

**A unique touch-and-feel suit
for the visually impaired
Amuseur public**



Musical street barrel organ act for the visually impaired

Amuseur public: musical street barrel organ act

Musical entertainment in a jester's suit: *Amuseur public* (street entertainment) - a street barrel organ act for both visually impaired and sighted people - is a wonderful experience for the young and young at heart. Goal: an intensive, musical experience attended by blind, partially sighted, and sighted people. Visual information is provided from different perspectives, stimulating people's sense of touch and hearing. Recognise materials, sounds, music, colours, shapes, objects and props.

Costume: jester's patchwork suit design

A jester's suit consisting of materials that are pleasant to the touch, specially designed by Studio Sabine Staartjes (Amsterdam) in close cooperation with Otto van der Mieden, director-curator of the *Nederlandse Poppenspe(e)lmuseum* [Dutch Puppetry Museum] in the village of

people are encouraged to touch and The suit's jacket and trousers have a of a variety of fabric textures - including opted for creating a multi-coloured patchwork pattern, or rather: resembles that of a harlequin, colourful pieces of fabric.

Creation of the suit

All pieces of fabric used for coat and trousers are equally pattern of the coat runs trousers vertically, with a spreading across the fabric. soft or course fabric to knitted have been altered on the of crinkly material sewn between wonderful crackling sound. but the pieces of fabric are brown, red, and gold.

10 cm by 12 cm, as a result of and trousers merge to a whole. Its design is a nod to the contemporary and wearable suit. act are encouraged to touch be worn on a



Vorchten. In a playful manner, feel its fabric and textures. tartan pattern that is composed audible ones. The designer has suit with a diamond-shape quilted, padded fabric. The suit which is also made up of

the hand-made patchwork sized. The diamond-shape horizontally and that of the rhythmic, repetitive pattern The patches range from or crocheted materials, sewing machine, or have a piece their layers that makes a The suit's basic colour is black, predominantly denim blue, The different patches all measure which the patterns of the coat The suit also has pockets. harlequin figure, but it is a more Spectators of the *Amuseur Public* and feel the suit, which can also variety of other occasions.

Picture: Otto van der Mieden with the touch-and-feel suit and a probing cane (commonly called a 'white cane' or 'long cane') for the visually impaired.



Picture: Otto van der Mieden, director-curator of the Dutch Puppetry Museum, with the touch-and-feel suit and a red-banded white, wooden probing cane fitted with the black head of the Italian Pulcinella as a handle, and a little bel.

Accessories and props

A red-banded white, wooden probing cane with a little bell, fitted with Pulcinella's black head as a handle; a black, commonly called triangle felt hat, a gold-coloured leather pouch bag, gold-coloured, leather, laced shoes; a satin, ruffled shirt with copper-coloured buttons, a gold-coloured scarf, a bow tie, suspenders, and a golden belt.

Extra

- Colourful, traditional Dutch puppet Jan Klaassen (Kasperl), and Pulcinella with a black half mask (Naples/Italy): hand puppets with a wooden head and a fabric body.
- Small barrel organ with a lifelike monkey (a fabric hand puppet); a drum; a bell; a horn; a copper-coloured, metal organ grinder's collecting box; and a money bag. The little street organ is situated on a small, three-wheeled handcart.

Commedia dell'arte: Harlequin

The harlequin is a comical servant character from the Italian *commedia dell'arte*, a form of folk theatre which consists of farce, dance, mime, and music. This theatre form originated in Italy in the sixteenth century and gradually spread over major parts of Europe. Many *commedia dell'arte* characters eventually acquired a permanent role in European folk puppet theatre. Harlequins usually comment on daily events in a satirical manner, not only in theatre performances for adults, but also as hand puppets in traditional folk puppet theatre.

Comical characters in folk puppet theatre

In the past, the profession of puppeteer was practised mainly by poor people, and usually the spectators were also working-class people. The performances demonstrated the fight against social injustice through the comical characters. Folk puppet theatre is based on old traditions, which differ on a country-by-country basis.



For example, puppet theatre with Jan Klaassen is typically Dutch, and his cousins include the German Kasperl, the English Mr Punch, the French Polichinelle, the Russian Petrushka, and the Italian Harlequin/Arlecchino. The Neapolitan Pulcinella is the forefather of many national puppet theatre heroes.



Picture: the German Kasperl with Otto van der Mieden as a street entertainer.

Studio Sabine Staartjes

Sabine Staartjes, an Amsterdam-based, eclectic fashion designer, pursues the challenging slogan 'Bring More Color To Your Life!'. In 2012, Sabine launched the Studio Sabine Staartjes label. She designs clothes, accessories, and jewellery, exploring and walking the boundary between the wearable and art.



Her designs focus on contrast and contradiction, making organised chaos the appropriate term for her amazing fashion line. She is inspired by influences from the urban scene (e.g. the hip-hop culture and rap culture). 'I'm constantly developing new techniques, combinations, and crafts. I feel strongly about originality and am always looking for something that doesn't yet exist.'

A key feature of her collections is that her entire clothing line is one-of-a-kind, sustainable, and hand-made. Her designs are original, colourful and rich in contrast, flamboyant, comfortable, and not trend-sensitive.

Acknowledgements

Pictures: logos of Studio Sabine Staartjes, Amsterdam; harlequin figure: illustration by Maurice Sand/A. Manceau from 'Masques et bouffons - Comédie Italienne'. Imprint: Michel Lévy Frères, Paris (1860); suit-pattern design and creation: Studio Sabine Staartjes, Amsterdam; shirt: Creatief&Zo, Tjitske Koops, Heerde; triangle hat: De Hoedenmaker - Dirk-Jan Kortschot and Marcel de Leeuw, Amsterdam. Photos of the jester's suit and Otto van der Mieden: Vakfoto Henri van der Beek, Wapenveld;



photo of the street barrel organ act with Otto van der Mieden and a monkey: Ben Kortman Fotografie, Utrecht; implementation of the tactile images: Christelijke Bibliotheek voor Blinden en Slechtzienden (CBB), Ermelo. Illustrations: Elsje Zwart and others. Concept and texts: Otto van der Mieden, Vorchten, The Netherlands (2020).

Pictures: Sabine Staartjes and Otto van der Mieden with a triangle hat.



Picture: Otto van der Mieden with the touch-and-feel suit and the Italian Pulcinella (hand puppet). Acrylic painting: 21 by 30 cm. Artist: Dorien Plaat (Gorssel, 2020).

Hyperlinks

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/blinden.aspx> (Dutch webpage on the project for the blind), http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/blinden_EN.aspx (English webpage on the project for the blind),
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Amuseurpublic.pdf> (*Amuseur public* activity, in Dutch and in English),
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/draaiorgel.html> (barrel organ music by composer Luigi Boccherini),
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/kostuumSabineStaartjes.pdf> (description of the unique touch-and-feel suit *Amuseur public*) and
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/Doepak279e.pdf> (Twee tactiele monden/Two tactile mouths).

This document is available in Dutch and in English. See:

<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/kostuumSabineStaartjes.pdf> and
<http://www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/pdf/CostumeSabineStaartjes.pdf>.



Pictures: *Amuseur public*, barrel organ act with Otto van der Mieden and a lifelike monkey (hand puppet).

With thanks to



Vrienden van het Poppenspe(e)lmuseum
Friends of the Dutch Puppetry Museum

Ieders Museum

katholieke stichting voor
blinden & slechtzienden

Dr. C.J. Vaillantfonds

Goede Doelen Fonds van de LVC

IJsselbosch Foundation

FUNDATIE VAN BEIJEREN



STICHTING
BLINDENHULP



PASMAN
STICHTING

DutchCulture
centre for international
cooperation

**ROTTERDAMSE STICHTING
BLINDENBELANGEN**



Gelderse
Blinden
Stichting



Poppenspe(e)lmuseum Musée de Marionnettes et de Guignol Puppentheatermuseum Puppetry Museum
Kerkweg 38 8193 KL Vorchten NL Tel./Tél.: +31(0)578 - 56 02 39 Info: +31(0)578 - 63 13 29
info@poppenspelmuseum.nl www.poppenspelmuseum.nl www.poppenspel.info
www.poppenspelmuseum.nl/onderwijs www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl
www.poppenspelmuseumbibliotheek.nl/Blinden
www.geheugenvannederland.nl/poppenspel2