



Press Release

## **Daan Roosegaarde and UNESCO switch off the city lights to see the stars as heritage**

**December 14, 2021 - Seeing the stars in your own street. It may sound like a fairytale, but the Dutch city of Franeker is achieving this by switching off its lights in the project *Seeing Stars*. By doing so, Daan Roosegaarde and Unesco Netherlands bring the stars back to create a sense of connection between people, something we are still missing in this COVID-19 pandemic. *Seeing Stars* encourages cities worldwide to follow; Unesco Netherlands aims to recognise seeing stars as a form of universal heritage.**

More than 80% of the world's population lives under light-polluted skies; a barrier preventing us from experiencing the beauty of the universe. But there is a solution. *"Everybody should have the right to see the stars through an unpolluted night sky. Looking at the stars makes you feel connected to each other, we are all part of the immense cosmos. This is the communal and universal heritage I strive for. Seeing Stars is an important step forward."* - Kathleen Ferrier, Chairperson of the Netherlands Commission for Unesco.

*"Everyone is now in their own little bubble, disconnected from each other. I realised that every night, there is an amazing light performance hidden up high in our sky. What if we switch off all the lights in a city, so we can enjoy the stars together? Seeing Stars brings back the stars in your street. The stars are only one switch away."* - Daan Roosegaarde, artist.

The movie premiere launches today at <https://studioroosegaarde.net/project/seeing-stars>. The *Seeing Stars* movie creates a sense of connection, not only with our community, but also with our planet.

Seeing Stars is a collaboration between the residents, government, and businesses of Franeker, Unesco Netherlands and Studio Roosegaarde to switch off all non-essential household lights, billboards, and street lights. By removing this light pollution on a city-wide scale, Seeing Stars enables everyone to reconnect with the universe and experience the magic of starlight again. Public safety is ensured in close collaboration with the local government. Seeing Stars begins in Franeker and aims to travel to cities such as Leiden, Sydney, Venice, Stockholm, and Reykjavik.

*"I am so proud to switch off all the lights in our city, to see the stars and feel connected with each other."* - Marga Waanders, mayor of Franeker

Unesco, Nacht van het Wad, Earth Hour, Nacht van de Nacht, and the International Dark-Sky Association have all previously advocated moments of darkness to increase human and animal well-being. Seeing Stars is part of this movement and acts as a radical premiere which is focussed on viewing the stars in your city. It contributes to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations and reflects the rich astronomical history of the city of Franeker.

The first Seeing Stars project was realized and recorded in Franeker, the Netherlands, to encourage other cities to follow. With the launch of the film Seeing Stars is the third project of the series DreamScapes by Studio Roosegaarde and partners Unesco Netherlands, Media.Monks, Visit Friesland, Visit Wadden, and the city of Franeker. Photography is by Albert Dros and Merel Tuk. Movie is by Media.Monks and Studio Roosegaarde.

### **About Roosegaarde**

As a social design lab, Dutch designer and innovator Daan Roosegaarde and his team connect people and technology in designs that improve daily life in urban environments and spark the imagination. The studio has won numerous international design awards. Internationally acclaimed works include WATERLICHT (a virtual flood showing the power of water), SMOG FREE PROJECT (the world's first largest outdoor air purifier which turns smog into jewellery), SMART HIGHWAY (roads that charge throughout the day and glow at night), SPACE WASTE LAB (visualising and up-cycling space waste) and URBAN SUN (cleans public spaces of the coronavirus). Seeing Stars is the third project of the series DreamScapes by Studio Roosegaarde and MediaMonks which show the beauty of a better world by combining art and science.

<https://www.studioroosegaarde.net>

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Pressroom high-res images and movie: <https://pressroom.studioroosegaarde.net/>

