

H. VAN DE VELDE

DE TEXT

JAGERSLAAN 1^{er}, TEL. KIEVIT N^o 651

HENRY VAN DE VELDE

WASSENAAR.

4 fev. 24

Cher confrère Huib. Hoste,

Je suis infiniment touché de la joie que Vous exprimez de ce que nous nous voyons réunis à l'occasion des manifestations de Bruxelles. Elles furent pour moi la plus agréable surprise. Je pense de plus de 30 années de lutte et de 24 années d'exil. Et parmi toutes les marques de sympathie qui me furent faites, celle de l'hommage de mes jeunes frères et vaillants confrères belges me touchèrent le plus vivement.

Letters of architects

26.09.2013

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30.11.2013

Je recommandais et admirais votre œuvre et même d'annoncer fort et fier le grand et vif désir de faire connaître à tous les hommes de Flandres. Je sais que pour avoir créé ce grand ensemble par faits et gestes.

Visitor's guide

Je vous suis bien reconnaissant de

Royal Library of Belgium

**HENRY VAN DE VELDE
LETTERS OF ARCHITECTS**

26.09.2013 > 30.11.2013
Royal Library of Belgium

Visitor's guide

In 2013 it is exactly 150 years ago since Henry van de Velde (1863-1957) was born in Antwerp. The Centre for Flemish Architectural Archives and the Royal Library have compiled a selection of letters of the designer and architect and his correspondents. Van de Velde mainly received and wrote these letters during his so-called “second Belgian period” from c. 1926 and during the last ten years of his life in Switzerland.

WHO WAS HENRY VAN DE VELDE?

Henry van de Velde’s international artistic and architectural career spans almost 75 years. He started out as a painter in the 1880s, among others as a member of the avant-garde group, Les XX (or “Les Vingt”). Around 1894 he switched to the applied arts, becoming an architect and designer over time. In 1895 he designed his first house, his own private residence, called “Bloemenwerf”, in Uccle (Brussels). His design career subsequently took him to Germany for many years, where he created an impressive series of buildings and interior designs. In Germany, and more specifically in Weimar, he contributed to the development of arts and crafts education and became a leading international figure, with an extensive network in the artistic, literary and architectural world. He then spent the early Twenties in the Netherlands, as the private architect of the Kröller-Müller family. After a controversial return to Belgium in 1926 and his so-called “second Belgian period”, van de Velde, in 1947, decided to migrate to Switzerland, together with his daughter, Nele. There he dedicated the last ten years of his long life to writing his memoirs.

LETTERS OF ARCHITECTS

Until the last year of his life Henry van de Velde maintained a personal, usually hand-written correspondence with a host of friends, in particular also with fellow architects. With the latter he exchanged views about the Belgian and international architecture of his era, and about his own work and role in the development of modern architecture. But he also discussed highly personal subjects, such as the painstaking process of writing his memoirs or his deteriorating health during the last years of his life in Oberägeri, Switzerland. Even more than his autobiographical “Récit de ma vie” his letters reveal the depth of his complex and very rich personality.

The number of correspondents – at least 800 – as well as the intensity of the correspondence is downright impressive. The majority of the letters was written in French, sometimes also in German or English and on rare occasions in Dutch or a combination of languages. Young architects as well as their more established counterparts would ask van de Velde for advice about articles they were writing or designs they were creating,

or would ask for his support for difficult decisions about their career or a reference for applications. They would thank him for the publications or portraits which he sent them. Or they would refer to meetings and discussions with van de Velde or to inspiring lectures which they attended. Frequently they also thanked the architect and his daughter Nele at length for the warm welcome they received when visiting "le Bungalow", as van de Velde was wont to call his house in Oberägeri.

All the letters demonstrate Henry van de Velde's great empathy and concern for his correspondents. He apologised when taking too long to answer a letter, took all the time he needed for letters which, at times, were very long and looked forward with interest to the response to his letter. Even at the most difficult times and almost until the last day of his life he continued to be interested in contemporary developments in architecture and formulated strong opinions on this subject. Henry van de Velde's letters are a brilliant and amazingly authentic testimony of his sustained effort to pursue the mission which he had set himself at the end of the nineteenth century. His correspondents' letters, by contrast, point to the widespread recognition of Henry van de Velde as a key figure of great significance for the development of twentieth-century modern architecture.

AN EXHIBITION OF LETTERS

During the van de Velde year other exhibitions in Germany and in the Cinquantenaire Museum in Brussels paint a comprehensive picture of his life and achievements in the field of painting, architecture, the applied arts and his publications, throughout his long career, and of the artistic context thereof. This exhibition of letters only highlights part of his career and life, the period between 1926 and 1957 to be more specific, but in a very special way. The letters reveal how varied van de Velde's network was as well as lending an intimate insight into his relations with his colleagues, acquaintances and friends. Whereas Henry van de Velde regularly refers to close friendships in his "Récit de ma vie" the visitor of this exhibition of letters can almost experience the mutual commitment and cordiality between the correspondents first-hand. The mixture of awe, trust and friendship which van de Velde elicited is, among others, expressed in the way the correspondents address him in their letters, including "Mon cher Maître" (My dear Master), "Maître et cher ami" (Master and dear friend), "Cher monsieur van de Velde et maître" (Dear Mr van de Velde and Master), "Beloved master", "Verehrtester, lieber Herr Professor" (Honourable, beloved Professor), "Lieber hoch verehrter Meister van de Velde" (Dear honourable Master van de Velde)...

It is not easy to exhibit letters. Many letters cover the front and back of the paper on which they have been written and comprise several pages. Consequently the letter can never be exhibited in its entirety. Handwritten letters are not always easy to read either, even though van de Velde's handwriting remained virtually unchanged throughout his life and he always took great care when it came to his handwriting. These are beautiful, always very personal documents, which are worth exhibiting, because of the content

and the form. Some interesting passages have been transcribed in the visitor's guide, without correcting possible errors, to compensate somewhat for the frustration of not being able to see the back of the letter or the handwriting, which is difficult to read at times. In the guide visitors will also find additional information about the life phase, the individual or the buildings to which the letters relate. Publications to which the letters refer are sporadically included in the exhibition while the correspondents are briefly portrayed.

STRUCTURE

The selected letters have been grouped chronologically and by theme. They illustrate van de Velde's very dense career, especially during the period between 1926 and the Second World War. During this time he combined several influential positions, which meant he had a strong impact on architectural life in Belgium. In 1926, for example, he was appointed director of the newly established Institute for the Decorative Arts in the former Abbey of La Cambre (a position, which he held until 1935) as well as being a professor at the University of Ghent where he lectured on the history of architecture and the history of applied arts at the Higher Institute for Art History and Archaeology, in Dutch (1926-1936). In 1935 he was appointed "aesthetic consultant" to the "Office de Redressement Economique" (OREC, the Office for Economic Recovery), a service of the Ministry of Finance, under Minister Hendrik De Man, and of the Belgian Railways.

At the same time he also worked as an architect and designer, building several iconic buildings, which went on to influence Belgian architecture during the period between the two World Wars (the Hôtel De Bodt and the Cohen, Wolfers and Grégoire residences), the Colman-Saverys villa in Knokke, the polyclinic and residence of Doctor Martens in Astene, the interior designs of homes, ocean steamers and trains, two Belgian pavilions for two world expos (Paris in 1937 and New York in 1939) and the RITO (a technical school) in Leuven. For the Krölller-Müller family van de Velde built a home in Wassenaar and designed the national Krölller-Müller museum, which was only completed in 1957, the year in which he died. There are traces and testimonials of all this in a long series of letters.

During the Second World War Henry van de Velde continued to work for the government (under the German occupying forces), something which the Belgians found very hard to forgive after the war. He served as Head of the Architecture Department of the Commission for National Reconstruction. In a sense this was a continuation of his OREC consultancy in the 1930s. In 1942 he resigned from office. In 1943 his wife, Maria Sèthe, who played an indispensable role in his career, died. Although van de Velde was not convicted of collaboration after the war, he felt that the climate in his homeland was very negative, which is why he decided to live in exile, together with his daughter Nele. He was able to count on the support of the Swiss architect Alfred Roth in this context and in 1947 he moved into "le Bungalow" where the younger generations of architects with whom he exchanged letters and whose careers he followed with great interest regularly visited him.

ARCHIVES

One correspondent, with whom van de Velde maintained a prolonged and intense correspondence, was Raphaël Verwilghen, an architect and urban planner. A large part of the letters on display is taken from the Verwilghen archive, which is currently preserved at the University of Leuven. The correspondence with Verwilghen comprises all the phases of the period covered here. Some of the letters are taken from the Huib Hoste archive [KU Leuven]. Hoste, a contemporary of Verwilghen, belonged to the avant-garde group who lobbied hard in favour of van de Velde's return in the 1920s. The remaining letters, consisting of correspondence with Belgian and foreign architects, was sourced from the van de Velde archive which is preserved in the Royal Library, and is managed by the non-profit foundation Archives et Musée de la Littérature (Archives and Museum of Literature). The letters shown here only constitute a fraction of the treasury which is preserved by these institutions. Many of these letters have never been consulted or published to date. With this selection the curators hope to stimulate architecture historians and to give a new impulse to research on van de Velde. In some cases the letters to van de Velde as well as van de Velde's own letters – the originals, the drafts, the carbon copies or copies – are preserved in the Henry van de Velde archive of the Royal Library.

The exhibition "Henry van de Velde. Letters of architects", in other words, is a first "anthology" of letters by van de Velde and his many correspondents, taken from three archives – the van de Velde archive in the Royal Library and the Verwilghen and Hoste archives at the University of Leuven, to which a few other documents are added. Other letters can be found in the Hoste archive which is preserved by Architecture Archive Sint-Lukasarchief VZW in Brussels, in other archives of van de Velde, such as at the ENSAV La Cambre School, or in the personal archives of many of his domestic and foreign correspondents.

Ellen Van Impe and Luc Verpoest
September 2013

ORIGIN OF THE DOCUMENTS

[HVDV KBR]

Archive Henry van de Velde
Royal Library of Belgium – Archives et Musée de la Littérature
Brussels

[PLF KBR]

Archive Pierre-Louis Flouquet
Royal Library of Belgium – Archives et Musée de la Littérature
Brussels

[HH KU Leuven]

Archive Huib Hoste, BE/212934/PP/HOSTE/255
University Archive KU Leuven
Leuven

[RV KU Leuven]

Archive Raphaël Verwilghen
Campusbibliotheek Arenberg KU Leuven
Leuven

[WK ABA ULB]

Fonds Willy Kessels
Les Archives et Bibliothèque d'Architecture (ABA) – ULB
Brussels

[SCAB ABA ULB]

Fonds SCAB
Les Archives et Bibliothèque d'Architecture (ABA) – ULB
Brussels

[AAM]

Archives d'Architecture moderne (AAM)
Brussels

[EVS APA]

Archive Edward Van Steenberghe
Architectuurarchief Provincie Antwerpen (APA)
Antwerp

[BTAB KU Leuven]

University Library KU Leuven, Tabularium
Leuven

BIBLIOGRAPHY

References in the visitor's guide to editions of van de Velde's autobiographical writings will be made with abbreviations, as follows:

GML 1962

Henry van de Velde, edited and translated by Hans Curjel, *Geschichte meines Lebens*, München, 1962.

RDMV 1992

Henry van de Velde, edited by Anne Van Loo, *Récit de ma vie. Anvers, Bruxelles, Paris, Berlin. I. 1863-1900*, Brussels – Paris, 1992.

RDMV 1995

Henry van de Velde, edited by Anne Van Loo, *Récit de ma vie. Berlin, Paris, Weimar. II. 1900-1913*, Brussels – Paris, 1995.

1

1926 HENRY VAN DE VELDE'S RETURN TO BELGIUM

Around 1900 Henry van de Velde was a key figure in the development of European architecture. From 1900 until 1917 he initially worked in Berlin and then in Weimar, where, as the founder and director of the “Kunstgewerbeschule” (the predecessor of the post-war “Bauhaus”), he played an important role in the development of German architecture and arts and crafts. A twenty-five year absence and his long stay in Germany especially made an immediate return to Belgium after the First World War impossible, which is why van de Velde went into exile in Switzerland. From 1920 onwards van de Velde worked as the personal architect of the Kröller-Müllers in the Netherlands. The young Belgian avant-garde – Huib Hoste, Victor Bourgeois, Louis van der Swaelmen, Raphaël Verwilghen, and others – however did everything possible to bring Henry van de Velde back to Belgium. In 1925 he was appointed professor at the University of Ghent. In 1926 the Minister Camille Huysmans proposed that he be appointed director of the new Institut Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs / La Cambre / Hoger Instituut voor Sierkunsten / Ter Kameren – The Higher Institute of Decorative Arts La Cambre in Brussels.

— 001

Henry van de Velde (?) in front of the Kunstgewerbeschule in Weimar
(date and author of photograph unknown)
[RV KU Leuven]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND THE BAUHAUS

At the end of May 1914, a few months before the outbreak of the First World War, Henry van de Velde had already decided to resign as director of the “Kunstgewerbeschule” in Weimar on October 1st. Ultimately he only did this on April 1st, 1915. When he was asked to stay on until September 1st, he wrote a letter to Walter Gropius (dated April 11th) asking him whether he wished to succeed him as director. The correspondence with Walter Gropius during the 1920s is interesting because it took place at a turning point in the development of the Bauhaus, in 1923-1924. Although van de Velde no longer was a part of the German cultural world for several years by this time, Gropius still consulted him about the school's policy and van de Velde's great concern is obvious from his letters.

(letters 002-006)

— **002**

Letter of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde, [at the front], 1 December 1914
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 434 bis Walter Gropius]

‘Lieber Herr Professor, ich danke Ihnen herzlich für Ihre freundliche Sendung. Danach darf ich hoffen, dass Sie mein Brief nach Konstanz doch erreicht hat, worin ich Ihnen sagen wollte, wie sehr ich das brutale, grenzenlos thörichte Gebahren meiner Landsleute gegen Sie verurteil; ich schäme mich für Sie und empfinde Ihren Mangel an Takt und Weitsicht äusserst schmerzlich. Wir haben viel an Ihnen gut zu machen, lieber Herr Professor, und wenn die Ohren der Welt erst Einmal wieder feinere Töne vernehmen könnten wie nur Kanonendonner, dann werden sicherlich einige aufstehen, die jene Toren gebührend abfertigen und Ihnen vor alle Augen dafür Dank sagen, was Sie unserem Lande geschenkt haben. [...]’

— **003**

Letter of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde, Weimar, 24 May 1919
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 434 bis Walter Gropius]

‘[...] Die Meute heult gegen mich und ist zur offenen Feindschaft übergegangen. [...] Sollte es sich vorübergehen und sitze ich dann einmal fest im Sattel, so will ich alles tun um Weimar an seine brennende Pflicht gegen Sie zu erinnern. [...]’

— **004**

Letter of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde in Weimar, 5 November 1923
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 434 bis Walter Gropius]

‘[...] Ich habe es wirklich sehr bedauert dass Sie unsere Ausstellung nicht gesehen haben, denn vieles, was in dem Bauhausbuch noch nicht enthalten ist, wurde für diese Ausstellung fertig. Zweifellos waren zahlreiche Dinge noch sehr problematischer Art, aber ich glaube, dass es Sie doch interessiert haben würde zu sehen, wie ich mir den weiteren Weg denke. Es ist endlos viel gesprochen und geschrieben worden über unsere Versuche. Gleichgültig gelassen haben sie jedenfalls nicht. Aber die äusseren Schwierigkeiten sind jetzt so enorm gewachsen, dass uns bald die Aussicht versperrt sein wird. [...]’

— **005**

Letter (copy) of Henry van de Velde to Walter Gropius, s.l., 9 October 1924
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 434 bis Walter Gropius]

‘[...] Je viens de rédiger une communication pour le Staatsminister a.D. Hartmann. [...] Je me demande si vous en serez satisfait. Elle exprime pourtant tout ce que d’ici je peux dire sur votre action et sur la façon dont vous avez compris votre rôle. Je m’abstiens naturellement de toute critique. Les critiques que j’aurais à formuler ne se rapportent pas au but final qui ne diffère pas de celui que j’ai poursuivi durant mes années de création et de direction de l’Institut, mais aux moyens. [...]’

— **006**

Letter of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde in Weimar, 23 October 1924
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 229 Otto Bartning]

'[...] Das politische Bild ist absurd. Die Regierung hatte sich vor Ihrer Konstituierung gegen das Bauhaus festgelegt, ohne zu wissen, was dieses Institut bedeutet. Die Folge davon war, dass sie durch den ausserordentlich starken Kampf in der Presse zu unseren Gunsten in grosse Verlegenheit geriet und die Verantwortung von sich selbst weg auf den Landtag abschob, obwohl sie in Ihrer Zusammensetzung noch ausgesprochen antiparlamentarisch ist. [...]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE IN THE NETHERLANDS

H.P. Berlage tentatively made contact with van de Velde, which has probably to do with the fact that Henry van de Velde had succeeded Berlage in 1920 as the architect of the Krölller-Müller family and was commissioned to design the "Groot Museum" in Hoenderloo in his place. In 1898 Berlage built a villa for Carel Henny, to whom the postcards refer, in The Hague, a work which would go on to greatly influence Huib Hoste. Van de Velde also corresponded with J.J.P. Oud, a key figure of the Dutch avant-garde in the early Twenties.

(letters 007-011)

— 007

Postcard of H.P. Berlage to Henry van de Velde, The Hague, 1 July 1922
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 236 H.P. Berlage]

'Hooggeachte heer v d Velde Ik had gehoopt U snel eens te zullen ontmoeten in den tijd dat U hier te lande weer werkzaam zijt; om dan de kennismaking van vele jaren geleden ten huize van de heer Henny te hernieuwen. Maar omdat [...] niet is gebeurd, zou ik U willen voorstellen een uur van samenkomst bijv. a.d. lunch te bepalen. Ik zou mij echter, de omstandigheden in aanmerking genomen, kunnen voorstellen, dat U dat enigszins moeilijk zou vallen. Maar ik geef U de verzekering dat er mijnerzijds een kwestie van eenig misverstand of wat ook tegenover U niet bestaat. Wanneer tegen een dergelijke samenkomst dus uwerzijds geen bezwaar wordt gevoeld hetgeen ik bijzonder zou apprecieeren, dan zou ik U willen voorstellen a.s. Donderdag tegen ½ 1 langs te komen in de "Vette Hen". Gaarne Uw antwoord wachend [...] ik met bel.[eefde] groet en hoogachting. [...]

— 008

Postcard of H.P. Berlage to Henry van de Velde, The Hague, 5 July 1922
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 236 H.P. Berlage]

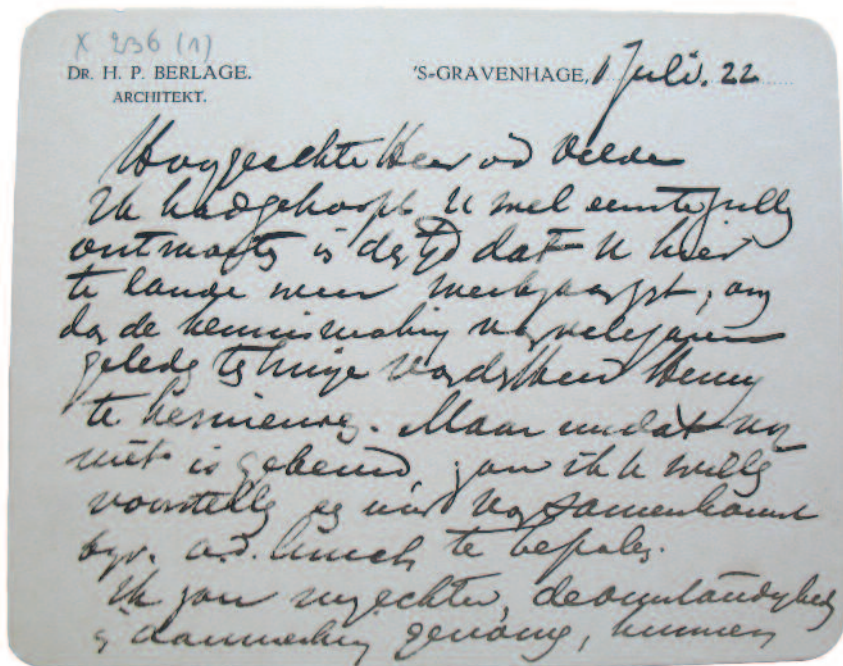
— 009

Postcard of H.P. Berlage to Henry van de Velde, The Hague, 9 August 1922
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 236 H.P. Berlage]

— 010

Letter of J.J.P. Oud to Henry van de Velde, Rotterdam, 19 May 1922
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 627 J.J.P. Oud]

J.J.P. Oud was in touch with both H.P. Berlage and Henry van de Velde. In letters from 1922 he tries to set up a meeting between van de Velde, Berlage and Peter Behrens (1868-1940), who is in Rotterdam for a lecture.



— **011**

Letter of J.J.P. Oud to Henry van de Velde, Rotterdam, 26 May 1922
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 627 J.J.P. Oud]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE BACK TO BELGIUM?

Henry van de Velde thanked Raphaël Verwilghen for sending him the magazine “La Cité”. Verwilghen co-founded the magazine and was also a member of the editorial board, in which excerpts from van de Velde’s publication, “Les formules d’une esthétique moderne” (The formulas of a modern aesthetic) were published. The letter is written on letterhead of the Müller & Co. Company, which was managed by Anton Krölller (1862-1956). During this period van de Velde was the private architect of the Krölller-Müllers. Verwilghen’s attention strengthened his belief that not all the Belgians saw him in a negative light. The financial difficulties of Müller & Co. in 1923 led to the abandonment of the construction of the “Groot Museum” in Hoenderloo and subsequently to the termination of the contract with the Krölller-Müller family in 1926 and to van de Velde’s return to Belgium. In a letter from 1925 van de Velde responds to negative statements by Victor Horta (1861-1947) about him.

(letters 012-013)

— **012**

Letter (copy) of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, The Hague, 20 March 1923

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 813 Raphael Verwilghen]

[...] Elle me confirme dans le sentiment que tous mes confrères compatriotes ne se sont dressés contre moi parce que la guerre m’a placé dans une situation tragique qu’il y eût plus de courage et de danger à accepter telle quelle qu’à protester vainement et à chercher à attirer sur soi l’attention et la pitié. Dans la situation dans laquelle je me suis trouvé moi, pendant toute la durée de la guerre et au-delà j’ai eu les plus lourds devoirs de conscience à remplir et je n’y ai pas failli, honoré confrère. Votre numéro de La Cité me fut une bonne poignée de mains de votre part et de celle de tous vos rédacteurs. Merci cordialement. [...]

— **013**

Letter (copy) of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Wassenaar, 22 August 1925

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 813 Raphael Verwilghen]

[...] Mais lisez l’interview de Horta à mon sujet.
Ou bien vous serez tous, en Belgique, dégoûtés de moi ou de lui! Quand je pense qu’en octobre prochain il y aura 25 ans que je suis parti en exil pour la Cause et que par suite j’ai laissé le terrain libre à celui qui cherche maintenant à me nuire par tous les moyens. [...]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND THE “YOUNG ONES”

As was the case in his correspondence with Raphaël Verwilghen van de Velde also expressed his joy in two letters from 1924 to Huib Hoste about the many tributes from his young colleagues. These “youngsters” among others lectured about van de Velde (Hoste in 1923), contributed to the publication of his texts (Verwilghen in “La Cité” and Bourgeois and “L’Equerre” in 1923), in 1924 invited him as a speaker (SUB, La Cité, Sept Arts, L’Equerre and the student association La Lanterne Sourde) and organised a banquet in his honour. Van de Velde confided to Hoste that he felt that it was his responsibility to return to Belgium.

In July 1924 Hoste published an article in “Bouwkundig Weekblad”. van de Velde referred to the so-called monument of the Belgians in Amersfoort, built in 1917 after a design by Huib Hoste and Louis Van der Swaelmen (who were both members of the “Comité Néerlandais-Belge d’Art Civique” (the Dutch-Belgian committee for civic art)), in lieu of thanks to the Dutch population for taking in Belgian refugees during the war. When referring to Hoste’s “ensembles parfaits et puissants” (perfect and powerful ensembles) van de Velde is probably referring to the reconstruction architecture in Zonnebeke, Geluwe en Geluvelde (1920-1922) and the garden city of “Klein Rusland” in Zelzate.

In 1926 Hoste also received two photos of van de Velde, which are dedicated to him. He not only gave lip service to van de Velde but on his request even started to search for a green plot of land in the suburbs around Brussels in 1925 where van de Velde would be able to build a house for his family upon his return to Belgium. That same year Jean-Jules Eggericx congratulated his “Maître et cher ami” (Master and dear friend) on his future appointment as director of a new institute in La Cambre.

(letters and documents 014-022)

— **014**

Huib Hoste, ‘Henry van de Velde onder de jongeren’ (1923). Lecture on the occasion of Henry van de Velde’s sixtieth birthday
[HH KU Leuven, dossier 255.25]

— **015**

Announcement of a lecture by Henry van de Velde in Brussels on 24 January 1924, organised by La Lanterne Sourde, Université Libre de Belgique
[HH KU Leuven, dossier 255.25]

— **016**

Speech of Louis van der Swaelmen during a banquet in Brussels on 25 January 1924, organised by the Société des Urbanistes Belges, 7 Arts and L’Equerre, in honour of van de Velde
[RV KU Leuven]

— **017**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Huib Hoste, Wassenaar, 4 February 1924
[HH KU Leuven, dossier 255.24]

'Cher confrère Huib Hoste,

Je suis infiniment touché de la joie que vous exprimez de ce que nous nous soyons rencontrés à l'occasion des manifestations de Bruxelles. Elles furent pour moi la plus enviable récompense de plus de 30 années de lutte et de 24 années d'exil. Et parmi toutes les marques de sympathie qui me furent manifestées celle de l'hommage de mes jeunes forts et vaillants confrères belges me touchèrent le plus vivement. Je connaissais et admirais votre monument d'Amersfoort et j'éprouve le plus vif désir de faire au printemps un tour des Flandres. Je sais que vous avez créé là des ensembles parfaits et puissants. Je vous suis bien reconnaissant de ce que vous songiez à faire un compte-rendu « des journées à Bruxelles » pour le « Bouwkundig Weekblad » et je remettrai directement à l'adresse que vous voudriez bien me communiquer les photos. Mais dites bien dans ce compte-rendu que ces fêtes ont dépassé ma personne et ce que c'est « l'architecture nouvelle » qui fut fêtée et Vous Tous, à l'occasion de mon retour – bien passer en Belgique. Et moi aussi, je vous attends ici cher confrère Huib Hoste. [...]

— **018**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Huib Hoste, Wassenaar, 22 August 1924
[HH KU Leuven, dossier 255.24]

'[...] vous, cher Monsieur Hoste, dont j'estime moi-même si profondément le talent et l'obstination à ramener l'architecture à son expression simple et honnête et pure. Votre appel a trouvé en moi une si puissante résonance que depuis je me ronge les poings et me tourmente l'esprit à l'idée que je puis si peu: « Onze frontlijn te herstellen en U ten stryde te voeren » ! « Meester, wij stellen vertrouwen in U ; verlaat ons niet ». Ce cri résonne constamment dans mes oreilles et je sens que la destinée m'a accablé du poids d'une lourde responsabilité dont la pensée me poursuit et me fait poser sans cesse la question – votre question – : « Wat zal er uit dit alles gedijen ? Alors, je pense à mon inaction et à mes faibles forces et à la lamentable misère à laquelle sont voués dans notre pauvre Belgique tous les idéaux et toutes les idées et toutes les existences qui tendent à s'élever au dessus du niveau de la lâcheté d'une opinion qui a tout corrompu et tout soumis à la satisfaction des jouissances matérielles. Votre appel me rappelle à mes devoirs, mon cher Hoste. [...]

— **019**

Henry van de Velde in the Netherlands (date and author of photographs unknown / dedication of Henry van de Velde to Huib Hoste, February 1926)
[HH KU Leuven, dossier 255.24]

'A l'architecte Huib Hoste en témoignage de cordiale confraternité. [...]

— **020**

Letter of Huib Hoste to Henry van de Velde, s.l., 18 June 1925
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 481 bis Huib Hoste]

'[...] Si vous maintenez le programme exposé dans votre première lettre: maison située au milieu d'un verger, il faudrait sans doute tâcher de dénicher un lopin de terre avoisinant quelque propriété importante, de manière à jouir de la véritable campagne (sans villas et cottages environnants) et d'une communication suffisamment rapide et fréquente avec Bruxelles. Mais grâce à l'automobile, les jolis (!!) cottages infestent tout. Ah si on pouvait découvrir un Wassenaar aux portes de Bruxelles! [...]

Ce 18-VI-27.

Cher Maxime,

Être rappelé à l'ordre par une brochure intéressante n'est pas du tout désobligeant pour moi, surtout quand je puis me témoigner à moi-même que je ne suis pas trop en défaut.

En effet il n'y a que très peu de jours que je suis en possession des renseignements que j'avais demandés à un ami habitant les environs de Pruyelles. Donc cet ami me rapporte que le pays situé entre Pruyelles et Vilvoorde est très joli, mais trop "industrialisé" - que par contre le pays de Darenthem, Crainchem, Wesambeek, Stocbel est joli et "rural". Je ne suis pas d'accord quand au centre de Stocbel où il y a hippodrome et tout ce qui s'en suit. Si vous maintenez le programme exposé dans votre première lettre: maison située au milieu d'un verger, il faudrait sans doute lâcher de chercher un lopin de terre avoisinant quelque propriété importante, de manière à jouir de la véritable campagne (sans villa's et cottages environnants) et d'une communication suffisamment rapide et fréquente avec Pruyelles. Mais grâce à l'automobile, les jolis (!!) cottages importent tout. Ah si on pouvait découvrir un wassenaar aux portes de Pruyelles!

J'ai fait, il y a quelques mois la route Jisore Pruyelles - là aussi il y avait de très jolies parties.

Je crois en définitive que la solution que vous m'écrivez est la bonne: savoir que vous alliez à Pruyelles voir vous-même. Je crois pouvoir vous assurer que les amis seraient aussi disposés que moi à vous aider, et que l'un ou l'autre voudrait nous conduire à la recherche du lopin idéal. - Il est entendu n'est-ce pas, que vous ferez escale à St. Michel - j'en profiterai pour vous entretenir de votre brochure que j'aurai du temps de lire, et qui traite d'un sujet qui me captive extraordinairement.

Inhertemps ma femme et moi vous présentons nos meilleurs sentiments.

Huib Jansz.

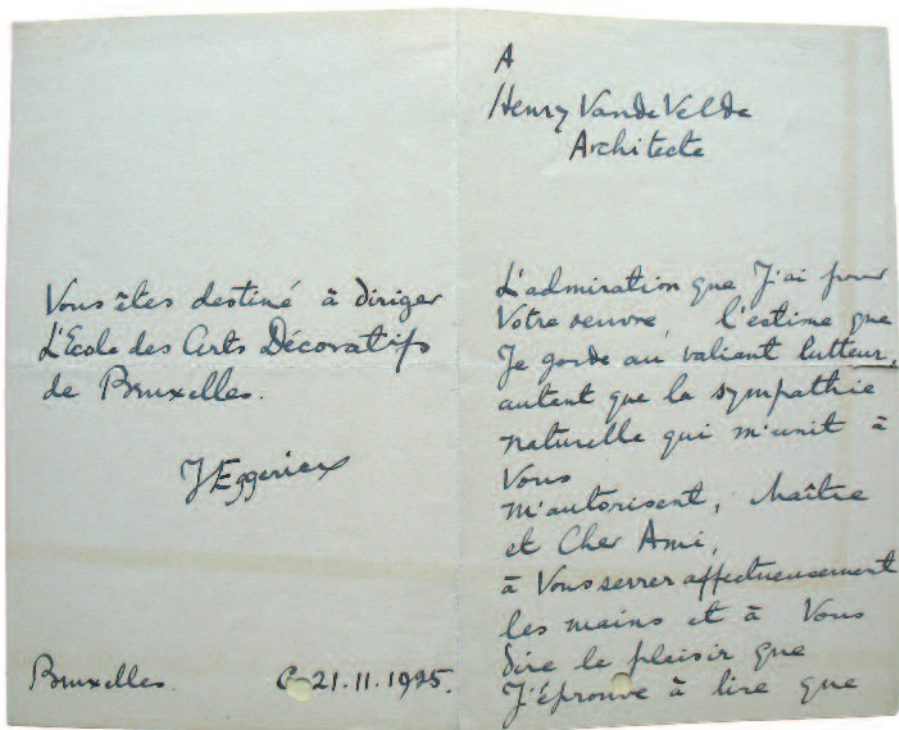
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— 021

Letter of Jean-Jules Eggericx to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 21 November 1925
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 375 Jean-Jules Eggericx]

‘L’admiration que j’ai pour Votre oeuvre, l’estime que Je garde au vaillant lutteur, autant que la sympathie naturelle qui m’unite à Vous m’autorisent, Maître et Cher Ami, à Vous serrer affectueusement les mains et à Vous dire le plaisir que J’éprouve à lire que Vous êtes destiné à diriger l’Ecole des Arts Décoratifs de Bruxelles.’

— 021



A
Henry Van de Velde
Architecte

Vous êtes destiné à diriger
L'Ecole des Arts Décoratifs
de Bruxelles.

J. Eggericx

Bruxelles. 21.11.1925.

L'admiration que J'ai pour
Votre oeuvre, l'estime que
Je garde au vaillant lutteur,
autant que la sympathie
naturelle qui m'unite à
Vous
m'autorisent, Maître
et Cher Ami,
à Vous serrer affectueusement
les mains et à Vous
dire le plaisir que
J'éprouve à lire que

Henry van de Velde, *Formules d'une esthétique moderne*, L'Equerre, Brussels, 1923.
With a preface of Victor Bourgeois
[RV KU Leuven]

The Belgian architectural periodical "La Cité" publishes in 1923 a series of articles by van de Velde, which are excerpts of *Les formules de la beauté architectonique moderne* (in 1916-1917 printed on 300 copies in Weimar on his own printing press): 'Suite d'idées pour une conférence' (in: *La Cité*, III, no. 10, February 1923, p. 214-221), 'La ligne est une force' (in: *La Cité*, III, no. 11, March 1923, p. 229-241), 'Vers la ligne nouvelle' (in: *La Cité*, III, no. 12, April 1923, p. 253-259). In the same year, the text is being reprinted in Brussels and edited by L'Equerre, as *Formules d'une esthétique moderne* (Brussels, 1923) with a preface by Victor Bourgeois (1897-1962). Five years later a Dutch translation is being published: *Formules van een moderne esthetiek* (translated and prefaced by Frank Van den Wijngaert), Antwerp, 1928.

'*Van de Velde* fut obligé, à la suite des derniers évènements, de quitter l'Allemagne. La Belgique n'a pas laissé passer une si belle occasion de perdre une seconde fois un grand artiste. *Van de Velde* travaille actuellement en Hollande. Son pays d'origine ne conservera ainsi de lui qu'une seule œuvre : sa première, *la maison d'Uccle*' [Victor Bourgeois]

2

1926-1940 HENRY VAN DE VELDE'S SECOND BELGIAN PERIOD

As of 1926 Henry van de Velde lectured at the University of Ghent and was also the director of the Higher Institute for Decorative Arts / La Cambre in Brussels until 1936. He also built his (third) private residence. From 1935 he exerted great influence on the government's major architecture projects as "aesthetic consultant" of the "Office de Redressement Economique" (Office of Economic Recovery) – an initiative of the Employment Minister Hendrik De Man. In collaboration with younger architects he designed the Belgian pavilions for two world expos in Paris (1937, with Raphaël Verwilghen and Jean-Jules Eggericx) and New York (1939, with Léon Stynen and Victor Bourgeois). Henry van de Velde continued to epitomise modern architecture in Belgium.

— 023

Photographic reproduction of a letter of king Albert I to Camille Huysmans, Minister of Arts and Sciences, Brussels, 2 March 1926
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1076]

'Cher Ministre,

Je vous renvoie l'avant projet de l'Institut Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs dû à notre grand artiste Vandevelde. J'en ai pris connaissance avec un vif intérêt et je vous remercie de m'avoir communiqué ce document. Il est hautement souhaitable – et je vois que vous l'avez compris – que Vandevelde qui, dans le domaine artistique, a exercé une influence mondiale, soit appelé à en exercer une dans son propre pays. Toujours, cher Ministre Votre affectionné Albert'

— 024

Letter of Henry van de Velde to king Albert I, 28 December 1926
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1076]

'Sire,

C'est dans un sentiment de profonde gratitude que je me permets de présenter à Votre Majesté mes humbles remerciements pour la décision que Votre Majesté a voulu prendre au sujet de la création d'un Institut supérieur des arts décoratifs et de ma nomination de directeur de cet Institut.

Sire, l'honneur est grand d'avoir été choisi pour une telle mission qui me permettra de vouer toutes les forces dont je dispose encore à mon pays dans un domaine bien négligé jusqu'à présent, mais la responsabilité que je suis appelé à prendre sur moi est bien plus grande encore.

Il me faut réussir et les félicitations personnelles dont votre majesté a daigné accompagner ma nomination me permettent d'espérer que la bienveillance des souverains de mon pays est acquise à cette entreprise d'intérêt national.

Cette marque de bienveillance personnelle de la part de votre majesté est une récompense dont l'inappréciable valeur me comble d'une satisfaction qui a relevé d'un coup, Sire, mon courage un peu abattu. [...].'

— **025**

Belgian passport of Henry van de Velde, 1929
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 186]

— **026**

Photograph showing some of the teachers of the ISAD La Cambre in 1931, including Raphaël Verwilghen (left), next to him Victor Bourgeois, Thylla van de Velde (1904-1955) and Jean-Jules Eggericx (second to the right) [photographer Willy Kessels] [WK ABA ULB]

— **027**

Letter of Louis Van der Swaelmen to Henry van de Velde, Saint-Clair-Le Lavandon (France), 9 July 1928
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 780 Louis Van der Swaelmen]

Due to an accident on a building site of Huib Hoste in 1926 and the subsequent lawsuit, Hoste is forced to leave the ISAD La Cambre. Louis van der Swaelmen, himself teacher of urbanism and landscape architecture at the Institute, suggests Victor Bourgeois as Hoste's successor as architecture professor. Bourgeois already taught a course 'Forme pure'. Apparently, also van de Velde, who had just turned 65, considered leaving the institute. Van der Swaelmen was in France to recover from his illness, but dies less than a year later.

'[...] Vous me parlez aussi du cas Hoste, qui me tient si profondément à cœur, car Hoste est un être sensible, un homme si excellent et qui a tant de mérites, que l'épreuve stupide qui lui survient me trouble et me révolte jusqu'au fond de moi-même. [...] Ainsi, dans le malheureux cas de Hoste. Par qui voulez-vous le remplacer ? Parmi les divers architectes qui font partie du corps professoral je ne vois que Bourgeois qui soit dans la même note. Quoique fort jeune, il est actif, chercheur, curieux d'esprit et de méthodes et heureusement il entre en pleine production. [...] Quant à votre succession, il ne faut pas parler de cela maintenant. Il n'y a pas un second van de Velde au monde. Il n'y a pas dans tout l'Institut un homme de culture universelle, d'éducation - si nécessaire pour en imposer et assurer l'homogénéité des choses à l'intérieur et le lustre à l'extérieur - qui soit mûr. Il y a des talents, il y a des maîtres d'enseignement, mais les « hommes » sont très inégalement évolués. [...].'

— **028**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Tervuren, 1 January 1932
[RV KU Leuven]

'[...] L' ISAD sera [...] la dernière oeuvre que je pourrai encore réaliser. J'y consacre, sans compter, mes forces et mes dernières années. Je suis profondément reconnaissant à ceux,

qui comme Vous, m'aident à la réalisation et qui, comme Vous, partagent la passion que j'éprouve pour Elle. [...]

— **029**

Maurice Casteels, *Henry van de Velde*, Editions des Cahiers de Belgique, Brussels, 1932 (with dedication of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, August 1932) [RV KU Leuven]

The architecture critic Maurice Casteels (1890-1962) made his name with *L'art moderne primitif* (Paris, 1930), with a preface of Henry van de Velde, also published in German as *Die Sachlichkeit in der modernen Kunst* (Paris-Leipzig, 1930). Casteels played an important part in the dissemination of van de Velde's work.

'(à) mon excellent collaborateur à l' ISAD'

HENRY VAN DE VELDE TURNS SEVENTY

In 1933 Henry van de Velde turned seventy, an event which was marked with the publication of all kinds of celebratory issues of magazines, the reprinting of texts and the organisation of banquets and lectures. The photographer Willy Kessels (1898-1974) took a number of famous portraits of van de Velde, which were often published in special issues and publications and also individual prints, such as a version in Verwilghen's archive, which was dedicated by van de Velde. The famous architect also was congratulated by several Belgian and foreign architects, including Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), who had just been appointed as the new director of the Bauhaus, and Thilo Schoder.

(letters and documents 030-038)

— **030**

Henry van de Velde (photographer Willy Kessels / date unknown (around 1933) / with dedication of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, March 1934) [RV KU Leuven]

'Aan Prof. R. Verwilghen, als blijk van hartelijken dank voor de waardeerde medewerking aan het 'v.d.V' n° van 'Kunst' maart 1934 [...]

— **031**

Gedenkboek Henry van de Velde, special issue of the periodical *Kunst*, IV, no.10-11-12, 1933 [RV KU Leuven]

Jean van de Voort (1894-1960) was editor of this issue and wrote the text 'Henry van de Velde, de leider, in het verleden, heden en toekomst' (p. 346-369). The draft version with annotations and comments of van de Velde is conserved in dossier FSX 1348 of the archive van de Velde in the Royal Library.

The frontispiece is designed by Claire Pâques, after Henry van de Velde's design for the Linkeroever (left bank) in Antwerp (1926).

— **032**

Theme issue of *La Cité*, XI, no. 5-6, April-May 1933. The issue contains contributions of, amongst others, Karl Moser, H.P. Berlage, J.J.P. Oud, Le Corbusier, Erich Mendelsohn and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1310/9]

— **033**

Invitation to an academic session in honour of Henry van de Velde, organised by the Antwerp architect's association Koninklijke Maatschappij der Bouwmeesters van Antwerpen (KMBA), Antwerp, 3 April 1933
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 197 b]

— **034**

Invitation to the lecture "La Voie Sacrée" of Henry van de Velde on 8 April 1933 in the Palais des Beaux-Arts/Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 197 c]

— **035**

Henry van de Velde, *La voie sacrée*, s.l., [1933]. With dedication of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen
[RV KU Leuven]

'En témoignage de sentiments de profonde gratitude pour le parfait objet-gage et collaboration affectueuse'

— **036**

Letter of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde, Berlin, 31 March 1933
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 197 e]

'ich fühle das bedürfnis, ihnen zu ihrem ehrentag herzlich die hand zu drücken und ihnen zu sagen, wie sehr ich sie und ihr werk verehere, ein werk, das auch bei uns in deutschland in der ganzen entwicklung verankert ist und niemals ausgelöscht werden kann. [...]

— **037**

Telegram of Mies van der Rohe to Henry van de Velde, Berlin, 1933
[HVDV KBR, dossier 197d]

'in dankbarer verehrung begruesst sie mies von der rohe und das bauhaus'

— **038**

Letter of Thilo Schoder to Henry van de Velde, Flekkefjord (Norway), 11 August 1933
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 705 bis Thilo Schoder]

'Sehr verehrter, lieber Herr Professor,
[...] Ja, lieber Herr Professor, es war mich sehr schmerzlich, dass ich zum 3. April nicht bei Ihnen sein konnte. Wenn Sie auch oft lange nichts von mir hörten, so wissen Sie doch, wie sehr ich mich Ihnen verbunden fühle – einmal in Dankbarkeit für all das, was Sie mich

HENRY VAN DE VELDE aura soixante-dix ans au début d'Avril prochain. Le monde des arts et particulièrement celui de l'architecture veut, à cette occasion, rendre hommage au pionnier qui, par l'audace de son œuvre et l'autorité de ses leçons, contribua à fixer en Europe les fondements d'un style nouveau.

Le Comité organisateur de cette manifestation a estimé que l'activité et la jeunesse de pensée du Maître se seraient mal accommodées d'une cérémonie de solennelles congratulations.

Il l'a prié de prendre lui-même la parole.

En une séance publique, à laquelle nous avons l'honneur de vous convier et qui aura lieu dans la salle de Musique de Chambre du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles,

LE SAMEDI 8 AVRIL PROCHAIN, A 4 H. 45 PRÉCISES

Henry van de Velde donnera une grande conférence. Il y parlera de l'ordonnation des efforts qui ont provoqué, après un demi-siècle de persévérance, la renaissance d'un art vivant, adapté aux idées et aux aspirations modernes.

Il a intitulé sa conférence :

LA VOIE SACRÉE

A l'issue de cette conférence, les amis et admirateurs d'Henry van de Velde organisent une réception en son honneur. Ils espèrent pouvoir vous compter parmi eux.

Cette réception aura lieu à 6 h. 15 dans les Salons de l'Hôtel Astoria, rue Royale.

La participation aux frais est fixée à 20 francs par personne, que veuillez avoir l'obligeance de verser immédiatement au compte chèque postal n° 2960.28 de M. H. Van den Berghe, Trésorier.

lehrten und erkennen liessen – zum anderen Male in Bewunderung Ihres genialen Schaffens und Ihrer grossen Persönlichkeit und menschlichen Güte. [...] Ach, wohin sind für uns Deutsche alle die Werte verschwunden, deren Kenntniss und Offenbarung der Sinn und die grosse Bedeutung Ihres Lebens gewesen ist? Ich erschrecke, wenn ich daran denke, wie ich alles finden werde, wenn ich in der kommenden Woche nach Deutschland zurückkommen werde [...]. Wie werde ich das Weimar finden, das zu Ihrer Zeit geistiges und künstlerisches Zentrum allererster Ordnung war? [...]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE IN PARIS AND NEW YORK

Van de Velde always invited younger architects to assist him with his designs of the Belgian pavilions at the World Expos. He relied on the services of Verwilghen and Eggericx in 1937 and on Bourgeois and Stynen in 1939. But van de Velde did not only receive praise for these striking buildings. The magazine "Pourquoi Pas?" in 1938 criticised the master's ubiquity. Léon Stynen defended his illustrious colleague. The exhibition features some hitherto lesser known photos of van de Velde's stay in New York. They show the three designers, van de Velde, Stynen and Bourgeois, relaxing during an excursion in rural Stanford (New York State).

(letters and documents 039-044)

— 039

Henry van de Velde (left) visiting the building site of the Belgian Pavilion of the Paris World Exhibition of 1937 (date and author of the photograph unknown)
[RV KU Leuven]

— 040

Postcards of the Belgian Pavilion at the Paris World Exhibition, 1937
[RV KU Leuven]

— 041

Letter of Raphaël Verwilghen to Jean-Jules Eggericx, Tervuren, 27 January 1960. Verwilghen points at the important role of Eggericx in the original design of the Belgian Pavilion in Paris, 1937.
[RV KU Leuven]

[...] c'était vous qui aviez pris la part la plus grande à l'élaboration des plans du Pavillon, mais ceux-ci avaient subi ensuite l'influence de van de Velde. [...]

— 042

'Henry van de Velde. Touche à tout de l'architecture belge', in *Pourquoi Pas?*, XXVIII, no. 1225, 21 January 1938, p. 163-166
[SCAB ABA ULB]

— 043

Carbon copy of a letter of Léon Stynen to the editors of *Pourquoi Pas?*, 14 May 1938
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 745 Léon Stynen]

[...] Je me permets de relever une argumentation de mauvaise foi parue dans vos colonnes sous le titre 'van de Velde et l'exposition de New York'. [...] Le pavillon de l'exposition de New York que j'ai eu l'honneur d'étudier représente à valeur égale un travail de van de Velde, de Bourgeois et de moi-même. L'un et l'autre y avons apporté notre acquit, sans arrière-pensée. C'est donc à tort que vous m'écrivez que ce travail m'est personnel. Je crois en fin de compte que la campagne menée contre mon confrère renferme une dose de jalousie et d'envie qui ne laisse aucun doute quant au but. Il est permis de juger sévèrement la partialité de ceux qui minent ainsi la réputation d'un homme. [...]

— **044**

Letter of Léon Stynen to Henry van de Velde, Antwerp, 25 September 1939, and pictures of a trip to Stanford. The pictures show van de Velde, Stynen and Bourgeois (photographer unknown; donation of Mrs. Stynen in 1993)
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 745 Léon Stynen]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND CIAM

The Swiss architect Karl Moser was the first president of CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) and he also attended the Brussels CIAM congress of 1930. Later that year he sent van de Velde a postcard and reminded him of his stay in Brussels. He expressed his admiration about "La Nouvelle Maison", of which he wished to use slides during his lectures. He expressed his hope that he would be able to make a longer trip to Belgium soon. Another postcard from Moser to van de Velde dated from 1933.

(letters 045-046)

— **045**

Postcard of Karl Moser to Henry van de Velde, Zürich, 21 December 1930
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 599 Karl Moser]

Mr. Le directeur van de Velde. Bruxelles
Monsieur et cher ami,

Les belles journées de Bruxelles tournent toujours dans ma mémoire et je suis épris de vos œuvres architecturales et littéraires-philosophiques. Je n'oublierai pas la bonne heure que j'ai passé dans votre jolie maison avec Bourgeois. C'est une maison modèle et je vous demande dans quel journal elle est publiée. J'aimerai bien de me faire venir ces journaux et d'en laisser faire des diapositives pour une conférence. Il y a une température active et chaude dans cette capitale d'un peuple acharné et j'aimerais y pouvoir faire bientôt un séjour à mon aise, sans congrès, sans travail, sans devoirs, seulement pour jouir des amis, de leurs œuvres, de la musique, de la beauté créatrice de la vie.

Toute en vous remerciant des sentiments amicaux dont vous m'avez entouré je vous souhaite aussi bien qu'à Madame une bonne santé, du bon travail et du succès aux aspirations spirituelles. [...]

— **046**

Postcard of Karl Moser to Henry van de Velde, Zürich, 20 July 1933
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 599 Karl Moser]

x 593/1

KARL MOSER

31. XII. 30.

FREUDENBERGSTRASSE 120
ZÜRICH 6

Mr. le directeur Clau De Velle
Bruxelles.

Monsieur et cher ami,
 Les belles journées de Bruxelles restent
 toujours dans ma mémoire et je suis
 épris de vos œuvres architecturales
 et littéraires-philosophiques.
 Je n'oublierai pas la bonne heure
 que j'ai passée dans votre jolie maison
 avec Bourgeois. C'est une maison
 modèle et je vous demande dans
 quel journal elle est publiée. J'aimerais
 voir de me faire venir ces journaux
 et de la même façon des Diapontives pour
 une conférence.

Il y a une température active
 et chaude dans cette capitale d'un
 peuple actif et j'aimerais y pouvoir
 faire bientôt un séjour à mon aise,
 sans contrainte, sans travail, sans
 devoirs, seulement pour jours de
 amis, de leurs œuvres, de la musique,
 de la beauté créatrice de la vie.
 Tout en vous remerciant des
 sentiments amicaux dont vous
 m'avez entouré je vous souhaisite
 aussi bien qu'à Madame une
 bonne santé, du bon travail et
 du succès aux aspirations spirituelles.
 Veuillez agréer Monsieur et cher ami
 mes salutations les meilleures
 K Moser

[...] Sie sind eben immer auf diesem heiligen Weg und die Fackeln der Begeisterung zu unserem Beruf brennen immer weiter, diese reinigender Feuer welche stets die Jugendlichkeit erhalten die Ihnen bis zum letzten Atemzug bestreben sein wird. [...]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND LE CORBUSIER

In 1926 Henry van de Velde had proposed a monumental design for Antwerp's Left Bank (Linkeroever). In 1933 an international competition was organised for the construction of a new city on the Left Bank. Le Corbusier participated, in collaboration with Huib Hoste, Paul Otlet (1868-1944) and Fé Loquet (1876-1942). Based on the competition results a "voorontwerp van plan van aanleg van de linkeroever" (preliminary design of the construction plan for the Left Bank) was developed by P. De Heem and Emiel Van Averbek (1876-1946). It is perhaps in this context that Le Corbusier, in a letter dated 1936, suggests that his "ami et collaborateur" (friend and co-worker) Huib Hoste be included in the supervisory commission, of which van de Velde was also a member.

Le Corbusier and van de Velde recognised each other as pioneers of modern architecture, as can be evidenced from Le Corbusier's contribution to the celebratory issue of "La Cité" in 1933, his dedication to van de Velde in a copy of "La ville radieuse" and a telegram from van de Velde with birthday wishes for Le Corbusier.

In a letter dated 1938 Le Corbusier asked van de Velde whether he could use his connections in regard to Le Corbusier's involvement in the "Exposition internationale de l'Eau" in 1939 in Liège. It is not clear whether or which steps van de Velde took in this context.

(letters and documents 047-50)

— 047

Le Corbusier, *La ville radieuse*, s.l., s.d. [1935] (with dedication to Henry van de Velde, September 1935)

[BTAB KU Leuven, 8B213]

It is as yet unclear on which occasion Le Corbusier gave and dedicated this copy to van de Velde. It probably ended up in the Leuven University Library through Huib Hoste, who collaborated with Le Corbusier on the Linkeroever competition.

'A Henry van de Velde pionnier - avec mon amitié 1935 sept'

— 048

Letter (copy) of Le Corbusier to Henry van de Velde, Paris, 17 March 1936

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 532 Le Corbusier]

'[...] mon ami et collaborateur Huib Hoste [...] qui est un homme très dévoué aux choses de l'esprit moderne à Anvers. Cette ville a besoin d'hommes de cette qualité. Hoste n'est peut-être pas ce qu'on appelle un brillant causeur, mais c'est un homme profondément convaincu. Je suis sûr que vous auriez un vif plaisir à l'avoir à vos côtés dans cette commission. [...]

— 049

Draft for a telegram of Henry van de Velde to Le Corbusier, Oberägeri, s.d. (after 1947)

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 532 Le Corbusier]

'Ardents souhaits longue vie heureuse au génial héraut destiné à signifier au monde entier avènement style moderne'

— 049

Y532/2

Le Corbusier 35 rue de Sèvres Paris

Ardents souhaits longue vie heureuse
au génial héraut destiné à signifier
au monde entier avènement ^{HÉRAUT} style nouveau

van de velde

Exp.
H. v. d. Velde
Oberägeri

ca. clis du jardin de Goethe

— 050

Letter of Le Corbusier to Henry van de Velde, Paris, 2 August 1938

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 532 Le Corbusier]

'[...] Je crois que, si mes amis belges insistaient beaucoup pour que le Pavillon français de Liège me fut confié, le commissaire français n'hésiterait pas à me le confier. Ainsi donc votre rôle pourrait être très important dans cette affaire et c'est pourquoi je me suis permis de vous écrire tout simplement, en vous priant de bien vouloir intervenir de toute urgence auprès de M. Crescent au Ministère des Travaux Publics à Paris, boulevard St-Germain. [...]

3

1940-1947 HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In 1935 Henry van de Velde received his last commission in Belgium, which he also completed: the Technical School in Leuven, which was only finished in 1942, by which time the war was in its second year, and the project of the University Library in Ghent, the construction of which had started in 1933. From 1940 van de Velde continued his pre-war task as “aesthetic consultant”, under German rule albeit, to the “Commissariaat-Generaal voor 's Lands Wederopbouw” (General Commission for the Country's Reconstruction). Here he met Raphaël Verwilghen again, who was the director of the second Directorate-General of Architecture and Urban Planning. Henry van de Velde resigned from his post in 1942. In 1943 his wife Maria Sèthe (b. 1867) died.

The fact that Henry van de Velde had worked as a civil servant under German rule was resented after the liberation. At the time the architect was 82 years old. A trial for collaboration which was launched against him was, however, declared unfounded. He retreated in “La Nouvelle Maison” in Tervuren and became very isolated. In 1947 he moved to Oberägeri (near Zug) in Switzerland, together with his daughter Nele.

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND THE RECONSTRUCTION

The correspondence about his position on the General Commission during the war indicates that van de Velde continued to work more or less in the same way as before the war: he kept a tight rein on matters and wielded his influence when one of his followers asked him to. He published articles in “Bouwkunst en Wederopbouw” (Architecture and Reconstruction) and the French-language version, “Reconstruction”, the commission's journal.

(letters and documents 051-054)

— 051

Note of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, 12 November 1940 (concerning the appointment of ‘artistic counselors’ in each province)

[RV KU Leuven]

[...] Pour ma part, je vois à quels ennuis cela nous expose, dont celui d'être d'un avis différent avec ces conseillers de seconde zone me paraît suffisamment grave pour écarter cette idée. [...]

— **052**

Note of Raphaël Verwilghen to Henry van de Velde, 6 March 1941, with reply of Henry van de Velde, 7 March 1941 (concerning the request of having the collaboration of the architects Jean De Ligne (1890-1985) and Charles Van Nueten (1899-1989) for the Commissariat-Général. Both were teachers at La Cambre, at that moment directed by Herman Teirlinck).

[RV KU Leuven]

[...] Si cela peut aider, j'irai en parler à Teirlinck. [...]

— **053**

Henry van de Velde, 'La reconstruction et l'esthétique', 1 July 1941 (text in slightly altered version published in *Reconstruction*, II, no. 9, August 1941, p. 11-25 and in Dutch translation as 'Wederopbouw en aesthetica' in *Bouwkunst en Wederopbouw*, I, no. 3, September 1941, p. 213-221)

[RV KU Leuven]

— **054**

Note of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Brussels, 21 February 1941 (concerning a more strict control procedure for reconstruction and restoration files, submitted to the Commissariat-Général for the reconstruction)

[RV KU Leuven]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE'S FAREWELL

When van de Velde resigned from his position in 1943 Verwilghen in a confidential memo listed some of the qualities of his "maître" (Master): the fact that he spoke several languages, his good connections, his artistic experience, all qualities which meant his involvement in the Commissariat-Général was very valuable, making it difficult to replace him. And yet Verwilghen also expressed a rare note of criticism: possibly van de Velde was too much of an artist to comply with the rigid structure of a civil service.

In any event Verwilghen was one of the driving forces behind the celebration of van de Velde's eightieth birthday that same year. On that occasion the General Commission presented the architect with an album of reproductions of his work.

In June 1945 the Minister Camille Huysmans notified his friend of any possible accusations brought against van de Velde. The negative perception of van de Velde must be seen in the margin of the Royal Question, which sharply divided Belgian opinion at the time. Auguste Buisseret, whose name is mentioned in the last lines of this letter, was the Minister of Education in the 1945 cabinet and was appointed Minister of the Interior in the cabinet which Camille Huysmans led from 1946-1947. Buisseret was a fervent opponent of Leopold III and condemned his behaviour during the war.

(letters and documents 055-062)

— **055**

Note of Raphaël Verwilghen to J.L. Custers, commissaire-général ad interim of the Commissariat for the reconstruction, Brussels, 16 December 1942 (concerning the resignation and succession of van de Velde as artistic counselor)

[RV KU Leuven]

[...] Quelque soient les mérites de l'œuvre accomplie par M. van de Velde au Commissariat général, on ne peut cacher cependant que son travail présentait le défaut d'être trop personnel, de s'opérer trop souvent en marge de l'administration et de ne pas s'intégrer dans l'action des divers rouages des Services techniques. [...]

— **056**

Raphaël Verwilghen, 'Henry van de Velde, adviseur-generaal voor Bouwkunde' (speech held at 20 May 1943, on the occasion of the celebration of Henry van de Velde at his departure from the Commissariaat-Generaal voor 's Lands Wederopbouw)

[RV KU Leuven]

— **057**

Special issues of the periodical *Bouwkunst en Wederopbouw*, III no. 4, 1943, p. 71. and no. 9-10-11-12, 1943, pp. 178-179

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1311/11 and 1311/10]

— **058**

Aan prof. Henry van de Velde, adviseur-generaal bij het Commissariaat-Generaal voor 's Lands Wederopbouw, ter gelegenheid van zijn 80sten verjaardag. Cover page of the album with reproductions of the work of Henry van de Velde, presented by the Commissariaat-Generaal voor 's Lands Wederopbouw in 1943 to van de Velde

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 199]

— **059**

Letter of the Société Belge des Urbanistes et Architectes modernistes (SBUAM), Brussels, 4 April 1943, with congratulations for the eighty-year old van de Velde, honorary president of the SBUAM

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 199]

— **060**

Letter (copy) of Henry van de Velde to the sisters of Raphaël Verwilghen, (Tervuren), 24 April 1943

[RV KU Leuven]

Van de Velde's wife Maria Sèthe died a few weeks after this letter, after a long illness, and fifty years after van de Velde and Maria Sèthe met for the first time at Cadzand (Netherlands). In *Geschichte meines Lebens* van de Velde dedicates a short paragraph to her: '[...] Mehr als ein halbes Jahrhundert hatte sie uns ihre Liebe geschenkt, für uns gesorgt, die Kinder mit aller Zärtlichkeit gross werden lassen. Sie war die treue

Helferin, die mich bei der Erfüllung meiner Mission jederzeit unterstützte. [...] Der Tod dieser wundervollen Frau war eine Erlösung für sie wie für uns. [...] [GML 1962, p. 444].

'[...] L'état de santé de ma femme, les soins de plus en plus difficiles qu'il exige, son régime, tout conjure à barrer la route à tout espoir et à tout bonheur. Nele et moi devons nous résigner. Le printemps va nous ramener dans notre voisinage. Nele aura quelques distractions à pouvoir s'échapper pour de courtes visites. [...]

— **061**

Photograph of Henry van de Velde and his daughter Nele van de Velde (in the centre) in Tervuren (photographer unknown, s.d., before 1947)
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 188 b]

— **062**

Letter of Camille Huysmans to Henry van de Velde, Antwerp, 23 June 1945, 'Personnelle'
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 485 Huysmans]

'[...] J'ai déjà entretenu le Ministre de divers points et notamment votre cas, - et je lui ai écrit également à ce sujet, à titre personnel. Mais je n'ai obtenu satisfaction sur aucun des points que j'ai soulevés. J'ai l'impression qu'il ne veut rien faire en ce moment. Si je suis bien informé, on vous reprocherait des voyages pendant l'occupation, ainsi que des visites honorifiques qui auraient été faites à Tervueren, par certains collaborateurs. J'ai lu des compte-rendus de ces visites, à Londres, dans les journaux de l'époque. Il ne faut donc pas songer à faire de démarches nouvelles, en ce moment. L'affaire du Roi divise les Belges en deux. Les partisans de la concentration réactionnaire d'une part, - et les autres. On vous range même parmi les premiers. Il paraît que vous auriez pris attitude. Je ne sais ce qui en est, mais toutes ces informations, vraies ou fausses, créent le malaise. [...]

4

1947-1957 HENRY VAN DE VELDE'S LAST YEARS

In 1947 van de Velde moved to Oberägeri (near Zug) in Switzerland with his daughter Nele. He dedicated the last ten years of his life to his autobiography. He died on October 25th, 1957, at the age of 94, in the “Zum Roten Kreuz” clinic in Zürich. On October 31st, 1957 he was buried alongside his wife in Tervuren. Huib Hoste died a few months earlier. In spite of his exile van de Velde maintained intense contacts with Belgian and international architects during his Swiss period. Belgian correspondents during this period include Jean-Jules Eggericx, Raphaël Verwilghen, Léon Stynen, Eugène Delatte, Paul-Amaury Michel and Edward Van Steenberghe. Letters from Alvar Aalto, Eric Mendelsohn, Richard Neutra, J.J.P. Oud, Sigfried Giedion, Alfred Roth and other correspondents point to the international recognition of van de Velde as a “pioneer of modern architecture”. Requests for cooperation to publications and special issues confirm his status.

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

In 1947 the Swiss architect and publisher Alfred Roth prepared Henry van de Velde's arrival in Switzerland, ensuring that the architect and his daughter Nele could move into a bungalow which he designed in 1939. In 1957, when the owner wished to move back into the bungalow himself, Roth and van de Velde together designed a small house nearby, where van de Velde spent the last months of his life.

Roth struck up a warm friendship with van de Velde and his daughter Nele. He strived to have van de Velde's memoirs published and brought various international architects to Oberägeri so they could meet with van de Velde.

Van de Velde felt a special kinship with Erich Mendelsohn, considering him a disciple and heir and was therefore deeply saddened when he learnt that he had died in 1953. He asked the architect's widow, Luise Mendelsohn, with whom he kept in touch even after Erich's death, to preserve the core of her husband's documents in an archive, library or museum.

The correspondence with the American architect Richard Neutra was also very cordial. In a letter to Neutra from 1953 van de Velde addresses him as “Cher et tres estimé frère de lettres pour l'avènement d'un style du XXème siècle” (My dear and esteemed correspondent about the introduction of a twentieth-century style). Neutra visited van de Velde in 1956.

The German architect Thilo Schoder corresponded with van de Velde from Norway. **(letters and documents 063-081)**

— **063**

Letter of Alvar Aalto a.o. to Henry van de Velde, s.l. (?), 24 September 1948
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 220 Aalto]

Quite a few persons of the circle of friends of the Finnish architect Alvar Aalto were acquainted to Henry van de Velde. In 1948 they write a letter together to van de Velde, signed by, amongst others, Aino Marsio-Aalto (Aalto's first wife), Sigurd Frosterus, Sigfried Giedion, Maire Ahlström-Gullichsen (1907-1990), Harry Gullichsen (1902-1954), the Finnish philosopher and diplomat Yrjö (Georg) Hirn (1870-1952) and the architect and architecture critic Nils Erik Wickberg (1909-2002).

'Versammelt im Hause Alvar Aaltos senden wir Ihnen unseren dankbarsten Gruss Sigurd Frosterus
Cher Maître, on a tellement et si gentilement parlé de vous, que nous voulons tous vous saluer chaleureusement. Giedion
Mit herzlichsten Grüssen Aino Aalto
Vielen vielen Dank für den schönen Tag am Aegeri see am 8.6. 48
Viele, viele Grüsse. Schönsten Dank für unfergesslige Stunden bei Ihnen
Tschus Alvar Aalto
Hommage d'admiration
Georg Hirn
Nils Erik Wickberg
Maire Gullichsen
Maija Heilieinkeino
(Harry?) Gullichsen'

— **064**

Letter of Alvar Aalto to Henry van de Velde, Munkkiniemi, 28 September 1949
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 220 Aalto]

Aalto refers to the Swedish art historian and critic Gregor Paulsson (1890-1977). Paulsson was important in the development of industrial design in Sweden and was influenced by the Deutsche Werkbund. Aalto and Paulsson met at the Stockholm Exhibition of 1930 of which the latter was one of the instigators.

'[...] J' étais bien heureux de pouvoir constater, que Paulsson avait trouvé de Vos travaux précisément cette caractère propre de Votre singulière balance. Personne de nous autre n'a pu tenir son ligne si pur, malgré les changements du temps. Je fais l'effort de suivre la même méthode. Vous savez vous-même, que Vos conseils sont très bienvenus et que les mots justes à la bonne place donnent un grand soutien surtout qu'ils aient la même direction que j'aie essayé toujours de respecter. [...]

— **065**

Letter of Thilo Schoder to Henry van de Velde, Flekkefjord (Norway), 10 November 1952
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 705 bis Thile Schoder]

'[...] Die Zeit des Jugendstiles war eine bedauerliche, aber notwendige Entwicklungsperiode, die Ihnen – besonders in seinen Entartungen – zu Unrecht in die Schuhe geschoben wird; ich darf wohl sagen, dass das Missverständnis und der sinnlose Missbrauch Ihres Schaffens es waren, die den hemmungslosen Jugendstil wuchern liessen, während Sie

selbst hoch ueber diesen Auswuechsen trohnten und in die folgenden 50 Jahre konsequent die Philosophie Ihrer Erkenntnisse und die Formgebung Ihrer Ideen und Ihres Schaffens ausbauten. [...]

— **066**

Letter of Thilo Schoder to Henry van de Velde, Flekkefjord (Norway), 19 October 1954
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 705 bis Thilo Schoder]

[...] Ich bewundere Ihre Schrift, liebster Professor. Es ist kaum zu glauben, dass diese die Schriftzüge eines 90 jährigen Mannes sind. Einfach unglaublich !!! [...]

— **067**

Letter of Erich Mendelsohn to Henry van de Velde, San Francisco, 4 May 1949
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 579 Mendelsohn]

‘Beloved master,
I am writing this letter in English [...], I don’t want to address you in German or avail myself of a language which, primarily noble and expressive as it is, has for both of us too many ignoble and inforgettable connotations. [...]

— **068**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Luise Mendelsohn, Oberägeri, 1 October 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 580 bis Mendelsohn]

[...] Me diriez vous, un jour, ce que vous aurez décidé de faire pour que la documentation de son œuvre restât unie dans une archive, bibliothèque ou musée où son oeuvre restera une source unique et vivante, où puiseront, à l’avenir, tout ceux qui poursuivront la création de ce style auquel Eric Mendelsohn aura contribué plus que moi et d’autres. [...]

— **069**

Letter of Sigfried Giedion to Henry van de Velde, Zürich, 10 August 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 418 bis Sigfried Giedion]

Giedion, who had just finished his 1955 publication *Architektur und Gemeinschaft*, prompted van de Velde to illustrate his books with pictures of his buildings and designs. According to Giedion this is necessary, because the postwar generation in Germany would no longer know van de Velde’s architecture.

— **070**

Letter of Paul-Amaury Michel to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 29 December 1947
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 587 Paul-Amaury Michel]

Like many of van de Velde’s correspondents, Paul-Amaury Michel, a pupil of Eggericx’ architecture class in La Cambre, refers to van de Velde’s memoirs. He hopes that van de Veldes stay in Switzerland will help him to actually finish and publish these memoirs.

[...] que l’air magnifique de la Suisse vous donne une santé florissante et vous repose des soucis et des tracas de toute sorte ... Que cette réclusion soit fructueuse pour le travail qu’il vous reste à accomplir et la mission que vous nous devez de poursuivre victorieusement ! [...]

ce 7 Oct. 55

Très chère madame Eric Mundelshof, très chère amie,

Comme qu'on dit bien sûr que je suis un être au mort et que je refuse tout ce que ce coup foudroyant est pour Vous et pour moi aux quels le destin arraché brutalement, déchire les liens qui nous attachait ^à lui!

Je me souviens compte de la douleur que Vous éprouvez. Je me souviens subitement privé d'un des amis auxquels j'avais le plus attaché, d'un disciple qui me venait avec une constante fermeté ^{de} son affection. J'ai suivi, de mon côté, l'échange mutuellement magnifiquement de ses dons et l'évolution de son génie depuis 30 ans.

Pourquoi ^{ma fille} elle avait-elle écrit - j'en ai à l'esprit - que elle avait écrit cette lettre qui m'annonçait la mort d'un être à qui elle n'avait pas ni amasser la terrible nouvelle?

- J'ai été moi-même en danger de mourir et suis resté depuis plus de 3 semaines. Mon médecin a défendu à ma fille de me faire part de ce qui me frappait avant que je n'aie retrouvé les forces pour supporter le maudit coup!

Et c'est que depuis que mon état de santé est redevenu à peu près normal qu'il a permis à ma fille de me montrer la lettre de la directrice d'Eric et qu'il m'a permis de m'adresser quelques instants - aujourd'hui - à ma table de travail pour Vous dire quelques mots, un souvenir, mais aussi que j'aime retrouver certains, devant l'absence réitérée.

Et au moins de la part de la douleur que je refuse de pouvoir rien faire pour Vous aide à porter ce poids écrasant que Vous avez à porter, dès maintenant.

- Je n'ai rien fait par oubli - j'en ai conscience - ne devant que je n'aurais pu payer ma dette de reconnaissance et proclamer mon admiration pour le plus génial de mes disciples.

Cette heure vaudra, digne, noble et souveraine. Je me souviens des dignes, nobles et souverains, lettres que Eric Mundelshof a mandées durant son séjour à Berne jusqu'à ce moment-ci.

Enfin moi Vous n'hésitez de ne pas oublier les supports d'aujourd'hui de Bernart je souhaite sincèrement de garder avec Vous.

Vous m'embrassez de tout, n'est-ce pas, dès que Vous avez retrouvé quelques forces et souvenirs.

- Et je regrette tellement de la séparation. Me diriez-vous, un jour, ce que Vous avez écrit de faire pour que la documentation de son œuvre restât réunie dans une archive, bibliothèque ou musée où son œuvre restera une source unique et vivante et fructifère, d'avenir, pour ceux qui poursuivraient la création de ce style auquel Eric Mundelshof aura contribué plus que moi et d'autres.

- N'oubliez pas, grande et admirable amie, un vieillard qui pleure - tant qu'il vivra - la perte d'un de ses plus fidèles fervents disciples et d'ailleurs pour que personne la perte d'un génie qui a frappé au moment même où il disparaît du maximum des moyens pour l'enseignement définitive du style du XX^e siècle.

- Je souhaille ardemment Vous voir réunies avec courage, et toujours de bien et de destin Vous font la suprême tristesse.

Je desire à Vos pieds l'hommage respectueux et affectueux de toute ma confiance.

De tout divin
van de Velde

— **071**

Letter of Paul-Amaury Michel to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 30 March 1948
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 587 Paul-Amaury Michel]

[...] Vous aurez sans doute durant ces longues journées, mis de l'ordre dans vos livres et vos papiers et il ne vous restera dès lors aucune excuse pour écrire vos mémoires. Combien de temps vous faudra-t-il pour mettre ce travail au net et quand envisagez-vous la publication ? [...]

— **072**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Richard Neutra, Los Angeles, 14 October 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 609 Richard Neutra]

These letters of 1955 probably discuss Neutra's article "Architektur als angewandte Physiologie", published in *Baukunst und Werkform* (1955, 6).

[...] il me pèse d'autant plus de devoir vous avouer qu'il ne me paraît pas probable que vos écrits compliqués, cérébraux, vos propos abscons si distants, vos créations architecturales de si radieuse et si exhubérante vitalité que vos conceptions philosophiques et savantes sans doute, mais embrouillées, confuses et rébutantes à un cervau comme le mien, épris de clarté et du discours simple, concis et frappant, des définitions nettes et à « l'emporte-pièce », servent la cause dont vos créations sont les radieux et authentiques exemples. [...] Je ne peux vous accompagner quand vous quittez cet atelier pour revêtir la toge du professeur ou le sévère habit du conférencier. [...]

— **073**

Letter of Richard Neutra to Henry van de Velde, Los Angeles, 28 October 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 609 Richard Neutra]

'Sehr verehrter Meister,
[...] Vielleicht ist die deutsche Uebersetzung meiner Gedanken etwas verworren gewesen. Es lag mir gewiss fern, kathederrhaft und Professoral zu erscheinen [...]
Ihr ergebener, und mit stets gleicher und tiefer Bewunderung
Richard Neutra'

— **074**

Postcard of J.J.P. and Annie Oud to Henry van de Velde, 12 June 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 627 J.J.P. Oud]

The Dutch architect J.J.P. Oud kept a correspondence with van de Velde of over twenty years. In his letters of the 1950s he addresses van de Velde as "Lieber Hochverehrter Meister" or "cher maître en beste vriend".

— **075**

Letter of Léon Stynen to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 19 October 1950
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 745 Léon Stynen]

'Merci mon très cher van de Velde, pour avoir bien voulu m'appeler à la direction de votre école, la plus belle et la seule qui en Belgique soit complète. Ma joie comme mon souci, vous le savez, seront de travailler pour une meilleure architecture, où nous verrons la peinture, la sculpture et les arts qui leur sont associés, participer à son rayonnement. Demain quand je prendrai place à votre bureau, je penserai à vous avec beaucoup de fierté. [...]

— **076**

Letter of Eugène Delatte to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 28 June 1949
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 334 Eugène Delatte]

[...] Nous attendons avec impatience la parution de votre article dans *Werk*. Il sera très intéressant de connaître le point de vue d'un homme tel que vous sur les tendances actuelles de l'architecture et nous pensons bien tirer grand profit des idées que vous ne manquerez pas d'émettre. Le point doit être fait et vous êtes le seul à le faire. [...]

— **077**

Letter of Eugène Delatte to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 28 July 1952
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 334 Eugène Delatte]

Van de Velde closely follows the project of the Faculty of Letters at the Ghent University, an extension of the library complex he designed and which was only completed after the war. From 1946 onwards, the project is led in Belgium by the architects Eugène Delatte (1910-1997) and Fernand Steppé (1910-1958). Delatte studied at La Cambre and worked as draughtsman for van de Velde.

[...] Il est bien évident, [...] qu'en ce qui me concerne, je reste votre délégué et que mon seul souci est de veiller à ce que l'oeuvre commencée par vous s'achève à votre entière satisfaction. [...]

— **078**

Letter of Eduard Van Steenberghe to Henry van de Velde, Antwerp, 16 July 1948
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 802 Eduard Van Steenberghe]

— **079**

Letter of Edward Van Steenberghe to Henry van de Velde, Antwerp, April 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 802 Eduard Van Steenberghe]

After some insistence of Edward Van Steenberghe (1925-2003), Henry van de Velde agrees to write a preface to the publication on Van Steenberghe's father, the Antwerp architect Eduard Van Steenberghe (1889-1952). It is the last publication of van de Velde.

[...] Uw werk heeft ons streven mogelijk gemaakt en nog zijn de fundamenten die U legde de basis waarop wij bouwen. [...] Ik weet dat ik veel van Uw kostbare tijd en van Uw rust vraag als ik om een woord ten geleide verzoek [...]. Toch zou ik het betreuren het boekje te zien verschijnen zonder dit woord van de zo bewonderde meester. [...]

— **080**

Henry van de Velde, 'Inleiding' (introduction to the publication on architect Eduard Van Steenberghe), 9 October 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 802 Eduard Van Steenberghe]

— **081**

Victor Van den Berghe, *Eduard Van Steenberghe, bouwmeester en binnenhuiskunstenaar* (with a preface of Henry van de Velde), 1889-1952, Antwerp, 1955
[EVS APA]

HENRY VAN DE VELDE NINETY

Alfred Roth organised a party to celebrate van de Velde's ninetieth birthday in Zug, near Oberägeri. Again several articles were published in various international architecture magazines, including in Roth's own magazine "Werk". Van de Velde received heaps of telegrams, from Belgian modernists such as Eggericx as well as from his international "fellow pioneers of modern architecture", Frank Lloyd Wright and Walter Gropius, and from Philip Johnson (1906-2005), the director of the Department of Architecture and Design of MOMA in New York.

(letters and documents 082-089)

— **082**

Offprint of Alfred Roth, 'Henry van de Velde zum 90. Geburtstag', in *Werk*, XL, no. 4, April 1953, with a dedication of Roth to van de Velde, 3 April 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/4]

— **083**

Postcard of Henry van de Velde, Oberägeri, April 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 A]

— **084**

Telegram of Jean-Jules Eggericx to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, 1 April 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 A]

— **085**

Letter of Philip Johnson to Henry van de Velde, New York, 19 March 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 B]

[...] At last you have arrived at the age of ninety – with your reputation and your accomplishments supreme in the world. May I congratulate you on living to see the time when the whole world of art and architecture looks to you and your designs with the admiration they deserve. It is your good fortune to be a prophet, and live to see the prophecy fulfilled. My pleasantest memory of my last summer's European trip was my talk with you. I have been trying since to arrange a lecture tour for you in this country, but so far with no success. Maybe next year. [...]

— **086**

Telegram of Sigfried Giedion to Henry van de Velde, Cambridge (Mass.), 3 April 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 B]

— **087**

Telegram of Walter Gropius to Henry van de Velde, Cambridge (Mass.), 2 April 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 B]

— **088**

Letter of Frank Lloyd Wright to Henry van de Velde, Taliesin West, 26 March 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 200 B]

'Dear van de Velde: Happy birthday to you, a gallant crusader for the better thing'

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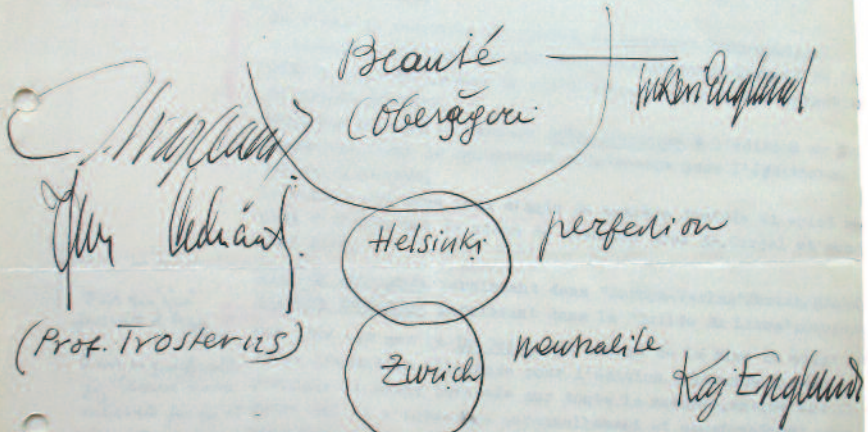
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|||||
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tous vos amis vous présentent
 les hommages les plus respectueux

Elsa Aalto

A Roth

Helsinki November 17-53

— 089

Letter of Alfred Roth and others Henry van de Velde, Helsinki, 17 November 1953
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 685 Alfred Roth]

Signed by, amongst others, Alfred Roth, Sigurd Frosterus, Alvar Aalto, Elsa Aalto (1922-1994, Aalto's second wife), Kaj Englund (1905-1976). The letterhead is of the Savoy Restaurant (Helsinki – Helsingfors), of which Alvar and Aino Aalto designed the interior.

'Tous vos amis vous présentent les hommages les plus respectueux.'

HENRY VAN DE VELDE AND RAPHAËL VERWILGHEN

Van de Velde continued to correspond intensely with Raphaël Verwilghen. The correspondence includes the annual New Year's and birthday wishes, reports about the state of "La Nouvelle Maison", where Verwilghen acted as some sort of concierge in the forties and fifties, and passages in which van de Velde expressed his fear that he would be unable to finish his memoirs. He described how he had difficulty remembering certain intense periods of his life and how his physical discomforts complicated the writing process. In 1955 van de Velde's daughter Thylla died, prompting Verwilghen and Léon Stynen to express their condolences in very personal letters. In his letters from 1956 and 1957 van de Velde gradually started to bid farewell to life in a number of poignant passages.

(letters and documents 090-103)

— 090

Postcard of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, (Oberägeri), 20 April 1953
[RV KU Leuven]

'[...] Je ne suis pas encore tout à fait remis d'une très mauvaise grippe et mon anniversaire me vaut un surcroît de fatigue [...]'

— 091

Postcard of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, (Oberägeri), 29 November 1953
[RV KU Leuven]

'Mon cher Professeur,
Je reçois des nouvelles bien alarmantes concernant l'état de ma maison de Tervuren. Je vais devoir faire de sérieuses réparations. L'une de celles-ci me paraît [...] du chauffage au mazout que mon locataire aurait installé. Thyl veut consulter quelque artisan du métier, à Tervuren. J'ai peur d'être entraîné à des frais importants alors qu'il y aurait bien de défendre à mon locataire de chauffer au mazout ! La cheminée n'a pas été conçue pour un chauffage à l'huile. [...]'

Vous vous êtes refait une situation
 Tim, chez R. Verwilghem, digne
 de vos talents et connaissances,
 que les uns et les autres profitent
 à notre pays.

Je me suis pas encore tout à fait
 remis d'une très mauvaise grippe et
 mon anniversaire me vaut un
 surcroît de fatigue. Dites, de votre
 part, au Commissaire général, que
 je conserve le meilleur souvenir de
 nos rapports. Avec votre, à tous
 van de Velde

20-4-53



à Mesdemoiselles, à M^r. Raphaël Ver.
 Wilghem
 Chaussée de Hoogvorst
Tervuren (Brab.,
 (Belgique))

— **092**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 6 December 1953
[RV KU Leuven]

'[...] C'est que prenant de jour en jour une conscience plus nette de la lutte que j'aurai encore à mener contre la déchéance physique et l'assaut final, toute contrariété nouvelle m'est un poids de plus dont l'ensemble m'entraînera malgré tout l'effort de résistance dont je suis encore capable pour éviter la noyade avant que j'aurai pu terminer l'œuvre à laquelle je me suis rivé. [...]

— **093**

Letter of Raphaël Verwilghen to Henry van de Velde, Tervuren, 3 April 1954
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 813 Raphael Verwilghen]

'[...] La date du 3 avril évoque un anniversaire qui est particulièrement cher aux amis de l'Art Moderne, qui non seulement admirent votre œuvre grandiose, mais encore professent un véritable culte pour celui qui, malgré son grand âge, continue généreusement la lutte qui fut l'essence même de sa vie. Permettez à vos amis de Tervuren, dont je suis ici l'interprète, de vous présenter, eux aussi, en ce jour anniversaire, leurs hommages et de formuler le vœu très sincère de pouvoir, souvent encore, vous exprimer leur vive admiration ainsi que leur très respectueuse mais non moins profonde affection. [...]

— **094**

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 7 December 1954
[RV KU Leuven]

Travail – soucis, la présence de Thylla son chagrin et son inquiétude d'avoir à se refaire une vie, à trouver une situation – où? Et ses scrupules d'être en attendant à ma charge ... Tout cela me fait perdre de vue bien des choses qui exigent pourtant que je m'en occupe. [...] Si peu je vous pose de questions, mon cher Raphaël Verwilghen et plus je me gêne d'abuser. Un homme qui se noie appelle au secours sans se demander s'il abuse [...]

— **095**

Postcard of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 27 November 1955 (with the message of the decease of van de Velde's daughter Thylla Kröller-van de Velde)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **096**

Letter of Raphaël Verwilghen to Henry van de Velde, Tervuren, 3 December 1955
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 195 ter]

'Cher Maître,
Mes sœurs et moi, avons été consternés d'apprendre le décès de votre fille Thylla. Nous nous sommes, aussitôt unis de pensée avec elle, mais surtout avec Vous et Nele, qui devez ressentir si péniblement ce brusque départ. [...]

— 097

Letter of Léon Stynen to Henry van de Velde, Brussels, s.d. (1955)
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 195 ter]

'[...] La mort de Thylla nous a bouleversés ma femme et moi. Hélas ! devant cet affreux malheur les mots sont tellement inutiles... Nous nous souvenons qu'à la mort de notre enfant, il y a vingt ans déjà, vous nous avez réconfortés par un regard si simple, d'affection et d'espoir ; aujourd'hui cher grand ami, chère Nele, si je n'étais cloué au lit par une mauvaise bronchite, je viendrais aussi vous embrasser et vous aider à passer les heures les plus tristes et les plus angoissantes de votre vie. [...]

— 098

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 21 June 1956
[RV KU Leuven]

Van de Velde refers to the news that he will have to leave the 'Bungalow'. In the spring of 1957 he moves to a small house in the neighbourhood, in which he will pass the last few months of his life.

'[...] Je suis confus et abattu [...].

Parmi tout ce que nous perdons, rien ne m'est plus précieux que ma minuscule petite table de travail, la vue sur le lac, l'horizon et ... mon médecin ! Où irons nous l'hiver prochain avec nos deux chiens (Thylla nous ayant laissé le sien!). Où trouverons nous pour le temps qui me reste encore à vivre, un abri ? [...] Mes amis suisses ne m'abandonneront pas; cherchent à me garder ici. Zürich est devenu le centre culturel et artistique le plus important de l'Europe [...]. Je m'y sens sur le plan international; plus mondial. [...].

J'en suis arrivé au dernier chapitre du livre que j'écris [...] et je me sens à la merci de mes yeux au sujet desquels la plus grande sommité suisse que je viens de consulter ne me laisse aucun espoir que je conserverai la vue encore plus longtemps que quelques semaines. Vous ne deviendrez pas absolument aveugle me disait-il, mais ne pourrai plus lire ni écrire. Ne m'en demandez pas plus pour aujourd'hui. Je suis arrivé au bout de mes forces. Je jette un regard désespéré vers le lac, le sublime spectacle qui s'étale devant moi. [...]

'[...] La maladie, la déchéance physique me tient alité ou couché sur le divan durant des semaines, de constantes et diverses piqûres me permirent de doubler le cap de mon 93^e anniversaire, au repas duquel n'assistèrent que deux amis, un suisse et un hollandais. Il me semblait plus agir, gesticuler, parler que comme un robot [...].

Cher ami, depuis la mort de Thylla Krölller le destin s'acharne à me poursuivre. [...]

— 099

Letter of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 24 November 1956
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 121]

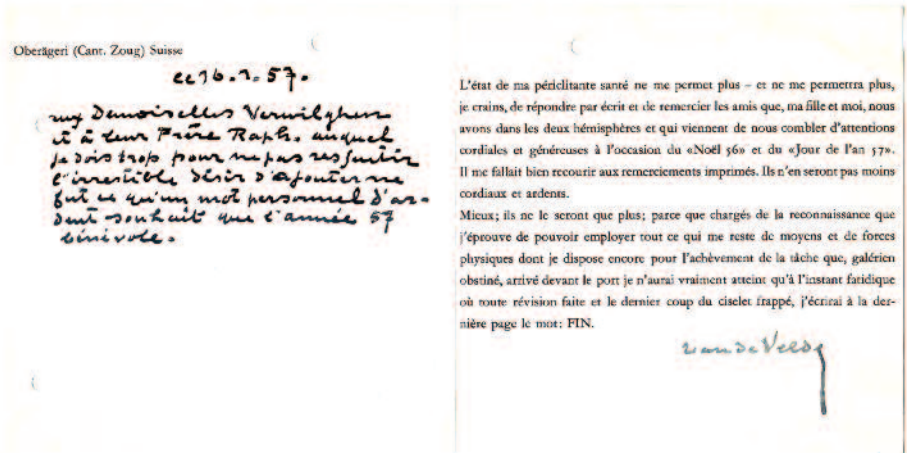
[...] Une fois de plus – depuis que j'ai subi l'effondrement de mon activité à Weimar – le destin me poursuit inlassablement. Je ne pourrai plus rien entreprendre que je pourrai achever. Si votre protection n'allait pas réussir, il ne me resterait aucun espoir. J'aurai à confier mon texte et toute ma documentation à quelque archive où quelques historiens d'art et quelques admirateurs en prendront connaissance. Je me résignerai, bien cher ami, avec le même sang-froid et la même fierté que ceux que j'ai manifestés après chacun des rudes coups qui m'ont frappé. [...]

— 100

Postcard of Henry van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 16 January 1957
[RV KU Leuven]

'Aux Demoiselles Verwilghen et à leur frère Raph. auquel je dois trop pour ne pas ressentir l'irrésistible désir d'ajouter ne fut ce qu'un mot personnel d'ardent souhait que l'année 57 bénivole.'

— 100



— 101

Letter (draft) of Raphaël Verwilghen to Henry van de Velde, Tervuren, 2 September 1957
[RV KU Leuven]

'Vous aurez appris sans doute le décès de mon excellent ami l'architecte Huib. Hoste, votre collègue à l'Académie Flamande'

— 102

Letter of Henry van de Velde aan Raphaël Verwilghen, Oberägeri, 20 September 1957
[RV KU Leuven]

'Cher ami Professeur Ralph Verwilghen,
Ce n'est que depuis le commencement de ce mois que je commence à respirer et de répondre les lettres qui se trouvent sur ma table. Ce que vous voudriez obtenir de moi est précisément ce que contiendra le manuscrit que je dois encore terminer. C'est tout l'exposé de la germination de l'idée d'un style nouveau basé sur le principe de la conception et d'une esthétique rationnelle. Me désaisir de quelques feuilles me serait tout-à-fait impossible. Il faudra donc patienter et espérer que je conserverai assez de force et de santé pour achever mon manuscrit.[...]

Pictures of Nele van de Velde, s.d. (after 1947).

The large photograph is made by Zoé Binswanger (1930), based in Zürich. The photographer of the small picture is unknown. Zoé Binswanger issued from a family of doctors and psychiatrists, which founded the sanatorium Bellevue in Kreuzlingen (Switzerland). Eversince van de Velde's stay in this sanatorium in 1909 and repeated stays of Nele van de Velde around 1918, the families van de Velde and Binswanger kept up a longstanding friendship. Also Zoé Binswanger's father Kurt was a doctor at the sanatorium between 1918 and 1927, where he met the van de Velde's. After his settling in Zürich and van de Velde's move to Oberägeri, Kurt and his daughter Zoé renewed contact with the van de Veldes.

Zoé Binswanger made a first series of pictures of van de Velde in 1952, as part of her training as a photographer at the Kunstgewerbeschule Zürich. The second series of 1954 she made as an independent photographer. The pictures are now kept by the Museum für Gestaltung in Zürich.

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 184 bis]

5

1957-1963 HENRY VAN DE VELDE AFTER HENRY VAN DE VELDE

After van de Velde's death Raphaël Verwilghen, together with the ISAD La Cambre, was in charge of the architect's posthumous reputation. In 1959 the Henry van de Velde Society was founded. He also maintained contacts with the Henry van de Velde Gesellschaft in Hagen (Germany). The centenary of Henry van de Velde's birth in 1963 marked the start of his final recognition as a pioneer of modern architecture. Raphaël Verwilghen died that same year.

— **104**

Letter (copy) to Camille Huysmans, s.l., 18 October 1957

Probably last letter of Henry van de Velde, who died on 25 October 1957

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 485 Camille Huysmans]

[...] Je suis bien en retard (je nai que des grippés « asiatiquement » autour de moi) [...]

— **105**

'In memoriam' of Camille Huysmans, s.l., s.d.

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 485 Camille Huysmans]

'Ik heb van Henry van de Velde veel geleerd, maar ik weet niet of hij veel geleerd heeft van mij. Wellicht een meer gemeenschappelijke opvatting der politiek, want van de Velde was meer individualistisch gedruild geworden, in zijn Antwerpse geboortestad. Dat personalisme bleek reeds uit zijn literaire stijl, - een constructieve vorm die zo lineair was als zijn bouwkunst. [...]

— **106**

Telegram of Léon Stynen to Raphaël Verwilghen, Brussels, 26 October 1957

[RV KU Leuven]

— **107**

Death notice of Henry van de Velde and acknowledgement on behalf of the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et des Arts Décoratifs de La Cambre*

[RV KU Leuven]

— **108**

Three pictures of van de Velde's last home (photographer unknown)

[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 195]

- **109**
Postcards with pictures of van de Velde's last home, photographed after his death (photographer Eugen Grau/Studio Foto-Optik Grau – Zug)
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 195]
- **110**
Photographs of Henry van de Velde around 1956: van de Velde and Richard Neutra (photographer unknown), 2 photographs with notes of Pierre-Louis Flouquet (Photo Marcel Baugniet), photograph with message of Henry van de Velde to Flouquet, dated April 1955 (photographer unknown)
[PLF KBR]
- **111**
Article Marcel Baugniet, 'L'ermite d'Oberägeri', in *La Maison*, no. 11, 1956
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/9]
- **112**
Article Pierre-Louis Flouquet, 'Vie et mort d'Henry van de Velde', in *La Maison*, 1957
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/14]
- **113**
Cover of the periodical *Bouwen en Wonen*, no. 11, 1957
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/17]
- **114**
Article Lucien Kroll, 'La Leçon de Henry van de Velde', in *La Maison*, no. 12, 1957
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/21]
- **115**
Photograph of Henry van de Velde in Oberägeri, sent to Raphaël Verwilghen by Nele and Thyl van de Velde, 3 April 1958
[RV KU Leuven]
- **116**
Letter of Raphaël Verwilghen to Thyl van de Velde, Tervuren, 3 April 1958
[RV KU Leuven]
- **117**
Speech of Raphaël Verwilghen, French version (with corrections and addenda of Pierre Bourgeois), 28 December 1959 (on the occasion of an exhibition in the Bouwcentrum in Antwerp on Henry van de Velde)
[RV KU Leuven]
- **118**
Draft of a letter to the founding members of the Henry van de Velde Genootschap (1959)
[RV KU Leuven]
-

— **119**

Pierre Bourgeois, with comments of Raphaël Verwilghen, 'Henry van de Velde, fondateur et directeur de l'Institut Supérieur des arts Décoratifs (ISAD) à Bruxelles, 1926-1935' (lecture at the general meeting of the Henry van de Velde Gesellschaft in Hagen, Germany, 21 October 1962)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **120**

Visit of a delegation of the city of Hagen (Germany) and the Henry van de Velde Gesellschaft to the graves of Henry and Maria van de Velde in Tervuren, 3 April 1963 (photographer H. Kessels) (from left to right: Eugène Delatte, Raphaël Verwilghen, dr. Kalthenputh, Jacques Stevens)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **121**

Visit of a delegation of the *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et des Arts Décoratifs de La Cambre* to the graves of Henry and Maria van de Velde in Tervuren, 3 April 1963 (from left to right: Rombaut, Charles Van Nueten, Léon Stynen, Cardijn, Robert Delevoy) (photographer H. Kessels)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **122**

'Séance d'hommage à Henry van de Velde' in the Paleis der Academiën, Brussels, 20 April 1963 (from left to right: Oswald von Nostitz, dr. Kaltenputh, unknown, Thyl van de Velde, Robert Verbanck, Samuel van Deventer)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **123**

'Séance d'hommage à Henry van de Velde' in the Paleis der Academiën, Brussels, 20 April 1963 (from left to right: Dom Watelet, dr. August Hoff, Raphaël Verwilghen, Thyl van de Velde, Lucien Kroll)
[RV KU Leuven]

— **124**

Herman Teirlinck, *Henry van de Velde*, Brussels, 1959.
The playwright and author Herman Teirlinck (1879-1967) was van de Velde's successor at the head of La Cambre. He taught between 1927 and 1947 theory and practice of the theatre. The book is dedicated to 'Aan Thyl van de Velde, mijn schoonzoon'. Thyl married Teirlinck's daughter Leentje in 1929.
[RV KU Leuven]

— **125**

Special issue of the periodical *Casabella continuità*, no. 237, 1960.
[HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1312/26]

The Italian architect Ernesto Rogers (1909-1969) edited as editor in chief of the periodical *Casabella* this issue on the work of van de Velde, with ample attention to

the 'second Belgian period'. The special issue was the result of many contacts and correspondence (1948-1954) with van de Velde. The frontispiece shows a portrait of van de Velde, a woodcut of 1917 by the German artist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938), who was a friend of van de Velde.

— 125



— 126

Letter of Jean van de Voort to Raphaël Verwilghen, 3 December 1959
[RV KU LEUVEN]

After van de Velde's death there are several Belgian initiatives in his remembrance. His former collaborator at the University of Ghent (1926-1936), the art critic Jean van de Voort, proposes to the Royal Academy for Science, Letters and Fine Arts to organise an exhibition in 1960 in Brussels, entitled 'De Belgische Stijl in bouw- en kunstnijverheid' (The Belgian style in architecture and applied arts). The recognition of van de Velde as a key figure in modern architecture was apparently not self-evident. Meanwhile, Van de Voort and others do not want to leave it exclusively to German art historians and the Henry van de Velde Gesellschaft in Hagen to secure van de Velde's posterior fame.

'[...] Enkel 't werk tonen van van de Velde, [...] zou m.i. niet van grote waarde zijn: zij die van de Velde kennen, kennen al is 't misschien oppervlakkig dit werk, anderen zouden afwijzend blijven: Horta-vrienden enz. [...]

— 127

Note of Jean van de Voort, 25 January 1960
[RV KU LEUVEN]

'[...] Zo mag het o.i. niet langer duren, telkens weer Henry van de Velde door de Duitsers als een der hunnen in de Jugendstil onder te dompelen of zelfs als de grote man van die Jugendstil tot gelding te zien brengen. Dat is kunsthistorisch onjuist en ontrukt Henry van de Velde van zijn hechtste plaats, als mens en als kunstenaar. [...]

— 128

Letter of Hans Curjel to Raphaël Verwilghen, Brione sopra Minusio (Switzerland), 15 July 1961
[RV KU LEUVEN]

The German-Swiss art historian Hans Curjel (1896-1974) asks information on van de Velde to Raphaël Verwilghen, with a view to his edition of van de Velde's memoirs in German translation. In his reply of 21 July 1961 Verwilghen elaborates on the questions of Curjel. Curjel had already published *Zum neuen Stil* (München, 1955), an edition with texts of van de Velde.

— 129

Letter of Raphaël Verwilghen to Hans Curjel, Tervuren, 21 July 1961
[RV KU LEUVEN]

— 130

Henry van de Velde, edition and translation by Hans Curjel, *Geschichte meines Lebens*, München, 1962.
[KBR]

— **131**

Letter of M. (Maurits) Naessens to Thyl van de Velde, Brussels, 27 April 1961
[RV KU LEUVEN]

Plans for a major publication on the work of Henry van de Velde take shape. An elaborate proposal by Raphaël Verwilghen is shown to the Genootschap Henry van de Velde. Verwilghen suggests a series of Belgian and international collaborators: Herman Teirlinck, Hans Curjel, Léon Stynen, K.N. Elnó, Klaus-Jürgen Sembach, A.M. Hammacher, Herta Hesse, Jean Van de Voort, Robert Delevoy, Pierre-Louis Flouquet, Salomon van Deventer, ...

— **132**

Raphaël Verwilghen, "Projet de publication d'un livre exhaustif sur Henry van de Velde", Tervuren, 5 May 1961
[RV KU LEUVEN]

— **133**

Robert L. Delevoy (ed.), *Henry van de Velde 1863-1957*, Brussels, 1963
[RV KU Leuven]

— **134**

A.M. Hammacher, *De wereld van Henry Van De Velde*, Antwerp – Paris, 1967
[KBR]

— **135**

Henry van de Velde 1863-1957, Brussels, 1970 (Galerie l'Ecuyer).
[Private collection]

— **136**

Beatrix Baillieul, Hilde Ballegeer, Luc Heyvaert, Hendrik Lambotte, Dirk Laporte, Norbert Poulain, Lucienne Zabeau-Van der Verren, *Een toren voor boeken. Henry van de Velde en de bouw van de Universiteitsbibliotheek en het Hoger Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, Ghent, 1985.
[KBR]

— **137**

Léon Ploegaerts en Pierre Puttemans, *L'oeuvre architecturale de Henry van de Velde*, Brussels - Québec, 1987.
[KBR]

— **138**

Klaus-Jürgen Sembach, *Henry van de Velde*, Stuttgart, 1989.
[Private collection]

— **139**

Léon Ploegaerts (ed.), *Henry van de Velde. Les mémoires inachevés d'un artiste européen, édition critique*, Brussels, 1991 (2 vols).
[KBR]

- **140**
Henry van de Velde, scientific edition directed by Anne Van Loo, *Récit de ma vie. Anvers, Bruxelles, Paris, Berlin. I. 1863-1900*, B, Brussels – Paris, 1992.
[KBR]
- **141**
Henry van de Velde, scientific edition directed by Anne Van Loo, *Récit de ma vie. Berlin, Paris, Weimar. II. 1900-1913*, Brussels – Paris, 1995.
[KBR]
- **142**
Klaus-Jürgen Sembach and Birgit Schulte (eds.), *Henry van de Velde. Een Europees kunstenaar in zijn tijd*, exhibition catalogue, Ghent, 1993.
[Private collection]
- **143**
Fabrice van de Kerckhove, Nicole Walch, Anne Rouzet, Paul Culot, Claudine Lemaire, i.c.w. Pierre Cockshaw, A.M. Hammacher, *Henry van de Velde dans les collections de la Bibliothèque royale Albert 1^{er}*, exhibition catalogue, Brussels, 1993.
[KBR]
- **144**
Steven Jacobs, Henry van de Velde. *Wonen als kunstwerk, een woonplaats voor kunst*, Leuven, 1996
[KBR]
- **145**
Thomas Föhl en Sabine Walter (eds.), *Leidenschaft, Funktion und Schönheit. Henry van de Velde und sein Beitrag zur Europäischen Moderne*, Weimar, 2013
[Neues Museum, Weimar [24.03-23.06.2013]
[Private collection]
- **146**
Hellmut Th. Seemann en Thorsten Valk (eds.), *Prophet des Neuen Stil. Der Architekt und Designer Henry van de Velde*, Weimar, 2013.
[Klassik Stiftung Weimar, Jahrbuch 2013]
[KBR]

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) and Aino Marsio-Aalto (1894-1949)

It is unclear whether the Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto and van de Velde already met before the Second World War, possibly on the occasion of world exhibitions. Aalto was absent on CIAM 1930 in Brussels, but he did visit the Brussels World Exhibition of 1935. Furniture of Aalto was on view in the Swiss Pavilion.

After 1945, Aalto visited van de Velde on several occasions in Switzerland. In *Geschichte meines Lebens* van de Velde calls Aalto 'der geniale finnische Architekt' [GML 1962, p. 262]. He writes a letter to Aalto on the occasion of the decease of his wife Aino Aalto in 1949 (Letter of 6 February 1949):

{...} the importance that I personally attach to you, with your special talent and skill, maintaining your worldwide prominence within the movement that has appeared and conquered as the special style of 'our' era. (...) It is to you more than to others that the young generation of architects and designers look. Dear Alvar Aalto, come here to Switzerland before you start any major projects – a few weeks of deep meditation will give you a clear view of the position you should take at a moment when both the practical and the aesthetic conceptions of the right direction for architecture are in great danger. Come back to us. Our devotion, our deep admiration, and the confidence we have in your creative power will strengthen your faith and redouble the talents you possess. I squeeze your hands hard. Your very devoted van de Velde" [vertaling in Göran Schildt, *Alvar Aalto, his Life*, Jyväskylä, 2007, p. 598-599].

The decease of Henry van de Velde was a heavy blow to Aalto, according to Göran Schildt (p. 766). In the Finnish architectural periodical *Arkkitehti* (11-12, 1957) Aalto published an in memoriam: 'The direct significance of van de Velde and his era cannot be measured, but it is quite possible that present-day architecture would have a much rougher general character were it not for the Continental impulses in a more elegant direction provided by van de Velde and his contemporaries' [quoted in Göran Schildt (ed.), *Alvar Aalto in his own words*, New York, 1998, p. 246-247].

Bauhaus (1919-1933)

In 1919 Walter Gropius was appointed as director of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar, on the recommendation of Henry van de Velde. The Bauhaus was a fusion of the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst and the Grossherzogliche Kunstgewerbeschule, founded by van de Velde in 1902/1904. The school moved in 1925 to Dessau and in 1932 to Berlin, where it was closed in 1933. Gropius was director from 1919 to 1928.

Henry van de Velde had paved the way for the fusion of the education of art, applied arts and architecture, which would all be taught in the Bauhaus, in interaction with one another. Van de Velde conceived the education in the Hoger Instituut voor Sierkunsten / Ter Kamenen – Institut Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs / La Cambre from 1926 onwards

in much the same way, which earned the school the label 'le Bauhaus belge' [Jacques Aron, *La Cambre et l'architecture. Regards sur le Bauhaus belge*, Liège, 1982]. In his text 'Les citadelles' (1955) van de Velde presents five schools - Bauhaus Weimar, Bauhaus Dessau, his own Kunstgewerbeschule in Weimar, the ISAD/La Cambre and the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm (1955) - as strongholds in the defence of the new aesthetics.

From the start, Gropius was confronted with public controversy around the school, about which he writes to van de Velde. The political difficulties of the Bauhaus in the 1920s are at length discussed in letters of Gropius. Van de Velde missed the legendary Bauhaus exhibition in 1923 but did see its catalogue [*Staatliches Bauhaus Weimar 1919-1923*, Weimar - München, 1923; with frontispiece by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy]. He explicitly supported Gropius's approach and confrontation of the rightwing populist attacks. Eventually, the Bauhaus in Weimar is closed on 31 March 1925 and moves to Dessau.

H.P. Berlage (1856-1934)

The Dutch architect Hendrik Petrus Berlage was van de Veldes predecessor as private architect to the art collectionneurs Hélène and Anton Kröller-Müller.

Before engaging Berlage in 1913, the Kröller-Müllers had already contacted the German architects Peter Behrens and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and commissioned them the design of a museum villa, designs which had been rejected.

In 1920 Berlage was succeeded by Henry van de Velde, who designed the villa 'Groot Haesebroek' in Wassenaar (1928-1935), the 'Groot Museum' in Hoenderloo (1921-1929, not realised), and the 'Voorlopig Museum', today Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo (1936-1957), only completed in the year of Henry van de Velde's decease.

Van de Velde and Berlage both lived in The Hague and apparently they wrote to each other to arrange meetings.

Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (1928-1959)

CIAM was founded in La Sarraz (Zwitserland) on the initiative of Le Corbusier. A broad selection of modernist architects were present at the founding meeting: Hannes Meyer (1889-1954), Mart Stam (1899-1986), Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964), Ernst May (1886-1970), Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998), and of the older generation, H.P. Berlage. From Belgium there were Huib Hoste and Victor Bourgeois. Two more correspondents of Henry van de Velde played an important role in CIAM: its first president was the Swiss architect Karl Moser, and the Swiss architectural historian and critic Sigfried Giedion was between 1929 and 1957 secretary-general. Victor Bourgeois was vice-president, together with Ernst May, the architect of *Das Neue Frankfurt*.

Until 1959, Belgian architects played an active role in CIAM: Huib Hoste, Jean-Jules Eggericx, Louis Herman De Koninck (1896-1984), Gaston Eysselinck (1907-1953), Renaat Braem (1910-2001), Léon Stynen, Willy Van der Meeren (1923-2002), Peter Callebout (1916-1970) were all members.

In 1930 the third CIAM-conference was hosted by Brussels. Its theme was 'low- mid- or highrise building?', introduced by Walter Gropius. Le Corbusier introduced some of the ideas he would later publish as *La ville radieuse* (1935). The final CIAM took place in 1959 in Henry van de Velde's Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo.

Jean-Jules Eggericx (1884-1963)

Jean-Jules Eggericx studied at the Brussels academy of fine arts and was a trainee of Victor Horta (1861-1947). During the First World War he stayed in England, where he became acquainted with the Garden City Movement of Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928). The latter's Garden Cities of To-morrow (1898/1902) became his inspiration for the propagation of garden cities as a model for the reconstruction of Belgium after the war. He designed a few much acclaimed garden cities such as Le Logis and Le Floréal in Watermael-Boitsfort, in collaboration with urbanist Louis Van der Swaelmen.

Eggericx was from the beginning active in CIAM and takes a prominent position on the famous picture of CIAM 3 in Brussels (1930), in between CIAM-president Karl Moser and vice-president Victor Bourgeois.

Van de Velde invited Eggericx as teacher at La Cambre, where he would teach until 1955. From 1923 to 1937 he worked in association with Raphaël Verwilghen. In 1937 van de Velde invited the two associates – 'zwei meiner treuesten Schüler und Anhänger' [GML 1962, p. 435] – to design with him the Belgian Pavilion for the Paris World Exhibition of that year.

Sigurd Frosterus (1876-1956), Hugo Westberg, Thilo Schoder (1888-1979)

The Finnish architect and critic Sigurd Frosterus was one of the forerunners of Finnish modernism of the generation of Aalto. In *Geschichte meines Lebens* Henry van de Velde remembers how 'der geniale finnische Architekt Alvar Aalto [...] mir ausdrücklich die grosse Achtung bestätigt [hat], die er und seine Freunde dem gesunden und zugleich sensiblen Schaffen ihres älteren Kollegen [Sigurd Frosterus] entgegenbringen'. [GML 1962, p. 262]

Van de Velde points at Frosterus's important role in Finland: 'Toujours actif, Sigurd Frosterus poursuivit une brillante carrière à Helsinki où ses confrères reconnaissent en lui l'introducteur de mes principes et du style nouveau' (RDMV 1995, p. 185). In an in memoriam at van de Velde's decease, Aalto puts the 'extremely healthy, intellectual

influence' of Frosterus on Finnish architecture – and also on Aalto himself – down to van de Velde's influence on Frosterus [in: *Arkkitehti* (11-12, 1957)], quoted by Göran Schildt (ed.), *Alvar Aalto in his own words*, New York, 1998, p. 246-247].

Frosterus studied architecture at the Technical University of Helsinki (1902). He came to Weimar to be taught by van de Velde as to his theoretical ideas on 'der neue Stil' and stayed there from October 1903 to March 1904. Van de Velde found in Frosterus a loyal and inspiring collaborator: 'Pour moi, ces années 1903 à 1905 et, surtout ma collaboration avec Frosterus, constituèrent une heureuse période de préparation à mon activité à l'institut de Weimar [de Kunstgewerbeschule] et, plus tard, à celui de Bruxelles [ISAD/La Cambre]' [RDMV 1995, p. 190].

Frosterus was introduced in 1903 to Henry van de Velde by Hugo Westberg. This Swedish cabinet-maker was between 1900 and 1917 van de Velde's main collaborator in Berlin and Weimar. In *Récit de ma vie* he is mentioned several times as 'mon dévoué dessinateur' or 'mon dessinateur fidèle', but he was undoubtedly more than a draughtsman [RDMV 1995, p. 92, n. 1].

In the same period, Thilo Schoder attended courses at the Kunstgewerbeseminar in Weimar. He also became a collaborator of Henry van de Velde. Schoder worked from 1912 as an architect, initially strongly influenced by Henry van de Velde. In 1932 he emigrated to Norway. Schoder and van de Velde corresponded intensively between 1933 and 1957.

Sigfried Giedion (1888-1968)

The Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion, who was also engineer, was one of modernist architecture's most influential historiographers and theoreticians. A visit to the *Bauhauswoche* in Weimar in 1923 brought him to modern architecture, as did a meeting with Le Corbusier in 1925. In 1928 he was, with Le Corbusier, a founding member of CIAM and its secretary-general until 1957. His first book on modernist architecture, *Bauen in Frankreich. Eisen, Eisenbeton* was published in Berlin in 1928. From the late 1930s onwards he alternately taught at Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Cambridge, Mass.) and the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zürich.

His book *Space, Time and Architecture. The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941) analyzes contemporary modernism and tries to position it historically and give it a pedigree. This text, which knew many reprints, had a strong influence on the perception of modern architecture and its subsequent historiography.

In the book, Giedion refers to a meeting with Henry van de Velde in 1938, on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Belgian Pavilion (New York World Fair 1939). In his opinion, van de Velde's first house Bloemenwerf (Uccle) was more forward looking than Horta's Hôtel Tassel.

Walter Gropius (1883-1969)

The German architect Walter Gropius studied in Berlin and München. In 1907-1908 he met Karl-Ernst Osthaus (1874-1921) who introduced him to Peter Behrens. Eversince the turn of the century, Osthaus had been an important patron and contact of Henry van de Velde, especially in the industrial town of Hagen.

In 1910 Gropius founded his own office in Potsdam, in association with Adolf Meyer. He earned fame with the design for a factory building in Alfeld (1911-1925) and a model factory building and house for the exhibition of the Deutsche Werkbund in Cologne in 1914. At the same exhibition, Henry van de Velde built his Werkbund-theatre, a key project in his development, and judged by himself as 'einen Meilenstein in der Entwicklung der [...] 'Neuen Architektur'' [a milestone in the development of New Architecture, GML 1962, p. 355]. From 1919 to 1928 Gropius was director of the Staatliches Bauhaus in Weimar – in the buildings of Henry van de Velde – and subsequently in Dessau, in the new Bauhaus-buildings, designed by Gropius and Meyer. Gropius was present in 1930 in Brussels on the third CIAM-conference, where he met Henry van de Velde again. In 1934 he left Germany. After a stay in England, he was appointed professor of architecture at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. and pursued his career there.

Hoger Instituut voor Sierkunsten / Ter Kameren – Institut Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs / La Cambre (ISAD / La Cambre) – Higher Institute of Decorative Arts / La Cambre

In 1922 Henry van de Velde met the Belgian minister of Arts and Sciences, Camille Huysmans, at the home of the Kröller-Müller family. During this meeting, the return of van de Velde to Belgium is discussed for the first time, as is the foundation of an institute for decorative arts. As minister in charge of public education Huysmans lay the foundations for the official installation of the institute in 1926.

Henry van de Velde and the socialist politician Camille Huysmans had already met in 1898, in the context of the Belgische Werkliedenpartij / Parti Ouvrier Belge and the Section d'Art in the Maison du Peuple in Brussels [RDMV 1992, p. 374, n.1 en GML 1962, p. 392]. In 1917 they met again, in Switzerland.

In a letter of 2 March 1926 king Albert I agrees with minister Camille Huysmans's plans, based on a first draft 'dû à notre grand artiste Vandevelde. (...) Il est hautement souhaitable – et je vois que vous l'avez compris – que Vandevelde qui, dans le domaine artistique, a exercé une influence mondiale, soit appelé à en exercer une dans son propre pays' ('of our great artist Vandevelde. It is highly desirable (...) that Vandevelde who, in the field of art, has had such an influence all over the world, would be called to exert this kind of influence in his own country') [HVDV KBR, dossier FSX 1076, no. 23 in the exhibition]. Henry van de Velde reproduces the letter in his autobiography [GML 1962, p. 423-424]. The foundation of the school is confirmed by Royal Decree of 30 November 1926. Van

de Velde becomes its first director, and around the same time takes up a chair at the state university of Ghent, teaching the history of architecture and the applied arts at the Hoger Instituut voor Kunstgeschiedenis en Oudheidkunde.

The first courses at the ISAD/La Cambre take place in 1927, in the buildings of the abbey of Ter Kameren/La Cambre in Ixelles. With the new institute, van de Velde repeated the pedagogical experiment of Weimar [*Repertorium van de architectuur in België*, 2003, p. 559] – i.e. his Kunstgewerbliches Seminar (1902) and subsequently the Kunstgewerbeschule (1907-1915) – which had been the direct predecessor of the Bauhaus, founded in 1919, with Gropius as director. Van de Velde has it that ‘Das ISAD, mein Brüsseler Institut, war die pädagogische Zitadelle die dem Weimarer Bauhaus folgte’ (The ISAD, my Brussels Institute, was a pedagogical citadel following the Bauhaus in Weimar) [GML 1962, p. 427]. He alienates his Seminar, the Kunstgewerbeschule, the Bauhaus as knots in the same ‘Veldian’ tradition, continued in 1955 by the Hochschule für Gestaltung founded in 1955 in Ulm by Max Bill (1908-1994) and Inge Aicher-Scholl (1917-1998). Van de Velde leaves it to history to determine his role in this four-citadels-line: ‘Ich überlasse es der Kunstgeschichte, klarzustellen, welches Institut die erste Zitadelle gewesen ist und welches die Stelle war, an der die Flamme entzündet wurde, die das Feuer der neuen künstlerischen Überzeugungen in alle Welt trug’ [GML 1962, p. 428].

Van de Velde was free to chose the teachers for his school and enrolled several of the ‘young’ modernists who had pleaded for his return in the 1920s, including Huib Hoste, Victor Bourgeois, Antoine Pompe (1873-1980), Louis Van der Swaelmen and Albert Van huffel, as well as Raphaël Verwilghen and Jean-Jules Eggericx. Henry van de Velde considered them as loyal disciples of his ideas [GML 1962, p. 426].

In 1936 Henry van de Velde retired and Herman Teirlinck took over the directorship. After the war, in 1950, the architect Léon Stynen became the last director during van de Velde’s life. Earlier on, Stynen had assisted van de Velde, together with Victor Bourgeois, for the design of the Belgian Pavilion in New York (1939). He was head of the ISAD / La Cambre until 1964. In April 1953, he was present in Zug (Switzerland) to celebrate van de Velde’s ninetieth birthday, a celebration organised by Alfred Roth.

Huib Hoste (1881-1957)

Huib Hoste started out in a rather traditional Gothic Revival context in his birth town Bruges before the First World War. He was, however, acquainted with the work of H.P. Berlage in the Netherlands. During the war, he lived in the Netherlands and was in touch with the avant-garde of Theo Van Doesburg (1883-1931), J.J.P. Oud and De Stijl, but he also kept his distance from them. He wrote architectural pieces in the daily *De Telegraaf* and attained a remarkably high quality level of architectural theory and critique, which was rare on a Belgian and international scale around 1918 [Marcel Smets, *Huib Hoste, voorvechter van een vernieuwde architectuur*, 1972, p. 14]. As a member of the Comité Néerland-Belge d’Art Civique he got in touch with Louis Van der Swaelmen and the preparation of the postwar reconstruction, in which he would play an important

role, together with Raphaël Verwilghen and Victor Bourgeois. His garden cities in Zelzate (Klein Rusland, 1921-1923) and Brussels (Kapelleveld, 1923-1926), in collaboration with Louis Van der Swaelmen, and the Zwarthuis in Knokke (1924) earned him international acclaim. In 1928 he was present, together with Victor Bourgeois, at the founding meeting of Le Corbusier's CIAM in La Sarraz (Switzerland). In 1932-1933 Le Corbusier included him in his team for the competition design for Antwerp Linkeroever (Left Bank).

Van de Velde is very appreciative of Hoste in his memoirs, 'dessen Arbeiten sich durch besondere formale Strenge auszeichnen' (whose work strikes because of its formal rigour) [GML 1962, p. 433]. At the foundation of the ISAD / La Cambre, van de Velde invited Hoste as professor of architecture. However, the aftermath and the trial Hoste was involved in after a building site accident in Bruges in 1926, led to his resignation in 1929. Hoste remained active as an architect, but did get no important commissions anymore. Like Henry van de Velde, he was a writing architect and continued his writing activity, amongst other things as editor of the periodical *Opbouwen* (1928-1937). In *Opbouwen* he published about Henry van de Velde his work. In 1941-1943 he also published in the periodical *Wederopbouw / Reconstruction* van het Commissariaat-Generaal voor 's Lands Wederopbouw (CGLW), in which van de Velde was also involved.

Hoste died in 1957, a few months before Henry van de Velde.

Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret) (1887-1965)

The Swiss architect and theoretician Le Corbusier, pseudonym of Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, is one of the most influential figures in modern architecture and urbanism. He co-founded the periodical *L'Esprit nouveau* (1920-1925), compiled its texts as *Vers une architecture* (1923) and designed many remarkable buildings, such as the Pavillon de l'Esprit nouveau (1925), the Villa Savoye in Poissy (1928-1931), the Unité d'habitation in Marseille (1947-1952), the chapel of Ronchamp (1950-1954) and the city of Chandigarh in India (1950s). His oeuvre, publications, designs and initiatives such as CIAM in 1928 make him one of the key figures of twentieth-century modernist architecture.

Henry van de Velde and Le Corbusier probably met on CIAM 3 (1930, Brussels). Two letters of Le Corbusier to van de Velde date from the 1930s. In both cases, Le Corbusier asks van de Velde to exert his influence: concerning the competition for Antwerp Linkeroever and its continuation afterwards, and concerning the international exhibition, the Exposition de l'eau, organised in Liège in 1939 on the occasion of the completion of the Albert Canal.

In one of the letters, Le Corbusier refers to a meeting in Venice, probably during the international conference 'L'art et la réalité. L'art et l'Etat', organised in late July 1934 by the Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle (later UNESCO). Le Corbusier was one of the key note speakers and van de Velde lectured about 'Kunst en staat'. In the University Archive of the KU Leuven a copy is preserved of Le Corbusier's *La ville radieuse* (1935) with a handwritten dedication of Le Corbusier to Henry van de Velde:

'A Henry van de Velde / pionnier / Le Corbusier / 1935 / sept.' Le Corbusier also contributed, in 1933, to the special issue of *La Cité*, on the occasion of van de Velde's seventieth birthday (*La Cité XI*, April-May 1933).

Erich (Eric) Mendelsohn (1887-1953) and Luise Maas-Mendelsohn (1894-1980)

Erich (Eric) Mendelsohn settled as an architect in Berlin in 1918, after his studies in Berlin and München. He made his reputation with the expressionist Einsteinturm in Potsdam (1917-1921). The Austrian architect was at the time his collaborator. Mendelsohn was, for this design, influenced by Henry van de Velde's Werkbund-theatre in Cologne in 1914.

In 1924 Mendelsohn founded, together with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius, Der Ring, an organisation of progressive architects. In the late 1920s he built several warehouses for Schocken, combining a functional design with a plastic style. In 1933 he left Germany and stayed in Amsterdam with the architect Hendrik Theodorus Wijdeveld (1885-1987). Wijdeveld had already made a special issue of his periodical *Wendingen* on the oeuvre of Mendelsohn in 1926. Later he emigrated to London and worked with Serge Chermayeff (1900-1996). From 1935 he worked for longer periods in Palestin, then a British 'mandated territory'. In 1938 he became a British citizen and changed the spelling of his first name into Eric. In 1941 he emigrated to the United States, where he worked until his death in 1953.

Van de Velde and Mendelsohn met in the Netherlands in 1919, after a lecture by Mendelsohn. In the special issue of *La Cité* [XI, April-May 1933], on the occasion of van de Velde's seventieth birthday, Mendelsohn recounted this meeting: after the speech, van de Velde approached Mendelsohn and congratulated him enthusiastically with the words 'I found a disciple!'. Mendelsohn was also present in Brussels on 8 April 1933, when van de Velde's birthday was celebrated in the Palais des Beaux-Arts.

Van de Velde called Mendelsohn 'un disciple qui me vouait avec une constante ferveur son affection' and 'le plus génial de mes disciples' (letter to Luise Mendelsohn, 1 October 1953, no. 68 in the exhibition). Van de Velde and Mendelsohn corresponded regularly from 1923 to 1953, with an interruption between 1937 and 1946. After Mendelsohn's death, van de Velde kept in touch with his widow Luise Maas-Mendelsohn, who eventually would donate the entire correspondence with van de Velde to the KBR.

Karl Moser (1860-1936)

The Swiss architect Karl Moser was a contemporary of Henry van de Velde. After studying in Zürich and Paris, he worked from 1887 to 1915 in Karlsruhe, together with Robert Curjel (1859-1925), father of Hans Curjel who issued the first version of van de Veldes memoirs, translated into German, *Geschichte meines Lebens* [GML 1962]. Between 1915 and 1936 Moser had his office in Zürich. He designed the Kunsthaus (1904-1910) and

the first concrete church building in Switzerland, the Antoniuskirche (1924-1931), both in Basel. Between 1915 and 1928 Moser taught architecture at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zürich. He there educated several architects who would take up an important role in the development of modern architecture in Switzerland.

At the founding meeting of CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) he was – although absent – appointed as its first president, and was as such present at CIAM 3 in Brussels, where he met Henry van de Velde. He suggested Victor Bourgeois as his successor, but eventually the Dutch architect and urbanist Cornelis van Eesteren (1897-1988) took over the presidency. Like Mendelsohn and Le Corbusier, Karl Moser also wrote in 1933 in the special issue of *La Cité* [XI, April-May 1933] on the occasion of van de Velde's seventieth birthday.

Richard Neutra (1892-1970)

The Austrian architect Richard Neutra studied under Adolf Loos at the Technische Universität of Vienna. In the early 1920s he worked as an assistant of Erich Mendelsohn in Berlin. Neutra left Europe in 1923 to settle in the United States. In 1924-1925 he worked in Frank Lloyd Wright's summer residence Taliesin East in Wisconsin, together with Rudolph Schindler (1887-1953). Subsequently, he started an office in Los Angeles. In 1930 he participated in the CIAM-conference in Brussels, where he probably met Henry van de Velde for the first time. In the same year he was guest lecturer at the Bauhaus in Dessau, on the invitation of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

J.J.P. Oud (1890-1963)

The Dutch architect Johannes Jacobus Pieter Oud is one of the key figures in the Dutch and international avant-garde. He designed the Café De Unie in Rotterdam (1925) and housing projects in Hoek van Holland (1924-1927) and De Kiefhoek (1925-1930) in Rotterdam, where he was the head of the 'Gemeente Woningbedrijf' (city housing office) between 1918 and 1933.

Oud wrote in the periodical *De Stijl*, which was founded in 1917 by Theo Van Doesburg (1883-1931), but he refused in 1918 to sign the Eerste Manifest (first manifesto) of *De Stijl*. He was part of the De Stijl-exhibition in Paris in 1923, designed a group of houses for the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart in 1927 and showed work at the exhibition The International Style in het Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932. In 1928 Sigfried Giedion and Le Corbusier invited him to participate in the foundation of CIAM but he did not show up and would continue to take a rather independent position.

Oud was in touch with Berlage and saw van de Velde regularly during his stay in Wassenaar (The Hague) between 1920 and 1926. Letters from 1922 show how he tried to organise a meeting between van de Velde, Berlage and Peter Behrens, who was in Rotterdam for a lecture. Henry van de Velde and J.J.P. Oud kept up their correspondence until 1954.

Alfred Roth (1903-1998)

The Swiss architect Alfred Roth was trained at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zürich and studied with Karl Moser. He became, on the proposition of Moser, a collaborator of Le Corbusier for the design for the League of Nations Building in Geneva, following the international competition of 1927. In the same year Roth worked as building site architect for Le Corbusier's houses on the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. Between 1928 and 1930 Roth worked as an architect in Sweden (Göteborg). His own work, such as the Doldertal neighbourhood in Zürich (1935-1936, in collaboration with Emil Roth and Marcel Breuer), clearly shows the strong influence of Le Corbusier.

In 1939-1940 Roth published *Die Neue Architektur*, an overview of modern architecture of his time. Between 1943 and 1957 he was editor-in-chief of the Swiss architectural review *Werk*. In 1956 Alfred Roth became professor at the Technische Universität Zürich and lectured at several universities all over the world. In 1962 a special issue of *Werk* was devoted to Henry van de Velde, with excerpts from *Geschichte meines Lebens*. Roth also published *Begegnung mit Pionieren: Le Corbusier, Piet Mondrian, Adolf Loos, Josef Hoffmann, Auguste Perret, Henry van de Velde* (Basel - Stuttgart 1973).

Roth designed the 'Bungalow' in Oberägeri in which van de Velde lived from 1947 to early 1957. Nearby, he also built the second bungalow, designed together with van de Velde, where the latter spent the last few months of his life. In 1953 Alfred Roth had organised the celebration on the occasion of van de Velde's ninetieth birthday in Hotel Aklin in Zug, at which, among others, Léon Stynen, Ernesto Rogers, Sam Van Deventer and Hans Curjel were present.

Léon Stynen (1899-1990)

Léon Stynen trained as an architect at the Antwerp academy. He realised an important oeuvre and, moreover, played an important role in the development of architectural education in Belgium. In 1948 he became head of the architecture department of the Antwerp academy (at that moment a separate institute called "School voor Bouwkunst en Stedebouw"). In 1950 he was the successor of Herman Teirlinck as third director of the Higher Institute of Decorative Arts/La Cambre. In 1963 he became the First national president of the "Orde van Architecten". A year later he left La Cambre.

In 1939 Stynen designed, together with Henry van de Velde and Victor Bourgeois, the Belgian pavilion for the world exhibition in New York. After the exhibition, the building was dismantled and rebuilt in slightly altered form by the architect Hugo Van Kuyck, on the campus of the University of Virginia in Richmond, Virginia (US).

The letters exchanged by Stynen and van de Velde in the archive of the Royal Library date from the period 1938-1957. Stynen discusses at length the tensions during his first years at La Cambre with van de Velde.

Louis Van der Swaelmen (1883-1929)

The Belgian urbanist Louis van der Swaelmen was trained as a painter. As son of a garden architect, Louis Leopold Van der Swaelmen, he gradually came to architecture and urban planning. He is considered one of the founding fathers of Belgian urbanism, together with Raphaël Verwilghen.

During the First World War he was, just like Huib Hoste, in the neutral Netherlands, preparing the reconstruction together with Paul Otlet (1868-1944) and the socialist senator Emile Vinck (1870-1950), as head of the Comité Néerlandais-Belge d'Art Civique (CNBAC), which had H.P. Berlage as president. In 1916 he published *Préliminaires d'art civique mis en relation avec le 'cas clinique' de la Belgique*, and urbanist guidebook for the reconstruction.

In 1919 he was one of the founders of the Société des urbanistes belges (SUB), the later SBUAM. He developed the urban plans and greenery of several of the well-known garden cities of the twenties, by Jean-Jules Eggericx, Huib Hoste, Victor Bourgeois and others. In 1925 he published in *La Cité* [V, 7, 1925] the first overview of the development of modern architecture in Belgium, entitled "L'effort moderne en Belgique". In 1927 van de Velde invited Van der Swaelmen as a teacher at the Higher Institute of Decorative Arts / La Cambre, for the courses urbanism and garden architecture.

Raphaël Verwilghen (1885-1963)

Raphaël Verwilghen is considered as one of the founders of modern urban planning in Belgium. He trained as a civil engineer (building engineer) at the university of Leuven. He prepared the first Belgian law on urbanism of 15 August 1915.

After the war he became head of the Building Service of the "Dienst der Verwoeste Gewesten" (Service for the Devastated Regions, the government body dealing with reconstruction and relief). As such, he created opportunities for young modernist architects such as Huib Hoste, Victor Bourgeois, Jean-Jules Eggericx and Louis van der Swaelmen, to realise the first garden cities in Belgium. In 1923 he retired from government service and started an association with Jean-Jules Eggericx (1923-1937). In 1928-1930 he designed the modernist plans for Uvira and Bukavu, which were then in Belgian Congo, some of the finest examples of interwar modernist planning. Verwilghen was co-founder and editor of the modernist periodical *La Cité* and of the Société des Urbanistes Belges (SUB, 1919). Together with Victor Bourgeois he was delegate for Belgium in Le Corbusier's Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM), from the start in 1928.

After having supported van de Velde's return in 1926, Verwilghen was invited as professor of urbanism at the Higher Institute of Decorative Arts / La Cambre in 1929, where he would teach until 1945. Henry van de Velde invited Jean-Jules Eggericx and Raphaël Verwilghen as his collaborators for the Belgian pavilion on the world exhibition in Paris in 1937. During the Second World War, Verwilghen headed the Service for Reconstruction

of the “Commissariaat-Generaal voor ‘s Lands Wederopbouw”. Henry van de Velde was at the same time head of the Architecture department of this Service.

The friendship between Verwilghen and van de Velde was longlasting. Their correspondence remained extensive and intense until the end of van de Velde’s life. When van de Velde moved to Switzerland, he charged Verwilghen with the care of La Nouvelle Maison in Tervuren. Hence, their letters from the 1940s and 1950s also concern practical matters such as reparations and renovations to be done at the house.

In the archive Verwilghen conserved at the KU Leuven, there are several publications of Henry van de Velde, often numbered and dedicated. They bear witness of van de Velde’s respect for Verwilghen, his confidant, especially at the difficult moments of van de Velde’s quite turbulent life. During his last years, Verwilghen took steps to ascertain the cultural heritage of Henry van de Velde and co-founded the “Henry van de Velde Genootschap”.

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Henry van de Velde. Letters of architects

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