

# Walking with Eliane Havenith in Antwerp. Navigating Architecture Then and Now



V&A



*This source guide expands on the Walking with Eliane Havenith: Navigating Architecture Then and Now walk and is based on Femke Van Dycke's research into Eliane Havenith's archive, preserved by Kanal Architecture (CIVA). This archive contains drawings, plans, documents, photographs, and editorial work that, together, provide a rich picture of Havenith's modernist oeuvre and the diverse roles she assumed within the field of architecture.*

*Whereas the walk reveals the urban context, this guide offers a concise overview of key sources that document her architectural practice and parallel trajectories. This guide invites you to browse the archive, which not only shows the visible traces of her architecture but also the less visible thought and writing processes that shaped her contributions to the field.*

*The walk is a co-production of the Flanders Architecture Institute (VAi) x Women\* in Architecture Belgium (W\*iAB) as part of their Reflective Cartography project.*



The presentation moment of the Godecharle competition. Havenith is standing in the centre wearing a white coat. Godecharle competition, (n.p.: 1943).

### **VAi Knowledge Centre**

The VAi Knowledge Centre works to make design heritage in Flanders and Brussels more accessible, with special attention to women designers. Their work is often overlooked, but initiatives like *Wiki Women Design* (2020–2021) help document missing stories and bring these contributions back into view. This walk invites you to discover the traces of a pioneering woman architect in the city.

### **Women\* in Architecture Belgium (W\*iAB)**

Women in Architecture Belgium (W\*iAB) is a non-profit organisation that promotes the visibility, inclusion, and recognition of women\* in architecture. First active in 1978 as the Union of Women Architects of Belgium (ufvAb), W\*iAB connects and supports women\* professionals across Belgium through events, research and advocacy. W\*iAB is recognised by the Belgian National Board of Architects.

### **Reflective Cartography**

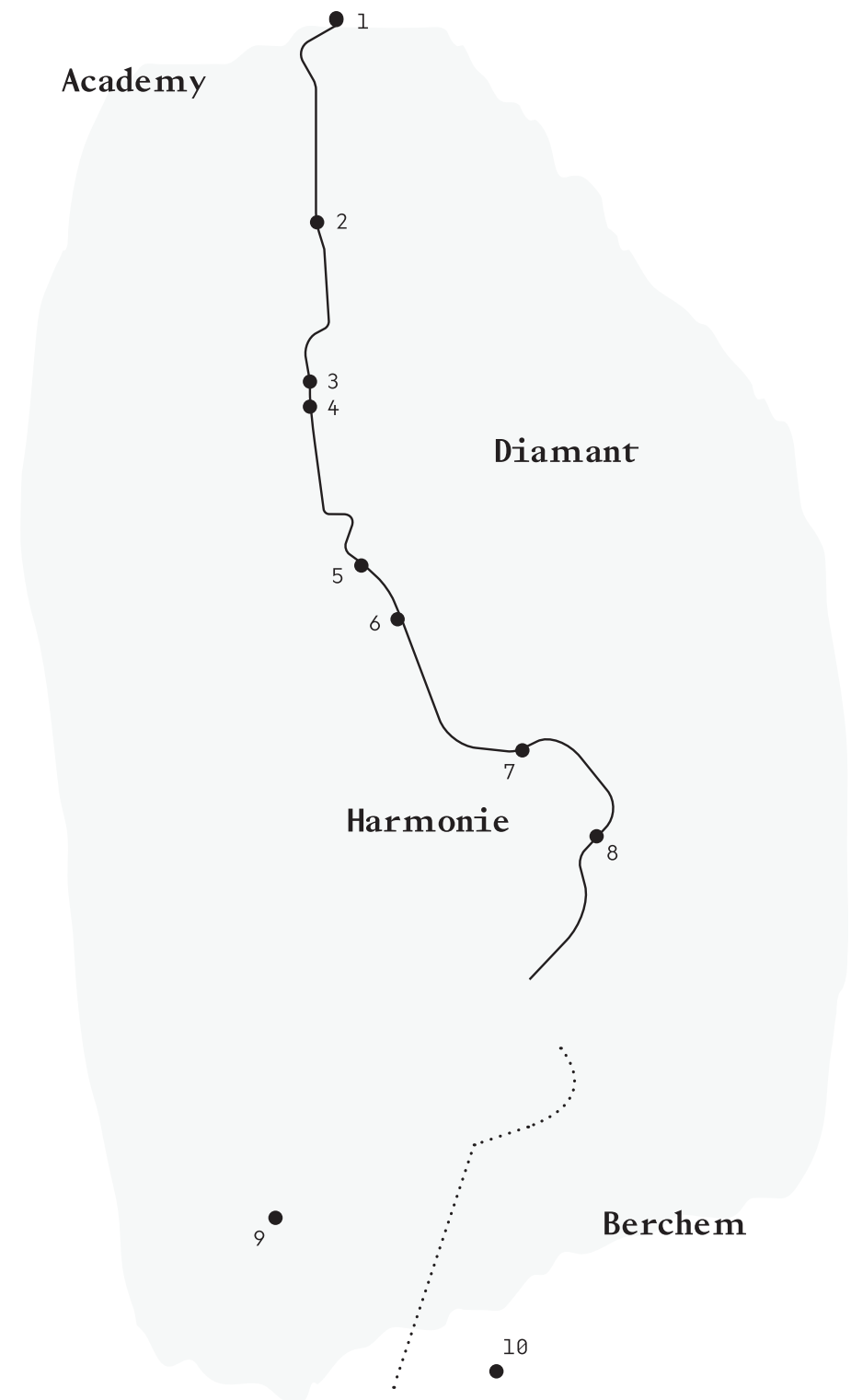
The project *Reflective Cartography: Mapping Women\*'s Perspectives in Architecture in Flanders* highlights the valuable contributions of women\* to architectural practice. Through mapping, site visits, public dialogues and podcasts, the project stimulates reflection on themes such as inclusion, authorship, craftsmanship and intersectionality. The project was initiated by Women\* in Architecture Belgium (W\*iAB) and is funded by the Department of Culture, Youth and Media of the Flemish Government.



## Role map



- 1 Academy of Antwerp  
1935-1951 Student  
1966-1978 Lecturer
- 2 Galeria Inno  
Designer
- 3 Museum Mayer van den Bergh  
1952-2004 Regent
- 4 Office building Spaarkrediet  
1942-1994 Architect
- 5 Apartment building Gontcharuk-Deckers  
1952-1970 Writer  
1952-1958 Secretary
- 6 Extensa NV  
1952-1962 Urbanist
- 7 Filles de Marie  
1918-1936 Primary and High School student
- 8 Own house  
1942-1994 Architect
- 9 House Havenith  
1942-1994 Architect
- 10 Louise-Marie Hospital  
1960-1997 Technical advisor



# Academy of Antwerp

Mutsaardstraat 31

Eliane Havenith (1918–2004) was one of the first women architects in Belgium. She earned a degree in Architecture in 1942 and another degree in Urban Planning in 1949 from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp (KASKA). Later, she completed a master's degree in Planning and Housing at Columbia University in New York. Havenith also became one of the first female lecturers in the architecture program at the National Higher Institute for Architecture and Urban Planning (NHIBS) in Antwerp.

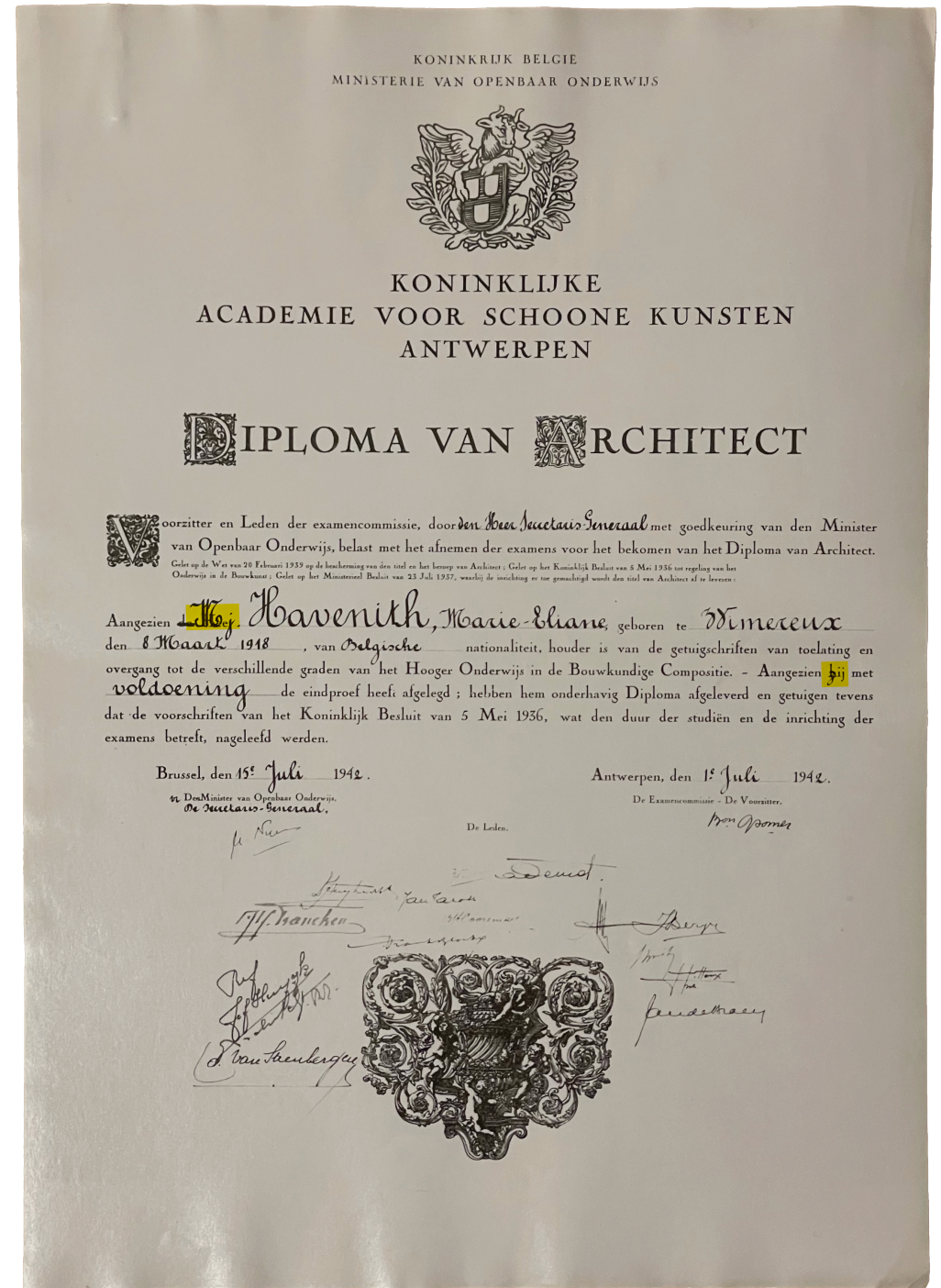
- 1935-1951 Student
- 1966-1978 Lecturer
- 1935-1942 Architecture studies
- 1947-1949 Urban planning studies

Rosa Goormans (1913-2012) was the first female student to graduate in 1933 from the Architecture program at the Academy of Antwerp, although she did so without receiving a legally recognised diploma. Very little is known about her professional oeuvre: the only documented project attributed to her is a 1956 cottage-style petrol station in Ekeren. Goormans was married to architect Octave De Koninckx.

Clara Bourgonjon (1919-?) was an architect and partner of architect Willy Van Gils, with whom she was part of the young design team for the second phase of *De Nationale Werf* in Deurne under the leadership of Renaat Braem in 1947. She combined her practice with an academic career as a lecturer in architectural theory at the NHIBS between 1963 and 1966, and won the Godecharle Prize for Architecture in 1943. Bourgonjon was thus part of the same generation of women architects as Eliane Havenith, who came second in the same competition in 1943.



Eliane Havenith, Satirical cartoon, (Antwerp: 1944).



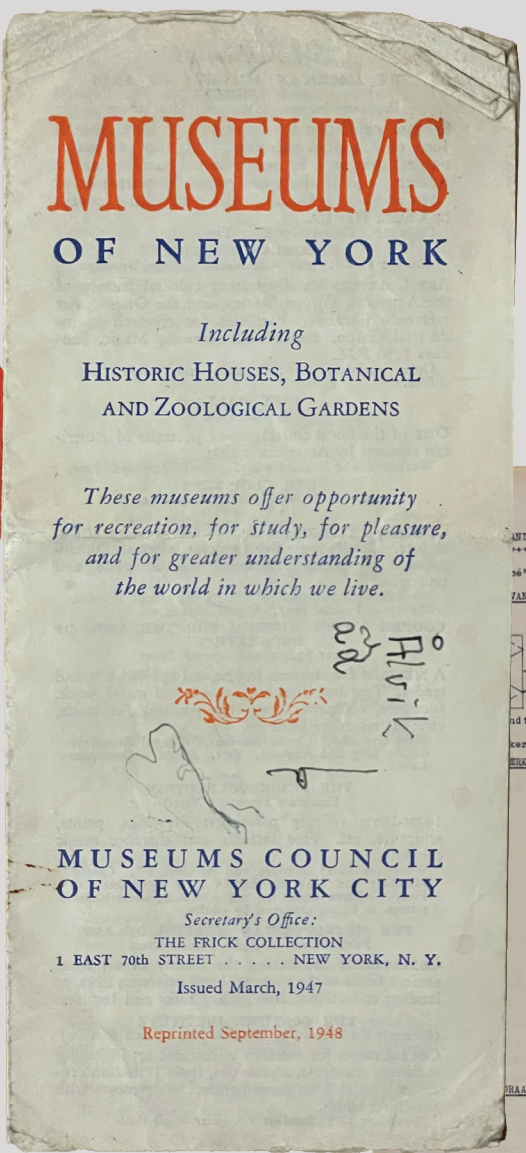
Diploma of Eliane Havenith, (Antwerp: 1942).



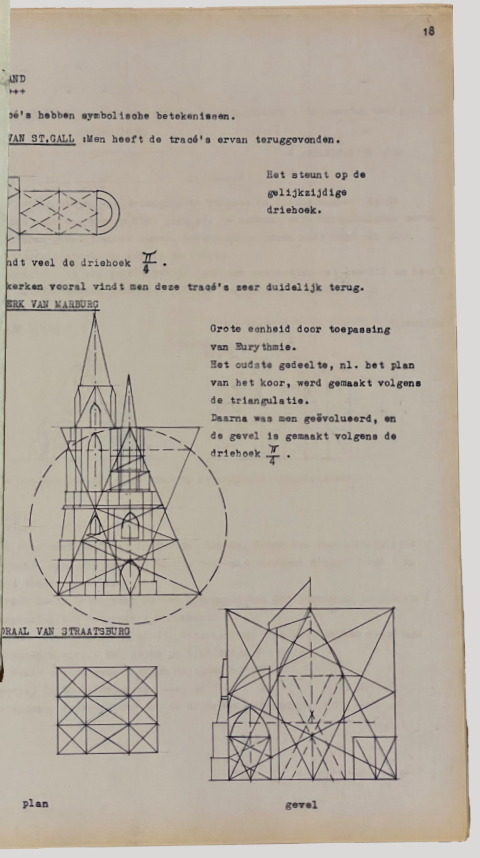
Campus site plan of Columbia University, Morningside Heights, (New York: n.d.).



Subway map of New York, (New York: n.d.).



Leaflet promoting Museums of New York, (New York: 1948).



A chapter from Havenith's course 'Theory of Architecture', in which she explains the various proportions and forms of architecture, (Antwerp: n.d.).

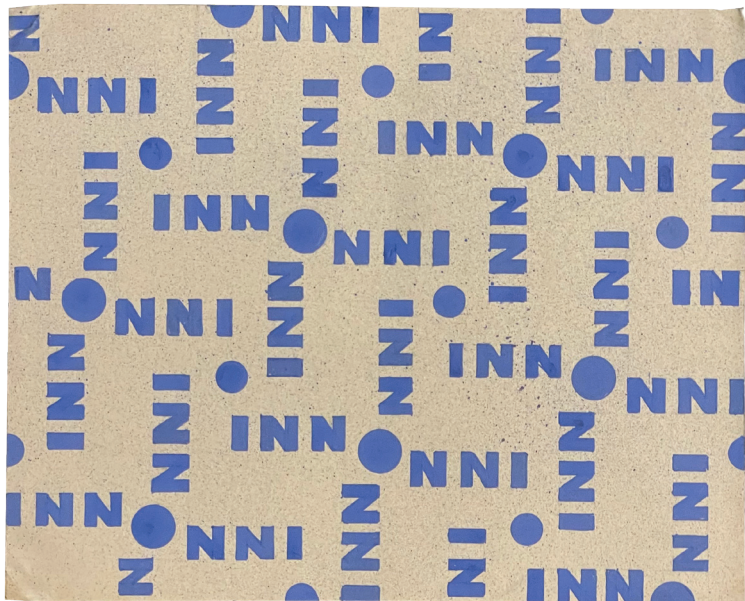
## Galeria Inno

Meir 80-82

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The Belgian department store Galeria Inno, formerly known as *A l'Innovation*, was an important commissioner for women designers in the second half of the twentieth century. The company offered opportunities to talented women in the design world, giving them a platform to showcase their creativity and develop their careers. Havenith, for example, designed gift wrapping paper for Galeria Inno. However, it is unclear whether this actually went into production.

Designer



Wrapping paper designed by Havenith for the department store A l'Innovation. (n.p.: n.d.).

Josine de Cressonières (1926-1985) was the co-founder and managing director of the Brussels Design Centre, which opened in 1964 in the Ravenstein Gallery to promote and professionalise Belgian design. Before this, she worked as a stylist and interior design consultant in the furniture department of the Innovation department store (1953-1956), where she developed a strong understanding of both the Belgian and international design markets – expertise that would later underpin her pioneering role in shaping Belgium's post-war design culture.

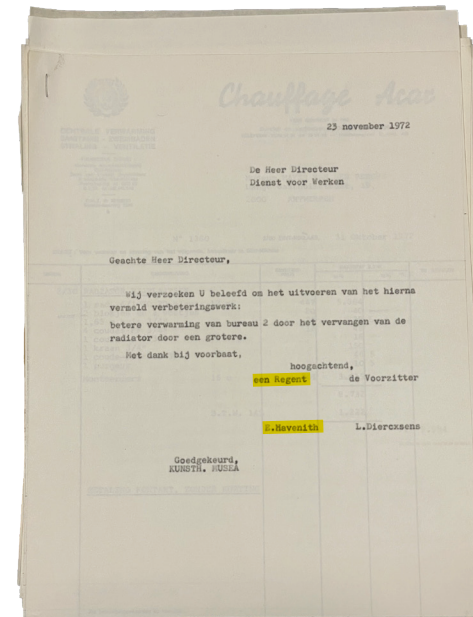
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## Museum Mayer van den Bergh

Lange Gasthuisstraat 19

From 1952 onwards, Havenith was a member of the Board of Regents of the Mayer van den Bergh Museum in Antwerp. She probably obtained this role through her connections with the Van den Bergh family. As a regent, she acted as co-owner of the art collection and the museum building. Due to her position as an architect, she also took on an advisory role.

1952-2004 Regent



E. Havenith, L. Diercxsens, Letter to the director of the Dienst voor Werken, (Antwerp: 1972).

Henriëtte van den Bergh (1838-1920) founded the Mayer van den Bergh Museum in 1904, where she housed her late son Fritz's art collection in a new museum building next to the family's home. The museum follows in the tradition of women's collectors' museums, characterised by an intimate, homely presentation style in which her vision was decisive. As founder-curator, Henriëtte took on a prominent public role in the Antwerp art world, a position that few women were able to attain in her day.



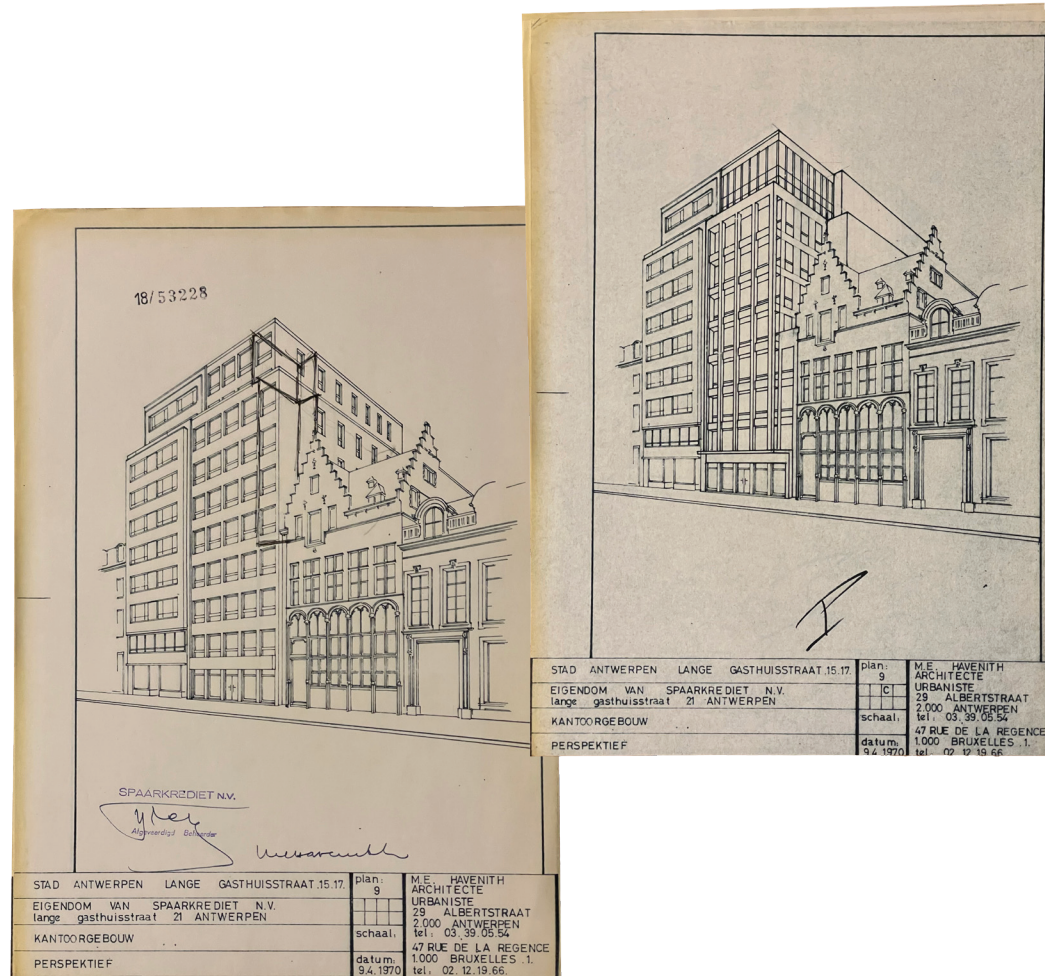
The museum with the former apartment block on the left where the custodian also lived. This was demolished and replaced by the Spaarkrediet office building, (Antwerp: n.d.).

# Office building Spaarkrediet (1969-1976)

Lange Gasthuisstraat 15-17

Due to her role as regent of the Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Havenith was commissioned in 1969 to design the adjacent building. It was to be a bank and office building for Spaarkrediet, which would immediately become the largest construction project she had ever realised. At the same time, the new volume served as an extension of the museum, linking the construction to a broad renovation of the existing museum.

1942-1994 Architect



Havenith produced several design proposals for the façade composition of the Spaarkrediet office building, which was to be situated next to the Mayer van den Bergh Museum. In doing so, she chose to mirror the apartment block on the opposite side, (Antwerp: 1970).

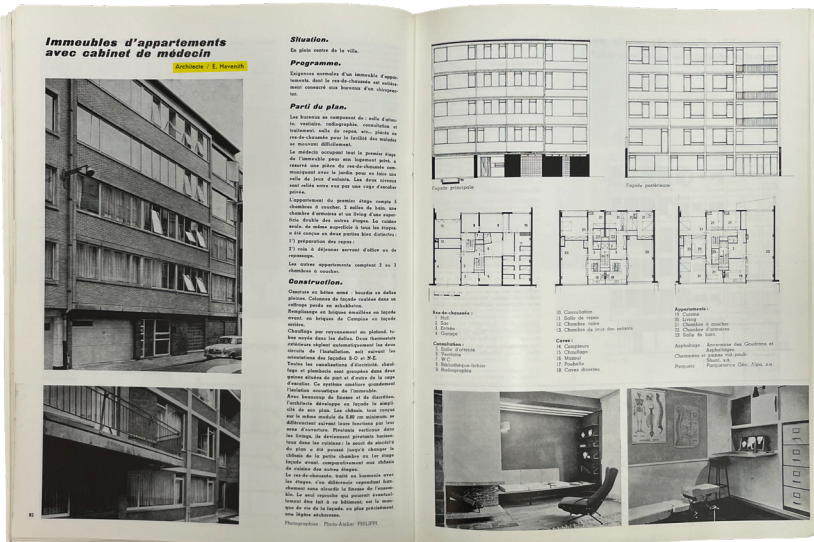


# Apartment building Gontcharuk-Deckers (1954-1957)

Kiliaanstraat 14

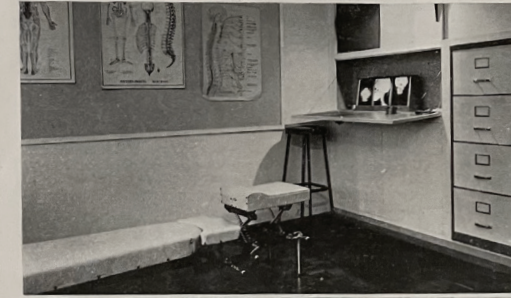
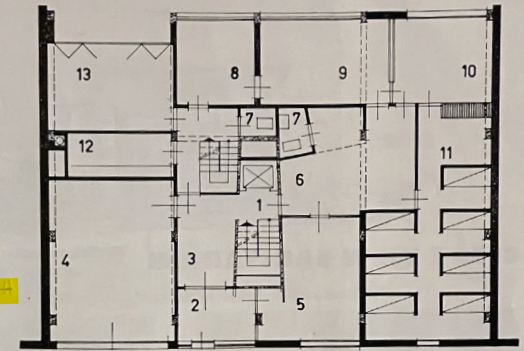
In 1954, Havenith designed this apartment complex for the Gontcharuk-Deckers family. The ground floor served as a practice for chiropractor Jacqueline Gontcharuk. However, Havenith was not mentioned as the architect in an English-language magazine article. In the professional journals *Architecture* and *Bouwen en Wonen*, where Havenith served on the editorial board, her work was regularly published, and she was recognised as an architect.

1952-1970 Writer/editor  
1952-1958 Secretary



An article from *Architecture* no. 25 on the Gontcharuk-Deckers apartment block in Antwerp, which Havenith designed, (Brussels: 1958), © Collection VAI, Antwerp.

## Belgian Clinic Office of the Month



Anvers—14, Rue Kiliaan, Antwerp, Belgium, is the address of the "office of the month" for April. The office belongs to Dr. Jacqueline Deckers Gontcharuk.

It was built in 1956 by Dr. Gontcharuk and her late husband, William, who also was a chiropractor. Dr. Gontcharuk takes you through a tour of her office with the following description:

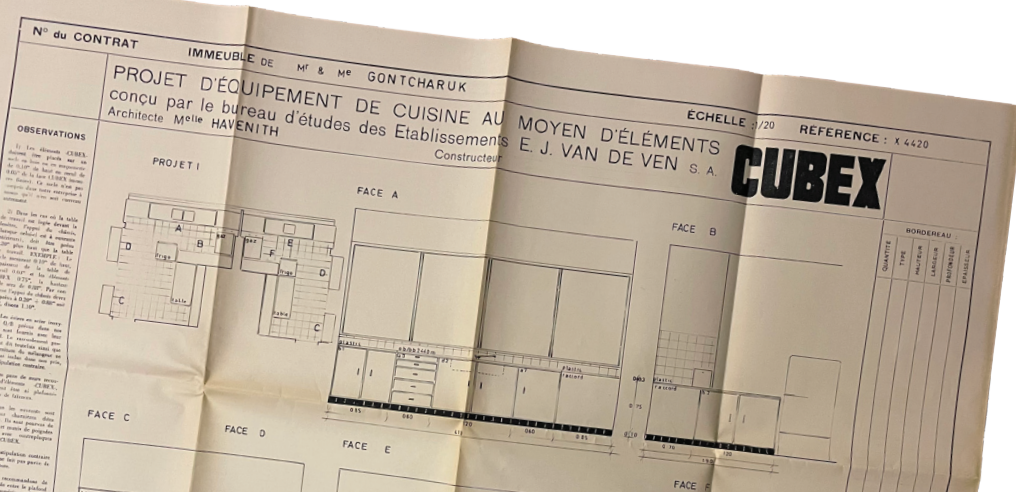
The patient comes through the first door, No. 2 on the plan, to the waiting room No. 5, which has glass walls. Patients take their hats and coats to the cloak room No. 6 and wait in No. 9 and No. 10 close to the doors of the working rooms. Patients are adjusted and later rest in No. 11. They leave through the door of the cloak room No. 6 and enter into the hall No. 3 before going outside.

The entire building has radiant heating (coils in the concrete) and has an elevator, although that is not needed for patients since office facilities are on the ground floor.

Dr. Gontcharuk lives with her daughter on the second floor of the building and occupies the entire width of 60 feet. The three floors above are separated into two and three bedroom apartments for six families.

Noting the number on the diagram, you can see to what purpose each room is put: main entrance and hall, 1, 2, 3; garage, 4; waiting room, 5; cloak room, 6; lavatory, 7; library (small office for assistant), 8; X-ray room, 9; main office, 10; rest coats, 11; dark room, 12; children's play room, 13.

An article from *Review* on the doctor's practice in the Gontcharuk-Deckers apartment block in Antwerp. Belgian clinic office of the month, (n.p.: 1959).



Cubex-kitchens were installed in all the apartments of the Gontcharuk-Deckers building. This was a functional kitchen, designed by the Belgian architect Louis Herman De Koninck (1896-1984). E.J. Van de Ven, Cubex kitchen, (Brussels: 1956).

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Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (1905-1983) was a British town planner, educator and editor. As a key member of the inner circle of CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne), she played an influential role in shaping post-war planning discourse. After the Second World War, she served as a consultant to the United Nations, advising on housing and planned reconstruction in Asia. In 1949, Havenith attended the CIAM Summer School in London, where she studied under Jacqueline Tyrwhitt. Tyrwhitt was the assistant of Maxwell Fry, the then chairman of the MARS Group, the English section of CIAM. The correspondence between Havenith and Tyrwhitt reveals a friendly relationship; Tyrwhitt even visited Havenith at her home in Antwerp.

CIAM 9  
AIX EN PROVENCE  
19-26 JUILLET 1953

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The CIAM 9 dossier includes, amongst other things, Havenith's text on the research of the Groupe Bruxelles-Anvers, as well as the official report of the congress and the membership list, (Aix-en-Provence: 1953).

C.I.A.M.

CONGRÈS INTERNATIONAUX  
D'ARCHITECTURE MODERNE

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L.T.VAN LOOY	66, Tweelingenstr. Anvers	tél.

3. Groupe des jeunes.

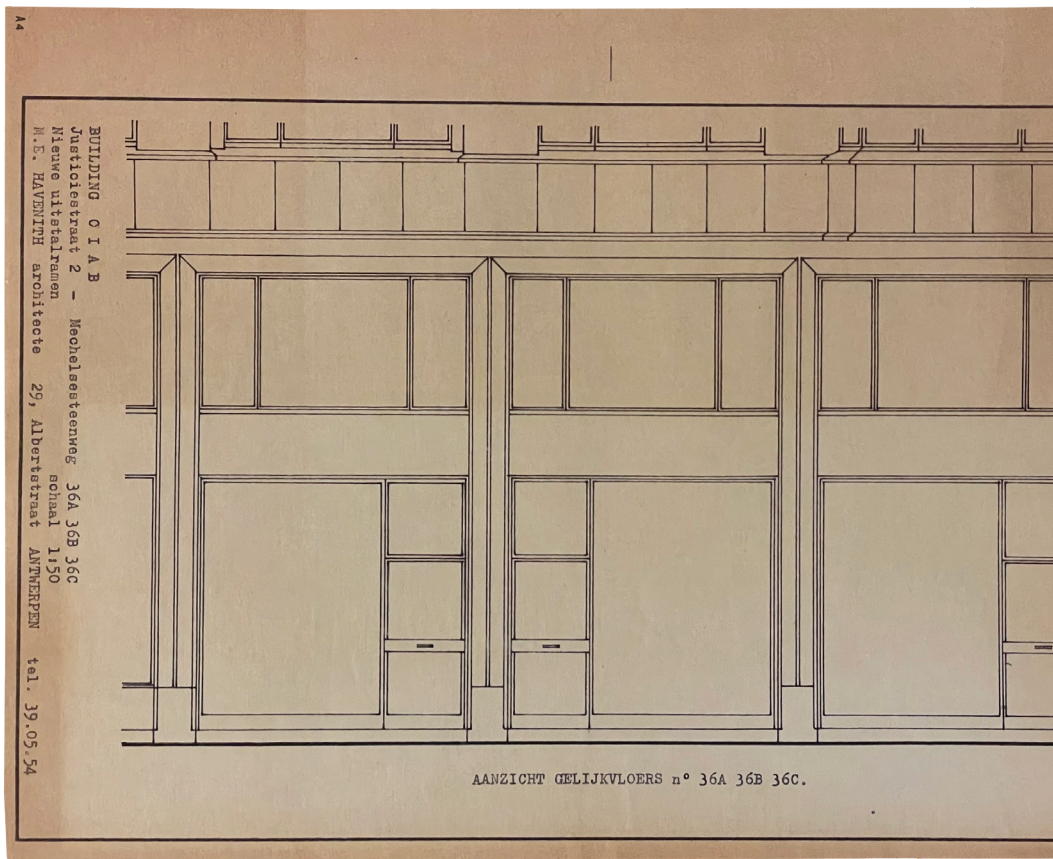
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P. DE MEYER	10, Lisperpoort. Lierre	tél. 21 83 50
L. PIRYON	11, av. Eugène Isays. Bruxelles	tél. 37 22 66
R. THIRION	16, rue d'Irlande. Bruxelles	tél.
G. VERSCHAEREN	36, Tentoonstellingstr. Anvers	tél.
M. WISSEN DE KONINCK	46, rue des Cottages. Bruxelles	tél.

## Extensa NV (1967-1973)

Justitiestraat 2 - Mechelsesteenweg 36

The property developer Extensions et Entreprises Anversoises (Extensa NV) had its headquarters in this building. Commissioned by Extensa NV, Havenith drew up development plans for two sites in Merksem and Brasschaat in 1950. Havenith also participated in *Regionaal Plan Brussel* in the 1950s and *Regionaal Plan Schelde-Rupel* in the 1960s. In 1967, she was also appointed as the architect for the renovation of the Extensa building.

- 1952-1962 Urbanist  
1952-1953 *Regionaal Plan Brussel*  
1957-1962 *Regionaal Plan Schelde-Rupel*



Façade view by Havenith of the ground floor (no. 36A, 36B and 36C) of the Extensa building, (Antwerp: 1954).



A development plan by E. Havenith for the Akkersdomein in Brasschaat, (n.p.: 1950).

## Filles de Marie (Sint-Jozef instituut)

Jozefstraat 35

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Havenith attended the Filles de Marie school throughout primary and secondary school. In 1932, Hélène Van Coppenolle founded the Sint-Lucaspaviljoen voor Sierkunsten, which was affiliated with Filles de Marie. This art school was the forerunner of Sint-Lucas in Antwerp. In 1936, the first students graduated from Sint-Lucaspaviljoen, including Havenith. Girls' schools, such as Filles de Marie and Sint-Lucaspaviljoen, were important for women's access to education.

1918-1936 Primary and High school student



Hélène Van Coppenolle (1905 -1985) was a Belgian illustrator, graphic designer, and teacher. In 1932, at the age of 27, she founded the Sint-Lucaspaviljoen (Section des Arts Décoratifs) in Antwerp, which was connected to the Sint-Jozefinstituut established by Filles de Marie. Jos Leonard, Joris Minne, and Eugene Yoors signed the first diplomas issued by the program.

Eliane Havenith graduated in 1936 as one of the first students of the Sint-Lucaspaviljoen.



A photograph from the second year in secondary school. Havenith is standing at the very top, dressed in black (number 8), (Antwerp: n.d.).

Filles de Marie, (Antwerp: n.d.).

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## Own house

Albertstraat 29

Havenith lived here with her sister, Denise Havenith. Her office was on the ground floor. The first women architects mainly started their careers in the post-war period, before the revival of the women's movement. In the 1940s and 1950s, society placed a strong emphasis on the family, making it difficult for women to pursue careers. Havenith chose not to marry or have children, allowing her to focus entirely on her practice.

Denise Havenith (1920 -2003) was Eliane Havenith's younger sister. Like Eliane, she remained unmarried and had no children. She worked as a French teacher at Sint-Lucaspaviljoen, and together the sisters cared for a remarkable art collection, including paintings by Antoon Van Dyck and Mattheus Ignatius van Bree.



House of Eliane and Denise Havenith, (Antwerp: 2023).  
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# Notes

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Flanders  
State of the Art

V.U. Dennis Pohl, Vlaams Architectuurinstituut,  
Jan van Rijswijklaan 155, 2018 Antwerpen.

## Colophon

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Tine Poot

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