

Advance Notice:

Restoration of Photo Collection

**Closer to Architecture / Architectuur
Dichterbij – Het Nieuwe Instituut**

2 oktober 2019

Introduction

Het Nieuwe Instituut has been awarded a multiannual project grant from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science for the programme Closer to Architecture (*Architectuur Dichterbij*), which aims to conserve, restore and digitise its extensive collection of over 1 million drawings and photos relating to architecture and urban design, and make it accessible to the public.

Due to its chemical nature, the photographic material is more fragile than other objects in a largely paper collection. Factors such as light, climate, harmful substances in the environment and the packaging can produce a number of chemical changes in photos. Preservation and restoration are vital to stop harmful processes and to preserve the collection for the future.

Purpose of this advance notice

The purpose of this advance notice is to gauge the availability and potential of market parties to (be able to) carry out the restoration of the photo collection in terms of both scale and quality.

Het Nieuwe Instituut

The mission of Het Nieuwe Instituut is to deepen public appreciation of architecture, design, digital culture and serve the professional community in the Netherlands. HNI manages and provides access to the National Collection of Dutch Architecture and Urban Planning, promotes research and programmes exhibitions and lecture and debate programmes in the Netherlands and abroad.

The focus of the multiannual project Closer to Architecture is to optimise the physical condition of the collection through restoration and conservation. This will achieve two objectives: enhance the preservation of the collection for the future, and prevent further deterioration. The risk of losing information (the loss of image and text, in addition to the loss of material information) will be reduced, which will ensure the collection's usability (exhibitions, digitisation). Digitisation will also improve accessibility, enabling us to better serve the general public.

The assignment

By photographic objects we mean loose photo prints (albumin, collodium, daylight and development gelatin prints, chromogenic prints), photo prints with an adhesive mount, Polaroids and photo albums. In most cases, the exact photographic technique has not been established and registered. Negatives, slides and photo-mechanical reproductions are not included in the photo collection.

The photo collection of Het Nieuwe Instituut (HNI) comprises numerous working archives of Dutch architects who used the photographic material primarily as documentation or as a design element (think of dummies or designs that incorporate photos). The collection also holds sources of inspiration and promotional photos of architects' work. In the meantime, the status of some of the photos has changed: they are no longer considered purely documentary but as autonomous objects with high museum value (such as the Bauhaus photography, for instance). These photographs are also featured in the collection.

Various preservation problems have been identified within the photo collection: labels, tapes and adhesive residues, mechanical damage (tears, dents, creases, scratches, distortions or missing portions), surface dirt, water damage, harmful contact material (mounting on paper, card or panel), chemical damage, (discolorations, silver mirroring) and unstable photo albums.

Scale

The collection holds an estimated 300,000 to 325,000 photographs divided among approximately 431 archives. The actual number of objects that require restoration will only become apparent during the project. Based on a damage assessment conducted earlier, we estimate that around 10% is in need of active conservation, and the remainder is passive conservation. The photo project has a duration of four (4) years with the deadline 31-12-2023. The material to be restored will be supplied in batches by Het Nieuwe Instituut. Every photo print or photo album is provided with an inventory number.

The party must meet the following requirements

Conservation and restoration work must at least be carried out in accordance with the ethical code of RN¹, AIC² and ICOM-CC³ or equivalent European variants. It is important that market parties are able to store photo collections temporarily in an air-conditioned environment (during restoration).

¹ <https://www.restauratoren.nl/over-ons/ethische-richtlijnen-rn/>

² [http://www.conservation-us.org/our-organizations/association-\(aic\)/governance/code-of-ethics-and-guidelines-for-practice#.WxEfL7RA2w](http://www.conservation-us.org/our-organizations/association-(aic)/governance/code-of-ethics-and-guidelines-for-practice#.WxEfL7RA2w)

³ <http://icom.museum/the-vision/code-of-ethics/>

Notice

Het Nieuwe Instituut requests all market parties interested in bidding for this photo restoration contract (in terms of both scale and quality) as a result of this advance notice, to contact Het Nieuwe Instituut. Market parties have until 14 October 2019 to respond via the message module in the Dutch online tendering system TenderNed, providing the following information:

- Name of organisation;
- Brief description of the organisation (for example, the studio and air-conditioned storage space) including the number of employees and revenue data for 2017 and 2018;
- Your organisation's object-processing capacity;
- Motivation stating why your organisation can implement the contract for Het Nieuwe Instituut.