

Press Release  
Amsterdam Museum  
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Exhibition sheds light on the Netherlands' greatest modern artist's Amsterdam years

## **Mondrian in Amsterdam 1892–1912**

**11 October 2013 to 5 January 2014**

The Amsterdam Museum reveals an unknown side of the world-famous artist Piet Mondrian. In his youth the pioneer of modern art lived and worked in Amsterdam for a long time. *Mondrian in Amsterdam 1892–1912* examines the way the painter discovered his own style in and around the city—from the dark, realistic landscapes of his early years to his almost abstract rendition of the dazzling *Mill in Sunlight* (1908). For the first time this exhibition brings more than sixty of his works—most of them rarely shown—back to the city where they were painted a hundred years ago.

In October 1892 Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) enrolled as a student at the Amsterdamse Rijksacademie van Beeldende Kunsten. This was the start of a period of twenty years in which his artistic talent reached full maturity. The city of Amsterdam, with its flourishing cultural climate, was an important source of inspiration. The Rijksmuseum had just opened and there was a huge rise in the number of art courses, artists and exhibitions. Mondrian became friendly with fellow artists and joined the Arti et Amicitiae artists' society.

### **In search of an individual style**

During his time in Amsterdam Mondrian was constantly seeking his own style. Initially he was influenced by trendsetters like Breitner and Isaac Israëls. He was then inspired by Symbolism, before concentrating on landscape painting for a prolonged period. In consequence, the exhibition contains many paintings of rural scenes in the countryside around Amsterdam. Mondrian was also often to be found further from the city. The Zeeland landscape was a particularly important source of inspiration for him, with the lighthouse at Westkapelle as one of the best-known examples. When the work of Vincent van Gogh gained greater recognition around 1905 it is easy to see its influence in Mondrian's oeuvre. Van Gogh's daring use of colour and his masterly handling of paint are echoed in *Mill in Sunlight* (1908), one of the highlights of the exhibition.

### **The indestructible link between art and philosophy**

Another highlight in Mondrian's oeuvre and of the exhibition is *Evolution*, a painting dating from 1911. It clearly shows how much Mondrian was influenced by theosophy, the religious philosophical movement he had followed since 1908. In *Evolution* Mondrian expresses the most important theosophical dogma—the spiritual awakening of mankind in three stages. For Mondrian art and philosophy were inextricably linked, and he remained a member of the Theosophical Society for the rest of his life.

### **Special exchange of works between Amsterdam and The Hague**

All the paintings, prints and drawings in *Mondrian in Amsterdam 1892–1912* come from the collection of the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague. In exchange for the many important Mondrians, the Amsterdam Museum is lending some of its masterpieces to The Hague. This autumn nine of the finest paintings of anatomy lessons in the Amsterdam Museum collection will be exhibited in the Gemeentemuseum.

### **About the Amsterdam Museum**

The Amsterdam Museum tells the story of the city of Amsterdam; the past, the present and the future. Four core values—enterprise, free-thinking, creativity and citizenship—are the basis of the city’s DNA. In the light of these concepts, history is brought to life and linked to the present and the future. The museum considers it a social duty to make the story of Amsterdam accessible and to present it to as wide an audience as possible.

### **Note for editors:**

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