

JOOST BALJEU

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TOMORROW IT COULD BE ARCHITECTURE, 1975

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The need to restore the lost balance between man and nature and between art and nature was important for Joost Baljeu (1925-1991) and many concrete artists who published in the journal *Structure*, which was published from 1958 to 1964. In his work, Baljeu aimed to express a structural process of growth which was parallel to that in nature, and in which he saw a synthesis of art and nature. He believed that natural forms were created by means of a process of interrelated forces. Therefore Baljeu considered that the artist should not focus on the external characteristics of a form, but on the growth processes on which it is based. Organic growth processes could be expressed particularly by means of mathematical formulae. Baljeu and the other artists of *Structure* believed that by ensuring that their work process was parallel to the growth processes in nature, they could promote the creation of a new and harmonious world. Baljeu did not consider the human mind superior to material reality. In this respect, he considered that Mondrian's attitude to nature was too arbitrary and he therefore went back to the French cubist Albert Gleizes, and later to Van Doesburg's ideas on time and space and the fourth dimension in order to express the dynamic character of nature. Spatial constructions such as reliefs and free standing statues played an increasingly important role in his work because the relationship with the dynamic growth process in nature was expressed better in these works than on the two-dimensional surface of a painting.

The Sikkens Foundation supported the publication of a design by Joost Baljeu, who was awarded the Sikkens Prize in 1962. The booklet "Tomorrow it could be architecture" is a step-by-step illustration from his art to architecture. Six colored prints show the development of a modular basic unit to links of residential designs, which provide more variety and privacy than the usual way of building in lines or vertical buildings. This composition of residential elements, which is reminiscent of a kasbah, is comparable to the clear and labyrinthine work of Aldo van Eijck and Herman Herzberger. At the same time, Baljeu's plan for an industrial construction system served as a proposal for a different design for the traffic plan, resulting in more free space which can be used, amongst other things, for more services and recreation in urban life.

The booklet with lithographs and photographs added separately

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