

reed field



dike tourism

spatial practitioner spazio cura and the (nelly&t)theo van doesburg foundation propose a public art work that focusses on human and animal life and leisure. the masterplan of sluisbuurt in amsterdam foresees a dike area around the urban fabric, which aims to constitute a space, where both humans and animals can gather and reside alongside each other. the reed field proposal is based on this goal and responds to the topic: "animals and people around the sluisbuurt dike – tools for nature maintenance and place-specific tourism for people and animals on the inside and outside of the dike."

the sluisbuurt area is located in the east of amsterdam, two kilometers away from the center. it covers an area of circa 600 000 m², which will mostly accommodate residential buildings. the area is surrounded by the ij and enclosed by the zuider ijdiijk. the zuider ijdiijk is supposed to be turned into a green belt of the new neighbourhood in which humans and animals can reside alongside each other.

the project "reed field" aims to create a space by planting reed and giving it shape by considering reed as a natural habitat, a material and an aesthetic element. reed is approached in a holistic manner in order to best understand and benefit from the relations and synergies between the plant itself, animals that live in it and humans, who use it as recreational space and material. the ultimate goal is to create a space, which follows a respectful cultivation of the plant and offers both humans and animals a precious refuge. this objective can only be achieved with sufficient knowledge and experience of the topic. therefore the



"a wheatfield for manhattan" by agnes denes

project foresees to establish a fruitful network of different actors, who contribute and shape the "reed field" with the help of their specific expertise. over the course of ten years and in form of different phases with different scales, the "reed field" is supposed to transform from an idea to a physical reality.

reed as habitat, material and aesthetic element

reed grows in shallow water, alongside shores, or on moist soils. wherever it grows, reed acts as an important element of the ecosystem as it not only produces oxygen



reed as habitat



reed as material



reed as aesthetic element

bird species, which use the reed to build nests, breed and raise their babies between march and july.

reed occurs naturally as a monoculture and can grow four meters tall. the visible plants over the ground are connected to each other through a thick and invasive root system. some vast areas of reed consist in fact only from one single plant. reed blossoms between july and september and develops inflorescences that can measure up to 50 cm. fields of reed are therefore perceived as visually striking and often define the image of whole landscapes. another aesthetic quality of reed is the calming and meditative sound it creates when its leaves are exposed to wind. this effect has been left an impression on humankind since ancient times and can be found in indigenous rituals, as well as in contemporary soundscapes. however, reed naturally loses all of its leaves during the winter after the temperature has dropped below zero. what is left is a landscape consisting of dry, straight sticks.

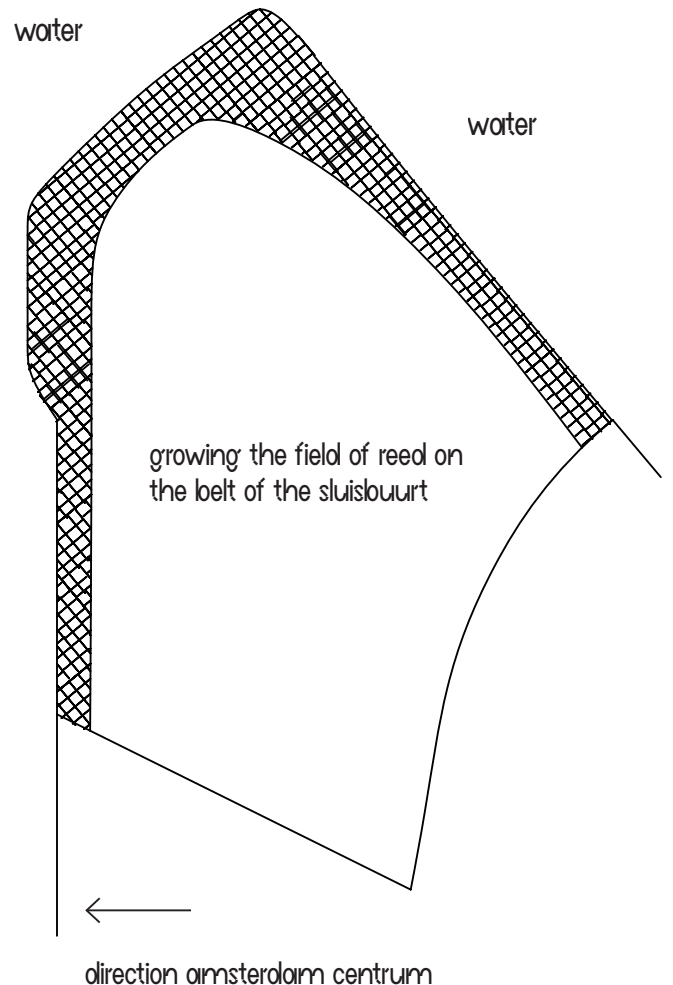
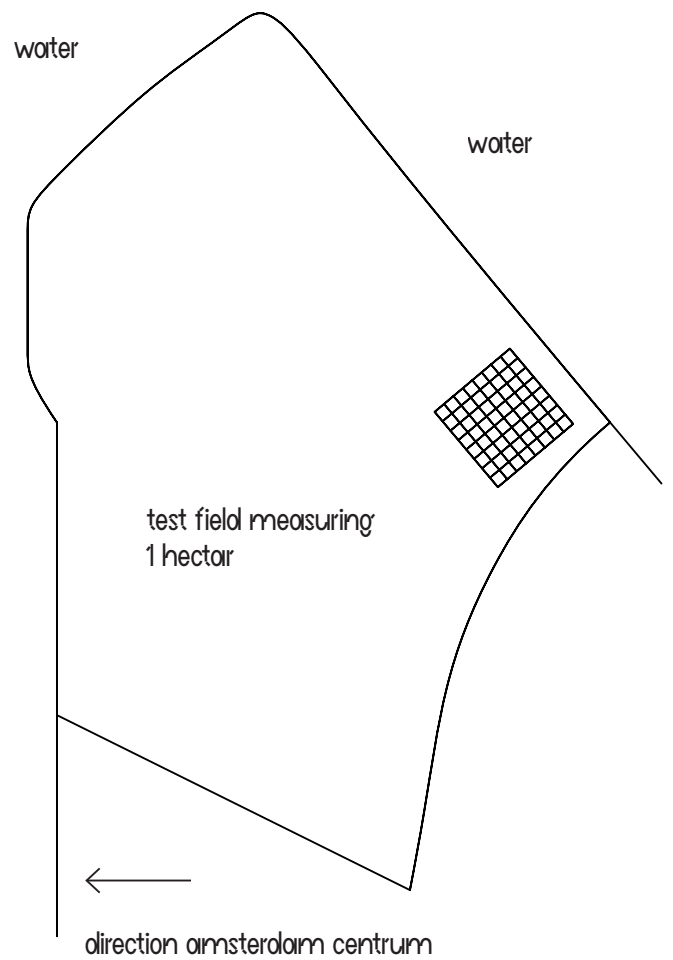
this effect has been used by humans since thousands of years, who have been using the dry and bare reed as a building material until this day the plant produces strong, water repellent pipes that are suitable for a nearly infinite variety of applications. however, reed is most commonly used for traditional reed-roofs, as insulation material or to create smaller objects like baskets and trays. the cultivation of reed does not only produce material but also has the positive effect that it contributes to the maintenance of a healthy and balanced landscape. reed is a renewable material, which has to be harvested every year between january and march before the birds begin to breed again.

but also cleanses the water from pollutants and forms a habitat for a grand variety of animals. the thick reed bushes are particularly important for birds as they offer a well protected breeding ground. some reed habitats accommodate up to 200 different

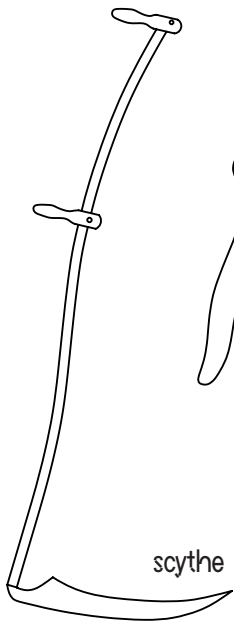
prototyping

to gain the necessary knowledge and experience to create an extensive space of reed in the sluisbuurt quarter from 2022–2024 a prototyping period is needed. therefore a first phase of the public art work development foresees to establish a test field with a surface of one hectare on which reed is planted, grown, maintained and harvested for the first time. this will generate a better understanding on how to properly cultivate and take care of the plant. furthermore the harvested material will be collected and turned into building material by cleaning and drying it. the homegrown material can then be used to develop first objects, furniture pieces and spatial structures. those are supposed to be implemented in the actual “reed field” later on but can already be used on the construction site in the year before.

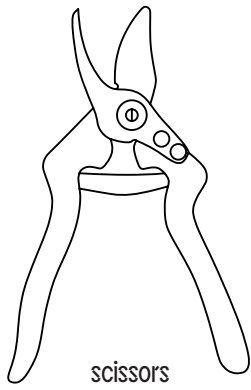
each step in the development of the test field is supposed to take place in form of a performance. for these performances all necessary tools, garments and other objects needed will be designed by spazio cura in collaboration with different experts in the fields of planting, growing, maintaining, harvesting and processing reed. the goal is to create a set of tools and scripts, which will be accessible to the future inhabitants (humans and animals) of sluisbuurt allowing them to become active caretakers in the dike landscape.



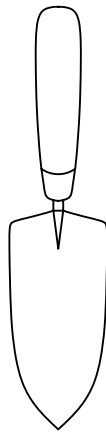
phase 1: tools



scythe



scissors

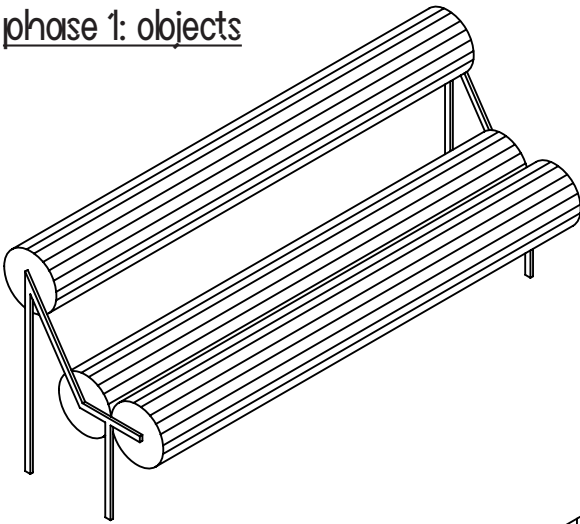


shovel

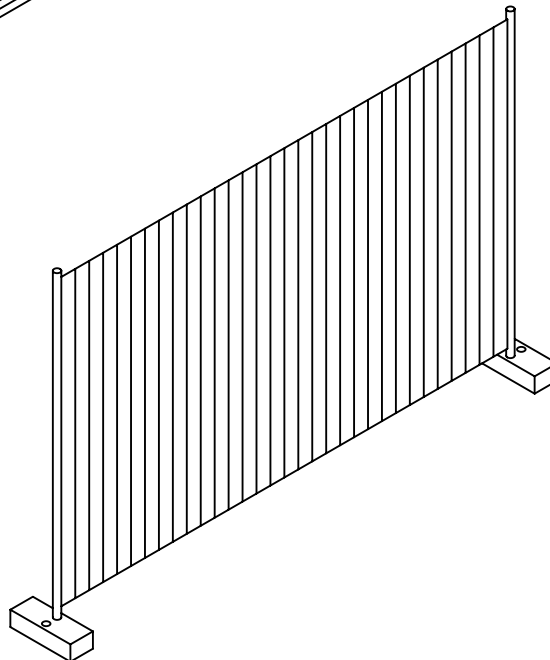
harvesting material for a public art work

after having gained experience and establishing connections with different actors concerned with reed, from 2025 until 2030 the knowledge is used to plan the actual "reed field". this plan should consider the available area of the zuider ijdiik around the sluisbuurt and take possible programmatic needs and restrictions into consideration. over the course of multiple years reed should be grown and harvested in order to establish a healthy landscape. the gathered material will be used to construct different installations, which will carefully be placed within the "reed field". these physical interventions are supposed to correspond to the theme of human-animal interrelation and give the possibility to enhance the experience of being in the "reed field".

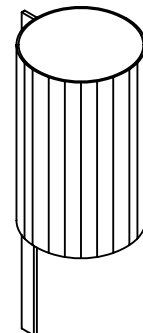
phase 1: objects



bench from steel and reed

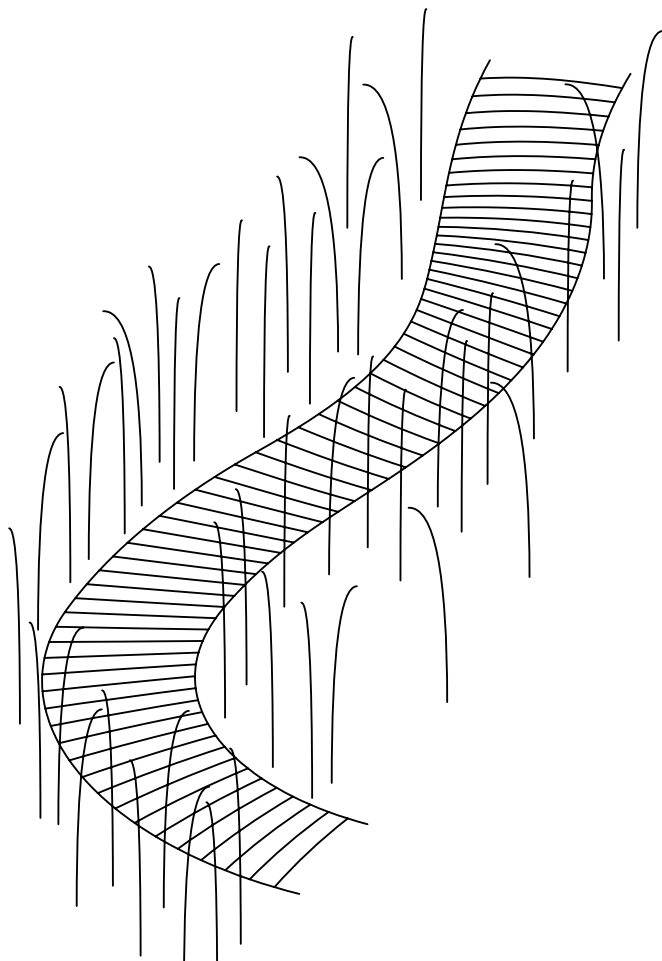


construction fence with reed



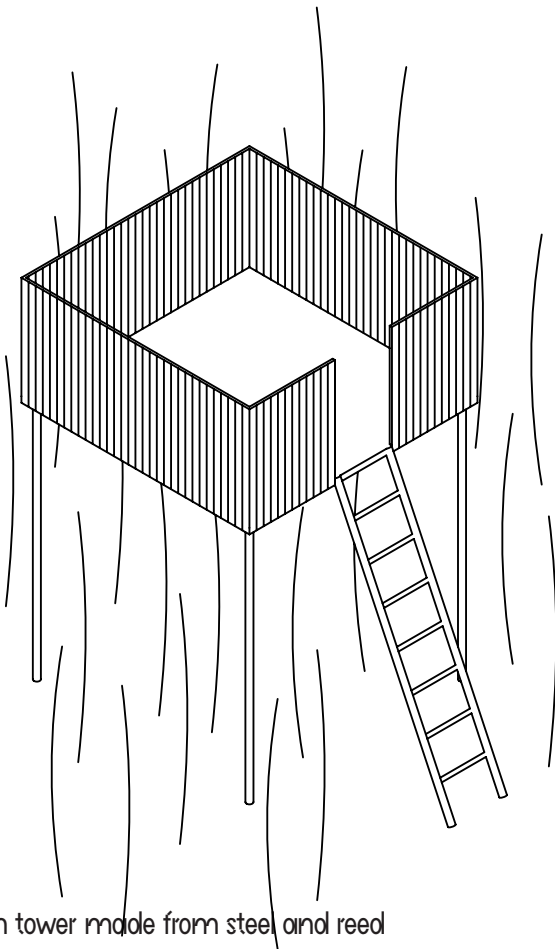
trashcan from steel and reed

annual caretaking programme



paths made from reed

the goal of the “field of reed” is to create a space, which offers a pleasant environment for both humans and animals. this can only be achieved, if it is being cared for and properly maintained. this means that the reed has to be harvested every year and that objects made from it have to be regularly repaired, or replaced. at the same time there is the possibility to organically alter the space according to current situations. new paths can be implemented, new objects and structures can be added, while others might be removed. for that purpose the “reed field” foresees to hire people, who are responsible for maintaining the space and are responsible for taking care of it. all objects and garments needed to execute this job of care will be designed by spazio cura with the help of the experience gained in the years before.



watch tower made from steel and reed



1. "wheatfield for manhattan" by agnes denes
2. reed roof installation by santiago borja on top of the sonneveld house in rotterdam
3. mr20 chair by ludwig mies van der rohe in chromed steel and wicker
4. reed bench by steven banken

"reed field"

(13)

by spazio cura



5. traditional indian dwelling made of reed
6. wall installation made from reed by olaf holzapfel

network

the (nellyÜ)theo van doesburg foundation and spazio cura welcome responses and ideas to further develop, prototype and finance the "reed field" proposal. especially the expertise and interest of the following parties is required: nature ecological network (nen), placemaking sluisebuurt, stadscuratorium gemeente amsterdam, weaver esme hofman, gardener piet oudolf, design publisher thomas eyck, metal workshop simon ertl and markus zull.

for more information visit
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colophon

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