



**International Festivals & Events Association**

**Johan Moerman  
2012 IFEA Hall of Fame Inductee  
Rotterdam Festivals**



**JOHAN MOERMAN**, Managing Director of Rotterdam Festivals and 2010 Chairman of the IFEA World Board, has contributed to the growth of festivals and events on local, national, pan-European, and international levels for the past thirty years. He is a specialist in concepts that optimize the co-operation between cities and event producers, maximizing the results for both festival organizers and city authorities.

Dutch by birth, Johan entered the creative industries in 1982 working for the Rotterdam Arts Council, where he developed a passion for festivals. With a parallel passion for the arts in general and a degree in business economics and administration, he quickly established himself as a valued asset to the arts industry in Rotterdam. In his role

as Deputy Director of the Rotterdam Arts Council, he was responsible for all cultural festivals supported and organized by the Arts Council after 1987.

In 1993 Johan developed the Rotterdam event support model. He founded Rotterdam Festivals, a company that became responsible for the events policy of the entire city. This non-profit organization was built around a philosophy that brought together city interests; an in-depth analysis of potential audiences; and initiatives from festival organizers, cultural institutions, and artists. Key to this strategy was the belief that festivals and events can help cities to strengthen their brand and image; increase tourism; build community pride, and enhance the quality of life for those living there.

The Rotterdam model became an outstanding success. Within six years, the number of festivals doubled, visitors tripled, and the amount of national media attention increased ten times, making the Rotterdam model an inspiring and much imitated example for other cities in The Netherlands and abroad. Rotterdam has been recognized on a national level as the best event city in The Netherlands; praised for its consistent and innovative festival policies; and recognized internationally as an IFEA World Festival and Event City.

Under Johan's direction and vision, Rotterdam Festivals today is both an incubator and an umbrella agency for the city's 60 major festivals and events. Internationally, cities such as Shanghai, China; St. Petersburg, Russia; and Baltimore, Maryland, in the United States, among others, are now "twin" or "sister" cities of Rotterdam, and cultural exchanges span the globe. Rotterdam's festivals range from a tropical Caribbean Mardi Gras-style summer carnival to a large world music and poetry festival; from one of the most respected international film festivals for independent filmmakers in the world to an annual festival for contemporary Turkish art.

In 2000, Rotterdam Festivals was given responsibility for the collaborative marketing of the total cultural sector in Rotterdam. Embracing this new direction, Johan wisely began by placing the visitors' experience and visitor research at the heart of the company's decisions. Rotterdam Festivals introduced the Mosaic Segmentation Model in the cultural sector in The Netherlands and enriched it by using information about visitors' behavior at festivals.

More than any other city in The Netherlands, Rotterdam collects extensive data about background, behavior, wishes, and thresholds of potential audiences, and uses that data to design and build successful festivals. The city hosts over 60 festivals per year. These festivals are built around several themes that are important to the city, including ethnic diversity (the city is home to 168 different ethnic groups), as well as modern architecture, the port, and international arts. Today more than two-thirds of the population of Rotterdam participates in city festivals, with an average of three festival-visits per year.

Johan Moerman is an enthusiastic promoter of networking and sharing information between festivals, both nationally and internationally; an enthusiasm gained from working in almost forty countries, as varied as Azerbaijan, Poland, and Korea. He first became a member of IFEA in 1992, serving on the host committee for the 1992 IFEA World Convention held in Rotterdam, and becoming a founding member of IFEA Europe, IFEA's first international affiliate outside of North America. IFEA Europe marks their 20 year anniversary in 2012.

Johan is also one of the founders of the Audiences Europe Network that brings together senior specialists in audience development in the cultural sector. Rotterdam Festivals hosted the Audiences Europe Network conference in May of this year.

In an era often punctuated by flamboyant, iconic leadership styles, Johan Moerman stands apart as an individual cloaked in admirable modesty. "Seen from the moon," says Johan, "we're all equal. And in the end, success in most endeavors comes through a team and not from one person."

Johan Moerman sees cultural differences as one of the greatest sources for inspiration and professional development in the festivals and events industry. He has always believed in IFEA as the world's premier professional event network and actively promoted IFEA's global development during the ten years he served on the IFEA World Board.

Johan was fittingly elected to serve as IFEA's first-ever Chair from outside North America in the organization's then 55-year history. With a true interest in both the commonalities and diversity of people, countries, and cultures, Johan helped to nurture a truly international community within IFEA and their global affiliates.

Believing passionately in the importance that festivals and events play in bonding the world closer together, he continues to serve as a Co-Chair of the IFEA World Global Development Committee; a member of the IFEA Global Roundtable Council; and as one of our industry's most respected voices.

Please help us congratulate our 2012 IFEA Hall of Fame Inductee, Johan Moerman.