

PRESS RELEASE

Daan Roosegaarde – Presence

Groninger Museum presents Daan Roosegaarde's first major solo museum show

The first major museum solo project by the artist and innovator Daan Roosegaarde has opened at the Groninger Museum. *Presence* is a groundbreaking new interactive artwork commissioned by the museum. It comprises an expansive, luminous landscape that changes colour and shape in the presence of visitors. The installation invites viewers to physically engage with it. Through touch and movement, they become uniquely aware of their own presence. It marks the first time that Roosegaarde, who previously mainly displayed his work in the external public domain and is known for *Icoon Afsluitdijk* and international projects like *Waterlicht* and *Smog Free Tower*, has explored interior space on this scale.

Daan Roosegaarde: “This was a really exciting project for me, because I usually make works for outdoor space. I wanted to create an intimacy, a kind of stillness within the walls of the museum. *Presence* is an exhibition that allows adults to briefly be children again, and at the same time it carries an important social message. It affects you.”

Human impact

Presence is based on the idea of the ecological footprint and the impact of human presence on earth. Visitors leave traces in the exhibition, which eventually disappear again to make way for new patterns. Roosegaarde also took inspiration from 1960s and 1970s landscape and environmental art, in which interactivity and a keen sense of the earth's vulnerability figured heavily. Through interacting with *Presence*, visitors symbolically experience the theme of humans' impact on and role in the world.

Dream landscape

With its specific use of light and way of responding to visitors, the work is as a dream landscape full of fascinating new possibilities that encourage experimentation. Touching, feeling and moving are essential for experiencing *Presence*. Walking through the installation, the visitor constantly undergoes shifts in perspective. You feel small in one space, enormous in the next. The work reflects on our involvement with our environment and allows visitors to experience their own presence in a surprising way.

Daan Roosegaarde

Daan Roosegaarde (b. 1979, Nieuwkoop) is known for his innovative designs for public space, which bring together social design, art and (bio-)technology. He characterises his work as ‘techno-poetry’: a blend of technology and creativity that blurs the boundaries between the humanities and the sciences and, according to the artist, is the engine that drives social change. Working with a team of designers, engineers and project managers, Roosegaarde investigates subjects such as the relationship between humans and technology, between the digital and the physical, and between living and nonliving matter. Natural phenomena such as luminous jellyfish and fireflies fascinate him, and the element of light often plays a key role in his work.

Groninger Museum

Presence is a pioneering project not only for Roosegaarde but also for the Groninger Museum, with visitors able to actively influence the installation's appearance. The work

experiments with art and design and asks us to redefine what an exhibition is. Visitors change from spectators into makers and from makers into parts of the installation that are subsequently looked at by others visitors. This innovative hybrid show builds on the Groninger Museum's policy of seeking out the boundaries where art, design, fashion and technology meet.

Curators: Mark Wilson and Sue-an van der Zijpp.

Publications

The artist's first monograph, *Daan Roosegaarde*, was recently published. Contributors include Nico Daswani of the World Economic Forum, Fumio Nanjo of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Carol Becker of Columbia University in New York, and Roosegaarde himself. The renowned art publishing house Phaidon produced the English-language book, and Lecturis has published a Dutch version. Curator Sue-an van der Zijpp has written a commentary on the exhibition, which is available free at the museum and at groningermuseum.nl/en/presence.

Daan Roosegaarde – Presence will remain open at the Groninger Museum through 12 January 2020.

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Note for editors

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