

# STYLIST IN WONDER- LAND



Like Alice in Wonderland after eating those magic cookies, some of our talents have simply grown through the roof of House of Orange. Based on their remarkable talent – which we still proudly represent – they have developed ‘extra curricular’ activities on exciting new paths. Giant fashion stylist Maarten Spruyt for example came into designing exhibitions for top of the line Dutch museums, to much – rather unexpected – acclaim.

Unlike the usual art historian, a stylist, and in particular Maarten Spruyt, creates moods, dreams or stories unbound by boring purist facts, thus bringing the objects on display to tantalizing life. His museum adventure started back in 1991 when Sjarel Ex, director at Centraal Museum Utrecht at the time, approached Maarten to create some show-windows in the new costume hall. His signature rich styling was applauded, mainly by the audience – the art critics needed a bit more time to get used to the results of this style hurricane. He subsequently did a big bang of a fashion exhibition with curator José Teunissen and when Sjarel Ex made his move to Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam he asked Maarten to let his fashionable light shine on, or in this case from underneath, a travelling Dali show. The special lighting design – inspired by Dali’s preferred sunset light – let his surreal work float, and combined with the refined stylist eye on juxtaposing Dali’s infamous paintings and drawings with fashion, film and objects, it made the show a groundbreaking success. Maarten’s name was secured on the museum world’s hot list.

Maarten’s most recent show, a display on Dutch court fashion throughout the centuries at the GEM in The Hague, may well be one of his finest to date. Naff and dusty as historical costume displays tend to be, Maarten let his imagination run wild and managed to get the staff on his hand to create fabulous fashion landscapes and even a fashion graveyard, masterfully combining the two-dimensional with the three-dimensional. It also takes a lot more than charm, another one of Maarten’s great assets, to get a serious museum to display damaged and not yet restored paintings to go nicely with damaged and beyond repair court dresses, from a completely different period in history mark you. But Maarten’s dead serious, passionate, respectful and ultimately perfectionist attitude towards his work eventually guides any team – fashion minded or not – to the wonderland he wants to create.

TEXT  
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PHOTOGRAPHY  
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