

Viclink Tour
Great Public Libraries of the World
28 September – 17 October 2008

Netherlands Photos

Album by tour participant
Debra Rosenfeldt
Manager, Public Libraries
State Library of Victoria

The tour group

Nine from Victorian libraries:

- Camille Cullinan - Swan Hill Library Service
- Beck Henshall - Frankston Library Service
- Chris Kelly - Brimbank Library Service
- Lynette Lewis - Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Chris Mackenzie (leader) - Yarra Plenty Regional Library
- Alix Massina - State Library of Victoria
- John Murrell - West Gippsland Regional Library ...

- Debra Rosenfeldt - State Library of Victoria
- Karen Ward-Smith - Greater Dandenong Library Service

Six others:

- Mandy Gatliff - Frankston Council, Vic
- Sharan Harvey - Brisbane City Libraries, Qld
- Sharon Robertson - Brisbane City Libraries, Qld
- Jane Cowell - AEC Group, Qld
- Geoff Strempel - State Library of South Australia, SA
- Patricia Genat - Australian Library Supply, SA

The itinerary – six countries and 20+ libraries in 20 days

Singapore:

- National Library
- Library @ Esplanade
- Bishan Public Library

Finland:

- Sello Public Library
- The Royal Library
- The Meeting Place
- Library 10

Sweden:

- Comics Library
- Children's Library
- Youth Library
- International Library
- Kista Public Library
- Asplund Public Library
- Malmo Public Library ...

Denmark:

- The Black Diamond
- Vanlose Public Library
- The Smart City and its Libraries - Conference

Hong Kong:

- Ma On Shan Public Library
- City Hall Public Library
- Hong Kong Public Library

The Netherlands:

- Amsterdam Public Library
- DOK Library Concept Center – Delft

THE NETHERLANDS

11-13 October 2008

Amsterdam Public Library



Opened in July 2007, Amsterdam Public Library is the largest in Europe at 28,000 sq m. The idea behind the design was to move from the concept of the library as just a lending institution to the concept of the library as a place of adventure, a great place to be in. In addition to the main Amsterdam Public Library there are 27 branch libraries ranging in size from 700 to 1,500 sq m. Together they serve a population of 800,000. The aim is one library per 30,000 people.



The Amsterdam Public Library is built over ten floors and is one of the tallest buildings in low rise Amsterdam. It's also brilliantly located not far from the Central Railway Station.



Looking down from the ground floor to the children's area in the Amsterdam Public library. It's a huge area – an entire floor – indicative of the importance given to investing effort in the earliest years. The area speaks for itself – the beautiful warm wooden floors, the custom-made curved shelving, the attention to detail ... note the items sitting on top of the shelving units. The broomsticks and witches hats were displayed for Halloween, placed on top of the shelves, where they were both out of the way and could be seen from the best viewpoint – looking down on the area from the floor above.



This fabulous shelving unit has a spiral staircase and a loft for young readers. Fantastic.



Lots of catalogues and PCs built into and around the shelving in the children's area. Love the seating.



More technology on the library floor, especially for little kids.



There's a small circular 'theatre' (an enclosed space) in the children's area for storytime and other activities, with seating for about 40 children. There's also a separate arts and crafts room permanently set-up.



Surprises amongst the shelves in the children's area – a life-sized giraffe looking for a good read.



Another surprise visitor in the children's area – a polar bear.



On the ground floor in Amsterdam Public Library – a huge magazine and lounge area. There's also a small café. It's a floor for relaxing.



The first floor up is dedicated to multimedia. It's all white, even the linoleum floor covering.



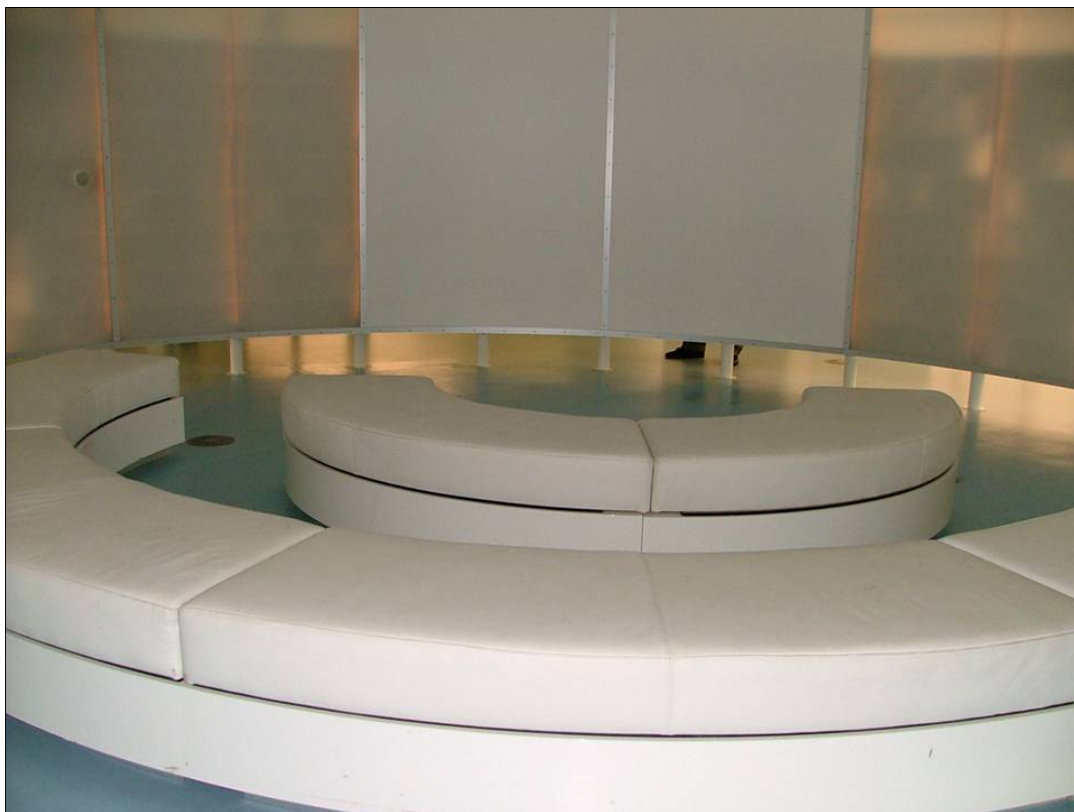
There's an enormous number of public access PCs on the multimedia floor (there's 600 throughout the entire library, many of them Apple Macs). The set-up and seating is varied, comfortable and always stylish. The fit-out of Amsterdam Public Library looks 'high maintenance' and there is provision for a continuous refurbishment program taking place over a ten year period. Note the escalators used both for transport between floors and unmissable yet discrete signposting.



More technology on the multimedia floor – low seating.



And more technology on the multimedia floor – high seating.



A viewing area on the multimedia floor.



A small private study space on the multimedia floor. These pods are soundproof, but I'm not sure how comfortable anyone would feel perched in one of them.



An information station on the multimedia floor.



The floor for adult fiction, in many languages. The tubes of lighting attached to the shelving units and running the full length of each bay give the books on the shelves an attractive glow. Display cases built onto the ends of the shelves enable Amsterdam Public Library to run a serious exhibition program.



Another photo of the fiction area. Note the charcoal carpet floor covering.



An information desk.



Customers making good use of the study areas on the non-fiction floor.



Amsterdam Public Library has its own radio station broadcasting nationally. Anyone can join the audience and have their say.



OBA Live broadcasts daily between 7pm and 9pm.



There's a business centre at the Amsterdam Public Library for travelling workers requiring short term (a few hours) office space.



The top floors of Amsterdam Public Library are for public meeting spaces. There's four meeting rooms with seating and facilities for 25-60 people at a time. There's a theatre seating 270 people (the tenth largest in The Netherlands), hosting an average 25 performances per month. And there's a restaurant with seating for 250. All floors can be accessed via a lift and escalators run between most floors. But a more dramatic and beautiful wooden staircase leads to the restaurant. As a general rule of thumb the floor space in Amsterdam's public libraries is 1/3 for the collection and 2/3 for the people.



The service area in the restaurant is like a fabulous market place. There's a balcony for dining outside on good days and for taking in the views across Amsterdam. As the library is one of Amsterdam's tallest buildings, this balcony provides some of the best city views.



Typically, most of the library materials check-out and check-in work is automated and done by the customer. There are ten self-service check-out machines in the library. This photo is of the machine that does the sorting of returned (checked-in) items.



Another view of the materials sorting machine in action.

DOK Library Concept Center - Delft



DOK – Library Concept Center is the main library in Delft, a regional city of around 100,000 people. It's located in a recently refurbished supermarket situated in the heart of the city. Almost 80% of the population use the library.



Customer self service check-out of library materials – again.



The low cost shelving is custom-made from recycled timber, painted in bold colours. A lot of thought has gone into the signage, furniture and fittings in DOK, while the shell of the building is unlined bare concrete (see exposed flue in photo above).



A thick soft white rubber covers the floor, contrasting dramatically with the boldly painted shelving.



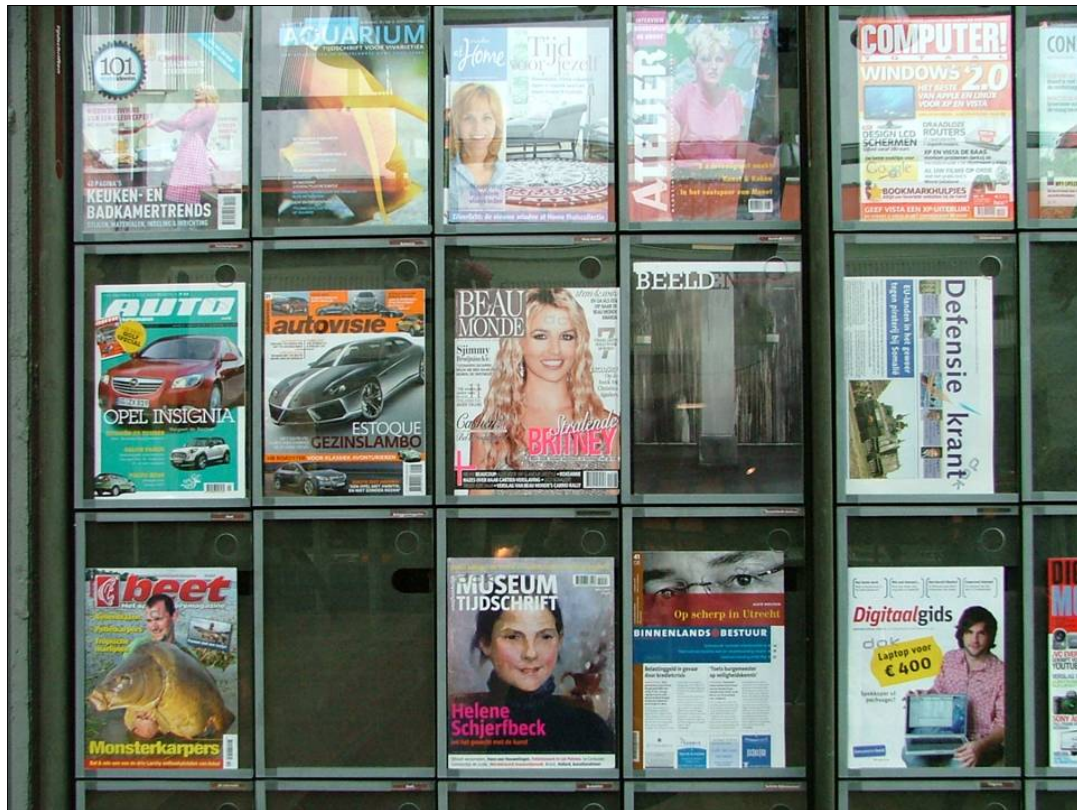
A wide staircase dominates the centre of the library. Occasionally the staircase serves as tiered theatre-style seating for library events on the lower floor.



At the top of the staircase there is a large open light-filled space, furnished with casual tables and chairs and with room for exhibitions and events.



One side of the large open space at the top of the stairs is used for housing and display of magazines. Note the paintings on the wall above the magazines.



DOK has solved the problem of managing messy magazines. They sit in pigeon holes behind the latest editions, which are displayed on the perspex doors at the front of each pigeon hole. It's neat, it's practical, it's easy to manage and the display looks fantastic.



Adjacent to the open area at the top of the stairs customers will also find the coffee bar. Love the splash of colour.



The upper level houses the adult fiction collection. In this photo several key design elements of DOK are well illustrated – bare concrete shell; boldly painted timber shelving; no 'lids' on the shelving units for added openness; brilliant white floor for contrast; dramatic but clear signage.



A special 'room' has been created in the fiction area especially for the romance collection. The enclosed space, red shelving and subdued lighting give the room a distinctly and appropriately romantic feeling.



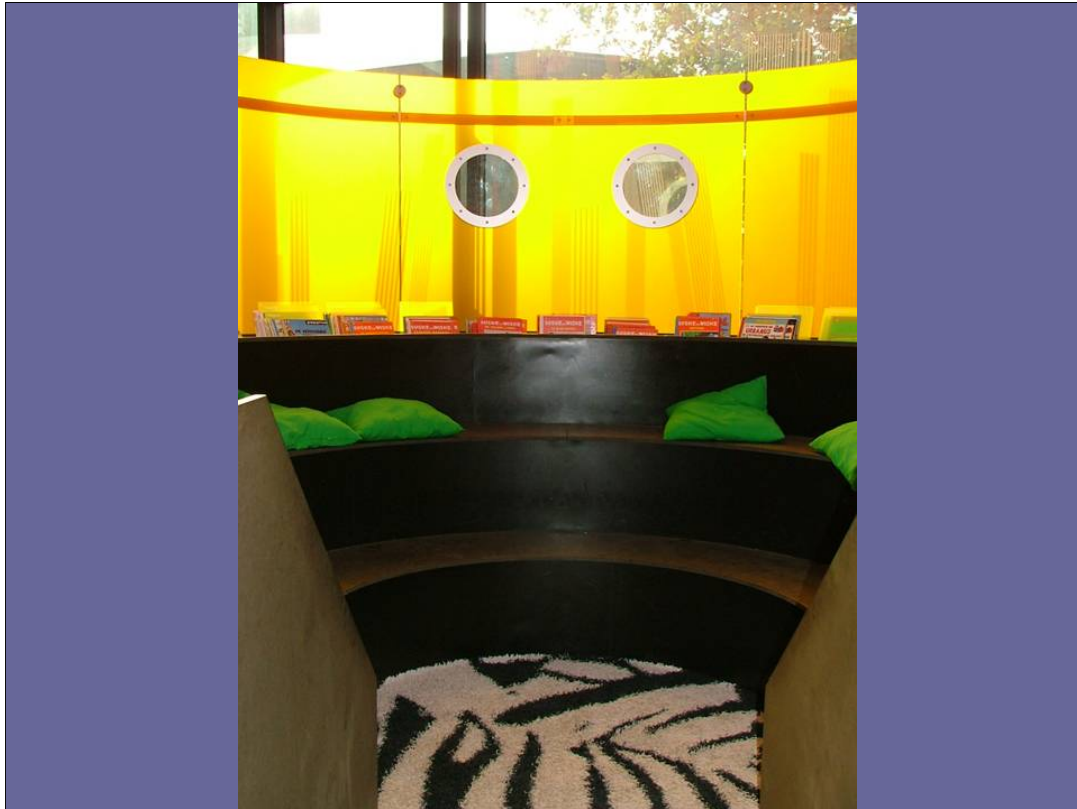
DOK might look trendy, but that doesn't mean that it's lightweight. During the week of our visit the Nobel Prize for Literature was announced, so the library created a temporary display of Nobel Prize winners – with many of their books available for borrowing.



The children's area of DOK is also on the upper level. In this area the custom-made shelving is painted in brilliant colours like orange and bright green.



Love the splatter paint on the endstands of the children's fiction shelves. The shelf labelling is sensational – there's no missing it. Much of the children's shelving is on wheels for easy rearranging of the area. The little platforms at the bottom of the shelving units are handy for short people who might otherwise struggle to reach the top shelves.



DOK may be the coolest (or hottest?) library visited by the Viclink tour group, but in one respect it is very traditional – in the children's area there's a small round 'room' set-up especially for storytelling.



Playstations in the children's area at DOK. I've seen the see-through red stools in at least one Australian public library.



Another feature of DOK is its funky and fun furniture.



There's plenty of technology and room to work in the children's area of DOK



More work and play space in DOK's children's area. There's always pencils and plenty of paper on the tables.



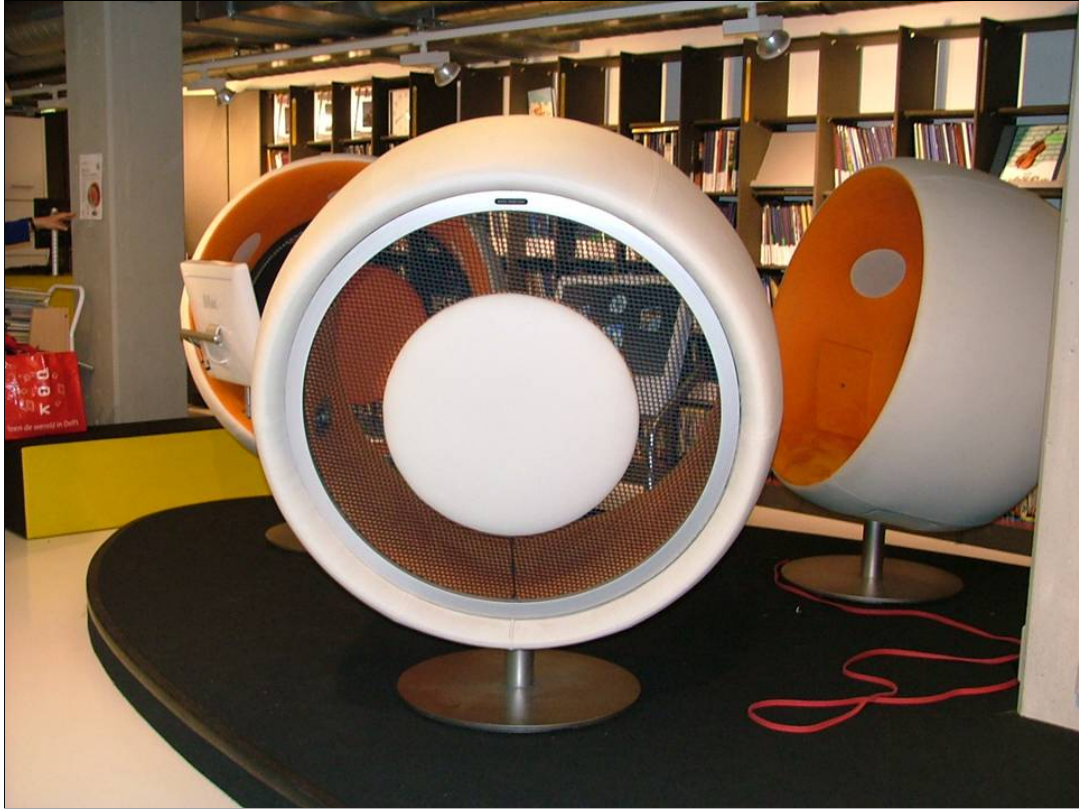
There's a special area adjacent to the children's area in DOK, which is set aside especially for use by local schools.



The service desk in the children's area of DOK.



The audio visual area on the ground floor of DOK is enormous. There seemed to be miles and miles of CDs to choose from.



These fabulous chairs, for listening to music, are like shells. They're designed to provide the listener with 'surround sound'.





The desk in the audio visual area is affectionately known as 'The Big Cheese'. Note the line of screens suspended from the ceiling. There's always something on show.



A tired Viclink tour member relishes the chance to try out one of DOK's armchairs.



There's game stations for big kids too, in the audio visual area of DOK.





Another DOK 'wow factor' chair.





One of DOK's most unique features is its art collection. There are several thousand original pieces owned by Delft and made available for loan to the community. Each piece can be borrowed for several months (for a small fee). If a customer really loves an item, it is sometimes possible to purchase it.









The staff workroom on the top mezzanine floor in DOK. It's open and staff can lean across the shelves along the edge to look down into the library.



The view into DOK from the upper mezzanine level.