world. Exhibitions like “The Perfect Medium: photography and the occult” (New York, 2004) and “Das Bauhaus und die Esoterik” (Hamm/Wurzburg 2005) broke little new ground. Other museums passed up on potential box office hits.

In 2006 Bax and Kroon worked together on the exhibition and publication concept “Verborgen werelden: esoterische stromingen in de kunst, 1800-1940” (later: Geheim!). We envisioned an exhibition introducing an overview of various esoteric currents, their history and key figures, and exploring how specific art currents and artists had soaked up and expressed these influences. The proposal was picked up by the Van Gogh Museum, the Singer Museum and Boom/SUN publishers, but budgetary matters prohibited the cooperation from materializing.

Accepting that Holland might be too small, we approached the large European museums in 2007 with the more internationally orientated concept “The Initiated Artist. Art & Western Esotericism, 1800-1940,” which was supported by international experts in the field of study, the Amsterdam University Press and the Iona Foundation. Museum managements responded with enthusiasm, but felt an overview of esoteric currents was too ‘complex’ a subject to draw large visitor numbers. However, several exhibitions were organized shortly after, which discussed esotericism in ‘safe’ terms, such as spiritualism and artists networks. Examples are: “Schilders van de Ziel: Symbolisme in Frankrijk” (Laren 2007); “Traces du Sacré” (Paris/München 2008); “Holy Inspiration: religion and spirituality in modern art” (Amsterdam 2008); “Albert von Keller: salons, séancen, secession” (Zürich 2009) and “Geheimgesellschaften: wissen wagen wollen schweigen” (Frankfurt 2011).

It is very satisfying to see that the Musée d’Art Moderne et Contemporain in Strasburg has recently