



PRIX DE ROME

Assignment final round Prix de Rome 2018

This 2018 edition of the Prix de Rome focuses on two extremes in architecture. Whereas the open call of the first round addressed issues for a Low Pressure area, this final round focuses on High Pressure; an assignment in a popular urban area, a place where many want to live. We ask the four shortlisted architects to come up with a proposal for the Sixhaven area opposite Central Station in Amsterdam North.

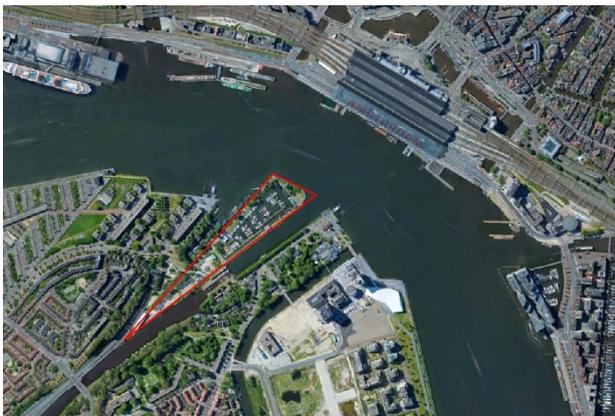
High Pressure

Throughout history, the water city of Amsterdam expanded during high-pressure periods. The city was known for its atmosphere of freedom. The expansions led to very specific urban typologies, like the canal structure in the 17th century, the 'Plan Zuid' (South Plan) by Berlage in 1915, and the 'Algemeen Uitbreidingsplan' (Plan for the expansion of Amsterdam) in 1935, made by Prix de Rome laureate Cornelis van Eesteren.

For a long time, the North of Amsterdam was dominated by the ship building industry along the IJ river, and characterized by low density blue collar working-class neighbourhoods, such as the garden cities of Vogelwijk and the Van der Pek neighbourhood. North has a completely different social structure from the rest of Amsterdam. For a long time, the recently transformed Shell Tower – originally designed by Prix de Rome laureate Arthur Staal and located next to the Sixhaven – has been the beacon of Amsterdam North.

Today, Amsterdam North, as well as the city of Amsterdam as a whole, is under high pressure. The new 'golden bend' along the IJ river is already very crowded. Public ferryboats that connect the riversides are overcrowded every day. 80.000 new inhabitants, mainly with high incomes, will enter Amsterdam North in the coming decade. The population of North doubles by the influx of these 'new strangers'. Social housing areas along the IJ river will probably soon be turned into unaffordable apartments. Now that the financial crisis is over, developers, architects and urban planners rush into producing master plans, housing blocks and commercial real estate.

The unasked question remains: what kind of city does Amsterdam want to be in the 21st century?



Sixhaven

At this moment, the triangular-shaped former lock island escapes large-scale urban developments. Along the new North-South metro line, Sixhaven will be the only metro station on the waterside, at the beginning of the Noordhollands Kanaal (North Holland Canal) and along the IJ river. In the midst of the high pressure along the IJ, the Sixhaven remains an oasis. Currently, the area is partly vacant and partly underused by a number of houseboats and sailing boats.

The Sixhaven is a remnant of Amsterdam from a different time period. Without becoming nostalgic, we ask the four shortlist candidates to come up with a carefully designed architectural proposal for the Sixhaven that gives a critical perspective on Amsterdam in the 21st century. This could, for example, be a small intervention that sets new developments in motion, an urban plan that sets an example for the coming decades, or anything in between these scales.

Doing nothing is not an option, because, undoubtedly, this site will be overrun by hungry city developers. We ask the candidates to come up with a meaningful and non-consumptive programme for this prominent place that could be significant for the city, a place that will be cherished by many.

In the spirit of the Prix de Rome competition, the jury would like to emphasize that the shortlist candidates are challenged to submit daring, experimental and unconventional proposals!

Every form of presentation is possible. Physical models are highly appreciated.

13 April 2018

Jury Prix de Rome 2018