

THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: A system of movable partitions made from recycled aluminium allows Circl pavilion's multipurpose space to be used for fashion shows, exercise sessions, debates, workshops, markets and other public events.



All Round

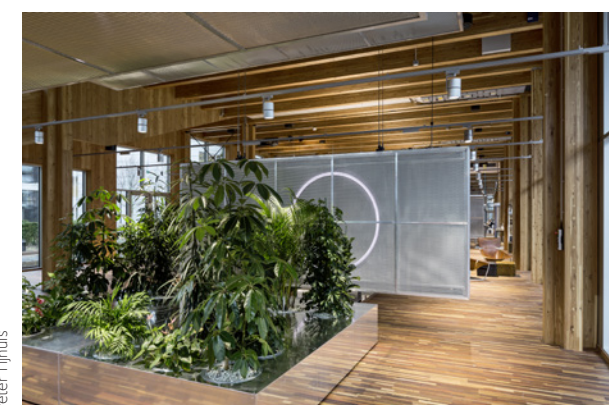
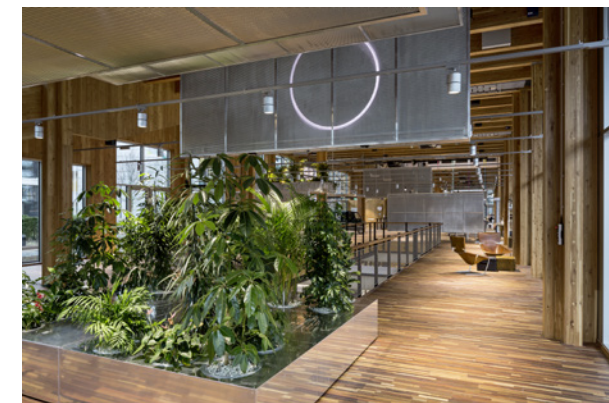
Supporting the Dutch government's goal to have a circular economy by 2050, ABN Amro's flexible CIRCL pavilion employs principles of reuse and recycling.

Words
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THE USE OF MOVABLE components has long been a challenge for designers and architects. From the modular rooms in Gerrit Rietveld's Schröder House of the 1920s to the telescoping shell of The Shed, a building in Manhattan by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (scheduled to open in 2019), adaptable space assumes a prominent role in innovative projects of all scales and functions. Even so, tedious procedures and unsustainable mechanisms have prevented the phenomenon from becoming ubiquitous. With these thoughts in mind, when designing the interior spaces of Circl – a multipurpose pavilion in Amsterdam's Zuidas district – DoepelStrijkers directed all its technological efforts towards the realization of a lighter, friendlier system of partitions that open, close and shift at the push of a button.

As its name suggests, Circl celebrates the emerging field of circular economy. Coined by American architect William McDonough in the late 1990s, circularity calls for a conscious use of raw materials for the preservation of the Earth's finite resources. McDonough's ideas were embraced by Dutch bank ABN Amro, which sought to expand its Amsterdam headquarters with a separate pavilion for receiving guests, hosting large meetings and events, and giving locals a place to have a drink or a meal. 'Financial institutions have a major role in the transition from the linear to the circular economy,' says Merijn van den Bergh, director of Circl. The sustainable pavilion responds to a current state of urgency about climate change and supports the Dutch government's goal to be fully circular by 2050. The pavilion is next to the bank's main office in the Zuidas, a district that extends from Amsterdam's old town to a new centre of business, retail, commerce and residential development.

Planned by Architecten Cie, the pavilion is a two-storey rectangular building that rises from a concrete plinth. The principles of circularity are evident »





Above the pavilion, a public rooftop garden features plants native to the area.

in loadbearing larch beams screwed with the use of 'dry' connections – no glue or foam – allowing the timber to be reused in future projects. 'If your design is circular, the process you follow will be completely different,' says architect Eline Strijkers, cofounder of DoepelStrijkers, explaining her firm's attempt to incorporate a maximum of sustainable components into Circl's interiors. She says that 'design can act as an agent for social renewal and lead to strategies that contribute to the economy'. Examples are acoustic panels made from used company uniforms donated to the bank; fire hoses, ducts and reels rescued from other buildings; a hardwood floor transplanted from a former monastery; and display cases that began life at the Stedelijk Museum. On the roof, 260 solar panels supply direct current to the pavilion's LED lights and to chargers for electronic devices, eliminating the need for energy-consuming adapters. For heating and cooling, a geothermal system installed 80 m beneath the pavilion was developed with experts from the Delft University of Technology.

A clever system of recycled aluminium panels that slide in all four directions generates an endless amount of spatial possibilities. The same system divides the ground-floor restaurant into different areas. The restaurant – one of the pavilion's few fixed functions – was added to assure the building's commercial success, as well as its engagement with neighbourhood residents and the general public, who also enjoy direct access to the rooftop bar from street level.

'Design can act as an agent for social renewal'

While conceived as a place for the bank and its clientele, discussions between the designers and their client resulted in a flexible pavilion that is, for the most part, programmatically undefined. It can be used for fashion shows, exercise sessions, debates, workshops, markets and other public events. 'What we see as the biggest challenge when faced with a commission based on circular design principles is how to manage the process in communication with the client,' says Strijkers, who calls for 'a stronger and stronger proactive attitude' among the designers involved in *any* project.

Meeting rooms in the pavilion's sunken basement are bathed with natural light from above and equipped with movable partitions sourced from a former Philips factory. Throughout the pavilion, furniture recycled from disused ABN Amro branches is mixed with objects by vintage furniture brand Mass Modern Design. Above the pavilion, a public garden features plants native to the area. The ancient Belgian cobblestones surrounding the building were sawn before being laid to form the paved surface.

The integration of a spectrum of sustainable solutions – from construction methods to furniture and finishes – is an attempt to create a blueprint for the future of circular construction at a time when off-the-shelf solutions have yet to appear. Among other things, DoepelStrijkers relies on three principles of sustainability: reuse I:1, defined by materials that need no adjustment; reuse + remanufacture, a combination of repaired and new objects; and recycle, the conversion of used materials into something completely new.

Circl not only contributes to the environment through its circularity; it also reaches out to the public with events and activities: living labs for children, cookery workshops for sustainable cuisine and an atelier for circular products. Providing a platform for everyone who wants to learn about, engage in or participate in a sustainable society, Circl encourages and facilitates a smooth transition into a global circular economy. ●

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The ground-floor restaurant offers a small, seasonal, fixed menu. Vegetables are supplied by Instock, which 'saves' supermarket leftovers, and beef is sourced from Dutch cattle.