

## The 'Shelter' Almost Saved by Hendrick De Keyser

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# HERITAGE IN DANGER

## THE 'SHELTER' ALMOST SAVED BY HENDRICK DE KEYSER

The 'Shelter' was at risk of demolition: a fascinating story by the architect, Kor Aldershoff, and the restoration architect, Ann-Katrin Adolph.

The 'Shelter' is a fantastic example of a circular plastic house with a diameter of 8 m that is somehow comparable to the 'Futuro'. It was conceived by the Dutch interior architect Kor Aldershoff, who developed a prototype in glass-reinforced polyester (GRP) shells held on a metal frame (1971). This kind of house is unique for the Netherlands and therefore of great importance. The 'Shelter' was meant for providing a home for refugees in Africa. The prototype was light and could also float on water. The production of the metal supporting frame was entrusted to the Nederlandse Dok en Scheepsbouw Maatschappij (N.D.S.M.) in Amsterdam-Noord and the GRP parts to the firm Resicon in Medemblik. The hall, living room and one bedroom were

arranged around an empty column for the disposal of rainwater.

The 'Shelter' prototype was exhibited at different locations, but its dismantling and reconstruction proved difficult and damaged various components. It further suffered from lack of maintenance until its condition became so critical that it ran the risk of demolition. It was found by Pi de Bruin, chairman of the board of the Association Hendrick de Keyser, who had it dismantled and brought to their atelier in Medemblik.

The restoration architect of the Association Hendrick de Keyser, Ann-Katrin Adolph, explains in an interview that they wanted to retain and restore the original materials in line with the aims of the Association. A specific difficulty in planning the works was related to the fact that the prototype was unfinished, and new problems and dilemmas

in conservation arose due to the unfamiliar material, GRP. The exposed outer surface of the elements could no longer be remediated, and a new layer of GRP had to be added. In some cases, substitutions were necessary.

Also, within the original shells were large voids/pockets which had to be filled. Left unattended, the ingress of moisture to these voids would eventually lead to the detachment of the glass-fiber and polyester. This was a complex but necessary intervention to ensure the conservation of the 'Shelter' prototype.

The next step will be to find a suitable location for the 'Shelter', which will open to the public.

<https://www.hendrickdekeyser.nl/de-huizen/shelter>

Silvia Naldini



01 The 'Shelter' and architect Kor Aldershoff. © Roos Aldershoff, daughter of architect



02 The 'Shelter' dismantled, under restoration. © Ann-Katrin Adolph