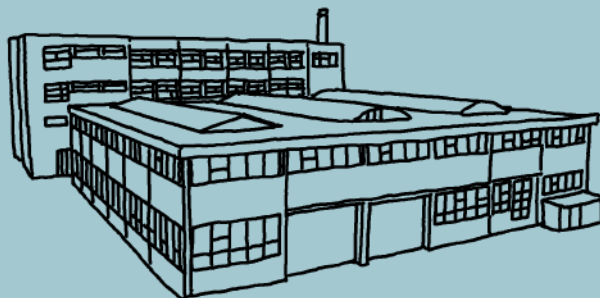


## De Besturing

From tenancy to collective ownership  
from 2006



Ateliercomplex De Besturing  
Saturnusstraat, 89  
2516 AG Den Haag  
The Netherlands

🌐 [debesturing.nl](http://debesturing.nl)

📘 DeBesturing

📷 [debesturing](#)

De Besturing was founded in 2006 inside an old industrial building in the Binckhorst business park in The Hague by Dennis Slootweg and Tidde de Ruiter. Originally, De Besturing started off as a temporary project in an area that was owned by the municipality, which planned to demolish all the buildings and create new houses. Creative professionals were offered the opportunity to use the space before the demolition, and during that time the space went from being a temporary studio complex to a sustainable collective of artists, designers and other creatives. Initially, the space was assigned to the collective for free on a temporary basis, but during that time they collected rent from the tenants in order to raise the capital needed to later purchase the building in 2017.

De Besturing now hosts a sustainable collective of uncommon minds who work with different creative disciplines: from textiles, wood and metalworking, to ceramics, photography, architecture, stonework, interventions in public space, and sound.



# DE GESTURING

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BEGRUPTING  
SPILT  
012-1332 01  
www.spilt.nl

## WHERE

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The De Besturing studio complex is an old industrial building in the Binckhorst business park in The Hague. The building is located directly on the harbor, opposite a large concrete plant where in the past sand and gravel were loaded and unloaded to produce asphalt. Today the area is being redeveloped into a more urban environment.

### LOCATION

Urban

### TYPE OF SPACE

Building

### ORIGINAL FUNCTION

Industrial (naval)

### YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

1950s

### SURFACE AREA

Around 2,100 sqm

### OWNERSHIP

Private

### CONCESSION

Owner

### CONDITION BEFORE ACTIVATION

Abandoned

### COMPOSITION OF THE SPACE

Coworking space  
Laboratories for ceramics, metal and wood work  
Event space  
Exhibition Space  
Film recording studio  
Meeting space  
Sound recording studio

## WHEN

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### TIME OF DAY USED

Morning ..... 7am - 1pm 50%  
Afternoon ... 1pm - 7pm 40%  
Evening ..... 7pm - 1am 10%  
Night ..... 1am - 7am 0%

Workdays 50%  
Weekends 50%

### OPENING HOURS

Open every day to tenants  
Open to public only during specific events

### AVERAGE USERS PER DAY

20-25 (there are 45 tenants in total)  
During events: up to 200-300

## WHAT

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The building houses a group of 28 artisans and creatives who work with different crafts: leather, wood, metal-working, ceramics, photography, architecture, interventions in public space, and art. The FabLab of The Hague was also located here in 2017. De Besturing offers services such as coworking spaces, mentoring, networking and events, professional development workshops and training.

### SURFACE IN USE

Around 2,100 sqm

### THEMATIC AREAS

Commercial  
Coworking and workspace  
Culture and arts  
Design, crafts and production

### USER DEMOGRAPHIC

Artists and creatives  
Young people  
Other: art buyers and clients of the tenants

### COLLABORATIONS

Artists and creatives

**NETWORK**

Local  
National  
International

**WHO**

The De Besturing Foundation is now the owner of the building, which hosts about 40 studios and workstations. Ever since the beginning, the project has been run by the creatives themselves.

**MANAGING ORGANIZATION(S)**

1. De Besturing Foundation (Foundation, 2015)

**PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT**

7

**HOW**

Initially De Besturing had a contract with the municipality to use the building for free in the form of a loan agreement (in Dutch: bruikleenovereenkomst). During this period, each tenant paid rent to use the spaces, accruing substantial savings over the years. In order to buy the building, the tenants created additional studios to be rented and received a loan from the Triodos Bank. In order to raise the last part of the amount needed, the tenants themselves, together with their friends and families, provided De Besturing Foundation a 10-year loan.

**NATURE OF THE INITIATIVE**

Top-down.

The goal is to improve the involvement of the tenants in what is being done, in order to turn De Besturing into a bottom-up initiative.

**TYPE OF MANAGEMENT**

Vertical (aiming for horizontal)

**ECONOMIC RESOURCES**

100% Rental income

**TYPE OF ACTIVITIES**

60% Free  
40% Paid

Watch the video  
"From tenancy to  
collective ownership"





## How did your story begin?

Our building is located in a former industrial area. At first, the administration activated anti-occupation measures, then invited artists and creatives to use the building in order to prevent squatting. The building was conceded to a group of people for free, who then rented out the spaces to other people who needed a space for their activities. The money collected from the tenants allowed them to purchase the property in 2017 and keep the rent for the workspaces low. The reason why we obtained this building and were able to buy it at a reasonable price is that, at that time, our contact person in the city council was responsible for both real estate and culture. It was an unusual combination, mixing real estate assets and culture. So we found ourselves in a unique position: De Besturing, a place for artistic and cultural research, in the middle of an area that would become residential (because in the Netherlands housing prices are a big problem). The context is changing a lot, and the area is being gentrified, and we have to be careful, as we are a “noisy” space with a lot of experimentation. We wonder what will happen when the houses will be finished and families with children will live there. We will not be allowed to make all the noise we were used to making, and we will have a new interaction with the suburbs. It’s important to establish a careful relationship with our surroundings. This is a challenge for our future, because we own the building but not what’s around it.

## Is there a practice or value that represents you and you think may be an inspiration to others?

We try to make all the tenants feel responsible for the building, not just as tenants, but as a part of a community. This was always our goal. For this reason, we organize events aimed at creating a sense of community and regular meetings between the tenants, when we talk about what we do, we update each other on the activities

“We try to make all the tenants feel responsible for the building, not just as tenants, but as a part of a community.”

we are organizing, etc. We try to share knowledge and experience on various subjects, because many people would like to try something different from what they usually do for work. We are all creatives who work in design, art, music

(experimental music too), and video games. This is a very diverse environment and we are happy about it, because we have the opportunity to get to know different fields of work. I can’t wait to see what the others are doing and to be inspired by them.

## What is the secret ingredient that makes your story unique?

De Besturing is located in a very rich area and we were afraid that the Coronavirus pandemic would cause economic and financial problems, but all the tenants are still here and paying rent, so as long as that continues, we won’t have any serious problems. Our foundation is managed very carefully, we are saving money in order to prevent future problems, and so far this has been a very effective strategy. We also take the project very seriously and want the people involved to devote their time and effort to organizing this place in the best possible way, because having a healthy financial system is not easy, especially in a long-term initiative.

*Interview with: Stephan Sjouke*



