



**MUSEUM
OF THE
LINEAR
ECONOMY**



FOREWORD

Welcome in 2050.

The Museum of the Linear Economy contemplates the past world and celebrates the hope of the new circular age. This museum, situated in a former night shop, is an initiative by Ilja Lang. Ilja is a descendant of a family of waste incinerators. Inspired by the stories of her grandmother she educated herself as a garbologist: someone who examines the garbage and leftovers of the past to examine its meaning, to find out what world we left behind and what world we have created in its stead.

In this museum, different curatorial teams display five key events. Each event reflects the realisation of a new circular civilisation. For too long we were obsessed with what we did not want: waste-free cities, waste-free offices, waste-free schools, waste-free oceans and so on, rather than shaping the resource economy and material culture that we did want. Making the shift to this more positive perspective also implied a rediscovery of the positive role of governments. Therefore this catalogue includes three 'practitioners profiles' of transformative policymakers from the year 2020, the year Ilja was born.

The circular society and the future we want: a family history

*The Heart cannot forget
Unless it contemplates
What it declines*

(Emily Dickinson, Complete Poems, 1890)

*Experience has made me rich
And now they're after me
'Cause everybody's living in a material world
And I am a material girl*

(Madonna, Material Girl, 1985)

What is the world we have created, and what are we leaving behind? This is a question worth asking now that we have definitely left the linear economy behind us. It is the question that led me to develop this museum together with five excellent curatorial teams. We are living in a paradoxical world: we, the members of the first circular generation, have grown up in a world obsessed with what it does not want: waste! But what about the new society we created along the way? And what was positive about the linear world that we are now leaving behind?

Many people these days say we just need to move on and not look back: 'let the damned linear past be the past.' As a garbologist and descendant from a renowned family of waste incinerators I do not hold this to be true. I do not want to make the same mistake as my grandparents did and burn every memory. I believe that uncovering positive and universal stories from the past helps us to see the world that we have created. Also: I love to examine history's rubbish and dig up surprising stories.

I adored my grandmother. She was a very linear person. Born in 1969, my grandma was a fan of the singer and cultural icon Madonna, who famously sang about being a 'material girl' living in her material world. She cherished her worn-out collection of Japanese Hello Kitty dolls that I could endlessly play with when visiting her. My grandmother once rescued a plastic spoon from the family waste incinerator. This was two days after the global ban on disposables that went into effect in 2026. She kept the spoon in a frame on her cabinet and could look at it for hours. Its whiteness, its smooth surface, its vulnerability. A funny little thing, this spoon. Its sole purpose was to enable a quick meal and then fill up the trash can. And yet, so carefully crafted. According to my grandmother, it was the perfect metaphor for the linear world.

Flushing things: stage I

Flushing things is the history of my family, and of the linear economy. In the early 20th century, my great-great-grandfather was one of the first tenants in Dutch social housing with a flush toilet connected to the novel sewage system. The flush toilet led to significant improvements in living conditions and especially cleanliness. For many workers this implied a need to look for new jobs. Up to that point many of my family members had been in the

OPENING ESSAY

profession of running the ‘poo bucket’ (poepton) through the city streets to collect human excrement.

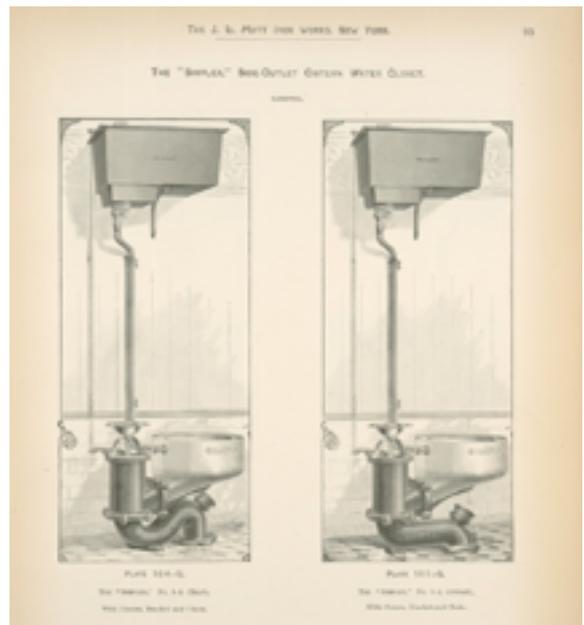
The flush toilet proved to be the first step towards a linear economy. The age-old town-country cycle, from poo to fertiliser to food and industrial crops and back again; all flushed away with the flick of a hand. For all their dirtiness, the poo buckets of my ancestors did provide a perpetual balance of fertility in Dutch soils, welcoming plant and insect life. A cycle that reminded citizens of death, decay and rebirth. The simple - yet circular - facts of daily life.

How hard was to revive this ancient feces-to-fertiliser cycle in the 2030s! It is now the foundation of our biobased building environment.

Birds and bees have returned. However, it is not as if our ancestors were not warned about the dangers of interrupting this valuable cycle. As I read in a 19th century chemistry book that I found in my family’s archive, written by the renowned chemistry professor Gerardus Johannes Mulder (1802-1880) at the time when the first sewage systems were placed:

“This nation that allows their solid excrements and urine to go down the drain; no wonder that they complain about hunger. In this matter, the Dutch people act like the goldsmith who does not collect the shavings that are filed off his objects and fall on the ground, but that neglects this golden waste. How can we be such fools?”

Mulder, De voeding van Nederlanders. Rotterdam: Kramers, 1854.



Late 19th century flush toilet

My great-great-grandfather did like his flush toilet though. As the family story goes, he would flush away his secretly smoked cigars before his wife would catch him.

Flushing things: stage II

Just after World War I, Dutch cities improved their waste collection systems. My grandmother told me about the difference this made to her parents. The workers districts were finally freed from plagues of vermin and persistent disease. But the cleaning of cities also meant a loss. The waste system was accompanied by the privatisation of neighbourhood life with fewer and fewer forms of communal living. Less sharing, less repairing, less



Workers running the poo bucket through the streets of Amsterdam in 1928. They collected feces that were brought to compost heaps and sold as fertiliser.

exchange of outgrown clothes and shoes among neighbours. Jobs related to reusing materials were lost. The 1920s saw the beginning of large-scale waste incineration for energy production. My great-grandfather found a job at the waste plant as a truck driver, but his uncles, members of the ancient guild of old-cloth sellers (*oudekleerkopers*), lost theirs.

Flushing things: stage III

Talking about clothing... After World War II people only looked forward, to the future, the new. Fast fashion was born, with the first H&M store opening in 1947. The fashion shop, thriving on the power to abolish the past while cleansing and dressing up the present. Perfectly fine shirts, hats, chairs and radios now ended up in trash cans, replaced by the newly hip and happening.

Browsing through my family photo book, my great-grandparents always seemed to make sure they were dressed in the latest fashion styles. A red circle dress in the 1950s, slim denim jeans in the 1960s. No doubt they had to look sharp as they made their way up to working in the management of the waste plant. It must have been so exciting to have your wardrobe and living room renewed on a yearly basis. My grandmother told me about the IKEA catalogues. Those linear times must have been bursting with creativity! Destruction was the other side of this shiny coin, but we know all too well about that.



Women fashion in the 1970s in Paris, France.

The flip side of the linear economy

Today it has become a taboo to talk about the linear economy. How to justify the massive destruction of planetary life that our very own grandfathers and grandmothers participated in? Whilst it is a painful topic, I believe that it is important to contemplate that linear world. To celebrate what we do and do not want to become as a society. Only then can we fully embrace our circular future.

Take oil for example. Because of the Dutch history – Shell, rising sea levels and all - oil is one of the most controversial issues these days. Oil gave rise to environmental degradation and blind consumerism. To McDonalds and obesity. To oil Sheikhs and terrorism. But as a garbologist I am also interested in its flip side. Travelling, fast food, shopping malls and plastics enabled people to hang out together. Meeting friends for a quick meal in the park, enjoying the afternoon sun. It enabled my grandmother to pick her own brands and fashion her own identity. A Madonna fan with Hello Kitty dolls on a Danish style IKEA couch.

Embracing the world we created stage I

So, what is the circular civilisation that has been realised? As a first attempt, policymakers in the 2020s envisioned waste-free city centers, waste-free offices, waste-free schools, waste-free festivals, waste-free oceans. They believed this ‘waste-free society’ would come about by promoting reuse, digital material passports and product-as-service business models. I remember as a child how everything had to be returned to the production chain. From our toenail clippings to our morning pee. All carefully collected rather than flushed down the toilet.

Paradoxically, this early approach to circularity with a focus on the ‘output side’ only increased problems. The focus on eliminating waste led producers to see wastelands everywhere around them, waiting to be cultivated. The bottles in our trash cans, the tiles in our sidewalks, the wooden frames around our windows. At the first signs of rot they would be disassembled, refurbished and reused. More reuse meant more production, leading to more consumption and more waste to reclaim for another round. All facilitated by digital material passports that guided producers around the ‘urban mines’ towards cheap and available waste to feast on. It did bring jobs and profits, this so-called ‘circular economy’. But it ran like a linear one - just at a faster pace and with shorter production cycles.

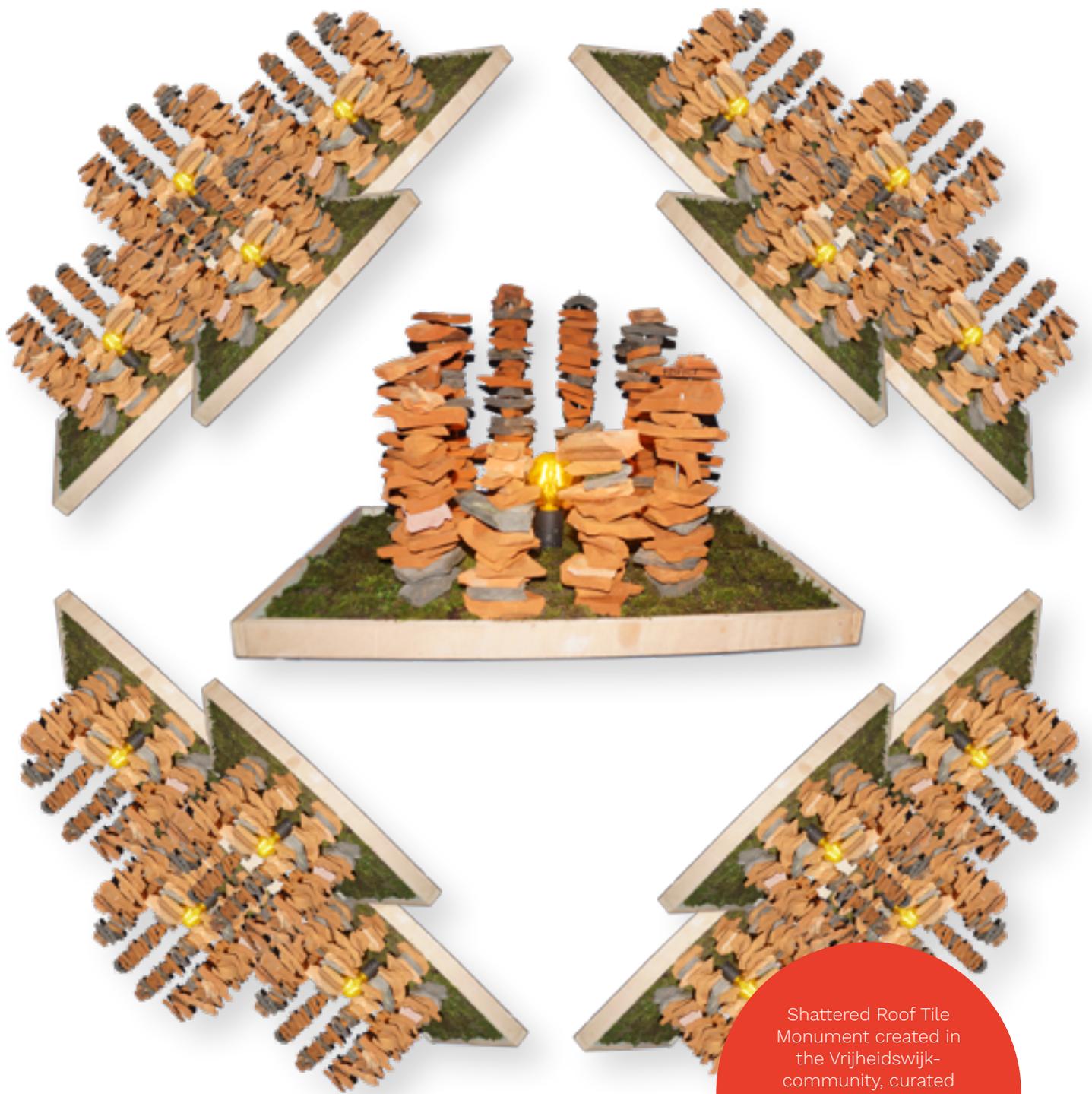
Embracing the world we created stage II

A transition only occurred when governmental policy fundamentally moved away from waste to a focus on the ‘input side’, resources and consumption culture. The reform of the European Union into a resource union with self-sufficient regions is well underway after the massive uprise of the political Parties for the Resources in the 2030s.

At the same time a new material culture was born, aimed at caring for rather than consuming, using or reusing materials. Caring for materials, even if they are broken, smelly, old-fashioned or useless. Caring meant to stop using our material world for our own idle purposes: to Refuse and Re-think, the infamous first steps on the R-ladder of the 2020s - the two steps that were always ignored. Refuse to use, rethink our lifestyles and be proud of our environment.

The year 2050 is a perfect time to stop and slow down for a moment, reflect on the society we have created and look back on the one we are leaving behind. Each of the stories represented in this museum provide a uniquely different perspective on the rise and fall of the linear economy. Lest we forget to watch and listen.

Ilja Lang
Utrecht, the Netherlands
13 January 2050



Shattered Roof Tile Monument created in the Vrijheidswijk-community, curated by Loes Albert, Thomas Kortekaas, Carolin Nast and Tessa Rutgers

The Shattered Roof Tile Ritual

2028

May 21st, 2028. A pioneering Community Land Trust-community from Leeuwarden, Friesland, gathers together around a large table in their communal room. The room is darkened, with light provided by candles set in beautifully decorated roof-tiles placed along the table. Each of these glowing pieces symbolises core values on which the community is based.

The meeting begins with a founding member reminding the group of these values and what they mean, drawing from her memories of living in the individualistic society of the past. As her speech continues people begin to write and draw on the bare roof-tiles in front of them. Through this ritual, the people of the community express the feelings of loneliness and homelessness they remember, which are invoked by the founder's speech. After this first speech many people feel encouraged to tell their own stories, expressing tough feelings. As the final speeches end, the group takes a minute of silence to contemplate the tiles in front of them. They gather to complete the ritual: lifting the roof-tiles up and smashing them forcefully to the ground, where they shatter into many small pieces. The moment is emotional: many cheer, many cry. Each member has their own way of engaging; some smash, others watch, a few listen and enjoy the sounds and the playfulness of it all. As the last tiles are shattered, members gather the broken pieces and bring them to a central space in their communal garden. It was here that the Vrijheidswijk-community from Leeuwarden created the first ever

Shattered Roof Tile Monument.

By now, in 2050, we can recognise these monuments all over the Netherlands. You might even walk by your communities' Shattered Roof Tile Monument every day. But when was the last time you took a minute to stop and remember why this monument was built?



Touristic map of Roof Tile Monuments

Why did the Shattered Roof Tile Monuments emerge?

In the 2010s and 20s, great loneliness and a lack of solidarity and care was crippling our society. Scientific studies conducted during that time show that loneliness was a common experience, up to 80% of under-18s felt this severely, and 40% of over-65s. In 2017,

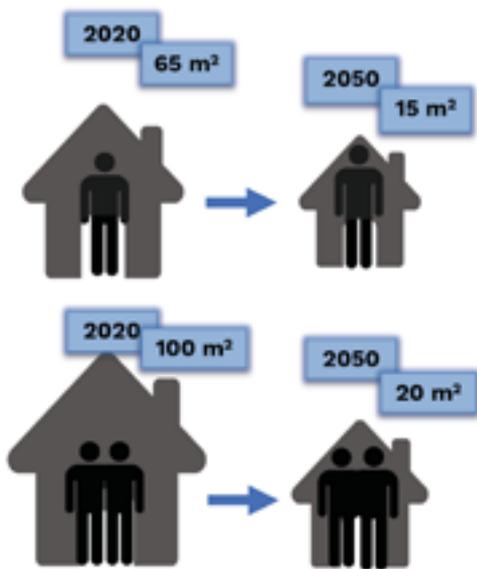
due to the high birth rates after the Second World War and increases in life expectancy, the number of over-65s was expected to rise from 18% of the population to 26% as of 2040. However, many nursing homes for elderly people delivered an inadequate performance in terms of quality of care, unsatisfactorily combating the loneliness of their residents.

Furthermore, the capitalisation and financialisation of land ownership triggered

The CTL Model

The CLT is a model for affordable housing. It is registered as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation that is governed by a three-fold board. It provides a system of dual ownership, where the land is retained forever in the Trust, removing it from the market. Buildings on CLT-land are owned by families, small businesses or non-profit organisations, and can only be sold up to a certain price, determined by a resale formula. This is enforced by the contractual obligation of the seller to sell back their house to the CLT, which then finds a new owner from a waiting list.

Private living space in the Netherlands



The change of private living space per m² in the Netherlands from 2020-2050

an unbearable housing situation in the 20s, where the divide between what the wealthy and poor could afford for housing was extreme. Homelessness rose, and thousands emigrated. Luckily, the model of the Community Land Trust (CLT), pioneered in the United States, gained a foothold in the Netherlands, and was welcomed by the government. Today we have the privilege that all of our living space is owned by the CLT, which effectively removed land from the free market.

On the European level, the building sector's exhaustion and exploitation of the Earth's resources was finally counteracted through the European Liveable Space Law (2032), which strongly restricted the resources, land, and space available for habitation. This meant first reducing resources, then reusing, and lastly recycling, with an emphasis on upcycling. This sparked the (re-)invention of diverse types of building materials and architectural designs, and mainstreamed the use of self-healing concrete, wood, and modular, fully-adjustable buildings. While poorer people before this law often could not afford living space, wealthier people occupied an inordinate amount of it, mostly without giving any of it a proper function.

The Livable Space Law tackled this, extremely restricted private living space, and required every living space to have a function. This led to the abandonment of the gable roof, which had the sole function of using ceramic or cement roof tiles to protect us from the forces of nature, and replacing it with flat and green roofs, which facilitate gardening, social interactions and connection with nature. This transition left communities with big piles of tiles, with no useful function. And so a small housing community in 2028 began the shattered-roof-tile-ritual.

Why is the Shattered Roof Tile Ritual important?

Amongst the Vrijheidswijk-community founders there was a desire to lift their community to the point of communitas;

an intense community spirit, the feeling of great social equality, solidarity and togetherness. Inspired by the work of the 19th-century anthropologist Victor Turner, the founders felt *communitas* was essential to maintaining a circular way of living, allowing people to experience belonging and modesty in the same breath. In the increasingly uncaring world of the late 2020s, it could open people to the gifts of humility, empathy, understanding, and kindness. Through experiences in their past the founding members were aware of the power of rituals to enable communities to evolve within a community. As their CLT-community started to take shape, they looked for ways to introduce such a ritual in order to lift the community spirit to a higher level.

The early years of these pioneering CLT-communities also saw many changes in the ways of dwellings were used and built. Especially amongst the elderly members, this parting led to feelings of sadness. They associated traditional building features with positive memories of home: safety, warmth and security. Some community members found themselves at a threshold where they had to say goodbye to these older features in order to enter new ways of living together. The founding members realised that the feelings of crossing a threshold were relatable for a larger part of the community and they should not be left unattended. The realisation arose that this should actually be the core intention of the ritual the community would later develop. By performing the ritual the community would (literally) break with the previous way of living and enter into circular living in a strong community.

In the subsequent CLT-communities that emerged shortly after, people had similar realisations. The pioneering Vrijheidswijk-community served as an example throughout The Netherlands. Word about the successful Shattered Roof Tile Ritual travelled fast, and increasing numbers of communities started to perform different versions of the same ritual as a way of



Drawing of a typical community house by a gifted high school student. Date unknown

commencing new ways of community life. Most, if not all, communities realised that in order to permanently adopt a circular way of living, a strong social fabric in which everyone feels equally important was essential to the success of such a way of life. A sense of community never comes easily, let us not forget the story behind the roof tile monuments.

An activist in the Ministry?

Practitioner
profile #1

In 2020 Inge Schrijver spoke to Alexa Böckel about making a difference in the surprising inner world of a Ministry.

I am an idealist and I was struggling quite a while to find a job that fits my interests and my former education. My goal is to contribute to a transition towards a more human- and nature-based economy. And I think it is more about making a connection, being (part of) nature, cooperation and people on a local scale, and less about profit. In theory, the circular economy could be our way towards this wellbeing economy. What is really interesting about the circular economy is that there are many interpretations. For some it is a possibility for green growth and I am very much not a growth person. But if you look at the R-strategies, the first step, Refuse, is basically not using stuff and using less stuff. That idea is not part of any mainstream economic narrative and never has been. It almost functions as a Trojan horse and I really want to accelerate that. Can you imagine how difficult it is to get a paid job which allows you to work on that?

I did my masters in Economics for Transition at Schumacher College and that gave quite a radical perspective on economics. We looked at low-carbon, wellbeing, and resilience approaches, for instance learning from natural systems, cooperatives, money systems and the concept of doughnut atmosphere, very community based. I wanted to do something with it, but I did not know how to fit that into the current world and

the jobs that were available.

In my first position after I graduated, I co-organised the Alternative Finance Festival. I really liked the topic of the festival, but I was working a lot on my own, which made me realise that I wanted to work closely in a team. At that time, I was already intrigued about working in government and asked myself questions such as ‘How does the government work? How do the processes go? What is it like to work for such an organisation and can you actually do stuff that really makes a difference there?’. So, I tried to get a traineeship at the Rijksoverheid (National government). Unfortunately, I was not able to get the trainee position, but I had also applied for the National Think Tank and I ended up very happy with 20 super intrinsically motivated students working full time on the circular economy for four months – it just could not get better.

It actually did get better, as at the end of it I got a proper job. The job title was “advisor on societal transition and innovation”. And I was like ‘Yes, I think, that sounds like something I would like to do. Didn’t know there was a job in transition stuff, that’s great!’. It was a combination of the content and the working environment of the bureaucratic government, so I applied. And guess what – I got it!

So, the journey to my current position was quite an expedition. Here I am, working as a junior policy advisor at the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in the Knowledge, Innovation and Strategy Depart-

ment (KIS). I am by far the youngest in our team of 20 people.

Still, my ambition is to make a difference. But that is not easy by any account! First of all, it always takes time to get into something and to get used to everything. And in this case, it takes extra time because it is such a big organisation. And with our department – it is really across the Ministry. So, especially at the beginning, I was wondering what the role of this department was in the whole field. For me, I am still in the phase of exploring what I can do and how and when and where.

Second, it is difficult to get to know your way through the Ministry to find the relevant people, because nobody knows what everybody everywhere is doing, as we are almost 2.000 people overall. What I really understood after the first couple of months, is that there is no such thing as ‘the’ government or ‘the’ Ministry. But there are innovative people everywhere. Those are the people that really drive things forward and that you need to be ‘the’ Ministry. You just have to find out how you enable these people to change something. A project I am thinking of currently is about identifying social innovation practices in the circular economy. This is not something you can find on our ‘intranet’. In the end, knowledge is embedded in people and it is perhaps impossible to catalogue it systematically for collaboration. So I will probably start with one contact person and snowball on to meet other people.

The third question is how to work in bureaucratic hierarchies. My team is not as hierarchical as the rest of the Ministry. But if you want to move something ‘higher up’, you have to follow the so-called ‘line’. For instance, for our summer school on the circular economy I had to report to the Bestuursraad (highest (civil servant) governing council). We wanted to inform them about our summer school and what happened there. I had to fill out these standardised formats, which I then had to give to my colleague, the head of the know-

ledge department, for feedback. Then I had to send it to our secretariat who checked the text and then to my director, she needed to sign it off. After that, it went to the general support staff to check the document. Next, it went to the support staff that work for one of the Bestuursraad members who brings it into the meeting. He needs to check it off and only then it can be brought into the meeting. That is how it goes. On the one hand, surprisingly from me handing it in to the actual final check it was only two days. And I was slightly impressed by that. On the other hand, it was a super small thing. It was just like ‘We want to let you know that this happened and you have to make no decision about it at all.’ That was about two days of checking stuff. But yeah, this is how the bureaucracy works.

Well all in all, I am more than happy to have this position. I am quite free to work on what I want and focus on aspects that are relevant for a human- and nature-based economy. Every day I understand a bit better how and why the government functions, and I realised that bureaucratic processes also guarantee stability and solidity for society. And I would always apply again. If you want to create change in a society, you need to get the government on board. And with that, I mean those individuals that form the government. All of them need to understand how important the circular economy is and that we have to change our mode of working in the Ministry.

A change agent or maybe an activist in the Ministry - that is what I try to be. My goals are to inspire my colleagues, build up a network of innovative and engaged actors, create a shared vision in the Ministry and move towards a new economy. Let us be the change we want to see!

**Written down by Alexa Böckel
on 8 January 2020.**



A typical DIY-NatureBox from the late 2030s or early 2040s (exact data unknown), curated by Mark Damen, Lily Lin, Dana de Weerd, Ba Ying Visser and Antonia Sattlegger

We, Dutch people of the early 2050s, are coming to terms with the consequences of a dominant urban focus in policy-making. Urban farming is a success, but there is a disconnection with our rural hinterlands. For nearly a decade, the countryside was a desolate area. What was formerly known for its idyllic vistas with fields, cows and windmills, has over the years transformed into a flood-threatened, polluted landscape. Particularly interesting is the impact sustainable urbanisation strategies have on rural areas.

The DIY-NatureBox is a cultural artefact that speaks of this urban-rural divide. It is an old 'fridge', a once-common electrical household appliance originally meant for cooling and storing perishable food. Later it was used to grow vegetables, with the sounds of chirping birds and strong nature smells inside. By the late 2030s, it became a symbolic object that allowed urban residents to reconnect with 'Mother Nature'. The DIY-NatureBox tells an important story about developments in the Netherlands between 2020 and 2050.



The countryside was formally known for its idyllic vistas, but is now flooded and polluted.

The 'Fridge' and The Crisis

In the early 2020s the DIY-NatureBox was still used for its original purpose. Prior to high-tech urban agriculture, food was shipped from faraway places and fridges kept it fresh. It was also common to eat animal products like meat, eggs and dairy, which needed refrigeration. Today, with food grown in local greenhouses, it is hard to imagine the need for a refrigerator to store food. However, food waste used to be a real problem. On average, your parents or grandparents threw away almost 10% of the food they purchased - imagine how much that is on a national level.



In 2019 there were a range of protest by farmers against the proposed policies like the reduction of their livestock.

This global mass-production and -consumption was highly unsustainable. The 'Nitrogen Crisis' in 2019 triggered a governmental change of mindset, and technical innovation towards circularity in cities, in particular the Randstad. The national government attempted to force the agricultural sector to adjust their practices.

They for instance proposed a policy for halving the livestock, against which farmers vehemently protested. The extremity of the protests led to distrust, fear and polarisation between urban and rural citizens. This resulted in deadlock in national policy-making, with central government struggling to implement new policies for the agricultural sector.

Transforming the City

Local governments within the Randstad reacted to the Crisis by emphasising investments in urban greening and agriculture. Spurred by the National Strategy on Spatial Planning and the Environment (referred to as the 'NOVI') and the implementation of the Environmental Code in 2021 (the Omgevingswet), renewable energy sources were installed on a large scale, high-tech urban agriculture became the major food source in the Randstad, and many urban grassroots innovations arose, dedicated to making cities more circular and resource-efficient.

As the city transformed, the fridge became less and less useful. They remained in households gathering dust as food production and consumption drastically changed. Health and well-being trends for high-tech urban food production promoted a distancing from the craftsmanship of traditional food cultivation. By 2032, food was locally produced in high-tech agricultural hubs like Rotterdam and Utrecht, which were owned by big agricultural companies. There was no place for greenery in the city, as every square meter was used for scaled food-production. This type of agriculture was almost artificial, growing food was not as connected to nature as it once was.

The city diet was increasingly supplemented with other highly processed food, such as nutrient drinks like the AllMeals bottles you still drink today. These come in single-serving bottles, which require no refrigeration and provide a full meal with all necessary nutrients. Clearly, the relationship



In the 2030s agricultural production mostly took place in urban hubs (picture from 2032).

between city dwellers and food, its storage, and preservation has changed dramatically.

The Do It Yourself-NatureBox

The DIY-NatureBox was a reaction to this changed relationship. The 'fridge' became an obsolete object occupying valuable space in the kitchen. Moreover, a trend of using it for do-it-yourself home-grown food as a craft and leisure activity emerged. Growing plants and vegetables recaptured a lost act of self-expression requiring skill and knowledge, as well as love and passion for nurturing plants. Simple foods that could flourish in the dark, such as mushrooms, or even moss, were soon found in many abandoned fridges. Some even added lighting to grow fresh flowers, or scents and sounds to extend the experience to all senses. People described this as almost spiritual, returning 'nature' into their homes.

Growing food, feeling the earth, smelling the scents of flowers and vegetables, relieved some of the negative psychological impacts the circular economy had brought. The fridge then continued to have a prominent place in peoples' homes throughout the 2030s, as its function gradually shifted from a food refrigeration unit to an artificial me-

mory storage box.

The DIY-NatureBox perfectly represents the disconnect between city residents and nature that was dominant in the 2030s. You could see how, in the newly developed circular cities, people suffered from this disconnection, and tried to recapture it in awkward and artificial ways. The 'nature' confined to the dimensions of a fridge in no way represented real natural wilderness: it was controlled and technological. Ironically, the DIY-NatureBox seemed all the more similar to the city they were trying to escape.



The AllMeals nutrient drinks became an important part of our diet from the 2030s onwards.

The Boundless Growth of the Hinterlands

The evolution of the DIY-NatureBox follows the story of the city, but what happened to the hinterlands? After 2021, city governments started promoting food production within city borders. To support their own livelihoods farmers focused on short-term profit at the expense of long-term environmental impacts. They upscaled their production as much as possible, disregarding the negative effects of pesticides and chemicals. This unsustainable way of farming contributed to the 'Nitrogen Crisis' and other negative environmental impacts

The agricultural sector used the political deadlock as a window for boundless growth. Now the connection with the cities was broken, nothing stood in the way of rural

municipalities developing policies focused on quick profits - a shared wish of the farmers and local politicians. There were no difficulties with permits anymore and the global market was entered without limits. Since the Randstad no longer bought their products, all production was exported to overseas markets like Japan, the United Kingdom, Russia and China. Contrary to the city governments, local governments outside the Randstad made no effort to become circular, instead intensifying their production with even more chemicals and machinery. The intensive mono-cultural farming negatively affected biodiversity and the environment. Soil subsidence increases flood risk in low-lying peatland areas. People slowly became aware of the severity of the ecological crises and, concomitantly, the absurdity of the NatureBox.

That is what this DIY-NatureBox showcases: the process of becoming circular within the city, causing poor mental health due to the disconnection with nature and leaving the hinterland to its fate with irreversible consequences. The illusion of nature, as a desperate attempt to reintroduce it into our lives, instead of taking the environmental crisis outside city borders seriously.

Changing the world as an environmental law enforcement officer

Practitioner
profile #2

In 2020 Han de Haas told Dana de Weerdt about his search for realising a better future and his career in recruiting talented people for the cause of the circular economy. Han starts by walking us through his career path, after which he explains what he believes is needed to achieve the sustainability goals of the Province of Utrecht.

I started my career at the Horticultural school with an interest in nature management. At the time, acid rain was the big thing and issues concerning pesticide use gained importance. Nature suffers immensely from acid rain and pesticide use, and this type of issue still gets to me. I really wanted to work on those types of questions.

Environmental Sciences was my next area of study because I was worried about natural resources, and to this day I still see that things are going wrong. If you think about how much cities will be growing in the next year, and how resources are currently used in construction, resource-wise that is a system you cannot sustain. And while some problems receive a lot of attention, others are neglected. In the Netherlands we are currently focusing on nitrogen-related problems, but another large issue is phosphate; do you have any clue about the problems around phosphate? It is a chemical that is put in fertilisers for agricultural purposes, but it is almost used up. No one talks about this!

After having finished my studies, my plan was to work at a consultancy firm. As I expected that as a consultant I would have to deal with governments a lot, I first wanted to know more about how governmental institutions worked. With that idea in mind I started working at a small municipality. Municipalities only then began considering setting up structures to deal with the emerging environmental issues. Whilst working there I got familiar with the basics of organisational structures.

Later I moved on to work for a company which provided service for municipal works in eastern Brabant. I worked in many positions there; I started as a technical officer and then climbed up to head of enforcement, head of permits, department head, part of the management team and ended up being involved in running the organisation. Environmental issues really grew in significance then, at the beginning of the 1990s. Every city needed to develop their own environmental program but many small towns did not have the capacity or expertise, so many municipalities asked our company to develop this for them. I wrote many of these programs for small municipalities in eastern Brabant, and I gained experience in recruiting people to carry out these programs.

In my 10 years within the company, I enjoyed the management work: constructing fruitful teamwork, organising a group that could get results. I was good at it. But after some time I missed the content too much. A former colleague asked me to come work

with them at the Province of Noord-Brabant, as enforcement coordinator, and there I returned to working on content issues. It is nearly the same work as I have been doing for the past six months with my current task: 'professionalising environmental enforcement and permitting'. In my job I determine what the issues in an area are, how they should be prioritised, what goals need to be set and how to carry them out. These are all tasks I worked on in the Province of Brabant and now the Province of Utrecht.

What worries me in the Province of Utrecht is how we can realise our goals. Looking at the Coalition Agreement from last elections, here in the Province of Utrecht a progressive coalition is in place. Regarding sustainability they are very ambitious and they have set goals I wholeheartedly endorse. But now that I have been working here for half a year and I see how this civil service organisation is structured to achieve these goals, it worries me. The organisation seems not built to achieve these goals. My job is to deal with enforcement measures, and I see that to obtain these great goals a connection between what I do, developing enforcement measures, and environmental objectives needs to be formed. This is currently not happening in a way these goals can be reached. The people and expertise for achieving the goals set are lacking.

What is needed for creating environmental solutions is a new type of thinking and a novel strategy. The way of thinking about the future, like we do in the mixed classrooms from the Urban Futures Studio, is helpful in developing sustainable strategies. I believe we need more people with a broad vision on future developments and with the mindset to connect with companies like startups, universities and so on. Maybe those new people can inspire people and society and realise a change in culture.

We need young graduates, who are now at the forefront of science, we really need you!

**Written down by Dana de Weerdt
on 10 January 2020.**



Relics of Consumption
donated by Peter
Hoffman, curated by
Alexa Böckel,
Po-Cheng Huang, Amy
Hand and
Viktoria Vero

Relics of Consumption

2045

Today, consumption means carefully investing in creating, repairing, reusing our resources. One reflects on what the purpose of an item will be, and respects the origins and process of the objects used. However, many members of our communities still remember what consumption meant not too long ago. At the turn of the millennium, it was the final purpose of economic activity, the fuel for economic growth. Being able to consume was seen as the cultural ideal. 'Relics of Consumption' invites the audience to contemplate our complex historical relationship to shopping.

To promote reflection upon the changes to consumption, "Relics of Consumption" has been donated to this museum by Peter Hoffmann, the owner of a repair shop in Utrecht's Hoog Catharijne, today an ULR, and formerly a shopping mall. ULRs - Urban Living Rooms - are mixed-use community spaces operated by residents living in the local community area. Peter Hoffmann collected these items during the tumultuous times of the last decade, when he and many other founding members of the ULR began to clean up and redesign the original shopping mall into one of the first ULRs in Europe, which opened in 2045. They are examples of products that were created and consumed during the height of throwaway consumerism, the shopping mall heyday. Objects such as Starbucks cups, store membership cards that offer exclusive discounts, and mass-produced items sold for one-day celebrations like King's Day were part of everyday life in the early 21st

century. Hoffman's Relics aim to spark contemplation, and to explore the feelings we have concerning changes to consumption.



Hoog Catharijne in the late 2010s: a sleek urban shopping centre geared towards consumption and convenience.



Hoog Catharijne in 2046: an Urban Living Room in full flow.

The rise of shopping malls

In the modernising 'Western' world after the Second World War, mass production led to overproduction: production of goods grew beyond consumer demand. In order to sell their excess, manufacturers aimed to increase consumer spending by manipulation through marketing measures based on psychological insights. Advertising soared, the culture of consumerism expanded, and shops started to become important as places to meet and socialise. Modern shopping malls started spreading in the 1950s. By the early 21st century, there were over 9500 indoor shopping centres in Europe. The majority of these hosted business chains, and did not provide an exhaustive area for alternative businesses or community space. At the height of this consumer culture, shopping was both a major emotional boost, as well as a key driver of economic growth. A string of research in the early 21st century demonstrated that younger people at the time were lonelier than any generation before them - and these youngsters tried to cure their chronic loneliness with "retail therapy": the endorphin boost they experienced when acquiring new things.



The opening of Hoog Catherijne by Princess Beatrix in 1973.



Princess Beatrix looking at a scale model of Hoog Catherijne in 1973.

Shopping malls became a destination location, comparable in function to that of a designated public space: a place for a Saturday trip with the family, for teenagers to meet and hang out, and for pensioners to have a chat over coffee. These areas were openly accessible, hence all kinds of citizens were able to spend time there. They were also simply convenient: many shops under one roof made it incredibly easy for people to get everything they wanted. Such easy convenience, which also promoted the downfall of the 'high street' and locally produced goods, was increasingly seen as necessary in the busy lives of our early 21st century counterparts.

In the meantime, the dependence on the short-lived happiness that came with consuming grew, and the positives soon came into conflict with the negative environmental impacts due to growing resource use and irresponsible throwaway culture. Ethical issues also arose due to globalised production chains and psychological problems associated with linking consumption to happiness increased

The transition to urban living rooms

"I am still amazed how we as a community managed to transition the Hoog Catherijne into a ULR. Instead of thoughtless over-consumption and waste, the Hoog Catharijne is now a place of community where materials are shared, co-working is practiced, and knowledge is co-created. That makes me

really proud! Sometimes I miss the old times even though I don't want to go back. It was easy and convenient, and I fondly remember visits to malls with my grandfather, experiencing the shiny newness and exciting atmosphere. But I think I'm more fulfilled now - I get my hands dirty, I know where what I use comes from. I know I'm not harming anyone or anything by using it. And to do it in this space! Everyone's here, and we all learn from each other." (Peter Hoffmann, ULR Hoog Catherijne)



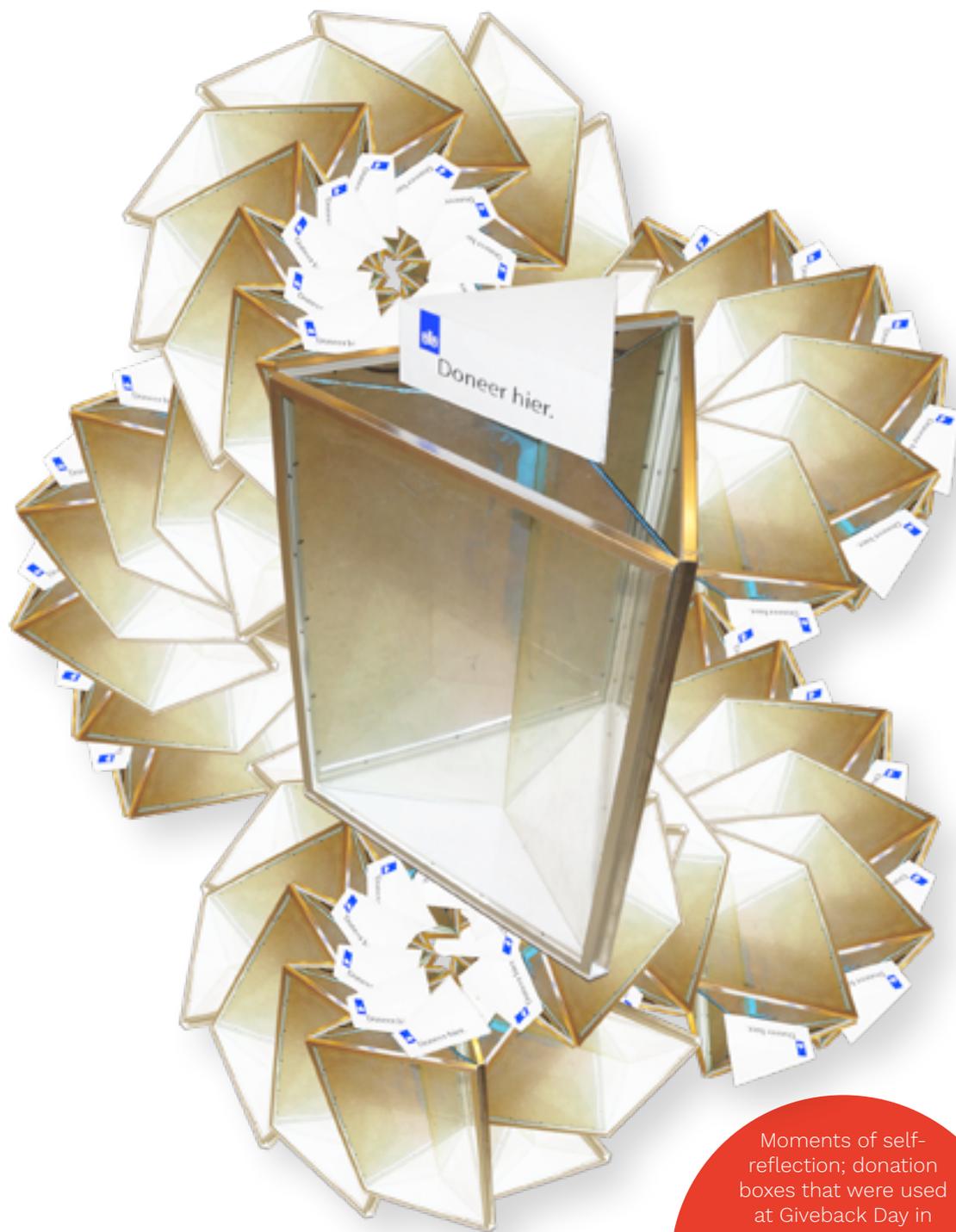
Local markets play an important role in the Urban Living Room

As citizens of 2050, we are familiar with the concept of ULR, what Hoffman refers to as co-working spaces: where local artists, scientists, makers, and repairers work side-by-side, on their own work and in educational areas where knowledge on materials, gardening, and modular building is shared with the wider community, all within the walls of former glass and concrete monsters. Communities are regaining their lost craftsmanship in sewing, soldering, woodworking: all necessary to upcycle and rework materials. But the road that has led us away from shopping malls and over-consumption to where we are today has been a rocky one.

In the 2010s the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals were envisioned to consolidate efforts towards sustainability. However, tangible action proved elusive. The

2020s brought climate breakdown and financial crises fueled by public debt, increasing inequalities, and resource scarcity. The global economy spiraled, climate protests grew, and anti-capitalist sentiment rose. Societal organisation shifted to the extremes in the 2030s - localisation increased, as a necessary way for communities to survive, whilst political power concentrated at the international level in order to deal with borderless problems. In Europe, national borders weakened and the EU became the main authoritative body. The 2040 financial crash acted as the catalyst - the 'tipping point' that allowed full systemic change. Lack of resources and changing consumption patterns had put many businesses under pressure, and the financial crash led to the final closing of many chains typical of consumerist culture. Suddenly, shopping malls were empty buildings with valuable space and infrastructure. The ULR concept, initially piloted during experiments in the 2020s and 30s, all of a sudden had a space in which to grow. The "Urban Living Room Agenda" law from the European Union in 2043 required owners to sell shopping malls for small prices to communities, leading to new forms of ownership and room for local experimentation. The first to officially open its doors was the Hoog Catharijne in 2045, which also led the way in repurposing buildings that had lost their original function.

Contemplating the story of consumption makes us aware of how far we have come. Consumption in the era of capitalism was convenient and comfortable, but let us count ourselves lucky that society is now more conscious of the detrimental consequences of this behaviour. Let us also not forget the environmental and societal price we had to pay to get here.



Moments of self-reflection; donation boxes that were used at Giveback Day in 2026, 2036 & 2046, curated by Esin Erdogan, Tjebbe Vroon, Rosemarie van der Laan, Deeva Kumari Parikh and Robin Rauws

Giveback Day

2046

Who would have thought that Giveback Day would become such a celebratory and meaningful national holiday in the Netherlands? The holiday marks the day on which Dutch citizens return a self-selected variety of their belongings to society. Every community (neighbourhood or village) has a designated drop-off depot where returned items are collected, sorted and selected for reuse. Each depot is fitted with a makerspace that community members use to craft new products from returned products and materials.

On Giveback Day itself, the makerspace is especially crowded, as community residents not only return items, but use new donations to co-create new products. This process of repurposing old and recognisable products into new ones is something that communities have come to enjoy, as they are able to see their possessions come together to make new, unique and valuable products. Giveback Days have produced many new items, such as sofas made from teddy bears and cuddly toys, and tables and chairs made from books. From this, Giveback Day has become a day not only to reflect on what you own and what you need, but also a day to strengthen community bonds through creativity and co-creation. As a result, today's society of 2050 is more minimalist, consumption-conscious and collectivist. The average household now leases or shares most of its appliances and vehicles, and owns only items that are necessary or emotionally valuable to them, and can easily be recycled or reused.



An announcement of Giveback Day from the Dutch National Government.

Giveback Day is not just a symbol of the broader development that has happened over the years, but also a day of festivity. It takes place on Queen's Day, December 7th. This emphasises the importance and prominence of Giveback Day for the Netherlands as a nation. Additionally, Queen Amalia has always felt Giveback Day was important. She wanted to merge Queen's Day, a day traditionally affiliated with clearing out old belongings at local 'Queen's markets', with Giveback Day. To stress the importance and national scope of the holiday, every year the Queen, together with her family, visits a collection depot in a different Dutch city, where she herself also donates some items. This event is broadcast throughout the entire country and makes Dutch citizens feel even more connected to

Giveback Day, as well as to the Royal family.

Even though Giveback Day is a prominent day today, in 2026, it was initially introduced by the Dutch government as a half-hearted policy measure to stimulate a shift to a circular economy. There were already policies in which companies were encouraged to make products from used materials, and those which discouraged them from using any more raw materials. However such initiatives often increased social inequality, due to resource scarcity causing rising prices and overdependence on imports. Therefore, Giveback Day was pushed by the government to recreate products and to successfully start the circular economy. In the first years of Giveback Day, most of

the objects handed in were not valuable, largely reflecting the vastness of unnecessary ownership and unnecessary products. Who needs a plastic duck? In the 2020s it was very common for people to own such items that they did not use. In fact, in an average household, over 80% of a person's possessions remained unused. This was because the consumerist lifestyle was used as a way of signaling wealth and defining or expressing one's self, as society was more individualistic and oriented towards personal success. Moreover, people attached emotional value to (old) items they did not use much anymore, using it as an excuse to keep the items and create an overly-cluttered (but seemingly-wealthy) home.

NWS @NWS - 22 Jan 2025

Prices of raw materials have risen again. 300% price increase of timber since 2020.

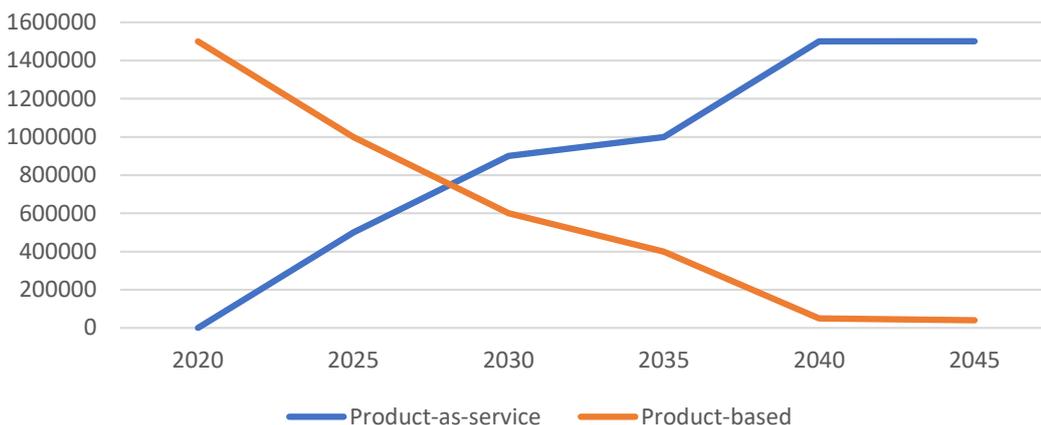


'Raw material prices are rising sky-high'
Prices of raw materials like timber keep rising, the Statistics Netherlands (CBS) reported. This mainly concerns timber, as prices...

News item from the Netherlands World Service (2025)

Over the years, more service-oriented businesses emerged. This growth of the service-oriented sector was the result of new laws and policies as part of the national circularity plan. Economic factors were also at play here: due to the increasing scarcity of raw materials, businesses needed to reinvent their business models to increase material-efficiency as well as maintain sales. The rise of a service economy led to differences in what people donated to the national sharing system during Giveback Day. For instance, in 2036, people started to donate their old bikes and electronics, such as their phones and music systems, as transportation became more public, shared

Change in product-based and product-as-a-service companies between 2020-2045



and/or leased, and consumers began leasing their electronics rather than buying them. This new system of leasing and sharing made sense to most consumers, because through the national sharing system and local depots, residents learnt how excessive ownership was and how wasteful the extraction, production and disposal of products used to be. Furthermore, as product-oriented services were slowly disappearing due to new restrictive and de-incentivising policies, buying new products became more expensive, meaning leasing and sharing products appeared the smarter choice.

In the 2040s, the Dutch economy had become increasingly characterised by standardisation. As the service economy had become business-as-usual, the materials that are used in society have become more homogenous and repurposable. This means that returned items are now more similar and easier to reuse and remanufacture. This demonstrates a shift towards possessions becoming less personal, and the concepts of self-image and identity coming to relate more to one's willingness to participate and involve themselves in the national sharing system, and less on tangible products.

As users of the makerspace in the local depots also realised the gradual shift in consumption behavior, some communities started working on projects often aimed at commemorating our progression as a society. An influential example is a project that comprised creating a mirror frame from a selection of returned goods. In this way, residents could not only visually see how the returned products had changed, but also could self-reflect on the history of consumerism in the framed mirror. Many artistic interpretations and adaptations of the project have also been created since. Many of the creators said that this helped them to both conceptualise and reflect upon our societal shift, but also on the realities of what consumerism is still like for many countries around the world. This is something that has encouraged many young Dutch people to get involved and encourage

other countries to adopt Giveback Day, and move towards a circular, sharing economy.



Mirrors nowadays play an important role in the self-reflective dimension of Giveback Day. Date unknown.

Looking back, Giveback Day has gone through an unforeseeable transformation. Originally implemented as “just another initiative to stimulate the circular economy”, it has evolved into a prominent and valued day for Dutch citizens. It has become one of the most visible and impactful policy measures out of a package of measures implemented over the past twenty years. It represents a shift in emotional attachment: whereas in the past Giveback Day was a day on which people were reluctant to give away many possessions due to personal attachment, it today represents the emotional involvement in the sharing economy that is now a societal norm, a requirement for making the national sharing system work.

The blissful grey areas of policy



In 2020 Jessica Thio spoke to Amy Hand about finding new ways to bridge old gaps between ministries, as she worked to embed the Dutch circular economy transitional agenda ‘Biomass and Food’.

In my role, I feel like I am in the middle. There are five transitional agendas, with different ministries working on each one. Whilst my job is within the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, I liaison on programs that fall under three ministries: my own, the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate. My agenda is about biomass and food, the others are manufacturing, construction, plastics, and consumer goods. The fact that different ministries cover each agenda can throw up some conflict!

In principle we can all agree that we have one overarching goal, a circular economy, but in practice this can mean many things. The different ministries are used to working on their own programs, in their own way. And different approaches can lead to different outcomes.

Take for instance biomass. We want to transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy and so the Ministry of Economic Affairs has pushed subsidies to encourage this, including subsidising the burning of biomass. But from a circularity perspective, burning a resource away is not necessarily the best option. Then there is always a conflict between construc-

tion and agriculture – space is scarce in this country. Do we use agricultural space for energy from solar panels, or for food?

Monitoring is another one – it is so important for measuring where we are in the transition, but there is no shared system within or across ministries. There was already a monitoring system being set up for the National Programme on the Circular Economy, but now new ones are being developed for the realisation of the plan on circular agriculture, and another for the climate agenda... so now there are at least three. So basically, everyone is doing their own thing.

I think we need to start thinking beyond the narrow, traditional scope of our ministries, but it is hard. And I get it – there are practical motivations for only thinking within bureaucratic boundaries.

Government has downsized in recent years. We are doing the same job as before plus more, but with less manpower. So I think naturally the people higher up look for areas we can cut, or areas that can be passed elsewhere. This is especially so because much of the agenda focuses on work we were already doing - so in an atmosphere of limited resources, it is easy to say oh, tick! We are already doing that! And re-label it as a circularity initiative, missing the opportunity to re-imagine it, look for linkages with other ministries, or delve deeper.

I think so many opportunities exist if we looked again at our existing initiatives, particularly if we looked at linking better

across ministries. As I said before there is a lot more you can do with biomass, and I am personally really interested in that. There are big parts of the chemical sector that need to become more sustainable. And there are lots of useful products for that sector that you can get from refining biomass ingredients, with leftover fibres useful for animal feed. In my ministry, we never thought of it like that before: we focus on food for the food retailers but we do not think of ourselves as working on production for the chemical industry. It is a whole new market. And we are always talking about the importance of farmers, their perspective, their livelihoods. Well this could be it, a whole new earning model for them. And that would require collaboration with the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

I feel like I am in a position where I am not in control of any specific topic – I am in-between them all, trying to get them together. On my level, on the working level, it can be productive – everyone wants to collaborate. But as soon as it has to go to a different level, that is where the problems start. Higher up politically, or lower down regionally – work often derails, goes its own way. That can be difficult at times.

At the regional level, every locality has its own tailor-made agenda again – specific to the characteristics of the area (which is not a bad thing). But all this has to fit into/tally with the national agenda, and vice versa. And in taking things higher we encounter politics.

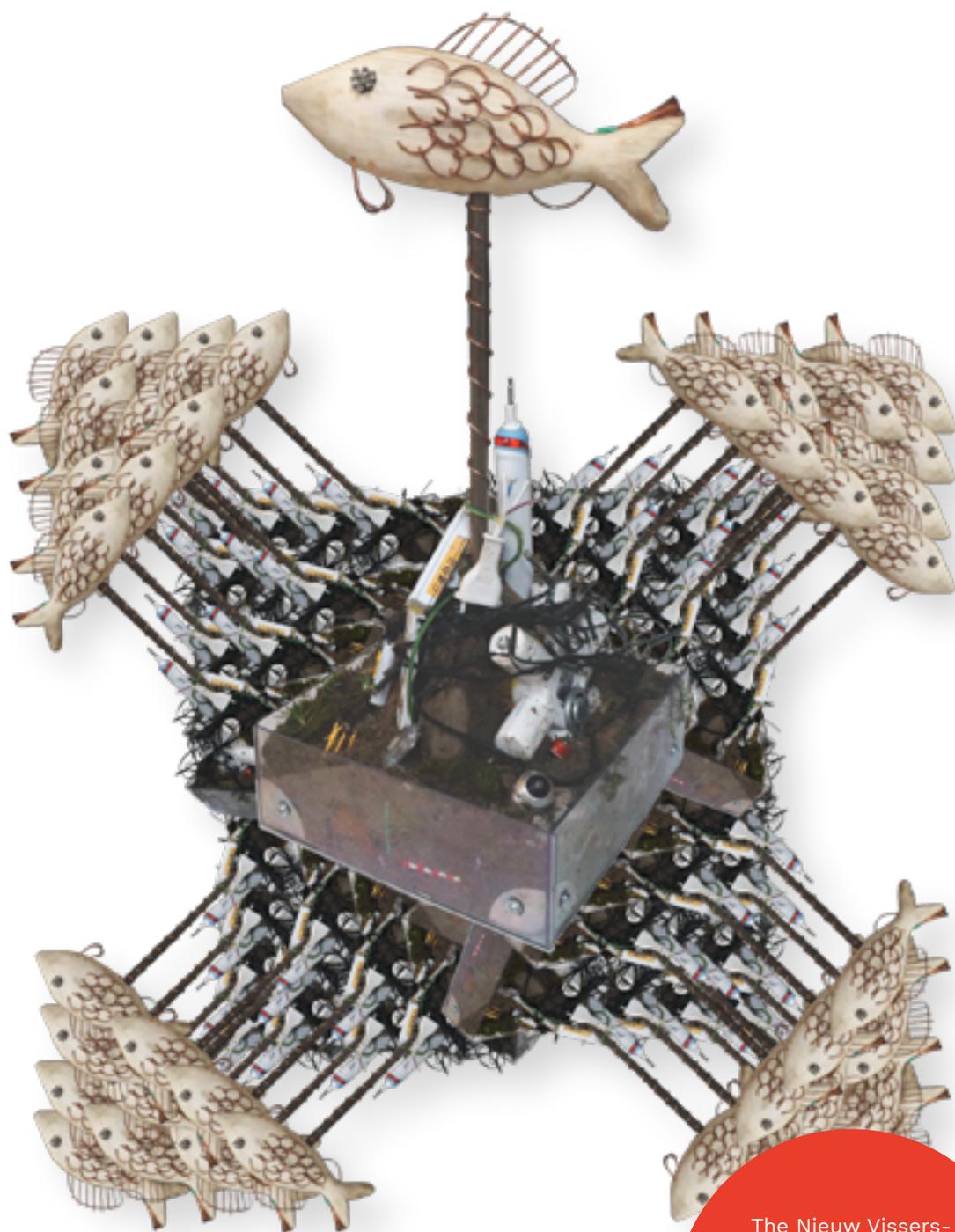
I guess going forward, I really want to focus on areas where I can actually make a difference. As it is just not working trying to revive existing initiatives, I want to work on topics in the grey area that have not been covered much yet. Law is a major one of these topics - it is divided within and between ministries. Biomass is on the edge of waste law and product law. For example, we got a question from the catering services of an airline company.

Regulations require them to burn all their juices (like orange juice) - all catering waste

is classed as a high-risk material because it could have animal products in it like meat, which can be the cause of animal disease outbreaks. So it cannot be used for other purposes like animal feed, and just gets disposed of. But this is a waste of the energy and resources that could be gained from composting or fermenting it, or using it as fertiliser. As the airline company already separated their waste, it would be really easy to ensure no contaminants. So we wanted to see what we could do! We invited the European Commission to come and see how the company's catering services works, how the stewards already work to separate the juice, and how much could be gained from changing the rules and allowing some catering waste to be used for other purposes. The Commission was quite critical about it, but they are coming around.

So these are the kind of opportunities we are now trying to create: bureaucracy is always there, the gaps between the ways ministries work is not going away. So I look to other options - let's look at what has not been covered, the grey areas between policies and ministries. Let's work on changing the rules instead, and make the road to a circular economy smoother for everyone.

**Written down by Amy Hand
on 13 January 2020.**



The Nieuw Vissersgilde Statue created in the AFNN. Curated by: Jonathon Hunt, Jontsje Fennema, Kayleigh O'Gara and Gideon Loerakker

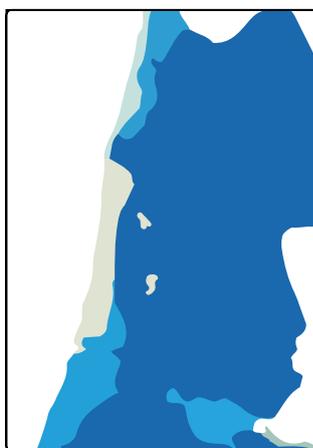
Craftmanship in 2047 the Autonomous Federation of the New Netherlands

The Nieuw Vissersgilde Statue presented to the Museum of the Linear Economy Network is a rare opportunity to explore the history and emergence of the Autonomous Federation of the New Netherlands (AFNN). When the people of the AFNN saw what happened across the world as finite resources started to run out – tensions, conflicts, wars, and exploitation – they decided to abandon the globalisation movements of the early 2040s, focusing instead on their own immediate surroundings and natural resources to build their society. The Nieuw Vissersgilde Statue commemorates the year of 2041 and the moment they began to craft their own way

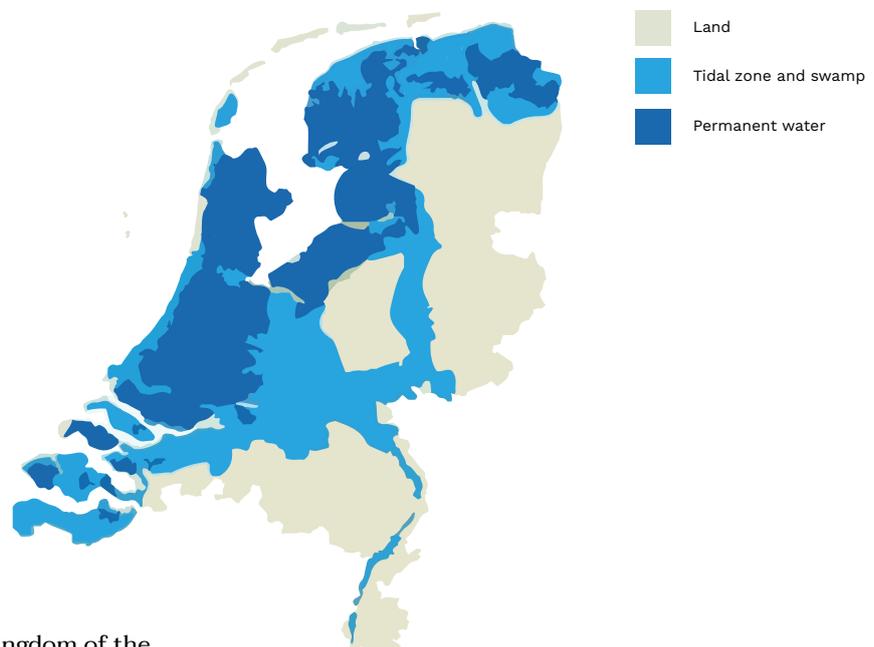
The Great Dutch Flood

The AFNN was born from tragic circumstances. The Great Dutch Flood of 2037, a ‘perfect storm’ of heavy rains, storm surges and breached dikes submerged most of the original Netherlands under water. Crucially, it became an international catastrophe in which over 40,000 people died. The cause was not only natural: the disaster was preceded by a decade of both political mismanagement and negligence, as well as a lack of international assistance due to continuous disasters stretching resources thin. In the aftermath of this near total collapse, most people fled inland for safety and security, fearing for the future of the nation. But not all. Around 100,000 remained in the region of Haarlem, determined to fight and build a new future together.

**Autonomous Federation
of the New Netherlands**



**Former territory of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands**



Flood map of the former territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the AFNN.

Since 2037, the remaining collection of communities in the West of the Netherlands have bonded over a love of their land, culture and environment. The isolated Federation has transformed into an ecologically sustainable and circular society. Noticing the constantly increasing global need for ever more plastics, rare metals and other non-reusable and finite materials, the Federation has abandoned their need for most modern technology that they deem to be unnecessary – most incredibly, consumer electronic goods. As building with rare earth minerals such as lithium is no longer possible in the AFNN, energy is primarily generated from the remaining windmills, solar infrastructure and biomass. Other than the ruins left behind from the Great Flood, all new homes and infrastructure are created from bio-based or salvaged materials, and follow flood-proof techniques of building.

A Revival of Circular Craftsmanship

Much of this story starts in 2020, a very different time for the Netherlands and the world. Early environmental threats were already clear by this point, but many believed that technology alone would provide the solution. Electrical power was increasingly being produced from renewable sources, which provided energy without putting greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. However, this depended on creating rechargeable power cells and batteries for vehicles and industrial appliances. The key components in these were rare metals, mined deep underground or extracted from fresh water springs. The extraction and disposal of these materials consumed significant resources and caused severe pollution on land and sea.

For a long time much of the world paid little attention to these impacts, or even to the wider threat of climate change that had been going on for far longer. Consumerist economies had emerged as king during the mid-1900s, after which several corporations controlled vast empires of trade and resources and many people enjoyed lives of comfort and convenience. This was



Wood is a highly appreciated resource in the Autonomous Federation of the New Netherlands.

despite many more living through struggle and hardship (astonishingly, by 2019 activist researchers found that the top 26 richest people in the world owned as much as the poorest 50%). Yet it was all too easy to look the other way and the excesses of this system were maintained for almost a century.

But during the 2030s the world became an increasingly chaotic place. Environmental disasters such as droughts, floods, wildfires and crop failures were getting more severe, more frequent and more widespread. It was becoming clear to many that switching to renewable and electrical power was not enough to halt this. At the same time, the prices of rare metals were rapidly rising as supplies dwindled, threatening global stability. Both governments and corporations feared for the future of their fragile economic systems and the societies built around them. For the sake of human civilisation, the avoidance of war and the relief of suffering, the United Nations and other regional bodies merged into the Global Union in 2041. It was granted total control of the world's most precious resources, coordinated action on disaster relief and managed the migration and resettlement of the displaced. Rationing and restriction of various technologies was a key method of preservation and was mandated globally.

It was against this background that the AFFN decided to do things differently.

The Nieuw Vissersgilde Statue

The AFNN, in their new beginning, envisioned themselves as a phoenix rising from the ashes (or indeed the flood) – a reinvention as well as a tribute to the lifestyles gone by. Since the rejection of the old linear economy, craftsmanship forms an important cornerstone in the daily lives of the community of Haarlem, the centre of the AFNN. The Statue in this museum is an emblem of sustainable fishing, the main craft in Haarlem. In the village of Wijk aan Zee, farmers reinvented the craft of organic farming in salinated soils. Interestingly, the origins of the emblems of these communities can be traced back almost five centuries.



Houses in the Autonomous Federation of the New Netherlands are almost inevitably built close to the water

Celebration of craftsmanship was once common. In the 16th to 18th centuries, local craftsmen in guilds created emblems to celebrate and represent their specific craft and skills. These guilds were central to towns in medieval Netherlands. They represented groups of craftsmen, and were vital to teaching, sharing and skill honing. Each guild took pride in their craft and saw both beauty and utility in the work that they did. On top of this, those who worked with nature and its precious resources understood that it could not be depended on indefinitely, and must be respected. Conservation therefore was a core value of the guilds and key to their survival and prosperity.

The materials used in the Nieuw Vissersgilde Statue represent not only the fishermen, but also the principles of Haarlem and the AFNN. The sandy e-waste represents the rejected lifestyles of their past. It was all gathered during the early beach clean-ups after the flood. In the spirit of re-use and recycling, copper, the steel and LED lights in the statue are still widely used for construction and infrastructure. While limited in quantity, its use for specific functions is still possible due to the high recycling rate of pre-existing steel and copper, and it still is conceived as special by the inhabitants of the island. After the flood most of these LED lights could be reused due to their solid design.

The fish jumping out from the sea, constructed of wood, represents the emergence of their new circular society that values natural, sustainable living. Wood is used to construct all new buildings, power their homes and industries. Trees are carefully managed and forests, boosted in number and resilience since the globally successful Tree Pact of 2029 onwards, are allowed to flourish across the land. Wood from trees is considered one of the most valuable materials on the island.

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*curators are students that participated in the Mixed Classroom 2019-2020



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Utrecht University



