

Gavin Wade: Z is for Zoo

FRANS HALS MUSEUM (2016-2017)

From 27 August to 11 December, artist-curator Gavin Wade (1971, GB) will be creating an intervention in the permanent collection presentation of the Frans Hals Museum within the scope of *New & Old*. Wade's work combines, conflates and fictionalises histories and methods of exhibiting. An artwork only exists when it is in the act of displaying. In storage, the artwork is nothing more than an artefact, materials, or stuff waiting to come back 'to life' as art again. According to Wade, *how you exhibit* is just as important as *what you exhibit*. These are the motivations that form the basis of Wade's intervention in the Frans Hals Museum collection. He creates sculptures that function as *display units* – systems on which works from the museum's old, modern and contemporary art collections are displayed as a temporary zoological garden.

Wade has no workshop of his own, but instead creates his work in public spaces in collaboration with others – fellow artists or thinkers and other publics. Wade has upcycled the works of a number of 20th Century architects and his work in *Z is for Zoo* is partly based on Frederick Kiesler (1890-1965) for his 1924 *display units* and Adolf Krischanitz's 1986 Mobile Wall System for the Vienna Secession. In the early twentieth century, Kiesler developed radical and innovative ideas on how art could be displayed; not in a domestic salon-like environment or on white walls in so called neutral spaces, but based on dynamic spatial suspension systems which he called *L-Type* and *T-Type Display Units*. Wade seized on the Austrian-American Kiesler's ideas in order to create structures that are both 'independent' sculptures and functional 'systems' onto which art and other objects can be hung.

Wade has started to develop an entire alphabet of these kinds of structures, extending the L and T types to be a full A-Z. At the Frans Hals Museum he is using the *T-type* and *Z-type* to display works from the collection with a botanical or zoological theme. The *T-type* is for plants and the *Z-type* for animals in an ode to the pre-human exhibitions of nature.

These structures – Wade calls them playgrounds for artists and curators – continuously assume a different role in each new environment. The artist-curator has presented a number of versions of *L* and *T-Types* since 2001 in major international exhibitions (Guangzhou Triennial, 2005), in art centres (ConTEMPorary, New York, 2003; Temple bar Gallery, Dublin, 2015, and Stroom Den Haag, 2016), in art fairs (ARCO Madrid, 2001 and Art Rotterdam, 2016) and now for the first time they appear in a museum collection presentation with old, modern and contemporary art side by side in all kinds of forms and materials. The structures act as the host for work from other artists from various periods. They function as a mini-exhibition, or zoological gardens, within the presentation of a permanent collection in the Frans Hals Museum.

<https://www.franshalsmuseum.nl/en/event/gavin-wade>







