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VAKhuis, A house for craftsmanship

Participant info

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Project info

VAKHUIS, A house for craftsmanship in Limburg

I have always been oriented towards craftsmanship and materiality in architecture. Therefore, my heart breaks seeing the increasingly generative architecture and design in today's society. Lack of place and interdependence are becoming common features of contemporary buildings. A false sense of identity that decays in narrow-mindedness. I refer to both the materialization and the execution of many architectural projects.

One of the main causes is the economic machine humming in the background. A machine fuelled by international trade agreements within a global economy. More and more companies are transporting production processes and goods, from and to low-wage countries, an ideology based on cheap transport tariffs and low wages that in reality only reduce 'internal costs'. The 'external costs' such as pollution, environmental impact and local unemployment are preferably swept under the carpet. The closure of the mines in Belgian Limburg and following the closure of Ford Genk are closely related.

Therefore, both in my thesis and in studio new economies, I stated: If we want to focus in Belgian Limburg on a manufacturing industry in the future, we will be guaranteed competition from multinationals that exploit the poorest areas on earth. An unfair competition where the high wage costs will continue to affect us. That is why we must focus on what a global monoculture can not deliver, namely high-quality and sustainable products combined with extraordinary craftsmanship and technical knowledge.

This ideology culminated in my graduation project, namely the establishment of a house for craftsmanship in Belgian Limburg, also known as the VAKhuis. A place where craftspeople, designers, local producers, small companies as well as builders and students can go for workshops, advice and advertising. A first step in promoting a local manufacturing industry for Limburg on a global scale.

