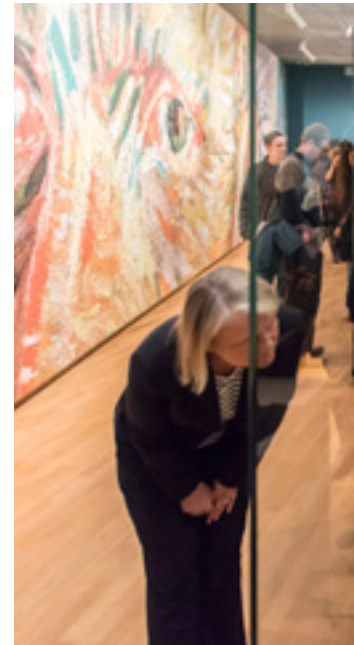




Artist impression Nieuwe Entree, Museumplein



# A continually inspiring location

The city of Amsterdam is flourishing, economically as well as culturally. With an expected economic growth of three per cent in 2015, as well as various developments in the cultural area, the Dutch capital remains an inspiring location, perhaps even more so in 2015.

The 'Economische Verkenningen 2015' (Economic Surveys), a research report by a consortium of TNO, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, EY supervised by Walter Manshanden (TNO) and Henri de Groot (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) show that the economic prospects for Amsterdam and its immediate surroundings are extremely positive. For this year, a growth of no less than three per cent is expected. Apart from that, in 2014 the capital was in great demand with foreign companies. In the past year, 130 enterprises were established in the Amsterdam region, which created 1,308 additional jobs.

Various developments are also taking place in the cultural area. For instance, this year the capital city highlights two of the most important artists the Netherlands have produced.

From 12 February until 17 May, the Rijks Museum hosts the exhibition 'Late Rembrandt'. This exhibition focuses on the works Rembrandt (1606-1669) made between 1650 and 1669. In this period the famous painter produced his most expressive works by means of loose strokes, thick clods of paint and the scratching off of paint. Unfortunately, this was not always appreciated by his contemporaries and patrons. 'The conspiracy of the Bataves under Claudius Civilis' which Rembrandt painted for Amsterdam's new city hall, was replaced after just one year because of the loose paint strokes, the dark background and the image of the Batavian leader as a one-eyed, weak man.

## Hypnotising

In the summer of this year, the Van Gogh Museum finalizes a thorough renovation. The main entrance is moved to the Museumplein. The new entrance consists of a transparent building with technically advanced glass constructions, designed by Kisho Kurokawa Architect and Associates. The new entrance offers 800 square meters of additional surface,



Natura Artis Magistra



Photo: Jan Kees Steenman



Oosterkerk



Rembrandt

which makes it possible to organize, among other events, large meetings and receptions. The permanent collection can still be found on the three floors that were renovated in 2014. The first thing that catches the attention of the visitor is the huge picture on that wall of Vincent's hypnotising eyes. Drawings and letters provide an insight into the ideas and ambitions behind his works of art. Attention is also paid to important aspects of Van Gogh's artistry, like the myths around the painter and the impact he had on the generations after him. On a regular basis an exceptional work of art is shown which is an example of Van Gogh's inspiration and influence. Francis Bacon's 'Study for a Portrait of Van Gogh VI' is the first work of art to have this honor.

#### The zoo as a link

Not just the museums, the Natura Artis Magistra zoo is also working hard on its infrastructure. In 2014, Micropia was opened. This museum is dedicated to the world of micro-organisms, invisible to the naked eye, but each person carries

around 1.5 kilos of these life forms. These organisms, made visible in this location, are the most powerful, most successful and at the same time, smallest life form on earth. Micropia is also a platform and serves as a connecting link between science and public.

The new Artisplein was also opened to the public. On this square lie the state monuments the Groote Museum (1851-1854) and the recently renovated Ledenlokalen (1870-1893). These Ledenlokalen house, among other establishments, the new café-restaurant 'de Plantage', Studio Artis, Micropia and the historic rooms. Opposite the Groote Museum and the Ledenlokalen lies the Hollandse Polder, a monumental aviary with meadowbirds (including the largest collection of spoonbills), pollard willows and a ditch.

This year the terrain between the current parking lot will be used to build an underground parking lot with room for up to 650 cars; on top of this garage an animal house and two animal pavillions will be realized. Besides this, the present Ledenlokalen will be housing a Microzoo as well as a Kennisplein (Knowledge square).

#### A new location?

There are plans to add the Oosterkerk (church) at the Oostelijke Eilanden quarter to the current location of the Amsterdam MICE collection. This Oosterkerk dates back to 1671 and was built after a design by Adriaan Dortsman with the assistance of Daniël Stalpaert. At the moment, a new function for the building is being considered, preferably (semi-)public, which makes good use of the special character (interior, exterior) of the church. One of the options is to convert it into a conference center. Thanks to the basic form of the church – a Greek cross – the Oosterkerk has a large central space which is extremely suitable for concerts, as well as other activities like exhibitions, meetings, presentations or gatherings. ■

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