

BOUWEN AAN DE POORT BUURTKRANT

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FIVE QUESTIONS ON...

THE RENOVATION OF AMSTERDAMSE POORT

THE MUNICIPALITY OF AMSTERDAM

MEET AMSTERDAMSE POORT'S LIAISON OFFICER

WHO WORKS AT...

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S SANDCASTLE CAMPUS?

AMSTER
DAMSE
POORT



GEMEENTE AMSTERDAM

LIAISON OFFICER FOR AMSTERDAMSE POORT

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

My name is Sara Japenga, I'm 44 years old and have been a liaison officer for Amsterdamse Poort since 2015, on behalf of the municipality. Everything I do revolves around introducing people to others who can help. I also have lots of experience of working with local businesses, which is handy in a place like the Poort.



SARA JAPENGA,
LIAISON OFFICER AMSTERDAMSE POORT

WHAT KIND OF THINGS CAN RESIDENTS OR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS APPROACH YOU ABOUT?

I'd love to say anything and everything, but I'd be lying. That said, there are a whole variety of things I can help people with. For instance, if you feel unsafe in the neighbourhood for whatever reason or want to organise a neighbourhood party but don't know where to begin, come see me. Most of my work involves putting local residents and small business owners in touch with the right people in the municipality, and vice versa.

People can call or e-mail me anytime, or they can search me out at the Poort, including during my weekly Tuesday afternoon surgery, which I hold from 1 pm to 2 pm in the Ymere community room at Bijlmerplein 99. I love problem-solving and looking for creative ways to make things happen, so I invite anyone with Poort-related queries or issues to call me so we can figure things out together.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT WORKING IN THE AMSTERDAMSE POORT?

Definitely the dynamism and diversity that defines everything here. The changes, the stakeholders, residents old and new, local businesses, and the sheer scale of the transformation. There's so much happening, and I can't get enough of it.

WHO WORKS IN THE AMSTERDAMSE POORT?

The third issue of Buurtkrant for 2023 introduces some of the people who work in or on the Amsterdamse Poort. You'll therefore get to hear from people who are either already engaged in some official capacity in the area or are about to be. They include staff from the Amsterdam International Community School, which opened its Sandcastle campus in September. You'll also get to meet Hans

Meiboom and Graziëlla Hunsel Rivero, two cultural entrepreneurs with operations in the Sandcastle. And last but not least, you'll get a glimpse into a typical day in the respective lives of the Poort's caretaker and one of its cleaners. Happy reading!

The cover shot was taken by Randy Da-Costa during Cultural Catwalk, which took place in August.

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FIVE QUESTIONS ... REGARDING AMSTERDAMSE POORT'S RENOVATION



It probably hasn't escaped your notice that Amsterdamse Poort is under renovation. Outlets in the cluster that includes TK Maxx, JD Sports and McDonalds now boast new shopfronts, as do those in the block where Nico's Butchers and the HEMA are located, which underwent renovation in summer. And thus, slowly but surely, proceeds the transformation of the entire complex. The changes have prompted all sorts of questions from local residents, so we've selected five of the most common ones to answer here.

DO LOCAL RESIDENTS HAVE ANY SAY IN THE CHANGES?

Yes, they do. We solicit input from residents, local businesses and visitors to the area in a variety of ways. These include face-to-face sessions and events, online questionnaires and social media surveys. For instance, this summer, we held three focus groups with residents, local businesses and Poort visitors to discuss the renovation of Shopperhal (the shopping arcade) and find out what the finished building must offer to meet their needs.

WHAT WILL PEOPLE BE ABLE TO DO AND SEE IN THE NEWLY RENOVATED POORT?

There will be plenty to do and see in the Poort, both in the daytime and at night, and whatever your age. In fact, this is part of the reason we included so much variety in the plans. For instance, the food and drink scene will include fine dining restaurants where you linger over a meal, bars and cafes for socialising in the evening, and casual and more affordable eateries for quick bites. There'll also be playgrounds with climbing frames and other such equipment. We'll keep you posted on the specifics of related operators via social media once we've signed all the contracts.

WILL LOCAL BUSINESSES STILL HAVE A PRESENCE IN THE RENOVATED COMPLEX?

Yes, and there'll even be more room for them. After all, local businesses are part of what makes the Poort the heart of the district. Our goal is to have a good mix of these and larger chains like the HEMA, JD Sports and H&M, which is essential to maintaining the uniquely diverse and vibrant vibe of the neighbourhood.

WHY HAVE SOME OF THE SHOPS LEFT?

Some of the tenancies were only ever meant to be temporary, either because the business in question just needed a temporary spot or because we were testing a new idea to see if it'd be a good match for the neighbourhood. In the latter case, it makes sense for a business to relocate if there's little demand in the area for what it has to offer.

WHY ARE THERE SO FEW MAJOR RETAILERS IN AMSTERDAMSE POORT?

The centre doesn't really have units large enough for major retailers like Zara or Primark. However, this may change in the future. In the meantime, we'll continue talking to these retailers to see how best to accommodate them. It's too early to say which ones we'll end up attracting, but we'll keep you posted via social media and a poster campaign as we know more.



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MEET ROGIER

THE PROPERTY DEVELOPER RESPONSIBLE FOR NICO'S BUTCHERS AND THE HEMA'S NEW SHOPFRONTS



INTRODUCE YOURSELF

"My name's Rogier van der Hulst, I'm 34 years old, live in Amsterdam, and I'm a project developer at 3W Real Estate, the company that helps Amsterdamse Poort (CBRE IM) conceive, design and realise new buildings in the area."

WHAT'S THE MOST EXCITING PART OF YOUR JOB?

"Managing design teams, which we do in collaboration with architects, consultants, the client and other stakeholders. The goal is to ensure that everyone's expertise and input, including that of residents, feeds into the design. The translation of idea into design and the execution of the latter is always exciting, because you want everyone to be happy with the result."

ARE THERE ANY EXAMPLES OF YOUR WORK THAT WE CAN SEE IN THE POORT?

"I supervised the renovation of the shopfronts along the block that includes the HEMA and Nico's Butchers."

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

"I'm currently designing shopfronts for the block that runs from Kruidvat to Subway, and for the one with Zeeman."

WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURAL MODEL BESIDE YOU?

"It provides a bird's-eye view of the entire development, and gives you a pretty good sense of its scale. It also lets you see what the place will look like when it's done."

WHY IS THE MODEL HERE?

"It's quite common nowadays for developers and other stakeholders to rely on digital models, but nothing beats a physical three-dimensional model for getting a proper sense of the scale of a project. It's incredibly useful and fun to be able to explain what we're doing around here with the help of this model. It really captures people's imagination, and the response thus far has been universally positive."

WHY WERE YOU INTERESTED IN THIS PROJECT?"

"I've always been fascinated by the built environment, especially its human or social aspect, and wanted to contribute in some way to making Amsterdam Southeast a more attractive and pleasant place."

WHAT'S THE IDEAL OUTCOME FOR THE POORT?

"My ultimate wish is that residents of Amsterdam Southeast rediscover their love for the Poort and embrace it as the heart of the neighbourhood. That it develops a reputation as a destination with great places to eat and drink, lots to do and see, and is a hotbed of local entrepreneurial initiatives."

WANT TO SEE THE MODEL?

IT'S DISPLAYED IN THE WINDOW OF AMSTERDAMSE POORT SUITE (BIJLMERPLEIN 97), NEXT TO THE STAIRCASE LEADING TO LIDL'S CAR PARK.

WHO WORKS AT...

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL'S SANDCASTLE CAMPUS?



INTRODUCE YOURSELF

"My name is Ivanielo Sabajo and I'm a janitor at AICS's Sandcastle campus. I am of Surinamese descent and grew up in Amsterdam North, but I know the Poort neighbourhood quite well. I've got relatives in the area that I've been coming to see since the 1980s, so I've always felt right at home in Amsterdam Southeast, and I'm happy that I now work here too."

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AT AICS?

"Een paar maanden pas, sinds het voorjaar. Eerst op de tijdelijke locatie in de Darlingstraat en nu hier in het Zandkasteel. Ik heb bij de AICS gesolliciteerd omdat het multiculturele karakter van de school mij aanspreekt en ik vind het leuk om met mensen om te gaan. Niet alleen de kinderen die hier op school zitten komen overall vandaan, ook veel van mijn collega's hebben een internationale achtergrond."

WHAT'S IT LIKE WORKING AT THE POORT?

"It's delightful to work in such a lively place, surrounded by shops, and a treat to work in a place with so many good restaurants,

cafes and takeaways, which is probably why I spend my breaks outdoors. It's also pretty amazing to work in a building as stunning as the Sandcastle; my kids were so impressed when they saw it. I feel right at home here."

ANY WISHES REGARDING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD?

"I'd like to know even more about the Poort, the neighbourhood and the organisations that are based here. Which is why I teamed up with our vice principal to organise a social engagement initiative with local liaison platforms Venzo and Swazoom, with whom the school is thrilled to be working."

WE'D LIKE YOU TO MEET

Eva van der Graaf, head of our secondary school & **Martine de Boer**, head of our primary school.

Martine: "I was born in the Netherlands and knew from an early age that I wanted to work in education. Over the course of my career, I've taught in Canada, England and the Netherlands. As Head of Campus, I'm responsible for the operation of the primary school and am in close contact with teachers, parents and students. Together we ensure that students receive the education they deserve and require!"

Eva: "I'm 35 years old, of Dutch origin, and have been at AICS for 10 years. I joined the school straight from university, initially as a French teacher. My working day as Head of Campus looks quite different to what it did back then. I start the day by greeting students as they file into the building, and

I patrol the school as often as I can afterwards to see how things are going. I also have various meetings throughout the day to ensure that everything's running smoothly. Each day is different and it's never boring!"

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AICS?

Martine: "AICS (Amsterdam International Community School) is an international school with over 2,000 students spread across two campuses, one in Buitenveldert and the other in the Sandcastle. The school opened its second campus in 2018 to provide English language instruction to the growing international population of students in the city. We initially operated from a temporary building on Darlingstraat, located further away in the D-Buurt neighbourhood, so we're thrilled to finally have a permanent home in the Poort."

WHAT KIND OF TUITION DO YOU OFFER AND WHO IS THE SCHOOL FOR?

Eva: "We provide an international education, with classes taught in English. Our curriculum is based on the International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, and tailored specifically for children whose families are only in the Netherlands temporarily, thereby making it easy for kids to transition seamlessly to a school elsewhere in the world if necessary."

WHY LOCATE A SCHOOL IN A SHOPPING AREA?

Martine: "The AICS needed a new campus in the neighbourhood because more and more families from abroad were moving into the area. The municipality is responsible for school accommodation and assigned us this building, which was a sound decision as it's great to be in a building that feels like a microcosm of the neighbourhood. We love

being part of the multicultural fabric of the Poort."

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL OPERATE AS PART OF THE COMMUNITY? CAN LOCALS VISIT THE SCHOOL, FOR INSTANCE?

Eva: "Yes, they can, but only on specific days, for obvious reasons, so it was really nice to see so many people on Neighbours Day. But you can also sign up to help out at the school. For instance, we're always looking for volunteers to help keep an eye on the kids during lunch breaks, so if this sounds like something you might be interested in, do pop in to let us know, or simply leave your details at the reception desk."



EIGHT QUESTIONS FOR ... HANS MEIBOOM

WHO HAS JUST OPENED BIJLMERBIOS CINEMA
IN THE SANDCASTLE

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

"My name is Hans Meiboom. I've lived and worked in the area since 1989, and have been running Bijlmerbios since 2015. I'm also an independent creative strategist who helps businesses resolve local or transition-related issues."

WHY HAVE YOU OPENED BIJLMERBIOS CINEMA?

"I took over Bijlmerbios as an open-air cinema from its founders in 2015. At the time, I'd been running a pop-up film festival called Metro Movies for two years, with screenings taking place beneath Bullewijk station. Things were going quite well, so I figured it'd be fun to take on a second film-related venture.

Both are vehicles for sharing stories and offering a shared experience in a public space, and have proved equally popular. Bijlmerbios cinema was the logical next step, in that it fills a gap in the district. It'll



help broaden the range of cultural activities on offer and make the area even more appealing than it already is."

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE BIJLMERBIOS CINEMA?

"Bijlmerbios is an indoor cinema dedicated to art house movies, documentaries and short films, with screenings occasionally followed by Q&As or other related activities. We screen local and international films that are connected in some shape or form to the identity of the neighbourhood, and operate in collaboration with IDFA (the documentary festival), CBK Zuidoost and Amsterdam Dance Event."

ARE SCREENINGS FREE OR PAID?

"They're paid, but we run promotions and offer discounts to card holders. We'll provide more information on this soon."

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BIJLMERBIOS CINEMA FROM PATHÉ ARENA?

"Our programmes are very different. Pathé mostly screens mainstream American films, whereas our focus is more on independent films that are connected to the neighbourhood, be that in the form of African films or Caribbean films, for instance. And we're much more affordable."

WHAT'S YOUR SCREENING SCHEDULE?

"Four nights a week, from Wednesday to Saturday."

WILL BIJLMERBIOS' FREE OPEN-AIR SCREENINGS CONTINUE?

"Of course!"

ARE YOU OPEN TO WORKING WITH OTHER PARTIES BESIDES IDFA, CBK ZUIDOOST AND AMSTERDAM DANCE EVENT?

"Absolutely! Anyone with an idea for a collaborative venture can contact me any time."

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GO FOR MORE INFORMATION OR A SCHEDULE?

"You'll find everything at www.bijlmerbios.com, where you can also sign up for our newsletter. We also post updates on Instagram and Facebook."

FIVE DAYS A WEEK

ABDUL WORKS TO PRESERVE THE POORT CLEAN

Abdul (40) lives with his family in Amsterdam East and works five days a week with his colleagues Isaac and Alwin to keep the Poort clean. "I love my job," he says, when we catch up with him during his lunch break.

His face lights up when he talks about his work. We're chatting just outside the janitor's office, opposite H&M, in the company of Alwin and Isaac, the other members of Amsterdamse Poort's janitorial team. They joke amongst themselves and the vibe is relaxed and friendly. They describe their daily journey through the centre, and the machines they use for the more difficult jobs. I ask what local residents and visitors can do to make their lives easier. "It would really help if people used the bins instead of dropping rubbish on the ground," says Abdul.

He's thrilled the Poort offers such a wide variety of food. "You can find whatever you're in the mood for here," he says with a smile. "I was in the mood for something with fish today, and that's what I've got." He loves the shopping centre so much that he even drops by when he's free. "I'm often here at the weekend, sometimes with my family. It's fun to wander around, do a bit of shopping, pop into places like H&M."



Kicks

&
Patta

INTERNATIONAL TALKS

By NIKE and GOWTU

FASHION POP-UP WITH

Bright Cleaning, Camino,
Demeanor, DFNS,
Fat Crayon Creative,
Hafsiya Moussa,
Never Everland,
Sanslimite Worldwide,
Secluded, Two4One

**Friday 20 &
Saturday 21 October**

Amsterdamse Poort,
Bijlmerplein 135

AN EVENT BY
**AMSTER
DAMSE
POORT**

IN COLLABORATION WITH

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THE MAN BEHIND THE FAMILIAR FACE: **WHO IS THOMAS PETTERSSON AND WHAT DOES HE DO?**



You've probably seen him around: sneakers on, bag hanging from a shoulder, phone held to one ear, keys or tools in the other hand. Thomas is a familiar face in Amsterdamse Poort, where he's to be found five days a week talking to one business owner or another as he makes his rounds.

"To stand still is to go backwards," says Thomas with a laugh. He walks an average of 10 kilometres a day in his role as the Poort's facilities supervisor. "Some days I walk 'only' six kilometres, other days 15, which averages out at 10 a day." Thomas works for CBRE Property Management, the company that manages the Poort, and oversees the centre's day-to-day operation. "I'm the caretaker."

He's done this for the past 3 years, and says no two days are ever the same. "Much of my work involves helping local businesses solve various problems." These, he says, include things like fixing leaks, restoring power and sorting out keys. He knows Amsterdamse Poort like the back of his hand, including all the nooks and crannies, and has keys to all the locks. "I do all sorts of things, so my days are quite varied. One minute I'm getting a call from a small business owner to change a lightbulb get a lift fixed, the next a colleague needs me to open some empty shopping units or help repair a shopfront." The variety of demands is precisely what Thomas loves about his job. "It's a pain in the neck for small business owners to have their shop spring a leak or suffer some other technical failure. So it's important we keep on top of things and sort out such problems as quickly as possible."

Thomas is excited about all the recent and ongoing changes. "The block with the HEMA and Nico's Butchers looks quite smart now, and I'm really looking forward to the unveiling of the new Shopperhal. On a personal note, I plan to be involved in the greening of the neighbourhood, help make it a more pleasant and beautiful place for local residents and visitors alike."

**WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CENTRE'S RENOVATION?
VISIT: WWW.BOUWENAANDEPOORT.NL**



GRAZIËLLA HUNSEL RIVERO, POPULARLY KNOWN AS THE FIRST LADY OF JAZZ FROM AMSTERDAM SOUTHEAST, IS OPENING A JAZZ VENUE IN THE SANDCASTLE.

"I am a proud product of a Bijlmer high-rise and an even prouder resident of Amsterdam Southeast," announces Graziëlla Hunsel Rivero by way of introduction, and "I'm known around here as the First Lady of Jazz," a title given to her by jazz pianist and big band leader Konrad Koselleck.

"I changed course five years ago, after teaching for 19 years." She's referring to ZOGrace Creative Agency, which is dedicated to promoting aspiring musicians from Amsterdam Southeast. She speaks excitedly about some of the ensuing achievements: "We've promoted people at the Ziggo Dome as part of a larger campaign, matched professionals from the cultural sector with organisations such as the Concertgebouw Orchestra, and worked with FOAM. I've also been involved in local development on a more

structural level, for instance by participating in the transformation of Hondsrug Park and working with an enthusiastic team of people to ensure that 38% of new residents in the KARSP building are from the neighbourhood." The diversity of her portfolio is unquestionably impressive, but she is perhaps best known as a jazz artist and the woman behind ZOJazz Lounge and ZOJazz Stage, the music event and jazz venue-cum-rehearsal studio, whose latter function will soon have a permanent home in Amsterdam Southeast.

ZOJazz Stage was not the first jazz venue in Amsterdam Southeast. "Anita Porcelijn laid the groundwork, with concerts featuring renowned artists. She was Amsterdam Southeast's Lady of Jazz - or more precisely, the H-Buurt neighbourhood's Lady of Jazz." Unfortunately, Mrs. Porcelijn passed away in 2013, and the concert series came to an end. "The lack of a dedicated local venue for jazz prompted me to launch a crowdfunding campaign." The plan was merely to raise €11,000 to stage events, "...but when donations hit €20,115, I began thinking of something more sustainable, and sketched out plans for ZOJazz Stage." She pitched her idea to Wonam, the property developer, which had recently taken ownership of the Sandcastle. "The timing was fortuitous," she says, "as they were in the market for a venue that embodied the DNA of the neighbourhood."

ZOJazz Stage is two ideas in one: a jazz club and a rehearsal studio. The club will be a lot like New York's famous Cotton Club, she says, an intimate venue with table service, one in

which the audience is but a few feet away from the performers, and "where anyone who's anyone simply has to perform. The vibe in the Cotton Club was crazy fun, with people eating, drinking, laughing and crying at the same time, and performances depending as much on the audience as the performers." A few details remain to be ironed out regarding the club and a food permit, but the rehearsal studio is a sure thing. "It's designed to be a full-service studio that can accommodate everything from soloists to bands and choirs, and services will include everything from artist publicity to masterclasses. It's scheduled to open at the end of January" "...but we certainly won't be twiddling our thumbs in the meantime." Between now and next September, Graziëlla plans to host 16 pop-up concerts in the Sandcastle and provide fortnightly guided tours of the rehearsal studio, for which anyone can sign up.



Want to know more about any of the above? Follow ZOJazz Stage on Instagram, Facebook or TikTok.





amsterdam
dance event

AMSTERDAM DANCE EVENT IN AMSTERDAM SOUTHEAST

Amsterdam Dance Event is an electronic music festival that descends on the city each year, and will this year include events at various locations around Amsterdam Southeast. The festival is set to run from 18 to 22 October, and will feature performances by local and international artists, panel discussions and networking events. Curious? Then check out the programme of events:



Scan the QR-code
for the current program.