

Press release  
Rotterdam, 16 February 2022

## Milestone for FENIX building: 22-metre lift shaft installed First part of viewing platform visible



**Building work on the forthcoming FENIX Museum reached an important milestone on the morning of Wednesday 16 February when the lift shaft of the Tornado arrived on a floating sheerleg on the river Maas. The lift shaft will support the viewing platform designed by the renowned MAD Architects from Beijing. The ninety-tonne lift shaft was hoisted from the water into the historic warehouse. The lift shaft now protrudes through the roof of the warehouse, from what will be the lobby. It will support the viewing platform, which will stand 24 metres above ground level. Further construction work on the Tornado will continue into 2024. The work of art consists of two intertwining staircases that will rise out of the historic Fenix Warehouse II like a double helix. From the Tornado, visitors will have a view of the Maas, towards the horizon over which three million migrants sailed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century when they left for the United States and Canada.**

### Artwork

The Tornado will be *the* eye-catching feature of FENIX, and an addition to the Rotterdam skyline. Visitors will be able to access the Tornado via the lobby on the ground floor, where they can choose one of the staircases to take them to the upper floor and viewing platform. The outside will be made of stainless steel, and the wooden interior finish will give the feeling of boarding a ship and embarking on a voyage. The first floor will give access to the museum, with displays of contemporary art, photography, luggage and historical objects that tell stories of migration. On the roof the viewing platform will afford a panoramic view of the river Maas and the northern side of Rotterdam. The Tornado will be part of the museum, and the largest artwork in the FENIX collection.

### MAD Architects

MAD Architects was awarded the FENIX commission in 2018. The agency, established by Ma Yansong in 2004, quickly acquired a reputation as one of the world's most innovative architectural practices. It is perhaps best known for its design for the Wormhole Library in Hainan, China. FENIX is the first European museum to be designed by a Chinese architectural agency. In its choice of MAD Architects, FENIX is honouring the history of the surrounding Katendrecht neighbourhood, which was once home to the first Chinatown in Europe. A place where people come and go, and where all kinds of nationalities and people live together. Ma Yansong was inspired by the history that took place on the quaysides at FENIX: 'FENIX

*will be a place to wonder and to explore about the past, the present and the future', he says. 'When we look at the path we've been through in the past, we know the future won't be linear.'*

### **Feat of engineering**

Since the first design sketch of 2018 and the arrival of the Tornado, work has been underway for three years. Engineers from IMd, CSM, CIG and EGM have worked non-stop on the complex structure. The lift shaft was made in Flanders, and last weekend embarked on its five-day journey by special convoy to Rotterdam. Later this year, construction work will continue on the Tornado, in several stages. The frame has been made by CSM, a company that also constructs complex buildings, bridges and rollercoasters; the principle is similar. The installation of most of the lift shaft Wednesday will be the first step. The viewing platform will be placed on top of the 22-metre high structure at a later stage, bringing the completed height of the Tornado to almost 30 metres.

### **About FENIX**

FENIX is located at the Fenix Warehouse II in Katendrecht, Rotterdam. The historic warehouse is currently being restored by Dura Vermeer. As the final stage of the renovations begins, work has started on the Tornado at the heart of the building. The museum will occupy the entire first floor, and will have a panoramic view over the river. Cultural, creative and culinary enterprises will be housed on the ground floor.

In the immediate surroundings of the warehouse, millions of people once boarded ships to embark on a new life. FENIX will explore this history, and the emotions associated with migration. Love, hope, work, necessity or adventure prompt people all over the world to move. Taking Rotterdam as its starting point, FENIX is building an art collection that represents these stories. The collection will include photographs, historical objects and art both contemporary and historical. FENIX is a Droom en Daad Foundation initiative.

#### Note for press:

Credit line: Artist Impression Tornado © MAD Architects

Photos: Installation of lift shaft at FENIX, photo Sylvana Lansu

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