

**title: Installation history**

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

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## Installation history

Initially Ger van Elk's 'The wider the flatter' had a different appearance because it was made for a different location. This look lasted only during two months, the length of the show. Shortly hereafter the Kröller-Müller Museum acquired the work and it was adapted to its new surroundings by covering the structure with new photographs. The wider the flatter had remained like this ever since for nearly 35 years.

**1973 Ger van Elk, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven**  
05.01.1973 – 28.02.1973



Photo: unknown – slide reproduction

The idea for 'The wider the flatter' was created at the end of 1972 and realized for Ger van Elk's solo exhibition in the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. Therefore the photographs on the sculpture were different from the current ones and showed the part of the wall of the exhibition space in which it was installed in front of. These were white painted textile covered walls. The work is depicted in the catalogue of the exhibition in black and white: Ger van Elk, Van Abbemuseum, 1973 on page 25.

### 1973 Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo

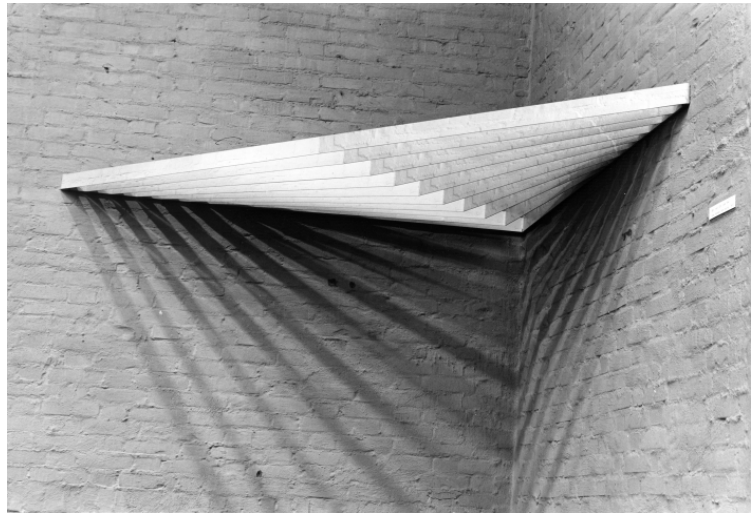


Photo: Kröller-Müller Museum  
Neg.nr.12505/4

The Kröller-Müller Museum acquired 'The wider the flatter' at the time it was exhibited in the Van Abbemuseum through Art & Project. Ger van Elk and the former director of the museum Rudi Oxenaar had chosen a location for the work in the Kröller-Müller Museum, in a corner that is approached by small steps. René van den Bichelaar, the same photographer who had made the first photo, was commissioned again to take photographs of the wall at the new site in the Kröller-Müller Museum and the resulting prints replaced the ones that were used in the Van Abbemuseum context. Because the idea was that the photographs on the work had to reflect the specific site it was positioned, the work got a fixed status, a site-specific position. The idea at the time was that this would stay this way. According to the former director late Rudi Oxenaar there was never a question of moving the artwork around.

**1974 Ger van Elk, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam**  
15.11.1974 – 08.01.1975



Photo (detail): Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, neg.no. A12810

A year after the Kröller-Müller Museum had bought the work, Ger van Elk wanted to show the work in his solo exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. This was arranged and 'The wider the flatter' was shown outside its site related context. To clarify the meaning of the work an explanatory photograph of the installation in the Kröller-Müller Museum was hung beside the piece. This was all arranged like this upon request of the artist himself. At that time, no one had the idea of changing out the photographs for this occasion.

**1998 Loan request**

24 years later the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam asked the 'The wider the flatter' on loan again for an exhibition around Dutch artist Ad Dekkers from 20.06-23.08.1998. This time the request was not granted. The Kröller-Müller Museum argued that the work was not displayable on any other site but the one in the Kröller-Müller Museum where it was made for. Additionally it was noted that the work was already in a very bad condition.

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