

# International Advisory Board Rotterdam

## Working group Non Subsidised



### Participants:

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Artist & Writer, Charlie Koolhaas

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Art Rotterdam, Fons Hof

Ken Theater, Kenneth Asperaat

Vers Beton, Eeva Liukku

Free Lance Curator, Rosa de Graaf

GROOS, Tjeerd Hendriks

Rotterdam Festivals, Johan Moerman

Rotterdam Festivals, Joyce Ruijs

The participants are all active in the arts and cultural sector. In this first meeting we defined the

strengths of Cultural Rotterdam and the trends that we think will influence the cultural landscape in the coming years.

## **What elements of our cultural portfolio today can help us achieve our future goals?**

### **What are the strengths of Cultural Rotterdam?**

Rotterdam is an open, international city that is willing to change.

This is reflected in Rotterdams cultural life: new initiatives are popping up all the time which makes cultural life dynamic and contemporary. It is important that the city is not only consuming but also producing art.

The quality of the initiatives and institutions is good, there is a willingness to collaborate

The cultural diversity of the city adds to the variety, quality and openness for change

Rotterdam is a city of modern architecture.

### **Which trends will influence and change the cultural landscape in the years ahead of us.**

A 'slash generation' artists will explore different disciplines. Borders between cultural disciplines will fade.

Consumers want to be surprised constantly. They will be less loyal to disciplines and to institutions.

They enjoy art as an experience and want to be surprised all the time.

Authenticity will become increasingly important for consumers, including tourists. They want to see a city that is different from others, honest and real.

The art world will become more commercial; As a result of this underground art will also increase.

The production and consuming of art will be more (culturally) diverse.

Digital channels will influence the production and marketing of Art.

### **In the 2nd meeting the group reflected on the paper of Wim Pijbes.**

Wim's choices seems to reflect a stable world without trends or changes in consumer behaviour. If you put more money into museums the declining visitor numbers will automatically raise again. We don't think that will happen. In a worst case scenario it even could withhold them from necessary renewal.

We think there are important and deep trends going on that will have huge impact on the cultural world and on cultural products. The consumers of tomorrow will behave differently than the babyboomer generation does – and even they will change. Less loyal to institutions, always on the look for an experience, something new and exciting.

Of course these remarks do not mean we do not agree with all suggestions: The river and architecture are important for the city and could be used more by cultural sector and of course a revolving exhibition fund could help to organise important international exhibitions. But much more than that is needed:

Rotterdam has always been open for change and the mix of different disciplines, high and low,

beautiful and raw. Rotterdam should not focus solely on one or two museum products but invest in its climate as a whole. Emphasize its openness and flexibility. In the words of Wallpaper magazine: *off-beat and fiercely committed to the new.*

Combining Rotterdams strengths and expected trends leads to the following advice.

## What needs to be done to make Rotterdam a real destination for the culture and art lover, the art press, the collector, the tourist, etc.?

- **Position the image of Rotterdam to reflect the strengths it already has: a creative – and so ‘destination’ – city.** A city of opportunity, creativity and innovation. Create an inspiring climate in the first place. Cultural life in Rotterdam will remain attractive if it stays dynamic, diverse, contemporary and surprising. Support talent, young and old. Support institutions and new initiatives, including underground. Connect them. Be glocal. Be flexible and agile. Stay open for new ideas all the time and don't over organize or focus too much as a government. Increase the attractiveness of the city for artists and cultural entrepreneurs. Production climate is an important part of a vibrant cultural climate. Embrace cultural entrepreneurs. They love Rotterdams 'freedom' to experiment. Offer them the affordable space they need.
- **Create a 24/7 large free zone where artist can live, work and present.** Combine it with coffee bars, cafés and restaurants. Market it. It can be an exciting attractive new art and entertainment district that will emphasize and proof Rotterdam's DNA: international, enterprising, unpolished and unfinished.
- **Make use of consumer trends**  
Audiences will more and more combine high arts and popular culture, always looking for new experiences. Rotterdam's openness for new developments, its festival tradition and love for mixing high arts and mass culture will satisfy the audience of the future.
- **In relation with this: increase strategic coordination**  
Strategic coordinating of events and collaboration projects around themes that highlight our strong points will improve national and international visibility and impact. On an international level, rooted in the local.

Collaborative projects like an Architecture Month and an Art Rotterdam Week will emphasize the quality of both the city and its cultural life. This also could include strategic programmes in Riverfront areas like Wilhelminapier/Katendrecht, Event programming and city dressing around important exhibitions, opening marathons, performance weekends etc. etc.

## Start a project that will brings cultural life to the next level

Expo 2025 could have been a natural 'dot on the horizon' to bring our cultural life to a higher level, increase audiences and international collaboration. Find other ways to do this. Rotterdam could pitch for the inclusion in Unesco's Creative Cities Network. So far no Dutch city is included within this scheme. Alongside/alternative to UNESCO, we could develop more international collaboration and development programs around themes like 'use of the riverfront'.

**Architecture is one of Rotterdam's primary strengths.** It is much more than the Martkhal and Central Railways station. The city already is an open air museum for modern architecture, a place where we can find previously radical or new typologies. We can make more out of the city as an architectural city. Find new ways of leading people through the city and tell the story of how

Rotterdam became Rotterdam. Program iconic buildings, use them as a stage and make the connection with other disciplines, including young talent and smaller institutions. Create more spaces like architectural galleries where architects and firms could showcase their yet unrealized works. Let's bring back an institute for Architecture!

- The offering of arts will be more culturally diverse, audiences will appreciate that. There's work to do, let's not forget the South!, but **Rotterdam is ahead of many other cities in this respect. Use it.**
- **The river** and the city's skyline is a great backdrop for events and for film. It gives a great visitor experience in which the cultural experience and the city experience are combined.

## A great city to live

Our advice focuses on the position of Rotterdam as a creative city and therefore as a cultural destination. Regarding the people that live or want to live in this city: Together, the cultural institutions in the city in the city should be able to reach all citizens. It is their city and there should be something for everybody that lives here.

The cultural institutions should cater all tastes, all age groups, all ethnic groups.

This is in line with the cultural year plan 2017-2020.

Tip: Get young people (25-40) with their heels in the present cultural life involved in decision making. They know the underground and periphery, apart from the well-known institutions. For a young youth culture fuelled city like Rotterdam some binding advice from within the field is very much needed.

## What could or should be the contribution of the cultural sector to the story/the narrative/the DNA of the city?

It's there, so now it's a matter of clever and holistic storytelling, which brings Rotterdam's strengths and aims to the fore.

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