

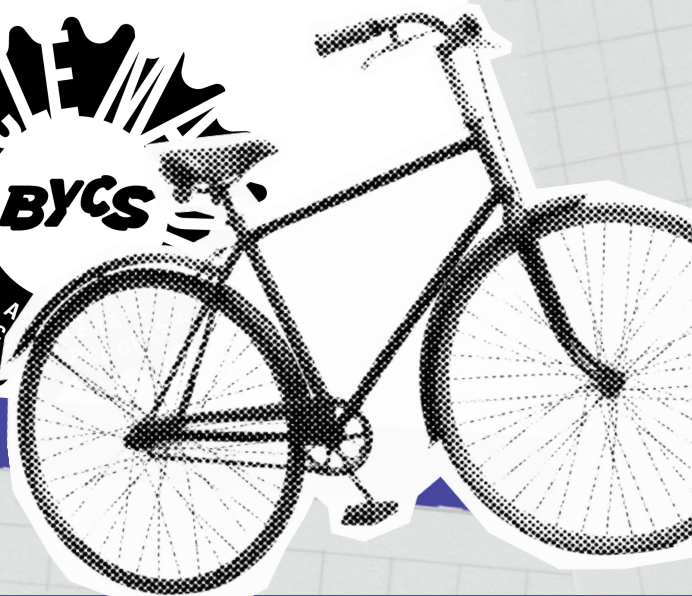
Romee Nicolai



Romee is a driven cycling enthusiast and advocate, born and raised in Amsterdam. With an academic background in interdisciplinary social science and urban planning at the University of Amsterdam, she bridges theory and practice about mobility and behavioural change. Currently, Romee is the Bicycle Mayor of Amsterdam, in which she combines her passion for cycling with advocacy for sustainable, inclusive, and accessible transport and driving social change through bicycles. With this attitude, she is the founder of the Bike Kitchen UvA: A do-it-yourself bike repair community place, located at the University of Amsterdam. Here, knowledge about sustainability becomes tangible by creating a learning hub where people can learn how to repair bicycles themselves. This all started with building and repairing her own Bianchi racing bike, which she still loves to ride in her spare time. Alongside this, she fulfills her professional role as project manager at BYCS. Whether coordinating national cycling projects or riding her Bianchi, Romee believes the bike is more than transport—it's a tool for empowerment, equity, and joy.



Amsterdam, The Netherlands



Transport systems can be considered inclusive only if...

... it prioritizes safe, accessible, and affordable mobility for all—especially women, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities. This means not only well-connected cycling infrastructure, pedestrian-friendly streets, and public transport that meets the diverse needs of all users, but moreover the inclusion and accessibility for all societal groups. In the example of a young female using the bicycle, the expression can reflect her experience of feeling safe, free and empowered by moving herself through her daily environment with the same ease and confidence as others. This also represents a form of epistemological justice, as it validates her lived experience as a valuable perspective that could help shape inclusive and equitable urban mobility. Furthermore, a truly just transport system can only be achieved if all groups are included in the decision making and governance process and go beyond serving the “default” commuter and actively consider and address all the needs of all genders, ages, races and abilities.

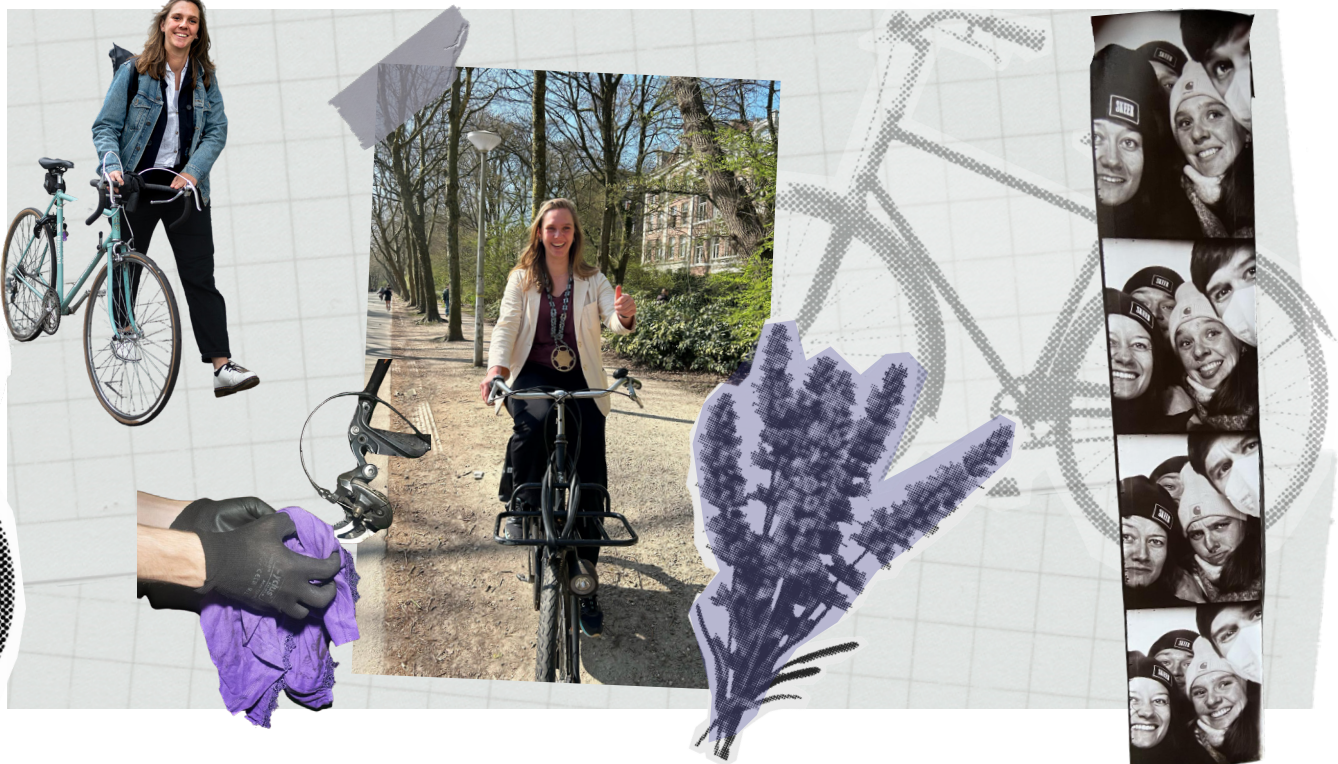
If I was in power of our transport systems, the first thing I would do is...


... reallocate street space. Too much of our urban environment is still dominated by cars. Instead, I would prioritize bikes, pedestrians,

and public transport, ensuring that these modes are always the safest, most convenient, and most attractive options. However, changing infrastructure alone isn't enough. We do also have to focus on the social aspects of cycling, through which the ties between human and environment could be strengthened. Cycling is just the means and lens to understand this connection better, by symbolically representing how everyday movement shapes social, spatial and environmental processes. Bicycle repair for instance can be a means to help translate this and help in forming the foundation for long-term driven-change. Shifting our beliefs starts with building awareness on how we could rethink our behaviour and attitudes towards our mobility environment.

How does the current situation for women, young people and persons with disabilities in your city influence your work?

The current situation for women and girls, young people, and persons with disabilities in my city influences my work because they are often still underrepresented in mobility decision-making. Even though Amsterdam can be considered as a bike-friendly city and has a strong cycling culture, still not everyone is benefitting equally. To ensure everyone is included and represented equally in transport and has access to a bicycle, I focus in my





My work aligns with the
Hamburg Charter Principles!

**Principle #1 Equitable and Climate-Friendly
Access to Opportunities**

This principle could be ensured by amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and emphasizing the power of communities that needs to be represented through co-creation and co-design. Secondly, climate-resilient cities are able to ensure through monitoring existing systems that create the opportunity to learn how these can be improved. The Hamburg Charter emphasizes the need for transport systems to be safe, sustainable and accessible by cities investing in safe active mobility that could create environments where everyone—regardless of gender, age, or ability—can move freely and safely. These principles are at the heart of what I advocate for as Bicycle Mayor.

work on advocating and amplifying that these voices are heard so that cycling remains a truly inclusive mode of transport.

What's the main challenge that you face in your daily work?

The main challenge I face in my daily work is cultural resistance and hesitation for change. While cycling is deeply embedded in Amsterdam's identity, many people resist reallocating space away from cars. Instead of perceiving cars as the enemy of bicycles, we should be aware of the role that speed and efficiency take in our daily life. Instead of perceiving transport as something that could be used for efficiency and speed, we should rather see it as an opportunity to stimulate social interaction and fun! Often we forget this essence in the rush and upcoming individual focus in our daily lives. Instead, we should adapt to slowing down and create a minute of realisation. The bicycle is more than only a transport mode, it is a human-owned possession and boundary object that connects humans with their environment and with each

other. Especially in Amsterdam, cycling is something that is often taken for granted and the awareness of the social function that it has for the city often gets neglected. Therefore, it's essential to stimulate the debate about the meaning and functions of bicycling. Societal topics such as affordability, access to safe cycling and cycling education still need to be prioritized on the public agenda in order to make cycling accessible for everyone.

Why is it important to listen to young people?

It is important to listen to young people because they are the future users and designers of our cities. They experience mobility differently and have fresh ideas about how to make transport greener, safer, and more inclusive. They also have a strong sense of climate urgency, which should shape our transport policies. They are the generation who sense the urgency of possible changes in our mobility system because they directly face the consequences of current societal and environmental challenges. Therefore, young voices should be heard and foster the power

of change, by making alternatives explicit and proving the power of imagining another future. Only by challenging the status quo, elements to change our daily transport systems could lead to changing reality.

What would you tell other young people working in the transport field?

I would tell other young people working in the transport field that they should be bold in their vision and demand systemic change. Transport is not just about infrastructure—it's about social justice, public health, and sustainability. Therefore, we should push for people-centered, instead of transport-centered, cities and don't be afraid to challenge existing planning principles or social norms. By questioning our assumptions, the boundaries of these norms become clear and create space for innovation and recreation.

