

# The professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands

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# Introduction

## Objects of study and interpretative ideas

This research on the professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands, can prove to be helpful in understanding the more recent and current developments of the interior architecture discipline. This thesis discusses the professionalization of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands through three different themes; the professional associations, the education and the protected title. The current situations and recent developments of these three themes are shortly explained here.

### *Professional association*

Interior architecture started developing into an independent discipline only just after the second world war. This makes interior architecture, compared to other related architecture and design disciplines in The Netherlands, a relatively new discipline (66). The Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten currently is the only professional association for interior architects in The Netherlands, counts roughly 400 members and has the aim to ‘support, stimulate and promote Dutch interior architects’ (37).

### *Title*

Since the Wet op de Architectentitel came into effect in 1988, the protected title of interior architect has repeatedly been threatened. For instance in 2014, when due to changed policies about protected titles in Europe the title of interior architect was nominated for elimination (66). The interior architect title ended up not being eliminated but according to Jeroen van Dijk, the chairman of Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten in 2018, it still is important to keep professionalising in all respects in order to keep the protected title of interior architect in the future (114).

### *Education*

Currently interior architecture is taught at hbo-master level at seven institutions in The Netherlands (41). This education is required for acquiring the title of interior architect (12). Nowadays the TU Delft architecture master track offers modules interior architecture but there is no university master track specifically for interior architecture (51, 84, 85). This might change because in recent years the TU Delft faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment has endorsed the importance of an interior architecture master track and there have been conversations with the professional field about the possibility of setting up a

master programme interior architecture at TU Delft (51). There have been discussions about the aspiration to introduce interior architecture education at university level since 1968 (1, 7).

## Academic context

On behalf of the Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten (BNI) Meijer has written about the history of the BNI for the occasion of its 50th anniversary in 2018 (66). This research is not extensive, however it is a useful starting point for this more extensive research on the professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands, in which the BNI played a significant role. Besides this piece there is no academic context, indicating the newness of the topic.

## Methodology

This is an architectural history thesis on the developments of the interior architecture discipline in The Netherlands. These developments in history are researched mostly through the use of documents of the BNI's archive, such as letters, reports, records and articles of association.

## Thesis structure

The main research question reads '*How did interior architecture become a professional and independent discipline in The Netherlands?*'. This question will be answered through the following chapters.

### **1. The history of defining interior architecture in The Netherlands**

*This chapter provides a short history of defining interior architecture in The Netherlands.*

### **2. The history of professional associations for interior architects in The Netherlands**

2.1 W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van Interieurarchitekten

2.2 Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf

2.3 The merged Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten

*This chapter chronically describes the history of the Dutch professional association for interior architects BNI and its predecessors.*

### **3. The history of interior architecture education in The Netherlands**

- 3.1 Early history of interior architecture education
- 3.2 Criticism on interior architecture education
- 3.3 Attempts to change interior architecture education

*This chapter is about the evolvments of interior architecture education during the time of the professionalisation of the discipline.*

### **4. The history of the protection of the title of interior architects in The Netherlands**

- 4.1 The establishment of Stichting Register Interieurarchitecten
- 4.2 The establishment of Federatie 'O'
- 4.3 First proposal of the Wet op de Architectentitel including interior architects
- 4.4 The enactment of Wet op de Architectentitel (WAT)

*This chapter discusses the route towards protection of the title of interior architect.*

# Chapter 1: The history of defining the interior architecture discipline in The Netherlands

It can be unclear to other people what interior architects do, which is problematic for the position of the interior architect and has caused the undermining of interior architecture by related disciplines and politics (66). This chapter will discuss the developments of defining interior architecture shortly.

The field of interior architecture has broadened over the years. The Dutch term ‘binnenhuisarchitect’, that demarcates the work terrain as the interior of residential houses, arose at the beginning of the 20th century. Later the broader term ‘interieurarchitect’ arose, widening the work terrain by including interiors of buildings other than homes. The use of the term ‘interieurarchitect’ was preferred and this switch marked the broadening and professionalisation of interior architecture in The Netherlands. This is visible in for example the name change of Werkgroep Binnenhuis Architecten to W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van interieurarchitecten, when it changed into an independent professional association in 1969 (48, 66).

The BNI repeatedly wanted and tried to define interior architecture, because a clear definition would be useful in negotiations with related disciplines about collaborations and for reorganizing the educational programme (24, 65, 66). Defining interior architecture has however been a hard task, because it is such a broad and hybrid discipline. It has strong connections with both other architecture related disciplines and other design related disciplines. According to former BNI chairwoman Cora Nicolai Chaillet interior architecture should not be demarcated, instead it is important to focus on defining the core objectives of the discipline (66).

## Chapter 2: The history of professional associations for interior architects in The Netherlands

In the course of the twentieth century several professional associations for interior architects in the Netherlands were established and eventually evolved into the current Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten (66). This chapter outlines the history of the professional associations and analyzes its role in the professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands.

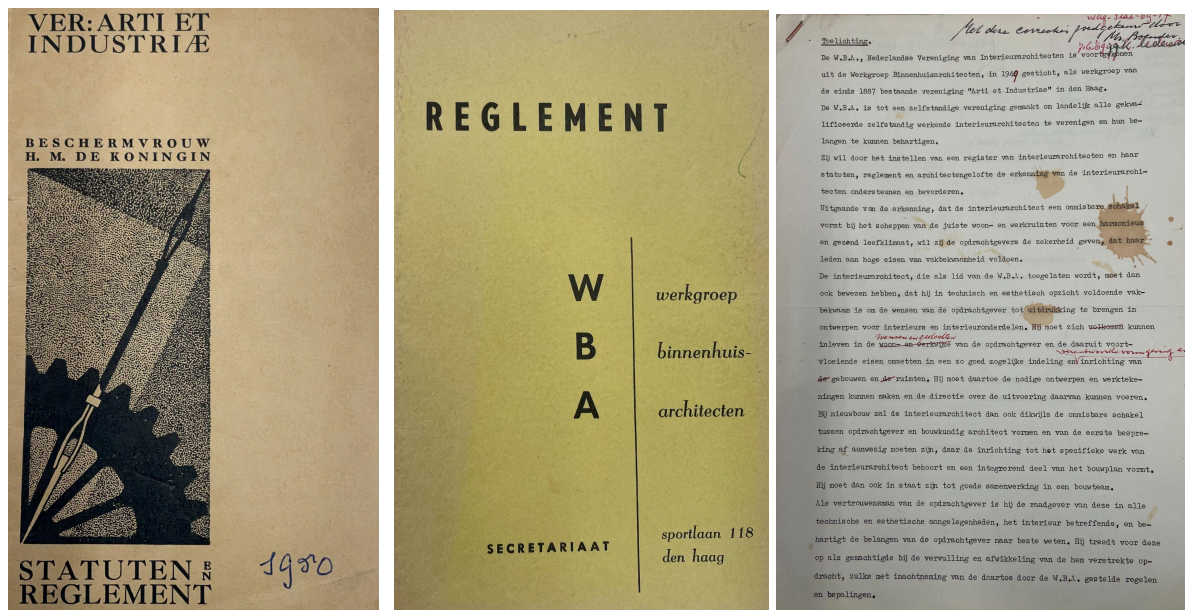
### 2.1 W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van Interieurarchitekten

1887 - The establishment of Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Kunstnijverheid Arti et Industriae

In 1887 Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Kunstnijverheid Arti et Industriae was established as a result of dissatisfaction with the increasing import of arts and crafts products and dissatisfaction with the quality of products that were machinally produced in The Netherlands. The aim of the association was to foster craftsmanship and the association consisted of departments in different disciplines (111).

1933 - Changing into De Nederlandsche Vereeniging 'Arti et Industriae' (aan de Kunst en Nijverheid)

By the year of 1933 the Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Kunstnijverheid Arti et Industriae had changed into De Nederlandsche Vereeniging 'Arti et Industriae' (aan de Kunst en Nijverheid). The articles of association state the aim of the association is 'to foster the visual arts, the industry and the collaboration between visual artists and industries, and to represent the interests of visual artists and industries'. The association was divided into two sections. Section I: Art was for the artists and section II: Industry was for the industrialists. Section I: Art consisted of four different groups, each with a different form of art. Interior architects were part of the first group, together with architects and landscape architects (88).



left: *Ver: Arti et Industriae: Statuten en Reglement 1950* (88)  
middle: *Reglement WBA: Werkgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten 1949* (93)  
right: *Toelichting op Voorlopige versie Statuten W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van Interieurarchitecten 1969* (89)

1949 - The establishment of Werkgroep Binnenhuis-architecten (W.B.A.) within the ‘Arti et Industriae’

The Werkgroep Binnenhuis-architecten (W.B.A.) was a department within the ‘Arti et Industriae’ and its first meeting took place in June 1949. It was established by the members interior architects of the association ‘Arti et Industriae’. This newly established department focused specifically on the field of interior architecture and its aim was ‘to foster the interior art in general and to represent the interests of its members’ (93).

1969 - The changing of Werkgroep Binnenhuis-architecten (W.B.A.) into the independent association W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van Interieurarchitekten

In 1968 the department Werkgroep Binnenhuis-architecten (W.B.A.) decided to separate from its overarching association ‘Arti et Industriae’ (66). This was decided during the general assembly of members on the 24th of October 1968, where 37 members voted in favour of the department becoming an independent association (94). From the first of January 1969 it continued as an independent association with the name W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van interieurarchitecten (66). At this time the association had roughly fifty members (90).



W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van interieurarchitecten took inspiration from the professional association for architects Koninklijke Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst Bond van Nederlandsche Architecten B.N.A. for drawing up its own articles of association (48). After extensive discussions about setting up the articles of association, the members voted approvingly during the general assembly of members in June 1969 (91).

The aim of the association was to nationally unite all qualified independently working interior architects and to represent their interests. The WBA wanted to take this a step further. In their articles of association they expressed the goal to set up a registry of interior architects to protect the position of the interior architect (89). Being registered at the Register van Interieurarchitecten was a prerequisite to becoming a member of the WBA Nederlandse Vereniging van Interieurarchitecten (92).

## 2.2 Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf

1904 - The establishment of Vereeniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst (VANK)

In 1904 the Vereniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst (VANK) was established. This association for craftsmanship and artisanship stopped operating when the Second World War started in The Netherlands in 1940 (43, 112).

1945 - The establishment of the Vereniging van Beoefenaars der Gebonden Kunsten (GKf)

The Vereniging van Beoefenaars der Gebonden Kunsten (GKf) was established in Amsterdam in september 1945, thus shortly after the Second World War ended (66). The GKf was a continuation of the pre-war Vereniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst (VANK) (58). Another name for the Vereniging van Beoefenaars der Gebonden Kunsten was Gebonden Kunsten Federatie, which explains the abbreviation GKf. It was an association for different art disciplines, including ceramics, photography, graphic design and interior architecture (66).

1946 - The establishment of the Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf

The GKf consisted of different departments with each their own design discipline. Interior architecture is one of these disciplines and in 1946 the interior architecture department Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf was established (66). At that time the department had 28 members (14).

A designer who was a member of the GKf could put the letters GKf behind his or her name. This was seen as a symbol of status and it served as a guarantee of the designer's professional ethics and quality. The strict selection procedure of becoming a member of the GfK contributed to the worth of the letters behind a designer's name (66). Since its establishment Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf was part of Stichting Goed Wonen, which was a collective founded after the Second World War with the aim to improve the quality of living in The Netherlands by home decoration (66, 113). After eight years of collaboration, the GKf parted from Stichting Goed Wonen because of its critical stance and lack of experimentation (66).

1968 - The division of the different departments of GKf into independent professional associations and the establishment of the BNI

In 1968 the departments of the GKf split up into largely independent professional associations. This divide was initiated by the department of graphic designers and the purpose was for the different departments to enhance their independence and their own identity. The Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf was transformed into a professional association with the name Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten (66).

In 1972 the BNI had, as written in article two of the articles of association, three aims. The first was to 'foster the development and practice of the interior architecture discipline in the context of a responsible design of the living environment'. The second aim was to 'represent the cultural and societal interests of the interior architects'. The third aim was to 'strengthen the interest in and the appreciation for the interior architecture discipline (15).

## 2.3 The merged Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten

1975 - The merger of the BNI (formerly Vakgroep Binnenhuisarchitecten GKf) and the W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van interieurarchitecten into the BNI

### *Prior to the merger*

In the years prior to the merger, the boards of BNI and WBA already had contact with each other regularly and had an annual meeting together, which had led to a number of collaborations (17, 25, 60). The two professional associations for interior architects were each other's rivals and yet they worked together as well (60). With the establishment of the Register van Interieurarchitecten in 1972, the differences between the WBA and BNI faded even more (17, 25).

The BNI and the WBA had different priorities but the aims and target groups of the two associations were essentially the same, thus a merger of the two would be more efficient than operating past each other (17, 25). The first proposal for merging into one Dutch professional association for interior architects, was done in the annual meeting of the boards of the WBA and the BNI at the end of 1973 (22).

### *Preparation of the merger*

At first there was little knowledge about the other association's activities from both the BNI and WBA members, thus a gathering was organised on the 15th of February 1974 where both associations presented themselves. The aim of this gathering was to provide both association's members with enough information to be able to form an opinion about the possibility of a merger (17).

Both the BNI and the WBA had individually hosted a general assembly of members in 1974 in which the merger with the other association was discussed and almost all attendees had voted in favour of merging (66). Two gatherings of the BNI and WBA throughout 1974 and multiple meetings between the associations' boards, resulted in concrete plans about the unification of the two associations (21, 22). A month prior to the merger, the members of the WBA were invited to attend the BNI's general assembly of members, to provide the opportunity for them to become involved in workgroups and activities (20).

### *The merger*

The BNI and the WBA joined forces officially per the 1st of January 1975 (25). They had agreed on continuing under the name Beroepsvereniging van Nederlandse Interieurarchitekten BNI, meaning that the BNI continued to exist and the WBA was liquidated. The former boards of the WBA and BNI together made up the board of the BNI in 1975, which is seen as a transitional year (21). The aim of the BNI remained the same and was ‘to foster the development and practice of the interior architect in the context of a responsible design of the living environment’ (25). In order to become a member of the BNI, a person had to be registered at the Register van Interieurarchitekten (21).

### *Looking back on the merger*

In the general assembly of members of the BNI in December 1975 the chairman stated that the boards of the two associations in 1974 and the compound board of 1975 had worked hard and have succeeded to make the merger work well. In retrospect the merger was a good decision of both associations (31). A report on the merger highlighted that this merger, even though successful, ‘should be seen merely as a starting point of its job to represent the interior architecture discipline nationally’ (25). After a year of the merger, the BNI counted 265 members in December 1975 and this growth was expected to continue (31).

## 1984 - The release of the first issue of BNI magazine Intern

The need to carry out the professional status and the work of interior architects to the outside world by releasing a magazine, was already expressed in 1974 by the BNI Werkgroep Publiciteit and the WBA (21, 23). In 1984 the BNI released the first issue of its magazine ‘Intern’. Before the founding of its own magazine, the BNI and its successors worked together with professional organisations of related disciplines, such as architecture and design, to release magazines collaboratively (66). One of these magazines was Stichting PLAN’s monthly ‘PLAN’, a collaboration of 6 associations in the field of architecture and the built environment (30).

The purpose of ‘Intern’ is to inform BNI members and interested outsiders about current affairs regarding the BNI and interior architecture. In the first issue of Intern, BNI chairman Sam Aardewerk writes that the start of this magazine can play an important role in enhancing the status of the interior architecture discipline (75).

## Conclusion

The interior architecture groups of the Arti et Industriae and the GKf went through similar developments. They developed from subgroups of overarching associations into official interior architecture departments. Then at the end of the 1960's they both split from their overarching association and became individual professional associations for interior architects specifically. In 1975 these two professional associations joined forces and merged into one national professional association of interior architects; the BNI.

By representing the interior architects and fostering interior architecture, the BNI and its predecessors have been important in the professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline. Additionally, the merger into one national professional association of interior architects was important as well, because from that point on the interior architecture discipline could unitedly tackle the next challenges of professionalization. The establishment of its own magazine functioned as a tool for the BNI to continue professionalising the discipline.

## Chapter 3: The history of interior architecture education in The Netherlands

The merger of the professional associations has succeeded and it became time to focus on the next challenge: improving interior architecture education (2). The Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten established a workgroup focused on education. In 1976 the Werkgroep Opleidingen BNI's objective was to 'improve the level of the interior architecture educational programmes, in such a way that the integration with the building and urbanism disciplines should be possible' (97). This chapter outlines the history of interior architecture education in The Netherlands, the critiques on the education and the attempts to change the education.

### 3.1 Early history of interior architecture education

Starting shortly before the Second World War, interior architecture was taught at the Academies van Beeldende Kunsten. At the start of these educational programmes, the 'binnenhuiskunst' was seen as a 'beeldende kunst'. Therefore it suited very well at the Academies van Beeldende Kunsten. In the period between circa 1935 and 1970, the discipline had developed from 'binnenhuisarchitectuur', into a more technical discipline that was different from the original 'binnenhuiskunst'. The workfield had broadened from the domestic workfield to a broader understanding of the discipline. This is accompanied by a name change from 'binnenhuisarchitect' to 'interieurarchitect' (49, 100). By 1979 there were 8 Academies providing interior architecture education and programmes were titled 'architektonisch vormgeven' with the specialization 'interieurarchitectuur' (104).

### 3.2 Criticism on interior architecture education

Reports with criticism on the interior architecture education in The Netherlands have appeared since 1968 (1). The poor condition of education was said to be a problem for both interior architecture graduates and society (2). The educational programme was one of the BNI's biggest concerns in 1974 and needed to undergo changes (19, 22). The main points of criticism are described below.

#### *Poor connection between education and practice*

From its establishment in 1968, the BNI mentioned the poor alignment of the professional practice and the education at the A.B.K.'s (1). This lack of connection to practice was

repeatedly mentioned in reports written by the BNI Werkgroep Onderwijs, the BNI and BNI members throughout the years 1968 to 1991 (1, 2, 5, 7, 49, 103, 108). In 1987, during the process of developing the articles of association for the establishment of the Stichting Bureau Architectenregister architectural education was reevaluated and it was concluded that the gap between the educational programmes and the practice had become too large (5).

### *Lack of technical components*

In 1973, Sem Aardewerk highlighted a lack of technical components in the education programmes (16). This concern resurfaced in a meeting of BNI Werkgroep Opleidingen in 1979, where the question came up whether graduates were technically and professionally equipped for practice (103).

### *Inconsistency between institutes*

Between 1974 and 1987 the BNI had noticed major differences in quality, curriculum and the notion of interior architecture between the interior architecture programmes at the different Akademies van Beeldende Kunsten (2, 5, 24, 97, 106). By 1980 there still was no common core curriculum across the various institutions (109).

### *Overly broad and unfocused curricula*

In 1974, 1976 and 1987 programmes were criticised for including too many courses irrelevant to interior architecture and therefore being too broad (2, 5, 24). This deviation came at the cost of the focus on the core courses of interior architecture (2, 5, 24, 108).

### *Limited interaction with related disciplines*

In 1976 the interior architecture programmes, which took place at the A.B.K.'s, lacked interaction with architecture and urbanism, which were taught at the technische hogescholen (96, 97). In a 1979 meeting of the BNI Werkgroep Opleidingen the question arised whether collaborations between related disciplines of different institutes were desirable (103).

### *Low educational level*

Starting in 1968, the BNI stated that the educational level of interior architecture was too low (1). They also declared that the admission requirement, which was a mavo diploma, was too low (2,49). In 1975 the discussion about the inclusion of interior architects in the WAT protected title for architects, led to discussion of raising the level of interior architecture



education to the same level as the other disciplines included in the WAT (27). As a result of the ECIA trying to realize protection of the title within the EEG countries, doubts were raised in 1977 about whether the level of education at the A.B.K.'s in The Netherlands was comparable with university-level interior architecture education in several other EEG countries (32).

### 3.3 Attempts to change interior architecture education

In 1968 the BNI expressed the urgent wish for an interior architecture education programme at the Academie van Bouwkunst, because the field of interior architecture had evolved from being solely a visual art to having a technical character as well (49). In the years between 1968 and 1976, the BNI had made numerous attempts of achieving interior architecture education at a higher level and at the Academies van Bouwkunst. This was done by organising conversations with and between the Academies van Bouwkunst, Academies van Beeldende Kunsten, the V.A.B.K., the Bouwkunde department of Technische Hogeschool Delft (2, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 59, 96).

In October 1975, the BNI organized the symposium *Opleiding en Praktijk (van de interieurarchitekt)* to address and discuss the gap between interior architecture education and professional practice (27, 29). The BNI had invited the boards of directors, educators and students of the interior architecture departments of the Academies van Beeldende Kunsten and emphasized broad participation to create a meaningful conversation (28).

The themes discussed in the symposium included the position of the interior architect in society, the relationship between interior architecture and related disciplines, the developments of interior architecture and future perspectives of interior architecture education (28). The invited speakers were related to different educational institutes in the field of design and architecture to highlight different perspectives on interior architecture and the education thereof (27). The symposium had sparked many reactions and was therefore a success (31).

The BNI also believed it to be necessary to improve the existing educational programs at the A.B.K.'s and wanted to achieve this by means of setting up a basic educational plan that could serve all of the A.B.K.'s (19, 22, 97). The first step was made by the BNI Werkgroep Opleidingen in 1977, by profiling the interior architect, in which 'the elementary necessary knowledge is determined and from which a profiled interior architect can take shape' (33).

In 1979, the BNI Werkgroep Opleidingen wished to have closer contacts with the educational institutes and proposed to organise regular meetings about education with the teachers and students of the A.B.K.'s (99, 102, 105). The Werkgroep Opleidingen itself met up regularly as well and wished to expand, especially BNI members who are teachers would make a valuable addition (98, 101, 103).

By 1987, interior architecture education still took place at the A.B.K.'s (8). The Academie van Bouwkunst still does not have an interior architecture education programme and neither does the Bouwkunde department of Technische Universiteit Delft (5). It was repeatedly stated that despite its numerous efforts, the Werkgroep Opleidingen did not achieve its goal of improving the interior architecture education (32, 60). Some reasons for this are the fact that in The Netherlands education is financed and controlled by the government and professional associations have little influence; the fact that the Vereniging van Academies van Beeldend Kunstonderwijs believed that 'consultation about the content and structure should principally be held within the educational institutes', thus not with interference from other parties such as the professional association BNI, and the fact that change was limited by the set of rules tied to the education formats (27, 49, 87).

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the numerous efforts of the BNI and its Werkgroep Opleidingen have not led to any significant changes throughout the years 1968 to 1987, even though it was very much needed according to the repeated critique on the educational programme. Thus in this context no firm conclusion can be drawn on how the development of interior architecture education has impacted the professionalization of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands.

## Chapter 4: The history of the protection of the title of interior architects

In 1970 a report on the position of the interior architect was written by the BNI. The status had improved and that resulted in more recognition from related disciplines, which was important for collaborations (48). The next step was to get official recognition through legal protection of the interior architect's title.

### 4.1 The establishment of Stichting Register Interieurarchitecten

In 1972 the Stichting Register Interieurarchitecten was founded collaboratively by the BNI and the WBA. The aim of this foundation was 'to protect the interior architect's title and to foster the contact between interior architects and potential clients' (66). The Stichting Register Interieurarchitecten used an objective admission method, in which the criteria for admission were based on educational achievements and professional experience. This replaced the more subjective methods which were formerly used by the WBA and the BNI (25). This change to an objective admission method, made the BNI a more serious accepted partner for, amongst others, the government (22).

### 4.2 The establishment of Federatie 'O'

Since 1969, the BNI has been part of the Permanent Overleg, a non-binding collaboration of the BNI, BNA, BNT, KIO, ONRI, and VTL. In 1973 plans were made to change the non-binding 'overleg' into a federative alliance, to create better possibilities of bundling activities and to make appearances outside together (17). This wish for a binding collaboration led to the establishment of Federatie 'O' (16). In December 1973 the members of the BNI voted almost unanimously in favour of joining the Federatie 'O', which was established in 1974 as a collaboration group between the professional associations of related disciplines, BNA, BNI, BNS, BNT, KIO and ONRI. The board consisted of a representative of every one of the associations (22).

Federatie 'O' and its predecessor Permanent Overleg had proven to be important in the route toward the enactment of the Wet op de Architectentitel (WAT) (66). This importance was noticeable in the conversations between several ministries and the professional associations

BNI, BNS and BNT about the inclusion of interior architects, urbanists and landscape architects in the WAT (22, 31).

### 4.3 First proposal of the Wet op de Architectentitel including architects

The first proposal of the WAT applied exclusively to architects, thus excluding interior architects, landscape architects and urbanists. In collaboration with the professional organisation of the other left out disciplines, the BNI actively worked towards the inclusion of these three disciplines in the WAT. The Dutch parliament agreed on the inclusion of these disciplines and it led to an extension of the first proposal of the WAT (26, 27). In December 1975 the BNI chairman announced that the first version of WAT including interior architects was ready and to be sent off to the Eerste and Tweede Kamer for approval (31). The law did not get approved until 1986 and between 1975 and 1986 the discussions between the professional associations and the ministries about the law continued and several versions of the law were made (5, 6, 26, 45, 46, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72).

### 4.4 The enactment of Wet op de Architectentitel (WAT)

On the first of October 1988 the Wet op de Architectentitel (WAT) went into effect, making the title protection concrete. From this moment on, practising interior architects can only carry the title if they are registered in the Architectenregister (66). The protection of the architect's title entails that only people who are registered in the Architectenregister, are allowed to use the corresponding title. A person could qualify for registration in the Architectenregister if they 'met the education requirements', 'had sufficient work experience' or 'passed the exam'. People who use the title unrightfully, thus without being registered in the Architectenregister, could be stopped by law, in order to be able to guarantee the protection of the title. This sanction however started five years after the implementation of the law (50).

By means of protection of the architect's title, the aim of the WAT is to 'foster the quality of the built environment', to 'protect the clients of architect services, in a way that accredited expertise is publicly recognizable' and to 'take away barriers for Dutch architects to establish themselves in other countries or to operate there'. In June 1985 an EEG-guideline was established to 'regulate the mutual recognition of degrees in architecture, and the right of freedom of establishment and the freedom of operation'. From the moment of

implementation of the WAT, this meant for Dutch registered architects that they could practice architecture in the other EG countries freely (50).

As a consequence of the implementation of the WAT, the government had prescribed the establishment of a foundation that handled the registrations of architects, urbanists, garden- and landscape architects and interior architects (42, 50, 79). The existing registers collaboratively established the Stichting Bureau Architectenregister and every professional association nominated one of its members for the board, thus all associations would be represented in the board (35, 42, 74, 77, 79). Each of the four disciplines had an admission committee and an exam committee within the SBA. These committees consisted of members of the related professional association (35, 77).

## Conclusion

The professional associations first set up their own registers to protect qualified interior architects. Then the BNI committed to making the architect's title lawfully protected for interior architects. They achieved this through collaborations with the professional associations of the other architecture related disciplines. The inclusion of the interior architect in the WAT has improved the status of interior architecture visibly and therefore it has helped the professionalization of interior architecture as an independent discipline in The Netherlands.

# Conclusion

The professionalisation of interior architecture as an independent discipline in the Netherlands started with the efforts and developments of the professional associations. The unification of the professional associations in 1975 made it possible to take on the next challenge regarding the professionalisation of the discipline. The BNI detected many flaws in the interior architecture education programmes throughout 1968 - 1991, but despite many efforts the BNI did not realise any significant improvements in the analysed time period, according to the available sources. The fight for the official recognition was more successful, leading to the protection of the architect's title in 1988.

To conclude, through the professional associations and the protection of the architect's title interior architecture has professionalised into an independent discipline in the Netherlands through the course of the twentieth century. However, room for improvement remained regarding the education of interior architecture.

# Discussion

This architectural history thesis provides information on the professionalisation of interior architecture in The Netherlands throughout the period which is seen as the most significant for the professionalisation. I have attempted to include many sources to write an unbiased research, yet the following can be remarked.

Most of the sources were written by the BNI, such as the many documents from the BNI archive and the text by Meijer, who was paid by the BNI to write about the BNI's history for a book about its 50th anniversary in 2018.

The BNI has 23 meters of archives in the National Collection for Dutch Architecture and Urban Planning. It was not possible to go through everything within the given time frame, so for this research I went through the folders that I expected to be the most relevant. Thus even though I have made use of an extensive number of sources, I cannot claim this survey to be complete.

The development of professional association BNI and its predecessors is well documented in the BNI archives, including both formal documents like articles of association as well as less formal documents expressing opinions. These documents answer both the when, how and why questions.

The developments about education included almost no formal documents which made it difficult to figure out the factual information of when what type of education existed. The found information provided mostly insight in the critique on the educational programmes and efforts and proposals to change it.

This thesis solely researches the history of interior architecture as a discipline and does not go into depth of the interior architecture itself. This could be interesting in a follow up research.

the professionalisation of interior architecture is still going on. The professionalisation has continued in more recent years and probably will continue. This research covers the period in history in which the professionalisation made the biggest steps. It might however be interesting to extend the researched time period to more recent years.

As a follow up, a more extensive research about the professionalization of interior architecture as an independent discipline in the Netherlands could be. The remarks in this discussion should then be kept in mind.

# Glossary

**Academie van Beeldende Kunsten, A.B.K.** Dutch term for academy of visual arts.

**Academie van Bouwkunst.** Dutch term for academy of architecture.

**Arti et Industriae.** See *Nederlandsche Vereeniging 'Arti et Industriae' (aan de Kunst en Nijverheid)*

**Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten, BNI.** The professional association for interior architects in The Netherlands.

**Beroepsorganisatie Nederlandse Ontwerpers, BNO.** The professional association for designers in The Netherlands.

**binnenhuisarchitect.** Dutch term for *interior decorator*.

**binnenhuiskunst.** Dutch term for *domestic interior art*.

**BNI Werkgroep Publiciteit.** The working group of the *Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten* concerning publicity.

**BNI Werkgroep Onderwijs.** The working group of the *Beroepsvereniging Nederlandse Interieurarchitecten* concerning education.

**Bond van Nederlandse Architecten, BNA.** Currently Branchevereniging Nederlandse Architectenbureaus. The professional association for architects in The Netherlands.

**Bond Nederlandse Stedebouwkundigen, BNS.** The professional association for urbanists in The Netherlands.

**European Economic Community, EEG.** 1958–1993. An organisation with the aim to foster economic integration, and the basis for the European Union.

**GKf. Vereniging van Beoefenaars der Gebonden Kunsten.** Professional association

**interieurarchitectuur / interieurarchitektuur.** Dutch term for *interior architecture*.

**Nederlandsche Vereeniging 'Arti et Industriae' (aan de Kunst en Nijverheid).** previously Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Kunstnijverheid Arti et Industriae. Dutch association for craftsmanship and industry.



**Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Bevordering van Kunstnijverheid Arti et Industriae.** later Nederlandsche Vereeniging 'Arti et Industriae' (aan de Kunst en Nijverheid). Dutch association for craftsmanship and industry.

**Register van Interieurarchitekten.** A register of interior architects.

**Technische Hogeschool, T.H.** Dutch term for *technical college*.

**Technische Hogeschool Delft, T.H. Delft.** Currently Technische Universiteit Delft. The technical college in Delft.

**Vereniging voor Ambachts- en Nijverheidskunst (VANK).** Pre-war association for craftsmanship and artisanship in The Netherlands.

**W.B.A. Nederlandse Vereniging van interieurarchitecten, WBA.** Professional association for interior architects in The Netherlands.

**Werkgroep Binnenhuis-architecten, W.B.A..** The interior architecture department of professional association 'Arti et Industriae'.

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