



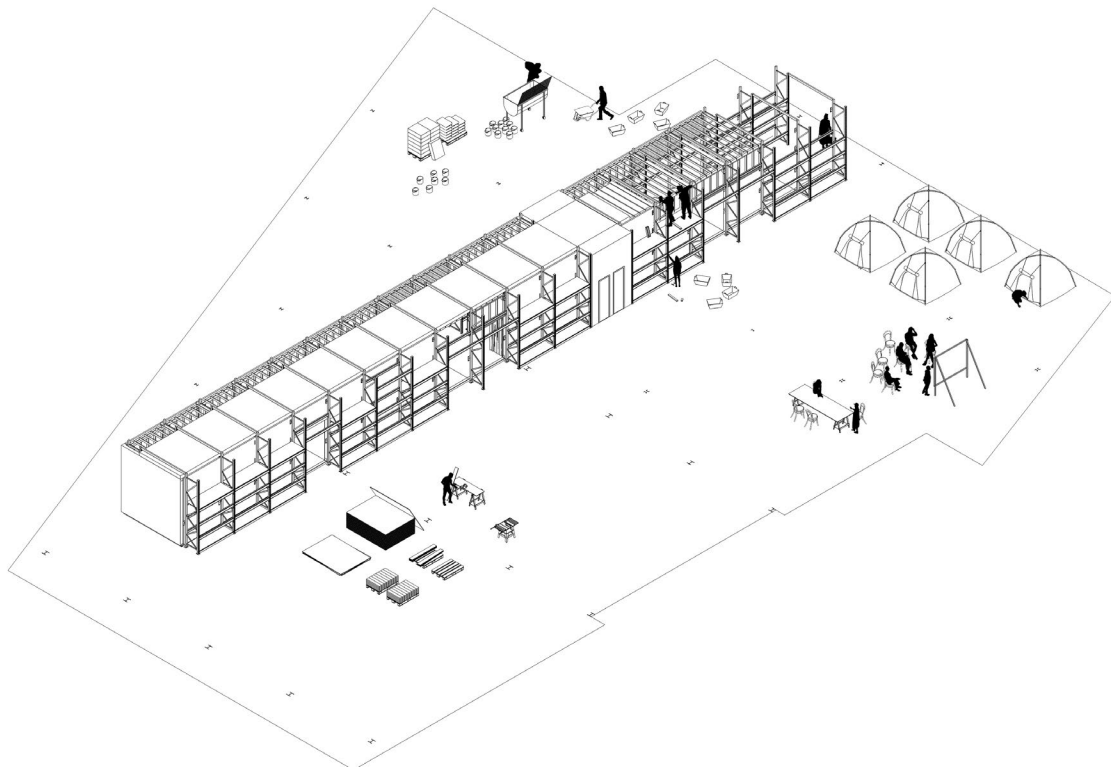
A 284

June-July 2020

Special Edition – Belgium: The Next Generation!



- 5 Editorial *Lisa De Visscher*
 7 Who's next? *Lisa De Visscher*
 14 **IDSRA - Laura Muyldermans**, Actiris, Brussels *Lisa De Visscher*
 20 **Traumnovelle**, A6K, Charleroi *Carla Frick-Cloupet*
 24 **Central**, iMAL, Brussels *Mathias Bouet*
 28 **TRANS**, Ryhove, Ghent *Jolien Naeyaert*
 35 Belgian architecture 2.0 *Lara Schrijver*
 40 **B-ILD**, Warot, Herent *Birgit Cleppe*
 46 **LRarchitectes**, Collège Notre-Dame de la Paix, Erpent *Apolline Vranken*
 50 **Goffart Polomé Architectes**, Crèche les Écureuils, Loverval *Pauline Malras*
 54 **FELT**, De Linde, Zarren *Bart Tritsmans*
 60 **Raamwerk**, Youth centre, Lichtervelde *Eline Dehullu*
 65 We need to take off - and land! *Pieter T'Jonck*
 72 **BC architects**, Studio of Pascale Marthine Tayou, Ghent *Gitte Van den Bergh*
 76 **Ouest**, Theatre Le Rideau, Brussels *Cécile Vandernoot*
 80 **Murmuur - Carton123 - ac-architecten**, Standaert site, Ghent *Jolien Naeyaert*
 84 **vvv - Bloc Paysage**, Pocket Parks, Laeken *Bart Tritsmans*
 89 When attitudes become form *Véronique Patteeuw*
 96 **Aslı Çiçek**, *Fernand Léger: Beauty is Everywhere*, Bozar *Eline Dehullu*
 100 **Gijs Van Vaerenbergh**, 'Labyrint', Genk *Bart Decroos*
 104 **Bernard Dubois**, PNY, Paris *Léone Drapeaud*
 109 Is representation the new building? *Victoire Chancel*
 114 **Nord**, La Carrosserie, Brussels *Maarten Delbeke*
 120 **VERS.A**, Mexico, Molenbeek *Élodie Degavre*
 126 **AHA Aurélie Hachez**, Jubel, Halle *Eloïse Perrillon*



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Birgit Cleppe

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Bart Decroos

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Léone Drapeaud

graduated as an architect from La Cambre-Horta (ULB). A member of the research collective Traumnovelle and a curator of the Belgian pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2018, she studies the interactions between gender and space.

Carla Frick-Cloupet

is an architect and doctoral student at the Université Jean Monet and the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Saint-Etienne.

Pauline Malras

is a freelance journalist who specializes in architecture, design and construction techniques. In 2013 she graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Lille.

Jolien Naeyaert

is an architectural engineer and visual artist based in Brussels. She graduated from Ghent University in 2012 and subsequently studied autonomous design at the kask School of Arts Ghent. Since 2015 she has been working at Robbrecht en Daem architecten.

Véronique Patteeuw

is associate professor at the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et du Paysage Lille and editor of *Oase*. Her research focuses on the theory and history of architectural publications in relation to the history of the postmodern. She has been a visiting professor at KULeuven since 2019, where she teaches 'Theory and Discourse'.

Eloïse Perrillon

is an architect. She graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture et de Paysage de Saint-Etienne and La Cambre-Horta (ULB) in 2018 with a master's thesis on the persistence of the individual house myth. She works at Karbon' architecture et urbanism.

Lara Schrijver

is professor of Architectural Theory at the Faculty of Design Sciences at the University of Antwerp. Previously she taught at TU Delft and the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture. Her work has been published in, among others, *The Journal of Architecture* and *Harvard Design Magazine*.

Bart Tritsmans

is head of exhibitions at the Flanders Architecture Institute. He studied history and journalism at the universities of Antwerp and Leuven. He taught at the University of Antwerp from 2008 to 2015 and obtained a PhD in history (University of Antwerp) and engineering (Free University of Brussels) in 2014 with a study on the historical evolution of urban green spaces.

Pieter T'Jonck

is an architect. He writes on architecture, the visual arts and the performing arts for several Belgian and foreign newspapers and magazines. He works for the Klara radio station and was editor-in-chief of A+.

Gitte Van den Bergh

obtained a master's degree in Dutch-language cinematographic, theatrical and literary arts in 2011. In 2015 she obtained a master's degree in architecture and cinema as an architect at the University of Antwerp. She has worked at RE-ST since 2016.

Cécile Vandernoot

is an architect, visual artist and journalist specializing in the field of architecture. She is interested in the space of the city and the landscape as the space of the page. Since 2011 she has taught at the Faculty of Architecture LOCI of UCL on the sites of Brussels and Tournai.

Apolline Vranken

is an architect who graduated from La Cambre-Horta (ULB). In 2018 she managed the 'Home For Less' project (modular and temporary housing for the homeless). As the author of the book *Des béguinages à l'architecture féministe*, she advocates an equal city of men and women. She currently works at Urban Platform.

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Of style

Léone Drapeaud – Photos Romain Laprade

Mixing and matching architectural styles and references with great refinement, Bernard Dubois's work is nonetheless pervaded with subtle humour. Erudite yet averse to theorization, bold yet delicate, Dubois may well be one of Belgium's famed humble heroes.



→ The arcade divides the deep space, making it appear less narrow while reinforcing the primary central axis. The kitchen window in the back validates, in the manner of a *trompe l'oeil*, the prevalence of the frontal perspective.

← The enfilade of lacquered wood arches, which offer secluded dining areas, resonates with the shiny black finishes, black matt leather seating, powdery white furniture and deep red floor.

Hybrid-historicism

Dubois's work is always strikingly neat, elegant and engaging. PNY, a small burger joint in an up-and-coming neighbourhood of Paris, is no exception. Its enfilade of lacquered wood arches, which offer secluded dining areas, resonates with the shiny black finishes, black matt leather seating, powdery white furniture and deep red floor. Yet behind the flawless detailing which testifies to the tasteful architect's acute awareness of technicalities, Dubois barely conceals the provocative smile or wink which seems to inform almost every design decision.

Dubois investigates architectural style in the manner of Durand's *Leçons d'architecture* cornered by an intuitive critical paranoia. He cultivates contradictions by combining unrelated and at times even conflicting references from the repertoire of forms and techniques of twentieth-century architectural history. Dubois particularly enjoys alluding to postmodern architecture of the 1970s and 1980s, which in the case of PNY he has melded with textures and materials reminiscent of the 1930s as well as hints of the 1960s diner.

Minimal-postmodernism

In line with Lyotard, who defines postmodernism as 'incredulity towards meta-narratives', Dubois questions architecture's grand narratives and highlights their preconceptions and inconsistencies. For instance, the change of material on the edges of the arches and tables elegantly challenges the prevalence of the object over the surface, which according to Dubois is considered in bad taste.

The arcade divides the deep space, making it appear less narrow while reinforcing the primary central axis. The kitchen window – which is scaled down compared to the other arches to compensate for the smaller adjacent booth – validates, in the manner of a trompe l'oeil, the prevalence of the frontal perspective. In line with his belief that the depiction of a space makes up much of its narrative, Dubois pays great attention to how his projects are photographed. Perhaps highlighting an unplanned contradiction in PNY's spatial hierarchies, Dubois confessed surprise that his own personal favourite of Romain Laprade's reportage of PNY is an oblique view that creates a diagonal enfilade in the mirror rather than a central view.

Retro-futurism

While strongly referencing the cliché diner of the 1960s – the booths, the shiny surfaces and the sense of openness replicated by lateral mirrors above the seating – PNY also calls to mind more futuristic forms of the same era through its curved arcade, directional tubular lights and integrated sound system. PNY thus highlights a tension between an idealized past and the future it projected.

The kitchen, which closes the perspective like a spaceship command hub, is staged as a laboratory, with white tiling, bright lights and stainless-steel surfaces. It stands in stark contrast with the warm undertones of the restaurant, perhaps reflecting upon the role of technology and both its alienating and empowering effects, which continue to be questioned today.



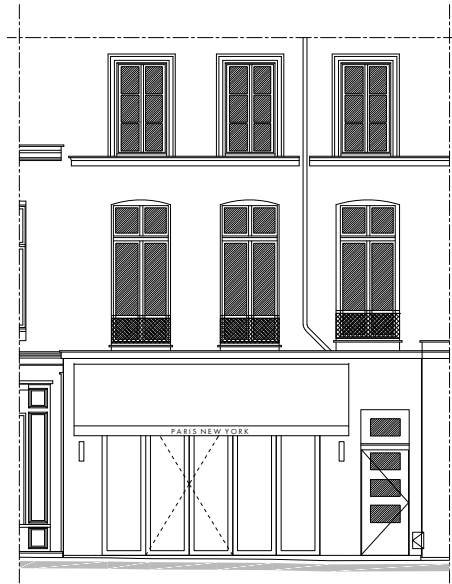
Decorative-functionalism

Dubois's intricate design details are never purely mannerist. Rather, they are opportunities to address specific technical or functional requirements. The silhouette of Hollein's Vienna Retti candle shop façade, crossed with Botta's circular arcade of the Novazzano Housing Project, offers seated guests an intimate atmosphere thanks to its lower narrowness while widening the perspective for standing viewers. The space is thus perceived differently by users depending on their needs.

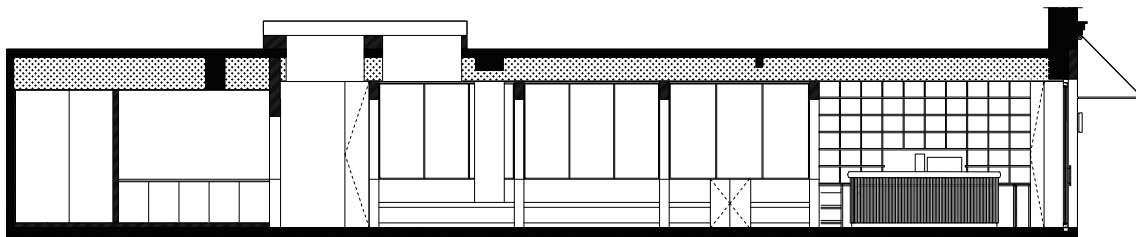
The 5 mm offset of the shiny black metal jamb of the arcade shields the lacquered multiplex in case of bumps. Similarly, the black rubber on the table edges protects the white melamine surface. Dubois never dwells on the technical difficulties of his projects. He considers that solving them is a self-evident aspect of his work unworthy of mention.

New-eclecticism

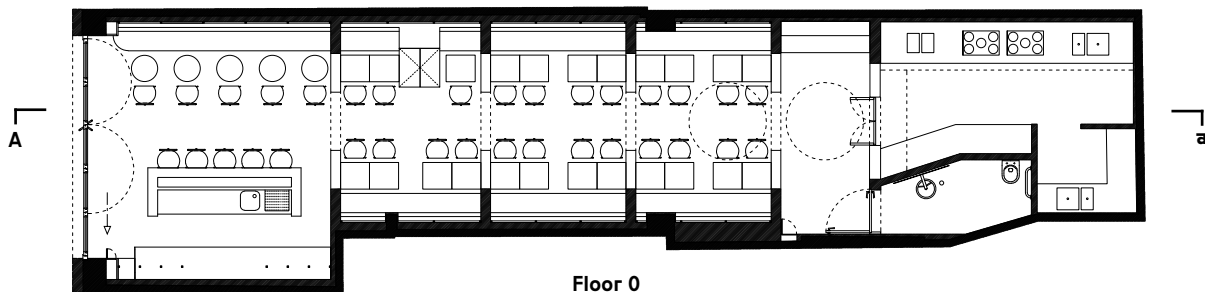
Through these multiple hybridizations of styles and movements, Dubois disconnects form and meaning. He subverts its political content by considering architecture as pure form and obviously relishes in playing with the contradictions and ambiguities of the vast catalogue of architectural history. Dubois's work can be read as a call for a new eclecticism which indiscriminately seizes architectural elements and invents iconoclast relationships between history, space and aesthetics.▲■●



Elevation



Section Aa



Floor 0



Architect
**Bernard Dubois
Architects**
Website
bernarddubois.com

Official project name
**PNY Faubourg
Saint-Antoine**
Location
Paris, France
Programme
Restaurant

Procedure
Direct commission
Client
Paris New York
Lead contractor
T.D.5

Completion
April 2019
Total floor area
100 m²
Budget
**€ 350,000
(excl. VAT and fees)**

I prefer to show only built projects. I generally don't show ongoing projects or unbuilt ones. The project's photographic presentation is very important because in many cases, people discover the project in photographs before they discover it physically. To me, photography is also a means of stepping back from the built project and of looking at it with an external and objective eye.

Bernard Dubois



2020

A+ Architecture in Belgium is published 4 times as a standard issue and 2 times as a special issue

4 standard issues

- handy format
- projects with photos, plan material and details
- in Dutch and French, with English summaries

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A+283 Care
April–May issue, out 20/4

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August–September issue, out 21/9

A+286 Structure & Reuse
October–November issue, out 16/11

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A+284 Belgium: The Next Generation!
June–July issue, out 15/6

A+287 Changing Practices
December–January issue, out 14/12
In collaboration with
Architecture Workroom Brussels

285

Museums

A+285 is an issue about new buildings for (contemporary) art which will focus not only on architecture, but also on the tension between building, artwork and visitor. Featuring Z33 in Hasselt (Francesca Torzo), the Folklore Museum in Mouscron (V+), an examination of the Open Call competition for the Design Museum in Ghent, and a state of affairs of Kanal-Centre Pompidou in Brussels (noA – Sergison Bates). And with an interview with the Swiss architecture office Gijon Guyer.



© Olmo Peeters

↑
Francesca Torzo,
Z33, Hasselt, 2020

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This special issue of A+ shows up-and-coming talent, 22 offices at the cutting edge that are designing both our spatial and societal context today. Offices that are at a pivotal point in their development, a relaunch moment that demands professionalization, growth and capacity building, but without any loss of identity or quality. Featuring projects by: ae-architecten, Aslı Çiçek, AHA Aurélie Hachez, B-ILD, BC architects, Carton123, Central, Bernard Dubois, FELT, Gijs Van Vaerenbergh, Goffart-Polomé, LDSRA, LRA, Murmuur, Laura Muyldermans, Nord, Ouest, Raamwerk, TRANS, Traumnovelle, VERS.A and vvv.

