

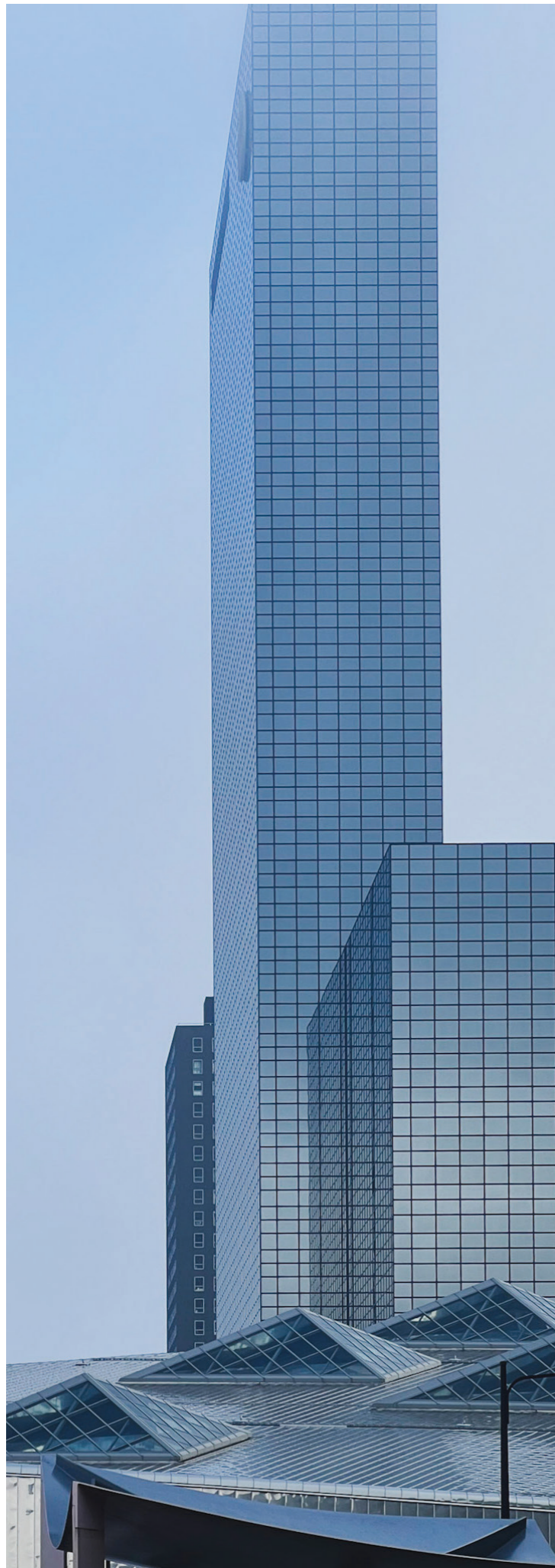


INTERNSHIP REPORT

Denis Kapitanov



**POWERHOUSE
COMPANY**

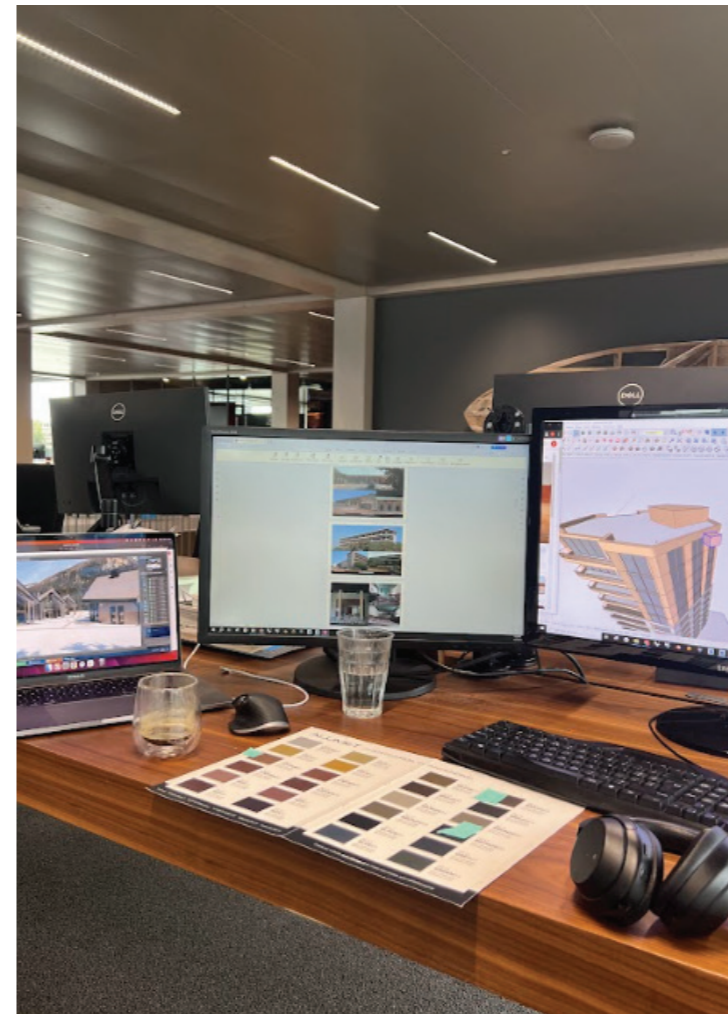


LIVING IN THE NETHERLANDS

I embraced an exciting opportunity to pursue another internship prior to completing my studies in Milan. Having previously lived and worked in diverse countries and cultures, I was eager to further enrich my experiences in an unfamiliar nation. The application process, coupled with my personal aspirations, led me to Rotterdam, where I embarked on an internship journey with Powerhouse Company. Despite having visited the Netherlands in the past, this opportunity provided a unique chance to immerse myself in a captivating, experimental, and diverse context—both in the professional realm and the daily life in Rotterdam.

As the city undergoes a transformative rebuilding phase, it pulsates with contemporary architectural projects. Additionally, the proximity of Amsterdam, just half an hour away, facilitates easy weekend access to wander through museums or explore hidden corners of the city. Rotterdam and Amsterdam, despite their close proximity, exhibit stark differences, allowing me to reflect on and appreciate the Dutchies' courage and experimental spirit in their constant reinvention.

The remarkable aspect of this experience was the accessibility to other cities within a one-hour radius, including Utrecht, Amsterdam, Breda, or Tilburg. This accessibility enabled me to explore architectural masterpieces on a weekly basis, offering a dynamic and enriching perspective on the architectural landscape in the Netherlands.

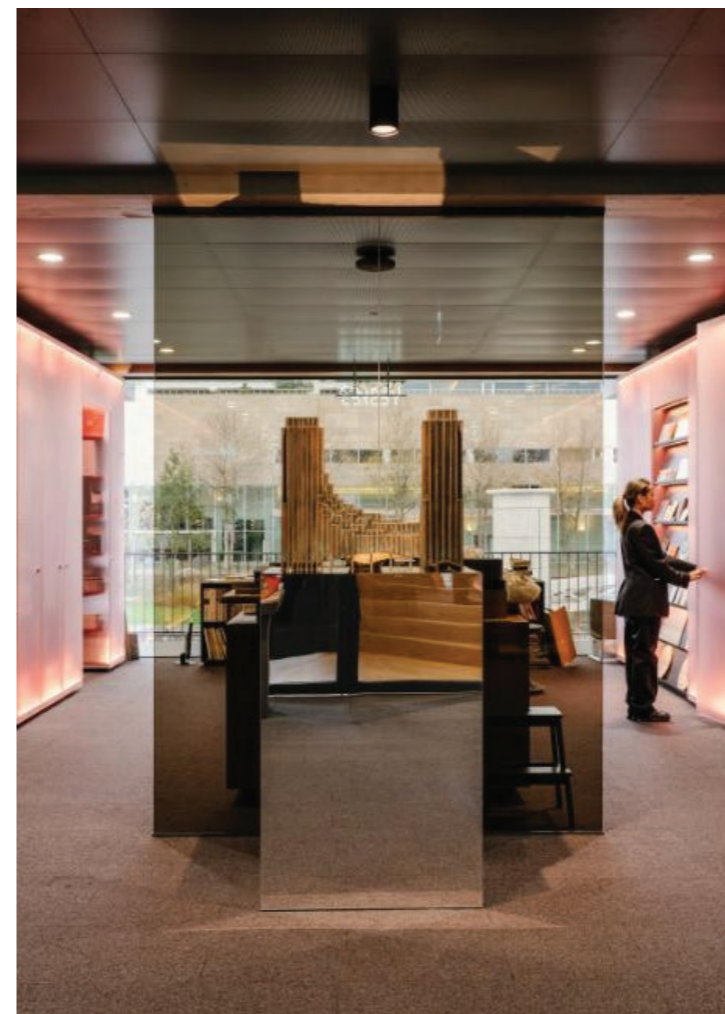
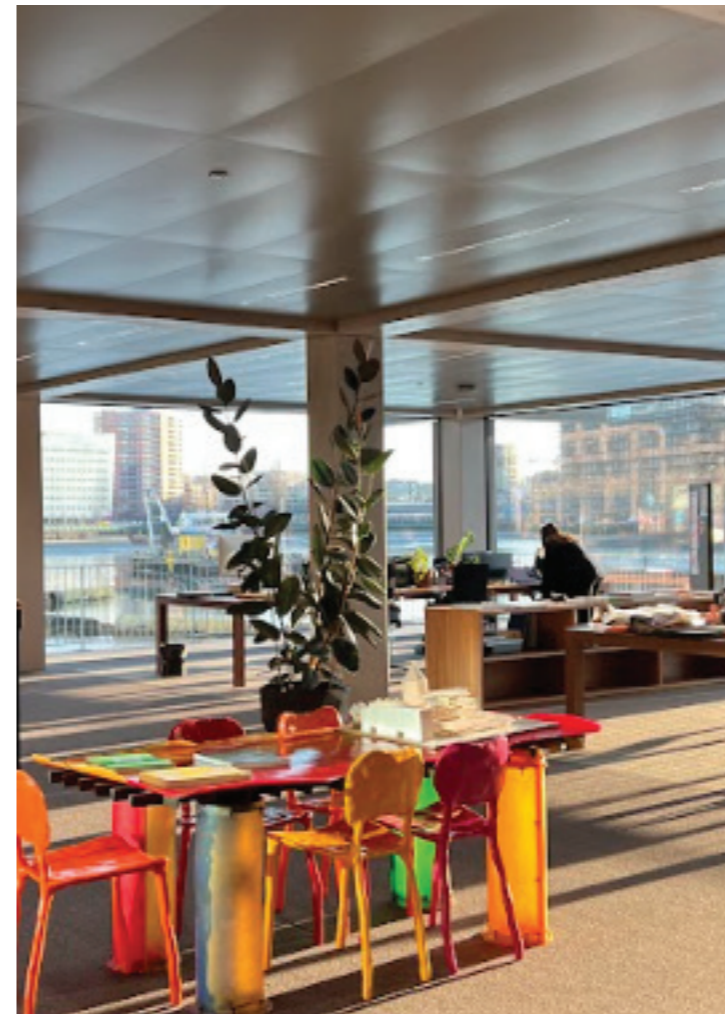


OFFICE ENVIRONMENT

The studio's office was unlike anything I had encountered previously. Powerhouse Company's floating office is a two-story wooden structure resting on a concrete floating foundation. Describing the interiors and the breathtaking views it offers is a challenge unless witnessed firsthand, but the opportunity to work within such a sustainable and innovative structure was particularly exhilarating. The ambiance and the individuals within are remarkable, contributing to a studio with a notably international profile where English is the predominant language.

The office is organized into four teams, although there are no strict boundaries between them, fostering a collaborative environment. Teams frequently engage in cross-collaboration, enhancing the overall creative synergy. A typical week in the studio commences with team meetings, where everyone shares their upcoming tasks, and project leaders provide updates on project progress or any new acquisitions entering the office.

Following these team meetings is a Monday morning gathering, where the entire office congregates. During this session, the management and team leaders deliver updates on project news, internal company developments, or practical information. This structured yet inclusive approach ensures effective communication and collaboration across the diverse teams within the studio.

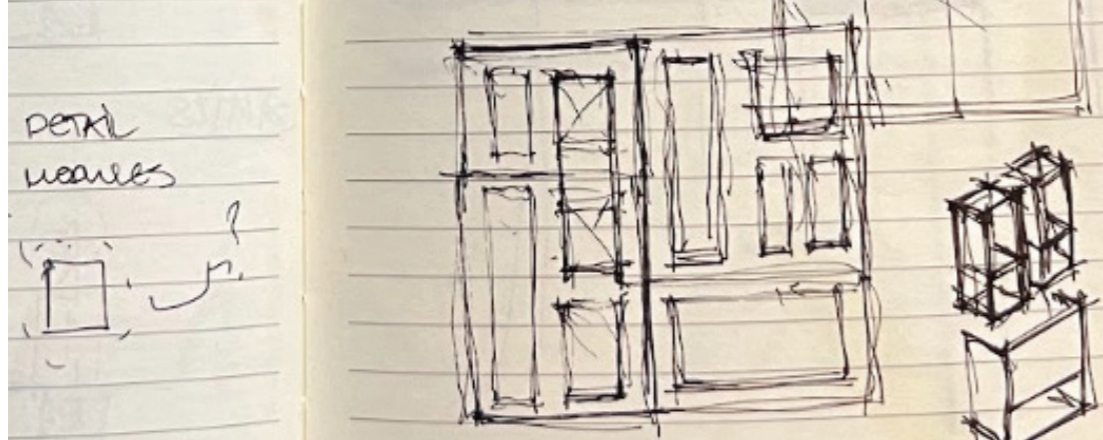
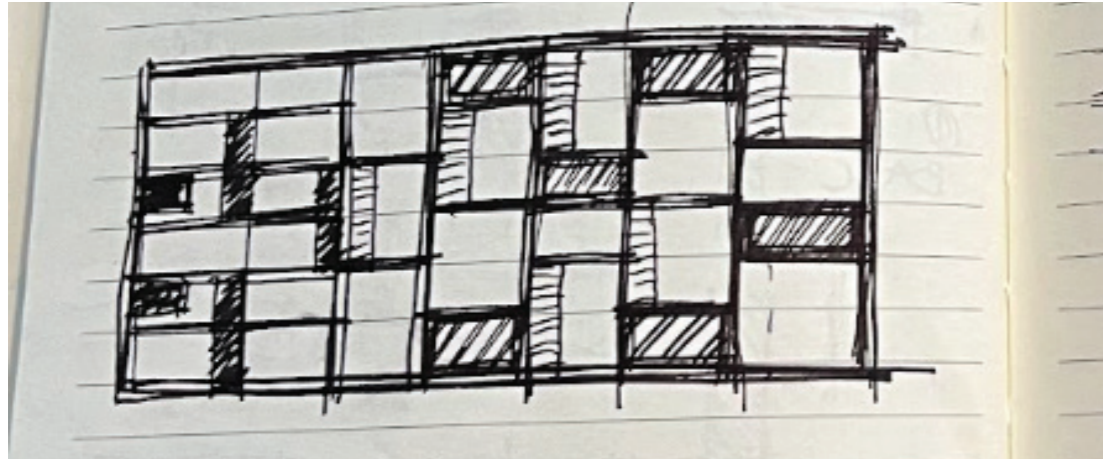


THE OFFICE

What stood out prominently to me was the youthful vibrancy of the individuals in the office. The day-to-day atmosphere is remarkably laid-back, fostering an approachable environment for everyone. What particularly caught my attention was the presence of individuals in their early thirties serving as project leads, concurrently managing multiple projects. Over time, I came to realize that this aspect is at the core of the studio's ethos: assembling a team of talented and amiable individuals to cultivate a creative and cheerful workplace.

Powerhouse Company, true to its philosophy, is a space where initiative, reliability, and proficiency are swiftly rewarded with increased responsibilities and trust, even for interns. The office structure operates on a flat hierarchy, encouraging open conversations with everyone in the workplace. Fridays typically conclude earlier, creating an opportunity for colleagues to unwind with a couple of beers in an informal setting. During the warmer months, colleagues often bring swimsuits, and a refreshing swim next to the office is complemented by snacks and the enchanting backdrop of the sunset.

The studio boasts a cutting-edge model room where teams convene weekly to fabricate an array of models, ranging from conceptual 3D-printed prototypes to intricate 1:100 scale building sections, depending on the project's stage. Additionally, an expansive sample room and library offer a treasure trove of inspiration for those seeking it.

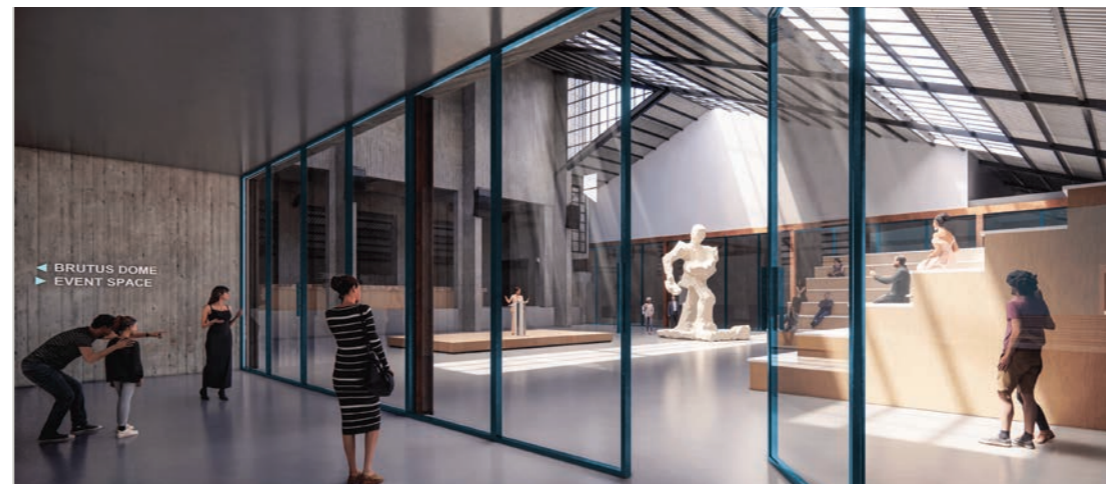
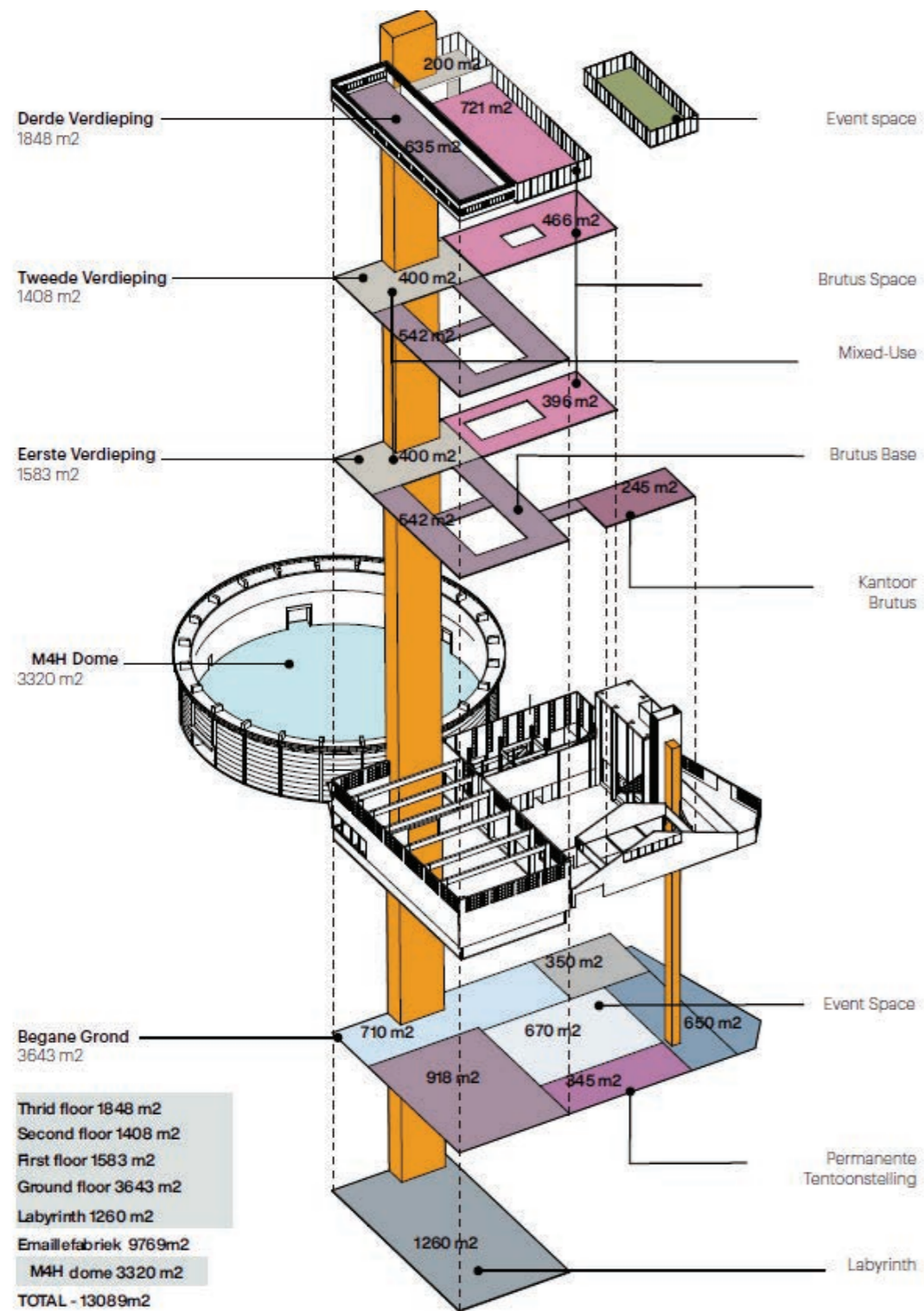


WORK EXPERIENCE

The highlight of my internship experience unfolded in the context of a major architectural competition for a housing development in Amsterdam. Tasked with conceiving a vision for over 350 housing units, situated atop a monumental stone plinth hosting various public activities. The team was comprised of only three people including myself and this provided me with a great opportunity to take on diverse set of responsibilities in various disciplines.

I was able to take part into this competition from its initial sketch phases, allowing me to experience every stage of the proposal. As an early stage contributor to the project, I actively engaged in design ideation, applying creative thinking to address the complex spatial requirements of the program. In addition, I was delegated tasks concerning aesthetic matters such as facade designs and overall material narration of the whole housing complex. The scope of the competition allowed me to hone my skills in strategic thinking and problem-solving, pushing the boundaries of my architectural imagination.

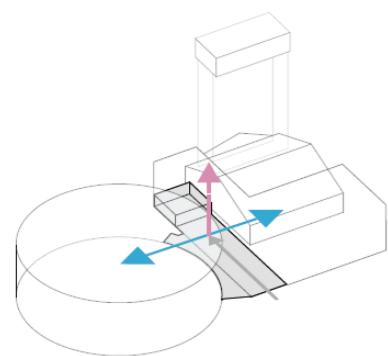
The concluding phase of my internship involved the meticulous production of all competition materials. This provided me with a platform to showcase and further develop my range of graphical and aesthetic skills, weaving together a comprehensive and compelling presentation that encapsulated the essence of our architectural vision for the Amsterdam housing development.



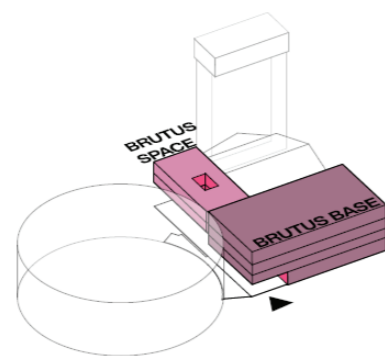
WORK EXPERIENCE

Transitioning from the sun-soaked landscapes of Nairobi to the industrial backdrop of Rotterdam, I undertook the challenge of adaptive reuse. Tasked with transforming a disused factory into a cultural hub, the project required a delicate balance between preservation and innovation.

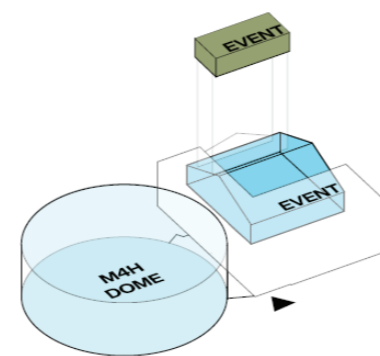
The project was part of a long-term vision of a private client for a large plot in Rotterdam West. The proposal was done together with a senior architect, having worked previously together I was granted an opportunity to work independently for the production of a concept for merging the existing industrial shell with newly carved out spaces. The program included a museum, workshop for a sculptor, exhibition space, several auditoriums and horeca. The spatial narration of such a diverse program presented me with a unique challenge, prompting an exploration of the symbiosis between history and modern functionality.



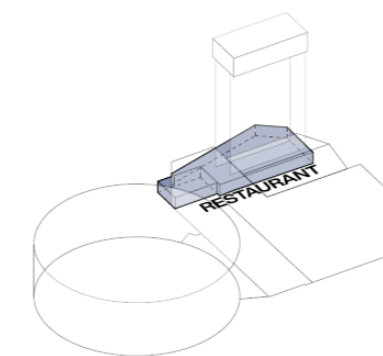
- Foyer
Vanuit de entree en foyer zijn de verschillende functies binnen de fabriek afzonderlijk van elkaar te bereiken



- Museum
De expositieruimtes van Brutus zijn georganiseerd in de twee betaande hallen van de fabriek en onderling verbonden



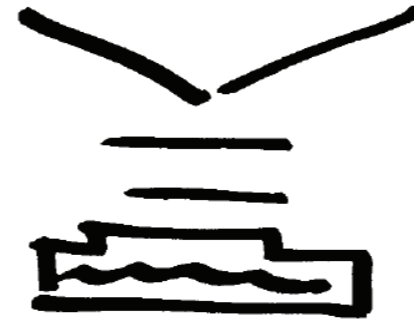
- Event Spaces
Onder het schuine dak van de fabriek bevindt zich een conferentie ruimte die door Gemeente Rotterdam, bedrijven en voor



- Horeca
In het lage deel van de fabriek bevindt zich een restaurant dat onafhankelijk kan functioneren, maar ook catering kan



GCA Rotterdam
Protection from rain, floating on water



GCA Nairobi
Capturing rain, gathering it in a waterbasin

WORK EXPERIENCE

The Nairobi headquarters project was a testament to the company's commitment to sustainability and environmental consciousness.

As part of a three-member team, we were entrusted with devising a compelling architectural pitch for the Global Climate Organization. The design aimed to seamlessly integrate the highest sustainability standards, incorporating natural-based solutions.

The building itself emerged as a harmonious fusion of rammed earth and timber structures, creatively juxtaposed with a concrete basement/ground floor. This foundation served a dual purpose, not only providing structural support but also hosting a substantial water basin.

The innovative butterfly roof design facilitated rainwater collection, directing it to the basin. This ingenious system ensured a reliable water supply during the arid months in Kenya, aligning our architectural vision with the vital principles of environmental responsibility.

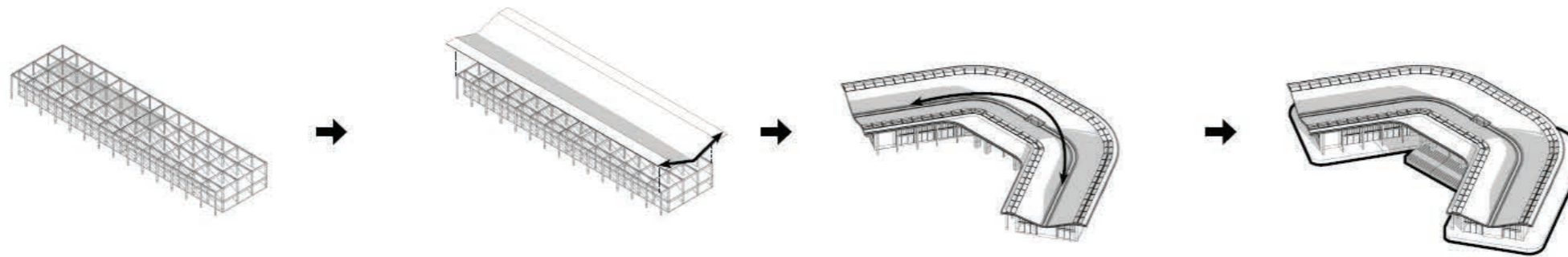
The project was brought to the office by private client, hence no extensive competition material was prepared. The whole project took about a month to develop from a sketch to the final proposal and my participation included early roof concept studies allowing for water collection, program distribution and preparation of concept architectural drawings such as plans, diagrams and perspective sections.

1: Applying a modular wooden grid

2: Adding a large roof surface

3: Embracing the landscape, creating views

4: Climate adaptation



The fully Cross Laminated Timber structure and floors helps us reduce CO2 emissions. Just like the GCA Rotterdam, we aim to become CO2 negative.

Rammed earth walls are a sustainable alternative to concrete / gypsum and the layers beautifully represent Kenya's earth.

Green walls are not only beautiful, they also create a nice interior climate.

Overhangs help maintain a comfortable climate within as the sun rarely directly hits the windows.

Green is applied on the edges of the roof, this helps cool the solar panels.

Solar panels generate enough energy to create an energy positive building.

The roof captures rainwater and lets it pass through the building to make the sustainable impact of the building visible.

Large windows allow for users to experience the weather outside and be in touch with the beautiful garden.



The concrete foundation also serves as a waterbasin that stores the captured rain water. This way we tackle Kenya's the irregular water supply challenge.



LIFE BEYOND WORK

Beyond office hours, studio members actively participated in a diverse array of activities, spanning cultural events to sports engagements like the Powerhouse running club or the football team. Notably, our office secured victory in the Architectural Cup competition in Rotterdam last year, attesting to the team's prowess and unity.

Rotterdam hosts several marathons, and our studio consistently participates, often forming small teams to run collectively. Additionally, the studio's founder, a fervent football enthusiast supporting Rotterdam's home team Feyenoord, generously provides free tickets for games to office members, fostering a shared passion for sports within the team.

Moreover, the city of Rotterdam pulsates with vibrancy, offering a good blend of cultural and architecturally related events. The New Institute of Architecture frequently hosts architectural presentations, attracting renowned authors who present their books, contributing to the city's rich cultural tapestry.

A month prior to the conclusion of my internship at Powerhouse Company, the studio organized a Christmas-themed dinner, uniting the entire office in a charming villa in The Hague. Attendees were required to dress in a 20's theme, and the entire day was spent together on the estate. This event not only showcased the office's ability to deliver high-quality architectural projects but also underscored its capacity to foster a sense of camaraderie, akin to one big family, where the professional and the personal seamlessly coalesce.

