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The statue 'De Vlecht' will be unveiled in Rotterdam on International Women's Day

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As if a giantess cut off her braid and it remained upright on the street, this is how the 6.5 meter high statue sees *The Plait* ('The Braid') by the Greek-British artist Kalliopi Lemos. In addition to the size, the texture is impressive: the dark brown hairs are woven from more than 14,000 meters of steel wire and glisten beautifully in the sunlight. It gives the hair a reddish glow.

The braid is from this week on the Westersingel in Rotterdam. It is the first of two large sculptures that director Wim Pijbes of Stichting Droom en Daad, the philanthropic organization of the wealthy Van der Vorm family, bought for the public space of Rotterdam. Later a picture of Gavin Turk follows. "Rotterdam has a very impressive collection of images, with works by Alexander Calder, Henry Moore and Picasso, among others, but because those images are always there, there is less attention for them," says Pijbes. "With these new images we want to give the collection new energy."



Detail of **The braid** by artist Kalliopi Lamos.

Photo Bram Vreugdenhil

This Monday, International Women's Day *The braid* disclosed. The work is part of Lemos' recent series of images *Tools of Endearment*, about the role of femininity. The cut braid stands for, among other things, throwing off old ideas; as an act of liberation.

Picture terrace

The artwork is placed on the sculpture terrace on the Westersingel that was built in 2001, when Rotterdam was European Capital of Culture. On the plateau are statues by, among others, Auguste Rodin, Umberto Mastroianni and Henri Laurens, "A nice row, but to be honest it had also come to a dead end," says Siebe Thissen, head of Visual Arts for Public Space at the CBK Rotterdam. An image is now being added for the first time in 20 years. "The city has grown, has become more dynamic, and that includes other images." *The braid* towers high above the other sculptures.

The request to the Droom en Daad Foundation to contribute to images in Rotterdam's public space came from the CBK, says Thissen. "Patrons and private donations have always been important to the Rotterdam sculpture collection." As an example he cites the Urban Embellishment Committee in 1960, which included collectors Gerrit van de Wal (director Bijenkorf / KLM) and Piet Sanders (Erasmus University) and Coert Ebbinge Wubben (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen). "Private collectors are close to the art market and can sometimes negotiate better." And they often also

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Pijbes bought the statue from a distance, without having seen it physically first. “Everything is done via the internet now. I was tipped off by an acquaintance in London, who saw it at the Frieze Sculpture Park sculpture exhibition. ” How much money it cost, the former Rijksmuseum director does not say.

Also read this interview with Gavin Turk (2019): **‘I want you to dwell longer on junk’**

Also comes from the same exhibition *Golden age* by Gavin Turk, a 3.5-meter-high bronze door, which will be placed in Katendrecht in June next to the place where the emigrants’ museum, also of Droom en Daad, will open in 2023. The symbolism of that statue fits well with the museum, says Pijbes. “It’s about entering a new space, change and a new perspective.”

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