

# Boijmans Van Beuningen Depot

A innovative & experimental manifestation or a political & economical tool



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## Abstract

Between 2013 and 2016 a striking number of 11665 architecture competitions were held in the EU, which is around 3888 competitions per year. Competitions were a way to be innovative, experimental and idealistic. However, due to the strike regulations and entry requirements, small businesses and young architects are often excluded. The question whether and how a building would be built or not becomes a political and social discussion. So considering the above, can architectural competitions still be considered to be innovative and experimental, as their organizers claim?

This research will focus on Boijmans Van Beuningen Depot in Rotterdam. The 61,5 million euro project designed by MVRDV will be finished in September 2021. The design is the winning design out of the international competition where 47 firms participated in. The selection committee chose five designs to continue to the final round, the five firms included: MVRDV, MAD/NIO/Okra, Neutelings Riedijk, Koen van Velsen and Zwitserse Harry Guggen/Barcode Architects. The interest in the competition will be who the judges were and how they selected the winning design, the various designs will be compared using simple drawing. Despite winning the competition, MVRDV was almost disqualified from the competition, due to a mistake by Sjarel Ex, the director of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. After the court declared they were the winner, various parties such as the government and surrounding institutes doubted if the building should be built. The main reasons for the disagreements were based on political standpoints, concerns on vision of the museum park and health concerns created by the mirror facade. In order to receive the building

permit, compensation had to be made with the respective parties. What were the difficulties Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen faced in order to achieve this? Was the choice of MVRDV's design over others a notion of innovation and change or political and economical?

## Introduction

First, a brief analysis will be made about the positive and negative sides of architectural competition. In this chapter it is made clear what effects competitions have on the architects, public environment, client, procedure and regulations would be investigated. This is done in a literature study from several literature sources. The information gained in this chapter helps to build up a baseline of knowledge that is later used in the following chapter about the competition of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen in chapter two. This is studied from the reason Boijmans Van Beuningen motivation behind the new extension. Then, the given in the competition project brief is looked at in detail. After that the five selected designs: MVRDV, MAD/NIO/Okra, Neutelings Riedijk, Koen van Velsen and Zwitserse Harry Guggen/Barcode Architects are compared and studied to find the reason behind the winning design. This is done by looking at documents and news made for the competition either from the internet or requesting the municipality of Rotterdam. With a new design that is planned to be built there are always voices against the plans. In chapter three, the difficulties in realising the design from the perspectives of innovative, technical and voices against the winning design of MVRDV are studied. This is from the perspective of the court, municipal council, finance, parties in the museum park and the Erasmus Medical Centre. This is done with information about the topic, debate and documents.

Related news, radio and video documentation of the involved parties. The result of the case study would be further studied in the discussion. In this chapter, it will be made clear whether the architectural competition of Depot Boijmans was based on an experimental playground or had an economical and political motive.

# 1. Pros and Cons of Architectural Competitions

The first architectural competition can be traced back to the 18-century.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays architecture competitions have become a norm in the EU. Between 2013 and 2016 a striking number of 11665 competitions were held in the EU, which is around 3888 competitions per year.<sup>2</sup> Competitions were a learning opportunity and a way to be innovative, experimental and idealistic.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the strict regulations and entry requirements, small businesses and young architects are often excluded.<sup>4</sup> It is often wondered how to choose the winner of such a competition. Competitions are becoming more political as it often are buildings that are meant to become 'icons' of the city. Competitions are becoming more transparent, they are promoted through the media. This opens up conversations, however, since nowadays it has become a 'marketing strategy' from these parts of local municipalities and their corresponding partners. In this chapter, the various statements and questions will be discussed and answered. In the end, this information gathered about architectural competitions will be used as a baseline for further investigation about the competition Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen which is discussed in chapter two and three.

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<sup>1</sup>Sudjic, Deyan. "Competitions: The pitfalls and the potential." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2005): 53-67.

<sup>2</sup>Menteth, Walter, Indira van't Klooster, Cilly Jansen, Margot de Jager, Saimir Kristo, Anne Isopp, Elsa Turkusic Juric et al. "Competition Culture in Europe: 2013-2016." (2017).

<sup>3</sup>Popovici, Ioana Cristina. "architecture competitions—a space for political contention. socialist romania, 1950–1956." *Journal of Architecture and Urbanism* 38, no. 1 (2014): 24-38.

<sup>4</sup>BNA, Michel Geertse. "Competition and innovation in Dutch architecture competitions." 6th International Conference on Competitions 2016 Leeds, (2016).

## 1.1 Competitions as a learning opportunity

Architectural competitions are a great way to experiment, be idealistic, introduce new talent and to create quality buildings for the public.<sup>5</sup> They provide the site with multiple possible different designs that can be fulfilled in the future. The greatest value is achieved. This benefits the public, architect and the client.

Nowadays the public is greatly involved with the competitions. Competitions are a way to market the new building, and create discussions about the new location as well as the project. The concern often would be if the new building would be rejected or accepted by the public. However, competitions provide a platform for people to see the building and provide their voice before it is released. The participation of making the decision for the public has a greater satisfaction rate than the final experience.<sup>6</sup>

Competitions are great when it comes to exploring new kinds of building typologies.<sup>7</sup> For new typologies it is unknown to anyone how to deal with the new problem, therefore, it is a very experimental and innovative process, where various professions present their perspective on the problem. It is a great learning process for all who are involved, to receive different ideas and perspectives from people with various experiences and backgrounds.

Competitions provide an equal ground for everyone who participates. Competitions in the EU are required by law to be

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<sup>5</sup>Lipstadt, H  l  ne. "The Competition in the Region's Past, the Region in the Competition's Future." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2006): 7-29.

<sup>6</sup>Sanoff, Henry. "Multiple views of participatory design." *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 23, no. 2 (2006): 131-143.

<sup>7</sup>Lipstadt, H  l  ne. "The Competition in the Region's Past, the Region in the Competition's Future." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2006): 7-29.



transparent, non-discriminative, and provide equal information to the participants.<sup>8</sup> Competitions provide chances for the youth. According to Volker, design competitions in the EU are often won by young architects who lack the publicity from the press.<sup>9</sup> The fresh blood in the discipline are very eager to take risks and think bold have illustrated a fantastic result in competitions.<sup>10</sup> They have new visions and innovative ideas, reflecting the ideas of the younger generation. This makes them stand out from the rest. Competitions might be a great way to start their careers as it does not need a high profile and for return can create one. Competitions are also a safe testing area for the firm itself.<sup>11</sup> The experimentation can be inspiring for the future designs. The winning project would gain plenty of publication and does not have to worry about unemployment for the coming few years, this counts for both small and large firms.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the firms who do not win have a chance to expose their work and receive attention by the media and general public. At the end the purpose of a competition is not to realise it but create innovative and experimental manifestos.

Competitions also benefit the client, without paying a relatively high price they receive a large amount of concepts. “By

*employing all the talent available, “they... improve the world in which the community has to live, while they bring to bear the only efficient restraint that seems to be practicable upon the vagaries and infelicities of architectural enterprise”.*<sup>13</sup> In the process of architectural competitions the proposals provide various perspectives of the brief. The client is not only looking for a design but also a partner.<sup>14</sup> The competition can be a secure way for the client to find someone suited for the job. Public competitions can be used as a way to promote and find support for the building before it is built.<sup>15</sup> This is a great way to market a new building, this can attract investors and get support from the crowd. This would often stimulate other business, and increase the value of the city in that area.

## 1.2 The negative-side of the procedure and regulations in competitions

Architectural competitions are the norm nowadays, they are often used as a way to find a suitable building that fits in the city. However, the competitions do often have a negative side on the architecture design culture. Competitions are often also very costly and time consuming, with no guarantee to have a satisfying outcome for the client. Moreover, winning competitions are also not always realised. It is often not a win-win for both parties. This might happen due to a lack of funding and finances or a political change.<sup>16</sup> The aim of architecture competition is to create

<sup>8</sup>Silberberger, Jan, Ignaz Strelbel, and Peter Tränkle. "The building process as a chain of displacements-Following a construction project from strategic planning through an architectural competition to the building permit." (2014).

<sup>9</sup>Volker, Leentje, and J. van Meel. "Dutch design competitions: lost in EU directives? Procurement issues of architect selections in the Netherlands." *Geographica Helvetica* 66, no. 1 (2012): 24-32.

<sup>10</sup>Knikker, Jan. "MVRDV Keep CAIm and Carry on." *Because it is always a competition!*. Archiprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 6-9.

<sup>11</sup>Hoogendam, Erik. Janssen, Ryanne. "Architectenbureau Koen van Velsen competing to improve the Built Environment." *Because it is always a competition!*. Archiprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 12-15.

<sup>12</sup>Lubbers, Emma. "Powerhouse Company Small Office, Big Competitions." *Because it is always a competition!*. Archiprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 14-15.

<sup>13</sup>Lipstadt, Hélène. "The Competition in the Region's Past, the Region in the Competition's Future." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2006): 7-29.

<sup>14</sup>Manzoni, Beatrice, Leentje Volker, and Hedley Smyth. "Managerial implications for architectural competitions based on paradox theory." (2014).

<sup>15</sup>Malmberg, Catherine, Cover Design Leslie Goldman, and Hélène Lipstadt. "The politics of design: Competitions for public projects." (2006).

<sup>16</sup>Volker, Leentje, and J. van Meel. "Dutch design competitions: lost in EU directives? Procurement issues of architect selections in the Netherlands." *Geographica Helvetica* 66, no. 1 (2012): 24-32.

a transparent platform for the public. The EU has specific regulations for certain typologies, the design that is carried out has to go through a competition. In other words, the EU creates guidelines that provide a fair and equal foundation where architects from different backgrounds and experiences are able to participate in competitions. Nevertheless, every county in the EU has slightly different policies.<sup>17</sup> The competitions are divided in various ways, with terms like: open, invited, national, international, ideas and tout court competitions are used.<sup>18</sup> The process of architectural competitions are often very complicated. An architectural competition consists of various stages, the selection phase, tender phase and the award phase as Volker calls them.<sup>19</sup>

In the selection phase it is often decided who can participate in the competition by the client, however, the client has to attract participants first. As Magnus explained, the client has to have several 'attractive' statements a few typical are: "Challenging competition task with large marketing value and prestige, high prize sum and good remuneration as organizer and client, regulations which provide fair preconditions, competent members on the selection committee and a credible organizer who promises the continued assignment to the winner."<sup>20</sup> This makes competitions very time-consuming and expensive, thus they often need to make sure that they are able to recruit the experienced architects for the job. In the paper "Competition and innovation in

Dutch architecture competitions", Geerste claims that in the Dutch market, architects without enough experience are often excluded from even participating in the competition for public building due to the criteria.<sup>21</sup> For instance, in order to participate in a competition for a 'public accessible museum storage facility' in Rotterdam. The participant has to depict two realised public utility buildings which were released in the Netherlands in the last decade.<sup>22</sup> This is to ensure that architecture firms are able and experienced enough to develop and finish their work. For young and foreign architects it becomes more difficult to participate. Moreover, an immense amount of time has to be spent on the design with no payment and guarantee that the architect is going to win the competition.<sup>23</sup> Most of the time, money is put in to attend but little or no is gained back.<sup>24</sup> Smaller firms and individuals might not be able to afford to attend, leaving it up to large international firms who do have poorly paid interns to do the job. Some firms have become competition firms and received high reputation. "*There was a time in the nineties when it appeared a competition was not respectable if MVRDV did not participate.*"<sup>25</sup> However, due to the immense amount of participants in these larger competitions, the exclusion of young and small architecture firms is not noticed. In some cases only real estate managers are invited for the

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<sup>17</sup>"Dutch design competitions: lost in EU directives? Procurement issues of architect selections in the Netherlands."

<sup>18</sup>Lipstadt, Hélène. "The Competition in the Region's Past, the Region in the Competition's Future." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2006): 7-29.

<sup>19</sup>"Dutch design competitions: lost in EU directives? Procurement issues of architect selections in the Netherlands."

<sup>20</sup>Rönn, Magnus. "The client regime in competitions-from requirement to professional praxis in selection of design teams to competitions." (2014).

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<sup>21</sup>BNA, Michel, Geertse. "Competition and innovation in Dutch architecture competitions." 6th International Conference on Competitions 2016 Leeds, (2016).

<sup>22</sup>ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Lubbers, Emma. "Powerhouse Company Small Office, Big Competitions." *Because it is always a competition!*. Archiprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 14-15.

<sup>24</sup>Malmberg, Catherine, Cover Design Leslie Goldman, and Hélène Lipstadt. "The politics of design: Competitions for public projects." (2006).

<sup>25</sup>Hoogendam, Erik, Janssen, Rianne. "Architectenbureau Koen van Velsen competing to improve the Built Environment." *Because it is always a competition!*. Archiprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 12-15.

competition.<sup>26</sup> This creates a bad design 'climate' in architecture.

In the tender phase, the selected designs have to finalise their design. The information the competition provided is restricted to the design brief. This brief is often very elaborate with unclear goals and budget.<sup>27</sup> The best way would be to talk to the client or jury of the project, nevertheless, due to the competition rules this is forbidden and can lead to plagiarism.<sup>28</sup> The architect has to fully rely on the design brief that is given. Sometimes the success relies upon the success of the project brief. In addition, the chosen architects in this phase are working against each other instead of together. Competitions are demanding and the client often expects a 'new' design language that has not been seen in the architectural dictionary before. The idea of recycling projects is not acceptable and considered as copying. The same counts for firms who produce similar designs. As Knikker puts it: "*Mostly because the same problem presented to the same sociological group of people might result in exactly the same solution, often the best of at least ten or more options that the team has explored and rejected.*"<sup>29</sup> This places a lot of pressure on the participants. A question that is raised is whether the 'copied' designs are bad? They seem to be the best solution as so many professionals came up with them. However, diversity and dreaming big is praised more. The concepts of the competition become more international,

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<sup>26</sup>Rönn, Magnus. "The client regime in competitions-from requirement to professional praxis in selection of design teams to competitions." (2014)

<sup>27</sup>Manzoni, Beatrice, Leentje Volker, and Hedley Smyth. "Managerial implications for architectural competitions based on paradox theory." (2014).

<sup>28</sup>Kreuner, Kristein. "Constructing the client in Architectural Competitions." *Architectural Competitions—Histories and Practice*. KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2013.

<sup>29</sup>Knikker, Jan. "MVRDV Keep Calm and Carry on." *Because it is always a competition!*. Architprint, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 6-9.

and do not express the tradition or the culture of the place anymore. This can be seen in a large number of projects that are released from competitions such as the Pompidou, Sydney Opera House, Setas de Sevilla, CCTV Headquarters, Depot, etc. These buildings can be placed anywhere in the world, they lost their local identity. It can be concluded in the words of Koolhaas states: "*Now there is zero communication among architects. We're all doing our own things; none of it is even remotely connected to the tradition of our own country. There is nothing Dutch about my architecture. We are constantly competing against each other, and winning a competition can make a difference between five years of work and ... nothing.*"<sup>30</sup>

The award phase would be the stage where designs would be judged and the winning design would be selected. The selection of the winning design would be either the cheapest one to realise of the one that has the higher benefit-cost ratio.<sup>31</sup> The latter one is more frequently approached. However, it is difficult to determine which design has the highest benefits, as none has been realised and are only made by verbal explanation, visualizations and impressions on paper. Therefore, the jury is key, they determine which design would be the winner. Nevertheless, the jury does consist of various stakeholders, including ones that might have little or no relation to architecture, (the so-called layman).<sup>32</sup> The background of the jury is essential, their decision directs the course of the competition. In the first selecting phase of

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<sup>30</sup>Ibit.

<sup>31</sup>BNA, Michel, Geertse. "Competition and innovation in Dutch architecture competitions." 6th International Conference on Competitions 2016 Leeds, (2016).

<sup>32</sup>Svensson, Charlotte. "Inside the Jury Room." In *Paper in the proceeding to the Nordic conference on Architectural Inquiries Theories, methods and strategies in contemporary Nordic architectural research*. Nordic-Baltic Conference, pp. 24-26. 2008.

an open competition, they have limited time to categorize the various designs in grades: A, B, and C.<sup>33</sup> They do not have time to look through the design carefully but instead rush through it. Good presentations and renders might be key in this process and not so much the content and concept of the design. However, in an invited competition it is often more cruel and the 'soft criteria' is more important. In invited competitions, the jury might award an honorable mention to an outstanding entry design only because it violated the competition brief. Moreover they also have the power to recommend and continue an honorable mention to develop and complete the design. In Switzerland "competitions are allowed to rework, redesign or translate specifications given in the brief while judging the submitted architectural projects."<sup>34</sup> This creates an unfair and unreliable design environment. The decision on the final winning design is essential as it determines what is going to be built. The judgment again has to be based on drawings, renders, model and linguistic description of the architect. They have to base their decision on these virtual and abstract information which is rather hard. There is not a guarantee that the chosen design would work as it is promised. The decision that is made is a result of a dilemma, it is based on both emotional and sensual responses on the design, and the harsh rational criteria from the brief and the initially worked out technical elements.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the decision of the jury can go anywhere, from an excellent project to a poorly chosen one. But again the difference between

excellent and poorly can be seen from various stand points. The selection of the competitions is fairly subjective. In a case where the 'wrong' winning design is chosen it might be difficult to execute or it will not be built at all. As Sudjic explained in the example of the Cardiff Opera House competition in which Zara Hadid was selected as the winning project. The city tried whatever they could to replace her, when that did not work out the project was discontinued and abandoned.<sup>36</sup> The realization of the project highly depends on the municipality and the winning design.<sup>37</sup> If either of them do not work well with each other, the project will result in abandonment. The case of Hadid is not singular. Financial reasons are a major reason for their discontinuation. Finances are the most important element for the client. If the client thinks that the design provided little beneficial returns or it costs too much the project might be discarded. There is often a process of the financial negotiation between the contractor and the architect, to reduce the cost of the design.<sup>38</sup>

Competitions should be a safe field to innovate and experiment. However, this is not always possible in real life. The interest in competitions is making a shift from architecture to the commercial context, cost of the land, building, and real estate management is becoming more essential.<sup>39</sup>

It can be questioned if Depot Boijmans competition was also motivated from a

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<sup>33</sup>Sarab, Marjan Mohammadzdeh. "TRUDO Woensel West Competition" Because it is always a competition!. *Architprint*, Volume 2, issue 1, (2012). 18-21.

<sup>34</sup>Silberberger, Jan, Ignaz Strel, and Peter Tränkle. "The building process as a chain of displacements-Following a construction project from strategic planning through an architectural competition to the building permit." (2014).

<sup>35</sup>Manzoni, Beatrice, Leentje Volker, and Hedley Smyth. "Managerial implications for architectural competitions based on paradox theory." (2014).

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<sup>36</sup>Sudjic, Deyan. "Competitions: The pitfalls and the potential." *The politics of design: Competitions for public projects* (2005): 53-67.

<sup>37</sup>Rönn, Magnus. "The client regime in competitions-from requirement to professional praxis in selection of design teams to competitions." (2014).

<sup>38</sup>BNA, Michel, Geertse. "Competition and innovation in Dutch architecture competitions." 6th International Conference on Competitions 2016 Leeds, (2016).

<sup>39</sup>Rönn, Magnus. "The client regime in competitions-from requirement to professional praxis in selection of design teams to competitions." (2014).

more economical and political standpoint rather than in an innovative manner. In the following chapter two and three, the knowledge gained from the pros and cons of architecture competition will be used as a baseline in the architecture competition of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen. This is to create a neutral baseline to further investigate in architectural competitions. Despite the very new and innovative design proposals for the Depot competition, it is not clear how much the project was affected by the side-effects of competitions. The question is from which point of view the design is chosen innovation or economical. In the realisation phase, the municipality is the greatest force that pursues the proposal to be realised, despite the numerous objections against the design.

## 2. Boijmans Van Beuningen Depot Architecture Competition

In chapter two, the focus is on understanding the history of Boijmans Van Beuningen, the motivation behind a new Depot, the five selected proposals and the reason behind the winning competition proposal.

### 2.1 Boijmans Van Beuningen

Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum is an art museum displaying art from the middle ages all the way to contemporary art, located in the Museumpark in Rotterdam.<sup>40</sup> Several extensions and renovations took place to end the current status of Boijmans. The most recent renovation took place in 2008, the entrance space was redesigned, including a print room, depot and education space.<sup>41</sup>

In May 2008, Boijmans presented a plan for a larger depot. In 2007, MVRDV got the commission to make a plan for the extension. In 2008 at the Kunstrai, MVRDV founding partner Winy Maas presented the design. The concept was based on a 'picture frame' ([Figure 1](#)) which looks like an enlarged ikea LACK table. The depot would have been high in the sky to protect from floods, an open plan would be left for the ground level which also can function as an exhibition area and beneath an underground parking lot. The design of the Depot should be completed and begin to be constructed in

<sup>40</sup>Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, "Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen - een huis voor verbeelding, inspiratie en creativiteit", accessed: 03 March 2021. url: <https://www.boijmans.nl/over-het-museum>.

<sup>41</sup>Boijmans van Beuningen Museum, "De geschiedenis van het museumgebouw", accessed: 03 March 2021. url: <https://www.boijmans.nl/de-geschiedenis-van-het-museum-gebouw>.

2010.<sup>42</sup> There was a budget at the time to realise the extension. However, due to the change of municipal council at the time,<sup>43</sup> the budget was not enough to realise the project.<sup>44</sup> In the later competition MVRDV abandoned this proposal.

### 2.2 Motive for a new extension

The motivation for Boijmans Van Beuningen to build a new depot building was to fulfill the ambition and vision. In the Netherlands, it is very common for cities, urban spaces and museums to have visions. 'Visies' are future urban plans that determine the direction the cities and institutes are striving towards. They are guidelines to develop and create the ideal image of the city, district institute. In competitions visions are a useful source of information to find the interest of the city and institute. Rotterdam's vision is to develop itself towards a city well known for its distinctive architecture which boosts the surrounding urban area economically. They believe that young architects and firms should be involved in this process.<sup>45</sup> Boijmans aims to be an international example of Dutch Museums, active in Rotterdam, doubling the amount of visitors, dynamic organization and financially independent.<sup>46</sup> A competition

<sup>42</sup>BauNetz, Bilderrahmen MVRDV planen Museumserweiterung in Rotterdam, Accessed 02 March 2021, url: [https://www.baunetz.de/meldungen/Meldungen\\_MVRDV\\_planen\\_Museumserweiterung\\_in\\_Rotterdam\\_27898.html](https://www.baunetz.de/meldungen/Meldungen_MVRDV_planen_Museumserweiterung_in_Rotterdam_27898.html). (2007).

<sup>43</sup>ANP, Nu, "ROTTERDAM - Rotterdam kan geen geld vrijmaken om direct nieuwe opslagruimtes voor kunstwerken van Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen te bouwen", accessed March 05, 2021. url: <https://www.nu.nl/cultuur/2351030/geen-geld-nieuwe-depots-museum-boijmans.html>. (2010).

<sup>44</sup>George, Knight, debat tussen links en rechts, "Boijmans bouwt depotgebouw, bouwt depotgebouw, bouwt", accessed: 10 March 2021 url: <https://georgeknightlang.wordpress.com/2013/05/17/boijmans-bouwt-depotgebouw-bouwt-depotgebouw-bouwt/>. (2013).

<sup>45</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam, Rotterdam Achitecturestad, "Met ontwerpkraft bouwen aan Rotterdam", (2019).

<sup>46</sup>Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, "Collection Plan 2020-2021", (2019).

and extension might provide a large exposure of the press. Moreover, the new typology creates curiosity and interest. With the addition of the new function to the depot, opportunities are created to attract people to the area, investment opportunities from companies, to extend the municipal collection with private collection, etc.<sup>47</sup>

Another reason is the poor condition of the existing art storage in the basement of Boijmans Van Beuningen. On several occasions of heavy rainfall, the water would penetrate through the walls. This is not a suitable environment to store delicate art.<sup>48</sup> This occurred as early as 2005. In 2009, the depot Metaalhof was again disqualified in fire prevention and compartmentalization.<sup>49</sup> The depot renovation of the entrance in 2010 provided a temporary solution. However, it was clear that the depot at the time was also getting too small to contain all the pieces. Over the years, Boijmans also received several requests from private art collectors, asking if they were willing to store their art pieces,<sup>50</sup> and showcase the hidden collections to the public.<sup>51</sup> Within Depot Boijmans there should be enough space for municipal and private collections (14.000m<sup>2</sup>), art conservation and open to the public. The design ought to be highly attractive and should be realised within the budget.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup>Oosterom, B. Gemeente Rotterdam, Selectieleidraad 1-503-13 Architectenselectie, "Collectiegebouw Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen". (2013).

<sup>48</sup>Rijnmond, "Regen bedreigt kunst in Boijmans van Beuningen", accessed: March 18, 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/143338/Regen-bedeigt-kunst-in-Boijmans-van-Beuningen>. (2016).

<sup>49</sup>Museum boijmans van beuningen, Royal Haskoning, Gemeente Rotterdam stadsontwikkeling/dKC, "Programma van Eisen", Collectiegebouw Museum Boijmans van Beuningen definitief, 2013.

<sup>50</sup>Ibit.

<sup>51</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#ai\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#ai_1826998).

<sup>52</sup>"Programma van Eisen".

More detailed information can be found in the document: "Program Requirements (Programma van Eisen)".<sup>53</sup>

### 2.3 The five design selections

The competition attracted a total of 47 participants.<sup>54</sup> From the 47 proposals, five designs were selected to continue in the second round. Although it is an open competition, the selected designs are chosen based on the architect's experience, this is done by experts and related people.<sup>55</sup> The evaluation was based on two reference projects (30 points each) and the firm's portfolio (40 points). The five firms with the highest score were selected.<sup>56</sup> The firms are: MVRDV, MAD/NIO/Okra, Neutelings Riedijk, Koen van Velsen and Zwitsere Harry Gugger/Barcode Architects. The firms do have a very different approach towards the design brief. The location of the Depot Boijmans has to be chosen by the architects themselves. Interestingly all the five proposals chose the same location.<sup>57</sup> Their designs were released to the public from October 2013.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup>Ibit.

<sup>54</sup>Rijnmond, "Vijf ontwerpen Collectiegebouw Boijmans gepresenteerd," accessed January 04, 2021, utl:

<https://nieuws.top010.nl/vijf-ontwerpen-collectiegebouw-boijmans-gepresenteerd.htm>.(2013).

<sup>55</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam College van Burgemeester en Wethouders, "uitnodiging bezichtiging schetsontwerpen Collectiegebouw 12649S0", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl:

<https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/4132706/3#search=%22collectiegebouw%22>.

<sup>56</sup>Oosterom, B. Gemeente Rotterdam, Selectieleidraad 1-503-13 Architectenselectie, "Collectiegebouw Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen". (2013).

<sup>57</sup>Rijnmond, "Schetsen collectiegebouw Boijmans beken", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/106989/Boijmans-Park-wo- rdt-niet-volgebouwd>.

<sup>58</sup>Top010, "Expositie Collectiegebouw Museum Boijmans", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://nieuws.top010.nl/expositie-collectiegebouw-museum-boijmans.htm>.

### 2.3.1 MVRDV

The project is called 'De Pot (The Pot)'. MVRDV's vision was to create an opportunity for the city to gain a new international icon. The bowl like shape creates a small footprint. The zigzag staircases would lead the visitors to the collections and eventually to the rooftop, where the original trees on the spot are planted. 99% of the building can be visited on request. The facade reflects the surrounding and makes the park look bigger, and it is a contemporary camouflage.<sup>59</sup> ([Figure 2](#))

### 2.3.2 MAD/NIO/Okra

The name of the design is the 'Schatkist' which is the 'Treasure Chest' in English. The design is like the name itself; it is mysterious from the outside as is the inside. From the outside the design can be perceived as an upside down pyramid. Pyramids were built as a grave for a Pharaoh. There is no view or contact towards the outside. However, not every room can be explored, only twenty percent of the building is open to the public.<sup>60</sup> Despite the collaboration with a combination with a landscape architect, there are no trees in the design.<sup>61</sup> ([Figure 3](#))

### 2.3.3 Neutelings Riedijk

Neutelings Riedijk proposes a design that is like a warehouse for art. The 'Art Storehouse' in the city. The design is a slender tower with a small footprint so that the park is left minimally touched. This creates a spatially balanced relationship with and between its neighbours. The

<sup>59</sup>MVRDV, Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, accessed January 04, 2021, url: <https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/10/depot-boijmans-van-beuningen>.

<sup>60</sup>Rijnmond, "Vijf ontwerpen Collectiegebouw Boijmans gepresenteerd", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, url: <https://nieuws.top010.nl/vijf-ontwerpen-collectiegebouw-boijmans-gepresenteerd.htm>.

<sup>61</sup>"Schetsen collectiegebouw Boijmans beken".

tower is made up of two closed volumes, and these two volumes are connected with a monumental open space. Inside, visitors travel vertically in glass lifts, showcasing the normally not seen circulation of art. On the rooftop, the exhibition space, café and terrace are located.<sup>62</sup> ([Figure 4](#))

### 2.3.4 Koen van Velsen

The Koen Van Velsen proposal tried to fit in the context in its proposal. The cube is meant to be a recognisable, understated and no-nonsense cube that matches the colour, shape and finish of the surroundings. The building is: The essence in the concept is openness, simplicity and coherence. The large cuts out on every floor not only creates leveled sculptural gardens, but also provides entry of daylight even deep in the building.<sup>63</sup> Inside the different functions are ingeniously organised in a way that they are independent from each other. The space is flexible and adventurous.<sup>64</sup> ([Figure 5](#))

### 2.3.5 Zwitserse Harry Guggen/Barcode Architects

The design is based on a Dutch '(Pak) Huis (Ware) House'. The proposal is a reflective combination of the landscape of the Museumpark design by OMA & Yves Brunier and the functional typology of the harbours in Rotterdam. They took inspiration from these locations, layering the characteristics in a creative, contemporary way to create the '(Pak) Huis'.<sup>65</sup> ([Figure 6](#))

<sup>62</sup>Neutelings Riedijk, Ornament and Identity: The Public Buildings of Neutelings Riedijk Architects, (2018).

<sup>63</sup>Koen van Velsen Architects, "Collection Building Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen 2013", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, url: <http://www.koenvanvelsen.com/nl/projects/56>.

<sup>64</sup>"Vijf ontwerpen Collectiegebouw Boijmans gepresenteerd"

<sup>65</sup>lbit.



## 2.4 The reasons behind the winning design

The jury is the essential as mentioned in chapter one. The jury commission of Boijmans van Beuningen consists of seven members: Director of Real Estate of the Cluster Urban Development Municipality Rotterdam (Chairman no vote), landscape architect, Chief Government Architect of the Netherlands, Urban Designer at BVR, The Chairman of Supervisory Board of Boijmans van Beuningen, Director of Stichting De Verre Bergen, and Director of Inner City and Urban qualities of the Group Urban Development Municipality Rotterdam.<sup>66</sup> The jury came together twice in November 2013 to decide on the winning design.<sup>67</sup>

Verspui (Chairman) claims that the decision on the winner was a result of asking all the people that could be involved about their opinion on the designs.<sup>68</sup> In the exhibition the audience is allowed to give their comment that is written on paper which would be passed to the jury.<sup>69</sup> However, Ex said that the jury should make the decision on their own with no outer influence.<sup>70</sup> They used a system of grading in various categories: 'Fitting & form' (40%), 'Functionality' (20%), 'Presentation & Conversation' (20%) and 'Building Cost' (20%), the maximum score is ten. The winner of the competition was MVRDV with 7.0, and with MAD/NOI/OKRA second with a score

6.8.<sup>71</sup> The difference lies in the 'Presentation & Conversation' and 'Building Cost'. The conversation was mainly on the first. This criteria mainly consist of the understanding of the essence of the assignment, communication and attitude and professionalism.<sup>72</sup> The jury committee was convinced that MVRDV met all the requirements and received an eight. They had properly understood the essence of the assignment. The team showed that they had the skill and knowledge. They had the ability to form a good team with good attitude and professionalism.<sup>73</sup> MAD/NOI/OKRA on the other hand received a six, the concern laid in the inconsistency of the renders that were made, probably due to time pressure. However, this was considered unprofessional. In the conversations, it shows that the team is insufficiently balanced. For the jury this is evidence to prove that the attitude and professionalism is not sufficient.<sup>74</sup>

According to the jury commission, the proposal of MVRDV had a strong international allure and is innovative, they believe the design would add value to the Museumpark and Rotterdam. The design has a special facade which provides a new perspective to perceive and experience the surroundings. It has a 'small' footprint not counting the projection.<sup>75</sup>

In the congress, Verspui thought that it was not suitable to talk about why the other designs were not chosen.<sup>76</sup> Related

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<sup>66</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam, "Locatiekeuze Collectiegebouw 2005-2014", (2014).

<sup>67</sup>Rijnmond, Schetsen collectiegebouw Boijmans beken, (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/106989/Boijmans-Park-wo-rdt-niet-volgebouwd>.

<sup>68</sup>Verspui, Petra, Gemeente Rotterdam, "Vergadering Commissie Fysieke Infrastructuur en Buitenruimte (2010-2014) 12-02-2014", (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai\\_825960](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai_825960).

<sup>69</sup>"Schetsen collectiegebouw Boijmans beken".

<sup>70</sup>Ibid.

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<sup>71</sup>De Rechtspraak, Rechtbank Rotterdam, (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBROT:2014:692>.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>"Locatiekeuze Collectiegebouw 2005-2014".

<sup>76</sup>Vergadering Commissie Fysieke Infrastructuur en Buitenruimte (2010-2014) 12-02-2014"

documents were not made public and requests to those documents have not been accepted.

## 2.5 Concussion

In Boijmans Van Beunings case an architectural competition was a must, as it is part of the law discussed in chapter 1. However, for this competition the selection was harsh and purely based on the existing portfolio of the architects. This excluded numerous potential participants. The five selected firm's proposals can be divided in two groups, the reflective and 'new' (not seen before) and the 'copied' (conventional) designs. As the first and second place are MVRDV and MAD/NOI/OKRA who belong to the 'new', it can be suspected that the jury was wanting to see a 'new' design language.



### 3. The voices against the Depot

After the competition was won by MVRDV, the realisation process could begin. There were various elements that complicated this task. There were technological challenges about the advanced 'new' design proposals, which in turn triggers innovative and experimental methods. As the winning building was announced, voices against the design were growing and could not be ignored. The initial plan was to realise the Depot by 2017.<sup>77</sup> However, they eventually started to build in 2017 with an expectation to open in 2019.<sup>78</sup> Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen has been built and is expected to finish in September 2021.<sup>79</sup> In this chapter, objections, dilemmas and difficult situations that occurred between the various parties would be discussed.

#### 3.1 Court Cases

After the announcement was made that Depot was the winning design. There was a court case against the winning design. It was suspected that MVRDV was plagued guilty with plagiarism.<sup>80</sup> It was suspected that MVRDV and Ex the director of Boijmans Van Beuningen had a conversation which might have given them unfair information upon the competition.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup>Verspui, Petra, Gemeente Rotterdam, "Vergadering Commissie Fysieke Infrastructuur en Buitenruimte (2010-2014) 12-02-2014", (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai\\_825960](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai_825960).

<sup>78</sup>Rijnmond, "Bouw Collectiegebouw in maart van start", (2017), accessed January 04, 2021, <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/151081/Bouw-Collectiegebouw-in-maart-van-start>.

<sup>79</sup>MVRDV, Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen, accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/10/depot-boijmans-van-beuningen>.

<sup>80</sup>Architectenweb, "Uitsluiting MVRDV door fout Boijmans-directeur", (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl:

<https://architectenweb.nl/nieuws/artikel.aspx?ID=33936>.

<sup>81</sup>Ibit.

In the interview with Ex the director of Boijmans Van Beuningen, he explained that he and Winy Maas founder of MVRDV had a conversation about the competition while having coffee together, just small talk.<sup>82</sup> This happened in September 2013 shortly after the selection was made in May 2013.<sup>83</sup> However, according to the records made in the court, it was more than small talk. They talked about several detailed aspects about the design brief and Ex opinion.<sup>84</sup> It is forbidden to talk with the client or jury about the competition project to ensure the fairness among the other participants.<sup>85</sup> The client of the project and an experienced architect both thought that this was not against the rules. Ex talked to the Municipality unintentionally about his conversation with Maas which turned out to be against the rules, as all the communication had to go through the municipality. Despite that Ex left the jury, the competition did continue like normal. It was not until MVRDV was announced to be the winner of the competition in November 2013 that the municipality mentioned this issue again and disqualified the firm. MVRDV placed a summary procedure against the municipality of Rotterdam.<sup>86</sup> In February 2014, it was made clear that MVRDV was guilty of breaking the rules. Nevertheless, the punishment was too 'harsh', they were unrightfully disqualified.<sup>87</sup> However, in the previous chapter, MAD/MIO/Okra was in the second place and only 0.2 points away from winning with the biggest difference

<sup>82</sup>van der Spek, Joly, Rijnmond, MVRDV is allowed to build a Boijmans depot, (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl:

<https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/112082/MVRDV-mag-Boijmans-depot-bouwen>.

<sup>83</sup>De Rechtspraak, Rechtbank Rotterdam, (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBROT:2014:692>.

<sup>84</sup>Ibit.

<sup>85</sup>Kreuner, Kristein. "Constructing the client in Architectural Competitions." *Architectural Competitions—Histories and Practice*. KTH Royal Institute of Technology, 2013

<sup>86</sup>"MVRDV is allowed to build a Boijmans depot"

<sup>87</sup>"Rechtbank Rotterdam"

between the two in the 'Presentation & Communication' category.<sup>88</sup> Verspui said in the municipality meeting that the court case was just a procedure.<sup>89</sup> Kleijn pointed out if this was the right thing to do, that one can violate the rules and still win the competition.<sup>90</sup> There was no direct answer given in the debate.

### 3.2 Government council

The government council in the Netherlands is essential when it comes to the decision whether the winning design is built or not. The decision was made by the party members of the municipality of Rotterdam. Every party has a different amount of seats in the council depending on the amount of votes they received in the previous municipal election. At least half of the council members have to agree in order for the museum to receive an approval. The job of the municipality in this case is to decide whether or not to give permission to build Dept Boijmans. The decision that is made is highly dependent on the vision of the various parties.

In 2014, the selection of the winning design was made, however, a decision on the location and if the building will be realised would be made by the following commission. In this debate, different parties expressed their standpoints. However, their opinions were not relevant for the outcome. The people in the council would change, some parties might not

return back to the council to govern.<sup>91</sup> In 2015, the municipality council of Rotterdam consisted of 45 members of 10 different parties: D66, VVD, CDA, ChristenUnie-SGP, PvdA, Groenlinks, Nida Rotterdam, Sp, Partij van de Dieren and Leefbaar Rotterdam.<sup>92</sup> November 2015, the decision was made to continue the project, 11 out of the 45 council members disagreed.<sup>93</sup> Therefore, the location is definite. However, there were many voices from different parties who were against the location in the Museumpark; the voices against can be read in detail in chapter 3.4, 3.5. The council was convinced that the location was the best place despite the concerns.

The municipality of Rotterdam foresees the economical growth that the Depot Boijmans would bring. They see a great opportunity for the design to be a branding of the Netherlands in the arts, culture and architectural fields. With more capital on architecture, Rotterdam has the potential to be recognised as the city of architecture in the Netherlands, stimulating international reputation. The boost in architecture increases tourism from outside and inside. This creates more jobs and revenue in restaurants, hotels, shops etc. With the increasing reputation of the city it has a tendency to attract international talent and businesses. Great architecture would not only boost the economy, but also art and culture; and they all have economical values.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>De Rechtspraak, Rechtbank Rotterdam, (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://uitspraken.rechtspraak.nl/inziendocument?id=ECLI:NL:RBROT:2014:692>.

<sup>89</sup>Verspui, Petra, Gemeente Rotterdam, "Vergadering Commissie Fysieke Infrastructuur en Buitenruimte (2010-2014) 12-02-2014", (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai\\_825960](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai_825960).

<sup>90</sup>Kleijn, Gemeente Rotterdam, "Vergadering Commissie Fysieke Infrastructuur en Buitenruimte (2010-2014) 12-02-2014", (2014), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai\\_825960](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/61818#ai_825960).

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<sup>91</sup>Ibit.

<sup>92</sup>George Knight, Debat tussen links en rechts, "Rotterdamse raad omarmt langzaam collectiegebouw van Boijmans", accessed March 12, 2021, utl: <https://georgeknightlang.wordpress.com/2015/10/04/rotterdamse-raad-omarmt-langzaam-collectiegebouw-van-boijmans/>. (2015).

<sup>93</sup>Rijnmond, Groen licht voor bouw Collectiegebouw, (2015), accessed 05 March 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/144516/Rechter-houdt-plannen-Collectiegebouw-grotendeels-in-stand>.

<sup>94</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

The municipality has the power, making the final decisions and if it will make compensation. An example of this is Hadid's abandonment of the project named in chapter one. In all the further procedures of realisation, the municipality is involved. Their decision making and standpoint is essential for how the project would turn out and whether it would be realised or not.

### 3.3 Financial reasons

The cost of the Depot kept returning in the conversations on whether or not to build it. The financial budget is often decided by the municipal council of the city. The change of the council can easily influence it. An example is the early case from 2007, when the plan made by MVRDV was discontinued due to lack of finances. However, the municipal council in Rotterdam made a reserved 23 million for the Depot. After the change of council financial plans for the Depot were discontinued.<sup>95</sup> This discontinuation of the plan might be a result of the economical crisis in 2008. Finance was a key topic in the discussion. The party Leefbaar Rotterdam had to make sure that the subsidy of 2.5 million per year without inflation correction was enough to maintain the expenses of the project. The conditions for this was that other cultural activities in the city were not influenced and that the cost of the project would not be passed on to the citizens of Rotterdam.<sup>96</sup> However, various parties were concerned about the unrealistic

<sup>95</sup>ANP, Nu, "ROTTERDAM - Rotterdam kan geen geld vrijmaken om direct nieuwe opslagruimtes voor kunstwerken van Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen te bouwen", accessed March 05, 2021, utl: <https://www.nu.nl/cultuur/2351030/geen-geld-nieuwe-depots-museum-boijmans.html>. (2010).

<sup>96</sup>Leefbaar Rotterdam, "motie Meerkosten Collectiegebouw", (2015), accessed March 05, 2021, utl: <https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/4106781/3#search=%22collectiegebouw%22>.

budget and the negative consequences.<sup>97</sup> In 2012, Rotterdam reduced the budget for art and culture which led to 600.000 euro reduction for Boijmans. 200.000 euro was lost in profit last year. This led to dismissal of employees.<sup>98</sup> In 2015, Rotterdam had to reduce its expenses as the city was 20 million euros in debt.<sup>99</sup> In the same year, the art and culture council said that the project was too expensive and should not be realised.<sup>100</sup> However, this did not stop them to invest in the not yet existing Depot building. According to Cate, there is an amount of 70.000 euro spent on the advertisement of the Depot Boijmans. Lebbing claims that 27.000 euros was spent on news reports in 2015. This money has been spent by the municipality of Rotterdam.<sup>101</sup> More public promotion was done on social media, glossy pamphlets, websites, newspapers, journals, etc. How did they pay for all this?

The suggestion was made to reuse an empty building as this might reduce the cost and create value in another. However, this was rejected. It was thought that the cost would be similar or even higher due to the harsh conditions that have to be achieved to be created for art storage.<sup>102</sup>

In the end, the project cost around 61,5 million euros.<sup>103</sup> This is almost three times

<sup>97</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#ai\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#ai_1826998).

<sup>98</sup>Rijnmond, Boijmans ontslaat personeel en schrapt tentoonstelling, (2012), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/92880/Boijmans-ontslaat-personeel-en-schrapt-tentoonstellingen>.

<sup>99</sup>Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015".

<sup>100</sup>Rotterdamse Raad voor Kunst en Cultuur, "Adviezen Collectiegebouw", (2015).

<sup>101</sup>Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015".

<sup>102</sup>Ibit.

<sup>103</sup>Persberichten Gemeente Rotterdam, "Start bouw van Collectiegebouw", (2017), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://persberichtenrotterdam.nl/blog/persbericht/start-bouw-van-collectiegebouw/>.

the original budget. Where does this money come from? The project received an amount of fifteen million euros from the Stichting de Verre Bergen,<sup>104</sup> who later in 2016 added two million extra.<sup>105</sup> In 2018, BankGiro Loterij gave 1.5 million euro to Depot Boijmans.<sup>106</sup> Before the building was being built, 70% of the private depot had to be rented out.<sup>107</sup> However, this was not met. Later, Ex said at the end of 2016 that companies with collections can also rent a depot, KPN would be the first company to rent a place.<sup>108</sup> This is done to create more income in order to continue the project.

Inhabitants with property near the Depot Boijmans are afraid that with the construction of the building, there would be damage to their houses. This already happened once when the construction was done on the underground parking. When this happens the inhabitants are able to claim financial compensation from the municipality. This would be another source of expenditure for the city council.<sup>109</sup>

In 2017, Depot Boijmans was started to be built. In December 2017, the project was

delayed due to suspicion about a moved foundation which led to a 40 centimeter deviation, this cost an extra 4,2 million euros.<sup>110</sup> The municipality and Stichting de Verre Bergen paid 2,9 million, the rest had to be paid by the contractor. The municipality decided that no more money will be given for further delays.<sup>111</sup> The collapse of the car garage at Eindhoven Airport, had the same floor structure as the Depot. Therefore, the constitution had to be reinforced. The extra fees of 1.6 million euros were paid by the municipality and the research costs were paid by Bam.<sup>112</sup> The facade of Depot Boijmans is very innovative, however, to realise it plenty of research and experimentation had to be done and that is expensive. The curved reflective facade and entrance doors consist of 1664 panels that were produced in China.<sup>113</sup> In 2018, to solve the shortage of money, the municipality set another two million free for the Depot, Boijmans canceled part of the solar panels and De Verre Bergen does not have to pay for tax on the donation to the Depot.<sup>114</sup>

In 2018, The municipality of Rotterdam agreed to the 223,5 million euro renovation cost of the Boijmans Van

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<sup>104</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

<sup>105</sup>Rijnmond, Gemeenteraad beslist over Collectiegebouw Museumpark, (2016), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/149743/Gemeenteraad-beslist-over-Collectiegebouw-Museumpark>.

<sup>106</sup>Rijnmond, Rotterdamse musea krijgen geld van BankGiro Loterij, 2018, accessed: 2021, April 1. utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/165150/Rotterdamse-musea-krijgen-geld-van-BankGiro-Loterij>.

<sup>107</sup>Rijnmond, "Raad Rotterdam akkoord met komst Collectiegebouw: 'Dit was het 'go'f 'no go'-moment", (2016), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/media/69291/Raad-Rotterdam-akkkoord-met-komst-Collectiegebouw-Dit-was-het-go-of-no-go-moment>.

<sup>108</sup>Rijnmond, KPN huisvest bedrijfscollectie in nieuw Collectiegebouw Boijmans, (2016), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/150166/KPN-huisvest-bedrijfscollectie-in-nieuw-Collectiegebouw-Boijmans>.

<sup>109</sup>"Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015".

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<sup>110</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam, College van burgemeester en wethouders, Cluster Stadsontwikkeling BS 18/00524 - 18bb5082, "Collectiegebouw voortgang", (2018) accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/6629618/1/s18bb005082\\_3\\_34031\\_tds](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/6629618/1/s18bb005082_3_34031_tds).

<sup>111</sup>Rijnmond, Geen geld meer voor tegenvallers bouw Collectiegebouw, (2018), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/171358/Geen-geld-meer-voor-tegenvallers-bouw-Collectiegebouw>.

<sup>112</sup>De Koning, Adrienne, "Te weinig geld in pot voor tegenvallers Depot Boijmans", (2017) accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/te-weinig-geld-in-pot-voor-tegenvallers-depot-boijmans~ae81eed7/>

<sup>113</sup>Raam en Deuren, "In de rubriek bouwplaats: Nieuwbouw Collectiegebouw Boijmans Van Beuningen Rotterdam", no.4 (2019), 8-11.

<sup>114</sup>De Koning, Adrienne, "Gemeente Rotterdam left twee miljoen bij voor tekort op nieuwe Depot Boijmans", (2017) accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/gemeente-rotterdam-legt-twee-miljoen-bij-voor-tekort-op-nieuw-depot-boijmans~a66518a7/>.

Beuningen.<sup>115</sup> In comparison with the money spent on Depot Boijmans, it does not seem that much anymore.

### 3.4 Museumpark

Depot Boijmans is planned to be built in the Museumpark of Rotterdam. The Municipality claims that the Depot Boijmans would benefit all the institutes in the museumpark.<sup>116</sup> As early as in 2013, several institutes had collectively stated their doubts about Depot Boijmans including Het Natuurhistorisch, Chabot Museum, Arminius, Kunsthal Rotterdam, Het Nieuwe Instituut and Internationale Architectuur Biennale Rotterdam.<sup>117</sup> In 2015, several cultural institutes were added, including: Stichting Museum, Erasmus Medical Centre, Erfgoedvereniging Bond Heemschut, Stichting Vrienden van het Park, Stichting De Bomenridders, Cultureel Ondernemers (Maritiem Museum), Onderzoek in de cultuursector), Kunst en Stadswerk, etc.<sup>118</sup> The main reason against the Depot Boijmans building was the location, design, financial concerns, and the relation of the building to the park. On May 27, 2015, there was a meeting where various institutes and inhabitants of Rotterdam including people with backgrounds in architecture, landscape, urban design, artist, culture, sociology and real estate could give their reason to be

against or for the plans of Depot Boijmans.<sup>119</sup>

The location of the Depot in the museumpark was one of the most mentioned arguments. The concept of the Museumpark was made in 1990, the park itself is supposed to be a piece of art with spatial experiences that was reinforced by the museums surrounding it. The concept of the Museumpark was never fully realised, which is taken advantage of to select the building location for Depot Boijmans.<sup>120</sup> The choice of the location is not chosen because of the qualities that the building can provide, but a location where it is possible to build it. The voices against the location are about the preservation of green space in the city centre of Rotterdam. It is considered precious and should not be touched. The choice of location is considered unrespectful to the park, especially the experience and sightlines. The design of the Chabot Museum is fully based on the sightlines from the Museumpark, with the Depot these sightlines would be polluted. The director of HNI was concerned about the ecology of the cultural infrastructure, this includes the relation of the artist, art institute and the cultural budget.<sup>121</sup> In 2016, Coenen, the original architect of Het Nieuwe Instituut, was against the Depot. According to him there would be too much attention taken away from the HNI, and the Depot is too close to HNI.<sup>122</sup> The example of Central Park in New York is used, the park is untouchable for everyone, this green area is precious and dealt with respect. Vrienden van de Park provided various alternative proposals for the location of the park. Nevertheless,

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<sup>115</sup>Rijnmond, "Boijmans krijgt 'in principe' meest dure verbouwing", (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/176420/Boijmans-krijgt-in-principe-meest-dure-verbouwing>.

<sup>116</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

<sup>117</sup>Kunsthal, open brief, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/document/2204699/1#search=%22kunsthal%22>.

<sup>118</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015".

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<sup>119</sup>Ibit.

<sup>120</sup>Ibit.

<sup>121</sup>Ibit.

<sup>122</sup>Rijnmond, Architect Nieuwe Instituut maakt bezwaar tegen Collectiegebouw, (2016). Accessed: 2021, March 06, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/149694/Architect-Nieuwe-Instituut-maakt-bezwaar-tegen-Collectiegebouw>.



they seem to not be investigated at all. Suggestions were made to locate the Depot on a new place where there is not that much development instead of in a location where art is already dense.<sup>123</sup> This suggestion was rejected. As early as in 2013, Ex made it clear that the location has to be in the Museumpark. He said that if the depot was in another place no one would go there and Rotterdam would not benefit from it as much.<sup>124</sup> In 2015, he had the same argument and insisted despite the people against that the Depot has to be in the Museumpark which is according to him the perfect location nowhere else would be suitable.<sup>125</sup> The municipal council is also convinced that the clustering of museums is highly successful. The building should significantly increase visitation, the building should attract 90.000 paying visitors per year.<sup>126</sup>

In March 2016, the trees that were on the location of the Depot were decided to be removed, according to the municipality this is due to the possibility that the trees might be 'sick' from access water in the ground. At this moment of time, the Depot was not yet definite. In two months the court would give the decision whether or not the building will be given permission to be built. Vrienden van the Park are suspicious about the reason and timing. The tree expert Sneep has also his doubts; the supposed sickness of the

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<sup>123</sup> Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

<sup>124</sup>Rijnmond, Schetsen collectiegebouw Boijmans bekend, (2013), Accessed: 2021, March 06, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/108439/Schetsen-collectiegebouw-Boijmans-bekend>.

<sup>125</sup>Rijnmond, Kunstraad negatief over Depot Boijmans, (2015), Accessed: 2021, March 06, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/127838/Kunstraad-negatief-over-depot-Boijmans>.

<sup>126</sup>AD, "Collectiegebouw en Coolsingel fors duurder", (2016), Accessed: 2021, March 06, utl: <https://www.ad.nl/rotterdam/collectiegebouw-en-coolsingel-fors-duurder-ab5686d2/>.

trees would be investigated after they are removed. He questions why not investigate before removing.<sup>127</sup> Verspui is the person being interviewed who was the chairman in the jury of the competition.<sup>128</sup> It can be doubted if all this is simply a coincidence.

After the decision to realise the building, little to none is done about the location of Depot Boijmans. It is surprising to witness that the voices of several experts in the cultural, architectural and landscape are not convincing enough to have the slightest change.

### 3.5 Erasmus medical centre

The Erasmus Medical Centre is next to the location of Depot Boijmans. The concerns that come from the childerence department of the Hospital. The playing area of the children is next to the Depot, with the reflecting facade the children would be exposed to the public. This is not feasible and EMC would like to have privacy for the children. Another problem is the department of children psychiatry is also next to the depot. The concern is that with the reflective facade the children would get too many stimulants which confuses them. It is unlike the summer festivals that are organised occasionally, the building is standing there 24/7.<sup>129</sup>

The objection of the EMC has to do with the combination of the location and the design.<sup>130</sup> If the location is somewhere else it would not have been a problem.

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<sup>127</sup>Rijnmond, "Bomen Museumpark zijn ziek en moeten weg", (2016), accessed 05 March 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/139821/Bomen-Museumpark-zijn-ziek-en-moeten-weg>.

<sup>128</sup>Gemeente Rotterdam, "Locatiekeuze Collectiegebouw 2005-2014", 2014.

<sup>129</sup>"Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015".

<sup>130</sup>Rijnmond, "Geen halt op voorbereidingen collectiegebouw", (2016), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/139515/Geen-halt-op-voorbereidingen-collectiegebouw-Boijmans>.

And the same goes for a different design on the location. In January 2014, EMC delivered a document about the concerns from EMC about the change of location and the design was ignored. The municipality initially thought that planting a row of trees or a high fence would solve the objection against the Depot Boijmans. Several members of the council believed this until Riemersma the director of program integral construction made the problem clear.<sup>131</sup> However, with the decision making of the municipal council in November 2015, they did not include the concerns of the EMC. They voted for the plan even without finding a solution.<sup>132</sup> However, with this agreement of the municipal council there were still voices against. In 2016, the judge permitted the construction of the Depot with the underlying condition to change part of the design. The oppositions are no longer able to interfere. For the EMC, the solution that is made is to matten the reflective facade of the Depot. This has to make it impossible for the visitors to look inside the territory of EMC from the roof terrace, inside and outside the Depot, and vice versa for the children in EMC.<sup>133</sup> This outcome is a shame for the design of MVRDV. The solution for the EMC is not ideal either.

### 3.6 The Design

The design of MVRDV is also criticised by various parties. The impressions and

renders are the only reference are misleading; they create fantasies, and do not make people realise how a reflective building looks like. The height and big volume are not reflected in the render. Model with only the depot and not the buildings behind. In the plan of the building footprint is counted, however that should have been the projection and not the footprint.<sup>134</sup>

There is too little research done on the consequences of the building on the reflection of light and sound, and how the wind behaves around the building. What are the effects on the surrounding and the cars on the road? How to clean a reflective facade which is curved at the same time?<sup>135</sup>

In May 2015, the modern art museum the Kunsthal was highly concerned about the program of the Depot building. According to the director Ansenk, the primary function of the Depot is to store art, however, with the new function of Depot Boijmans to be accessible by the public, and have open space for art in the long term she is afraid that the concept of the Depot is too similar to that of the Kunsthal. As a result, a diminution of visitors in the Kunsthal. Her concern is that it will become the second 'Kunsthal' and not a Depot.<sup>136</sup> The Depot can become the cannibal of the museum park.<sup>137</sup> The concern would be gone if there are no free space for exhibition.

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<sup>131</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

<sup>132</sup>Rijnmond, Groen licht voor bouw Collectiegebouw, (2015), accessed 05 March 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/144516/Rechter-houdt-plannen-Collectiegebouw-grotendeels-in-stand>.

<sup>133</sup>Rijnmond, Rechter houdt plannen Collectiegebouw grotendeels in stand, (2016), accessed 05 March 2021, utl: <https://www.rijnmond.nl/nieuws/144516/Rechter-houdt-plannen-Collectiegebouw-grotendeels-in-stand>.

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<sup>134</sup>Gemeenteraad, Gemeente Rotterdam, Vergadering Commissie Bouw, Wonen en Buitenruimte 27-05-2015, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: [https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a\\_i\\_1826998](https://rotterdam.raadsinformatie.nl/vergadering/181758#a_i_1826998).

<sup>135</sup>Ibit.

<sup>136</sup>Ibit.

<sup>137</sup>Ibit.



## Discussion

The main goal of the new extension is to promote Boijmans but also Rotterdam and boost the economy by increasing the number of visitors nationally and internationally. The first step was attracting attention by a design competition. In chapter one, the mutual importance of young talent in architecture competitions is mentioned. Rotterdam is welcoming them to design in their vision. However, in the depot competition they were excluded. Only very experienced, accomplished and internationally known architects were selected. It is clear that Boijmans and Rotterdam wanted an iconic design, made by a famous architect. Like many designs made by famous architects, it motivates people to come and see the spectacular design. Indeed, they got what they wanted. The jury chose MVRDV as the winner. The competition was won with a slight advantage to MAD/NOI/OKRA. Both these are a 'new' design language which works well with a new typology which are preferred in competitions.

However, there were some bumps on the road. MVRDV was disqualified after suspicion of plagiarism. It is hard not to notice the shady bits about the finally won court case. The first is that despite knowing about the conversation between Ex and Maas, immediate action was held. The fact that they both thought that the conversation would have done no harm is surprising. The winning design was won in the category 'Presentation & Communication'. The jury committee said that MVRDV had a good understanding of the project. Nevertheless, it can not be unthought that this might have been a result of the conversation between the two. In addition, MVRDV already won the earlier design in 2007. Should this count

as heard start as well? If it was an exam would it not be one an open book exam? The court case was won and the municipality did not investigate further. Verspui said that this is part of a 'procedure'. MVRDV officially won. But, the violation of the rules did not have consequences.

However, winning is 'easy' realising it is another story. Numerous people were against the new depot, especially the location. The objections to building in the Museumpark came from various institutes and accomplished individuals. They gave their concerns, complaints and solutions. However, the municipality decided to continue the plans with no change. Advice from experts in the field of arts and culture were ruthlessly ignored. Before the judge made the call to continue or discontinue the project, the municipality decided that the trees in the Voorportaal needed to be removed. In the same month the announcement was made. It is susipied if this decision was to claim that the Depot would be built anyway? Ex pointed out that other locations would simply not work, people would not go there. The best way is to cluster. However, other museum directors say the opposite. Was this with the intention to introduce more visitors to the Boijmans museum as well? The combination of design and location concerned Erasmus MC about the health of young patients. The municipality thought that EMC agreed to the compensations of planting trees and high fences between the Depot and the clinic. It was not until the EMC sued the municipality that they had to make changes which were blurring the reflective facade. How could this happen? Verspui, the chairman of the jury said that they asked everyone they could find, and they all wanted the Depot. And enough research was done, right? It seems for

some reason that the design and location had to be that combination.

Depot Boijmans was heavily promoted in various ways. Early on this was done with reports of the problems with depot in Boijmans Van Beuningen, then the competition in 2007, afterwards the competition in 2013 interestingly both 'coincidentally' won by MVRDV. The building process is also heavily promoted. In the form of paid flyers, news, social media, journals websites, etc. This all cost money. According to the project brief, the building cost had to be within the budget. In the end, 61.5 million that has been spent on the project almost tripled the original budget. The question might be what is the limitation of this increasing financial help. There was a strict budget, however, every time that there was a shortage that could lead in abandonment of the project. The municipality helped out. The design had to be realised. This was done either with making money free for the project or other paths which include reducing tax payment from different parties. This seems almost absurd, but the main point of investing is to receive some kind of return. Depot Boijmans can create larger benefits for the city as a whole. However, the road towards this result with the competition and realisation of Depot Boijmans seemed to have some shady parts.

The architectural competition should be innovative and experimental, however, in the case of Depot Boijmans it is more based on the economical benefits that come with the project. The Depot Boijmans has made plenty of innovations on the facade and suitable area, however, this is with the support of the municipality that made it possible. With a limit this will not have been realistic. Nevertheless, the municipality is willing to invest as long it has benefits returning in the future.

## Conclusion

Architectural competitions are a good way to introduce new blood to the discipline. Promotion of the project and architect are often positive side effects. Competitions are great for publicity of one's work. For public buildings competitions are a must. However, the procedure is not always ideal. The highest cost-benefit ratio is strived to be achieved. The winning design is chosen completely based on background and personal taste and thus high risks are involved. Another pitfall is that competition designs are not always realised and the process is highly dependent on the municipality. 'Due to the high risks architecture competitions have a tendency to be more economical than innovative.'

In the Depot competition the five firms were selected based on their portfolio, thus excluding the young. The first and second place design had the notion of 'new' design language in common, this is often seen in architectural competitions. The limited information found about the judgment of the jury was not convincing.

After a winning design is chosen there are always opposing parties. This would create delays in the realisation phase. In Depot Boijmans the complications were: guilty in violation of the rules, change in government council, financial problems, objection against the location of the design, problems with the children clinic next door and the design itself. There were dilemmas and difficult situations could be solved with compensations. However, in many cases the suggestions were ignored. The standpoint of the municipality and Boijmans was that the cost-benefit ratio should be highest and ought not to be affected by anything standing in its way, unless the court gave them wrong.

The Depot Boijmans would be realised in September 2021. It took them over a decade to make it finally happen. There are high budgets and high hopes placed in Depot Boijmans. It is innovative and creates a new perspective on the architecture and cities. However, the hopes lie higher in the economical and political area. With the addition of the new Depot, a new icon is added, hoping to increase the local economy.



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Image Reference



The Table MVRDV

Figure 1<sup>138</sup>



DePot MVRDV

Figure 2<sup>139</sup>



Schatkist MAD/NIO/Okra



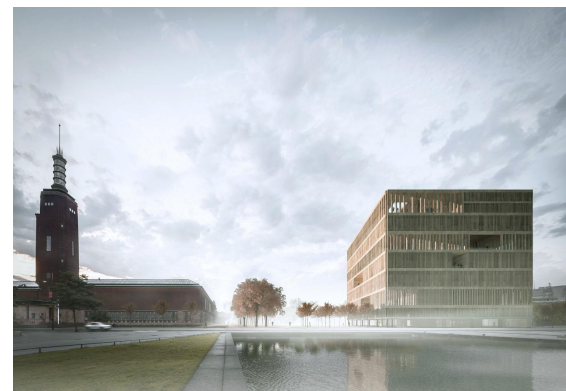
Neutelings Riedijk

Figure 3<sup>140</sup>



Zwitserse Harry Guggen/Barcode Architects

Figure 4<sup>141</sup>



Koen Van Velsen

Figure 5<sup>142</sup>

<sup>138</sup>MVRDV, Boijmans Art Depot, (2015), accessed: 2021, March 07, utl: <https://www.mvrdv.nl/projects/83/boijmans-art-depot>.  
<sup>139</sup>Rijnmond, "Vijf ontwerpen Collectiegebouw Boijmans gepresenteerd", (2013), accessed January 04, 2021, utl: <https://nieuws.top010.nl/vijf-ontwerpen-collectiegebouw-boijmans-gepresenteerd.htm>.

<sup>140</sup>Ibit.  
<sup>141</sup>Ibit.  
<sup>142</sup>Ibit.  
<sup>143</sup>Ibit.

