



and its later international successor, ESSWE (European Society for the Study of Western Esotericism). We have since drawn attention to esoteric symbolism in art through both individual and joint projects. Examples of various conference themes are: 'Kunst en Westerse Esoterie: Een traditie in de kunst van de 17de eeuw tot heden' (Van Gogh Museum, 1999); the start of the OVN foundation, its research projects and conferences including "Masonic and Esoteric Heritage: new perspectives for art and heritage policies" (Dutch National Library, 2005); research into the esoteric interests of Helene Kröller-Müller (Kröller-Müller Museum, 2002-2003); and exhibition on artist and theosophist Henri Verstijnen (1882-1940) (Assen/Den Haag 2006-2007); the exhibition "Holy Inspiration. Religion and Spirituality in Modern Art" (Amsterdam 2008); and the city guide *Geheim Den Haag: vrijmetselaarstempels en andere esoterische gebouwen in Den Haag rond 1900* (Nieuwe Haagsche, 2011).

Bax published a dissertation on theosophy and art "Het web der schlemming: theosofie en kunst in Nederland van Lauweriks tot Mondriaan" (SUN, 2006), while Ariens' dissertation explored the influence of esotericism on Picasso and the Surrealists, "*De wangen van de Macroposofus: Een nieuwe interpretatie van het schilderij 'Les Demoiselles d'Avignon' van Pablo Picasso.*" Kroon expects to finish her dissertation on "The role of Dutch freemasons in the cultural and commercial exchange with Asia, 1735-1852" in 2012.

While in the 1990s we were 'lonely callers in the desert', as the Dutch saying goes, younger art historians have since studied at the chair for Hermetic Philosophy in Amsterdam, whose interdisciplinary approach will further broaden the boundaries of the art historical field of study. Meanwhile, many esoteric organisations have opened up and digitalized their historical libraries and archives, making more and more sources accessible for art historians. The Art Archives (www.theartarchives.org) are now also online, providing international access to an important primary source.

Apparently it takes a long time for new perspectives and research results from academic circles to filter down to the daily practices of the art