

DETAIL

[Digital Lab](#) [Climate & Resources](#) [Products & References](#) [Current Issue](#) [Collaborations](#) [Product Award 2023](#) [Bau 2023](#)

03.04.2023 [Sandra Hofmeister](#)



Update for an icon

Restored Book Tower in Ghent and Building Culture in Flanders

[library](#) [refurbishment](#) [concrete](#)



© Stad Gent - Dienst Toerisme

Advertisement



How can an historical library be adapted to modern uses? The university library in Ghent is a late work by Henry van de Velde. In 1933, the Belgian architect and artist was commissioned with building a new structure on a high inner-city lot in the Flemish university town. He conceived a spacious concrete building with three storeys that feature lecture halls and administrative spaces grouped around an inner courtyard.



© Stad Gent - Dienst Toerisme

The Boekentoren, which is the trademark of the library, can be seen from afar. Its 64 m of height nestle into the inner city of Ghent and are devoted to books. This proud symbol of knowledge in the university town is topped by a belvedere offering space for presentations and assemblies. One could say that from the Book Tower, Education watches over the entire city.

6

Top Article



[Recycled Pavilion in Almere](#)

[timber](#)



[Convent Extension on Corsica by Amelia Tavella Architectes](#)

[extension](#)



[Family Residence in Normandy by Java](#)

[living](#)



Advertisement

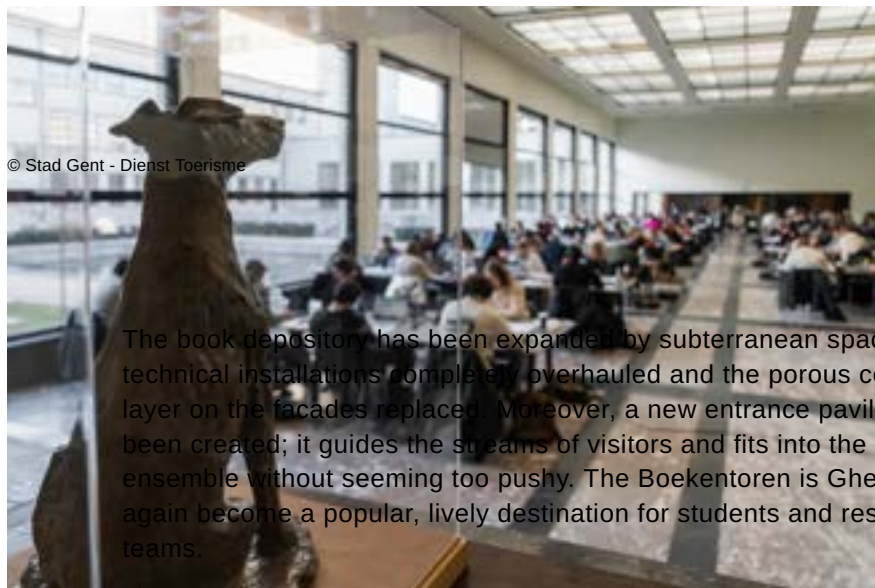
Advertisement

Refurbishment

“This project is part of my life”, says Belgian architect Paul Robbrecht of Robbrecht en Daem. For nearly two decades, he has been entrusted with the refurbishment of the iconic library: a true life’s work. Today, the architect’s painstakingly planned interventions are hardly visible, yet are all the more effective due to this fact.

Advertisement





© Stad Gent - Dienst Toerisme

The book depository has been expanded by subterranean spaces, the technical installations completely overhauled and the porous concrete layer on the facades replaced. Moreover, a new entrance pavilion has been created; it guides the streams of visitors and fits into the building ensemble without seeming too pushy. The Boekentoren is Ghent has again become a popular, lively destination for students and research teams.





Alliances with the Real, Flanders Architectural Review N°15, Vlaams Architectuurinstituut (Hg.), Texts by Livia de Bethune, Sofie De Caigny, Maarten Desmet, Hülya Ertaş, Marleen Goethals, Petrus Kemme, Marc Martens, Mark Pimlott, Martino Tattara, Kiki Verbeeck, Photoessays by Sepideh Farvardin und Miles Fischler, 300 pages, ISBN: 9789492567284, Gent 2022. © Detail



Alliances with the Real, Flanders Architectural Review N°15, Vlaams Architectuurinstituut (Hg.), Texts by Livia de Bethune, Sofie De Caigny, Maarten Desmet, Hülya Ertaş, Marleen Goethals, Petrus Kemme, Marc Martens, Mark Pimlott, Martino Tattara, Kiki Verbeeck, Photoessays by Sepideh Farvardin und Miles Fischler, 300 pages, ISBN: 9789492567284, Gent 2022. © Detail

Building culture in Flanders

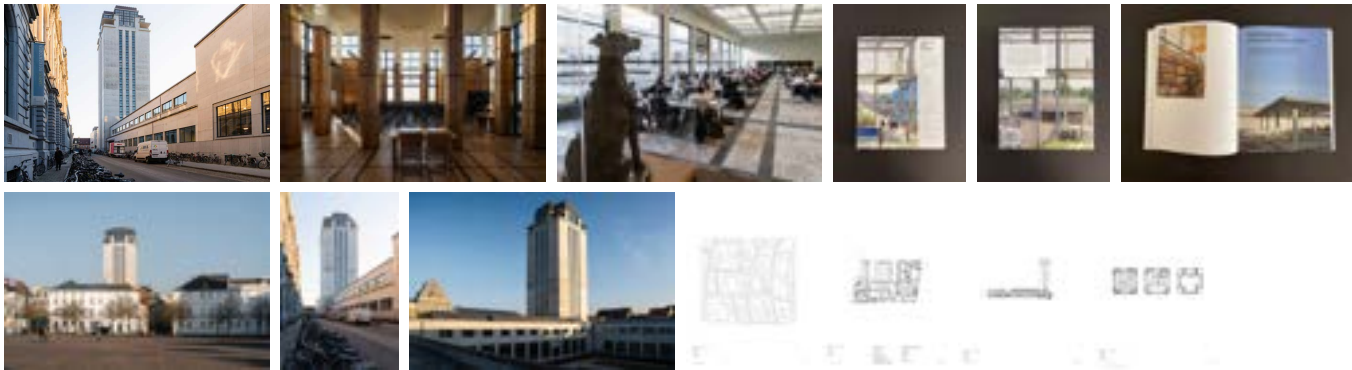
“Alliances with the Real” is the title of a summary of contemporary Flemish architecture published in Flanders Architectural Review No 15 as an English-language book by the Flanders Architecture Institute under the direction of Sofie de Caigny. The Boekentoren is one of the much-discussed projects of the past few years that are documented in the 300-page paperback. The book provides a thorough summary of building culture in Flanders – with remarkable results. The volume and quality of the many refurbishments and expansions, schools and residential buildings are quite convincing, particularly when they are compared with other regions of Europe. Additional essays complete the overview of current architecture in Flanders and reflect its cultural context. Of course, we must not forget the photoessays by Sepideh Farvardin and Miles Fischler, which make this notable volume a browseworthy handbook that will amaze and delight. Anyone who reads this book will surely want to visit Flanders.

Read more in [Detail 4.2023](#) and in our databank [Detail Inspiration](#).

Refurbishment: Robbrecht en Daem architecten,
 SumProject, Baro, Barbara Van der Wee Architects
 Location: Universitätsbibliothek Boekentoren, Rozier 9,
 9000 Gent, BE
 Completion: 2021

Alliances with the Real, Flanders Architectural Review
 N°15, Vlaams Architectuurinstituut (Hg.), Texts by Livia
 de Bethune, Sofie De Caigny, Maarten Desmet, Hülya
 Ertas, Marleen Goethals, Petrus Kemme, Marc Martens,
 Mark Pimlott, Martino Tattara, Kiki Verbeeck,
 Photoessays by Sepideh Farvardin und Miles Fischler,
 300 pages, ISBN: 9789492567284, Gent 2022.

Gallery



These articles might also interest you



A building in an historical context
[Malene College Library in Cambridge](#)



With the New Library at Magdalene College, Níall McLaughlin Architects add a contemporary note to the historical brick architecture of the university town without breaking with tradition.

[university](#) [brick](#) [building simply](#)



Innovation meets low-tech

Community Centre in Barcelona

With Casal Trinitat Vella, Haz Arquitectura have realized a community centre in Barcelona made (almost) entirely of wood. An intelligent energy concept completes the structure and minimizes its carbon footprint.

[public building](#) [timber](#) [sustainability](#)

Editorial 4.2023





Materials and surfaces

Truth to Materials – Editorial Detail 4.2023

DETAIL

DETAIL Business Information GmbH is a leading international specialist information group for architecture and structural engineering. Founded in 1961, the company is headquartered in Munich and is part of the European Professional Publishing Group, a holding company for professional information with a focus on the strategic business areas of construction and architecture, recycling, hospitality and fashion.

[About Us](#)
[Contact](#)
[Editorial Team](#)
[Newsletter](#)
[Media Kit](#)
[Legal Notice](#)
[Privacy Statement](#)
[Terms and Conditions](#)
[Shipping & Delivery Terms](#)

[DETAIL Award 2022](#)
[DETAIL Inspiration](#)
[Magazine](#)
[Books](#)
[Collection](#)
[Cancel Subscription](#)

Social Media



Newsletter

Register now for the
DETAIL newsletter and
stay up to date at all times.

* indicates required

Mail address *

Select country

I want to receive the
newsletter.
By sending this
message, I agree that the
data provided may be
processed and used for
the purpose of sending
the newsletter. I may at
any time revoke my
consent. ([Data
protection](#))

SUBSCRIBE

Copyright © 2023 DETAIL. All rights reserved.

