

Pierre Cuypers & Abraham Salm

Immortalised and forgotten

Author:
Thijs von Barnau Sythoff
4647297

Tutor:
Birgitte Hansen

AR2A011: Architectural History Thesis.
TU Delft, MSc Architecture

19-04-2023

1. Prologue	p.1
2. Introduction	p.1
3. Research questions	p.1
4. Methodology	p.2
5. Main argument	p.2
6. Analysis	p.3
6.1. The contemporary appreciation of Abraham Salm and Pierre Cuypers	p.3
6.1.1.The Blindeninstituut	p.4
6.1.2.The Rijksmuseum	p.6
6.2. Salm, Cuypers and the 19 th century architectural debate	p.8
6.2.1.The Dutch 19 th century debate	p.8
6.2.2.The movements in the Dutch debate	p.8
6.2.3.The movements and their problems	p.10
6.3. Education & Personal life	p.10
6.3.1.Abraham Salm (1857-1915)	p.11
6.3.2.Pierre Cuypers (1827-1921)	p.12
6.4. Immortalised and forgotten	p.12
7. Conclusion	p.13
8. Discussion	p.14
9. Epilogue	p.14
10. Bibliography	p.15
11. Appendix	p.16

“Now here we are, making copies in steel and concrete of copies in plaster of copies in marble of copies in wood, why?”
- Howard Roark (Rand, 1943)

1. Prologue

As an architecture student at TU Delft, I took architectural history classes in the undergraduate programme. In these architectural history classes, 19th-century architecture was portrayed as a time in which movements succeeded each other chronologically. That this time in Western architectural (and art) history is a lot more turbulent and ambiguous than this portrayal first became clear to me while reading Ayn Rand's classic 'The Fountainhead' (1943). The book portrays a fierce debate on architecture which took place in America in the early 20th century. This debate originated in the 19th century and also had a strong presence in the Netherlands. During multidisciplinary research into the Dutch debate, I developed a fascination for the eclectic architect Abraham Salm. A popular and successful architect at the time, he built up a broad and diverse oeuvre, mainly with Amsterdam building projects. Why have I never heard of him before?

2. Introduction

When 19th-century Dutch architecture comes up for discussion, it doesn't take long before Pierre Cuypers is mentioned. The architect of the Rijksmuseum and Central Station in Amsterdam, the grandfather of rationalism in the Netherlands. However, during research on Abraham Salm, it emerged that Pierre Cuypers was not at all such a celebrated superstar in his own time as the history image suggests. In contrast, Abraham Salm was immensely popular in his own time, received much praise for his architecture and ran a very successful building practice together with his father Bartholomeus. The main question of this thesis arose from the literature reviewed: Auke van der Woud's 'Waarheid en Karakter' paints a critical picture of Cuypers. In Aart Oxenaar's work on Cuypers, the general tone is very positive and praising. Both 'Waarheid en Karakter' and the publication 'Bouwmeesters van Amsterdam' suggest

that Abraham Salm was a popular competent architect who has unjustly fallen into oblivion. A 2021 dissertation by Remco van der Kuip also provides evidence of the success of Salm's building practice and his popularity. The discovery of van der Woud's criticism of Cuypers and the growing evidence of Salm's qualities led to the research question of this thesis:

"Why is Pierre Cuypers immortalised in Dutch architectural history, and Abraham Salm forgotten?"

At the time of Cuypers and Salm, the second half of the 19th century, the architectural world was in stormy weather. Architects and academics could not agree on what the architecture of the time should look like. The main question of this debate was 'what style should we build in?' Which ideology or movement won this debate? And does this explain the immortalisation of Cuypers and the oblivion of Salm?

3. Research Questions

Main question:

"Why is Pierre Cuypers immortalised in Dutch architectural history, and Abraham Salm forgotten?"

Sub-questions:

- Was Cuypers criticised for his architecture in his own time, and if so on what criteria was he criticised and by whom?
- Did Abraham Salm receive praise for his architecture, and if so on what criteria did he receive this praise and by whom?
- Does the explanation for the immortalisation of Cuypers and the forgetting of Salm lie in the course of the architectural debate?

- Which architectural movements and ideas existed in the 19th century and what was their position in the debate?
- To which movements can we count Cuypers and Salm and what was their relationship to these movements?
- What role did both architects' educations and personal lives play in their position in the debate?
- What is the role of Hendrik Petrus Berlage in the immortalisation of Cuypers?

4. Methodology

The research that preceded this thesis consists of visual and literary research. Both primary sources and secondary sources were investigated. Based on research in the archives of the Nieuwe Instituut and the Stadsarchief Amsterdam, the primary sources were collected. These sources consist of opinion pieces from architectural trade journals from the late 19th century, opinion pieces from weekly magazines from the early 20th century and original architectural drawings by Abraham Salm and Pierre Cuypers. The secondary sources consist of the literature examined at the start of this thesis in response to the fascination with the 19th-century architectural debate. The main publications that formed the argument of this thesis are:

'Waarheid en Karakter. Het debat over de bouwkunst, 1840-1900' by Auke van der Woud from 1997.

'G.B. Salm & A. Salm GBzn. Bouwmeesters van Amsterdam' by Janjaap Kuyt, Norbert Middelkoop and Auke van der Woud from 1997.

'G.B. Salm and A. Salm GBzn en de ontwikkeling van de bouwpraktijk in Nederland, a 2021 doctorate by Remco van der Kuip

'P.H.J Cuypers en het gotisch rationalisme: architectonisch denken, ontwerpen en uitgevoerde gebouwen 1845-1878' by Aart Oxenaar from 2009

'Het Rijksmuseum: evocatie van een groots verleden' by Jet Burgert from 1998.

These secondary sources were consulted via the TU Delft university library, the library of the 'Nieuwe Instituut' and via the internet.

5. Main Argument

Whether the criticism of Cuypers and the praise for Salm is correct, and on what criteria this criticism and praise was expressed, is examined through a case study of two important works by both architects. For Abraham Salm, the design for the Blindeninstituut from 1884 was examined. For Pierre Cuypers, the Rijksmuseum from 1885 was examined. Both architects obtained the design commission through a competition. This research focused mainly on opinion pieces written about both buildings shortly after they were completed. This research showed that Pierre Cuypers received strong criticism on the aesthetics and symbolism of the Rijksmuseum mainly from the general public. From professional circles, Cuypers also received criticism but the authors of the opinion piece also recognised certain qualities in his architecture, those of the so-called 'reasoning art doctrine'. Abraham Salm received high praise from professional circles for his design of the Blindeninstituut. Both opinion pieces from architectural journals and an evaluation report from the jury that had chosen Salm's design as the winner of the competition appreciated the design for its beauty and effectiveness.

The debate on architecture in the 19th century, which formed the playing field in which Abraham Salm and Pierre Cuypers practised their architecture, focused on the question: 'in what style should we build?'

Around the 1880s, the time period when the Rijksmuseum and the Blindeninstituut were designed, the debate was conducted from the following three movements: the two historicising movements: the Dutch Renaissance and the 'official style', and the modernising movement: eclecticism. The two historicising movements were looking for the right historical style for the 'new era'. Eclecticism rested on the idea that architecture for this new era did not have to conform to one style principle and that modern design could be found precisely by combining the whole range of historical styles in the 'right way'. Whether the course of this debate answers the main question of this thesis was examined on the basis of the literature mentioned before. The architectural movements were examined for this purpose. This showed that Abraham Salm can be considered to belong to eclecticism. Van der Woud categorises Cuypers to the 'official style', but the research has shown that this categorisation negates the architectural development Cuypers experienced. This conclusion came about through research into the education, personal life and architectural careers of Pierre Cuypers and Abraham Salm. From this research, it can be concluded that Abraham Salm had developed into a successful architect with a broad knowledge of historical styles and the necessary competence to apply them 'correctly' in his architecture through proper education and making architectural trips abroad. Pierre Cuypers was a neo-Gothic church designer who in the course of his career developed the foundations of what was later labelled as 'rational' architecture. This development originated from as early as his education.

The movements in the architectural debate each ran into their own problems in the transition to the 20th century. The Dutch Renaissance and the 'official style' ran aground on their historicising nature. Copying historical examples led to plagiarism, and with the rising importance of originality and individualism, historicising styles lost their artistic credibility. The rise of commercial construction caused the corruption of

the eclectic repertoire. The movement lent itself extremely well to commercial construction and eclecticism as an architectural theoretical territory soon became indistinguishable from unprincipled building development for commercial profit. Partly for these reasons did the debate, which focused on style, not have a winner transitioning into the 20th century. The hypothesis that the course of the debate can provide the direct explanation for Pierre Cuypers' immortalisation and Abraham Salm's falling into oblivion can therefore be rejected.

As Auke van der Woud suggests in 'Waarheid en Karakter' and 'Bouwmeesters van Amsterdam', Cuypers' immortalisation is probably mainly due to Hendrik Petrus Berlage. Berlage led a new group of young architects in the early 20th century who rejected the entire importance of historical examples and paved the way for the modern architecture of the 20th century. Berlage's 'rationalism' found its foundation in Cuypers' 'reasoning art doctrine'. For this reason, in rejecting the entire architectural development of the 19th century, Berlage made one exception: for Pierre Cuypers.

The fact that the criticism Cuypers received, and the praise for Salm's designs, no longer played a role in this valuation can be explained by the criteria against which their architecture was assessed in times of completion. These criteria, which focused mainly on the style of the building, were no longer relevant according to Berlage cum suis.

6. Analysis

6.1 The contemporary appreciation of Abraham Salm and Pierre Cuypers

This first part of the analysis answers the first two sub-questions:

- Did Abraham Salm receive praise for his architecture, and if so on what criteria did he receive this praise and by whom?

- Was Cuypers criticised for his architecture in his own time, and if so on what criteria was he criticised and by whom?

The answer to these sub-questions was arrived at by analysing mainly primary sources. The completion of the Blindeninstituut and Rijkmuseum led to a reaction from professional and/or public circles. Professional circles expressed their views on architecture through professional journals. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 210-218) The two main examples are the two weeklies of the two most relevant architectural societies of the time: 'Het Bouwkundig Weekblad', a publication by the Maatschappij ter Bevordering van Bouwkunst, and 'De Opmerker' a publication by Architectura et Amicitia. Response from public circles has not been found for the Blindeninstituut. For the Rijkmuseum, an analysis of public opinion was made using a 1998 publication by Jet Burgert, PhD, of Leiden University, and the public opinion magazines 'De Lantaarn' and the 'Elsevier'.

6.1.1 The Blindeninstituut

Abraham Salm obtained the commission for the Blindeninstituut through a competition in which J.P.F. van Rossem, P.J. Hamer and T.G. Schill also participated. All three are eclectics with a noteworthy oeuvre. For instance, we know J.P.F. van Rossem as the architect of Carré theatre in Amsterdam. The commission involved designing a new institute building for the education and guidance of blind children, as the old building no longer met the requirements. Jan Leliman, a key figure in Dutch eclecticism who will be discussed in more detail later, was on the jury. His assessment report was investigated by Remco van der Kuijp in his doctoral thesis. The assessment report written by Leliman shows a high appreciation of the design. For instance, he called the entire design of the work 'effective'. Mainly because of the central location of the engine room

that provides easy connections for the plumbing and kitchen. He found the front facade 'creditably modern' and 'even original'.



Figure 1: Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1883, Presentatietekening met opstand van de voorgevel van het Blindeninstituut, architectural drawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 07-03-2023

Leliman was less pleased with the rear facade, which is in 'disharmony' with the front facade and needed to be modified. The design is characterised by the strict separation of the boys' and girls' quarters. This makes the design perfectly symmetrical. Although the identical mirrored rooms do not always occupy the same functions, in Leliman's view the separation is 'sublime'. All in all, he called the design a 'masterpiece'. The design distinguished itself from the competition by its 'artful content' and 'excels above its contenders in everything'. (van der Kuijp, 2021)

The Bouwkundig Weekblad featured the building in 1885. The building was praised wholeheartedly. (Bouwkundig Weekblad, 1885, p.942) De Opmerker also wrote a piece on the building in 1885, they were mainly descriptive and did not yet form an opinion (De Opmerker, 1885, p.181,182). In 1908, De Opmerker wrote again about the Blindeninstituut, this time celebrating the 100th anniversary of the institution. This time, De Opmerker also praised the design highly: on its general beauty and how the architects managed to reach this beauty on a tight budget. (De Opmerker, 1908, p.643) The full (translated) texts can be found in the appendix.

Through an analysis of the various opinion pieces and Leliman's assessment report, it is possible to deduce what the design was tested against. Leliman admired the front facade and criticised the rear facade. The Bouwkundig Weekblad wrote about the facade by explaining its materials and stylistic elements. Leliman praised the design's artistic content. In terms of the interior, the Bouwkundig Weekblad mainly praised the quality of the workmanship and details. The commentary of De Opmerker in 1908 also mainly focused on the exterior features. A number of plan comments were made. Among them were the separation of the boys and girls, the central location of the engine room and how two central stairwells keep the circulation in the building easy. That the building is perfectly symmetrical in plan despite the variety of programme

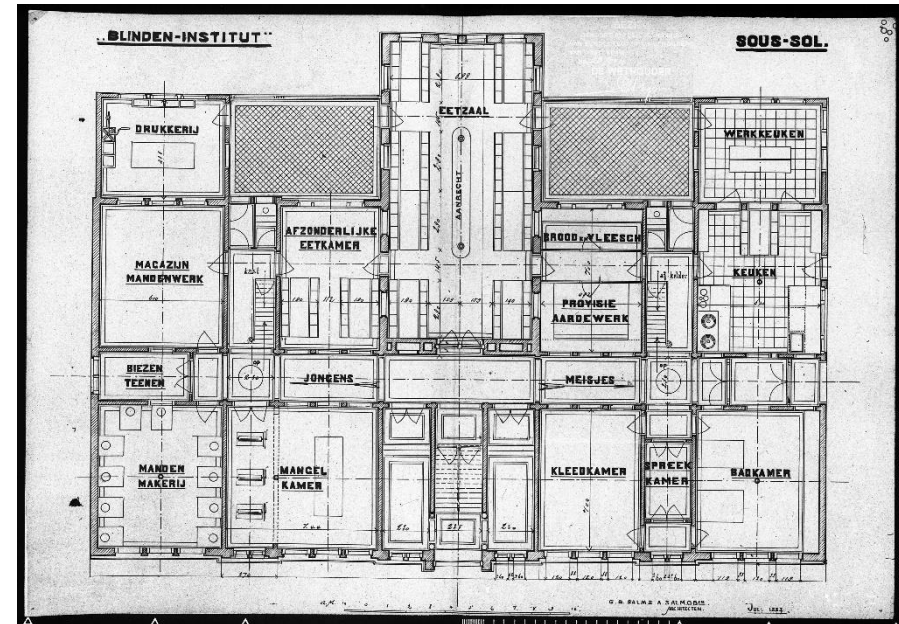


Figure 2:Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1883, Plattegrond Sous-sol, architectural plandrawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 07-03-2023

'Figure 2' shows the plan drawing for the 'sous-sol', the basement, of the Blindeninstituut. The drawing shows the functions of the different rooms. It shows how rooms with totally different functions, and therefore probably different spatial needs, are given the exact same space due to the designs symmetry. It is therefore the argument that the 'extremely practical layout' does not indicate a programmatic logic.

did Leliman not see as disturbing, calling the design effective instead. The Bouwkundig Weekblad concurred by calling this layout extremely practical. The suspicion arises that this assessment refers to the fact that the design is easy to build and therefore probably financially viable, such as the simple connection of sanitary facilities and the kitchen, rather than that it would indicate programmatic logic.

From both Leliman's professional comments and both professional journals, Abraham Salm's ability to combine all facets of a successful building is evident. The appearance of the facade is beautiful and harmonious, the design purposeful, the ornaments artful and all this also economically feasible even on a tight budget.

6.1.2 The Rijksmuseum

The Rijksmuseum opened in 1885. Cuypers obtained the commission by winning a competition. The aim of the museum is to house and exhibit the 16th- and 17th-century masterpieces of Dutch painting. In doing so, the Netherlands is following a European trend; building a national museum. The building is constructed in a hybrid between neo-Gothic and Renaissance. Aart Oxtenaar claims in his publication on Cuypers that the façade was designed mainly according to Renaissance stylistic principles. That this was hardly recognised by the 19th-century observer is clear from the opinion pieces on the building that appeared the same year as its completion.

De Opmerker wrote about the Rijksmuseum in 1885, the same year as the Bouwkundig Weekblad expressed its appreciation of the Blindeninstituut. De Opmerker considers the Rijksmuseum from two points of view: from the 'general artistic point of view' and from the 'reasoning art doctrine', as drawn up by Viollet-le-Duc'. From the first point of view, De Opmerker is critical. The Rijksmuseum's style is mainly recognised by De Opmerker

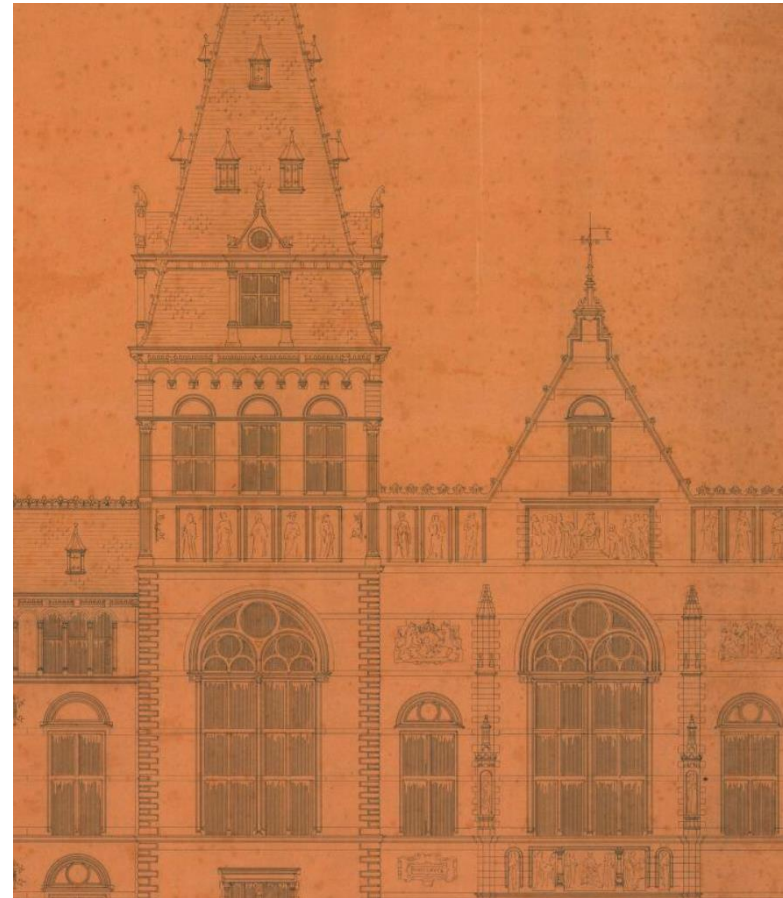


Figure 3: Cuypers, P.J.H, 1876-1885, *Exterieur Rijksmuseum*, architectural drawing, Het Nieuwe Instituut, 11-04-2023

'Figure 3' shows a focused area from a elevation drawing of the Rijksmuseum. It shows a variety of gothic style elements such as: the rose windows, the crucifer, the arcade, the lucarne and the niches with statues. (Hopkins, 2012)

as neo-Gothic and it regrets this. In its view, it is not in line with the building's function: to preserve 16th- and 17th-century art treasures. Nor does the building have the character of a national museum. Seen from the second point of view, that of the 'reasoning art doctrine', the Rijksmuseum is an outstanding building, according to De Opmerker. Shapes, which are not indicated by the structure, have been rejected and ornament has only been used to clad the framework. (De Opmerker, 1885, p. 241)

The general public is less nuanced in its assessment:

'Episcopal palace', 'butter hall', 'building with the plaques', 'temple' or 'motley dwelling of a parvenu grown rich', are examples of the labels given to the museum when it opened in 1885. (Jet Burgert, 1998).

To many, the richly ornamented church building felt out of place in liberal Amsterdam. The building's function of housing 16th- and 17th-century Dutch painting, could hardly be recognized in the style of the facade, according to many critics. A façade in the Dutch Renaissance style is the logical option, in their view, Gothic in any case not. Nowhere is this criticism better illustrated than in the cartoon drawn by caricaturist Jan Holswilder (1850-1890) for the magazine "de Lantaarn" in 1885 in response to the museum's opening.

In the 1903 Elsevier, Cornelis Veth wrote of the drawing: "Take that beautiful print, more famous than many others because of its subject: 'The Dedication of the Episcopal Palace, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam'. It is of a very special importance because of the outstanding charges of three such great figures in our later cultural history as de Stuers, Thijm and Cuypers. [...] But the most remarkable thing about the print is the caricature of the Rijksmuseum, the criticism of the building, so entirely the criticism of an artist of a work of art. Even more than the episcopal, the Romanesque, the pompous, the hectic, the angular of the building is exaggerated, more than a political, it is an aesthetic criticism" (Veth, 1903)

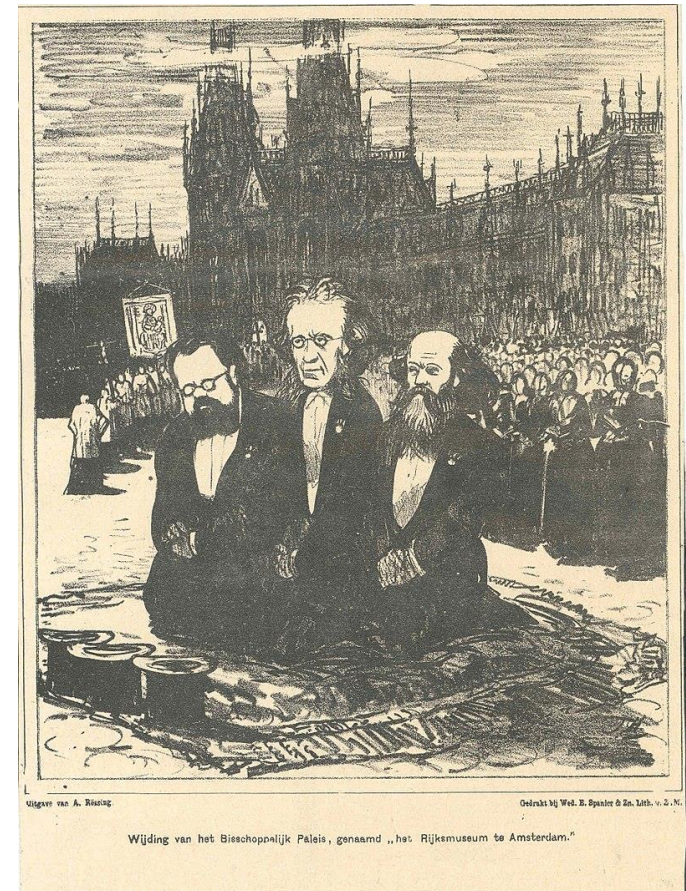


Figure 4: Holswilder, J, 1885, *Wijding van het Bisschoppelijk Paleis, Het Nieuwe Instituut*, 07-03-2023

'Figure 4' shows the cartoon by Jan Holswilder. Important to register is the exaggeration (caricature) of the gothic style of the Rijksmuseum as Veth also explains in the Elsevier.

6.2 Salm, Cuypers and 19th century architectural debate

This second part of the analysis answers the third sub-question:

- Does the explanation for the immortalisation of Cuypers and the forgetting of Salm lie in the course of the architectural debate?

Before an answer to this could be formulated, the architectural debate first had to be set out in the -contemporary and relevant movements and the position of Cuypers and Salm within that movement had to be examined. This answers the fourth and fifth sub-question:

- Which architectural currents and ideas existed in the 19th century and what was its position in the debate?

- To which movements can we count Cuypers and Salm and what was their relationship to these movements?

6.2.1 The Dutch 19th century architectural debate

The Dutch architectural world in the 19th century was mainly characterised by struggle. There was great disagreement among architects and academics about the answer to the question 'how should we build?'. The industrialisation of the Western world and, for example, the invention of the computerised printing press made the dissemination of information via magazines and newspapers easier than ever. Consequently, the various representatives in the architectural debate published countless pieces in various media in order to convince their peers, but also the general public, of their rightness. A good example of such publications are the pieces of text from 'De Opmerker' and the 'Bouwkundig Dagblad' studied for the first part of the analysis.

Most of the attention in the architectural debate went mainly to the external features of the building. Many call this the 'style'. So for them, the question is "what should a building look like today?" or "what style should we build in today?". Ever since the Romans, the norm in architecture was to take historical examples. In the 19th century, therefore, no one was going to break this almost sacred tradition. The fact that good architecture relied on historical examples was a given for everyone. Which historical example was suited best to represent their present time therefore became the point of discussion for many. Around the 1880s, the time period when the Rijksmuseum and the Blindeninstituut were designed, there were two movements in search of such a historical example: the Dutch Renaissance and the 'official style'. For this reason, these movements are categorised as historicising movements. The third movement from this period, eclecticism, deviated from this search for a single historical example and instead sought to find a contemporary design by striving for a certain lack of style. For this reason, eclecticism is categorised as a modernising movement. (van der Woud, 1997)

6.2.2 The movements in the Dutch debate

Dutch Renaissance

The Dutch Renaissance originated with the Polytechnic School in Delft, the forerunner to the Technical University. The forerunner of this movement was Eugen Gugel, the first professor of architecture at the school. Gugel and his followers are mainly looking for a style that best represents the Dutch people. They see the 17th century as the absolute heyday of Dutch society and therefore see a revival of 17th-century architecture as the best way to represent the people. (van der Woud, 1997,p.187-189)

Eclecticism

Abraham Salm can be labelled as an eclecticist. Eclecticism was a movement that allowed architects to choose freely from historical examples without adhering to a single style principle. This approach modernized architecture in a way by interpreting historical examples more freely to find contemporary design. Jan Leliman, a Dutch architect, propagated the importance of truth and character in architecture, stating that the exterior of a building should represent its functionality and the design, construction, and interior layout should form a unity. Style was secondary to this, and all the different historical styles were to be combined to enhance the building's character and truth. This approach brought an emerging individualism to architecture since the architect no longer had to conform to a unified style. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 68)

Leliman's social commitment, theoretical publications, and involvement in leading architectural organizations such as the Maatschappij ter Bevordering van Bouwkunst and Architectura et Amicitiae lead to Leliman gathering many followers, including Abraham Salm.

Both architects were influenced by Henri Labrouste's views on architecture. Salm was influenced through his education in Paris, as will be explained later on in this thesis. Leliman was influenced directly from his time in Labrouste's studio. Labrouste's belief stated that contemporary architecture could only be developed based on the requirements of the modern age and the possibilities of modern building materials and constructions and was therefore not related to any real discussion on style. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 238)

Salms friendship with Leliman is proven by Remco van der Kuijp through discovered letter correspondence in his thesis. Salm's architecture aligns with Leliman's convictions, as evidenced by Leliman's designation of the

Blindeninstituut as a 'masterpiece.' Therefore, there is a case for positioning Salm alongside Leliman in the architectural debate.

The 'official style'

Auke van der Woud associates Cuypers with the 'official style', a movement that sought a universal design for all architecture. The movement was heavily influenced by the Catholic faith, which experienced a revival in the Netherlands in the 19th century. The 'official style' is a mix of Gothic and Renaissance, with Gothic playing the most prominent role. Cuypers was strongly influenced by Gothic art, and art historian Joseph Alberdingk Thijm saw him as the leading representative of Gothic architecture in the Netherlands. Cuypers' good relationship with Thijm and civil servant Victor de Stuers, both key figures in the 'official style', certainly supports the relationship between Cuypers and the 'official style'. It was also this relationship that earned Cuypers the commission to design the Rijksmuseum. Cuypers' architecture also often adhered to the style principle of the 'official style'.

Nevertheless, there is an argument to be made for not including Cuypers in the 'official style'. This argument is based on Aart Olenaars publication 'P.H.J Cuypers en het gotisch rationalisme'. It provides evidence that Cuypers did not seek a unanimous design. He believed in a rational design methodology that took into account location, program, budget, structural structure, and available materials. The facade was the final result of this process, and thus the style of the building was less important to Cuypers. He started to develop this rational design methodology when he was still designing churches. He was the first to move away from the so-called "model church" and looked at the effect of the building on its surroundings. This development was closely linked to Cuypers' relationship with French architect Eugene Viollet-le-Duc, an important figure in neo-Gothic architecture who formulated the principles of rational

design methodology. Cuypers further developed these principles in his own church designs. According to Viollet-le-Duc, style was the result of a rational process, not a stylistic starting point. He distinguished between "les styles" (the styles), acknowledging the existence of historical styles, and "le style" (the style), referring to style as the result of a rational design process. Cuypers concurred with this thinking. He believed that a building's style could only arise from a methodological design process, not from formal characteristics. (Oxenaar, 2009)

Within the profession, others recognized this development in Cuypers' architecture as the 'reasoning art doctrine' as recognized in the opinion piece on the Rijksmuseum.

6.2.3 The movements and their problems

Eclecticism & commercial construction

In the 19th century, industrialization and automation led to new building techniques and faster construction processes, which gave rise to commercial construction. This created a new group of players in the field of architecture, such as investors, speculators, and developers, who were primarily interested in revenue rather than architectural beauty.

Eclectic designs were well-suited for commercial construction because they allowed for a mix of different styles that could be adapted to meet the needs of different clients. In contrast, historicising movements such as the "official style" and the "Dutch Renaissance" were less practical for commercial projects because of their stricter architectural rules.

However, the popularity of eclectic design also led to its demise as a theoretical territory. Competent architects who had a good grasp of historical styles and their representation presented well-considered style mixes, but they were overshadowed by uneducated designers who had no

basic architectural knowledge. Mixing styles became a way to mass-produce buildings quickly and cheaply, leading to the vulgarization of the eclectic repertoire. After all, ordinary citizens were unable to distinguish proper eclectic architecture from mixed-style buildings. (van der Woud, 1997, p.199)

The historicizing styles & originality

Just as eclecticism eventually broke down in the face of changing times, historicising styles including the 'official style' and the Dutch Renaissance, ran into a growing problem. Originality, the 'uniqueness' of a design, had little value in the early 19th century. In fact, the general consensus was that it was better to copy a good example than to bring a poor original creation into the world. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 244) However, this opinion began to shift towards the end of the 19th century. Individualism in art became increasingly important and copying historical examples became increasingly questionable. The best example of this is the competition for the stock exchange building in Amsterdam. The 'Beurs van Berlage', ultimately logically designed by Hendrik Petrus Berlage, should have obtained its original design through a competition in 1884. The winner of this competition, the Frenchman Cordonnier, never saw his design realised because he was accused of plagiarism. The ensuing debate in the professional journals exposed how difficult it is to guarantee such originality when architecture is created by copying. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 244)

6.3 Education & Personal life

This part of the analysis answers the sixth sub-question:

- What role did both architects' educations and personal lives play in their position in the debate?

6.3.1 Abraham Salm (1857-1915)

Abraham Salm was born to Bartholomeus Salm, who was also an architect. Bartholomeus, despite a limited education, established a successful building practice. He was the regular architect for Artis Zoo in Amsterdam for 30 years, for example, thanks to his good relationship with its director G.F. Westerman. He designed notable buildings such as the Aquarium and the Artis Library. (Kuyt, Middelkoop, van der Woud, 1997)

Abraham Salm received extensive education thanks to his father's success. He studied under architect J.G.J van Roosmalen in Zwolle in 1877 before moving to Paris to attend the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1878. The school was initially known for its strict classicist style doctrine but had evolved under the influence of French architect Henri Labrouste, who rebelled against this doctrine in 1829 when he won the Grand Prix de Rome with a design in a not classicist nor any other defined style. A good forty years later when Abraham attended the school, Labrouste's architectural beliefs, as stated earlier this thesis, had taken a central role in the education. Abraham shows himself to be good student and he works hard.

Letter correspondence reveals an architectural credo that Abraham formulated during his studies: "The true beauty in an architectural design is: 1. That the silhouette is good; 2. That the proportions are good; 3. That the refinement of the windows and doors is harmonious". This credo reveals a modern conception of design that goes beyond style. Indeed, Salm does not express a preference for one or more styles but judges the beauty of a design on a more abstract level. (van der Kuijp, 2021)

Apart from his studies in Paris, Abraham also travelled extensively across Europe and America to research global architecture, which greatly influenced his work. A very important work of Salm, the building on

Herengracht 380-382, was designed in the "Francois I style" for tobacco magnate J. Nienhuys. The lavish decoration and frills in a predominantly classicist pattern were inspired by the castles in the Loire Valley. This design, in comparison with the relatively sober Blindeninstituut, which he designed in roughly the same year, proves the broad scope of the canon of styles from which Salm compiled his designs.

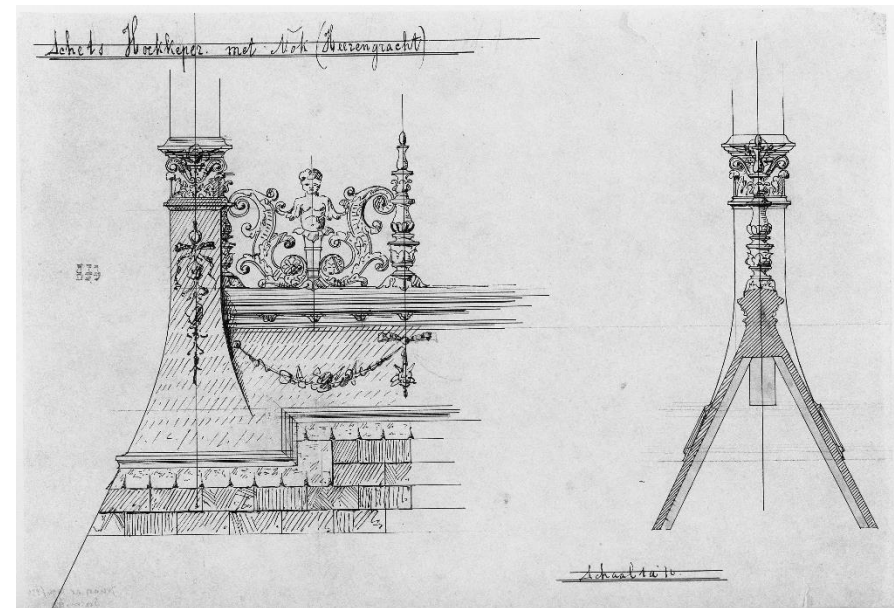


Figure 5: Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1884, *Ontwerptekening met aanzicht en doorsnede van een hoekkeper op de nok van het dak Herengracht 380-382*, architectural drawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 12-04-2023

'Figure 5' shows a detail drawing of one the ornaments Salm designed for the Herengracht 380-382. Showing the level of detail and lavishness of the decoration.

Together, Abraham and Bartholomeus worked as executive architects in the Netherlands from 1858 to 1915. Exactly how many buildings were designed and built by either Abraham, Bartholomeus or by them together is difficult to say. The architectural historian Janjaap Kuyt compiled a catalogue of G.B. and A. Salm's work for the Stadsarchief Amsterdam in 1997. This catalogue is based on 1,300 architectural drawings and describes 150 designs. At the very least, this proves their high productivity and the size of their oeuvre. Especially if one also takes into account all the documentation that did get lost over 120 years.

6.3.2 Pierre Cuypers (1827-1921)

Petrus Josephus Hubertus (Pierre) Cuypers grew up in the Catholic municipality of Roermond. He studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp from 1845 to 1849. This education was in a sense 'ahead of' the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. Indeed, in Antwerp, art was judged not only by the 'rules of art' and aesthetics but also by the content and rationale of the work of art. It dawned on the young Cuypers early on that apart from a particular style, art could also have a social meaning and ideological charge. (Oxenaar, 2009).

During his studies, Cuypers became acquainted with neo-Gothicism. A style promoted, among others, by the English architect A.W.N Pugin (1812-1852). Pugin, and the Belgian Pugin followers, did not see neo-Gothic as simply one of several historical styles. For them, reverting to the principles of medieval Gothic was the answer to save the now corrupted architecture. (Oxenaar, 2009) A good example of such a medieval Gothic principle is the brick pointed arch. With the invention of cast-iron supporting structures, the common practice in construction by now was to use plaster and sandstone to clad a steel arch. This created the impression of a stone arch. However, this impression was false. Steel was the real constructive material. This undermined the truth, as also Cuypers later

felt, of the construction. Better to return to constructing actual stone pointed arches according to the constructive principles as they had been discovered and established in the Middle Ages. Cuypers himself was raised Catholic and the son of a church painter. So it is easy to imagine that he could identify well with the idea that the divine stylistic form of Gothic was the answer for restoring architecture.

6.4 Immortalised and forgotten

This part of the analysis answers the seventh sub-question:

- What is the role of Hendrik Petrus Berlage in the immortalisation of Cuypers?

Hendrik Petrus Berlage

It is 16 June 1915. Around Abraham Salm's grave stands the entire top of the Dutch architectural world. Among those present are the elderly Pierre Cuypers and Hendrik Petrus Berlage, who is 59 years old at the time. The general secretary of the Maatschappij ter Bevordering van Bouwkunst and editor of Bouwkundig Weekblad, J.Gratema (1877-1947), wrote an obituary a few days when the funeral took place. In this obituary, he described A. Salm and praised him mainly for his administrative qualities and efforts within the Society. About Salm's architecture, Gratema dared to be less concrete. He concluded that Salm always sought a connection with historicising styles but always managed to combine them into modern architecture through a personal twist. He could not say very well what Salm's position would become in architectural history but was sure that Salm would be remembered in honour. Salm's name turned up a few more times in publications until five years when he died. In 1920, J.H.W.

Leliman, Jan Leliman's son, publishes an architectural compilation of the past 25 years. Abraham Salm is not mentioned. (van der Kuijp, 2021)

Attention has shifted, and at the centre of this shifted attention is Hendrik Petrus Berlage (1856-1943). The modern, rational architecture of Berlage and his followers was the only correct path to follow within architecture. The debate on style was at an end and a new era had begun. (van der Woud, 1997, p. 287)

Berlage's views on 19th-century architecture can be summed up quite simply. No one in the entire profession in those hundred years had understood anything about what architecture was all about, namely the pure principles of construction. He made one exception: Pierre Cuypers. Berlage's influence on the modern conception of 19th-century architecture cannot be underestimated. Berlage was an active publicist and gave many lectures. Whether it was due to his powers of persuasion or something else is now difficult to verify but Berlage's words were taken as truth by the masses. Thus the general picture of 19th-century architecture in the Netherlands emerged: two beacons of reason, Cuypers and Berlage, surrounded by a whole parade of idlers. (Kuyt, Middelkoop, van der Woud, 1997)

7. Conclusion

The debate about architecture in the Netherlands in the 19th century was mainly a debate about external features, design, detailing, ornamentation, etc. It was theorised and debated about what this appearance should look like; why precisely one historical style is better than another or how precisely a mix of styles is better than a pure interpretation. Either way, the debate moved into a territory of aesthetics, symbolism and representation. We can recognise this in the praise and criticism that appeared about architecture in the trade journals and opinion magazines.

In the case of both buildings discussed, the Blindeninstituut by A. Salm and Cuypers' Rijksmuseum, the buildings were judged on aesthetic criteria. Salm, who was a master of these 19th-century values, was therefore praised for his masterpiece. Cuypers, who had the aesthetics of the facade more or less at the bottom of his list, missed the mark with the general public and was strongly criticised.

In the meantime, under the playing field of the debate on aesthetics, symbolism and representation, a new consciousness grew. A new design methodology that does not start with the external features of a building and incorporates a floor plan, but tries to find the best solution to the design task from an integral methodology. It is a methodology that involves terms such as orientation and programme and considers a new scale such as the urban fabric. This awareness later came to be known as rational architecture and, in the Netherlands, can be traced back to developments within Pierre Cuypers' architecture. Whether Cuypers was alone in this cannot be proved or disproved with this study. From Berlage's own rational constructive principles, it is quite understandable that he considered Cuypers the only competent architect of the 19th century. The debate on architecture, with its players as we have treated them: the eclectics, the Dutch Renaissance and the 'official style', did not really have a winner. Both directions, the historicising approach and the attempt at modernisation from eclecticism, failed in the face of the social changes that so strongly characterised the late 19th century. The hypothesis that Cuypers backed the winners of this debate can therefore be rejected.

That Abraham Salm was a competent architect should not be doubted. His good education and foreign travels gave him an excellent grasp of both structural principles and historical styles. A true virtuoso, he showed himself to be a true master in the realm of aesthetics, symbolism and representation and, in a sense, was actually innovative. However, the

domain in which Abraham was so master, the domain of aesthetics, symbolism and representation, came to an end towards Abraham's death. By the time he is buried, rational consciousness had broken through the old playing field. To move forward, the old ways had to be polished away for a clean slate. Abraham Salm had to pay for this cleaning with oblivion.

The research also revealed that the foundations from which Cuypers and Salm's architecture emerged were essentially not that different. Henri Labrouste, whose thinking laid the foundations for eclecticism in the Netherlands, has been labelled a rationalist for a reason. Abraham Salm, however, never quite managed to actually let go of style, and mainly exploited the possibility of mixing styles rather than actually looking beyond aesthetics.

8. Discussion

Much of the information that forms the argument of this thesis comes from publications by others and is thus undoubtedly influenced by their personal preferences.

The research into the architectural debate of the 19th century and the architectural movements was done on the basis of Auke van der Woud's 'Waarheid en Karakter'. The information on Abraham Salm comes largely from 'Bouwmeester van Amsterdam' in which Norbert Middelkoop is the author of the relevant information. Remco van der Kuijp's thesis mainly provided a lot of insight on certain details in Salm's life, which for the argument of this thesis could grow into key information such as Salm's architectural credo, which van der Kuijp had managed to find through research into letter correspondence. The critical image van der Woud creates about Pierre Cuypers is hardly recognisable in the work of Aart Oxaar. This thesis has tried to bring both perspectives to light. On the one hand, the justified notion that Cuypers too had his weaknesses, and

on the other, the recognition of the importance of his architecture for the unfolding of modern architecture.

That the debate of the 19th century focused almost exclusively on the external features of the intended structure is concluded for the first time in this paper. Auke van der Woud did not dare draw this conclusion in 'Waarheid en Karakter'. Perhaps in fear of losing the complex nuance, of which the importance of remaining aware of at all times cannot be underestimated. The primary source research had a great influence on this conclusion, as it showed that even when 'reasoning art doctrine' was mentioned, this referred to the logic of ornamentation on the façade.

The influence of emerging commercial construction plays an important role in this thesis, yet the depth of research into it is limited.

Commercialism plays an undeniable role in architecture today. The role of "the market" on the course of architectural developments from the late 19th century to the present would be a valuable topic for future research.

9. Epilogue

Let me start by saying that I learnt a lot while writing this thesis. Mainly in the context of substantive research. For instance, I never had a very high opinion of Pierre Cuypers. The discovery that I share this critical view with van der Woud was reason enough for me to take a closer look at him. In this research, my appreciation of Cuypers has actually increased, now that I have a better understanding of the foundations of his architecture. The actual writing of the thesis was difficult for me. I am curiously inclined and quickly lost myself in details, which later turned out not to contribute to the argument of the thesis. From the beginning of the research, my supervisor, Birgitte Hansen, insisted that I had to map out the outline of the thesis. I failed to do this each time, and when putting all the information together, the problems this entailed surfaced. For future

research, I now realise the importance of mapping out a proper structure. Maybe the reason I failed to do so is because my research question kept on changing while I researched more and more. Again a product of my curiosity. In terms of writing I continuously had to remind myself that I was not writing a novel but an academic paper. To 'spoil' the conclusion of the argument early on was something I found difficult. In the end I hope to have given an interesting perspective on 'our' architectural history and how relative the concept of success can be.

10. Bibliography

Secondary sources:

Burgert, J. (1998). *Het Rijksmuseum: evocatie van een groots verleden*. Leidschrift, jaargang 14, nummer 1

Hopkins, O. (2012). *Reading Architecture. A visual lexicon*, Laurence King

Kuyt, J., Middelkoop, N., & Van Der Woud, A. (1997). *Bouwmeesters van Amsterdam: G.B. Salm & A. Salm GBzn*.

Oxenaar, A. J. (2009). *P.H.J. Cuypers en het gotisch rationalisme : architectonisch denken, ontwerpen en uitgevoerde gebouwen 1845-1878*. [Universiteit van Amsterdam]. NAI Uitgevers.

Van der Kuip, R.V. (2021) *G.B. Salm en A. Salm GBzn en de ontwikkeling van de bouwpraktijk in Nederland tussen 1848 en 1915*. Universiteit Leiden

Van Der Woud, A. (1997). *Waarheid en karakter: het debat over de bouwkunst, 1840-1900*. NAI Publishers.

Veth, C. (1903). *Jan Holswilder, 1850-1890*. LVIII. Elseviers No. 8.

Primary sources:

Archief Het Nieuwe Instituut

Location: open stacks archival library

Het blinden-instituut te Amsterdam. De Opmerker : weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap. (1885) p. 181, 182.

Het Blindeninstituut. De Opmerker: weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap (1908) p. 643

Het Rijksmuseum. De Opmerker : weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap. (1885) p. 241

Instituut tot onderwijs van blinden . Bouwkundig Weekblad : orgaan van de Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst (1885) p. 942

Image reference:

Figure 1: Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1883, Presentatietekening met opstand van de voorgevel van het Blindeninstituut, architectural drawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 07-03-2023

Figure 2: Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1883, Plattegrond Sous-sol, architectural plandrawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 07-03-2023

Figure 3: Cuypers, P.J.H, 1876-1885, Exterieur Rijksmuseum, architectural drawing, Het Nieuwe Instituut, 11-04-2023

Figure 4: Holswilder, J, 1885, Wijding van het Bisschoppelijk Paleis, Het Nieuwe Instituut, 07-03-2023

Figure 5: Salm, Abraham G.Bzn, 1884, Ontwerptekening met aanzicht en doorsnede van een hoekkeper op de nok van het dak Herengracht 380-382, architectural drawing, Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 12-04-2023

11. Appendix

Het blinden-instituut te Amsterdam. De Opmerker : weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap. (1885) p. 181, 182.

"One of the old patrician houses on Heerengracht in Amsterdam is now home to the Institute for Blind Children. Lack of space, coupled with furnishings that did not meet all requirements, made the directors decide to construct a new building. To this end, the director gathered all the necessary information to design the future institute in accordance with the latest scientific and practical requirements. In a closed competition, the design of Messrs G.B. Salm and A. Salm BGzn. for the construction and they were also entrusted with the execution. The foundation stone was laid at the end of February 1884. The building is now ready and will soon be occupied. Many a walker in our beautiful Vondelpark has already regarded the substantial facade with attentive eyes. Constructed of colourful Groninger brick, alternated by bands, frames, etc. of artificial cement stone, decorated by a tastefully designed entrance gate of sandstone, the façade makes a pleasant impression, which is not little enhanced by the extremely neat finish. Entering the main entrance, a stone staircase with copper railings leads us to the first or bell floor, where the main rooms are located: a music hall with space for choir and organ, an administration and reception room, a museum also serving as a sales room, two classrooms with a recreation room for boys in the right wing of the building. The second floor contains the director's residence, consisting of lounge and living room, as well as one large and two smaller bedrooms, a room for handicrafts for boys and for girls, a children's room, a sick room, and rooms for teachers; furthermore, a voting room also used for music and religious education with six adjoining voting rooms. On the third floor there are four spacious dormitories: two for boys and two for girls, all with separate washing and changing rooms, as well as rooms for

servants, servants, etc. The basement contains a large and a small dining room, two kitchens with adjoining rooms for provisions etc., a bathroom with dressing room, a mangle room, rooms for basketwork and a print shop. A strict separation of the two sexes is maintained throughout the building. All stairways border on spacious corridors, while easy communication with the different floors is provided by stairways in both wings of the building. The layout is extremely practical, and all rooms, corridors, stairs and private areas are well lit. The building covers an area of 745 m² with a garden of 555 m² behind it; the façade is about 36 metres long. The depth of the building in the centre is 26 and on both wings at the height of the ground floor 18 metres. The height to the eaves is about 17 metres, and to the ridge 20 metres."

Het Blindeninstituut. De Opmerker: weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap (1908) p. 643

"Friday 13 November saw a festive commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the Institute for the Education of the Blind in Amsterdam. The newspapers reported on the occasion, at the same time giving a historical overview of the Institute from its foundation to the present day, including the various rooms and buildings used for teaching and later housing blind students. The present building on Verleg de Vossiusstraat, shown here, is the result of the winning competition design by the late A. Salm and is equipped for 100 students. One half of the building is for boys, the other half for girls, which separation has been maintained as much as possible wherever possible. Behind the main entrance, these sections divide and lead to separate stairwells with adjacent privies, while for the public, a separate, more monumental staircase leads to the ground floor with the large music hall where the organ from the old house is located. [...] Although the original purpose of the rooms has sometimes been changed by the various directors, the building still appears to fulfil its

purpose and the interior was praised, as the festschrift reports, by the directors of foreign institutes for the blind at the congress held in Amsterdam and has since been taken as an example elsewhere."

Het Rijksmuseum. De Opmerker : weekblad voor beeldende kunst en technische wetenschap. (1885) p. 241

"The museum can be viewed from two points of view, that of the reasoning theory of art, drawn up by Viollet-le-Duc, and from a general artistic point of view. Viewed in the first way, it is an excellent building in many respects. Forms that are not indicated by the construction have been rejected, although the designer has also made concessions here and there, e.g. at the main towers, whose constructive significance cannot be defended. The ornament is used everywhere only to cover the frame, and nowhere appears independently. Since Viollet-le-Duc had built his teaching on the study of early medieval memorials, it is not surprising that the museum mainly contains medieval elements, but we are sure that these elements were not , to give the building a ecclesiastical character, although the general public is led into this delusion, especially by the Biblical texts used as decoration. If one considers the Museum from a general artistic point of view, one regrets first of all that its forms do not correspond to the greater part of the art treasures contained therein, and that the building does not bear the character of a museum. The dryness of the main lines also immediately catches the eye, as the very fine details, seen from a distance, do not add to the liveliness"

Instituut tot onderwijs van blinden . Bouwkundig Weekblad : orgaan van de Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst (1885) p. 942

"Many a walker in our beautiful Vondelpark has already regarded the hefty façade with attentive eyes. Constructed of colourful Groninger brick, interspersed with bands, frames, etc. of artificial cement stone, decorated

by a tastefully designed entrance gate of sandstone, the facade makes a pleasant impression, which is not little increased by the extremely neat manner of finishing. [...] A strict separation of the two sexes has been maintained throughout the building. All staircases border on spacious corridors, while stairs in both wings of the building ensure easy communication with the different floors. The layout is extremely practical, and all rooms, corridors, stairs and privies are well lit. [...] Like the façade, the interior of the building bears witness to solid workmanship and good execution, and all details, although simple, have been treated with the utmost care. Bound by a limited building cost, the architects have herewith managed to create a building, which will meet the high requirements of utility and practice excellently and will be viewed with pleasure by everyone."

