

English guide



Food Forward

Scenarios for the future

Food Forward

Stroom Den Haag

15 January- 1 April 2012

Opening: Saturday 14 January 2012, 4 pm

Location: Hogewal 1-9, The Hague

Curator: Karen Verschooren, Z33

Image cover: Dunne & Raby, *Between Reality and the Impossible*, 2010, Foragers 6. Photo: Jason Evans

Food Forward

Food Forward presents scenarios by artists and designers for the future of our food production and food consumption. Cynical stock speculators, irresponsible consumerism and a growing world population force us to search for radically new solutions and ideas. The future of food is the future of mankind.

Food Forward shows new works by John O'Shea (UK), Michiko Nitta and Michael Burton (UK), and Arne Hendriks (NL). In addition, an older work by Christian Jankowski (DE) is shown: *The Hunt*. In this video Jankowski goes hunting in a supermarket for food. He shoots with a bow and arrow on a frozen chicken or a pack of eggs. This work can be understood as an introduction into *Food Forward*. It points towards the central problem that the overall *Foodprint* program at Stroom Den Haag addresses: the alienation of man and food in an urban context.

We take this alienation as a 'default' starting point from which the distorted relation between man, food and the city is considered in a radically different way without any attempt to restore or repair it. We accept with Jankowski the problem of our food production and food consumption and see it as a starting point to explore new possibilities. The proposals in *Food Forward* go, as such, much further than city farms and urban gardening.

Through the works of Jankowski, Hendriks, Nitta

& Burton, and O'Shea, *Food Forward* zooms in on the individual's relation to food, focusing on the personal and very intimate relation between the human being and the food that is being put into and digested by the body. However, it also zooms out and considers the position of the human being in a larger ecological context; the relation between humans and their dwellings (cities, for an ever increasing amount of the world population), mediated by food.

While some of the future visions presented in *Food Forward* might seem more realistic or plausible than others, all of them are rooted in today's scientific research and existing or developing technologies. The artists in this exhibition take these scientific as well as societal developments further and present far-reaching visualizations and scenarios for the future. It would be a mistake to think that through their futuristic nature, the works avoid the issue. On the contrary, they propose solutions by redefining the problem.

Food Forward thus inquires if we are still asking the right questions. Will there be a need for urban gardening and farming, if we agree to grow food in laboratories? Should we focus our attention to increasing or altering current food production systems or should we switch gears and focus on how we can alter humans and their consumption patterns to diminish the need for food?

Food Forward is curated by the Belgian curator Karen Verschooren. She works at Z33 in Hasselt (BE) and is the chairman of the assessment committee for audiovisual arts at the Flemish

Community. Recent exhibitions of her include *Werk Nu* (2009) and *Alter Nature* (2010-2011). This summer *Mind the System, Find the Gap* opens, an exhibition on which Verschooren works together with her colleagues at Z33.

During the opening weekend, on Sunday January 15, at 3 PM, Verschooren will give a guided tour through *Food Forward*.

Foodprint

In 2009 Stroom Den Haag started with the program *Foodprint. Food for the city*. The program takes place over the course of three years and focuses on the influence food can have on the culture, shape and functioning of the city, using The Hague as a case study. The program invites artists and designers to develop appealing proposals on the subject, while at the same time establishing a clear connection with entrepreneurs, farmers, food experts and the general public.

Largely hidden from the view of the city dweller, a worldwide network of food producers and supermarket chains take care of our supply of daily food. This is very convenient, but it is also the cause of many problems. A handful of distributors decide what we eat. For the most part the people who produce the food are invisible. There is hardly any knowledge how food is actually produced. The return of food production to the city might help to increase this awareness and might also create healthy and safe food within the boundaries of a more sustainable city. With *Foodprint*, Stroom aims to explore the possibilities of The Hague as a production landscape and to develop utopian, appealing and feasible proposals.

Foodprint kicked off in 2009 with an international group exhibition curated by Marieke Berkers and an international symposium. Now, almost three years later, we close the *Foodprint* program with

the *Food Forward* exhibition, the publication *Food for the City* and a *Food Tribunal*.

In the publication *Food for the City. A Future for the Metropolis* (NAi Publishers) we investigate how we can feed the cities of the future. Twelve views of experts – from activist and economist to philosopher and chef – from around the world are presented, a timeline of the most striking “foodmoments” from 2050 BC. to 2050 AD. Is created and a rich visual essay offers a different view on food chains. The book is edited by Brigitte van der Sande.

The *Food Tribunal* (April, 5 2012) invites experts from different disciplines to present their view on the question “How do we feed the cities of the future?”. The Tribunal will instigate discussion through a set of statements and engage the public actively within the debate.

For more information on these and other activities during *Food Forward*, please consult the Stroom School section in this guide or visit www.stroom.nl.

Christian Jankowski

The Hunt (1992-97) is Christian Jankowski's most seminal early project. The footage captures a segment of Jankowski's weeklong quest to eat only groceries he shot in the supermarket with a bow and arrow. Jankowski visited several supermarkets and kept on filming until security guards kicked him out. The final video, 1 minute and 11 seconds long, was recorded in 1 take and shows us a successful hunt. Jankowski shoots eggs, butter, a chicken and other items. He puts them, arrows still in place, on the conveyor belt and pays an unperturbed cashier. The video, shot by a friend, has a certain Do-It-Yourself or home video quality that makes it all the more absurd and funny.

In *Frieze* (2002, issue 66) James Trainor and Ana Paula Cohen see key aspects of Jankowski's work in this early video: "a regard for process over finished product; a dependence on the unpredictable participation of others, specifically non-artists and amateurs (he enlists the unwitting shoppers and cashiers) within scripted or improvised situations; a fascination with types of exchange (economic, linguistic, visual) and role reversals (budding young professional artist or dilettantish sportsman?); and, above all, a comfortable ease in making gesture, play and humour vital to his art."¹

In 1997, the filmmaker Lars Kraume approached

¹ Read the full article online at http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/poisoned_arrow/

Jankowski because he wanted to make a film featuring *The Hunt*. The romantic comedy by Kraume, *Viktor Vogel: Commercial Man* (2001), dealt with a young female video artist, Rosa, whose adman boyfriend, Viktor, steals her ideas and turns them into hip and commercially successful product commercials. Jankowski agreed on the condition that he would be allowed to make his own short film during Kraume's filming process, using his actors and sets. This turned into the video work *Rosa* (2001). Both premiered at the same time, *Rosa* at the Berlin Biennale and *Viktor Vogel* in theaters.



Screenshot from *The Hunt* (1992-97) by Christian Jankowski. Courtesy the artist and Lisson Gallery.

John O'Shea

British artist John O'Shea has been working for several years on projects related to the ethics and dilemmas of eating meat. The most prominent of these works is probably the ongoing *Meat Licence Proposal* project. This project centers on the premise that people who are comfortable with eating meat, should be equally comfortable with killing animals.

O'Shea proposes a new law; once you've killed an animal you are given a licence to buy meat. Citizens wishing to purchase or consume meat will thus be required to obtain a 'meat licence' through their specific and supervised engagement in the act of killing an animal. The project documents the legal struggles and uncovers the hypocrisies of the meat industry and public attitudes to meat consumption. Since 2008, The Meat Licence Proposal has operated as an organization working towards the collaborative development of a new kind of law, which would compel individuals to directly engage with the act of killing implicit in animal slaughter.

For *Food Forward*, O'Shea has developed two works: *The Meat Licence Proposa* and *Black Market Pudding*. The first project consists of audio responses to The Meat Licence Proposal as recorded by O'Shea on Market Street in Manchester (UK). Shoppers on this UK high street were asked to respond to an unusual new law - The Meat Licence Proposal - that would

require all citizens wishing to purchase or consume meat to obtain a special licence. These audio fragments are presented alongside corresponding legal documents. The documents support but also sometimes contradict claims that people made in response to the proposal for a new law. The audio files and legal documents are presented through a digital interface, developed in collaboration with Tom Schofield, which allows the gallery visitors to explore gaps between public perception of 'law' and the actual rights and freedoms of citizens contained within written legal documents past and present.

Black Market Pudding represents a completely novel ethically conscious food product, which is being launched and showcased as part of *Food Forward*. Presented at Stroom within a refrigerated delicatessen counter, *Black Market Pudding* is a traditional blood sausage of the UK and Ireland - combining congealed pigs blood with various fats, cereals, herbs and spices - manufactured using blood from a living pig! The pudding is blanched to result in a dark brown colored sausage which is sweet to taste and often served hot as part of a hearty cooked breakfast or cold as an exquisite starter dish.

Black Market Pudding is supported by a robust business plan, ensuring a uniquely fair deal for farmer, animal and consumer. Register your interest online and you will be among the first to be allowed to place advance orders for your own Black Market Pudding in 2012. The pricing structure for Black Market Pudding is such that the producers of the sausage are compensated for the costs associated with breeding and

maintaining the animals that are kept outside of the traditional food chain. The consumer pays premium market prices for these delicious puddings in order to provide an unparalleled peace of mind: In purchasing and consuming Black Market Pudding we are keeping the animal from slaughter - no animals are harmed!

More info on The Meat Licence Proposal
www.meatlicence.org.uk

To register your interest in Black Market Pudding
www.blackmarketpudding.co.uk



John O'Shea, researching *The Meat Licence Proposal*. Image courtesy the artist.



John O'Shea, try-out for *Black Market Pudding*. Image courtesy the artist.

Michael Burton & Michiko Nitta

Michael Burton and Michiko Nitta's project *The Feast After Agri* is a collaborative investigation into future evolutions to our food systems. They ask what new Cultural Revolution will replace agriculture and how will our species and civilization will be transformed?

Just as agriculture catalyzed human development 10,000 years ago, *The Feast After Agri* proposes new food cultures to revolutionize the way we feed ourselves. These are created in reaction to emerging science and technology to develop alternative ways to fuel the body. They explore and reveal a complex history and future.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates the world population will grow to 9 billion by 2050. To accommodate this growth, they warn that the world will have to nearly double its current output of food. In reaction, *After Agri* urges us to make dramatic changes to sustain such a large population in a changing world. It investigates how our bodies, behavior, society, culture, landscape and planet might be reconsidered.

For *Food Forward*, Nitta and Burton explore two of the seven future food cultures from *The Feast After Agri* in greater depth: *Algaculture* and the *Republic of Salvation*.

Algaculture designs a new symbiotic relationship between humans and algae. It proposes a future

where humans will be enhanced with algae living inside new bodily organs, allowing us to be semi-photosynthetic. Almost enabling us to become plant-like by gaining food from light. As such, we will be symbionts (meaning that both entities entirely depend on each other for survival), entering into a mutually beneficial relationship with the algae.

This scenario is, among other sources, inspired by the work of scientists Debora MacKenzie and Michael Le Page who wrote about photosynthetic creatures, or what they call “plantimals” in the *New Scientist* (2010). Such photosynthetic organisms currently include lichen, sea slugs and salamanders that welcome algae into their bodies, in a partnership called endosymbiosis.

The *Algaculture* installation at Stroom will create a vision of the integration of algae into our bodies. Visitors will enter a Solarium from the future where people go to feed for enjoyment and get access to light.

The *Republic of Salvation* starts with the food shortages and famine we will face in the future. Governments will be forced to ration food through restricted food policies to ensure that everyone is fed and to control social unrest. It creates a future where inhabitants of the city are allocated a quota of food according to their employment. The type of food they receive is carefully designed to the emotional, intellectual and physical demands of their job.

The exhibited piece explores an industrial worker’s diet that is largely designed on modified

starch, enabling the body to work for longer on fewer nutrients.

Alongside exploring the possibility of a government controlled food supply, the *Republic of Salvation* also investigates the biological reaction to a mono-diet. The scientific study of nutrigenomics has found that the more starch we eat (such as through bread or potatoes), the more enzyme called Amylase to convert starch to sugar, is found in saliva. The worker in the scenario presented at Stroom, uses the advantage of a high starch diet to allow him to create alcohol illegally from his increased saliva production. The amylase enzyme found in saliva being used in industrial alcohol production to create sugar from starch to feed yeast.

Actor featuring in *Algaculture*: Noah Young

Special thanks to: Jon Ardern, Matt Heath, Martin Blum

More information on The Feast After Agri can be found on the project website:
www.afteragri.co.uk



Michiko Nitta and Michael Burton, *Republic of Salvation*.
Image courtesy the artists.



Michiko Nitta and Michael Burton, *Algaculture*. Image
courtesy the artists.

Arne Hendriks

Arne Hendriks is a Dutch artist and curator who initiated the project *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. *The Incredible Shrinking Man* is a speculative design research project about the consequences of downsizing the human species to 50 centimeters. It has been a long established trend for people to grow taller. As a direct result we need more energy, more food and more space. But what if we decided to turn this trend around? What if we use our knowledge to shrink mankind?

Most people are aware of the fact that there are currently more than 7 billion people on earth, and many of them also know that the average person is getting taller. Not everyone seems to realize, however, that this increased length translates into a significant additional pressure on our food supplies. In terms of housing, transportation, and many other things, an increased body length means a proportionate increase in resources required. Fortunately, and this is the good news, the shrinking of people has inversely, the same major consequences. The human of 50 centimeters needs, in theory, only 2% of what we use now.

For *Food Forward*, *The Incredible Shrinking Man* focuses on the implications of smaller human beings for (urban) food supplies. A man of 50 centimeters will not only need less calories (probably between 60 and 200 calories per day), but his smaller size will also lead to a dramatic

change in his relationship to the ingredients we know and use.

The presentation at Stroom consists of four parts. A *Speed Crop Balcony* will be installed on an “old format” city balcony now filled with baby vegetables. A person of 50 centimeters can keep a large vegetable garden on the surface of an average city balcony. After all, the smaller people will live for a long time in the “ruins” of our cities. On the balcony so-called micro greens are growing, tiny sprouts that grow easily and quickly, and contain a very healthy dose of concentrated nutrients. On several posters in the gallery space, a speculative study is outlined that looks for suitable farming grounds within the city limits of The Hague, and the possibilities of using vacant recreational green areas for subsistence farming in the city.

Behind the *Speed Crop Balcony* we find the *Somatostatin Zebrafish Farm*, a fish farm for zebra fish. Zebra fish are widely used in genetic research. Recently the first zebra fish has been developed with medicinal properties. The zebra fish in the *Somatostatin Zebrafish Farm* are manipulated in such a way that they contain large amounts of somatostatin. Somatostatin is a natural growth-reducing hormone that also delays digestion. By regularly eating a fish from this farm, one suppresses both hunger and the tendency to grow.

In the adjoining room we find the *Sunflower Table*, a table based on a large mature sunflower that can accommodate five small persons who can sit around the table while they pull the seeds

from the flower. *Sunflower Table* explores future possibilities in the relationship between people and ingredients. How do you relate to a banana or a pomegranate when you are 50 centimeters tall? And can we, by means of objects such as the *Sunflower Table*, be transported into a future scenario in which this has become a reality?

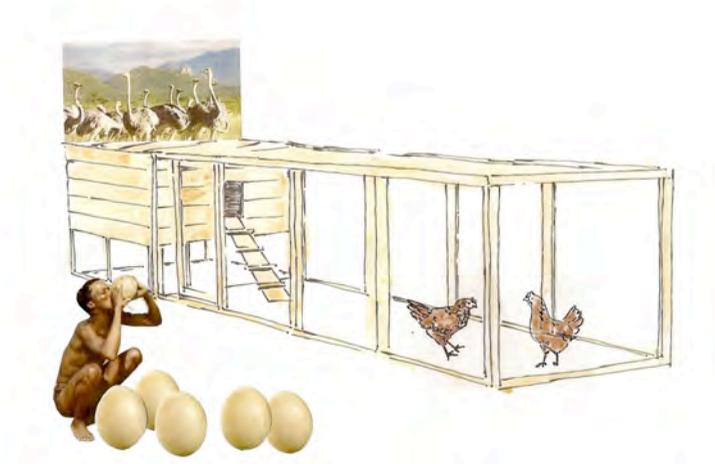
In a sense this is also what the *Poultry House* aims at. This project investigates the relationship between man and micro-livestock, chickens in this case. What kind of tools do we need to prepare a chicken? How do we capture, slaughter, and cook a chicken when we are 50 centimeters tall? To better understand this relationship, we organized an *Ostrich Dinner* on December 22, 2011 at Stroom where an ostrich was prepared as if it was a chicken. This process was filmed and the film is now shown in the exhibition space alongside a chicken coop and ostrich eggs.

On Hendriks' website his research on the growing and shrinking of humans is brought together and new developments are regularly posted. *The Incredible Shrinking Man* is based on research that has been conducted for years now into the benefits and ways in which humans and animals could be shrunk.

website www.the-incredible-shrinking-man.net



Arne Hendriks, *Speed Crop Balcony*. Image courtesy the artist.



Arne Hendriks, *Poultry House*. Image courtesy the artist.

Scenarios for the future: speculating through art and design

The artists who created new work for *Food Forward* have worked on scenarios – both radical and futuristic – that are based on existing trends. Some have taken these trends further and elaborated the context around them (Burton and Nitta for example). Others operate within and work with existing frameworks and push that logic further (O’Shea for example). The results are radical and futuristic scenarios built on realistic foundations.

Some of the artists work on the intersection of art and design, some present us speculations, others “ready to be implemented” frameworks. In this sense, not every work in the exhibition provides a practical answer to the question how the cities of the future can be fed or how we can solve the problem of the alienation between people, food and cities. The exhibition is aimed at stimulating thought and changing our perspective by placing us in a situation of what you might call *realistic estrangement*.

We can approach this way of working of the artists and designers in the exhibition from the perspective and the strategies of Critical Design. They put forward speculative and radical proposals to challenge our assumptions on the future of our food. On the subject of Critical Design, the designers Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby created a great Q&A that we will here reproduce. They write that Critical Design is

aimed at making us think, raising awareness, exposing assumptions, provoking action and sparking debate. That is what we hope to achieve with *Food Forward*.

The work by Dunne & Raby is, in general, very relevant for *Food Forward*. In particular the project *The Foragers*, for which they propose to change our digestive capacities to meet challenges to food production in the future. They write on *The Foragers*:

“So far we have not really embraced the power to modify ourselves. What if we could extract nutritional value from non-human foods using a combination of synthetic biology and new digestive devices inspired by digestive systems of other mammals, birds, fish and insects?”

The image on the cover of this exhibition guide shows *The Foragers* foraging at the margins of a city for food. A video from *The Foragers* is on view in the library window of Stroom Den Haag, together with key literature on the future of food.²

² *The Foragers* is on view at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen until February 26, 2012.

Critical Design FAQ

Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby

1. What is Critical Design?

Critical Design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions and givens about the role products play in everyday life. It is more of an attitude than anything else, a position rather than a method. There are many people doing this who have never heard of the term critical design and who have their own way of describing what they do. Naming it Critical Design is simply a useful way of making this activity more visible and subject to discussion and debate.

Its opposite is affirmative design: design that reinforces the status quo.

2. Where did it come from?

Design as critique has existed before under several guises. Italian Radical Design of the 1970s was highly critical of prevailing social values and design ideologies, critical design builds on this attitude and extends it into today's world.

During the 1990s there was a general move towards conceptual design which made it easier for noncommercial forms of design like critical design to exist, this happened mainly in the furniture world, product design is still conservative and closely linked to the mass market.

The term Critical Design was first used in Anthony Dunne's book *Hertzian Tales* (1999) and later in *Design Noir* (2001). Since then many other people have developed their own variations.

3. Who does it?

Dunne & Raby and their graduate students from the Royal College of Art (RCA) such as James Auger, Elio Caccavale and Noam Toran, are probably the most well known, but there are other designers working in a similar way who would not describe what they do as critical design: Krzysztof Wodiczko, Natalie Jeremijenko, Jurgen Bey, Marti Guixé ...

4. What is it for?

Mainly to make us think. But also raising awareness, exposing assumptions, provoking action, sparking debate, even entertaining in an intellectual sort of way, like literature or film.

5. Why is it happening now?

The world we live in today is incredibly complex, our social relations, desires, fantasies, hopes and fears are very different from those at the beginning of the 20c. Yet many key ideas informing mainstream design stem from the early 20c.

Society has moved on but design has not, Critical Design is one of many mutations design is undergoing in an effort to remain relevant to the complex technological, political, economic and social changes we are experiencing at the beginning of the 21c.

6. What role does humour play?

Humour is important but often misused. Satire is the goal. But often only parody and pastiche are achieved. These reduce the effectiveness in a number of ways. They are lazy and borrow existing formats, and they signal too clearly that it is ironic and so relieve some burden from the viewer. The viewer should experience a dilemma, is it serious or not? Real or not? For Critical design to be successful they need to make up their own mind.

Also, it would be very easy to preach, a skilful use of satire and irony can engage the audience in a more

constructive away by appealing to its imagination as well as engaging the intellect. Good political comedians achieve this well. Deadpan and black humour work best.

7. Is it a movement?

No. It's not really a field that can be neatly defined. It's more about values and an attitude, a way of looking at design and imagining its possibilities beyond the narrow definitions of what is presented through media and in the shops.

8. What are its main relatives?

Activism
Cautionary Tales
Conceptual Design
Contestable Futures
Design Fiction
Interrogative Design
Radical Design
Satire
Social Fiction
Speculative Design

9. What are the biggest misconceptions?

That it is negative and anti-everything.
That it is only commentary and cannot change anything
That it is jokey
That it is not concerned with aesthetics
That it is against mass-production
That it is pessimistic
That it is not real
That it is art

10. But isn't it art?

It is definitely not art. It might borrow heavily from art in terms of methods and approaches but that's it. We expect art to be shocking and extreme. Critical Design needs to be closer to the everyday, that's where its

power to disturb comes from. Too weird and it will be dismissed as art, too normal and it will be effortlessly assimilated. If it is regarded as art it is easier to deal with, but if it remains as design it is more disturbing, it suggests that the everyday as we know it could be different, that things could change.

11. Isn't it a bit dark?

Yes, but not for the sake of it. Dark, complex emotions are ignored in design, nearly every other area of culture accepts people are complex, contradictory and even neurotic, but not design, we view people as obedient and predictable users and consumers.

One of critical Design's roles is to question the limited range of emotional and psychological experiences offered through designed products. Design is assumed to only make things nice, it's as though all designers have taken an unspoken Hippocratic oath, this limits and prevents us from fully engaging with and designing for the complexities of human nature which of course is not always nice. It is more about the positive use of negativity, not negativity for its own sake, but to draw attention to a scary possibility in the form of a cautionary tale.

12. And its future?

A danger for critical design is that it ends up as a form of sophisticated design entertainment: 90% humour 10% critique. It needs to avoid this situation by identifying and engaging with complex and challenging issues. Areas like Future Forecasting would benefit from its more gritty view of human nature and ability to make abstract issues tangible. It could also play a role in public debates about the social, cultural and ethical impact on everyday life of emerging and future technologies.

<http://www.dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>

Stroom School

Stroom School is the umbrella term for the public programming at Stroom. Through various events, certain themes of the exhibition are further explored.

Agenda

Free guided tour on Sundays at 3PM

On selected Sundays there are free guided tours through the exhibition:

- January 15:

During the opening weekend, on Sunday January 15, there will be a guided tour by the guest curator of *Food Forward*, Karen Verschooren.

- February 6: Guided tour by high school student Jessica van der Pol (pupil Motaigne Lyceum, The Hague).

- February 26:

Lucas Evers, Head of the Culture Program at Waag Society will give a guided tour on Sunday February 26. Evers has organized various projects on the intersection of art, technology and biology.

- March 11:

Willem Velthoven, one of the founders of Mediamatic in Amsterdam, will be our guide on Sunday March 11. Velthoven has recently been active in projects related to food waste and has established an Urban Mushroom Farm at Mediamatic.

Guided tour and lunch on Fridays

Every Friday companies and organizations are welcomed at Stroom for a guided tour and lunch (10 Euros a person). If you are interested in taking part in these Friday events, please visit www.stroom.nl.

Publication launch: Food for the City. A Future for the Metropolis

The publication *Food for the City*, published by NAI Publishers, will be launched during the *Food Tribunal* that takes place on April 5, 2012.

Publication launch: Nils Norman, Eetbaar Park/Edible Park

In this book Norman explains how he sets to work, what his sources of inspiration are, and in which artistic and social-critical context his work can be placed. Edible Park will be launched during the Food Tribunal that takes place on April 5, 2012.

April 5 2012: Food Tribunal

The *Food Tribunal* invites experts from different disciplines to present their view on the question "How do we feed the cities of the future?"

Reservations and more information via: www.stroom.nl

April 1 2012: Finissage

The exhibition closes with a guided tour by Arno van Roosmalen, director of Stroom Den Haag.

On www.stroom.nl you can find the latest information on the Stroom School activities.

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Foundation, The Netherlands Architecture Fund,
Koppert Cress and Dunne & Raby.

Stroom
Den Haag