

INSTITUTIONS
**Government Interior
of the Year**
METRO OOSTLIJN BY GROUP A



Group A was awarded for respecting and enriching the history of Amsterdam's brutalist Oostlijn metro line.





AMSTERDAM – Although Amsterdam's bicycle lanes transport around 58 per cent of its citizens to work and school each day, nearly 200,000 citizens commute via the underground. For many, the 16 original brutalist stations of the city's Oostlijn – the metro line that runs from Centraal Station to the city's southeast neighbourhoods – had become a sore point. The design and infrastructure of the line was completed in 1978, and after 30-plus years of use, safety and hygiene were becoming increasingly problematic. Until, that is, the municipality brought in Rotterdam-based practice Group A.

Instead of completely overhauling the interiors, Group A chose to enhance

the existing identity of the stations. Daylight now floods the entrances to welcome morning commuters, while loose elements – ticket machines and information panels, for example – are clustered to promote more efficient passenger flow and the feeling of social safety during use. Materiality was an essential consideration for the architects: the original concrete was stripped of paint and treated prior to the application of new materials and murals.

Jury member Francine Houben, founding partner and creative director of Mecanoo, remarked on how 'public' the project is and how effortlessly it pays homage to the social fabric of Amsterdam. (She

also vowed to ride the line before returning for the Frame Awards ceremony later that evening.) The compliments were unanimous. 'Group A respected the history of the station while adding a second layer on top,' said Marie Hesseldahl Larsen, partner at 3XN. Many were relieved to see the much-delayed metro finally in use, a sentiment summed up by Alex de Rijke of dRMM: 'They completed the project at last.' – LGM

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PEOPLE'S VOTE

Utopia Library and Academy for Performing Arts by Kaan Architecten