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XOXO The Mag
The Holland – Turkey
Annex

Celebrating
400 years
of creative exchange



Featuring: innovative designers, young artists, fashion shoots, Rotterdam's architecture, Utrecht's galleries, Amsterdam's fashion, Eindhoven's design and the coolest hot-spots in Holland

Hi there!

Welcome to this paper celebration of the 400-year relationship between Holland and Turkey. In 2012, it has been exactly four centuries since the Dutch envoy Cornelis Haga presented his letters of credence on behalf of the Republic of the United Provinces (now Holland) to the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire. This event marked the start of a relationship focusing on trade. This trade aspect between Holland and Turkey still exists, but the two countries share a lot more nowadays. First of all there are 380,000 people of Turkish origin living in Holland and uncountable Dutch tourists visit Turkey each year. Besides this physical exchange, many swaps and collaborations take place in the field of art, design, fashion, music and culture. This XOXO Annex focuses on the people that are either up-and-coming or already dominating talents in the creative scene in Holland. They are for example Jos van Tilburg, the CEO of the renowned denim label G-Star, but also the amazing shoe designer Marloes ten Bhömer, young artist Yuri Veerman and the experimental graphic designers Pinar&Viola.

The latter is a duo that is half Turkish – half Dutch: a perfect illustration of the strong relationship between Holland and Turkey. Besides focusing on talented creatives, this annex tips cool typical Dutch places to visit whilst in Holland and highlights brands from the Netherlands to keep an eye on in Turkey. We put exciting projects in the spotlight, like the International Architecture Biennale that takes place in Rotterdam but also has a Test Site in Istanbul, and celebrate Dutch photography with a special shoot by the up-and-coming Gidi van Maarseveen featuring fashion from Dutch designers. We hope you enjoy reading, seeing and feeling this special edition of XOXO The Mag, made by and about Dutch young creatives; be inspired to find your own connection with the Netherlands, Dutch projects and brands. We share so much more than trade and a love for soccer: the creative Holland-Turkey relationship is here to stay.

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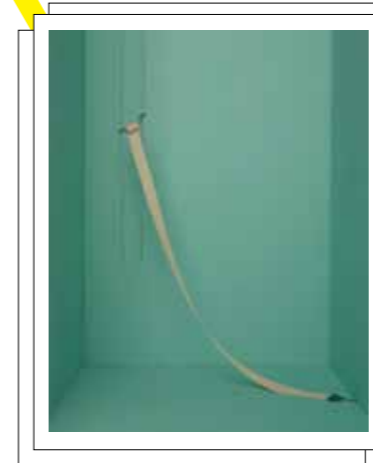
Introduction



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The SS 2012 fashion collection by Maarten van der Horst is a colourful explosion of Hawaiian floral prints and pastel-chique items, captured here in floating moments by the talented photographers duo Meinke Klein.



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The harbour city Rotterdam is known for its modern architecture. This year the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam takes place, with a Test Site in Istanbul. Besides this special event, Rotterdam has many more cool places to discover.



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Dutch young artist Janneke van Leeuwen uses her background in psychology to observe and capture visual abstractions of everyday life in her photography. Her constructed images are both aesthetically attractive and disorienting at the same time.



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Holland has so many interesting projects, cool places, nice stores, cute cafes, great parties, edgy magazines, beautiful museums and fashionable brands to offer; it's impossible to name them all. But we tried anyway in this list.

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The City is not the Problem, but the Solution

What role can architecture and urban design play in an ever-expanding metropolis such as Istanbul? And what is the economical and political importance of such larger-than-life communities? Making City, the 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam that opens on April 19, hopes to tackle such questions. 'Man is rapidly developing into a urban species – Homo Sapiens Urbanus.'



'Wait, I'll show you an image.' George Brugmans, director of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, presents a sheet of paper with a small diagram. The diagram shows two lines depicting the population growth and urbanization over a few centuries. 'Compared to, let's say, the past two hundred thousand years, the last two hundred years demonstrate an incredible increase in population, accompanied by an extreme urbanization in the past century. The Homo Sapiens is rapidly developing from a non-urban- into an urban species: Homo Sapiens Urbanus. We are in the middle of this development and yet we do not fully grasp what is going on.'

Brugmans leans back in his chair and continues: 'The city is an extremely complex construct, probably the most complex thing we have ever created. We are already building cities for 20 million inhabitants, while we really have no clue how to do this. Just imagine, what if the prediction that Delhi will have 95 million inhabitants by the end of the century turns out to be correct? Close your eyes for a second. How are we going to make that city?'

How to make the city? That is the central question of the 5th edition of the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), an extensive architecture event in Rotterdam. Ever since its foundation in

2001, the IABR has aspired to be more than just a big bi-annual exhibition. The program is comprised of eight exhibitions (six of which will take place in the Netherlands, the others in Istanbul and Sao Paolo), several conferences, film screenings, lecture series, publications, and debates. As if that isn't enough, the IABR has joined forces with the Dutch broadcaster VPRO to launch a multimedia program around the Biennale, with radio, television, and internet productions loosely centered around the theme of the IABR: 'Making City'.

Remarkable features of this Biennale are the so-called Test Sites that the organization has set up together with local city administrators and stakeholders in Istanbul, Sao Paolo, and Rotterdam. The Test Sites are essentially long-term programs in which research is connected to actual urban projects. The objective is to develop projects with the support of parties that are rooted in the local environment, and create local alliances dealing with site-specific questions and challenges.

This approach originates from IABR's belief that in this age of tremendous urbanization the role of the architect is fundamentally changing. There is no longer room for the visionary Architect – with a capital A – that imposes his plan for an Ideal City upon an empty terrain, a tabula rasa. Nor does the pragmatic one-size-fits-all urban planning of the last decades uphold. The days of generic planning are over, declares Brugmans. 'Cities have become too complicated to be left to the will of one party, whether it be the State, the Market, or the Architect. Tailor-suited alliances of architects, politicians, social scientists, market parties and residents will have to ensure that cities of tomorrow will be habitable, despite their incredible size.'

The Test Sites are also exemplary for the way the IABR tries to sidestep academism. As the historian

Test Site: Istanbul

Asu Aksoy is the curator of the Test Site in Istanbul that is part of the 5th International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) 2012. Trained as an economist, she now lectures on subjects like Urban Studies, Cities, Culture and Globalisation at the Cultural Management department of the Bilgi University in Istanbul. We asked her a few questions.

Why is Arnavutköy such an interesting Test Site for IABR?

Arnavutköy is a peripheral large district of Istanbul, bordering on the Black Sea. Here, you can see how the city is taking over the natural areas as it grows. In this area of beautiful rolling agricultural fields you experience the shock; you see how the city is moving towards its edge. The city life with its vehicles and expansive cemented surfaces takes over and starts multiplying, destroying the local values. I suggested Arnavutköy as a test site of IABR because here you can really feel the issue of 'Making City': Istanbul is a sprawling metropolis on a growth trajectory, transforming its edges, peripheries and non-urbanized areas. This dramatic change poses serious challenges like the sustainability of the city as it is expanding towards the protected water and agricultural areas. No matter how authorities try to stop this, it is happening. Even though authorities agree that sustainability is the key question of the 21st century, it seems that we lack palpable mechanisms to make this principle work in reality; and then, the inevitable happens, while we think, the city keeps expanding. Arnavutköy is the objectification of the quest of our times: how to fulfill the needs of people in Istanbul without losing sight of this central issue of sustainability.

Pictures: Erasmus bridge © Hannah Anthonysz
Arnavutköy area © Arnavutköy Municipality



Spiro Kostof famously said: architecture is a social act. Communities shape buildings, but are, in turn, also shaped through the act of building. The IABR takes this social dimension of architecture very seriously. The organization is founded on the conviction that architecture and urban design are a public concern and that they have to contribute to the standard of housing and living of billions of people. Because of the almost perplexing size and significance of this task, the Biennale cannot be merely an 'academic exercise', states Brugmans. It has the duty to seek strategies and practical applications for the future, and to live-test them. 'If you are working for the future of the city, it is morally questionable to do so only on a theoretical level.'

The location of Test Site Istanbul is the Municipality of Arnavutköy. In 2009 the IABR and the municipality started Atelier Istanbul, a joint venture of architects (H+N+S Landscapsarchitecten from the Netherlands, 51N4E from Belgium), city administrators and academics and the biennale, the Bilgi University lecturer Asu Aksoy and the Belgian architect Joachim Declerck (Architecture Workroom Brussels). The Strategic Vision and Action Plan for Arnavutköy developed by the Atelier has recently been accepted by the municipality. The next phase entails the development of design proposals. The first pilot projects will be realized in 2014. (See frame text)

The IABR had several reasons to choose Istanbul as location to launch a Test Site.

'First of all, because it is one of the oldest examples on the globe of this concept we call city.' explains Brugmans. 'But more significant is that, where the European cities have basically stopped evolving over the last decades, Istanbul is right in the middle of an explosive process of growth. For me Istanbul is – perhaps together with London – the only really dynamic metropolis on the European continent.'

Reinventing Rotterdam

IABR is housed in a building called the 'Schieblock', a postwar office slab located a stones-throw away from Rotterdam Central Station. Brugmans' office is located in the corner of the building and provides a terrific view of the Coolsingel – the city's most prominent street. This street embodies the complicated past, present, and future of the city. Rotterdam was heavily bombed during WWII, demolishing the entire city centre apart from a handful of monuments that could be salvaged.

Brugmans' desk overlooks one of the few buildings that was saved after the war: the Old City Hall. In a few years OMA's new city hall, consisting of stacked glass cubes, will loom up behind it. The high-profile project bears testimony of the ambition of the city council to market itself as the 'City of Architecture'. The city already houses buildings by star architects such as Alvaro Siza, Norman Foster, and OMA, and the swan-like curve of the Erasmus Bridge (UN Studio) is arguably as recognizable as a city icon as the Eiffel Tower or the Aya Sofia.



Sexy as this type of city branding might seem, it is not what the IABR proposes with 'Making City'. The IABR does not endorse solipsistic super buildings by starchitects as a strategy to boost the reputation of a city – often called Bilbao effect, after the effect that Frank Gehry's Bilbao Guggenheim presumably had on the economic regeneration of the impoverished city in the North of Spain. Brugmans: 'The IABR does not regard the city as the territory to accommodate the market, but as the catalyst for the cultural, social and economical emancipation of its residents.'

Whereas the story of Test Site Istanbul is a tale about unprecedented urban expansion, sometimes at the expense of the environment, the Test Site Rotterdam tells a story about what happens to a city when it stops growing. After the war Rotterdam was rebuilt along the lines of modernist urban planning, with broad avenues colonized by motorized traffic and delineated by concrete office buildings. In the following decades several redevelopment waves washed over the central district, resulting in a kaleidoscopic gathering of buildings from different periods and styles. Somehow this peaceful coexistence of buildings matches the diversity of the population of Rotterdam, that prides itself in being the most multicultural city of the Netherlands.

'The theme of this area is economic stagnation. This area has become a backside, an island in the urban fabric,' says Elma van Boxel from the architecture firm ZUS [Zones

How does Istanbul fit in with the other Test Sites of IABR like São Paulo and Rotterdam?

Rotterdam has different problems: as it is working on a central business district it is trying to find new functions for empty office spaces. Shrinking cities and 'dead spaces' are a key challenge in Europe. The opposite is happening in Istanbul: here we have growth related issues. It is difficult to see where the city starts and ends. Identity, feeling part of the city, does not work in these cities. How do you talk about making city when its residents, to begin with, are mainly connected to the city agenda through the promise of growth? There are similarities between São Paulo and Istanbul, but in Istanbul the particular concern is the ecological future of the city: how do you balance growth with the environmental sustainability? This question is posed as if they are contradictory dynamics, like they cannot mix. In our IABR project with the Municipality, we started from this position, to somehow see growth as something that needs to be stopped or contained in order to open space for sustainability. But as we went ahead, our perspective shifted: we began to see how growth and sustainability can actually feed one another in a positive relationship. Just saying no to growth doesn't work: people need to earn money, and people keep looking for new places to build, but, of course do not see agricultural areas as anything but as real estate potential. The key issue is to make urban citizens see the value of agricultural lands and water areas and show why we should keep them. Citizens are the ones who have to protect the areas. How do you make people understand that these are the assets of the city?

Atelier Istanbul © Arnavutköy Municipality
Vertical City De Rotterdam @ OMA
Arnavutköy area © Arnavutköy Municipality

The City is not the Problem, but the Solution

Written by Roel Griffioen and Lisa Goudsmit

Urbaines Sensibles]. Van Boxel and fellow ZUS partner Kris Koreman are the curators of Test Site Rotterdam. ZUS and the IABR are neighbors – in fact, there is even a secret passageway between the two offices.

It is an understatement to say that Van Boxel and Koreman are familiar with the challenges this area faces. When architecture firm ZUS was founded in 2001 they settled into the semi-squat office building Schieblock, which was built smack in the middle of the area that now designates the Test Site. Meanwhile ZUS' presence has contributed to the transforming of this building into a collective site of collaborative creatives and semi-public spaces. Further plans to demolish the office block have been postponed until at least 2015. Right next to the Schieblock shiny late-modern office towers of the Weena district soar up against the winter sky. In the 1980s the Weena burgeoned into a metropolitan business district modeled after American cities, but since the financial crisis it lost most of its glamour. Nowadays the once prestigious towers look somewhat outdated. Elma van Boxel points out the window. 'That tower over there is empty. The building you see over there will also be abandoned in the near future. That's not pretty, but in our view vacancy also creates new opportunities. What if we can create student housing in those buildings?'

Schieblock is just one of many projects that ZUS set-up as part of the IABR. Other projects include a 'city factory' to design and make street furniture that can immediately be implemented in the surroundings of the Schieblock, and a wooden pedestrian bridge financed by crowd funding. What all these projects share is a sense of pragmatism. Van Boxel: 'In our view "Making City" implies looking at reality. We have to stop building utopia.'

The New Orient Express Notwithstanding the obvious differences, there are also certain characteristics that connect Istanbul and Rotterdam, states Brugmans. Both are ports, for instance. 'Rotterdam has one of the biggest ports of the world. That implies that it is an open city, because it is completely dependent on global economic developments. Exchange with other major ports such as Shanghai, Sao Paolo and Istanbul is vital for Rotterdam.' The two cities can help each other in their development, according to Brugmans. 'The mayor of Arnavutköy and the mayor of Rotterdam are both trained as engineer, and the mayor of Istanbul is an architect. That helps. They understand each other.'

In Brugmans' view, politics in the Netherlands is preoccupied with national affairs. 'In the Netherlands politicians are overly concerned with the question how we can integrate the outer world in our country. Instead the question should be how we can integrate our tiny country in the outer world – how we can make sure that we'll stay connected. In former times the Orient Express went from London to Istanbul. The new Orient Express will go from Istanbul to Shanghai. Then the question will be whether we as Western-Europe will still be part of it. That's an interesting problem.'

'Just think of Byzantium and Constantinople and you will be reminded that Istanbul has been hugely important in the history of European continent, and had a tremendous influence on the formation of what we now call 'Europe'. A growing number of urban regions nowadays transcend national borders, but Istanbul is still the only city that exceeds the border between two continents. It is a junction between worlds. Istanbul is not the same as Turkey. If Turks from the Netherlands or Germany emigrate back to Turkey, they move to Istanbul. The dynamic of this city – call it the

dynamic of the Global City – has, in some ways, more to do with what happens in Rotterdam or Paris than with what goes on in East-Turkey.'

The exponential urbanization is often seen as the cause of problems. Brugmans argues that the city should be regarded as a solution rather than a problem. 'Around 2040 more than half of the world population will live in cities that surpass 10 million residents. These cities are the locus of innovation, creativity but also of economic activity. That's where welfare is being produced, and even with a smaller ecological footprint than in the countryside. It is in the cities that we should look for the answer to the question how to set course for the future. It is the city that has to accommodate our prospects.'



I think the answer to your question is that the young people of Istanbul should come to the biennale.

What can they expect to see?

Yes, definitely! In October 2012 we are taking the Arnavutköy project and a selection from the 5th Rotterdam Biennale to an exhibition in Istanbul, that we are organizing at the old water distribution center in Taksim. The theme is 'Making Green City Istanbul', and it is a collaboration between the IABR, Arkitera and the Arnavutköy Municipality. The location of the Istanbul exhibition is symbolic for the importance of water in cities, and we will have a multi-faceted programming that we hope will encourage people to think about the relationship between water, agriculture and urbanization.

It all sounds very optimistic, but is it realistic?

During the biennale process we brought together authorities that don't often come together to express their common concern. This is a very good start, since there are pressing issues, like the third bridge that is being planned on the Bosphorus that cuts right through the agricultural heart of Istanbul. It can be a disaster or the damage can be minimized by steering urbanization in such a way that it contributes to the very protection of the lifeline of the city. But this requires all authorities to concur on a programme of green urbanization by developing a circuit of dependency between urbanization and agricultural, water and forest areas. In order to do this, the city should be made in such a way that what is now seen as inert and un-urbanised becomes productive, adding value to the city and its identity. It is obviously an ongoing project and the biennale is just a stop on the way.

Luchtsingel: bridge over Schiekade © ZUS

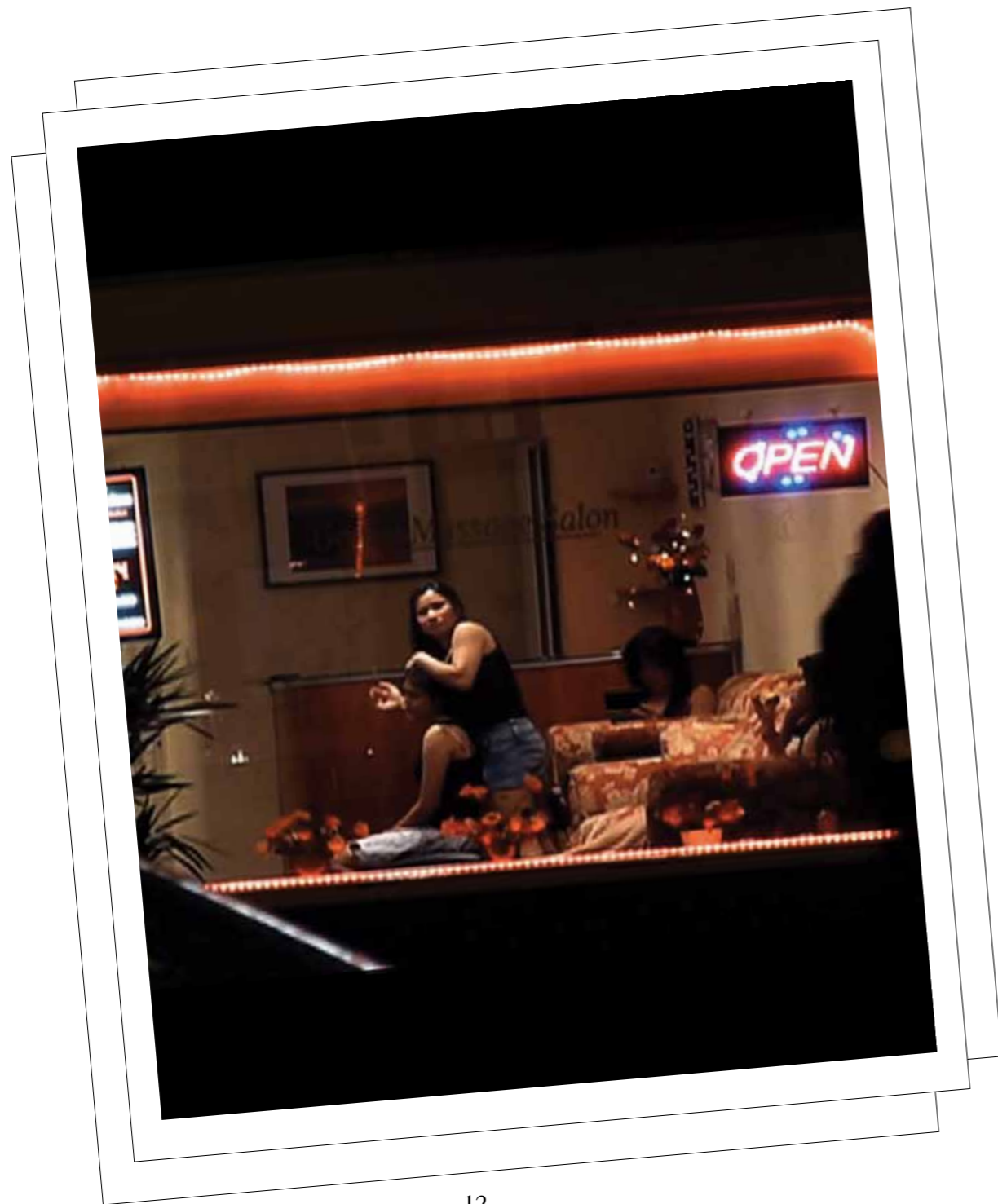
Luchtsingel: seen from above © ZUS

www.iabr.nl

www.zus.cc

Happy End?

'Some may describe Amsterdam as a multicultural city with inhabitants that are open-minded, culture-loving, kind, smart and intellectual. Tourist-guides mainly describe the bicycles; a metaphor for equality and democracy, the coffeeshops; a postcard-illustration of our 'free minds' and the red light district, which shows that we believe in equal rights and equal job opportunities. As an artist, living in this great city for many years, I force myself to take a step back. From time to time I try to observe my surroundings through the eyes of a stranger. Is it that wonderful? Are we so open and friendly? Am I really welcome here?'



All images: Happy End (videostills), 2011 © Maartje Smits

Written by Maartje Smits and Jaron Beekes

'Last year I noted that Chinese massage-salons were popping up everywhere around me. Even though I had never had a massage, I could not really believe that there was enough business for all these small parlors. Also, the way these ladies were sitting in the shop windows, waiting for the next customer, dressed for a beach party, did not fit my image of the professional salon.'



I wondered if this sudden increase of Chinese salons had anything to do with the "cleaning" of the red light district, by the Municipality last year. I wanted to investigate this matter more closely. So, I took my spy-camera and went for my first massage. During this visit I did not get many answers.



My masseuse could not or did not want to talk to me about her job. I left the parlor even more intrigued. What was it she offered? What did I want from her? I figured my approach needed to be more daring, more direct. Therefore the second visit I asked for a foot-massage, on my toenails I had written the words "Happy End?" Another visit, another attempt, everything documented with a spy-camera. This resulted in a short film called Happy End. In the film I share my questions, observations, desires and fears I had during the massages.

For me this personal approach is essential. As a filmmaker I want to be genuine.



Therefore I have to step off the pedestal of the objective observer that sees it all, knows it all. I have to be on the same level as my subject. Only through this vulnerability, this intuitive and subjective research-method, can I tell a story. There is just as much at stake for me as for my masseuse.



At the moment I am working on the myths of Amsterdam, which can be

massage salons, all-you-can-eat-restaurants, banana-shows or bachelor-parties. I think these are faces of my city that need to be portrayed in a personal subjective way. At least that is how I like these stories; through fictional infiltration, poetic intervention, subjective observation. I hope it does them right.'

*Maartje Smits (1986), artist and poet, lives and works in Amsterdam. Happy End and other films are to be seen on www.maartjesmits.nl The films also feature on the DVD *Binnenstebuiten Zwemmen*, which can be purchased via the same website.*

Ecstatic Surface Design

Pinar Demirdag and Viola Renate form an independent graphic design duo which creates hyper detailed surfaces by 'scanning' the contemporary visual culture, and 'printing' ecstatic surfaces in return. Their work invites the viewer to experience a kind of visual ecstasy in front of our two-dimensional surfaces. That's why they started using the term 'Ecstatic Surface Design' to frame their graphic design practice. Ever since 2009, one year after they met at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam, they have been sharing this vision of what their graphic design should be about. As Pinar&Viola, they initiated a new modus operandi in the cosmos of graphic design which is an experiment on the fulfillment of surfaces. Every year, they'll be launching an autonomous Ecstatic Surface Collection which tends to be recognized as the 'haute couture' of their practice.



How would you two describe your work?
It is best said in this description written by Erika Spray, commissioned by Étapes Magazine: 'Pinar&Viola is an independent graphic design duo which creates hyper detailed surfaces by 'scanning' the contemporary visual culture, and 'printing' ecstatic surfaces in return. Colossal visual gestures, hyper intricate detail and excessive embellishment fill their collaged designs to the brim. The highly artificial character of Pinar&Viola's work testifies the 'flat' media sphere made up of solely recycled material. By transposing, fusing and altering its elements, they aim to subvert conventional compositions. These notions all collapse into one single surface of visual insatiability and informational intensity.'

Can you tell us something about some of the work you have done in the past?
Every time we have a new ecstatic surface design commissioned, it's always dramatically different. We so far made commissioned artworks for the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and the Cobra Museum, made patterns for fashion designers, a cover and video for Diplo, a porn site, company video for a technological company which makes eyes for cyborgs and stained glass windows for a synagogue. This sometimes creates a daily oximoron in our outfit choices for meetings with clients. On occasions we had a meeting planned in the same day with a rabbi and the porn site client. Next to our commissioned practice, we launch an autonomous graphic design collection called Ecstatic Surface Collections every year. So far we launched The Credit card Collection 2011 and Diva Opaque: Anonymous Guardians of Intimacy 2012. We see these collection as the haute couture garments of our design

practice, where we reflect on the contemporary, while imagining fictive scenarios for the future.

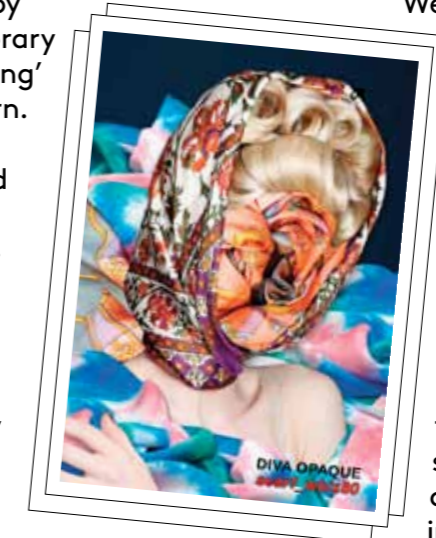
What is your work process like?

We both separately make a research around the theme, later on come together and start composing text files which seek for one notion / idea / image which will tingle our minds and will make us fantasize. We continue searching until we both find an idea which makes our hear beat stop for a second. We create separately for a little while, and come back together in order to start the ping-pong game. The file is

transferred between our screens until it's hand crafted a la haute couture. In that stage if we both like the result, that means that something is majorly wrong. We both need to be disturbed by the image somehow. It should be sexy yet monstrous in the same time. Sometimes, even if all the ingredients are in there, the image is still not convincing. We call the unnamed missing element 'the x-effect'. Our surfaces are composed of so many layers that if one thing is extra or missing, it would easily look 'off' or misunderstood.

Do you think your work has any drawbacks?
From hours of digital craftsmanship, we both have RSI, repetitive stress injury, also known as the mouse sickness among folk. I guess we weren't clever when we decided to restore the dignity of ornament and decoration without the crippling weight of nostalgia.

What do you love most about your work?
Everything! From scanning the digital, contemporary, folk, cultures, to print special edition, custom-made fanatical, overloaded, seductive yet confronting surfaces. From updating our blog



where we display our fascinations and fantasies, to hours of despair when we are looking for an idea. But I guess where we have the most fun is when we have a tight deadline and we wish a day is 50 hours, not 24. There, we go to our summer house in Amsterdam, and stay there for couple of days or a week where we feed ourselves with peanut butter, chocolate and energy drink and play ping-pong with digital files. And the thing which is less heart-lifting is the opening or the launch of a new project. We are the only ones bored in the room, thinking 'What is next?'

You have a rather unique style of art that you create. Tell us about it, and how you developed it.

We consider style a nostalgic visual reference, used in a situation where the context is over imposed to its content. Beyond style, each surface of ours embraces a different message that we keep on delivering. Even though a general over-loaded, flamboyant, disorienting and ecstatic etiquette might be placed; throughout its content, elements outshining the surface differs. It was right before we started our practice, at the Sandberg Instituut, that we decided to create ecstatic surfaces as a rejection of the standardization and democratization of design and it's software, making the 'hand-crafted' originality vanish. More politically speaking, our surfaces are a commentary on the dominant rigid Western modernistic 'outfit' and suggested return to decorative traditions a statement about the relationship between Western and non-Western cultures.

What was your first contact with art?
Pinar: It was the beginning of my teen-

age hood, mum was holding a Pirelli Calendar. She replied 'It's Art' when I asked her why she was staring at naked women. After seeing my eyes devoid of content, she later added that it will take time for me to understand the difference between Art and naked women. As impatient as a kid on energy drink, in my path to understand Art, I did everything to fast forward the time with the pre-googleian research tools of 90s. Viola: The first art in my life was my mother's art and her craftsmanship skills. Thanks to her multi-talents I was surrounded with sculptures, paintings, early computer drawings, embroideries and woodworkings starting from day one. Obviously my first cuddly toy was made by her.

What is the driving force behind your inspiration?
Strategies, notions, ideologies, subcultures,

technology, behaviors, etc which reflects the year where we live in. From creative hair etchings to self-made internet ghetto gold vendettas; from celebrities attacking paparazzi to luxurious orthodox religious accessories; from low in luxury USB pendants to high in decadence, diamonds engraved in credit cards; from electronic cigarettes to food art; from Steve Job's monotone clothing style to Ghaddafi's decadent dictator wardrobe, etc. Basically, we take our inspiration from contemporary conflicts, paradoxes, oxymorons, ironies, optimizations, fanatics, disorders, powers, esoterics, counter glamour and the heat of the info glut. We also prefer to be transparent about our inspiring sparks and muses.



We have a blog, www.pinar-viola.com/blog, where we upload our found treasures. They are all results of our online and offline (in real life) trips, while traveling with our 'ecstatic radar' switched on.

Has there been a particular project or client you found to be the highlight of your career so far?

Yes, it's the first ecstatic video we did. In the beginning of December, we were negotiating with Mad Decent boys, for a possible music video, based on the cover artwork we did for Diplo. The thing is, we preferred not to communicate that we didn't put a static image in motion so far. Meanwhile, we got an assignment to make an 'artistic' promotion video for a Spanish technology company making chips for cyborgs' eyes. Yes, we're kind of an glam-odd-magnet when it comes to assignments. No one believed that we could pull off a hyper filled 3min video in less than a month, not mentioning that we never made a video before, and that Pinar had RSI during the entire month. This assignment, Vera Focus, made us realize that we'd love to be drawn in the endless ocean-wide world of video making, the next best thing in our practice.

Do you believe in a secret to success?

We don't think it's any secret. Be stubborn, obsessed, driven, in love with what you do, dedicate all your time, remix your privileges, don't take no as an answer, take action in a moment when nobody expects, work harder than any urban-myth-hard-working-youngster story

you heard, and have at least one person in the world who agrees with you.

Is there something you'd like to achieve?

As everything else, when it comes to our aims, they are also over-loaded. We aim to blur the line between art and design, to put spotlights on graphic design among its sister creative practices, to put back the dignity of ornamentation, to be able to have an intellectual discussion around the end 20th-and-beginning-21st-century forbidden-art-critic-word 'beauty', and to be 75 years old and still working together.

What's next in your career?

Any big projects coming up?

We are currently extending our practice to Istanbul. Now we're busy preparing our Ecstatic Surface Collection 2013, which will be launched in Istanbul in May 2012 in Murat Pilevneli's new project space.

All images:

*Diva Opaque - Anonymous
Guardians of Intimacy
Ecstatic Surface Collection 2012
© Pinar&Viola*



Mind Sofa

So what brought you here?

I have always had the feeling I don't really understand the world around me, which often makes me feel very insecure and incapable. I wish I could make more sense of it all.

Why do you think photography could help with that?

Photography is about observing and understanding life. It functions very similarly to how psychologists look at people and try to make sense of their behavior, which I find very fascinating.

You were educated to be a psychologist yourself, why did you give up on that?

Whilst in university I was mostly drawn to neuropsychology because it tries to find basic structures in the brain underlying the individual thoughts and behavior of people.

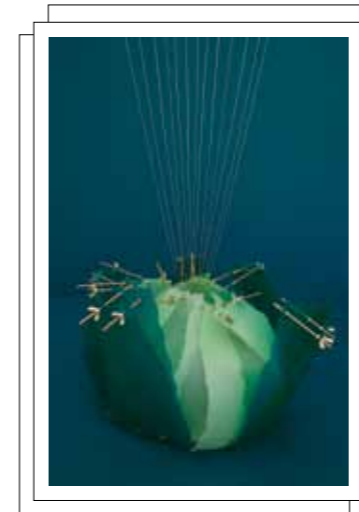


Bonding Room # 1, 2009

Written by Janneke van Leeuwen

What I found very interesting was the idea that despite all the apparent differences between people, there is a common ground in our minds regarding the way we interpret the world around us. However, I discovered during my internship at a rehabilitation centre for patients with brain trauma that I was not suitable for the actual practice of a neuropsychologist. The personal tragedies of the patients affected me too much, but it was not for another two years after I graduated though that I dared to go to the Gerrit Rietveld art academy in Amsterdam.

Blind Spot #2, 2011
Negative Space #1, 2011



Do you approach photography as a neuropsychologist?
In a way I do try to make visual abstractions of everyday life in my photography in a similar way a neuropsychologist might try to identify basic structures of human behavior in the brain, but of course this is strongly influenced by my personal perspective.



So I don't pretend to be scientific, but what I try to do is to construct images that can be understood intuitively based on material, form and dimension associations instead of by an everyday context.

How is your photography influenced by your own experiences? I have had a string of strange illnesses in my life and have been in the hospital many times. Because of this I am strongly aware of my bodily vulnerability and I constantly feel I'm somewhere in between immersing myself in the chaos of everyday life and retreating into the clinical distance of the scientific world.

Expanding room #5, 2009
Stripped Room #2, 2011



Connecting and disconnecting therefore plays an important role in the subject matters of my photography, which is also clear in the materials I choose. Some series are very personal, as for instance the 'Stripped Rooms', which is about the mental deterioration of my mother who suffers from Alzheimer's disease.



Other works come about by my general fascination with signs of detachment from the world. Like for instance the 'Negative Spaces'. In this series I tried to visualise an awareness of negativity in space and took inspiration from an infamous Japanese suicide forrest near Mount Fuji.

You seem to have a rather macabre view on life...
I guess that's true, yes.

Janneke van Leeuwen (1980) is a Dutch art photographer as well as a neuropsychologist. In *A Therapy Session on Photography* she interviews herself. All images © Janneke van Leeuwen, www.jannekevanleeuwen.com

Red Light Fashion Amsterdam

Strutting the streets of the Red Light District a decade ago, you'd find nothing but black leather, silver studded straps and latex attire to complement your wardrobe. Mannequins in the windows couldn't really be considered dressed at all.

Featuring:
Bas Kusters
Sjaak Hullekes
Jan Taminiau
Roswitha van Rhijn



Written by Jessica Put



Image 1,3 and 4 © Jessica Put
Image 2 © Mylou Oord

Ladies of Pleasure

Ever since the 14th Century when sailors arrived in need of some female company, ladies of pleasure have dominated the district concentrated in the heart of Amsterdam, called the 'Wallen'. The name Wallen (walls) refers to the medieval dam walls that can be found in the old center of Amsterdam. De Wallen is a network of alleys crossing several canals, which contain over three hundred one-room cabins rented by legal prostitutes who offer their sexual services.

Combining two ancient crafts

Nowadays, between notorious brothels, sex shops, nightclubs, student housing and kebab shacks, you will encounter 18 elegantly decorated window displays. These displays lead you to the inspiring work/living spaces of major Dutch fashion designers. The Redlight Fashion Amsterdam project was launched in January 2008 and is a collaboration between the municipality of Amsterdam, NV Stadsgoed and fashion recruitment & consultancy agency HTNK. The project started as a fit solution to two growing problems in the area. Young creatives and fashion designers were having a hard time finding affordable places to work and live. At the same time crime rate was rising rapidly. Now, four years later the Redlight Fashion project is the talk of the town and beyond. Seemingly the combination of the two era-old professions fit well together as the Red Light fashion project is a magnet for International attention.

Showcase of Dutch fashion

While exploring the Red Light fashion project you will get a great impression of the identity and diversity of the Dutch fashion culture. Visit rising star, Jan Taminiau, who is becoming an internationally acknowledged fashion designer. Take a peek into the workshop of a real craftswoman and discover the wonderful shoe-designs of Roswitha van Rhijn. If you are into underground streetwear be sure to stop by Bas Kusters' place.And beyond is the place to be for avant-gardist women's wear. Also The CODE gallery store is a definite must see. The store showcases clothing by Dutch designers who are participating in the project combined with some of the most directional contemporary international designers and brands, plus a selection of the finest books, magazines, art prints and accessories around.

Uniting such a diverse group of talents makes the Red Light fashion project unique in it's kind. At the same time it depicts the attitude of the Dutch (fashion) culture. The Dutch are not at all glamorous and have a practical and quirky approach to fashion. In their own way they have succeeded in presenting their fashion talents in a new and spicy manor. The project started as an experiment, to find a fitting solution to a practical problem, and has grown into a major fashion project. Along the way putting Amsterdam on the map of the International fashion scene.



All images by Mylou Oord

Bas Kosters

Multi-talent Bas Kosters is a real chameleon. He can be best described as a fashion designer with great interest for the underground music scene and performing arts. For his collection presentations he combines these worlds to create over-the-top fashion shows. Bas was born and raised in the East of the Netherlands where he attended multiple fashion schools. A huge highlight was his graduation from the Fashion Institute Arnhem with the project 'Two Teacups and a Frying Pan'. This project enabled him to compete and win the Robijn Fashion Awards, an important Dutch fashion competition for upcoming fashion designers. After winning the Robijn Fashion Award, Bas Kosters soon caught the eye of the fashion public. His latest collection is the 1,2, Tree collection, inspired by the balance between hectic city life and the peacefulness of nature. Bold prints, flashy graphics and bright colors dominate his latest collection.

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 82
1012 DR Amsterdam
<http://baskosters.com/>

Sjaak Hullekes

This young designer (30) uses his calvinistic Dutch origin as a source of inspiration. Efficiency and tradition with a modern approach are important elements in his collections. Sjaak learned the tricks of the trade during his time at ArtEZ institute for Arts and Design. Well-established names in fashion such as Viktor & Rolf, Alexander van Slobbe and Lucas Ossendrijver (Lanvin) all joined this same academy. In 2007 they introduced their men's wear label 'Sjaak Hullekes' during the Amsterdam International Fashion Week. In November 2009, Sjaak won the Mercedes-Benz Dutch Fashion Award 2009. An International jury considered Sjaak to be the best Dutch designer to take part of the International fashion industry. His latest collection 'Gemstones' is inspired by the pureness of the Berber culture found in Morocco.

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 17
1012 DA Amsterdam (by appointment only)
www.sjaakhullekes.nl

Jan Taminiau

Jan inherited a strong passion for artisan techniques and nostalgic materials from his creative family, which are all active in the world of (interior) design. He likes to experiment endlessly with form and is always on a quest to find the perfect fit. After completing his education (cum laude) at the Fashion Institute Arnhem, he launched his own women's label JANTAMINIAU in 2003. By 2005 his collections were shown twice a year during Paris fashion week. Besides his own collections, Jan designed two small collections for Claudia Strater (2007/2008). His latest collection 'Tarnished Beauty' celebrates the beauty of a woman. The collection is full of feminine, extravagant and fragile masterpieces. The combination of tarnished delicate fabrics and glittering armoured pieces create an interesting contrast.

Oudezijds Achterburgwal 60-62
1012 DP Amsterdam
www.jantaminiau.com

Roswitha van Rhijn

This designer creates high-end fashion shoes with true craftsmanship and a dose of socially conscious ideology. By means of themes and used materials she tries to draw attention to the wondrousness and beauty of all that surrounds us. At the same time she tries to bring awareness to the trend of excessive consumerism by designing a unique, fashionable product that is sustainable. Roswitha developed her passion for shoes, especially western boots, during her internship with an authentic craftsman in Oregon, USA. Her love for Western Boots has remained, her fair trade 'Wolfboots' are inspired by the Native American culture. Besides this fashionable boot-line, Roswitha also designs one-of-a-kind pieces that hardly can be distinguished between shoes or works of art.

Oude Kennissteeg 5
1012 EB Amsetrdam
www.roswithavanrijn.nl

Mary Mary

The young queen strolls around her fairytale-like gardens. She is bored. One would assume she feels happy and lucky, yet she feels trapped and frozen by the castle life. The hot pink air is almost choking her, but she will not let it get to her. Her wealth means nothing to her. The castle-rules don't matter anymore.

The cotton-candy hair dances on pale-white shoulders as the afternoon sunbeams stroke her freckled face. Eyes wide open, always hoping for better days to come. Like darkgreen emeralds, they stare into the blinding sunlight. Mary's cheeks flush pow-

dery pink as she walks around, waiting for waves of exciting adventures to lighten up her world. She is done waiting. She will create her own cooling breeze. Sheer rich fabrics hug her restless body as her porcelain toes dip into refreshing pink pools. The neon yellow dress contrasts the dazzling splatters of orange sunlight in the water. She wants to get out, walk into the real world and start her own fairytale. Dive into lakes of pleasure, smell the sweet flowery air. Dance around trees in the moonlight, smoke cigarettes on the beach.

And she will...
The door is open.



Top: Monki

Dress: The People of the Labyrinths

Top: Roya Hesam
Pants: Bas Kosters
Necklace: Stylist's own



Photography: Gidi van Maarseveen
Styling: Maaïke Peek
Hair/make-up: Charlotte Maihle
Model: Petra @ De Boekers



Dress: Maison Porter
Jacket: Bas Kusters

The young queen strolls around her fairytale-like gardens. She is bored. One would assume she feels happy and lucky, yet she feels trapped and frozen by the castle life. The hot pink air is almost choking her, but she will not let it get to her. Her wealth means nothing to her. The castle-rules don't matter anymore. The cotton-candy hair dances on pale-white shoulders as the afternoon sunbeams stroke her freckled face. Eyes wide open, always hoping for better days to come. Like darkgreen emeralds, they stare into the blinding sunlight. Mary's cheeks flysh powdery pink as she walks around, waiting for waves of exciting adventures to lighten up her world. She is done waiting. She will create her own cooling breeze. Sheer rich fabrics hug her restless body as her porcelain toes dip into refreshing pink pools. The neon yellow dress contrasts the dazzling splatters of orange sunlight in the water. She wants to get out, walk into the real world and start her own fairytale. Dive into lakes of pleasure, smell the sweet flowery air. Dance around trees in the moonlight, smoke cigarettes on the beach. And she will... The door is open.



Dress: Bas Kusters
Skirt: Sage & Ivy Price

Blouse: Sage & Ivy
Top: Monki
Skirt: Bas Kusters
Schoenen: United Nude



Mary Mary

Jumpsuit: Lhana Marlet
Purple vest: Dimitri Frenko Krul
Playsuit: Lhana Marlet
Shoes: United Nude

Photographed by Gidi van Maarseveen



Deconstructing the Headscarf

'For a really long time it was quite hard for me to say "this is what my work is about". Because my work exists of so many different things, it was hard for me to describe it all in one elevator pitch. Last year, during my studies at the Sandberg Institute (The Master department of the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam) I had one of these moments where, all of a sudden, you completely understand what you are doing.'

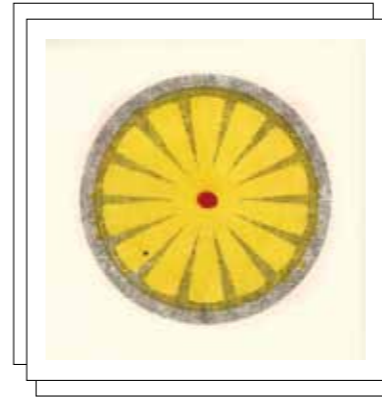


First image: Islamic Headscarf

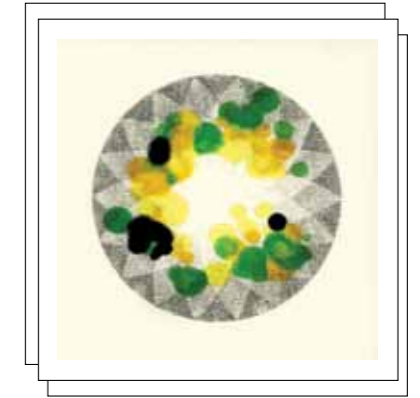
Written by Yuri Veerman and Jaron Beekes

'It was the moment I finished my work "The 3rd dimension". This work consists of no more than an unfolded headscarf, pinned to the wall; a black square of polyester fabric, and also the gateway to an endless debate: "Kosovo bans Headscarf", "Imam sues school over headscarf", "Men should wear headscarves", "Muslim woman sues Disneyland over headscarf" and so on.'

Reconstructed Shell & Reconstructed BP



The Islamic headscarf shows in all its clarity the complexity of symbols. While each religion and region applies their own cultural codes to the headscarf, and each woman has her own personal motives to wearing the headscarf, we can't seem to escape the urge to perceive it as a one dimensional phenomenon.

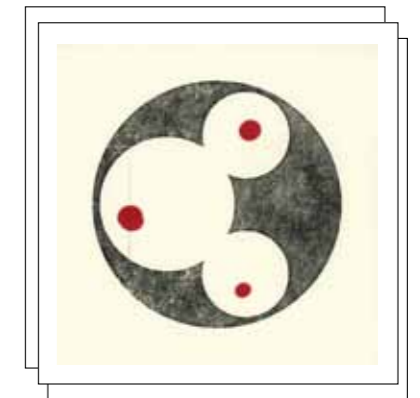


And so different people say it can only be a symbol of oppression, or freedom, or protest, or self expression, depending on their own motives and cultural background. This is the only way we can comprehend the world, to make symbols that guide us from A to B. As soon as these symbols guide us to A and B, there's a short-circuit in our brain; a headscarf can never be oppression and freedom at the same time. Because then we can't be for it or against it anymore.

Reconstructed Mickey Mouse & Deconstructed Mazda



Although most of my work is political, making the work is also a means to get away from politics. This too is the case with the deconstructing and reconstructing of famous logo's such as these of Shell, BP or Toyota. It's my way of refusing to accept the fact that so much meaning is projected onto so little.



Two ovals representing "a relationship of mutual trust between the customer and Toyota", a stylized V representing 'creativity, vitality, flexibility and passion'. A green geometrical shape looking like a flower made to represent an oil company that won't even invest more than 10% of its activities in sustainable energy.'

Yuri Veerman (1982, NL) is an independent artist and designer that lives and works in Amsterdam. He is currently doing a master studies in Design at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam where he works on various projects that deal with the complex relationship between ideas and their manifestation. All images © Yuri Veerman, www.yuriveerman.nl

Shining Bright in the Denim Sky

You are forgiven for not gasping and shrieking in excitement when reading the name Jos van Tilburg. Which is in fact the way he himself prefers it. The brand that van Tilburg has built from the ground up is G-star RAW. Feel free to gasp and shriek in excitement now. This man pioneered a global denim imperium, but will be the first to acknowledge that it's the shared passions, interests and desires of the G-star RAW employees that form the collective driving force behind the success of the brand. I sat down for a chat with him at the head office in Amsterdam.



Thank you for taking the time for this interview.

Well, time is the most valuable possession we have, and you can't buy it. But this is a pleasure because Turkey is an interesting market for G-star. Usually I try to stay away from interviews, especially in my home country because I believe it should be the brand that shines.

G-star currently has one store in Istanbul, correct? Any plans to expand?

We currently have one store and one office there. We can't tell you too much yet, but we are gearing up for some expansion.

So, more stores?

Turkey is an emerging market for us. It is experiencing enormous growth economically. Plus about 60% of its population is under 30 years old. And they all need jeans. So yes is the answer to that. Besides, Istanbul is an amazing place. It is a city with a winning mood. Everyone there is so positive and you can just smell the scent of success in the air. Also, expansion here will hopefully help fight the production of fake G-star denim.

So this expansion will do a lot for the brand, will it?

Well, that's hard to say. I don't know, but I do believe so. We see plenty of potential in Turkey.

Is it fair to say that G-star prefers to set trends itself and create demand for its products itself rather than keeping an eye on its surroundings?

Yes. Although we are not about creating trends. We look around, but we plot our own course. We have our own collection and constantly ask ourselves: what works? What doesn't? What do

we love about it? Over the course of the twenty three years G-star has been around we have always tried to claim our own space. We continue working on original designs and concepts.

So this was the idea that G-star was built on? Did you already have this strategy in mind when you set up G-star back in 1989?
Yeah, I knew I wanted to take this approach back then. It hasn't really changed. We don't have history, we're not a hundred years old. We certainly



shouldn't pretend we are. Plus Holland is not a typical denim country. It's just that jeans -denim- is an amazing product. It has this slightly rebellious, unruly image with its own character. Slightly non-conformistic even. From a strategic point of view, there's so much you can do with that. There are a lot of brands out there that permanently work to reinvent vintage jeans. To us, it's the future that fascinates us. Reproducing what has been done is one way to go, but a noble copy is nothing but a reproduction. There's no authenticity in that. So you find your own identity and then you determine your course of action. Our very first designer Pierre Morisset, who's still with us to this day, shares this point of view. So when he came on board, we started experimenting with all sorts of designs and themes.

Pierre joined G-star in 1991, didn't he?
Yes.

So he and G-star are more or less joined at the hip. What brought you together?

The first time we ran into each other must have been around 1990 at a fair

in Cologne. We did know of each other and I was already a big fan of his work. There was an instant connection. He'd already done some insane things – designer and founder of Liberto in France, Appaloosa, owning stores like 'Depeche' and 'Save and Smile'. He told us he liked what we did. I still feel that's like Johan Cruyff giving a football player a compliment. So we got together for a capsule collection and from 1994 onwards he came on board with us exclusively.

A while back you were quoted as saying you know what works in a company and how to get the best out of people. That you have a knack for synergy, in other words. Is it true you're still involved in all aspects of day to day life at G-star?

Did I say that? Well. I did once say that I don't have any real skills, but do know what everyone inside an organisation does - or should be doing. So I understand a designer's job, a merchandiser's job. A lot of companies are facing fragmentation. Like designers who only work with other designers. There's more to a product than that, it takes a team effort, and I am all for that. Everyone in the process needs to respect each other's jobs and work together. I am consulted or advised pretty much every day. I keep an eye on what we've made and where we're headed as a company. There's a permanent flow, an evolution going on.

What inspires you? What stimulates you in your work?

Pretty much all things. Everything around me. It could be a film, but it could just as well be a chair.

Do you draw concrete ideas from that? Definitely. It's like you're tuned in all



the time. Everything just seems to present opportunities. It's like when we just got back a few days ago from a fair in Berlin. Every department in G-star has contributed in some way. And the more people are involved, the more creativity you have at your disposal. There's beauty in all things, isn't there? Sometimes a minor detail can be altered and change the whole appearance of an object, from something ordinary to a work of beauty.

Can you give a recent example to illustrate?

Well, there's Jean Prouvé. (A collaborative project between the designer and Gstar, in which creative teams from both sides gave some of Prouvé's best known designs a contemporary and fresh new look and feel, red.) That was more of a cross over but definitely a lot of

fun to do. Something that came about when we were just brainstorming.

'Just the Product' is the philosophy here at G-star. Please elaborate. Right, well like I said recently in my Christmas speech, it's not just a slogan. I truly believe that a product should be so good, it doesn't need anything else. Not even a brand name. It should sell itself. Having said that, such a product doesn't just magically appear. It's people who make it. But still, every product should have an inherent worth to persuade any customer to part with some of his cash for it.

There's an old-fashioned element to that. Like we're talking about a craft. I certainly believe in craftsmanship. I don't actually like it all that much when people buy G-star just for the sake of the brand. I'd much prefer they

bought it for the actual product. I also think the traditional philosophy of a brand name should be like a seal of approval. That it's G-star approved, having a certain design and standard of quality. Having said that, I don't mind too much that people buy our products for the brand name. I've been in fashion all my life. Spending several decades in this industry I know what works and what doesn't. Plenty of consumers do not have that, and you can't hold that against them. It simply doesn't interest them. And that makes sense to me, because ultimately what we do is irrelevant. In the grand scheme of life.

Well...clothing does seem fairly essential. You mean as an essential part of life, protection. Sure! But we do have way too much of it, right? Yet we always come up with something new.

But exactly that makes 'Just the Product' relevant, doesn't it? Plus the fact it refers back to the craftsmanship. Sure but clothing in general is a form of communication. Ok, look, I am fifty years old, so try to wear jackets more often. You wear what you like, but you do think about what you wear, how you come across to others.

I get why people buy specific brands just for the name. It makes them feel safe. It has a certain social value. With clothing, you are what you wear. It's social. You want to look nice and pleasant to those around you. Especially in this time of urbanisation, where people are living ever closer together. Surroundings and etiquette become more important.

Fair enough, and understandable. Yet this does seem to contradict what the G-star philosophy is about: doing what we want and not depending on what

the outside world is doing or thinking. Sure, but we like that. I've always been a pleaser. I like to be of service.

Just not when it comes to a specific jeans design or something similar? Right. Being of service means creating a demand for things people were not aware of. Which means we need a clear strategy. This strategy is built on our Just the Product approach, and the drive to explore new possibilities and develop innovative products.

We're talking about passion now. Which really drives people.

It does. And just last week I was up till the wee hours of the night examining our company's motivation. In a bar. Could not find a single problem. But

there have been instances where we left the office late at night. Instead of wishing each other a good evening we'd say 'see you in a few hours.' If you get into this business you must be willing to put in the time. There's no time to sit back. If you do, you're history. We have stores in 70 countries, but we've never been a hype.

The G-star brand has an introduction time of about 7 years before we get to where we want to be in each particular country. So that takes a lot of time and effort, but it offers stability.

So when you get to your expansion plans for Turkey, you will quietly build up your presence there too?

Of course. In Istanbul we started with a third party. That went well, but we decided to take matters into our own hands. And by that I mean using a global-local approach. We employ local people in our offices around the world.



The France offices employ French people, the Turkish offices will employ Turkish people and so on. We feel that's the only way to go.

To come back to a topic we discussed earlier – can we state that even though G-star engages in mass production does not mean that its products are for the masses?

Yes...Yes I like that. I have to steal that off you. But yes, that's accurate.

Let's talk about New York Fashion Week. This will be your fifth year attending, won't it?

If we still attended that would be true, but we stopped going last year, after five years in a row. Every time we did bigger and better shows. It was wildly successful but at one point just became a drain on our creative resources. We slowly became part of the establishment there, which is what we wanted to avoid. We may come back some day but we should always keep in mind we're not a catwalk brand. Our shows were so elaborate that we felt we kind of lost our way. It is still a brilliant platform though. It's meant a lot to us to be there.

You didn't launch your own webshop until 2010. Why wait so long?

We took our time with it. Because if you do it, do it right. Moreover, a webshop takes time. Every single item needs to be photographed. Not to mention the logistics of the whole process. Look at Asos. They take 2000 photographs a day. Online store Zalando has a team of 1200 people dedicated to its online services.

I wanted to mention Fair Trade and wondered what place this has inside G-star. I read that you have a dedicated division to not just Fair Trade but to

social and environmental responsibility. That's right, but all of that is something we have in our genes. Social and environmental responsibility is something we've always held in high regard and continue to. Just never formally so. It's incorporated within the strategic decisions about the future of our brand, and less so in our marketing strategy. The Corporate Responsibility division is fairly new but formalises our commitment. We've always worked with reputable suppliers and factories. Except what I found out is that you can't say that about yourself. Others, outsiders should do that. So through this division inside G-star we arrange external audits that will periodically confirm that we're on the right track. As for sustainability, we're part of a think tank, together with a bunch of others such as Nike, Adidas, H&M and Zara to think of ways to further

improve our production methods. It's no longer just about price-quality.

Tell me something about your plans or ambitions for the future.

Personally I have achieved all I could wish for. I just hope to be able to continue doing this work in good health, with the same people

around me, for many more years. It still doesn't feel like work. As far as the business is concerned we want to stay fresh and relevant. That takes focus and that's just cool to do. We still have potential for growth in many countries. We just entered the Colombian and Brazilian markets, we have recently opened a new store on Rodeo Drive in LA and in the short run we'll open a new store in Hong Kong. Other than that we'll continue along the path we're on now. We still want to make



a left turn when everyone else turns right. Not for shock value, mind you, because that's just cheap and easy. But if you can touch people by doing something unexpected, so much the better.

All images @ G-Star
Campaign Images:
Anton Corbijn for G-Star



Comeback City Rotterdam

A survey once showed that of all city-dwellers in the Netherlands, the inhabitants of Rotterdam have the highest tolerance for the noise of pile-driving work. No wonder, since living in the second city of the Netherlands gets you used to building sites popping up everywhere pretty soon. In WWII most of the historical centre of Rotterdam was bombed flat, and although rebuilding the city has long been finished, the city has kept developing. Instead of a traditional Dutch medieval centre, it now offers the most impressive skyline in the Netherlands, Europe's biggest port, a colourful mix of different cultures and lots of modern architecture.

Featuring:
Wijnhaveneiland
Lloydpier
Maastower
Kop van Zuid
Erasmusbridge
Wilhelminapier
WORM
Black Pearl



Written by Sereh Mandiaz



All pictures by Ossip van Duivenbode
www.ossip.nl

Tabula rasa

After WWII, Rotterdam took a chance and let progressive city planners erect an unmistakably modern city. Inspired by modernist ideals like the separation of functions, offices and leisure came to replace the old heart, while housing was pushed outwards, to the edges of the centre. More space was made for traffic. Although many of the post-war insights have since long been discarded, Rotterdam doesn't seem to have shaken off its progressive attitude. Evidence for this can be found both in the willingness of the city in entering into large-scale experiments and in the resourcefulness of young Rotterdam architects in a series of smaller projects.

Take for example the 'Wijnhaveneiland' (Wine Harbour island), a piece of land between city centre and river Maas. For the transformation of this area formerly filled with uniform post-war office buildings, a for Dutch standards unusual method was devised. Instead of designing a master plan, which would be the obvious thing to do, architect and urban planner Kees Christiaanse developed an open-ended strategy: he laid out a set of rules that govern what can be build and what not. For instance, the maximum volume of cubic meters that is allowed to be built in a certain place depends on the size of the plot. As a result, there is no height restriction: the higher one wants to build, the more slender the tower gets. Apart from that buildings basically have to be good neighbours: they should for example take into account the views of other buildings, and make sure enough daylight reaches the street. As a result,

over the last fifteen years quite a few towers have been built on the island. The latest addition is the 'Red Apple', a bright red residential tower that will also house office spaces, shops, cafes and a gallery. This functional mix reflects the cities goal to make the island a lively residential area, and is interestingly enough quite the opposite of what was done right after the war: instead of separating functions and moving housing out of the centre, this centrally located residential tower combines several different functions. Ideas about building cities have changed, and Rotterdam is not afraid to change the city accordingly. As for the Red Apple, the mixture of inhabitants took an unexpected, but not unwelcome turn: the towers' colour attracted a lot of Chinese people, for whom the colour red has a positive connotation.

The legacy of the harbour

Except for the events of WWII, another decisive historical factor (and somewhat less abrupt) was the growth of the harbour. Rotterdam got big because of its port, but by the time the 80s arrived most of the inner-city harbour industries had moved out to sea, where land was cheap and readily available. One of the area's that profited from the migration of harbour activity is the former site of the city's first power plant, the Lloydpier. Presenting itself as an audiovisual hub (it is home to the local broadcasting company), it now mixes residential buildings with restaurants, a hotel, some shops and offices for creative firms. The old power plant, called 'Schiecentrale', has been redeveloped and extended into a multifunc-



tional ensemble. Especially striking are the apartments: a white slab with strange, rust brown dots sticking out. On closer look these dots appear to be storage rooms, which have been conveniently hung from the façade, opposite of each door. But the most remarkable building on the pier is without a doubt the periscope-shaped Shipping and Transport College. It has a blue and silver chequered façade that is inspired by the image of stacked containers. Its cantilevered conference room has a spectacular view over the port, that instead of clustering around the city centre now covers the entire distance from Rotterdam out to sea.

Looking back towards the city centre, on the opposite site of the river one discerns a collection of towers. The highest one seems to rise up from the river and is appropriately called the 'Maas-tower'. At 165 meters it is now the tallest tower in the country. To accentuate its height, its colour changes from dark grey at the bottom to white at the top. It is part of one of the more radical transformations of the past decades: the 'Kop van Zuid'-development (Head of South). Being the most northern part of Rotterdam-South, the Kop van Zuid originally housed harbour industries and warehouses, but got abandoned as the industries moved out west. Since Rotterdam was founded on the north bank of the river, the south part is traditionally much less prosperous, and still counts several deeply troubled neighbourhoods. In the 80s, an ambitious redevelopment was begun, aimed both at revitalising the area and giving a fresh impulse to Rotterdam-South: warehouses were converted into lofts, the underground was

extended southwards, residential and office towers were constructed. The most radical change was a new bridge that had to reconnect both sides of the river en would fuel future developments: the Erasmusbridge. This slender, concrete and steel construction designed by UNstudio quickly became the new symbol for Rotterdam. Now, some 25 years after the work was started, the Head of South has successfully transformed from a kind of industrial no mans land into a bustling area, and a showcase of what modern architecture has to offer. This is especially true of the Wilhelminapier, where towers designed by Rem Koolhaas (under construction), Renzo Piano, Norman Foster and Alvaro Siza huddle together. Or in the Rhineharbour, where a floating pavilion demonstrates the city's future plan to build an entire neighbourhood on the water. But even though the Head of South might be a success in itself, there's still a lot of work to be done, since the impulse it was supposed to give to the rest of Rotterdam South is only very slowly taking effect.

Black pearls and hovering houses
However, it's not only big scale city developments that give architects the chance to experiment. Over the last years several smaller projects have shown how resourceful young offices from Rotterdam can be when designing for their city. A good example is the new accommodation of WORM, an institute for experimental music and film. WORM asked 2012architects, a young office that cleverly integrates leftover materials whenever they can, to make a design for their new home. It is located



in a monumental building in the centre of town and comprises a large auditorium, a bar, a record store and workshop- and office spaces. Although the entrance is on a side street, 2012architects made sure it is hard to miss. Part of the façade has resolutely been cut out and relocated two meter outwards, in front of the building. Through this newly created opening one enters an interior that has almost completely been constructed out of recycled materials. The chairs were collected from rejected Dutch trains, the acoustic panels lining the walls are taken from old plains (one recognizes the tiny windows), the lamps come from an abandoned airport, well, you get the point. This might sound like a patchwork, which it is, but the architects have nevertheless succeeded in creating a consistent and vibrant atmosphere. WORM calls itself the 'institute for avant-gardist recreation' and their new home can certainly be said to live up to this title.

Almost at a stones throw another eccentric project has just been completed. It is a relatively small building that combines living and working spaces for one person, and was both initiated and designed by architecture office Kuhne & Co. It has quite an exceptional location: built-in between pre- and post-war architecture it hovers above an access route into a courtyard. The footprint of the building has been kept at a minimum: on one side there is the entrance with a staircase and an elevator, on the other side only two columns touch the ground. In doing so, the architects succeeded in transforming a gap leading into a more or less derelict courtyard into a full-fledged street fa-

çade, and creating a new house along the way. Further out of the centre one can find experiments of a different kind. A few years ago the city of Rotterdam decided to sell homes in troubled neighbourhoods at cut-rate prices. Buyers had to agree to do a minimum amount of renovation work on these badly maintained homes. These so-called do-it-yourself-houses attracted mostly young, creative people not afraid of getting their hands dirty. Among them was Rolf Bruggink, who bought a house in the Charlois district, in the South of Rotterdam. It turned out to be a good choice: his thoroughly renovated new home, called the Black Pearl, has already won his office (Studio Rolf.fr) several design prizes. What gave the house its name is not hard to guess: the reconstructed brick façade has been painted an oily pitch-black. The old façade is penetrated by new window openings, better fitted to provide the newly arranged interior with daylight, while keeping the original window arrangement visible. The Black Pearl is only one example of many do-it-yourself houses, that have until now proven to be a success. Creative citizens get the opportunity to realize their dream house, and in doing so they give troubled neighbourhoods a nod in the right direction.

It will be clear that Rotterdam still has a long way to go. But it can also be clear that both the city and its architects are not afraid to pose unconventional solutions to unconventional problems. In any case it is never boring in a city that sometimes acts before she thinks, but in doing so also makes things possible that would otherwise never have left the drawing board.

Escapism in Hawaiian Shirts

Please allow us to introduce to you: fashion designer Maarten van der Horst. Maarten was born in the Netherlands in 1982 to an Indonesian mother and a Dutch father. He first embarked upon his design journey at the ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, a college famous for nurturing the talents of Viktor & Rolf. He gained work experience through an internship at Chloé in Paris: a lovely and well-known and respected name in the world of fashion.



Interview by Puck Landewé

Maarten says he learned a lot about Paris and what he's good at during his internship. The reason he wanted to do an internship at Chloé was because he loved the 'Chloé-girl'. Maarten graduated from ArtEZ with a bright, hand painted and joyous collection that already reflected his preference for using D-I-Y techniques to convey highly personal statements.

During his tutelage with Professor Louise Wilson's MA Womenswear course at Central Saint Martins in London, Maarten got a chance to further develop his distinctive aesthetic. His designs are technically advanced yet highly wearable and they exude a light-hearted, joyful elegance with a clear focus on craftsmanship. He presented his MA graduate Autumn/Winter 2011/2012 collection at London Fashion Week, which was met with critical acclaim from both editors and buyers. Showing your graduation collection at the London Fashion Week must be quite amazing. 'The MA at Central Saint Martins supplies the designers behind every great fashion house on the planet, so the fact that it's the only school in the world that shows on schedule during London Fashion Week makes sense. It's a great way to introduce yourself to the press.' Maarten's collection channels both transvestism and escapism through its marrying of intricately embroidered, second-hand Nylon petticoats with Hawaiian shirts, Capri trousers and Bermuda shorts, creating a John Waters-inspired wardrobe.

If you ask Maarten, he would describe his style as boyish, blissed-out, low budget, escapist and gutsy.



As long as Maarten can remember, he's a fan of fashion. He used to be obsessed with Vivienne Westwood and anything in i-D magazine and if you ask him about his first contact with fashion, he firmly answers: 'Madonna in Jean-Paul Gaultier!' i-D magazine was his source of inspiration when he was a teenager and nowadays photograph him. A big

highlight so far. He hopes that he can continue doing what he loves: fashion! Whether that includes living in a studio, sleeping on an inflatable mattress or in a palace, he don't care. As long as he can escape boring day-to-day life with fashion.

There are only a few designers who become famous with their fashion and their collections. Is it good luck, or is there really a secret to success? 'To know a lot, but not enough, is very important. It's a balance between knowing what you're doing and forcing yourself to be better.' Maarten is about as good as they get in fashion, so we can't wait to



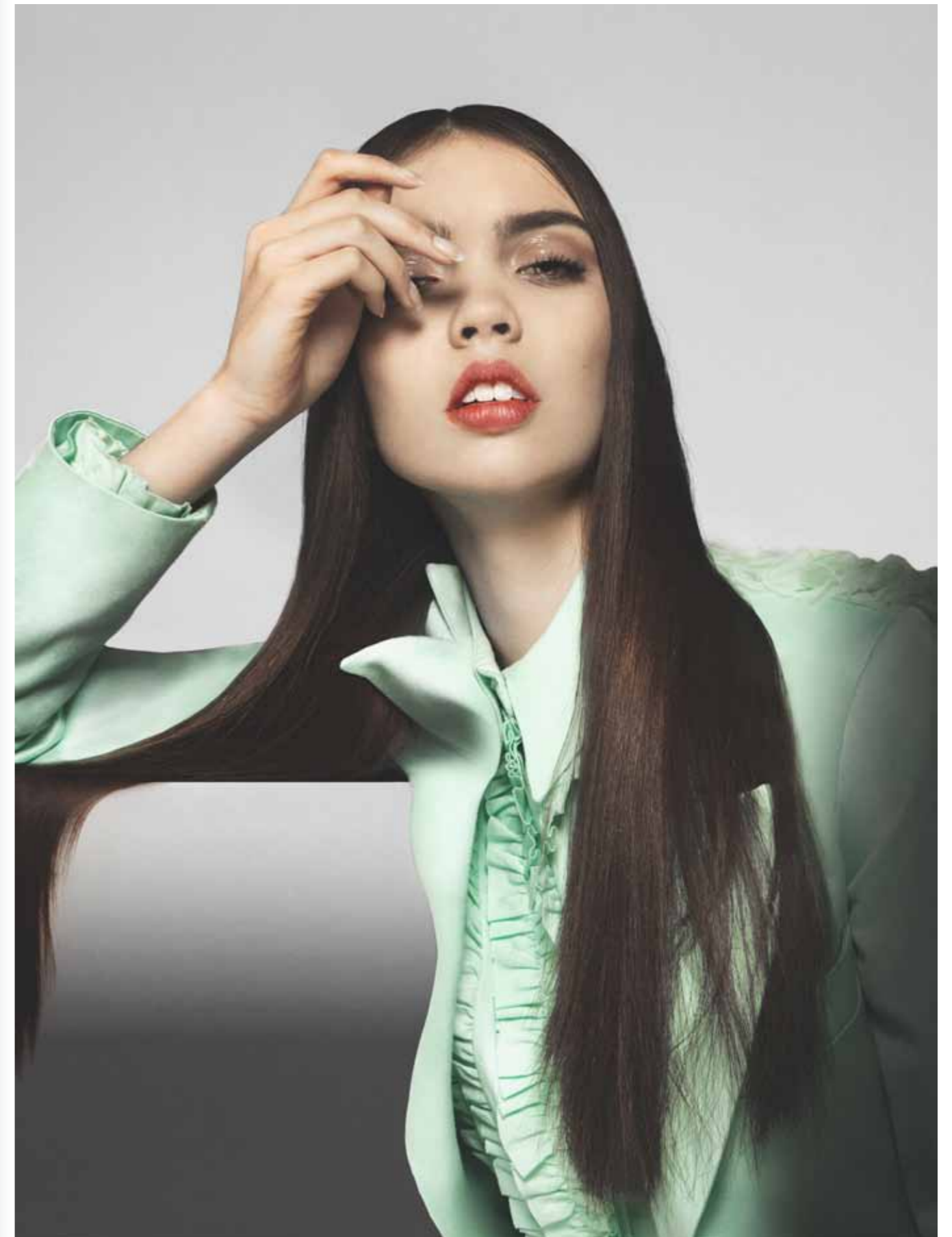
see him get even better....

Portrait © Meinke Klein
Runway pictures: Christopher Moore
for catwalking.com

Maarten van der Horst Spring Summer 2012

Forget the oversized Hawaiian shirts made famous by tasteless tourists; here comes a collection that will let your summery fashion heart jump of joy. Fashion designer Maarten van der Horst created Bermuda shorts that make you want to run on the beach barefoot; summer jackets that will complement your glamorous look when sipping a delicious Pina Colada in the evening sunset; and salmon-coloured Capri trousers designed to hug your sun kissed-skin.

The objectification of escapism is captured in these joyful outfits that breathe a refreshing summer vibe. Turning your mind upside down, it is fashion that makes the soul levitate. Exotic prints and vibrating colours combine their powers to create an exciting flower-power-bomb. Hawaiian floral prints and pastel colours have never looked this good before. Lean back and let the clothing of tomorrow dazzle you; let the summer of 2012 begin with Maarten van der Horst.





*Photography: Meinke Klein @ UNIT c.m.a.
Styling: Maarten van der Horst
Hair/make-up: Chiao Li Hsu for Clinique
@ House of Orange
Model: Justine @ Fresh Model Management
Assistant photography: Lathifa Lesteluhu
All clothing by Maarten van der Horst,
Fashion East, Spring Summer 2012*

Forget the oversized Hawaiian shirts made famous by tasteless tourists; here comes a collection that will let your summery fashion heart jump of joy. Fashion designer Maarten van der Horst created Bermuda shorts that make you want to run on the beach barefoot; summer jackets that will complement your glamorous look when sipping a delicious Pina Colada in the evening sunset; and salmon-coloured Capri trousers designed to hug your sun kissed-skin. The objectification of escapism is captured in these joyful outfits that breathe a refreshing summer vibe. Turning your mind upside down, it is fashion that makes the soul levitate. Exotic prints and vibrating colours combine their powers to create an exciting flower-power-bomb. Hawaiian floral prints and pastel colours have never looked this good before. Lean back and let the clothing of tomorrow dazzle you; let the summer of 2012 begin with Maarten van der Horst.





Eindhoven, Design Capital of the Netherlands

Everybody knows that Amsterdam is the capital of Holland, but this small country also has a capital of design. Its name? Eindhoven!

Eindhoven is a slightly smaller city in the south of Holland: a town driven by industry and the home of the multinational technical company Philips. Ok, they invented the CD, but is that really the coolest thing Eindhoven has to offer? No no no. Eindhoven is like stated the design capital of the Netherlands, as it is the home of the renowned Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE). And once every year in October, the modest countryside city of Eindhoven transforms in the glamorous design capital of the world, when Dutch Design Week (DDW) takes place. Since 2001, DDW has been a event of global proportions, with design connoisseurs and all lovers of beautiful things visiting Eindhoven to take a look at the most innovative products the Netherlands has to offer. In 2012, a beautiful marriage between the ancient craftsmanship of Turkey and the innovative design history of Holland is taking place at Eindhoven's Designhuis ('Designhouse').

Featuring:
Design Academy Eindhoven
Designhuis



Written by Lisa Goudsmit

The Designhuis

Since the 10th anniversary of the Dutch Design Week in 2011, Premsula is programming events at the Designhuis, in partnership with Capital D and the city of Eindhoven. Premsula, the Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion, creates opportunities for the growth of Dutch design. The Designhuis is one of their many interesting projects, among the other exhibitions, events, lectures and publications they organize. In January 2012 Premsula opened the exhibition Connecting Concepts in Designhuis Eindhoven, that focuses on the characteristics of Dutch Design and shows why it is so successful. Dutch Design is well-known all over the world, but it is very hard to indicate what makes it so interesting and innovative. How can such a small country become so big in design? After touring in cities in India and China, Connecting Concepts finally arrived in its home country in 2012.

As Premsula explains: 'Dutch design is usually exhibited in the form of a collection of objects, often with star designers' names attached. Connecting Concepts lays bare the processes that underlie these objects. These processes – which involve collaboration between designers and clients, the use of new and unusual technologies, and a willingness by involved parties to reinvent the wheel, sometimes literally – are what make Dutch design different and unique. Marcel Wanders' famous Knotted Chair is a good example. It's a product of traditional craft technique combined with contemporary

knowledge and materials. In a different way, so is a dyke-strengthening project in the province of Zuid-Holland in which the sea does most of the work. Sand is dumped in strategic areas along the coast, and currents sweep it away to the spots where it's needed. The idea came from traditions of dyke building and polder draining and was transformed by contemporary knowledge and design thinking.' In the exhibition, Connecting Concepts shows what all these different forms of Dutch design and the processes behind them have in common, literally connecting concepts. Exhibited work includes items by fashion designer Alexander van Slobbe and 3D printed jewellery by designer Ted Noten. Also on display is the hellofashion collection by Monique van Heist, a collection that does not change every season except for the addition of new items, challenging questions on sustainability and fast fashion. Other participating design in Connecting Concept is the work from shoe designer Marloes ten Bhömer, also featured here in XOXO, as well as the typeface design of Beowulf. These are just a few examples of the very diverse material shown in Connecting Concept, that remains open to adding new designs and principles from the Netherlands and especially from other countries it has visited and will visit in the future. After touring India, China, the Netherlands and Germany, the next stop for Connecting Concept will be Istanbul. In the fall of 2012, probably from Istanbul Design Week until the Istanbul Design Biennial, the exhibition will be opened; go check it out!

All pictures © Lizzy Kalisvaart,
second image © Forum



Eindhoven,
Design Capital
of the Netherlands

Design Academy Eindhoven

In February 2012, a new addition was made to the Connecting Concepts exhibition in Designhuis Eindhoven: a project that connects students of the Design Academy Eindhoven and their perhaps typical Dutch design to traditional Turkish craftsmanship. This Focus on Craft exhibition is an unique and perfect example of connecting concepts, so to say. In this project, 3rd year BA students of the Department Forum of DAE deal with questions like: how can old crafts and techniques have an innovative value in contemporary design? Are small production processes valuable for the future and what is the role of traditional craftsmen in this matter? Is it possible to start sustainable collaborations and have a dialogue with another design culture? In 2012 it is the third time this projects takes place. Nicoline Dorsman, art historian and head of Department Forum at DAE states: 'We focus on crafts that are almost gone in Holland and are disappearing in Istanbul as well. So much knowledge will disappear that can play an important part in modern design. By introducing young designer to traditional techniques we hope to come to new insights.' Students investigated craftsmanship in Istanbul like the making of typical Turkish carpets and by visiting leather factories and metal, glass and ceramics work places – all material based disciplines.

Istanbul is chosen as the city to connect with in this project, since it is a dynamic metropolis in which East and West unite and in

which tradition exists next to ultra-modernity. Therefore it is the perfect setting to do a socio-cultural historical research on the value of crafts in modern design. In this way, a sustainable format can be developed that is applicable in other projects that deal with the saving of traditional crafts and techniques. As Dorsman explains, this project is a win-win situation. 'Holland is losing its knowledge on craftsmanship, by focussing on this matter this project can perhaps prevent the same thing to happen in Istanbul. Young designers and students can have a surprising outlook on the use of materials; in this project young Turkish and Dutch designers and students work together, which creates an interesting exchange of knowledge and a new vision on design. The Dutch conceptual approach can also come in handy in the Turkish design world.'

In this project, students of DAE work together in groups to first of all do a theoretical research on specific traditional crafts and techniques. After this a field research in Istanbul takes place, in which the students can truly connect with craftsmen and get inspired by the traditions in this matter in Istanbul. Students of the Kadir Has University assisted the students of DAE in this process. After this, the students develop their research in a practical project and execute their ideas. Their research-results are presented in Designhuis Eindhoven. Besides this, an exchange of knowledge takes place between Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Glass Furnace,

Written by Lisa Goudsmit

Istanbul Technical University and Design Academy Eindhoven. One of the groups of students also founded a website with their research results from their project in which they investigated the empowerment through the act of making. See their Craft and Community project on the Crafts Community website stated at the end of this article.

Nicoline Dorsman emphasises that the students of the 2012 project of DAE started from a fascination with materials like ceramics, leather, textiles and glass. Besides these materials, the use of natural pigments and the transference of crafts is being researched, as well as the identity of craftsmanship. Dorsman expresses what she hopes to accomplish with this project: 'The conservation of knowledge and skills when it comes to traditional crafts and techniques by connecting young designers to craftsmen, but also developing new insights in which traditional techniques can collaborate with innovative new materials. This can create new markets for young designers and sustainable collaborations; this way a dialogue can be developed between two design-cultures.' Connecting Concepts connects Dutch design to ancient craftsmanship; in addition to this the Focus on Art project by the students of Design Academy Eindhoven connects Eindhoven tot Istanbul. It is the perfect connection to celebrate the 400-year-old relationship between Holland and Turkey with an inspiring creative exhibition.

See www.premsele.org,
www.designacademy.nl and
www.craftscommunity.cer33.com
for more information.

Images © DAE Eindhoven



These Are a Few of My Favourite Things... in Holland

Holland has a lot of cool things to offer, especially when you consider the fact that it is such a small country. The capital Amsterdam has not even a million habitants, but at least as many cool places. Because it is impossible to name all the hot stuff, we decided to name a certain amount of our favorite things. So here we go, this is what you will not find in your regular travel guide... Just remember: the best is always to come – whatever is cool today, may be old news tomorrow in Holland.



1. OntFront

OntFront is a Dutch brand with a store at the Haarlemmerdijk in Amsterdam, one of Holland's best shopping districts. This brand portrays a new generation of tailored men's wear combined with a classical touch of street style, for the modern man using the classical Dandy style to form it into something unique and personal. OntFront has a very personal approach in their store as well as on their website: have a look and add some uniqueness to your wardrobe.

Address: Haarlemmerdijk 121, Amsterdam, www.ontfront.com



2. Tenue de Nîmes

Tenue de Nîmes is a store specialized in denim; next to the jeans-wear from vintage to new collections you can find accessories, magazines and interior decoration with a raw and classic edge. The Tenue de Nîmes store not only looks great, it also has a very personal touch and service within their boutique: every denim-lover has to take a look in this store. From their online store you can order their collection and special collaborations: delivery all over the world.

Address: Elandsgracht 60, Amsterdam, www.tenedesnimes.com

Written by Anna Wagner

3. Arnhem Mode Biennale
Every two years a unique fashion event takes place in Arnhem: the Arnhem Mode Biennale. It symbolizes the Dutch society and is the ambassador of fashion in Holland. Some call it forecasting the fashion future, others are just fascinated by the creativity and most are just impressed what Holland has to show and give in all its facets. Several emerging and established artists create a sphere all around fashion, which is every time breathtaking and beyond inspiring.

www.arnhemmodebiennale.com



5. Kabinet

In one of the small streets next to the canals in Amsterdam there is a store called Kabinet. In the window display you will always find a new purchased vintage design or a design from an outspoken independent designer from Holland. No fashion lover will pass this store without stepping into it to explore new arrivals from the Dutch fashion market or an old vintage treasure. Owner Ferry van der Nat is one of Amsterdam's most passionate collectors of vintage fashion.

Address: Herenstraat 13, Amsterdam
www.kabinet-amsterdam.nl



6. Scotch & Soda

The Amsterdam clothing brand Scotch & Soda has been around already since the 1980s and is taking over the world now with their vintage style with a touch of high-end inspiration. From small girls and boys to big boys and women, Scotch & Soda has a little something for everyone. Quality and personality is one of the handwritings within the brand, which you can clearly experience whilst entering one of their stores.

www.scotch-soda.com

7. Margreeth Olthoorn

Fashion expert Margreeth Olthoorn has two stores in this cool street in Rotterdam: Beljon and MGH20. Both stores have a very personal environment and every detail is filled with passion and great style. This is also very well reflected in the choice of clothing and brands. It is certainly a must to pass by and have a look at the new arrivals and add an investment piece to your wardrobe.

Address: Witte de Withstraat 5 & 39, Rotterdam, www.margreetholthoorn.nl

4. Amsterdam Fashion Week
Twice a year the young creatives and established designers of Holland show off their work in the Westergasfabriek: an old industrial area in the West of Amsterdam. What was once the 'gas factory' of the capital is now a completely renovated cool area: the buildings are used for a great number of events and parties throughout the year. If you don't have a ticket to enter a fashion show, you can just hang out there and watch the Dutch fashion crowd.

Address: Polonceaukade 27, Amsterdam, www.aifw.nl



These Are a Few of My
Favourite Things...
in Holland

8. Pont 13

Rent a bike for this adventure, because it will take you a bit further West in Amsterdam to explore the way to restaurant PONT 13: an old boat, built into a restaurant. In the summertime you can enjoy a cold drink on the deck of PONT 13, stay inside during the winter to have some lunch or dinner and snacks whilst appreciating the very cozy family feel: you will certainly have an unforgettable moment.

Address: Haparadadam 50,
Amsterdam
www.pont13.nl



9. Brug 9

Brug 9 is one of the bridges that cross one of the canals in the center of Amsterdam. During the summer you can enjoy a cold drink and some 'bitterballen' (fried meat balls: sounds horrible, but is a delicious specialty from Holland) and enjoy the sun. But the secret lies under the bridge, which used to be a prison a long time ago. Now it is a well-hidden place where various events including bi-monthly live jazz performances take place.

Address: Singel 157/161,
Amsterdam, www.brug9.nl



10. Café Brecht

Away from all the usual touristic places, you can have a romantic rest moment in grandma's living room; a small cozy place to enjoy a piece of cake, drinks (they have a very good selection of beers) and enjoy a nostalgic moment. Café Brecht is inspired by an old Berlin grandma's interior and has a very welcoming sphere its young and fresh spirited crowds.

Address: Weteringschans
157, Amsterdam
www.cafebrecht.nl



11. Villa Zeezicht

It's a typical Dutch dessert: apple pie. If you're in Amsterdam, go ahead and treat yourself to a coffee on one of the beautiful canals and eat one of the best apple-pies you have ever eaten at Villa Zeezicht. This little cozy place has so much charm you can do nothing else but enjoy its atmosphere and have a beautiful view onto the 'gracht' (canal).

Address: Torensteeg 7, Amsterdam

12. Patisserie Holtkamp

At Patisserie Holtkamp you can enjoy one of the best 'kroket' (croquet - this is the 'bigger brother' of the 'bitterbal', some sort of meatball) in town or any other delicious snack you can dream of, like their amazing pies. Holtkamp's range of tasty traditional Dutch food is not to miss whilst staying in Amsterdam, and certainly a fulfilling moment for your taste buds. Treat yourself and 'eet smakelijk!' ('Enjoy your meal!')

Address: Vijzelgracht 15, Amsterdam, www.patisserieholtkamp.nl

Written by Anna Wagner

13. Friday Next

Friday Next is a new way of creating a world around shopping, hospitality, fashion, interior and design. Next to big international brands, Friday Next also has a lot of collaborations with local designers. Every item you buy at Friday Next, is a investment piece. Take a look at the new concept store in the centre of Amsterdam; have a coffee, pie or sandwich and enjoy the new store experience. Continue walking on the Overtoom street to find more cool places.

Address: Overtoom 31, Amsterdam, www.fridaynext.nl

14. Smaak

Travelling women are always on the hunt for new bags and accessories to bring home and be proud of: that one unique piece to add to our wardrobe. Smaak is one of those stores that can help you with that 'need'; a small boutique with very good service and a personal touch. Next to affordable leather bags in all kinds of shapes and colours you can find cute accessories items and wallets fitting to your bag.

Address: Leliegracht 16, Amsterdam, www.smaakamsterdam.com

15. Mendo

A dark room filled with collector items of the influential world of creative imagery industry; Mendo will be one of your favorite bookstores because it has all heros you look up to collected in one room. The mystic sphere of the store makes you want to brows through the shelves for ages and get inspired. There is so much to see: take your time to bring home that special book to add to your book shelve.

Address: Berenstraat 11,
Amsterdam
www.mendographicdesign.nl



17. Droog

Droog Design can be considered the pioneer of the now so famous 'Dutch design' movement: their items breathe functionality, fun and a love for innovation. The store of Droog Design in Amsterdam supplies you with new inventions and the illusion of playing with your interior and space. Have a look and take a small something Dutch with you to make your home and life a new experience.

Address: Staalstraat 7,
Amsterdam
www.droog.com



16. Moooi

The Dutch are known for displaying their houses and showing their interiors with pride by letting their neighbours have a sneak peek through the window.

The items from Moooi ('mooi' means 'beautiful') are a dream come true for every furniture lover and give homes a fresh and modern touch.

Various compositions from old traditional forms of Dutch culture and furniture create a new living experience: that's Moooi!
www.moooi.com



These Are a Few of My
Favourite Things...
in Holland

18. Centraal Museum Utrecht

From modern art and design to fashion and classic masters, they have it all at Centraal Museum Utrecht: sometimes you can even feel the connection between the times when experiencing the different styles. The museum also involves the visitor with debates and do-it-yourself workshops that creates an open and creative environment. Also worth seeing is the Rietveld Schröderhuis, a fascinating home designed and decorated by 'de Stijl' member Gerrit Rietveld.
Address: Agnietenstraat 3, Utrecht
www.centraalmuseum.nl



20. Foam

In the Foam museum it's all about photography, photography and photography. Enjoy and experience various documented subjects and artists from all over the world. Foam fulfills your passion for photography in a very unique way, without the usual museum look and feel. The building gives every exhibition something refreshing. When you visit Foam, you will come out with a different view and opinion on the world of imagery.
Address: Keizersgracht 609, Amsterdam, www.foam.org



19. MMKA Arnhem

The Museum of Modern Art Arnhem is situated in a 19th century building with a lovely view on the river Rhine. Since the start of the museum in 1920, it gives space to realistic art and various types of design, lately having a focus on fashion. The MMKA is famous for its collection of Magic Realists, and for having a beautiful gallery. After seeing an exhibition it is also nice to take a walk in the museum garden where sculptures are exposed.
Address: Utrechtseweg 87, Arnhem, www.mmkarnhem.nl



21. Groninger Museum

The Groninger Museum is a definite must-see during your visit in Holland, because it almost always has an interesting fashion-related exhibition on display. The year 2012 started with the amazing inspiring collections of Azzedine Alaïa and Iris van Herpen, the latter even created special pieces for the occasion. Not only the exhibitions at this museum will inspire you, also the building in it self is a very interesting architectural happening to explore.
Address: Museumeiland 1, Groningen, www.groningermuseum.nl

22. Museumnacht

Every year in November, the doors of Amsterdam's museum stay open (almost) all night to celebrate art, culture and music. Have you ever been to a museum whilst dancing, enjoying a drink with your friends amongst famous pieces of art, and all of this at night? No? Well, Museumnight is a very fun event and certainly a different experience than we usually have while visiting a museum.
www.n8.nl

Written by Anna Wagner



23. Hotel The Exchange
Architecture and fashion go hand in hand at The Exchange Hotel: a collaboration of the Lloyd Hotel and the Amsterdam Fashion Institute where graduate and alumni students created a new way of hospitality. The 61 rooms are decorated by students: from minimalistic styles to over the top decoration, and from historical time lines to modern inspirations dressed like fashion dolls. Now you can have a fashion fairytale dream!
Address: Damrak 50, Amsterdam,
www.exchangeamsterdam.com



24. Hotel New York
Harbor cities always have historical memories and stories to tell. One of these historical buildings in Rotterdam is Hotel New York. Let your fantasy imagine how it used to be back in the days when immigrants arrived in Rotterdam, or when the Europeans escaping from poverty to America hoping for a better future were waiting here. Smell the history in the atmosphere!
Address: Koninginnenhoofd 1, Rotterdam
www.hotelnewyork.nl



25. La Remise
Based in Central-Amsterdam, this is a very personal and well-decorated Bed and Breakfast. The owner of this wonderful place put all his love and passion for detail into this place with the intimacy of a private residence and the luxury of a contemporary hotel. The very charming guest house is for everyone who likes his privacy and cares about the unique experience of stylish, luxurious and comfortable living.
Address: Noorderstraat 74, Amsterdam
www.laremise.nl

26. WOR

We Own Rotterdam (WOR) is website you have to check out before visiting Rotterdam. You will get secret tips on what to do, where to go and what to see. WOR is created by four freelance creatives, who decided to give the city a platform where they inspire young people to promote their under-the-radar initiatives. You can find anything you can wish for: tiny galleries, pop-up stores and parties, which are created and organized by a passionate new generation. www.weownrotterdam.nl

27. Overdose.am

Three young entrepreneurs created the Amsterdam underground website Overdose, an online magazine about fashion, art, music and all important events in Amsterdam and the rest of Holland. Their articles are about activities and culture, and are written in a very humoristic, fresh and open way. Take a look at their website before visiting the crazy town of Amsterdam or visit one of Overdose's legendary Monday's Next Hangover Party.
www.overdose.am

These Are a Few of My
Favourite Things...
in Holland

28. De Parade

De Parade is a creative summer circus, a moving theatre festival with theater, music and dance performances, traveling through the Dutch cities of Rotterdam, Den Haag, Utrecht and Amsterdam. There is nothing nicer to do on a summer's day than to go spend a day or evening at the Parade Festival. The mixture between entertainment, culture and delicious food from all over the world is certainly a pleasure to share with old friends, new acquaintances and your loved ones. www.deparade.nl

29. Gaypride

When the drag and homosexual community of Amsterdam is digging in their extravagant closets to unpack their most daring costumes, it's time for the biggest gay parade you can imagine. All the colors you can wish for are shown in the hottest, sexy provocative outfits on the boats in the canals. It takes place from the 3rd till the 5th of August: be there and wear your always-wanted-to-wear-but-never-dared costume, because this is the day you can dare. www.amsterdampride.nl

30. Void

Void is a new art and design agency in the artist district De Pijp in Amsterdam. This new gallery/agency approaches the art world from a different angle with a new accessible concept of presenting and selling art. Every first Friday of the month, well-selected new talented artists can display their art, which you can buy for affordable prices. Each exhibition gets opened with a little get together event.
Address: Ferdinand Bolstraat 145, Amsterdam
www.void-amsterdam.com



32. Mini Mall

Every city in Holland has its own charm: this project is the new hotspot in Rotterdam. Mini Mall shows why it is important to re-develop old buildings instead of tearing them down: turn them into new projects and treasure these new found cultural gems. This old station is now an inspiring space; and affordable for young talent and creatives to meet and build a community around healthy food, art and fashion.
Address: Raampoortstraat 30, Rotterdam
www.mini-mall.nl



31. Lowlands

Lowlands Festival is a three-day music festival held every year in August, and is known for being one of the biggest parties in the country. Besides music (alternative music, pop, rock, dance, hip-hop), there is also an indoor and an outdoor cinema, stand-up comedy venues and street theatres. It is a camping trip into music paradise surrounded by thousands of people who came with the same mission: just enjoy life and listen to music.
www.lowlands.nl



33. Motel Mozaïque

Holland may be a very small country, but it has many festivals that all have their own signature-style. Motel Mozaïque is one of these outstanding happenings, and will celebrate its 12th edition in 2012. From an open stage to fascinating performances and an organic mix of music, art and many more surprises and acts, every adventurous person will find a little something somewhere in the city of Rotterdam at several surprising and fascinating locations.
www.motelmozaïque.nl



34. SALON/1

Salon/1 is a creative platform that is active both online and offline, and aims to investigate the dialogue between art, design and fashion. Throughout the year, several events and collaborations with artists are taking place in and around the city of Amsterdam. Salon/1 also became Turkey-based recently, which brings a wide creative network together. Every exhibition surprises with new and fresh combinations of different media into one overarching concept.
www.salon1.org



35. DUS Architects

DUS Public Architecture is a creative company with a wide vision: architecture is approached as a lifestyle that we all live and breathe. DUS is showing us how to think different and offers strategies on how to include our given environment to benefit our own comfort. There is always more to explore and DUS never stops sharing these great ideas: it is great when architecture reminds us on being more conscious about our future and how we want to live in it.
www.dusarchitects.org



36. F*cking Pop Queers

Every second Saturday of the month, the 'pop icons' are celebrating and having an amazing time in the fancy Amsterdam club Jimmy Woo. As they say, 'the aliens and the queers' come from all different directions into one room and go wild. Every single party has a different theme, challenging Amsterdam's hipsters to express themselves and showcase their over the top outfits and entourage. Come join them if you are in town, and shake your body to some pop pop pop music.
Address: Korte Leidsedwardsstraat 18, Amsterdam, www.jimmywoo.com

37. Queensday

Every April 30th, Holland turns into a big orange outdoor spectacle. It is the Queen's mum's birthday and the whole country is celebrating: every street turns into a flea-market and people dress crazy and party on the streets. Several music events are staged throughout the cities and everyone enjoys this special day of the year. For the Dutch nation, Queens's day is almost bigger than New Years Eve and definitely one not miss.
www.koninginnedag2012.nl

These Are a Few of My Favourite Things... in Holland

38. 5 Days Off

5 Days Off is a creative indoor festival, which takes place every year in the heart of Amsterdam. It has existed for 12 years, and accommodates emerging as well as established DJ's from Holland and abroad. In the main locations Paradiso, DeBalie and the Melkweg, you can celebrate to electronic music for 5 days long. The main focus of this festival is music, but you can also enjoy theatre, film, debate, photography, art and literature performances. www.5daysoff.nl



40. Nuit Blanche

Are looking for new adventures, great inventions and crazy new places? Then you are at the right place at this event: Nuit Blanche is an annual nighttime summer festival, which puts its focus on connecting creative pioneers in the strangest ways imaginable. It is certainly a fun night to remember and not to miss, if you are in the city to explore a different side of art, culture and music at unexpected and unconventional places. www.nuitblancheamsterdam.nl



41. Soho Bar

SOHO Bar is that innovative night bar we are all looking for. It has the best cocktails in Rotterdam, a refreshing atmosphere, excellent service, fresh cocktail-ingredients and a high dosis of style. Outside as well as inside, SOHO has a lot to offer and still provides a personal and intimate feeling. Take your time to go through the cocktail list and try something different or have your all time favorite; I am sure it will be better then you ever have tasted it before. Address: Pannekoek 53, Rotterdam, www.sohobar.nl

42. Boutique Vesper

Vesper is the best cocktail place in Holland and certainly the coziest one in Amsterdam. It is not bigger than most living rooms, but as the Dutch people say very 'gezellig' (remember this word, it means 'cozy' and the Dutch use it all the time). There are all kinds of cocktails but if you have the longing for a surprise cocktail, you can order the 'Leap of Faith': the rest is all enjoyment. Cheers! Address: Vinkenstraat 57, Amsterdam, www.vesperbar.nl

39. IJ-Hallen

Holland knows many surprising events that only the locals will know off, like the monthly flea-market at the IJ-Hallen. Getting there is a little adventure in itself: take the free ferry behind the Amsterdam Central Station to get to the industrial NDSM-yard in the north part of Amsterdam. Even if you decide to not visiting the IJ-Hallen, you can enjoy the nice boat trip (for free!), and watch the beauty of Amsterdam seen from the water. www.ijhallen.nl



43. ZOO Magazine

Surprisingly enough, this international magazine has its roots in Holland! Sandor Lubbe, Jose Klap and singer and photographer Bryan Adams (yes, the guy from the hitsingle 'Everything I Do, I Do It for You') founded Zoo Magazine in 2003. Nowadays, it is a globally appreciated independent magazine with iconic shoots, in-depth interviews with leading figures from the fashion, art, film and music industry and some of the best photo shoots a Dutch magazine has ever published! www.zoomagazine.com



44. Prestage

As their graduation project, two young students from the Amsterdam Fashion Institute decided to make a fashion magazine on young creative talents in Holland. After the first edition they realized everyone was so enthusiastic about their magazine that they decided to do this as their daily job. By now they are at issue 4 already and the two young power-women Puck Landewe and Stefanie Mensink are selling their fresh spirited magazine in 16 countries already. www.prestagemagazine.com



45. Glamcult

Glamcult is one of Holland's leading independent fashion magazines that started as an underground tabloid in 2003 and emerged into a high performance independent magazine. You can obtain a copy for free in clothing boutiques, cafes and museums around Holland and Belgium. The magazine gives a nice inside look into the young and emerging talents and shows established international talents, art, music and all kinds of new inventions in and around the fashion world. www.glamcult.com



46. MYKROMAG

Mykromag is a small black & white magazine created by young passionate fashion lovers. Their motto is 'together is the future' and the founder and Editor-In-Chief Sonny Groo brings young new talents together to create flourishing shoots, texts and exciting combinations of visuals and content. His new MYKROMAG is a collaboration with fashion designer Rad Hourani and is certainly a must have on your book shelf. www.mykromag.com

47. ILOVEFAKE Magazine

From a crazy fashion blog to a daring magazine, ILOVEFAKE Magazine brings a fresh wind into the world of magazines and should definitely stand in every magazine lover's closet. The style of the magazine is a perfect reflection of Holland's fashionable daring youth and new ways of showing photography. So far there is only one issue, but the second promising edition is in the making. I love Ilofefake. www.ilovefakemagazine.com

All images are press images

Shoe Architect

Marloes ten Bhömer. Remember this name. She can be considered the most innovative Dutch shoe designer of today, even though you will not spot her work in the streets of Holland. Her creations are little works of wonder that makes one question the true function of shoes. But besides this, they are also just a joy to watch.



Interview by Lisa Goudsmit

Hi Marloes, can you please introduce yourself to the Turkish audience?

After doing my BA in 3D Design at ArtEZ, Institute of the Arts, in Arnhem, I went to London in 2001 to study Design Products at the Royal College of Art. I also did a short course on shoe design at the London College of Fashion. Ever since then, I am an independent designer and exhibit my work, mainly shoes, internationally. Besides this I am a consultant and work for a couple of shoe companies. Currently I am a Stanley Picker Fellow at Kingston University. Here I am researching a new method to support a foot in elevated position during movement. This approach focuses on the parameters of feet to eventually come to a series of designs and design solutions that are more connected to architectural structure and principles than to shoe design.

In what way do traditional crafts and technical innovation play a role in your work?

In my work, I try to make the typologies of shoes less common by experimenting with traditional crafts, non-traditional techniques and materials. This reinventing of the making process results in designs that serve as unique examples of new esthetical and structural possibilities, while also serving as an example to criticize the traditional position of shoes as cultural objects. In the case of Rotationalmouldedshoe (Rotational-moulded-shoe, red.), the technical innovation or the use of a mechanically making-process play a role in the concept of the installation After Hours. The Rotationalmouldedshoe is part of the After Hours-installation that shows a complete, yet stylized making-process of the rotational moulded shoe. This work serves as a critique on the esthetical and extrinsic value of mechanically produced objects versus handmade objects. Be-

sides this, the application of technical innovation is sometimes the only way in which the design can be developed into a structural functioning object.



In what way does functionality influence the appearance of your models? Are aesthetics more important than wearability?

Because I design shoes that are supposed to be very different from existing shoe-typologies, I deny conventions regarding wearability and functionality in my design process.

In this way, I can

design without restrictions and execute my ideas into a technical operating shoe or to a shoe that can be used in the context of expositions, photography or film. When changing the design into a wearable model, I try to work without compromises. Only Carbonfibreshoe #1 (Carbon-fibre-shoe #1, red.) is not wearable, besides this some designs are not fully developed but do function.

Do you consider your work to be design, art or both?

I consider my work to be design because it relates to ideas such as commerce, functionality, technology, the machine versus the handmade, industry, gender, interdisciplinarity, material expression, abstraction and craft. Of course these are ideas that are also manifested in art, but this does not automatically label my work as art.

How important is it to exhibit your work in design and art museums?

It is very important to exhibit work in museums because it gives the freedom to work autonomous and free from industry and commerce. This is one of the ways to develop alternative methods and ideas with an independent vision. Be-

Shoe Architect

sides this it is also a platform to address a larger audience that my work would I galleries and boutiques. The changing context in which the work is exhibited also results in an extra layer in my work that addresses the idea of functionality and prejudices about shoes.

Do you consider yourself to be a typical Dutch designer or an international, universal or trans-boundary designer?

I think my Dutch education at ArtEZ Institute of the Arts, that was back then focused on concept development and experiment, did have a strong influence on the vision and esthetics of my work, but I would not label my work as typically Dutch. Most probably because I do not think my designs fit in with the Dutch nostalgic design climate.

Second picture: Foulded Shoe
Third picture: Rotational Moulded Shoe
All images @ Marloes ten Bhömer
www.marloestenbhomer.squarespace.com



Art & Design in Utrecht

'The smallest of the biggest'; 'A city that has little pretence, but at the same time produces an unlikely amount of talent'; 'holding a lot of potential'; 'starting to dazzle'; 'down-to-earth'; 'a warm city that covers you like a coat'; 'with the image of a student town'. These are some observations on Utrecht, the fourth largest city in the Netherlands. Wondering about the state of the arts and design in a city that cannot compete in size and industrial heritage with its urban counterparts, Ragna Manz visited her hometown in search of the art scene.

Featuring:
Maira
Impakt
Flatland Gallery
BAK
Das Spectrum
Cult Dealer Enzo
Monobanda
Vlambeer



On the outskirts of Utrecht's city centre stands a building that was once owned by an insurance company named Moira. In the early eighties the abandoned building was squatted by artists and musicians seeking an affordable place to live and work. In the following years it was transformed into a multi-tenant art- and living space. A variety of cultural initiatives are situated in the many working spaces, and the Moira exhibition space serves as an open platform for upcoming talent. Artistic leader Sascia Vos tells me that Moira aims to act as a springboard for recent art school graduates. While artists exhibiting at Moira are often picked up by the art world, Vos emphasizes that experiment is most important, meaning that 'here, artists can still fall flat on their face and be ok'. Moira has yet to turn down any contemporary art discipline, works exhibited at the gallery ranging from installations, sculptures, and painting, to sound works, live performances, and autonomous fashion. The artist has the opportunity to work within the space for a couple of weeks before the exhibition opens. This results in new site-specific installations. Anyone looking for a headstrong and authentic view of today's art that crosses boundaries and transcends traditional museums – Moira is the place to be.

At a stones-throw from Moira (this is the beautiful thing about the centre of Utrecht: everything is within walking distance) you will find the headquarters of Impakt. Founded in 1988, Impakt organizes an annual festival on

visual art, film, video, music, and performance. The city is their stage: concert venues, galleries, theatres, vacant buildings, but also the streets, squares, and canals serve as event locations. Besides the festival Impakt organizes year-round 'Impakt Events': short projects like workshops, lectures, and residencies. Moreover, through their 'visiting curator program', Impakt contributes to the construction of an international network of artists, and stimulates exchanges between artists, curators, and art institutions. Not living in the Netherlands? No worries! The online Impakt Channel (<http://impakt.nl/channel>) displays video art works, background information, curatorial statements, and critical texts: Content with Context, as Impakt would say.

One of the first contemporary art galleries in Utrecht focusing on photography is the Flatland Gallery. Founded in 1983 by Martin Rogge, Flatland Gallery is situated on the lovely site of a 15th century cloister in a former school building. The gallery is internationally known for its contemporary photography, but also exhibits installations, drawings, film, video, and sculptures. Flatland Gallery highly values beauty and aesthetics, as can be seen in well-styled photographs by Erwin Olaf, the staged photographs of Ruud van Empel, and on a different level in the work of documentary photographer Rob Hornstra. Very important to the gallery is the way they (re)present their artists, internationally, to the outside world. The



reception of an artist's work can of course vary from country to country, as for example the work of photographer Nazif Topçuoğlu does. His photographs contain images of young women in boarding school uniforms reading in late 19th century libraries, or doing unusual things that appear a bit sinister. They often entertain a sense of nostalgia, or a subtle erotic undertone. Female subjects are one of the most common in western art, and Topçuoğlu is interested in the representation of women in Islamic countries. In his staged mises-en-scènes, classical themes are addressed and inspiration is drawn from authors such as Thomas Mann and Marcel Proust, as well as from artists such as Rembrandt and Caravaggio. Topçuoğlu's photographs perfectly illustrate what is essential to the Flatland Gallery when they choose to work with an artist, namely that the work has to have a certain stratification, because it needs to be engrossing on the long term too.

One of the more established institutes for contemporary art and research in not only Utrecht, but in the whole of the Netherlands, is BAK, basis voor actuele kunst (basis for contemporary art). With a focus on artistic practices that on the one hand consciously articulate their position to society, and on the other hand can themselves be seen as practices engaged in the production of knowledge, BAK compares their activities to that of a laboratory. They explore the ways in which art can help us understand the contemporary world. Artistic

director Maria Hlavajova: 'we think that the most important thing that art has to contribute to the world, is imagination.' In order to place itself in the middle of society and its urgencies (like war, questions of migration, Roma issues etc.), BAK not only organizes exhibitions, but rather engages in long-term research, educational activities, and publishing. Artists, scholars, writers, activists, and students find their way to the institute. Perhaps these words by Hlavajova describe BAK in a nutshell: 'from an international perspective BAK is often seen as an example of a medium-scale, dynamic space for art that pushes the boundaries of the discussion on art and theory forming. Something we are very proud of.'

For my next visit I have to leave the city centre. After a short bus ride I arrive at Das Spectrum, a collaborative artist space situated in an old publishing house in Utrecht Overvecht. Das Spectrum opened their doors in October 2011, and was set up by Das BiIT, Frast, and IMG_SRC Collective. The three storey-high building offers room for sixteen artists – as well as to a drugs research centre – and the ground floor serves as an exhibition space where the three collectives organise exhibitions as well as music- and film nights, readings, and other happenings. The exhibition on show when I visit is 'Exotropy / De mens voorbij' (Beyond the Human), curated by IMG_SRC. I am taken around the show where I encounter beautiful microscopic images of human skin, the meditative

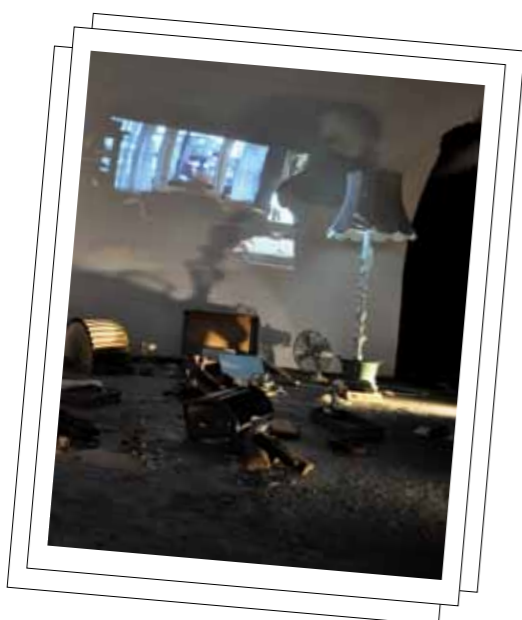


workings of my own brain, robotica sculptures which startle and amaze, and real-life spiders that are part of a bio-art project aiming to create bullet-proof skin. The three initiatives have their own signature and approach, which makes Das Spectrum a dynamic and diverse place. Whereas the current exhibition is typical of IMG_SRC, Frast has a more narrative and poetic bias, and Das BilT serves as a platform for starting artists, collaborating regularly with art students. There are no rules at Das Spectrum. Everything is constantly evolving, and when you enter the space you feel the power of display and creation converging. The young, edgy city manifests itself here more than anywhere else.

Back in the heart of the city centre, I find myself literally underground. In an old wharf cellar along the Oudegracht, a new experimental laboratory and meeting place has opened its doors. 'Cult', a place where visitors can execute their dreams and plans, is one third of Cult Dealer Enzo (CDE). 'Dealer' focuses on entrepreneurship and the development of ludicrous ad campaigns, and 'Enzo' (and so on) facilitates events, people, and ideas that fall in between, and transcend 'Cult' and 'Dealer'. The entire program is in the hands of so-called cultjunkies (visitors) and cultdealers (event organisers). Many of Utrecht's independent platforms come together at CDE, the program and events stemming from a need, a collaboration, or both. CDE's events contain an ardour of intimacy, unprecedented inspiration, and have a certain

rawness to them. Additionally, the activities reveal the synergetic power that is released when working together. At CDE the framework is continuously shifting. Ignoring all rules, the events jolt people awake, earning them the title 'the enfant terrible of the Utrecht art scene'. Bon vivants of all ages, backgrounds, disciplines, and gradations of enlightenment will find their place at CDE.

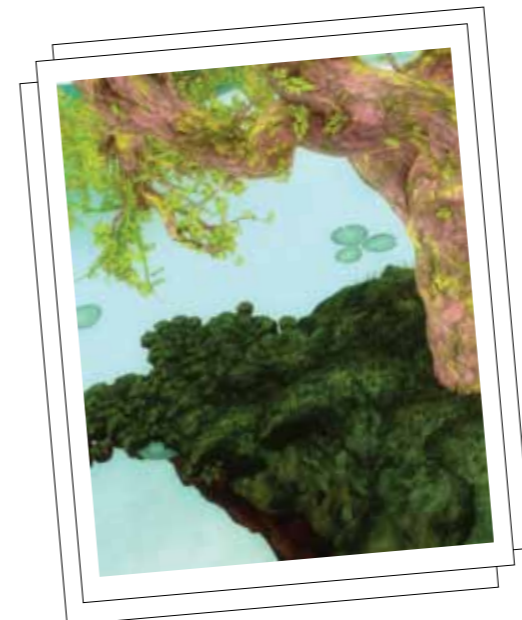
Just behind CDE at Neude Square, lies the Dutch Game Garden, a game development hotspot. Home to well over thirty game organisations, DGG provides the city with an extraordinary status when it comes to game design. Therefore I decide to deviate a bit from my chosen path, and meet with Monobanda and Vlambeer, who both have a studio in the Game Garden. Monobanda makes games and experiences linking the real- and the virtual world. They embrace physical interaction in games, because of the particular emotions or feelings it can evoke. For example, when playing Do It Yourself DJ, an interactive music installation, a sense of nostalgia comes over the players. A moment is created in which people can travel back to their childhood, and be overcome by an experience, rather than worrying about winning or losing. Departing from a concept or a story, the appropriate technique follows. This means that the shape of an end product is unknown at the start, but will always be playful. And sometimes they end up playing in public space themselves, for example on the square in front



of their office where they played every Friday afternoon for a year with anybody who dared to join. The five creative brains behind Monobanda consider the entire world their playground. Their honourable, fun, and sweet projects reintroduce the elementaries of playing games, and add a playful layer to the everyday.

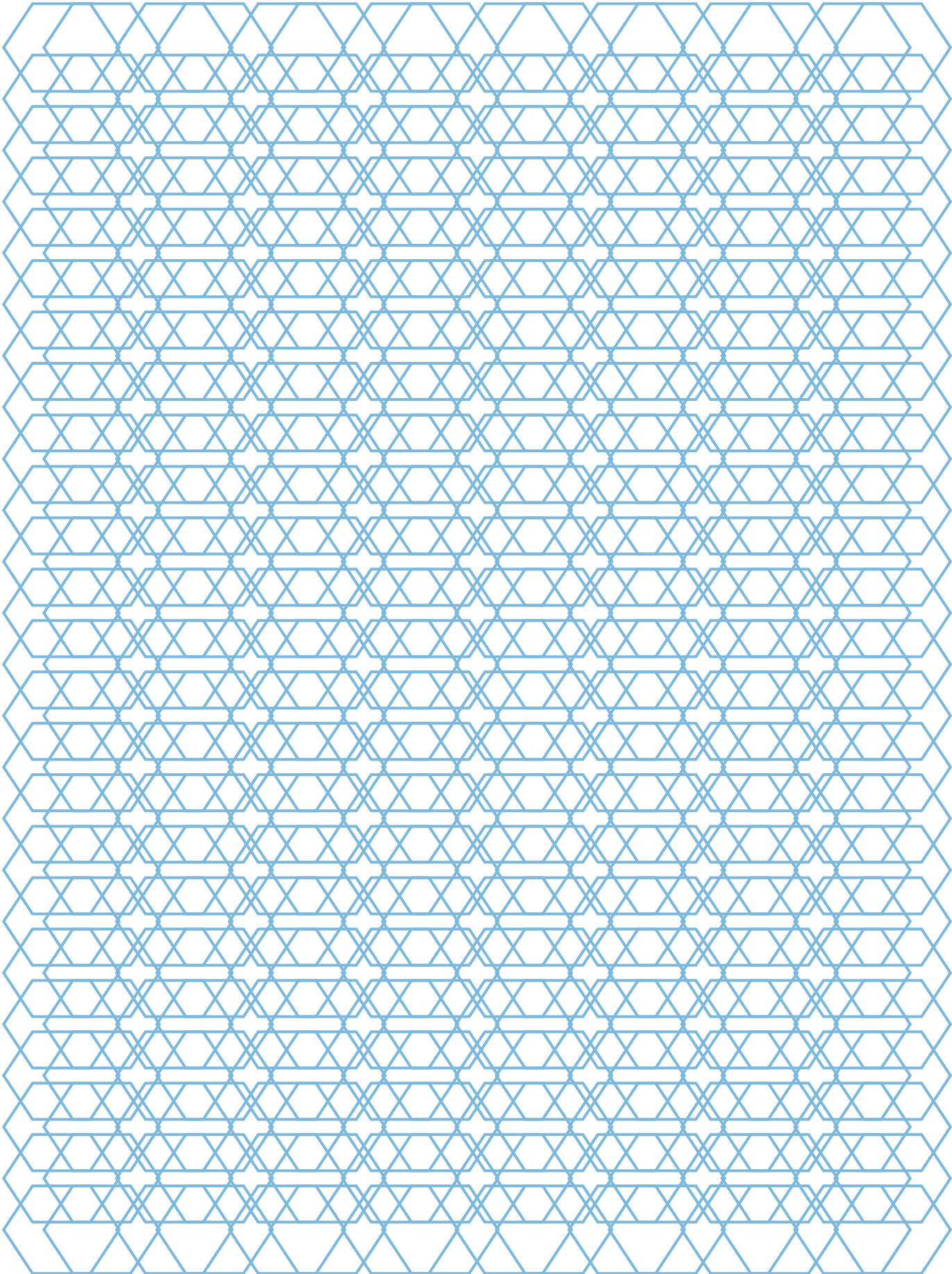
Vlambeer operates in the indie scene and, like Monobanda but in a different way, tries to bring 'play' back into games. More specific: Rami Ismail and Jan Willem Nijman aim to bring back arcade gaming. While modern games try to look and feel more and more like movies, according to Rami the best thing about games is the interaction – this is what creates a personal bond between the game and the gamer. Vlambeer states that with impressive coding, precise game design, old-school art, and some other, sadly, classified elements, they try make the best games they can. Want to play? Go to supercratebox.com.

The fact that, besides these places and initiatives, there is much more left to discover, says enough: Utrecht is rising. Over the past decade, artists have taken control of their city and have successfully carved out a space for their work. With the looming budget cuts, institutes cannot afford to sit around and wait for the money to come, but rather are taking initiative and forming new alliances. New projects are driven by fresh energy and enthusiasm; established institutes are returning to their core values. Utrecht is developing quickly, and is worth keeping an eye on.



Credits:

BAK © Rob 't Hart,
Ejderkan in Moira, 2009 © Sascia Vos,
Domenique Himmelsbach in Moira, 2010 © Sascia Vos,
Interview, 2007 © Nazif Topçuoğlu / Flatland Gallery,
BAK © Rob 't Hart,
Spiders and curious visitors at the exhibition,
'Exotropy' © Das Spectrum,
An evening program in Cult Dealer Enzo,
The digital landscape of 'Mimicry', a game by
Monobanda in the virtual and the real world,
Screen of the videogame 'Bohm' © Monobanda
(pictures in order of appearance)



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