

# Entrepreneurship, food, art and culture under one roof in Zuidas

*Zuidas welcomes another creative hotspot: Old School. The former school building, in the Gaasterlandstraat near the MBO vocational College Zuid and congress centre RAI, is home to entrepreneurs and artists alike. Creativity and sustainability are key words in this place. And there's an added bonus, which may perhaps seem unexpected: the presence of a restaurant with a menu that makes your mouth water. Also on offer are flexible work spaces. The main hall of Old School functions as the venue for a wide selection of cultural events.*



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## GOOD OLD DAYS

Old School is the brainchild of Maarten de Wolff, Gerben Mienis and Wally Brewster. Bureau Broedplaatsen, that aims to provide artists with affordable work spaces, and Dienst Zuidas asked them to come up with ideas for the building. The name did not come up by coincidence. 'Obviously it is a former school building but we also wanted to incorporate something else, a reference to the good old days, to some certain type of entrepreneurship,' Wolff explains. 'The restaurant only uses locally sourced, organic products. The kitchen is the one where cookery students used to practice so it is a very efficient use of the space.' The Old School's business model is an unusual one. 'The money coming in from the restaurant and the fitness facilities have to make up for the much lower turnover coming from the work spaces,' says Wolff. 'We have room for about 30 to 40 creative entrepreneurs, Brewster adds. 'They can rent studios as well as "combined work spaces", and they can also set up events and perform in the main hall on the ground floor.' Attracting the requisite 40% 'CAWA-certified' artists (i.e those who are eligible for a work space) is not going to be a problem at all, the organisers say.

## WATER-COLLECTING ROOF ON OLD SCHOOL PREVENTS WET FEET IN ZUIDAS

On October 24, the new roof on top of the Old School was officially opened. Known as a polder roof, named after the Dutch system for draining low-lying land, the special plant-covered surface has a high capacity for storing water. The Green Business Club Zuidas came up with the idea and roof makers Dakdokters developed it in cooperation with Dienst Zuidas, Waternet and Amsterdam city council's engineering bureau. The storage system allows rain water to be released slowly and in a regulated fashion. This alternative form of water storage in a private space significantly contributes to efficient water management in Zuidas. The roof micro-manages rain water in the urban environment, which is an important improvement now that climate change is causing summers to be warmer and wetter. The system forms an excellent basis for the comprehensive solutions needed to manage water storage in private and public spaces.

Text: Romy Lange



Sigrid Karsten is one of the artists renting a space at Old School. Amsterdam city council and a search on the internet put her on the trail of a number of places, but she was immediately attracted to the school. 'It had the perfect studio for my business Creative Wake-up Call,' she says. 'The people who work at Old School are very interested in what their fellow artists are doing and there is a growing number of projects where artists collaborate. and more. Zuidas wants to integrate art and culture and I want to be part of that process. My clients are the urban professionals of Zuidas. The fact that I can use whatever else is going on here and include it in one package makes it all the more interesting. I regularly organise a painting workshop after working hours, for example, and then take the group for a meal at the Old School restaurant. There's also a larger space - the former school canteen - where I can do team building activities with bigger groups.'



The main hall at Old School is rented out for cultural activities, conferences or company drinks parties. The restaurant uses only organic, local products. The management of Old School goes out of their way to provide good Old-fashioned quality and good service.

For information about Old School go to [www.oldschoolamsterdam.com](http://www.oldschoolamsterdam.com)