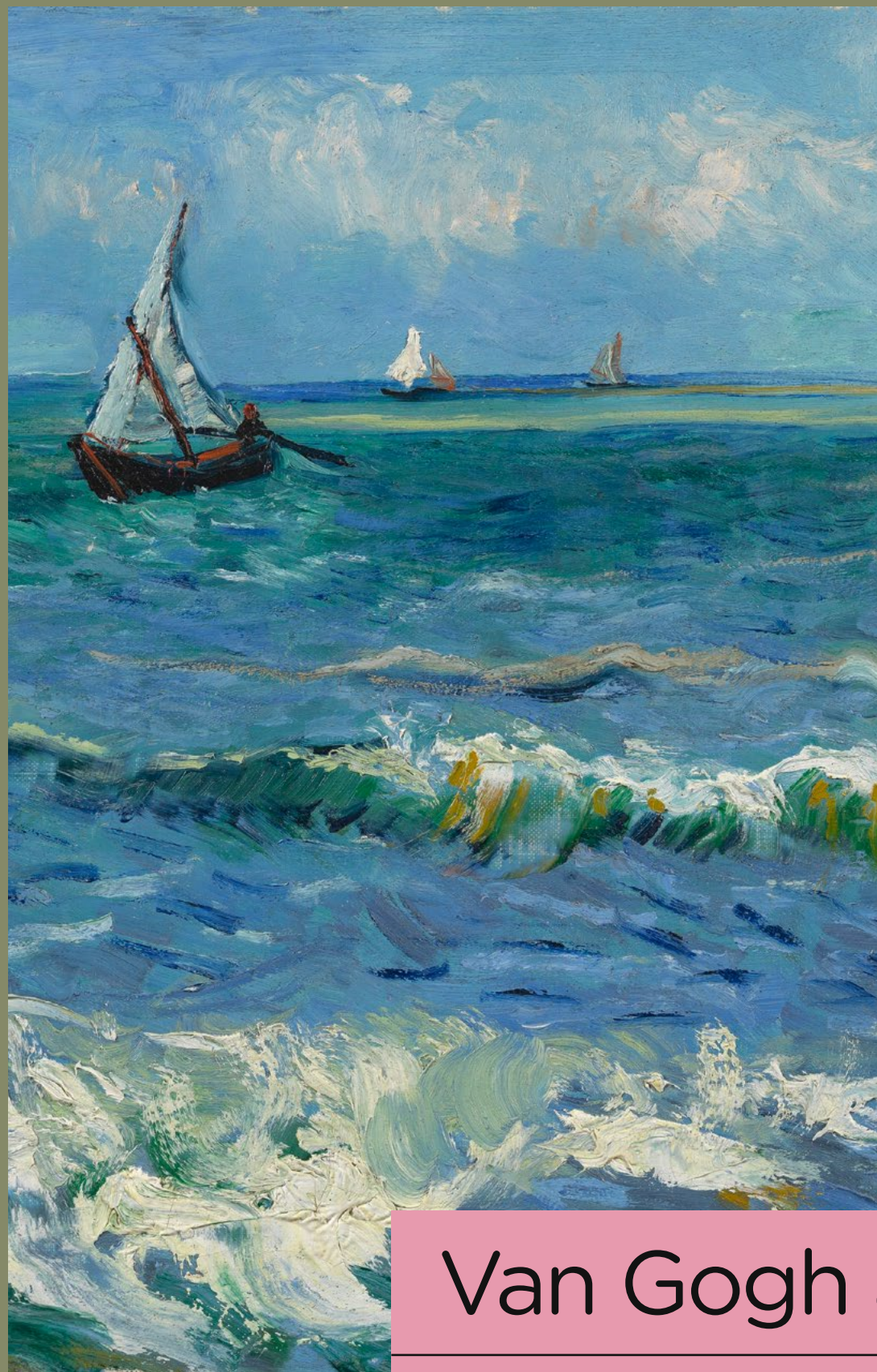


Van  
Gogh  
Museum

Amsterdam



# Van Gogh aspires

Strategic Plan 2018-2020









Vincent van Gogh. *The Bedroom (detail)*, 1888. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)





Vincent van Gogh. *Window in the Studio*, 1889. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

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# 01





# Foreword



# Foreword

The Van Gogh Museum (VGM) is proud of the fact that Vincent van Gogh, the museum's collection and the programme of exhibitions continues to hold strong appeal for visitors to the museum from more than 125 countries, and that its audience is extremely diverse (ranging from young to old, and from schoolchild to scientist). In 2017, the VGM was the most visited museum in the Netherlands. In extensive international research conducted by the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University in collaboration with the acclaimed Reputation Institute into the reputation of the 18 most famous art museums in the world, European respondents placed the Van Gogh Museum in first place, ahead of the Louvre and the Rijksmuseum. International respondents ranked the Van Gogh Museum in second place, behind the Louvre and ahead of the Rijksmuseum. Exhibitions in the museum and abroad are held in high regard and attract large numbers of visitors. The VGM hit the international news with the presentation of the two stolen paintings by Vincent van Gogh, which were recovered in Naples in late 2016. There was also wide interest for innovative projects such as '#SunflowersLIVE', in which five live streams digitally reunited five of Van Gogh's Sunflowers paintings. This Facebook-based project attracted more than 9.4 million views.

The VGM is proud of the high numbers of museum and online visitors, values the ever-growing international interest in Van Gogh and above all, appreciates the impressive visitor ratings. However, the VGM is fully aware that the recent successes and high level of interest bring with them new challenges and responsibilities, and therefore a new focus for the future. How do we maintain a good balance between managing and preserving the collection on the one hand, and the museum's supplementary activities on the other? How do we ensure that a visit to the museum remains a unique experience, despite the high visitor numbers? How can we satisfy the (international) interest in Van Gogh and ensure that the VGM continues to inspire people all over the world?

The world around us is changing rapidly. Cultural diversity is increasing, society is aging and



digitisation of our world marches forth. How do we ensure that the museum reaches all sections of society and remains relevant to society as a whole? How can we utilise the ever-increasing digitisation to reach and inspire more people all over the world?

The VGM is keen to prepare for the future – an ambition that is embodied in this Strategic Plan. Of course, this plan builds on the foundations laid by earlier strategic plans. The majority of the mission, vision and core values remain intact and are still at the heart of the VGM's activities and thought processes. Adjustments to the plan and a shift in focus are only made where necessary. The VGM has made notable progress with regard to the strategic pillars<sup>1</sup> outlined in the previous Strategic Plan. Access to the collection has improved, in part thanks to the new presentation in the Rietveld Building. Access to the buildings has also been significantly improved following the opening of the new Entrance Hall and far-reaching initiatives regarding disabled visitors. The museum has also made headway with visitor flow management, through the further implementation of online ticket sales and the time-slotted ticketing system.

Accessibility of information on the collection has been further optimised by continued efforts to digitise the works in the collection and the introduction of a new multimedia guide, which is available in eleven languages for both the permanent exhibition and temporary exhibitions. In 2017, the multimedia guide realised an unprecedented pick-up rate of 26%.

In order to better reach our audience outside of the museum (non-visitors), work started in 2014 to dramatically redesign the website. The museum also invested heavily in social media activities, resulting in the VGM moving into the international top-five of art museums in terms of social media reach. It was precisely social media that enabled the museum to make significant progress regarding dialogue and engagement (the emotional connection) with the audience.

By restructuring the organisation of its subsidiary Van Gogh Museum Enterprises Ltd (VGME) in the past period, the museum succeeded in significantly increasing commercial turnover

and profit. Van Gogh Museum Professional Services also presents fresh opportunities to generate additional income. A new educational and commercial initiative developed in the past period is the Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience, which will be brought to market in the coming policy period. The further development and professionalisation of the museum's fundraising activities and events also resulted in significant increases in income from this field. All of the museum's supporting member circles grew considerably, particularly on an international level.

These areas will remain of importance in the years ahead. Nevertheless, this Strategic Plan focuses on the new challenges and responsibilities facing the VGM in the coming years. Moving forward, the VGM is dedicated to remaining excellent, leading and inspiring. The golden jubilee of the VGM in 2023 is the point on the horizon that extends beyond the reach of this Strategic Plan. This milestone will be celebrated extensively, and this plan outlines the museum's initial aims in this regard.

The VGM's activities and thought processes are categorised in three dimensions: local, global and digital. These three dimensions will be reflected in the development and formulation of the core values and strategic pillars. Wherever possible, we will state the dimension (local-global-digital) that the plans relate to and affect.

This Strategic Plan is the result of close collaboration between the Management Team and the Supervisory Board. VGM employees were asked to provide input in a series of consultation sessions, while the Works Council also considered the issues at hand and contributed to the development of the plan.

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<sup>1</sup> The strategic pillars outlined in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 were: 1) The VGM has ensured optimal access to the collection and its buildings; 2) The VGM reaches as many visitors and non-visitors as possible, creating dialogue with the public alongside a high degree of public involvement; 3) The VGM secures additional income, partly through developing new business models and the continued professionalisation of fundraising activities.



# 02





Museum profile





## Visitors

For several years, the VGM has achieved visitor numbers above 2 million. In 2017, the museum even welcomed approximately 2,260,000 visitors, of which circa 85% travelled from abroad. This makes the VGM the most visited museum in the Netherlands in 2017, with a place in the top-25 most visited art museums in the world.

## Social media users

The VGM is active on several social media channels. The museum's reach has developed considerably, and continues to grow. At the time of writing, the VGM had a total of 12 million followers on social media. In 2017, the VGM had 1,455,722 followers on Twitter, 4,475,549 fans on Facebook, 5,611,281 Google+ followers and 535,753 followers on Instagram.

## Income

The VGM's income structure is unique. The large numbers of visitors generate 50% of the annual budget through entrance fees, making them the most important source of income for the museum. Commercial activities, merchandise, donations, benefactions and sponsorship contribute approximately 35% and in broad terms, the remaining 15% comes from governmental subsidy.

## Collaborations

### Fellow Dutch and international museums

The VGM is involved in numerous loan transactions and multiple collaborations with other Dutch and international museums, working together to organise exhibitions and conduct research.

### Research institutes and universities

The VGM collaborates with numerous Dutch and international research institutes and universities, such as the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, the University of Amsterdam (Master's degree programme in Conservation and Restoration), the VU Amsterdam, Netherlands Institute for Conservation Art and Sciences (NICAS), Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the TIAS School

for Business and Society, alongside international organisations including Cornell University and Duke University.

### (International) public bodies

The VGM enjoys close links with the City of Amsterdam and the City District of Zuid. The museum also maintains good relations with numerous embassies, including those in Japan and China.

### Social organisations

As part of various projects such as Kunst Maakt de Mens (Art makes men. Elderly meet Van Gogh), the Museum Plus Bus and Van Gogh Connects, the VGM collaborates with a range of social organisations including Cordaan and De Zonnebloem.

### Joint promotions

The VGM is involved in collaborations in which both the third party and the museum benefit from free publicity and a positive image amongst a shared target group. Previous joint promotions have seen the VGM collaborate with Tedx Amsterdam Women, Armin van Buuren, AVROTROS, N8 | Museum Night Amsterdam Foundation and Amsterdam Fashion Week.

### Other art disciplines

Derived from the museum's mission, the VGM constantly seeks collaboration with young talent in a variety of (art) disciplines. The Vincent on Friday programme provides the ideal platform for these young artists to introduce their work while also illustrating how Vincent van Gogh and his art still inspire the next generation of artists. The VGM also enters into other (occasional) collaborations with organisations such as the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and the Dutch National Opera & Ballet, or for film productions, such as the recently released film Loving Vincent. The VGM works closely with Dutch designers to develop products for sale in the museum shops.

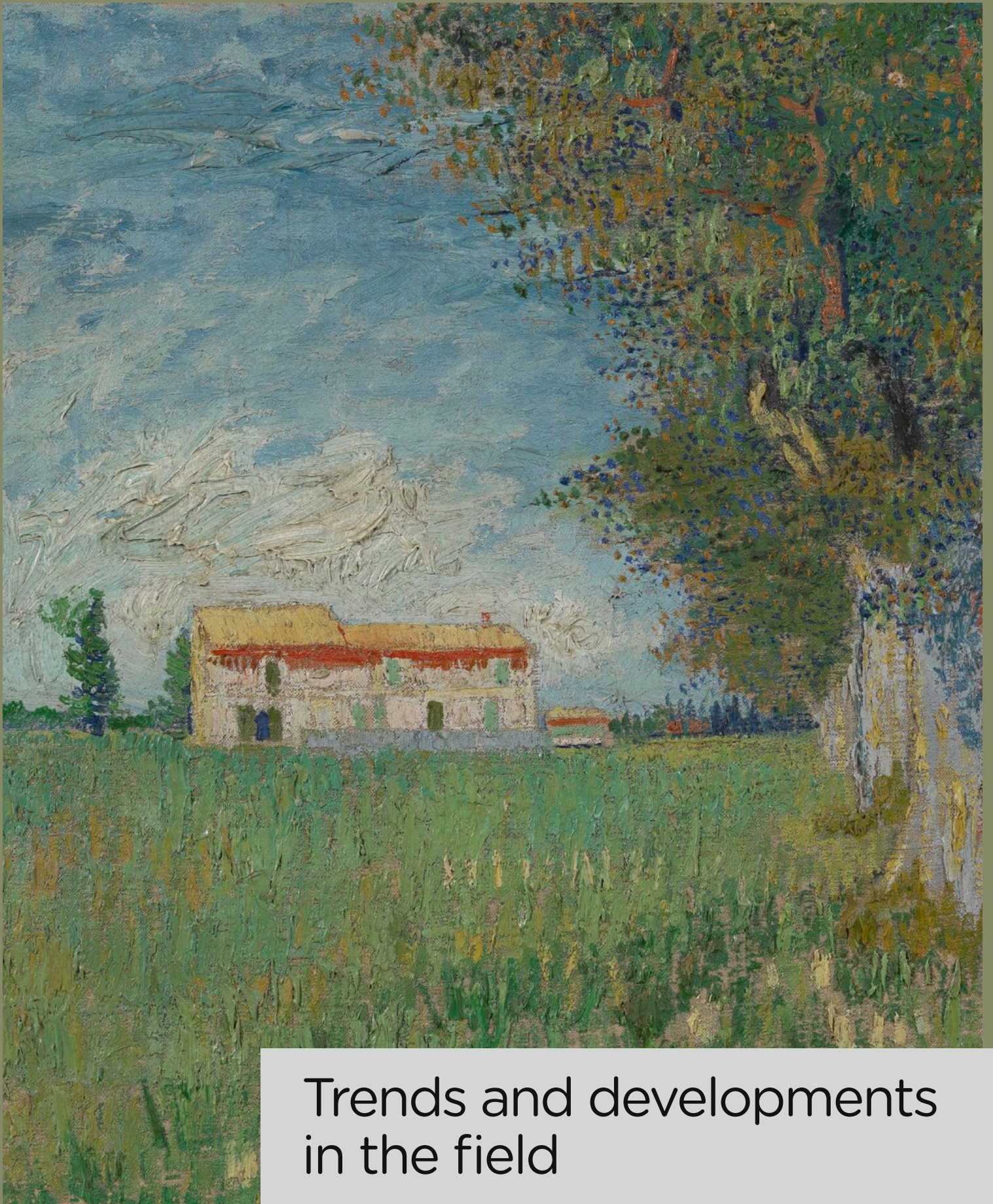
### Tourist sector

In light of the importance of tourism to the museum, the VGM works closely with various parties in the field, such as Amsterdam Marketing, NBTC Holland Marketing, Booking.com, tour operators, various ticket retailers (Tours & Tickets Amsterdam and numerous canal cruise operators, etc.) and hotels.



03





Trends and developments  
in the field





### Growing tourism and increasing overcrowding in Amsterdam

The rising number of visitors to Amsterdam will result in more visitors to the VGM. This is a positive development, but not without its downside. The dramatic increase in the numbers of tourists is sometimes met by negative sentiments in the city. The museum's buildings can also only accommodate a limited number of visitors. There is a genuine risk that if visitor numbers continue to rise, not all of those keen to visit the museum will be able to do so during their time in Amsterdam. This is at odds with the museum's mission. There is also the risk that the increased crowding caused by international visitors will result in the museum losing appeal to Dutch visitors. A challenge therefore facing the museum in the years ahead is to ensure that these concerns are effectively balanced.

### Social developments

Society is changing. The Netherlands is set to face major socio-demographical change in the years leading up to 2040. Changes to the composition of the population will take on greater proportions in the years ahead.

### Aging

The number of elderly members of the population is rising rapidly. The population forecast published by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) indicates that the number of senior citizens will increase. There were 2.7 million senior citizens in the Netherlands in 2012, a number set to rise to 4.7 million in 2041. At the apex of senior citizens numbers in 2040, an estimated 26 per cent of the population is expected to be above 65, with a third of these aged above 80. The rise in the number of senior citizens will result in several social issues, including loneliness amongst elderly people. The aging population represents a challenge for the VGM in light of its large numbers of primarily young visitors.

### Cultural diversity

The population will tangibly continue to diversify, comprising an increasing number of people with a non-Western background. Amsterdam is home to 180 nationalities. The non-Western section of the population is growing by 10% a year and by 2040, a third of the residents of Amsterdam are set to be from a non-Western background. To this group, a visit to the museum is not always a matter of

course. The challenge in the years ahead is centred on improving reach to these groups and increasing support for museums in general, and for the VGM in particular.

### Digitisation

Digitisation is proceeding at a rapid pace, and it is now difficult to imagine the museum world without digital developments. Digital media are now a permanent fixture in many of our lives. Thanks to mobile apparatus and mobile internet/Wi-Fi, people are always reachable, wherever they are. Digital media also enables a greater level of personalisation of information and services for the user/consumer, and the users have come to expect this. The VGM recognises this development as one of the major challenges for the coming period.

Alongside all of the opportunities and possibilities, we are also witnessing a countertrend characterised by immense scales, an information overload and stress of choice, leading to people seeking authenticity and a personal touch. The VGM is also keen to suitably address the development of this demand.

As a result of the rapid digitisation of the world and the great level of independence of organisations such as the VGM on digital resources and systems, the threat of becoming a victim of cyber-crime is on the rise.

### 24/7

One consequence of digitisation is that our society is increasingly becoming a 24/7 society. Our (potential) visitors and fans hail from all over the world, and communicate with us from a range of time zones. Visitors expect the museum to stay open for longer and to be offered optimal accessibility, including via social media. The VGM is keen to keep pace with these developments, but also recognises the drawbacks. There are limits to the museum opening hours, and due to the vulnerable nature of the collection and capacity of the organisation, it is not possible to endlessly extend them. The damaging effects of light on the collection also play a major role. Potential 24/7 access to the museum via the digital channels could present the museum with significant organisational challenges.



# Political developments

## Domestic

The policy paper entitled 'Scope for Culture' ('Ruimte voor cultuur'), drafted by the (previous) Minister of Education, Culture and Science, outlined the principles of cultural policy for 2017-2020. This policy focuses on accessibility to collections and investment in knowledge and research. It also emphasises the social significance of museums, a role that is to be strengthened through collaboration and education.

The 2017-2021 coalition agreement – insofar as it is relevant to the VGM – outlines the cabinet's plans to follow an initial period of dramatic restructuring with additional investment in the quality of the cultural sector and extending the fundamental infrastructure. This will enable leading institutions to maintain their position in the Netherlands and overseas, and to use digitisation to protect and provide access to artworks. The government is also willing to stand surety for iconic loaned works (the Dutch Indemnity Scheme) in order to expedite exhibitions. The VGM will take the latest governmental policy developments into consideration when formulating its strategy and in its activities.

## International

Geopolitical relations have become more instable in recent years, and this impacts the choice of countries to which the VGM will loan valuable art. In addition, we live in a world where a terrorist attack is a realistic possibility. Recent attacks have indicated that they are targeted on tourists and places popular with tourists. For crowd-pulling institutions such as the VGM, guaranteeing the safety of visitors and staff in and around the museum represents a major challenge.

## Developments linked to fellow Dutch and international museums

Loan requests are increasing and are beginning to exceed the possibilities of the limited collection. One area of concern regarding loan transactions is the ever-rising costs associated with transport and insurance. This means that the cost of organising exhibitions is only set to rise further. Contracts are also becoming more complex: discussions regarding liability and immunity are becoming more frequent occurrences, while solutions cost a great deal of time and effort. Issues such as these can best be solved in collaboration with other Dutch and international museums and with the government.

## Job market developments

Applicant numbers are high, but the museum often has to compete with the business world when it comes to attracting certain specialists. As the economy continues to pick up, this is only set to become more of an issue.



Vincent van Gogh. *Wheatfield with a reaper (detail)*, 1889. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)





04



# Stakeholders



# Stakeholders

In all of the museum's activities, the various museum stakeholders are always taken into consideration, as are their needs and expectations. The most significant stakeholders have been identified as:

- VGM museum visitors (domestic and international)
- People interested in Van Gogh who are not in the position to visit the museum
- The Dutch population
- The population of Amsterdam
- The Dutch government, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Dutch political sphere
- The Government Buildings Agency
- The Province of Noord-Holland
- The City of Amsterdam and the City District of Zuid
- The Vincent van Gogh Foundation
- Supporters
- Commercial partners
- The media
- The tourist sector
- The education sector
- The cultural sector, art institutions, industry organisations
- The other museums on Museumplein
- Collectors and art traders
- Suppliers
- Employees

Vincent van Gogh. *Impasse des Deux Frères (detail)*, 1887. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Stichting)









05





Mission



## Mission

The Van Gogh Museum has determined the following mission:

‘The Van Gogh Museum makes the life and work of Vincent van Gogh and the art of his time accessible and reaches as many people as possible in order to enrich and inspire them.’

This mission indicates what the VGM aspires to embody for its stakeholders in the broadest sense. The mission forms the foundation for the organisation’s vision and strategic objectives. In light of the success and growth achieved in recent years, the VGM is staying true to this mission, which was formulated in 2009. The word ‘reaches’ has been added in order to emphasise that the VGM wants to actively reach as many people as possible.

Vincent van Gogh. *Wheatfield under Thunderclouds (detail)*, 1890. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)









06



Core values



# Core values

The VGM is leading, excellent and inspiring. These core values function as an ethical compass and are at the heart of corporate culture at the museum.

## Leading

The VGM is a leading player on the world stage when it comes to Vincent van Gogh. The museum is home to a unique collection of his paintings and prints. This collection, complemented by years of scientific research into the work of Van Gogh and his contemporaries, offers an unparalleled insight into Van Gogh's life, work and the context of both. The VGM's unique position can be traced back to its genesis: a link with the Van Gogh family and the role the museum has been awarded as guardian of the heritage of Vincent van Gogh. In addition, the VGM presents itself as a forerunner in museum operations, research, education and exhibitions.

## Striving for excellence

The VGM enjoys international renown and continuously strives for excellence. This is significantly linked to the outstanding passion and dedication of museum employees. With success comes responsibility and the VGM is determined to hold its own with other leading international museums in the coming years.

## Inspiring

Since opening in 1973, the VGM has devoted itself to making Van Gogh's life and work accessible to as many people as possible in order to enrich and inspire them. The museum continually introduces different perspectives and themes to people all over the globe, to allow them to examine the world of Vincent van Gogh in new ways and through the emotions this evokes, even to reflect upon their own lives. For its part, the VGM always seeks enrichment and inspiration in what happens outside of the museum's walls. The museum is inquisitive, keen to explore and discover, and encourages its visitors and stakeholders to do just the same.

Vincent van Gogh, *Almond Blossom*, 1890. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)









07





Vision



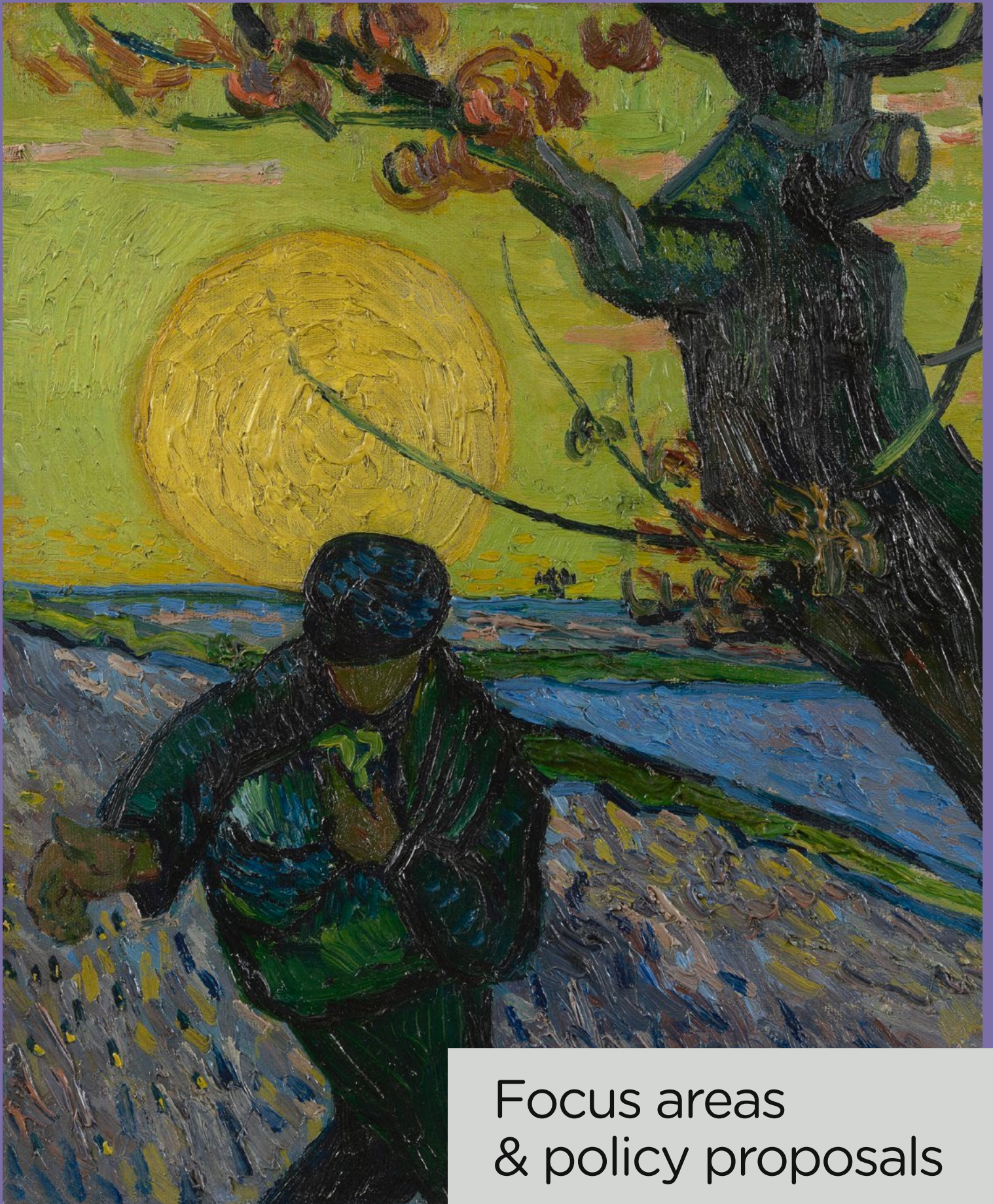






08





Focus areas  
& policy proposals



## Focus areas & policy proposals

Ahead of the formulation of the Primary Objective, this Strategic Plan outlines several focus areas & policy proposals. In light of current developments and trends, the formulated cross-sector focus areas & policy proposals will be the VGM's primary focal point in the years ahead.

### Income structure

While the museum's income structure is no longer a Strategic Pillar in this Strategic Plan, it remains a consideration of vital importance to the museum. The museum is still heavily dependent on (potentially vulnerable) ticket sales. The expansion and diversification of the other sources of income will have the VGM's full attention in the coming period.

### Capacity

In the years ahead, the VGM will focus on issues of capacity at the museum. The limits regarding the maximum number of visitors that the VGM can welcome are drawing nearer. We need to ensure that the museum does not only become accessible to visitors who purchase their ticket online months in advance. The VGM is also fully aware of the field of tension between managing the vulnerable collection and providing access to it. Extended opening hours and organising events in the museum after hours are at odds with preserving the collection and building management. When making decisions in this regard, issues such as light damage and the time required for regular maintenance play a significant role.

### Ethical policy

Ethics are important in every aspect of life at the VGM. Ethics play a major role for all staff when carrying out their daily activities and in interaction with each other. First and foremost, this applies internally. We need to continue to ensure that we work together to create a safe and dependable working environment in which all employees have the opportunity to develop, and in which offering open and honest feedback is integrated into standard daily behaviour. However, this also applies outside of the museum's walls. The VGM is active in numerous countries throughout the world. The norms and values that the VGM

embraces also need to be applied in how we interact with the outside world and all of the museum's (business) partners. In the coming period, efforts will be made to further clarify and refine the external ethical policy. This policy will adopt a transparent approach to clarifying how to deal with countries that violate human rights or environmental regulations, or that commit war crimes. The policy will also outline which sectors and companies the VGM can accept as a sponsor. The products on sale in the VGM shops and via the webstore are produced in various countries, often in Asia. It is vital that all product safety requirements, environmental guidelines and rules relating to working conditions are complied with during the production of VGM products.

### Integral country strategy

The VGM reaches a global audience. Museum Affairs, Public Affairs, VGME, Professional Services and the Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience all organise a range of activities overseas. Unfortunately, it is not possible to develop activities in every single country, and considered choices have to be made. The ethical discussion also plays a major role in these choices. An integral country strategy has now been developed for the entirety of the VGM, and this is set to be expanded upon in the period ahead. The focus is on: Asia (Japan, China and South Korea), Europe and the United States.

### Inclusivity/(cultural) diversity

The VGM believes that it is important to be an inclusive organisation in the broadest sense of the word. The VGM mission outlines the museum's ambition to make the life and work of Vincent van Gogh accessible and within the reach of as many people as possible. However, society is changing; new audiences are emerging who are less likely to visit the museum as a matter of course and who are yet to become properly acquainted with the museum (see also Trends and developments in the field – p. 14). Inclusivity (and hence cultural diversity) therefore needs to be a driving policy principle in the years ahead. In order to remain relevant to a wide audience, the museum's inclusivity policy focuses on young people, young residents of Amsterdam, people with a physical disability and vulnerable elderly people. More specifically in the field of cultural diversity, the



museum will develop a large number of activities as part of a four-year research programme entitled Van Gogh Connects. The museum will work together with the target group to explore how it can gain relevance for young Amsterdam residents aged between 18 and 30 with a Surinamese, Turkish, Antillean or Moroccan (STAM) migration background. With the support of Fonds 21 and in collaboration with the Impact Centre Erasmus (ICE) from the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Van Gogh Museum's academic partner), the VGM is researching which activities actually result in cultural participation. Progress will also need to be made within the museum towards a more inclusive organisation that offers the best possible reflection of society. In line with Van Gogh Connects, personnel policy and the future recruitment of new employees will expressly focus on the further diversification of the workforce. The VGM is also creating possibilities for people who are distanced from the labour market.

#### Attractive employer/learning organisation

Whether it concerns results, quality and safety or increased flexibility, it is our employees – with their expertise, skills, talents, energy and pleasure – who further develop the organisation. The VGM is keen to be an attractive employer. Stagnation means decline, which is why the museum wants to be a learning organisation. One of the concrete consequences of this aim is that employees are given the opportunity to develop their talents. This area will be addressed in more detail in the coming years, and we will look to the example set by other (innovative) organisations when it comes to motivating staff and alternative means of collaboration. We will also stimulate an engaging office environment and flexible working, ensuring sufficient attention is paid to the correct balance between work and private life.

#### Brand policy

In the years ahead, the ambition of the VGM is to even more emphatically link the Van Gogh Museum brand to the name of Vincent van Gogh. The VGM positions itself as a global triple A brand, using the 'Branded House' philosophy whereby all activities are conducted under the flag of the Van Gogh Museum parent brand. The quality of all of our activities in combination with strengthening our brand policy is designed to contribute to a single, high-quality and uniform character in all communications, products and activities. This underscores the international visibility and presence befitting of the triple A status.

09





Primary objective

# Primary objective

As in the previous Strategic Plan, this plan draws a distinction between the museum's Primary Objective and the Strategic Pillars. This distinction is designed to help clearly define the focus for the coming years. The Primary Objective concerns the tasks that are (or have become) inherent to the identity and running of a museum, and that require constant attention at the museum. These tasks are handled by the Museum Affairs, Public Affairs and Operations sectors and VGME, the museum's PLC within which most of VGM's commercial activities are conducted.

## 1. Museum affairs

The unique, extremely valuable collection itself as well as exhibiting and providing access to the collection remains the most important aspect of all activities and thought processes at the VGM. 80% of VGM visitors come to the museum to view the permanent collection. The coming years will again see continued investment in conserving, managing and extending the collection. The VGM is also focused on maintaining its established academic reputation; the VGM is, and will remain, the definitive authority on Vincent van Gogh.

### Collection management and restoration

The VGM's most important tasks relate to the conservation and management of the collection. In recent years, the VGM has dramatically improved its facilities for managing the collection. A new conservation studio (the PACCAR Foundation Conservation Studio) was completed in 2015 and the collection was relocated to refurbished depots. High-quality microscopic and photographic facilities were also realised. The improved facilities and equipment considerably improve the quality of technical examination and therefore positively impact efforts to conserve and manage the collection.

As a result of these developments, a new survey of the collection is of crucial strategic importance and urgently required. In the coming period, the condition of the collection will once again be systematically recorded, while the burden on the collection will be gauged with greater emphasis on

movement and light. In 2014, lighting policy was adopted to facilitate the development of optimal measures to limit damage to the collection caused by light.

### Presentation of the permanent collection

The presentation of the permanent collection is the core upon which the majority of the museum's public activities are based, and the collection is the reason why most visitors come to the museum. In order to safeguard quality, more detailed research into audience appreciation will be conducted in the coming period. For the next step in the presentation of the collection, two ways of utilising the permanent collection are being developed. During peak season, a more static presentation will be on display. Featuring the highlights, this presentation is primarily oriented towards international visitors. During low season, the presentation will be more flexible. This offers scope for 'experimentation', for focusing on topical issues as well as on various, smaller target groups such as the elderly and the Van Gogh Connects target group. While the focus therefore shifts to Dutch visitors (local level), the presentation still needs to remain appealing to tourists (global level).

### Modern and contemporary art

The VGM focuses on the art of Van Gogh and his contemporaries. Modern and contemporary art falls outside of this scope. Nevertheless, the museum does devote a modest amount of attention to it. One cabinet in the permanent collection is reserved for a programme of alternating select presentations. These presentations display the work of a modern or contemporary artist, in which the enduring influence of Van Gogh is clear to see.

### Exhibitions

#### Local (in the Van Gogh Museum)

In line with its mission, the VGM will continue to organise a comprehensive programme of temporary exhibitions: two major exhibitions (often in collaboration with international museums) and a lower key summer exhibition each year, alongside two smaller exhibitions in the print cabinet. The themes of the major exhibitions are usually directly linked to Van Gogh and his contemporaries. This offers the public a broader,



fresh insight into how artists influence each other and into Van Gogh's context in his time. With the umbrella title of Van Gogh and..., the summer exhibition programme is held on a single floor of the Exhibition Wing and focuses on works by Van Gogh in the permanent collection, allowing us to present other aspects of Van Gogh's work, new insights and research findings. An incidental benefit is therefore that intriguing exhibitions are also on display in the exhibition spaces in the summer months (for the primarily tourist audience).

In light of increasing crowding due to rising visitor numbers, the VGM is keen to further optimise visitor distribution by making full use of the physical space available in the museum – also in the Kurokawa Wing. One of the two large floors of the Exhibition Wing where an exhibition is not on display in the summer months will host a summer programme. The summer programme will make its debut in 2018, focusing on Van Gogh's time in Arles. With the working title of Van Gogh's Dream of the South, this initiative sees the VGM invite visitors to explore Van Gogh's various (emotional) states during this time in Arles.

In the years ahead, the DMC will host two exhibitions every year. These exhibitions will be more ambitious than to date, and a special fund is being established to facilitate this aim. Wherever possible, the exhibitions will link to the theme of the major exhibitions at the VGM.

#### Global

Travel potentially presents the risk of works in the VGM collection being damaged. The majority of the modest collection will be on display in Amsterdam for the large numbers of visitors who travel to the city specially to see the works. In light of the high level of pressure on the vulnerable, limited collection, the VGM loan policy is essentially restrained. Nevertheless, the VGM is also keen to be as generous as possible with its loan policy and to contribute to exhibitions organised by fellow museums on Van Gogh and the art of his time, in the case that such a contribution is actually relevant and can potentially result in new knowledge and insights.

In addition, with the support of the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, organising exhibitions overseas will remain a policy objective of the VGM in the coming years. This will help to make Van Gogh's works accessible to people who are not in the position to visit Amsterdam in person. Other objectives include increasing brand awareness, attracting sponsors and other partners, and generating income. In recent years, overseas exhibitions were once again extremely successful, attracting large numbers of visitors.

The following risks and concerns play a role when considering VGM loan policy:

- the rise in legal and insurance issues;
- the vulnerable nature of the collection;
- the relatively modest size of the collection;
- the suitability of the facilities at the international museum requesting the loan with regard to security and climate;
- ethical concerns linked to specific countries;
- funding.

#### Registrar's Office

The Registrar's Office is a service department that coordinates the transport and insurance of incoming and outgoing loans. The Registrar's Office also coordinates the design of the exhibitions at the VGM and DMC. A trend being observed at the museum is that loan contracts are becoming increasingly complicated. The VGM will make efforts to promote the discussion of this matter with Dutch and international colleagues in the field in order to reach clear agreements. The museum will also invest in more specialised legal support, especially regarding insurance.

### Knowledge institute/research

Research is an integral part of museum policy and forms the foundations of all art-related activities such as exhibitions, publications and other (educational) programmes presented by the VGM. An active research and publication programme based on the collection therefore remains a spearhead of VGM policy. The VGM is a knowledge institute and one of the leading museums in the field of research. Upcoming research will focus on Van Gogh's paintings from his time in Arles, Saint-Rémy and Auvers-sur-Oise as well as on the works in the collection by other artists. In this regard, art historical research and (technical) examinations go hand in hand. A considerable part of various exhibitions is based on research findings.

In the years ahead, efforts will be made to further increase VGM's visibility in the academic field with the Van Gogh Museum Academy (VGMA). The VGMA is the umbrella initiative within which the VGM increases awareness of academic expertise on Van Gogh, the research programme and research activities. The VGMA makes this information primarily accessible to the academic audience, but also to the general public with an interest in the field. Research therefore has an important local and global dimension.

### Collection Information

The fundamental principle driving the Collection Information Department is that the information about the collection should be as comprehensive as possible, of a high quality and reliable. The collection information needs to be sustainably and securely stored and managed, while being easy to access, find and (re)use. In this regard, the VGM operates in line with the national strategy for digital heritage. This applies both internally and externally. The digital dimension is becoming increasingly important: digital registration of the collection will be rolled out further in the coming years. The initial focus is on the (continued) digitalisation of the documentation, which to date, is primarily still in analogue form.

At a local level, the library is an important part of the Collection Information Department. The Van Gogh Museum is a knowledge intensive organisation, and in this regard, the library plays a significant role. Following the relocation to the new offices at Gabriël Metsustraat 8, the library

will benefit from a new, state-of-the-art book depot and a new reading room, for use by internal researchers and the public alike. Focuses in the coming policy period include digital visibility, findability, sustainable management and demand-driven collaboration. The new library will therefore develop itself more emphatically into a knowledge centre where physical and digital collections are used interchangeably, where meeting Van Gogh is stimulated and where information and knowledge is exchanged and created. On a global level, providing greater digital access to information about the collection facilitates international accessibility.

### Education & Interpretation

The VGM successfully piques the curiosity of millions of people around the world into the life and work of Van Gogh. With his great reputation, captivating life and vivid works, the artist offers a plethora of approaches to reach people. However, the majority of people do not form a personal connection with Van Gogh as a matter of course – some assistance is required. The objective of Education & Interpretation at VGM is therefore – in line with the museum's mission – to enrich and inspire people so that they make the connection between themselves and the artwork and/or the artist. The VGM has established an excellent reputation in the field of museum education and is keen to retain this leading position.

First and foremost, Education & Interpretation focuses on the local dimension – the museum itself, and the Amsterdam region. To facilitate this, solid infrastructure and a broad educational programme were put in place in the previous period. Moving forward, the VGM is keen to retain the quality of what has already been achieved while improving the correlation with social developments by ensuring that all parts of the organisation more explicitly select target groups. In order to ensure that Van Gogh remains relevant, we need to find inspiring ways of satisfying the curiosity of Van Gogh enthusiasts, but also proactively seek people yet to develop an interest in the artist.



In the coming period, the VGM will focus on two main target groups:

- Visitors who are already curious  
Large numbers of Van Gogh fans are spread all around the world. These people seek inspiration in his work, but often also in his life. They find us in the museum or online. In the coming policy period, the museum will continue to satisfy and stimulate this curiosity.
- People who the VGM wants to make curious<sup>1</sup>  
From the viewpoint of our social responsibility, the VGM is devoted to making the life and work of Van Gogh accessible to target groups who are not aware of how art can enrich their lives, or target groups who come up against barriers.

In the coming period, there will be a keener focus on the Dutch public, especially the following groups:

- Young people, in relation to school (aged 4-18) and in the family circle (aged 4-12)  
The VGM believes that every (Dutch) child should know Van Gogh, irrespective of their educational or socio-economic background. The objective of 10% of museum visitors being under 18 years old remains in force in the coming period.
- Young Amsterdam residents (aged 18-30)  
In 2004, the VGM launched a deliberate focus on young residents of Amsterdam aged between 18 and 30. The activities for this target group – primarily the Friday evening programming – have recently been optimised and as a result, the museum is now effectively reaching the segment of culture-minded young Amsterdam residents. This policy is set to continue. The VGM also wants to make more specific efforts to reach young people who are yet to discover museums, primarily the four large – rapidly growing – non-Western sections of the population (Surinamese Turkish, Antillean and Moroccan). However, the VGM is not yet sufficiently familiar with this target group to take targeted action. The VGM plans to explore how the museum could gain relevance for this target group, thereby improving diversity amongst visitors in general. In 2017, the Van Gogh Connects research programme was launched in collaboration with Fonds 21. During the coming four years, the VGM will work together with

Surinamese, Turkish, Antillean and Moroccan youths and the Impact Centre Erasmus (ICE) from the Erasmus University Rotterdam to conduct experiments and organise impact meetings to establish how to sustainably improve the participation of this target group

- Elderly people  
The number of elderly people in the Netherlands is steadily rising. Inherent in profound population aging is the threat that elderly people will become socially isolated due to ailments and the loss of close friends, certainly in light of the new healthcare system, as a result of which they live at home for longer. The VGM will continue its successful efforts in this field in the coming period and further increase accessibility to the museum and the collection for this target group.
- People with a disability  
The VGM does not want to exclude anyone from the museum experience. It is therefore vital that the museum is accessible to everyone. Since 1 January 2017, accessibility became the statutory norm, and inaccessibility the exception. The reputation of the Van Gogh Museum as an accessible museum has grown in recent years, and the VGM has set itself the target of embedding accessibility throughout the entire organisation by 2020. This covers not only all forms of physical accessibility, but also programmes for people with a visual or auditory disability. Some of these programmes will be organised in collaboration with other museums.

In light of the global reach of Van Gogh (and therefore the VGM), education cannot be limited to the museum itself and the local environment. The VGM recently developed an online teaching platform in Dutch and English (Van Gogh op school/Van Gogh at School), which is designed to become the leading platform on Van Gogh for teachers and pupils all over the world. Education & Interpretation will also continue to collaborate with Collection & Research Department to ensure that the correct art-related content is developed for the various online channels.

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the objectives outlined in the 'Van Gogh Museum Activity Plan 2017-2020' submitted with the Basic Infrastructure for Culture 2017-2020 subsidy application (allocated by the Minister of Education, Culture and Science on 20 September 2016).

## 2. Public affairs

### Visitor service

85% of our annual visitors travel from overseas to visit the museum. The VGM regularly welcomes more than 100 nationalities on a single day. This places high demands on our hosts, their multilingualism and our communication materials, while also requiring that our hospitality services increasingly adopt a 24/7 mentality. In order to communicate with (potential) visitors and fans from throughout the world, and in different time zones, the VGM needs to intensify its efforts in the coming period to offer visitors the best possible service. Concrete plans in this regard include combining customer contacts by establishing a ticket office, investment in web care and the optimisation of international information services via digital communication channels.

### Marketing

VGM campaigns in the coming years will not only focus on the international audience, but also expressly on the Dutch audience. This Dutch audience is ultimately the Van Gogh Museum's most significant target group, despite the dogged perception of the VGM being 'a museum for tourists'. Our objective in this respect is to reintroduce the Dutch audience to the museum and the collection in the coming years, and to tempt them to make repeat visits.

However, we are witnessing sustained growth not only in the Netherlands, but also further afield. In light of the fact that, with the existing marketing budgets, the VGM is not in the position to organise campaigns in all countries, the marketing strategy will focus on the countries where the museum is already involved in international exhibitions and where commercial activities are being developed. In the coming years, this equates to a focus on the 'close by' European countries, the US and Asian countries including Japan, China and South Korea. Early investment in contacts in Japan is slowly but surely beginning to bear fruit and by becoming the first major Dutch museum to become heavily active in the Chinese market, the museum has realised a first movers advantage that results in rapid network expansion. The VGM can bolster overseas activities through its prominent role in collaborations such as Van Gogh Europe, the

Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience and through content-related activities such as exhibitions, publications, research and so forth.

Digital communication offers a platform to create more (international) experience for our target groups, and for us to connect with them at a deeper level. In this field, the VGM utilises instruments such as marketing automation and data marketing. Data-driven marketing, the spearhead for the coming years, presents the museum with the opportunity to connect with (potential) visitors and Van Gogh fans all over the world. There will also be a greater focus on email marketing. This approach will allow the VGM to directly offer people information, inspiration and service, while email communications can also help to boost repeat visits and play a role in other objectives.

### Ticketing

Ticketing is more than a system that enables us to sell tickets; it is a resource that allows us to optimise visitor capacity and to more effectively manage visitor flows, thereby increasing the quality of the visit and the visitor experience. The online sale of time-slotted tickets is the key to success when it comes to rising visitor numbers, as this facilitates the distribution of visitors throughout the whole day, allowing us to achieve optimal use of the building's capacity. It also improves the visitor experience: there is improved visitor distribution and the queues in front of the museum are considerably shorter. Since the rise in online ticket sales from 15% in 2015 to 60% in 2017, the queue has more than halved. Promoting online ticket sales therefore remains one of VGM's primary marketing objectives. Increasing the number of languages and payment methods offered represents a significant step towards being able to improve the online service offered to tourists. Online ticket sales is also viewed as the start of the 'visitor journey', and hopefully of an enduring relationship.

### Digital communication

As the physical limits of the museum grow ever closer, digital communication is becoming increasingly important to the VGM. In the previous policy period, the museum grew to assume a world-leading position in the museum sector



with regard to the number of website visitors and numbers of social media followers. In line with the implementation of the VGM mission, a new communication concept will be developed in the coming period in which social media and the website are combined in order to introduce as many people all over the world to Vincent van Gogh. Online behaviour has changed dramatically in recent years, and VGM digital communications are being adjusted accordingly.

Of course, the website remains important for specific purposes, and the challenge is to link it more closely with the more prominent role that social media is set to play for the VGM. In the coming policy period, the website will be redesigned and restructured in order to ensure that it remains effective in this new set-up. The innovative combined communications approach uniting social media and the website is trailblazing in the field of cultural heritage. On social media, social video is used as the primary communication tool. Broadly speaking, highly dynamic interaction between museum and visitor will be a much more common occurrence, representing an opportunity to enter into a relationship with fans and followers. The VGM is keen to create a digital Vincent van Gogh world that is inextricably linked with the museum, while not being fully dependent on it. In this way, the Van Gogh Museum is distributed digitally throughout the world, activating a personal connection with individual people as it travels.

#### Publications

The VGM produces numerous publications in multiple languages, also in collaboration with fellow museums and international publishers. These publications strengthen the reputation of the museum as an internationally-renowned knowledge and research institute and contribute to museum income. The coming policy period will see a continued focus on collaboration with prestigious international publishers, and the museum's own publications will be distributed via its numerous contacts with international partners. E-commerce represents additional revenue opportunities, primarily for the publications that the museum publishes itself and together with acclaimed publishers: shipping books is rising in popularity, as opposed to purchasing books on the spot. At a digital level, publications are being digitised at a

rapid rate. In line with the museum's aim to provide access to historical information (catalogues, exhibitions), new forms of digital publication are under development.

#### Press Office

Thanks to a highly active press policy, the VGM's local level presence in the media increased substantially in the past period. In the coming policy period, the VGM is keen to move towards a proactive press policy in which the museum is even more emphatically positioned as a participant in the social debate regarding subjects that both directly and indirectly affect the museum, such as tourism and corporate social responsibility. A revised policy outlining these plans will be drafted in the year ahead.

At a global level, in recent years, the VGM has invested heavily in establishing its own international media network. As a result, we are gaining an increased presence in the international press. This approach will continue in the coming policy period.

At a digital level, the growing digitisation of VGM communications means that the current press policy requires expansion. Radio, television and the press were once key, but an extensive and influential digital news service has now come to the fore. This world of influencers, vloggers and bloggers demands a new, alternative strategy. It also places demands on our response time: as a result of digitisation, news and discussions spread at lightning speed and require a quicker, new type of response.

#### Development

In light of the VGM's significant budgetary dependence on income generated by ticket sales, one of the organisation's spearheads is to increase income from other sources and to further diversify these sources. Fundraising plays a crucial role in this regard. In recent years, we have witnessed clear growth in successful collaborations with the business world, private individuals, collectors, trusts and equity funds at both local and international level. Our development strategy focuses on strengthening relations with our Dutch and international supporters and expanding the following groups:

— Private individuals

The Yellow House, a network of private supporters of the museum, was established in 2010. The aim is to expand this network by 3 to 5 new members a year, reaching 25 members by 2020. The Sunflower Collective was added in the previous policy period, enabling private individuals to make more modest contributions. We are looking to expand this network by 20 to 30 members a year, reaching 150 members by 2020. Another network of supporters, Vincent's Friends, was established mid-2015. The museum now has more than 600 friends, and this number is growing steadily. This network of friends fulfils an important role regarding local support in the Netherlands.

— Business world

the Van Gogh Museum strives to realise long-term partnerships with corporate partners. Several companies have partnered with the VGM via the museum's corporate network, the Van Gogh Museum Global Circle. We endeavour to expand this network to 75 members by 2020. In order to considerably bolster regular income from companies by 2020, the aim is to secure 3 or 4 long-term partners for the museum. Collaboration with these partners will also intensify, with regard to branding, activation and licensing.

— Trusts and foundations

relations with trusts and foundations have intensified in recent years, developing into one of our largest sources of additional support that helps us to realise our unique projects. This income is vital for specific projects at the museum. This network will be expanded further in the coming period, primarily at global level.

Events

The newly-formed Events Department is a professional department responsible for organising high-quality events at the VGM. In the coming policy period, this department will focus on events designed to:

- improve the reputation of the museum (corporate and content-related events);
- serve relations and sponsors (development and lead generation);
- connect with new target groups (marketing events);
- enter into potential joint promotions.

At a global level, in the coming policy period, the VGM will collaborate with its (intrinsic) international partners to organise events outside of the museum's walls in order to continue to satisfy the growing demand for knowledge about Vincent van Gogh and further expand the museum's network.

### 3. Operations

General

By 2020, the internal organisation will be underpinned by an outstanding operations structure. In this policy period, all operational processes will be safeguarded in a coordinating organisation. Expertise and implementation can either be sourced from within the museum, or externally, whichever secures the best result. Operations is of primary importance at local and digital levels.

Corporate social responsibility

A museum is a socially responsible organisation by definition (BREEAM). Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of the areas of interest at the heart of corporate social responsibility (CSR): the environment (Planet), the human dimension (People) and business continuity (Profit). The preservation and management of the collection entrusted to the VGM, as well as research into the collection and its presentation, means that sustainable working practices and an increased focus on corporate social responsibility represent an important aspect of operations at the museum. The VGM aspires to become one of the most sustainable museums in Europe and is



devoted to reducing its environmental footprint wherever possible, as documented by its BREEAM certification. The VGM invests in sustainable innovations and where possible, in partnerships of this nature.

#### Accommodation and real estate

In the last 20 years, the VGM has expanded its real estate portfolio – in line with the requirements of the Central Government Real Estate Agency, and under its administration. In 2017, the government property system was revised. This means that the VGM is now responsible for the management and maintenance of its own real estate, therefore becoming the principal in the internal management contract with an external party. In the coming three years, this commissioning role will be subject to further development, so that not only is management and maintenance implemented optimally, but that demand-driven processes are also implemented in order to meet the requirements of the organisation and visitors. In 2018, an accommodation vision for the museum will be developed, outlining issues regarding quality, safeguarding our heritage, flexibility, sustainability and the availability of spaces. A long-term accommodation plan (Meerjaren Huisvestingsplan, MJHP) will be developed based on this vision, addressing potential major building and conversion activities, renovations or even new constructions.

#### Human Resources

VGM employees – the ‘human resources’ – are a crucial part of the museum’s success. They are extremely committed and contribute enormous expertise and experience, each in their own field. A sustained objective of the VGM is to provide the best possible working environment to allow all employees to flourish in their role. This is regularly assessed in a remote employee satisfaction survey. However, this alone is not sufficient, and the VGM and VGME are therefore keen to develop into learning organisations: organisations that support the development of their employees. In an organisation of this kind, employees (and managers) are able to constantly adjust to the changing environment, and are focused on improving their capabilities and developing their talents. The employees and managers are therefore more effective in achieving

their own objectives, and contribute optimally to the organisation’s objectives. In a learning organisation, the management primarily fulfils a coaching role, but does offer direction where necessary. There is a healthy tension between autonomy and authority: new ideas and collective ambitions are encouraged. Another objective of personnel policy is focused on increasing employee diversity throughout the organisation.

#### Provision of information

The museum is keen to realise improved digital services in the short term, both internally and externally, dovetailing with the organisation’s ambition. Strategic foundations will first be laid, upon which the provision of information can be developed. ICT architecture, ICT structure and information architecture are all vital elements of these foundations. Working on strategic foundations also means taking a new perspective of issues such as the processes, statistics, metadata and the intranet as a digital working environment. The elaboration of these strategic aspects is conditional and dependent on the continued growth of several significant initiatives, such as data governance, an improved ticketing system, marketing automation, a CRM system and the digitisation of HR processes.

#### Safety

The Integral Safety Policy was developed during the previous policy period. This policy concerns the following safety areas: business continuity, building security, security, health & safety, installations & equipment, information security and collection security. This integral policy has become an important cohesive instrument for the identification and mitigation of safety risks.

#### External security

In light of global developments, the focus in the coming period will be on two areas: the threat of attacks and that of cybercrime. As part of the business continuity safety area, the focus will be on developments regarding external security. One aspect of external security is the creation of predictive profiling, which was introduced to the VGM and Rijksmuseum in 2015. In 2017, the VGM, Rijksmuseum and the joint incident room PP10 B.V. entered into a partnership with an external party to ensure an optimal, proactive approach to external security. This partnership will be developed further in the coming three years.

#### Cybersecurity

A knock-on effect of the rapid digitisation of the world is that the risks in the digital domain are also increasing exponentially. The Van Gogh Museum is vulnerable to a range of threats in this field. As part of the safety area of 'information safety', there will be a strong focus on data protection. In addition to the focus on these threats and vulnerabilities, from 25 May 2018, the museum is obliged to conform with the General Data Protection Regulation (Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming), which succeeds the Personal Data Protection Act (Wet bescherming persoonsgegevens).

## 4. Van Gogh Museum Enterprises Ltd

The unique, extremely valuable collection itself as well as exhibiting and providing access to the collection remains the most important aspect of all activities and thought processes at the VGM. In light of the number of visitors it attracts, the position it assumes regionally, nationally and internationally, and its professional organisation, the VGM also believes it to be a logical step for the museum to adopt an entrepreneurial stance. The VGM is of the opinion that an entrepreneurial approach forms an integral part of the museum operations and therefore harmonises with the policy aspiration of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science for entrepreneurship at museums to be sustainably stimulated.

VGME contributes financially to the future of the VGM and, alongside the income from ticket sales, represents an extremely important aspect of the museum's income structure. By adding commercial value to Vincent van Gogh and being the logical partner for the development of commercial activities, VGME realises structural profit growth by adopting an approach befitting of the artist. The activities are focused on the local, global and digital level. The objective in the coming years is to further improve the balance between local and international income (in favour of the latter) to realise a more balanced revenue model at VGME. At local level, VGME's retail activities – which are already successful – will be further optimised (improved conversion and spend per visitor). New initiatives will also be developed.

From the perspective of the global and digital dimension, the VGME strategy is focused on commercial activities (primarily licensing, e-commerce, wholesale) overseas and advancing digital activities to the next level. In this regard, activation and visibility of the VGM brand overseas plays a crucial role, and exhibitions, the Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience and pop-up concepts represent the ideal approach within this focus area. In the years ahead, VGME will focus on growth outside of Amsterdam (in order to become less dependent on income generated in the museum). The focus countries for the years ahead are the same as those of the VGM: Asia (Japan, China and South Korea), Europe and the United States.



## 5. Other commercial activities

### Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience

The Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience was developed in light of the sustained interest in Van Gogh and thinking from the global dimension. This multisensory, three-dimensional experience, which does not feature original works from the collection, allows visitors to follow in Van Gogh's footsteps. The Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience contributes to the mission to make Van Gogh's life and work accessible to as many people as possible in order to enrich and inspire them, primarily offering those who are not in the position to travel to Amsterdam the opportunity to become acquainted with the life and work of Van Gogh. For the Education & Interpretation Department, the Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience represents an excellent means of reaching a global audience. The Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience is expected to open to the public at various international locations from 2018.

### Development of Museumplein 4

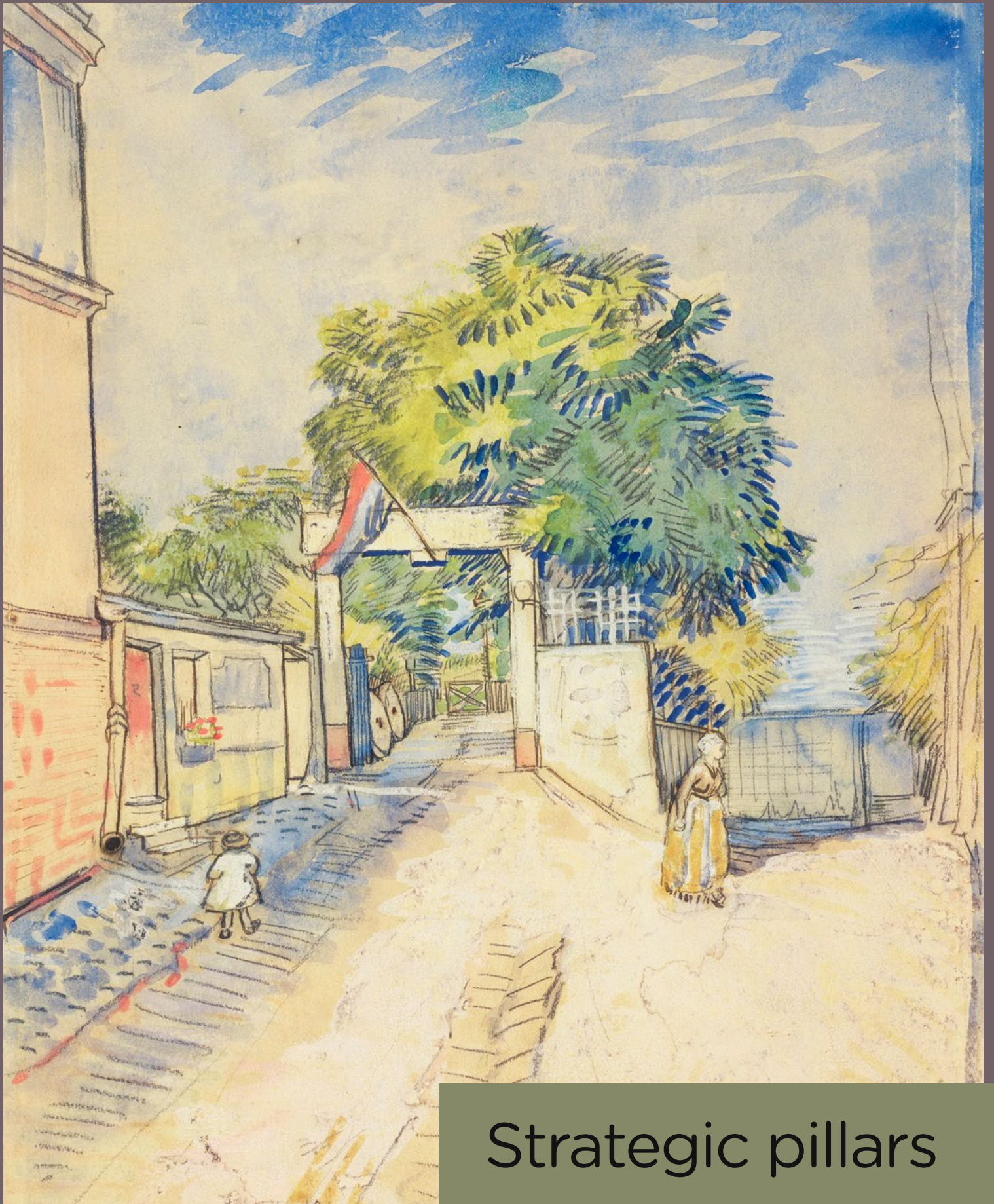
At a local level, consideration needs to be given to the future of the villa located at Museumplein 4, which is owned by the museum. Once all museum offices move to Gabriël Metsustraat 8, the building will no longer fulfil its original purpose as offices and the library. The villa represents gainful opportunities to generate additional income through commercial management.

### Van Gogh Museum Professional Services

The VGM has established a leading reputation in the Netherlands and internationally based on the expertise and skills of its employees. VGM employees possess advanced, specific expertise in multiple fields including museum management, publications, collections, exhibitions, building management, security, visitors, etc. This knowledge is invaluable. In line with the mission, the VGM is keen to share this expertise and skill, and make it accessible to others. This is a key reason behind the launch of Professional Services in 2014. Professional Services offers consultancy services to (international) museums, owners of Van Gogh works, companies and private collectors at local level, but primarily at a global level. Lectures are also held, courses are organised, contributions are made to congresses, works by Van Gogh and his contemporaries are restored and research is conducted. The services are diverse and carried out by various employees, hence Professional Services demands the collective effort of the entire organisation. In addition to its financial objective (realising new sources of income), Professional Services aims to improve the image/reputation of the VGM, increase the museum's knowledge of Van Gogh and support the development of the talents of museum employees. The VGM is keen to allow Professional Services to flourish into a phenomenon in the Dutch and international museum world, and will develop these activities further in the coming period.

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Strategic pillars



## Strategic pillars

The strategic pillars offer direction and focus to the VGM's objectives for the coming period. Activities envisioned by the sectors are required to comply with the pillars. Based on its mission, vision and core values, and taking the stakeholders and external influences into consideration, the VGM has drawn up three strategic pillars:

## 'Van Gogh celebrates'

'The museum's golden jubilee in 2023 will be marked by extensive, distinguished celebrations, fully in line with the VGM's mission.'

### 1. The golden jubilee in 2023

In 2023, the VGM turns fifty. This significant, special milestone will be marked by extensive, spectacular celebrations. It is the perfect opportunity to re-establish the position of the museum and take another leap forwards with regard to profile, reach and museum activities. In the coming period, the VGM will focus on developing ambitious projects to be held in 2023. In line with the reputation and status of the VGM, the projects are set to be highly ambitious, do justice to the leading position held by the VGM on the Dutch and world stages, and comply with the VGM's core values: leading, excellent and inspiring. In order to realise these goals, the museum will draw on the creative input of every aspect of the organisation. The challenge that awaits in the coming years is to drive the plans towards an unprecedented level of ambition. The project kick-off is in 2018, when the focus will be on the conception of ideas. These ideas need to result in pioneering, distinguished projects that are connected and interdependent. The 2019-2022 period will be utilised for the actual implementation and preparation of the events in 2023.



‘Van Gogh reaches’

‘In the years ahead, the VGM will make efforts to better reach groups of society for whom a visit to the museum is not a matter of course.’

## 2. Accessibility

One of the primary objectives in recent years was to be accessible to as many people as possible. This remains one of the spearheads of VGM policy. The issue is, in fact, not that the museum is inaccessible. The museum is accessible to all: everyone can visit the museum. However, this is not reflected in practice. We are aware of the fact that, in addition to the large numbers of international visitors, the VGM primarily reaches a young audience that is already curious: well-educated, mostly female, aged 25+ and for the most part, from the centre of Amsterdam. Of course, the city, the Netherlands and the world are a lot more diverse than this group.

Society is changing. The population is aging, and there are increasingly more people with a migration background. There are also more groups of Dutch people who are out of touch with society. These groups feel more distanced from museums, and for them, a visit to the museum is therefore not a matter of course. They do not visit the museum, nor do they use the website to find information about the VGM. In the coming years, the VGM is keen to shift its focus and make significantly more active efforts to better reach these groups in society. With his

great reputation, captivating life and vivid works, Van Gogh is ideally suited to removing barriers obstructing (cultural) participation. The VGM wants to improve its connection with society, become central in society and increase public support for the museum. The VGM is aware that it will need to select the groups upon which it will focus specifically in the years ahead, and has selected the following groups: young residents of Amsterdam aged between 18 and 30 with a migration background, the elderly and disabled visitors.

Reaching these groups will not always be straightforward, and significant efforts will be required on the part of the museum. There is no fixed, mapped route to all of the target groups, and we will need to establish which methods of communication are most suitable. The VGM often does not have the required expertise in-house, and will therefore collaborate with relevant partners. The aim is not to work for the target groups, but together with them, both inside and outside of the museum. It is important that the museum actively seeks target groups for whom a visit to the museum is not a matter of course.

### Global

The VGM does not only want to reach more people at a national level; an element of the strategy is that the museum better reaches people over the entire world. With this in mind, access to the collection and all information about Van Gogh will be further improved in the years ahead. The new digital strategy, projects such as the Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience and the services offered by Professional Services also need to facilitate the museum reaching a large, global audience and help ensure that expertise on Van Gogh is optimally distributed.

‘Van Gogh welcomes’

‘The (digital) visitor is at the heart of all of the VGM’s activities and thought processes: their visit to the museum and the website should be a unique, special experience.’

### 3. Hospitality

In the coming years, the VGM will focus on hospitality in the broadest sense of the word. Visitors and their experiences are the VGM’s primary focal point. The guiding principle is that a visit should be a unique, special experience, both for online visitors and physical museum visitors.

Visitors are seeking increasingly more personal and direct contact. In the coming period, the VGM will intensify efforts to respond to this need, with regards to both physical and digital visitors. In light of the fact that museum visitor numbers continue to rise, a challenge facing the museum is to ensure that a visit to the collection remains a unique, personal experience. All visitors should feel special and their visit should form a lasting, singular and enriching memory. Visitors should feel like everything is about them personally, irrespective of whether they are visiting the museum, website or shop. The service offered in and around the museum must be outstanding. Visitors are given personal attention, feel at home and hold the unique collection in high regard. The website is optimally structured, piques and retains the interest of visitors, and entices them to make a

purchase. Education focuses on helping visitors to make a personal connection between themselves, the artwork and Van Gogh. All of these factors combine to ensure that the visitor experiences the museum as highly welcoming. Ticketing ensures capacity optimisation, the distribution of visitors throughout the day and that queues and waiting times are minimised. When visitors do have to wait, the experience is as pleasant as possible.

Projects such as marketing automation and customer journey offer effective means of charting visitor needs. These resources help ensure that communication with visitors is optimal, as are the visits, and that visits are tailored to individual visitors. This means that the VGM is increasingly in the position to serve (international and digital) visitors directly, personally and attuned to their specific needs. Van Gogh fans from all around the world should feel at home at the VGM.

Digital communication offers excellent opportunities to provide access to knowledge that are not always possible in the ‘real world’. The VGM seeks the target groups wherever they may be. The digital communication strategy is focused on personal contact with visitors and fans throughout the world, helping to ensure that people all over the globe come into contact with Vincent van Gogh.





# Colophon

‘Van Gogh aspires’ was drafted by the Directors in close collaboration with the Supervisory Board, the Management Team and the Works Council.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Van Gogh Museum employees who participated in the consultation sessions, providing valuable, inspirational contributions.

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Vincent van Gogh, *The Pink Peach Tree*, 1888. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)





