

Reshaping the dynamics of urban environments

# Exploring Rosalie de Graaf

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“Indeed I have the power to change the face of a city street.  
That is what I love so much about my job.”

~ **Rosalie de Graaf**

# Exploring Rosalie de Graaf

Reshaping the dynamics of urban environments

## Abstract

This thesis explores the spatial and cultural agency of Rosalie de Graaf's street art, focusing on how her (hyper)realistic murals reshape urban life in Dutch cities. De Graaf, working under the name RoosArt, is a self-taught street artist known for blending realistic technical mastery with a distinctly feminine public persona, strategically navigating a male-dominated scene. Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space, and enriched by psychogeography and atmospheric theory, the study combines visual analysis, urban ethnography, and a semi-structured interview with the artist herself to examine how her murals act as more than artistic expressions. They become emotional landmarks and cultural interventions. Centring on three works: *See No Color* in Zwolle's Holtenbroek and two historical murals in Doetinchem, the research reveals how her art navigates between institutional frameworks and embedded community presence, reactivating memory, challenging spatial norms, and amplifying overlooked voices. Ultimately, the study shows that De Graaf's murals transform public walls into powerful spatial narratives, challenging norms, reclaiming histories, and reimagining the lived experience of urban space.

## Acknowledgement

I would like to thank a few people who helped me during the process of writing my thesis. First of all, the artist Rosalie de Graaf, whose artistry this thesis is all about. It was incredibly valuable to have the opportunity to interview her and gain firsthand insight into her creative process and perspective. Her reflections not only enriched the empirical foundation of this work but also contributed a crucial dimension to the analysis. By centring the artist's voice, this thesis is better equipped to explore how agency is articulated and embodied within artistic practice. I am also grateful to my supervisor László Munteán, whose guidance, insightful feedback, and thoughtful advice were instrumental throughout the writing process.

## Key words

Street art, RoosArt, murals, urban space, spatial practices, local culture, activism, Lefebvre, trialectics of space, perceived space, conceived space, lived space, psychogeography, atmospheres, public memory, community engagement, gender and visibility, visual storytelling, cultural narratives, historical memory.

## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	6
Chapter 1: Becoming RoosArt and the Woman Behind the Wall.....	13
Chapter 2: <i>See No Color</i> .....	21
Chapter 3: Historical Narratives: <i>Anna Reintjes</i> and <i>The Lamplighter</i> .....	34
Conclusion .....	46
Works Cited.....	49
Appendix.....	52

## Introduction

### *Introduction*

As I considered my thesis, my thoughts cycled back to moments when art sparked wonder in everyday life. The topic had to be related to street art, an idea inspired by a City Culture lecture on ruins in urban memory. Like ruins, street art reveals hidden histories, resists erasure, and invites reinterpretation. Murals breathe life into overlooked walls, telling stories of cultural dialogue, identity and resistance. This led me to ask: how does contemporary street art shape and redefine urban spaces?

I recalled biking trips to Doesburg as a teenager with my best friend from our nearby village, Didam. When entering the city, one image always stood out: the 9-meter mural *Connection* by local artist Rosalie de Graaf, depicting a boy gazing at a historic train. I always wondered why it was there and what it meant. Years later, I learned it marked a former train station, symbolising intergenerational dialogue. By recalling this moment and delving deeper into De Graaf's striking work, I knew I had found the topic for my thesis.

Known for her (hyper)realistic style, she has painted around 200 murals worldwide. However, my focus is on her local work in the Netherlands, pieces personally significant to her and accessible for me to explore in person. These include *See No Color* in Zwolle's multicultural Holtenbroek district, celebrating unity through diversity, and two murals in Doetinchem honouring local figures, farmer Anna Reintjes and the town's lamplighters. More than decoration, her murals tell stories, amplify overlooked stories, and explore identity, history, and the evolving nature of public space. Building on this exploration, this thesis aims to uncover the performative role that De Graaf's contemporary street art plays in reshaping the dynamics of urban environments.

*Literature review*

While there is no existing scholarly research on De Graaf or the murals examined in this study, the analysis draws on a combination of media sources and a broader body of academic literature to establish its conceptual framework. News articles, artist interviews, and online features offer contextual insight into the reception and socio-cultural meaning of her work. However, it is through engagement with scholarly debates on space, visibility, and urban art that this study builds its critical foundation.

Before examining de Graaf and her murals, it is essential to clarify the conceptual distinction between “street art” and “graffiti” to understand why her work is categorised as street art. Graffiti is traditionally centred around the “tag”, a stylised rendering of the writer’s alias, rooted in Hip Hop culture and linked to marginalised, racialised male youth. As Pabón outlines in “Ways of being seen; Gender and the writing on the wall” (2016), this association reinforces the assumption that graffiti writers are male, making women artists largely invisible within the graffiti subculture. The medium itself, spray paint rapidly applied in public, often under threat of arrest, reinforces its perception as vandalism and frames it as an illicit act of resistance (78-79).

In contrast, street art incorporates diverse media such as stencils and video projections, often prepared in private before being displayed publicly. This makes it more accessible to those facing higher risks in public spaces, including women. Pabón notes that these practices align with gender norms, positioning women as better suited to safer, less confrontational forms of expression. Nonetheless, female street artists must still navigate the politics of visibility, deciding whether to disclose their gender and risk being subjected to gendered scrutiny (78-79). This distinction between street art and graffiti highlights the sociocultural dynamics that shape who is seen and sanctioned as an artist in public space.

Building on this conceptual grounding, the theoretical framework of this study engages key spatial and affective perspectives to analyse De Graaf's murals. In particular, this research draws on Henri Lefebvre's triad of space (1974), David Pinder's notion of psychogeography (2005), and Gernot Böhme's theory of atmospheres (1993), as expanded by Niels Albertsen (2019). These perspectives will be discussed in detail in the following section on theory and methodology.

In the course of writing this thesis, De Graaf's website, *RoosArt Paintings*, proved helpful, offering an overview of her portfolio and media appearances. Notably, regional newspaper *De Gelderlander* offers detailed coverage of her murals related to Doetinchem's historical series. For example, the article "Voorzichtig graag met de muur van Mogendorff" highlights a local response to the mural depicting Anna Reintjes, discussed in the third chapter, and underscores the artist's careful approach in preserving key elements of the wall. Exploring these archives reveals valuable contextual information, often highlighting the social, historical, and cultural characteristics of the mural's locations. For instance, Holtenbroek in Zwolle, home to another mural, has been described as "the most multicultural and diverse neighbourhood of Zwolle", with a somewhat "rough image" (Duijn and van Popering-Verkerk 6). Such attributes are crucial for understanding the local reception and societal function of public art within these settings.

Additionally, international recognition of her work is reflected on global street art platforms, such as *Meeting of Styles*. In a 2020 interview, De Graaf expresses the transformative power of her art: "Indeed I have the power to change the face of a city street. That is what I love so much about my job." ("RoosArt from Doesburg"). Although news articles and De Graaf's website provide valuable documentation of the context of specific murals, they lack critical depth. To address this, an original interview with De Graaf was conducted, providing firsthand perspectives on her artistic intentions and creative processes.

*Theory and methodology*

To fully engage with De Graaf's work, this thesis employs an approach that is as multifaceted as the environments she transforms, intertwining theory and methodology as mutually informing practices. This approach is critically necessary, given the absence of academic attention to De Graaf's oeuvre. As the first study of her practice, this thesis fills a critical gap in contemporary art scholarship. By centring an underexplored contemporary street artist and situating her practice within smaller urban contexts such as Zwolle and Doetinchem, this research challenges the prevailing geographical and theoretical focus of muralism and graffiti studies, which tend to privilege major cities in Latin America, the U.S., and the U.K.

Drawing primarily on Lefebvre's triad of space, this framework guides methods like visual analysis, urban ethnography, photography, interviewing, close reading, and spatial analysis, bringing theory to life. This approach allows murals to be read as spatial acts that reflect and shape urban life. By inhabiting the environments I study, I position myself within the field as an active participant. In this sense, this thesis serves as a post-signing walk-through of De Graaf's oeuvre, examining how murals live and change through use, memory, and community presence. I move between close-ups of aesthetic technique and wide-angled views of urban spatial relations, zooming in to examine brushstrokes and symbolism, and zooming out to see how the artwork resonates across a neighbourhood. This embodied and reflexive stance ensures that the interplay between theory and methodology remains responsive, attuned to the textures of urban space as lived and represented.

Lefebvre's theory distinguishes between three interrelated dimensions of space: perceived, conceived, and lived. It originates from his foundational work *The Production of Space*, first published in French as *La production de l'espace* in 1974 and later translated into English by Donald Nicholson-Smith in 1991. This model, as critically interpreted by Makinde and Amao (2024), reveals how murals operate across material, conceptual, and affective

registers. As they argue, perceived space is “the real space”, defined by physical form and tangible use (70). The conceived space is constructed through the logic and abstraction of architects, urban planners, and experts. This “instrumental space” is shaped by maps, mathematics, and technocratic planning (70). The third, lived space, emerges and transforms over time through use, becoming “devoted with meaning and symbolism”. Lived space emerges over time, imbued with meaning and localised interpretations (70). Lefebvre’s triadic framework enables my research to reveal De Graaf’s work as a transformative act in the urban environment, shaping public perception, contributing to cultural narratives, and fostering community engagement in the contemporary city. Thus, the use of Lefebvre operates both as a theory, offering a way to think about space, and as a methodology, serving as a guide for how to observe and document spatial dynamics.

The research is further informed by scholarship on atmospheric aesthetics, particularly Böhme’s concept of atmospheres as spatially felt realities that emerge in the “in-between” of subjects and environments (120). Likewise, Böhme’s atmospheres are not merely abstract concepts but serve as tools to guide how I register mood and sensorial response in fieldwork. Albertsen extends this thinking to urban life in his “Urban Atmospheres”, emphasising that atmospheres are shared, sensory, and emotionally resonant experiences shaped by both built form and social activity (2-4). Rather than fixed or merely visual, urban atmospheres are affective configurations that influence mood and contribute to collective memory. In this context, De Graaf’s murals are atmospheric interventions that shape how urban space is experienced. Inspired by Pinder’s article “Arts of Urban Exploration” on psychogeography, the murals are read as emotional landmarks, where identity and memory are actively reinscribed onto the cityscape (383).

Focusing in greater detail on the methodologies, this research undertakes a multifaceted exploration. Each mural is subjected to close visual analysis, examining

composition, colour, subject matter, and how the works interact physically and symbolically with their environments. Alongside the symbolic resonance, particular attention is paid to aesthetic techniques such as *trompe l'oeil*, highlighting De Graaf's mastery of (hyper)realism.

In order to understand how spatial positioning influences public engagement and the interpretation of meaning, the murals are also situated within their urban context. This includes their proximity to community hubs and other architectural features. Ethnographic methodologies, particularly participant observation, complement this spatial analysis. Field visits involved documenting how people interact with the murals as part of their daily urban experiences, using notes and photographs to capture the atmosphere, spatial flow, and community sentiment. Such methods are grounded in Lefebvre's notion of lived space, offering insight into how murals shape and are shaped by the social environments they inhabit.

A central component of this study is a semi-structured interview I conducted with De Graaf, which provides essential context regarding her artistic motivations and persona, her experiences of navigating the public art world as a woman, and her collaborative process with communities. Crucially, the interview foregrounds De Graaf's agency over the interpretation of her work, allowing her voice to support the academic analysis. Translated excerpts are woven into the text, with the full Dutch transcript provided in the appendix.

Once again, considering my positionality in conversations with the artist, it is important to acknowledge that my interpretations are shaped by the spaces I study. They are informed by my embodied experiences with the murals: the weather, the encounters, and the textures of the streets. Recognising this grounds the academic analysis in lived and sensory realities.

*Chapter breakdown*

My thesis is structured into three chapters. The first chapter traces De Graaf's artistic development and rise as a leading street artist, focusing on how she strategically crafted the public persona "RoosArt" to challenge gender dynamics in street art. This contextual foundation is crucial for the subsequent analysis of three of her most significant murals, which will be examined primarily through Lefebvre's framework of the spatial triad. Therefore, the chapter concludes with a breakdown of Lefebvre's concepts of perceived, conceived, and lived space.

Building on this foundation, the second chapter analyses *See No Color*, De Graaf's tallest mural, located in Zwolle's Holtenbroek district. The analysis is conducted through the lens of visual and spatial theory, urban ethnography, and insights drawn from my interview with the artist. I will outline the critiques associated with the neighbourhood and investigate how the mural functions both as a spatial intervention and an emotional landmark, shaping the ways it is lived with, experienced, and interpreted within the urban fabric.

The third chapter builds on the earlier theoretical and methodological framework but shifts toward a more interpretative engagement with Lefebvre's spatial triad. Through spatially grounded close readings of *Anna Reintjes* and *The Lamplighter* and their architectural contexts, the chapter explores how emotion, atmosphere and memory give these works meaning and transform them into lived spaces that connect personal histories to the city's past.

Following this exploration of De Graaf's artistic trajectory and spatial interventions, the conclusion draws together the key arguments and theoretical insights developed throughout the thesis, while also outlining potential directions for future research in this field.

# Chapter 1: Becoming RoosArt and the Woman Behind the Wall

## *Introduction*

Before delving into the analysis of De Graaf's murals, it is essential to establish an understanding of the artist herself. This chapter will provide a foundation by exploring De Graaf's life and career, her dedication to art, and her engagement with the world of street art. A critical lens will examine the male-dominated art sphere and how De Graaf has claimed space within it through creating her public persona, "RoosArt", as a strategy to navigate gender dynamics. These contextual layers are vital for understanding the socio-cultural pressures and opportunities that shape her artistry. Furthermore, this chapter further nuances Lefebvre's spatial triad. This theory, when interpreted in the context of De Graaf's murals, offers a compelling way to understand how space is perceived, conceived, and lived in street art practice.

## *Life and career*

Rosalie de Graaf was born in 1999 in Doesburg, the Netherlands. Now, at the age of 26, De Graaf and her artistry are travelling the world, as she aims to have at least one artwork in every country across all continents. During our interview, De Graaf recounted the development of her artistic practice. At fourteen, she started teaching herself realistic oil painting through YouTube. She mastered techniques on her own, inspired by artists like Bob Ross: "I first started by making small paintings and selling them. Then, when I was eighteen, someone who had seen them said, 'Oh wow, maybe you should try working with spray paint.' So I attended a street art festival and created a mural for the first time using spray paint."

Her transition to spray painting marked the beginning of her career. At just eighteen years old, she created a provocative mural of Putin and Trump kissing. Originally a response

to the political climate, the piece became her breakout work, launching her to national fame and exposing her to both the power and risks of public and political art. She faced intense backlash, including death threats. Despite the pressure, she embraced the controversy. “I like to evoke reactions”, she said in our interview. Still, the experience left a lasting impression, pushing her to move away from overtly political themes.

What De Graaf faced as a public artist mirrors the reactions that street artist Banksy provokes, yet with a key difference: anonymity. Banksy employs anonymity as both a means of protection and a strategic advantage. This hidden identity enables Banksy to subvert authority and comment on war, capitalism, and inequality, while still maintaining artistic control and privacy. As an academic specialising in street art, Blanché (2019) emphasises that anonymity is part of what grants the artist power. “Anonymity [...] is Banksy’s trademark, its own distinctive feature [...] It presents anonymity not as something regrettable, but as a higher goal [...] (211). This concealment of identity has become as significant as the artworks themselves, fostering intrigue and engagement.

The contrast mentioned underscores the tension between visibility and vulnerability in art. By attaching her face and identity to her work, De Graaf amplifies her artistic voice but also risks backlash, as seen with her mural of Putin and Trump. The experience led her to shift towards a more personal, aesthetic expression. “Politics does not interest me that much”, she said during our interview. “I would rather focus on my own art and telling beautiful stories.” This move reflects her desire for a deeper alignment with her artistic values. Unlike Banksy, De Graaf embraces visibility as part of her artistic journey, one she navigates on her terms.

### *Dedication to art*

De Graaf’s dedication to art led her to leave her medical studies. Determined to break into the male-dominated world of street art, she set out to inspire others, especially young women, to

follow their creative passions, as she stated in the *Meeting of Styles*: “I want to inspire others and I want to succeed. By doing what you love, success will follow” (“RoosArt from Doesburg”). Today, RoosArt has grown into a label with 22 employees. She has earned numerous awards, including Best Young Entrepreneur (2019), the Bep van de Velden Award (2021), and Best Street Artist of the Netherlands (2023). *The Lamplighter* mural also won second place in Street Art Cities’ global contest of 2023 (RoosArt).

De Graaf advocates for street art as a powerful, often overlooked form of public communication. She views it as a way to transform shared spaces and spark dialogue, arguing for its legitimacy beyond vandalism: “To many people, Graffiti is scrawls on the wall and defacement of property. To me, it is a form of artistic expression. It is a way to shine a light on larger issues that stretch beyond my city’s borders” (“RoosArt from Doesburg”).

Her commitment to democratising art is also evident in her 2023 founding of the RoosArt Academy. Located in her hometown of Doesburg, the academy offers workshops, teaching aspiring artists her techniques. Through her academy, de Graaf furthers the institutionalisation of street art, which, as Pabón (2016) argues, can open doors for women, even as it may also involve conforming to certain gendered expectations (78-78). However, De Graaf uses this institutional space not to conform but to reshape it, making room for other women, local culture, and new urban narratives.

#### *Male-dominated scene and creating a persona*

Despite differences in how graffiti and street art engage with public space, as previously addressed in the literature review, both are framed by dominant gender assumptions. As Pabón states: “[...] the writer/artist is invariably assumed to be male. Under the condition of this particular gaze, girls and women who write graffiti or make street art are not visible” (78). Banksy, for example, remains anonymous yet is almost always presumed male. As

Pabón explains, women must hide or perform gender to be recognised. Making gender visible often relies on the very stereotypes that exclude them, revealing the complex politics women artists navigate in public space (79).

De Graaf actively navigates and challenges this invisibility, and her experiences reflect the gender imbalance, as she shared in our interview: “The scene is indeed very dominated by men. This naturally makes me stand out as a woman.” She recalls attending her first street art festival, where she was the only woman among a hundred male artists. Though met with scepticism, her strong work earned respect. Her public persona, represented through the name “RoosArt”, plays a significant role in differentiating her within the predominantly male space. She has intentionally crafted a distinctive identity around her art: “Long blonde hair, pink clothing, a sort of Barbie style, a persona indeed” (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. A framed picture at the RoosArt Academy that reflects the persona De Graaf intends to represent (own picture).

By choosing to be visibly female, De Graaf performs the kind of gender signification that Pabón describes. She embraces the risk of being dismissed for her femininity and instead turns that visibility into a strength: “I have built my whole brand around it [...] I can also do business well and represent myself well. And yes, I make such realistic works, which are also technically very difficult to create; there are not many people doing that in the Netherlands, or even worldwide.” This combination of technical expertise and curated persona has secured

her a unique position within the broader street art landscape, allowing her to not only reshape city walls but also the expectations of who gets to paint them.

*Lefebvre's triad of space à la RoosArt*

With an understanding of De Graaf's career, artistry, and persona, we can turn to an analysis of her chosen murals. To do so meaningfully, we must first situate Lefebvre's triad of space, particularly as it is reimagined through De Graaf's urban interventions. Lefebvre's spatial triad disrupts the notion that urban space is an infinite resource, revealing it as shaped by forces of control, access, and symbolic meaning (349). De Graaf's murals intervene across all three dimensions: perceived, conceived, and lived space.

First of all, perceived space refers to the material and everyday use of space as well as the sensory experience of space. Like how people move through, use, and physically engage with their environment. It is the most concrete and observable dimension of space. Lefebvre (1991) writes that "the spatial practice of a society secretes that space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it." (38). For Lefebvre, as well as many others, the environment we live in significantly shapes and influences individuals. This idea is captured in the concepts of "propounding" and "presupposition", meaning that the spaces we encounter are already filled with meaning, symbols, and sensory cues. Therefore, these spaces reflect and are shaped by the social conditions in which they were created. De Graaf's murals intervene in this space by altering atmospheres, inviting emotional and sensory engagement. As Böhme (1993) defines, atmospheres are felt realities that emerge between bodies and their surroundings (114). By placing her murals on prominent civic buildings, such as the town hall, De Graaf embeds them within the routines of everyday life, encountered during acts of commuting, waiting, or walking, thereby reshaping the perceived space through rhythm and affect. As Makinde and

Amao (2024) put it, perceived space is “the real space” that ensures “cohesion and continuity” through the everyday reproduction of social life (70).

Secondly, conceived space refers to the designed, regulated, and ideologically constructed representation of space, often serving economic productivity, order, surveillance, or national identity. The physical makeup of a space is the only essence of space which can be replicated and thus mapped, that is why Lefebvre describes it as the “space of scientists, planners, urbanists, [...] all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (38). This abstract dimension, shaped by capitalist priorities, tends to override lived realities, as Lefebvre critiques. Makinde and Amo describe it as ruled by “monopolized cogent/expert power structures”, producing “dominant codes, signs, and frontal associations” (71). Such representations shape public perception and mediate how a space is interpreted, often oversimplifying the complexity of social practices and emotional connections to space. As a result, it can conflict with how space is experienced (lived space) or used (perceived space). De Graaf’s murals challenge this top-down logic by introducing alternative narratives, like those of Anna Reintjes and the lamplighter, within official civic spaces. Commissioned by local authorities and placed prominently, such as on Doetinchem’s town hall, they subtly subvert municipal power from within, recoding conceived space through cultural collaboration.

However, spatial attributes become meaningful only when mediated by perception. Therefore, perception and conception of space are inextricably intertwined (fig. 2). We do not encounter space in a purely objective form; instead, we perceive it through cognitive, cultural, and sensory frameworks shaped by lived experiences and a priori conceptual categories. Thus, spatial experience is an active process of interpretation. Having examined how space is perceived and conceived, we now turn to the third dimension: how space is lived.

Lefebvre's lived or "representational space" is shaped by imagination, memory, and cultural meaning. As he states, it is "the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe" (39). Lived space is not planned or structured in advance, but instead emerges through the interactions, rituals, and narratives that people bring to the space. It resists imposed order and is often a site of symbolic struggle. Makinde and Amao (2024) frame it as the realm of "coded, recoded, and decoded choices offered as figurative resistance" (71). De Graaf's murals engage this dimension by embedding memory, identity, and critique in everyday environments. By commemorating forgotten figures or visualising inclusive futures, as in *See No Color*, they transform institutional facades into affective, inhabited surfaces. These interventions reclaim neutralised space for lived meaning and emotional resonance. The representational space can therefore serve as a space of counter-narratives, where alternative experiences reshape the dominant order.

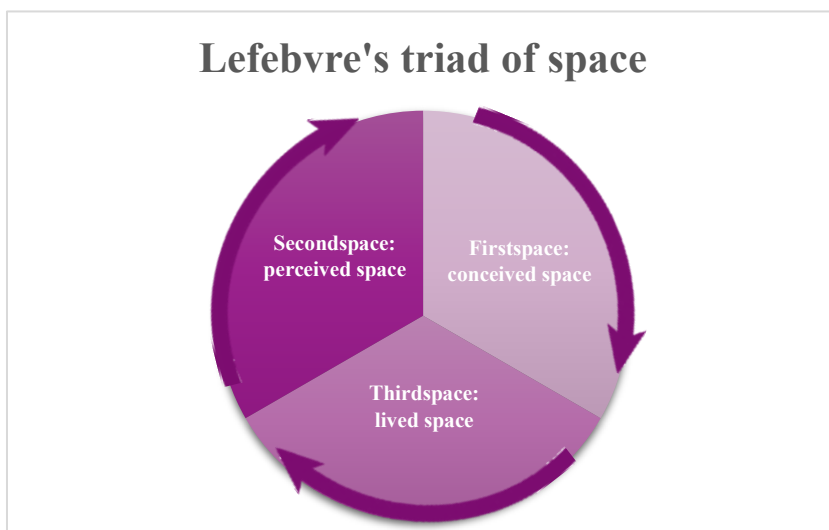


Fig. 2. Lefebvre's triad of space interpreted through a circle diagram.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter is important to my thesis because it offers a foundational overview of De Graaf's background, artistic identity, and the nature of her work, drawing on anecdotes she shared

during our interview. De Graaf's artistic journey, shaped by self-taught expertise and entrepreneurial drive, has positioned her as a force in the street art world. We have explored how she navigates the tension between personal expression and public reception, and how her persona challenges male-dominated norms. Furthermore, her alignment with Lefebvre's triad of space has revealed how her murals are more than aesthetic objects, as they are spatial, social, and symbolic interventions.

From here, we move from the artist to the artwork. In the next chapter, we will analyse *See No Color*, a mural that exemplifies how De Graaf transforms the built environment into a living surface of inclusion and dialogue. By focusing on this mural in Zwolle, we begin to understand how spatial theory, local context, and artistic vision materialise on the wall. In this way, the transition from artist to artwork is not just chronological but also conceptual, shifting us from the foundations of identity and practice to the performative role of street art. We now begin that journey.

## Chapter 2: *See No Color*

### *Introduction*

This chapter shifts from artist to artwork, focusing on De Graaf's *See No Color (SNC)* mural, part of Zwolle's Holtenbroek since July 2024. By walking the site and observing community dynamics, this chapter foregrounds Lefebvre's trialectics to show how *SNC* both shapes and is shaped by its spatial and social context. The methodology applied here, rooted in urban ethnography and participant observation, embraces the affective nature of fieldwork. It views space not as static, but as shaped by transient conditions. My dual role as researcher and visitor enables a reflexive, embodied reading of *SNC* as an emotional landmark, following Pinder's rethinking of psychogeography. The analysis also includes De Graaf's reflections on the artistic process and her collaboration with residents, revealing *SNC* as both a performative act of place-making and a contested symbol of inclusion.

### *Critique and the conversation of See No Color in context*

To understand the significance of *SNC*, it is essential to consider the context in which the mural was created. This includes the social and urban critique surrounding the multicultural district of Holtenbroek. Standing 32 meters tall on the Elvis Presleyflat, the piece was completed by De Graaf and her team over a month as part of SWZ's broader renovation to improve the area's image and atmosphere.

Historically, Holtenbroek has long struggled with social issues and a "somewhat 'rough image'", as noted by Duijn and Van Popering-Verkerk in their article on integrated public value creation (6). The district has consistently ranked among the areas with the highest number of reported incidents in Zwolle, including significant instances of fraud and theft. Moreover, it is associated with juvenile crime, drug problems, violent incidents, and suicide. Although annual crime reports dropped from 953 in 2012 to 574 in 2024, the numbers

remain substantial (“Holtenbroek in cijfers en grafieken”). Still, improvements in safety and community atmosphere have been noted since 2016, as reflected in the 2020 “Buurt-voor-Buurt” survey, reported in the first edition of the Holtenbroek newspaper (June 2021). From 2012 on, liveability and safety in the area have notably increased, with many residents attributing these changes to renewal efforts (“Een tolerante wijk” 1).

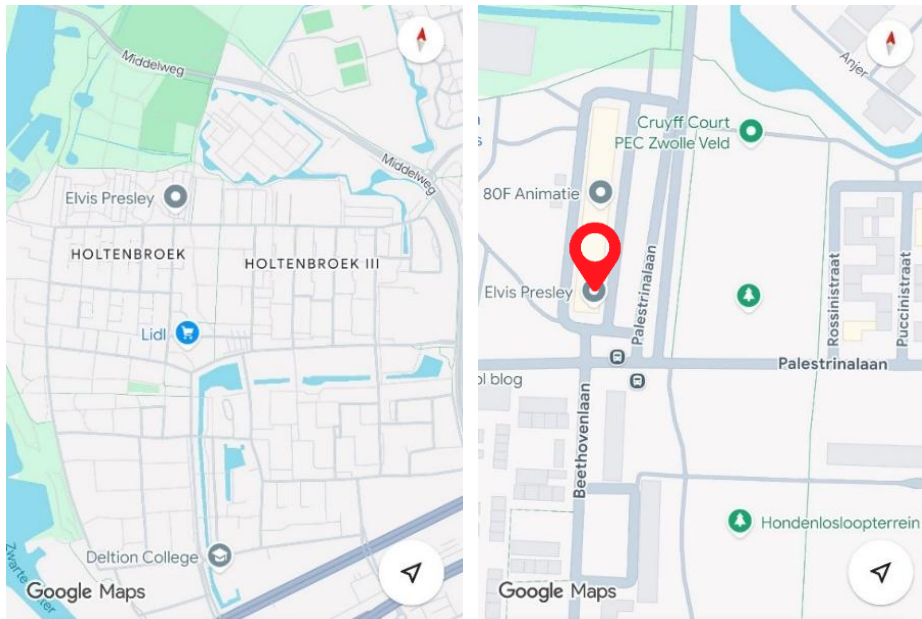


Fig. 3. Zooming out on Holtenbroek (left) and zooming in on the Palestrinalaan where the Elvis Presleyflat is located (Google Maps).

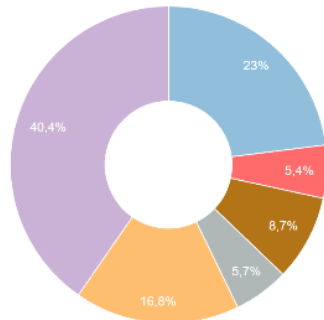
Duijn and Van Popering-Verkerk also note that Holtenbroek “is the most multicultural and diverse neighbourhood of Zwolle” (6). According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), in 2022, 23% of Holtenbroek’s residents had a Western migration background, whereas the remaining 77% had non-Western backgrounds. The most represented groups included individuals with Turkish (16.8%), Antillean (8.7%), Surinamese (5.7%), and Moroccan (5.4%) origins. 40.4% fell under the category “Other non-Western backgrounds” (fig. 4), reflecting the wide range of nationalities present in the neighbourhood (“Holtenbroek in cijfers en grafieken”).

### Migratieachtergrond wijk 30 Holtenbroek [↗](#)

De meest voorkomende migratie-achtergronden in de wijk Holtenbroek in 2022 zijn Overig (1.570 inwoners) en Westers (895 inwoners).

Jaar: 2022 ▾

● Westers ● Marokko ● Antillen ● Suriname ● Turkije ● Overig



Bevolking in de wijk Holtenbroek: inwoners met een migratieachtergrond worden onderverdeeld in Westers en enkele niet Westerse landen op grond van hun geboorteland of dat van hun ouders.

Fig. 4. Migration backgrounds in district 30 Holtenbroek (2022), showing the most common origins. Data sourced from CBS via *AlleCijfers.nl*.

Focusing specifically on the Elvis Presleyflat reveals renovations aimed at improving safety and fostering community engagement. During my visit, I observed noteworthy enhancements: a community room within the building, a Nouri-AED installation, a mini library, and a giveaway corner (fig. 5). In addition, the apartment complex is adjacent to a well-equipped playground and a Johan Cruyff Court, as well as a community garden located across the street, and a park with a dog-walking area (fig. 6). In the theoretical analysis, I will elaborate on the significance of these elements concerning De Graaf's mural. However, first, we need to assess the work itself and De Graaf's experience in creating it.





Fig. 5. Initiatives inside and around the Elvis Presleyflat (own photographs).



Fig. 6. Initiatives next to and across the Elvis Presleyflat (own photographs).

Among all the initiatives, De Graaf's mural is the most visually striking.

Commissioned by Trotse Muren, a six-woman art foundation founded in 2018, the project reflects the collective's mission to enrich Zwolle's public spaces with large-scale murals. De Graaf was invited to contribute her signature style to transform a once-forgotten wall into a symbol of local pride and hope. However, rather than imposing an outside vision, she rooted her design in dialogue with residents. "We started with a meeting open to anyone from the neighbourhood to share ideas", she explained in our interview. De Graaf was struck by the multicultural diversity of those who attended. Inspired by their stories, she developed a concept that reflected what she had seen. "I noticed how many children were playing outside, it is a young neighbourhood", she said.

The composition features four children of different ethnicities, each represented by a distinct colour: yellow, red, green, and blue. As they play together, the colours blend, representing cultural fusion and unity (fig. 7). "Children do not judge by skin colour, they just see another kid to play with. That is what I wanted to convey: innocence and openness. When they mix colours while playing, it is not about race; it is about creativity and connection. That is what *SNC* means to me, a celebration of diversity through the eyes of a child", De Graaf explained.





Fig. 7. Different shots of *SNC* by De Graaf (own pictures).

Though the children depicted were not based on real individuals, De Graaf aimed for them to reflect the local community. She used AI-generated portraits, combining hundreds of image elements to form unique, multicultural characters: “It is a digital collage, and then we mapped it out in squares to paint on the wall, square by square, using only spray paint.” De Graaf reflected that, despite the logistical and financial effort creating this mural together with three other girls from her team, she felt empowered by the creative freedom: “I could put everything I know about realism into this work, it is also like a business card for me. You do not often get the chance to paint something this huge.”

*SNC* also marks a return to a more activist and political mode in De Graaf’s repertoire. “It is a left-wing piece,” she admitted, “and yeah, that stirs up reactions.” This was notable through the controversy it sparked when the mural went viral. One child’s hand gesture was misinterpreted as a satanic symbol: “I got these crazy emails from people saying I was worshipping the devil”, De Graaf recalled. Even the butterflies, meant to be playful, were interpreted by conspiracy theorists as dark imagery (fig. 8). “People imagined meanings that were not there”, she said, recounting messages connecting her oeuvre to government agendas.

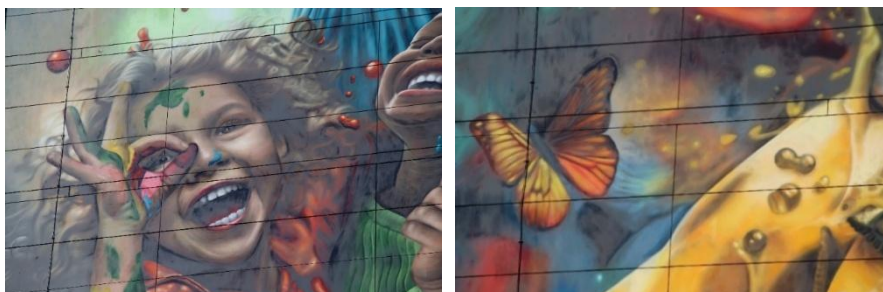


Fig. 8. Close-ups of the symbols that stirred up many reactions (own pictures).

In contrast to the misinterpretations and external controversies, De Graaf pointed out the predominantly positive and engaged response from the local community, noting: “In

general, the people from the area were very enthusiastic, watching every day, chatting with us, bringing food and drinks.” This response exemplifies the artwork’s fundamental objective of embodying the collective sentiment of the community.

Yet, De Graaf does not romanticise the context in which the mural was created, acknowledging the social challenges still inherent to the neighbourhood. “Someone stole my phone along with other things, while we were just ten meters away. We noticed a lot in that neighbourhood, from drug deals to human trafficking”, she recalls. Positioned in a lift overlooking the street, De Graaf gained both a literal and symbolic perspective on the area’s vitality and vulnerability. Despite the challenges, she expresses hope that the mural instils renewal and pride: “I hope that when people from the area pass by and look at the mural, they feel proud to live in that flat or neighbourhood with that beautiful artwork on it.”

Now a striking landmark visible from afar, the mural has become a focal point, making it the centre of the neighbourhood. Even though De Graaf acknowledges that “not everyone may find the art beautiful,” she emphasises that “that is the subjective nature of art.” Nonetheless, her intention is clear: to help residents see their environment not just as a space of struggle, but as one of dignity, connection, and transformation.

*Psychogeography, atmospheres, and the triad of space: from theory to practice*

Regarding the topic of landmarks, Pinder’s article “Arts of Urban Exploration” (2005) highlights how street art engagement creates transient landmarks and alternative ways of knowing the city, shaping urban experience. This informs how *SNC* transforms its neighbourhood across spatial, emotional and symbolic levels. Through Lefebvre’s triad of space and Pinder’s psychogeographic lens, the mural emerges as an urban intervention operating across perceived, conceived and lived space. Pinder’s focus on mood and affect

complements Lefebvre's emphasis on lived experience, while his critique of urban control mechanisms aligns with Lefebvre's concerns about dominant ideologies in conceived space.

In his article, Pinder frames the term psychogeography as a politically charged, sensory way of experiencing the city, rooted in Situationist practices that focus on mood, movement, and everyday urban textures (385-386). During my fieldwork in April, the inviting weather conditions fostered immersive engagement with the area surrounding the Elvis Presleyflat. This environment enabled me to observe the dynamics that Pinder identifies. Practices that engage with urban space as a sensuous real, and that seek to "challenge norms about how urban space is framed and represented" (385). These often involve moving through the city in ways that unsettle dominant narratives, revealing the "fragments, everyday materials and detritus" of urban life through "playful-constructive behaviour" combined with politically conscious analysis of urban ambiences and behaviours (389). In Holtenbroek, the mural engages in this form of spatial critique by inviting reinterpretation of a formerly stigmatised space through its integration into everyday rhythms and atmospheres. Through this lens, *SNC* becomes a catalyst for reimagining the neighbourhood from the ground up.

During my walk, what immediately stood out was the density and diversity of everyday life at the mural's site: children playing on the Johan Cruyff Court, multicultural families gathering at the playground to have fun, and neighbours meeting one another near the community garden and dog-walking area across the street (fig. 9, 10 and 11). These observations suggest the space is heavily trafficked and used for social and recreational activities, illustrating Lefebvre's concept of spatial practice within perceived space, the domain of physical activity, sensory experience, and everyday routines (38). In this Lefebvrian sense, perceived space is where bodies move, play, and gather. As De Graaf's mural becomes part of the neighbourhood's dynamic setting, it continually shapes and is shaped by lived experience and daily public interaction.

However, considering Lefebvre's dimension of conceived space, which represents the ideologically planned urban surface, it is necessary to acknowledge that the mural both reflects and disrupts this dimension (38). As mentioned before, enhancements in and around the Elvis Presleyflat reflect more than surface-level improvements. Like the mural, they are part of a strategic reconfiguration of the area's physical and emotional fabric. Although these efforts foster local care and cohesion, they also raise questions about their broader political function. As Pinder warns, public art is often implicated in "socially divisive urban development programmes, where [it is] used merely to add gloss to urban 'renewal' projects through aestheticization ..." (398). This corresponds with Lefebvre's critique of conceived space, which often fails to reflect lived experience due to its abstraction and alignment with dominant codes (38).

The commissioning of *SNC* aligns municipal rebranding efforts, risking being read as a top-down beautification measure. However, like resident-led initiatives such as community rooms ("Een tolerante wijk" 2), De Graaf's approach was also participatory. Therefore, *SNC* speaks directly to Pinder's concern with "rights to the city" (392). De Graaf's decision to incorporate community input through informal engagement, along with her inspiration drawn from observing the everyday presence and playfulness of children, reflects Pinder's notion of artistic interventions that "emerge through situated practices and engagements with particular contexts" (404). The mural, therefore, is not merely painted onto the city; it grows from it. This enables the mural to function both within and in opposition to institutional frameworks, a tension Lefebvre might describe as a recoding of conceived space from within, subtly reworking urban symbolism while remaining municipally sanctioned.

Reducing the mural merely to a tool of gentrification overlooks its lived resonance. It inspires meaningful moments, especially when children from different backgrounds play together and their colours quite literally blend, showing its message of cultural fusion and

unity. Thus, the artwork becomes more than an institutional artefact; it emerges as an organic meeting point where people naturally engage. In doing so, the mural activates the dimension of lived space. In the realm of imagination, memory, and symbolic appropriation, elements of what Lefebvre also terms the “representational space” (39), the mural functions as a cultural artefact within a symbolic landscape.

Here, Pinder and Lefebvre converge most clearly. Quoting Steve Pile, Pinder describes “the imaginative, fantastic, emotional – the phantasmagoric – aspects of city life” (390). The recorded moments of interaction along the Palestrinalaan resist scripted order and instead reflect the neighbourhood’s vitality. These mundane yet emotionally charged interactions align with Pinder’s view of psychogeography as offering a “street-level perspective”, one that surfaces the often-overlooked textures of urban life, forming “anti-texts” that challenge dominant urban narratives (401). Far from being peripheral, such interactions are central to urban experience. They embody what Rendell, as quoted by Pinder, calls “spatial stories”: the lived narratives we create as we make sense of the urban environment (403). In this context, *SNC* becomes a spatial story in itself: an artwork that is lived with, walked by, observed, photographed, talked about, and folded into memory. For residents, especially in a multicultural neighbourhood, it might evoke pride, critique, solidarity, or questions, depending on personal and collective histories. This interplay challenges the idea of urban space as fixed or neutral. As Pinder argues, psychogeography “directs attention in particular to spatial practices, undercutting assumptions that public space can be understood in static terms as a ‘thing’ whose status is fixed in advance” (399). Instead, the mural affirms space as contested, shaped from below through everyday use and meaning-making. By doing so, it echoes Lefebvre’s view of lived space as a site of resistance and reappropriation (39).

Moreover, the emotional and social interactions that unfold around the mural resist the containment of public space by dominant ideologies. As Pinder insists: “For all the increasing

forms of privatisation and control in cities today, they do not exhaust the stories that can be told about public space” (400). This resonates with Holtenbroek, a district often defined by its history of social issues and marginalisation in media and statistics. Yet, through the presence of this mural, once a symbol of neglect, the neighbourhood becomes a site of spatial reimagining. It performs what Pinder terms “writing the city” (383), inscribing alternative meanings on urban surfaces that have historically been sites of stigma. By situating images of multicultural childhood innocence and creative fusion at the very heart of a stigmatised urban space, De Graaf undermines how Holtenbroek is often represented through mainstream platforms. This way, *SNC* testifies to the “stories still to be told”. The mural does not erase social challenges; it stands amidst them, affirming possibility over pathology.

As such, the mural alters the atmosphere, echoing Böhme’s (1993) theory of atmospheres as felt realities that radiate from the constellation of things and emerge in the “in-between” of subjects and objects, of bodies and environments (114). As Albertsen (2019) interprets this, atmosphere does not float freely in the air, nor is it merely a subjective projection. Instead, it belongs to things and their properties as they present themselves outwardly, “as ecstasies”, to other things (3). In this sense, *SNC* participates in such a constellation: it is not just an isolated mural, but a presence that emanates meaning and mood through its materiality, scale, location, and the histories and emotions it evokes. We do not only look at it; we sense ourselves with it. As Böhme puts it, “The atmosphere is the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived” (122).



Fig. 9. Photographs of gatherings at the playground located next to the Elvis Presleyflat (own pictures).



Fig. 10. A photo series of two girls of different ethnicities playing games next to the Johan Cruyff Court (own pictures).



Fig. 11. A photo series of other interactions (own pictures).

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has shown how *See No Color*, complicates binaries of top-down control and bottom-up resistance. It reveals how residents are not only recipients of urban planning but also active co-creators of their lived space. De Graaf's mural, situated within this double frame, becomes a trialectical object: materially shaping perceived space, dialoguing with conceived space, and animating lived space. In doing so, it affirms the right not only to inhabit the neighbourhood but to redefine it.

From this community-rooted intervention, we now turn to one shaped by history. The next chapter explores how De Graaf's murals in Doetinchem draw upon overlooked pasts to inscribe memory onto the urban present. *SNC* focuses on inclusion through diversity; these historical murals explore belonging through remembrance, continuing the exploration of how art reshapes space, this time through remembrance rather than diversity.

## Chapter 3: Historical Narratives: *Anna Reintjes* and *The Lamplighter*

### *Introduction*

Whereas *See No Color* reframes social space through childhood innocence, the murals discussed in this chapter inscribe memory into the present, evoking lived atmospheres shaped by overlooked local histories and stirring nostalgia. Situated in Doetinchem's city centre, the historical-themed visual narratives result from a collaboration between the City Museum and Binnenstadbedrijf Doetinchem. As museum director Esther Ruesen explains, they “connect different parts of the city”, blending culture, commerce, and hospitality (“Kunstwerken met geschiedenis”).

There are four murals in total, each portraying real people or professions from Doetinchem's history who have lingered in the margins of collective memory. Among them are the steam tram machinist and Saap, the local fisherman known from the Oude IJssel. However, this thesis focuses on the historical and cultural relevance of the first two murals, *The Lamplighter* and *Anna Reintjes*, which received the strongest public response. In the pages that follow, we will explore how De Graaf's brushstrokes reshape the way Doetinchem engages with its heritage. Regarding the theoretical and methodological approach, this chapter builds on the previous framework but adopts a more interpretive lens, allowing the artworks to express their emotional and lived impact.

### *Anna Reintjes*

Painted by De Graaf in 2021, *Anna Reintjes* is the first of four murals. Reintjes (1911-2007) was a well-known figure in Doetinchem. She lived on a farm along the Holterweg and was renowned for her strong will and lifelong dedication to her land and livestock, making her a remarkable presence in the community (“Anna Reintjes geëerd”).

The mural on the wall of the Mogendorff building on Gart Seevinckstraat depicts Reintjes alongside her cows and pasture near De Zumpe, offering a glimpse into her rural life. According to De Graaf, the design was inspired by local stories shared by residents and a historian. Also, during the creation of the work, residents, some of them who knew Anna, would stop by on their bikes to follow the progress and have a chat, De Graaf confirmed. Theo Dekkers, a former neighbour who knew Anna well, reflected on her legacy during an interview with *Regio 8* as he watched the artwork being created: “Everyone in our neighbourhood knew Anna; in her overalls, with a red scarf tied around her head, and a milk can on her bicycle. She kept that up well into old age, which is remarkable” (“Anna Reintjes krijgt muurschildering”). Engagements like these, rich in memory and local identity, already activate lived space, where meaning emerges through affective use; the symbolic order of this dimension will be addressed later in this chapter.

However, these on-site stories, woven into the mural, can be viewed through Pinder’s psychogeographic lens, as this mural too touches upon his notion of “rights to the city”, where ordinary people get to reshape urban meaning through their storytelling and presence (392). Depicting Anna before a broken wall, the artwork symbolises the breaking of time and the connection between past and present. Based on photographs of Anna, the mural radiates authenticity, honouring a woman whose legacy lives on within the community.



Fig. 12. The pose of Anna Reintjes used as an example for De Graaf’s artwork.

Source: “Anna Reintjes geëerd,” *Zumpe*, <https://www.zumpe.nl/excursies/anna-reintjes/>.

On the level of Lefebvre's perceived space, the mural integrates into everyday rhythms. Positioned close to the historic mill and only a few minutes' walk from the lamplighter statue, the mural lies at a strategic crossroads, connecting cultural landmarks with the city's vibrant heart. It greets passersby who cycle through the side street on their way to the city centre, residents who park their cars nearby, and those who live in the building itself or across the street, observing the mural daily from their windows (fig. 13). In this way, it becomes a familiar fixture in their spatial routines, subtly shaping how they inhabit, navigate, and emotionally relate to the space around them.



Fig. 13. Rhythms of everyday life interacting with the mural (own pictures).

This daily interaction with the mural is reinforced by its material presence: it does not merely sit on the wall but emerges from it. De Graaf's artwork blends seamlessly into the crumbling plaster of the former Mogendorff building, making Anna's world appear through the ruins of the past (fig. 14). As De Graaf explained to me, the design embraces the wall's decay, using rough stones so falling pieces wouldn't immediately disrupt the work, preserving both authenticity and the building's historical value.



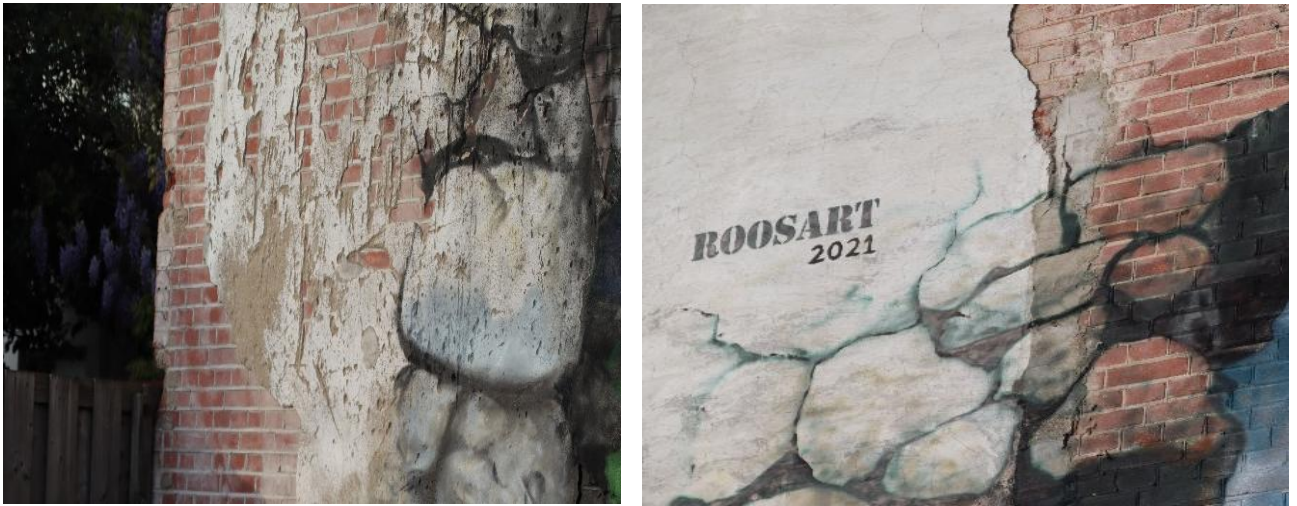


Fig. 14. De Graaf's art blends with the crumbling of the mural (own pictures).

The fact is that the location was already steeped in historical and cultural significance before its completion. It not only honours the life and legacy of Reintjes, but its placement on the former Mogendorff building also introduces a deeper layer of meaning (fig. 15). This site, once home to the prominent Jewish furniture business of Maurits and Justus Mogendorff, who were tragically murdered in Sobibor during the Holocaust, stands as a silent witness to both personal resilience and collective loss (Vromen 42). The building is also valued as a symbol of Doetinchem's post-war commercial growth (Vromen 35). Crucially, then, the mural does not simply depict history; it occupies and transforms conceived space. On this level, the mural becomes an intentional act of cultural intervention. Commissioned in collaboration with local heritage organisations, it redefines how the wall and its surroundings are interpreted within the cityscape. By painting Reintjes beside the still-visible "Mogendorff" lettering (fig. 15), her mural embeds alternative historical narratives directly into officially sanctioned public space. Figures like Reintjes, often excluded from formal historical accounts, are given visibility and symbolic permanence. In doing so, De Graaf's work subverts the top-down logic of urban planning, what David Pinder describes as "writing the city anew" (400-401).

The public also recognised this layering of memory. In an article from *De Gelderlander*, a resident expressed appreciation for the mural's respectful positioning: "I saw

that the artist stayed well away from the large white letters high on the wall that spell ‘Mogendorff.’ Fortunately, because those letters mean as much to me as the nearby Jewish monument” (“Voorzichtig graag met de muur van Mogendorff”). This comment highlights how the mural serves as a multifaceted medium of remembrance. It exemplifies how conceived space can be reinterpreted through cultural collaboration and embedded histories, rather than erased or overwritten.



Fig. 15. Mogendorff and its historical value (own pictures).

*Then*

As seen in Fig. 16, back in 2021, the mural was vivid with rich colours and the crumbling faux-brick background created the illusion of a window into another world, into the past. Reintjes appeared lifelike, while the cow beside her seemed to step out from the wall, rendered with detailed shading. The scene showcases De Graaf's mastery of trompe-l'oeil, a technique that uses hyperrealism to make painted elements appear three-dimensional, tricking the viewer into perceiving depth and physicality (Ebert-Schifferer 17-18). De Graaf employs this technique to incredible effect. The mural makes the wall appear torn open, transforming the space into something immersive and emotionally resonant.

However, this illusion did more than deceive the eye; it transformed the wall into what Lefebvre's dimension of lived space, a space symbolically charged with meaning, memory, and imagination (39). Through its illusion of depth, the mural invited viewers not simply to observe Anna's world but to enter it emotionally. In this way, the mural evoked a shared cultural memory that was felt as much as seen.

Expanding on this, the mural cultivates what Albertsen, drawing on Böhme and Riegl, describes as a city's "historical depth" or "age-value": a sensed past that does not rely on historical or architectural knowledge, but is instead felt through material presence and weathering (12-13). The deterioration of the plasterwork of the building becomes integral to this atmosphere. The crumbling surface and textured stones evoke precisely the kind of "age-atmosphere" Albertsen describes. One in which a viewer senses the passage of time emotionally rather than intellectually. This physical embeddedness, where art, building, and memory are indistinguishable, heightens the mural's role as lived space: a site where history is not displayed but experienced.



Fig. 16. *Anna Reintjes* then (2021).

Source: “Anna Reintjes geëerd,” *Zumpe*, <https://www.zumpe.nl/excursies/anna-reintjes/>.

### *Now*

During my visit in April 2025, it stood out immediately that the trompe-l'oeil has itself begun to crumble (fig. 17). The illusion is quite literally breaking down: once-vivid colours are now faded, and Anna's face has suffered severe paint loss, obscuring her expression. Many of the finer details in the clothing, background foliage, and the cow have eroded, revealing the brick beneath and disrupting the illusion. Where viewers once saw a vivid pastoral scene, they now face a visibly decaying image. The blurred line between painted and real no longer stems from the illusion's strength, but from its fading into the wall's own decay. This adds a meta-commentary: the illusion of permanence is gone. The mural, once a celebration of memory, now reflects how memories inevitably fade. Anna appears more ghostlike, dissolving into history. The work now speaks of fragility, impermanence, and the passage of time.

The mural's evolving state deepens its function as a lived space, aligning with Pinder's view that psychogeography challenges static notions of public space as a fixed thing (399). The deterioration of the mural also amplifies the sense of age-value, as described by Albertsen (12-13). The breakdown of the trompe-l'oeil illusion adds historical depth not through

preservation, but through its loss. Rather than weakening the mural's impact, this transformation enhances its emotional and temporal depth. It continues to shape urban experience not just visually, but affectively, anchoring the collective memories of a woman, a building, and a city within the shifting textures of time.



Fig. 17. *Anna Reintjes now* (2025) (own pictures).

### *Lamplighter*

A short distance away from *Anna Reintjes*, a mural of a lamplighter adorns Doetinchem's town hall, adding a visual warmth to the street right before entering the city centre (fig. 18). Voted the world's second most beautiful mural by Street Art Cities in April 2023, it deepens the city's historical narrative woven through its fabric.



Fig. 18. *The Lamplighter*: Raadhuisstraat 4, Doetinchem (own pictures).

Completed in April 2023, the artwork pays tribute to a once-essential municipal profession employed by the municipality: the lamplighter, who manually illuminated the city's streets before electric lighting became widespread. These lamps had been strategically placed thanks to the establishment of the Doetinchem gasworks in 1863 (“Historie komt weer tot leven”).

Framed by the image of the old town hall, an emblematic building in Doetinchem's heritage, the mural deepens the historical narrative running through the urban landscape. Its placement on the town hall underscores the civic roots of the lamplighter's role, keeping a piece of local heritage alive. As De Graaf explained in our interview: “The connection to the old town hall in the background creates a bridge between the past and the present.” The location, immediately adjacent to a parking lot and directly across from the city centre, ensures high visibility and interaction with a past narrative relived in the presence of everyday city life (fig. 19). Therefore, its perceived space dimension is undeniable. Pedestrians, drivers, and those entering or exiting the parking area are exposed to the mural; this immediacy encourages casual and repeated engagement, allowing the piece to become an integral part of the everyday routines of residents and visitors.



Fig. 19. *The Lamplighter* and its surroundings (own pictures).

At the level of conceived space, the mural's integration into Doetinchem's town hall carries symbolic institutional weight. With the family of the town hall's architect, Piet Tauber (1927–2017), granting permission to use the building as a canvas, the mural marks a symbolic collaboration across generations. Linking Tauber's modernist vision with a contemporary artist's cultural storytelling. Constructed between 1964 and 1969, the building embodies the democratic ethos of the 1960s through its terraced square, designed to welcome citizens into the sphere of governance (BRTA). The mural extends this democratic vision, transforming an exterior wall of the 1986 extension into a public-facing monument to local history.

Notably, the wall that now hosts the mural was initially conceived for commercial use before being repurposed for civic functions, exemplifying the building's adaptive narrative. Furthermore, the mural is situated at a site of architectural negotiation: Tauber once regarded later modifications as violations of his design principles, though he ultimately respected the building's evolving function (BRTA). In this context, De Graaf's mural becomes another layer of reinterpretation; an artistic intervention that does not detract from the building's integrity but enhances its role as a living institution. The site thus becomes an active narrative surface, a place where urban planning, memory, and representation are re-negotiated. By depicting the lamplighter against the silhouette of the pre-war town hall destroyed during WWII bombings (fig. 22), De Graaf introduces a poignant juxtaposition of loss and continuity. Her visual narrative bridges the old and new civic centres of Doetinchem,

embedding the memory of a vanished building into the postwar structure that replaced it (RoosArt).

Lived space, in this case, breathes through the mural's affective resonance. Though the man depicted is fictional, De Graaf focused on crafting a strong, expressive face that showcases her portraiture skills. By choosing a side profile (fig. 22), she made the figure less specific and more universal, inviting viewers to project their own memories. As De Graaf pointed out to me, many people have reached out to her, recognising their grandfather in the mural. These emotional identifications anchor the mural in memory and belonging, creating a shared space where nostalgia and recognition converge. Here, symbolic and emotional interpretations resist abstraction, embedding themselves in the everyday urban life. The mural's colour scheme deepens this affective impact (fig. 20): "The dark, cold tones suggest the chill of night, whereas the presence of fire and the warmer purples and reds convey the sense of warmth and comfort that the lamplighter's work brought to the community", she explained to me.

De Graaf considers this mural one of her finest works and takes great pride in its presence in the public sphere. In claiming its place there, it illuminates not merely a lamp, but a layered pathway through Doetinchem's spatial and cultural identity. As alderman Jorik Huizinga observed, the mural not only revives the image of the lamplighter but reaffirms its relevance in the present-day cityscape ("Historie komt weer tot leven"). This act of memorialisation, projected on the very building where decisions affecting Doetinchem's future are made, underscores the ongoing role of civic art in shaping collective identity and urban cohesion.





Fig. 20. The mural in detail, depicting the old town hall and the characteristic lamplighter (own pictures).

### *Conclusion*

This final chapter has explored how De Graaf's historical murals in Doetinchem do not simply illustrate the past but also activate it. By placing figures like Anna Reintjes and the lamplighter at the heart of the city, her work turns memory into encounter, asking viewers to see familiar streets as layered with quiet legacies. These murals do not shout; they resonate. Quiet and reflective, these murals offer moments of stillness amid urban flow, contrasting the urgency of *See No Color*. Nonetheless, both chapters reveal the same force at work: a reimagining of place through the power of presence.

## Conclusion

*The findings, limitations, recommendations, and reflections of this study*

This thesis set out to explore the research question: How does Rosalie de Graaf's street art performatively reshape the dynamics of urban environments? In addressing this, the study has shown that de Graaf's murals are active spatial agents intervening in how people perceive, use, and remember their city or neighbourhood. Through a critical engagement with Lefebvre's conceptual triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space, complemented by psychogeographic and atmospheric theory, the study revealed that De Graaf's art not only reflects space but produces it anew.

On the level of perceived space, the discussed murals assert their presence through monumental scale and interaction with everyday movement, reshaping how people register the urban environment. In terms of conceived space, her works challenge the top-down logic of municipal planning by embedding counter-narratives within sanctioned, often institutional spaces. Reframing town halls and civic buildings not as abstract representations of order, but as surfaces for cultural, social and historical dialogue. Most profoundly, in lived space, De Graaf's murals catalyse emotional, memorial and communal engagement. Whether reimagining Holtenbroek through the playful innocence of *See No Color*, or reviving historical memory through local figures like Anna Reintjes and the lamplighter, her murals invite the public to see their city not only as it is, but as it was, and as it could be.

These findings have broader implications for our understanding of the cultural agency of street art. They suggest that street art, when contextually embedded and community-attuned, holds the capacity to reshape not just the aesthetic of a city, but its meaning. De Graaf's work demonstrates that murals can alter atmospheres, contest historical erasure, and foster collective identification. Rather than serving as beautifying afterthoughts to urban

planning, such interventions “write the city from below”, as Pinder would say, creating new landmarks of identity, memory, and inclusion.

Significantly, the spatial impact of De Graaf’s work is inseparable from the persona she has intentionally crafted under the name RoosArt. This thesis supports that her performative presence as a young, female, self-taught street artist in a male-dominated scene is itself a spatial act. Her visibility challenges gendered norms of authorship in street art, while her signature “Barbie-style” appearance and branding reclaim femininity as a source of strength rather than marginalisation.

However, a limitation of this study lies in its temporal scope; it mostly captures spatial transformation at a single moment in time, without tracing how the murals’ meaning may shift through seasons, politics or generational change. Future research could explore how communities continue to live with these artworks: whether they become landmarks, fade into the background, or evolve as sites of new interaction. Additionally, the research did not incorporate in-depth and firsthand perspectives from residents, meaning that the personal and collective experiences of those directly affected by her interventions remain partially unexamined. More large-scale follow-up studies could therefore include surveys with community members to explore the emotional, cultural, and socio-political meanings they assign to the artworks. Such research could also investigate how different demographics (e.g. age, background, or length of residence) experience the presence of street art in their neighbourhoods, shedding light on its varied and evolving impacts.

The avenues for future research highlight the ongoing relationship between street art and its urban environment, one that cannot be fully understood through static analysis alone. Street art, particularly as practised by De Graaf, is dynamic and alive. This was strikingly visible during King’s Day 2025 (Fig. 21). As De Graaf reflected, “It was given a whole new life” when the mural of Anna Reintjes became surrounded by a sea of people dressed in

orange. As if they stepped straight from the mural into the present. That spontaneous encounter, captured in festive motion, offers a final lens for this thesis: street art does not just shape space; it rearranges time. It allows memory to breathe in the now. In doing so, it shows us how public art can create new forms of togetherness in the city streets we share.



Fig. 21. Streetview of Anna Reintjes during King's Day 2025 (@roosartpaintings, 27 April 2025, *Instagram*).

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## Appendix

### Interview questions Rosalie de Graaf:

1. Wat inspireert jouw beeldtaal en symboliek in je muurschilderingen?
2. Hoe beïnvloedt de interactie van het publiek met jouw werk jouw creatieve proces of toekomstige projecten?
3. Welke rol speelt de locatie (site-specificiteit) in je artistieke keuzes?
4. Zijn er terugkerende motieven of verhalen in je werk die jouw artistieke handtekening vormen?
5. In hoeverre voel je je vrij in je artistieke keuzes bij opdrachten?
6. Heb je concessies moeten doen aan je visie vanwege wensen van een opdrachtgever, gemeentelijke regels of commerciële belangen?
7. Hoe ga je om met de spanning tussen persoonlijke expressie en externe verwachtingen?
8. Hoe zou je jouw artistieke identiteit zelf omschrijven? Hoe blijf je authentiek?
9. Op welke manier beïnvloeden jouw achtergrond en persoonlijke ervaringen jouw visuele verhalen?
10. Hoe combineer je de rollen van kunstenaar, ondernemer en publiek figuur?
11. Wat was de inspiratie achter jouw designs voor eenieder van de werken: *Anna Reintjes*, *Lamplighter* & *See No Color*?
12. Kun je wat vertellen over de symboliek en het ontwerp van deze muurschilderingen: *Anna Reintjes*, *Lamplighter*, *See No Color*?

### ***See No Color:***

- Hoe is dit project/deze opdracht tot stand gekomen?
- Beschouw je *See No Color* als visueel activistisch? Zo ja, welke maatschappelijke of politieke verandering wil je met deze muurschildering teweegbrengen?
- In het algemeen, in hoeverre beschouw jij jouw kunst als activistisch?
- Welke emoties of ideeën hoopte je op te roepen bij mensen die dagelijks langs de muurschildering lopen, vooral bij de bewoners van de wijk? Welk effect hoop je dat dit werk heeft?
- Hoe heeft de fysieke locatie, omringd door woningen, een speeltuin etc... jouw visuele en thematische keuzes in deze muurschildering beïnvloed?

- Waren er specifieke verhalen of personen uit de buurt die je ontwerp of aanpak hebben geïnspireerd?
- De uitdrukking *See No Color* kan op veel manieren worden geïnterpreteerd, hoe zie jij die betekenis in de context van deze wijk, en welke gesprekken hoop je ermee op gang te brengen?
- In een omgeving waar mensen van verschillende culturen samen spelen, samenkomen en leven, hoe combineer je het vieren van diversiteit met het bevorderen van eenheid in een werk als dit?

### ***Anna Reintjes:***

- Hoe is dit project tot stand gekomen? Wat trok je persoonlijk aan in het verhaal van Anna Reintjes en hoe heb je dit gebruikt als inspiratie voor je ontwerp?
- Hoe heb je je verdiept in het leven van Anna Reintjes en de cultuur van Doetinchem? Heb je met buurtbewoners of lokale historici gesproken tijdens je voorbereiding?
- Hoe heb je het proces ervaren om een historisch figuur als Anna Reintjes om te zetten in een kunstwerk dat zowel authentiek als visueel aansprekend is voor een hedendaags publiek? Wat kan een muurschildering volgens jou overbrengen wat een museum of geschiedenisboek niet kan?
- Kun je iets vertellen over je gebruik van trompe-l'oeil in deze mural? Was het je intentie om een soort 'portaal naar het verleden' te creëren?
- Hoe ben je te werk gegaan bij het kiezen van compositie, kleur en lichtinval om de illusie zo overtuigend mogelijk te maken?
- De muur van het Mogendorff-pand heeft een beladen geschiedenis. Hoe heb je deze historische context mee laten wegen in je proces/ontwerp?
- Voel je een verantwoordelijkheid als kunstenaar wanneer je werkt op een plek met zoveel sociaal-historische lading, zoals de muur van Mogendorff?
- Hoe ben je te werk gegaan bij het kiezen van compositie, kleur en lichtinval om de illusie zo overtuigend mogelijk te maken?
- De verf begint nu zichtbaar af te bladderen, vooral op Anna's gezicht. Hoe kijk je aan tegen deze fysieke veroudering van je werk? Vind je dat het afbreuk doet aan je oorspronkelijke boodschap, of voegt het iets nieuws toe?
- Was de vergankelijkheid van straatkunst iets waar je al rekening mee hield tijdens het maken van de schildering?

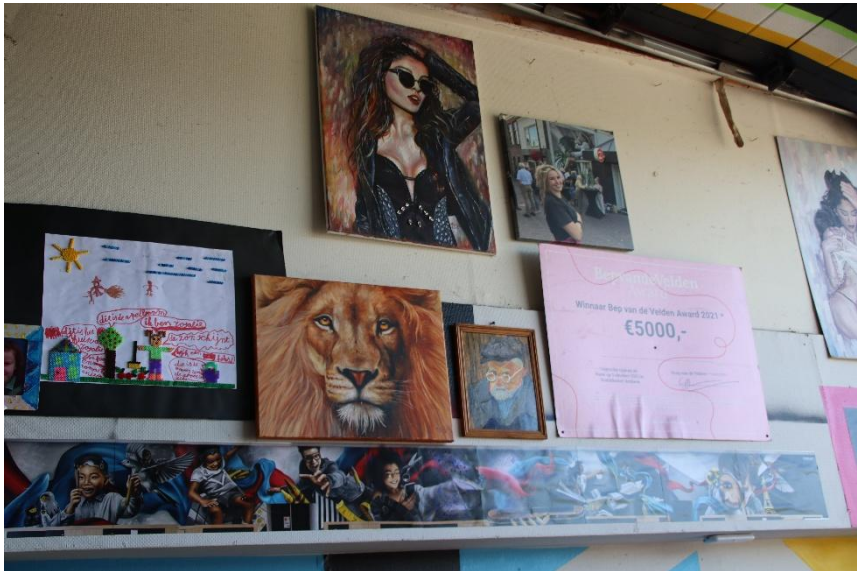
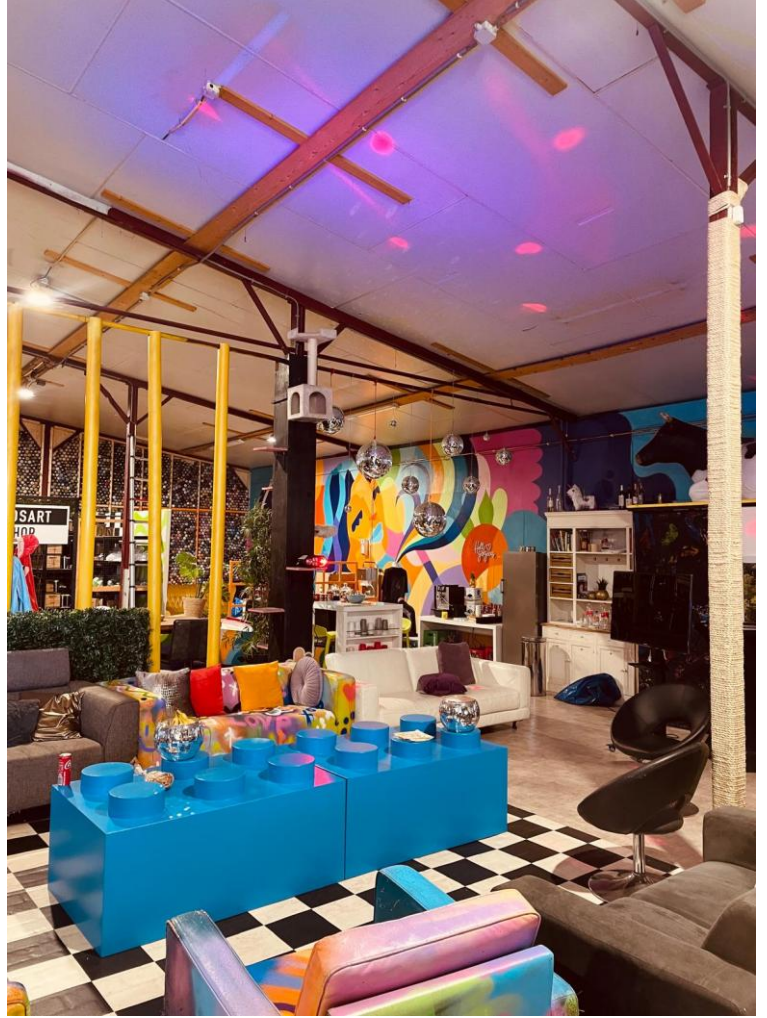
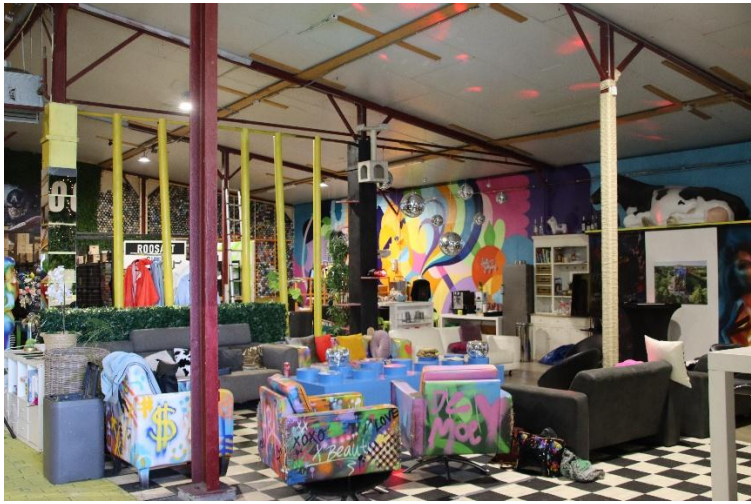
- Zou je willen dat deze muurschildering wordt gerestaureerd, of zou je liever zien dat ze langzaam verdwijnt, als een natuurlijk proces van herinnering die vervaagt?
- Heb je reacties ontvangen van mensen die Anna nog persoonlijk gekend hebben of van bewoners die geraakt zijn door het werk? Wat voor rol speelt zulke feedback in jouw benadering van openbare kunst? Heeft de gemeenschap zich het werk echt 'eigen' gemaakt?
- Als je nu, vier jaar later, opnieuw zou beginnen aan dit kunstwerk, zou je dan iets anders doen, technisch, inhoudelijk of emotioneel gezien?

### ***The Lamplighter:***

- Hoe is deze muurschildering/ deze specifieke opdracht tot stand gekomen? Was het meteen al duidelijker dat je een lantaarnaansteker moest verbeelden?
- Hoe was de verhouding tussen restricties vanuit de opdrachtgever en artistieke vrijheid?
- Kun je wat vertellen over het artistieke proces en de keuzes die je hebt gemaakt wat betreft, compositie, kleur, de houding van de lantaarnaansteker? Wat inspireerde je de muurschilderingen te maken zoals die nu is?
- Hoe beïnvloedde de architectuur en geschiedenis van het gemeentehuis jouw ontwerpkeuzes?
- Je werk werd internationaal bekroond, terwijl het onderwerp diep lokaal is. Wat zegt dat volgens jou over de kracht van zulke verhalen? ...Hoe is het werk zo internationaal gegaan?
- Hoe beïnvloedt het feit dat deze muurschildering op een overheidsgebouw zit, het stadhuis, jouw gevoel van verantwoordelijkheid als maker?
- Wat betekent het voor jou als kunstenaar om letterlijk in de publieke ruimte in te grijpen? Ervaar je dat als een vorm van macht, zorg, verantwoordelijkheid of iets anders?

Extra photographic material at RoosArt Academy







**Transcript interview answers De Graaf (Dutch original version):**

Over jezelf:

“Nou ik ben dus Roos/Rosalie van RoosArt en ik maak dus mega grote kunst over heel de wereld. Nou vanaf kinds af aan ben ik altijd al wel super creatief geweest. Ik weet nog dat ik als kind met lego ging bouwen en dan maakte ik al helemaal 3D piramides terwijl andere kinderen gewoon 2D torens bouwden zeg maar. Dus dat zat er al wel jong in. En vanaf mijn veertiende zag ik een video online van iemand die een schildering maakte en dat was gewoon net een foto en ja toen was ik eigenlijk meteen helemaal gefascineerd met hoe ze dat deden. Vervolgens heb ik echt honderden video's gekeken op YouTube, veel van Bob Ross, en mezelf alles aangeleerd op het gebied van schilderkunst, elke techniek etc...En als je zo jong bent 14/15 dan neem je al die informatie in je op en ja toen wist ik eigenlijk alles van elke techniek. Overigens nog niet met spuitbussen. Ik begon eerst met schilderijtjes maken en dat verkocht ik dan. En op een gegeven moment was ik 18 en toen zei iemand die mijn schilderijtjes had gezien (die staan ook hier in de studio kun je straks even bekijken) van oh wow misschien moet je een keer met spuitbussen gaan werken en toen dacht ik “JA!” Toen ben ik een keer meegegaan naar een Street Art festival en daar heb ik een muurschildering gemaakt voor het eerst met spuitbussen. En toen dacht ik echt: “Holy shit dit is zo vet!” Dus sindsdien doe ik het nu acht jaar. En ja we hebben nu een supergroot bedrijf opgebouwd met 22 man personeel. Dus het is nu heel groot. We doen veel workshops, evenementen, grote muurschilderingen over heel de wereld. Ik ben nu volgens mij 17 of 18 landen gehad.”

Hoe in het wereldje gerold?

“Ik maakte dus een schildering van Poetin en Trump die elkaar zoenen, toen was ik 18 en dat was echt mijn derde schildering ofzo ooit. Die is gemaakt in Arnhem in een galerij. Toen zei iemand van hier ik heb een muur je mag gewoon alles maken wat je wil. Toen dat ik van oh vet en toen ja was het net in het nieuws allemaal over Poetin en Trump en toen dacht ik ja daar ga ik het over doen. Vanaf het moment dat ik het werk op internet plaatste explodeerde alles. Ik kwam in talkshows, interviews. En ja ik was 18 en ik kreeg echt zo veel over me heen, ook heel veel negativiteit. Het waren nog net geen doodsb bedreigingen. Uiteindelijk doet me dat niet zoveel, ik vind het juist leuk om reacties op te roepen bij mensen. Het was natuurlijk best wel een heftig beeld, wat natuurlijk een bewuste keuze was, omdat ik iets wilde opwekken...Maar dat het zo veel impact had dat had ik echt nooit verwacht. Toen heb ik wel de politieke onderwerpen wat meer aan de kant geschoven, ik vond dat toch wel een ding en eigenlijk niet zo heel leuk. Ik richt me echt op mijn eigen kunst en het vertellen van mooie verhalen, de politiek vind ik helemaal niet zo interessant.”

Artistieke vrijheid/restricties opdrachtgevers?

“Ik kies nu mijn opdrachten daarop uit...Dus soms in het begin zei iemand van ik wil een portret van bewijs van spreken Poetin ofzo en dan schilderde ik gewoon één op één een foto na...Dat is niet echt mijn eigen kunst. Nu maak ik zelf ontwerpen, echt mijn eigen kunst, helemaal gecreëerd vanuit wat ik zelf tof vind. Dat doe ik eigenlijk alleen maar nu. Dus als iemand zeg ik wil m'n logo of iets in die trant dan doe ik het niet.”

Hoe verhoud je je als vrouw tot deze “male-dominated scene?”

“Ja de scene wordt inderdaad heel erg gedomineerd door mannen. Dit maakt natuurlijk dat ik als vrouw heel erg opval. Ik denk echt dat 90% man is. Op dat eerste festival waar ik ben geweest waar ik het net over had was ik de enige vrouw van 100 mannen. Dus ja daar kwam ik aan met mijn koffertje verf. En toen dachten zij allemaal van ja wie is die meid, wat doet zij hier...En dan krijg je alle aandacht op je en als je dan ook nog iets vets maakt dan vinden ze dat juist allemaal heel leuk en dat promoten ze. Maar ja dat is natuurlijk ook wel meer het illegale graffiti wereldje waar we het dan over hebben en ik ben helemaal niet met illegale kunst bezig, alleen maar in opdracht. Dus dat is echt een hele andere wereld, daar zitten wel wat meer vrouwen vaak met kwast. Maar ja het is wel een stoer beroep. Maar ja daar heb ik ook heel mijn merk omheen gemaakt: lange blonde haren, roze kleding, een soort “Barbie stijl”, een persona een beetje inderdaad. Daarmee onderscheid ik me ook heel erg van de rest. Daarbij zijn veel meiden in dat wereldje in beetje “vaag”, wat alternatiever. Ik daarentegen ben een super nuchtere, Achterhoekse meid. Dus daarin onderscheid je je ook natuurlijk. Ik kan ook goed zaken doen en mezelf goed representeren, ik kom mijn afspraken na. Dus daarin denk ik dat ik wel relatief uniek ben hier in Nederland. En ja ik maak gewoon zulke realistische werken, die technisch gezien ook heel moeilijk zijn om te maken, dus er zijn niet veel mensen die dat doen in Nederland, ook wereldwijd niet.”

*See No Color:*

“Dit project is ontstaan omdat dat flatgebouw daar helemaal gerenoveerd werd door SWZ heet dat. En het is gewoon een hele slechte wijk om het zo maar te zeggen. Heel veel criminaliteit en mensen die daar zelfmoord plegen, van de flat afspringen daar...Echt 7 in één jaar. Echt bizar. Het staat gewoon echt bekend als de achterbuurt in Zwolle. En toen dachten ze nou we willen de uitstraling van de wijk verbeteren en dat kan je natuurlijk heel mooi met street art doen. Dus ja toen kwamen ze bij mij terecht. Toen ben ik in gesprek gegaan met buurtbewoners. Dus eerst hebben we een meeting gehad met een vrije inloop waarbij iedereen die wilden aan kon sluiten en ideeën kon opperen. Een iemand zei bijvoorbeeld ik wil de zon want ik kom uit Curaçao haha...Je merkte bij deze bijeenkomst ook dat het een super multiculturele groep mensen is. Van allerlei nationaliteiten. Nou met die ideeën van die bijeenkomst ben ik aan de slag gegaan en op basis van wat ik daar heb gezien. Nou toen dacht ik zie daar inderdaad ook heel erg veel kinderen spelen, het is een wijk met veel jonge kids. Dus ik dacht iets met multiculturele kinderen op een creatieve manier. Dus op de muurschildering worden kinderen van verschillende culturen afgebeeld die samen spelen met elkaar. Elk kind staat voor één kleur verf en doordat ze samen spelen mengen alle kleuren verf met elkaar, dus alle culturen mengen met elkaar. Dus ja dat vond ik wel een hele mooie symboliek erachter. Het zijn voornamelijk primaire kleuren, dat vond ik gewoon mooi staan, fel en pakkend en dat is ook gebonden aan de kids. Bij dit werk had ik tevens ook complete creatieve vrijheid. De kinderen zijn overigens niet specifiek gebaseerd uit individuen uit de wijk...Ze zijn gegenereerd met AI. Dus ik heb het plaatje helemaal zelf in elkaar geknipt met honderden foto's van AI. Dus dan zeg ik creëer een meisje met: deze kenmerken...En dan creëert AI dat. Uiteindelijk knip en plak ik dan dus alles en combineer het tot één samenhangend beeld. Ik verdeel alles daarbij in vakjes en vakje per vakje wordt alles ook geschilderd op de platen. Ik werk echt met alleen maar spuitbussen en we verdelen dus alles in vakken en op onze telefoon hebben we dan de afbeelding. Dan zoomen we in op één vak en dat gaan we zo vakje per vakje af en dan breidt het zich zo langzaam uit.”

“Ik hoop dat als mensen (uit de buurt) langs de muurschildering komen en ernaar kijken dat ze trots zijn dat ze in die flat/wijk mogen wonen met dat mooie kunstwerk erop. Want het valt natuurlijk super erg op vanaf de weg kan je het al in de verte zien, het is echt het middelpunt van de wijk. Dus vanaf nu als mensen zeggen ik woon daar bij die muurschildering dan weet iedereen wat ze bedoelen. En tuurlijk er zijn denk ik ook mensen die het niet heel mooi vinden, dat heb je met kunst. Maar ik wilde gewoon echt iets maken waar ik echt al mijn technieken in kwijt kon op het gebied van realisme, dus ook als een visite kaartje voor mezelf dat ik echt kon laten zien van ik kan goed schilderen haha... Je krijgt natuurlijk ook niet vaak de kans om op zo'n grote flat te schilderen, dus dat was ook wel heel bijzonder.”

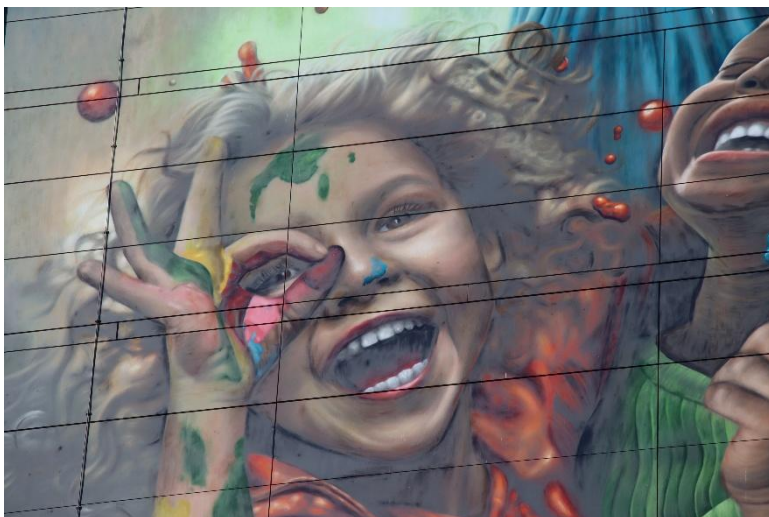
“Er zit ook heel veel tijd in, in zo'n werk als deze. Uiteindelijk ben ik er ongeveer 2 maanden mee bezig geweest samen met drie andere van het team. Want we hadden twee hoogwerkers, een hoogwerker huren kost 4000 euro per week... Dat is echt heel duur, dus daarom hadden we maar twee hoogwerkers en dan twee aan twee.”

Activistisch?

“Dit kunstwerk is dus best wel weer heel politiek gericht en dat brengt wel veel commotie met zich mee online, het is een heel links kunstwerk en daar hebben soms mensen wat van te zeggen... Ja je ziet gewoon ook aan Doesburg bijvoorbeeld waar ik woon, dat in een paar jaar tijd de helft van de bevolking bijna gewoon buitenlands is geworden. Dus je ziet gewoon dat de wereld verandert en dat er Nederland veel meer multicultureel is geworden. Nou waar ik vandaan kom de Achterhoek dus, met de nuchterheid centraal, ja daar zijn ze vaak wat meer tegen buitenlanders. Zelf had ik dat eerst ook een beetje. Maar nu heb ik bijvoorbeeld ook een Syrische vluchteling bij mij in het team werken en mijn beeld van dit alles is nu ook heel erg veranderd. We zijn uiteindelijk allemaal mensen.”

Kritiek?

“Ja over die muurschildering in Zwolle was dus ook echt wel ophef. Het ergste was dat ik een kind had afgebeeld met een bepaald handgebaar:



En er waren dus mensen die dat associeerde met 666 “getal van het beest”. Ik heb echt tientallen mails gekregen van mensen die zeiden dat ik in de illuminatie zat en dat ik de duivel zou aanbidden, dus dat ging heel ver. Ook met die vlinders die worden afgebeeld, en dat de monarchvlinder gelinkt zou zijn aan de duivel. Terwijl ik dacht een vlinder, gewoon speels.



Dus ook echt online heftige reacties, mensen hebben me hele brieven gestuurd dus dat was ook heel intens. Mensen gingen er allemaal dingen in zien wat totaal niet zo bedoeld was, allemaal elementen zoeken wat dan gekoppeld aan de duivel zou zijn ook met betrekking tot mijn andere kunstwerken. Dachten ze dat ik betaald werd door de overheid etc...”

“Maar er waren natuurlijk ook super veel positieve reacties en positieve publiciteit. Want deze muurschildering is echt miljoenen keren bekeken online. Grootste schildering tot nu toe gemaakt. En over het algemeen waren de mensen uit de buurt ook erg enthousiast, elke dag kijken, een praatje maken, eten en drinken brengen. Maar daar zit ook een keerzijde aan want er was ook iemand die mijn telefoon daar gestolen heeft samen met nog andere dingen, terwijl we er gewoon 10 meter naast stonden ofzo. We hebben echt veel gezien in die wijk van drugsdeals tot mensenhandel weet ik het allemaal. In de hoogwerker kijk je natuurlijk naar beneden op de straat en wat we daar allemaal hebben gezien... Door die initiatieven zoals een speeltuin etc... proberen ze dat natuurlijk te verbeteren, maar alsnog is er nog veel problematiek.”

“See No Color” → “Kinderen zien niet de huidskleur, maar de mens achter de kleur. → Onbevangingheid van een kind.”

*Anna Reintjes:*

“Ja samen met de *Lamplighter*, is deze tot stand gekomen vanuit het stadsmuseum, die geld beschikbaar had voor muurschilderingen. Zij wilden dus historische verhalen vertellen in de stad. Zij kwamen met de onderwerpen voor deze schilderingen, maar ik moest me er zelf in verdiepen en er ontwerpen bij maken. Ik heb eerst online research gedaan en nou online was er erg weinig over te vinden. Dus ik heb een historicus gesproken en die heeft mij veel weten vertellen, net als mensen uit de buurt, dus meer via via verhalen gehoord. En ja, toen het ontwerp gemaakt. En Anna had dus twee koeien, waarvan ik er eentje in de voorgrond heb geschilderd en in de verte zie je de ander. Samen met de melkkan op de voorgrond natuurlijk en ja het moet er dus uitzien alsof ze echt uit dat gat komt, de trompe l’oeil techniek is dat inderdaad.”

“Dit kunstwerk was vrij bijzonder, omdat die muur dus afbreekt. Dus ik dacht ik maak in mijn ontwerp gebruik van ruige stenen, zodat als er stukjes van de echte muur afbreken dat niet uitmaakt en het werk zich daarmee vermengt als het ware. Alleen nu over de jaren is er wel

heel erg veel uitgevallen. Maar we hebben echt rekening gehouden met de historische waarde van het pand, we hebben de muur bewust niet opgespoten of glad gemaakt. We lieten het echt staan zoals het was zodat het wel nog oud en monumentaal zou blijven, dit draagt bij aan de authenticiteit van het werk. Maar nu is over de jaren dus wel een heel deel van het gezicht weggevaagd, dus dat ga ik nog wel fixen, dus mijn intentie is wel om het te blijven bijwerken, tenminste de belangrijke delen.”

“Je bepaalt wel gewoon hoe een wijk eruit gaat zien, dus ik voel wel een verantwoording toe naar de wijk en het werk. En de reacties van de mensen uit de wijk die je krijgt is ook wel iets waarvoor je het doet, als kunstenaar wil je gewoon dat je werk gezien wordt. Street art is daar perfect voor omdat het openbaar is.”

“Tijdens het maken van dit werk waren er ook veel lokale bewoners die regelmatig langskwamen op de fiets om alles te volgen en een praatje te maken. Ook mensen die haar persoonlijk hebben gekend en langskwamen met verhalen, waardoor je weer op een nieuwe manier naar het werk gaat kijken. Mensen maken foto's en posten het online, dus er is veel interactie met en rondom het werk. Daarbij is het heel tof dat het ook een stukje educatie met zich meebrengt in dit geval over een stukje historie. Dus het werk bereikt al met al heel veel mensen. Het werk werkt weer een heel nieuw leven ingeblazen afgelopen koningsdag, toen het werk omringd werd met mensen in oranje. Hier was duidelijk te zien hoe tekenend een werk als deze is voor het straatbeeld.”

*Lamplighter:*

“Nou ik had al meerdere kunstwerken gemaakt in de buurt en toen kwam het stadsmuseum weer naar me toe en die zeiden we willen iets over dit oude beroep maken. Het gaat om een lantaarnaansteker die natuurlijk is uitgestorven door de uitvinding van elektriciteit. En op basis hiervan ben ik aan de slag gegaan met een ontwerp. In eerste instantie voor op een muur bij de Gruitpoort als je binnenkomt aan de andere kant van de stad, ten opzichte van het gemeentehuis. Maar toen zei het Stadsmuseum dat ze het ontwerp zo ontzettend gaaf vonden dat ze gingen kijken of ze een betere muur konden vinden voor het werk. En toen kwamen ze uit bij het Gemeentehuis, dus we hadden het ontwerp op de geselecteerde muur gefotoshopt zodat je een goed beeld kreeg van hoe het zou worden. Maar ik dacht echt van daar gaat nooit toestemming voor gegeven worden, omdat er natuurlijk ook rekening gehouden moest worden met de architect van het gemeentehuis. Maar het tegendeel werd bewezen, de familie van de architect gaf toestemming en het kon gewoon, super vet! Ik heb die familie ook ontmoet en met ze gepraat en die waren heel enthousiast. Het kunstwerk past eigenlijk ook perfect daar en die muur was voorheen ook veel lelijker, het is echt een verrijking voor de muur. In het werk zit daarom dus ook een link naar het oude gemeentehuis op de achtergrond, dat vormt een brug tussen vroeger en nu. En ja de kleuren passen gewoon heel goed. De donkere, kouden kleuren verwijzen naar de kou van de nacht. En dan het vuur en de meer paarse en warme tinten verwijzen naar de warmte die het beroep brengt.”

Inspiratie man die wordt afgebeeld?

“Ja de man die wordt afgebeeld is geen bestaand persoon, maar het is een man uit de Achterhoek met kledij uit de tijdgeest. Eerst wilde ik ook nog een sigaar in zijn mond toevoegen, maar dat mocht niet, want ja je mag roken tegenwoordig niet promoten. Dus als je het hebt over artistieke beperkingen in combinatie met het werken in opdracht is dit een voorbeeld. Maar hoe dan ook is het ontwerp verder helemaal vanuit mijn eigen visie tot leven

gebracht. Ik wilde een goede, oude karakteristieke kop, in het realistisch schilderen van zulke geleefde gezichten ligt ook mijn kracht. Verder wilde ik dat de man niet te herkenbaar was, dus vandaar dat ik voor een zijaanzicht heb gekozen. Dit maakt de man naar mijn idee universeel, zodat iedereen zijn eigen opa er een beetje in kan herkennen. Ik krijg zo vaak mails van mensen die foto's sturen van familieleden, hun opa of oma etc....die dan zeggen van kijk hij/zij lijkt erop en dan is dat ook echt zo. Ook van de man die op deze schildering is geportretteerd, heel veel. Dus mensen herkennen hun eigen liefdes erin."

"Naar mijn mening is dit ook een van mijn mooiste werken dus ik ben er erg trots op. Ik rijd er regelmatig langs en iedere keer is het weer zo ongelooflijk vet om te zien dat mijn kunst gewoon het straatbeeld vormt."