

## Wim Crouwel's postzegels

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### PRESS RELEASE

Art needs to be special.

Nobody has ever said unironically that an object is so commonplace, so boring, so quotidian and so utilitarian that it must be art. And few things are more ordinary, utilitarian and widely available than a definitive postage stamp.

Yet at times, commonplace objects are nevertheless highly considered and extremely efficacious. The definitive postage stamps that Wim Crouwel designed for the Dutch postal service in 1976 are such objects. They were used for nearly thirty years before being discontinued in 2002, when the Euro was introduced as the new currency in the Netherlands.

The constraints that a stamp places on a design is well suited for the deeply rigorous design principles of Wim Crouwel. In such a small space a design must be hermetic, in order to be understood without any problem by millions of people. Yet such a design also has to be open, to allow for future changes in denomination and so on. Additionally the design has to be somewhat difficult to reproduce, to avoid counterfeiting. The design needs to be complex, but simple, closed, but open, unremarkable, yet distinctive, and I don't think these opposite demands have ever been better unified than in Crouwel's stamps. They are a world class piece of design that was delivered daily to people's houses for over thirty years and it's this simple fact we wish to celebrate with this exhibition.

A simultaneous consideration were the similarities between the collecting of stamps and art. They are two worlds that resemble each other, yet rarely seem to mix. As far as I can tell, the biggest difference between these two activities is that stamp collecting is mostly a solitary practice, based on study and attention to minor details, while for many art collectors the social aspects and personal relationships of the art world are important motivations for their activities.