

About a year ago, artist Giny Vos was commissioned to create a work of art for Shell that would artistically symbolise energy production by the solar panels mounted on the roof of the C5 building. One challenging constraint was that the location of this work of art had already been determined: the main hall in C5. This imposing work of art has now been completed, and Giny Vos talks about her inspirations and the end result.

Solar Treasure

Shell had decided to install solar panels during the Metamorfose project with a view towards highlighting the Group's commitment to developing sustainable energy. The solar panels were mounted on the flat roof for technical and efficiency reasons – and because they were thereby concealed, it was decided to symbolise them in a work of art.

SAFE DOOR

The architect of C5, Niek van Vugt of architects Ellerman Lucas van Vugt, put Shell in touch with Giny Vos after she had won the national Witteveen+Bos Award for Art and Technology in 2004. 'I regarded it as an exceptional challenge and honour to be awarded this commission by Harry van der Meijden at Shell Group Headquarters,' says Giny. 'I started off by thinking about what energy really is. It's important for a work of art destined for a public space to be appealing but surprising for everyone. I enjoy working with new techniques, and physical movement has a special part to play. My idea gradually developed of seeing Shell as the custodian of our energy, handling it very economically. This train of thought

led me to imagine the door of a safe behind which sunlight – in fact, the stored energy from the solar panels – is carefully locked away.'

SOLAR TREASURE

The work of art has now been finished and has been installed. Made of copper, the imposing safe door is about eight and a half metres tall and three metres wide. 'In my concept I deliberately decided not to depict the amount of energy produced by the roof-mounted solar panels but to show how essential the sun is for our existence,' Giny continues. 'Now and again the safe door opens a chink and a bright ray of light shines through the opening. The brightness of the light evokes the sun and its almost limitless energy.' Giny thereby portrays the treasure of the sun – which we must all use economically and is briefly visible when the door occasionally opens.

In order to create this work, Giny did a lot of research. She even collected statistics about the hours of sunlight during the year from the Royal Dutch Meteorological Institute KNMI, which were



Giny Vos with the 'Solar Treasure' in the main hall in C5.

translated into the frequency with which the safe door opens. In this sculpture 750 LEDs symbolising sunlight have been incorporated. The artist is reluctant to disclose all the details of her construction because it is intended to retain a certain element of mystery, but the more observant amongst us will indeed be able to spot them. The official unveiling will take place in the autumn.

THE ARTIST

Born in Rotterdam in 1959, Giny Vos studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and State Academy of Fine Arts, both in Amsterdam. The commissions she has fulfilled for the Philips head office in Amsterdam, the National Natural History Museum in Leiden and the Domstad College of Higher Education in Utrecht eminently qualified her for the commission entrusted to her by Shell Group Headquarters Director Harry van der Meijden.