

Alexander Lichtveld

Commissions for public spaces

In these projects the assignment was to design a tile pattern for floors and/or walls: in other words, not autonomous works of art but works that react to a building. The guiding principle is that the tiling has to complement the architecture in an idiosyncratic way. The design for the leaded light window can be seen as a transparent tiled wall.

The thinking underlying the designs varies greatly. It may be related to the history of a building or its purpose, or a reaction to the source of inspiration of the architect.

Het Fort, The Hague

Old photos of the Het Fort housing complex in the Schilderswijk district of The Hague show that there used to be mosaics in the arches above the doors and windows. This assignment relates to those arches.

In 1997, the decision was taken to renovate the area thoroughly. Despite two earlier renovations in 1968 and 1984, the neighbourhood of workers' houses (built in 1890 and designed by architect W.B. van Liefland) had fallen into disrepair.

I was asked to restore in a contemporary manner the faded mosaics in the 300-plus arches, spread across the 65 homes. I decided to give each home its own logo, so I made 65 designs. This logo appears in every arch of that home. You could regard this as a modern version of a family crest.

I let all the residents choose their own logo. All 65 logos appear as a sort of visual index on the first side wall at the beginning of the neighbourhood.

This project was realised in close cooperation with a landscape architect and, for advice on the colour of the walls, with an artist.

2000

Architect for the renovation: Buro Hooysschuur

Principal: De Principaal

Artistic advice: Maria Chailloux

Olympic Stadium, Amsterdam

The assignment for this project was to design a tiled wall on both sides of the entrance to the new car park under the Olympic Stadium. The stadium was constructed for the 1928 Olympic Games; it was designed by the architect J. Wils and dates from 1928. After so many years, the condition of the building had deteriorated and demolition was a real possibility. Fortunately, this did not happen and in 1992 it was granted monument status and the decision was taken to renovate it.

A car park was built under the stadium at the same time as the renovation. For the walls of the car park entrance that are visible from the outside I designed tiles that fit in with the history of this place. I did this by coordinating the colours to those of the building. As a motif I used 'rolling' circles that refer not only to the Olympic rings but also to the traffic that 'rolls' in and out.

2000

Architect for the renovation: A. v. Stigt

Principal: SFB vastgoed

Artistic advice: Maria Chailloux

Private residence, Maastricht

This assignment was to design two identical leaded light windows for the stairwell of a private residence Maastricht. Considering the age of the house, I made a design that is in keeping with the style and ambiance of the house and the stairwell.

2000

Cortile apartment building, Amstelveen

The commission was to make a design for the entire public floor area of this building. What was special about this project was that five artists were involved in it from an early stage. Designs were made for the walkway railings, the entrance hall, two huge murals and the entrance to the apartments. This necessitated close cooperation in order to harmonise all the individual components with each other. And because the floors are to be found throughout the entire building, I was involved in all the other components too.

The principal wanted an apartment building with an Italian feel. The focal point of the floor design is the atrium. The design makes reference to archaeology, to excavated mosaics, some pieces of which are missing and others have been preserved. The corridors around the atrium have a classical delineation – regular, conventional, but with dimensional variations, damaged by time.

1997

Architect: I.M. Liem

Principal: NHP

Artistic advice: Maria Chailloux, Benno Premsele

Arcade shopping centre, Alkmaar

The Arcade shopping centre in Alkmaar is located in a nine-storey block of apartments and offices. It is located alongside the Great North Holland canal, adjacent to the town centre of Alkmaar. The shopping centre itself covers four floors, including the underground car park.

The assignment was to design the tiling of the four shopping floors, including a 'walkway' more than 150 metres long that runs along the back of the entire block.

1996

Architect: Zeeman architecten

Principal: NHP