

**"İSTANBUL EINDHOVEN  
SALTVANABBE: POST '89"  
INTERPRETATION PACK**

# CONTENTS

3

INTRODUCTION TO SALT

4

"İSTANBUL EINDHOVEN SALT VAN ABBE: POST '89"

5

TO EDUCATORS

6

OPENING DISCUSSION: INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

8

BUILDING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

13

CLOSING DISCUSSION: OPEN ACCESS

14

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# INTRODUCTION TO SALT

SALT explores critical and timely issues in visual and material culture, and cultivates innovative programs for research and experimental thinking. Assuming an open attitude and establishing itself as a site of learning and debate, SALT aims to challenge, excite and provoke its visitors by encouraging them to offer critique and response. SALT hosts exhibitions, conferences and public programs; engages in interdisciplinary research projects; and maintains a library and archive of recent art, architecture, design, urbanism, and social and economic histories to make them available for research and public use.

An essential part of SALT's programming is developing ongoing, collaborative partnerships with schools, community and civic organizations through its Interpretation Program. SALT Interpretation is free, and seeks to engage young people through exhibition tours, moving image programs and artist-led collaborative projects. SALT also creates online curriculum guides (Interpretation Packs) for schools and youth organizations, which feature discussion topics, activities and educational resources to accompany each exhibition.



SALT's activities are distributed between two landmark buildings located in walking distance to each other, and also shared via [www.saltonline.org](http://www.saltonline.org). The first building, SALT Beyoğlu, whose program and circulation interiors are dedicated to exhibition and event spaces, opened in April on Istiklal Avenue. The second building, SALT Galata, is the former 19th century Imperial Ottoman Bank headquarters designed by Alexandre Vallauray. SALT Galata opened November 2011.

# "İSTANBUL EINDHOVEN SALT VAN ABBE: POST '89"

SALT and Van Abbemuseum are collaborating on a series of exhibitions that bring together works from the Van Abbemuseum collection with selected local positions. Planned to coincide with the 400th year of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the Netherlands, the project aims to enhance and celebrate the growing cultural exchange between the two countries. *İstanbul Eindhoven SALT Van Abbe* will evolve over the course of three exhibitions presented across both SALT venues throughout 2012. The first exhibition *İstanbul Eindhoven SALT Van Abbe: Post '89* opens on January 27 and presents art works loaned from the Van Abbemuseum collection that were produced after the year 1989.

In collaboration with the team at Van Abbemuseum, SALT has selected over forty works by fifteen international artists who have either never shown in İstanbul or have been rarely exhibited despite their notoriety. The selection revolves around key themes explored within artistic practices of this period. These include "portraiture" with photographs by Rineke Dijkstra and an installation of paintings titled *Models* by Marlene Dumas; "literature and text," for which Allen Ruppersberg's homage to Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" takes center stage; "film," as referenced throughout the practices and works of Douglas Gordon and Rodney Graham among others; and "time and space," conceptually explored by Stanley Brouwn. Works by local artists relating to these themes are positioned to encourage conversations around similar ideas and approaches. These include paintings by Leyla Gediz that afford an alternative appreciation for portraiture, Cevdet Ereğ's studies of rhythm and measure, Özlem Günyol and Mustafa Kunt's plays on translation and geographical positioning, and İnci Eviner's quirky film-set-like panoramas that read along one horizon line.



Gabriel Orozco, *Sand on Table*, 1993

Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

The artists in the first exhibition of the series are Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Abdellatif Benfaïdoul, Stanley Brouwn, Rineke Dijkstra, Marlene Dumas, Cevdet Ereğ, İnci Eviner, Leyla Gediz, Douglas Gordon, Rodney Graham, Özlem Günyol & Mustafa Kunt, Pierre Huyghe, Mike Kelley, Atelier van Lieshout, Paul McCarthy, Juan Muñoz, Gabriel Orozco, Allen Ruppersberg, Wilhem Sasnal and Jan Vercruyssen.

# TO EDUCATORS

## HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

This SALT Interpretation Pack has been designed as a resource for you and your students as you explore the *Istanbul Eindhoven SALT VanAbbe: Post '89* exhibition. It is our hope that, as a resource with the objective of stimulating dialogue, the following materials will not act as an authority on the concepts they introduce, but rather will encourage students towards further exploration and study, towards active discussion, and towards critical thinking about the exhibition and its themes.

Included in this Interpretation Pack are:

- *Opening Discussion: Institutional Collaboration*
- *Building Museum Collections*
- *Closing Discussion: Open Access*
- *Additional Resources*

Each unit includes classroom activities, multi-media resources, terminology and opportunities for discussion; we encourage you to adapt, shape and build upon these materials to best meet the needs of your students and teaching curriculum. for discussion; we encourage you to adapt, shape and build upon these materials to best meet the needs of your students and teaching curriculum.



Marlene Dumas, *Models*, 1994

Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

# OPENING DISCUSSION: INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION

In 2005, Van Abbemuseum presented an exhibition composed of works coming from its own collection and a selection of works shown in the previous eight İstanbul Biennials. Titled *Eindhovenİstanbul*, the exhibition gave visitors in the Netherlands the chance to see works produced for one of the most significant international exhibitions in recent years in combination with Van Abbemuseum's renowned modern and contemporary artworks. A broader idea of the geography and politics of culture was captured in the exhibition, with a focus that extended beyond Western Europe and the United States. This idea pivoted around global changes taking place during and after the year 1989 that eventually had its effect on Europe's own sense of identity and cultural values. The exhibition represented a radical reassessment of the idea of an international museum collection and inspired Van Abbemuseum to develop a new purchasing policy that addressed issues of global vs. local production.

Seven years later, on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Turkey, the collaboration between SALT and Van Abbemuseum is realized amidst a global cultural shift. While institutions in Western Europe and the United States are experiencing financial hardship and losing traditional support structures and audiences, new cultural hubs are being established. İstanbul, Mumbai and Moscow are such examples, where emerging markets and new economies are stimulating demand for cultural institutions. The new situation presents challenging possibilities for Western European museums. The partnership between SALT and Van Abbemuseum will thus provide an opportunity to debate the changing role of art museums in the 21st century.



Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands



Üsküdar Lions Elementary students at SALT Galata, İstanbul, 2012

Discuss with your class the definition of collaboration (see below). With the institutional partnership and exchange of ideas between SALT and Van Abbemuseum in mind, can students think of any examples in their own city where different groups or organizations have worked together, either formally or informally, to achieve a goal, realize a project or initiate change?

#### TERMINOLOGY

*Collaboration* — to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor

#### DISCUSSION

- *Have you seen different institutions working together in your city? If so, on what kinds of projects?*
- *What do you think the benefits are of collaboration? What are the challenges?*
- *How do you think the sharing of ideas, resources and skills will influence the outcomes of SALT and Van Abbemuseum's institutional collaboration in the long term?*



Wilhelm Sasnal, *Warsaw*, 2005

Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

# BUILDING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

## INTRODUCTION

As part of its collaboration with SALT, Van Abbemuseum has committed to reserve part of its 2012 acquisitions budget to purchase works shown in the *SALT Van Abbe* exhibitions in İstanbul. Like Van Abbemuseum, most museums set aside a specific amount of money each year for acquisitions – the works that will become part of permanent collections they share with visitors. An important issue for these institutions, however, and one that is constantly evolving, is how decisions regarding what (and how) to collect are made. Typically, larger institutions write collection development policies to help address such questions. Built around the institution’s mission statement and the needs of users, these policies can outline what kinds of artists, styles or periods the institution collects; who makes decisions about collecting (for example, does one person in the institution lead purchasing decisions, or is there a committee?); and whether or not works may be resold in the future (a practice called de-accessioning).

As described in the OPENING DISCUSSION, Van Abbemuseum’s commitment to build its collection of artists from Turkey represents a radical shift in the way that, historically, Western European museums have purchased artworks. (Van Abbemuseum’s own collection was originally bought by Eindhoven City Council in 1934 in an agreement with private collector and local cigar manufacturer, Henri van Abbe, who donated the museum building to house the collection). While until recently institutions almost exclusively built their collections around artists from Europe and the US, new cultural centers – İstanbul, for example – are now becoming focal points. This development has benefits for both established and emerging participants on the global arts and cultural scene. The collaboration between Van Abbemuseum and SALT, for example, creates an



Video excerpt from Cevdet Ereğ, *Studio*, 2005

important opportunity for both institutions to explore relationships between the works of their respective countries, to challenge “local” collecting practices, and to engage visitors in both İstanbul and Eindhoven with a diverse selection of works.

With the current shift in museum collecting in mind, in **BUILDING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS: SESSION ONE**, your students will explore Van Abbemuseum’s collection at SALT Beyoğlu and online. The full collection spans a period of roughly 100 years and includes 2700 individual works of art. In **SESSION TWO**, envisioning their own museums, students will take on the challenge of collection development, structuring mission statements and collection policies to best meet their new institutions’ objectives.



## TERMINOLOGY

*Acquisitions* — an asset or object bought or obtained, typically by a library or museum

*Accessioning* — adding a new item to an existing collection of books, paintings or artifacts

*Budget* — a plan for the coordination of resources and expenditures

*Collection* — an assembly of items such as works of art, pieces of writing, or natural objects

*Collection development policies* — guidelines used by institutions in developing their collections to ensure that collecting is relevant and fulfils the organization's mission as effectively as possible

*De-accessioning* — officially removing an item from the listed holdings of a library, museum, or art gallery, typically in order to sell it to raise funds

*Mission statement* — a statement of the purpose of a company or organization

## OBJECTIVES

— *To critically evaluate past and current trends in museum collection practices*

— *To consider institutions with “global” vs. “local” perspectives*

— *To imagine new and innovative possibilities for the role of the museum*



Allen Ruppersberg, *The Singing Posters*, 2003-2005

Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

# BUILDING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

## SESSION ONE

1. Engage students in a discussion around the idea of a museum collection. Have they been to museums that have a permanent set of works on display for visitors? What do these collections typically look like?

2. Now read for students the definition of collection development policies on the previous page. Museums that collect generally have clear standards and strategies for what kinds of works they will add to their collections. Using the collaboration between SALT and Van Abbemuseum as an example of changing dynamics between Western European institutions and those in emerging cultural centers, how might the global exchange of ideas affect how museum collections are developed?

3. In a group visit to SALT Beyoğlu, or in a school library or computer lab, ask students to explore Van Abbemuseum's collection. (The online collection may be found at [vanabbe.nl/collectie/collectie.htm](http://vanabbe.nl/collectie/collectie.htm).) Students should find answers to the following questions:

- Where is Van Abbemuseum located?
- What period does the museum's collection cover?
- What kinds of works do you see in the collection? (For example, are specific types of media or artistic styles more prominent than others?)
- What countries or regions do you see represented? Where are the artists from?

4. As a class, discuss students' findings. What is their impression of the collection – and how do they think its content may evolve over the coming years?



Pierre Huyghe, *Les Grands Ensembles* [Project Housing], 1994-2001  
Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

# BUILDING MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

## SESSION TWO

1. With Van Abbemuseum's evolving collection practices in mind, in groups of 4 or 5, students will now envision their own institutions. These can be art museums, cultural institutions, science centers, zoos, botanical gardens – any type of institution students would like to see established in their city. Note that this session can be spread over a few class periods, but has the potential to be expanded into an entire course unit.

2. For the purposes of this activity, all students' institutions should be "collecting institutions"; that is, they will build permanent collections of art works, objects, etc. to share with the public. (For students' information, though, "non-collecting institutions" – SALT, for example – exist as well.)

3. Ask groups to develop the foundations of their new institutions. Each group must establish a name and a mission statement outlining their overall objectives. Give students time to develop their ideas into an organizational identity, and to research other institutions, both local and international, they could potentially collaborate with to achieve their goals.

4. Once groups have a clear idea of the direction they'd like their institutions to take, it is time to write a list of collection development policies. If students are establishing an art museum, for example, they may consider what kinds of art or artists the museum will focus on, what the process will be for acquiring new works, and what the short- and long-term goals are for the institution. This list will represent the standards and guidelines students think are most important in shaping their collections.



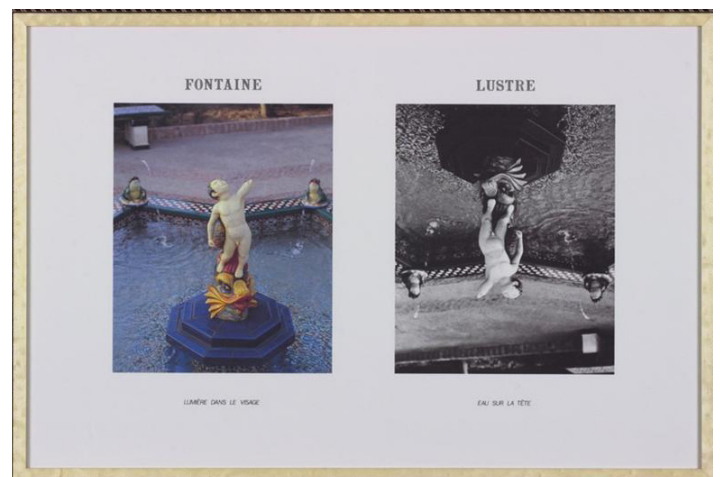
Mike Kelley, *Categorical Imperative and Morgue*, 1999  
Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

5. Give students the opportunity to present their institutions and collection policies to the class. This is a great opportunity for students to give and receive feedback, through critique of each other's proposed institutions and the development of their permanent collections.

6. As an extension of this activity, let students turn their policies into practice. Using an online photo-sharing site like Picasa or Flickr, groups can upload images that meet the criteria of their collection development guidelines, creating an album of works or objects to be accessioned by their new institutions.

#### DISCUSSION

- *What do you believe the role of the museum is? Given the changing needs of an increasingly global, technologically connected society, what do you think museums will look like in the future?*
- *Was it difficult to draft collection development policies? What was the most challenging part of this process for your group?*
- *Of your class' proposed institutions, did the majority focus on collecting items from one country or region, or were collections more global in nature? Do you see the current shifts in museum collecting practices reflected in your classmates' institutions?*



Jan Vercruyssen, *Fontaine/Lustre* (1990) [Fountain/Shine (1990)], 1991  
Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

# CLOSING DISCUSSION: OPEN ACCESS

After visiting the *Istanbul Eindhoven* SALT VanAbbe: Post '89 exhibition at SALT Beyoğlu and engaging in some of the supplemental discussions and activities included in this Interpretation Pack, your students have explored the potential of institutional collaboration, critically examined the evolution of museum collecting practices, and taken on the challenge of building collections through the development of their own arts and cultural institutions.

As a conclusion to your students' experience of the exhibition, we suggest leading a discussion around what happens after a museum makes the decision to add a work to its collection. Although some institutions keep a permanent collection on display, many accessioned pieces inevitably are moved to storage. Until recently, this meant an institution's works were no longer publically accessible – only when (and if) the opportunity to show a work again arose would it be shared. With many museums today falling under the category of public institutions – that is, supported through public funds, like governmental sources – the question of public access has become crucial. Is it a museum's responsibility to ensure its collection is available to the public? Who owns these works? One way today's institutions are addressing these questions and meeting the demand for open access is to share their collections online. Examples of this approach can be seen in the digital collections of museums like Van Abbemuseum, MoMA and Tate Modern.

As we see an increase in information collected, shared and interpreted on the web, do students believe digital collections provide a solution to the problem of public access for museums? Why or why not?



Juan Muñoz, *Untitled*, 1992

Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

## TERMINOLOGY

*Accessibility* — a term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service, or environment is available to as many people as possible

*Public institution* — institution supported primarily through public funds

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## WEB RESOURCES

SALT Online | [saltonline.org](http://saltonline.org)

Van Abbemuseum Collection Online  
[vanabbe.nl/collectie/collectie.htm](http://vanabbe.nl/collectie/collectie.htm)

MOMA | [moma.org](http://moma.org)

The Museum of the Future  
[themuseumofthefuture.com](http://themuseumofthefuture.com)

Tate Modern | [tate.org.uk/modern](http://tate.org.uk/modern)

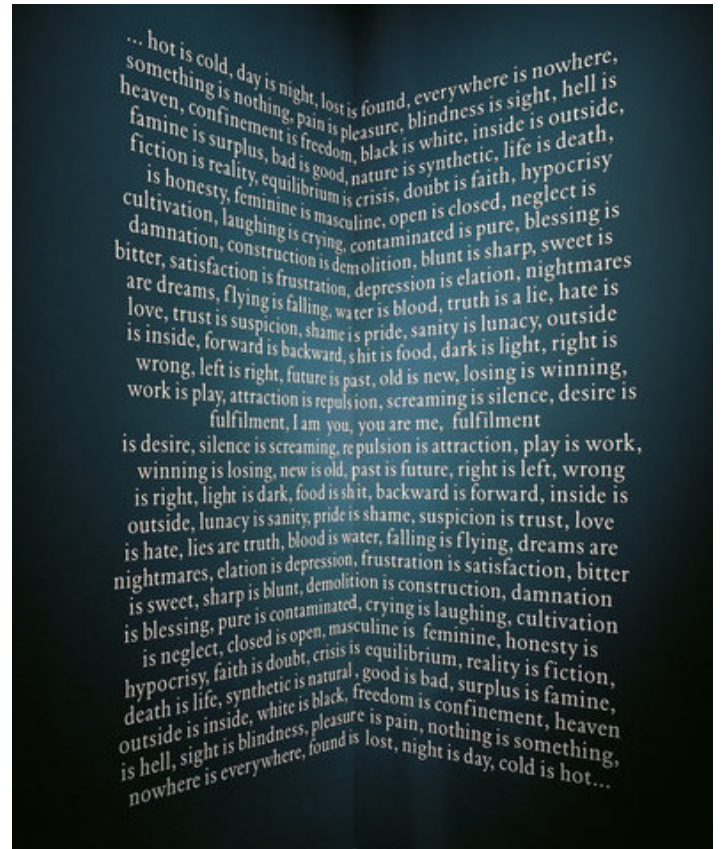
## BOOKS & ARTICLES

“Managing Things — Crafting a Collections Policy”  
John Simmons, American Association of Museums

Sharjah Museums Department  
Collection Development Policy

## AUDIO GUIDE

[Soundcloud.com/salt-online](https://www.soundcloud.com/salt-online)



Douglas Gordon, *Untitled (Text for someplace other than this)*, 1996  
Van Abbemuseum Collection, Eindhoven, The Netherlands

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