Recommendations of the Catalogue Project Group

20th July 2021

Context and mandate

The Catalogue Project Group was set up in January 2021, and consists of the following Eye employees: Anne Gant (project leader), Rommy Albers, Jim Wraith, Susan van Gelderen and Walter Swagemakers. The brief prepared by Giovanna and Frank provides the following context:

'Eye wants to engage in internal and external discussions about how we use language in our communication, from the perspectives of inclusivity and diversity. This means looking critically at the language used in our catalogue, as much retrospectively (how we deal with terms and descriptions no longer considered appropriate) as looking forward (what terminology we would like to use instead, and what guidelines can be given for descriptive texts). On these points we want to formulate policies that translate into practical solutions for CE that stand in line with the policies and practices of peer institutions (inter)nationally so that collections, for example, could be linked together where desirable[1]'.

The project group received as its assignment to investigate the catalogue and contextualising policies of a number of comparable institutions in the Netherlands as well as abroad, and the existing guidelines of (intern)national umbrella organizations (such as the *Museum Vereniging* [Museum's Association] in the Netherlands, and FIAF and AMIA in the wider world). On the basis of this benchmark, the project group will prepare a number of recommendations for new policies regarding the catalogue. Further, the mandate requests that the group ensures Eye-wide coordination on language use by way of communication and information exchange with other departments.

The results will be delivered at the end of July.

1. Introduction

To be able to judge what in the catalogue must be changed, it's important to understand how the catalogue is set up and what functions it fulfils, thus we begin with a brief explanation.

The Eye Catalogue consists of Collection Eye (CE), the part representing the film and film-related collections, and Bibis, the information system for books and periodicals. In addition, internally we use EYE-D, the Media Asset Management system (MAM) linked to CE. The CE catalogue was created to provide access to films and film-related collections for conservation, research, and programming. It provides factual information about the objects and their interrelationships. Bibis is a catalogue that follows the usual formal outlines of the library world. Within the CE catalogue, some reflection takes place in the 'curator's comments' field. In addition, substantive content descriptions are made of the visual material, often sourced from external sources. References are provided for sources providing information about the film, it's reception, and certification. Reflections on a given title come primarily via programming, educational programmes, online presentations (website, Eye Film Player), publications, lectures, and articles.

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[1] For the full brief, see appendix E

It is important to keep the functions of formal cataloguing of works and the reflection thereon separated in the catalogue, to prevent the catalogue from becoming overly bound to specific periods in time. The ways in which we reflect on films via presentations and programming will change over the course of time to reflect new questions and insights provoked by the collection. A large part of our catalogue can be compared with the catalogue of the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* [National Library of the Netherlands], who receive on a voluntary basis a copy of all books published in the Netherlands. A formal description is given of the contents of the book so that the user can dive deeper into the book and the period in which it was written.

Currently, museums are being asked to publish their collections and related information online. The CE and Bibis catalogues have been accessible online (without images) for some time. It is stipulated in the *Erfgoedwet* [Cultural Heritage Act] that all national collections, including that of Eye, are published online (preferably *with* images) via *Collectie Nederland*, the database of the *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed* [Cultural Heritage Agency]. The information for *Collectie Nederland* is pulled directly from CE, though this is merely basic information. See, for example, the information regarding the Filibus poster collection. Additionally, Eye has a curated online offering via, for example, the Eye Film Player, European Film Gateway, and the Education and Programming departments. With a curated offering there is always a tailoring of the information provided to best suit the audience. In doing so, various audience groups are taken into account – in these instances, the catalogue can be considered a supplier of 'raw data' that is polished further along in the publication process.

Terms
With the online publication of catalogue, discussion about 'outdated' terms and descriptions gains extra relevance. Because the catalogue gives a fairly factual description of the films/film-related collection, possibly supplemented with reflections on the content via the 'curator's comments' field and perceptions of the film at the time of release, we believe that the focus of any adjustments will be on the use of outdated terminology in keywords and free text fields. Here we can think of, amongst others, 'negro', 'eskimo', 'coolie', 'gypsy' and 'slave', but also words such as 'hut', 'exotic', 'native', 'rebel'/'insurgent' vs 'hero'. Here we do not need to reinvent the wheel, as there are already good publications and codes of best practice extant which indicate how to deal with these issues.

Fiction vs. non-fiction
In addition, we believe that fiction and documentary material require different approaches. Fiction films frequently contain stereotypes in reference to Native Americans, Roma and Sinti, Inuits, enslaved peoples etc. These words cannot be simply exchanged for new terminology. For example, replacing the term 'Indian' with 'Native American' would be contrary to reality in so far as reference to an existing construction in the cinema of the time would be lost. With documentaries this is different: herein images are presented in conjunction with intertitles/spoken text with which the maker wants to provide an image of an aspect of reality. Here, then, it is easier to adapt such words.

Language
Another point under discussion in the museum world is the difference in description of visual material from, for example, antiquity or medieval times, and the present day: language is changeable. In antiquity and the middle ages 'slavery' had different connotations than during the period of the Atlantic/Asian slave trades. Translated to the practice of Eye we cannot simply use the term 'enslaved' in describing films set in antiquity. Similarly words such as 'kenau' now have a different meaning than in the time of Kenau Simonsdochter Hasselaar (1526-1588), when 'kenau' denoted not a shrew, but a hero.

The present databases are as yet only available in Dutch, which makes the catalogue less easily searchable for speakers of other languages.

Formal description vs. reflection
By clearly distinguishing between formal description and reflective texts, and communicating this clearly to the user and outlining the context in presentations and programming, we believe the catalogue will remain a robust source of information about the Eye collection.

2. Recommendations

On the basis of our research into the practices and policies of peer institutions and interviews with stakeholders (see appendix B), we present the following recommendations, divided into five categories: enrichment of existing records, guidelines for new records, suggestions for search terms and metadata structures, person records, and disclaimer/notifications for catalogue texts. Recommendations labelled with *IR conform with the "Internal Inclusivity Council's recommendations for the Catalogue Project Group, May 3rd, 2021". Recommendations labelled with *CE 2.0 will be resolved in the new catalogue system presently under development.

Recommendations for existing records
- The catalogue record itself makes up part of the history of a given object and hence should remain unchanged from a museal perspective but can be contextualised with additional information about the author/source and date of creation. Thus, additional information may be added, but the previous records must remain in their original context. *IR
- Where possible use original sources (with authorship attributions) for synopses, for example from contemporary reviews or programme notes from festivals, Delpher, international film databases. Incidentally, these sources may contain text offensive to certain groups or individuals. *IR
- Retroactively apply ISBN, EIDR, ISAN identifiers (unique, international numbers given to a specific work). *CE 2.0
- Define areas of special interest and invite subject matter experts/critical friends to enrich the catalogue data (Rijksmuseum Model). *IR
- Import information into CE from various external film databases with source citations. This will result in a richer and more up-to-date set of information. Import YouTube texts (produced by Maike Lasseur) into CE with source citations. This complies with the prior recommendation.. *IR
- Historic titles remain the same (for example, 'The Happy Eskimo'). *IR
- "Given titles" – titles created by Eye – may be changed (e.g. 'Negerdorp'), though the previous title will remain visible in the catalogue as "Former Eye title".
- If a disclaimer is used for a film, this must be recorded in the 'curator's comments' with the date when this was made, the text of the disclaimer, and information regarding the screening. E.g.: "Blind Kind, April 2021, Eye Film Player" + disclaimer text. Proposed adjustment to CE: add "Disclaimer" as an option in the "Type" field of 'curator's comments'. *IR
- Reduce the number of textual description fields (presently five Dutch and three English), and make a choice as to which texts are to be edited. Find an editor for this purpose. *IR *CE 2.0
- Make the catalogue available in English, so that it is more widely accessible. *CE 2.0

  Rather than indicating what themes a film might be useful to illuminate, we think it is more practical to show how a film has been programmed in the past, and in what context. By enriching the records with information about the programmes in which a film has been screened, we can show how these have been interpreted in the past. This important documentations of screenings and loans is unfortunately missing for all of our digital files: this needs to be updated to create better data regarding the historical use of our material. *CE 2.0

Recommendations specific to new catalogue records
- Attributed authorship for catalogue entries: who wrote the text and when (*not* when it was added to the catalogue). This provides extra context to the commentary. *CE 2.0
- ISAN, EIDR, and ISBN numbers to be applied to all film and book records. This allows for data to be shared, in turn enriches the information. *CE 2.0
- Registration of disclaimers, and when these are used (see above under 'recommendations for existing records').
- Provide a supplementary training course for catalogue data entry covering inclusivity rules for descriptive texts.

- Eye-wide standardisation of terminology (which sources we use for keywords, place names, names, languages etc.)

Recommendations for search terms and metadata structure

- Use of a thesaurus were links can be made between approved and non-approved terms and (hierarchical) relationships can be established. For example: 'Gypsy (fictional stereotype of Roma)' links as a relative term to Roma. 'Eskimo (fictional stereotype of Inuit or Native Alaskan)' links to Inuit. With this thesaurus, other outdated terms can be linked to new ones, for example 'negroes' as a non-preferred term to 'black people' (also words like 'natives' etc.)
- New categories/labels, such as "blackface" or "colonialism" as keywords in consultations with the GTAA (thesaurus used in conjunction with the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision).
- Addition of persistent identifiers to keywords (Wikidata), making it possible in the future for people to search the online database in their own language.
- In addition to the ability to provide sources, provide for the possible addition of literature references for contextualisation (e.g. films of the Indies). *CE 2.0
- For the purpose of contextualisation, allow for the import of exhibition or programming texts, or linking of same to the catalogue. *CE 2.0

Recommendations for person records

- Biographical descriptions of women in film can be approved (see also Wikipedia project); these are meagre by comparison to the biographical descriptions of males.
- CE presently only indicated gender as male, female, or unknown, and does not take into account non-binary individuals who do not fit in these categories. Inquiries have been made of other museums as to how they deal with gender identity, but responses are yet to be received. At the moment we feel we cannot make a precise recommendation for this, though it is clear that a new field for gender identity is required. As soon as further input is received, we shall define this recommendation in further detail.

Recommendations for disclaimer/notification as part of the catalogue record

- The question at hand is whether a disclaimer should be used to draw the user's attention to the fact that viewing or reading a work may present them to content that is not in line with current norms and values, or may otherwise be harmful to the user. 'Disclaimer' is somewhat a legalistic term, and it may be better to use the more neutral 'notification'. After all, what is experienced as offensive by one person is not an issue for another. It remains to be determined when exactly a disclaimer/notification is to be used. A problem encountered here is that we register films with a main theme, leaving the possibility for offensive images to exist with no means by which these can be searched for/notified of). Further, an interesting question remains as to how we deal with subtitles, which could be corrected or censored.
- The catalogue itself should have a general disclaimer/notification stating that the catalogue is built of a collection of unworked, raw data, collated from a wide range of sources and time periods. The information in the catalogue, then, is to be considered as not ready for publication, and should be tailored to the intended audience.

  The above recommendations are systematically summarised in appendix A. The matrix shows, among other things, which recommendations can be completed in the short term, and those expected to take a longer time to realise.

3. Extra steps

- Make a specific plan for a DEI catalogue intern via P&P (coordinated by Elif and Anne).
- Make a small test case for a number of these subjects. The advice to the Inclusivity Council is to provide a budget of €20,000 to allow for a five-month pilot.

4. New catalogue: CE 2.0

The present catalogues of Eye (CE and Bibis) are outdated, and are to be replaced with a new system (anticipated lead time 2 years). As a result, only absolutely necessary changes will be made to the current systems. The new catalogue (Axiell Collections) will have many of the features currently required. To summarise:

- The library and the film(-related) collections will be integrated into the same system. This provides for the possibility of linking literature to the collection so as to better provide context. It also improves the management of keywords, film titles, persons, and organisations, which all take place in one location.
- The system will use a thesaurus, where relationships between preferred and non-preferred terms can be established (CE is a non-relational database).
- Descriptive texts are to be provided with a name and date. These description fields are replicable, so that older descriptions can be retained. Hence it is possible to choose only to publish the most recent ones online.
- The new catalogue will be provided with a language option, so that field names, thesaurus terms, and selection lists are also offered in English. Additionally, a separate field will be provided for English language descriptions. The present catalogue is, aside from some descriptions in English, solely in Dutch.
- There will be the possibility to record screenings and loans (also from external parties).
- Fields will be provided to record texts from exhibitions and data deliveries (e.g. YouTube and other websites), linked to the corresponding date and URL, so as to provide greater context.
- EIDR, ISAN, and ISBN fields to be added.
- Online publication by way of an API, whereby a choice can be made which fields are to be shown, and which not (as applicable to the entire catalogue, not per record).
- Possibility to exclude records from online publication (e.g. films under embargo).

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Recommendations of the Catalogue Project Group

Recommendations for existing records

Category	Present status	Short term	Longer term/extra cost involved	CE 2.0
Adapt descriptions; replaced loaded terminology	Terminology will be adjusted in a relatively small number of records	Can be done in the short term; needs to be done in a project basis.		
Existing records remain	Information will be retained	Policy remains unchanged: no action to be taken.		CE contains a dump of Freebase; it may be possible to include a dump of CE in CE 2.0
Use of external descriptions	Is already done for films received via the Netherlands Film Fund. For a large part of the collection, no external descriptions are available: curators and registrars provide descriptive texts.	Policy remains, though source citations to be included.		In CE 2.0 separate fields for descriptions and published text in which the source and date for the content can be included.
Unique, international identifiers	Cannot yet be input	To become policy: ISAN field to be added in CE	ISAN numbers to be imported and matched to title	
Experts for areas of special interest			Costs money and organisational work; in future to be done on a project basis – e.g. as a result of presentations, internships, or research projects	
Import information from external film databases				It is important that we synchronise information/texts on our own website and in CE 2.0 in the future. E.g. from Eye Youtube and Collection Online
Historic titles	Will be maintained	Policy remains unchanged		
Given titles	Can be replaced; the old given title remains as 'Former Eye title'	Policy remains partially valid: can be further elaborated	Catalogue scanned for 'given titles', quickly processed	
Disclaimer/notification	Can be described in 'curator's comments'	Will have to become policy; additional function in 'curator's comments'		
Reduction in number of descriptive fields			Presents a large-scale project, which will require editorial	May be partly realised during the conversion of CE to CE 2.0. Should also

			supervision and commensurate authorisation. A content editor will need to be appointed.	include the desired synchronisation of internal and external descriptions/information
Multilingualism	English in addition to Dutch.		Dutch terms provided with an English translation.	Visibility to be realised in CE 2.0

Recommendations specific to new catalogue records

Category	Present status	Short term	Longer term/extra cost involved	CE 2.0
Citation of authorship for descriptions	Is presently done in part, for descriptions taken from external sources			In CE 2.0 separate fields to be provided for descriptions and published texts, wherein the source and creation date of the content description can be recorded (see also: Recommendations for existing records: original descriptions)
Unique, international identifiers		See: Recommendations for existing records. ISAN numbers to be entered from the Netherlands Film Funds submission form		
Disclaimer/notification				See: reconsiderations for existing records
Catalogue input training	New users undertake an input course	Training course to be expanded to include extensive information on content accessibility and matters of inclusivity/diversity.		In future, a content catalogue editor to oversee training course, editing, and authorisation.
Standardisation	Partly current policy: many entries creating with reference to existing standardised thesauri	Catalogue manager	Check and complete thesauri	Catalogue manager

Recommendations for search terms and metadata structure

Category	Present status	Short term	Longer term/extra cost involved	CE 2.0
Hierarchical thesauri			After delivery of CE 2.0: incorporation of hierarchy of current terms by catalogue manager	Possibility for hierarchical structure present in CE 2.0
New contextual categories	Addition of new keywords and genres	Can be realised in the short term: add to		

		thesauri in consultation with the GTAA		
Persistent identifiers				Future adaptation, to be implemented in CE 2.0
Contextual literature references	Possibility of including references for films or sub-collections	Already possible, but not specifically with inclusivity/diversity in mind		Elaborated in 'test case'; can be accommodated in an extra functionality under 'curator's comments'. There will also be a link between the library and the catalogue.
Import of programming and exhibition texts				Can be imported after delivery of CE 2.0

Recommendation for person records

Category	Present status	Short term	Longer term/extra cost involved	CE 2.0
Biographical description of women	Is being undertaken	Can be expanded, albeit with editorial oversight (≠ Wikipedia project)		
Gender	New term for gender identity to be added	To be added; easy to enter after determining correct terminology – instruction to be provided		

Recommendations for disclaimer/notification

Category	Present status	Short term	Longer term/extra cost involved	CE 2.0
Disclaimer/notification				See: Recommendations for existing records
General disclaimer/notification	Already exists, in reference to integrity of catalogue information	Expand with text on inclusivity/diversity		

Extra steps
- Plan DEI Catalogue: P&P internship (Anne/Elif)
- Plan literature references as functionality within curator's comments: Reinwardt Academie internship (Walter/Rommy/Susan)

Furthermore, it is important during the implementation of CE 2.0 (when Bibis will be integrated into the new system) to pay close attention to data conversion, editing of names, thesauri, and terminology, and planning of content improvements. A new relocation project, but now for data.

Appendix B: Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the following stakeholders and experts:

Internal
- Rixt Jonkman (Rommy)
- Leenke Ripmeester (Anne)
- Elif Rongen (Anne)
- Giovanna Fossati (Anne)
- Maike Lasseur (Anne)
- Piet Dirckx (Rommy)

External
- Beeld en Geluid – Irma van Kampen (Rommy)
- Rijksmuseum - Bas Nederveen (Walter)
- British Film Institute – Stephen McConnachie (Anne)
- Academy Film Archive - Jessice DePrest and team (Anne)
- Rijksmuseum van Oudheden - Lucas Petit (Walter)
- Museum van Wereldculturen – Cindy Zalm en Richard van Alphen (Walter)
- Openluchtmuseum, Allard Pierson Museum, Van Gogh Museum, Stedelijk Museum en Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Walter via SIMIN)

Appendix C: Possible areas of focus for SMEs/Critical Friends
- KIT films
- Mullens
- Home movies
- Travelogues
- Zwarte Piet
- NSB
- Religious and social groups
- Sexual politics
- "Multicultural society" TV films, NPO etc.
- Suriname films
- Other colonial regions
- Disability/neurodiversity (Pisters, Lameris)

Appendix D: Other sources consulted
- NFF webinar KLEUR, March 9, 2021
- White Innocence, Gloria Wekker, 2016
- The Dutch Atlantic, Kwame Nimako, 2011
- The Brutish Museums Dan Hicks, 2020
- Webinar on decolonisation Reinwardt Academie, 2021
- https://www.tropenmuseum.nl/nl/over-het-tropenmuseum/words-matter-publicatie
- Het Ongemakkelijke Gesprek [The Uncomfortable Conversation] ⋆ Nederlands Film Festival
- Eindrapport onderzoek geslachtsregistratie [End report of research into gender registration], Verdonk & Klooster Associates, Zoetermeer 2019 commissioned by het Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken [Ministry of Home Affairs]
- Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac and Joseph Ziegler, eds, 2013. *Origins of racism in the West,* Cambridge University Press.
- https://www.reinwardt.ahk.nl/media/rwa/docs/Publicaties/Queering-the-Collections-publicatielight.pdf

Appendix E: Brief

DRAFT – Brief of Catalogue Project Group
Eye wants to discuss, internally and externally, how we use language in our communication in light of inclusivity and diversity. This means taking a critical look at the language used in our catalogue, both as much retrospectively (how we deal with terms and descriptions no longer considered appropriate) as looking forward (what terminology we would like to use instead, and what guidelines can be given for descriptive texts). On these points we want to formulate policies that translate into practical solutions for CE that stand in line with the policies and practices of peer institutions (inter)nationally so that collections, for example, could possibly be linked together where desirable.

Commencing 2021, we want to put together a cross-departmental project group (within Collection) that will give advice in this area, and provide practical proposals. The project group will comprise of colleagues who work a lot on/with the catalogue in terms of both content and function.

Assignment
The project group received as its assignment to investigate the catalogue and contextualising policies of a number of comparable institutions in the Netherlands as well as abroad, and the existing guidelines of (intern)national umbrella organizations (such as the *Museum Vereniging* [Museum's Association] in the Netherlands, and FIAF and AMIA in the wider world).

On the basis of this benchmark, the project group will prepare a number of recommendations for new policies regarding the catalogue.

Assuming that the project group can begin work in January 2021, we expect a result by the end of June 2021, as follows: January to April: literature study and interviews; April to end of July: formulate advice and recommendations.

Eye-wide coordination
To ensure that there is Eye-wide coordination over language use – and given that this topic is also under discussion in other departments who are also forming policy thereupon – we want the catalogue working group to be in contact, and sharing information at an Eye-wide level.

It is of great importance that the choices made for the catalogue are in line with, for example, texts produced for the public and/or stakeholders by other departments (think of MarCom, Programming, Education, and SEE.NL). How exactly this coordination will take shape will be defined shortly.