

# wonder Rietveld and Mondriaan were Dutch

## Uri Cohen

40 years old, architect and urban planner, teacher at the TU Delft, was born in Israel, and has lived in the Netherlands for sixteen years.

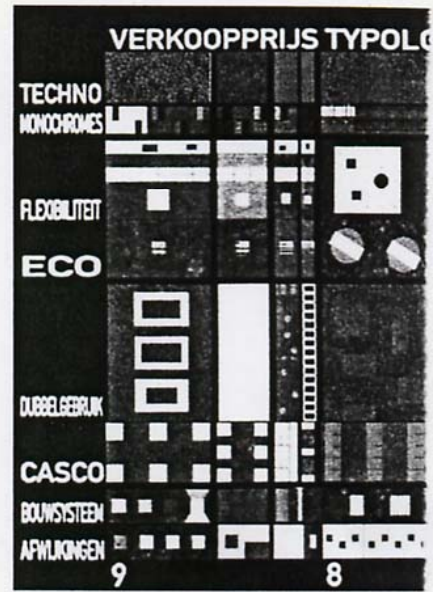


## Straight forward

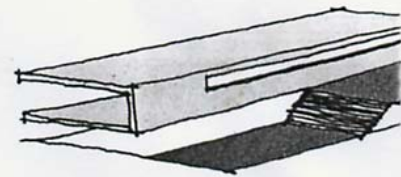
The most 'superdutch' to me in Dutch culture is the absence of any 'SUPER'. Architecture, as part of culture here, is very modest, and functional. On the one hand this is what saves architecture here from 'stylish' and 'over' theoretical architecture and deals with architecture on a deeper and substantial level. On the other hand it is a cover for possible shallowness in lack of virtuosity. It was no surprise for me that, when Koolhaas wrote the theme for the RIBA competition, he named it: "A house without style".

It might be cliché, but that old struggle of the Dutch nation, to conquer nature, created a landscape as a rational work of art. There is a saying "one is the mirror of the landscape of his homeland." In this sense, it is no wonder that Rietveld and Mondriaan were Dutch. Landscape is often the underlay of town-planning and eventually architecture. This fascination for the linearity can sometimes be unexplainable to a stranger; water, roads, buildings and even the trees stand in rows here. One can even notice that in the way students approach the design process. Dutch students will usually try to get grasp on the project by shifting and playing with linear objects, while students abroad often choose to begin with the 'hagelslag' model or any other free form.

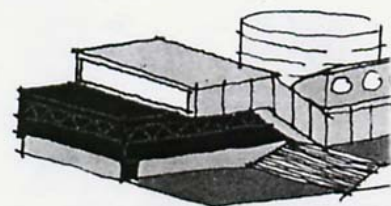
The big difference that I experience here in Holland is the fact that the common Dutch person, has much more knowledge and understanding about architecture than a common person in other countries. It is remarkable that newspapers publish, almost daily, an article about architecture. This causes that the average Dutch client is seeking for quality and is much more interested in innovation than abroad. This is a great advantage, which gives architectural talent the opportunity to grow.//



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