

INSPIRATION

Explore, Connect and Innovate: Hilmer and Yvette about The Vibe of the Future Festival

During The Vibe of the Future Festival Nijmegen is transformed into a hotbed for innovation and inspiration. Hilmer, one of the driving forces behind the festival, and Yvette, community manager and co-organiser, share their vision, planning and ambitions for this remarkable event.

“Nijmegen has long been a breeding ground for innovation, with groundbreaking innovations developed that have a global impact. This is exemplified in Nijmegen’s leading positions in Health, High Tech, and their crossovers”, says Hilmer.

With The Vibe of the Future Festival they created a platform for an entire spectrum of innovation beyond these focus areas, allowing visitors of all ages and educational backgrounds to personally experience the future. In a seven day programme, with innovation, creativity and collaboration at the forefront, Nijmegen is introduced to the future.

Structured like a mosaic, in the festival’s programme different components, colours and genres come together during a vibrant week full of events, organised by various partners. The format is comparable to events like Dutch Design Week and Amsterdam Dance Event. “The idea is to stimulate cross-pollination between different sectors and disciplines, which is vital to taking the next steps in innovation”, says Yvette.

Driving forces

Since 2014, Hilmer Thijs (38) has been deeply involved in INNOVATE, an organisation that focuses on celebrating,

promoting and inspiring innovators in the region of Nijmegen and Arnhem. INNOVATE is known for events like De Nacht van de Ruimte (The Night of Space) and De Innovatiefste Student van Nederland (The Most Innovative Student of the Netherlands). Now they are also the main organiser of The Vibe of the Future Festival 2024. After three years as a creative director, Hilmer has now been general director of INNOVATE for two years.

What does innovation mean to you?

Hilmer: “INNOVATE energises me. It is always wonderful to see people dedicating themselves to the creation of a better world. Whether big or small, all innovations work towards progress.”

Since February 2022, Yvette Akkermans (51) has been the community manager at Noviotech Campus, working hard to make The Vibe of the Future Festival visible.

What motivated you to initiate The Vibe of The Future Festival?

Yvette: “In this festival, many gems from the region are being showcased. That is fantastic! It’s important for me to keep innovating and work towards a better society. Innovation goes beyond making life easier: it’s about progression for both people and nature.”



What exactly does The Vibe of the Future stand for?

Hilmer: "We looked for a name that not only emphasises innovation but also conveys the energy and character of the future. In The Vibe of the Future we have exactly that: a vibe, an invisible energy that connects us and gives a glimpse of what the world of tomorrow might look like."



"Whether big or small, all innovations work towards progress."

- Hilmer Thijs

According to Hilmer and Yvette, innovation is not just about technology; it is also about community thinking. *Yvette:* "This is something you feel and share with others. That's what we wanted to highlight in this name."

What's in it for the visitors?

Hilmer: "The Vibe of the Future Festival forms a unique opportunity to catch a glimpse of the future and meet interesting people who work on innovative projects every day. The festival not only lets you discover new things, but also expand your network and form collaborations."

Yvette: "The festival works with many companies and players in the innovation sector. Companies on the Noviotech Campus like NXP, or knowledge institutes like Radboud University, Radboudumc, HAN University of Applied Sciences, and ROC Nijmegen are also involved with inventions and practical applications."

A colourful programme

What does the programme look like?

Yvette: "One of the major events of the festival is a Technology Day, organised for young people by VNO-NCW at the Technovium location of ROC Nijmegen. Whether you want to conduct experiments, create something or just play with technology - it's all there. The Technology Day receives support from the government, including the municipality of Nijmegen."

Are there any business-oriented events for startups and entrepreneurs?

Yvette: "Demo Day, organised by Mercator Launch, is where startups, scaleups and innovators from Nijmegen showcase their innovations. Students can attend the HERO Entrepreneurs evening event, where they can meet their various entrepreneurial heroes. Are you aiming to expand your network, be inspired and learn where Nijmegen's innovation ecosystem is heading the coming years, then visit the INNOVATE Meetup at Noviotech Campus."

Hilmer: "That's not all: film enthusiasts can attend a special film screening by InScience at LUX Nijmegen, with three films shown about the 'Future of Health'. Afterwards InScience gives you the opportunity to ask questions."



"Innovation is about progression for both people and nature."

- Yvette Akkermans

Yvette: "The programme is highly diverse and tailored to different audiences. Whether you're a student, an entrepreneur or an enthusiast, the festival truly has something to offer for everyone."

The future of the festival

What are the ambitions of The Vibe of The Future Festival?

Yvette: "If successful, we want to continue The Vibe of the Future Festival and expand it to an event spanning two weeks and two cities."

Hilmer: "We're considering a festival that connects Nijmegen and Arnhem, with Nijmegen focusing on Health & High Tech and Arnhem on Energy & Creativity."

Yvette: "Working together in this way, we believe we can further consolidate the strengths of this region."

More about the event: vibeofthefuture.com.

