

Call for submissions for the Geert Bekaert Prize for Architecture Criticism

It's that time again! Archined, together with OASE, is organizing a new edition of the Geert Bekaert Prize for architecture criticism to promote debate and multiperspectivity within the design field. Take part!

Why is design criticism important?

Spatial design disciplines (architecture, urban design and landscape architecture) concern more than just the design of the built environment. They determine in a lasting way how and where we live, work and relax. They condition our world, consciously or otherwise. Moreover, they contribute greatly to the human footprint on ecosystems. In short, the spatial design disciplines exert a big impact on the living environment of humans and non-human creatures.

In the context of a world in which the call for an equal society is becoming increasingly urgent and louder, a world that is being exploited beyond recovery, architects, urban designers and landscape architects are challenged to define their position again and again. A reflective design practice is important in that regard. Design criticism has a vital role in this area for two reasons. First, criticism fuels substantive debate within the profession, puts contemporary developments and challenges in perspective, and questions these. In the process, criticism helps designers to determine their position. Second, owing to the impact of spatial design on the lives of humans and non-humans, and on society in general, designers bear a responsibility to critically reflect on completed projects and to make knowledge in this area widely available. In our view, design criticism is the appropriate instrument to make knowledge and questions concerning architecture, urban design and landscape architecture accessible.

Stimulating design criticism is more than relevant today. Branding and the 'newspeak' that comes with it is now a permanent fixture within the design profession. The algorithms of social media and search engines are becoming ever more powerful and heavily influencing what we see and read. Media storms and incessant flows of information lead to a gradual deadening of substantive debate. At the same time, the urgency of change within the profession is being felt by more and more people, and many designers are searching for the relevance of their profession. So it's high time for a new edition of the Geert Bekaert Prize, to be awarded to an exemplary work of criticism, whether previously published or not, in the field of architecture, urban design or landscape architecture, that contributes to a vibrant design climate. Talented writers (beginners, unheard-of, established,...) take part, make your views known, send in your essay, review, report, interview, opinion piece....

Judging

All texts will be sent to the jury in anonymous form to prevent bias as much as possible. After reading the submissions, the members of the jury will jointly compile a shortlist. This will be announced in early May 2025. The award ceremony will take place in early June during Critics Night. On this festive evening, the shortlisted authors will read the nominated texts, after which the jury will announce the winner. The winner receives honour and fame, along with a beautiful trophy. The recital of the texts is intended to initiate discussion.

How can you take part?

Criteria for submissions

- Everybody, individually or collectively, can submit a self-written text.
- The submitting individual must be the author or co-author of the submitted piece of criticism.
- The text is new or previously published, but no earlier than 1 January 2022.
- Is maximum 1,500 words long
- Is written in Dutch or English
- Includes no images.

Submit your text as a Word file (NOT a PDF or other type of file) in standard font Calibri, line spacing 1.15, and font size 11, with the title of the essay as the file name.

Include in your email, not in the text document, your name and telephone number. If your text has previously been published, indicate in your email the date of publication and the title of the periodical or URL of the website page.

Send your work of criticism no later than Sunday 1 December 2024 to bekaert@archined.nl. Texts that do not meet the criteria laid down will not be assessed.

FAQ

Question: Must the author have the Dutch nationality?

Antwoord: No.

Question: Can you submit work that is not place-related but that examines more general themes in architecture, urban design or landscape architecture?

Answer: Yes, as long as it concerns themes that are relevant – or should be, according to the author(s) – in the Dutch-speaking world.

Question: Can a work of criticism concerning a foreign project set an example for design practice in the Dutch-speaking world?

Answer: Yes it can, provided that the relationship with the objectives of the Bekaert Prize is clear.

Question: Does the reading of the text form part of the judging process?

Answer: No

The jury

The members of the jury for the fourth edition of the Geert Bekaert Prize are:

Gideon Boie is an architect-philosopher, guest professor at the Faculty of Architecture at KU Leuven, and co-founder of the BAVO collective. He lives and works in Brussels. Boie initiates public events and has written numerous articles that largely focus on the political dimensions of art, architecture and urban design. His thesis has recently been published under the title *Discursive Architecture: Tactics for Critical Intervention in the Work of BAVO*.

Violette Schönberger is an architect with her own office, Falsework, which operates from both Rotterdam and Brussels. She teaches at the Rotterdam Academy of Architecture and writes. She

publishes both on her own blog Fromscratch and on Architectenweb. Her first book, a collection of her columns, recently appeared under the title *Het paradijs van imperfectie, over macht en onmacht van architectuur*. Winner of the Geert Bekaert Prize 2019.

Mechthild Stuhlmacher is an architect and co-founder of the Rotterdam office Korteknie Stuhlmacher Architects. Stuhlmacher teaches at the Technische Universität Berlin and at KU Leuven, was a member of the editorial board of *OASE* and writes about the relationship between architecture culture and design practice.

Tom Vandeputte is a writer and theoretician. He studied architecture at TU Delft, did an MRes at the London Consortium for Humanities and Cultural Studies, was a member of the editorial board of *OASE*, and completed his PhD in Philosophy and Critical Thought at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is currently a Reader in Philosophy and Critical Theory at the Sandberg Institute Amsterdam, where he also heads the Critical Studies department.

Vincent van Velsen is an architecture historian, curator and art critic. He works as a curator of photography at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and is an editor of *Metropolis M*. He has previously written for *Volume*, *Tubelight* and *Archined*. Last spring the Nieuwe Instituut was the venue for the exhibition *Soengoe Kondre / Submerged Heritage*, which he initiated.

(Excluded from participation: the Archined editors, the jury members and Hans Teerds.)

About Geert Bekaert

Geert Bekaert (1928-2016) was a Belgian art and architecture critic, theoretician, historian and curator. From 1950 until 2012, he wrote over one thousands articles and texts about visual art and architecture for periodicals and newspapers: from *Jeugdlinie*, a Flemish weekly for young people, to *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, and from *De Standaard* newspaper to *OASE*. He taught at numerous universities and colleges in the Netherlands and Belgium, made documentaries such as *Rijksweg nr.1* with Jef Cornelis, curated exhibitions and was editor in chief of *Archis* (1990-1995). In 1988, Bekaert won the Rotterdam Maaskant Prize. His articles have been compiled into the publication series *Verzamelde opstellen*. The first instalment, *Stapstenen: 1950-65*, appeared in 1985; the ninth and final instalment, *Wijnvlekken: 2006-2010*, appeared in 2012. A number of articles by Bekaert can be read online in 'De Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren'.