



A museum with military precision

Kossmann.dejong designs exhibition space at the Dutch National Military Museum

Since 2011, Amsterdam-based exhibition architects Kossmann.dejong have been working on designing the exhibition space for the Dutch National Military Museum in Soesterberg. They have co-developed a robust plan in which landscape, buildings and the museum interior are finely interwoven into a cohesive whole.

Mark de Jong, partner and creative director at Kossmann.dejong said: "In this project all the disciplines interlock to create a harmonious entity. The added value of this approach is clear and unmistakable. Other museum building projects can learn a lot from it."

The vast exhibition area covers 20,000 sq m, and comprises two very different spaces: a large 'daylight museum' on the ground floor for the extensive arsenal collection, and a 'black box' on the first floor, a darkened thematic space for telling the stories of bravery and hardships of war.

In the arsenal collection space, visitors are taken on a chronological journey through time stretching back one thousand years. Large objects, such as tanks and jets, are skilfully positioned in a 13-metre high exhibition space. Smaller pieces, such as aircraft engines, are displayed in lower-ceilinged spaces.

In the black box area, visitors can encounter different kinds of thematic spaces, created with a mix of media and communication tools, including scale models, panoramic films, animations, dynamic sounds, and dramatic lighting effects to tell stories in a unique way.

Referring to the challenge of presenting over 3,000 culturally valuable objects, Mark de Jong said: "As always, the key to good exhibition design is to keep the layout clear and monumental, no matter how vast the collection or how copious the information. We achieved that in this museum despite the scale and complexity of the brief."

Also addressing the challenge of communicating to a diverse audience, Kossmann.dejong has introduced different layers into the presentation in order to attract families and visitors with a general interest in culture as well as enthusiasts.

Mark de Jong added: "There is so much to see and experience at the National Military Museum, far too much for one visit. But that doesn't matter; everyone will make their own journey and piece together a story on the basis of what they already know and the time at their disposal."

Visitors young and old will be impressed and excited by what the new museum has in store, not just because of the amazing objects on show, but also because of the exceptional architecture.

Kerry Boettcher

News editor

Key Facts

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Status

Value

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