

Report by the Supervisory Board

General

The Supervisory Board met four times in 2012. In addition to ongoing matters, such as the museum's finances and organisation, the Supervisory Board devoted a great deal of attention in 2012 to two important subjects: the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's cultural policy and the Van Gogh Museum's accommodation.

Dutch government cultural policy

According to the provisions of the new grant system, introduced by Secretary of State Halbe Zijlstra in 2011, the Van Gogh Museum submitted its grant application to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science before 1 February 2012. An extra Supervisory Board meeting had been organised in early 2012 to discuss this grant application, plus the Dutch government's policy plan for 2013-2016.

In May 2012 the Dutch Council for Culture issued its recommendations regarding the grant application: the Council was extremely positive in its appraisal of the Van Gogh Museum and advised the Secretary of State to allocate the grant in accordance with the museum's placement in category one.

In September 2012 the Van Gogh Museum received the definitive grant allocation from the Ministry which awarded the museum a total of € 30.4 million for the period 2013-2016. The Van Gogh Museum is delighted to receive this continuing support from the Dutch government.

In 2011 Secretary of State Halbe Zijlstra had announced that he would no longer use his statutory right regarding appointment of members of the Supervisory Board. The statutes of the Van Gogh Museum were therefore altered to this effect at the Supervisory Board's meeting in September 2012. Members of the Supervisory Board are henceforth appointed by the Supervisory Board. Several other amendments were also made to the statutes to bring these in line with the requirements of the Central Bureau on Fundraising.

Accommodation

The accommodation projects can be divided into:

- The Maintenance & Fire Safety Project: the Rietveld Building was closed from September 2012 to April 2013 for essential maintenance work.
- The Hermitage Project: 75 of the Van Gogh Museum's masterpieces were presented in the Hermitage Amsterdam during renovation of the Rietveld Building.
- The Kurokawa Project: the projected New Entrance on Museumplein, attached to the Kurokawa Wing.

The Supervisory Board discussed the finances, scheduling and capacity of the above-mentioned projects. Keeping the collection permanently accessible to the public was a recurring principle in these discussions.

The Kurokawa Project ('New Entrance') will remain an important point of attention in 2013, with the focus lying on raising sufficient sponsorship for this.

In 2012 the Supervisory Board discussed and approved the 2011 Annual Accounts and the 2013 Budget.

Directors and organisation

With regard to the composition of the board of directors, it was decided that the major challenges facing the museum required Mr F. van Koetsveld to remain managing director of the Van Gogh Museum in the period 1 July 2012 to 1 May 2013, despite attaining pensionable age. The recruitment process for a new managing director was initiated during the year under report, with the appointment of an applications committee comprising a representative from the Supervisory Board and the museum's general director. The process was successfully completed in 2013. The appointment of Mr A. Dönszelmann, formerly Operations Section Manager, confirms the quality of the Van Gogh Museum's organisation.

Supervisory Board composition

A number of changes were made to the composition of the Supervisory Board in 2012.

Mr H. van Beuningen, partner at Booz & Company, was appointed as a member of the Supervisory Board, thereby fulfilling the Board's wish for a member with a strong commercial, business background and a network relevant to the museum. In appointing this extra member the Supervisory Board successfully achieved the range of desired profiles for its members laid down in the Code Cultural Governance.

Mrs T. Maas-de Brouwer was reappointed as chair for a period of four years. Mr J. Cuno will resign as a member of the Supervisory Board with effect from 22 March 2013, when he attains the maximum term he is allowed to serve.

Supervisory Board activities

Procedures

In addition to chairing regular meetings of the Supervisory Board, the chair of the Board regularly consults with the general director of the Van Gogh Museum. During these consultations the chair and the general director discuss both ongoing issues and items on the Supervisory Board's agenda.

There are two committees active within the remit of the Supervisory Board, to wit:

- **The Audit Committee**
The Audit Committee, active since 2010 with Mr P. Tieleman and Mr R. Dijkgraaf as representatives. The Audit Committee is involved in financial reporting, budgeting and the quality of the financial organisation and reporting.
- **The Building Committee**
The Building Committee, established in 2011, also played an active role in 2012. This committee addressed the Van Gogh Museum's challenging, large-scale projects. The Supervisory Board was represented on this committee by Mrs A.J. Kellermann and Mrs T. Maas- de Brouwer. The Building Committee was given a regular tour of the Rietveld Building which was closed for a period in 2012 for major renovations. The Building Committee also received a weekly report on the progress of the renovations.

Annual accounts 2012

The 2012 annual accounts were discussed at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 13 March 2013. The external auditor reported his findings from his audit of the 2012 annual accounts. The Audit Committee presented the annual accounts to the Supervisory Board with a recommendation to approve these. The Supervisory Board accordingly approved the 2012 Annual Accounts in conformance with Article 8 paragraph 1 subsection b of the Statutes.

The Supervisory Board acknowledges that the director and staff of the Van Gogh Museum made extraordinary efforts in the year under report and expresses its sincere thanks in this regard.

These extraordinary efforts included the temporary exhibition Dreams of Nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky, the necessary renovation of the Rietveld Building, the collection's temporary move to the Hermitage Amsterdam and the display of the museum's top pieces in the Hermitage in the presentation entitled Vincent. The Van Gogh Museum in the Hermitage Amsterdam

The dedication and involvement of the Van Gogh Museum's organisation provides a healthy foundation from which to face a challenging 2013.

Thus approved on 10 April 2013.

Mrs T.A. Maas- de Brouwer
(appointed with effect from 25 September 2008)

Mr P. Tieleman
(appointed with effect from 24 August 2009)

Mrs A.J. Kellermann
(appointed with effect from 31 May 2010)

Mr R.H. Dijkgraaf
(appointed with effect from 31 May 2010)

Mr H. van Beuningen
(appointed with effect from 26 November 2012)

Foreword by the Directors

The Van Gogh Museum on the move

On the move was the primary theme for the Van Gogh Museum in 2012. On 24 June 2011 we had announced that our museum's permanent collection would be moving temporarily to the Hermitage Amsterdam in late September 2012. We had set ourselves the goal of implementing the required renovations to our building on Museumplein in the relatively short period of seven months. This meant that our activities in 2012 were not only guided by the programme but also by the renovation work and associated move to other premises.

In every respect these were exceptionally ambitious projects which renewed our energy and brought new insights. We displayed our collection in a new environment, collaborated with a range of parties, dealt with visitors to our closed premises on Museumplein, and above all completed a substantial building project.

Behind the scenes we worked hard on the preparations for renovating our building and moving the collection to temporary premises. On 24 September the time had come. Under the watchful eye of the national and international press the painting *Sunflowers* was removed from its gallery and prepared for transport to the Hermitage Amsterdam. The Hermitage closed its doors to the public for five days so we could make the finishing touches to the presentation *Vincent. The Van Gogh Museum in the Hermitage Amsterdam*. On 29 September we opened the doors of our temporary accommodation. Much was new: the location, working with new people. But a familiar factor was the continuing interest shown by our public whose response to our presentation *Vincent* was overwhelmingly positive.

Together with the artist Henk Schut we developed the *Van Gogh Mile*, a walking route concept with visual and audio artworks, to guide visitors as effectively and pleasurably as possible from Museumplein to our new quarters in the Hermitage on the banks of the River Amstel. The highlight of this route was the 'red line', a 2.2 km long red cord, which was suspended five metres above the ground and literally connected the Van Gogh Museum and the Hermitage Amsterdam with each other. The opening of the *Van Gogh Mile* made our move a reality and in early October we embarked on the required renovations at Museumplein.

Excellent collaboration with the Government Buildings Agency and contractors was a major reason why we were able to successfully complete this project, within budget and on time, in the projected period of just seven months. Against all expectations we even managed to refurbish the floors, walls and ceiling, thereby giving the interior a fresh appearance. New installations and improved insulation have also made our building more sustainable. During the preparations for the

renovations and the actual execution of the work, we were always surrounded by professional partners. We thank our 'caretaker', the Government Buildings Agency, the City of Amsterdam and the contractors who made extraordinary efforts to complete the project within the allotted time.

We also extend our heartfelt thanks to the directors and staff of the Hermitage Amsterdam for their hospitality and successful collaboration. The move to the Hermitage Amsterdam would not have been possible without the support of our network of partners. In this regard we particularly wish to mention the City of Amsterdam and Amsterdam Marketing who supported us in the realisation and promotion of this unique project.

The success of the *Van Gogh Mile* art route can be partly attributed to the support we received from the City of Amsterdam, the VSB Fund, the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts, Boels Rental, Wacom Europe, Artery and BridgeHeads. We are delighted by their belief in innovative art projects. We would also like to thank all the residents of Amsterdam, contractors and organisations whose collaboration, patience and enthusiasm made possible this 2.2 km long art installation through the historic city.

During this challenging year almost 1.5 million Van Gogh fans found their way to our building on Museumplein and, from late September, to our temporary accommodation in the Hermitage Amsterdam. Our activities were closely followed through a range of social media. On Facebook we concluded 2012 with almost 80,000 followers, while more than 1.1 million people spread our messages on Google+. We are exceptionally proud that we have such a large network of people interested in Van Gogh who join with us in promoting the museum worldwide.

We opened 2012 in our premises on Museumplein with *Dreams of nature. Symbolism from Van Gogh to Kandinsky*. This exhibition was devoted to the European Symbolist landscape in the late nineteenth century. The Kurokawa Wing was themed on the natural world and transformed into a birch wood. The Symbolist pictures on display combined with the striking exhibition design and associated activities to form a spectacular whole. The Prince Bernhard Culture Fund sponsored transport of the exhibition works, thereby allowing us to include a wealth of magnificent works in the colourful presentation.

In the Rietveld Building we paid plenty of attention to our permanent collection and additionally created a special place for top exhibits from our print collection. This presentation, entitled *Beauty in Abundance. Highlights from the Van Gogh Museum's Print Collection*, allowed visitors to immerse themselves in major works by artists such as Bonnard, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and their contemporaries.

2012 was also an exceptional year in the field of acquisitions as we were afforded a rare opportunity to add a work by Vincent van Gogh to our collection. On 10 May we displayed this new acquisition, the 1882 watercolour *Pollard Willow*, for the first time. The piece had been high on our wish list as a potential purchase, as it is one of the most representative watercolours from Van Gogh's time in The Hague. Generous financial support enabled us to purchase this picture. We would like to thank the BankGiro Lottery, the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, the Rembrandt Association and its Print and Drawing Fund, the VSB Fund and the Mondriaan Fund for their munificence in this connection.

Thorough research into Van Gogh and his art is crucial to our museum in order to preserve the collection for this and future generations, and also to increase our knowledge of the work and life of Van Gogh. In June we presented striking new research results: not only had we discovered a previously unknown letter by the artist, our researchers had also concluded that the canvas *Tree Roots* must have been the artist's final work, rather than the better known *Wheatfield with Crows*. These and other discoveries were described at length in a new volume of our Van Gogh Studies series entitled *Van Gogh: New Findings*.

We attach great importance to welcoming more children to the Van Gogh Museum. An ambition we were able to further with the help of the Turing Foundation which sponsors the *Turing Museumplein Bus*. In early February the *Turing Museumplein Bus* took its first trip. This free bus service allows primary school children from the Amsterdam region to travel to Museumplein where they can visit the Van Gogh Museum's permanent collection, or the collections in the Rijksmuseum and Stedelijk Museum.

In May we opened the exhibition *Penseelprinsessen II. Schilderen als beroep* (Paintbrush Princesses II. Women Painting as a Profession) in The Mesdag Collection in The Hague – the museum managed by the Van Gogh Museum. This presented the work of a number of professional women artists from the nineteenth century. The collection assembled by the painters Hendrik Willem Mesdag and his wife Sientje Mesdag includes a striking amount of work by female artists. Sientje Mesdag-van Houten also proved of great value in helping many of these women set up as independent professionals. The exhibition was sponsored by the Prince Bernard Culture Fund (Zuid-Holland), the Hartenfonds, the SNS Reaal Fund, the Mondriaan Fund, the Stichting Pieter Haverkorn van Rijsewijk and the J.E. Jurriaanse Stichting. We are extremely grateful to them for the support they give us as we continue to raise the profile of this unique museum.

In this foreword we can only outline the major events and developments. You can read more about these, and the other activities which we undertook in 2012, in our online Annual Report for 2012. A year which would have been very different in its style and scope without the unfailing support of our partners, sponsors and other interested parties.

We are especially grateful to our permanent partners the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the BankGiro Lottery for the continual and generous support they give our museum. Time and again their involvement reinforces the activities we are developing, now and in the future.

Research into our print collection was sponsored by the Vincent van Gogh Foundation. This research will allow us to make this important collection more accessible. We thank the Foundation sincerely for its support.

Our ongoing research into *Van Gogh's Studio Practice* (which underpins the 40th anniversary exhibition *Van Gogh at Work*) has been supported for a considerable time by our Partner in Science Shell Nederland, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and the De Gijsselaar-Hintzenfonds. Thanks to their continuing support we regularly make new discoveries.

In the realisation of various educational projects we received financial support from the members of the Van Gogh Museum Global Circle. Their contribution is of enormous value to this and future generations.

We also wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the members of The Yellow House for their always lively support, their generous financial contributions and wealth of advice.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of our Supervisory Board and the staff of the Van Gogh Museum and The Mesdag Collection. The support and trust of our Supervisory Board were great assets in 2012. During this exceptionally challenging period our staff delivered a tremendous result. Without their enormous dedication, passion and involvement we would not have been able to plan, prepare and successfully carry out what we had determined to achieve in this ambitious year.

We trust that you will enjoy reading our online Annual Report 2012.

Axel Rüger
Director

Adriaan Dönzelmann
Managing Director

2009-2014 Strategic Plan

The new 2009-2014 strategic plan came into effect in 2009. The last period of subsidy from the Dutch government (2005-2008) had come to an end, together with the museum's policy plan that was linked to it. The start of a new policy period and a changed subsidy system meant that the time had also come for a new strategic plan for the Van Gogh Museum. The museum's mission statement has been restated and clarified in this plan. The vision sets out the situation the museum is aiming to achieve.

Mission statement

The Van Gogh Museum makes the life and work of Vincent van Gogh and the art of his time accessible to as many people as possible in order to enrich and inspire them.

Vision

1. The Van Gogh Museum is one of the most respected and most accessible museums in the world. It is innovative, trend-setting, dynamic, of the highest standard and professional in all its activities.
2. The Van Gogh Museum excels in:
 - a. preserving and managing, researching and presenting the art and objects entrusted to the Van Gogh Museum;
 - b. enlarging the collection by means of new acquisitions and loans.
3. The Van Gogh Museum reaches as many people as possible worldwide, including non visitors, and forges a strong bond with its audience by offering a stimulating and enriching experience.
4. The Van Gogh Museum has access to ample resources and support and maintains a wide national and international network of partners.
5. The Van Gogh Museum is an attractive employer where talent and ideas can be developed in a professionally challenging environment.

This vision will be achieved by realizing the following six strategic objectives:

1. We want to be an innovative museum.
2. We want to be a widely accessible museum.
3. We want to express quality in all parts of the museum.
4. We want to build up an extensive network of partners and supporters.
5. We want to make a visit to the Van Gogh Museum a stimulating and enriching experience.
6. We want to be an attractive employer.

In the years to come these objectives will form the basis for the choices the Van Gogh Museum will make with regard to its programme and activities. The complete strategic plan 2009-2014 can be found on www.vangoghmuseum.com

Over the course of 2009 the Management Team identified a number of key areas the museum will address in the future. These are the reorganization of the permanent collection, the further development of the museum as a knowledge centre, the expansion of the network of partners and supporters, and organizational development.