

POORT

TORI.

Edition September 2024



CHEF EMMANUEL MENSAH

Promotes contemporary
culture from Africa

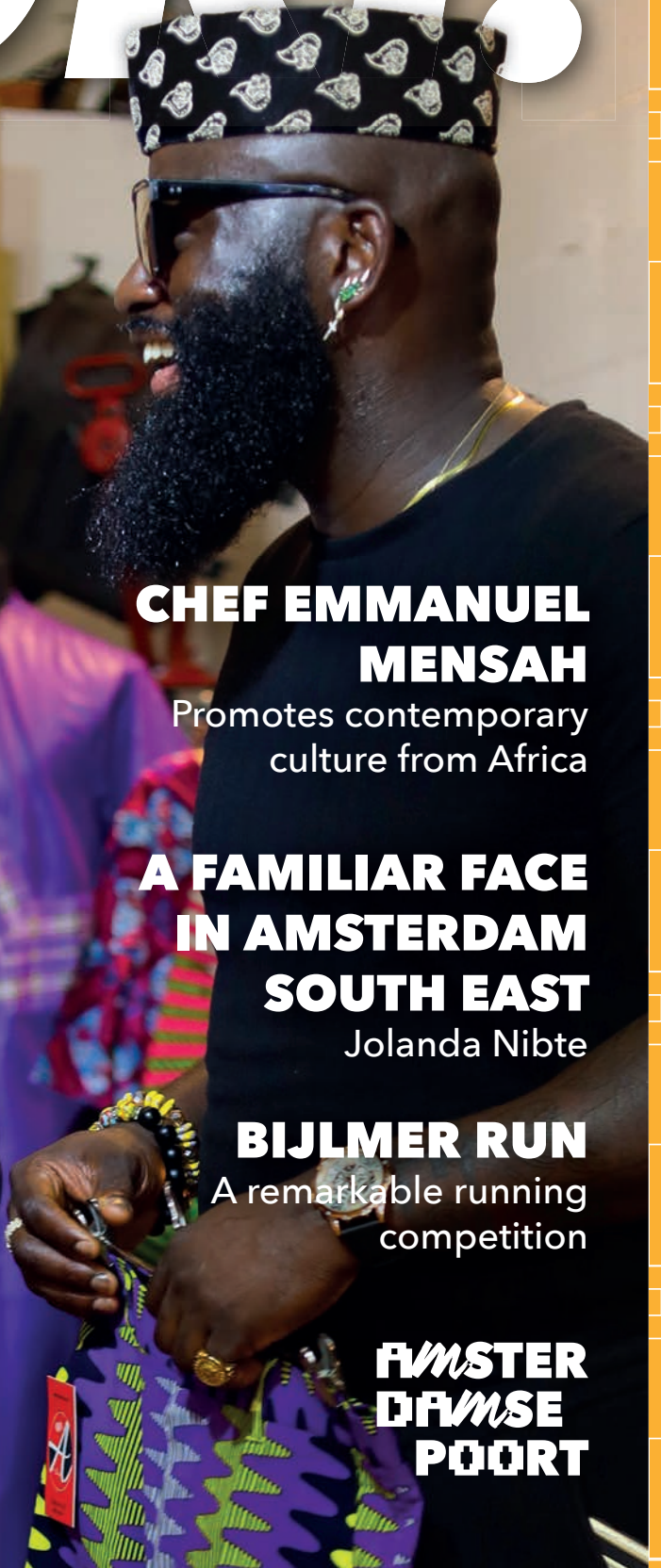
A FAMILIAR FACE IN AMSTERDAM SOUTH EAST

Jolanda Nibte

BIJLMER RUN

A remarkable running
competition

**AMSTER
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COLOPHON

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AMSTERDAMSE POORT

INTRODUCTION

Glad to make your acquaintance!

Since opening, Amsterdamse Poort has been the social epicentre of the district: somewhere to meet friends and neighbours, pick up groceries, shop, take in a movie, and enjoy some art, culture and good food. Above all, it serves as a place where you can be yourself.

If you're a local or a regular visitor, then you'll no doubt have your favourite spots. You buy such and such products at that one shop, know who sells the best sandwiches and where to see art that'll resonate with you. And if you're just getting to know the neighbourhood, you're in for a treat as there's always something new to discover: the most delicious Surinamese, Caribbean or Chinese dishes, an unexpected bit of street art, a cute boutique with affordable jewellery and accessories. Then there's the welcoming friendliness of people you meet on the street, people you may have never met before but who nonetheless make your day with a spontaneous greeting or bit of unsolicited advice.

Amsterdamse Poort, like the surrounding district and the rest of the city, is growing. Over 1,500 new residents have moved to the neighbourhood in recent years, setting up home in the monumental Sandcastle, which has been transformed into a lively residential building with restaurants and cultural venues, or in the former office buildings that have similarly been converted into apartment blocks. Meanwhile, storefronts have received a facelift and old buildings are making way for new ones. New cultural concepts, such as the OSCAM museum and the hip-hop academy foundation, are also up and running. And there's more to come. Works in the pipeline include a new Shopperhal arcade, more shop renovations and additional housing. And, as ever, these will be informed by input from everyone with a stake in the neighbourhood, including residents, visitors and local organisations, the better to amplify the appeal of the beating heart of the South East.

This edition of *Poort Tori* magazine features interviews and conversations with both familiar and lesser-known faces, all with their own unique connection with Amsterdamse Poort and this lovely district.

Happy reading!



**Want to know
more about what's
happening in the
Amsterdamse Poort?**

Visit amsterdamsepoort.nl for information about events, shop listings and construction plans.



THE BIJLMER RUN

HOW CHARITA TURNED HER LOVE OF RUNNING AND THE BIJLMER INTO A REMARKABLE RUNNING COMPETITION

If you love running, then you'll no doubt have heard of it or attended an edition as a spectator, and may even have participated in it yourself. I'm talking, of course, about the Bijlmer Run, a festive annual half marathon for runners of all kinds that began in 2022. The third edition, which took place last June, saw as many as 3,500 participants set off from the Anton de Komplein. We met up with its founders to find out more about the event and discuss their goals and dreams.

The idea was cooked up during the pandemic by a handful of people including Charita Zandgrond, who lives in Almere Poort and works for the regional education centre (ROC) next to the Poort. Charita is an avid runner and began jogging from Almere Poort to Amsterdam Poort during the pandemic, a distance equivalent to a half marathon. "It occurred to me that this Poort-to-Poort element coupled with the distance gave it the makings of an organised event."

She'd never done anything like this before, but pitched the idea to friends and colleagues and was soon talking to people who knew about such things. One of those people was Yoshi Groen, an avid runner who'd organised several such events under the "Indie Run" banner. "I'd taken part in some pretty cool marathons in other countries," he says, "and realized that if I wanted to do the same in the Netherlands, I'd have to start something myself. So I did." It was through a friend of Charita's that he heard about her idea. "A half marathon in the Bijlmer sounded absolutely awesome," he says. They ran the route together, to see what it was like, but concluded it wasn't quite right for an event. "It had all these long, boring stretches with nowhere for spectators to stand," says Yoshi. Moreover, it would be more convenient for everyone if the race could end where it started, as "people wouldn't have to go elsewhere to pick up their stuff after the race."

"People got to experience the place themselves".

- Charita Zandgrond -

Another friend put Charita in touch with Edson Sabajo, co-founder of the Amsterdam-based lifestyle brand Patta. Not only was Edson an avid runner himself, he was also on his brand's running team, through which they organised various events including impromptu running meets. "He was interested, but said he felt the event should take place entirely in Amsterdam South East," says Charita. Shortly after that, the idea came into focus: the Bijlmer Run – a race through the Bijlmer.

Charita has worked in the area for 15 years and has been coming here since she was a kid. "The area gets a bad rap in the press and I thought it would help if



CHARITA ZANDGROND



YOSHI GROEN



DELANO ZANDGROND

people got to experience the place themselves." The participants are as diverse as they come, with twenty per cent hailing from the area and the remaining eighty from all over the place. They include everything from professional athletes to first-timers.

The idea rests on three pillars: exercise, discovery and making friends. "Ignorance breeds intolerance," says Charita, "and if you don't know anyone from a part of town you've only heard terrible things about, your prejudices go unchallenged. One way to get people to question their prejudices is to create opportunities for them to meet and hang out with the targets of those prejudices." Participants can run one of five individual distances, from 5 kilometres – for beginners – all the way up to a half marathon for seasoned athletes. There's also a Kids Run, for children aged 4 to 10, and a recently introduced 5-kilometre walk. Routing the runs through the various neighbourhoods ensures the participants, including the locals, really get to know the area. "There's lots of green here, and loads of cycle paths, which is perfect for the event," adds Yoshi. The routes are incorporated into Bijlmer Run's logo in different colours, which not everyone realizes, apparently. "Some think the shapes are meant to represent the sails of a windmill," says Charita, laughing. "There's also a family run," adds Delano. Delano is Charita's brother, and has been involved since the day of the first edition. "I sort of fell into it," he says. "I helped set things up from about half past eight in the morning, and didn't leave until we were done at about two or three the next morning. I came on board much earlier the following year. Then Charita went travelling for a bit, so I stood in for her while she was away." He's now responsible for sponsorship.

The Bijlmer Run is more than just a race for young and old alike. It's an event with everything from food trucks and children's entertainment to a stage with DJs and live music, with each edition kicking off with a performance by a brass band, "as that's just part of Amsterdam South East," says Charita. It's essentially a fun day out for all on the Anton de Komplein.

BIJLMER RUN



There are some challenges ahead, though. The Anton de Komplein is undergoing renovation to accommodate Vomar supermarket, which is temporarily relocating from the Shopperhal arcade. This is likely to shrink the space on the square, which is a problem for the organisers as they need quite a bit of space to accommodate the various parts of the event. Naturally, they'd much rather keep everything where it is, as shifting things towards Amstel III would make it less a South East event. "Sure, Amstel III is technically in South East, but it doesn't have that South East vibe, and doesn't attract casual visitors the way this place does, which is one of the things that makes the area fun."

While Charita and Yoshi are busy organising the next run, Delano is busy talking to prospective sponsors – after all, no sponsors, no Bijlmer Run. "We're always on the lookout for like-minded partners and sponsors," he says. "If your company is similarly interested in bringing people together, promoting well-being through physical activity and helping people discover new parts of the city, then do get in touch," says Charita.



**WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BIJLMER RUN OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK TOGETHER?
VISIT BIJLMERRUN.NL**

CHEF EMMANUEL MENSAH PROMOTES CONTEMPORARY CULTURE FROM AFRICA

Emmanuel was born in Ghana but has been living in Amsterdam South East for roughly 12 years, first in the Kraaiennest neighbourhood but for the past year or two on the Bijlmerplein. He makes his living as a chef and promotes contemporary culture from Africa in his spare time. As part of the latter, he recently took the popular food influencer Chef van der Lecq on a tour of the South East, during which they visited his favourite spots and sampled a variety of cuisines from around the world. We meet Emmanuel in the Amsterdamse Poort to find out more about his love of food and his favourite spots in his neighbourhood.



EMMANUEL WITH ASBON IN THE SHOP OF JEKKAH



EMMANUEL WITH OWNER GOLDCOAST CATERING: SARAH BAWUAH-ACQUAH

So, where are we going today?

"First, we're dropping in on Asbon, who runs Jekkah clothing store, which is right here in the Poort. His whole operation is unique and edgy, and I love it. He combines streetwear and African print in a really interesting way. Furthermore, his fashion shows are unfailingly impressive and he's always stylishly dressed. We share the same style, actually, and are also from the same part of Ghana. Next, we're stopping off at the Gold Coast Restaurant & Lounge bar. Its owners have come a long way, both literally and figuratively, and now have a really good concept running in a beautiful location. They've shown that there's room for people who want to do something related to their culture, and that if something interests you, there'll be others who share your interest. And the more people pursue their interests, the more people they inspire."

What's life like as a chef in South East?

"It's absolutely wonderful! There's so much culture and diversity here, which is great for food lovers like me. I've discovered so many flavours from a variety of cuisines thanks to this neighbourhood. This place is the dictionary definition of a melting pot. Flick through a few food-related history books and you soon start to discover how different cuisines travelled along trade routes and influenced other cuisines wherever ships docked. And many of the results of this phenomenon can be found right here. Take Moksi Meti, for instance. It's considered a Surinamese dish, in other words, it's 'from' Latin America, but includes influences from almost every other continent."

Your interest in food extends beyond cultural qualities into health-related ones. Can you talk a bit about this?

"Much of what we eat in the Netherlands is processed, as opposed to whole foods, which are not refined and don't come with added ingredients. I was quite shocked by that when I arrived here. And I remembered that my grandmom [in Ghana], who lives in a village, raised lots of kids who were rarely ill. So, I did a bit of research and discovered that much of their diet had medicinal qualities. It's why cancer, for instance, is rare in Ghana. The typical West African diet consists of the six nutrients you need to stay healthy: carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals and water. Consequently, people don't generally go on weight-loss diets, because what they eat is natural and therefore nourishing. My grandmom could walk with 10 kilos of yam on her head at the age of 90! People of her generation also respect nature; they know when to hunt and when to leave things alone. I think it's important to be in tune with nature, but I'm afraid my parent's generation failed to pass on the necessary knowledge."



CHEF EMMANUEL MENSAH

Does that mean you don't eat fast food?

"Haha! Very rarely... Maybe twice a year if I really can't find anything else."

What does food signify for you?

"Food is life. Food is culture. Food is an essential element that we can't do without. Food is something we do together, a means of bringing people together. I sense that many people of our generation have lost contact with their [African] culture, which is why I try to reintroduce people to these cultures, with food but also with music and fashion. Too few know what Africa has to offer."

How did you meet Chef van der Lecq?

"I ran into him in the building where I work. He was having lunch and I brought him his dessert, which he really enjoyed. We soon got talking, and I discovered that he wasn't familiar with the area. I promptly invited him on a food tour of the Poort and he immediately accepted. I took him to Nico's Slagerij [Nico's Butchers], where he sampled a variety of Surinamese delicacies, such as blood sausage, regular sausage and fladder [tripe]. Then I took him to Lucky King and Hong, followed by Queen D. I'm taking him to the local markets on his next visit. I'm keen to show him, and everyone else, just how culturally vibrant this neighbourhood is."

What's your greatest ambition?

"I'd love to be able to promote culture from Africa by travel vlogging. Then I'd be able to show what it's really like in a variety of places across the continent, talk about the food, the music, the cultural attire. I do a version of that already by vlogging from cultural events like Amapiano and Jollove, and through vlogs like the one with Chef van der Lecq, but I'd like to take it up a notch."



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FOLLOW CHEYENNE ON INSTAGRAM
@FOOTFAIRYVOETFEE



A SPECIAL ENCOUNTER



Mireille Stadwijk passed away on 25 July 2024 following a short illness. Our interview with Cheyenne took place in early July. Cheyenne and Mireille's partner both felt it should be published all the same as a testament to the impact that Mireille had on the lives of those around her.
Waka bun, Mireille.

"I come to the Poort whenever I need anything Surinamese, when I want to be among people who share my background or eat Surinamese food," says Cheyenne, a pedicurist from Amsterdam South. There are few signs of Surinamese culture where she lives, in marked contrast to the Poort, where she's able to treat herself to things like Surinamese bami [noodles] or a slice or two of Surinamese blood sausage. "It reminds me of home, so I'm here whenever I feel like experiencing a bit of Suriname." Her favourite shop is A Seti, run by Mireille Stadwijk.

"I come to the Poort whenever I need anything Surinamese, when I want to be among people who share my background or eat Surinamese food"

- Cheyenne Genevieve Johans -

Cheyenne's face lights up when she talks about Mireille and her shop: "She is my oracle," she says affectionately, adding that an oracle is "someone special, someone wise and someone who senses things." Their first encounter was preordained, she says. Her dad had fallen ill and was planning to go to Suriname to seek alternative forms of treatment. "I didn't want to take all his jewellery with us but wasn't sure what to do. And I was wandering around the shopping centre when I suddenly felt myself being drawn towards A Seti." She got into conversation with Mireille and her assistant and explained her dilemma, and they gave

her such good advice that the encounter left a deep impression on her. Cheyenne is Surinamese but says she doesn't know much about her culture, and Mireille has been instrumental in helping her fill in the gaps. "She's my first port of call if I need anything relating to Suriname, including advice. She has a special aura and is authentically herself, and I don't know what I'd do without her." It was from Mireille that she got the eagle pendant necklace [Kromanti] she's wearing today. "It's something of a guardian angel. I have others, though, each with a different pendant." She never leaves the house without one.

Her visits to the Poort have been less frequent of late, as she's been busy setting up her business as a pedicurist. "I've also been looking after an older lady in my neighbourhood, Dientje, whom I see every day." Her business is called the Foot Fairy. You may have seen her driving around: her company car is a three-wheeled enclosed scooter with purple stickers on the sides. "I want to use my business to help, inspire and heal others, just like Mireille," she says, and aspires to become the best pedicurist in the city. Her practice is on the Uiterwaardenstraat in Amsterdam South. And come January she'll start training as a chiropodist. "The plan is to fill in my spare time with a side job as a chiropodist in a hospital or care home, where I can serve those who are less fortunate."



IF YOU SPOT CHEYENNE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OR ANYWHERE IN TOWN, DON'T HESITATE TO SAY HI. SHE'S ALWAYS READY TO CHAT AND UNFAILINGLY RADIATES WARM AND LOVING ENERGY!



GRAZIËLLA HUNSEL RIVERO

PROUD BIJLMER NATIVE



Introduce yourself to readers

I'm Graziëlla Hunsel Rivero, proud product of a Bijlmer high-rise and even prouder resident of Amsterdam South East. I'm a local resident, mother, entrepreneur and singer-songwriter. My near 49-year life in this neighbourhood has seen me develop from child to entrepreneur to director of ZOJazz Stage. I have a passion for excellence and wish to put my neighbourhood on the map in the most beautiful way possible.

What's your favourite spot in the Poort and why?

It has to be the public square opposite the Sandcastle, where you'll also find Lidl and KFC. I love it because of the variety of people you see passing through it each day: office workers, visitors, residents, you name it.

What's your favourite shop, restaurant or takeaway joint and why?

At the moment, it's Moda Di Ricardo [fashion store]. They're proper fans of the Poort, and I love that. They get the local sense of style and deliver accordingly. But they don't only sell clothes, they stock everything that goes with it. You leave the place slaying from head to toe. I have to give them their props.

Why did you decide to locate your business in the Poort?

Because I feel like I'm in my element here. I feel the vibe all day and night. This place boasts an incredible variety of people, all with their own unique story! The location of ZOJazz Stage in the Sandcastle is one part of a multi-stage plan. I opened the rehearsal studio in 2023 and plan to open the next part of the venture next year, which will be a 300-square-metre venue with catering facilities and a full-fledged concert hall for jazz and world music.

FOLLOW ZOJAZZ STAGE ON INSTAGRAM
@ZOJAZZSTAGE



INTERVIEW WITH DJ JAY FREE "I'VE BEEN DJING FOR 18 YEARS"

EVERY SATURDAY DJING AT JEKKAH

Jeffrey Ahenkan, better known as DJ Jay Free, is a familiar face around the Poort. A regular at music festivals whose Instagram page is an endless catalogue of selfies with fellow artists and DJs, he is the epitome of living and breathing music. Jeffrey lives in Ganzenhoef and often walks to the Poort, which he visits fairly regularly: "Every Saturday, at the very least, for my DJ set at Jekkah concept store." This year, he also began DJing on a regular basis at events in the Bijlmerplein.

What's your favourite spot in Amsterdamse Poort?

Definitely Jekkah. It's a cool store and I get to deejay there every Saturday.

What's one of your fondest memories of growing up in the Poort?

Visiting the Free Record Shop. That was in the very early days, and I used to go there for CDs. I remember popping in to get a Boys II Men CD, which I still have and which is still one of my favourites. They had everything from children's CDs to the latest singles, including by groups like Boys II Men.

How long have you been DJing?

I'm 32 now, so I think about 18 years. My favourite sets are wall-to-wall African music, featuring artists I love, such as Daddy Lumba [a Ghanaian hiplife artist], who

released one of my favourite tracks ever, 'Aben Wo Aha'. I understand most of his lyrics, but I sometimes have to listen carefully to catch all the jokes, which are littered throughout his songs.

('Aben Wo Aha' is a certified classic. Released in 1998, the song is known for its suggestive lyrics and was initially banned from radio play in Ghana, which only increased its notoriety.)

Favourite place to eat?

Kam Yin (Surinamese/Chinese restaurant). I love their nasi moksi meti dish (noodles with chicken and pork).



FOLLOW JAY FREE ON INSTAGRAM
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HART VAN ZUIDOOST



HARTWAARD



ZUIDOOST



PHOTOS TAKEN BY RANDY DA-COSTA DURING THE CULTURAL CATWALK, THE WINTERSPEELCAFÉ, HELL'S KITCHEN, BLOCK PARTY AND ROOT'S & RHYTHMS

A FAMILIAR FACE IN AMSTERDAM SOUTH EAST JOLANDA NIBTE

Chances are you know who she is or at least recognise her. To her fellow locals, Jolanda Nibte is pretty much synonymous with the neighbourhood: she's usually out and about, loves meeting people, does a lot for the community and radiates positivity wherever she goes. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that she was among those chosen to model for the sculpture Rona Batho ["We the People"], the Nelson Mandela monument in the eponymous park. "Good thing we were instructed to keep a straight face," says Jolanda as we view the monument, "otherwise the one modelled on mine would be sporting a big grin." She is clearly proud of the work. "It's beautifully crafted and a fitting tribute." We'd arranged to meet Jolanda so as to find out what makes her tick.



"otherwise the one modelled on mine would be sporting a big grin."

- Jolanda Nibte -

She recalls her initial disbelief on receiving the call about the monument. "I immediately called the CBK [Centre for Visual Arts], because, well, it's hard to know what's real these days." She was delighted to learn that it was very real indeed. "I'd apparently been nominated by quite a few people," she says, evidently still a little surprised. The artist commissioned to create the monument, Johannesburg-based Mohau Modisakeng, had in mind something that, for the first time in history, would focus not directly on Nelson Mandela himself but rather on the other. He thus decided to depict seven actual locals who collectively represented the spirit of the community. The chosen individuals were to be nominated by their fellow

"I dug out my camouflage top especially for this shoot," she says as she poses for our photographer. "The army colours are meant to symbolize the fighting spirit, but in a positive sense. I'm an advocate for Article 1 of the Constitution," she adds by way of explanation. The Article states as follows: All persons in the Netherlands should be treated equally in equal circumstances, and distinctions on grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race, sex, or any other grounds, are prohibited. "We need to be able to rely on one another, and we have to care for one another, right? Otherwise, we lose what it means to be human."

residents. The idea was informed by the Mandela quote: "We are human only through the humanity of others".

Jolanda has worked in youth care for more than 30 years, but most people know her from her many activities in the community. She's a photographer, is part of the group that tends to the local kitchen gardens, is socially engaged in various ways, and is always brimming with positivity. "I probably inherited it from my mum, Cornellie Devid," she says. "She was a very positive and highly active person, a member of all sorts of associations and did a lot for people in the community. People used to call her Queen Mom; still do, in fact." Jolanda's mum recently passed away, at the age of 92. "I miss her so much. I celebrated Ketu Koti without her for the first time this year and it felt so strange." Luckily, her mother was still around when the monument was unveiled. "I told her we were going to an event but didn't tell her what it was about. And when the piece was unveiled and she recognised my face, she almost fell over with joy!"

A man with a parrot perched on his shoulder zips by on a scooter as we stroll through the park in the direction of the market. "Did you see that?" she exclaims, beaming. "Only in South East!" She'd honestly be the perfect ambassador for the neighbourhood. Everywhere we go she notices something worth seeing, greets people left and right and beams with joy as she speaks. "The neighbourhood is truly as culturally diverse as everyone says, and I love that about it, but what I find even more compelling is the genuine spirit of community that abounds here. I lived in Amsterdam South for a while and it's totally different there." To illustrate her point, she lists some of the local initiatives: neighbourhood salon, community centre, coffee hours and a series of outdoor activities. "I particularly love the outdoor activities, such as the rummage sale at the Poort, where the benches are always packed with people chatting." She also loves strolling through the local market, shopping for fresh (Surinamese) vegetables and saying hi to everyone she meets. There's no time like the present, so we head over there, and she's soon picking through vegetables, chatting with another shopper about the prices and talking about how much she buys for a family with six kids. The fellow shopper offers tips on how to stretch the vegetables to more meals and thereby save a bit of money. "Thanks, and bon appétit!" shouts Jolanda to the lady as we leave. "It's such fun, isn't it?"

It's clear as to why Jolanda was chosen for the monument: she's a people person who absolutely loves the neighbourhood and everyone in it. So, if you happen to spot her when she's out and about, just go up and say hi; she loves meeting new people and is always up for a chat. "I'll probably coax them into getting out more!"



KENNETH BRAMMERLOO ON WORKING AND LIVING IN AMSTERDAM SOUTH EAST

'IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD'

Kenneth Brammerloo recently celebrated his fortieth year of service with the local government. Kenneth's love for and commitment to Amsterdam South East and its people is palpable, and we met up with him outside his office to talk about living and working in the neighbourhood.

Kenneth was born in Suriname but moved to the Netherlands at a young age. At the time, his dad had been a civil servant in Suriname for 25 years, which qualified him for a sabbatical abroad. "He picked the Netherlands but only intended on staying a short while. However, his sister convinced him to make the move permanent as she felt it'd be better for us, his children." It was a far from easy decision, as it meant giving up a secure job in Suriname and starting all over again in the Netherlands, but he did it all the same for the sake of his family, particularly his eight children. Starting from scratch in the Netherlands meant "working as a cleaner for Asito". Thus, Kenneth's parents were over the moon when he, the eldest of all the kids, broke the news of the job offer that ultimately led to one with the municipality. "One of the key benefits of working for a municipality is obviously job security. The government essentially protects your interests from cradle to grave, so to speak."

The family was initially based in the city centre, on Prinseneiland, but moved to Gliphoeve in 1984. "The Bijlmer was quite different back then," says Kenneth with a smile. "It felt more like a village, as everyone knew each other and seemed to care for one another." Kenneth recalls some of the pillars of the community, the charismatic individuals that everyone looked up to, such as Hilly Axwijk and Ma Hille. "These were the people you'd automatically turn to if you had a problem," he says. "They held the community together and what they said went, but you knew you could always rely on them." Kenneth misses that era of tighter social checks and mutual love and respect. "It's the way I was brought up in Suriname: it takes a village to raise a child, as the African proverb goes."

ON BEING YOURSELF

Kenneth isn't shy about displaying his Afro identity. He often wears jewellery from Suriname and West Africa and his clothes usually have references to Africa. "It wasn't always so," he explains. "The change happened around about my 30th birthday. I began to take a good look at myself, to reflect on where I was from, where my roots were." This sudden bout of introspection was prompted by a record of his family tree that a cousin brought to the house. "It had all these names in it, some belonging to people I'd never heard of, including white people," he says. He began reading about African

history and philosophy. "I became a walking and talking encyclopaedia." He also changed the way he dressed and decorated his office with posters of civil rights activists like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X and artists like Bob Marley [complete with a lit joint], all of which attracted some strange looks from his colleagues, who wondered what had come over him. "Stuff like this was seen as revolutionary back then, as radical. But I didn't care; I had an African hat and I was going to wear it to work."

"Stuff like this was seen as revolutionary back then, as radical. But I didn't care; I had an African hat and I was going to wear it to work."

- Kenneth Brammerloo -



ON AMSTERDAM SOUTH EAST

The world is changing, and so is Amsterdam South East. "Indeed, gentrification has made its way here too," he says. Gentrification is the process of "upgrading" a neighbourhood with the intent of attracting wealthier tenants. "People who've lived in the Bijlmer for ages have been up in arms about this, which I wholly understand." A single-family home in the Vogeltjeswei, like the ones behind the municipality office, now costs about €700,000. "Hardly anyone here can afford that. And yet those very homes, which were part of the Bijlmermeer renovation project of 1992, were meant to be for the tenants of the high-rise buildings that were being torn down to make way for low-rise housing." There are rules in place which mandate that a certain percentage of new housing be set aside for people from South East, but these rules aren't always followed, says Kenneth. "Much of the new housing now goes to expats, as they're the only ones that can afford the staggering prices. But these new residents have no connection with the neighbourhood."

"It's important to understand the forces that made it possible for you to be free in the here and now."

- Kenneth Brammerloo -

As Kenneth sees it, it's crucial that those who made a neighbourhood what it is are able to remain in their neighbourhood if they so wish; otherwise, a place soon loses its character and history. These things are vital, he says, because part of a neighbourhood's character is the knowledge of its origins, the knowledge of what came before and those responsible for its development. "And we should never forget that." He draws a comparison with our collective memory of the Second World War and how this knowledge is kept alive through things like films and novels, which enable regular reflection. "It's important to understand the forces that made it possible for you to be free in the here and now," he says.

ON HIS FAVOURITE PLACE

His favourite place in the entire district is a market. "In my experience, a local market is a reflection of the surrounding neighbourhood. So, if I find myself bored whilst visiting a market, I take it as a sign to get the hell out of there. His particular favourite is the one on the Anton de Komplein, near the Poort. It's where he gets his Surinamese vegetables, fruit and nuts and chats with vendors. "I always stop off at Glenn's Bitter and say hi to the Ghanaian ladies who run some of the other stalls I visit."



ON WORKING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Kenneth is a people person and has been deeply devoted to the district for the past 40 years. About five years ago, he was appointed community manager, a position that necessitates being out and about and meeting people. Consequently, he's rarely in the office. "It's a dynamic neighbourhood with 180 nationalities that need to get along as a community, so you have to be among the people to do this job." Kenneth is aware of the negative perceptions some outsiders have of the neighbourhood, "But those that care to visit always leave with a different impression. This neighbourhood surprises people, affects them in a way they least expect." He talks about the next generation with great affection, about what sort of society he wants for them. "Sooner or later, I'll have to pass on the torch, and I'll need to be prepared for some questions from those receiving said torch, such as, 'In what condition is what you're handing me and will it help or hinder our progress?'" Kenneth is a huge fan of the book Socratic Design by Humberto Schwab. "He once said that Amsterdam's heart is in the South East, which is looking after it until the city is ready to rediscover its heart."



YOU CAN STREAM 1104, DE POSTCODE
WAAR HET BEGON AND THE REST OF
KIDDO CEE'S MUSIC ON SPOTIFY

HIPHOPARTIEST KIDDO CEE ON HIS NEW EP

'1104 DE POSTCODE WAAR HET BEGON'

Amsterdam South East is a genuine breeding ground for aspiring musicians, and countless household names got their start here, among whom rapper and teacher Chander Peroti, better known as KidDO CEE, whose most famous track, "Waar Ik Woon", hit the airwaves two decades ago. The subject of the track's accompanying music video was, you guessed it, the Bijlmer. Earlier this year, KidDO CEE released a new EP, inspired this time by the Kraaiennest, where he grew up. The rapper has been living Amsterdamse Poort for the past few years, and we met up with him to discuss the new EP and his experiences of the neighbourhood.

What's the story behind the title of your new EP, 1104, De Postcode Waar Het Begon (1104, Where It All Began)?

"1104 is the postcode of the place where I was introduced to hip-hop, namely the Kraaiennest. It's where I grew up, where I'm from, and the place I'll always represent; it's K-Zone to the death, you know."

What's it like to live in the Poort?

"It's all right! It's not that different where I used to live, though. It used to be considered a "chic" neighbourhood, but that's no longer the case. Same shit, different place. And as is the case with any neighbourhood, it has its pros and cons. Good food, a multicultural population, an us-versus-them mentality, these things apply as much to 1102 as they do to 1107, so your precise area of the district isn't especially important. Everyone has relatives all over the district, and we all know one another, at least by sight. We all grew up together."

So, why have you brought us to the Bijlmer Park theatre's pop-up stage?

I recently arranged a listening session here, my third. My first was in Kraaiennest, beneath the metro station, but that was just for my friends and relatives, people who'd worked on the album and a handful of interested parties. The second was at Oscam, where we also shot part of "TDML" [trip down memory lane], my first music video for the new EP, which we shot there because the venue happened to be hosting an exhibition about Café De Duivel [the iconic hip-hop café]. Long story short: this pop-up stage was where I premiered that video as part of the third listening session.

But why have a listening session when the album is already on Spotify? Why do you have these sessions?

"It's really just an excuse to get everyone together, to link up again and reminisce about the good times and the bad. And to see who's still around, because, honestly, we've lost quite a few people. Brother Def Rhymz, for instance, and more recently DJ Ill Skills, who produced several of my tracks. We shouldn't only touch base at



funerals. That's why the recent Hell's Kitchen Block Party on the Bijlmerplein was so awesome. It was just like old times, with everyone going wild like they were 16 again! Meeting up like that lets you give people a real hug and find out how they're doing. An emoji is simply no substitute for the sound of real laughter."

Your music is once again, or still, informed by the Bijlmer. Why is that?

"The Bijlmer is more than just a place to me, it's a state of mind. It embodies hip-hop's philosophy of making something from nothing. People tend to look down on you and underestimate you [if you come from the Bijlmer], but being on the receiving end of such perceptions actually motivates you to make something of yourself. This neighbourhood is full of rough diamonds, and it churns out trendsetters like there's no tomorrow, not only in music but also in fashion and art. It's a hotbed of creativity, and the fact that my neighbourhood produces so much raw talent fills me with pride."

What message would you like people to take from your new album?

"Give people roses while they're still around to smell them. Keep enjoying life, and ride till the wheels fall off."

THE CREATORS OF THE NAME

POORT TORI.



CURIOUS ABOUT WHERE EMILY PERFORMS? CHECK HER INSTAGRAM AND STAY UP TO DATE @EMSIFLYBOKOE

This magazine's title was suggested by Amsterdamse Poort's followers on social media, three of whom actually had the same idea: Poort Tori. Emily Osei, a familiar face in the Poort, is among these individuals. Emily is one of the country's first female Afrobeats DJs and has been deejaying for about eight years. In fact, you'll often find her playing at events in the Poort. We chatted about her favourite spots and fondest memories of the Poort and found out what prompted the idea of the magazine's title.

Introduce yourself to readers

I'm Emily Osei, better known as Emsifybokoe. I'm a DJ and I often play at events in Amsterdamse Poort. I'm also a youth worker, but I'm much less well known for that!

What's your favourite spot in the Poort?

If I had to choose just one spot, it'd have to be the long bench opposite KFC. You can see everything from there, and it feels like a sort of open-air community centre.

What's your favourite dish or place to eat in the Poort?

I don't really have a favourite dish, but I love Ghanaian food, which you can't currently get in the Poort, but you can in the market. So I usually get something from a Ghanaian lady who runs one of the stalls; unfortunately, I don't know her name. But I like all sorts of food – Surinamese, greasy fast food, you name it – and the Poort, with all its variety, is great for that.

What's your fondest memory of the Poort?

Deejaying at the Panna Knock Out tournament. I'm a huge football fan, particularly when it comes to street football, so I had a whale of a time creating the vibe for the event. I even got to kick the ball about!

How did you come up with the name "Poort Tori"?

Everyone loves a "tori" [story]. And local gist is a sort of story. So it seemed fitting to name a magazine with the latest local gist Poort Tori. Moreover, "tori" is an established Surinamese term, so most people know what it means.

THE CREATORS OF THE NAME



ANGELO BENJAMINS

POORT **TORI.**

Angelo Benjamins is a gardener who grew up in Echtenstein but moved back to Amsterdam South East in 2009, at the age of 12. He's 39 now, and is among the three locals who suggested we name the magazine Poort Tori. We chatted about his favourite spots and fondest memories of the Poort.

What's your favourite spot in the Poort?

That's a good question... I'd say the square outside McDonald's, because it's a great place to relax and a good meeting point.

What's your favourite place to eat in the Poort?

Febo, 'cause I love a good grilled burger!

What's your fondest memory of the Poort?

Strolling through the Poort with my mum and sister as a kid before eating at Tjin's. It's no longer there, unfortunately, but we loved that restaurant.

How did you come up with the name "Poort Tori"?

"Tori" is a Surinamese word for "story". And the Poort is full of wonderful stories, so it seemed fitting.



MAARTJE NEXT TO HER PORTRAIT OF WENDELL ONG ABAN, AKA INGI



DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT MAARTJE AND/OR HER PROJECTS? PLEASE VISIT THE WEBSITE WWW.KETIKOTIPROJECT.COM

Maartje Jaquet, a visual artist who runs a Facebook page called "ALA SMA TORI", is very involved in the Amsterdam South East community. She's an affiliate of CBK Zuidoost and has twice been Artist in Residence at Open Space Heesterveld. It was actually Maartje who gave this magazine its name, Poort Tori.

Introduce yourself to readers

My name is Maartje Jaquet and I'm a visual artist. For the past few years, I've been working on a project about Ketu Koti, which involves painting portraits of and interviewing people who commemorate and celebrate Ketu Koti. I've also published a book about it. I began the project because I'd learnt too little about the abolishment of slavery at school, which, incidentally, is why most people in the Netherlands are equally vague on the subject, even though it's part of our history.

What's your favourite shop in the Poort?

Athenaeum Bookshop. That's where you'll find my book *Ala Sma Tori: Ketu Koti Verbeeld* [stories of all kinds of people/of all of us]. I also love Bobo Couture in Shopperhal, where you can buy jewellery and clothes imported from Africa without middlemen. Bibi van Assen's market stall is another favourite. She sells spices, calabashes and a bunch of other items from the Surinamese countryside. Her assistant, Wendell Ong Aban, aka "Ingi", is the guy in the portrait beside me.

What's your favourite dish or place to eat in the Poort?

Something from Fong Food in Shopperhal. You'll sometimes find me munching on one of their takeaways while strolling in the neighbourhood and enjoying the vibe.

What's your fondest memory of the Poort?

The 2020 edition of Ketu Koti. The event couldn't go ahead that year because of the pandemic, but people still wanted to mark the day, so they dressed up for the occasion and were milling about the Poort. I began talking to people and asking if I could take their portraits, and that was the start of ALA SMA TORI. Thanks to all those I spoke to that day, I've been able to contribute, in my own way, to raising awareness of an underexposed part of Dutch history.

Why did you suggest the name "Poort Tori"?

It's short and memorable and the two words go well together. It was the first thing that popped into my mind when I saw the Facebook request for title ideas. It's a magazine with stories from the Poort, therefore Poort Tori.

HART VAN ZUIDOOST