



Room view Plug In #38. Photo Peter Cox.

title **Lily van der Stokker & guest:  
HW Werther**  
episode **Plug In #38**  
duration **from 19-04-08 to 31-08-08**  
curator **Lily van der Stokker  
in cooperation with  
HW Werther**  
text by **HW Werther**  
photographer **Peter Cox**

Algorithm 'ALEX.01' by HW Werther for organising an exhibition with all works from the Van Abbemuseum collection, less the works which the algorithm excludes, in room B2-05 of the Van Abbemuseum, in which the walls are clad with the wallpaper work entitled 'In de versiering' (In the decoration) by visual artist Lily van der Stokker.

1. Think about the invitation by the Van Abbemuseum and Lily van der Stokker to do something, based on a conceptual approach, with the Van Abbemuseum collection in room B2-05, against the backdrop of Lily van der Stokker's wallpaper.

2. Surrender to doubt and sleepless nights.

3. Do not see the invitation as an urgency test but as a puzzle with the opportunity to realise dreams and then accept the invitation with thanks.

4. Collect the ideas and factual information from all parties involved. Make an inventory and analyse.

5. Formulate basic exhibition premises, such as:  
a. The swapping of the foreground and background. Each newwork at the Van Abbemuseum is always exhibited against a background (context) of place and time (history), and particularly the history of the Van Abbemuseum and the collection that is a residue of it. The collection will now be displayed against the literal backdrop of a recent work by Lily van der Stokker.  
b. Wallpaper ► decoration ► algorithm. Lily's wallpaper is an infinite, decorative pattern of parallel lines, made according to an algorithm. Decoration has no perspective, no depth (no significance??).  
c. Separate matter and significance. In terms of problems, every work of art can be divided into matter (conservation, restoration, replication, storage, transport, insurance, security, theft) and significance (the ideas you can distil from a work and the stories you can relate and spread about it, but also the aura,

copyright, autonomy, trade and speculation, price rises caused by scarcity).

**d.** The museum as a meme transmission station. "A meme consists of any unit of cultural information (...) that gets transmitted verbally or by repeated action from one mind to another. Memes propagate themselves and can move through a 'culture' in a manner similar to the behaviour of a virus" (Wikipedia). A non-political conceptual approach to the release of material works of art and art collections by museums. The liberation of art from the cash flow, not by keeping art works in collections and conserving them, but by releasing matter and facilitating the spread of memes. Stopping the promotion of authenticity, aura and scarcity and improving replication, multiplication and dissemination.

**e.** The chiasmic relationship between the conceptual and the physical in the form of conceptual physicality and physical conceptualism.

**f.** The creative and explosive potential of large numbers close to one another.

**g.** The change of disposition, diffusion of individuality due to the proximity of the other.

**h.** The algorithm as a form of third-generation art.

**6.** Arrive at the following solution to the puzzle: develop an exhibition algorithm (repeatable procedure or method) for placing all works (or as many as possible) from the Van Abbemuseum collection on the walls and floors of a room in such a way that the matter in the collection is spread about the room in a significance suspending manner and, at the same time, the materiality (the means of transport of artists' ideas) and quantity (of the collection) can be experienced in as breathtaking a way as possible.

**7.** To do so, make the necessary modifications to the room. In the case of room B2-05:

**a.** Remove the sterile, neutrality-suggesting, autonomy-encouraging, grey gloss museum floor by laying a colourful carpet that matches the green shade of the wallpaper.

**b.** Improve the acoustics and intimacy of the room by using a soft velvet carpet.

**c.** Change the room from a superficial, draughty passage into a secret, intimate room, a cul-de-sac, where you can go in and then have to find your way out again. Do this by closing off the two existing, facing, enormous openings in the short walls and making a much smaller opening in the long wall.

**d.** To enhance visitor-friendliness and as an additional experience, drill peepholes in the panels covering the closed openings.

**e.** Dim the lights.

**8.** Study the Van Abbemuseum collection in The Museum System, the museum database. The collection

is subdivided into eight sections: audiovisual art, sculptures, miscellaneous, photography, graphics, installations, paintings and drawings.

**9.** Exclude the use of the following sections: audiovisual art (due to immateriality); miscellaneous (apart from the works that could also be included in the sculptures or paintings section); photography (due to immateriality and/or the use of frames with glass); graphics (due to the use of frames with glass); installations (due to intolerance with respect to the proximity of other works; drawings (due to the use of frames with glass).

**10.** Also exclude: all works on loan; all works given on loan; all works being used in other Van Abbemuseum exhibitions; all works being restored; all works that use electricity; all sculptures that are too difficult to install, too vulnerable or too big; all sculptures that cannot be experienced as a compact, individual body; all sculptures that cannot stand alone on the floor; all sculptures for which, according to the Van Abbemuseum, the artist would not grant permission to be used in this way; all paintings behind glass; all paintings that cannot be hung on the wall; all paintings that are not rectangular; all paintings with one or more sides shorter than 25 cm; all paintings that are thicker than 10 cm.

**11.** Calculate the total surface area of the available wall space of the gallery in question.

**12.** From the paintings section (less all excluded work), in sequence of surface area, from small to large, choose as many paintings until the sum of all surface areas of the selected paintings is 60% of the total surface area of the available wall space of the gallery. If there are not enough paintings to achieve the 60%, expand the collection of useable paintings or reduce the total wall space by choosing or making another gallery.

**13.** Make the inventory numbers of the selected paintings a random series.

**14.** Hang the painting with the first inventory number in the random series in the middle of the first wall to the left of the main entrance to the gallery.

**15.** Hang the painting with the second number in the series with its bottom left-hand corner against the top right-hand corner of the first painting. Then move the second painting 10 cm to the right and 20 cm down.

**16.** Hang the third and following painting in the series in the next corner that fits (between two paintings) in a clockwise direction. Then move this painting first (in the test sequence) 10, 30 or 20 cm horizontally and then 10, 30 or 20 cm vertically in relation to the adjacent

paintings in such a way that there are as few adjacent horizontal and vertical lines between the paintings as possible and that the newly created corners make an overlap of at least 15 cm. This minimum overlap of 15 cm is not necessary on the edges of the available wall space if the remaining space is less than 35 cm (and no following painting fits). Make sure that the distance between an outermost painting and the edge of another object (corner, ceiling, skirting board, door, window, radiator, etc.) is at least 10 cm.

**17.** Carry on hanging paintings from the random series until there is no more space to hang the next one in the series. Then move on to the next wall (in clockwise direction).

**18.** Repeat steps 14 to 17 until there is no space to hang the following number in the series on the final wall.

**19.** Now forget the sequence of the random series and find a suitable place for the remaining works on one of the used walls, bearing in mind the previous hanging rules and an even spread. The works that no longer fit are not used.

**20.** When all the walls in the gallery are ready, place all non-excluded works from the sculptures section in the gallery, from high to low and from the middle of the floor to the edges. Do so in such a way that the sculptures fit together like a puzzle as well as possible (with a minimum distance between them of 10 cm) into an attractive, compact heap, yet making sure that each individual piece is visible.

**21.** Use at least 30 sculptures and a maximum number of sculptures to leave enough room around the sculpture heap for people to walk around it safely. If there are not enough useable sculptures available, expand the collection of useable sculptures or do not perform algorithm 'AL.EX.01'.

#### Art works

You can request a full list of art works that are present in this Plug In by contacting Nicole de Boer, [n.de.boer@vanabbemuseum.nl](mailto:n.de.boer@vanabbemuseum.nl), +31 40 2381019..