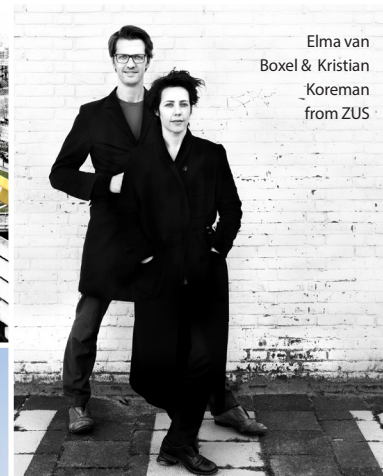


Rotterdam: city of architecture

As it prepares to host the ZigZagCity architecture festival and the International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR), landscape architect Elma van Boxel reveals her Rotterdam insider tips



Sky bridge,
Luchtsingel
and city park
Pompenburg by
the end of 2014



Elma van
Boxel & Kristian
Koreman
from ZUS

CITY WITH CONTRASTS

"What I love about Rotterdam are the contrasts," says landscape architect Elma van Boxel. "On one hand, it's an anonymous city. When you walk along the Kop van Zuid peninsula, down wide boulevards and past high buildings, you can feel how spacious it is. On the other hand, there are many intriguing areas built on a smaller scale, such as Katendrecht, Pannenkoekstraat and the Central District."

Van Boxel founded Zones Urbaines Sensibles (ZUS) with Kristian Koreman over ten years ago. Architecture represents just one of the tools they use to "make the city", alongside theatre, fashion, festivals and art installations. They are currently working on the construction of a crowd-funded pedestrian sky bridge, the Luchtsingel, and a new city park in Rotterdam's Central District. "During IABR and ZigZagCity, you can see both projects coming into being. A walking route runs from our park to Piet Blom's Cube Houses, taking you past all sorts of interesting spatial interventions, such as the urban jungle and performances on the way."



Terrace at
Rotterdam's
Central District

SKYSCRAPERS AND HOT SPOTS

The Rotterdam skyline is growing day by day, with the brand-new De Rotterdam building, by OMA/ Rem Koolhaas, shining proudly on the Kop van Zuid. "It's the biggest building in the Netherlands, so there's no way you can miss it," says van Boxel, who's also looking forward to seeing the Markthal, a residential high-rise with a covered market, designed by Rotterdam-based MVRDV. "Plus, there are so many other must-see spots in the city, such as the Van Nelle factory, Delfshaven and the Lloyd Pier. The best thing to do is book a cycle tour with Rotterdam ArchiGuides so you can see it all."

ARCHITECTURE ON DISPLAY

IABR: 29 May – 24 August

ZigZagCity: 29 May – 9 June

www.rotterdam.info



Rotterdam: city of energy

As the city counts down to the marathon on 13 April, we speak to Rotterdam native Martin van Waardenberg about what makes the city so great, and why he chose it as the location for his film *De Marathon*



Martin van Waardenberg



Marathon runners crossing the Erasmus bridge

ROTTERDAM RUNS ON ENERGY

Every year, the Rotterdam Marathon represents one of the major highlights of the Dutch sports calendar, with athletes currently training for the 34th edition, coming up on 13 April. Among those to be inspired by the race is Martin van Waardenberg, who used the event as the basis of his widely acclaimed film *De Marathon*, which treats viewers to an authentic slice of Rotterdam life.



Nieuwe Binnenweg

INTENSE AND DYNAMIC

Van Waardenberg is an actor, cabaret performer, scriptwriter and director, born and bred in Rotterdam. "I'll never leave here," he says over a cappuccino in the Westerpaviljoen grand café, which he considers "an extension of my living room". He lives and works just a few hundred metres away.

"Rotterdam has so much to offer – beautiful museums, cinemas and theatres, wonderful routes past the city's public sculptures, and loads of festivals – but Nieuwe Binnenweg is the best as far as I'm concerned," he says. "This lively street has it all, including good restaurants and cosy cafés. I like eating Italian at Spaghettata or Lux. Both the pubs I go to regularly are across the street here. That's where I had the idea for the film, too. A buddy

of mine had run the marathon and told me I should make a film about it: 'The whole city is in uproar! That intense feeling when you cross the finish line, it's indescribable!'"

RAW AND PHOTOGENIC

De Marathon became a cinematic tragicomedy, representing the city of Rotterdam in unprecedented ways. The film is full of characteristic Rotterdam humour and gorgeous footage of the city's streets and architecture.

"Rotterdam does very well on film, with its river and soaring modern buildings," says van Waardenberg. "It has a majestic feel. Every street corner invites an exceptional shot. I want to make many more films in Rotterdam. The port area, for example, is so photogenic: raw, robust and dynamic. It's not something you see anywhere else; only in Rotterdam."

The ABN AMRO Marathon Rotterdam starts and finishes on Coolingsingel, the main boulevard in downtown Rotterdam.

MORE TOP SPORTING EVENTS IN 2014:

World Ports Classic: 24-25 May
UCI BMX World Championships: 22-27 July
VKV City Racing Rotterdam: 31 August

rotterdam.info



Carnival in Rotterdam

Colourfully clad dancers, exotic percussionists and world-class musicians transform Rotterdam into the hottest spot on the planet for three days in July.



Clockwise from top: Summer Carnival Street Parade, Battle of Drums, Concert at Hofplein



Images: Bas Czerwinski & Oesip van Duivenbode



"From the double-decker bus I was standing on, I looked out across the

square and the heaving crowd of dancing people having a great time. It was one big party." When Guus Dutrieux talks about Manu Chao's show at last year's Rotterdam Unlimited, his eyes sparkle.

"People from around the world were all dancing side by side, and all you saw was happy faces," exclaims the festival director, who is determined that this year's event will outshine last year's.

The impressive line-up includes free concerts by the likes of Machel Montano – the hugely popular soca singer – and world-famous funk & disco

band Kool & The Gang. Bossa nova star Sergio Mendes will perform in De Doelen concert hall in Rotterdam.

Dancing in the streets

Rotterdam Unlimited is a three-day event that gets the whole city dancing. In addition to the many free concerts in venues around town, brass bands face off in the Battle of Drums.

Another highlight is the 2.5km parade of extravagantly decorated Caribbean floats snaking through the city streets on Saturday afternoon. It's a big year for the Summer Carnival Street Parade: "We are celebrating our 30th anniversary with an amazing thirty parade floats," Dutrieux explains. "The pride on the faces of all the fantastically

costumed people is one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen. Their gorgeous attire, music and dance are how they show off their cultures."

Fusion of cultures

Dutrieux has a simple take on it: Rotterdam is a dream location for such a thrilling international event on such a large scale. "Nowhere else in the country will you find over 170 different cultures living in such close proximity and inspiring each other with their own music, theatre, dance and

street art. And there's no other city in the Netherlands where you can have 900,000 people dancing in the streets."

If you want to be a part of it, head to Rotterdam for the festivities from 18 to 20 July.

Highlights:

Battle of Drums 18 July
Sergio Mendes 18 July
Street Parade 19 July
Machel Montano 19 July
Festival Crazy Sexy Cool 20 July
Kool & The Gang 20 July

rotterdamunlimited.com

Rotterdam: Sports City

The world's best BMX riders will gather in Rotterdam for the BMX World Championships, a spectacular event that is all about speed and skill



Clockwise from top:
street rider in
Rotterdam; freestyler
Channon Balorian;
BMX racers on the
track



Rotterdam is a real sport hotspot. Many large-scale events take place in the city: the ABN AMRO Rotterdam Marathon, the ABN AMRO World Tennis Tournament, the CHIO equestrian event, City Racing Rotterdam, the Red Bull Air Race, the World Ports Classic cycle race. The BMX World Championships are perfectly situated here, especially as Rotterdam has a very lively BMX scene with many racers, street riders and freestylers in the city.

Channon Balorian belongs to this last category, performing the most incredible stunts on his BMX bike. He's one of few people in the world who can do a double back flip. "You can drive the crowd wild with that," he says. Balorian gives demonstrations and clinics,

and he travels the world to compete in major international events. For him, the adventure began at the Skatepark on Westblaak in Rotterdam. As a young boy, he was there seven days a week. Standing in his inline skates (his big passion at the time) he looked up to the older boys doing their stunts on BMX bikes. "They went so fast and so high, and they did such spectacular tricks. I wanted to be able to do that, too!"

New tracks

In addition to the Skatepark, Rotterdam has many other good places for skating and biking: stairs, bridges, ramps – the urban environment offers plenty of challenges. The Rotterdam skyline, full of skyscrapers and other imposing architecture, also

enhances the urban feel that is inextricably linked with the BMX sport. Balorian: "I like to train at Skateland in Rotterdam South. That's where we all come together: BMX riders, inliners, scooter riders. Also, a new dirt track (a mud-surfaced route) and race track have just been built in Rotterdam South."

Balorian is very much looking forward to the World Championships in Ahoy, which promise five days of intense competition, thrills and spills. "You don't get to experience something on this scale every

day. I think it's great that this event is taking place in Rotterdam, so that people here will be able to really see and experience what this sport is all about. They'll be able to see the very best BMXers on the scene flashing past right in front of them. I'm sure this event will inspire people and cause an explosion in the number of BMX lovers in the city. That would be so cool.

UCI BMX World Championships 2014
23-27 July, Ahoy Rotterdam
wkbmx.com

Rotterdam: Maritime City

The port of Rotterdam is not only a significant driver for the Dutch economy, it is also a place of inspiring beauty. What should you not miss when you visit the port of Rotterdam? We asked Zekiye Yilmaz, the 2013 winner of the port's Young Port Talent competition.



1 View from the Euromast

Zekiye Yilmaz's love for the port of Rotterdam did not come out of the blue. Every year from the age of five, her father took her on a tour around the harbour on the Spido and to the Euromast observation tower. 'I have an album full of photos of the port and the view from the Euromast. When I flip through it, I am amazed at how much Rotterdam has changed in the past twenty years.'

Cosmopolitan

Zekiye is 24 years old and works as Account Manager for the Evergreen shipping agency, which ships goods all over the world. Her grandfather worked in the port as well, when he came from Turkey to the Netherlands. 'Though the work he did cannot be

compared to mine; everything is automated these days,' she says.

She loves Rotterdam because of its dynamic, cosmopolitan character. 'The festivals, the celebrations, the restaurants: Everything demonstrates that many different cultures come together here. I have a number of regular haunts I go to, to enjoy great Turkish food. My favourite is Manzara, near the Maritime Museum on Leuvehaven. But deep in the heart of the port especially, I feel connected with the rest of the world.' Zekiye enjoys driving through De Botlek, a large industrial port area, at night. 'All the lights and the roaring flame at the Shell refinery. I love that.'

Her advice for tourists is to start their voyage of



2 Zekiye Yilmaz



3 The Erasmus Bridge

discovery with a tour of the harbour on a Spido boat and a visit during September's World Port Days. 'For three days, you get the opportunity to visit places in the port that you normally would never get access to. There are excursions, such as tours to the Maasvlakte I and II sites and the FutureLand Information Centre, but also plenty of entertainment near the Erasmus Bridge!'

World Port Days

This three-day festivals takes place from 5 to 7 September on and around the

Wilhelminapier and explores all facets of the port; there are excursions, demonstrations and performances, and ships are opened to the public for tours. The climax is a spectacular fireworks show on Saturday evening.

World Port Days: 5-7 September

Other maritime events:

Rotterdam International Shanty Festival: 5-7 September

Nacht van de Kaap: 6 September

Maritime Quarter: 6-7 September

Expedition Noordereiland: 7-8 September

www.rotterdam.info