



eindhoven

4/10/08 - 25/1/09

HEART LAND

art & music

from the heart of
the United States

featuring

MAARTEN VAN ROSSEM

AD VAN MEURS

LOW

JEREMIAH DAY

ERNEST C. WITHERS

MARJETICA POTRČ

ALEC SOTH

muziekcentrum NETS PHILIPS EINDHOVEN **vanabbemuseum**

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dan doe je al gek genoeg”

Dr. Bernard van Driel, psycholoog

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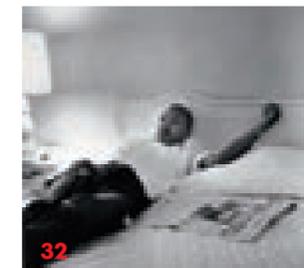
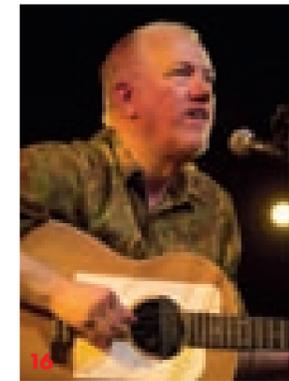
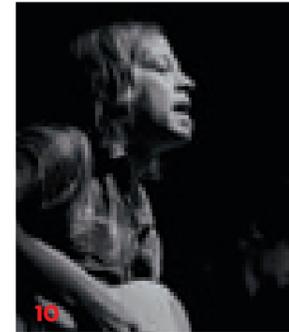
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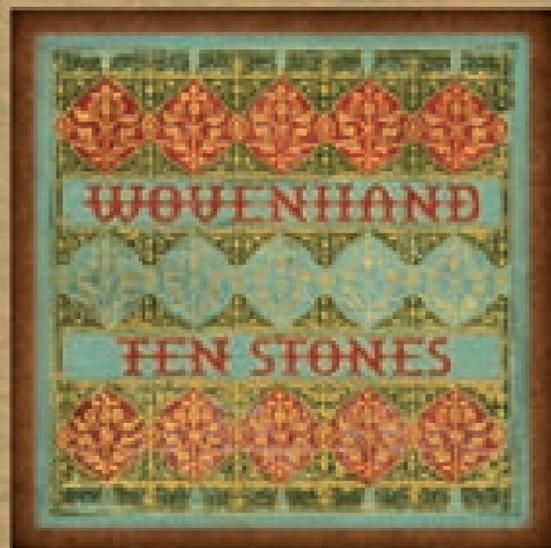
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WOVENHAND

NIEUW ALBUM
'TEN STONES'

HEARTLAND
4 oktober 2008
Muziekcentrum Frits Philips
Eindhoven

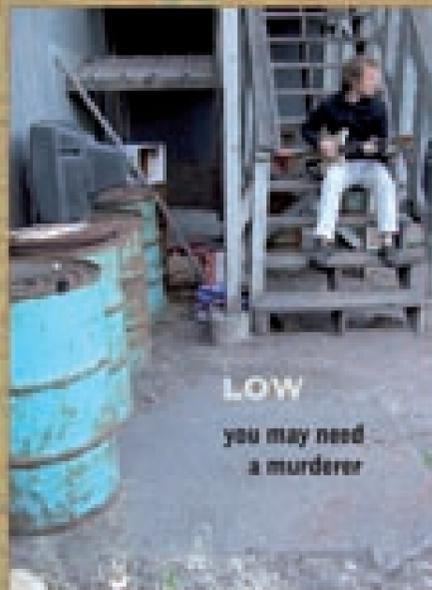
VERDER OP TOUR
14 november
Nijmegen, Doornroosje
21 november
Eersheid, Atak
22 november
Kortrijk, Next Festival
4 december
Leuven, Depot
5 december
Utrecht, Twiil

LOW

ONLANGS VERSCHENEN
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'DRUMS AND GUNS'
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HEARTLAND
22 januari 2009
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HEART LAND

This magazine presents the programme for Heartland, the first interdisciplinary project by the Van Abbemuseum and Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, addressing a (inter)national audience. The project marks the start of a close cooperation between these two institutions that will result in a series of major exhibitions and events in the coming months and years.

The international, southern region of the Netherlands is one of Europe's top economies. With the establishing of Brainport and the High Tech Campus, and the international and attractive diversity of cultural institutions, the region offers an appealing climate for people and businesses to settle. The Van Abbemuseum and Muziekcentrum Frits Philips take the lead by presenting topical exhibitions, concerts and debates that aim to exchange ideas with you, and explore the cultural riches and the social challenges inevitably associated with them.

Heartland is a logical and noteworthy start to this collaborative enterprise. The Heartland of the United States has long been a cradle of important developments and movements in both music and art. With the American presidential election process about to reach its climax this November, every vote will count in the swing states of this region. The outcome of the American election will have consequences worldwide. Heartland probes beneath the surface of voter behaviour, disclosing its reasoning and creative roots.

We warmly welcome you to attend the festive opening of Heartland on Saturday 4 October 2008, and to visit the many other Heartland activities in the following months. We look forward to meeting you in Eindhoven!

Wim Vringer

Director Muziekcentrum Frits Philips

Charles Esche

Director Van Abbemuseum

The city of Eindhoven plays host for three months to art and music from the heart of the USA. Heartland is an interdisciplinary project focusing on the art and music of the geographical heart of the United States of America: the so-called Heartland. As a visitor, you will be given a fascinating introduction to an unknown part of a very well known country. During the American presidential elections – when there is a great deal of US political coverage in the Netherlands – the Heartland experience offers a different perspective, concentrating on new, cultural insights into the United States.

Heartland consists of a group exhibition featuring existing and newly commissioned works in the Van Abbemuseum together with a musical programme in Muziekcentrum Frits Philips in Eindhoven. It will also include debates, lectures, a photo exhibition, publications, and an artists in residence programme.

The Heartland project is an ambitious collaboration between the Van Abbemuseum and the Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, and the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago as an American partner.



ZA 4 OKT 2008

Opening
Heartland Festival

WOVEN HAND

- Muzikás
- Zapp String Quartet

Met afterparty van
Clare & The Reasons

Muziekcentrum Frits Philips
20.15 uur - € 15 + € 1 servicekosten

Kijk voor meer informatie ook op
www.heartlandeindhoven.nl

MUZIEKCENTRUM FRITS PHILIPS
HEUVEL GALERIE 140, EINDHOVEN



TRAVELS THROUGH THE HEART OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Research travel Mississippi. Photo Charles Esche, 2008



Church in Alabama. Photo Charles Esche, 2007



Taco Bell in Arkansas. Photo Otto Berchem, 2007

Welcome to the Heartland, deep in the Netherlands. For three months, the city of Eindhoven will play host to art and music from the heart of the USA. Within the pages of this magazine, artists, thinkers, musicians, and Dutch experts on American culture will introduce you to our programme and guide you through a rich and fascinating part of the world. To complete this mental journey we invite you to come to Eindhoven, in our own Dutch Heartland, where the exhibitions, concerts and performances at the Van Abbemuseum and the Muziekcentrum Frits Philips will lead you northwards from the tropical climate of old New Orleans to the industrial decay of central Detroit.

How it all began...

The Heartland project grew out of two simple observations: one based on the relationship between the Netherlands and the USA, the other related to the Van Abbemuseum and the Muziekcentrum. Firstly, we wanted to do a creative project in Eindhoven, which coincided with the timing of the US presidential elections. For many Dutch people, the USA is an attractive and still mysterious country that has a considerable influence over our cultural and political lives. Although we hear a lot about what is happening in New York, Hollywood, and Washington D.C., there is a degree of ignorance about the cultures and places between the coasts, which in fact make up the majority of the United States. We wanted to offer people another look at the centre of the USA – the Heartland – at just this historic moment. We hope to offer you an idea of its current culture, people and landscape in ways only possible through the creative work of artists and musicians.

Secondly, the Van Abbemuseum and the Muziekcentrum are based in what could be described as the "Dutch Heartland" of Eindhoven and North Brabant. The museum also has a long history of collecting art from the United States, beginning in the 1960s. The museum was the first to show artists such as Andy Warhol and Bruce Nauman in the Netherlands, playing a significant role in establishing local interest

WWW.MUZIEKCENTRUM.NL - 040.244 20 20



Research travel Illinois. Photo Otto Berchem, 2007



Clanton, Alabama. photo Otto Berchem, 2007



Louis Armstrong Parc in Louisiana. Photo Otto Berchem, 2007



Overton Park Shell in Memphis. Photo Kerstin Niemann, 2007



research travel Tennessee. Photo Otto Berchem, 2008



Research travel Illinois. Photo Charles Esche, 2008

in such work. In the 1990s, the museum switched its attention to the west coast and collected Mike Kelley, Jason Rhoades and Paul McCarthy. *If you continue your exploration in the museum after seeing Heartland, you will discover more about this history in our Living Archive exhibition. In terms of Heartland however, this background made us curious about the zone between the east and west coasts. We wondered what was happening within this huge geographic area that was so little represented on Europe's cultural map of the world. This curiosity led to our first visit to the region, travelling by car from New Orleans to St. Louis along the Mississippi River.

We often travelled together as a curatorial search party, which allowed us to share our different perspectives – shaped by our backgrounds as two Europeans and an American based in Chicago – learning collectively about the region's complexity. We met artists, fellow curators and people interested in the cultural life of their own cities. This led us to make extraordinary discoveries: breaking into an abandoned automobile factory in Detroit with Scott Hocking, to see his work using material he finds on site, and meeting with Dan Peterman and Theaster Gates at the amazing Experimental Station in Chicago, which brings

'the area that Mark Twain once called "the body of the nation"'

The significance of music to the Heartland of the United States is even more obvious, and the Muziekcentrum Frits Philips has developed a dynamic programme of music ranging from the south to the north of the region. The art and music collaboration in Heartland also allows each Eindhoven institution to present a small example of each other's specialism. Thus there is a vibrant photography exhibition in the Muziekcentrum and a number of music performances in the Van Abbemuseum.

Since that initial trip, we have journeyed to Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Omaha and elsewhere, focusing on the area that Mark Twain once called 'the body of the nation'. As one source of orientation, we chose the Mississippi River, with its rich social, economic, and cultural history and as a second, the Midwestern states. To envision this territory, it is perhaps easiest to imagine a heart shape stamped on a map of the United States, with its southern tip at New Orleans, stretching in the west to Minneapolis and in the east to Detroit.

together people from contrasting communities who live next door to one another. In the south, we were inspired by Marjetica Potrč's proposal for a new Republic of New Orleans, a work she created in response to the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. We also encountered Greely Myatt in his studio, where he twists rural Mississippi traditions while working midway between the site of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination and a monument to the founder of the Ku Klux Klan. In Omaha, we saw the latest version of "Whoop Dee Doo" – a sophisticated, hugely entertaining variety show that mingles artists and local talents, presenting everything from performance art to tap dancing. These revealing moments laid open something of the history and specific flavour of each place. In making the Heartland programme, we have tried as much as possible to bring these experiences back to Eindhoven and share them with you.

What you'll see now...

At the Van Abbemuseum, a body of work will first introduce the region via the Mississippi River, and from there guide you into the exhibition galleries on a journey northwards through this heart-shaped territory. Along the way you will encounter work by artists who represent several generations and different approaches to art-making. This includes newly commissioned works from artists who we asked to investigate the Heartland region, as well as others produced in the Netherlands during the last 15 years. All of the project's art and music respond in some way to the texture of this region, by individuals originating not only deep within the Heartland, but also from other parts of the United States and Europe, thus paralleling the insider/outsider perspectives of our curatorial team.

We also included a room in the Van Abbemuseum that presents a sampling of independent initiatives that support the creative work of artists. These initiatives range from new, small-scale, artist-run enterprises like KKProjects in New Orleans and Percolator from Lawrence, Kansas; to fabled residency programmes like Grand Arts in Kansas City; as well as established artist-run spaces – the Soap Factory in Minneapolis, for example. These schemes provide alternatives to commercial structures and help knit together the creative communities within the vast and dispersed Heartland region.

And where it may go next...

Just as this first presentation of Heartland is inspired in part by the Van Abbemuseum's history, its role within Eindhoven, and its European context, the final incarnation of the project will respond to its next home at the University of Chicago's Smart Museum of Art in the Fall of 2009. Chicago is one of the largest urban centres within the Heartland region and deeply tied to the area's rural environment in the midst of the United States.

Our research as a curatorial team will continue over the coming year, further extending the impact of the project. We have begun to talk to many of the colleagues we have met during our travels and together are exploring the possibility of linking a series of conversations, events, and exhibitions around this Heartland region, in different communities and cities during Autumn 2009.

Through its many-layered collaborations, Heartland offers you the opportunity to experience different forms of culture from and about this region, not only through contemporary art but also echoes of the region's renowned musical traditions. We hope that this magazine, combined with the other elements of the Heartland project, will tell you a new story about America; one that complements your existing knowledge of the region with many surprises.

Charles Esche, Director Van Abbemuseum
Kerstin Niemann, Research Curator Van Abbemuseum
Stephanie Smith, Director of Collections and Exhibitions and Curator of Contemporary Art, Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago
Frank Veenstra, Artistic Manager Muziekcentrum Frits Philips

OPENING CONCERT WOVEN HAND

Dave Eugene Edwards's Carte Blanche



The Gold Rush brought not only European immigrants to the “New World” but also the development of the dynamic, white music, known as hillbilly.

A curious name, linked even more curiously to the Netherlands. Tradition has it that Billy, as in “Hillbilly”, was King Billy – William Henry of Orange-Nassau and Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic – who reigned over England, Scotland and Ireland from 1688 to 1702. At this time, many Scottish and Irish immigrants were settling in the Appalachian Mountains (the hills), and spoke constantly of their king, Billy. This moving caravan of people transported a colourful palate of European musical influences. Amongst these you could hear the Irish fiddle, the Italian accordion, sounds of the waltz and polka from the dance halls where the newly formed “hillbillies” would hold their musical entertainment after a week of hard labour. The best baladeers and fiddlers showed off their virtuosity in contexts ranging from medicine shows to vaudeville productions. Dismissed by big city sophisticates, these communities together with their homespun music

nonetheless formed the basis of what became one of today's great commercial genres: Country Music.

Gramophone records helped spread popular music on a large scale from the start of the twentieth century onwards, but it was not until the 1920s that the industry started taking an interest in hillbilly music. Uneasy about the hillbilly epithet (an insult on par with ‘white trash’), record executives invented the term ‘Country’ to market the product better. The genre enjoyed a meteoric rise, with celebrities such as the Carter Family, then Hank Williams and eventually the ‘hillbilly cat’, Elvis Presley. Country became the vox populi of white America. As for many musical styles emerging from the melting pot of the Heartlands, Country has sprouted countless offshoots. One extremity of the firmament is occupied by Nashville – dominated by Country Pop stars such as John Denver and Dolly Parton. On the far left we

find Alternative Country (also known as Alt.Country), with Neil Young as its godfather who has inspired generations of lo-fi musicians since the Woodstock era.

Dave Eugene Edwards and his band, 16 Horsepower, appeared on the scene in the mid-1990s with a distinctive variant of Alt.Country. You could call it a kind of ‘Country noir’: a mix of traditional Folk, Americana, Country and Alternative Rock larded with lyrics about sin and redemption. Edwards now purveys his pensive music under the name, Woven Hand. During the Heartland opening evening, Edwards will be adding a new ingredient to his personal Country elixir. For his musical, Carte Blanche, he is collaborating with the Zapp String Quartet from the Netherlands and Hungary's leading folk group of the moment, Muzsikás, whose Outlaw Song he has covered. The performance is a once-off cooperation in which Edwards is seeking the European roots of Coun-

try, while simultaneously enriching the mix with – rather curiously – the ‘Dutch mountains’ sound of Zapp.

Frank Veenstra is artistic manager at Muziekcentrum Frits Philips Eindhoven. Opening concert Heartland: **Woven Hand, Muzsikás & Zapp String Quartet**, afterparty with Clare & The Reasons. 04/10/2008, 20:15, Muziekcentrum Frits Philips. Entrance € 15 + admin. fee. Tickets: www.muziekcentrum.nl (040-2442020), www.ticketsevice.nl (0900 300 1250), and the official sales locations.

SCOTT HOCKING



Scott Hocking, *Ziggurat*, Detroit, 2008

I've never liked the term "Heartland". It's been used in America as a marketing tool and political buzz word for so long it makes me cringe.

It conjures up images of working class, denim-decked Marlboro men having a Budweiser after work; commercials for pick-up trucks with country rock soundtracks; cornfields and cows, even George Bush himself. The word alone doesn't bother me. It's kind of pretty, really – a Heartland sounds like a strong and beautiful place. But, it has been simplified into a stereotype. In reality, the Heartland combines the Midwest, the Great Lakes, the Great Plains, the Rust Belt, the Bible Belt, and the Mississippi Basin. Its part Dust Bowl, part Appalachia, part North, part South, and everything in between. Heartlanders are as diverse as the landscape. It's hard to imagine what America's Heartland means to people in other countries. Or if they even know it exists.

As an artist, I am interested in forgotten places and things kept out of sight, out of mind. I spend a lot of time exploring my surroundings, hunting for and gathering information, images, and materials. I spent three years without a car in Detroit. I walked, biked, bummed rides, and rode the bus. Life slows down without a car in the Motor City. It is a driving city, and it's very hard to find everything you need within walking distance from your home. Sometimes it could take me two hours to reach the same place by bus that would take twenty minutes in a car. I learned to be patient and meditative while waiting for and riding on the bus.



Scott Hocking, *Skylight Forest*, Detroit, 2008

Walking through Detroit, on the other hand, became much more to me. I never minded how long it took, and I loved exploring details that I had missed while whizzing by in a car. Going along the railroad tracks or into abandoned areas of Detroit became my nature walks – the closest I could come to a hike in the woods. I found solace in massive, empty factories and overgrown neighbourhoods, and beauty in the decay and transformations there. I've had a motor vehicle for many years since then, but I still prefer walking to work sites, like the one documented in the Heartland exhibition. It's not impossible to live in Detroit without a car, but it isn't easy either. It all depends on how much time you've got.

Wherever I go, my artwork is influenced by the history and people of that place. Often I am responding to being either inspired or bothered by what I find. In Detroit, I have worked with abandoned industry and former sites of native earthworks, knowing that I am somehow collaborating with thousands of others who once lived or worked there, used the materials I now find, and built the vacant structures I now work with. Although I am influenced by the past, specifically how humans interact with nature through history, I am equally affected by current events. When I imagine how our time will be viewed in the future, I am simultaneously excited and frightened by where the world may be heading. I try to present viewers with issues I believe are important and things they might have overlooked, such as ideas of learned beauty and/or ugliness.

Work by artist **Scott Hocking** (lives and works in Detroit, Michigan) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

JOHN WEEDEN



RISK, Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee, 2008. Photos John Weeden

"So...then...why the hell did you come to Memphis?"

This was my first reaction upon hearing an accented voice requesting a meeting to discuss a most peculiar sort of exhibition. I was intrigued by the premise, an indexical mapping of the contemporary art practices within the vast interior of the country, including a featured focus on the current art ecology of our own hometown.

Until a few years ago, it was largely uncommon to meet internationals interested in contemporary art here. Sure, there were always the tourists that came for Elvis, and to walk the streets in the birthplace of the blues, but art? Doubtful. Contemporary art? Unfathomable.

And yet, within the past 5 years a steady stream of creatives from around the globe have made various exploratory forays into our hinterlands, wondering what lay beneath the myth of their music heroes. When they speak of their Memphis meanderings they tend to use hushed, excited tones, having discovered some intangible "feeling" in Memphis unlike anything they've experienced elsewhere; something of the intimately familiar and the surrealistically foreign within the same instant seems to almost breathe in the air around them. The most extraordinary phenomenon is that, almost without exception, they seem to never want to leave. In fact, many now return on a yearly basis for weeks at a stretch, determined to deduce the root of their hopeless attraction to the ineffable, insatiable soul of the city.

What is it that seems to be calling them? What is it about our little town halfway up the Mississippi River that intrigues those from beyond the sea? Why is this rough and tumble town suddenly so compelling to those engaged in decidedly more sophisticated pursuits than barbecue cooking contests and Rock n' Roll nostalgia tours?



Could it be the overwhelming sense of authenticity that still resonates just under the pavement here? Perhaps it's the utter lack of pretension amongst the majority of this place's citizens – people that have never had much, so have grown accustomed to making do. Or, maybe it's the distinctive Memphis manner, the raw unpredictability of its character, constantly in flux – a mysterious state of perpetual curiosity, chicanery, exuberance, despair, gentility, swagger, scepticism, passion, and a certain sort of 'the hell you say' defiance?

Reflecting this mercurial mix, the Memphis art landscape has always been an eccentric patois of the ordinary and the outrageous. Outside the traditional fare of conservative commercial galleries and encyclopaedic museums, a certain rebellious, 'damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead' ethic has driven our most compelling new art practices. Musicians in the city have also continually contributed to the dynamism of the local art scene with their emphasis on experimentation, rapacious urges of exploration, and borderline pathological obsession for both the artful and the arcane.

Memphis is the end of the earth in so many ways that it is daunting to even attempt a definition of its demeanours. Within the same heartbeat we tend to love you ecstatically, and yet to not even give a damn. This town with mud in its veins and blood on its hands will keep making art as if its life depended on it, because, ultimately, it does.

John Weeden is a freelance curator in Memphis, Tennessee, where he also works as Executive Director of the Urban Art Commission.



Maarten van Rossem in debate at the Van Abbemuseum, 4 July 2008. Photo: Bram Saeys

MAARTEN VAN ROSSEM

City Folk and Countrymen in the Heartland

The Great American Heartland is clearly a mythical region. Some people define the Heartland as that part of the USA where traditional values like individualism, hard work and a fear of God survive intact. Others see it as the cradle and breeding ground of the religious and political obscurantism that has kept George W. Bush in the presidential saddle for the last eight years.

The Great American Heartland is clearly a mythical region. Some people define the Heartland as that part of the USA where traditional values like individualism, hard work and a fear of God survive intact. Others see it as the cradle and breeding ground of the religious and political obscurantism that has kept George W. Bush in the presidential saddle for the last eight years. The 'some' and the 'others' just referred to are, respectively, Republicans and Democrats. The Heartland consists from this viewpoint of those states which invariably light up in Republican red during TV election-night broadcasts. Looking at American election results from recent years, it is striking how the Democrats have prevailed, with only a few exceptions, in the states that line the ocean coasts; similarly, with only a few exceptions, the Republicans hold sway in all the states between them. One interpretation of this fact springs readily to mind: there are two Americas, an extroverted modern one and an introverted traditional one – a contrast corresponding almost exactly with a coastal or inland situation. The reality is as always more complicated, although it is not entirely unrelated to the sketchy analysis just given. I will start by

trying to give my own sharper definition of the American Heartland. The effect may be to sap the mythical aura, but this will be compensated by a gain in geographical and historical clarity.

The USA has traditionally been divided into four fairly clear-cut regions: the Northeast, the Midwest, the South and the West. Each of these regions has a subtle but recognizable identity. The Northeast and to some extent the South are the cradle of the Republic. The South itself is by far the most problematic region because of its history of slavery and the Civil War, evidence of which remains to this day. If the USA differs strongly from the nations of Western Europe, the difference lies in the (unattractive) characteristics of the Southern states. The West has a certain fairytale aura, which can be associated with the tragic fate of the native Indians or with the swinging beach culture of golden California. The Midwest, finally, consists of the states from Ohio to North Dakota and from Michigan to Kansas. Back in the Nineteenth Century, these states formed the wild frontier where the fundamental American national character, indi-

vidualistic and democratic as it is, was forged. It was a land of independent ranchers, of men and women who lacked the urban sophistication of the coastal cities but had their hearts in the right place, stubborn but honest. Even today, if we are to believe the statistics, people in the Midwest work harder than in the other regions.

Slave-owning was banned very early on in the Midwest, and the Ohio River was the traditional boundary between slavery and freedom. The Midwest was thus spared the shame of slavery – that awful birth defect which marred the face of the great American Republic.

'The Heartland is everywhere; and urban Americans occupy mere islands within it'

Many a researcher of sociology has sought the essence of the United States in the Midwest. Middletown, which has famously figured in several research reports, is in fact Muncie in Indiana. Is the Midwest then really identical to the Heartland, from the viewpoint of culture and history? I am unsure about this. I would rather return, cautiously and by way of my personal observations, to the wider definition given at the beginning of this article.

If you rent a car in Manhattan and drive north, it will take hours before you finally escape the megalopolis. With the city behind you, you will probably feel surprised at the countryside of upstate New York, so thinly populated by West European standards. If instead you turn off in a westerly direction and follow the southern part of New York State, you will soon realize that you have left modern, metropolitan America and are entering the mythic Great American Heartland. This is the home of the Republican voter, where people go to church on Sundays and where the 1950s have never stopped. Somehow the American countryside often seems more uncompromisingly rural than in a country like the Netherlands.

A similar phenomenon occurs in another typically Blue state, Massachusetts. As a whole it is America's most progressive state, but that progressiveness is determined by the huge urban conglomeration of Boston. Driving westwards, you soon leave metropolitan America and enter the Heartland. Perhaps the Heartland here is not as pure as that of rural Kansas, but it remains instantly recognisable. The Heartland is, in other words, everywhere; and urban Americans occupy mere islands within it.

My own family is an effective demonstration of the astonishing cultural contrasts between metropolitan America and the inhabitants of the Heartland. A niece of mine lives in a fashionable suburb of Boston and is married to an Australian who has been in the computer industry since the year dot. Both of them are occupied with ethics and highly progressive; in Holland they would no doubt vote Groen Links ('Green Left'). My niece sobbed with disappointment over the phone when Bush was re-elected in 2004. Although I was upset, it was nothing compared with her sorrow; it was their Head of State, and there was nothing they could do about it.

Her sister, my other niece, lives in an attractive suburb of Columbus, the capital of Ohio. She is married to an American who hails from working class roots in Cleveland. It is a background he has left behind him: he studied chemistry, and prospered in the 1960s and '70s. He is highly intelligent and wide awake to political issues. But he has not lost the basic cultural equipment of the Heartland, or in his case perhaps of the Midwest: he owns two rifles and several pistols. I am convinced, by contrast, that my Boston niece has never touched a gun. My Columbus nephew-in-law votes Republican for lack of anything better, for he considers himself a Libertarian, opposed to further government involvement in the social sphere.

The immense differences that exist between Columbus, Ohio and Boston, Massachusetts (not to mention the Netherlands) and between members of the same family who live in different areas of the United States, are illustrated by the following incident. I was relaxing with my wife and daughter in the garden of my niece and nephew-in-law in downtown Columbus. They have a splendid vegetable patch at the bottom of the garden. Suddenly there was a commotion: there was a groundhog – a largish American rodent – in the vegetable patch. What a cute animal, my daughter said, but my nephew's reaction was quite different. He commanded my niece to fetch one of his rifles. An execution was imminent. My daughter protested in horror and announced that she would leave immediately if they were to shoot the poor groundhog. Fortunately, the groundhog scurried off before a major family row ensued. To my nephew, our concern for the rodent was incomprehensible. Pleasant though the family reunion had been, culturally speaking, we are still miles apart.

It seems that the culture of sentimental city dwellers is likely to prevail over that of the pragmatic hunters (or murderers?) of the Heartland. The small-town conservative world that defines the Heartland is doomed to vanish. It may take a while, however, for rural America is immense.

Professor Maarten van Rossem teaches History at Utrecht University and specialises in the history and politics of the United States.

AD VAN MEURS

The destination was Ponca City in the north of Oklahoma. That's where the Heartland of the USA starts – that great unknown America stretching all the way up to the Canadian border. Our gig was at Webb's World of Fun, which would soon turn out to be a euphemism for a grimy, dilapidated slum. For the moment, getting there was what mattered.

It was late October, still warm, typical Indian Summer weather (oddy, the best song about that was written by a Frenchman, Joe Dassin in his L'Été Indien). Just before nightfall, with the car windows wound down, we cruised into Oklahoma. The surroundings grew gradually emptier – something we couldn't really see on that moonless night, but we could feel it. Apart from the headlights of occasional oncoming vehicles, the only signs of life were tiny pinpricks of light at immeasurable distances. It was like being in a space capsule, soaring over some far-off planet, in some remote galaxy. The lukewarm breeze, as old as time itself, washed through the car.

'we proudly called ourselves "brabo-hippies", the easy riders of De Peel'

A strange euphoria settled over me. It took a while before I could place the feeling, but then it came back to me. In my school days in the Netherlands, I used to cycle to school in Helmond, pedalling daily through De Peel – a large area of swamps, heath and peat-bog, part of which is now De Groote Peel National Park. Later, I would traverse the same landscape at night, riding a moped with friends on our way back from a party in one of the region's far-flung towns – Venray, Asten or wherever – to our home in Gemert. As inhabitants of the province of North Brabant, we proudly called ourselves 'brabo-hippies', the easy riders of De Peel. I remember one of our favourite groups, CCC Inc., descending on the district to perform at a farm in Neerkant. Now those were real hippies, from distant Amsterdam – then another planet altogether. Well, it was that sensation of being at one with nature, surrounded by an endless horizon, with an unknown but tempting future before me: that was what overcame me as we hurtled through the night in Osage County, Oklahoma.

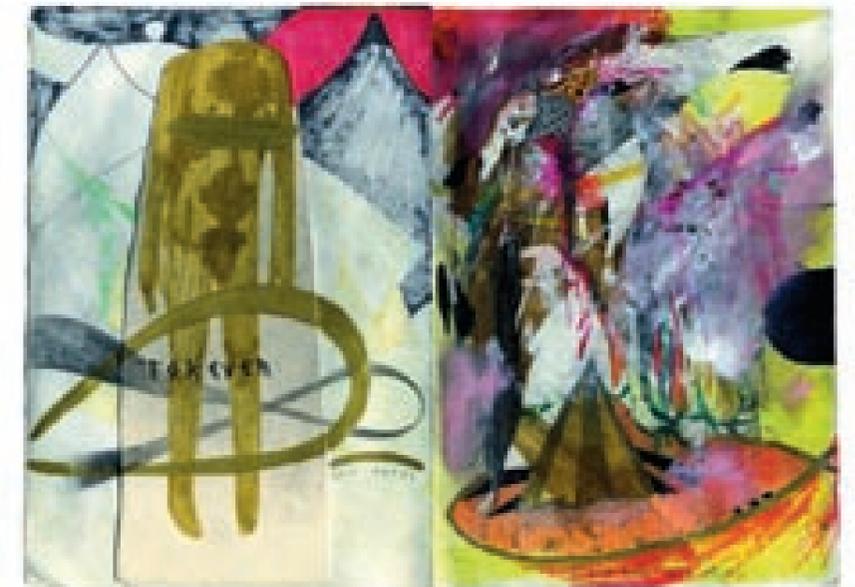
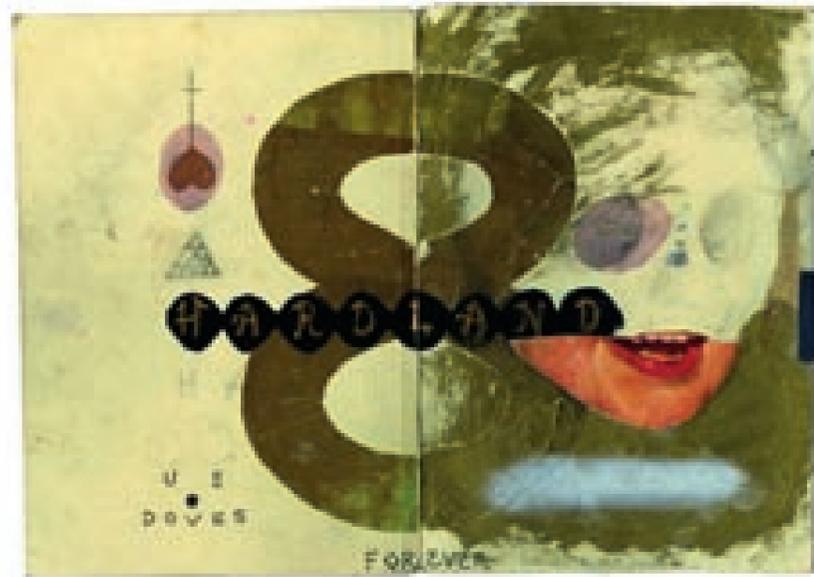
In the light of the next day, we passed one village after another, every one of them reminding me of places in my boyhood countryside. There was Pawhuska (let's call it Elsendorp) where a cop literally lurked behind every bush, waiting to hand out speeding tickets; then came Hominy (could that be Zeilberg?) with its plastic stand-ups of Indians on a hill, followed by countless miles of nothing. In the far distance we could see cattle – or were they buffalo, who knows? At last we rolled into the oil town of Ponca City. (Where? Let's say Deurne.) The town centre had opted to remain stuck in the 1920s. Like dusty cowboys, we crowded into an antique radio station where there was a no less antique DJ. It was the first time he had met Europeans face to face. Can you pay for things in dollars there, he wondered, and he'd love to see our passports because nobody has one in Ponca. Who needed it?

Later, in Webb's World of Fun – a place I could write a book about and maybe one day I will – the club filled up

with an audience of witches, serial killers, ghosts and suchlike. It was Halloween, 31 October! Of course, I could place the scene in my memory: Carnival gigs at Hotel de Kroon in Gemert, in 1963 and subsequent years. Our act then was a rough and ready one; we were a band of ruffians and desperados, loud-mouthed and overconfident.

During the intermission at Webb's, I stood looking out through the door. Rain was gushing down and people were dashing to and from their cars, yelling and laughing drunkenly like only American girls can. I felt at peace with myself. Was this my homecoming? No, that would be saying too much, but I counted my blessings. I was playing guitar in a group. My bike ride through De Peel had not yet come to an end.

Ad van Meurs is singer-songwriter (also known as The Watchman) and is currently working together with Ankie Keultjes and filmmaker Dré Didderiëns on the documentary *Searchin' for the heart of the Heartland*, which will premiere on 08/01/2009, 20:15, Muziekcentrum Frits Philips Eindhoven. Entrance €15 + €1 admin. fee.



Collage of pages from Us Doves (by) Hardland/Heartland, WE: AA x CQ x ETC, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2008.



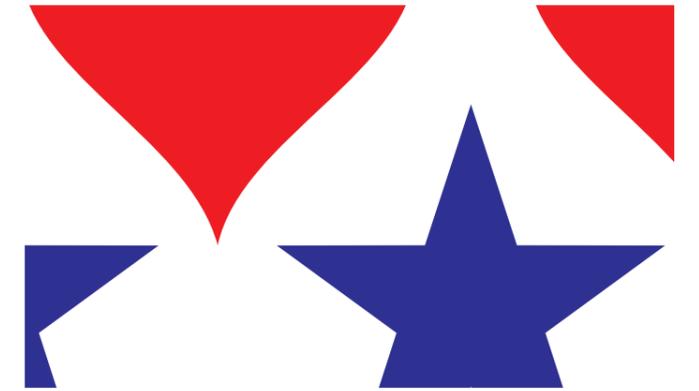
JEREMIAH DAY

Road trip through the Heartland

My friend and I used to joke about the magic can of beans cooked on a fire under the stars on the roadside. Somehow, like in *On The Road* by Jack Kerouac, such moments emanate with wonder and fulfillment. Sitting there, maybe on a log or a piece of wood, looking out at the night, each time I drove cross-country I would look out (at a rest-stop in North Carolina, a small park in Grand Junction, Colorado) and think: "I could just stay here, give up my plans and choose this instead." But the joke is, after all, it's just a can of beans. 'America, that is the name of my unhappiness,' Kerouac wrote in *Visions Of Cody*. It is this precise mix of promise and disappointment that marks the Heartland.

I've been to the Heartland in Western Massachusetts, Upstate New York, and two hours drive north of Los Angeles. But the Heartland is not just the non-urban, non-suburban – the meanest ghetto of St. Louis, Missouri, where the libraries were closed and the city even stopped collecting garbage for a while due to a lack of funds, that too is the Heartland. I remember an image from '91 or '92 – a sign on the side of the road in Montana: 'Fuck the New World Order.' The first people to recognize and criticize globalisation were in the Heartland. When the American president

Bush Sr. presided over the end of the Cold War and announced the "New World Order", the farmers in Montana saw through it instantly. It was one thing to defend freedom, but altogether another to propose running the world. These farmers were part of the good old-fashioned American democratic-republican tradition, and recognized that imperialism was the main threat to self-government. The important critics of US imperialism and the "police-state-ism" that goes with it were not from California or New York, but from Montana and Wisconsin.



'It is this precise mix of promise and disappointment that marks the Heartland'

My project for the Heartland exhibition concerns Lowndes County, Alabama – a place that is simultaneously a "nowhere" and the location of world-historical political events – making Lowndes a dramatisation of the conditions we all live with everywhere. In Lowndes, at the beginning of 1965, no African Americans were registered to vote because of a complex system of violent harassment and intimidation that stood in their way. The area was known by civil rights workers as "bloody Lowndes", due to the severity of repression there. Some in the civil rights community thought to make a kind of example of the area – if they could challenge white supremacy in Lowndes, they could challenge it anywhere. So that same year activists from the Student Non Violent Coordinating Committee and local leaders formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organiza-

tion – an independent political structure dedicated to electing African Americans to political office. This story has been largely ignored within most histories of the civil rights struggles, except that the symbol for the LCFO was a black panther – an icon taken on by the much more famous Black Panther Party of Self Defence. My project for Heartland is an exploration of the LCFO – its legacy, its contradictions, its memory. At the end of *Dharma Bums*, a spirit comes to Kerouac and tells him his mission is to remind people that they are essentially free: how to connect this vision with Lowndes County Freedom?

Work by artist Jeremiah Day (lives and works in Amsterdam) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

DAVID OLNEY



David Olney

If you listen to David Olney's records you will hear two voices. There is a growling, macho voice in which he sings about drug dealers, desperados and swindlers, and a soft, charming voice in which he sings about love, be it passionate or purchased. It is always, however, unmistakably David Olney.

David's musical palette has more colours than any other singer-songwriter, apart perhaps from Randy Newman. He shares with Randy the literary talent to crawl into someone else's skin and give a voice to that personality. The 'I' in his songs is hardly ever David Olney himself, unless (I assume) in his most intimate love ballads such as *If My Eyes Were Blind*. The ego figure might be a French prostitute in the First World War, or a petty swindler from two thousand years ago who wonders about Jesus Christ and his amazing tricks that have set everyone talking (in *Jerusalem Tomorrow*, favourite of Dutch cabaret artist, Freek de Jonge). Sometimes the protagonist is not a person at all but an iceberg awaiting a fateful encounter (*Titanic*) or a humble donkey bearing Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (*Brays*, my own favourite).

Part of David's fascination as a writer is that he draws on such a diversity of sources for his subject matter, including cheap thrillers, biographies of painters, adventurers and film stars, *The Bible* and the newspaper sports page. When singing *Vincent's Blues*, he is not speaking of Van Gogh in the Mississippi Delta. Through all his music, you can hear the voice of a true storyteller with an impeccable feel for the right word. I have often seen David perform. The first occasion was in 1994, when I had a Sunday morning radio programme (it drew the highest audience ratings ever polled

by VPRO – so high they quickly cancelled the programme). The programme was called *Sunday Morning Coming Down*, and a sweet girl with bright blue eyes drew my attention to a David Olney song called, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. Wouldn't it be a good idea to have him sing it live on the programme? David sang, and went. The girl with blue eyes stayed forever.

David has a charming disdain for logistics and side issues. It is no coincidence that his managers and agents are always female: he likes to be mothered. If nobody looks after him he is quite capable of getting a train from Schiphol to Arnhem – just because he has been there before – and ride from there to Amsterdam. He can't be bothered to check the map. Maybe it's in his nature, because he is totally focussed on his music; when the microphone is in front of him, he performs with the same intensity whether it is for a football canteen or a concert hall.

He has cut many records since he moved from Rhode Island to Nashville, and since he broke up with the X Rays, deciding to go solo. He has barely ever disappointed, and forces his listeners to attention. If you don't listen you will miss a lot, and that's not all. I am always inclined to tell people in the audience to shut up if they chatter while someone is performing. If anyone talks while David Olney is singing, however, I would have them taken out and shot.

Jan Donkers is radio-maker for the VPRO, and an independent critic and writer. *Heartland Café: David Olney & Tommy Womack*, 20/10/2008, 21:00, Grand café Meneer Frits in Eindhoven. Entrance € 10 + € 1 admin. fee. For a discount on multiple Heartland Cafés, you can buy the Heartland Café Card. See www.muziekcentrum.nl.

MATT BAKKOM



Downtown Looking Up (Minneapolis from my roof), 2008. Photo Matt Bakkom

Growing up in Minneapolis it seemed to us that anything was possible.

That adolescent enthusiasm must have been rooted in the full spectrum of seasons descending yearly; or maybe a middle class civic pride that defined city politics, much as it does now. This was compounded by our distinct geographic position, midway between the coastal capitals of New York and Los Angeles. Sure we were stuck in the middle, all the way at the top of the river, but the expansive canopy and a dozen lakes made up for what our quiet streets might have lacked.

It helped that I came of age in the golden era of a music scene that was simultaneously local and global in scope. The Suicide Commandos had introduced punk rock in the Midwest in the mid-'70s. Prince followed and flowered. The Replacements and Husker Du, among many others, blossomed through the 1980s. When I first travelled in Europe in 1987, these were the names that came up when I mentioned my hometown to hip strangers. The idea that artists who you knew from the neighbourhood were reaching audiences around the world, inspired a confidence that art from Minneapolis could make a mark. Participating in this flow seemed then, as it does today, to be an everyday activity with unknown and limitless potential.

Somewhere underneath it all, was an element I would later recognise as the legacy of our recent frontier past. This year, Minneapolis celebrates its 150th anniversary as a city. For the

first sixty years of its existence, the city was based on the milling power harnessed by the Mississippi's only waterfall, coupled with its centrality as a point of shipping and processing. By the early 20th Century that heyday had passed, but the cooperative ethos and tendency toward self-initiated effort that underpinned the city's practices remained. Minneapolis continues to flourish in new and unexpected ways.

An essential truth of that pioneer moment was that survival was in the hands of the community, and only after that, making progress. The most effective way to achieve goals was by working together. The independent artists, groups, studios, labels, spaces, zines, cinemas, and audiences that have followed the blush of my teenage icons continue to demonstrate this simple premise. A complete list is too long for this entry but current highlights include Skoal Kodiak, Black Corners, Art of This, Arts Review and Preview (ARP), River Projects Authority (RPA) and The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Programme, to name just a few...

Matt Bakkom is a member of the artist's group, The New Kinomatographic Union, whose work is on show in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

PROGRAMME

GENRE	DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	PRICE
ONGOING					
E	04/10/08 – 25/01/09	see vanabbemuseum.nl	Heartland exhibition Photo exhibition Ernest C. Withers	Van Abbemuseum Muziekcentrum Frits Philips	€ 8,50 (discounts see vanabbemuseum.nl) free entrance with concert ticket
E	04/10/08 – 14/11/08	see muziekcentrum.nl			
OCTOBER					
E, C	04/10/08	from 15:00	Official opening Heartland Opening concert Heartland: Woven Hand, Muzikás & Zapp String Quartet Afterparty with Clare & The Reasons	Van Abbemuseum Muziekcentrum Frits Philips	free entrance € 15 + admin.fee*
C	04/10/08	20:15			
C	06/10/08	21:00	Heartland Café: Ben Weaver Listening course Introducing the Heartland I Heartland Café: David Olney & Tommy Womack Listening course Introducing the Heartland II Heartland film I (see heartlandeindhoven.nl)	Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee
LC	10/10/08	20:15		Muziekcentrum Frits Philips	€ 9 + € 1 admin.fee
C	20/10/08	21:00		Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee
LC	23/10/08	19:00		Van Abbemuseum	€ 9 + € 1 admin.fee
F	26/10/08	14:00		Van Abbemuseum	free entrance with museum ticket
NOVEMBER					
C	03/11/08	21:00	Heartland Café: Boo Boo Davis Mississippi Blues band Election Brunch Miss Rockaway Armada and MU Heartland Café: Stacey Earle & Mark Stuart and Tim Easton & Leeroy Stagger Lecture by Jeffrey Foucault Heartland Café: Jeffrey Foucault Heartland film II (see heartlandeindhoven.nl)	Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee
	05/11/08	09:30 – 12:00		Van Abbemuseum	€ 18,50
P, E	07, 08, 09/11/08	see mu.nl		Stroomhuis	free entrance
C	10/11/08	21:00		Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee
L	16/11/08	14:00	Van Abbemuseum	€ 15 incl. museum ticket	
C	17/11/08	21:00	Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee	
F	30/11/08	14:00	Van Abbemuseum	free entrance with museum ticket	
DECEMBER					
L	08/12/08	21:00	Heartland Café: Lecture by Peter Guralnick Heartland film III (see heartlandeindhoven.nl)	Meneer Frits	€ 10 + € 1 admin.fee
F	28/12/08	14:00		Van Abbemuseum	free entrance with museum ticket
JANUARY					
F	08/01/09	20:15	Film: Searchin' for the Heart of the Heartland Final concert Heartland: Low & Special Guests Heartland film IV (see heartlandeindhoven.nl)	Muziekcentrum Frits Philips	€ 15 + € 1 admin.fee
C	22/01/09	20:15		Catharinakerk	€ 15 + admin.fee*
F	25/01/09	14:00		Van Abbemuseum	free entrance with museum ticket

E = exhibition, C = concert, LC = listening course, P = performance, F = film, L = lecture

*Tickets: www.muziekcentrum.nl or 040-2442020 and Ticket Service: 0900 300 1250 (45 cpm), the 151 larger postal offices, the 100 larger Free Record Shops, the 33 GWK-Travelx offices, the 11 larger VVV offices, www.ticketsservice.nl and the official sales locations.

Other concert tickets: www.muziekcentrum.nl or 040-2442020.

For a discount on multiple Heartland Cafés, you can buy the Heartland Café Card. See www.muziekcentrum.nl.

Programme subject to change

LOCATIONS & RESERVATIONS

Muziekcentrum Frits Philips

Heuvel Galerie 140
Eindhoven

Information & reservations:

+31 (0)40 244 2020
bespreekbureau@philipshall.nl

Opening hours:

Mo–Sa 12:00–17:00
during concert nights:
one hour and fifteen minutes
before, until fifteen minutes after
start of a concert

Van Abbemuseum

Bilderdijklaan 10
Eindhoven

+31 (0)40 238 1000

Opening hours:

Tu–Su, 11:00–17:00
Th evening until 21:00

Grand café Meneer Frits

Corner Markt / Jan van Lieshoutstraat
Eindhoven

Stroomhuis

Eindje 1
Eindhoven

Catharinakerk

Kerkstraat 1
Eindhoven

www.heartlandeindhoven.nl

<http://heartland.vanabbe.nl>

ALEC SOTH

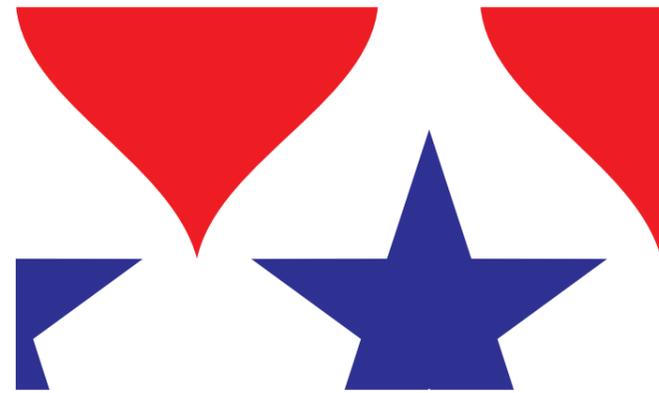
Artist in the Middle

As an artist in America, it is just assumed that you live on the East Coast or West Coast. The great middle is just sort of forgotten. But the Mississippi river runs nearly the entire length of the country and has a number of impressive cities on its banks. It is an important part of the country and deserves to be recognized as such.

In some ways, the term "Heartland" conjures up a nostalgia in me. The word suggests something wholesome and pure. I think of wheat fields, baseball and apple pie. It sounds like a television show from the '50s. A lot of people on the East and West coasts, and possibly beyond, might still think of the middle of America this way. But it is much more complicated than that. Like other places, there is poverty, crime, racism and so on. But the complication isn't always negative. For example, a lot of people from outside of Minnesota are surprised by how diverse it is. Where I live in Minnesota there is one of the largest populations of both Hmong and

Somalians in the country. If you go a little south to Iowa, you'll find a significant Mexican population. The Midwest is rich, complex and not easily understood by simple generalities.

The idea of place is absolutely essential to my work. A while back, I worked with my agency, Magnum Photos, to produce an entire magazine on the subject of fashion – with Paris as the obvious starting place. But the whole time I was there, I was continuously thinking about how utterly un-Parisian I am. We were using professional models and I realized that I just wasn't interested in working with pros. So in the end, I did a corresponding



Alec Soth, *Peter's Houseboat*, Winona, Minnesota, 2002. Courtesy: Gagolian Gallery

set of pictures about everyday fashion where I live in Minnesota, working only with regular folks. The way I see it, fashion is about the way you present yourself to the world. Whether you are a supermodel or a farmer, you are making some sort of fashion statement.

When I was starting out, I was deeply influenced by the '70s colour photographers like Joel Sternfeld, Stephen Shore, and William Eggleston. But now I seem to be increasingly influenced by literary sources. When I'm on road trips, I often listen to books on CD. Right now I'm in the middle of a Jack London book. There is something about listening to a story while driving that

seems especially powerful. I prefer to drive when I'm working on my own material, and only take planes when I do magazine jobs. There is so much freedom in driving. I remember when I took my first serious road trip along the Mississippi. I got to the river and I had to make a choice: I could go right (up the river) or left (down the river). You certainly don't have that kind of freedom when you get to the security line at an airport.

Work by artist Alec Soth (lives and works in Saint Paul, Minnesota) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.



Alec Soth, *Charles, Vasa*, Minnesota, 2002. Courtesy: Gagolian Gallery



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DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER ONAFHANKELIJK WEEKBLAD SEDERT 1877

AL 130 JAAR HÉT OPINIEBLAD VAN NEDERLAND



Photo Regina te Grotenhuis

RON LINKER

Obama's Heartland

Washington, D.C. - summer 2008
'Obama maintains lead over McCain', 'American voter disgusted by Republicans' and 'Berlin cheers Obama.'

The newspaper headlines spoke volumes last summer: Obama has got the presidency in the bag. But under the surface there is a slumbering doubt about Obama's candidacy. Where is the projected landslide, Obama's crushing lead? In August the senator from Illinois was still only a few percentage points ahead of his rival, John McCain, in the polls. An explanation as to why Obama's real breakthrough has not been forthcoming can perhaps be found in the American Heartland – a part of America where the political contest between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama was exceptionally bitter. In that part of America, doubt over Obama is visible and palpable.

Terry pushes back his baseball cap, rubs his hair and says apologetically, "I think I voted for Hillary, but I'm not sure anymore." I nod, but inwardly I don't understand. The world is keeping a close track of the American presidential elections, but the main players – the electors – can't even remember how they voted?! I meet Terry in one of the more pleasant suburbs of Lansing in the state of Michigan. After the exciting preliminaries the political flame has died down.

"I've got my hands full just with everyday worries," says Terry when I ask him how closely he is following, or has followed, the election news. Increased gasoline prices are one of the biggest concerns for many Americans. Fuel here has always been much cheaper than in the Netherlands, but still, the price of gasoline has risen by about forty percent within a

year. This inflation eats into income in the heartland, where distances are great and public transport is not always an option everywhere. Terry doesn't know whether Obama has enough experience to tackle these enormous problems.

Farmer T.R. Raymond (78) and his son Danny can no longer afford the high cost of fuel. "We have to leave the tractor in the shed, since we've no money left for gas," complains Danny. And so he tills the land with two mules: Dolly and Molly. "It's a lot slower, but then we just get up a bit earlier," the farmers laugh. At first the neighbours found it peculiar, but in the meantime, a lot more farmers are settling for horse and cart. "My favourite presidential candidate has already dropped out. That was Hillary Clinton," sighs Danny. And now the farmer doesn't know what to think. "Obviously, anything is better than Bush. This country can't endure another four years of Bush, and McCain wants to follow the same political course," he says. Deliberately, I am silent. But Danny does not automatically arrive at the third option, so I decide to ask him. "And Barack Obama?" He answers resolutely, "I don't know him that well. I hear him talk about change, but what sort of change?" He doesn't comment on whether or not he'll vote for the senator.

In a certain sense, Heartlanders like Terry and Danny are putting Obama's problem into words. Voters say that they don't know him, and in these times of economic uncertainty they refuse to gamble on an inexperienced candidate. Others have become embittered by the internecine struggle within the Democratic Party and have lost interest in the elections. Barack Obama will have to bring voters like Danny and Terry on board in the time that remains. Only then can he become president of the Heartland, and of America.

Ron Linker is the NOS correspondent in Washington.

MISS ROCKAWAY ARMADA crosses the ocean



A homemade raft full of artists – an artistic armada that is a cross between a jolly Carnivale circus and a free-and-easy, contemporary hippie commune. For two summers the Miss Rockaway Armada brought art and music to the banks of the Mississippi. In November they are berthing for the first time in Europe, at the Stroomhuis in Eindhoven, invited by MU and the Van Abbemuseum, for the Heartland project.

'I never felt easy till the raft was two mile below there and out in the middle of the Mississippi. Then we hung up our signal lantern, and judged that we was free and safe once more... We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.'

Huckleberry Finn, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

More than a hundred years ago Huckleberry Finn and his Negro friend Jim drifted down the Mississippi on their homemade raft. The one cursing and smoking and fleeing from 'civilisation' and a violent father; the other in search of freedom. The adventures they share make them one of American literature's classic duos as, in a satirical way, they fought against the hypocritical morality dominating the Heartland at that time.

The demons of our own time are also a good occasion for a Great Escape, or so says this group of artists, musicians and performers, who have gathered together in the wake of Huck and Jim under the name Miss Rockaway Armada. 'We still live in a country that fights wars so it can consume more,' their website states. The Armada is seizing the chance to flee and 'head for the center' of our country, now literally.

Sailing on a fleet of fantastic, homemade rafts made from trash, the loose collective of artists drifted down the Mississippi for two summers in 2006 and 2007, from Minneapolis in the north to St. Louis in the south. A journey of some 3,500 kilometres. It took months to gather enough money, materials and supplies to make their dream come true. However, convinced of their mission, an auction of works by the participants provided enough to actually build their floating, vaguely fish-shaped "Villa Villekulla".

Analogous with river water, the Miss Rockaway Armada – a name proposed by street artist Swoon at one of the many initial brainstorming sessions – is a fluid club. There is no leader, no list of members, and there are hardly any rules. Miss Rockaway Armada is simply a large group of enthusiastic people who only want one thing: to drift down the Mississippi together, tying

up now and then in order to perform, talk with people and exchange ideas and meals on the banks of the artery that traverses America.

That was then. Now, in the summer of 2008, the Armada is seemingly on dry land. Having been seized by uninhibited fellowship, many of the crew members can't give up the water. So the group is mustering up a new raft, organised by the same Swoon who gave Miss Rockaway its name. This time it is not the Mississippi that is being sailed but the Hudson, from upstate New York all the way down to Long Island, where they are berthing in the dock belonging to art pope Jeffrey Deitch.

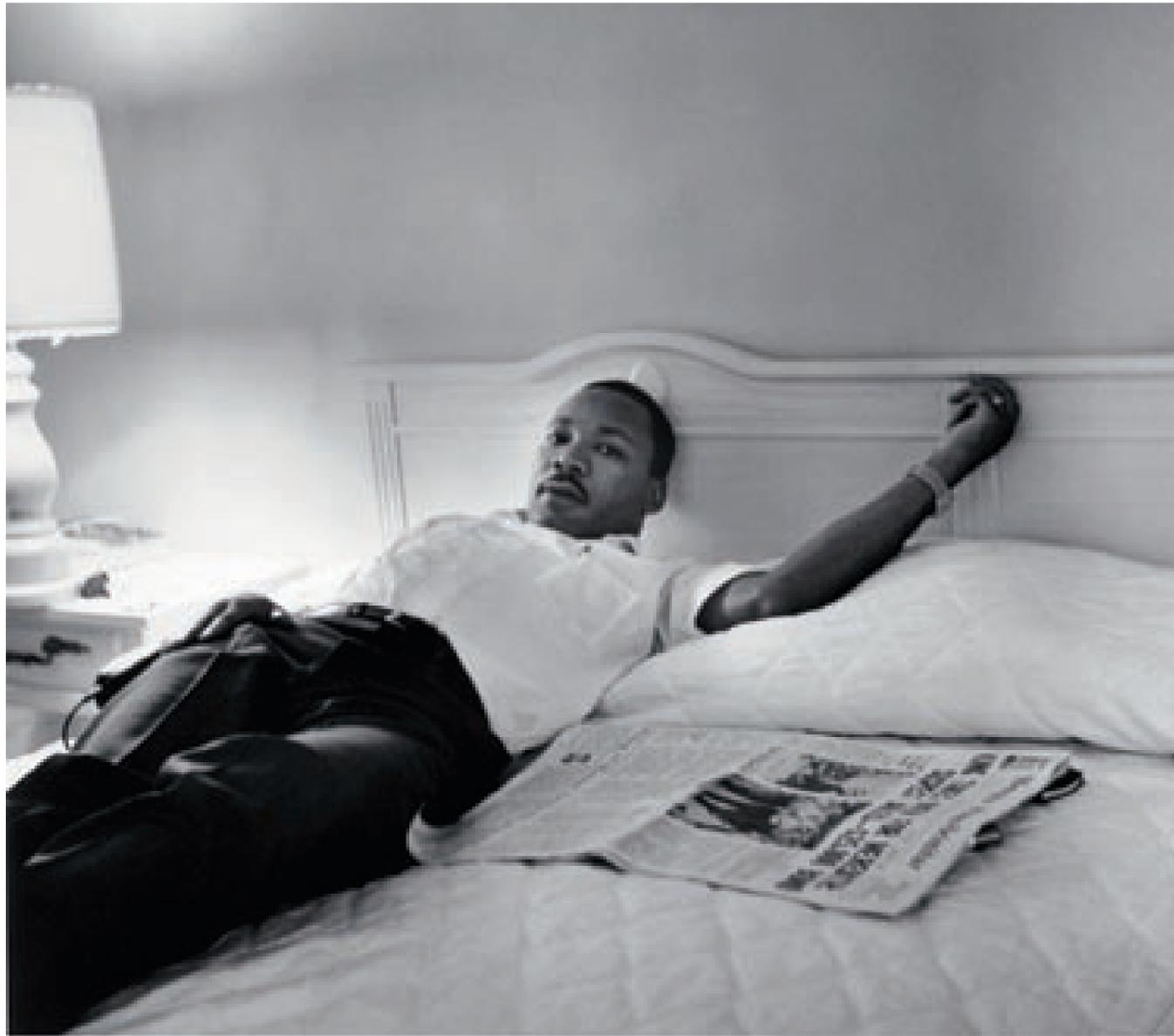
As if that were not enough, (a substantial part of) the Armada is crossing the ocean to Eindhoven. With the experience that the Armada crew

has gained, and the support of a small fleet of Eindhoven artists, they are spending a few weeks building an installation that conveys the spirit of their collective river adventures. Culminating in a weekend of performances and music on the 7th, 8th and 9th of November, the genie of the Armada will once again be released from his bottle – all under the banner of 'hope floats'.

Angelique Spaninks, Director of the contemporary art institute MU in Eindhoven.
Performance, exhibition and workshop by Miss Rockaway Armada and MU, 07–09/11/2008, location: Stroomhuis in Eindhoven, for opening hours, see www.mu.nl. Entrance free.



photo Tod Seelle



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. resting in Lorraine Motel following March Against Fear, Memphis, TN, 1966. © Ernest C. Withers / Panopticon Gallery

ERNEST C. WITHERS

Photo exhibition

The police car crawls along the kerb. The officers peer out suspiciously. A black man wheeling a pushchair strides on, the child unaware, asleep. A notice hangs above the perambulator: 'Daddy, I Want To Be Free Too!!!' It's 1961 in Memphis, Tennessee – the city where even the drinking water is segregated: Whites Only. Blacks Only. Ernest Withers clicks the shutter.

Ernest Withers runs a small photography studio on Beale Street in downtown Memphis. He had learned the craft while on military service. Back in Memphis, he walks along Beale Street (the 'Home of the Blues') in the evenings, taking photographs. He knows the Beale Street music scene inside out. Among his subjects are the 17 year-old Aretha Franklin, Elvis Presley and B.B. King. He pays regular visits to Negro League Baseball matches, as the sport is also segregated.

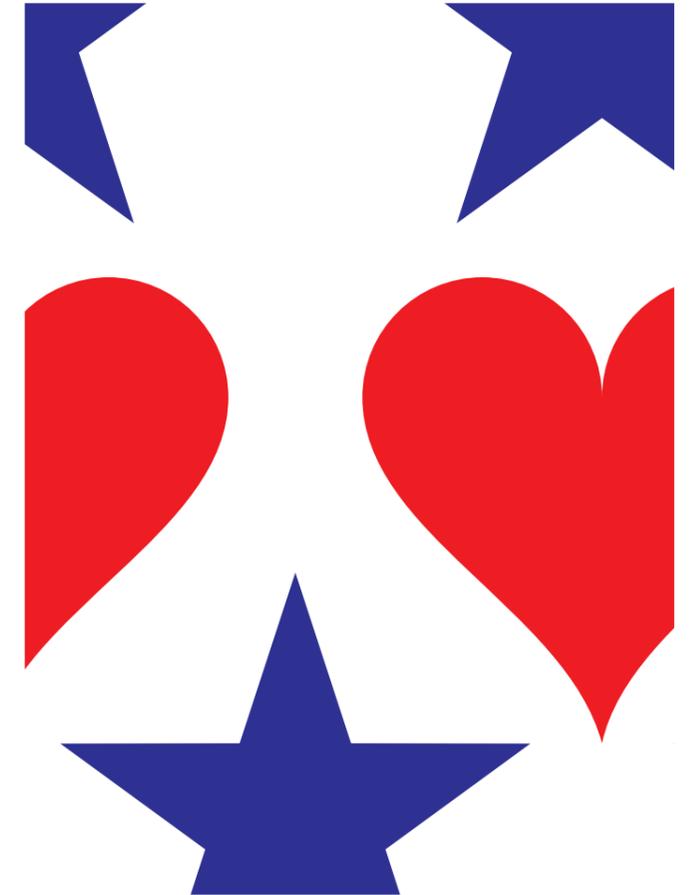
In 1955, he photographs the trial of Emmett Till. "We have twenty-two seats for white folks and four for blacks," the sheriff announces as they enter the court. "We don't mix 'em down here, we ain't going to mix 'em now and we don't intend to." Till, a black teenager of 15, had been brutally murdered by two white men. The suspects are acquitted after a short trial. Ernest Withers is there from start to finish and publishes a small book of his photographs. The Till Case shocks America, eliciting a storm of protest.

Later that same year, Rosa Parks, a black woman, refuses to give up her seat on the bus to a white passenger as mandated by state law. The police come to arrest her. The event sparks a bus boycott, lasting several months, under the leadership of the young pastor, Martin Luther King Junior. The American Supreme Court declares segregation on busses illegal in 1956. That morning, Martin Luther King Junior sits in the bus and Ernest Withers takes the photograph that ends up in the New York Times.

Ernest Withers attends practically all the important events of the Civil Rights Movement during the 1960s. He looks and looks, recording what he sees in black and white film. He grows in stature and becomes the leading photographer of the Civil Rights Movement – his work appears in publications such as Newsweek and Time Magazine. Withers mostly depicts people, 'as they are': a smiling boy, a tense face, an exhausted man; and only later, celebrities such as Elvis, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Junior. He always captures the human side of the sitter in his perceptive portraits. His images are ostensibly ordinary photographs of ordinary people who happened to make history.

Last year, at age 85, Ernest Withers died. His work as a witness of history earned him the reputation of being one of 20th Century America's leading photographers. A small selection of his work will be exhibited for the first time in the Netherlands in Muziekcentrum Frits Philips.

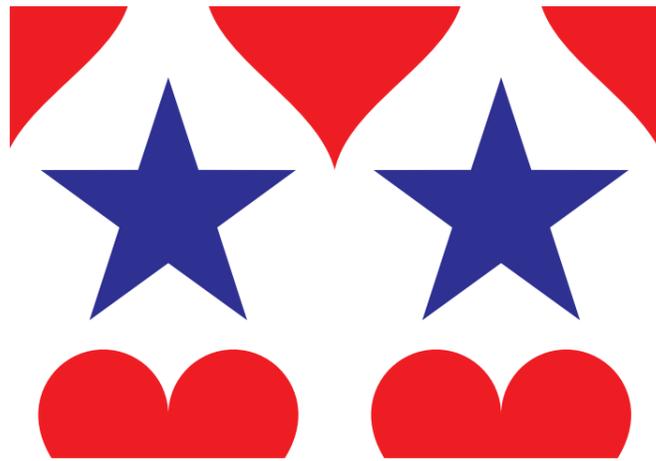
Frank de Munnik is an editor and conducts listening courses at Muziekcentrum Frits Philips Eindhoven, he also freelances at VPRO-guide and VPRO-radio. Photo exhibition Ernest C. Withers, 04/10–14/11/2008, Muziekcentrum Frits Philips Eindhoven, for opening hours, see www.muziekcentrum.nl.



Elvis Presley and B.B. King, Ellis Auditorium, Goodwill Revue, Dec 7, 1957. © Ernest C. Withers / Panopticon Gallery

MARJETICA POTRČ

Possibilities in post-Katrina New Orleans



To me, “Heartland” means people with open hearts, a very New Orleans thing. Last year, I lived in New Orleans for two months. This was post-Katrina, a slow time in a slow city. Life was difficult – literally all my friends were repairing their houses in each moment of free time. At the same time life was good, as there was always time to get together. I was lucky to stay with Adrian and Srdjan, two wonderful young artists. I vividly remember how we met.

A taxi driver who was unable to read the map dropped me by a big heap of rubble in front of their bright blue house in a run-down neighbourhood. This mountain of bits and pieces taken from the house was so big that at first I couldn't see Adrian and Srdjan. For us, it was instant friendship. I stayed with them for two months while they were occupied with the seemingly endless task of fixing the house and their lives,

walking their two dogs and making art. The tropical madness of New Orleans and its citizens has a structure, albeit not a linear one. But having lived in Caracas, I know that eventually tropicalism can work very well. I love New Orleans. For me, it was like coming home.

It is important, and also a great adventure, to learn from people about their place. I was happy to be in New Orleans in the midst

of the rebuilding efforts after Katrina. The people who live there have a new enthusiasm for the shotgun house, their vernacular architecture. This is a long, narrow house – so narrow, in fact, that it allows for only one room across its width – with a small porch facing the street, where people sit and chat with passersby. Actually, it is the shotgun house that has provided the basis for the city's famously strong neighbourhoods. The people of New Orleans are truly embracing sustainable methods of living and the wetlands, both reasserting their roots and acknowledging their survival territory. Sustainability is always practiced on the local level, a fact that will, I believe, have concrete geo-political consequences in our century. In this way, I like to connect with people and exchange knowledge, letting it develop in my work.

In New Orleans I worked with FutureProof, a sustainable-design consultancy consisting of a small group of designers who were able to think 'out of the box' after Hurricane Katrina. They radically support the idea of sustainable practices that residents can implement themselves, as well as participatory design - the process of designing things step by step with the participation of the communities involved. One example is the practice popularly known as 'rainwater harvesting', where residents collect rainwater in their neighbourhoods. Rainwater is diverted from paved parking lots into green areas where it is allowed to sink into the ground. Some might say there is no reason to store water in a place like New

Orleans, where there is too much water already. So why is this important? Whenever there is a storm, the sewers flood and sewage gets flushed into Lake Pontchartrain and the wetlands. Rainwater harvesting slows down the water in the city, less water is pumped out, and the city's water table is restored.

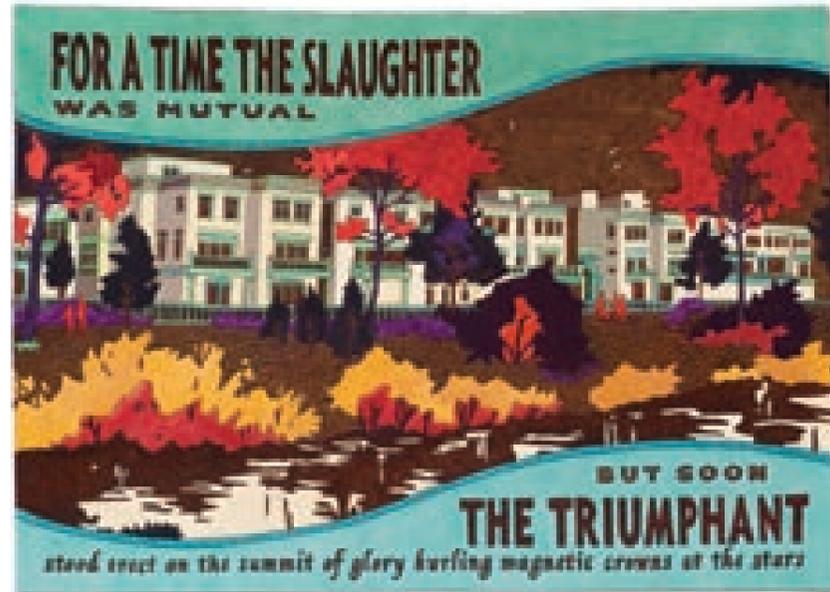
On top of this, the city is sinking. It sounds complicated, but it's not. New Orleans was settled in the Mississippi River delta a long time ago, and now, only after Katrina, its unstable, unique and marshy environment is finally being acknowledged as important. People realize that the wetlands that protect the city from hurricanes are being lost at the rate of one football field every 38 minutes. Today, FutureProof, among others, is redefining the conditions for coexistence between the city and its environment. Reviving the city and restoring the wetlands are part of the same effort. "We build the city, we own it!", my friend Kerry said; New Orleans is a test site for a 21st-century democracy.

Work by artist Marjetica Potrč (lives and works in Ljubljana, Slovenia) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.



Marjetica Potrč, New Orleans: Shotgun House with Rainwater-Harvesting Tank, 2008. Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY. Photo Eli Ping Weinberg

CAROL JACKSON



Carol Jackson, *Slaughter*, 2006. Photo Carol Jackson

As a child, I remember gazing at hills rolling out endless rows of crops from the back seat of our family car, only broken every twenty minutes by an isolated farmhouse. This was the central part of California we went through on our way to a vacation in the mountains, and our lone visit to see relatives in the Midwest. The Heartland was something to drive through or away from, not towards.

For an urban American, 'Heartland' is a loaded term. On the one hand it conjures up pastoral visions of our agricultural origins. On the other, it means the Red States, where Christian Fundamentalists have given us eight years of George Bush. It is the agricultural centre of the continent providing sustenance, like a vital organ, to the urban majority dwelling on the coasts or extremities. Madison Avenue has co-opted the term to endear market-processed food with a nostalgic halo of "Wholesomeness" or "Goodness".

I came from L.A. to Chicago for graduate school and was surprised to find how much I loved it. Its seasonal changes, people, affordability, 'livability', and unique culture continue to engage me. Far from the monetary and market pressures of New York or LA art I have more time to contemplate and produce my ideas, while being inspired by others. Amongst these is the work of Roger Brown, Jenny Holzer, and Oswald Spengler's overwrought and methodless classic entitled *The Decline Of The West*. I am most influenced by historical accounts of cultures in their final stages, from the Roman Empire to the British Navy just after the Napoleonic wars, to the more reliable news reports of today's US economy.

One clear indication of this deterioration within the US is the mortgage and loan crisis. The rural Midwest is suffering the largest losses due to a decline in manufacturing and agriculture and, with that, the lowering of demand for housing. My art chronicles the rupture of property lust in America in leather. It speaks to this particularly heightened hankering after property prominent in the United States and the subsequent burst of the real estate market. My sources include billboard signage for housing and property, western tack and saddlery, as well as fragments from epic literature.

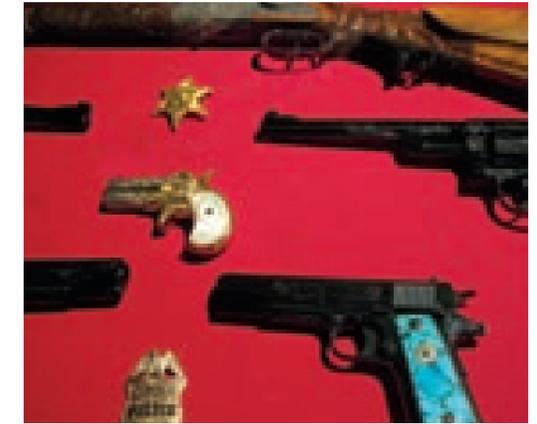
'You, the West, are dying. I see in you all the characteristic stigma of decay. I can prove that your great wealth and your great poverty... is bleeding you from below and killing you off at the top in your brains. I can prove to you that these were characteristic marks of the dying ages of ancient states... Alexandria and Greece and neurotic Rome.' Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West*

Work by artist Carol Jackson (lives and works in Chicago, Illinois) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

HEARTBREAK HOTEL



Birthplace of Elvis Presley, Tupelo, Mississippi. Photo Otto Berchem, 2007



Elvis' guns. Photo Otto Berchem, 2007

So this is him. Ridiculously long sideburns, three brands of gel in his hair and that weird costume. He barely looks at her during the interview. Shyly, he tells her a bit about his mother. "Ah," she thinks, "how sweet."

It's 28 July, 1955. Mae Boren Axton is talking to him in his dressing room, where he is preparing for a performance. Mae is a teacher who occupies herself with music PR and also occasionally writes songs. "That thing you do with your leg – however do you manage that in time with the beat?" He smiles. "It's not easy, but it just automatically wiggles like that." After the interview, she watches him perform. Could that really be the same shy boy? The audience explodes. Mae turns to a girl near her and asks, "What's with that kid?" The girl replies, "He's just a great big beautiful hunk of forbidden fruit!"

Autumn, 1955. George Dudden, a DJ friend of hers, shows her an article in the Miami Herald. A man has been found dead in a hotel room, and the police seek information to identify him. The only clue he has left is a letter saying 'I walk a lonely street'. Mae and George put their heads together and start writing a song. "Let's put a Heartbreak Hotel at the end of this lonely street." They are finished in half an hour, and record a demo. Mae knows just the singer to show this one to.

The singer looks at her. She plays the demo again. He is impressed: "Hot dog, Mae, play it again!" By the time he leaves, he knows the song by heart. "Mae, I promise you, I'm going to record this number."

10 January, 1956. It's mid-afternoon and she is in the RCA Studio in Nashville. Producer Steve Holes sits down beside her and says, "Heavens, where did he get those sideburns! This kid needs a barber." She takes no notice, for her song is about to be recorded. "Well, since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell. It's down at the end of Lonely Street, at Heartbreak Hotel." The kid believes in what he is singing. "This is going to be my first number 1 hit." It takes only half an hour to get the song down on tape.

She has heard the rumours. The big cheeses at RCA didn't go for it. So Lonely I Could Die? Much too grim, nobody wants to buy that. What kind of music is this anyway? Bebop crossed with Country? "Rock 'em and sock 'em" rhythm style? And we paid that kid the highest price ever, thirty-five thousand dollars. Surely that's just throwing money down a hole? But Mae Boren Axton has no doubts.

Heartbreak Hotel comes out as a single on 27 January, 1956 and reaches number 1 in less than three months. It is Elvis Presley's first number 1 hit. In Liverpool, England, a 15 year-old schoolboy called John Lennon hears the number. He starts growing sideburns and forms a group.

Frank de Munnik is an editor and conducts listening courses at Muziekcentrum Frits Philips Eindhoven, he is also a freelancer at VPRO-guide and VPRO-radio. Listening course *Introducing the Heartland I & II*, 10/10/2008, Muziekcentrum Frits Philips & 23/10/2008 Van Abbemuseum. Entrance € 9 + € 1 admin. fee. Heartland Café with Peter Guralnick (one of the most important American pop culture journalists, and writer of a two-part biography on Elvis Presley), 08/12/2008, 21:00. Grand café Meneer Frits in Eindhoven. Entrance € 10 + € 1 admin. fee. For a discount on multiple Heartland Cafés, you can buy the Heartland Café Card. See www.muziekcentrum.nl.

MATTHEW DAY JACKSON



Room where my Grandfather was born, Malmo, Memphis, 2006. Photo Matthew Day Jackson

If you asked me what the word "Heartland" means, I would say that, to me, the Heartland is not a geographical space, but rather a psychological one where the bullion of the American dream lies. At one time it was the gateway to a new frontier, and in the time since it has become something more liminal. The Heartland is a tightrope: through presidential elections and regional history, it is neither here, nor there; it is a threshold.

Locality and a consciousness of the place from and about which I make work, both play an important part in my artistic thinking. The place that I live in determines who I am: I am a product of my environment. Working with the iconography and the mythology of my 'locale', is who I am, so perhaps it is everything. I believe in nurture rather than nature, so place is both me and us, and in a culture that becomes more global everyday, I also become you. Everything is interrelated, making it difficult to even define the boundaries of my 'locale'.

In my own small way, I try to remain open to many influences at all times, maintaining a comprehensive view of the world and problem solving. I am influenced, as I am a creature of nurture, rather than nature, but the source of this changes rapidly and constantly. Generally I am trying to illuminate the space between, like purgatory, or a ghost realm. I believe I live in a middle space, with history

informing the now at every turn, like a spectre that never goes away and never supposes the same form.

It was not a person, place or thing, but rather a portion of myself, which I continue to find in all the historical locations I have travelled to and in the people I have met. The most amazing discovery during one of these trips happened when I went to Malmo, Nebraska, to the home that my grandfather was born in – a man I never met, who died when my father was young. I went to the room where he was born, and in turn where much of myself was born. Outside was overgrown, and the house about to fall, it was an illustration of this United States: a failing body which hasn't realized yet that it is ill.

Work by artist **Matthew Day Jackson** (lives and works in Brooklyn, New York City) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.



Bruce Nauman en Jean Leering in gesprek, 1969. Foto Van den Bichelaer, Geldrop.

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I know the church Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker go to in Duluth, and believe me, it does not begin to compare with the Catharina Church in Eindhoven – where their group, Low, will round off the Heartland project.

LOW

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is somewhere on the outskirts of the sleepy American city (think of any moderate sized European provincial town like Grimsby or Almelo, with fewer traffic lights). Its congregation numbers, at most, a few hundred. The drab building with its spire pointing perkily heavenwards looks, if anything, like a crematorium. Tones of grey predominate with occasional touches of faded brown and pale green; there is more than just a hint of the dismal 1970s architecture – a familiar style across the Western hemisphere. Surrounded by an asphalt car park, the site's ambience can at best be called corporate.

The same is true inside. It's like a dentist's waiting room. Should you suppose that the Mormons (our usual name for adherents of the Church of Latter-Day Saints) hide some fascinating secret in the bowels of their church, I will have to disappoint you: even their services are desperately dull. The

Catholics, by contrast, have a greater sense of drama, which is evident in their love of ritual. This Sunday, two people have volunteered to address the congregation. They both describe how they found faith. Nothing you wouldn't expect. The preacher tells us about two members of the congregation who are thinking of changing jobs. Should they? Yes, the congregation pronounces, twice, as though to order. Then it's time for psalms. Alan Sparhawk and Mimi Parker sing along, while their children, Hollis and Cyrus, look around aimlessly. They behave themselves impeccably, of course, though it's clear at a glance that they are bored stiff.

What a good idea to have Low, the group that has made Sparhawk and Parker not so much famous as notorious, performing in a church. You don't come across a lot of Mormons in popular music. The Osmonds, those teenage idols of the 1970s, were an exception. The late guitarist

Mick Ronson, friend of David Bowie in the 1970s, was also a Mormon. And the moustachioed singer of The Killers is apparently one too. As far as I know, however, no musician of any standing has ever made music based on his or her Mormon convictions. Sparhawk and Parker may well consider themselves Mormons first of all and musicians only secondarily. I don't know, because I have never asked them. Nonetheless, when they make music they are purely musicians, as I have been able to confirm with my own eyes and ears. They are musicians who just happen to be Mormon, not Mormon musicians. There's a world of difference.

Low's music seems perfectly at home in a church, all the same. On stage, the group is like a force of nature, and it has been that way for fifteen tumultuous years. Look at a geyser, listen to a rainbow: where do you go for things like that? Their sound is an

ultra-slow, bittersweet, sung in unison, delivered with an utter concentration you wouldn't expect from a neurotic like Alan Sparhawk. Low demands the same concentration from the audience.

Before I make the error of comparing this performance in Eindhoven to a church service, I must mention that Sparhawk walks like a duck. Yes, a duck: with ankles almost touching and toes pointing outwards at an angle of forty five degrees. And what a tempo the man can keep that way. Another force of nature.

David Kleijwegt is documentary filmmaker, producer and pop culture journalist. He made the documentary Low - You May Need A Murderer. Final concert Heartland: Low & special guests, 22/01/2009, 20:15, Catharinakerk in Eindhoven. Entrance € 15 + admin. fee. Tickets: www.muzeiekcentrum.nl (040-2442020), www.ticketseervice.nl (0900 300 1250), and the official sales locations.



Alan Sparhawk. Still: Jacques Laureys, N.S.C.

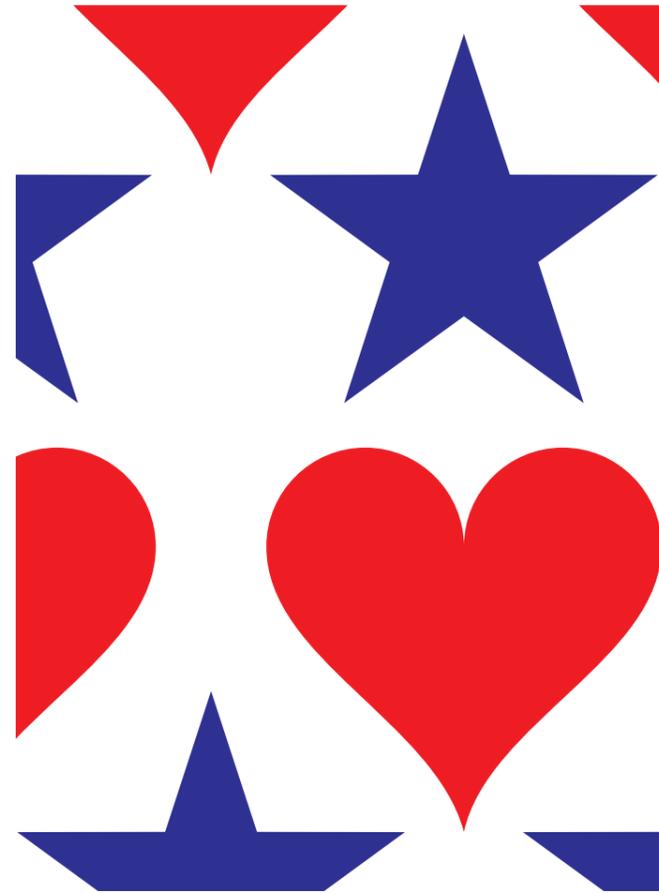
GREELY MYATT

Home is where the Heartland is

I live in Memphis, Tennessee – smack in the middle of the Mid-South and on the banks of The Mississippi River. I was born in Mississippi, south-east of Memphis, and despite traveling often, I have spent most of my life in this region. While I would like to explain the Heartland to an audience unfamiliar with this place, I simply would not know where to begin. I believe my art addresses this “home” in a non-verbal way, but I’m sure it doesn’t get close to telling the whole story.

In the sense of the lower case “heartland”, to me this means home. However, home is what I know, where I am comfortable and what moves me. With an upper case, “Heartland” means something broader – this project, of which I am excited to be a part. It offers an opportunity to get my work in front of a new and different audience. My guess is that to someone outside, this region is seldom thought of. But thanks to another Mississippi boy who settled in Memphis, Elvis, I believe this area is easy to place, though difficult to understand.

I cannot say that I try to represent the Mid-South concretely, but it is absolutely in my work. This place is invasive! It completely embraces you. Everything from the oppressive humidity to the magnificent smells and sounds affect the world here. The air is heavy, the pace is slow, but life here is sweet and should be cherished. The materials I use are indigenous, with their own local colour. By profession, I am an observer and make work which reflects the visual stimulations as



well as smells, sounds and sensations. All these flavour the work, like cooking, and hopefully together they produce a good stew.

As an artist, I want you to care about something as much as I care. To do that I make work that is at the same time familiar, and a bit strange – mysterious and, I hope, poetic. I want the work to be accessible on numerous levels, through use of materials and treatment of form, conscious of how it rubs up to art across time and informed by this same history. The sculptural objects and installations that I have produced over recent years refer to topics as varied as High Modernism, topical issues, the landscape - both physical and cultural - as well as music, jokes and cartoons. I have

consistently attempted to combine art historical references with vernacular influences. As a native of the rural south I have a tremendous respect for work that is made by hand and guided by the heart and eye. But I also understand the importance of the mind in the process. To state my approach to the making of art in the simplest and most direct manner, I have tried to use these: the hand, the eye, the heart and the mind.

Work by artist Greely Myatt (lives and works in Memphis, Tennessee) is on view in the Heartland exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.



Greely Myatt, *Cleave*, 2002-2008, in The University of Memphis Art Museum, 2002

SMART MUSEUM OF ART



The Smart Museum of Art in Chicago. Photo Andrea Baer

Heartland will offer the European audience an opportunity to consider how artists have responded to a region at the center of a country that is a continent wide. Having been exposed primarily to life (and fictionalized images of the life) on the East and West coasts of the United States, Europeans are generally unfamiliar with the "real" America that occupies so much space between those far-flung edges of the nation. This project offers a unique opportunity to enhance European understanding of an America that is more complex and multi-faceted than is often acknowledged. By the same token, the Smart Museum of Art is looking forward to the exhibition's reformulated presentation here in the United States in 2009.

The Smart is located in Chicago, often described in the United States as "the most American of cities" and certainly the largest, most important city in the center of the country. It is perhaps best known abroad for its extraordinary architectural and musical legacies. Our city supports a rich community of visual artists, many of whom are featured not only in this exhibition, but also in the Smart Museum's permanent

collection. In addition, Chicago is the home to an astonishing array of immigrants from other lands as well as to Barack Obama. All are part of the story of the American Heartland. This makes Chicago a particularly appropriate American base for this exhibition.

As the art museum of the University of Chicago, one of America's most important research universities, the Smart is also keenly interested in presenting projects that lie at the intersection of art and ideas. We take particular pride in our history of organizing compelling thematic exhibitions of contemporary art. Heartland is in every way a project that emerges from the spirit of adventurous inquiry that characterizes the Smart Museum's program.

Anthony Hirschel, Director of the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago. The Heartland exhibition will travel to the Smart Museum of Art, where a modified form of it will be shown from October 2009 until January 2010.

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Eb en vloed
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taal en de
taal van de post-romantiek



JAMES AGEE
*Een sterfgeval
in de familie*



Een grondige analyse van hoe Amerika en Europa zich nu verhouden en zullen gaan verhouden. Door Amerikadeskundige Ronald Havenaar.

Een Amerikaanse klassieker eindelijk vertaald: *Een sterfgeval in de familie* verscheen postuum in 1957 en won onmiddellijk de prestigieuze Pulitzer Prize.

Verschijnt voorjaar 2009

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**Colophon
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Project Heartland

Curators Heartland exhibition: Charles Esche and Kerstin Niemann (Van Abbemuseum), Stephanie Smith (Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago)

**Music programme
Heartland Muziekcentrum
Frits Philips:** Frank Veenstra en Ad van Meurs

Photo exhibition Ernest C. Withers by: Frank de Munnik

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