

ZEEUWS
POLICY PLAN
PERIOD
2021-24
MUSEUM

MUSEUM MISSION & VISION

The Zeeuws Museum deploys art and heritage for a resilient society in which everyone matters.

Climate change, migration, ageing, a faltering democracy and increasing polarisation: the challenges we face as a society are huge and demand that we remain adaptable. To respond appropriately to these changes, it is important that we are able to reflect, to learn to deal with contradictions and to search for what connects us. Because only a resilient society can absorb shocks and find a new balance in an unstable world.

The collection of the Zeeuws Museum charts historical developments and tells stories about society. We see the museum as a place where you open yourself up to different ways of looking at that society. You learn to transport yourself to another period, another world, and to see things from different perspectives. By using and sharing the collection actively, we ensure that people continue to identify with it and that new networks and communities can also use it for their development. We do that in the following ways:

ZM welcomes

The Zeeuws Museum brings people from different backgrounds and generations together. Everyone is welcome to take part.

ZM meets

We are open to other perspectives because we believe this broadens our vision and makes us more resilient in a rapidly changing world.

ZM challenges

The museum uses its collection as a source of inspiration. We use the knowledge, techniques and stories behind the collection to generate new ideas and applications. We use art and our imagination to envision a new common future.

ZM allows you to blossom

The Zeeuws Museum is a guide that helps you to live more creatively and with more attention to others and your environment: a tool you use regularly to keep your mind nimble and enrich your everyday life.



Photo Anda van Riet

Photo Anda van Riet



Photo Zeeuws Museum



Photo @prestigieux



Photo Mieke Wijnen

WHAT ARE
WE GOING
TO DO?

Through the EenZM programme, we are investigating how museums can contribute to combating loneliness. The programme is financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Definition

'Loneliness is the subjective experience of an unpleasant or unacceptable lack of (quality of) certain social relationships' (Van Tilburg and De Jong Gierveld, 2007). This may be due to the number of contacts and/or their quality:

- Social loneliness is having little contact or few relationships with people with whom you share common characteristics (for example, people who have no family and few or no friends, acquaintances or colleagues);
- Emotional loneliness is the lack of a close, intimate bond with others (for example, elderly people whose life partners have died).

Consequences of a feeling of loneliness

- Loneliness can have serious consequences. In addition to 'participating less' in society, loneliness can lead to serious health risks and even an increased risk of premature death. People who feel lonely are at greater risk of suicide, heart problems, depression, dementia and chronic conditions. Loneliness often results in unhealthy behaviour such as reliance on drugs (including alcohol), medication or other narcotic and addictive substances, eating less healthy food and taking less exercise. Loneliness often initiates a downward spiral in which a person

withdraws further and further, and their world becomes smaller and smaller (from: Coalition Erbij, 2018).

By which methods?

We employ a variety of methods. The most important are:

Useful Art Association

Art and museums should have an effect on society. Not just as a rarefied spectator experience but as part of everyday life. These are the principles of the Useful Art Association. This movement, initiated in New York by the Cuban artist Tania Bruguera, lays the foundation for the museum 3.0. While the visitor in the museum 2.0 was activated and involved in the conversation, the museum 3.0 goes a step further. It focuses on learning by making and doing, while at the same time putting together a programme that offers solutions to social problems. It sees collections and exhibitions not as an end point but as the starting point for a way of applying art in everyday life. This fits in well with the development that the museum has gone through in recent years.

Museum on prescription

The impact on the participants of the Museum on Prescription project was significant and indicates that a museum can be used effectively to combat loneliness and social isolation. This experience fits the trend in the Netherlands where cultural provision is seen as preventative care. Target groups for such preventive care include smokers, obese people and people who feel lonely. Sports clubs, museums and cultural activities are classified under preventative care. The municipality of Middelburg will be focusing more on prevention in the coming years in

order to reduce the cost of care, paying special attention to social organisations in the culture and sports sectors.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/culture/projects/museums-on-prescription> <https://culturehealthresearch.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/mopguide.pdf>

With what result?

Within 4 years eenZM has delivered:

- A good insight into how and to what extent the philosophy of the Useful Art Movement can be translated to and applied in the practice of the Zeeuws Museum. Or, in other words: how we can integrate museum visits and art and heritage more into society? We realise that there may be resulting methods that are difficult to transfer to other museums and we might therefore have to limit ourselves to transferring the process. How can a museum enable artists in such a process of collaborating on and imagining new ideas and solutions?
- The results of four years of research and experiment will be presented in the form of:
- A meeting for stakeholders and interested parties
 - A free (online) publication with a 'recipe book' of dos and don'ts and best practice for cultural institutions.
 - Videos and podcasts of the individual projects

Depending on the results of four years of experimentation, this project will ideally also deliver the following:

- A menu with activities in the fight against loneliness: The menu contains activities that focus on one or more of the following aspects:
 1. increasing self-reliance
 2. increasing the social network in both
 3. the rural environment
 4. and the urban environment for
 5. people who have little or nothing to spend
 6. people who have more to spend

The relevant activities can be found on the websites of the participating museums.

We are striving to realise a (revenue) model for the continuation of the offer. Participants, entrepreneurs, educators and governments are involved in the (financial) assurance of the various activities at the participating museums.



Photo's Viorella Luciana



Photo's Mieke Wijnen



Photo's Anda van Riet

WHAT
ARE WE
WORKING
WITH?

Collection

How did the collection come about? How do we acquire and deaccession objects? In this section we also provide an insight into the evaluation, preservation and use of the collection.

Origins of the collection

The Zeeuws Museum's collection was formed by merging the collections of the Zeeland Society (KZGW)¹ and the Middelburg Art Museum, which closed in 1961. The Zeeuws Museum has built on the collection in the decades since then and has supplemented it with several long-term loans, including the Provincial Art Collection. This includes the imposing Zeeland Tapestries (1593-1604) and the extensive collection of porcelain that Zeeland-born antiquarian Willem Bal bequeathed to the Dutch state. This has resulted in a very broad and varied collection. In total, the museum's collection comprises more than 33,000 objects. Ownership is divided as follows:

- Approx. 25% collection of the Zeeuws Museum
- Approx. 65% long-term loans from the KZGW
- Approx. 10% other (long-term) loans, including RCE (4%) and the Province of Zeeland (3%)

In addition to the main collection, the Zeeuws Museum also has an educational collection (135 objects) and a reference library for internal use (6280 objects).

Acquisitions and deaccessioning

We regularly receive gifts and bequests. Sometimes the museum also purchases objects for the collection. For several years, the museum has also been collecting objects created in response to Zeeland's heritage through partnerships with contemporary artists and (fashion) designers. In addition to acquiring works directly, the museum continues to benefit from the growing collections of several lenders. The KZGW in particular still collects, both passively and actively, as does the Province of Zeeland, albeit to a lesser extent. Regular consultations are held with both lenders about new acquisitions. In addition to adding to the collection, a deaccessions policy will also be formulated in the coming period. In preparation for this, the Zeeuws Museum's staff carried out an evaluation of the collection in the period 2019-2021, supervised by Raadsaam Erfgoedprojecten.

Evaluation of the collection²

To undertake a substantive evaluation, the collection was divided into five main themes. This division largely runs parallel with the semi-permanent exhibition *This is Zeeland*. Each theme comprises three to seven sub-collections. The first theme, *Land in Sea*, focuses on the interaction between land and water at the mouth of the River Scheldt.

It includes objects that tell us something about the changing geographical structure of the area. The second theme is *Zeeland in the World*, which addresses Zeeland's socio-political and trade activities on the international stage. The third theme, *Islands and Communities*, focuses mainly on regional diversity and the continuous changes in Zeeland's cultural and religious identity. Zeeland's heritage in the form of everyday

1. In full, the Royal Zeeland Society of Arts and Sciences, see www.kzgw.nl. Other institutions that manage the KZGW collection are the Zeeuws Archief, the ZB, Erfgoed Zeeland and the Zeeuws Maritiem MuZEEum.

2. For more information, see the Collection Valuation Report.

and ornamental objects forms the fourth theme, Crafts and Design, including objects made in Zeeland and further afield which found their way here through numerous overseas contacts. The fifth theme is *Visual Art from 1900* and explores the various periods in which artists moved to Zeeland, especially to Walcheren. They influenced the artistic climate and the local artists who worked in a traditional way.

In evaluating the collection, we have consciously chosen not to distinguish between the ownership of the various objects. The reason for this is that in daily practice the museum makes no distinction between its own collection and objects that are on long-term loan. Based on the thematic division, the number of objects in the collection are as follows:

- Land in Sea
(approx. 10,000 objects)
- Zeeland in the World
(approx. 8800 objects)
- Islands and Communities
(approx. 5400 objects)
- Craft and Design
(approx. 5200 objects)
- Visual Art from 1900
(approx. 2800 objects)

In addition, the collection contains approximately 800 supporting documentary objects, including photographs, postcards and documents. For each aspect of the collection within each theme we assigned substantive values, such as presentation value and artistic and/or historical value. We have also identified the development potential in terms of collections development, expansion and research for those sub-collections that speak to the current socio-cultural climate.

Preservation

One of the museum's core tasks is to preserve heritage for future generations. To this end, we employ passive conservation to continuously monitor and, where possible, improve the collection's condition and storage. We also regularly conduct active conservation operations and restorations. This work includes necessary maintenance, preparing works for exhibition and processing overdue collection problems. For this, the Zeeuws Museum works together with external restorers. In addition to conservation, data security is also an important issue. Almost the entire collection is included in a digital database that contains all relevant data relating to the objects.

Visibility

Our core task is not only to carefully preserve the collection, but also to display it and make it accessible to the public. The museum collection can be seen in semi-permanent displays such as *This is Zeeland* and the *Chambers of Wonder* and in temporary exhibitions such as *re_USED re_SATIN*, *From the Depths* and *Closer to Jan Heyse*. The exhibitions include items from our own collection and objects (many relating to Zeeland) from elsewhere. Limited space in the museum means that only a portion of the collection can be displayed onsite. To give the collection greater visibility, we also present it online. In the coming period, the online database will be updated, and more images will be added. We also highlight Zeeland's heritage by lending objects to other institutions, both in Zeeland and further afield. We also enhance visibility by conducting scholarly research into the collection. We regularly offer space to external researchers.



Still Hoekman Brothers



Photo Zeeuws Museum



Still Hoekman Brothers



Still life by Christoffel van den Berghe



Photo Anda van Riet and Mieke Wijnen

HOW
WE
WORK

Since 2019, the Zeeuws Museum has endorsed the Diversity & Inclusion Code. This aims to ensure that the cultural and creative sector in the Netherlands represents the broad diversity of Dutch society. Endorsing this code has raised awareness that the museum's collection, exhibitions and activities do not sufficiently reflect the Netherlands' social diversity. Neither is this reflected in the museum's public, its partners or its staff. In order to catch up and give substance to the code, we have joined two initiatives. Our participation has accelerated an internal process that was already underway and has resulted in, among other things, several social projects. It has also strengthened the belief that we have an important role to play in connecting diverse groups of people in society.

OF/BY/FOR ALL

Since 2021, the Zeeuws Museum has participated in the Change Network, a programme of OF/BY/FOR ALL. This is an initiative of Nina Simon, an American museum pioneer and author of *The Participatory Museum*. By participating in the Change Network, we want to attract target groups to the museum that we do not (yet) know well and discover how we can benefit each other, not only in terms of what we have to offer each other in concrete terms, but also about what we can learn from each other. Entering into lasting relationships requires a number of changes. From involving others at the beginning of our thought process to opening ourselves up completely without making assumptions or wanting to take control. As a change maker, we want to involve new communities in the museum by being guided by the principle OF + BY = FOR ALL. This method gives us the tools to work not only 'for' a community but also 'with' this community and

to have new developments realised 'by' them. For a partnership based on equality, it is important not to get too concrete right away, but first to investigate without obligation what the target group itself finds important and what it can contribute. And what we, conversely, can contribute to the realisation of its goals. The ultimate goal of our participation in the Change Network is to structurally apply the lessons learned from a first community of interest with more and more groups and communities. In order to make this change in thinking and working permanent, it is important that the entire organisation is involved in this process.

Museums See Colour

In order to translate the Diversity and Inclusion Code into practice, the Zeeuws Museum has also joined the national collective Museums See Colour. As part of an initial study group, employees from the Zeeuws Museum and twelve other museums met with a group of experts to reflect on what is going well and what is not going well in our museums. Together we wrote the Commitment, a statement in which we have committed ourselves to real change and a number of objectives. Each heritage institution has created its own action plan in connection with this commitment, which describes in detail (and where possible quantifiably) how it will fulfil the goals in this document. As a common objective, we ensure that we help each other to achieve our goals by meeting annually and through regular peer review.

Five Principles of the D&I Code

By participating in Museums See Colour we have made an extensive cultural analysis of our organisation, involving people from all departments. This has given us an insight into

where we stand in terms of diversity and inclusion. At the same time, it has increased the support base for improving this within the organisation. Working together on the Commitment has contributed to the formulation of a new vision in which inclusiveness and diversity are more firmly anchored. A plan has been drawn up for the Commitment, which describes the action points that the Zeeuws Museum wants to realise during this policy period. Participation in OF/ BY / FOR ALL has resulted in an action plan for change that describes which interventions the museum will make to involve a specific community of interest and to make it feel welcome and better represented. The way of working we have developed in response to this will be laid down for use in the future in partnership with other groups and communities. Both initiatives have contributed to our making progress in the longer term and monitoring that progress. Through our affiliation with OF / BY / FOR ALL, we have automatically joined a network of 100+ institutions worldwide, all of which are going through or have gone through a similar development. We regularly organise network calls in which members can share experiences and ask questions. Museums See Colour continues to monitor and evaluate the process as a platform for heritage institutions and to be a place where knowledge can be shared.



Photo Viorella Luciana