

Foreword by the Directors

2014 - A year of major changes

1.6 million visitors

With great pleasure, we hereby present the online Annual Report for 2014. We look back on the past year with great satisfaction. This is primarily thanks to more than 1.6 million visitors that we were able to welcome to our museum in 2014, from every part of the world. This was substantially more than in the year before. We would like to thank all Van Gogh fans worldwide and everyone in our organisation who made these visits an unforgettable experience.

New interior at the Van Gogh Museum

November brought the spectacular presentation of the completely new interior and design of our permanent collection. This was the crown on a project on which many people have worked with great devotion in recent years. We are proud that the new presentation was welcomed with great praise and was discussed in detail in both the national and international press.

Exhibitions

Prior to this, we presented two special exhibitions this year. Firstly, the extremely well-attended '*Félix Vallotton: The Fire Beneath the Ice*' exhibition was on show in February. This was followed by the surprising photography exhibition '*The World of Van Gogh: photographs by Emmy Andriess*' from June to October.

Award-winning new website

The launch of our new website in August means that our online platform is also once again entirely state of the art. The new website is predominantly informative. The focus on the stories about Vincent van Gogh and his contemporaries gradually brings the online visitor closer to his world. We were surprised and delighted that the website won two important international awards immediately after the launch: the *Developer Award* for web design and an *honourable mention* from *awwwards.com*.

Awards for Touch Van Gogh app

Our museum also won awards in another field. The *Touch Van Gogh* app which the Van Gogh Museum launched in 2013 won as many as three awards. The app makes the results of complex technical research into Van Gogh's working methods accessible to the general public in a playful manner. For example, it can be used to discover how a painting appeared before a restoration, which paints were discoloured, or how the composition of a work of art is developed. The app won the *Heritage In Motion Award*, followed by the World Summit Award Mobile. Shortly afterwards, it won a 'Gold' award in the 'Best App' category of the International Design and Communication Awards (IDCA).

It gives great satisfaction that these new products, developed in response to the great interest in Vincent van Gogh, have been awarded by such well-known institutions.

New multimedia tour

We are also very pleased with the good responses with which the new Multimedia Tour has been received by our visitors. The tour was developed specially for the new presentation of the permanent collection. It is now possible to choose from three different tours, in as many as ten different languages. There is a tour that everyone can take at their own pace, a tour of the highlights and a family tour, to be enjoyed together.

Start of construction of new entrance building

Following careful preparation, we formally gave the starting signal for the construction of a new glass entrance building in April. The ceremony was performed by Stef Blok, Minister for Housing and the Central Government Sector, and Axel Rüger, Director of the museum.

The construction of the entrance building has been made possible partly through the generous financial support of the BankGiro Lottery, the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Municipality of Amsterdam, the South District of the Municipality of Amsterdam, Yanmar, the C. van Zadelhoff Fund Foundation, the Elise Mathilde Fund and other companies and private individuals. We are very grateful to all of them for their contributions.

With this new building, the main entrance to the museum will be moved from the Paulus Potterstraat to the Museumplein, where our fellow institutions are also located. This realises a long-cherished wish to be able to give our visitors an even better reception. That will be made possible by the extra 800 m² which will be created through the construction of the new entrance building.

At the time of publication of this Annual Report, the fundraising activities for the financing of the new building were complete and all our work is focused on the official opening in September 2015.

New Strategic Plan

The activities developed in 2014 were in line with our new Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. This is based on the strategic pillars of Accessibility (collection and building), Penetration (transfer of knowledge and dialogue with the public within the digital domain) and Income (including via VGM Consultancy, the Van Gogh Experience (working title), new products and fundraising).

Together with the Core Assignment, these form the basis of our policy. The Core Assignment of our museum is secured by the three sectors that make up our organisation: Museum Affairs, Public Affairs and Business Operations. We also regard the continuation and expansion of the partnerships with various parties as an important part of our Core Assignment.

Activities in 2014

The new interior of the museum

We are delighted with the enthusiastic reactions that we still receive to the new presentation of our permanent collection. The main theme in this new presentation is Van Gogh's development into one of the greatest artists ever. We tell a human story and show how Van Gogh wanted to express in his art the major themes of the human condition, such as fear, suffering, love and hope.

The accompanying texts and the new multimedia tour for adults and children show how Van Gogh used his distinct style of painting and use of colour to express these emotions. His works hang among those of his contemporaries and major sources of inspiration, so that this context clarifies Van Gogh's development and visitors 'see through his eyes', as it were.

We now not only exhibit Van Gogh's paintings in the permanent display, but also his drawings and letters. Key works from Van Gogh's oeuvre serve as eye-catchers in the colourful design by Marcel Schmalgemeijer and Mariëlle Tolenaar.

Myths about Van Gogh

The attention we devote to personal aspects of his life is also new. Visitors can learn all about this through letters which are read out, films and special information for families with children. In addition, all the myths surrounding Van Gogh – such as his suicide, illness and severed ear – are discussed in detail for the first time.

Impact on later artists

We also show the huge impact of Van Gogh on the first generation of artists after his death. This is reflected partly by expressive works such as those of Maurice de Vlaminck and Kees van Dongen from the museum's own collection.

Contemporary art

As a grand finale, a visit to the museum ends with a modern artist who was inspired by Van Gogh. From November, this was *Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh VI* by Francis Bacon, a temporary loan from the Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London.

Our special thanks go to the VSB Fund and the Rik van Koetsveld Fund, which helped to make the realisation of this extensive project possible with their generous contributions.

Felix Vallotton: The Fire Beneath the Ice Exhibition

The Félix Vallotton: The Fire Beneath the Ice Exhibition was on show from 14 February until 1 June. The title of the exhibition was drawn from the emotion that smoulders behind the cool detachment in the paintings and prints of Franco-Swiss painter Félix Vallotton (1865-1925).

Some 60 paintings on loan by international museums and private collectors, together with 40 prints from the collection of the Van Gogh Museum, show the tension and emotions in Vallotton's intriguing oeuvre, where nothing is what it seems. We are extremely grateful to the Swiss Pro Helvetia fund for their contribution to the realisation of this exhibition.

The World of Van Gogh: photographs by Emmy Andriessse Exhibition

The centenary of the birth of Emmy Andriessse (1914-1943) led our museum to present her exceptional photographs in the exhibition *The World of Van Gogh: photographs by Emmy Andriessse*.

Armed with her camera, Emmy Andriessse travelled to the places where Van Gogh had lived and worked. The exhibition of photographs by this pioneering photographer from the first half of the 20th century was on show at the museum from June until early October.

Online network

We are very encouraged by the exponential growth of the online network of the Van Gogh Museum. The fan base on Facebook increased from 200,000 to 500,000 and on Twitter from 75,000 to 100,000. Moreover, more than 4 million Van Gogh fans follow the museum via Google+.

Consequently, the museum holds a leading online position in the Netherlands, and with Google+ it even holds the number 1 position among museums worldwide.

The Mesdag Collection

In the Mesdag Collection in The Hague, which is managed by the Van Gogh Museum, the *How Does an Artist Collect?* exhibition closed on 12 January. This innovative exhibition presented the work of eight contemporary artists for whom collection plays an important role in their work. The exhibition was compiled by the 12 participants in the *Art of Making Art Exhibitions* course at the Van Gogh Museum. Our special thanks go to the 1818 Fund, which contributed towards the realisation of this exhibition.

Research

We once again invested a great deal in scientific research into the collection during the year. This was performed by a team of seven conservators and restorers. In 2014, the research focused mainly on the final section of the catalogue, the print collection and on authenticity investigations.

Research is also in progress for a publication on the lives of Vincent's sister-in-law Jo van Gogh-Bonger and her son Vincent Willem van Gogh. Both played a crucial role as the first guardians of the present collection of the Van Gogh Museum.

In 2014, research into the *Fin-de-Siècle* prints collection of the Van Gogh Museum was continued. That research will be published in 2016, via a new website devoted to this collection. The prints collection consists of about 1,300 sheets, largely made by artists of the so-called Nabis Group. We are very grateful for the contribution that the Vincent van Gogh Foundation pledged as part of this research and for the special website.

Finally, a preparatory study was conducted into the life and work of Hendrik Willem Mesdag. In the spring of 2015, this led to the publication of *Hendrik Willem Mesdag. Artist, collector, entrepreneur*. This book was published as part of the Mesdag Year, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of this artist.

New additions

We are exceptionally pleased to have been able to make important additions to the collection in 2014. These include a monotype by Edgar Degas, the painting *The Supper at Emmaus* (1894) by Maurice Denis and a series of woodcuts by Félix Vallotton. These acquisitions were made possible through the financial support of the BankGiro Lottery, for which we are very grateful.

Education

In 2014, we again had an ample and very varied range of products and services for adults and children. In addition to the Multimedia Tour and the award-winning app *Touch van Gogh* already mentioned, many activities were organised. We are also very happy with the new products developed in connection with the new presentation, such as the audio letters, many different forms of biographical information and the 'family walls', where old and young can increase their knowledge of Van Gogh from unexpected angles.

The public could also once again get to know Van Gogh and his art through tours, lectures and the free 'stories in the halls'.

Museum experts delivered monthly Sunday lectures and many workshops were organised for children and adults.

Through a treasure hunt or with *Vincent's Travelling Case*, children were able to discover the museum independently or with their families. Our museum also took part in the national Museum Youth University, through which children receive lectures from museum experts. The annual Family Days were once again held in 2014, in October.

The wide range of activities for primary schools include the entirely new theatrical tour *'Famille van Camille'*. There was also a varied programme for secondary schools, including the *Van Gogh on the Road* project for preparatory secondary vocational education, concerning the art handling and shipping of art works, in cooperation with art shipper Crown Fine Art. During the school holidays, special children's workshops were organised at the museum for After School Care services.

We are very pleased that the weekly Friday Night sessions, which offer a stimulating programme, were once again very well attended this year. The evening programmes include live music, modern dance, performances, tours, workshops, VJ presentations and a cocktail bar. The highlights included a performance by the Eefje de Visser band and a fashion show by couturier Mattijs van Bergen.

We are also proud that we were able to develop a growing number of activities both in and outside the museum to reach the elderly. Our museum participates in the programme set up by 12 museums around the Museum Plus Bus, an initiative that is supported by the BankGiro Lottery. Groups of residents from nursing homes or elderly people with a home nursing indication are taken to the museum free of charge, where they receive a warm welcome. The *'Art makes the Man: Senior Citizens meet Van Gogh'* programme, which is explained in the 'Partnerships' section, was also set up.

Publications

A catalogue was published for the *Félix Vallotton: The Fire Beneath the Ice* exhibition, in collaboration with the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. Also, *Vincent van Gogh: Ever Yours. His finest letters*, was published in Dutch, English and Norwegian.

We are very grateful to Mr Shigeru Myojin for his donation, which benefited the publication of the Japanese translation of *Ever Yours. His finest letters*.

Partnerships

Partnership with museums on the Museumplein

We attach considerable importance to cooperation with the other museums on Museumplein and are keen to expand this further. One example of this is PP10 BV, which provides the security for the Van Gogh Museum, the Stedelijk Museum and the Rijksmuseum.

The Turing Museumplein Bus was also the result of an initiative of these museums. This school bus collects pupils from the Amsterdam area free of charge for a visit to the museum. We are very grateful to the Turing Foundation for making this initiative possible.

The research project ‘*Tour Guiding is a Profession*’ was also launched this year, together with the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk Museum. The museums work together on this project with the teacher training courses of the University of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam Primary School Teacher Training Degree Course (UpvA) and the National Humanities and Social Studies Expertise Centre (University of Amsterdam, VU University Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences and iPabo University of Applied Sciences).

The Museumplein ticket, which was introduced in 2014, was also set up by the above museums, together with the Royal Concertgebouw and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. The combined ticket provides entrance to the three museums and a concert at the Royal Concertgebouw.

Other productive partnerships

Loans

We also have many other forms of shared efforts. The VGM participates in many loans between museums, for example, and has many alliances in the fields of research and exhibitions with fellow museums in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

The following (inter)national loans were among the highlights in this field. For the full list, we refer to the Loans review.

We received a large number of loans in 2014 from different (inter)national museums and institutions, for which we are very grateful.

We are also very pleased that we were able to contribute to the *Van Gogh. Repetitions* exhibition in the Philips Collection, Washington and later in the Cleveland Museum of Art in Cleveland. We lent them six works, including our public’s favourite *Portrait of Camille Roulin*.

We also lent two Van Gogh paintings, *Olive Grove and Undergrowth*, for the *Verso Monet. Storia del paesaggio dal Seicento al Novecento* landscapes exhibition at the Palazzo della Gran Guardia, which travelled on to the Basilica Palladia in Vicenza.

Farm and *Portrait of Leonie Rose Charbuy-Davy* by Vincent van Gogh are on long-term loan to the Rijksmuseum.

At the *Story of Brabant* exhibition, the North Brabant Museum was able to display four of Van Gogh’s works from our collection.

A very special loan was the exchange with the National Gallery in London, which, like the Van Gogh Museum, has a version of Van Gogh’s *Sunflowers* in its collection. In 2013, we were able to display the two versions together for a time. In 2014, the London public was able to see these paintings together for some months.

The Danish Ordrupgaard Museum in Charlottenlund borrowed nine paintings from our collection, including eight by Van Gogh and one by Emile Bernard. This was for the *Friction of Ideas: Van Gogh, Gauguin, Bernard* exhibition.

In the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, three works from our museum were on show during the *Esprit Montmartre. Die Bohème in Paris um 1900* exhibition.

We contributed as many as 10 works to the *Van Gogh/Artaud. Le suicidé de la société* exhibition at the Musée d’Orsay in Paris, including Van Gogh’s iconic *Self-Portrait as a Painter*.

The Vincent van Gogh Foundation in Arles also received important loans, for the short and longer term, from the collections of the Van Gogh Museum and the Mesdag Collection. The loans involve 23 works, including *The Yellow House (the Street)* by Van Gogh.

Six paintings from our collection were on show in the *Émile Bernard (1868-1941), la peinture en colère* exhibition in the Musée de l’Orangerie in Paris.

As many as 17 items by Theo Colenbrander were loaned from the Mesdag Collection’s rich collection of pottery for the *Theo Colenbrander 1841-1930 – Dutch Design avant-la-lettre* exhibition of this artist’s work.

Universities and research institutes

The museum also works with national and international research institutes such as the University of Amsterdam, the VU University Amsterdam, the Tilburg Institute for Creative Computing, Cornell University and Duke University.

Art makes the Man

A completely new programme that began in 2014 was *Art Makes the Man: Senior Citizens meet Van Gogh*. This programme is aimed at visiting vulnerable senior citizens and inviting them to actively take part in experiencing art. Our initiative could not have been realised without the special partnership with the care organisation Cordaan, Vereniging De Zonnebloem, Viatore and Stichting Vier het Leven. From the second year, the Kröller-Müller Museum will also join the programme. The programme is supported by the RCOAK and Sluyterman van Loo senior citizens' funds.

Young artists

In addition, the VGM actively seeks contact with young artists, in order to offer them a platform for their art.

Van Gogh Year

Finally, we work with various partners on the organisation of the Van Gogh Year, to mark the 125th anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's death.

Entrepreneurship

Van Gogh Experience

In 2014 too, we were able to further develop cultural entrepreneurship. There are concrete plans for a Van Gogh Experience (working title) and talks have already taken place with various parties who wish to take up the experience.

Van Gogh Museum Enterprises

We are also encouraged by the results of the retail activities of Van Gogh Museum Enterprises, partly thanks to a strategic reorientation. We were able to expand our exclusive collection of Relievos this year. Nine of these advanced high-quality 3D reproductions are now available. The Relievos, which are produced in collaboration with Fuji Film, show the relief of every brush stroke by Van Gogh exactly as it is in the original.

Van Gogh Consultancy

We decided to extend the Van Gogh Consultancy pilot project by one year. The first year of the consultancy brought us many interesting openings. In the second year, we will make the business plan more concrete.

Partners, sponsors and other benefactors

Our online Annual Report provides more information on the above and all other activities that we undertook in 2014. Without the vital support of our partners, sponsors and other parties involved, we would not have been able to develop these activities in this way and on this scale.

Thanks to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, the museum has been able to inspire and enrich a broad (international) public since 1974 with the life and work of Vincent van Gogh and his contemporaries. The Vincent van Gogh Foundation is not only our most important partner in this, but also pledged to support the new entrance building with a generous contribution in 2014. Furthermore, the Foundation supports research into the museum's collection of prints.

The BankGiro Lottery supports the museum each year with a large contribution for new acquisitions. In 2015, the BankGiro Lottery also supported the museum with a generous contribution for the construction of the new entrance building. During the past year, the museum also received a number of contributions through 'earmarked fundraising'. With this, participants in the BankGiro Lottery were able to specify that the proceeds of their lottery tickets should be donated to the Van Gogh Museum. The BankGiro Lottery and the Van Gogh Museum jointly promoted the lottery ticket sales. These contributions will be for the benefit of the new entrance building.

In 2014, AkzoNobel was again a partner of the Van Gogh Museum's restoration studio and also supplied paints for the design of exhibitions in the museum via its Sikkens subsidiary. AkzoNobel also launched a paint line inspired by iconic works of Vincent van Gogh.

Canon Europe supports the Van Gogh Museum in drawing attention to projects in innovative ways.

Researchers from Partner in Science Shell Netherlands make a valuable contribution to the Van Gogh Museum's research in the group's laboratories. In the past, the results of this have led to various scientific publications and have contributed to exhibitions.

Thanks to Fonds Sluyterman van Loo and RCOAK, our *Art Makes the Man* project for the elderly was launched in 2014. With the support of these funds, we will be able to offer workshops for the elderly on location for the coming three years.

Stichting Lieve contributed to research into Vincent van Gogh's *Field with Irises* and the subsequent restoration. We also received an anonymous donation of €30,000 for the restoration of this painting.

The Eye Fund of the National Foundation for the Blind and Partially-Sighted facilitates *Feeling Van Gogh*, which enables us to offer workshops in the museum for the blind and visually impaired.

Via a named endowment fund, we received a financial contribution from an anonymous donor for educational programmes, projects and resources. Thanks to this contribution, we will be able to realise the *Van Gogh Goes to School* project.

With contributions from Nuon, events for Nuon's relations were organised.

The fact that our supporters include an increasingly wide network

of donors is invaluable to our museum. We would first like to thank the members of The Yellow House for their generous financial support and valuable advice.

The Patrons of the Van Gogh Global Circle also help the museum to remain accessible for its visitors, in both physical and educational terms.

The same applies equally to The Sunflower Collective, which was formed in the past year and forms a growing network of Supporting Friends. We are extremely grateful to them for this.

Finally, we would like to offer very warm thanks to the members of the Supervisory Board, the Advisory Board and the employees of the Van Gogh Museum and the Mesdag Collection. The support and confidence of our Supervisory Board and our Advisory Board were extremely important. Our employees also once again worked for the museum with great involvement, knowledge and energy in 2014. We would like to express our gratitude to all the staff for this.

We hope you enjoy reading our online Annual Report 2014.

Axel Rüger
Director

Adriaan Dönszelmann
Managing Director