

The Netherlands is a small country. Just over a two-hour drive from east to west and four hours from north to south. There, below sea level, 17 million people live. One of our national poets wrote that if, in this densely populated country, you waved your hands you could easily hit someone. Some artists create space in their work around objects or people to counter balance this closeness.

There is however also a different country: spacious, with endless horizons and huge skies, where wide rivers cross through the low lands. Here golden reeds move on the breeze, rows of ethereal poplars disappear into the horizon, and there are polders, dunes, sea. This is the country Dutch artists also depict. Or they carry such images in their hearts, when they escape the denseness of the homeland to become travellers.

People of the Netherlands are to be found anywhere in the world, as are Dutch artists. Away from home they submerge themselves into other cultures, or get lost in a more mysterious nature. On return their experiences find their way into their studios. Printmaking itself is also a 'travelling' medium. With the ability to be rolled up and posted, original prints can be easily exhibited in international graphic shows. While in the 80s printmaking went through a crisis in the Netherlands when digital prints of paintings were numbered and confused the public, the establishment of the Society of Original Graphics (VOG) in 1993, turned the tide. Today printmaking has regained its status as an original art form, as can be witnessed by the many printing events and exhibitions.

For the Novosibirsk Triennial I have selected a number of artists who all, in their own way, explore different aspects of this diverse identity, either in a realistic or abstract way. With the exception of two printmakers I have chosen the artists from the professional art organisations *Grafiekgroep Bergen*, en *Grafiekplatform*, previously VOG. All artists exhibit regularly at home and abroad. In my choices I have focused on traditional original printmaking techniques, such as etching, mezzotint, linocut, woodcut and lithography.

Nan Mulder
January 2021