

The Hague, city without walls

Artistic vision, key elements and timeline

**Candidacy of The Hague
as Cultural Capital of Europe in 2018**

The Hague, an example to Europe

The Hague is in contention for the title of Cultural Capital of Europe in 2018; a prestigious title, with considerable spin-off. Our motivation to compete reaches much further than that, however. The Hague believes that Art&Culture is profoundly important, and not just for the development of the individual but for society as a whole. For it acquaints us with the unfamiliar, helps us develop tolerance for the unconventional, and encourages us to cultivate a boundless mind.

Tolerance and open-mindedness are not only vital to a city like The Hague that is home to 144 nationalities, but they are essential in every society. The Hague, City of Peace and Justice, carries an international mandate to resolve conflicts and to help societies accommodate differences. The Hague must set an example to the world.

The Hague has much to offer Europe: renowned and distinguished culture, a vibrant underground scene, and a fervent desire to see Art&Culture hold a prominent and permanent place, and a platform for international exchange. This is The Hague's font of inspiration on its way to the title of European Cultural Capital in 2018.

"All arts contribute to the greatest of all arts: the Art of Living." Bertolt Brecht

The criteria of the European Commission

The status of European Cultural Capital demands an extensive, varied and high-quality programme, encompassing an entire year. Yet that's not all that counts. The European Commission applies a number of further requirements; thus, the participation of the city's inhabitants and attracting visitors from within the country and from abroad are considered very important. The plans must also have a role in the development of the city in the long term. The programme should moreover foster international cultural collaboration as well as highlight Europe's rich cultural diversity.

The candidates

The European Union consists of many member states. For that reason, two countries are appointed each year to host a Cultural Capital. In 2018 the privilege falls to Malta and to a city in the Netherlands. Wherever possible, the two cultural capitals will coordinate their programmes. The Hague aspires to be the Dutch Cultural Capital of Europe. Other candidates are Utrecht, Maastricht, Almere, Friesland and BrabantStad (a joint bid by several towns and cities in the province of Brabant).

The heart of the artistic vision

The Hague seeks to give Art&Culture a prominent and permanent place in society. Over the coming years it will be highlighting Art&Culture, will focus on developing creativity, and will involve the city's inhabitants in that process. This will have priority in the years leading up to 2018 and beyond.

The Hague, city without walls

The Hague is a city of many faces. It is both quaint and cosmopolitan, stately and working class. One characteristic is unmistakable: its centuries-long appeal to artists. The city's unusual history may perhaps play a role here: the city had no city rights, nor the constraining perimeters of a town wall. The Hague became a haven for artists, politicians and leading thinkers. Here, their visions and ideas on fine arts and fashion, music and dance, literature and philosophy could mature. Still today, in the early 21st century, artists continue to appreciate The Hague as a free haven, as neutral territory. There is no single dominant scene; here, artists are neither rejected nor categorised. Here they find the optimum conditions for their inspiration to flourish.

✓ **Exposing The Hague's rich cultural life**

Art, culture and cultural heritage remind us of our history and thereby enhance our view of the future. That is why the renowned cultural institutions, art education programmes and the international festivals play a key role in the planning process. And at least as important is the as yet invisible wealth: all that is brewing and fermenting in the underground scene. In the coming years The Hague will be investing in new trends, initiatives and collectives and in promoting the development of this creativity.

✓ **Art&Culture for youth**

The Hague wishes to stimulate artistic and cultural awareness and appreciation among its youthful population, and is developing a 'Culture Education' master plan in dialogue

with cultural institutions, schools and the government. By participating in Art&Culture, it appears that pupils not only learn to think and operate creatively, but also to be open to others. It helps them become independent-minded and to deal sensibly with judgment and prejudice. Here, too, The Hague seeks to set an inspiring example for other cities and countries.

✓ **Full participation of inhabitants**

The Hague is home to almost half a million people, belonging to no less than 144 nationalities. By means of Art&Culture, The Hague aims to make the characteristic features of these identities visible in the city, and is encouraging all residents to participate actively in the process. With the assistance of community organisations, it is coaching and supporting creative potential through neighbourhood-based cultural projects, amateur art and individual initiatives.

✓ **International encounters**

Cultures are changeable. They influence each other as soon as people of one culture encounter those of another. Art helps build bridges in this process. International exchange projects are therefore encouraged, as these inspire people to literally take a look across borders and to cultivate a free and open mind. The Hague is dedicated to enhancing the dialogue between cultures, not only within its own city confines but also internationally.

✓ **Participation of the business community**

The Hague is engaging its business community in developing Art&Culture, and this extends beyond the matter of financing. The goal is to foster close collaboration between cultural institutions, businesses and the municipality. Having a high-quality cultural offer has a positive impact on a city's domestic and international image, on the business environment and on the number of visitors it draws. A varied art offer makes the city more attractive for companies and their personnel.

✓ **Creative urban development**

Over the coming years, The Hague will continue to invest in the city as a platform for Art&Culture. This concerns large-scale projects such as the urban development around the centrally located Spuiplein and the former industrial area De Binckhorst, but also the many small-scale locations where art can flourish.

The roadmap of inspiration

Founded on the artistic vision and inspired through the dialogue with the cultural world and the city's inhabitants, all sorts of ideas, plans and processes will be crystallising over the course of this year. In the autumn of 2012, all these creative flows will culminate in the bid book that The Hague will present to the jury. Expressive of the boundless mind of a city without walls, this bid book is The Hague's petition to become cultural capital.

With sweeping brush strokes and realistic visions of the future, The Hague will make its cultural life visible and palpable in 2018. The bid book will put The Hague's power, passion and potential with respect to Art&Culture fully in the spotlight.

The Hague is an international city. The Hague is a cultural city. The coming years will be devoted to the sustainable development of The Hague as Cultural Capital of Europe, culminating in the year 2018. Then the city will be the international platform that demonstrates the vital importance of Art&Culture, at all levels. In 2018, The Hague will be a city second to none.

Timeline

Autumn 2012 Presentation of the bid book to the jury

Early 2013 Jury's announcement of a shortlist

Autumn 2013 Jury's definitive choice

Den Haag 2018

- Aus Greidanus - artistic director
- Anastasia Chiarella - business director
- Zsuzsa Jónás - marketing & publicity
- Elsbet Leenhouts - production & administrative support

Den Haag 2018

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