



**CENTRUM ARCHITEKTURY  
ARCHITECTURE CENTRE**

**A10**  
new European  
architecture



A10 New European Architecture Magazine  
Centrum architektury / Architecture Centre  
Mezinárodní stavební veletrhy Brno 2009 / International Building Fairs Brno 2009  
Nizozemský institut architektury / Netherlands Architecture Institute  
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Velvyslanectví Nizozemského království v Praze / Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Prague

Cordially invite you to take part in the debate

## **PUBLIC REALM**

April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009, 10.30 – 13.00, rotunda of A pavilion at the Brno Trade Fair Site

## **URBAN IMPLOSSIONS / THE INNER-DIRECTED GROWTH OF TOWNS**

For the 2009 Debates on Tour project there was determined the theme PUBLIC REALM. The project is organised by the Netherlands Architecture Institute, in co-operation with A10 New European Architecture Magazine, the Czech venue also with the Brno Architecture Centre.

For the Brno venue there were invited:

Hans Ibelings, critic of architecture, editor-in-chief of A10 New European Architecture, Bart van der Vossen from Rijnbouwt Van der Vossen Rijnbouwt bv studio. Czech Republic will be represented by architects: Jan Jehlík, head of the Urban planning Department of the Faculty of Architecture CTU in Prague, Roman Koucký, the author of the book „Elementary Urbanism“ and Petr Hlaváček from R.U.A. studio, also teaching at the Prague Faculty of Architecture.

Running counter to the ‘cluttering up’ of the Dutch landscape as a result of the unremitting dispersion of the city (about which government and architects are rightly concerned), is a contrary movement towards densification of the existing city. Although demographic predictions indicate that the Netherlands may well be on the brink of a fall in population, there is no sign of this as yet in the construction industry, where the number of square metres development per person that society can bear continues to rise unabated.

Whereas in other parts of the world cities are growing explosively, the Dutch situation is better described as an implosion, an inner-directed growth whereby gaps in the urban fabric are being filled in – even in Rotterdam where emptiness has defined the *genius loci* ever since the destruction of the city centre in 1940.

Until recently, almost every Dutch city featured a considerable number of residual spaces, ‘overshot’ zones, redundant sites and other types of ‘blank’ space. Besides which, the modernist ideal of openness had far-reaching consequences in many areas.

During the past two decades, however, gaps in the urban fabric, whether natural or designed, have speedily disappeared, filled in with buildings or public spaces that have swallowed all the openness like a black hole. And anything that has not yet been taken in hand, will probably be tackled in the coming years. The most important interventions of the last fifteen years, and some promising projects currently in the pipeline, mainly concern the transformation of former industrial and port areas, the densification of inner cities, the regeneration of post-war housing estates and the intensification of transport routes and nodes. In those project, a wide variety of strategies are present, from the meticulous repair of old structures in inner cities reshaped by modernist urban planning, to radical new solutions such as building over existing structures and dual land use.

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