

AN EMPTY STAGE

Assessing the Value of Theatrical Collections

Riemer R. Knoop

In 2013, after almost a century of activity, the Theater Instituut Nederland ('Dutch Theater Institute'; TIN) ceased operations. Two years earlier, TIN directors Henk Scholten and Pim Luiten had invited me to review the institute and its collections on the assumption that, once established as unique in an independent expert's report, the institute could survive as an autonomous, state-funded entity. Such recognition had previously led the Dutch government to assume responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of and sustainable access to various collections in other fields of heritage.¹

The moment chosen for assessment was not coincidental. Since the 1990s, increasing pressure had been exerted on cultural institutions, especially in the visual and performing arts, to either increase their public promotion or become more economically independent. The bank crisis, followed by the debt crisis and the general European recession, had caused many governments to turn the screw ever tighter. In the Dutch arts and culture, cut backs from around twenty percent were applied in the subsidies for the period 2013-6. 'Museums and heritage,' however, were treated relatively kindly, perhaps due to their inherent connection to buildings and collections that were more difficult to get rid of, and, undoubtedly also because their activities were more easily associable with conservative (political) agendas, such as the maintenance of a (supposedly) homogeneous and coherent cultural memory and national identity.² It is no surprise to observe, then, that the first cultural actors in the field to see their government funding being slashed were the private players, along with institutions in the secondary tiers, that is, those only supporting the cultural field and/or providing infrastructure. TIN happened to be one such institute.

1 An example is the former Dutch Film Museum (now EYE Institute) in Amsterdam.

2 The then center-right minority government under minister-president Mark Rutte (2010-2012) relied on the notoriously populist, right-wing Partij voor de Vrijheid (led by Geert Wilders) for parliamentary support.

In May 2011, I was set the daunting task of surveying the TIN collections in three weeks, as fairly as possible, and in a way that would both sway general decision makers and carry weight in the court of critical peers and learned specialists. In this chapter, I will describe my assessment of the institute and also outline the context that informed it. It is vital to look beyond the mute contents of an institute dedicated to the preservation of theatrical heritage to produce a truthful and profound image. As the value of such a collection not only entails a judgment about its assets in the light of similar holdings, but also an assessment of its significance in terms of actions to stakeholders and beneficiaries,³ I will examine both *objects* and *behaviors* associated with TIN.

HISTORY OF TIN

Just like its big sister, the Gabrielle Enthoven Collection that now forms the core of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Theatre & Performance Department in Kensington (V&A), TIN started in 1924 as an association of enthusiastic individuals who decided to purchase several private collections of theater costumes and memorabilia. With these objects, a Toneelmuseum ('Museum of the stage') could be founded.⁴ The idea seems to have made a considerable impact, since what followed, during the next decades, was a steady succession of mergers, take-overs, combinations, fusions and transfers, eventually resulting, in 1960, in the inauguration of a specialist library-cum-museum that was open to the public. Located at Amsterdam's Herengracht, the institute then joined with other public institutions in the field of the performing arts, in particular the International Theater Instituut and the archives of the Stichting TheaterKlank en Beeld ('Foundation for TheaterSounds and Image'), to form the more general Nederlands Theater Instituut ('Dutch Theater Institute'). It was only after a third merger, with archives for mime, dance and puppetry, in the 1990s, that a truly comprehensive TIN was born. Yet TIN constituted less a single-purpose institution dedicated to the memory of the whole of the performing arts practices in the Netherlands, than a haphazard amalgam of objects and documents from many diverse and highly specialized branches and sub-branches in that world.

3 See Russell & Winkworth 2009.

4 See Erenstein 1996, *passim*.

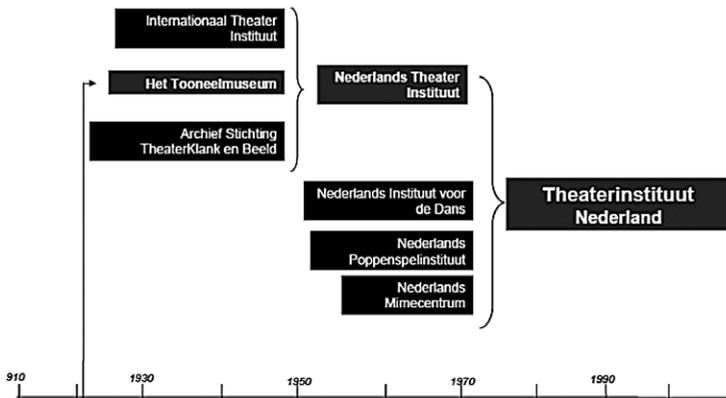


Table 6. Predecessors of the TIN.

Throughout its history, TIN’s main public activities have consisted of organizing exhibitions. By 2012 over three hundred exhibitions had been held. In addition, the institute had accumulated many other functions and aims, such as providing documentation, information, debate, advice, education, representation, advocacy, and international trade and sales. Consequently, it had become a multi-purpose center of expertise and knowledge exchange on pretty much everything related to the performing arts. In the optimistic postwar period, such broadening of roles was generally appreciated by many, and even admired like the *Nutcracker*’s wonderfully growing Christmas tree. In the less welfare-inclined political climates that dominated the period after the fall of the Berlin Wall, by contrast, such riches began to meet with disapproval. In fact, both the Dutch government and its advisory councils demanded more focus, less fuss and reduced costs. A general crisis had enveloped TIN by 2000, leading to a much leaner institute, reorganized to operate on a dramatically reduced financial basis. A team of new directors retuned the engine, professionalized the team, chose digitization as the core medium, and took a number of important and truly novel measures. One of them was the decision to present the archives and collections in wiki format on the *theaterencyclopedie.nl* website. Another was to discontinue the regular in-house exhibitions at TIN’s seat at the historic Huis

Bartolotti ('Bartolotti House'; fig. 27),⁵ in favor of traveling exhibitions. With regard to the latter measure, the directors argued that audiences of theater history were more likely to be served on the spot, *i.e.* the theatrical venues, rather than being lured to the Herengracht, where one could be sure to find many things Thespian but neither a proper 'theater' nor its audiences. This new policy grew into an energetic program of nomadic, co-produced presentations, which were in full swing by 2010.⁶



Figure 27. Huis Bartolotti in Amsterdam, former seat of the TIN. Creative commons.

- 5 Huis Bartolotti was built in 1617 by banker Willem van den Heuvel tot Beichlingen with funds from his uncle-by-marriage, the Bolognese merchant Giovanni Battista Bartolotti. Said to be designed by city architect Hendrik de Keyser, the house figures among the best examples of Dutch Renaissance architecture. TIN started renting it in the 1980s, owning three adjacent buildings. Musician Gustav Leonhardt occupied its ground floor for the last forty years of his life and wrote a book about Huis Bartolotti (Leonhardt 1979).
- 6 Examples are *Amsterdam, Aruba, Curaçao en Almere* (MC Theater, Amsterdam; Cas di Cultura, Aruba; Galerie Mon Art, Curaçao; Schouwburg, Almere; 2010-1), *Sonia Gaskell. Pionier van de dans* (Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam 2009-10), and *Ergens & overal* (Festival aan de Werf, Utrecht; De Parade, The Hague; Over het IJ Festival, Amsterdam; Theaterfestival Boulevard, 's Hertogenbosch; Zeeland Nazomerfestival, Middelburg; 2010-1). See <<http://wiki.theaterencyclopedie.nl/wiki/Theatermuseum>> and <<http://jaarverslag.tin.nl/2010/presenteren/>> (last accessed 24 April 2014).

A REQUEST FOR AN INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

Then a tragedy happened. In the latest re-appraisal of cultural funding in the Netherlands, (prepared in 2011, effected in 2013), it became clear that national budgetary cuts would above all affect the so-called *non-producing* institutions. TIN was defined within the performing arts field as a subsidiary, second-level player with respect to theater companies and festivals (playhouses being county- or municipality-funded) rather than as a key player. That judgment would not have been fatal, if only the TIN had profiled itself as an archive. Had it done so or, better still, shown itself to be a special case in the family of ‘museums,’ the stakes surely would have been different (though competition could have been fierce all the same).

This is where I came in, a former member of the Raad voor Cultuur (‘Council for Culture’) with expertise in the museum sector. Would it be possible to come up with a narrative on the quality and significance of the TIN’s collections that would justify it being ranked in a different league, as a heritage institution in its own right? Such a vindication of the collections as a national asset might have been TIN’s last straw in its battle for survival.

A quick scan revealed TIN’s diverse, if not incoherent, collections reflecting the institute’s many guises and transformations in its ninety-year lifespan. Its holdings included designs, posters, photographs, prints, drawings, videos, films, tapes, texts and files; archives about people and companies; sheet music, booklets, old prints, flats, chamber theaters, props, masks, puppets, puppet theaters, models, miniature theaters, leather *wayang kulit* shadow puppets (a unique legacy from the former Dutch East Indies), (scale) models, mannequins, wigs, costumes, shoes, walking sticks, hats, busts, backdrops, memorabilia, books, periodicals, programs and tokens, covering the entire gamut from drama, comedy, burlesque, music hall, cabaret, show, circus, ballet, modern dance, movement theater, jazz ballet, shadow play, puppetry, mime and pantomime to opera and musical. In this respect, the TIN collections constituted a parallel, archival universe of life on stage, offering a quirky amalgam of materials amassed since 1638, the earliest documented performance at the first municipal theater in the country, incidentally also at the Herengracht (though in another house).⁷ Little by little, this rather chaotic constellation had been balanced by a rigorous acquisition policy, adopted in recent decades and in a continuous process of refinement since. For instance, a representative docu-

7 Joost van den Vondel’s *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel* at Jacob van Campen’s Schouwburg, 3 January 1638.

mentary archive had been built up of live performances in the country, covering over 1,900 opening nights per year. Yet, taken together, the TIN legacy seemed still to be missing a binding factor, or general sense of purpose, that made it relevant to the outsider.

In contrast to the theatrical holdings of the V&A, where the collections are arranged along three clear acquisition lines—productions, buildings (houses) and biographies (plus some archives of extraordinary individuals)—TIN had organized its records and objects primarily according to the performances themselves. The formal principle for the selection, restoration, and provision of access and interpretation had thereby resided in the precise events, and was aimed at documenting the Netherlands' production, consumption and reception of live performances. Bearing witness to these ambitions, the TIN collections amounted to half a million objects, the nature of which could be qualified in several ways: according to the logic of information management, physical form or practical availability.

In the last few years, much energy had been invested in making the diverse collections internally accessible through an integral content management system, AdLib.⁸ This database classified all contents under twenty-two headings. The items dealing with the 'performances' took up three quarters of the total and covered 'resources' (texts, library, reviews), archives on 'persons' and 'buildings,' and 'puppets' (Table 7). 'Puppets' also appeared under a second, dedicated heading, depending on the physical nature of the collection items. The traditional distinction between (mostly) three-dimensional museum objects, old prints of supposedly intrinsic value and archival objects of documentary value was followed very rigorously (Table 8). According to the database figures, the TIN collections consisted of 75,000 museum items and four running kilometers of archival information on various carriers (including digital ones). A third organizational principle made a distinction according to practical use (Table 9). One running kilometer of books, recordings and selected documentation, mostly of an archival nature, was offered in open access (the Mediatheek) in Amsterdam's city center, the remainder being stacked away in the Institute's relatively cheap suburban storage facilities. Easy front-of-house service, based on FAQ evidence, was therefore privileged over in-depth, specialized visitor enquiries.

8 AdLib is the name of one of the more common digital content management systems for heritage institutions in use in Europe, see <<http://www.adlibsoft.com>> (last accessed 4 November 2014).

subject	material		no. of items
performances	photographs	123,000	
	reviews	75,000	
	programs	55,000	
	posters	35,000	
	audio	32,000	
	designs	25,000	
	video	13,500	
	costumes	5,000	
	memorabilia	600	
	masks	200	
			364,300
primary sources	Texts	40,000	
	sheetmusic	16,000	
	Books	26,000	
	cuttings	2,300	
			84,300
people, institutions	letters, personal files	20,000	
	portraits	4,000	
	models	850	
	archives	440	
			25,290
puppets			3,300
architecture	building dossiers		1,300
			478,490

Table 7. The TIN collections as arranged in the AdLib content management system.

nature	Material		volume
museum	Posters	35,000	
	Design	25,000	
	Costumes	5,000	
	Memorabilia	600	
	Masks	200	
	books published before 1800	5,000	
	models and paper theaters	850	
	puppets	3,300	
archive			4 km

Table 8. The TIN collections arranged according to type of material.

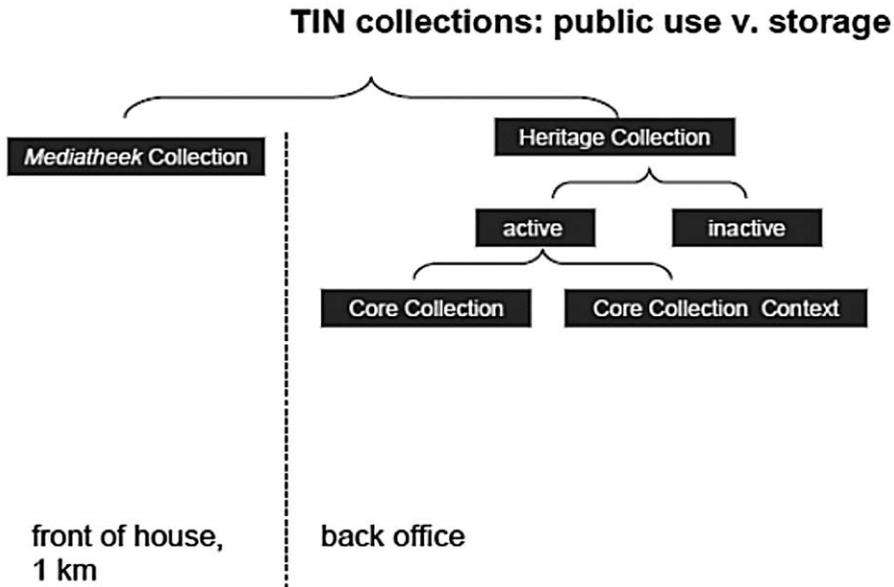


Table 9. The TIN collections arranged according to use.

Benchmarks and User Perspectives

Trying to understand the nature of the TIN collections, I needed a comparative framework that would facilitate the positioning of the institute within a broader, even global perspective. How did other branches in the cultural world fare with their institutionalized memories, both at home and abroad? And what was the significance of the TIN collection in terms of use?

When benchmarked against that of other cultural branches in the Netherlands, the volume of the TIN holdings may appear to be considerable, but remains modest compared to that of cultural documentation centers of national importance (Table 10). By contrast, the scope of TIN's holdings fell somewhat within the range of other special interest archives (*e.g.*, film and sheet music) and were on the scale of the governmental archives of a medium-sized city in the Netherlands. As for esteem, I noticed (though not systematically established) that the TIN collections were fa-

vorably compared on account of their variety, depth and breadth with the foreign performing arts collections, such as those in London (V&A) and Vienna (Österreichisches Theatermuseum).

Genre	Institute	Nature	Volume
Dutch music	Nederlands Muziek Instituut	sheet music of Dutch composers	700,000 manuscripts
film	EYE Institute	national film institute	37,000 titles
radio/tv	Beeld en Geluid	national broadcasting archive	800,000 hours
books	Koninklijke Bibliotheek	national library	6,000,000 items or 110 km
archives	National Archive	national and state archives	110 km
theatre	TIN	national archives performing arts	75,000 items and 4 km

Table 10. Overview of the national Dutch archives of the arts and literature.

My second approach aimed at assessing the collections' value from a user's perspective. Value and significance of heritage and culture reside in that unique intermediary domain of 'inbetweenness'—that is, in entertaining and mediating a relationship with different audiences on the basis of varying social or artistic goals, ends and purposes. It is therefore necessary to distinguish various 'user levels' of performing arts archives and collections, from dedicated theater producers and lovers of the genre (to whom the V&A website politely refers as "persons who may have not had the opportunity to attend a production during its run")⁹ to chance visitors (if they really exist) to an exhibition or website. For each tier of users, different sorts of significance may hold in the dynamics between memory and recollection (Aristotle), between the archive and the repertoire (or *staging*, according to Diana Taylor), between the *Gedächtnis* and *Erinnerung*.¹⁰ In other words, I tried to distinguish between the *user value* of the TIN's archives and memory banks, their *recollection value* as museum exhibits, and their *societal existence value* as historical documentation.

9 <<http://archiveshub.ac.uk/features/theatreperformancecollections>> (last accessed August 2013).

10 I am referring here to a continuing discussion on the difference between the act of recollecting, as a process in the present and reflecting the present's needs and anxieties, and the materials it uses, or rather (re)creates, by doing so: memory. In English, the distinction is less clear than in German, see Taylor 2003.

While the first two user perspectives are more or less evident, existence value is a somewhat controversial notion in classical economic theory.¹¹ For in addition to user value intrinsic to products and exchange value attached to money (or branded goods), people may benefit (or feel that they are doing so) from merely being aware that particular resources exist, such as Antarctica, the Grand Canyon or the notion of biodiversity, the bare existence of which is appreciated without the need to visit, physically enjoy, own or consume them. The nature of the relations and dominant forms of significance relevant to the TIN is categorized in Table 11, in which four groups of users are distinguished: 1) producers, actors, authors, playwrights, scholars, journalists and critics; 2) amateurs and fans; 3) the wider audience; and 4) society at large.

Relation	Significance	Level	Criterion
producers, students, active recipients	user value, memory, documentation	need to know	completeness
amateurs, fans	user value, memory, documentation	nice to know	representativeness
wider audience	recollection, repertoire value, museum	nice to engage	representativeness
society at large	existence value	symbolic	decency

Table 11. Overview of ‘user positions’ with respect to cultural collections and archives.

To check the relevance of each group and its particular user perspective, I subjected some twenty representatives of the first group to in-depth interviews. Given the restricted time, I could only consult a handful of people from the second group. As regards the remaining two, I had to rely on press clippings and on the documented history of public outcries against several earlier threats to the TIN’s survival.¹² The following three main observations resulted from the comparison and user survey.

First of all, I was struck by the fact that all interviewees of the first group pointed out how they *always* used the TIN’s resources when preparing for a role, production, article, revival or review, and were on the whole quite to very satisfied with the quality and completeness of the TIN’s resources and services. I was likewise

11 See the work of Rotterdam professor in the economy of culture, Arjo Klamer: Klamer 2003-4.

12 Sources: the Internet and the TIN’s own paper and digital records.

struck, but more painfully so, by the fact that the popular perception of TIN-like institutions was very often reduced to what might be the least significant and smallest parts of their holdings: namely, celebrity souvenirs. In most people's imagination, a theater museum or archive is interesting mostly for the dress of such and such an actress, the pointe shoes of Margot Fonteyn (1919-1991), the Turkish *fez* of Tommy Cooper (1921-1984), or the funny noses worn by Johannes Buziau (1877-1958), the grand old man of Dutch music-hall.¹³ This, I believe, is a minor tragedy that the documentation of the performing arts shares with archives in a more general sense: without a showcase full of anecdotal memorabilia—incidentally the very thing that set Mrs. Enthoven on her V&A collecting road—archives to most people will remain a total mystery, despite the fact that these anecdotal objects may satisfy the initiated. Performing arts archives, by contrast, deal with the systematic documentation of performative acts, being complex processes involving events, intentions, decisions, contexts and outcomes, as well as conserve the occasional hardware deriving from these acts; however, archives hardly if ever succeed in recreating the experience of the performance itself, in spite of a rather constant number of visitors (some 40,000 annually to the TIN's in-house and traveling exhibitions).¹⁴

Thirdly, I became aware of an alternative use for TIN's resources. Among the first group (producers, actors, authors, playwrights, scholars, journalists, and critics), some researchers pointed out that TIN and the like preserve a unique historical source within their performing arts archives: namely, direct testimonies of common life, uniquely mixed with the experiences of the socio-intellectual elite and relationships with the experimental avant-garde over long periods of time. The theater is indeed the place where 'high' and 'low' culture meet, as a result of which performing arts archives contain material reflecting both everyday entertainment and social life, political strife and moral innuendos, public uproar and scandal, the ephemeral events nowadays voraciously recorded in the press and on radio and television, and increasingly in and through new social media. To appreciate this point, one has only to recall the evening of 25 August 1830, when a set of patriotic lines in the *grand*

13 Several pairs of Fonteyn's pointe shoes have been auctioned, sometimes for thousands of euros. In July 2013, for example, a pair of them still sold for 1,820 euros, cf. <<http://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20771/lot/31/>>. Signed copies of Cooper's signature red *fez*, too, are highly prized memorabilia, see <<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/memorabilia/tommy-cooper-5374937-details.aspx>>. For the famous Buziau noses, no doubt acquired by the TIN in the 1960s, see <http://mediaserver2.tin.nl:8008/media/get_by_ref/Repro-kk00128.00c-1/2000/2000> (websites accessed 25 August 2013).

14 There are forms of re-enactment, using archival means or materials, such as performances on historical instruments (the Antwerp Vleeshuis) or of period music (the Brussel Royal Library matinee). For French examples, see Picon-Vallin 2008.

opéra by Daniel François Esprit Auber's *La muette de Portici*, performed at the Théâtre de la Monnaie in Brussels, drove the audience to a frenzy, sparking a revolution that would lead to the collapse of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and the birth of Belgium. Theatrical collections can thus serve a purpose of both an intrinsic and extrinsic nature in their capability of documenting a particular sort of artistic production, while at the same time chronicling the heartbeat of the times.

A FAVORABLY GOOD JUDGMENT, INDEED

All in all, I was able to conclude that the TIN collections were of considerable value in relation to various communities, highly significant to many persons in (and outside) the live performance arts business, and capable of withstanding international comparison. In a further stage, I looked into the effectiveness and efficiency of the collection's care and presentations. Suffice it to say that there was nothing to worry about here. All recent audits and external reviews had been positive, subvention and earned income (including sponsoring) on a par, and the provision of access to the collections exemplary and highly satisfactory. Even the ratio between subvention and number of visitors could be said to be within acceptable national museum parameters.¹⁵

However, there was some reason for concern with regard to focus. It is a matter of course that all collecting institutions should regularly—though perhaps not all too frequently, with an eye to continuity—re-assess their holdings in terms of relevance and significance. TIN had accepted but not yet implemented this logic. Plans to reduce the volume of the collections by up to one fifth of its current size, which would have markedly increased the institute's economic health, had already been made but were delayed. Despite this concern, I was happy to conclude, in the final report issued in June 2011,¹⁶ that the 'heritage' side of TIN was seriously worthwhile, being meaningful for the specialist and society alike, was decently managed and, in addition, functioning well.

Unfortunately, the strategic choice, made a decade earlier, to inextricably entwine the TIN's archival/museal aspects with its 'sectoral tasks' (i.e., advice, debate and expertise for the industry) proved fatal. Though this choice repeatedly had earned TIN approval and even praise, documentation and expertise had become en-

¹⁵ Anonymous 2010.

¹⁶ Gordion Cultureel Advies 2011.

meshed to such a degree that it was now impossible to disentangle them. Based on the awareness that cutting the one would inevitably lead to the demise, at least partial, of the other, TIN had tried to develop both tasks simultaneously.

According to its last plans, presented in 2012 for the following four years, TIN would again shrink its staff, from forty to twenty people, abandon many of the non-collection-related tasks, and turn into a full-fledged museum.¹⁷ Its exposition function, however, would now be of a *nomadic* nature. A temporary abode would be taken up, with highly visible exhibition spaces and service areas, in Amsterdam's Stadhuis ('City Hall'), next to Het Muziektheater ('The Music Theater'), the venue of De Nationale (formerly 'Nederlandse') Opera. To compensate for this 'flight forward' into municipal arms, the collections would be accommodated in the library of the University of Amsterdam. Yet decision makers at both municipal and national levels remained unconvinced, not least because they failed to appreciate the itinerant nature of the TIN's proposed location. The funding verdict was negative. As of 2013, TIN ceased to exist as an institution, but its collections found a safe haven.

AN AMSTERDAM SMITHSONIAN

In late 2012, the University of Amsterdam (established 1632) and its huge library, the former Stadsbibliotheek ('City Library,' 1578), took responsibility for the TIN collections, and used the four million euro net profits from the sale of the prestigious real estate at Herengracht¹⁸ to finance the transfer of the collection and the continued employment of four remaining staff members. In addition, a Stichting TIN ('TIN Foundation') would continue to exist as formal owner of the collections, which were now managed by the University of Amsterdam. The Foundation would henceforth provide several digital services, such as the *TheaterEncyclopedie*, and provide a switchboard for theatrical career opportunities.

For the Amsterdam University Library, which already boasted a dozen museums and archival collections,¹⁹ managing the TIN holdings required a rethinking of many points. A gradual shift was felt from a situation which, in the words of

17 Amsterdamse Kunstraad 2011.

18 In 2009, TIN sold its property adjoining the Huis Bartolotti and left the complex of buildings at Herengracht nos. 166-174.

19 In 2013, among other heritage partners joining the University of Amsterdam's *Bijzondere Collecties* ('Special Collections') were the Dutch Music Center's archives and music collections, consisting of some two running kilometers. The DMC itself is a recent merger of pop, jazz, new and contemporary music archives.

some involved, “we would never have chosen ourselves,” to one that “is here, so let’s make the best of it.” The heritage division of the library finds itself turning towards no less than a Smithsonian Institution model, in a process of musealization that for many a hardcore librarian feels relatively new—“We’re now about things, not texts,” to which one might add: “Libraries will increasingly be about content, not form.”

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Looking back, I should like to reflect on three issues. First of all, in the history of the TIN a strong and—in fits and starts—continual contraction of collections can be observed, right from the start of the very Theater Institute itself. An increasing number of minor categories (*e.g.*, mime, puppetry), once the focus of dedicated disciplinary attention, became subsumed into an ever more general, comprehensive performing arts paradigm. In the Netherlands, it is currently the Amsterdam University Library that is turning into some sort of a mother collection institute of the performing arts, which would not have been a bad idea by itself. The costs and organizational benefits of working on a much larger scale will no doubt be positive. Among the negative points are the risk of less visibility and a reduction of specialized staff and expertise.

Second, there has been a long history of tension and misunderstanding between the two poles of theater collections: the documentation and archives on the one hand, and the recreation—one might even say the ‘staging’—of their significance as heritage on the other. I think a blurring of the two has led to many difficulties that, in hindsight, could have been avoided, but which would perhaps not have greatly influenced the outcome of the institutional survival of the TIN. One wonders where the fad for collecting theater- and performance-related objects in recent decades came from. Is it general postmodern anxiety, or a more localized generation transition?²⁰

Last but not least, we can detect a growing awareness of a ‘heritage dimension’ in the time-based and performing arts. At least in the Netherlands, the contemporary arts, both in the visual and performance fields, were for a long time pervaded by a modernist sense of timelessness, of empty spaces. This is not to say there

20 Elsewhere (Gordion Cultureel Advies 2010), I surmised that this and other actions of heritage safeguarding had to do with the passing away of a whole generation of post-World War II cultural innovators.

was no consciousness of or reaction to several traditions; but the lack of history in some areas, for instance in the field of modern dance, allowed for remarkable experiments and truly novel forms of ballet.²¹ This dimension of timelessness is, at the same time, something of a paradox. Defining oneself in a negative way—‘free of history’—implies being framed by the very thing one denies. And now, after half a century of timeless bliss, the latest experiments in dance, this most modern of modernist branches, are increasingly concerned with documenting their own works. Examples include Emio Greco|PC’s *Capturing Intention* project,²² co-funded by Professor Marijke Hoogeboom at the Amsterdam Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (‘School of the Arts’); or the program of the 2007 *Nederlandse Dansdagen*, *Cover:Re-Cover*, investigating the perception of newly recreated modernist dance pieces from the 1970s and ’80s. Needless to say, theater archives are indispensable in informing such reflective processes, conscious of the flow of time. And this is precisely where the TIN legacy still has a role to play.

21 Examples are Hans van Manen and Tour van Schayk, see Van Schayk 1981. I wish to thank Ms. Klazien Brummel for the reference.

22 DeLahunta 2007.