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## **Beatrix Ruf, former Stedelijk Museum director, cleared of alleged conflicts of interest**

**Report commissioned by Amsterdam city council finds that she complied with Dutch regulations**

**MARTIN BAILEY**

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Beatrix Ruf stepped down as director of the Amsterdam museum last October Michael Stewart/Getty Images

Beatrix Ruf, the former director of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum who resigned last October, has been cleared of alleged conflicts of interest in a report commissioned by the city council. The findings of the investigation, which had been due to be published later this month, were leaked to AT5, an Amsterdam television company.

Ruf stepped down after Dutch press reports suggested that her Swiss-registered private consultancy Currentmatters compromised the modern and contemporary art museum, which accepted works on loan from owners she advised. She was also accused of failing to disclose arrangements surrounding a large donation of works to the Stedelijk by the German collector Thomas Borgmann.

The city council's 120-page report, compiled by the legal specialists Sjoerd Eisma and Jan Peeters, focussed on whether Ruf had complied with the Dutch cultural governance code. The authors argue that there is no reason to doubt Ruf's integrity, although as a museum director she should not only have followed the wording of governance regulations, but also their "spirit".

The leaked report is critical of the Stedelijk's supervisory board for its handling of the affair. Yesterday evening (12 June), three of its members resigned, including the acting chairwoman Madeleine de Cock Buning. "In the best interests of the museum, it is time to bring the recent turmoil to an end and start afresh," they said in a statement.

Amsterdam's mayor and city council will consider the report shortly. Meanwhile, the Stedelijk is being run by an acting managing director, Jan Willem Sieburgh.

In a statement, Ruf thanked the researchers. "Contrary to stories in the press, the independent investigators concluded I always acted with integrity; all side activities were approved; and I never ran an art consulting business on the side," she said. "But above all, I was touched most by their conclusion that I always put my heart and soul into the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Because I did."

**UPDATE:** On 13 June, the remaining four members of the Stedelijk's supervisory board—Cees de Bruin, Ronald Hans, Willem

de Rooij and Joyce Sylvester—announced that De Bruin will serve as interim chairman until a permanent chair can be recruited in consultation with the city of Amsterdam. The board "will take steps to improve its performance" in light of the report, they said.