

ENGLISH

ONS LAND

DEKOLONISATIE, GENERATIES, VERHALEN

1850

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2020

ONS LAND – Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen (Decolonisation, generations, stories)

We have decided to keep the Dutch title in this booklet because a literal translation into English has proved problematic. We considered *Our Homeland* and *Where we belong*. None of these fully captures the sense of the Dutch title. The main element of our exhibition title, *ONS LAND*, is deliberately thought-provoking. It refers both to the Netherlands as it is now and to the country of origin that continues to play an important role in countless ways: in the culture, memories and identities of the communities concerned.

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ONS LAND

Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen

This exhibition is about Dutch colonial history in the East and how it continues to have an impact to this day. Here at Museum Sophiahof, eyewitnesses of that history and their descendants tell their stories.

Currently, there are around two million people living in the Netherlands with a special bond with the former Dutch East Indies. They or their forefathers came to the Netherlands after the Republic of Indonesia was declared. It was the largest ever wave of migration to the Netherlands. Some of them expected to stay here only temporarily.

The voices of eight families are at the heart of the exhibition. These personal and varied stories will be familiar to many and provide an impression of complex post-colonial history and the different ways in which it is and has been lived.

The family stories in 'Ons Land' begin in the present. From there, they lead us back into colonial history. The exhibition ends back in the here and now.

'Ons Land' is not neutral, the story is not complete and it is not over. It is a snapshot in an ongoing process of awareness-raising. Consider this exhibition to be an invitation to take part in a conversation. Your contribution will enrich the bigger story of decolonisation and its aftermath.

In this exhibition we aim to provide the most accessible and inclusive presentation possible. We aim to respect the feelings of everyone involved, especially because it concerns personal content and images. Of course, as a visitor, you are always free to respond via www.museumsophiahof.nl.

'ONS LAND - Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen' is a joint project by the Indisch Herinneringscentrum and the Moluks Historisch Museum, both of which are based at Museum Sophiahof.

KALEIDOSCOPIIC NETHERLANDS

Many Dutch people have a direct or indirect connection with the Dutch East Indies, each with their own unique (family) history. These very varied stories add colour to the Netherlands of today. The Netherlands is like a kaleidoscope: colonial history shines through everywhere, from Indonesia, Suriname and the Dutch Caribbean Islands. How you see it depends on your perspective.

The consequences of 350 years of colonialism in the Indonesian archipelago are evident in many ways: culturally, socially, economically and politically. At times this is clear, but at other times it is not. This is a very multifaceted story, often with sharp edges. Tensions still persist from the past, occasionally triggering strong emotions. There is anger, grief and misunderstanding, but also pride, pleasure and a sense of togetherness.



De koning vindt zijn excuses aan Indonesië geen nieuws: 'Ik heb het weloverwogen gedaan'



Welcome to Museum Sophiahof.

My name is Francesca Pichel. But also: Manuputy, Oostermeijer, Jansen.

And: Ramidjah, my foremother – who had no other surname.

My family has been on a journey. From Banda Neira, Java, Madura to Europe: the Netherlands, Italy, France. We don't yet know each other, but I'm taking you on a tour of 'Ons Land'!

There may be many reasons for your visit to Museum Sophiahof today.

You may have family with roots in the former Dutch East Indies.

Perhaps you yourself have roots there, or some of your good friends do.

Or perhaps you are just interested, even though you still think that it's nothing to do with you personally.

Whatever your reasons: it's good that you're here. Because actually this is about all of us.

Come on in. This is 'Ons Land'! Everyone is welcome here.

..... • **17 January 1969**



Dutch East-Indies veteran J.E. Hueting speaks publicly about war crimes committed by Dutch military forces in the period 1946-1949. The government report cataloguing the excesses (*Excessennota*) issued on 2 June 1969 concludes that the Dutch military in Indonesia has generally behaved appropriately.

15 August 1970

First August commemoration, held in the Congresgebouw in The Hague.

22 November 1972, 10 March 1984 and 16 May 1986

Initial implementation of legislation providing financial support to victims of persecution (WUV), civilian war victims (WUBO) and people who participated in the resistance (WBP Indisch Verzet).

..... • **27 December 1974 - March 1978**



Young Moluccans take action to draw attention to the RMS: storming of the Peace Palace (1974), train high-jack in Wijster and simultaneous occupation of Indonesian Consulate in Amsterdam (1975); train-hijack at De Punt and simultaneous occupation of primary school in Bovensmilde (1977) and occupation of provincial government building in Assen (1978).

17 February 1976

National Consultative Committee for the Welfare of Moluccans established to advise Dutch government.

1 January 1978

Tong Tong magazine changes its name to *Moesson*.

1 July 1981

The Benefits Act for imprisoned 'Indisch' people (*Uitkeringswet Indische Geïnterneerden*) regulates the awarding of a once-only payment of 7,500 guilders to former prisoners or their widows.

21 April 1986

Joint declaration issued by Badan Persatuan (Moluccan Unitary Organisation) and the Dutch government. Medal and annual benefit payment for first-generation Moluccans, 1,000-jobs plan for Moluccans, housing policy and a Moluccan museum as a 'living monument'

15 August 1988

Unveiling of the Indisch Monument in The Hague, set up in memory of all citizens and soldiers who were victims of Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies (1942-1945).



25 November 1990

Moluks Historisch Museum opens in Utrecht.

26 August 1991

Establishment of Indisch Platform (IP), an umbrella group of organisations. Official dialogue partner for government regarding 'Indisch' topics.

1998 - 2006

The first Indisch Herinneringscentrum opens in 1998 and closes in 2001. The second Indisch Herinneringscentrum, the 'Indisch Huis', opens in late 2001 and closes in 2006.



12 December 2000

Stichting Het Gebaar ('The Gesture') Foundation founded by the government. A grant is made available for the Indisch community in the form of individual benefit payments and collective projects intended as compensation for the 'suspected shortcomings in post-war legal redress' and a government policy that appeared 'cold-hearted, formalistic and bureaucratic'

12 January 2007

Announcement that the State of the Netherlands has no obligation to pay backpay to KNIL soldiers and former civil servants.

..... • **22 August 2009**



Third Indisch Herinneringscentrum (IHC) opens at Bronbeek in Arnhem. In 2017, the IHC relocates to Sophialaan 10 in The Hague.

16 December 2015 - 31 December 2017

Government compensation scheme to cover backpay in the form of a once-only payment.

1 August 2017

Stichting Het Indisch Platform 2.0 established in protest against negotiations by the Indisch Platform with the Dutch government on issues relating to the 'Indisch' question.

1 September 2017

Academic research programme, 'Independence, decolonisation, violence and war in Indonesia, 1945-1950', launched by the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

8 August 2018

Government subsidy scheme (*Collectieve Erkenning van Indisch en Moluks Nederland*), intended for projects and activities that contribute to the collective recognition of the Indisch and Moluccan community in the Netherlands.

..... • **27 June 2019**



Opening of Museum Sophiahof
- Van Indië tot nu.



TOGETHER, BUT NOT BY CHOICE

In the colony, an idealised image of the Netherlands persisted, created and sustained by the colonial powers. When these two worlds come together after the journey across the ocean, a sense of disappointment, desperation and amazement prevails among the people who arrive here. The country and its welcome are cooler than people had imagined.

They arrive in a Netherlands that is picking itself up after World War II; a country that, despite centuries of colonial rule, has little or no experience of a large group of people of colour. This leads to misunderstanding and dismay and even open racism and discrimination. The strict social hierarchy of the former colony has also made the journey across the ocean and will continue decades later to influence relationships within this very varied group that has arrived in the Netherlands.

This is a period coloured by a longing for home and a sense of frustration, but marked by real determination and a strong will to shape the future.



We're taking a step back in time.

Back to the period just before World War II, up to the end of the 1960s.

Hundreds of thousands of people are arriving in the Netherlands, in six big waves.

At the start, some people think that they'll only be here for a few months.

Their clothes remain packed, their cases ready for departure, sometimes for years on end.

The transfer of sovereignty in 1949, and all the conflict that that involves, means that for many, this will be a one-way journey.

After arriving in the Netherlands, many Moluccans wait for years to be able to return to their native country. But it will never actually happen.

People are given refuge by family members or accommodated in camps known as 'woonoorden': labour camps, barracks, monasteries and country estates.

LAND

• But also in former concentration camps at Westerbork and Vught.
• For many, it's their first introduction to a country that seems so very different
• from what they expected. Many are reunited with lost family and friends,
• only to discover how five years of German occupation has changed them.
• There is misunderstanding on both sides – everyone is affected by war
• and violence, here and back there. Other people's suffering often goes
• unseen. It's difficult to make room for someone else's pain when you're still
• overwhelmed by it yourself.
• In this room, you will hear the voices of these people. You can meet them
• here, in the house where they arrived.



Notes on exhibits

1. Dean Zainan Umarella:
My father Samad and mother Annie Umarella used this prayer cloth for their daily prayers.
2. Xanterra Manuhutu:
My father Jan(tje) Manuhutu wore this commando beret with insignia during the Actie Wassenaar in 1970, when the Indonesian ambassador's residence was occupied.
3. Caroline Kroon (Van Liefland family):
My mother Ineke kept her parents' letters from shortly after the war in this cigar box. She never read the letters. I did. They're heart-wrenching.
4. Rebecca Tutuhatunewa – Louhanepessy (Bernardus family):
These scales used to sit on my grandfather Jacob Bernardus' desk. He used them every day in his work as a nurse in the MOC Navy Inspection Centre in Voorschoten in the years 1951-1957.
5. Lucas The:
In the early days, we had hardly anything at home. But that also had its advantages: I was able to occupy the living room with my train set.
6. Nico Jouwe:
This flag is called the Morning Star. It's the first flag of the Netherlands New Guinea, designed by my father and made by his niece.
- 7a. Jeff Keasberry:
My brother Duncan and I used to deliver Indonesian meals. Not in throwaway packaging, but in a rantang, and we charged a deposit!
- 7b. Jeff Keasberry:
This hotplate is from my grandmother Keasberry's restaurant. It's one of the few tangible objects from that period.
8. Alfred Birney:
It was on this kind of 'Remington' that my father Adolf typed out his memoirs. It formed the basis for my novel *De tolk van Java* (The Interpreter from Java).

LAND

17 November 1947

Stichting Pelita is established, a civil-society organisation offering help to victims of the war with Japan.

..... • **29 April 1950**



Interment of the East Indies urn in the temporary National Monument in Dam Square containing earth from 22 war cemeteries from Southeast Asia.arts.

2 May 1950

Central Committee of Church and Private Initiatives (CCKP) established in order to organise social welfare among *Indische Nederlanders*.

..... • **8 October 1950**



The Netherlands signs the Peace Treaty with Japan in San Francisco. This results in the Yoshida-Stikker agreement: negotiations about compensation for Dutch citizens held in internment camps.

November 1952

Establishment of the Commissionership for Ambonese Affairs (*Commissariaat van Ambonezenzorg, CAZ*) to serve as the 'face' of the Dutch government, responsible for everything relating to social welfare, from food to the choice of school.

13 January 1953

The Backpay Committee (*Commissie Achterstallige Betalingen, CAB*) concludes that 'Indisch' victims of war have not received sufficient reparations. They have a legal and moral right to backpay and material damage compensation.

1956

From 1956, most Moluccans become stateless because they refuse to extend Indonesian citizenship as they consider themselves to be citizens of the RMS.

1956

Introduction of self-sufficiency scheme for Moluccans. In principle, this means that they are responsible for earning their own living. If unsuccessful, they receive no support from government. Moluccan protests prove unsuccessful.



30 January 1956

Japan pays \$10 million in compensation to the Netherlands as a result of the Yoshida-Stikker Agreement. Citizens formerly held in internment camps and ex-prisoners of war receive a once-only payment.

1 July 1956.....

Tjali Robinson, alias Jan Boon, establishes the magazine *Onze Brug* (Our Bridge). It aims to bridge the gap between the Netherlands and (Indisch) Dutch people in New Guinea. On 28 February, Robinson changes the magazine's name to *Tong Tong*.



LAND

17 April 1958

The Four Tielman Brothers (Andy, Reggy, Ponthon and Loulou Tielman) achieve their international breakthrough in the Hawaiian Village at the Expo '58 world exhibition in Brussels.

..... **August 1958**



The Pastore-Walter Act makes emigration to the United States possible.

..... **6 May 1959**



The Indische Kunstkring Tong Tong, (cultural society) established in The Hague. From 3 to 5 July, the first ever Pasar Malam Tong Tong is held at The Hague Zoo.

1 June 1965

From 1 June, emigration of *Indische Nederlanders* to Australia becomes easier because refusal based on skin colour no longer applies.

ONS

26 and 27 June 1966

Establishment of Badan Persatuan Rakyat Maluku Selatan (BPRMS), which serves as the official RMS Parliament while at the same time representing the interests of large numbers of Moluccans in the Netherlands.

26 July 1966

Arrival in the Netherlands of the widow of Chr. R. S. Soumokil (RMS president, executed on 12 April on the orders of Soeharto). On the evening of her arrival, young Moluccans set fire to the Indonesian embassy.



3 September 1970

State visit to the Netherlands by President Soeharto. On 31 August, a group of young Moluccans occupy the Indonesian ambassador's residence in Wassenaar.



LAND

THE JOURNEY

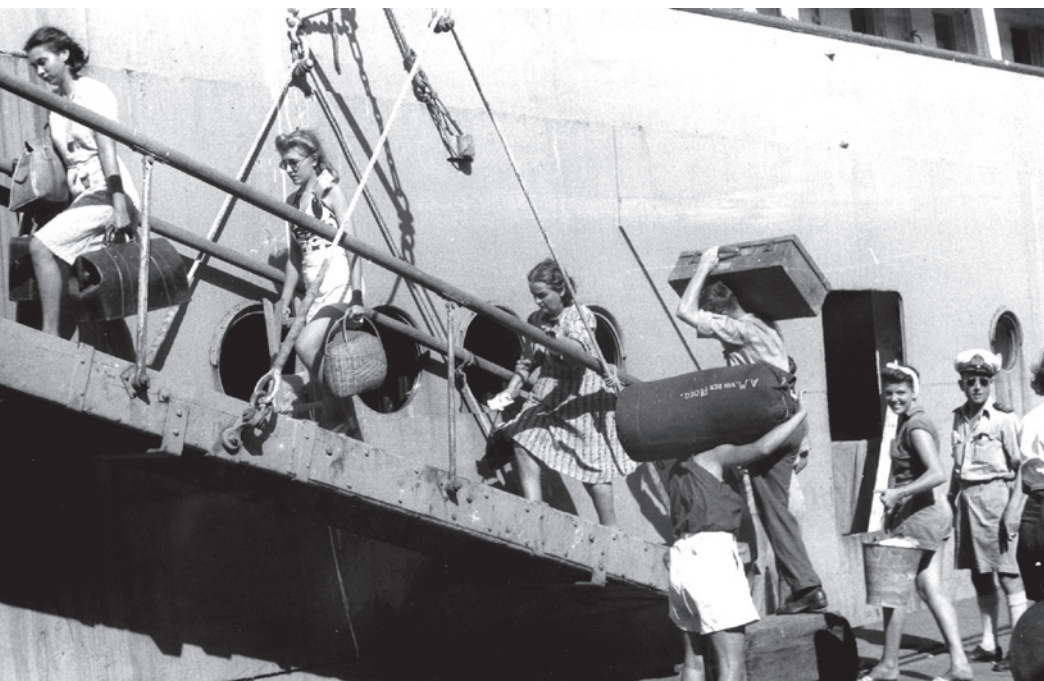
Between memory and future, trauma and hope.

From 1945 to 1969, more than 300,000 people set off for the Netherlands. Depending on their personal circumstances, the journey is an evacuation, a repatriation, an enforced departure, migration or escape.

The years of colonialism, Japanese occupation and decolonisation have left deep traces. People have lived in a permanent state of danger and uncertainty. Many have lost loved ones, and are often embarking on their journey as incomplete families.

During their journey, memories stir of what their country once was.

Although they may be physically heading in this direction by ship or by plane, for many their hearts and minds are still back there. What is their story? Why are they leaving? What are they leaving behind? And what do they hope to find in the country they are heading to?



ONNS



a. *Here, we are making the journey.*

All these people left their old lives behind them. Lives that had been indelibly changed in the previous years. Many had lost family and friends. Others had even lost their names.

Can you even imagine that? How that feels? Leaving your home country. Knowing that you might never ever return. Never again experience those smells, colours, sounds, those tropical rain showers. Never again see the house where you grew up. And never see some friends or family again. 'Never' is such a strange word. So small, but its full impact is almost impossible to fathom.

b. *Take as much time here as you would like.*

On the screen at the back, you will find more information about the historic context of all of these stories. Then, in the next room, we delve even deeper into the past. We return to colonial times.

Notes on exhibits

1. Grandfather David Manuhutu:
The bendera RMS, the flag of the Republic of South Maluku. Always close to our heart since the proclamation of the RMS on 25 April 1950. Mena Muria! (Motto of the RMS and age-old battle cry that literally means front and back, referring to the men at the front and back of the boats. Together, they form a single unit).
2. Ruud van Liefland:
My mother Nel got this wall hanging from fellow inmates at the Japanese Poeloe Brayan camp. Its embroidered drawings tell the story of everyday life in the camp.
3. Jeff Keasberry:
My aunt Nesity was actually married, but fell in love in the Republican Barongan camp. It was controversial love, because Koen was Indonesian and her guard. This is written down in a letter to her mother, my grandmother Keasberry, but it never arrived.
4. Grandfather Jacob Bernardus:
KM 26597 is my Royal Netherlands Navy number. Blood group O+. It's all listed on my ID tag that I wore at all times.
5. Alfred Birney:
My father Adolf had a black naval dagger, just like this one. He threw away the real one. I don't know why. Maybe too many harrowing memories?
6. Lucas The:
This wayang is called Bima Sakti or Milky Way. This symbolic departing gift is a reference to the Schmidt telescope of the same name, that was realised thanks to my father's huge efforts at the Observatory.
7. Nico Jouwe:
I took my first steps in the Netherlands together with Brom the Bear. He was always close to me through all those years.
8. Grandfather Talib Turkey (Umarella family):
Making music is in our blood. Having your own Indo rock band or playing in the flute orchestra at Schattenberg camp. (suling suara dua = bamboo flute, second voice)

ONS

7 December 1941

Japan attacks the US Navy base in Pearl Harbor on Hawaii. On 8 December, the Netherlands declares war on Japan.



28 December 1941

Establishment of allied military forces in the Dutch East Indies: American-British-Dutch-Australian Command (ABDACOM).

January to early March 1942

The Japanese attack on the Dutch East Indies begins on 10 January. Kendari, Balikpapan and West Borneo are the first to fall. Ambon is occupied on 1 February. Makassar, Banjarmasin, Minahassa, Tarakan, Palembang and Bali soon follow. Internment of military forces and Dutch citizens begins.

27 February 1942

During the Battle of the Java Sea, allied Navy ships attempt to hold back the Japanese invasion fleet. The combined Dutch, British, American and Australian fleet loses the battle. Three Dutch vessels are sunk, 900 people on board and rear admiral Karel Doorman are killed.



1 March 1942

Japan invades West Java.

LAND

9 March 1942

Surrender of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) and start of military detention on Java.

..... 11 April 1942

From 11 April 1942, all Europeans aged 17 and above must register with the Japanese occupier. White Dutch people and other Europeans are interned, together with some Indo-Europeans. However, most Indo-Europeans are not interned.

..... 29 April 1942



Japanisation of Indonesian society starts. Japanese time and year introduced. Dutch is outlawed and Malay becomes the official language. The process of Japanisation includes the Tiga A movement: Japan is the Light, the Protector and the Leader in Asia.

June 1942

Release of some of the indigenous KNIL soldiers from detention and some Indo-European women and children from civilian internment camps. On their release, Moluccan KNIL soldiers join citizens in the resistance. The Kempetai (Japanese military police) adopt a hard line on resistance fighters by means of imprisonment, torture and execution. By September 1942, the resistance organisations have largely been disbanded.

9 July 1942

Soekarno returns from exile. He expresses a willingness to cooperate with Japanese rule in exchange for stronger participation in governance by Indonesians, on the road towards future Indonesian independence.

1 April 1943

Establishment of Dutch military intelligence service (NEFIS) in Australia.

29 April 1943

Militarisation of Indonesian society begins with the establishment of Keibodan (auxiliary police) and Seinendan (youth corps). PETA is founded on 3 October 1943, the Indonesian army, led by Japan.



19 September 1943

Indo-Europeans given equal status to indigenous Indonesians.

22 April - 31 August 1944

1944 Under the command of General MacArthur, US troops capture Hollandia and other places in New Guinea. From New Guinea, the troops head north in the direction of Japan.



15 September 1944

Capture of Morotai in North Maluku. The island becomes an important base for air raids on the Philippines.

19 September 1944

Japan promises independence to Indonesia.

27 September 1944

Indo-Europeans continue to refuse to renounce their Dutch origin. The Japanese intern them in the Glodok prison in Jakarta. Arrests in other cities on Java then follow.

29 April 1945

Japan sets up BPKI (Badan Penyelidikan Kemerdekaan Indonesia – Forum for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence).

5 May 1945

Germany surrenders, end of World War II in Europe.

..... **6 August 1945**



Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, first ever atomic bomb attack from the air, carried out by the US. It is estimated that around 100,000 to 140,000 people are killed immediately.

7 August 1945

Establishment of PPKI (Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia - Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian independence) on 7 August 1945. This is an offshoot of the BPKI. Soekarno is its chairman and Hatta vice-chairman.

9 August 1945

Second atomic bomb on Nagasaki. It causes the immediate death of 39,000 people.

15 August 1945

Japan surrenders, end of World War II in Asia.

17 August 1945

Proclamation of independence for Republic of Indonesia.



September 1945 - February 1946

British military rule on Java.

September 1945 - December 1945

↳ Bersiap: term used in the Netherlands to describe the period between October 1945 and the start of 1946, in which groups of Indonesian militia aim to prevent the Netherlands regaining power in the Indies. Violence is particularly targeted at Indo-Europeans, Chinese and Dutch-minded citizens who have no protection. Many of them fall victim. Around 46,000 are interned in so-called Republican camps.



December 1945 - 1949

First wave of repatriation to the Netherlands: war evacuees, widows and orphans and people on leave (in Europe). In this way, a total of 100,000 people leave the country. Some of them leave permanently, others return after a brief period of leave or recovery.

1945 - 1949

Indonesian War of Independence. The Republic of Indonesia fights to maintain its independence. The Netherlands refuses to accept it. The war lasts for over four years and claims many victims: 5,000 soldiers, between 10,000 and 20,000 Dutch citizens and around 100,000 Indonesians die.



LAND

15 - 25 July 1946

Malino Conference, at which the decision is made to establish a federal Indonesia.

..... • **25 March 1947**



In the Linggadjati Agreement, the Netherlands recognises the existence of the Republic of Indonesia on Java and Sumatra. The Republic of Indonesia pledges to cooperate with the formation of a federal Indonesia and a Dutch-Indonesian Union.

23 August - 2 November 1949

During the Roundtable Conference in The Hague, negotiations are held between the Netherlands, the Republic of Indonesia and representatives of the various states that the Netherlands has created in the Indonesian archipelago. It is agreed that the Netherlands will transfer sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia.



..... • **27 December 1949**



Transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia. New Guinea is excluded from this. Following the transfer of sovereignty, the Dutch-Indonesian Union is established, a confederation linking the two countries.

1949 - 1952

Period for opting for state citizenship: European residents above the age of 17 living in Indonesia can choose or opt for Indonesian state citizenship. The Dutch Citizenship Act of 1892 had a decisive role to play in this. People who were legally considered to have equal status to Europeans (*'gelijkgestelden'*) automatically become Indonesian state citizens (Warga Negara).

ONS

1950 - 1952

Second wave of migration to the Netherlands.

25 April 1950

Proclamation of the Republic of South Maluku (RMS).

8 May 1950

Moluccan KNIL soldiers on Ambon leave the KNIL and form the RMS militia.

26 July 1950

The KNIL is disbanded. Moluccan KNIL soldiers not yet demobilised temporarily join the Royal Netherlands Army (KL).



July - December 1950

On Ambon and other islands, there are battles between Indonesian forces and RMS troops.



17 August 1950

Republic of Indonesia is declared a unitary state.

LAND

March - June 1951

Moluccans leave for the Netherlands in twelve transportations.

1952 - 1957

Third wave of migration to the Netherlands.

14 December 1954

Indonesian government unilaterally dissolves the Dutch-Indonesian Union.

..... • **18 - 24 April 1955**



Bandung conference (Asian-African Conference) to promote cooperation between populations of Asia and Africa. This marks the start of the Non-Aligned Movement. Soekarno becomes one of the leaders of this movement.

1957 - 1964

Spijtoptantenregeling: special scheme for *Indische Nederlanders* who have accepted Indonesian nationality and later regret it because of the enforced circumstances. The scheme enables them to reverse the choice and depart for the Netherlands.

5 December 1957

Partly as a result of tensions around New Guinea, on 'Black Sinterklaas', Dutch consulates are closed and Dutch people forced to leave Indonesia. Dutch companies are taken over and nationalised.

1958 - 1959

Fourth wave of migration to the Netherlands.



1960 - 1964

Fifth wave of migration to the Netherlands.



19 August 1960

Indonesia ceases diplomatic relations with the Netherlands in response to increasing tensions around the Netherlands New Guinea. Indonesian embassy in the Netherlands closes.

6 April 1962

Installation of Netherlands New Guinea Council in Hollandia. The council has 28 members: 21 Papuans, six Dutch and a Keiese Indonesian. 16 members are elected and 12 appointed by Governor Platteel. The elections are the first step on the road towards independent rule.



1 October 1962

Netherlands New Guinea is transferred to the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA). On 1 May 1963, UNTEA transfers power to Indonesia.

LAND

1964 - 1968

Sixth wave of migration to the Netherlands.

..... • **1 October 1965**



Army seizes power led by General Soeharto, hundreds of thousands of people are murdered. On 12 March 1967, Soeharto is appointed president.

..... • **12 April 1966**



RMS president mr. dr. C. Soumokil is executed on the orders of Soeharto.

1969

Act of Free Choice: referendum held from 14 July - 2 August 1969, in which 1,025 men and women selected by the Indonesian army in Western New Guinea vote unanimously in favour of Indonesian control. Free choice does not come into it.

3 September 1970

State visit to the Netherlands by President Soeharto. In the lead-up to the state visit, the RMS occupies the Indonesian ambassador's residence in Wassenaar on 31 August.

THE DUTCH EAST INDIES: SHIFTING IMPRESSIONS

The idyllic and peaceful Dutch East Indies never actually existed. There is continuous criticism, resistance and opposition in response to colonial rule, there and (to a much lesser extent) also here. Often in the shadow, sometimes in full view. The Dutch government underestimates this, refusing to give up the Dutch East Indies and responding with suppression and violence.

For 350 years, the white colonial power enforces minute differences of race, rank and status among a highly diverse population. Partly by taking advantage of traditional social structures, the colonial power creates a class society. Rank and status determine everyone's lives. Often in unexpected, tragic and permanent ways.





'Life should be lived forwards and understood backwards.' I think that's a great quote. It's only if you can look back that you can see where you come from and then you take a good look forward and see where you want to go.

Here, we look further into the colonial past. How did that system shape these families' lives? We're now entering the twilight zone between storytelling and history. Between legend and history. These are living stories. Most of them never written down, but passed on down the generations.

Everything these people experienced: The suppression and violence, but also the hope and love, the sacrifices and embraces - it not only shaped them, but also those around them, and everyone who came after them. The past continues to have an effect on the present.

When you're ready, I'll take you into the last room. In it, we return to the here and now and look forward to the future. But let's look back first.

Video-installation



Rebecca Tutuhaturunewa-Louhanepessy (Bernardus family)

This bow and arrow from New Guinea have been hanging on my grandfather's wall for more than sixty years. They were a souvenir from one of his many journeys and encounters. And a reminder of how all his adventures started.



The city of Ambon, 1946. My grandfather is turning 18. He hears from friends that the Royal Netherlands Navy is looking to recruit. He wants to join! Take to the seas! To go on an adventure, on one of those big ships he often sees in the bay. So, he reports for duty. 'Sir, I would also like to join the Navy.' That's possible. Oh - could they please also see the necessary papers? He is able to provide proof of good report marks, at least. But the written permission from his parents? He eventually writes that himself. Back at home, he explains that he will be leaving shortly. Excuse me? So, when exactly?

Well, that very evening. As a sailor, Jacobus – or Jaap or Bob, depending on who you ask – travels halfway across the world. He cares for the sick on the Snellius navy ship heading for New Guinea. He journeys past villages and meets people, one of whom gives him this bow as a gift, made from hard wood from betel palm, with a set of arrows.

Back in the Netherlands, the bow takes pride of place in the living room. In memory of my grandfather and how the Navy broadened his horizons. How could he have predicted that his children would end up using these arrows to fish in the ditches of Den Helder?



Julia Jouwe

My grandfather was born in Netherlands New Guinea, on an island in the bay of Hollandia. It was a tranquil spot. The ocean was littered with fisherman's pirogues, just like this one. The figureheads of these boats are decorated with fish. They are supposed to protect against danger. This one was made by my grandfather's father. He was a fantastic woodcarver. But he loses his right arm in the war, when a grenade explodes in his hand. Instead of giving up, he teaches himself to carve wood with his left hand. That's typical of our family: whatever happens, you never accept defeat. You just carry on.



For a long time, our family was closely involved in governing New Guinea. In my grandfather's village, Kayu Pulau, there are four clans. My grandfather is chief of the Jouwe clan. For centuries, this area remains almost completely free of Dutch interference. But, eventually, his life in the calm waters of Hollandia suddenly makes way for something faster and different. As a well-spoken daredevil, he is selected by the Dutch colonial government to train for the civil service. They plan to fast-track him for a position in colonial government.

So, off he goes to Manokwari.

But then the Japanese invade the archipelago. They force my grandfather to help them in the fishing industry. That means a return to Hollandia. And back to his pirogue. In 1943, he is picked up by an Allied submarine and taken to Australian New Guinea. A year later, he joins the fight to win back his beloved Hollandia. As a result of all of this, my grandfather becomes determined to fight for a free New Guinea for the rest of his life. Because, whatever happens, you never accept defeat. You just carry on.



Xanterra Manuhutu

You take the ingredients out of the tjokar. You start by finely chopping the pinang. Then grind the shavings to a paste in a mortar. You roll it into a sirih betel leaf and place it in your mouth. You're now chewing sirih. For us, chewing sirih is an age-old tradition. It's how we bond with friends, families and even whole villages.



In 1937, my grandfather is sitting around the tjokar chatting with friends. As often at that time, the conversation turns to the question: should they join the KNIL or not? Although the army may not be a dream job, a regular income, education for your children and a pension – that's not to be sniffed at. My grandfather is also missing his three brothers, who are already in the KNIL. He decides to join. He is stationed in Makassar. There is tension in the air – the population has had enough of those Hollanders. War is stirring.

In 1942, he is sent to Lombok. There, he becomes acquainted with my grandmother, the oldest daughter of a Pringgabaya nobleman. It is forbidden love: he is a Christian, she is a Muslim. She is also very much his junior. Soon after, Japan invaded the Dutch East Indies. The KNIL surrenders. My grandfather is made a prisoner of war. He spends three years in camp Tete Batu. On his release, he reports back to the KNIL and returns to Makassar – with my grandmother.

Ultimately, the KNIL failed to fully live up to his hopes. But it did bring him his wife and a large family. For us, the tjokar now serves as a symbol for how love transcends origin and religion.



Dean Umarella

This parang is something quite special. Too small to be a sword. Too big to be a knife. But don't let its unusual size deceive you: this machete is a great all-rounder. Whenever I think of the parang, it always reminds me first of my great-grandfather on my mother's side. Wahid Lesteluhu. In Tulehu, the village on Ambon where my family comes from, he used the parang virtually on a daily basis. To prepare fish. To cut coconuts out of the tree. To work wood. When the family went walking through the dense undergrowth of the hutan, he used it to clear a path. The parang helped him to build a life for his family.



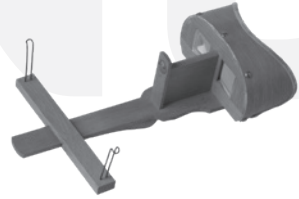
But it was also an illustrious weapon. One of my forefathers was the Upu Latu of a kingdom that stretched as far as the eye could see. From all around, he brought men together who helped him fight against the Portuguese and the Dutch. The parang helped them to protect their country.

Another distant ancestor, the first raja of Tulehu, knew exactly how to use it. It was impressive to watch, as he took part in the tjakalele, the Moluccan war dance that is still passed on between the generations. The parang helped him to disseminate his culture.

Too small to be a sword. Too big to be a knife. The people who preceded me, and the way in which they used the parang, are a source of inspiration to me. I'm glad I still have it.



Kimberly Keasberry



This is a stereo viewer (or stereoscope). More than a century ago, it was used to view photos in 3D. This one belonged to

Neville Keasberry, my great-great-grandfather. At the start of the twentieth century, he runs a photo studio in Malang in East Java. He takes some amazing photographs. Of nature. The markets. The people. The local community. His pictures are really popular and his studio becomes increasingly successful.

But he finds himself in a difficult position. The Indonesia he depicts in his photos is Indonesia as its white colonial power like to see it. Idyllic, peaceful and calm. But not the full picture. Of course, he has a family to feed. But at the same time, he perpetuates a one-sided picture. Reality is much more complicated. That is true of his photos, but also of our family.

The Keasberrys initially lived in British colonial India. In 1811, they come to Java, which was temporarily also a British colony at that time. That's where Neville's parents meet. Neville's mother, Katiedja, was probably Javanese. That's how our family became Indo-European. Neville straddles two different worlds. He considers himself to be European. He dresses and behaves like a European. But as someone of mixed origin, he never completely belongs.

Indos – as they were still referred to pejoratively – are always slightly excluded. What started out as an insult, has now been reappropriated. I'm a Dutch girl with an English name and of colour. My uncle Jeff always says: you're an Indo, not an Indonesian. You have to explain it properly, because people don't understand the difference.



Olivia The

These perfume bottles were a wedding gift to my great-grandparents. Both came from families of traders, Peranakans (sometimes referred to as Straits Chinese) who had lived in Indonesia for generations. They had an arranged marriage in around 1918. Before that, they had never even met. According to tradition, the bride had to spend a period of time as a servant to her new mother-in-law. If she refused, her husband would have to forfeit his inheritance. But my great-grandmother totally recoiled at the idea. 'I don't want to be a servant,' she told her new bridegroom. And so, they left for Yogya.



From now on, they have to earn their own living. So, they decide to become traders too. My great-grandmother takes the lead. With their wedding rings as starting capital, they grow their business over the years. From soya beans and spices that my great-grandfather sells at the market, to sugar and tobacco. In the meantime, their arranged marriage blossoms into a loving relationship.

During the Japanese occupation, they are permitted to continue trading. Late 1948 sees the second 'police action', as it was known at the time. A period of violence and chaos then ensues. Before being removed by Indonesian soldiers, my great-grandmother buries all her valuables in the garden: jewellery, money and the perfume bottles. When peace returns and they are able to go back home, the house has been completely looted. The jewellery and money have disappeared. All that's left are the perfume bottles: two silent witnesses of what has been lost.



Robin Zijlstra (Van Liefland family)

My great-grandparents lived in the Dutch East Indies for over fifteen years. In that time, they made a great life for themselves. They had countless friends. My great-grandfather was a teacher. My great-grandmother was a pianist. Their professions meant that, unlike most white Dutch people, or totoks, they were at the heart of society. The colony offered them an urbane life, filled with luxuries that they probably would never have acquired in the Netherlands and that were the preserve of the very few. Of all the great things they received, nothing was greater than their three children. The youngest daughter, my grandmother, is baptised in December 1941. To give the exact date: on 7 December 1941. The very same day that Japan attacks Pearl Harbor. The day after that, several countries – including the Netherlands – declare war on Japan. My great-grandfather is mobilised the day after that. Three months later, the KNIL surrenders.



In the space of just three months, the suppressor has become the suppressed. My great-grandparents lose everything: their home, their possessions and their freedom. As a prisoner of war, he is set to work on the Burma to Siam railway line. She ends up, with three children, in a Japanese internment camp in Medan. The great life they built together is at an end.



Alfred Birney



The Birnies were an aristocratic family. They headed out to the Dutch East Indies in the nineteenth century where they ultimately established a tobacco plantation in Djember.

It is also where they earned their fortune. Their son Willem, my grandfather, was a lawyer in Surabaya. After his first marriage failed, he cohabited with Sie Swan Nio for a long time. She was his njai, his concubine. He had five children with her, the youngest of whom was my father.

They never married. Because Willem does not acknowledge his children, they are not given Dutch nationality, but Chinese, from the mother's side. The Birnies never accept them as fully-fledged members of the family either. As a result, my father Adolf grows up in a colonial twilight zone. As the youngest, born out of wedlock, he feels Dutch, but also Chinese and Indo-European to the same extent. This lack of a home will follow him for the rest of his life.

How painful must it be to be a child and to know you are unloved. Only permitted to participate partially. To be an outsider. Would his father, my grandfather, have understood what the repercussions of not marrying Sie Swan Nio would be? Would he have realised that this was like a ripple from a pebble, the results of which would be felt for generations? How different could my father's life have been?

LAND

1860

Abolition of slavery.

1869

Opening of Suez Canal.



1870

End of *Cultuurstelsel* (Cultivation System, the enforced growing of export crops for trading) by the colonial power. Colony opened for private enterprise.

1873 - 1907

Colonial zone expands, via both diplomatic and violent means, such as the Atjeh war (1873-1907), military expeditions to Lombok (1894), Bone (South Celebes) (1905) and Bali (1906). On Bali, this results in the mass ritual suicide (puputan) of the Raja Klungkung and his followers.



1892

Dutch Nationality Act lays down in law who in the colony is a Dutch state citizen. Two categories of subjects: those who are Dutch subjects and state citizens and those who are merely Dutch subjects. Much of the Indonesian population, supposedly granted equal status to Europeans, is part of the latter category.

1901

Dutch Ethical Policy (*Ethische Politiek*), the official policy of the colonial government of the Dutch East Indies, brings about increased focus on the interests of the Indonesian population. Major changes fail to happen.

1905

Javanese doctor Soewardi Soerjaningrat writes a column in protest, 'if I were a Dutchman' (*'Als ik eens Nederlander was'*) about the Netherlands' hypocrisy.



1908 - 1917

Rise and establishment of emancipation movements, including the *Boedi Oetomo* Association (1908) that aims to bring improved access to western education for the Javanese, the *Indische Partij* (1912), the first multi-ethnic political party, the *Sarekat Islam* (1912) and the establishment of the central Chinese association, *Tjong Hoa Thong Hwe* (1917).

1918

Volksraad (People's Council) installed in Batavia. The *Volksraad*, which has 60 members and represents the entire population of the Dutch East Indies, has advisory powers only. 35 of its members are appointed, 25 elected.



1920

Foundation of the PKI, the Indonesian Communist Party.

1920 - 1927

Introduction of higher education, including the University of Technology in Bandoeng (1920), the Law School in Batavia (1924), Bosscha Observatory in Lembang (1923), the Medical School in Batavia as a successor to the STOVIA, ('School for the Training of Native Physicians') (1927).



1926 - 1927

Uprisings in West Java and West Sumatra coordinated by the PKI. The colonial government instigates a hardline response. Some 4,500 people are taken prisoner and 1,300 exiled to the Boven-Digoel prison camp in New Guinea.

1927



Establishment of PNI, Perserikatan (later: Partai) Nasional Indonesia in Bandoeng by Soekarno, Iskaq Tjokrohadijoerjo, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Boediarto and Soenarjo. The PNI aims to achieve political independence for Indonesia and refuses to cooperate with the colonial authorities.

1927 - 1930

The PNI is suppressed by the colonial authorities. Soekarno faces accusations of criminality. He gives a speech placing colonialism in the dock. In 1928, a PNI young people's conference is held, with the theme: One people, one national anthem, one language, one country (Sumpah Pemuda). In 1930, the PNI is condemned by the authorities. Soekarno is exiled to Flores in 1933. In February 1934, Mohammed Hatta and Soetan Sjahrir are arrested and exiled to Boven-Digoel together with other activists.

1936

The Soetardjo Petition is an initiative of the Javanese member of the *Volksraad* Soetardjo, in which he calls on the Dutch government to organise a conference with a view to achieving independence for the Dutch East Indies by means of gradual reform. On 16 November 1938, the Dutch government, led by Hendrikus Colijn, rejects the Soetardjo Petition.

'ONS LAND', AND NOW?

The end of the Dutch East Indies does not mean the end of the story. The colonial past lives on in Dutch society. Hundreds of years of Dutch expansionism brought groups from all corners of the Indonesian archipelago to this country.

In this room, the new generation shows how they deal with their history and above all: how they discover, rediscover and reinterpret the stories of their fathers and forefathers.

For them, the past forms an almost inexhaustible source of inspiration. Old resentment is transformed into new energy, demonstrating the emancipation of different communities and opening up the conversation. The conversation about (de)colonisation is not an easy one. Deep-seated racism continues to raise its head. But, precisely for that reason, it is important to continue this conversation.



LAND



a. *The story of 'Ons Land', and of decolonisation, is one that affects all of us. Here, we discover how, in the new generation, everyone finds their own unique way, not only of embracing family history, but also of using it to shape their future.*

b. *We're also interested in hearing about you. In the next room, you can tell us what your experience has been of the exhibition. And, by answering a few questions, you can become part of it yourself. Your contribution will enrich the story of decolonisation and how we all process it.*

My name is Francesca Pichel. It was an honour to be your guide today. Many thanks for your attention and I look forward to seeing you again in 'Ons Land'.

Testimonials

Robin Zijlstra (Van Liefland family)

For their school research project, Robin and her friend Afra Pelupessy made a podcast about their own family history in the Dutch East Indies. From a 'peanut' and a 'cheese head': *Pindakaas*.

Julia Jouwe

Julia is continuing the Papuan storytelling tradition in journalism projects in which she gives a voice to Dutch Papuans and also researches the history of the Papuans and their relationship with the Netherlands.

Justin The

For Justin, being judged on your qualities and not on your appearance really matters. That's why, in the Delft student rowing club, Justin is completely in his element.

Kimberly Keasberry

Kimberly talks to her uncle Jeff about 'Indisch' cuisine in their family and the important role it has to play in preserving this culture.

Chelsea Manuhutu

Chelsea in conversation with her father Xanterra about their Moluccan identity and what it means to them.

Rebecca Tutuhatunewa-Louhanepessy (Bernardus family)

The apple never falls far from the tree. Just like her grandpa, Rebecca works in the medical sector. Together with her husband, also a doctor, she discusses their Moluccan roots.

Dean Umarella

Mother and son talk about Dean's cultural activities, such as Tjakalele dancing at the Kwaku festival.

Alfred Birney

Alfred connected with his father through words. Alfred connects with his son by playing guitar.

Key terms

Archipelago	Area consisting of several islands.
Batavia	Capital of the Dutch East Indies. Now called Jakarta, capital of Indonesia.
Burma-Siam railway line	Myanmar-Thailand railway line built under Japanese occupation by prisoners of war and forced labourers in 1942-1944.
The Dutch Caribbean Islands	The Netherlands' territories in the Caribbean Sea. Now consisting of the countries of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten and the three public bodies Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba.
Decolonisation	Process in which colonies become independent of a mother country.
Discrimination	Unfairly differentiating between people. This may be based on origin, culture, gender, sexual orientation or faith.
Djember	Now known as Jember. A place in East Java.
Djakakarta	Now known as: Yogyakarta, or Yogya for short. A place in Central Java.
European	Person originating from Europe and his/her descendants. In the Dutch East Indies, the so-called ' <i>gelijkgestelden</i> ' were also considered to be Europeans.
<i>Gelijkgestelden</i>	People from various non-European population groups in the Dutch East Indies who were accorded equal legal status with Europeans. They are Christians and lead western lifestyles.
Hollandia	Now Jayapura. Place in New-Guinea.
Hutan	Forest
India	From 1858 until 1947, India was part of the British Empire.
Indo-European or Indo	Indo-European, or Indo for short, is a person of mixed European and Asian origin. The term Indo has positive or negative connotations for different groups.
Indische Nederlanders	Umbrella term for people originating from the former Dutch East Indies. This is wider than the group of Indo-Europeans only.
KNIL	Acronym for Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL), the Dutch colonial army. It existed officially from 1814 until 1950.
Colony	An area governed by a sovereign state but located outside its own territory. This governance often goes hand-in-hand with exploitation of the colonised country for the benefit of the mother country.

ONS

Colonisation	The occupation, conquest and exploitation by sovereign European states, such as the Netherlands, of large areas elsewhere for political and economic gain, involving the use of powerful force, including suppression and compulsion.
Makassar	Also known as Ujung Pandang. Capital of South Sulawesi (Sulawesi Selatan).
Malang	Garrison town in East Java.
Manokwari	Place in western New Guinea.
Medan	Capital of Sumatra.
Moluccans	Inhabitants of the Moluccan archipelago.
Dutch East Indies	<i>Nederlands-Indië</i> , since 1816, the official name for the areas of the Indonesian archipelago colonised by the Dutch.
New Guinea	Island in the Pacific Ocean and part of Oceania. Until 1962, the western part remained part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Netherlands New Guinea. Now Irian Barat.
Njai	Unmarried Indonesian, Chinese or Japanese woman forced to cohabit with members of the Armed Forces, soldiers, planters or civil servants. Also known as concubine. Some of them were enslaved.
De Oost	Literally: the East. Term used in colonial times for the Dutch East Indies.
Papuans	Inhabitants of New Guinea.
Parang	Machete
Pasar	Market
Pearl Harbor	US Navy base on Hawaii. Bombed by Japan on 7 December 1941, after which the Netherlands, America and the United Kingdom declared war on Japan.
Peranakans (sometimes referred to as Straits Chinese)	Inhabitants of Chinese origin who permanently settled in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia from the 16th century onwards.
Pinang	Betel nut, or areca nut, seed of the betel palm. Used as a stimulant.

Politionele actie or Police action	Term originally used by the Dutch government for two short-term Dutch military campaigns: <i>Operatie Product</i> (Operation Product, 21 July to 5 August 1947) and <i>Operatie Kraai</i> (Operation Crow, 19 December 1948 to 5 January 1949) targeting the struggle for independence in Indonesia. Often used incorrectly in the Netherlands to describe the War of Independence (1945-1949). Referred to in Indonesia as Agresi Militer Belanda I & II.
Portuguese	In the 16th century, long before the arrival of Dutch ships in Moluccan waters shortly before 1600, the Portuguese were a colonial power in the region, reaching from Hong Kong to the Philippines, North Maluku and Ambon.
Pringgabaya	Place on the island of Lombok.
Racism	Negative judgement, treatment, categorisation, exclusion or humiliation of people based on assumed racial differences.
Raden	Title for noble persons (originally Javanese).
Radja	Raja. Title for king.
Republic of Indonesia	Indonesian Republic, declared on 17 August 1945. In the Netherlands, the date of the transfer of sovereignty, 27 December 1949, was often used in the past.
Sirih betel leaf	Foliage of a climbing plant, used for chewing.
Transfer of sovereignty	Transfer of supreme power by the Dutch government to the government of the United States of Indonesia.
Soerabaja	Now known as Surabaya. Port in East Java, a marine base and garrison town in colonial times.
Tjakelele	Moluccan war dance, different variations of which are performed.
Tjokar	Cokar. Set of bowls and jars for storing the sirih leaf, pinang and other ingredients in. Used when chewing sirih. The tjokar is also known as the tempat sirih.
Tulehu	Islamic village on the eastern coast of the island of Ambon in the Maluku Islands.
Upu Latu	Ceremonial title. Literally: father and king.
Woonoorden	Camps (90 in total) where Moluccan families were housed after arrival in the Netherlands in 1951. From 1960, they were successfully disbanded and demolished.

COLOPHON

The semi-permanent exhibition ONS LAND – Dekolonisatie, generaties, verhalen opened on 4 February 2022.

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LAND

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Ministerie van Volksgezondheid,
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At various points in the exhibition, you will encounter a coloured pattern on a darker background. It also features on the cover of this booklet and has been specially designed for the exhibition by Remco Swart from Kossmanndejong. It is based on existing fabrics from Indonesia and the Netherlands merged with a DNA pattern.

LAND

1850

1900

1910

1920

1930

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2020



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