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Space for Art at the Zuidas

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Imagine it’s 2040 and you’re looking at Amsterdam’s Zuidas with Google Earth. What kind of art do you see? In 2040, the Zuidas does not feature art objects that seem to have crash-landed there like comets. What you do glimpse amid the sleek, towering commercial buildings are mysterious spaces so full of, adventure, crafted with such refinement and care, that you zoom in for a closer look and are seduced into wandering from one artistic site to the next. For among the buildings, streets, shops and theatres runs a ribbon of such oases, places of freedom and imagination, inextricably bound with the city.

This Google Earth vision of the future may seem like a dream sequence out of Alice in Wonderland, but serious work has been going on for six years to turn that dream into reality. For the city, banks and developers are not simply building a new financial, commercial and legal business district along with apartments and theatres at the Zuidas. Plazas designed by artists are also being built and sites intended for art and culture are being created.

While the Virtual Museum Zuidas, the foundation responsible for art and culture at the Zuidas, considers the entire area-in-progress a living and constantly evolving museum, the laws and rules that operate at the Zuidas are different from those within the secure walls of a museum. In a museum, the point is to present autonomous works of art away from a disruptive environment. Art at the Zuidas, especially the public space designed by artists, is created to have a function as well. It coincides with the space in which people meet, stroll and find recreation and entertainment. At the same time it creates a free zone in which ‘autonomous imagination’, the work of the artist, defines appearances and which the spirit and passion of the artist inhabit. This turns this public space designed by artists, inextricably connected to its urban design and planning, into a mysterious and exciting world. A different world, in which everyday life temporarily fades and the strict rules of work can be momentarily suspended.

For in spite of the function factor, as much a complication as an enrichment, art at the Zuidas, just as in a museum, has to embellish life, elicit amazement, surprise and admiration, serve as a foothold for imagination and unexpected possibilities. Art at the Zuidas, just like art in a museum, should have depth and stimulate reflection. In addition, however, it must be substantively and physically connected to its surroundings. What’s more, it must be understandable for all, without apology.

The level of ambitions may be comparable to those of a museum, but the conditions inherent in a construction project, set to cost billions and span decades, in which art is created are fundamentally different. These conditions are defined to a significant extent by time and money; plans evolve amid constantly changing conditions and require patience and endurance. The number of parties involved also differs. The builders and planners from the city and national governments, the private investors, the project developers, the established businesses and educational institutions, the artists, designers and architects, the residents and the legions of workers, everyone is taking part in reflections, observations and decisions. This is vital. If art is to be taken

seriously and claim its place for the long term, it must elicit the interest and command the respect of those who are in daily contact with it.

This article is about the art policy at the Zuidas and outlines the process of the last several years, during which its vision has been formed and tested in practice. This vision has also grown, and this growth process is of essential importance. Art that participates in building the city is not about high-minded theories or the pursuit of trends that are by definition ephemeral. It is about creating high-quality physical spaces that suit the area and will still matter not just 40 years from now, when the area is completed, but 200 years from now as well. In order to achieve this, this art must take advantage of the specific conditions of the area; it must grow along with the process, establish itself in the reality of the built environment – without making compromises. Developing such a policy attuned to a single area requires time, flexibility, creativity and endurance. It is an extremely fascinating and exciting process, because its outcome cannot be predicted.

Setup and Organization

The art policy for the Zuidas is based on the plan developed by Simon den Hartog, the former director of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in late 2000 and early 2001 at the request of the Zuidas Project Bureau in its incarnation at the time, when it was the city's delegated commissioning agency. The project bureau now operates as the project management unit of the new NV Zuidas public limited company, under the name Zuidas Amsterdam. Since 2007, the city, the national government and private investors have been operating jointly within Zuidas Amsterdam, with Elco Brinkman as its president-commissioner.

From the start, it was clear that the planners and builders, in order to make the Zuidas a fully fledged urban area, also had ambitions for a cultural climate. Art and culture would imbue the area with character and identity, improve its quality of life and create an informal atmosphere, which would allow people to form an attachment to it. To work out the requested plan, Den Hartog set up a programming council, bringing together people not only with expertise in the field of art in public space but also competent in organizing exhibitions and special events. The programming council made a tour of the country, visiting museums, businesses, foundations and meeting with other experts, including Sjarel Ex (then the director of the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, now the director of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam), Pi de Bruijn (an architect, at the time urban design supervisor for the Zuidas), Jan Wijle (head of the departments for art in the public space and architecture at the Stroom Foundation in The Hague), the Foundation Art and Public Space (SKOR), the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK), and the Art and Business Foundation, as well as visual artists like Joep van Lieshout and Krijn de Koning and architects like Jeroen van Schooten.

These meetings with experts highlighted the importance of a two-track policy: alongside permanent art in public space, temporary and supporting art projects had to be organized. After all, with only art in public space – however essential it may be – a sustainable, complete and inspirational art climate cannot be created. In order to achieve the latter, it is imperative to embed art in the public space which is by definition static – in an active, artistic environment and in a cultural programme that encompasses both the incubation period – the 40-year process during which construction will take place – and the permanent situation and the life that will follow.

That cultural programme will be filled in with art and culture specifically tailored to the Zuidas, in order to avoid competing with existing activities in the rest of the city. At the Zuidas, activities that entail an enrichment for the area itself as well as for the cultural climate of Amsterdam and its environs can flourish. With this non-competitive principle in mind, two areas of attention were identified during this initial period. Rein van der Lugt, the former director of the Groninger Museum, advised bringing the design community, which was in full development and had not yet put down roots, to the Zuidas. In addition, the Zuidas would do well to get the fickle new media on its side. The plans were set out in November 2001 in the Vision on Visual Art at the Zuidas.

The concept of 'participating in the construction along with the architecture' as a unique form of art in public

space also dates from this initial period. The premise was that art should be an essential element of the area's development. Too often, art in public space is merely the cherry on top of the cake, and artists are brought into planning at such a late stage that they can only serve as decorators and object makers, or they are expected to produce so called interactive art, as a palliative measure, to redirect failed social processes. At the Zuidas, on the contrary, the ambition is to connect art and culture, by means of structural interventions, to the urban design, the architecture and the public space. Artists from the Netherlands and abroad are to be invited at an early stage to contribute to specific elements of the Zuidas, in order to think about a substantive contribution to the planning from the very beginning – a premise that carries on the tradition of 'total urban planning' that has been established in Amsterdam. The works of art created in this process are new, unique and specially made for the Zuidas. This calls for artists who are capable of operating independently within such a process. The objective is two-fold: to enrich a newly constructed city with art that is an integral element of it as well as to contribute to the development of the artist, of art in general and of art in public space.

Once the Vision on Visual Art at the Zuidas was approved, Simon den Hartog was appointed visual art supervisor by the Amsterdam city authorities. The supervisor advises the city and the project's management about the establishment and promotion of an attractive and inspirational artistic climate and is also the central contact for all the initiative leaders and planners involved in visual art activities at the Zuidas. As the supervisor cannot operate alone, the foundation Virtual Museum Zuidas (VMZ) was created out of the programming council in 2003. In order that the foundation be firmly embedded in the development process of the Zuidas, its governing board includes prominent partners from the business community, the borough authorities of ZuiderAmstel, Zuidas Amsterdam and Dutch art institutions.

Ambitions

After six years of work at the Zuidas, the importance of the most lasting contribution to the future of the area – that artists should play a part in the construction of the city – has not diminished. The idea is that the art should not function as a parallel world to the tower blocks. In 2040, when the Zuidas city is complete, there will be six or seven sites that will stand out from the rest, both in their appearance and in their significance. These sites will particularize the urban context and give it a unique face. To use a metaphor, if the buildings are the trees in the jungle, the works of art are the beasts that live in that jungle. Without the one, the other cannot come to life. Unique art that engages in a harmonious and adventurous symbiosis with the city: that should be the goal.

In order to reach the desired level of ambitions, several interrelated criteria apply. As previously mentioned, in 'participatory construction' the autonomous imagination of the artist is of paramount importance. Just as in a museum, art at the Zuidas should be a mirror held up to our civilization, in which values such as freedom, beauty, reflection and tolerance find expression. In the process they must appeal to the conceptual, collective memory, and perhaps build on the past or look forward to the future. Unlike in the temporary projects, to which complete artistic freedom applies, imagination in the 'participatory construction' projects is bound by certain rules. The permanent artistic contributions cannot be tied to a particular period; they must be based on universal values and build on a tradition of art and public space.

The second criterion is the importance of durability. The art is inextricably connected to its environment, but even if the buildings are obsolete and perhaps are replaced or given a facelift, even if the city is torn down around it, art should essentially last for eternity. After all, it nestles in our collective memory, defines the image of an area and of a city, assures recognizability and identity.

Imagination and durability must be matched by craftsmanship and the art of creating, an aspect that has been rather neglected in the last few years. The material interpretation of imagination at the Zuidas will have to meet strict standards. The final product must stimulate the senses and be skilfully made. This takes time: to conduct tests, to look for the right concrete structure or for durable materials. It also takes money. All too often, there is hardly any money available for the high quality, durable implementation of what is in principle a brilliant

concept. At the Zuidas, the money is there. This creates the unique opportunity to stimulate and breathe new life into the art of creating, as well as intellectual depth.

The same principle applies for the art as for the architecture: striving for top quality. The artists who have been invited to contribute have earned their stripes in one way or another, are conversant with the latest developments and meet international standards.

The final criterion is flexibility. Those who cannot work with others, those that are unable, in the course of the construction period, to respond to the evolution of the built environment and the demands of functionality and durability have no place here.

Temporary Projects

Not all the plans from the Vision on Visual Art at the Zuidas have become reality. All the parties were convinced of the importance of the two-track policy, but the economic tide turned. As a result of the declining economic situation, ambitions for the Zuidas had to be adjusted and the funding allocated for visual art was also cut back. This spelled the end to several initiatives already underway for events and temporary projects. A new set of priorities emerged, in which art in the public space remained the focus.

Another reality also made itself felt. In that initial period, the attitude of the various players at the Zuidas toward art differed significantly. It took a great deal of time for the gaps in outlooks of the various parties to narrow and for the needed support to be created. In addition, it was a while before buildings began to rise out of the tabula rasa and users took over the area and in so doing began to form the basic requirements of any art policy: a podium and an audience. Working methods also changed over the years. The small, programming council, operating parttime, was expanded with external project curators. These curators are responsible for the content and organization of a specific project and have access to an extensive international network in the art, tailored to the project.

Although the temporary projects, special events and initiatives, in particular, have had to endure budget cutbacks, with all the consequence this entails, there have nonetheless been successes in this domain in the past several years. The temporary (two-year) art project Landfall by the artist duo Elodie Hiryczuk and Sjoerd van Oevelen, which investigates how a natural landscape and an urban landscape of comparable size to the Zuidas are experienced physically and in the imagination, attracted a great deal of positive attention and was therefore extended.

The initiative ‘Platform 21’ was set up, a platform for the twenty-first century in which design, fashion and creativity come together. Originally (in 2003) the VMZ had commissioned Bik Van der Pol to design a mobile exhibition and exchange centre, which was to serve as an intermediary art institute for the VMZ’s visual art activities. Ultimately, it was decided to set up an exhibition space in the nearby chapel of the former St Nicholas monastery, under the name Platform 21. Free Spaces for Artists in Residence were also inaugurated and housed in the monastery. Here, ideas and plans are hatched in complete freedom, and research and reflection take place, in order to nurture the exhibition and conceptual climate.

Another significant accomplishment is the establishment of the Research Group Art and Public Space. This Research Group, established by a partnership of the VMZ, the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, the Sandberg Institute, the Foundation Art and Public Space (SKOR) and the Universiteit van Amsterdam, has taken on the role of gadfly and conducts research on the cultural development of the Zuidas as well as waging debates about it in the symposia it organizes.

The Virtual Zoom, a multi-year photography project, is also up and running. Each year, two to four photographers nominated by a curator are invited to record the Zuidas-inprogress in their own way. Foam, Amsterdam’s photography museum, has agreed to take over, preserve and exhibit the growing collection. In the

process, in the midst of the crucible of commercial forces and the thundering advance of the construction process, space has been built in, by means of a small number of temporary projects, for reflection, openness, debate, humour and critique.

Now that the economic tide has turned, economic activity has picked up and the Zuidas has entered a new phase with the wind in its sails, the programme of temporary projects has been resumed. This includes work on a regular series of events based on specific themes or locations. From this event structure, featuring a broad programme of music, theatre, symposia and debates, a net of temporary activities will be spread across the Zuidas. For the importance of temporary projects continues to be acknowledged, and the lack of a supporting cultural climate has left its toll over the last several years. Because of a lack of public events, for instance, the hoped-for stream of interested visitors and tourists has so far been a mere trickle. And if innovative projects are to be created, a range of experiments and trial projects remains imperative, if only to nurture the intellect.

Art in the Public Space

It is clear that artists, in projects like those for the Zuidas, cannot reach their objectives on their own. If they want to achieve a unique performance within such large-scale processes and shepherd their design intact to the finish line, they must, just like architects, work with feasible designs and collaborate with a team that includes people from municipal departments and the engineering, design and construction disciplines, as well as financial experts. The idea is not simply to come up with and erect a sculpture in the public space: the artist must also be able to lead and work with such a team. For in the philosophy of ‘participatory construction’ it is the artist who determines what a section of the public space will look like. He or she provides artistic direction throughout the design process. The other parties follow his or her directions, produce test models, drawings and calculations, think about feasibility. This has consequences for the budgets. We are no longer dealing with erecting a sculpture in the public space and budgets around 200,000 Euro; financial expenditures for art have increased by a factor of 10. A plaza for which an artist is the main designer, for instance, now costs about 2 million Euro. This is not due to delusions of grandeur or American-style bombast. The setting in which the artist works demands this larger scale; his or her work must relate to the buildings and the public space, and the facilities in the public space must relate to the art installation. This has an impact on the budget.

It goes without saying that in order to achieve the desired quality and attract the necessary funding, it is necessary to join forces. The point is to create the art we want to have, without cutting corners or fiddling with dimensions or quality. In order to achieve this, other sources of funding have to be tapped besides the VMZ. It also goes without saying that such a process takes time – four to eight years on average – as long as a construction process, longer than we have hitherto been accustomed to for art in public space.

In order to preserve the autonomy of the artists, a good client relationship is necessary, as well as a system that monitors and safeguards quality in the course of the process. If the artist is not supported by the commissioning client throughout the project, if the process is not managed from A to Z, the likelihood of success is nil. The commissioning client of a work of art is the investing party, or the joint parties, possibly with the addition of outside donors. In practice, this usually involves a partnership of several parties and is then dubbed the ‘commissioning team’. In this case, the VMZ is the delegated commissioning client for the artists on behalf of the commissioning team.

The visual art supervisor and the artistic manager for art and public space of the VMZ stand above the parties and can therefore bring them together, seek out solutions where needed and operate strategically. They monitor artistic content and quality throughout the process and guide and advise the artist during planning and execution. The Zuidas Amsterdam project manager is responsible for the progress of the total process. Final decisions are made by the Zuidas Amsterdam Board of Commissioners, which takes the recommendations of the urban design supervisor, public space supervisor and art supervisor into account. The recommendations of the supervisors are based on the presentations of the various design phases and discussions of the designs with the artists.

By now, years of investment and patience are bearing fruit and the first results are emerging. In the Vivaldi sector, artist Krijn de Koning is working on the transformation of the Nuon site.1 This area, which until now had escaped the notice of the planners and builders, is being transformed by De Koning into the eastern gate of the Zuidas, featuring two multi-coloured transformer sheds placed one on top of the other, a public transport folly,a park and an expansive, open plaza. Part of the plan has already been implemented, and it is already clear that private domain and public space have been turned into a single area, that art and setting are merging. The rest will be completed in phases: the plaza and the park will follow in 2008 and the folly will be built in 2009, along with the new tram stop.

Four artists – Giny Vos, Germaine Kruip, Nicky Zwaan and Johan Vonk – are currently making preliminary designs for light-installation art on the KPN transmission tower. The project is due to be completed in early 2009.

On 22 November 2007, a new cultural axis lined with temporary sculptures by international artists was inaugurated. For this form of sculpture exhibition, the VMZ entered into a partnership with the Dutch Association of Corporate Art Collections (VBC N). Every two years, a new curator will be appointed to put together a new collection. Art historian Ernst van der Hoeven was appointed to make the first selection. He chose from among the corporate collections works by artists Rob Voerman, Ewerdt Hilgemann, Charlie Roberts, Frank Bruggeman, Tony Cragg, Henk Visch, Sjoerd Buisman, Thomas Ruff, Julika Rudelius, Fernando Sánchez Castillo and Lukasz Skapski. The participating corporations are ABN-Amro, Aegon, Akzo Nobel, Rabo Bouwfonds, Fortis, lNG, KPN, Rabobank and SNS Reaal.

In mid-2007 a large, semi-permanent video screen was installed on the Zuidplein. The LED screen originated from the concept ‘Het kunstwerk als podium’ (‘The artwork as stage’), a project that was developed in 2003 for the Zuidplein by Tom van Gestel (SKOR) and Henk de Vroom (VMZ). They departed from their original idea of a static work of public art and, instead, decided to conceive of the artwork as a stage in itself.

The Zuidplein is located in the central business district of the Zuidas and functions both as a meeting place and an intersection where people cross paths on their way to and from work or meetings. From the outset of the project the aim. has been to broadcast a provocative programme that will attract local, national and international interest with the help of state-of-the-art LED technology. The program is innovative in nature and its content is made up of 80 percent art and 20 percent announcements and commercials. A new curator will be responsible for each new season of programming. The project took four years to complete, due to extensive research in the areas of technology, feasibility and financing, as well as negotiations with the display suppliers, cultural organizations and artists, calls for EU tenders, construction permits, decision-making procedures and final approvals.

At the initiative of the VMZ and in partnership with SKOR, CASZuidas (Contemporary Art Screen Zuidas. Moving Images In Public Space) has been set up for the programming of the video screen, which will serve as an exclusive and provocative podium for visual art in the public space of the Zuidplein. Since 5 October 2007, every day from 6 a.m. to midnight, CASZuidas has been showing work by renowned Dutch and international artists as well as promising young talents. Spectators can call a toll-free telephone number to hear the

soundtrack of a film on a mobile phone or headset. In addition, CASZuidas is already working with initiatives such as PARK4DTV and NIMk (Amsterdam), Impakt (Utrecht), Argos (Brussels) and TankTV (London), and it will provide space for art and cultural events such as the Holland Festival. The programme is put together by curator Jan Schuijren. This ambitious focus on art on a video screen makes CASZuidas not only unique in the Netherlands, but in the entire world.

In the newspaper NRC Handelsblad Reinier Kist writes about CASZ: 'What does a video screen do to a plaza? As long as it is not intrusive, it turns it into a living room. The redesign of the Zuidplein, completed three years ago, was already a success, because the architects, in spite of the office blocks towering alongside and the adjacent train station and motorway, had managed to make the plaza an intimate place. People hang out here, reading a book or a newspaper on the rim of a tree container, strolling past terraces. The only thing it was missing to make it really welcoming, the object that most evokes a sense of home for modern man, was a television set. CASZuidas is intended as an escape from the whims of the day. "Video art allows you to look at your environment in a different way," says Jan Schuijren, the screen's programmer. "In that sense it can be an enrichment in comparison to visual culture on television, which currently consists almost exclusively of reality shows."'2

For the Gershwinplein with its water basin measuring 45 by 45 metres, artist Jennifer Tee, in collaboration with Richard Niessen and Joost Vermeulen and the advisory team, has produced a preliminary design.

The definitive design had been scheduled for autumn 2008, whereupon implementation would begin, with completion to coincide with that of the buildings around the plaza, in 2009. At the moment (autumn 2007), the further development of the plaza is at a standstill. The reason is that a new visual quality plan is being formulated by the new Zuidas urban design supervisor, bOb Van Reeth, who took over in late April 2007, and by Zuidas public space supervisor Paul van Beek, who began work in August 2007. In the view of these supervisors, Jennifer Tee's design does not fit in with the new visual quality plan being developed. The question is why that is. And how a design process that has been worked on for so long can be halted. For Jennifer Tee's preliminary design has the potential to accommodate new visions on visual quality in the next design phase.

One answer might be that it is already known that the Gershwinplein, in the new visual quality plan, is seen as part of a greater whole dubbed the Minerva axis. The sequence of the existing plazas – Minervaplein, Zuidplein, Stationsplein, Mahlerplein and Gershwinplein – which will be lined with iconic architecture that will define the area's aspect, can represent an advance in quality, durable construction at the Zuidas. But this does not have to mean that integrated art in the public space of the Minerva axis is impossible. Jean Tinguely's fountains in Basel and the water plazas by Yaacov and Takis at La Defense in Paris demonstrate that it can be done. At La Defense in particular, it is clear that in a large-scale public space lined by iconic buildings, integrated art and even object art can serve to increase quality of life and stimulate a variety of uses, such as places to meet.

Art and Money

The financial foundation of all the projects is the budget of the Virtual Museum Zuidas, funded by the city. It is vital that the VMZ have a sound financial foundation, for it is only on that basis that supplementary funds by outside donors can be raised. The Amsterdam Fund for the Arts (AFK) for instance, has agreed to a partnership for the Gershwinplein art project, for which the AFK and the VMZ will each assume 50 percent of the costs.

Although the VMZ regards cooperation with subsidy donors, such as SKOR and the AFK, as vitally important, it is often difficult for government institutions of this kind, in practice, to finance projects with extended preliminary and production periods. The policy objectives of donor funds are oriented to the short term and span at most two years. 'Participatory construction', on the other hand, requires patience that goes beyond the short term. In order to achieve this sort of project on a communal basis and to make longer development periods possible, the subsidy conditions of donor funds need to be expanded. Moreover, donor funds, like city

governments, sometimes have to deal with the consequences of politically mandated cutbacks, which can place allocated funding at risk.

For this reason, and in keeping with current social developments whereby private and public investors are joining forces, the VMZ is looking beyond the government and donor funds and has begun to tap a third source of funding. It has set up partnerships, for the short or long term or per project, with corporations and parties located and operating at the Zuidas, such as Nuon, KPN, AKZO-NOBEL, Faircom, WTC, ABN-Amro, lNG, HouthoffBuruma, the Dutch Association of Corporate Art Collections, the Holland Festival, Gerrit Rietveld Academie, the Sandberg Institute and Platform 21.

The question remains whether all these efforts will benefit the new city, its future users and art, or simply serve the interests of the project developers. The Amsterdam alderwoman for culture, Carolien Gehrels, is convinced, like many others, that art and culture drive up land prices and increases the value of real estate. This is undoubtedly the case at the Zuidas as well. Artists and project developers have differing objectives. Artists work on an artistic development, project developers on an economic one. But there are also shared motivations. Both groups want to create a beautiful city, one that exudes liveliness, is unique and attracts people. Art's contribution is vital, for it plays a part in ensuring the success of the project developer. On the other hand, if art is to contribute to a sustainable urban environment, to the level of civilization of the city and the country and to the development of art itself, this can only be achieved, in this ambitious construct, in areas where money is and where money is made. It becomes imperative to join forces and take advantage of opportunities. Money and financial profit seeking need not be a threat to pure art and artistic freedom, as Belgian sociologist Pascal Gielen argues. The 'melting pot of artistic and economic values' also offers advantages and opportunities, Gielen says – in this case the opportunity for art to go all out, to relate to its setting and to reach a broad audience. 3 The necessarily broad base of support need not automatically result in lazy art. In fact the joint effort to create a unique work rewards the involvement of the project developer. His contribution becomes an honourable brief, a showpiece that differentiates him and shows he is not a barbarian.

Art belongs not just in a museum, but in the public space as well. That is where it does its work, creating opportunities for encounter and contributing to the city's level of civilization, affording a sense of identity and establishing itself in the collective memory, like the 'total urban planning' of Berlage's plan for Amsterdam Zuid in the nineteenth century. That area has now been included in UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. We nurture similar ambitions for the Zuidas, but without Berlage's didactic tendencies and detailed regulations. The goal now is to create artworks that stand for freedom and tolerance, that please the senses and stimulate the mind, that relate to society, to the art world and to people and will remain standing for many years to come.

Notes

1. Nuon is a Dutch energy company.

2. Reinier Kist, 'Buitenkunst Zuidas Amsterdam', in NRC Handelsblad, 12 October 2007.

3. Pascal Gielen, 'Artistic Freedom and Globalization', in Open no. 12, Freedom of Culture (Amsterdam/Rotterdam: SKOR/NAi Publishers, 2007) pp. 30-38.

With thanks to Marina de Vries

Henk de Vroom is a visual artist who has worked as on adviser in the field of visual art in public space since 1987. In his capacity as consultant to the IJ-As proiect group (Werkverband Kunst IJ-as), he has organized art projects, for example in the Amsterdam eastern dock area, and is currently member of the programme board

(Art and Public Space) for the Virtual Museum Zuidas. Henk de Vroom also works for the Research Group Art and Public Space of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie as coordinator of education projects.

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