

MAASVLAKTE 2, PORT OF ROTTERDAM

A lot has changed in the environment since man has the ability to change the landscape in his own image. Where once there was land that was dominated by plant and wildlife, man has moved himself front and centre to a place that the environment has second stage. There are no better placed where this is more visible than at the Maasvlakte.

We moved land and water to keep ourselves dry, but in the process driven the wildlife to the edges of our existence. Animals and plants inhabit the fringes where human presence is at a minimum, always finding a new equilibrium in its ever changes state of evolution.

LAST FRONTIER

The last time the area around the Maasvlakte could be considered somewhat wild was near De Beer. De Beer was a loved place for lovers of the wild and the ability to seek connection with environment that was alien to that of the big city.

A place for recreation, a place for exploration, a place for hunting, a place where the environment could play out without involvement from man. Except to collect an entrance fee.

CURRENT TIME

If you compare the history to the present, the hand of man is visible in all places. The dunes are protected and helped form by manmade structures. Wind is used to generate energy. The waters are used for leisure. Signs, posts, and fences are everywhere to remind us to stay away from the animals we once explored and. Even the very sand we walk on is so unnatural we have to keep spraying it back on land to make sure it doesn't disappear.

Is this the height a human maintenance?

What is the value of plants and animals in a totally man-made landscape?

CROSSING BORDERS

So how can we design this intermediate where we interact, respect, and live with this natural environment?

We are looking for a middle ground where an equilibrium between humans and animals is possible, just so we can get used to each other without crossing boundaries. More in the way of domestication with the preservation of the wild character of animals.

INTERACTION MAN EN ANIMALS

We as a people have always seen the value of the contract between man and animals. There are plenty examples of animals coming in contact with man. Sometimes it is spontaneous, where the animals have no natural fear of humans. In some cases, the animals, through capture, have been in close contact with man and have learned to tolerate them. Other cases we have domesticated animals for hunting and even as life mates.

I believe that it's this interaction that if it can help us perceive and respect a nature we had forgotten to recognize as natural.

LIMITS TO INTERACTION

BIG suggests a series of images where in a usual zoo situation the animals would be fenced, the other situation is where the person is caged and the last, most extreme situation there would be no cage or fence at all. His concept is a way of freeing ourselves from the restriction of hard borders and boundaries.

ROUTING THE GRID AND ELEMENTS

After defining the elements to traverse the boundaries collected in the Atlas, we develop a language for the further definition of these boundaries. How do we organize these elements which need to be specific but also be able to supersede the plan already present at the Maasvlakte?

By the introduction of the grid as an arranging element between the space, we can create a unified pattern whilst working with separate elements.

After the introduction of the grid, we find a flexibility in the elements we can introduce.

Elements like short barriers to step across, crawl under and look through. The route can be traversed to walking, walking, jumping and climbing, elements design for human interaction, making you aware of your route. Between the man forced elements you'll find elements for birds like perches, drinking fountains and nesting places. These plateau's for animals have counter elements for humans which are lifted up and more at the human scale.

IMAGINE

Imagine walking along the steppingstones, close by it is a chatter of bird sounds mixed with a summer breeze. Somewhere in the distance you hear birds scattering. You look back, but only see an out of place pigeon between the nesting wading birds. Out of your field of view, someone walks out of the warm summer water. In a distance she sees the plateau from which she came. While she swims, someone lurks from behind the wall, summoned by the noise of startled birds. He looks on as the girl swims, and the bird settle once again He returns to the bird sanctuary, where he keeps watch over the surrounding area.

His little Bird Garden Breathing heavily after climbing up the ladder to the platform, she looks up to birds flying by unconcerned in the afternoon sun. She dives in with a big splash! Whilst the bird startle, she bobs softly up and down, taken by the current, further out to sea.

