

Critica de arhitectura

## Arhitectura contemporana

Hans Ibelings:

"Unmodern Architecture in Netherlands"

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Almost unnoticed among the controversial projects and ideas from firms such as Rem Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture, MVRDV and UN Studio, a completely new style of architecture has evolved in the Netherlands in recent years: a contemporary traditionalism that can best be described as 'unmodern'.

Unmodern architecture in the Netherlands has been shaped by the work of a relatively small group of architects who work together in ever-changing partnerships: Soeters Van Eldonk Ponc, Gunnar Daan/Doeke van Wieren, Molenaar & Van Winden, Scala, Mulleners & Mulleners, Rapp+Rapp and foreign architects such as Charles Vandenhove, Krier & Kohl, Kollhoff und Timmermann and Adolfo Natalini.

Characteristic of most of the Dutch architects in this group is that they regard adherence to a particular style as a constraint rather than a positive quality. Almost every contemporary traditionalist draws on a wide range of styles, ranging in time and appearance from Neoclassicism to the Amsterdam School, from traditional to entirely contemporary. This eclecticism is the outcome of what Sjoerd Soeters refers to, by analogy with NATO's Cold War strategy, as a 'flexible response'. By comparison, the work of exponents of unmodern architecture from outside the Netherlands has a stronger personal signature. It is these foreign architects who, through working on commissions in the Netherlands from the beginning of the 1990s, have paved the way for contemporary traditionalism in this country. Moreover, they have convinced several of their Dutch contemporaries that there is an alternative to the modernism that is and has been so prominent in all its forms in Dutch architecture, even when postmodernism was causing a stir elsewhere in the world.

Contemporary traditionalism has its roots in that postmodernism or, to be more precise, in the European postmodernism that evolved from the end of the 1960s, notably in Italy, France, Germany, Luxemburg and Belgium. In the 1970s and 80s, Brussels was a focal point for the renewed appreciation of the traditional city, one of the central themes of European postmodernism. This manifested itself in the drive to reconstruct the (European) city and in a desire to return to the coherence and order of the traditional city.

In 1980 this was the subject of the Brussels Declaration published by the AAM (Archives d'Architecture Moderne), one of the two organisations in Brussels: in