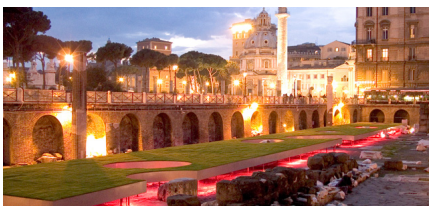


WONDER HOLLAND

2004, Rome, Italy



To revitalize the ancient Mercati di Traiano, an archaeological site, is by itself a peculiar intervention. Furthermore, to attempt to build a landscape for the Dutch Embassy on the site, when the Supervisor of Roman Antiquities insists that none of the ruins be touched or damaged, seems a folly.

The design response by West 8 is appropriately unconventional. It negotiates the delicate ruins by floating a ground plane as an imagined “flat, virgin carpet of fresh Dutch greenness” amidst old roman ruins. The structure is a simple raised steel container, planted with grass, and punctured like Leerdammer cheese with holes to allow for pieces of the ruins to protrude, visually linking and integrating the green carpet with the context, while also expressing its proposed connection to Dutch culture. The expression of this floating carpet is further accentuated by an outline of dramatic red lighting. Maintenance of the piece consists of watering and the 'occasional attention of a lawn mower'.

client

Royal Embassy of the Netherlands