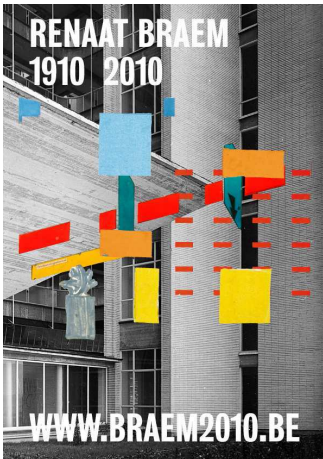




VlaamsARCHITECTUURinstituut  
CentrumVlaamseArchitectuurarchieven



## RENAAT BRAEM 1910-2010

In 2010 the much-discussed architect Renaat Braem would have been 100 years old. The **Flemish Architecture Institute (VAi)** and the **Centre for Flemish Architectural Archives (CVAa)** are taking the occasion of this centenary as an opportunity to hold an exhibition and a series of other events connected with the man and his work.

### 01 THE ARCHITECT

While still a student, the Antwerp architect Renaat Braem (1910-2001) was already utterly convinced that architecture and urban planning would liberate mankind. He combined socialism, emancipation, modernism and plan-based spatial concepts seamlessly in his utopian **Lijnstad** project (Linear City) (1934). He was the only Belgian to be a trainee at Le Corbusier's architectural firm in Paris. After the Second World War he continued to adhere to his ideology and among other things built the social housing complex at **Kiel** (Antwerp, 1951-54, 1956-58), which was internationally regarded as one of the best examples of postwar modernist social housing. His other designs include the Administrative Centre at the Oudaan (the **'Police Tower'**, Antwerp, 1957-67), the **Middelheim Pavilion** (Antwerp, 1969-71), the **Model District** at the Heizel (Brussels, 1957-64), and a number of **private houses** such as his own home in Deurne (1957-58). Throughout his life he continued to work on a better standard of spatial planning for Belgium, which resulted in **Bandstad België** (Belgian Band City) (1964). Now, in 2010, we are struck most by the expressiveness of his architecture, his commitment to social housing construction and his vehement writing. The astuteness of his social and spatial analyses, his meticulous use of materials and his sculptural formal language still contain elements relevant to contemporary architectural debate.

### 02 THE EXHIBITION [1 October 2010 – 9 January 2011]

The curators Sofie De Caigny and Katrien Vandermarliere will be compiling the exhibition on the basis of several **tensions** in Braem's life and work: **utopia** and **context**, **collectivity** and **individual**, the **visionary** nature of Braem's spatial insights and the prominence of a **biomorphic formal language** and an **ecological reflex**. While Braem's attention to interactions with nature is astonishing for its contemporary relevance, his sometimes far from gentle approach to the historical fabric of the city can be quite shocking. His major social housing projects and urban planning designs are viewed in the light of these tensions, and a number of his private houses and public buildings are also featured. These designs cannot be seen as separate from the **ideological discourse** Braem developed in parallel. This discourse culminated in *Het lelijkste land ter wereld* (The ugliest country in the world) (1968). The CVAa will be republishing this book to mark Braem's centenary. The chronological story – ranging from Braem's youth and student days to his late work – is thus complemented by highlighting symbolic buildings and interpreting them in the light of Braem's own ideology.

**Dates:** 1 October 2010 – 9 January 2011

**Production:** VAi and CVAa

**Curators:** Sofie De Caigny and Katrien Vandermarliere

**Exhibition Design:** Heimat

**Coproducers:** deSingel and VIOE

**With support from:** Flemish Community and City of Antwerp

**Venue:** deSingel, Desguinlei 25, B-2018 Antwerp

**Website:** [www.braem2010.be](http://www.braem2010.be)

**Booking guided tours:** 0032 (0)3 248 28 28

### MORE INFORMATION

[www.braem2010.be](http://www.braem2010.be)

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