

---

## **If These Walls Could Speak**

Martijn Sandberg has created a site-specific artwork for the walls lining the lift shaft at the Amsterdam Public Library Oosterdokseiland (OBA, Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam).

The artist selected a range of titles from every section of the library's collection; he has compiled a typographic figuration from them, to be lit and visible through the glass rear wall of the lift.

The lift cabin moves like a scanner across the typographic figuration, illuminated by blacklight as light source. The visitor navigates through the library's content with the lift as 'scanner', as it were. The visitor 'scrolls' and 'zapps' with the lift to the various sections of the library.

For each line of the typographic artwork, Martijn Sandberg selected a title from the collection of around 600.000 available titles of books, films and music in the Public Library.

Martijn Sandberg designed a 'data-typeface', for the script he used for his total of 343 titles, similar to the vertical stripes of the barcodes on all the library items. In actual fact, all the titles together form the sentences, the 'content' of the artwork 'If These Walls Could Speak'.

Travelling up and down in the lift is a journey in the dark past a never-ending story constructed from 'stolen' and 'borrowed' titles. What the occupant of the lift views in passing includes: 'The Art of Writing', 'The Murmuring of the Muse', 'Elevator Madness' and 'Heaven and Hell'.

Title: 'If These Walls Could Speak'

Artist: Martijn Sandberg

Location: Lift 1 and Lift 2, shaft wall, OBA/ Centrale Bibliotheek Amsterdam

Measurements (lxw): 2x: 34m x 2m

Material: c-print, blacklight (lift interior: colour black, glass wall)

Concept and design: 2005

Definitive design: 2006-2007

Title research and compilation: Martijn Sandberg

Completion: 2007

Commissioned by: Amsterdam Municipality

Architect: Jo Coenen & Co Architects, Amsterdam/ Maastricht