

Johannes-Harm Hovinga

A quiet and sunny September day 1976

It was on a quiet and sunny September day, five years after the realisation and just two kilometers west - northwest from one of the most important land-art works world wide (Broken circle-spiral hill, Robert Smithson 1971) a child was born. No wise men from the east or three kings, just his mom giving birth and his dad and sister around. No one could imagine yet that that the work of Robert Smithson would influence his life years and years after.



Johannes-Harm Hovinga, Weerdinge, September 20-1976



Broken Circle

Water, sand, and boulder

Diameter: 140 ft. (42.6 m); canal: 12 ft. (3.6 m) wide, 10-15 ft. (3-4.5 m) deep

Photo: April 2022

Let's press fast forward: 2012

2012, it wasn't that sunny anymore, death looked like a sunny place in paradise.
A little black spot slowly growing and managing my life around it, a black spot called depression.

It was 2012, after 10 years of running a business in garden and landscaping, I made a choice, a choice to give up everything I ever known.

A hard reset was needed, managing my depression and not my life around it.

I made a choice, a choice inspired by my youth a choice for a life in art,
What was I thinking..

As a kid I was already fascinated by the work of Robert Smithson, Broken circle - spiral hill, in a sand quarry just outside Weerdinge. It was my first contact with art where I was playing as a young child up and around the work, where I did go for a swim on the warm summer days.

When growing up the work made me more and more aware of the influence we have as a human on our environment, it made me aware how the landscapes in the Netherlands are completely designed, planned, manmade, it made me curious in and about life, the work learned me to look with a different eye to everything around.

My other inspiration for my step in the art world I found in words, words that echoed in my head since a day in the late nineties.

In neon letters reading them at the main train station of Eindhoven The Netherlands

"Conventie, een soort herinnering, is het grootste beletsel om te genieten van het leven en kunst".

"Convention, a kind of memory, is the greatest hindrance to enjoying life and art.

Piet Mondiaan

Standing there for over 15 minutes, reading those words over and over again.

2012 - 2013



Fragmented society 1, 2012

Where it all started in 2012, a first step in art.
110m2, Emmen the Netherlands.



Fragmented society 2, 2013

In the end of 2012 the organisation of the Elephant parade in Trier Germany contacted me to be part of this outdoor exhibition and auction in Trier Germany in 2013 to raise awareness for need of elephant welfare and conservation,

For this I made this work based on Fragmented society 1.

The orange shoaling fishes on the elephant are representing the people in our society who are very well connected through social media by facebook, twitter, instagram, but at the same time more divided than ever and alone in our fragmented society.

Fast forward again: 2020 - 2021.

Really what was I thinking..

After years of experimenting, traveling, making mistakes, being homeless for a while, hurting people, making bigger mistakes, climbing up, falling down and in repeat even falling harder and deeper. I learned what love means, I learned to manage the dark.

And as always when you least expecting it, one last push off the cliff of the familiar to get up (covid 19).

I learned accepting my self in being me, I'm not a saint and not perfect at all, and you know what? That's completely okay, where I'm happy that death isn't that sunny place anymore.

CTRL+ALT+DEL a soft reboot, with all the knowledge and experience I've gained so far.

No mask, no pseudonym, just me; Johannes-Harm Hovinga, with my not so fancy name at all in the art world and with all my imperfections in our fragmented society.

My curiosity for and about life, the way in which I live and the choices I make and I've made, lead sometimes to admiration, and at the same time to envy or even dislike from others. This dialectic works as an inspiration for me. The dialectic multiple perspectives in live makes me want to explore, to question, but also to provoke, to disturb, and with that to inspire, and to be connective in the search for new answers. Where in art we have the responsibility to make visible what is invisible, the responsibility to record what should not be forgotten, the responsibility to speak up for those who cannot, the responsibility to create awareness,