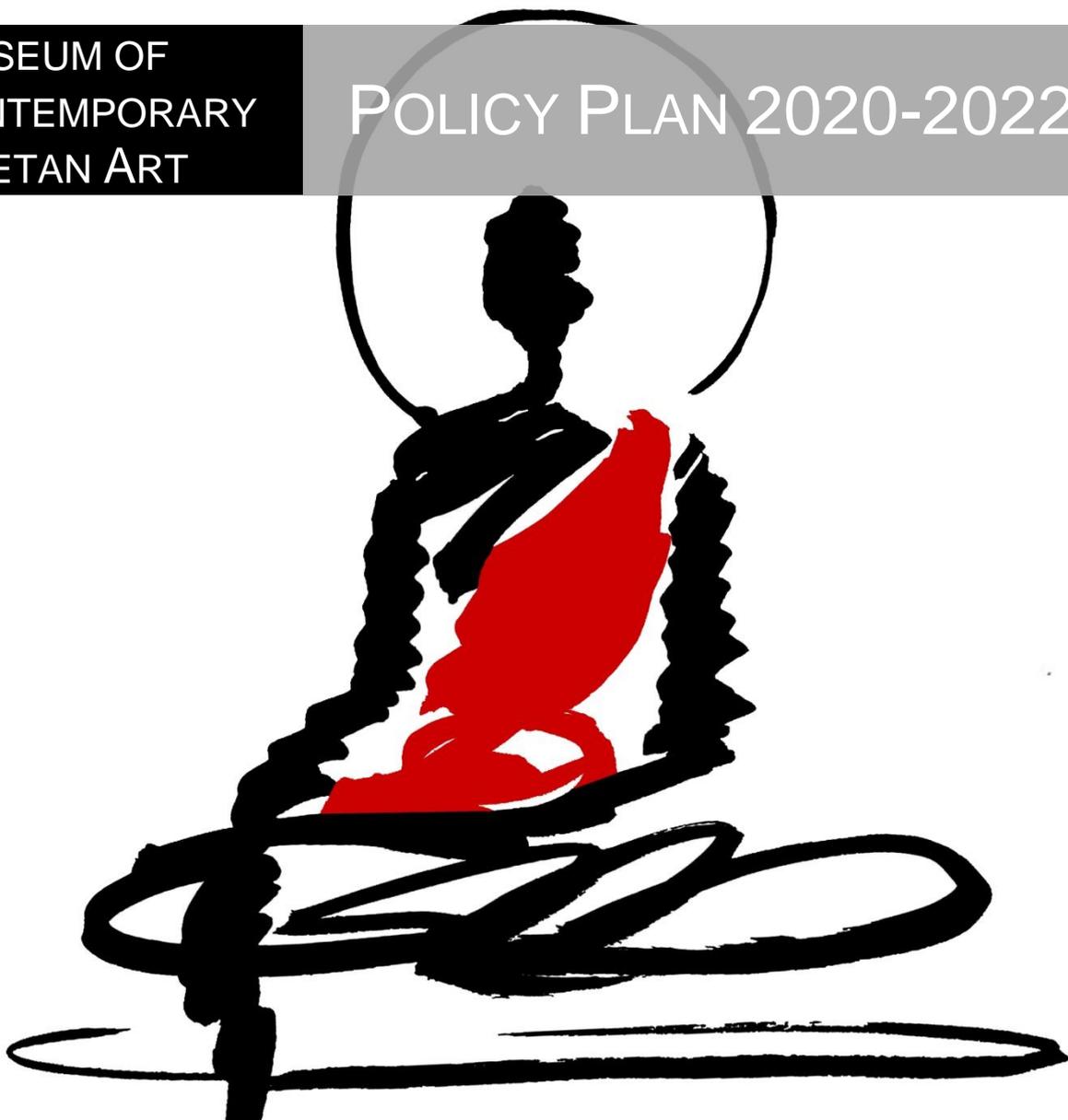


16-8-2019

MUSEUM OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
TIBETAN ART

# POLICY PLAN 2020-2022



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# General

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After finding a space in the municipality of Emmen in 2017, Tashi Norbu was able to fulfill a lifelong dream and open the first museum of contemporary Tibetan art in the world. Ever since the opening of the museum the board; Tashi Norbu, Eleni Skitsa and Reindert Dooves, have been working on professionalizing the museum. Many ideas of the board will be documented in order to provide transparency to the public about the plans and policies of the museum concerning collection, education, publicity, volunteers and calamities.

The museum sees it as its task to educate the public about the culture of the 'roof of the world'. As befitting of the first official policy plan of the museum, we aim to improve and expand upon a wide range of topics to achieve the museum's mission. This document will serve as a statement to guide our decisions for the next two years.

By submitting this policy to 'Stichting het Nederlands Museumregister', we hope to officially become a part of the circle of Dutch museums. When the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art is registered, possibilities will open up to apply for a multitude of funds as well as the possibility to let visitors use their 'Museumjaarkaart'. Additionally, this quality guarantee may attract more visitors from outside the immediate area. These developments would be beneficial to the future of both the museum and its public.

## Mission

The aim of the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art is to educate and spread awareness to an international public about contemporary Tibet-inspired artworks and their themes. The collection is representative of contemporary Tibetan

and Tibet-inspired artists as well as the traditional Buddhist culture. The museum conserves, researches and presents the collection and is a platform for discussion; also a platform for activities between artists and public revolving around the themes of the collection.

## Vision

The museum aims to spread knowledge of Tibetan culture by lending a platform to Tibet-inspired artists from all over the world. We aim to diversify the artists represented in the museum through trade of artworks and the display in temporary exhibitions, eventually gaining representative pieces for the core collection.

The museum lends a platform to both traditional and modern art, frequently engaging in collaborations with artists and museums with similar goals to preserve Tibetan art and culture. Different forms of Tibetan culture are represented in regular live performances of painting and music such as mantras. This, too, is done in collaboration with international artists of different backgrounds. The permanent exhibition as well as the performances attracts local as well as international visitors. By doing so the museum tries to inspire a diverse discussion about contemporary Tibetan art and its current themes.

The museum's collection is mainly provided by the live-in artist and his connections to the Tibetan cultural world. Regular small art exhibitions give diversity to the collection. As the museum expands, the size of these art exhibitions will expand as well. These temporary exhibitions, along with the core collection, will be used to regularly attract international as well as local visitors, as

well as increase the diversity of cultural knowledge to be gained in the museum.

## Historical profile

As Tibetan culture slowly disappears from the Himalayas and the world, a group of dedicated tibetans is working hard to ensure the survival and spread of different types of Tibetan cultural expressions such as the language, art and music. Tashi Norbu is one of these artists, and combines traditional visual influences and a contemporary style in his works.

This eventually led to the founding of 'Stichting Tibet House Holland' on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2010 with the mission to:

1. Create awareness of the Tibetan culture and identity.
2. Stimulate the development of contemporary Tibetan art and to exhibition as such while promoting cooperation with international artists inspired by Tibetan culture.
3. Organize, develop and execute educative programs in general and to organize the education of the Tibetan language and culture for the Tibetan community in the Netherlands and anyone who is interested.
4. Give a platform for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism.
5. Initiate and participate the societal dialogue concerning the history and culture of Tibet.
6. Offer literature, information and documentation concerning Tibet.

In order to realize the various statements of the mission of the Tibet House Holland, the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art opened its doors to the public on 1st June 2017 and functions under the 'Stichting Tibet House Holland'. The Museum functions as the platform for realizing mission statements 1, 2, the first part of 3, 5 and 6. Mission statement 4 is not an aim of the Museum.

Plans for the Museum were formed in the beginning of 2017, while on the first of June, 2017 the Museum was opened in the Rensenpark of Emmen. The municipality of Emmen proved to be helpful in the opening of a new Museum because it fits in with the new destination of the park to attract cultural initiatives.

The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art is the first one of its kind, the success of the Museum is needed among others to ensure survival of the art and culture of Tibet through its collections, exhibitions and performances, at an era that Tibetan Art and Culture tends to get disappeared. Because of the relative recent opening, the Museum recognizes the need to quickly expand its reputation and collection. Through rapid professionalization we believe to cater to a growing public. Considering the growing interest in foreign cultures, the Museum works to make its reputation known to a public outside the immediate physical and cultural environment.



# Goals

- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art wishes to give a representative view of contemporary Tibetan art by gaining works from various artists with a Tibetan cultural background for the permanent collection as well as organizing annual exhibitions in cooperation with contemporary Tibetan or Tibet-inspired artists.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art wishes to organize the storage for its collection in a more logical and sound manner to ensure conserving the condition of the objects of the collection for a longer period of time. To start, objects will be stored in the cooling cells to prevent damage by the sun and heat. The furniture in the former kitchen will be broken down to make more room. When more space is available, shelves will be built to store artworks, materials for workshops and other necessities for the museum.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art presents the exhibition in a more cohesive way with according labels, giving information about the artwork and, in the gallery, indicating whether it is for sale. These labels will be translated into both Dutch and English.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art creates a separate gallery with works of Tashi Norbu to be able to fund the museum and its activities. The museum will do so by making a clear separation between the museum's collection and the artworks for sale. Items in the gallery will be registered separately from the museum's collection. The museum's shop will also be moved closer to the entrance, so that it will not distract from the collections on display, and to allow visitors to look at items without paying an entrance fee. Visitors who collect traditional Tibetan items frequently request to look at the shop, without visiting the museum, and such requests are too frequent to ignore.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art attracts an international public and expands its reputation beyond Drenthe and the Netherlands by the use of social media thus improving PR with a larger international public.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art aims to expand its circle of volunteers in order to keep the Museum functioning at the same rate it has until now.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art aims to create a group of "Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art Friends" (MOCTAF) to bond and connect with the local and international public as well as companies, organizations and so forth, providing funds and support for the Museum. We also aim to strengthen cooperation within the local cultural sector for the purpose of exchanging knowledge and starting collaborations.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art stimulates scientific research of the contemporary and historical collection by attracting (inter-)national students and/or local interns.
- The Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art will elaborate the calamity plan and make adjustments in the physical space of the museum accordingly.

# Collections

## Collections

As of today, the museum houses the following collections:

### Core collection of:

- contemporary Tibetan art consisting of
  - Paintings by Tashi Norbu, Tulku Jamjan, Sonam Dolma Brawn, Passa Tobgay, Lela Skitsa, Valérie Lebeau and Louise Burnet-Munoz
  - Sculptures by Tashi Norbu,
  - Digital Artwork by Tibetan artist Tenzing Rigdol
  - Video art from Dutch filmmaker Tobias Stokhof
  - Photos by Bryan Liptzin, Gonkar Gyatso and Tenzing Rigdol

### Subcollection of:

- Tibetan (Buddhist) artifacts
  - Scriptures
  - Family altar pieces
  - Historical statues
  - Cabinetry
  - Rugs
  - Clothing
- Hanging scrolls of His Holiness Dalai Lama's photography exhibition (scroll collection) related to his refuge to India and his Commitments in life. Granted from Tibet Museum in India, the private office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's government in Exile
- Publications about the museum, Tibetan art in general and the Tibetan artist Tashi Norbu. This collection, among others, documents the events leading up to the creation of the museum.
- A small library about Tibetan art and culture, Buddhism and art history.



The museum is divided into two areas or two major separate parts, an exhibition hall and a gallery, together forming a space of around 700 m<sup>2</sup>. The exhibition hall is where the core collection, the traditional collection from Tibet, as well as miscellaneous Tibetan objects are housed. In contrast, the gallery is used to fund the Museum's activities. Obviously, visitors are free to visit the gallery space if desired. A plaque next to all artworks indicates whether the artwork is for sale or not.

The gallery space and museum shop host artworks and objects of Tibetan artists as well as Dutch and western artists in general, such as photographers, writers, visual artists, painters and poets. A number of artworks in these spaces are for sale due to the fact that the museum should cover expenses (rent, insurance, etc.) bearing in mind that a percentage of 10% of the income in general, should be addressed to the city hall of Emmen which supports the Museum in many ways.

## **Collection history**

All the objects of the core collection so far have been donated by their artists. The subcollection of scrolls about the Dalai Lama has been donated by the Tibet Museum of Dharamsala. The objects of the subcollections and books have been donated by individuals, publications artifacts are donated by the museum's director. A series of traditional Buddhist objects have been inherited from his ancestors. Other objects come from a Bhutanese Monastery Sekhar Lhaxhang, situated in South Central Tibet, at the border to Bhutan.

## **Expansion of collections**

The Museum is currently working on the documentation of core collections and therefore will not make any large changes in the existing collections.

However, it can be expanded any time by the living Artist Tashi Norbu. Selected creations could be added in the existing collection at times. This arrangement makes for the overrepresentation of his artwork in the museum. To counter this, the museum wishes to purchase artworks from major Tibetan artists whenever the budget allows for this. Other major methods of acquiring contemporary Tibetan art are exchanging gallery artworks as well as taking on long term loans. Any such assistance in the expansion of our collections is of course greatly welcomed.

## **Documentation and research**

Befitting of a Contemporary Art Museum, artworks of this Museum are constantly moving around the world. The museum's leadership recognizes the need for documentation of objects and has systematically documented details about the artworks. Currently, the core collection, the photograph collections and family altar artifacts collections have been entirely documented.

The rest of the artifacts, as a large collection, will take more time. Publications about the museum, but also about Tibetan art in general, form a large collection and will take more time to be registered. The museum makes use of Google Sheets to get a systematic overview of our collection for the museum's leadership and volunteers. This overview is not yet available for the

public, although the museum can always be contacted for research projects.

Whenever new art comes in, an entry form is available, from which the information is transferred to said google sheets document, where all information on objects is gathered. The Museum volunteer team is working on the possibility of adding photos of the objects into the document as well, although this will take more time. We will finish the registration of various publications in due course, this is dependent on temporary exhibitions and the availability of volunteers.

### **Conservation of collections**

As the Museum focuses on Contemporary art, the cultural value far exceeds the

historical value. Most works in the museum have been made in the past few decades; the museum does not employ any methods of active conservation. In the case of physical damage, artworks made by Artist Tashi Norbu can be restored by same artist.

Passive conservation is done through physical protection of the major works. There is not yet any need for climate control. The museum will consider this when expanding the collections of artifacts to include even older objects. Considering the museum's mission, we will not focus on this expansion at this moment.



# Audience

## Target audience

The museum distinguishes several target audiences:

### Visitors to temporary festivals

Visitors to festivals are our largest audience every year. Visitors to cultural festivals are generally enthusiastic about visiting nearby museums and getting to know different cultures. Our museum therefore attracts thousands of visitors when Emmen hosts another festival. We play into these interests by alerting festival visitors about the existence of the Museum. We keep the Museum open on festival days and put up a stand with information and museum goodies.

### Citizens of Emmen and surroundings

The museum is a popular attraction for citizens of Emmen to visit on their days off. Enthusiasts of Asian culture see this as an interesting place to learn about one of the more obscure but highly engaging cultures of the largest continent in the world.

The museum is a popular place to spend a weekend afternoon with the family or a small group of friends, or students of the nearby universities. The majority of visitors are senior citizens living in the neighborhood. We hope to increase visits from this audience, by regularly hosting temporary exhibitions with engaging subjects.

## Culture lovers

This audience is a large part of the makeup of the previously mentioned groups, but also a target audience by itself. The museum's probability of reaching this audience is far greater, though some effort is needed to alert even the most enthusiastic culture lover. Part of the strategy to attract this audience is to be added to the register of Dutch museums.

## International audience

As the only museum in the world that has a core collection on contemporary Tibetan art, we appeal to people that have affinity with (Tibetan) Buddhism as well as contemporary art. These people can be found all over the world, from Germany just over the border, to Tibetans on the other side of the world.

## Presentation

The museum of contemporary Tibetan art relies heavily on visual presentation. We therefore take care to present the museum in a neat but culturally authentic way. We aim to achieve a balance between an environment that will allow for concentration on individual artworks and the traditional expression of Tibetan visual art, music and the occasional unity of the two in live performances.

Currently, the museum is focused on providing every piece of the core collection with information visitors can use to more deeply understand the object they are looking at. The core collection currently consists of over 20 objects, all on display in the museum. Objects of

supporting collections are regularly switched around, although in-house temporary exhibitions on a large scale will only be organized after works are entirely documented.

Improvements we want to make to the exhibition of the permanent collection are to provide more introductory texts to different parts of the permanent collection and changing exhibitions. More information per individual object is also desired. By elaborating on the objects through the labels the museum wants to give a more cohesive view on the permanent collection.

Another way to elaborate on the story of the permanent collection is the making of an audio tour. The audio tour will be in addition to the object labels and will provide a deeper layer to the story of the accompanying label of an artwork. The audio tour will be available in Dutch and English. The audio accompanying Tashi Norbu's objects will be recorded with the Director's voice. We aim to have the audio tour before the end of 2019.

### **Temporary exhibitions**

The museum aims to regularly provide temporary exhibitions in collaboration with international Tibetan artists, or make artworks involving Tibet or Tibetan Buddhism. The network that the artistic director Tashi Norbu has built as an artist, helps in establishing various cooperatives. For instance, a few names that he wishes to work with in the future, besides Contemporary Tibetan Artists, are Ai Weiwei and Marina Abramovic. The museum tries to have at least one temporary exhibition a year, made with cooperation of around 10 Artists each. In addition, individual works are loaned to

the Museum to be shown as part of the usual displays.

### **Publications**

The museum has released one art book just before the official opening. This serves as an introduction to the subject of contemporary Tibetan art by Tashi Norbu. Two further publications are being planned such as an audio tour and an art book referring to the core collection, which is still growing, involving major Tibetan artists. The information we have on the core collection can be more easily spread among the public.

### **Contemporary Tibetan Art Book**

At the moment, this is the only published art book in the world that specifically focuses on contemporary Tibetan art. The artistic director, as well as other Tibetan artists are mentioned. The book is widely used by Tibetans in India in an effort to be informed on the details of the contemporary Art, and it has even been used in schools.

### **Other works**

The Museum is currently planning to publish another art book, this time not focused on Tibetan art in general, but to systematize information we have available on the core collection. We hope to educate the public about the details of our collection.

To guide visitors and provide them with information, an audio tour for the most important pieces is in the works. This tour can be used when personnel tours are not available, and will provide visitors with information on the works that would

otherwise not be available. The information in the collection's art book and the audio tour will therefore partly overlap.

### **Educational policy**

As a small- to mid-scale museum, we do not regularly participate in formal educational activities. We do, however, organize regular workshops for art lovers to participate in. These workshops usually involve the use of Tibetan buddhist imagery, where participants are taught to paint in similar styles to the museum's collection. Another way the museum wants to extend its educative material is by providing an audio tour with the exhibition (see: Publications).

### **Hospitality**

In order to create more publicity and a network around the museum the objective the upcoming years is to establish a community called the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art Friends (MOCTAF). With a community of members we hope to gain a network to fall back on concerning volunteers, services and sponsorships.

### **PR-activities**

### **Social media**

As the museum is always focused on spreading interest in Tibetan culture, we are active in using all means to reach as large a public as possible. The museum recognizes the popularity of social media and actively uses it to connect to a larger public. The museum has its own Facebook and Twitter page, while the director uses his own pages to post updates on his

artworks. We also plan to use an Instagram account for the museum to reach an audience that does not use Facebook or Twitter. News about workshops and exhibitions is spread in this manner, connecting with art lovers from all over the world.

### **Website**

For those already familiar with the museum, the website is an ideal way to provide potential visitors with more information about our collection. The strictly necessary information is already available, and we aim to make information on the collection public as soon as it is fully systematized. While we use this as a means to achieve greater transparency about the collection, including the parts that are not on display, this feature would also provide (potential) researchers with any necessary information.

### **Newsletter**

The museum is informing subscribed public and external parties by sending newsletters. These are sent as well as published on the website of the museum. The upcoming years this schedule will be maintained.

### **Websites of external parties**

The museum is listed in the online 'Museum Gids Nederland'. As a museum we want to have a wider reputation in the regional area in order to attract a regional public. In order to do so we want to connect to Dutch websites targeted at inhabitants of and tourists to Drenthe and especially Emmen. In the upcoming year

we will contact various organizations and ask to mention the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art on their website. Examples are the following:

[www.drenthe.nl](http://www.drenthe.nl)

[www.museum-info.nl](http://www.museum-info.nl)

[www.emmenmaakhetmee.nl](http://www.emmenmaakhetmee.nl)

[www.emmencentrum.nl](http://www.emmencentrum.nl)

### **Publications:**

In order to approach the type of public that has not heard of the museum and therefore did not connect with the social media or the website, the museum has been mentioned in a few publications. For a small fee the museum has been mentioned in the following publications by Tourist Info Emmen:

'Vriend van Tourist Info Emmen 2019'

Guide 'Emmen en Omgeving 2019'

Besides these publications, flyers in Dutch, German and English are put regularly in public spaces in Drenthe. The Museum aims to continue this type of marketing to reach tourists in the area.

As one of Emmen's more popular attractions, the museum's activities are popular subjects in local newspapers. Temporary exhibitions announced through newspapers can be considered free publicity, which is the reason we regularly reach out to the press during such events.

### **Activities**

By participating in festivals and organising performances in collaboration with other organisations the museum tries to stimulate its reputation and relate to a wider public. These activities will be continued the upcoming years.



# Business operations

## Housing and Security

The building that houses the museum had a previous function of a restaurant. The dining area is made into an exhibition space while the former kitchen and storage rooms are currently in use as the museum's studio as well as storage space for the artworks that are currently not displayed in the museum. The lay-out for storage is not yet ideal for the objects of the collection. A point of interest is making the storage facilities of a better quality in order to conserve the collection. Separating the functions of the rooms per collection type will enable us to conserve the collection more appropriately.

Recent points of interests are the size of the museum and the collection. Various artworks are not hung in the museum because of a lack of wall space. The director wants to make room by:

- Putting some of the exhibited artworks in storage of the already overrepresented artists.
- Making more displays available by putting up two more walls in the museum.
- Reusing the space that is currently used as a studio to be used for the storage of artworks instead.

In order to establish a better climate for preservation of the artworks as well as ensuring safety of public and intern personnel, work will be done on isolation of the walls and floors of the building and

installing air conditioning to maintain a good temperature throughout the seasons.

## Staff and Organization

The main source of manpower in the Museum of Contemporary Tibetan Art is volunteering work.

A form of "Museum Friends" planned to be established in the near future, which could be a potential source for recruiting new volunteers.

We are currently registered in the V.I.P. Emmen (Vrijwilligers Informatie Punt) which is the main source of our volunteers. Other local people or people throughout the Netherlands, who are following our mission, work at the museum on a volunteer basis. Some are working part time or from their home via the internet. During Museum operation hours we have part time volunteers as follows.

### Part time

2 receptionists

2 persons for maintaining museum and gallery cleanliness

2 persons working on maintenance and preservation

3 persons working on public relations

1 filmmaker

1 photographer

2 graphic designers

4 Musicians which accompany Artist Tashi Norbu during his Tibetan Mantra Lounge

## Fulltime

- 1 accountant
- 1 manager
- 1 artistic director

The non-profit Foundation "Tibet House Holland" governs the Museum and ensures that all actions concerning personnel volunteers are taken, in accordance with the policy and legal procedures. In the future, we would like to focus more on the education of volunteers in their respective roles. In due time, tours will be available for the public, given by the artistic director, the manager or a trained volunteer.

## Volunteer policy

The museum currently has a brief volunteer policy. Although most applicants are accepted, whether to hire a volunteer is dependent on their availability, skills and motivation. At minimum, volunteers are expected to speak a basic level of English to ensure fluent communication.

Not all volunteering positions are open at all times. Since the museum director and manager are in charge of educating and managing volunteers, the number of hires will be according to the needs of the moment. Currently, the greatest lack of volunteers is in permanent reception desk work and a temporary position of art work registration into the database.

## Insurances

The Museum has an insurance ever since its opening two years ago. This insurance concerns protection of the collections against natural or man-made disasters. There is appropriate security against theft



and damage in displays or during exhibitions.

## **Finances**

The board of Tibet House Holland ensures that there are sufficient funds to support Museum expenses as well as to develop Museum activities. We strongly believe that our successful registration would enable us to achieve a respectful income and funds in order to invest in the Museum. In the coming years financing would be achieved by workshops made by artist Tashi Norbu, live painting performances, and 'Tibetan Mantra Lounge' recitation. The income from these activities is donated to the museum by involved personnel. We will participate in different cultural events and festivals, as well as gain income from sales of the Gallery space and Museum shop. New expenditures are expected in order to obtain new assets, improving existing ones, start new projects, as well as improve museum PR, maintenance, equipment and technology.

Our aim is to get funds or subsidies from various organizations, companies and even individuals who share the same vision about the preservation of Tibetan Art and Culture and the message of environmental awareness in Tibet and the world.

In the first years after the opening of the museum we tried to make it as accessible as possible for the public to come in and learn about the collection and mission of the museum, thus not asking an entry price. Our mission was to teach the Dutch public about the preservation of Tibetan Art and culture, as well as promote environmental awareness about Tibet and the world. This approach, however, led to a shortage of funds and an irregular income, since income was only gained from the sale of artworks and souvenirs from the museum shop. Although we wish to continue with this approach, once we have gathered data about the number of visitors we may start experimenting with one or two days of free entry a week. In this way, we will try to strike a balance between improving the museum's quality through income, and achieving the museums goals of making the public more aware of Tibetan culture.

Another method by which income will be generated is the organization of sales exhibitions in the gallery part of the museum. Half of the income will go to the concerning artist, the other 50% will go to the museum. Multiple exhibitions will be organized every year, and they may last for about one month. The first of these exhibitions will take place in October 2019.