

# Bulimic Blue- Print??

There are no prizes for anyone who can guess where the inspiration came for this slender dwelling in the centre of Antwerp. And no, we don't mean the world's skinniest house in Amsterdam, though a certain neighbourhood just a few strides away from there would be a fair guess!

In fact, husband-and-wife run architecture firm Sculp(IT) found this old fire damaged skinny-structure in Antwerp's defunct red-light district (now one of the swankiest post codes in the city), and set about putting a bold rescue package together.

With the gable measuring a mere 2.4 meters, the company motto "less is more", came somewhat conveniently into play.

Confident about the outcome of such a manageable and affordable project, Sculp(IT) dived into the salvage operation, initially propping up the building's dented ego with a chunky steel and wood brace. The duo then set about transforming this tiny 60-meter space into a light and functional studio-stack, incorporating a slick company HQ.

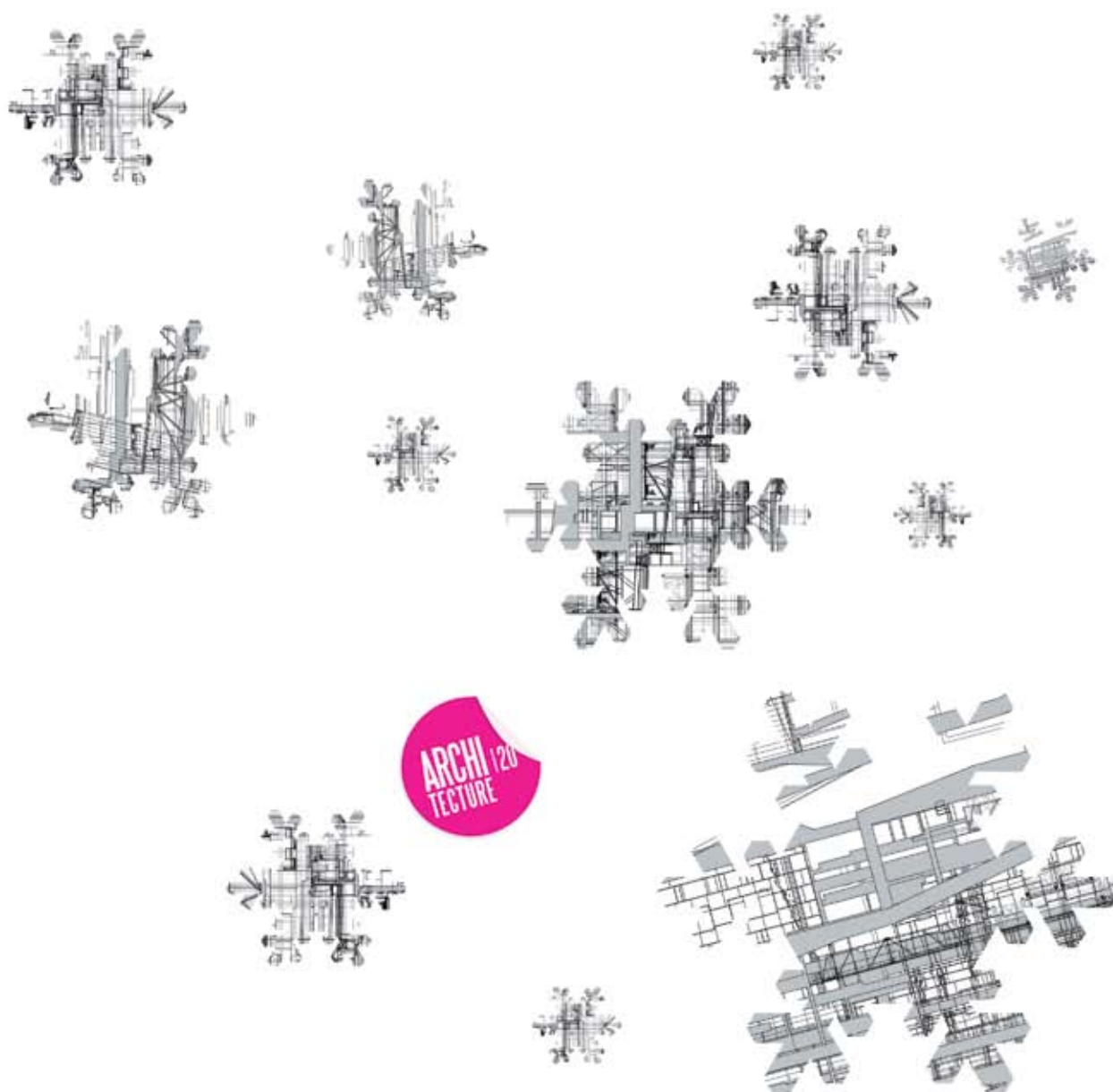
Garish UV lights decorate the glass facade of this award-winning structure, each interconnected floor a contrasting colour, the main intention of which was to fragment the space into functional areas. A clinical white illuminates Sculp(IT)'s ground-floor office space; then ascending the tightly coiled spiral through the living and dining levels, we quickly climb through a bold colour spectrum, ending in a cool electric-blue at the rooftop sleeping and bathing area. Ultimately the brash lighting is hardly used - but when it's burning bright, tourists are attracted like moths, gazing in through the giant glass-plated frontage to a rather public display of domestic harmony.

When confronted about existing in such a tiny space, the couple proudly announce that the rest of us have all got it wrong when it comes to energy saving. "By taking up less space, you automatically reduce your ecological footprint," notes co-founder and wife Sylvia Mertens, "You're not going to do that by incorporating all kinds of expensive technical novelties. It's the basic principles you need to adjust". We have to agree this is a good point, but wouldn't you say that, too, if you lived and worked in a hamster stack?

Anyway, for its size, the design certainly speaks volumes, and has become an iconic emblem for the area. This trim design has also firmly stamped Sculp(IT) on the architectural map, and the stream of new clients certainly have no trouble finding them.

Text: Dave Vickers Architect: Sculp(IT)





# Let it SNØH

Standing like a quasi-architectural masterpiece in the middle of **Norway**, it's hardly surprising that the Snøhetta mountain range was the inspiration behind the obscure Swedish design collective of the same name. Founded in 1989 by **Craig Dykers, Christoph Kapeller** and **Kjetil T. Thorsen**, the snow-capped peak symbolises the firm's unwavering philosophy to create landscapes rather than objects with architectural forms that blend seamlessly with the environment. With a signature low-key style and an **admirable emphasis on sustainability**, Snøhetta is proof that modern architecture can have heart.

**Text:** Nick Clarke **Featured Architects:** SNØHETTA