Biographies

Veronique Boone
is a lecturer at the La Cambre Horta Faculty of Architecture at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). She teaches history, theory and criticism of architecture, as well as the conservation of twentieth-century architecture. Her research focuses on the modes of representation and reception of modern architecture, on which she publishes regularly.

Mark Brearley
is Professor of Urbanism at The Cass in London and leads the Cass Cities initiative. He advises in Brussels on development that welcomes diverse enterprise, and is Ateliermeester for the programme Atelier Brussels, The Productive Metropolis. Until 2013 he was Head of Design for London. He is proprietor of London tray manufacturer Kaymet.

Nathalie Cobbaud
has been working as a journalist since 1992. A lawyer by training, she has always been a generalist in information processing, with a particular attention to the popularization of the fields covered. This is also the case in terms of architecture, urban planning and wider issues of living together in the city.

Asli Çiçek
obtained her master’s degree from the architecture and design department of the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich in 2004. She settled in Belgium to work for Gigantes Zenghels Architects (2005–2007) and Robbrecht en Daem architecten (2007–2014). She founded her own practice in 2014, focusing on exhibition architecture. She currently runs the master graduation studio Narrative Space and Materiality at Campus Sint Lucas, Brussels.

Rocland Dudal
is founding partner of Architecture Workroom Brussels. He studied architecture at Ghent University. He teaches architectural design at the KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture Campus Ghent and Brussels.

Ludovic Lamant
is a French journalist specializing in EU affairs for the online media Mediapart. He lived in Brussels from 2012 to 2017 and published an essay on the architecture of the European Quarter (Bruxelles chantiers, Une critique architecturale de l’Europe, Lux, 2018).

Julie Mabilde
trained as a civil engineer-architect, is an adviser and project leader at Team Flemish Government Architect. She coordinates the research by design that is initiated by ’labo ruimte’ – a collaboration between the Flemish Government Architect and the Flemish Department for Spatial Planning. She also advises public authorities on architectural or urban projects within the framework of concrete developments.

Thibault Paggen
is an architect. He graduated from the Faculty of Architecture of ULB. He practices architecture as well as related fields such as photography and writing.

Véronique Patteeuw
is associate professor at the Ecole 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 is a visiting professor at the KULeuven since 2019, where she teaches ‘Theory and Discourse’.

Pieter T’Jonck
is an architect and writer for several Belgian and foreign newspapers, magazines and books on architecture, the visual arts and the performing arts. He works for Klara Radio and was editor-in-chief of A+.

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 ucl/ocf on the sites of Brussels and Tourmai.

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. Until 2018 she was a member of the editorial board of A+.

Laurent Vermeersch
studied history and works as a journalist for bruzz, the leading Dutch speaking regional media group in Brussels. He deals with a wide array of topics but his focus is on urbanism and mobility. He is also an occasional contributor to other media outlets, including The Guardian.
Editorial  Lisa De Visscher
Tour & Taxis  Lisa De Visscher
Gare Maritime (Neutelings Riedijk Architects – Jan De Moffarts Architecten)  Lisa De Visscher
Herman Teirlinck Building (Neutelings Riedijk Architects)  Aslı Çiçek
MAD Museum (v+ and Rotor)  Gitte Van den Bergh
Coop (Bogdan & Van Broeck)  Thibaut Paggen
Brussels, compact city  Julie Mabilde
Brussels, productive city  Mark Brearley
Materials Village (Tetra Architects)  Veronique Boone
Foodmet (ORG Permanent Modernity)  Pieter T’Jonck
From sustainable to circular Brussels  Pieter T’Jonck
Kicking the car habit  Laurent Vermeersch
Place Rogier (XDGA)  Véronique Patteeuw
Place Dumon (Artribune – H+H+S)  Eline Dehullu
Parc de la Senne (La Compagnie du Paysage)  Eline Dehullu
Building the city, bottom up and top-down  Nathalie Cobbaut
A glass Trojan Horse  Roeland Dudal
Canal Wharf (51N4E)  Cécile Vandernoot
The Cosmopolitan (Bogdan & Van Broeck)  Eline Dehullu
Brussels, European capital  Ludovic Lamant
Brussels, urban governance for a metropolis  Lisa De Visscher
Rue de la Loi (Christian de Portzamparc, b2ai, Assar Architects)  Laurent Vermeersch
Kanal – Centre Pompidou (NOA – EMN – Sergison Bates architects)  Pieter T’Jonck
Mediapark Reyers (François Leclercq, Robbrecht en Daem – Dierendonckblancke, v+ and MD Architecture, Baukunst – Bruther)  Pieter T’Jonck
Place Dumon

Eline Dehullu

The redesign by Artgineering and H+N+S of the area between the Place Dumon and the Stokkel metro station was completed in 2018. After a long process and much resistance, the square that previously served only as a car park was finally transformed into a meeting place for residents. A truly shared space, open to pedestrians, cyclists, trams, buses and cars.

By demarcating the inner zone of the square with a concrete bench around the perimeter, the architects create a place in which to linger, relax, meet people.

At the southern end, a green space with trees, benches and a fountain. At the northern end, a canopy with a pavilion that houses a chip shop and a café.
The reconstruction of Place Dumon did not go without a hitch. And that is an understatement. In 2013 the municipality of Woluwe-Saint-Pierre launched an architectural competition. The aim was to bring a new dynamic to the area and to make the square more appealing. Pascal Smet, the Brussels minister for mobility and public works, wholeheartedly supported the plans and made them even more ambitious. In order to improve the quality of city life, he wanted to divide the public space in a radically different manner: cars would no longer have absolute priority, and more space would be given to public transport, cyclists and pedestrians.

Place Dumon was built at the start of the twentieth century as a turning point for the tram. The genius loci of the square is its oval shape. The local residents used it like a typical English village green: a shared open space in a densely populated neighbourhood. In the design for the reconstruction drawn up in 2015, Artgeneering evoked these features, the raison d’être of the square. The urban-planning office decided to retain the typical oval shape and to emphasize it with a concrete bench around the perimeter. By demarcating the inner zone, they create a place in which to linger, relax, meet people. At the southern end of the square is a green space with trees, benches and a fountain. At the northern end, a canopy with a pavilion that houses the old Friture Charles chip shop, a new café and an ice-cream stand.
Architects Els Claessens and Tania Vandenbussche drew the architecture of the pavilion and the wooden canopy in collaboration with Util and covered it with white zinc. On the side of the square, the canopy resembles a pair of saddle roofs; on the street side, it looks like two interlinked butterfly roofs. The primary structure consists of ridge and gutter beams that form triangles. In-between are identically sized beams, although the distance between them varies depending on the span: the longer the span, the narrower the gap. The top and bottom of the canopy follow the same pure, simple logic. The canopy marks out a place on the square and lends it a homely feel.

The outer zone, on the other side of the uninterrupted oval bench, is dedicated to commerce and traffic. All traffic is condensed into a single lane, making manoeuvres and double parking impossible. Cars, buses and trams share the only available lane not only among themselves, but also with pedestrians and cyclists. There is no space for long-stay parking, there is no open tram verge, there is no separate bicycle path, there is no pavement with raised curbs and there are no pedestrian crossings. This is one space, stretching from façade to façade, and executed in one and the same material. It is also a 20 km/h zone, in which traffic is reduced to the same level. Here, all types of users are included. This is a shared public space, where everyone has to adapt their speed and behaviour to one another. The tram and the pedestrian determine the scale.
The plans for redevelopment of the square generated a great deal of controversy. The STIB/MIVB (Brussels Intercommunal Transport Company) was unhappy because there was no separate bedding for the tram. Cyclists grumbled because there was no ‘safe’ cycle path. Local residents and shopkeepers were downright furious. The square was an important intermodal hub for tram, metro and bus. However, many of the families in this rich municipality own, not one, but often two cars, which they tend to use for short trips. The retailers feared that the loss of parking spaces would cause their turnover from the local middle-class residents to plummet. In 2016 they launched a petition that collected 5,000 signatures and they lodged an appeal with the Council of State: they asked for the design for the reconstruction of the square to be destroyed. The ‘residents of the square’ were opposed to the ‘square for the residents’.

After an independent study (conducted by Atrium) showed that only 24 per cent of visitors arrived by car, and following much consultation, the municipality and the merchants reached a compromise. During a transitional phase – which will last until the underground car park at the nearby Stockel Square shopping centre gains an additional 200 parking spaces – the municipality will also allow short-term parking within the oval of the square. The municipality does not mark out parking spaces or use barriers and is gradually increasing the number of concerts and festivals held in the space. You could call it a sweetener, but it’s one that allows the inhabitants to swallow a bitter pill. In the meantime, they have noticed what such a collective, sheltered place for meeting and relaxation gives back to the neighbourhood. Seeing comes before believing.

‘This is Brussels. We’ve accepted the dominance of the car in the public space for far too long’, says Stefan Bendiks of Artengineering. He can draw comparisons with other European capitals as he works in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. In the latter country, he is a member of the Dutch Cycling Embassy. He continues: ‘This is not a preliminary master plan or mobility scheme with multimodal traffic, as seen in the Netherlands and other European countries. In Brussels – and by extension in Belgium – things are the other way around. Small projects are meant to bring about a greater revolution.’ The transformation of a small car park into a collective public space needs to lead to a broader outlook in terms of mobility in this city and the wider country. In this sense, Place Dumon is a pioneering project.