# The Dutch Museum of Freemasonry, unparalleled heritage (The Hague, 25 May 23)

The Hague, the Netherlands, May 25, 2023
Registration deadline: May 22, 2023

Andrea Kroon, Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen

‘A heritage collection, unparalleled in the world': an introduction to the Dutch Museum of Freemasonry

Why this conference?
Freemasonry is one of the oldest social networks in the world. It has been active in the Netherlands since 1721 and is distinguished by a remarkable ritual tradition. For over three centuries the initiation society produced an impressive cultural heritage. Through strict collection policy, this earned a museum status in the middle of the 19th century under the rule of Grand Master Prince Frederick (1797-1881) and subsequently grew into a heritage collection of (inter)national importance. The Vrijmetselarij Museum or Dutch Museum of Freemasonry is located in The Hague.

The museum consists of three interlinked collections: historical archives, scientific library (incl. the famous Kloss Collection acquired by Prince Frederick) and historical objects. The collection not only reflects the development of freemasonry, its tolerant ideas and ritual tradition. It also documents 300 years of the social, political and cultural history of the Netherlands and its international contacts, as well as the lives and works of 70.000 members. From the history of Western expansion to the emancipation of women, and from art history to gender studies, the collection is a gold mine for researchers from all disciplines within the Humanities.

The Dutch Museum of Freemasonry is therefore internationally renowned amongst academic researchers, although it is less well known to the wider Dutch public. Ample reason to put this best kept ‘secret’ in The Hague in the spotlight with an international conference. Experts from different countries and disciplines will discuss the founding of the collection and its relevance as heritage of international calibre (lectures in English). A special guest speaker from America (via Zoom) is emerit. prof. dr. Margaret Jacob, author of The Radical Enlightenment and Living the Enlightenment. She consulted the Dutch lodge archives for her groundbreaking research. This conference provides a unique introduction to a collection that has been preserved in The Hague for more than 150 years, and which should continue to be cherished in the future.

Preliminary conference program (09.30-18.00 hours)
- Opening by Vera Carasso. director Dutch Museums Association
- "The Dutch Museum of Freemasonry and the Study of Humanities" (via Zoom), emerit.prof.dr. Margaret C. Jacob, Distinguished professor of research, Dept. of History, UCLA (USA)
- "From 18th century club archive to national heritage: the Dutch Museum of Freemasonry", dr.

Andréa Kroon, Kroon & Wagtberg Hansen / Guest curator Vrijmetselarij Museum, Den Haag (Netherlands)
- "The Kloss-library, a goldmine for researchers", prof.dr. Jan Snoek, professor of Ritual and Religious Studies, University of Heidelberg (Germany)
- "Archive, library, objects. The unique hybrid nature of masonic collections", Martin Cherry, librarian of the Museum of Freemasonry, London (UK)
- "Western esotericism and the Dutch Museum of Freemasonry" (via Zoom), prof.dr. Henrik Bogdan, professor of Religious Studies, Dept. of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion, University of Göteborg (Sweden)
- "Egyptology and freemasonry: an example of interdisciplinary research opportunities", emerit.prof.dr. Eugène Warmenbol, professor at the Dept. of History, Art and Archaeology (Belgium)
- "Freemasonry and the study of Religion. Opportunities for collaboration", prof.dr. Ab de Jong, Scientific director of the Leiden Centre for Religious Sciences (The Netherlands)
- "From private to public collections. The future of masonic museums",
prof.dr. Andrew Prescott, Digital Humanities Dept., Glasgow University (UK)

Venue
The event will be held at the Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague, which is conveniently located near the Dutch Museum of Freemasonry, and another significant venue: the lodge rooms designed by Karel de Bazel in 1916. These rooms, which were created by the renowned architect, Freemason, and Theosopher, are now a protected monument and part of the Beeld & Geluid Den Haag building complex. Guided tours of the museum and the lodge rooms will be organized for participants.

Registration
The conference is open to students, researchers and heritage professionals, as well as lodge members and anyone with a love of history or cultural heritage. Registration in advance is required.
Participation fee: € 75 regular rate / € 50 OVN donors /€ 35 students (please enclose a copy of your student ID). The fee covers coffee, tea and the drinks at the reception afterwards, and a copy of the conference publication. In addition, tours are included; however, availability is limited.
To register, please email info@stichtingovn.nl. After sending your email, you will receive a registration form and additional information. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and will be confirmed only upon receipt of payment.

Reference:
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