

press release about artwork the Zandwacht by Observatorium

4 June 2015

Monumental artwork 'Zandwacht' on dunes of Maasvlakte 2

In May 2015 an iconic artwork rose up on the dunes of the beach of Maasvlakte 2: the Zandwacht. Covering an area of 20 by 40 metres and 12 metres high, this will be an impressive structure. Developed by Observatorium, the international artists' collective based in Rotterdam, Zandwacht shows how dunes are formed by sand being blown into the air by strong winds and then settling again when the wind drops. The Zandwacht marks the completion of the construction of Maasvlakte 2, a large land reclamation project in the North Sea in front of the port of Rotterdam.

The Zandwacht consists of 92 slender, concrete elements which represent how dunes are created: sand is blown into the air by strong winds and settles again when the wind drops, thus forming a small hill. The Zandwacht is made up of three contours of the same, ever-growing dune. Together, the 92 elements form a three-dimensional drawing. If you walk through it, you can clearly see the three stages. The artwork represents in a visual form how the forces of nature help determine the shape of the Netherlands.

From the Zandwacht, you look towards the new container terminals in one direction, but closer are the sea, the beach, the dunes, the Hinderplaat and the South Holland islands. The windows present a different perspective of the surrounding area all the time. You can wander through the Zandwacht and be surprised by the ever-changing view. It's as if you are walking in a dune. At the bottom of the Zandwacht there is a large bench and you can sit in the windows. The concrete is exactly the same colour as the sand of the Maasvlakte beach. A footpath provides easy access to the Zandwacht from the car park.

Geert van de Camp, one of the members of Observatorium: 'We took inspiration from how sand is blown upwards by the wind, the path it traces through the air and how it settles again. The Zandwacht shows a moment, frozen in time, of how the landscape forms. It is a drawing, cast in concrete, in the dune landscape, representing three stages of the formation of a dune. Because the Zandwacht consists of a many elements of varying sizes, it is a complex structure. Due to its sheer size, the Zandwacht invites you to wander through it and see the Zandwacht and the surrounding area in an ever-changing perspective. The Zandwacht is a place to enjoy the vast panorama. The artwork introduces a human dimension to an almost endless landscape of sand, sea and terminals.'

Allard Castelein, Chief Executive of the Port Authority: 'The Zandwacht marks the completion of the construction of Maasvlakte 2. The recreational beach is one of the most popular locations in the port. Thanks in part to a generous contribution from Boskalis and Van Oord, Rotterdam now has a unique work of art at this unique location.'

Sjarel Ex, director of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen: 'This is a wonderful asset for the new public space of the Maasvlakte. It is a place where Rotterdam residents and visitors alike will come for some fresh air and will be able to enjoy the space, sun and wind even more.'

The Zandwacht was funded by Boskalis, Van Oord and the Port of Rotterdam Authority. Van Oord and Boskalis built Maasvlakte 2 in the period 2008-2014, commissioned by the Port Authority. The Zandwacht is, as it were, the crowning glory.

The Zandwacht was made from special high-strength concrete. The contractor/supplier is the specialist company Betonindustrie De Veluwe from Staphorst. Ingenieursbureau ABT provided constructional advice and managed the project.

Observatorium is a Rotterdam-based artists' collective which has completed works both at home and abroad during the past decade. Projects include large artworks in Essen (Germany), Nantes (France) and London (England). Observatorium is made up of Geert van de Camp, André Dekker, Lieven Poutsma and Ruud Reutelingsperger. It strives to create sculptures which emphasise the nature of the location and which are also pleasant places to spend time.



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