



The Birth of the Midnight Sun

Biography of a work of art



This publication accompanies the presentation of the rediscovered and restored film *Sail the Midnight Sun*, directed by Dutch filmmaker Robert Klinkert, which will be presented at the 14th International Symposium of the Pacific Arts Association, *Oceanic Blazing Forms*, held from June 23 to 27 at the Wereldmuseum Leiden.

It tells the remarkable story of a stainless-steel sculpture created by Dutch artist Adriaan Brouwers, and of the events that followed. The sculpture is closely linked, both in content and origin, to the epic poem *Sail the Midnight Sun* by the Papua New Guinean poet John Kasaipwalova.

Brouwers got the inspiration for this sculpture when he met the people of Kiriwina, the island where John Kasaipwalova used to live and where Bronislaw Malinowski conducted most of his groundbreaking field research. Shortly thereafter, Brouwers visited Kasaipwalova in Boroko prison and Kasaipwalova wrote his poem.

The sculpture holds a central place in Brouwers' oeuvre. During his lifetime, he completed thirteen sculptures. Together, they narrate the story of his life, in the sense that each sculpture emerges from the previous one. To fully appreciate this body of work, one must begin with his earliest childhood.

All 13 of Adriaan's sculptures are permanently exhibited at Máxima Medical Centre in Veldhoven and this brochure covers his entire body of work. Neither Brouwers nor his heirs ever intended to sell them; they are meant to remain together, collectively telling a single story.

Brouwers considered these works as models for large-scale sculptures intended for public spaces. Unfortunately, such a project proved too ambitious and costly to realize during his lifetime.

With thanks to:

Pacific Arts Association
Máxima Medical Centre
Wereldmuseum Leiden
Eye Filmmuseum
The Klinkert family
The Brouwers family

THE BIRTH OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN - Biography of a work of art

Gilze



Mother Brouwers with her children.
In front, with his knees pressed together,
Adriaan.

Adriaan Brouwers was born in 1928 in the Brabant village of Gilze as the first son of Johanna van Gestel and Jozephus Brouwers. His father was a fifth-generation brewer, going back to the founding of the family brewery in 1774. The Catholic faith played a significant role in the large Brouwers family, as well as in the entire community of Gilze.

At home, Adriaan experienced little love and, at a very young age, felt misunderstood. He preferred playing behind the house in the sand under the large lime tree, or further back in the garden where no one came, and later in the fields outside the village. Increasingly, he became an outsider in his family. The only one he felt close to, was his older sister Berth who left home early due to conflicts with their parents. Later, his parents forbid him from maintaining contact with her, but he ignored them.

Close by, in the heath, lay a small airstrip where on June 27, 1909, the very first airplane took off in the Netherlands. This airstrip later grew into the country's first airbase. The small propeller planes that landed there, fascinated Adriaan and later the steel military aircraft that brought in supplies during the 1939 World War II mobilization.

Boarding Schools in Huijbergen and Voorhout - Meeting Joke



The Wilhelmita Monastery, where the boarding school of the Brothers of Huijbergen was located, cut off from the outside world.

It soon became evident that Adriaan would not become a brewer. His mother wanted him to become a priest. From age eleven to thirteen, he was sent to a boarding school run by the Brothers of Huijbergen, where boys received general education in a strongly religious environment. The school functioned as preparation for religious life and often formed the first step toward further clerical or ecclesiastical training. It was the regional gateway to priesthood. In addition to education and religion there was an emphasis on sports, music, theatre and craftsmanship, but the children were isolated from the outside world, and the regime was strict. **N1** (See notes on page 34 ff.)

It looks like Adriaan had serious problems during his final month at the school. His report card shows the lowest behavioural rating the school had given one of their students in seventeen years. His mother punished him severely, she had the maid beat him with a carpet beater and said, "Beat him hard, but don't beat him to death."

After boarding school, Adriaan wanted to work with iron and steel. However, his parents refused to let him attend a trade school, considering it a disgrace to the family. But after two years of failed attempts at three elite schools, they found a solution at the Bisschoppelijke Nijverheidsschool {BNS} in Voorhout -an esteemed boarding school run by the *Fathers of the Congregation Our Lady of Seven Sorrows*, far away from Gilze. This is where Adriaan found his mentors. He was able to confide in the Fathers about his troubles, and he was able to learn the craft of shaping metal by hand at the work bench, including some smith work. In his final year, six months before he was to leave the boarding school in Voorhout, he met Joke. She was fifteen years old, and he was eighteen, and they fell in love.



Joke Eggen, 16 years old, a photo that Adriaan took with him to the Indies.

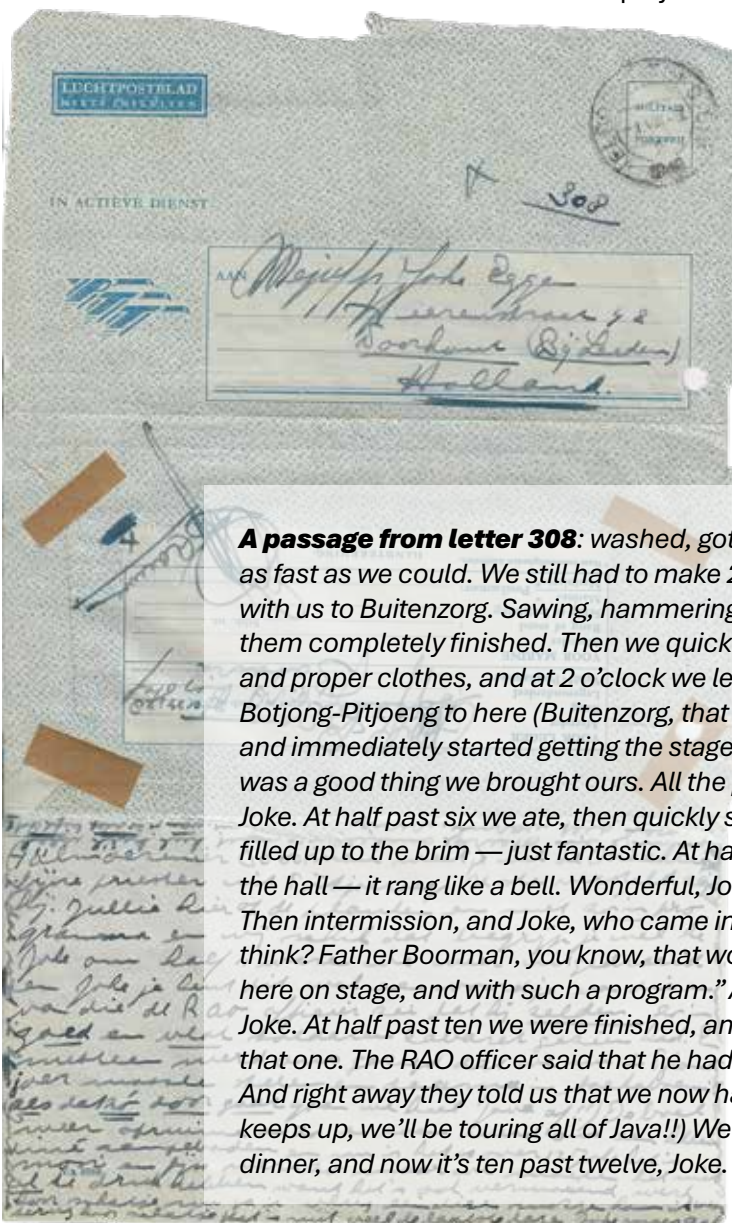
His parents strictly forbade him from having any contact with her until he turned twenty-one. They brought him back to Gilze, where he was required to study for his final exams.

His mother forced him to sign a declaration promising not to contact Joke for three years. Officially, this was due to the age difference and the fact that Joke was still a minor, but the primary reason was class, as she was the daughter of the village constable of Voorhout. Breaking a promise to a parent was considered a serious sin.

Colonial War in Indonesia

In secret, Joke and Adriaan continued to exchange occasional letters and saw each other once briefly. When he was drafted into military service and finally was able to leave his parental home, their contact improved slightly. However, it soon became clear that Adriaan would be deployed to the colonial war in Indonesia. Then, their correspondence intensified. From September 25, 1949, when he set sail from IJmuiden, Adriaan wrote Joke a letter every single day — on average, five pages a day — until he left Indonesia two years later, having written more than 3,000 airmail pages. **N2**

Adriaan played the trumpet, and during training he joined the marching band. On board the ship to the Indies, a band formed and later they morphed into a cabaret troupe in Java. In their second year, they performed across West Java, playing in grand city venues for audiences of over 1,000 as well as for small groups of soldiers stationed at remote outposts. Adriaan took on multiple roles—he played the trumpet and saxophone, recited, sang, applied makeup, designed programs, and, together with another member of the group, managed the set design, lighting, and other technical aspects of the show. **N3**



A passage from letter 308: washed, got dressed and ate, and then, Joke, I worked with Jan Vonk as fast as we could. We still had to make 2 little light boxes for colored lights, and they had to go with us to Buitenzorg. Sawing, hammering and nailing like crazy, and by half past twelve we had them completely finished. Then we quickly ate again, showered, packed our things, put on clean and proper clothes, and at 2 o'clock we left again for Buitenzorg!! Quite a trip again, because from Botjong-Pitjoeng to here (Buitenzorg, that is) is still 83 km. At ten past four we arrived (at the A.M.S.) and immediately started getting the stage ready. There was footlighting, but no colored lighting, so it was a good thing we brought ours. All the props on the stage — you know how this goes now, right, Joke. At half past six we ate, then quickly showered and got dressed to perform, and then the hall filled up to the brim — just fantastic. At half past seven we started the show. And the atmosphere in the hall — it rang like a bell. Wonderful, Joke, and the hall itself was fantastic too. Then intermission, and Joke, who came into the dressing room during the break — yes, who do you think? Father Boorman, you know, that wonderful priest from Tjitjoeroeg. "I'm amazed," he said. "You here on stage, and with such a program." And we were having a great time, you understand, right, Joke. At half past ten we were finished, and Joke, you know what it's like — a word from this one and that one. The RAO officer said that he had rarely seen such a good and smooth soldiers' cabaret. And right away they told us that we now had to perform in Tjiangjoer and then in Soekaboemi (if this keeps up, we'll be touring all of Java!!) We packed everything up again, and then were offered a small dinner, and now it's ten past twelve, Joke.



Adriaan's writing desk in Tjimahi,
28 april 1949.

One of the highlights of the cabaret was Adriaan's recitation of the poem *Het Lied der Achttien Dooden* (The Song of the Eighteen Dead) by Jan Campert. After delivering it for the first time, he wrote to Joke:

"And it really hit home, Joke. At the end, I say: 'I see how the first morning light falls through the high window, and my God! make my dying light, and if I have failed, as any man might fail, grant me Your grace so that I may go as a man when I stand before the rifles.' Oh, my love, the hall was deathly silent—quieter than quiet. I truly heard just how totally still it was when I finished speaking! I remained standing for a moment longer—oh, it was so powerful, Joke. The entire audience, as if hanging from my fingertips. Can you imagine such a thing? Oh, this was such a wonderful experience for me, because it made me truly feel how beautiful and profound it is when you can make the audience, even the roughest of men, feel and experience what you yourself feel.

Can you picture how much this means to me, my Joke? And then, I stepped backward and bowed, and only then was the silence broken—by applause, sweetheart. But even that—truly, Joke, of course, it's nice to receive thunderous applause, but that's not what matters to me. What matters is that I succeeded in making everyone in the audience, without exception, see and feel for a moment what I feel."



Tjimahi, 28 april 1949.

His letters not only provided meticulous daily reports of events—sometimes criminal acts—but also revealed how conscripted soldiers were indoctrinated by dominant discourse and peer pressure, how they became increasingly hardened and unruly, and how Adriaan clung desperately to his love for Joke and his faith in God to resist that descent. As a result, he found himself increasingly isolated, yet his thoughts about Indonesia and its people grew more nuanced. His letters document his personal growth and the deepening of his and Joke's conviction that Adriaan, as an artist, had to and would create things of beauty and purity—as a counterbalance to all the ugliness he witnessed.

A passage from a letter: *"I am the only one who, to this day, has refused a drop of gin. I am the only one who stays home in the evenings. And oh, I could list more, my love, but just imagine what it is like to have to live among such a bunch of uncivilized men (because that is what they have become now, save maybe five) and not just for a day, but for such a long time! Oh, Joke, these past months, I have lived entirely within myself. I no longer involve myself with the other men any more than I must to.*

I don't care about a single one of them. I have my own thoughts about it all—I live as much as possible in my own world, and that's that. I cannot bear the thought that everything God has created so beautifully, so sacredly, so wonderfully, and so purely, could ever be corrupted in any way. Oh, why don't people understand this, my love? I feel sorrowful—why do people refuse to see the beauty and holiness of God? How empty, how shallow, how hollow must the lives of so many people be, Joke? It all saddens me so much. Things could be so different in people's hearts and minds.

Oh, Joke, earlier, I asked why others are all so different from me. I was confused then, but now I am happy—so very happy—and I thank God for making me just the way I am. Oh, Joke, could I really be an artist after all? Oh, if only I knew for certain. Could it be that God created me this way so that I might create, to honour Him and to bring joy to humanity?"



The book Adriaan wrote in 1979 published in 1980 on the occasion of his first retrospective exhibition.

The fact that his love for Joke, his experiences in Indonesia, and his daily letters to her played a crucial role in shaping his future as an artist is confirmed in the book he wrote about his sculptures in 1979; certain passages are almost word-for-word identical to those letters, even though he did not reread them until 1991. **N4**

Training with Master Blacksmith van Donzel – A Home and a Workshop

When Adriaan returned to the Netherlands, he was 22, and Joke was 19. Yet his parents still tried in every possible way to keep them apart. Adriaan had no money, and traveling from Gilze to Voorhout was expensive. He managed to become an apprentice to Tiny van Donzel, a renowned blacksmith in Oss whom he greatly admired. His letters to Joke show that while van Donzel taught him a great deal, he also took advantage of Adriaan's dedication and passion. Van Donzel had a complicated personality, which made things difficult for Adriaan. Though he would later call van Donzel 'the truest friend' he had ever met, he decided to leave him after just one year—without having saved a single penny.

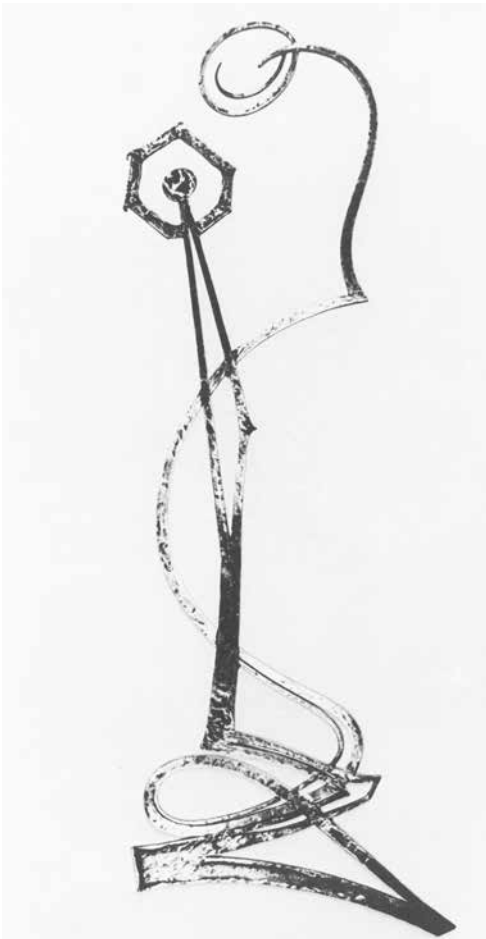
Back in Gilze, the village blacksmith allowed him to use his forge and tools free of charge. There, Adriaan created his first commissioned decorative ironwork, a forged desk lamp, ornamented with the Aesculapius symbol. Everyone admired it, and soon, many more commissions followed. Seeing his success, his family gradually began to appreciate his work. After a year and a half, they allowed him to set up his own forge in an annex of the family brewery, using second-hand and self-made tools and a hearth he built himself. As demand for his work grew, Adriaan found himself receiving more commissions than he could handle. He worked day and night, six days a week, except for once every three weeks when he took the weekend off to see Joke in Voorhout.

Two years later, Adriaan and Joke were able to buy a small piece of land, in Gilze, from a farmer for next to nothing. With financial aid from the Marshall Plan and a bank loan, they built a modest house with a workshop. At the end of 1955, more than five years after his return from Indonesia, they finally married and moved in together.

Vice President of DAF Automobile Factories Martien van Doorne commissioned Adriaan to craft nearly all the wrought ironwork for his new residence in Waalre. This led to a surge in commissions for villas and churches across the province and the country, from Waalre to Bergen op Zoom, and from Amsterdam to Sittard. He also received numerous commissions from the renowned Belgian architect Jan Bols, who believed that no blacksmith in Belgium matched Adriaan's skills. Today, eight of Bols's buildings are officially recognized as Flemish heritage sites. Eventually, Adriaan had to hire two assistants in order to complete all the work.

However, most clients ultimately took advantage of Adriaan's passion for his craft. He poured his heart and soul into every project, often working more than 12 hours a day, yet he struggled to negotiate fair prices. After five years, burdened with debt, he was forced to close his workshop.

To find emotional relief, Adriaan and Joke borrowed money for a vacation to Italy.



First commission as a professional Blacksmith, 1952.



Detail of the front door at Martien van Doorne's residence.

On their way back, not far from home, they were involved in a car accident. The damages were quickly assessed and compensated, and Adriaan repaired the car himself—marking the beginning of his auto body repair business.

Two years later, they were debt-free. Looking back, Adriaan would later write: *'After a year and a half, I had become completely relaxed again, precisely because of this work, and I had acquired a better technique in sheet steel. I also learned to look at shape very closely, because a wrinkled car fender needs to become completely tight and smooth again.'*

Teacher and first free Sculptures

In 1960, Brouwers was invited to teach at a craft school. He seized this opportunity, as it would allow him to pursue independent artistic work as a blacksmith. However, this proved difficult as he and Joke had two children when he took the position, and a third was on the way. Outside of working hours and family affairs, he focused on obtaining the necessary diplomas to officially qualify as a teacher. In 1964, their fourth child, Adriaan Jr., was born. It had been a difficult delivery, and the bleeding afterward would not stop. The gynaecologist warned Joke that she would likely not survive another pregnancy. Faced with this, Adriaan and Joke asked their parish priest for permission to use contraception. He refused, insisting that God forbade it. Adriaan then sought an audience with the progressive Bishop Bekkers, well-known from television for his open views on issues such as family planning. The bishop told him that in circumstances like theirs, the use of contraceptives was permitted. But their parish priest persisted in his prohibition. For Adriaan and Joke—who, like so many in the 1960s, had already begun to question the authority of the Catholic Church—this was the final straw. They decided to break with the Church altogether.

In the meantime, Adriaan's students excelled, creating remarkable pieces, and many admired him. However, tensions arose between Adriaan and other teachers, as well as the school administration. It seemed as if they resented his success with the students. After a year, he moved to another school. This pattern repeated itself five times. At the sixth school, Brouwers had finally earned all his teaching credentials and secured a permanent position. He could no longer be easily fired. He now also had time to create his own work. But even at this school, conflicts persisted. His students were highly motivated, continuing to work after school hours and even during holidays. Meanwhile, opposition from colleagues escalated to the point where they deliberately delayed orders for essential materials for his classes for months.



Metal workpiece by one of Brouwers' students at the Episcopal Industrial School.

First Sculpture – Breaking Out (1967)



At this last school, he met Fieke, who fully supported him and encouraged him to persevere. A platonic love developed between them. Over time, Adriaan, with Joke's support, wished to deepen this bond into something physical, but Fieke resisted—because he was married. He struggled deeply with this. During this period, Adriaan had a vision in which he saw his first large sculpture—over ten meters high. He felt a strong urge to break free, to push past the constraints of rational safety standards and seek new artistic space, being present and working in an unlimited space. Sitting on the side of a sandy trail, he traced its outline in the sand. Since he couldn't create it at full scale immediately, he decided to sculpt a model. This "Peak" was made of steel, the same material he worked with at the vocational school.

When the director of the factory where Adriaan purchased his steel saw the sculpture, he said, "Go ahead and make it—I'll make sure you'll have all the materials and support you need." Initially, Adriaan accepted the offer, but upon returning home, he and Joke realized that the sculpture would become a mere status symbol for the factory. He called the director and declined. A friend pointed Adriaan to the book *Call and Calling* by professor P.J. Bouman, who argued that society exists in the tension between personal ambition (the call) and social responsibility (the calling). **N 5**

He believed that individuals should align their personal growth with the needs of the community, striving for a harmonious balance where personal ideals serve collective well-being. Adriaan travelled to Groningen to meet Bouman and brought his sculpture with him. Bouman convinced him not to spend all his energy enlarging the piece, since he was just starting to work as an artist. Instead, he encouraged him: "Make a second one. And then another. And another."

Quote from a visitor's letter:

Your sculptures have moved me, stirred me, confirmed what lives within me and will give me the strength to break through to my surroundings, feeling as I am.



Second Sculpture – All That Exists Is Unique (1968)



Meanwhile, the tensions at school escalated. At the same time, Brouwers struggled to create a second sculpture as he had no idea what it should be. Until, one day, lying in the grass, he stretched his arms upward as if asking for guidance. At that moment he felt his second sculpture. Feeling as small as the blade of grass beside him, in this moment he experiences that they are both unique but born from the same primordial source. As if the blade of grass said to him, “You can become me, you can Be—if only you are open and willing to listen.”

This second sculpture was made in stainless steel. Later Brouwers would write about this sculpture:

“Receiving to become and thus being able to give.”

“Trembling and moving, touching and feeling, the willingness to listen and to be open to let flow-in and experience.”

“In each man the spark of the absolute universal being is present.”



NRC Handelsblad (a leading national quality newspaper):

Smoothly and gracefully, spheres transition into three-dimensional ovals, flower-like figures unfold on stems, and the tentacles of a giant magnified microorganism fan out into the air. You can experience these sculptures as beautiful dream shapes that breathe the harmony of a better world. It would indeed be an experience if such a sculpture, at the size Brouwers intended, stood out against the sky.

Third Sculpture – Enduring Harsh Reality (1970)



After completing the second sculpture, Brouwers was visited by several younger people who had heard about his work. They were deeply moved by it and began visiting Adriaan and Joke regularly during the following months and years. It was the late 1960s—a time of intense discussions about global issues. At school, his colleagues didn't appreciate that he was making movies with the students outside of school hours about topics such as "Where are we Going – Chaos or Community?" and "Future!". The last film includes images of Gandhi, John F. Kennedy and bishop Bekkers and ends with a shot of Adriaan's second sculpture silhouetted against the sky. During this period Brouwers envisioned his third sculpture. Later he would write about it:

"Everything is in movement, completely adrift and there is always the hazard of being overwhelmed. The immense reality of losing yourself or finding yourself. To be destroyed as an individual or to conquer. To stay in balance or complete chaos. To have clarity or total confusion. Struggling on toward a renewed Order or to get lost in destruction"

As the sculpture neared completion, Adriaan struggled with how to shape its top. Meanwhile, the pressures at school became unbearable—he suffered severe migraines and eventually lost function in one arm. By June 1971, he could no longer teach and was forced to stay home.

Floor Haak (secretary of the Scientific Council for Government Policy <WRR, 1976–1994>, recognized freethinker in government, columnist for the Financial Daily)

Most of the sculptures made a great impression; one I found fantastic. In my view, it symbolizes the struggle of the abstract against the concrete, of the natural against the artificial, of the ideal against the material, of the heavenly against the earthly, of the mystical against the comprehensible, of the spiritual against the common, of the feminine against the masculine, or whatever you want to call it.





Kunstbeeld (leading Dutch magazine for visual art from 1975 to 2015)

Yet, the decisive element remains the sculptural strength of his works, animating the space in every direction, fascinating and different when viewed from all sides. Sculptures to live with and to touch. Sculptures in which modern human beings will recognize themselves, even if they cannot put it into words. Sculptures that our contemporary living spaces so painfully need.

Quote from a visitor's letter

A stem lifts itself heavily upward. Groping, shivering along the flat edge, sinks, swings, tightens into a new arch and delicately bores through the wall.





Fourth Sculpture – A Growth Within Ourselves (1972)

As the tension subsided and Adriaan regained feeling in his arm, the vision for his fourth sculpture suddenly came to him—along with the design solution for the top of the third sculpture. In contrast to the bottom part of his third sculpture; a mechanical, masculine world of doing and fighting, a feminine world of happening emerged. Later Brouwers would write about it:

“As opposed to extreme forms of willed actions, I became aware of the pure forms of organic growth. Acting and occurring are one great organism. There are moments of organic growth that motivate action. And only when the act or the initiative is of service, will a new good thing come about and take place.”

During the year that Brouwers was working on this sculpture the school administration attempted to have him declared unfit for teaching. He was assessed by psychiatrist Professor Paanacker, who concluded in his report that, while Adriaan was certainly capable of teaching, his extreme sensitivity would likely lead to conflicts within a teaching team. Based on this report, two company doctors visited him. Seeing him at work on his fourth sculpture, they convinced him that retiring early would be the best course of action, allowing him to devote himself entirely to his art.

Exhibition visitor

Let go, let go, let go.

Die and be reborn.

From “doing” to letting happen and experiencing.

Time and again, I encountered these words on my journey.

I find your sculptures very special, Adriaan. They moved me.

Aniela Jaffé (close associate of Carl Jung, co-author with him of his autobiography *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*; author of the chapter on art in *Man and His Symbols*), after she had seen Brouwers’ third and fourth sculptures:

I was very pleased that you and your friend came to see me and showed me your two sculptures, both of which I found very impressive.

Both figures convey an impression of great artistic honesty and therefore made a positive impression on me as a viewer: they have meaning (content) and they are beautiful (form).





Hoogovens Group (one of Europe's leading steel companies)

These shiny stainless-steel statues have graceful shapes and are reminiscent of plants, water droplets, or the human body. His working method and technical craftsmanship are unique in the Netherlands, if not in Europe.

**Art Committee of the Netherlands
Middle-Class Bank (NMB)**

The exceptional craftsmanship that forms the foundation of this difficult work and its mastery can rightly be considered unique.

**De Waarheid (Dutch national
Communist Daily)**

*What is truly astonishing is the craftsmanship involved.
The smoothness of the form and the way it reflects light evoke associations with water. You can imagine someone creating something like this out of glass or plastic, but this is steel!
Rock-hard stainless steel!
These are sculptures to enter, to touch, and possibly to take shelter in.*

While the third sculpture demonstrated extraordinary craftsmanship, evidencing tens of thousands of hours of dedicated work with iron and steel, the fourth sculpture marked a technical milestone, demanding ever more from himself, this is a fluid work, with few flat surfaces. It is hard to imagine that the fourth sculpture is constructed entirely from welded pieces of steel. Technique and emotion merge seamlessly. This is exemplified by the 'fissures' (growing pains) seen in the detail on the picture left.

Conceiving this form and then realizing it by welding together small strips of stainless steel, grinding and polishing, is technically nearly impossible—especially in the 1970s with the tools and resources available at the time. Given this arduous process, and unforgiving materials, it's hard to imagine the intuitive process—as the form of the sculpture—must be imagined from the very beginning. **N6**

Adriaan articulates the explanation for how this was possible in a text he wrote in 1979, which in his book is placed—perhaps not coincidentally—between two detailed photographs of this fourth sculpture:

"After a long period of doubt and searching, during which my sense of self becomes increasingly uncertain and smaller until it essentially no longer exists, I am suddenly overwhelmed by an absolute answer—an absolute feeling of belonging to, being part of, and connected with everything around me. This overwhelms and moves me so profoundly that even the smallest fragment of my 'self' ceases to exist because I have become everything else. It is an absolute moment of 'Being.' It is a moment of absolute floating within the 'All.' In that moment, thinking no longer exists. Thinking only returns much later, when the all-encompassing emotion becomes calmer and more settled. It is an absolute experience, and only much later does my intellect gradually gain enough insight to process that 'Being' moment—until, after months, it becomes a deeply internalized, clear, and unquestionable certainty in my life.

In the 'Being' moment, I have become more human. In that unexpected moment, a sculpture comes to me—without me doing anything to summon it—and it happens in such a way that I, myself, am the sculpture. Every fibre of my body vibrates and radiates with the form and expression of it. Sometimes, it takes a year before I can bring this inner sculpture to life in steel. It always takes a long time because externalizing the sculpture is an ongoing and arduous struggle between the 'I' and 'Being.' Only 'Being' is of service. Only 'Being' can create."



Prof. Aldo van Eyck (architect, extraordinary professor at TU Delft, one of the founding figures of structuralism in Dutch architecture):

The sculptures are thoroughly worked and have great intensity. Now it's just a matter of finding a place and placing one there!

Prof. Dr. Freiherr von Weizsäcker (founding director Max Planck Institute):

The works are impressive.

Fritjof Capra (author of *The Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point*, co-founder of the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley):

I have been very touched by the beauty in your work.

The way Brouwers describes how he is overwhelmed by a sculpture closely corresponds to what Friedrich Nietzsche wrote in *Ecce Homo* about how he was overtaken by Zarathustra (years later, in 1984, Brouwers would read a Dutch translation of *Also sprach Zarathustra*, but he never read *Ecce Homo*): “... that suddenly, with an inexpressible certainty and finesse, something becomes visible, audible—something that strikes you in your innermost being and unsettles you—summarizes the actual occurrence briefly and succinctly. You hear, you do not seek; you receive, you do not ask from whom the gift comes: like a lightning bolt, a thought flashes forth, unavoidably, immediately cast into its proper form—never have I had the freedom to choose . . . a partial state of being outside oneself, accompanied by an utterly clear awareness of a multitude of subtle shivers and tremors down to the tips of your toes . . . an instinctive sense of rhythmic proportions spanning vast formal spaces.

The involuntariness of the image is the most remarkable; you no longer have an idea of what image is, what resemblance — everything that arises within you presents itself as the most direct, the most correct, the most simple way of expressing itself. Here, before you, the words and word-shrines of all being burst open — all being longs to become word here, all becoming wishes to learn to speak through you.”

In both Brouwers’ and Nietzsche’s descriptions, the creative breakthrough is described as neither intellectual nor purely emotional, nor as an act of intention, but as something entirely physical—almost incarnational. It is conveyed as a bodily revelation: a moment of human disappearance in which the body is no longer merely a vehicle, but a temple through which the All briefly resounds. Such experiences are rare and striking: moments in which a work of art is said to come into being through complete bodily incarnation, as the self temporarily recedes and the artwork arises spontaneously. Yet they are not without precedent. Comparable phenomena have been described by, among others, William Blake, Jackson Pollock, John Kasaipwalova, and several Surrealist artists, all of whom recount moments of spontaneous, physically felt inspiration. What distinguishes the descriptions given by Brouwers and Nietzsche is the claim that the artwork exists before it is externalized. In Brouwers’ case, the subsequent materialization of this pre-existing form in stainless steel renders the experience uniquely compelling. **N7**

Adriaan had done what Bouman had advised. Now, once again, he seeks to bring his work to the attention of the outside world. The, at that time, famous Dutch artist Wessel Couzijn took an astonished step back when Brouwers opened the doors of his van, revealing the third and fourth sculptures. He promised to contact Adriaan soon. However, Adriaan never heard from him again.

Shinkichi Tajiri was so enthusiastic that he told Adriaan he would withdraw two of his own works from an exhibition in Helsinki to replace them with Adriaan’s sculptures, bringing them to the attention of a large audience. Once again, Adriaan never heard anything further. He endured many other disappointments within the established art world.



Ronald Alley (The first 'Keeper of the Modern Collection' at the Tate Gallery, London, from 1965 until his retirement in 1986.

It was a great pleasure to meet you, and I very much enjoyed seeing your sculptures.

I liked them even more than I did in the photographs and find them very individual, and rich and complex in meanings, as well as beautifully made.

The sculptures seem to have a real sense of scale, and the forms are so taut and precise, so highly charged and carefully worked out, that I feel confident that they would enlarge without any loss of tension.

The effect of seeing certain of them really big, so that one could not only walk around them but underneath some of the forms, would be quite extraordinary and dramatic.

Then, Adriaan met sculptor Ole Langerhorst, who introduced him to Carl Gustav Jung's book *Man and His Symbols*, specifically the chapter *The Symbolism in Visual Arts*, by Jung's closest collaborator and biographer Aniella Jaffé. **N8**

Adriaan travelled with Ole and his two most recent sculptures, to Zürich to meet her. She found the work beautiful and meaningful, as she later wrote to him, but asked why he had come all the way from the Netherlands to see her. He told her that he hoped she could help bring his sculptures to the public in the large scale he envisioned. She replied that she could—but that she would not—because he was far from finished. Her message echoed that of prof. Bouman's five years earlier: Follow your path, keep making sculptures, and one day they will rise above the trees. Shortly afterward, she sent Adriaan a letter in which she confirms this once again: "*Excuse me for expressing my thoughts after the fact. I otherwise do not do this, and I have no time at all for correspondence. And so, I close my writing with heartfelt wishes for patience and for all strength for the continuation of the works entrusted to you.*"





Fifth Sculpture – Being Part of a Sacred World (1973)

Disappointed but deeply aware of the truth of Jaffé’s advice, Brouwers returned home. He felt the need to ground himself, but he had no idea how to create his next sculpture. Then, one day, while cycling home, he noticed a tree trunk which served as a pasture fence post. He stopped and sensed that this tree—this tree remnant—had experienced far more than he ever had. The next day, the farmer allowed him to dig up the tree trunk, provided he would replace it with a new post.

In his workshop, Adriaan began by copying the pasture post in iron, creating a model. But when he started working in steel, he reached an impasse. On impulse, he grabbed an angle grinder to cut a hole in the model—if the essence wasn’t on the outside, perhaps it lay within. It was then that the fifth sculpture revealed itself to him. In his own words:

“A sculpture of being connected with, of being part of a conscious, universal, and indestructible sacred world.” And: “True growth is ‘to change and not to change.’ Just look at nature. Every organism, every blade of grass, every plant changes at every moment! This is only possible because they have roots. To grow is to create new forms from the foundation.”

Right: fence post; left: iron model (top left, cuts for the hole); centre: initial steel stage, which Brouwers could not continue.





Sixth Sculpture – The Earth is my Altar (1974)

While bringing the fifth sculpture into existence Brouwers experienced that the essence of things was not something sacred or mystical outside of people—it was within and between people and everything else.

Laying on his back at the edge of a field, he felt deeply connected to the earth and all that surrounded him, and he felt completely happy, like the child he once was beneath the lime tree. He thought, as he later recalls: “Let the tractor come now,” and at that moment, he was the sixth sculpture. He later wrote:

“When we approach the deepest reality of things, we are pervaded with a mysterious silence”



“In Love, sexuality is a universal power. In Love, the body is the “telling” of the giving Being.

“Every place, which I experience as holy becomes my “Altar”.

“The primeval source where everything comes together and finds each other back. From which everything happens, from which everyone can say “Yes”.

The heart of the sixth sculpture may be seen as a moment of conception, from which the subsequent seventh small sculpture emerges. When Adriaan completely trusted people, he would sometimes say that the inner structure of the sculpture was a coitus.



Exhibition visitor:

In my latest composition, a work for choir, soloists, orchestra, and ballet, a central question stood out:

Quare fremuerunt gentes?

Why are the nations in motion?

Are they searching, time and again?

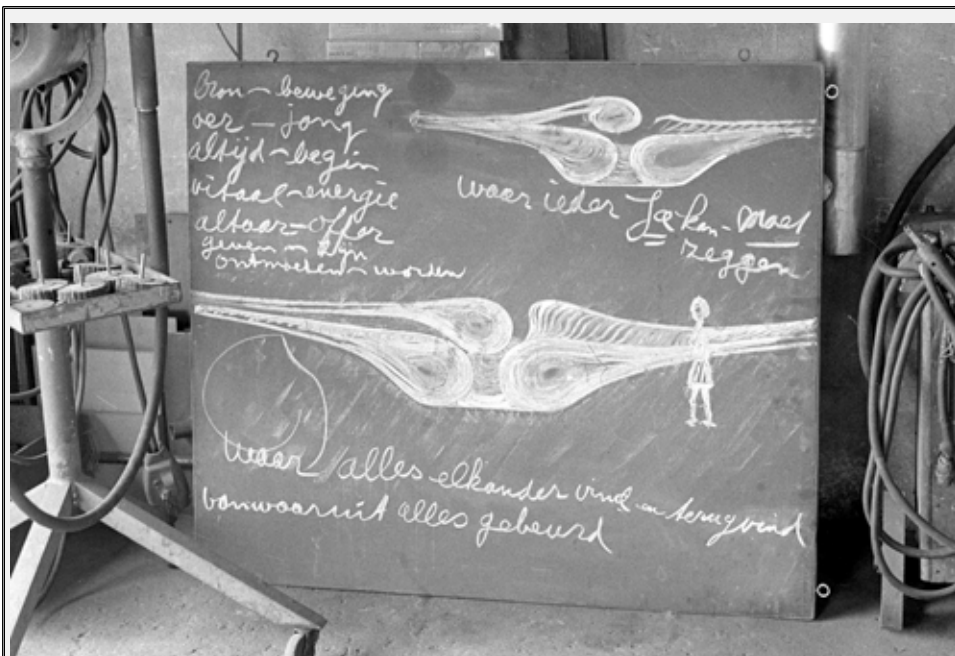
What are they seeking?

They might find it in your work.

Brouwers: *“Growing is: Building a new world on old foundations”.*

“The struggle between wondering and reasoning escapes explication. But wondering is the source, the beginning of the willingness to listen, willingness to experience in order to acquire knowledge.”

“We are on the threshold of an entirely new culture and religion. New culture and religion means to me: new forms, broader and more complex structures and more awareness of universal, unchanging values. This means that we do not dispose of the universal values we gained as being useless and outdated and no longer inspiring. Of course not, because then we chop off our roots which are meant to give us nutrition to grow on to that new culture.”



When Brouwers began a sculpture, he first constructed a frame onto which he could weld steel strips. As a reference for the measurements, he usually started with a rough sketch. For the sixth sculpture, he made this sketch in chalk on an old classroom blackboard.

Alongside it, he wrote several key words and sentences reflecting on the meaning of the sculpture. He also drew a woman next to it, relating her figure to the sculpture's proportions as he experienced them in space.

The text reads: source – movement; primordial-young; eternal-beginning; vital-energy; altar-sacrifice; giving – being; encountering – becoming. Where everyone can – must say Yes. Where everything finds and rediscovers the other. From where everything happens.



Where we come from, who we are.



Where we are going.

Seventh and Eight Sculptures – Returning to the Essence (1977)



From an irrational and intuitive fundamental feeling, Brouwers began to work on the seventh sculpture—this time, it did not come to him fully envisioned like the others did. As the small sculpture (the smallest of all sculptures which must never be enlarged) took its final shape, the eighth sculpture emerges from it. Within the family it was referred to as ‘The Inward-Looking Sculpture’.

Brouwers later reflected: *“Without realizing it at first, I had begun an inner journey—an ever-deepening desire to return, a relentless search for the essence of my humanity. All of this took place within me as a Western person, immersed in a Western culture. A culture so terrifyingly one-sided and rational, both then and now, that most people around me avoided me because of it.”*

“Nothing is more important than truth. Nothing is harder than truth.”

“In love we experience truth. That is why Love is so absolute and hard. That is why Love is so inspiring.”

“A relation all within my “Self”. One part encounters the other part within me. My ego encounters my “Self”.

“In his greatest crisis, man is most receptive. The relation is the mutual recognition and makes everything alive.”



Regional daily De Stem (The Voice)

That his stainless-steel sculptures particularly appeal to so many young people is undoubtedly because the symbolic meaning of his sculptures represents the most elemental sense of life in a person.

From a school essay

Then there is the smallest sculpture, the complete balance between male and female, the essential, the primal force, the self-evident. It contains a very strong force, the life force, the seed.



Ninth Sculpture – The Birth of the Midnight Sun (1980)



As Adriaan and Joke witnessed the enthusiastic and emotional reactions of people, they increasingly longed for the sculptures to stand among the public. Moreover, their home and workshop were becoming too small for the expanding collection. Using Adriaan's part of the inheritance from his parents, they began constructing a large 'meeting space' for the sculptures, with help from friends and their children. Once completed, they regularly welcomed visitors, including entire school classes.

Despite his efforts, Adriaan failed to connect with the established art world. But when he watched Nigel Calder's 1976 BBC documentary *The Human Conspiracy* on TV — featuring footage of the Trobriand Islands and poet John Kasaipwalova and the story of his Sopi Arts School and the Kula voyages — he became convinced that the Trobriand people would completely understand his sculptures. He and Joke started learning English to study writings about these people and their culture. **N9** His dedication took him to England to meet Nigel Calder. Calder, in turn, arranged for Adriaan and Joke to journey across the world to explore the Trobrianders' world firsthand and to meet John Kasaipwalova.



Poet and playwright John Kasaipwalova (1949–2023 / picture 2022) was born on Kiriwina, A Trobriand Island in the Australian colony of Papua New Guinea. As a charismatic student leader advocating for indigenous rights and identity, he played a key role in his country's independence movement in the 1960s and '70s. Beside other things he was instrumental in the founding of the Pangu Pati, since independence the largest party in the parliament and government of Papua New Guinea. His writings were infused with a drive for cultural revival. The Australian government sought to limit his influence, at one point imprisoning him under false pretences. To this day, Kasaipwalova is regarded as one of the most important writers of Papua New Guinea — according to some, even of the entire Pacific. **N10**

In 1972, after returning to his home on Kiriwina in the Trobriand Islands, Kasaipwalova began to revitalise the Kabisawali Movement, a Self-help Movement on Cultural Life in the Trobriand Islands, a 1968 initiative of his uncle Chief Nalubatau, deeply rooted in local culture. Drawing inspiration from long-standing practices such as the Kula exchange and ceremonial festivals, Kasaipwalova sought to breathe new life into the social structures, giving them a renewed political and cultural purpose. Under his leadership, the Kabisawali Movement grew into a dynamic force—one that blended tradition with modern ideas and encouraged community organisation, cultural pride, with a measure of local self-determination actually being achieved. **N11**

After Papua New Guinea gained its independence on September 16, 1975, the country struggled with the transition to self-governance and the formation of a new political system. Kasaipwalova became a vocal critic of the new government, particularly on social and cultural issues. He continued to fight for indigenous rights and the preservation of their culture and land. In 1977 he was again arrested, partly under false charges and sentenced to two years in prison. While in prison, he wrote his poem **Sail the Midnight Sun**. The work has since become the subject in several studies, including and most notably an extensive analysis by Prof. Gunter Senft of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, who did field research on the Trobriand Islands between 1982 and 2012, researching the interface of language, culture and cognition in the Trobriand Islands. The poem appears in full in his book *Imdeduya: Variants of a Myth of Love and Hate from the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea*. **N12** Senft and others regard *Sail the Midnight Sun* as Kasaipwalova's masterpiece.

The preparations took a great deal of time. By the time Adriaan and Joke were ready to leave for Papua New Guinea, they received word that John Kasaipwalova had been sentenced to two years in prison, but they decided to proceed with their trip, nonetheless.



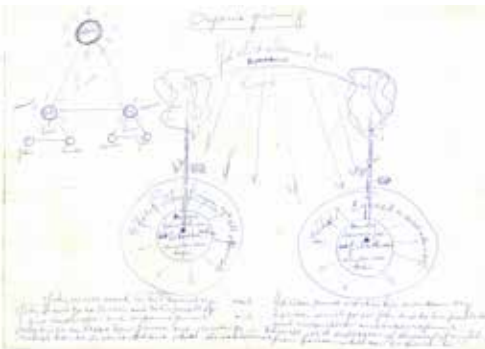
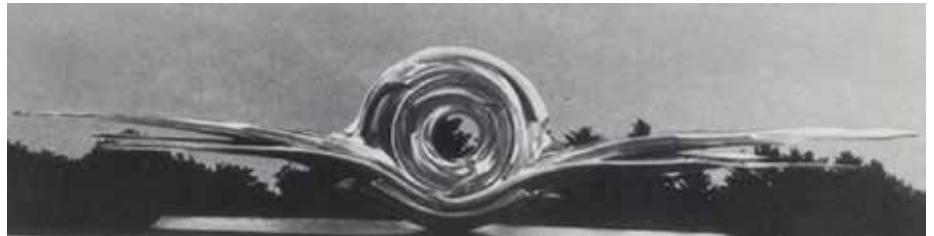
Meyakasa, Adriaan en Joke

Upon arriving in Papua New Guinea, it turned out that it was not possible to meet John Kasaipwalova on short notice. His wife Linda took Adriaan and Joke to Kasaipwalova's island Kiriwina. There, they spent two weeks immersing themselves in the local culture, sharing photographs of the sculptures and spending time with Linda, sculptor Meyakasa and other Trobrianders.

During their stay, the locals called Brouwers a Sopi—a term used for the most magical of artists, those who do not create from imagination but from Being, from humanity's nearly limitless ability to keep growing in connection with nature and fellow humans, because everything is interconnected.

Together with Kasaipwalova's wife and children, Adriaan and Joke journeyed through the jungle, eventually arriving at a secluded bay. Bathing in the clear waters of the Solomon Sea, overwhelmed by the impressions and emotions of the past days, Adriaan began to weep.

Then, his ninth sculpture came to him. In his words: *"I became the sculpture."*



Drawing for Kasaipwalova

A few days later, Brouwers visited John Kasaipwalova in prison on the mainland. And he shared the photographs of his sculptures. Afterwards, Adriaan discussed with Linda how he and John could cooperate, and Adriaan made a drawing to illustrate this plan. On the day that Joke and Adriaan were leaving Papua New Guinea, Linda told them that John—who hadn't written for a while—had started composing a poem. She had the first fragment with her and read it aloud.

The final version of the poem, titled *Sail the Midnight Sun*, begins with the union of two cosmic entities: Bwalai (representing the ocean) and Libra (Kasaipwalova's own zodiac sign, symbolizing the starry sky). From their passionate love, the Midnight Sun is born, the protagonist, a being born from the elemental forces of ocean and stars. The opening stanzas read:

Bwalai refers to protective spirit figures, often carved on Kula trade canoe splashboards (lagim), used by the Massim people of Papua New Guinea for safe sea journeys; they could summon giant fish to rescue capsized canoes or, if angered, become monstrous sea creatures, embodying spiritual power in their complex exchange system.

*I am the midnight sun
 My soul conceived to body
 The love embrace of that night
 When my Bwalai turned monster of the depths
 Trembling for blood revenge on mankind
 But instead summoned with burning desires
 My naked Libra in her virgin love
 Extasying the tender patience of the stars
 The waters raged like earthquake mountains
 To couch the love bed of my parent blood*



*While the heavens throughout smoked their blackness
 To weave a marriage curtain of lovers' secrets
 As my Libra plunges into the ocean
 Into the trashing arms of my Bwalai erect with eagerness
 For her open flesh craved of untold hunger
 Of nights and days that never meet as one
 On that loving night my ocean depths flashed
 In unison with the openness of my heavens
 To join night with day as one lover's body soul
 And through the crescent peaks they whispered my name
 The midnight sun*



The Midnight Sun then embarks on a long and adventurous journey across seven of the Trobriand islands, in search of his destiny, in the form of a foretold absolute love, the Woman of the Moon. The journey ends at the beach where Brouwers became overwhelmed by the vision of his sculpture. The final stanzas read:

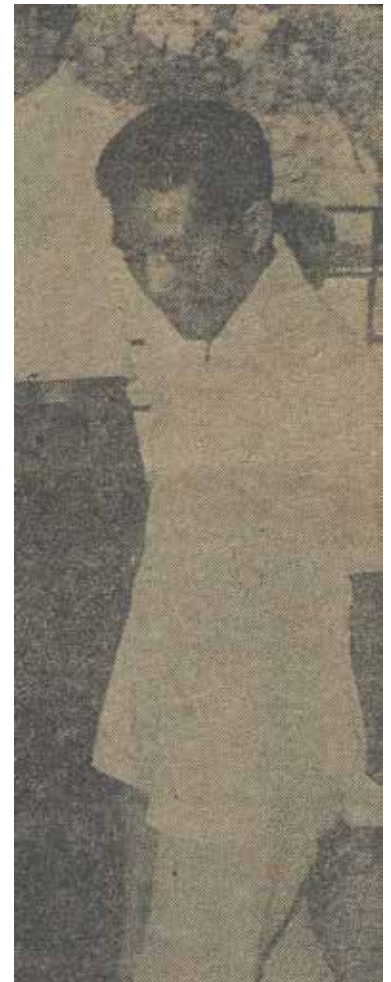
*The shifting sands of Yakaba cliffs
 Where the midnight sun embraced his lover afresh
 To dance the firmness of his feet
 To end the many years on ocean waves
 Then hand in hand their hearts as one
 They rested first at Yoyu caves
 To melt away the journey's stiffness
 Till they came to Bweka waters cool and sparkling
 To wash away forever their salty tears
 And there in love embrace they bore
 A yelu dream where dark ocean currents cry*



*Today the rock of the midnight sun sleeps at rest
 With thousand secrets buried deep inside
 Whose back has carved many an ocean steer
 The silent passage through Yakeba beach
 Yoyu shall gape open and mossed with age
 The shelter for warming fires
 While Bweka waters is haunted filled
 With the dream of the midnight sun*



*Yes a dream
 A restless flowing dream
 Whose Sopi was seeded
 Where dark ocean currents cry
 Whose waters I have drunk
 To love you today
 With the longings for the tomorrow
 Sunshine and flowers
 The flow of the mountain spring*



John Kasaipwalova released immediately after appeal, shortly after writing his poem.



Above and on the left page, details of wood carvings depicting the poem.

The poem is rich with Trobriand symbolism, passed down through generations. It connects the dreams and desires of the present with the hope for a radiant future. Sopi literally means “water,” a stream of inspiration in which a work is born, and Kasaipwalova named the art school he founded after it. The story expresses the challenges Papua New Guinea faced during its transition to independence.

The Midnight Suns’ search for his absolute love, the *Woman of the Moon*, symbolizes progress and new possibilities, while his connection to oracles and myths emphasizes the importance of tradition. The *Midnight Sun* thus represents a future where tradition and renewal are in balance.

Shortly after returning to the Netherlands, Joke paints the large canvas: ‘*Growth and Fertilization*’.

Although she never spoke about it in this way, one can see the sea, the beach and the sculpture that ‘overwhelms’ Brouwers, and at the same time the birth of the Midnight Sun — as Kasaipwalova wrote, ‘*the soul conceived to body*,’ and in Brouwers words, ‘*The body is the expression of Being*’. Behind the sea lies the firmament: on the left, day; on the right, night. In this night is the cosmic connection between the celestial bodies and the ocean — *the love embrace of that night* from which the Midnight Sun is born.



Brouwers quickly completes the 7th and 8th sculptures and then begins the process of bringing to life, in steel, the sculpture that overwhelmed him in the bay of Kiriwina. He works on it continuously for two years, almost every single day, seven days a week, mostly for at least ten hours a day.



As the sculpture nears completion, Adriaan writes about it: “*I cannot show it to you yet, but it will be a magnificent, radiant, and luminous sculpture. Through my encounter with the Trobrianders on Kiriwina, I have come to feel that we, Western people, stand in the frontline of evolution. But it is precisely this almost unbearable, relentless fire that can and will give us the inspiration to survive.*”

Jozef van Ruyssevelt (teacher of the etching class at the Antwerp Academy; almost his entire graphic oeuvre is included in the collection of the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam):

The ninth sculpture will be a sculpture of conscious Being and the spirit that carries this Earth. I will do my best to give back what I have received. I hope that this new sculpture will contribute to the longing of all people to find one another. That the dormant urge for open and free humanity will awaken more and more, and that we will see perspective and be able to believe in a renewed world in which we can move forward together. Together — Living.”

Your latest sculpture is magnificent. To me it is a blossoming form, a flower — life itself.”



At the same time, in Papua New Guinea, the Raun Raun Theatre Group was creating a folk opera based on John Kasaipwalova's poem. For the set, they used fourteen carved panels depicting the story of the Midnight Sun, created at an earlier time, on the suggestion of John Kasaipwalova, by artists from his former Sopi Arts School.



While Brouwers was completely unaware of this, one panel, *Looking for Imdeduya*, made by Sopi master carver Yobwita, appeared to be almost a direct symbolic translation of Brouwers' sixth sculpture, which he had shown in photographs on Kiriwina. **N13** Both the sculpture and the panel portray a journey (transition) from an archaic world to a new one. The journey of *The Midnight Sun* at the back of the swordfish unfolds through a shape that evokes associations with a womb, echoed in the heart in Brouwers' fourth and sixth sculpture.



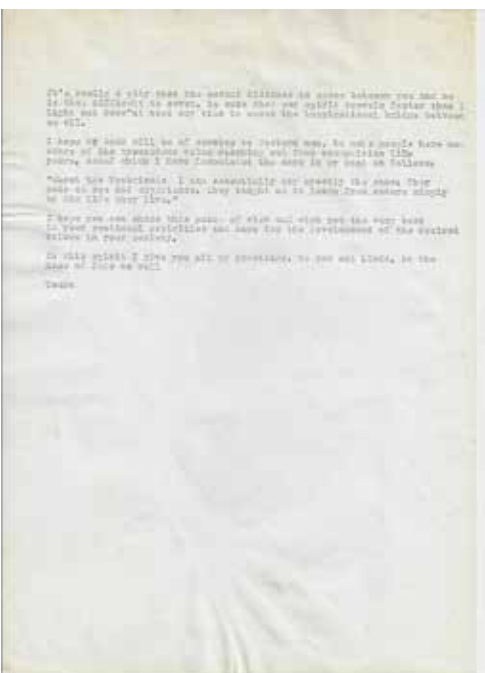
Thus, Adriaan's 6th and 9th sculptures and the poem and the theatre production mirror each other. They tell the story of the journey people must undertake to find one another. To do so, they must stay close to themselves, to the universal values that each can find within themselves, which they must strive to preserve. The poem and the sculptures speak of the longing for a world in which we can live in harmony with each other and nature. They appeal to humanity's potential for transformation and progress through awareness and collective effort.

In 1979, Brouwers sent a letter to John Kasaipwalova. Some excerpts from it:

Now after all these years, I am really glad to ask you for cooperation on something which started in some way or another by our visit to you, Linda, and all the other Trobriands we met on Kiriwina.

In December of this year my book "Seeing Beyond A New Horizon" will be published.

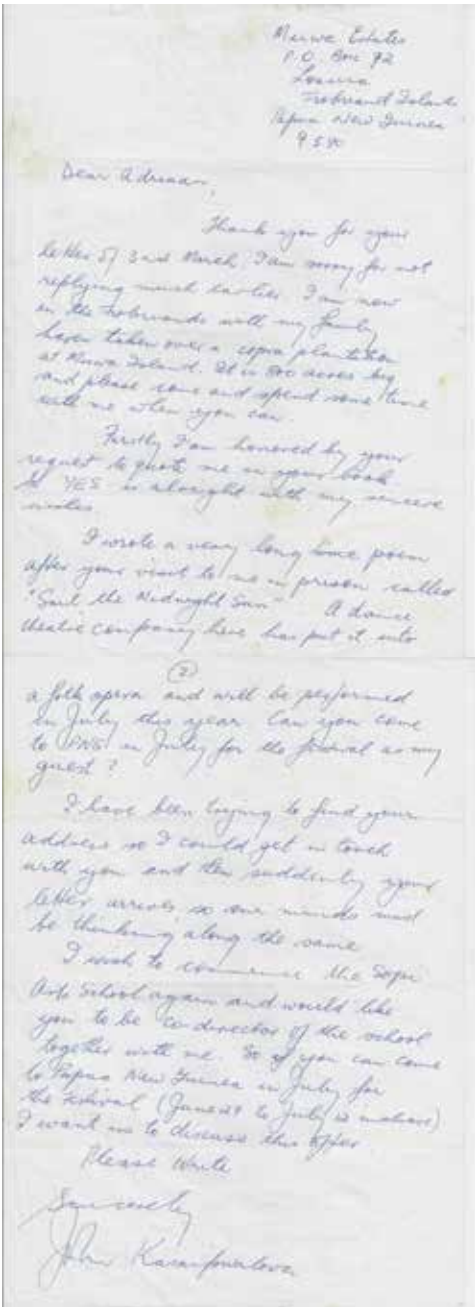
*I want to quote some parts out of your essay SOPI – The adaptation of a traditional aesthetic concept for the creation of a Modern Art School on Kiriwina. **N9***



It's really a pity that the actual distance in space between you and me is so difficult to cover. Be sure that our spirit travels faster than light and doesn't need any time to cross the inspirational bridge between us all.

I trust that you are willing to cooperate and in this way to further the possible recognition of forgotten Western values, so present in your culture, of which Joke and I had the opportunity to taste so much.

I hope my book will be of service to Western man, to make people here more aware of the tremendous value reaching out from communities like yours, and of which I have formulated the core in my book as follows: "About the Trobriands I can say exactly the same: They made us see and experience. They taught us to learn from nature simply by the life their live."



Two months later, Brouwers received a reply. Some excerpts from that letter:

"I wrote a very long poem after your visit to me in prison called "Sail the Midnight Sun". A dance theatre company here has put it into a folk opera, and it will be performed in July this year. Can you come to PNG in July for the festival as my guest?"

"I have been trying to find your address so I could get in touch with you, and then suddenly your letter arrives, so our minds must be thinking along the same.

I wish to commence the Sopi Art School again and would like you to be co-director of the school together with me. So, if you can come to Papua New Guinea in July for the festival (June 29 to July 12 inclusive), I want us to discuss this offer."

It didn't work out—the physical distance proved insurmountable. Brouwers never read the poem, nor did he witness the performance or the panels, and Kasaipwalova never saw a photo of the 9th sculpture.

The opera was a major success, later described by its director Greg Murphy as a defining moment in the construction of a national culture in Papua New Guinea and a brilliant example of "unity in diversity". **N14** On that occasion, the poem was published, accompanied by photographs of the try-outs without the carvings. **N15**

It also travelled beyond the country's borders, with performances at the 1981 Asian Arts Festival in Hong Kong, the 1984 Adelaide Festival, the 1986 Brisbane Warana Festival, the 1992 6th Festival of Pacific Arts at the Cook Islands, and in 1987 a remarkable run of twenty-four performances at the 41st Edinburgh Arts Festival. The Dutch national broadcaster NOS produced an in-depth documentary about the production, that is preserved at the Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam. **N16**

Today, the panels created for the opera form part of the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne. **N17**

Raun Raun a Hit at Edinburgh

A spellbinding performance at the great arts festival. By ROSIE MCKAY.

Frank Dunlop had been worried that Raun Raun would find Edinburgh "an enormous cultural shock" but they acclimatised very quickly and were ready for anything.

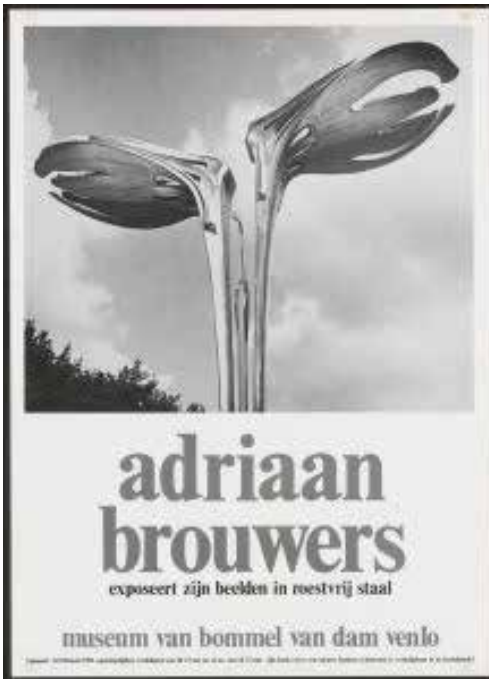
In the first week of their week stay, Raun Raun went to the Adelaide Festival for a week stay.

Story by Andrew McKenzie and photographs by Jim Fenwick

March 1-18

1984

第六屆亞洲藝術節
The 6th Festival of Asian Arts



To celebrate the unveiling of Brouwers' ninth sculpture, publisher of art books Van Spijk released the book *Seeing Beyond a New Horizon*. Not the new horizon, but a new horizon—one that is different for everyone, always shifting, always renewed, pointing toward a peaceful and collectively better future. **N18** Or, in Brouwers' own closing words: "Together – Living."

In the foreword, the nationally well-known and widely respected art critic Hans Redeker wrote:

"Drawing attention to the work of Adriaan Brouwers at this point, in my role of theoretical and critical companion of the plastic arts, in this case can be no less than a frank confession of faith: I believe in the enormous artistic power of these sculptures and the vision on which it is based and I believe in these sculptures, each the result of years of struggle, as being among the most important achievements of modern plastic arts."

"Moreover when, characterizing his work, we did speak of the vital, vegetative, or animal-human power of his sculptures, we should surely point out the way he could, beyond all books and theories, give his sculptures the power of the archetypical, the plastic expression of the symbolic meaning of the most elementary aspects of our live, living on in our subconsciousness."

N19

Jo Langen (director of the art book publisher Van Spijk)

And then it will become clear that these sculptures, created in a slow process of maturation and conception, are indeed among the highlights of modern post-war sculpture, in their highly abstract form bursting with life—human, animal, vegetative—animated, fascinating, and perfect from every spatial angle.

Ley Albrichs (director of the Bommel van Dam Museum)

Adriaan is so unique that I cannot say anything about the sculptures. You simply have to come and see them.

A teacher

Tuesday morning at the Bommel van Dam Museum—an experience! On behalf of all of us, students of the Collegium Marianum in Venlo, and also on my own behalf, thank you for what you have done for us. We have become richer.

Simultaneously, an exhibition was mounted at the *van Bommel van Dam* museum in Venlo. The event received national attention. Polygoon newsreels in cinemas highlighted the occasion, there was an interview on national radio, and the Dutch Broadcast produced a short documentary announcing both the exhibition and the book.

The exhibition was a success, until then museum *van Bommel van Dam* rarely had attracted so many visitors, partly due to the rave reviews in newspapers. Brouwers received many letters from visitors who were moved by the sculptures. His fourth sculpture, the feminine sculpture, was chosen for the *XVIe Grand Prix International d'Art Contemporain de Monte Carlo*.

After the exhibition, people who had read the book continued to contact Brouwers, expressing a desire to see the sculptures in person, which led to special encounters in his own exhibition space. Dozens of them wrote to him afterwards—in sometimes impressive letters—about how deeply they were moved by the sculptures and often also how they were inspired by them.

In the end, the sculpture that came to Brouwers in Papua New Guinea—and everything that followed from it—was the culmination of the life he had lived up to that moment: a difficult childhood spent partly in boarding schools, formative experiences both painful and inspiring during the colonial war in Indonesia, a complicated solitary artistic path, his transformative encounter with the Trobriand Islanders, and the unwavering love and support of his partner and later wife, Joke.



Tenth Sculpture – The Guard (1983)

With the book, the retrospective exhibition, the Grand Prix exhibition in Monaco, and all the publicity surrounding them, the realization of the first sculpture in the intended size now seemed to be only a matter of time.

However, the exhibition in Monaco turned out to be a major disappointment. The fourth sculpture was squeezed against a balustrade, leaving no space to view it properly from different angles. At the opening, visitors barely took a look at any of the artworks, being mainly preoccupied with being seen by one another. In Gilze, the number of visitors gradually but steadily declined. Adriaan's condition worsened. Joke and the children feared that he would collapse. He spoke of burying the sculptures so that they could later be unearthed, fully intact, when "people are ready for them". In this way, he argued, they would no longer weigh on him, on Joke, or on the children while they waited for their time.

But, one day, architects Ton Alberts and Max van Huut arrived and asked if they could see the sculptures. They had read his book. Alberts and van Huut were enthusiastic. From their car, they pulled out a large drawing of a colossal building: the new headquarters of the Dutch Middle-Class Bank (NMB) in Amsterdam. Construction had yet to begin, but they'd come because they would like to place one of Brouwers' sculptures in front of this building.



The optimism and energy of the architects inspired Adriaan. He asked about the colours of the building and whether he could keep the drawing. The following day, he bought coloured pencils and began colouring it.

Ton Alberts and Max van Huut

(architects of, among others, the Sandcastle in Amsterdam South-East and the headquarters of Gasunie and KPMG)

We characterize the work of Adriaan Brouwers as a continuous search for harmony: a new bond between life and art. Or as De Stijl put it so beautifully: the task of the artist was to create an art that would promote harmony.

The central theme of Mondrian's essay was that the new imagery is the achievement of a balance between the individual and the universal, between nature and spirit.

And this is what strikes us in the work of Adriaan Brouwers.

In Adriaan Brouwers, art is born from the heart. Or as a friend of ours remarked when he saw Brouwers' sculptures, "For the first time in my life I've met someone who brought stainless steel to life".

Unexpectedly, Adriaan started working on a new sculpture. Day and night, he laboured on it, and six months later, it was finished. It was quickly dubbed "The Guard" — its top shiny like a mirror, a mirror that you would hold up to yourself before stepping into a "new world". Brouwers had experienced the building as a new world where people could meet each other openly and freely.



When Ton Alberts saw the sculpture in an exhibition in Brussels, he reacted enthusiastically and said he could envision it standing in front of the NMB headquarters. However, the art committee at NMB was divided. All the

members were impressed by the craftsmanship and understood that the architects wanted a larger version of the sculpture, but they felt that stainless steel did not suit the anthroposophical character of the building.



A visitor who saw the tenth sculpture and heard Brouwers explain it said he recognized it in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* by Friedrich Nietzsche, and a few days later, he gave Brouwers a Dutch translation of the book. After reading a few pages, Adriaan said, ‘*Joke, listen*’ and began reading out loud from the start. Only interrupted for a meal, he read until they went to sleep, and continued reading the last pages in the morning, still in bed. The book was a tremendous confirmation for Adriaan. A few years later, in a brochure for an exhibition in the Shell buildings by the IJ in Amsterdam, he printed quotes from the book:

for his second sculpture “*To hurl myself into your heights—that is my depth! To shelter myself in your clarity—that is my innocence*”

and for his tenth sculpture, “*With a hundredfold mirror, I captured life’s gaze, as its mouth was closed: so that its eye would speak. And its eye spoke to me.*”

Brouwers was disappointed that no commission had come for an enlarged version of the tenth sculpture. But there were other hopeful developments. Two directors from Shell, along with the head of Public Relations and their wives, visited the exhibition space. They were excited. The contact person who arranged the visit overheard PR head Hoogland say to his wife that he could picture the eighth sculpture in front of the new headquarters and wanted it there. A few months later, however, Brouwers received word that Van Wachem, Shell’s highest executive, toured the Kröller-Müller Museum with its director, Rudi Oxenaar, and that Oxenaar had recommended a different artist, who turned out to be Shinkichi Tajiri, with one of his Square Knots.

Ronald Alley, the head of modern art at the Tate Gallery, visited Brouwers to see his sculptures—perhaps his only studio visit ever to an artist working in the Netherlands. **N20** Adriaan had recently hung a screen measuring two by three meters in the exhibition space where details of the sculptures could be projected, enabling visitors to experience them at their intended size.

Ronald Alley was impressed by the sculptures and projections and stayed the entire afternoon, until after dinner. Since a successor had already been appointed to take over upon his imminent retirement, he said he could do nothing further for Adriaan at the Tate Gallery. However, he did write several letters of recommendation to colleagues, including a long two-page handwritten letter addressed personally to Rudi Oxenaar, director of the Kröller-Müller Museum. Yet no one from the Kröller-Müller Museum took the trouble to come and see the work.

The Mayor Gallery in London wanted to organize an exhibition of the sculptures, and film company Bandung Productions was planning to create a documentary for Channel 4. However, when James Mayor discovered that the sculptures (the models) are not for sale, both the gallery and the filmmakers withdrew. They nevertheless kept Adriaan Brouwers waiting for some time, and in the meantime his contact with Ronald Alley—conducted entirely by correspondence—gradually faded. **N21**



Ronald Alley to Rudi Oxenaar

It seems strange for me to write to you about the work of an apparently unknown contemporary Dutch artist, but the circumstances are so unusual that I hope you will forgive this.

It may be that you know all about him already, but if not I would strongly urge you or one of your colleagues to get in touch with him and see his work.



Eleventh sculpture – A Hollow Mirror (1986)

Despite—or perhaps because of—the disappointments and likely influenced by the story and message of *Zarathustra*, Adriaan began work on a new sculpture. This time, for the first time, he used plaster, searching for a form. He created at least three models before beginning in steel, forming a sphere with a hollow mirror on one side. The convex mirror of the tenth sculpture opens up the world and enlarges it, stretching the space toward a wide horizon. The concave mirror, on the other hand, collects that same world and returns it to the core, concentrated and intense. For Adriaan, it represented the core of oneself, which must remain shiny and clear to give it authenticity. In this state of mind, the next sculpture was born.

Brouwers, explaining the sculpture to a young boy: “*You can imagine your inner self as a beautiful marble. Hold it in your hand and truly look at it. When you feel whole, it is clear and shining; when you have lost yourself, it becomes dull and chipped. Care for your marble, keep it bright, for only then can you give what is pure and sincere. When your friend accepts the marble, he shows his appreciation that you are offering the most precious thing you possess. The receiver becomes the giver, and the giver becomes the receiver.*”



Twelfth Sculpture – Male Guard (1988)

Brouwers spoke little or nothing about his twelfth sculpture. He mainly listened to what others said about it. The children quickly called it the “masculine guard,” a name to which he did not object. It is obvious that this was an intensely personal and sensitive sculpture for him. While he worked on it, Joke painted a large canvas, which later received the title “*The Secret.*”

Adriaan said that with this twelfth sculpture, that what he had to express has come full circle. From now on he would create light, free sculptures. There was no more need for stories of his personal development.

Thirteenth Sculpture – Beyond Pollution (1989)

After enduring two further major disappointments, Adriaan envisioned his thirteenth sculpture.

In the autumn of 1986, documentary maker Philip Engelen from the national broadcasting organisation IKON visited Brouwers. He was deeply impressed by the sculptures and told Adriaan that he intended to make a film about Brouwers’ work and philosophy. His director had promised him one film project that he was allowed to design entirely according to his own vision, and this would be that film. Engelen repeated this in several IKON letters, and the two remained in close, warm contact for a long time.

But eventually Adriaan came to realise that Engelen had chosen a different path—one partly based on the same principles. This later turned out to be the four-part documentary series *Passions of the Soul*, about the life, work, and significance of Carl Gustav Jung, broadcast in 1991.

Philip Engelen (filmmaker)

I derived a sense of invulnerability from your sculptures, as if I had been momentarily connected to an undoubtedly unknowable source of power. Your work has greatly inspired me. I must now continue on the path I have hesitantly embarked upon. For that alone I am grateful to you. I look forward to our collaboration. I want to make that very clear to you.



In 1988, after PSV, the main soccer club in Eindhoven, had won the European Cup, the management of sponsor Philips decided that a work of art should be installed in the square in front of the newly expanded football stadium. Several artists were invited to submit designs, including Brouwers. Adriaan created a rough concept for a monumental steel sculpture, and his design was selected. However, the cost of execution proved too high—even for a cheaper alternative. PSV director Jacques Ruts remarked that, for that amount of money, a large modern scoreboard would be a better option.

In the months that followed, Adriaan became increasingly engaged with the subject of pollution. He noted how television was crowded with discussions about water, air and earth, yet he felt that the true pollution began elsewhere — quietly, within. It began, he said, when people turn away from their own inner truth, when openness hardens, when the simple courage to live authentically is pushed aside. That is where the real contamination takes root: in the slow forgetting of what is most essential.

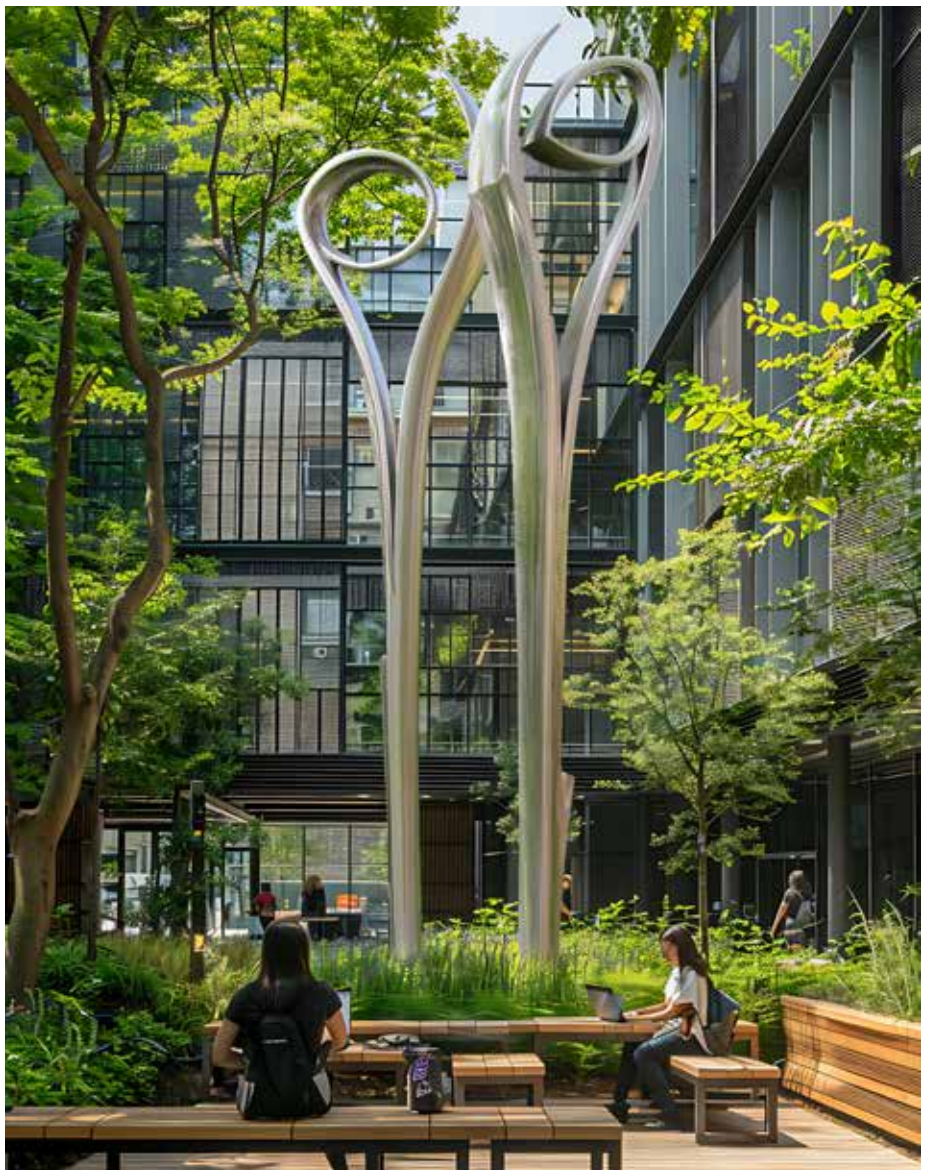
The thirteenth sculpture Adriaan created consists of two free, simple and pure autonomous forms — almost non-binary in nature — oriented both inward and outward. Each on its own would be lost in space; it is their relationship that gives them body and life. In the closing words of his 1980 book: *“Together – Living”*. He placed them -for the first time- on a white rather than a black pedestal. The family soon called the sculpture *“Beyond Pollution”*.



Exhibition visitor

This has deeply moved me and made me realize how important these sculptures are for people in our time.

They are sculptures of expectation and hope. They remind us that we depend on one another, while also calling on each individual to follow their own path, for each person carries a modest yet essential and unique task.



A Final Interview

Tariq Ali (political activist in Pakistan and later in England, published dozens of books, including *Fear of Mirrors*, director Bandung Productions)

We find your work to be most impressive.

We are extremely interested in the possibility of doing a film on your work in 1986 and would be grateful if you could confirm that such a project would be agreeable to you.

Heinz Georg Haussler (co-founder Alanus Hochschule for musical and visual arts in Bonn and professor and head of the sculpture department, wrote *Entdeckung der Formgesetze Michelangelos*)

I often thought of you and have shared your book with my students, drawing their attention to your wonderful work in welding and polishing sculptures.

Exhibition visitor

Someone who dares to articulate life itself. And gives form to that life in stainless steel shapes, turning the abstract concept into tangible reality. I find it wonderful!

Your work speaks to me deeply. I had seen the TV broadcast, but the sculptures themselves are much more beautiful.

Brouwers decided to make a film himself. After all, as a teacher, he had once made films with his pupils, and he had seen how it was done by the NOS and the makers of the Polygoon newsreel. He enrolled in a video course and built a structure on which the sculptures could be rotated for filming. A man with film experience, whom he met in the course, offered to help. And a friend who worked at a broadcasting company agreed to conduct a trial interview based on notes Adriaan had to make. And so he did, with Joke's help.

On New Year's Day 1992 when the family was gathered around the table for a meal, mother Joke, who never had the biggest word, suddenly stood up and started reading a letter:

"You're thinking, 'What is mama doing now?' Yes, on Christmas Eve, I couldn't sleep, and I thought about my life, 'Our life of papa and myself.' Over the past two weeks, we've delved back into 45 years of both of our lives, and we are very happy. We've looked back on a life of faith, perseverance, and love. From the ages of fifteen, eighteen, we've had to fight in our lives.

We were and are convinced that, with all the love within us, we stood in a life full of polarity. But our faith has always held us firm. I want to ask you, our children, our grandchildren, and our future grandchildren, for the new year and the years to come, in these polarizing times where values and principles are so volatile, to individually and together uphold the values within yourselves and with each other by loving one another.

I hope that when you too are 60, you will be able to look back on a meaningful life. You will overcome all the ups and downs in life if you believe in yourself. Pass on love and values to your children. Wishing you a good and happy new year."

A few weeks later Adriaan had his interview, in which he was almost the only one who spoke. It lasted two hours and was filmed with a small camera. A year later, it became clear that the trial recording covered all the essential topics for understanding Brouwers' life story and artistic career.

In the background, Joke could be heard coughing intermittently.

The following day, she stayed in bed, sick. A few weeks later, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and the specialist's prognosis was that Joke had only two or three months to live. At Joke's and Adriaan's request, the children came to their parental home to discuss what should happen to the sculptures. Clearly Adriaan could not handle the responsibility alone. Joke did not want the children to be burdened with something that had already caused their parents so much sacrifice. They offered a proposal to donate the sculptures to companies or institutions that would care for them properly.

Soon after the conversation with their parents, the children held their own meeting and decided that the models should stay together. The sculptures were placed in a foundation for public benefit, with Adriaan as the chairman. The goal was to keep them together, because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. They also expressed the desire to attempt to have them monumentally realized. If possible, in the future, at Joke's request, money should be donated to KWF Dutch Cancer Society.

Model for the 14th Sculpture Joke's and Adriaan's Passing (1992)



Exhibition visitors

What do you put at the top of a letter addressed to someone you don't know, but whom you feel you know because their work evokes an almost suffocating sense of "recognition"?

On Saturday in Brussels, I saw your sculptures, which moved me and left me speechless.

I greatly appreciate that someone like you, through your sculptures, allows others to learn from what you have experienced. You make yourself vulnerable in doing so. Thank you!

Through your sculptures, you give so much to humanity.

But the way your sculptures have impacted me has never happened before.

Joke was cared for at home and died six months later, surrounded by Adriaan and her children.

To everyone's surprise, Adriaan seemed to carry himself with remarkable steadiness after Joke's passing. Only a few weeks later, he unveiled a small plaster model for his next sculpture. Anyone who knew Joke needs only one glance to understand: it embodies her quiet devotion, and her sense of perpetual renewal. Adriaan said he felt as if Joke was guiding his hand, whispering, *'stop — this is exactly enough.'* The sketch will later become the logo of the Adriaan and Joke Brouwers Foundation.

While preparing to create the sculpture in stainless steel, Adriaan experienced heart rhythm disturbances and was admitted to the regional hospital in Breda. A day before his expected discharge, he suffered a stroke. He became paralyzed on one side and lost his ability to speak. The doctors believed he could largely recover with intensive treatment at the Radboud University Medical Centre in Nijmegen. There, ten weeks after Joke's passing, Adriaan died in a hospital corridor, attended by a nurse.

Like Joke, he lay in state at home, surrounded by a sea of flowers, the unfinished painting of Joke and the thirteen steel sculptures that marked his life —and now also the plaster model of the statue dedicated to her. His obituary read: *'Faithful to all that was good, he was able to keep believing. In the autumn, Adriaan died, for everyone and for no one.'* On a stormy day, his and Joke's ashes were scattered by the children, while the falling rain and the wind carried them across the field where they spent many peaceful hours together.

Friends of the Foundation

Two weeks after Adriaan's cremation, the children and several friends of Adriaan and Joke met to discuss what should be done with the sculptures. Soon, the *Friends of the Adriaan and Joke Brouwers Foundation* are established. The house and the exhibition space were legally split. As a result, the house was worth so much less that a daughter and her husband were able to buy it. The exhibition space was donated to the foundation by the children.

The friends of the foundation met regularly and organized various events in the exhibition space, often with music and exhibitions of work by other artists. The municipality began to show interest and provided a small subsidy. It was then decided that a larger version of the ninth sculpture (The Guard) would be placed in front of the cultural centre in Gilze-Rijen. The available budget was too limited, and the process of making it, requiring four different specialized companies in sequence, was complicated. The result was disappointing: the form was not precise enough, and the casting skin showed defects. When these defects led to rust formation after a year, it was repaired at the foundry's expense. The subsequent new grinding and polishing work was not in line with the model. Parts that should have shone were dull, and other parts were overly shiny. Still, the local government decided to place the sculpture as it was.

Exhibition visitors

*I won't write a lengthy account,
as it might only detract.*

*I simply want you to know how a
completely ordinary 54-year-old
housewife was deeply touched and
moved by what you expressed in
sculptures and word.*

*What I find most typical is the
transition from the feeling of being
in a cold, sterile emptiness
(upon entering) to the feeling
of being surrounded by warm,
ineffably meaningful radiations.
Poorly expressed,
but perhaps you understand.*

For ten years, the friends of the foundation remained very active. Then, in 2007 the sculptures were moved to the estate of “Het Broeck” in Raamsdonk, where they were exhibited outdoors during the summer in a specially designed *Adriaan Brouwers Park*. **N22** In the fall, they were smeared with beeswax and carefully packed. The first sculpture, not made of stainless steel, was given a plastic coating.

Since the sculptures began to suffer in the open air, from the rain and dirt, in 2018 it was decided to search for permanent indoor housing. The board and some friends of the foundation created a brochure with photos of the sculptures and approached institutions, asking if they would like to exhibit the sculptures in their building.

Donation to Máxima Medical Centre

The art commission of the Máxima Medical Centre in Veldhoven responded enthusiastically. On November 21, 2019, the sculptures were loaned to the Máxima MC location Veldhoven. In 2022, it was agreed that the foundation would donate the sculptures for permanent exhibition in the new to be built main entrance. As chairman of the MMC board Marcel Visser stated at the vernissage, *‘We will take over the care of the sculptures and give them a very beautiful place in our new main entrance.’*



The website of Máxima MC states that the hospital aims to be ‘a welcoming and friendly environment for its patients, visitors, and staff — a place where people feel comfortable, based on the belief that the environment contributes to their well-being and recovery. Art provides relaxation and distraction and can reduce stress, for example by offering new perspectives or providing inspiration, recognition, or comfort’. During the severe COVID-19 pandemic, it became evident how people could find comfort in the sculptures.



Adriaan's Thought World – His Relationship with Steel

In 1979, Hans Redeker wrote in the preface to Brouwers' book, after spending several days together, that Adriaan's religious-philosophical insights were acquired existentially. Adriaan had never read many books, as he had no time for them. His days were filled from early morning until late evening with work, creating iron works, sculptures in stainless steel, and providing (barely enough) income for himself and his family. The books mentioned in this brochure were only read after he received them from people he spoke with about a sculpture.

In the interview he gave in the year of his passing, Brouwers explained how he came to his insights while describing his relationship with steel:



"From the age of 15 to 64, I lived with steel. I have had a relationship with steel. And that relationship deepened enormously between me and the steel—this has nothing to do with theory and science, or with intellectual engagement with the material—it is purely experience, it is life. I experienced that dynamism; I experienced that energy. I experienced that affinity in the steel and in myself, but also mutually. And, I say this gladly: I am a conscious being, I am a conscious being who is aware of both negative and positive. I can choose between positive and negative. I can do that. The steel has never been able to do that. I have experienced that. I have seen that. And despite the fact that steel is less evolved than I am, it has always had the advantage of shaping me enormously. Why? Because the steel has always been honest. It couldn't choose. It can't choose between negative and positive. So, steel was always in its entirety as it was. While I, with my totality, can be both negative and positive. So, there were moments when I wasn't honest, just as there were moments when I was honest. So, in that sense, my integrity is something I have to struggle with. And precisely because I have experienced this relationship with steel for so many years, I have also always experienced how honest, how integral the steel is. So, steel has always appealed to my integrity. Yes?! And steel almost forced me, no, literally, to keep my relationship with steel honest. And if only I could keep my relationship with steel honest, then both the steel and I, in our relationship, would reach a higher dimension. So, we both evolved. Now, when you see a sculpture of mine, the steel has an enormous expression, and that expression was earned by the steel in our mutual relationship. That is exactly how it is. I find this very important."



After Adriaan completed a sculpture in this way, new questions would inevitably arise—questions he would once again wrestle with.

In that struggle, the answer would take shape within him in the shape of the next sculpture, which he then had to bring forth, initiating a new battle: on one side the sculpture (Being) and the steel, and on the other side the Self. Through this process, Adriaan gained the insights embedded in each work, insights that offered him a deeper understanding—above all—of himself as a human being.



The result of this lifelong journey can be seen in the fourteen sculptures he left behind, of which the ninth, which came to Brouwers in the sea of Kiriwina, occupies a prominent and central place.

Endnotes

1.. In the second year of Adriaan's stay in Huijbergen, part of the monastery was occupied by German forces. Shortly after Adriaan had returned to Gilze, in November, the entire monastery was confiscated. When the American liberators were almost at the gates in 1944, the Germans hastily withdrew and set the main building on fire. Only the gatehouse was spared. Today, the Wilhelmiëten Museum is housed there, where the history of the monastery and its inhabitants is presented.

www.wilhelmiëtenmuseum.nl



Driveway to Saint Marie's gatehouse - still standing today - before World War II

2.. The number of letters Brouwers wrote was exceptionally high, very likely even unique. When his ship, the Johan van Oldenbarneveltdt, arrived in Indonesia with two thousand soldiers on board, it was announced that the soldiers could hand in their outgoing mail — with the joking addition: "and a separate mailbag has been reserved for soldier Brouwers."

3.. The cabaret was called "Lading Super." This was the term used among Dutch soldiers for a heavy high-explosive charge used to blow things up. In addition to performing in the cabaret, the participating boys carried out their standard military duties, although they were increasingly excused from them as the cabaret became more successful.



The touring cabaret troupe in Cheribon, with Brouwers reclining in the second row, far right.

4.. Brouwers, Adriaan. Seeing Beyond a New Horizon. (Venlo: Van Spijk, 1980).

5.. Prof. J.P. Bouman, Call and Calling: The Lives of Jaurès, Wilson and Rathenau [Roep en roeping. De levens van Jaurès, Wilson en Rathenau] (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1955).

6.. Ninth sculpture in progress.



How exceptional Brouwers' craftsmanship was, became very clear in 1988 when, during an exhibition in the Shell buildings along the IJ in Amsterdam, the third sculpture was damaged during transport. At the request of the insurer, three experts were engaged to assess the financial extent of the damage. Metal specialists from the Central Laboratory for the Arts (a national institute responsible, among other things, for maintaining and restoring the metal collection of the Rijksmuseum), the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, and a metalworking company (Het Stempel) concluded that, as far as

they were aware, apart from Brouwers himself, no one in Europe would be capable of repairing the sculpture. As a result, Brouwers was paid fl. 25,000 for the repair.

7.. William Blake, in *The Letters of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1956), letter to Thomas Butts, 22 November 1802.

Jackson Pollock, in *Jackson Pollock: Works, Writings, Interviews*, ed. Nancy Jachec (Barcelona and New York: Ediciones Polígrafa / Distributed Art Publishers, 2011), remark beginning "When I am in my painting, I'm not aware of what I'm doing..."

John Kasaipwalova, in Jutta Malnic, *Kula* (Wahroonga: Cowrie Books, 1998) p. 106: *"Within yourself, you are clouded and faceted with personal human feelings, all sorts of pain, struggles and emotions. Then, suddenly, you perceive a flash of reality, 'you see the light'. Clarity and freshness radiate through your entire being, to the core. There that perception strikes a reverse form. It illuminates you with the brilliance of that sun shining out there, 'my goodness, everything is so clear! But while in perception you project out there and see the brilliance of the sun, the actual transformation is within you. Those light shafts play through spatial spheres. They diffuse in mingling with smoke, with the miss of the rising dew. They refract from the gleaming leaves, then play this freshness through the atmosphere of your emotions. These reflections illuminate your perception like sopi-piercing essence. You apply it to whatever your mind is directed to, be it politics business, a personal relationship or gardening. At those moments you suddenly see the obvious in a completely new perspective. Your perception breaks into the essence of what you have been working on. You have a breakthrough. And in that star form you see the result of whatever you are planning."*

8.. C. G. Jung, ed., *Man and His Symbols*, with contributions by Marie-Louise von Franz, Joseph L. Henderson, Aniela Jaffé, and Jolande Jacobi (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964). In her chapter "Symbolism in the Visual Arts," Aniela Jaffé argues that the symbolic power of artistic form lies in its capacity to render the unconscious visible and tangible, thereby allowing archetypal and unconscious contents to emerge into conscious experience.

9.. In Brouwers' archive, various publications can be found, full of his notes, particularly on a discussion paper by John Kasaipwalova titled *The Adaptation of a Traditional Aesthetic Concept for the Creation of a Modern Art School on Kiriwina*, which he presented in 1975 at the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, later included under the title *SOPi in Voices of Independence: New Black Writing from Papua New Guinea*, edited by Ulli Beier, *Asian and Pacific Writing* no. 13, St Lucia, University of Queensland Press, 1980.

10.. - Greg Murphy, *Dance of the Mask: The First Flowering of Literature and the Contemporary Arts in Papua New Guinea*, *New Guinea Communications* Vol. 3, Galda Verlag, 2021.

- Maebh Long and Matthew Hayward, *The Rise of Pacific Literature: Decolonization, Radical Campuses, and Modernism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2024.

11.. - John Kasaipwalova, *Philosophy and historical reality of Kabisawali*, in *Gigibori*, a magazine of Papua New Guinea Cultures, Volume 2, Number 1, (Boroko, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, in association with Niugini Press, 1975).

- Ulli Beier, *Kabisawali: The Impact of a Self-help Movement on Cultural Life in the Trobriand Islands*, Volume 2, Number 1, (Boroko, Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, in association with Niugini Press, 1975).

- Michael Somare, *Sana*, an autobiography of Michael Somara p. 122-128, (Port Moresby, Niugini Press, 1975)

12.. Gunter Senft, *Imdeduya, Variants of a myth of love and hate from the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea*, *Cultural and Language Use* Vol. 20, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam 2017.

The book is an open access publication and can be downloaded for free at the following URL: <http://www.jbe-platform.com/content/books/9789027265890>

13.. In later publications, including those of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne—which owns the carving—the title "Midnight Sun Rescued by the Sacred Swordfish" was erroneously assigned to the work. Evidence that this attribution is incorrect can be found in the documentary *Sail the Midnight Sun*, which

explores the poem and the theatrical production based on it, and in which the carving plays a central role in both the stage performance and the film (see also note 16).

In the documentary, the carving appears on screen for approximately thirty seconds, initially as a still image, at the moment when the protagonist sets out on his journey. During this moment, the narrator states, "Looking for Imdeduya," succinctly encapsulating the central theme of the poem, and goes on to explain that the voyage represents a passage from a traditional, archaic condition to a new postcolonial world.

Letters written by the maker at the time indicate that, both prior to and during the filming, he spent considerable time with John Kasaipwalova discussing the poem, the theatrical production, and the documentary.

14.. Greg Murphy, *Dance of the Mask*, 143–144.



15.. John Kasaipwalova, *Sail the Midnight Sun*. Melanesia, Trobriand Islands, 1980.

16.. At the request of Ulli Beier, Director of the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, and with funding from the Dutch government, Dutch filmmaker Robert Klinkert was commissioned to produce two films related to the performance *Sail the Midnight Sun*: one documenting the performance itself, and another portraying life on Kiriwina Island, where John Kasaipwalova lived. In the end, the Dutch national broadcaster decided that Klinkert should produce only one film from the footage. The film was broadcast on Dutch television and screened at several filmfestivals, but it subsequently fell into obscurity.

In 2025, the film and all the original footage were discovered in the filmmaker's study and attic shortly after his passing.

The Eye Filmmuseum in the Netherlands recognized the significance of the material and will preserve, archive, and partially digitize it. The original final edit—previously broadcast and screened—was the first to be restored and digitized, for presentation at the 14th Pacific Arts Association International Symposium.

17.. Images of all the panels are available on the website of the National Gallery of Victoria, where they are incorrectly attributed to John Kasaipwalova rather than to the artists of his Sopi Arts School. The panel *Looking for Imdeduya*, for example, was carved by Yobwita (see Sergio Jarillo, "How Malinowski Sailed the Midnight Sun: The Academic Conference as Ethnographic Performance," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 27, no. 2, April 2021, p. 16).

18.. This book initially had the working title "Over de Drempel" (over the Threshold), the same as an earlier publication solely for visitors to Brouwers' own exhibition space. The title was very likely changed under the influence of his trip to Papua New Guinea.

19.. Adriaan Brouwers, *Seeing Beyond a New Horizon*, p. 5 and p. 8. Hans Redeker—poet and essayist—served as art critic for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* (later *NRC Handelsblad*) from 1949 to 1978; he was the (co-)author of dozens of books on artists and contributed numerous articles to the journal *Kunstbeeld* between 1976 and 1986.

20.. As the very first 'Keeper of the Modern Collection' at the Tate Gallery in London from 1965 until his retirement in 1986, Ronald Alley played a significant role in the expansion of the Tate's modern art collection.

Through his expertise, exhibitions, and publications, he enhanced the Tate's reputation as a leading institution for modern art.

He also played a key role in the European breakthrough of artists such as Mark Rothko, Francis Bacon, and Lucian Freud, all of whom later donated important paintings to the Tate during his keepership—fourteen in total. These were works to which the artists were deeply attached and which they did not wish to see end up in private hands.

From Alley's obituary in *The Guardian* (1999):

"His discerning eye built the Tate Gallery's modern art collection." – *The Independent*:

"The Tate had become truly international.

What happened to change its perspective so radically? To a great extent, what happened was simply Ronald Alley." – *The Times*:

"By the time he retired in 1986, he had not only immeasurably transformed the collections, helping in the process to turn the Tate into an important international museum of modern art,

but had given an effective lead in introducing the 20th century to other art collections all over Britain."

Alley's 1985 visit to Brouwers was, as far as is known, his one and only studio visit to an artist working in the Netherlands. Afterwards, Alley wrote a letter to Brouwers reflecting on his visit. See page 38.

21.. Contact with Ronald Alley was established after Brouwers had seen a talk show on Dutch television featuring the Indian Akumal Ramachander, who had discovered the work of the "forgotten" abstract expressionist Harold Shapinsky. An acquaintance subsequently sent photographs of Brouwers' work to Ramachander, who in turn showed them to Ronald Alley. A few months later, Alley visited Brouwers. Shortly thereafter, Brouwers received an invitation to the opening of the sales exhibition of Shapinsky's work at the Mayor Gallery in London.

The opening of Shapinsky's exhibition was documented in the film "The Painter and the Pest" narrated by Salman Rushdie, in which Brouwers can be seen speaking with the painter and his "discoverer" (available via <https://www.howlarts.org/event/harold-shapinsky-abstract-soul/>). Brouwers felt no connection with those present; he observed that people were not engaged with the artworks but only with one another, and he found the whole affair overly commercial. Within half an hour, he and his wife had left.

A few weeks after returning home, he received a newspaper article from The Arts Guardian explaining Shapinsky's "discovery" as a conspiracy to hype an unknown artist and profit handsomely from it. Ronald Alley was described as a minor officer at the Tate Gallery (but see note 20). After his disappointing experience at the Mayor Gallery — where his visit was so brief that he missed Ronald Alley entirely — Brouwers became convinced that this account was true. There was no internet at the time, Brouwers' command of English was limited, and he had little knowledge of the art world. Instead of investing in his relationship with Alley, as most others might have done, he allowed it to lapse. Lawrence Weschler wrote the story of the "discovery" of Harold Shapinsky, which was first serialized as a feature in The New Yorker. The essay was later included in two of Weschler's collections. The first, *Shapinsky's Karma, Boggs's Bills, and Other True Life Tales* (North

Point Press, 1988, San Francisco, CA), collected several of his profile essays. The second, *A Wanderer in the Perfect City: Selected Passion Pieces* (University of Chicago Press, 1998, Chicago, IL), reprinted the Shapinsky essay and was subsequently reissued several times, most recently in 2006.

22.. Estate Het Broeck, located between Geertruidenberg and Waalwijk in the Langstraat, includes the carriage museum De Koetserij, an art collection with sculpture garden, and a 15,000 m² garden with the art pavilion Art Collection.

The former Adriaan Brouwers Park

Photo Credits

Most images are courtesy of the Adriaan and Joke Brouwers Foundation.

Black-and-white photographs of sculptures are by Jaap Werschull.

Exceptions:

p. 2: Photograph of the monastery.

p. 19: Detail from a photograph of John Kasaipwalova. Image licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License.

Photograph by Vandholt.

pp. 21, 22, and 23: Carving and detail carvings. Pictures by prof. Gunter Senft.

Photograph p. 23 lightly cropped

p. 24: Collage.

p. 26: NMB building — drawing and photograph licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. Drawing by Architectenbureau Alberts & Van Huut. Photograph by Sybolt Voeten, cropped.

Graphic design and layout:

Ton Gommans (www.rtg.nl)

Digitizing/restoring old pictures:

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22 April 1985

Mr Adrian Brouwers
Tilburgsebaan 19
5126 PH Gilze
Holland

Dear Mr Brouwers

It was a great pleasure to meet you and I very much enjoyed seeing your sculptures. I liked them even more than I did in the photographs and find them very individual, and rich and complex in meanings, as well as beautifully made. It amazes me that you have had to work away for so many years without any kind of recognition (apart from the one exhibition in a small local museum) and I hope that this is going to change at last.

Although I liked the sculptures on their present scale in the setting of the room you have built for them, it is clear from seeing the slides projected onto a large screen that they would lend themselves to monumental enlargement for outdoor settings. The sculptures seem to have a real sense of scale and the forms are so taut and precise, so highly charged and carefully worked out, that I feel confident that they would enlarge without any loss of tension. The effect of seeing certain of them really big, so that one could not only walk around them but underneath some of the forms, would be quite extraordinary and dramatic.

Congratulations on your achievement and my very best wishes to you and all your family.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Alley

Ronald Alley
Keeper of the Modern Collection

PS. I gave the book to Frits Keers for the Library of the Stedelijk Museum and urged him to go and see your work.

