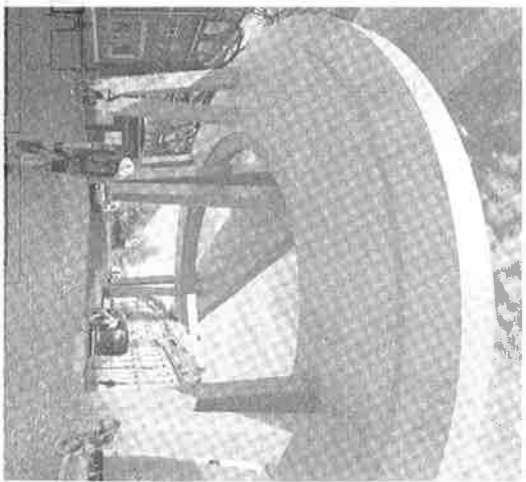
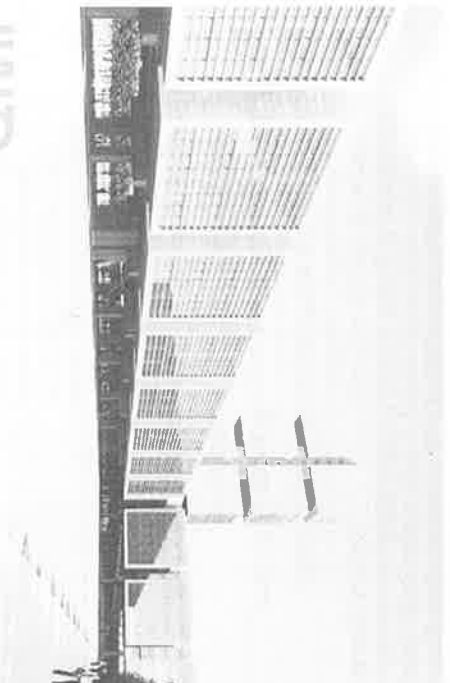


# UN

# VOOLTI



# ENDE EINDE



# NOOIT GEBOLWD MAASTRICHT

# Unvollendete. Nooit gebouwd Maastricht

Muziek bestaat niet. Het moment vervliegt zodra het in het leven wordt geroepen. De klanken bestaan in het absolute nu en in de herinnering, maar an sich duren ze niet voort. Waar de ene melodie nog nazindert in het kortetermijngeheugen, borduurt de volgende voort op diens restanten. Muziek betekent constante flux.

Het uitenken van een plan, de ontwikkeling en doorontwikkeling daarvan, vloeit evenzeer van het ene toemaling relevante, in het andere, dan weer onbeduidende. Zoals noten vervliegen, vervliegt ook de tijd. In de architectuur wordt een project bedacht in een tijdsgeest, vanuit politieke noodzaak, economische ontwikkelingen of maatschappelijke behoeftes, terwijl het er een bewindsp periode, een decennium, een generatie later niet meer toe doet. Architectuur betekent constante flux en een stad is nooit af.

Contingentie. Hoewel er een optimumsituatie is, is de beste keuze en de uiteindelijke beslissing afhankelijk van omgevingsfactoren in een bepaalde situatie. Wat is, had anders kunnen zijn. Niets is meer waar als het op stadsontwikkeling aankomt en Maastricht is hier niet van verschoond gebleven.

Wat als? Wat als er een snelweg over de stad heen had gelopen? Wat als de Amerikaanse gokpaleizen aan de Maas waren aangemeerd? Wat als de Sint Jan in de schuldus was komen te staan van hogere kartoor- en woontorens? Wat als...?

Zoals elke gezonde stad had ook Maastricht grote ambities, wilde dromen. Er werden gedurfde, experimentele oplossingen verzonnen voor acute problemen. Het vervullen van een behoefte mag gewaagd zijn, mag best opzien baren. Je wint aan prestige, je doet je stad eer aan, je vervult je dromen.

Het is vanuit die avontuurlijke geest dat grote architectonische, infrastructurele of stedenbouwkundige projecten bedacht worden, om te beantwoorden aan issues kenmerkend voor de Zeitgeist. Maastricht gaat mee met de tijd en dwingt stads-

vernieuwing, -vergroting, -verbetering af. Contingentie. De beste keuze werd gemaakt afhankelijk van omgevingsfactoren. Wat had kunnen zijn, is nu niet. Waar dromen vervuld kunnen worden, is de ratio nodig om de beste beslissing te maken. Beslissingen werden gemaakt.

Met de tentoonstelling *Unvollendete. Nooit gebouwd Maastricht* verkent Bureau Europa het Maastricht dat nooit is geworden. De constante flux die van Maastricht de stad heeft gemaakt die het nu is. Welke plannen waren er ooit voor de stad? In welke tijd werden ze bedacht en waarom waren ze zo typisch voor dat tijdspektak, voor dat bewind, voor die maatschappij? En nog stringenter: waarom en onder welke omstandigheden kwamen deze plannen te vervallen, waarom staan er nu gebouwen niet?

Bureau Europa toont met *Unvollendete* die spraakmakende en tot de verbeelding sprekende projecten die typerend waren voor hun tijd en maatschappij, maar die nooit tot wasdom zijn gekomen. Het onderzoekt de redenen daartoe en de gevolgen voor stad en volk. Dat een project niet voltooid is, betekent niet dat het dat nooit zal zijn: net als muziek, is de stad Maastricht ook altijd in beweging, nooit helemaal af, immer onvoltooid.

*Unvollendete. Nooit gebouwd Maastricht* is ontwikkeld naar een idee van Wido Smeets (Zuiderlucht), Wim Orjens (Gemeente Maastricht), Chris Keulen (fotograaf), gerealiseerd door Remco Beckers en Saskia van Stein (Bureau Europa).

# Unrealised. Never-Built Maastricht

Music does not exist. The moment evaporates as soon as it is brought into being. The sounds occur in the absolute now, and in the memory, but in themselves, they do not last. As one melody reverberates in the short-term memory, the next elaborates on its remains. Music denotes constant flux.

The devising of a plan – its development and realisation – flows as equally from one relevance into another as it does back into insignificance. As notes evaporate, so does time. Architectural projects are conceived in the spirit of their times, out of political necessity, economic developments, or social needs, but may no longer matter once a government's reign, a decade or a generation later, has passed. Architecture implies constant flux, and a city is never finished.

Contingency. Although there is an optimum situation, the best choice, the final decision, depends on the factors surrounding a given condition. What there is could have always been different. Nothing is fixed when it comes to urban development, and Maastricht has not been spared this fate.

What if? What if a highway had crossed over the city? What if the American gambling palace was moored on the Meuse? What if Sint Jan had fallen into the shadow of high-rise office buildings and residential towers? What if...?

Like any healthy city, Maastricht has had its fair share of grand ambitions and wild dreams. Darling, experimental solutions devised for acute problems. Fulfilling a need can be risky and equally cause a sensation. You gain prestige, honour your city, and realise your dreams.

It is from this adventurous spirit that large architectural, infrastructural, or urban projects are devised to answer issues typical of the Zeitgeist. Maastricht moves with the times, demanding urban renewal, enlargement, and improvement. Contingency. The best choice is made according to contextual factors. The present is not what it could have been. Fulfilling

dreams requires the rationale to make the best decision. And Decisions do get made.

With the exhibition *Unrealised. Never-Built Maastricht*, Bureau Europa surveys a Maastricht that never came to be and the constant flux that made Maastricht the city it is now. What plans have been made for the city? When were they hatched and why were they so typical for their respective timeframes, regimes, and societies? And more significantly, why and under what circumstances did these plans lapse, why do the buildings not exist?

With *Unrealised*, Bureau Europa shows some of these high profile and imaginative projects, typical of their time and social context, but which never reached maturity. It examines the underlying reasons and the consequences for the city and its people. The fact that a project is not complete does not mean that it never will be: just like music, Maastricht is always in motion, never completely done, always unfinished.

*Unrealised. Never-Built Maastricht* was developed from an idea by Wido Smeets (Zuiderlucht), Wim Orjens (Municipality of Maastricht), Chris Keulen (photographer), and is realised by Remco Beckers and Saskia van Stein (Bureau Europa).

# It's Done

Christophe  
Van Gerrewey

It seems plausible to consider as failed that which is incomplete. A project is an activity bound by time and means that is done to create something. A plan is both a goal and an idea of how to achieve it. Plans and projects strive for an end and to a moment when expectations and desires are fulfilled. Would it be absurd to start something without taking into account a controlled, and not coincidental, end?

But the reality is more complicated. To start with, an end is often arbitrary and externally imposed – it is seldom a characteristic of work; rather, it is its very last aspect. This is indeed the case for poetry, as the French poet Paul Valéry made clear when he wrote: 'A poem is never finished; it's always an accident that puts a stop to it – i.e., gives it to the public.' Among these "accidents" are: last-minute, pressure from a publisher, the upsurge of another poem. But never does the actual state of the work (if the author's not a fool) demonstrate that it could not be carried further, changed, and treated as a first rough draft or the starting point of some new venture. At the same time, it is romantic and lucid: as anyone who works on a text will appreciate, it is often not a necessity. A poet who determines when the poem's completion presents itself, thus fooling him or herself, does not realise that there are thousands of other possibilities and that the work material – provided it is complex and important enough – can be infinitely rearranged, rewritten, and rephrased. Creation arises by the grace of doubt – how could something that starts with the freedom of a blank page develop into chiselled sentences and the equally conclusive and shocking certainty that no word can be changed?

It is no coincidence that many of the great modern novels – Musil's *The Man Without Qualities*, Flaubert's *Bouvard en Péchuchet*, Kafka's *The Castle*, Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, and later *The Pale King* by David Foster Wallace – are unfinished and could not be completed because rather than an efficient story arc, a narrative pattern, or a process-based plan, the starting point is instead the search, excrescences, doubt, and the impossibility of monumental completion. Similarly, Michel-

angelo's unfinished statues of slaves, made in 1525, are works of art that – non-finito – perfectly resonate with modern sensitivities. The head and legs remain to be carved from the marble, making the male figures more generic and indeterminate, and the bodies seemingly oppose their unambiguous and static portrayal. According to the ancient Greeks, one should: 'Call no man happy until he is dead.' Conversely, it is equally valid that an artwork compellingly presented as complete and unchanging carries a deadly artificiality and can never be called alive.

The fact that these considerations about completion and finishing cannot simply be applied to buildings and city plans shows that architecture and urban planning are not as is known, like all other art forms. In the introduction to the 1976 publication *Unbuilt America: Forgotten Architecture in the United States* from Thomas Jefferson to the Space Age, art historian George R. Collins describes different kinds of 'unbuilt-ness'. 'The major categories of unbuiltness would appear to be (1) not carried out as planned; (2) not really intended by its instigator to be "done"; and (3) begun but never completed. The first would be considered to be a negative situation (although the intention was positive), the second to be a positive situation (although the intention would appear quite negative) and the third to be half-and-half'. Collins might have added to the second category that it is the least valuable or typical, precisely because these kinds of works (which quickly attain the label 'visionary' or 'fantastic') are too artistic, literary, or fictional to be considered as architecture. Regarding completion and realisation, the work of an architect or urban planner is different than that of an artist or a novelist: it wants to intervene in what already exists and make material changes to the world and society. Reversing the above quote from Valéry, one could propose: never does the state of the work itself (if the architect's not a fool) demonstrate that it cannot be completed. All going well, projects for buildings or districts succeed in situating elsewhere the obstacles that impede completion, making them somebody else's problem. They challenge the world and society by proposing changes seemingly so obvious that they imply the absurdity of being left unfinished.

It is not by chance that George R. Collins, the author of the introduction to *Unbuilt America*, was also one of the most important

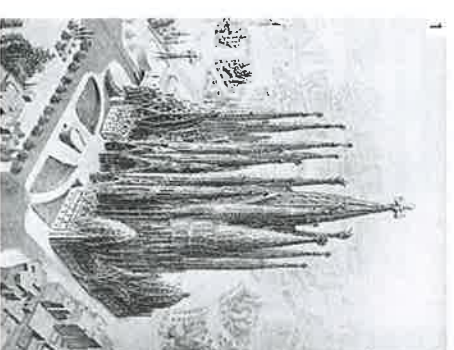
biographers of Antonio Gaudí, the Spanish architect whose *Sagrada Família* in Barcelona has been underway since 1882, although it is hoped that the basilica will be ready in 2026 to coincide with the centenary of Gaudí's death. Like the unfinished modern novel, the *Sagrada Família* is an insane exercise in the rules and characteristics of a traditional genre – in this case, the Gothic cathedral. It is a game with constantly changing rules that, through continually adding details and elaborations, can hardly solidify into a fixed form. The problem for Gaudí and his cathedral was already evident in the presentation of its implausible plans, which – in retrospect – can be regarded as a last, almost desperate, violent conviction of a church being built in an increasingly secular world. The main difference with an unfinished work of art remains that an end has indeed been devised and drawn up by the architect. A building is normally completed twice: firstly when it is 'commissioned', thus drawn and detailed, and secondly when it is constructed and realised. The crucial moment ensues somewhere in the middle: the point at which the project either remains a project or becomes a reality.

Of course, there are prosaic and uninteresting reasons why buildings or urban projects go unrealised: the architect dies, one technology overtakes another, the client goes bankrupt, or a new mayor is elected. But sometimes, it is the singularity of a historical era that is put at stake. One of the most striking examples from the last century is the *Sea Trade Center* for the port of Zeebrugge on Belgium's North Sea coast. In 1988, a competition solicited designs for a new passenger terminal for ferries travelling between the European mainland to the United Kingdom; it should be exciting, an attraction for the future even, and was intended to compete with the high-speed channel tunnel trains. Five architects, including Aldo Rossi, Charles Vandenhove, and Bob van Reeth, submitted designs for this late-Modern temple. The jury chose a project by OMA and Rem Koolhaas: a semi-spherical-topped node of circulatory roads, tourist activities, trade routes, and vistas – a gleaming, perfectly realisable beacon for what, at that time, just before the fall of the Berlin Wall, could become one of the centres of a budding European Union.

The project was eventually abandoned because the port of Zeebrugge already anticipated indomitable competition from Eurostar and Ryanair. Today, OMA's unrealised project poses the bold question of whether

this was the right decision and whether Europe – given the correct, visible, symbolic architecture – could have developed differently.

Looking back on unrealised projects from the history of architecture and urban planning is both a valuable and fascinating activity, especially when the reasons for going unrealised are not merely personal or anecdotal. Sometimes it can be pride and overconfidence in the game, a misjudgement of scale or the possibilities of technology, or the political difficulties to create consensus. But the past, present, and future are always challenged. To continue from Paul Valéry: 'I believe that the same subject and almost the same words could be worked over ad infinitum and provide a whole life's occupation'. The same applies, but differently, to unrealised designs, because they show that key moments and supposedly inevitable historical decisions are subject to review, because no deterministic laws determine history, because everything always could have gone differently than it actually went, and because the world itself is never finished. Although progress, in today's parlance, has become a relative value, the future, as well as the past, can still be shaped in a positive way.



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1. De Sagrada Família in Barcelona zaai in 2026, met architect Gaudí's 100e sterfdag, voltooid zijn.

2. Het Sea Trade Centre in Zeebrugge moest de belangrijkste continentale haven naar Groot-Brittannië worden. Ontwerp: Rem Koolhaas/OMA (1988).