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Roosenberg: Disposition & Ordinance

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Project info

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Roosenberg III is one of the few buildings designed by the Dutch monk and architect Dom Hans van der Laan. The monastery was built in a forest close to Waasmunster in Belgium in 1975 with 12 rooms for the nuns and 25 guest rooms. After the sisters' departure from the abbey in august of 2016, a new use is now being searched for. The development of a youth hostel is in accordance with the sisters' tradition of hospitality and fits in to the extraordinary location in one of the Flanders rare forests.

Furthermore, the transformation of Dom Hans van der Laan's theory of 'the plastic number', which is usually applied to the solid construction in masonry, is supposed to be explored in a timber construction.

Dom Hans van der Laan himself describes his building as a 'symphony of seclusion and views', somewhere between open to the nature and a closed monastery. The new extension continues the themes: the existing 'hortus conclusus' will be completed by a second courtyard more open and connecting the interior and exterior spaces. Moreover, the theme of the tower will be taken up in a new and profound way: an observation tower in a 1:7 ratio, the basic ratio of 'the plastic number'.

One of the basics of Dom Hans van der Laan's theory is the thickness of the wall, the fundamental element that gives the space its dimension. This thickness can be experienced and used as seating elements. The entire grid and measure system used by Dom Hans van der Laan is continued throughout the extension, the axes are developed with his 'Abakus', the rooms using his 'Morphothek', all the openings and proportions with the ratio of the 'plastic number'.

A play of 'disposition' and 'ordinance'.