



Prof. ir. Thijs Asselbergs (1956) has been working as an independent architect since 1984. With his office, from 2002 onward known under the name architectuurcentrale Thijs Asselbergs (aTA), he realizes housing projects, villas, bridges, urban plans, restaurants and commercial buildings. In addition, he is engaged in initiating activities in various domains, such as the stimulation of young design talent, industrial design, and technological innovation in architecture. He is constantly switching between his role as a designer, director, motivator, organizer and coach.

Asselbergs graduated in the mid-eighties, a period that offered little employment for architects. However, Asselbergs not only sought work as an architect, but also actively involved himself in education, policy and design. He was one of the founders of the *Items* magazine, which would evolve into a leading platform for design in the Netherlands.

In 1990, Asselbergs was appointed City Architect in Haarlem. He developed a series of major projects and presented a specific architectural memo for Haarlem, echoing the national architectural memo presented in 1991. He has been the chairman of Building Inspectorates in various large cities and advocates building regulation as a method of architectonic quality control. In this context, he advised the Chief Government Architect on innovations concerning the introduction of municipal memos on building regulation. At the end of the eighties, Asselbergs became head of the Architecture Department of the Amsterdam Academy of Architecture. With this, his enthusiasm for stimulating young design talent received a substantial boost. Also as chairman of the Archiprix Foundation (since 1994) and Archiprix International (since 2001) he regards it as an important responsibility to create opportunities for young designers. With his appointment as Professor of Architectural Engineering at the Faculty of Architecture of Delft University of Technology as of September 2008, two of his passions now converge: the stimulation of young design talent and technological innovation in architecture.

In the early nineties, Asselbergs conceived the term *zappi* for an imaginary material that can be used for everything. It was devised to assist the architect-engineer, the archineer, at least in a metaphorical sense, in creating his technological innovations. Aviation and aerospace technology, industrial design, and high-quality temporary construction provide a source of inspiration in this context. However, for worthwhile technological innovation, it is necessary to generate synergy between all the parties involved in design and construction, as the individual architectonic genius has now been replaced by a team of specialists. In this function development, it is essential to guard against the erosion of the role of the architect down to a mere stylist. It is the architect par excellence who is ideally suited for the position of generalist in this multi-layered process.

The ideas that Asselbergs develops in his many activities and the expertise he accumulates provide the fundament for the work implemented by his office. What began in 1984 with *Oculenti*, a hightech company building for a contact lens manufacturer, has developed via utilitarian designs such as the *Langebrug*, and large-scale housing projects such as *Henkenshage* and *IJburg Blok 3a* in Amsterdam, into complex inner city substantiations such as the *Mariastichting* in Haarlem and *De Dominicaan* in Nijmegen and a challenging assignment like the *Jazzhall* in the Utrecht Music Palace.