

# N O O K

2 — 2021

Nook is a publication by the BNA and the  
AIA on interior architecture.



PAGE 14

Maison 226, Melle  
Photo - Barbara De Prest

Emptiness, simplicity and day light prevail in interior architect Barbara De Prest's design for the Maison 226 office building in Melle. One particularly striking stand-out feature is the imposing library bookcase which separates the reception area from the work area. Potted plants and trees, a ventilation system and an ionisation system combine to ensure a healthy indoor climate.

AIR

# Building castles in the air



Text

Racheda Kooijman-Ruissenaars

Images

Richard Powers

In 2022, Rotterdam will be getting a new masterpiece. The Zalmhaven project, located in the middle of the historical Scheepskwarter, will be completed and will feature the highest residential towers in the Benelux. In addition, the project is something of a masterpiece in itself, thanks to the list of resounding names that are working on it. Studio Piet Boon is one of those names and is getting itself ready for a challenging, large-scale and prestigious project.





The Zalmhaven project, with a 215 metre high skyscraper as its most striking element, is open for registration. A choice can be made for a villa, an apartment or a penthouse. The design is being undertaken by Dam & Partners and KAAAN Architects, except for the lay-out of the penthouses. These will be delivered as a shell. "That's where we enter the picture and we really want to work on such a unique project", explains Kim Peeters of Studio Piet Boon. "Many purchasers, certainly the future occupants of a penthouse in such a unique location, like to see a completely finalised and approved design whereby they are relieved of all care."

After opting for a shell penthouse, the next step for purchasers of Zalmhaven is an intake meeting with Studio Piet Boon. "We discuss with the client all of their wishes. A tour through our three showrooms helps us draw a pretty good picture of the client's taste. In addition, each shell apartment is unique thanks to its position and the view it offers. We link the identity and power of apartments and tower with the wishes of the client in a unique and personally coordinated concept."

### Designing together

The role of Studio Piet Boon is rather large in this possible process. The studio is multidisciplinary, and

I BELIEVE IN LEAVING  
THE LINES OF SIGHT AS  
OPEN AS POSSIBLE TO  
EMPHASISE THE VIEW  
AND THE CHANGING  
LIGHT

so the initial discussions that are held between the designer and the penthouse purchaser go further than the lay-out within the shell. Peeters: "We have a very varied and international team of architects, interior designers, product designers, material and colour specialists and art experts. Since we continuously work together, we always arrive at a completely coordinated and correct design, right down to the final detail. Clients who find their way to us know that they will end up with a highly functional and balanced aesthetic design. From unusual floor plans, kitchens and customised cabinet design to matching door handles and art: in the world of Studio Piet Boon nothing is left to chance."



Experiences shows that clients initially give the team carte blanche, but as the work progresses it turns into more of a collaboration. "We involve the client completely in the design process. The starting point for the design is clear from the start and the client can also see during the various stages how this relates to the subsequent design stages. It is important to lead the client through an understandable and clear story and make it tangible. In this way, the feeling grows for the design for their own home."



## Thinking in solutions

The design of a penthouse demands a different view on fitting out than a traditional design. In Zalmhaven, all the penthouses are provided with one or more outside areas and some apartments have two floors. All of them feature floor-to-ceiling windows which mean that the ever-changing light and the view play a big role in the design. Peeters: "All those extra frames make designing a penthouse challenging. It is a quest towards the optimal design. The more details I have to take into account, the more interesting things become. And this project also helps enormously here, for the building is incredibly powerful in itself."

The art is to continue the strong points of the exterior into the interior. The strongest points of Zalmhaven? They are the location and the view. It is in the Scheepskwartier, an historic area of Rotterdam where there are many warehouses that survived the bombing. The four directions provide views on the Kop van Noord, the Erasmus Bridge, the city centre and the Euromast. In short, all the characteristic areas of Rotterdam come together in Zalmhaven. Peeters already has ideas about this: "In order to emphasise the view and the changing light, I believe in leaving the lines of sight as open as possible. This means we must literally not think in compartments, but link the view to the desired functions and then lay these out in such a creative way that you can still create and shut off any desired separate spaces."

## The sun rules

With the enormous windows in Zalmhaven, you cannot, as designer, escape the sun. The light and the additional heat force you to do so. Here again, Peeters sees possibilities: "We link each space to the routing of the sun in combination with the use of the occupant. Think for example of getting up with the morning sun and returning home in the evening and being able to





enjoy sunset from the living room and/or roof garden. Most clients do not think about this, but it is genuinely an essential part of the design process.” Nor should shading from the sun be underestimated in the design of a penthouse. It not only keeps out the heat but also prevents discolouring of furniture and works of art. “These are the typical points where we, as multidisciplinary studio, prove our added value. Since various expertises come together early in the process, we can take into account each other’s interests.” What that design is in the case of Zalmhaven is something to which Peeters cannot given an unambiguous answer. “Our multidisciplinary teams search for the perfect balance between functionality, aesthetics and individuality in order to arrive at an authentic and timeless design for each client. We combine the characteristics of location, architecture, use and our identity, whereby living comfort always takes pride of place. This is the strength of our studio.”

( WE LINK EACH SPACE  
TO THE ROUTING OF THE  
SUN IN COMBINATION  
WITH THE USE OF THE  
OCCUPANT )

**As long as the basis is good**

Not just the penthouses, but the entire Zalmhaven project, has an unprecedented allure. In addition to the luxury homes, Zalmhaven also offers a garage, offices, a gym, a roof garden, a restaurant and a large reception lobby with an indoor garden. And that’s not the end of it. Zalmhaven will have a team of service employees available to all occupants. This includes, say, accepting parcels, washing the car, arranging a gift or reserving a table at a restaurant. Zalmhaven is high-class living following the New York example. Is that why they have chosen Studio Piet Boon, because of its design experience abroad? “We are fully aware of how to give a design international allure. We have undertaken many projects abroad, from America to Japan. In addition, we are also genuinely international as studio. Our team consists of sixty-five people from a wide diversity of nationalities and we combine all that knowledge of world customs and varied weather conditions in our work.”

That the people at Studio Piet Boon know how things work in the world is also apparent in their network. When handling foreign projects, they always look for

local expertise with which to collaborate. In this way, a project not only takes into account local customs and traditions but also looks at how regional materials can be used and partnerships are sought with local artists. The allure of Studio Piet Boon is so timeless and balanced that it lends itself well to foreign countries. Wherever they may be. “We have a clear signature, but not a clear style because we always couple our identity to the type of assignment. This combination provides a good basis that allows us to work on fine and various projects throughout the world.”

— STUDIO PIET BOON

Studio Piet Boon is an exterior, interior and product design studio working worldwide and recognised for creating the perfect balance between functionality, aesthetics and individuality. The multidisciplinary team designs prize-winning houses, corporate projects, hospitality environments and an extensive range of products. Studio Piet Boon was founded in 1983 by Piet Boon and Karin Meyn in Oostzaan. [pietboon.com](http://pietboon.com)

