

**QUAY TO THE PAST**  
The harbor-side museum's three debut exhibitions include "The Family of Migrants," a collection of nearly 200 photographs that chronicle the hope and trauma of migrants. *Inset:* The building is topped by a twisting, double-helix steel staircase dubbed Tornado.



## FENIX RISING

A new institution in the Netherlands explores the universality of the migrant experience.

**ROTTERDAM** The movement of people has shaped the world we live in, and will continue to define it for generations to come. It's high time, then, for an art museum dedicated solely to migration. The **Fenix** (*fenix.nl*) is just such a place.

Housed in a century-old warehouse in the former docklands of Rotterdam's Katendrecht area, Beijing-based MAD Architects' first cultural project in Europe overlooks the quays where millions of migrants — including notable names like Albert Einstein and Willem de Kooning — once departed or arrived in search of a better life. The building's defining feature is the Tornado, a double-helix staircase of polished stainless steel that crowns the flat rooftop, acting as both a viewing platform and a metaphor for the nonlinear nature of the migrant journey.

Inside the museum's concrete halls, artworks, installations, and photographs explore the timelessness and universality of migration. Visitors encounter poignant mementoes contributed by Rotterdam residents, each tied to a personal story of movement and change. There's an arresting documentary photo exhibition titled *The Family of Migrants*, and the *Suitcase Labyrinth*, a maze of thousands of well-worn bags that shows how suitcases, beyond their mere functionality, serve as repositories of memory and identity.

Another exhibition spotlights stories of love, loss, longing, and finding home, as interpreted by artists from around the globe, including Steven McQueen, Efrat Zehavi, Shilpa Gupta, and Omar Victor Diop, among many others. Like the rest of the Fenix, it reminds us that migration is not just a headline. It's a human story. — **Chaitali Patel**

IWAN BAKIN/COURTESY OF FENIX