



Wallonie-Bruxelles Architectures

BO  
ZAR



ARCHITECTURE  
IN BELGIUM

PRESS DOSSIER

ARCHITECTURE

CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS  
BRUSSELS



V+  
2014-  
2015

18 JUN. –  
20 SEPT. '15

SIMON BOUDVIN  
PIERRE CHABARD  
MAXIME DELVAUX  
SONIA DERMIENCE  
MARCEL JARADIN  
ROTOR  
TRANS ARCHITECTUUR  
LOÏC VANDERSTICHELEN &  
JEAN-PAUL JACQUET

PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS  
BRUXELLES  
PALEIS VOOR SCHONE KUNSTEN  
BRUSSEL

## **Table of contents**

<b>1. Press release</b>	<b>p. 3</b>
<b>2. Projets presented in the exhibition</b>	<b>p. 4</b>
Mode and Design Center (MAD), Brussels, under construction	
Water tower, Ghlin, completed	
Cultural Centre, Deinze, preliminary draft	
Phénix 5, film and image centre, Charleroi, under construction	
Folklore Museum, Mouscron, under construction	
<b>3. Publication 'V+ Architecture. Documents on 5 Projects'</b>	<b>p. 6</b>
<b>4. 27 points on the exhibition and the book by Sophie Dars and Carlo Menon</b>	<b>p. 7</b>
<b>5. The curators - V+ - Associated architects – Collaborators</b>	<b>p. 10</b>
<b>6. Practical information</b>	<b>p. 11</b>
<b>7. Press contacts BOZAR – A+</b>	<b>p. 12</b>

## 1. PRESS RELEASE

# V+ ARCHITECTURE DOCUMENTS ON FIVE PROJECTS

The faculty of Architecture of the KTH and A+ Architecture in Belgium in collaboration with Wallonie-Brussels Architectures present *V+ architecture documents on five projects*, the first monographic exhibition to be devoted to the architectural practice of V+.

Thursday 09.11 > Friday 24.11.2017

Faculty of Architecture, KTH, Stockholm

This exhibition concentrates on projects that are on the drawing board or in course of construction. Models, installations, plans, photographs, and videos highlight the key aspects of each project and reveal the practice's distinctive features, such as rethinking the requirements of a project, coming to terms with the existing context, and experimenting with the limits of the discipline of architecture. Bearing witness to the importance of collaborative work, *V+ architecture documents on five projects* also shows contributions by Simon Boudvin, Maxime Delvaux, Rotor, Loïc Vanderstichelen, and Jean-Paul Jacquet, among others. More than a retrospective, this exhibition takes you behind the scenes of major public projects. As V+ has designed the new Mode and Design Center (MAD) that opened last april in Brussels.

This exhibition is an initiative of A+ Architecture in Belgium and Bozar. It was firstly on show in Bozar Brussels from 18 June 2015 until 20 September 2015. In 2017 it was shown in the architecture school of Nancy, France.

Curator: Sophie Dars and Carlo Menon

Architect in charge of the exhibition: Sara Cremer (V+)

Guests: Simon Boudvin, Pierre Chabard, Maxime Delvaux, Sonia Dermience, Marcel Jaradin, Rotor, Trans Architectuur, Loïc Vanderstichelen & Jean-Paul Jacquet

Graphic design: Überknackig

### PROJECTS PRESENTED IN THE EXHIBITION

- Mode and Design Center (MAD), Brussels, under construction
- Water tower, Ghlin, provisional completion
- Cultural Centre, Deinze, preliminary draft
- Phénix 5, film and image centre, Charleroi, under construction
- Folklore Museum, Mouscron, under construction

### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

**Dates:** 09.11.2017 > 24.11.2017

**Place:** KTH, Stockholm, entrance hall

**Entrance:** Free

**Coproduction:** BOZAR - A+ Architecture in Belgium

**Main support :** Wallonia-Brussels Federation – Architecture Unit, Wallonia-Brussels Architectures, Wallonia-Brussels International

**Support:** Brussels Capital-Region, Vlaamse Overheid, Ville de Bruxelles

**Sponsor:** Febelcem

## 2. PROJECTS PRESENT IN THE EXHIBITION

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### Mode and Design Center (MAD), Brussels

The new Mode and Design Center (MAD) is the result of a collaboration between V+ and Rotor. The renovation project includes several exhibition and reception spaces, offices, studios and a cafeteria. The architects have decided to preserve the three existing buildings, all very different and almost unsuitable for their new function, by totally reconsidering the way people move around in them. This results in a rich spatial variety, unified thanks to the use of a vast range of white materials, which deflect the image of the white cube and of which Rotor has put a selection on display in the exhibition.



V+ MAD AVP Maquette 1-50 grande coupe

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### Water tower, Ghlin



V+ GHLIN EXE maquette 1-50 ©  
Maxime Delvaux

This iconic project has developed from the specific and rather unusual request of the contracting authority: to design a water tower (> A+252) with not just technical efficiency but an architectural quality as well. V+ collaborated with structural engineers Greisch in order to combine expression and necessity; an infrastructure which raises 3000 m<sup>3</sup> of water to 42 m in height, each side of which has a different aspect in the Ghlin countryside, documented at the very heart of the exhibition by the photographic work of Maxime Delvaux.



Cultural Centre Deinze © V+

### Cultural Centre, Deinze

For the design of this new arts centre (> A+254), the architects have integrated all the different functions (theatre, multifunctional hall, foyer and cafeteria) within a square plan. The introduction of the building, the organisation of its different functions and the work on the façades is designed in such a way that it interacts with its surroundings: a cultural campus located at the intersection of a motorway, a museum, an events centre and a park which will soon be home to the new town hall designed by Tony Fretton. Work on the façades, still being designed in the offices of V+ and Trans Architectuur, will be unveiled in the exhibition.

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### Phénix 5, cinema and image centre, Charleroi

The establishment of this new cinema and image centre in Charleroi creates a new opening between the banks of the Sambre and Place Albert. Its large brasserie and its workshops situated in the former National Bank and its four new projection rooms look out onto the lower town and contribute to its cultural and urban renewal. Following the example of numerous V+ projects, Phénix 5 has generated a large number of documents in order to appropriate its spatial and structural complexity. As part of the exhibition, the fascinating report by the site supervisor Marcel Jaradin bears witness to this.



V+ PHENIX5 EXE © Maxime Delvaux



Folklore Museum © V+

### Folklore Museum, Mouscron

In 2010, V+ won the competition for the construction of the new Folklore Museum in Mouscron. The building's location, which was moved to the interior of the housing block, makes it possible to requalify the entire site including a square and a park. The museum extends lengthwise and consists of several rooms of domestic proportions in line with the nature of the collection. In the façade one can see an embedded work by artist Simon Boudvin who combines the bricks from the remains of the small local heritage which was recently demolished - as can be seen in one of the installations on display in the exhibition.

### 3. PUBLICATION 'V+ Architecture. Documents on 5 Projects'

For Brussels-based architecture studio V+, each project is an occasion to explore new themes, without any predefined aim, in a truly experimental fashion. Understanding and managing all the intrinsic circumstances of the project constitute the starting point of an ongoing search, from the competition stage to the building site.

By approaching five ongoing public projects, this book illustrates the complexity and heterogeneous nature of architecture projects, mapping their lines of tension and questioning the status of the (working) document within architectural discourse.

Editors: Sophie Dars, Carlo Menon

Associated Architect V+: Sara Cremer

Authors: Pierre Chabard, Sophie Dars, Carlo Menon

Graphic Design: Überknackig

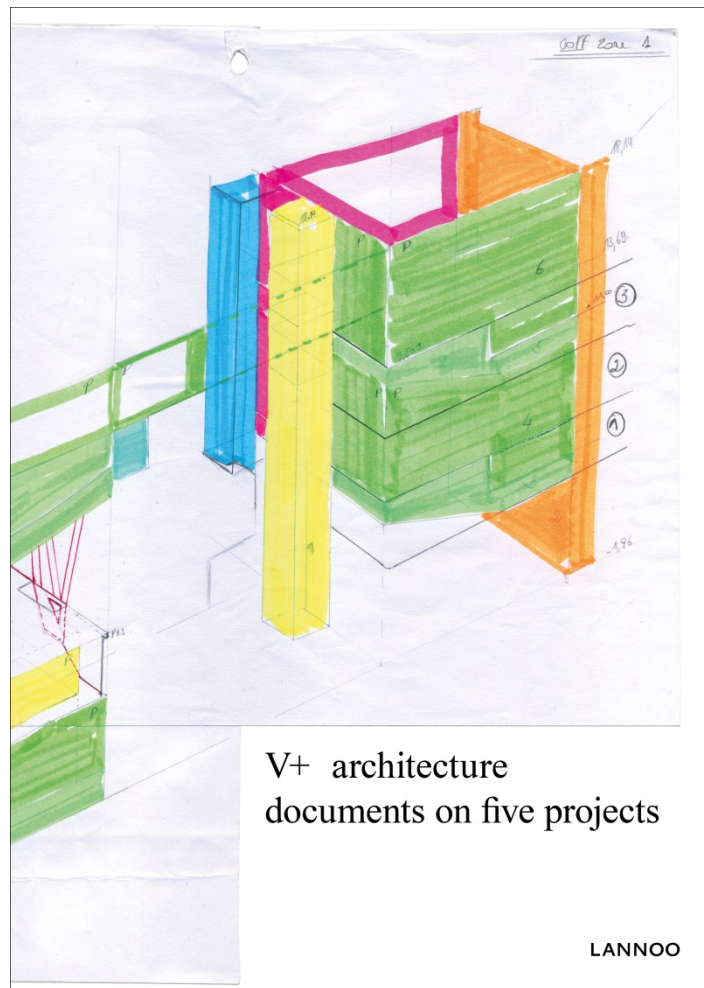
Photography: Maxime Delvaux

€ 29,99, June 2015, paperback, quadri & b&w, 280 x 200 mm, 192 pages

NUR 644

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Publishers: Lannoo, Bozar Books, A+ Architecture in Belgium





#### 4. 27 points on the exhibition and the book by Sophie Dars and Carlo Menon

1. *V+ 2014-2015*, the book and the exhibition, have been conceived as a single project. Both of them demonstrate the interplay between the realization of an architectural design and the development of a curatorial project. The time-scale of the exhibition sets the framework for experimentation and exchanges between architects and exhibition organizers.
2. The book presents five public design projects that are on the drawing board or in course of construction. It reveals their complexity, maps their tensions and questions the status of a working document in the processes of architectural mediation. Can an architectural design be fully understood before it is built? How may the exhibition affect the project's development, and vice versa?
3. This introductory text consists of a series of points that illustrate both editorial assumptions and the approaches adopted by the architects.
4. The outcomes of *V+* are subject to a comparatively indeterminate process, whose demands involve not so much the solution of problems as the opportunity to address new, fundamental questions about architecture.
5. A 'naive' position,<sup>1</sup> in which the understanding and handling of all the circumstances intrinsic to the project are the starting-point for continuous research, from competition stage to construction site. Everything is potentially architecture: a folklore collection, three existing buildings of mediocre quality, an ambitious brief for an absent client.
6. The conception of a design project follows an uncertain path, with no predetermined hierarchy, in which the creative process, the context, the participants, and the many iterations of a plan or a detail all play an important part.
7. As if the project embodies all possible projects.
8. This condition cannot be met by the kind of architectural representations commonly published: photographs or scale models of the completed building. Paying attention to the many aspects of the project directs our interest to the whole range of working documents created daily by those involved — blueprints, annotated sketches, site photographs, e-mail attachments, models, etc. A way of 'reading' the project as it is being written.
9. Every project has a focal point, a specifically architectural question which may arise at any moment during the design process. Circumstances open or shut down the possibility of exploring a topic favoured by the architects.
10. For this reason, projects differ widely.

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<sup>1</sup>

Thierry Decuyper has often laid claim to this word in our conversations.

<sup>2</sup>

Jeremy Till, 'The Expanding Field. Architecture beyond the Object', lecture given on 8 November 2012

11. Architecture *depends*.<sup>2</sup> An empirical attitude which is based on actual opportunities and circumstances. The architecture of V+ corresponds extremely well to this reality, and problematizes it.
12. Architects and exhibition organizers invest in a kind of mediation that is connected to the questions posed by the architects' office. A retrospective of everyday experience, a genealogy of anecdotes.
13. Two elements play a part in the exhibition. The first, in two dimensions, puts together a series of working documents in the form of panels. The second emphasizes in three dimensions the collaborative aspect of projects: architects, a photographer, a film-maker, an artist and a site supervisor were invited to submit singular objects that would diversify the points of view and invoke the unexpected through their reactions to the respective projects.
14. The panel leads to talk, a singular object is an illustration. One is expanded, the other condensed.
15. Only the panels are reproduced in this book.
16. The chosen method is a systematic review of all the existing documents: a plunge into the living archive of current projects in order to select meaningful fragments; addressing the different time-frames of the project, whose archaeology sparks off missing connections.
17. Once taken out of the archive, the documents are arranged on the surface of the table without a particular hierarchy. They are discussed, dated and compared, and then rearranged on the basis of the connections established between them. An iconographer's approach,<sup>3</sup> which makes it possible to study and understand the ways in which architecture is produced.
18. Mounted in the architects' office, the panels become a place for interaction, rather than a hushed, neutralized location for an archive. All the documents have been chosen for their ability to affect the work in progress, from a critical design point of view.
19. The mounting permits a non-linear reading of the project. Description of the spaces or of the programme is replaced by a thematic approach, a partial perspective<sup>4</sup> that opens up the potential for interpretation through a form of writing in images.
20. Everything rests on the intervals of meaning created between all the documents, and not on the overall cosmetic effect.

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<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Till, 'The Expanding Field. Architecture beyond the Object', lecture given on 8 November 2012 at the Faculté La Cambre Horta, Brussels. See also *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2009), or the article written with Tatjana Schneider 'Beyond Discourse: Notes on Spatial Agency', in *Footprint* no. 4, 2009, pp. 97-111.

<sup>3</sup> Garence Chabert and Aurélien Mole, 'Artistes iconographes', in *Art 21* no. 25, winter 2009-2010, pp. 18-27.

<sup>4</sup> Donna Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges. The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', in *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, Autumn 1988, pp. 575-599.



21. Every panel is a spatial and temporal association of documents produced at different stages of a project. While the narrative lines are relatively simple, all the images displayed have their own history and can be read on additional levels.
22. The economical principle underlying this edition is to stimulate interpretations of this kind. The 'expanded' captions lie part-way between supplying didactic information and posing open questions. Except in the case of the Folklore Museum in Mouscron: there, a text by Pierre Chabard resonates with the montage of documents on the board.
23. A transversal reading of the panels reveals some recurrent positions in the approach adopted by V+: negotiation, displacement, indiscipline, resistance, indeterminacy and over- investment of what already exists.
24. The panel relating to MAD, for example, emphasizes the negotiation between the architects' two personae: that of the archaeologist, who conserves what exists, and that of the pragmatic builder, who adapts it to meet the requirements of the brief. This negotiation, operating case by case, results in the creation of a series of white, differentiated spaces that are never neutral: a *dirty white cube* composed of found spaces, which an architect would never be able to imagine from scratch. These solutions always preserve the questioning that provoked them: the neutrality of contemporary exhibition spaces and architects' tolerance towards what exists.
25. The exhibition and the book implicitly affirm that the practice of architecture evades the sole logic of artistic creation when it questions certain taboos: the concepts of beauty, the architectural object, authorship, and representation.
26. Without being impervious to disciplinary ambitions, V+ keeps a certain distance from the conventions and retains enough room for manoeuvre during the designing process. There are no limits to the field of ideas, though they are constantly put to the test, resulting in an architecture that is 'less powerful, but better adapted'.
27. The conversations with V+ at the end of this book reconsider these themes, exploring them more deeply and demonstrating their still provisional nature.

## 5. THE CURATORS - V+ - ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS - COLLABORATORS

**Sophie Dars** (°1983) and **Carlo Menon** (°1981) are two Brussels-based architects. Together, they seek to define a practice somewhere between critical research and project creation. Alongside the graphic design studio Überknackig, they are the founders of the architectural review *Accattonne*. Sophie Dars notably participates in editing projects and exhibitions involving collaboration with artists and architects. She has lectured at the Architecture Faculty of La Cambre Horta since 2011, where she and Thierry Decuypere are responsible for the Unité de Production studio. Carlo Menon is a researcher in history and theory of art at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London. His field of research focuses on the status of the author and representation in contemporary reviews.

### V+

Since its creation in 1998, the V+ Brussels office has worked on more than 190 scenography projects, private and public housing, urban studies, public infrastructures and amenities, museums, cinemas. The firm earned its reputation through the creation of the Pavilion of Temporary Happiness (2008), the Sauvenière Cinéma in Liège (2008), the Town Hall of Montigny-le-Tilleul (2013) and the recent water tower in Ghlin (2015). Several far-reaching public projects – such as the Mode and Design Center (MAD) in Brussels, the cinema and image centre Phénix 5 and the new RTBF studios in Charleroi, the amenities project and the Divercity Park in Forest, the Folklore Museum in Mouscron, the Museum of Fine Arts in Verviers and the Cultural Centre in Deinze – are currently in the implementation or pre-project phase. V+ has received numerous awards including the Belgian Prize for Architecture, the Urban Planning Award of the City of Liège, the Belgian Building Award, the Brussels Horta Award and was twice nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award. Each project is the opportunity for a unique narrative which is built up by playing close attention to the context of the commission and often goes beyond the initial challenges. Each project also represents the opportunity to question the power and limits of the architectural discipline and of the architect as an individual.

### Associated architects

Jörn Aram Bihain: Architect, scenographer and lecturer.

Architectuur Hogeschool Sint Lukas, Brussels / 1996 – co-founder of V+, associate and administrator. Lecturer in Project Architecture / Architecture Faculty of the ULg, Liège, since 2007.

Thierry Decuypere: Architect and lecturer

Institut Victor Horta, Brussels / 1996 - co-founder of V+, associate and administrator. Lecturer in Project Architecture / ULB, Architecture Faculty La Cambre Horta, Brussels, since 2003.

### Collaborators

Current: Aidas Krutejavas, Philippe Buraud, Paul Mouchet, Alexandra Vandenbrande, Céline de Vinck, Valentin Bollaert, Pacôme Soissons, Margaux Larcher, Alice Foulon, Mathias Bouet, Louis Magerman, Sandrine Blaise, Tina Javornik

Past: Shin Bogdan Hagiwara (past associate), Sourya Sukhaseum, Julie Paquet, Christophe Pham, Antoine Rocca, Mathilde Coster, Sophie Dars, Denis Glauden, Valentin Piret, Céline Lellouche, Claire Lootens, Thibaut Paggen, Didier Beaudoin, Estelle Fort, Elodie Degavre, Sara Cremer, Timothée Cadars

## 6. PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Exhibition V+ architecture documents on five projects

**Date :**

09.11.2017 > 24.11.2017

opening 09.11.2017, 6 p.m.

**Place :** Faculty of Architecture, KTH, Stockholm, entrance hall

**Entrance:** Free

**Coproduction:**

BOZAR - A+ Architecture in Belgium

**Main Support:**

Wallonia-Brussels Federation - Architecture Unit, Wallonia-Brussels Architectures, Wallonia-Brussels International

**Support:**

Brussels Capital-Region, Flemish government, City of Brussels

**Sponsor:** Febelcem

**Exhibition host:** KTH

### Lecture by Jörn Aram Bihain and Thierry Decuypere

**Date:** 09.11.2017, 18:00

**Place:** KTH

**Language:** English

## 7. PRESS CONTACTS A+

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