



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

Investigation into the Academy's colonial past
Preliminary market consultation

Amsterdam, 3 October 2024

Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

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Summary

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) has decided to start an investigation into its past involvement with colonialism and slavery.

The Academy aims not only to examine its own role in the history of colonialism (including in science and scholarship), but also to use this knowledge to raise awareness about the impact of the history of colonialism, racialisation and slavery and to reflect on what it means today.

The investigation must be based on a broad understanding of colonialism that considers networks of connections, knowledge and power relations. Focusing on the colonial past will, almost automatically, reveal the Academy's stance towards slavery while also doing justice to the complexity of colonialism in its various manifestations.

To ensure the investigation's tangibility and to breathe life into its results, it would be advisable to develop a number of specific case studies.

The Academy plans to award the commission to investigate its colonial past by undertaking a European tender. It is however not sufficiently familiar with the 'market' and potential researchers for such an investigation, beyond those in its own organisation. This preliminary market consultation is therefore meant to survey the pool of potential researchers and how different knowledge networks can be linked to carry out this investigation, without compromising its tender obligations.

It is in the interest of both the Academy and the researchers to connect at an early stage and explore opportunities and threats, so that the call for proposals and the investigation produce worthwhile outcomes.

The Academy has therefore decided to organise a meeting for interested parties at the Trippenhuis in Amsterdam on 18 November 2024, from 2 to 5 p.m. Researchers who are unable to attend this meeting may participate in the preliminary market consultation in writing.

1. General information

1.1 Introduction

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) has decided to start an investigation into its involvement with colonialism and slavery. The investigation is consistent with the Academy's policy of promoting social justice in its organisation and mobilising the necessary resources to become more inclusive. An understanding of its own past is crucial in that context. By examining its involvement with colonialism, the Academy will be able to gain more awareness of the past and its ramifications for the present, take responsibility for its history, confront possible blind spots, and reflect on its own values and practices.

The Academy's existing historiography makes little mention of its role in colonialism, because its focus has been more on celebrating the past. But as argued by the creators of the Black Heritage Tours and others, there must also be a place in that celebration for the untold stories in the organisation's history. We must not only celebrate the blessings but also acknowledge events and attitudes that can be judged as less successful or simply wrong. Accountability is not only about recognising the Academy's complicity in the colonial system. It also means inviting those who have, until now, encountered barriers in our organisation to take the stage. Understanding the many and varied facets of history will lay the foundation for dialogue and reflection with a view to becoming a forward-looking and inclusive organisation.

The investigation thus also offers the Academy an opportunity to reflect on knowledge production: what has the Academy done or neglected to do in the pursuit of knowledge and in its communication, and what effects has this had? By positioning itself as the embodiment of the best that Dutch science and scholarship have to offer, the Academy sanctions the knowledge produced by its members and the manner in which they do so, as well as prevailing notions of what 'relevant' knowledge is. How has the Academy framed that responsibility? Has it adopted a position, explicitly or implicitly, on matters that concern the work of its members/institutions in a colonial context? And has that position changed over time?

1.2 Research brief

The Academy aims not only to examine its own role in the history of colonialism (including in science and scholarship), but also to use this knowledge to raise awareness about the impact of the history of colonialism, racialisation and slavery and to reflect on what it means today.

The investigation must be based on a broad understanding of colonialism that considers networks of connections, knowledge and power relations. Focusing on the colonial past will, almost automatically, reveal the Academy's stance towards slavery while also doing justice to the complexity of colonialism in its various manifestations.

Possible topics of investigation are: the institutional structures, procedures and activities that have made the Academy what it is today, for example nomination of members, Academy advisory reports and awards, but also buildings, objects and collections, as well as any ties that the Academy, the Learned Society or the Academy's institutes had, explicitly or otherwise, to slavery and colonialism and/or what role the Academy played within the broader system of science and scholarship.

The Academy's position in the science system is made manifest not only in its specific opinions, assets and advisory activities, but also through its symbolic role within the broader system of science and scholarship. The investigation should strike a balance between examining the Academy's specific role in the science system and the activities of the Learned Society and institutes on the one hand, and studying the symbolic role that the Academy plays in academia, the economy and politics on the other. That also means taking perspectives informed by local knowledge and knowledge institutions in the former colonies explicitly into account in the research design and the investigation itself.

The investigation should focus primarily on the Dutch colonies, both in Suriname and on the Caribbean islands, as well as the Dutch East Indies and Dutch commercial outposts, in particular in Asia and South Africa. However, where applicable, it should also examine the Academy's involvement in colonies founded by other nations.

To ensure the investigation's tangibility and to breathe life into its results, it would be advisable to develop a number of specific case studies.

1.3 Purpose of the market consultation

The Academy plans to award the commission to investigate its colonial past by undertaking a European tender.

In early 2023, the Academy embarked on a series of internal and external conversations with the purpose to define the boundaries of the research brief.

The Academy intends to survey the pool of potential researchers as soon as possible and examine how different knowledge networks can be linked to carry out this investigation. It is therefore inviting interested researchers to provide information on:

- their possible interest in undertaking the investigation;
- how to access local knowledge networks about participating in the research team;
- questions that they have about the research brief.

The preliminary market consultation will be conducted with due regard for the basic principles of equal treatment, transparency and proportionality. The information obtained from the preliminary market consultation may serve as input for a follow-up, for example when drafting the final research brief, assembling various parties to form potential research teams, or drawing up the tender documents.

1.4 Timeline and budgetary conditions

The Academy estimates that it will take two or three years to complete the investigation. Only proposals that cover the entire research brief will be considered. The investigation may be carried out by a research team whose members are all affiliated with a single organisation, or by a team whose members are affiliated with multiple different organisations. Research teams may include self-employed individuals. The projected timeline for the investigation is 2025-2028. The final report must be submitted no more than three years after the start of the investigation.

The Academy will make €1,100,000 available to carry out the investigation (including any recoverable overheads and VAT). This sum will be paid against itemised expenses.

A fee of €5,000 (incl. VAT) will be made available for drafting a complete proposal that meets all of the requirements set out in the programme of requirements included in the tender document; this sum will be paid to the proposal project coordinator, who will then distribute it to the research team. The Academy Bureau is responsible for the eligibility test. If, after submitting their proposal, the research team is invited for an interview, they will be paid a further sum of € 5,000 (incl. VAT).

Teams that cannot guarantee that they will complete the investigation within the specified time and budget should not submit a proposal. If such uncertainties or time-sensitive deviations are merely marginal in nature, the team should make this explicitly known when responding to the market enquiries.

2. Research team specifications

2.1 Research team

Only proposals that cover the entire research brief will be considered. The investigation may be carried out by a research team whose members are all affiliated with a single organisation, or by a team whose members are affiliated with multiple different organisations. Research teams may include self-employed individuals.

2.2 Language of communication

Reporting must be in Dutch. If contributions by local knowledge networks are communicated in a language other than Dutch, a translation into Dutch must also be made available.

2.3 Project coordinator

The research team's project coordinator must have a proven track record as a researcher, comply with the strictest research quality standards, ¹ and have access to institutional complaints systems ensuring research integrity and social safety.

The project coordinator may not be a member of the Academy or of the Society of Arts or of The Young Academy during the term of the investigation, and may not have a part-time or other appointment at an Academy institute.

The project coordinator will serve as the Academy's main contact person.

The project coordinator must have an involvement of at least 0.2 FTE for the entire duration of the project.

The project coordinator must have demonstrable experience in connecting various knowledge networks, both in the Netherlands and in its former colonies.

The project coordinator will be responsible for:

- the research quality and integrity of the investigation;
- timely completion of the activities described in the research plan;
- financial accountability for the investigation;
- communicating with the client as the main contact person;
- the interim and final reports.

2.4 Research team members

The independent nature of the research team is crucial. That is why it must not include any Academy, Young Academy or Society of Arts members or researchers who have a part-time or other appointment at an Academy institute. Such members or researchers may, however, be consulted as experts in their field.

¹ The project coordinator should hold a PhD (Dr) and be able to produce evidence of having published in leading, peer-reviewed scholarly journals within the past three years. These publications should be of outstanding quality and should have contributed to the relevant field of study.

2.5 Communication between the research team and the Academy

Organisations that examine their own role in colonialism are forced to face what may be thorny questions of identity and responsibility. This is no different for the Academy. The independent nature of the research team is therefore crucial. The Academy would, however, ask the research team to enter into dialogue with the organisation during the investigation, and to join it in considering the potential consequences of the investigation for the organisation, its staff and its members and how the organisation can respond. The Academy intends to establish a contact working group to this end that will meet with the research team twice annually to discuss what the investigation means for the organisation. The contact working group will actively support the Academy in developing specific internal activities that engage directly with the investigation, based on its interim and final results.

3. Questions for potential researchers

1. Which market parties should be able to carry out and/or are essential for this investigation?
2. Do you see yourself as the project coordinator or a researcher conducting a portion of the investigation?
3. How can the Academy facilitate the building of an efficient and high-calibre research team during the tendering process?
4. How can local knowledge best be incorporated into the investigation, not least for the purpose of accessing crucial sources in the former colonies?
5. What questions do you have about the research brief?
6. What recommendations or comments would you like to share with the Academy about the European tender?
7. What recommendations or comments would you like to share with the Academy about the content, scope, wording, execution, etc. of the research brief?

4. Preliminary market consultation: Procedure

4.1 Communication

This preliminary market consultation will be published on TenderNed. In addition, the Academy will also extend direct invitations to researchers to participate in the consultation.

4.2 Academy contact person

The Academy contact persons for the preliminary market consultation are:

First contact person: Marie Beauchamps, policy advisor for the Academy Bureau and project coordinator for the internal process leading to an investigation into the Academy's colonial past.

Second contact person: Gijs van der Starre, senior policy advisor, Academy Bureau.

4.3 Schedule

The schedule for the preliminary market consultation is given below. The Academy intends to publish the call for proposals on 19 December 2024. It will decide which follow-up procedures to undertake based on the outcomes of the preliminary market consultation.

<i>Activities</i>	<i>Schedule</i>
Publication of preliminary market consultation (TenderNed)	3 October 2024
Deadline for interested parties to submit written questions concerning the preliminary market consultation (TenderNed)	23 October 2024
Academy's responses to written questions (TenderNed)	5 November 2024
Preliminary market consultation, meeting	18 November 2024, 2 - 5 p.m.
Deadline for interested parties to submit comments concerning the preliminary market consultation (TenderNed)	25 November 2024
Publication of summary of preliminary market consultation results	Mid-December 2024
Publication of call for proposals on TenderNed	19 December 2024

4.4 Discussions during preliminary market consultation

The Academy will organise a meeting for interested parties at the Trippenhuys in Amsterdam on 18 November 2024. The meeting will focus on the questions that the Academy has for the researchers. Researchers who are unable to attend this meeting may participate in the preliminary market consultation in writing.

By organising this meeting, the Academy hopes to engage in open dialogue with all interested parties. The purpose is to share knowledge and experience so as to arrive at a sound research brief and European tender documents, ensuring satisfactory results for all parties.

4.5 Questions and answers

Interested parties may submit their questions through TenderNed using the form provided in Appendix 1. The questions and the responses will be shared on TenderNed. Questions will be anonymised.

5. Terms and conditions and provisions

Parties wishing to submit a research proposal are not required to participate in the preliminary market consultation.

Interested researchers may also respond in writing. See Appendix 2.

Registration is required to participate in the preliminary market consultation meeting on 18th November in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Register using the following link: [Preliminary market consultation for investigation into the Academy's colonial past \(lyyti.fi\)](https://preliminarymarketconsultationforinvestigationintotheacademycolonialpast.lyyti.fi)

The Academy reserves the right to reject requests to register without stating its reasons for doing so; it will, however, endeavour to explain its decision. There is a limit to the number of participants who can be accommodated. Requests to register will be considered in order of receipt. After registration has been confirmed, each designated visitor should report to the Academy/Trippenhuis reception desk in Amsterdam on the agreed date and at the agreed time. Visitors must state their name and, where applicable, which party or organisation they are representing. Visitors must identify themselves by presenting a valid form of ID.