



BRICK **THE BOOK**

**16 DESIGNERS,
ARCHITECTS
+ ARTISTS**

**SHOW THE LATEST IN BRICK
DESIGN FOR THE FACADE OF
THE FUTURE**

**PUBLICATION OF .EKWC'S
BRICK PROJECT
2005-2007**



CHRISTINE JETTEN/ SUSAN TUNICK

"A brick wall is about: closeness, mass and sound. 'Our walls' are also about the opposite: openness, light and the dispersion of sound. And, they have to be a feast for the eyes, tease the eye and draw people's attention. After all, even though we use buildings every day, we hardly look at them," tell Susan Tunick (1946) and Christine Jetten (1955). Based on these themes they developed different concepts for the Brick project with working titles: 'Sunscreen Brick', 'Rod Brick' and 'Lace Brick'. Titles which also give away the desired possibilities of application: bricks as a sunscreen, sound dispersing walls, and 'weaves of brick'

like a transparent piece of lace. Applications which influence the surroundings and the experience of the space, like those that are also recognisable in the autonomous works and installations of both: "The results are the outcome of a joint design process. In hind sight it is no longer possible to point out whom the ideas and thoughts belong to. They are the result of a continuous interplay."

Jetten and Tunick combine a sea of experience in the area of ceramics and architecture. Tunick completed an MA at the Academy of Art in Bennington Vermont (US) and is head of the American

organisation 'Friends of Terra Cotta'. This non-profit organisation focuses on the conservation and research of architectural terracotta and other ceramic building materials with the aim to inform the public and the construction industry on the value and history of these building materials. Jetten graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and took a specialisation course in technical ceramics at the Technical University Eindhoven and is active as a visual artist and ceramist as well as advisor in the area of ceramics and architecture.

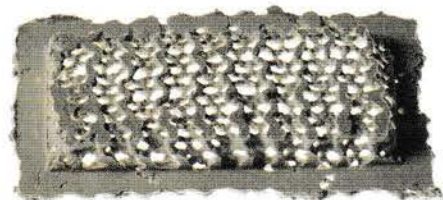
They met each other in 1999 when Tunick visited the

Netherlands to give a lecture during the Ceramic Millennium in the RAI. In that period Jetten was involved in the restoration of ceramic building parts of the indoor garden of 'De Porceleyne Fles' in Delft. They came together to discuss these activities and exchange knowledge in connection to the preservation of a series of tile scenes from 1914 of 'De Porceleyne Fles' at the Seaview Hospital, a former tuberculosis hospital on Staten island in New York City. It was the beginning of a friendship and various joint work and study projects on the cutting edge of ceramics and architecture.

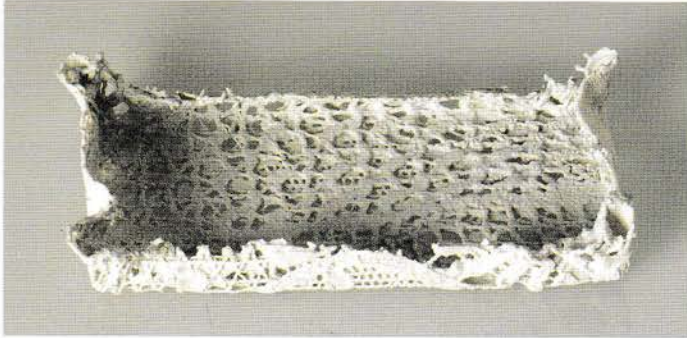
www.christinejetten.nl
www.preserve.org/fotc



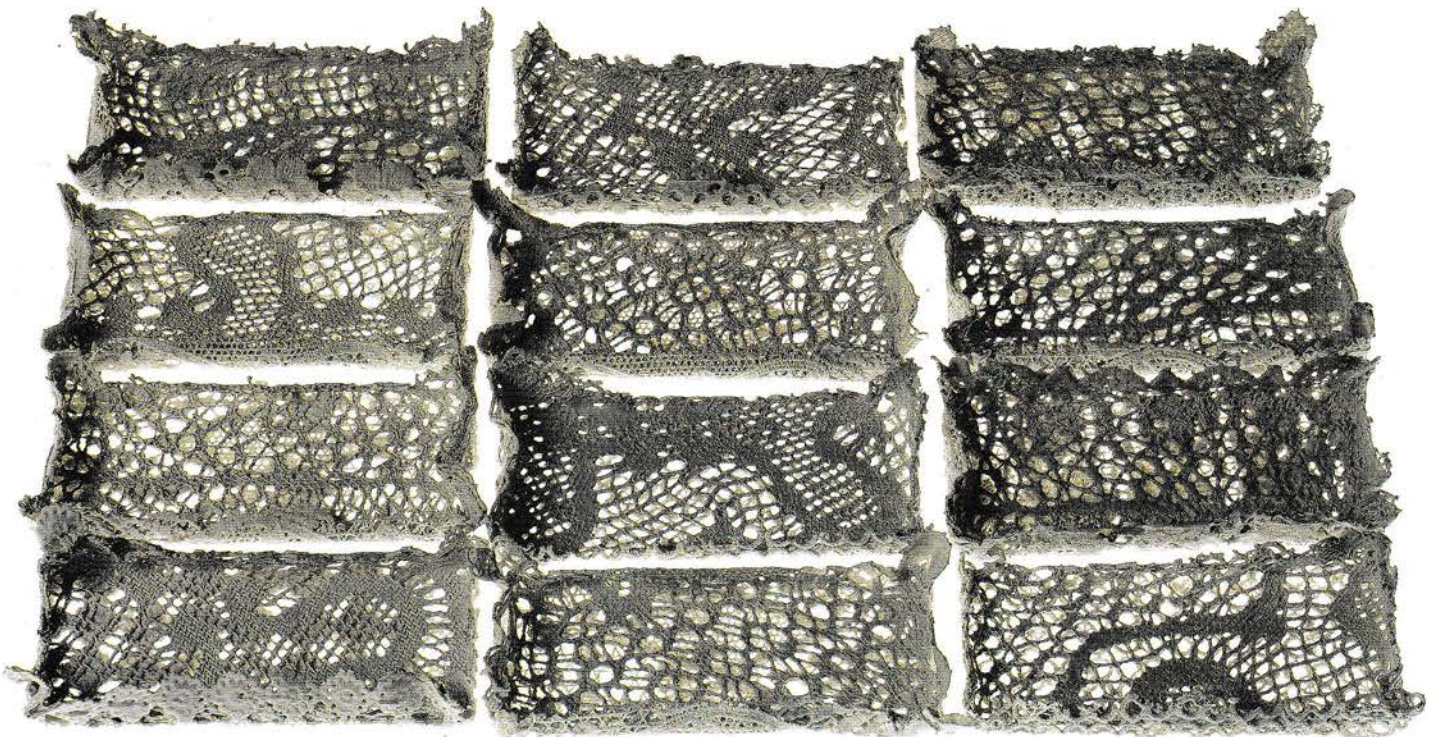
'Knitted Brick'
23 x 12 cm



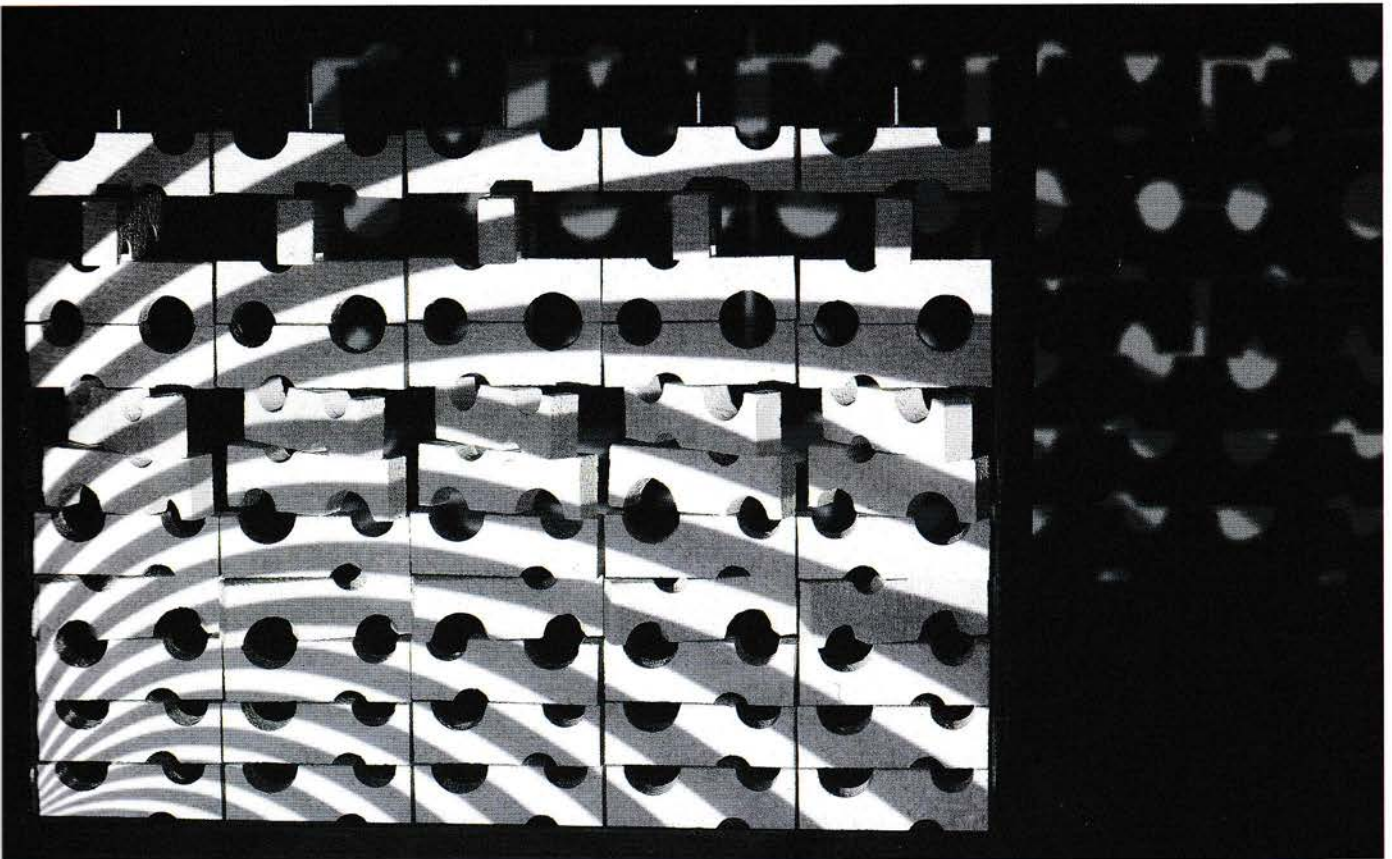
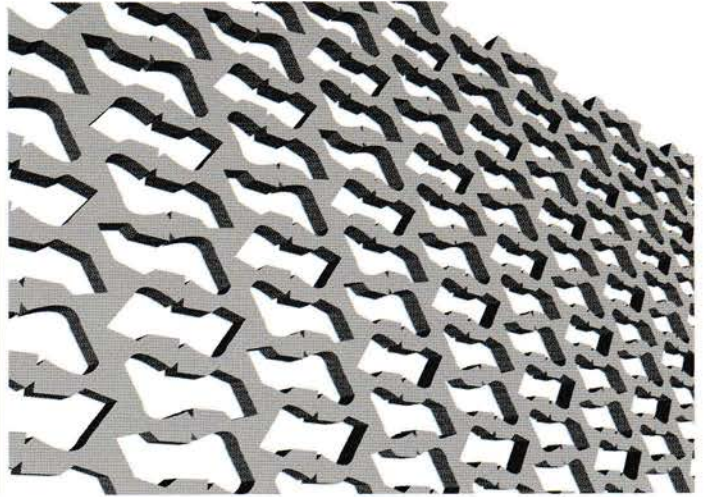
**CHRISTINE
JETTEN/
SUSAN
TUNICK**



'Lace Brick'
19 x 9 cm



'Sunscreen Brick'
 21 x 5 x 3,5 cm (scale model)
 Application of 'Sunscreen Brick'
 (computer rendering by Stijn Diepstraten)



'Acoustic Brick'
 14 x 4,5 x 3 cm (scale model)
 Screen projection 'SKIN' by Daniel Saakes
 ID-Studiolab, TU Delft

CERAMICS AND ARCHITECTURE: A VISION

KOOS DE JONG

Considering the broad experience the European Ceramic Work Centre (ekwc.) has at its disposal when it comes to experimenting with ceramics, there are valid reasons for the centre to also revive the experiment in the relationship between ceramics and architecture. With much enthusiasm we initiated the project Ceramics and Architecture in 2005 and are already amazed by the quantity and quality of the new ideas it has delivered. Though before I elaborate on this, I would firstly like to explain what the .ekwc stands for.

THE .EKWC

The .ekwc is a workshop and aims to advance the development of ceramics. It functions as an artist-in-residence and as a centre of excellence.

The first function entails that the centre on a yearly basis offers circa 50 artists, designers and currently also architects from around the world the opportunity to experiment with ceramics. Hereto it does not only supply studios, workshops, excellent equipment and living accommodation, but also an extensive staff of specialized co-workers. They enable the participants, who mostly have no experience with ceramics, to realize their ideas in a relatively short residency of three months. In as far as they already have experience with ceramics; this can be broadened or deepened. Half of the participants are selected through a worldwide open enrolment, four places are dedicated to recent graduates, while the other participants are directly invited by the director or participate in a project.

The centre of excellence function entails that as well as participants and co-workers do research in artistic and technical areas. In addition research is done into new ways of presenting ceramics. The

knowledge and experience gained are documented and distributed through, mostly English, publications. This spin off in the form of knowledge of existing and new possibilities in the application of ceramics is particularly profitable to education, the ceramics industry, museums and galleries.

The artist-in-residence is partly financed by the State and partly by sponsoring and foundations. The latter also applies to a variety of activities like exhibits, publications, congresses and lectures, that aim to show the world what the centre delivers.

“THE CENTRE OFFERS ON A YEARLY BASIS CIRCA 50 ARTISTS, DESIGNERS AND CURRENTLY ALSO ARCHITECTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH CERAMICS.”

EXPANDING THE WORK TERRITORY

To realize its aim – advancing the development of ceramics- the centre makes use of any opportunity to broaden and deepen the application of ceramics, as a medium. A short retrospective on the history underlines that. Straight from the start in 1991 the centre was open to not only ceramists, but also to artists. Consequently in the late nineties the input by designers was advanced. Especially the yearly presentations of the results during the prestigious Salone Internazionale del Mobile in Milan showed designers, firstly nationally and then also internationally, the way to the centre. This has been a fruitful policy,

since by now one third of the participants consist of designers. In 2005 the next step was taken by drawing in architects.

As indicated previously there are a number of very valid reasons for the .ekwc to revive the relationship between ceramics and architecture. I name the most important.

SETTLING WITH THE TRADITIONAL IMAGE

The image of ceramics is still traditional. Most people think at first instance of tableware, vases and souvenirs. Now an increasing number of artists and mainly also designers are occupied with ceramics, this has started to change. We have become accustomed to ceramic sculptures and that designers do completely different things with clay than the crafts ceramists has by now, through lifestyle magazines, become obvious to a broader public. The more curious it is that almost no-one realizes that ceramics play an important role in architecture. The application of ceramic products in interiors, like sanitation or tiling, is so taken for granted that the association with the material is almost not even made. The same applies to construction materials like brick, roof tiles and paving-stones. But, it has to be said; it should become a little more exciting after a thousand years of building. It is about time to consider the application of new ceramic materials and techniques.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

After all, especially in the area of technical ceramics recent technological developments have led to all kinds of new applications. This is mainly used for its hardness in precision instruments and medical applications. The great heat resistance of technical ceramics also makes it very suitable as parts of internal combustion

engines and heat shields for rockets. There too is great progress in the area of ceramic composite materials whereby the various characteristics of different materials are combined with those of ceramics. It is very peculiar how little of this progress is to be found in building construction. There are undoubtedly very good reasons for this, just think of the considerably higher costs, but still.

AUTOMATION, MEDIA AND MARKETING

Also several other technological, social and cultural developments justify a new rapprochement between architecture and ceramics. Of great influence is for example automation. This influence concerns all aspects of building construction, to begin with the design process (CAD), consequently the production (CAM) and the application of construction materials and eventually the sales. Think, where the latter is concerned, mainly of virtual presentation techniques. Another development is the influence of the media. This applies mainly to the marketing. Television and internet have opened a world to consumers that they did not know and that they had completely no access to. The experience teaches that, now this new world is within reach, no matter whether it is a far (holiday) destination or an idols' interior, people want to have some of that. This need to for example copy expresses itself in purchasing specific accessories, a new interior and, when more money is available, in building a villa 'in the style of'. The literally fairytale like residential areas of these nouveau riche are currently booming. The advertising campaigns of producers cleverly play into this. This manipulation on one hand makes the consumer dependant, but on the other, within the margins offered by the producers, also

more outspoken. After all, part of a producers' marketing can be to offer the consumer a wider variety of products. For example customizing the standard bathroom tile, that, to order, can be finished with a glaze where for example a family snapshot or a favourite view is worked into. This marketing strategy has of course consequences for the production process; instead of selling from stock more factories move to made to order. In this set up the basic product is fixed, but the customer is offered the choice from as wide a variety of styles and accessories (pimping) as possible. Obviously the car

"IT IS ABOUT TIME TO CONSIDER THE APPLICATION OF NEW CERAMIC MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES."

industry is leading in this; however the construction industry meanwhile is following in close proximity.

This conscious rapprochement to the customer is less speedy in architecture, but also this is changing. In a large scale housing project on the former Java island in Amsterdam candidates were offered the possibility of having their homes designed by an architect of their choice, in order to accommodate their special wishes.

MORE CONSIDERATION FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CONSUMER

The sensitivity of the architect as well as the consumer for the environment is

another development, which has a growing influence on architecture. A sensitivity that is translated into an aversion to environmentally unfriendly materials and techniques and an increasing need for natural products, or that which is seen as such. Here it's about materials like wood, natural stone and ceramics, on the condition that the related production process and maintenance are carried out in an environmentally friendly manner.

In the Netherlands, in that respect, a new generation of architects has come to the fore: in their thirties and forties lead by the Onix agency in Groningen, that clearly distinguishes itself from the much longer known phenomenon that is referred to as Superdutch. Architects like Paul de Ruiter and agencies such as Daad and Sofa, and of course Onix, stand out by a renewed interest in craftsmanship and traditional trade, the use of natural, often traditional, materials (unfinished wood, ceramics, thatch), durability, consideration for the landscape, coherence with the surroundings and the specifics of the location. The chosen materials and their way of application are meaningfully connected in the design with archetypical notions of 'house', 'shed', and 'place'. Add to this a greater consideration for the specific needs of occupants and users of buildings, for the individual approach instead of the universal way of construction which just has to fit everyone and everything and you arrive at an approach to architecture where the notions of human and environment are central.

FEMALE ARCHITECTS

In this kaleidoscopic melange of mutually enforcing influences there's also room for the rise of the female architect. Architects like the Iraqi Zaha Hadid and the Dutch architects Francine Houben from the

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architectural agency Mecanoo and Liebeth van der Pol from the agency Zeilstravan der Pol, have in common that they opt for a more expressive sculptural approach to their architecture and therefore not for an architecture where technique by definition has the upper hand. Add to this the fact that many female architects by nature seem more interested in an organic way of construction and organic structures, such as those generated in nature by the multiplying and clustering of cells. This architecture distinguishes itself by its round and flowing shapes from the classical art of construction, where the stacking of horizontal and vertical construction elements leads to an angular architecture.

Buildings that, in the most extreme case, alienate humans. In addition female architects have better social skills, which enable them to show more consideration for the context of their buildings and with the consumer. An impression, which is mainly based on what I have observed over the past years in plastic arts and design: women who are, more than men, interested in the social and physical aspects of the (own) body and their surroundings. Whether that is also emphatically the case in architecture designed by women is hard to prove. For that it is probably still too early, but I expect this development to become more clearly detectable.

CLAY AS ORGANIC CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

In relation to this it is relevant to remark that clay, as raw material for ceramics, should not be used to imitate classical ways of construction, which originate from the application of natural stone, but exactly because of their plastic properties. For it is those which make the material pre-eminently suitable for organic

construction and with that there seems to be a new future for ceramics. Since David Keuning further elaborates on this interesting aspect in his article, I will not discuss it further here.

DESIGN

The influence of design on architecture is, it is true, still hard to prove, but it is tangible. For the present this influence applies mostly to the interior of buildings. As an appealing Dutch example I name the design agency Concrete, which wanted to push beyond just the interior and therefore pulled in an architect. Another exam-

“THE STRONGEST ARGUMENT FOR THE PROJECT CERAMICS AND ARCHITECTURE: THE REMARKABLE RESULTS WHICH A MULTIDISCIPLINARY OR INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH DELIVERS.

ple is the architectural agency Merckx + Girod, where interior designer Evelyne Merckx and architect Patrice Girod successfully collaborate.

In the course of the past ten years the interest in design has clearly increased under the influence of lifestyle magazines and the media. What stands out is the continuously strengthening relation between fashion and design. A good example of how the design world copies the art of hyping from the fashion world is the presentation of the design label Moooi at the Salone Internazionale del Mobile in 2006: scarcely clad ‘Chippendales’ with ice caps on top and bottom served cham-

pagne to a gathering crowd. Successful designers by the way also behave more and more like kings of fashion: like real stars, who have to appear as such in their dress and way of life, but who mainly constantly have to hold the attention with something new. The effect hereof on the market and production is fashion sensibility, a lot of variation and a shorter shelf life for products.

The situation in the Netherlands is, if possible, even more interesting, because the influence of the plastic arts manifests itself through design. Without selling short the high quality and diversity of Dutch design in its full scope, it can be stated that especially the Droog Design collection has caught a lot of attention internationally for the past ten years. The designers involved stand out by an approach of design that greatly resembles the plastic arts: through the design the designer renders his vision on the society, within which he himself and his products function. That explains why the Droog Design products are very successful in the media, museums and galleries, but can hardly be found in shops. There, French and Italian signature design products, for example, still reign.

THE VISUAL ARTS

Even so, the influence of the visual arts on architecture should not be underestimated. Artists have, especially because they work autonomously, the ability to develop and shape a new vision on the human condition. This vision is of course too subject to change, but reaches much deeper and lasts longer than today’s fashion. In that sense the visual arts are still the mother of design and architecture.

And exactly there lies the strongest argument for the project Ceramics and Architecture: the remarkable results which a

multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approach delivers.

MULTI- AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

A multidisciplinary approach used to be the most normal thing in the world. In the 16th century an Italian sculptor like Bernini designed the front of the Saint Peter in Rome, whereas at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century closer to home, Dutch architects such as Cuypers and Berlage also explicitly concerned themselves with the interiors of their buildings. The other way around, Gerrit Rietveld, who started out as a furniture maker, developed into an architect. Due to the increased specialisation of vocational education, the organisation of trade and by the laws and regulations in general, in the course of the 20th century a division of disciplines occurred, which caused the demise of the 'creator universalis' type. And it did not stop there. Until the rise of the 'architect creator' in the 80ies of the last century – a term I adopted from architect Sjoerd Soeters - it was the habit among architects to render the design process completely dependent on the program of demands and regulations on one side and the technology available on the other. The own creative input was hereby reduced to a minimum and, in as far as it existed, denied as much as possible. The results of this barren, if not schizophrenic period were accordingly. It has been the merit of postmodernism that it alleviated, firstly the plastic arts and consequently also design and architecture from the burden of the 'form follows function' principle, adhered to since the Bauhaus. The Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and the Swiss architects Herzog and De Meuron have the lead in this development. Especially also, because they con-

tinually very consciously cross the boundaries between disciplines. That is why they often work together with designers and artists. Today a building does not only have to be functional, but it can also again be beautiful or exciting.

This multidisciplinary approach, which in some cases even leads to a form of cross fertilisation, has by the way been a daily occurrence for years at the .ekwc and it is no cause for surprise that the centre specifically seeks its rapprochement to architecture from this angle. Thus far, the most important reasons for the .ekwc to

“NOT ONLY IS THE BRICK A QUALITATIVELY OUTSTANDING APPLICATION, THE RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES IN COLOUR, SHAPE AND TEXTURE OFFERS THE ARCHITECT ABOVE ALL NEW INSPIRATION.”

revive the relationship between ceramics and architecture.

COMBINED RESIDENCIES

For this project, Dutch and foreign architects, artists and designers are invited to form a combination with a representative of another discipline; so: an architect chooses an artist and/or designer and vice versa. The condition is that each combination holds at least one architect. The combination hands in a proposal together for a residency at the .ekwc. From the project proposals handed in it is expected that they concern the application of ceramics in architecture and that

they aim at innovation in some way; it being in either artistic, or technical areas. Starting point for the chosen set up is that at least one of the members of the combination actually realises the project proposal during the work period, but in such a way that the partner is intensively involved from the start. Experience has reaffirmed the expectation that in most cases the artist or designer comes to work at the workshop and that the architect is confined to thinking along. On the other hand the architect is closely involved with the project from the start and afterwards is in the position to really work with the results achieved. The .ekwc offers from 2005 for three years consecutively five combinations the opportunity to realise their plan within the centre. The project runs until the end of 2008. The results of the project will, just like with the Brick project, be presented in the form of a publication and an exhibition.

To warm up interest the results will also be on show in the meantime. This is done through smaller exhibitions, like the one by the artist Couzijn van Leeuwen who designed exhibition Luchtkasteel? (Castle in the clouds?) that was on show in Hilversum from November 25th to December 31st, 2006.

BRICK

With the Brick project the .ekwc mostly wants to stimulate the technical and artistic development in the production and application of brick. Participants are architects, artist and designers with novel ideas concerning the production or application of brick as a construction material. They have been recruited from the circle of previous participants of the .ekwc, though also through the centres' worldwide network.

The brick has at all times been the most

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taken for granted construction material in the Netherlands. Not only is the brick a qualitatively outstanding application, the range of possibilities in colour, shape and texture offers the architect above all new inspiration. In 2005 and 2006 fifteen selected participants were offered the opportunity to realise their designs. The realisation, depending on the artists' needs, took place mostly at the .ekwc, though in some cases also at their own studio. Some of them made use of the

option, offered by the main sponsor of the .ekwc Wienerberger B.V., to already explore the possibilities of industrial production. Peter van Kester broadly discusses the exciting results of this project in his article.

The road the .ekwc has chosen to travel since 1991, runs from traditional ceramics, past the visual arts and design to architecture and hereby returns to familiar territory. I refer to a time, thousands of years

ago, when men did not only shape its first pots to contain food, drink and the ashes of the dead, but also built houses of clay stones or by covering wicker-work with clay. To that time we of course do not have to return, but it would be good to feel a little more at home again in the buildings where we live and work. So that work is in progress.

Koos de Jong is director of the European Ceramic Work Centre