

## Q&A Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen

### 1. Why a storage facility?

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen has a collection of around 151,000 artworks but can display only eight percent in the galleries. The remaining objects are kept in external storage facilities that are closed to the public. Some of these spaces no longer meet the stringent standards for the storage of artworks. The construction of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen achieves several things at the same time. The entire collection will be accessible to the public and will be stored at a single location in the Museumpark. Creating an iconic new building here will also give a boost to the Museumpark. Thanks to a generous gift from the Rotterdam-based philanthropic De Verre Bergen Foundation, Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen will cost the City of Rotterdam barely more than a regular, closed storage facility.

### 2. Why have you opted for an open storage facility rather than a closed one?

This choice means that the museum's entire collection is accessible to the public. It will be the first of its kind in the world. The arrival of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen increases the Museumpark's attractiveness as an international art complex. The 39.5-metre-high, mirrored building has the potential to be a new icon for Rotterdam and to attract 120,000 paying visitors per year.

### 3. What makes it unique?

Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen is the world's first art storage facility that offers access to the museum's entire collection without the mediation of a curator. The museum anticipates around 120,000 paying visitors per year, who will get a glimpse of what goes on behind the scenes in a museum. Visitors will be able to take a guided tour of the Depot spaces or explore the building independently and peek inside restoration studios and other spaces that are normally closed to the public. The Depot will also attract visitors who simply wish to use the freely accessible rooftop restaurant and terrace. On their way up to the roof in the transparent express lift, they will get a glimpse of what is happening in the building. Ninety-five per cent of the building is open to the public. Visitors are guests in a functional art storage facility and take the same route as the artworks.

### 4. What else will happen in the Depot?

In addition to being the museum's 'machine room', the Depot will also have a commercial function. Part of the building will be rented out as storage space for private collectors, corporate collections and other museums. If they choose to, they can make these spaces accessible to the public. KPN plans to do this with its celebrated corporate art collection. There will also be a rooftop restaurant, spaces for events and a shop. The freely accessible roof garden will offer visitors a spectacular view over the city and the harbour.

### 5. Is it a public-private partnership?

The Depot is an initiative of three parties: the City of Rotterdam (which owns the majority of the collection), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen and the De Verre Bergen Foundation. Approximately 1900 m<sup>2</sup> of space is available for hire. These spaces are primarily intended for private collectors, but corporate collections and other museums can also rent storage space. Private collectors who rent a space in the Depot can be assured that their works will be handled as expertly as those that belong to the museum. By offering private collectors accommodation and services; presentations, costs, expertise and networks can be shared.

### 6. How do the museum and Depot differ?

The museum has three basic tasks: displaying the collection in an art-historical context, conducting research into the collection, and conserving the collection. The museum is the showcase and the Depot is the machine room. In the Depot, visitors will observe museological activities such as provenance research, conservation and restoration. The two buildings have different dynamics: the museum organises exhibitions, whereas in the Depot visitors can browse, alone or with a guide, amongst 151,000 artworks.

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#### Editors' Note

For images, interviews and / or further information please contact:  
Rhiannon Pickles, [rhiannon@picklespr.com](mailto:rhiannon@picklespr.com) 0031 (0) 615821202  
or the press officer Sharon Cohen +31(0)6 1188 6879, email: [pressoffice@boijmans.nl](mailto:pressoffice@boijmans.nl)

**7. How was the architect selected?**

The building's integration within the Museumpark was an important consideration in assessing the submitted design proposals. A committee of experts selected five architects on the basis of relevant previous projects. From the sketch designs submitted by these practices, in 2014 a broad-based selection committee chose the design by the Rotterdam-based practice MVRDV, founded by Winy Maas, Jacob van Rijs and Nathalie de Vries. An important factor in selecting this design was the unique bowl-shaped volume with mirrored cladding that will reflect the surrounding parkland.

**8. Who is financing the building?**

The investment cost of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen is approximately €85.5 million. The De Verre Bergen Foundation is contributing €27.6 million to the Collection Building Foundation, which was established specially for the project. This foundation is the outright owner of the building, including the site. The City of Rotterdam rents the Depot to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. After the building's opening, the City of Rotterdam will make an annual structural contribution of €2.5 million. The museum is fundraising among sponsors and donors to ensure that the interior will be just as spectacular as the exterior. Fundraising initiatives include a scheme for 'adopting' one of the mirrored cladding panels.

**9. How big is the building?**

The Depot will be 39.5 metres high and will have a floor surface area of 15,541 m<sup>2</sup>. The building has six floors with a range of climate-control scenarios that are ideal for art storage and the public. The building has a diameter of 40 metres at ground level (footprint) and a diameter of 60 metres on the sixth floor. The 35-metre-high roof will be planted with 78 trees that are designed to withstand wind and bad weather.

**10. When does Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen open?**

The official opening of Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen is in 2021. The building is expected to be completed at the beginning of 2020, to be followed by drying time, calibration of the climate control systems and the installation of approximately 151,000 artworks.

**11 Why is the museum closing before the depot opens?**

The museum building has been in need of renovation for years and can no longer continue in its present state due to the presence of asbestos and the danger of flooding and fire. The listed building no longer meets modern needs technically and functionally. The presence of asbestos in the building has created a maintenance situation that can no longer be ignored. Together with outdated electronic and climate-control systems, keeping the building open is no longer a responsible choice.

The motivation to build the Depot was to replace the museum's current storage facilities, which are too small, unsafe and outmoded. These problems could not be solved within the existing museum buildings but required the construction of an external storage facility. Even with the renovation of the museum buildings, an external storage facility would still be required.

**12. What happens to the collection when the museum closes?**

It is estimated that the museum will be closed for seven years for extensive renovation and modernisation. During this period, selections from the collection will remain visible at other locations in Rotterdam and further afield. The museum's programme will continue, and part of the museum's world-class collection will be displayed in eleven exhibitions at eight neighbouring cultural venues, in schools in Rotterdam and possibly in a location in Rotterdam Zuid. From 2021 the entire collection will be on view at Depot Boijmans Van Beuningen. Selections from the collection will also travel to leading museums around the world.

**13. What were the biggest challenges in constructing the Depot?**

There are some challenges when it comes to construction. The biggest challenge was the geometry of the concrete wall and the mirrored cladding panels, both of which are curved along both axes. Climate control in the Depot also requires careful attention. The building has to be sealed as quickly as possible so that as little moisture as possible enters the structure and the building can dry as quickly as possible.

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Rhiannon Pickles, rhiannon@picklespr.com 0031 (0) 615821202  
or the press officer Sharon Cohen +31(0)6 1188 6879, email: pressoffice@boijmans.nl

#### **14. Will sunlight reflected by the façade cause any problems?**

On sunny days the cladding panels will reflect sunlight. MVRDV carried out a study in 2014 using a light-simulation programme to assess the extent of the reflection and the possibility of any troublesome glare. The building's convex form will prevent any concentration of glare that could cause a fire and the curvature will ensure that light is dispersed, which means that any glare from the building can be deflected with the same means used to deflect glare from the sun itself, such as sunshades in cars, awnings and blinds. The houses on the north side of Het Nieuwe Instituut will not be affected because of their distance from the Depot building.

#### **15. Why have you chosen a mirrored exterior?**

The most important reason was related to the surrounding landscape. How can you make the park appear bigger? In a densely populated city, you want to make open spaces bigger and the mirrored façade can help to increase that effect. The mirrored surface helps to integrate the large building within the landscape by reflecting the surrounding trees, giving the impression that the park is bigger than it actually is.

#### **16. What are the milestones in the coming period?**

The first staircases were installed in April 2019 and the installation of the mirrored cladding panels began in May 2019. The building will reach its highest point in September 2019. The completed empty building will be delivered to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in 2020 and it will open to the public in 2021.

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