

St. Pete Art Scene Opens Window to Netherlands

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September 17, 2012



The painting "Bird Concert" by Flemish artist Frans Snijders will be the inspiration for Nico de Hann's lecture.

ST. PETERSBURG — Dutch flavor will dominate St. Petersburg's art scene for the next two months as the annual Window on the Netherlands program gets under way.

Photo exhibits, music festivals, films, lectures and much more will be held at venues around the city including the State Hermitage Museum, Loft Project Etagi, Dom Kino, Tkachi Creative Space and St. Petersburg State University.

This year, the festival is something of a dress rehearsal for 2013, which has officially been designated the Year of the Netherlands in Russia and Year of Russia in the Netherlands. The topic of this year's "window" is creative industries, and the festival focuses on contemporary Dutch art.

"The main purpose of this program is to widely represent arts and crafts, design, music, dance, fashion, literature — the entire spectrum of creative professions in Holland," said Jennes de Mol, consul general of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in St. Petersburg.

As well as one-off events organized especially for the festival, artists from the Netherlands will take part in other events traditionally held in the city in the autumn, such as the PROEstate International Real Estate Investment Forum from Sept. 12-14, where a group of six architects titled Collective Amsterdam will present their projects.

One of this year's highlights looks set to be the showing of a documentary film by Jessica Gorter about the Siege of Leningrad. The film, "900 Days," will be shown at the Dom Kino movie theater as part of the annual Message to Man film festival.

"I have already seen this film. This extraordinary event will probably prompt many discussions," said de Mol.

Dutch musicians will participate in two big festivals this year: Early Music and Ethno Mechanica. "A Day in Gatchina," part of the former, is this year dedicated to the 450th anniversary of the birth of the Dutch composer Jan Swelinck.

"In Russia, this composer is virtually unknown, and we hope to remedy the situation," said Viktoria Lurik, coordinator of the Window on the Netherlands festival.

Anastasia Kuryokhina, the organizer of Ethno Mechanica, said this year's festival would feature two guests from the Netherlands: Fellow and VJ Ken Wolff.

Meanwhile, the Hermitage will host a lecture by the eminent Dutch ornithologist Nico de Hann, who will bring new life to one of the museum's many masterpieces: "Bird Concert" by Frans Snijders.

"The lector with an ornithological surname (hann in Dutch means cockerel) has collected the voices of all 26 birds represented in the picture," said Svetlana Dotsenko, the lecture's organizer. After the lecture on Sept. 26, the audience will witness the painting come alive as the bird concert is played.

The last event of the program and a "high-powered last chord," as organizers describe it, will be the presentation of the collection of Dutch designer Addy van der Krommenacker at Aurora Fashion Week.

The designer has made dresses for Dutch actresses, for the wife of the football star Ruud van Nistelrooy and for the Netherlands' Eurovision participant, Glennis Grace. Van der Krommenacker will open this year's Aurora Fashion Week program on Oct. 17 at the Manege.

A full schedule of events can be found at stpetersburg.nlconsulate.org

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