

## Will the Almere art pavilion be the breakthrough for Studio Ossidiana?

**Multidisciplinary architectural firm Studio Ossidiana (Rotterdam, the Netherlands) is not yet well known to the general public. Chances are this will change soon with the realisation of the Almere art pavilion. Why did Almere award this prestigious commission to such a young company? And why is it that competitions for artistic buildings often lead to a breakthrough for the chosen designers?**

Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano were in their early thirties and completely unknown when, as a team, they submitted their radical proposal to the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Bernard Tschumi won the design competition for Parc de la Villette in Paris before he was 40. The Dutch architectural firms MVRDV and ZUS also rose to prominence after designing pavilions for the world's fairs in Hanover (2000) and Shanghai (2010), respectively. Many more examples of architects and designers owe their breakthrough to a competition or commission to design a building for art.

The benefits of such commissions are twofold. The young architect receives the chance of a lifetime. And because so much hangs in the balance for the architect, the commissioning party can count on receiving a wealth of radical, innovative and distinctive ideas.

### **A strategy befitting of Almere new town**

For its new art pavilion, Almere intentionally approached architectural firms that had not previously made any buildings. This is because Almere is built on the ideas of young talent. This polder city was conceived by then newcomers Projektburo Almere, a group of recently graduated urban planners who formed a creative think tank in the early 1970s. Since then, the tradition of pioneering and experimenting has continued. It is with good reason that the city, with its campaign slogan *It's Possible in Almere (Het Kan in Almere)*, has put itself on the map as the city to live, do business, work, study and visit, and strives to become the fifth city of the Netherlands.

'By awarding Studio Ossidiana the opportunity to build a pavilion, we are continuing a tradition befitting of Almere new town,' says Denise de Boer, who is leading the development of a new museum in Almere, for which the art pavilion is the forerunner. 'Studio Ossidiana helped us achieve a special and innovative design, and we are helping them to realise it. To achieve the quality we have in mind, we have paired them with an experienced technical team.'

Lian The, project manager at ToornendPartners, is directing this process. 'Studio Ossidiana has developed a brilliant concept. The technical design team, which consists of experts in sustainability, building physics, materialisation and construction, ensures the concept's technical and financial feasibility and obtains the necessary permits. Sometimes Ossidiana's vision creates challenges for what is technically possible and financially feasible. Together, the parties then do everything in their power to find solutions. Studio Ossidiana's commitment to their concept means they do everything in their power to overcome such hurdles. This makes for a very dynamic and informative process for all involved.'

Whether this will be this young firm's big breakthrough remains to be seen. 'Of course, we hope the attention the pavilion generates will benefit Studio Ossidiana and put them in the international spotlight,' says De Boer. 'I believe this design has everything to kickstart their career.'

Alessandra Covini and Giovanni Bellotti of Studio Ossidiana: 'The project gave us the possibility of developing at an architectural scale a series of themes we have been exploring through small-scale interventions, such as new types of public spaces on water, relations between humans and other species. We also got the possibility to develop a new material research. Because it is our first building, having a team of experts as part of the process, gave us the possibility of focusing on the essence of the project, from the concept to detailing and materialization.'

### **About Almere art pavilion**

At the start of this year, the municipality of Almere and the province of Flevoland asked five up-and-coming architectural firms at the intersection of architecture and art to develop a proposal for an art pavilion as a forerunner to a new art museum. The jury unanimously chose Studio Ossidiana's poetic design, which merges architecture, art and nature and offers visitors an inspiring experience both inside and out. The pavilion will open at the start of the Floriade Expo in April 2022 and function as an annexe and testing ground for the new museum for at least five years. Led by project coordinator Denise de Boer, the museum will focus on accessible and appealing art, with an emphasis on large-scale multimedia projects and land art.

The pavilion will be situated in the heart of the Floriade expo, which will then be developed into the innovative, sustainable residential area Hortus, with the art pavilion as a central attraction.

### **About Studio Ossidiana**

Founded in 2015, Studio Ossidiana is led by Italian architects Alessandra Covini and Giovanni Bellotti. Their projects are playful, tactile and inclusive. Based in Rotterdam, Studio Ossidiana works with an international team of architects, designers and researchers. Alessandra Covini studied in Milan and Lisbon and gained her MA in Architecture MA at the Technical University in Delft. In 2018 she won the Prix de Rome for Architecture, the oldest and most prestigious award for architects under 35 in the Netherlands. Giovanni Bellotti studied in Venice and Delft, earning his MA in Architecture at the IUAV University of Venice and a postgraduate degree in Architecture and Urbanism from MIT in the US. Giovanni is a Fulbright Fellow and Miguel Vinciguerra Award recipient.

Read more about the design of the Almere art pavilion [here](#).

See images of the design [here](#).

[www.almere20.nl](http://www.almere20.nl)  
[Studio-ossidiana.com](http://studio-ossidiana.com)  
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**Note for editors**

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