

## Look into My Eyes

### *A Communication-Oriented Analysis of the Madonna del Mare Nostrum*

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**ABSTRACT** Dutch painter Hans Versteeg's *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* (2017) depicts a woman and child wrapped in thermal blankets, seemingly just rescued from the sea. Its composition draws from Christian iconography, particularly Eastern Orthodox icons and Western Madonna-and-Child symbolism, recontextualizing these traditions by applying them to the contemporary, interrelated refugee and climate crises. Through a communication-oriented analysis, the author argues that this painting is an illustrative example of the cultural persistence of the Christian narrative complex in secularized contemporary Western society. **KEYWORDS** Art, climate crisis, eco theology, icon, madonna, political art, refugee crisis

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### INTRODUCTION

In September 2017, I made a professional visit on behalf of the Dutch regional newspaper *BN DeStem* to the first edition of the *biennale Kunst in de Heilige Drieboek* (Art in the Sacred Triangle) in Oosterhout, organized by a Dutch foundation of the same name. *Biennale*, in Dutch art terminology, refers to a recurring art event or exhibition that is held every two years. This particular biennale is an art exhibit route committed to preserving the unique character of the area and strengthening it to secure its future. The area is unique because it is home to three monasteries in Oosterhout, a small municipality in the Dutch province of North Brabant: Saint Catharine's Vale (Sint-Catharinadal), Our Lady's Abbey (O.L. Vrouwe Abdij), and Saint Paul's Abbey (Sint-Paulusabdij). The buildings of these three monasteries are used as exhibition locations for the biennale.

In the porch of the church at Our Lady's Abbey, visitors were confronted with a life-sized painting of a mother and child. They were both wrapped in a silver-gold thermal blanket, with a dark blue sea visible in the background beneath an equally dark sky. Both figures, depicted as people of color, looked directly at the visitors. This piece, titled *Madonna del Mare Nostrum*, left a profound impression on me, prompting me to make it the focus of my journalistic article, which was published a few days after my visit (Bosman 2017).

Two years later, this same painting, created by Dutch artist Hans Versteeg, also known by his artistic pseudonym Hansa, was displayed prominently in the Protestant Bethel Church in The Hague. From October 2018 to January 2019, this church offered asylum to the Armenian Tamrazyan family to prevent their removal from the Netherlands. The campaign was successful, allowing the family to stay in the country (Boffey 2019; Kingsley 2019).

In 2019, the painting was presented in yet another context. From March to April of that year, it was featured in the multisite exhibition tour *Troubled Waters* in Amsterdam, an initiative organized by curators Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker and Anikó Ouweneel-Tóth. The painting was the first of fourteen (Art) Stations of the Cross that led visitors through an equal number of churches in Amsterdam, all connected by modern religious art. Versteeg's painting was displayed in Saint Nicholas's Basilica (Nicolaasbasiliek), located at Hendrikkade 73, in the old city of Amsterdam.

One painting, three distinct locations. Hansa's painting occupies the frontier between the ecclesiastical realm of devotional art and the secular domain of political art. It references both the well-known tradition of the Madonna and Child from Western art history and the contemporary political issue of refugees, particularly those who try to cross the Mediterranean Sea to reach Western Europe. The title *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* is aptly chosen; it combines two Italian words (*Madonna* and *del*) with two words (*Mare Nostrum*) that have clear meanings in both Italian and Latin, translating to either "Madonna of our Sea" or "Madonna of the Mediterranean Sea."

#### COMMUNICATION AS METHOD

As with all art objects and performances, the question arises: What does it mean? What does it communicate and to whom? I use the communication-oriented method of text analysis (Bosman and Wieringen 2022) here to systematically extract meaning from the *Madonna del Mare Nostrum*. This method of analysis distinguishes, in principle, between text-immanent communication (i.e., communication within the textual world) and text-external communication (i.e., communication in the real world) (Van Wieringen 2020). It establishes a strict distinction between the characters (and their accompanying props) presented on the textual stage and a text-immanent author who directs these characters and communicates the narrative to a text-immanent reader. The real author and real reader exist outside the text; the former communicates to the latter by means of the text "between them."

The real author, situated in the real world, never coincides with the text-immanent author, who resides in the textual world. Similarly, the real reader, existing in the real world, never coincides with the text-immanent reader, located in the textual world. Nevertheless, they are all related. Their relationship is mediated by sociohistorical data, which supports the plausibility of the coexistence of the text-immanent author and real author on one hand, and the text-immanent reader and real reader on the other. These two sets of entities are referred to respectively as the "implied author" and the "implied reader."

This methodology also incorporates complex communication structures, including intertextuality and contextualization—concepts that will be discussed later in the article.

The subsequent sections of this article each focus on one of the following instances of communication: (1) a description of the object—what could be termed the "text" of the painting; (2) Versteeg's interpretation as the creator (or real author) of the painting; (3) a differentiation among three "spheres" (or sociohistorical paradigms) to which the painting appears to belong; (4) a presentation of the three contexts in which I observed

the painting displayed, focusing on how each context influences the (hypothetical) real readers; and (5) an evaluation of the text-internal communication between the immanent author and immanent reader of the painting, partly based on insights gained in the previous steps.

In conclusion, I will evaluate my findings within the Dutch context of secularization. Versteeg's *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* appears to occupy a liminal space between traditional religious art and secular contemporary political art. By combining these characteristics, the painting serves as a compelling example of the cultural persistence of the Christian narrative complex within contemporary Western society.

## THE PAINTING

The painting itself measures 125 cm by 125 cm and is rendered in oil on canvas. Its style is hyperrealistic, approximating the detail and precision of a photograph. In the forefront are two figures: an adult woman of color, positioned at the center, and a baby of similar complexion, slightly to her right. Both figures gaze directly at the viewer—the baby's gaze is neutral, whereas the woman's expression could be described as strong or stern. She holds the baby on her left arm against her chest, but everything except their heads and the baby's left foot is obscured by a thermal blanket, gold on the outside and silver on the inside, resembling those used to prevent hypothermia, particularly after prolonged exposure to cold water. The back of the blanket is folded around their heads, while the front flap is folded back over the child's chest.

Although not explicitly depicted, the painting suggests that both figures are either naked or seminaked, as implied by the child's exposed bare foot. The two figures are set against a backdrop of sky and an expanse of water that resembles the sea (the bottom 10 percent of the canvas). Both the sky and sea appear dark and threatening, though brighter patches of sky emerge in the bottom right and the top left, behind the woman's right shoulder. On the left, the sea and sky are nearly indistinguishable, while the bright patch of sky on the right starkly contrasts with the dark water.

The title of the painting, *Madonna del Mare Nostrum*, suggests that the sea depicted is the Mediterranean Sea. *Mare Nostrum* was the Latin term used by the Romans to denote "our sea." The title, combined with the figures' skin color and the thermal blanket covering them as they stand by the sea, strongly suggests that they are refugees rescued by a European coastguard after fleeing their homeland, likely in Africa. An alternative title for the painting, though less commonly used in the public domain, is *Mantel der liefde* (cloak of love). This title alludes to a Dutch expression that metaphorically suggests a cover-up of faults or wrongs, presumably referring to the downplaying of the refugee crisis by European and Dutch politicians.

## THE CREATOR: HANS "HANSA" VERSTEEG

As mentioned earlier, the creator, or real author, of this *Madonna and Child* is Dutch artist Hans Versteeg, also known as Hansa. According to an article by Anikó Toth

published on Versteeg's website, the artist began painting with oils in his seventies, following a career in graphic design. According to Walter Van Teeffelen (2021), Versteeg received formal training at Artibus, now HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, an institute for higher art education. Over the course of his career, he worked for Proost & Brandt, a paper company; the Rijksmuseum, the national museum of the Netherlands in Amsterdam; and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, also in Amsterdam.

Guus van den Hout, the curator of the inaugural biennale in Oosterhout, commissioned Versteeg to create the painting for the event. Our Lady's Abbey, which hosted the painting's first showing, states on its website that Versteeg was "inspired by a newspaper photo of boat refugees, wrapped in thermal blankets." The abbey's religious community deeply connected with the story of this Madonna's origins, noting that "the abbey itself was erected and built by refugee nuns from France, Germany, and the Basque Country" who fled to the Netherlands in 1901.

Later, when the painting was displayed in Bethel Church in The Hague, Versteeg reflected on its success:

From the beginning, the canvas touched people. It became iconic almost instantaneously. At every viewing of the painting, I placed a notepad near it where people could write down their comments. This has become a special document with hundreds of comments and heartfelt cries. The comments don't beat about the bush and confirm why I made the painting. Good art asks questions. It does not answer them. It has to stimulate people to think. And people have to make up their own mind, because a good painting is nothing other than a well-formulated question. I regard this painting as an autonomous piece of art, detached from the context. That is what I want to stress as much as possible. But the context of Bethel has contributed enormously to turning this work into an icon, and I am grateful for that.

Versteeg describes his artistic style as "compassionism" and defines compassionist artists as "artists who are truly involved in an ever-changing society, interactive, provocative, and visible in the expression of their opinions and ideas" (Van Teeffelen 2021).

#### THE SPHERES: MADONNA, ICON, REFUGEE

From a communication perspective, this painting appears to allude to three distinct spheres within two paradigms: (1) the Madonna-and-Child image from the Roman Catholic tradition; (2) the religious icon from the Eastern Orthodox tradition (both these spheres, the image and the icon, belong to the historical Christian-religious paradigm); and (3) the ongoing refugee crisis of our contemporary, postmodern political paradigm.

The first sphere places Versteeg's Madonna within the broader artistic tradition of paintings and sculptures that depict Mary, Mother of God, with the infant Jesus. Typically, he is shown seated on her right arm or lap, his back leaning against her chest. Other variations include the infant and mother facing each other chest to chest in a mutual embrace, or the infant standing on Mary's lap or on another surface, either turned toward his mother or the viewer of the painting. Famous historical examples include the

*Madonna of the Book* by Sandro Botticelli (1480/81), Raphael's *Small Cowper Madonna* (1505) and *Madonna del Granduca* (1505), the *Madonna of Loreto* by Caravaggio (1604), the *Virgin and Child* by Elisabetta Sirani (1663), and the *Virgin of the Lilies* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1899).

The direction in which Mary and her child gaze is an interesting feature of this type of painting. Traditionally, four possibilities exist:

1. Jesus and Mary look at each other.
2. Jesus looks up toward his mother, while her eyes are fixed on the viewer of the scene. This viewer is not only a text-external, real “reader”, but also—and perhaps more significantly—the text-immanent reader of the painting. Usually, the text- or painting-immanent reader/viewer is not depicted within the painting itself. However, when the painting includes a figure who looks directly at the viewer, this immanent reader/viewer becomes an integral part of the communication of the image.
3. Mary looks lovingly at her child, whose eyes are turned to the immanent viewer of the painting. In this case, the same type of communication occurs as in the second scenario.
4. Both mother and child look at the immanent viewer. This makes the “presence” of the viewer within the painting’s communication even more pronounced. Versteeg’s rendering of this artistic tradition exemplifies this specific form.

The second sphere pertains to icons historically celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and, increasingly, in the Western world since at least the second half of the twentieth century. The concept of an “icon” is multifaceted, carrying theological, aesthetic, and philosophical connotations. In the context of this article, I define an icon as an “image that embodies and realizes deified existence aesthetically.” These religious images “bring what they present to a state of temporal realization, as if in showing it they are bringing it into existence and keeping it alive and present in time” (Tsakiridou 2013, 4). Theologically, icons serve as intermediaries between the persons depicted and those who view the painting (Leonid Ouspensky quoted in Fairbairn 2002, 105). From a communication perspective, in the case of icons, the text-immanent author always addresses the text-immanent reader through the person depicted in the icon by portraying them as gazing directly into the immanent reader’s eyes, drawing the reader/viewer into the conversation, so to speak.

The third sphere shifts to our contemporary paradigm, the start of the twenty-first century, within which the couple depicted can be identified as climate, political, and/or economic refugees—if such distinctions can indeed be made—just after being picked up by the coastguard. The thermal blankets that wrap them point to their perilous and vulnerable state. As refugees, they are at the mercy of those into whose hands they have fallen by pure chance.

Given the unfavorable political climate toward refugees in many Western European countries, the gazes of the mother and child in the painting take on a layered significance.

The infant's face conveys a mixture of surrender and inquisitiveness; he is naïve and unaware of the perilous situation they face, unable to grasp the uncertainty of their fate. In contrast, the mother's gaze reflects tension and apprehension, as she comprehends their predicament and anticipates various outcomes: either they will receive a more or less warm welcome, or they will become the targets of harassment, hatred, or even violence. Nevertheless, her gaze remains "penetrating, but also neutral: no fear, no relief, no gratitude" (Borgman 2018).

These three spheres not only reinforce the communication already established by the painting, as identified in our initial analysis, but also generate new insights. Mary and Jesus are depicted, in Versteeg's piece, as refugees rescued from the sea who, through their "iconic" nature, directly address—or even confront—the immanent viewer of the painting. In the traditional Madonna and Child depictions and classic Orthodox icons, the text-immanent readers were almost self-evidently faithful members of the church. By contrast, the context of refugeeship evokes a new immanent reader: those responsible for determining how these two refugees will be treated.

#### THE LOCALES: BIENNALE, BETHEL, STATION OF THE CROSS

Let us now consider the three locations of the painting discussed in this article: (1) the Oosterhout biennale, (2) Bethel Church in The Hague, and (3) Saint Nicholas's Basilica in Amsterdam. The relocation (or recontextualization) of a text from one environment to another does not alter the text-immanent communication between the immanent author and reader (Bosman and Wieringen 2022). For instance, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* may be performed in a church filled with devout worshippers or in a concert hall attended by staunch atheists, yet the lyrics and music remain the same. However, the experiences of the real readers in these two settings will differ significantly due to the distinct locales as well as the varying interpretations that each group brings to the piece.

The first location of Versteeg's Madonna, the biennale in Oosterhout, is an event that likely attracts a diverse audience: tourists, art enthusiasts, local residents, friends of the three organizing monasteries, casual passersby, and others. The combination of an art exhibition (as a genre) with the three churches (as sacred hosting spaces) could appeal to visitors' artistic, religious, or mixed interpretative sensibilities. In this setting, while a political interpretation of Versteeg's piece is not entirely excluded, it is likely secondary to the other frames of reference.

The second location, Bethel Church in The Hague, was once the epicentre of a very heated national debate on asylum seekers in the Netherlands. This context adds a new layer of meaning for the new real readers of Versteeg's Madonna. At this location, the artistic significance of the piece is likely less pronounced as it takes on a more political dimension (unless such a perspective is absent for a particular viewer). Meanwhile, the religious frame of reference, though still present, shifts from a distinctly Roman Catholic to a Protestant one. For the real readers at Bethel Church, the Madonna and Child fully embody the role of refugees.

The final location, the Basilica in Amsterdam, is a Roman Catholic church. Here, Versteeg's Madonna is the first of fourteen Stations of the Cross, an initiative organized by the art platform ArtWay (Ouweneel-Tóth 2019). Scattered across the old city center of Amsterdam, these stations invited people "to pause at and meditate on the actual suffering of people around the world" (Van Dorssen 2019). Real readers of this "first station" are likely to interpret the Madonna through a combination of political, religious, and/or artistic frames of reference.

#### A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE: "WHEN DID WE SEE YOU AS A STRANGER?"

We have, so far, examined the object (painting of a woman and child), its artist's interpretation ("a well-formulated question"), its spheres (Madonna and Child, icon, refugees), its frames of reference (artistic, religious, political), and its locations (Oosterhout, The Hague, Amsterdam). This groundwork positions us to analyze the text-immanent communication of Versteeg's Madonna. We have established three key points:

1. The two figures in the painting represent the Madonna and Child: Mary, the Mother, and Jesus, her child.
2. They are portrayed as refugees, just rescued from the Mediterranean Sea.
3. Both figures gaze directly at the viewer, explicitly engaging the text-immanent reader of the painting.

Based on these insights, we can uncover and analyze the intertextual relationships apparent in Versteeg's painting. Intertextuality occurs when one text "quotes" another (Bosman and Wieringen 2022). More technically, intertextuality arises when the text-immanent reader of an older text (the archè-text) becomes entangled with the text-immanent author of a newer text (the pheno-text). It is up to this immanent reader of the pheno-text to determine the nature of the relationship between the two texts.

From our earlier analysis, we identify at least two intertextual relationships between *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* and another text (or text collection), the New Testament: (1) the Flight into Egypt, and (2) the Judgement of the Nations.

The first intertextual relationship evoked by the painting is the episode commonly known as the "Flight into Egypt," recounted in two related passages in Matthew 2:14 and 2:21, where Joseph and his family flee King Herod's attempt to locate and kill the infant Jesus—a narrative that itself stands in intertextual relationship with Exodus 1:16, where Pharaoh orders the execution of all male firstborns of Israel (Zehnder 2021, 73–74). Warned in a dream, Joseph "got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt" (*New American Standard Bible* 2020). After Herod's death, Joseph has another dream urging him to return: "So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came to the land of Israel." Here, the Holy Family—Joseph, Mary, and Jesus—become refugees in Egypt, fleeing mortal danger and returning only after the tyrant's death (Keener 2009, 109; Eboch 2018, 68).

The second intertextual relationship is the “Judgement of the Nations” in Matthew 25, which itself quotes Isaiah 58 (Voss 2016, 88). In this parable, narrated by Jesus, the “Son of Man comes in His glory” (Matt. 25:31) to judge humanity, symbolized by separating the righteous “sheep” from the unrighteous “goats” (25:32–33). The Son of Man praises the righteous (25:34) for their acts of kindness: providing him with food, drink, and clothing (25:35–36), inviting him in when he was a stranger (25:35), and visiting him when he was sick or in prison (25:36). When the righteous ask the Son of Man when they saw him as a stranger (25:38), he replies: “Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me” (25:40). This passage, along with Tobit 1:16–22, forms the basis for the Christian concept of the seven corporal works of mercy (Bell 2004, 193), the fourth of which pertains to care for the homeless, for strangers, and—central to our analysis of Versteeg’s painting—for refugees (Opongo 2019).

The intertextual relationship with Matthew 2 not only identifies Versteeg’s Madonna and Child as Mary and Jesus but also associates Mary and Jesus with refugees, of whom the New Testament says: To care for them is to care for God Himself. Matthew 25, meanwhile, brings back into focus the text-immanent viewer of the Madonna painting, now identified with those whom the Son of Man exhorts: “I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.” The painting suggests to the immanent reader that caring for a refugee in the present is akin to caring for God.

A third potential biblical intertextual reference emerges, but uniquely in the context of the third location, Saint Nicholas’s Basilica. Versteeg’s painting functioned there as the first of the fourteen Stations of the Cross, titled “Jesus is Condemned to Death.” The Stations of the Cross is a Roman Catholic devotional tradition, primarily inspired by Biblical passages and, to some extent, extracanonical traditions. In this commemorative practice, the Christian faithful undertake a fourteen-step pilgrimage, moving from station to station, each displaying an image that depicts a scene from Jesus’s journey to Mount Calvary on the day of his crucifixion. The first station, the condemnation of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, is based on Matthew 27:26 (cf. Mark 15:15; Luke 23:25; John 19:16): “Then he released Barabbas for them; but after having Jesus flogged, he handed Him over to be crucified.”

While the first station has a clear intertextual relationship with this biblical passage, no such direct relationship exists between the station, or the passage, and Versteeg’s painting. However, the association between the condemnation scene (both at the station and in the biblical passage) and the *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* arises exclusively for the real readers of the painting in Saint Nicholas’s Basilica. At this location alone, visitors may identify Mary and Jesus with the refugees, in the sense that both are condemned by the powers that be—whether a Roman governor from antiquity or European politicians today.

The absence of Pilate from Versteeg’s Madonna does not preclude his symbolic presence, which may be inferred from the two sets of eyes gazing out from the painting at the real reader/viewer in the basilica (though not at the immanent reader). While Mary herself was not directly condemned by Pilate, from the perspective of viewers of the painting in the basilica, it is not difficult to sense that in the condemnation of the son, the mother is likewise targeted, at least on an emotional level.



## THE MADONNA AS CULTURAL PERSISTENCE

As stated earlier in this article, Versteeg's *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* exists at the intersection of traditional religious art and secular contemporary politics. The painting draws extensively from both traditional religious (Christian) sources, such as the New Testament and Madonna-and-Child iconography, and from contemporary political and societal discussions on refugees and climate change. What does this combination reveal about the position of religion in the modern age?

First, while the primary self-identification of Western Europeans in general, and the Dutch in particular, has become predominantly nonreligious, the cultural heritage of Christianity remains strong and tangible (Lee 2013, 587–600; McGrath 2004, 217–256). This persistence is evident not only in Versteeg's Madonna but also in numerous novels, films, television series, and video games, which incorporate—some more explicitly than others—distinct references to religion and Christianity (Lyden and Mazur 2015). These include, but are not limited to, references to scriptural quotations, religious notions and themes, iconography, and historical religious figures. This phenomenon represents what I call the *cultural persistence of the Christian narrative complex* within contemporary society. It is *persistent* because it permeates our culture, even though this culture has abandoned Christianity as a collective, self-explanatory identity. It is a *narrative* because it primarily takes the form of texts and stories communicated through various media. And it is a *complex* because the Christian narrative emerges as a highly intricate and interrelated web of intertextual relationships spanning time and space. Versteeg's painting exemplifies this elaborate web of complex intertextuality.

Second, the meaning of this cultural persistence can be understood from several perspectives. From the standpoint of the theology of culture, this phenomenon may represent a form of the continuous self-revelation of the Christian God within contemporary society (Meisinger et al. 2006; Usselman 2018; Bosman 2019). From a religious studies perspective, it could point to the potent historical cultural dominance of the Christian narrative complex in Western societies—a legacy of over a millennium and a half, during which the Christian religion and Western culture were deeply intertwined (Nitschke 2006, 53–61; Wolkenstein 2022). Versteeg's painting accommodates both interpretations. Theologically, the painting reveals something of the Christian God, while culturally, it also testifies to the enduring entanglement of Western culture with Christianity's historical cultural dominance.

From a communication viewpoint, Christianity's cultural persistence is evident in Versteeg's painting, particularly in the implied author and implied reader. These paradigm builders not only facilitate the text-internal communication between the immanent author and reader but also enable communication between text-external entities (the real author and real reader) and between the text-internal and text-external readers. The paradigm builders guide the immanent reader of the painting to understand its references to both the Christian narrative complex and contemporary European politics. Significantly, the intent of the painting's real author, Versteeg—whether religious, nonreligious, or a mix of both—is irrelevant to identifying the work as an instance of Christianity's

cultural persistence. Likewise, whether a real reader interprets the painting as religious or otherwise does not alter its status as an example of this persistence.

Versteeg's painting underscores the complexity of thinking about religion in a secular, twenty-first-century Western European context, where Christianity—or religion more broadly—continues to influence society and culture despite the decline of institutionalized religion and spirituality. However, the cultural persistence of the Christian narrative complex does not imply that traditional Christian faith has survived intact into the modern era. The reality is far more intricate and layered.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

As previously stated, Versteeg's *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* exists at the intersection of traditional religious art and secular contemporary politics. One need not be religiously affiliated to understand or appreciate its artistic quality or political significance. The painting is a prime example of religiously inspired art that also functions effectively in a secularized context, such as twenty-first-century Netherlands, as evidenced by its success and subsequent exhibitions.

According to Versteeg, a good work of art asks a question. The *Madonna del Mare Nostrum* poses a clear and provocative one: Do you feel that the divine appeal to treat refugees as if they were God Himself is directed at you? In the perception of the immanent reader of the painting, the answer is inescapable; they are compelled to comprehend the immanent author's plea and respond positively. The real readers of Versteeg's work, however, are not obligated in the same way. They may choose to accept the appeal to identify with the immanent reader, reject it and refuse such identification, or ignore the immanent author's plea altogether.

In essence, Versteeg's Madonna is an open question, as perhaps all good art is (in line with Versteeg's own observation). It invites an answer by engaging a particular real reader—whether a visitor at the Oosterhout biennale, the Bethel Church in The Hague, Saint Nicholas's Basilica in Amsterdam, or any other venue where the work appears, including the internet, media, and the like. Whether the question is understood (correctly or not) and answered is up to the individual reader, and them alone. ■

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