



Cultural Heritage & Museums Netherlands

## "Rijksmuseum occupied in another act of climate activism"

*"Climate activists from Extinction Rebellion blockaded Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum on September 7th, protesting ING Bank's sponsorship. Demonstrators occupied the entrance, and tied themselves to the gates of the museum site, criticizing ING's fossil fuel financing. The museum closed for the day, with XR vowing to continue protests."*

On Saturday 7th of September, Climate action protesters and activists tied themselves to the gates of the museum site, and occupied the entrance hall, preventing visitors from entering. The occupation was part of a climate action protest concerning ING Bank's financial support of the cultural institution.

A banner outside the blockade said that ING is 'the biggest Dutch financier of toxic and unsustainable oil, gas, and coal,' stating that the bank is "fueling the climate crisis" and "destroying our planet and the future of life on it. The spokesperson for Extinction Rebellion, Josefian Van Marlen stated 'By accepting money from ING, the museum gives the major polluter the opportunity to hide its dirty face behind famous works of art from Dutch history.'

ING bank is currently responsible for 0.6% of the museum's sponsorship. A spokesperson for the bank wanted to defend the museum, stating that the bank's financial investment is an issue

for the bank, not the Rijksmuseum. The spokesperson noted that 'we are always open for dialogue', Deutsche Welle reported that day.

Museums and cultural centres are a target for climate action groups, with campaigners focusing on divestment from oil sponsorship and what they deem as other environmentally harmful industries. One of the most notable interventions was Just Stop Oil's action in 2022, where two protesters threw a tin of soup over a Van Gogh painting at London's National Art Gallery. Kneeling before the spoiled masterpiece they asked shocked onlookers, 'What is more important, art or life?'

XR, founded in the UK by Roger Hallam in 2018, has hundreds of local action groups around Europe. The group uses explicitly peaceful measures including activist actions to target and disrupt public events and cultural spaces. The protestors at Saturday's occupation wore jackets with a similar message: ***no art on a dead planet.***

Though the climate protestors were removed by early Saturday afternoon, the museum remained closed to visitors for the full day to ensure visitor comfort and safety. They have since installed nighttime security personnel.

Extinction Rebellion [XR] campaigners said in a statement that they will keep coming back 'as long as the Rijksmuseum continues to be sponsored by ING, the largest financier of oil, gas, and coal companies of all Dutch banks.'

image credits: Extinction Rebellion NL