



Delft University of Technology

About the New Architect

Asselbergs, M.F.

Publication date
2023

Document Version
Final published version

Citation (APA)
Asselbergs, M. F. (2023). *About the New Architect*. nai010 publishers.

Important note

To cite this publication, please use the final published version (if applicable).
Please check the document version above.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download, forward or distribute the text or part of it, without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license such as Creative Commons.

Takedown policy

Please contact us and provide details if you believe this document breaches copyrights.
We will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

*This work is downloaded from Delft University of Technology.
For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to a maximum of 10.*

THIJS
ASSELBERGS

ABOUT THE NEW ARCHITECT



nai010 uitgevers





Thijs Asselbergs

About the new architect

nai
oio

Contents

<i>About the new architect</i>	13
1. The old architect	17
2. The new architect	33
3. Innovative architecture	47
<i>Back matter</i>	58

ar·chi·tec·ture

(countable and uncountable, plural architectures)

Architecture is the art and technique of designing and building, as distinguished from the skills associated with construction. It is both the process and the product of sketching, conceiving, planning, designing, and constructing buildings or other structures. The term comes from Latin architectura; from Ancient Greek. Architectural works, in the material form of buildings, are often perceived as cultural symbols and as works of art.

ar·chi·tect

(plural architects)

An architect is a person who plans, designs and oversees the construction of buildings. To practice architecture means to provide services in connection with the design of buildings and the space within the site surrounding the buildings that have human occupancy or use as their principal purpose. Etymologically, the term architect derives from the Latin architectus, which derives from the Greek (arkhi-, chief + tekton, builder), i.e., chief builder.

Source: wikipedia

About the new architect

I'm from the 20th century, you're from the 21st century. However, we need each other.

That is how I began my lectures for 15 years, with that simple opening. I knew that my students, looking with the young eyes of the present, saw an old white guy standing in front of them, brought up with concrete. A living remnant from a time that was damaging in many respects. You must do things differently, I said to them then. We showed it to you, but we also inflicted it on you. It is up to you to clear up part of our mess. And that is a complicated legacy. You can no longer afford the luxury of ignorance, or the luxury of the pretence of ignorance. You know, as soon as you start building, that you will be part of the problem. You

will then be a potential threat to sustainability; you are a fridge then; you are an aeroplane then.

Yes, a complicated legacy; I admitted that to them frankly. A legacy which the old architect doesn't know how to handle; he is not equipped to do so. A new type of builder is needed for that legacy: the new architect. I will go into greater depth about this key figure shortly, as well as his or her predecessor: the old architect.

I have always seen myself as an intermediary. I'm an architect, but I've also held my chair in Delft. I was a part-time professor of professional practice. I was in contact with the academic hotbed of innovations that a university represents, as well as with the property developers; with the neighbourhood. I have always found myself straddling the divide between architecture and architectural engineering; between architecture and politics. Looking back, not only on the past

15 years, but also on my young life, I can say that my intermediate position felt familiar to me from an early age. My father was a pharmacist and chemist. My mother was a housewife. She made no secret of her opinion about architects: according to her, they were charlatans; artistic show-offs, who wanted a lot and delivered little. In her eyes, they were not sufficiently service-minded. I took note of that, while I was playing with my LEGO and building my Meccano cars; while I began to work with wood and did odd jobs around the house; while I tinkered with bicycles and mopeds, and organised races. Without them knowing it, without that term already existing, they were talking about the old architect.

My conviction is that if we are to move into the future with confidence, we need to look back keenly and clearly. Not to put the past behind us; that would be easy. But to understand which legacy we are talking about and how this arose.

1. The old architect

Who was the old architect? First of all, he was a man. From my early days in the profession, in the 1980s, I can recall few female architects. Indeed, there were not only a few female architects walking around, but hardly anyone was even wondering why that was the case. However, let's not misrepresent history by arguing that things were different in those days. It's always the self-evident truths of previous eras that feel most strange today.

Furthermore, the old architect had a distinct appearance. Somewhat exaggerated, I admit: he wore a black suit, a white shirt or a black polo neck, with black shoes. Aesthetically sound, in his sleek architect's uniform. And I got to know him soon after my studies. It was the beginning of the 1980s. An economic crisis was underway, which

was evident on the streets, but not in the offices of the old architect. Thirty years later, during the building crisis that began in 2009, that would be a different matter. But I'm getting ahead of myself now.

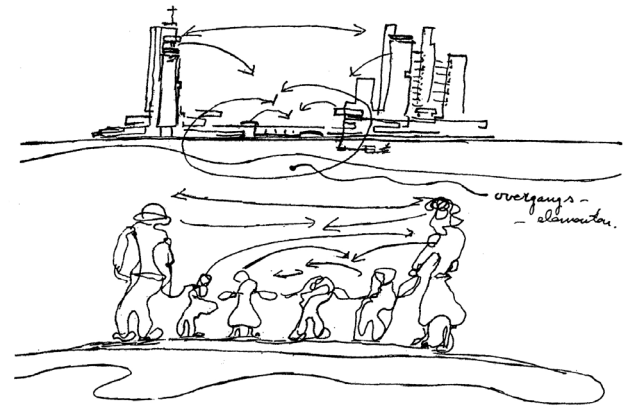
It was the beginning of the 1980s. There was almost no work. I was earning some extra money in a café, sang in a band, wrote for the Dutch daily newspaper NRC and the weekly magazine *Vrij Nederland* and was publishing a magazine called *Items* together with some study friends, which brought together the worlds of industrial design, architecture and graphic design. At the time, 'Design' was still a crazy or even suspicious American word, which an intermediary like me found peculiar – couldn't all those disciplines not learn an awful lot from each other?

I graduated in 1982, based on the case of Amsterdam-Noord (Amsterdam North). It was the

time of the dry docks and the urban district was poverty-stricken. The *Amsterdamsche Droogdok Maatschappij* (Amsterdam Dry Dock Company, ADM), one of the most important shipyards, had just left. The area had to be given a new use. This was a new development. Up until the 1980s, urban construction was roughly equivalent to new construction. However, from the 1980s, the city was not only growing through expansion, but it was also becoming more compact; in some places, it was being consolidated. Urban districts like Amsterdam-Noord were beginning to be transformed. My mentor was Professor Jaap Bakema, who had introduced the groundbreaking concept *door de schalen heen werken* (working across the scales). In his book *Van stoel tot stad* (From chair to city), he argued that an architect should not just construct large buildings, but should consider every scale. From large (how do you put together a district) to small (how do you put together a building) and vice versa.

From chair to city, therefore. A prescient plea for the new architect, yet to be born at that time.

One of my first assignments after graduating was an exhibition at the Royal Palace on Dam Square (Paleis op de Dam), about post-war architecture, from 1940 to 1980. This was even going to be opened by the queen, which made a considerable impression on me at the time. I was involved with the preparations, as a documentalist. Indeed: once again an intermediary. I was given the unique opportunity to interview all the architects that mattered to me, almost all of whom fulfilled the image of the old architect. To sit across from them and to ask: what are you doing at the moment and what are your best projects? Aldo van Eyck, Herman Hertzberger, Piet Blom, Jan Hoogstad, Carel Weeber, the modernist masters about whom I had learned so much in the lecture rooms; I visited them all. I drove across the country in my old Renault 4, packed with folders, envelopes and



Van stoel tot stad (From chair to city), J.B. Bakema, 1964.

black-and-white photos, flattered that I was able to get an appointment with these busy big names. After all, that was not something to be taken for granted. I had made countless phone calls. I can still feel my finger gliding over the rough pages of the telephone book. I can still hear myself asking muffled questions to the old architect's secretary; she was the gatekeeper of the bastion that the architectural firm was at the time. That firm was usually a spacious office, with all kinds of rooms and corridors, bustling with activity. Employees made drawings and drew up invoices and plans, all in the name of the architect who was at the helm; after whom the firm was named. They were serious companies. I had not learned about that in the lecture rooms. I had learned about architecture, but I had no idea about how a well-oiled economic machine works.

The old architect saw independence as his greatest asset. He lived according to the rules, both written

and unwritten. He was not supposed to advertise; his reputation was enough of an advertisement. He retained his copyright for every assignment that he carried out. He therefore had a very dominant artistic position. He made the design and didn't have to negotiate about what, in his eyes, were trivial practical details. He refrained from any negotiation and any compromise. He provided the image, the icon, and it was up to society to take care of it. Sitting across from the old architect, I heard more than just the voice of my mother, who asked what had happened to the sense of service. However, this was contrasted by my father's voice, who said: the pharmacist determines the medicines; he knows what needs to be done best. I still had no idea what my own position was, or what my own voice was. I was 26 years old.

The old architect could afford to have this lofty attitude. He had been an essential part of the urban renewal of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. That had been a monumental task. New public buildings had to be erected, new town halls, a building for the Dutch House of Representatives, a theatre here and there; entire neighbourhoods had to be built out of the ground. Whereas neighbourhoods had grown organically in previous centuries, in silent agreement with the surroundings and the residents, they were now imposed from above. The old architect took on the challenge. He succeeded, and his reputation preceded him.

The more the clients wanted to distinguish themselves, the more important it was for them to bring in a good, famous architect, who not only came up with buildings intended for men, women and families, but with icons, with cultural cathedrals. The 'Starchitect' was born. The themes of today, which the new architect is occupied

with, such as reuse and adaptation to the specific circumstances of the area, sounded endearing to the old architect; endearing, old-fashioned and extremely 'unsexy'.

However, circumstances change. This was how it all began. At the beginning of the 1990s, a shift took place from government assignments to the free market. At that time, I was the city architect of Haarlem. All of a sudden, architects were no longer selected, but they had to compete with each other. Design contests and competitions were held. Initially, the alderman or the chief government architect selected the right architect, but at a later stage it became a social issue. The neighbourhood and the city were given a voice; debates were set in motion about which requirements architects had to meet; what the city needed. The architect was forced to make artistic concessions. His art was increasingly constrained.

Investors were also given a voice. In 1991, the Vierde Nota Ruimtelijke Ordening Extra (Supplement to the Fourth Policy Document on Spatial Planning) was drawn up. The 'Vinex district' was a fact. Investors now had to be convinced about the new sites that were being developed; investors with special requirements. They wanted gleaming buildings with reflective glass facades. The architect allowed himself to be seduced; his artistic freedom was curtailed once again. They discussed it among themselves, the architects, but they seldom said no to assignments. His autonomy was further constricted by a legal change; the standard terms under which his contracts had previously fallen, now fell under the so-called Nieuwe Regeling (New Terms). The architect was now referred to as 'adviser' in the standard contract between the client and architect. As an architect, you used to be involved with the implementation of the plan too; you had more duties; you had greater duties. As a result of this, you not only had

more influence on the project itself, but also on how the project extended to society. A halt was put to that influence now. The architect had to work in accordance with a list of requirements of plusses and minuses. He was browbeaten. An early key moment in this tendency, five years still before the Policy Document on Spatial Planning, was the construction of the Stopera in 1986. The architects on duty: Wilhelm Holzbauer, Bernard Bijvoet & Gerard Holt and Cees Dam. The project went painfully wrong financially: the construction budget was exceeded by 120 million Dutch guilders. The so-called 'Stopera effect' was a fact: a public building project in which the costs get totally out of hand. In order to rein in the Stopera effect, managers were invariably brought in for major building projects, who undermined the autonomy of the architect.

The landscape surrounding the old architect was therefore already changing. I can still remember

the two moments when I realised that the old architect himself had become outdated. The first moment: in 2000, when my wife Nicole and I wanted to renovate our house. To avoid problems, I would be the client and not the architect as well. We asked an architect friend to design the bathroom. I had already made several plans myself – that's where the kids were to take a bath, that's where the shower was to be, and I wanted a view while showering, which, as any right-minded person knows, is the best time of day. The architect came with his drawings; I can still remember it well. When we saw them, Nicole and I said in unison: but then the bathroom will be flooded. The architect responded to that with the legendary words: in that case, you can just hang up a shower curtain, can't you? He was the perfect example of the old way of thinking, which I had got to know when I was driving across the country in my little Renault: if a concession had to be made, then that should be made by the

client, not the architect. I thanked him, paid his invoice and drew the bathroom myself. Shower curtains were not needed.

The second moment: the fall of Lehman Brothers on 15 September 2008. After an era in which prosperity was continuously increasing, so continuously that it felt as if it was the natural course of events, the renowned bank collapsed, after which the market collapsed. The knock-on effects were great and destructive. As I mentioned earlier, property, and therefore architecture, had become an investment model. The collapse of that bank led to a long, heavy, deep crisis for architects. That began slowly, in 2009 and 2010, but continued until 2013-2014. It therefore took over half a decade until there was some light at the end of the tunnel. Half of the 14,000 architects in the Netherlands lost their jobs. Many firms went bust, even renowned firms. Erick van Egeraat, a starchitect who built for the Russians,

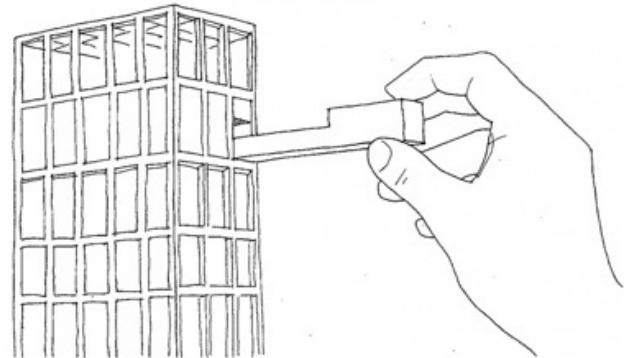
who travelled the world with a Czech photo model, who had become a brand, went bankrupt from one day to the next. Those large firms which I had visited as a student to meet the old masters became a lot smaller: where there had once been 150 people walking around, there were now 50 left over. I also had a hard time. I had 24 employees, many of whom I could not keep on. I moved to the Keizersgracht in Amsterdam, where I collaborated with other architects. We no longer provoked each other, and no longer fought over a contract. There was a sense of collectivism, which was truly something new in the landscape of the architect. Two key elements of the old architect, namely that he was autonomous and worked as a lone wolf, were suddenly obsolete. The architectural industry became fragmented. Many major players were gone. A complete reassessment was necessary. The best days of the old architect were over. The new architect still had to emerge. That's not to say, of course, that those from the 20th

century all disappeared. Many of those architects are still around. Herman Hertzberger, Pi de Bruijn, Jo Coenen, Sjoerd Soeters, Francine Houben – they are still working and fighting to maintain or reclaim the old position of the architect. The new architect is busy with other matters.

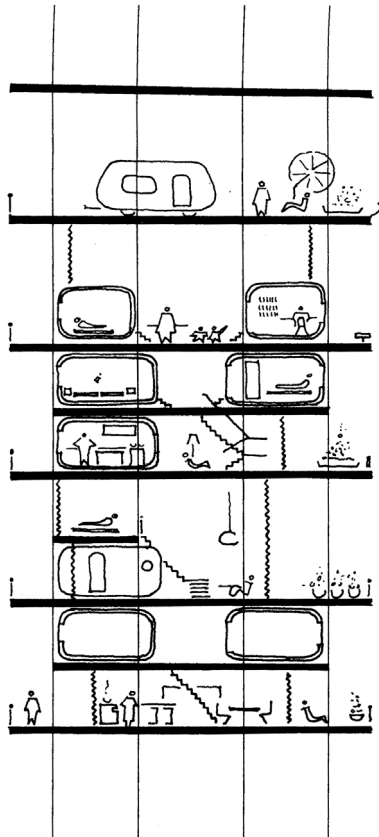
2. The new architect

I was there when the new architect first showed his or her face, in the 2010s. Young architects started small firms; for a mere trifle they moved into offices in a piece of the docklands. They carried out mountains of work for paltry fees. People didn't realise it sometimes, but demolishing something and building from scratch is cheaper and simpler than restoring, then modifying. Whereas earlier generations were given an empty building site, or could have existing buildings removed, the new architect had to make do with what was there already. How could he or she set to work most sustainably? Which materials did he or she have to use, and how could he or she deal with energy most efficiently? And a crucial question: how could he or she collaborate with the neighbourhood?

One example. Whereas Amsterdam-Noord had once been transformed, it was now the turn of another neighbourhood in the capital: the Houthavens. The municipality wanted to stimulate collective private entrepreneurship. They wanted to increase neighbourhood participation and implement it into the initiative. We, a collective of architects which I was part of, won the call for tenders. We had to design 50 homes with five firms, and meet the wishes of 50 private clients, all of whom had invested their own money. Therefore, not a government assignment, no investors wanted gleaming windows. No, we were building for people, citizens, the future occupants of the houses that we were designing. In this way, we found work again; in this way we could put some bread on the table again, although just a little; it wasn't much more than a paltry roll. We designed the loft in shell form; a template, a frame, which could be expanded based on the requirements of the future occupants.



Support and infill



Source: Grondslagen voor de bouw van dragers en de fabricage van dragerwoningen (Principles for the construction of supports and the manufacturing of support dwellings), N.J. Habraken, 1963.

It was about what they wanted. We were only facilitating; we were offering a structure that would provide them with the freedom to complete their home. When carrying out this assignment, I had to think about my mentor, of course, Jaap Bakema; from chair to city. I added a new old master to that: John Habraken, who had introduced 'Open Building' in the 1960s.

I saw then that the young guard is pragmatic. Young architects are mainly concerned about the creation of their project, and the collaborations that are needed for that, with investors, with the municipality. The copyright which their predecessors had fought for, and are still fighting for, seems to interest them less – copyright is no longer sacred, or perhaps we should say that copyright has become more complex. It is not solely vested in the architect, but in the network to which he or she belongs.

The young guard realises that society plays a crucial role in the promotion of architecture: each building needs an urban, social embedding. At first glance, this seems to break with tradition. However, when we look more carefully, we see that the 20th century – the century of the autonomous architect, of modernism – has not always been the rule, even in the Netherlands. In 1842, during the time of King Willem II, the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* (Society for the Promotion of Architecture) was established. It was a broad society, in which one was made aware of the importance of cooperation, just as Filippo Brunelleschi had emphasised when he made the Duomo in Florence. He was the architect, that much is certain, but at the same time he was a glorified union leader, he invented the tools and fetched the sand – he knew that while one person had to be at the base of the cooperation, that person was by no means separate from the cooperation, from the collective. In the list of



Logo Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst

members of the *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst*, in addition to architects, all kinds of other professions can be found; it was not a closed society, but a cooperative. It was only in 1915, the

20th century therefore, that the Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst was merged into the Royal Association of Dutch Architects. From that year, only private and official architects could become members of the association. The high-handed attitude of the 20th-century architect – the stylist who stood outside society, as it were, delivered his iconic creation and then disappeared again – has created a great distance between society and architect; you could even speak perhaps of mutual alienation. The sooner we realise that this alienation forms a major obstacle to the development of architecture, the better.

Because let's be honest, there is that complicated legacy, as I described earlier. In an interview in *De Architect* in 2014, I said that the emerging generation of architects 'were not troubled by demons from the past'. They could, and I quote, 'form a picture of their future with a tabula

rasa'. That statement, I now see, contained more falsehood than truth. The complicated legacy is precisely that the new architect, unlike previous generations, has no tabula rasa in front of him or her. Each generation starts totally afresh, of course, but the slate is never cleaned.

The modern age constantly raises new questions. Politics, the climate, the impact of humans on the planet, the loss of biodiversity – everything seems to be shifting. Whereas a century ago a beginning architect might have thought he could impose his will on the world, today's architect is more likely to feel that the roles have been reversed: the world determines the course, the architect reacts and responds to changing circumstances. You can no longer just talk about strength, utility and beauty, the Vitruvian virtues. Sustainability is a requirement. The aim is to add structures with a long lifespan to the environment. You are responsible for the happiness of the people living

in the vicinity, but also the non-human system surrounding it. An additional obstacle, I already alluded to: there is very little space. We can no longer build from chair to city or roll out meadows or flatten neighbourhoods. And you have to work in the most energy-efficient and circular way possible. All products used on the construction site should be able to be harvested once again for use elsewhere. Waste no longer exists. And while you are building and designing, you always have to think: can what we are building be more flexible, easier to assemble and disassemble, better thought-out, safer and smarter?

During a lecture in Delft years ago, I said, somewhat provocatively, that the construction industry has seemingly developed marginally in recent decades. Nevertheless, you only need to walk onto a building site anywhere in the world to see that the traditional way of assembling materials – the pile-driving, hoisting, bricklaying and building –

is still widespread in the construction industry. The reason that the construction industry is not a very innovative industry is because the impetus for innovation has traditionally been low. Historically speaking, the construction industry has mainly consisted of a collection of separately operating parties looking for the best, but also the cheapest, way to put pieces together. This has always been the essence of the profession. The construction industry therefore does not have a very cooperative character; there was no reason for builders or construction companies to share innovations or technological improvements among themselves. We are paying for that attitude now, given that we must devise and implement complex solutions for complex problems. There is nothing wrong with a carpenter and a plane, of course, but we are facing a bigger job, and we cannot do it with craftsmen alone.



*Previous page: Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft
The left-wing at the front is the Architecture department, the right-wing at the front is
the Management in the Built Environment department.
Aerial photo: Aerophoto-Schiphol.*

3. Innovative architecture

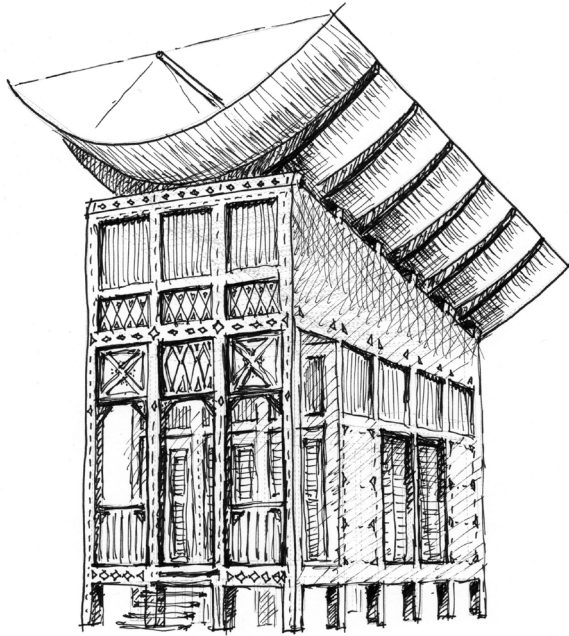
The solutions to today's problems must be sought both in the past and the future, both in tradition and innovation. We must look forwards and backwards while trying not to stumble. As a result of the computer, the 3D printer and robotisation, a lot changed in the building process at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. A period of experimentation followed, which was concerned with how these digital production methods could be integrated into both the design and the building process. Parametric design, for example, can help when exploring greater freedom of form. The question then arises of how to link these digital files to both two-dimensional and three-dimensional production methods. As a result of this, new materials (primarily bio-based) could also be implemented, and experiments were conducted with new types of concrete. In a sense, that

experimental phase is still ongoing. At the same time, we have to learn to work with materials from long ago once again. Concrete is high-quality, but not sustainable in general; concrete buildings are often demolished after a few decades. The same is true for glass and aluminium. At present, we are looking at wood once again. For the first time in 40 years, we will get a Professor in designing with wood here in Delft.

Students understand this new course. The new architect knows that his or her buildings no longer have to be the highest, most beautiful, or most expensive. We have entered a new phase, which requires a new design assignment, in which vain or self-centred issues such as icons, stardom and copyright are less important. Of course, we want to show students that they are strong, innovative and original, but I rarely notice them wanting to link that to themselves as individuals. Today's students communicate an awful lot, and

they have become dependent on each other to a certain extent. They also, therefore, want to show what 'they' have devised. The architect speaks in the first-person plural form ('we'), even though they often come up with brilliant ideas.

Take the graduation work of my Master's student Pieter Stoutjesdijk, for example, from 2013. When an earthquake partially devastated Haiti, he came up with the idea of sending CNC milling machines instead of tents, which could mill houses with locally manufactured bio-based sheet material, which you could then assemble with a rubber mallet, as if they were simple construction kits. Thanks to digital modification, everyone was able to design his or her own home. In this way, the city could be rebuilt in line with the old traditional architecture. However, there are countless examples. Alumnus Eric Geboers built his own 'architecture machine': a 3D printing machine which you could use to print



CNC-cut post-disaster shelter for Haiti, Pieter Stoutjesdijk, 2013

building components. And Ellen Rouwendal and Laura Strahle who have won the 2017 Archiprix with a multifunctional public pavilion with an innovative bamboo support structure in Africa. The university played an important role, of course, in the development of their talent. Top lecturer Marcel Bilow challenges Master's students time and time again to come up with an innovative concept, elaborate on it and ultimately build a full-scale prototype based on it. The Architectural Engineering and Technology department is a hotbed of building innovation, where researchers and lecturers are permanently looking for smart, sustainable solutions.

However, what I sometimes find lacking in this talented generation, is the willingness to have a keen conversation about the future of architecture, like I used to have when I was young. The willingness to zoom out and examine: what now? I've noticed that the younger generation is

much more inclined to feel personally attacked than we did in the past, and students don't want to rub each other up the wrong way. That's understandable, but it's also a shame. Ideas become even better when they are held up to the light in a critical way; viewpoints become stronger when they are subjected to a proper riposte. And a good and honest discussion about the future of the architect is essential now that we are at the interface of the old and the new, and the building assignment is more challenging than it has ever been. There is something, therefore, that the new architect could learn from his or her predecessor, the old architect, namely assertiveness. The desire to take a position, to show your qualities and to assert your powers of persuasion where necessary. Be aware of your duty as an architect, as guardian of spatial quality, as a link in a rich tradition, and stand up for your cultural act.

However, the students are not the only ones

Journal winter 2010/2011 NR 1

aE lab 01/06

Graduation **architectural engineering lab**

SOFIA CARDENAS

on a shortlist of the world's ten most talented architecture students!

page 2 Introduction aE
page 3-5 lab 01 Pries Claus square The Hague
page 6-11 lab 02 and 04 RDM Rotterdam
page 12-14 lab 03 and 05 Eastwards Haarlem
page 16 master Program aE and Building Technology



SOFIA CARDENAS - AE LAB TU DELFT, THE NETHERLANDS
A SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS HUB, DHARAVI MUMBAI

In Dharavi, a densely populated area in the heart of Mumbai trapped in the circle of poverty and the informality of a progressing industry, a desired future vision is formulated. The result is the introduction of new elements as generators to provoke predetermined changes (Urban acupuncture). The first intervention is a node that will introduce quality to the area and connect Dharavi to unused economic potential. The concept of this project, which is divided into three phases, is to engage the local community to make them accessible to external users.

The macro phase crosses technology between design project and object. Architecture becomes a medium between the city and the river, connecting the existing environmental conditions to improve productivity, stimulating activities and to increase connectivity by introducing a boulevard.

The meso phase of the project establishes the design proposal. A bamboo bridge introduces consumers to the low tech icon called "Crab Tower" which works as a show room. A community centre is located on the inner flank of the bridge.

Finally, the micro phase zooms in to detail level. To understand the behaviour of the structure a structural analyses based on a parametric module was developed (IGC and DIANA). To research the behaviour of the material a mechanical testing with bamboo and concrete was carried out and a prototype was build.

Tutors: Axel Kilian, Arjan van Timmeren, Elise Giese

source ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW site 13 August 2010

aE Journal no.1, 2009. Design by Bureau Arjan Karssen.

who should interfere in this discussion about building the future. I have described myself as an intermediary, a *trait d'union*. That has always been my place, slap bang in the middle between architecture and politics, between architecture and architectural engineering. That may be why I have an eye for the connections that can and should be made, for the bridges that need to be built.

I don't know if you're aware of it, but this is a very strange building. Why? Because it's actually two buildings, two worlds. On one side of the building, there are the managers; people walk around in suits and drive lease cars. On the other side of the building, there are the 'architectural experts', who often can barely pay their rent. Sometimes, they meet each other in the middle, but let's be honest, that's more often not the case.

The faculty has taken the leap from the 20th to the

21st century, but we have not yet landed. If that continues to be the case, we will need an entirely new faculty in 20 years, because we will have lost touch with society by then. Our attitude must be more flexible if we want to be able to adapt to changing requirements. Why do we insist on delivering 400 architects a year, when there is no room for it socially? We should focus instead on bridging the gap between the drawing board and the neighbourhood, between architecture and society, and by designing across all scales in an innovative way, as well as learning to give the proper assignment for that. A broad coalition is needed for this, between clients and executors, between the designers and the builders, and between architecture and architectural engineering. Between one part of the building and the other.

This coalition will not simply arise; it must be created and cultivated and maintained. That

requires will, a different attitude and expertise – precisely the type of expertise that a faculty needs to impart more.

Just over 40 years ago, I drove across the country in my cramped, fully-loaded Renault 4 to enter into discussion with the top architects of the day. In recent years, I have had the opportunity to engage with, I hope, the top architects of tomorrow. An ongoing discussion is needed in order to find out in which ways we can complement each other. In many ways, therefore, this farewell is not an end; this is an attempt at a beginning. Whereas I once asked questions as a recent graduate and answered others' questions as a lecturer, I simply want to open the discussion now – as my 15 years as a professor draws to a close – which I feel is so lacking. A discussion that must be held, before the gap between the architect and society is so large that we disappear into it ourselves. The architectural community must take responsibility

and transform its kingdom of insular islands into an archipelago. Architecture is not the property of the architect alone.

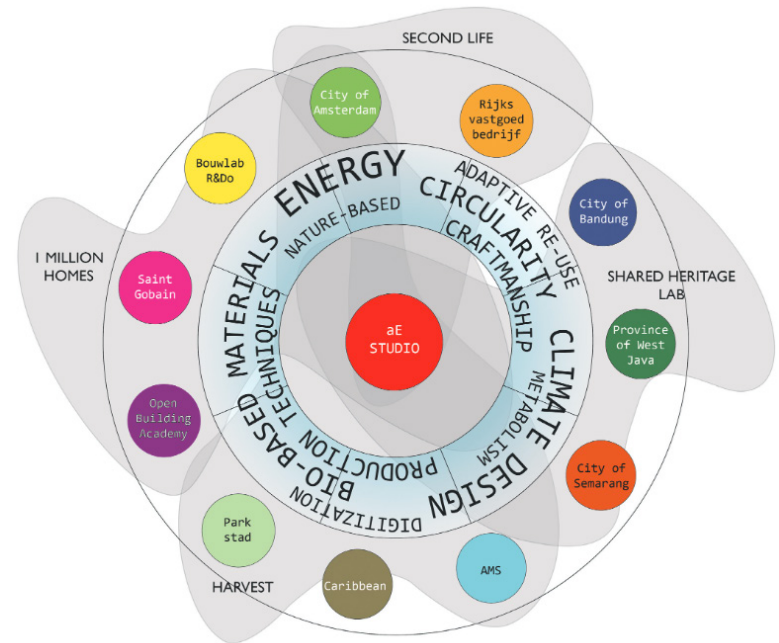
I have said. It's up to you to respond. I was from the 20th century, you're from the 21st century. However, we need each other.

Back matter

Collaboration and knowledge exchange

In recent years, the graduation studio Architectural Engineering of the Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) has frequently used this diagram. The centre is the aE Studio itself, where all the design-based research is collected and shared among themselves.

The middle ring concerns the various themes that students and researchers are working on. The outer ring contains the locations (contexts) where work is being performed (every student chooses their own context) because we have good cooperation partners there who participate in the knowledge exchange. That may be in the Netherlands, such as the Central Government Real Estate Agency (Rijksvastgoedbedrijf), the Marineterrein or IBA Parkstad, but also with partners in Indonesia and the Caribbean region (Saint Martin). In addition, there are also partners in the construction industry and the BouwLab R&Do. Finally, we connect themes, contexts and other partners with each other through current design assignments being carried out within the faculty, such as 1M Homes, Harvest and Second Life (Post '65 buildings), allowing for collaborative knowledge exchange and mutual reinforcement.





Biography

The curriculum of Thijs Asselbergs' professorship at the Delft University of Technology also bears witness to the desire for innovation and collaboration. As a professor of Architectural Engineering (since 2008), he develops innovative technological solutions, together with students, as an integral part of architecture. He interprets technology broadly. It's about industrialised, flexible and circular building solutions, such as those for the one million houses that must be built in the coming decade. However, Thijs Asselbergs wants to do more with his students. He wants to understand the possibilities of data architecture, research digitisation and robotisation, think about new financing of the construction industry, devise systems in the field of mobility and investigate how environmental damage and the loss of open space can be limited. The breadth of this research area already shows how the profession of architect is changing. That is why Asselbergs set up the platform *De Nieuwe Architect* (The New Architect) prepare his students for their future roles. He is also involved in *BouwLab* and *Openbuilding.co*, two initiatives that stimulate innovation in the design and modernisation of buildings, building on the Open Building approach developed by John Habraken in the 1960s.

Thijs Asselbergs graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of Delft University of Technology in 1982. He co-founded the design magazine *Items* in the early-1980s and published articles about design and architecture in various daily newspapers and professional journals. In 1985, he established his own design firm in Haarlem. At the end of the 1980s, he was head of the Architecture department of the Academy of Architecture in Amsterdam, and in the early-1990s, he was the city architect of Haarlem. He has chaired various building aesthetics committees of large cities and was Building Aesthetics adviser to the Chief Government Architect and Crown-appointed member of the Dutch Council for Culture. In addition, he occupies various board positions and is jury chairman of renowned Dutch architecture prizes. Up until 2010, he was chairman of the Archiprix Netherlands Foundation and Archiprix International, which organises prizes and exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad for young, recently graduated designers. He is director of Thijs Asselbergs architectuurcentrale. Completed projects include housing complexes in numerous cities, *Ruimte voor de Waal* (Room for the River Waal) in Nijmegen (Gulden Feniks prize in 2017) and *Cloud Nine* in the music venue *TivoliVredenburg* in Utrecht (Rietveld architecture prize in 2015).

Photo: Janita Sassens

Colophon

Idea/contents: Thijs Asselbergs
 Text advice: Daan Heerma van Voss
 Editing/advice: Nik Berkouwer
 Design: Bureau Arjan Karssen
 Translation: Richard Glass
 Lithography and Printing: Zwaan Lenoir
 Publisher: Marcel Witvoet,
 nai010 publishers Rotterdam

With thanks to: TU Delft
 Nicole Ex

This publication was made possible thanks to a contribution from TU Delft and Architectuurcentrale.

© 2023 Thijs Asselbergs, nai010 publishers, Rotterdam.

Notwithstanding the exceptions stated in or pursuant to the Dutch Copyright Act of 1912, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a database, or published, in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise – without the prior written permission of the publisher. Insofar as reprographic reproductions from this publication are permitted under Article 16h of the Dutch Copyright Act of 1912, one must pay the fees legally due for this to Stichting Reprerecht (PO Box 3060, 2130 KB Hoofddorp, www.reprerecht.nl). For the copying of sections from this publication in anthologies, readers and other compilations (Article 16 of the Dutch Copyright Act of 1912), one may apply to Stichting PRO (Stichting Publicatie- en Reproductierechten Organisatie), PO Box 3060, 2130 KB Hoofddorp, www.cedar.nl/pro.

The copyright of works by visual artists affiliated with a CISAC organisation is arranged through Pictoright in Amsterdam.
 © 2023, c/o Pictoright Amsterdam

Not all the copyright holders of the illustrations used could be ascertained. The parties concerned are requested to contact nai010 uitgevers, Korte Hoogstraat 31, 3011 GK Rotterdam.
info@nai010.com

nai010 publishers is an internationally-oriented publisher, that specialises in the development, production and distribution of books in the fields of architecture, urban design, art and design.
www.nai010.com

ISBN 978-94-6208-817-7
 NUR 648
 BISAC ARC006000, ARC009000 THEMA AMD



With over 40 years of experience as a lecturer, architect and driver of architectural policy, Thijs Asselbergs looks ahead in *About the new architect*. In response to conversations with students, Asselbergs shares his personal perspective on the profession and explains how ‘the new architect’ should be shaped.

In 2008, when Thijs Asselbergs had just taken up his position as professor at Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), the investment bank Lehman Brothers collapsed. It ushered in the financial crisis, which had an enormous impact on the construction industry and architecture. Over half of the architects at the time lost assignments or quit altogether. This led to a rise in small architectural firms with all kinds of new forms of collaboration. What does the future of architecture look like after that turbulent history? Which challenges await the current generation of architects in times of far-reaching economic and climatic changes? And what is the difference between the old and the new architect?

nai010 uitgevers
www.nai1010.com