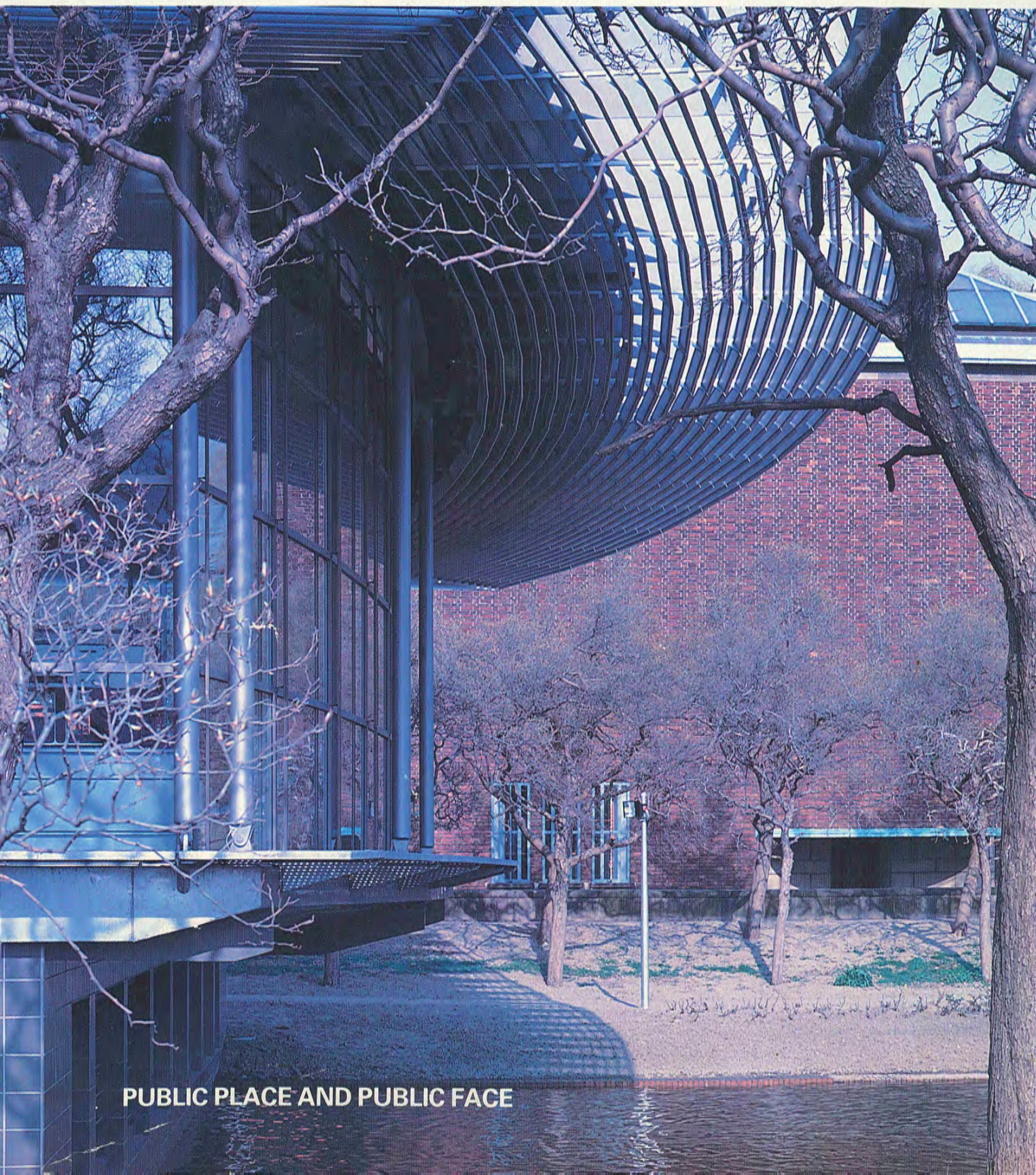


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# THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW



PUBLIC PLACE AND PUBLIC FACE

**Museum extension,  
Rotterdam**  
Architect  
**Hubert-Jan Henket**  
Criticism  
**Peter Buchanan**  
Photography  
**Van der Vlugt & Claus**

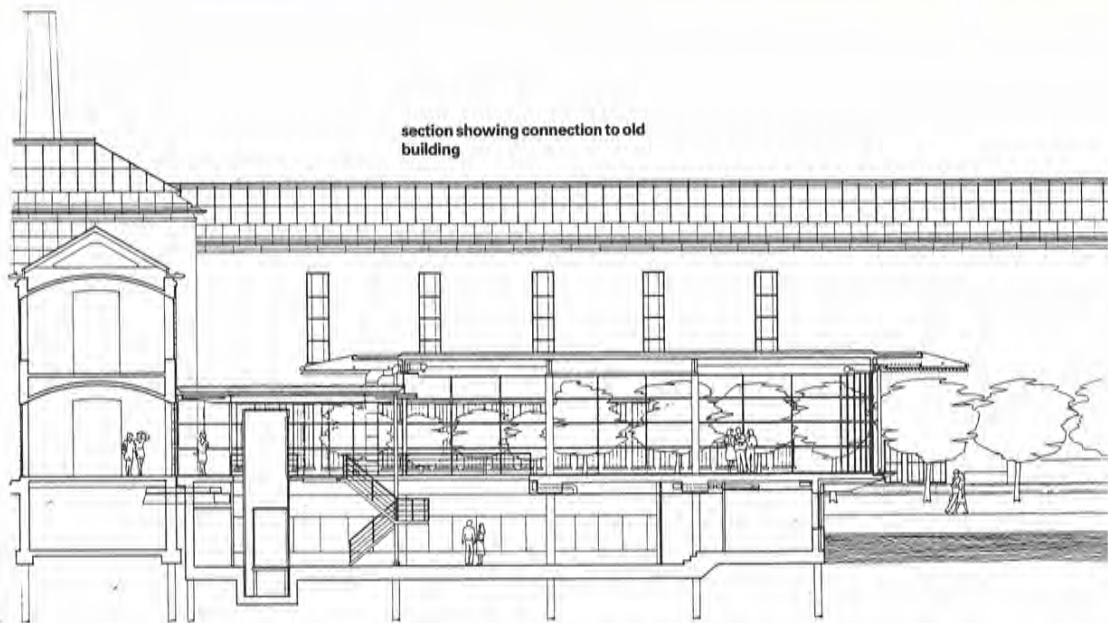
# PRODUCT PAVILION

Looking like some industrial product itself, this High-Tech pavilion displaying industrial products and household utensils both suits its function and a setting that is quite different in character to it.

1  
An almost inevitable response to its setting.

1



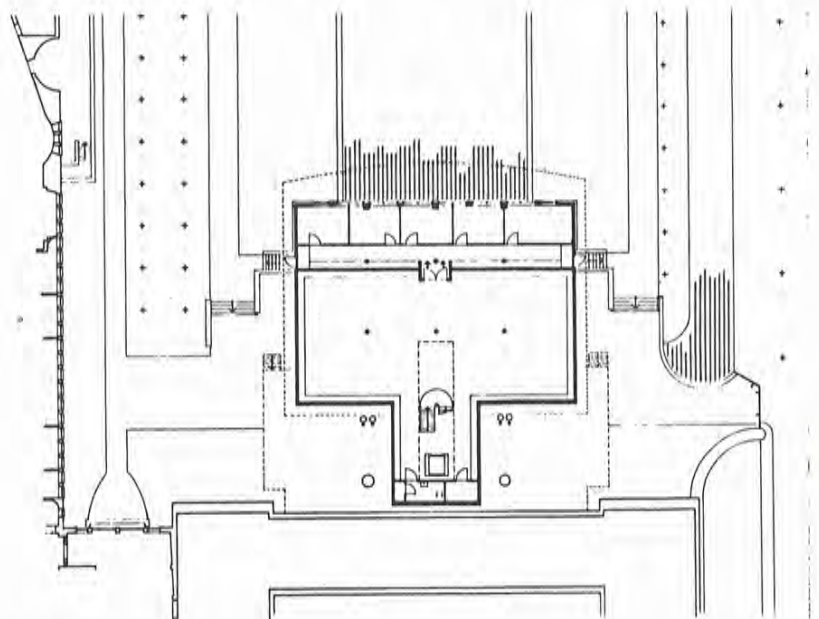


The extroverted transparency and horizontal emphasis of the new Van Beuningen-dé Vriese Pavilion, and also the cool silver grey steel and large sheets of glass of which it is made, are all in marked contrast to the introverted solidity, vertical towers and windows and warm brick of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum that it extends. Yet as designed by Hubert-Jan Henket the rather High-Tech pavilion does not seem out of place in this traditional-looking setting with high culture associations. Not only do its contrasts complement rather than clash, but it seems an almost inevitable response to its setting.

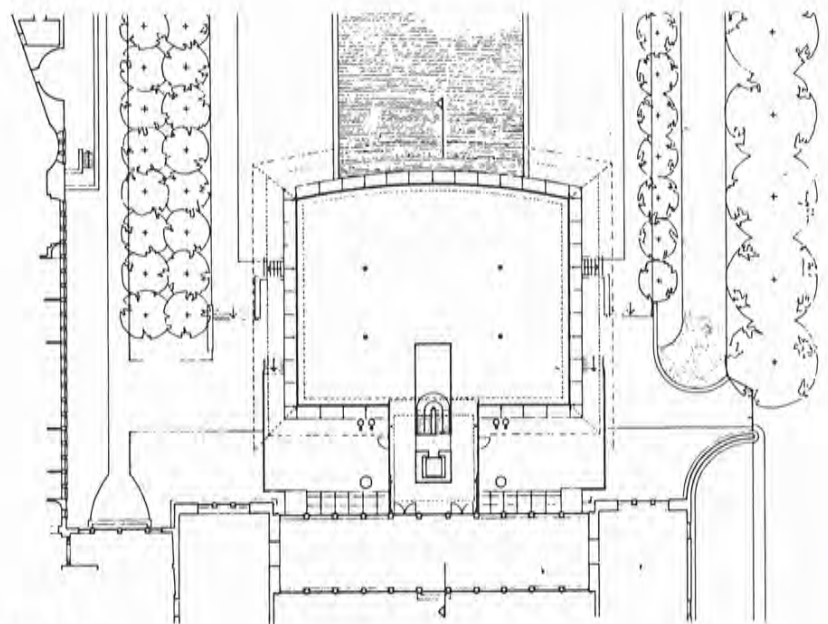
Spaced away from the main building, to which it is linked by a glazed corridor, it rises from the end of a long rectangular existing pool to close a dominant vista. One of the few beautiful vistas in Rotterdam, it extends 250 m over this pool and another, as well as over a lawn and rose garden to terminate at its other end on an obelisk. The cantilevered curve of the pavilion's front facade accentuates both the axial siting and the way in which the pavilion opens out to views down the vista and over the splendid mature garden.

The pavilion is one result of an ambitious building programme by the municipality to boost the cultural profile of Rotterdam. Most of the present phase of this is in the proximity of the Museum Park and includes, as well as a remodelling of the park itself, the Netherlands Architectural Institute (by Jo Coenen and at tender stage) and the Kunsthal (by Rem Koolhaas and OMA and under construction). The pavilion was commissioned to house and display the Van Beuningen-De Vriese collection of 10 000 pre-industrial (from thirteenth- to nineteenth-century) household utensils and also to hold exhibitions from the museum's growing collection of twentieth-century products of industrial design. The pre-industrial artefacts are in a semi-basement; above this the transparent gallery which is on the same level as the main floor of the museum houses the changing exhibition of contemporary objects.

Entry to the pavilion bifurcates past a slot down to the lower ground floor in which a lift and a stair connect the two levels. The slot gives views on to (facilitated by the way the ceiling below splays up



upper level



lower level



2

## Museum extension, Rotterdam

Architect  
**Hubert-Jan Henket**

2

The building rises from a pool to close one of the few beautiful vistas in Rotterdam.

3,4

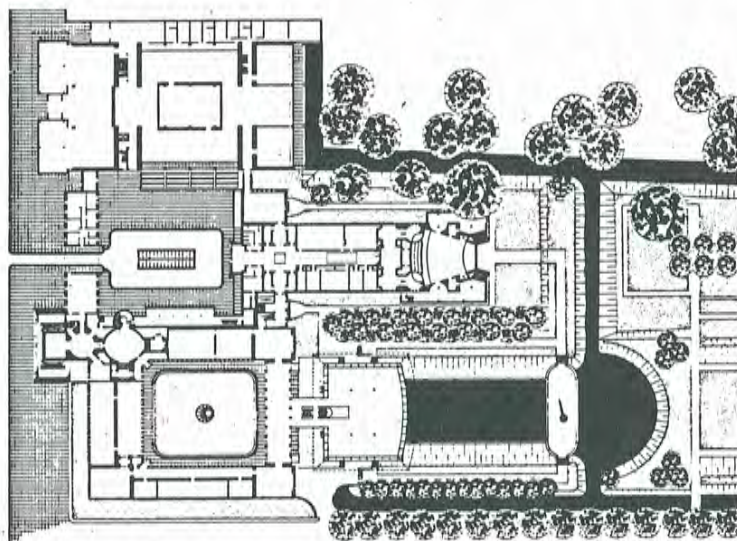
Louvers project from the building on all sides (except the north) to protect the contents from sunshine.

5

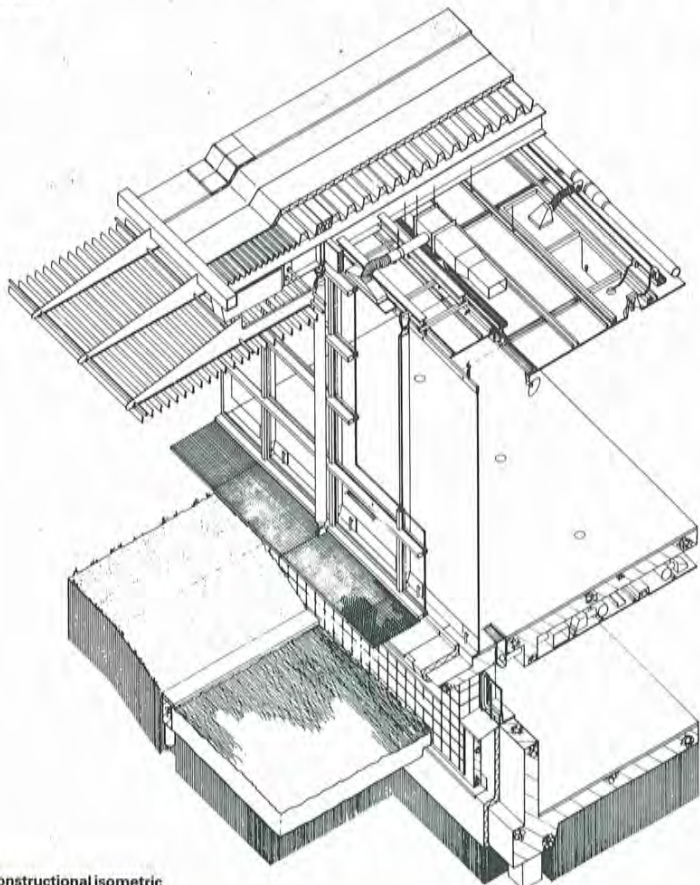
The garden room.

6

The pre-industrial artefacts are in a semi-basement, a reminder that most of them were discovered in excavations.



site plan



constructional isometric

to it) the artificially lit display cases to tempt visitors down to study the dense array of objects. Most of these were discovered in excavations and so seem quite at home in this windowless crypt. Across the gallery, double doors open into a corridor, both ends of which lead out and up to the garden and which give access to curators' and administrative offices ranged along windows that look out on the pool.

The large room above, now called the garden hall, is uncluttered and open, the roof supported by only four internal columns and slender pinned colonnettes outside the continuous floor-to-ceiling glazing. To protect all this glass from the sun, rafters project 4 m to support louvers on all but the north side while the glass is coated to exclude ultra-violet light. Here contemporary products are displayed almost like sculptures against the backdrop of the garden. This arrangement and the abstraction from context bring due attention to what many may take unobservantly for granted, yet also deifies utilitarian objects into consumerist icons. Moreover some of this deification rubs off on the pavilion itself, the High-Tech aesthetic of which suggests that it too is an industrial product, that has been placed to adorn its setting like some tempietto or sculptural focus.

### Client

Municipality of Rotterdam and the director of the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum, W. H. Crouwel

### Architect

Hubert-Jan Henket bna architecten;  
job architect: Henk Van Laarhoven

### Structural engineers

ABT adviesbureau voor bouwtechniek

### Services engineers

Raadgevend Technies Buro Van Heugten  
bv

### Display design

W. H. Crouwel and Hubert-Jan Henket  
bna architecten

### Main contractor

BAM Bataafse Aanneming mij b

