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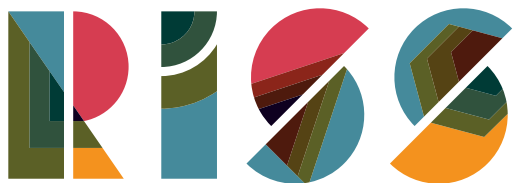


Why Dutch design matters

2021

Spring-Summer

In this issue | Living alone during lockdown | Art meets design |
De Stijl | The future of design | Architectural walks | Community groups |
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Dear ACCESS readers



Steve Voyce

ACCESS Editor

editor@access-nl.org

**Not the normal we would prefer,
but we are all making the most
of what we have**

What a year.

Looking back over our last four magazine issues, it's clear to see, in retrospect, the gradual dawning of a 'new normal' into the curious world we find ourselves in. Without argument, the last year has been devastating to many, but what has been remarkable is the way we have adapted in our everyday lives. For an organisation such as ACCESS, where our working methods were based mostly on personal interactions, the changes have been great and challenging. That we have changed is a testament to all of us, here at ACCESS and in the world beyond. It may not be the normal we would prefer, but we are all making the most of what we have.

In many ways, the Netherlands has a history of making the most of what it has. A smallish country on the outer edge of the continent, the Dutch have always had to find innovative ways with limited resources and challenging conditions. This may be why the country is world-renowned in the field of design.

Jacqueline Pemberton spoke to some leading lights in the Dutch design industry, and her fascinating article is a great introduction to the way that design developed here, and how it affects our daily lives. The Netherlands focuses on the future of design too, and Hannah

Behrens talked to students from the world-leading Design Academy in Eindhoven about their educational experiences and plans for the future. We also look at one place where modern Dutch design began, De Stijl movement of the mid-twentieth century. Lynette Croxford's article is a good place to start on any journey into Dutch design. Speaking of

journeys, Lynette also went on one with her photographer husband, looking at buildings in two local cities. Unsurprisingly, Dutch architecture is ground-breaking too.

Some internationals have found themselves away from their home country for the first time, alone and working from a new home amid a pandemic. Our Health & Wellbeing article features two young, recently-arrived internationals who found themselves in a new situation –figuring out a new job and country–whilst stuck in their new homes. Hopefully, we also give some useful tips on how to improve similar situations.

ACCESS is...

a dynamic volunteer run, not-for-profit organisation that serves the needs and interests of the international community in the Netherlands. We do so by:

- personally responding to inquiries and providing information through our helpdesks
- providing face-to-face support through the expat centres we work with
- offering answers to the most frequently asked questions on our website
- fostering cultural diversity, facilitating connections and encouraging growth for the volunteers we work with
- offering childbirth preparation courses in The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Rotterdam and online (at the moment)
- maintaining an on-call Counselling Services Network
- facilitating a network of Trainers to support the community
- producing an informative magazine intended to help the community get to know the Netherlands
- being available to international employers and their HRs to support their staff, partners & families

MISSION

ACCESS is an independent not-for-profit organisation serving internationals to settle and live successfully in the Netherlands.

ACCESS

The ACCESS vision is to provide unique, comprehensive and essential services nationally through the expertise and experience of its volunteer expatriate community.

VISION



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Magazine



35



10



40



44



23



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Contents

6 **The ACCESS Family**

Meet our trainers

10 **Cover Story**

Modern Dutch design

16 **Dutch Lifestyle** Tax on, tax off

18 **Arts & Entertainment**

De Stijl Movement

23 **Travel** A tale of two cities

26 **Schools**

28 **Review** How Dutch are you?

31 **International Community**

With a little help

35 **Health & Wellbeing**

Locked down alone

40 **Food** Breaking bread

44 **Education**

Dutch design potential

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Meet our trainers

ACCESS trainers are a diverse group of professionals offering broad support for the Netherlands, international community. Some of our trainers share their thoughts about being part of the ACCESS Training Network (ATN).

BY OLIVIA VAN
DEN BROEK-NERI

 **Rawia Liverpool**, Behavioural Change Coach



Country of birth: Ghana

Recipes4Change.com

“The first thing that struck me about ACCESS was the diversity of the members,” says Rawia. “I also loved the inclusivity and respect shown by all ACCESS members to each other. It was a stimulating, supportive and encouraging environment where one can grow and develop both personally and professionally. I feel at home in such environments.”

“As a freelancer it is great to be part of a network where you can share and discuss ideas and collaborate on projects.”

Chitra Natarajan, Childbirth Course



Country of birth: India

akriti.nl and Baby Ahoy podcast

“I truly believe that mothers need a support group, a tribe, with whom they can talk and share, especially when their babies are young, as they navigate life as new sleep-deprived parents,” says Chitra.

"I love working with ACCESS because of the ethos of the organisation and its diversity," she says. "People coming from different cultural backgrounds to serve the expat community is phenomenal."

Dr. Nina Bogerd, Childbirth Educator and Doula



Country of Birth: Slovenia

birthyourway.nl

"We know it first-hand, we were expats that were expecting a child and birthed in the Netherlands too," she says.

"I hope we can further expand our offer to support expecting international families with additional courses, such as breastfeeding, first aid and naturally expanding birth preparation courses in other cities."

Caitríona Rush, Cross-Cultural Consultant



Country of Birth: Ireland

athomeabroad.nl

"My passion for travel and other cultures led me to set up my business as a cross-cultural consultant," says Caitríona.

"ACCESS has in the past years started focusing more and more on companies and the recently announced cooperation with EMA shows that efforts are finally paying off," she says. "I would like to see this continue and more partnerships with both international companies and Dutch companies hiring international staff."

Colleen Reichrath, Career Consultant



Country of birth: Canada

cjscareers.com Co-author of *A Career in Your Suitcase*, 4th edition

"I was impressed with the breadth of information, service and support provided or facilitated by ACCESS completely through volunteers," says Colleen.

"A number of my coaching clients indicate that they found me through the ACCESS website," she says. "It is also helpful to be connected to a network of

professionals serving internationals in the Netherlands as it opens opportunities for collaboration and mutual support."

Janet Rodenburg, Certified Career Coach and personal development, Utrecht area



Country of birth: The Netherlands

casitacoaching.nl

"Becoming part of ACCESS, and especially of the ATN, gave me an interesting group of international colleagues and new learning experiences," says Janet.

"I'd like to exchange more ideas, experiences and methodology, specifically with the group of career and life coaches within ATN."

A stimulating, supportive and encouraging environment

Natália Leal, Life, Career and Executive Coach



Country of birth: Portugal

natalia-leal.com

"ACCESS is both a great source of information about life in the Netherlands and a lovely community," says Natália. "It's nice to feel that you belong to a larger community and have some peers," she says. Although her experience with ACCESS has been limited due to Covid-19, she enjoys being part of the ATN and looks forward to volunteering at the IWCUR, where "the team has welcomed me warmly".

Marie Dewulf, International Life and Career Coach



Country of birth: Belgium

coach2moveon.com

"It's not about telling them what they should do, but about discovering what they can do and having someone on their side as they make their journey," says Marie who started her business in 2005. »



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“I can easily connect and fully understand international women and men who are living abroad or going through big changes in their lives. I have been, seen and done it. It is critical to have people in your life who support you,” she says.

“ACCESS managed these challenging Covid times, an office move and going online well—always with a smile, dynamism and positivism.”

Veena Joseph, Transformation Coach



Country of birth: India

forerunnersconsulting-coaching.com

“ACCESS offers support for the international community with useful resources, acting as a bridge to the Dutch system of working,” says Veena.

“I would not be surprised if more commercial connections could come up, especially now that I am more oriented toward supporting people with stress and burnout.”

Helga Evelyn Samuel, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Consultant



Country of birth: India

curryandculturecompany.com

“I value that ACCESS is approached by corporate clients that seek services that my consultancy has to offer,” says Helga. “I also get to meet different volunteers and trainers at ACCESS who are at different stages in their expat journey and are so open and helpful.”

“At the core of it, both ACCESS and Curry & Culture seek to support internationals and their partners,” she says. “I see our mutual support and partnership growing in the coming years.”

Mutual support and partnership

“I love being a part of the ATN and offer workshops and write in the magazine or the newsletter, contributing my two cents to this wonderful organisation,” she says. “That has helped my business gain visibility. My article on ‘Be the Star of your own relocation’ has helped clients in a great way.”

Veena would like ACCESS to create a language buddy network for those wanting to learn Dutch and to host conferences bringing its partners together. “I see the relationship developing as I grow as a small business owner and ACCESS continues to grow in the international community.”

Jac Rongen, ICF-certified (mentor) coach and SE therapist.



Country of birth: the Netherlands

rongen.com

“I will always point out the existence of ACCESS to my international clients,” he says. “They provide a knowledgeable view on the Dutch society through the eyes of an international.”

Becoming a member

ATN Members are selected, screened and approved by ACCESS based on our experience with the interests of the community. Benefits of joining the network include: presence on our dedicated ATN website page; invitation to a quarterly network event organised by ACCESS; and discounts on advertising. For more details about the ACCESS Training Network, the fee, the benefits, and how to join contact the ACCESS Community Education Department-access-nl.org/what-we-do/contact-community-education-department/

About the author

California-native Olivia van den Broek-Neri works as Project Coordinator Communications & Events at Holland Expat Center South in Eindhoven, and was previously an ACCESS volunteer.

Modern Dutch Design



PHOTO: MARCEL WANDERS STUDIO



PHOTO: THIJS WOLZAK



PHOTO: STUDIO WIEKI SOMERS

Simple, inventive, original and fun design is an integral part of life in the Netherlands. The country has a long, rich and complex design history, but what exactly is Dutch design and what makes it so special?

BY JACQUELINE
PEMBERTON

Daring to be different

“It’s not for nothing that the Dutch came up with the saying, ‘God made the world, but the Dutch made the Netherlands,’” says one of the country’s most prominent designers Wieki Somers. “We live in a small country where every tile is designed. We stole our land from the sea and built (and designed) our own country.”

High-tech landscape

As you descend through the grey, low-hanging clouds into Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport (which itself, along with the underground train station, is a model of clean, high-tech, simple Dutch design), it’s easy to see why. Appearing gradually, the landscape below almost resembles a giant circuit-board –a never-ending criss-cross of intersecting fields, windmills, dykes and grid-like apartment blocks. But there is a remarkable order to it all.

As writer Rodney Bolt alludes to in his tongue-in-cheek book *Xenophobe’s guide to the Dutch*, “The Dutch character is inseparable from the Dutch landscape. The Netherlands is so flat that even black and white cows stand out as silhouettes against the skyline. Consequently, the Dutch are used to wide horizons and lots of light. Openness, freedom and vision are fundamental.”

De Stijl

The seeds of modern Dutch design were sewn with *Se Stijl*—an abstract art movement founded in Leiden in 1917 by the artist, writer, and poet Theo Van Doesburg (see Art article in this issue). Artists including Piet Mondrian and Gerard Rietveld

founded a reaction to the turmoil and devastation of World War One and a rejection of the economic and material values of the time. They were as philosophical as they were artistic, using abstract lines, primary colours, and shapes to peel away the outer layer of reality and expose the purest elements of art, universal truth, and artistic harmony within.

Attitude is everything

Although modern Dutch design is based on a number of conceptual design principles typical of the Netherlands (such as concept, innovation, experimentation and minimalism) that revolves around the Design Academy Eindhoven and arguably contains traits of the Dutch national character, Dutch design is more of an attitude than anything else. As maverick Dutch designer Maarten Baas says, “There is nothing unique about Dutch design. Good design is everywhere, and maybe the concentration is greater in the Netherlands because of the design academy, and because like-minded people attract each other.”

Beautiful imperfection

Born in 1978, Baas is an independent artist and a designer who, at his studio *Maarten Baas studio*, likes to push boundaries with his unorthodox approach, earning him the nickname ‘Bad boy of Dutch design.’

“I like to challenge assumptions, rules and fixed ideas,” he says, “It’s easier to do that in design than in fine art because there are more rules to question in design. It’s a language that communicates my thoughts better.”

His work has been described as bold, surreal, and intense, with a touch of cabaret thrown in, and many of his playful, colourful items evoke a beautiful childlike imperfection.

One of his most striking pieces is the Schiphol Clock: a hyper-realistic performance art piece in which a man appears to be trapped inside a clock and forced to repaint the second hand, endlessly on a loop. His blue dungarees are a reference to the “faceless »

Dutch Design Week

DDW is the largest annual design event in Northern Europe. It begins on 16 October 2021. More details are available at ddw.nl



We awaken the hidden qualities in ordinary objects and invite people to look at everyday reality with new eyes

men who clean and work at the airport.” While the yellow rag in his pocket—and the red bucket he carries—are in homage to Mondrian and Rietveld.

Timeless Beauty

Like Maarten Baas, Wieki Somers, born in 1976, began her design journey at the Design Academy Eindhoven. Now working with her design partner, Dylan van den Berg, at her Rotterdam studio (Studio Wieki Somers), her work can be described as poetic, experimental, and timeless. “We create products that evoke wonder and silence, that are critical but not loud. We awaken the hidden qualities in ordinary objects and invite people to look at their everyday reality with new eyes.”

Many of Somer’s designs are also imbued with a gentle, whimsical, dreamlike quality. Such as her surreal Merry-go-round Coat Rack, in which a coat rack transforms into an ingenious, fairground-like carousel that functions as a permanent coat rack, at the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam.

Playful and serious

Although Dutch design is renowned for its playful, irreverent tone, there is a more serious message behind it, based on sustainable design principles, and an aversion to overproduction and overconsumption. Issues which are now even more relevant than ever during the current Covid-19 pandemic. As Somers explains, “The crisis makes it possible

to implement changes more quickly and make the transition to a sustainable economy with much lower CO₂ emissions. We need to change, the Corona crisis has shown that we can change, but how will we do it sustainably, how will this crisis affect our behaviour, and our living environment?”

Known for his highly conceptual work Jurgen Bey (1965), a seminal figure in Dutch design, says, “I really feel that we are going to move in this direction and usher in a new era of behaviour and language.”

Bey, who is a proponent of the ‘slow movement’, (a cultural movement that rejects the notion that faster is always better, and our culture of convenience and disposable packaging), says he originally wanted to be a vet. However, after visiting friends who were studying at the Design Academy in Eindhoven, decided studying design “might be quite nice as well.”

Among his best-known designs is his classic Tree Trunk Bench, a sleek, Dutch design classic that sees a fallen tree trunk used as a bench, complete with elegant bronze backrests. And his EarChair, a playful, sturdy, eye-catching piece (with elongated ears) that offers cocoon-like privacy and intimacy in a public setting. He first appeared on the design scene at the now legendary Salone del Mobile international furniture fair in Milan in 1993, when he and a handful of young, talented, and down-to-earth former students of Design Academy Eindhoven such as Marcel Wanders, Hella Jongerius, Tejo Remy and Richard Hutten took the event by storm when they presented their conceptual, offbeat and down-to-earth designs under the Dutch design banner Droog.

Droog Design – A new way of looking

Droog, which means “dry” or “wry” in Dutch, refers to the dry humour, humble sensibility, and playful aesthetics that characterises much of their work, where high- and low-tech materials combine with storytelling. The event was a spectacular success, earning both Droog, the designers, and the Design Academy Eindhoven international acclaim virtually overnight.

Speaking of a later exhibition in Milan in the 1990s which featured both Droog and the design label Moooi, the creative director of Marcel Wanders, Gabriele Chiave says, “There were many exhibitions in Milan, but the most inspiring were the Dutch—all of them. Everyone said, you have to see Moooi, and at Droog there were also a lot of super cool things that inspired designers beyond their functional blinkers.”

Embracing the past designing the future

Surreal, alluring, provocative, seductive, and exciting are just some of the words used to describe Marcel Wanders’ designs. One of his most famous creations is his iconic Knotted Chair, which was one of the most talked about items at the Milan show, and which was pivotal in launching his career. »

We need to change, but how will we do it sustainably?



PHOTOS: RÉGINE DEBATTY



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Dutch designers are saying “Can’t we do it another way?”

Consisting of carbon rope, knotted by hand, the chair combines old-fashioned craftsmanship with modern industrial manufacturing and is, according to Wanders, “strong enough for a heavy guy to sit in.” A work of art in its own right, it is now on permanent display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

With his studio Marcel Wanders Studio and his design label Moooi, Wanders is now a rock star of the Dutch and international design world.

But it was not always so, as during first year at college he was classed as unteachable and kicked out of the Design Academy Eindhoven for rejecting the modernist design philosophy of the time.

But he refused to give up on his dreams and finished his design education the Arnhem Academy of Art, where he graduated with honours and has not looked back ever since.

Today, under the creative direction of Chiave (1978) – who brings with him his Italian charm, flair and pizzazz to the studio’s eclectic mix – the duo aims to bring back a human touch to design.

Rejecting the modernist notion that the past is irrelevant, the studio wants customers to connect with their products, so they are less inclined to throw them away. As creative director Chiave says, “let’s take a breather. We need to adopt a ‘less is more’ philosophy—and not less is more like thirty years ago, but less in the sense of less quantity and more quality. For example, if you’re a designer launching chairs and sofas every six months, there’s no quality behind the project, the thinking, the concept or the production.”

Optimistic

Clearly, Dutch design is a paradox. It is functional yet beautiful, compliant yet sophisticated, simple yet complicated, sober yet colourful. And while it may not be everyone’s cup of tea, one thing is certain, it won’t be ignored.

And while the world may have moved on from 1993 when a talented group of grungy, Dutch creatives first wowed the world with their clever, quirky creations, issues like climate change, social unrest and sustainability remain firmly on the agenda. You can be sure that Dutch designers, are taking it all in stride and continuing to say to themselves, “Can’t we do it another way?” «

About the author

Jacqueline Pemberton is a British-Australian freelance writer living in the Netherlands.

Tax on, tax off

BY TRACEY TAYLOR

The world of tax can be rather confusing at the best of times, particularly if you are an international living in a foreign country.

Tax. Just three letters. Worth 10 points on the Scrabble board, and seemingly innocent, but can often be complicated. Luckily, we are not alone, and there are many companies and advisors in the Netherlands who can help with issues and questions about tax.

Taxing

For Jose de Boer of FVB de Boer, a broker for expatriate financial services, products, and financial advice, “the Dutch tax system is complicated, so we recommend a tax advisor for everyone’s tax returns at least.”

Internationals who attempt to file their taxes themselves can often make a mistake (remember that that forms are in Dutch), and only afterwards will contact an advisor for help. While most errors are easily resolved, this can add extra time and stress into the process. Also, tax regulations can change a lot in a short period of time, and even though the Tax Office provides some information in other languages than Dutch, when filing taxes for the first time it is worth considering using a professional to help with the paperwork.

Taxes

Any registered adult resident in the Netherlands is required to pay tax on income, wealth and assets. The amount of tax you pay will depend on your level of income. The Dutch Tax office (*Belastingdienst*) are the folks who send you those blue envelopes, collect taxes and are part of the Ministry of Finance. The Dutch fiscal year runs from 1 January to 31 December, but annual income tax returns need to be submitted between 1 March to 30 April.

Taxed

“The most common misconception in the Netherlands is the high tax rate,” says de Boer. “It is true that our top rate is high compared to other countries, but there is a (modest) rebate on mortgage interest payments, rental income is tax-free – for private individuals – and we do not have a capital gains tax.”

Most financial advisors in the Netherlands recommend any internationals staying longer than two years to think about buying a house. If you do, the first thing is to find a local real estate agent, and de Boer agrees.



PHOTO: SHARON MCCUTCHEO

“A financial advisor should then be your next stop,” she says. “Independent financial advice is more beneficial than simply visiting your bank, since their advice is limited to their own products.”

If you’re a young international filing taxes for the first time, “you might be eligible for a tax break,” says de Boer. “Or even a rebate.” While the tax system can be complicated, it is worth remembering that, particularly for newcomers, you may be entitled to a tax return if either your income was low in the previous year, or if you bought a home. So, it seems that independent advice when it comes to finances, and specifically taxes, is important and might be beneficial for internationals living in the Netherlands. Luckily there are plenty of people out there happy to help. «

Use a professional for your tax return at least



PHOTO: NIKITA KACHANOVSKY

Did you know...
Income tax was first introduced in the Netherlands in 1914, payroll tax in 1964, and VAT in 1968.

Dutch Tax Office belastingdienst.nl

The main tax types in the Netherlands

Income tax (*inkomsten-belasting*)

Declared via your annual tax return (*aangifte inkomstenbelasting*).

Payroll tax (*loonheffing*)

A contribution deducted (generally once a month) from an employee’s salary by the employer.

VAT sales tax (*BTW*)

A sales or revenue tax (*omzetbelasting*): Businesses must add VAT (usually 21%) to the price of their goods and services.

Annual income tax return (*aangifte inkomstenbelasting*)

Even if payroll tax has been deducted from your salary, one may still need to complete an annual income tax return (usually applies to homeowners or if one is earning any additional income).

Road tax (*wegenbelasting*)

For those owning or importing a motor vehicle into the Netherlands, road tax is applied; it varies according to the size of vehicle, and if powered by petrol, diesel or electricity.

Pollution levy and water board tax

(*verontreinigingsheffing* and *waterschapsbelasting*)

Annual taxes applied for water purification (pollution levy) and the water board (maintenance of dykes/control of water levels) and can vary depending on your municipality.

Real estate tax (*onroerendezaakbelasting*)

Refers to a residence or a place of business—your local municipality will assess the value of any properties every two years.

Refuse tax (*afvalstoffenheffing*)

The collection, processing and disposal of household rubbish and the amount of tax due can vary per municipality.

M form

If you have only lived in the Netherlands for part of the year, you must file a tax return using the M Form.

About the author

Tracey Taylor lives in Maastricht with Dave and their cat, Little Tubbs. Tracey is Irish and an aspiring photographer. She also writes a blog and hosts a weekly expat talk show.

@traceytaylor_nl | @taylormade.theblog | @littletubbs_theecat | @themaastrichtedition

De Stijl Movement

BY LYNETTE
CROXFORD

While you may not know the name 'De Stijl', you might certainly be familiar with the visual language of this artistic movement, especially if you've lived in the Netherlands for any amount of time.



PHOTO: SEBASTIAAN TER BURG

The iconic and simple graphic design with blocks of primary colour and straight lines appear in many places all over the country. A number of notable buildings in The Hague were decorated with the look in 2017 for the 100th anniversary of De Stijl's inception. The art movement, also called Neoplasticism, was founded in 1907 by a group of Dutch abstract artists, including Theo van Doesburg, Gerrit Rietveld and Piet Mondrian.

Inception

The name of the movement originated from simply meaning The Style, which was the name of a publication exploring the group's theories and promoting their innovative ideas, published by van Doesburg. The publication represents the most significant work of graphic design from the movement, and their ideas of reduction of form and colour are major influences on the development of modern graphic design.

The idea of the movement was formed mostly as a reaction to the horrors of World War One and was one of complete simplicity and abstraction, thereby expressing a Utopian notion of harmony and order. By reducing elements to their purest geometric forms and using only primary colours, the designers could establish this harmony through art, pulling society back together as such. Its precision and orderly form heavily contrasted the chaos and disorderliness of the war. The founders viewed it also as a universal visual language much better suited to the modern era.



PHOTO: DENNIS ELZINGA

The ideal fusion of form and function

The members envisioned nothing less than the ideal fusion of form and function, thereby making De Stijl in effect the ultimate style. To this end, De Stijl artists turned their attention not only to fine art media such as painting and sculpture, but virtually all other art forms as well, including industrial design, typography, even literature and music. Enduring works of De Stijl are those by Piet Mondrian, who was the most celebrated member of the movement and his work has been displayed all over the world. His simple, abstract style developed from his knowledge of cubism, and created after spending three years in Paris, is well known in the art world and has been adopted in fashion, furniture and architecture.

Architectural icon of De Stijl

The highlight of De Stijl from an architectural point of view is undoubtedly the Rietveld Schröderhuis in Utrecht. Designed in 1924 by Gerrit Rietveld, Dutch architect and member of De Stijl, the home was built as a symbol of a kind of rebellion against conventional

homes. Commissioned by Truus Schröder, herself a famous furniture designer, the brief was simple. She wanted a sober and minimal construct for a home that lived and wasn't just lived in. Something totally different from the homes that were being created at that time.

Rietveld, who had only designed and built furniture up to that point, set about crafting a home with minimal and stark proportions, straight lines and the use of primary colours, as had never before been seen in the Netherlands. His love of simplicity saw him innovate and design quirky but useful additions to the house, such as movable walls and hidden staircases. He was thereby redefining the limits of space, making the house more flexible. Schröder found the flow from outdoors to indoors of utmost importance and Rietveld made the most of this by maximising the views from the top floor over the adjacent countryside. The large corner window upstairs can be opened, as well as the small window »

PHOTO: 6 DECADES BOOKS

Complete simplicity and abstraction

perpendicular to it, making the corner disappear, which creates the feeling of actually being outside. The view was so important to Truus Schröder that she bought the neighbouring land when it came up for sale, hoping to safeguard her precious outlook over the fields.

Schröder lived in the house until her death in 1985, after which she left the care and preservation of her beloved home to the Rietveld Schröderhuis Foundation and the Centraal Museum. Gerrit Rietveld also stayed involved and interested in the home he designed and was given a studio space on

the ground floor to work on new designs. After his wife passed away in 1957, he moved in with Truus Schröder and lived there until he died in 1964.

The red blue chair

Also on display in the house, The Red Blue Chair, consisting of only 15 slats and two rectangular panels, is one of the first three-dimensional explorations of De Stijl and typifies their simplicity and abstraction themes. Primary colours take centre stage with the seat of the chair lacquered in blue and the back in red. The surfaces of frame slats are yellow and the slats themselves are black, so against the black walls and floors of the house these coloured parts appear to hover.

The first design of the sculptural seat dates back to 1917 with prototypes of the pure and rationalist form coming out in 1918. The original design and several early versions were simply stained wood, and the now-famous painted versions were not produced by Rietveld until 1923.

Calling it a “spatial creation”, closer to a sculpture more than simply a piece of furniture, Gerrit Rietveld appears to have regarded his chair as a work of art. The Red and Blue Chair appeared in the journal *De Stijl* and made a strong impression when exhibited in a contemporary Bauhaus show.



PHOTO: THALIA POTAMOU



PHOTO: BM

Fashionable followers

In 1965, world-renowned designer Yves Saint Laurent, a passionate art collector, designed the Mondrian collection, inspired by the work of Piet Mondrian. At the time the dialogue between art and fashion was particularly strong and Saint Laurent challenged that juncture, taking it further than it had ever gone before. The couture collection consisted of six dresses in deference to the Dutch painter's linear style. The story goes that the idea struck Saint Laurent after his mother gave him a book about Mondrian for Christmas.

The colour-blocked, geometrical print on wool and jersey dresses seemed like a straightforward idea, but the shift dresses weren't as simple as they looked. The brilliance of it all was actually in the architecture of the dress itself, colour-blocking moved with the natural lines of the body while also hiding the seams. The dress had a defined silhouette with a cleverly hidden structure dubbed "the dress of tomorrow".

The end

Although they agreed in the significance of both art forms, and the necessity to reflect the modern world, at the centre of De Stijl there had always been a conflict between painters and architects. Collaborations became more demanding and confrontations arose over the hierarchy of creativity and the control of space. In his studio, Mondrian played with the organisation of cardboard planes of primary colours. He also accepted his theories being revealed in architecture and for a moment the movement looked to be saved, with once again the merger of painting and architecture envisioned by van Doesburg in the Schröder House.

PHOTO: ARTOTEM

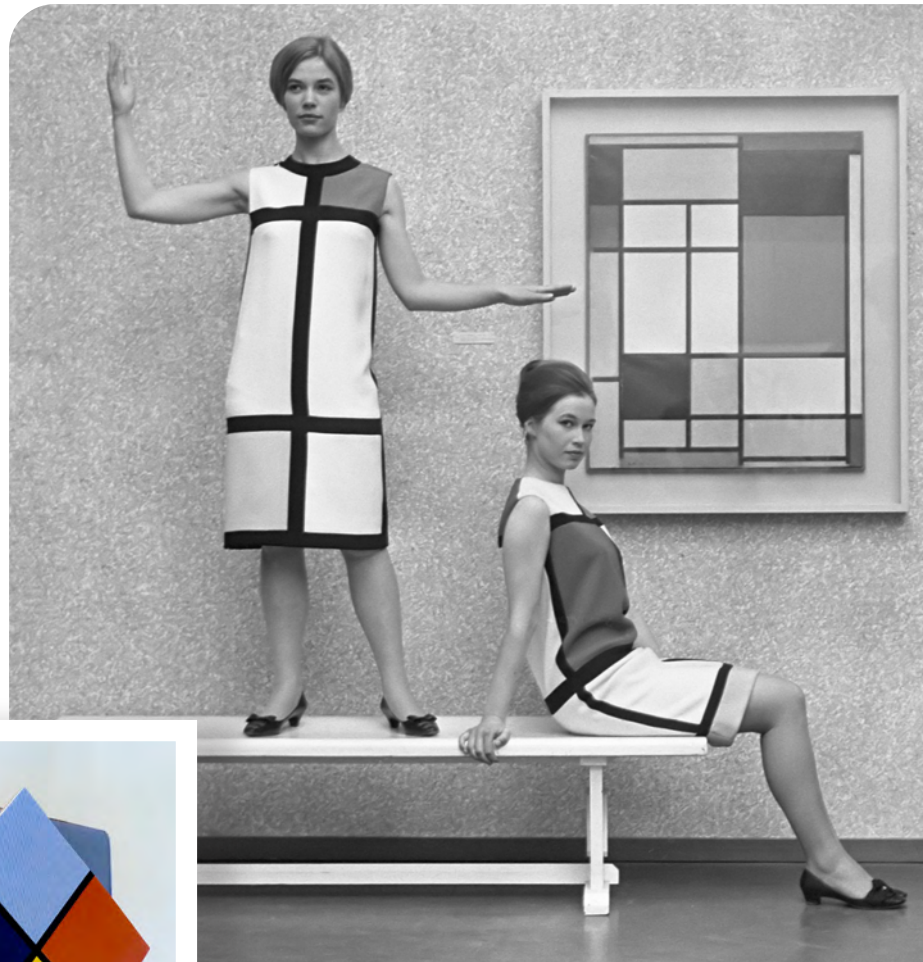


PHOTO: ERIC KOCH / ANEFO

While the artists persisted in their efforts to achieve their vision of a utopian world, it was profoundly an overwhelming task

unattainable in reality. The failure to realise the vision led to the ultimate downfall and splitting of the group. In the end, De Stijl dissolved and died with Theo van Doesburg in 1931. None too soon, the age of utopia came to an end. «

About the author

Lynette Croxford is a British copywriter and translator living in Delft with her husband and daughters.

Settlement agreements and redundancy

Amid rising reorganisations, settlement agreements have become a frequent topic.

The decision to accept or reject such an offer is complicated for internationals, who must also consider their residence rights. Expat employment law expert Godelijn Boonman shares key tips and advice.

BY GODELIJN
BOONMAN



070 361 5048
legalexpatdesk.nl
gmw.nl/en

Dutch law strongly protects employee rights, so terminating an employment contract through the court/UWV is time-consuming and expensive for employers. Therefore, employers may try to minimise dismissals during reorganisations by using a process called termination by mutual consent. This is where the settlement agreement comes in.

Voluntary departure

In this process, employers ask selected employees if they are willing to terminate their employment voluntarily in exchange for a predefined package, i.e. a settlement agreement. This package can deviate from standard employment law and may offer additional pay or benefits.

Interested employees are offered the settlement agreement and, if they accept, their employment will be terminated by mutual consent. Employees who decline continue their employment without change. If insufficient employees accept, the employer may move to forced redundancy – and this is quite different.

Forced redundancy

In a forced redundancy, you cannot choose to remain in your job (unless you can prove that the employer has not fulfilled their legal obligations or has not met the legal grounds for dismissal).

When the employer offers you a settlement agreement, your choices are to accept the offer and give up your job, or to decline and wait to be made redundant and dismissed according to standard employment law. This decision deserves your attention.

Key considerations

You need to thoroughly understand the contents of the settlement agreement. This means weighing up the benefits and risks of the company's offer compared to redundancy in terms of: your expected transitional allowance, unemployment benefits, non-competition clauses, vacation days, holiday pay, outstanding salary, company shares, options, bonuses and pensions, as well as what losing your job will mean for your residence rights.

Due to how complex this assessment is, many employers offer a budget to seek professional legal advice. A lawyer can assess how all these factors come together in your specific situation and give you guidance.

Top tips

- 1 If you want to negotiate a point in a settlement agreement, do so before signing. When you sign, you legally commit to all the conditions.
- 2 If you sign a settlement agreement and then change your mind, you can withdraw your consent within 14 days. You do not have to give a reason.
- 3 If your employer offers a legal budget, use it to seek legal advice.

We can work it out

GMW lawyers has a team of employment law experts who can assist you in English. Call us on 070 361 5048 or contact us via our website: gmw.nl/en. «

A tale of two cities



The Dutch are particularly bold when it comes to architecture, which is why it's worth exploring the variety of styles on display around the country.

BY LYNETTE
CROXFORD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
RICHARD CROXFORD

From the very old to the latest modern designs, there's a structure to please most. Our adventures took us to two cities in South Holland to walk through time and spaces where people have gathered, studied, bought, sold and lived for hundreds of years: The ancient city of Delft with its magical charm and trendy Rotterdam, risen from the ashes of a devastating war to be rebuilt as a modern metropolis.

Delft – it's justified and it's ancient

We start with the Stadhuis (Town Hall) in the city centre. The original building erected in 1200 suffered a ruinous fire in 1618 which destroyed all but one

tower where prisoners were held. Architect Hendrick de Keyser was commissioned and the new building was completed in only two short years. The symmetrical structure in the Renaissance-style features pillars, a beautiful statue of Lady Justice and a triangular front façade. In this town hall, the famous artist Johannes Vermeer gave public notice of his intended marriage to Catharina Bolnes.

A short walk across the large town square is where you find the impressive New Church. The monumental build was started in 1381 with the assembly of a wooden skeleton and three years later the stone »



Walk through time and spaces where people have gathered and lived

construction started which took a staggering 49 years to complete, only half the time it took to finish the imposing 109-metre tower. The royal heritage of the church started with William of Orange, the forefather of the Dutch monarchy, being interred there.

Travel | A tale of two cities

A monument was built in his honour between 1614 and 1622 and since William's burial in 1584, all the descendants of the House of Orange have been laid to rest there.

A few hundred metres away stands the Old Church, a.k.a. 'Scheve Jan' on the same site as the wooden church built there in 1050. With a gothic clocktower and 75-metre high ceiling, this church is fit for the famous people buried there such as Johannes Vermeer and naval heroes Piet Hein and Maarten Tromp. A notable feature of this great building is the leaning tower. Built on sandy soil and surrounded by water, the church fell prey to subsidence. Although it's now stable, earlier there was great concern that it would collapse.

Leaving the centre towards the east you will come across the charming Oostpoort (Eastern gate), the only remaining city gate in Delft. Built in around 1400 when the city walls were constructed, this was one of eight gates that permitted entry to Delft. With its twin-peaked towers and bridge over the Schie, it really is one of the most photographed locations on the edge of the city.

A thoroughly modern addition to the city is a little further south-east on the campus of the Technical University of Delft. The TU library was designed by architects Mecanoo and completed in 1998. Its 15,000 m² includes an underground book archive, reading rooms, offices and study spaces.

Rotterdam – the new kid on the building block

Arriving in Rotterdam by train, you'd be forgiven for thinking it's just another station until you get outside. The front of Rotterdam Centraal Station is reminiscent of a futuristic movie set with its angled roof, silver exterior and glass frontage. The current station building, designed by a collaboration of architects, was officially opened in March 2014. This mega hub handles over 96,000 passengers per working day, making it the third busiest station in the Netherlands.



As you leave the station, one of the first buildings in view is the Calypso Apartments. These striking red and white buildings with their distinctive wobbly shape were designed by William Alsop, a well-known British architect. The new flats are built on the site of the old Rijn Hotel and Calypso Cinema and were completed in 2013.

A little further into the city you come across the Cube Houses, a collection of 51 bright yellow homes and a true reflection of the adventurous spirit of Dutch architects. With not a straight wall among them, these dwellings are interesting and perplexing. Designed by architect Piet Blom, it was completed in 1984 and connects the Oude Haven (Old Harbour) and the Blaak areas in Rotterdam.

Next door a recent addition is the Markthal, an arched residential and office building with a massive market hall being the main part of the building. People flock to enjoy the atmosphere or to feast at one of the many food stalls or restaurants. The ceiling of the arch features colourful murals displayed on the 40-metre high structure. The Markthal was opened in 2014 by Queen Maxima of the Netherlands.

A true reflection of the Dutch adventurous spirit

The Witte Huis (White House), built in 1898 was one of the highest office buildings in Europe at the time, and is one of only a few buildings that survived World War Two bombing raids. During the 1990s it was restored as close to the original as possible.

Taking 10 years to complete the Erasmus Bridge, spanning the Maas River is an impressive cable style steel construction and one of the most famous bridges in the Netherlands. The swan-shaped pylon holding the cables in place reaches 139 metres into the sky and links parts of north and south Rotterdam.

There are many more old and new sites in both Delft and Rotterdam to explore and discover. All you need is a bit of time, a good pair of walking shoes and a camera. Enjoy! «

About the author

Richard and Lynette Croxford were born in South Africa and moved to South Holland 10 years ago. They have two daughters and enjoy photography, running and exploring cities on foot.

Schools: heart of the community

Amsterdam

• Amity International School Amsterdam

Admissions: +31 20 345 44 81
admissions@amity.amsterdam
amityschool.nl



By striving to provide an education which allows students to thrive in our ever-changing world, Amity International School Amsterdam helps prepare them for an unknown future. The school is housed in a wonderful building that provides a unique learning environment for children ages 3 – 14.

The Hague / Wassenaar

• American School of The Hague

Admissions: +31 (0)70 512 10 60
admissions@ash.nl
ash.nl



More than a School. An Experience. American School of The Hague (ASH) is an international school located in Wassenaar, the Netherlands. Here, we learn how to build a better world as we become better human beings. For this, we are guided by our Core Values and learn from and for the world. We embrace everyone's voice, our unique differences and achievements, and our service to others.

Amsterdam

• Winford Bilingual Primary School

Admissions: +31 20 7516650
info@winford.nl
winford-bilingual.nl



Winford Bilingual Primary School is a global school in the Amsterdam community focused on the highest quality bilingual primary education. During their time at our school, students follow the Dutch, UK, and IPC curricula. This approach provides children with a very solid emotional, intellectual, and cultural basis for secondary schooling.

The Hague

• German International School The Hague

Admissions: +31 (0)70 354 94 54
info@disdh.nl
disdh.nl/en-us



DISDH has a long tradition to which we feel a strong commitment. Founded 150 years ago, our school's mission is to promote the German language and culture and become part of the international community in The Hague. This spirit continues to be very much alive at our school today and is cultivated by both everyday school life and our special events and festivities.

Delft

• International School Delft

Admissions: +31 15 285 0038
or +31 (0)15 820 0208
admissions@internationalschooldelft.org
internationalschooldelft.com



International School Delft (ISD), an IB world school, offers an inspiring future-oriented learning environment that fosters innovation, design and technology. ISD aims to develop a community of self navigating learners who embrace diversity and promote international mindedness, value collaboration and demonstrate care and compassion.

The Hague

• British School in The Netherlands

Admissions: admissions@britishschool.nl
britishschool.nl



An international school for girls and boys aged 3-18, BSN is a thriving community of 80+ nationalities. The BSN's blend of traditional British values, educational rigour, and caring and committed staff provides an environment for students to prepare for a happy and successful life, no matter the pursuit.

Academic institutions are communities of families, staff, students and support teams—the people ACCESS has been serving for more than 35 years. Below are the institutions who invest in us so we can continue to serve internationals throughout the Netherlands.

The Hague

- **International Waldorf School of The Hague**

Admissions: +31 70 7830030
info@iawsth.org
internationalwaldorfschool.nl



The International Waldorf School of The Hague is a primary school that distinguishes itself through the integration of cognitive and artistic education. We consider physical education, handicrafts, art and respect for the natural world to be of equal importance to proficiency in mathematics and literacy. Our balanced educational approach addresses learning that occurs with the head, heart and hands.

Rotterdam

- **Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam (NAISR)**

Admissions: +31 10 422 5351
admissions@naisr.nl
nordangliaeducation.com/rotterdam



Our school challenges and inspires students from Pre-Kindergarten through to Grade 12 to be principled and resourceful citizens of the world. We go beyond traditional education to transform learning. Your child will study world-renowned curricula, enhanced with global programmes bespoke to Nord Anglia, such as STEAM with MIT and the Global Campus.

The Hague

- **International School of The Hague**

Admissions: +31 70 328 1450
ishthehague.nl



Highly commended and fully accredited international school providing children between 4 and 18 with High Quality learning. Guiding and supporting students to become proactive global citizens to shape a better future for all.

Rotterdam

- **Rotterdam International Secondary School (RISS)**

Admissions: +31 10 890 7744
admissions.riss@wolfert.nl
riss.wolfert.nl



Our Vision: educating for self-awareness, curiosity and integrity in a changing world. Our mission is for every student to enjoy their youth. We will do this by providing innovative approaches to learning, by encouraging achievement, by fostering international mindedness with local and global engagement, by modelling ethical behaviour and by acting respectfully and with honesty.

Hoofddorp

- **Optimist International School**

Admissions: +31 23 303 5924
info@optimist-international-school.nl
optimist-international-school.nl



Optimist International School is a public international primary school, offering a happy, safe and encouraging learning environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. Through inquiry-based education, we make learning visible, giving children the opportunity to discover and develop their unique talents and learning skills.

Boarding

- **Eerde International Boarding School**

Admissions: +31 529 451 452
admission@eerdeibs.nl
eerde.nl



Eerde is the only international school in the Netherlands to offer day school, flexible boarding and full boarding facilities. Located on a tranquil country estate only two hours from central Amsterdam, Eerde offers a safe and healthy environment for your child to focus on study, outdoor activities and having fun with school friends.

How Dutch are you?

Guides to Dutchness

Recently published by Xpat Scriptum Publishers are these two distinct and enjoyable handbooks to living in the Netherlands.

BY GIULIA
QUARESIMA

The Cycling Paradise

When it comes to the Netherlands, the bike or *fiets* is a key image. Riding a bike is truly the first stage to 'Dutchification'.

The Cycling Paradise, written by Peter de Lange, is a fascinating introduction to cycling culture in the Netherlands. The book travels through topics such as how to get familiar with cycling, road rules, biking etiquette, and different types of bicycles—from traditional to electric, from shared to more quirky specialist bikes.



Newcomers to the Netherlands are often afraid to get on a bike, so this book collects expat testimonies of how many faced and overcame the fear and got their bikes out into the traffic. According to de Lange, it's a matter of developing quick reflexes and learning the right body language—clearly communicate to others your intentions with eye contact, head and upper body movements, and use hand signals to indicate directions.

Learning this 'language' and becoming familiar with the traffic is worth it, as the bicycle is a great way to travel around the country. The book is full of colourful photographs that illustrate the Dutch cycling lifestyle, beyond simply as a means of transportation.

The Cycling Paradise contains a selection of beautiful cycling paths and routes edited by Robert van Weperen. A lovely example is the picturesque Winterswijk path (in Gelderland), a cycle tour through the landscape that inspired Piet Mondrian. The tour starts in front of Villa Mondrian where the painter spent his childhood and which now hosts many of his paintings and a pencil landscape drawing of the surrounding area. The 24 km. route goes past the Strandbad natural pool to finish at the hamlet Het Woold, where riders can enjoy goat cheese, wines, distilled liquors, jams and chutneys.

This book is an essential guide to discovering the country beyond the well-known paths and becoming part of the cycling community.

The American Netherlander

Some internationals experience a cultural shock when arriving in the Netherlands. Seen by many as a liberal, tolerant and progressive country, newcomers may find certain Dutch conventions—or lack of—surprising. For some, the Dutch language is a hurdle for social interaction and job opportunities, while others find the unique work culture—particularly its lack of hierarchy or separation of work and personal lives—something to get used to.

A hilarious manual to understanding the country

Greg Shapiro's *The American Netherlander*, with its sense of humour and sharp eye for detail, is a good starting point to understanding life as an international in the Netherlands. The author is an American comedian, a member of comedy group Boom Chicago, presenter of the satirical Dutch programme *Comedy Central News* and author of two books now collected together in *The American Netherlander – 25 Years of Expat Tales*.

This book tells the story of Shapiro's personal cultural adventure and assimilation in the Netherlands, from when he first arrived 25 years ago and stayed for love. It is not a scientific guide, but a manual to understand and familiarise yourself with the country, using the author's personal anecdotes for a subjective and hilarious point of view.

Shapiro tackles Dutch common sense, a pragmatic approach to problem solving, openness and tolerance, multiculturalism, politics, education, and even customer service. While his personal experiences really bring out the humour and irony, he also shows understanding. For instance, the renowned 'Dutch directness' is really brutal honesty that isn't intended to hurt feelings.

Shapiro sees paradoxes and oxymorons in Dutch culture: How can Dutch identity be so independent-minded, yet also so obsessed with consensus? How can Dutch identity be so liberal and open, yet also so Calvinistic and conformist? How can Dutch identity be so proud, but then be so quiet about it? "Dutch police won't stop you for having an un-helmeted baby strapped to the front of your bike, like a human shield. In fact, Dutch police won't stop you if there is one kid on the front handlebars, one on the crossbar, two on the back rack, and another one standing on top of those for a playdate. But if they'd been riding at night without a light? That's a fine of 50 euros."

The second part of the book is a Dutch assimilation test, a collection of all the questions that should be included in the *Inburgering* exams. According to Shapiro, these reveal more than the exam ever intended. Give it a try and see how Dutch you are! «



About the author

Giulia Quaresima is from Italy and has lived in The Hague since 2018.



Creating new practices together

Translanguaging in the hands of our multilingual students and teachers



The International School
of The Hague

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ishthehague.nl

For internationally-mobile parents with diverse home language backgrounds, placing their children in an international school that uses English in everyday instruction can be a daunting prospect. While learning through a new language brings new challenges, connecting new language learning to a strong home language base can accelerate language learning in many positive ways. That's why at The International School of The Hague, translanguaging plays such a prominent role in their approach to learning.

So what is translanguaging?

Translanguaging is a powerful, pedagogical tool that allows students to flexibly use the languages they're already learning at home to communicate with those around them and learn in the classroom. Put simply, it means students are encouraged by teachers to vary

their language of input and output (Williams, 1994) as they learn. For example, students may have a discussion with their peers in their home language about how equivalent fractions in Maths work and then go on to complete English word problems about this same concept.

Over the past ten years, working with experts Dr. Jim Cummins, Eowyn Crisfield and Pascale Hertay, the team at ISH has been strengthening their dynamic, translanguaging practices and has now become a world leader in this field.

Using natural practices of bilingual people, ISH Primary multilingual students are supported in:

- creatively exploring and supporting their complex, international identities
- supporting students who are new to English to feel comfortable and safe at school
- creating equal access to and aiding learning for academic English and Dutch school tasks
- allowing students to think critically in their strongest language, develop new concepts and then transfer their deeper understanding to all the languages they are learning
- developing language awareness in all students languages to help them become more accurate in using them

With a decade of experiments and improving our methods, students and class teachers are empowered to find new and innovative ways of using their languages as flexible, creative learning tools in everyday lessons.

"To see our confident, high achieving international students in action is to believe in the power of the translanguaging approach!" Mindy McCracken, Home and Identity Language Leader. «

To find out more about the ISH approach to translanguaging ishthehague.nl/academic/translanguaging

With a little help

Being an international in a foreign country certainly comes with challenges. These have been compounded when a worldwide pandemic was added into the mix, and opportunities to meet others, socialise and network suddenly dried up.

BY ABBIE MARSH
PUMAREJO

Before Covid-19 arrived, many internationals (myself included) might have taken for granted a variety of organisations and methods to assist with getting established in our new homes away from home.

Before my husband and I moved to Rotterdam in November 2019, I had mapped out the usual strategies for meeting people. I investigated organisations online because I was traveling back and forth between Switzerland, where we lived, and the Netherlands, where we would soon live.

Settling in

While I wasn't exactly settled in the city per se, I wanted to get ahead of the game and start making contacts. I changed my region to the Netherlands for InterNations, an organisation for connecting internationals the world over.

Locally, I joined the International Women's Networking Group (IWNG) which is more than a social group, and I was excited to meet professional women there and hopefully expand my professional network.

I investigated language courses, which are an excellent way to meet others and learn more about the new country, called on any friends and contacts already living in the Netherlands, and looked up acquaintances from previous assignments.

It takes a conscientious effort to put oneself out there. As an empty nester, I no longer had the security blanket of my sons' school as a contingency plan. If I wanted to meet people, I was going to have to work at it.

I discovered an intriguing organisation called Venture Cafe, where "isolation is the enemy of innovation". They host free community gatherings every Thursday for networking and with an interesting and well-thought-out programme. When I first arrived, these meetings were live. When Covid-19 happened, the meetings went virtual.

Little did I know that I didn't have the time or luxury to shop around for the right organisations to help me get integrated. Little did we all know. Looking back, I don't think I would do anything differently. However, I did experience how these types of organisations are helping their members and community during the pandemic. »



PHOTO: CALLUM

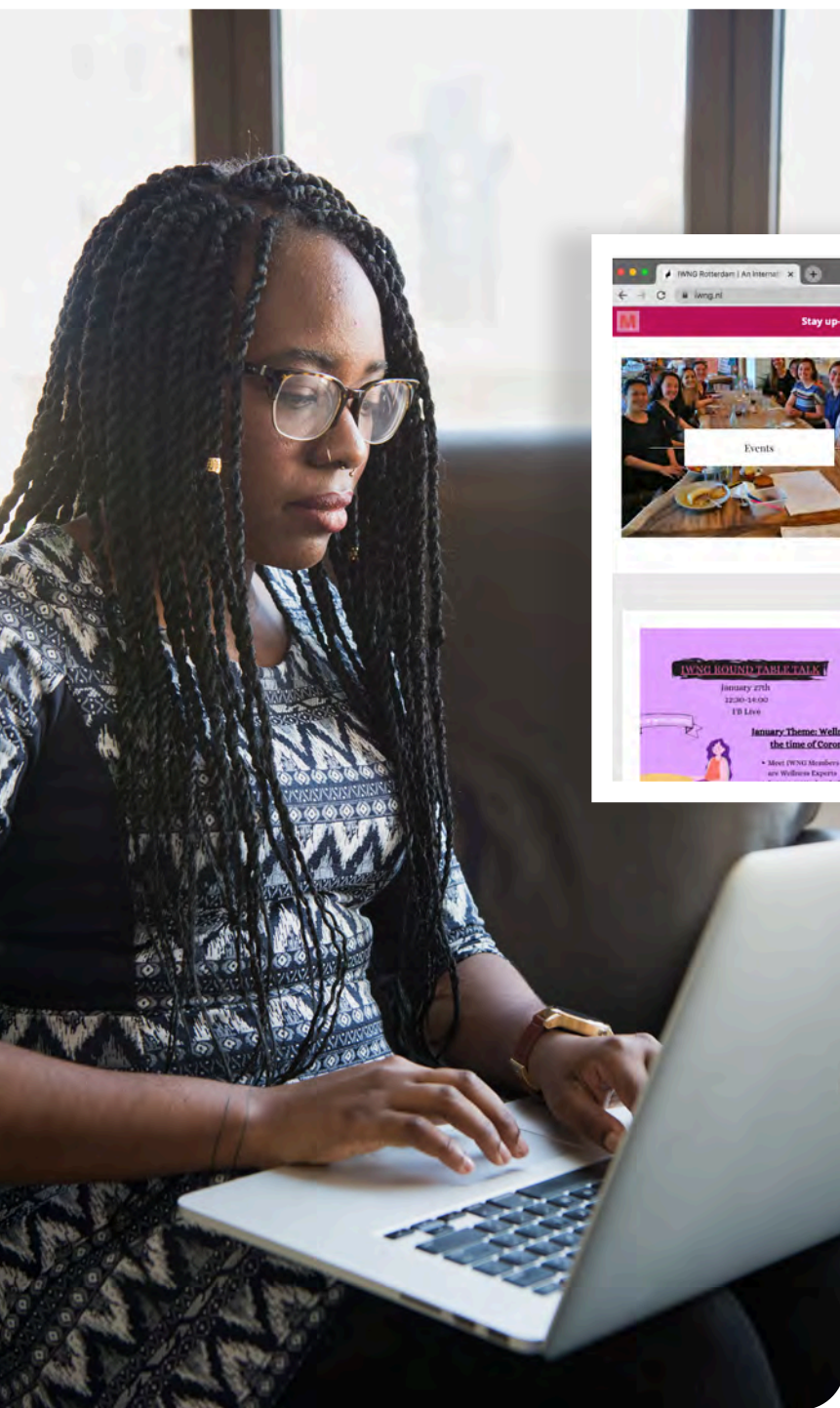
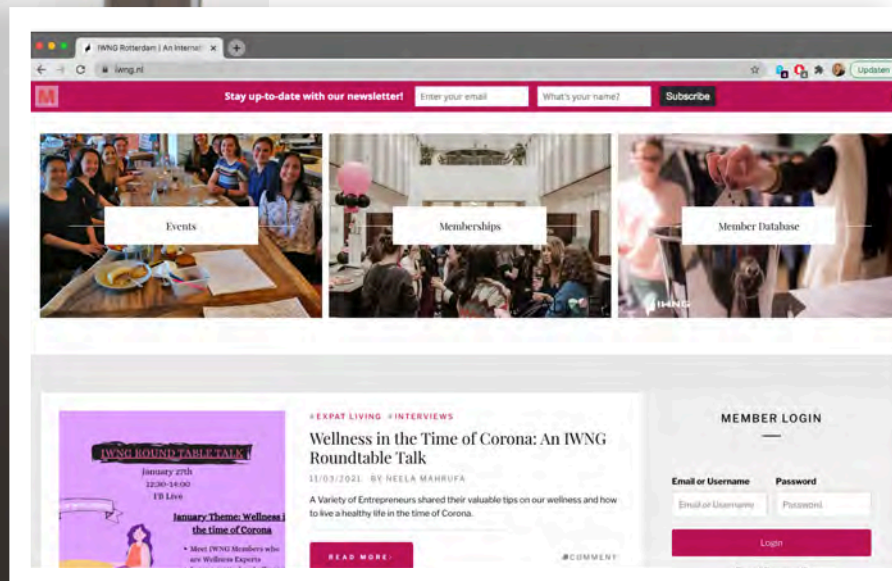


PHOTO: CHRISTINA WOCINTECHCHAT



Respondents expressed concerns regarding a variety of issues, including travel restrictions, home-schooling children and healthcare for themselves and family. It is not surprising, however, that “about 75% of respondents reported that they had to work from home (using technology), and 27% of internationals struggled with social isolation as a result of the coronavirus measures.”

Adapting to the situation

I recently asked one of the co-founders of the IWNG about these issues. How did they manage when Covid came to town? Did they make changes and adaptations, or did they keep the status quo? Did they lose members or get stronger during that time?

The IWNG was founded in 2017 by Kristina Jackson to connect with other self-employed female internationals in the city. As the group grew, other members organised regular lunches, dinners, coffees and get-togethers, an indication that expat women were seeking connections. The organisation recently passed the 1000 members point, an impressive number for a young group, having also faced one of its years during the pandemic. Sterling Schuyler is a freelance copywriter who's been living in the Netherlands since 2018. She joined the group

The international experience

According to a report published by The Hague International Centre, data shows that most internationals felt informed about coronavirus measures in the Netherlands, using expat and Dutch media as well as the National Institute of Public Health and Environment (RIVM) as primary sources of information to stay abreast of the changing pandemic. This report utilised answers from 900 respondents to an online survey.

because she needed friends and wanted to get involved. As time went on, she took on more responsibilities and helps keep the IWNG running.

Learning Curve

In order to help its members during Covid-19 restrictions, the group endured a learning curve. While they planned a number of Zoom events early on, Schuyler admits that fatigue quickly followed. In the end, they returned to an organic methodology. “We encouraged engagement in the Facebook group itself. We introduced some new ‘programming’ so that members could comment and interact with each other based on different topics. And, most importantly, we moderated the group so that the information was interesting as well as trust-worthy.”

As things continue to evolve globally, this organisation is collaborating with other international organisations to help their members. “We always want our members to feel comfortable and confident within the community,” says Schuyler. Their online platforms help to bring people together and bridge the gap between sheltering in place and networking.

Schuyler points out that they are continually looking for new ways to speak with members and provide useful content and interaction. This is done in large part by connecting with other organisations like ACCESS and Rotterdam Partners to see how they can work together and support one another. “It’s been enlightening to learn from all kinds of people (especially new arrivals) about their experiences in the Netherlands.”

Due to the current state of affairs, in the beginning of 2021 the IWNG introduced more online workshops and programming so that members can learn and engage with specific purposes in mind. “It’s something that Kristina and I hadn’t prioritised as part of IWNG’s initial offerings, but with in-person events out of the question, we had to figure out what further value we could provide to our members,” admits Schuyler.



PHOTO: CHARLES DELUVIO

Building and maintaining a thriving community is hard work, and we can’t do it alone

And if things eventually return to normal? “Building (and maintaining) a thriving community is hard work, and we can’t do it alone. If there are any groups, organisations, or companies that want to collaborate, we’re happy to chat. I definitely think our Facebook group engagement and our online workshops will remain. But I’m really looking forward to starting the networking dinners again!”

While the ongoing challenges are real, and getting established in a foreign country is more complicated than ever, it’s good to know there are organisations that support their members—not only to keep them afloat, but to help them thrive. «

About the author

Abbie Marsh Pumarejo is a writer and editor based in Europe, who enjoys travel, reading, entertaining and spending time at the beach in Spain.



that both Dutch and English are spoken and supported consistently for balanced language distribution and exposure. As such, children will start to pick-up words and gain confidence in switching from Dutch to English and vice versa with ease.

A themed approach with daily subjects relating to weekly topics and a broader monthly theme guarantees regular exposure to songs, books and vocabulary, thus providing children with plenty of opportunities to repeat, learn and process (words in) both languages at their own pace.

Laura, a bilingual teacher, explains: “Songs are a fun way to learn a language. We sing songs in the morning—first the English version, then the Dutch version. For example: itsy bitsy spider/hansje pansje kevertje. It makes me proud to hear international children sing a Dutch song whilst they play together as I am the one who taught it to them!”

Lifelong benefits

Research into bilingualism shows that children raised bilingually (or multilingually) are more open-minded, have better problem-solving skills and can learn additional languages faster than their monolingual counterparts. A parent from our pilot scheme reflects: **“Our daughter is doing very well language-wise; we are convinced the bilingual group is an asset to her development.”**

As the leading international childcare provider in the Netherlands, Zein creates an environment in which every child feels at home. With a strong focus on the specific needs and wishes of internationally-oriented families, Zein delivers fully English-speaking and bilingual day care, pre-school, after school and holiday care services both independently and in collaboration with international and Dutch schools in The Hague region. Discover the locations in Leidschenveen, Voorburg, Benoordenhout, Statenkwartier, van Stolkpark and Kijkduin, zeinchildcare.nl <

How to make bilingual childcare work

An insight into Zein Childcare's method



Zein International Childcare has served the internationally-minded community in The Hague for over a decade. Known for their genuine international character and commitment to quality, Zein provides a welcoming environment for children aged 0 - 12 to grow and develop.

Following a successful pilot, English-Dutch bilingual Childcare programmes were launched in Spring 2021 at multiple locations across The Hague and in Voorburg.

Daily programme

Zein's bilingual groups follow the same award-winning programme as their fully English-speaking groups. The daily programme is designed to ensure

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info@zeinchildcare.nl

Locked down alone

BY DAPHNE
VLACHOJANNIS



PHOTO: EWIJN VAN BERGEIJK-KWANT

After over a year, we're all familiar with the struggles of working parents. Little kids running into work meetings half naked, while co-workers smile patiently and mumble platitudes like "we're all in the same boat". But what if you're living alone?

Some boats are empty save for a sole captain who is realising that sailing out to sea alone sounded much more romantic than it is. The reality is it can be lonely. And it can be quiet—too quiet.

Alone in lockdown

"My daughter and I now bake our own bread."

"I taught my kids all about geography."

"We have a new family board game tradition."

But what about those of us who don't have kids?

What about those of us who don't live with a partner or even a pet? Or don't even have plants because before the lockdown, our apartments were basically a place we showered and slept and on occasion ate but certainly never cooked? What about those of us who have spent the better part of the past year only really interacting with people on Zoom? And those people are colleagues.

It can often seem that society has focused on the challenges of working parents of young children, all but forgetting about those facing a very different set of challenges.

Recently arrived

"I moved here on the first of November for a new job, and knew no one here," shares one international.

"The lockdown has been very complicated for me. It's very difficult to meet anyone, and months after moving, I still don't know anyone here." »

Elevate others and bring benefits to our own mood and health

He confides that although he has “a very solid character and is pretty good at managing solitude”, recently he’s noticed some signs of depression. When asked whether the international company he works for has provided any support, the answer is a clear no. “They’ve tried to organise one or two online social events, but they were awkward.”

When asked what he has done to deal with the situation, the international says he’s had to take the matter into his own hands. “You have to just get out –take your bike, or walk, and see your city–there are lots of beautiful things to see even when everything’s closed. On New Year’s Eve, I took my bike and went

out and just spoke with people on the street—I met two or three people who I could at least chat with in person for the evening.”

When the travelling stops

Another international moved to Amsterdam in May 2020 in the middle of the lockdown. “I’m single, with no kids, no pet,” he quips. “Up until the lockdown, I was traveling a lot for work and for personal reasons. Up to that point life was pretty lively. Then all that stopped.” He shares that one of the main reasons he came to the Netherlands was to be closer to family, from whom he’s had to isolate since he moved.

Spending the holidays alone was particularly difficult. “Over Christmas, and the curfew coinciding with the darkest months of the year, it felt like the symptoms of seasonal affective disorder.” He also shares his

Alone at home?

Before the pandemic, for many internationals, the standard question when making plans was “Are you here this weekend?” Yes, we are all here this weekend. Literally all of us. And while some of us are with our families, a lot of us are here alone. Here are some ideas from those in that situation:

- Rent a car and just drive. There are plenty of places to explore, both cities and in nature, even if everything is closed.
- Turn your house into a Michelin star restaurant for an evening. Many restaurants deliver all the components of a super fancy meal, and putting it together gives you an interesting insight into what goes into the production of a meal in such a restaurant.
- Put yourself on a sleep schedule. And more importantly, a Netflix schedule.
- Get fresh air daily, and don’t be afraid to talk to strangers. At a distance. It’s amazing what a short interaction with another live human being can do for morale.
- Take an online course, nurture a hobby, or throw yourself into personal development projects. But manage your expectations—sometimes keeping our sanity is all the personal development we can handle right now.
- Be patient. We’re almost there.



PHOTO: LE CREUSET

battle with sleep. “When you’re living alone, it’s hard to keep to a regular sleep schedule, and that can really mess up your mood.”

This sleep-deprived international describes how he put himself on a strict sleep schedule. He jokes that he hid his television remote control in order to stop watching Netflix until 3:00 am, and decided instead to get outside as much as possible. Instead of hopping on a plane weekly to an international destination, he now hops on his bike or gets in a rented car and explores the Netherlands. “I’ve decided to take this as an opportunity to really get to know this place I’m calling home.”

Make the best of the situation

“One way is exercise at least three times per week,” says psychologist and member of the ACCESS counsellors network (CSN) Katarina Gaborova. “This will stimulate serotonin production (a neurotransmitter in the brain) to elevate the mood, enhance general well-being, improve appetite and sleep, and decrease stress levels and anxiety.”

“When it comes to creativity, exercise also improves memory and cognitive skills. Luckily for us, the spring is around the corner, so spending time outdoors while absorbing some sun—at least 30 minutes—will not only make us happier but will regulate the Circadian rhythm, strengthen the immune system, take care of our bones and prolong our life.” Gaborova adds.

While we take care of ourselves, we can also share caring for others. Psychologists emphasise that doing random acts of kindness (even for complete strangers, and there is a huge need during these times) is a great way to elevate others and bring benefits to our own mood and health. Even walking at a safe distance with a colleague, neighbours or friends can help us to re-connect with others.

Did you know...
ACCESS counsellors are on-call to assist the whole community.
access-nl.org/counselling



Lastly, but not least, plan a little surprise or a joyful activity for yourself every day (maybe something you always wanted to try but never got time to do). This gives a special purpose each day. And guess what? Anticipating a joy will spice up your life even more. «

About the author

Daphne Vlachoianis is a New York-qualified international human rights lawyer who has worked around the world. In 2013 she settled in The Hague where she lives with her husband and three children. Daphne is passionate about languages and creative writing.



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In creative partnership with the Rijksmuseum

Eerde's partnership with the Rijksmuseum offers students an Enriching Educational Experience.

Eerde students benefit from its ongoing partnership through workshops, engaging with artists, exclusive exhibits and exchanges. This experience is enjoyed by students of all grade levels but it is especially beneficial for the International Baccalaureate (IBDP) Visual Arts students.

Since the partnership was established in 2017, Eerde International Boarding School and the Rijksmuseum have collaborated to develop educational programmes which can be integrated into the international curriculum, serving for both IBDP and international middle school programmes.

The curriculum development work done by the Eerde Visual Arts instructor and the educational experts at the Rijksmuseum is of high quality. The collaboration originally produced three curriculum guided tours. These tours focused on a special combination of Netherlands artwork and history, as seen through an international perspective and dialogue. As the partnership progressed, it has broadened to include other subjects in an integrative, inquiry-based learning approach.

Over the years, students from Eerde have enriched their educational experiences through visits to the Rijksmuseum and participating in several workshops.

Even in these recent times involving COVID measures, Eerde and the Rijksmuseum have found a way to maintain the connection and engagement with students in the form of online workshops during the lockdown period. Through the dedication of the Rijksmuseum educators, Eerde students have just completed a variety of stimulating and interactive workshops featuring Dutch Design and Photography. A wide selection of captivating artworks resulted from these workshops.

Stimulating and interactive workshops

Eerde looks forward to continuing this partnership with the Rijksmuseum for the benefit of its international students and enriching their educational experience. «



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Breaking Bread



PHOTO: MAGNUS

Did you know...
A recent study found bread still contributes most to daily food energy intake in the Netherlands

Bread has a rich history in the Netherlands. Regional bakers have always used creativity and different techniques, and this could explain why such an ordinary product as bread is still so popular and consumed in great quantity. A Dutch adult eats on average fifty kilos of bread per year, which is four slices a day.

BY KIM VAN DER VELDEN

Bread as a social marker

Until the end of the 19th century, the majority of Europe's population lived at the edge of having enough food to survive. The biggest calorie provider

was bread, and therefore its quality and price were fundamental for entire populations. In the 19th and 20th centuries new resilient types of wheat and grains as well as innovations in production processes were key to the way we consume bread today.

Up until the late 19th century, the bread you consumed reflected your social class in the Netherlands: white wheat bread was for the elite and dark rye bread for the poorest, with a wide variety of different mixes in between. After World War Two, wheat prices dropped significantly so everyone could afford white bread. But since the 1970s, whole wheat and darker types of bread returned to bakers' shelves, due to their health benefits and a nostalgia for different and richer flavours.

Nowadays specialist bakers are re-discovering older, regional techniques and ingredients adding to the bread types found in the Netherlands. Ironically over two centuries later, it is often the case that the bread you eat reflects your social class, with the difference being that it is now the other way around.

Regional differences

Types of bread in the Netherlands have historically been divided east-west and north-south, determined by the cereal that was grown. In the southwest, wheat was grown on the clay soil and brown bread was baked from this. In the south and east, rye bread was eaten because of rye and oat harvests.

Regional specialty breads are often seen as a treat these days, so if you are travelling around the country, why not drop into a local bakery and try one?

Suikerbrood (Sugar bread – Friesland)

White wheat bread with lumps of half melted sugar and a hint of cinnamon. This is a true treat for a weekend breakfast, or with a cup of coffee as a snack, cut in thick slices with a layer of butter.

Fries Roggebrood (Frisian rye bread – Friesland)

An almost black bread from rye grains cooked slowly in the oven. This bread does not contain any yeast and is very compact and tastes almost sweet. Cut in very thin slices with cheese, it is a nice lunch or snack. Or with cured thinly sliced bacon (*spek*) topping as an accompaniment for the well-known Dutch pea soup, traditionally eaten in winter after a day of ice skating.

Kaneelbeschuitjes

(Cinnamon biscuits – Gelderland)

The Dutch word *beschuit* has the same origin as the word “biscuit”, coming from the Latin “bis” (twice) and “coctus” (cooked). First baked and then dried out in a slow oven, the bread is storable for a long time. *Beschuit* from the Achterhoek near the German border in Gelderland has a rectangular shape and is sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon, and is a nice light and crunchy treat with a cup of coffee or tea.

Worstenbroodjes

(Sausage rolls – Noord-Brabant)

Sausage wrapped in a white wheat flower bun.

Every baker in Noord-Brabant will have its own secret sausage recipe. It is a treat that is eaten often during the Carnival festivities where alcohol flows abundantly in the south of the country.

Ontbijtkoek (Breakfast cookie)

Ontbijtkoek is one of the staples of a traditional Dutch breakfast: a rye cake spiced with cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, honey, pepper, and cloves. Although it is mostly consumed for breakfast, it is equally popular as a lunchtime treat or a midnight snack, topped with butter or jam, and sometimes with a few pieces of cheese on the side, or simply as a snack, paired with a cup of tea or coffee.

Specialist bakers are re-discovering techniques and ingredients

Ontbijtkoek has been baked in the Netherlands since the 16th century, and today there are numerous regional varieties of this flavourful sweet bread. In the southern parts of the country, it is known as *peperkoek*, referring to the fact that pepper is one of the ingredients used in its production.

Krentenbollen (Currant buns)

Krentenbollen are slightly sweet Dutch bread rolls filled with currants and raisins. These buns are regularly consumed for breakfast or lunch or as an afternoon snack. They can be paired with sweet or savoury toppings such as butter, sliced ham, fruit jam, or cheese. «

About the author

Kim van der Velden works at a multi-national and is also a full-time mother of two teenagers. She regularly prepares lunch boxes for them and tries to be as creative as possible with all the bread options available in the Netherlands.



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The approach to learning and teaching has a significant influence on a child's life-long learning. So what are the benefits of attending an international school such as Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam (NAISR)?

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An emphasis on nurturing responsible, caring, and compassionate global citizens should be a part of any international school. At NAISR we provide many opportunities to recognise, respect and celebrate cultural diversity. In the words of NAISR Director, Niki Meehan, "International schools not only actively teach cultural understanding, but the children live and breathe it through their day-to-day life within the community. Our vision is to shape a generation of creative and resilient global citizens – a generation that will change our world for the better – and we live up to that promise".

Contact us

Nord Anglia International School Rotterdam (NAISR) offers a truly international education where a world-wide perspective is embedded, and values are celebrated. Contact our admissions team to find out more about the exciting opportunities that are available to all students at NAISR. «



Dutch design potential

The future of design belongs to the students

In the Netherlands, Design Academy Eindhoven (DAE) stands out for its unique philosophy and approach to design education, and has become a leader in training the next generation of designers.

BY HANNAH BEHRENS

Dig deeper

Recent BA graduate, Michelle Kee, was initially impressed by the outstanding quality of DAE's student work and the unique approach. She reflects upon her educational experience, "I've learned to dig deeper, to find something that really gets my

PHOTO: CHARLENE DOSSO

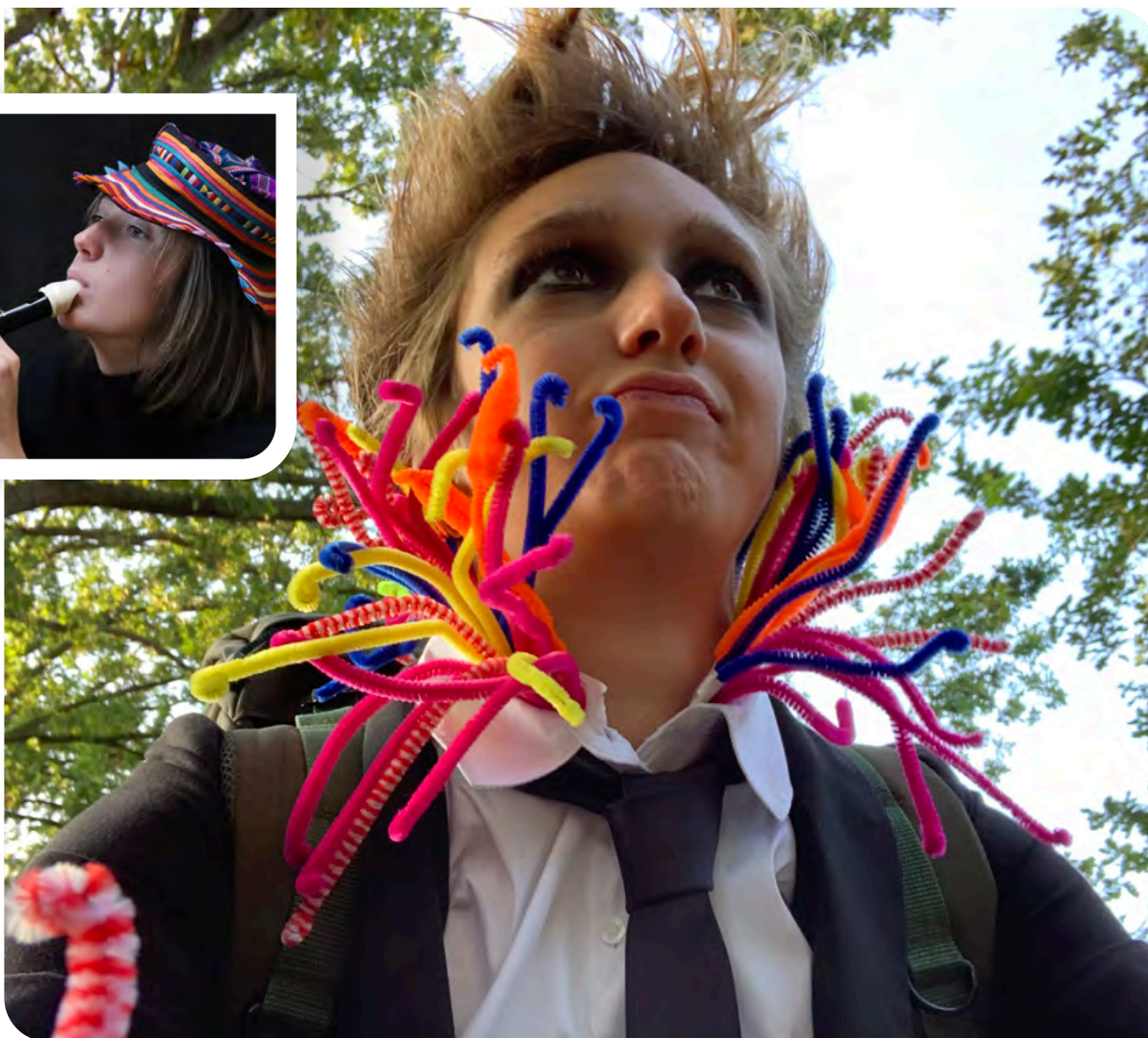


PHOTO: CHARLENE DOSSO

curiosity sparked, and to find a way to explore that concept; something human-centred, helping people and utilising design to find a way to do that.”

Kee’s senior project reflects the human-centred design that the school is known for, a project related to sexual education. “I found myself in a situation where I was negatively impacted by personal experience. The Netherlands is at the forefront of quality information and encouragement of dialogue.

Growing up in Seoul, South Korea, there is a cultural stigma around sex, which leads to a lack of both practical information and people simply talking about sexual issues.”

Kee conducted interviews with different professionals, and others in her own university-age peer group, to gain deeper insight and knowledge on topics of sexual education, openness and resources. She conducted anonymous personal and online interviews to two main questions: “Can you describe a sexual experience that has taught you a valuable lesson?” and “What was that lesson about?” She brought the audio stories into a collaborative project with 17 illustrators, creating an artistic and informative experience for participants, artists and experts and the public. The final result was to develop a website that shares and promotes sex positivity in a meaningful way. [learningbydoingit.com](#)

Beyond traditional

Second Year BA student, Charlene Dosso, explains that up until last year, her focus area would traditionally be called ‘Communication,’ but her department is now called ‘Studio Moonshot’. The name comes from the concept of deriving motivation, action and solutions from a big question, such as “How do we get to the moon?” and prompts collaboration and experimentation beyond traditional department parameters.

Studio Moonshot focuses mainly on computer-based software development, 3-D modelling, animation, and game creation. However Dosso prefers working directly with people and was drawn to study design at DAE because she didn’t want to be put in a box the

way that other university academic programs might dictate. “Design Academy Eindhoven allows the freedom to study and experiment in all related fields.” She didn’t want to be limited by a dogma of specialisation, and is interested in scientific studies, but the course allows her to take an open, experimental and innovative approach. Faculty members are in a supportive role, to teach technique and guide the path of study chosen by the student.

“The epidemic inspired me to connect creativity and inspiration through dance and movement. I noticed how people are often afraid or self-conscious about movement, often claiming that they might be shy to dance in front of or around others”. Every kind of movement is a little interpretive piece of a whole, connected by the same cue to trace the participants movements into a digital format and thus, created a new dimension to the dance, an interaction between the body and technology.

To find something that really gets my curiosity sparked

Open curriculum

Still figuring out what her area of focus will be, Carly Zegers appreciates that DAE has opened opportunities for students to learn and choose a career path. She already had a degree and was working as a graphic designer when she decided to go back into education. “I didn’t want to sit behind a computer for 40 hours a week. I wanted to do more hands-on work.”

Zegers wants to use design skills to do something good for the world and chose DAE because it offers design with a human-centred approach. Instead of focusing on a title like, ‘product designer’, ‘photographer’, ‘architect’ or ‘fashion designer,’ all of those aspects are built into an open curriculum where students can choose for themselves. The faculty guides students in their working and thinking method, rather than taking a pre-determined course. »

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Education | Dutch design potential

Zegers feels she is teaching herself more than relying on her teachers to give her the information. Within workshops and studios there is project-based and collaborative learning, and students are empowered toward self-exploration—reading, learning and experimenting with materials and practising and developing specific skills.

A recent assignment was to work within a restriction—she assigned herself the task of “giving a hard material a soft character,” and decided to work with concrete (as it is inexpensive, weather resistant, and sustainable) and made a side table.

“What inspires me is listening and speaking to how people, especially non-designers, react to design. I like to interact with my community. I like to compare interests of people from different places. I find it interesting to work with people to understand why they make certain choices or preferences, and how a design might impact them. Being a designer is about understanding how people are using, responding to and connecting with or receiving an experience.”

Emerging technologies

Sina Grebordt is interested in emerging technologies and evaluating how we use them to live in more meaningful ways. Before applying to DAE, Grebordt learned from a friend that design was not simply about designing products, but solving problems and thinking strategically, which are qualities she saw in herself.

Faced with the constrictions of the pandemic, Grebordt created a project around how to engage the body when using a computer. Part of the project involved making special wearables as a kind of ‘work uniform’ with two-dimensional shapes which a computer camera can recognise and map, to reconsider how we are using computers to embody our own natural movements.

Grebordt would like to pursue a Master’s degree and go into research and development linked to technology and work academically. She would like



PHOTO: CARLY ZEGERS

I like to compare the interests of different people

to understand a broader, ‘big picture view’ of the implications of emerging technologies, particularly human impact, with a focus on interaction or strategic design, system thinking, and people and technology.

Grebordt encourages future design students to be honest with themselves and try to seek out the places and experiences where they can contribute and grow. “It is beautiful to see younger students finding their own design language. The beauty of Design Academy Eindhoven is its enriching experience with a huge variety of interests.” «

About the author

Hannah Behrens is a freelance writer, editor, poet and writing coach. She writes a blog, weedsandwilderness.com, leads Weeds and Wilderness Creative Writing Meetup in Amsterdam, and is currently working towards her PhD in Expressive Arts Therapy.

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According to a recently released survey by the International Community Advisory Panel (ICAP), 74% of the community had mental-health impact on their lives due to the corona pandemic. Working and educational habits are also affected. Travel rules are regularly changing. Plans for the future – here in the Netherlands as well as in other countries – will, for some time, be out of sync with one another.

What can we do?

Some tips we hope can help break a downward spiral, and hopefully improve your own mood, and mental well-being.

Virtual commute – plan your breaks, share this with others, do something different, change what you do & where every day

Smile more often – to yourself on camera and to your neighbours or people you pass on your walk, practise smiling with your eyes – for when wearing a mask

Gourmet events – support a local restaurant (not 'take-away') and plan a special meal. Live alone? Plan this with one or two others – and share the moment together, online.

Be brave – ask questions, introduce yourself in the groups you may have found online – others will also appreciate. For many this will be asking a lot, know this though, there are many aware of this, and there to provide a helping hand

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welcome.utrechtregion.com/en

For additional information, please visit: access-nl.org

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