

# The new standard

It is quite an interesting thing to know that the year that the order was given was the year 1965 and the year Oxenaar finished his last banknote of the series, the 250 guilder banknote was in 1982. Almost twenty years of work is in there. In a book about the history of Dutch banknotes design I read about the struggles and the slow development stage the design process tended to stay in. It was noted that the printer and designer were frequently behind schedule. I read it as if they were suggesting that Oxenaar was slow in progress and lazy in his deadlines. Then I read an interesting **lecture of Oxenaar** that he gave at a design congress in 1987. It appeared to me that Oxenaar wasn't lazy at all. The reason it took him so long to make the banknotes was the fact that he first had to break through a conservative tradition of printing. Formerly designs of new banknotes were handed in to the printer works, and coming back from the printer the design was sometimes unrecognizably changed. The printers pinpointed at the fact that this was for security reasons. Oxenaar didn't want to rest with this and suggested further and further on cooperation between the printer works and the designer. It took him a lot of effort to convince the Bank of the Netherlands to let him get an insight of the printer laboratory, but when his relationship with the printers improved he got a 'yes'. This resulted in a journey where Oxenaar could follow all the complex steps that had to be taken in the printer matters. Staying that close to the process he was able to guarantee his stamp on the design. I think it shows some guts and pioneer ship to keep on going with the clear vision in sight of making on the one hand a useful design for everybody and on the other hand capturing the personal touch.

The importance he gave the design was clearness. No more searching around for the right banknote in your pocket. The image, the typography and the color should guide you in the right direction. This resulted in the clear and brilliant colored bills of his final design. In this design the developments that resulted from the intense cooperation between the printer works and the designer are clearly visible. From new engraving technologies to the perfection of the watermarks, all the developments are in there. Technicians even tend to say that it is the most advanced banknote in the world.