
'Demolition Ball and Battle of Waterloo'

29 June 2011

There is a danger that distinctive works of art created in the Seventies and early Eighties will vanish from several stations, as part of the Amsterdam Metro East Line renovation. They include the Gesamt artwork by Jan Sierhuis, Louis van Gasteren, Tine Hofman and others in the Nieuwmarkt metro station, the typography 'Waterloo' by Willem Sandberg at Waterlooplein station, and the letters by Opland at Wibautstraat station. Regrettably, the artwork by Siet Zuyderland in CS station was recently removed.

Every one of the artworks on the East Line is exceptional, typical of the location. As a series, each in its own way is characteristic and symbolic of the history of integrated art in public space - under and above ground - of the city of Amsterdam, of The Netherlands and even further afield. It is therefore of real cultural importance to mount a campaign and take direct action to retain the works of art still existing in the metro stations, and to protect them from the strokes of the demolition ball.

I wish to support the renovation, relocation or complete re-execution of the above-mentioned artworks according to their original design in the station renovation. Tomorrow these artworks will then appear as good as new, just as they were formed yesterday and designed by the artists at the time.

In my vision, the East Line renovation moreover offers the optimum, ideal opportunity to seriously investigate whether re-executing artworks, that have in the meantime disappeared from the metro line, may yet be included in the renovation planning. With this objective in mind, it might be possible to have the entire range of site-specific artworks - at any rate as complete as possible - present at metro stations between the Central Station and Amsterdam Zuidoost after the planned completion of the station renovation, in 2014.

So please give the artworks their old place back in this station renovation and if need be, adapt the renovated areas to the works.

Let us all fight for a renewed look at the plans, with all the care and attention needed. A look at all avenues allowing the collection of public artworks presently enriching the metro route to continue to exist as part of the East Line renovation.

See you at the Demolition Ball and the Battle of Waterloo,

Greetings from the Nieuwmarkt,

Martijn Sandberg

"The last thing you should do in times of cultural demolition is destroy good public works by good artists and designers." Max Bruinsma.

To read Max Bruinsma's argument in its entirety, see the online article 'Grafisch erfgoed bedreigd' ('Graphic legacy threatened') on the Items website: www.items.nl

Text: 'Demolition Ball and Battle of Waterloo' (short version)

Author: Martijn Sandberg

Date: 29 June 2011