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# Boijmans van Beuningen viewable storage area, Rotterdam:

**Art – fully mirrored**

**The Boijmans von Beuningen viewable storage area is a building that holds a mirror up to its surroundings – and the building thus has the most inconspicuous presence. For the installation of the double-curved – and in some places triple-curved – mirror panels, MVRDV Architekten opted for the Jansen VISS SG Façade system solution with the requirement of RC4 burglar protection. The seamlessly integrated automatic sliding doors in the entrance areas are also special solutions that are based on a Jansen steel profile system.**

With the open exhibition area at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, MVRDV Architekten has created a new type of building – a publicly accessible art warehouse in which all of the pieces can be viewed. The idea for the project was first devised in the early 2000s, as the underground storage area belonging to the neighbouring Museum Boijmans van Beuningen was constantly at risk of being flooded. Urgent action was needed to protect the 151,000 works created over seven centuries that are stored there. The special characteristic of the extensive and constantly growing collection is that it is not only the combination of the collections of two patrons – Frans Jacob Otto Boijmans and Daniël George van Beuningen – but that hundreds of art lovers have “added to it” to date; i.e. they have acquired pieces that fit with the theme of the collection. “Collecting is a passion,” explained Sjarel Ex, Head of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, at the press conference for the silver opening at the end of September 2020. “However, bearing responsibility for a collection can be overwhelming.” For this reason, some collectors rely on the expertise of professional institutions, such as that of the Depot Boijmans van Beuningen: Seven climate zones in 13 different room sequences guarantee a high standard of passive conservation and experienced restorers ensure that the artwork will remain intact for generations to come.

The aim of establishing a new repository, however, was to open up new opportunities. The goal was to no longer have just a selection of the artwork on show, but the whole collection. And not somewhere in the countryside, but in the Museumpark in the centre of Rotterdam. This location also plays host to the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, the Netherlands Architecture Institute and the Natural History Museum, as well as the Erasmus University Medical Center and the associated faculties. “We envisaged a building that would add value to this neighbourhood, but not be the main focus,” explained Winy Maas from MVRDV Architekten. “This is how we decided on the round design, without a clearly defined front or back. We also wanted the area of land that would be sealed to be as small as possible. This resulted in the circumference of the building increasing as it extends into the sky – the building diameter on the ground floor measured 40 metres, while the diameter on the top floor is 60 metres. There was also the idea to install a reflective coating on the façade so that the neighbouring buildings, the park and even just the sky would be reflected.”

The 1664 mirrors, which have been arranged in 26 rows of 64 mirrors that stretch all the way around the building, were manufactured in China and installed in the building in a VISS SG façade with the requirement of RC4 burglar protection. The installation of the double-curved – and in some places triple-curved – panels using specially measured anchors required extensive engineering by both the system provider Jansen and its Dutch partner ODS as well as by the façade constructor Intal Producties Zuid, which is based in Horst, The Netherlands. The biggest challenge that we had to overcome, however, was in the entrance areas, where automatic sliding doors had to be integrated into the façade construction seamlessly. These sliding doors were developed by Sorba Projects bv, based in Winterswijk, the Netherlands, in collaboration with Intal. As these doors were also to be installed with a reflective coating, the mirror image seen by visitors splits in two as soon as they approach the doors. Once you pass through the relatively small entrance, you enter the atrium, which is almost 40 metres high. The tour takes you from the foyer via criss-crossing staircases and past numerous repositories, exhibition rooms and “glazed” workshops to the roof garden overlooking the 6th floor. The fixed glazing on every level ensures that there is no doubt as regards the function of the building – the archiving and restoration of valuable artwork. Even the lifts pass glass display cabinets in which constantly changing exhibits will be presented. All of the glazed inner façades have been installed in the Jansen VISS RC3 system with a fire protection requirement of EI60 and equipped with heat-insulated Janisol C4 RC3 fire-proof doors. Low-iron glass was used in the glazing. Thanks to its distinctly more neutral colour, this special glass guarantees an unadulterated view of the exhibits.

On the roof terrace, visitors will find a sculpture garden surrounded by numerous trees that were planted to replace all of the trees that had to be removed during construction. The VISS façades on the roof structure, which house a restaurant among other things, comply with RC2 burglar protection. From RC4 and RC3 to RC2: The advantage of the system solution with the Jansen VISS steel profile system is that different solutions can be implemented as one cohesive aspect, and additional requirements – in this instance, different classes of fire protection – can also be integrated “invisibly”.

A striking effect is provided by the curved mirror on the facade distorting the reflection and making the Rotterdam skyline appear higher than it actually is. This has helped the façade to become a selfie hotspot long before the opening of the repository (planned to take place in September 2021). The 1664 mirrors are incidentally a kind of “memorial wall”, as they bear all of the names of the donors. Altogether, 35 private investors have provided EUR 92 million to make the dream of a publicly accessible art repository a reality. The result is a building that itself is a work of art.

**Project details:**

**Client:** Depot Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam

**Architecture:** MVRDV, Rotterdam

**Companies involved**

Outer façade**:** bespoke special solution with Jansen VISS SG RC4

**Installation:** Intal Producties Zuid B.V., Horst, the Netherlands

**Double-curved sliding doors on the outer façade:** bespoke special design with Janisol C4

**Development, manufacture, installation:** Sorba Projects bv, Winterswijk, the Netherlands

**Roof structures:** Standard solution with Jansen VISS RC2

**Installation:** ZNR Zuid Nederlandse Ramenfabriek B.V., Rucphen, the Netherlands

**Inner façades:** bespoke special design with VISS RC3 EI60

**Installation:** ZNR Zuid Nederlandse Ramenfabriek B.V., Rucphen, the Netherlands

**Fire-proof doors:** Bespoke Janisol C4 RC3 EI60 special solution

**Metalwork:** Aalbers Wico, AC Renswoude, the Netherlands

**Extra-high sliding doors:** 380-cm-high Economy 60 EW60 standard solution

**Metalwork:** Hoefnagels Fire Safety, Tilburg, the Netherlands

**Fire-proof revolving doors:** Standard solution with Economy 60 EW60

**Metalwork:** ZNR Zuid Nederlandse Ramenfabriek B.V., Rucphen, the Netherlands

**Text:** Anne Marie Ring, Munich

**Photos:** Ossip van Duivenbode, Rotterdam

**Image rights:** Jansen AG, Oberriet, Switzerland

The editorial use of the illustrations is bound to the present project report.

**Captions:**

pic\_01\_58\_Depot\_2020©OvD.jpg: The Boijmans von Beuningen viewable storage area is a building that holds a mirror up to its surroundings – by reflecting its surroundings in its façade, the building has an inconspicuous presence. For the installation of the double-curved – and in some places triple-curved – mirror panels, MVRDV Architekten opted for the Jansen VISS SG façade system solution with the RC4 requirements. What’s more, the seamlessly integrated automatic sliding doors in the entrance areas are a special solution that is based on a Jansen steel profile system.

pic\_02\_083\_Depot\_2020©OvD.jpg: The round design, without a clear front or back, adds value to the neighbourhood without being the main focus.

pic\_03\_075\_Depot\_2020©OvD.jpg: The circumference of the building gets larger as you move from one floor to the next, with a diameter of 40 m at the ground floor and 60 m on the top floor, which minimises the area of land that is sealed.

pic\_04\_36\_Depot\_2020©OvD.jpg: The mirrored façade reflects the neighbouring building, the park and even just the sky.

pic\_05\_09\_Depot\_2020©OvD.jpg: The result is a publicly accessible viewable storage area for art that does not just showcase all of the art in the collection, but is also a work of art in itself.

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