

PRESS



RELEASE



Rear view of Hôtel Turgot



Rear view of Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix

Fondation Custodia: Prospects 2014

Frits Lugt, with his wife To Lugt-Klever, founder of the Fondation Custodia, was instrumental in the establishment of the Institut Néerlandais. Soon after the war he urged the minister to set up an institute in Paris on an equal footing with Maison Descartes in Amsterdam. He believed that international exchange was extremely important and regarded knowledge and culture as the most essential things a country has to offer.

After fifty-six years of activity, however, the **Institut Néerlandais has ceased to exist on 1 January 2014**. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to end its grant. The presentation of Dutch culture in France will be organized differently and on a more limited scale, with a new role for the cultural attaché at the Dutch embassy in Paris. **Respect** is due for everything the staff of the Institut Néerlandais have achieved in all those years. French and Dutch people alike speak enthusiastically about the exhibitions and concerts, the literary evenings and debates that the Institut has staged. The closing of the Institut Néerlandais marks the end of an era and has been a very emotional affair. This is understandable when we are talking about something that has meant so much to so many for so long.



Countless aspects have had to be considered since the announcement of the closure of the Institut Néerlandais. What to do with the **Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix in Rue de Lille**, which is owned by the Fondation Custodia? The Fondation decided to try to maintain the house's cultural function and is seeking partners willing to assist them in this. The Fondation Custodia always provided the content for the exhibition programme for the older art in the Institut Néerlandais, becoming in the process an indispensable site for lovers of art on paper in the Parisian exhibition landscape. **The Fondation will continue to stage exhibitions of art in various forms in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix with the emphasis on art on paper.** This is entirely in line with the interests of the founder Frits Lugt. As the Fondation Custodia's mission defined by Lugt is 'to serve art history', this must continue and be given new substance.

The Lugt Collection is one of the most important collections of drawings in private hands and is happy to put out items from the collection for visitors to study and to enjoy in the adjoining Hôtel Turgot. Furthermore, if the works permit, it is willing to collaborate on the staging of exhibitions elsewhere in the world by making loans. The Fondation would like to develop into **the house for art on paper**, the house in which a dialogue is possible with drawings from its own collection and from drawing collections worldwide. **Partners** are being sought on the basis of the importance of ensembles in their collections in order to allow an interested Parisian public to become acquainted with drawings, prints, oil sketches and paintings (in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix) that can otherwise only be seen on rare occasions. These do not necessarily have to be works from the Dutch or Flemish schools, although these will of course remain a special area of interest.

The five floors of the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix house a series of well-equipped exhibition spaces which will continue to be used by the Fondation. The Fondation will also **let** some of the floors of the large nineteenth-century building. The first partner to take a floor in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix is the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, which took over the third floor on 1 January 2014 and will initiate activities on behalf of the Dutch embassy under the direction of the embassy's cultural attaché. This includes staging exhibitions, particularly of photography and modern art, commencing in September 2014. The **art history library will** be moved from the second to the fourth floor of the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix with an entirely new reading room. The art history library is the fourth largest in France, with many titles that cannot be found elsewhere. The treasure trove of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Dutch literature will shortly be transferred to the University Library of Lille. Thereafter the focus of the library holdings that remain in the rue de Lille in Paris will be on the history of art and culture up to the present day, history, especially that of the Netherlands, and old books. The accent will lie primarily on the specific areas



that are strongly represented in the Fondation Custodia's collection: drawings and prints, painting, artists' letters, portrait miniatures, Indian miniatures and the history of collecting.

Talks are underway with another partner, the **Terra Foundation**, founded in 1978 by the collector Daniel J. Terra (1911-1996), for the lease of the second floor, which will first have to be cleared out and renovated. This thriving institution, non-profit making like the Fondation Custodia, promotes interest in American art from the colonial period to the mid-twentieth century. With its headquarters in Chicago, it has offices in Paris, a specialist library and the desire to stage exhibitions or to make them possible. **Collaboration with the Fondation Custodia and an office in the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix may mean an increase in the number of exhibitions in Paris.**

The Fondation will continue to stage exhibitions so that the cultural function of the house will be preserved, in part with the aid of our partners. From 22 March to 22 June 2014, for instance, there will be an important exhibition of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish drawings from **Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam**, one of the world's finest collections in the field, entitled *Bosch to Bloemaert*. At the same time, *Dialogues: Drawings from the Fondation Custodia and the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen* will be staged in the basement, a literal dialogue between drawings from the Lugt Collection and sheets from the Rotterdam collection, which will create an intense viewing experience. Then, at the end of the year, we are working with the **Stichting P. & N. de Boer in Amsterdam** on an exhibition and a book to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the collection amassed by art dealer Piet de Boer. He was a contemporary of Frits Lugt, but had a keener eye for modernity and at a time when it was still possible collected **paintings and drawings by Vincent van Gogh**, which will adorn the walls of the Hôtel Lévis-Mirepoix. This important exhibition, *Entre Goltzius et Van Gogh. Le goût de P. de Boer, marchand-collectionneur*, will run from 13 December 2014 to 11 March 2015.



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