

24 Years Euregional Prize for Architecture

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Mother and child behind bars

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Project info

OVERCROWDED PRISONS IN BELGIUM ...
HARROWING CONDITIONS...
MOTHERS BEHIND BARS...

In Belgium there are currently 32 prisons, 2 of them are women's prisons. They are located in Bruges and in Hasselt. It is not only women that live in these prisons but also women WITH CHILDREN. Up until the age of 2.5 years, children are allowed to stay in their mother's cell. Mothers behind bars and children behind bars. Captured twice.

My Master thesis contains a search for a solution for a social issue. To develop living accommodation for the detained mother as well as for her child.

For this development of a rehabilitation unit, I have designed for a group of residents, users and innocent children without knowing each individual in person. Each individual will be different; although they will have one thing in common; their deprivation of freedom, the same is also applicable for their child?

Starting with the standard core cell, this can be developed into a mother and child cell.

As a designer I laid down some fundamental ideas. I put myself in the position of the detainees and their children. I have tried to approach the design from their experience and their needs and to improve it where possible.

For the detainee the placement in a prison is a forced measure, there is no way back. Taking away this freedom is a negative experience. The integration in prison is physical as well as psychological and a difficult step to take.

And the child? Is it allowed to grow and play carefree? What about the child? How does it experience and undergo this detention?

The aim of the design is to create a total cosmos where everyone, short and tall inhabitants, will feel secure, a world in which the warden no longer has the function of the 'all seeing eye', but will also work as a social worker.

