

Netherlands, Do Better! - The Impact of 15 years of Black Activism

Exhibition Amsterdam Museum and Nederland Wordt Beter marks the disbandment of the activist group

From 2 November 2025 to 1 February 2026, the Amsterdam Museum and foundation Nederland Wordt Beter present the exhibition *Netherlands, Do Better! - The impact of 15 years of Black activism*. An exhibition that takes visitors through the activist struggle of the movement Nederland Wordt Beter, which has been active over the past fifteen years under the leadership of Jerry Afriyie and Raul Bala. The movement, which aims to create awareness around racism and its impact, is best known for the campaigns *Zwarte Piet is Racisme* and *Kick Out Zwarte Piet*, initiatives advocating for an inclusive Sinterklaas celebration.

The exhibition offers insight into the work of Nederland Wordt Beter and the broader struggle/fight against racism that the movement has fought in recent years alongside other organizations. It serves as a call to the next generation to pick up the baton and continue the struggle/fight. *Netherlands, Do Better!* can be visited free of charge four days a week at the exhibition space Beautiful Distress at the NDSM-wharf in Amsterdam-Noord.

Since 2010, the foundation Nederland Wordt Beter has been striving for a Dutch society without racism and exclusion. From the very beginning, the mission was to commit to 15 years of social engagement and to achieve several concrete results within that period. These results have now been achieved: structural and sustainable education about the colonial and slavery past, an inclusive Sinterklaas celebration without Zwarte Piet (Black Pete), and a national commemoration and celebration of the abolition of Dutch slavery. On 5 December 2025, the foundation Nederland Wordt Beter will therefore disband and hand over the baton to the next generation. This milestone forms the basis of the exhibition and the collaboration with the Amsterdam Museum.

Exhibition

In the exhibition, the Amsterdam Museum and Nederland Wordt Beter look back on 15 years of Black activism in the Netherlands (2010-2025); the fight for equality and against racism and other forms of exclusion. A timeline, combined with personal stories of those involved, shows the history and present of various anti-racism initiatives. Banners, T-shirts and other objects used during actions and demonstrations are on display, as well as photographs and newspaper clippings. There will also be video portraits of the founders and other participants, and artworks by contemporary artists such as Brian Elstak, Eugénie Boon and Pris Roos.



Quincy Gario
Art project *Zwarte Piet is Racisme*, 2011-2012
collection: Amsterdam Museum



Shirt *WAR/NO MORE ZWARTE PIET*, 2024
collection: Amsterdam Museum

The exhibition highlights key social developments that characterize the 15 years in which foundation Nederland Wordt Beter was active: such as the milestones of *Kick Out Zwarte Piet* and *Feest voor alle kinderen*; the founding of political party Bij1, cultural organization *The Black Archives* and broadcaster *Omroep Zwart*; the changing recognition for 1 July in Amsterdam and nationally; the *Black Manifest*; and the *National Day of Empathy*.





Selection of photos Luciano de Boterman
Black Lives Matter protest on Dam Square, 1 June 2020
collection: Amsterdam Museum

The exhibition showcases how a social movement drives change, and how individual actions - ranging from coining the right slogan to political lobbying - contribute to progress. The exhibition also reflects on what the struggle means for those involved: the positive impact of successes achieved, as well as the risks and negative physical and emotional consequences for people who have taken action.

Imara Limon, chief curator of the Amsterdam Museum: *"Over the past 15 years, major developments have taken place in Amsterdam and the Netherlands in the field of Black activism. With this exhibition and the accompanying public programming, we want to stimulate dialogue about this. Not only with those who have already been deeply involved, but also with people who are less familiar with Nederland Wordt Beter and Black activism. We also ask the question: What could activism look like in the future, and who will take part?"*

Alongside the exhibition, a toolkit and educational materials are available to support (emerging) activist groups and foundations on their way to a Netherlands free of racism and exclusion. Jerry Afriyie: *"With this exhibition we pass the baton to a new generation of activists."*



Ellen Brudet
doll Marlon with shirt Black Lives Matter (Colourful Goodies), 2023
collection: Amsterdam Museum

Nederland Wordt Beter

Since 2010, the foundation Nederland Wordt Beter has fought to increase awareness in the Netherlands about the country's slavery and colonial past and anti-Black racism. Demonstrations have been a prominent aspect of the movement, but its work extends far beyond protest. The organization Nederland Wordt Beter pursues three objectives and develops various free teaching packages used in primary and secondary schools nationwide. It also organizes conferences and workshops and engages in ongoing lobbying, such as conversations with municipalities, ministers, and policymakers. Furthermore, they are co-initiators of the widely supported and successful initiative: Black Manifest (March 2021), a list of 12 domains with action points to combat anti-Black racism, and the National Day of Empathy on 3 May; aimed at fostering mutual understanding and creating more space for empathy.

Jerry Afriyie: *"In recent years, much attention has focused on our demonstrations. However, none of the changes would have been possible without careful planning and the many other initiatives and campaigns taking place year-round. With this exhibition, we hope to give visitors a complete picture of how, within 15 years, we were able to bring about changes that few in the Netherlands thought possible. The Amsterdam Museum has shown commitment from the very beginning and we are proud that together with this iconic organization we can conclude this special project with a final exhibition."*

The exhibition *Netherlands, Do Better!* is part of a series of events marking the final phase of the foundation Nederland Wordt Beter. A closing reception will take place on 30 November at Internationaal Theater Amsterdam (ITA), and a farewell celebration will be held on 5 December at the Melkweg. The organization will also launch 'The Historical Calendar' highlighting key figures and events from with important people and events from the Dutch slavery and colonial past. With a teacher's guide, teachers are given tips and guidance to counter racism in the classroom. After the opening of *Netherlands, Do Better!* the exhibition will travel in mobile form to other cities; Rotterdam, Eindhoven, Leeuwarden, and Middelburg.

Amsterdam Museum

The Amsterdam Museum, founded in 1926, invites residents and visitors of Amsterdam as an innovative city museum to become co-owners of the city - a metropolis in miniature. The museum does this by celebrating the city, but also by addressing its less positive aspects. The Amsterdam Museum manages a collection of more than 100,000 objects. The main location of the Amsterdam Museum on Kalverstraat is currently closed for renovation. Until the reopening of the renewed Amsterdam Museum in 2028, the network museum is programming at various locations in the city. Such as for this exhibition in Beautiful Distress in Amsterdam-Noord.

Limon: *"The Amsterdam Museum wants to provide knowledge and insight with its exhibitions and programs and thus create connections and stimulate dialogue, awareness, and mutual understanding. The collaboration with the foundation Nederland Wordt Beter and the exhibition we are creating together fits perfectly into this."*

Netherlands, do better! - The impact of 15 years of Black activism
Sunday 2 November 2025 to Sunday 1 February 2026
Beautiful Distress at the NDSM-wharf in Amsterdam-Noord (Ms. van Riemsdijkweg 41a)

The exhibition is open four days per week:
Thursday, Friday (11:00-18:00) and Saturday, Sunday (12:00-18:00)
With the exception of 25, 26 December 2025 and 1 January 2026

The exhibition is free of charge so that everyone can visit.
Visitors may leave a financial contribution in the exhibition to support the work of Nederland Wordt Beter.

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Not for publication:

Press preview Thursday 30 October from 10.00 - 12.00

RSVP via: lottegelders@coebergh.nl

Not for publication: for more information, free of rights images and interview requests, please contact Coebergh Communicatie & PR, Anne van der Wal, Leidsegracht 38-40, 1016 CM Amsterdam, T +31 20 470 87 87 and E anne@coebergh.nl

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