



PERSBERICHT

## Exhibition: Beer. Amsterdam, city of beer and brewers

Starting Thursday, 9 April 2020, the Amsterdam Museum presents an exhibition on beer, the age-old fuel of Amsterdam. Many mayors in the history of Amsterdam were brewers, the city saw the rise of breweries such as Heineken, and today it is home to no less than 45 beer breweries. Visitors of *Beer. Amsterdam, city of beer and brewers* will discover everything there is to know about beer history in the capital, including a broad contextualization and critical side notes. Through cultural-historical objects ranging from contemporary and historic art as well as archeological treasures, it tells the story of the brewing process, the image surrounding beer, and the café culture that arose from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. After the exhibition, visitors can enjoy a specialty Amsterdam Museum beer at the museum café. The exhibition will run until 6 September 2020.

### Backwards through beer history

Amsterdam is an evergreen in the top-5 lists of 'European beer cities'. The city is home to over 45 breweries, and this number is still growing, just like the number of specialized beer cafes. The development of modern-day Amsterdam beer culture has gone so fast that it might be called a revolution. However, this did not happen overnight. The exhibition guides visitors from the present to the past: from the recent craft beer revolution, through the era of industrialization and the rise of pale lager in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the late-medieval foundations of Amsterdam's later trade successes that were laid with the import of German hopped beer.

*It is remarkable that Amsterdam became a big beer city because it had brackish water: not an ideal ingredient for beer.*

### Brewing process and ingredients

There are about 400 known types of beer worldwide. They differ in taste, but are all created using the same procedure. This process is illustrated with historical objects such as bushels, bottling machines, a malt cart, microscopic samples of ingredients, and hop aromas. In addition, contemporary brewers share their perspectives on taking up the age-old craft of beer brewing: Brouwerij de Prael creates beer out of rainwater, for example, and the organic brewery Troost turns surplus potatoes into Pieperbier ('Spud Beer').

*Many modern-day brewers add special ingredients to their beers, from coriander and orange peel to seaweed and prunes.*

### Across the Amstel river and the IJ waters

Sleds, ships, horse wagons and later motorized vehicles have been used in the course of history to bring beer from brewery to consumer. In order to tempt the latter into a purchase, brewers have traditionally spent much money on posters and advertisements. These promotional materials also tell the story of how the image of beer has changed over time. A number of female-unfriendly advertisements that can be interpreted in a sexist manner, for example, illustrate that beer was strongly positioned as a men's beverage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*The Second World War led to shortages in many food staples. Barley was rationed, and the beer became weaker and weaker. In 1949, annual beer consumption sank to a historic depth. In order to restore their reputations and encourage beer consumption, in that year brewers organized a collective campaign with the slogan 'The beer is back to best.'*

### **Beer consciousness**

In the Middle Ages everyone drank beer: men, women, children, the elderly. Beer had positive effects on anemia and stomach weakness, and it was considered helpful during sickness. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, beer had a largely harmless image. It was even suggested as an alternative for *jenever*, or Dutch gin, in the battle against alcoholism. But today's perspectives on the impact of alcohol consumption on health, traffic safety and relationships are very different. One room in the exhibition *Beer. Amsterdam, city of beer and brewers* is dedicated to the dark sides of the beer industry.

*A protest beer was named after Halbe Zijlstra, a former minister of Education, Culture and Science who cut the budget for the arts by over 200 million Euros in 2011. Artist Teun Castelein developed this beer together with Henriette Walle of the Buitenbrouwerij in Amsterdam. The sales profit is used to support art projects.*

### **One last round — the café**

In 1806, 1793 places in Amsterdam were registered as a tavern or beer house. The city is still filled with brown cafés, theme bars, pubs catering to specific groups such as LGBTQI+ persons, women or students, karaoke bars and stage venues, après-ski cabin bars and other party cafés. You couldn't have a beer exhibition without a café. This includes the legacy of café culture in the arts: from Gabriël Metsu's 17<sup>th</sup>-century portrait of an old drinker to Gijs Assmann's contemporary *vanitas* sculptures with beer bottles. A 17<sup>th</sup>-century still life with a drinking-game glass full of beer by Jansz. van de Velde was reconstructed for this exhibition, using archeological findings excavated from Amsterdam soil.

*The oldest café in Amsterdam is 414 years old. It is said that Dutch seafarer Piet Hein was a regular guest at distillery-tavern De Druif on Rapenburgplein square.*

### **Busy brewers**

Amsterdam is buzzing with brewing activity. Visitors of *Beer. Amsterdam, city of beer and brewers* will be introduced to many well-known and lesser-known local breweries such as De Prael, Kleiburg, Mokums Mout, Walhalla, Zuidas Bier, Bruut, Gebrouwen door Vrouwen, Brouwerij 't IJ, Oedipus, and of course the large player Heineken.

*In 1980 there were only 15 breweries left in the whole of the Netherlands. Today Amsterdam alone has 45 registered breweries.*

### **Events**

During the run of this exhibition, the Amsterdam Museum will organize various activities relating to beer and brewers. There will be lectures on themes such as low-alcohol brewing, the book launch of 'Van brouwhobby tot succesvol biermerk' by the all-female brewers of Gebrouwen door Vrouwen, and beer tastings guided by professional beer sommeliers.

### **A beer of its own**

When the Amsterdam Museum's historic building on Kalverstraat was a convent, and later an orphanage, home-brewed beer was already produced there. Now, for this exhibition, the Amsterdam Museum releases its own specialty beer that will be for sale at the museum shop and the museum café. The museum is adopting the New England IPA by Brouwerij Troost as its very own signature beer. The Amsterdam Museum beer has a limited edition design by design agency Thonik and is packaged in cans: canning is both more sustainable and a better choice for the preservation of the beer's quality.

The exhibition *Beer. Amsterdam, city of beer and brewers* will be on show from Thursday, 9 april, to Sunday, 6 September, 2020. It is compiled by guest curators Irma Enklaar and Edo Dijksterhuis. Dijksterhuis has written several books about beer and brewers.

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*Press notes / not for publication: For any questions, requests for images or interviews with guest curators Edo Dijksterhuis and Irma Enklaar or one of the Amsterdam breweries that participate in the exhibition, please contact Kim Koopman (press spokesperson), [k.koopman@amsterdammuseum.nl](mailto:k.koopman@amsterdammuseum.nl) or +31 (0)6 - 22 92 77 29.*

**Press preview Tuesday 7 April**

On Tuesday 7 April, starting at 16.00, the Amsterdam Museum organizes a press preview that allows journalists to visit the exhibition before it opens for the general public, and to sample the Amsterdam Museum beer. If you would like to receive an invitation for this event, please e-mail [k.koopman@amsterdammuseum.nl](mailto:k.koopman@amsterdammuseum.nl).

**Images**

All images shown, as well as additional images, can be downloaded at high resolution through this [PDF](#). Would you like to receive more images? Please contact the museum.

