

## **Krijn de Koning Church Warden of De Nieuwe Kerk From 27 August to 24 October 2010**

To mark the 600th anniversary of De Nieuwe Kerk in 2010, a permanent change is to be introduced in its programming. De Nieuwe Kerk – the ‘New’ and now ‘Renewed’ Church – will henceforth be open for visitors from home and abroad all year round. There will be a fixed schedule of activities at different times of the year. One of the innovations is the introduction of a ‘church warden’.

### **The church warden**

In the old days, the church warden was the person in charge of the day-to-day management of the church building. After De Nieuwe Kerk became a cultural centre, in 1980, the function of church warden was abolished. It is now to be reinstated, in a revised form. Each autumn, De Nieuwe Kerk will turn the building over to a well-known Dutch or international figure – an architect or fashion designer, a dramatist or artist – who will become the ‘church warden’ of De Nieuwe Kerk for some two months. He or she will present a personal vision, as inspired by the building and the church’s history.

### **Krijn de Koning**

Krijn de Koning (1963) is to be the first of these ‘church wardens’. Krijn de Koning’s work revolves around the experience of space and the relationship between people and space. He uses the history of a building, its architecture, function and colour in close interaction with the surroundings as a source of inspiration to build accessible artworks, structures that visitors can enter and explore. He works in buildings in the Netherlands and other countries, generally on temporary commissions.

Krijn de Koning:

‘De Nieuwe Kerk is an extraordinary, unique building. Not only is it a “house of God”, which injects special ceremonial and historic significance into its formal features, but for the past thirty years it has been used as a venue for exhibitions, with offices, storage, and a restaurant. First and foremost, however – and this aspect is timeless – it is a public meeting-place. All these aspects can be seen, and make themselves felt, in its interior. To place within it an artwork that will have its own autonomous impact on the experience of the space and add something tangible to the location is an interesting challenge, to put it mildly.’

### **Artwork**

With Krijn de Koning’s spectacular installation, De Nieuwe Kerk is acquiring both an extra storey and a new dimension. On the one hand, the raised floor will enable visitors to truly immerse themselves in the artwork. In the middle

of the floor is 'an artwork within an artwork', a sunken area with small rooms that invite contemplation. These dark little rooms, which will be geared towards meditation and earthly concerns, form a stark contrast with the large, light church, which was originally oriented towards devotion and Heaven. On the other hand, the extra storey will also provide an entirely new perspective from which to view the church itself. It will be possible to view from close quarters not just the architecture and ornamentation, but also renowned elements of the interior, such as the superb woodcarvings on the pulpit (1649–1664), by Albert Jansz. Vinckenbrinck. Visitors will also be able to look down on Johannes Lutma's gilded choir screen (1654), and see the two organs at the same height as an organist seated at the claviature. The angels supporting the vault, too, will be much closer.

In addition, visitors will naturally want to study the stained-glass windows. Above the entrance is the window made to mark the inauguration of Queen Wilhelmina. In the north transept, we see Amsterdam's coat of arms being handed over to the city's magistrates. On the left-hand side of the central nave, we see the memorial window designed by Toon Verhoef to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Netherlands' liberation from Nazi occupation, in 1995. On the right-hand side of the central nave is the memorial window designed by Marc Mulders, to mark the silver jubilee of Queen Beatrix in 2005.

In short, the 'church warden' will dwell at greater length on the rich history of De Nieuwe Kerk – a history stretching back 600 years.