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## SUPERLOFTS BLOK Y IN UTRECHT, HOLLAND

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PRECAST WHITE CONCRETE APPLICATION: AALBORG WHITE® CEMI 52,5R-SR5



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### ***White concrete: if it really has to be white***

Concrete company Vlassak made a crucial contribution to the concrete grid of Blok Y in Utrecht. A slender model with columns and beams of white concrete. Nicely dense, aesthetic, smooth and with a tight pattern thanks to Aalborg White® Cement. "The color fastness remains. Even after years you can build in the same color", says Yves Terneu, Sales Manager of Aalborg Portland Belgium.

"Architect Marc Koehler visited the concrete plant and was quickly convinced of the look and quality", says Thijs Sonnemans of Vlassak, Precast Concrete Producer. "White stands out and gives a special look. It had to be truly white, with no color difference, clouds and gravel nests and a natural appearance. "And Koehler had an additional requirement, says Sonnemans. "He did not want to see any connections. Together we have taken the maximum out of it. "

#### ***Winner***

Superlofts Blok Y in Utrecht won the best building in the BNA election as the winner in the Private Living Experience category. The jury report calls it a 'fresh and sturdy building that offers a solid framework for the desired variation'. There is also praise for the 'unique building process'. Architect Marc Koehler developed the building together with the residents according to the open building principle. Residents get a blank canvas in this concept to design their own home. This creates a unique and flexible complex, in which no home is the same.

### AALBORG WHITE® in PRECAST CONCRETE

#### ***Fashionable***

White is internationally in fashion in architecture and the popularity will increase, expects sales manager Yves Terneu of Aalborg Portland Belgium. Aalborg White<sup>®</sup> is a global leading White Cement brand under the Cementir Group with more than three million tons capacity of White Cement worldwide and is a reliable brand for the concrete industry. Terneu: "It is known that buildings in white concrete sell more easily. The appearance and the light power of a white building are enormous. White concrete is cheaper than painting and more beautiful than concrete with dyes. The price-quality ratio is excellent. Moreover, it is easy to clean. The choice for white concrete is therefore an architectural choice. Block Y really stands out; the building stands out from far. "

### ***Pure white***

The chemistry and purity of the White Cement and the superior mechanical properties that can be achieved in concrete thanks to advanced production technologies make the material special. This makes it possible to manufacture very thin panels and elements based on Aalborg White<sup>®</sup>, which still have great strength and excellent durability. Terneu: "For example for compact, highly insulating panels for façade elements with a low weight per square meter and a significant reduction of the total wall thickness, as in Block Y. White concrete also contributes to saving energy and improving the thermal comfort of homes. "

### ***Manufacturer of aesthetic concrete***

Thijs Sonnemans is project manager at Vlassak Betonbedrijf from Budel. The company produces precast concrete elements for walls, balconies, gallery plates and staircases for offices, residential towers and healthcare institutions. "It is mainly about 'aesthetic concrete'. Nothing of what we make is standard. Our strength is that we make small and big things: from sill to wall plate. And all that in the same color and detailing. "That knowledge and expertise was desperately needed for Blok Y. The buyers had to be able to finish their hull lofts at their own discretion, which created the necessary headaches for the concrete specialists. For example, each node was different. Sonnemans: "The joints had to be as small as possible and fastening points for sunblinds, for example, should not be visible from the outside, and at the same time it has to be stable and constructive and you have to introduce the adjustment possibilities. "

### ***Smart solutions***

Various feasibility studies were carried out and the limits of the feasibility were looked up. And with results, Sonnemans says. "At the junctions we came up with a smart solution that met the wishes of the architect and the residents and that is still sufficiently strong." Vlassak went to the limit in all areas: the size of the joint, the slenderness of the elements, their stiffness and deflection, considering the expansion of the concrete. To keep the bolts and nuts in the nodes out of sight, a small plate was conceived and installed. "All in all, there is a lot of 'wisdom' in the nodes."

Sonnemans: "The architect triggers you to innovate. Normally you do an extra inch and you go for the decent. Here we have put together something beautiful, technical, but also literally. "Terneu, finally:" The column-bar structure on the front and rear makes it very beautiful. And the luminosity that comes from the building is fantastic. "

## **PROJECT PARTICIPANTS**

White concrete producer and contractor: VLASSAK

Architects: Marc Koehler Architects

White Cement Producer: Aalborg Portland A/S