

Do I enter a building or an institution? Both I think. I learnt to know it in the last ten years or so in many ways. I excavated the archive for my research on De Appel in the first period, 1975-1983. I had several meetings at the offices, I attended the opening of many exhibitions or just visited the shows in a mostly empty space. I learned to know the backside of the exhibitions spaces. And so we, my guide of DAS ARTS and I started our tour through the building. We meandered through it, from below with the elevator to above, and from there to the first floor again and by way of a different routing again up to the second floor and back to the first, the offices. And then we arrived in an almost empty space, with only a beamer and a screen. We said goodbye to each other. We had talked quite a bit about how we had experienced the spaces and about my connection to De Appel and the people I know of DAS ARTS. The rooms had still the character of exhibition spaces but with details that should not be seen in the normal circumstances when they were still on duty. "They" had left it but not as a ruin. They could come back and start all over again. Was it really the last time I was in this building? I have no particular affinity with it, as I had with the building at the Brouwersgracht. One does not suppose to have it with a with cube. It is only there for the art works, to let the works look as happy as can be. The people, curators, assistants, the technical staff, were most of the time behind closed doors, though I was there often when they were rebuilding the spaces for the next exhibition. Only that already makes a difference, compared with the first location at the Brouwersgracht. But nevertheless it had been more lively since the arrival of Ann than it had ever been before.

Now I was alone and I start reading 'the voice': And? Was it nice? What? The walk?

That was not all. I was brought back to the history of the building. Remarkable that these artists who had invited be for this 'performance' were interested in the history of the building as well as one of the curator classes in the past few years. It had been a bank, owned by a Jewish family. Did I know this history already? Certainly some parts of it. But I had never realized the connection with the Goldstikker family and the art collection of this family. Of course I had followed all the items about this affaire in Dutch newspapers or on television. Not particularly because I was so much interested in this family or its paintings, but because a friend of my was fighting for ages for the paintings and drawings of her grandfather, Mr. Koenigs. So I was more interested in the fate of the grandchildren and the collections they wanted to get back in one way or the other than it the art works themselves. I was intrigued by the images on the screen that first looked like images from an air craft but later appeared to be images of a mountain top. You know that there is something behind that grayness but what?

And then it was time to go. Of course I could have walked through the building again but a friend was waiting, so I took the stairs that like a screwdriver in a castle or tower brought me back to the exit. The artists were waiting for me. We talked a bit. I knew that I was the first participant, but I had not realized until then that my performance would differ from the next one. They were still working on it. They asked me questions and I asked my questions.

I was happy that I could have participated. So good-bye Nieuwe Spiegelstraat, number 10!

Marga van Mechelen