

title: Material history

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case: Ger van Elk, *The wider the flatter*, 1972

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Material history of 'The wider the flatter'

Case researcher: Sanneke Stigter

1972

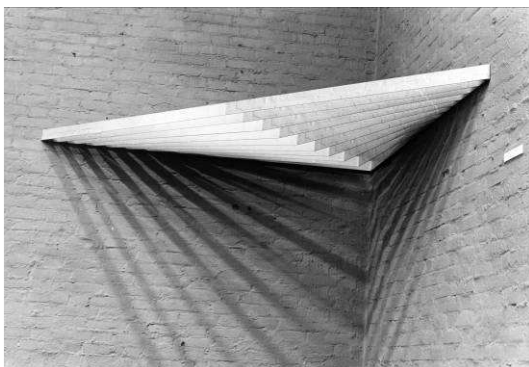
'The wider the flatter' was first realized end of 1972 / early 1973 for the Van Abbemuseum and thus the initial photographs on the aluminium structure showed the wall of a corner of the Van Abbemuseum.



Ger van Elk, 'The wider the flatter', 1972
During exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum 1973
Photo: unknown photographer, image from 35mm slide kept in KMM archive

1973

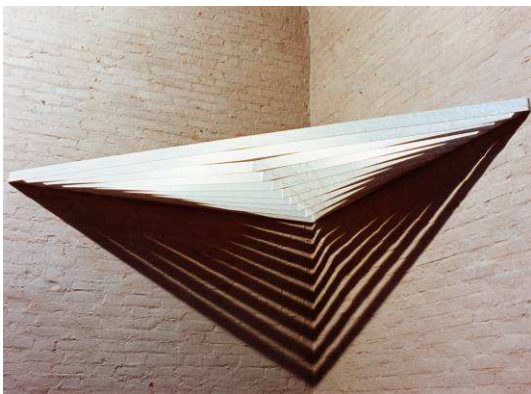
The same year these were replaced by new chromogenic prints related to its new site after acquisition by the Kröller-Müller Museum in 1973.



Ger van Elk, 'The wider the flatter', 1972
Inventory photograph, after 1973
Photo: unknown photographer, negative nr. 12505/4, KMM archive

1976

After a loan to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam in 1974, at which occasion the photographs were not replaced, 'The wider the flatter' got damaged during transport to the next venue Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels in 1975. There is no condition report or photographic documentation known, but apparently the photographs got damaged so severely that new prints needed to be made. The course of action is documented in correspondence between the Kröller-Müller Museum and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and in a report by mister Hoefsloot, the technician of the Kröller-Müller Museum who replaced the final photographs in 1976.

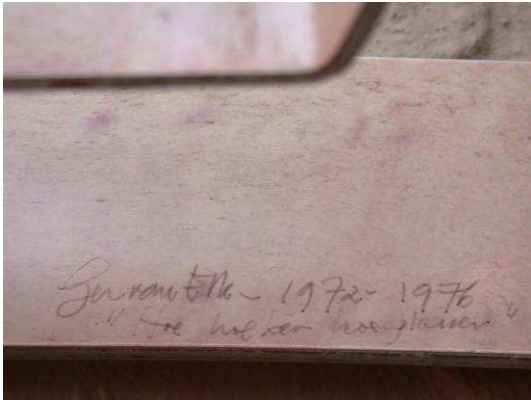


The wider the flatter, possibly the rejected version with new prints, judged too light by the artist?
Photo: unknown photographer, image from 4 x 5" Ektachrome kept in KMM archive



Possible working photo or the original take for the production of a new version of 'The wider the flatter'.
Photo: unknown photographer, image from 4 x 5" Ektachrome kept in KMM archive

Two 4x5" Ektachromes were found in the photo archive of the museum that were probably made at this time for 'The wider the flatter'. One shows a rather pale version of 'The wider the flatter' in the Kröller-Müller Museum, presumably the version with the new prints from the original negatives that dissatisfied the artist because of their lack of contrast. This was why a new photograph was made of which probably the other Ektachrome in the archive is the result. It shows the wall with colour bars adhered to it and some tape marking the total width of the artwork.



Ger van Elk, 'The wider the flatter', 1972, 1976
detail of new signature from 1976
Photo: Sanneke Stigter, KMM November 8, 2004

So completely new photographs were taken and new prints were made. After completion of at this time Ger van Elk signed 'The wider the flatter' with two dates: 1972-1976. 'The wider the flatter' had been on display for a long time from 1976 onward, but is not known until when exactly.

1996

First written document about the need for a conservation treatment of the Wider the flatter (no photographic documents).

2007

Newly made photographs adhered over old ones – see conservation report by Clara von Waldthausen.

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http://www.insideinstallations.org/artworks/detail.php?r_id=533&ct=research