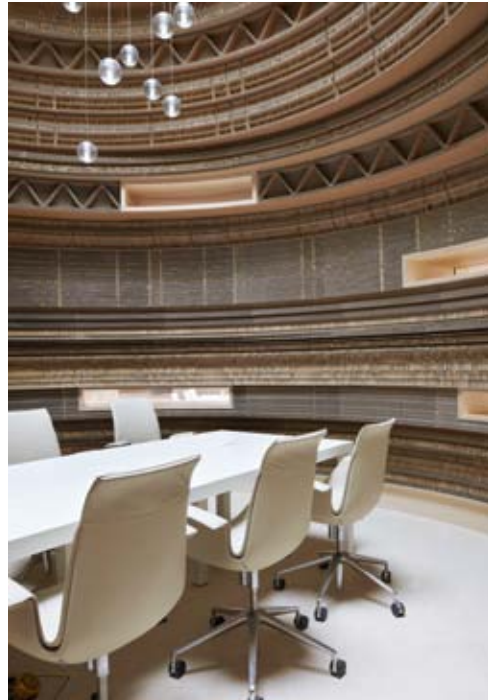




Ellen Sander used cardboard of varying thicknesses for her meeting-room pavilion. She also designed spiralling enclosures and lanterns.



Ellen Sander unplugs a bank



Marking the pavilion designed by Ineke Hans, which accommodates a seafood restaurant, is a pattern in a typically Dutch shade of blue.

Words Femke de Wild
Photos Alexander van Berge

Although the project wasn't completed on schedule, the ground and first floors of Rabobank Netherlands' new headquarters in Utrecht are now open and in use. Linking the two towers that Kraaijvanger Urbis Architects designed and realized – close to a number of existing buildings occupied by the Dutch bank – is a large covered plaza dubbed 'the Square'. Brought in to do the interior design of both towers and plaza, Ellen Sander followed the Rabobank Unplugged philosophy, a concept based on activity-orientated work that shuns the conventions of fixed workstations and a nine-to-five day at the office.

The 'urban plan' that Sander developed for the vast entrance level uniting the towers features zones for waiting, meeting, and having coffee or lunch. Another area has been set aside for the exhibition of pieces from the Rabobank's collection of contemporary art. Because cooperation is such a significant spearhead of Rabo's Unplugged approach to work, Sander invited other designers to contribute to the project. She aimed for a sense of coherence by requesting that everyone involved work with wood.

Rather than taking her suggestion literally, Richard Hutten came up with an espresso bar poised beneath a flaring canopy that doubles as a large LED screen for the display of all sorts of images, including trees. Next Architects combined wood and fabric in its design of 'the Bakery'. Emma Architects provided nestlike meeting rooms, and Ineke Hans put her stamp on the seafood restaurant, among other things. Yet another member of the multi-collaboration was Pentagram, but what appeals most to the imagination is the cardboard pavilion designed by Sander herself. As we go to press, the interior design of the towers remains uncompleted; the building will be ready for use between late 2011 and early 2012.

sander.nl



Emma Architects designed nestlike meeting pavilions made from timber harvested in the Netherlands.