

# DESIGNING FOR THE PUBLIC

---



---

**bende**

**placemaking**  

---

**europe**



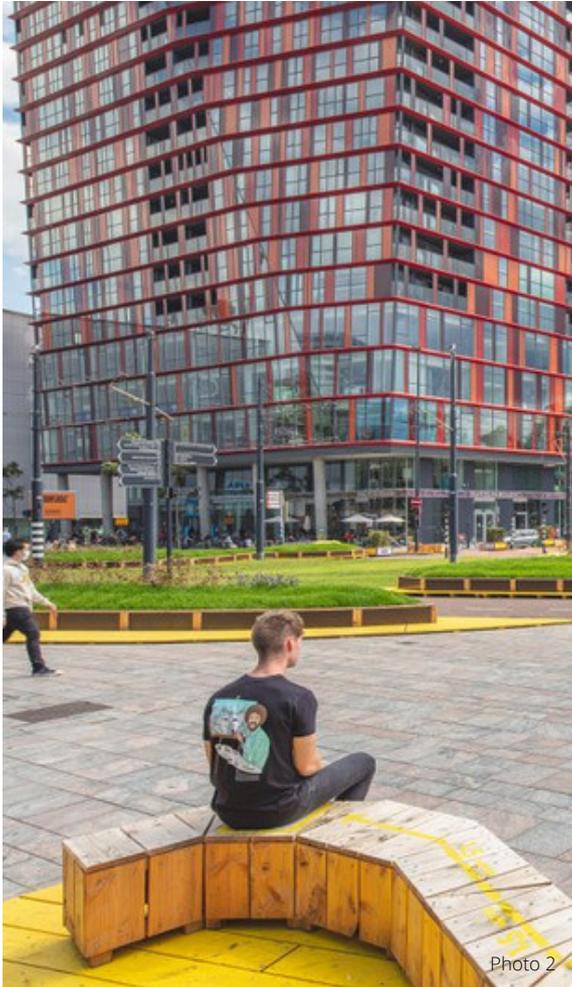
# CONTENT TABLE



Photo 1

---

●	Why this manual?	2
●	Bende's recipe	3
●	The ingredients	4
●	Case: West-Kruiskade	5
●	Case: Experiment Oude Westen	6
●	Credits	7
●	References	8



Yellow furniture on Kruisplein

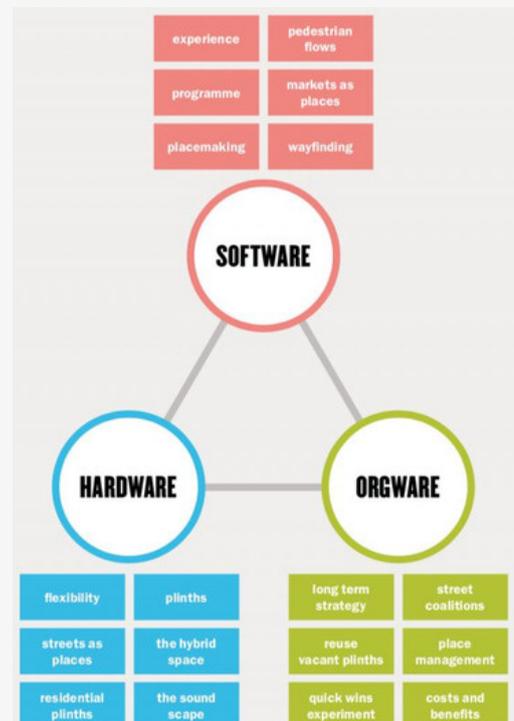
# WHY THIS MANUAL ?

*"However different the situations are, creating a great city at eye level is always dependent on the triangle of use." - The City at Eye Level by STIPO*

To create great places you need to focus on a balance in the **triangle of use**, according to The City at Eye Level (2016). When we think of places, we might initially think of the **hardware** or the built environment, like the street or the architecture. Increasingly, however, the contribution of software and orgware are understood in the creation of good places. By **software**, you can think of the social life of the place, the local economy and the types of activities the place, inhabits. To ensure the long term quality of a place you need some form of place management and a coalition between actors to ensure it. This is called **orgware**.

The design of public space products, such as furniture or pathways, is a good example of hardware, but public space design can be even more transformative to a place when the neighbourhood's software and orgware are taken into account too.

Rotterdam based design studio 'Bende' takes a rather innovative and unique approach in its design process. **Bende designs its products based on the characteristics and 'soul' of the neighbourhood.** The public space designs are sensible to the local surroundings and social dynamics. Let's get into how they achieve this!



Graphic 1



Conducting interviews on Eendrachtsplein

## BENDE'S RECIPE

*"We believe in the principle of designing a street scene based on the typical cultural characteristics of the neighbourhood. This strengthens the bond between residents and their city and this ultimately contributes to everyone's urban experience." - Bende*

In a design process, the outcome often results in a product, such as a place for seating or greenery. However, the traditional way of designing public spaces, oftentimes, lacks input of local residents and focuses on cars instead of pedestrians and cyclists.

To create good quality spaces we need to **focus on the users**. The recipe for success, according to Bende, is **to analyse, produce and test your design**. Often this also entails rethinking and adapting the initial conceptual design.

The Bende team has done different public interventions or product design projects - integrating the formula to analyse the place, create a conceptual design, produce the design and test it. They engage with local residents, business owners and people that pass by to find out where there is room for improvement and to gather input on the concept. This, together with their design skills, create public interventions and products that foster the 'soul' of the place and **strengthen the connection between the urban resident and their environment**.



Furniture blocks on Eendrachtsplein



More 'green' on Kruisplein

# THE INGREDIENTS

*We will highlight the different ingredients of Bende's design process. These can be followed in this exact order, but it is not imperative. Some ingredients can be less useful or two phases can take place simultaneously. This is dependent on the context, location, or time schedule of your own project.*

---

## Analysis

- Visit the location in order to generate insights. You will not achieve this by sitting behind your drawing desk.

## Values

- Formulate values that genuinely represent the community using your interviews and visits to the location.

## Design

- Now, start on the design process according to all the insights from the other phases.

## Interviews

- Involve the stakeholders. This strengthens their feeling of ownership of their environment.

## Concepts

- Use these values to create one or multiple conceptual directions. Brainstorming gives you the opportunity to imagine different designs.

## Realisation

- Construct the different products based on the designs. Lastly, place them on the location and voila!

# CASE: WEST-KRUISKADE

October 2020 - no end date

*Ingredients: analyses, interviewing, values, concepts, designs, realisation*

*"The picnic tables have been on the West-Kruiskade since October. It is amazing to see how many people use them and yet they still look as good as new!" - Wouter van Doorn (Bende)*



1,5 meter picnic table on West-Kruiskade

During the covid-19 pandemic, Bende was asked to design picnic tables where residents of the *Oude Westen* neighbourhood could safely meet. The picnic tables would need to ensure a 1,5-meter distance between the two users.

Bende based their design on the perceived character of the neighbourhood and also involved local *Rotterdamers*. Besides the production of a series of tables, **they also produced different products for local business owners along the West-Kruiskade**, which are now part of the street scene.

This project was in cooperation with the Rotterdam municipality and BIZ, the local shopkeepers association of the *West-Kruiskade*. After **analysis** of the street, they **consulted with the shop owners** to get input on their opinions on the conceptual designs.

The neighbourhood is characterised by the diverse nationalities of the residents. Bende playfully hinted to this in their design. The diagonal lines represents the versatility of the residents. The colorful cross refers to the name of the street, which roughly translates to West Cross street.

## Conclusion

The picnic tables are planned to stay! It was decided they would be permanently placed as addition to the public seating of the neighbourhood.

To further develop this concept, Bende sketched up a more elaborate product family, based on the existing picnic tables. They want to place these products along the Middellandstraat, located close to the West-Kruiskade. When the impression sketches were finished they contacted local business owners and residents to gather their thoughts and ideas on the possible designs.

Do you want to keep up to date on this development? Check the Bende website!



Sit together at a safe distance

# CASE: EXPERIMENT OUDE WESTEN

May 2020 - August 2020

*Ingredients: analyses, interviewing, values, concepts, designs, realisation*

*"The Rotterdamse Mobiliteit Aanpak (Rotterdam's Mobility Approach) is part of the city's mobility policy, which aims to restore the balance between cars and bicycle traffic, public transport and pedestrians." - Rotterdamse Mobiliteits Aanpak*



Photo 8

**Enjoy your break on Kruisplein**

Two squares in Rotterdam, *Kruisplein* and *Eendrachtsplein* were closed off for four months to car traffic, giving pedestrians, cyclists and public transport more space. Bende was asked to formulate a plan to structure the closed off squares. They started the process by **assessing** and **analysing** the squares to get a 'feel' of the location. Then they initiated participation of pedestrians and shop owners on the squares. To do this they set up a 'chat box' where a few Bende members interviewed people about their ideas and wishes for the squares.

Based on these steps they defined three values that users wish were more present in the sq:

**Unified identity:** The squares have a scattered identity. A consistent approach will create more unity.

**Friction free connections:** Ensure that pedestrians and cyclists would be directed naturally across the square.

**Unique spot in the city:** Giving the squares a contrasting function in relation to the current use.

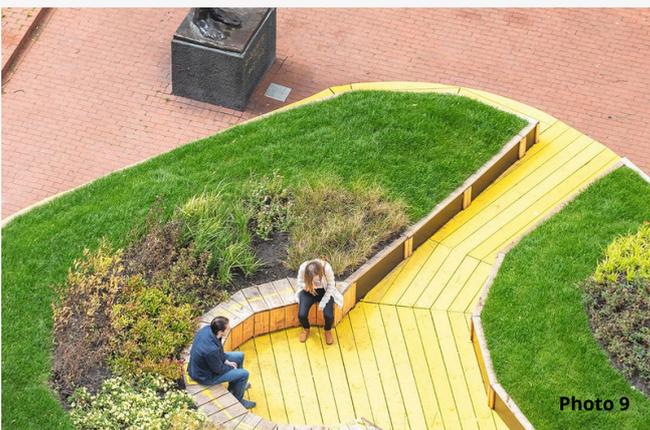


Photo 9

**Green hill with yellow seating**

## Conclusion

Bende transformed the two squares with various yellow 'organic hills', which contrasted with the surroundings on the squares. The colour yellow refers to the typical colour of temporary mutation in Dutch road construction, but also brightened up the public space. The hills gently guided pedestrians across the square. It also provided seating, greenery in the city and also served as obstacles for car traffic.

# CREDITS



Photo 10

---

- **Bende**

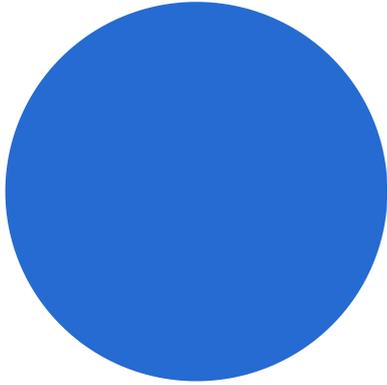
Bende is a design and production agency based in Rotterdam. They help their clients to move from abstract challenges to tangible solutions.

- **Placemaking Europe**

Placemaking Europe is a European network of front-runners, who together accelerate placemaking as a way to create healthy, inclusive, and beloved communities.

- **STIPO**

Stipo works as a public developer and contractor on better cities and more beautiful regions. They are a multidisciplinary urban development team, driven by sustainable quality and human scale.



# REFERENCES

---

Bende. *Een buurtspecifiek straatbeeld ontwerpen: voor de stad vanuit het karakter van een buurt.*

Karszenberg, Hans, Jeroen Laven & Mattijs van 't Hoff. 2016. "80 Lessons to a good city at eye level." In *The City at Eye Level: Lessons For Street Plinths*. Utrecht: Uitgeverij Eburon. <https://thecityateyelevel.com/biglearning/80-lessons/>

Gemeente Rotterdam. 2020. *Rotterdamse MobiliteitsAanpak*.  
<https://www.rotterdam.nl/wonen-leven/mobiliteitsaanpak/Rotterdamse-Mobiliteitsaanpak1.pdf>

## Image credits

Bende: Cover photo

Wouter van Doorn: Photo's 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10

Thijs van Luijk: Photo's 2, 4, 5, 9

The City at Eye Level: Graphic 1

---

## WRITTEN BY

Lotte Caljé

*Urban anthropologist at STIPO*

---

## IN COOPERATION WITH

Wouter van Doorn

*Co-owner of Bende*