



# MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

-Persbericht-

CIVIC VIRTUE

Subtitle: A NEOCLASSICAL REVIVAL

Rokin 112, 1012 LB Amsterdam  
6 februari t/m 7 maart 2010  
Opening vrijdag 5 februari van 20.00-22.00 uur  
Zalen: IV, V, VI en VII

*Civic Virtue* is a revival of all ideas that used to be considered classical. Using an aesthetics of borrowed items and discarded ideas, *Civic Virtue* approaches its subject using various elements; an assembly of antique artefacts that refer to the classical age, a selection from Arti et Amicitiae's collection, wall drawing, paintings, video and sound installation.

*Civic Virtue* renews the relationship with virtue, morality and the nuanced sensibilities of what freedom means to the citizen of the modern world. It is an inquiry into the past and into the nature of the thing. It presumes that each object, or assembly of objects, forms coordinates which explain how all other things have come into being. In the end you can look at the future, but you can also look at the present while pretending you are in the past.

*Finally, we are told, you fear the gaze of posterity. Yes; posterity will be astonished, in fact, by your irresponsibility and your weakness, and our descendants will laugh at the presumption of their fathers, and at their prejudices. [...] It is less a question of enlightenment than of avoiding voluntary blindness.*

- Maximilien Robespierre: On the Trial of the King

Participating Artists:

Geirthrudur Finnbogadottir Hjorvar

Gijs Wahl

Ruchama Noorda

Brian Mckenna

Mounira Al Solh

Arti et Amicitiae, Rokin 112, 1012 LB Amsterdam  
Openingstijden: dinsdag t/m zondag van 12.00-18.00 uur  
Entreprijs voor niet-leden: € 3,-. Met dit kaartje kan van dinsdag t/m vrijdag de sociëteit van Arti (normaal alleen toegankelijk voor leden) worden bezocht.

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Voor nadere informatie kunt u contact opnemen met Mirjam Taverdin, [mirjam@arti.nl](mailto:mirjam@arti.nl), 020-6233508  
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## MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

### On The Subject of Civic Virtue:

Let's address the problems of reality with a little more conviction. Attempts at observing form tend to be completely unconvincing. Reality lies before us with the subversive presence of a contradiction and its problem is our perception of it.

Civic Virtue is put forth as an ambiguous notion on purpose. It is more of a dusty artefact among notions than it is the language of propaganda. But it also holds within itself the hidden core of the people's sovereignty in opposition to its submission to (unreasonable) state or (unjust) rule. Consequently, to neglect a critique of the state is a serious lack of civic virtue. The same thing can be said of the state of things.

### The Sphinx:

Someone once told me that they had a revelation when they saw the Nike of Samothrace (The headless Greek goddess with wings at the Louvre) – it was undeniable proof that civilization is eroding before our eyes.

Neoclassicism was an aesthetic of rational formalism. It was a look that tied together the ideals of the Enlightenment into a slick and harmonious surface that reflected the ideology of the upcoming revolution of 1789. The Empire style however was an aesthetical embrace of Napoleon's Empire. It was based more factually on archaeological information and was filled with references to exotic landscapes in an irrational unison with Roman soldiers and charioteers. It is the Sphinx who looks in perpetual perplexity out at the living arrangements of the new bourgeoisie.

It is a forgone assumption that the final stages of the French Revolution of 1789 gave birth to its tyrant when Napoleon Bonaparte became a general of war comparable only with Julius Caesar. If fate itself resides in the energy of the material that design expresses, then it is perhaps the revival of Roman styled interiors in Neoclassicism that brought about this unforeseen repetition in history.

### And in Conclusion:

A sociologist might imply a subliminal desire to act out a past where the king is not only overthrown, but is sacrificed on a yearly basis. First ritualistically, and eventually it starts to imply its own politics. It implies that regicide is the suppressed natural order of things and not a revolt against it.



## MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

Geirthrudur Finnbogadottir Hjorvar's method is based on positioning artefacts that expose their own meaning – a Roman marble head is at once an original while simultaneously serving as a reference to its own revival in the form of classicism. It is a disembodied head that has been mutilated by the passage of time. It also makes a reference to the guillotine as the outcome of an awkward combination of terror and virtue, while the style of the Empire, like that of the clock, is the flip side of the same coin – an emerging market economy regenerates the proper kitsch of classicism.

*Rime VI*

### Civic Virtue (Installation):

- The Sound of Dolphins
  
- Marble head of an Aphrodite.  
Type **Aphrodite Euploia**  
Roman  
Circa 150 AD  
White marble  
On loan from The Allard Pierson Museum
  
- Bust of man from Republic Period.  
19<sup>th</sup> century copy  
Original: 1<sup>st</sup> century BC  
Plaster  
On loan from The Allard Pierson Museum
  
- Clock in the Empire Style  
On loan from Bruens Juwelier & Antiquair

### With support from:

Allard Pierson Museum, Bruens Juwelier & Antiquair  
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Gijs Wahl references things; these references are at once gestures that are universal at the same time as they are the obnoxious conclusion of their own formality. It is a poetic incomprehensibility that has the potential to describe the tragedy of the unknown. The relationship between the mark and the thing it represents can be complicated by the relationship that meaning has with its author, and which only the surface allows to come forward. The rest is lost to a universe of relativity, which is often mistaken for a hallucinant sense of truth that each person has the potential to fall victim to.

*Ruimte VII*

### **Liberté, égalité, sélection.**

Installation:

- Acrylic paint and primer on Canvas
  - Acrylic paint and primer on Canvas
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  - Acrylic paint and primer on Canvas
  - Acrylic paint and primer on Canvas
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  - **Onbekend**, gravure, portret, ovaal
- From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae



## MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

Ruchama Noorda is moved by the logic of past ideologies. It is a position that holds neither critique nor nostalgia – it is more of an understanding that symbols keep reproducing themselves without any particular reason.

The Phrygian cap is placed on the tree of liberty without irony; there is something sophisticated about what on the surface is the use of primordial iconography to hold the quality of transgression in the supposed innocence of the sign – despite the fact that these signs are positioned in face of a world that is populated by subliminal agents of control.

*Ruimte VI*

### **Stedenmaagd**

Wall drawing:

- Acrylic on wall

with

- Lizzy Ansingh (1875-1959)

**Portret van C.M. Garms**

Doek, gedateerd 1923

From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae

With support from:

Fonds BKVB



## MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

Brian Mckenna has an aesthetic that is made up of found objects and forgotten moments. It is probably based on a commitment to an irreversible sense of subjectivity; it is based on reconciling the viewpoints implied by perception rather than indulging in their alienation. The difference between positions such as the future or the past might after all be overestimated in the grand scheme of things.

*Ruimte VI*

### **Beaver Atlantis**

Installation:

- DVD loops
- Ampex 456 recording tape
- VBBK 1952, Van der Walle, **Bever**  
From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae
- VBBK 1880, Henr. Ronner, gravure  
From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae
- Henr. Ronner, gravure  
From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae
- J.-B. Carpeaux  
**De schilder J.L. Gérôme**  
Terracotta  
From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae
- J.-B. Carpeaux  
**De schilder J.L. Gérôme**  
Brons, getateerd '41  
From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae

*Ruimte V*

### **Snowman / Fishwife**

Video:

- Field Sequential 3D video
- LCD shutter glasses
- Scratched Compact Disc Recording



## MAATSCHAPPIJ ARTI ET AMICITIAE

Mounira Al Solh's approach is more direct. She inquires into the nature of the thing by asking animals about philosophy and existence. It is after all animals that have an instinctual self-knowledge of being in the world – but they also know that the world doesn't really need us to understand it.

*A double burger* is populated by dogs that refuse to be stigmatized and cats that like referring to the social contract, but who conveniently forget that such things prioritize humans. On the one hand these animals refuse any attempts at meaningful communication, but on the other, their existence relies on a hallucination. Either way, their lack of humanity becomes the principle source of confusion.

*Ruimte V*

### **A double burger and two metamorphoses: a proposal for a Dutch Cat, a Dutch Dog, a Dutch Donkey, a Dutch Goat and finally, a Dutch Camel.**

Installation:

- Video projection
- Slide projection
  - Toegeschreven aan Marius Bauer (ps. Rusticus)
  - Steunpilaren der Kunst** (spotprent)
  - Litho

From the collection of Arti et Amicitiae

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