



De Gastvrije Stad

Stichting Monet in Zaandam en 50 jaar Zaanstad

Zaandam en Wormerveer

2 juni 2024 - 10 oktober 2024



Stichting Monet in Zaandam is looking for artists who have fled their country.

They are invited to take part in a unique art project on the celebration of '50 jaar Zaanstad'.

At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, the renowned French painter Claude Monet fled to London, together with his wife Camille and their son Jean. Although the war ended on May 10, 1871, Monet did not yet dare to return to France. On June 2 that same year, Monet arrived in Zaandam. The influential impressionist enjoyed his stay in Zaandam and thus spent four months there.

In letters to his friends, he noted that 'the Dutch made a very pleasant and hospitable impression'. He enjoyed the freedom to do as he pleased, which allowed him to commit to painting 'en plein-air'.

A century and a half later, Zaanstad remains hospitable towards refugees. Contrary to many other towns, where sounds of protest are becoming increasingly audible, Zaanstad remains calm and continues to help those in need. Even today its inhabitants ensure that everybody feels welcome, just the way it was in 1871.

In 2024, the municipality of Zaanstad exists for 50 years. During "50 jaar Zaanstad" Stichting Monet in Zaandam would like to reinforce the bond between the inhabitants and the refugees, by means of art. Therefore, Stichting Monet in Zaandam is looking for artists who have fled their country. We invite these people to contribute to this exciting project by creating an artwork.

De Gastvrije Stad and artworks

For the celebration of '50 jaar Zaanstad' in 2024, Stichting Monet in Zaandam organizes the exposition 'De Gastvrije Stad' at different locations in Zaanstad, between June 2 and October 10. We are looking for artists who have fled their homeland, just like Monet did in 1870. We would like to get in touch with them, via persons involved with these artists.

We are hoping for artworks in the broadest sense, as long as they can be exhibited and transported. One could consider paintings, installations, sculptures, textile art, photography, cinema art and so forth.

Also, some locations are suitable for musical performances. Artists are free in the choice of subjects and materials, just like Monet was. However, we encourage artists to use recycled

materials whenever this is possible. Please bear in mind that the artworks will need to be relocated numerous times and that transportation needs to be arranged by the artists themselves.

The artworks will be exhibited at different locations in the center of Zaandam from June 2—the day that Monet arrived in Zaandam in 1871—onwards.

This way, visitors can tour past all the exhibitions in the center of Zaandam. In September, the artworks will be relocated to the beautiful Zaanbocht in Wormerveer after which they will return to Zaandam. On October 10 an auction will be held in the Bullekerk in Zaandam. Part of the earnings will go to the artist and the remainder will be donated to a charity that is committed to helping refugees.

All the artworks will be listed in a catalogue ‘De Gastvrije Stad’, including background information and a biography of each artist.

Do you know any artists, who considers themselves to be refugees? Do they believe it is important to play a role in reinforcing the bond between the inhabitants of Zaanstad? Please bring the idea to their attention, so we can together turn this into a unique art event.

In the months that there are no exhibitions, the artists are responsible for the storage of their works of art. If there is a huge number of entries, Stichting Monet in Zaandam considers organizing a ballotage commission, that will select the artworks to be exhibited. As a result, it might not be possible to exhibit all the works of art. It is extremely important that the artists are aware of this, in order to avoid major disappointment.

On the 26th of February there will be an information evening:

Time: 07.00 PM

Place: MonetAtelier, Westzijde 14G Zaandam.

For questions and suggestions please mails us at info@monetinzaandam.nl

The Story of Claude Monet in Zaandam

In 1870, when the Prussians invaded France, Monet and his family fled to London, where Monet was rather unhappy. Likely due to the grim political situation in France—mainly in Paris—Monet did not yet want to return when the war ended. From London he crossed the English Channel to Holland, where he arrived in Zaandam on June 2, 1871. Monet and his family stayed there for four months. The archives of the Attorney General show that the customs and police were unusually vigilant towards the French immigrants. However, the Attorney General did not regard Monet as suspicious and Monet in turn was most likely not worried about this extra attention.

The twenty-five works of art made by Monet in Zaandam are colourful. He experimented with composition, and he set up the paintings hastily and sketchily with wide brushstrokes and thin layers of paint. He was able to capture the atmosphere of the Dutch skies. In Zaandam he seemingly enjoyed the freedom to explore and apply the knowledge he gained from contact with his friends, including Jonkind, Boudin and Daubigny. He even dared to go beyond that. In Zaandam he let go of the rules that were set by the established order in Paris and he is considered to have been a happy man¹.

¹ Marjolein van Houten, “Monet in Zaandam 1871” (onderzoek, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2022)