

Black Figures, Black Voices

**ASCA Programme Cinema Olanda Platform Witte de With 4 & 6 July 2017
(language English, documentary films with English subtitles, poems will be performed in original language)**

Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Witte de Withstraat 50, 3012 BR Rotterdam

Black Figures, Black Voices is programmed by participants at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA), University of Amsterdam, chaired by Patricia Pisters and Esther Peeren.

Tuesday 4 July 2017

19.00 Opening with poem performed by Naomi Veldwijk
19.10 Welcome & introduction on behalf of ASCA
19.20 Screening "Zwart Belicht" (English subs) & short Q&A
20.30 Break
20.45 Poem
20.50 Conversation between Tessa Boerman & Valika Smeulders
21.30 Questions with audience
21.50 Closing poem
22.00 Ending

Thursday 6 July 2017

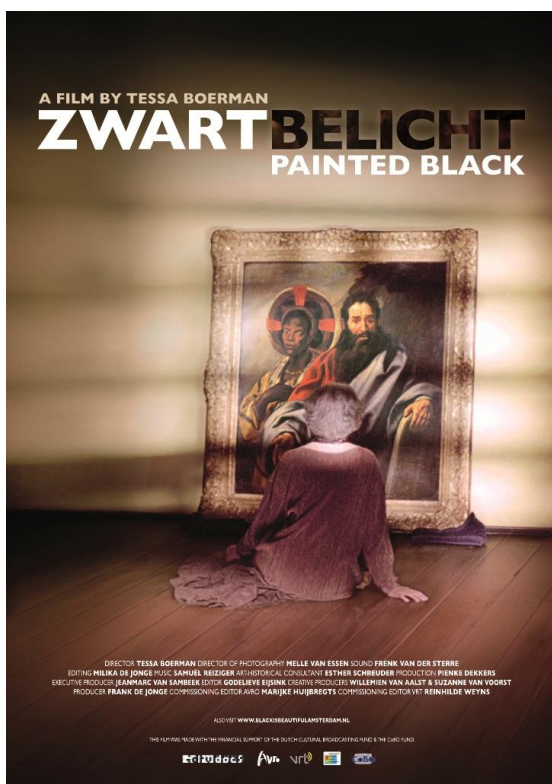
19.00 Charl Landvreugd: 'Dat Boelgedicht' poem van Edgar Cairo (in Dutch)
19.10 Welcome & introduction on behalf of ASCA
19.20 Screening 'Edgar Cairio: "Ik ga dood om jullie Hoofd"' (English subs)
20.10 Break
20.30 Lecture on Cairo by Charl Landvreugd
21.00 Questions with audience
21.50 Closing Poem
22.00 Ending

Op 6 juli is Uitgeverij In de Knipscheer aanwezig met een boekentafel.

Black Figures, Black Voices: Zwart Belicht; Painted black

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

The first session of *Black Figures, Black Voices* (4 July) focuses on the documentary *Zwart Belicht; Painted Black* (2008) by Tessa Boerman, which zooms in on the hidden stories behind black figures in 17th century Dutch and Flemish paintings. Shedding new light on famous paintings such as those of Pieter Paul Rubens and Rembrandt van Rijn, as well as less famous works of art, the film tempts us to look at what was meant to be seen, but has often been overlooked. In response to *Zwart Belicht*, Valika Smeulders (researcher at KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies) discusses issues of representation, colonial history and art historical canons with Boerman, and performer Naomi Veldwijk reads from Robin Coste Lewis' collection of poems, *Voyage of the Sable Venus* (2015).



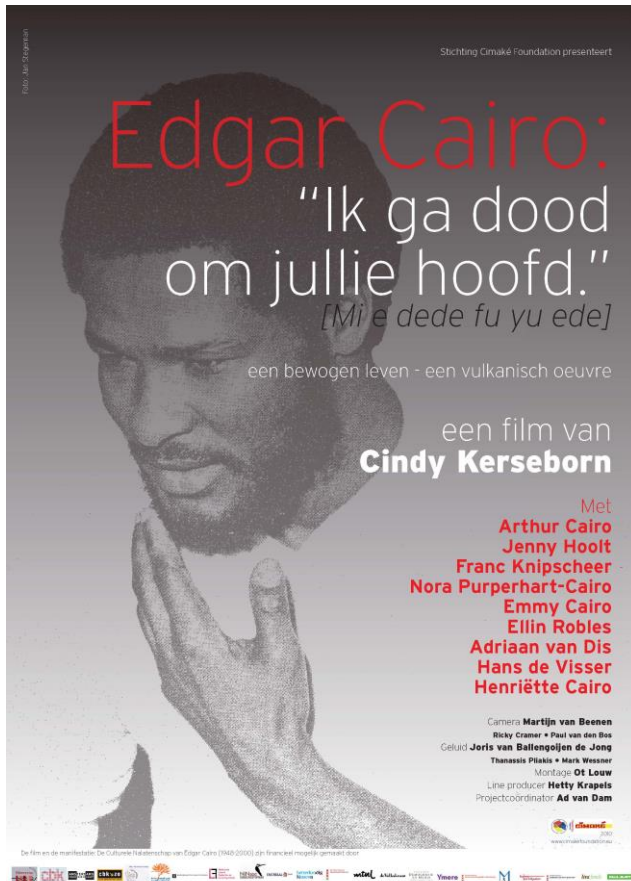
More on *Zwart Belicht* (documentary, Tessa Boerman, 2008)

Zwart Belicht; Painted Black painfully reveals how a dominant colonial gaze created a blind spot for the artistic representations and historical presence of black people in (pre-) 17th century Europe: clearly visible, but unseen for centuries. As expressed by the nameless character in Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*: "I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me..." This documentary, narrated as a visual detective, investigates these hidden figures, relating them to both their historical context as well as their contemporary relevance. By zooming in on these paintings an obscure historical reality emerges: one that can hardly be found in written texts. It is a testimony of the importance to reinvestigate our gaze and frames of reference.

Black Figures, Black Voices: Edgar Cairo

7:00-10:00 pm

A second session of *Black Figures, Black Voices* (6 July) focuses on the work of the Surinamese -Dutch poet and author Edgar Cairo (1948-2000). The evening starts with a screening of Cindy Kerseborn's (Film Maker) documentary '*Edgar Cairo: 'Ik ga dood om jullie hoofd'*' (2011), about the life and work of this writer, poet, painter and performer. Kerseborn's film highlights Cairo's role as a pioneer in the thinking about a black identity and a black consciousness in the context of the Dutch colonial history and post-colonial present. During this evening, Charl Landvreugd (Artist, Researcher) will read from Cairo's poems and present a performative lecture that focuses on reading Cairo as theory. The program ends with time for questions and a dialogue between the audience, Charl Landvreugd and Cindy Kerseborn.



Trailer van de documentaire: https://youtu.be/vL-MZcU_NZA

More on *Edgar Cairo: 'Ik ga dood om jullie hoofd'* (documentary, Cindy Kerseborn, 2011)

A documentary about the life and work of writer, poet, painter, performer Edgar Cairo (1948-2000). Ten year's after his death, Cairo's publisher Frank Knipscheer and his brother Arthur Cairo take part in a revival of interest for Cairo's disturbing message, as young rappers, singers and writers rediscover and recycle his Surinamese Dutch as an early version of their street talk. In much of his literary and artistic work, Edgar Cairo(1948-2000) focused on the Dutch colonial history of his native Suriname and on the Dutch legacy of slavery. As a black man in the predominantly white Netherlands, race and racial discrimination played an important role in his critical analysis of Dutch society. Cairo was known as an extremely creative writer who developed a proper literary language, mixing Standard Dutch with the Surinamese Creole Sranantongo.

Tuesday 4 July 2017

- 19.00 Opening with poem performed by Naomi Veldwijk
- 19.10 Welcome & introduction on behalf of ASCA
- 19.20 Screening "Zwart Belicht" (English subs) & short Q&A
- 20.30 Break
- 20.45 Poem
- 20.50 Conversation between Tessa Boerman & Valika Smeulders
- 21.30 Questions with audience
- 21.50 Closing poem
- 22.00 Ending

Thursday 6 July 2017

- 19.00 Charl Landvreugd: 'Dat Boelgedicht' poem van Edgar Cairo (in Dutch)
- 19.10 Welcome & introduction on behalf of ASCA
- 19.20 Screening 'Edgar Cairio: "Ik ga dood om jullie Hoofd"' (English subs)
- 20.10 Break
 - 20.30 Lecture on Cairo by Charl Landvreugd
- 21.00 Questions with audience
- 21.50 Closing Poem
- 22.00 Ending

Bios of all participants *Black Figures, Black Voices*

Tessa Boerman is an independent documentary filmmaker (e.g. *A Knock out, Puck en het Raadsel van de codes, Zwart Belicht*), programmer and cultural advisor. Her work focuses on issues of representation, diversity and inclusion. For IFFR she programmed *Black Rebels* focusing on international films about and predominantly by black people navigating the cultural divide since the origin of cinema. With the Dutch Directors Guild she advocated for cultural diversity and inclusion in the Dutch Film and TV industry. Her film ZWART

BELICHT painfully reveals the long history of exclusion: even what was meant to be seen, stayed unseen for centuries.

Esther Peeren is Associate Professor of Literary and Cultural Analysis at the University Amsterdam. She is vice-director of the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the Amsterdam Centre for Globalisation Studies (ACGS). Recent publications include *The Spectral Metaphor: Living Ghosts and the Agency of Invisibility* (Palgrave, 2014) and the edited volumes *The Spectralities Reader: Ghosts and Haunting in Contemporary Cultural Theory* (Bloomsbury, 2013, with María del Pilar Blanco) and *Peripheral Visions in the Globalizing Present: Space, Mobility, Aesthetics* (Brill, 2016, with Hanneke Stuit and Astrid Van Weyenberg).

Patricia Pisters is professor of film at the Department of Media Studies of the University of Amsterdam and director of the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA). She is one of the founding editors of the Open Access journal *Necsus: European Journal of Media Studies*. She researches the role of film and media in respect to collective consciousness. Currently she is working on a book project about the psychopathologies of contemporary media culture; and on a multi-media project about filmmakers as metallurgist and alchemist of our times. See also www.patriciapisters.com.

Cindy Kerseborn is an independent researcher and documentary maker. In the past years she has focused on the work of Caribbean writers from the West and organizes literary debates and exhibitions around the work of these authors and edits art books. In recent years she made a documentary about the work of Edgar Cairo (*Edgar Cairo: 'Ik ga dood om jullie hoofd,'* 2010) and Frank Martin Arion (*Yu di Kòrsou*, 2013). The film she made about Astrid H. Roemer's work (*De wereld heeft gezicht verloren*, 2015) spurred renewed attention to the work of this 'absent' author from the literary canon.

Charl Landvreugd, PhD candidate at the Royal College of Art in London, looks at the idea of Blackness as a political and aesthetic tool and is specifically interested in how the idea of diversity works in the visual arts. He uses his understanding of these mechanisms as a way to speak about our efforts to speak culture in contemporary continental European society. As an artist/researcher, Landvreugd creates sculptures, installations, performances,

photographs, videos, texts and exhibitions. Since 2009, his work has been presented in the US, UK, the Caribbean, Senegal and the Netherlands. He is published in magazines such as ARC, Small Axe, Open Arts Journal and several catalogues. Landvreugd studied at Goldsmiths College, London and Columbia University in New York.

Valika Smeulders, PhD, specializes in social diversity, heritage, museums and the slavery past. She has written on heritage institutions and the presentation of the slavery past in The Netherlands and Curaçao, Suriname, Ghana and South Africa. As the owner of Pasado Presente she works on new heritage presentations and new audiences. As a researcher for KITLV (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies, Leiden) she studies the Dutch Caribbean diaspora and new definitions of heritage.

Naomi Veldwijk is a writer, poet and spoken word artist who also teaches creative writing and theatre to youth from 12-21 years. She started writing when she was only 8 years old. She moved from children's bedtime stories to song lyrics and now performs on stage with her spoken word poetry. It all began in 2013 when she won a talent show 'Violencia'. A year later she made it to the finals of another talent show 'Fanatics'. You can also ask her to write personal poems for your birthday, team building day or a special occasion such as Black Rebels' program at the International Film Festival Rotterdam where she has performed. Currently, Naomi is the house poet of talk show Fresh, where she listens to the guest speakers and performs a piece on the spot.