

Bend, Blur, Color, Pour: Glass and Identity in Architecture

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1. Summary

In contemporary architecture, glass often takes the pretentious role of something that is absent, a fully transparent, non-existent material where one can look right through. However, a mute material that says "I'm not there" refuses to establish a relationship with the people that live in the building. This might be one of the reasons people often feel alienated in contemporary buildings.

Neutelings Riedijk Architects follow a radical opposite path. In their projects they bend, blur color, or pour glass to make it a robust and characteristic material. A glass that tells stories, that obstructs the view, that speaks to the visitors. These interventions give a specific identity to a building. It involves the development of new glass production techniques and intense collaborations with artists, as demonstrated in public buildings such as Beeld en Geluid in Hilversum or the MAS Museum in Antwerp.



Fig. 1 'Beeld en Geluid', Hilversum, the Netherlands. Photography scagliolabrakkee © Neutelings Riedijk Architecten.



Fig. 2 Beeld en Geluid', detail. Photography scagliolabrakkee © Neutelings Riedijk Architecten.



Fig. 3 Beeld en Geluid', detail. Photography scagliolabrakkee © Neutelings Riedijk Architecten.



Fig. 4 MAS Museum, Antwerp, Belgium. Photography Sarah Blee © Neutelings Riedijk Architecten.



Fig. 5 MAS Museum, inside view of corrugated glass facade. Photography Sarah Blee © Neutelings Riedijk Architecten.

