

Press release
Rotterdam 9th of September 2021

Milestone in transformation of Fenix Warehouse II: restoration of façades



The eastern façade of the Fenix Warehouse II after restoration, photo: Sylvana Lansu

Another step has been taken in the transformation of the Fenix Warehouse II. The restoration of the south and east façades of the former storage and transshipment warehouse, dating back to 1923, has now been completed. It took a year and a half to complete the 127-metre-long façade that is situated in Rotterdam, on the Katendrecht peninsula. The façades have been given a completely new look as reflected in Bureau Polderman's restoration plan. Transformation of the Fenix Warehouse II, which started back in 2018, aims to preserve this unique example of Rotterdam's port architecture. FENIX is due to open its doors at the warehouse in 2024.

Between its founding in 1923 and 2018, when restoration work commenced, the Fenix Warehouse II's turbulent story had left quite a big mark. Details were rediscovered dating back to 1923, the year it was built, while others had been part of the 1948-1950 reconstruction plan. Also, in the following sixty years, all kinds of additions were made and the building's function changed many times over. In short, the façade had little uniformity. Fronts and frames were rusty. All the elements along the façade have now been restored, refurbished or recreated. The characteristic windows were recreated to reflect the situation of 1923 and fitted with glass suitable for monuments. The 2,200 m² expanse of the south façade was blast-cleaned and cement stucco was reapplied. The characteristic sliding doors at street level have been restored to their original post-war state of 1950. The doors and frames have also been repainted in their original green colour. A serene rhythm of columns, windows and fronts has emerged that emphasizes the horizontal quality of the building.

Rutger Polderman, Director of Bureau Polderman: *"Our work on the Fenix Warehouse II is aimed at preserving the cultural and historical heritage of the building as a storage and transshipment warehouse. The Fenix Warehouse II has a turbulent history in the human migratory story of the urbanised port area of Katendrecht. The building symbolises the blossoming, devastation and resurrection of this section of*

the port of Rotterdam. We want to preserve that for future generations.



The south façade of Fenix Warehouse II, before and after restoration. Photos: Rubén Dario Kleimeer

MAD Architects

The newly created façade underlines the character of the former port building. The warehouse is being prepared for its new function, including a museum on the first floor. In the coming years, the Fenix Warehouse II will be given a contemporary addition, for which the Chinese architect agency MAD Architects has been engaged. They worked on the 'tornado' design, a panoramic lookout point on the roof of this landmark building. Old and new elements also come together in the centre part of the façade, where a huge glass front will be added that offers sweeping views over the river Maas. This new addition will become the future entrance area of FENIX.

History of the building

The history of the Fenix Warehouse II is closely linked to the port of Rotterdam. Commissioned in 1923, the building was given the name San Francisco warehouse. With a length of 360 metres, it was the largest warehouse in the world at the time. Architect C.N. van Goor designed a structure of reinforced concrete with distinctive windows and robust columns. The purpose of the building was the storage and transshipment of goods. The Interbellum and the Post-War Reconstruction Period were significant periods in the history of the building. During the Second World War, the quays near the warehouse were bombed. Later, a fire destroyed the middle section of the warehouse. In 1950, it was rebuilt as two separate buildings: Fenix I warehouse and Fenix II warehouse.

FENIX Journeys: videos as seen from the building site

Rotterdam's film producers Gregg Telussa and Debbie Kleijn capture the activities at the Fenix Warehouse II building site and create personal portraits of the employees, such as Alan and Remsley, who helped to restore the façade. Watch the video via this [link](#).

About FENIX

FENIX is located in the Fenix warehouse II, at Katendrecht in Rotterdam. The warehouse is currently being restored so that the museum can be opened to the public in a few years' time. In the immediate vicinity of the former storage and transshipment warehouse, millions of people boarded ocean liners departing to a new destination. At FENIX, these movements and all the emotions that this conjures up take centre stage. Love, hope or adventure stirs people from all over the world to pack their bags. From a Rotterdam perspective, FENIX actively assembles a collection of international (contemporary) art, photography and historical objects that brings these stories to life. FENIX is an initiative from Stichting Droom en Daad.

Note to the press:

Landscape photo: Sylvana Lansu, The eastern façade of Fenix Warehouse II after restoration.
Portrait photos: Rubén Dario Kleimeer, The south façade before (l) and after restoration (r).

High resolution press images are downloadable via this [WeTransferlink](#)

Watch our video's on the [FENIX YouTube-channel](#)

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