Prof. Ir. (C.H.C.F.) KEES KAAN - BIOGRAPHY


In 2014 Kees Kaan founded KAAN Architecten together with partners Vincent Panhuysen and Dikkie Scipio, after collaborating with Felix Claus for 25 years as Claus en Kaan Architecten.

He has built up a national and international range of projects, urban planning, architecture and interior design, among which in the last five years the won competitions for the master plan El Prat de Llobregat in Barcelona, the Chambre des Métiers et de l’Artisanat in Lille, the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp and the Pharmacy building on the campus of the University of Granada.

Realized projects include the Supreme Court of The Netherlands, Provinciehuis Noord-Brabant and the multiple awards winning the Crematorium Heimolen in Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, the Netherlands Forensic Institute in The Hague, awarded with the Lensvelt De Architect Interior Prize, and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Maputo, Mozambique. Various books and exhibitions have been dedicated to his body of work.

Kees Kaan has been a practice professor of Architectural Design (Chair of Materialization) at the Delft University of Technology since 2006. In 2012 he founded a new Chair 'Complex Projects'. The ambition of this program is to develop analytical and critical thinking skills on any scale projects in the city, merging knowledge from the different fields of architecture and urbanism.

As well as taking on a range of peripheral activities, he is an international lecturer and member of various juries and boards both in the Netherlands and abroad, in cities like Barcelona, Berlin, Dublin, Madrid, Mexico City, Paris, Split, São Paulo, Brasilia, Novosibirsk and Tokyo.

ONE MOULD – LECTURE 13TH OF APRIL 19:00, ETSAM (AULA MAGNA)

KAAN Architecten projects will be illustrated starting from an enlightening retrospective on the history and the actual planning and development of the Dutch urban landscape, that is all about water management. Put a shovel in the ground and the hole will fill itself with water immediately. The permanent relation with the water throughout the history has settled in the DNA of our culture. Building Dutch cities implied making or reinforcing the land, keeping it in place and making foundations in the water. There is little stable and dry land available so not only buildings are constructed but so are the streets and the canals. The section canal, street and house are inherently related and intertwined: one "mould" (synonymous of build, form, shape, structure, nature, character, quality). The houses are built out of the same bricks as the docks, streets and bridges and have similar foundations.

Public, collective and private interests are constantly negotiated in these complex constructions. In the Netherlands, the production of land or vice versa the flooding of land was and is used as a military, political and economical tool. The expression ‘poldermodel’ literally refers to the habit of dealing with societal issues by compromising and finding consensus among stakeholders, this implies collaboration. It produces a strong sense of shared values and interest in the ‘common’.

If architecture is supposed to reflect shared values the question is raised what extend contemporary buildings can actually represent fundamental principles of the organizations they facilitate.