

**Eline de Groot**

**Evelien Cok**

**Fenna Rook**

**Fleur Daalderop**

**Han Jiang**

**Honey Ibanez**

**Jesper Groothoff**

**Jonne Van Bunningen**

**Linda Peled**

**Marit Boekholt**

**Melissa Meertens**

**Puck van Bokhoven**

**Samuel Gradel**

**Sihui shen**

**Yingxuan Chen**

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Tutors: *Saskia de Wit, Monica Veras Morais, Diwen Tan*

Contributors: *Eline de Groot, Evelien Cok, Fenna Rook*

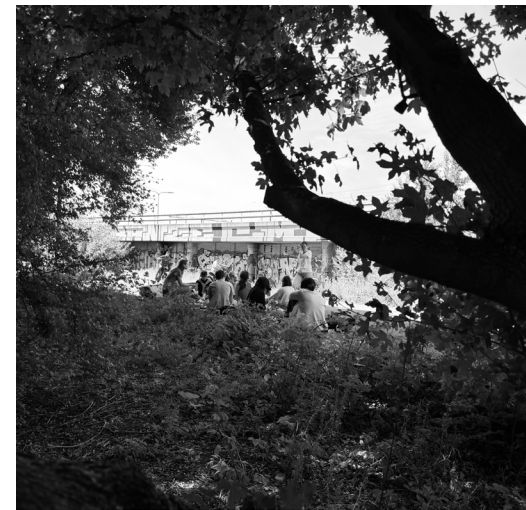
*Fleur Daalderop, Han Jiang, Honey Ibanez*

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## Introduction

This booklet is the result of an collaborative exploration into the hidden potential of the city's in between spaces, carried out by fifteen students. At first glance, these places appear to be left over areas without clear function. Yet it is precisely in these 'interstitial' spaces that hidden value can be found. For plants and animals, but also for people who may lack space elsewhere in the city.

Through alternative methods of analysis and repeated field visits, the qualities of such places gradually became more recognizable and understandable. Rather than applying large-scale design solutions, the approach focused

on subtle, careful interventions. Gestures that invite passersby to perceive their surroundings through a different lens. By building directly on site, the process explored how spatial design might serve not to impose, but to reveal. What does it mean to reveal what is already there? And in what ways can design bring a place's hidden qualities to the surface?

The site is located in the west and northwest of Rotterdam. Within this area, there was the freedom to choose a location for developing a concept design. The selected site lies on a former (railway) dike, directly bordering the Spangen district in Rotterdam West, near the right bank of the River Maas.

*On site, Landscape architectonic explorations*

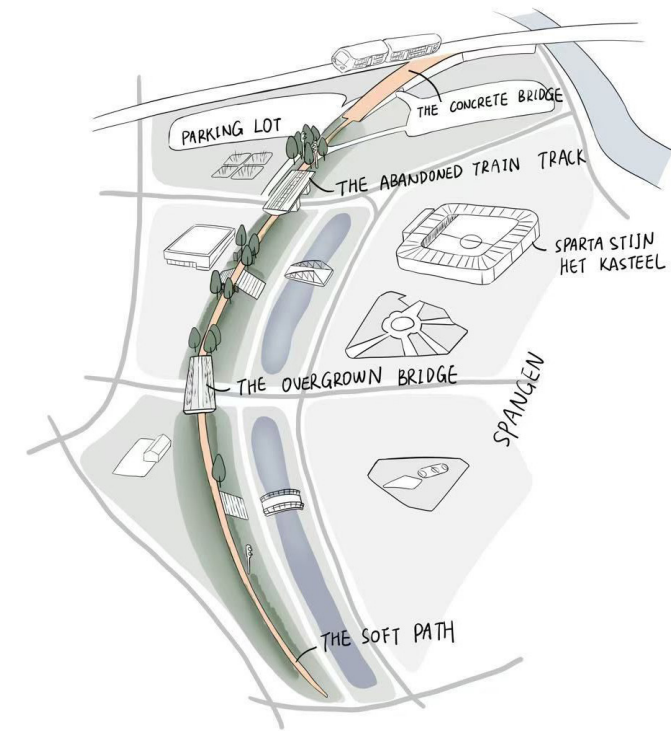


# An echo of experiences.

## 01.

Now follows a storyline told from the first-person perspective. The “I” in this text does not belong to a single individual. It is shaped from shared observations, thoughts and experiences gathered through analyzing and building on site.

This narrative unfolds as a walk along the dike, tracing the path of the exhibition. Along the route, “I” reflect on transitions, materials, traces and the interventions encountered. Uncovering the often hidden qualities of the site.



## The exhibition.

### Intervention

The intervention introduces a subtle, minimal gesture that reveals and reactivates the hidden qualities of the existing landscape. Rather than imposing something new, it draws attention to overlooked elements, reshaping how the landscape is perceived, used, and remembered.

### Transitions

Transitions analyze how spaces connect and flow into one another, whether abruptly, gradually, or through intermediate zones. It considers views, paths, enclosures, and openings, revealing how spatial relationships guide movement, perception, and experience across a site or structure.

### Traces

Traces focus on visible or subtle signs of human and non-human activity over time. These may include worn paths, natural patterns, or built remnants, revealing the layered history of use, interaction, and memory embedded in a place.

### Materials

Materiality explores the sensory and tactile qualities of materials. It examines how these elements feel, look, and interact with the body and environment, shaping the atmosphere of a space and influencing how we experience and engage with it.

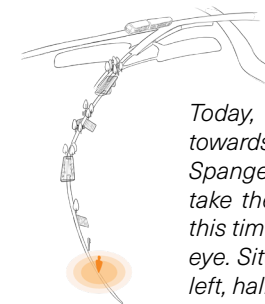
## *“Escape Route”*

*The city hums with restless pace,  
Steel and glass, a crowded race.  
But past the noise, a narrow lane—  
Half-hidden in the evening rain.  
A door, a break, a sudden hush,  
Where towers yield to leaves and brush.  
Each footstep softens, breath runs deep,  
As concrete fades to forest sleep.  
Beyond the blur, a wild unknown—  
A place the city's never shown.*

## *“Vluchtroute”*

*De stad zoemt met rusteloze tred,  
Staal en glas, een drukke wedloop.  
Maar voorbij het lawaai, een smal pad—  
Half verborgen in de avondregen.  
Een deur, een breuk, een plotselinge stilte,  
Waar torens wijken voor bladeren en struiken.  
Elke voetstap verzacht, de adem wordt diep,  
Terwijl beton vervaagt tot bosachtige slaap.  
Voorbij de waas ligt het wilde onbekende—  
Een plek die de stad nooit heeft getoond.*

## Discovering the soft path.



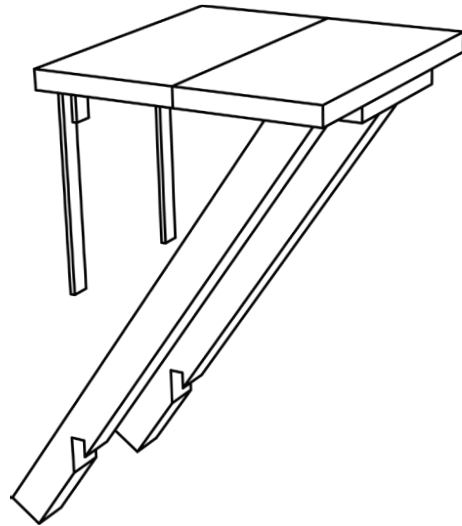
*Today, I walked from Marconiplein towards the park alongside the Spangen neighbourhood. Normally, I take the stairs down into the park. But this time, something orange catches my eye. Situated on the elevated dike to my left, half hidden in the greenery. Curious as I am, I step off the paved path onto the soft path. As I approach, the orange shape reveals itself as wooden beams alongside the path. When I walk through them, the noise of the road fades and the vegetation begins to surround me. I've entered a different atmosphere, quieter and wilder.*

Transition



## The signpost

*Walking in between the beams, I see a glimpse of orange in the distance again. When continuing, I notice that these beams do not guide me as the beams before, but are actually perpendicular to my path. I need to carefully step over them. They make me slow down. As I am looking around, a railway signal suddenly emerges from the vegetation. What stands out immediately is the orange chair hanging on its ladder. I walk closer. The chair fits the ladder perfectly, as if it has always been here. I sit down and look around. Standing up again, I inspect how the chair is attached. To my surprise, it is not fixed. I unhook it and rehang it a few rungs lower. Then, I climb up and stand on it. From this new height, the surroundings appear completely different. It looks like the landscape reveals itself in a new way.*



On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



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On site, Landscape architectonic explorations

## An archive of traces

Next to the chair hangs an orange fold-out panel. Attached to it is a strip of cards that you can unfold. Each card shows an image with a short text. They are traces: remnants of the past still visible in the landscape. Some refer to the site itself, like the railway signal. Others hint at former visitors, like a Polish beer bottle. Each object reveals a small fragment of a bigger story. I realize these scattered details tell me something about time, use, and memory.



Contemporary

**People must be walking here regularly as there is a clear path.**

I N F O  
This walking path is part of 'De Groene Connectie'. A walking route, attracting citywalker. The roundwalk goes from Delfshaven to Spangen and back again following the Heemraadssingel.



Contemporary

**People must have burned the bushes here. Maybe because the bramble bushes became too dense?**

I N F O  
Burning brambles can be a method of removing them, especially when they are woody or difficult to compost. It can also be used to manage the understory in certain situations, like promoting an herbaceous ground cover rather than brambles. Additionally, burning brambles can be a way to dispose of them if they are too tough to chip or compost.



Historical

**This looks like an old light post for the train. There was probably a train track here?**

I N F O  
Railroad signals can have multiple light heads or lenses, displaying different combinations of colors to convey more complex information, such as speed limits, route directions, and block occupancy. Searchlight signal indications: Green indicates clear. Red indicates stop and stay. Yellow indicates approach. Lunar white indicates restricted speed.



Historical

**This used to be an electricity cupboard. Was it used by the railway? Or might it be the remains of something else?**

I N F O  
These cabinets protect electronic systems for track and signaling applications, radio-based train control systems, and the measurement and evaluation electronics of safety systems on high-speed railway lines, such as axle counters or temperature detection on the train wheels.



Contemporary

**This beer isn't dutch. It might be from poland?**

I N F O  
Zubr is a Polish bottom-fermented beer brand. The beer has been brewed in the Dojlidy Brewery in Białystok since 1768. It has an alcohol content of no less than 6%. The ingredients water, barley gold, sugar and hops give it a perfect flavour.





Contemporary

**Somebody must have been drinking Brouwers here. Maybe football supporters?**

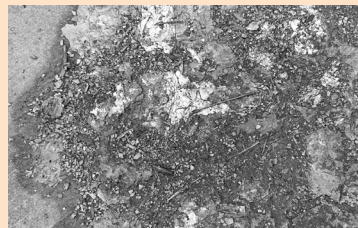
*I N F O*  
Brouwers Pilsener is a Dutch beer that has been marketed by Albert Heijn since 2016. The beer is brewed by the Grolsche Beer Brewery. The premium is a bottom-fermented, golden-yellow beer with an alcohol content of 4.8%. Also available are: Premium 0.0% en Radler 0.0%.



Contemporary

**Somebody must have been smoking here. Maybe while walking with the dog, or teenagers from the highschool nearby?**

*I N F O*  
A cigarette is a narrow cylinder containing a combustible material, typically tobacco, that is rolled into thin paper for smoking. The cigarette is ignited at one end, causing it to smolder; the resulting smoke is orally inhaled via the opposite end. Cigarette smoking is the most common method of tobacco consumption. leaf, different smoking method, and paper wrapping, which is typically white.



Contemporary

**It looks like a lot of cans have been burned here. Somebody must have burned their can collection?**

*I N F O*  
Aluminum cans themselves don't burn, the process can release harmful chemicals and potentially create metal fumes. They burn at a temperature of around 660 degrees celsius.



Contemporary

**Maybe somebody who recently arrived in the Netherlands requested a Digid? Maybe they didn't know what to do with the letter?**

*I N F O*  
DigiD stands for Digital Identity provides a secure platform for logging into various government websites, This system enables individuals to authenticate their identity and conduct transactions with government organisations.



Contemporary

**Somebody bought new socks at the Primarkt and disposed of their wrapping here?**

*I N F O*  
A package with 10 sports socks from primark is 10 euros. The socks are high and elastic, fitting multiple footsizes. Sport socks are primarily worn during exercising.



Contemporary

**People must have been stickering here to attract the attention of everybody using this path.**

*I N F O*  
The Sticker 'Claim je woonrecht', comes from the 'Bond Precaire Woonvormen' ([www.bondprecairewoonvormen.nl](http://www.bondprecairewoonvormen.nl)). This association fights for housing security on a national scale. The association helps inhabitants to create solidarity networks.

## Seed paper

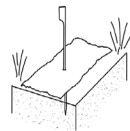
*Next to these cards, two small paper bags are attached to the panel. One contains wooden sticks and the other one holds small pieces of paper. It looks like there are seeds inside. On the paper bag, I read that it's seed paper, made from recycled paper and seeds collected from the surrounding allotment gardens. I take one stick and a piece of seed paper. A bit further along, in a spot that could use some extra plants, I press the paper into the soil. A small gesture, but it makes me more aware of my surroundings. I leave behind a trace, something that will become part of this dike.*



1. Take a piece of seed paper



2. Find a place where YOU want more flowers.



3. Stick the skewer through your piece of paper into the ground.





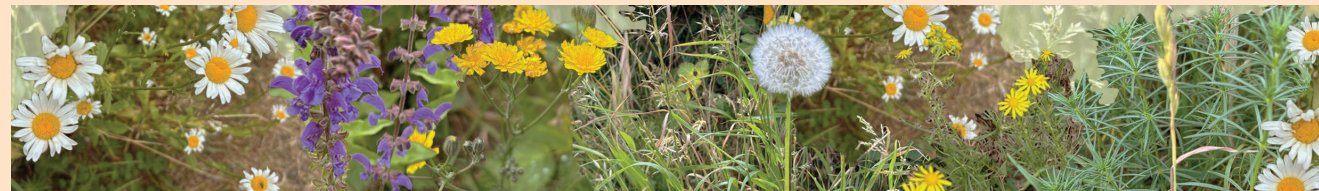
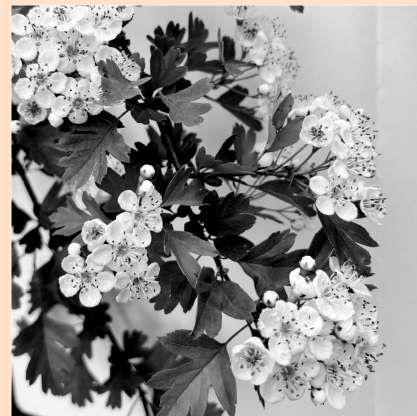
## Vegetation

Pioneer grassland communities

*A bit further on, I notice a poster with images of plants typical of pioneer grassland communities. I stop because I recognize some of these plants from earlier along the path. The poster explains how pioneer grasses stabilize disturbed soil, allowing other plants to grow. Nettles enrich the soil as they die back in autumn, while daisy seeds spread by wind and can survive for years. Reading this, I begin to understand how these species contribute to restoring biodiversity in this once barren place.*



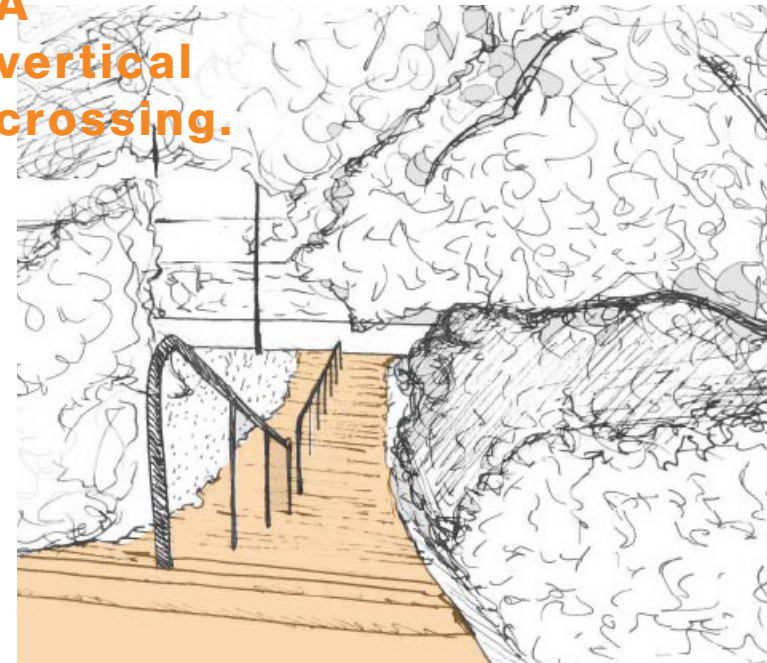
## V E G E T A T I O N S



*“Stone Steps”*  
*Smooth stone descends in silent grace,*  
*Each step a mark, a measured pace.*  
*Flanked by walls in ivy’s hold,*  
*The stairway curves through green and gold.*  
*But moss begins to veil the line,*  
*And roots break through each old design.*  
*The edges crack, the order fades—*  
*A forest breathes in deeper shades.*  
*The final step gives way to trees—*  
*Where structure bows to wilderness and breeze.*

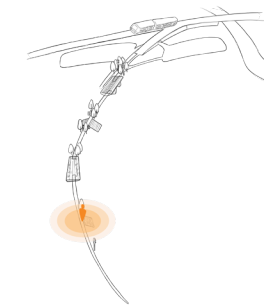
*“Stenen Treden”*  
*Gladde steen daalt in stille pracht,*  
*Elke trede een ritme, zacht.*  
*Geflankeerd door muren, met klimop bekleed,*  
*Kronkelt de trap door groen en geel geweven leed.*  
*Maar mos begint de lijn te sluieren,*  
*En wortels doen het oud patroon scheuren.*  
*De randen splijten, orde vervaagt—*  
*Een woud ademt in diepere laag.*  
*De laatste trede buigt naar bomen toe—*  
*Waar structuur wijkt voor wildernis en rust in de lucht.*

## A vertical crossing.



*After a while, I pass a staircase that leads down from the overgrown dike into the maintained park below. It is a clear contrast between the wild and the styled. It’s comforting to know that I can always return to the familiar park beneath the dike.*

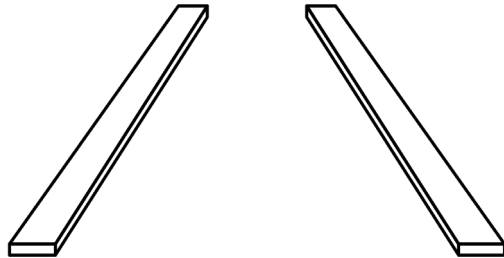
Transition





## The rails

*A bit further, I see more orange beams. Unintentionally, the colour keeps catching my attention. This time, the beams are laid parallel along the path instead of horizontal. The perpendicular beams made me pause, but these parallel beams create a sense of movement and continuation. I come across more and more of these beams and wonder what they symbolize.*



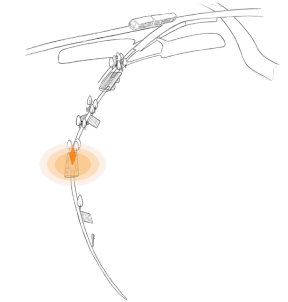
*“Where Green Gives Way”  
 The meadow hums with summer’s breath,  
 Tall grasses dance, untouched by death.  
 A path of clover, soft and bright,  
 Leads onward through the filtered light.  
 Then trees thin out, the ground turns bare—  
 And something rusted lingers there.  
 Old tracks emerge through weed and stone,  
 Half-claimed by roots, yet not quite gone.  
 A quiet line the world forgot,  
 Where time and nature tie the knot.*

*“Waar Groen Wijkt”  
 De weide zingt met zomeradem,  
 Hoge halmen dansen, ver van de dood.  
 Een pad van klaver, zacht en licht,  
 Leidt verder door gefilterd zonlicht.  
 Dan dunnen de bomen uit, de grond wordt kaal—  
 En iets verroests blijft daar staan.  
 Oude sporen komen tevoorschijn door onkruid en steen,  
 Half ingenomen door wortels, maar nog niet verdwenen.  
 Een stille lijn die de wereld vergat,  
 Waar tijd en natuur elkaar omarmen.*

## Wander over the overgrown bridge.

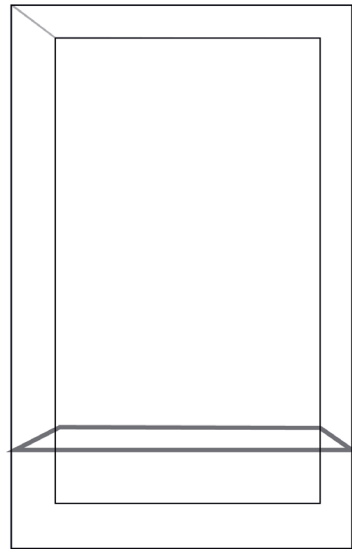


*After walking through the dense greenery for a while, the atmosphere changes. I step onto an overgrown bridge, leaving the sheltered vegetation behind and entering a more open space. Nature is clearly taking over here. Metal fences run along both sides. Through them, I can see the surroundings and the road below. I hear the cars rushing on the road below. Just moments ago, I was walking in silence, surrounded by leaves. Now I’m standing in the open, exposed to the city again.*



## The cablebox

*I cross the bridge and then I see orange beams again, perpendicular to my path. They make me slow down again just like near the railway light. When I look around, I notice a large metal box with an orange wooden shelf fitted inside. I step off the path to investigate. The shelf is wide enough to sit on, so I take a seat. Now I am surrounded by plants. It feels calm and secluded. On the shelf I spot small footprints. I think by myself, maybe kids have played here. They must have experienced this place very differently than I do now.*



On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



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On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



## An archive of traces

Again, I notice an orange fold-out panel hanging next to the cable box. It looks just like the one I saw earlier. This time, the images on the cards are different. My eyes fall on the cards showing the box itself and the soft path I am walking on. I start to wonder, could there be a connection between the railway light and the cable box?



Contemporary

**This is dog poop.  
Probably a domesticated dog that  
walked around with their owner.**

I N F O  
Fecal matter, is the solid waste produced by a dog's digestive system. It's a mix of undigested food, digestive juices, bacteria, and other waste products. Healthy dog poop is generally brown in color, well-formed, and firm enough to hold its shape, but it can vary in color and consistency depending on the dog's diet and overall health.



Historical

**This used to be an electricity  
cupboard. Was it used by the  
railway? Or might it be the remains  
of something else?**

I N F O  
These cabinets protect electronic systems for track and signaling applications, radio-based train control systems, and the measurement and evaluation electronics of safety systems on high-speed railway lines, such as axle counters or temperature detection on the train wheels.



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Contemporary

**People must be walking here  
regularly as there is a clear path.**

I N F O  
This walking path is part of 'De Groene Connectie'. A walking route, attracting citywalkers. The roundwalk goes from Delfshaven to Spangen and back again following the Heemraadssingel.



Contemporary

**This might have been stolen en  
later placed here?**

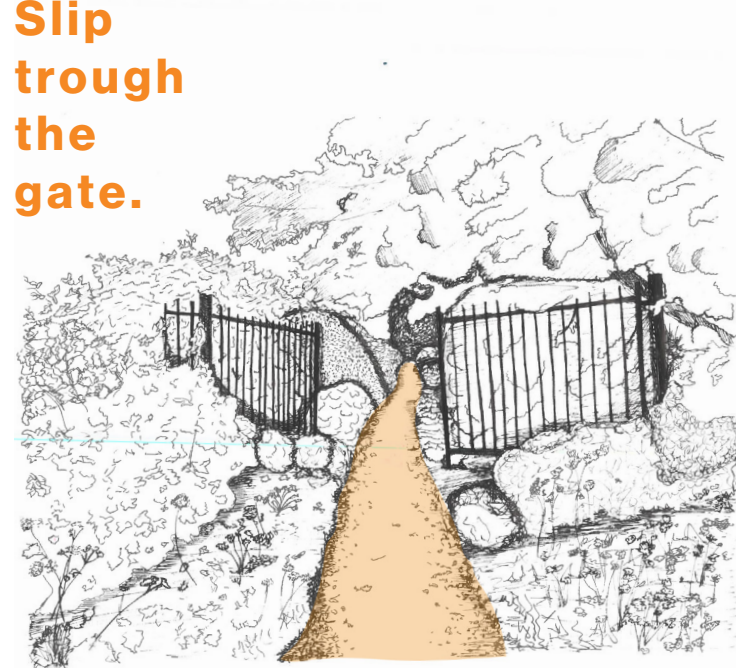
I N F O  
Rotterdam faces a significant problem with bike theft, with over 120 bikes stolen daily.\* Batavus is a renowned Dutch bicycle brand known for its high-quality, comfortable, and durable bikes. It has been a major player in the Dutch bicycle market since 1904. Batavus offers a wide range of bicycles, including electric bikes, transport bikes, touring bikes, and kids' bikes.\*\*



*“Escape Route”  
The city hums with restless pace,  
Steel and glass, a crowded race.  
But past the noise, a narrow lane—  
Half-hidden in the evening rain.  
A door, a break, a sudden hush,  
Where towers yield to leaves and brush.  
Each footstep softens, breath runs deep,  
As concrete fades to forest sleep.  
Beyond the blur, a wild unknown—  
A place the city’s never shown.*

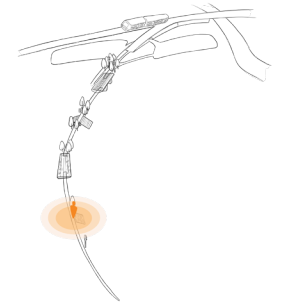
*“Vluchtroute”  
De stad zoemt met rusteloze tred,  
Staal en glas, een drukke wedloop.  
Maar voorbij het lawaai, een smal pad—  
Half verborgen in de avondregen.  
Een deur, een breuk, een plotselinge stilte,  
Waar torens wijken voor bladeren en struiken.  
Elke voetstap verzacht, de adem wordt diep,  
Terwijl beton vervaagt tot bosachtige slaap.  
Voorbij de waas ligt het wilde onbekende—  
Een plek die de stad nooit heeft getoond.*

## Slip through the gate.



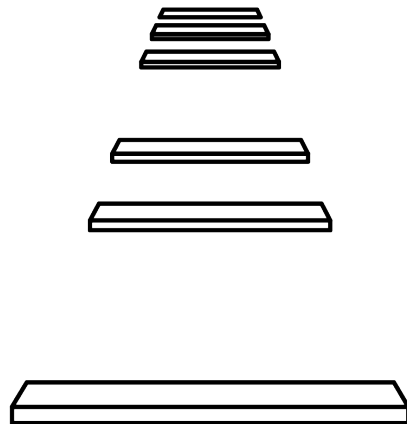
*I arrive at a simple, half open gate. I wonder if it was meant to be closed and for whom? In the distance, I spot another hint of orange. As I pass the through the gate, the surroundings shift. It feels like entering a new chapter of the landscape.*

Transition



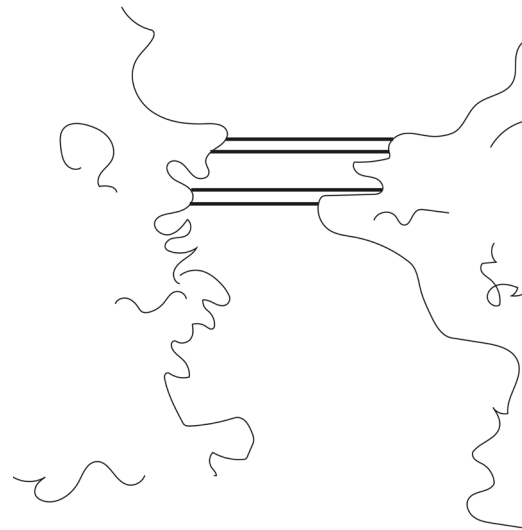
## The sleepers

*The path continues between various trees and shrubs. It feels intimate and enclosed. I pass several horizontal orange beams. Because they are laid like this, I am slowing down and looking around me. I realise these beams are placed like this to draw my attention to something and to stop walking.*



## The desire path

*From the right, a young boy suddenly appears, climbing up onto the dike. It startles me at first. But then I see how he got here. I notice a desire path, squeezed between two orange beams, leading up from below. That must be what the horizontal sleepers were pointing me toward. Another informal access point, another connection between the park and the dike.*





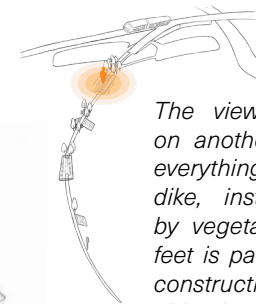
*“Tracks Beneath the Wild”*

*The forest stirs with breath and leaf,  
A world untouched, both dark and brief.  
Branches twist and brambles sprawl,  
No path, no sign, no sound at all.  
Then underfoot, a sudden clang—  
A buried rail where robins sang.  
The moss gives way to rusted steel,  
Half-lost, yet strangely sharp and real.  
From root to rail, the wild refrains—  
And yields its hush to ghosted trains.*

*“Sporen Onder het Wild”*

*Het bos beweegt met adem en blad,  
Een wereld onaangetast, donker en zacht.  
Takken kronkelen, doorns grijpen breed,  
Geen pad, geen teken, geen enkel geluid.  
Dan plots een klank onder de voet—  
Een spoor verborgen waar roodborstjes zongen.  
Het mos wijkt voor verroest metaal,  
Half-verloren, maar scherp en echt als verhaal.  
Van wortel tot spoor weerklinkt het wild—  
En schenkt zijn zwijgen aan treinen uit het verleden*

**Straddle  
over  
the  
abandoned  
traintrack.**



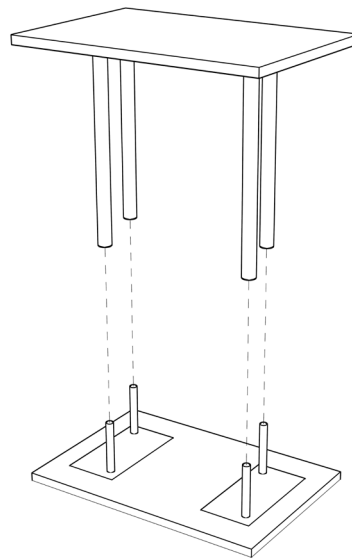
*The view opens up. I find myself on another bridge. Again, I can see everything happening alongside the dike, instead of being surrounded by vegetation. The path beneath my feet is paved, and on top of it lies the construction of what appears to be an old train track!*

*Suddenly, everything falls into place: the railway lights, the cable boxes, the orange beams. They weren't random. The beams abstractly reflect the old railway lines that were once there.*

**Transition**

## The abandoned traintrack

*On top of the train track is another orange chair. The chair is made of wood again but the legs are from metal. The legs rests on the rail pins, looking solid and grounded. I sit down. I've never seen a train track like this before: quiet and abandoned. I realize this must have been part of the old harbour railway lines of Rotterdam, one of the routes that used to connect the harbours with the city and the hinterland.*



On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



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On site, Landscape architectonic explorations

## An archive of traces

Next to the orange chair is another orange fold-out panel lying on the ground, filled with traces cards. One card that immediately stands out is an invasive plant species, something not originally from this area. Later I read that trains used to carry seeds with them, unintentionally scattered them along the tracks. That's how non-native plants came to grow along this old railway embankment. I recall spotting giant hogweed earlier. These are also remnants of the past, however not the kind you would immediately notice.



Historical

**There is an overgrown train track here. Might it never be finished or did there use to be a train track here? Maybe it went to one of the Harbors?**

I N F O  
This railway is an old remnant of the harbor railway connection between RMO (Rotterdam Rechter Maasoever) and the hinterlands. The connection was built in 1908 as the harbors of Rotterdam were expanding. Later, during the seventies and eighties, use of the railway decreased as the functions of the harbors downtown, changed to recreational and residential areas. In 2008 the railway connection was permanently deconstructed.



Contemporary

**It looks like they can close down both sides of the walking path by closing the fences on both sides. Maybe they want to close the P5 from Sparta?**

I N F O  
Big black metal fences are a popular and versatile choice for property security and aesthetics. They are known for their durability, strength, and ability to withstand harsh weather conditions. Black metal fences can be made from materials like steel, aluminum, or wrought iron, each offering unique benefits and drawbacks.



Contemporary

**This plant isn't native to the Netherlands. How did it get here?**

I N F O  
Species: Japanese knotweed - Reynoutria japonica  
This plant is native to Japan, China, Taiwan and Korea. "It is considered to be one of the most invasive exotic species. The strong growth of the Japanese knotweed allows it to displace many native plant species while its invasive root system and strong stems can cause damage to buildings, pipes and roads." (Wageningen University)



Historical

**This looks like an old light post for the train. There was probably a train track here?**

I N F O  
Railroad signals can have multiple light heads or lenses, displaying different combinations of colors to convey more complex information, such as speed limits, route directions, and block occupancy. Searchlight signal indications: Green indicates clear. Red indicates stop and stay. Yellow indicates approach. Lunar white indicates restricted speed.



Contemporary

**This looks like a bag that could have contained drugs?**

I N F O  
Drugs are substances that change a person's mental or physical state. They can affect the way your brain works, how you feel and behave, your understanding and your senses. This makes them unpredictable and dangerous, especially for young people. The effects of drugs are different for each person and drug.



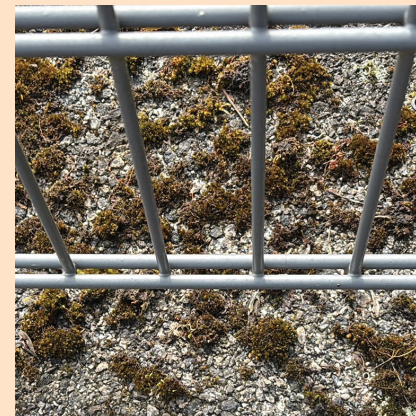
## Mosses & concrete

*There is also a poster hanging here, showing mosses growing on old railway structures. It immediately reminds me of the patch of moss I had just noticed clinging to the base of the railway light. Their soft green texture stands out against the hard grey concrete. The text explains how mosses are pioneer species that help form soil on bare ground. I see fences that are slowly overgrown with climbing plants. The railway, once a hard infrastructure, is turning into a living, textured surface, slowly reclaimed by nature.*



## MOSSES

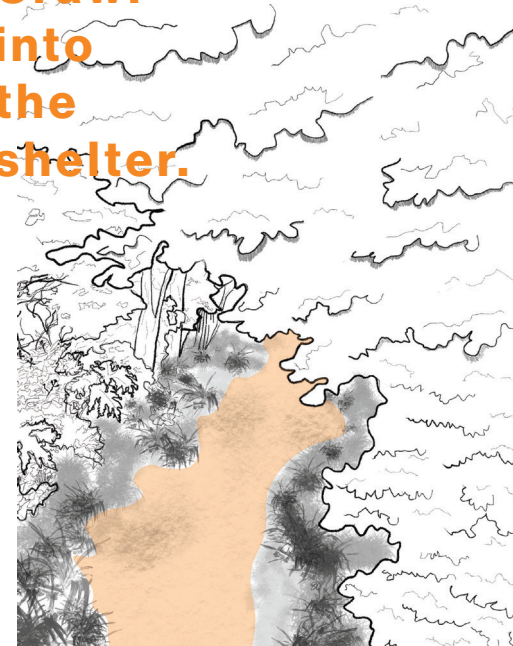
## & CONCRETE



*“Through the Green”  
Rust clings to tracks in silent rows,  
Where time forgot and nothing goes.  
Gravel crumbles under tread,  
And weeds rise up where rails once led.  
But step by step, the green grows tall,  
With ivy creeping over all.  
The metal fades, the path turns deep—  
Where roots entangle, shadows sleep.  
The forest swells with breath unseen—  
And swallows all in growing green.*

*“Door het Groen”  
Roest kleeft aan sporen in stille rijen,  
waar de tijd vergat en niets meer rijdt.  
Grind verpulvert onder voetstappen,  
en onkruid groeit waar rails ooit leidde.  
Maar stap voor stap wordt het groen steeds hoger,  
klimt klimop over alles heen.  
Het metaal vervaagt, het pad verdwijnt—  
waar wortels grijpen, schaduwen rusten.  
Het bos zwelt van ongeziene adem—  
en slokt alles op in groeiend groen.*

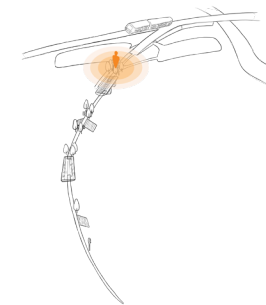
## Crawl into the shelter.



51

*After the open railway bridge, where I felt highly exposed, I now step into a more sheltered area, enclosed by vegetation. Here, I'm hidden from the outside world, protected from traffic and noise.*

Transition

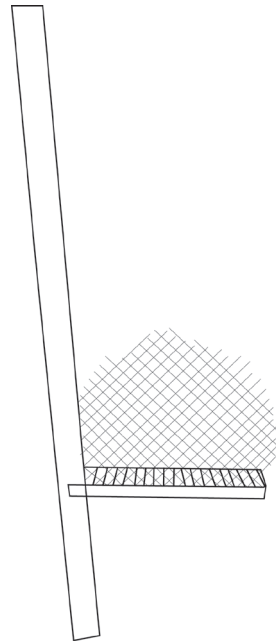


*On site, Landscape architectonic explorations*



## The sheltered signpost

*The now familiar orange beams lie parallel to the path again. By now, I have learned that this means there is something to discover. Between the trees, I spot something orange. As I get closer, I see another railway sign, this time with a completely different kind of seat. The seat is covered in soft fabric, giving the illusion of comfort. The vegetation has been cleared around it, making me feel welcome to come closer. I sit down. The bench is wide and big enough for two people. It is a place to sit together quietly and take in the surroundings.*



On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



53



On site, Landscape architectonic explorations

## An archive of traces

Next to this intervention is another orange fold-out panel with traces inside. Some are familiar: invasive plants, animal droppings. But this time the droppings seem to belong to wild animals, like rabbits. One card shows a small pit in the ground. I suspect it was dug by an animal.



Contemporary

**This plant isn't native to the Netherlands.  
How did it get here?  
Possibly the seeds are spread by the old trainline?**

I                      N                      F                      O  
Species:      Staghorn sumac - *Rhus typhina*

Native to North America. It is frequently used for erosion control, naturalized planting, and ornamental landscapes. It belongs to the Anacardiaceae family, a diverse group that includes economically and ecologically significant plants such as a cashew, mango, pistachio, as well as toxic species like poison ivy, and Pacific poison oak.



Contemporary

**This plant isn't native to the Netherlands.  
How did it get here?  
Possibly the seeds are spread by the old trainline?**

I                      N                      F                      O  
Species:      Tree of heaven - *Ailanthus altissima*

This is an invasive species, native to China. It is known by a number of names including stinking sumac, Chinese sumac, varnish tree and stink tree; the plant releases a strong, offensive smell, particularly from its flowers. It was brought to Europe and America in the eighteenth century



Contemporary

**This plant isn't native to the Netherlands.  
How did it get here?**

I                      N                      F                      O  
Species:      Giant hogweed -  
Heracleum                      mantegazzianum

An invasive plant that can cause painful burns and scarring. Brushing against or breaking the plant releases sap that, combined with sunlight and moisture, can cause a severe burn within 24 to 48 hours.



Contemporary

**This is rabbit poop, there must be rabbits living in the area.  
Where did the rabbits come from?  
Where they domesticated first?**

I                      N                      F                      O  
Rabbits produce two distinct types of droppings: fecal pellets and cecotropes. Fecal pellets are the dry, round droppings you typically see in a litter box, composed mostly of undigested fiber. Cecotropes are soft, shiny, mucous-coated pellets produced in the cecum and re-ingested by the rabbit for nutrient absorption.



Contemporary

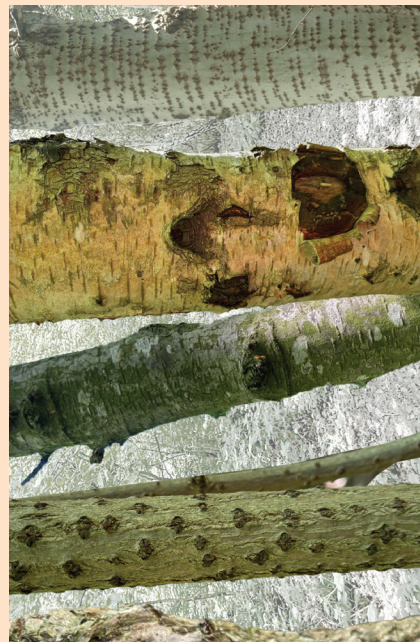
**Something drugged here?  
Animal or human?  
Could it be a dog or a rabbit?**

I                      N                      F                      O  
Animals dig for a variety of reasons, including foraging for food, building burrows for shelter and reproduction, and storing food for later use. Digging behavior varies greatly between species, with some animals only scratching the surface while others, like moles, create complex tunnels.

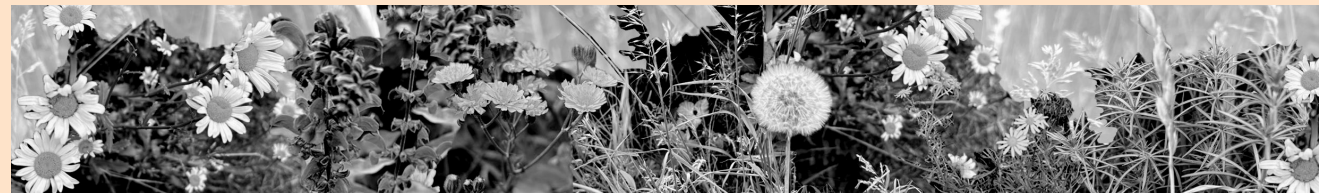


## Vegetation

*As I continue walking, I see a poster with images of shrubs and young trees. Looking up from the poster, I notice how brambles actually line the path here, forming thorny boundaries. These plants belong to what's known as early woody and scrub encroachment communities, the next phase after pioneer grasses. I see a lot of different bark textures: smooth, cracked, moss covered, each a new material shaping the space.*



## VEGETATIONS

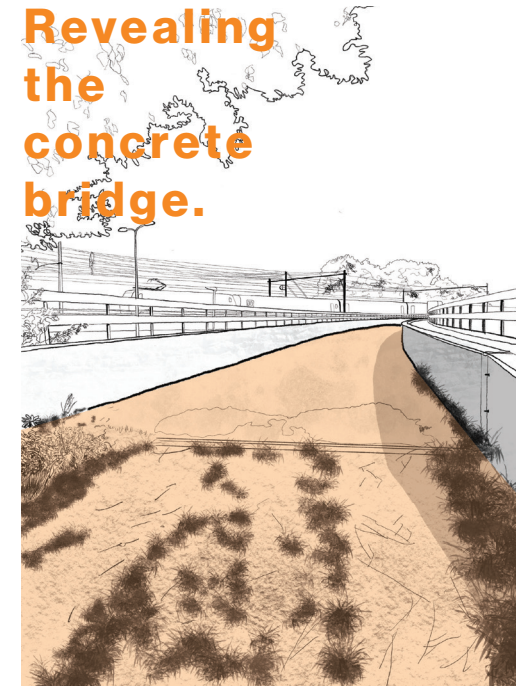


## EARLY WOODY AND SCRUB ENCROACHMENT COMMUNITIES

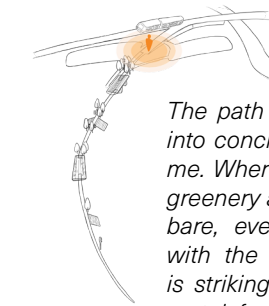
*“The Bridge”  
Footsteps pause  
where cold stone from the past lays,  
where rusted steel loses its power,  
and where weeds grow in the cracks  
of what was meant to last  
Colored noise speaks  
where no one answers,  
where movement comes and goes,  
and where time stands still  
until nothing remains*

*“De Brug”  
Voetstappen verstillen  
Waar koud steen uit het verleden rust,  
Waar verroest staal zijn kracht verliest,  
En waar onkruid groeit in de kieren  
Van wat bedoeld was om te blijven  
Gekleurde echo's spreken  
Waar niemand antwoordt,  
Waar beweging komt en gaat,  
En waar de tijd stilvalt*

## Revealing the concrete bridge.



59



*The path I am walking on slowly shift into concrete, a bridge rises in front of me. Whereas before I was enclosed by greenery and shelter, it now feels open, bare, even abandoned. The contrast with the lush segments of the route is striking. At the end of the bridge a metal fence stands. Behind it, a train track which is probably still in active use. Although it seems quiet for a moment, suddenly a train rushes by, my prediction turns out to be true. I feel like I have reached the edge of something, as if I am somewhere I am not supposed to be. It feels like the end of the route, a dead end.*

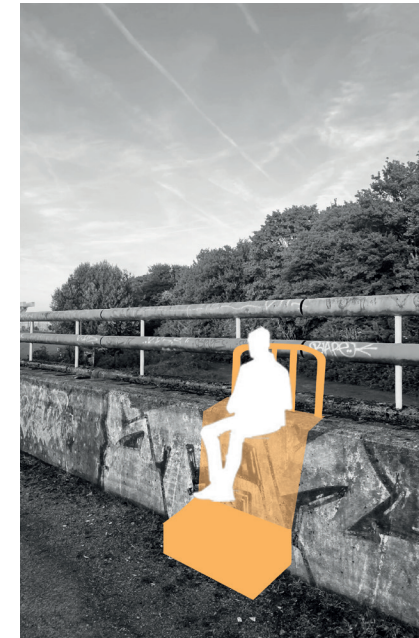
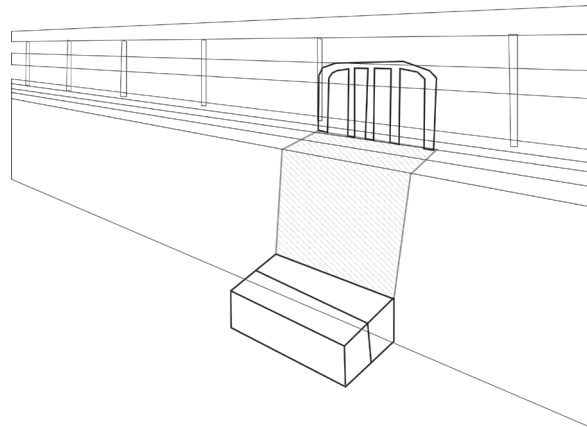
Transition

On site, Landscape architectonic explorations



## The concrete bridge

*The concrete bridge is covered in layers of graffiti. Colourful, chaotic and full of life. But through the paint, something catches my eye: orange again! To my surprise it is the back of a chair, fixed directly onto the bridge structure. The step beneath is also painted orange. I climb up and sit down. From here, I can see everything: The Van Nelle Fabriek in the distance, the passing trains, and all the vibrant graffiti.*



## An archive of traces

Once again, I look into the orange panel. This time I see an image of a parking lot used during Sparta games. Earlier when I walked on the old train track, I saw the Sparta Stadion. The graffiti here is another kind of trace, left behind by people who have passed through and marked this place.



Contemporary

**This must be a parking lot for Sparta. Maybe people vandalized the sign because their bleu pen looks good on the white background?**

*I N F O*  
P5 is the parking lot for the non-sparta supporters when visiting a football match in 'Het Kasteel'. Your parking ticket will be scanned at the entrance of P5. You can change your card at the non-sparta box from 15:30 on. You are not allowed to enter downtown Rotterdam before the match.



Contemporary

**People love to do graffiti in this area. Possibly because it is a hidden site where it is easy to spray paint without legal consequences?**

*I N F O*  
The people making art here use a variety of colours from black and white to green, yellow, pink etc. There is a huge variety of style within the artworks showcasing the hand of several masters.



Contemporary

**It seems like people broke through the fence to get to the railway. Might it be for copper robbery?**

*I N F O*  
Going through the hole in the fence you directly enter the operating railway zone. When stealing copper, thieves earn 5 euros per kg, when selling to a scrap dealer. Copper robbery caused dysfunctions in the railway system causing train delays.



Contemporary

**It looks like unhoused people are living here?**

*I N F O*  
There are around 2500 unhoused people in Rotterdam, provided residency in unhoused shelters, every year. Nevertheless, due to rightwing politics, these shelters, partly funded by the municipality, are only offered to unhoused, in possession of a CO card. You receive such a card upon arrival, if you fit the requirements. One of the requirements being "you are in the Netherlands on a legal basis". There are around 6000-8000 undocumented immigrants in Rotterdam. Around 250 of them are forced to sleep on the street as they don't possess a CO card.



Historical

**This viaduct goes to the railway, although closed off by a fence. Might it be a road for maintenance? Or did it used to be part of the railway?**

*I N F O*  
This railway is an old remnant of the harbor railway connection between RMO (Rotterdam Rechter Maasoever) and the hinterlands. The connection was built in 1908 as the harbors of Rotterdam were expanding. Later, during the seventies and eighties, use of the railway decreased as the functions of the harbors downtown, changed to recreational and residential areas. In 2008 the railway connection was permanently deconstructed.



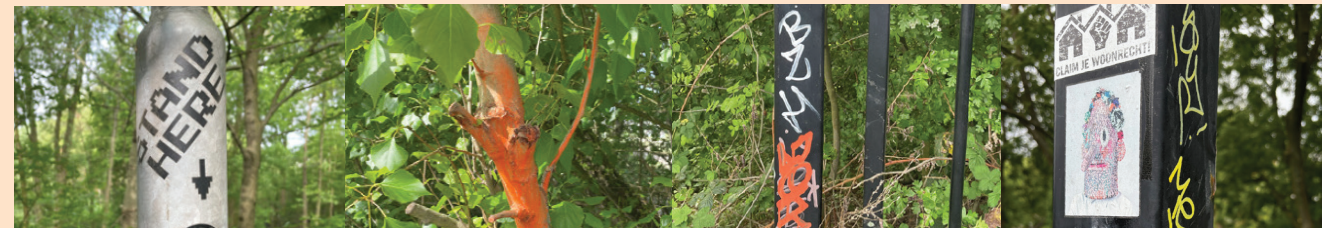
## Materials

## Stickers &amp; paint

*I come across another poster, this time with images of graffiti and stickers found along the railway. Just before this, while sitting on the last intervention, I had noticed these same layers of colorful paint on the concrete edges. I never thought about these markings as materials before. Unlike plants, they don't grow, but they accumulate, layer by layer, over time. They record human presence, shaping the space through identity and memory.*

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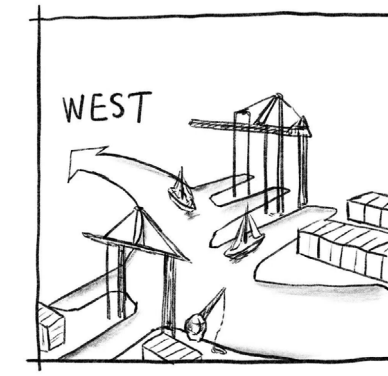
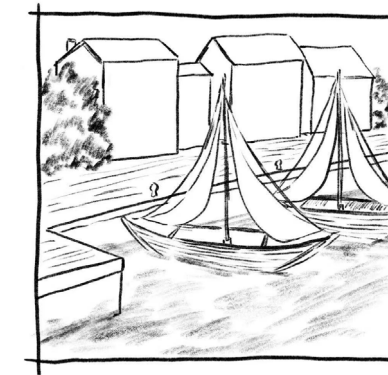
&amp;

P  
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When I used to walk through the park alongside this railway embankment, I never gave much thought to what was above. But walking the route now, guided by the orange interventions, I've started to see it differently. The interventions didn't add something new but pointed out what was already present. They made me slow down, look closer, and recognise the value of this often overlooked space.

## The harbour expands, the railway follows.

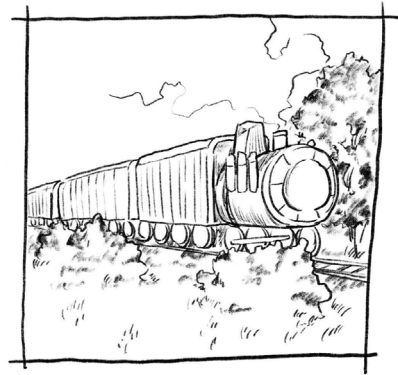
The history of the harbour of Rotterdam begins in the city center, with small urban harbours, narrow quays, and warehouses for storing general cargo, such as the Leuvehaven. But in 1872, the construction of the Nieuwe Waterweg provided the harbour with a direct and open connection to Sea. As a result, increasingly larger seagoing vessels were able to reach the city.



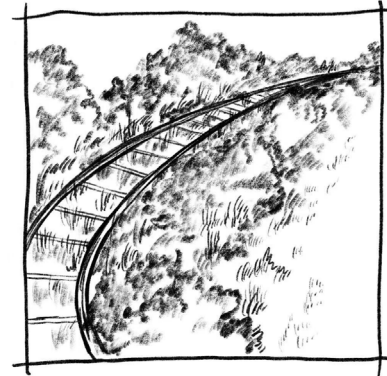
The old inner-city harbours became too small and impractical. At the end of the 19th century, larger new harbours were constructed south of the city, such as the Maashaven and Rijnhaven (Port of Rotterdam, 2019). Around 1900, the municipality of Rotterdam began developing new general cargo harbours along the Rotterdam rechter Maasoever (RMO), to the west of the city. This expansion required a direct logistical link to the existing railway network. In 1908, a dedicated harbour railway line was constructed, branching off from the existing "Oude Lijn" between Rotterdam and Schiedam. This line extended approximately 4.5 kilometers westward into the port area (Vulpen, 2020).



Through this new connection, goods could be efficiently transported from the port to the hinterland, especially to Germany, which was heavily dependent on the Harbour of Rotterdam (Port of Rotterdam, 2019). This was essential in a time when road transport was still limited.



After the Second World War, the harbour railway reached its peak (Vulpen, 2020). But by the mid-1960s, freight transport changed drastically with the introduction of the shipping container. This led to a logistical revolution: ships became larger, and even more space was needed. New port areas were developed even farther toward the sea, such as the Europoort and the Maasvlakte (Port of Rotterdam, 2019). At the same time, road freight traffic increased significantly, leading to a decline in the use of the harbour railway (Sakamoto, 2020).



From the 1970s and 1980s onward, the railway gradually fell out of use. The old port areas were given new functions such as housing and recreation. As a result, the need for rail connections in these locations disappeared (Vulpen, 2020).



Even today, there are places in Rotterdam where the past remains tangible. Our project site, the former railway embankment, is one of the visible remnants of the old harbour railway. The dike lies next to the Spangen neighborhood, between Marconiplein and the "Oude Lijn," and was once part of the connection to the general cargo ports along the Rotterdam rechter Maasoeever. It is a typical example of a leftover space shaped by former infrastructure. The elevated dike was constructed to carry freight trains from the harbour, but lost its function when the general cargo harbours disappeared. In 2008, the harbour railway's connection to the main railway network was permanently removed (Vulpen, 2020). What remains is an unpaved walking path, dotted with railway elements such as signal lights and cable boxes, quiet reminders of the site's logistical past.

## Stadspark west

This railway embankment is now part of Stadspark West. This is not a traditional park, but a network of green zones stretching across the western and northwestern parts of Rotterdam. It consists of formal green areas such as parks, allotment gardens, sports fields, and Diergaarde Blijdorp (the zoo), which are connected by leftover patches of green along infrastructure, such as railways, waterways, and highways. In this way, Stadspark West serves as a counterbalance to the hardened overheated city. It offers space for relaxation, cooling, and biodiversity. The southern

section is also part of the Groene Connectie, a green route through Rotterdam West that links residents, nature, and neighborhoods.

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in the formation of Stadspark West. Precisely because of the presence of railways and roads, many strips of land remain undeveloped, they are unsuitable for other uses. Without this infrastructure, many of these green leftover spaces wouldn't exist. These informal, often overlooked areas are also known as interstitial spaces: in-between spaces that fall outside the formal structure of the city. Because they are not strictly defined or designed, they offer room for spontaneous nature, informal use, and new forms of meaning.



## Interstitial spaces

Ignasi de Solà-Morales referred to these kinds of areas as terrain vague. Terrain vague refers to empty, abandoned, and often neglected spaces that exist physically in the city but lie outside its functional, economic, and social systems. It symbolizes resistance to the rational order and productive logic of urban planning, offering instead a space for imagination and the exploration of the unfamiliar (Mariani & Barron, 2013).

According to Desimini, these kinds of places can even be described as a fourth nature: landscapes where

nature gradually reclaims urban ground. They are terrains vivants, living, hybrid urban landscapes where city and nature converge. This aligns with Christophe Girot's concept of Nouvelle Nature, in which remnants of infrastructure are not erased but remain visible as they are slowly overtaken by vegetation, just like the railway elements on our site. Stoetzer's concept of ruderal thinking is also relevant, focusing on ecologies that arise in damaged or forgotten places. Because they fall outside dominant systems, they offer space for alternative forms of life (Stoetzer & Bettina, 2018).

These interstitial spaces form the starting point of the design. They may appear insignificant or forgotten, yet they contain qualities that are often overlooked. How might the hidden value of an interstitial space be made visible? This question led to the development of the concept: The Wild and the Styled.



Where  
the  
west  
grows  
wild.

02.

## Wild West Rotterdam.

Rotterdam-West is home to a wide range of green spaces. Most of them are carefully designed and programmed for public use. These “styled” spaces are a big part of city life and include parks, gardens, sports fields and allotments. They support community health, reduce climate stress and provide shelter for urban wildlife. Public green is usually maintained by the municipality and kept tidy, organized, and legible.

In contrast to the recognizable, styled forms of greenery, there is another layer of the city that is spontaneous, undefined, and often overlooked. This “wild” green exists in the in-between urban zones, such as along roads or railway lines, under viaducts, or other unused corners. Falling outside the regulated boundaries of the city, they allow for unplanned and unconventional use. We believe these wild spaces deserve the same recognition and care as the styled. Although different, they enrich the urban landscape by supporting distinct ecosystems and offering space for human activity beyond society's norms.

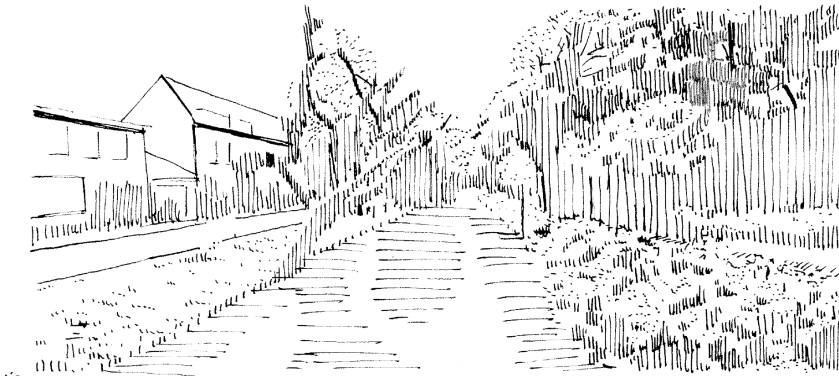
Not all interstitial spaces are wild, but they have the potential to become wilder. With the right care and recognition, these spaces can become essential parts of Rotterdam's ecological and cultural landscape. Not as new city parks, but as wild places with minimal human interference. Their strength lies in the undefined character of the spaces. Here, nature can develop on its own terms, and people can experience a different rhythm of the city that is slower, messier and more surprising.



## Wild & styled explained

### styled urban spaces

In styled spaces, vegetation is heavily maintained. The greenery is managed by the city for tidiness and aesthetics, with clear boundaries and compositions. It is found in parks, gardens, zoos, and other designed spaces. Styled greenery consists of curated compositions of select species, planted in spaces with clear purpose and established programs.

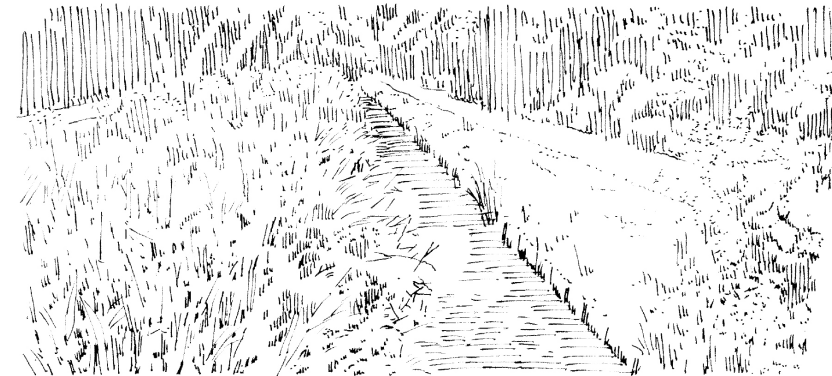


*Styled & Wild*

## Wild & styled explained

### Wild urban spaces

Wild spaces are minimally maintained. Vegetation is left to develop through natural processes, with native and invasive species growing side by side. These spaces are dynamic and shaped by informal human and animal use. They exist without fixed purpose and adapt to the changing conditions of the city around them.



*Wild & Styled*

## Three layers of wild

### Ecology

Wild spaces are more than just overgrown green. They have many layers that shape the landscapes. Wild spaces are ecologically rich, socially dynamic, and historically meaningful. To show their full value, we look at them through these three lenses.

#### Ecology

Wild zones are real-time ecological labs where native and non-native species coexist. Old trees, dense shrubs, and tall grasses create diverse habitats that provide food and shelter for animal life. Many species that are rarely seen elsewhere in the city find their home in the wild zones, making them important refuges for urban wildlife.



*Different plant and animal species to be found in wild zones.*

## Three layers of wild

### Historical

Every place holds traces of the past, even if covered by vines or layers of soil. Wild spaces are shaped by what came before, whether it's an old railway track, a forgotten path or an abandoned lot. These historic layers shape the spaces and add depth. Precisely because the spaces have been overlooked, they've grown into rich, layered landscapes. They hold many stories and will tell many more.



*Past functions shape how wild spaces look today and add depth to the landscape*

## Three layers of wild Culture

There is no defined program in wild zones, leaving room for creativity, spontaneity, and self-expression. People come here to rest or exercise, to hang out or celebrate, to spray-paint or do anything that doesn't quite fit into typical public spaces. The mix of activities reflects the diversity of cultures and communities that live in the city.



*The wide range of activities that take place in wild spaces.*

## Assigning wild zones

Our vision is to enrich urban green spaces, by introducing wild zones. These wild zones are made up by the three layers mentioned before. Existing low-quality urban ecosystems can be transformed by restoring natural habitats to increase biodiversity. For improving the ecosystems, we rely on natural processes such as spontaneous growth and ecological succession. In the wild zones, maintenance is limited, but still important. The goal is to assure safety and accessibility, while preserving the wild character and distinct ecology. Maintenance becomes a tool not to control nature, but to facilitate the experience of wildness within the city.

By introducing wild zones to Rotterdam we aim to help people revalue this overlooked type of green space. Because the zones support a wide range of plant and animal species throughout the year, they are valuable links within the larger ecological network. Besides their ecological function, they contribute to a more climate-resilient city by improving soil and air quality, reducing heat stress, and absorbing excess rainwater.

Additionally, wild zones offer an escape from the pace and pressure of city life. They provide a different kind of experience than the structured and programmed nature of most urban spaces.



Their informal character allows for unexpected uses and offers a sense of belonging to those who usually don't find their place within society.

We can protect these valuable places, and the traces they hold, by giving them an identity. These areas are often leftover or undefined, which makes them vulnerable to urban development. By assigning them as wild zones, we acknowledge their value and prevent them from being redeveloped.

Making them visible helps people recognize their ecological, cultural, and social importance. However, increasing visibility also brings risks. When these spaces become

more attractive, the people and species that seek refuge there can be threatened. It is a fragile balance that we need to keep in mind. The goal is not to fully define or redesign these places, but to protect and strengthen their existing qualities; to make space for wild nature, for cultural diversity, and for new stories to be told.

## The vision

### Levels of wild

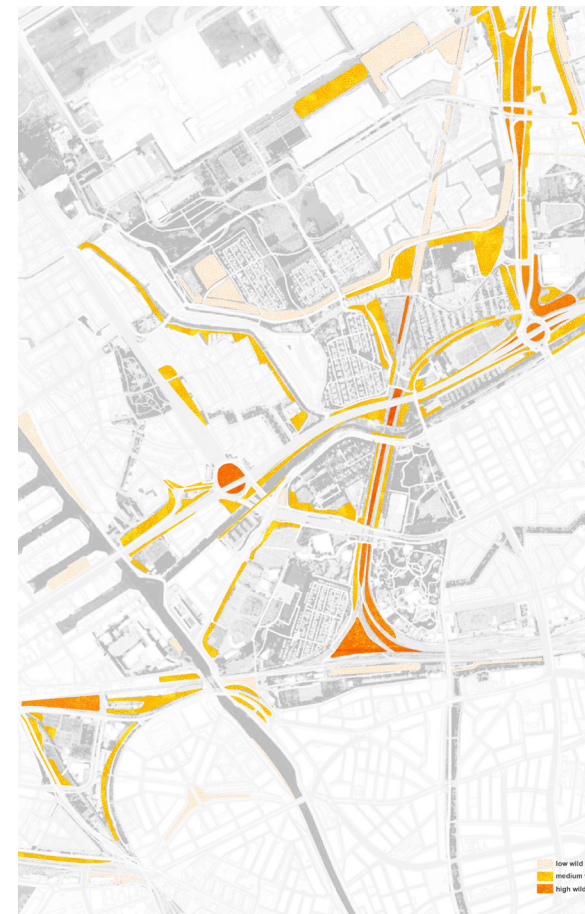
For our vision we looked at the interstitial green spaces in Rotterdam West to see how they could be rewilded. The wild spaces are divided into three degrees of wildness: first-, second- and third-degree wild. These degrees are based on the accessibility of the zones.

First-degree wild zones tend to be found within neighborhoods and along infrastructure where visibility is important.

Second-degree wild zones are situated on the edges of neighborhoods, along waterways, or in other corners that are less frequently visited.

Third-degree wild zones are located in places that are hard to access. This is mainly in-between roads or railways.

Each degree has its own maintenance guidelines, which can be found in the maintenance plan. The wild zones exist next to the styled zones to create a varied green structure in the city.

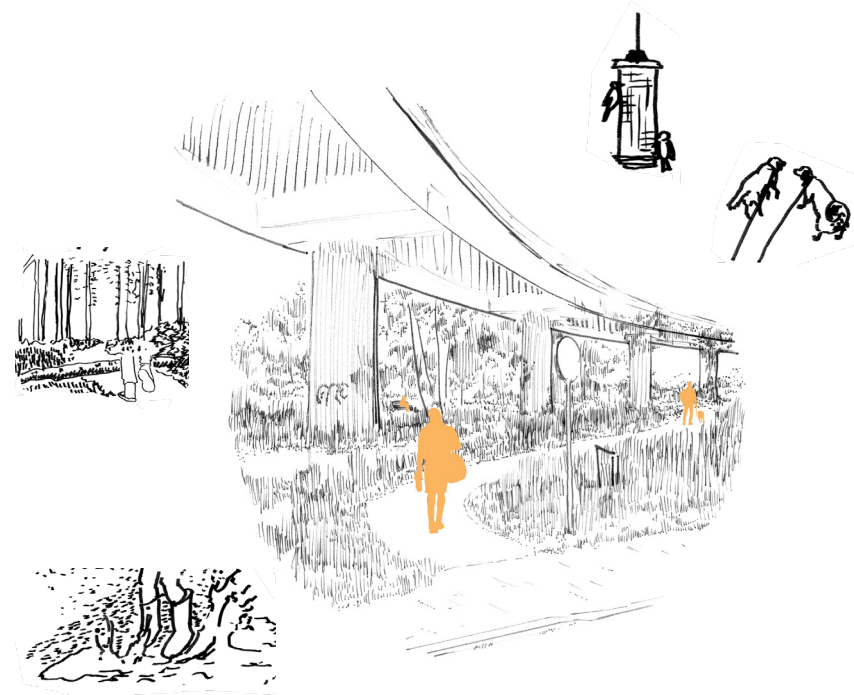


## Styled

### Degrees of wildness

Styled green zones are the spaces of common sense in the city. They are the expected and the familiar. These areas are clearly designed and regularly maintained. Boundaries are well-defined, with mown lawns, pruned trees, and structured planting beds. They are kept neat, accessible, and predictable, reflecting an ordered and controlled vision of urban nature.

Styled zones are meant for everyday use, meeting the needs of the general public. Families come here for a relaxing picnic, children play in well-kept playgrounds, and the elderly enjoy strolls along paved paths. These spaces are well-lit at night to feel safe. They are places where aesthetic greenery, tidy structures, and a well-kept appearance are the standard.



## First degree wild

### the traversable

First-degree wild zones are still structured, but are less maintained than the styled. Grasses grow taller, wildflowers are abundant, and wild bushes rise up. Maintenance focuses on increasing biodiversity, while ensuring paths remain open and sightlines clear. These spaces promote a connection to nature while still feeling safe and traversable. Vegetation is wilder than in styled parks, but the wildness is maintained to a degree that most can appreciate.

The spaces are not determined by top-down park design. They invite individuals and communities to adapt, change, and maintain the space and its use to an appropriate degree. People may experience a wilder side of Rotterdam from the safety of a path. Locals can have picnics and parties, while children can run around and explore. Overall, activities are less constrained here.

## Second degree wild the explorable

Second-degree wild zones offer an immersive experience of wilderness within the city. These areas feel untamed but remain open to explore. Maintenance is minimal and site-specific, focusing only on safety and accessibility. The wild is given a high degree of freedom to grow without being shaped by public preferences. However, invasive species may be controlled for ecological reasons. Paths are less defined and often formed through use. Human activities are less prominent, leaving space and quietness for animals.

The feeling of exploration and escape from city life is central to the experience in explorable wild zones. These zones appeal to explorers, creatives, nature-minded individuals, and those who want to step away from traditional urban programs for a while. Anything can happen in these dynamic places.



## Third degree wild the autonomous

Third-degree wild zones are the most autonomous and unmanaged, both in terms of nature and human use. These areas are typically inaccessible to the public, with dense vegetation, no clear paths, and usually without any traces of human use. Here, nature develops free from design and control into self-regulating ecosystems. The only interventions that may be built in these spaces are animal passages, as these zones are usually isolated by traffic infrastructures or bordered on all sides by roads and railways.

Third-degree zones provide independence to those who choose to enter. These spaces offer a deeper sense of escape and exploration, far removed from the structured city. The experiences here are more raw and immersive than in second-degree wilds. The autonomous wilds are places for outsiders, people who don't feel at home in conventional public spaces.



## Maintenance Wild Zones.



*The maintenance tools used for maintaining the styled urban green spaces.*

The maintenance plan shows how wild zones can be managed in a way that supports their ecological and social values, while preserving their untamed character. The approach is to work with natural processes instead of controlling them. The maintenance strategy is not focused on neatness, but on care. That means stimulating local ecosystems with minimal, site-specific interventions, while assuring safety and accessibility. This approach allows nature to develop freely and signals residents that these spaces are looked after by giving cues to care.

After explaining the maintenance strategy for each degree of wild, there is an image to show the amount of tools necessary. The higher the degree of wild, the less tools needed.

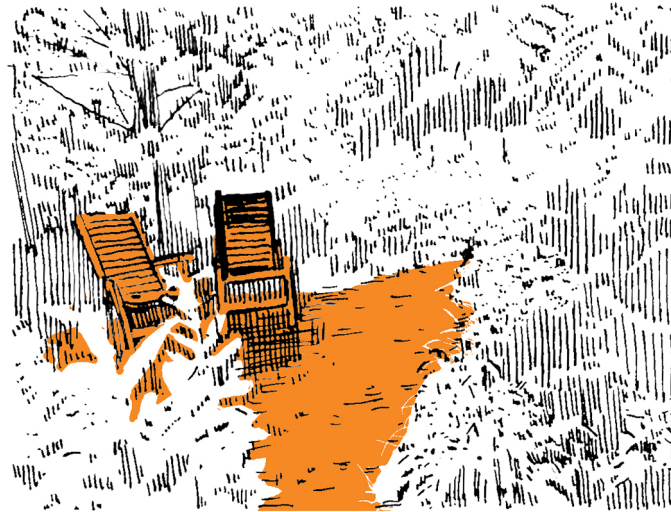
## Maintenance Cues to care

Cues to care are visible signs that indicate a green space is intentionally managed. The concept was introduced by landscape architecture professor Joan Iverson Nassauer (1995) and addresses the challenge that ecologically rich landscapes may appear wild and messy. Without recognizable signs of human intention, these wild areas may be mistaken for abandoned plots. Styled elements like mown edges, clear paths, signage, or seating can signal to people that these spaces are cared for and looked after. These cues help people see that these biodiverse landscapes are not neglected, but thoughtfully maintained as part of a bigger ecological strategy.

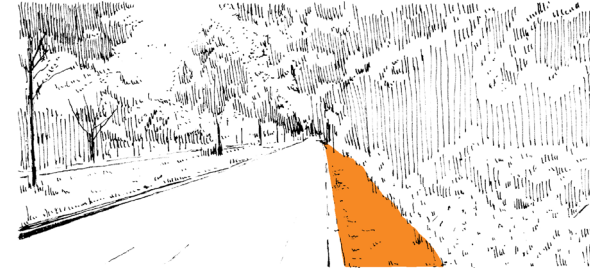
The maintenance plan for the wild zones is based on this theory. This is why mowing strips along the borders is mentioned frequently in the plan, they act as signs of care. Other cues to care include mowing around benches, trimming overhanging branches or keeping sightlines open. These small interventions help people to appreciate the wild spaces, without making them feel designed or controlled.

## Flexible and participatory maintenance

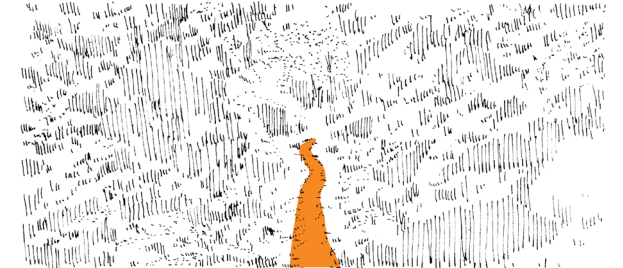
In wild zones, spontaneous vegetation develops on its own, making intensive management unnecessary. Strict maintenance for neatness or aesthetics is not needed, making the management of these wild zones flexible, intervening only when necessary for safety or accessibility. This approach is highly cost-efficient, saving time and resources compared to conventional management. Essential maintenance can be carried out by enthusiastic residents, to ensure these spaces are cared for while strengthening connections within the neighborhood.



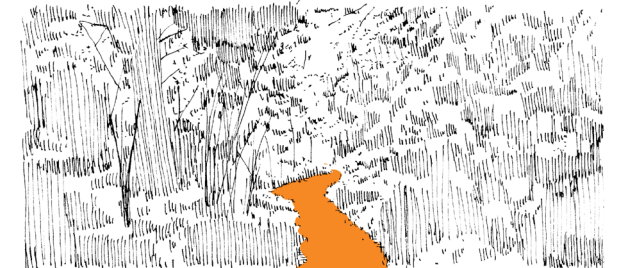
*Mowing around seating areas is a cue that shows the spaces is cared for.*



*Mowing strips along edges improve visibility and indicate the space is intentionally maintained.*



*Keeping paths clear and accessible help people experience and appreciate the wild.*



## Maintenance guidelines

### First degree wild

In first-degree wild zones, maintenance follows the new ecological strategy of the municipality of Rotterdam (n.d.). These areas are typically located in public spaces where tidiness is still appreciated. Maintenance is guided by ecological principles, while keeping the spaces inviting and well-integrated into the urban environment.

#### Mowing strategy

The mowing strategy in first-degree wild zones focuses on increasing native plant species through natural, spontaneous growth. This is why frequency and timing of mowing vary per location and depend on the season. The strategy increases biodiversity in the city and

reduces maintenance intensity, while keeping the green spaces clean and accessible.

#### Ecological mowing

In these first-degree zones, mowing is done two to three times per year. Clippings are removed to reduce nutrient levels in the soil. This helps wildflowers to grow and increases overall biodiversity. Phased mowing is part of an ecological strategy, and is used so that parts of the vegetation are always left standing. This gives different species a chance throughout the year and ensures continuous food sources for bees and other insects.

#### Functional mowing

Mowing is more frequent in places where safety and accessibility are important. This includes traffic intersections,

roundabouts, and pedestrian crossings. Along roads, the strip directly next to it is mown to improve visibility and ensure safety. Pedestrian paths, benches, and artworks should remain clear and accessible throughout the year. The outer edges of first-degree wild zones are frequently mown as a cue that the area is intentionally managed.

#### Pruning

In first-degree wild zones, pruning is done regularly to prevent overgrowth and offer more space and light to other plants. However, pruning is only done when necessary and not as a fixed annual routine. The frequency depends on factors like the age, species, and desired condition of the vegetation. The aim is still to increase biodiversity and keep a natural appearance.



*The maintenance tools used for maintaining first-degree wild zones.*



## Maintenance guidelines

### Second degree wild

Maintenance in the second-degree zones focuses on minimal interventions to support undisturbed natural development. Management aims to preserve the untamed character of the spaces while keeping paths usable. This allows for exploration and stimulates people to experience the wild.

#### Mowing strategy

In second-degree wild zones, vegetation is allowed to grow freely and natural processes can occur undisturbed. There is no fixed schedule and mowing is not done for neatness and aesthetics, but only for safety and accessibility. Interventions are minimal and site-specific to interference as little as possible. The outer edges of the wild

zones are still maintained to keep the wild vegetation within borders.

#### Safety and accessibility

Vegetation is cut back in places where it blocks sightlines or creates unsafe situations, for example at road crossings, intersections, or along bike lanes. Paths should stay accessible so the spaces can be experienced year-round. However the shape of the paths may shift over time depending on how and where mowing is done.

#### Cues to care

Public objects like benches and artworks can be placed within the wild-zones to increase user experience. These installations are kept usable by trimming the vegetation directly around them. Mown strips along the outer edges of second degree zones serve

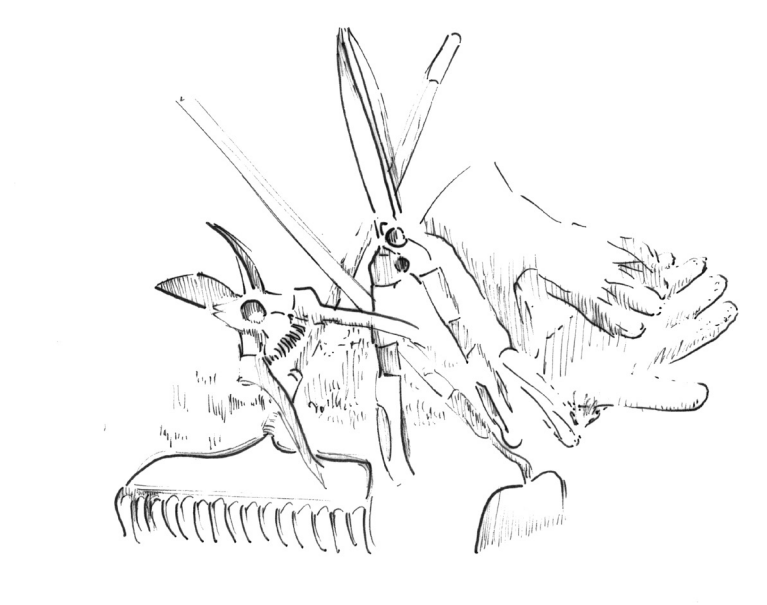
as subtle cues that the area is cared for, without disrupting the feeling of wildness within.

#### Pruning strategy

In second-degree wild zones, pruning is minimal, since natural growth patterns contribute to the wild character of the space. Trimming is used selectively to keep paths accessible, but overhanging branches should not be removed if they do not obstruct passage. Most pruning takes place along the outer edges of the zones, mainly for safety reasons. Pruning is never done for aesthetics.

#### Safety and accessibility

Branches that hang too low, block sightlines, or obstruct paths are trimmed to keep the spaces safe to move through. This also applies along roads and bike lanes, where branches can



*The maintenance tools used for maintaining second-degree wild zones.*

## Maintenance guidelines

### Third degree wild

The third-degree wild zones are the most ecologically autonomous areas in the city. These zones are typically inaccessible to the public and can develop without human interference. The main task is monitoring instead of actively managing. Maintenance is limited to essential safety measures and edge management, while the rest of the zone is left to develop naturally. The goal is to reduce disturbance as much as possible while preventing conflicts with surrounding infrastructure.

#### Mowing Strategy

Mowing is not part of regular maintenance within third-degree zones, since vegetation is allowed to grow freely without interference. Mowing

only happens where wild zones border roads, railways, or paths, in order to maintain safe sightlines and prevent damage being done to infrastructure.

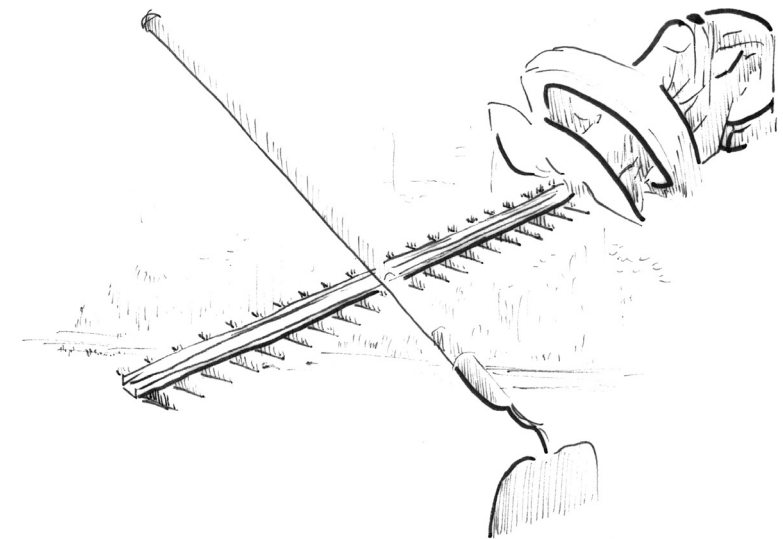
#### Pruning Strategy

Pruning is limited to preventing damage or safety risks. This includes removing overhanging branches above roads, railways, or other important structures. Within the zone, trees and shrubs are left to develop naturally without trimming. This no-intervention approach preserves the ecological integrity of the space.

#### Invasive Species management

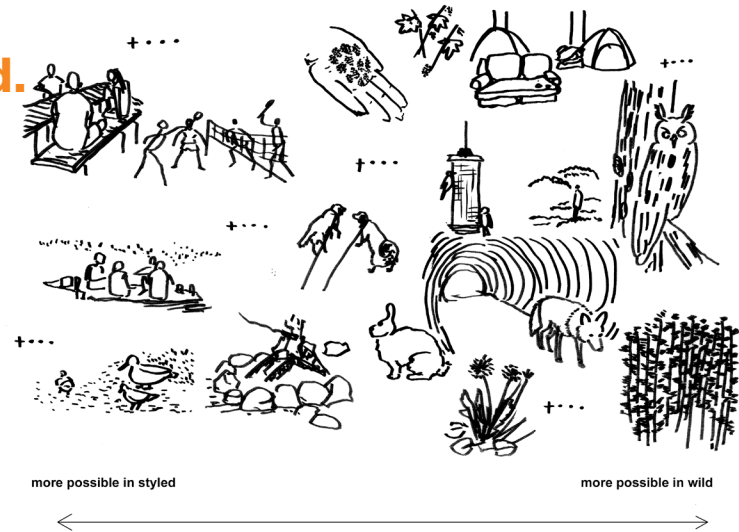
Invasive species are allowed to grow freely within autonomous wild zones. They are not actively controlled, but still monitored to ensure they do not

spread beyond the borders or threaten surrounding infrastructure. The focus is on containment, not removal. This approach supports a dynamic, self-regulating ecosystem without human interference.



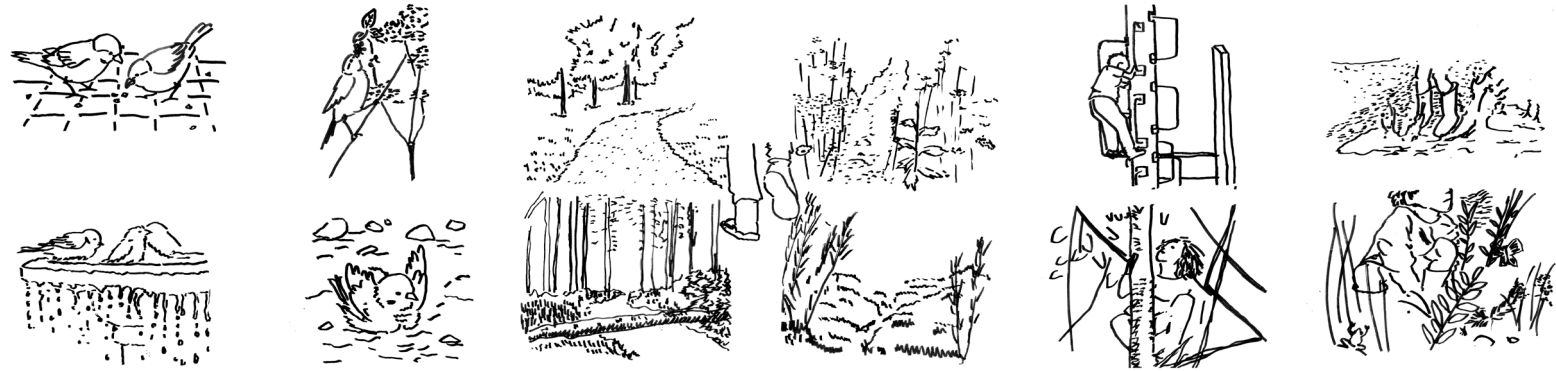
*The maintenance tools used for maintaining third-degree wild zones .*

**Experience  
the  
wild.** + . . .



Both wild and styled spaces have their own values. Some activities take place mainly in styled areas, others in wild zones. The co-existence of both creates a richer urban landscape, offering different spaces for different people and enabling a wide range of activities and experiences. This drawing illustrates what kinds of human activity and wildlife can be encountered in urban green spaces, from the most styled on the left to the most wild on the right.

Even the same activity can look and feel different depending on the zone. By introducing degrees of wildness into the city, urban green spaces become more diverse and open up new ways for people to experience nature. This way, there is room for everyone to be outdoors in their own way.



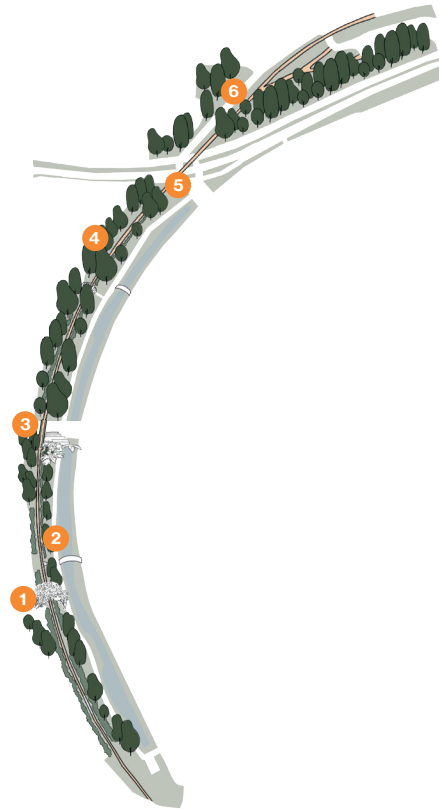
*The same activity can look different in every space. From encountering wildlife, to walking and playing, the experience of the activity changes depending on the setting. These drawings show how the same activity looks different for the styled and the wild zones.*



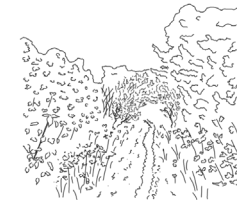
## Wildness on site

On the map, the old railway dike of our site is shown. The numbers correspond to eye-level perspective drawings that illustrate how the wild is experienced here. The site is a second-degree wild zone, where the feeling of exploration is central.

As you move through the site, multiple transitions in wildness become noticeable. The explorable wild feels untamed, even though it remains freely accessible. Dense vegetation invites you to slow down and immerse yourself in the surroundings. Plants grow freely and enclose the path, which is minimally maintained to allow for passage. Some edges are mown and branches trimmed as cues to care. This suggests that the site is not neglected, but intentionally taken care of.



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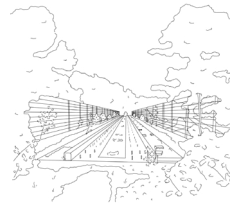
**1.** The wild vegetation encloses the path with trees and shrubs and guides you to move forward. The dense foliage limits visibility from outside and preserves the hidden character of the wild space.



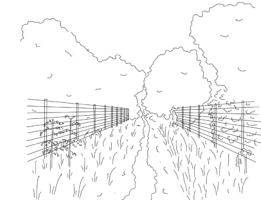
**4.** A glimpse of the train track draws you to move closer. Along the path, the different plant species vary in height and density to create dynamic atmospheres that change throughout the seasons.



**2.** The paved staircase serves as entrance to the wild space. Here, the path opens up and offers sightlines to the surrounding urban landscape. The hidden quality offers an escape from city life.



**5.** Here, the path opens up to the old railway bridge. This unique place really shows the wild character of the site, and how nature reclaims places that are no longer used. It shows the beauty of wild nature in the city.



**3.** After walking through dense vegetation, the path opens up to a bridge, overgrown by wild grasses and flowers. The site is characterized by transitions from closed to more open spaces.



**6.** These overhanging branches form a living corridor and create an intimate path. The explorable wild zones really allow you to connect to nature, even in the busy city.

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# The Process Of Making.

## 03.



The process of making follows the journey from ideas to actions. It shows how the intervention and exhibition gradually took shape. Through experiment, conversation and shared decisions. Not just what was build, but why and how: the intentions behind the design, the challenges faced and the discoveries made along the way.

Next to that the working groups are introduced. Each with their own focus, voice and perspective. While each group focused on a specific aspect of the project, the work unfolded collectively. And the final outcome was shaped through ongoing exchange and collaboration.

# The intervention

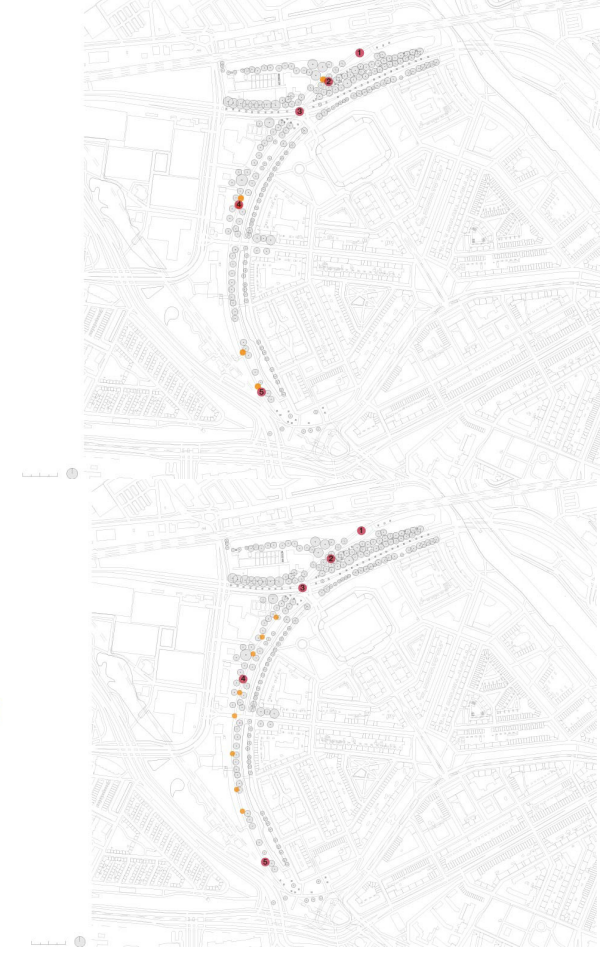
The intervention introduces a subtle minimal gesture, working with the existing qualities of the site rather than transforming them. It aims to reveal the qualities of the landscape that are often overlooked or underutilized.

## Materials & process

### Placing

The interventions are placed on different locations along the Spoordijk.

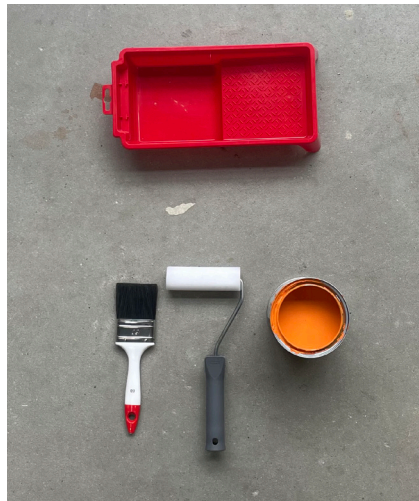
1. The bridge
2. The lamp post
3. The traintrack
4. The cable box
5. The ladder





## Materials & process

### The colour



To encourage people to take a closer look to the landscape around them, five heritage points in the area are subtly marked using the colour orange. At each of these locations minimal orange structures were added. Not to dominate the landscape, but to create new ways of experience. Visitors are invited to sit, lie down and shift their perspective. Engaging with the wild site in ways that were not possible before.

The orange colour was chosen for its striking contrast with the surrounding green landscape. Its presence naturally draws attention that highlights the intervention without overwhelming their context. The specific shade Pumpkin was applied using Copperant pura lacquer paint, with both paint rollers and wide brushes used to ensure smooth coverage over varied surfaces.

## Materials & process

### The QR code



On each intervention a QR code is placed. When scanned, the code leads to guest cam, a shared online photo library where visitors can upload their own images of the interventions and the exhibition. This allows people to share their personal views and experiences of the site through the lens of their own camera.

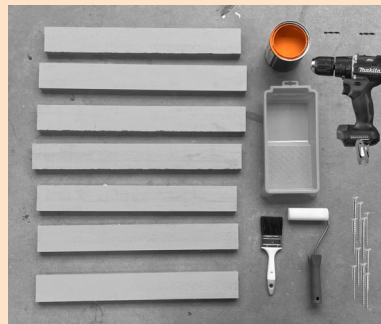
The library remains open and accessible over time, creating a growing collection of perspectives. As the seasons change and the site evolves, these photos will also capture how the interventions shift, weather or fade. Making the transformation visible of both place and perception.

## Materials & process

### Rails and sleepers

The rails on the side of the path are 2 m long wooden beams that are painted in orange. To ensure that the rails will stay in its place, they are attached to the ground with 10 cm long screws. The wooden sleepers on the path consists of wooden beams of approximately 60 cm long. They are painted orange too and are attached to the ground with screws, just like the rails.

The process consisted of having the beams cut into the proper sizes. Painting took the most time. Furthermore, various ways were tried to fix the beams in some way. This was consulted with several parties, such as the Groene Connectie, and in the end the screws came out best.





## Materials & process

### Ladder



The first intervention along the route is the ladder seat. To make this seat, we use 2 wooden planks of 15 x 30 cm that are attached to each other with 2 metal corner connectors. These connectors also function as a hook to attach to the ladder. For extra support, wooden braces are used to ensure its stability. All of the wooden elements are painted orange for clear visibility. The process consisted of going back multiple times to make it fit, since it is a very site specific intervention. Attaching it with 2 wooden beams to make it sturdier required fitting and measuring and applying math to make the right cutout. Furthermore, the sawing, painting and attaching it to each other was a more easy job.

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## Materials & process

### Cable box

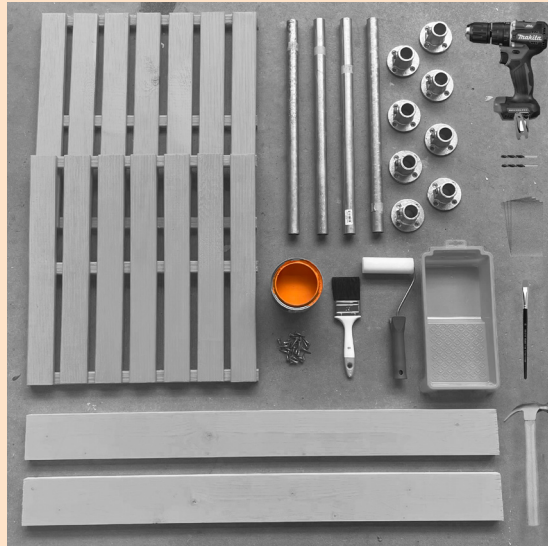


For the intervention in the cable box, we use 3 different sets of wooden beams that will be painted in orange. The first set consists of 6 pieces and functions as the legs of the structure. The second set are the sides of the structure which will be clamped by the walls of the existing structure. And the last set are the planks which creates the bench. The process consisted of letting the wooden beams be cut in the right size and painting them orange. By going back to the site multiple times we figured out how to place them in the cable box in the right way. For this we had to push and pull and fit and measure to make it work exactly since the measures were a bit hard to work with.



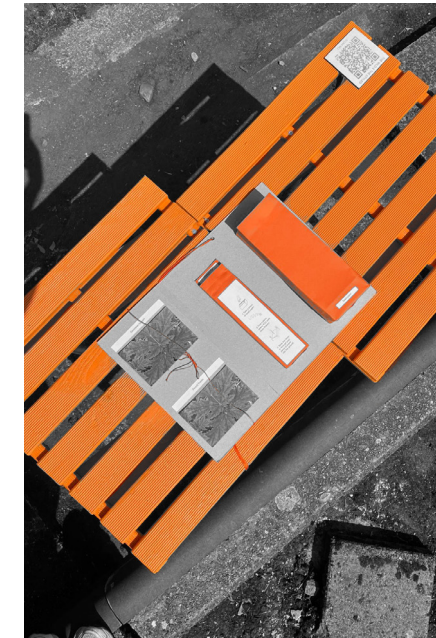
## Materials & process

### Traintrack



The chair at the abandoned train track needs some additional materials besides wooden beams. The legs are made of hollow metal pipes that fit perfectly over the pins of the train track. The top of the bench is made from 2 wooden decking tiles that are screwed together and supported by pieces of wood on the bottom. To connect the legs and the bench, we used metal connectors.

The process for the train track was again fit en measure and going back till it fitted. Because of the rust on the pins it did not fit exactly at first. By working with an iron file it worked in the end. Also cutting, painting and drilling were part of the process.





## Materials & process

### Lamp post



After the train tracks, the chair at the lamp post only requires one material: orange jute ribbon. This natural material is biodegradable and will make the chair stand out with its color.

The process involved creating this pattern with the jutelint. By doing this several times, the best pattern was chosen.





## Materials & process

### Bridge



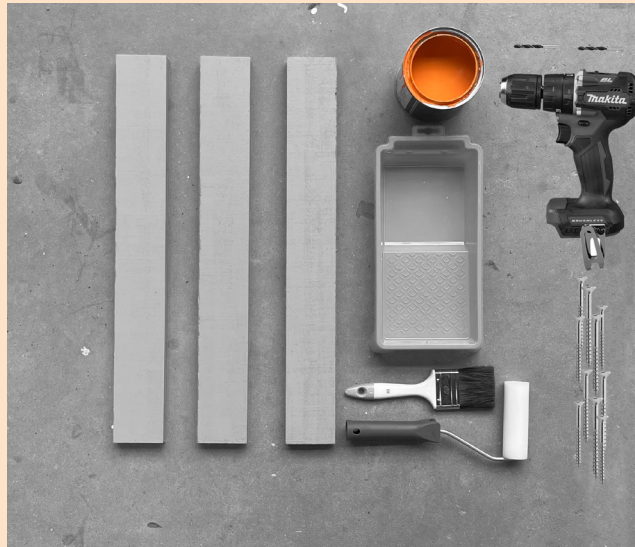
For the intervention on the bridge, paint is the material that is mainly used. By using the paint on existing elements, the form of a chair will be mimicked. Besides this, a backrest is added to show this even better. By adding some stones as a small step up to this bridge, the accessibility will be improved. These stones will be kept together with a cargo strap.

The process consisted of getting the back rest of a chair. This required searching and picking up chairs. Furthermore, stones were gathered on site and painted orange, just like the part on concrete bridge. This also required strength and discussion because it would go over existing graffiti. Securing the back rest required some tests on site to make it work.



## Materials & process

### Vertical crossings



Along the route, several vertical connections cut across the old railway dike. Moments where stairs or desire paths offer access to the site. These crossings act as transitions between more structured, designed spaces, and the wilder more informal landscape growing along the dike

To draw attention to these entrances, simple interventions were added. At the top of selected access points, orange railway sleepers mark the beginning of the path. Next to that the steps of the already existing stairs are painted orange. Signaling that these connections are part of the exhibition.





## Maintenance intervention

To ensure that the interventions remain accessible and inviting throughout the year, a thoughtful and minimal maintenance approach is applied. The primary aim is not to create a neat or manicured appearance, but to maintain safety and accessibility while preserving the natural character of the landscape. Mowing is limited to areas where it is essential for maintaining access or visibility, rather than for aesthetic purposes.

The outer edges of the wild zones are maintained to prevent vegetation from spreading beyond intended boundaries, and sightlines are kept clear by selectively cutting back overgrowth. Paths remain

accessible year-round so that the area can be fully experienced in every season. Around the intervention trimming is needed to keep them usable, while overhanging branches are only removed if they obstruct passage. This subtle and deliberate maintenance strategy allows the wildness of the site to flourish, while ensuring it remains safe, functional, and welcoming to all visitors throughout the year.

## Ladder Maintenance





**Cable box**  
Maintenance

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**Lamp post**  
Maintenance

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## The exhibition

The site itself acts as a kind of museum, where the exhibition is a translation of the collective analysis conducted on the site. We worked with materials, transitions, and traces, which were the key layers used during the research. These layers were transformed into spatial objects placed throughout the area. Rather than presenting conclusions, the exhibition invites visitors to experience the landscape differently.

The natural spatial structure of the site guides visitors, requiring no additional route design. This sense of exploration and unpredictability is part of the special experience of this site. Moments of wildness, traces of past use, and subtle interventions that reveal themselves gradually along the way.

*On site, Landscape architectonic explorations*



## Exhibition

### Traces

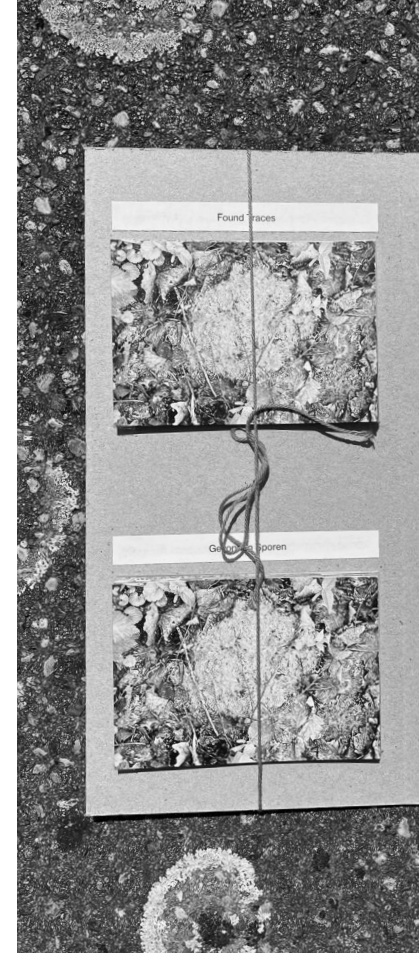
Traces could be many things. When thinking about 'traces' the mind quickly stumbles into thoughts such as; footsteps, waste, feces, hair, mowing, objects etc. All are traces as they are the physical expressions of time. Expressions with different durations. Depending on their materiality and physical expression they can either remain for ages or seconds. A piece of paper can blow away, a concrete bunker might remain forever indestructible.

For humans, traces are food for assumption. Assumptions rising from the human perception,

creating stories within their imagination. Which assumptions have we made on site? Which factual knowledge can we gather on them? Could this make the stories in our imagination more reliable? The cards are designed to first draw attention to the trace itself, then offer context. Both speculative and factual knowledge. In doing so, they invite the visitor to engage in their own interpretive process.

The traces suggest layers of use and presence: the remains of a harbor train track, paths worn by daily walkers, territories marked by dogs, informal shelters of unhoused individuals and surfaces repurposed by spray paint. These

are not isolated incidents, but interconnected assemblages. Visible and invisible groupings that collectively shape the site's identity. Some patterns are grounded in human activity, others operate in subtler registers such as ecological shifts and histories fading from view. In making these assemblages visible, the traces invite reflection on how space is continuously made and remade through layered presences.



### Disclaimer:

On the site there were many traces of unhoused people. The OnSite Studio Team decided only to display one of these traces. This results from a conversation in the PaulusKerk with unhoused people and staff. It became evident that this exhibition doesn't provide enough room to accurately represent the unhoused of this area, as they and their stories are vast and in need of careful curation. Therefore the one picture showcased now, is only representing the cause of the rising numbers of unhoused in Rotterdam.



## Exhibition Materials

The layer of materials in based on three core principles: simplicity, visibility of character and relational context. The goal is not to interrupt the visitor's experience but to help them become more aware of what is around them.

The materials are shown in thematic groups, each with a clear label. These labels include visible materials found on site. Materials from the direct surroundings are displayed in full colour, while others are shown in black and white. This makes it easier to see what is part

of the current landscape and what exist elsewhere. These labels are placed on different spots on the site.

The idea is to guide visitors through a gradual process: first noticing the materials, then understanding about them, and finally seeing them differently on site. This way, materials become part of the visitor's own discovery. By grouping materials, the exhibition encourages a closer look at how materials belong to a place, how they connect to each other and how they can shape the feeling of a site.





## Exhibition Transitions

These poems explore spatial and emotional transitions within natural and built environments, using lyrical imagery to evoke the passage from order to wilderness, and from urban intensity to spaces of retreat. Each piece captures a moment of threshold—where the character of the landscape shifts and invites reflection or escape.

The first poems trace a movement from styled, human-controlled spaces (such as gardens, structured paths or the “Marconiplein”) into more untamed and unpredictable

terrain. By using motifs such as gravel paths and stone staircases, they emphasize how designed elements serve as conduits toward the organic and the wild. These transitions are not abrupt but gradual, marked by subtle encroachments—moss growing between steps, or vines softening clean lines—indicating nature’s quiet reclamation.

Later poems extend this motif into more poignant terrain, such as the transition from dense greenery into abandoned train tracks. These spaces are liminal: once engineered, now surrendered to time and overgrowth. They become metaphors for forgotten

narratives and layered histories, where the natural world slowly erases human intent. Finally, the transition from city life to wilderness reflects a psychological as well as spatial escape—a movement from overstimulation toward silence, stillness, and reconnection. Together, these poems articulate a nuanced reading of landscape as a continuum, where boundaries between constructed and natural, present and past, remain fluid and alive.



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## Exhibition

### Seed paper

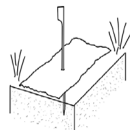
The Seedpaper was introduced to reconnect visitors with 'the wild' by letting them add to 'the wild'. The unconscious connection of humans and their surroundings is shortly made conscious, by the act of 'planting the paper', being in direct relation with the elements that add to 'the wild'. The paper itself consists of scrap material from the team's process and seeds, collected in the allotment gardens of Rotterdam.



1. Take a piece of seed paper



2. Find a place where YOU want more flowers.



3. Stick the skewer through your piece of paper into the ground.

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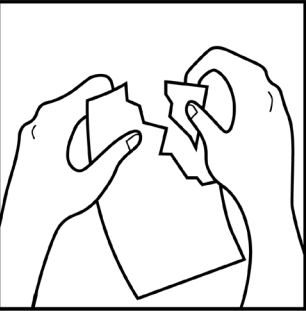
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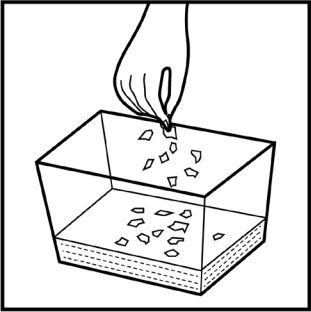


Exhibition

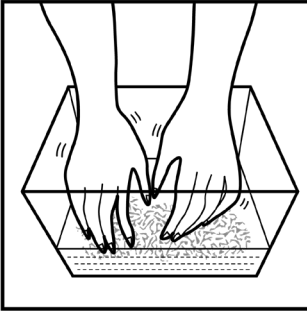
Seed paper



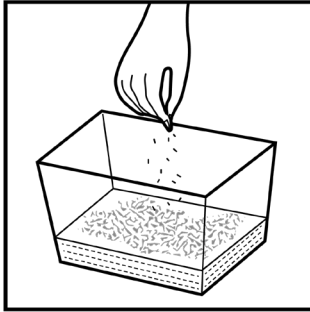
Tearing the paper



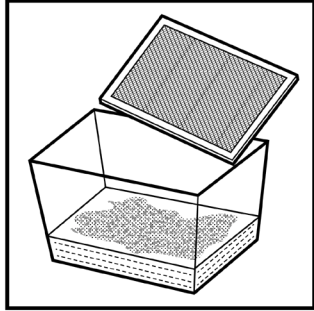
Soaking the paper



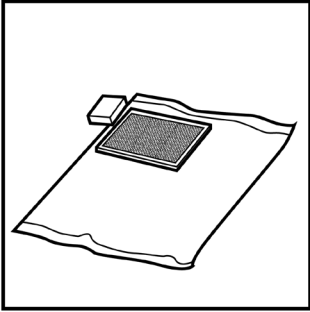
Crumbling into pulp



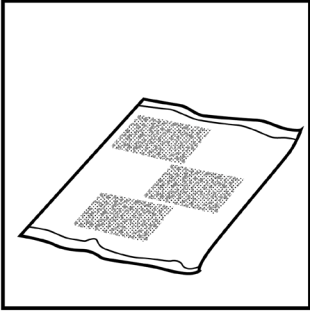
Adding the seeds



Bailing by filter



Placing on towel



Airing

**A**  
**collective**  
**effort.**



This project is created by a group of fifteen masters students from different disciplines, architecture, urbanism and landscape architecture. Working together brought a mix of perspectives and ways of thinking that made the process dynamic and inspiring. Each discipline approached the site differently, which led to interesting conversation, some discussions, new ideas and in the end a layered result.

Collaborating across fields was not always easy, but it was big part of the excitement. The result is a collective effort, shaped by many voices and a common curiosity for the site.



## A group effort

The intervention

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Exploring the 'hidden' greenery of Rotterdam made us realize that there is much more to the city. These 'hidden' green areas that run through the city are valuable spaces that can function as a place of calmness and rest from the busy city life, as well as spaces to escape from the "culture" where there is not room for everybody.

Designing and building the interventions for the exhibition required our team to be on site frequently. We wanted to ensure that our interventions would highlight the history of the old train track and demonstrate the value of such an interstitial space/a place with still a lot of history correctly. By talking to

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people from the Green Connection, caretakers of the location, and unhoused people in the area, we have deepened our understanding of its function and meaning.

Working on this project and connecting with locals has made us appreciate interstitial spaces like these more. We hope more neighbourhoods will take care of the nature around them, whether wild or styled, to stay connected to each other and nature.

*On site, Landscape architectonic explorations*



## A group effort

The exhibition



This project marked a first encounter with landscape architecture for many of us, introducing a new way of interpreting and engaging with space. The method of working—on-site, in direct dialogue with the landscape—offered insights and knowledge that cannot be acquired through purely digital or remote collaboration. Thus, it helped us broaden our way of perceiving a site and dealing with its characteristics. Moreover, a significant learning outcome was developing the skills required to create a site-specific and coherent exhibition. Questions such as “What defines a site-specific exhibition?” and “How can we communicate our concepts clearly and effectively?” guided our

process and challenged us to think critically about spatial presentation. Interactions with other groups were frequent, and some thematic and spatial overlaps naturally emerged. While this fostered exchange and inspiration, it also highlighted the need for clearer coordination. Establishing a fixed meeting time for all participants could improve alignment and ensure a more cohesive final outcome. Overall, the experience was enriching and opened new perspectives on collaborative and spatial practices.

## A group effort

The concept



The ON SITE course has exposed just how reliant we are, as designers, on clearly built forms and obvious physical interventions to communicate concepts and feelings to our target audiences. Converting our initial slew of formal concepts into something minimal, informal, and concise was a difficult task. Language use and definitions became pitfalls that bogged down the conceptualization process and caused confusion. For this, our tutors and the weekly progress presentations were key to overcoming these pitfalls and staying on track.

With regards to the greater project as a collaborative effort, it felt in

many instances that each group worked independently and made important decisions internally, our group included. This became a double-edged sword that helped everyone stay on track and meet deadlines, while also causing concern about the project no longer being one cohesive work, but rather a collection of smaller group works. Key group meetings and discussions in the final weeks of the course alleviated those concerns, and it felt like the project stayed one cohesive whole work we could all identify with.



## A group effort

The booklet



As the name of this course suggests, personal experience, perception, and understanding form the core of our 'On Site' journey. We immersed ourselves in the site—sensing, interpreting, and reading its nuances. Through our senses, reflections, and imagination, we envisioned the future of this urban corner and translated our ideas into spatial elements, objects, and events.

This booklet captures the creativity and effort we devoted to this collective project. We chose to tell our story in an interesting and imaginative way—through the eyes of a fictional visitor who wanders through our site, discovering our

interpretations and interventions step by step. Guided by this narrative, readers can uncover the hidden histories and spatial qualities in a part of Stadspark West.

Our working process, insights, and outcomes are woven together into a coherent story—moving from the individual to the collective, from detail to whole, from present to future. We hope, even for those unable to visit the site and join in the exhibition in person, this booklet offers an immersive glimpse into the spirit and meaning of our project.



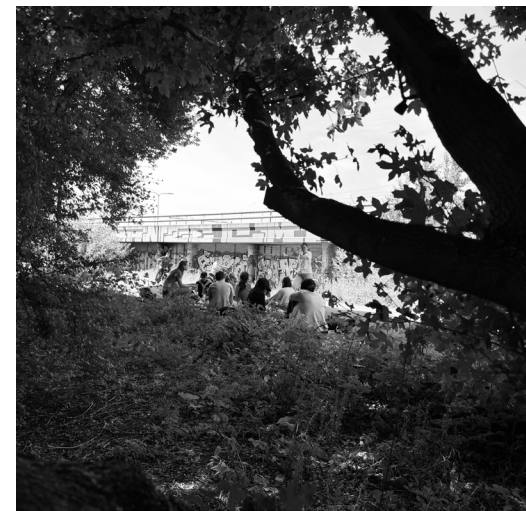
The



exhibition



day



# A big thanks to.

We want to thank everyone who helped to bring this project to life.

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