

# hosting soil.



public art work programme is a project by (nellyE.)theo van doesburg stichting

# as a gift

public art work development  
programme ot sluisbuurt

( 15 )

by elise ehry, franziska goralski, kitty maria  
and jules van den langenberg

# pioneers

the masterplan for the sluisbuurt neighbourhood foresees its first residential tower connected to geothermal heated earth and an underground waste management system. the inhabitants will spend the first decade of their life in the newly built environment and construction sites.

artists elise ehry, kitty maria, franziska goralski and the (nelly&theo van doesburg foundation propose a public art work that focusses on the first inhabitants of the sluisbuurt neighbourhood in amsterdam.

the sluisbuurt area is located in the east of amsterdam, two kilometers away from the center. it covers an area of circa 600 000 m<sup>2</sup>, which will mostly accommodate residential buildings. the area is surrounded by the ij and enclosed by the zuider ijdijk. due to our research on soil and earth as a common good, we imagine a fitting cooperation with the planned new buildings of saref (middle segment housing) which are heated with the earth warmth – a concept by innoforte. they have been asked to develop a number of sustainable soil energy concepts that can be applied to sluisbuurt.

the project “hosting soil: as a gift” thinks of the first and future inhabitants of a neighbourhood and how to arrive in a community. it offers a new perspective on the welcoming gift, and encompasses a ritual that refers back to the soil on which the houses are built and with which the buildings are possibly heated. the presented proposal responds to the topic: “social gestures and collective practices in the arts by raising awareness for sustainable and need-based subjects such as the commons in society.”



illustration of a common ground at rendering of saref building in sluisbuurt

## principles of gift-exchange

gift-giving at its simplest is the transfer of property rights over a particular object. the nature of those property rights vary from culture to culture, and so the nature of gift-giving is altered by the type of property regime in place. gifting can be done to make another indebted to you or to advance politically, but also to foster human relationships and to de-commodify material objects.

in gift anthropology the welcoming gift holds a prominent position, constantly recurring in various societies in various shapes. according to marcel mauss in *essai sur le don* (1925), the gift economy allows a possible alliance with others. the act of giving puts in place a social pact between two entities that do not know each other yet. by offering a common welcome gift, we are offering a form of self-management in writing and building the story of this new area.

for the development of the sluisbuurt we're proposing an alternative take on the welcoming gift. a de-commodified

perspective on what gift giving could be for the inhabitants of this newly developed area. within this proposal we're introducing the idea of a commons as a shared welcoming gift. this is an object that will become communal property of all the inhabitants of a residential building. for every new incoming inhabitant of the building the gift can be activated with a welcoming ritual, inviting neighbours to interact with one another in a social play of which they can design the rules. "hosting soil: as a gift" is an invitation and at the same time a gift that could be seen as a precious moment for grounding, connection and creativity. it is an act of care and offers space for expression and activation of impact of the new inhabitants.

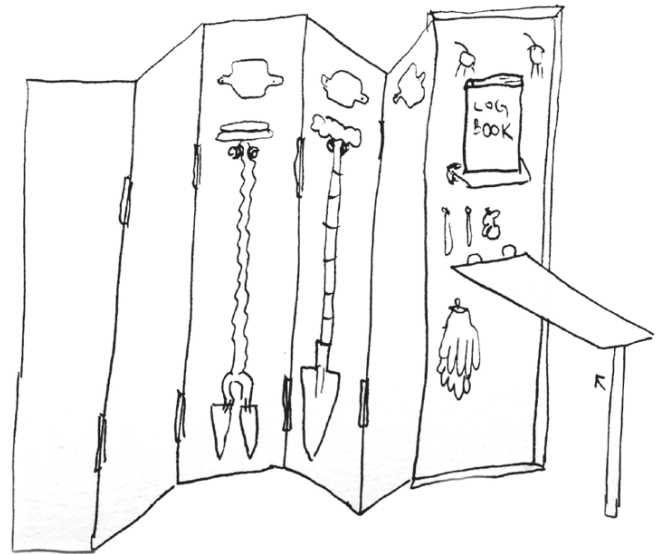


first shovel of earth ritual in building processes

## shovel station

the public art work for all safe inhabitants consist of a cabinet, shovels and a logbook. the cabinet "hosting soil: as a gift" comes in the shape of a handcrafted cabinet for a set of speculative shovels in a central part of the safe building. the so-called poetic toolbox or shovel shelter will be made of wood and glass with hand carved shovels. the cabinet

will hold a logbook in which inhabitants can document the rituals they've created with the shovel shelter. as a starter, it stores inspiration for welcome rituals as well as traces of past interventions. the shovels come in shapes that are in-pragmatic and sometimes clumsy, because these shovels don't need to be used daily but can be used annually or seasonally. they're built to think of alternative reasons to dig and create customised rituals between neighbours.



sketch for cabinet



sketch for logbook



prototype production for shovel



shovel prototypes tested by elise ehry

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# the recurrence

from 2022 till 2030, every year a new shovel will be launched, following the rhythm of the construction of sluisbuurt. by choosing a specific annual date, the ritual will solidify itself. the three artists will take turns to activate the project yearly and exchange about the new gestures that have been accomplished during the past year.

## harvesting material for a public art work

“hosting soil: as a gift” is an ongoing artwork and a progress shaped process which will transform during time and efforts, initiative residents are putting in.

phase 1 (2022 – 2024): production of the tools, shovels and shelter. the actual prototype was produced by kitty maria at buurtwerkplaatsen west, under the guidance of sophia simensky.

phase 2 (2024): “hosting soil : as a gift” is an ongoing artwork and a progress shaped process which will transform during time and efforts, initiative residents are putting in.

phase 3 (2024 – 2030): an annual activation of the tools in a recurring performance with community of first sluisbuurt inhabitants, after which a new shovel will be launched and added to the shelter.

# annual performance

the performance hosting soil is based on amsterdam zuid’s urban development and is an ephemeral public art work taking place at the lowest and highest priced pieces of soil. how do tall tales spread through towns? what meaning can be given to a square meter of seemingly random sand? how do we make something as unapparent as the underlying economic structures of a cities’ soil visible? the performances are scheduled in amsterdam zuid as the district shows some of the most rapid increase of property value over the last six years. the area features both a monumental residential area as well as a growing commercial district in which construction sites and skyscraper buildings mark this part of town.



annual performance with saref inhabitants based on soil swapping performance

as public artworks are often drafted on the practical terms of public space, they need greater resilience than other art works, which is why there is only a limited amount of expressions and materials used in their production. they usually abide by the laws of other outdoor construction in their need to last for a very long time. visual artist f. goralski and k. maria with e. ehry, all alumni from the amsterdam south based sandberg instituut, team up with curator j. van den langenberg to produce common value in public space using a temporary form of art as a medium.

with their hosting soil performance they are keen to introduce the public to a sculptural scenography that is built on the premise of temporality and use of the human body. hosting soil is rather a scripted situation than a long lasting structure, and engages with the people passing through public space. the idea for the performance is based on an ongoing research by the artists about ways of commoning, solidarity and labor or striking as women to activate change.



testing shovels in sluisbuurt

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cabinet prototypes by kitty maria

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## network

the (nelly&#212;)theo van doesburg foundation and elise ehry, kitty maria and franziska goralski welcome responses and ideas to further develop, prototype and finance the "hosting soil: as a gift" proposal. especially the expertise and interest of the following parties is required: property developer saref, investors lopl, investors syntrus achmea, construction company jjo van eesteren, placemaking sluisbuurt, stichting buurtwerkplaatsen amsterdam.

for more information visit  
[www.theovandoesburgstichting.nl](http://www.theovandoesburgstichting.nl)

### colophon

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