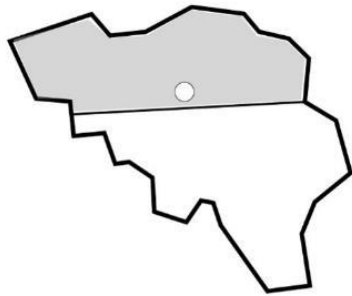


A grayscale photograph of an architectural studio. On the left, a large map of a coastal region is pinned to a wall. To the right, a wall is covered with a grid of numerous small architectural drawings and plans. In the foreground, a drafting table with a light box and a desk lamp is visible on the left, and a small architectural model sits on the right.

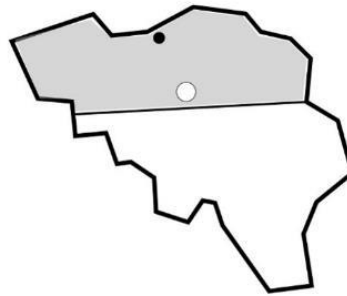
BOUWMEESTER MAITREARCHITECTE



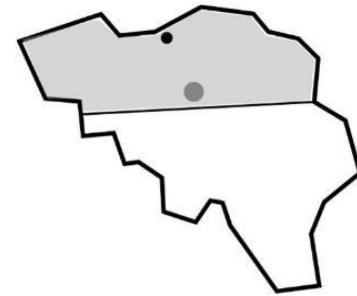
The « Bouwmeester » in Belgium



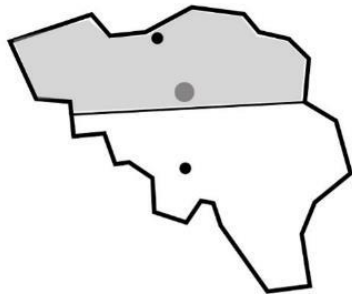
1999
Flanders



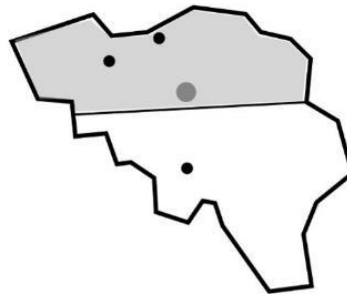
2000
Antwerp



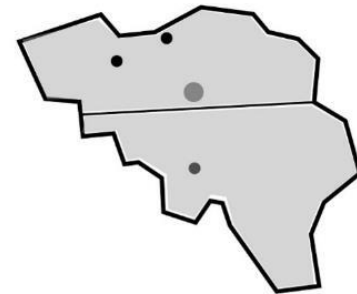
2009
Brussels



2013
Charleroi



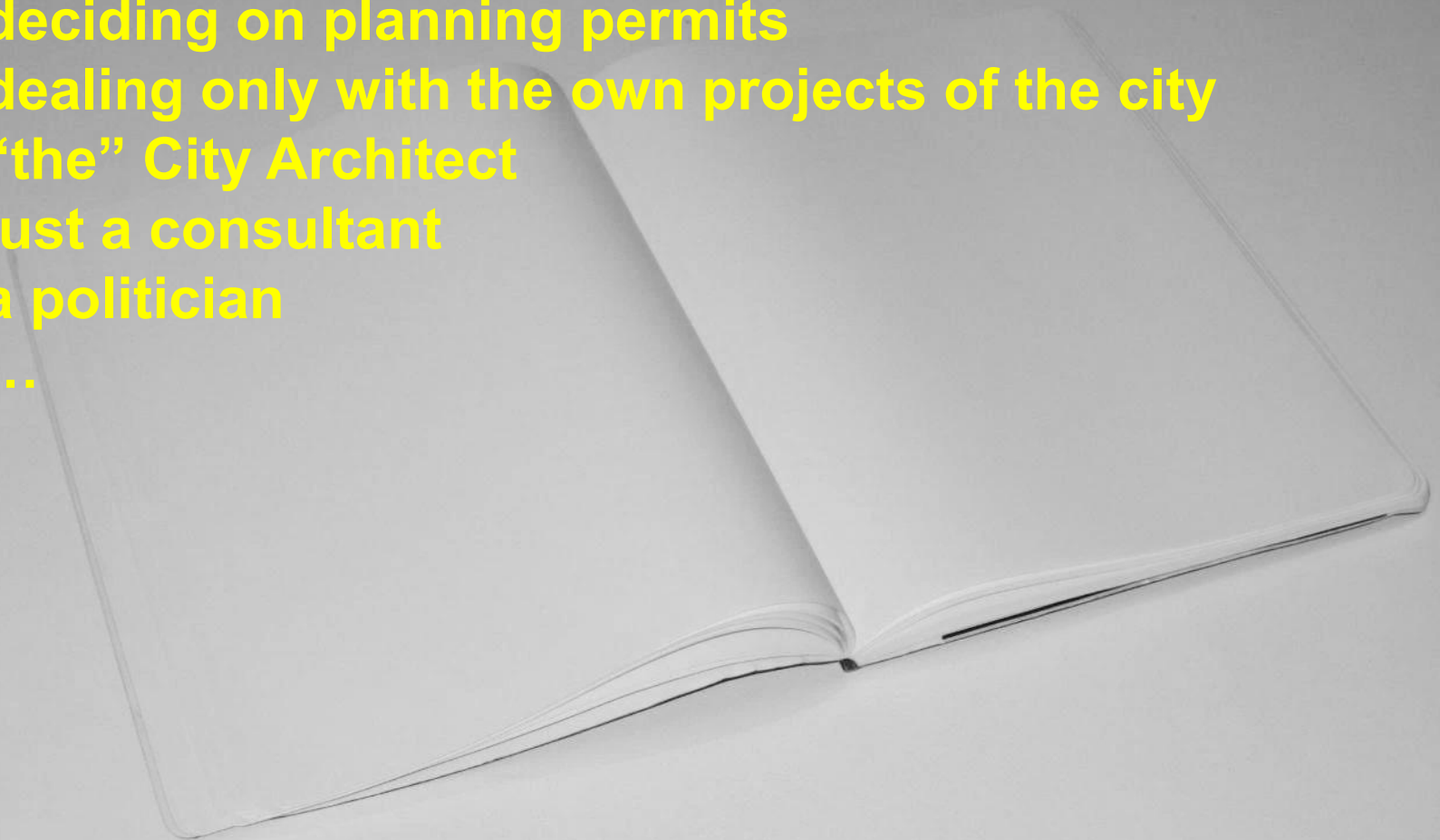
2017
Ghent



2025 ?
Wallonia

The Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA) is NOT:

- head of the planning administration
- deciding on planning permits
- dealing only with the own projects of the city
- “the” City Architect
- just a consultant
- a politician
- ...



The Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA) is NOT:

- head of the planning administration
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- ...

The BMA is a government appointed official
– however working in an independent position –
in charge of improving the design quality of urban
development projects in Brussels.

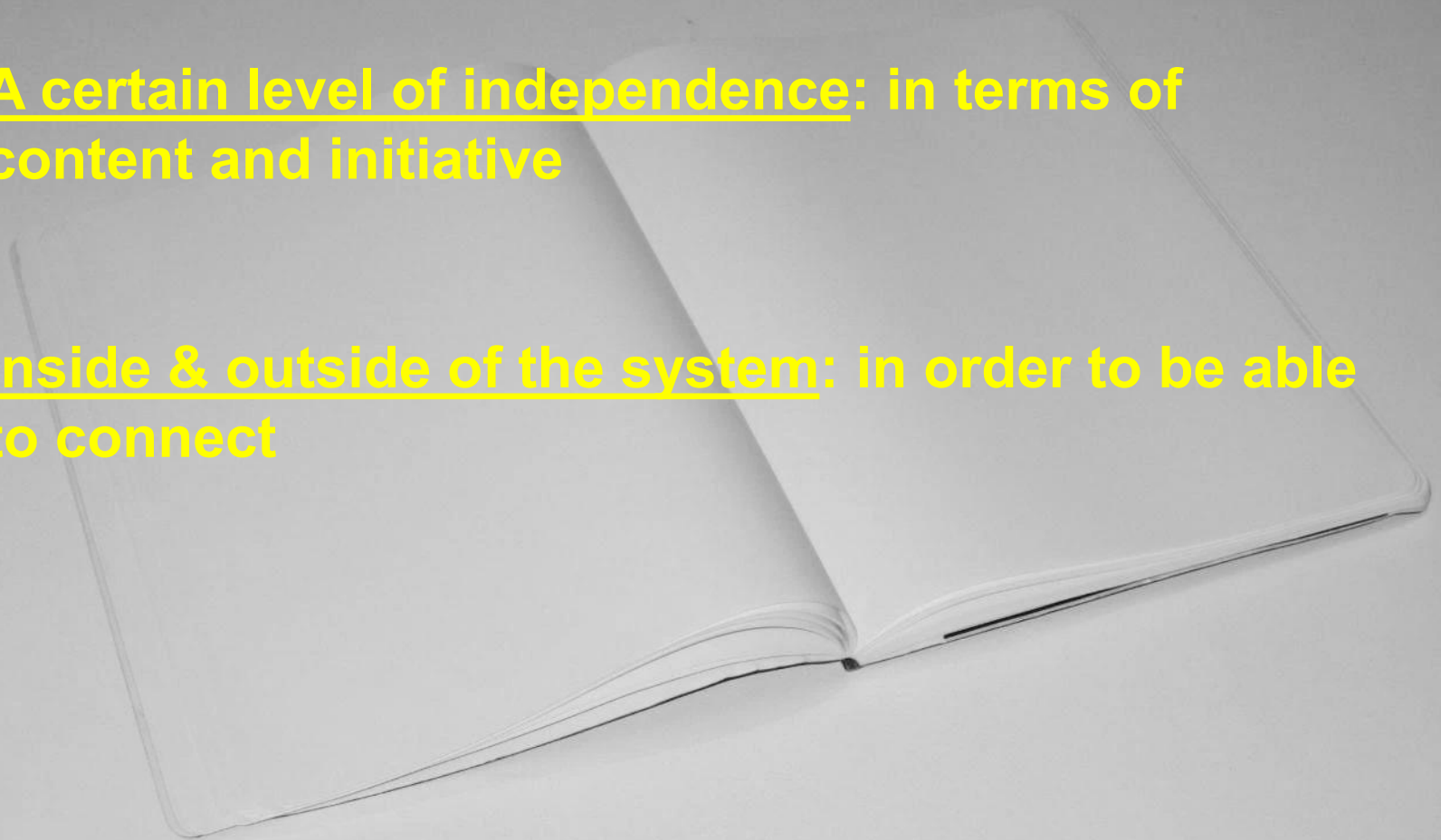
Critical Success Factors for City Architects?

- ✓ A certain level of independence: in terms of content and initiative

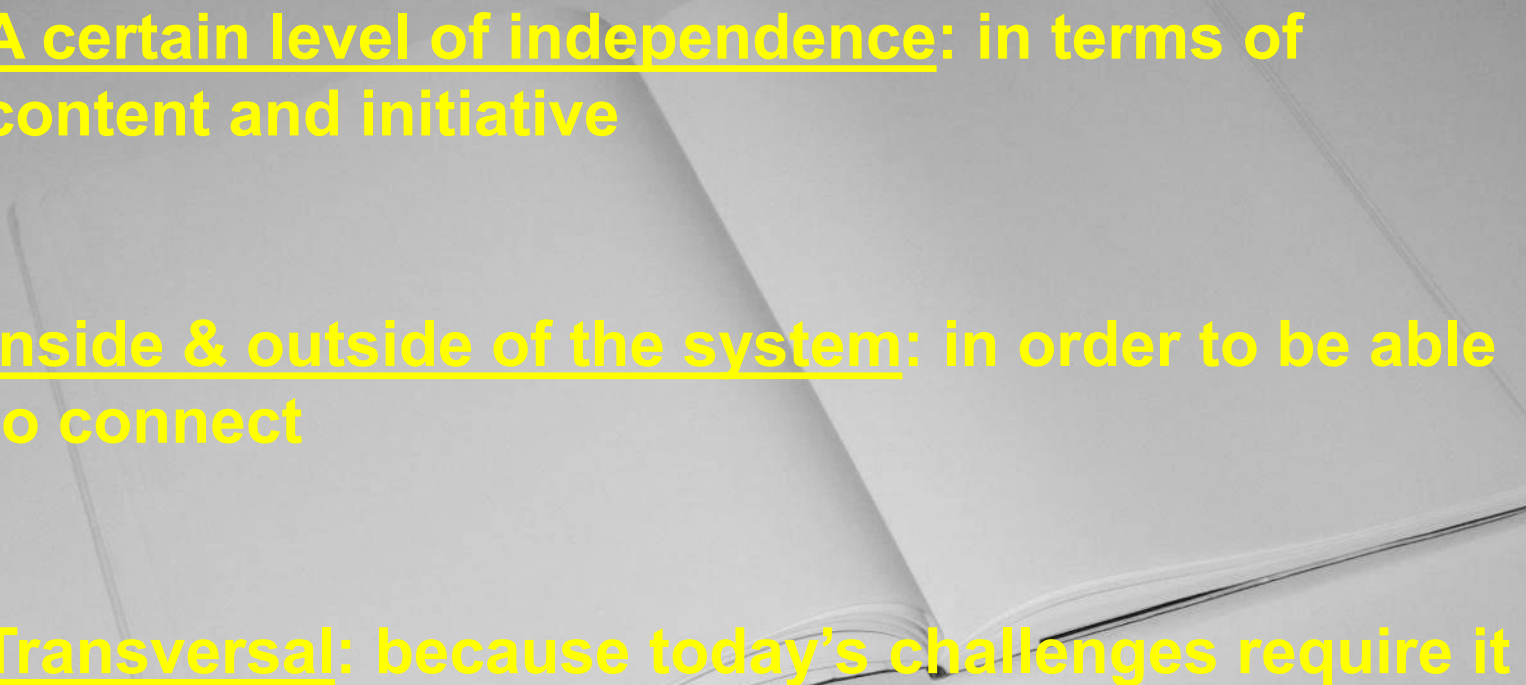


Critical Success Factors for City Architects?

- ✓ A certain level of independence: in terms of content and initiative
- ✓ Inside & outside of the system: in order to be able to connect



Critical Success Factors for City Architects?

- ✓ A certain level of independence: in terms of content and initiative
 - ✓ Inside & outside of the system: in order to be able to connect
 - ✓ Transversal: because today's challenges require it
- 

Urban Maestro

New governance strategies for Urban Design

It focuses on the “soft power”
modalities of urban design
governance and the approaches
where public authorities act in a
semi-formal or informal capacity for
improving spatial quality in cities
across Europe

UN HABITAT

BOUWMEESTERMAITRE ARCHITECTE



BMA & TEAM BMA

- The BMA is appointed for a **5-year term**
- The working of BMA is **financed by the region**
- A **team of 15 people** collaborates with the BMA



WHAT WE DO

BMA uses **a number of tools** to support clients and public authorities throughout the entire process, from the project definition right up until the delivery **in order to improve the quality of urban projects.**

ORGANISE A COMPETITION

The design competition is BMA's most important tool. Competitions put assignments for architecture, urban planning or public space on the market openly and push up the quality of the projects.

RESEARCH BY DESIGN

This tool, which exists at BMA since 2016, intervenes as early as possible in the design process and contributes in its own way to the quality of projects. The drawing is at the heart of Research by design.

ASKING FOR A DESIGN REVIEW

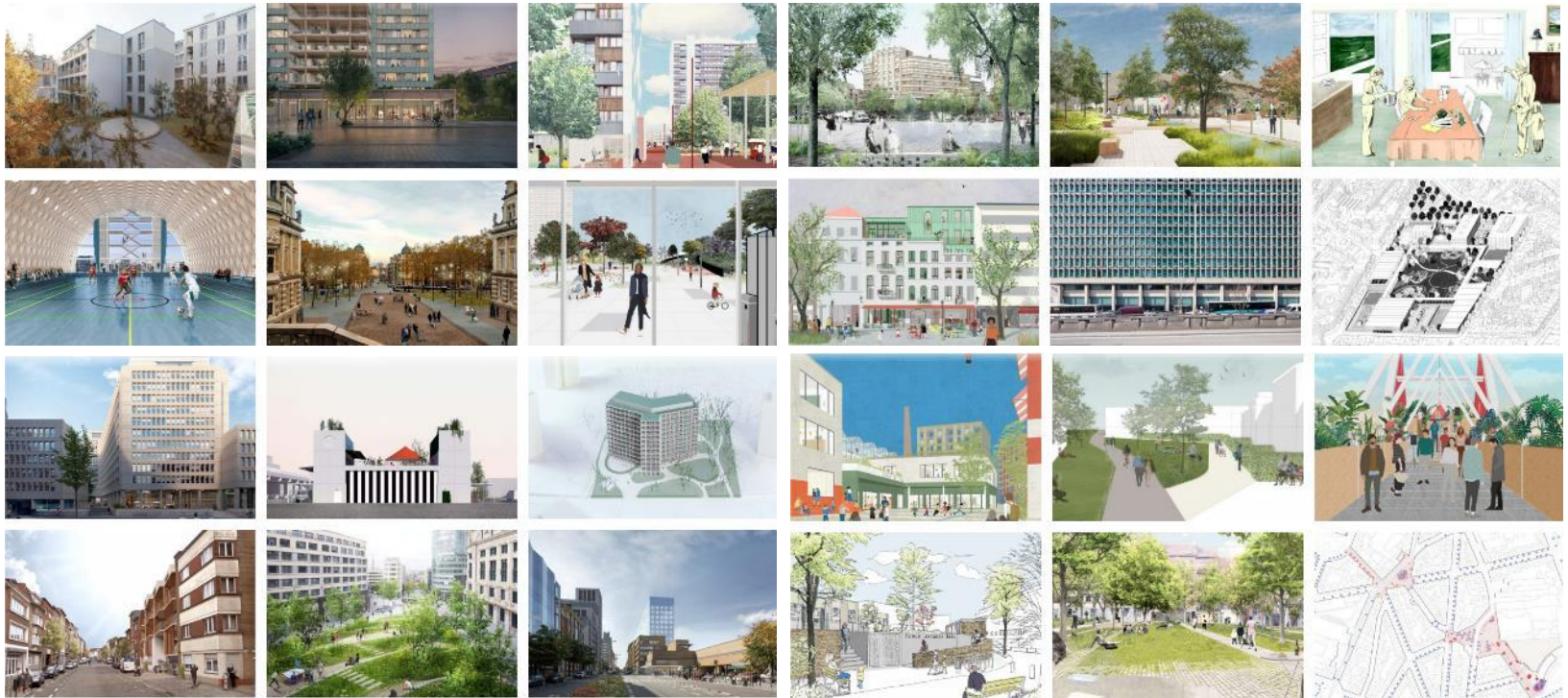
The earlier the dialogue on the quality of a project is initiated, the more fruitful it will be. Indeed, asking the BMA for its opinion on the eve of a permit application does not allow for a calm discussion of the project.

LABEL

With the BMA Label, we help advance unsolicited proposals from citizens' initiatives or from research and design practice, which is still in its early stages. Every year, BMA looks for three fresh ideas.

COMPETITIONS

Competitions offer an **open, fair and transparent** way of awarding architectural, urban and public space contracts with a focus on delivering high-quality projects, with both **public and private clients**. BMA launched **since 2015 more than 400** competitions, that is an average of **1 competition per week**.



10 BMA

POINTS

FOR

A GOOD

COMPETITION

Stage 1

- **Clear programme and ambitions**
- **No lowest price mechanisms**
- **Public call for applications**
- **Low access conditions**
- **Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal**

Stage 2

- **Remuneration of the proposal**
- **Jury criteria on quality and essentials**
- **Oral presentation for a jury**
- **Transparency in decision and communication**

10 BMA

POINTS

FOR

A GOOD

COMPETITION

Stage 1

- Clear programme and conditions
- **No lowest price mechanisms: *architect's fee is fixed on beforehand; not budget estimate but credibility of budget estimate is evaluated***
- Public call for applications
- Low access conditions
- Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal

Stage 2

- Remuneration of the proposal
- Jury criteria on quality and essentials
- Oral presentation for a jury
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10 BMA

POINTS

FOR

A GOOD

COMPETITION

Stage 1

- Clear programme and conditions
- Architect's fee is fixed
- Public call for applications
- **Low access conditions: no turnover asked, max. 3 references (1 for 30-50% of budget), specific motivation note for each project**
- Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal

Stage 2

- Remuneration of the proposal
- Jury criteria on quality and essentials
- Oral presentation for a jury
- Transparency in decision and communication



KANAL-Centre Pompidou (NoA – Sergison Bates –EM2N)

10 BMA

POINTS

FOR

A GOOD

COMPETITION

Stage 1

- Clear programme and conditions
- Architect's fee is fixed
- Public call for applications
- Low access conditions
- Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal

Stage 2

- **Remuneration of the proposal: *min. 500 €/A3; reduction of design efforts for competition proposal***
- Jury criteria on quality and essentials
- Oral presentation for a jury
- Transparency in decision and communication



Royale Belge (Souverain 25 SA): transformation of offices into mixed use (Caruso St John / Bovenbouw / DDS+)



Royale Belge (Souverain 25 SA): transformation of offices into mixed use (Caruso St John / Bovenbouw / DDS+)

10 BMA

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Stage 1

- Clear programme and conditions
- Architect's fee is fixed
- Public call for applications
- Low access conditions
- Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal

Stage 2

- Remuneration of the proposal
- Jury criteria on quality and essentials
- **Oral presentation for a jury: *value of discussing with the architect; external jury member; citizen panel for public space***
- Transparency in decision and communication



Nieuwe Graanmarkt (City of Brussels): public space (Fallow / Basil Descheemaeker)

10 BMA

POINTS

FOR

A GOOD

COMPETITION

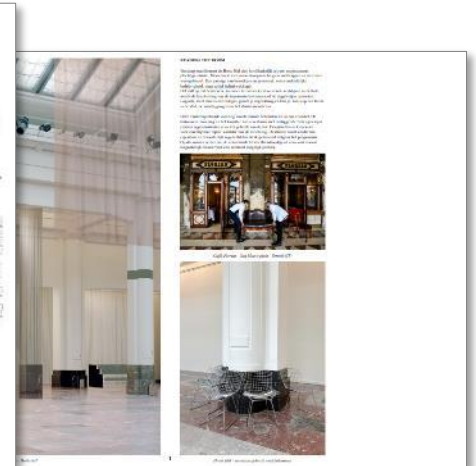
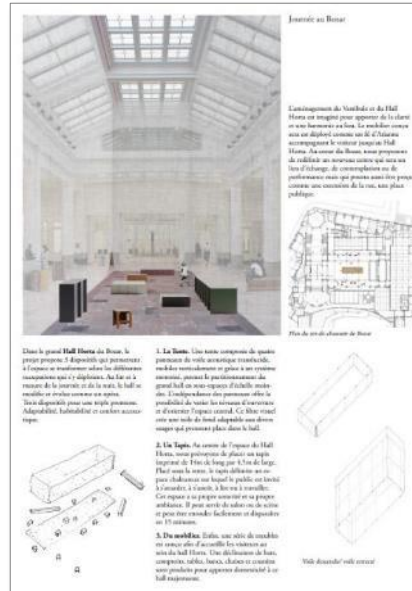
Stage 1

- Clear programme and conditions
- Architect's fee is fixed
- Public call for applications
- Low access conditions
- Selection of 3-5 candidates to make a proposal

Stage 2

- Remuneration of the proposal
- Jury criteria on quality and essentials
- Presentation for a professional jury
- **Transparency in decision and communication:**
online publication of factsheet and full competition entries

HALL HORTA



SOFT

From 2015 to 2024, Kristiaan Borret was the Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte (BMA) of the Brussels-Capital Region. The BMA is appointed by the government to stimulate spatial quality in urban development from an independent position. This book looks back at a period when architecture in Brussels gained international recognition while also taking a look at the city's future. It illustrates how the city is made and experienced today, covering both formal tools and informal practices that, together, form the *soft power* of the Bouwmeester Maitre Architecte. This book embraces complexity, like Brussels city life itself.

10 YEARS OF BOUWMEESTER MAITRE
ARCHITECTE IN BRUSSELS

POWER





Novacity (&Bogdan / DDS+)



ZIN (51N4E / l'AUC / Jaspers-Eyers)



Parc Marie Janson (Studio Vigano / vvv)



CLT Tivoli (V+)



WWW.BMA.BRUSSELS