

ABOUT WEST 8

West 8 is an award-winning international office for urban design and landscape architecture, founded in 1987. Over the last 20 years West 8 has established itself as a leading practice with an international team of 70 architects, urban designers, landscape architects and industrial engineers. West 8's main office is based at the port of Rotterdam, and has two branch offices in Belgium and New York. West 8's New York office was established after winning an international design competition for the design of Governors Island Park - a 172-acre island in the New York Harbor.

Multidisciplinary approach

With a multi-disciplinary approach to complex design issues, West 8 has extensive experience in large-scale urban master planning and design, landscape interventions, waterfront projects, parks, squares and gardens. We also develop concepts and visions for large-scale planning issues that address global warming, urbanization and infrastructure.

Working on an international level from its start, West 8 developed projects all over the world in places such as Copenhagen, London, Moscow, New York, Madrid, Toronto and Amsterdam. The office gained international recognition with projects such as Schouwburgplein in Rotterdam (NL), Borneo Sporenburg in Amsterdam (NL), Chiswick Park in London (UK) and Expo '02 in Yverdon-les-Bains (CH). Many of the projects are the result of groundbreaking entries in important international competitions. Recently won competitions include Governors Island in New York (USA), Playa de Palma in Mallorca (ES) and Miami Lincoln Park (USA).

Amongst the numerous awards received by West 8 are the Honor Award of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the International Urban Landscape Gold Award (IULA), the Prix de Rome, the Dutch Maaskant Award, the Bijhouwer Award, the Rosa Barba First European Landscape Prize, the Green Pin, the Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Urban Design and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Architecture of The Mondriaan Fund (previously BKVB, the Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture).

Second nature

West 8 approaches the production of nature in two different - but characteristically Dutch - ways. First, we take a classic civil engineering approach for creating landscape - a logic based on utility and necessity. Second, we are part of a landscape tradition that confers identity and, therefore, understand the need for creating symbols in the production of landscape. This method envisions a new nature, a 'second nature' of constructed landscapes that respond to pragmatic demands (water management, population growth, traffic congestion) and also reinforce the culture to which they belong (identity, symbols, expression).

In a departure from the old demolish and install engineering methodology, or the current preserve and protect model, we are adding and expressing new natures. The real future in today's debate about sustainability lies not in a political or philosophical dialogue about what we are protecting or how we are going to sustain it, but rather how to actively create new ecologies. Creating land and then painting it: in many ways, this is the soul of Dutch culture.