

The Position of Women Artists in Four Art Disciplines in The Netherlands

A Report for Mama Cash by Astrid Kerchman and Pauline Salet, January 2019

Introduction

This report serves as an account of the research project for Mama Cash, which had as its goal to map out the current position of female artists in the Dutch art scene. This meta-research contains a collection of already existing (quantitative) research projects and articles about female artists in The Netherlands. Whenever there was no existing research available, we filled those gaps through our own research, using the method of counting. The research focuses on artists in The Netherlands only. The selection made, which will be elaborated on later in this document, was based on a series of available research, our own knowledge and recommendations from professionals in the field. The first intention of this research was to find out whether inequality resides in a particular discipline, or whether there is a commonality to be found between the different fields/disciplines.

Methodology

Deploying the method of counting and attempting to put inequality into numbers does not come without its limits. Quantitative research methods are often **assumed as providing objective knowledge**. The translation of certain things into numbers suggests the existence of numbers as factual representations of phenomena. However, feminist research argues for taking into account situatedness, politics of location and personal biases in the collection of data. Furthermore, regarding data as facts can result in **generalisations** and leaves out any diversity within the studied group. Additionally, this method involves a level of **categorisation**. Consequently, another risk involved in the use of this method is that of reinstating (gender) binaries, a process that counters feminist thinking, which seeks to break through and transcend those set boundaries and binary thinking. The solution, however, does not lie in creating more and more subgroups; a process that could lead to an infinite number of categories that on their own are not representative of a certain trend.

Therefore, we approach the categorising involved in quantitative research not as defining, but as **strategic tool** for mapping out structural problems based on structures in a society where people/bodies are being gendered and recognised as such. Counting as a strategic tool can provide an indication of a larger, structural problem of inequality and exclusion by giving a sample which can serve as a starting point for further research, rather than a definite overview. The supposed objectivity of numbers, assumed as 'facts' that are already there, as information ready to collect neglects the researchers' position and any biases on the researcher's part/positionality from which researcher is doing research and speaking. The outcome of this research is a result of a series of choices based on the politics of location, and influenced by own perceptions based on positionality, prior knowledge and biases. This document serves as a means of nuancing the data presented in the Volkskrant article of February 4, 2018, to give insight into the choices and selections made during the research process, and to provide an overview of all the data collected.

Disciplines

For the discipline **Music**, we used a report by BumaStemra from 2018 and articles by Rufus Kain, published by De Correspondent in 2017, supplemented with own counts, providing an indication of the share of women on the most popular Dutch radio stations, the most popular

Dutch (pop)festivals, and members of the collecting society for composers and music labels, Buma/Stemra. For **Literature**, we looked into the Dutch literary canon, based on a survey by the 'Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letteren'. Additionally, we conducted our own research, looking into authors connected to seven major Dutch publishing houses.

The section **Visual Arts** looks into museums and galleries, based on Pauline Salet's own Master thesis on eight Dutch museums, as well as additional research for Mama Cash on five influential art galleries. Lastly, the section **Performing Arts** contains an overview of theatre, dance, opera and symphony orchestras in The Netherlands. This was also based on new research for Mama Cash.

Limitations

The timespan in which this research was conducted was one month, meaning that the available time frame for this research was very limited. The sources and tools available to us resulted in having to make specific choices regarding our methods and in the institutions and collectives we picked. Existing research had used methods of digital software such as data scraping tools (for example in the case of Rufus Kain) or handing out surveys (in the case of the Buma/Stemra report); things that we did not have at our disposal. Because of this, the additional research done for Mama Cash, such as counting the number of authors represented by publishing houses and artists in performing arts was limited to only a few well-known institutions; enough to give an indication but limited enough to make the research feasible.

Our research focused specifically on the **artists**. Looking at, for example, the representation of women in the arts, fell outside the scope of our research. We also did not take into account managing directors, assistants and (in the case of performance arts) performers, which means that what we define as an artist differs between disciplines. We focused on the positions that have, from a structural day-to-day basis, the most influence in the decision making of who receives a platform and how this platform is given shape. Whereas the notion of who is given space is relevant for actors as well, we approached, for example, authors and artists in museums as different kinds of agents in the spaces they are given than actors casted in a play. This is not to say they don't bring any agency or input into the play, but they have less authority in defining roles than for example a play writer or a choreographer, as in where a visual artist or an author of a novel (which we did chose to count) is chosen for their own creativity and input.

This also led to a **specific choice** of the institutions and collectives we have counted. We have selected them on the basis of number of visitors or listeners, fame and prestige, size, subsidies they receive. We also regarded it as important to choose initiatives that vary in location, so as to give an overview of The Netherlands as a whole, and not just those institutions that are located in the 'Randstad'. Secondly, we focused on which institutions receive the most important funding: the governmental multi-year subsidy 'Basisinfrastructuur' (see the subsection of performing arts). Thirdly, we looked at the institutions that are commonly regarded as prestigious and influential (in the case of galleries and publishing houses).

Furthermore, we also want to acknowledge the problematic sides and complexities that are regarded as **possible solutions**. We want to emphasize that the method of counting and mapping out inequalities through numbers should not, in any way, be understood as an incentive to aim for a 50/50 balance as a solution to the problem of inequality. Solutions for the structural problems of inequality are often stuck in the idea that with a 50/50 balance the problem is solved; number-balancing as a method for social change. We want to problematise this solution and want to put emphasis on, and create space for, a solution that

is **rooted in analysing where this problem comes** from in the first place (lack of female role models, discouragement of young girls, white male dominated curriculums at education institutions, etc.). However, as mentioned before, we do think that an overview based on numbers does hold a great power to demonstrate the inequality at a glance.

Tokenism, the risk that the instalment of a quota brings, results in people from marginalised and underrepresented groups from society and communities to only be chosen for the positions because of a certain identity marker. They are chosen not for their talent, but rather to fill up a gap, or tick off a box on an imaginary 'diversity checklist'. However, it does not look at the roots of the problem of inequality. The standard is still based on the white man, resulting in comments such as "your guitar play is quite well, for a girl" and being booked for a certain "female energy" they are supposed to bring in, which again reinforces binary thinking and creates an exclusive (and potential sexist) space. Focusing solely on a 50/50 balance dismisses further research into the scope and the causes of these inequalities we are dealing with. Therefore, we want to emphasize the importance of finding solutions that are based in creating equal chances, instead of equal numbers.

What Stood Out

Women are strongly underrepresented in each discipline incorporated in this research. Prior to this research, our hypothesis was similar to what came out of the research. However, we realised how striking it is to have all the numbers written down next to each other. The underrepresentation of women is undeniable – the numbers don't lie. Absence of women from already established, or canonical, collections such as the authors in publishing houses and the artists in the main collections of museums, is often explained away because of the availability, and the things that are being passed down from previous generations. However, as our research shows, more recent practices, for example temporary exhibitions and representation of women in music, show similar data.

Another striking point is the lack of an intersectional approach in current researches, which are mostly focused on male and female artists. This means that it not only overlooks many other important identity markers, but also that it upholds the binary categories of male and female. We do want to acknowledge that we are complicit in this as well, as this is a difficult and time-consuming project, and the limits of this research did not allow for further expansion on this. However, we strongly emphasise the need for a more intersectional approach and want to highlight this as a suggestion for further research.

Suggestions for Further Research

We suggest doing further and more exhaustive research into the inequality in the Dutch art sector. As a proper intersectional approach was beyond our scope, we call for a research that is intersectional, since it is extremely important to highlight different, intersecting mechanisms of oppression and exclusion, and how they work together. We also call for a research that is focused on highlighting and finding solutions to the underlying, structural mechanisms of exclusion; a focus on where the problem comes from instead on how to solve the problem. Other important perspectives that call for research, which we have stumbled upon in this project but fell behind the scope of this project, were among the following:

- The gap between female graduates from art schools and the work field should be researched. How is it that women are slightly overrepresented in art schools, but strongly underrepresented in the work field they studied for? (as mentioned in the Buma/Stemra report).
- Comparison between Dutch conducted research and other countries: What can we learn from those researches? Where do we fall behind? (for interesting reports and initiatives, see for example Women Make Music (UK), APRA AMCOS (Australia & New Zealand), Keychange and Soundgirls).

- Research focused on the (limits of) agency of women: do women generally not take up as much space for their work as men, as research of Women Make Music and Buma/Stemra e.g. shows. The question of who dares to take the space is equally important to who is given space.

Research Team

ASTRID KERCHMAN (1993) is currently a second-year student of the research master Gender Studies at Utrecht University (NL). Her research focuses on the intersections of feminist decolonial thinking, deconstructing “Western” modes of thinking, activism and (visual) art. These interests come together in her thesis project that aims to rethink the binary opposition between silence and speech. At the moment she works as a research assistant and online editor at MOED, Museum of Equality and Difference, a platform for scholars, activists, (cultural) institutions and artists who dedicate themselves to making visible marginalized histories and knowledge perspectives in art, culture, and politics. She is also involved as a guest researcher and campaigner for Mama Cash’s annual Feminist Festival. She holds a Bachelor’s in Cultural Studies from the University of Amsterdam (NL) and is one of the founders and curators of the activist research and exhibition project called Strijd ∞.

PAULINE SALET (1992) is a recent graduate from the research master Gender Studies at Utrecht University. Her research focuses on the intersections of storytelling, representation, literature and visual arts, with a special interest in museum spaces. This resulted in a Master thesis on the share of female artists, and representation of women in eight Dutch museums, following the example of the Guerrilla Girls. Having previously contributed as a researcher to the Museum of Equality and Difference, she currently works as a guest researcher and campaigner for Mama Cash’s fourth Feminist Festival on International Women’s Day.

Outcome of Research in Data

Music

Festivals

Festival	M%	F%	
Pinkpop	98,3%	1,7%	54 headliners between 2000 and 2016
Lowlands	96,6%	3,4%	The last 39 headliners until 2016
Best Kept Secret	100%	0	No female headliner since the start of the festival in 2013

Source: Kain, Rufus. "[Er spelen heel weinig vrouwen op 3FM en Pinkpop. Wat zit daarachter?](#)" *De Correspondent*, April 28, 2017.

For Kain, the gathering of these data, all revolved around the question of "who holds the power in the Dutch music industry?" The articles are all accessible through *De Correspondent* (in Dutch).

All data collected are until 2016, since the articles started appearing in spring 2017. We wanted to extend his data by counting the festivals until 2019. Therefore, we conducted the same methods as Kain used:

- We understood headliners as the musicians who get to perform in the final slot of the day on the main stage
- From these performers, we counted heads in each band (for example: if a band is the day's headliner with five members, that's five headliners. Arctic Monkeys counts as four male headliners). However, bands that join single performers for their tour are not counted.

While wanting to extend this data to 2018, we had to recount the festivals since Kain didn't specify some years in his research. For example, the statement "the last 39 headliners on Lowlands festival" does not show from which year he counted. While using the same methodology, our counting resulted in a slightly different result. However, looking at the percentages, this doesn't change much.

Lowlands headliners from 2010 until 2018 (own count)

Total	79	100%
M	77	97,5%
F	2	2,5%

Pinkpop headliners from 2000 until 2018 (built on Kain's count)

Total	74	100%
M	72	97,3%
F	2	2,7%

For Pinkpop, we built on Kain's findings since he explained them in a clear manner and in a way that we were able to work with. Furthermore, time tables for the editions before 2011 were hard to trace, so we couldn't convincingly point at the headliners from these earlier years.

Best Kept Secret headliners from 2013 until 2018 (own count)

Total	63	100%
M	60	95,2%
F	3	4,8%

Radio

Radiostation	M%	F%
3FM	79%	21%
Radio 538	79%	21%
Radio 2	80%	20%
Qmusic	75%	25%
Sky Radio	70%	30%
Funx	83%	17%

Source:

Kain, Rufus. "[Zo weinig vrouwen kwamen er afgelopen jaar op de Nederlandse radio,](#)" *De Correspondent*, May 18, 2017.

Kain was able to do his research, for which he counted all songs that were played on the above listed radio stations during April 1, 2016 en April 1, 2017, through digital softwares of data scraping. In the article below, he explains (in Dutch) how this process evolved. Furthermore, important to mention, is the way he counted the artists. He started off from the same principle as he counted the bands playing at festivals: he looked at the members of a band on the basis of each act. Session musicians weren't taken into account. When Anouk works with male musicians, he counts one woman. When Cee Lo Green works with female musicians, he counts one man.

Kain, Rufus. [“Zo kwamen we erachter at vrouwen minder radiotijd krijgen en kun je zelf met de data aan de slag,”](#) *De Correspondent*, May 18, 2017.

Buma/Stemra Report

Members of:	M%	F%
Buma/Stemra	87,0%	13,0%
Sena	81,0%	19,0%

Source: Smeulers, Eefje. [Gendergelijkheid onder muzikmakers in Nederland/Women music creators in the Netherlands](#). Report Buma/Stemra, April 2018.

Literature

Literary Canon

The data on the literary canon is based on a survey from 2002, initiated by the 'Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde', and found on the website of the Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren:

https://www.dbnl.org/letterkunde/enquete/enquete_dbnlmnl_21062002.php

The survey resulted in a list of 108 Dutch authors, mentioned three times or more in the survey, which had 229 respondents (of which 74% male and 24% female). The table below shows 109 authors. In the original list, Aagje Deken and Betje Wolff were counted as one, in this research they were counted individually.

Total Authors	109	100%
M	82	75,2%
F	17	15,6%
O	10	9,2%

Publishing Houses

Research includes seven well-known publishing houses, looking at the total numbers of authors they represent, as well as the authors that will be published in the spring of 2019. The choice of publishing houses was based on their fame and prestige of more (longer) established publishing houses, the number of authors, as well as a few relatively new publishing houses.

Brochures Spring 2019

Publishing House	Total	M#	M%	F#	F%
Bezige Bij	30	22	73,3%	8	26,7%
Querido	32	13	40,6%	19	59,4%
Prometheus	76	40	52,6%	36	47,4%
Meulenhoff	30	18	60,0%	12	40,0%
Atlas Contact	88	59	67,0%	29	33,0%
Das Mag	9	2	22,2%	5	55,6%
Lebowksi	0	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Total	265	154	58,1%	109	41,1%

Lebowski: No brochure available

Das Mag: two 'Other': one collection of stories by multiple authors and one anonymous author

Source: additional research for Mama Cash, own count.

Authors

Publishing House	Total	M#	M%	F#	F%	O
Bezige Bij	579	422	72,9%	157	27,1%	
Querido	260	143	55,0%	117	45,0%	
Prometheus	687	456	66,4%	228	33,2%	
Meulenhoff	269	192	71,4%	77	28,6%	
Atlas Contact	1143	0	0,0%	0	0,0%	
Lebowski	126	88	69,8%	37	29,4%	1
Das Mag	28	15	53,6%	12	42,9%	1
Total	3092	1316	42,6%	628	20,3%	

Das Mag: books in 'latest releases', but no overview of all authors available.

Source: Additional research for Mama Cash, own count.

Visual Arts

Museums

The data on museums is taken from the Master thesis by Pauline Salet. The research in this thesis focusses on eight well-known Dutch museums: the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Groninger Museum in Groningen, Museum de Fundatie in Zwolle, and the Drents Museum in Assen. The selection was made based on how well-known these museums are in The Netherlands, their visitor numbers, location, and, in some cases, their attention to (gender) equality and diversity. The numbers represent the number of male (O) and female (F) artists in the main collection and temporary solo exhibitions¹ between 2013 and 2018. Other (O) represents artist collectives or partnerships, of which the gender was not taken into account. Additionally, this research does not distinguish between type of art, acquisitions, art movements, or period. Guiding this research was the question: who is given space and who is not? Assignment of M/V was based on prior knowledge, photographs, biographies of artists and pronouns used by the artist and/or museums themselves.

Main Collection

Museum	Total number of artists	Male artists	M in %	Female artists	F in %	Other	O in %
Van Abbe	121	99	81,8%	19	15,7%	3	2,5%
Boijmans	336	316	94,0%	18	5,4%	2	0,6%
Stedelijk	307	233	75,9%	63	20,5%	11	3,6%
Centraal	131	110	84,0%	14	10,7%	7	5,3%
Groninger	69	60	87,0%	9	13,0%	0	0,0%
Drents	49	44	89,8%	3	6,1%	2	4,1%
Fundatie	25	25	100,0%	0	0,0%	0	0,0%
Gemeente	117	100	85,5%	14	12,0%	3	2,6%
Total	926 ²	779	84,1%	124	13,4%	23	2,5%

Source: Mastersthesis Pauline Salet, Utrecht University, 2018.

¹ Main collection here means: the selection made from the complete collection of a museum, those pieces that are on long term, (semi-)permanent display. The temporary exhibitions

² This total includes every artist only once. Adding up the individual numbers of each museum would add up to a total of 987 artists, but many of those artists have been featured in more than one museum, and thus would be counted twice or more.

Temporary Exhibitions

Year	Total	M#	M%	F#	F%
2013	65	45	69,2%	20	30,8%
2014	49	36	73,5%	13	26,5%
2015	51	36	70,6%	15	29,4%
2016	65	43	66,2%	22	33,8%
2017	72	54	75,0%	18	25,0%
2018	39	26	66,7%	14	35,9%
Total All Years	341	240	70,4%	102	29,9%

Total per year of all the museum combined.

Source: Mastersthesis Pauline Salet, Utrecht University, 2018.

Galleries

Gallery	Total Artists #	M#	M%	F#	F%	O#	O%
GRIMM Gallery	31	21	67,7%	9	29,0%	1	3,2%
Fons Welters	21	14	66,7%	7	33,3%	0	0,0%
Stigter van Doesburg	24	9	37,5%	15	62,5%	0	0,0%
Annet Gelink	23	13	56,5%	10	43,5%	0	0,0%
Wilfried Lentz	16	8	50,0%	7	43,8%	1	6,3%
Total	115	65	56,5%	48	41,7%	2	1,7%

Source: additional research for Mama Cash, own count. Selection of galleries made based on suggestions by Anna van Leeuwen.

Performing Arts

Because of non-existing concrete quantitative research of gender (in)equality in the Dutch performance arts sector, we had to count ourselves. We decided to focus on the performance groups that are currently funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap). Every four years, the government gives funding to collectives they consider of great quality, encourage education and participation, vary in geographical location and of great social value. The chosen collectives fall under the umbrella-term “BISgezelschappen 2017-2020”. BIS refers to “culturele basisinfrastructuur” (cultural basis infrastructure), which means they receive structural funding over the period of four years. The “culturele basisinfrastructuur” calls itself the spine of the Dutch cultural sector. Therefore, we found it interesting to look at what the ministry takes into account when subsidizing these collectives and initiatives. Where there are plenty of performance art collectives that actively do work on being more inclusive and culturally diverse, we chose for the BISgezelschappen because they are the most influential and hold the most power.

For the performance arts section, the BIS is subdivided into the following categories: theatre, youth theatre, production houses, dance, symphony orchestras, operas and festivals. However, we have decided to focus on theatre, dance, symphony orchestras and operas, because this is where artists are mostly active.

For the performance arts, it was important to demarcate a clear line between artists/performers. This brought a certain complexity to the counting, because not all collectives define their employees in the same manner. They are listed under each table. Overall, we understood artists as: artistic leaders, play writers, dramaturges, directors, choreographers, casting and scenographers. Assistants and managing directors (unless they also hold the position of artistic leader) are not taken into account. We only counted the positions that are, from a structural day-to-day basis, influential in deciding of who receives the platform.

We counted based on the current division inside the collectives, meaning we have only looked at the artists that were active in **season 2018/2019**.

Theatre

The BISgezelschappen 2017-2020:

Het Nationaal Theater, Noord Nederlands Toneel, Theater Rotterdam, Theater Utrecht, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Toneelgroep Maastricht, Toneelgroep Oostpool, Tryater, Het Zuidelijk Toneel.

Total Artistic Leaders	9	100%
M	8	88,9%
F	1	11,1%

The only female artistic leader is Ira Judkovskaja, active at Tryater, and she is leaving in 2020.

Total Artists	81	100%
M	52	64,2%
F	23	28,4%
O	6	7,4%

Nationaal Theater: a total of eight artists: six male and two female. They are divided over artistic leaders and directors.

Noord Nederlands Toneel: a total of six artists: two male and four female. They are divided over an artistic leader, a dramaturge, a choreographer and directors.

Theater Rotterdam: a total of thirteen artists: four male, five female, four collectives (in the tabel listed as “other”). They are divided over creators and artistic leaders.

Theater Utrecht: a total of four artists: all are male. They are divided over an artistic leader, a dramaturge, a scenographer and casting.

Toneelgroep Amsterdam: a total of three artists: all are male. They are divided over an artistic leader, a scenographer and a dramaturge. Additionally, Toneelgroep Amsterdam has worked with eight guest directors in the season of 2018/2019, of whom six are men and two are women. They are also taken into account in the table above.

Toneelgroep Maastricht: a total of then artists: all are male. They are divided over artistic leaders, play writers, dramaturges, a director and a scenographer.

Toneelgroep Oostpool: a total of four artists: two male and two female. They are divided over an artistic leader, a dramaturge and directors.

Tryater: a total of nine artists: four male and five women. They are divided over an artistic leader (the only female artistic leader), directors, play writers and a dramaturge.

Het Zuidelijk Toneel: a total of sixteen artists: eleven are male, three are female, and two mixed collectives (listed as “other” in the table). They are divided over an artistic leader, directors, creators and a play writer.

Opera

The BISgezelschappen 2017-2020: De Nationale Opera, Nederlandse Reisopera, Opera Zuid

Total Artists	31	100%
M	22	71,0%
F	9	29,0%

De Nationale Opera: a total of three artists: two male and one female. They are divided over a conductor, dramaturge and an artistic leader of the choir.

Nederlandse Reisopera: one male artist who is simultaneously the artistic director and the head of casting. For the four productions they have hired guest artists for in the 2018/2019 season, they worked with four male conductors and three male directors.

Opera Zuid: one male artist who is the intendant. For the six productions they have hired guest artists for in the 2018/2019 season, they worked with seven women and eleven men. They are divided over directors, scenographers, conductors, play writers and choreographers.

Dance

The BISgezelschappen 2017-2020:

Introdans, Het Nationale Ballet, Nederlands Dans Theater, Scapino Ballet.

We have looked only looked at the (external) choreographers the collectives work with, since we have considered those as the core artists of the collectives. Some of the collectives also work with artistic leaders, conductors and ballet masters, but this is not a shared component of the collectives.

Total Choreographers	52	100%
M	43	82,7%
F	9	17,3%

Symphony Orchestras

The BISgezelschappen 2017-2020:

Het Balletorkest, Het Gelders Orkest, Koninklijk Concertgebouw Orkest, Metropole orkest, NedPHOINKO, Noord Nederlands Orkest, Orkest van het Oosten, Philharmonie Zuidnederland, Residentie Orkest, Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest

Total Conductors	53	100,0%
M	53	100,0%
F	-	0,0%

Interesting feminist fact: Karina Cellalakis will become conductor at the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest (however, this orchestra is not in financed by the Dutch government). She will commence the position in September 2019. In Dutch media, she has often been portrayed as the first female conductor of a Dutch symphony orchestra. However, we want to credit the Dutch Frieda Belinfante (1904-1995), who was a cellist, conductor and prominent lesbian who worked as a conductor at the Orange County Philharmonic (USA).