

# Sarah van Sonsbeeck selected works 2006-2023

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# Letter to my Neighbours

Year: 2006

Medium: print on phone bill & Tipp-Ex

Dimensions: 29 x 21 cm

Artist Books Collection MoMa

For her graduation at the Rietveld art academy in Amsterdam Van Sonsbeeck presented a letter written to her loud neighbours asking them to pay that part of her rent they were occupying in her home with their noise.





## One cubic Meter of broken Silence

Year: 2008

Medium: vandalised reappropriated artwork

Dimensions: 104 x 104 x120 cm

Plancius Art Collection, Amsterdam

For her show at Museum De Paviljoens in Almere Van Sonsbeeck intended to create a new physical measurement unit for silence, such as already exist for the meter or the kilogram. Within several weeks the object got vandalised. The artist renamed the the piece 'One cubic meter of broken silence'. **2.**



## Open Studios Rijksakademie

Year: 2008

Installation view Rijksakademie van Beeldende  
Kunsten, Amsterdam

Medium: replica of found situation

Dimensions: 240 x 80 x 60 cm

Fiorucci Art Collection

The object is a replica in construction steel of  
the bench the artist found on the most silent  
point of Holland.



## Faraday Bag

Year: 2012

Medium: silver plated polyester

Dimensions: 50 x 80 cm

Expanding her research into (acoustical) silence, inspired by Cayce Pollard, a fictional character in William Gibson's book *Pattern Recognition* (2003) Van Sonsbeeck made a series of democratic tools for data silence.

4.

The Faraday bag shields its contents from electromagnetic signals such as Wi-Fi or cellphone signals.

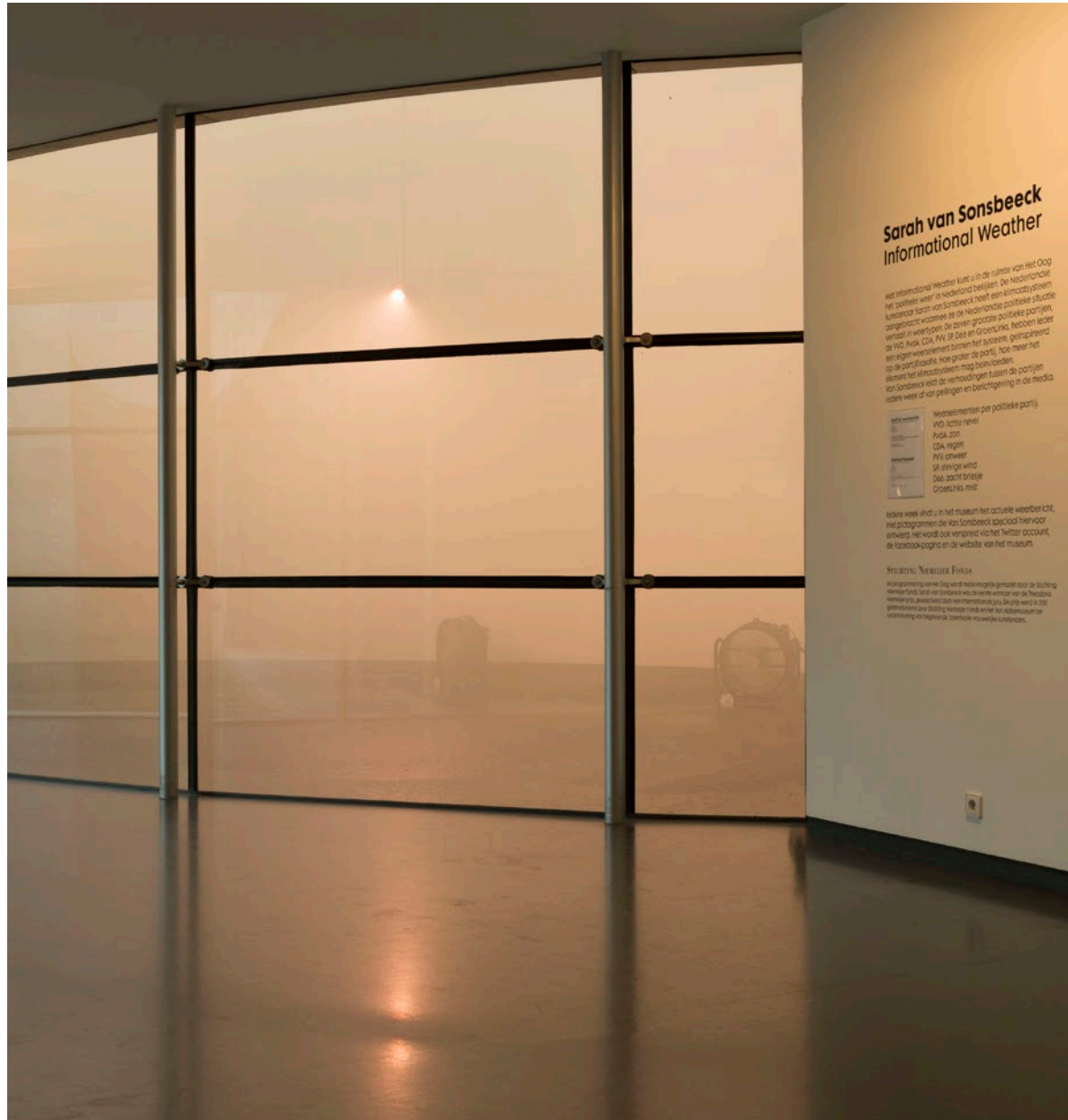


## Things to do in Mönchengladbach

Year: 2012

Installation view Museum Abteiberg,  
Mönchengladbach

As a result of her residency in Mönchengladbach Van Sonsbeeck was invited by Susanne Titz to intervene in the collection of Museum Abteiberg with existing and new works. Here shown is the Faraday Tent, shielding the inside from Wi-Fi signals thus creating a 'data-silent' space right in front of the museum. **5.**



## Informational Weather

Year: 2012

Installation view Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven

Medium: theatre lighting, fog machines

Dimensions: 600 x 300 x 300 cm

Upon winning the first Theodora Niemeijer Prize for Dutch female artists Van Sonsbeeck showed her installation 'Informational Weather' in the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven.

6.

Informational Weather translated the changing political landscape of the Netherlands into weather types using a provisional climate system invented by the artist assigning each party a climate element based on their party ideology.



## Moment of Bliss

Year of the initial work: 2012

Installation view: Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 2022

Moment of Bliss is a projection of the sunlight as projected through the windows of the artists studio recreating a moment always giving great comfort to Van Sonsbeeck. Using theatre techniques it slowly fades in and out. It is to be always placed near a window in the direction of the sunlight. **7.**





## Light S.e.s.a.

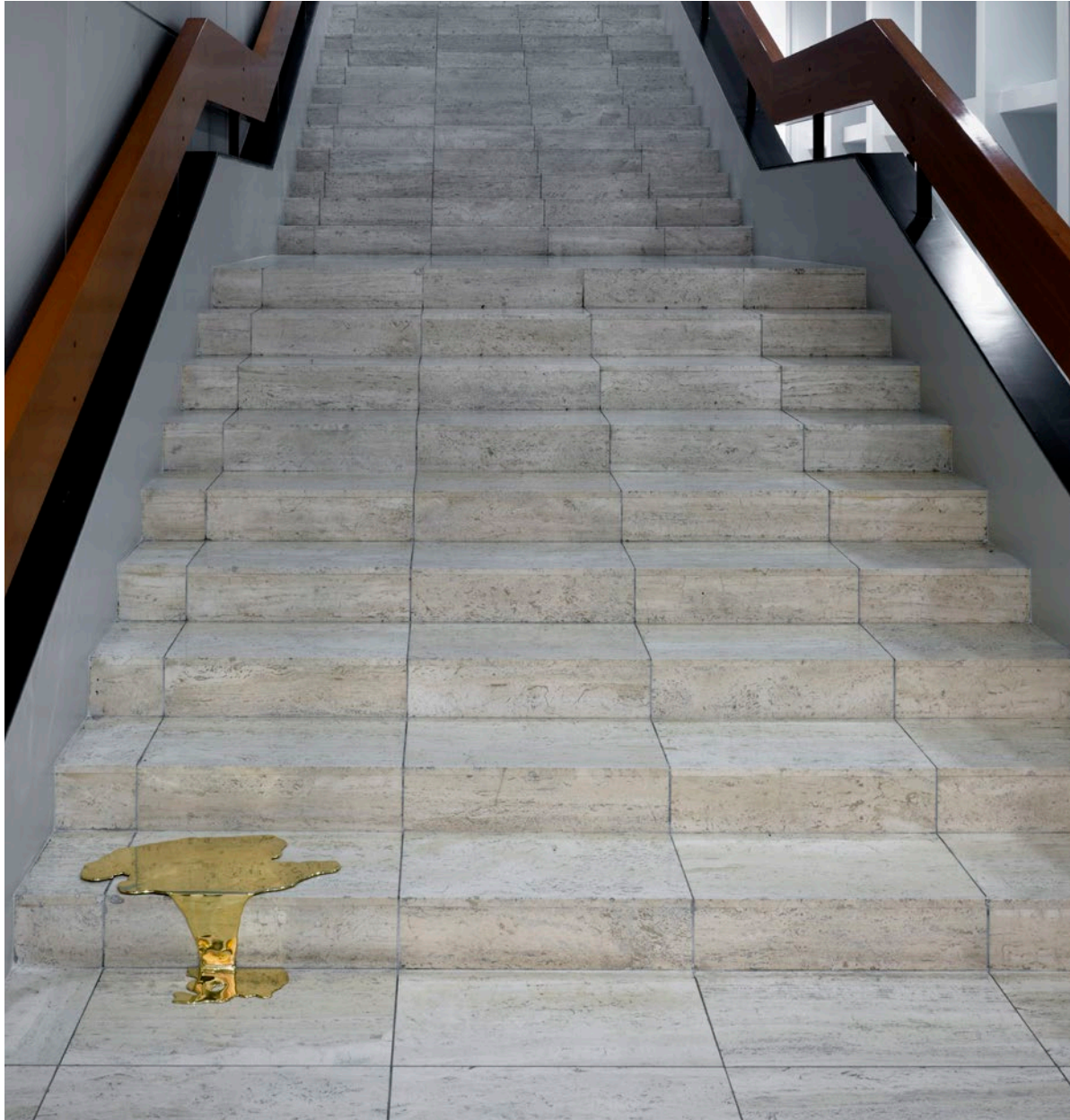
Year: 2013

Medium: replica of found situation, bronze

Dimensions: 80 x 80 x 3 cm

Ekard Art Collection

The object is a replica of a found situation in Sao Paulo. A sewerage lid causing noise due to being badly installed was copied in cymbal bronze to function as a gong.



## One Bar of Gold, dripped

Year: 2016

Installation view De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam

Medium: polished brass, directors staircase

Dimensions: 50 x 50 x 18 cm

Collection De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam

Fascinated by the standard gold ingots hidden and secured from the public in De Nederlandsche Bank's vaults, Van Sonsbeeck requested to make precise molds of one, as the departure point for a new series of works investigating the standard gold bar's formal and conceptual aspects. 9.

Subsequently Van Sonsbeeck 'translated' this standard of value into a series of sculptures using its volume as a starting point and architectural elements of the building of de Nederlandsche Bank as a pedestal.



## We may have all come on different Ships, but we're in the same Boat now

Year: 2017

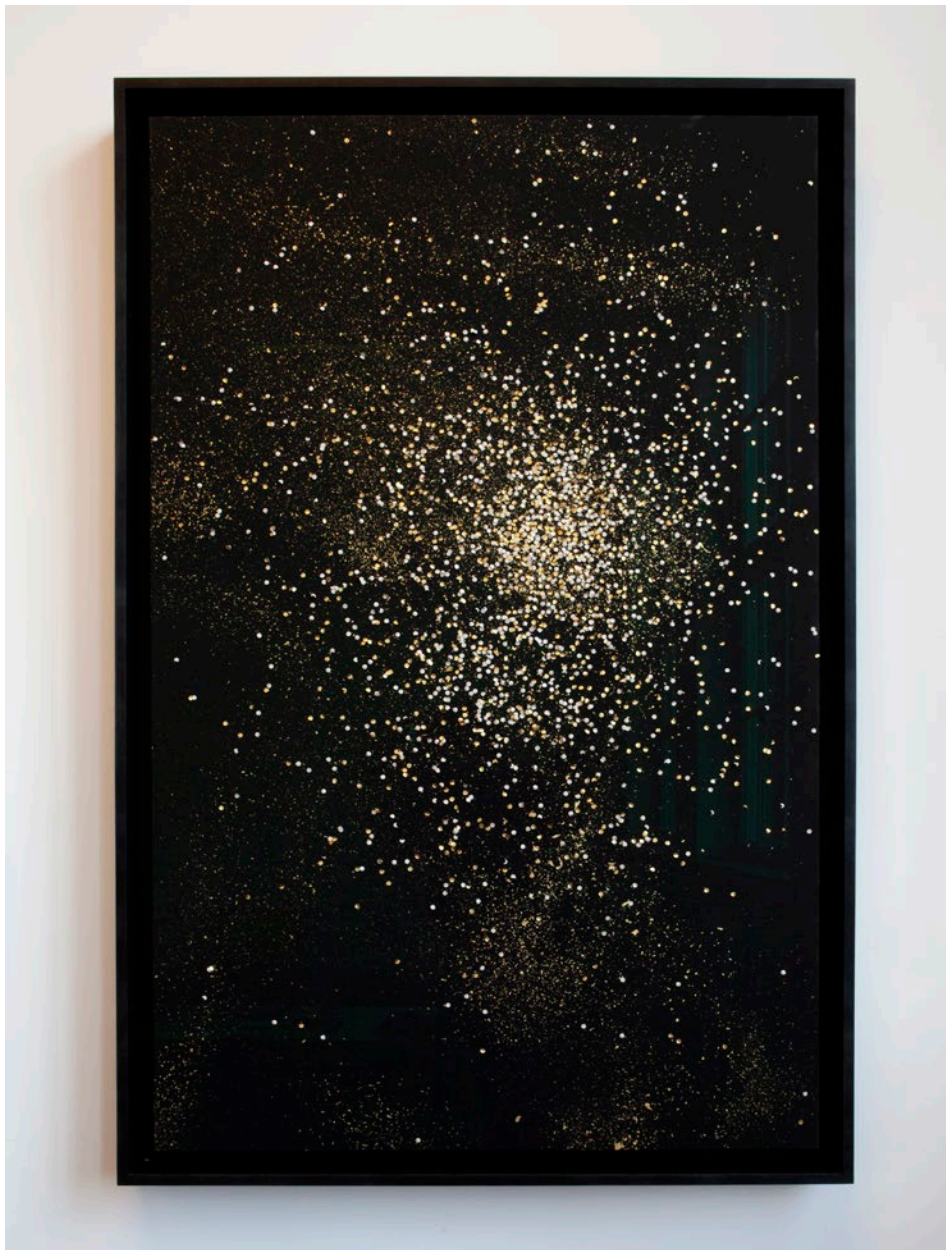
Installation view De Oude Kerk, Amsterdam

Medium: Mylar blankets, site specific installation

Dimensions: 2000 sqm approx

For her solo exhibition at de Oude Kerk (Old Church) Amsterdam Van Sonsbeeck decided to reflect on the colonial past of this monumental building from the early 13th century and on the complex relationship of religion to the concept of rescuing the other. Van Sonsbeeck installed 333 Mylar rescue blankets on the grave-clad floor inviting visitors to walk in between.

10.



## Mistakes I've made and remade

Year: 2017

Medium: gold dust and wind on faraday paint

Dimensions: 80 x 120 cm

In the 'Mistakes I've made and remade' series Van Sonsbeeck uses (the waste of) one work to create another in a bid to research circularity of ideas and of art. By letting the wind in her studio create a pattern of the universe, the artist invites the universe to become her co-creator. **11.**



## Tristan Gong

Year: 2017 - 2022

Installation view Utrecht Central Station

Medium: found object and bronze copies.

Dimensions: 200 x 200 x 24 cm

Collection JC Art Fund for NS (Dutch railways)

Upon her visit to Tristan da Cunha, the worlds most remote inhabited island Van Sonsbeeck took a blue oxygen cylinder, originally shipwrecked on the island from a Petrobras oil rig that went adrift. The islanders, inventive by nature, had discovered the empty cylinders to have a beautiful sound subsequently turning some of them into gongs. They gifted the artist a spare one that she then tuned and added two bronze copies to, so creating a three-tone gong.



## Meteorite, the Seventh Day

Year: 2018

Installation view Into Nature

Medium: bronze and traffic signage in found situation

Dimensions: variable

'Meteorite, the Seventh Day' sprang from the artists desire to add a bronze stone to an existing dolmen in a bid to research its authenticity and its protected status. The artist was only allowed to do so if she placed it on the adjacent road and added traffic signage for safety.



## Shelter

Year: 2018 (2013)

Installation view Catharijne Convent, Utrecht

Medium: Mylar rescue blankets on frame

In collaboration with Centraal Museum Utrecht.

Curators Bart Rutten and Puk Leering.

The Anti drone tent initially made by Van Sonsbeeck in 2013 uses Mylar rescue blankets to shield the inhabitant from the heat-scanning gaze of drones, reclaiming back the space inside from this surveillance technique often used in warfare or police action. In 2017 migration and politics in the Netherlands claiming a 'migration crisis' had given this work new meaning. Shelter was an attempt to research the Ani Drone Tent in this new context



## Failed Ideas, rolled and unrolled #1

Year: 2019

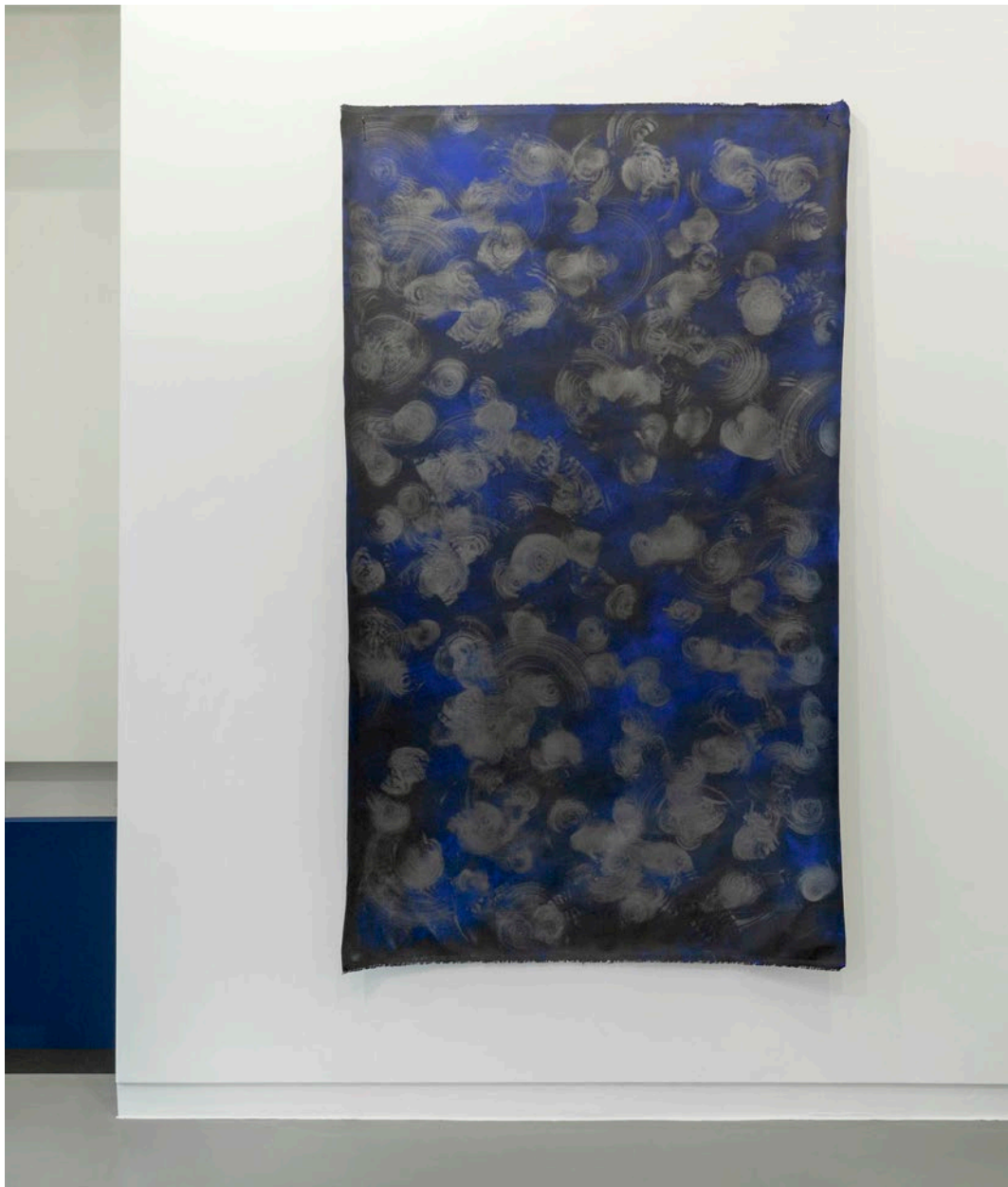
Medium: gold leaf on drawings

Dimensions: 96.5 x 76.5 x 6 cm

Between 2019 and 2020 Van Sonsbeeck tore pages with drawings of ideas for never realised artworks from her sketchbooks. She then gilded them, hiding her 'mistakes' in plain sight.

The series is an attempt to rethink how we judge mistakes, and to research the value of mistakes within the artistic process and in life. Of course the work is also based on the question whether you trust the artist to have actually done what the title suggests and to believe there are actual ideas for artworks behind the gold.





## Entering the Studio

Year: 2020

Medium: canvas, faraday paint and blue pigment

Dimensions: 115 x 200 cm

The black faraday paint used as a base layer in this series of works is typically used on buildings to avoid electromagnetic radiation from entering or leaving. The paint consists of an acrylic binder with added carbon- and graphite powder to make it conduct electricity. The carbon powder in the paint is so lightweight it dries up as a thin deep matte black layer on top. When the painted surface is touched, the carbon comes off to reveal the silver graphite below.

16.

Van Sonsbeeck stretched this canvas on her studio floor inviting everyone entering the studio to walk over it creating a chance pattern of marks, then adding blue pigment herself.

## A Square Ascension

Year: 2020 - ongoing

Medium: gold leaf on found situation

Dimensions: 1 x 1 meter

Committed by: Museum IJsselstein



Right in front of the Sint Nicolaas Basiliek in IJsselstein the artist found a small pocket of public space lined with 'Amsterdammer' poles, typical street furniture found in Amsterdam to protect sidewalks from traffic. To give these poles something to protect Van Sonsbeeck gilded a square of the pavement so the light of the sky reflects via the gilded surface to the viewers eye.



Alex at Dam square (photo by Iris Duvekot)

## World Flag Attempt

Year: 2020 - 2022

Medium: silk paint on silk

Dimensions: 135 x 200 cm approx

Collection Museum Boijmans van Beuningen & Ministry of OC&W

In an equal spirit to Paul Carrolls 'World Flag' (1988) and OMA's EU barcode (2001) Van Sonsbeeck handpainted a series of flags on silk, using all colors of all flags of the world opening the borders between the colors allowing them to blend and share territories.

18.

Van Sonsbeeck then asked several women to 'perform' the flag in a manner and location they deemed personally important to celebrate freedom.

The work was shortlisted for the Open Call of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, De Balie Amsterdam & the Amsterdam 4&5 May committee to celebrate 75 years of freedom in the Netherlands after World War II.



## World Flag IJsselstein

Year: 2020 - ongoing

Medium: print on fabric

Dimensions: 3 x 5 meter

Commissiomed by: Museum IJsselstein

Initial resistance to the idea of a rainbow colored flag on this monumental renaissance protestant church was turned to a positive dialogue resulting in a special edition of the World Flag in which the colors of the flag of the city of IJsselstein and the Dutch flag were blended, sharing territories. As the artist and the church agreed, these colors blending into one another create all other colors.

The flag was gifted to the church flag guild to be shown on special occasions.



## Temporary Monument #1

'Willem Arondeus Pavlova Cake'

Year: 2020 - ongoing

Medium: pavlova cake

Dimensions: 10 x 15 x 5 cm

Commissioned by: De Balie Amsterdam

As a temporary monument to Dutch openly gay resistance hero Willem Arondeus Van Sonsbeeck created this Pavlova cake together with Holtkamp. Arondeus being sentenced to death by the Nazi regime for partaking in the bombing of the Amsterdam registry (thus hiding the identities of many jews and saving many lives) asked to eat a pavlova cake for his last supper with friends in his cell. At the time the area of De Balie was a courthouse and prison.

The pink square, initially forced upon lhbti prisoners of war, was later adopted by the Dutch gay movement as their symbol of pride.



## Pedestal for Imperfect

Year: 2021

Installation view Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam

Medium: gold leaf and visitor intervention

Dimensions: 500 x 200 cm approx

The golden coach around which this exhibition in the Amsterdam Museum centered was gifted to queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands in 1898. It could be considered a pedestal for the monarchy, but perhaps even more so as a pedestal for democracy, as it is used yearly to present the governments policy for the coming year.

21.

Simultaneously to the gift of the coach a queens-linden tree was planted, framed by a bench, in honour of the queen in the orphanage that formerly housed the Amsterdam Museum. This bench together with the tree are seen by the artist as a much better monument to democracy as they evolve and shelter all (not just royalty). In honour of this 'democratic monument' she gilded its surface, then inviting visitors and even Willem-Alexander king of the Netherlands, to scratch a message in the gold in a transactional gesture that trades physical value (gold) for immaterial value (thoughts, ideas, comments).

## Gold Drippings

Year: 2021

Medium: dyptich, gold luster on float glass

Dimensions: 136 x 149 cm



In the 'Gold Drippings' series Van Sonsbeeck paints on glass using luster. The result of this alchemic process is as much dependent on knowledge and precision as it is on chance as temperature, grease, dust and other uncontrollable factors influence the outcome thus rendering chance a co-creator of the works.



## The State of Things

Year: 2022

Installation view: Kunsthalle Emden

Shown left: Six bars of gold, tapestry

The State of Things brings together seven of Van Sonsbeeck's works spanning seven years of reflection on gold as a standard of value. In a poetic bid to reflect on our current financial system Van Sonsbeeck researches the meaning and value systems surrounding gold, in a region **23.** known for its gold filigree artisanship.

'Six Bars of Gold, Tapestry' translates the volume of six standard gold bars into a transparent tapestry, transparency being an important point of debate in many recent discussions about our financial system and its main actors.





## The Beginning, part 2

Year: 2021

Medium: copper saturation on ceramics, bronze

Dimensions: 80 x 40 cm approx

Collection Ministry of OC&W

A small neolithic biface was copied and enlarged ten times, then counter moulded in ceramics and glazed with copper saturation glaze. This process allows for a variety of hues and textures reminiscent of earthly streams of resources such as steel and copper, that were discovered around the time the biface was made. The piece means to both be a tribute to its unknown original creator and to what perhaps is the first object of art of mankind.



## Turning a Leaf

Year: 2022 -2023 - beyond

Jubilee present De Nederlandsche Bank

Medium: found leaves cast in bronze

Installation view: De Nederlandsche Bank

Together with employees of De Nederlandsche Bank Van Sonsbeeck selected a variety of leaves fallen around its main offices on Frederiksplein in Amsterdam. She then cast each individual leaf in bronze using various techniques from high polish or raw bronze to patina. Each employee regardless of hierarchy will get to select the bronze leaf they feel most connected to and take it home on the occasion of their personal 20th year jubilee. Van Sonsbeeck sees the work as one living installation, physically changing through touch (as bronze changes hue when touched), spreading geographically over time.

## Moles of Modernism (Zone2Source)

Year: 2022

Medium: installation, earth

Dimensions: 100 sqm approx

Installation view Zone2Source, Amsterdam



The 'Glass House' is a modernist pavillion in the Amstelpark initially designed for the 'Floriade', a world exhibition held in the seventies to display floral splendour and carefully groomed nature worldwide. The grass landscape surrounding it is filled with molehills. If modernism is the attempted triumph of control over nature, the moles in the view of Van Sonsbeeck are perhaps the better architects even if they are nearly blind.

26.

Questioning the modernist ideal of transparency where interior flows effortlessly into exterior and vice versa, the molehills were artificially continued inside, in an attempt to both construct and deconstruct this alledged transparency. The mole is still often regarded as a pest, but it is becoming increasingly clear that the animal is important for the ecosystem and the fertility of the soil. The presence of moles indicates healthy soil with many micro-organisms.



## Moles of Modernism Kröller-Müller Museum

Year: 2023

Materials: bronze, aluminum, resin, marblecast, wax, epoxy, PLU, cast glass, gilded plaster, birdseed.

Dimensions: 150 sqm approx

Installation view Kröller-Müller Museum.

Moles of Modernism is a playful ode to art history and chance, which is often the defining factor in life. Scattered throughout the spaces of the former museum entrance and outside in the grass, more than eighty 'molehills' made of bronze, glass, ceramics, wax, rubber, plaster and even birdseed are sitting. All these materials refer to works of art in the Kröller-Müller Museum collection.

27.

The artist asked the museum to 'dig' into its own collection to find modernist works by female artists, which have not been exhibited for a long time. She chose *Untitled (Double bar-red)* by Jo Baer (Seattle, 1929). This minimalist painting doesn't actually refer to anything. 'It is a work that simply "is"', says Van Sonsbeeck, 'it is an entity in itself, and forms a nice contrast with the recognizable shape of the molehills'.



## Moles of Modernism Kröller-Müller Museum

Year: 2023

Installation view Kröller-Müller Museum.

Moles of Modernism is the sixth exhibition in the series *Vestibulum*. This title refers to the location of the exhibitions. This was the former entrance to the museum, which was designed by architect Henry van de Velde and opened in 1938. The space is now rather undefined. Every six months, the museum invites an artist to create a presentation here, which relates to the place, the history of the museum or the collection.

28.

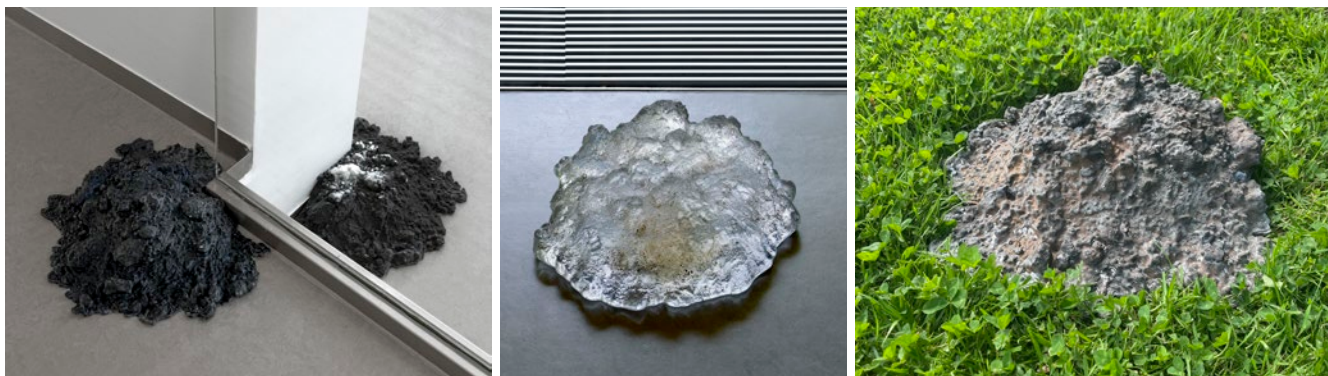
To the artist this space with its sets of steps elevating the museum just above the ground physically but perhaps also symbolically is an intriguing time capsule of shifting perspectives on the role and meaning of the museum in general.

# Moles of Modernism

## Kröller-Müller Museum

Year: 2023

Installation view Kröller-Müller Museum.



The origin of Moles of Modernism lies in a presentation that Van Sonsbeeck realized in February 2022 in Het Glazen Huis, a pavilion built for the 1972 Floriade in Amsterdam's Amstelpark. While sitting in the space, she decides to bring the molehills that surround the building indoors in order to investigate what the boundary between 'inside' and 'outside' actually means. Glass outer walls are a disaster for animals. For example, birds regularly crash into them. But in modernist architecture they are often used to allow light, air and space to flow freely.

The mole is still often regarded as a pest, but it is becoming increasingly clear that the animal is important for the ecosystem and the fertility of the soil. The presence of moles indicates healthy soil with many micro-organisms. Incidentally, moles do not occur naturally in De Hoge Veluwe National Park as the groundwater level is too low. This makes Van Sonsbeeck's 'molehills' here all the more surprising.