

# HELLO ZUIDAS.

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*Cintha van Heeswijk, ARTZUID*

Linking the Rijksmuseum with  
the city's business district

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# ARTZUID: a bridge between the Rijksmuseum and Zuidas

*The 2013 edition of the hugely successful ARTZUID festival will start off on May 22. International human rights lawyer Cintha van Heeswijck is director of the biennial sculpture route which she has been organizing for the third time. Henk van Os, curator of ARTZUID and a former director of the Rijksmuseum, will once again be helping her turn the area around the Minervalaan into an inspiring art environment. 'We liked the idea of linking the Rijksmuseum, Museumplein, the Cornelis Schuyt area, the Beethovenstraat and the area around the Apollolaan with the city's business district. The enthusiasm of the people in Zuidas is inspiring. They want to do all they can to improve the quality of life in the area,' Van Heeswijck says.*

## **ENGAGEMENT**

The theme of this year's ARTZUID is Engagement. The word has more than one connotation but in this particular context it translates into a focus on non-Western artists. 'I wanted to include artists from developing countries as well as artists from western countries,' says Van Heeswijck. 'Some of them are becoming quite well-known, but there are still many artists who are struggling because they lack the resources to pay for transportation, or the modes of communication needed to introduce themselves to a wider audience.' Van Heeswijck began by looking for sponsors for 14 artists. 'Sponsorship costs € 5000 and we're still four sponsors short of our goal,' she says.

## **CULTURAL ENTERPRISE**

From the start Van Heeswijck has been the driving force behind ARTZUID. 'This year, for the first time, the local city council has given us a € 100,000 subsidy. The council is beginning to understand that we have the potential of developing into a major tourist attraction for the city of

Amsterdam,' she says. The Rabobank has been appointed special project sponsor for the educational programme and Van Heeswijck is counting on the renewed support of lots of schools. But all this doesn't begin to cover the costs, she says. ARTZUID depends largely on the support given by businesses. 'Business doesn't end at the front door of the office, it forms part of a neighbourhood and what goes on there,' she says. 'ARTZUID attracts lots of visitors and serves as a good networking event. Last year one of the sponsors told me: "I have known this business contact for 15 years but when we went on a guided tour of ARTZUID together, I suddenly saw a whole new side to him".'

This sort of thing matters to companies and this is why they want to contribute, Van Heeswijck says. The rest of the money comes in the shape of donations and from the sale of catalogues, guided tours, the children's studio and coffee and tea sales. 'Our local volunteers play an enormously important role in this event,' she adds. 'You could call us a cultural enterprise but unfortunately,





Henk van Os & Cindia van Heeswijck

being entrepreneurial is very difficult in the current economic climate.'

## INSPIRATION

The idea for ARTZUID came from the Sonsbeek district sculpture exhibition in Arnhem.

Van Heeswijck grew up in the area and thought a similar exhibition would be just perfect for Amsterdam Zuid. 'I always loved the idea of having sculptures lining the streets,' she said. 'Lots of other people gave their support and six months later we established the ArtZuid Foundation. We wanted to liven up the neighbourhood, put the spotlight on Berlage's Plan Zuid, create new meeting places and open up the neighbourhood to the surrounding areas. ARTZUID is essentially an initiative by the neighborhood and it shows: we have lots of local people offering their services as volunteers.'

## ZUIDAS

ARTZUID's starting point is the Minervalaan, which connects the part of the city designed by Berlage to the new Zuidas business district. 'We want to emphasise the link between the two with our sculptures,' Van Heeswijck says. German artist Martin Pfeifle has been invited to exhibit on the Zuidplein with an installation meant to change our perception of the existing space. The same location will also host an enormous helicopter by the Vietnamese artist Dinh Q. Lê. 'Dinh Q. Lê is a young artist trying to come to terms with his country's violent past,' says Van Heeswijck. 'He asks the younger generation to be more understanding of the way the older generation is coping with its wartime experiences.' The windy Gustav Mahlerplein has been chosen to host an exhibit, consisting of 942 flags, by Pascale Marthine Tayou. The Gershwinplein will be given over to Koen Vanmechelen and his Cosmopolitan Chicken project, which, says Van Heeswijck, represents a plea for globalisation and a multicultural society.

## AI WEIWEI

Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei will be represented through his work Forever Bicycles at the Kunstkapel in Zuidas. 'This space has been

vacant and we are very grateful for being able to use it to show Ai Weiwei's work,' says Van Heeswijck. 'It's a wonderful space and it's perfect for this particular artwork. It's a great pity the artist himself won't be here, as he is not permitted to travel abroad. He is an artist as well as an activist who wants to draw the world's attention to the human rights situation in his country and the Chinese government doesn't like it. I admire his persistence.'

## FAVOURITE WORK

Of course Van Heeswijck has her favourites among the works on display. 'I like the wall hanging by Abdoulaye Konate which will also be found in the Kunstkapel,' she says.

*Forever 2003 Ai Weiwei; courtesy of More Gallery Gitswil Switzerland*



# ARTZUID

**ARTZUID** will run from May 22nd until September 22nd when Berlage's broad avenues and the streets of Zuidas will be lined with top quality international artworks.

For more information about ARTZUID go to [www.artzuid.nl](http://www.artzuid.nl). Businesses wishing to become sponsors or wanting to book a guided tour can do so via [communicatie@artzuid.nl](mailto:communicatie@artzuid.nl)