

# Art Manifestation 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam' ~ The Guest Becomes Host



Joseph Sassoon Semah shares his lost rich Jewish Babylonian cultural heritage through art, performances and debates. He asks the public to review their own art, culture, traditions and identity.

The manifestation takes place mainly in 36 different public locations in Amsterdam, from September 7th 2019 - January 19th 2020.

Nederlandstalig: <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/gast-wordt-gastheer/>

[Stichting Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten](#)

Curator: Linda Bouws.

*On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* is an aesthetic and poetic research into the cities Baghdad, Jerusalem and Amsterdam, which has been conceived by artist Joseph Sassoon Semah and curated by Linda Bouws (Metropool International Art Projects). All these cities are said to have been tolerant at some time in their history, but how does that relate to 'otherness' and what does it mean today? The project focuses on two lines of thought. The first is what Semah called 'The Third GaLUT', the third Exile, a metaphor for disconnectedness.

The second is 'The Guest', he who is allowed to live and work in a foreign context tests his surroundings the very moment he articulates his particular position in exile without any reservations.

The Guest becomes Host. By this process Semah investigates one of the greatest achievements of human civilisation: hospitality. Joseph Sassoon Semah translates his cultural and visual heritage and its subtext into contemporary art. While doing

so he reassesses and redefines lost heritages.

The project will translate the cultural heritage of Baghdad, Jerusalem, and Amsterdam, with the help of the different 'Guests', into a meaningful experience for a broad audience.

In On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam, Joseph Sassoon Semah shares his lost rich Jewish Babylonian cultural heritage and asks the public to review their own art, culture, traditions and identity. This will take place mainly in 36 public locations in Amsterdam.

There will be new pieces of art, performances, debates, lectures, round-table discussions, video-interviews, a publication in English, articles on diverse platforms, a research - and a video-report.

Simultaneously in Amsterdam, Baghdad and Jerusalem a small house will be built: MaKOM in MaKOM. The project will translate the cultural heritage of Baghdad, Jerusalem and Amsterdam, with the help of different 'Guests', into a meaningful experience for a broad audience.



### *Artist Joseph Sassoon Semah*

Artist Joseph Sassoon Semah was born in Baghdad (Iraq, 1948), as one of the last of a Babylonian Jewish family lineage, the grandson of Chief Rabbi Hacham Sassoon Kadoori (1885-1971). Kadoori was the head of the Babylonian Jewish community and preached of peace between Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Baghdad once was one of the most diverse and tolerant cities in the world. The Babylonian Jews in Iraq were one of the oldest and historically seen, the most important Jewish community. The Talmud Bavli was compiled in Babylon and during the British

mandate in the 1920s, the well-educated Jews played an important role in public life. But from 1948, the year of independence for Israel, life for Jews in Iraq becomes extremely difficult.

Between 1950-1952, 120.000 - 130.000 Iraqi Jews were transported to Israel. The displaced Baghdadi Jews were forced to leave behind their culture and

possessions in Iraq. Semah, together with his parents was displaced to the State of Israel in 1950. His grandfather Hacham Sassoon Kadoori refused to leave Iraq and stayed in Baghdad until his death. His experiences in the Six Day War (1967) and the Yom Kippur War (1973) resulted in Joseph Sassoon Semah deciding to leave Israel: in this context he calls this a *self-imposed exile*.

As a Babylonian Jew who emigrated to the West (Amsterdam), he is part of GaLUT (Exile), an endless cycle of diaspora and return. You long for your country of birth and search for a way to relate to your cultural heritage and traditions. Heritage reminds us of our history.

*On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam*

For this project Joseph Sassoon Semah designs a new series of drawings and scale-sized architectural models of houses, cultural institutions, synagogues and Jewish burial places in Baghdad from before 1948, that refer to their rich history. At all 36 locations there will be an architectural art-model on show for at least a month, and activities will be organised with the partners.

On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam was realised in part with the support of AFK, BPD Cultuurfonds, Lumen Travo Gallery, Mondriaan Fonds and Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten.

Please mark the following data in your calendar and keep an eye out for our next newsletters or stay up-to-date at [http://rozenbergquarterly.com/category/meritis\\_makom/](http://rozenbergquarterly.com/category/meritis_makom/) and [www.josephsemah.nl](http://www.josephsemah.nl)

On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam will take place in 36 places:

1. *Location: Lumen Travo Gallery, Lijnbaansgracht 314, Amsterdam*

*Date: 7 September - 26 October 2019*

Exhibition, performance and meetings, opening 7 September, 17.00 hrs.

On Saturday 7 September at 5 pm: opening of On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam.

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah, Baruch Abraham, Peter Baren, Zuhail Gezik, Jom Semah.

Exhibition: drawings from the new series 'Between Graveyard and Museum's

sphere', paintings, sculptures and a model cast in bronze of the Meir Tweig Synagogue of Hacham (Chief Rabbi) Sassoon Kadoori, who was also president of the Babylonian community in Iraq.

He lived from 1885-1971. Artist Joseph Sassoon Semah is his grandson. The model, key work of the project, will later be exhibited at other locations.

Lumen Travo Gallery, the gallery of Joseph Sassoon Semah, is the home of the entire event.

A space is also available as an information and research place and ad hoc lectures and meetings are organized for a small audience.

*2. Location: Advocatenkantoor Bynkershoek, Herengracht 310, Amsterdam*

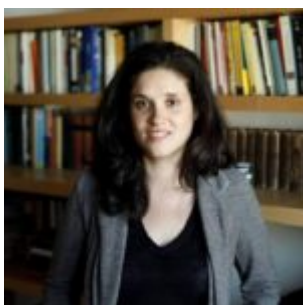
*Date: 24 September - 6 October 2019*

*Art and private meeting 24 September, 18.00 hrs.*

*3. Location: Goethe-Institut Amsterdam, Herengracht 470, Amsterdam*

*Date: 12 September - 12 October 2019*

*Lecture & Performance, 12 September, 20.00 hrs.*



*Lecture: dr. Yael Almog, Goethe Universität Frankfurt*

The lecture will engage with the presentation of the East in the works of the great German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe particularly in his major work on Eastern aesthetics, the *West-Östlicher Divan*. In his *Divan*, Goethe portrays the possibility of cultural exchange through art between the East and the West. What was the meaning of this vision in Goethe's time? How can we understand the *West-östlicher Divan* in light of contemporary polemics on migrants and refugees? The Israeli migration to Western Europe will be taken as a unique case study with which to examine the contemporary validity of Goethe's vision.



Performance – Photo: Ilya Rabinovich

*Performance:*

Joseph Sassoon Semah, Baruch Abraham, Levent Aslan and Zuhail Gezik – Aslan Muziekschool with 6 students, Dali Heymann, Uzi Heymann, Atousa Bandeh, Peter Baren, Mikko Fritze, Jom Semah, Yvonne Strang and Els Wijnen.

4. *Location: Aslan Muziekcentrum, Corantijnstraat 9, Amsterdam*

*Date: 15 September – 13 October 2019*

Art, performances with students

In *On Friendship/ Collateral Damage) III – The Third GaLUT*: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam we will organize various performances. Zuhail Gezik, artistic director of Aslan Music Center, with six students, and Levent Aslan, are part of several performances.

5. *Location: UvA, Faculteit des Geesteswetenschappen, P.C. Hoofthuis, Spuistraat 134, Amsterdam*

*Date: 18 September – 18 October 2019*

Artwork

6. *Location: UvA, Duitsland Instituut, Bushuis Kloveniersburgwal 48, Amsterdam*

*Date: 18 September 2019*

College: Prof. dr. A.J.J. (Ton) Nijhuis, Duitsland Instituut/ chair of faculty politicology

Since the late 1970s, artist Joseph Sassoon Semah has developed an encyclopedic artistic oeuvre. Sassoon Semah was born in Baghdad and moved with his family to Jerusalem in 1950. Sassoon Semah now lives in Amsterdam. His research focuses on the relationship between Jewish identity and modernist art. Modernist art is based on exclusion principles. Sassoon Semah was one of the first artists to

criticize these mechanisms in the Dutch context. He asks the simple question of what modernism looks like from a Jewish perspective. As a result, he has not only uncovered unknown layers in modern art, but has also drawn attention to the destroyed intellectual climate of Baghdad before 1950.

*Followed by private visit:*

*September 18, visit Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam*

Visit Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam: Dr. A.S. (Anna) Seidl, Prof. dr. A.J.J. (Ton) Nijhuis, artist Joseph Sassoon Semah and students.

Joseph Sassoon Semah is a versatile artist whose work includes drawings, paintings, sculptures, installations, performances and texts. Sassoon Semah has been studying and researching the relationship between Judaism and Christianity as sources of Western art and cultural history for more than forty years. By reading in his native language, Hebrew, he signals a lack of Jewish knowledge and the urgency to add it and fill the “blank page” . With his own work he “corrects” art history, philosophy and theology. He argues for more attention for different sources in order to create broader support for other visions.

*7. Location: privé-huis Prof. mr. E.J. (Egbert) Dommering*

*Date: 19 September - 19 October 2019*

*Art and private*

*Meeting 19 September, 19.00 hrs.*

Meeting: Introduction prof. E.J. (Egbert) Dommering: About the exclusion of mixing and appropriation of cultures in the visual arts.

In the art world, artists regularly refer to other people’s work. There is a vague boundary between incorporating forms and ideas from a different culture into one’s own and appropriating or excluding them. This will be explained on the basis of a number of examples as an introduction to a discussion about this phenomenon in relation to the work of Joseph Sassoon Semah.

*8. Location: Gallery ARTTRA, Tweede Boomdwarsstraat 4, Amsterdam*

*Date: 5 October - 30 October 2019*

Exhibition: opening 5 October 2019, 17.00 hrs.

*9. Location: The Jerusalem Biennale 2019 For Heaven’s Sake, Kol HaOt in Huzot Hayotzer in Jerusalem*

*Date: 10 October - end November 2019*

Exhibition, performance, opening 10 October 2019

MaKOM in MaKOM by Joseph Sassoon Semah is exhibited at the Jerusalem Biennale. As a Babylonian Jew who emigrated to the West (Amsterdam), Joseph Sassoon Semah is part of GaLUT (Exile), an endless cycle of diaspora and return. You long for your country of birth and search for a way to relate to your cultural heritage and traditions. Heritage reminds us of our history. Sassoon Semah built 'temporary houses' in various parts of the world since 1979

as a reminder of his GaLUT. The houses are recognizable as 'portable homeland', especially for those who live in exile. The house symbolizes the place where the Jew can only live temporarily. As long as the diaspora lasts, GaLUT itself remains a temporal location, a MaKOM in MaKOM which must be formally replaced by another MaKOM in MaKOM.

The other two houses MaKOM in MaKOM that are part of the project On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam are placed in Hermitage Amsterdam (November 2- 2 December) and in Baghdad for the synagogue Meir Tweig. This was the synagogue of Hacham (Chief Rabbi) Sassoon Kadoori (1885-1971). Joseph Sassoon Semah is his grandson.

*10. Location: Museum Hedendaagse Kunst De Domijnen, Ligne 5, Sittard*

*Date: 20 October 2019 - 26 Januari 2020*

Retrospective Joseph Sassoon Semah: opening 20 October, 13.00 hrs.

A large retrospective with artworks by Joseph Sassoon Semah: "Being touched by an angel just before birth." Curator: Roel Arkesteijn.

Joseph Sassoon Semah in gesprek met Roel Arkesteijn in De Domijnen, Sittard over de tentoonstelling "Being Touched by an Angel Just Before Birth"

20 oktober 2019 - 16 februari 2020. Ligne5, Sittard

*11. Location: Oude Lutherse Kerk, Singel 411, Amsterdam*

*Date: 13 October - 10 November 2019*

Art

Performances and meeting: 13 October, 12.15 hrs.

Host: Andreas Wöhle, president Evangelisch-Lutherse Synode in the Protestantse Kerk, preacher of the Evangelisch-Lutherse Gemeente Amsterdam

Performance 'Back to Back' Joseph Sassoon Semah with among others Andreas Wöhle, and rabbi Mustafa Slaby.

Performance with public: 'Yusuf, Yosef, Joseph' and discussion with representatives from several communities.

*12. Location: Podium Mozaïek, Bos en Lommerweg 191, Amsterdam*

*Date: 17 October - 17 November 2019*

Opening, performance and meeting: 17 October, 19.30 hrs.

Art: Joseph Sassoon Semah - Graftombe Ezra

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah, Levent Aslan, Baruch Abraham, Uzi Heymann, Zuhail Gezik and six students Aslan Muziekschool, Anna Seidl, Jom Semah, Rick Vercauteren.

Lecture: Rick Vercauteren, art historian/publicist 'Architecture in GaLUT' - Joseph Sassoon Semah translates his cultural and visual heritage and its subtext into contemporary art. While doing so he reassesses and redefines lost heritages. Dialogue between Vercauteren and artist Joseph Sassoon Semah.

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah, Levent Aslan, Baruch Abraham, Mudar Adas, Uzi Heymann, Zuhail Gezik and six students Aslan

*13. Location: Kunstenaarsboekwinkel Boekie-Woekie, Berenstraat 16, Amsterdam*

*Date: 19 October - 15 November 2019*

Exhibition: opening 19 October 2019, 17.00 hrs.

*14. Location: Werkgebouw het Veem, Van Diemenstraat 410-412, Amsterdam*

*Date: 25 October - 24 November 2019*

Exhibition

*15. Location: Embassy of the Free Mind, Keizersgracht 123, Amsterdam*

*Date: 31 October 2019, 19.00 hrs.*

Art and lecture

Joseph Sassoon Semah: The meaning of Tetragrammaton and Pentagrammaton and The Black Square (EN)

What is the Tetragrammaton, or even the Pentagrammaton? We often see the



image of the Tetragrammaton and Pentagrammaton in art and culture, but also in the work of artist Joseph Sassoon Semah (Iraq, 1948) and in the collection of The Embassy of the Free Mind.

In this lecture Joseph Sassoon Semah will reflect on the work of Barnett Newman, Marcel Duchamp, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Johannes Reuchlin and Vincent van Gogh and their sources of inspiration and the collection of the Embassy of the Free Mind.

Joseph Sassoon Semah will also talk about the meaning of The Black Square, the reference to the destruction of the Second Solomonic Temple reconstructed by Herod (29 or 30 July 70 C.E.), and the perfection of its dimensions.

Voor meer info en reserveren:  
<https://embassyofthefreemind.com/nl/evenementen#LJSS>

16. *Location: Hermitage Amsterdam, Amstel 51, Amsterdam*

*Date: 2 November - 2 December 2019*

Art and House MaKOM in MaKOM on the bleachfield, performance, opening Night of the Museum 2 November, 19.00 hrs.

Performance Museumnacht Joseph Sassoon Semah, Baruch Abraham, Levent Aslan, Peter Baren, Uzi Heymann, Zuhail Gezik with six students Aslan Muziekschool, Anna Seidl, Jom Semah, Yvonne Strang, Els Wijnen and Pierre Bokma.

Joseph Sassoon Semah has built 'temporary houses' in various parts of the world since 1979 as a reminder of his GaLUT. The houses are recognizable as 'portable homeland', especially for those who live in exile. The house symbolizes the place where the Jew can only live temporarily. As long as the diaspora lasts, GaLUT itself remains a temporal location, a MaKOM in MaKOM which must be formally replaced by another MaKOM in MaKOM.

The other two houses MaKOM in MaKOM that are part of the project *On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* are placed in the Jerusalem Biennale (10 October - late November) and in Baghdad for the synagogue Meir Tweig. This was the synagogue of Hacham (Chief Rabbi) Sassoon Kadoori (1885-1971). Joseph Sassoon Semah is his grandson.

17. *Location: Vrijmetselaars Stichting Amsterdam, Vondelstraat 39, Amsterdam*

*Date: 3 November - 1 December 2019*

Art

Performance and meeting: 3 November, 14.00 hrs.

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah, Baruch Abraham, Levent Aslan, Peter Baren, Zuhail Gezik with six students Aslan Muziekschool, Jom Semah and Jan W. Treffens.

Joseph Sassoon Semah and Jan W. Treffens (La PAIX lodge) will play chess and reflect on the sources and the use of symbols and the never-completed process of building the *Second Temple of King Solomon*. *The meaning of On Friendship / (Collateral Damage)* is also discussed.

18. *Location: Fatih Moskee, Rozengracht 150, Amsterdam*

*Date: 14 November - 12 December 2019*

Art

19. *Location: Locus Solus (Artist in Practise), Oudezijds Voorburgwal 131, Amsterdam*

*Date: 16 November - 14 December 2019*

*Saturday 16 November 2019 - 17.00 hrs.*

Exhibition: Confrontation II: 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam'. The Guest becomes Host. Joseph Sassoon Semah and franck gribling.

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Peter Baren: 3 photoworks Title: ARK [On Hope And Other Terminal Bodies], 2007

*Saturday 7 December 2019, 17:00 hrs.*

Discussion on the role of Alternative Artists Spaces in the past and present. Moderated by Albert van der Weide. Participants: Joseph Sassoon Semah (Stichting MaKOM), franck gribling (City Thoughts Foundation and Locus Solus), ieke Trinks (performance en beeldend kunstenaar), Arnisa Zego (RONGWRONG), Peter Baren (independent Performing Artist) and Martin Uit den Bogaard (De Branderij, Antwerpen).

Opening hours: Saturdays - 13.00 - 18.00 hrs.



Edwin Shuker

*20. Location: Hilton Hotel, Apollolaan 138, Amsterdam*

*Date: 17 November - 15 December 2019*

Art

Film and meeting : 17 November 2019, 15.00 hrs.

*Special Guest: Edwin Shuker: Remember Baghdad, 2016, 69 min. A Spring Films and Echodocs Production, director Fiona Murphy*

Iraq's last Jews tell the story of their country.

Five families from the Jewish community look back on a barely imaginable time in Baghdad - Iraq was booming. It was a city of pleasure seekers, and there was inter-communal trust. Iraq was once of the most diverse places on earth, more tolerant of its minorities than any European nation.

Today, after decades of war and instability, Iraq is a very different place. In spite of the danger, North Londoner Edwin Shuker decides to return to the country he loved. We follow him back to Baghdad. He wants to buy a house in Iraq so that he can say "The Jews have not all gone." He wants to plant a seed of hope for the future.

With vivid home movies and archive news footage.

*21. Location: Anne Frank Huis, Keizersgracht 192, Amsterdam*

*Date: 21 November - 19 December 2019*

Art

*Performance and meeting: 21 November 2019, 15.00 hrs.*

Joseph Sassoon Semah & writer-poet Mati Shemoelof (Berlin), both of them Baghdadi Jews living in Europe: The Babylonian Jew in the West, The West in the Babylonian Jew: Re-Thinking the concept of GaLUT, Re-claiming the lost Culture.

Moderator: Markha Valenta.

They will discuss Judaism, diaspora, exclusion, and acts of concealment and

building.

RSVP: [communicatie@annefrank.nl](mailto:communicatie@annefrank.nl)

*22. Location: Amsterdam Museum Regentenkamer, Nieuwezijdsvoorburgwal 359, Amsterdam*

*Date: 23 November - 22 December 2019*

Art

Guided tours Joseph Sassoon Semah New Narratives: 23 November and 24 November 2019

*23. Location: Architectenbureau Jowa, Prinsengracht 526, Amsterdam*

*Date: 28 November - 29 December 2019*

Art

*Private Meeting: 28 November 2019, 17.00 hrs*

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?

After a musical prelude and reading of one of the Songs of Travel Jowa will briefly speak about being in exile, being an emigrant and carrying a mix of cultural identities. Followed by a conversation with Joseph about house / home / place, integration, assimilation and friendship.

*24. Location UvA, Faculteit des Geesteswetenschappen Bushuis, Kloveniersburgwal 48, Amsterdam*

*Date: 2 December 2019 - 2 January 2020*

Art

*Location: SPUI25, Spui 25, Amsterdam*

*Date: Meeting and film, 2 December 2019, 17.00 hrs.*

*Location: SPUI25, Spui 25-27, Amsterdam*

*2 December 2019, 17:00 hrs.*

Keynote Lecture *Professor Ella Shohat: Reminders Revisited: An Exilic Journey from Hakham Sasson Khdhuri to Joseph Sassoon Semah with screening of the film *Forget Baghdad**

In her keynote lecture Professor Ella Shohat (New York University) will reflect on the significance of place in the narration of the displaced Jewish-Iraqi community

in the wake of overpowering political forces that, in one form or another, generated a historical vortex that rendered impossible a millennial existence in Mesopotamia.

The enormous task of shepherding a Jewish community massively impacted by internal and external political pressures after the fall of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of the state of Iraq fell largely on the shoulders of the Hakham Bashi (the Chief Rabbi and also the President of the Iraqi Jewish Community), Sasson Khdhuri, the grandfather of artist Joseph Sassoon Semah. Although the majority of Iraqi Jews were dislocated in the wake of the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, the Hakham stayed to safeguard those who remained in Iraq, living through wars, revolutions, and a dictatorial regime that rendered hellish the situation of all Iraqis, but especially of Jews, existing as they did under the unrelenting suspicion of disloyalty. At the same time, some of the Hakham's children moved to Israel where the Iraqi-Jews, along with Sephardi/Middle Eastern Jews more generally, experienced exclusion, rejection, and otherization as Arabs/Oriental.

Against this backdrop, one can appreciate the self-exiling of some Mizrahim, including that of the grandson of the Hakham Bashi, artist Joseph Sassoon Semah, who left Israel in 1974 and has been living in Amsterdam since 1981. Tracing the familial passage from the Hakham's decision to remain in Iraq to his grandson's decision to depart from Israel encapsulates the fraught trajectory of a shattered community. These simultaneously in-place and out-of-place figures allegorize the unsettled story of Jewish-Iraq.

In her keynote lecture Professor Shohat will explore some of the motifs in the work of Joseph Sassoon Semah to illuminate the twinned loci of "Zion" and "Babylon" in the present-day formation of contradictory affiliations and paradoxical notions of "exile" and "diaspora." The emphasis on a "Third Galut" in particular will serve to unfold a tale of a Jewish rupture from an accustomed Arab cultural geography, as re-membered by the descendants of those forced to abandon the land between two rivers, resulting in a lingering feeling of at once homelessness and at-home-ness.

*Ella Shohat* is professor at the departments of Art & Public Policy, Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies (Tisch School of the Arts) at New York University. Moderation and comment by *David Wertheim*, historian and director of

the Menasseh ben Israel Institute for Jewish Cultural and Social Studies.

Welcome: *Linda Bouws* (curator 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam')

After the lecture, an academic screening of the award-winning documentary *Forget Baghdad* will be hosted at the Goethe Institute Amsterdam, Herengracht 470, Amsterdam.

The extraordinary film *Forget Baghdad* (Jury Prize, Locarno 2002) offers a rare glimpse into a community which is little-known but extremely important in light of the current crises in the Middle East: the group variously known as "Sephardis," "Mizrahim" or "Arab Jews," that is, people of Jewish religion but Arab culture. The Iraqi Jews, specifically, represent a millennial tradition of Jewish presence in the region, where they formed an integral part of the society and often achieved high positions in politics, finance, and the arts. Yet they were uprooted virtually overnight in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Organized around the moving lives of four Iraqi-Israeli writers (Shimon Ballas, Sami Michael, Samir Naqash, Mousa Houry), former members of the communist party, *Forget Baghdad* reopens a lost chapter of Middle Eastern history.

*If you would like to attend the screening, please register by mail to: [aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl](mailto:aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl)*

Metropool International Art Projects in collaboration with Menasseh ben Israel Instituut, University of Amsterdam, SPUI25, Joods Cultureel Kwartier en Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam.

Official language: English

Free Entrance. *Registration via [Spui25.nl](http://Spui25.nl) (lecture) and [aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl](mailto:aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl) (film)*

25. *Location: Kunstenaars sociëteit Arti en Amicitiae, Rokin 112, Amsterdam*

*Date: 3 December 2019 - 3 January 2020*

Art

Performance and meeting: 3 December 2019, 16.30 hrs.

Performance Joseph Sasson Semah, Peter Baren, Uzi Heymann, Jom Semah.

As early as 1993, Joseph Sassoon Semah organized "The Third Exile" in Arti and Amicitiae.

Interview Renée Hartog (cultural diplomat / political scientist) with Joseph Sassoon Semah: 'What does GaLUT (Exile) mean then and now?'

26. *Location: Voormalig Burgerweeshuis van Aldo van Eyck, IJsbaanpad 1, Amsterdam*

*Date: 10 December 2019 - 12 January 2020*

Exhibition

Opening and meeting: 10 December 2019, 19.00 hrs.

Guided tours: 14 December, 12.00-13.30 hrs. & 11 January, 12.00- 12.30 hrs.

Joseph Sassoon Semah: 'Architecture in Exile', followed by a conversation with Sharon Oldenkotte-Vrolijk of BPD, Director of Art & Culture.

The lecture is preceded by the opening of the exhibition.

27. *Location: AMSU, Weesperzijde 34, Amsterdam*

*Date: 12 December 2019 - 12 January 2020*

Art

Private meeting: 12 December 2019, 17.00 hrs.

Steve Austen "Cultural heritage: tangible and intangible heritage"

How can lost cultural heritage regain meaning?

Joseph Sassoon Semah was born in Baghdad and was 'moved' to Israel in 1950. In Iraq there is no longer any memory of the once powerful Jewish Babylonian community. The Babylonian culture has been destroyed three times: in Iraq, in Israel, but also in Europe, it hardly ever plays a role. Although buildings have a meaning limited in time, they live on in the soul. Or is could it be that the spiritual capital that once gave rise to the creation of such buildings finds its own way and lives on in the intellectual 'world heritage' of our time?

28. *Location: Vrijheidspaleis, Paleisstraat 107, Amsterdam*

*Date: 13 December 2019 - 5 January 2020*

Art

Performance: 13 December 2019, 19.00 hrs.

29. *Location: Ton's autohal, Disketteweg 15, Amsterdam*

*Date: 16 December 2019 - 16 January 2020*

Art

30. *Location: Rijwielhandel Oud -West, Frederik Hendrikstraat 59-61, Amsterdam*

*Date: 17 December 2019 - 17 January 2020*

31. *Location: Schaak en Gowinkel Het Paard, Haarlemmerdijk 173, Amsterdam*

*Date: 18 December 2019 - 18 January 2020*

Art in the display window

32. *Location: het voormalig kunstcentrum Stichting Makkom, Haarlemmerdijk 39, Amsterdam*

*Date: 18 December - 18 January 2020*

Art in the display window of the former art-center Stichting Makkom

Stichting Makkom opened its door on April 1, 1983 on the Haarlemmerdijk. Joseph Sassoon Semah and his then partner Hedio Meyling were the initiators and organizers. The starting point of the activities of Stichting Makkom was interdisciplinary research in art in the broadest sense. Various disciplines were brought together and until the conclusion in 1988, meetings, international exchanges and innovative opportunities for cooperation took place at Stichting Makkom.

33. *Location: Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten, Benit 28, Amsterdam*

*Date: 19 December 2019 - 19 January 2020*

Art

Meeting: 19 December 2019, 17.00 hrs.

In Redstone Natural Stone & Projects and the Jewish Historical Museum, two identical works of art 'City of Shelter' will be created simultaneously.

The shape of the objects is based on Joseph Sassoon Semah's memory of the public entrance of a shelter in Tel Aviv. One object will be placed with his friend Yasin Kalac (Redstone) in the private space and one with his friend Emile Schrijver (JHM) in the public space. The 2 spaces are connected by an "invisible square, an invisible territory, a frame of mind, a spatial place, a void, to remind us of the idea of the City of Refuge / Shelter."

34. *Location: Joods Historisch Museum, Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1, Amsterdam*

*Date: 19 December 2019 - 19 January 2020*

Exhibition

In Redstone Natural Stone & Projects and the Jewish Historical Museum, two identical works of art 'City of Shelter' will be created simultaneously.





# Jerusalem, Amsterdam ~ Gast wordt Gastheer



*Kunstmanifestatie in Amsterdam door stichting Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten*

*Joseph Sassoon Semah* deelt zijn verloren gegane culturele erfenis door middel van beeldende kunst, performances, debatten en lezingen. De manifestatie vindt plaats op 36 verschillende locaties in Amsterdam, van 7 september 2019 tot en met 19 januari 2020.

*Stichting Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten*

Curator: Linda Bouws.

*The Introduction in English:* <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/the-guest-becomes-host/>

*On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* is een poëtische en kritische zoektocht van kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah naar de steden Amsterdam, Bagdad en Jerusalem. Deze steden waren van oudsher gastvrije en tolerante toevluchtsoorden. Zijn ze dat vandaag nog? Wat is de plek voor 'De Gast', degene die in een vreemde context leeft en werkt en zijn omgeving toetst op het moment dat hij zijn specifieke positie als 'Gast' in ballingschap zonder enig voorbehoud toont en zijn plaats opeist? De Gast wordt Gastheer. Deze bijzondere kunstmanifestatie gaat over twee onlosmakelijke grootheden: de dynamiek van de derde ballingschap en de evolutie van Gast naar Gastheer.

Joseph Sassoon Semah ontwerpt voor de manifestatie 36 architecturale modellen op schaalgrootte van huizen, culturele instituties, synagogen, joodse begraafplaatsen in Bagdad van voor 1948, die refereren aan de rijke geschiedenis van zijn verloren gegane joodse Babylonische cultuur, en een nieuwe serie tekeningen. Hij vraagt het publiek opnieuw te kijken naar zijn eigen kunst,

cultuur, tradities en identiteit.

De manifestatie vindt plaats op 36 zeer diverse locaties van musea tot fietswinkel, van theaters tot hotel, van schaaakwinkel tot garage. Op alle plekken verschijnt zijn kunst en worden met de partners activiteiten georganiseerd (artistieke interventies, performances, lezingen, en debatten). Daarnaast bouwen wij een huis in Amsterdam (Hermitage Amsterdam), in Bagdad (voor de synagoge Meir Tweig) en in Jeruzalem (Jerusalem Biënnale): MaKOM in MaKOM.

*On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam'* is mede tot stand gekomen met steun van AFK, BPD Cultuurfonds, Lumen Travo Gallery, het Mondriaan Fonds en Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten.



#### *Over de kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah*

Joseph Sassoon Semah is geboren in Bagdad (Irak, 1948) als één van de laatsten van de Babylonische joodse familielijn, de kleinzoon van Hacham (chief-rabbi) Sassoon Kadoori (1885-1971). Kadoori was de president van de Babylonische gemeenschap en predikte vrede tussen het jodendom, de islam en christendom. Bagdad was een van de meest diverse plaatsen ter wereld. Vanaf 1948, het jaar van de onafhankelijkheid van Israël, hebben de Iraakse joden het echter zwaar. Tussen 1950-1952 werden 120.000 -130.000 van de joodse gemeenschap van Irak naar Israël getransporteerd. De ontheemde Bagdadi-joden werden gedwongen hun cultuur en bezit in het Midden-Oosten te verlaten. Samen met zijn ouders werd Joseph Sassoon Semah in 1950 'verplaatst' naar de staat Israël. Zijn grootvader Hachem Sassoon Kadoori weigerde Irak te verlaten en bleef tot zijn dood in Bagdad. Ervaringen in de Zesdaagse Oorlog (1967) en de Yom Kippur Oorlog (1973) deden Joseph Sassoon Semah besluiten Israël te verlaten: in deze context spreekt hij van een 'zelfopgelegde ballingschap'.

Als Babylonische jood die is geëmigreerd naar het Westen (Amsterdam) is hij onderdeel van GaLUT (Exile), een eindeloze cyclus van diaspora en terugkeer. Je blijft altijd verlangen naar je geboorteland en zoekt een manier om je te

verhouden tot je culturele erfenis en tradities. In Irak zelf is geen enkele herinnering meer aan de eens zo machtige joodse Babylonische gemeenschap. De Babylonische cultuur is driemaal vernietigd: in Irak, in Israël, maar ook in Europa speelt ze nauwelijks nog een rol. Alhoewel er geen joden meer leven in Irak en de Babylonische cultuur lang is ondergeschoven in Irak, Israël en in Europa, kan hun cultuur niet langer worden genegeerd. Een terugkeer naar de cultuur en identiteit die ze in Irak, Israël en Europa hebben verloren.

Joseph Sassoon Semah spreekt van 'architectuur in ballingschap'.

In *On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* onderzoekt Joseph Sassoon Semah hoe verloren gegane culturele erfenis weer betekenis kan krijgen. Hij vertaalt zijn verloren gegane, rijke joodse Babylonische culturele erfgoed in beeldende kunst en performances. Terwijl hij dat doet revalueert en herdefinieert hij dit erfgoed samen met anderen. Zijn gasten.

*Activiteiten en Locaties: On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam Kunstmanifestatie van 7 september 2019 t/m 19 januari 2020*

Op elke locatie verschijnt voor een maand een ander architecturaal model en een selectie uit de serie nieuwe tekeningen.

*Locaties: Joods Historisch Museum - Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1 Amsterdam - en Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten - Benit 18 Amsterdam*

*Datum: 20 december 2019 t/m 19 januari 2020)*

In het Joods Historisch Museum en bij Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten worden gelijktijdig twee identieke kunstwerken opgesteld. De vorm van de objecten is gebaseerd op de herinnering die kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah heeft aan de ingang van een publieke schuilkelder in Tel Aviv.

Tussen de twee objecten in (tussen de Publieke en Private Ruimte) heeft hij een onzichtbaar Zwart Vierkant bestemd - een onzichtbaar gebied - een gemoedstoestand - een ruimtelijke plaats - een zekere leegte - een herinnering aan עיר מקלט IER MiKLaT & Het Toevluchtsoord / Schuilkelder &

*Performance & bijeenkomst: 16 januari, aanvang 14.00 uur*

In het kader van de manifestatie vindt op 16 januari 2020 vanaf 14 uur een

gesprek plaats, voorafgegaan door een performance.

*Performance:* Joseph Sassoon Semah met 22 participanten: o.a. Emile Schrijver, Baruch Abraham, Jom Semah, Peter Baren, Uzi Heymann, Bulent Evren, Mudar Adas, Yvonne Strangen, Zuhail Gezik en Renée Hartog.

*Gesprek:* Emile Schrijvers (algemeen directeur JCK), Arie Hartog (directeur Gerhard-Marcks Haus, Bremen) en Joseph Sassoon Semah over de urgentie van diversiteit in het jodendom en de noodzaak van heroriëntatie van culturele erfenis in musea.

Voor nadere informatie en aanmeldingen verwijzen wij u naar [www.jck.nl](http://www.jck.nl).

Zie voor info tentoonstelling in het Joods Historisch Museum: <https://jck.nl/nl/tentoonstelling/friendshipcollateral-damage-iii-third-galut-baghdad-jerusalem-amsterdam>

Op 36 locaties in Amsterdam zijn unieke architecturale modellen van huizen, synagogen, culturele instituties, joodse begraafplaatsen in Bagdad van voor 1948 geplaatst, die refereren aan de geschiedenis van Joseph Sassoon Semahs verloren gegane rijke joodse Babylonische cultuur. In december en januari zijn op de volgende locaties de modellen op schaalgrootte te bezichtigen.

*1. Locatie: Lumen Travo Gallery, Lijnbaansgracht 314, Amsterdam*

*Van zaterdag 7 september t/m zaterdag 26 oktober 2019*

*Kunstwerk: o.a. uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen*

*Tentoonstelling, performance en meetings, op 7 september om 17.00 uur opening*

*Op zaterdag 7 september om 17:00 uur is de opening van *On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Bagdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam*. Deze kunstmanifestatie vindt plaats op 36 plekken.*

*Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah, Baruch Abraham Peter Baren, Zuhail Gezik, Jom Semah*

*Te zien zijn onder andere tekeningen uit de nieuwe serie 'Between Graveyard and Museum's sphere' en een in brons gegoten model van de Meir Tweig Synagoge van Hacham (opperrabbin) Sassoon Kadoori, die tevens president was van de Babylonische gemeenschap in Irak. Hij leefde van (1885-1971). De kunstenaar*

Joseph Sassoon Semah is zijn kleinzoon. Het in brons gegoten model, sleutelwerk van het project, wordt later ook op andere locaties tentoongesteld.

Lumen Travo Gallery, de galerie van Joseph Sassoon Semah, is de thuisbasis van de gehele kunstmanifestatie.

Tevens is een ruimte beschikbaar als informatie- en researchplek en er worden ad hoc lezingen en meetings georganiseerd voor een klein publiek.

*2. Locatie: Advocatenkantoor Bynkershoek, Herengracht 310, Amsterdam*

Vanaf 24 september, aanvang 18.00 uur t/m zondag 6 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model in raam

*Besloten bijeenkomst op 24 september 2019*

*3. Locatie: Goethe-Institut, Herengracht 470, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 12 september t/m zaterdag 12 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen



Foto: Ilya Rabinovich

Performance en lezing, op donderdag 12 september om 20.00 uur

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met in ieder geval Baruch Abraham, Levent Aslan, Atousa Bandeh, Peter Baren, Mikko Fritze, Dali Heymann, Uzi Heymann, Zuhail Gezik met 6 leerlingen van de Aslan Muziekschool, Jom Semah, Yvonne Strang en Els Wijnen.

Keynote speech: Dr. Yael Almog (Goethe University, Frankfurt)

Goethe's 'West-östlicher Divan'. Wat was de betekenis van het boek in de tijd van

Goethe? Welke rol speelde het Oosten voor Goethe? Hoe kunnen we de 'West-östlicher Divan' herlezen in het licht van de hedendaagse polemieken over migranten en vluchtelingen? Kunnen we dit werk relateren aan Israëliische immigranten in Europa zoals Joseph Sassoon Semah?

*4. Locatie: Aslan Muziekcentrum, Corantijnstraat 9, Amsterdam*

Van zondag september t/m zondag 13 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

*Performances - In On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* organiseren we verschillende performances. Zuhail Gezik, artistiek directeur Aslan Muziekcentrum, is met een zestal leerlingen, vaak van de partij. Ook Levent Aslan, algemeen directeur, treedt op in diverse performances.

*5. Locatie: UvA, Faculteit des Geesteswetenschappen P.C. Hoofthuis, Spuistraat 134, Amsterdam*

Van woensdag 18 september t/m vrijdag 18 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk en college:

College: Culture and Catastrophe. A German and Jewish History, docent Prof. Dr. I.E. (Irene) Zwiép, over Wagners Das Judentum in der Musik van 1850. In dat college staat de kwestie centraal of kunst universeel of nationaal is, en wie dat bepaalt.

*6. Locatie: UvA, Duitsland Instituut, Bushuis Kloveniersburgwal 48, Amsterdam*

Datum: woensdag 18 september 2019

*Besloten college:* Prof.dr. A.J.J. (Ton) Nijhuis, Duitsland Instituut/voorzitter politicologie

Sinds het eind van de jaren zeventig heeft kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah een encyclopedisch artistiek oeuvre ontwikkeld. Sassoon Semah is geboren in Bagdad, verhuisde met zijn familie in 1950 naar Jeruzalem. Semah woont tegenwoordig in Amsterdam. Zijn onderzoek is naar de relatie tussen joodse identiteit en modernistische kunst. Modernistische kunst is gebaseerd op uitsluitingsprincipes. Sassoon Semah was een van de eerste kunstenaars die deze mechanismen in de Nederlandse context bekritiseerde. Hij stelt de eenvoudige vraag hoe het

modernisme er uitziet vanuit een joods perspectief. Hierdoor heeft hij niet alleen onbekende lagen in de moderne kunst blootgelegd, maar ook aandacht gevraagd voor het vernietigde intellectuele klimaat van het Bagdad van vóór 1950.

Gevolgd door bezoek: 18 september, bezoek Stedelijk Museum (*besloten*)

Bezoek Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam: Dr. A.S. (Anna) Seidl, Prof. dr. A.J.J. (Ton) Nijhuis, kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah en studenten.

Joseph Sassoon Semah is een veelzijdig kunstenaar wiens werk onder meer bestaat uit tekeningen, schilderijen, sculpturen, installaties, performances en teksten. Sassoon Semah bestudeert en onderzoekt al meer dan veertig jaar de relatie tussen het jodendom en het christendom als bronnen van de westerse kunst- en cultuurgeschiedenis. Door te lezen in zijn moedertaal, het Hebreeuws, signaleert hij een tekort aan joodse kennis en voelt hij de urgentie deze toe te voegen en de 'lege bladzijde' te vullen. Hij 'corrigeert' met zijn eigen werk de kunstgeschiedenis, filosofie en theologie. Hij pleit voor meer aandacht voor verschillende bronnen om zo een breder draagvlak voor andere visies te creëren.

*7. Locatie: privé-huis prof. mr. E.J. (Egbert) Dommering*

Van donderdag 19 september t/m zaterdag 19 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en kunstwerk

*Besloten bijeenkomst 19 september, 19.00 uur*

Bijeenkomst: Inleiding prof. mr. E.J. (Egbert) Dommering: Over uitsluiting vermenging en toe-eigening van culturen in de beeldende kunst.

In de kunstwereld verwijzen kunstenaars regelmatig naar andermans werk. Er loopt een vage grens tussen het uit de andere cultuur opnemen van vormen en ideeën in de eigen cultuur en het toe-eigenen of uitsluiten daarvan. Dit zal aan de hand van een aantal voorbeelden worden toegelicht als inleiding tot de discussie over dit fenomeen in relatie tot het werk van Joseph Sassoon Semah.

*8. Locatie: Gallery ARTTRA, Tweede Boomdwarsstraat 4, Amsterdam*

Van zaterdag 5 oktober t/m woensdag 30 oktober 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen

Tentoonstelling: zaterdag 5 oktober 2019, opening om 17.00 uur



*'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam'* is een poëtische en kritische zoektocht van kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah naar de steden Amsterdam, Bagdad en Jerusalem. Deze steden waren van oudsher gastvrije en tolerante toevluchtsoorden. Zijn ze dat vandaag nog? Wat is de plek voor 'De Gast', degene die in een vreemde context leeft en werkt en zijn omgeving toetst op het moment dat hij zijn specifieke positie als 'Gast' in ballingschap zonder enig voorbehoud toont en zijn plaats opeist? De Gast wordt Gastheer. Deze bijzondere kunstmanifestatie gaat over twee onlosmakelijke grootheden: de dynamiek van de derde ballingschap en de evolutie van Gast naar Gastheer.

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ARTTRA Galerie is één van de 36 locaties.

9. *Locatie: The Jerusalem Biennale 2019 Kol HaOt in Huzot Hayotzer in Jeruzalem*  
Van donderdag 10 oktober t/m eind november 2019



*On Friendship / (Collateral Damage) III -The Third GaLUT - Baghdad,*

*Jerusalem, Amsterdam, 2019*  
*sepia ink on paper, brown*  
*thread, glass, wood,*  
*50x40cm Photo: Ilya*  
*Rabinovich*

Tentoonstelling, performance, opening 10 oktober 2019

In de Biënnale Jerusalem wordt in de tentoonstelling 'For Heaven's Sake' MaKOM in MaKOM van Joseph Sassoon Semah getoond. Kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah laat sinds 1979 op verschillende plekken in de wereld tijdelijke huizen verschijnen als herinnering aan zijn ballingschap. De huizen zijn herkenbaar als 'draagbaar vaderland', speciaal voor hen die in ballingschap leven. De andere twee huizen MaKOM in MaKOM die onderdeel uitmaken van het project *On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* worden geplaatst op het bleekveld in Hermitage Amsterdam (vanaf 2 november) en in Bagdad voor de synagoge Meir Tweig. Dit was de synagoge van Hacham (opperrabijn) Sassoon Kadoori (1885-1971). Joseph Sassoon Semah is zijn kleinzoon.

*10. Locatie: Museum Hedendaagse Kunst De Domijnen, Ligne 5, Sittard*  
Van 20 oktober 2019 - januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen  
Zie: <https://www.dedomijnen.nl/expositie/joseph-sassoon-semah/>

Overzichtstentoonstelling:

Opening: Zondag 20 oktober, 13.00 uur

Een grote overzichtstentoonstelling met kunstwerken van Joseph Sassoon Semah:  
*'Being touched by an angel just before birth'*. Curator: Roel Arkesteijn.

Joseph Sassoon Semah in gesprek met Roel Arkesteijn in De Domijnen, Sittard  
over de tentoonstelling "Being Touched by an Angel Just Before Birth"  
20 oktober 2019 - 16 februari 2020. Ligne5, Sittard

*11. Locatie: Oude Lutherse Kerk Singel 411, Amsterdam*  
Van zondag 13 oktober t/m 10 november 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen  
Performance en lezing: zondag 13 oktober, om 12.15 uur

Gastheer: Andreas Wöhle, president Evangelisch-Lutherse Synode in de  
Protestantse Kerk, predikant Evangelisch-Lutherse Gemeente Amsterdam  
Performance 'Back to Back' Joseph Sassoon Semah met in ieder geval Andreas  
Wöhle, Mustafa Slaby, een rabbijn.

Performance 'Yusuf, Yosef, Joseph' met publiek

Gesprek o.l.v. Andreas Wöhle met vertegenwoordigers van verschillende  
gemeenschappen.

*12. Locatie: Podium Mozaïek, Bos en Lommerweg 191, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 17 oktober t/m 17 november 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

Programma

19.30 uur Presentatie van het kunstwerk van Joseph Sassoon Semah 'Graftombe  
Ezra'

20.00 uur Performance Joseph Sassoon Semah, Levent Aslan, Baruch Abraham en  
Zuhail Gezik met zes studenten van Aslan Muziekschool, Uzi Heymann, Jom  
Semah, Anna Seidl, Yvonne Strang, Els Wijnen en Rick Vercauteren.

20.15 uur Rick Vercauteren (kunsthistoricus/publicist): Introductie Architectuur  
in GaLUT, gevolgd door een interview met kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah.

Rick Vercauteren gaat in op Josephs Sasoon Semahs nieuwste tekeningen en  
architecturale schaalmodellen van begraafplaatsen, culturele instituten, huizen,  
schuilkelders en synagogen waarin Sassoon Semah reflecteert op zijn historische  
en culturele erfgoed in zijn geboorteplaats Bagdad voor 1948.

*13. Locatie: Kunstenaarsboekwinkel Boekie-Woekie, Berenstraat 16, Amsterdam*

Van zaterdag 19 oktober t/m vrijdag 15 november 2019

Kunstwerk

*14. Locatie: Werkgebouw het Veem, Van Diemenstraat 410-412, Amsterdam*

Van vrijdag 25 oktober t/m zondag 24 november 2019

Kunstwerk en tentoonstelling: nieuw architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen

*15. Locatie: Embassy of the Free Mind, Keizersgracht 123, Amsterdam. Opening 19.00 hrs.*

Joseph Sassoon Semah: The meaning of Tetragrammaton and Pentagrammaton and The Black Square. Voor meer info en reserveren:

<https://embassyofthefreemind.com/nl/museum/openingstijden-prijzen-locatie/evenementen#LJSS>

What is the Tetragrammaton, or even the Pentagrammaton? We often see the image of the Tetragrammaton and Pentagrammaton in art and culture, but also in the work of artist Joseph Sassoon Semah (Iraq, 1948) and in the collection of The Embassy of the Free Mind.

In this lecture Joseph Sassoon Semah will reflect on the work of Barnett Newman, Marcel Duchamp, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola; Johannes Reuchlin and Vincent van Gogh and their sources of inspiration and the collection of the Embassy of the Free Mind. Joseph Sassoon Semah will also talk about the meaning of The Black Square, the reference to the destruction of the Second Solomonic Temple reconstructed by Herod (29 or 30 July 70 C.E.), and the perfection of its dimensions. This lecture will be given in the context of 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam', an aesthetic and poetic research into the cities Baghdad, Jerusalem and Amsterdam.

*16. Locatie: Hermitage Amsterdam, Amstel 51, Amsterdam. Aanvang 19.30 uur.*

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met Baruch Abrahams, Mudar Adas, Peter Baren, Uzi Heymann (piano), Levent Aslan en Zuhail Gezik met een zestal studenten van Aslan Muziekschool, Renée Hartog, Anna Seidl (dans), Jom Semah, Yvonne Strang en Els Wijnen (naaimachine).

Emile Schrijver (algemeen directeur JCK) leest in het huis MaKOM in MaKOM een gedicht van Joseph Sassoon Semah. Dirk Polak speelt accordeon.

Opening van het huis MaKOM in MaKOM en uniek architecturaal model op het bleekveld van Hermitage Amsterdam, te bezichtigen t/m maandag 2 december 2019.

Kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah laat sinds 1979 op verschillende plekken in de wereld tijdelijke huizen verschijnen als herinnering aan zijn ballingschap.

Tijdens 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam' verschijnen nog twee andere huizen MaKOM in MaKOM: in de Biënnale van Jerusalem (15 oktober - 28 november) en in Bagdad.

*17. Locatie: Vrijmetselaars Stichting Amsterdam, Vondelstraat 39, Amsterdam.  
Opening 14.00 hours*

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met Baruch Abraham, Masja Austen, Peter Baren, Bulent Evren, Emile Schrijvers, Dirk Polak, en Jan (W.) Treffers.

Daarna zullen Joseph Sassoon Semah en Jan (W.) Treffers (loge La PAIX) al schaakspelend reflecteren op de bronnen en het gebruik van symbolen en het nooit voltooide proces van het bouwen van de Tweede Tempel van Koning Salomon. Ook wordt ingegaan op de betekenis van On Friendship/(Collateral Damage). De kunstwerken in de Vondelstraat zijn te bezichtigen van zondag 3 november t/m zondag 1 december 2019.

*18. Locatie: Fatih Moskee, Rozengracht 150, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 14 november t/m donderdag 12 december 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen

*19. Locatie: Locus Solus, Pourbusstraat 14, Amsterdam*

Van zaterdag 16 November - Zaterdag 7 December 2019. Alleen op de zaterdagen van 14.00 tot 18.00 uur en (eventueel) op afspraak.

*Zaterdag 16 november 2019. aanvang 17.00 uur.*

Exhibition: Confrontation II: 'On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam'. The Guest becomes Host. Joseph Sassoon Semah en franck gribling.

en

Peter Baren: 3 photoworks Title: ARK [On Hope And Other Terminal Bodies], 2007

*Zaterdag 7 December 2019, 17:00 uur*

Discussion on the role of Alternative Artists Spaces in the past and present. Moderated by Albert van der Weide. Participants: Joseph Sassoon Semah (Stichting MaKOM), franck gribling (City Thoughts Foundation and Locus Solus), ieke Trinks (performance en beeldend kunstenaar), Arnisa Zego (RONGWRONG), Peter Baren (independent Performing Artist) and Martin Uit den Bogaard (De Branderij, Antwerpen).

*20. Locatie: Hilton Hotel, Apollolaan 138, Amsterdam*

Van zondag 17 november t/m zondag 15 december 2019

17 november, 15.00 uur: Remember Baghdad - Fiona Murphy (2017) - Speciale gast: Edwin Shuker

Ed Dallaal (producer); Charles Chabot/Nick Follows (editors); Molly Nyman (muziek) - 69 min.

Locatie: Hilton Hotel, Apollolaan 138, Amsterdam

Datum & tijd: 17 november, 15.00 uur

Reserveren: [lindabouws@gmail.com](mailto:lindabouws@gmail.com)



Edwin Shuker

De film "Remember Baghdad" toont de geschiedenis van het joodse leven in Bagdad. Met verhalen van de joodse vluchtelingen en documentaire-materiaal komt de ooit bloeiende joodse gemeenschap in beeld - een gemeenschap die bij elke volgende historische gebeurtenis klappen krijgt en langzamerhand leegbloedt. Schrijnend is dat de Baghdadi-joden hun naderende ondergang niet zien aankomen. Vooral de gegoede middenklasse leeft in een bubbel, vol vertrouwen in het koningshuis. Na de zoveelste militaire coup, de Zesdaagse Oorlog en een showproces tegen zogeheten 'zionistische spionnen' maken de laatste Baghdadi-joden zich uit de voeten. Zonder paspoort, zonder geld.

Berooid komen ze aan in het buitenland. Hun in Irak nagelaten bezittingen worden binnen drie maanden geconfisqueerd, hun nationaliteit ontnomen. In Israël krijgen ze niet bepaald een warm onthaal. In de tentenkampen maken ze kennis met de harde, anti-Arabische Israëliëse werkelijkheid. Andere Baghdadi-joden vertrekken naar Londen, de hoofdstad van de voormalige Britse kolonisator. Ook de familie van Edwin Shuker, de hoofdfiguur van 'Remember Baghdad' heeft zich hier gevestigd. Shuker kan en wil de Iraaks-joodse cultuur niet loslaten. Hij reist naar Irak om zijn oude buurt in Bagdad te bezoeken en om in het Koerdische deel van het land een huis te kopen. Een nieuw begin? Zijn tegenpool in de film is Eileen Khalastchy. Zij wil niet terug naar Bagdad om er de ruïnes van de joodse cultuur te zien. Liever denkt ze terug aan het glorieuze verleden. 'It was paradise - Jews, Muslims and Christians, we were all Iraqis'' vertelt ze ons met een brede lach.

Edwin Shuker is zakenman en filantroop. Hij zet zich in voor het behoud van het joods-Iraakse erfgoed en is een actief lid van de Londense joodse gemeenschap. Shuker is onder meer speciale gezant van de president van het Europese Joodse Congres op het gebied van interreligieuze zaken en vluchtelingen. Ook spreekt hij regelmatig over de joden uit de Arabische landen. Hij trad onder meer op in het Britse Lagerhuis, het Europees Parlement en de Verenigde Naties.

*21. Locatie: Anne Frank Huis, Keizersgracht 192, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 21 november t/m donderdag 19 december 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

Bijeenkomst: donderdag 21 november 2019, om 15.00 uur

Joseph Sassoon Semah en schrijver-dichter Mati Shemoelof (Berlijn), beide Baghdadi-Joden die in Europa wonen, praten over 'The Babylonian Jew in the West, The West in the Babylonian Jew: Re-Thinking the concept of GaLUT, Reclaiming the lost Culture.' Moderator: Markha Valenta universitair docent (University College Utrecht) op het gebied van geo-culturele politiek en geschiedenis.

Gratis maar wel tijdig aanmelden via [communicatie@annefrank.nl](mailto:communicatie@annefrank.nl)

*22. Locatie: Amsterdam Museum Regentenkamer, Nieuwezijdsvoorburgwal 359,*

*Amsterdam*

Datum: van zaterdag 23 november t/m zondag 22 december 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

Rondleidingen New Narratives: zaterdag 23 november en zondag 24 november 2019

Joseph Sassoon Semah geeft 2 rondleidingen 'New Narratives'.

*23. Locatie: Architectenbureau Jowa, Prinsengracht 526, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 28 november t/m zondag 29 december 2019

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit serie nieuwe tekeningen

Besloten bijeenkomst: donderdag 28 november 2019, 17.00 uur

*Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?*

Na een muzikale prelude en het lezen van een van de Songs of Travel, Whither must I Wander? (muziek: Ralph Vaughan Williams, lyrics: Robert Louis Stevenson) spreekt Jowa Kis-Jovak over wat het betekent in ballingschap te zijn, een emigrant, en een mix van culturele identiteiten te hebben. Daarna volgt een gesprek met Joseph Sassoon Semah over huis / thuis / plaats, integratie, assimilatie en vriendschap.

*24. Locatie UvA, Faculteit des Geesteswetenschappen Bushuis, Kloveniersburgwal 48 Amsterdam*

Van maandag 2 december 2019 t/m donderdag 2 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen

*Location: SPUI25, Spui 25-27, Amsterdam*

*2 December 2019, 17:00 hrs.*

Keynote Lecture *Professor Ella Shohat: Reminders Revisited: An Exilic Journey from Hakham Sasson Khdhuri to Joseph Sassoon Semah with screening of the film Forget Baghdad*

In her keynote lecture Professor Ella Shohat (New York University) will reflect on the significance of place in the narration of the displaced Jewish-Iraqi community in the wake of overpowering political forces that, in one form or another, generated a historical vortex that rendered impossible a millennial existence in Mesopotamia.



The enormous task of shepherding a Jewish community massively impacted by internal and external political pressures after the fall of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of the state of Iraq fell largely on the shoulders of the Hakham Bashi (the Chief Rabbi and also the President of the Iraqi Jewish Community), Sasson Khdhuri, the grandfather of artist Joseph Sassoon Semah. Although the majority of Iraqi Jews were dislocated in the wake of the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the state of Israel, the Hakham stayed to safeguard those who remained in Iraq, living through wars, revolutions, and a dictatorial regime that rendered hellish the situation of all Iraqis, but especially of Jews, existing as they did under the unrelenting suspicion of disloyalty. At the same time, some of the Hakham's children moved to Israel where the Iraqi-Jews, along with Sephardi/Middle Eastern Jews more generally, experienced exclusion, rejection, and otherization as Arabs/Oriental.

Against this backdrop, one can appreciate the self-exiling of some Mizrahim, including that of the grandson of the Hakham Bashi, artist Joseph Sassoon Semah, who left Israel in 1974 and has been living in Amsterdam since 1981. Tracing the familial passage from the Hakham's decision to remain in Iraq to his grandson's decision to depart from Israel encapsulates the fraught trajectory of a shattered community. These simultaneously in-place and out-of-place figures allegorize the unsettled story of Jewish-Iraq.

In her keynote lecture Professor Shohat will explore some of the motifs in the work of Joseph Sassoon Semah to illuminate the twinned loci of "Zion" and "Babylon" in the present-day formation of contradictory affiliations and paradoxical notions of "exile" and "diaspora." The emphasis on a "Third Galut" in particular will serve to unfold a tale of a Jewish rupture from an accustomed Arab cultural geography, as re-membered by the descendants of those forced to abandon the land between two rivers, resulting in a lingering feeling of at once homelessness and at-home-ness.

*Ella Shohat* is professor at the departments of Art & Public Policy, Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies (Tisch School of the Arts) at New York University.

Moderation and comment by *David Wertheim*, historian and director of the Menasseh ben Israel Institute for Jewish Cultural and Social Studies.

Welcome: *Linda Bouws* (curator On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam)

After the lecture, an academic screening of the award-winning documentary *Forget Baghdad* will be hosted at the Goethe Institute Amsterdam, Herengracht 470, Amsterdam.

The extraordinary film *Forget Baghdad* (Jury Prize, Locarno 2002) offers a rare glimpse into a community which is little-known but extremely important in light of the current crises in the Middle East: the group variously known as “Sephardis,” “Mizrahim” or “Arab Jews,” that is, people of Jewish religion but Arab culture. The Iraqi Jews, specifically, represent a millennial tradition of Jewish presence in the region, where they formed an integral part of the society and often achieved high positions in politics, finance, and the arts. Yet they were uprooted virtually overnight in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Organized around the moving lives of four Iraqi-Israeli writers (Shimon Ballas, Sami Michael, Samir Naqash, Mousa Houry), former members of the communist party, *Forget Baghdad* reopens a lost chapter of Middle Eastern history.

*If you would like to attend the screening, please register by mail to: [aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl](mailto:aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl)*

Metropool International Art Projects in collaboration with Menasseh ben Israel Instituut, University of Amsterdam, SPUI25, Joods Cultureel Kwartier en Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam.

Official language: English

Free Entrance. *Registration via [Spui25.nl](http://Spui25.nl) (lecture) and [aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl](mailto:aanmeldingen-dia@uva.nl) (film)*

*25. Locatie: Sociëteit Arti en Amicitiae Rokin 112, 1012 LB Amsterdam*

Van dinsdag 3 december 2019 t/m vrijdag 3 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: nieuw architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen

*Arti et Amicitiae, Rokin 112, Amsterdam*

*3 dec 2019 - 16.30 uur*

On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam  
The Guest becomes Host

Joseph Sassoon Semah deelt zijn verloren gegane culturele erfenis door middel van beeldende kunst, performances, debatten en lezingen. De manifestatie vindt

plaats op 36 verschillende locaties in Amsterdam, van 7 september 2019 tot en met 19 januari 2020.

Arti et Amicitiae is één van de 36 locaties.

Joseph Sassoon Semah toont een architecturaal model en een selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen (tot en met 3 januari 2020).

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met Uzi Heymann, Jom Semah, Peter Baren, Baruch Abraham, Renée Hartog en Bulent Evren, gevolgd door een interview van Renée Hartog (cultureel diplomaat/politicoloog) met Joseph Sassoon Semah: 'Wat betekent GaLUT (Exile) toen en nu?'

In 1993 organiseerde Joseph Sassoon Semah de tentoonstelling *'The Third Exile'* in Arti et Amicitiae. Het gelijknamige boek onder redactie van J.A.G.M. Rutten en Joseph Semah met als ondertitel 'Verkenningen in het grensgebied van architectuur, beeldende kunst en wetenschapsfilosofie' verscheen in oktober 1993.

Als Babylonische jood die is geëmigreerd naar het Westen (Amsterdam) is hij onderdeel van GaLUT (Exile), een eindeloze cyclus van diaspora en terugkeer. Je blijft altijd verlangen naar je geboorteland en zoekt een manier om je te verhouden tot je culturele erfenis en tradities. In Irak zelf is geen enkele herinnering meer aan de eens zo machtige joodse Babylonische gemeenschap. De Babylonische cultuur is driemaal vernietigd: in Irak, in Israël, maar ook in Europa speelt ze nauwelijks nog een rol. Alhoewel er geen joden meer leven in Irak en de Babylonische cultuur lang is ondergeschoven in Irak, Israël en in Europa, kan hun cultuur niet langer worden genegeerd. Een terugkeer naar de cultuur en identiteit die ze in Irak, Israël en Europa hebben verloren. Joseph Sassoon Semah spreekt van 'architectuur in ballingschap'.

Joseph Sassoon Semah ontwerpt voor de manifestatie 36 architecturale modellen op schaalgrootte van huizen, culturele instituties, synagogen, joodse begraafplaatsen in Bagdad van voor 1948, die refereren aan de rijke geschiedenis van zijn verloren gegane joodse Babylonische cultuur, en een nieuwe serie tekeningen. Hij vraagt het publiek opnieuw te kijken naar zijn eigen kunst, cultuur, tradities en identiteit.

*26. Locatie: Voormalig Burgerweeshuis van Aldo van Eyck, Ijsbaanpad 1, Amsterdam*

Van dinsdag 10 december 2019 t/m zondag 12 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen  
Tentoonstelling

Opening en bijeenkomst: dinsdag 10 december 2019, om 19.00 uur

Rondleidingen: zaterdag 14 december, 12.00-13.30 en zaterdag 11 januari, 12.00-12.30

Joseph Sassoon Semah spreekt over Architectuur in Ballingschap', gevolgd door een gesprek met Sharon Oldenkotte-Vrolijk van BPD, directeur Kunst & Cultuur

De lezing wordt voorafgegaan door de opening van de tentoonstelling. Te zien zijn onder andere tekeningen uit de nieuwe serie 'Between Graveyard and Museum's sphere', een architecturaal model naast enkele andere werken van Semah uit de BPD Kunstcollectie. Het werk dat Semah maakt voor dit project, heeft veel te maken met de herinnering aan verloren gegane cultuur: plekken en gebouwen die niet meer bestaan. Een bijzonder gebouw als het voormalig Burgerweeshuis bestaat nog wel, maar het gebruik ervan is veranderd.

*Rondleiding:*

Cultureel organisatiebureau ARTTRA organiseert 2 rondleidingen in het voormalig burgerweeshuis:

zaterdag 14 december, 12.00-13.30

zaterdag 11 januari, 12.00- 12.30

Reserveren: <https://www.arttra.com/burgerweeshuis/>

*27. Locatie: Weesperzijde 34. Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 12 december 2019 t/m zondag 12 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen  
Besloten bijeenkomst: donderdag 12 december 2019, om 17.00 uur

Steve Austen - 'Cultureel erfgoed: materieel en immaterieel erfgoed'

Hoe kan verloren gegane culturele erfenis weer betekenis krijgen?

Joseph Sassoon Semah is geboren in Bagdad en werd in 1950 'verplaatst' naar Israël. In Irak zelf is geen enkele herinnering meer aan de eens zo machtige

joodse Babylonische gemeenschap. De Babylonische cultuur is driemaal vernietigd: in Irak, in Israël, maar ook in Europa speelt ze nauwelijks nog een rol. Alhoewel gebouwen een in tijd begrensde betekenis hebben, leven ze voort in de ziel. Of is het wellicht zo dat het spirituele kapitaal dat ooit aanleiding was voor het creëren van dergelijke gebouwen zijn eigen weg zoekt en voortleeft in het intellectuele 'werelderfgoed' van deze tijd?

*28. Locatie: Vrijheidspaleis, Spuistraat 189, Amsterdam*

Van 13 december 2019 t/m zondag 5 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen

Performance: 13 december 2019, om 19.00 uur

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met voormalige AORTA kunstenaars.

*29. Locatie: Ton's autohal, Disketteweg 15, Amsterdam*

Van 16 december 2019 t/m donderdag 16 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

*30. Locatie: Rijwielhandel Oud -West, Frederik Hendrikstraat 59-61, Amsterdam*

Van dinsdag 17 december 2019 t/m vrijdag 17 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

*31. Locatie: Schaak en Gowinkel Het Paard, Haarlemmerdijk 173, Amsterdam*

Van woensdag 18 december 2019 t/m zaterdag 18 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

*32. Locatie: het voormalig kunstcentrum Stichting Makkom, Haarlemmerdijk 39, Amsterdam*

Van woensdag 18 december t/m zaterdag 18 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model

Opening: woensdag 18 december 2019, 15.00 uur

Stichting Makkom opende haar deur op 1 april 1983 op de Haarlemmerdijk. Joseph Sassoon Semah en zijn toenmalige partner Hedio Meyling waren de

initiators en organisatoren. Het uitgangspunt van de activiteiten van Stichting Makkom was een interdisciplinair onderzoek in de kunst in de breedste zin. Er werden diverse disciplines met elkaar in verbinding gebracht en tot de sluiting in 1988 vonden in Stichting Makkom ontmoetingen, internationale uitwisselingen en vernieuwende samenwerkingsmogelijkheden plaats.

*33. Locatie: Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten, Benit 28, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 19 december 2019 t/m zondag 19 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model, selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen, kunstwerk City of Shelter

In Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten en het Joods Historisch Museum worden gelijktijdig twee identieke kunstwerken 'City of Shelter' opgesteld.

De vorm van de objecten is gebaseerd op een herinnering van Joseph Sassoon Semah aan de publieke ingang van een schuilkelder in Tel Aviv. Eén object wordt geplaatst bij zijn vriend Yasin Kalac (Redstone) in de privéruimte en een bij zijn vriend Emile Schrijver (JHM) in de publieke ruimte. De 2 ruimtes zijn met elkaar verbonden door 'an invisible square, an invisible territory, a frame of mind, a spatial place, a void, to remind us of the idea of the City of Refuge/Shelter' aldus Joseph Sassoon Semah.

*34. Locatie: Joods Historisch Museum, Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1, Amsterdam*

Van donderdag 19 december 2019 t/m zondag 19 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model, selectie uit nieuwe serie tekeningen, kunstwerk City of Shelter

Tentoonstelling

In het Joods Historisch Museum en in Redstone Natuursteen & Projecten worden gelijktijdig twee identieke kunstwerken 'City of Shelter' opgesteld.

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*35. Locatie: Joods Liberale Gemeenschap, Zuidelijke Wandelgang 41, Amsterdam*

Van zaterdag 21 december 2019 t/m 19 januari 2020

Kunstwerk: uniek architecturaal model en selectie uit de nieuwe serie tekeningen

Performance en bijeenkomst: zaterdag 21 december 2019, om 18.00 uur

Performance: Joseph Sassoon Semah met in ieder geval rabbijn Joram Rookmaker, Andreas Wöhle, predikant Evangelisch-Lutherse Gemeente Amsterdam, Mustafa Slaby, Jom Semah

Gastheer: Rabbijn Joram Rookmaker

Gesprek met vertegenwoordigers van verschillende gemeenten.

*36. Locatie: Joods Historisch Museum, Nieuwe Amstelstraat 1, Amsterdam*

Datum: 16 januari 2020, om 14.00 uur bijeenkomst

Bijeenkomst: Gesprek Emile Schrijver Algemeen directeur Joods Cultureel Kwartier, Arie Hartog Directeur Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen, en kunstenaar Joseph Sassoon Semah over de noodzaak van diversiteit in het jodendom. Een bijeenkomst over de noodzakelijke heroriëntatie van heritage in culturele instellingen.

Joods Historisch Museum Amsterdam, January 16, 2020

Joseph Sassoon Semah, Emile Schrijver & Arie Hartog

*Januari 2020 Engelstalige publicatie On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam*

De Engelstalige publicatie *On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III - The Third GaLUT: Baghdad, Jerusalem, Amsterdam* verschijnt in januari 2020 met bijdragen van:

- Dr. Arie Hartog (directeur Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen): *Makkom in Mokum (working title)* Prof.dr Emile Schrijver (algemeen directeur Joods Cultureel Kwartier): *Oreah Natah Lalun. Reflections on the concept of the Jewish artist as Guest.*

- Professor Ella Habiba Shohat (Departments of Art & Public Policy, Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies, Tisch School of the Arts, New York University): *A Genealogy of Dis/placement, From Hakham Sasson Khdhuri to Joseph Sassoon Semah*

- Drs. Rick Vercauteren (kunsthistoricus, publicist): Art in GaLUT
- Prof. dr. Margriet Schavemaker (artistiek directeur Amsterdam Museum): Dwingende voetnoten: Joseph Sassoon Semah en het Stedelijk Museum
- Mati Shemoelof (poet and author): How to explain Hare Hunting to a Dead German Artist
- Joseph Sassoon Semah (beeldend kunstenaar) THE THIRD גלית GaLUT: Remapping the Memory of the Guest
- Drs. Linda Bouws (directeur Metropool Internationale Kunstprojecten): Re-thinking the concept of the GaLUT, re-claiming the lost culture

Contact:  
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 Linda Bouws

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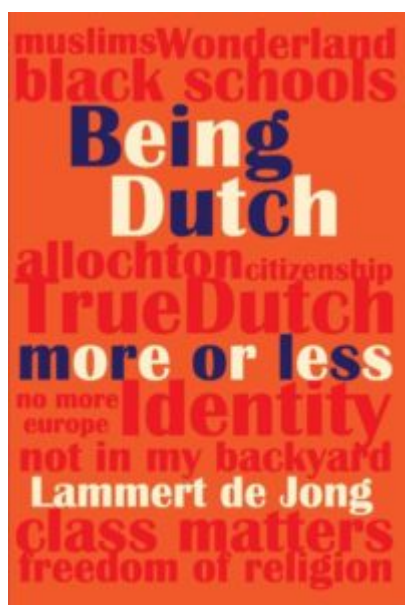
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# Achsa Vissel ~ Tijd voor andere verhalen





# The Dutch Black School: They Are Not Us



Lammert de Jong - *Being Dutch. More or less. In a comparative Perspective of USA and Caribbean Practices* Rozenberg Publishers 2010. ISBN 978 90 3610 210 0 - The complete book will be online soon.

## 'An Inconvenient Truth'

In the Netherlands, 'black' is *not* black; it is 'non-western', including Moroccan, Turkish, and people of Caribbean origin, lumped together as allochtons. In government statistics, schools with more than 70% allochton pupils are generally classified as a black school; schools with less than 20% allochton pupils are graded as white. The *black school concept* is also used in relation to the surrounding neighborhood. Schools with more pupils of non-western origin than expected in view of the composition of the neighborhood are labeled blacker or, in the case of an over-representation of white pupils, whiter. A deviation of 20% or more between neighborhood and school population classifies a school as *too white* or *too black* (Forum, 2007). The number of primary schools with more than 70%

allochton pupils is increasing; in Dutch nomenclature: the schools are becoming blacker.

The *Dutch black* school is a perfidious contraption that locks in children of non-western origin, while its black label flags an underlying *apartheid syndrome* to underscore for the *True Dutch* - intentionally or not - how different these allochtons are. Yet the black school touches an open nerve in the Netherlands, a sensitive reality that surpasses its statistical definition. On the one hand the black school reeks of *apartheid*, which the Dutch so bravely contest when occurring elsewhere in the world. On the other hand the *True Dutch* are well aware that their entitlement and unencumbered access to white schools is at stake when school *segregation* is tackled in earnest. So far Dutch counteraction is limited to research and some experimental desegregation projects.

The Dutch black school is embedded in the particular Dutch school system that funds public-secular as well as private-denominational schools. Once, the Dutch school system was driven by the accommodation of different beliefs. On the strength of their belief - church-religion or secular ideology - parents wanted a school for their children that adhered to the values, doctrines, and rules of their faith, and paid for by the state. *[Note: In 2009 the Netherlands' Council of State pointed out that publicly financed orthodox religion-based schools may refuse teachers who identify with a particular gay life style. The fact that a teacher is gay is not sufficient to deny a position, but if he or she is in a same sex relation and married in church or city hall, that may suffice, as such contravenes the orthodox rule that marriage is a holy sacrament between one man and one woman]*

Denominational and non-religious schools emphasized particularity, a distinctiveness that corresponded with religious doctrines or ideological orientations. The principle of *Freedom of Education* (Onderwijsvrijheid) is enshrined in the Netherlands Constitution, art. 23. Over the years parents have come to believe that they are entitled to choose a specific school for their children, which is a travesty of the freedom to choose a particular type of school, based on denominational or secular definition.

Dutch politics wavers when coming to grips with the effects the black school brings - quite literally - home. Most parents don't set out intending to discriminate, which makes a noble difference, and legally enforced segregation is

not on the books. Nonetheless a segregated white-black educational system has become a reality, with most True Dutch children in better schools and having better school careers, and children of allochtons at the other end. And that with long lasting effects after the school years have come to an end. This type of school segregation stigmatizes New Dutch children for life, while reinforcing an allochton footprint that will divide the nation for years to come. Although most political parties assert that integration is the major social issue of our time, they fail to confront the black school with a sense of urgency. Dutch politics still has to acknowledge that the black school emblemizes the allochton population in the Netherlands with an explicit signature: *They are not Us*.

Black schools are a common feature in most major Dutch cities. So far the black school does not stand out in Dutch politics as a problem that must be solved urgently by law, regulation or in the courts. The black school seems more of an inconvenient truth than a critical social or political issue. To an outsider this must be surprising, given that the Netherlands is known for its rock-solid liberal reputation. How come then that the Netherlands has become a segregated nation? And do they discriminate against people of color? Do the Dutch not know how to handle the ethnic complexities of today's multi-cultural society? Or is it a lack of compassion for those who do not belong to the white Dutch tribe: *Discrimination or not, my children first*. Or is it merely a matter of social-economic stratification, a distinction between advantaged and disadvantaged children, so that the Dutch black school is just a *myth* (Vink, 2010)?

### *The Dutch Black School*

The Dutch black school has come into existence at the intersection between non-western immigration and the particular Dutch history of a nation that until the 1950s was separated by religion and ideology. The Dutch were used to the idea of organizing themselves along the lines of church religion and secular ideology, in schools, politics, libraries, and on the social parcourse. This divide partitioned marriage and friendship, sports and universities, and shopping for groceries, milk and meat. So when immigrants flocked into the Netherlands and concentrated in certain neighborhoods, thus becoming physically separated from the True Dutch, this division fitted into a historic pattern of a segregated nation.

The immigrants were administratively grouped together as allochtons whose children went to black schools.[*Note: According to the Netherlands Statistical*

*Office, Japanese and Indonesian immigrants are classified as western-allochton because of their social-economic and social cultural position. Japanese immigrants and their families are defined as economically incorporated, Indonesian immigrants are mostly born in the Dutch East Indies, which became independent in 1949]*

School segregation was already mentioned in 1971, especially with regard to immigrants from Suriname (Karsten, 2005). Most of the immigrants from Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles are classified as racially black. Concentrations of Surinamese immigrants gradually changed the character of the white neighborhood schools into black schools. Where guest workers settled, schools in their neighborhood became populated with children of Moroccan and Turkish origin. The idea of particular schools for foreign children who eventually would be returning home to Morocco and Turkey (but did not) was not too farfetched. These children had different educational needs, which could be best addressed by schools that also taught the language of origin, though only a few hours per week. At a later stage Muslim schools were established as a logical extension of the Dutch particularistic school system. Occasionally these Muslim schools were challenged as holdouts of backwardness, or not in line with the historic Christian-Judeo cultural signature of the Dutch nation, but overall these schools fitted the Dutch concept that religion merited a particular school, paid for by the state. The concept black school covered all these varieties in school population, which became a distinctive category for schools with a majority of pupils of non-western origin, irrespective of its racial make-up. The use of a black label simplified a more detailed allochton classification. Black is not just a word; it comes with gargantuan amounts of racist baggage, which is included in the True Dutch perception of these schools. White parents do not send their children to such schools, however liberal minded they might otherwise be.

*School segregation in Amsterdam (DOS, 2008)*

*Many children in Amsterdam attend white or black schools. A study 'Segregation in Primary Education in 2008 in Amsterdam' comprised 203 schools of which 86 are black (over 70% allochtons) and 31 white (less than 20 % allochton); 86 schools have a balanced ethnic composition. So over half of all primary schools are either white or black.[Note: Zwarte scholen steeds zwarter. In: Trouw, 19 July 2007] Against the background of the composition of the neighborhood population, 29 schools are too black and 31 too white, calculated on a deviation of 20 % or*

*more. When counting pupils, 11% of a total of almost 60,000 attend a 'too black' school and 9% a 'too white' school. 'Too black' schools count on average 222 pupils, which is less than 'too white' schools (311). This study points out that segregation also exists in terms of schools being overcrowded with children whose parents have little education, and schools where such children are few.*

*School segregation follows residential segregation, but is reinforced by parental choice. The Amsterdam study indicates that many children attend schools outside their own neighborhood: 43%, while 57% attend schools in the neighbourhood. Children - black and white - from relatively black neighborhoods, who are going to school elsewhere, attend more often a white school than would have been the case if they had attended school in their residential neighborhood. The difference for white children is 62 against 26%; for black children 17 against 5%, which indicates that parental choice goes for white. That parental choice favors white is also shown in the choice of a school that is further away than three other schools, and is at the same time whiter than those neighborhood schools: 40% of the white parents choose the whiter schools, and 14% of the allochton parents. These parents do not mind their children biking or walking an extra mile to get to a relatively whiter school.*

### *What's Wrong with the Black School?*

Is the black school really that bad? Doesn't the black school perfectly fit into the Netherlands' live and let live tradition? Are black schools a form of discrimination? In quite a number of cities, a black school in a predominantly allochton neighborhood is not perceived as a problem. School governors do not feel pressured to take action, as such schools are a reflection of the (allochton) neighborhood (Forum, 2007, 18). As long as the school population is in line with the ethnic composition of the neighborhood, the composition is attributed to residential segregation, which is beyond the school governors' control. This black school is considered inevitable and a priori fated not to become desegregated. A black school in an allochton neighborhood is 'at home' as it were, and segregation is not judged to be an issue.

This calculation is disingenuous, as it does not acknowledge the double bind of these children, living in a segregated allochton neighborhood and attending a black school. Residential allochton segregation is topped with black school segregation. The double bind segregation of school and neighborhood is generally overlooked. An exception was an advisory council on Integration and Diversity in

Amsterdam that condemned all black school segregation, also the black school in the black neighborhood, because of its adverse effects on the development of common Dutch citizenship (Adviesraad, 2009).

Assuming that the black school cannot be eradicated, perhaps this school should be accepted as such, and be dealt with realistically. Doubt is cast on the received opinion that black schools obstruct social-cultural integration and citizenship participation. Furthermore the practicality of reducing high concentrations of underachievers in allochton neighborhoods is questioned. '*Making the best*' of the *black* school is put forward as a realistic alternative. Specific support programs for black schools must be developed (Karsten, 2007, 19). Additional programs and specific efforts must elevate the black school. Provided that pupils get the same opportunities as children at other schools, the black school should not be considered a problem per se. Black schools must be reformed when they are stagnant schools which do not serve their students upward social mobility (Gramberg, 2005, 189). According to this reformist view, separate but equal is the next-best thing for educating allochtons to proper Dutch levels, a reality that must be accepted. Considering all impediments to a better integrated school system, the black school must become an end in itself, something to be accepted, and where necessary, improved. In the USA the case of the black school has been turned upside down. Movements of *Black Power* and *Black is Beautiful* have encouraged African-Americans to endorse black school segregation, as legal action had for decades not succeeded to end school *segregation*. In the slipstream of this separatist argument, integration of allochtons by means of school desegregation is no longer seen as a feasible option (Karsten, 2007, 19).

Obviously, *black* schools in the Netherlands have created an issue that must be dealt with, if only by listening to the plenitude of statements on most political platforms: we oppose school segregation, and we oppose the black school. But it seems that, first of all, a multitude of research projects must be undertaken before the problem can be outlined in full. Too white or too black schools are focused on as a problem that can possibly be tackled by manipulating registration and reigning in parental choice. Research is called for to determine the black school plusses and minuses; the effects of the black school. On social integration, and society in general; on immigrants' social-economic advancement and mobilization; children's educational success or failure; and civic participation of the allochton in adult years. It seems that research is called for as a way out of a

problem that a priori is deemed intractable, because all parties realize that when white parents have a choice, they do not send their children to black schools, nor do they allow too many allochton kids into the school of their choice. Studies from both the USA and around the world have shown that parental choice often leads to more segregated schools: 'Unless policy makers actively intervene in the choice process, parental choice of school is very likely to make schools more segregated than they would otherwise be' (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 3-5).

### *Class Matters-Classmates Count (Paulle)*

Efforts have been made to take the black denomination out of the black school. From that angle the question is raised whether it is strategically right to focus on the black school, as race (or ethnicity) is not the principal denominator of educational failure or success. Doesn't the social-economic status (SES) of parents correlate more strongly with the school scores of their children? In a study of two schools, one in the Bronx, NY, and one in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam, Bowen Paulle quotes a generally respected research finding: '*Educational research suggests that the basic damage inflicted by segregated education comes not from racial concentration but from concentration of children from poor families*' (Paulle, 2005, 276). Pupils from disadvantaged milieus are more sensitive to the quality of teaching. He points to the success of experiments with economic desegregation programs: schools statistically dominated (70% or more) by youth from middle- or high income families can successfully absorb youth from low-income families (Paulle, 2005, 277). Yet this self-evident argument needs further confirmation. The right proportional mix is still a subject of research and debate: what is the actual tipping point for high SES parents, and what is the turning point in absorbing disadvantaged children in a school dominated by advantaged children? These experiments have built a strong case for mixing school populations according to parental SES in a win-win proportion, yet it does not exonerate the existence of the black school.

The *black* denomination is also taken out to explain differences in school careers of allochton children. *Allochton* children are especially disadvantaged when being tested for further education. In the Netherlands parents are counseled early - at a child's age of 11, about follow-up education, the options being various types of high school, which lead to university education, or a range vocational training alternatives. At this age, many allochton children lag behind *True Dutch* pupils because of a language disadvantage, due to the language of origin often being

still spoken at home. They tend to be steered toward vocational training, based on non-biased scores, but perhaps also on a teacher's subtle bias that blacks tend to fail academic education. Quite a number of these students do reach university level, but only after having made a detour of several years on vocational and high school training circuits. This has caused a debate on postponing the age of decision on a child's high school academic or vocational training options, especially in view of the detour black children are making. Though the Dutch may be relieved that also in this case ethnicity can be taken out of the black school, the black school is still there, in actual reality and very much so as a stark image in the Dutch mind, especially because the black school legitimizes *True Dutch* entitlement to white schools.

Dismantling the black school by social-economic stratification and the effects of early decision on secondary education both serve Dutch enlightenment. Social-economic stratification is of course not as bad as a simmering ethnic taboo that allochtons are underachievers from birth, justifying white flight and so creating the black school. Others argue that when segregation is exclusively defined as a black-white issue, the problem of white underachievers in the rural areas is overlooked; the big-city bias of ethnic *segregation* had created a blind spot for white underachievers (WRR, 2009, 162). The SES argument relieves Dutch uneasiness about the black school, because the high rates of underachievement are not a black issue anymore but rather an issue of a forgotten underclass, which includes whites as well. The changeover from black to social-economic class was welcomed as a clearance from the probability that Dutch school particularity had lubricated racial discrimination and ethnic segregation. What a relief. What good news exclaimed Wouter Bos, the labor party leader, when hearing about the near perfect exchange rate between black and underclass scores. [Note: Aleid Truijens, *Klassen met louter dezelfde kindertjes*. In: *De Volkskrant*, 27 January 2009] He may have thought that having an underclass is something to be sorry for, but certainly not as annoying as white-black apartheid. It just ain't that easy.

The black school denomination is whitewashed by research indicating that class matters in explaining achievement scores. Yet this does not change the fact that differences of underachievement continue to be registered in terms of autochthon and allochton scores. The drop-out rates in vocational training schools during 2006-2007 - 27.5% for autochthons, and 50.1% for *allochtons* - testify to a divided reality that, according to Dutch parlance, is a black school issue (WRR, 2009, 27).



Given the reality of the black school in Dutch politics, cities, media, conversation and statistics, it is cynical to argue that a black school does not matter much, because SES and class matter more. This class difference does not make the black school disappear from the parental radar that is set to be sensitive for color. Besides, for the most part SES and non-western origin (if you want, race) walk hand in hand in Dutch society (DOS, 2008, 22).*[Note: It is often assumed that allochton children are equally disadvantaged in terms of the low level education of their parents. Amsterdam's segregation study indicates that allochton children vary in being disadvantaged. Half of the Surinamse children (54%) and 62% of the Antilleans are educationally disadvantaged while much more Turkish and Moroccan children are disadvantaged (85 and 86%) (DOS, 2008, 22)]*

The Dutch black school collects children of an underclass, mainly of non-western origin or, according to a fashionable non-class jargon, disadvantaged youth. Yet some critics believe that since the breakdown of bloc-based segregation Dutch society is classless, and its educational system as well.*[Note: Frans Verhagen, De eerste Italianen van Amerika. 'Hun geloof is vreemd en bedreigend.' In: De Groene Amsterdammer, 6 June, 2009]*

Obviously the very existence of the Dutch black school contradicts the assumption of a classless *Dutch Wonderland*.

### *Awkward Family Ties*

The *Dutch black school*, and its underlying residential segregation, inevitably reminds one of *racial discrimination* elsewhere, in South reason, the Dutch black school is whitewashed by SES and cultural disadvantage, and shrouded in black power mystification. In these countries, whites and blacks were kept apart, based on the believed superiority of white over black. Separate educational structures were to safeguard the superiority of the white race: *slegs vir blanke, or whites only*. South Africa's apartheid came to an end in 1994 when the first elections with universal suffrage were held. The USA's Supreme Court ruled in 1954 against the separate but equal doctrine. Institutionalized and legally enforced separation of white and black education was outlawed. Yet in 1957 the Arkansas Governor called in the National Guard to prevent a group of African-American high schools students to enter the white Central High School in Little Rock: *'Blood will run in the streets if Negro pupils should attempt [to enter] Central High School'* (Ogden, 2008). The struggle of the Little Rock Nine was caught in stark pictures of white hatred and newspaper headlines all over the world. And so

was Governor George C. Wallace of Alabama in 1963 when he announced that he would defy the federal court order and block the door of the university's main building to keep the black students out. Eventually President John F. Kennedy managed to resolve the ominous standoff without bloodshed. [Note: Fred Kaplan, *When the Kennedys took on Wallace over Integration. About the television documentary (1963) "Crisis: Behind a President's Commitment."* In: *The New York Times*, 18 January 2009. ]

The Supreme Court ruling did not make the black school disappear, nor did it make much difference to the inferior quality of *black* schools. But the USA upholds the principle that separate but equal is against the law. Transgressions are continuously fought out in court to determine the constitutional options and limits of (affirmative) action to further desegregation.

White hatred and staunch segregationists are rarely to be found among the Dutch. These extreme phenomena are also petering out in the USA; overt bigotry has become risky and unpopular: 'today most racial conflicts involve ambiguous facts and inscrutable motivations' (Ford, 2008, 263). Even so, Richard Ford maintains: 'Today's racial injustices are, in many ways, as severe as ever. But these injustices now stem from isolation, poverty, and lack of socialization as much as from intentional discrimination or racism' (Ford, 2008, 307). Though the Dutch black school does not fit the historical origin and the exact definitions of school segregation in the USA, quite a few characteristics overlap. The vernacular of Dutch school segregation is framed in ethnic and racial definitions.

Most True Dutch parents are liberal enough that they do not mind allochton children in a white school, as long as it remains a white school. After all, a bit of color adds an interesting touch to a cosmopolitan Dutch self-image. But not too many allochtons should have this privilege. White parents do not want their children in black schools, for sure. Black schools are seen as inferior to white schools; they have become distinctly separate institutions, which offer inferior school careers when compared to white schools. Even when black is taken out of the equation by class and cultural disadvantage, the black school remains firmly rooted in the actuality of Dutch education.

The decisive argument against the black school is not that it scores relatively low on educational benchmarks - an occasional white school may score even lower, but that it is a particular school populated by children of non-western origin,

being separated from their white compatriots. The *black* school constitutes de facto a new Dutch reality: a particular school for Dutch children because of their non-western origin, and with a second rate classification. Nomen est omen, the name says it all. The *apartheid* label does apply. In the end, True Dutch parents do not send their children to a black school if they can help it. *True Dutch* parents who insist on a white school for their children are exonerated from being xenophobic or racist; they simply look for what's best, and don't have the intention to discriminate. From their point of view this cannot be wrong.

### *Particularistic Dutch School System*

In the Netherlands, a group of parents is free to establish a school where their children are educated in line with their religion or belief, to be funded with public monies. As such the Dutch school system is rather particular; it is based on intentional segregation according to privately held religious beliefs or secular orientations. As a result, there is no tradition of what in the U.S.A is called a 'common school' that serves the entire community and promotes a common sense of civic and other values (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 8). The USA public school is a melting pot of differences with a communal public orientation. The concept public school as known in the USA does not make sense in the Netherlands. The USA public school fosters 'the foundation for good citizenship', which necessarily implies that public education is an instrument of public socialization to common values and a common national identity (Ford, 2008, 206). Americans are free to send their children to private schools, for which they pay themselves. A small minority of private schools are prestigious non-religious institutions, but the vast majority of them are operated by religious organizations, predominantly Roman Catholic, but also Jewish and others. A combination of parents, private and religious institutions, funds these schools, while government finances the public schools. Only 11.5 % of all pupils in primary and high school attend private schools. Income plays a role of course, but also 80 % of the children of families with an income of > \$ 75,000 per year attends a public school (Council for American Private Education). [Note: Council for American Private Education: <http://capenet.org/facts.html> ] The British public school is a different species going back centuries, where admission was restricted for children from a particular aristocratic class. Nowadays the term refers to fee-charging independent secondary schools.

In the Netherlands, the government funds almost all schools, also denominational

schools which would be labeled private schools in the USA. The Dutch *Freedom of Education* induced a widely held belief that parents are free to choose the school they want for their children; this has become identified as a constitutional right. Parents can chose schools of a particular religious denomination (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Christian, Jewish, Muslim) (*bijzondere scholen*), or secular schools (*openbare scholen*), which do not claim a particular religious affiliation. All schools have to meet centrally set educational standards and goals. They are supervised by the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education, and financed out of public funds. Only a few schools are privately funded. What stands out is that denominational schools enjoy full financial support from the state. This has not always been the case.

The Education Act of 1878 reflected the established practice of the day: not one penny of public aid to denominational private schools (Lijphart, 1975, 106). In the second half of the 19th Century, more than three quarter of all pupils attended public (non-denominational) elementary schools, which were paid for by the state. One century later, in 1957, the situation was completely reversed. Only 28 % still attended public-secular schools (non-denominational) and 72 % were in private-denominational schools (Lijphart, 1975, 52). In the second half of the 20th Century, these figures have not changed much. In 2006 31 % attended public-secular schools and 69 % private-denominational schools; 34 % Catholic; 24 % Protestant; and the remaining 11 % include Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Evangelical, Catholic-Protestant-Combined schools.[*Note: Trends leerlingen aantallen 2002-2006. Bron cijfers: Cfi/OCW*] All these schools are financed with public monies.

A decisive moment came at the end of the 19th Century when the ruling political parties recognized that the unequal financial treatment of private-denominational schools and public-secular schools fundamentally divided the Dutch nation. Around 1900 both the Catholics and the Protestants had grown into strong blocs, each with a principled desire to have their own school financed by the state. The State's regents could no longer overlook these aspirations, all the more so as demands for universal suffrage had become a burning issue as well. Especially the Protestants' *kleine luyden* (little people) acquired strong leadership demanding that also their schools must be financed out of public funds. Voting rights were part of the power struggle in which the *kleyne luyden* also triumphed. The first elections under universal suffrage (according to those days: male only)

were held in 1918. Just before, in 1917, the Dutch legislature enacted a law that guaranteed government funding (Lijphart, 1975, 110).

*all elementary schools, public and private, were to get the same financial assistance from the government in proportion to their enrollments.*

The equal financial provision by central government guaranteed the schools an even financial foundation irrespective of denomination, or locality - rich or poor - and so added real value to the doctrine that all men are created equal. Rather interestingly it was assumed that this financial equality would help to consolidate the cultural unity of the nation.*[Note: A proposal to decentralize the financing of schools to municipal and provincial authorities was contested in 2008 for this reason. Jaap Dronkers, Zo verbrokkelt Nederland als cultuureenheid. In: De Volkskrant, 9 December 2008 ]* While in the USA the public school was assigned the task of uniting the nation, in the Netherlands equal funding for public-secular and private-denominational schools had to serve the same purpose. Ever since, the parents' freedom to choose a school has become carved in stone in Dutch national consensus. That is, until the Dutch Muslim community claimed this freedom to set up Muslim schools.

In the Netherlands parents do not have to balance their choice by cost considerations; they can simply opt for what they think is best. From an American point of view, such freedom sounds too good to be true. In the USA private schools are not financed by the state but out of the parents' pockets; and they are very expensive.*[Note: Charter schools are a recent phenomenon in the USA, and can best be defined as a hybrid structure of a publicly financed school - often initiated by philanthropic monies - that is independently operated on a specific charter. Examples include schools dedicated to Arabic language and culture, or those dedicated to the Hebrew language (e.g. the Hebrew Language Academy Charter School)]* No wonder that the USA Brookings Institution came to visit the Netherlands to find out how this freedom works. Could it be of use across the Atlantic? Alas, the USA concept of separation of church and state forbids the use of public monies for religious causes, although there are numerous exceptions.

School choice based on church religion lost its momentum after the strong wave of secularization passed through the Netherlands. Likewise ideological contestants such as socialism and liberalism had lost much of their imaginative hold by the end of the 20th Century. The formative and behavioral appeal of

church-religion and ideology no longer suits the individualized mind. In the meantime, specific pedagogical platforms, also called signatures, such as Dalton, Montessori, Jena, and Waldorf School (Vrije School), have become strong competitive factors in determining parental choice. Although Protestant and Catholic families are still likely to enroll their child in a school with the corresponding religious orientation, a recent study shows that 29 % of Protestants and 23 % of Catholics attend either a non-religious school or a school of another religious persuasion (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 9). For many parents school choice is no longer determined by church religion or ideology; yet the particularistic school system remains in place, and conveniently accommodated a new phenomenon, the *black* school, which had come into being by default of the *True Dutch* white choice.

### *Freedom of Education's Travesty*

The principle of *Freedom of Education* is meant to guarantee that education is provided and can be accessed according to one's belief (*overtuiging*; Government Paper, 2008, 5). Nowadays *Freedom of Education* has been manipulated to become a choice that takes into account a school's excellence, reputation, and ethnic composition (black or white) as well. Religion lost much of its impact with regards to the choice of a school. Perhaps with the exception of some Jewish, Hindu and Muslim parents, parents now balance their choices between a school's denomination, proximity, ranking and status, and color. Parents generally prefer the best school, which must also be within close range of their residence. These days the choice of a particular school has for many parents little to do with its denominational or secular definition.

Residential patterns and parental school choice determine school segregation. When residential patterns are segregated the schools become segregated: white neighborhoods produce white schools, allochton neighborhoods *black* schools. But parents are not inhibited from looking over the neighborhood boundaries.

White parents do not normally send their children to a black school, as their choice for a white school is a matter of course (with a few exceptions). Not only because of the assumed better education but even more so with regards to school culture and after-school contacts. A black school is perceived to be not as liberal as a white school, especially in case of a dominant Muslim presence. These parents perceive a miss-match between school and home (Karsten, 2005). They contend that white children in a black school have difficulty making after-school

friendships. When such white parents live in a predominantly black neighborhood, they look elsewhere, or they move home and hearth to find a white school that fits their aims. This is known as *white flight*. However, a grey flight is formed by allochtons who have progressed on the social-economic status (SES) ladder, and opt for white schools as well, often in suburbia.

White schools are sought after, and thus become overbooked and tend to expand.

On average, half of the white pupils attend a school *outside* their own neighborhood, while 80% of the allochton children are at a school within their neighborhood. Allochton parents are less inclined to travel an extra mile to the school of their preference than white parents. If *allochton* parents prefer a white school, they must compete with white parents. At the same time, Muslim parents may prefer a Muslim or another black school, as they perceive white schools out of step with the traditional upbringing they hold dear. For them, white schools are too liberal.

Parents who insist on free school choice cling to the constitutional provision of *Freedom of Education* as a roadblock against regulating school admission. Though parents' school preference may be directed by a consumer mindset to pick the best school, the *Freedom of Education* still serves as a strong rallying principle. An improbable alliance of disparate activists has gained leverage to block school desegregation, not bonded by principle or intention but by happenstance. Parents that are directed by denominational-choice found a partner in large numbers of enlightened best-school-choice parents to safeguard a principled *Freedom of Education*. Best-school-choice parents now include a rising number of allochton parents who do not want their children in an inferior black school. This rather respectable combination happened to connect with an increasing number of equally principled parents who pursue a True Dutch cause that forbids their children to be mixed with allochton kids: *Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)*. This alliance of motley adversaries considers desegregation an infringement upon the *True Dutch* right to *Freedom of Education*, based on denomination, best-school, and NIMBY preferences. Invoking a hard won constitutional right of *Freedom of Education* of more than a century old, this alliance is hard to beat notwithstanding the fact that many of these crusaders harbor a motivation that is irrelevant to the constitutional clause of *Freedom of Education*.

Dutch media have finally begun to picture the black school as an *integration*

problem. But as long as the extent of the Dutch principle of *Freedom of Education* is not critically questioned in parliament and courts, all attempts to counter segregation are bound to remain tokens of goodwill without real impact. What are the limitations of this *freedom*? Does this freedom include a choice for a *specific* school, as such has become received opinion and customary practice?

Or is a parent's choice limited to a type of school in terms of religious and ideological orientation? Can this *freedom* be controlled by *positive discrimination* or *affirmative action* to secure equal rights of children who otherwise would not stand a chance? These questions must be raised before they can be answered. Benevolent good-will initiatives are fine, but remain doomed without national, political and legal backing. The Netherlands' minister for Integration absolves himself of the responsibility for the ever-deepening process of school segregation by leaving the problem to municipalities, parents and school boards to deal with, and sits back in anticipation of the outcomes of a few goodwill pilots (Integration Brief, 2009, 22-23). Apparently the black school is too sensitive an issue to be tackled by national politics and parliamentary action. Exactly for this reason, it cannot be solved locally. The stakes are too high for *True Dutch* parents to lose their right of school choice while *Allochton Power* to change this course has yet to be mobilized.

### *Regulating Parental Choice?*

Changes in the playing field are beginning to desecrate the sanctity of parental school choice as an absolute right. Against the backdrop of deepening ethnic school segregation, school choice has become a contentious issue. Critics point out that parental choice has all along been conditioned by availability, zoning of school catchment areas and the discretionary powers of school authorities.

Parental choice has never meant that parents could pick a *specific* school. If schools are full, then parents must look elsewhere. However, the way the system was organized allowed savvy parents to jump the queue, suggesting that actually the parents called the shots. Growing concerns about the divide between white and black schools in the Netherlands are now causing some people to call for a re-interpretation of *Freedom of Education*. A tentative critic merely suggests that a critical debate on the Dutch particular education system must continue (Scheffer, 2007, 422). A more imaginative approach is proposed by an expert on educational inequality in the Netherlands, who recommends a distribution of pupils based on an all encompassing score system for each local authority (municipality, city),



allowing children from lower SES parents to register at a good school. Parental preference does still count but is balanced by a range of other scores and considerations (Dronkers, 2007, 76). An interesting twist in the logic of parental choice is that school segregation actually limits the choice of parents; especially those who do not want their children to attend a white or a black school. These parents prefer the blessings of mixed schools so that their children become aware and accustomed to the habitat of the Dutch multicultural society; a kind of multicultural citizenship training: 'more mixed schools, more choice' (Adviesraad, 2009).

There is even a suggestion that the time has come to replace the Dutch particular *Freedom of Education* system with a general structure which aims at public education for all, while allowing latitude for cultural and religious diversity (Pels, 2008, 170). Ahmed Marcouch, a prominent politician, and ex-mayor of Slotervaart, one of Amsterdam's Burroughs, Muslim, of Moroccan origin, supports an overhaul of the system: 'I believe that Muslims should integrate along with their religious identity. We must create Dutch Muslims. You can't just put children from religious families into separate Muslim schools. That adds to segregation. By teaching different religions in public schools, you encourage children to think critically.' [Note: Ian Buruma, *Letter from Amsterdam. Parade's End. Dutch liberals get tough*, pp. 36-41. In: *The New Yorker*, December 7, 2009] Such a radical departure from Dutch *particularity* however would entail for a politician - even in these secular times - a guaranteed electoral downfall.

Kees Schuyt, an esteemed sociology professor, questions whether the particularity of Muslim schools must be encouraged in view of the demands of a multicultural society: 'One can argue that pupils from the first school day must be confronted with each other's different religion and cultural behavior' (Schuyt, 2009, 123; Translation mine). However, Schuyt warns, this common school may turn out to be a rough encounter with discrimination and humiliation in classroom and schoolyard. So it may be better to let Muslim children grow up in a protected school environment, namely a Muslim school that scores high on good teaching and postpones the confrontation with a tough outside world to a later age, similar to the way Roman Catholics and Protestants operated. He emphasizes that Muslim schools are in line with the Dutch segregated school system, and that blocking them would be extremely hypocritical. Yet in the end Schuyt doubts whether the present Muslim schools meet the terms of educating children to

become free citizens (burghers) in a modern society, just as some other religion-based schools fail to do (Schuyt, 2009, 124). As late as 2010 orthodox protestant schools claim the right to keep their schools free from homosexual teachers and students who live by their sexual identity. Schuyt's argument comes close to a declaration that the Dutch particular school system does not fit the demands of a modern multicultural society, which is held together by a commitment to democracy, personal freedom and the rule of law.

The pressure is mounting to combat school segregation by legislation. At first, in 2009, only one of the political parties publicly recommended legislation to force schools mixing their population. [Note: Agnes Kant & Sadet Karabulut, *Bevecht Segregatie*. In: *De Volkskrant*, 3 October 2009] A few months later, the governing socialist party (PvdA) also called for legislation to mix schools according to high and low parental SES. [Note: PvdA: *Wet tegen segregatie onderwijs*. In: *de Volkskrant*, 19 January 2010]

These political suggestions were answered in Parliament by a Christian-Democrat Pavlov reaction, throwing together all possible disagreements to forestall hands-on action: No way! Parents won't support this mixing [...] The effect of mixing white and black schools is not evident: the opinion is still out [...] A child's school success is determined by neighborhood, parents' education and income [...] A black school is not per se a bad school, nor a white school per se a good school [...] Instead of mixing schools, the quality of schools must be raised [...] The preliminary outcome of pilot-projects looks promising. [Note: CDA: *mix zwart/witte scholen vrijwillig*. In: *NRC*, 21 January 2010]

This reaction makes a travesty of the Netherlands' *Freedom of Education*. Knowing that school segregation deepens, whether defined by white/black color, high/low class parents, or advantaged/disadvantaged youth, the problem is obfuscated to forestall regulatory change. Foreign experts conclude that the segregation of disadvantaged immigrant pupils in the four major Dutch cities exceeds that of black students in most major American cities: 80 % of ethnic non-white Dutch students attend a black school, while in the USA 50 % of non-white students attend a black school. They are pessimistic about change: 'Thus any efforts to reduce segregation will have to reflect the voluntary commitment of a substantial number of stakeholders for whom private interests in maintaining the status quo may well exceed the public benefit to them of reducing segregation' (Fiske & Ladd, 2009, 25-32).

### *Extras, Goodwill and Projects*

Additional support, private goodwill and benevolent activism help to soften the edges of school segregation. Schools receive extra money for catching-up purposes. Until recently the allocation of a school's budget was apportioned on the basis of a pupil's origin and the level of education of parents: 1.0 for autochthon pupils at the right level, 1.25 for autochthon pupils with parents' of a low education level, and 1.9 for allochton pupils. In 2006/07 the ethnic component was abandoned and since then only the level of education of parents defines the number of disadvantaged pupils (*achterstandsleerlingen*), irrespective of their origin. The net result of this change was that the additional budget was spread thinner over the cohort of *allochton* pupils (Aboutaleb, 2005, 130). Yet a black school's extra budget allows for programs that aim specifically at allochton pupils, which naturally attract allochton parents. Notwithstanding this benevolent purpose, these subsidies in effect ease the way for even more segregation. Some have argued that extra finances should be poured into an integration budget that sets a premium on schools that have achieved a mixed pupil population. [Note: Jan Marijnissen, *Gemengde school bevordert integratie*. In: *Algemeen Dagblad*, 23 December 2003. Weblog Jan Marijnissen]

A variety of initiatives and agreements have spontaneously sprung up to contest school segregation. Numerous schools use double registers, which temporarily give priority to allochton pupils to a *too white* school and vice versa. A *too white* school will first admit *black* pupils if there is a *black* waiting list. [Note: *Dubbele wachtlijsten tegen zwarte scholen*. In: *Trouw*, 23 november 2004]

These double ethnic registers are contested - though not in court - as they supposedly disrespect the freedom of choice. *The Council for Education* and the *Commission for Equal Treatment* have spoken out against a distribution based on ethnicity, but support a distribution that aims at parental SES variance. In thoroughly segregated residential areas, a white-black pupil mix is not attempted. Instead *friendship schools* are formed to stimulate (mostly after-school) interaction between white and allochton pupils. Since 2006-2007 the Ministry of Education obliges an Agenda on Local Educational Affairs (*Lokaal Educatieve Agenda*), to spell out the action taken to counter segregation. These deliberations between school boards and municipal authorities are binding (*bindend; niet vrijblijvend*) but according to how the Dutch phrase these things, this binding does not mean a legal or moral obligation without any possibility of withdrawal or

avoidance. What it boils down to is that the parties are obliged by law to report once a year what has been done about school desegregation. Reporting that nothing has been achieved, or even been undertaken, perfectly fulfills this obligation.

At the request of the four big cities, the Ministry of Education has given municipalities a helping hand by establishing an *Expertise Center for Mixed Schools* that provides assistance to pilot programs, publishes about trials and errors, and evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of actions taken (Kenniscentrum, 2008). This expertise center is an extension of the Ministry of Education. At the end of 2010, reports of several pilot projects to combat school segregation, in total 12 municipalities, will be communicated to the Ministry.

An *Agreement* between the City of Amsterdam, Burroughs and School Boards to counter segregation is a case in point. The idea was a departure from idealistic white parents who register their children at a black school. In this *Agreement* the School Boards proposed that popular white schools, which had a waiting list, become mixed with more black students. Neighborhoods were chosen with schools that were too white and too black in comparison with the color composition of the population. In theory this color mismatch made a redistribution of pupils a possibility. The waiting list of the white school was forked into an individual registration, and a twinned registration - a combination of white and black pupils. At the moment of registration white parents who were accompanied by an allochton couple were given priority, which would result in a more mixed school population of the too white school.

The *Agreement* included a cap on school size to prevent that expanding white schools would attract white pupils from mixed schools. This *Agreement* had been almost three years in the making.

When *the Agreement* was signed, Amsterdam's Deputy for Education called this a historic moment.

The project failed before it even started. The white-black combos were criticized; instead combos of SES variations were proposed, as these would be more in tune with the latest academic results. The high correlation between these entries was deemed irrelevant, and the fact that SES would be more difficult to apply was ignored. Second thoughts sprung up about the political correctitude of the project: 'What's actually wrong with black schools?' Another complication was thrown in by questioning how to deal with brothers and sisters of those who are

already at school? One of the initiators scornfully reported that the white Dutch elite idolizes Nelson Mandela, South Africa's anti-apartheid hero, while being persistent in placing their children in white schools, no apartheid questions asked.[*Note: Pieter Hilhorst, Apartheid. In: De Volkskrant, 17 December 2008*] The Agreement was shelved and the historic moment forgotten. The *Agreement* did not include any instrument to enforce the agreement. A well-positioned initiative, which was highly publicized and backed by local authorities and school boards, came to naught because as it was lacking formal regulation to keep the parties on task.

Nijmegen, a medium size city, announced in February 2009 a new trial along somewhat different lines than the Amsterdam attempt. In order to pre-empt *white flight* from the inner city, children are obliged to enroll in neighborhood schools. On a preference list of 6 schools, parents may include schools outside the neighborhood. Only if a preferred school outside the neighborhood has vacancies, enrolment may be accorded. Parental preferences are played out against factors such as: the school of brothers-sisters, an equitable distribution of children from parents with little or no education, and a fixed enrolment number per school. Popular schools are not allowed to expand, as this would create a pull-away effect that blackens neighboring schools. Parental religion or political leanings are not factored in, nor a preferred educational platform. All parents receive a binding enrolment advice, which can be appealed and reconsidered by an administrative body. According to a municipal council member, the principle of Freedom of Education is fully respected, but 'full is full'. [*Note: Nijmegen zet het mes in witte en zwarte scholen. In: De Volkskrant, 11 February 2009*] Of course, others disagree. [*Note: Vrije schoolkeuze bevordert segregatie. In: De Volkskrant, 11 February 2009*]

Nijmegen's Deputy for Education expects that 95 % of the parental choice will be honored, that is one of the six schools on the preference list, which may not be exactly the first choice. The city and school boards are convinced that this project will hold out in court if challenged.

In Utrecht, one of the four big cities, parents and students opted for better schools outside the city of Utrecht, causing the inner city schools to deteriorate even further, and eventually to shut down. [*Note: "Dwang nodig bij schoolkeuze." In: De Volkskrant, 5 February 2009*] The problem was to stop the flight of the best segment of secondary education pupils, both autochthon and allochton, to schools

in the surrounding municipalities. Provincial authorities pursued the city of Utrecht and the surrounding municipalities to come to an agreement on stopping this flight; to no avail. Utrecht's Deputy for Education complained to the Ministry of Education that school integration was sabotaged on several fronts: by schools, school boards, as well as parents.[*Note: Wethouder Utrecht: sommige scholen willen gewoon wit blijven. 'Integratie op school gesaboteerd'. In: De Volkskrant, 29 September 2009*] The Deputy argued that voluntary agreements with school boards in the surrounding municipalities had not stopped the grey flight out of Utrecht, and pushed for central government intervention to come up with enforceable regulation.

Parental goodwill is not lacking, but is mostly incidental or unsubstantial, on paper only. Some politically correct white parents do purposely send their children to *black* schools and try to convince neighbors and friends to do so as well. A poll in a neighborhood with an equal share of autochthon and *allochton* children indicated that over 90 % of the parents preferred two mixed schools over one white and one *black* school. Segregation is generally deemed bad, and desegregation as something that must be pursued, but it is not felt as a personal issue when one's own children are involved. Very few feel a personal motivation to actually pursue desegregation (Karsten, 2005). In addition, enlightened white Dutch politicians set a poor example by not sending their children to black schools if they can help it. Why would they, as nobody questions a parental choice that aims at the betterment of their children? A conspiracy of silence seems to prevail in media and politics that a politician's parental white choice has nothing to do with school segregation. Politicians and media-makers generally do not differ in their parental choice.[*Note: The media silence about the Obamas' private school choice for their children after they moved to Washington is a telling mark, especially when compared to the media frenzy about their choice of a White House puppy*] And some racially black parents at the high end of the social-economic status (SES) distribution have stated that school choice is a very complex personal matter, which means that they either regret their choice for a black school, or have chosen differently.[*Note: Personal statement of a black father, with a PhD, and his wife, a prominent Dutch politician*]

Good intentions are not enough as long as the political will to change course is lacking. Regulating school enrolment in order to attain a mixed school with regards to parental SES or children's origin is only at an experimental stage.

Although the Netherlands government declared in 2007 to impose a school registration policy (*aanmeldingsbeleid*), nothing has come about as yet. Without formal regulation most initiatives to seal loopholes used by savvy and creative parents fall by the wayside (Karsten, 2005). Apart from a few pilots and goodwill experiments, desegregation runs into a pro-choice wall, built upon the constitutional Dutch *Freedom of Education* and paid for by the state. Thus Dutch particularity is engraved in stone, one of the sacred cows of Dutch politics. A school board director stated that he would rather resign than initiate action to engineer a mixed school population (WRR, 2009, 251). Recommendations given to the Netherlands government on how to create mixed schools of various grades of (under-) achievers receive negative press. One editorial outlined how badly underachievers must feel when they were going to be mixed with high achievers. [Note: *Een gunst is geen recht*. In: *NRC Handelsblad*, editorial. 27 January 2009] Does it really feel so much better in a black school? In *Today's Youth. One Year in a Black Class*, Kees Beekman, a teacher, depicts in detail how stigmatized these *allochton* children feel; they feel worthless and no good because they attend a school for *Dummies* (Beekman, 2006).

### *Equal Rights, Integration and Diversity*

The Netherlands' rather recent experience with black school segregation and the experimental efforts to do something about it, inevitably invites a comparison with the USA's long history of principled school segregation, and equally principled desegregation. While in the Netherlands *Freedom of Education* set out the course, in the USA the Civil Rights Movement took on school desegregation as a major challenge, culminating in a range of unending USA court battles over equal rights, states rights, racial integration and ethnic difference.

The *Civil Rights Movement* in the USA in the 1960s testifies to the strength of civic activism to pursue codification of rights that were once denied. At that time, people were killed while securing civil and voting rights for African-Americans: *Civil Rights Act* (1964 and 1965), and the *Voting Rights Act* (1968). A long and bitter fight over equal education rights culminated in a legal victory in 1954. In a now famous case, *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) the separate but equal doctrine of the segregationists in the Southern States was overturned. The Supreme Court decided that separate black schools, even when offering quality equal to white schools, trampled upon the principle of equality. The Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to institutionalize education along color lines:

'The unmistakable promise of Brown was that primary education could and should coax children away from the racial and ethnic solidarities of their parents and supplement those affiliations with a sense of common citizenship that could, at least occasionally transcend racial differences' (Ford, 2008, 306). The Brown case inspired African-Americans in the Southern states to demand their rights as they never had before, without waiting for lawsuits: 'Black college students began sitting in at drugstore lunch counters to demand service; Rosa Parks and countless others suffered hardship to protest the humiliation of being forced to sit in the back of the bus.' [Note: Anthony Lewis, *A New National Scripture. A literature professor analyses the origins and meanings of Martin Luther King's famous speech.* By: Eric J. Sundquist, *King's Dream*, Yale University Press. In: *The New York Times Book Review*, 18 January 2009]

And yet, however victorious this outcome had been, the fight over the black school had just begun. Since the Supreme Court's decision, everything imaginable has been undertaken, either to keep desegregation in place, or to undo it. The boundaries of school districts have been manipulated in order to keep schools white. Elsewhere, courts have ordered busing to transport black children to white schools. In the face of unrelenting obstruction to desegregation, the Black Power movement came to the conclusion that black parents' best choice was a black school for their children.

Notwithstanding fierce opposition and confusing choices, institutional discrimination is not allowed. Legal codification, court orders and activists have changed the tide. Thompson Ford proudly summarizes the achievements in fighting discrimination (Ford, 2008, 27):

*Schools once accepted racial integration only under court order, the armed forces only under executive order, private enterprise only under congressional mandate. Now universities, the military, and private business combine forces to defend integration and race-conscious affirmative action. Officially sanctioned racist propaganda has been replaced by multicultural sensitivity training.*

Yet affirmative action has followed a twisted trajectory in the USA. Over a period of years affirmative action served different goals and used a variety of vehicles, some of which have been declared illegal; it is a policy with a history that is loaded with contest. The American civil rights movement initially argued that affirmative action must achieve racial integration, setting quota aside for African-American students in order to attain a racially mixed school or university



population. America's Ivy League elite universities embraced racial affirmative action for a mixture of reasons. On the one hand, it was driven by idealism: 'it would be better for this diverse country if there were a diverse elite.' On the other hand, minority recruitment of the white Ivy League universities was based on more practical considerations. In order to control such a diverse country as the USA 'it would be better to socialize the best and brightest of the minorities and make them more like us.' [Note: Helene Cooper, *Meet the new elite, not like the old*. In: *The New York Times*, 26 July 2009]

Racial affirmative action caused many students, especially at primary and high school level, to travel larger distances than would have been the case when attending school in their white or black neighborhood. School busses and *busing* became iconic and contested emblems of this way of integration. Eventually the highest USA court did not agree with racial quota. The court ruled that such would violate the equal rights of others, the rights of white children. Student assignments based on race could no longer be used to keep public schools from re-segregation after finally having achieved a measure of integration. In the end a most familiar civil rights concept of integration as racial balancing was rejected. Chief Justice John Roberts recently summarized once more his rather uncomplicated opinion: 'The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race, is to stop discrimination on the basis of race.' [Note: Lida Greenhouse, *Two Stars, meeting across a Bible*. In: *The New York Times*, 18 January 2009]

This one liner does not acknowledge the perpetual character of established privilege, nor does it distinguish between the intentions behind race discrimination on one hand and *affirmative action* on the other. *Affirmative action* is designed to bring underrepresented minorities in, not to keep whites out. Diametrically opposite Justice Robert's view stands the observation that *You can only fight discrimination with discrimination*, arguing that the amount of injustice in the world cannot be totally solved or even alleviated but at best be redistributed (Wijnberg, 2006, 216-220). *Affirmative action* in the USA had to find another vehicle.

Thompson Ford analyzes in *The Race Card* how *affirmative action* meandered through the courts over the years. For *affirmative action* to be legal, a 'compelling interest' must be argued: 'This means that in practice, the legality of affirmative action depends on whether or not it's a good policy' (Ford, 2008, 248-249). Several arguments to build a case for affirmative action flourished, and

subsequently foundered: (white) bias in grades and test scores; bigoted teachers; social discrimination; racial stratification; diversification of the nation's well-educated elite; and familiarity with underprivileged minority communities. Only one policy goal got an unambiguous thumbs-up from the Supreme Court: affirmative action that furthers the compelling interest in a 'diverse' student body. The court endorsed the right to select those students who will contribute the most to the 'robust exchange of ideas': to *differ* and to *be different* became an educational asset. The rationale for *affirmative action* became the pedagogical benefits of diversity. Critics argued that racial and ethnic difference rather than racial integration became the orthodoxy of necessity; supporters of affirmative action now needed to shore up racial difference and diversity, which were once fringe positions taken by black nationalists and white supremacists (Ford, 2008, 251).

The Civil Rights Movement became a house divided. On the crest of the *diversity* creed, the drive for integration was turned upside down. *Integration* had failed to improve the education of black children, and *integration* had also manifested itself as whitewashing minority cultural norms and practices. Segregation and separation, which were once the marrow of civil rights activism, now gained legitimacy as a guardian of multiculturalism revisited that glorified the virtue of racial difference. Once forceful arguments are now contested: 'For every argument that racial justice demands integration, there is now a counter argument that it requires separatism [...]' (Ford, 2008, 305). Colleges and universities must now advance a questionable and convoluted justification for affirmative action - diversity - when the more sensible one - integration - is a better fit. Thompson Ford deplors that the strongest arguments for affirmative action have been ruled out by judicial fiat (Ford, 2008, 262-263). The different faces of *affirmative action* over the years are an indication of its political and judicial sensitivity: at first racial integration was the defining metaphor while now *diversity* and *difference* frame the compelling interest that legitimizes affirmative action. All along through its turbulent course, affirmative action in the USA exercised strong agency to combat school segregation.

### *Positive Discrimination and Affirmative Action*

*Positive discrimination* has become a contested issue. Discrimination literally means recognizing or identifying a difference, or to pay attention to subtle differences and exercise judgment and taste. But the term has gained wide

currency as unfair treatment, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age, religion, sexual preference or gender. In most countries discrimination is unconstitutional; it is against the law. How then can discrimination be positive? The term must be applied to measures that do not have the intention to discriminate but instead to affirm options of people who otherwise would not stand a chance. Positive discrimination allows one to have precedence over another, not on the basis of merit, educational score or performance, but for other reasons. For instance, in order to prevent black-white school segregation, entry quotas have been imposed, which have given black children with lower school scores precedence over white children with an equal or higher score. The student with the higher score is 'discriminated' against to make room for the next best, or even the next-next best applicant. In America's equal rights parlance, the better scoring student's *equal rights* are violated. Much more than in the Netherlands, USA parents and school boards tend to go to court, one day to contest *segregation* by requiring positive *discrimination*, and the next day to protect the principle of equal rights against affirmative action programs. In the rubrics of positive discrimination and affirmative action an ever-progressing range of legal cases has clarified what is legally permissible, and what is not, when pursuing policies of school desegregation.

*Positive discrimination* and *affirmative action* are used interchangeably, but it makes sense to point out a difference. *Positive discrimination* confuses because of its suggestion that discrimination can be positive. Isn't that a contradiction in terms? It also confuses by implying that one's status has been earned at the expense of someone else. Quite a few oppose *positive discrimination* because it supposedly violates equal rights. When one is enlisted at a good school, the best university, or a top position with the help of positive discrimination, these entries have not been earned on the strength of merit and ability, but simply by having been given precedence. Though this is a gross simplification of a day-to-day reality that is replete with glaring inequalities, a bias of being *second-rate*, or not being as good is always in the air. In spite of *all born equal rhetoric*, people are not born equal, and after being born they are embedded in disparate settings. The social-economic status (SES) of parents, especially their educational level (Dronkers, 2007,14), determines to a large extent the chances their children have, starting from first grade to university, and subsequently in the careers that follow. Children from parents on the high end of the SES scale usually attend better schools, and do better at school, than students born to low SES parents. Ivy

League parents tend to create Ivy League access for their children.

In reality, the Dutch *Freedom of Education* has become an advantage to children surrounded by social-economic privilege, and thus not available to everyone. Schools do not intentionally discriminate between students of different background, but it turns out that the school choice of parents firmly correlates with where they come from. Parents who are well off themselves, especially in respect to education, insist on - and often succeed in putting their children in better schools. They know how to maneuver through the registration bureaucracy; they encourage their children to do better, and will step up their own or additional extra-mural efforts when necessary. Not all, but many True Dutch children come from the 'lucky sperm club' [Note: Michael Young, *The Rise of the Meritocracy*, 1957. In: *De Volkskrant*, 4 July 2009], and are better off when starting their school education compared to most allochton offspring.

Positive discrimination has been disqualified as giving precedence at the expense of others who are discriminated against. Many a critic emphasizes that positive discrimination is an infringement on the equality principle. For example, Paul Scheffer, an *integration* pundit in the Netherlands, underscores that this may cause conflict, violence, or even war (Scheffer, 2007, 423). He is prepared to make an exception for the black population in the USA because of their history of slavery and forced segregation, but warns against extending this way of thinking to immigrants who don't need recompense for any historic wrong doing. Scheffer narrows the idea of positive discrimination to compensation for wrong doing at some stage in history, giving advantage to descendents of those who have been done wrong. But why does Scheffer exclude asylum seekers? And why exclude immigrants who have suffered from the Netherlands' immigration policies of the *live and let live era*?

The party wings of the Netherlands' 'Young Socialists' and 'Young Liberals' oppose *positive discrimination* of allochtons and women being recruited by the Police Force, which was recently prescribed by the Netherlands' Interior Department.[Note: *PvdA Nieuwsbrief* 31 March 2008, *OPINIE Geen positieve discriminatie, Niet gebaat bij positieve discriminatie*] To bolster their opposition the usual arguments were aired: quality deficiency, substantiation of the second-rate level of the target groups, problems on the shop floor, and negative discrimination of capable men and autochthons. They suggest that quality control is blown out of the window with a pro-active recruitment procedure that

intensifies the search among the target groups. They do not account for the negative effects that a *True Dutch* white-male dominated Police Force has in cities with a high degree of diversity, populated with groups of people from all corners of the world.

*New York Police Department: Diversity matters*

*The ethnic diversity of the New York police that beats the streets correlates securely with the diversity of the millions who occupy these streets every day. The New York Police Department has never been so diverse, a result of quality control indeed. A majority of the cadets in the last rookie police class were members of ethnic and racial minorities, offering a rainbow cross-section of the city itself. Over all, 47.8 % of the city's officers are white, 28.7 % Hispanic, 17.9 % Black and 5.4 % Asian.<sup>31</sup> This is not a matter of course, or Darwinian selection, but of creative design, aka affirmative action by New York City authorities who know that diversity matters in keeping order and peace.*

Of course, there is resistance to this kind of affirmative action. An editorial in *De Groene Amsterdammer* on positive discrimination aired that first the mentality within the Netherlands' Police Force needed to be changed before regulation should be imposed. [Note: Margreet Fogteloo, *Blauwe Vrouwen*. In: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 5 June 2009] How is this done? Precisely, by departmental regulation to intensify recruitment from these target-groups! [Note: Lammert de Jong, *Blauwe Vrouwen*. In: *De Groene Amsterdammer*, Letter to the Editor, 17 June 2009.] This is exactly what the women's Quota-Manifest in 2009 proposed, an initiative that sprang from the supposition that the rise of women to top positions required time and patience, just as was required all along. The Quota Manifest's signatories had lost their patience, and pushed for legally backed quotas to increase the number of women in public and private top-positions. [Note: 'Geen zeurkous, ze steekt haar nek uit.' In: *De Volkskrant*, 20 October 2009]

*Affirmative action* to attain a desired order, at school or university, nation-wide or social-economic, or even international, is an alternative to *positive discrimination*. *Affirmative action* aims to include those who otherwise would not stand a chance; *affirmative action* aims at building bridges between diverse populations. These actions are legitimized by farther reaching political goals, such as having more people participating in the national economic commonwealth; or to widen the recruitment reservoir of talent to be tapped; or to bring apartheid to an end. Where Scheffer's *positive discrimination* is limited to recompense for wrongs

done to the African-American or American Indian population, *affirmative action* is a more productive concept because it aims further than compensation to particular groups. Affirmative action is concerned about the disorder of racial segregation, or of a class-riddled society; or the imbalance between disparate regions; the *divide* between rich and poor countries; or the diversity of the nation.

*Affirmative action* basically aims at correcting the damage done to the nation – and the world for that matter – by gross inequality. In the USA *affirmative action* was always meant to be a temporary remedy. Some argue that the policy should be based on ‘the situation on the ground,’ rather on some arbitrary timeline: ‘... reasonable people may disagree how much remedy is enough, and how much is too much but ... no reasonable person can look at our society’s disparities in income, employment, education and incarceration rates and argue that the job is done.’ [Note: David Berman, New York, July 20, 2009. In: *The New York Times*, July 26, 2009] Another commentator adds: ‘I too hope that affirmative action will, at some point in the future, not be needed. However, it is not *affirmative action* that corrupts and condescends and corrodes, but rather a society in which unequal educational and economic opportunities are provided to some of its citizens because of the color of their skin. *Affirmative action* is a necessary corrective for our imperfect society.’ [Note: Cathleen Barnhart, White Plains, July 20, 2009. In: *The New York Times*., July 26, 2009] Affirmative action is testimony to the belief that the state must level the playing field. [Note: Josef Joffe, *The Worst of the West. Reviewing Tony Judt’s ‘Ill Fares the Land’*. In: *The New York Times Book Review*, 2 May 2010]

Much government policy, especially in so-called welfare states, can be measured as affirmative action: subsidies for a more expansive family re-production, or producing *affirmative action babies* [Note: *These subsidies produce affirmative action babies in the truest sense of the word. See also Stephen L. Carter, Reflections of an Affirmative-Action Baby. Basic Books, 1991*]; extra development funds for backward regions (European Structural Fund); preferential tariffs for elderly and disabled people; or facilities for enterprising initiatives of economic starters.

These programs and funds serve a purpose and intentionally target regional areas or specific groups of people. Under most fiscal regimens, taxpayers are not treated equally, but are treated according to income and wealth instead, in order to finance – among other things – welfare state policies. In the USA this

redistribution of wealth is perceived as coming dangerously close to socialism, or even communism, while in the Netherlands a wide consensus endorses the Dutch welfare state as a telling expression of social solidarity.

Government practice is to make policy choices that often have disparate impacts on different (groups of) people. The intention of these *policies to make a difference* is totally different from discrimination as unfair treatment rooted in prejudice with regard to race, sex, origin or other wicked inclinations (Scheffer, 2007, 423). [Note: Scheffer misses this point when he equates 'negative' discrimination with 'positive' discrimination]

Therefore positive discrimination does not fit as concept; this term can better be ditched as a contradiction in terms, and exchanged for affirmative action defined as political engineering to attain specific societal goals, not only in the realm of undoing historic wrongs but also with regard to today's mundane government affairs. *Affirmative action* is essentially in the interest of good governance; it is regular government business to keep the nation together, or to elevate the underclass, or to regulate immigration. 'In a sense, all law is social engineering' (Ford, 2008, 226). *Affirmative action* is designed to enroll children of non-western immigrants and disadvantaged whites in good schools; this action is not designed to keep advantaged pupils or advantaged colors out (Ford, 2008, 260). And in the case of the Netherlands' job market, affirmative action must help law study graduates of non-western origin to find a place in the law firms and professions, and so combat discrimination (Schuyt, 2009, 132-133).

### *Eyes Wide Shut*

'Relax, it will happen' concludes Frans Verhagen in '*The American Way*': *do not accelerate an immigrant's advancement in the Netherlands by assistance and positive discrimination; that's counterproductive* (Verhagen, 2006, 244; Translation mine). Does this mean that the slippery palisades surrounding Dutch school segregation must be left untouched? Has the Dutch disposition to immigrants nothing to want for? Is there no ethnic discrimination to fight? Weariness rather than activism prevails these days with regards to the *black* school. Even among activists a fighting spirit is absent and political leadership to tackle the Dutch black school is limited to secondary adjustments. Some Dutch integrationists argue that ethnic discrimination is a matter of mentality that must be changed, not by laws but primarily by instilling the awareness that discrimination is wrong. Instead of regulation, everybody must come to an agreement that ethnic discrimination is immoral, and must be made aware that it is against the nation's

self-interest as scarce talent may be lost in the process (Scheffer, 2008, 424).

How do we arrive at this agreement? Voluntary initiatives, *binding* agreements and lots of goodwill have not substantially changed the segregated school scene; mainly because white parents do not want to risk what they believe to be in their child's best interest. Only one out of six parents and just a quarter of all citizens are willing to consider a next best choice if that would challenge the formation of black schools. The majority does not feel motivated to jump the color line. They are insensitive to arguments of a possible white school bias, which overestimates the quality of the white school, neither are they concerned about the apartheid and out-of-touch white schools in otherwise predominantly multiethnic cities (Aboutaleb, 2005, 133). An *Eyes Wide Shut* attitude negates the effects of school and neighborhood segregation on generations of Dutch children. Against better wisdom!

In 2007 the Scientific Council for Government Policy pointed to *school* and *work* as essential vehicles in the process of an immigrant's identification with the Dutch nation, while criticizing school segregation. The Council observed that school segregation was increasing in terms of *black* schools as well as too *black* schools. [Note: In the period 1985-2000 the share of 'black' primary schools (with more than 70% pupils of non-western families with low education) rose from 15 to 35 % in the 4 big cities in the Netherlands. In 2002 of all the primary schools 33% were 'too white' or 'too black.'] Reviewing the actions to fight this segregation, the Council concluded that such depended to a large extent on local activists (parents, schools, boards, municipalities) who must navigate the rigidity of the constitutional *Freedom of Education*, and the sanctity of parental school choice (WRR, 2007, 119-125). The Council recommended that Dutch parliament legalize a *Connection Through Education* (Verbinden) principle that would assign school authorities the obligation to pursue a policy of connecting disparate groups. This would provide a legal basis for school desegregation projects and experiments (WRR, 2007, 205). However laudable in its intention, this recommendation was too general to stand a chance to be implemented.

Legalizing a *Connection Through Education* principle was presented as a *must* without a persuasive reconnaissance of its practicalities or an implementation strategy. Being well aware of the problem of school segregation as well as the sanctity of parental choice, the Council made a perfunctory gesture.

In its reaction, the Netherlands' government merely took note of the Council's



recommendation; and left it there. Government took a benign stand and declared that everybody should have access to high quality education, which should not depend upon the composition of the school. Government saw no need to amend the constitutional *Freedom of Education* and emphasized that investment in school quality must have priority, as well as combating residential segregation. Government expressed its unwavering support for school desegregation pilots (Government Paper, 2008, 13-14). By failing to be more specific, the Council missed an opportunity to elevate the Dutch black school to the top of the *integration* agenda.

School *segregation* in the Netherlands carves out multiple negative distinctions. First, an immigrant's ethnic group distinction is invalidated by the conception of the *allochton*, denying immigrants the advantage of a hyphenated identity. They are marked *not-Dutch*, while in the same breath their origin is obscured; as *allochton* they are in limbo. Furthermore, the schools their children attend are labeled black schools. This makes Dutch black school segregation essentially different from ethnic school segregation in the USA. In New York, Chinatown in Manhattan, around Avenue A in Brooklyn and in Flushing, Queens, Chinese-American schools abound as a reflection of the Chinese-American neighborhood population. This hyphenated identity does not negate American citizenship; on the contrary, it adds an interesting twist to the roots of these American parents and their American children. Obviously a Chinese-American school testifies to ethnic school segregation, but this school is not painted black nor considered a school for *Dummies*. On the other hand, black schools in Harlem, Manhattan, or Brooklyn, New York, carry a real history of institutionalized racism. White schools were once *Terra Prohibita* for Negroes, as African-Americans were called those days. They had to attend separate black schools, until 1954 when the Supreme Court ruled that even if these black schools were equal to white schools, this separation was against the law, which eventually inspired a powerful movement for change, though with limited results.

The Netherlands' black school is an expression of how the Dutch position non-western immigrants. The nomenclature of the Dutch integration discourse reveals a curious contradiction in terms. An immigrant's introduction to Holland is marked with segregationist road signs. As soon as non-western immigrants enter the Netherlands they become *allochtons*. They and their children carry this label for the remainder of their life, *undutchable* (White, 2006) as it were. When these

children attend a school that is populated with other immigrant children of non-western origin, they find themselves in a Dutch *black* school, to be distinguished from a white school, which adds a connotation of the racist history of white over black. When income rises, allochton parents attempt to get away from the black school, just as autochthon parents have done all along. According to the lingua franca of educational platforms the black school eventually becomes a cesspit (*afvalputje*) with ever more children from underclass families only - in other words, a school for *Dummies*.

The Dutch black school is not a myth; on the contrary, it is a stark expression of *They are not Us*.

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## **“Trump Specializes In Showmanship Not Statecraft”: An Interview With Andrew Bacevich**



*Andrew J. Bacevich.  
Professor Emeritus of  
International Relations and  
History. Photo: Boston*

## *University*

What are the founding principles of U.S. foreign policy? Was the U.S. ever isolationist as mainstream diplomatic history claims? And what about Donald Trump's foreign policy? Is he a normal foreign policy president? Is he in favor of U.S. global expansion? Is China emerging as the new global empire? *Andrew Bacevich*, Professor Emeritus of International Relations and History at Boston University and now president of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft tackles the above questions in the interview below. A retired US army Colonel who fought in the Vietnam War and lost a son in the Iraq war, Bacevich is the author of numerous works on U.S. foreign policy, including among many others, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (2010); *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (2005); *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed Their Soldiers and Their Country* (2013); and of the forthcoming book *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory*.

*C. J. Polychroniou: I would like to start by asking you to reflect on the founding principles of U.S. foreign policy, which many regard as "geopolitical isolationism" and "unilateralism," and whether this is what the U.S. has practiced for most of its history.*

*Andrew Bacevich: The overarching theme of U.S. policy from the very founding of the Republic has been 1780s opportunistic expansionism. As far back as the 1780s, the Northwest Ordinances had made it clear that the United States had no intention of confining its reach to the territory encompassed within the boundaries of the original thirteen states. While the U.S. encountered sporadic resistance during the course of its remarkable ascent, virtually all of it proved to be futile. With the notable exception of the failed attempt to incorporate Canada into the Union during the War of 1812, expansionist efforts succeeded spectacularly and at a remarkably modest cost. Already by mid-century, the United States stretched from sea to shining sea.*

In 1899, the naturalist-historian-politician-sometime soldier and future president Theodore Roosevelt neatly summarized the events of the century just drawing to a close: "Of course, our whole national history has been one of expansion." When TR uttered this rarely acknowledged truth, a fresh round of expansionism was underway, this time reaching beyond the fastness of North America into the

surrounding seas and oceans. Among Europeans, a profit motivated but racially justified imperialism was in full flower. The United States was now joining in.

The year before, U.S. forces had invaded and occupied Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Guam, and the island of Luzon across the Pacific. Within two years, the United States had annexed the entire Philippine Archipelago. Within four years, with Roosevelt now in the White House, U.S. troops arrived to garrison the Isthmus of Panama where the United States, subsequent to considerable chicanery, was setting out to build a canal. Soon thereafter, to preempt any threats to that canal, successive administrations embarked upon a series of interventions throughout the Caribbean. Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson had no desire to annex Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, they merely wanted the United States to control what happened in those small countries, as it already did in nearby Cuba. While President Trump's recent bid to purchase Greenland from Denmark may have failed, Wilson - perhaps demonstrating greater skill in the art of the deal - did persuade the Danes in 1917 to part with the Virgin Islands for the bargain price of \$25 million.

The U.S. preference for operating unilaterally and its determination to avoid getting entangled in European power politics during this period is of much less significance than narrative of expansion, as Americans persistently sought more — more territory, more markets, more abundance.

*In 2016, Donald Trump called U.S. foreign policy a "complete and total disaster." Firstly, was he wrong in saying so? And, secondly, has he shown so far to be a normal foreign policy president?*

Taking the long view, U.S. foreign policy has been remarkably effective. By 1945, the United States was the richest and most powerful nation on the planet. That achievement testifies to the shrewdness of American statesmen, who knew how to seize an opportunity when it presented itself.

After 1945 we have a different story. During the Cold War, U.S. policymakers were guilty of making very costly mistakes, with the Vietnam War leading the pack. But where things really went wrong was after 9/11. That's where Trump's critique has merit. Over the past two decades, successive administrations have engaged in unnecessary wars that have depleted American power and reduced our standing in the world.

*Does Donald Trump have a consistent foreign policy? Is there such a thing as a Trump Doctrine?*

No, he does not. Understand that the very notion of principles is alien to Trump's make-up. He is, therefore, incapable acting in a consistent fashion pursuant to some larger sense of purpose. So he makes things up as he goes along. He specializes in showmanship not statecraft.

*Trump has said repeatedly that he is not in favor of wars, yet he is clearly a militarist and the military budget continues to receive large yearly increases (the United States spends more than twice as much on its military as China and Russia combined), although, as you have pointed out before, the US has yet to win its first war in the twentieth-first century. Can you shed some light into what's going on here?*

I wouldn't call him a militarist. Again, militarists actually believe something. They fancy that through war, a nation can fulfill its destiny and a people can purify themselves while cultivating an identifiable set of virtues. Trump believes no such things.

*Trump has gone so far as to question the loyalty of U.S. Jews, while Israeli PM Netanyahu has kept quiet. What's behind Trump's unequivocal support for Israel?*

Who knows? My guess is that he assumes that the devotion of American Jews and of conservative Christian evangelicals equals or even surpasses their loyalty to the United States. So full-throated support for Israel may win him votes when he runs to re-election. This much is for certain: The actual interests of the United States figure only minimally in shaping Trump's policies toward Israel. The same can be said regarding his policies toward Saudi Arabia, by the way.

*Trump has just announced the establishment of a U.S. space command. Is space command key to U.S. defense, or will it lead inevitably to the militarization of space and to a new arms race?*

The militarization of space has already occurred and is likely to continue.

*One final question. Is China in the process of building its own empire?*

The answer depends on your definition of empire. China doesn't seek to acquire colonies. So it won't be an empire on the British model. But it clearly intends to

exercise indirect influence on a global scale — hence, its massive involvement in development projects in places far from China proper. It appears to be creating an informal empire.

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# **Mudar            Adas            |            On Friendship/(Collateral Damage) III**