

book launch

# PETER BAREN: BLIND DATES WITH THE HISTORY OF MANKIND

## 18 MAY 2014

Book presentation of the recently published monography Peter Baren: Blind Dates With The History Of Mankind. It provides a detailed summary of the performance work of Peter Baren, who is considered one of the most prominent artists in the field of performance art in the Netherlands, since the 1980s.

Location

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Teijin Auditorium, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

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Time

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4 - 5:30 am

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Language

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Dutch

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Admission

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Entrance price to the museum + € 2.50 cover charge

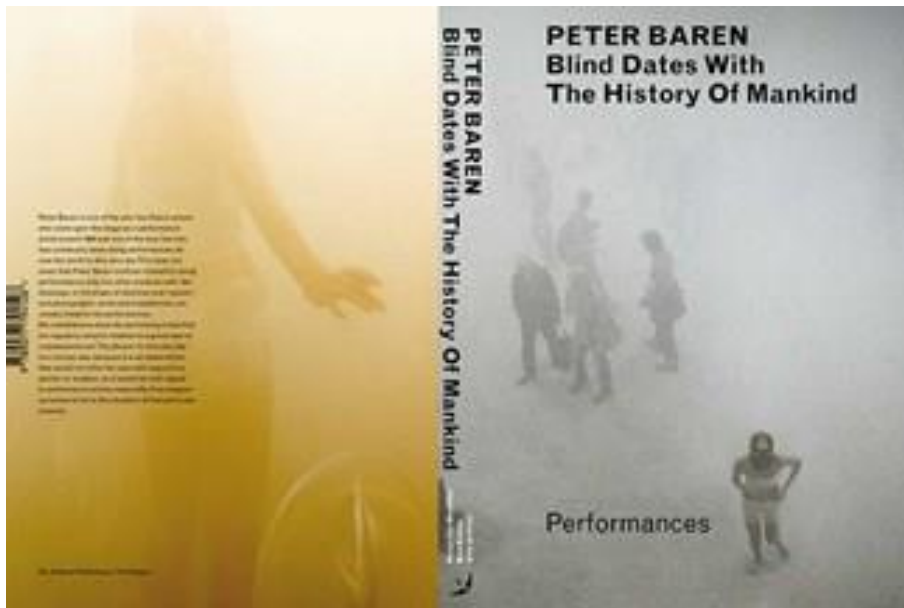
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Reservations

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[reservations@stedelijk.nl](mailto:reservations@stedelijk.nl)

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Peter Baren: Blind Dates With The History Of Mankind, courtesy of the artist

During this afternoon, Marga van Mechelen, who also wrote an essay for the book, will introduce Baren's work. Her presentation will be followed by a poetry recital by Dalstar (Koos Dalstra) and a question-and-answer session between Baren and Alex de Vries.

Three authors, Marga van Mechelen, Bart Rutten and Alex de Vries, collaborated on the publication *Peter Baren: Blind Dates With The History Of Mankind*. These authors each explain Baren's work from the perspective of their own expertise. Van Mechelen discusses the place of Baren's oeuvre in performance art and its significance in terms of art history in the last decades of the twentieth century. In an interview with the artist, Rutten (curator Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam) focuses on the position and meaning of the work in the current artistic climate and international practice of art, of which Baren is a part. Finally, De Vries provides a personal interpretation of Baren's work from the point of view of his own involvement in performance, mime, and theater practice. De Vries is also the publisher of the publication, which contains a large selection of photographic material, descriptions of the performances, and plans of campaigns between 1980 and 2013.

The artist will be available to sign the book after the presentation.

## ABOUT PETER BAREN

Peter Baren studied at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam (1972-77). His first public performances took place during Frame Experiment in the Willem II factory (Den Bosch, 1980). This was followed by *The Living Room* (Amsterdam; De Fabriek, Eindhoven; and Galerie Alto, Rotterdam, 1981) and the WIRRA series with Koos Dalstra (1982-83). Baren's performance work was also exhibited on a large scale at international exhibitions, including CENTURY 87. Today's art face to face with Amsterdam's past, during Amsterdam Cultural Capital of Europe 1987, *Points of Reference 38/88* (STEIRISCHER HERBST, Graz, 1988). An act from *Macbeth* was designed and performed in the context of the PRIX DE ROME Art & Theatre (Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam, 1989). His work has been exhibited at well-known performance festivals and platforms such as PERFOTIJD and PERFO 3 (Lantaren/Venster, Rotterdam, 1983

and 1985), The National Review Of Live Art (The Midland Group, Nottingham, 1986 and Tramway, Glasgow, 2007), Shaffy Theater, Amsterdam (1986), Chisenhale Dance Space and Gallery, London (1988), POLYPHONIX 14, Parijs, FESTIVAL A/D WERF, Utrecht, Shedhalle, Zürich (1989), Franklin Furnace, New York (1990) and III. SPOTKAN TEATRU WIZJI I PLASTYKI, Poltel Filmstudios, Katowice (1991). Other presentations and publications include HILLS+MILLS (Amsterdam/ Bratislava, 1992), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1993), The Living Room: Eine Amsterdamer Galerie und die Achtziger Jahre (Kunstverein Grafschaft Bentheim, Neuenhaus, 1995), CARESSING THE DIKE (DIJKWACHT. Art and poetry on the borders of Flevoland, 1996), and TransArt Communication (Cinema MIER, Nové Zámky and Mücsarnok, Palace of Exhibitions, Budapest, 1997). More recent performances appeared in Currency 2004: An International Festival of Contemporary Performance (New York, 2004), BLURRR 5 Biennial (Tel Aviv, 2005), LIVE! Biennale (Vancouver, 2005), ASIATOPIA 10 (Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Bangkok, 2008), Préavis de Désordre Urbain (Marseille, 2008 and 2009), 10th Open International Performance Art Festival (798 Art Zone, Beijing, 2009), The manifold (after) lives of performance (Frascati, Amsterdam 2009, a co-production of de Appel arts centre, Amsterdam and PLAYGROUND/ STUK Leuven), Guangzhou Live (53 Art Museum, Guangzhou, 2010), and TRANSMUTED (Ex Teresa Arte Actual, Mexico City, 2011). Baren began his new series Blind Dates With The History Of Mankind in 2013 and the first performances took place with Infr'Action Venezia 2 during the opening days of the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SPEAKERS

**Koos Dalstra** was born at the airbase in Leeuwarden in 1950. After studying social sciences in the Netherlands and Germany, he worked as a research criminologist at the Free University of Amsterdam. In 1980, he abandoned science and became an artist. He appeared initially as a performing poet, and in this capacity he collaborated with Peter Baren, Rob Scholte, and Jiri Dokoupil. Beginning in 1990, he produced autonomous visual arts under the name Dalstar, including paintings, installations, and videos. Since 2000, he has lived and worked in Vlissingen. In 2013, Dalstra started work on a dissertation at the Technical University of Delft.

**Marga van Mechelen** lectures on art history at the University of Amsterdam. In 2006, she published her detailed monograph on the legendary history of De Appel foundation (De Appel. Performances, Installaties, Video, Projecten, 1975-1983). In 2011, she wrote *Echt Peeters*, realist avant-gardist (Uitgeverij de Kunst), about Henk Peeters, an important representative of the Dutch Nulgroep (Zero Group) and international Zero movement. In 2013, she published a book with an anthology of texts: *Art at Large. Through Performance and Installation Art* (Artez Press).

**Alex de Vries** was the co-founder of *Metropolis M* in 1979 and the editor of that journal until 1984. In its second year, *Metropolis M* was already devoting attention to Peter Baren's work. From 1984 to 1989, De Vries worked in the Shaffy Theater, where he regularly collaborated with Baren. He was then the head of communications at the Arnhem Art College for seven years, and between 1997 and 2001 he was the director of the Academy of Art in 's-Hertogenbosch. Since 2001, he and graphic designer Jan Willem den Hartog have owned the communication and consultancy bureau *Stern/Den Hartog & De Vries*, of which the *Uitgeverij de Zwaluw* publishing company is part, as well as the exhibition space *De Zwaluwkamer*. De Vries regularly publishes

articles on contemporary art in journals, catalogues, and books. He is also an advisor for the Mondriaan Foundation and the Performing Arts Foundation.