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PAVILJOEN IN HET GROEN VOOR SOCIALE WETENSCHAPPEN



## *‘Exact and theoretical sciences can strengthen one another.’*

Images often speak louder than words. This book uses text and images to tell the story of the creation of an exceptional building on our campus, the Maria Montessori building, the new home of the Faculty of Social Sciences.

### **BRIDGE**

It is a stunning building that fits seamlessly into Radboud University’s green campus. It looks natural and seems to invite the surroundings in, as if it has always been there. Visitors might even forget that not so long ago, this was the location of the Thomas van Aquinostraat, a closed street that obscured the view of other buildings on campus, while the passageway beneath the Maria Montessori building offers a fantastic view of the Berchmanianum on one side and the Dentistry building on the other. In this way, the Maria Montessori building acts as a bridge linking the buildings and the campus grounds. The building connects not only the surroundings, but also the people. The wide staircases invite casual encounters, staircases that connect not only floors, but also people, and that are so inviting they lure visitors away from the lifts.

### **ANGLES AND CURVES**

A striking element is the interplay of lines in the building. Wherever you look, inside and outside, you see a combination of straight and rounded lines, of angles and curves. This is echoed in the use of materials: the seeming contradiction between wood and concrete is attractively resolved in the Maria Montessori building. It reminds me of the diversity of the social sciences, where material and immaterial phenomena are studied in conjunction, from molecules that bridge synapses to thoughts, behaviours and social processes. Exact and theoretical sciences are able to find and strengthen one another. In the symbiosis of straight and curved lines, of concrete and wood in the Maria Montessori building, I recognise this diversity of the social sciences.

### **HUMAN SCALE**

For decades, the social sciences were spread across a number of buildings on the Radboud University campus. The Maria Montessori building brings the social sciences together and encourages interaction between social sciences researchers and students. Students and colleagues from other disciplines also feel welcome and can find their way to the social sciences. Despite its size, the Maria Montessori building is open and accessible. The human scale is apparent everywhere and it ensures that the building is a pleasant space in which to be, work, study and relax.

### **FUTURE-PROOF**

The Maria Montessori building sets a new sustainability standard for the Radboud University campus. Of compact form, it is almost entirely energy neutral, making it the most sustainable building on campus. It was designed with flexibility in mind, making it relatively easy in the future to redesign and adjust the space. While none of us can look far ahead, I dare to wager that the way in which we teach and conduct research will continue to

evolve with time. A modern university building needs to be able to accommodate these shifts and the changing needs of students and staff. This can prolong a building’s viability and therefore also its sustainability.

### **BEATING HEART**

Many people have contributed to the creation of the Maria Montessori building. People with different backgrounds, different skills and different ideas. From early brainstorming sessions with the staff about the possible construction of a new building to the very last modifications just before the building was opened for use, each and every contribution has made the Maria Montessori building into what it is today: a beating, sustainable heart for the social sciences on our campus.

On behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to warmly thank everyone who has contributed to the Maria Montessori building.

Enjoy this book and enjoy the Maria Montessori building!

Daniël Wigboldus,  
*President of the Executive Board*

## *‘A construction book about the people of the Faculty.’*

Once the construction of a building is completed, it’s easy to forget the incredible efforts it required from so many people. And once a building is in use, the dreams captured in its stones can slowly fade away. This is why it has now become a tradition to record any construction or large-scale renovation project on the Radboud University campus in a publication. The creation of a coffee-table book about the Grotius building in 2014 was followed by a photo book on the renovation of the Dentistry building and an art history account of the transformation of the convent retirement home and Rijksmonument Collegium Berchmanianum into the new Academy Building.

What these publications all have in common is that they both describe the construction process and tell the story of the building’s future inhabitants. From the start, it was clear that the Maria Montessori building also deserved a reference book of its own. On the one hand, this was supposed to be a ‘construction book’ showing how the Thomas van Aquinostraat first became a bare sandpit before transforming into a stunning pavilion surrounded by greenery. On the other hand, it had to be above all a book that told the stories of the people of the Faculty.

### **CAPTURING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS**

Documenting the construction process in this way is particularly important for Campus & Facilities and the parties responsible for construction. Photographs of the build and the builders and interviews with architects, advisors, contracted parties and Campus & Facilities staff help illustrate and highlight their contribution to the whole project. Photographer Thea van den Heuvel drew on her expertise to capture the construction journey and the building during the past five years.

At the same time, this record also represents a starting point for reflection. What went well and less well with the project? What did we learn from each other in this collaboration? This process does not end once the building is delivered. Once the building is put into use, teething problems start to emerge. And once these are resolved, and the users have found their place, new ideas and wishes will arise – after all, it’s the people who bring a building to life, time and again.

This book has also to some extent become a *big deal*. Studio Another Day has created an inviting book, one that can be opened at any page to reveal a new perspective on a small part of the building and discover who it is that is actually using the building. It goes without saying that this bold image of the time in which we live is printed on sustainable paper.

### **A BUILDING FOLLOWS THE PEOPLE**

A building is made for people. This is why the Faculty opted from the start to involve staff members and students in the development process. In various expertise groups, they brainstormed about the facilities that the building needed. They were also kept informed of the building’s progress in vlogs, newsletters, meetings, ‘test sit’ sessions and tours, and were invited to submit their thoughts via the suggestion boxes that were placed in every department. It was also the staff that chose the building’s name.

Maria Montessori was a leading intellectual who played a crucial role in the social sciences. She was a world citizen and studied various scientific disciplines in depth. The core of her vision on education was: ‘Teach me to do it myself.’ In line with her vision and life, the Maria Montessori building was designed with the idea of bringing social sciences researchers under one roof, so that they can discover great new ideas together. This is why their stories have been given such a central place in this book. What are their expectations, ideals and visions concerning their new work and learning environment? What do they look forward to as they start working and studying here? And for those who have already moved into the building: how do they experience their new ‘home away from home’?

### **IN PROUD TRANSITION**

The relocation to a new building is of course something exciting, but it also means saying goodbye to your familiar workplace. It is a moment of transition: leaving behind what you are accustomed to and giving meaning to the new. To do justice to the various ways in which the people involved have experienced this transition, the editorial team carried out dozens of interviews. Photographers Lennard Heijer and Roy Soetekouw portrayed people at their chosen – often favourite – place in the building.

Some of the people interviewed are simply enthusiastic, while others may at times be critical of certain aspects of the new building. There are technical stories and personal stories. But in the end, all interviewees agreed that the new Faculty building is a magical place, and that they are proud of having had the opportunity to contribute to its creation.

### **FOSTERING ENCOUNTERS**

In the past, the social sciences staff were spread all over the campus. They were housed in one of the nine floors of the Spinoza building, in the Thomas van Aquinostraat and on the Toernooiveld. Individuals from a single department were able to find each other, but the physical distance made it more difficult to spontaneously run into colleagues from other departments or institutes. It will therefore come as no surprise that one of the most important wishes of the Faculty was to bring the social sciences together in one building, a building that would also encourage encounters between colleagues and students.

The Maria Montessori building encourages casual encounters in a number of ways. The pleasant daylight, the warm colours of the furniture and the well-designed layout of the building all contribute to an enjoyable work and study environment. The Grand Café de Iris links the two wings of the building and acts as a central meeting area. It sits in the skyway at the heart of the building that not only fosters synergy between teaching and research, but also connects various teaching and research disciplines, and science and practice.

In its welcoming ambience students and staff can come together to enjoy a cup of coffee or have lunch. The lounges in the wings cater to the same need on a smaller scale, providing seating space for staff members, but also screens that can be used to connect a laptop or display a presentation. The study associations have their own meeting areas in the building, which the students refer to as the Common Ground and lie in a prominent position within the building, close to the large lecture halls. Numerous benches and seats are scattered throughout the building to allow students to get together between lectures.



The building's design and layout offers a wealth of spaces to meet. The warm, natural materials give it a homely, intimate feel that promotes spending time with others. The friendly greeting of the concierge at the door also contributes to a pleasant atmosphere that invites interesting encounters, encounters that not only provide relaxation but may also lead to surprising new insights, and allow existing collaborations to flourish and future ones to develop.

#### SUSTAINABILITY

In a world that increasingly asks of us that we leave it in a better state than we found it, Radboud University feels the weight of its responsibility. That is why we prioritise sustainability in our teaching, research, operations, and construction and renovation projects. We apply the latest knowledge and state-of-the-art technology to make our new campus buildings increasingly energy efficient. As of 2021, the Maria Montessori building is the most sustainable building on our green campus, and energy neutral.

Energy neutral means that the building annually generates as much energy as it uses. It has also been designed to require little building-bound energy.

- *The building follows the people*  
Energy is only used if a given function is needed. Presence detection sensors ensure that the lights switch off automatically when someone leaves a room. And if someone opens a window, the room's climate system switches off.
- *Smart design*  
Smart design and innovative facilities enable substantial electricity savings. For example, people are persuaded to use the stairs, with staircases that are clearly and visibly integrated in the walking routes, while the lifts are somewhat hidden from view (behind the stairs). And when the lifts are used, generative engines produce electricity during deceleration. This saves up to twenty percent of the electricity! The ventilation systems also make use of the latest technology. A thermal wheel captures heat from the extracted used air and releases it into the circulating fresh air. When the outdoor temperature drops and the air needs to be heated, this requires less external heat than with other energy sources.
- *Good insulation*  
The building is well insulated. Half of the facade is triple glazed. This ensures that the building quickly reaches a pleasant indoor temperature. At the same time, automatic sunscreens prevent the building from overheating in the summer.

#### ENERGY SOURCES

The choice of green energy is a choice for the future and for a

liveable climate for future generations. This is why the Maria Montessori building uses sustainable energy sources. There are solar panels on the roof, and the electricity generated in this way is used as much as possible directly inside the building. The building is also connected to a hybrid energy network that includes a heat and cold storage system in the ground. Via this sustainable energy network the building is linked to other university buildings, with which it exchanges heat and cold. In this way excess heat from the Maria Montessori building can be stored and used, for example, in the Erasmus building.

#### WASTE SEPARATION

Waste separation ensures that recyclable materials can be reused to make new products. On the campus and in the buildings, we separate waste as much as possible. During the construction phase, waste material was separated into various waste flows: wood residues, stone-like materials, metal, plastic, glass, paper and cardboard, plaster and insulation material. These waste materials can be reused as raw materials elsewhere, for example in road construction. We also critically examined the packaging of any construction materials we intended to use. For example, we agreed with suppliers that the cardboard used had to consist of at least eighty percent recycled material.

#### HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT

The materials used on the inside and outside of the building are sustainable and contribute to creating a healthy work environment. For the facade, we used a wood-like material: a largely natural product consisting of rice fibre and salt. This material demands little maintenance: it requires no painting and only needs to be cleaned once a year! For the interior design, we opted for partial use of recycled furniture. Cabinets were brought along from the previous locations and chairs and tables were refurbished using new fabrics and table tops. When purchasing new furniture, we took into account the sustainability of the raw materials and other resources used. These meet strict emission standards, releasing only small amounts of volatile compounds.

#### SURROUNDED BY GREENERY

Plants and animals are also users of the site, which is why we took their needs into account when designing the Maria Montessori building. The facade and roof have nesting boxes for animals such as swifts, house sparrows and various types of bats. Around the building, new trees have been planted to compensate for the ones that had to make way for the construction. The planted trees represent various indigenous species and were selected for their ability to withstand drought and our changing climate.

Buffering facilities filled with rainwater at the lowest points in the landscape – so-called 'wadis' – ensure good water

management: when it rains, excess water doesn't run into the sewer, but flows via these wadis into the soil. This groundwater is ultimately pumped up by Vitens in the Heumensoord water catchment area, south of the campus. This is a long-term cycle that respects both humans and the environment: after 25 years, the rainwater returns to the Radboud University campus as drinking water, ready for use.

#### DIVERSE USERS

It is people who bring a building to life. In the case of the Maria Montessori building, these people represent a diverse group: students, lecturers, researchers, support staff, but also professionals who come to the campus for refresher courses and visitors who take part in scientific research studies. The building has been designed to help all these users, from different generations and different international backgrounds, to feel at home.

But who are these diverse users of the Maria Montessori building? What encounters do they dream of? And where do they find their place within the building?

#### LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The Faculty of Social Sciences is home to approximately 5,000 students. Bachelor's and Master's students follow programmes in Psychology, Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogical Sciences, Educational Sciences, Pedagogical Sciences of Primary Education, Communication Science, Sociology, and Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. To these students, the building is like a second home, and they bring life to it. In addition, older students also find their way to the Maria Montessori building for refresher courses to help improve healthcare, education and society. In this way, the Faculty caters to a very heterogeneous group.

#### TEACHING IS CENTRAL

Students come to the campus to follow lectures, tutorials and practical sessions. At the same time, the new building also offers good facilities for digital learning. Lecture halls are equipped with the latest microphones and recording equipment, and students can attend lectures remotely via the screens in the lecture halls. What's more, the lecture halls enable a flexible use. For example, the large lecture hall can be divided into three smaller lecture halls, and the computer rooms can be used for multiple purposes. The building includes lecture halls of different sizes, but also areas for group work and sufficient quiet areas.

If students have questions, for example about enrolling for exams, they need not worry. The support services for students and staff are in a visible and accessible location near the entrance to the building.

#### SITTING ROOM

Workplaces for staff members from the various teaching and research institutes are spread across the wings. Secretariats are located at the entrance to each wing. Each wing has its own lounge where colleagues can relax and have a drink together. The office spaces are organised into individual and shared rooms. Most staff members have to share a workplace. The rooms contain a maximum of four workplaces. Unlike other departments, the faculty office is organised according to the flexible work principle, based not on offices but on workplaces. Here too, some staff members have to share workplaces. Every wing also has a number of meeting rooms, so that deskwork and meetings are split.

#### SMART RESEARCH FACILITIES

Conducting research about people also means carrying out research with people. In the research rooms of the Maria Montessori building, we have recreated a variety of situations as realistically as possible, making it easier to study social behaviour. High-quality facilities such as cubicles and one-way screens are crucial in this context.

Research facilities that are open to all researchers are located on the ground floor. This floor has little traffic, which ensures a quiet and stable environment for conducting well-controlled social studies. The Technical Support Group (TSG), which offers technical support for research equipment, is located on the same floor, near the laboratories. This makes it easier to find and provide help and support. How different this is from the former situation, when the TSG team was hidden away deep in the Spinoza building.

#### WELCOME!

A lot of research studies require participants from outside. It is the Faculty's wish that these study participants feel welcome. To this end, we have created special visitor parking facilities and visitors are welcomed at the door in the Grand Café de Iris. We also have a separate entrance and reception area for older participants and the parents of children who take part in research studies, to allow them to make use of the lift and enter the building from a quiet area.

## *‘We’ve realised our sustainability ambitions.’*

To be involved in the construction of a new campus building was an exciting and insightful experience for us as the Faculty Board. Actually, it was more than that: it was a unique experience for all members of the Board.

We were involved in brainstorming about the design, and assessing the selected 3D designs. We sat in on the steering group meetings, project group meetings, and meetings with advisory committees and various other temporary and long-term consultation sessions. We contributed to multiple versions of the schedule of requirements. We looked forward to new developments, were frequently surprised by technical aspects and often worried about budgets and the risk of them being exceeded. We learned about cast floors and sight-lines and, after some time, had to admit that they really exist. We discussed workplace concepts and made estimates of required laboratory space and future student numbers.

### **PROGRESS AND SIGHS**

Then, when the actual construction began, we watched with a great sense of wonder as incredibly skilled people went about creating something where there used to be nothing. We were deeply impressed by the synchronised and harmonious collaboration between all these professionals. At a certain point, we were given a first tour, followed by a second, a third, etc. At every stage, we were pleasantly surprised by how much progress had been made. And yet, despite the builders having made a great deal of progress since our last visit, we always left the construction site sighing about ‘everything that still needed to happen’. After some time, the building was nearly ready, and then it was actually ready. The strange thing was that at this point we could move in, but we still couldn’t unpack due to the corona crisis. Once the corona signage had been installed over the first few months of 2021, we watched as people slowly and carefully began to work and study in the Maria Montessori building.

### **UNDER ONE ROOF**

We will inevitably still run into a number of teething problems, but the prospect of working and studying here is very attractive, and I’d like to take this opportunity to once again draw attention to some of the special features of this building. The most important of which may be that it is in fact one building. All the teaching and research of our Faculty has finally been brought together under one roof, which helps strengthen the connection between the social and behavioural sciences. And the link between Bachelor’s, Master’s and post-Master’s programmes is also bolstered thanks to the Radboud Centre for Social Sciences being housed at the same location.

The Maria Montessori building is light and transparent – quite literally – and makes attractive use of colour, wood and other materials. It is a building with a heart, the Grand Café de Iris, that invites casual encounters and chats around a cup of coffee or some other beverage. In this construction project, sustainability was not a fashionable gimmick but our foundation, and we’ve fully realised our sustainability ambitions.

### **BETWEEN DISCIPLINES**

This is really a building for students, with facilities for study associations and all kinds of study stations and areas for collaborative working. But it is also a building where researchers can quietly focus and meet each other and students, and where they can receive guests and study participants. One advantage of the Maria Montessori building is that we have all our teaching rooms in one place, with lecture halls that can be used separately or combined, and with a wide selection of medium-sized and smaller teaching rooms. And we have every reason to be proud of our modern laboratory facilities, which encourage collaboration between disciplines.

### **HARD THINKING AND HANDS-ON WORK**

The Maria Montessori building is a building that Radboud University can be proud of, and we feel privileged that our Faculty community can work and study here. We would like to warmly thank all the people – from within and beyond Radboud University – who have contributed to the realisation of this building. Without your hard thinking and hands-on work the Maria Montessori building could not have become what it is.

We wish all students and staff lots of fun studying and working here!

Michiel Kompier  
Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences  
*On behalf of the faculty board*