

# Met Blanje Bewapend - Research Statement

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Met Blanje Bewapend (Armed With White) is a critical installation that reflects on the monopoly of violence of the dutch police-force, and its escalating threat to people's lives and their right to protest<sup>1 2</sup>.

By showing a current day officer with a Bornean inspired 'Mandau sword' in the style of their present visual language, the work recontextualizes the past of the police force, and the absurdity of their current use of Indonesian<sup>3</sup> rattan shields.<sup>4</sup> The protester in the scene uses a wicker shield in defense as well, but in this case the shield is made from local willow-trees.

Since 2019, the Dutch police have been increasingly violent<sup>5 6</sup> and have been investing in more heavy weaponry that threatens people's lives<sup>7 8</sup>. This has an escalating effect that resulted in an increase of violence by people to the police in 2019, 20 and 21. However, whereas violence to the police decreased with 12 percent in 2022, violence by the police keeps increasing.<sup>9</sup>

The work juxtaposes archival images from the 1820s with present ones, pointing out the similarities between native Indonesian warriors, Dutch colonial military "politieele acties", the Dutch "Marechaussée" (military/border police) and the police. By looking back at the historical context from which this monopoly of violence arose, the work draws a line from the Dutch colonial military weapons and war techniques, to the Marechaussée, to the eventual adaptations in the formation of the militarization of the Dutch police force from 1919 to the present day.<sup>10 11 12 13 14</sup>

The title of the work refers to 'white weapons' (swords, such as the Klewang) that the Dutch police used in confrontations until 1957. Therein, the word 'white' is replaced by the old Dutch synonym 'blanje', taken from the description of the Prince's Flag: 'Oranje, Blanje, Bleu' (Orange, White, Blue),<sup>15</sup> the colonial-era predecessor of the current Dutch flag. For instance, it was used in the colonial flag of 'Dutch East India Company,' 'VOC'.

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1 Article on investigation demonstration right (Amsterdam, Platform Investico: 22-03-23) <https://www.platform-investico.nl/artikel/onderzoek-demonstratierecht-in-de-knel/> (accessed 25 June 2023)

2 Article on containment demonstration right (Amsterdam, Amnesty Nederland: 14 november 2022 ) <https://www.amnesty.nl/actueel/inperkingen-demonstratierecht-nederland-in-strijd-met-de-mensenrechten> (accessed 25 June 2023)

3 Article on the rattan history in Indonesia (Blogspot on Rattan: 26-03-2013) <https://rattancenter.blogspot.com/2013/03/rattan-history-in-indonesia.html>

4 Herman Oozenbeek, Jeffrey van Woensel, Frank Bethlehem *Een Krachtig Instrument* (The Hague, the Nederlands Institute of Military History: 2014) P.134

5 Article on increase of police violence (Amsterdam, Controle Alt Delete) <https://controlealtdelete.nl/articles/geweldsgebruik-door-politie-neemt-weer-toe#gsc.tab=0> (accessed 25 June 2023)

6 Article on new official instruction of Dutch police (Lilith Magazine: June 2022) <https://www.lilithmag.nl/blog/politie-mag-onder-nieuwe-ambtsinstructie-mogelijk-meer-geweld-gebruiken> (accessed 25 June 2023)

7 Article on more weapons against rioters (Amsterdam, Controle Alt Delete) <https://controlealtdelete.nl/articles/politie-wil-op-nieuw-meer-wapens-tegen-relschoppers#gsc.tab=0> (accessed 25 June 2023)

8 Article on new official instruction of Dutch police (Amsterdam, Controle Alt Delete) <https://controlealtdelete.nl/articles/wat-staat-er-in-de-nieuwe-ambtsinstructie#gsc.tab=0> (accessed 25 June 2023)

9 Article on decrease in physical violence against police (Amsterdam, Controle Alt Delete) <https://controlealtdelete.nl/articles/fysiek-geweld-tegen-de-politie-daalt-met-12-procent#gsc.tab=0> (accessed 25 June 2023)

10 Article on the arrival of the military police force (Apeldoorn, Politieacademie) <https://www.politieacademie.nl/thema/Politiegeschiedenis/canonpolitiegeschiedenis/Pages/22DekomstvanhetkorpsPolitietroepen.aspx> (accessed 25 June 2023)

11 Pierre Heijboer *Klamboes Klewangs Klapperbomen* (Bussem, Unieboek: 1977)

12 Gert Oostindie, Ben Schoenmaker, Frank van Vree *Over De Grens* Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press B.V.: 2022) P. 31

13 Patrick Zanders & Jelle Janssens *Militarisering van Politiefuncties in Postconflictgebieden: Is er een Plaats voor de Civiele Politie bij Gemengde Vredesoperaties?* (2010)

14 Krijgsmacht en Politietaken (Den Haag, Boom Juridisch: 2018) P. 31

15 Jeroen Visser *Prinsenvlag is omstreden, maar kent lange historie* (Amsterdam, de Volkskrant: 2011)