

PROJECT STIMULUS

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Stichting Project Stimulus
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Introduction

Stichting Project Stimulus was founded on 20.1.2022, in order to consolidate and support project Stimulus, a wide-ranging exploratory project bringing together cultural, scientific and medical institutions. The project aims to investigate if and how the experience of an art exhibition - the synergy of art and its environment - can influence a person's overall health and well-being. In collaboration with the Amsterdam Museum, OLVG Amsterdam and the University of Amsterdam, Stichting Project Stimulus investigates the impact of experiencing art exhibitions on mental health, how such impacts can be assessed, and ultimately how museums and hospitals can collaborate to create sustainable working and living environments.

The objectives of Stichting Project Stimulus include:

- creating a fruitful long-term collaboration between the art world and the healthcare industries for improving the wellbeing of the individual and the community
- establishing an interdisciplinary research framework in the healthcare sector in order to explore the effects of art and the museum experience on the wellbeing of individuals
- creating site-specific environments where research and measurement of the art- and museum experience can take place through different means;
- researching the effects of art and the museum experience on hospital- personnel, patients and visitors
- making sure the project and its outcomes are accessible to the public; involving the public in the process of the research
- implementing the outcomes of the research in different locations
- raising necessary funds to accomplish the goals above.

In the first two years of the Stichting, we ran feasibility tests, consolidated partnerships, and secured funding. 2024, the third year of the project is marked by public presentations, collaborations and activities. It opened with a launch event on January 31st, including presentations from doctors, museum practitioners and academic researchers around the theme of care, art, and co-creation; and the presentation of Itamar Gilboa's feasibility study *Red, Blue, Yellow*, presented in two locations: the designated research hallway and the hospital entrance. Following this event, the project continued to develop steadily, and moved to the research phase in collaboration with two groups of invited guest artists. The duo *Children of the Light* created the site-specific installation *Passage* for the research hallway, and photographer Carla van de Puttelaar created the exhibition *Togetherness*, comprising portraits of hospital staff that were later presented in the emergency department. In 2024 Stichting Project Stimulus also conducted co-creative workshops with hospital staff members and the results are now hanging in the emergency department. All workshops and artistic interventions were very well received, and were accompanied by our research team, that experimented with more- and less traditional research methodologies from the social sciences and the humanities. The research team is working on publications to various (academic and non-academic) outlets, and is scheduled to present its findings and work in progress in international symposia and conferences in 2025.

This third year of the Stichting is also marked by increased visibility. All of our activities can now be viewed on our <https://projectstimulus.nl/>. Together with a PR and visual communication specialist we presented our project on public media such as LinkedIn and Instagram. In October, together with our final activity for 2024– the opening of Carla van Putelaar's exhibition *Togetherness* at the emergency department – we offered a “grand tour” to funding bodies and hospital staff and management, and celebrated the various interventions and activities that have taken place so far.

Organization and members

Chairman board and founder: Itamar Gilboa, multi-disciplinary artist based in Amsterdam, whose work explores the connections between art, technology, science, and environment. He holds a bachelor's degree in visual arts from the Rietveld Academy Amsterdam. Itamar's works have been exhibited in museums and art institutions across Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia; currently they feature in private and corporate collections and in the permanent collection of the LAM Museum in the Netherlands.

Secretary: Alessandra Laitempergher, independent curator and creative producer. Until recently she was Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Sculpture and Head of Presentation and Education at Museum Beelden aan Zee. Today, in addition to making and producing exhibitions, Alessandra works as a mentor for emerging artists, lectures on the presentation and interpretation of contemporary art and gives workshops on creative thinking.

Board member and founder: Dr. Obbe Tiddens, Emergency Physician (dr. med) at the OLVG, an independent artist and a guest lecturer at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten. Within the art committee of the OLVG hospital he is responsible for the art content and for research and development. He is committed to a more human-oriented, integrated medicine and together with Itamar Gilboa he started Project Stimulus.

Board member and founder: Mariska Zwartsenburg, Emergency Physician at OLVG and principal investigator in the OLVG research team. She has a background in medical journalism and (science) philosophy, and is actively involved in several pieces of research toward a more humane approach to medicine. She co-created the Pediatric Emergency Department, the Project Learning from Excellence that focusses on what goes well in healthcare, and coaches fellows in Emergency Medicine.

Core Team Member: Dr. Noa Roei, Assistant Professor in Comparative Literature and Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam and a research fellow at ASCA (Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis). Noa has published material mostly on the representation of national identity in visual arts and popular culture. Her current research focuses on questions of image, space and infrastructure.

Treasury: Eduardus Johannes Maria Zentveld



Collaborations

Within OLVG:

- **Dr. Maro Sandel**, Emergency Physician and head of research at OLVG on setting up a research internship for Stimulus.
- **Herre Reesink**, board director of Art Committee OLVG, to enable site-specific artistic intervention and to ensure financial support for Project Stimulus.

Within the Amsterdam Museum

- **Dr. Margriet Schavemaker**, Director of Amsterdam Museum,
- **Gonca Yalciner**, Manager Education and Participation,
- **Rowan Stol (2022) and Dorine Maat (2023)**, junior curators,
- Emma Waslander, curator
- Tom van der Molen, curator

Within the UvA

- **Prof. Dr. Manon Parry**, historian of medicine, exhibition curator, and founder of PULSE (research network in medical and health humanities)
- **Margot van der Sande** (2023), research assistant to Prof. Parry
- **Prof. Dr. Jeannette Pols**, professor of Anthropology of Everyday Ethics in Healthcare
- **Maya Lane** (2024), junior researcher, medical anthropology
- **Simone Stergioula** (2024), junior researcher, cultural theory and affective justice.
- **Emily Read** (2024), junior researcher, cultural analysis and performance.



Activities

1. Official launch of Project Stimulus

On January 31st 2024 we held our official launch. The board of directors of Stichting Stimulus, the board of directors of OLVG, the OLVG art committee, and members from the University of Amsterdam and the Amsterdam Museum met to discuss the themes of care, art, and co-creation. The event also invited participants to experience the last feasibility study: board member Itamar's Gilboa's site-specific intervention *Red, Blue, Yellow*, comprising sculptures presented at the entrance to OLVG, and a colour-themed installation in the research hallway.

2. 3 Site-specific interventions

In 2022, we secured a space for Project Stimulus: a hall that is located very near to the Emergency Department of OLVG West, for artistic interventions. During 2023 we have kept the space “alive” through feasibility studies, and the space was shaped into a mini-exhibition space with the work of artist and Stichting Project Stimulus board member Itamar Gilboa.

2024 opened with Itamar's final feasibility study, between February and May. During this time, two groups of artists were invited to plan their own intervention in the hospital space.

Between July and October, the Amsterdam-based duo [*Children of the Light*](#) (Christopher Gabriel and Arnout Hulskamp) created a site-specific intervention *Passage* in the research hallway. The work comprised of an animated light installation that offered hospital staff an alternative experience of a familiar space.

In September, Amsterdam-based photographer [*Carla van de Puttelaar*](#) opened a pop-up studio at the emergency department of OLVG West. The results of the photo-shoot were turned into group portraits that were displayed in the same emergency department between October 2024 and February 2025.

3. Co-creation Workshops at the Rijksacademie

4. In collaboration with museum practitioners and curators, and the Rijksacademie, board member, artist and physician Obbe Tiddens and board member and curator Alessandra Laitempergher conducted **creative workshops on the relation between medicine, care work and art**. Participants included medicine interns and emergency care doctors. The workshops took place on 6th, 7th and 21st February, during which participants reflected on what matters to them in their work while creating a communal artwork. The results of the workshop are now on display in the emergency department.

5. New research methodologies

In collaboration with the University of Amsterdam, the OLVG research team, and Project Stimulus members Mariska Zwartsenburg and Dr. Noa Roei, we experimented with supplementary research methodologies to the surveys that were in use in 2022 and 2023. These included ethnographic field work to trace the effects of co-creative workshops, and interviews with staff members to understand better their needs and priorities and their reaction to the artistic interventions. In addition, the research team experimented with more creative research methodologies including *sensory mapping* and *question cards*. A group of 20 volunteers from the OLVG West emergency department staff participated in the activities. The activities received the approval of the ethics committee. Research and findings were presented to various publics during 2024 and in early 2025 (see below) and were received with enthusiasm.

6. Collaboration with Partners

We continued to collaborate with the Amsterdam Museum, the OLVG, and the University of Amsterdam.

At OLVG, staff of the emergency actively and willingly participated in our workshops and research experiments throughout the year. The art committee continuously helped to facilitate the changing artistic interventions.

With the Amsterdam Museum, we continue to build co-creation methodologies, and to plan an exhibition that will take place on both sites – the hospital and the museum – to be carried out in 2025/ 2026.

The University of Amsterdam has taken over the lead in terms of research, headed by a team from the faculties of humanities and social sciences, to develop alternative assessment methodologies that cater to Stichting Project Stimulus' profile.

With the Rijksacademie, the workshops and their research assessment were carried out as planned.













Carla van de Puttelaar Togetherness

Uitnodiging
13 november 2024
16h00-19h00

OLVG West, Amsterdam

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1.Public Visibility

During this year our project gained much visibility for different publics.

Online, for the general public, [Project Stimulus website](#) was launched. It comprises a presentation of Stichting Project Stimulus' aims and a comprehensive overview of all of our activities. With the help of our PR and visual communication specialist we further disseminated the project visibility on social media (Linkedin, Instagram).

It was of utmost importance for us to give back to the community of the OLVG and share with them our work in progress. During January, February, and June, we met with the OLVG art committee and interior design team, raising awareness to the role of art in the hospital style and corporate identity. In June and July we were intensely in touch with the emergency department staff around the sensory mapping experiments. In early November we celebrated Carla van Puttelaar's portrait installation with an opening event that included an art tour and a research "question card" game for staff. This event also invited our funding bodies and the hospital board of directors to view our achievements so far.

In terms of academic knowledge and research dissemination, in February we presented our work at the Rietveld Academy symposium *Written on the Body* (5 February) and later on at the PULSE network interdisciplinary seminar for the Health Humanities (29 February). We are scheduled to present our work in 2025 at the third international conference of the Care Ethics Consortium (23-25 January), and at the Netherlands Research School for Literary Studies' symposium on Creative-Critical Approaches to the Health Humanities (9 May).



Project Stimulus is a wide ranging research project, bringing together artistic, scientific, and medical institutions. It investigates the impact of the art exhibition experience on the well-being of hospital staff. The project is led by Stichting Stimulus in collaboration with teams from the OLVG Amsterdam Hospital, the Amsterdam Museum, and the University of Amsterdam.

Future Plans

We are very proud of our achievements so far. Stichting Project Stimulus' plans for 2025 continue to be ambitious and include:

- Increasing project visibility
- Continue to present our findings in various venues, artistic, academic, and medical
- Work on written academic and non-academic publications
- Continue to broaden partnerships and collaborations (now at initial stages of communication with teams at the UMC); strengthen and maintain current collaborations
- Search for site-specific possibilities in additional locations in the Netherlands
- Consolidate our advisory team

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