CATCHING UP ON HISTORY

Ethical Imperialism & (Craft) Education in the Dutch East Indies after 1900

Rosa te Velde

FIGURE 1
Carel Lion Cachet,
Chair covered with batik
parchment in a red, white,
and black diamond pattern,
the Netherlands, 1910.
Rijksmuseum, BK1974-52.

Working in the field of 'design', researcher and educator Rosa te Velde had a lot of catching up to do when it came to the colonial history of the Netherlands, which is hardly part of the curriculum of Dutch art schools. In the past decades, things have changed in art and design education: institutions aim to be more 'inclusive' and express the desire to move beyond a 'eurocentric canon'. But is that possible without a rigorous examination of the 'cultural archive' as a result of centuries of colonialism? With the violent expansion of the Dutch occupation in the Indonesian archipelago as a backdrop, this project looks at the period of the so-called Ethical Policy at the turn of the twentieth century and the ways in which it played out in crafts and (crafts) education.

In 1891, artist and drawing teacher Ben Wierink took his students to the Artis Zoo in Amsterdam to draw animals. At the time, Artis also housed a large ethnographic collection, which was not unusual for a zoo. The collection's purpose was to 'enhance knowledge of natural history', and included ethnographic objects with the aim of understanding humanity's evolution. It so happened that Artis owned a large batik collection from Dutch-occupied Indonesia (renamed by the Dutch as 'the Dutch East Indies').[1]

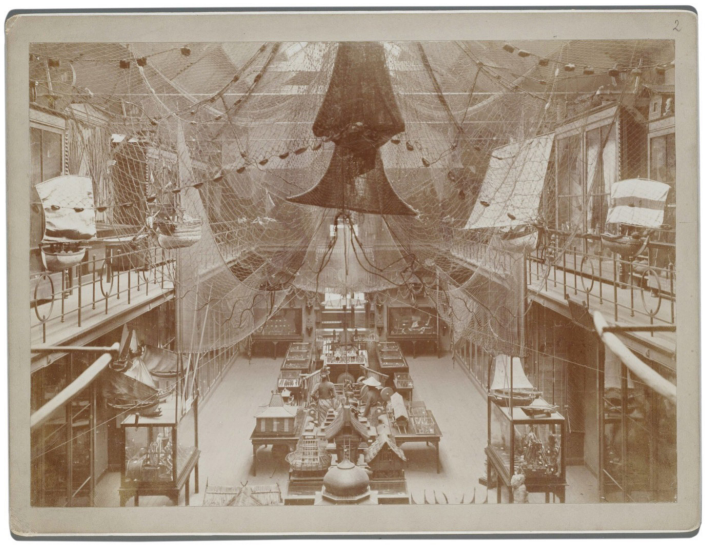

FIGURE 2
The main hall of the ethnographic museum of Artis, ~1910. Collection Artis Natura Magistra, RKD.

It was there that designer Carel Adolph Cachet – who later added 'Lion' to his surname to become known as Lion Cachet – became acquainted with batik. The story goes that, during the visit, Wierink explained the batik process, after which Cachet, full of inspiration, rushed home from Artis to start experimenting with the medium immediately. He went on to inspire fellow designers such as Gerrit Dijsselhof, Chris Lebeau, Johan Thorn Prikker, and many others in the Netherlands.[2] In 1898, a batik atelier was opened by Agathe Wegerif-Gravestein in Apeldoorn.[3]

In response to industrialisation, as mechanical reproduction took the reins in western capitalist markets, designers and artists were searching for new sources of inspiration for their field to form 'a language of its own'. In 1904, Dutch book designer Johannes Ros would summarise what was taking place in the following words: 'We are children of the age of the steam engine, the telegraph and electricity. We have turned our backs on the beautiful, and that is why we no longer understand it'.[4] This sentiment had already been understood in Britain since the 1830s, when British design reformers worried about the perceived decline of quality and competitiveness of British products. Design reformers promoted the need for an education where 'the arts of painting and sculpture should form the basis for the education of designers'.[5] *The Great Exhibition of the Work of Industry of all Nations*, held at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851, was organised with the purpose of displaying the superiority of British industry and encouraging the development of new standards for design as well

1 This collection would later become part of the Tropenmuseum's collection that opened its doors in 1926 (today it is known as the Wereldmuseum).

2 T. Eliëns, 'Nieuwe Kunst: Nederlandse Kunstnijverheid in de periode 1880-1910' in: T. Eliens, M. Groot and F. Leidelmeijer (eds.), *Kunstnijverheid in Nederland 1880-1940*, V+K Publishing, 1997. See also: M. Simon Thomas, *Goed in Vorm: honderd jaar ontwerpen in Nederland*, Uitgeverij 010, 2008, p. 28.

3 Olga Harmsen, 'Batik - How Emancipation of Dutch Housewives in the Dutch East Indies and "Back Home" Influenced Art Nouveau Design in Europe', paper presented at *Art Nouveau and Politics in the Dawn of Globalisation*, Barcelona 2018. Accessed through: https://artnouveau.eu/admin_ponencies/functions/upload/uploads/harmsen_olga_paper.pdf.

4 Johannes Ros (1904) cited in the exhibition *Art Nouveau in the Netherlands*, Kunstmuseum Den Haag, 2018. Accessed through: https://www.kunstmuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/art-nouveau-netherlands.

5 D. Raizman, History of Modern Design, Laurence King, 2010, p. 61.

as educating the public. Despite being a huge public success, the organisers of the exhibition and a small circle of critics were disappointed:

> It was widely acknowledged that the handmade Indian objects shown in 1851, such as the sari from Benares (now Varanasi) later purchased for the South Kensington Museum, displayed higher qualities of design than the ingenious but generally vulgar products of mechanised industry.[6]

In search of 'the true path' in design, British architect and designer Owen Jones, who had also contributed to the interior design of the Crystal Palace exhibition, would analyse 'ornaments' from different times and geographies. He argued that his book *The Grammar of Ornament*, published after the exhibition in 1856, derived from the 'accumulated knowledge of thousands of years', from which he arrived at 37 general, universal propositions for 'good design',[7] as though this could be inventoried and quantified. A few years later, in the 1870s, in their critique of industrialisation, the socialists of the Arts and Crafts movement – led by philosopher John Ruskin and designer William Morris – would turn to an idealised medieval England as well as 'village India' as new '"sources" for a renaissance of British design'.[8]

The will to reform design through education and museum collections also arrived in the Netherlands, where reformers took a particular interest in Indonesian arts and crafts. Notably, director F. W. Van Eeden (of both the Colonial Museum and Arts and Crafts Museum in Haarlem) believed that Dutch artistic traditions 'were succumbing to superficiality and alienation as a result of industrialisation'. He admired Indonesian arts and crafts and the 'exceptional artistic abilities' of the Indonesians.[9] Were these design reformers 'cosmopolitans' as some art historians have argued?[10]

Through a design-historical lens focused on individual artistic, visual, and technical innovation, the story that is so often told about Lion Cachet – whenever mentioned in museum catalogues, collections, and design history books – is that he was the first of many Dutch artists to use the Indonesian batik technique. Prioritising the development of modern design results in a particular way of recalling this historical moment: the story says that European artists were simply inspired and borrowed from many processes such as batik. But in reality, European artists and designers turned explicitly to what they viewed as 'primitive' cultures for inspiration, which – in their eyes – hadn't lost their innate capacity to produce beautiful and useful objects because of their closeness to nature, yet, were simultaneously at risk because of 'European presence'.[11] This kind of 'cosmopolitanism', as 'a broad understanding of other cultures and customs, and a belief in universal humanity' was intricately tied up with the development of the Dutch 'ethical empire', as we will see in this project.[12]

Unfinished Histories

In 2005, I enrolled at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, an art school in Amsterdam

6 T. Barringer, *Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain*, Yale University Press, 2005, p. 16 and p. 260.

7 O. Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, Day and Son, 1856, p. 2.

8 T. Barringer, p. 294.

9 I. van Hout and S. Wijs, 'Colonial Collections', in: *Indonesian Textiles at the Tropenmuseum*, 2017, p. 69 and p. 52.

10 See for example art historian Stacey Sloboda on *The Grammar of Ornament* by Owen Jones. S. Sloboda, 'The Grammar of Ornament: Cosmopolitanism and Reform in British Design', in: *Journal of Design History* 21:3, 2008, pp. 223-236.

11 S. Wijs, 'The Presentation of Textiles, Trade, Ethnology and Design', in: I. van Hout and S. Wijs, *Indonesian Textiles at the Tropenmuseum*, 2017, p. 122.

12 Amanda Anderson quoted in S. Sloboda, 'The Grammar of Ornament: Cosmopolitanism and Reform in British Design', in: *Journal of Design History* 21:3, 2008, pp. 223-236.

where I studied design.[13] As far as I can remember, any mention of Dutch colonial history or the Dutch occupation in Indonesia was completely absent. 'History' in the programmes I attended and later worked at was hardly taught. It has taken me years of study to catch up on design history, let alone colonial history and critical theory. Things are different today: in the cultural institutions where I have worked, there is some kind of – perhaps temporary, superficial – awareness of the colonial 'past' and how it affects our present. Still, however, history remains under-studied as a serious component of design practice. What I have noticed, for example at the Royal Academy in the Hague where I have been working in recent years, is that, in the attempt to move beyond a 'eurocentric canon' and in the context of climate catastrophe, many students, artists, and designers today are inspired by 'Indigenous' cultures.[14] With this in mind, catching up on history for me has meant revisiting books like *The Grammar of Ornament*, and understanding the intimate connections between western artistic 'inspiration' and empire. Indigenous knowledges teach ways of relationality and being in the world that are not based on eradication and destruction. But I have often wondered, on what terms and for how long is this 'interest' sustained? How is Owen Jones' inventory and gaze repeated and internalised in the quest to improve design practice today?

Catching up on the history of the field isn't a radical act – it is the necessary work of making sense of the ways we have arrived at where we are now, and understanding that we are on a continuum: these histories aren't finished. It is also the work of learning to pose critical questions about design and imperialism today: How can we understand the ways in which 'imperial cultural figurations'[15] remain ingrained in our structures, our ways of thinking and seeing the world?

The Cultural Archive

This essay series *Recall/Recalibrate* departs from two main questions: How do we read and write design history? And how has 'empire' been foundational to the field of design? These questions emerged during a collaboration with the Wereldmuseum under the title of 'Design/ing and the Ethnographic Museum'.[16] In her book *Potential History, Unlearning Imperialism*, photographer and theorist Ariella Aïsha Azoulay calls into question the ways in which knowledge is produced and shaped through imperialism.[17] According to her, the 'imperial condition' creates hierarchies and separations: between disciplines, institutions, things, people, lifeworlds. These structures inform the way in which ideas and people today (do not) travel, how they (do not) coincide, or (do not) share worlds.

13 As a (white Dutch) person with well-off parents (with a Finnish mother and a Dutch father born in Dutch-occupied Indonesia), I was able to study at an art school. After my education at the Rietveld, I obtained an MA in Design Cultures from the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam in 2015. I have worked at the Sandberg Instituut, the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague, and briefly also at ArtEZ in Arnhem. Studying the narrow-minded constructions of 'Dutchness' in design under the supervision of Joana Meroz, joining the editorial board of the *Kunstlicht* magazine, witnessing and joining the protests against Zwarte Piet, reading the crucial book *White Innocence* by Gloria Wekker, participating in the Decolonial Summer School in Middelburg, and many conversations with friends have all been key moments of transformative study.

14 Design educator Ahmed Ansari warns against the instrumentalisation of decolonial discourse in service of the status quo: 'These projects range from appropriations and co-optations of practices and cultural forms that lie on the margins of capitalist culture, to fetishizations of figures like the indigenous and the romanticization of pre-colonial pasts, to mistaking liberal pluralism and cosmopolitanism with decolonisation and pluriversality.' In a world where information travels fast, he writes, these ideas become diluted. A liberal approach of 'cherry-picking' in service of innovation and creating 'exciting' projects is not 'decolonial'. See: A. Ansari, 'Decolonisation, the History of Design, and the Designs of History', talk given at the Annual DHS conference *Memory Full*, 2021.

15 G. D. Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race*, Duke University Press, 2016, p. 21

16 https://www.materialculture.nl/en/research/themes/designing-and-ethnographic-museum

17 Ariella Aïsha Azoulay is professor of Media studies and identifies as a Palestinian Jew of Algerian descent, born in Israel, now based in Canada.

Azoulay writes how 'art' becomes a 'distinct realm of activity', with its renewal based on the dispossession and erasure of modes of life of 'communities of *fabri*".[18] Similarly, 'design' is based on eradication and separation. While 'design' is seemingly situated within Europe and intricately connected to histories of the industrial revolution, notably, 'crafts' have often been separated from it, as a 'racially othering category'.[19] Indonesian crafts became 'design' or 'art' only in the hands of Dutch artists and designers like Lion Cachet. Thinking with Azoulay, these types of examples illustrate the imperial condition directly: it not only compartmentalises knowledge into separate disciplines and hierarchies but also sustains these divisions in the present. Understanding this imperial condition reveals that history is not a closed chapter, and creates an awareness of the violence of imperialism that continues to shape our gaze.

Surinamese-Dutch professor of anthropology Gloria Wekker notes that: 'Knowledge about Dutch overseas expansion is, not incidentally, in quarantine in a separate specialisation of the discipline of history; it is not an element of Dutch national history.'[20] Today, if students of design pick up a book about Dutch design history from the library, they will not very likely meet the histories of empire or the Indonesian artisans: they will meet designers like Lion Cachet, but the broader political context will be obscured. In accounts of European design history, its starting point is traditionally the 'industrial revolution', not 1492, the defining and shifting moment of world history shaping the practices of 'design', where Columbus' arrival to the so-called New World ushered in the era of colonial exploitation, eradication, and destruction.

According to Wekker, centuries of Dutch imperial rule have established an 'unacknowledged reservoir of knowledge', a cultural archive, defining a way of being in the world and informing 'meaning-making processes'.[21] The construct of race and resulting racism, both necessary for and outcomes of centuries of colonial violence, has, according to Wekker, for long been 'passionately' denied. Following Palestinian-American scholar Edward Saïd, Wekker describes the cultural archive as:

> [...] located in many things, in the way we think, do things, and look at the world, in what we find (sexually) attractive, in how our affective and rational economies are organized and intertwined. Most importantly, it is between our ears and in our hearts and souls.[22]

This cultural archive has self-fashioned an idea of 'white innocence', and the Netherlands as 'a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism; as being inherently on the moral and ethical high ground, thus a guiding light to other folks and nations'.[23] Wekker's book, at first only published in English to reach a global audience, caused a stir in the Netherlands. Turning attention to the previously evasive construction of 'whiteness', it received defensive and offensive responses from critics often dismissing Wekker's work as too subjective.[24]

How does the cultural archive function within the broad spectrum of design, ranging from product design fuelled by technical solutionism in service of the market, to the artistic design of objects and projects circulating in museums

18 Azoulay, p. 140. Azoulay refers to Hannah Arendt's notion of the 'homo faber' in an attempt to '[…] displace the persona of the individual artist that has been cultivated through the violence of the institution of the museum, and to account for the practice of art in its *longue durée* and not only through peak moments in artists' careers.' 'Communities of *fabri*' to me denotes the importance of the social fabric of making/working. See: A. Azoulay, 'Plunder, the Transcendental Condition of Modern Art and Community of *fabri*', in E. Roelandt and E. Barois de Caevel, *Congolese Plantation Workers Art League*, Sternberg Press, 2017.

19 Ansari, p. 4.

20 Wekker p. 25.

21 Wekker p. 2.

22 Wekker, p. 19.

23 Wekker, p. 2.

24 G. D. Wekker, 'Het grote ongemak: De ontvangst van White Innocence' in: G. D. Wekker, *Witte Onschuld*: Paradoxen van kolonialisme en Ras, (2017), 2020 (Dutch translation of *White Innocence*).

and galleries? We could think about the cultural archive as defining the norms of who and what is (not) seen as a 'designer' or as 'design' today – as defining what is seen as worthy of being designed; as defining what is beautiful, cutting-edge, critical, contemporary, or as a source of inspiration to be used in design. The cultural archive has instilled a 'cosmopolitan' understanding of 'other' cultures and customs and an evolutionist, progressive logic of world history. These frames decide what is deemed relevant to the field of 'design', and thus what is important enough to include in accounts of design history. Moreover, the still dominant supposedly apolitical and ahistorical norms within design practice have strengthened the idea of designers being inherently 'good', or at least neutral, and always capable of finding solutions. According to Wekker, what is needed in confronting white self-representation is an intersectional reading of the cultural archive.[25] Wekker's intersectional approach asserts that inequalities and privileges are continuously produced and reproduced by interacting and overlapping social identities and positions of race, class, gender, and sexuality, nuancing the binary and oppositional dynamic of oppressor–oppressed. This is not to say that there is no oppressor or oppressed, rather her approach calls for taking into consideration the intersections of experience, power, and contexts, and the complexity of the ways in which the cultural archive has been internalised and expressed in day-to-day interactions and beliefs, especially when it comes to Dutch ideas of ethics.

An Artistic Debt of Honour

How and when was the idea of the Netherlands as an 'ethical nation' established? The increased interest in Indonesian arts and crafts by designers like Lion Cachet both corresponded to and increased with a new turn in colonial politics: the 'Ethical Policy'. This new direction was symbolically marked by a declaration in 1901 by Queen Wilhelmina to 'better the situation of the Javanese'. The Ethical Policy became known as a moment of reckoning with the past: by 'elevating' the Indonesian people by 'modernising' them, the Netherlands felt it was ostensibly paying off the debt it accrued during the notorious colonial malpractice of the Cultivation System.[26]

How have Dutch historians discussed the role of the Ethical Policy in relation to arts and crafts? In their contribution to the series *Culture and Migration in the Netherlands*, historians Susan Legêne and Berteke Waaldijk discuss the role and centrality of the colonial context to the history of art and design, and the 'artistic debt of honour' as declared by Gerret Rouffaer in 1901.[27] Rouffaer, a self-trained art historian and 'Indologist', was convinced that Indonesian crafts had been neglected and that they deserved more interest, the generation of which should be part of this new national ethical direction. Historian Marieke Bloembergen has shown in her dissertation *Koloniale vertoningen: de verbeelding van Nederlands-Indie op de wereldtentoonstellingen (1880–1931)* the changing colonial relations and attitudes to Indonesian crafts through her analysis of Dutch presentations at world exhibitions.[28] In Dutch

25 Intersectionality was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, who coined the term to highlight how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalised in society.

26 During the 'Cultuurstelsel', Javanese farmers were forced to plant specific crops for export.

27 B. Waaldijk & S. Legêne, 'Oktober 1901. Gerret Rouffaer constateert een artistieke ereschuld: Vernieuwing van de beeldende kunsten in een koloniale context', in: R. Buikema and M. (eds.) *Cultuur en migratie in Nederlands. Kunsten in Beweging 1900-1980*, Sdu Uitgevers, 2003. Accessed through:_ https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/meij017cult01_01/meij017cult01_01_0003.php.

28 M. Bloembergen, *Koloniale vertoningen: de verbeelding van Nederlands-Indië op de wereldtentoonstellingen (1880-1931)*, 2001, PhD dissertation University of Amsterdam.

design history, from which colonial history is largely absent, a chapter in *De leer van het ornament: Versieren volgens voorschrift 1850-1930* (*The Theory of Ornament: Decoration by the Book, 1850-1930*) by Mienke Simon Thomas titled 'Ex Oriente Lux' ('the light shines from the East') is one of the rare instances where the political context of this period is also offered.[29] She traces the ways in which figures like F. W. van Eeden, J. E. Jasper, and J. A. Loebèr, as well as G. P. Rouffaer, were among a small group promoting interest in Indonesian arts and crafts – shifting the general disinterest and dismissal of ethnographic objects to an area of artistic inspiration and academic interest. Simon Thomas shows how this interest was mainly visual and ornamental: for example, in the case of Loebèr's publication *Bamboe-ornament in Nieuw-Guinea* (1919–1929). While Simon Thomas makes central the visual and ornamental aspect in her history-telling, the broader imperial context of the time remains underexamined.

Cultural work and programming that reveals 'hidden histories', honours 'unsung heroes', and examines 'colonial encounters' within museum spaces have been increasing over the past years. Recently, Museum 't Schip in Amsterdam held an exhibition on Indonesia and the architectural movement of the Amsterdam School, investigating how 'culture crosses the ocean'. The museum engaged with Indonesian authors and historians to explore the 'Indonesian influence' on Dutch architects and vice versa. The exhibition catalogue includes many articles that illustrate the 'cross-pollination'[30] between architects and designers against the backdrop of the politics and relationships of a colonial society. Many of the articles unveil the Indonesian influences hidden in plain sight in the streets of Amsterdam, built by the Amsterdam School architects.[31]

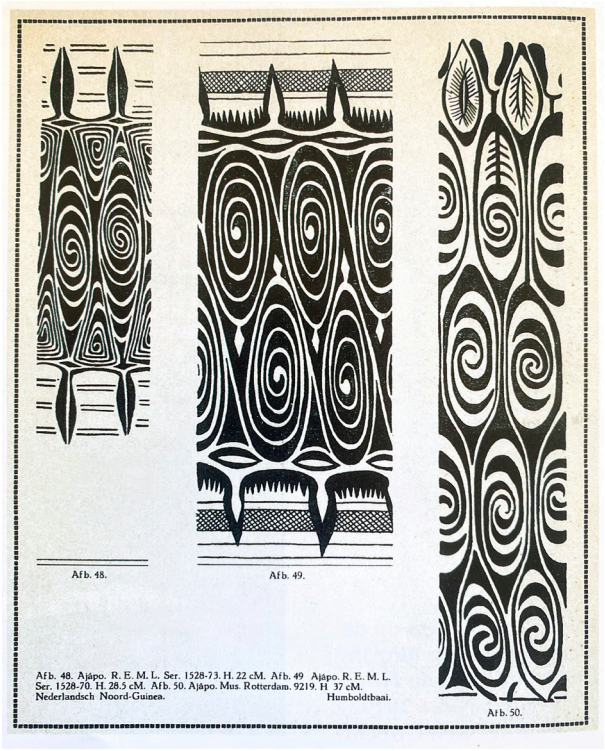

FIGURE 3
Image from: J.A. Loebèr, *Bamboe-ornament in Nieuw-Guinea*, 1919-1929, in: *M. Simon Thomas, De Leer van het Ornament: Versieren volgens voorschrift ~1850-1930*, Amsterdam, 1996.

29 M. Simon Thomas, *De leer van het ornament: versieren volgens voorschrift 1850-1930*, Amsterdam: De Bataafse Leeuw, 1996.

30 This is a term brought up during a conversation with the Indo-European art collector and historian Frans Leidelmeijer, who is known for presenting the Dutch TV programme Tussen Kunst & Kitsch. Leidelmeijer prefers to think about 'cross-pollination' and the 'flow of inspiration'. See: M. van Maanen, 'Cross-pollination: A conversation with art expert Frans Leidelmeijer' in: M. van Maanen, 'Cross-pollination: A conversation with art expert Frans Leidelmeijer' in: M. van Maanen (ed.), *Indonesia and the Amsterdam School: When Culture Crosses the Ocean*, Museum Het Schip, Amsterdam, 2024, pp. 120-131.

31 See: A. Halim and R. Kalebos, 'The Indische Buurt Revisited: The Amsterdam School and Public Housing' in: Van Maanen, pp. 242-255.

Empire

One can research and trace ‘inspiration’ and ‘cross-pollination’, but what if worlds and disciplines were designed to *not* cross and meet, as Azoulay posits? If it was precisely the purpose of the system to keep things separated, how to reveal a ‘hidden history’? Tellingly, the increased interest in Indonesian arts and crafts at the time of the Ethical Policy coincided with the intensified brutal occupation and expansion by Dutch imperial forces in the Indonesian archipelago. From the arrival of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) in 1596 to the Banda islands for the exploitative colonial spice trade, for centuries, the centre of the Dutch colonial regime was firmly established on Java. It was only towards the end of the nineteenth century and the early 1900s – only decades away from Indonesia’s liberation – that the ambition of acquiring political control of the *entire* archipelago unfolded and was realised. The ambition to create one singular Dutch territory in the East was covered up by the rhetoric

FIGURE 4
Europeans at a champagne bar during a 'fancy fair' for the benefit of the Institute for the Blind, 1933. Collectie Wereldmuseum, coll.nr. TM-ALB-0715-5.

of ethics, of ‘developing’ the country and its people after western example. Rather than referring to this period as the moment of the Ethical Policy, it should be understood as ‘ethical imperialism’, as coined by Dutch historian Elsbeth Locher-Scholten.[32] This term forces us to examine together the ‘ethical’ with ‘imperial’, not as a paradox, but as closely connected.

Materialising Ethics

This project is interested in understanding the ways in which the so-called ethical period at the turn of the century materialised through (crafts) education in Dutch-occupied Indonesia. It aims to understand the processes of material craft practices and (crafts) education *together with* imperial occupation. By

32 E. Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in fragmenten. Vijf studies over koloniaal denken en doen van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel, 1877-1942*, Hes & De Graaf Publishers, 1981. The term had been used by historian P. van 't Veer already in 1969 in his study on the Aceh war. See: P. van 't Veer, *De Atjeh-Oorlog*, De Arbeiderspers, 1969.

33 R. Raben, 'A New Dutch Imperial History? Perambulations in a Prospective Field' in: *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 128:1 (2013), p. 5

34 On relationality and decoloniality, see: R. Vázquez, *Vistas of Modernity - decolonial aesthesis and the end of the contemporary*, Mondrian Fund, 2020.

'materialisation', I refer to the ways in which policy becomes executed and implemented, and how it affects the everyday lives of people.

The approach of *correlating* between metropole and colony allows for understanding events 'in tandem'.[33] Thinking with historian Locher-Scholten's concept of 'ethical imperialism' facilitates a correlation between the 'ethical direction' and 'imperial expansion'. With Wekker, we aim for an intersectional understanding of this period, while acknowledging the ways in which the 'racial grammars' continue to perpetuate today's practices, ingrained in us by the cultural archive. Centering empire as foundational to the way knowledge is produced, shaped, and split into disciplines, as Azoulay asserts, we follow an approach that understands history as unfinished. The historical circumstances we are researching are not yet over, but are an ongoing structurally influential condition of our present.

The purpose of *Recall/Recalibrate* is to look at the period around 1900 through crafts and (crafts) education in Dutch-occupied Indonesia and ask: What role did (crafts) education play within Dutch propaganda? How did the 'ethical direction' materialise, while at the same time expanding the Dutch occupation of Indonesian land?

The first two essays (which I wrote for the Research Center for Material Culture/Wereldmuseum) look at how 'ethics' emerged as a rhetoric to cover up and legitimise the brutal extended occupation. In 'A Firm Nudge' I discuss how the efforts of researchers and colonial servants like Rouffaer and Jasper in the field of 'native crafts' mirrored and justified the expansion of empire, and how they tried to inventory and 'improve' craft traditions. In her contribution, Marjolein van Pagee investigates how the racist apartheid system controlled who received crafts education, not only by investing very little in education despite the talk of it, but also in designing the limited education that was offered only to create a small, controllable labour force. A central theme for the 'ethicists', was the 'elevation' of women. They found an ally in Raden Ajeng Kartini, a woman of Javanese nobility who wrote in Dutch and became known for her fight for women's rights. Saut Situmorang traces the instrumentalisation of Kartini and the promotion of 'imperialist feminism', which argues that women were oppressed due to the sexist, patriarchal ideologies of local cultural traditions. The Dutch justified their continued occupation of Indonesia through the idea that they brought civilisation. While Kartini is well-known as a 'feminist' within and outside of Indonesia, Raistiwar Pratama together with Marjolein van Pagee, explore the ways in which Dewi Sartika, already before Kartini, founded a school for girls in Bandung. While Sartika's Dutch text in *Verheffing van de Inlandsche Vrouw (Elevation of the Native Woman)* of 1913 is the only text that remains from her, it seems that the Dutch co-opted her educational efforts.

In her article on Djokja silver, curator at the Wereldmuseum Marjolein van Asdonck discusses the central role of Mary Agnes van Gesseler Verschuir-Pownall in 'reviving' silverware practice in the 1930s in Yogyakarta. In this article, the importance of understanding this revival also as eradication in the context of expanding empire becomes clear.

Together, these texts show that through studying crafts and education,

we can uncover the ways in which the Ethical Policy was realised. Material and materialised practices are understood here as concrete manifestations in response or resistance to colonial rhetoric. When we grasp the (material) legacies of ethical imperialism, we can see how inspiration from 'the East' for someone like Lion Cachet is not just a story of appropriation, but of colonialism. We can begin to recognise how morality and ethics still define our current moment through ideas about improvement and development. Design education and education at large today should offer the desperately needed analyses of imperial histories and the ways in which justifications for occupation are manufactured. By pulling these histories into the realm of design history, this essay series offers a small gesture toward recalling and recalibrating (design) history. The intention for these texts is to circulate widely and to be used as study material.

For me, this research project has opened up many potential further directions of study. Together with the authors, we touched on many sources, images, and between-the-lines information from the fragmented colonial archives that are in need of further examination. Importantly, I wonder what histories of design and craft look like *beyond* colonial relations and the colonial gaze – on their own terms. I'm also interested in exploring the 'recalibrated' pedagogies that surface when the histories – that do not necessarily start nor end with 'design' – presented in this series become central. For example, what kind of practices emerge when creative producers are aware of the cultural archive and centre relationality instead of innovation?[34]

As mentioned earlier, the thinking for this research emerged in the context of a project at the Wereldmuseum. More specifically, it emerged in conversation with Wayne Modest, Esmee Schoutens, and the museum's curators. I am much indebted to Rana Ghavami and the tireless work of Marjolein van Pagee. For this project, Marjolein not only brought me in touch with Saut Sitomorang and Raistiwar Pratama, but wrote, edited, and taught me about Dutch and Indonesian history. For example, she insisted on the importance of using terms like 'Dutch-occupied Indonesia' instead of the colonial 'Dutch East Indies'. I would also like to thank all the authors and the readers (Lisa Baumgarten, Fitria Jelyta, Iris Pissaride, and Mark Oomen) for their contributions, and Harriet Foyster for her generous editing and proofreading. Many thanks to Zuzana Kostelanská for the graphic design of the website and the articles, that sought to visually bring together and layer the histories that haunt our present moment. Lastly, I owe thanks to the Creative Fund NL, who supported this project.

If you have any comments, corrections, or articles that you would like to publish, please contact me on: recallrecalibrate@gmail.com.

ROSA TE VELDE is a researcher, designer and teacher. The Decolonial Summer School, led by Rolando Vàzquez and Walter Mignolo, which she attended in 2016, has been decisive for her work and thinking. She edited Vàzquez' book *Vistas of Modernity: Decolonial Aesthesis and the End of the Contemporary* (2020). In 2021 she published *Drafting Futures: Remembering a Building*, a research into segregation, gentrification, and the 'politics of forgetting' in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, commissioned by De Appel. Currently, she works as a researcher at the Amsterdam University of the Arts, and teaches at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague at the MA Industrial Design.

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