

PRESS RELEASE

Large scale campaign for the preservation of subcultural music venue and youth centre
Willemeen

2019 is the year in which the monumental building located at Willemsplein will celebrate its 50th birthday as the urban location for youth culture in the shape of a youth centre and subcultural music venue. If it's up to the Arnhem's local council, 2019 will also be the year in which Willemeen will cease to exist in its current shape. The involved parties responded to this news with great defeat, sadness and incomprehension. Per the 1st of July 2019 the budget from the local cultural funds will be cut and a new partner will be assigned for the cultural programming of Willemeen. This means that Willemeen in its current shape will cease to exist. To offer resistance against this plan, the volunteers of Willemeen work alongside Arnhem's culture makers on a large scale campaign to preserve Willemeen. Further campaigns will be made public in time.

The local council has rejected the subsidy application from umbrella organisation Rijnstad, which means another party will decide about the cultural programming of Willemeen. The programming is partly decided by a large group of volunteers, of which a significant amount is in need of extra guidance and only get these opportunities by means of long-lasting, structural tailored work that the fixed group of involved and reliable youth workers offers them. With the absence of cultural subsidy, this form of urban youth work will also disappear; this will be the end of an important cultural influence youth groups have in Arnhem, the end of a nationally and internationally loved music venue, the end of a unique and valuable piece of local history.

Within Arnhem's cultural landscape Willemeen has taken a unique spot, but, maybe even more importantly, also in the hearts of her volunteers. A lot of them grew up in Willemeen and have found their second home and family.

Volunteer Eva: *“For half of my life, 15 years, I've been a volunteer at Willemeen. Nowhere else have I found such solidarity and passion in one place. It breaks my heart to hear the local council wants to shut down a unique place like this, we all have sleepless nights because of it.”*

Volunteer Maarten: *“For 9 years I'm a volunteer at Willemeen, ever since I was 16 years old. Willemeen helped me to grow up and to get along with people of a different background, culture or sexual orientation. Willemeen has made me the person I am today.”*

To read more about what Willemeen means for Arnhem, her inhabitants and her youth, please visit our website redwillemeen.nl. This is also the place where you can sign the petition for the preservation of Willemeen.

This initiative is already supported by the following culture makers and organisations:

- Forms events
- Kunststof
- Bad Habits // Good Company
- Dollhouse Queerparty
- 8Bahn
- Psychout Circus
- Ruimtekoers Festival
- Reggae Agenda Nederland
- De Transplantatie
- Deem Index
- Illmatic Blockparty
- Chefs de Partie collective
- Dub Nation
- Grindfeast Events
- Rockers Artist Agency
- Fat Like Us
- Astrant Ede
- Arina Events
- KBL Systems
- Jongin Arnhem
- Impresariaat Kunststof