

Utrecht

## Arhitectura contemporana

Wiel Arets – biblioteca universitara

Uithof



The Uithof university campus in the south-east of Utrecht is famous far beyond the borders of the country for its modern architecture. Based on a master plan by Rem Koolhaas, the density of the development was increased. All that was missing was a central focal point. Since last summer, the architectural nucleus has been formed by a darkly shimmering, powerful, cubic structure: the library by Wiel Arets. Despite the physical dominance of the building, it was possible to avoid any impression of an isolated monolith. This was achieved by linking the library via bridges with the neighbouring structures and by incorporating it in a design ensemble that includes the new parking block. A lecture hall, shops and an espresso bar help to integrate the library into the campus; but above all, the up to 33-metre-high reading room – a space communicating many different impressions which is open till late in the evening – makes the building a popular central meeting place. A stylized image of willow branches lends the external relief-like concrete surfaces a haptic quality; and the same image in the form of screen-printing creates a sense of depth in the glazing. Koolhaas's model of a kasbah has been transposed by Wiel Arets from an urban planning context to the spatial layout of the building. The huge storage area that was required is distributed over a number of cubic tracts that seem to float like clouds between the reading platforms within the volume. The black coloration of the interior is an aid to concentration. The open space and large areas of glazing help to ensure a pleasant, communicative atmosphere.

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