



Association of Architectura ET Amicitia and Dutch Architect C. Citroen

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ABSTRACT

Genootschap Architectura et Amicitia (Association of Architectura et Amicitia) is an important association in the development of architecture in the Netherlands in the second half of 19th century up to the 20th century. And it turned the Dutch architect C. Citroen (1881-1935) who was once the advisory architect (1915-1930) of the Municipality of Surabaya is one of the members of this association. This article describes the history of the founding of Architectura et Amicitia and its development, as well as Citroen's involvement in this association.

KEY WORDS: Architectura et Amicitia, Amsterdam, C. Citroen, Surabaya.

1. INTRODUCTION

Association of Architectura et Amicitia or A et A in short is an important institution in the architectural development in the Netherlands in the second half of 19th century up to the 20th century. Most of the well-known Dutch architects joined in the association. Some of them had good reputation not only in the Netherlands but also in the international architectural constellation.

The Dutch architect C. Citroen (1881-1935) was one of the most remarkable architects in the Netherlands Indies who ever participated in the International Paris Exhibition 1925 [1]. His works range from furniture to town planning and from architectural designs to civil constructions for a broad range of clients during his career both as an advisory architect of the Municipality of Surabaya in 1915-1930 and as an independent architect afterwards. Unfortunately, previous studies on this architect only focus on his activities and works in the colony. They only mentioned that in the Netherlands he studied architecture at the Quellinus School, Amsterdam and afterwards, he worked at the B.J. Ouëndag's office in the same city. No one reveals that there is relation between him and the association.

By knowing the history of A et A and Citroen's involvement in the association, we can know that the role of Citroen actually is not limited in the colony but also in his native country.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data in this study are mostly taken from various literature and old publications, as well as archives associated with A et A and architect Citroen. Thus, this study employs historical and descriptive method.

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3. ORIGIN OF ARCHITECTURA ET AMICITIA

A et A was a Dutch architectural association based in Amsterdam that aims to bring together architects and individuals from related disciplines to exchange information with one another and to continue to inspire each other by means of excursions, lectures and exhibitions [2].

The plan for the establishment of A et A arose in a site office of the building for the artist association *Arti et Amicitiae* on the Rokin in Amsterdam. Building contractor G.F. Moele Bergveld and architect superintendent F.W. van Gendt, both at the start of their careers, listened to a story from a 26 year old architect named J.H. Leliman, who was also the architect of the association building, about his travels abroad. His enthusiasm for architectural life and extensive contacts with young architects in France made them realize what was missing in the Netherlands. With the help of friends like architects H.P. Vogel, J.F.J. Margry and H. Molemans, their dream was realised on 23 August 1855 when A et A was formally established in café “de Stad Breda” on the Warmoesstraat, Amsterdam. This historical moment was witnessed by 22 young architects, building engineers and drafters. A et A was also an alternative for the official and traditional *Maatschappij tot Bevordering der Bouwkunst* (Society for the Advancement of Architecture) which had been in operation since 1841 [3].

Moele Bergveld was elected as chair at the first meeting on 17 September 1855. Soon afterwards A et A held its first competition. Next, a librarian was hired to circulate artistic construction books, magazines and loose illustrations. Lectures were scheduled and stimulating discussions on art criticism were encouraged. The board of Society for the Advancement of Architecture, including I. Warnsinck, A.N. Godefroy and J. van Straaten, were appointed as honorary members. They gave books and magazines to A et A and adjudicated design competitions. In addition, temporary investigation commissions were set up, including the 1856 commission for the coordination of measurements and drawings of old buildings with artistic value [3].

4. DEVELOPMENT OF ARCHITECTURA ET AMICITIA

A et A was not only focused on activities in architecture and related disciplines but also active socially [2]. Beginning in 1862 with the creation of the first *Amsterdamde Ambachtsschool* (Amsterdam Crafts School), members of A et A such as J.A. Rooseboom, J.H.A.E. de Vries, J. Olie and G.D. Martens signed on to be among the first teachers. Leliman directed his attention to the shortage of affordable housing for employees [3].

Enthusiasm among members of the association was low in the beginning. Meetings and lectures were rarely attended [2]. In 1865, J. Olie imposed a *f* 0.50 fine for members who did not attend a lecture or a meeting on art criticism at least once a year [3].

Around 1870, there was a vacuum in architectural education in Amsterdam after the architectural department at the *Koninklijke Academie van Beeldende Kunsten* (Royal Academy of Fine Arts) was moved to the Polytechnic School in Delft [2]. Finally, in 1875 A et A started its own courses, which were very successful [3].

A year later, P.J.H. Cuypers was happily welcomed as an honorary member. In 1877, external members (people who lived outside of Amsterdam) were allowed to be A et A members. As a result, the financial conditions of the association improved significantly. In order to enlarge the role of A et A in society, the board reorganized the association in 1881, extending personal rights to each member [3].

In 1888, A et A strengthened its relationship with the architectural association *Architectuur en Vriendschap* (Architecture and Friendship) in Rotterdam, *Architectura* in The Hague and *Groningse Vereniging ter Bevordering van Bouwkunst* (Groningen Association for the Advancement of Architecture), including the sponsorship of joint exhibitions. Beginning in 1890, A et A, in collaboration with *Bouwkunst en Vriendschap* in Rotterdam and *Architectura* in The Hague, published the illustrated magazine *De Architect* [3]. Three years later, A et A released the magazine *Architectura* which ceased publication in 1906. The latter magazine placed articles about art, architecture and related associations within the 1164 lands Indies in several editions between 1899 and 1900. There were at least three editions on Indies art and four on Indies architecture and another on architectural associations [4-11].

During the 1890s, A et A was dominated by employees from Cuypers' firm, including H.W. Mol, K.P.C. de Bazel, J.L.M. Lauweriks and J. Stuyt. In 1897, C.E. Grantke was hired as the first female employee. In 1906, W. Kromhout, chairperson from 1895 to 1896, introduced a new member category, i.e. donor member in an attempt to improve the financial conditions of the association. However, only a few new members came [3].

On 28 February 1908, important A et A members, such as K.P.C. de Bazel and Willem Kromhout, set up the *Bond van Nederlandsche Architecten* (Association of Dutch Architects) or BNA. In the same year, Amsterdam started its own architectural programme after a 40-year absence when Kromhout and others established the *Afdeling Voortgezet en Hooger Bouwkunst Onderricht* (Department of Further and Higher Architectural Education) or VHBO. The aim of the VHBO was in fact the same as that of A et A: education in architecture [3].

In 1912, A. Keppler, Director of Public Works of Amsterdam, called upon A et A members to take action in solving the housing problem in Amsterdam, especially in regard to the forthcoming urban expansion. A year later, he asked the A et A again and gave them the opportunity to assist his office in making plans for urban development [3].

The outbreak of the First World War had a significant impact on the society. The magazine *Architectura*, first published in 1893, had to drastically reduce the number of its pages due to a paper shortage and the fact that many young members were drafted [3].

In 1917, H.Th. Wijdeveld initiated a new category of members: delegated members. This category, consisting of talented and experienced members, was to ensure that the society focused more on the aesthetics of architecture and what A et A had to do to improve standards. A year later, he also launched a new magazine, *Wendingen* [3]. It became a medium in which to convey architecturally the aesthetic ideas and opinions of members, especially the delegated members. It likewise served as an inspiration for all members. In this way, A et A focused on the aesthetic interest of the architect while BNA was concerned with more material aspects [3].

5. CITROEN IN THE ARCHITECTURA ET AMICITIA

Citroen became a member of A et A shortly after he graduated from the Quellinus School. He was a member from 1902 until 1907 [3]. His membership was proposed by Jacques Roosing Jr. (building engineer, regular member in 1899-1920) and Maurits Plate (building engineer, regular member in 1902-1932) [12], most likely during the 1143rd meeting on 15 October 1902. Their proposal was approved at the 1145th meeting on 29 October 1902 [13]. The inauguration of Citroen's membership, as well as that of P. Landré (furniture maker and external member of A et A until 1910) [3], took place at the 1148th meeting on 26 November 1902 [14].

Citroen's interest in joining A et A cannot be separated from the involvement of his former Quellinus School teachers in the association, i.e. W. Kromhout (1884-1940, external, regular and

honorary member, architect), B. van Hove (1883-1899, regular member), C.W. Nijhoff (1885-1916, regular member), K.P.C. de Bazel (1891-1923, external, regular, honorary member, architect), J. Visser Jr. (1900-1910, external member, teacher of the Quellinus School), J.H. de Groot (1900-1932, regular member, teacher of the Quellinus School), H. Ellens (1901-1906, external member, teacher of the Quellinus School), and H.C. Elzinga (1907-1920, external member, architect). His employer, B.J. Ouëndag, was also a regular member of A et A (1880-1932). Interestingly, Citroen became a regular member based on his position as a teacher of geometry [3], not as a junior architect or an architect assistant in Ouëndag's office. Unfortunately, no additional information on this educational institution can be found.

During his membership (29 October 1902 - 1907), there were around 120 meetings, of which Citroen only participated in four, on 10 December 1902, 25 February 1903, 25 March 1903, and 22 April 1903 [15]. Of these four meetings, the last (22 April 1903) discussed the topic of the Netherlands Indies, i.e. "Den Hindoetempel van het Djeng Plateau op Java", conveyed by J.W. IJzerman [16]. Citroen was inactive at the A et A meetings, most likely because:

- in the morning and afternoon, he worked in Ouëndag's office; and
- in the evening, he taught geometry while the A et A meetings were usually held every Wednesday evening at 8 p.m.

In an attempt to compensate for his absence at most of the A et A meetings, and also to update his knowledge, Citroen subscribed to the illustrated magazine *De Architect* in April 1903 [17].

In 1908, Citroen left A et A. One probable reason was his commitment to training young members to be architects.

6. CITROEN'S CAREER AFTER HIS MEMBERSHIP IN ARCHITECTURA ET AMICITIA

After receiving his diploma in 1902, Citroen worked for thirteen years at B.J. Ouëndag's office in Amsterdam [18]. At the time, he was given the opportunity to assist Jacob F. Klinkhamer from the *Technische Hogeschool* Delft and B.J. Ouëndag in designing the *Nederlandsch Indische Spoorweg* (Netherlands Indies Railway) office in Semarang [19]. Actually, a (preliminary) design of the project had already been made in 1901. He learned a great deal about building techniques in the tropics from this project [18].

In 1908, Citroen and the architect Maurits Plate, who supported Citroen's membership in 1902, provided the opportunity for young members of A et A to study architecture and prepare for examinations [20]. Citroen provided this service after he resigned from A et A in 1907, while Maurits Plate continued his membership until 1932 [3].

The scope of their curriculum covered all the courses needed for a career in architecture, such as line drawing, architectural drawing, projection theory for wood, stone and steel constructions, descriptive geometry and perspective, surveying, knowledge of building materials, making specifications and budgets, and general knowledge of architectural styles [20]. Training for examinations was given for both private and in-course classes for the examinations mentioned below:

- Examinations for supervisor and draftsman set up by Society for the Advancement of Architecture;
- Admission examinations for all (three) classes of Department B (construction and mechanical drawings) of the *Rijksnormaal School voor Teekenonderwijzers* (Royal Teachers' School for Drawing Educators) in Amsterdam;
- Admission examinations for all (four) classes of the *Rijkschool voor Kunstnijverheid* (Royal School for Applied Arts) which covered decorative sculpture, painting and architecture; and
- Secondary education examinations, line drawing and perspective [20].

With the above explanation, it can be concluded that in 1908, Citroen had enough knowledge of building engineering and construction. It means that he probably took an additional class on the subject before 1908 and after the middle of 1904. As a consequence, he did not attend an evening class at the VHBO, which was established in 1908. It is possible he took a course at the *Industrieschool van de Maatschappij voor den Werkenden Stand*. A second alternative is that he learned in practice at Ouëndag's office.

Besides teaching the young members of A et A, Citroen still kept his status as an architect (assistant) in Ouëndag's office. However, further information on other projects he took on until 1915 are not known due to the lack of records of the period.

His competence as a professional architect was finally recognized after he was accepted as a member of BNA in 1921 [21]. At the time, he had already been living in the Netherlands Indies for six years.

7. CONCLUSION

A et A becomes an important institution in the development of architecture in the Netherlands. A et A does not only act as a forum for exchange of information among practitioners of architecture and related disciplines who become its members, but also plays an active role to help solving the problems facing the city government, educating the young architect candidates, partnering with other similar organizations of other cities, and the important to encourage the establishment of Dutch architects association. By A et A magazine, meetings and senior members, very probably Citroen was interested in practicing his knowledge in the Netherlands Indies and then he knew the way to go to the colony.

Although Citroen was an A et A regular member since 1902, he did not actively attend the regular A et A meetings due to his busy work. But after his resignation from the association in 1907, he took an active role in training for the A et A young members to study architecture and prepared them for exams. Therefore, there was a mutual symbiosis between him and the association.

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