



Bios of key people behind the Shift International Architecture Competition



Don Ritzen Founder & CEO of Shift

Before starting Shift, Don was the co-founder of Amsterdam based Rockstart, which has offices in Bogota, Copenhagen and Amsterdam. Since its inception in 2010, Rockstart has invested in 350+ early stage startups till date, of which many impact oriented companies such as Peerby, Hubs and Finch buildings, which are now worth €1.7 billion.

Don led the first round in several successful Rockstart companies such as 3DHubs (exit \$330 million to NYSE:ProtoLabs), iClinic (Exit €27.9M to NASDAQ: Afya), Wercker (Exit to NYSE: Oracle) and many other success stories. Another noteworthy company is Finch Buildings, who is the dutch market leader in modular timber buildings.

Don sat on the investment committee for Rockstart's Web&Mobile, Artificial Intelligence, Smart Energy, Digital Health and Rockstart Colombia programme. He also set up Rockstart's corporate innovation practice.

While Don remains an active shareholder and advisor at Rockstart, his full focus is now on Shift's mission: to orchestrate the greatest comeback in planetary history. He is not alone—thousands of individuals, impact investors, family offices, and tech pioneers share this commitment. Together, they've not only launched an international architecture competition to create a "New World Wonder" dedicated to sustainability but are actively building it.



David van der Leer Principal of DVDL

David van der Leer, Principal of DVDL, is a consultant, educator, moderator, researcher, strategist, and writer. David's passion is reinventing the institutions of yesterday—and dreaming up the most inspirational institutions of tomorrow—through excellent architecture and interdisciplinary programs.

David founded DVDL in 2018 after having worked and consulted with institutions, government agencies, corporations, and individuals for 15 years. He has extensive experience in bringing together interdisciplinary teams to create successful design projects. David has taught a course called (Re)Programming Museums at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture Planning and Preservation and now teaches a course called Institutions &

Impact: Mental Health – Could hybrid institutions have more impact? at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design.

David has created, chaired, and led nearly 30 design competitions, and he has commissioned numerous design and art projects. He enjoys rethinking conventional design competition and commissioning processes, and actively promotes new practices in events like the Design Competition Conference he developed and co-chaired at Harvard University in 2015.

Born and raised in The Netherlands, David is a graduate of Erasmus University Rotterdam, and of the High Impact Leadership program at Columbia University's Business School.

Jury



Aric Chen Director of Nieuwe Instituut

Aric Chen is General and Artistic Director of the Nieuwe Instituut, the Netherlands' national museum and institute for architecture, design, and digital culture, in Rotterdam. He has previously served as: Professor and founding Director of the Curatorial Lab at the College of Design & Innovation at Tongji University in Shanghai, China; Curatorial Director of the Design Miami fairs in Miami Beach, USA, and Basel, Switzerland



Astrid Leyssens Founder of We Are Impact Collective

Astrid drives system change through sustainable impact investing and strategy. With broad experience in both private equity and family office sectors, she advises companies on integrating social and environmental value into their long-term strategies. A seasoned board member and mentor, Astrid excels in guiding organizations through complex challenges while fostering innovation and societal impact.



Ben van Berkel Founder of UNS

Ben is the founder of UNS, an internationally renowned architecture and design firm based in Amsterdam with offices in Austin, Melbourne, Dubai, Frankfurt and Hongkong. With a focus on human-centered design, he has led the creation of iconic projects spanning architecture, urban planning and product design. Van Berkel's work explores the intersection of architecture, technology and sustainability.



Carice van Houten Activist, Actress

Carice van Houten gained international acclaim for her portrayal of Melisandre in the iconic TV show "Game of Thrones" and Paul Verhoeven's Black Book (2006). Beyond acting, she is a committed human rights and environmental activist, participating in climate protests and advocating for ecocide to be recognized as an international crime.



Clemens Brenninkmeijer Head of Sustainability at Redevco

Clemens Brenninkmeijer is Head of Sustainability at Redevco, one of Europe's largest independent real estate asset management companies. He is passionate about the role of real estate in creating vibrant, dynamic, liveable and sustainable cities and ensuring that projects are good for people and the planet. He also serves as Global Governing Trustee of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) and sits on their C Change

Steering Committee.



Géke Roelink Director of NEMO Science Museum

Géke Roelink is the director of NEMO Science Museum in Amsterdam, where she leads initiatives to inspire curiosity and engagement with science and technology. With a background in cultural management, she has a passion for creating educational experiences that make complex scientific concepts accessible to a wide audience. Under her leadership, NEMO continues to innovate in its mission to foster critical

thinking and learning through interactive exhibits and programs.



Dr. Lewis Akenji Executive Director of Hot or Cool Institute.

Dr. Lewis Akenji is managing director of Hot or Cool Institute, a public-interest think tank that explores the intersection between society and sustainability. His work takes a political economy lens to economic development and the environment, with implications on fair distribution of resources within ecological limits.



Lodewijk Hoekstra Ambassador Groene Cirkels and Presenter

Lodewijk Hoekstra is a passionate advocate for a sustainable world where people and nature exist in harmony. Over the past 20 years, he has become well-known as a TV gardener, appearing on programs like Eigen Huis en Tuin and Lodewijks Groene Geluk, and has authored books such as Green Happiness, offering tips for a greener lifestyle.

As the quartermaster ambassador for Green Circles Green Healthy City, he works to make municipalities more sustainable, and he co-founded NL Greenlabel to establish a standard for nature-inclusive development, which is now widely adopted by 220 partners in the Netherlands.



Mireia Luzárraga Principal of TAKK architecture

Mireia Luzárraga is Assistant Professor and Coordinator of the Core I sequence at Columbia University' GSAPP in New York. She is principal of TAKK architecture, a research-driven design office based in Barcelona and New York. Her work focuses on investigating how design can catalyze egalitarian societies through the incorporation of feminism, queer ecologies, and posthuman studies into spatial practices.



Nicole Maarsen Real Estate Investor and Trusted Advisor

Nicole Maarsen is an experienced real estate investor and trusted advisor. She is a supervisory board member of Home.Earth, an impact real estate company. Over the past 20 years she has held senior roles at ING Real Estate, Syntrus Achmea and Maarsen Groep, and is actively involved in various industry boards, including the Dutch Green Building Council and the Economic Institute for Construction.