

WETHECITY: FROM BOILING EVENTS TO THE WORLD'S BIGGEST OPEN-AIR CAFE

WeTheCity improves the human element of public space by making the city a shared canvas. We believe that the people who use the city are the people that colour the city. We create inviting spaces that can be turned into valuable places by the users. Not just at certain points in time, but continuously. Below is a selection of WeTheCity's placemaking projects. If you're still hungry for more info after reading this, check out www.wethecity.nl.

BENCHESCOLLECTIVE

The gap between rich and poor, immigrants and locals, and low-skilled and highly educated people seems to be growing every year. Therefore, one of the most urgent challenges of our time is to combat structural inequality and promote mutual understanding. We believe that public space can play a vital role in this endeavour. This is what sparked the idea for the BenchesCollective.

The BenchesCollective is a platform that organises the biggest open-air café in the world. We encourage people to create a meeting place by adding a (permanent) bench on the sidewalk, preferably in front of their house. People can register their little café for a day on our website. Anyone can become part of the biggest open-air café or a local edition. As a host you can serve food and drinks, give salsa courses, play board games, set up a mini cinema, or organise music or anything else that makes you happy. Guests give a small donation or bring something



yummy themselves. This is how the BenchesCollective encourages people to invite and get to know their neighbours. Collectively, all of these new meeting places (spread across 17 countries) form a giant open-air café. As many as 2,500 people have already joined the BenchesCollective with over 1,350 benches in 17 countries bringing more than 20,000 people together. So transform your sidewalk and join the movement!

BOILING

As a city maker, there are a number of ways in which you can get funding for your (idealistic) initiatives. Municipalities and foundations are often your best bet. However, they require extensive project and budget plans, co-financers and take up a lot of your time. Boiling provides new possibilities for getting your project off the ground. It's fast, based on trust and relies on the power of the crowd.

Boiling is like an ammunition room for impatient city makers. Together, we determine the city's future, starting tomorrow. Anyone visiting a Boiling event donates €10 and gets a voting ballot and a simple dinner in return. During the first hour, four impatient city makers present their idea and tell the crowd what they need besides money. During the second hour, everybody enjoys their dinner and fills in their voting ballot, which consists of a voting point, a tipping point and a boiling point. You can vote, share tips, contacts, space and material, and even roll up your sleeves to help. The city maker with the most votes takes home all of the entrance fees, the amount of which

is matched by an external party. All four city makers get a powerful piece of crowdsourced ammunition for their project. The only thing the winner needs to do in return is give a presentation at the next Boiling event. Boiling is currently active in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and we are very much looking forward to taking the concept abroad.

PARK LIBRARY

Stress and obesity are both becoming increasingly prevalent problems in many cities around the world. The Parkotheek ('Park Library') promotes the better use of parks and celebrates a healthier lifestyle. Accordingly, we've created a demand-driven library for cool things you can use in parks, aiming to spark the imagination of their users and encourage them to explore all the different facets of parks.

Anyone can buy a membership card for the Park Library. Memberships is free for low-income families (who are especially afflicted by obesity). As a member, you get the opportunity to borrow cool things that you can share with fellow members. The Park Library community decides what will be added to the collection. It can be anything from trampolines and giant chessboards to guitars and soccer goals.

We offer businesses based near the park the opportunity to become sponsors. In return, all employees get a membership and the company can add three branded items to the library to create even more possibilities for enjoying the park.

The Park Library is a transformed cargo bike with a colourful storage container. In the future, it will have a building with a playful design based on a hay barn, the whole roof of which can go up when open. The Park Library is currently active in Noorderpark in Amsterdam. Since the collection is based on the ideas and the needs of the users, the concept is suitable for urban parks around the world.

ROEF

Currently, only 2% of the rooftop landscape in Amsterdam is being used. We want the remaining 98% to become green, sustainable and open to the public. This is why ROEF came about. It's a festival and symposium on the rooftops of 17 giant buildings in Amsterdam. All these buildings are spread around the Knowledge Mile, a field lab and BIZ (a company investment zone) that runs from Amstel Station to Waterlooplein. Besides impressive views, the festival consists of anything from binocular theatre shows to bird-based brass bands. Hosting a festival is not a goal but a means to show the potential of the vastly underused rooftop landscape.

The festival is based on rooftops that showcase a glass house, a farm, a swimming pool, solar panels, a smart roof, an edible vegetable garden, hot tubs and a sauna. By showing the festival's





diversity, we want people to be amazed by the potential opportunities offered by rooftops. That's the first step, which we call 'show'. The second step is to 'grow' the number of green, sustainable and public roofs. The symposium aims to bring together investors and rooftop pioneers in an inspiring way. The third step is to 'connect' rooftops with other rooftops and the ground level. The result will be an accessible skypark, generating much-needed tranquillity in the midst of hectic city life while making the city more green and sustainable.

ROEF is enjoying its third edition in Amsterdam, and Antwerp is excited to join. ROEF can be a perfect catalyst for the movement to make more use of the rooftop landscape in cities everywhere. Do you see a rooftop festival happening in your city?