

Strategic Focus 2016-2019

What we are, what we want

Castrum Peregrini, 'the fortress of the pilgrim', was the code name of a WW II hiding place in a canal house at the center of Amsterdam. A group of German, Jewish and Dutch youngsters survived in this house with the help of the Dutch artist Gisèle and the German poet Wolfgang Frommel and their networks. They taught the group in hiding how they could preserve their spiritual freedom through the arts and friendship. Today Castrum Peregrini tells the story of these Silent Heroes and their hidiers in the same house and interiors that remained unchanged till now and make the spirit of freedom, friendship and culture tangible for every visitor, young and old.

*Not multiculturalism in and of itself, but government led multicultural or assimilationist policies in Europe since the 1960's have led to fragmented societies, alienated minorities, and resentful citizenries. [...] As a result of those policies, Europeans have begun to see themselves and their social affiliations in a different way. Increasingly, they define social solidarity not in political terms but rather in terms of ethnicity, culture, or faith. (Kenan Malik: *The Failure of Multiculturalism*, Pandaemonium).*

Vision

Castrum Peregrini believes in an inclusive society that embraces diversity and equality as a key to justice and progress. Migration as a key feature of today's world poses challenges and offers opportunities in building these societies. Collective memory is at the heart of a shared identity, with multiple belongings as a reality of today's citizens. Commemoration of the Holocaust, the history of hidiers and helpers at Castrum Peregrini and elsewhere and the role of art and friendship for survival offer lessons for individuals of all generations. Memory, identity and culture are dynamic, evolving concepts that require engagement and empowerment of individuals. Continuous deconstructing and constructing of collective memories is needed to build shared cultural spaces. In this process commemoration, research, learning and creativity are intrinsically linked. They offer a change mechanisms towards more inclusive societies in the future.

Mission

Castrum Peregrini wants to create awareness of a universal 'condition humaine' based on the example of historic events and their currency today. It does so by commemorating historic figures and their networks and building a link to contemporary change makers and their networks. It wants to enhance the awareness of visitors and participants of the role of the individual in society and develop for and with their audience knowledge, skills and competences about change mechanisms in (civil) society. It offers a site of commemoration of

CASTRVM PEREGRINI

intellectual playground

heroes of the past and the present, a cultural and educational programme with a strong role for engaged arts and artistic research and a think tank to inform and support the cultural sector.

Urgency

Real integration is rarely brought about by the actions of the state; it is shaped primarily by civil society, by the individual bonds that people form with one another, and by the organizations they establish to further their shared political and social interests. It is the erosion of such bonds and institutions that has proved so problematic –that explains why social disengagement is a feature not simply of immigrant communities but of the wider society, too. Populism and fundamentalism have succeeded to fill the vacuum, where traditional politics dramatically have failed.

This demands for strong community based actions, that are embedded in the international theoretic discourse and for an international discourse that is derived from real-life situations. Structural educational offers for dealing with diversity are urgently needed for children and young adults as well as for professionals and volunteers in the third sector. The positive example of citizens that put their life at risk for their fellowmen in peril are a source of inspiration for that purpose.

Castrum Peregrini offers

/ a place to remember and experience what silent heroes stand for (GISELE HOUSE)

/ a cultural and educational programme (MEMORY MACHINE)

/ a think tank to impact on change mechanisms in society (INTELLECTUAL PLAYGROND)

/ At Castrum Peregrini visitors can experience an authentic historical hiding floor and the tangible heritage of the group of survivors and their helpers. It wants to be the place where Silent Heroes from the past and present are remembered and celebrated. Their stories are told to the audience in search for positive examples, to spark a dialogue for schoolchildren, youngsters, their parents and teachers, young leaders, organizations and companies. They all share the need to positively deal with the multiple diversities of their social environments.

/ Its cultural- and educational programme aims at merging theory- and practice-based-learning for an inclusive society. Castrum Peregrini wants to foster togetherness and belonging in the multi-ethnic, -cultural and -religious society of Amsterdam, through memory, dialogue and collaborative work.

/ With its Think Tank Castrum Peregrini offers the cultural and educational sector analysis, content and ideas that are developed in a consortium of leading international intellectuals, high ranking educational organizations and effective activist organizations from all over Europe.

CASTRVM PEREGRINI

intellectual playground

Objectives

- The venue and heritage of Castrum Peregrini fills a gap for the visitors of Amsterdam interested in World War II and its consequences. It puts the spotlight on the helpers of people in need that helped for no other reason than humanity. This category is currently not sufficiently represented in Amsterdam and The Netherlands.
THE GISELE HOUSE will collect stories of exceptional individuals and communities that helped others. It will make them accessible and use them as case studies in its educational offers. Castrum Peregrinis premises will become the central place in Amsterdam and nationwide for commemorating Silent Heroes as well as showcasing today's heroes that make a difference in building human societies.
- The cultural- and educational programme of Castrum Peregrini will impact on the target groups of educational providers and civil society organisations. Its method will reflect Castrum Peregrinis conviction that culture is memory in action, with a strong role for contemporary online and urban cultural identifiers. It offers
 - A cross-disciplinary cultural programme for its metropolitan target group
 - a curriculum on dealing with diversity and inclusion: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and train-the-trainer workshops for teachers and educators; higher education modules on cultural participation; primary and secondary school offers for schools to better prepare their children for the diversity in the classroom and their neighbourhood; Masterclasses for young leaders to add diversity to their profile of competences.
- The Think Tank will provide a structure for Castrum Peregrinis local and international network to engage in a targeted discussion about the core values of Castrum Peregrini. This will not only allow the organisation to re-evaluate its value system in a continuous fashion, it will also generate intelligence and content that can inform its programme and the public discussion nationally and internationally.

Goals

- Castrum Peregrinis and its educational projects will be recognized at the forefront of international initiatives that deal with diversity.
- Make THE GISELE HOUSE the most awarded organization of the Netherlands. It will make use of its story and reputation to implement some simple, but effective means to gain recognition and attention for its cause
- The cultural- and educational programme, the site of memory with a focus on today's civil society and the think tank will make the city of Amsterdam a bench mark for other places in Europe and elsewhere, that face racial and cultural tensions.

CASTRVM PEREGRINI

intellectual playground

Fact Sheet

- Castrum Peregrini foundation is a non-profit organization. It is categorised as an Institution for General Benefit (ANBI) by the Dutch tax authorities.
- The foundation is financing its activities mainly by public and private funding, exploitation of its real estate and donations.
- It possess and manages the heritage of Gisèle d' Ailly-van Waterschoot van der Gracht (1912 - 2013), Wolfgang Frommel (1902 – 1986) and the Castrum Peregrini exile publishing house (1951 – 2008).
- The heritage consist of buildings (1.600 m2), archives, the oeuvre of Gisèle, authentic interiors from the '40, '50, '60 and '80 of last century and art pieces and artefacts, that all together tell the story of a group of remarkable individuals throughout the 20th century, that originates in the period 1942-1945. The story doesn't stop there. A rich and vibrant life continues at Castrum Peregrini, being institutionalised in 1951 as a publishing house and in 1957 as a foundation. Gisèle passed away in 2013, as the last witness of that epoch.
- In 2008, the foundation made a major strategic overhaul: from an Amsterdam based German language exile publishing house to a cultural and educational activity organisation, based on the experiences of the hiding period during WW II, that are captured in the core values freedom, friendship and culture.
- From 2009 on the foundation realised cultural research programs in collaboration with a multitude of regional, national and international partners, on major contemporary societal topics that are derived from its core values, in a search of answers on the simple question why intelligent, young, innocent youngsters had to hide: group fanaticism, the paradoxes of liberty, the societal meaning of friendship, the link between cultural memory and identity. These programs consisted of lectures, exhibitions, publications, performances and were realised with 30 partner organisation and countless individuals.
- Simultaneously the foundation initiated and developed European projects like *TimeCase. Culture is Memory in Action*. (2012-2014) on cultural participation as a tool to foster a sense of belonging to society, *Silent Heroes* (2014-2015) dealing with heritage of helpers during WW II, and currently (2015-2018) *Academy of Participation*, a continuation of TimeCase.
- In 2014 two public cultural funds (Mondriaan Fund, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst) designated Castrum Peregrini as a heritage learning institution.
- The foundation is currently run by 3 fte staff and an executive board of seven.