



Local Heroes

The attraction of a modern city is not only determined by its rich history, splendid cultural venues and abundant culinary offerings, but also by the people who live and work there. Gain interesting insight into Amsterdam through the personal stories of some of the most fascinating Amsterdammers: renowned figures in their own city for their contribution to art, culture and business.



Cornelis Claudius Spruyt Veas

OWNER SO ART GALLERY

“I hope to spread the love of art”

In the Spiegelkwartier you can find a small gallery called So ART. But don't let its proportions fool you.

Inside are many hidden treasures. You might stumble upon a drawing by Matisse, a study that Dalí did or an original litho by Kahlo. Cornelis Claudius Spruyt Veas is the very proud owner of the place.

The little gallery hasn't gone unnoticed and among Cornelis' customers are many famous people. He can't name everyone but Adele and Bruno Mars are among his known customers. His age is a secret that he'd rather keep to himself. But, for the curious ones: He has been on the Nieuwe Spiegelstraat since he was 18 and has been there for the last 35 years. So, you can do the math.

Nieuwe Spiegelstraat

He spends most of his time on Nieuwe Spiegelstraat, because he works here so often. He explains: 'I love this street! It is full of art and antiques. When you've been to the museums you stumble across into this street. Here one can buy some works of the artist that you just saw in Het Stedelijk Museum or in Het Rijksmuseum. I think that is quite unique.

“As a little boy I was so impressed by the Rijksmuseum. This is where my love for art started.”

My gallery is not only for the elite. I try to make every person feel welcome when they take a look. I hope to inspire people with my love of art. You can buy art here ranging

from €30 up to €20,000 a piece. More than 70% of the stock is priced under €300. So, you can start to buy art for a very affordable price.'

Rijksmuseum and soccer games

Spruyt Veas continues: 'My grandfather was a businessman and took me into Amsterdam as a child. We went to soccer games, went out for lunch and visited the Rijksmuseum. I was so impressed by the Rijksmuseum as a little boy. This is where my love for art started.

My first piece of art was a drawing I bought when I was 12 years old. It's a drawing that I've kept by an 18th century Roman artist. I noticed people really liked the drawing and wanted to pay lots of money for it. I've kept it and never sold it. From that experience I learned two things:

1. I have a good eye for art and 2. People are willing to pay money for art. That's the way I got into the business.'

Carry Gang

He tells about one of his favourite artists, Carry Gang. 'She walked in here ten years ago. I had no idea who she was. We decided she would send me one of her paintings, and we would see if it would sell. I told her to send me a small piece. So, a few weeks later this huge truck rolls up. She sent me a work of 2 by 1 meters. As you can see, it is hard to fit a piece like that through that door. We managed to fit it in anyways. And it sold in about two weeks. Now I go and visit her every year in New York and I've never stopped selling her works. It's very interesting work. All the different layers give it great dimension and depth. The lineworks are her interpretation of the view she has of Central Park in New York.'

The most beautiful job

This, to me, is the most beautiful job in the world. Every time I walk through the gallery, I have that special feeling inside. I'm making people happy with art. I have the privilege of working with beauty and making people enthusiastic about art. I really love what I do. I am open every day and work about 7 days a week. But it doesn't feel like work.

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Don't be shy to take a look

His enthusiasm and love for art is contagious. Every piece in the gallery has a story which he tells you all about. On the wall is a piece by Damien Hirst. 'Some people say it portrays London's 'medicine cabinet' of the eighties. The colours of the dots are said to be the ecstasy pills of that time. But you never know if these stories are true.'

Even if you keep asking the stupidest questions, he answers them gently and with much patience. But before you know it, you might have bought a piece of art. So, go and have a look and be surprised at So ART gallery. ■

S So ART GALLERY
Nieuwe Spiegelstraat 46
soart.nl