

CULTURE IN AN OPEN SOCIETY

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Introduction: the value of culture

The Netherlands is an open society. A nation in a river delta, where ideas stream in and out quite naturally. Just as the Rhine does not stop flowing as it enters the country, so arts and heritage do not stop at our national borders. Any distinction between internal and external, any sharp dividing line between what happens here in the Netherlands and events elsewhere, in the rest of the world, is a fiction. And we have known that for a very long time. The arts and heritage show us ourselves through different eyes. Writers, dramatists, film-makers, designers and artists tell us stories about our environment and about the world. They challenge our imagination. Thanks to their images and narratives, we are able to critically examine our view of the world, and to develop it.

Take the Hindelooper Room in the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, regarded as a high point of Frisian heritage. If you look carefully, you will see that that heritage contains many elements once thought strange and exotic. The chintz fabrics came originally from India, the porcelain from China. What is now seen as Frisian heritage is in fact an interplay of international influences. Heritage tells the story of such interactions, enabling us to look at the past, the present and the future with fresh eyes.

First and foremost, culture has an intrinsic value of its own. As an expression of deep-seated thoughts and innermost feelings, of beauty and refinement, or conversely of confrontation and raw emotion. But it also has an important social function, as a thermometer of the times. Culture can guide the spirit of an age, helping to define it. Or it can capture that spirit and challenge it. A society with a strong cultural sector better senses the temperature of its times than one deprived of that thermometer. And in our day and age, that social function has become indispensable. When rationalization and financial returns become dominant themes in a society, culture is a vital counterweight.

In times like ours, with developments occurring at a rate many people are no longer able to keep up with, uncertainty becomes a common experience. Fear of the unknown makes a lot of us turn inward, to "our own" culture. In itself this is understandable, but it should not result in fear and reticence becoming the guiding principles for society as a whole. An open society like the Netherlands simply cannot permit itself stagnation. And art resists stagnation. If the nation threatens to nod off, artists are there to shake it back into wakefulness.

At the same time, grounding is also essential. A society consisting only of innovation and confrontation would be impossible to live in. A healthy society strikes a balance between the new and the familiar. With a recognizable living environment playing an important role in that. Monuments, landscapes and historic buildings are beacons in a changing world.

Heritage, things like monuments and museums, shows where we come from, what we are today and how we are developing. Culture is significant for the future of our nation, in the public debate about identity and in the search for what connects us all. The Dutch government therefore considers it important to build knowledge of our shared history, values and freedoms. Knowing more about our own background equips us to learn where we come from and how to reflect on that. So that from there we can further improve ourselves and our society. In a changing, globalizing world, that knowledge provides us

with a grounding for the future. Heritage is important because it enables us to keep on telling the story of our village or town, of the Netherlands and Europe.

As such, heritage is a good example of how culture can act as a unifying force in our society. In an age when it seems as if social ties are becoming more superficial and social divides wider, that is a quality we cannot underestimate. It is why it is important that as many people as possible engage actively with culture, and from as early an age as possible. Either as participants or simply by enjoying it as spectators. Cultural engagement is one way of taking part in and helping to shape society, which in turn are essential aspects of good citizenship.

Culture is by and for everyone. Regardless of where you live, who your family are or what your own cultural background is. Regardless of age, sex, disability or education. That may seem obvious, but it is not. Our society will become more diverse in the coming years, in terms of the cultural background of its members as well as other factors, and hence also more diverse in who produces, practices and enjoys culture. New generations have a preference for novel genres and stories. And access to culture should be equitable, distributed evenly across all sections of the community. As the current government's coalition agreement clearly states, "It is important that the arts and culture remain accessible to all, not just for those living in major cities, but throughout the country."¹

The government is determined to act on this commitment. It has already announced a number of policy measures intended to encourage diversity in the cultural domain.² By extending its focus to include "alternative" forms of art and new generations, the government particularly hopes to reach groups that may not currently engage with the stories being told in "traditional" theatres, concert halls and museums.

As well as recognizing the value of culture, the government is also investing heavily in the sector. For heritage alone, an additional €325 million is being made available in the coming years. This is to ensure that future generations can continue to experience and enjoy their heritage. Culture and "historic democratic awareness" have also been singled out for supplementary funding, which is due to rise from €25 million in 2018 to €80 million per annum from 2020 onwards – a reflection of the coalition's decision to make "extra, targeted investments in quality".³

This paper is about the value of culture in the Netherlands and provides more details of the plans first outlined in the coalition agreement. In developing its cultural policy, the government has focused on five themes: "culture breeds curiosity", "space for new creators and culture", "a living environment with character", "culture is boundless" and "a strong cultural sector". We also look ahead to cultural policy post-2020, with one

¹ *Confidence in the Future*, 2017-2021 Coalition Agreement. People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), Christian Democratic Alliance (CDA), Democrats '66 (D66) and Christian Union (CU), 10 October 2017, p. 22. English version available at <https://www.kabinetsformatie2017.nl/documenten/verslagen/2017/10/10/coalition-agreement-confidence-in-the-future>.

² In this paper, the term "cultural domain" refers to culture in the broadest sense of the term, including the arts, heritage and creative industries.

³ *Confidence in the Future*, p. 22.

particularly important point at issue here being collaboration between the cultural domain and different levels of government.

The national government is aware of a wish on the part of the Dutch metropolitan regions to raise their profiles through culture, a development which it wishes to encourage in cooperation with other levels of government – that is, provincial and local authorities. Such cooperation is vital for a strong cultural policy. The government therefore calls on its fellow public administrations to follow its lead in making additional investments in this field in order to create a good starting point for negotiated agreements.

The statutory basis for ministerial responsibilities in the cultural domain is provided by the 1993 Cultural Policy (Special Purpose Funding) Act (Wet op het specifiek cultuurbeleid), “Our Minister [of Education, Culture and Science] is charged with creating conditions for the maintenance, development, social and geographical distribution or dissemination in other ways of cultural expressions, guided therein by considerations of quality and diversity.” In developing its specific cultural policy, the current government has adopted the objectives formulated by the Netherlands Council for Culture.

- Creative and artistic talents are given chances and opportunities to flourish.
- Everyone, regardless of age, cultural background, income and place of residence, has access to culture.
- The range of culture on offer is pluriform, with established forms cherished and new forms embraced.
- Culture is given a safe haven within which to reflect on society and its citizens, and to criticize them.⁴

Applicable to all levels of government, these objectives are embraced in all five cultural policy themes adopted by the national coalition.

During its four-year term, the current government intends to invest €325 in heritage and monuments. This paper describes the great majority of that spending. Meanwhile, an initial tranche of €25 million for culture and historic democratic awareness has been set aside in 2018. That, too, is accounted for here. But exact plans for subsequent tranches – €50 million in 2019 and €80 million per annum from 2020 onwards – will be announced later, in the relevant annual budget statements.

Culture breeds curiosity

In the Netherlands, culture is for everyone. That is not just an objective for artists, performers, programmers, heritage managers and policymakers, it is an established fact. The statistical data shows high levels of public interest, with nine out of ten people aged six and over attending at least one cultural performance, exhibition, event or institution a year. In most sectors, both the range of culture on offer and the number of people

⁴ Raad voor Cultuur, *Cultuur voor stad, land en regio – de rol van stedelijke regio’s in het cultuurbestel* [Culture for the city, the countryside and the regions – the role of metropolitan regions in the cultural system]. The Hague: Netherlands Council for Culture, 2017. Available (in Dutch only) at <http://toekomst-cultuurbeleid.cultuur.nl/verkenning>.

taking advantage of it increased between 2009 and 2016. Museums and cinemas, in particular, have seen a sharp rise in visitor numbers.⁵ Public libraries are used by all sections of the population and, because of their wide distribution and broad reach, constitute an important access point to culture.

The Dutch are also keen participants in cultural activities, with more than six out of ten people aged twelve and over practising some form of culture in their free time. Almost a third of the population support cultural institutions, events or activities as volunteers, friends or donors.⁶ Some ten per cent take part in amateur theatre, musical groups or the like, or work voluntarily for a museum, festival or similar.

More than most other Europeans, the Dutch use the internet as a cultural resource as well. Sixty-five per cent of population play and stream games, watch films or listen to music online. That compares with an average of 51 per cent in the rest of the EU.⁷ Moreover, the distinction between consumer and producer is blurring all the time. More and more younger people, especially, are developing their own games, making films and posting vlogs.

Despite all this, there are still groups we are not reaching so effectively. For example, the audiences for various “traditional” performance arts are ageing. Cultural policy has to keep abreast of the times in order to appeal to more people, especially the younger generation, with different stories and forms of expression. This will therefore be one of the points specifically addressed over the next few years.

Culture is kept alive by people, and so is constantly developing. It is also one of the main ways in which we take part in society, so it has a unifying effect as well. As European Capital of Culture 2018, for example, Leeuwarden is currently bringing together people and groups who might never otherwise have come into contact. That is not to say that every cultural expression is unifying or harmonious, of course. After all, everyone has their own cultural preferences – that is part of what makes them unique as human beings. Preferences which often coexist, but can sometimes also collide or even clash.⁸ But such tensions are an intrinsic part of a dynamic society.

Culture has its own value, but that does not exist in isolation. When older people attend or take part in cultural activities, that contributes towards lengthening their participation in every aspect of society. For this reason, it is important that government at all levels break down barriers between culture and other areas of policy. And not just care and welfare for the elderly, but also the creative industry, sport, tourism and economics

⁵ More figures about cultural participation in all its forms, as well as current developments in both subsidized and unsubsidized branches of culture, can be found in the annual Ministry of Education, Culture and Science publication *Cultuur in Beeld* [Culture in view]. The 2017 edition (in Dutch only) is available at <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2017/10/23/cultuur-in-beeld-2017>.

⁶ SCP, *Sport en cultuur – patronen in belangstelling en beoefening* [Sport and culture – patterns in interest and participation]. The Hague: SCP Netherlands Institute for Social Research, 2016, pp. 50-53. Available (in Dutch only) at https://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2016/Sport_en_cultuur.

⁷ Eurostat, *Culture Statistics -2016 edition*. Luxembourg: Eurostat, 2016, p. 141. Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/7551543/KS-04-15-737-EN-N.pdf>.

⁸ See also: Pascal Gielen, Sophie Elkhuisen, Quirijn van den Hoogen, Thijs Lijster and Hanka Otte, *De waarde van cultuur* [The value of culture]. Groningen: University of Groningen Arts in Society, 2014, i.a. p. 12 and pp. 75-85.

(business climate). The current coalition is committed to such an interdisciplinary approach, with cooperation between national, provincial and local authorities strengthening each in its own policy efforts.⁹

It is important that everyone come into contact with culture from an early age. To quote Kim Putters, director of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, SCP), culture "is not a last add-on at primary school, but perhaps the core of the development of young people".¹⁰ By this he means that children need to learn to be curious about things new and unknown, to develop themselves and their creativity. To succeed in an open society, that is an essential skill.

The government wants to "increase knowledge about our shared history, values and freedoms",¹¹ and so has decided to make it financially possible for all Dutch schoolchildren to visit the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam or another museum. Greater knowledge of historical and social evolution will help youngsters better understand each others' backgrounds and cultures. It is also important that we do not lose sight of uncomfortable truths which have long been neglected in the nation's historical conscience, such as the Dutch role in slavery and the slave trade.

The government further believes that there is a clear place for art and culture in both the primary and the secondary curriculum. Over the next few months, nine teams of teachers and school heads will be working with subject experts to develop the building blocks for a revised curriculum.¹² One of these teams is dedicated specifically to art and culture, but the others will also be considering links with these subjects. They are due to present their results in 2019.

The coalition agreement explicitly mentions the importance of actively passing on Dutch history and values. To help increase awareness of them and the freedoms they represent, children will be taught the national anthem at school and have its origins explained to them. Considering Dutch identity and the anthem's role in that as a national symbol will be part of the revised curriculum, although exactly how this will be done is a task for the teams developing it.

Music has substantial intrinsic value. Moreover, "musical skills, including listening to and singing along with music, are closely entwined... with a range of social, emotional, cognitive and motor skills".¹³ So the government wants even more schools to provide good music education.

⁹ See the sections of the coalition agreement *Confidence in the Future* covering "programmatic agreements with provinces and municipalities" (pp. 9-10), "regional problems" (p. 10) and "deals with local and regional authorities" (p. 36).

¹⁰ Martin Visser, "Wat biedt ons nog houvast?" ["What can we still hold on to?"]. Interview with Kim Putters, *De Telegraaf*, 13 October 2017.

¹¹ *Confidence in the Future*, p. 23.

¹² See <http://curriculum.nu/> (in Dutch only), which is covering this process. This website is a joint initiative by teacher representative organization De OnderwijSCOöperatie, the National Primary Education Council (PO-raad), the National Secondary Education Council (VO-raad), the Association of School Leaders (AVS), the National School Students' Action Committee (LAKS) and Parents & Education (O&O).

¹³ Henkjan Honing, "Gaan we kinderen weer horen zingen in de klas?" ["Are we going to hear children singing in the classroom again?"]. *De Volkskrant*, 3 November 2014. Available (in Dutch only) at <http://www.volkskrant.nl/opinie/gaan-we-kinderen-weer-horen-zingen-in-de-klas~a3781185/>. See also: Henkjan Honing, *Iedereen is muzikaal – Wat we weten over het*

The government is also challenging schools to face up to confrontational culture. Dutch youth theatre, film and literature have a strong reputation when it comes to presenting alternative, even unsettling, points of view. Nor do they shy away from subjects young people sometimes find it hard to talk about, such as homosexuality, discrimination, sexual exploitation and bullying. Culture can pave the way for new ideas and help us to understand others. And if it is challenging, too, then it has the potential to light a spark – as the “super broad-minded” video works of Katarina Zdjelar did with the 10-14-year olds on the children’s jury of the 2017 Prix de Rome, one of the most prestigious arts awards in the Netherlands.¹⁴

In summary, the government’s plans for this theme are as follows.

- Additional funds are being allocated, through the so-called “Performance Box”, to facilitate more primary-school visits to museums and historic sites. The choice of destination is up to the schools themselves: there are many museums in the Netherlands with beautiful and interesting collections. Twelve of these, from all over the country, have already joined the “national canon network”, devoted to showcasing key events in Dutch history, with more due to follow soon. It is expected that many schools will opt to visit the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, so it has been awarded extra resources to cope with the influx.
- In consultation with the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, opportunities to enable more school visits to Parliament are being considered.
- A copy of the “national canon” of key events in Dutch history, compiled in 2006, is to be issued to all young people when they reach the age of 18 and to everyone acquiring Dutch citizenship.
- Investment in film museum EYE in Amsterdam and in youth theatre companies around the country is being increased. In addition, the government is to request the funds needed to extend its future innovation and talent-development programmes to include youth provision.
- The budget for the final round of grants under the Music Education Incentive Scheme (Impuls muziekonderwijs) is being doubled. In addition, a study is being commissioned into the effects of this scheme and of efforts to professionalize music education for trainee teachers. This measure enacts a parliamentary motion tabled by MPs Lodewijk Asscher and Vera Bergkamp.¹⁵
- Since good cultural education requires patience and long-term commitment by all concerned – schools and their governing bodies, cultural institutions and public authorities – an administrative framework for culture and education is being put in place until the end of 2023. The successful current programme, Cultural Education with Quality (Cultuureducatie met kwaliteit), is scheduled to end in 2020, but the government wishes to continue the positive progress made and so is already setting aside resources for this purpose and calls on other authorities to do the same.
- The government agrees with the House that it would be useful to gain a better insight into “non-users” of cultural provision. It therefore intends to enact a

luisteren naar muziek [Everyone is musical – what we know about listening to music], Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2012; and Erik Scherder, *Singing in the Brain*, Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2017.

¹⁴ <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/blog/voor-wie-zijn-ogen-opent>.

¹⁵ Netherlands House of Representatives, 2017-2018 session, parliamentary paper 34775-VII, no. 28; <http://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-34775-VIII-28.html>

parliamentary motion tabled by MPs Vera Bergkamp, Carla Dik-Faber, Arno Rutte and Lodewijk Asscher by commissioning research on this topic.¹⁶

- I have promised the House that I will engage in discussion with the cultural domain and interest groups concerning access to cultural provision for people with disabilities. I am also looking at what measures we can take in the short term.¹⁷
- The ministries of Education, Culture and Science, of Health, Welfare and Sport and of Social Affairs and Employment are discussing access to cultural provision for children growing up in low-income families. The Youth Sports Fund (Jeugdsportfonds) and Youth Culture Fund (Jeugdcultuurfonds) will administer any measures taken.

Financieel kader Cultuur maakt nieuwsgierig	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>(alle bedragen x € 1 miljoen)</i>				
Scholenbezoek musea	2,1	4,9	4,9	4,9
Cultuureducatie en talentontwikkeling jeugdtheater	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9
Cultuureducatie EYE Filmmuseum	0,6	0,6	0,6	0,6
Impuls muziekonderwijs	5,0			
Uitreiking canon	0,5			
totale uitgaven	9,1	6,4	6,4	6,4

Investments in 2019, 2020 and beyond will be announced in the relevant annual budget statements.

Space for new creators and culture

Dutch culture policy has traditionally acknowledged the great quality of the nation's renowned performance companies, symphony orchestras and museums. After all, they contribute immensely to our rich cultural landscape. They are important, and they will remain so. However, the current government also wishes to stimulate other forms of expression – digital culture, for example, virtual reality art and fashion. The same applies to urban arts, too, the collective name for contemporary genres such as hip hop, spoken word, dance music and urban film and theatre. The Netherlands plays a leading international role in these fields, but there is no guarantee that we will maintain that if we do not invest in them.

In recent years, the scope to encourage the development of the top names of the future has been limited. Nowadays, talent can emerge from all kinds of directions; artists' careers do not necessarily progress along familiar, well-worn paths such as drama school to production house to theatre company. Creators are less confined than ever by the dividing lines between genres. They acquire a wide range of expertise and make use of multiple platforms.

Young designers, for instance, often collaborate in networks unaffiliated to any institutions, through which they encourage one another, join forces on particular projects and team up for presentations at trade events. By acting collectively, they are stronger.

¹⁶ Netherlands House of Representatives, 2017-2018 session, parliamentary paper 34775-VIII, no. 26; <http://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-34775-VIII-26.html>.

¹⁷ Netherlands House of Representatives, 2017-2018 session, parliamentary paper 34775-VII, p. 66; http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/verslagen/detail?id=2017Z11679&did=2017D3499_3. Report of a legislative consultation held on 13 November 2017, concerning establishment of the budgetary statements of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (VIII), Culture Division, for the year 2018.

More and more creators in other disciplines are now also discovering this approach, but such initiatives often lack the resources needed to take the next step. They need room to grow.

This government wants to give such new creative groups the chance to become front runners in their respective fields. This emerging generation is set to enhance the diversity of Dutch cultural life. It speaks its own language, has its own stories and appeals to the contemporary audience.

In summary, the government's plans for this theme are as follows.

- As announced in the legislative consultation on culture, in 2018-2020 investments are to be made in the form of additional subsidies for institutions financed by the Netherlands Performing Arts Fund (Fonds Podiumkunsten). The recipients will be those bodies previously approved for funding but which did not receive it due to lack of resources. It has also been decided to allocate money to the other national cultural funds to incentivize institutions dedicated to new artistic genres.
- As stated in the coalition agreement, more scope will be created within the framework of cultural funds for innovation and the development of talent. The government is to support talented creators through a joint programme operated covering all six national funds. In the run-up to the next funding period, these bodies will be invited to review their existing arsenal of tools and, where necessary, draw up new proposals to encourage talent development, cultural entrepreneurship, greater audience diversity and more varied provision, particularly for young and new audiences (including children). These proposals will be used for guidance when allocating the subsequent tranches of funding provided for in the coalition agreement.
- Additional resources are to be made available for a select group of institutions which play a major role in talent development: the National Academy of Arts (Rijksakademie voor Beeldende Kunsten) independent artists' institute De Ateliers. The House has requested that we pay particular attention to these bodies, which might otherwise be unable to survive until the next funding period.
- Three of the "routes" defined in the Dutch National Research Agenda (Nationale Wetenschapsagenda) – "Art: research and innovation in the 21st century", "Living history" and "Smart, liveable cities" – bring together academics and artists investigating the impact of art and heritage. As I promised the House in my memorandum of 30 November 2017,¹⁸ this spring I shall present specific plans for research policy and the Dutch National Research Agenda.

Financieel kader Ruimte voor nieuwe cultuur en makers	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>(alle bedragen x € 1 miljoen)</i>				
Aanvullende subsidie cultuurfondsen	10,0	10,0	10,0	10,0
Vernieuwing en talentontwikkeling via de cultuurfondsen	2,7	4,9	4,9	4,9
Talentontwikkeling beeldende kunst	0,7	0,7	0,7	0,7
totale uitgaven	13,4	15,6	15,6	15,6

Investments in 2019, 2020 and beyond will be announced in the relevant annual budget statements.

¹⁸ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2017/11/30/kamerbrief-over-investeringen-in-onderwijs-en-wetenschap>.

A living environment with character

People are very attached to their familiar living environment. Plans to demolish historic farmhouses, the fate of empty churches and even the innovative modern architecture in our inner cities all cause disquiet in local communities. It is therefore very important that we treat our monuments, our cultural landscapes, our villages and our towns with respect, in so doing drawing on the power of design.

The more the world around us changes, the more we appreciate the value of heritage. Its importance for our identity and the attractiveness of our living environment is now generally accepted. We can see its positive effects for tourism and leisure, for the business climate and for the future of our villages, towns, cities and neighbourhoods. But above all, our monuments, historic city centres, cultural landscapes and museums have an intrinsic value in themselves: they are the messengers of our past, cherished for their beauty and the powerful stories they tell. We are therefore committed to passing them down to future generations.

Power and beauty are also characteristics we find in more day-to-day aspects of our living environment: our architecture and the design of our cities, homes, offices and everyday products. The Netherlands is a nation largely shaped by the ingenuity of its own inhabitants, a land formed by its architects, planners and other designers. And their vision remains essential to our future.

This government intends to uphold the importance of our heritage and design by linking it to challenges we face today. Because the world around us is changing fast. Climate change and energy transition, rural decline and urban growth are all trends which very much affect the living environment. Heritage and design have their part to play in facing up to them. Using creativity and building on our Dutch tradition of making our own nation, we want to back solutions to help create a living environment with character and quality. One of our tools in this mission is the Planning Action Agenda (Actieagenda Ruimtelijk Ontwerp), which incentivizes the use of design to tackle social challenges.¹⁹

We can see our cultural history is all around us, in archaeological sites, monuments and the landscape itself. This living environment is also the stage for the cultural expression of today, from concert halls and theatres to libraries, festivals and artistic incubators on the fringes of our cities. In my view, those incubators – many of them on industrial heritage sites – are vital to innovation. But ongoing urbanization is swallowing up many of the “edgelands” they occupy. Places where artists once set the tone with the creation of autonomous work are making way for restaurants and apartments. But this government considers it important that there still be space for creativity in our towns and cities, villages and countryside. Incubators are essential for innovation and renewal, and they also add to the appeal of a city.

The value of heritage lies in a combination of use, community significance and cultural and historical importance. Take, for example, city-centre churches open to the public, old almshouses which still offer low-rent housing to vulnerable members of society or historic country houses that open their parks and gardens. Such monuments are not,

¹⁹ See <http://www.samenwerkenaanontwerpkraacht.nl/en/index.html>.

and should not be, repurposed to achieve maximum financial returns. The government is committed to keeping heritage accessible, and so wishes to investigate whether such factors as social value, accessibility and sustainability can be translated into financial support.²⁰

The government is investing €325 million in heritage in the coming years. We will achieve the best results if owners and public authorities work together, creatively and with open minds, to utilize opportunities. We intend to pay particular attention to historic churches, encouraging local authorities to draw up “church plans” in order to decide, together with their communities, where and how we safeguard our religious heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage is the body of cultural practices and expressions which unite people as a community, and so is an important aspect of our ongoing debate about identity and diversity. This government believes that we should take a broad and modern approach to the phenomenon, including in it cultural manifestations by all groups living in the Netherlands, young and old, from the ancient trade of miller to the Caribbean-inspired Rotterdam Summer Carnival. It is important, too, that this form of heritage connect with contemporary cultural activities, as in the case of young designers who are inspired by traditional crafts to make new and innovative products.

Heritage is a public good and has significant social value. People give meaning to their living environment through stories about and engagement with its heritage. The government acknowledges and appreciates the many volunteers who devote themselves to that heritage, and wants to encourage and support them in their efforts to preserve and develop it. Heritage can forge links between young and old, and between different groups in our society. Children find windmills and castles exciting, while an unusual new use can broaden the appeal of a monument. Such sites tell the story of the Netherlands, just as the national canon does. A good example has already been set by the enthusiasm with which people in the Netherlands have been enjoying activities organized in 2018 as part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, with museums, archives and monuments highlighting our place in European tradition and shared European values through exhibitions, stories, film, music and craft displays.

Over the past few years, the internet has greatly expanded the reach of culture and heritage.²¹ Recent research across the European Union reveals that at least half of its citizens obtain information about cultural heritage online, but the proportion is far higher than this average in the Netherlands: 83 per cent.²² The government therefore considers it important to invest in electronic access to heritage. Digital design bureaus, for instance, are creating new ways to experience heritage and to share the stories around it. And authors are gratefully making use of the digitized collections posted to the web by museums, archives and specialist libraries. For academics, too, such collections are

²⁰ Netherlands House of Representatives, 2017-2018 session, parliamentary paper 34775 VII, no. 22; <http://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-34775-VIII-22.html>. Motion by MPs Corinne Ellemeet and Carla Dik-Faber, requesting the government, “in the allocation of resources to heritage, to encourage accessibility, including cultural functions”.

²¹ *Cultuur in Beeld 2017*. The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2017, p. 15.

²² European Commission. *Special Eurobarometer 466: Cultural Heritage*, Brussels: European Commission, December 2017, p 14.

important sources which they are now able to consult and analyse using new research techniques.

New acquisitions continue to enrich the collections of Dutch museums and provide inspiration for popular exhibitions. Well-known recent examples include the joint purchase with France of Rembrandt's twin portraits of Marten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit, the Fries Museum's acquisition of the painting *Entrance of the Theatre* by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema and the arrival of "Trix" the Tyrannosaurus rex at Naturalis Biodiversity Centre. The government is committed to maximizing the accessibility of the nation's collections, including encouraging museums to share exhibits – particularly items usually kept in storage.

In summary, the government's plans for this theme are as follows.

- An increase in the budget of the National Acquisitions Fund (Nationaal Aankoopfonds), which has been virtually empty since the purchase of the two Rembrandt portraits. It is essential that such acquisitions of national importance remain possible. With this capital injection, I shall fulfil my promise to return the fund's value to its 2010 level.²³ In practice, major acquisitions are only ever possible thanks to generous backing from sponsors, friends associations, the Rembrandt Association and BankGiro Lottery. I greatly appreciate this broad public support for new purchases and am pleased to make a contribution on behalf of central government.
- Additional investment in intangible cultural heritage through the Cultural Participation Fund (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie). In encouraging the revitalization of old craft skills, I am asking this body to work closely with the Netherlands Creative Industry Fund (Stimuleringsfonds voor de Creatieve Industrie).
- Local communities and associations are to be granted a so-called "right to challenge" – that is, the opportunity to submit initiatives for the preservation and use of heritage in their immediate vicinity. One inspiration for this measure is in the province of Groningen, where some years ago residents of five villages around Kloosterburen sought to take on responsibility for the heritage and quality of life in their area.
- Additional resources are to be made available for monuments in the province of Groningen over the next four years, due to the ongoing risk of earthquake damage. These funds are supplementary to the compensation payable by the gas production company NAM. The provincial government is also increasing its heritage budget. Our additional resources will be allocated in consultation with the province and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy.
- Further additional resources are to be set aside for:
 - the Revolving Fund Plus for the restoration and repurposing of national monuments;
 - the restoration and sustainabilization of larger monuments, including churches; and,

²³ Netherlands Senate, transcript of the proceedings of 8 December 2015 (2015-2016 session, no. 11), <http://www.eerstekamer.nl/verslagdeel/20151208/erfgoedwet>. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science states that, "It goes without saying that I set great store by the replenishment of the acquisitions fund for museums. I hope that I can do this within five years."

- measures to counter the non-utilization of religious heritage.
- Additional investment in digital access to heritage, archives and collections, including draft designs by Dutch architects held by Het Nieuwe Instituut.
- Additional resources to fund a rescue plan for the former island of Schokland, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Province of Flevoland, the local authority (Noordoostpolder), Flevo Landscape (Flevo-Landschap) and the Zuiderzeeland Regional Water Authority are contributing to this initiative.
- Additional investment in archaeology, in particular historic shipwrecks threatened by natural erosion, archaeological monuments, important finds and activities to present archaeology to a broad audience.
- Additional investment in training and guidelines for trades suffering a shortage of professional practitioners, such as restoration and traditional crafts in which skills passed down from generation to generation are in danger of being lost. Heritage is also to be included in the digital support system being introduced under the new Environment Act (Omgevingswet). In compiling its plans in this area, the government is drawing on ideas put forward by the sector itself.
- Explicit consideration of the relationships between heritage, public space and the living environment in government measures and plans such as the Environment Act, the National Environment Plan (Nationale Omgevingsvisie), the transition to sustainable energy, the Delta Programme (Deltaprogramma) and the Dutch Urban Agenda (Agenda Stad). In doing so, we shall take notice of advice issued by the Netherlands Council for the Environment and Infrastructure (Raad voor de Leefomgeving en Infrastructuur) and the Netherlands Council for Culture (Raad voor Cultuur).
- A study into the potential ratification by the Netherlands of the Faro Convention (the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society). As well as emphasizing that value, this international framework agreement is also designed to enhance citizens' engagement with heritage.²⁴ To mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage, we are also commissioning research into best practices in the Netherlands.

Financieel kader Een leefomgeving met karakter	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>(alle bedragen x € 1 miljoen)</i>				
Museaal aankoopfonds	25,0	15,0	10,0	
Restauratie monumenten, waaronder kerken	30,0	30,0	25,0	10,0
Restauratie en herbestemming rijksmonumenten Revolving Fund Plus	30,0			
Archeologie	3,3	11,1	11,1	6,0
Restauratie monumenten Groningen	2,0	4,0	4,5	4,5
Bestrijding leegstand religieus erfgoed	1,0	4,5	4,2	3,8
Restauratie en digitalisering ontwerptekeningen Het Nieuwe Instituut	5,5	5,5		
Maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen erfgoedsector	1,4	0,8	0,8	0,8
Digitale toegankelijkheid van erfgoed, archieven en collecties	0,1	6,1	6,1	0,1
Volkscultuur	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0
totale uitgaven	99,3	78,0	62,7	26,2

Culture is boundless

²⁴ For more information, see <http://cultureelerfgoed.nl/dossiers/internationaal-beleid/internationale-verdragen>.

The Netherlands is home to some of the world's best architects, artists, writers and designers. They show that our nation is a global cultural leader with a rich and varied output, open to international cooperation and a source of innovative solutions. But to retain this strong global position requires constant development and renewal. What makes us unique is our vigorous and unconventional profile.

Dutch international cultural policy has recently been reoriented.²⁵ Its new direction and objectives align well with the passages in the current government's coalition agreement about the importance of culture, our efforts to maintain the leading international position of our top institutions and the contributions we want to make to building a durable, futureproof international society and to maintaining peace and security in the countries around Europe.²⁶ To this end, there is added value in coordinating our cultural and foreign policies. As part of its so-called "top sectors" policy, the government is committed to strengthen the Dutch creative industry and the part it plays, abroad as well as at home, in tackling critical global issues such as urbanization, climate change and energy transition.

Culture also deserves a strong place in our European policy. The government considers it important that, without disrespecting the principle of subsidiarity, the Netherlands champion culture across the continent. I regard the European Union first and foremost as a community of values. And culture, heritage included, gives voice to essential values like freedom of expression, tolerance and diversity.

At a time when international tensions are sometimes narrowing diplomatic pathways, we often find that culture is still treading an easier road. It helps us to engage in discussion about sensitive issues. Our government's international cultural policy framework therefore bestows culture with a clear role in promoting Dutch social and economic interests abroad, not least our policy objectives in respect of gender equality and LGBTI rights.

In summary, the government's plans for this theme are as follows.

- Additional investment to raise the international cultural profile of the Netherlands, with more resources for cultural funds and to encourage international cultural cooperation.

Financieel kader Cultuur is grenzeloos	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>(alle bedragen x € 1 miljoen)</i>				
Versterken internationale culturele profiel Nederland	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0
totale uitgaven	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0

A strong cultural sector

²⁵ *Beleidskader internationaal cultuurbeleid 2017-2020* [International cultural policy framework, 2017-2020]; <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/beleidsnota-s/2016/05/04/beleidskader-internationaal-cultuurbeleid-2017-2020>.

²⁶ *Confidence in the Future*

The Dutch cultural sector has in recent years succeeded in finding “new sources of funding, new audiences and innovative partnerships”.²⁷ It is developing strongly, as also confirmed by a recent report on the future of the labour market in the cultural and creative sector.²⁸

The government appreciates the responsibilities the sector has assumed in this respect, with its declared objective that good employment, commissioning and entrepreneurial practices be “the new normal”. That commitment deserves fair reward. The labour-market agenda for the sector is worked out in detail up until 2023; in the first half of this year it will become clear which aspects of this agenda can be addressed by the sector itself in the short to medium term, and where some government support will be required.

The House has requested a plan of action to improve the position of those working in the cultural sector. In developing this, we are building on the recommendations contained in the report *Passion Rewarded Passie gewaardeerd*. Meanwhile, the steering group behind the labour-market agenda has asked me to reserve resources for its implementation and to ensure that projects already under way are able to continue in the next budgetary year.

Cultural change does not happen overnight. Improving working conditions in the cultural sector requires clear choices and a realistic outlook, and it is important that the sector itself continue to show initiative in this regard. The government is happy to further encourage the current positive development in the run-up to 2021, the start of the new subsidy period.

In summary, the government’s plans for this theme are as follows.

- Support for further elaboration of the labour-market agenda in 2018.
- Consultation with the agenda’s steering group to flesh out plans for the coming years. The government sees a role for itself in the area of schooling and in the further development of remuneration guidelines. The national cultural funds also have a part to play, for unsubsidized disciplines as well as subsidized ones.
- By the time the new subsidy period begins in 2021, a number of procedures need to have become an integral part of the management process in the cultural sector, with compliance written into subsidy policy. Examples include observance of the Fair Practice Code and the remuneration guidelines.
- Cooperation with the sector is creating the right conditions for successful cultural entrepreneurship. In this respect, we will also be looking at the best way to implement the parliamentary motion tabled by MPs Corinne Ellemeet and Lodewijk Asscher.²⁹

²⁷ *Confidence in the Future*, p. 22.

²⁸ Kunsten '92, *Arbeidsmarktagenda culturele en creatieve sector 2017-2027* [The labour-market agenda in the cultural and creative sector, 2017-2027]. Amsterdam: Kunsten '92, 2017; <http://www.kunsten92.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Arbeidsmarktagenda-culturele-en-creatieve-sector-2017-2023.pdf>.

²⁹ Netherlands House of Representatives, 2017-2018 session, parliamentary paper 34775-VIII-19, 13 November 2017; <http://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/detail?id=2017Z15261&did=2017D32087>.

- Pursuant to the parliamentary motion tabled by MPs Corinne Ellemeet and Arno Rutte, consultation with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy to examine whether financing tools can be made more accessible for freelance workers in the cultural sector. I shall also be asking the Netherlands Council for Culture to look at this issue for its forthcoming advice on financing in the cultural sector.
- The government has decided to keep the Charitable Donations Act (Geefwet) on the statute book.
- Together with the Minister for Legal Protection, I will be reporting to the House shortly on our initial experiences with the Copyright Contracts Act (Wet auteurscontractenrecht).
- Sustainable entrepreneurship, cultural management and the Fair Practice Code are all slated for discussion with my fellow ministers in preparing for the new subsidy period.

Investments in the labour market in 2019, 2020 and beyond will be announced in the relevant annual budget statements.

Preparations for the 2021-2024 subsidy period

The composition and interests of the Dutch population have changed over the past 25 years.³⁰ The number of people living in cities will continue to grow for the next fifteen years, while smaller, more rural communities will see their populations shrink and age.³¹ These trends are affecting the demand for culture and its provision, in both the subsidized and the non-subsidized sectors. A new generation is taking the stage, with new forms of art for the audiences of today. So there is every reason to critically re-examine the spectrum of subsidized cultural provision. This government wants to make space for a wide range of stories and kinds of artistic expression, and a new generation of creators, so that our cultural policy remains in step with the times and its offerings continue to appeal to the entire population.

We want to prepare for the period beyond 2020 in consultation with our cities and provinces. After all, they also invest in culture and provide the new generation with space in the form of workplaces, studios and performance venues. And they know what stories and what forms of expression engage with their communities. The ability of cities to “drive” universal access to culture is mentioned in the coalition agreement.³²

As a follow-up to the survey by the Netherlands Council for Culture, the government is inviting authorities at other levels to draw up local and regional cultural profiles. These

³⁰ “While the system remained the same, tastes and demographics were evolving, thus eroding the pedestal supporting ‘high’ art.” Anne Roeters, Annemarie Wennekers, Andries van den Broek, Ine Pulles and Annet Tiessen-Raaphorst, “Vrije tijd” [Free time]. In: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, *De Sociale Staat van Nederland, 2017* [Social State of the Netherlands]. The Hague: SCP Netherlands Institute for Social Research, p. 258; http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2017/De_sociale_staat_van_Nederland_2017.

³¹ Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek/Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, *Regionale bevolkings- en huishoudensprognose 2016* [Regional population and household forecasts, 2016]. The Hague: PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency/Heerlen: CBS Statistics Netherlands; <http://www.pbl.nl/publicaties/regionale-bevolkings-en-huishoudensprognose-2016>.

³² *Confidence in the Future*, p. 22

will assist us in providing a basic infrastructure which, as the survey urges, better accounts for “the composition and needs of the population, the region’s identity and stories and the local climate for creators and artists”. We as governments at all levels will then present these profiles to the Council for Culture as input for its subsequent systemic recommendations.

Like the cultural domain itself and the Council for Culture, the government considers it important that, rather than being imposed from the top down, future plans be attuned to the domain’s own strengths and the developments it is undergoing.³³ We therefore call on our fellow public authorities to compile their profiles in conjunction with the cultural domain. I shall be consulting them about the exact contents of those profiles in the near future. The Council for Culture has already listed some good starting points in its survey, pointing out that there needs to be a focus on “basic, intermediate and top amenities appropriate to the region’s identity and the opportunities before it”, as well as on actual provision, audiences, participation and cultural education.

The government expects each profile to outline a future vision of cultural policy which is rooted in the particular strengths of the city or region in question, as well as addressing its particular challenges, to examine amenities and programmes and to be clear about financing. We also expect them to include investment commitments on the part of the compiling authorities. It is important, too, that the profiles complement one another and help create a pluriform cultural landscape.

Again echoing the Council for Culture survey, the government intends to form a maximum of sixteen cultural alliances. We expect proposals for these to be tabled by the authorities concerned in time for this spring’s round of policy consultations. We set great store by good matching of supply and demand and by pluriformity, culture’s international dimension and the responsibilities of the state, as set out in various pieces of legislation. For example, we as central government do not finance libraries, municipal and provincial museums, theatres or cinemas. But we do support amateur arts through the Cultural Participation Fund (Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie).

Another point to be addressed is reducing red tape. At present, for example, local authorities, provinces and the national government all have their own subsidy periods. In some places a round lasts three years, in others (as for central government) four. A cultural institution in receipt of national, provincial and local subsidies currently has to comply with three different sets of requirements, imposing an unnecessary bureaucratic burden.

In summary, the government’s plans in preparation for the 2021-2024 subsidy period are as follows.

- Investment in innovation and talent development in advance of the new period, through the national cultural funds.
- Participation from 2019 onwards in the pilots which emerge from the local and regional cultural profiles. These will be trials for the 2021-2024 subsidy period.

³³ Nederlandse Associatie voor Podiumkunsten, *Input NAPK voor toekomstig en lopend beleid* [Dutch Association for Performing Art input for future and current policy], 10 January 2018, p. 3.

- Allocation of additional resources to the basic cultural infrastructure, as set out in the coalition agreement.
- Consultation with other public authorities about ways to reduce red tape in the new subsidy period.

The timetable for these preparations is as follows.

- May 2018: policy consultations on the cultural profiles.
- June-November 2018: local and provincial authorities compile profiles in consultation with the cultural domain.
- Autumn 2018: policy consultations on joint request for advice from the Netherlands Council for Culture.
- Spring 2019: Council for Culture issues its advice.
- Summer 2019: Minister of Education, Culture and Science presents outline proposals for 2021-2024, including draft subsidy arrangements and allocations to the cultural funds.
- September 2019: policy consultations on draft arrangements.
- October 2019: finalization of arrangements for 2021-2024.
- 2020: institutions submit their subsidy applications and Council for Culture advises on them.
- Budget Day 2020 (15 September): Minister of Education, Culture and Science announces subsidy allocations for 2021-2024.
- 1 January 2021: 2021-2024 subsidy period begins.

Finances

Samenvattend financieel kader	2018	2019	2020	2021
<i>(alle bedragen x € 1 miljoen)</i>				
Beschikbare middelen				
Regeerakkoord reeks Cultuur	25,0	50,0	80,0	80,0
Regeerakkoord reeks Intensivering erfgoed en monumenten*	98,5	140,0	60,0	25,0
Totaal beschikbare middelen	123,5	190,0	140,0	105,0
Aangekondigde uitgaven per briefthema				
Cultuur maakt nieuwsgierig	9,1	6,4	6,4	6,4
Ruimte voor nieuwe cultuur en makers	13,4	15,6	15,6	15,6
Een leefomgeving met karakter	99,3	78,0	62,7	26,2
Cultuur is grenzeloos	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,0
Totaal in brief aangekondigde uitgaven	123,8	102,0	86,7	50,2
waarvan dekking uit reeks Cultuur, tranche 2018	25,0	25,0	25,0	25,0
waarvan dekking uit reeks Intensivering erfgoed en monumenten	98,5	77,0	60,0	25,0
waarvan dekking uit cultuurbegroting	0,3	0,0	1,7	0,2
Resterende middelen Regeerakkoord	0,0	88,0	55,0	55,0
waarvan reeks Cultuur	0,0	25,0	55,0	55,0
waarvan reeks Intensivering erfgoed en monumenten	0,0	63,0	0,0	0,0
* Het verloop van deze reeks zoals hier vermeld, wijkt af van het Regeerakkoord als gevolg van: 1) een kasschuif met het onderwijsbeleid (vierde Nota van wijziging bij de OCW-begroting 2018); 2) een overboeking van € 1,5 miljoen in 2018, rechtstreeks van het ministerie van Financiën naar het ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, voor Fort Oranje (St. Eustatius, besluit MR). 3) een tweede kasschuif met het onderwijsbeleid: € 10 miljoen verschuift van 2018 naar 2020.				

Further details concerning the allocation of the amounts listed under “Outstanding resources in coalition agreement” will be announced in the annual budget statements for 2019 and 2020, respectively.

In conclusion

This paper outlines the current Dutch government’s cultural policy agenda, providing more details of the plans first outlined in the coalition agreement. We have opted to invest heavily in this sector. After all, culture is an essential part of an open and dynamic society.

The government is committed to familiarizing children and young adults with art and heritage. Innovation and developing talent are being given greater prominence in the activities of the national cultural funds, and in general we are broadening our view of culture. We also want to protect monuments, works of art and archives, while at the same time making them more accessible. In this respect, we are paying particular attention to historic churches.

In implementing this cultural agenda, the government hopes to work closely with other public authorities. The various levels of government in the Netherlands should reinforce one another. As regards the cultural domain, we believe that “a combination of strong national guidance and a practical approach on the ground”³⁴ creates the best conditions for a flourishing cultural climate. We therefore call on other authorities, at all levels, to invest in culture as well.

³⁴ Kunsten '92, *Reactie op verkenning Raad voor Cultuur “Cultuur voor stad, land en regio”* [Response to the Netherlands Council for Culture survey, “Culture for the city, the countryside and the regions]. Letter to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Amsterdam, 23 January 2018.