

**Flanders Architectural Review N°14. When Attitudes Take Form**

# Social engagement as the key to good architecture

The Flanders Architecture Institute presents the latest edition of the Flanders Architectural Review. *When Attitudes Take Form* focuses on architecture that actively responds to social and spatial changes, and which also questions the architectural discipline itself. The themes and projects in the book challenge architects, civil society organisations and policy-makers to engage in even closer forms of collaboration.

**When Attitudes Take Form**

Apartmentisation, the 'building shift', Mobiscore, demolition, air quality, mobility and the right to a home... All of these terms have had a pointed and persistent presence in the Flemish media in recent months. Reason enough, therefore, for an examination of how architects use 'form' to tackle societal challenges. The projects selected for inclusion in the *Flanders Architectural Review N°14* demonstrate that architects in Flanders and Brussels are actively responding to these changes with a strong spatial dimension. Designers are permanently searching for a design attitude and language by which to provide forward-thinking responses to profound ecological, social, urban planning and economic transitions. This core idea resonates in the title of the latest book: *When Attitudes Take Form*.

**The position of the architect in a changing world**

The authors conclude that the architectural practice is in an unprecedented state of transition. Contemporary architects assume different roles within society: not only are they designers, but also researchers or engaged citizens. They have a new attitude towards material culture and participation. The young architect and his or her quest for how architecture is realised within an increasingly complex world also occupies a prominent place in the book.

**The role of the civil society**

The book questions the discipline of architecture while also communicating a broader social narrative about how cities deal with diversity, intergenerational places and the memory of the city. Ten essays examine the link between engagement and form and what this means for new urban developments, the right to housing, the contribution of the visual arts to architecture, and the active input of users in design processes. The leitmotif is the crucial role that civil society organisations play within projects that result in high-quality architecture. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown have demonstrated that not

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everyone in society enjoys equal rights to high-standard spaces and that healthcare and education systems, for example, are in need of radical re-evaluation, and not just in policy terms but also architecturally. A strong civil society, ranging from care workers to journalists, is vital to this process.

### **About the Flanders Architectural Review**

A new edition of the *Flanders Architecture Review* is published every two years. The series began in 1994 and remains a yardstick for architecture in and from Flanders and Brussels to this very day. To compile the fourteenth edition, the editors evaluated around 400 recent projects. They visited buildings, spoke to clients and users and studied numerous plans. This intensive process led to a selection of some 50 projects that are presented in words and images.

### **Quotes**

- *“The thorough revolution in architectural policy can be considered one of the most important accomplishments of the last twenty years...However, the ecology of this network seems extremely precarious.”*  
Maarten Van Den Driessche, Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning, UGent
- *“Architects examine how designers explore new relationships between architecture and the preservation of monuments. It is not only the relationship with the discipline’s own memory that offers new perspectives, but also the captivating interface between architecture and contemporary art.”*  
Sofie De Caigny, Director, Flanders Architecture Institute (VAi)
- *“Although ecological sustainability has become a priority, also for architects...this is not yet the case for social sustainability.”*  
Luce Beeckmans, postdoctoral researcher, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, UGent
- *“Architecture gains added value when it does not take the form that society expects of it, but rather breaks away from and exceeds expectations.”*  
Isabelle Blancke, architect, Dierendonckblancke

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### Projects in the spotlight

#### [Construction materials hub, Vergote dock, Brussels](#)

*TETRA architecten*

Cover image:

TETRA architecten, Construction materials hub, Brussels © Filip\_Dujardin

Brussels is drawing lessons from other national and international projects and is avoiding pushing harbour activities out of the city altogether. Because of its central location, the port area can play a crucial role in the narrative of the productive city and in the sustainable development of the urban ecosystem. With the construction materials hub, TETRA architecten has realised a building that is as sustainable as it is flexible. Inspired by the typology of a warehouse with a saw-tooth roof, the dynamism of the project's own roof is particularly striking. The open zones are precisely positioned at the intersection of the transverse streets on the Havenlaan, which means that the Vergote dock and its quays can be seen from afar in these thoroughfares. By making this activity visible, the architects show the true face of the city as a complex ecosystem in which the port plays a crucial role.

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#### [Bogerse Velden social housing, Lier](#)

*META architectuurbureau*

In its social housing brief to design thirty-three flats for rent and twenty-seven homes for sale, META architectuurbureau distances itself from the existing morphology by introducing a new density and architecture. By linking multiple units together, this social housing project forms an exceptional urban planning design and is a breath of fresh air in the context of the adjacent suburban landscape of detached houses. The ensemble is shaped by three elements: multi-family houses, linked houses and terraced houses. It is an interplay of typologies around a common outdoor space that gives rise to interesting proportions of scale.

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#### [Gruuthusemuseum, Bruges](#)

*noAarchitecten*

In 2015, noAarchitecten participated in the competition to design a new scenography for the city museum of Bruges, located in the Huis van de Heren van Gruuthuse [the former residence of the Lords of Gruuthuse]. The office won the competition with a proposal that brings the museum visitor's experience closer to an original encounter with the house, as well as to the history of the city.

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### Practical information:

#### English edition:

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*When Attitudes Take Form*

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#### Also available in Dutch:

*Architectuurboek Vlaanderen N°14*

*Wanneer attitudes vorm krijgen*

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**With essays by** Luce Beeckmans, Isabelle Blancke en Jürgen Vandewalle, Sofie De Caigny, Michiel De Cleene, Arnaud Hendrickx, Petrus Kemme, Katrien Laenen, Maarten Liefoghe, Petra Pferdmenges, Eireen Schreurs, Stichting Mevrouw Meijer, Helen Thomas and Maarten Van Den Driessche.

**Featuring projects by** 51N4E, ae-architecten, architecten Els Claessens en Tania Vandenbussche, Architectenbureau Bart Dehaene, Areal Architecten, Atelier Kempe Thill, B-ILD, Baeten Hylebos Architecten, Baumschlager Eberle Architekten, BC architects & studies, BLAF Architecten, BOB361, Bouebouze & Graindorge, Bovenbouw Architectuur, BULK architecten, Callebaut Architecten, Carton123 architecten, Compagnie-0, CRIT./Peter Swinnen, De Smet Vermeulen architecten, Dennis Tyfus, Eagles of Architecture, Endeavour, evr-architecten, FELT architecture & design, Francesca Torzo, Frederic Vandoninck Wouter Willems architecten, Gijs Van Vaerenbergh, import.export Architecture, John Körmeling, Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architecten, Lauren Dierickx & Sander Rutgers architecten, META architectuurbureau, murmuur architecten, noAarchitecten, NU architectuuratelier, OFFICE Kersten Geers David Van Severen, OM/AR, ono architectuur, osar, OUEST, Poot Architectuur, Pool is Cool, Puls architecten, Raamwerk, RE-ST, Robbrecht en Daem architecten, Sigert Defrancq, Didier De Roeck, Juri Jansen, Gilles Vanneste & Stef Verhees, Sileghem & Partners, Seasonal Neighbours (Ciel Grommen, Dieter Leyssen & Maximiliaan Royakkers), Stéphane Beel Architects, Styfhals Architecten, TETRA architecten, TRANS architectuur | stedenbouw, URA Yves Malysse Kiki Verbeeck and Xaveer De Geyter Architects

[Download press kit and press images](#)

### Press contact:

Siska Claessens

Press & Communication

*Flanders Architectural Review N°14*

[siska.claessens@vai.be](mailto:siska.claessens@vai.be)

0476 99 15 54

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*Editor:*  
 Sofie De Caigny

*Editorial board:*  
 Isabelle Blancke  
 Sofie De Caigny  
 Michiel De Cleene  
 Petrus Kemme  
 Petra Pferdmenges  
 Eireen Schreurs  
 Bart Tritsmans  
 Maarten  
 Van Den Driessche

*Authors:*  
 Luce Beeckmans  
 Isabelle Blancke  
 Sofie De Caigny  
 Michiel De Cleene  
 Arnaud Hendrickx  
 Petrus Kemme  
 Katrien Laenen  
 Maarten Liefoghe  
 Petra Pferdmenges  
 Eireen Schreurs  
 Stichting Mevrouw  
 Meijer  
 Helen Thomas  
 Bart Tritsmans  
 Maarten  
 Van Den Driessche  
 Katrien Vandermarliere  
 Jürgen Vandewalle

*Coordination:*  
 Petrus Kemme

*Head of publications:*  
 Ilse Degerickx

*Production assistants:*  
 Kristýna De Schryver  
 Eva Pot  
 Mathilde Breukink

*Assistants:*  
 Jonathan Cludts  
 Sofie Lamote  
 Els Ceulemans  
 Seppe Seyner

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 Gregory Ball  
 Jenke Van den  
 Akkerveken

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