

# Order & Intuition

Irene Companjen & Theo Rooden

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## **Early work (1897-1907)**

Piet Mondrian is best known for his abstract compositions with black lines and planes in primary colours. But at the beginning of his artistic career, he mainly painted landscapes in dark tones. During this period, the young artist lived in Amsterdam, but regularly biked out of the city towards the river Gein. There he sketched and painted outdoors, capturing the idyllic farm landscape with its water, trees and grasslands, many times. Although Mondrian's early landscapes are still far removed from his later abstract masterpieces, they represent an essential phase in his artistic development, during which he experimented with composition and use of colour.

Piet Mondriaan

### **Farmhouse**

1905

Oil on canvas

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

### **Flip-up bridge in a meadow**

1903

Oil on canvas

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

### **Dredger on the Amstel River near the Omval**

1906-1907

Oil on cardboard

Collection Mondriaanhuis

## **Winterswijk**

Mondrian was eight years old when his father took a job in Winterswijk and the family moved to the village in the Achterhoek region. It was here that the young Piet began to develop his drawing and painting skills.

The drawings of the Lappenbrink shown here were made by Mondrian when he was 27 years old. During this period, the artist was living in Amsterdam, but he regularly spent his summers with his parents in Winterswijk.

Piet Mondriaan

**The Lappenbrink in Winterswijk, view of the Nieuwstraat**

ca. 1899

Black and red Conté pencil on paper

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

**The Lappenbrink in Winterswijk, view of the Meddosestraat**

ca. 1899

Black and red Conté pencil on paper

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

**Shady ditch**

ca 1901-1902

Watercolor

Private collection

## Flowers

In Mondrian's floral still lifes, a single flower usually takes center stage, as in this chrysanthemum. The chrysanthemum is the flower he depicted most frequently. Even during his later abstract period, Mondrian continued to depict flowers on a regular basis. It is generally assumed that he chose this subject because there was a market for it; however, given the high quality of these works, it seems likely that he also took personal pleasure in creating them.

Piet Mondriaan

**Chrysanthemum flower**

1908

Charcoal on paper

Collection Mondriaanhuis

## Painting at river Gein

Between Driemond and Abcoude flows the Gein, a small river about six kilometers long, meandering through an archetypal Dutch landscape of water and meadows, farms and mills. It is the area where Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) could often be found at the beginning of his artistic career. In his Amsterdam period, the artist regularly went out by bicycle to sketch and paint along the river Gein. The landscape constantly inspired the young painter to experiment with colour, light and composition.

Between 1905-1907, the landscape around the Gein was practically the only thing Mondrian painted. He made over a hundred works along the river during that period.

Piet Mondriaan

**Farmhouse along the river Gein flanked by tall trees (oil sketch)**

1906-1907

Oil on canvas

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

**Isolated tree on the river Gein (Oil sketch I)**

1906 – 1907

Oil on canvas

Collection Mondriaanhuis

Piet Mondriaan

**Pollarded willows along a ditch outside Amsterdam**

1905

Watercolor

Collection Mondriaanhuis

**Drawing Simon Maris**

In 1899, Mondrian met Simon Maris (1873–1935) in Amsterdam, a young portrait painter from a distinguished family of artists. A lifelong friendship developed between the two. During this period, Maris hosted so-called *jours* on Saturdays in his studio at the corner of the Spui and the Kalverstraat. At these gatherings, painters, writers, and poets came together to exchange artistic ideas. Mondrian was a frequent participant and, as a result, built up a wide circle of friends and acquaintances.

Mondrian and Maris also regularly went out together to paint en plein air. On one such occasion, Maris portrayed his friend while he was painting along the River Gein.



## **Order & Intuition - Irene Companjen & Theo Rooden**

For Piet Mondrian, principles of order and intuition went hand in hand. In creating his abstract work, the artist adhered to a number of fixed premises: in addition to black, white and grey, he used only primary colours, and he limited himself to strictly horizontal and vertical lines/. Within these constraints, the composition then emerged intuitively. The Rooden (b.1969) and Irene Companjen likewise work according to their own sets of rules, while at the same time leaving room for chance and their inner logic.

### **Theo Rooden**

Theo Rooden explores the relationship between order and chance, between system and intuition. The Rotterdam-based artist has a keen eye for rhythm and structure. Although he always works according to a plan and within strict self-imposed rules, the final outcome remains unpredictable.

Through these self-imposed constraints, Rooden searches for rhythms and patterns that are both systematic and surprising. The possibilities and limitations of the loom, as well as the colours of the available yarns, form a constant source of inspiration. He often works in series in order to investigate the effects of variation. When translating a design into woven work, his rules sometimes need to be stretched. It is precisely in this space between system and deviation that unexpected and intriguing results emerge. Ultimately, his intuition for colour and composition determines the direction and balance of the finished work.

### Theo Rooden

#### **Gridscape 5**

#### **Gridscape 8**

2024

Handwoven damask, mercerised cotton

Courtesy the artist

### Theo Rooden

#### **Shadow of a doubt, serie ba**

#### **Shadow of a doubt, serie bc**

2021

Handwoven double weave, linen singles

Courtesy the artist

### Theo Rooden

#### **Trom Plui 1**

2021

Block weave, linen and wool

Courtesy the artist

Theo Rooden

**Parade 7**

2022

Handwoven damask, mercerised cotton

Courtesy the artist

Theo Rooden

**Parade 4**

2022

Handwoven damask, mercerised cotton

Courtesy the artist

Theo Rooden

**Tiny 75, Mondriaan edition 1a**

2026

Handwoven double weave, mercerised cotton

Courtesy the artist

Theo Rooden

**Tiny 78, Mondriaan edition 3a**

**Tiny 79, Mondriaan edition 3b**

2026

Handwoven double weave, mercerised cotton

Courtesy the artist



## Order & Intuition - Irene Companjen

The Arnhem-based artist Irene Companjen (b. 1954) plays in her work with the boundary between abstraction and reality.

What at first glance appears to be an abstract pattern reveals itself, upon closer inspection, to be composed of concrete forms drawn from the everyday world. Companjen specialises in stamp printing on linen. She designs and makes her own stamps, which she then applies to the canvas by hand or foot.

For the forms in her work, Companjen draws inspiration from real objects. Everyday items such as a pan, a box, or a door are transformed into abstracted shapes and arranged on the canvas in a repetitive rhythm. The choice of object emerges intuitively.

The compositions, executed in sometimes bright and at other times more muted tones, convey a sense of calm and clarity. They invite the viewer to linger: first the pattern appears as a whole, and then—sometimes with the help of the work's title—the recognisable object from which it is constructed gradually comes into view.

Irene Companjen

### **Facade 5**

2021

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

### **Uni 1**

2024

Stamp printing with stencil on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

### **Uni 2**

2025

Stamp printing with stencil on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

### **Dot**

2023

Stamp printing with stencil on canvas  
Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

**Rest**

2019/2023

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

**Pan**

2017

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

**Jug**

2018

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

**PM no. 1**

2025

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist

Irene Companjen

**PM no. 2**

2026

Stamp printing on canvas

Courtesy the artist