

PRESS RELEASE

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World City and CityLab: Two New Exhibitions in the Amsterdam Museum

Coinciding with the opening of *The Most Beautiful City: Amsterdam Through the Eyes of Eberhard van der Laan* on 16 June, two new permanent displays – *World-City* and *CityLab* – will be unveiled in the Amsterdam Museum.

Many visitors from the Netherlands and abroad know about the Amsterdam Museum's permanent exhibition, *Amsterdam DNA*. It takes no longer than an hour for visitors to take an interactive journey through time and through the city. *World City* and *CityLab* are designed to complement it. *World City*, a thematic sequel, takes an in-depth look at elements of *Amsterdam DNA*. The geographical concept of Amsterdam is broadened in *World City*, with the personal aspect paramount. *CityLab* focuses on children, inviting them to give their vision of the city as it is today and might be in the future.



Dam Square as the centre of a global empire. Johannes Lingelbach, 1656.

World City

Visitors walk through six thematic rooms in *World City*: From Settlement to World City, Finding Happiness, I Amsterdam, Perpetrator or Victim, Religion and Tolerance, *World City Revisited*. It explores the centuries-long intense interaction between the city, the delta and the world that has shaped Amsterdam's history. Amsterdam would be inconceivable without the port then or Schiphol now. Consider, too, the simple fact that until 1850 the city could only grow because of an influx of people from elsewhere; the city's birth rate did not offset the mortality rate. The process of globalization and the migration that accompanied it are key elements of this new permanent exhibition, bringing to an end a view based solely on the municipality. It brings the role of Amsterdam in the

Randstad, Europe and the rest of the world more sharply into focus. Be it Almere, Scandinavia, Suriname or Indonesia, the interaction between Amsterdam and those places or regions was, or is, a continuing subject of discussion. The headquarters of the Dutch East India Company was in Amsterdam, not The Hague. The Suriname Society was an Amsterdam concern, making Suriname essentially a suburb of Amsterdam. Until the mid-twentieth century Amsterdam was the colonial capital and it is partly for this reason that it is now a very diverse city. The Zuidas and Amsterdam Zuidoost are the modern symbols of this.



Dam Square can be regarded as the city's fulcrum. It was for good reason that the city derived its name from the 'Dam in the Amstel'. From the outset Dam Square has been a local, national and international meeting point, and it still is today. The town hall built there in the seventeenth century has a Citizens' Chamber where you could walk across a floor depicting the whole world, with Amsterdam at its centre. Today it is a place where shoppers and tourists encounter one another, but also the place where the Second World War is remembered and people automatically congregate to seek comfort after a tragic event.

The digital growth map that showed how the city grew and developed in past centuries, was always a popular feature of the Amsterdam Museum. A new digital growth map has been produced for World City. It zooms in on the city and widens out to encompass national and international aspects, with a focus on migration and connections.

CityLab

CityLab, a research space in which children can work with their own Amsterdam and their own world, is part of the new permanent layout. They hear and see the historical stories and add to them their own tales, wishes and dreams. What was Amsterdam like in the past and what might my city look like in the future? How do we live together and what can my contribution be? A selection of their opinions and designs will be exhibited in the CityLab. The CityLab is also an interesting space for those without children: visitors may be surprised by the latest generation of Amsterdammers' views of their city and of the future.



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