

# Co Westerik – Everyday Wonder

9 February – 26 May 2019

[Media kit](#)

**In 2019 Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is paying tribute to the Rotterdam-based artist Co Westerik, who recently died at the age of 94, with a retrospective of his art and his diaries. It is the first time these private journals are on display.**

‘Everyday Wonder’ offers an overview of Co Westerik’s oeuvre that has been compiled in close collaboration with the Co Westerik Foundation. The exhibition opens on 9 February 2019 and transports the visitor into Westerik’s experiential world, in which the everyday becomes something special. The exhibition is being presented in the Willem van der Vorm Gallery and the Print Room – both of which are part of the modern half of the museum’s accommodation, which will remain open until 26 May 2019. Alongside 50 works by the artist, the presentation includes six diaries, which are being presented for the first time. ‘Everyday Wonder’ coincides with the publication of these unique journals, in which Westerik tracked the creation of his works of art. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has often devoted attention to Co Westerik, who spent much of his life working and living in Rotterdam: the last occasion was in honour of his 90th birthday in 2014. The museum owns seven of his paintings and an extensive collection of 152 drawings and prints.

**Director Sjarel Ex:** *‘Co Westerik created unforgettable images that are engraved into our collective memory. His art will prove to be of eternal value.’*



*Co Westerik, 'Hand above Torso', (2007, oil paint, alkyd and tempera on canvas on panel) and 'Gramophone Player' (1971, oil and tempera on canvas on panel). Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.*

## **The artist**

Co Westerik was born on 2 March 1924 in The Hague, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts (KABK). From 1971 he worked from Rotterdam and the south of France. Westerik is primarily known as a painter, but he has also produced plenty of drawings: his works in pen, pencil, crayon, watercolour and India ink were produced with a speed and lightness that distinguishes the drawings from his paintings. The latter consist of layers of paint that were applied with meticulous care, so they were produced extremely slowly. Co Westerik died in Rotterdam, on 10 September 2018 at the age of 94.

## **His oeuvre**

The poetic character of Westerik's works arouses feelings and emotions. The canvases show scenes that are derived from reality, but are transformed through the artist's idiosyncratic, wonderful gaze. Everyday events and normal people acquire something uneasy in Westerik's art. Details such as the swollen veins on the back of a hand in *The Kiss on the Hand* (1984) are magnified in such a manner that they assume a totally different meaning. This disquietment made the greatest impression in one of his most famous works, *Cut by grass*, of which Westerik produced five versions between 1966 and 1975. These works show one or several fingers above blades of grass in extreme close-up. A finger is cut by grass and the wound is depicted so graphically that the minor incident – something that Westerik personally experienced – acquires something nauseating. On the initiative of the Stichting Openbaar Kunstbezit – the Dutch Public Art Foundation – reproductions of this work adorned the carriages of Dutch trains for a while, until they were removed because some rail passengers felt the image was too agonising.



*Co Westerik, 'The Kiss on the Hand', 1984, oil paint and tempera on canvas. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.*

## **The exhibition**

‘Everyday Wonder’ consists of 50 works by Co Westerik, including paintings, drawings, prints and videos. Twenty of these works are from the collection of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen; the other works are from the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, as well as from private collections and the collection of the artist himself (via the Co Westerik Foundation). Some of these works have never been exhibited before. Occupying a central place in this exceptional retrospective of the work and life of this Rotterdam-based artist are the six journals that he kept throughout his life, in which he noted the choices and progress he had made in the creation process of his works almost daily. The showing of the journals was already planned before Westerik’s death. With his passing, the project has expanded into this well-considered overview of his oeuvre, in consultation with the family.

The exhibition also includes a special presentation in honour of Westerik’s monumental mural in Rotterdam: the 17-metre-high *Girl Skipping Rope*, which graced the side wall of the police headquarters at Haagseveer between 1976 and 1988. The fresco was cherished by the people of Rotterdam, but despite protests it was destroyed along with the demolition of this police station.

Curator of modern and contemporary art Francesco Stocchi with regard to ‘Everyday Wonder’: *‘Co Westerik’s unique perspective on the normal and quotidian proposes a totally new relationship between humankind and nature and how that is represented. It is an honour to be able to stage this project, initiated in conjunction with the artist himself.’*

Co Westrik - Oefenswep wand, Haagse Veer, Rotterdam, 1976 - "Tomtje Springsnd Metje"



Westrik 1976

*Co Westerik, 'Girl Skipping Rope', 1976, brush and watercolour on paper. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.*

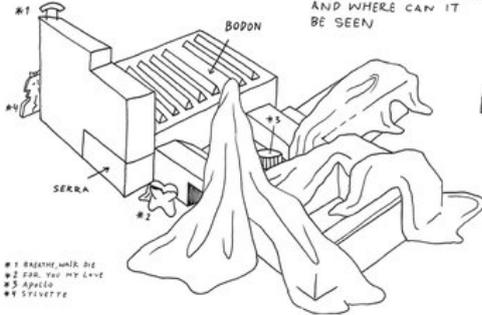
## **Transit Boijmans Van Beuningen**

From 2019, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is 'in transit'. From the early summer of 2019, while the museum building is closed for renovation, the collection will remain accessible to the public in various ways and the programme continues. Eight institutions and museums across Rotterdam will be holding exhibitions with works of art from the museum collection, under the title 'Boijmans at the Neighbours'. The collection will also be presented abroad, by means of touring exhibitions. The book collection is being transferred to Rotterdam City Archives. With 'Boijmans in the Classroom', Rotterdam schoolchildren will be astonished by an educational programme that involves actual works of art. Preparations are also underway to establish a venue in Rotterdam-South, an experimental garden for the younger generation. In the meantime, construction of the Boijmans Van Beuningen Depot – the world's first publicly accessible art depot – continues apace and this landmark adjoining the museum is set to open in early 2021.



### BOIJMANS IN TRANSIT

THE COLLECTION HAS GROWN IN 170 YEARS TO BECOME A WORLD CLASS COLLECTION WITH 157,000 ARTWORKS. IT HAS BEEN HOUSED SINCE 1935 IN THE MUSEUMPARK. THIS BUILDING NOW REQUIRES RENOVATION. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COLLECTION AND WHERE CAN IT BE SEEN



### DEPOT

THE WORLD'S FIRST PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE ART DEPOT!  
- UNDER CONSTRUCTION NOW  
- NEXT TO THE MUSEUM  
- NEW OPPORTUNITY AND ICON FOR ROTTERDAM  
- OPENS 2020/BEGINNING OF 2021  
- BOIJMANS.NL/DEPOT

### IN THE CLASSROOM



MUSEUM EXPERIENCE IN THE CLASSROOM: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION WITH REAL ARTWORKS FROM THE COLLECTION

FROM 2019

### MUSEUM

JANUARI 2019: OLD VAN DER STEUR WING CLOSES FOR RENOVATION  
FEBRUARI - MAY 2019: MODERN BODON AND ROBBRECHT & DAEM WINGS OPEN. ON VIEW: BAUHAUS, CO WESTERIK, COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS  
JUNE 2019: ALL DOORS CLOSE AND RENOVATIONS BEGIN  
\* CITY COUNCIL DECIDES IN 2018 HOW AMBITIOUS THE RENOVATIONS WILL BE

### ROTTERDAM ZUID

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

### V&D?

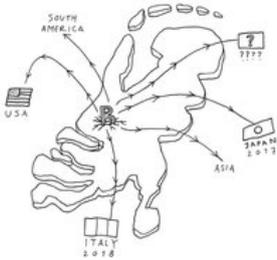
CREATIVE PRODUCTIONS

IF IT GOES AHEAD, OPEN FROM 2020

UNDER CONSTRUCTION: MORE INFO SOON!

### ABROAD

SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS TRAVEL AROUND THE WORLD TO PROMOTE THE CITY AND THE MUSEUM #BOIJMANSCOLLECTIONS FROM 2017



### LIBRARY

145,000 BOOKS AND MUSEUM-DOCUMENTS ON SHOW IN A SPECIAL READING ROOM IN THE CITY ARCHIVES FROM MID-2019

### BEST OF

MASTERPIECES FOR AN (INTERNATIONAL) AUDIENCE. ON SHOW IN THE BEST MUSEUMS IN THE NETHERLANDS AND ABROAD DURING THE RENOVATIONS FROM 2019/2020

### NEXT DOOR

EXHIBITIONS AT:  
KUNSTHAL ROTTERDAM  
TAX & CUSTOMS MUSEUM  
MUSEUM ROTTERDAM  
CHABOT MUSEUM  
STEDLIJK MUSEUM SCHIEDAM  
MARITIME MUSEUM  
WERELDMUSEUM  
FROM FEBRUARI 2019



### DIGITAL

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### IDEAS

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HAPPENING NOW

FUTURE PLANS

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