

GR5A - Grande Randonnée

Bart Lenoir ♦ From left to right: Hilde Daem, Marc Dubois, Paul Robbrecht, Christian Kieckens, Marie-José Van Hee, De Singel, Antwerp, 1997.

Crispijn Van Sas, *The Valley*, 2013 ♦ In his free work, architectural photographer Crispijn Van Sas looks for chance encounters and events in the city. Exceptionally, he explored the landscape in the Low Countries, resulting in this photograph. We chose this image because it refers to the ramparts landscape that Léon Stynen encountered in the 1960s when he was commissioned to design the Royal Conservatoire. Where cars, trucks and trains now pass, the people of Antwerp once used to skate during the cold winters.

David Grandorge *Narva II*, 2016 ♦ David is known as one of the leading architectural photographers in Britain. In 2008 he visited Marie-José’s home for the first time. Like her, David prefers little comfort; he invariably travels with just a backpack and a pair of sturdy walking shoes. For an exhibition at the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale, he travelled with Jonathan Lovekin through the Baltic States in search of the origins of clean energy production. This is where he made this poetic image of a steel bridge in a winter landscape. We bring this picture into dialogue with René Guiette’s work on the spot where a steel bridge connects Stynen’s conservatoire with Beel’s extension.

Dominique Issermann, *DI187 Anne Issermann, Pont de Normandie, juin 1996* ♦ An absent image that demands your imagination. Marie-José came across the picture at Les Rencontres d’Arles. She uses it in her lectures to talk about dreaming of/under/about a bridge, about the desire to be allowed to design a bridge, a connection between two places. We tried at different times to show Marie-José’s favourite image in publications or at this exhibition, but in vain. We see a young woman who appears to be sleeping on a wall separating a road from a river. The picture is crossed vertically by a busy thoroughfare in the landscape, a bridge from which comes the monotonous drone of passing traffic. At this spot, we pause to contemplate this image, clamped among the symphonies playing in the concert halls and the terrace along the noisy Antwerp ring road.

Hélène Binet, *Dimitris Pikionis, Acropolis, Athens, Greece, 1989* ♦ These black-and-white photographs from the free work of architectural photographer Hélène Binet show the paths that Greek architect Dimitris Pikionis built on the slopes of the Philopappos Hill near the Acropolis in Athens. Given the context and landscape, these playfully laid-out paths play an important role in Marie-José Van Hee’s work. At various times Marie-José travelled to Athens, either with students or with colleagues from the office. In De Singel, the photos of Binet refer to the sloping paths Stynen constructed around the blue and red concert halls.

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (A-D)

An Fonteyne, *1992 - 2021* ♦ Marie-José Van Hee is not just a wonderful person and a very talented architect, she has also devoted a lot of her time to passing on knowledge to the next generations of architects. 1992–2021, thirty years, 661 students.

Anne Mie Depuydt, *En Profondeur* ♦ Generosity brut sober restrained natural tactile just deep.

Aslı Çiçek, *Flower and José* ♦ Photo taken on 12 July 2018, 10:42 a.m. in the garden of Museu Calouste Gulbenkian. “If you are very strong, you must be also very kind.” Pippi Longstockings.

Ben Rea ♦ During my time working with Marie Jose I was lucky enough to spend a prolonged period of time in the Prinsenhof neighbourhood, taking notes of certain details of House Van Hee for the installation at De Singel, and visiting neighbouring building sites. Projected section drawings bring together these seperate projects into a single drawing, a section through the neighbourhood. Street, house, yard, and garden are read as a singular, continuously evolving project, a retrospective manifesto, an incremental masterplan.

Benoît van Innis, *Vals perspectief...* ♦ Marie-José got to know Benoît when designing the squares in Deinze. This small work in oil on aluminium hangs in this location in her home, and Marie-José passes by it every morning on her way to the shower, to meet a sunny day. ^{MJvHa}

Berlinde De Bruyckere ♦ Pandora’s box in which only hope remained. A box with a lead rose, the book *The Laws* by Connie Palmen and a letter to you.

Carmen Osten, *Piazza Grande, Arezzo, 1835* ♦ Marie-José Van Hee instilled in me a love of Italy and of Piero della Francesca, which was closely associated with Arezzo. This etching shows the city’s central square. It is a nod to the many beautiful squares we designed together and to the historical postcards we were inspired by. In addition, this etching also demonstrates craftsmanship (although craftswoanship would not be out of place here), a knowledge of making, a sensitivity without fragility. It is also beautiful as a work in itself. I hope José thinks so too...

Caroline Pauwels † ♦ In 2021, with your famous smile, you asked us to come and have a look at your flat by the sea. The idea was to make the attic accessible via a book staircase. You had to leave us all far too soon. Rest in peace. ^{MJvHa}

Cathérine Biasino & Marie Mees, *Intertwined* - Photo: Filip Dujardin ♦ Our shared love of textiles brought us closer together. We became somewhat intertwined. More than once, Marie-José’s house was used for our photo shoots with Filip Dujardin for The Alfred Collection. Each time a journey of discovery full of wonder! Each time with a different surprising light.

Luc Deleu, *Bakstuurboord*, 2022 ♦ Luc Deleu & T.O.P. office’s apartment complex *Barcelona Towers* (1989-92), includes a staircase that would serve two identical towers, one horizontally and the other vertically positioned. With a request from The Kröller-Müller Museum, a wooden 1:1 scale model of the staircase was built in 1991. Following the *Future Plans* exhibition of the Flanders Architecture Institute, the staircase design was reworked into a walkable sculpture, placed on the terrace of De Singel.

Maarten Vanden Abeele, *Opwijk*, 2014 ♦ For the Slow Festival organized by Archipel at Concertgebouw Brugge, we asked Maarten to make a film about the house with the doctor’s surgery in Opwijk. The urban fabric which this house fits in is highlighted by the morning chimes, some excerpts from a conversation with François Englert and a spider in its web.

Metasequoia glyptostroboides ♦ A new inhabitant and welcoming gesture for visitors of De Singel.

Reiner Lautwein ♦ We wanted to pay homage to the work of Christian, who left us a few years ago. In 1997 Christian realized *Tafellandschap (Table Landscape)* at the invitation of Katrien Vandermarliere. This installation established a direct relation with visitors’ bodies and contextualized the slopes that Léon Stynen devised for the arts campus. On the right of this image, a window opening suggests the wild garden behind the conservatoire. A small photo by Bart Lenoir, with Hilde, Marc, Paul, Christian and Marie-José looks back in time.

> *Do pay a visit to the Christian Kieckens Cabinet, a library and study space at De Singel realised as an homage to Kieckens’ contribution to architectural culture in Flanders and Brussels.*

René Guiette, *Wanklank*, 1960s ♦ We find it important to integrate this mural painting again in the daily parcours of the various publics and users of De Singel, by replacing the closed firedoors by glazed ones. In front hangs a small photo print selected from the free work of architecture photographer David Grandorge.

> *Do explore the On Sculpture route that runs throughout the building and gardens of De Singel with a growing collection of permanent artworks.*

All texts of the GR5A - *Grande Randonnée* are written by Marie-José Van Hee architecten.
All texts of the PR5A - *Petite Randonnée* are written by the contributors of *Jardin Des Ami.e.s.* unless stated as Marie-José Van Hee architecten (MJvHa).

Céline De Clercq ♦ ‘To care about architecture’. Is the intent to nurture. To understand past meanings. To imagine future possibilities. To introduce an idea. To help it evolve. To watch it grow. To be precise. To take distance. To give time. To come back. To be critical. To be understanding. To be generous. To find balance. To be continuous. To create. To maintain. To live.

Claudia & Patrick Lynch ♦ In 2015 twenty-five of us visited Ghent. Marie-José opened her door and her arms and her wine for us and we felt so lucky being able to enjoy her work and her generosity. Our poem and drawing try to capture this experience as well as the combination of domestic and public, or personal and universal, that we find so inspiring in Marie-José Van Hee’s projects.

Daniel Libens, *The sculpture park in Wanås, Sweden, features A House for Edwin Denby by Robert Wilson, 2000* ♦ The house has a Shaker style and is seemingly simple and sleek. Despite having lights on inside one cannot enter it. It nevertheless makes an imposing impression, like MJ’s house in Ghent’s Varkensstraat.

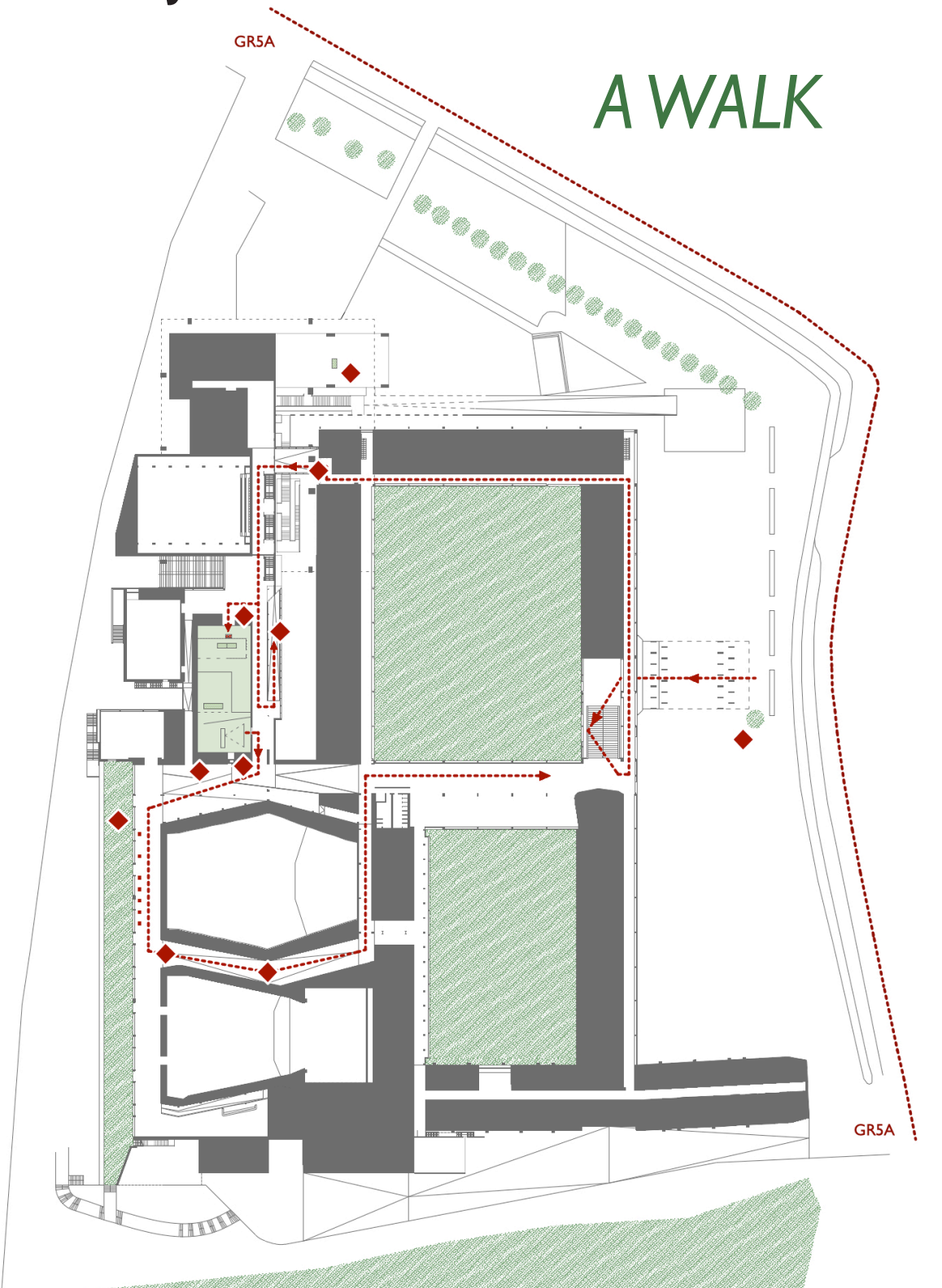
Daniel Libens & Jacob F. Schokking, *Hut and House* ♦ In the late 1970s, when José was gaining recognition as an architect, we were still confused students at the art academy in Ghent. At the time, the glass ceiling in the architecture industry was still hard as hell, and José bumped her head against it many times during the early years. She and others then fought their way through it with as much will power as with talent. The old fogeys could whistle for it. For the Garden of Friends, we chose two documentary photos from previous projects of ours. An homage to José’s pure sense of aesthetics and to her fierce creativity.

Daniel Rosbottom, *Private House, London* - Photo: David Grandorge ♦ Presented as a letter in poetic form, the text reflects upon a visit to the house of Marie-José Van Hee in Ghent. This visit led to a series of friendships and subsequently informed the thinking about another house in London. Two photographs, showing it from the street and within its garden, were taken by David Grandorge, whose images of Marie-José’s own house are shown elsewhere in the exhibition.

David Grandorge ♦ In this photograph, taken at night in the summer of 2008, the outer walls of the house, smeared with ‘bastard’ mortar, are partially illuminated by light from a house situated across the narrow medieval street in which it sits.

Dietlinde Verhaeghe ♦ A walk. Back and forth by ferry. Stairs, slopes, terraces make up the landscape. Gates to the ferryboat, at low tide or high tide or something in-between. A walk. A walk in the house. When the stairs and internal circulation are right, everything fits together. A staircase that becomes a library and a workplace. Light and views. Vertical and diagonal. The staircase that folds, that knits spaces together and brings rooms close together. A mountain of stairs. A climb in the house.

MARIE-JOSE VAN HEE ARCHITECTEN



DE SINGEL - ANTWERPEN - 30.XI.MMXXII - 21.V.MMXXIII

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (D-G)

Dirk Braeckman, *MJ.-H.G.-18 #1 2018 & MJ.-H.G.-18 #2*, 2018 - Courtesy of the artist and Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp ♦ This photographic work by Dirk Braeckman consisting of two images was created on the occasion of the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, where it was hung on the walls of the Corderie dell’Arsenale. On this occasion, they end up in the *Petite Randonnée* section of the exhibition, in a space that is also shrouded in shadows: Marie-José’s shower room. From here, one has a view of the images Dirk made of the outdoor staircase and garden in the spring of 2018. ^{MJvHa}

Dirk De Meyer, *Abbaye du Thoronet, abdijkerk*, 2006 ♦ Stairs, shadow and incident light. Stone, texture, arrangement. Une promenade. Architectural et autre. In the Var or in Ghent. In the thirteenth or the twenty-first century.

Dirk Jaspaert ♦ As a comment on an interview conducted with Marie-José by students in architectural engineering regarding our collaboration, I subsequently wrote this: José is a brilliantly sensitive designer and it feels like a self-imposed duty to assist her as best we can. This means that up to the very last moment before realization, things can change, always for the better but difficult to keep pace with. This makes for very unorthodox collaborations, varying from project to project. There is a great affinity towards materiality/spatiality and the collaboration has taught me many insights, typically the ones that take a lot of time. Not to talk about buildings for once, her approach and ability to design landscape regarding the encounter of a bridge with the bank are really very dear to me. In fact, finding the way to connect is far more important than the bridge itself. That is something I really did learn from José.

Elizabeth Hatz, *Throne for a Queen of Architecture* ♦ This is a dual piece, Evening and Morning, in homage to Marie-José Van Hee, architect of outstanding integrity and skill, whose work has timeless vigour, beauty and generosity. The tall Evening Throne faces the setting Sun awaiting the Moon, the lower Morning Throne is turned to the East. Between them may be the Bed of Night. The Circadian Cycle begins at Dusk, with the Evening and the Night. Days are for Walks and Drawings. Thrones are for Mind Walks and Abiding. Beds are for Dream Walks.

Els Claessens & Tania Vandenbussche, *Bermeo*, 2007 - Courtesy Philip Aguirre y Otegui ♦ The bas-relief of the stairs in Philip Aguirre y Otegui’s work Bermeo refers to the way Marie-José likes to design and materialize stairs: not light and slender but solid and resting firmly on the ground. Leaning against the wall on one side and, on the other side, open to the space the staircase is part of. The side of the stairs is plastered, like the walls. The staircase becomes a sculptural part of the wall and seems to be carved out of it.

Filip Buyse, *Met kleur!* ♦ With colour! The bronze-like green on the silk-screen print refers to the cycling and walking path that will hang from the robust concrete deck of the Verapaz bridge in Ghent. The colour gives the steel projection a soft character and identity while enhancing the colour nuances of the light incidence and shadow effects. The Verapaz bridge in Ghent marked an important milestone during the early years of Maat Ontwerpers. The project grew out of a unique collaboration with Marie-José Van Hee architecten. Thank you, José, for the inspiring design workshops in the competition phase, the inspired and determined commitment in the further elaboration, and your inexhaustible energy, which was needed to achieve such quality.

Filip Dujardin, *Wall-column* ♦ A column is a compressed wall. It gives support to a superstructure and opens up the substructure. Multiple columns lend rhythm and proportion to a space. Marie-José Van Hee masters the play of open and closed, of walls and columns like a virtuoso and thus elevates building to architecture.

Filip Reumers † ♦ A warm personality, very precise in measuring and following up the structural works, that’s how we knew you. You would have liked to have visited Le Puy but the pandemic prevented that. Rest in peace. ^{MJvHa}

Frederic Hossey ♦ I did my internship with Marie-José in 1986 in Brussels. In the midst of late post-modernism, her projects tended towards precision and simplicity. The rotogravure plate of the Abbaye du Thoronet, taken from the Zodiacque collection. I associate that with those years of learning. Her work: rigour, proportion and above all poetry and modesty.

Frederik De Smet, *Odysee*, 2012 - Photo: Nondas Paschos ♦ *Marie-José Van Hee architecten. A Walk*, this time with sea legs. It was the calm before the storm. No visual material exists of the minor odyssey itself. Only thanks to oral tradition does the memory live on. There are dozens of versions, each with its own particular accent. Each time they are recalled, they bring us closer together. Memorable tales like these characterize how José stands in life and how she approaches her work. A snapshot as a witness to her open mind, her sense of adventure and discovery. This attitude undoubtedly translates into the designs of Marie-José Van Hee architecten.

Geert Bruloot ♦ We met when you drew the first bold lines on the ground plan of ModeNatie. Without words, you then drew before our eyes the new home for an international fashion crossroads in Antwerp. A friendship developed during the building process, inspired by a constant search for beauty and balance. Marie-José taught me to look at the relation between volumes, views and light. This friendship ultimately built the new library in our own historic home. A work of art that I live in every day and which has added a poetic sense to the already varied timeline of a special building. Thank you, Marie-José!!!

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (H-J)

Hans Van der Heijden, *Lakerlopen, Eindhoven, 2022* ♦ An object especially made for this occasion, focusing on the aesthetics that I’ve experienced in the work of Marie-José, then copied and adapted. A reduction of a façade model in layers of MDF onto which Marie-José once vigorously reacted.

Helen Thomas - Photo: Adam Caruso ♦ We visited Marie-José Van Hee at her house in France in August 2018, when large parts of it were empty and she was near the beginning of mobilizing its transformation, imagining and inhabiting it. It was exciting to be there with her to experience that, to see and hear her first-hand at this time in the process.

Hera Van Sande ♦ We went through an entire process together for the creation of the issue a+u 613. An intense period, a wonderful period, in search of expressing your work and who you were within the format of a+u. It was a wonderful issue. To recall it, I wanted to walk through the projects, through imaginary spaces, using sketches in search of their final form. I wanted to walk in your thoughts, walk along your pencil... I edited the sketches, made new spaces, new connections, places, passages... always seeking and discovering... The result is two interwoven stories: your sketches and my amazement.

Hilde Daem, *De Boomgaard* ♦ In Marie-José’s orchard, the seasons are still themselves. Here, the fruit trees slowly go about their business, as they have for centuries. Persimmon, quinces and figs bloom there in full splendour, orange-green, golden yellow, purple and greenish blue, a delightful Garden of Eden. Not a word from any architect. Not in this orchard, which escapes, but not from the lens...

Ilse De Sutter ♦ Togetherness: a state or feeling of closeness and happiness among people who are together, here as coworkers. Many thanks to the past, the current and the future team.

Indra Janda & Menno Vanderghote, *Zomernacht*, 8 August 2022 - Atelier Janda Vanderghote ♦ Our image shows imagination. Imagination that while working for, alongside and with José became ever purer. Learning to take time... for the essence, subtle and tactile and yet... not to lose sight of anything and with an eye for detail.

Inge Ketelers, *51°03’31.4”N 3°43’03.5”E*, 2022 ♦ This publication was created on the occasion of the exhibition *Marie-José Van Hee architecten. A Walk* (2022). The photographs were taken during several stays at Marie-José Van Hee’s private home in Ghent during the years 2019–2021. They show nature and the changing light in and around the house.

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (M-S)

Mattias Deboutte, *The Black Mushroom* ♦ Late one evening, we worked on the design of the house in Zuidzande. Attached to a narrow tower, a compact living space with fireplace, kitchen and bench are held together under a wide projecting roof. This covers additional indoor and outdoor spaces that can be opened or closed depending on the seasons or on visitors. It is one of many trial models created with cut-and-paste work. It was to be a black house. The layout and image of the model often come to me when I am designing.

Michel Devos, *Nul n’est censé ignorer la nature** ♦ Her drawings literally grow out of the ground and the site. Her sketches, using a thick pencil, evolve intuitively, instinctively. They mature. Her houses breathe discretely in their surroundings. With respect for and in interaction with nature. All architecture should be contextual!

* A variation on the saying ‘*Nul n’est censé ignorer la Loire*’ by Sylvie Augereau, *grande dame discrète de la Loire*. Journalist, writer, organizer of La Dive Bouteille, idiosyncratic winegrower and *copine à José. Santé!*

Michiel Hendryckx, *Market Hall*, 2013 ♦ Michiel has a distinctive eye; the wooden body of the Market Hall of Ghent, seen from Stadhuissteeg, resembles a bow tie. Michiel gave a copy to Marie-José and one to Paul and Hilde. So every day we come across a miniature version of the Market Hall in our offices on Lieremanstraat. ^{MJVHa}

Nadja Van Houten ♦ The experience of Marie-José Van Hee, on a stroll through Antwerp.

Paul Robbrecht, *Tuinhuis Merelbeke herbezocht* ♦ Revisiting raises new, unexpected questions. It exposes a confrontation between then and now and shows how time has nurtured mutations. This is the case also in the garden house in Merelbeke, a project for a common teacher of Marie-José Van Hee and myself. The design emerged in 1979 from an exchange of ideas between us. More than four decades later, I recorded my second visit in this contribution as an encounter with the ravages of time.

Peter Vanooteghem & Mieke Claeys ♦ In the *Jardin des Amis*.s there is a greenhouse. Due to a partial expropriation of our garden in Beernem, the greenhouse almost fell prey to the sledgehammer in the year 2000. Thanks to Marie-José, it was saved (CARE) and moved (A WALK) to her own garden in Varkensstraat in Ghent, where it is shown to its full advantage in green surroundings. Damask woven waiting for a *déjeuner sur l’herbe*. (The photo has already been published in the book *More Home, More Garden*)

Jan Baes, *Hearths* ♦ *Hearths* is a three-dimensional sketch of the central spot in the living area of the House V-D project. It is an organically sculpted element that contains two hearths and is constructed from a massive block of slowly hardened, unfired clay. This fireplace dominates the core of the domestic space as an exceptional place and as an ode to craft and to Hestia.

Jan De Causmaeker ♦ Together with Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem, Marie-José converted a historic city building dating from 1870. The project was awarded the Flemish Architecture Prize in 1997. The house is a synthesis between classical architecture and radically contemporary elements in a quest for improved quality of life in the city. She seeks the confrontation between tradition & innovation, poetry & reason, sensibility & abstraction. Her talent, great sensitivity and very personal signature result in serene spaces with high quality of life and a subtle experience.

Jan Moens ♦ Working with José, driving, meeting or talking on the phone was always warm, intense, passionate and focused on ‘only the best is good enough’. José sometimes asked me, ‘What do you think, how would you do it?’ A simple question that made us feel addressed like a true partner. Collaboration doesn’t get any better. ‘It’s like the design just emerges from my arm via the pencil onto the paper’ is something she said that will always stay with me. This is how I saw the atrium of ModeNatie grow from José’s sketch to its execution. Especially on the wooden staircase, we – Guido, Rudy, Dirk, Rolf and Leslie – had a lot of fun. I learned a lot from José.

Javier Fernández Contreras - *House Dedercq*. 2017 ♦ In 2017, with immersed doubts about my future, Marie-José invited me to write an essay on her work. The days I spent with her in Ghent, changed my life forever.

Johan Celsing, *Årsta Church, Protestant, Under Construction*, 2010-2011 ♦ The film shows moments of the construction process. The building is a load-bearing brick structure with red-brown and glazed bricks in white, green and red, several of which are perforated for acoustic reasons. The roof with beams and perforations is of cast-in-situ concrete. The bricks are all standard Danish but custom-glazed in Sweden. We designed the cross, the font and the stackable benches, chairs and ceremonial items for the church. Sensing an affinity between our work, I am glad to contribute these fragments of the construction process, especially since I visited the church with Marie-José Van Hee in the spring of 2022.

Johannes Robbrecht, *Field Trip, Le Mercantour*, 2022 ♦ A walker is shaped by his or her walks. By the body that bravely pushes thought over the crest. In a conversation with Marie-José Van Hee, an avid hiker, I once talked about the GR52 (which runs through the Parc National du Mercantour) as one of the most extraordinary trails she ever walked. Here I show my pictures from last summer – from the six-day trip I made with my family – as if they were possible pictures that Marie-José stored in her (sub)conscious.

Ricardo Gordon ♦ I met Marie-José recently, even though I already admired her exquisite work. Our encounter showed, once again, how architecture contains a spirit capable of uniting people, even without knowing each other. We talked about different projects and some details that, as in music, complete the melody. That’s why, when she told me about this extraordinary exhibition, and about the possibility of receiving external contributions, I absolutely wanted to participate, and send this drawing, which contains in itself the energy and complicity that unites us.

Sahar Jaber, *The Continuous Table*, 2022 ♦ Eleven years ago, I had the opportunity to be part of the *huis-werk-tafel* (*house-work-table*) project. I remember how it all began when Marie-José started sharing her thoughts of a table with no beginning and no end. A table that grows further to enable new stories and experiences. This artwork illustrates this memory and represents this continuous table in an abstract visualization. The silk-screen technique honours Marie-José’s appreciation of craft and details.

Sam De Vocht ♦ The shadow of a white turtle dove touches the single glass. The chirping of birds in the backyard reaches our eardrums. As a resident of Varkensstraat, Marie-José embodies many animals. Like a spider, she quietly draws her web; like a swallow, she builds nest after nest. Cat person, underdog, wise owl and, above all, free as a bird.

Stief Desmet, *Athena Noctua*, 2021 ♦ In Marie-José’s *Drawing Room* there is a high niche that she decided to integrate in the depth of the wall during the building phase. The walls in her designs are thickened so that they offer more protection from the cold outdoor climate, but also hollowed out so that they can accommodate the books, plates, pictures and works of art she might come across. For some time already, there had been a desire to place a bird, a symbol of freedom, in the niche. For this occasion, it will be a night bird, a symbol of wisdom. ^{MJVHa}

Sylvia Van Peteghem, *Print van fish-bodians*, 1893 ♦ Marie-José once chose a Fragonard from the Book Tower collection as her favourite: nineteenth century, graphics, nature. That gave me the courage to put this work forward. Why a fish? At our first dinner, an unforgettable and perfectly presented sunfish (with secret spices) appeared on the table, because that is another thing she is a master of. These two fish were engraved and coloured by an anonymous artist in 1819 for *Naturgeschichte in Bildern*. The warmth of the soft red catfish and the perfection of the seemingly simple lithograph reminds me of what Michel Devos wrote about Marie-José’s work: ‘Her architecture never shouts, it whispers.’

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (J-M)

Juan Duque ♦ This postcard is an invitation for you to explore Marie-José’s house. It displays an image taken in Berlin in 2013 titled *The Walker*. To me, this hand gesture conveys Marie-José’s ways of creating knowledge while doing. On the other side of the card, you can find a performative score to bodily experience the spatial configurations at Varkensstraat 7.

Kiki Verbeeck ♦ Ghent, October 1994 I would like to take you back to Marie-José Van Hee’s first year of teaching. A searching student and an equally searching teacher. How someone can stimulate and drive you. How one woman trained the other. How we found each other. The impact of that one special person we want to come across again one day. The magical mentor in José Van Hee. Brussels, October 2022

Klaas Goris, *An Invitation From a Friend* ♦ The initial contact was in the early 1980s under the influence of *Stichting Architectuurmuseum* (Architecture Museum Foundation) through Christian Kieckens. Later, sporadic contacts until, together with Paul Robbrecht and Guy Mouton after the beginning of the twenty-first century, we supervised master’s theses at Sint-Lucas Ghent. Friends write to each other, hence a letter, to jot down the true facts of someone who has marked your life over time.

Koen Van Synghel, *Betonboom I*, 2022 ♦ Marie-José initiated me into the art of walking. In Japan in 2018, following in the footsteps of poet-pilgrim Matsuo Bashō, I walked some 1000 km of his *Oku no Hosomichi* or *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. Along the way, I discovered how monumental cedars surpassed the temple architecture in Nikko. More so, they made the architecture redundant. Back in Belgium, I realized more and more that trees(and raw materials) were being sacrificed negligently for architecture. *Betonboom* (Concrete tree) is the first drawing of a series meditating on the nature of architecture. Thanks to the old technique of stone rubbing, a tree rises again from a plank-cast concrete beam in Marie-José’s outbuilding.

Kris Martin, *Wakefield*, 2014 - Courtesy of the artist ♦ Kris was an architecture student of Marie-José’s but chose a different path. For the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, we were supposed to show *Wakefield* in the Corderie dell’Arsenale, but the organizers did not allow us to perforate the brick walls. The gecko that almost disappears against the background of a natural stone wall captures the warmth of the midday sun, a warmth we find in the materialization of the many works Marie-José has designed and continues to realize. ^{MJVHa}

PR5A - Petite Randonnée (S-W)

Sylvie Cosyns ♦ The ceramic sculpture was built by hand, a reference to detail and craft which José’s work symbolizes for me. It is a process that evolves and emerges in the moment of execution. José’s plan structure is central to this work. The form possesses continuity but is not immediately perceptible in its entirety. The reflection of the light varies on the contours and textures.The design was worked out in light clay with grog, after which the sculpture was partly polished and partly washed out. Different textures emerged without glazing or other additions. The whole emerged from the same pure material.

Thomas Faes, *Quercus ilex*, 2022 ♦ Growing in the north-western corner of the walled garden is a slender holm oak. Shielded by two brick walls, the tree is surrounded by an ever-changing wild and colourful undergrowth consisting of *Galium aparine*, *Erigeron canadensis* and *Jacobaea vulgaris*. The young *Quercus ilex* still stands somewhat unstable in its slightly raised brick border, but stubbornly resists the strong, swirling winds in the walled patio. Slowly outgrowing its protecting walls, the tree is starting to take on its role as a centre of gravity in the garden. The *Quercus ilex* is a recurring tree in the work of Marie-José Van Hee, where it plays a subtle but imposing role in the landscape facet of her architecture.

Tinne Verwerft, *Tegelwijsheid* ♦ ‘With time and sandwiches’, a phrase I learned from M.-José. Before that: first get the big picture right. Clear plan, powerful shell, flawless circulation, plenty of daylight. (She won’t go for less.) Only when the basics are right can you finish: ‘with time and sandwiches’, room by room if necessary. The saying seems to apply to Marie-José herself. She can take the time for something, sometimes letting the drawing rest for a while. A tile wisdom: in jest... because José is averse to any cosiness. Perhaps it will soon fit into the façade of our office.

Ursula Novak ♦ My contribution to the exhibition I am happy to participate in is a short essay and a set of printed analogue photographs depicting the subjects I touch on in the text. Marie-José, being an excellent architect and invaluable mentor, has taught me a lot about viewing architecture, the importance of light and the understanding of spaces. These are all important principles I now use daily when dealing with seemingly simple or underrated architectural tasks.

Valerie Doutreluingne, *Moving Branches*, 2022 ♦ ‘An ode to storytelling and playing’ Marie-José Van Hee’s buildings almost always reflect a way of moving. A walk through a house takes on the experience of a stroll through a wild garden where there is always the expectation of a subtle surprise.

Kristoffel Boghaert, *First Conversion* ♦ I associate this ‘project’ very strongly with the discovery of José’s work some thirty years ago. I transformed a rectangular standard fruit box into a square one, painted the wood white, and placed it loose from the wall with spacers, allowing light and shadow to play. Ultimately, the intervention is barely visible.

Lennert Dejonghe ♦ Perhaps what José and I share more than a passion for architecture is a love for ‘the good life’. That Burgundian nature is now at the heart of my new work but can be found at least as much in José’s architecture.

Linda Loppa, *Modenatie*, 7 September 2022 ♦ The grandeur of the ModeNatie building became a humble experience, as we, the visitors or those people privileged to work in the building were invited to embrace. The ‘Petit Paris’ corner and the location of the building, revisited in a human experience, humbled by her interventions; a building forgotten true by time, nostalgic and ready to become.Thanks Marie-José.

Lou Terryn, *Umbonium vestiarium: A Collection* ♦ The logic contained in the colour, pattern and shape of these shells (*Umbonium vestiarium*) immediately reminds me of Marie-José’s architecture. In her work, too, all the elements are in exactly the right place. This purity comes from her thoughtful way of designing, where every aspect has been thoroughly thought out and knotted into a clear whole.

Marc Dubois, *Marie-José Van Hee and Claire Bataille*, Aalst, February 1985 ♦ Two women of great charisma and significant in their fields. Claire Bataille collected many membership fees for the *Stichting Architectuurmuseum* (Architecture Museum Foundation) set up by Christian Kieckens and myself. A moment of friendship and celebration in Christian’s flat.

Margot De Caster ♦ The model is an architectural translation of a scene from Bramantino’s Renaissance painting *The Adoration of the Three Kings* when I was researching transitional moments and liminal spaces. The timelessness of the building’s structure and materials, the gradual shift from outside to inside and the proportions and relationship with the context reflect many of the aspects I find in Marie-José’s work.

Marthe Vandenabeele & Alice Sanders, *Image – language* ♦ Marie-José expresses herself in images better than with language. For birthdays, congratulations or get-well wishes, we, current and former employees, receive images as digital postcards in a shared WhatsApp group. They are mostly images of light and space taken in the house in Varkensstraat and Le Puy-Notre-Dame, but also the walks in-between. It is this perspective that we find in her architecture.

Viktor Derks, *Salisbury via Beira*, 2022 ♦ My parents moved some time ago from a house in the city centre that Marie-José Van Hee had designed for them to a house in the suburbs by René Heyvaert which she converted. For years, a plaque of the railway connection between Salisbury (now Harare, Zimbabwe) and Beira (Mozambique) hung next to the kitchen door. In the new house, the object – which itself evokes a journey – again marks the entrance to the same place.

Wannes De Brouwer ♦ Reinterpretation of the sketch Marie-José made when she was asked to draw her dream house as a child. Unlike typical children’s drawings of a home, she chose the idea of a butterfly roof and a concrete staircase.

Willem Cole, *PORTRAIT - VOLUME - IANA - VLS*, 2022 ♦ Portrait based on volume in cube form drawn to scale with Caran d’Ache luminance 162, 810 and 061.

Wim Cuyvers, *Bâtons de buis morts* ♦ A stack of boxwood stems for Marie-José. Boxwood is native to Europe and grows wild. Boxwood grows very old. Boxwood is the only European wood species that sinks in water (specific gravity 1150kg/m3). One of the reasons for cutting into the noble boxwood was that it would last longer than silver and gold: after all, it could not be melted down. Since the ancient Greeks, boxwood has been the symbol of eternal life. Today, boxwood is dying off massively due to the attacks of the boxwood moth, *Cydalima perspectalis*, unintentionally transplanted from the Far East, brought over by a society gone mad. *Bâtons de buis morts* are memento mori.

Wim Goes, *Tekeningen*, 2022 ♦ The drawings probe architecture and nature along with the life that takes place there.

Wim Voorspoels ♦ Thank you for the endless perseverance.The start of many new encounters, experiences, friendships...