

International  
Architecture  
Biennale  
Rotterdam



# Annual report Overview 2023

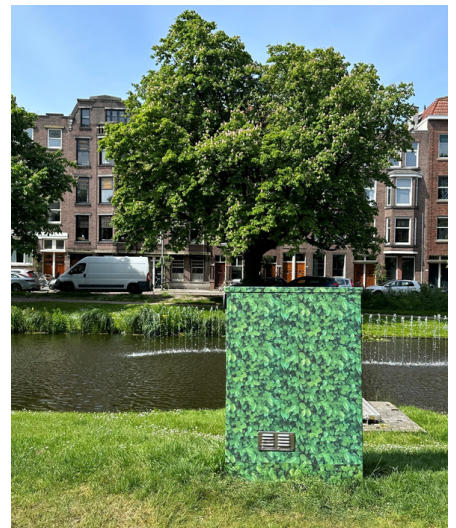
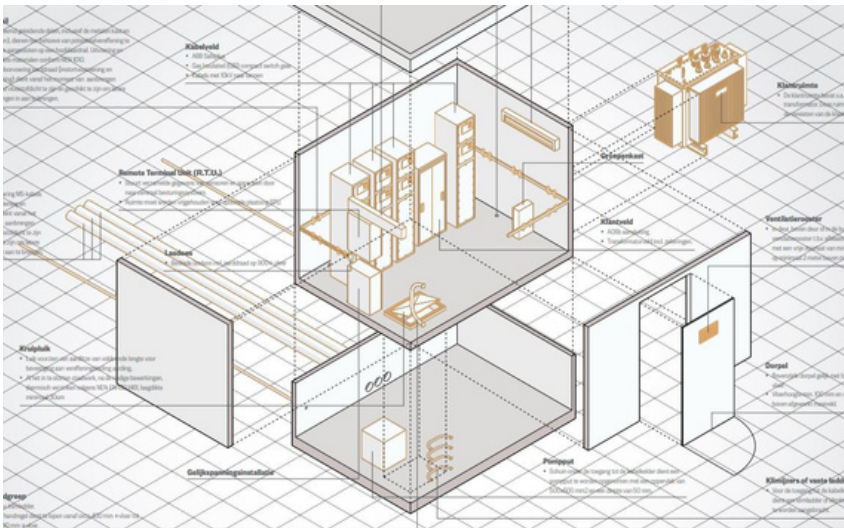




# Research

## Jeux des joules

In 2023, the Cities of Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Amsterdam, in collaboration with the IABR, LOLA Landscape Architects and DRIFT, launched the Transition Atelier Jeux de Joules, an initiative focused on the spatial challenges of the energy transition. This transition to the use of renewable energy, which is essential for urban design, infrastructure, and energy production, requires a strategic approach to the integration of 48,000 new electricity substations into the Dutch cityscape. The Atelier, led by LOLA's Peter Veenstra, is looking for innovative solutions that combine technological innovation, aesthetics, and multifunctionality. Through a series of working sessions and public talks, the project involves various stakeholders, including technology partners and design teams, to work towards a seamless and minimal impact of this transition on the urban landscape. The results will be presented at the next edition of the IABR.



Jeux de Joules: Systems Research. © BRIGHT and an electricity substation. Photo: Saskia van Stein.

## Atelier A16 Rotterdam, Mobility as a Driver for Change

The Atelier A16 Rotterdam, an IABR initiative on behalf of the City of Rotterdam, the Department of Waterways and Public Works, Delft University of Technology, and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in collaboration with the Vereniging Deltametropool, focuses on the future role of the A16 and its environs. The initiative uses research by design to provide a new perspective on how this infrastructure and its interaction with the City of Rotterdam – including the Alexanderpolder and Oostflank districts and the bridge to Rotterdam-Zuid – can serve as a catalyst for wider social and spatial value creation. With a kick-off workshop led by Saskia van Stein and with contributions by various consultants, the project was launched with the participation of the design offices West 8 and H+N+S. The results will be presented at the IABR 2024. This project is part of a larger knowledge and innovation program on urban ring roads and spatial development. During this project, the IABR will ensure a fruitful exchange and co-creation among designers, residents, and administrators.

# Agents of change

The IABR has appointed Agents of Change – young professionals who explore innovative topics outside the mainstream – to investigate new social and cultural issues and bring them into the public debate. This year's topics include fortification and colonial patterns by Australian architect Oskar Johanson, a changing concept of space by Berlin-based theorist Patricia Reed, and the EU's outsourcing of energy production explored by Ukrainian architect Lesia Topolnyk. Robbert de Vrieze delves into the possibility of socially inclusive gentrification through local value creation.



Energy Landscape in Morocco. Photograph: Lesia Topolnyk.



Lesia Topolnyk. Photograph: Lesia Topolnyk

# Panorama Ukraine

In 2022, architect Floris Alkemade donated his prize money from the Grote Maaskant Prijs to the IABR to establish a Reconstruction Atelier for Ukraine. This led to the Panorama Ukraine program, which focuses on long-term visions for the country. In 2023, the IABR organized a workshop focused on water management and the reconstruction of Ukraine, especially around the Dnipro Delta and the destroyed Kakhovka Dam. Participants, including international young talent selected through the Archiprix network, worked with Dutch and Ukrainian architects and experts on plans that were presented during a five-day event in Rotterdam. The results are available online and serve as inspiration for other conflict areas, with the collaboration of several Dutch and Ukrainian partners. In 2024, the project will continue to explore topics such as housebuilding, digitization, and food security.



Participants workshop and brainstorming session Working on Water. Photographs: Sabine van der Vooren.





# DOWN TO EARTH

The publication **DOWN TO EARTH: Designing for the Endgame** is a crucial call to designers to act against the climate crisis, compiled by IABR head curator George Brugmans. Following from the 9th edition of the Architecture Biennale Rotterdam, entitled **DOWN TO EARTH**, this book explores the research by design and results of various IABR-Ateliers, including Rotterdam III and East Flemish Core Area. It addresses our complex relationship with the Anthropocene and offers a view on how designers can play a crucial role in shaping the future. The publication, designed by ARK and printed by Stokroos, was made possible with the support of various funds and public bodies.



DOWN TO EARTH. Photographs: Rick Keus

# Programming

## Carbon Stories

The Carbon Stories series catalyzed the conversation about the (im)possibility of a climate-positive built environment. It covered the perspectives of financiers, developers, designers, builders, consultants, and material suppliers. This series of thematic sessions explored in depth the issue of CO2 in the building sector. Science journalist Geert Maarse moderated the discussions, presentations, and workshops.



Carbon Stories on 23rd February 2023. Photographs: Jacqueline Fuijkschot



# Fundraising for Türkiye and Syria

On 17 March 2023, the Nieuwe Instituut in collaboration with Artists in Solidarity Netherlands and various cultural partners, including the IABR and Kunstinstituut Melly, organized a benefit event in support of all those affected by the recent earthquakes in Türkiye, Syria, and the Kurdish regions. The evening, moderated by IABR director Saskia van Stein and featuring a contribution by Syrian architect Marwa Al Sabouni, focused on fundraising. The proceeds were donated to various organizations providing aid in the affected regions, including support for women, children, migrants, refugees, LGBTI+ persons, sex workers, and animals. The event attracted 150 visitors and was also streamed online.

# Water Works, Ecologies of Entanglement

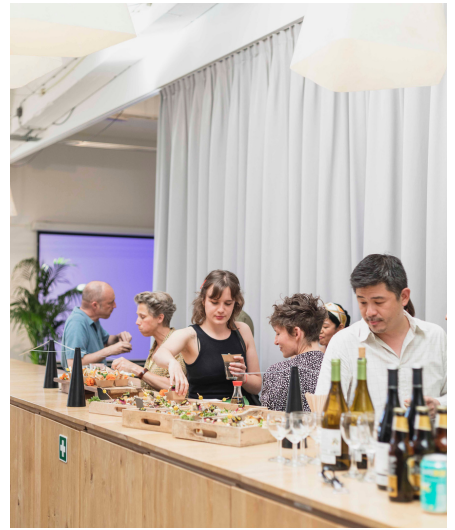
On 24 March 2023, the IABR and the Embassy of Water, which is part of the Dutch Design Foundation, organized a water event in parallel with the UN Water Conference in New York, focusing on the complex water challenges in the Netherlands, such as drought, sea level rise, and flooding. This event highlighted the need for fundamental and systemic changes in our approach to water management, with a focus on regenerative design solutions and the integration of non-human ecologies. The event emphasized the role of design and imagination in addressing these issues, with contributions by experts such as Floris Alkemade and Fransje Hooimeijer. The aim was to put new knowledge into practice, to involve others in the process, and to embed the ‘voice of water’ in landscape and urban structures. Marsha Simon moderated the event.



Water Works, ecologies of entanglement. Photographs: Sabine van der Vooren

# New Store Back Office Dialogue

The New Store Back Office Dialogue series, a collaboration between the IABR and the Nieuwe Instituut, explores non-extractive value models and examines the processes behind consumption, such as labor, infrastructure, and distribution. At the third edition on 14 June 2023, Irma Földényi, Selçuk Balamir, and Tom Frantzen shared their insights on the transformation of current financial-economic models and the role of design in creating alternative values. Saskia van Stein moderated the event.



New Store Back Office. Photographs: Sabine van der Vooren

## Rotterdam Architecture Month: Water Day & Night

On 30 June, the IABR, Architectuur Instituut Rotterdam (AIR) and Nieuwe Instituut hosted WATER DAY, the closing event of the Rotterdam Architecture Month 2023. It was a day full of activities focused on turning water challenges into opportunities to reconnect with nature and promote healthy, inclusive, and resilient cities. Tours, workshops, and lectures by experts such as Marco Vermeulen and Eva Pfannes explored local and global water issues and discussed solutions ranging from neighborhood water storage to large-scale design strategies. The evening program, WATER NIGHT, with speakers such as Shrishtee Bajpai and Henk Ovink, offered in-depth insights into climate justice and sustainable urbanism. The IABR's Saskia van Stein moderated the event.



Water Night. f.l.t.r. Ziega van den Brink, Shrishtee Bajpai en Henk Ovink. Photograph: Sabine van der Vooren

## Welcoming Wednesday

In 2023, the IABR opened its doors monthly to architects, researchers, urban designers, writers, and others with ideas about how to contribute to the social challenges posed by climate change. Aiming to look beyond its limited horizons, the organization welcomed questions, projects, portfolios, and initiatives. IABR director Saskia van Stein held conversations with various professionals such as Lesia Topolnyk and Harmen van der Wal van Krill, among many others, to explore a wide range of visions and approaches.





Welcoming Wednesday with Harmen van der Wal. Photographs: Sabine van der Vooren en Vivian Ammerlaan

# Collaborations

## Ministry of Make!

After the successful Ministry of Make! exhibition during the 10th IABR in 2022, the Ministry of Make! organized further exhibitions and public programs in various Dutch regions. These events sought to present innovative designs and models and promote discussions on regional architectural and landscape challenges. Architects and officials worked together on spatial solutions, with exhibitions in, among other places, the Provinciehuis in The Hague, Stadsschouwburg de Harmonie in Leeuwarden, the Waterschapshuis in Apeldoorn, and the Huis der Provincie in Arnhem. Lectures and knowledge sessions were also held, such as during the Dag van de Projectontwikkeling in The Hague, the Dag van de Ontwerpkraft in Rotterdam, and the Brabantse Week van het Wonen in Den Bosch.



Sub-exhibition Provinciehuis. Photographs: Sabine van der Vooren

# Research by Design Thirst

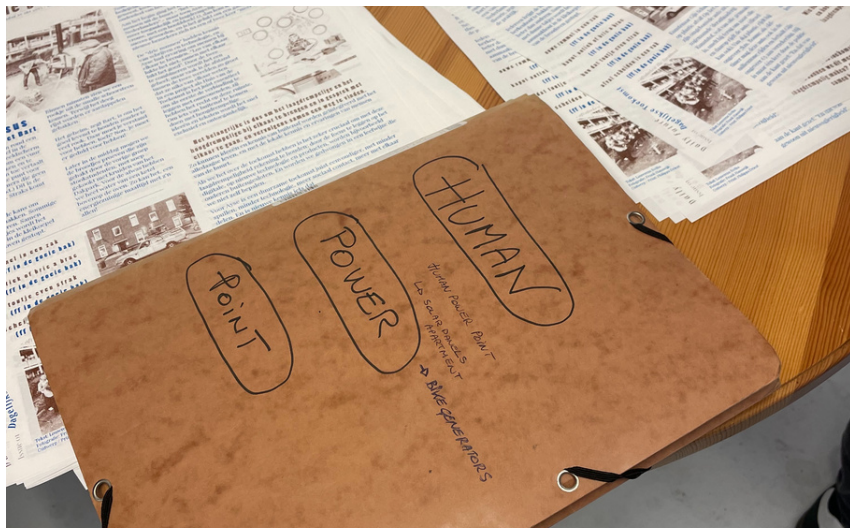
In 2023 the Design Academy Eindhoven, regional water board De Dommel and the IABR collaborated on a transdisciplinary research program on water with 120 master students of the Design Academy, supervised by Lada Hršak and Afaina de Jong. The program, THIRST, aimed to broaden the dialogue on water by positioning design at the intersection of technology, policy, science, and art in the light of climate extremes, social justice, and environmental challenges. With a wide range of mentors and guest lecturers, including Merwe Bedir and Anne van Kuijk, the project focused on exploring 'thirst' as a metaphor and the cultural values surrounding water management and delta design. The program emphasized the critical role of designers in the future of our planetary water management.



Kick-off THIRST. Photograph: Ilse Meulendijks

## IABR Commons Collectief BOTU

From 2017 until at least 2028, the IABR is working with the Rotterdam district of Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu) to phase out natural gas by 2030. BoTu is a district of both vulnerability and resilience, which is due in part to its low-income and diverse demographics. Active residents are engaged in the community, sharing knowledge, and working towards a better, climate-adaptive living environment. The IABR supports BoTu as a testing ground for the energy transition and citizenship. It has launched studies and initiatives such as the IABR Commons Collectief BoTu and the Huis van de Toekomst (House of the Future) in 2022 and 2023, focusing on community spaces, ownership positions, and local ownership (commons) with the aim of achieving a socially just energy transition. This is in line with future projects such as Transition-Scapes and the IABR 2024: Nature of Hope, and includes energy transition initiatives in the Professor J.J.P. Oudblok.

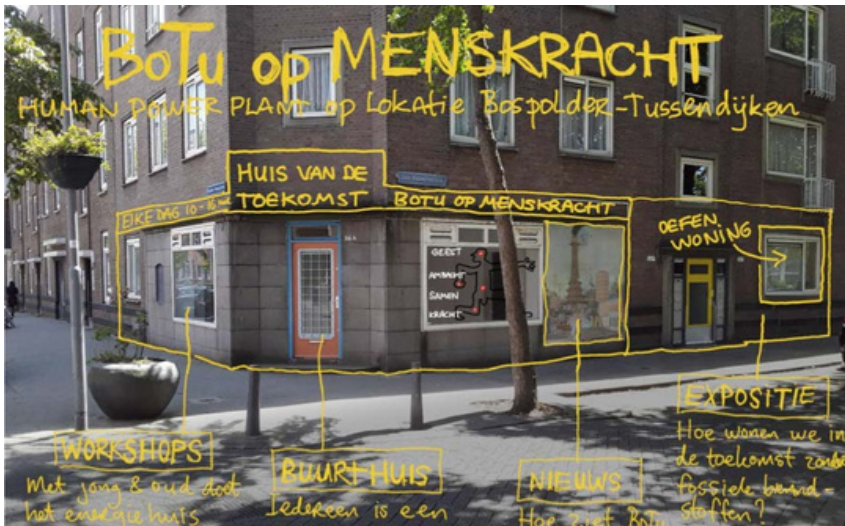


Opening event at EnergieMeent. Photographs: Huis van de Toekomst.



# Transition-Scapes

The IABR is collaborating with the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences (HvA) on the Transition-Scapes research project, led by curator Linda Vlassenrood, to develop a new design methodology for addressing social challenges. This two-year project, focusing on vision, participation, and institutional change, integrates the experiences of the IABR, particularly in the Rotterdam district of Bospolder-Tussendijken (BoTu), where the IABR has been active for some time. Exploratory talks were held in 2023 to link this Rotterdam case to the research, partly through the efforts of the Huis van de Toekomst and the BoTu Commons Collectief. With contributions from design offices such as Bright and Generation.Energy, the project will start in 2024 with a series of workshops in BoTu, while a similar track will run in parallel at Haven-Stad in Amsterdam in collaboration with Arcam.



The Location of the Huis van de Toekomst and the Rotterdam district of Bospolder-Tussendijken.  
Images: Huis van de Toekomst.

## Rotterdam-Based Architecture Institutes

Since 2023, the Rotterdam-based architecture institutes united in the Rotterdams Architectuur Cultuuroverleg (RAC), including the IABR, AFFR, AIR and the Nieuwe Instituut, have been working together on a common vision of architecture for the city's cultural agenda. The RAC pursues a diverse and multi-voiced architectural landscape in Rotterdam, advocates the preservation and expansion of individuality in this field, and highlights the gap between policy and financial support in letters to the municipality. In addition, the IABR together with AIR and ARCAM sent an open letter to Secretary of State Gunay Uslu, asking her to formulate policy in collaboration with the existing network of architecture institutes. This initiative emphasizes the importance of architecture in Rotterdam's urban development and cultural policy, which is supported by commissions given to experts such as Sergio M. Figueiredo, Arie Lengkeek, and Catja Edens to investigate the role and public appreciation of architecture in the city.

## Photo credits

Frontpage from top to bottom, f.l.t.r.

Saskia van Stein and Jasmine Montana. Photo: Vivian Ammerlaan

Water night. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

CarbonLab. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

Workshop Working on Water. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

Backpage from top to bottom, f.l.t.r.

Maquette Ministry of Make!. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

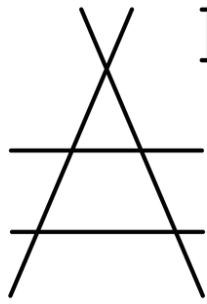
Working on Water. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

Sub-exhibition I. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

Sub-exhibition II. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren

Sub-exhibition III. Photo: Sabine van der Vooren





# International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam

