

SOFT INTERVENTIONS

Het Nieuwe Instituut, a permanent ground for spatial and temporary experiments.



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a permanent ground for spatial and
temporary experiments*

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“The NAI is made up of building parts spatially arranged into an ensemble in the urban landscape. The architectural unity between the different building parts is created by their mutual coherence: the fragments work as a whole. The entrance hall forms a route that connects to Museum Park. From this hall the visitor can access all the important areas of the institute. During opening hours, this route makes the building part of the public domain. Once inside, the visitor can simply cross the road and exit again or take other routes, from one building section to another. The rich variety of spaces and experiences that are composed in this building make a walk through the complex a fascinating experience.”

Jo Coenen, in Het Nederlands Architectuur instituut, NAI Uitgevers (1993)

Translation Studio ACTE.



photo ©Studio ACTE

0_Introduction

The Nieuwe Instituut is the Netherlands' national museum for Architecture, Design, and Digital Culture and it holds a unique and influential position both within the country and internationally. With a focus on experimentation and critical inquiry, the institute is continually re-examining and innovating in the fields of architecture, design, and digital culture.

Possessing one of the world's most extensive architecture collections, the Nieuwe Instituut serves as a valuable repository of past design knowledge in the Netherlands, which it uses as a base to inspire and promote future-proof design practices within the industry. The institute also plays a crucial role as a testing ground and platform for innovative ideas in architecture and design internationally through its varied, pioneering research projects and exhibitions that are displayed in-house and abroad

Functioning as an open house, the Nieuwe Instituut fosters a culture of questioning, critique, and experimentation, striving to create a more sustainable, equitable, and resilient future.

With the Young Innovator trajectory, Studio ACTE has collaborated with the College van Rijksadviseurs (CRA), as well as Het Nieuwe Instituut (HNI) representatives and stakeholders to design and establish a new relationship between the institution and its surroundings. From the outside towards the inside, this research by design re-considers the function and the position of the institute, given its role as a major platform for experimentation in the fields of architecture, design and digital culture.

Architect Jo Coenen shows his competition design for a new architecture museum to Elco Brinkman, then Minister of Welfare, Health and Culture. Het Nieuwe Instituut Collection, NAIN archive.



0_Methodology

As a roadmap for the project, the process was defined under 4 steps:

1/ Learning from the existing : archives, photos, current and past situations

—> Conducting an in-depth analysis of the existing institute and the many spatial and material transformations that have taken place since the building first opened.

—> Understanding the roots of the institute, how the building came into being and what were the intentions for it to become, by learning from the design competition and its political evolution.

2 / Meeting HNI's Team : Meetings, interviews and workshops

—> Interviewing and discussing with various staff members of the HNI to bring a better understanding of the operational side of the institute as well as the overall function and public accessibility.

—> Hosting a workshop with representatives and stakeholders of HNI to initiate a wider and cross-departmental conversation about the uses, functions, programs and spatial potentials.

3/ Spatial Analysis of the building

—> Using diagrams, photos and maquettes at various scales to study the existing building as well as its current program, function and uses in order to propose suitable locations for the interventions and upcoming spatial transformations and drawing conclusions on the overall functionality and organisation of the space.

4/ Research by design : soft interventions

—> Researching by design to explore the capacity of the space as well as its plurality of uses. Materialising these uses and interventions allows for experiment and challenges our current preconceptions of space

—> Sketch Design and Models of Each Intervention: Developing sketch designs and physical models for each intervention based on the analysis exploring various possibilities and concepts

GENESIS OF THE INSTITUTE

The study of the history of the HNI is the starting point of this research. Understanding the foundations of the current institute allows us to place the building within its context, function, and program. The enduring transformations over the last century demonstrate the cultural sector's ability to respond to political events and adapt.

1

Archives

01a_Genesis of the making of the architecture institute



1955 Foundation of the SAM
Architecture Museum Foundation



1972 Foundation of the NDB
Nederlands Documentation Center for Architecture



1983 Agreement to merge NDB, SAM and Stichting Wonen Foundation to create a National Architecture Museum

1986 Agreement to establish the Nederlands Architecture Instituut NAI in Rotterdam;
Steering group formed for setup and financing

1988 NAI officially founded;
Architectural competition launched,
Jo Coenen design awarded

1989 Adri Duivesteijn becomes NAI director

29th Feb 1992 Groundbreaking for the new NAI building

29th Oct 1993 NAI building officially opened to the public



2013 NAI transformed into Het Nieuwe Instituut
(Architecture, Design, and Digital Culture)

A revived interest in architecture in the 1970's lead to it being given a prominent place in national cultural policy, eventually leading up to the establishment and construction of the Nederalands Architecture Instituut (NAi) in Rotterdam.

Initially, The Netherlands Architecture Documentation Centre (NDB) was founded in 1972 to take the valuable collections and archives of private designers into state management, taking over the assets of the Architecture Museum Foundation (SAM) at the time. They were located in a building on the Droogbak in Amsterdam, shared with other government institutions, however this building had unsuitable climate conditions for the proper management of the collections and archives.

At a similar time, Stichting Wonen, an organisation with a mandate to 'generate interest among a broad audience for the cultural dimension of architecture and urban design' through exhibitions and publications, established themselves in a very small retail space on Leidsestraat.

These institutions had already started to look for a shared premises to move to, when in 1983, Elko Brinkman, minister of Welfare, Public Health and Culture (WVC) announced an intention to establish a national architecture museum for the Netherlands, and in doing so, promising state help towards this endeavour. Following a complex collaboration procedure between the three institutions and the state, the NAI was officially founded in 1988, merging together these three institutions (NDB, SAM and Stichting Wonen).

The motto of the NAI policy plan that formed was: 'History as a source of inspiration for contemporary design assignments' illustrating the commitment to combine the function of the archive with current urban and architectural issues. (translation Studio ACTE)

01b_The competition

A 'multiple assignment' competition was launched in January of 1988 to build a large space for the national architecture archive and institute.

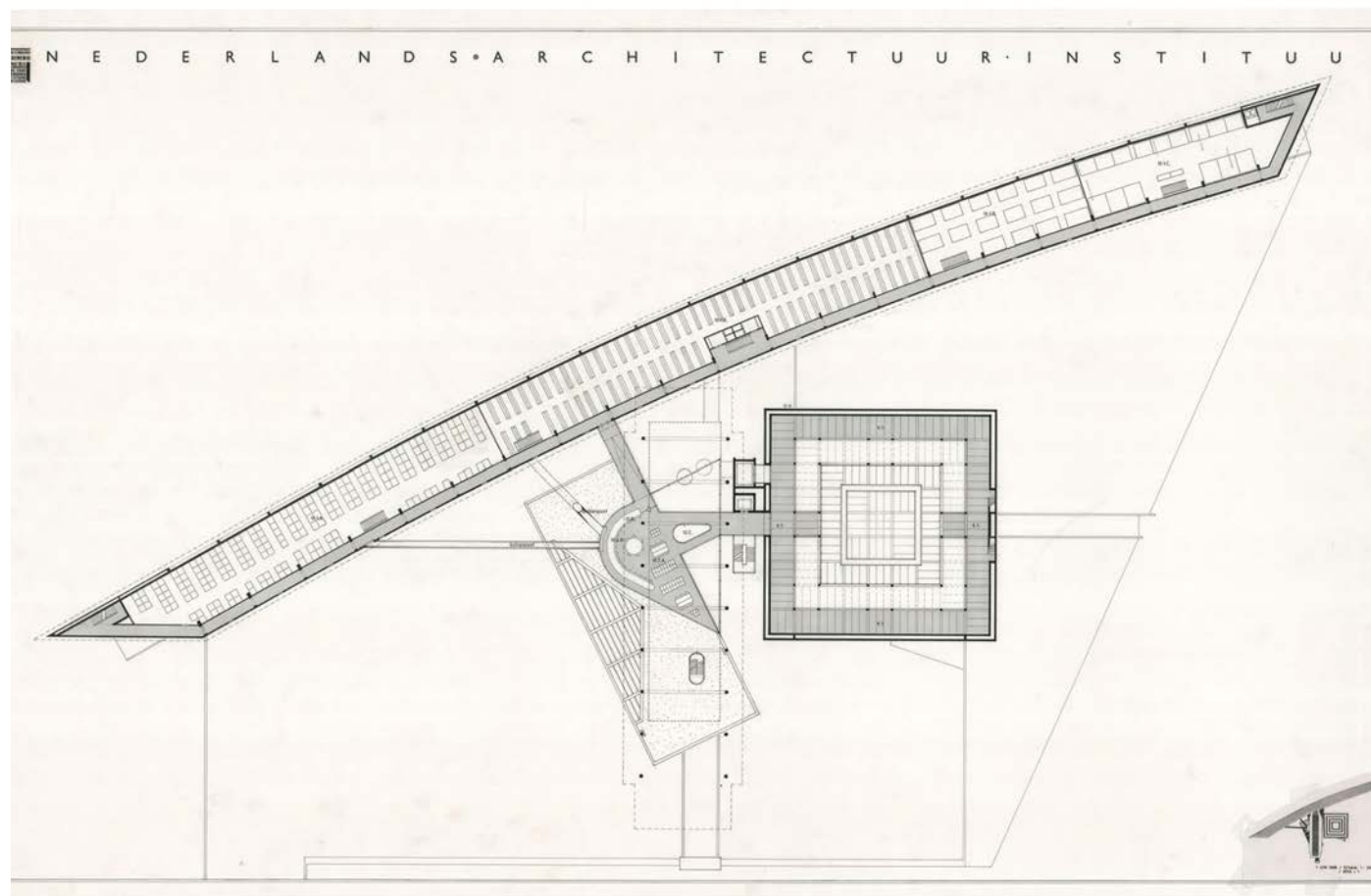
6 architects were invited and paid to take part, a process that was subsidised by the ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture (WVC) on the requirement that at least four of the six architects had to be Dutch. The emphasis had to be on a manifestation of Dutch Culture, and both older and younger architects had to be represented.

The competition invited Bentham Crowel, Jo Coenen, Rem Koolhaas, Wim Quist, Luigi Snozzi and Ralph Erskine - who dropped out at the last minute to be replaced with Hubert-Jan Henket.

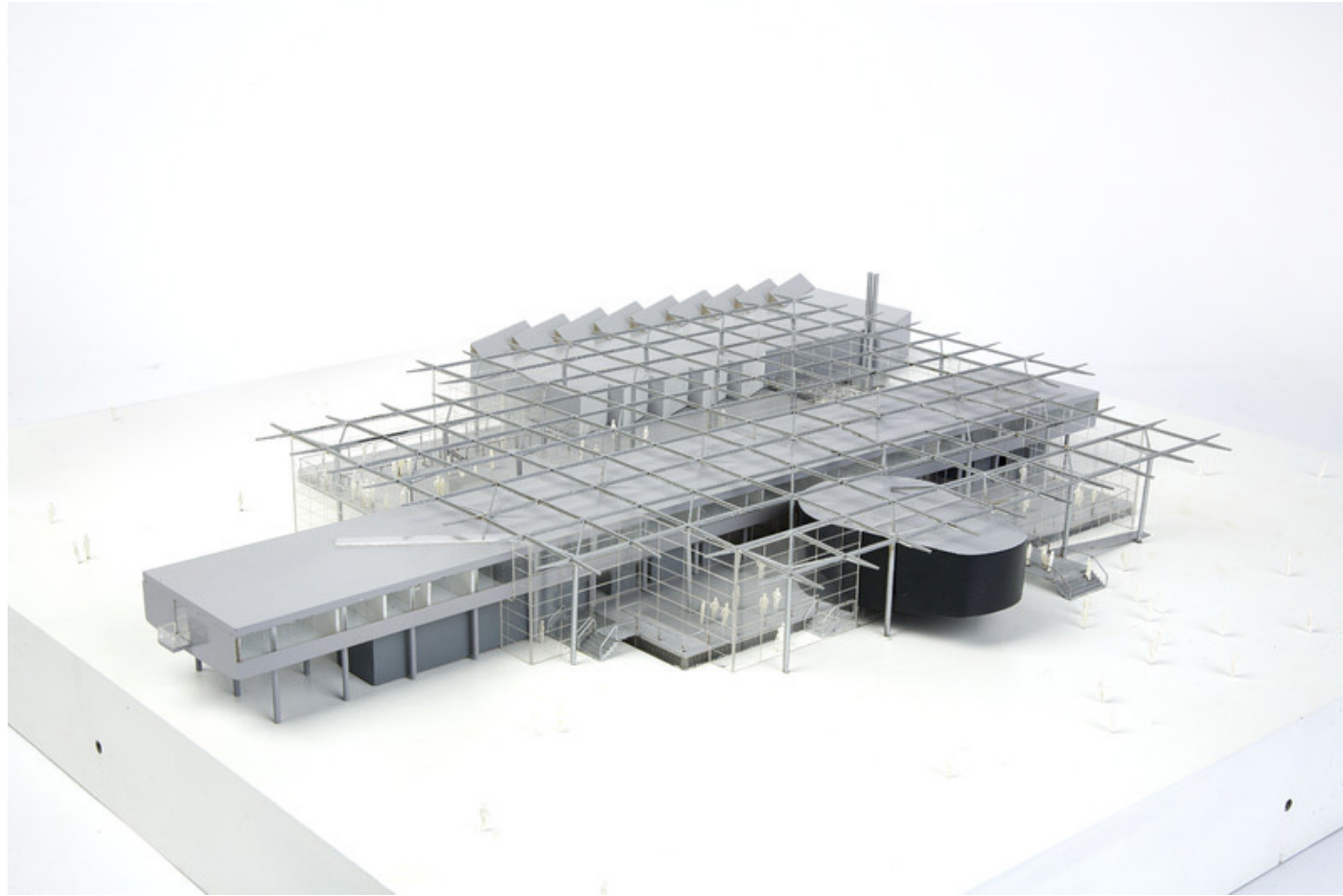
The new building would be located at the northern end of Museum park, on a 3-cornered site of approximately 1 hectare. However, over half of the given building site had to remain undeveloped to leave room for the construction of a park. It was also a condition that, given the location, the new building has to have a 'front character' on all sides.

The main tasks for the institute were to collect, manage and make accessible archives and collections, to study this material, and to disseminate the findings to the public in the form of exhibitions and publications.

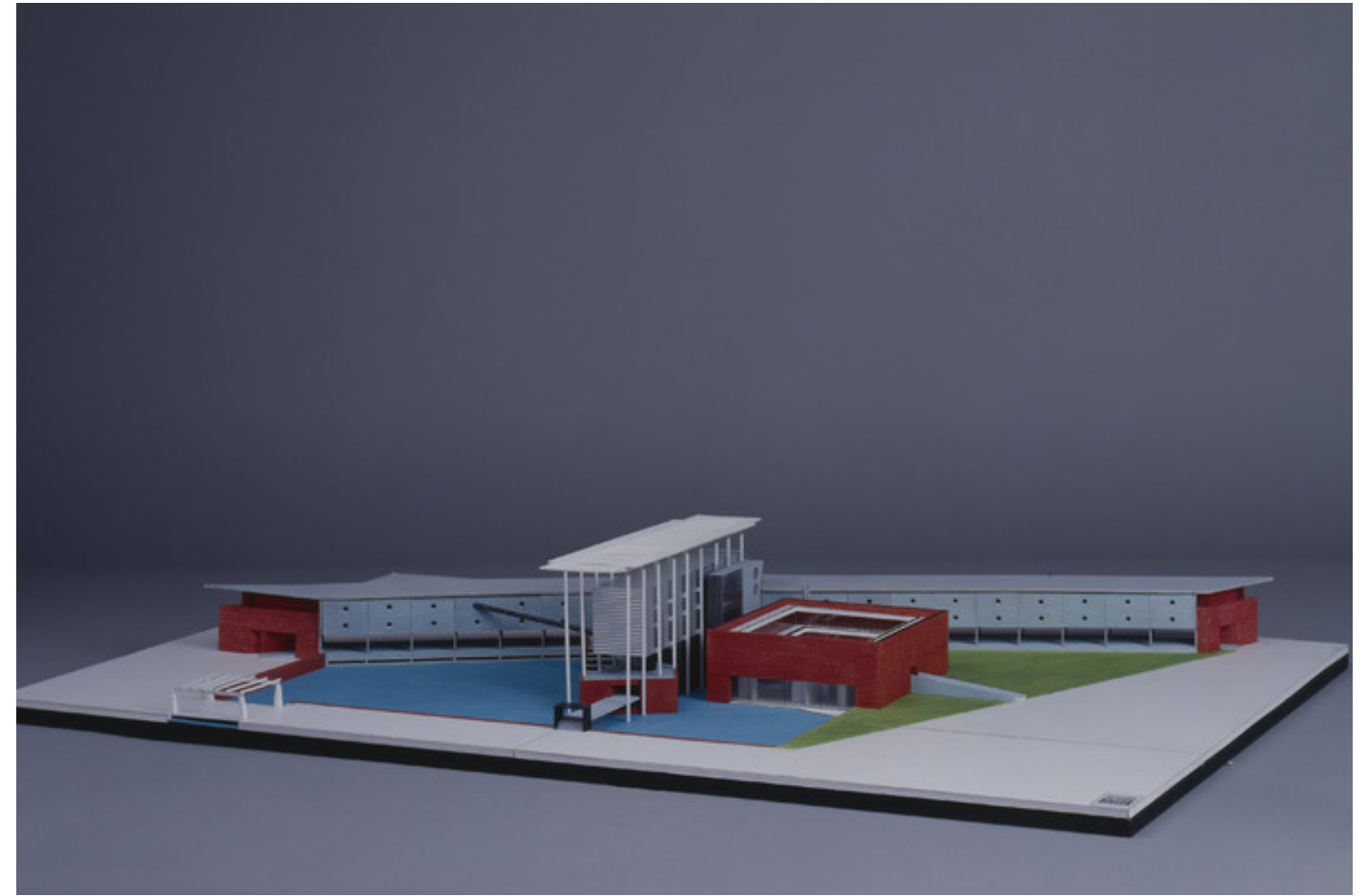
The programme of requirements and the design brief was representative of this, calling for approximately 8,000 m² of net floor space, of which roughly half was for the storage of the collections and archives. The archives were the fundamental start of the competition as well as the largest space of the programme, and would not be accessible to the public. In spite of this, the design brief stated that the building should radiate an atmosphere of openness: 'Despite the fact that the program aims for a partly private character, the building must nevertheless be attractive and easily accessible to a large number of people. A paradox arises here, privacy and openness, which can be turned into a stimulus for the design.'



The Original Design of the NAI / Jo Coenen (1988), 1st Floor Plan



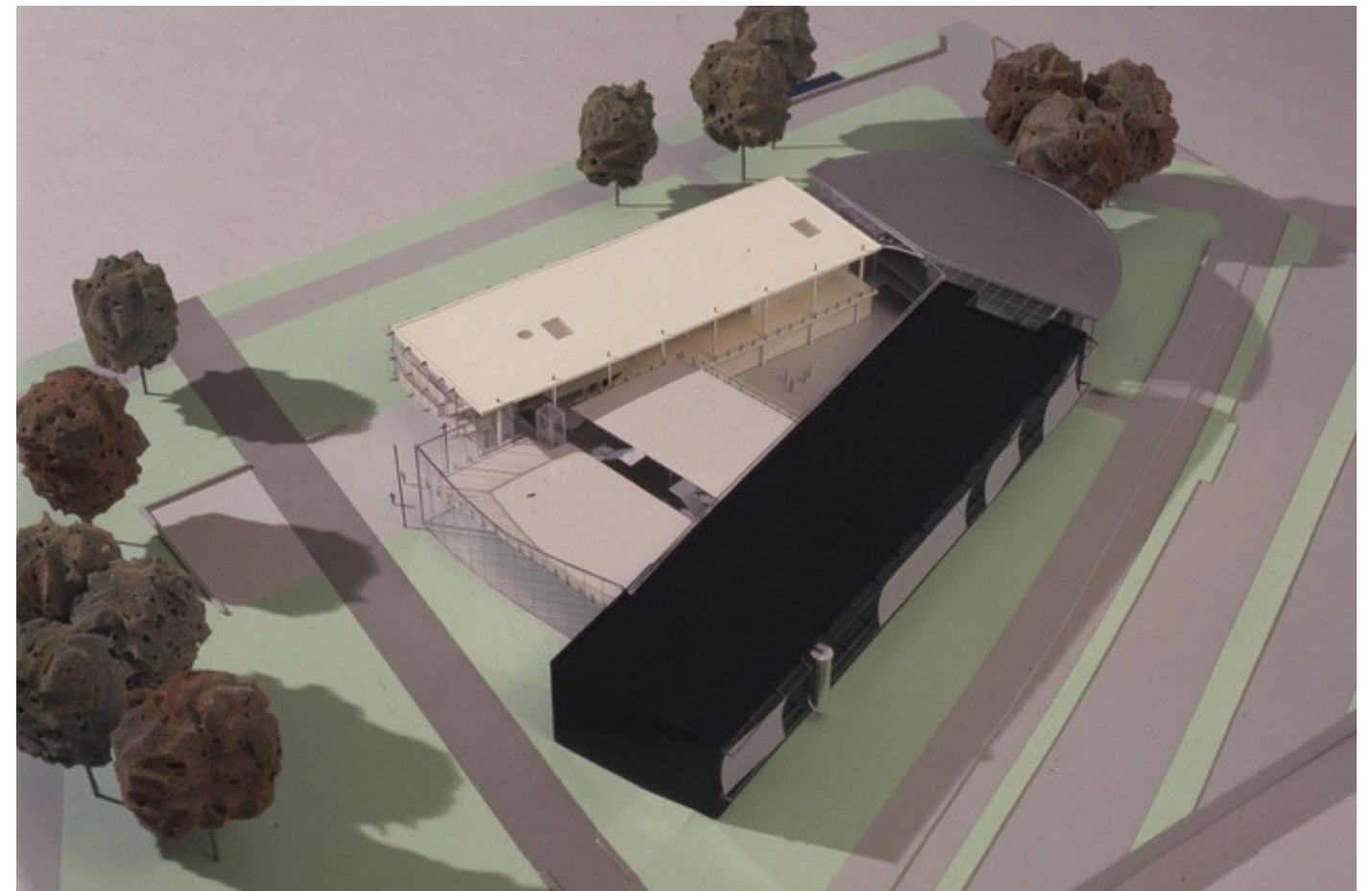
Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Benthem Crouwel Architecten



Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Jo Coenen Architecten



Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Wim Guist Architecten



Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Hubert-Jan Henket Architecten



Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Office for Metropolitan Architecture



Model - HNI Archives - Proposition of Luigi Snozzi

The 6 competition responses show a great deal of diversity, in both their approach to the site and surrounding park, and the organisation of the building itself. A distinction can be seen between proposals to organise the functions in a unified mass, versus the option to separate the functions into different buildings - a fundamental part of Jo Coenen's winning design.

The competition formalised several positions on the potential of such an institute to gather knowledge and compile different functions together into a very experimental space.

Despite Koolhaas' (OMA) design being the favourite with the public, the industry press and the municipality, the NAI board awarded Jo Coenen the design assignment. In their press release announcing the result, the NAI wrote "Coenen's design provides a distinctly expressive and differentiated portrayal of the institute's functions. The design of the building components did not seek outspoken modernism, but a timeless repertoire that would allow for the equivalence of history and the current events from the institute formula in this regard are depicted." (translation studio ACTE)

“The program components are connected in such a way that not only is an efficient and rapid completion of the work guaranteed, but they also complement each other in meaning. The pond plays an important role in this, working as a separation, link and mirror. The gigantic sculpture by Auke de Vries fits in with this wonderfully. ”

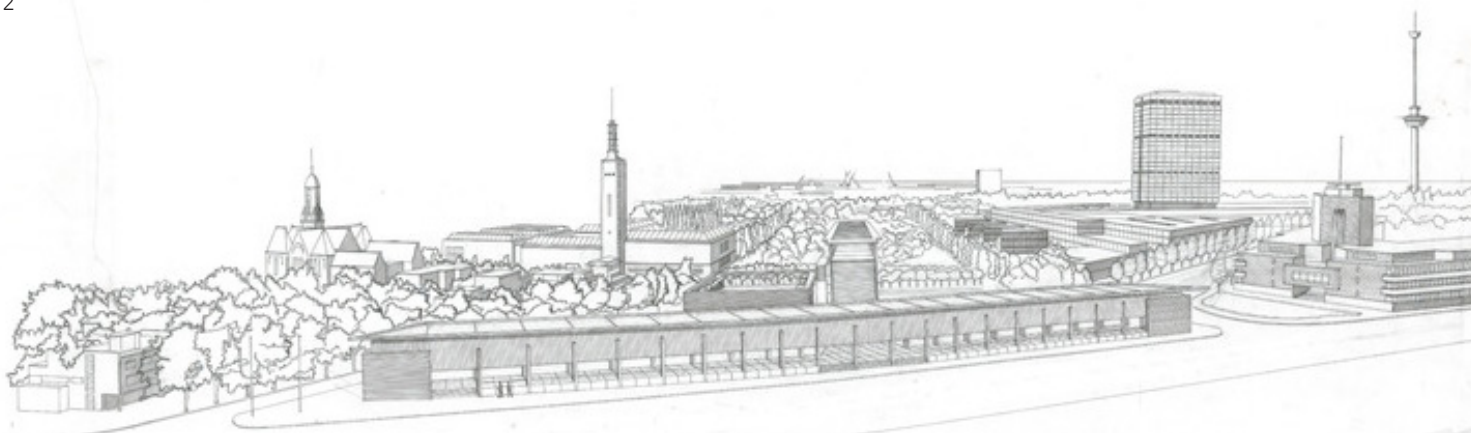
*Jo Coenen, in Het Nederlands Architectuur
instituut, NAI Uitgevers (1993)*

Translation Studio ACTE.

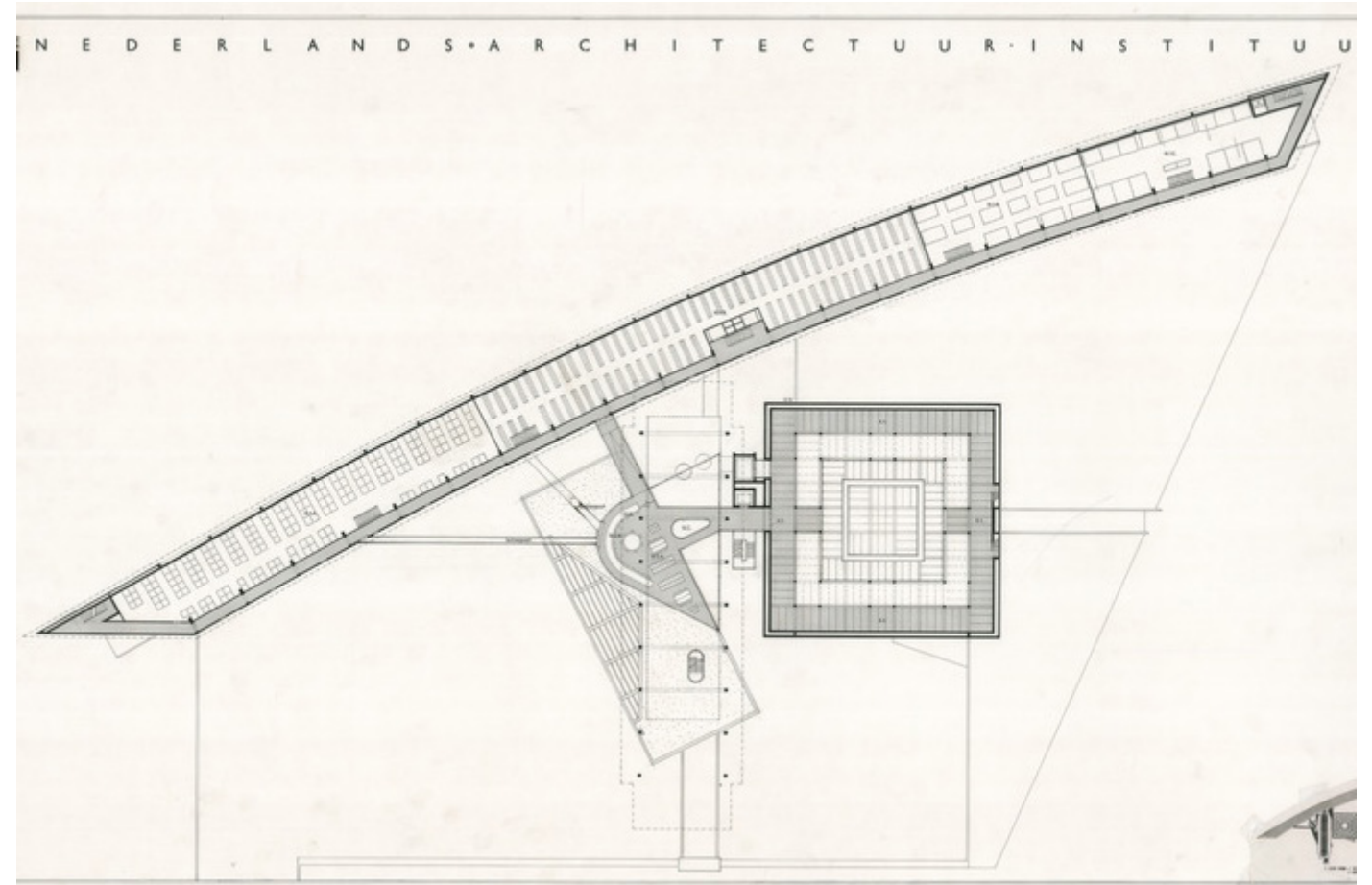
01c_The original design



2



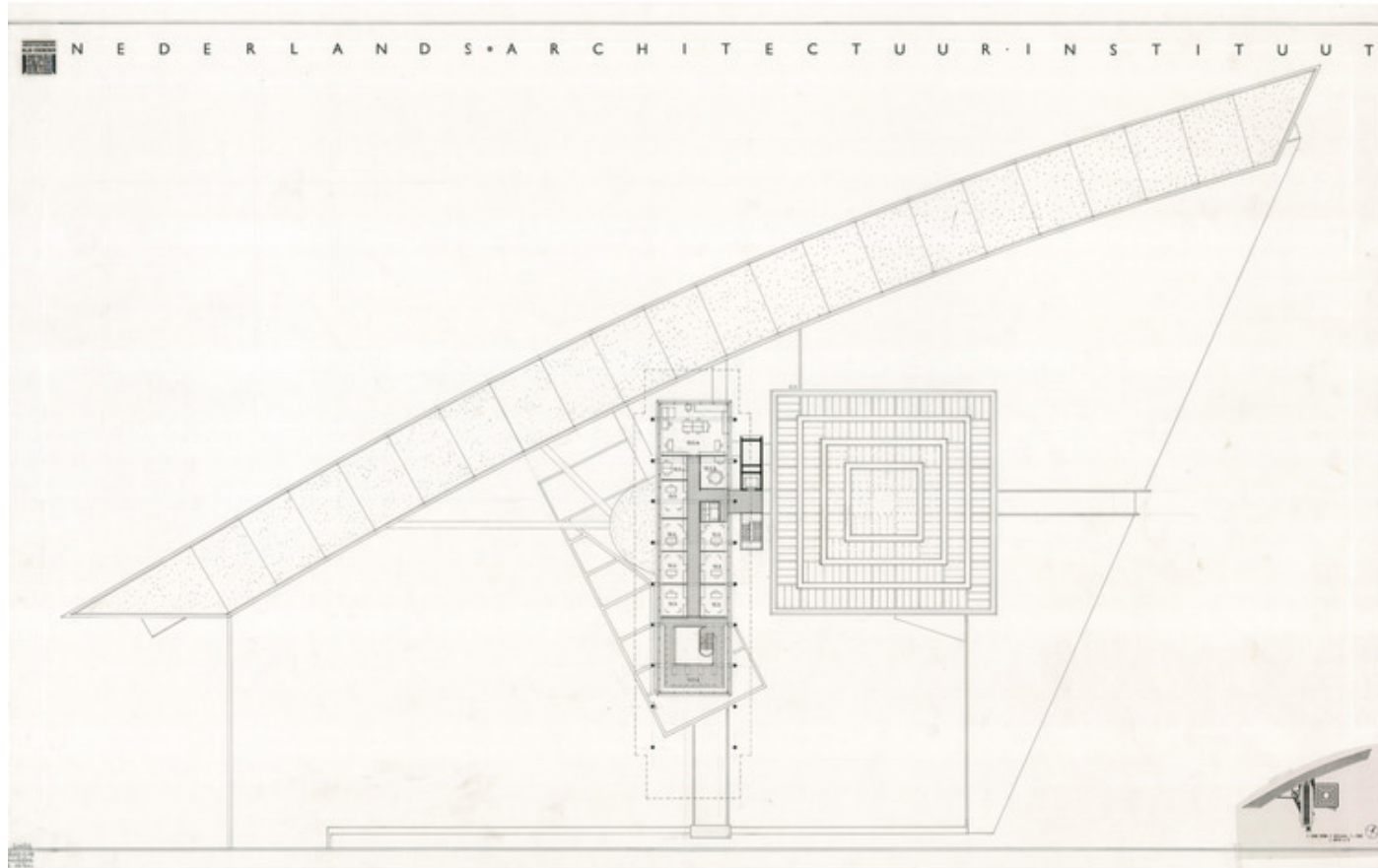
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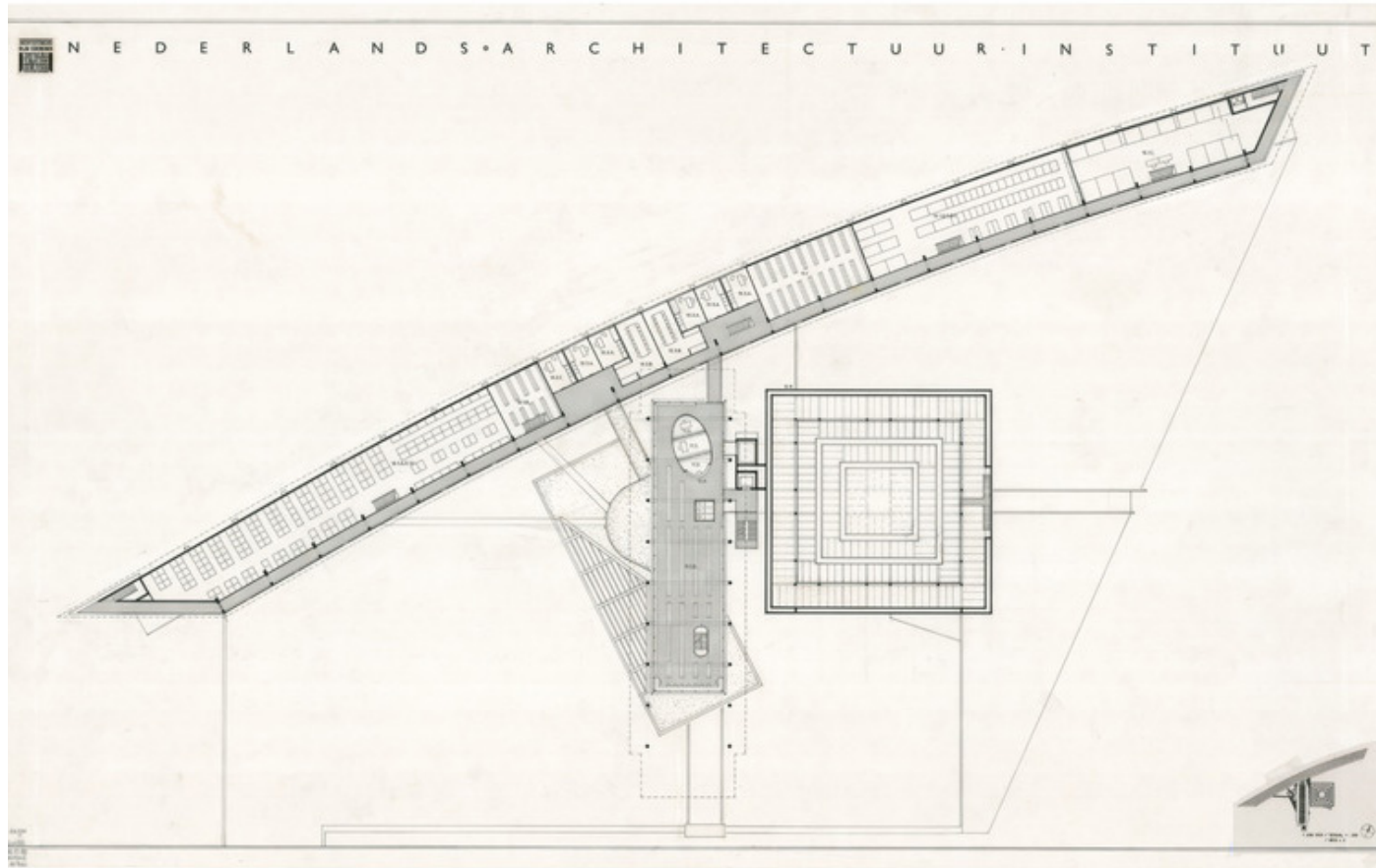


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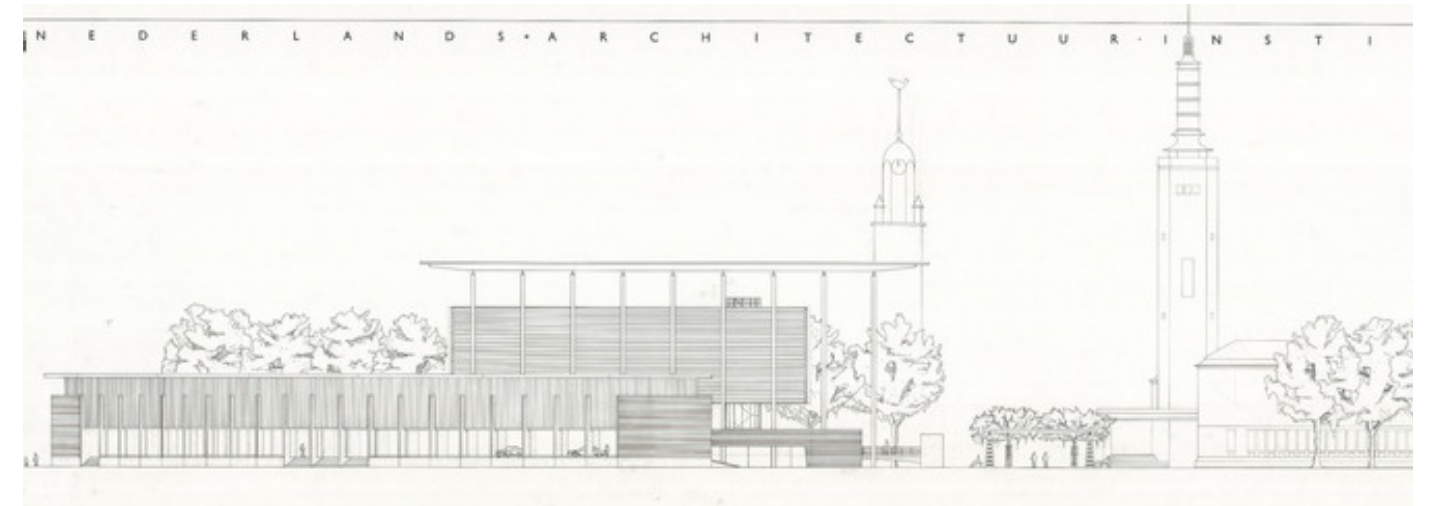


- The Original Design of the NAI / Jo Coenen (1988)
1. perspective view showing archive building and museum
 2. birds-eye view perspective from the north of museum park
 3. 1st Floor Plan
 4. Maquette
 5. 3rd Floor Plan
 6. 2nd Floor Plan
 7. West facade elevation

6



7



“Beckerman diende op 21 juni een motie in om de terugkeer van een nationaal instituut voor architectuur te onderzoeken. Reden is dat “het ontbreekt aan waardering en erkenning voor het werk van onder andere architecten” en “zij in de gehele bouwketen en marginale positie krijgen”, zo luidt ook de constatering van de Tweede Kamer. Een national instituut zou architecten kunnen helpen hun stem beter hoorbaar te maken.

De motie is op 27 juni aangenomen met 122 stemmen vóór. Minister Hugo de Jonge (Volkshuisvesting en Ruimtelijke Ordening) liet weten ok voor terugkeer van en Nederlands architectuurinstituut te zin, maar dat niet een taak van het kabinet te vinden. Hij gaf aan wel het gesprek met de architectenbranche aan te willen gaan om te onderzoeken hoe de branche zelf een instituut opnieuw in het leven kan roepen.”

Source : Architectenweb - Robert Muis (July 2023)

01d_The institute under debate



AK
A

Gezamenlijke Art Kallen
bv rondtafelgesprek architectuurbeleid 6 september 2023

INVESTEREN IN SOCIALE WONINGBOUW
De rijke volkshuisvestelijke traditie in Nederland is een product van investering in de sociale woningbouw. Door nu te investeren in hoge woonkwaliteit voor de bewoners, creëert de overheid ruimte voor vernieuwing en verrijking van de Nederlandse architectuurcultuur.

Zinswag: De rijke Nederlandse volkshuisvestelijke traditie is het resultaat van de Voorwet van 1901 waarin de ambitie werd getuigd om de woonkwaliteit te verbeteren. Als overheid was de werf toen om voorbeeldend te zijn en te investeren in goede sociale woningbouw. In de Amsterdamse schiedboek wordt samen voor het volk gebouwd: woonkwaliteit voor de lagere inkomers. Door te investeren in leefomstandigheden van bewoners in de samenleving, wordt de leefbaarheid voor de gehele bevolking opgehoogd. De les die we kunnen trekken nu bewoners huishouders weer onder druk staan, is dat we moeten ambleren om sociale huiving van hoge kwaliteit te ontwikkelen.

Doen: Hoge woonkwaliteit voor de kwetsbaren vraagt van de overheid om te investeren in kwalitatieve sociale huiving. Met investeringen in de sociale huiving wordt het voor corporaties weer mogelijk om het voorbeeld te stellen en ontwikkelingen in de architectuur en woningbouw te versnellen. Nu zijn corporaties huiving om bodapest te bouwen of te kiezen voor duurzame renovatie. Met meer ruimte voor de corporaties kunnen zij juist weer de medewerkers zijn zoals zij in de huizing van de volkshuisvesting zijn geweest. En wordt het gemeenschappelijk weer geïnvesteerd in hoge ruimtelijke kwaliteit.

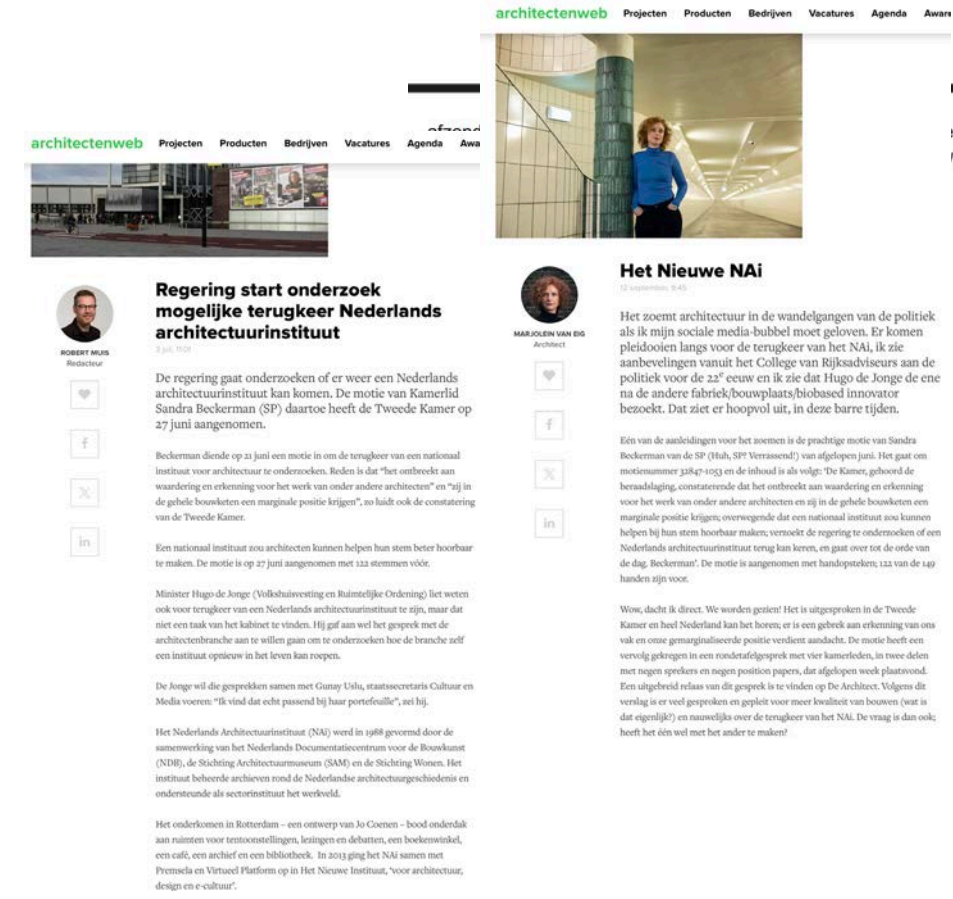
EEN STEVIG NATIONAAL INSTITUUT ZET KWALITATIEVE EN DUS DUURZAME ARCHITECTUUR CENTRAAL
Om conflicterende doelstellingen en goede samenwerking te kunnen brengen en beleidsvriendelijk te een sterk nationaal architectuurinstituut nodig. Dit instituut kan het kwaliteitsaspect in de woningbouw een stevige stem geven in de dynamiek van ruimtelijke ordening. Zo kan de rol van de architect als waarborg van woon- en bouwkwiteit versterkt worden.

Zinswag: Sinds de Nationale Woon- en Bouwagenda in 2022 is opgesteld is de druk op meer woningen locuen alies nog maar toegrennen. De maatschappelijke druk op de ruimte in Nederland neemt ook overvloedig toe, doelstellingen tamen over elkaar heen en zetten elkaar tegen. Investeren begint een strategie 2024 af te maken in de bouwsector onder druk van betaalbaarheid en concurrentie doelstellingen. Het antwoord op deze uitdaging is al in gang afloetter bouwen. Maar effectief bouwen kan op verschillende manieren worden ingevuld. Zoals het effectieve denken nu wordt ingevuld - kantteel voor kwaliteit. Is het een zaak om de toeken wat betreft kwalitatieve woningbouw en de algemene architectuur in Nederland.
De architectuurcultuur in Nederland is te verworden tot een effectiviteits waer aan

De onwenselijkheid van een nieuw centraal architectuurinstituut
Sinds de door de overheid afgedwongen fusie van het Nederlands Architectuurinstituut met Prensela en Virtueel Platform in 2013 zijn er vaker stemmen opgegaan om weer een Architectuurinstituut op te richten. Door het samenvoegen van de drie disciplines architectuur, design en digitale cultuur was volgens sommige architecten hun discipline te onzichtbaar geworden. Dat het Nieuwe Instituut een heel andere opdracht had dan het NAI, en ook geen heldere positie meer had in het architectuurbeleid werd daarbij vaak vergeten. Alsmede dat de fusie gelijk op ging met een algehele marginalisering van dat architectuur(beleid) en ruimtelijke ordening.

Maar hoe effectief het NAI misschien ook was: de tijden zijn veranderd. De uitdagingen van dit moment zijn te complex en de behoeften te divers om geadresseerd te worden door één

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ctieven, meer vormen van
rat we nodig hebben. En laten

A SPACE IN CONSTANT TRANSFORMATION

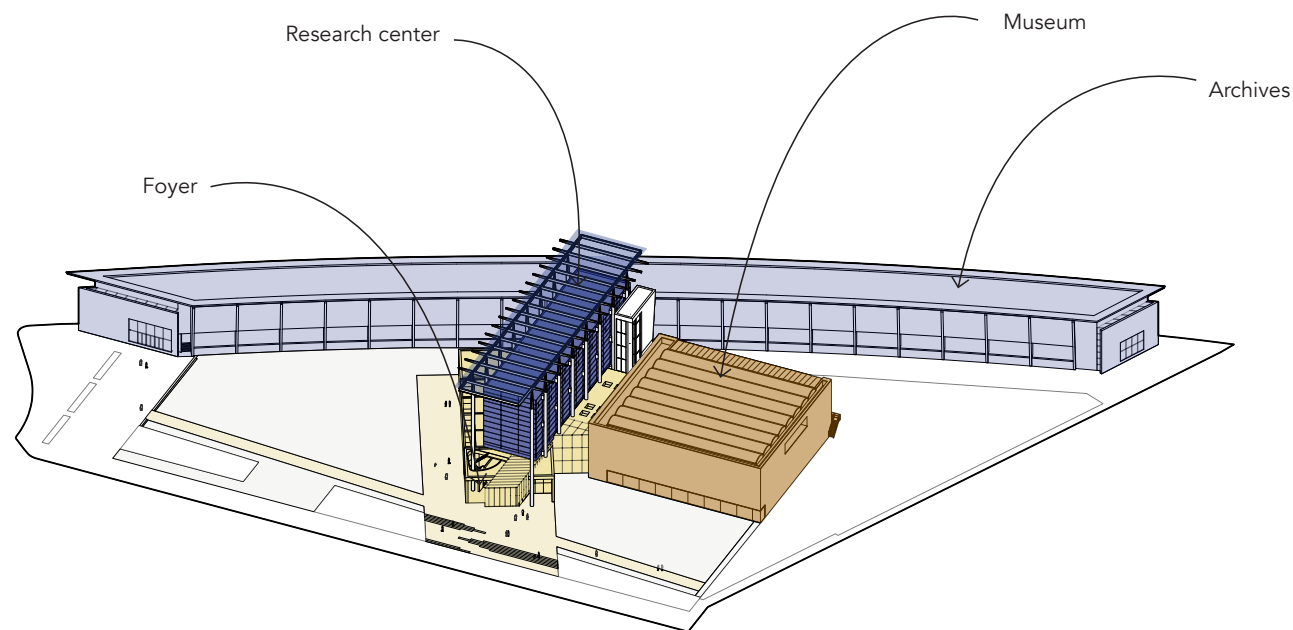
By critically examining the building through its spaces and its perpetual transformations, we gain an insight into how it functions from both a technical and programming perspective. This analysis aims to recognise spatial qualities and programme potential, laying the foundation to initiate propositions and sketches. The enduring complexity of the design and the way space is articulated presents challenges, as well as, opportunities, for any future interventions.

2

Analysis of the existing

“The premise is simple, the four building parts represent the four functions: entrance hall with foyer and auditorium, museum (exhibition rooms), archive, and library reading room with offices above. Each function is made visible from the outside by using a different surface material. The museum - the exhibition rooms - is clad with masonry and the archive building with steel plates. The main building is made of glass and, like the plinth building, shows the concrete supporting structure behind it. Due to the tight budget and the desire for frugality, the skeleton has been designed to externally enclose the space. The supporting structure and the service pipes are exposed next to each other.”

Jo Coenen, in *Het Nederlands Architectuur*
instituut, NAI Uitgevers (1993)
Translation Studio ACTE.



02_The building today

The separation of the main programs of the institute into different volumes is one of the defining elements of Coenen's design, dividing them not only spatially but also formally and materially.

By doing so, the uses, programs, and functions are clearly disassociated, which profoundly affects how the institution operates and the ability of the different programs to intersect.

Visitors to the institution enter into the public entrance hall, from which they can access the public exhibition space. However, they may have little awareness of the archive space, which is a fundamental part of the use and function of the institute. Additionally, the "research centre" located in the elevated glass building directly connected to the archives does not have clear access for visitors, and the exhibition space, directly connected to the entrance hall, isn't very recognisable from the hall.



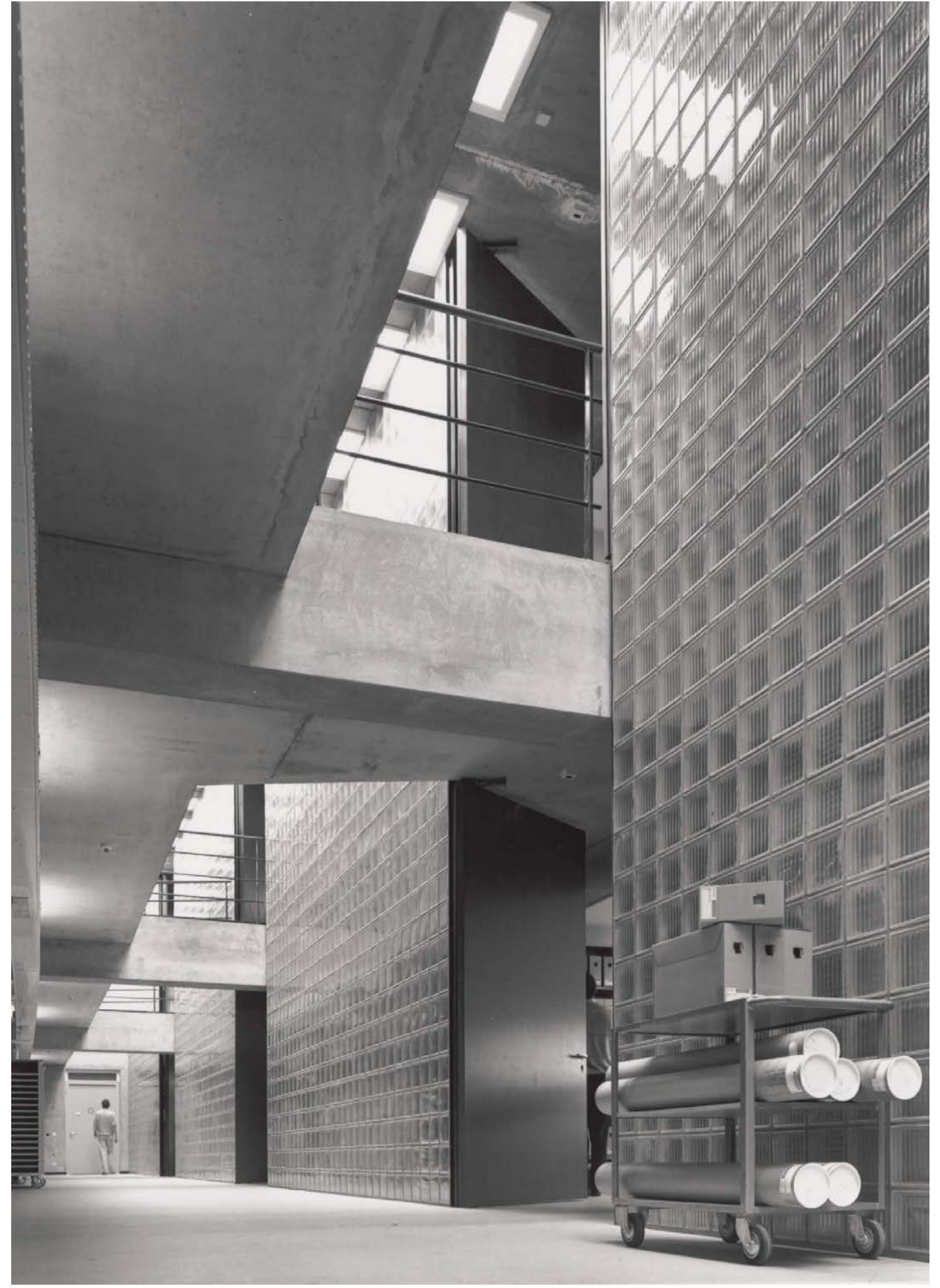
photo - ©Studio ACTE



NAi (1993), view of museum and office building from the Mathenesserlaan - HNI Archive Collection



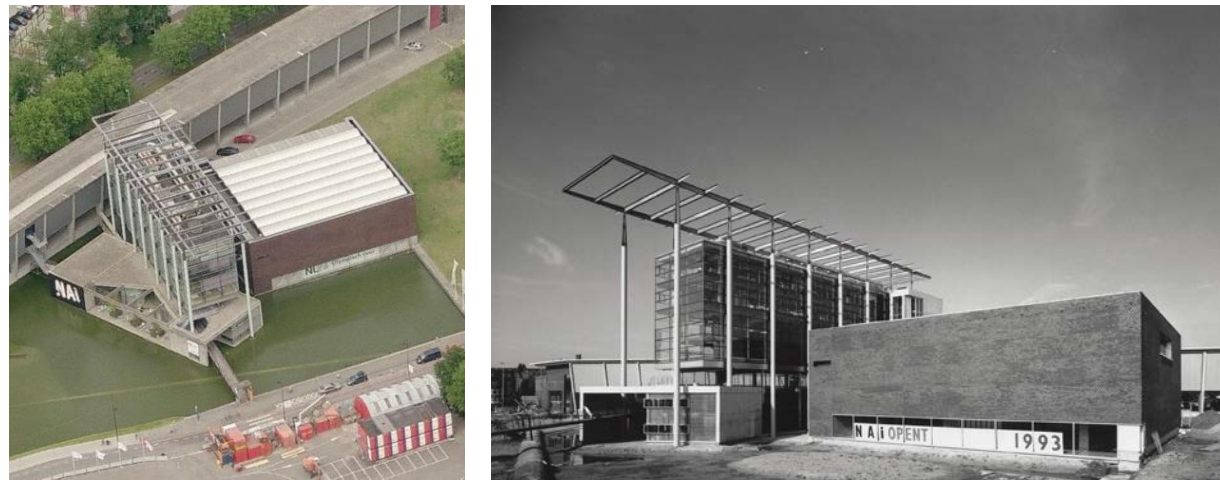
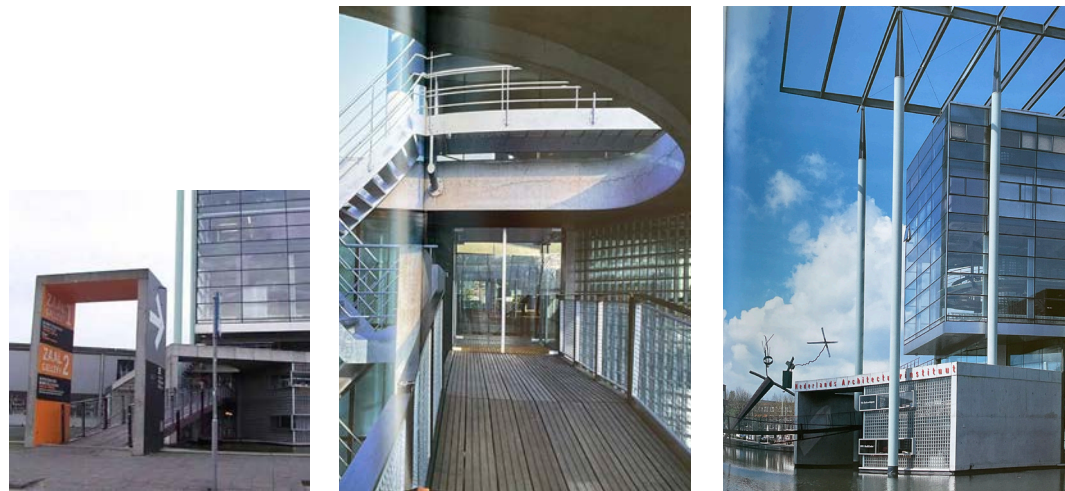
NAi (1993), view of the archive building from Rochussenstraat - HNI Archive Collection



NAi (1993), inside the archives - HNI Archive Collection

02b_Hard transformation : 1. the entrance

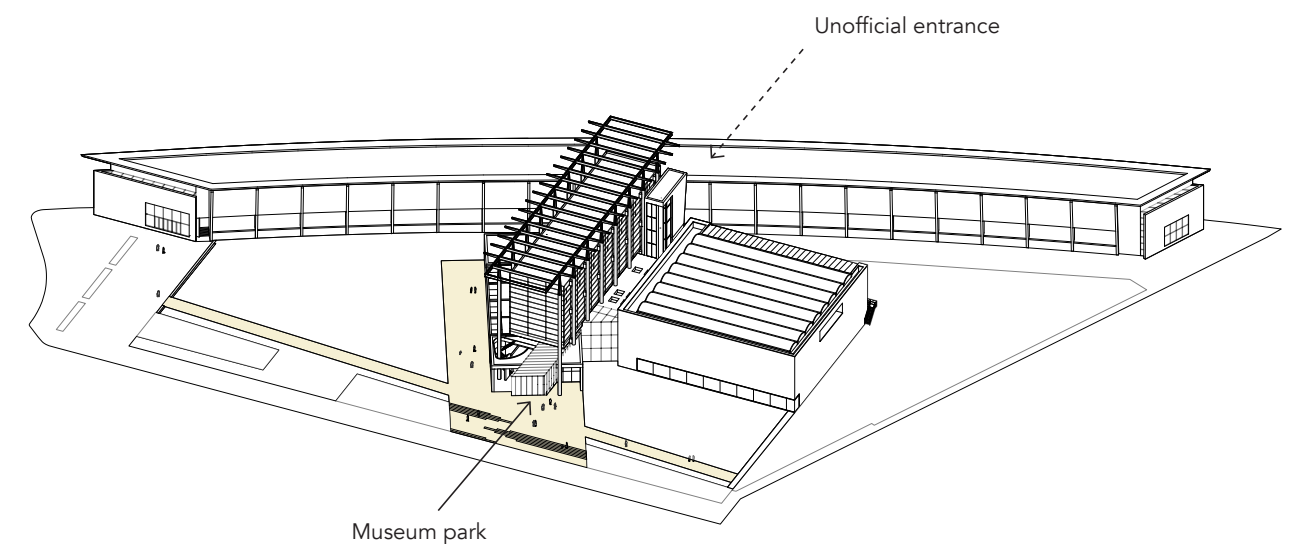
The original south entrance took visitors across a footbridge over the water from the sidewalk, into the first floor level of the building. The new entrance configuration not only brings a change in access and permeability of the building, but also involves a transformation of the public space. This modification, carried out by Jo Coenen himself in 2011, represents a significant alteration in the relationship with the urban context, and the influence of the cultural institute on its immediate surroundings, involving changes in both structure and facade.



The original entrance



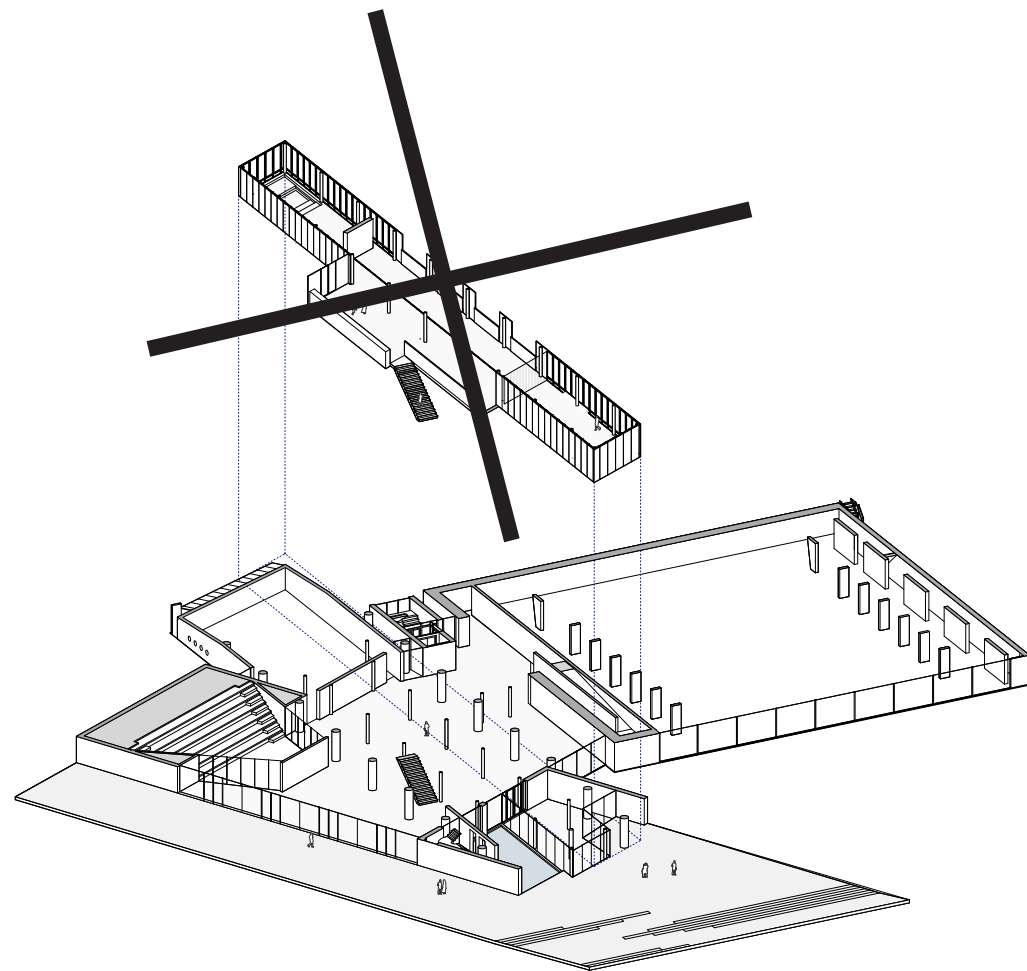
After the transformation



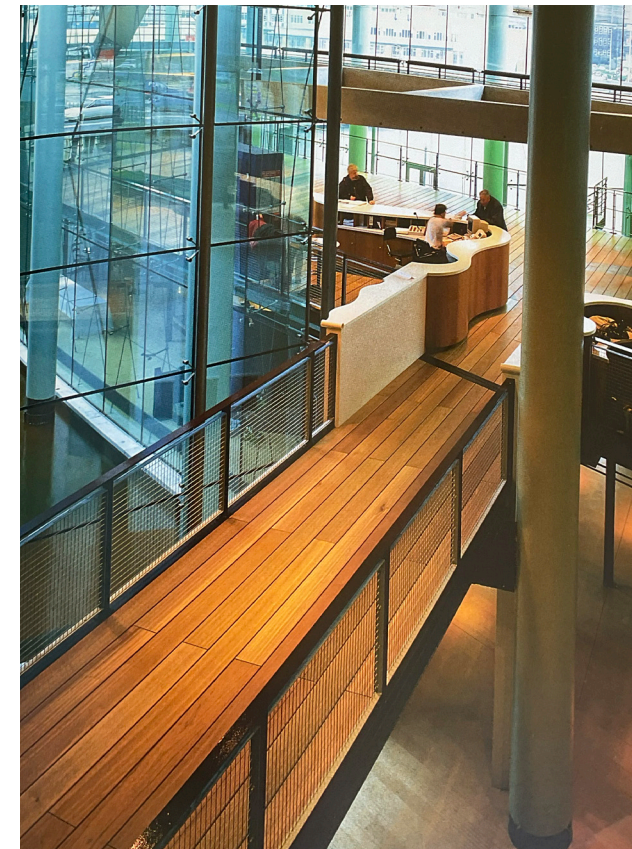
02b_Hard transformation : 2. the foyer

The added platform, known as the “chocolate bar,” allowed HNI to acquire both an educational space and an additional events space. With the addition of this platform in 2011, the foyer underwent a major transformation that eliminating the double height space and created a low-ceilinged area, complicated by its structure and not easily accessible.

This significant alteration to the building is closely linked to the modification of the entrance transformation.



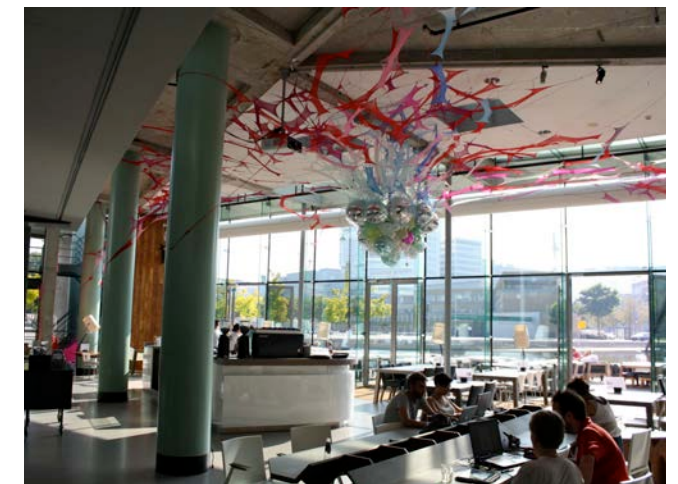
Before the addition of the «chocolate bar»



The original foyer,

02c_Soft transformation : 1. the café

The café is central to the institute building. Over time, it has undergone several changes in design and location while consistently maintaining a direct connection to the terrace and open, west facade. The continual transformations have primarily focused on altering the furniture, arrangement, and dimensions of the tables. The terrace has evolved in parallel with changes to the outside public space. Now, the café has its own entrance from the terrace side and it occupies the largest area on the ground floor. It not only serves as a space for events, performances, openings and parties, but also contributes to the liveliness of the foyer.



Transformation of the cafe

02c_Soft transformation : 2. the bookstore

The bookstore occupies the ground floor and is located directly in front of the entrance axis. Initially situated on the first floor, the bookstore went through numerous subtle transformation, moving between floors and re-organising its shelves and the main counter. In its early stages, the NAI publisher was also located within the institute. The bookstore contributes significantly to the cultural centre's attendance, with many designers and architects regularly coming to look for books. Always connected to ongoing exhibitions, and self-organised events, it plays an important role in programming the foyer and enhancing the institute's visibility.

The modification of furniture and layout functions as an experiment, continually transforming the entry experience for the visitor.



Transformation of the bookshop

02c_Soft transformation : 3. event spaces

The foyer also serves as a platform for events. The amphitheatre regularly hosts lectures, presentations, and public debates in an enclosed setting. The main space brings together exhibitions and openings with performances and concerts, supporting use at different times of the day for diverse audiences.

In the past, the ground floor was sometimes used as an installation space or as a temporary venue for pop-up exhibitions, providing access to a broader audience.

The foyer could be utilised in a more experimental way. Due to its large dimensions and good lighting conditions it is able to support diverse and spacious configurations. The flexibility of the space could be challenged in order to offer more radical and experimental settings.



Transformation of event spaces

02d_Temporary interventions



The Podium, MVRDV (2022)



Architecture of Appropriation, ZUS (2018)

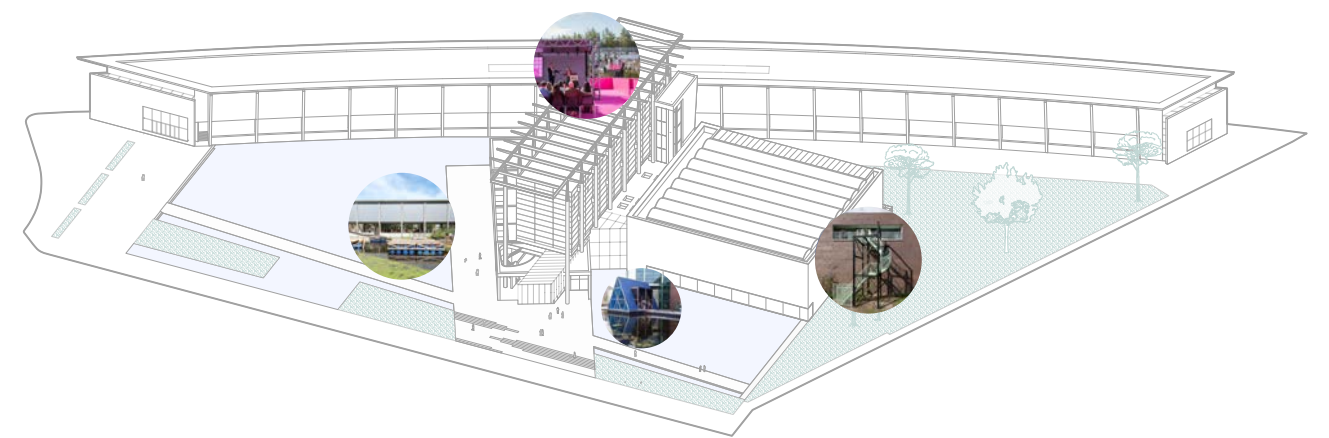


Water Cities Rotterdam, Kunlé Adeyemi (2023)

Examples of temporary material interventions in and around HNI

The Nieuwe Instituut has, on numerous occasions, served as a site for temporary interventions, providing fresh perspectives on its space and uses. The example of the roof platform, designed by MVRDV, that allowed for lectures and public events to take place on top of the building was a remarkable example. Facilitated by the original design, the building functions as a structure capable of hosting interventions in a very technical setting. The temporary entrance with the reused staircase, designed by ZUS, provided another access to the top-floor gallery of the museum that challenging the traditional use of the space. The floating school, designed by Nlé, proposed a unique use of public space and water, directly engaging with the city.

These temporary interventions reveal the building as a framework for experimentation, materially and theoretically, presenting thoughts and propositions on architectural experiments to broader audiences.



When HNI opens towards the city

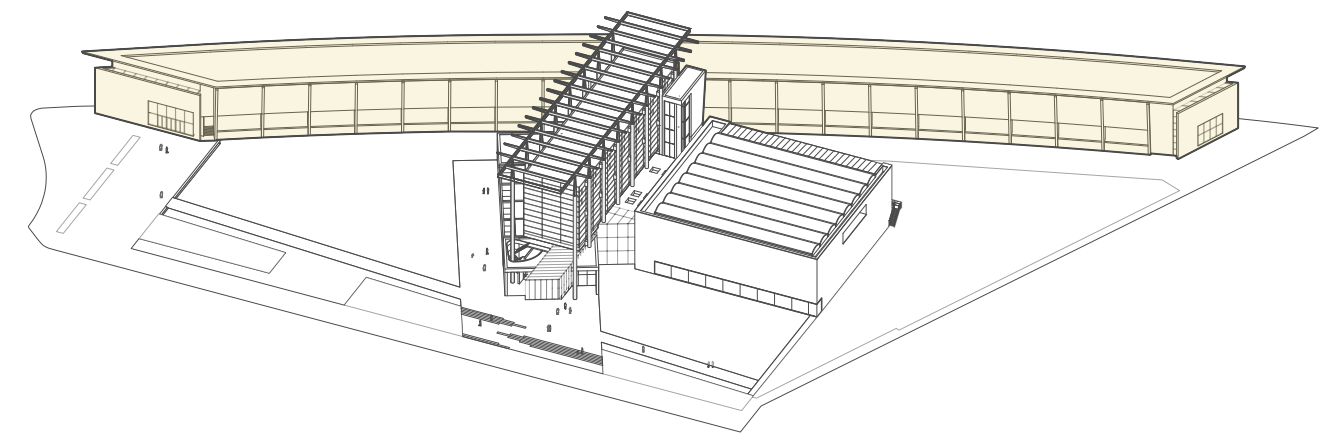
02e_Temporary events and programmes

On many occasions, the HNI has curated programs outside of its walls, reaching beyond its normal range of spaces. By organising a fashion show and a catwalk under the archives, or hosting a grand dinner for the municipality, the institute has made use of its spaces in unexpected ways. This temporary programming must be seen as an experiment, extending from the social to the spatial, that rethinks the capacity of the building to address cultural needs.

The temporary character of the programme is an essential part of rethinking the upcoming transformation of the institute.



Examples of temporary events and programmes in and around HNI



When HNI opens towards the city

SOFT INTERVENTIONS

Looking at the potential of the existing building, this research by design aims to uncover a flexible institute where space is available for experimenting – a place to question the permeability of function and to design new forms of making. Like a collage, the exhibition space, the foyer, the entrance, the educational facility, and the archives come together to explore flexibility and transformation through soft and temporary interventions.

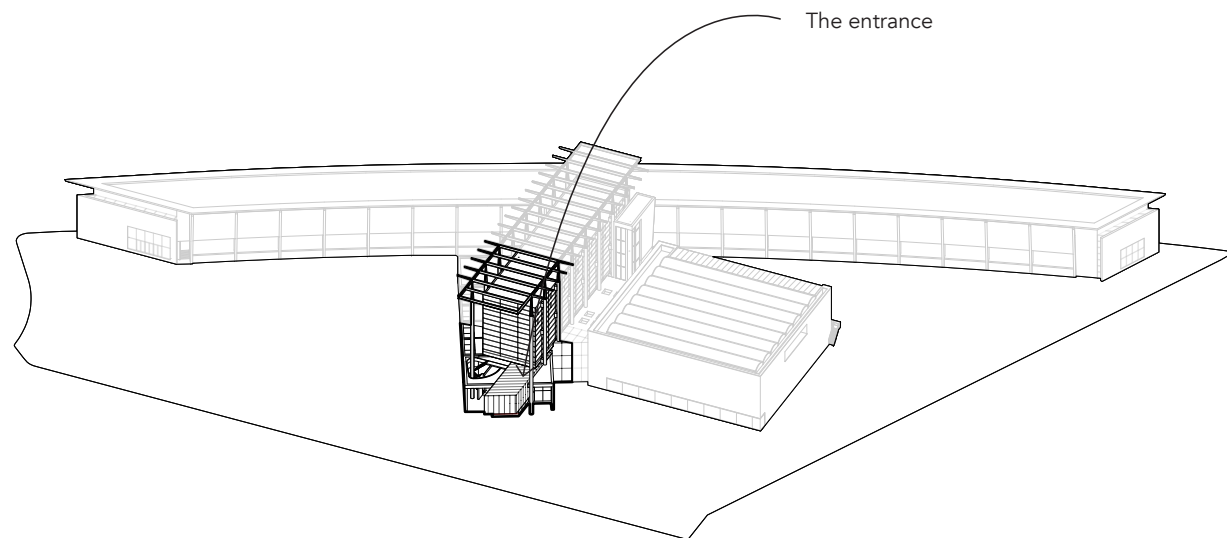
This serves as a ground for experimentation, reflecting the need for cultural institutions to weave their programs and spaces together to move towards more resilient practices.

3

Research by design

“The supporting structure of the glass main building has a dual purpose. It supports the building above and, thanks to its pergola structure, it is an eye-catching gesture that announces this important urban park in Rotterdam from afar. Pragmatic and symbolic consideration both play a role and alternate where there is reason for it in the design.”

*Jo Coenen, in Het Nederlands Architectuur
instituut, NAI Uitgevers (1993)
Translation Studio ACTE.*



03a_Entrance

The entrance of the institute underwent a transformation in 2011 with the addition of the “chocolate bar,” creating a cantilever and lowering the entrance. The steel mesh cladding it serves as an advertising board for the museum. One of the most recent major transformations to the institute is the expansion of the public space around the entrance, creating a long promenade connected by footpaths on both sides. However, the entrance door still suffers from low visibility.

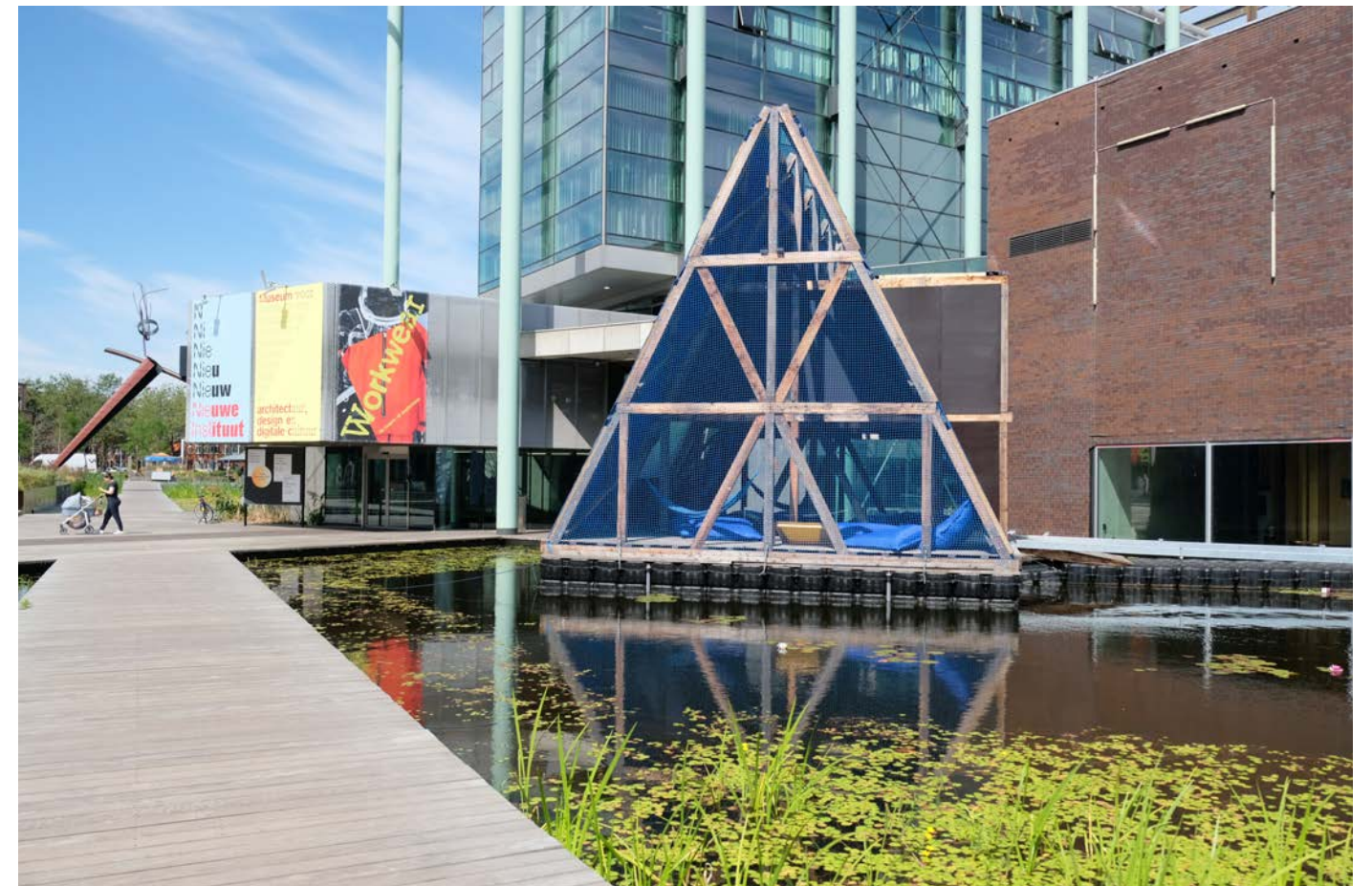
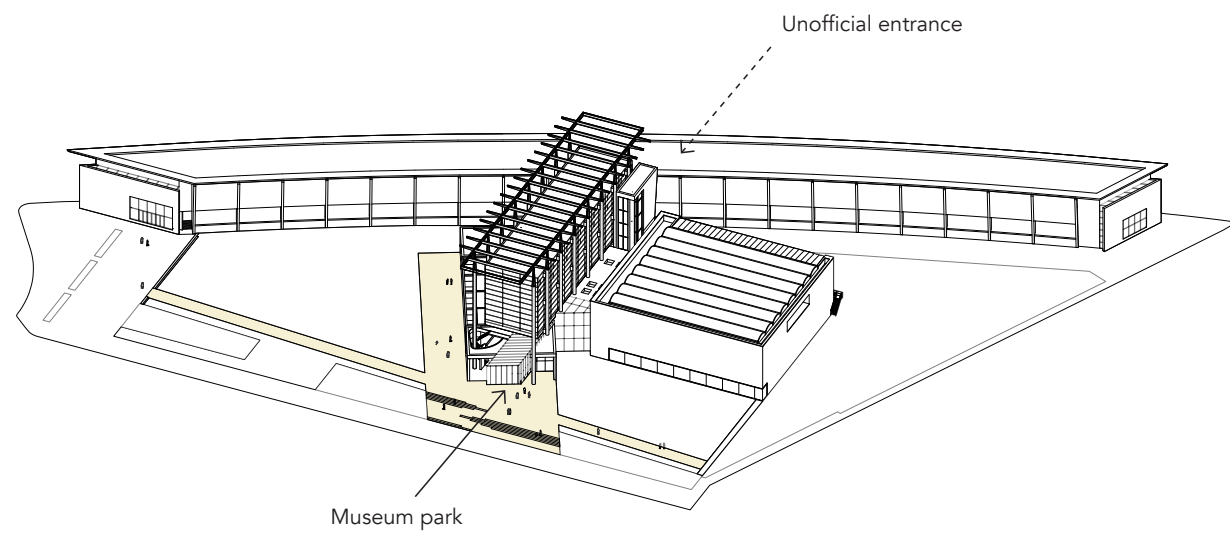


photo ©Studio ACTE



Considering the height and proportion of the building, the public space has the potential to generate functions and uses in front of the building. Both the square and the facade have the capacity to be transformed or host temporary interventions.



Entrance to HNI - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



Entrance to HNI - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



Entrance to HNI - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE

Rethinking the facade as a large and generous glass front by removing the "chocolate bar" transforms the perception of the entrance, creating a transparent double height opening. This sketch model intends to provoke and question the 2011 addition. Such a significant transformation would reconsider the spatial quality of the entrance, the institutes relationship to the city and the Museum park, as well as the potential use and position of the entrance desk.

The textile or soft intervention on the roof structure calls for a more artistic approach. Crafted from a reused fabric assembly, this large curtain would reflect and be visible from afar. Creating colours on the ground and producing an intimate spatial feeling, it could support more versatile uses of the public space and the entrance.

The sketch model narrates a soft intervention inhabiting the slender and distinctive metal structure of the HNI building. This could create a space that serves various public functions, including exhibitions, small events, and performances. As a temporary installation positioned at the entrance, the intervention would formalise a designated area for a wider audience, prompting a thoughtful reflection on the facade and the overall image of the HNI. Through this element, the aim is to provoke and stimulate debates while creating a visual impact on the city through the strategic use of materials, playing with reflection and projection.



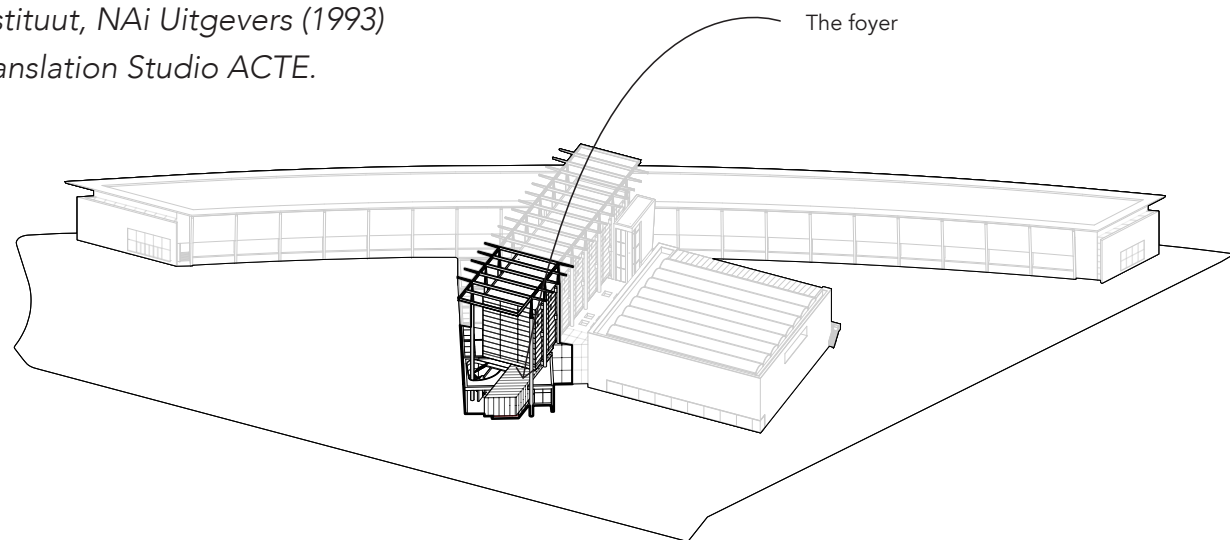
Entrance to HNI - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



Entrance to HNI - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE

“The ensemble is anchored into the city, and into Museum Park, which is part of the city. The edges of the water and the greenery near the building make a groove on the Museum Park side that marks the NAI domain. The bridge over the water has a concrete gate that catches the eye of the visitors from the park. Once in the entrance hall, a wooden bridge leads to all parts of the complex. The use of materials is sober. The concrete skeleton dominates the image, supplemented by steel, glass, wood and brickwork. The limited budget necessitated a shell that was as expressive as possible, which could be filled with noble materials in the future. The USM Haller furniture in the library and offices is already an example of such an addition. As is the case with the structure and composition of the main building, the furniture developed by Fritz Haller is systematic and pragmatic, and fits perfectly into the design of this part of the building.”

*Jo Coenen, in Het Nederlands Architectuur
instituut, NAI Uitgevers (1993)
Translation Studio ACTE.*



03b_Foyer

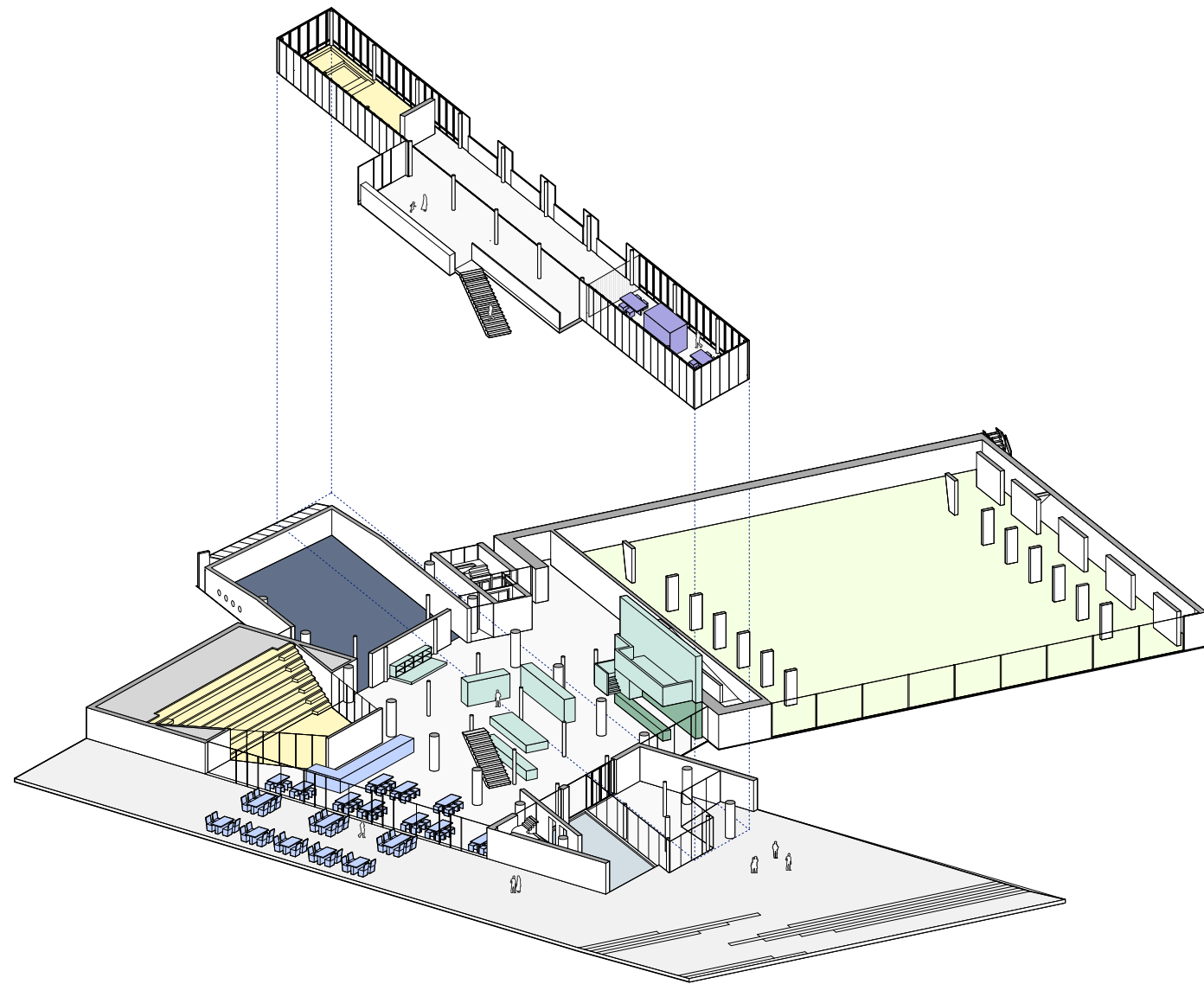
The Foyer is central to HNI, merging many functions such as the bookstore, the café, the amphitheater, the entrance to the exhibition, as well as educational facilities and access to the entire building. Accessible from both sides of the institute, the foyer hosts many functions, such as events on Thursday nights, exhibition openings, concerts, and dinners. As one of the largest continuous spaces of the institute, it has the capacity to be flexible, benefiting from the very large, open, glass facade and a full double height over half of the floor. In addition, it is the interface between the city and the institute. Free to access during opening hours, it functions as a hub for many designers and architects.

The foyer is the space that has undergone the most transformation over the last years, from interior design changes to the reorganisation of the plan.



photo ©Studio ACTE

- FOYER
- CAFE
- BOOKSHOP
- EXHIBITION
- EDUCATION
- LECTURES
- FACILITIES



As a result of the many transformations over the years, layers have been added on top of each other, creating a patchwork of uses and designs that divide the space into areas dedicated to different programs. This axonometric illustrates the current, fixed uses of this space.

This organisation could be reimagined in a more flexible and permeable way, offering possibilities for extending programs or reversing functions.



Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



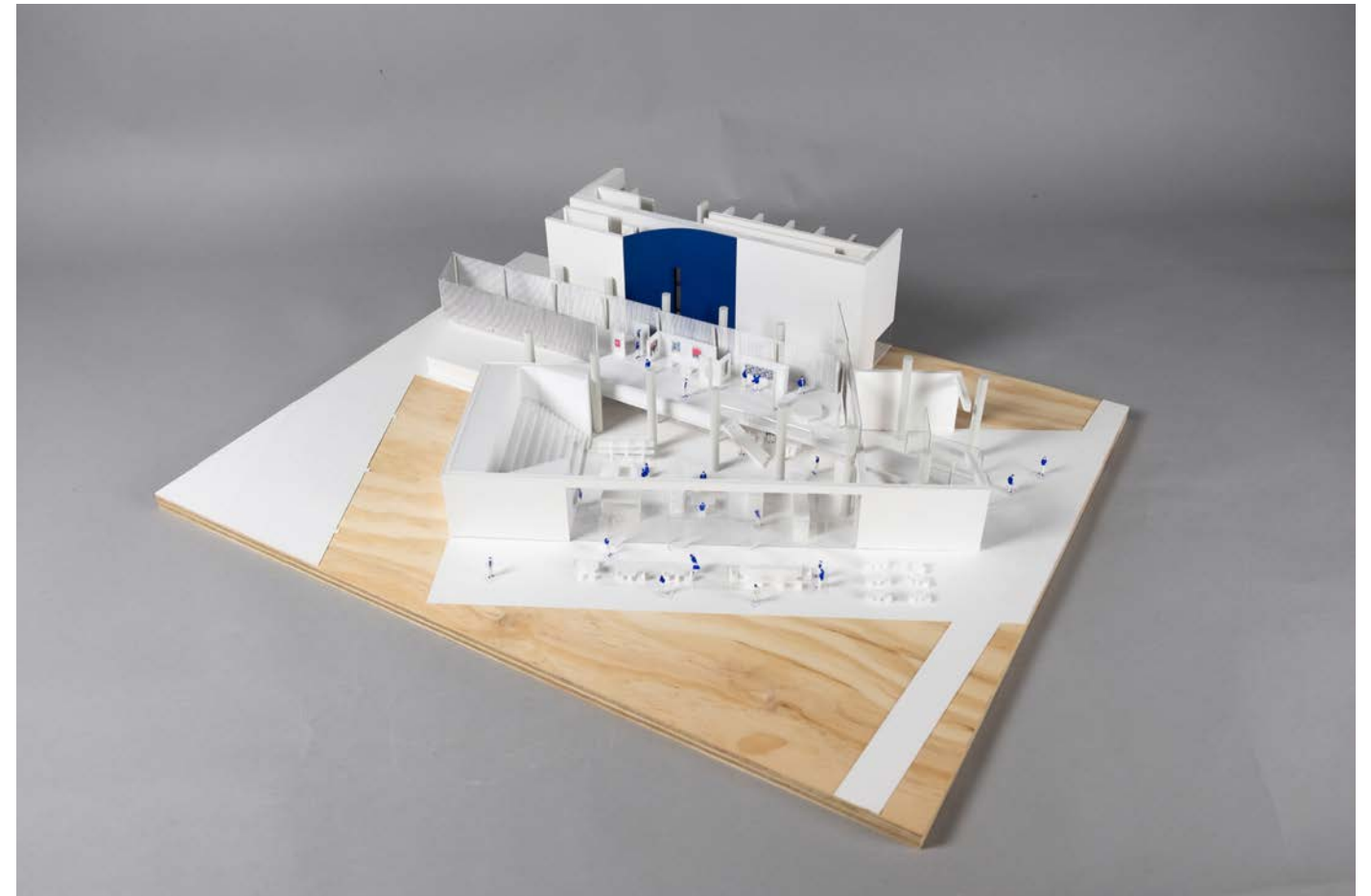
Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE

Through a series of variations, these sketch models explore the potential and permeability of the current program.

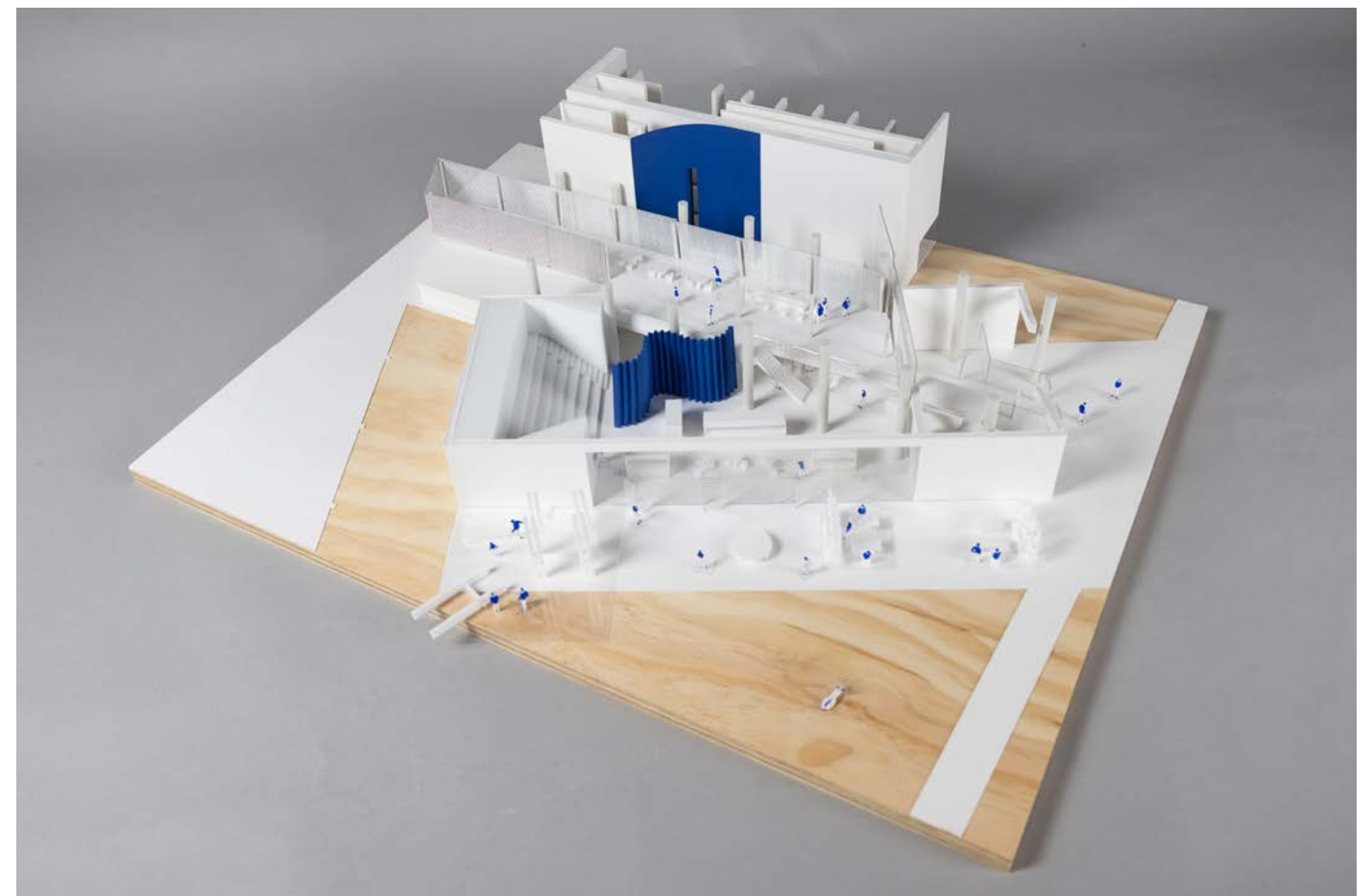
Looking at the entrance to the exhibition hall, this vast curtain or folded textile serves as an indicator for the entrance and provides clarity between the foyer and the museum. Additionally, incorporating the access ramp into the museum area allows for a simplification of circulation between the various galleries. Currently located outside the museum, the ramp is not a clear or easy way for visitors to move between rooms.

A proposal to remove the hard wall and the division between the amphitheater and the foyer suggests the possibility of opening-up lectures and events, as well as changing the configuration of the audience and performers. Imagining the stepped-stands as part of the main foyer would contribute to a more permanent use of the space by visitors.

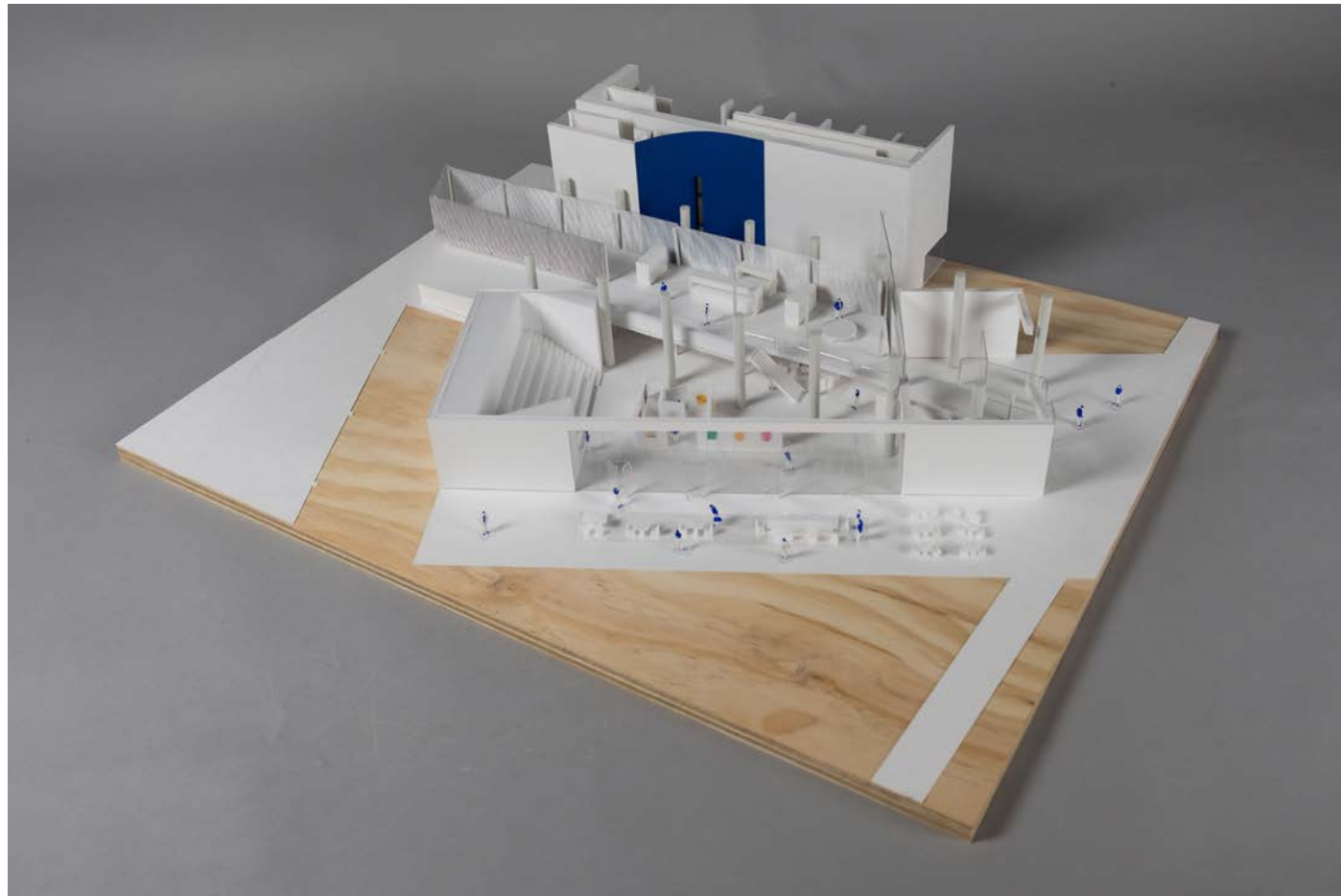
Several variations of models explore the potential of the foyer to become an exhibition space, a temporary setting for a workshop, as well as experiments with the division of the space by large curtains that allow temporary room subdivision. Thinking of easily movable furniture could contribute to a greater flexibility of the space.



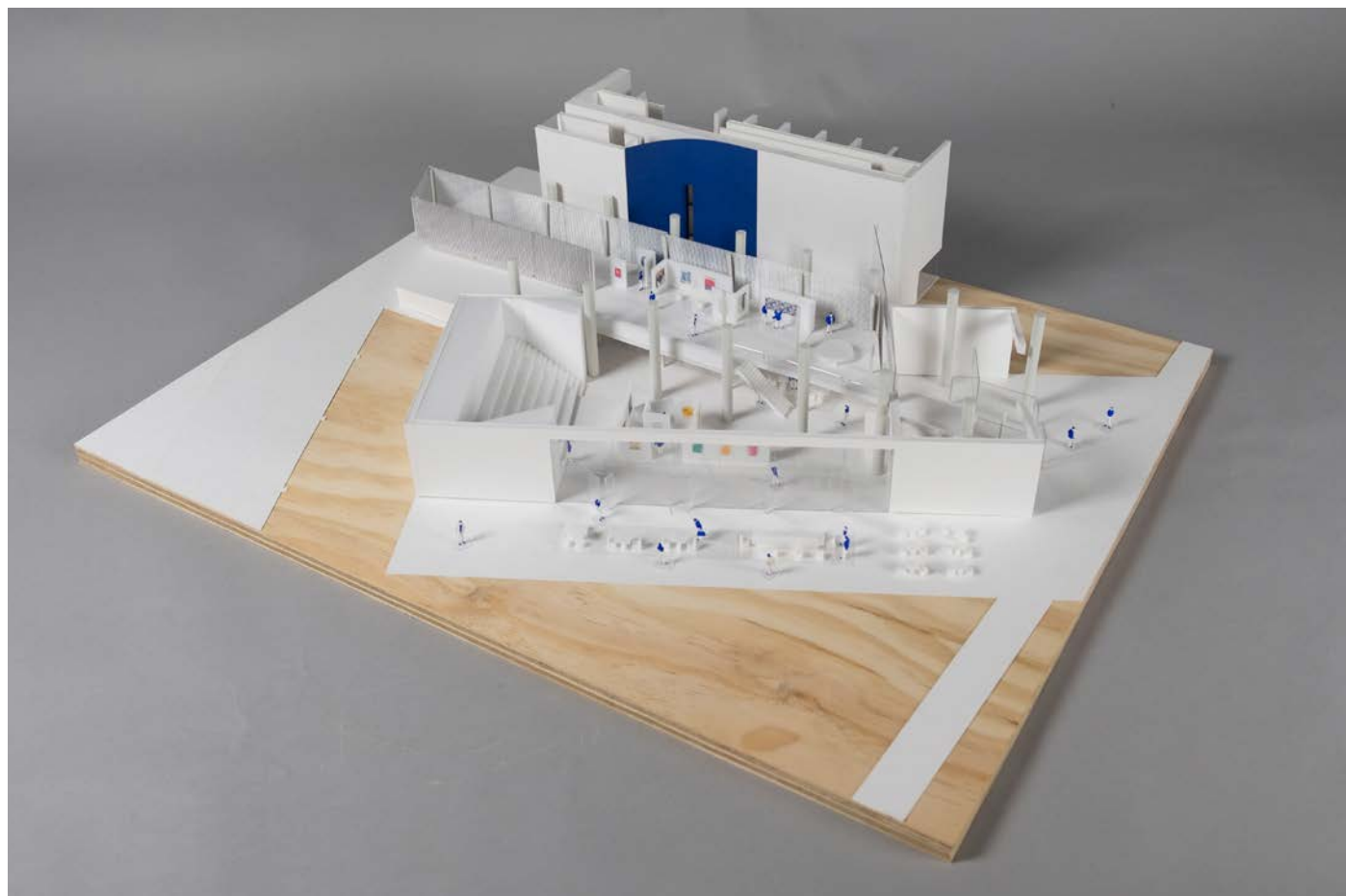
Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE

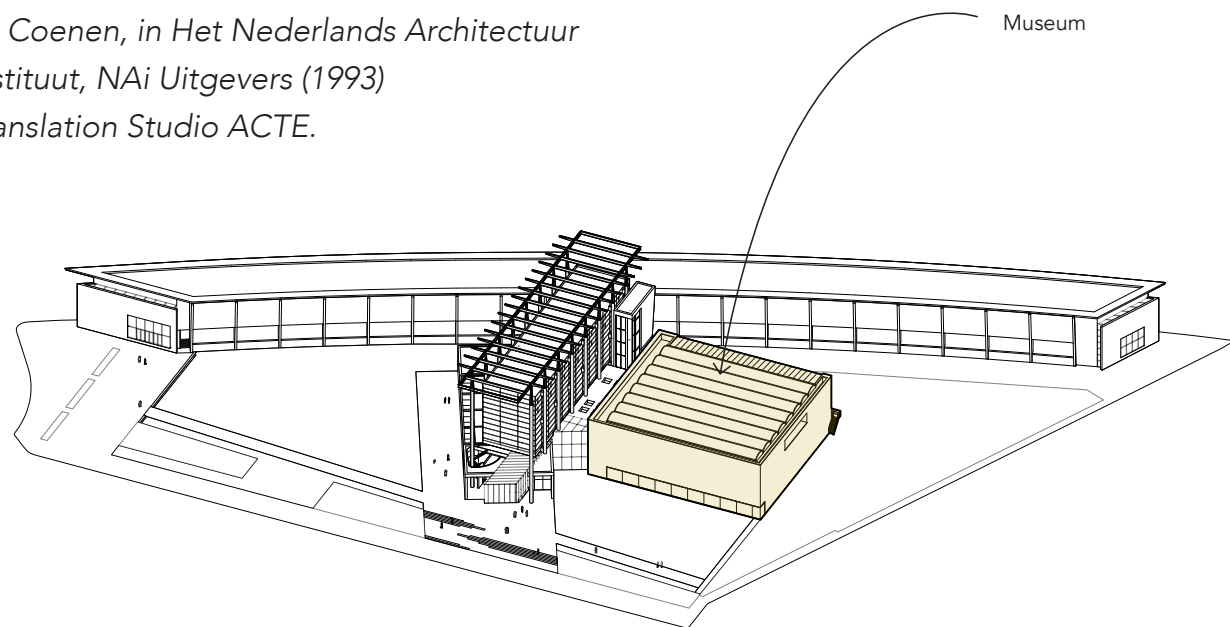


Foyer of the HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE

The dimensions of the foyer space, as well as its volume, offer a very versatile area beyond its current uses. By removing the amphitheater wall, the floor plan appears to be clarified and can benefit from its full length. The removal of the "chocolate bar" or the educational room allows for a generous entrance with more programmable space. A diversity of uses combined with flexibility could lead to a very experimental space, a platform for events and workshops on a larger scale.

“The exhibition box is made up of specific spaces that, like the building components, are prototypical, although they will not immediately be recognised as such due to the overlaps. The recurring use of concrete for the walls, the construction and the repetitive dimensions creates a coherent picture in which none of the components are emphasised or come to the fore. The voids and the openings through which daylight is introduced provide an exuberant spatial interplay within the construction that remains modest due to the limited use of materials. Only traces of this can be seen from the outside through the sparsely cut holes. The surprise effect is increased by using specially burned bricks from the north of Germany. Bright sunlight turns the museum building into a glowing box against a green background. In bad weather the building looks gloomy, appearing like a mysterious and heavy mass.”

Jo Coenen, in *Het Nederlands Architectuur instituut*, NAI Uitgevers (1993)
Translation Studio ACTE.



03c_Exhibition

The original intention of the exhibition space was to offer total freedom, enabling exhibitions to scale up and reach the 1:1 or construction scale, creating a space within a space.

The exhibition space is reached through the entrance hall and its access is organised through staircases and ramps. It comprises three different exhibition halls, each with its unique qualities and lighting systems and distinctive formats and proportions are distinctive, providing three variations of spaces for exhibition. Beneath the main hall, a basement that was previously used as an exhibition room has been transformed into a digital lab.



photo ©Studio ACTE



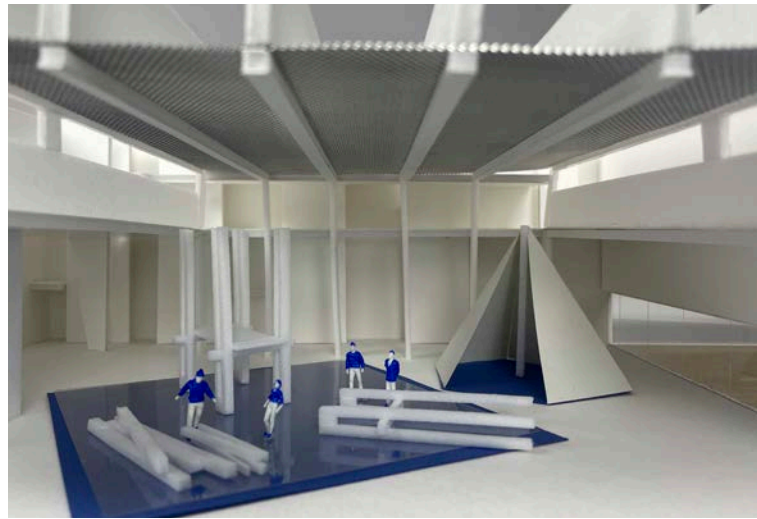
Exhibition hall in HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



Exhibition hall in HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



Originally designed to host large structures and installations, the ground floor of the museum offers a very compelling volume capable of accommodating constructions at a 1:1 scale. Pavilions, structures, installation, screens, and stands provide numerous options to experiment and give the museum a learning function. Workshops or festivals could inhabit and transform the space; students could squat and investigate materials, professionals could learn the basics of earth building construction, and designers could host symposiums. The AFFR could project a series of movies hosting talk and film presentation. The IABR could build a pavilion made from the reused exhibition set of the previous year.



By fully utilising the ground floor, the museum could become a learning platform—an architecture in the making, a stock of materials translated into resilient forms of living. Mixing exhibition and making hall could transform the institute into a permanent toolbox or a sharing centre for the cultural field.

Additionally, the idea to temporarily reverse programs within the institute could offer spatial experiments, bringing the café to the top floor gallery while relocating the exhibition to the foyer.



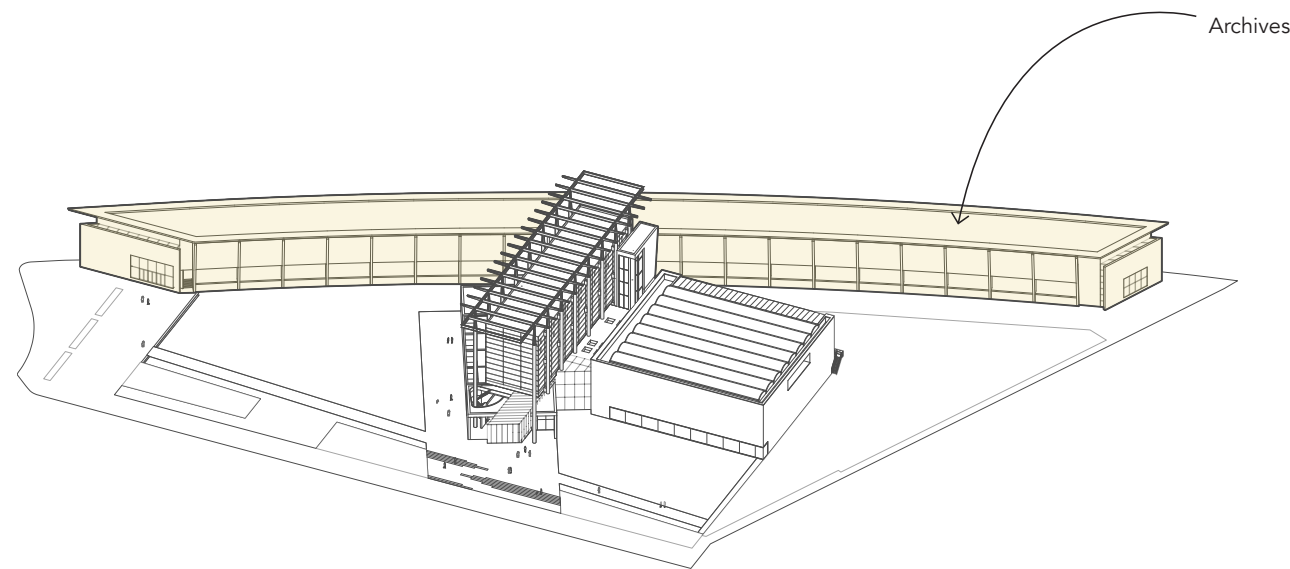
Exhibition hall in HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



Exhibition hall in HNI - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE

“Due to its construction on 42 raised slabs, the long archive building is also a covered street, an arcade, that provides access to the complex. This building section forms the boundary and access to Museum Park. At night it is festively illuminated by coloured lights that create a computer-controlled rainbow effect. This artwork from Peter Struycken’s connects the building with the Rotterdam atmosphere at night.”

Jo Coenen, in *Het Nederlands Architectuur instituut*, NAI Uitgevers (1993)
Translation Studio ACTE.



03d_Archives

The Archives constitute the very heart of the Institute. Serving as the genesis of the building, the iconic “banana” structure provides nearly a kilometre of storage across two stories for the Dutch Architecture Collection. Originating from the years 1750-1800, the archive has undergone a significant evolution, transitioning from a concentration of monographic works to a more discerning and thematic composition that highlights renowned designers.

The Collection Archive, staffed by approximately 30 dedicated individuals, stands as a testament to the Institute’s commitment to preserving architectural heritage. It reflects the essence of why HNI was built in the first place. The Archive not only houses a wealth of historical artefacts, but also serves as a dynamic entity, constantly adapting to the evolving landscape of architectural discourse.



Under the archives - photo ©Studio ACTE



The Archives - photo ©Studio ACTE



A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE

Exploring various options to inhabit the ground floor beneath the archive structure directly questions the fundamental relationship between this public space and the city. Permanently closing the arcade's facade would not only alter the urban structure but also redefine its function and connection to the neighbourhood, particularly on Rochussenstraat.

However, the programming and permanent use of the space beneath this volume would provide opportunities for urban and spatial experiments for the institute. This versatile space could serve as a platform for displaying exhibitions, organising lectures, workshops, festivals, small constructions, and more. Past instances of temporary events have demonstrated the potential of this long arcade in hosting small fairs, dinners, and fashion shows.

The sketch models envision the lower space as a dynamic volume, serving as a storefront for HNI towards the surrounding area. The interplay of light, enclosure, and opening suggests the potential of the space to resonate with both the outside and the inside of the museum.

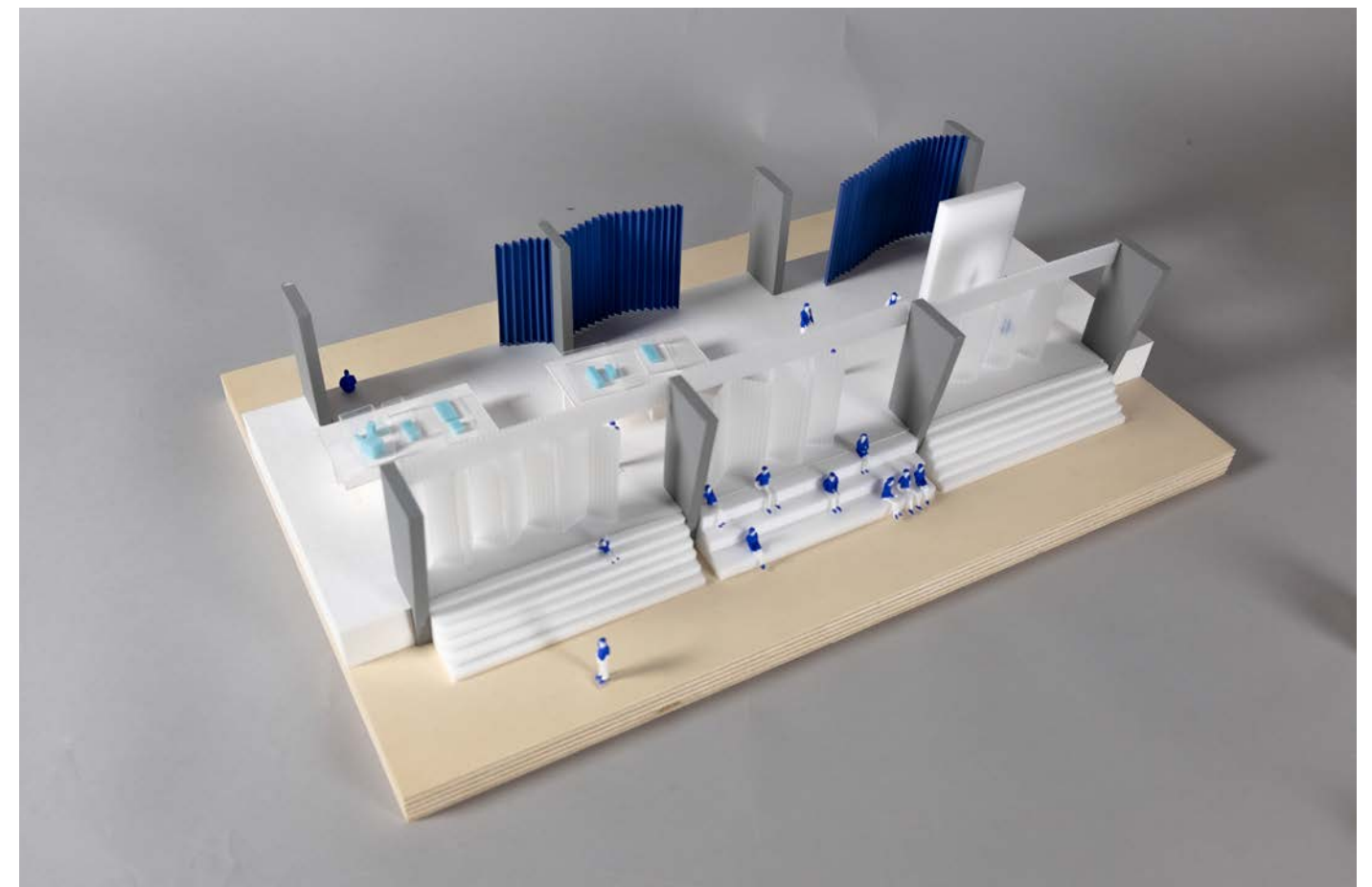
Considering public exhibitions with permanent accessibility could attract diverse individuals to interact with the collection and engage in a dialogue with the institution, reaching a wider audience.

Though the question of enclosing the archive ground floor in a solid and insulated way is not new, and has risen from many places, the means and forms in which it could happen remain unclear. A first gesture towards the city could be stimulated through the substantial extension of the public staircase on Rochussenstraat, which could become stands, planted steps and a playful public space.

The necessity of HNI to experiment could take base in this vacant space, by proposing temporary programs in direct association with spatial interventions.



A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE



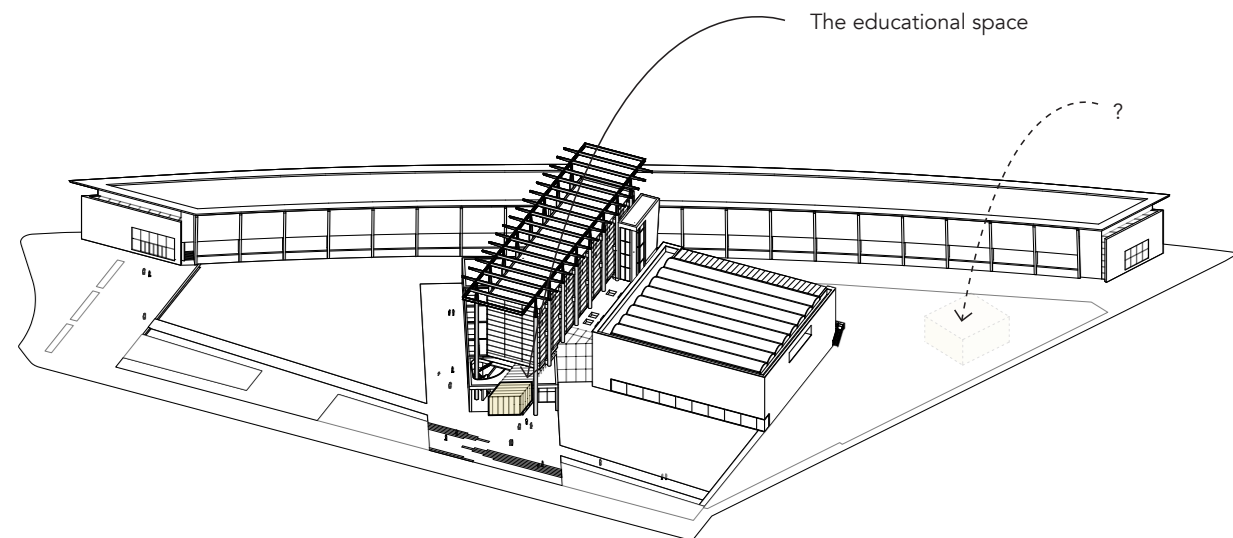
A fragment of the archive - study model 1:50 - ©Studio ACTE

“The program of requirements called for a total of approximately 8,000 m² of net floor space, of which roughly half was for the storage of the collections and archives, which, like other service areas, are not accessible to the public. The latter was stated in a characteristic with which the NAI indicated what atmosphere the building should radiate:

‘Despite the fact that the program aims for a partly private character, the building must nevertheless be attractive and easily accessible to a large number of people. A paradox arises here, privacy and openness, which can be turned into a stimulus for the design.’ Yet another sentence from the characteristic: ‘The building, its immediate surroundings, the interior, the furnishings reflect that it is an institution in which the cultural content and practical meaning of design is central.’”

Ruud Brouwers

Translation Studio ACTE.



03e_Educational space

The institute’s role to convey knowledge to diverse audiences, coupled with the need to directly engage with the designer community, is crucial. It serves as a platform for knowledge exchange, sharing, and, more importantly, as a space for learning and experimentation - a collective space for all design stakeholders.

The imperative to expand this function and provide a 1:1 facility for building, such as an atelier, lab, or experimentation facility, is evident. Taking inspiration from Les Grands Ateliers or Luma Arles, such a space could bring together professionals and promote new, resilient approaches to building and designing.

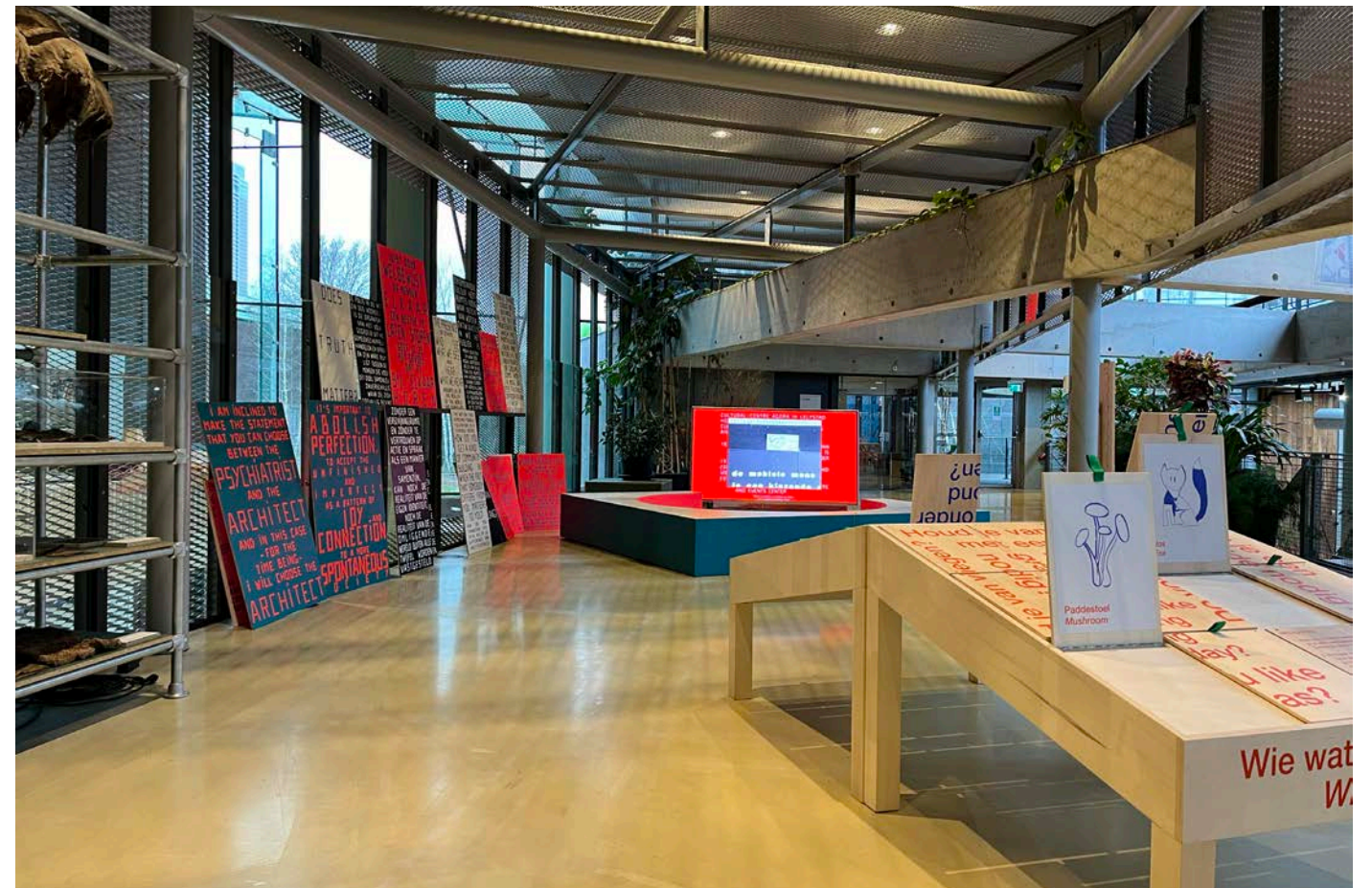
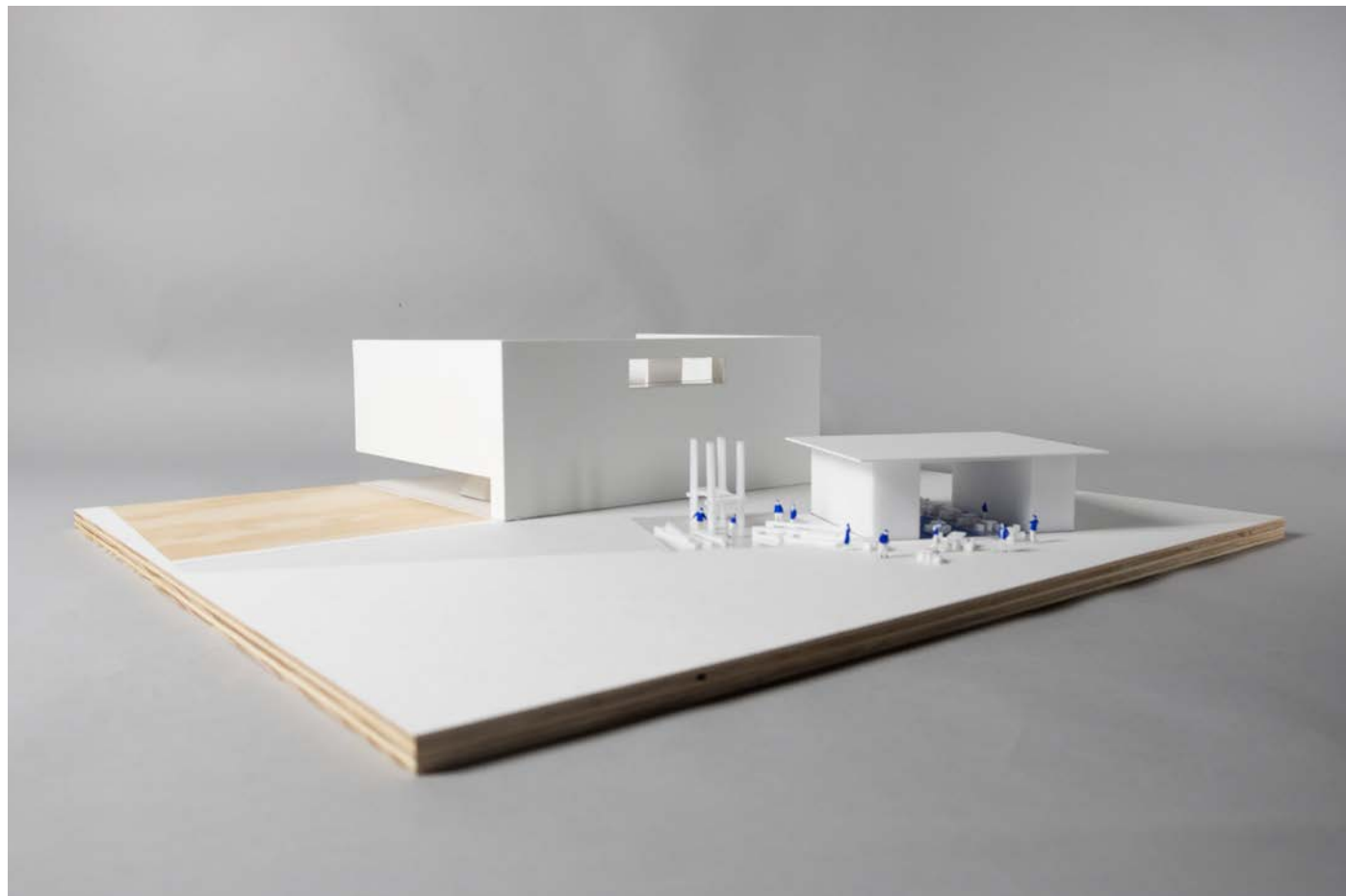


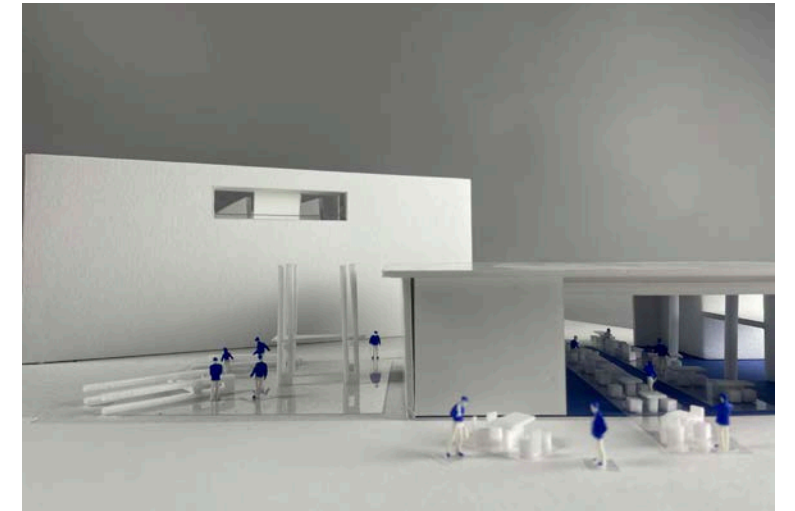
photo ©Studio ACTE



A temporary educational pavillion - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



A temporary educational pavillion - study model 1:100 - ©Studio ACTE



The research conveyed by HNI through the educational platform should be at the core of cultural education. The necessity to bridge knowledge between actors in the design field is essential, from makers to designers, architects to builders, and various other stakeholders. In light of the need to change the way we build, this sharing of knowledge is fundamental. Experimenting at a 1:1 scale, testing materials, and rethinking resources will become the breeding ground for resilient forms of practice.

The educational function is therefore not only necessary for reaching broader audiences (from young children to families), but must also focus on the design field where the necessity to grow knowledge remains vital. More than supporting student groups and one-off professional experiences, the learning facility of a cultural institute should be a vital tool for collecting and experimenting with the entire field.

Considering a temporary facility, a pavilion, or an atelier capable of various forms for space-for-experimentation: a temporary testing ground, external workshops that could resonate with the experimental spaces in the NAI building, a new structure in the HNI park, free from constraints, and with increased visibility from the public space.

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Acknowledgements - Everyone from HNI who spoke with us, notably: Josien Paulides, the Managing Director, and Mirjam ten Have, the Executive Board Secretary, for the regular feedback and involvement through this research. As well, Aric Chen, the General & Artistic Director, for talking with us; Bert, for giving us a tour of the building; and Elza van den Berg and Alfred Marks for showing us around the archives. Also to Flora van Gaalen (foyer and digital hub), Hanna Piksen (education and visitor) and Ben Shamier (production) for telling us about their side of the institute.

Everyone from the CRA, and especially Francesco Veenstra for the many meetings and conversations, As well Carolien Ligtenberg for her involvement and follow-up along the process.

In addition, we want to thank all the representatives and stakeholders who joined us for a workshop in our studio; Mirjam ten Have, Tijn van de Wijdeven, Flora van Gaalen, Viola Lisapaly, and Elga de Pina Fernandes from HNI Team; Joost Degenkamp from NAI bookseller; and Francesco Veenstra the Rijksbouwmeester (chef government architect).

This booklet is a product of the College van Rijksadviseurs 'Young Innovators' programme 2023. The 'Young Innovators' programme links young, talented architects, urban planners and landscape architects to major spatial tasks in order to generate innovative ideas and innovative input on the themes of the agenda of the College van Rijksadviseurs.

In this edition of 'Young Innovators', Studio ACTE was linked with Het Nieuwe Instituut to carry out this research.

