

Creative Energy

In the conversion of a Dutch power station into a cultural centre, TenBrasWestinga left the raw aesthetic of the complex intact.



Dordrecht

Cultural Centre

At Energiehuis, TenBrasWestinga left traces of older construction work intact.

Words David Keuning
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Architects Roel ten Bras and Maaïke Westinga have given a new identity to an old power station in the Dutch city of Dordrecht, transforming the building into a cultural hub with a focus on self-expression. The 14,000-m² Energiehuis (Energy House) now accommodates no fewer than four cultural divisions: pop venue, theatre, concert hall and educational facilities for classes in music, dance, theatre, literature and the visual arts.

To make the station's six great halls suitable for their new functions, the architects inserted a long, broad corridor into the centre of the renewed community landmark. 'A glazed roof opens the heart of the building to an abundance of natural light,' says Ten Bras, 'improving visibility and orientation.' Much of

the interior circulation takes place along what had been the station's outer walls. 'In this way,' he says, 'visitors can still experience the original magnificence of the power station.'

As you enter the building, you're drawn instantly to Grand Café Khotinsky, which has a striking interior design by Angelika Kok of Barzileye. An impressively tall steel drinks rack behind the bar divides the vast space in two. A similar steel structure along one wall forms a narrow mezzanine, with tables and chairs. Throughout the complex, TenBrasWestinga has left traces of older construction work intact. Walls inside Khotinsky, for example, are a patchwork of pinkish tiles, green wall paint and grey plasterwork.

tenbraswestinga.nl

