

SHEEP IN THE CITY

Exposition Beatrice Waanders

23th May – 13th June 2015, Atrium City Hall The Hague

Official opening: 23th May 16:00 Nicole Uniquole, arts & crafts curator

THE ARTWORK

Huge organic cotton cloth felted-in with the raw wool from the sheepflock of Westland and The Hague's sheepflock make a fairytale like wool-sky, having an interesting meeting with the great and cool architecture of the Atrium of het The Hague city hall, designed by star-architect Richard Meier.

At the floor of the city hall visitors can touch themselves the pure raw wool at a salon-like formation formed by the Dutch design icon of a Martin Visser sofa covered with the raw woolfelt and a huge carpet made from several whole fleeces of the sheeps. Don't be surprised to see and feel little natural trash in the wool from the dunes like twigs and seeds. At a screen you can enjoy films of the work of woolartist Beatrice Waanders, and from Dunea drinking-water supplier for The Hague city that hires the services of the sheepflock for keeping the natural dunes landscape in shape.

At this time of urbanisation, globalisation and high-technology, people have the feeling to lose connection with their roots and with nature. We see a renewed appreciation for crafts, local traditions and nature, like city-farming and old crafting techniques in nowadays designs. It's remarkable the 83-years old Dutch artist Herman de Vries, who makes art in and with nature for more than a half century now, had his first exposition this year at Venice Biennale. In Dutch newspaper NRC of 6th of May: 'In a period that computers dominate our culture, De Vries says: 'Look at nature, see how beautiful she is'.

This is exactly the story that feltartist Beatrice Waanders wants to tell with her exposition in the Hague city hall. With the artwork 'Sheep in the City' she wants to bring nature to the city in a modern attractive way, to get people inspired to go from the city to nature. The city of The Hague has a great landscape of natural dunes with a very special sheepflock of the old Dutch primitive sheep breed 'Drents Heideschaap' from shepherd Judith Prins, one of the oldest primitive sheep breeds from the West of Europe. Beatrice hopes to inspire people to discover this wonderful natural hermitage in their own city.

The artwork is handmade by Beatrice Waanders and her team by the century old technique of felt-making. Felt is a non-woven cloth that is produced by rubbing, condensing and pressing woolen fibers with hot water and soap. Felt making is one of man's first handicrafts, and the oldest way of making fabric. It started in Central-Asia and North-East Asia (Mongolia), as soon as human beings started to domesticate sheep. The first people made their tents, rugs and clothes from felt, and in some areas, nomads still do. The artwork is made at the studio of Beatrice Waanders, a former boathouse from the harbor council along the river Maas in Rotterdam (The Netherlands). Beatrice and her team got help at this project from intellectually disabled people from Stichting Pameijer that has card, spin and felted for the artwork.

Beatrice does not use chemical products; water, olive soap and muscles is all she uses. The work is 100% animal- and environmentally friendly. The wool is not even dyed, Beatrice exploits the rich color palette of the animals themselves.

WOOLARTISTS BEATRICE WAANDERS

Beatrice Waanders (1970) received her education at the Willem de Kooning Academy of Art and Architecture in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. She graduated in 1997 in Interior-architecture and Material Design. After she worked for years as an Interior-architect at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There she designed and decorated the residences and embassies of the ambassadors from all over the world. Being the manager of the entire collection of the Ministry, she learned a lot about materials. In 2008 Beatrice made a career change to a feltdesigner. She followed classes at renowned textile institutes including the Dutch Textile Museum in Tilburg.

She presented her feltdesign-brand The Soft World for the first time at the 100% Design fair in Rotterdam in 2008. Beatrice participated at the Dutch Designweek and since 2009 every year at the big home decoration show Maison & Objet in Paris, at the prestigious department Scènes d'intérieur. The Soft World is now represented at galleries and shops worldwide. People come from all over the world to follow her master-classes in Rotterdam. The Soft World has worked for several prestigious fashion designers and brands like Givenchy Paris.

www.atriumcityhall.nl / www.thesoftworld.com