

the right to copy

text from lecture by Annelys de Vet
held at 'Invloedszone'
Montréal, 20th october 2000

I am Annelys de Vet.

- I am 6 hours of television a week
- I am 20 hours + 12 minutes + 43 seconds of telephone every 2 months
- I am at least 30 free mobile-call-minutes a month
- I am 6 SMS-messages a week
- I am 6 hours of computer a day
- I am 1 exhibition a week
- I am 10 e-mails a day
- I am 6 invitations a week
- I am 3 magazines a week
- I am 9 conversations a day
- I am theater twice a month
- I am 5 years secondary school + 5 years art school + 2,5 years postgraduate school
- I am 5 trial newspaper subscriptions a year
- I am 7 hours internet a week
- I am abroad once a month
- I am cinema twice a month
- I am 3 hours of radio a day
- I am 4 books a month

- I am what I copy
- I copy what I am

- No one of you has never copied**
- No one of you has ever made anything original.**
- No one of you speaks his own language.**
- No one of you uses his own software.**

You're all the same as Annelys de Vet. She imitates what's good, mimics other designers, appropriates what's needed, copies who she is, pastes what she notices, exchanges contexts, combines different styles and ideas, assembles and uses what happens to her.

A good example of how de Vet uses personal experiences is this photo.



The driver of this car was Annelys de Vet. Another car drove too fast and hit it, which gave her the opportunity to make this picture. Shortly after, the Sculpture Department of the Melbourne University organised their Honours Year Graduation Show. It was held in a former garage. De Vet designed the invitation, using the picture of her car accident. The license plate was changed to read: RMIT SCULPTURE DEPARTMENT. And the nameplate for the make and model of the car was changed to read: HONOURS YEAR GRADUATION SHOW.



While designing this invitation de Vet's car brought bad luck again. A parking ticket was stuck between the windshield wipers.



RMIT Sculpture Department
Honours Year Graduation Show '99
 24 November till 17 December '99
 Opening days: Wednesday to Saturday
 Opening hours: 1.00 to 7.00 pm

DIR: MEDNESORY

OPENING: 24 NOVEMBER
 11.16.00 TO 6.00 PM

CONCIL: MELBOURNE

AREA: FORMER GARAGE HARLEY HEAVEN

STREET: 74 LT LATROBE STREET

OFFICER: HONOURS YEAR GRADUATION SHOW '99

NAME:
 CHRISTO BRETTE
 CHARIS MCGARRA THOMPSON
 BLANCA HESTER
 KATE MC WHERIN
 ANDREW MC GUALTER
 NIKOLAS PANTRZOPOLLOS
 JENNY PECK
 DANIELLA TIGHNI
 ANNELYS DE VET
 FREDRICK WHITE

Officer's signature

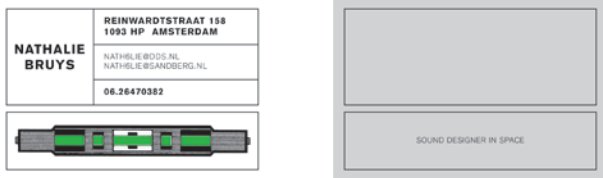
We advise food from The Vegetable Connection and Le Coc's chocolate cakes. Dr. Java has the best coffee and chocolates, and Babba the best bread. We go to Klugfisher for the most wonderful prawns. We love the RMIT Student Union. Like we love our local councils, the City of Iarra and The City of Melbourne. Thanks to Yarra Trams.

Irritated as she was, de Vet imitated the fine's typography and used it for the back of the invitation.

Original design doesn't exist. Original contexts are created with every design.



You might have seen the Maxell tape sleeve before. Nothing special. Annelys saw it lying on a sound designer's desk. The sound designer, Nathalie Bruys, uses lots of tapes for her work. She mixes existing analogue and digital sounds together to create new ones. Her choices, her combinations, her tempo, and her filters give the sampled sounds new meaning. So, the strongest and most recognizable detail of the Maxell design is sampled and applied to her business card.



Look at the business card of Jos Houweling. Jos Houweling is-among other things-artist and director of the Sandberg Institute, the postgraduate institute of the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. He is an incorrigible trader, a 'wheeler dealer' in artists, art students, politics and art projects. He initiates new projects whenever there is an opportunity. Therefore De Vet allowed the following examples to influence her design for his business card. The first influence is the French TO RENT poster. It's the standard sign to rent houses in France and Belgium. The second influence is the French FOR SALE poster. This is the standard sign to sell houses in France and Belgium.



Good designs ask to be copied.

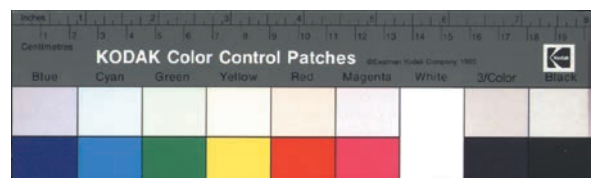
De Vet will show how an effective design forced her to imitate it. The inspiration for the next work was found in the Color Identification Chart in Flora of British Fungi. This is a card of colors of fungi spores, caps, stalks, and their appearance after they have been picked. The artist Rudy J. Luijters bought this card at Kew Gardens near London. He used it to identify fungi. He found the names of the colors remarkable.



Later, for the historical garden in Aalsmeer, Luijters designed a new color identification card. On the first day of Spring, 1999, he photographed all the colors in this historical garden. These photos were reproduced in his chart design, with color names inspired by the history of the flora, their Latin names, their Dutch names, or other contextual information. The graphic design of the Aalsmeer card was based on the design of the chart in Flora of British Fungi. The used font is the Swift, designed by Gerard Unger.

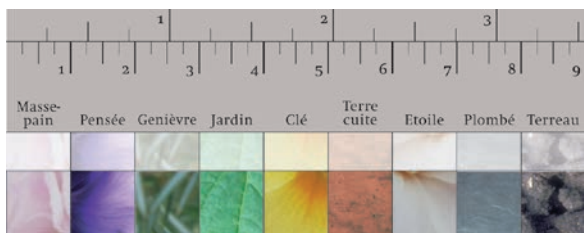


For Rudy J. Lujters, Annelys then designed a business card. Please take a close look at the Kodak color control patch.



This scale is used in photography to keep colors as close as possible to the colors of reality. Rudy Luijters used this card while photographing the historical garden. The design of this colour scale, in combination with the design of the Aalsmeer colour identification card, became-of course-the ingredients for Annelys's design of Rudy's business card.

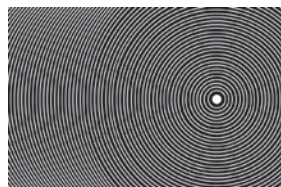
His photos replaced the bright colors. Personal notions replaced the technical colour names. Annelys de Vet sharpened both elements for the new context.



It's ridiculous to use interesting ideas only once.

The important thing is to appropriate good ideas, and develop them further.

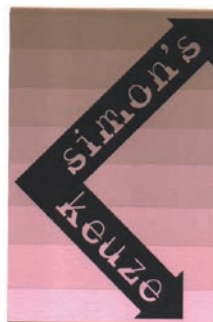
Persijn Broersen
GRAPHIC DESIGN
 Dusartstraat 46*
 1072 HT Amsterdam
 020-6763634 / 06-26070391



This is not a design by Annelys de Vet. It's the business card of the Dutch graphic designer Persijn Broersen. Pay attention to the concentric circles – a design idea De Vet recognized and wanted to use. While working on a new commission, this card attracted her attention. The music school in Utrecht was organizing new concerts. Concerts of their Symphony orchestra. De Vet made the posters for those concerts. And just as in classical music, which has a centuries-old tradition of composers quoting other composers, where copying and interpreting is as old as music itself, where compositions are imitated again and again, where themes are repeated endlessly and old fragments are worked up in new compositions, sometimes very literally and sometimes only in slightly different configurations. Annelys de Vet could not resist working up her colleague's graphic idea in a new composition.



This is the design by Annelys de Vet for the concert of the Utrecht music school's Symphony Orchestra. Obviously there is the influence of Broersen's business card. But the poster also appropriates a schematic overview of a symphony orchestra.



Imitation is about survival of the fittest.

Fit designs should be preserved, and kept from decay.

This is the invitation for the exhibition called 'Simons' choice'. This show was curated by Simon den Hartog, who is the former director of the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. As you can see, the logo consists of two arrows. The font was mixed by De Vet. On the top of the characters you can recognise the font 'Letter Gothic Regular', the bottom is set in 'Clarendon Regular.'

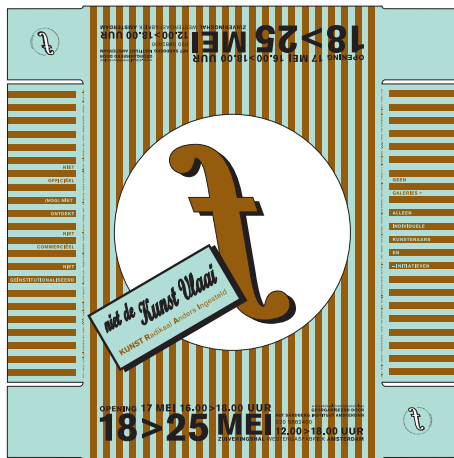
The inspiration for this logo lies in a design by Mevis & van Deursen. They are two marvelous Dutch designers and one of them, Armand Mevis, gave a lecture at 'Invloedszones' as well. Mevis & van Deursen did the graphic design of this book, called 'The power of the present'.



Look at the cover. Who doesn't want to use this design?

In the Netherlands there's a yearly art fair called De Kunst RAI.

The director of the Sandberg Institute, Jos Houweling, had the opinion that this fair had become too commercial, so he organized a counter-fair in 1997. Its title alluded to the commercial fair's title, De Kunst RAI: the counter-fair became Niet De Kunstvlaai, which means Not the Art Pie. When De Vet was asked to do the graphic design, she immediately bought a 'vlaai', which is a particular kind of South Dutch pie. She ate the pie, and unfolded the lid of the box. This image almost seemed to be right design for a poster. The graphics were adjusted and de Vet placed a mirrored guilder sign in the center of the poster, mirrored to emphasize the anti-commerciality of this art-fair.



De Vet wanted to show you the original pie box. She visited the pie shop where she bought the pie three years ago, but they've changed their whole corporate identity. Look at the new pie box.



Awful. For God's sake, who makes a design like this? This will never survive time and I'm positive it won't be copied.

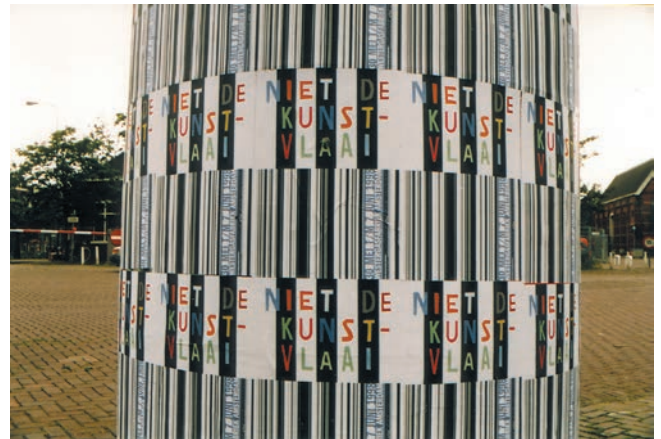


Back to the art fair.

For the invitation, the inspiration was not the pie box, but a

dollar sign. In the centre you recognize the mirrored guilder sign again. This invitation was actually worth money. The recipient got a free admission by handing in the left-hand coupon. The right-hand coupon got people a one guilder discount on a piece of pie.

In 1998 the art counter-fair was held again. Traditions copies itself and Annelys de Vet was asked to do the graphic design again. This time in collaboration with Jos Houweling, the organizer. He cut the letters of the title in different colors and pasted them on paper. De Vet designed the rest of the poster, inspired by bar codes. (Don't forget the anti-commercial agenda of this fair.)



Everything costs money. Everyone needs money.

Especially designers, artists and architects. Recognizing this, the Netherlands has a fund called the Fund for Art, Design and Architecture. It's the biggest source of subsidy in the Netherlands. Because the demand is bigger than the supply, there is a selection procedure. Designers, artists and architects need to fill in forms. Dreadful forms, because no is no, and yes means a lot of money. Every designer, artist or architect who applies has to enclose slides of her or his work. Those slides are most often mounted in GEPE slide mounts, a common brand of mounts in the Netherlands. When Annelys de Vet applied for a subsidy, she bought a box of these slide-mounts too.



At the same time, the Fund for Art, Design and Architecture was planning its 10th anniversary celebration. The occasion was marked with a three-day event. The artist Moniek Toebosch organized this event and engaged de Vet to do the graphic design. De Vet now was in a double position. On one hand she was a subsidy applicant: on the other she was the graphic designer for the event. With this double feeling she visited the fund's offices and was struck by the huge archives, cabinets crammed with submitted slides and forms. So, in her cover design for the invitation, she copied the design of the familiar slide mount box.



For the inside of the invitation, she reproduced the application form. The form wasn't blank. Annelys de Vet used her own subsidy application, filling in the blanks. The recipient

of the invitation could see that the designer was using her commission to design the invitation to apply for a grant.

- For which subsidy are you applying? :

"Starting Stipend"

- How would you describe your current work? :

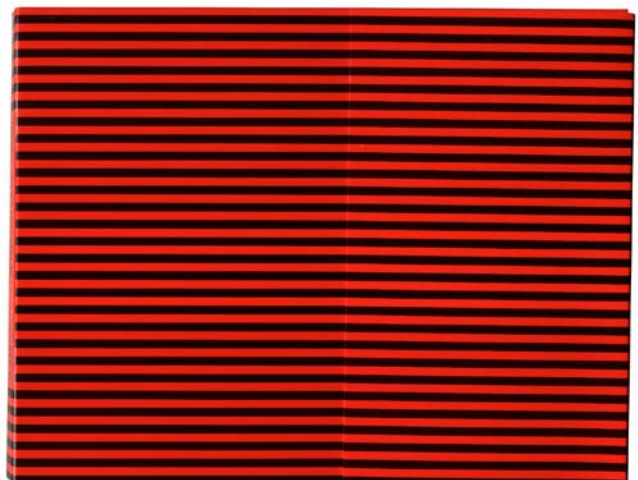
"Designing the invitation, press release, catalogue and web site for the 10th anniversary of the Fund for Art, Design and Architecture."

In other words the recipient of the invitation could see that the designer was using her commission to apply for a grant.

The title of the Fund's anniversary event was De Toekomst Die Ons Toekomst-The Future that is Ours. A logo with widening stripes was made for it. The inspiration for the logo was in a book by the Dutch graphic designer Piet Zwart-a masterful design to mimic.



The logo was used on the cover of the catalog for the Fund. As you can see, both the slide-mount design and the design of Piet Zwart were appropriated for the cover.



Design is not about the image that is produced. It is about the conditions wherein the design exists.

What would Dutch Design have been without imitation? It would not exist. And today's tools provide even more opportunity to copy. Not only that, they force you to copy. (Isn't it weird that all designers work with the same software?) This is only the beginning. Strong design reproduces itself. Make sure your work will be copied. Stimulate your own imitators.

Copy.

Appropriate.

Imitate.

Assemble.

Mimic.

Use.

Fuse.

Misuse.

Don't be shy about it.