

Do you also want to utilize artists as a tool for heightening competitiveness and managing local conflicts?

Enforce artist participation, the Rotterdam way

Be inspired by Rotterdam's pioneering cultural policy.

Everybody participates... artists above all

This PR Brochure showcases the pathbreaking cultural policy employed by the City of Rotterdam to enforce artist participation. It is a winning formula to strengthen the City's international competitive position and manage local communities.

The visionary courage of Rotterdam is a shining example for European cities to overcome the challenges of the twenty-first century. Its cultural policy serves as a model for new EU policy that soon will be implemented on the regional level.

Foreword

For several years now, the City of Rotterdam is spearheading the European trend towards employing artists to solve the many social and economic challenges that cities face in the twenty-first century. Acknowledging the tremendous powers of art, Rotterdam has made of the participation of artists to the city's main policy objectives the cornerstone of its cultural policy. And rightly so. With this, Rotterdam lives up to its central city motto: 'Rotterdam... the city with guts'.

The most innovative development in this regard has been the establishment of a special task force, called the Office for Artist Participation. Since its inception in 2010, this Office has launched several cutting-edge policy instruments to enforce and maximize the participation by artists. With this, it has declared a war against artists who remain on the sideline and keep their creative capital to themselves instead of investing it in society.

The anti-social tendency among artists is no longer tenable. Especially against the backdrop of the huge subsidies received by the art sector, it is economically unsustainable and morally unjustifiable. Also artists are citizens and should act accordingly in their professional endeavors.

This brochure showcases the Office for Artist Participation's cutting edge policy initiatives to make

artists take up their civil responsibilities. These initiatives include the establishment of specialized temp agencies for artists, an urban protocol for artist participation and an artist participation officer. More initiatives are currently being developed by the Office and lobbied for among public and private parties.

With this brochure, Rotterdam wants to do more than showcase its winning formula for mobilizing artists for achieving social and economic benefits. Above all, it wants to inspire other cities and tell them that in order to be successful on all fronts - socially and economically, locally and globally - the Rotterdam approach towards artist participation is an approach that works. And importantly, that it only takes a modest portion of political courage and out-of-the-box-thinking to implement it.

Gideon Boie and Matthias Pauwels
Operational managers

Tap into the surplus value of art

Artists do make a difference, whether it concerns integrating population groups from foreign origin or creating image-determining places. Consequently, Rotterdam has made artist participation into the cornerstone of its cultural policy.

The notion of cultural citizenship is Rotterdam's leading principle. As the recipient of special rights and subsidies, artists have the duty to offer something in return – and they are eager to do so. Artists further the cities' interests through their life and work. They help the city to deliver attractive benefits to its residents as well as competitive advantages to its businesses.

Profile

Assets of Rotterdam

- an entrepreneurial city in the European heartland
- at the centre of a city-region of about 1,2 million inhabitants
- Europe's biggest port
- traditionally an industrial and working-class city

Main challenges ahead

- making the leap from an economy focused on the harbour to a more mixed, creative one
- strengthening global competitiveness despite a relatively low educated population
- managing social tensions caused by the amount of inhabitants originating from foreign countries

- the flight of predominantly white, middle-to-high earners to the city's fringe and beyond
- the need to thoroughly restructure the declining neighbourhoods within the city

Rotterdam artists... a breed apart

By fully playing the card of artist participation, Rotterdam has turned a distinctive feature of the city's existing artistic scene into a unique selling point, offering the city a sharp competitive edge.

Rotterdam's art scene is still strongly shaped by the city's working class past and present. Its artists are well-known for their no-nonsense, socially friendly, action-oriented and business-like attitude. They live by Rotterdam's central motto: 'don't just talk, get to work'.

Consequently, artists in Rotterdam are making themselves useful in popular neighbourhoods, city developments or the creative industries. They contribute constructively to the inhabitability, social cohesion and the business climate of the city. This constitutes the strength of art in Rotterdam.

The struggle for artist participation

In Rotterdam, artist participation has taken a quantitative as well as qualitative jump over the past years. It is the result of persistently breaking down the resistances amongst artists and the inertia amongst art institutions and government.

Artist participation is maximized by supporting self-regulation in the art sector. Rotterdam encourages artists to anticipate future developments, such as subsidy cut-backs and opportunities in emerging art markets. It does so by eradicating all major obstacles to artist participation.

Major obstacles

1 The reflex of autonomous art

Among artists, there still exists a strong prejudice towards the autonomy of art. This autonomy is an outmoded concept, taken over uncritically from twentieth-century debates on engaged art practices. As a result, artists engage with Rotterdam's policy objectives with a merely private, artistic agenda. Societal benefits and profitable alliances are thereby lost to the city.

However, this is also a bad thing for the artists themselves. They deprive themselves of the vital inspiration that the many challenges of Rotterdam offer them. Also, they miss out on the opportunity to emancipate themselves from the subsidy system and finance projects via public-private partnerships.

2 Protecting artists from society

Existing art institutions in Rotterdam mainly pursue their own narrow curatorial agenda, and reward artists who comply with it. This further increases the alienation between artists and interested societal

actors. It seriously damages vital, direct interrelationships with governments, companies and citizens.

Moreover, the predominant focus of art institutions on top art only satisfies a select, high educated elite, often coming from outside Rotterdam. This flies in the face of every notion of good cultural citizenship and is at odds with the population dynamics of Rotterdam (low educated, immigrant).

3 Treating artists with kid gloves

In the past, the government has nurtured in the past too much respect for artists and art institutions alike. Rotterdam counted on the good will of the art sector in working together with private actors and paying its due to society.

To be sure, the art sector demands a specific approach. Artists and art institutions must be allowed to operate in relative independence, in order to maximize their return value. Still, Rotterdam has learned that it cannot withdraw completely. For artist participation to work, Rotterdam again tightens the reins and uses its authority and power to enforce clear delivery agreements.

Artists demand firm policy action

To make of artist participation a reality, a special action plan has been put in place. It lays down a solid basis for artists to fully develop their sense of responsibility in the social, economic and spatial development of Rotterdam.

The action plan entitled 'In a city with guts, also artists participate' translates the general lines of Rotterdam's Cultural Policy 2009-2012 into a concrete road map. The latter contains clear targets for the art sector to reach by 2012. It allows the city to closely monitor its artists, correct their behaviour where necessary and sanction them in the case of poor performance.

Targets 2012

1 Building trust capacity

By 2012, the participation of artists in public-private partnerships will be fully normalized. Central to this programme is the rebuilding of trust among the parties involved. Investors demand hard guarantees that artists will live up to their high expectations. Artists demand the demarcation of a playing field that generates a fruitful context for art production.

The key instrument in the Rebuilding Trust programme is the scripting of an Urban Protocol for Artist Participation that explicates the mutual expectations between all parties involved. It will be guided by several meetings and feedback sessions - both formal and informal - that allow the different players to synchronize their interests and desires.

2 Coming out

By 2012, the taboo on artist participation must be finally lifted. The surplus value of locally embedded artists is equal to that of the autonomous art circuit. Top museums are an important instrument

in city marketing and they generate lucrative tourist flows. Locally embedded artists, however, are an indispensable link in internal city marketing. They effectively manage everyday problems in the city and reach out to local people as their consumers.

The corner stone of the Artists Coming Out programme is the appointment of an Officer for Artist Participation. He will bridge the gap between the artists, the government and the people.

3 Professionalization

By 2012, all artists must be self-reliant. Today, the art sector depends too much on state subsidies and commissions by art institutions. Public-private partnerships open up totally new opportunities for artists, both on the production and consumption side of the art market. Artists who take up the challenge of tapping into these new markets deserve a cultural infrastructure that manages all their contracts and sales markets.

The central aim of the Professionalization programme is the restructuring of all defunct art institutions in Rotterdam into Recruitment Agencies for Artist Participation.

Do you want to regulate the participation of artists?

Let rules of engagement define the collaboration

Policy measure 1

An Urban Protocol for Artist Participation spells out the mutual expectations that are at stake in the partnership between artists and governments.

What is it?

A special protocol streamlines and directs the socio-economic commitment of artists.

Aim

The protocol sets out a clear framework for enhancing the efficiency of the commitment of artists to Rotterdam's main socio-economic policy objectives.

Enforcement

The protocol is enforced through a broad consultation process involving the art sector, municipality, market players and investors.

FAQ

What kind of matters are regulated in the Protocol for Artist Participation?

1. The rights and duties of artists regarding participation in society
2. Prescriptions for a disciplined and streamlined conduct of artists in heated social situations
3. The municipal policy aims where participation of artists is obligatory
4. Clear-cut delivery obligations with regard to participation

How does the Protocol for Artist Participation help artists in a concrete way?

- It offers support in operating in heated social situations
- It helps to better reach one's target group by prescribing artistic formats that are accessible to non-specialists
- It maximizes the impact and scope of one's actions by making co-operation with private and public parties obligatory
- It offers a secure income by forcing to anchor one's practice onto the long-term goals of the municipality and market
- It offers a full-fledged citizenship by obliging the artist to contribute to the Gross Municipal Happiness, just like any other citizen or entrepreneur

What are the strategic objectives of the city that are secured with the Protocol?

Economically

- promoting Rotterdam's cosmopolitan character
- creating a strong international image of economic strength and resilience
- enhancing the location and investment climate
- attracting highly educated residents (also from foreign origin)
- building up creative capacities

Socially

- heightening social cohesion
- stimulating intercultural relations
- mobilizing population groups with low qualifications and/or from foreign origin
- making problems visible and discussable

Spatially

- creating strong and inhabitable living environments
- heightening the quality of public space
- creating a stage for the meeting of people
- creating spatial cohesion and image-determining places
- upgrading streets, city quarters and harbour areas

Do you want to secure return on investment in art?

Let artists face their responsibilities

Policy measure 2

The Artist Participation Officer does away with indifference and skepticism amongst involved parties and heightens their alertness.

What is it?

An Artist Participation Officer enforces Rotterdam's cultural policy towards artist participation.

Field of action

The mandate of the Artist Participation Officer covers everything related to the cultural citizenship of artists and art institutions in Rotterdam.

Function

The Artist Participation Officer points out to the art sector its duty to participate in the society and economy. He will report negligence in this regard and mobilize stakeholders.

FAQ

Why is an Artist Participation Officer needed?

The art sector demands clarity and resolution of Rotterdam. A contemporary city clearly points out the areas in which it expects commitment of the art sector, such as the inhabitability of neighbourhoods, safety, Islam and economic decline. That is precisely what the Artist Participation Officer does.

What means does the Participation Officer have at its disposal to hold artists accountable?

The Artist Participation Officer uses all the instruments available to the city. The latter include structural subsidies, traditionally a strong mechanism for enforcing artist participation. Public-private partnerships are also a powerful instrument. The business-like conduct of developers motivates artists and art institutions not to lose sight of the higher interests of the city in artistic production. Finally, hard delivery targets will be determined on the basis of which the participation of artists will annually be judged.

What are the major tasks of the Artist Participation Officer?

1. Pushing on the cultural citizenship of artists and art institutions. These parties enjoy a relative independence and their commitment to society

should therefore be constantly pointed out to them.

2. Creating an interest in public-private partnerships with artists and art institutions. Public and private actors do not make enough use of the cultural citizenship of artists for their own objectives.
3. Tracking down abuses on the level of artist participation or non-participation. These will be reported immediately to the City and possible sanctions will be implemented.

What important skills does the Artist Participation Officer possess?

- sensitivity to the artistic field
- a clear insight into Rotterdam's strategic interests
- sensitivity to existing power relations
- skillfulness in inventing solutions and demining conflict situations
- ability to delegate
- high approachability factor
- strong physical presence

Do you want to match artistic supply with societal demand?

Let the market replace dysfunctional art institutions

Policy measure 3

Specialized Artist Recruitment Agencies exploit synergies between existing art practices and strategic socio-economic opportunities.

Necessity

Traditional art institutions install a buffer zone between artists and the city and its market partners, thus contravening Rotterdam's cultural policy and frustrating co-operation.

Strategy

All Rotterdam artists are registered in one of the artist temp agencies and outsourced to an appropriate job.

Practical

Art institutions which are not competitive enough internationally or only strive after their own artistic agenda are restructured into artist temp agencies.

FAQ

How do artist temp agencies help entrepreneurs?

The agencies bring you into contact with artists who can offer real surplus value to your core business. As an entrepreneur, you know that creativity and innovation are the key to securing profitability in the long term. And artists possess this creative expertise. We make a preselection of appropriate artists and assist you in contracting the most suited candidate for your company.

What happens to Rotterdam's traditional centres for art?

A special task force is screening all art institutions in Rotterdam to determine their contribution to Rotterdam's policy objectives. If the latter is insufficient, they will be restructured into artist temp agencies. These will be for one hundred percent private enterprises where business-like interaction between artist and customer comes first. Interested operators and investors for the agencies are currently being approached.

How can artists register?

All artists in Rotterdam are obligated to register in the nearest agency. Candidates are judged on the basis of their CV and experience with private and

public enterprises in the past three years. Once registered, artists have to respond to job offers. If not, they will be penalized.

What services do the recruitment agencies offer?

- Dispatching labour: linking supply and demand with regards to artist participation. The agencies will create a database with jobs and will send out job offers to which artists are obligated to respond
- Educational and training function for artists: the agencies will offer obligatory basic training programmes on specific skills in working with government and market parties
- Consultancy work for governments and companies
- Drawing potential clients: for this purpose, the agencies will work out flexible labour regulations
- Renting out meeting rooms: spaces previously used as exhibition spaces are used more efficiently for negotiating deals or portfolio presentations
- Conflict and labour mediation

Artist participation is serious business

The Office for Artist Participation has established itself as the key driver of artist participation in Rotterdam. It fulfills the need for a central, fully professional agency that pushes the participation agenda forward without compromises.

The central ambition of the Office for Artist Participation is the accelerated implementation of Rotterdam's Cultural Policy 2009-2012 centered on cultural citizenship and participation. It will ensure that this policy becomes the crown-piece of Rotterdam's recent rebirth as a global city, and offering it a unique competitive edge.

Key tasks

1 Think tank

Government often lacks the crucial imagination or courage to come up with more effective policy instruments to enforce artist participation. This is mainly due to its democratic accountability and vulnerability towards the pressure of special interest groups (e.g. artists, art institutions). As a special agency, the Office for Artist Participation can more independently and consistently explore and pursue the participation agenda. It has been doing this successfully over the past few years by inventing and implementing advanced policy instruments.

2 Lobbying activities

For artist participation to become Rotterdam's point of excellence, it is crucial to secure the support from both politicians and the business world. Especially so, in order to prevent retro-garde attacks from within the art sector, where there is still a strong reflex to fall back on the outmoded practice of artistic autonomy.

3 Public relations

Rotterdam's cutting-edge cultural policy towards artist participation is still relatively unknown. Insufficient promotion, both locally and internationally, is to blame for this. The Office takes up this challenge by show-casing artist participation at home and abroad.

4 Watchdog

Artist participation is something which needs to be constantly and closely monitored. Artists and art institutions display a continuous tendency to fall back into autonomist positions. This necessitates a high alertness among all parties involved. The Office regularly mobilizes its strategic partners around recurrent obstacles to the full application of artist participation in practice.

Best Practice 1

Illegal bus stop

Kamiel Verschuuren



What is it?

A fake mobile bus stop allows youngsters to informally hang out without contravening the municipal ban on gatherings in public space of three people or more.

Where?

At six different locations in the socially and economically underdeveloped southern part of Rotterdam, in 2007.

Commissioner?

The Kick Foundation and the City of Rotterdam.

Lucrative synergies

1. increasing the quality of life in impoverished neighbourhoods
2. encouraging inventive use of existing municipal regulations
3. creating outlets for aggression and violence among youngsters
4. creating new meeting points

Best Practice 2

A monument for the chased-off citizen of Rotterdam

Jonas Staal



What is it?

A monumental sculpture erected in remembrance of all the original inhabitants of Rotterdam chased out of their city due to the influx of immigrants.

Where?

At the central square of the impoverished and multicultural southern part of Rotterdam, in 2008.

Commissioner?

The right wing populist party Leefbaar Rotterdam ('For an inhabitable Rotterdam') founded by the assassinated politician Pim Fortuyn.

Lucrative synergies

1. involving low educated and middle class people (from non-foreign origin) in art
2. stimulating social cohesion
3. breaking the taboo on right wing sentiments and rendering visible the hardship of a people
4. direct, honest cooperation with political parties

Best Practice 3

Will o' the wisp

Jeanne van Heeswijk



What is it?

A series of popular art events in the public space which help the sitting residents of the neighbourhood to say goodbye to their living environment as well as alleviate the emotional stress caused by their forced removal.

Where?

In an impoverished neighbourhood close to the centre of Rotterdam that will be restructured into an upmarket city quarter for middle to high income groups, in 2004-2007.

Commissioner?

Development Conglomerate Nieuw Crooswijk

Lucrative synergies

1. nurturing a sense of public responsibility among locals
2. mediating between different shareholders and stakeholders
3. offering solutions to the everyday discomforts of the common people
4. creating public meeting points (time-based)

PR Brochure
Office for Artist Participation
March 2011

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TENT10



City of Rotterdam
Arts and Culture



The Office for Artist Participation is founded in 2010 as a special task force aiming at the accelerated implementation of Rotterdam's cultural participation policy for the period 2009-2012. It is supported by the Department of Arts and Culture, the Rotterdam Centre for Visual Arts and The Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture. The cultural mediation firm BAVO acts as spokesperson of the joint venture.