

Afterlife Foodprint

Study for Stroom Den Haag,
Centre for Art and Architecture

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by Alex Wilde and
Annechien Meier
(A Growing Exchange)

foodprint
Stroom Den Haag

Introduction to *Foodprint Afterlife* study

Commissioned by Stroom, artists Alex Wilde (Scotland) and Annechien Meier (Netherlands) carried out a study from August till December 2011, focusing on the legacy of the *Foodprint* programme and the viability and possible avenues for future developments.

In our research on the afterlife of *Foodprint* we investigated how the groups, projects and individuals in the Hague and further afield in the Netherlands, would like to see future development of the role of artists / arts organisations and cultural programmes in relation to food and the city. We identified needs and interests of groups and individuals that could be fulfilled by *Foodprint Afterlife* (i.e. cultural, interdisciplinary, theoretical and practical approaches to the issues of food in the contemporary city).

We sought feedback on the three main areas of the *Foodprint* programme:

- The formation of multi-disciplinary networks and the exchange of knowledge on behalf of professionals
- Designing research for and by professionals
- Neighbourhood art projects and exhibitions for a broad audience

Additionally we asked people if there were other areas that they felt the *Foodprint* programme should potentially cover in the future.

We found out whether people had ideas for other areas of future development of the *Foodprint* programme and spoke to people with a connection to the *Foodprint* programme including people who were involved in the organisation/delivery of the programme, people that benefited from the programme, people who supported the programme as well as programme partners. We also spoke to people who are relevant to the programme who have not been directly involved. We did not have the scope to make contact with people who had not heard of the *Foodprint* programme and did not already have any connection with ourselves or Stroom. Appointments with the people we interviewed were made after an email of introduction. Most people were interviewed on location, in a work or project situation. We also organised a group discussion hosted at *Edible Park* to which we invited people who we had interviewed, which five people came to.



Interview with Menno at Edible Park

List of people we interviewed

Cascoland, Fiona Bell

City Spices, Mathilde Peen, Anja Jansen

Eetbaar Park, Nils Norman, Menno Swaak

Eetbaar Rotterdam, Paul de Graaf

Farming The City, Francesca Miazzo

Foodprint, Stroom Den Haag, Arno van Roosmalen, Peter de Rooden

Foodscape Schilderswijk, Debra Solomon

Fransje de Waard

Haagse Bond voor amateurtuinders verenigingen, Peter Pieters

Imkersvereniging Den Haag, Paul en Hanneke van Rooijen

Kolpa Architecten B.V, Jago van Bergen

LEI, Jan Willem van der Schans

Mens en Tuin, Joke Kaptein

MVRDV, Winy Maas

Park 16 Hoven, Gina Kranendonk

Rachelle Eerhart en Rachna Deenstra

Roseboom/Weemen, Inge Rooseboom, Mark Weemen

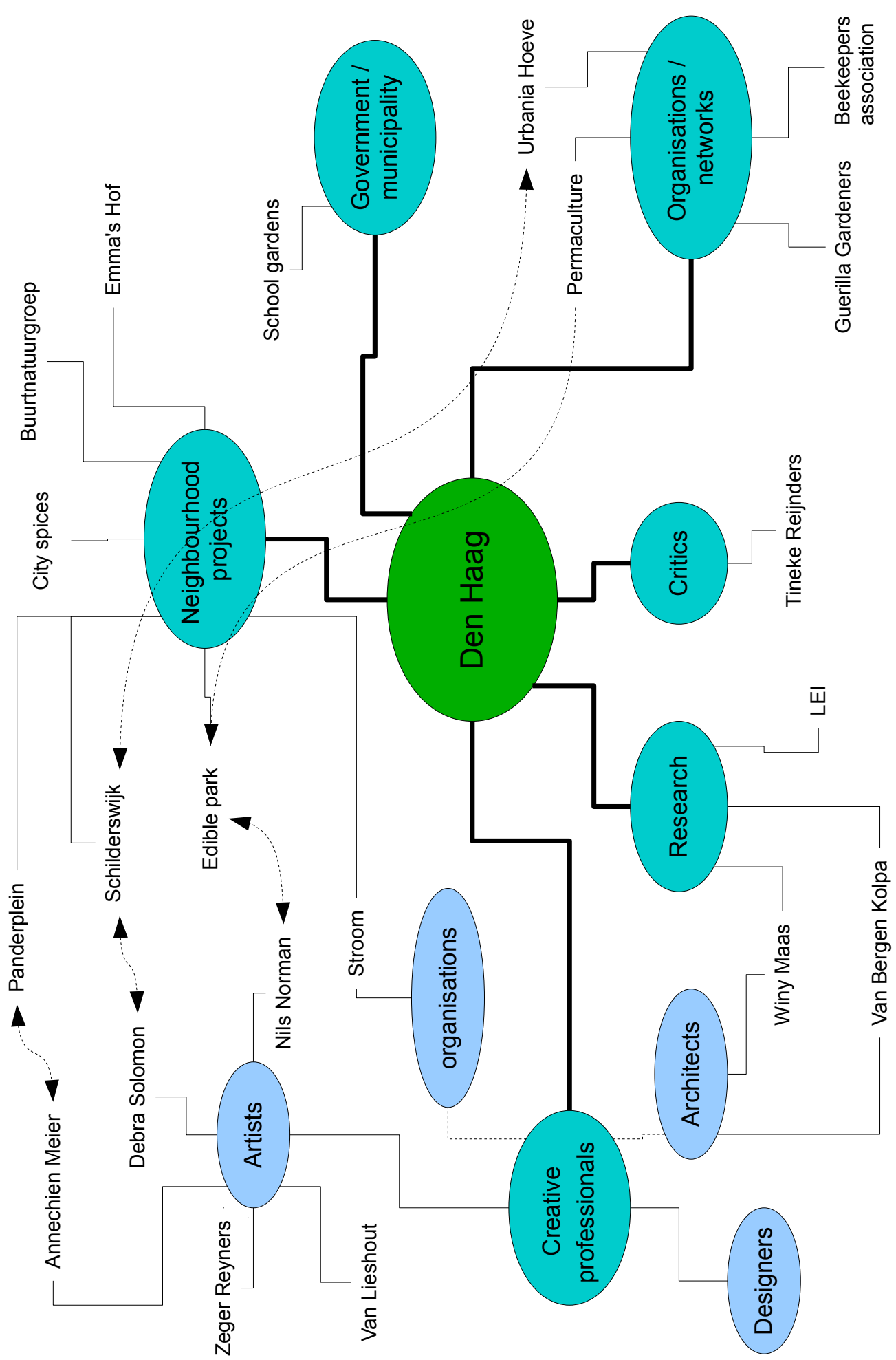
Schooltuinen Den Haag, Sylvia van der Berg

Tineke Reijnders

Inhabitants of The Hague; Panderplein, Emma's Hof, Foodscape Schilderswijk



Interview with City Spices



Feedback about *Foodprint Afterlife*

This feedback is drawn from interviews and organised under the key questions we based the study on.

Our interviews were organic discussions rather than a list of questions. They were wide ranging, starting from finding out more about the projects people were involved with, their aims and issues and leading onto how they would like to develop and what role they saw for artists / creative programmes in that development. This formed a background for more specific questions about the *Foodprint* programme and its future development.

People we spoke to had varying levels of connection to the *Foodprint* programme, everyone was aware of it, most had experienced an aspect of it and some had a direct connection. Most people were not aware of the the extent of the whole programme.

Responses / feedback to the *Foodprint* programme

- A particular strength of the programme has been the bringing together, by Stroom, of partners across different disciplines. Stroom's role as a cultural organisation has been important in this. Stroom and the *Foodprint* programme have achieved a level of influence and recognition that could be built on.
- The projects commissioned by Stroom were given a level of autonomy and freedom to develop that was well appreciated. The trust and commitment given by Stroom were felt to be unique.
- For some people it was not clear how the *Foodprint* programme relates to the profile development of Stroom
- Although appreciating what the *Foodprint* programme achieved in many respects attitudes towards the programme are mixed. Some people felt excluded from it (as contributors not participants) or felt they couldn't influence the agenda of the programme.
- Naturally some people felt the programme could have been broader in what it covered or who it worked with. Linking with migrant workers in the food industry was one example or including people that live nearby a *Foodprint* project, shopkeepers for example was another suggestion. Also suggested was linking with other institutions such as film houses and dance theatres. Some people felt the programme could have utilised the skills of local artists more.
- People thought it was good that the programme extended over several years, particularly in relation to the community-based projects.
- Some people felt the audience for the *Foodprint* programme was too small. More participation of inhabitants of the city was required to make projects successful

Is there a need for *Foodprint Afterlife*?

- There is a clear interest in seeing something develop from the *Foodprint* programme
- There is a desire to build on the influence of the *Foodprint* programme at a strategic level, working together to influence policy and government practice.
- Projects want to connect with each other more to provide support and share ideas and information
- There are motivated people who are interested in progressing the food growing agenda. *Eetbaar Den Haag* has been suggested as a possible name to operate under and has been registered as a domain name
- Some people were interested in *Foodprint* programme continuing as it is and extending to other cities
- Several people we spoke with were keen to be involved in a new network



Interview with Winy Maas (above) and Gina Kranendonk (below)

Form and structure of network / organisation? Who should be involved?

- A strong a network / organisation would include a broad range of people from different levels of operation and experience. Examples of potential partners are building corporations, school gardens and government officials.
- An *Foodprint Afterlife* programme needs a good curator to create clarity.
- One idea was a network or web portal, where food-related initiatives can find each other in The Hague
- Having political support is an important foundation for a new network, to enable projects to be realised
- People felt it was important to have continue to have demonstration projects to explore how things can work in practice. It was also felt important that these projects looked good and were attractive to people
- There was a concern about any network / organisation being 'top down' and imposing ways of communicating. Some people felt it was important that the organisation grow organically based on the interests of those involved rather than any predetermined agenda. The drive and the organisation should come from the community itself. One person talked about an 'open source' approach, opening up a democratic dialogue between individuals, organisations and the municipality
- Strong interest in continuing to see opportunities for cross disciplinary collaboration
- Some people felt an organisation was necessary to support ongoing developments and enable new projects to get started. Some people felt with an association / organisation you have more potential to realise things, a network might be too loose a structure
- It was felt that the network / organisation shouldn't be dominated by a particular agenda and would work best as a neutral platform
- Several people advised about resources and money. You need structural funds to be more effective. Investments should be well placed and direct cash flow between the network and participants
- The network / organisation should have a time limit of 5 – 10 years. This is important to clarify goals for the set-up of a network and see if these goals are achieved in a period of time.
- Possible opportunity for a professional organisation to be set up to deliver advice and support i.e. landscape gardeners with a focus on a productive green landscape

What activities do people want?

- People want projects, workshops and ways of sharing ideas, practical advice, information
- A few people talked about wanting to develop compost systems to make their projects more sustainable. This would encourage recycling, save money and reduce the amount of peat based compost bought.
- Many people felt there was an urgent and ongoing need for skills development, particularly in relation to growing your own food.
- Toolkits for citizens to initiate projects by themselves was suggested
- Some people felt that continued investment in research was important in order to bring some of these projects and ideas into the mainstream. One person suggested there should be new data gathered to identify what urban agriculture means for society, community, health and education.
- The intellectual development of the programme was seen to be important as well as the practical development.
- Focus on lectures that could be really worthwhile and make a difference. A well-targeted programme of a few lectures could be more worthwhile than a huge programme.
- Link in with innovation around food production and the technological developments for the urban environment.
- Broaden out the programme to include a wider range of activities. Specific suggestions were film, dance and chemical cooking.
- Several people felt it was important to involve more of the local community in projects



Interview with Debra Solomon at
Foodscape Schilderswijk

Should a network be based in The Hague or further afield?

- Some people felt that a local structure was important, connecting individuals and groups in the city.
- In terms of National networks there are already links between cities nearby, particularly Rotterdam and Amsterdam. There is interest in continuing to build on relationships with food organisations in these cities. Some people suggested there would maybe be a benefit of starting something in The Hague first but with an eye to linking with / building a wider network later.
- A network could be an organisation of companies called “Healthy City”, including healthcare and pharmaceutical industry as well. Cultural partners in this agency could support communication and innovation.
- To be part of an international network gives a strong conceptual framework for projects. Contacts from abroad can give more independent advice, other viewpoints and encourage an objective way of thinking.



Interview with Fransje de Waard

Are there organisations already delivering this kind of programme?

- We didn't get any feedback that indicated there was anyone in the Hague delivering this kind of cultural programme in such a co-ordinated way.

Is there an organisation that could host a network / new organisation?

- *Permaculture Den Haag* was suggested as an option for a new organisation bringing different parties together.
- Some people felt it shouldn't be hosted by an environmental organisation as this might steer the agenda too much in one direction. One organisation in particular felt that environmental organisations lectured them about methods of production rather than worked with them.

Is it important for it to be based in a cultural organisation / on a cultural programme?

- There was recognition of the role of art to bring attention to and raise awareness of issues around food and the city.
- Some felt art projects needed to have a practical application or result for them to be useful.
- There were mixed feelings about any organisation / network being based in a cultural organisation or being defined by a cultural programme.
- Some people felt that a creative organisation would provide a good, neutral platform to bring people together. Other people didn't think it would be a neutral platform and were unsure about the organisation / network being driven by a cultural agenda.
- It was suggested that as you involve more food-related businesses as partners in the organisation it may become difficult to stick to a cultural perspective.
- Some people felt that creative programme could interfere with the development of food growing projects, potentially being a distraction and work against the natural growth of an organisation. Concern from a few people that art workshops would be imposed on them.
- Stroom's identity is part of the success of *Foodprint*. The cultural platform has given the programme access to different spaces it might not have been able to otherwise.
- Art is a good tool for communication, is definitely necessary and transcends the reporting world. In this way it is important for a network / organisation to have a strong cultural partner.

How would Stroom relate to this network / organisation?

- Clear that people want Stroom to continue as a partner in any ongoing developments.
- Stroom needs to take credit for the development of the *Foodprint* programme even if it is not in control of its future development.
- There was uncertainty about what role Stroom should have and maybe a little wariness about the agenda being dominated by Stroom.
- Stroom can use its expertise to formulate principles for a new network/organisation and commit to supporting the processes of development.
- Stroom can function as as an incubator, a centre of innovation where people of different disciplines meet each other. The role of Stroom as a cultural partner can be very beneficial in making this happen.
- Stroom needs to nourish new teams and see how these teams can penetrate into society to make effective solutions. It is important to take time in bringing these teams together and sometimes the steps are more important than the final result.

Foodprint Brand

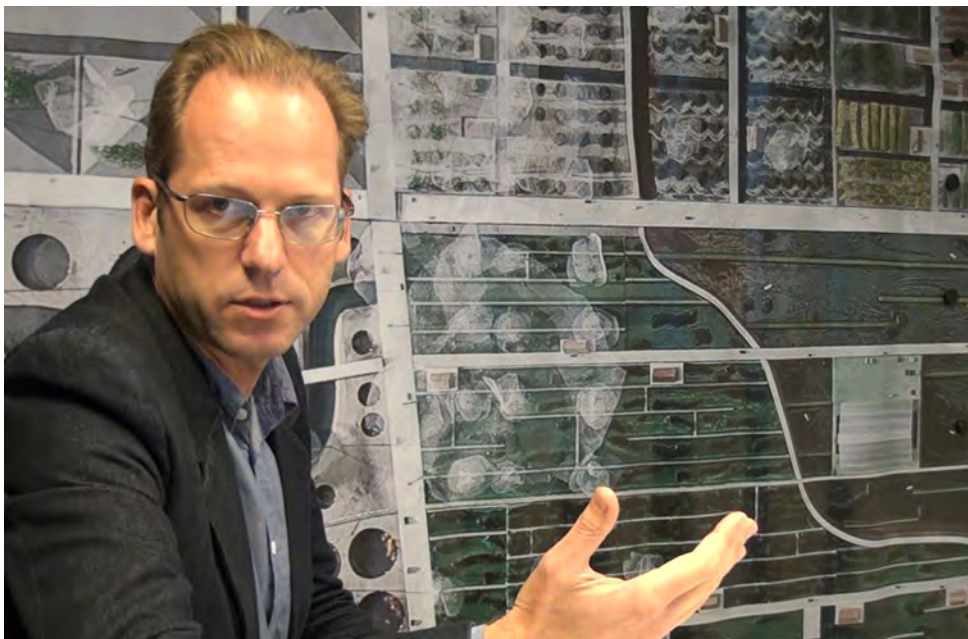
- This specific question was only asked of a few people but it was generally felt that it would be of benefit to continue with the brand as it was recognised and had built up a level of support.
- It would be good to see *Foodprint* stand on its own two feet as a network / organisation independent of Stroom.
- The cultural aspect is a vital part of the *Foodprint* brand. Stroom would not be able to support it without that.

New locations for future activities of the *Foodprint* programme

- Abandoned buildings in the city should be used for growing food. Social networks could grow alongside the growing of food.
- Large scale or small scale? New agencies are needed to start producing food or to get people involved. Not only on balconies but also large scale, re-thinking urban space, organisation of vacant sites and re-use of the borders of a city.

New target groups

- Some people felt it was important to get more young people involved
- Building corporations, particularly those with expertise on sustainability.



Interview with Jago van Bergen

Our reflections and recommendations

Based on our conversations with the people we interviewed, our conversations with each other and our experience of working in this field we have come up with some key points which we think should be considered in the development of *Afterlife Foodprint*.

Food and the city is still a very 'live' issue with many avenues yet to be explored. Food and issues of sustainability are still not embraced by the mainstream, or incorporated into the infrastructure of the city. We are enthusiastic about the continuation of *Foodprint* into a new structure and the opportunities available for the expansion of the programme and development of new partnerships. It is something as artists we would be interested to be involved with.

We feel Stroom is still best placed to take a lead on creating a structure for *Afterlife Foodprint* that is open, dynamic and inclusive.

Below are our ideas about the best way forward for the development of *Afterlife Foodprint*.

Who (might be involved)

We were not able to speak to all the people suggested to us in the time available and there are several groups of people that we could recommend bringing in to future discussions:

- Farmers – perhaps through the farmers union
- People involved in the distribution of food – markets and shopkeepers
- People employed in the large scale production of food
- Communications consultancies
- International networks

Artists should be represented in their own right, not just through Stroom. Other experts should also be able to connect individually.

There is an energy that could be capitalised on to get a network up and running. This energy comes, in part, from the *Foodprint* programme, particularly those people involved in the community projects. It also comes from an increasing awareness and interest in how food is produced and the ways in which food and growing connects us in cities.

Some organisations are very outward looking and keen to work with other partners, this tends to be the younger organisations with younger people involved. Other organisations are more self-sufficient and potentially see partnership as interference. This may well change however as funding for projects gets squeezed and they feel under pressure to open up.

Some people have a desire to go their own way and are resistant to more formal ways of organising things and there are other people who are eager to get going. *Foodprint Afterlife* needs to find a way of bringing these people together and finding common ground for them to work together so they are not competition or conflict with each other.

What (might it look like)

People we talked to had different ideas in terms of what the shape of the network could be. A physical platform, a group of cross disciplined experts who come together, a place for demonstration projects and research, a web portal or a combination of these might be a start for a new network.

A network seems to be what is needed to carry forward the ideas around food and the city, which have been stimulated by the *Foodprint* programme. The first step is to connect people and organisations, sharing ideas and resources. The next steps could be lobbying of politicians for support and the development of new projects or testing of new ideas.

A framework could be created by Stroom to nourish ideas, at the same time as giving a network freedom to develop organically.

Perhaps a more formal organisation could be established later on when the agenda of a new *Foodprint* group has been developed.



Group discussion at Edible Park

What (might it do)

The programme should continue to offer a range of practical and theoretical activity, targeting different interest groups.

There is an opportunity to really broaden out what the *Foodprint* programme can offer without diluting the concept of it too much.

The *Foodprint* brand could encompass a broad range of activities, not necessarily those organised directly by Stroom. Different aspects of the programme could be led by different organisations as long as they signed up to the principles and aims of the network.

There is potential for more critical discussion amongst artists, this could be addressed through lectures / discussions targeting artists.

There is also potential for more discussion amongst experts of different organisations and disciplines.

Where (would it be based)

We think it makes sense to initially create a network specific to the Hague with a view to connecting with organisations in other cities in the future.

The Hague would be a logical location to start a wider network in the future, as it follows on quite naturally from the *Foodprint* programme.

Once a network is established other groups in The Netherlands, such as Edible Rotterdam and Farming the City will be keen to link with this network and look at ways the organisations can support each other and work on a broader national agenda.



Interview with Sylvia van der Berg

How (to go about setting it up)

In order not to lose the energy it would be good to have something starting up when the *Foodprint* programme, as it currently exists, closes. Stroom need not necessarily have the details of an organisation or network finalised but having set the wheels in motion.

Stroom will have a critical role in the initial phase, bringing together the right people and keeping things moving and on track. This phase should create an open structure, a kind of laboratory and should be easily accessible for different disciplines. It is also important to make everyone feel they have something to offer, not just the experts.

There is a need for Stroom to stand back and encourage people to take ownership of any network / organisation and encourage the agenda to be formed and driven by the members. Stroom would need to work out how this was balanced by the desire to protect the *Foodprint* brand.

The process of forming a network is very important in building a solid foundation and creating fruitful relationships. It should be a transparent and democratic process.

Though some people were unsure about the role of an art organisation in any network / new organisation we think that people would support the continuation of the *Foodprint* brand if they felt there were equal partners in its future development.

Examples of other projects that could be learnt from in the development of *Foodprint Afterlife*

The *Foodprint* programme is fairly unique and we have not come across any sustained cultural programme on the subject of food and the city, which had the scope of the *Foodprint* programme. There are other networks or projects which might have elements which would be helpful to learn from or refer to in the development of *Foodprint Afterlife*.

Farming the City, Amsterdam

CITIES is a research unit for urban observers and explorers. They are working on systems of distribution of food and innovative ways of doing that. They are mapping what projects exist around the world and present them on their website in a way that encourages people to connect. This international perspective gives an open, independent and accessible platform for discussion, debate and action.

Edible Rotterdam

Edible Rotterdam collects and disseminates knowledge about urban agriculture, connecting people with knowledge and experience in these areas. The association wants to organise a network in which local initiatives can support and reinforce each other. Partnership between ideas and practice is significant in their organisation. They are developing a new structure for their association to accommodate this.

NVA , Glasgow

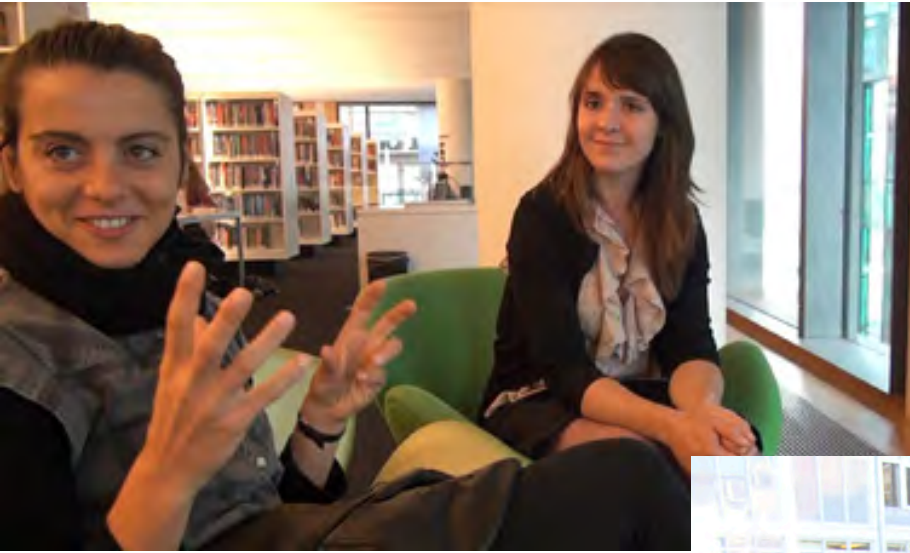
NVA started the SAGE project in 2009 in partnership with ERZ Landscape architects and Glasgow Clyde Greenspace to investigate solutions for the growing number of derelict spaces round Glasgow that were potential growing sites and to support community growing. Next year SAGE is set to become a separate organisation and build a network of growing organisations in Glasgow.

CCA , Glasgow - This Land is Your Land

Francis McKee promotes open source ways of working, using the building as a space for incubating projects and ideas, allowing connections to be made between them naturally. The exhibition *This Land is Your Land* uses the gallery as a laboratory, bringing in a range of different people and ideas from artists to chefs to gardeners. Francis sees many parallels between the issues faced by artists and those connected to food; activism, collaboration, participation and ownership.



Interview with Paul de Graaf



Interviews with Francesca Mezzo (above),
Jan-Willem van der Schans (right) and
Peter Peters (below)



A Growing Exchange

A Growing Exchange is an international exchange project between artists Alex Wilde (Scotland) and Annechien Meier (The Netherlands) exploring and connecting the cities of Glasgow and The Hague and their growing projects.

We aim to explore and interrogate approaches, issues and ideas within our creative practices, which focus on the production and consumption of food.

We are using the opportunity to explore questions about the role of the artist in growing, gardening and 'environmental issues', interrogate our approach to making work, examine the commonalities in our practices and to conduct research and experimentation.

