

RKD NETHERLANDS
INSTITUTE
FOR ART HISTORY



NETHERLANDS HOUSE OF ART HISTORY

RKD: ACTIVITIES 2021 – 2024



INTRODUCTION

I MORE KNOWLEDGE, MORE IMPACT: THE RKD IN 2017-2020

1.1	On the move	4
1.2	Digitisation, digital services	4
1.3	Scope	5
1.4	Collection's management	5
1.5	Collaborations	5
1.6	RKD and COVID-19	5

II NETHERLANDS HOUSE OF ART HISTORY

2.1	Mission and vision	6
2.2	Collection's profile and acquisitions	7
2.3	Unique position	8
2.3.1	Target groups: users and visitors	9
2.3.2	Target groups: museums and universities	9
2.3.3	Target groups: public and private markets	9
2.3.4	Collaborations	9
2.3.5	Collaborations: supporting institutions	10
2.4	Premises: Bleijenburg	12
2.5	Strategic compass	13
2.6	<i>Centre for the History of Collecting</i>	14

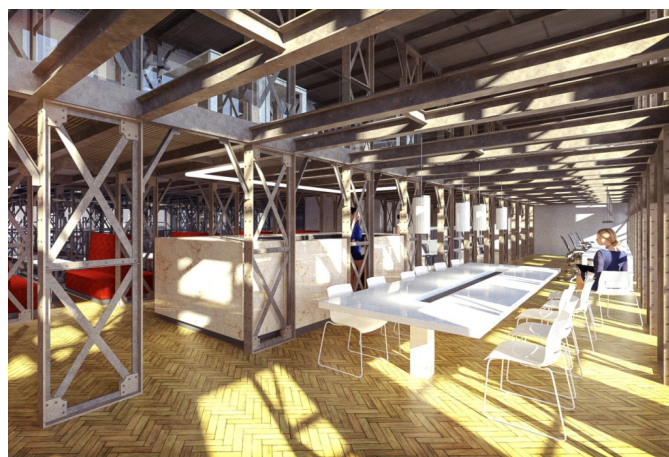
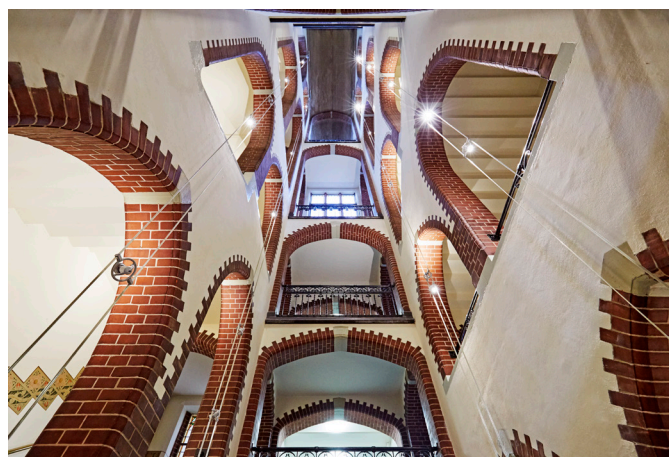
III ACTIVITIES PROGRAM 2021–2024

3.1	New premises	14
3.2	From analogue to digital	15
3.3	Knowledge network and platform	16
3.3.1	Platform feature: analogue	16
3.3.2	Platform feature: RKD <i>Digital Research</i>	17
3.4	Valorized research	17
3.4.1	<i>Arts of the Low Countries in Context</i>	17
3.4.2	Valorisation: projects	18
3.4.3	Valorisation: e-humanities	19
3.4.4	Valorisation: education	19
3.4.5	Valorisation: fellowships	20
3.5	Visibility and services	20
3.5.1	Online visibility	20
3.5.2	Reinforcement of activities	20
3.5.3	<i>Treasures: integral programming</i>	21

IV. AN ENTERPRISING KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE

4.1	Financial position	22
4.2	Marketing	22
4.3	HRM	23
4.4	Codes: Governance, Fair Practice, Cultural Diversity	23
4.5	Compliance	24
4.6	Self-evaluation and review	24

‘Our collections house thousands of stories about great and minor masters, about successes and stunted ambitions, about bona fide and rogue dealers, passionate collectors, enterprising artists’ associations, meticulous restorations and ruined canvases.’



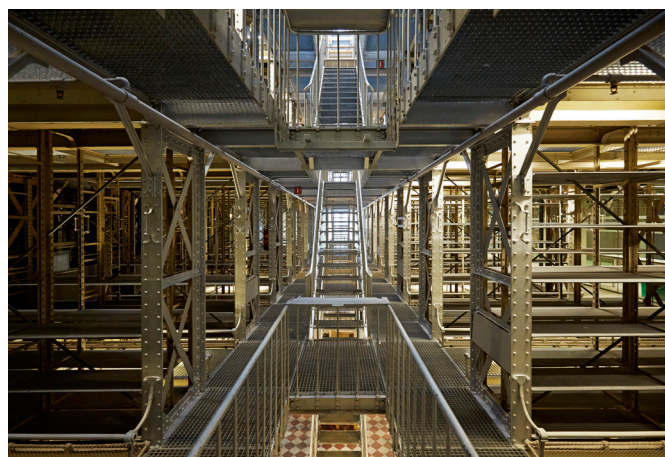
INTRODUCTION

With *Netherlands House of Art History. RKD: Activities 2021-2024*, we present a plan that is as ambitious as it is realistic and inspiring, with as guiding principle being the realisation of a new physical and digital workplace. We already delved deeper into a ‘Business case Renovation KB-complex’ in *More knowledge, More Impact* (2016). Since then, the RKD has opted for new autonomous premises, namely Bleijenburg 7, the former, monumental Dutch State Archives. It is at this location that we want to create a home and meeting place that inspires and promotes connection, a place where our mission and our strategic goals can firmly take root and where our target audiences can feel welcome.

Pursuant to the Heritage Act of 2016, the RKD is charged with the duty of care for the management of cultural heritage goods in museums belonging to the Dutch Government. In 2017-2020, the Dutch state consisted of two components: The Heritage Act, which encompasses a long-term subsidy for the maintenance of the RKD with budgets for accommodation and collection management, and the BIS (Cultural Basic Infrastructure), a subsidy for its activities’ program.

In 2021-2024, instead of this BIS, the RKD receives a public activities’ subsidy pursuant to the Regulation management of the state collection and subsidies for museum institutions (Rbr).¹

We look forward to welcoming you in our *House of Art History*.



¹ *Netherlands House of Art History. RKD: Activities 2021-2024* has been drawn up in accordance with the plan format for activities established in the Heritage Act for Museums, as published on 21 September 2020.

I. MORE KNOWLEDGE, MORE IMPACT: THE RKD IN 2017-2020

1.1 On the move

In *More Knowledge, More Impact*, the RKD has set the following strategic goals:

- 1) the transition from an analogue to a digital collection – accessibility;
- 2) expansion of the knowledge network and platform – function for the target groups;
- 3) improvement of the physical management and maintenance of collections, with a particular focus on security and preventative conservation.

Due in part to the reorganisation process RKD *On the move* (2018-2020), our institute is undergoing a period of change. We have achieved good results, including those related to the enhancement and valorisation of our collections, our digital scope, the development of RKD *Digital Research* and the organisation of collection, exhibition, research and training projects and activities. Moreover, we recently celebrated the completion of the digital platforms RKD *Studies*, RKD *Bulletin* and *Van Gogh Worldwide*, and the refurbished public and presentation spaces where people can come to study and congregate and connect with others. In advance of our much-anticipated *House of Art History* at Bleijenburg, the RKD has been able to offer its target audience an excellent service per the end of 2020.

1.2 Digitisation, digital services and digital scope

With regard to digitisation and the development of digital (research) services, the RKD plays a pioneering role within the museum field. We are steadily building an infrastructure of related databases containing art historical knowledge and information, which more recently included RKD *Digital Research*, a digital meeting place for the presentation, connection and sharing of art historical knowledge and information (please refer to: 3.3.2).

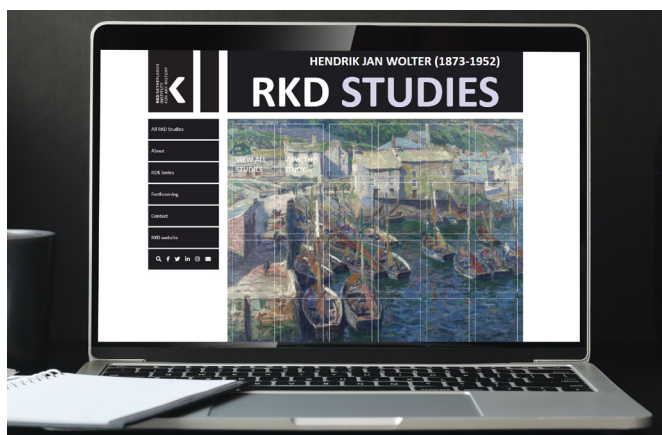
With respect to the transition 'From analogue to digital', 2017-2020 was a distinguishing period, with RKD *Boxes* being a project of particular note.



Within no time, we were able to scan almost three of the over five million objects in our image collection. Besides quantity, RKD *Boxes* naturally also boats quality, namely the internal safeguarding of knowledge and expertise, including the development and execution of future, standard digitisation processes.

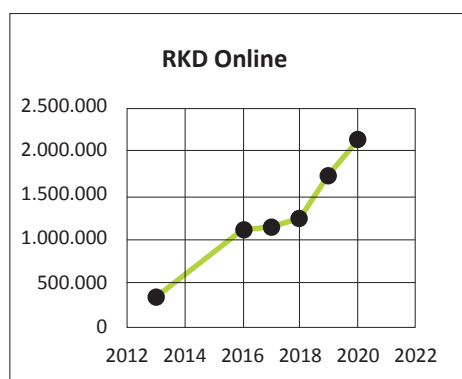
Thanks to projects such as *Vlaamse Retabels* (Flemish Retables), *Kunstambachten in Leiden* (The Arts in Leiden), *Kunsthandelarchieven* (Art Market Archives), *Dendro4Art* and *The Rembrandt Database*, we have managed to enhance all our databases. *Artists4All* and *RKDtechnical* are good examples of (newly) developed digital services with which the RKD serves its target audiences.

RKD *Studies* and RKD *Bulletin* allow the RKD's expanded databases to be merged thematically. In the meantime, we are busily working on the launch of RKD *Digital Research* (please refer to: 3.2 and 3.3.2).

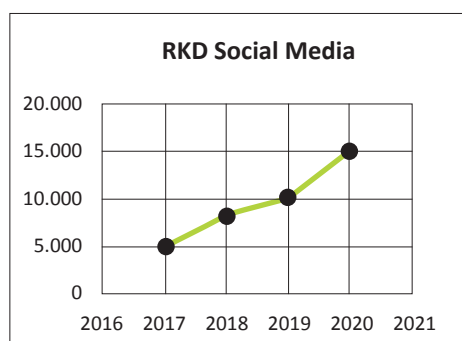


1.3 Scope

The continued digitisation, digital data enhancement and development and expansion of our digital services has greatly increased our digital scope via www.rkd.nl, with a growth of no less than 650%: from about 340,000 visits (2013), via 1,100,000 (2016) to about 2,200,000 (2020). The number of visits to web pages also shows a clear increase, with a significant surge in the number of non-Dutch visitors.



In addition to the promotion of such online visits, we have stepped up our social media presence over the past few years. The number of people the RKD has been able to inform via various channels (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter) has grown substantially since 2017. We realised a growth ('followers') of 300%, i.e., from about 5,000 (2017) to about 15,000 (2020).



1.4 Collection's Management

In 2017 we used the planned professionalisation of our (analogue) collection management to merge our subcollections under one department, we established a *Collection and Acquisitions Plan*, reorganised the depots, established an access policy and a Collection Calamities Plan, improved the climate control and established the so-called 'integrated pest management': a solid basis to continue to build upon, also in regard to the run-up to our relocation.

1.5. Collaborators

The RKD can only achieve these results by collaborating with a large number of (inter)national partners. It is, however, worth mentioning that we have maintained our long-term partnership(s) with the Rubenianum, CODART, RIHA, SBMK, and the Research School of Art History (OSK), while new collaboration agreements have been signed with the European Society for Nineteenth-Century Art (ESNA), PHAROS: The International Consortium of Photo Archives, the network of National Knowledge Institutes (RKI), the universities of Leiden, Utrecht and Geneva, the research institute Illuminare (Leuven), and multiple museums, including the Stedelijk Museum Alkmaar and the Kröller-Müller Museum.

1.6 RKD and COVID-19

At the moment of writing it is still impossible to predict how long COVID-19 will remain among us. Fortunately, the RKD had already invested in digitisation, the digital installation of core administrations and the reinforcement of our online services before the outbreak of the pandemic. The resulting positive effects are evident: since the beginning of March 2020, we have been able to continue most of our activities, even when working from home. This does not mean that certain aspects of business operations have not and are not affected in terms of planning, execution, results and/or appearance.

First and foremost, COVID-19 affects public events and educational activities. Although we been developing several online alternatives, the longing among our audiences to meet in person (conferences and lectures)

continues to grow each day. If possible, we will work towards organising such gatherings, albeit at our own scale (30 – 100 participants). Due to significantly diminished mobility, museums are focusing more on their own collections and local/national visitors. Together with the museum sector, we are investigating the possibly changing information and knowledge requirements that are emerging as a result and, by extension, will experiment with RKD *Catalogues*.² The limiting safety measures have placed a strain on the development of RKD *Digital Research*, which may negatively impact planning in 2021, resulting in changes to agreements with suppliers, partners and subsidy providers.

In light of a possible relocation, working from home can be translated to a (flexible) ‘work from home policy’, possibly with fewer permanent workplaces. This also provides our partners with the opportunity to ‘reside’ in our *Netherlands House of Art History*.

² As part of RKD *Studies*, we will begin work on a series of digital collection catalogues: RKD *Catalogues*. The goal is to support museums in their research and the online presentations of their own collections and to provide the public with better insight into the often-unknown Dutch heritage in the collections of foundations and private collectors.

II. NETHERLANDS HOUSE OF ART HISTORY

As one of the world’s most important art historical research and information institutes, the RKD acquires, manages, maintains, researches, and provides access to art historical knowledge and information for the benefit of museums, academia and the public. The institute has been performing these core duties since 1932.

2.1. Mission and vision

In 2021-2024, the RKD will develop broader (also societal) ambitions pertaining to (digital) services, public reach, digital sustainability, thorough collection maintenance and management, and valorised research. We want to involve the public more, both in terms of quantity and quality.

Our mission:

The RKD provides museums, academia and the public with global access to knowledge and information about visual arts of the Low Countries in an international context.

We are developing an inviting *Netherlands House of Art History*, where anyone who wants to know more about the visual arts of the Low Countries will feel right at home. This *House* places us at the heart of society, at an appealing location in the Museum Quarter in The Hague. An important part of our collections is online and accessible to the general public. We conduct (also charged) research, participate in research programs and projects for museums and universities, and produce publications and exhibitions. RKD *Digital Research* connects (professional) partners and individuals worldwide. As a network organisation, we offer inspiring programs and reach out to a general public that is interested in art. In 2024, we expect to receive 10,000 visitors per year in our *House*, and via www.rkd.nl, we expect an annual increase of 5% in visits – by the end of 2024, about 2,700,000. Although not required to do so, we want to generate 18–20% in own income, partly in order ensure lasting innovations in service.

Our core values are: customer focus, reliability, quality, accessibility and professionalism. The quality of our services and activities is characterised by the correlation between our programs and activities, by our services (digital and analogue), and by the quality of our collaborations.

2.2 Collection's profile and acquisitions

The RKD manages a unique national collection which, in combination with the existing knowledge and expertise, is of great importance, partly for humanities research. For many years, we have enjoyed a strong and fruitful relationship with museums, universities, research institutes, and individual researchers the world over.

Our (national) collection covers the visual arts of the Low Countries in an international context from about 1200. The objects have a strong informational value and are – thanks to their interconnections – an indispensable source for museums, scholars and the general public. The collections are made accessible through basic records. Scholarly research leads to both enrichment of this knowledge as well as active use for cultural and societal purposes.

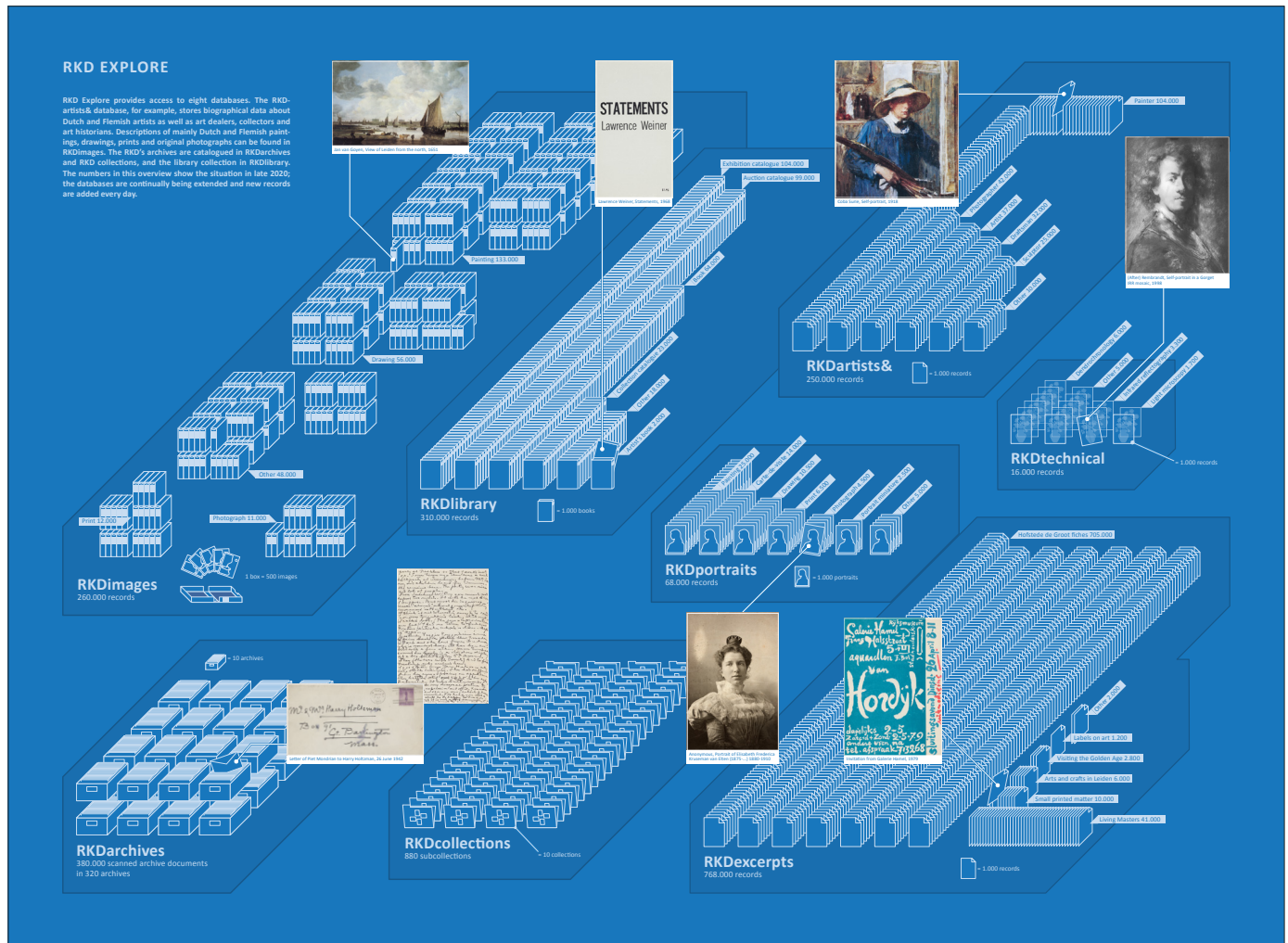
The main components are:

- a collection of *visual documentation* (photographs, analogue and digital reproductions) of about 5.5 million items, supplemented by microfiches of other, equally extensive files;
- a comprehensive collection of archival materials, including more than 700 archives obtained from artists and artists' associations, art historians, art dealers, and collectors;
- the most important art historical *library* in the Netherlands with about 525.000 tapes;
- an extensive and much-consulted digital collection, consisting of various databases with art historical information and thesauri;
- other collections: technical documentation, portrait iconography, press documentation, auction catalogues, drawings and prints.³

The collection helps the RKD achieve its mission and supports its vision. The objective of acquisition is to enhance the collection. Which objects (collections) are missing? What does external demand dictate? Thanks to improved insight, we are able to quickly respond to requests from third parties, such as the acquisition of the Royal Library's so-called Byvanck Database (please refer to 3.4.2), or the intended transfer of the archives of the oldest artists' union in our country, Arti et Amicitiae in Amsterdam.

³ For a further description of the collection profile and the related management duties, we refer you to our *Collection and Acquisition Plan 2021-2024* (2020).



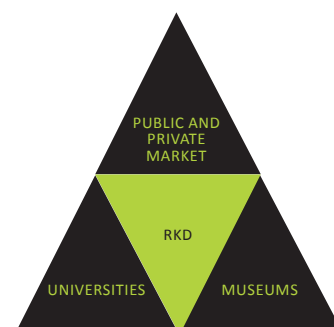


2.3 Unique position

Our position as one of the leading and most visited research institutes for the visual arts is boosted by a unique combination of tasks and functions. We offer knowledge and support in a one-on-one relationship with partners and users and subsequently make this knowledge available for our audiences, both online and analogue (lectures, conferences, exhibitions, etc.). In this way, the RKD holds an independent and unifying position, with which we can serve different fields and areas of expertise.

The RKD is located at the heart of the so-called 'Golden Triangle' of museums, universities and the private market. Within this infrastructure of knowledge and information, we conduct research, provide knowledge and information and contribute substantially to the development of initiatives, particularly when these

relate to issues that do not fall within the specific scope of the institute. In this respect, the RKD also offers a platform where researchers and heritage institutes can store, adapt and make their art historical data available for re-use.



2.3.1 Target groups: visitors and users

Our visitors and users can be categorised as follows:

- 1) *The fine arts and cultural sector*, consisting of representatives of museums, universities, knowledge institutes, both at home and abroad;
- 2) *Independent professionals*, such as researchers, conservators and art dealers;
- 3) *Cultural pundits*, including private collectors;
- 4) *Students* (particularly those in humanities);
- 5) *A wider public interested in art and culture* and looking to broaden their knowledge.

In the coming years, the RKD expects an increase in visits and use of its (online) services across all categories, partly thanks to the realisation of RKD *Digital Research* (please refer to 3.3.2), a significant expansion of its educational offerings (please refer to: 3.4.4) and the number (and nature) of public events (please refer to: 3.4. and 3.5), our new concept for premises at the current location (recent refurbishment) and the anticipated location at Bleijenburg 7 (please refer to: 2.4 and 3.1), and, finally, our comprehensive programming (please refer to: 3.5.3).⁴

2.3.2 Target groups: museums and universities

The RKD is embedded in the Dutch museum's infrastructure for which it performs a primarily supporting role. Thanks to the RKD, museums are able to limit their own facilities for research, documentation and acquisition to what is required on a daily basis. In this supporting capacity, we work together with universities, with whom we promote research. In this respect, we focus on object-oriented, monographic and thematic research, and research on materials. Digitisation and sustainability, broader automated access to information and e-humanities – especially Digital Art History – play a prominent role.

⁴ In the fall of 2020, public, study and presentation spaces in the current location were refurbished to accommodate the changing demands of current and potential target groups. We can now begin to experiment with exhibitions, meetings and new service concepts. Lessons and 'best practices' will subsequently be implemented in our new House.

2.3.3 Target groups: public and private market

The RKD has traditionally been a reliable collaborative partner. We work together with countless organisations, including art dealers and auction houses, funds, foundations and companies, on programs, projects, and activities, ranging from incidental 'assistance' to structural, long-term collaborations. The relationship with the public and private markets is maintained, among others, by the *Friends of the RKD* foundation.⁵

2.3.4 Collaboration

The RKD continues to focus on collaborations which can generate mutual added value. Well-known, long-term partnerships such as with the Rubenianum, ESNA, RIHA, SBMK, PHAROS, NICAS, CODART, HNA, RKI, UU, RUL, RCE (E-RIHS) have been extended. In almost all projects, we collaborate with (inter)national museums, knowledge institutes and/or private parties. To this end, the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (OCW) and numerous private funds has been indispensable.

⁵ Our Friends of the RKD (approx. 500 members) form an important group stakeholders. They aim to grow the number of parties interested in the mission of the RKD, both in the Netherlands and abroad, and support our institute morally and financially. The Friends' contributions have made frequent projects and acquisitions possible. Special events are organised on a regular basis, such as lectures and visits to exhibitions. The Friends are also invited to other gatherings organised (in part) by the RKD.



2.3.5 Collaboration: supporting institutes

As a 'supporting' institute, the RKD has a specific role, knowledge and skills with which to service its target audience. In the past year, common themes were formulated, based on gatherings organised by other supporting institutes such as Het Nieuwe Instituut, DEN and Dutch Culture. For example, we want to raise our visibility in the region, and are exploring current societal themes such as Fair Practice Code, sustainability, diversity and inclusivity.

In addition, we have identified opportunities to reinforce each other in terms of 'back-office' activities (HRM and/or communications). Finally, we will work together as interlocutor for OCW and the Council of Culture regarding the developments in our sector. We delegate interlocutors and set the agenda of relevant subjects in the field of support and policy development.





2.4 Premises: Bleijenburg

In recent years, the RKD has been looking for new premises to help reinforce our corporate identity, mission and vision. After several integration studies, we recently signed a letter of intent with the Government Real Estate Agency for Bleijenburg 7.

This new *Netherlands House of Art History* will help to realise the following ambitions:

- 1) ***An enterprising research and knowledge institute***
This ambition demands an exclusive building, a place which all stakeholders will enjoy spending time in.
- 2) ***An organisation at the heart of Dutch society, in an appealing location***
The general public is becoming increasingly interested in storytelling: stories of and about objects from our collection. This demands an accessible, visible and attractive location.
- 3) ***A network organisation that receives, connects and encourages and facilitates collaboration***
Our House provides a home for (inter)national networks and organisations, thereby also making it a place that demonstrates the impact of art.
- 4) ***An organisation that can present its collection(s) in an inviting way***
Our House is a place where the treasures in our collections can be presented and their stories can be told.
- 5) ***An organisation that demonstrates good stewardship (maintenance and management)***
The new building offers ample opportunity to present, manage and (let others) use our collection in a responsible way.

RKD and Bleijenburg reinforce each other's corporate identity and history; after all, Bleijenbrug was once intended as a so-called *Temple for Dutch History*, complete with lecture halls and a storage facility. We can revive these functions and return the monument to the public as a contemporary *Netherlands House of Art History*. (please refer to: 3.1).⁶

We observe the DERA standard (Digital Heritage Reference Architecture) and the Novius Architecture Framework (NAR).

⁶The intended relocation (after extensive maintenance, renovation and functional adjustments) is expected to take place in 2024. That means that, during the next policy period, we will be working on various subprocesses to make the move possible.

2.5 Strategic compass

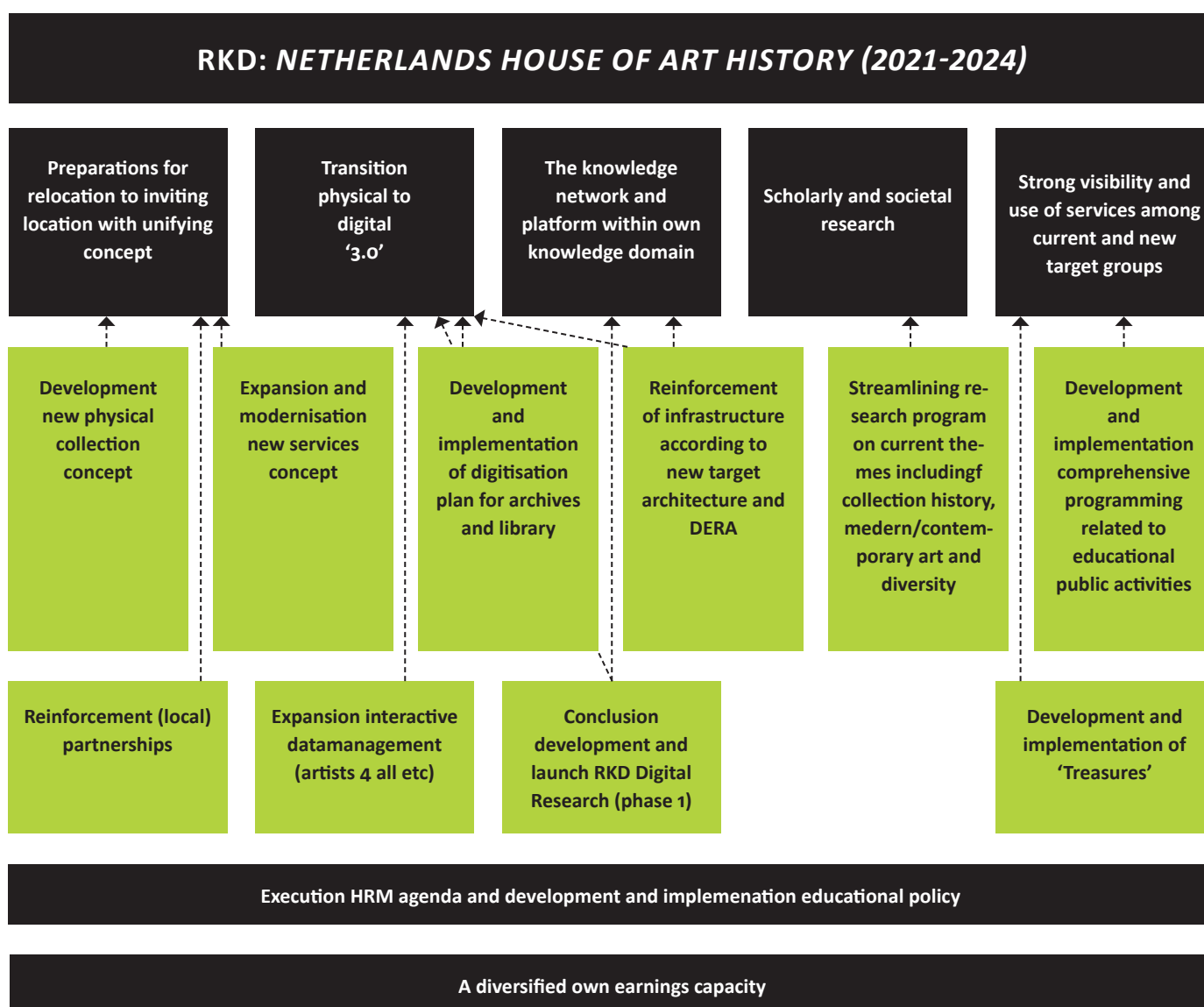
In addition to changes in new organisation, RKD *On the move* has also resulted in the streamlining of our strategy, as formulated in *More Knowledge, More Impact* (2016), including updates of performance indicators and modifications as a result of COVID-19.

The RKD presents its new *Strategic Compass 2021-2024* in which the following five strategic objectives are included, below:

- 1) Preparations for relocation to inviting location with unifying concept
- 2) Transition 'From analogue to digital'

- 3) Knowledge network and platform within own knowledge domain
- 4) Academically and socially valued research
- 5) Greater visibility and use of services by current and new target groups

These objectives are explained in greater detail, point by point, in chapter 3; they are directed linked to our multi-annual budget 2021-2024, as innovation demands (mostly digitally related) investments.



2.6 Centre for the History of Collecting

Het RKD wants to tailor available art historical knowledge and expertise to supply and demand, with the unique *Collectie Nederland* acting as a guide. This does not just pertain to ‘Dutch’ art, but also to art with an international origin and meaning that has been (or still is) present in ‘Dutch’ collections, has been temporarily exhibited here, or is closely related to the Netherlands.

The RKD is an essential link and a rich source for anyone looking for information about a work of art that can be linked with the dynamic *Collectie Nederland* in any way.⁷ Based on the recommendations provided by the Pechtold Committee regarding the protection of Dutch cultural heritage, the RKD wants to set up a centre for the purpose of researching, inventoring, updating and – ideally – advising and communicating with a broader network of both institutions and individuals.

Whereas in many neighbouring countries the collective history is often an integral part of (national) research programs, in our museum-rich country, founded on the initiative of benevolent citizens, the foundation of the (dynamic) *Collectie Nederland* has thus far been unwritten.



⁷ Advisory Committee Protection Cultural Goods, *From restraint to involvement*, Den Haag (Council for Culture) 2019.

⁸ Furthermore, a great deal of material is not available online due to copyright and GDPR-restrictions. An important part of the library can already be consulted in an open configuration. For many researchers, this is an important reason to visit our institute.

III. ACTIVITIES PROGRAM 2021-2024

As indicated in paragraph 2.5 (in relation to the RKD's strategy) the strategic goals and the corresponding subprocesses and instruments/tools are addressed here.

3.1 New premises

The RKD's ambition is to grow the platform both digitally and analogue into the premiere platform within our knowledge domain. To this end, we will spend the next few years working on (the preparations for) the relocation to our new *House* (please refer to: 2.4), for which we have developed a new and attractive concept containing the following parts:

1. Development collection concept

Despite extensive digitisation, a large portion of our collection remains analogue and can only be consulted on location, for example to facilitate study on-site.⁸ The most important part of our library will be kept in an *open* configuration. The design of this collection concept also applies to the consultation of other analogue sources such as archives. Taking into account the intended relocation, at least the basic registration of *all* the collections should be in order.

2. Reinforcement (local) partnerships

In order to be recognised as *Netherlands House of Art History*, it is not only imperative that our own organisation but, in particular, (external) partners should feel at home there. To this end, we want to collaborate with local, national and international partners, whereby parties are able reinforce each other both substantively as well as organisationally.

3. Expansion and innovation of service concept

For the past few years, the RKD has been working with a service catalogue for its clients. The process of client evaluation, market exploration and service development is still at an early stage, but is being reinforced and expanded. In our *House*, we will be (far) more able to develop deeper relations with our audiences and reach to new ones. Moreover, the new *House* requires adjustments to the existing service.

3.2 From analogue to digital

The RKD is many things: a library, an archive, an enormous database, an extensive (digital) research platform and for thousands of researchers, museum, research institutes, art professionals and students both at home and abroad, it is especially an indispensable source for study, research and/or business operations. The ‘look outwards’ has led to the realisation that we would ideally like to offer all of our collections and information digitally, and to the whole world at that. If our collection is to be and remain meaningful, (qualitative) selection is required and the deployment of the latest insights and technologies in order to be able to manage our data in a reliable and sustainable way will be most preferable.

In order to play an international role as leading research institute, we continue to invest in our digital infrastructure which is necessary to offer a – preferably – excellent service. To this extent, we play a contributing role in the development of (digital) standards that are nationally and internationally required. We work, among others, with DERA (Digital Heritage Reference Architecture) and the NAR (Novius Architecture Framework) and contribute to the language required for metadata-exchange (Linked Open Data, LinkedArt DataModel, RKDartists, AAT, Iconclass and more). We are working on a robust service structure and solid IT environment (RKD *Explore*, RKD *Digital Research*).

We provide access to our databases and information in a proper, well-organised and accessible manner – digitisation of the collections with RKD *Boxes*, Digital Library, Digital Archive, RKD*Images*, RKD*ImagesLite*. In addition, we provide substantive, technical and infrastructural support on large and small projects with partners such as *The Mondrian Papers*, *Van Gogh Worldwide*, *E-RHIS* and *Byvanck*. We do this by collaborating intelligently and intensively with partners in the field (Picturae, DeventIT, Spinque) who provide knowledge in areas the organisation does not have. In addition, we cooperate intensively with society in many aspects: we open our databases to expertise from outside of the organisation. Specialists from other institutes are thus able to supplement RKD*artists* with validated data. And with a project like *Bredius*, we provide professionals with access to the knowledge through a crowdsourcing platform, in order to create added value, including for our organisation.

In all these matters, the RKD must naturally take the current laws and regulations into account. Our focus in the coming years will therefore also be on embedding the GDPR Implementation Act, the implementation act Copyright Directive in the digitally unified market and the development of a policy and strategy regarding digital sustainability of our working processes and stored collections (please also refer to: 4.5).

In 2021-2024 we will try to realise the following goals within the framework of our *From analogue to digital* objective.

1. RKD Digital Research

Given the intended transition from analogue to digital collection accessibility and the enhancement of our knowledge network and platform features, we are developing this new, digital, art historical research platform (please refer to: 3.3.2).

2. Development ‘visual search’ techniques

Our extensive digitisation gives a much larger global audience access to the information. Millions of images will be available online. Using ‘visual search’ techniques in a structured way, searches can be based on identical or similar images. Visual search is a valuable addition to the traditional search options.

3. Working with standards under architecture

The RKD is working on a standardised environment in which all the required elements ‘speak the same language’. We subscribe to DERA, which is derived from a standard used by the Dutch government. In doing so, we not only professionalise our own digital operations, but also make the environment we offer to the outside world clear and robust and are able to dictate compatibility requirements. We are also clearly preparing for our *House*.

Data sets for the purpose of research are described according to open standards and are made available based on standardised vocabularies. The RKD offers a repository for research data which allows academia to build on the knowledge of predecessors. With its data, the RKD provides an important building block for research in the domain of digital humanities.

We connect collections and data collections that are described as Linked Open Data. With this 'digital hub feature', the RKD intends to provide researchers with data that has been spread out over the internet in a useful, integrated way. Additionally, other institutes also provide links to the RKD by joining our provided services, such as the use of the biographical artist database *RKDartists*, which has been made available as LOD-web service. On various museum's websites, links are currently being created from the descriptions of collection items to *RDKartists*.

4. Continuity in digitisation and projects

As of mid 2018, over three million objects from the image documentation have been scanned using a 'conveyor belt' developed by the RKD. The goal for 2021-2022 is to digitise the remaining two million plus objects. In addition, archives and materials that have already been earmarked, such as the many pre-war archives (including 50 running metres of *Modernism*), will be digitised and many much-consulted archives will be eligible for 'scanning on demand'. In so doing, standard digitisation will become further embedded within the organisation.

At an European level, a consortium will be established under the name European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RHS). Its goal is to optimise cooperation by sharing not only equipment but also data in the field material research into heritage.

In this context, the RKD will focus on sharing data and further shaping its ambition to be a repository of digital data sets.

Within the context of E-RHS, the RKD plans to merge research data and works of art in a useful way and share this information with researchers. Moreover, the RKD wants to allow researchers and heritage institutes to place their own data in the RKD's digital infrastructure (*RKDtechnical4all*). A pilot is being launched in early 2021 with the RCE, in which research data on the art movement De Stijl will be processed.

5. Digitisation plan for archives and libraries

During the next policy period, the RKD will be orientating itself on digitally providing source material from its own library and archive collections. To this end, two exploratory projects will be initiated in 2021, in which further development of our Digital Preservation Policies is also expected to take place.

6. Supporting cultural entrepreneurship

A sound management is important to the RKD. In addition to investing using common sense, this also includes increasing income. Having this in mind, necessary changes include a new web shop and a new payment module for services rendered. The RKD will tailor the digital infrastructure (download, storage, accessibility) accordingly. The provision of digitised material will thus be achieved within our digital infrastructure.

With this transition *From analogue to digital*, we intend to grow into an internationally operating network organisation that facilitates humanities research on an academic level.

3.3 Knowledge network and platform

Where our knowledge domain is concerned, we are increasingly being utilised as a platform for knowledge sharing and enhancement, both nationally and internationally, both digitally and physically. In 2021-2024, we will increase the opportunities for our target audience to share and exchange knowledge within our (digital and physical) environment.

3.3.1 Platform feature: analogue

Our newly designed public spaces will allow more frequent, more diverse and more focused programming in-house. By realising new project spaces, a new separate space for workshops, our new lecture hall and potential professional exhibition spaces, it will be easier to develop and share knowledge with and/or in the RKD.⁹ We will be experimenting with the use of these facilities and will be applying lessons and experiences to our new premises.

Paragraph 3.5 delves deeper into the nature of and manner in which we will program these activities to benefit knowledge exchange.

⁹ Until the end of November 2020, the RKD organised lectures and events at an external location, for example at the Museum of Literature.

3.3.2 Platform feature: RKD Digital Research

With a view to the intended transition from analogue to digital collection accessibility and expansion of our knowledge network and platform features, we are developing a new digital, art historical research platform which, among others, will feature our image documentations. This will give all interested audiences access to millions of images and metadata.

RKD *Digital Research* facilitates collecting (selection, organisation and questioning), comparing, enhancing, commenting, researching, visualising and sharing of research results, 24/7, as well as the valorisation and publishing of those results. To ensure that our audiences are optimally supported in sharing knowledge, the (art historical) research process has been analysed in more depth (please refer to the diagram).

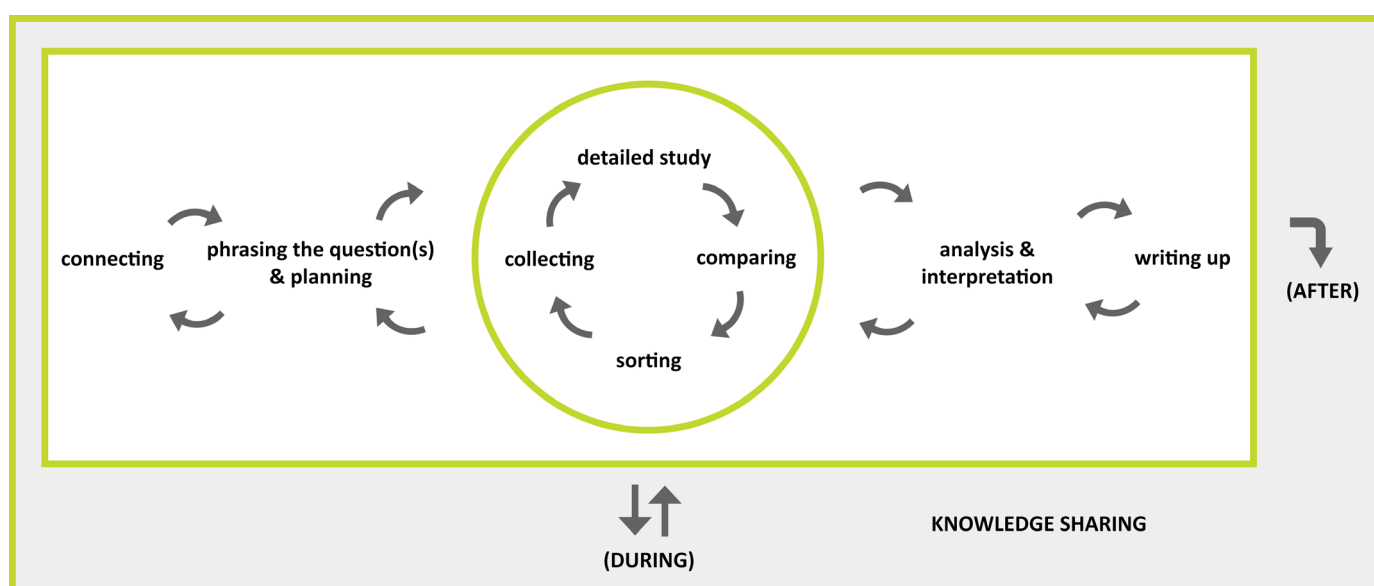
RKD *Digital Research* will offer a large number of features that facilitate knowledge sharing, including features that support contact between researchers.

Researchers collect, organise, study and compare their sources in a systematic way. We emphatically want to facilitate (international) research activities, so that they can take place in a more effective, efficient, interdisciplinary and therefore more impactful way. We plan to offer a personal, digital environment in which users can create, study, compare, edit, save and share selections of (RKD) sources and other material.

3.4 Valorized research

In consultation with (and upon the request of) museums and scholars and based on research agendas (OSK, NWA), we recently developed the research program *Arts of the Low Countries in Context*, in which we will be focusing on knowledge sharing and valorisation even more than before. Our research is relevant for academic (including museum) disciplines and, societally, for the discourse about the development of cultural identities in a rapidly changing world. By presenting art historical analyses of the Netherlandish arts regarding the formation of cultural identities and image cultures, the RKD can contribute to the connections between people. After all, art knows no (national) boundaries.

Arts of the Low Countries in Context serves as guide for research projects that reinforce each other thanks to their mutual cohesion. Artists in the Netherlands have produced an enormous body of work. These days, only a part of this body of work can be admired in museums; the majority is in private hands or 'on the market'. The RDK traditionally focuses on this very dynamic *Collectie Nederland* (please refer to: 2.6).



Our research is primarily object-based research. The area of focus encompasses the fine arts of the Low Countries from about 1200 to the present within an interdisciplinary framework and international context. This has resulted in the following focus:

- 1) collection catalogues and other forms of collection accessibility, the basis for virtually all activities geared towards public and museum activities;
- 2) monographs of artists and works of art;
- 3) technical research on works of art;
- 4) (interdisciplinary) art-historical and (culture-) historical studies.

3.4.2 Valorisation: projects

At present, there are various large and small research projects and activities that will continue to run through 2021-2024. In addition, research projects are being developed with emphasis on themes such as the history of collecting (please refer to: 2.6), contemporary art and societal themes such as 'diversity'.

Medieval Dutch miniatures and manuscripts

Research on Medieval Dutch miniatures and manuscripts will play an increasingly important role in 2021-2024. The reason for this is twofold: firstly, the intended donation of the library and research documentation of Professor Emeritus James Marrow (Princeton University), one of the leading scholars in the field of medieval manuscripts, and secondly, the launch of the project *Medieval miniatures from Byvanck* to RKD, a joint initiative undertaken by the Alexander Byvanck Foundation and the RKD. This project will provide online access to all of the scholarly descriptions and images of medieval, illuminated manuscripts of the Netherlands.

In order to make the so-called Byvanck Database and the accompanying (visual) material lastingly accessible, the data will be unified and prepared for integration into RKD *Explore*. This will create a unique research tool that can uncover the effects of the visual language of the Middle Ages on later periods and other media than books.



At the end of the research phase, we will work together with Museum Catharijneconvent on an exhibition about the influence of book illuminations on early prints and paintings. During the project, students on various internships will be invited to take part in subprojects, and in order to sustain this field in the future, a position will be opened for the role of specialist in medieval image culture.

Framing Mondrian

In the run-up to 2022, the 150th birth year of Piet Mondrian (1872-1944), we will be working on an exhibition and publication of all of Mondrian's photographs. During research on Mondrian's letters, a long-term collaboration between Huygens ING (KNAW) and the RKD, many hundreds of portrait and studio photographs of Mondrian were studied.



New findings and the importance of these exceptional photographs have led to the scholarly documented publication of a photograph book in which all approximately 350 of Mondrian's portrait, studio and portfolio photographs are presented. The earliest known photographs are studio portraits, but from about 1908, Mondrian became aware of the way in which he could utilise the medium and cultivated a public image.

Over one third of the photographs is held by the RKD and a selection will be included in the accompanying exhibition in cooperation with various museums in the Netherlands and abroad.



3.4.3 Valorisation: e-humanities

For the study, RKD is utilising e-humanities and numerous (structural) collaborations. Research results are mostly presented in an accessible and digital form (open access), allowing new insights to be valorised for a wider audience. Thus, we also stimulate research by third parties. Examples of the way in which the RKD applies its research results in order to further develop the e-humanities include RKDStudies *Counting Vermeer* and the *Reference Lab – De Stijl* project within the European E-RIHS program.

Reference Lab – De Stijl

Few institutes have the capability for digitally storing and sharing data derived from scientific research on cultural heritage.

Moreover, it is often impossible (or hardly possible) to digitally link to the sources of various institutes, let alone search them. Within the E-RIHS program, the RKD is developing a (pilot) platform on which multiple sources and systems can be linked to each other and in which institutes without their own (digital) infrastructure can safeguard and/or provide access to their scholarly research data. The objective is to make the data FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

In the project *Reference Lab – De Stijl* pilot, the RCE and the RKD will select a test group of art historical information and technical documentation relating to De Stijl. We will explore how the existing research data in the RKD and RCE collections – such as reference materials and databases containing scientific research results – can be made accessible through Linked Open data via *RKDtechnical*. We will test whether this provides a solid basis for further development of an online platform on which museums and cultural heritage institutes in the Netherlands and abroad can provide sustainable access to their data. This will facilitate more integrated research, identifying new cross-links, and building on the research results of predecessors will be more straightforward.

3.4.4 Valorisation: education

The RKD is investing in (adult) education: it offers (digital) master classes, at least 15 internships per year (university, higher and intermediate vocational training), organises substantive events (RKD *Talks* conferences, specialist meetings), publishes and supervises PhD processes. Two members of staff are professors affiliated with the University of Utrecht and the University of Leiden, respectively, and various colleagues are giving lecturers. Several RKD employees are currently working on completing their doctoral dissertations.

The collaboration with, among many others, the Dutch Post-Graduate School for Art History (OSK), the Association of Research Institutes in the History of Art (RIHA), the European Society for Nineteenth Century Art (ESNA) and the Historians of Netherlands Art (HNA) is indispensable for such valorisation.

3.4.5 Valorisation: fellowships

The RKD offers at least two fellowships per year. In cooperation with the Fondation Custodia the RKD set-up the (structurally) bi-annual *Jacoba Lugt-Klever Fellowship*. In addition to this, the RKD supports the *Visiting Fellow in Contemporary Art* (together with the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the OSK) and the *RKD Visiting Fellow in Computational Art History*.

3.5 Visibility and services

The RKD is actively focusing on increasing its visibility for its current audiences, but also in order to reach new ones. More often than even before, the RKD is approaching different audiences separately ('segmentation'), but for the sake of efficiency in its communication policy, the RKD often reduces the total number of audiences to the following three groups:

- 1) professional users (academia and museums)
- 2) interested laypersons (public)
- 3) main stakeholders (internal and external)

The general communication policy and goals in, for example, annual and project plans undergo intermediate streamlining and are made SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely). In order to achieve our goals concerning communications and PR and in order to approach different audiences separately, the RKD will be implementing a new Client Relations Management (CRM) system over the next years.

3.5.1 Online visibility

The website www.rkd.nl will also be occupying a central position in the next period in terms of the RKD's communications and marketing mix. All social media messages, Adwords campaigns, e-newsletters and printed material will lead to this. The RKD will make every effort to increase the number of online visitors by, for example:

- 1) broadening, rejuvenation and internationalisation of the target group;
- 2) generating more repeat visits among existing (online) visitors;
- 3) promoting more interaction, via the site and social media.

'Content marketing' will play an important role in this. The RKD will undergo a professional transition by bringing scholarly content to broader public audiences, with added focus on the development of attractive (audio) visual aids. These will be presented via our own channels or those of partners.

3.5.2 Reinforcement of activities

As previously outlined, as of 2021 the RKD will have better facilities at its disposal in which to receive guests and expand its activities. In consultation with our audiences, the RKD has developed public activities that are attractive to both existing and new, and younger audiences. In addition to expanding the number of activities, the coming period will also see us working on new activities such as master classes and walk-in consultations.¹⁰ In doing so, the RKD will, for example, reinforce its visibility and interaction with the teaching profession and forge relationships with students in the early phase of their careers.



¹⁰ During these walk-in consultations, visitors with appointments and those who arrive at specific times are able to consult members of staff, which lowers the threshold for new users. During master classes, participants will receive explanations about a part of the collection or research theme and be able to utilise this knowledge immediately. Master classes are meant for (potential) users of the RKD, including students.

3.5.3 Treasures: integral programming

In order to increase RKD's worldwide visibility, we will be focusing on the realisation of integral programming in which projects, publications, exhibitions, lectures and activities form a logical, cohesive whole. In consultation with education and the museum field, the RKD is working on inspiring programming, based on our *Treasures* program.

The visibility of and knowledge about 'treasures' in our collection are enhanced by presenting them and their stories in museums, in various media and in our own premises. Our societal impact is reinforced thanks to targeted applications: *Treasures* helps to bring the outside world in the RKD and the RKD in the outside world.

With *Treasures*, the RKD demonstrates an enormous wealth and a range of our collections and, in doing so, the indispensability of our unique collections for scholarly research. Stimulating exhibitions, presenting various objects and their stories can be an important tool in this; exhibitions corresponding with the current and/or exhibition agenda. *Treasures* will enable us to reach out to wider audiences and will allow us to increase our visibility and our academic and social impact.

Impression display cases

In order to involve and educate the public, from 2021 we will be displaying many 'treasures' from our collections in our newly designed exhibition spaces, by telling their stories in an appealing way. These exhibitions will consist of both permanent displays and those with a changing themes (twice a year). They are also part of our goal to bring together networks and audiences, and allow them to connect via fine arts form the Low Countries in an international context.

Our displays will not be limited to our treasures in our own premises: the next few years will see more objects from the RKD on loan at other locations.



IV. AN ENTERPRISING KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE

In the period 2017-2020, the RKD also took giant steps in terms of cultural entrepreneurship, primarily regarding the extensive digitisation of its services, in particular RKD *Digital Research* and its related business case.¹¹ After implementation, RKD *Digital Research* will also provide further diversification and the ability to increase RKD's earnings capacity.

4.1 Financial position

The RKD is a non-profit organisation. Positive results supplement our capital, and negative results reduce our capital. Various designation funds and reserves have been set up within our capital. With a view to continuity of the organisation, the *General Reserve* primarily serves as a buffer to fall back on in case of calamities with (serious) financial repercussions.

In 2017-2020 the RKD was able to maintain the size of its general reserve; an amount of approximately € 612,000. The annual change in this period was nihil, mainly due to the utilisation of unspent housing funds to cover the costs of collection management.¹¹ In light of the RKD's general development plans (RKD *On the move*) and the digitisation of the collections, the growth objectives for our capital per 2019 have been postponed for the time being; at least until the implementation of RKD *On the move* has been concluded (2020), and the business model linked to RKD *Digital Research* has been implemented (2021-2022).

Furthermore, in considering our financial position, the liquidity and solvency ratios are key indicators. In 2017-2020, these were naturally affected by the financial volume of RKD *Digital Research*.¹² The RKD still has enough liquidity and solvency. Both key figures show that progress in both regular and innovative activities and projects is being safeguarded.

The improved management of operation expenses, mainly staff expenses, the results of the cultural entrepreneurship (see below) and the growth of our earnings capacity through profitable and cost-effective execution of projects, give us confidence in the (financial) continuity of the RKD in the mid to long term; that includes 2021-2024, when plans for the RKD's new premises will be realised.

4.2 Marketing

In 2017-2020, the RKD carried out a policy based on the pillars indicated below, which will also remain applicable in 2021-2024.

1. Pricing of the (digital) service

In order to generate its own income and better tailor the services to the wishes of users, the RKD is implementing pricing for (a portion of) the services.¹³ The RKD has taken steps towards pricing of digital services, within the framework of RKD *Digital Research* and the related business case. In this service, we will also expressly be focusing on the target groups mentioned in chapter 2.1.

¹¹ A specific and legitimate possibility within the Manual for reporting and cultural subsidies, mainly resulting from the RKD's specific housing situation.

¹² For further details about the way in which these have influenced results, we refer you to the RKD's annual accounts in this period.

¹³ Initially, we looked for a balance between direct monetary pricing, for example by passing on the staff expenses to research, and free services. The latter was how the RKD had operated for decades: a freely accessible and free service that arose from the conviction that the RKD, as a subsidised (government) institute, optimally met the officially recognised core duties and performance criteria. The result was indeed a broadly recognised service that was much appreciated by users of the institute, but the RKD's efforts were also somewhat opaque and often too costly to counterbalance the resulting unquantifiable goodwill and knowledge.

2. Fundraising, sponsorship and private patrons

In order to be able to realise projects, activities and make acquisitions, the RKD is fully committed to raising funds from (international) funds. In doing so, more attention will be paid, not only to the desired substance of services provided, but to the structural added value that parties can offer each other, including sharing knowledge and (knowledge) networks. Opportunities for supplementary financing in the form of fundraising and sponsorship are:

- a) Supporting activities: funds
- b) Attracting donors: companies
- c) Attracting donors: private individuals
- d) Supporting activities: crowd funding

The *Friends of the RKD* foundation and CODART successfully raise additional funds by attracting a loyal group of private individuals, collectors and art dealers.



4.3 HRM

As shown in the visualisation of the strategic compass (please refer to: 2.5), HRM and our development and training policy form an important foundation for employees. The focus is currently on developing a clear picture of which skills are required in the coming years. These will be translated into a strategic personnel plan and an integral development and training policy.

4.4 Codes: Governance, Fair Practice, Cultural Diversity and Inclusion

The RKD endorses the principles of the Governance Code for Culture (version 2019). These principles are embedded in our statutes and governance and performance practices. Meetings between the Supervisory Board and management take place at least four times per year. Outside of these meetings, the Director/Board Member of the RKD and the chairman of the Board consult with each other on a regular basis. There where the eight principles are not fully applied, explanations under the motto 'apply or explain' are provided in the management report or the Supervisory Board's report.

Furthermore, the RKD endorses the Fair Practice Code and the Code for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion. The 10 components of the Fair Practice Code are embedded in the organisation (and core administrations) and performances practice. In addition, the RKD supports the existing agreements regarding remuneration and the social dialogue between employers-clients and employees-contractors.¹⁴

With regard to the Code for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion, the next policy period will see the RKD utilising the (eponymous) self-scan to identify areas for further improvement.¹⁵

¹⁴ Het RKD is a member of the museum CAO (collective labour agreement).

¹⁵ The self-scan pertaining to the Code for Diversity and Inclusion, as it appears on the eponymous website.

4.5 Compliance

Material may only be placed online when the institute knows that the rights have expired, or when it has a (written) agreement with the copyright holder. Unlimited use of images is a thing of the past.¹⁶

With the approaching completion of the digitisation of our image documentation and the launch of RKD *Digital Research*, the RKD is focusing on ‘clearing’ the copyright of its collection of art historical visual material and proper management of its copyright status. Similar attention will be paid to this collection component during an expected expansion of digitisation to the *Archives* collection.

Although the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) predominantly builds on existing principles, it introduced new elements that have a significant impact on the processing of personal data by heritage institutes like the RKD. Due to a greater application range, a stronger position for those involved, extra requirements for the organisation and greater emphasis on compliance, the focus on privacy and data protection has increased.

The privacy policy has been implemented for various departments and on the website. A delegation is helping to draft model documents at the branch organisation for archive institutes (KVAN/BRAIN). The RKD is considering joining the Arbitration Committee for Authors Rights Contracts, which is authorised to deal with a number of specific disputes between the maker and the operator of his work with respect to the exploitation agreement that they made with each other. The idea behind it is that settlement by this arbitration committee is faster, cheaper and more accessible than seeking access to the courts.

4.6 Self-evaluation and review

The RKD is well-acquainted with the concept of self-evaluation. During the previous policy period, we evaluated our new course since the RKD *On the move* reorganisation both internally and externally. We also conducted a comprehensive customer (satisfaction) study prior to the previous policy period.

With the establishment of the multi-annual policy and activities plan for 2021-2024, the RKD is preparing for the review framework that has been approved by and for the government-subsidised museums. Activities and projects are embedded in a multi-annual vision and strategy. We also carefully considered how best to ‘measure’ progress and quality. This resulted in a significant expansion of the array of performance criteria, providing a solid foundation for self-evaluation so that the review process too can be as instructive and useful as possible.

*‘Your house becomes your home
when you share it with others.’*

Ed van Bergen

¹⁶ In recent years, the heritage sector has been shaken a number of times by lawsuits arising from disputes over whether or not permission has been granted for the use of images.