

Sketch Design for Public Artwork: *The Journey of Life: Growing in the Realm of Possibilities*

Artist: Marjan Laaper

Location: Façade of primary school: "het Epos" in Rotterdam, Zuidwijk, The Netherlands.

Sources of Inspiration: The journey of life, personal growth, the paths we choose, life directions, the Zuidwijk map, guidance systems, support, and the Wisteria tree.



The Wisteria begins its life as a small seed, growing into a climbing plant and eventually maturing into a full tree. It grows in stages, and with proper support, it can reach impressive heights. Its flexibility allows it to adapt and shape itself to its environment. The growth potential of Wisteria is remarkable, with the ability to reach up to 30 meters. It has fragrant flower clusters and after flowering it has plenty of green leaves. The tree is not only loved by people but also by birds and insects. The Wisteria tree is the symbol of the power of life, endurance, sustainability, growth and resilience. The Wisteria can live up to 100 years and its ability to withstand the test of time has made it a beloved symbol of strength and perseverance.

The Concept:

For the facade of the new school building of primary school *Het Epos* in Zuidwijk, Marjan Laaper developed a concept where the growth of nature serves as a metaphor for the personal growth and development of the pupils during their life journey. This journey, which begins at a young age, is shaped by their education, the circumstances they encounter, and the neighborhood in which they are raised. Zuidwijk, the area where the school is located, plays a vital role in the early development of the pupils. The paths they choose at the beginning of their lives will partly shape their futures, and the neighborhood becomes an important pillar in their growth. In turn, the pupils themselves contribute to the ongoing development of Zuidwijk.

The Artwork:

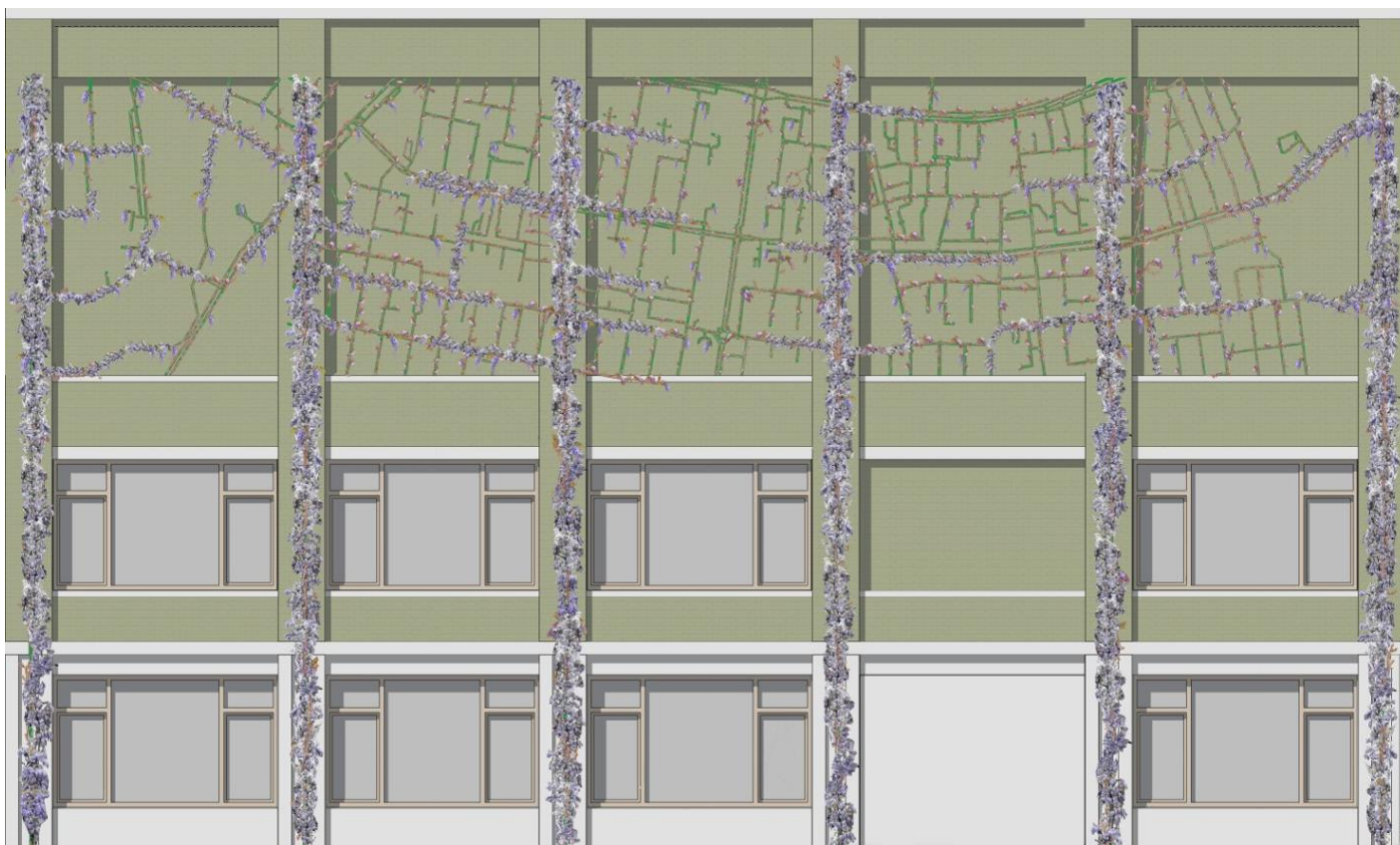
For the facade of the new school building of primary school "Het Epos" in Rotterdam Zuidwijk, Marjan Laaper created a design that symbolizes growth and development, taking the form of the Zuidwijk district floor plan. Six Wisteria trees, planted at the base of the building's pillars, grow upwards, intertwining their branches, leaves, and blossoms with the layout of Zuidwijk. These trees represent not only the core values of the school—growth, perseverance, achievement, curiosity, community, and happiness—but also the students' personal growth, development, and the choices they make throughout their life journey.



The artwork is based on a growth-guided system on the facade of the school building, depicted as the Zuidwijk map.



At the base of the six vertical pillars of the building, six Wisteria trees grow upward along the guided system. At the midpoint of the facade, the guided system branches out, allowing each plant to thrive along different sections of the Zuidwijk map. Collectively, the six Wisteria trees can cover the entire Zuidwijk map with their branches, leaves, and flowers. The work creates a visual link between the map, the pathways available for exploration, the growth process, and the choices encountered along life's journey. The living installation not only provides a vibrant and aromatic facade for the local community but also promotes a safe and welcoming habitat for birds and insects.



blue/purple flowers in spring.

The artwork will also transform with each season. In winter, when the leaves have fallen, the branches of the trees and the guiding system become clearly visible. This reveals the intricate pattern of how the Wisteria trees integrate into the ground plan. The first flowering period begins in April and May.



Each of the six trees grows together with a different part of the guidance system, and once fully grown they not only embellish the facade with their tendrils, leaves and flowers, but also visualise the Zuidwijk, the neighbourhood in which the school is located and the children begin their journey through life.



The six Wisteria trees that are rooted at the bottom of the six pillars of the new building also symbolize the core values of the school, namely: growth, perseverance, achievement, curiosity, community and happiness. After flowering, the plant grows with many green branches and leaves, into a lush green facade.

