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CoBrA, reconstructie 1949



The 1949 Cobra Exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

A Substantive Reconstruction

The large Cobra exhibition held in 1949 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam still appeals to the imagination. However, it has become clear over the years that the reconstruction of this major exhibition which was undertaken by Willemijn Stokvis is incomplete. On the basis of new photos and drawings which have never before been published, the British researcher Peter Shield has come up with a different reconstruction, one which does more justice to the original show, in particular with respect to the foreign exhibitors. Jong Holland has the honour to launch the results of his research.

Peter Shield

Peter Shield is a free-lance art historian specializing in Danish art of the mid-third of the 20th century. He has published *Comparative Vandalism: Asger and the artistic attitude to life*, Aldershot 1998 and a translation of Jorn's main theoretical texts as *The Natural Order and Other Texts*, Aldershot, 2002. He curated the first Cobra exhibition in England (Newcastle, Manchester) and Ireland (Dublin) in 2003 and has written and translated many articles from Danish to English. Peter Shield lives in Nottingham, United Kingdom.

When I began my research for my doctorate in various aspects of Cobra in 1976, my external supervisor Troels Andersen suggested a reconstruction of the first Cobra exhibition in Amsterdam as existing records seemed incomplete. At the time I rejected this as being too difficult, but throughout the intervening

quarter of a century I have often been uneasy about the preliminary reconstruction by Willemijn Stokvis, based on extant photographs, documents and interviews, which appeared to allow insufficient space for the non-Dutch participants.¹ During a research visit to Silkeborg Kunstmuseum in November 2000, Troels

Andersen showed me a record of a visit to the first Cobra Exhibition made by the Danish architect Marinus Andersen (1895-1985) which had been deposited in the museum archives by his widow. Marinus Andersen was a strong supporter of Asger Jorn and his colleagues in the forties and fifties.

¹ Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra. Spontanitetens veje*, Copenhagen, 2001.

CATALOGUE

ANGLETERRE	WILLIAM GEAR Tableaux Gouaches Monotypes		ERIK THOMMSEN (1916) Femme sculpture (bois) 1947 Tête 1947 L'homme 1949 Femme 1948
	STEPHEN GILBERT Personnages allés (tableaux) Formes éphémères		JACQUES DOUCET (1924) Zone insectivore (tableaux) jongleur Enfant au cerf-volant Torcedor
ALLEMAGNE	WOLFGANG FRANKENSTEIN (1918) Monotypes KARL OTTO GOTZ (1914) Gölgamesch II (monotypes) IV Côté à la côte (gouache) ANNELIESE HAGER (1909) Le rang d'oignons Composition aux gouttes d'eau Composition aux morceaux de verre KARL HARTUNG (1908) Gouaches OTTO HOFMAN (1907) „Von einer Insel“ (bois) HEINZ TROKES Gravures	FRANCE	ATLAN Peinture Peinture Peinture
	TAJIRI SHINKICHI (1923) Le Guerrier (sculpture) Oiseaux (gouaches) Femme enceinte Paysage l'oiseau mécanique dessins ou crayons de couleurs	HOLLANDE	KAREL APPEL (1921) Het erehje 1949 Dieren 1 1949 Dieren 2 1949
AMERIQUE	PAUL ALESCHINSKY (1927) Le public (tableaux) Les mariés Les métiers (eaux-fortes)		EUGENE BRANDS (1913) Geboorné maan 1949 Victory Boefimah 1949 Ruanda 1949 Oosterse expressie 1949
BELGIQUE	ELSE ALFELT (1910) Jaune et rouge clair 1942 (tableaux) Paysage alpestre vert 1943		CONSTANT (1920) Femme qui a blessé un oiseau avec une feuille morte 1949 Femme qui a quitté sa maison pour la lune 1949 Baises profond 1949 L'oiseau devenu femme 1949
DANEMARQUE	EJLER BILLE (1910) Masque (1938) (tableaux) Peinture 1949 1947		CORNEILLE (1922) Dépouillement 1949 Au sein du désert il y a encore de la place pour les jeux .. 1949 Personnages, poissons et soleil 1949 Au temps où les prés étaient verts 1949 Table palette 1949
	HENRY HEERUP (1905) Tête d'animal (sculpture) Motocycliste Mère et enfant Oiseau rouge	SUEDE	ANTON ROOSKENS Arabesque magique 1949 Fond noir 1949 Signe 1949 Peinture 1949
	ASGER JORN (1914) Paysage imaginé 1946 (tableaux) Meloc enchané 1948	SUISSE	THEO WOLVENKAMP Dessins 1949 Tableaux 1949
	ERIK ORTVAD (1917) Peinture 1945 1947 1947		ANDERS OSTERLIN Horse kissing a face (tableaux) Landscape with wheel Erotic landscape
	CARL HENNING PEDERSEN (1913) Les deux nuages 1943 (tableaux) Le soleil du matin 1948 Tête de lune 1948 Dieux de la mer 1948	TCHÉCOSLOVAQUIE	ZOLTAN KEMENY Jardin Provençal Le jardinier entre vases et églantines Jardinière Les jardiniers par l'œil fermé MADELEINE SZEMERE KEMENY Pêcheurs Têtes Ecartreuse de rideau en perle de bois Femme devant un rideau en perle de bois
			JOSEF ISTLER Gravures

Fig. 1 The catalogue sheet inserted in *Cobra 4*, but also available loose at the exhibition.

The record consists of sketches [figs. 3 & 4] made on the back of the catalogue sheet (usually bound in with *Cobra 4* but also available loose) [fig. 1] and four photographs of walls with works by Danish artists. [figs. 12, 13, 15, 17] The sketches show six rooms but not the entrance room or the 'poets' room'. Thus Marinus Andersen has the exhibition consisting of eight rooms, while Stokvis has only seven. In addition, paintings and sculptures are detailed for each room and in the case of some artists differ considerably from the published catalogue. I therefore began an attempt to reconstruct the exhibition both from the Marinus Andersen record, from the material used by Stokvis and published in her book and any other source I could find. This clearly proved that most of the extant photographs agreed precisely with Andersen's sketches and that there were indeed eight rooms. Most of the hangings can be specified to the exact placing on the wall. Andersen's mapping of the position of various works is wholly consistent with all published pictures of various walls, while Stokvis appears to have assigned some of these to the incorrect room. In Andersen's main sketch [fig. 3], there are four rooms with two windows each, two of which are easily identified as Stokvis's Rooms 3 and 4. Two others both match Room 6 (Room 7, the only other two-windowed room available, having a different doorway positioning). Therefore, either Andersen is wrong about one of these rooms and has carelessly drawn the doors in the wrong place or the Stokvis plan is incorrect somewhere. The former would be the only discern-

able error in Andersen's sketches, the latter would mean that Stokvis's plan of the Stedelijk Museum is not contemporaneous with the exhibition. Andersen is, however, quite consistent with the plan currently shown in the Stedelijk orientation leaflets of 2001. Room 5 can be identified from his sketches by the curved benches. The four single windowed rooms of the facade side do not appear in any of the photographs. There are three extant indications of Room 8, two photographs by Andersen and a view through to it from Room 7 published in another book.² These seem to be consistent with the large turret room on the right facade. This thus identifies Rooms 6 to 8 (Room 6 being the one that does not have the view through to Room 8). The simple catalogue sheet is correct for some artists and very misleading for others. For example, Bille, Jorn and Ortvad all exhibited more works than listed. This is also true of Constant on the evidence of photographs. Substitution of works also seems to have taken place. There is also evidence that some element of selection was exercised over the invited artists. Anders Österlin of the Imaginisterna Group from Malmö sent three works, which were listed in the catalogue. However, only one work was shown, which Österlin himself thought was 'only fair'.³ I am currently only working from published photographs, Stokvis's published researches and the Marinus Andersen material plus a couple of letters from involved artists. From these, I have come to four firm conclusions.

Marinus Andersen is correct in all details; Stokvis was correct in the details available to her, but assigned some photographs of walls to the incorrect room and had no knowledge of the 8th room; the catalogue sheet, published before the exhibition, is only partially correct and most of the extant photographs show the final state of the exhibition, and only a couple demonstrate that there may have been a minor rearrangement, either just before the hanging or at a later stage. However, this does not account for all the works exhibited as both Stokvis and the Cobra catalogue sheet also mention other works as being exhibited. This gives the possibility of yet another room that Marinus Andersen overlooked, because there is not much unallocated space in the existing rooms 1-8 and Andersen's accuracy is so far unassailable. As Willem Sandberg allocated all the rooms to the right on the ground floor for the exhibition, this is possible.⁴ However, I have come to the tentative conclusion that some of the works mentioned in the catalogue sheet were not sent and others were excluded. One of the final stages of this investigation was to have been the submission of the findings to Constant, the original organizer, who was said to have an excellent memory of the exhibition.⁵ However, much of my time in 2001-03 was taking up with the curating of the first Cobra exhibition in England and Ireland and by time I was ready to return to the 1949 exhibition Constant had sadly died and this avenue has gone for ever.

² H. Wingen, *De A van COBRA in woord en beeld*, Amsterdam, 1998, p. 76.
³ Letter from Anders Österlin, Malmö, to the author, 18 December 2001.

⁴ Stokvis (op. cit. note 1), p. 243.
⁵ Jan Elburg, *Geen letterheren. Uit de voor-geschiedenis van de vijftigers*, Amsterdam, 1987, p. 142.

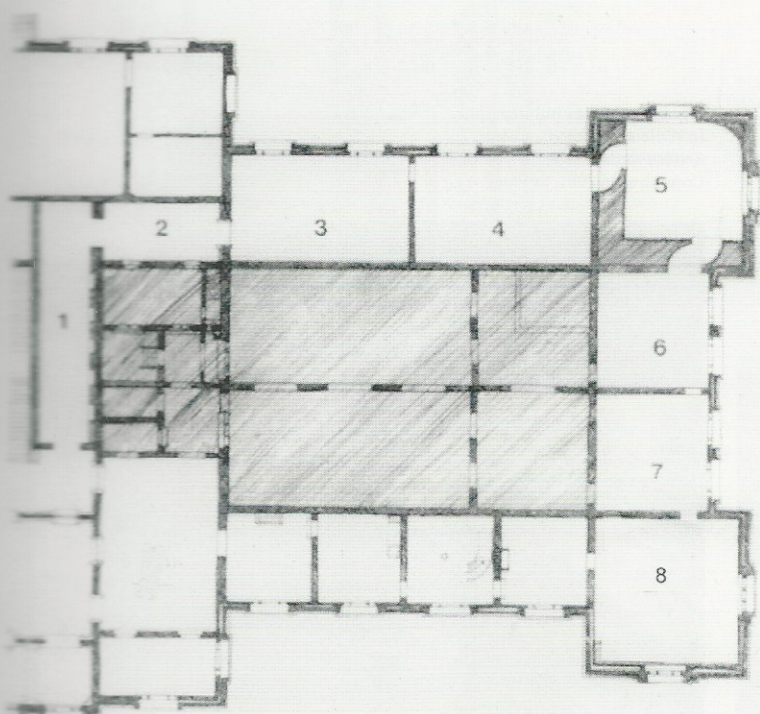


Fig. 2 The layout of the exhibition (reconstructed by the author from a drawing in a Stedelijk Museum pamphlet).

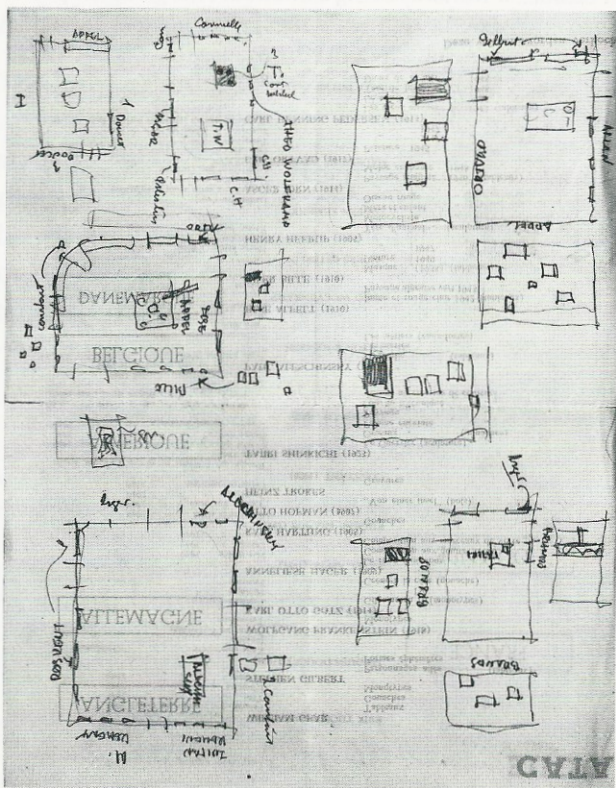
The Marinus Andersen Sketches

Sketches of the *Amsterdam International Exhibition of Experimental Art* at the Stedelijk Museum, November 1949, made by Marinus Andersen on the back of the folded catalogue sheet, pencil on paper, 320 x 475 mm.

Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives.

Rooms shown are, clockwise from top left on the first sheet: 7, 8, 5, 3, 4 and 6, with various details on the second sheet.

Figs. 3 and 4:



The Reconstruction so far.

Room 1 (The entrance room - not on Marinus Andersen's sketch) [fig. 5]

On the far wall was hung Constant's *La Barricade*, oil on canvas, 355 x 283 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, painted in situ.⁶ The long wall case contained graphic works by the German artists introduced by Karl Otto Götz.⁷ The lower case contained examples of Cobra publications, including the first issue of *Reflex*, which can clearly be seen on the extreme left. There was also a copy of Götz's magazine *Meta*.⁸ Jan Elburg states that there was also a copy of the book *Goede morgen haan* by Constant and Gerrit Kouwenaar (1949). He also states that his own poem *Fragmenten* (1949) was nailed over the vitrines above eye-level.⁹

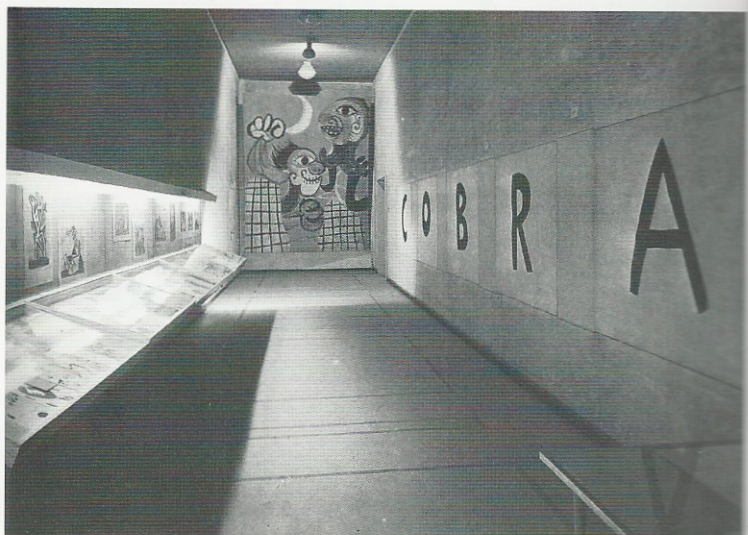
6 Jean-Clarence Lambert, *Cobra*, London, 1983, p. 138.

7 Stokvis (op. cit. note 1), p. 186 (n. 158).

8 Ibid.

9 Jan Elburg (op. cit. note 5), p. 154.

Fig. 5. Room 1, as published in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra Spontanitetens vej*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 99a.



Room 2 ('The Poet's Cage' - not on Marinus Andersen's sketch)

fig. 6
 Jan Elburg gives a vivid picture of the fractious process of putting this room together, with disagreements amongst the poets and between them and the architect Aldo van Eyck, the main curator of the exhibition.¹⁰ The object at centre right is *L'Arbre de Vie*, a now-lost assemblage by Corneille. Understandably, this room did not catch Marinus Andersen's attention, because he had no understanding of Dutch.

Room 3 (Third room from the right at rear of the Stedelijk Museum)

[figs. 7, 8]
 It is possible to identify all the works hung in this room plus the sculptures and some of the graphics on the plinths.

- fig. 7
1. Karel Appel, *Mens en dieren*, 1949, oil on canvas, 352 x 358 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
 2. Jacques Doucet, *Jongleur*, 1948, oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
 3. Pierre Alechinsky, *Les Métiers*, 1948, 9 dry-point etchings in edition of 6. Only eight exhibited here, on low white plinth in foreground. The other etching may be exhibited elsewhere.

Asger Jorn's *Automolok* can be just be seen through the door in Room 4.

Fig. 6. Room 2, as published in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra: Spontaneïteits reje*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 102



Fig. 7. Room 3, towards doorway into Room 4, as published in Jean Clarence Lambert, *Cobra: Kunst in Vrijheid*, London 1983, fig. 139.

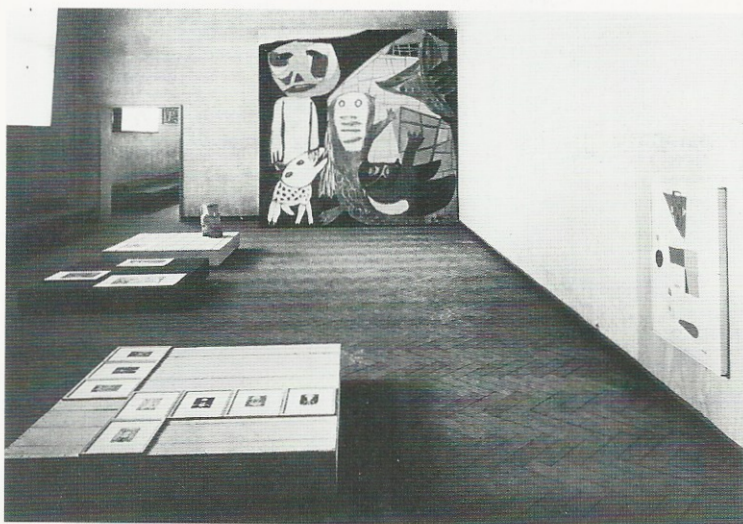
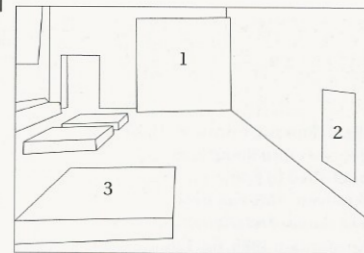


fig. 8 (room 3 continued)

4. Jacques Doucet, *Zone Insectivore*, 1948, oil on canvas, dimensions unknown, private collection Mexico.
5. Doucet, *Toreador*, Details unknown, not in oeuvre catalogue, possibly lost.
6. Doucet, *Enfant au cerf volant*, 1949, oil and sand on canvas, 60 x 73 cm., private collection.
7. Three unidentified graphic works.
8. One unidentified graphic work.
9. Erik Thommesen, *Hoved* [Head], ash, 47 cm, probably Kastrupgaard Collection, Copenhagen (Erik Thommesen oeuvre cat. 79).

Room 4 (Second room from the right at rear of Stedelijk Museum)

[figs. 9,10]

Most of the paintings in this room are illustrated in the following and other photographs, but I have been unable as yet to identify four works by Corneille and one by Theo Wolvecamp.

fig. 9

1. Unidentified work by Corneille.
2. Corneille, *Dans la désert il y a encore de la place pour les jeux*, 1949, oil on canvas, 90 x 100 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
3. Corneille, *Personnages, poissons et soleil*, 1949, oil on canvas, 50 x 40 cm., illustrated in Galerie Nove Spectra catalogue 1978.
- 4-5. Unidentified works by Corneille.
6. Unidentified work by Theo Wolvecamp.

fig. 10

7. Theo Wolvecamp, *Compositie* [Composition], 1949, oil on canvas, 60 x 71 cm., Coll. Gerard Lasés, Amsterdam.
8. Wolvecamp, *Compositie* [Composition], 1949, oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.
9. Carl-Henning Pedersen, *Havets guder* [The Sea Gods], 1948, oil on canvas, 120 x 98 cm., Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (Erik Andreasen Collection).
10. Pedersen, *Blå univers* [Blue Universe], details unknown, unidentified.¹¹

¹¹ Identified in Gunnar Jespersen, *De Abstrakte*, Copenhagen, 1991, p. 209.

Fig. 8. Room 3, towards doorway into Room 2, as published in Francis Strauven, *Aldo van Eyck: The shape of relativity*, Amsterdam 1998, fig. 126.

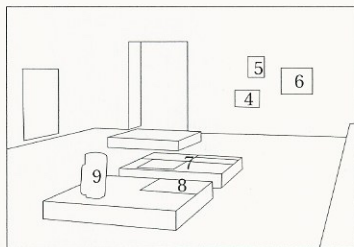
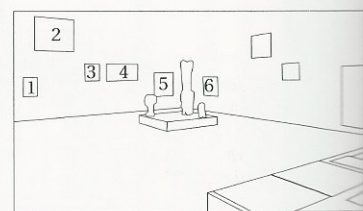


Fig. 9. Room 4, from doorway into Room 3, as published in exh.cat. *Cobra, 1948-1951* (Paris, Chalons sur Saône, Rennes) 1982-1983, fig. 67.



- 11. Carl-Henning Pedersen, *Månebillede* [Moon Picture], 1948, 100 x 122 cm., Alfelt & Carl-Henning Pedersen Museum, Herning.
- 12. Pedersen, *Morgensol* [Morning Sun], 1948, unidentified.¹²
- 13. Unidentified graphic works.¹³
- 14. Erik Thummesen, *Manshoved* [Male Head], 1948, elm, 53 cm high, Silkeborg Kunstmuseum.
- 15. Thummesen, *Pige med fletninger* [Girl with Plaits], 1948, oak, 142 cm high, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.
- 16. Thummesen, *Pige* [Girl], 1948, birch, 36.5 cm high, private collection.

Also in Room 4, by the window wall, either shown in other photographs, identified from the Marinus Andersen sketches, or other information, were:

- Anders Østerlin, *Landskap med hjul* [Landscape with wheel], 1948, oil on canvas, 50 x 95 cm., artist's collection.¹⁴
- Ruger Jørm, *Automolok*, 1948, oil on canvas, 98.5 x 80 cm., Silkeborg Kunstmuseum.¹⁵
- Unidentified work by Corneille.

¹² Ibid.
¹³ *Cobra 1948-1951*, exhibition catalogue, (Paris, Chaumont-sur-Saône, Rennes) 1982-83, p. 68, states that this work was by Theo Wonnecamp, but gives no source.
¹⁴ Although Østerlin sent three works, only one was exhibited, see Østerlin (op. cit. note 3).
¹⁵ Information from Troels Andersen, Silkeborg, November 2000.

Room 5 (the corner turret room at rear right of Stedelijk Museum)
 [figs. 11, 12, 13]

fig. 11

- 1. Constant, *Femme-oiseau* (possibly the *Loiseau devenu femme* of the catalogue sheet), 1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 65 cm., private collection.
- 2. Constant, *Femme qui a blessé un oiseau avec une feuille morte*, 1949, oil on canvas, 110 x 95 cm., possibly in artist's collection.
- 3. Constant, *De Kus*, also known as *Baise profond*, 1949, 90 x 85 cm., collection Olga Nieuwenhuys.
- 4. Constant, *unidentified* (probably the *Femme qui a quitté sa maison pour la lune* of the catalogue sheet, details unknown).
- 5. Tiny unidentified work by Karel Appel, but the Andersen sketch implies that all the works on this wall are by Constant.¹⁶

Also on this wall but out of photograph (according to Andersen sketch), were: [fig. 12] Constant, *Masker* [Mask], 1949, oil on canvas, 44 x 50 cm., Cobra Museum, Amstelveen (collection Karel van Stuijvenberg).¹⁷ Unidentified work by Ortvad, who cannot remember which work this was.¹⁸

¹⁶ Stokvis (op. cit. (note 1), p. 247.
¹⁷ Constant's son Victor is carrying this in a photograph of the artists waiting to enter the Stedelijk Museum prior to the hanging. Allocated to this room by elimination. [fig. 20]
¹⁸ Erik Ortvad in conversation with the author, Silkeborg, 22 March 2002.

Fig. 10. From doorway into Room 5, as published in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra Spontanitetens vej*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 106c.

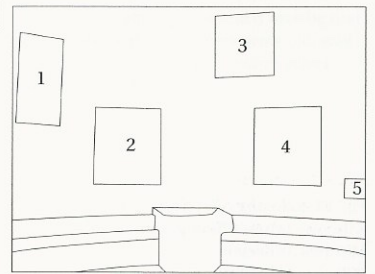
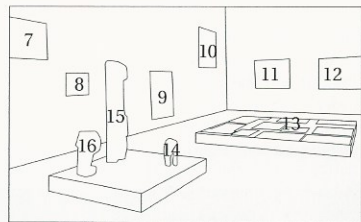


Fig. 11. Room 5, from the corner on the window side to opposite corner (photo Marinus Andersen, Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives, never published before).



fig. 12. (room 5 continued)

6. Ejler Bille, *Figur i rum* [Figure in space], 1938, oil on canvas, 46 x 38 cm., private collection.

7. Bille, *Figurkomposition i grønt. Cagnes* [Figure composition in green. Cagnes], 1947, oil on canvas, 102 x 91 cm., Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

8. Bille, unidentified work, no details known.

9. Bille, *Improvisation, Gudhjem*, 1946, private collection (Torben Bille).

10. Unknown drawings.

fig. 13 (room 5 continued)

11. Else Alfelt, *Spidser der rækker mod himlen* [Points reaching towards heaven], 1945, oil on canvas, 127 x 127 cm., Alfelt & Pedersen Museum, Herning.

12. Alfelt, *Universelt - grønt* [Universal - green], 1943, 102 x 102 cm., Alfelt & Pedersen Museum, Herning.

13. Karel Appel, *Totem*, 1948, gouache on wood, 84 x 24 x 10 cm., artist's collection (on plinth)

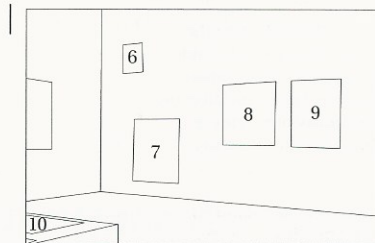


Fig. 12. (Looking right from window corner) (Photograph Marinus Andersen (Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives, never published before).

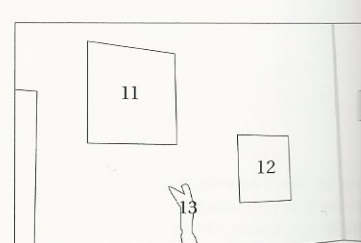


Fig. 13. Room 5, looking left from window corner (Photograph Marinus Andersen (Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives, never published before).



Room 6 (next to the rear turret room to the right of the Stedelijk Museum) (figs. 14, 15)

This photograph obviously shows Tony Slater and Aldo van Eyck hanging a number of Appels. However, this hanging precisely matches Marinus Andersen sketch. The painting that van Eyck is carrying (Constant's *Animal sorcier*) was finally hung in Room 8.

Fig. 14

1. Karel Appel, *De kleine Hiep Hiep Hoera* [The Small Hip Hip Hurrah], 1949, oil on canvas, 74 x 100 cm., location unknown (possibly artist's collection).

2. Appel, *Nachtvogels* [Night Birds], 1949, oil on canvas, 88 x 90 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

3. Appel, *Klein Cobra-schilderij* [Little Cobra Picture], 1948, oil on canvas, 30 x 42 cm., location unknown (possibly artist's collection).

4. Appel, *Het kind op het ezeltje* [The Child on the Donkey], 1949, oil on canvas, 70 x 155 cm., private collection.

5. Appel, *Lentedieren* [Spring Animals], 1949, Tempera and pencil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm., artist's collection.

6. Appel, *Nachtdieren* [Nocturnal Animals], 1949, gouache on canvas, 75 x 100 cm., artist's collection.

Fig. 14. Room 6, wall opposite window, as published in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra: Spontanitetens veje*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 104.

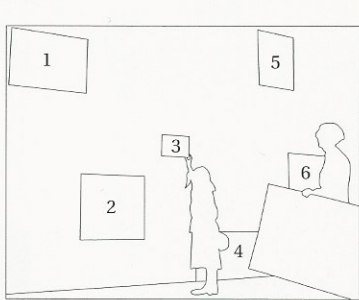


fig. 15 (room 6 continued)

This photograph came to light while this article was being written and shows three as yet unidentified works by Jean-Michel Atlan.¹⁹ The plinth is shown in the Andersen sketch, which indicates a small sculpture as well as graphic works. The only unidentified small sculpture known to be exhibited is Karel Appel's *Kat* [Cat], 1947, gouache on wood, 12 x 55 x 12 cm., artist's collection, which was described in a contemporaneous newspaper article on the exhibition as 'a chubby section of pole with seven little pieces of wood stuck on its backside, and with spots in yellow and azure and vermilion.'²⁰

On the opposite wall there were also three paintings by Erik Ortvad, who has verified the details:

Erik Ortvad, *Helsjön*, 1944, details and whereabouts unknown.²¹

Ortvad, *Lyst landskab* [Lucent Landscape], 1947, oil on canvas, 86 x 88 cm., artist's collection.

Ortvad, *Indianer* [Indians], 1947, oil on canvas, 117 x 99 cm., artist's collection.

Two works by Stephen Gilbert were also squeezed in on the window wall, according to Marinus Andersen. A Gilbert work, perhaps the *Personnages ailés* of the catalogue, is being taken into the Stedelijk Museum by the poet Bert Schierbeek in a pre-hanging photograph [fig. 20], but it cannot be said for certain that this was hung here.²²

19 Jacques Polieri (ed.), *Atlan: catalogue raisonnée*, Paris, 1996, must be consulted, although the statement there that many pictures from this time were either over-painted or even destroyed must be borne in mind.

20 *Het Vrije Volk*, Amsterdam, November 12, 1949.

21 There is a black & white illustration of this in the catalogue to the exhibition *Abstrakt*

kunst i Danmark, Fredericia 1947, unpub. 22 Stephen Gilbert could not remember which works had been hung at this exhibition in a conversation with the author in Dublin in July, 2003. However, this was in a very convivial atmosphere and it may be that Gilbert, who, although ninety years old, was as bright as a button, might well recollect more in tranquillity.

Fig. 15. Room 6, view through door to rooms 7 and 8. (Photograph Marinus Andersen (Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives, never published before).



Room 7 (The room before the turret room at the right front of the Stedelijk Museum)

[fig. 16]

This is the only known photograph of this room and shows Eugène Brands' own enlargement of a smaller work. This room was almost totally hung with works by Brands, only one of which can be identified with certainty. This is Brands' *Neergeschreven drift 2* [Passion Written Down 2], 1949, oil on canvas, 485 x 112 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Brand's *Victory Borfimah*, 1949, Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, (included on the catalogue sheet) was almost certainly exhibited plus another which may possibly be identified from one of the pre-opening photographs. In addition there are four unidentified other works by Brands, one of them perhaps that illustrated in *Cobra 4* (now destroyed). The only other painting was Asger Jorn's untitled work, 1945, oil on plywood, 130 x 145 cm., private collection, Copenhagen. On a plinth was Shinkichi Tajiri's plaster sculpture *Le Guerrier* (now destroyed), and at least one work on paper. I have provisionally included Tajiri's drawing *Loiseau mécanique*, 1949, gouache on paper, 33 x 26 cm., collection Van Eyck family.²³

²³ *The Warrior* illustrated in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra*, Amsterdam, 1974, p. 215, was not at the Amsterdam show. (all info: letter from Tajiri to the author, November 12, 2001).

Fig. 16. Room 7, view into Room, as published in Ed Wingen, *De A van Cobra in Woord en Beeld*, Amsterdam 1997, fig. 76.



Room 8 (The corner turret room on the right side of the front of the Stedelijk Museum)

[figs. 17, 18, 19]

fig. 17

1. Anton Rooskens, unidentified work.
2. Asger Jorn, *Untitled (Saxnäs)*, 1946, oil on canvas, 152.5 x 121.5 cm., collection Susanne Jorn, Copenhagen.
3. Three sculptures by Henry Heerup, *Mor og barn* [Mother and Child], *Rød fugl* [Red Bird], *Motorcyklist* [Motorcyclist], not yet identified.²⁴
4. Sculpture by Henry Heerup, *Hoved* [Head], not yet identified.
5. Unidentified graphic works.

²⁴ Caroline Kesser, *Madeleine Kemény-Szemere*, St Gallien, 1995, cat. no. 104.

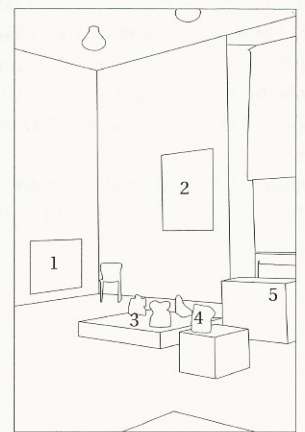


Fig. 17. Room 8 (Photograph Marinus Andersen (Silkeborg Kunstmuseum Archives, never published before).



fig. 18 (room 8 continued)

This photograph appears to be of an intermediate stage of arrangement as the works on the walls are as the Andersen sketch, but the plants are not as either the contemporaneous newspaper pictures, some other photographs in Ed Wingen's book *De A van Cobra* or the Martinus Andersen photographs. This may have been an attempt to make the room less crowded.

6. Madeleine Kemény, *Femme devant le rideau en perles de bois*, oil on cardboard, 69 x 60 cm., Sanja Henie & Nils Onstad Foundations, Høvikodden.

7. Unidentified work by Madeleine Kemény.

8. Anton Rooskens, *Danse macabre*, 1949, oil on canvas, 117 x 145 cm., Stedelijk Museum Schiedam

9. Unidentified work by Anton Rooskens.

10. Unidentified work by Anton Rooskens.

11. Corneille, *Kubus (Vissen)* [Cube (Fish)], 1949, gouache, curtain material, wood, 80 x 88.5 x 57.5 cm., Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

Also in this room outside photograph (fig. 18) to the left:

Madeleine Kemény, *Tête et mains*, 1949, Sanja Henie & Nils Onstad Foundations, Høvikodden. If the assertion that this work was exhibited here in the Kessler catalogue raisonnée is correct, then this is the only place it could be.²⁵

²⁵ The Ørnstrup Bentsen of the Heerup Museum, Randovre, was unable to identify these from the photographs as Heerup made many similar works (e-mail May 21 2002).

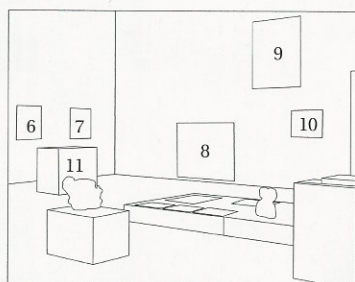


Fig. 18. Room 8, as published in Ed Wingen, *De A van Cobra in Woord en Beeld*, Amsterdam 1997, fig. 46; Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra Spontanitetens veje*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 106a.



fig. 19 (room 8 continued)

12. Constant, *À nous la liberté*, 1949, oil on canvas, 139.5 x 107 cm., Tate Modern, London.

13. Constant, *L'animal sorcier*, 1949, oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm., Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.

14. Zoltan. Kemeny, *Jardin provençal*, 1949, relief-collage, oil, mortar, glass on Pavatex, 58.8 x 76 cm., Kunstmuseum Bern.

15. Kemeny, *Lechevelée*, undated, relief-collage, painted cement and wool on Pavatex, Aagauer Kunsthau Aarau.

16. Kemeny, *Le jardinier entre roses et églantines*, 1949, coloured cement and painted string on Pavatex, destroyed.

17. Karl Otto Götz, *Mutter mit Kinder*, 1949, gouache on paper, 46 x 62 cm., Cobra Museum Amstelveen.

18. Götz, *Trinkerkopf*, 1949, gouache on paper, 46 x 63 cm., Cobra Museum Amstelveen.

19. Pierre Alechinsky, *En plein air*, 1949, Indian ink and gouache on paper, 64 x 50 cm., collection Alechinsky, Bougival.

20-21. Two unidentified drawings.

Also in this room, the Andersen sketch places three unidentified works by Pierre Alechinsky. His painting *Les Mariés* (details unknown) appears in another photograph being carried into the museum. [fig. 20]

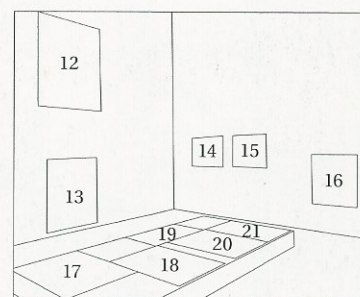


Fig. 19. Room 8, as published in Willemijn Stokvis, *Cobra Spontanitetens veje*, Copenhagen 2001, fig. 106d.



Works said to be in the exhibition but which were probably not there:

Theo Wolvecamp, *Explosie*, 1948, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.²⁶ This is not the unidentified picture in Room 4 and no other unidentified Wolvecamp works are mentioned by Marinus Andersen.

Although an unknown number of paintings by William Gear were listed on the catalogue sheet, I have been unable to find evidence that they were exhibited, although William Gear himself, who did not attend, thought they were.²⁷

Options for presentation

My own health makes further research prob-

lematic, so I felt it was time to release my preliminary findings to a responsible journal. I would be quite happy to assist any bona fide researchers in carrying this further by giving them access to my material.²⁸ That there is more to be done is evident. Even whilst this article was being written, Silkeborg Kunstmuseum found two more Marinus Andersen photographs in their archives. There may well be photographs and reminiscences in other hands as well as records at the Stedelijk Museum, for instance.

When I discovered that my reconstruction was feasible, my original dream was that this made it possible to re-create the exhibition in the original spaces in the Stedelijk Museum

Amsterdam, but I can see that this is not altogether realistic. For example, the low plinths designed by Aldo van Eyck would nowadays be deemed a hazard to safety (and to the works themselves). On the other hand, a re-creation of most of the walls could be achieved. Another option would be an illustrated book that showed nearly all the exhibited works in their original relationships to each other, augmented with the photographs that accompany this article and any others that may come to light. The impact of this important exhibition, designed by Aldo van Eyck as a work of art in its own right, could thus be conveyed to a present-day public.

²⁶ Stokvis (op. cit. note 24), p. 286 and *Cobra 1948-1951* (op. cit. note 12), p. 190.

²⁷ William Gear in unpublished interview by Tessa Sidey (typescript), Birmingham 1995.

²⁸ I have built up a considerable archive and can be contacted at peterjshield@btinternet.com.

Fig. 20. *The artists waiting to enter the Stedelijk Museum prior to the hanging, Amsterdam 1949. From left to right: Rooskens, passerby, Schierbeek, Wolvecamp, Brands, Götz, Corneille, Doucet, Alechinsky, Tony Appel, Lucebert, Elburg, Tajiri, Kouwenaar, Constant, Appel, Victor Nieuwenhuys.*

