

— PONT

STEEGER

PONTSTEIGER

THIS BOOK...

... is about Pontsteiger, a unique and striking building that has now become an inseparable part of Amsterdam. Pontsteiger is linked with the future of this city, with the transformation of a remarkable site on the bank of the River IJ, with the new Houthaven zone, with the historic Spaarndammerbuurt, with the people who worked there and with those who will move there.

The core of this book consists of the hundreds of photographs of the Pontsteiger project that Milan Hofmans took in the course of three and a half years. He started before the first spade had been sunk into the ground and continued until the building had been completed. From the moment that the decision was taken to construct the building, different stages, many details and atmospheres and the numerous people working on the building were photographed with loving care and attention. This was done in a direct, sometimes almost in your face way, but always with genuine admiration and respect for the people involved with the building work and the project that gradually matured thanks to them. By recording not only predictable important moments but also what seemed at the time to be casual ones during the process, the result is a many-sided impression that above all celebrates the accomplishment of this project.

There is no other building like Pontsteiger. Its added significance lies not so much in a specific element but in the combination and culmination of architecture, form, process and importance for the city of Amsterdam. Arons and Gelauff came up with a design that appealed directly to the imagination and grew – literally and metaphorically – to a great height in the course of close collaboration with the builders.

The building is no less than a turning-point for Amsterdam and the growth and transformation that the city is undergoing. What began as a project to symbolise the development of a new dockland zone has by now become a strategic and symbolic benchmark in the tumultuous developments of the capital's future. That awareness and those expectations were also an important motive for the making of this publication.

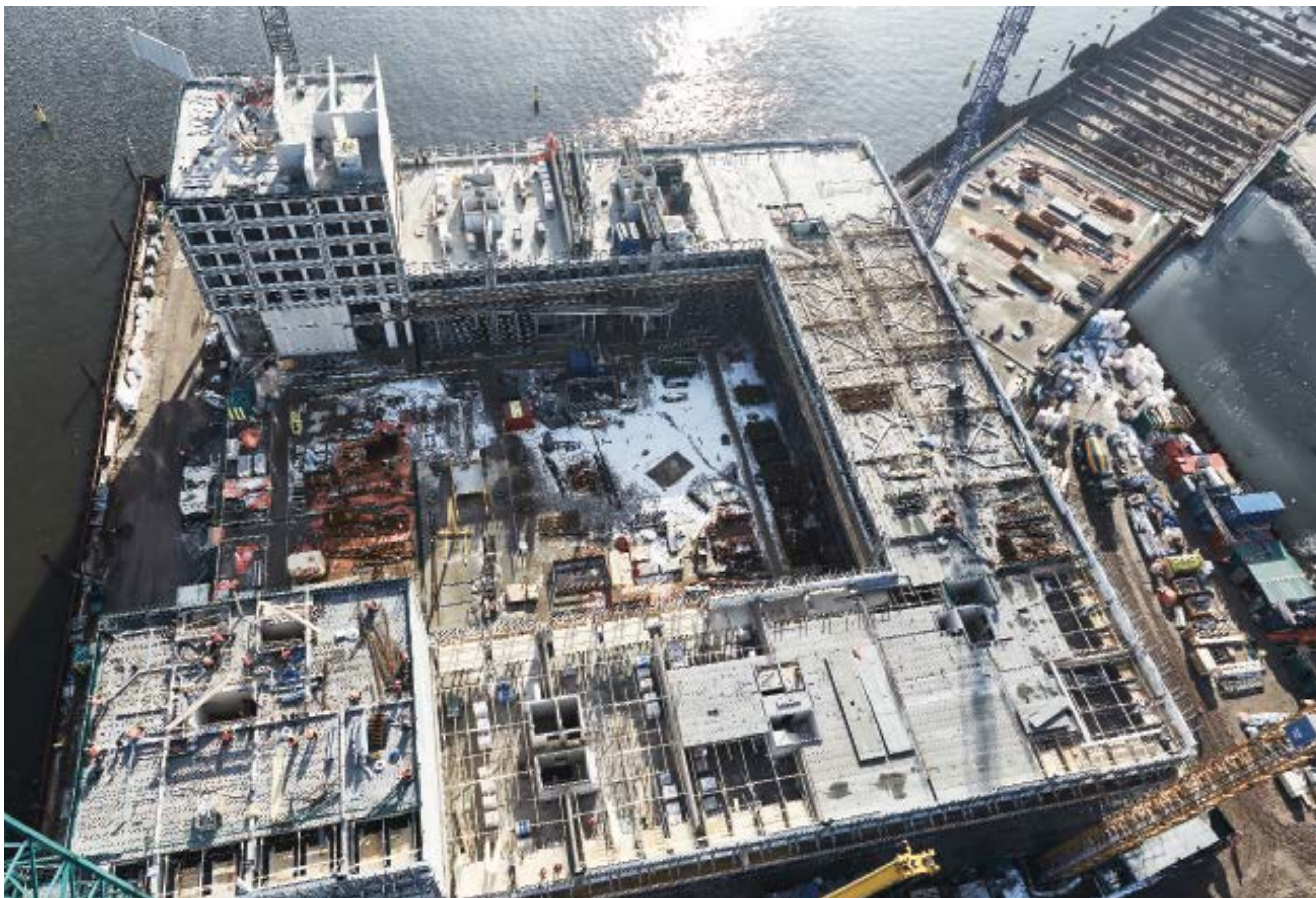
This book is part of the memory of Pontsteiger. It reminds us of when there was only a landing stage for the ferry. It reminds us of the building site and the hard work that was carried out. It reminds us of the transformation and densification that have taken place here in a short period of time, but also of the significance that this building will still have long after its completion for living in and thinking about the city of the future and urbanism.

Architectural journalist JaapJan Berg complemented the visual narrative on which the book is centred with texts and interviews. Graphic designer and publisher MENDO put all the ingredients together in an impressively designed whole. Bouwinvest Real Estate Investors, the owner of the rented apartments in Pontsteiger, masterminded the whole project with care.



Letterboxes at the end of the old landing stage.





MONDAY, 8:30 HRS —It is bitterly cold, but hardly anyone complains, at least not in any of the languages and dialects that can be heard here. To avoid linguistic confusion on the scale of the biblical Tower of Babylon and its possible consequences, Dutch has been chosen as the language spoken. That ensures calm, order and unity. But there is something else here that is shared by all, undisturbed by the to and fro of specialists and the variety of activities, varying from pouring concrete to laying internet cables. It is the activity in which they all share: building. There is something heroic about it. But if you start looking for it, you are constantly distracted by the frequent contrast between small, vulnerable workers and the big machines and heavy materials with which they work. So what you scent here is not bold heroism, but the fragile balance between people and machines.

At times it is difficult and challenging to find that balance. For example when it comes to hoisting very heavy but seemingly light building materials, or when the lower floors are being completed while above work is still proceeding on the basic construction. In such a case, refinement and finesse are interwoven with raw material. Time and again it reinforces the miracle of a building nearing completion.



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4647 DOORS — 347,609 SQUARE METERS OF GROSS FLOOR AREA — PONT STEIGER 90 METERS HIGH — 846,000 KILOS OF STEEL — 1,119 PILES









Glazing for the lofts on the topmost floors.

