Theo Bos and the rest of the time

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We know what the average Dutch person does between, say, 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. He works. Solidly and with dedication. Overall, we can count on a reliable workforce. Come on, around January he is leafing through some holiday brochures 'in the boss's time'. Just enough to give a hint of guilt towards the employer and well short of being seriously accused of negligence. In those half minutes of pseudo-freedom in which he withdraws, he actually feels quite human for a moment. And then he put in 200% again. He is proud of his work.

But then the time comes and without delay we rush through those damned eight and a half full hours of Rest Of Time. Just try to keep your cool.

But what does a Dutch person do in that compact and threatening mass of hours, which we are used to referring to with the euphemism Free Time? In the Netherlands sixteen such hours are measured per day. A monster. Let there be no misunderstanding about that. It is a national problem that constantly threatens to disrupt society. If the trade union movement in this country negotiates a reduction in working hours, it is an unmitigated form of solidarity with those who are burdened by Free Time 24 hours a day. The aim is not to work less, no, they collect working time for those who are not so well endowed with boss time.

You thought that a Dutch person is frugal with money. Ha, money is time! Sixteen hours is a desert of time. A barren plain where the sower cannot reap. What you have to drag yourself through, thirsting for a reason, an explanation for this existence. That is where we are truly unfree; slave of the Great Nothing, idleness. The devil's ear

cushion. Come (again), for we sleep seven hours; we eat a few times a day (preferably a lot of sandwiches from a plastic container brought from home), but then the time comes and without delay we rush through those damned eight and a half full hours of Rest Of Time. Just try to keep your cool.

Everything is good as long as it takes a lot of time. Spare time? Oh, don't talk to me about free time…

Theo Bos dared to do it. He witnessed the hours of our shame, our original sin. Theo Bos documented the shame of Dutch idleness: a widespread organization of pseudo-work with which we can neutralize those shameful hours of oppressive freedom. He photographed record attempts *swimming backwards, preparing sour will, baking pancakes, milk carton boat building* (worth a print for that find alone. But make no mistake, the real skipper must acknowledge his proud superiors, visibly defeated). Above all, we are known as breakers of the 'endurance record': *roof sitting, cow milking, pole sitting, high chair sitting, pinball*...

You name it. Any alibi will do. Everything is good as long as it takes a lot of time. Spare time? Oh, don't talk to me about free time: the debt burden of the world, that's what it is. Christ bore the cross for relief and the Dutchman drags leisure over his shoulder. The heavier, the better. He does this thoroughly and with dedication. Let there be no misunderstanding: we recreate seriously, organized and prepared for our task. Now you need to scroll back to the photo's of Theo Bos. Because if there is no record to break, you have to find something else that can make sense of that remaining time.

In the Netherlands people do not take time off for National Holidays, they work on Labor Day

Theo Bos is ruthless. He has also recorded this as a subject in his series: recreation in the Netherlands. Source of misunderstandings. Object of orchestration and careful

organization. You will see a dropping of Airborne troops in Arnhem to commemorate a failed liberation. In the background the only ridge in the Netherlands. Above it, American soldiers are, in the truest sense of the word, recreating; floating in the air, out of the game. Down there those who, on behalf of their childhood or their parents and grandparents, contribute diligently and with dedication to a form of volunteer work that we call Remembrance.

An eight-and-a-half-hour activity (in the Netherlands people do not take time off for National Holidays, they work on Labor Day) that preferably places demands on our endurance and our arch supports. After all, we are not here for pleasure. You could call this, after Nietzsche, an “unzeitgemässe Betrachtung”. Retroactively we step forward to receive our liberators according to our nature. And so we are still left to figure in a history that so painfully surprised us in an unguarded moment. See us standing there in Napoleonic battle array under that graceful stave of descending, dancing American jazz tones. The fanfare has rehearsed a new march night after night in the previous months. We are forgiven.