

Press Conference Exhibition

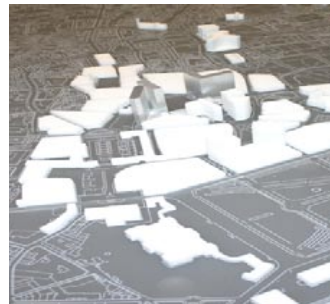
15 March 2007, A Vision for Brussels – Imagining the Capital of Europe

Imagining the Capital of Europe was opened at the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels with a press conference in the presence of the curators, Joachim Declerck and Pier Vittorio Aureli, and Pablo Fernandez, the artistic coordinator of the Centre for Fine Arts. Since 2004 an international team of sixteen architects and urban designers of the Berlage Institute in Rotterdam have developed a concrete project for Brussels as a worthy capital of Europe. With its multiple social, political, and cultural layers, the city perfectly reflects the diversity of today's Europe. In the view of the working group, Brussels is Europe in miniature and not, as is often said, its accidental capital.



Both the Berlage Institute Project and the exhibition rely on the hidden and forgotten qualities of the city as the basis for the urban project that focuses on the relationship between the European institutions, the city, and its citizens and aims to break through the isolation of the European presence in Brussels. Declerck says: "To us Brussels mirrors in miniature what Europe is as a whole. Like Europe, Brussels is highly fragmented. That is also Europe's problem. Our project runs in parallel to the political effort to shape Europe."

The project leaders state clearly that theirs is a radical yet progressive vision based on the simple thought that there is very little to celebrate on the 50th birthday of the European project which today appears banal and distant from its citizens. From this stems their rejection of the notion of architecture as sculpture in favour of a simpler, more austere form of architecture. The emphasis which this project places on Brussels as a city with its own history, culture and people is reflected in this simple and austere vision in that it takes into account the (largely negative) feelings of the natives of Brussels towards the drastic changes that have been made to their city in recent decades.



The exhibition shows the main points of the project: it shall be a project for the future that contains the European idea of unity and diversity and considers the city as a political form, Brussels as a representation and architecture as the material context in which society unfolds.

At the press conference was also presented the publication *Brussels – A Manifesto. Towards the Capital of Europe*. As Aureli says, the "manifesto goes against the idea that economics are the core of the European project" and perceives the word 'Europe' to be a magic word. The exhibition was officially opened on the same evening by Charles Piqué, Guy Verhofstadt and José Manuel Barroso. It is open until 20th May 2007 (admission free).

Ciarán Carey and Elke Zander

Host

berlage institute
postgraduate laboratory of architecture

The Berlage Institute in Rotterdam, Netherlands, is a centre for postgraduate studies in architecture and urban planning.

**BO
ZAR**

BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts brings together Music, Exhibitions, Cinema, Theatre, Dance, Literature and Architecture.

Centre for Fine Arts / Rue Ravensteinstraat 23
1000 Brussels

Links

www.bozar.be/home.php
www.naipublishers.nl/architectuur.html
www.berlage-institute.nl

more information [here](#)