



# Tunnel Tool

Helsingborg & Placemaking Europe  
**Placemaking Tool Manual**



HELSINGBORG

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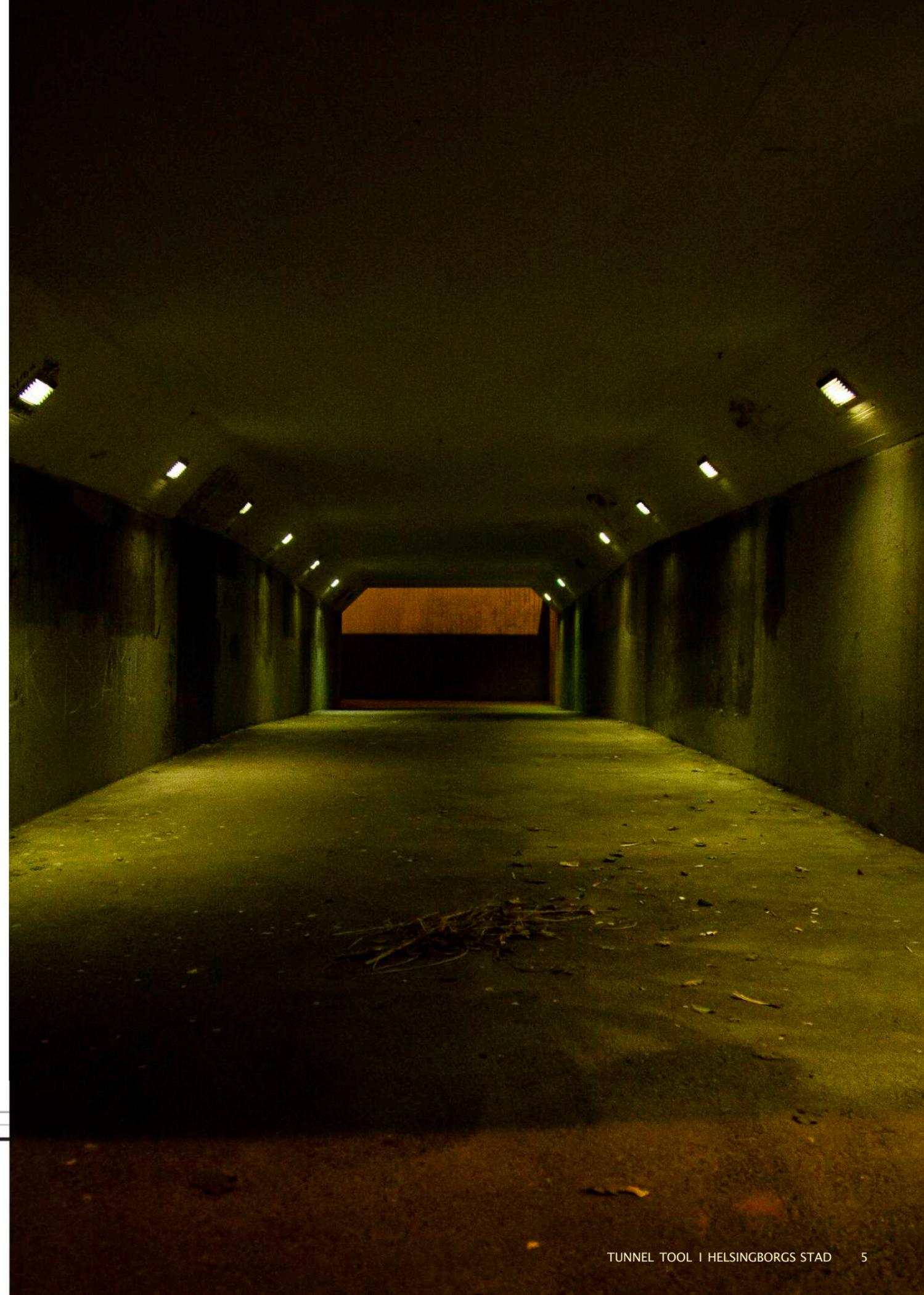
## Local context

### Why the tunnels?

The modernist movement in Sweden introduced a strategy of creating safe school roads for children and separating them from cars. As part of this strategy, many tunnels were built to eliminate the need for children to cross the street. Tunnel crossings for pedestrians and cyclists act as important links between neighbourhoods, but many people do not feel safe using the tunnels. We have noticed that many tunnels need renovation and that this is a big challenge for us, working to improve the feeling of safety. As in most cities, Helsingborg also lacks "eyes on the street", especially during the dark hours of the day.

### Our approach

To respond to this challenge, we as Helsingborg Municipality first used a digital map of the city where residents can mark a place as unsafe. From this map we knew which tunnels were marked as unsafe. We started with a basic renovation, which included increasing the lighting, but then we realised we needed to do more. By involving artists who painted the tunnels in decorative motifs, large, beautiful works of art were created. At the same time, we learned that co-creating a project with residents can lead to a stronger identity and a sense of pride in one's place. In this manual we want to share our experiences of using the 'Tunnel tool' in Helsingborg. We hope that our findings will also be useful to other organisations and municipalities in transforming problematic spaces into loved places.



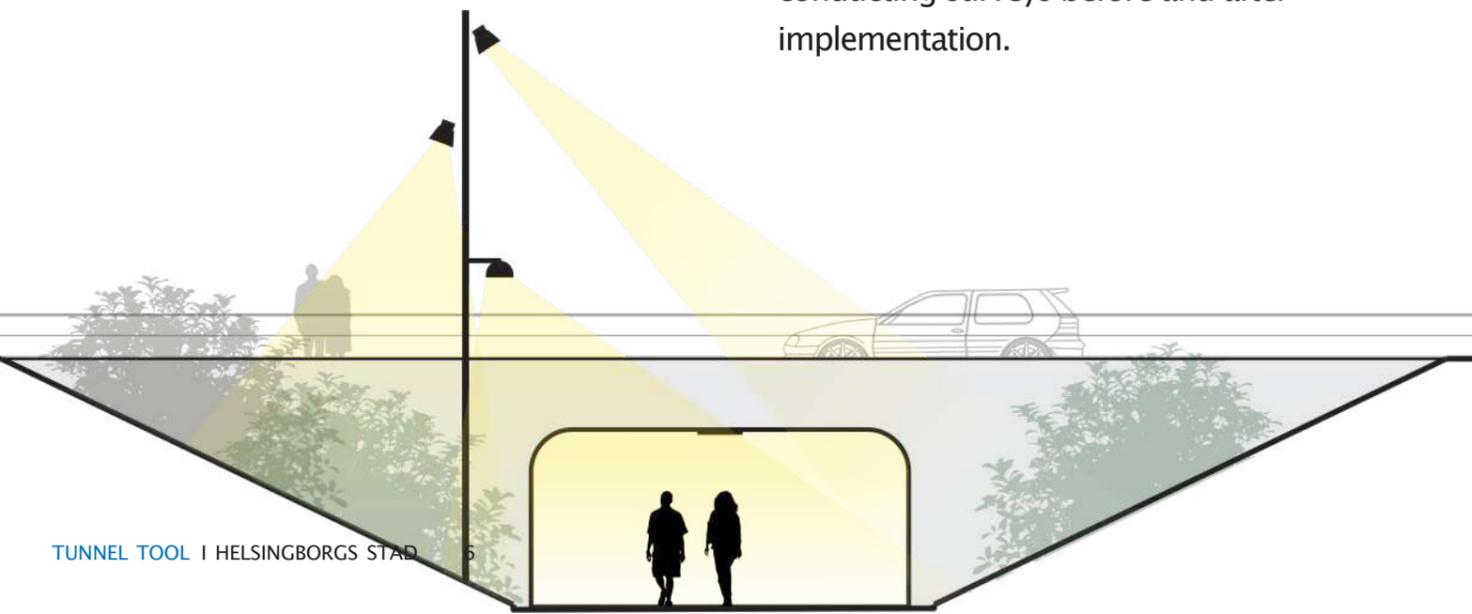
# Tunnel Tool

## The impact

We work nimbly and see that the 'tunnel tool' is a fairly quick and easy way that produces a great effect at little cost. Our measurements show that there is less graffiti and vandalism in painted tunnels. The method of painting the tunnels itself may not make people stay longer – that's not its function – but a clean and well-kept environment with a unique motif will add something to the neighbourhood. We believe that our approach of involving residents in a participatory and democratic process increases pride and ownership of the neighbourhood.

## The preparations

When we begin the process of using the "Tunnel tool", firstly, we always make sure that the lighting inside and outside the tunnel is sufficient. We know from research how important it is to be able to see your surroundings in order to assess the people you encounter and your ability to deal with unsafe situations. It is important that the lighting is as even as it is bright enough. Lighting in tunnels should be designed from a holistic perspective, where the surroundings must thoughtfully combine with the lighting concept for pedestrian and cycle paths. Our Helsingborg team works according to CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles, which are well researched. We also study how people perceive safety in the area and sometimes check how the design has improved the sense of safety by conducting surveys before and after implementation.



## The steps

1. Define your goal
2. Do your research – check the cleanliness and lightning of the tunnel as well as the neighbouring area.
3. Check the legal ownership of the tunnel.
4. Secure funding.
5. Establish contact with local organisations that can support your project.
6. Identify your target audience for dialogue.
7. Find the right artist.
8. Connect the artist with participants in the placemaking project (or let participants choose the artist).
9. Organise workshops where the artist and participants can collaborate on creating a project.
10. Invite community.
11. Paint!
12. Measure the impact.
13. Celebrate and share!



## Our experience

In realising the tunnels, we have learned many valuable lessons, both in terms of the technical side of the project and in collaborating with artists and residents.



### Communication with the residents

It is good to inform residents about the tunnel refurbishment. People are less likely to vandalise something that is in the spotlight. If several tunnels are painted, you can create a buzz around the project. Maybe a guided art tour can be organised!

### Safety

The painting of the tunnel must be organised taking into account road permits and relevant traffic signs. In this way, artists and participants are protected from cars, mopeds and bicycles.



### Collaboration with the artist

It is important to mention that people will be involved in the painting process, as not every artist is willing to let people interfere in the work. As Helsingborg organises many "tunnel tool" processes each year, the city council has hired a consultant to curate the selection of a suitable artist. We tried to choose artists who have a certain style, give people joy and a positive mood, and choose bright colours. And of course artists who are unlikely to upset people by spreading hate and discrimination.

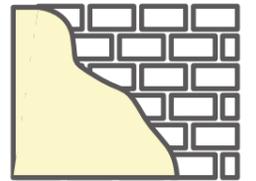


### Good weather

The tunnels must be in good working condition, moisture in the concrete can destroy the paint within a year. The tunnels cannot be painted in winter, e.g. in Sweden from September to May it is not possible, because the concrete is too wet and cold. Before painting, it is also important to make sure that it has not rained for several days.

### Durable and damage-proof

Painting concrete in a durable way is very costly – you have to exfoliate the concrete with sand, impregnate it, put a base layer on, then eventually paint, and then apply a top coat – two thin layers of wax, which allows the top coat to be washed off with hot water in case of vandalism. In this way all the tunnels are protected for easy removal of the tags.



### Breathable paint

Spray paint does not allow the concrete to breathe, use a paint that is designed for outdoor concrete and allows the concrete to breathe.

### Clean and light

If the tunnel is clean and lighting is good and functioning, the artwork is better visible and the tunnel as a whole becomes more attractive.



### Costs

The fee for the artist is around 15–30 % of the total cost (not including lightning).

## Case studies

By involving artists who painted the tunnels in decorative motifs, large, beautiful works of art were created. At the same time, we learned that co-creating a project with residents can lead to a stronger identity and a sense of pride in one's place.



## Joshen Jorua & Ilse Weisfelt's Tunnel

We organised two workshops with two primary school classes, one from each connecting neighbourhood. The first was held in a gallery in the city centre. We came to pick up the children by bus and showed them some tunnels to inspire them. The second one we organised in the neighbourhood, at school. The children were mixed in smaller groups. In the first workshop they got to paint and draw on paper with lines that were a scaled down version of the tunnels walls and ceiling. The artists looked at these sketches

and drawings and came up with the idea to have a superhero theme for the tunnel. So in the next workshop the children were asked to come up with different symbols for the superheros using colored paper, scissors and glue. The children also got to do a workshop where they got to spray on a legal wall nearby (a legal wall is a wall where anybody is encouraged to paint and where you can do graffiti legally).

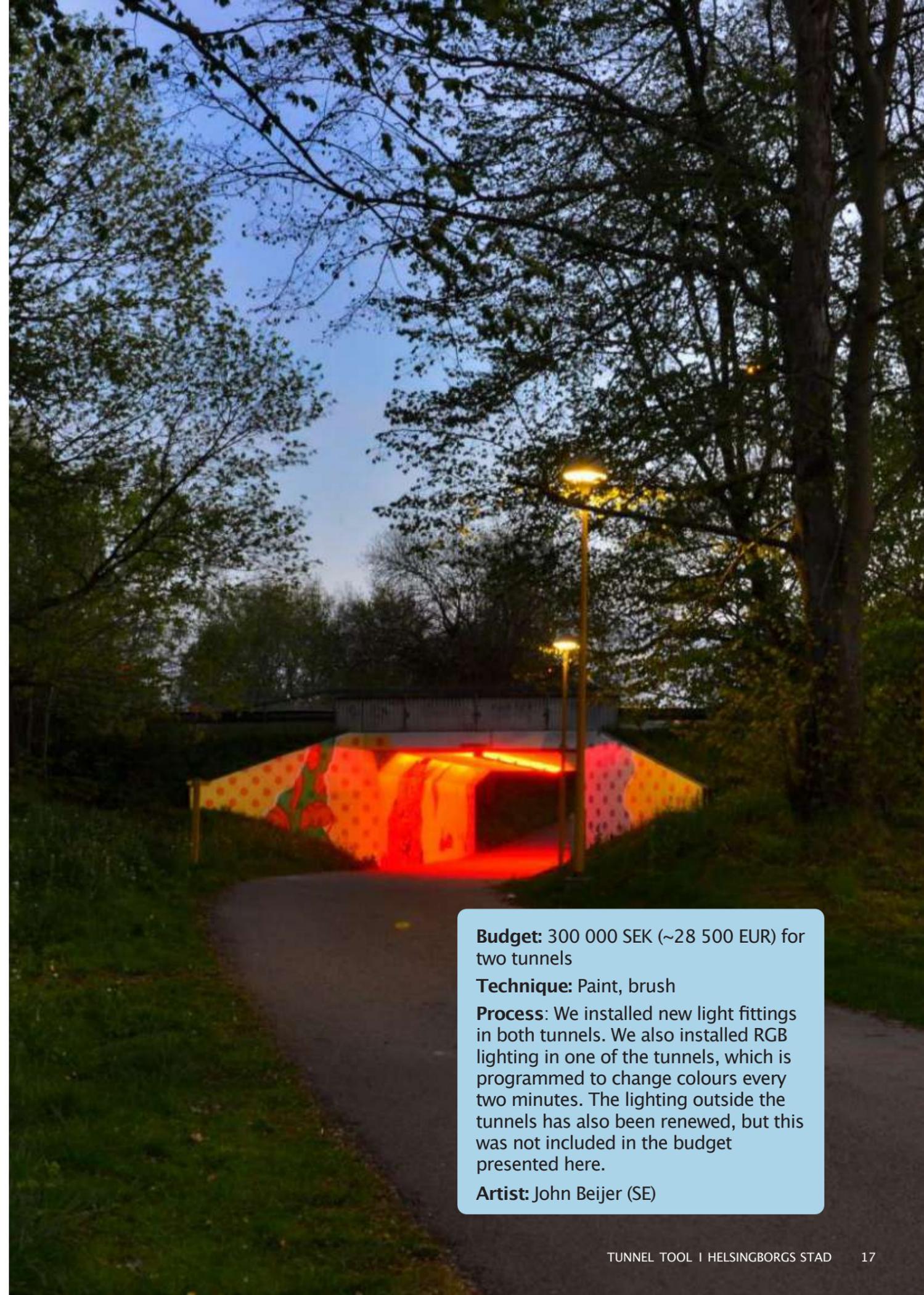


**Budget:** 800 000 SEK (~77 500 EUR)  
**Technique:** Paint, brush on one side of the tunnel and enamel plates on the other  
**Lightning:** Yes, new fixtures inside the tunnel  
**Artist:** Joshen Jorua and Ilse Weisfelt (NL)

## John Beijer's Tunnel

These tunnels were part of a larger project that involved a number of different dialogues. Inviting people into a dialogue can be difficult, and to get different people to participate, it's good to do it in a smart way. All the dialogues we did were rather casual and informal. In one we sent a postcard to all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, inviting them to a neighbourhood party. During the party we started an informal dialogue. On another day we invited families to the park and interviewed children and parents. We also approached dog

owners and interviewed them spontaneously. We held a workshop at a nearby youth recreation centre, where participants had to vote for posters with different lines of action. After these dialogues we came to the conclusion that we had not reached the young women, so we invited them specifically to the school for a workshop to find out what was most important to them. They pointed out inviting and light entrances to the park, and different chill/hangout spots away from the main pathway but with an overview of the park.



**Budget:** 300 000 SEK (~28 500 EUR) for two tunnels  
**Technique:** Paint, brush  
**Process:** We installed new light fittings in both tunnels. We also installed RGB lighting in one of the tunnels, which is programmed to change colours every two minutes. The lighting outside the tunnels has also been renewed, but this was not included in the budget presented here.  
**Artist:** John Beijer (SE)

## Alternative ideas



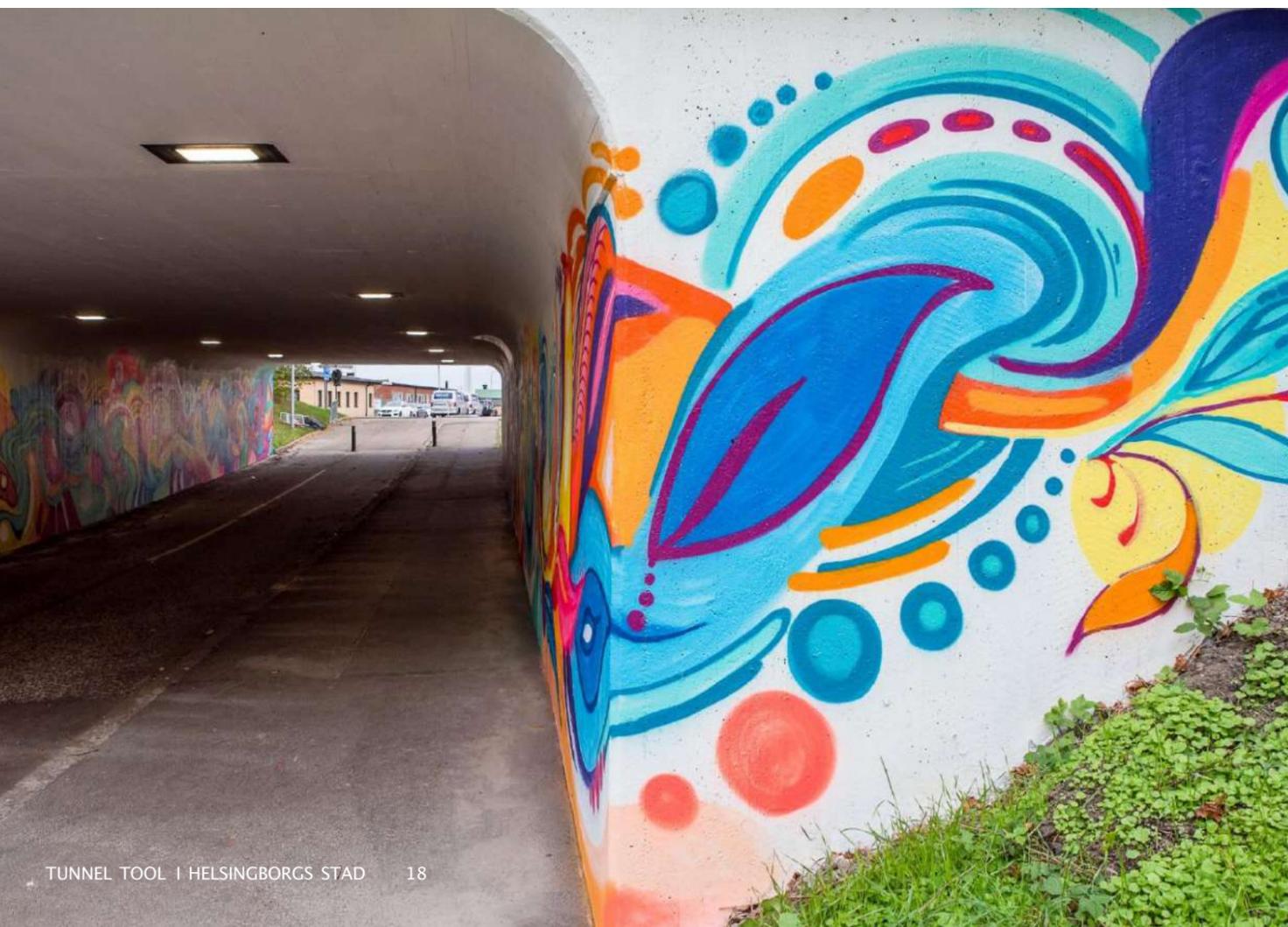
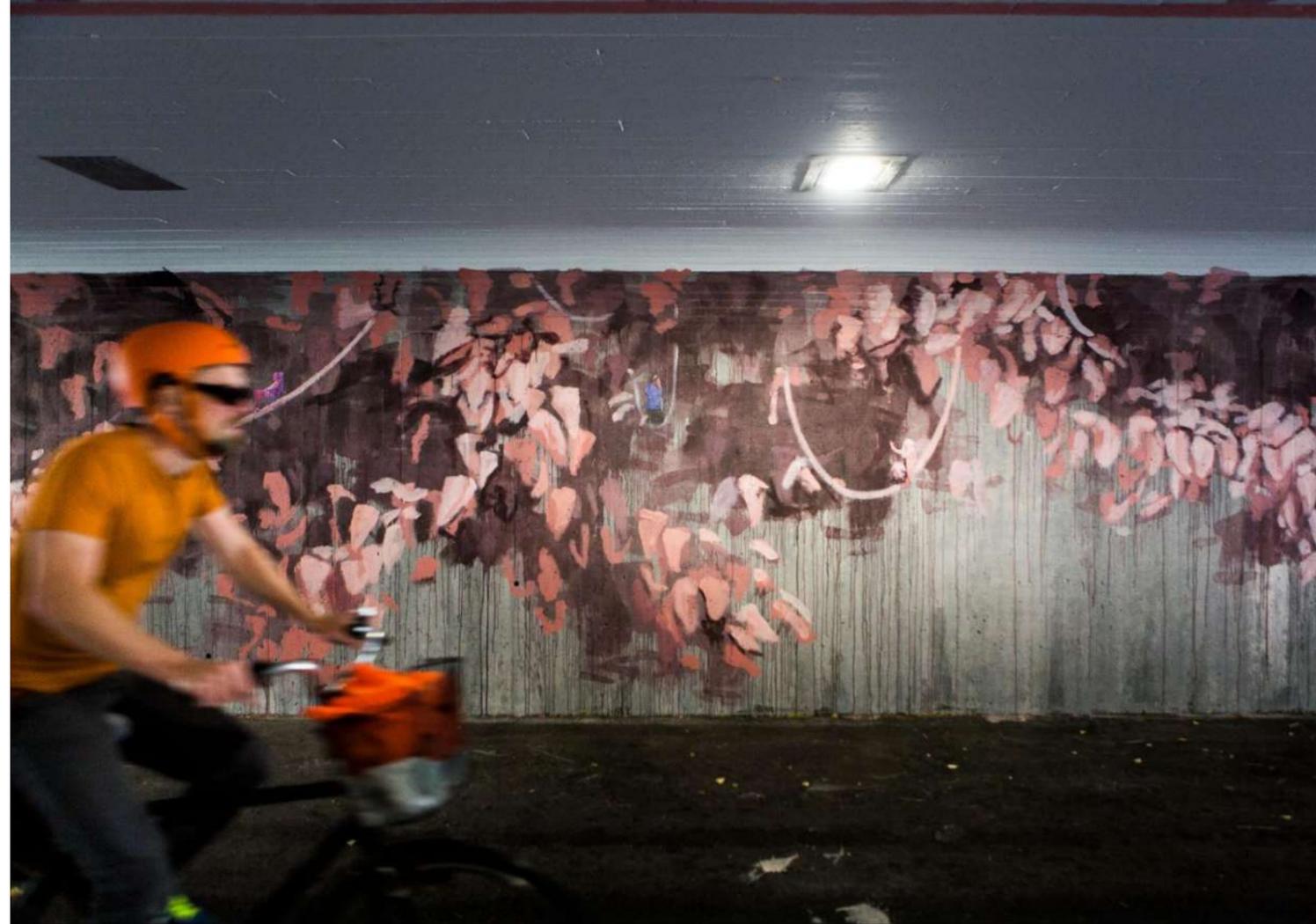
**Budget:** 240 000 SEK (~23 000 EUR)

**Technique:** Paint, spray

**Lightning:** No

**Artist:** Spaceism (SE)

**Process:** We organised an open call for artists via social media, the newspaper and on our website. The open call set a fixed emolument of €4,000. A jury made up of residents from the two neighbourhoods that the tunnel connects selected three favourites. These three idea proposals were displayed in the tunnel for one day and passers-by could vote for their favourite. Two interns were responsible for managing the voting process on site.



**Budget:** 156 000 SEK (~15 000 EUR)

**Technique:** Paint, brush, photo paste ups

**Lightning:** No

**Artist:** Bifido (IT) did photo paste ups and Jacoba (DA) painted

**Process:** The previous project (a light installation) in the tunnel suffered from a number of acts of vandalism and was eventually removed. This time, a group of teenagers from the area were temporarily recruited to run a series of workshops to come up with a theme for the tunnel with the artist. One of the artists took photographs and another painted around them.



**Budget:** 200 000 SEK for two connecting tunnels (~19 500 EUR)

**Technique:** Paint, spray

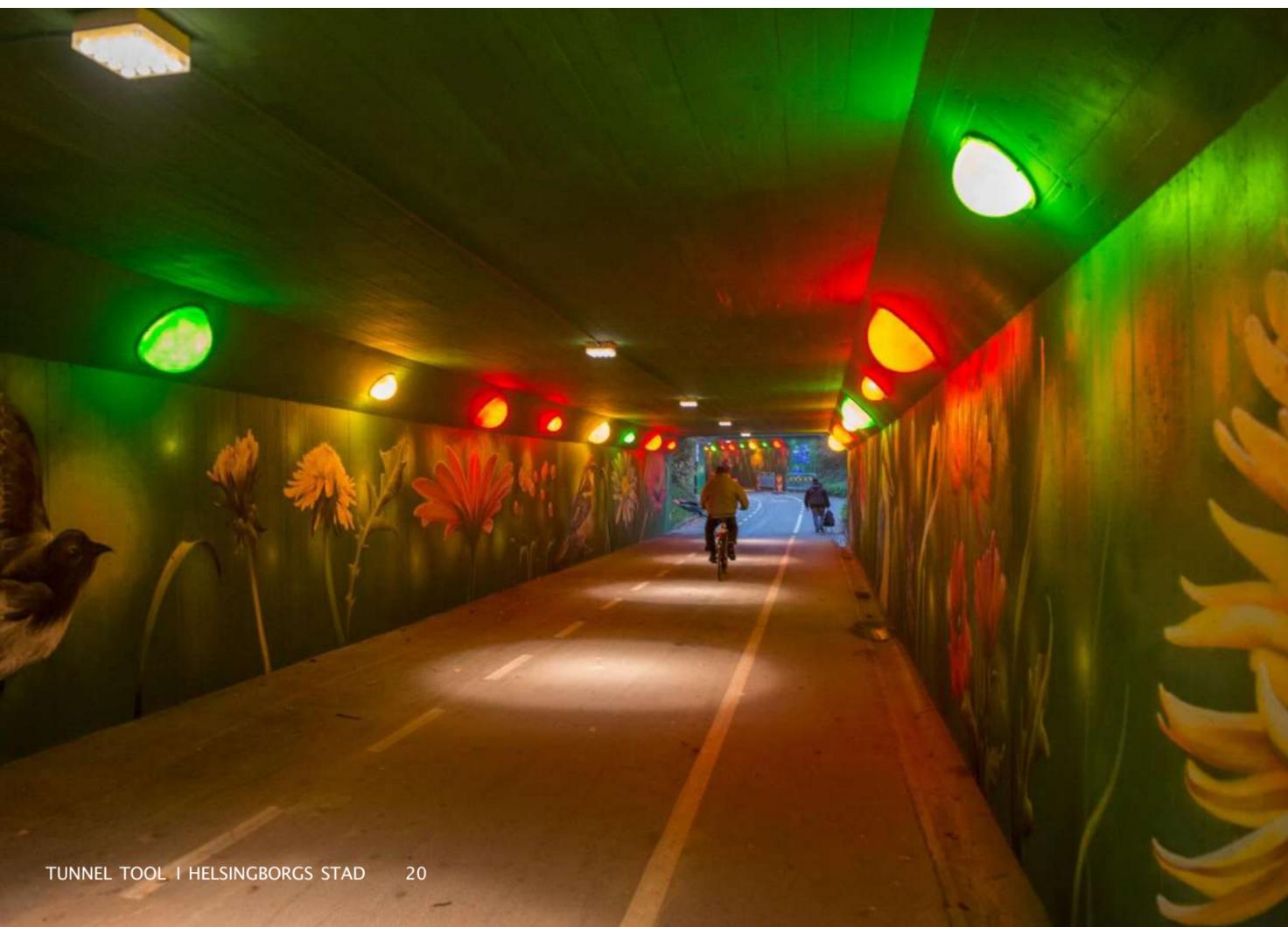
**Lightning:** No, these light fixtures were a part of a previous project.

**Artist:** Sagie (SE)

**Process:** We organised an open call for artists via social media, the newspaper and on our website. The fixed emolument was €6,000. A jury of neighbourhood residents selected three favourites. These three proposed ideas were displayed in the tunnel for one day and passers-by could vote for them. Two interns were responsible for the voting process on site.



Foto Bertil Hagberg



**Budget:** 590 000 SEK (~56 000 EUR)

**Technique:** plates with customized prints cover the concrete pillars and ceiling

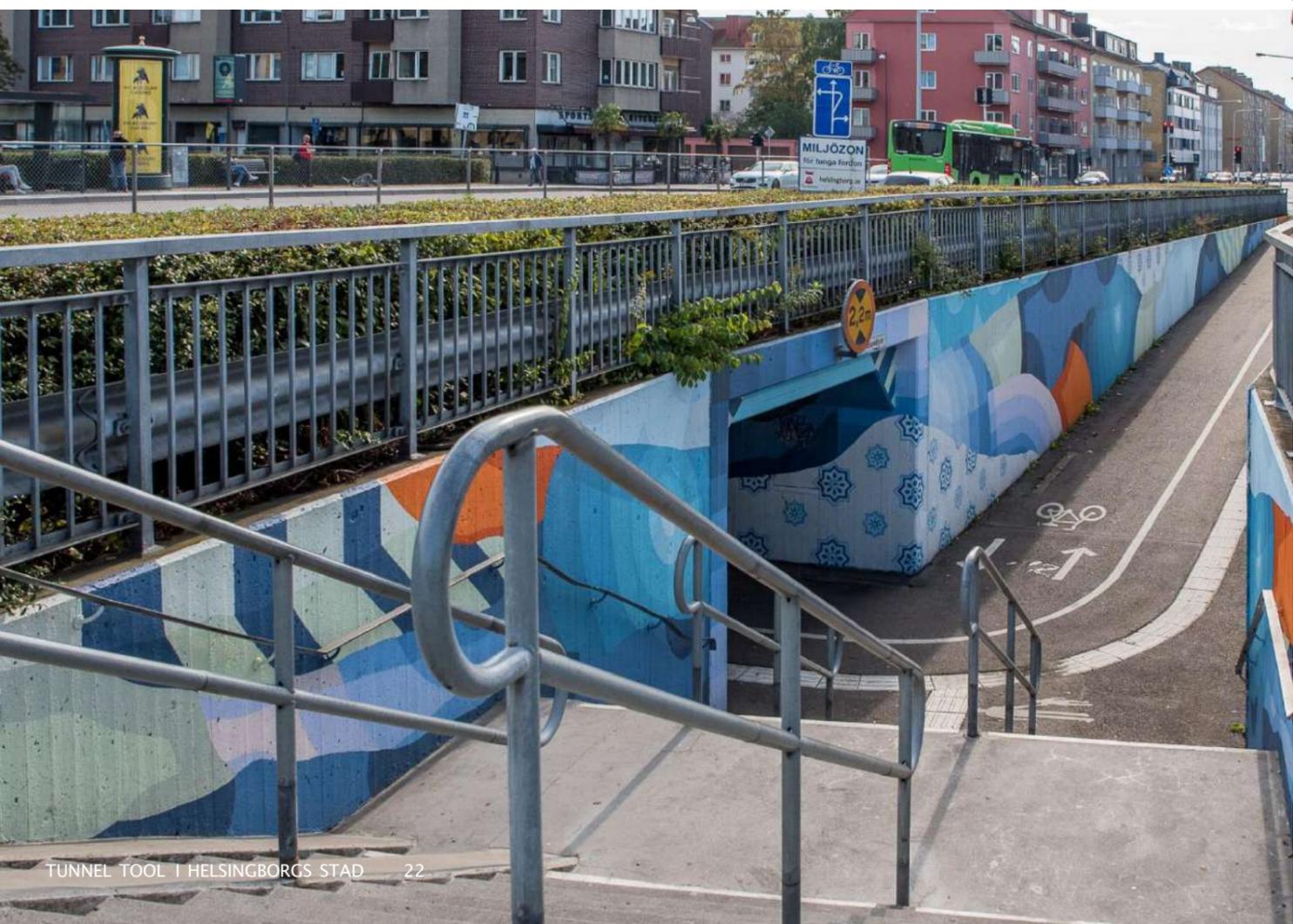
**Lightning:** Yes, new wall sconces

**Artist:** Design by Josette Dahlin (landscape architect working for the city of Helsingborg)

**Process:** The landscape architect did two idea proposals for this tunnel and invited people to vote for a favorite during a neighborhood party. This was the winning concept.



**Budget:** 430 000 (~40 500 EUR)  
**Technique:** Paint, brush and spray  
**Lightning:** Yes, new fixtures in the tunnel and light poles made of acrylic and lit from within the poles with printed patterns made by the artists, similar to the painted ones in the tunnel.  
**Artist:** Leans (AUS)



**Budget:** 150 000 EUR  
**Technique:** The whole tunnel was painted yellow with six corten steel plates on the walls. They were perforated with verses from a poem by the local writer Hasse Alfredsson and lit up from behind.  
**Lightning:** Yes, new fixtures in the ceiling and light behind the corten steel plates.  
**Artist:** Design by Paulina Svenstrup (landscape architect working for the city of Helsingborg)



**Budget:** 600 000 for two connecting tunnelsl (~56 500 EUR)

**Technique:** Paint, brushl

**Lightning:** Yes, new fixtures in the tunnel

**Artist:** Moneyles (IT) and Bumblebeelovesyou (US)



**Budget:** 350 000 (~33 000 EUR)

**Technique:** Paint, brush

**Lightning:** Yes, new fixtures in the tunnel and extra light to enhance the motives at each end of the tunnel.

**Artist:** Artez (SRB)



## Concluding words

Painting a tunnel is a very rewarding task, because the tunnels are always changing for the better and this will be met with a positive response. One of our artists, Spaceism, recalled painting the tunnel as the most joyful job he had created in a public space, because everyone talked to him afterwards and was very happy with the transformation. The owner of the pizzeria, on the other hand, said that he always used to make up the road so as to avoid the tunnel, and now he enjoys going through it. A lot of residents relate to the renovated tunnels and want something similar to be done with the tunnel in their neighbourhood, which to us is the ultimate confirmation of the positive impact of the tunnels.



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