



Heineken
Prizes



KNAW

2016 Dr A.H. Heineken Prize for Art, awarded to Yvonne Dröge Wendel

Presentation speech by Kitty Zijlmans, Chairperson of the 2016 Dr A.H. Heineken Prize for Art Jury

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good art touches us. Usually, we mean that in the metaphorical sense.

A work of art moves us, gets us thinking or — why not? — makes us angry.

What gives Yvonne Dröge Wendel's work so much originality and vitality is that it also touches us ***literally***.

There's never a sign posted next to her work insisting that we 'Do not touch'.

There's never a security guard who intervenes if you get too close, if you reach out your hand because you're curious.

The art that Yvonne Dröge Wendel creates is all about touching. About contact.

Her playful and infectious work tempts people and things to touch each other.

She calls the interaction between people, things and their environment 'relational thingness'.

One of her performative actions was famous and hilarious at the same time.

It was entitled *Black Ball*.

Dröge Wendel created an enormous felted black ball, twice the size of an adult.

She set the ball loose on the streets of different cities, without having any predetermined plan.

In Bolzano, Italians wrestled the ball through narrow streets and alleyways.

In Rotterdam, the ball was given a twenty-man police escort, destroying every possible form of spontaneity.

In Istanbul, the ball attracted so many street kids that the situation almost got out of control.

The artist deflated the ball before any accidents occurred.

In every city and in every situation, the giant ball remained a mysterious black hole.

It was a fantastic object, and no one who came across it unexpectedly could resist handling it.

It was art that never failed to touch people.

Other objects created by Dröge Wendel also have a role to play in our world.

They become her allies.

Each one of these objects is carefully designed and has a strong presence, but its function or purpose is not immediately obvious.

She conducts playful, philosophical studies of how objects influence human behaviour.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Yvonne Dröge Wendel works at a lively crossroads of art, philosophy, education and science.

As an artist, she asks philosophical questions, and her PhD research at the University of Twente sets an example of the growing field of 'artistic research'.

She also trains young artists at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam.

She welds all these different domains together with an eye for detail, and with a sense of the absurd and unexpected.

Don't imagine for a moment that people hold absolute sway over things.

Things equally have people in their grasp, as Dröge Wendel's work shows us and has us experience.

It is splendid, the way her art gives us a new way of being in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Her work shows her immense imaginativeness.

She uses sophisticated means to reinvent and recreate relationships between people and their environment in the most magnificent way.

Please join me and the jury in a round of applause for Yvonne Dröge Wendel, the winner of the 2016 Dr A.H. Heineken Prize for Art!