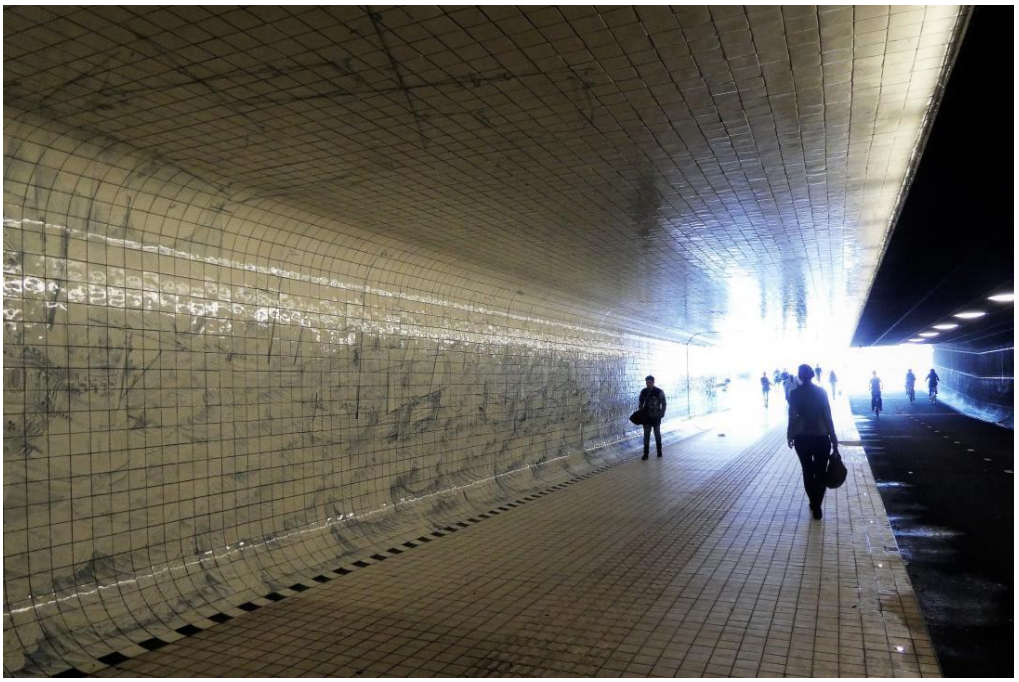
Graduation project:

Enhancing the feeling of safety in public environments through the use of responsible sensing



One out of three Dutch people (33 percent) occasionally feel unsafe in general, according to the Safety Monitor 2021. Overall feelings of insecurity have decreased by 34 percent compared to 2005, the first comparable year of measurement. 14 percent of Dutch people sometimes feel unsafe in their own neighbourhood. In 2021, feelings of insecurity in the neighbourhood are 13 percent lower than in 2008, the first comparable year of measurement. Women feel unsafe more often than men. Young people feel unsafe more often than older people. Feelings of insecurity at home are greatest in places where groups of young people hang out. 36 percent of Dutch people sometimes felt unsafe there in 2019. Among women aged 12 to 25, 67 percent said they had been harassed in the street at some point in the past year in 2021. They have been whistled at or shouted at, and sometimes followed. Among men, 1 in 3 experienced street harassment in 2020/'21, teenage boys more often than young adult men.

This graduation project would include research into how the design of public spaces and people's behaviour in them can affect citizens' feelings of safety and comfort. Are there certain challenges or characteristics that impact the individual's perception of safety in either a negative or positive way? This can be researched through literature study as well as field research. The research should be followed up with a design phase, focusing on how to use sensors to create solutions that can help increase the feeling of safety for citizens in Amsterdam. If possible, the project should result in physical prototypes to test in real-life settings. The goal of this project is not to make products for the individual to employ to enhance their own safety, but to find design solutions for how cities can increase people's feeling of safety without putting the action and responsibility on the individual.

This project also invites the student to not only design for a specific situation, but to try and consider what measures a municipality should employ to enhance feelings of safety in a responsible way. Can we design solutions that not only address the said problem without infringing the freedom and individual privacy of the public space? Or if we have to infringe on individual freedom, where should we draw the line between opposing values?

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At the Responsible Sensing Lab we figure out how to operationalize public values in smart city technology. In January 2021 the Responsible Sensing Lab was officially launched by AMS Institute and the City of Amsterdam. In the Responsible Sensing Lab academics are invited to connect and work with practitioners who are responsible for digital systems in the city to (re)design, prototype and test (more) responsible ways of sensing in public space for and with the City of Amsterdam. Read more on https://responsiblesensinglab.org/

The Responsible Sensing Lab is situated at Marineterrein Amsterdam.
Contact | Responsible Sensing Lab