

This month we meet Wouter van der Zouwe, partner at [YIPP](#) who are Platinum sponsors and exhibitors at the Business Bistro tradeshow at this years Ecsite Conference.

On top of that, Wouter will be speaking at the session [“Collaboration by design: creating digital interactive exhibits that build connections”](#)



Thank you for joining us today Wouter, would you like to introduce yourself?

Hi, I'm Wouter van der Zouwe, and I am the Director of YIPP together with my business partner Wouter Verbiest.

I come from a programming background which was fun, but after a while I missed a creative challenge so went to art school, and studied media, technology and art. After that, Wouter and I joined forces and started YIPP.

For those of us who don't know YIPP, can you tell us who you are and what you do?

Yes, sure. We have a team of 20 people, based in Amsterdam and make games and interactive installations for museums and science centres, combining technology and creativity. Our work is always physical in the sense that it exists in either an experience centre or a Science Centre or a museum.

There's always a digital component, so either with projectors or touch screens incorporating interactivity. And through those interactions and games, we help our clients tell their stories, to convey the information that they want to the visitors.

As a client, how is it to work with YIPP?

We are a very flexible and collaborative company, whether that's thinking with the museum looking for creative solutions, or partnering with hardware providers to ensure we deliver a seamless installation.

We are a hands-on organisation, you'll see that in the whole team culture and we prioritise prototyping projects early on in the development process.

Wouter and I complement each other well and do both the company strategy as well as being involved in client projects from start to finish in a creative and technologically creative manner, which is how we like it.

Can you tell us about what sort of projects you work on?

We do a mixture of larger and smaller projects. Large would be the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) project which had 35 interactive stations and 30 AV stations.



Smaller projects would have 10 to 15 installations and we sometimes do one offs as well.



YIPP Interactives
developed for EMBL

Where could we find your installations?

Last year we completed projects for the Science Museum Group in the UK as well as the Deutsche Museum in Munich and we've worked in museums in Norway and many in Belgium and the Netherlands. We also did multiple installations for Experimenta and Esplora in Malta so we're looking forward to seeing them again at the Conference in June.

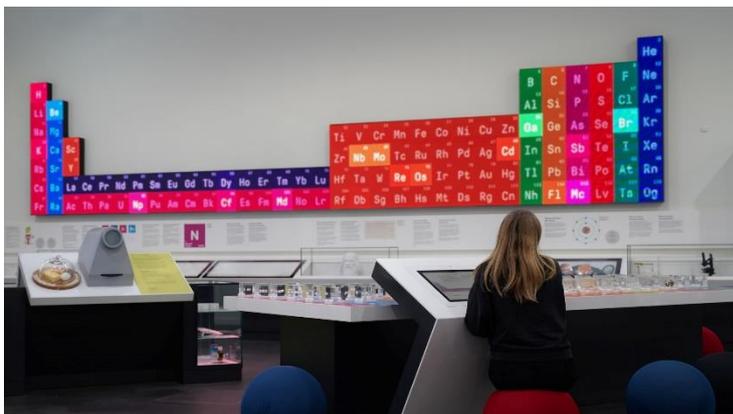


YIPP Interactives
developed for Science
Museum London

Photo ©Science Museum
Group



YIPP Interactives
developed for Deutsches
Museum





YIPP Interactives
developed for Technopolis,
Belgium



Our main focus is in Europe which has to do with sustainability. We only work further a field when our specific skills are needed, so we are working on project for Mexico at the moment but most places have local suppliers which is a more sustainable approach.

Can you give an example of the kind of installations you develop?

The Grootte Museum at Artis in Amsterdam which is part Natural History, part philosophy and also includes a number of artworks. After following a really organic development process, for an exhibition about the start of life, we developed an animation shown on a screen with a rope in front representing an umbilical cord. The visitor pulls on the rope and starting from an image of a baby, you go digitally back through layers, through the line of the mothers, back through the ages, through all the animal ancestors, and then back to microbes, and then back to the last commonly known ancestor. And from which at the end sprouts all kinds of different of life including plants, mammals, and insects, all of it.



YIPP Interactives developed for The Grootte Museum at Artis Amsterdam. Photo: Maarten van der Wal

What is a game changer for you in the development process?

One thing that's really important to us is including users in the testing process. We always do a lot of demos, and in the past few years, we've started including kids, parents, and other users in those demos. It's incredibly valuable to see how people respond to our ideas and get feedback from those who will ultimately be experiencing the exhibition. We use prototypes instead of PDFs and PowerPoint presentations, as it's hard to imagine the final product without seeing it in action.

Two important topics are accessibility and inclusion and sustainability, can you tell us about YIPP's approach?

Our approach is to do as much research as we can into these areas, and we are constantly learning new things. It's good to see that clients are developing their own vision on these topics, but finding the right balance can be a challenge. Each exhibition and target group is unique, so there are no quick fixes. We are continuing our research and see that there's more room for accessibility and inclusion, with sometimes a chunk of the budget reserved for it. User testing is even more important for the different target groups because it's hard to predict what works.

We also have a [blog about our research in accessibility](#) to share what we've learnt and to help others.

What would you say is unique about YIPP?

As a company, YIPP is unique in its hands-on approach, especially in combining hardware and software. We identify project risks and opportunities early on to avoid issues later and prototype as soon as possible. Our calculated risks result in more unique experiences. Seeing and experiencing a project firsthand can completely change perceptions and ideas, which is helpful for clients who may be inexperienced in exhibition design. This approach makes the process more enjoyable for everyone involved.

What do you think is the future of technology in museums?

I believe that museums and science centres should remain physical spaces where people can have hands-on experiences. The combination of physical and digital is still very powerful, and immersive experiences that combine physical objects and real exhibits with digital technology are the most interesting and powerful.

One example of this is a project we're currently working on is for a museum in the Netherlands that has the oldest canoe in the world. Visitors will be able to experience canoeing through the prehistoric area where the canoe was discovered. They will get into a boat and paddle through an immersive projection that we've built, using a custom tracking system for the paddles. This kind of unique, immersive experience that combines physical objects and digital technology is, in my opinion, the most interesting and powerful way to create exhibits. I think this is where the trend is going, and also where it should go.

Thank you for your time Wouter, it was a pleasure to meet you and we look forward to seeing you at Business Bistro Trade show at the 2023 Ecsite Conference.