



Outline: Leeser Architecture



Marnix van der Meer has been running Zecc Architecten since 2003.



In 2006 Zecc Architecten converted this chapel in Nieuwegracht, Utrecht into a residential loft.



Janus-faced house: The two overhanging parts of the Vriezenveen villa in Twente are supported by 27 metre long glued laminated timber girders. Photographs (2): Cornbread Works, Utrecht

## Marnix van der Meer, Utrecht, NL

Marnix van der Meer was born in 1972. In 2003 he founded Zecc Architecten in Utrecht together with Rolf Bruggink. He has managed the firm on his own since 2007. He studied architecture at the University of Utrecht and the Academie van Bouwkunst in Amsterdam. From 1996 to 2002 he was a project architect and project manager at Meyer en Van Schooten in Amsterdam. Zecc Architecten currently has a staff of six and is specialised above all in residential buildings in the Netherlands. The firm received a Special Commendation in the 2006 ECOLA Awards.

I believe the so-called "star architects" receive important commissions not on account of their star status, but simply because there are only a small number of people who are capable of carrying out this type of complex commissions with such outstanding results. Even 50 or 100 years ago there was a small group of architects who enjoyed international repute. The stars of the time went by the name of Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe. Today it's the turn of architects such as Rem Koolhaas. I think they are comparable to a degree, even though today's stars of architecture may appear to shine more briefly and vanish more quickly from the firmament. Are Peter Eisenman, Richard Meier or Toyo Ito still "stars" or are they already fading as new names such as SANAA or Herzog & de Meuron come to the fore?

Zecc Architecten is a young firm. So far, our work has focused on relatively small projects in the Netherlands, ranging from conversion projects on former churches or water towers to villas and multiple dwellings. While these are not international prestige projects, this does not make them any less important or less interesting. Many of our works have been published, and they

are attracting increasing attention abroad, too. Major projects such as the Casa da Musica by Rem Koolhaas in Porto are unattainable for most of us. That is probably precisely the reason why they have little influence on what goes on around us. In contrast, through small projects and relevant topics we endeavour to demonstrate to large numbers of people the opportunities offered by architecture. Our concept for a villa in Vriezenveen, entailing the transformation of farmland into a recreational landscape, for example, is highly topical and will provide inspiration for many architects and clients. In this way, a small project can also have a major influence, provided that it receives sufficiently broad media attention. For example, the conversion of former industrial buildings or churches for different usages is another major talking point in the international arena.

The internet and the means of reaching the public that it offers have made it much easier for a young firm working on small projects to attract attention abroad. In no way do we seek attention with aspirations to stardom. I see it rather as a recognition of our work. And it's nice to be recognised in this fashion!