

became a member in March 1905. His brother Arie and his nephew, also named Arie, were or became members too. I also knew that Adriaan had married the daughter of the sculptor Bart van Hove. His father-in-law had been the director of the Quellinus Art School (from which e.g. De Bazel graduated) and after that he taught sculpture at the Rijksakademie, which Mondrian attended. Also, Bart van Hove was president of the artists' club *Arti et Amicitiae*, of which Mondrian was a member.

In 1994 surfing the internet for more information about Adriaan – back then Google was not so prolific in its sources – I discovered, to my surprise, that his daughter was still alive and alert. Next week, on the 12th March, she will turn 95. I tracked her down and visited her two weeks ago for more information on Adriaan and also for photos. Who was he? What was he like?

Adriaan was a descendent of a line of wood traders. As the oldest son he would have had to take over the company, but apparently he was better with books. On several photo's he sits there, studiously reading a thick book. But Adriaan was not a boring guy. He appears to have been adventurous from an early age. Even though he found a replacement for his army service in Holland, he served in the Dutch colonial army in the East-Indies and traveled around the islands until 1905, after which he returned to Amsterdam. His early interest was in alchemy and especially medicinal herbs. He translated a book by Paracelsus from Latin into Dutch in 1913. Adriaan was immersed in every esoteric organization existing then. In 1916, he bought a 40 hectare piece of woodland in Den Dolder – a place then especially known for its notorious clinic for the insane. Adriaan worked his butt off and with his second wife he successfully turned the woods into an enormous herb garden. With his wife he traveled Europe with a rucksack, trying to find rare herbs. The garden products were sold to apothecaries and factories of homeopathic medicine. The Van de Vijsels kept an open house for like minds.

But how did Adriaan and Piet Mondrian meet? Without concrete evidence – except for the horoscope – I will have to describe the possibilities.

Mondrian obviously needed wood for his picture frames. Brother Arie van de Vijzel, theosophist since 1908, had a lumber store at Ceintuurbaan 330. You can spit from there to Mondrian's house at Sarphatipark 42, where he lived since 1908. That would narrow the evidence down conveniently. But