

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

a journal of nineteenth-century visual culture

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exhibition review of

Jan Toorop

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide 15, no. 3 (Autumn 2016)

Citation: Lisa Smit, exhibition review of *Jan Toorop*, *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 15, no. 3 (Autumn 2016), <https://doi.org/10.29411/ncaw.2016.15.3.21>.

Published by: [Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art](#)

Notes:

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Jan Toorop

Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague, The Netherlands
February 27, 2016–May 29, 2016

Villa Stuck, Munich
October 27, 2016–January 29, 2017

Museum Bröhan, Berlin
February 15–May 15, 2017

Catalogue:

Jan Toorop: Zang der tijden (Jan Toorop: Songs of Our Times).
Gerard van Wezel, edited by Paul van den Akker and Hans Janssen.
The Hague: Gemeentemuseum; Zwolle: WBOOKS, 2016.
280 pp.; 475 color illus.
€ 29.95 (hardcover Dutch edition)
ISBN 9789462581319

[The Dutch-language exhibition catalogue will also appear in English and German translation and is the first part of a three-volume English-language catalogue raisonné, the other two parts of which will appear in 2017–2018.]

The aim of the exhibition *Jan Toorop* is clear: The exhibition organizers want to give the artist Jan Toorop (1858, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia–1928, The Hague, Netherlands) the recognition they believe he deserves, namely as an artist ranking alongside Vincent van Gogh and Piet Mondrian as one of the most important Dutch artists of the period around 1900. This ambitious retrospective exhibition shows Toorop's entire artistic career; every development is shown in representative groups, each with its highlights. Because of the prestige of the project and its well-researched concept, many artworks that have not been on public display for decades are now exhibited. It was put together by Toorop expert Gerard van Wezel who has dedicated his working life of the last four (!) decades to the research of the artist's vast and complex body of work.^[1]

Toorop was a celebrated artist during his lifetime, exhibiting often throughout Europe, and maintaining good relations with the press. Closely connected to the European avant-garde as he was, Toorop was always well aware of the latest cultural developments and quickly adapted to new styles and genres. In turn, his influence reached far beyond regional borders. He often played an important role in the organization of exhibitions and bringing people together. This monographic exhibition is devoted to Toorop "the artist" and focuses solely on his art; no works by other artists are included. The exhibition organizers' aim of (re)assessing Toorop's true artistic value is an appropriate point of departure. A previous exhibition *Toorop in Vienna, Inspiring Klimt* (Gemeentemuseum, October 7, 2006–January 7, 2007) already visualized the artist's relation to fin-de-siècle Vienna.^[2] A further exploration of Toorop's role as a key figure in the cultural networks of fin-de-siècle Europe, as well as his influence on others, would make for an interesting exhibition in itself.

As Ronald de Leeuw, former director of both the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, put it in his opening speech to the exhibition, Toorop was a master of all weapons, not restricted to one particular genre. The fact that Toorop was at ease with so many different artistic styles is a fascinating trait of the artist, but it might also leave one with the impression that he was an artist that trimmed his sails according to the wind. This is a notion that Van Wezel strongly wishes to correct. For Toorop, style and technique were instrumental to the message and therefore every artistic approach was permitted. This message was clear, for his work was always motivated by the same conviction, namely that life is “a painful struggle between antitheses of every kind” as the introductory label to the exhibition proclaimed. Regardless of the different visual languages Toorop adopted in accordance with the quick succession of avant-garde styles, he never ceased to give expression to this key theme. According to the renowned architect H.P. Berlage, Toorop had the ability “to make visible the universal in the personal” (9). It is this primary quality that transcends all the different stylistic phases of Toorop’s artistic career, ranging from the Realism of Gustave Courbet to a very personal use of Art Nouveau, and from the Divisionism of Georges Seurat to Berlage’s ideal of the communal total work of art.

The sequence of stylistic changes is referred to by Van Wezel as “Songs of Our Times,” referencing the title of one of Toorop’s works which was also used as the title of the exhibition catalogue; a mark of honor to the artist’s diversity (10). The substantial Dutch-language exhibition catalogue will also appear in English and German translation and is actually the first part of a three-volume English-language catalogue raisonné, the other two parts of which will appear in 2017–2018. The catalogue is divided in five more or less chronological chapters entitled “Modern Life,” “The New, Mystical Life,” “The Sea,” “Labor and Faith,” and “Figuration and Geometry.” These are followed by shorter sections on Toorop’s portraits, his creative process, and his frames. Furthermore, the storyline is interrupted now and then by short sections highlighting specific subjects such as Toorop’s art education, early collectors, or a design for an art nouveau shop window.

The catalogue is full of newly discovered information, and clearly the work of a well-informed scholar. As such, it is an invaluable must-have for any future research on Toorop. The focal point of the catalogue is Toorop’s critical reception by the contemporary press; it also provides great detail on dates, titles, and exhibition histories, which makes it somewhat too scholarly for the purpose of an exhibition catalogue. Perhaps some of this extensive information would be better placed in the entries of the forthcoming catalogue raisonné. Yet, it serves as the introductory volume of Toorop’s catalogue raisonné for which such an in-depth approach is definitely justified.

Van Wezel’s greatest scholarly contribution was to straighten out the chronology of Toorop’s oeuvre. The author has made a tremendous effort to verify, adjust, and correct Toorop’s oeuvre, regardless of the medium, from painting to mirror frame. This is an extremely complex matter given Toorop’s belief that the process of creation was simply more important than the fixed end result. It was not at all unusual for him to update works at a later date, to reuse subjects, to antedate works, or to date works as they left his studio. In this exhibition and the accompanying catalogue, Van Wezel corrects the misunderstanding that Toorop worked in different styles all the time. The many different developments can in fact

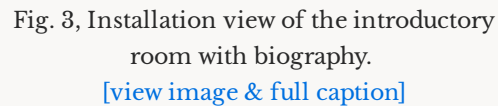
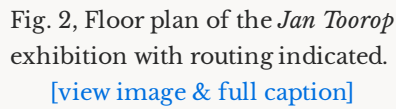
be grouped chronologically. Van Wezel's connoisseurship resulted in a stylistic chronological rearranging of the artist's oeuvre. This deserves much praise.

The Gemeentemuseum has a long tradition of Toorop exhibitions, starting with a grand overview exhibition in 1940.[3] The museum's stunning design (1931–35) by renowned architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856–1934) is the perfect setting for a retrospective exhibition on Jan Toorop (fig. 1).[4] The two were contemporaries and shared their views on monumental art. They actually cooperated closely on Berlage's trading hall, the famous Beurs van Berlage, for which Toorop designed a range of tile pictures (see figure 23 below).



Fig. 1, Entrance to the exhibition *Jan Toorop* with a blowup of a detail of *Play of Lines*, 1893.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

Berlage's design consists of a large sequence of fairly small rooms and cabinets alternated by a few larger exhibition rooms (fig. 2). The organization of the exhibition follows that of the catalogue, although the five main themes are subdivided into smaller sections. Firstly, one enters a space without art where one can read an elaborate biography of Toorop and an account of his career in an off-putting small type size. More appealing are the two blowups of photographs of the artist in his studio (fig. 3). The introduction label summarizes the aim of the exhibition, impressing upon the visitor that Toorop is to be considered as one of the few Dutch artists who really mattered in the international art world of his time.



A large, bright gallery space with red walls and a wooden floor. Several large paintings are displayed on the walls, and a long wooden bench is in the center. The ceiling is high with a grid of skylights.





Fig. 6, Installation view of the exhibition room “Urban Life: Ladies in White.”

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

A new feature in exhibition design that was also noticeable in the exhibition *Munch : Van Gogh* at the Van Gogh Museum (September 25, 2015–January 17, 2016), is the placement of labels *above* the art works (see fig. 5). This works well as the labels feature large size type and are placed high enough not to distract the viewer. And it is especially convenient in crowded exhibition rooms where visitors no longer have to take turns reading the small label next to an artwork, often obstructing the view of others.

In 1888, Toorop began to work in a pointillist style inspired by Seurat, whose work was exhibited at the 1887 exhibition of Les XX; Toorop was an active member since 1884. This resulted in paintings like *Au Nes* (1889) and *A Dying* (1888) (fig. 7). This refreshing change in style was Toorop’s answer to the critical judgement of the press that had deemed his exhibited works of the previous year not to be original (15). This is but one occasion that demonstrates just how closely intertwined Toorop’s artistic practice was with contemporary critical reception. Especially from 1891 onward, as Toorop came to be considered the most important Dutch avant-garde artist, his work would always be the subject of scrupulous assessment. Exhibitions and their critical reception are very decisive for an artist, typically the determinants of an artist’s reputation.^[5] Toorop could always count on a polemic between equally fierce supporters and opponents. Not only was Toorop influenced by the way he was received by the art world, but also he would in turn steer critical opinion by asking critics to discuss certain works, and by responding extensively to reviews.



Fig. 7, Left: *Au Nes. Mère et Fille* (In the Nes. Mother and Child), 1889. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

Toorop's depictions of peasant life became increasingly infused with a deeper spiritual meaning. This distinguished the artist from typical Dutch Realism. According to critical opinion, Toorop grew into his own in 1891 with the work in watercolor and pencil entitled *Melancholy* (fig. 8). Although the subject of a peasant woman on her doorstep is reminiscent of the work of Josef Israëls, it was executed in a non-realistic style that has a sense of impassioned mystery (12). In his series of works devoted to the depiction of fisher folk from the village of Katwijk, Toorop sought to imbue his subjects with symbolic significance. The decorative use of flat areas of color as seen in *Flood* is derived from the work of Gauguin, Japanese art, and modern printmaking (fig. 9).



Fig. 8, *Melancholy*, 1891.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 9, Installation view of the exhibition room "Realistic Symbolism: The Lives of Fisher Folk." [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The large middle room forms the center of the exhibition. It is an absolute treasure trove, containing the works for which Toorop is most celebrated. Van Wezel has specified this prime phase of Toorop's career as "The New, Mystical Life." In the 1890's it was all important to be new. Just like the powerful nations that were locked in a rat race for progress that seemed to know no end, modern artists were constantly competing for renewal. Innovation had become the number one criterion for appreciation.^[6] Toorop too strived to constantly renew himself. In 1891 he presented a range of new works executed in the symbolist style. These works can be seen as poems in paint, mystical images that bring to mind Wagnerian tales. Today's viewer might regard *Une Génération nouvelle* (The Young Generation) (1892) as rather unappealing with its ominous green and blaring pink. At the time it was first exhibited however, its "bright and splashing colors" were compared to Persian embroidery and were believed to actually enhance the expressive quality of the work (fig. 10) (57).



Fig. 10, Left: *Une Hétaïre* (An Adulteress), 1891. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

A key work here is *The Three Brides* of 1892 (fig. 11). It depicts an earthly bride, nude apart from her veil, flanked by a heavenly bride and a *hetaere* (courtesan). Toorop now worked in a highly authentic linear style with which he intended to speak directly to the human soul. As one of the exhibition labels explains, Toorop was in search of an art that would represent a spiritual reality rather than external life. Images and forms were regarded as symbols; abstractions of a universal, spiritual reality.



Fig. 11, Installation view of the exhibition room “The New, Mystical Life.”
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

Many contemporary critics have claimed that it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe Toorop's work (71). As a reviewer for this issue of *NCAW*, I could not agree more. His work is full of secrets as it were. Putting words to the images will most likely only result in the transposition of Toorop's linear impressions teeming with symbolic meaning, ranging from sensuous to profoundly devout, into verbal riddles. Some critics claim that one should not try at all, and strikingly enough, Van Wezel too has taken this advice to heart and largely refrains from giving his own descriptions of Toorop's work. Toorop himself got tired of having to explain his symbolist works and thought it ridiculous to put words to the emotions he conveyed in his art (77). It is probably best to proceed as a critic of the *Berliner Tageblatt* suggested in 1893: “The viewer will become confused and at the same time urged to penetrate the labyrinth of the imagination.”^[7] What one can and *must* say about Toorop's elaborate drawings is that each section on its own deserves the viewer's attention. One can marvel in the extraordinary beauty of the details, and often, the parts delight even more than the whole (fig. 12). Toorop is simply a fabulous draughtsman.



Fig. 12, Detail of *The Sphynx*, 1892–97. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The crowning glory and conclusion of this decisive phase in Toorop's career is *The Sphynx* (fig. 13). It is also the highlight of the exhibition—quite extraordinary perhaps, as this large-scale drawing is in fact only an underdrawing on canvas. The artist worked on it sporadically between 1892 and 1897. He had in fact meant to apply color to it, but ended up doing this only very slightly. The drawing symbolizes the mystery of life. It shows the different stages of the elevation of man, from those bowed down by the claws of the feline sphinx to the figures in the top left with their hands raised in adoration. The swans are carriers of the mystical ideal and represent the connection between past and present, whereas the vulture symbolizes transience (122). *The Sphynx* was considered a résumé of the artist's symbolist phase of the previous six years; it subsequently toured Europe to be exhibited at all of the continent's foremost artist societies and exhibition venues.



Fig. 13, *The Sphynx*, 1892–97. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The exhibition pays a great deal of attention to the artist's creative process. A distinctive trait of Toorop's artistry was that he had no objections to the modification of his works at a later date, as is the case with *The Sphynx*. His attachment to the importance of this creative process exceeded that of a fixed end result. This was in line with the modern artistic views of the time. It would mean that he often enlarged drawings by sticking on extra pieces of paper; or he might make radical changes to works apparently finished years earlier; or he would even destroy works beyond repair, as is the case with *Twilight*, which he crossed out around 1895–96, adding the words “Deugt niet” (no good) (fig. 14). Just as eye-catching, but in a wholly

different way, is *Des chants de notre heure* (Songs of our times) (1893). Influenced by Art Nouveau, Toorop here extended his drawing onto the inner frame (fig. 15). Although the work is moderate in scale, it has a monumental quality (87). At the time, artists paid a great deal of attention to their picture frames and regarded them as an integral part of the artwork.



Fig. 14, *Twilight*, 1893.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 15, *Des Chants de Notre Heure* (Songs of Our Times), 1893.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The print cabinets following the grand exhibition room function as both intermezzo and continuum. Here, Toorop's involvement with applied arts is showcased, a development concurrent with the wish of modern artists to break free from the isolation of "high" art in favor of engagement and exchange with other arts and crafts. Starting in 1894 Toorop designed posters, book covers, and even a shop window for an art dealer (figs. 16, 17). The replica of the shop window that is incorporated in the exhibition is unfortunately an awkward oddity. Most famous is Toorop's poster advertising salad oil produced in the Dutch city of Delft (fig. 18). The renown of this poster was so great that the Dutch often referred to Art Nouveau as 'salad oil style' (fig. 19). No less than five versions of this advertisement are displayed in one of the cabinets. The following cabinets contain very delicate drawings from around 1895, several of them depicting female figures in an etheric guise evoked by a haze of white pastel (fig. 20).



Fig. 16, Art Nouveau designs for book covers.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 17, Installation view of a replica of the shop window of art store Oldenzeel in Rotterdam designed by Toorop, 1898.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 18, Installation view of “Art Nouveau: Art for Sale.” [\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 19, Detail of the renowned *Advertising Poster for “Delftsche Slaolie.”* Photograph by the author. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 20, Installation view of “Symbolist States of Mind: A Refined Drawing Style.”
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The section “The New, Mystical Life” takes up the lion’s share of the exhibition. It is followed by a far smaller section dedicated to Toorop’s depiction of the sea. The delightful pointillist

coastal landscapes of 1899 represent the changing seasons and times of day (fig. 21). Other than his divisionist Neo-Impressionism of 1888–89, Toorop now chose to work in a very delicate and systematically placed *pointille* in light pastel colors (129). On the occasion of this exhibition, the museum’s walls were painted in bright colors that fit the Gemeentemuseum’s branding very well. But in this room, the flashy yellow clashes unpleasantly with the delicate tones of the paintings. The room further includes a showcase containing a couple of touching drypoint etchings depicting Toorop’s young daughter, Charley, who would grow up to become a celebrated artist herself. Highlights of the room, however, are the pointillist portraits of Mrs Bouman-de Lange (1898) and Mr Timmerman (1898–1900). The latter, known as *The Printlover*, is especially well executed; it shows the sitter holding a color lithograph by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (fig. 22).^[8]



Fig. 21, Installation view of “Second Katwijk
Period: The Sea as Mood and as Life.”

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 22, Left: *Portrait of Marie Jeanette
Bouman-De Lange*, 1900.

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

As I made my way through the exhibition I noticed most visitors were amazed by the diversity of Toorop’s work, and I overheard one visitor saying: “Each exhibition room is like a world on its own.” Very different indeed from the delicate seascapes of 1899 is the next room marking the beginning of the phase the exhibition organizers chose to refer to as “Labor and Faith.” Toorop, who himself thought of his oeuvre as divisible in different phases, refrained from Art Nouveau in 1902. His swirling linear style was replaced by a much more geometric linearity. Influenced by architect H. P. Berlage, Toorop advocated the notion of the communal *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) and believed that the plastic arts would reach great heights in merging with architecture. Berlage and Toorop appreciated each other greatly and Berlage asked Toorop to create decorative designs for his renowned Beurs van Berlage, the trading hall of Amsterdam. Toorop would ultimately make 25 designs for the Beurs, of which the three tile pictures for the front hall are most well known; they depict the *Past*, *Present*, and *Future* of the exchange business. The exhibition features a trial firing for a section of *Present* (fig. 23). It shows a strongly built laborer holding a sledgehammer as a symbol of participation in modern society, which is itself depicted in the background by means of smoking chimneys and a train.



Fig. 23, Left: Tile picture “Jong Holland” (Young Holland), 1903. [\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The name of the section “Labor and Faith” refers to a painting with the similar title *Faith and Remuneration* (1901–02), which has an autobiographical character. Toorop had “poured out his state of feeling of the time” into this painting (fig. 24). He had severe marital problems with his wife Annie Hall whom he had married in 1886. They had been living “separated from bed” for many years and were on the verge of a divorce. The two had almost irreconcilable differences about religion; Annie was living more and more according to a devout Catholic conviction, while Toorop, with his Protestant background, lived the life of an artist. He believed that if he adhered to the Catholic faith too rigorously, he would lose the spirit that nurtured his artistic labor (148–50). This is what is expressed in *Faith and Remuneration*; the fisherman is unsatisfied with his meagre pay and is doubting his religious belief, exemplified by the illustration of Christ in a shattered picture frame in the background. Toorop hereby rebelled against his wife’s restricted opinion of good faith and the limiting effect this had on his artistic spirit.



Fig. 24, Installation view of “Meditations: ‘Another New Period in My Work.’”
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

It is in this light that we must understand Toorop’s ultimate conversion to Catholicism in 1905. In becoming reconciled with his wife, Toorop opened up to the Catholic faith. He claimed that after a long search and great suffering, he found a true and pure connection with God through the Roman Catholic Church (156). The chapter “Arbeid en geloof” (Labor and Faith) is the most interesting part of the exhibition catalogue. Van Wezel managed to give thoughtful insight into this complex aspect of Toorop and his art. After many turbulent

years, Toorop entered a phase in his life when he felt much more at ease. This is reflected in the everyday scenes of rural life that he made in the summers of 1904 and 1905 in the area of Domburg. The Divisionist style he now turned to was characterized by a much broader touch as opposed to the refined Pointillism of the earlier coastal landscapes. This can be seen for example in Toorop's poetic rendering of *Labour (The Lumberman)* (1905). The late afternoon sun is beautifully conveyed by the juxtaposing of greens and lilacs, yellows and pinks; "A Fanfare of Light and Color" (fig. 25).



Fig. 25, Installation view of "Inner Life of a Greybeard: A Fanfare of Light and Colour."

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

The fifth and final stage of Toorop's career is designated as "Figuration and Geometry" and is dominated by his religious belief (fig. 26). A more opportunistic reason for Toorop to convert to Catholicism might have been the opportunity for new commissions of a grander scale (205). For a long time, Toorop aspired to create monumental art, and at this period the Catholic Church was looking for new modern visual means to convey its message. Artists like Toorop, who sought to give representations of universal spiritual life, suited this aspiration (209). By abstracting figurative art, Toorop could bring higher truths into the limelight. The goal was to get to the essence of figuration, not to abandon it in favor of abstraction. This resulted in figurative scenes with symmetrical compositions and geometrical volumes, as can be seen in *Stations of the Cross* (1916). Toorop used the cross to dissect the picture plane, giving it a rhythmic movement of line (229–30) (fig. 27). This same clarity of composition is manifest in his late work, for example *Prayer* (1924) (fig. 28). The stylized heads and meditative figures that occupy this painting exemplify the work of Toorop's final years.



Fig. 26, Installation view of “Catholicism: A New Art for a More Profound Faith.”

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 27, One of the *Stations of the Cross*, 1916.

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)



Fig. 28, Left: *Prayer*, 1924.

[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

Up to the very end of his life the struggle between diverging forces and the pursuit of inner peace that is continually conflicted by passionate desires remained at the core of Toorop’s artistic motivation. *The Pilgrim* (1921) is another highly meaningful autobiographical work (fig. 29). It serves as an allegory for the path of life. Man is a diligent worker, who, led by the light of God’s love (embodied by the radiating heart) is forever searching for elevation. Mary and the baby Jesus are awaiting the pilgrim with open arms. Many might regard this large drawing in black chalk and charcoal as a ponderous or melancholy final piece, and in fact it was considered as such when it was first exhibited. Toorop objected strongly to this interpretation, and claimed he had experienced “heavenly” pleasure at making it and considered it a “perfection” (albeit not completion) of his body of work (244). Jan Toorop passed away in 1928.



Fig. 29, Installation view of “The Final Years: Hieroglyphics of Inner Peace.”
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

From the late 1890’s onward, Toorop always had numerous portrait commissions, which served as an important source of income (185). A selection of Toorop’s portraits, both commissioned and non-commissioned, are served up as an encore (fig. 30). These are squeezed into a screened off part of a larger exhibition room. This is a pity, for the choice selection of portraits is marvelous, and it is once more very clear that Toorop was a masterly draughtsman. Putting together a retrospective exhibition is not an easy task. Do you show an overview of an artist’s entire oeuvre? And in equal proportions? The answer in this case seems to have been a whole-hearted “Yes.” The *horror vacui* (fear of empty space) that is characteristic of Toorop’s most renowned art nouveau symbolist works was in a sense transmitted to the exhibition organizers. The overall exhibition would have benefited from a somewhat sharper selection.



Fig. 30, Installation view of the final section with a choice selection of Toorop’s portraits.
[\[view image & full caption\]](#)

Apart from this considerable reservation, the exhibition deserves much praise. The exhibition and accompanying catalogue constitute a profound contribution to the knowledge of Jan Toorop. Not only does the exhibition show the artist’s oeuvre in its entirety, in all its complexity and diversity, but also Van Wezel’s decades-long research resulted in a stylistic chronological rearranging of the artist’s oeuvre. The linking narrative in Toorop’s oeuvre of “life as a painful struggle between antitheses of every kind” is convincingly conveyed throughout the entire presentation. Exhibition visitors are treated to a large amount of “salad oil style” works for which Toorop is most celebrated, and pleasantly

surprised by the artist's pointillist coastal landscapes and a variety of excellent portraits. For many, his later religious works will be less easily digestible. But in the catalogue, Van Wezel did a very good job of explaining this body of work. The exhibition certainly provides all the information needed to form a considered opinion about whether or not Jan Toorop lives up to the ambition of the exhibition organizers to rank Toorop alongside Mondrian and Van Gogh. Those who do not wish to make such a comparative assessment should simply allow themselves to "penetrate the labyrinth of their imagination" and marvel in Toorop's draftsmanship, especially in the beauty of the details.

Lisa Smit
Art historian

Notes

I am greatly indebted to guest curator and Toorop expert Gerard van Wezel for his explanation of the coming together of the exhibition, and for his impassioned stories about his decades-long research on Toorop's oeuvre.

All translations are by the author unless otherwise indicated.

[1] As guest curator, Gerard van Wezel worked alongside curator Hans Janssen of the Gemeentemuseum.

[2] *Toorop in Vienna: Inspiring Klimt* (October 7, 2006–January 7, 2007) by guest curator Marian Bisanz-Prakken. See <http://www.gemeentemuseum.nl/en/exhibitions/toorop-in-vienna-inspiring-klimt>.

[3] Based on the museum's sizeable collection of Toorop's work, the Gemeentemuseum has a long history of Toorop exhibitions, including retrospective exhibitions in 1940 and in 1987. Also see Carel Blotkamp et al., *Kunstenaren der idee: Symbolistische tendenzen in Nederland, ca. 1880–1930* (Artists of Conception: Symbolist Tendencies in the Netherlands, ca. 1880–1930), exh. cat. (The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1978); Maurice Tuchman, Judi Freeman and Carel Blotkamp, *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986); Marian Bisanz-Prakken, *Toorop/Klimt: Toorop in Vienna, Inspiring Klimt*, exh. cat. (The Hague: Gemeentemuseum; Zwolle: Waanders, 2006).

[4] See Joniek van Es en D. Valentijn, *Het laatste meesterwerk van Hendrik Petrus Berlage: de geschiedenis en restauratie van het Gemeentemuseum Den Haag* (The Last Masterpiece of Hendrik Petrus Berlage: History and Restoration of the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague) (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000).

[5] According to Pierre Bourdieu, it is a misconception that the "author" (e.g. the writer, the artist, the composer) is the one and only creator of the product (e.g. the book, the painting, the composition). Because who creates the creator? The critic discovers new talent and guides the public's opinion through its verdict. The critic either contributes to an artwork's consecration, or detracts from it. Finally, the public itself is responsible as creator by appropriating the artworks materially (as collectors) or symbolically (as audience). See Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 74–8.

[6] When the arts were "liberated from the authority of guilds, princes, the state and the academies" they were at the same time "robbed" of their support. Art now had to rely on itself and the artist could only be legitimized through his art, which meant he "could only be legitimated by maintaining he is a genius." When, due to the influence of the Impressionists, the age-old selection system of "good" art shifted from a peer-based selection to an expert-based selection, the standard of quality changed with it. Innovation became the number one criterion for appreciation and hence for a good reputation. Art dealers, critics, and museums became the experts, denominating "good" art on the basis of innovation. See Oskar Bätschmann, *The Artist in the Modern World: The Conflict Between Market and Self-expression* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 58; 66.

[7] Citation from *Berliner Tageblatt* (December 20, 1893) in Gerard van Wezel, *Jan Toorop: Zang der tijden* (Jan Toorop: Songs of Our Times) (The Hague: Gemeentemuseum; Zwolle: WBOOKS, 2016), 79.

[8] The depicted print is Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's *Mademoiselle Marcelle Lender, En Buste*, 1895. Color lithograph. Image 32.5 x 24.4 cm; Sheet 35.6 x 27.7 cm. Cat. rais. Wittrock 99.

Illustrations

Artworks are by Jan Toorop unless otherwise indicated.



Fig. 1, Entrance to the exhibition *Jan Toorop* with a blowup of a detail of *Play of Lines*, 1893. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)

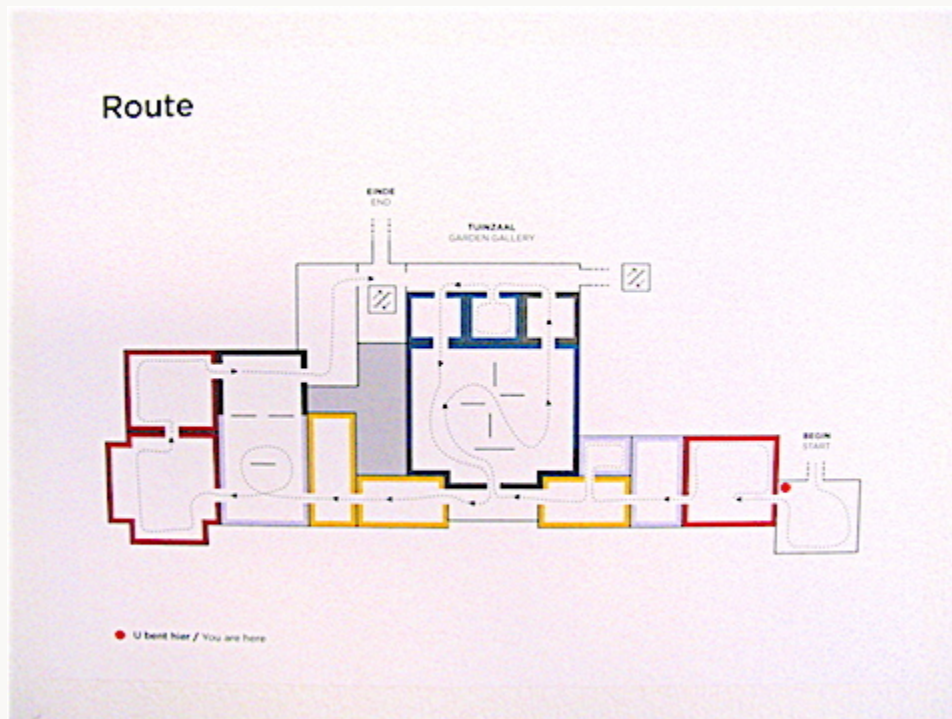


Fig. 2, Floor plan of the *Jan Toorop* exhibition with routing indicated. Photograph by the author.
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Fig. 3, Installation view of the introductory room with biography. Photo © Gemeentemuseum.
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Fig. 4, Installation view of the exhibition room “Rural Life: The Poverty of Modern Life.” Right: *L’Enterrement* (The Funeral), 1883. Oil on canvas. Private collection. Photo © Gemeentemuseum.
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Fig. 5, Left: *The Sick Little Child*, 1884. Oil on canvas. Private collection; right: *The Sickly Child*, 1884. Oil on thin cardboard on panel. Permanent loan from a private collection to Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 6, Installation view of the exhibition room "Urban Life: Ladies in White." Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 7, Left: *Au Nes. Mère et Fille* (In the Nes. Mother and Child), 1889. Oil on canvas. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; right: *A Dying*, 1888. Oil on canvas. Private collection. Photograph by the author.

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Fig. 8, *Melancholy*, 1891. Water color and pencil on cardboard. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 9, Installation view of the exhibition room “Realistic Symbolism: The Lives of Fisher Folk.” Far left: *Flood*, 1891. Oil on canvas. Private collection. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 10, Left: *Une Hétai're* (An Adulteress), 1891. Oil, pencil, and scratched lines on canvas. Private collection; right: *Une Génération Nouvelle* (The Young Generation), 1892. Oil and pencil on canvas. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 11, Installation view of the exhibition room “The New, Mystical Life.” Right: *The Three Brides*, 1892. Black chalk, pencil, and some green, blue and yellow colored pencil, heightened with white on paper. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 12, Detail of *The Sphinx*, 1892–97. Black chalk with colored chalk, pencil, opaque paint, and black watercolor on prepared canvas. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Photograph by the author. (See also fig. 13). [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 13, *The Sphinx*, 1892–97. Black chalk with colored chalk, pencil, opaque paint, and black watercolor on prepared canvas. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 14, *Twilight*, 1893. Black and a little yellow, green and grayish blue chalk and pencil on cardboard. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 15, *Des Chants de Notre Heure* (Songs of Our Times), 1893. Black chalk, pencil, and colored pencil, heightened with white gouache on tinted paper on cardboard in original carved, plastered and painted wooden inner and outer frame. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. Photograph by the author.

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Fig. 16, Art Nouveau designs for book covers. Bottom left: book cover design for *Metamorfoze* by Louis Couperus, 1897. Decoration in black on white linen. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 17, Installation view of a replica of the shop window of art store Oldenzeel in Rotterdam designed by Toorop, 1898. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 18, Installation view of “Art Nouveau: Art for Sale.” Right: five different versions of the *Advertising Poster for “Delftische Slaolie”* (Salad Oil from the City of Delft), 1894. Color lithographs. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 19, Detail of the renowned *Advertising Poster for "Delfische Slaolie."* Photograph by the author. (See also fig. 18). [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 20, Installation view of "Symbolist States of Mind: A Refined Drawing Style." Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 21, Installation view of “Second Katwijk Period: The Sea as Mood and as Life.” Right: pointillist coastal landscapes. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 22, Left: *Portrait of Marie Jeanette Bouman-De Lange*, 1900. Oil over an underdrawing in pencil on canvas. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam; right: *The Printlover (Portrait of Aegidius Timmerman)*, 1898–1900. Oil over an underdrawing in pencil on canvas. Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 23, Left: *Tile picture "Jong Holland" (Young Holland)*, 1903. Ceramic. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; right: *trial firing for The Present* in the entrance hall of the Beurs van Berlage (Berlage Trading Hall), no date. Ceramic. Royal Delft / Koninklijke Porcelain Fles. Photograph by the author.
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Fig. 24, Installation view of “Meditations: ‘Another New Period in My Work.’” Left: *Faith and Remuneration*, 1901–02. Pencil, black chalk and wax crayon and pastel on paper. Triton Collection Foundation, Rotterdam. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 25, Installation view of “Inner Life of a Greybeard: A Fanfare of Light and Colour.” Center: *Labour (The Lumberman)*, 1905. Oil on canvas. Gemeentemuseum, The Hague. Photo © Gemeentemuseum.
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Fig. 26, Installation view of “Catholicism: A New Art for a More Profound Faith.” Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 27, One of the *Stations of the Cross*, 1916. Black chalk and wax crayon on plywood. St. Bernulphus Church, Oosterbeek. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 28, Left: *Prayer*, 1924. Black and colored chalk and pencil, heightened with white, with scratched lines on thin cardboard, mounted on cardboard. Private collection; right: *The Guardian Angels Carry . . .*, 1923. Black chalk, pencil, wax crayon, and pastel, heightened with white on brown paper laid on cardboard. Private collection; background: *Stations of the Cross*, 1916. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. (See fig. 27). [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 29, Installation view of “The Final Years: Hieroglyphics of Inner Peace.” Left: *The Pilgrim*, 1921. Black chalk and charcoal, washed, on paper. Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht. Photograph by the author. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 30, Installation view of the final section with a choice selection of Toorop's portraits. Photo © Gemeentemuseum. [\[return to text\]](#)