website everything can be accessed at any time, even by family members in far-off countries. (Nowadays almost all homeless people have e-mail and access to internet at the walk-in centres.) In 2008, Janssen and Korsmit undertook a working visit to Suriname with a small group of Blaka Watra visitors. In Suriname they all worked together, facilitating drawing workshops in remote villages in the interior as well as at the Opa Doeli youth detention centre in

the capital city of Paramaribo. Since February 2010 the Rainbow Soulclub has boasted a dedicated workspace in the form of a specially equipped portacabin in the grounds of the Blaka Watra walk-in centre. Soulclub members congregate there at set times to work on their projects. The walk-in centre's visitors can also 'book' time in this studio to work on personal projects. There are, for example, visitors who write, make music, paint and draw, and one who makes coconut-shell lamps. The studio functions as a peaceful oasis to work without being disturbed and offers the opportunity to store the work safely in order to continue working on it another day. Visitors are currently working on a music project: a double album with the working title 'Songs from the Shelter' that is set for release in 2011. A working visit to Ghana is planned for the autumn of 2011 in association with the Bokemei Foundation. A small group of Blaka Watra visitors will go and help with the completion of a school and will make a mural for this building.

Gimme Shelter #1, #2, #3, #4, #5 is a series of publications produced by visitors to De Regenboog Groep in association with art academy students. For further information, see www.rainbowsoulclub.nl.





Karma Orchestra

Workshop and performance commissioned by Mister Motley magazine, during the Lowlands pop festival in 2007.

Large-scale pop festivals, even 'Live Earth', produce considerable quantities of rubbish: plastic beakers, plates and so on. *Karma Orchestra* is the working title of a series of workshops and performances at which this waste is metamorphosed into music. During the daytime workshops,

festival rubbish was transformed into musical instruments that were used to perform concerts in the evening. For example, a live soundtrack accompanied a recycled image from pop history: footage of Beatles fans on a 'pilgrimage' to Abbey Road in 2005–2007.

Concept for the Karma Orchestra & footage of the Abbey Road crossing: Saskia Janssen.
Live band and workshop in association with David Hollestelle and Ruud Englebert.





Me & You on a Golden Avenue

Solo exhibition at Ellen de Bruijne PROJECTS, 2009

Me & You on a Golden Avenue is the sequel to the gallery presentation staged by Saskia Janssen (b. Den Bosch, 1968) in July 2008. Central to this exhibition is the publication *Blaka Watra Spiders*, in which she reports on her encounters in the Blaka Watra users' room in Amsterdam during the period 2006 to 2008. The works to be seen in the exhibition were made with, by and for Blaka Watra's visitors. Some of these works were inspired by the journey she made to Suriname with three of the visitors in late 2008. Blaka Watra was one of first users' rooms in Amsterdam and is primarily frequented by an 'invisible' group of users with roots in Suriname. Most of them moved here after Suriname gained its independence from the Netherlands in 1975. Blaka

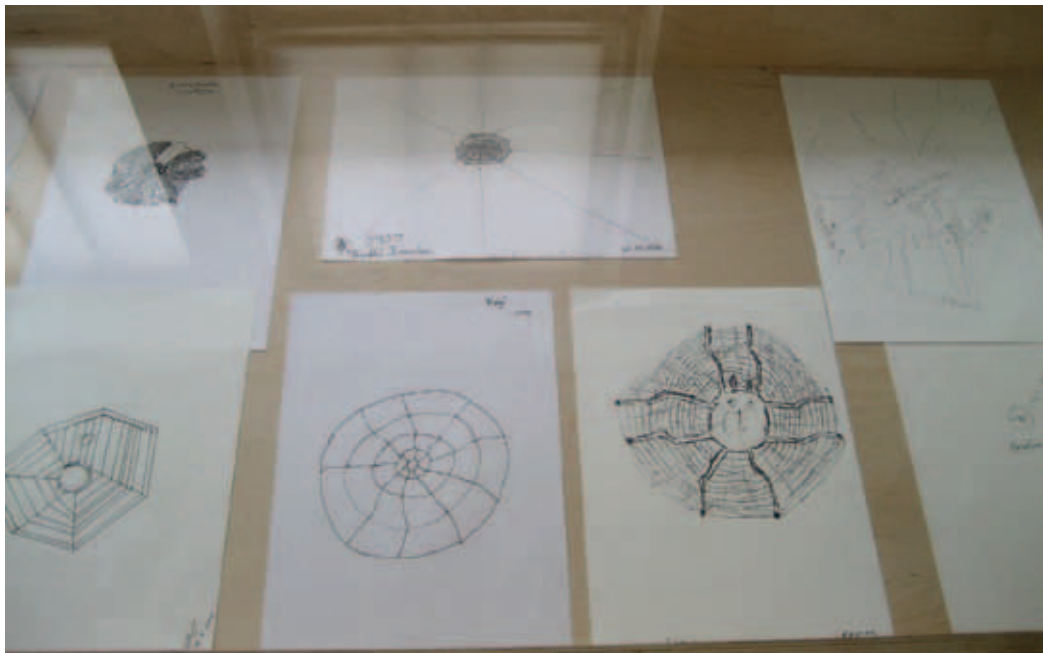
Watra's visitors are long-term users of hard drugs, most of them between 45 and 65 years old. Blaka Watra's function is two-fold: it offers shelter and protection but at the same time provides for the 'tidying up' of public space and thus meets the growing clamour for a sense of safety in the public domain. Saskia Janssen often works in conjunction with specific groups of people. This is driven by her personal fascination with making a situation 'visible'. A users' space like Blaka Watra is integrated into her work simply because she is curious about this invisible group, which has been sidelined to society's periphery because the majority of us regard them as a nuisance. Saskia Janssen's intention was to become acquainted with the users, and the work was produced as a result of this contact. She does not profess to improve the situation of the users; she has no 'good intentions'. She does, however, cherish the ambition to generate something special as a result of such contact. The publication

is the result of a study conducted by Saskia Janssen in the context of the Art and Public Space Research Group project at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. *Blaka Watra Spiders* was published by Roma Publications.

Installation: various photos, objects, prints, music, video, text, drawings, sound recordings and a series of 34 spider-web drawings, which were made by Blaka Watra's clients under the influence of various kinds of hard drugs.

Blaka Watra Spiders
Report on Janssen's encounters in the Blaka Watra drug users' room in Amsterdam from 2006 to 2008. With drawings of spider webs by Blaka Watra visitors. Jackson: 'This is the real shit, man! A spider web! That's my life.'
Design: Jaan Ewart & Indrek Sirkel.
ISBN 978-90-77459-36













Monument for Invisible Particles

Monument for Invisible Particles is the title of series of 15 large-format colour photos made for the Dutch tax office in Kralendijk, the chief town of Bonaire (one of the main islands of the Netherlands Antilles), a commission from the Atelier of the Chief Government Architect in 2010. The tax office employees were keen that the work of art should be made in collaboration with Bonairian children and at the same time be a work that devoted attention to the island's cultural history. During workshops lasting several days, the children cut out the shapes of cultural

elements on the island which they thought were important, all from memory. They cut out the outlines of divi-divi trees, cactuses, salt pans, little slave huts, lighthouses and flamingos. All the cut-out paper on the table was then divided into two piles: a pile with cut-out forms in which you can clearly recognise these elements and a pile with the shapes that are left behind: the remnant forms. The first pile contains unmistakable symbols of the island, those that are also to be seen on postcards and in tourist guides. The shapes in the second pile are more mysterious, even though you know that they are the by-product of recognisable forms. These remnant forms could also be seen as symbols for

all the fragments of culture which have become invisible, because they continue to exist only in memories, music, stories or history. They do exist, but they cannot be seen with the naked eye. All these mysterious remnant forms were enlarged and sawn out in wood together with the children. These wooden objects were then painted in typical Bonairian colours, reintroduced into the landscape, and subsequently photographed. The resulting series of photos can be seen as a small monument, a reminder of all those invisible fragments of culture that are not immediately visible to us yet are still important enough not to be forgotten.



