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As Found

International colloquium on adaptive reuse

5-7 September 2023

📍 Hasselt & Antwerp, Belgium

Hasselt University &
Flanders Architecture Institute

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



Vlaamse
overheid

fwo

Research Foundation
Flanders
Opening new horizons

Vlaams

Architectuur

instituut

IMAGE: Castelvecchio Museum Verona by architect Carlo Scarpa (cc) presso Archivio Paolo Monti

AS FOUND INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON ADAPTIVE REUSE
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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Organized by the Faculty of Architecture and Arts of Hasselt University and
Flanders Architecture Institute

5-7 September 2023 in Antwerp & Hasselt

Conference Chairs and editors: Bie Plevoets, Hülya Ertas, Sofie De Caigny



Fig.1, House HdF, Zuidzande, The Netherlands, Marie-José Van Hee architecten

AS FOUND. AT HAND.

Sam De Vocht, Joana dos Santos Gonçalves
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This paper explores how intuition plays a role in navigating the complexities of projects dealing with heritage, drawing from the practical experience in the office of Marie-José Van Hee architecten. Van Hee has a dual relationship with heritage. On the one hand, the Flemish heritage inventory – set up around the time she started her architecture career in the 1970s, feels limiting in her creative work. On the other hand, her oeuvre is considered of value by the same heritage instances, exemplified by the listing of two of her early projects dating from the 1980s, being House Lowie-Derks (1984-86) and the electricity transformer (1982-84), both located in the Ghent Prinsenhof. The work of Marie-José Van Hee starts from a given context, never from a white page. This paper examines how the first primer of observation of the place – the built environment as found – and the interpretation of the context, consisting of a wide variety of vectors, such as social, geographical, and morphological, are essential to understand design possibilities. The elements that the architect considers significant enough to create or not a project are then confided to paper in a series of design exercises and discussed with co-workers, and only later with clients. Marie-José Van Hee often works subliminally with heritage, referencing architectural precedents and her travel experiences. She subtly cuts through layers of history, like peeling an onion and defining the depth of the cut with each design decision. Van Hee borrows shapes and lines but also developed her own language. Detailing is based on the logic of old construction techniques and experimenting with new materials. The research is thorough, takes the time it needs and happens in dialogue with makers, craftsman, and material producers, inspired by and contributing to traditional construction methods. This paper considers the role of creativity in the translation of the “as found” and in making heritage-related decisions that are at the same time technical and intuitive, inspired by past experiences, travels, or the drawing process. It aims at contributing to a deeper understanding of what intuition could mean for the design process and how it can be used to broaden up the meaning and value of heritage for the creation of contemporary architectural experiences that respect or highlight local values and narratives. It focuses on two projects of Marie-José Van Hee architecten: her own house in Ghent and House HdF in Zuidzande, The Netherlands.

- [1] W. de Jong and M.C. Kuijpers, *Designing from Heritage: Strategies for Conservation and Conversion*, Delft: Delft University Press, 2017
- [2] Jellema, Meischke and Muller, *Bouwkunde voor bouwkundigen*, parts 1,2,3, Delft: Waltman, 1970

Sam De Vocht is an architect, teacher, and urban ecologist. He graduated with degrees in architecture, urban design and urban environment and sustainability at KU Leuven, the University of Michigan, and the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, respectively. Since 2006, he has been actively involved in the realisation and representation of architectural projects at Marie-José Van Hee architecten. He has taught at KU Leuven, Rotterdam Academy and, since 2016, at the TU Delft, where he holds a position at the Department of Architecture, Chair of Interiors Buildings Cities as lecturer and tutor in the master studios. Since 2022, he teaches at UAntwerpen.

Joana dos Santos Gonçalves is a researcher on circularity in the built environment at VI-TO (Belgium). She graduated as an architect from the University of Minho (Portugal) School of Architecture in 2014 with a master's thesis on the contributions of vernacular architecture for sustainability. In 2022 she concluded her PhD on “Beyond good intentions: building passport for sustainable conservation”, funded by FCT. Between 2019 and 2021, Joana was a guest PhD in the UNESCO chair on Heritage and the Reshaping of Urban Conservation for Sustainability. Between 2020 and 2022, she was a lecturer on Heritage and Sustainability in the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at TU Delft.

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This colloquium is organized as an extension of the exhibition *As Found: Experiments in Preservation* by the Flanders Architecture Institute. Curated by Sofie De Caigny, Hülya Ertas and Bie Plevoets, the exhibition is on show at De Singel, Antwerp, from 6 September 2023 to 17 March 2024. The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, available in English (ISBN: 9789492567321) and Dutch (ISBN: 9789492567338).

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