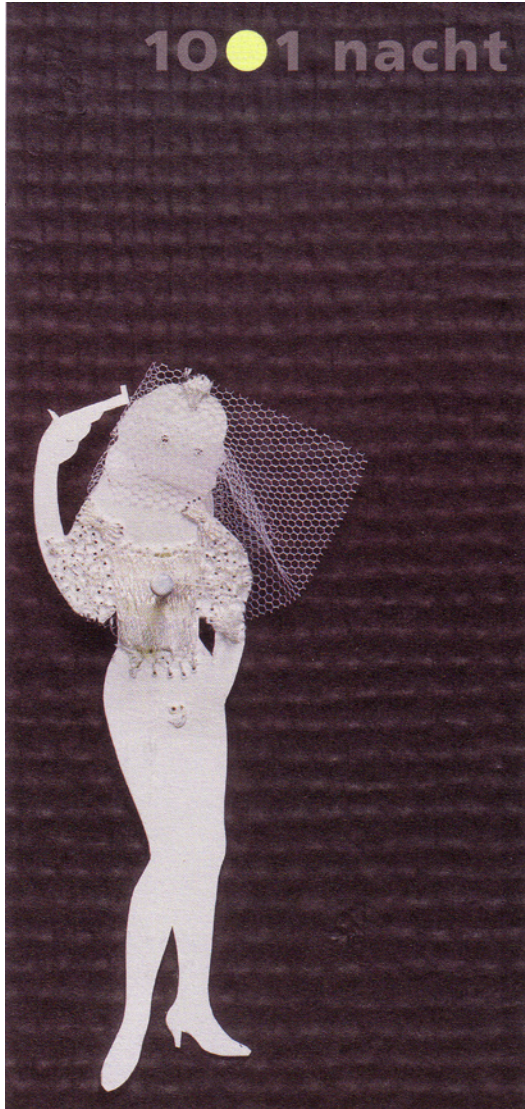


1001 Night



Management

1 *Project name*
1001 Nacht.

2 *Contact*

Jan Cunen Museum, Oss,
The Netherlands

Edwin Jacobs, Director, Jan Cunen
Museum

E-mail: e.jacobs@oss.nl/Jan
Cunen Museum

E-mail:

receptie@museumjancunen.nl;

Tel. +31 (0)412-629328

3 *Partner organisation type*
Museum

4 *Partner organisation*

The PBC was a joint initiator and was closely involved in the production of the companion book 1001 nacht. In connection with the project, the Omroep Brabant network put together a series of stories. The Bosch Architecture Initiative [*Bosch Architectuur Initiatief*] (BAI) was instrumental in establishing the partnership and designed a preparatory secondary vocational education programme

in urban studies. Finally, the Hooghuis Lyceum Oss-West was involved in the development of a secondary-education curriculum.

5 *Funding*

The project was financed primarily by public and private funds. Financial support for the exhibition programme and the publication of the book was provided by the Municipal Authority of Oss, the Mondriaan Foundation, the Fund for the Promotion of Visual Art, Design and Museum Activities [*Stimuleringsfonds voor Beeldende Kunst, Vormgeving en Museale activiteiten*], the Dutch Province of North Brabant, Hooge Huys Verzekeringen, the Authors' Foundation for Literary Copyright Fund [*Stichting Lira Fonds*] and the Prince Bernhard Cultural Foundation/Anjerfondsen Noord-Brabant.

▢ Medium

- An exhibition and, subsequently, the publication of a book. The works of art making up the exhibition were extremely diverse, ranging from paintings to installations. In each exhibition space, a visual artist reflected upon the stories in *One Thousand and One Nights*. Photography was also an important medium throughout the project. The book, in which the literary form is also focal, reflects this. To generate public interest and promote interaction, the museum also employed theatre initiatives.
- Performance. Theatre played a role in the museum's educational programme. Peter Cox's photography and the literary contributions of various authors are central to the book.
Types of heritage: Oral history, to which the participating authors gave their own individual interpretations. Architecture played a role in the interpretation of the surrounding area and of identity.

▢ Project

1 *Aims / objectives*

With a view to revitalising exhibition practice, the Jan Cunen Museum approached artists about playing an active role in achieving this goal – a follow-up initiative to integrating and publicising the collection, with which the museum began in 1993. This process resulted in the collection being placed in a new context, a principle maintained throughout the project, primarily by means of cultural exchange.

2 *Who it was for*

The general public. Afterwards, it was determined that the majority of the public were Caucasian, however.

3 *What learning was involved*

Active interpretation and construction involved the use of artistic skills in particular, while the spatial and experimental aspects of the exhibition involved the use of kinetic skills.

4 *Which methodologies used (if applicable)*

Both the book and the exhibition were non-linear and fragmented. For this reason, the approach can be seen as aesthetic and experimental, involving opposed learning styles ranging from experimental to constructive. The original text, suspended like a meta-text between art and prose, served as a kind of verification.

5 *where/when it was*

The exhibition was put on in the seven galleries of the Jan Cunen Museum, and an outreach initiative was launched to include certain schools. It lasted from 15 October 1999 to 12 August 2002.

6 *Planning / preliminary work*

During the year-long preparation period, the parties involved did a great deal of networking and met frequently. Once the project had been launched

and artists were already working on the exhibition in the exhibition spaces, these spaces were made accessible to the public, which allowed for the evaluation of the development process upon completion of the installations. This took a great deal of time, however. Furthermore, a 'dangerous' situation was created in that the results of the artists' involvement could not be known in advance.

7 *Any exhibition / art / artefacts involved*

Various art objects from the museum's collection, sculptures and paintings, as well as works of art that seven contemporary artists created specially for the project, formed the core of the exhibition.

8 *Any follow-up / longer-term contact with the target group*

The Ossensia project was a continuation of 1001-Nacht ('1,001 Nights'). During this two-year project, the Dutch town of Oss served as a source of inspiration and reflection, as well as an exhibition space to artists and the public alike. Here the focus was more on interactivity between the public and the artists. The history of Oss, reflected in architecture, leisure activities, work, migration and spirituality, formed the core. Contributions made by the public played a greater role in the creation of the art. The Zcala centre in The Hague has since taken over the Ossensia project under the title 'Hagania'. There are plans to merge the two projects in association with the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in a new neighbourhood-related project.

9 *Involvement of other partner organisation*

The artists involved were instrumental in developing and designing the exhibition space. Educational institutions were also given a large say. Innovative aspects: As regards museum practice, the space allotted to the artists and the open way of dealing with the museum's collection were very innovative. This open approach also created a variety of suitable options in other places. In concrete terms, the project signified the discovery of the different visions of the various artists; additionally, working in a broad multicultural network was a new experience for Oss and the surrounding area.

10 *Key words to reflect the concept of the project*

'Why do we insinuate that our own story is the only right one?' (John Duivensteijn)

D Type of project

Eyes are very important for looking at, and reading, books. The exhibition also focused on looking, but visitors could also physically enter certain works of art. Listening was of secondary importance.

Website: www.museumjancunen.nl.

▢ Roughly how many people were involved?

- 1 *As direct participants*
Eight visual artists, eight writers and one photographer.
- 2 *As indirect beneficiaries*
40,000.
- 3 *As staff*
2 people

▢ Participants' ages

26 - 35

▢ Disadvantage due to social or economic factors, discrimination or disability

Belonging to an ethnic minority

Mixed: Dutch, Surinamese, Moroccan and Turkish.

▢ Participants' needs

The participating artists were deliberately chosen without regard to age or background. The exhibition was intended for a wide public.

▢ Outcomes and lessons learned

- 1 *Evaluation process:*
A general evaluation was held, but the Jan Cunen Museum requires a more systematic analysis of the outcome, also with regard to funding.
 - 2 *Overall learning points* - Collaboration with the Main Provincial Library [*Provinciale Bibliotheek Centrale*] (PBC) was mainly provisional in nature and will continue in this vein. In a general sense, the collaboration between the various organisations, artists and writers bolstered knowledge.
Organisation: Changes in personnel complicated the interaction between the various parties. Confusion quickly arose as to the assignment of tasks; in this case, it was unclear as to whether the PBC was to assume a leading, advisory role or a symbolic, supervisory role. The library also took a somewhat conservative position in respect of the writers chosen; consequently, there was a risk that lesser-known authors would not gain sufficient exposure. This risk also resulted from a communication problem, an aspect that requires close attention. Furthermore, the time factor had to be taken into consideration, particularly where the production of a book was concerned, the writing of which required much more time than had originally been allotted. It turned out that few were acquainted with the network of artists with 'a dual cultural background'; the creation of new conduits was therefore deemed essential.
- Substantive considerations: The exhibition would have been more stimulating had it appealed to more of the senses. Because certain choices were not explained, the project was less convincing than it could have been. Intellectual reflection and simple explanations were lacking.

- Ways of dovetailing with education initiatives must be examined in greater detail. Moreover, additional research initiatives are, in general, desirable, as is capitalising on expertise. The parents who came into contact with the museum through the interaction with the schools are no longer involved – a missed opportunity. A more active effort to involve the public was needed, since, overall, far fewer members of ethnic minorities attended than was initially hoped. Not enough was done to involve the surrounding area, either; no connection was made between existing projects, which was another missed opportunity.
- The demand for more organised reflection (e.g. research), creating opportunities within existing networks (e.g. education), establishing and maintaining new contacts, capitalising on skills, and transforming concepts into concrete explanations and active transfer all enabled the creation of the Blauwdruk ('Blueprint') project. In 2005, this project will be presented on a wide scale with a view to issuing a recommendation to museums on how to reorganise on the basis of projects like 1001-Nacht. Indeed, new museumgoers lead to new insights, which merit a place in the more conventional setting of the museum, even when deemed too unorthodox by the museum world.