

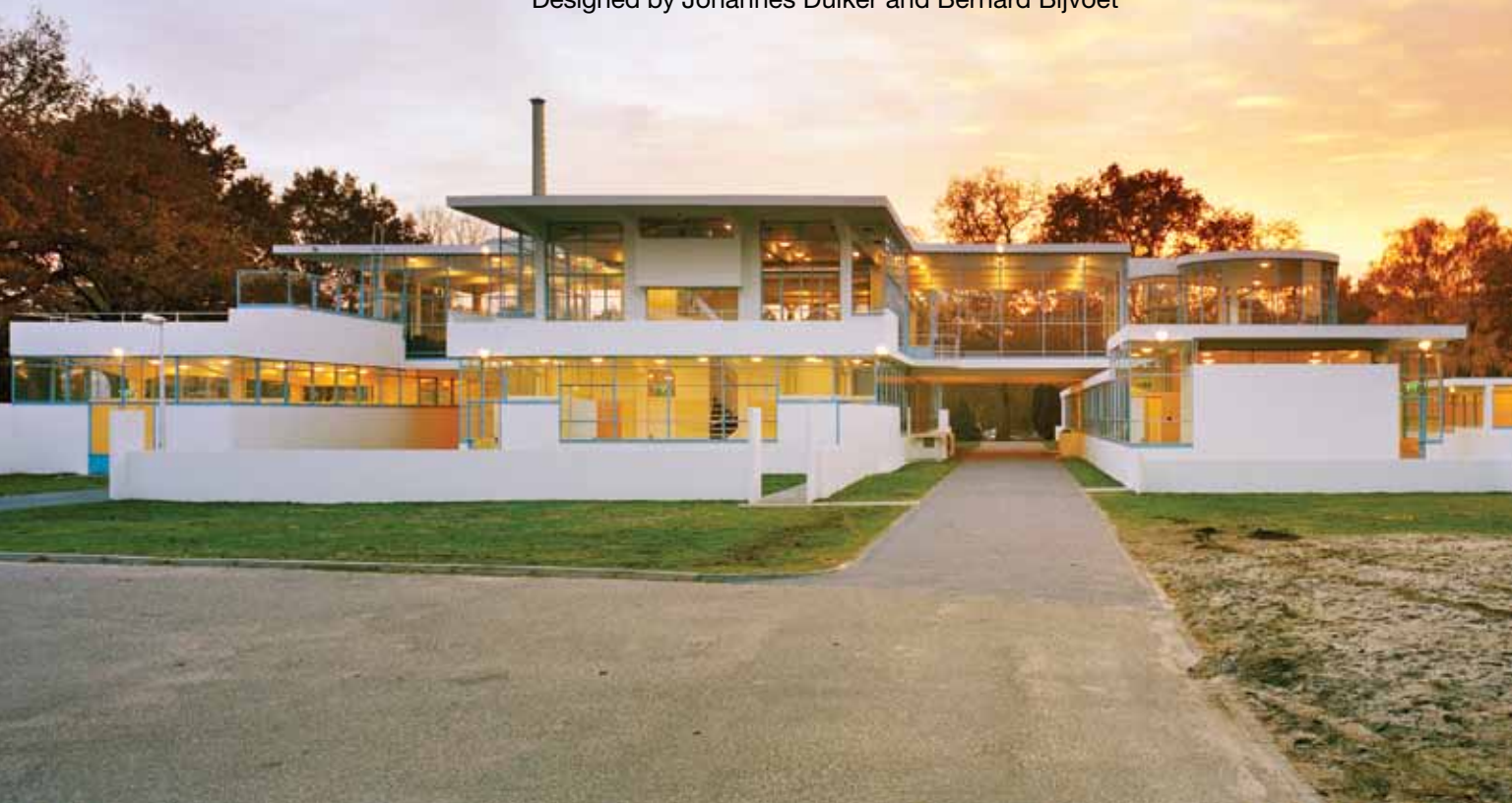
World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize

2010 award to **Bierman Henket architecten**
and
Wessel de Jonge architecten

For the restoration of the Zonnestraal Sanatorium (1928–1931)

Hilversum, The Netherlands

Designed by Johannes Duiker and Bernard Bijvoet



Zonnestraal is a modern movement gem of concrete and glass, revelatory in its own time and a discovery anew each time architects and historians have rediscovered it after years of neglect. Now as Wessel de Jonge's and Hubert-Jan Henket's work on the restoration comes to a key stage of completion, it reconfirms without a doubt that Zonnestraal stands as one of the most experimental designs in the fervently creative decades of modernism between the two world wars. A beacon of Dutch rationalism, it is also a major work of modern architecture that can now be experienced in a way that resonates with its original architects' intentions.

—JURY CHAIRMAN BARRY BERGDOLL

The Philip Johnson Chief Curator of Architecture and Design at The Museum of Modern Art







Since the founding of the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk Initiative in 2006, we have encountered dozens of great buildings from the recent past that were on the brink of loss, and where architects and other advocates were struggling to save them. Lacking a watchful constituency or a clear future, modern buildings disappear without a trace, often without adequate public review. To save them requires imagination, determination, and even a measure of heroism.

The 2010 WMF/Knoll Modernism Prize recognizes a prime example of this struggle. The Zonnestraal Sanitorium is an elegant functionalist work, but it was built to have a short life. Its original design was predicated on the belief that its purpose of harboring tuberculosis patients would soon be outdated by the invention of new cures for the disease. And it was, leaving the building with no use. But its reputation lived on among architects and historians, and a determination grew to give it a new life, even as it approached the brink of loss. This prize salutes the outstanding work of architects Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge, for their innovative restoration of this modernist gem. It should be noted that the risk of losing the Zonnestraal Sanitorium gave birth to a new organization—DOCOMOMO—now a worldwide network of professionals active in documenting important modern structures in face of the prospect of their imminent loss. In awarding this prize, WMF also salutes their efforts.

The WMF/Knoll Modernism Prize is the only prize to acknowledge the specific and growing threats facing significant modern buildings, and to recognize the architects and designers who help ensure their rejuvenation and long-term survival through new design solutions. We hope the excellent work recognized by the awarding of this second biennial WMF/Knoll prize will inspire others to undertake the efforts that are needed to preserve these important buildings at risk, and will also stimulate more public vigilance for iconic buildings created in our own time. WMF is grateful to Knoll for this opportunity to draw attention to one of the most pressing issues of historic preservation today.

Bonnie Burnham

President, World Monuments Fund

Throughout the history of our company, Knoll has fostered the most unique talents of our time, drawing on the creativity of architects and designers worldwide to connect people with their work, their lives and their world. The World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize reflects this mission by recognizing those who demonstrate that endangered modern buildings can be economically and functionally viable, and continue to serve their communities, often in new and innovative ways.

Our partnership with the World Monuments Fund is consistent with our commitment to preserve the integrity of landmark mid-century furniture designs sold by Knoll and to manufacture these products according to the designers' original specifications.

Knoll associates are proud that our work with the World Monuments Fund, including the exhibition *Modernism at Risk: Modern Solutions for Saving Landmarks*, has raised international awareness of design through education and advocacy in both the public and professional arenas. These important initiatives, which have captured the imagination of so many—students, design professionals, and community leaders—reinforce our belief in the timeless role that good design plays in defining the pulse of contemporary life.

Andrew B. Cogan

CEO, Knoll, Inc.



THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND MODERNISM AT RISK INITIATIVE was launched in 2006 to bring international attention and resources to address the key threats and challenges facing many modern buildings only decades after their design and construction: demolition, inappropriate alteration, perceived obsolescence, and public apathy, as well as the technical problems associated with conserving innovative designs and materials.

THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND/KNOLL MODERNISM PRIZE was established as part of the larger advocacy mission of the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk Initiative to acknowledge the specific and growing threats—neglect, deterioration, and demolition—facing significant modern buildings, and to recognize the architects and designers who help ensure their rejuvenation and long-term survival through new design solutions. The prize is awarded biennially to an individual or firm in recognition of a completed project or a body of work. The award is a \$10,000 honorarium and a limited-edition chair manufactured by Knoll.

Knoll is the founding sponsor of the World Monuments Fund Modernism at Risk Initiative and the World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize.

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, our highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide.



One of Zonnestraal's restored workrooms



THE JURY

BARRY BERGDOLL

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President of DOCOMOMO US
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KAREN STEIN

Design consultant, writer, and faculty
member in the Design Criticism
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Zonnestraal, Dresselhuys Pavilion (1931),
before and after restoration



ZONNESTRAAL SANATORIUM was designed between 1925 and 1927 by Jan Duiker (1890–1935), the leading spokesman for the modern movement in the Netherlands, Bernard Bijvoet (1889–1979), and structural engineer Jan Gerko Wiebenga (1886–1974). Completed in 1931, the sanatorium functioned as a rehabilitation center for tuberculosis patients and was designed with the conviction that a cure for the deadly disease would be discovered within thirty to fifty years. Embracing the progressive ideals of the modern movement, Zonnestraal's architecture sought short-term functionality, providing the requisite lighting and ventilation that specialists postulated was necessary to treat the illness.

Zonnestraal was celebrated as a significant monument in the early years of the modern movement even while it was under construction. The death of Duiker in 1935 and progress in the eradication of tuberculosis following the Second World War, however, saw the sanatorium soon fade from public and academic notice, falling into disuse and disrepair, with sections almost literally disappearing into the surrounding landscape. For nearly two decades, Zonnestraal was forgotten.

In the 1960s, however, the sanatorium was rediscovered and deemed by architectural historians to be a major monument of modern architecture. In 1982, faced with the looming physical decline and programmatic obsolescence of a growing body of modern architecture in The Netherlands, the Dutch government convened leading architects, headed by Hubert-Jan Henket and Wessel de Jonge, to address this problem. Zonnestraal was the monumental iconic example used as the template for the study on how to save modern buildings. Completed in 1987, the study led not only to a conservation program for Zonnestraal, but to the eventual creation (in 1988) of an international movement to save great works of modern architecture: DOCOMOMO. Zonnestraal's physical survival was assured when it received landmark protection in 1995.

Over the last 15 years, exhaustive research and painstaking conservation and reconstruction by Messrs. Henket and Wessel de Jonge have seen the sanatorium restored to its original splendor and re-purposed for contemporary use. Zonnestraal now serves as a multi-purpose health facility, accommodating several health care providers, an obesity clinic, a sports injury rehabilitation clinic, and a conference center.

The conservation effort to save the sanatorium is both immediate and long-term, site specific and global. Nearly eighty years after its original date of completion, the architects' commitment to restoring the complex architecture and reviving its purpose furthers the legacy of Zonnestraal as an icon of the modern movement.





Hubert-Jan Henket (left) and Wessel de Jonge

Bierman Henket architecten

Architecture is utilitarian art, representing the spatial design of social structures. The primary aim of these structural processes is to satisfy human demands and embody their dreams.

Bierman Henket architecten is a medium-sized architectural firm with a staff of highly trained architects, designers, and planners. Their expertise in the field is extensive, and their skill sets wide-ranging. The office is organized as a design studio, where a design team for each project is assembled. As necessary, external advisors are included.

Wessel de Jonge architecten

In revitalization, the restrictions imposed by the existing building pose an inspiring challenge. Our goal is to ensure that a building is able to speak for itself again.

Wessel de Jonge architecten is a growing firm with a strong and expanding portfolio of projects, recognized internationally for its work in the reuse and restoration of architectural heritage of the recent past, often in a dynamic urban context. In an architecture that is lucid and subtle, with sophisticated choices of materials and details, spaces are created where the occupants feel comfortable and at ease.

Modernist buildings are designed with temporality in mind, which makes them often fragile and very hard to preserve for future generations. That's why I am so thrilled we won this important prize with Zonnestraal, the most fragile and most inspiring of them all.

—HUBERT-JAN HENKET, OF BIERMAN HENKET ARCHITECTEN

The careful dismantling of the main building proved an unprecedented source of knowledge and hands-on experience with early modern building technology and its preservation...the great value of Duiker's work is now again attainable to the expert community as well as the public at large. The fact that Zonnestraal is not only an architectural icon, but also a social landmark, gives this restoration an extra dimension and value to our social history.

—WESSEL DE JONGE, OF WESSEL DE JONGE ARCHITECTEN

In awarding the 2010 World Monuments Fund/Knoll Modernism Prize to Bierman Henket architecten and Wessel De Jonge architecten for the restoration of Zonnestraal Sanatorium, the jury recognizes the formidable functional, material, and economic challenges that have threatened this site, and the architects' heroic efforts in helping to forge a successful conservation plan that preserved the original design intent of the building, while updating it to meet modern uses, modern materials, and environmental standards. In addition to Jury Chairman Barry Bergdoll's commendation that the Henket and de Jonge restoration has confirmed Zonnestraal's standing in the canon of major works of modern architecture internationally, other jurors spoke of the additional virtues of the conservation program.

EXCELLENCE OF TECHNICAL CONSERVATION SOLUTIONS

Theo Prudon praised the project's "sound conservation philosophy and brilliant technical solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing a building of such poetic lightness, which was constructed with minimal use of three materials: concrete, steel, and glass. The technical solutions for the building's distinctive glass fenestration were especially thoughtful, incorporating sound scholarly research in original materials and programmatic and design intent with modern advances in glass fabrications and environmental conservation."

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Kenneth Frampton added, "the restoration program for Zonnestraal re-engaged the community at all levels of Dutch society—governmental, professional, and local citizens—and returned the building to a programmatically and financially sustainable use as part of a health care facility. It is a use that is both respectful of its history and provides it with a vital and viable role in contemporary society."





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SCHOLARSHIP

As with the 2008 prize, the 2010 prize, according to **Jean-Louis Cohen**, “recognizes practitioners engaged with intellectual issues, who do not consider their contribution solely a technical one. The thorough investigation of the archival sources and the detailed material history of the building’s construction and use do not exclude the invention of legitimate solutions for the conservation of delicate components. The combination of skills displayed at Zonnestraal reveals the kind of expertise modern landmarks require.”

QUALITY OF THE RESTORATION

Deitrich Neumann stated his belief that “this careful restoration does full justice to the subtleties of the original building, its particular handling of light, and the seeming weightlessness of its composition. In this project, practical conservation and thorough scholarship reinforced each other in finding the best approach to the preservation of one of modern architecture’s most important buildings.”

REFERENCE FOR FUTURE

Karen Stein added, “ the rallying of many great architectural minds to save Zonnestraal eventually led to the creation of DOCOMOMO. That legacy, plus the conservation solutions that were eventually implemented by Wessel de Jonge and Hubert-Jan Henket, will earn Zonnestraal its own chapter in any reference book on the preservation of modern buildings.”



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