

RACHEL REFAEL

Rachel Refael is a Rotterdam-based designer with experience in spatial and communication design. She collaborates with multidisciplinary teams to deliver efficient, unconventional design solutions that balance creativity with client needs.

Studio Het Wijkpaleis
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Work Experience

166 Brut Studio: Designer + Researcher. 2020 - Present Rotterdam, NL.

- Develop installations and exhibitions on cultural, social, and spatial themes through research and material experimentation
- Collaborate with artists, researchers, and communities to co-design site-specific environments from concept to production
- Oversee all stages of projects, ensuring both conceptual depth and technical execution.
- Notable clients: WORM, ARCAM

Northern Light: Spatial Designer. 2023 - 2024 Amsterdam, NL.

- Design exhibitions, museums, and immersive experiences from concept to implementation
- Develop 3D models, drawings, and presentations to communicate design intent
- Translate complex narratives into accessible spatial storytelling in collaboration with multidisciplinary teams

2turvenhoog/StrandLAB: Artistic + Cultural Research. 2023-2024 Almere, NL

- Develop artistic research on themes tied to Flevoland and Markermeer in collaboration with other creatives
- Translate research into site-specific outcomes, finalized in two exhibitions at StrandLAB gallery.

Studio Berkveldt: Freelance Spatial + communication Design. 2022 - 2024 Rotterdam, NL.

- Support the production and realization of installations and exhibitions
- Develop communication design materials to accompany spatial projects
- Assist with fabrication, logistics, and technical coordination in collaboration with designers and partners

Jasmin Djerzic: Ceramics Design + production. 2022 Breda, NL

- Assist in the design and production of ceramic objects.
- Support fabrication processes from prototype to final product.

Alex Augusto Suarez: 3D modelling Design. 2021 Amsterdam, NL

- Produced Rhino 3D models to support architectural and spatial research projects.
- Translated design concepts and research data into detailed digital models.

Max & Morris: Freelance Textile +Graphic Design. 2020-2021 Sacramento, CA

- Designed original textile print patterns for children's clothing collections
- Created trend-driven motifs from concept sketches to final production-ready artwork
- Researched seasonal trends and visual references to inform playful, market-relevant designs.

Education

Master of Arts in Interior Architecture
Piet Zwart Institute
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Graduated 2021.

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Studies
University of Calgary
Calgary, Canada
Graduated 2018.

Designing Lighting Plans
Lighting Design Academy
Amersfoort, The Netherlands
Certified 2022.

Languages

English: Native/Academic level

Dutch: A2-B1 level
(Finished a Blik op Werk certified course at Lest Best)

Software

Rhino3D * * * * *
Grasshopper * * * * *
Blender 3D * * * * *
AutoCAD * * * * *
Unity * * * * *
Twinmotion * * * * *
(unreal engine)
QGIS * * * * *
Adobe Suite * * * * *

Achievements

Stimulerings Fonds: Architecture Kick-Stat Grant. 2025

FlevoLAB: Spin-off Traject. 2024

S+T+ARTS: Pre-selected for Hungry Ecocities. 2023

Stimulerings Fonds: Architecture Starting Grant. 2022

Piet Zwart Institute: MIARD Alumni Research Award. 2021

Van Beek-Donner: Women's Fund Award. 2021

Teaching and Pedagogical Experience

Het Wijkpaleis, Rotterdam — Blender 3D Summer Course Instructor

Taught a two-day course on 3D modeling fundamentals for interior design.
July, 2025

School for International Training Study Abroad, Amsterdam — Visiting Lecturer

Delivered a lecture in the course "Netherlands: Human Trafficking, Sex Trade, and Modern Slavery in Europe" on the history of interiors in De Wallen and space-making as resistance to policy-making.
June, 2025

ETH Zurich, Zurich — Visiting Lecturer

Course: "Studio Care," Bachelor of Architecture

Gave a lecture on Peeping Spaces, focusing on transdisciplinary research methodologies and queer informal histories in architecture and urban planning
April, 2025

Porn Film Festival, Amsterdam — Public Workshop Facilitator

Led GummiBAR, a creative latex workshop introducing fundamentals of working with latex sheets and guiding participants in designing objects with custom patterns.
February, 2025

Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam — Visiting Lecturer

Bachelor of Graphic Design

Delivered a lecture on Changing Typologies, focusing on methodologies of documenting the city
November, 2024

Selected Exhibitions

WormNEST (with Rebecca Schedler), Worm Expo, Rotterdam, NL, 2025

Queer History Month: IHLIA in OBA (Group Exhibition), Amsterdam, NL, 2025

Peeping Spaces: A Queer Historical Perspective of 'De Wallen', Arcam, Amsterdam, NL, 2024–2025

FlevoLAB (Group Exhibition, Land Art Weekend), StrandLAB, Almere, NL, 2023

FlevoLAB (Group Exhibition, Land Art Weekend), StrandLAB, Almere, NL, 2022

Manifestations (Group Exhibition, Dutch Design Week), Eindhoven, NL, 2021

The In-Between (Graduation Exhibition), The Hofbogen, Rotterdam, NL, 2021

Selected Publications + Press

The Molyhouse, by Rachel Refael and Gavin O. O'Leary. *Amsterdamx750 Verhalen*, Amsterdam, NL, 2025

Expositie: historie van sekswerk en queer plekken in Amsterdam, by Maarten Mol. *Het Parool*, Amsterdam, NL, 2024

Queer Histories of De Wallen, by Rachel Refael and Gavin O. O'Leary. *Ons Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, NL, 2024

What is an Institute for Night Culture (book), contribution by Rachel Refael. Edited by David Mulder van der Vegt & Stephan Petermann. Published by ARCHIS, Amsterdam, NL, 2024

HistoricALL! A Collective Rewriting of Design History (publication), contribution by Rachel Refael. Edited by Cecilia Casabona & Maxime Benvenuto. Published by ONO-MATOPEE, Eindhoven, NL, 2023

Heterotopias of Modern Prostitution, *The Piet*, no. 2, by Rachel Refael. Published by Piet Zwart Institute, Rotterdam, NL, 2022

Talks

Open Monumentendag — Lecture at Arcam, Amsterdam, NL, 2024

Barcam — Panel Moderator at Arcam, Amsterdam, NL, 2024

BioArt Gallery — Panel Moderator, Eindhoven, NL, 2022