

22 Years Euregional Prize for Architecture

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# RE:Peat Zwartenhoek

## Participant info

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## Project info

This project is a call for defragmentation against the continuous fragmentation of the Belgian landscape; The traditionally grown ribbon development is resulting in a ubiquitous peripheral condition at the expense of valuable places on the countryside.

The site Zwartenhoek in Oostham is traditionally an agricultural area on the Flemish countryside. Fields with trees, surrounded as rooms and sporadically filled with a house or a farm are enclosed by infrastructure. This remote place carries clear traces of its past. The challenge is to increase the capacity of this landscape and juxtapose it for its users by maintaining and reinforcing the inherent landscape qualities. Before the discovery of coal around 1900, peat was mined in this area; Originally the main energy source for the residents of Belgian rural areas. Homegrown energy, a starting point for a new industrial activity; The result is a scenography of four pavilions throughout the vast agricultural crop fields. Varying growth periods allow changeable and temporary open spaces to emerge inside the crops; The perfect backdrop for short projects/exhibitions. All growing crops are serving one of the four pavilions, a bio-energy plant. It supplies natural gas to the neighboring residential area and industry. The variable open spaces, linked by a route and supported by the four pavilions, form a park that continuously reinvents itself.

Where fields refer to rooms, the four rooms are rough prints of their environment and its history, no rhetorics but direct spatial proposals. Four formal concrete structures in the agricultural landscape draw the line between a rational human intervention and the intuitive growth of nature. Explicit architecture in the hands of nature.

The new masterplan retains all existing infrastructure. Housing is bundled, fields connected and new industrial activity deployed centrally; Defragmentation by a symbiosis of qualitative clusters of housing, agricultural industry and recreation.

