

Platform Future

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boerhaave

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Welcome



This is the first issue of 'Platform for the future'; our new business magazine. Insiders will recognize this title as the name we have also given to our strategic plan for the years 2021-2025 and this coherence is easily explained.

In the magazine, you can read about the support and cooperation we have mobilized in the past eighteen months and what plans are still in the pipeline. Apart from information on the exhibitions we are currently developing, we will of course be shedding light on our strategic plans for the future as well as our ideas for the Life Science & Health Studio which will be inaugurated in 2025.

We turn to our committed Board of Trustees, chaired by Alexander Rinnooy Kan, ambassadors and partners from a variety of sectors for reflection, advice and inspiration. Cooperation is key here and our actions are based on the conviction that we can position our historic and scientific heritage even more emphatically by linking it with current events and the societal challenges we face. This is how we give shape to our mission which states that 'driven by our passion for science, we want everyone to discover that science is invaluable for everyday life.' Our partners contribute to this mission, each in their own way.

We are always happy to meet you and in all the conversations we engage in, we encounter

the wholehearted commitment of scientific knowledge institutes and the business community to support us in our outreach. This support takes the form of contributions to high-profile exhibitions, and new objects and gifts that enrich our collection. But we are also supported in our strategy of encouraging talent in young people. This has resulted in special educational programmes and a first multi-year interaction with children who are not normally used to visiting museums. In addition to this targeted support and involvement, we are of course also happy to welcome you to the museum as friends, patrons, partners and members of our Business Club.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to edition 1 of 'Platform for the future' but particularly the Head of Development & Partnerships Carmen Cabo, Public Engagement & Exhibitions Manager Annelore Scholten and Management Assistant Esther Went. I hope you enjoy reading our magazine and I look forward to discussing our ambitious strategic plans with you and the role you can play in these plans.

With kind regards,

Amito Haarhuis
Director

Ruben Brave talks to Carmen Cabo

On Maria Sybilla Merian's Peacock Flower: symbol of female autonomy

Entrepreneur and investor Ruben Brave adopted a Rijksmuseum Boerhaave artwork: the Peacock Flower made by the German artist and entomologist Maria Sybilla Merian. Carmen Cabo, head of Development & Partnerships at Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, met Ruben and asked him about the story behind the adoption. A dialogue between Ruben and Carmen on female autonomy, science and pubescent daughters.



"I made my own creation," Ruben says enthusiastically as he holds up a solid transparent rectangular block. It is a replica of the artwork the Peacock Flower that he adopted, using a type of crystal and with his own text. "I dedicated it to my two daughters. I let Eva, the eldest, choose which artwork of Merian's I would adopt and she chose this one."

Carmen: "We had an adoption programme a few years ago during a refurbishment. People could adopt an artwork. That creates a bond and offers interesting stories. Ruben's personal story really appealed to me, particularly because of the meaning behind the painting."

Ruben: "That's right. I was also thrilled that Eva chose this work. For me, the Peacock Flower is a symbol of female autonomy. Long ago, when slaves still worked on plantations, female slaves were often raped by white plantation owners. These women were obviously not keen to have a mixed-race child as it could only mean that you were raped by a white man. The peacock flower was their secret way of avoiding that. The flower is poisonous and induces termination of the pregnancy."

Carmen: "The first form of contraception in fact."

Ruben: "Exactly. That gave those women at least some control and autonomy. That's why I was glad it was this particular work that Eva chose because of its symbolism. After all, you want your daughters to be fully autonomous."

Carmen: "It's a wonderful story. These adoptions are a great way for us to get into contact and enter into a dialogue with our audience. It was what gave us the idea of looking up all the people that had adopted a work some years ago and inviting them to the museum. That wasn't as easy as it sounds, at least in Ruben's case. I certainly gave you chase, didn't I? If you couldn't make it on a Friday afternoon I immediately suggested, come on Thursday afternoon then!"

Ruben, laughing: "I'd never been to the Rijksmuseum Boerhaave before either."

Carmen: "I found that very surprising, that you had feelings for an artwork and wanted to support us financially while you had never even been to our museum."

Connecting

Carmen Cabo mentions it several times: connecting. Boerhaave focuses on connecting and the adoption programme Ruben Brave participated in, is part of that

focus. Carmen: "The cultural sector has been hit hard during the corona crisis. The difference with the past is that subsidization no longer goes without saying. That's why we want to do more. In addition to our exhibitions, we want to join forces with the business community and entrepreneurs. We brought Jaap van Dissel, director of the Centre for Infectious Disease Control and chair of the Outbreak Management Team, into contact with the director of Pfizer in the Netherlands, for example. We can do that because, as a museum, we are a neutral zone. That's my job. I try to connect the museum's inner world with the world outside. And I love going to work, every single day."

Ruben: "I think it's great that you do that. It's also what makes the museum so special. On the one hand, there is the scientific know-how that offers greater insight and on the other, you have the interpersonal side that creates greater social cohesion. That really appeals to me."

Carmen: "It makes me happy to hear the wonderful personal stories, inspired by the collection, such as yours."

"The Peacock Flower: symbol of female autonomy"

Ruben: "Maria Sibylla Merian's story really touches me. She left Germany for Amsterdam and from there she went on to Paramaribo. This was in the late 17th century. My parents are from Paramaribo and I am from Amsterdam so the parallels were already there."

Carmen: "What about your daughter Eva, does she find it special too? After all, the adoption of the Peacock Flower was already a few years ago now."

Ruben, laughing: "I wonder. She thought it was great back then when she was 12. Now she is 15 and when I mention the Peacock Flower, she asks me what I'm talking about. The female autonomy symbolized by the painting is something I wish for my daughters too. But when they hit puberty, you realize that you should be careful what you wish for."

Erna Barèl

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's Business Club

In November 2020, Rijksmuseum Boerhaave set up its Business Club. The first member was the Leiden company BaseClear. We are talking to co-founder Erna Barèl, an ardent supporter of the Business Club. What motivated her to become a member? And what does it mean for her company?

The photo of the life-size gorilla made from papier-maché by Dr Azoux that forms the backdrop to BaseClear's entry to Boerhaave's Business Club was not entirely coincidental. BaseClear analyzed the DNA from the gorilla's actual tooth and determined that it was a female.

DNA-sequencing

That's what BaseClear does best. The company was originally set up for DNA sequencing. This is the analysis of the building blocks of DNA in order to draw conclusions about its origins. That includes the sex of the DNA source, such as in the case of the above-mentioned gorilla. A DNA building block is a base, hence the name BaseClear, or the clarification of the significance of DNA building blocks.

"I set up the company in 1993 together with my husband who at that point was still only my boyfriend," Erna explains. "We had both studied biology in Leiden but weren't so enthusiastic about a career in science. We are more business-minded. Even though we didn't have a lot of experience, we just jumped in at the deep end. Now, we can honestly say that this turned out successfully. We now employ around seventy people and we still have our place in the Leiden Bio Science Park. My husband and I still work very well together."

BaseClear is specialized in microbial genomics. In simple terms, this means they primarily carry out research into micro-organisms such as bacteria and viruses. Erna mentions gut flora as an example. These are the bacteria in your intestines that aid digestion. "We analyze those and then write up reports about the composition of that flora, whether it is healthy or not. But we also do nutritional analysis, for example, where we determine which micro-organisms occur in certain food products."

In its infancy

For Erna, the Business Club provided a good opportunity to expand on her network, even though the current Club is still somewhat in its infancy. "We were the first to become a member so there wasn't really a network at that time. But more companies have joined in the meantime and it's always fun and useful to get into contact with others. One thing leads to another and these meetings can often bring about great things. We met up for the first time just before the summer holidays. We were there when entrepreneur Robin Koops donated his artificial pancreas to the museum's collection."

But there were other reasons for becoming a member and supporting the museum. "It's simply a wonderful museum. I have an annual museum membership card and

Boerhaave is one of my favourites in Leiden. Also the simple fact that the museum is there is important. After all, you want to inspire a passion for science among the next generation so it's important that they come into contact with it at an early age. I can personally see the effect of that because my nephew and niece are always eager to come with me. But perhaps that has more to do with the water playground the museum houses."

"Together with leading scientists we, as Business Club members, form part of an advisory body to

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave. For example, we were recently invited to provide input on the current issues included in the Big Questions exhibition."

A gorilla with real bones

The press release on BaseClear's membership in the Business Club mentions the interesting fact that Erna's favourite museum object is the papier-maché gorilla. "Actually, I'm not sure if it really is my favourite," Erna explains with a laugh, "but it certainly is a very appealing object."



Erna Barèl and Bas Reichert

Support Rijksmuseum Boerhaave

Become a business partner

Together with all of our partners and stakeholders we aim to make our dream come true: Platform for the future. We look forward to cooperating closely with our partners.

There are three options open to the business community to partner with Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.

By becoming a structural partner of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave and building a lasting relationship with our museum. Time is an important factor in reaping the benefits of cooperation. One such long-term alliance is, for example, our affiliation with the healthcare insurance company Zorg en Zekerheid.

By becoming an exhibition sponsor. Companies new to social sponsoring, or companies we have as yet to form a relationship with, are offered the option to affiliate their business with our museum for the duration of an exhibition as exhibition sponsor. Janssen Campus Nederland (part of Johnson & Johnson) is one of our partners for the temporary exhibition Contagious!. This proved to be an excellent first venture for both Janssen and Rijksmuseum Boerhaave and resulted in Janssen becoming a member of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's Business Club and opening up avenues for further forms of cooperation.

By becoming a member of the Business Club. The Business Club is where scientists, entrepreneurs and private individuals come together and where discussion contributes to the issues we feature in the exhibitions and the projects that we make accessible to a broad audience. In doing so, we jointly build our Platform for the future. Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's unique trinity of private individuals, businesses and scientists forms the basis

of the Business Club's strong proposition. Together, we form the independent podium for access to knowledge. Knowledge fuels and channels innovations and helps to identify health issues. Sharing knowledge and innovating together are an excellent basis for regional, national and international cooperation. We facilitate this cooperation in the Business Club.

We also see the Business Club as the tangible embodiment of the route running through Leiden from the Bioscience Park Leiden (LBSP) to the cultural district where Rijksmuseum Boerhaave holds a prominent position. Members of the local and (inter)national business community meet several times a year at our museum. This creates a unique and exclusive opportunity to get to know business partners better and to expand networks.

We cherish our partners such as Du Prie Bouw & Ontwikkeling, a Leiden-based company specialized in the restoration of monuments. Du Prie recently offered to restore the tuberculosis cottage located in the courtyard of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave free of charge. Under the layers of paint, the craftspeople discovered traces of the original colour and restored the cottage to this grass green hue.

Are you interested in becoming a business partner? Then please contact Carmen Cabo, head of Development & Partnerships at +31 6-82 32 22 35 or carmencabo@rijksmuseumboerhaave.nl.

Onno van de Stolpe

"Boerhaave really takes you deeper into the matter"

Onno van de Stolpe grew up in what he defines a 'Philips family'. His father worked as a researcher at Philips in Eindhoven which instilled an interest in technology in the young Onno, prompting him to go on to study molecular biology in Wageningen. That, in turn, led eventually to the establishment of Galapagos, a company that is now a member of the Boerhaave Business Club.

Following his graduation, Van de Stolpe first worked as a business developer for a plant biotechnology start-up, a job that took him to the United States. He returned to the Netherlands in 1995 to live in Leiden. Four years later he set up Galapagos; a biotechnology company focussing on developing innovative medicines. Now, more than 20 years later, it is one of the leading companies in Europe in this field. In 2019, Galapagos launched its first medicine for rheumatism on the European market.

Getting lost in chaos

When Van de Stolpe first visited Rijksmuseum Boerhaave in 1995, it looked completely different than it does today. "Actually, only the location was the same," says Van de Stolpe. "At that time, it was primarily a vast collection of devices and artefacts all bunched together. I have to admit that that, too, had its charms. You could get lost in the 'chaos' of all those objects. It was impressive

just for its sheer amount and variety. It appealed mainly to enthusiasts who came to see all the different devices. Now the museum has a thematic approach and that is far more accessible. It also appeals to a wider audience such as families with children, which is clearly reflected in the increase in visitor numbers in recent years."

Fulfilling a pioneering role

Galapagos is one of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's sponsors. "A logical choice," says Van de Stolpe. "The sponsorship actually began through earlier cooperation. The museum was interested in showing the development of our medicine for rheumatism. We provided a film and the first pill was displayed. Then, unfortunately, this had to be withdrawn because 'advertising' medicines wasn't allowed. But it did prompt us to talk about the bond between Boerhaave and Galapagos and how we could contribute to the museum's future."

“But it is a bit complicated because we are not profitable at this moment. However, we made an exception for Boerhaave because we share the same goals. Looking to the future, it would be great if more companies that develop medicine and medical equipment joined forces with the museum. Together, we could then make a substantial and financial contribution to the Life Science Studio & Health, for example. We would be happy to take a pioneering role in this process.”

Prominent figure

In addition to sponsorship, Van de Stolpe is a member of Boerhaave’s Business Club. “The Business Club is a great opportunity to network with other companies. It’s a pleasant, informal setting for maintaining ties and meeting new contacts. Not just to meet up and talk but also actually to offer real added value. I think that a lot of young entrepreneurs have a need for access to experience, knowledge and competence. These types of network events are a low threshold way of coming into contact with others and creating opportunities for future cooperation.”

Taking the next step

Van de Stolpe sees similarities between his own company and the museum. “I have accumulated quite some knowledge through the years and that could be put to good use at the museum’s Business Club. Suggesting parties these young entrepreneurs could get in contact with, sponsor but also to make their own contributions by coming up with ideas to help the museum move forward. Our gatherings aren’t just about meeting up for drinks or meals, it’s about making real contacts that can help you take the next step.”

Deeper into the matter

Van de Stolpe is very enthusiastic about the experience Boerhaave offers. “My son is fourteen now but when he was around eight, he experienced the museum much differently than he does now. Children lose interest after looking at one microscope. Today, a visit to the museum is a real experience for all ages. Boerhaave takes you deeper into the matter but you can also experience it as a type of show. That gives Boerhaave a real advantage over other museums.”

“Boerhaave is going in the right direction in my opinion and is seeing great results.”



Life Science & Health Studio



Artist impression of Studio VVKH

The Life Science & Health Studio is the fourth strategic line in ‘Platform for the future’, our strategy for the years to come. The Studio will open its doors in 2025. The other strategic lines relate to:

- Realizing (inter)national exhibitions with a strong focus on current events and society.
- Embedding current events in the exhibition Big Questions as a feature of our permanent presentation.
- Refining our collection policy by deploying a future-oriented acquisition strategy.

Many people consider innovative medicine and life sciences to be far removed from their daily lives or find these subjects difficult to understand. They read about new breakthroughs and wonder how these will affect their personal lives and the (near) future. Hence Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is taking the initiative to develop the Life Science & Health Studio, *the* public hotspot for biotechnology and innovative medicine in the Netherlands. In this interactive environment, we will be welcoming pupils, students and daily visitors to engage them in medical and scientific developments in life sciences and innovative medicine.

This Studio fits in seamlessly with our vision which states that *‘In a society where scientific and technological developments continue to advance rapidly, we see it as our remit to engage the public in these developments and to explain their origins. This creates a greater understanding of science and the remarkable achievements of research and innovation.’*

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is, of course, located in Leiden, the city of life sciences. The Leiden Bio Science Park (LBSP) is the largest dedicated park for life sciences in the Netherlands and is among the top 5 in Europe. It is the explicit wish of the LBSP and the municipality of Leiden to intensify the bond between the LBSP and the city of Leiden and its inhabitants. As the national museum of science and medicine, Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is the ideal partner to give shape to the bond between citizens and science and in this case, life sciences and innovative medicine.

We do this by:

- Linking scientists’ personal stories behind the most important discoveries and inventions with our unique collection;
- Inspiring people to form an opinion on pressing current and future scientific issues;
- Encouraging new generations to develop their talents.

In 2022, when Leiden is European City of Science, we, together with LBSP and the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC), will organize the Life Science and Health Week from 28 May up to and including 3 June.

Michael Wise

“What’s not to like, right?”

The American astronomer Michael Wise has been director of SRON, the Netherlands Institute for Space Research, for three years now. SRON is a member of Boerhaave’s Business Club and is sponsoring the Big Questions exhibition. Why is an exhibition of this kind so important? And what’s it like as an American to live and work in the Netherlands?

What exactly does SRON do?

Michael Wise: “We carry out space research. That’s a very broad description, of course, but our orientation is quite comprehensive and we have a lot of different roles. We focus on all kinds of space research. Let me give you a few examples. We develop technology that is used on space missions and we also conduct research into the space beyond our galaxy such as black holes and distant planets. But we do not just look at faraway objects, we also observe our own planet, and research into climate change is a substantial part of that. In short, we build satellites which we use to study both the Earth and the universe.”

SRON recently moved from Utrecht to Leiden, why?

“We had two locations, one in Groningen and one in Utrecht. A practical reason for leaving the Utrecht location was the need to update and modernize our facilities. It was more expensive to renovate the existing building than to build a new location. Utrecht has a fantastic university, but Leiden really is the epicentre of our discipline. The majority of companies involved in space research are right here in the neighbourhood. And now that we are here, our partners such as Leiden University and ESTEC are just a few blocks away. So we are hoping that that will make it easier to work together.”

And what’s your connection to Rijksmuseum Boerhaave?

“When we moved here, we felt it was important to build a relationship with Boerhaave. That’s because as a research institute, we receive public funding and it is therefore our responsibility to show the public what we are doing. So we are not just the museum’s friendly next-door neighbours, we can actually help each other out.”

How do you do that exactly, show what SRON is doing?

“Well, the Big Questions exhibition that we are supporting is an example. We are providing some of the instruments for this exhibition. An instrument we built ourselves, for example, which we use to measure the amount of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere. But it’s not just about putting an apparatus in a pretty glass display, we also provide images of carbon monoxide emissions all over the planet in order to show the impact people have on climate change. We can also show images of the areas around black holes, or telescopes and use these to explain what kind of research we are doing. I am very enthusiastic about it and I am really looking forward to the opening of the exhibition.”



SRON is a member of the Boerhaave Business Club. What does SRON get out of that?

“That’s all about networking. Meeting up with representatives of companies and institutions in our field of expertise. Of course, you already know some people, like the managing director of Airbus, for example. When we meet, we always catch up. But meeting people you don’t know through the

Boerhaave network can be very useful. You might come to the conclusion that you have common interests and you get to know what the other person is doing exactly. Then maybe a week, six months or a year later, you think, hey, how about giving that person a call. He or she has a cool company and maybe we can work together. It’s important to do things together these days otherwise you won’t make it.”

“It’s important to do things together these days otherwise you won’t make it.”

What’s it like networking in the Netherlands?

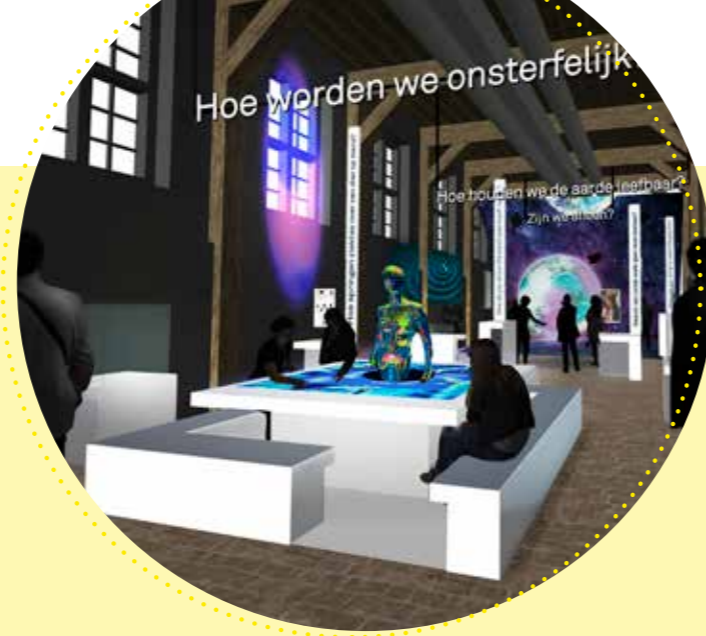
“Actually, I think everything I just said reflects how Dutch people do things. I mean the need to join forces and do your bit. In the Netherlands, people expect cooperation so it happens naturally. And rightly so because it is a small country and investments aren’t therefore as large as in other countries, so you have to make the best with what you have. The best way to do that is teamwork. The Netherlands is a great place to live. Well apart from all that rain, of course. But my wife and I have been living in the Netherlands for fifteen years now and we are very happy here. What’s not to like, right?”

Big Questions

Opening summer 2022

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave already is the pre-eminent platform where current events and debate are fuelled by knowledge and history. In the coming years, we will be allocating more space to the future in our museum. This includes a new focus on the exhibition devoted to the 'Big Questions' in which the 21st century and the future will feature prominently in an appropriately futuristic setting. Whereas the stories of scientists or patients form a central theme in other exhibition areas, the focus in Big Questions on the major social challenges of our 'universe, climate, the manipulability of life and our health', also referred to as the 'grand challenges' or societal challenges, forms the core of the narrative context. We will also be looking at the ethical dilemmas inherent to these issues.

SRON, the Netherlands Institute for Space Research is involved in the exhibition and will be making the SPEXone prototype available; an instrument that will measure the properties of aerosols in the Earth's atmosphere with unprecedented accuracy for the purpose of climate and air quality research. The artificial pancreas created by Robin Koops for patients with type 1 diabetes, a prototype of an entirely different nature, will also be on display. This prototype was donated to our museum and illustrates the major strides being made within



innovative medicine to improve the quality of life of people living with diabetes. The current Covid-19 pandemic, the vaccines and the One Health approach, the interdisciplinary cooperation aimed at improving human, animal and environmental health will also be featured.

The opening of the exhibition in June will also feature a six-part podcast series. This ensures an ongoing and up-to-date link with the societal debate that touches on the themes of our exhibition. The opening will take place before the EuroScience Open Forum (ESOF), Europe's largest interdisciplinary science conference. This conference revolves around scientific research and innovation and offers a unique opportunity for interaction and dialogue with scientists, innovators, policy makers, the business community and the general public. The exhibition 'Big Questions' ties in perfectly with the themes of the conference.

Contagious!

Extended to 7 August 2022

Owing to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, we will be extending the temporary exhibition 'Contagious!, on past and present-day epidemics' for a further seven months. This exhibition looks at the current corona crisis, draws parallels with earlier pandemics and focuses on the painful impact of 'exclusion, stigmatization and shame'. A separate six-part podcast series accompanying this exhibition also offers interdisciplinary reflections on the current pandemic and previous crises.



Bart van Zijl Langhout
(Janssen Campus
Nederland)

Artificial Intelligence

8 September 2022 - 5 March 2023

The opening of this temporary exhibition on artificial intelligence is right in the heart of the Week of AI (5 - 11 September), part of the Leiden European City of Science 2022 programme, whose aim is to form a bridge between society and science.

Artificial intelligence deals with the ability of machines to display intelligent behaviour, it changes the way we live, work and move around and it offers innovative solutions to keep us healthy and safe. In this time and age, life without artificial intelligence is no longer imaginable and it is precisely for this reason that Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is keen to explore this phenomenon. The applications are endless. Self-driving cars are all the go, the use of big data and algorithms has proved essential in diagnosing illness and in cancer prediction models as well as insight into cancer at cellular level. But the dark sides of AI -

algorithms, Big Data, AI Bias, the Internet of Things – are also regularly in the news. The government, for example, uses algorithms to detect fraud and criminality – the allowance affair at the Dutch tax authorities is an example of this. The use of predictive algorithms entails a substantial risk of discrimination. The exhibition will also feature ASMI; the Dutch multinational supplier of production machines for the semiconductor industry (such as chips). Bas Haring, professor of 'public understanding of science' at Leiden University as well as science philosopher and an expert on artificial intelligence, is our guest curator.

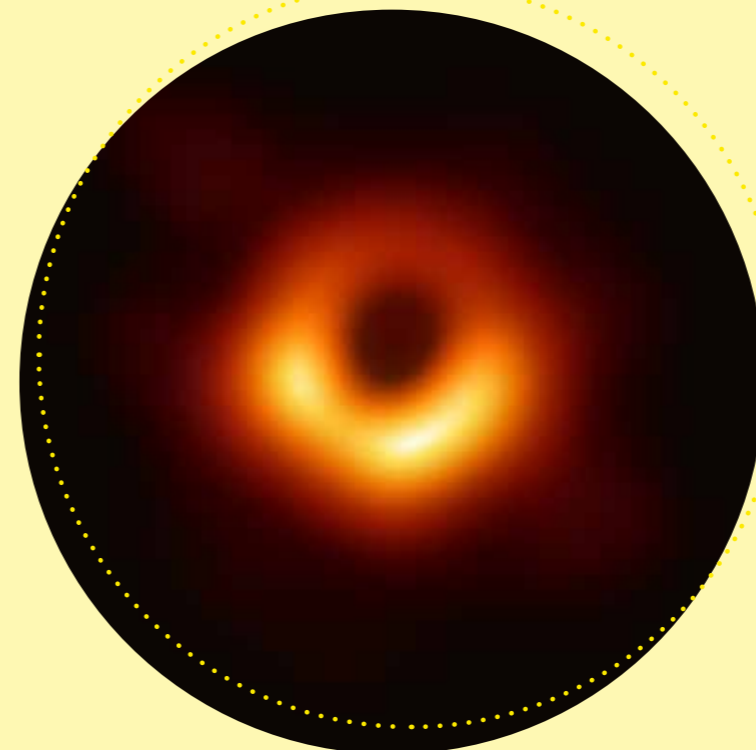


Foto ESO/EHT Collaboration

Black Holes

15 February 2024 - 5 January 2025

This exhibition utilizes the knowledge of the consortium of which we are a member. We work alongside a constellation of the Netherlands' finest physicists and astronomers as well as with authoritative scientists such as Erik Verlinde, Gerard 't Hooft, Jo van den Brand and Heino Falcke. Other participants are the Universities of Utrecht, Amsterdam and Nijmegen, Nikhef (the Dutch National Institute for Subatomic Physics), TNO (the Netherlands Organisation for applied scientific research), the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) and even the Black Hole Initiative in Harvard.

Antoni van Leeuwenhoek

5 April 2023 - 7 January 2024

In 2023, our exhibition 'Antoni van Leeuwenhoek' will mark the 300th year of the scientist's death. Antoni van Leeuwenhoek is acclaimed as the pioneer of microbiology. His handcrafted microscopes opened up a new world; Van Leeuwenhoek was the first to observe bacteria, sperm cells and blood cells. He published these discoveries in the British Royal Society's journal. It would take another one and a half centuries before scientists succeeded in building microscopes that revealed even more. Together with a large group of partners, we will be launching an 'Antoni van Leeuwenhoek year' which already includes an educational project for secondary education, a documentary, a biography, a national publicity campaign, and, of course, an inspiring exhibition at Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is participating in a long-term research project entitled 'Visualizing the unknown; Scientific Observation, Representation and Communication in 17th-century Science and Society'. Microscope users in the Dutch Golden Age faced huge challenges when trying to present never before seen microstructures such as bacteria, sperm and insect organs as scientific data. This prompted them to develop new ways of preparing, observing, displaying and reporting. These techniques still form the tenets of scientific practice. With 'Visualizing the unknown' modern scientists are revisiting the source, using Van Leeuwenhoek's original lenses and preparations. The cooperative venture which includes Rijksmuseum Boerhaave together with Amsterdam and Leiden Universities, the Max Planck Institute in Rome and the Royal Society in London, is funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).



Children & education

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's educational programmes allow pupils to discover the world of science. During active workshops and using historic narratives and objects, pupils learn more about impassioned scientists such as Antoni van Leeuwenhoek. And by inquiry-based learning, they form an understanding of how invaluable science is in their lives.

The programmes are aimed at all age groups and levels and comprise courses ranging from after-school care up to and including higher education. The museum has also developed several digital programmes in response to the corona crisis.

Scope of education

A lot of learning goes on outside the classroom and our educational programmes are therefore linked to our informal education programmes (open to daily visitors). These elements can be either supervised or unsupervised and are related to the museum's target group strategy and differ according to age and interest. Our educational department is developing so-called 'learning ecosystems'; different programmes that build on and are interconnected with the didactic aims of the educational programmes. We have developed 'The Doctor's Bag' and 'The Maths Route' specifically for visitors in family groups; appealing tools in which we assign each family member a different role.

Leila Prnjavorac

Reliable information as social lubricant

Leila Prnjavorac is a presenter, chairman of the day, speaker and trainer among other things. She was also named 'The Hague citizen of the year' in 2017 and in 2020 she became Freedom Ambassador for The Hague in the framework of '75 Years of Freedom'. Apart from that, she is also an ambassador for Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, a role she takes very seriously and for good reason.

Foto: Arnoud Roelofs

"I recently heard a wonderful quotation but now I can't remember who actually said it." Just a minute, let me look it up. I'll be with you in a moment." We are speaking to Leila Prnjavorac. The moment she gets up to consult her notes is the first pause in our video call with her. She speaks energetically and passionately about her role as ambassador of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave. "Got it!" she says enthusiastically as she takes her seat again. "It was the astronomer Vincent Icke. He said: 'We are all made of stardust, of simple matter but we exist only because of others.'"

Always keep the dialogue open

For Leila, the astronomer's quotation represents everything she stands for. For keeping the dialogue open, always and with everyone. And being constantly aware that you are in this together for life. "It's particularly important to try and understand why someone makes the choices he or she makes," Leila explains. "You can only do that by keeping the dialogue open, allowing you to see things from the other person's perspective. Trying to understand the other is the deeper layer of the dialogue."

"We are all made of stardust, of simple matter but we exist only because of others."

Leila believes that making choices and understanding other people's choices is only possible if you are well informed. This is something she emphasizes in her work as ambassador of Boerhaave. "When I talk to people about the current corona pandemic, it sometimes occurs to me that they simply know too little about it, so I point them to Rijksmuseum Boerhaave which is a good source of reliable information. Because that's exactly what the museum offers: reliable information based on scientific research. I didn't make it up. People actually go to the museum". "So," she laughs, "in that respect I'm a pretty good ambassador."

Ethnic war

She also believes that keeping the dialogue open is important because she has seen what can happen if talks fail. She was born in Bosnia-Herzegovina and as a child had to flee the war in the country. "It was an ethnic war and the goal was to exterminate the Bosnians." This is one of the reasons she believes in the importance of continuing to listen to one another. "When you do that the dialogue always begins on the basis of an agreement. Even if that agreement means your opinions differ. If there is no scope for exchanging opinions then things can escalate in the most horrific way."

"A lot of conflict stems from fear and uncertainty," Leila explains. "That's why it's essential to keep talking to find out where the fear comes from. Take the corona vaccinations for example. When you travel, you always make sure you have the right vaccinations but for some reason the corona vaccination is suddenly scary. But if you stop talking about it, then you will never find out where that fear stems from. Perhaps a person is not well informed. Then you have to inform rather than point the finger. With the latter you leave them in the dark and then there is no room for enlightenment."

Reliable information

This is where Boerhaave can play a key role because it is here that reliable information can be found and that, above all, is what is called for. The information is there but it is not always getting to the right people, she believes. "To young people, for example, a group which has not yet reached a sufficiently high vaccination rate. That's partly because they are calling out for information. But they will only accept information from someone who they believe understands them, takes them seriously and listens to them. This is too easily ignored. Listening in particular, is essential. If you are not heard, you become obstinate and rebellious."

According to Leila, a museum such as Boerhaave is important for us as a society. "We often fall back on science when we are trying to understand difficult and challenging matters to help us make choices. And Boerhaave is a place where you can find inspiration and reliable information. Where you can ask a lot of questions to make informed choices in your life."

Clémence Ross-Van Dorp

“Boerhaave demonstrates that strength lies in connection”

Clémence Ross-Van Dorp is a well-known figure in the Netherlands: she was State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport from 2002 to 2007 and a politician. She now holds a very different position: she is ambassador for the action programme ‘New opportunities for the Life Sciences & Health Top Sector’ on behalf of the government. She is also a Rijksmuseum Boerhaave ambassador, an involvement that hardly comes as a surprise. We spoke to her about connection, the museum’s role and TikTok.

Connection, that’s a word we often come across where Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is concerned.

Ross-Van Dorp: “That’s right. That’s because it’s important to exchange ideas with the public and in doing so ensure that the broader public is better informed. Take the provision of information on Covid-19 and the pandemic, for example. A museum like Boerhaave has an important role to play there. It can provide information on what viruses or vaccines are exactly. It can put things in perspective by pointing to the past and show the public what other pandemics we have endured. What is happening now, is that on social media, for example, the current pandemic is being presented as an isolated occurrence. Which of course it isn’t. There have been several pandemics and we could learn a lot from them.”

So social media are harmful when it comes to providing information?

“Social media as such are not harmful. But it seems as if everyone is a vaccination expert these days and a lot of contradictory opinions get aired which are not always based on scientific data. This may sound negative and it should be said that social media can be particularly useful for information campaigns. I recently spoke to Indonesia’s health minister who told me they were informing the public with a campaign based on scientifically verified information via TikTok. That’s an effective way to reach a larger group of people and not all information has to go through the central government’s website.”

But we have quality newspapers in the Netherlands providing reliable information, don’t we?

“You will always reach people who look for information by themselves. They are the people for whom a public campaign is intended. But it is the people who don’t look for information and don’t read newspapers that you want to reach as well. People simply don’t have access to reliable information and that’s why it is so important for the central government to support initiatives such as the one taken by Boerhaave.”

What kind of initiatives should we be thinking of?

“Well, an outgoing public campaign, for example. We will shortly be touring the country with a mobile presentation on the corona pandemic to inform the public throughout the country about what is happening in the Life Sciences sector. That’s how we provide people with reliable information. It’s quite exciting because it’s breaking new ground; you are meeting with

people who would not normally go to a museum. But going to a museum is very important. Since the corona outbreak, Rijksmuseum Boerhaave has a new role to play.

In ‘normal’ circumstances, people would come to the museum themselves to visit an exhibition. That was an enjoyable and informative outing. The corona crisis has prompted the museum itself to go to the public, to meet with people in different places and in different ways in order to keep informing them and involving them in the corona debate.”

“Bringing the people in the field of life sciences in contact with each other”

What other tasks should the museum be taking on?

“I firmly believe that, in addition to exhibitions, the museum’s relevancy also lies in bringing the people in the field of life sciences in contact with each other. There are about twelve locations in the country where people are working in this field but the coordination is inadequate. I sometimes compare the situation with Boston in the United States where work is also being done in this discipline. They both cover more or less the same area but there is far more cohesion in Boston than in the Netherlands. Boerhaave is therefore an ideal meeting point: it’s the perfect place to hold meetings, to get together and network with other parties. And that is important because success is always based on taking swift action and reaching consensus together. That’s where Boerhaave’s strength lies, in my opinion. It’s the reason I am an ambassador. When I’m there, I realize why my mission is so meaningful: bringing researchers together with the parties who can put their findings into practice.”

To come back to that mobile presentation for a minute. So we don’t have to go to Boerhaave anymore, it’s coming to us?

“Ha ha, no I would certainly recommend a visit. Take it from me, it’s really fascinating. It gives people a glimpse into the history and essence of science. Rijksmuseum Boerhaave should be on everyone’s to-do list. The mobile presentation tells one story, the museum tells many.”



Ewine van Dishoeck

“Rijksmuseum Boerhaave fulfils a unique role by directly linking the history of science with today’s exciting findings. I felt very honoured to act as curator of the Cosmos: Art and Knowledge exhibition and to work together with the museum’s outstanding staff.”



Siep Wijsenbeek

“Rijksmuseum Boerhaave shows that science is and was the basis for solving social issues. Today’s questions such as climate change and global health threats are uncharted territory but the roadmap is the same: scientific research. The museum has the important social task of showing the value of science and inspiring a new generation and, with Platform for the future, this task is brilliantly executed.”



Henri Lenferink

“Rijksmuseum Boerhaave succeeds in making the history of science accessible to young and old in a captivating manner. Moreover, the museum’s exhibitions and activities tie in well with current events and, with its future-oriented focus, Rijksmuseum Boerhaave shows how science is dealing with the challenges facing our society. It’s a fantastic museum that is perfectly positioned in Leiden, city of knowledge and culture.”



José van Dijck

“Rijksmuseum Boerhaave offers a platform for curious people who never cease to question. I love this museum because it also confronts young children with big questions. People in search of challenges who don’t walk away when the going gets tough. Curiosity, after all, is the source of all knowledge. A visit to Rijksmuseum Boerhaave stimulates that intellectual creativity.”

Pedro Tetteroo



“I enjoy my role as ambassador for Rijksmuseum Boerhaave because I heartily endorse your focus and approach in bringing science to secondary school pupils. You offer visitors the opportunity to step into the shoes of the scientist and in doing so you create involvement in the key issues we are facing. For my nine-year old grandson, there’s nothing better than a visit to Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.”

Robbert Dijkgraaf



“The objects at Rijksmuseum Boerhaave are amazing and poignant.”

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave’s ambassadors

André Kuipers
Astronaut and ambassador for Techniekpact

Anton Valk
Chairman of Eden Holland Foundation and former trustee of the Science Museum Group London

Annemiek Verkamman
Managing Director HollandBio

Clémence Ross-van Dorp
Ambassador for Life Sciences & Health sector

Douwe Biesma
Chairman of the Executive Board of Leiden University Medical Center

Ewine van Dishoeck
President of the International Astronomical Union and professor of molecular astrophysics at Leiden University

Gerard 't Hooft
Nobel prize laureate in physics

Henri Lenferink
Mayor of the City of Leiden

Hester Bijl
Rector Magnificus of Leiden University

Ineke Sluiter
President of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

José van Dijck
University professor in media and digital society at Utrecht University

Leila Prnjavorac
Presenter / daily chairman / speaker

Pedro Tetteroo
Professor in the School of Biochemistry and Cell Biology at University College Cork

Robbert Dijkgraaf
Director of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, and university professor at the University of Amsterdam

Siep Wijsenbeek
Director of Fondsen in Nederland (FIN)

Willy Spaan
Former chairman of the Executive Board Leiden University Medical Center

Wim Pijbes
Director of the Droom en Daad Foundation



Bert Degenaar and Amito Haarhuis

Friends of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave

Become a Friend of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave and contribute to the realization of our future ambition.

“Rijksmuseum Boerhaave succeeds in forming a bridge between the rich history of science in the Netherlands and current developments. Thanks to the generous contributions of its Friends, the museum is able to win over an increasingly larger audience for the world of science.”

Professor Jan van Ruitenbeek, chairman of the Circle of Friends of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.

We offer Friends the opportunity to contribute to the realization of our Platform for the future. An important and visible element of this strategy is the construction and outfitting of the Life Science & Health Studio. We hope to welcome visitors here in 2025.

Based on your personal and social involvement, you can support us as sponsor and thus build a long-lasting relationship with Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.

There are several options to join forces with the museum.

You can become a Friend of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave from €40 per year. As Duo-Friend (for two people), you pay €65 per year. This gives you free access to the museum and we look forward to inviting you to attend unique Friends events both inside and outside the museum.

As a Patron of Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, you support us with an annual donation from €250. In addition to the Friends privileges, we have a programme specially designed for you. We sincerely hope this forms the prelude to supporting us as Benefactors.

The newly outfitted hall for Powerful Collections opened in the autumn of 2021 in Rijksmuseum Boerhaave.

Some of the objects from the extensive Zuylenburgh Collection of collector and prominent 'gentleman dealer' Bert Degenaar have been given a permanent place in the hall. Rijksmuseum Boerhaave and Degenaar had already reached agreement in the context of this special cooperation whereby it was agreed that the collection of scientific instruments will be transferred to the museum at some future point. We are enormously grateful for this pledge as Bert Degenaar's collection is one of the largest private collections of scientific instruments in the world. The agreement is in accordance with the legacy policy initiated by Rijksmuseum Boerhaave. We hope that others follow in Mr Degenaar's footsteps. All donations, large or small, are highly appreciated. The museum is more than happy to discuss this with you.

In addition to becoming Friends and Patrons, we offer private individuals the option of becoming Benefactors. We welcome Benefactors in three circles.

- **The Huygens circle**
with donations from €1000 per year
- **The Einstein circle**
with donations from €5000 per year
- **The Van Leeuwenhoek circle**
with donations from €10,000 per year

Our ambition is to raise €5 million by 2025 for the Platform for the future.

Will you help us to realize this ambition?

Are you interested in a private donation or donating a gift in your will? Please contact Carmen Cabo, head of Development & Partnerships via +31 6 82 32 22 35 or at carmencabo@rijksmuseumboerhaave.nl.

Funds & Partners

Who are our sponsors?

The VSBfonds and Fonds 1818 are sponsoring a two-year project involving diversity and inclusion within the museum. The museum is working with JES Rijnland, a Leiden organization dedicated to improving the involvement of young people (aged 10 – 12) from disadvantaged areas via a two-year highly methodical curriculum. Rijksmuseum Boerhaave's role in the cooperation concerns the programmes 'The Weekend Class' and 'The Summer School'. The children from The Weekend Class are guests in our educational facilities 30 Sundays a year, and participants of The Summer School spend two full weeks during the summer holidays at our museum. We have been working together closely since 2020 to create an inclusive educational programme over a period of two years and getting to know the children from JES Rijnland as trusted visitors to our museum.

Zorg en Zekerheid, a regional health insurance company, supports the museum with the educational programme 'Health and Sickness, then and now'. During three years all primary schoolchildren (at the age of 11 and 12 years) can attend this appealing programme free of charge. Zorg en Zekerheid also sponsored the marketing for the exhibition Contagious!

The Van der Mandele Foundation made the restoration of our historic wax moulages possible and their subsequent display in the exhibition Contagious!

Raising funds for the creation of temporary exhibitions is another crucial aspect. We have already been pledged financial aid for the development of the Big Questions exhibition (opening in the summer of 2022) by the Dioraphte Foundation and SRON. Various requests for funds are currently in the pipeline.

Rijksmuseum Boerhaave is a partner in a long-term international research project into Antoni van Leeuwenhoek and the early years of microscopy. This prestigious research project started in the autumn of 2021 and is financed by the Dutch Research Council (NWO). Part of the results of this research will be used for the exhibition on Antoni van Leeuwenhoek in 2023.

The NWO is also financing long-term research into black holes and the outreach programme that comes with it: a temporary exhibition with a supplementary programme that Rijksmuseum Boerhaave organizes in 2024.

Fundraising makes excellent and important educational programmes and exhibitions possible.



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rijksmuseumboerhaave.nl

