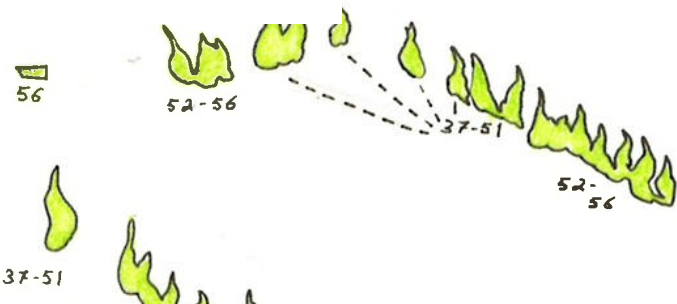


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# Form for Reinstallation of Installation Artworks

Art Collections 2023



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# Introduction

Installations are works of art that consist of several parts, often made of different materials and media. Due to the fragility of materials and the rapid obsolescence of technology, the space required for reinstallation, the scattered knowledge, and complex workflow installation artworks ask for a different approach than traditional works of art. In addition, the involvement of the artist is an important focus point for collection managers of installation art.

Like museums, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), owns a collection of installation artworks that require a solid approach in management and conservation, and is committed to improve the loan traffic for this sub-collection. The RCE strives for making the artworks accessible to the public as much as possible.

Since 2004, the RCE - together with others - has been committed to developing best practices in the field of registration, documentation, and conservation. Part of this effort was the project *Installation Art on the Map!* (2014-2017), during which useful guidelines and forms for the management and preservation of installation art have been developed. These have been brought together in two current publications (2023): *Intake Form* and *Reinstallation Form*, including guidelines for registration, reinstallation, and depot management as well.

## History

In 2004-2007, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE, then the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage) was coordinator of the European collaborative project *Inside Installations. Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art*. 25 leading museums and research institutions from Europe took part, including Tate in London, Restaurierungszentrum Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf, and S.M.A.K. in Ghent. From the Netherlands participants were: Van Abbemuseum, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Kröller-Müller Museum, Bonnefantenmuseum, the RCE, [University of Amsterdam Conservation & Restoration](#), and [LIMA](#) (then NIMk). Coordinator for the Dutch participation was the [Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art](#) (SBMK). The project yielded

a wide range of insights and methods that support the management, preservation, and presentation of these complex artworks. Besides, 30 works of art were examined and re-arranged. The results have been published on a website, in a book and as a documentary film.

## Challenge and objective

The problems with installations are diverse, such as the use of different materials, techniques, and media (as a result of which parts are often stored in different places), the fragility of materials (such as obsolescence of technology and rapid transience of materials), scattered knowledge (e.g. restorer, curator, documentalist, registrar, technician), the scale (space is needed for research and reconstruction), the complex workflow, the involvement of the artist (often necessary, but can it be done without the artist's presence?).

For the project *Installation Art on the Map!* the following objectives were central:

- Based on available forms and guidelines, to increase insight into the problems surrounding the management, preservation, and presentation of installation artworks in the Netherlands.
- To improve existing guidelines for management, preservation, and presentation of installation art.
- To develop forms for intake and reinstallation.
- To improve the current guidelines for documentation, re-installation, and depot management of installation art.
- To improve the management and accessibility of the sub-collection installation art at RCE with the aim to improving accessibility for loans.
- To test the knowledge gained in practice in collaboration with partners from the museum field.
- To organize a dialogue about the results with the museum field in collaboration with the SBMK.
- To optimize the registration of installation art at RCE, sorting out the documentation (artist interview, installation instructions, etc.) and fully construct, conserve, and restore four installation artworks.

# Guidelines for reinstallation

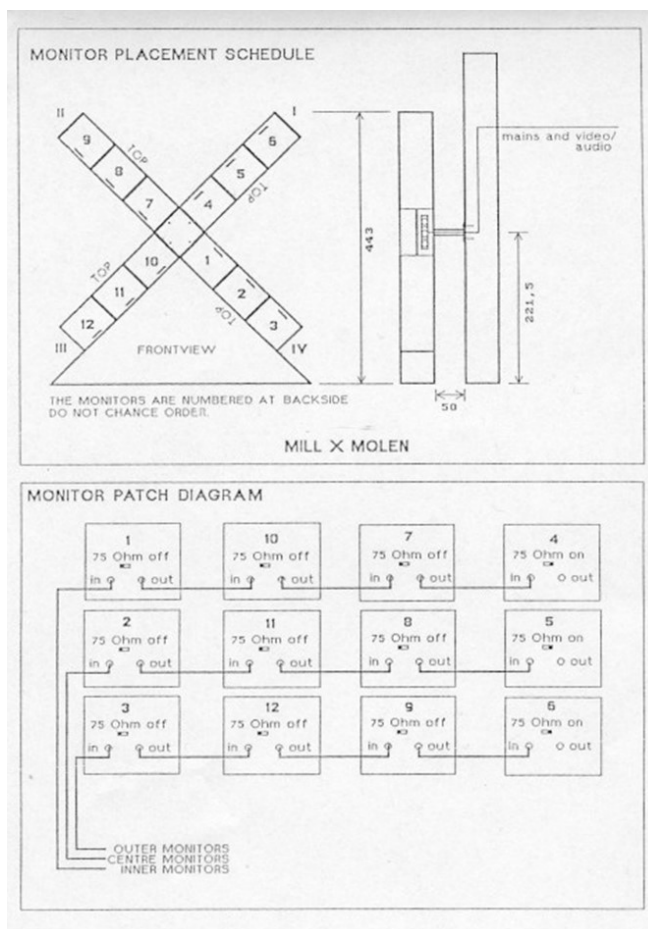
Lending out a work of art raises a whole range of issues, including condition reports, technical specifications, costs, packing, shipping, facility reports, insurance, climate requirements, the use of courier services and the use of requisites for reinstallation.

When compiling reinstallation instructions an interdisciplinary approach is the best option. A collaborative effort from staff members who take different roles in the organisation is more likely to create instructions that will cover all relevant aspects and the tasks involved.

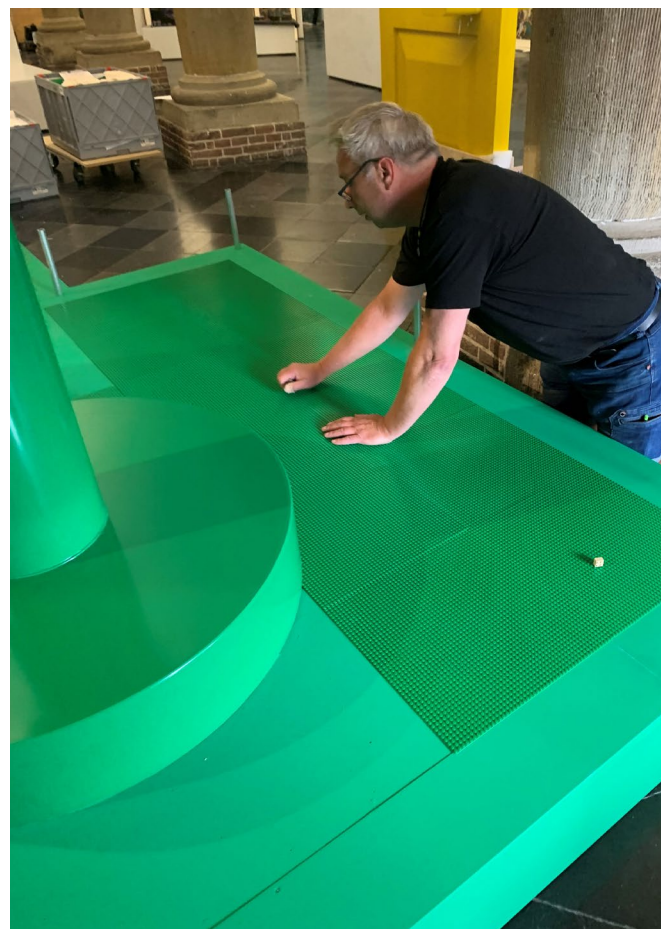
In the case of media art, it is advised to consult [LIMA](#) for conservation and presentation issues. Factors to consider include

the creation of back-ups, version optimization (e.g. transfer from an obsolete carrier to a current format) and version management (e.g. master held at LIMA, presentation copy at the museum).

Given the diversity of contemporary art, there is a huge diversity in instructions for reinstallation. As a rule of thumb, the instructions should be compiled for each artwork individually as well as its components. However, the Form for Reinstallation described below may serve as a good starting point. This template is used by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) and meets the requirements for collection management.



Bert Schutter, *Mill X Molen*, 1982. Drawing for reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



PINK de Thierry, *Et in Arcadia ego sum*, 1990. Installation of the artwork at the exhibition 'PINK de Thierry. Leven in kunst', Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, 2023. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

# Guidelines for storage and maintenance

The guidelines for long-term storage and upkeep of installations are far from straightforward. Installation art is often made of different materials and various techniques are being used during its creation, each of which requires its own management, conservation, and maintenance strategy. For example, electronics and media are often being used, bringing their own complexities. It is therefore advised to treat individual components separately during storage and maintenance, according to the requirements of the artwork. A few basic concerns are being discussed below.

## Long-term storage

Because installations are generally made of different materials, individual parts are often stored in separate areas after dismantling of the installation, depending on the type of material. However, we have learned that such an approach frequently leads to parts being lost. Bearing this in mind, if possible, we would recommend to store the installation's parts together. In general, this shouldn't be a problem in a clean environment with good climate control, because the requirements for most materials are more or less the same. However, there are some exceptions.

- Photographic materials. Ideally, photographic material should be kept in cold storage.
- Works on video and film. We recommend that these be stored at [LIMA](#).
- Plastics. For information about the identification, restoration, and preventive conservation of these materials, consult the RCE/SBMK [Plastics Project](#) and [POPART](#).
- Particularly fragile components or components that may affect other materials (such as organic components).

It is recommended to label all components of the installation, because some parts may be stored separately. Once separated, it

may no longer be obvious where they came from and how they fit together. If stored separately, these parts should be provided with an illustration of the complete installation to show that they are part of it, and where they belong.

## Maintenance and upkeep

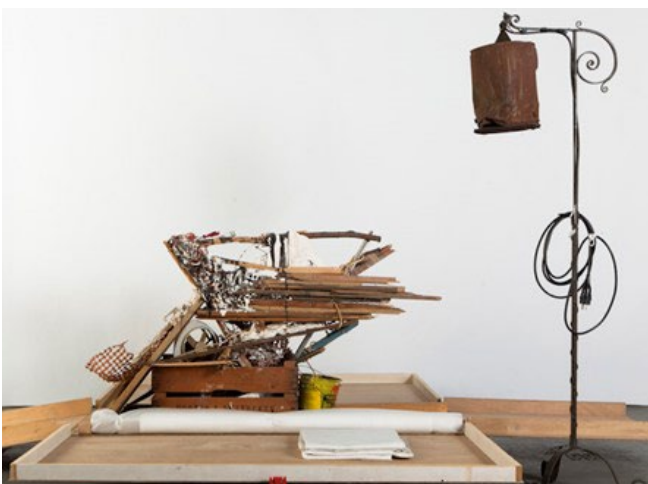
Regarding media works, the 2009-2011 research project [Obsolete Equipment](#) generated useful material concerning the maintenance and upkeep of both hardware and carriers (storage media). The project aimed to raise awareness of the importance of a proactive policy for the conservation and management of audio-visual artworks.

The core business of preserving media works is to keep on up-to-date hardware, software, and carriers. For example, the transfer of film or video material to digital media.

For more information about the conservation and management of media art or installations incorporating media components, your best option is to contact [LIMA](#), expert in the preservation, storage, and distribution of media art in The Netherlands.

Besides, you may want to consult the following publications:

- Noordegraaf, Julia, Vinzenz Hediger, Cosetta Saba, Barbara Le Metre eds., *Preserving and Exhibiting Media Art. Challenges and Perspectives*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013. [Preserving and Exhibiting Media Art | Amsterdam University Press \(aup.nl\)](#)
- Serexhe, Bernhard ed., *Preservation of Digital Art. Theory and Practice: The digital art conservation project*, Karlsruhe: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2013.



Diet Wiegman, *Recombinatie*, 1982. Test setup for future reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Roos Theuws, *Forma Lucis VI*, illumination through the light, 1989. Test setup for future reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

# Collaborators of the project

## *Installation Art on the Map!*

### **RCE Collaborators:**

Sylvia van Schaik, s.van.schaik@cultureelerfgoed.nl (project leader)  
Karin te Brake-Baldock  
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Yuri van der Linden  
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Manon Klerks

### **Interns**

Juliette Klaar  
Roy Russchen

### **Partners**

Karien Beijers (Frans Hals Museum/De Hallen)  
Colin Huizing (Stedelijk Museum Schiedam)  
Arthur van Mourik (Centraal Museum Utrecht)  
Gaby Wijers (LIMA)



Axel en Helena van der Kraan-Maazel, Johnny Woodhouse (mechanische music box), 1972. Test setup for future reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Thom Puckey, *Pride is Pride, Doubt is the Fall*, 1985. Test setup for future reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



Ricardo Füglistahler, *Panta Rhei*, 1988. Test setup for future reinstallation. Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

# Form for reinstallation

Version dd. 19/10/2017

Name of institution:

Compiled by:

Date of issue:

Number of pages:

Appendices [examples]:

1- photographs referred to on the form;

2- a plan, diagram, sketch or similar of the installation.

## 1. Basic details

Inventory number:

Maker:

Title:

Date:

Dimensions:

Interested parties: [e.g. RCE, borrower, gallery and/or artist?].

[Insert illustration of the work here]

Important information

Use this field to provide essential information concerning the work and its installation, in particular details which are important for the lender and needs to communicate to the borrower.

For example: key conditions of the loan, recommendations to the borrower and maintenance requirements.

[Insert name/logo of institution]

## 2. Description

- 2.1 Brief description of the work (material and immaterial components, as well as a brief statement about the intended meaning of the work).
- 2.2 Components of the artwork, with their individual dimensions and other relevant specifications (e.g. weights of heavy physical components and lengths of video or audio material):
- 2.3 Requisites to be supplied with the work (tools etc.):
- 2.4 Requisites to be provided by the borrower:
- 2.5 Other important information (optional):

## 3. Installation

- 3.1 Handling of the work, manpower and time required for its installation and persons to be involved (e.g. curator, conservator, collection and/or repository personnel, technical staff):
- 3.2 Safety precautions during installation (taking into account electrical and fire risks, fragile parts, etc.):
- 3.3 Technical information (e.g. equipment specifications, power consumption, number of electrical sockets required):
- 3.4 Assembly instructions, including fitting of components and, if necessary, step-by-step directions:

## 4. Disassembly and storage

Instructions for the work's disassembly, storage, and packing.

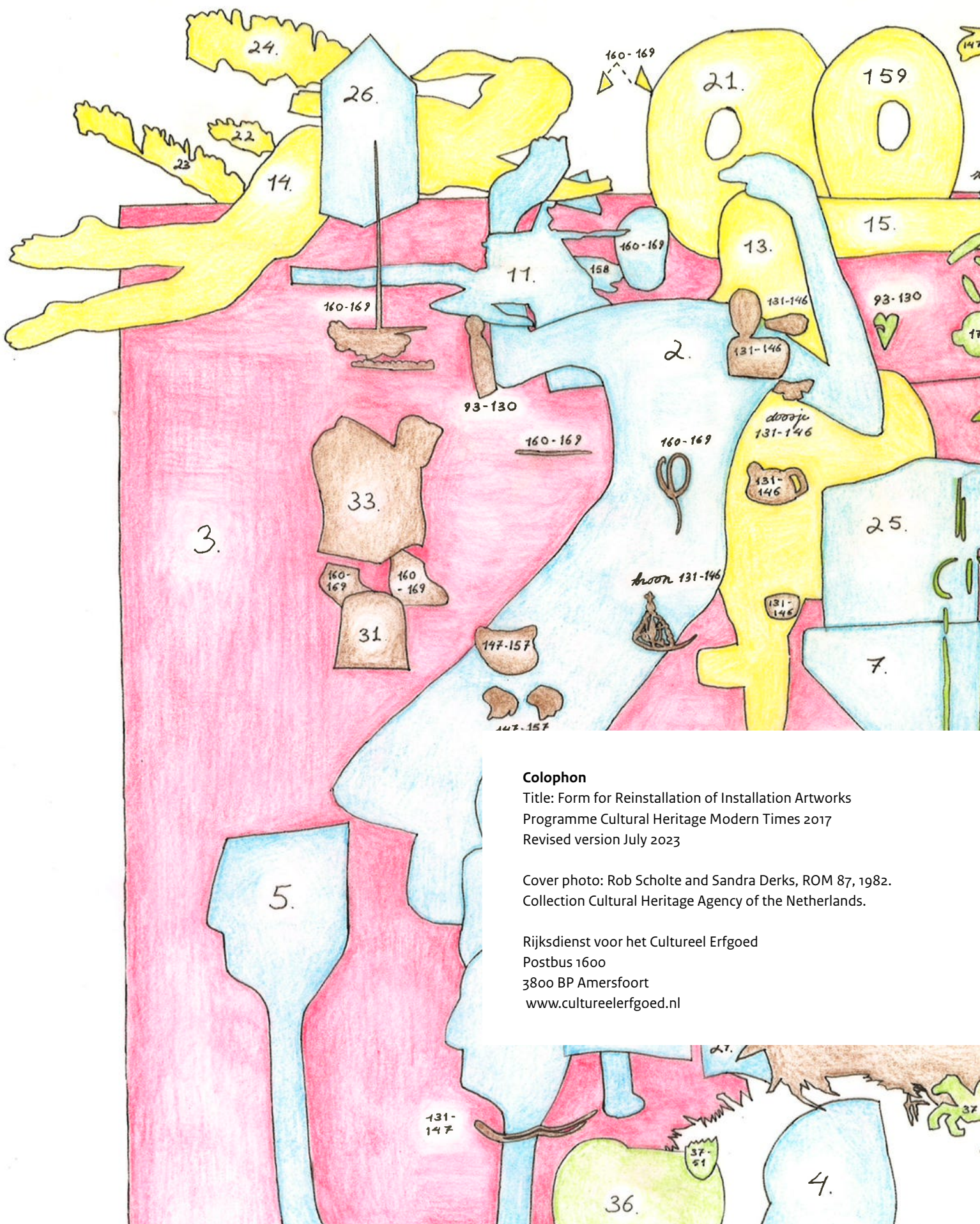
- Dismantling or disassembly:
- Storage (where and how):

## 5. Appendices

[Examples]

- Plans and diagrams (2D and/or 3D views, cross-sections, assembly diagrams).
- Detailed photographs (of individual parts, or a photographic record of the work's assembly and dismantling), video recordings, etc.

If anything is unclear or if you have any questions, please contact the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



**Colophon**

Title: Form for Reinstallation of Installation Artworks  
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Cover photo: Rob Scholte and Sandra Derks, ROM 87, 1982.  
 Collection Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.

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