

## Juliaan Lampens, Nazareth (Belgium)

Authentic modernism from Flemish soil

Local Heroes #05  
Juliaan Lampens  
1926-2019

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Hovenier

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Shortly after the N60 motorway, just after the village of Oudenaarde under Ghent, we turn onto the Edelareberg. It is 10 o' clock in the morning and it was still very quiet on the road. Perhaps just ask for directions. When you open the door, you feel it and smell it - this is where the Flemish Ardennes begin. A group of bent riders give further confirmation. The Edelareberg, a slope that has been part of the last 35 Tour of Flanders, Kuurne Brussels-Kuurne, across Flanders, Three Days of de Panne Koksijde and Nokere Koerse.

Or so you thought. The title of this edition of Local Heroes gives a different impression: Is this edition entirely devoted to Belgian cycling? After a climb of 1500 meters with a 4.6% slope, we reach the summit and start the day full of concrete, purity and detail with the pilgrimage chapel O.L.V. van Kesselare in Edelare by Juliaan Lampens.

Juliaan Lampens (1926) comes from De Pinte, near Ghent. Raised in a traditional family, he inherited a keen sense of craftsmanship from his carpenter father. Even in his youth he had a talent from drawing and dreamed of becoming a painter. At the advice of the village teacher, in 1940 he enrolled at the Higher Institute for Art and Professional Education in Sint-Lucas to train as a technical draftsman. From 1946 to 1950 he studied architecture at





the same institute and in his graduation year, he founded his own studio in Eke/Nazareth. His career, however, will not take off until a decade later when it was more developed. Then, his affinity with the works of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe became evident. Before 1960 he built in a kind of renewed traditional style of which little is known (1). Juliaan Lampens is not a man of grand gestures. In Belgium, he has existed unnoticed in the background as a forgotten architect in a silent generation.



Eddy Merckx

### Open concept

He was especially influenced by the 1958 World Exhibition in Brussels and changed course accordingly. He focused on the minimalist concrete architecture with a fair use of materials, a constructive logical structure and austerity without folklore. The ideal acoustics of the Chapel of the Onze Lieve Vrouw van Kerselare (1964-1966) was due to its shape and use of materials. Regarding his preference for concrete, he said the following in an interview with Koenraad de Wolf (2): "Brick remains one of the best building material, but unfortunately the possibilities for use are limited. I am not in love with concrete, but I do love the possibilities that the material offers. After all, the constructive gesture that you make as an architect is the first step towards beauty.

His home, built in 1960, also marked an important turning point in his career by making good use of it in a civilian way. He said goodbye to the house as a collection of separate rooms divided by walls, doors and corridors. Instead he introduced an open concept where all spaces are connected. He dreamt of a place where living in a small



community has been reduced to an essential intimacy with nature. Since then, Lampens has been working almost exclusively with concrete, steel, wood, glass and occasionally with brick. His homes are designed in harmony with the environment and deals with themes such as boundary, orientation and direction (3). Lampens does not see windows as windows, but as glass walls where landscape is framed as an equal.

### Spatial Conventions and Natural Light

Lampens plays with the 'plan libre' with which Le Corbusier has become world-famous. He turned calibrated forms of living upside-down. When it comes to light treatment, he does not refer only to light. In this realm, he also steps beyond the traditional banks. He sometimes treats the light in a sacred way and occasionally knows, like in the Vandehaute-Kieboons home in Huise, that the light falls on the kitchen table so that the table is transformed into an altar. The way Lampens dealt with light, especially natural light, creates an elusive and supernatural air.

### Frivolity

Lampens' achievements do not have the bleakness that is often associated with brutalist architecture. Lampens manages to rid the traditional brutalist architect of its rigidity and claustrophobia. Unlike many of the other architecture of his time, his homes offer a sense a security, while also radiating transparency and even frivolity. It is an architecture that transcends the conventional and places the emphasis on the utopian avant-garde concept of living



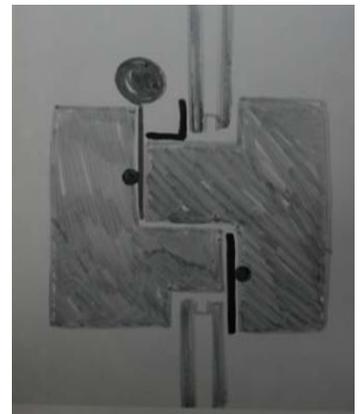
Pilgrimage Chapel O.L.V. of Kerselare



detail , Lampens - Dierick Residence



Woning Lampens - Dierick



Detail, Van Wassenhove Residence



without borders. In contrast to the bourgeois emphasis on individuality, Lampens prioritizes communality and equality within the living spaces.

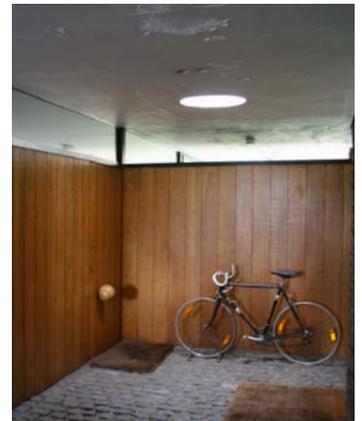
#### Ronchamp, a Brothel

The chapel of Kerselare in Edelare (1966) evokes a skyward ramp. It is one of Lampens' few assignments in public space. The members of the church factory were led on a wild goose chase by decoy drawings: "I have made many false drawings! Only the pastor got to see my real plans. He supported me, even if only to minimize the area's notaries."

Thousands of pilgrims visit the chapel every year. Ascension Day and May are particularly popular. The architecture of the chapel is neither secularized nor overflowing with ecclesiastical symbolism. It concerns the elements from the air to the earth. The altar is not placed at the high-point, but at midpoint. The Ronchamp chapel, on the other hand, called Lampens' a "brothel", a disapproval stemming from the warm creamy red tape that Le Corbusier himself seems to have put in an innocent trance.



Details, Lampens - Hartman Residence



Juliaan Lampens Residence

Pilgrimage Chapel O.L.V. van Kerselare





Van Wassenhove Home

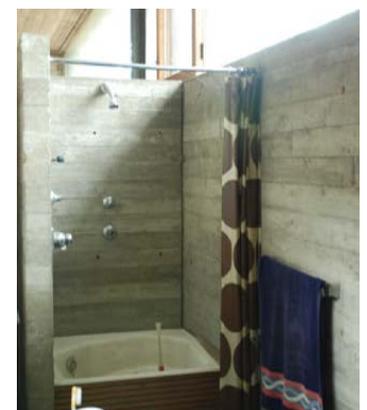
Notes:

1 and 3: Juliaan Lampens in perspective. The voice of a silent generation: [www,dimension.be](http://www.dimension.be) (PHW)

2 The interview was conducted on the occasion of Lampens' drawings and sketch exhibition in the Museum of Deinze and the Leie Region, from May 4th to June 12th, 2005.



Pilgrimage Chapel O.L.V. of Kerselare



Shower - Van Wassenhove Residence

Woning Velghe - Vanderlinden





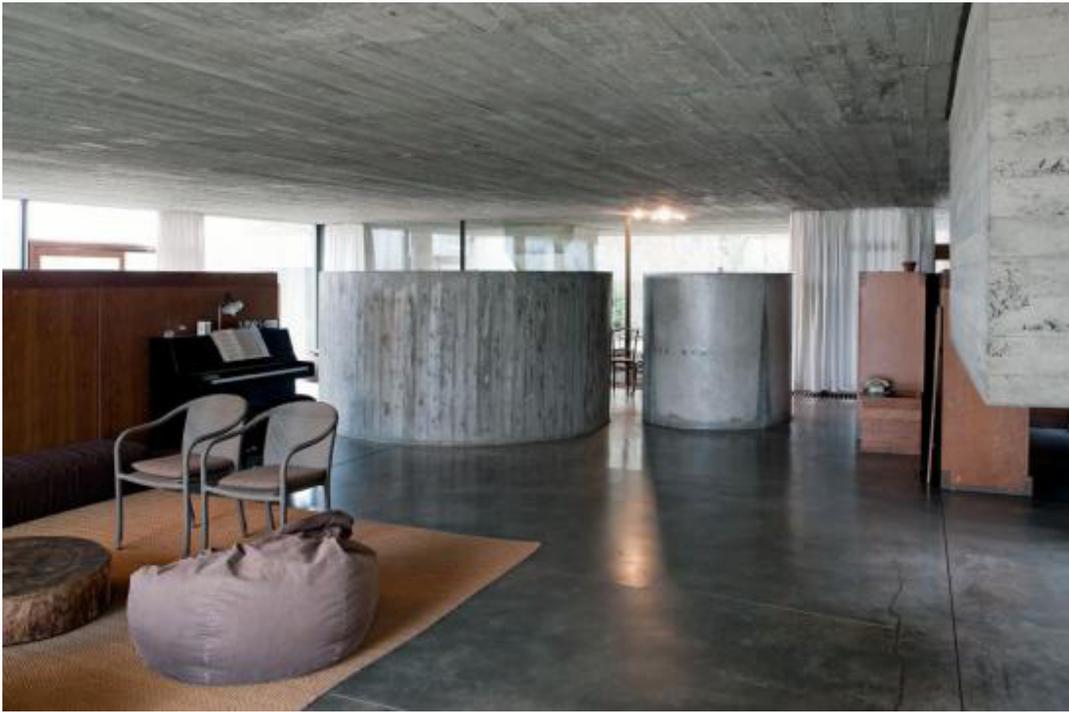
Juliaan Lampens Residential

Municipal Library in Eke

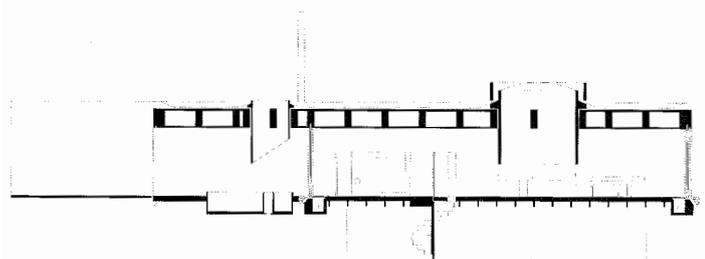


Local Heroes #5

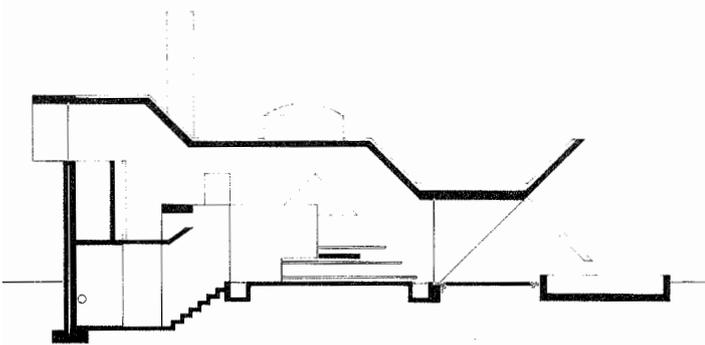
Juliaan Lampens



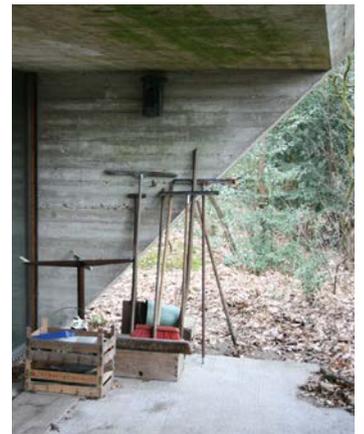
Vandenhaute Residence - Kiebooms



Vandenhaute Residence Cross Section - Kiebooms



Van Wassenhove Residence Cross Section



Woning Van Wassenhove



Local Heroes #5

Juliaan Lampens

More information about Juliaan Lampens

Books:

Wallpaper, April 2010

OASE 55 - Home and Garden  
Living Towards Nature Houses by Juliaan Lampens  
Like Bijlsma

Juliaan Lampens  
Edited by Angelique Campens – With contributions by  
Angelique Campens, Sara Noel Costa De Araujo, Joseph  
Grima, Jan Kempnaers, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Fran-  
cis Strauven.  
ASA PUBLISHERS  
ISBN: 9789461170057

Juliaan Lampens  
Projects 1950 - 1991  
Edited by Katrien Vandermarliere  
deSingel  
out of print

Websites:

<http://www.archined.nl/en/reviews/maart/de-heldere-stem-van-een-stille-generatie-juliaan-lampens-in-perspectief/>

Excursions:

VZW Juliaan Lampens can open a few houses for groups

Google Map:

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=10f6tYnKtaSRP8X5XTz\\_s9Xgv5q\\_4eHN7&usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/open?id=10f6tYnKtaSRP8X5XTz_s9Xgv5q_4eHN7&usp=sharing)



Details, Lampens - Hartman Residence



Velghe storage house - Vanderlinden



Vandenhoute Residence Kitchen - Kiebooms



Van Wassenhove kitchen - Kiebooms



Directions:

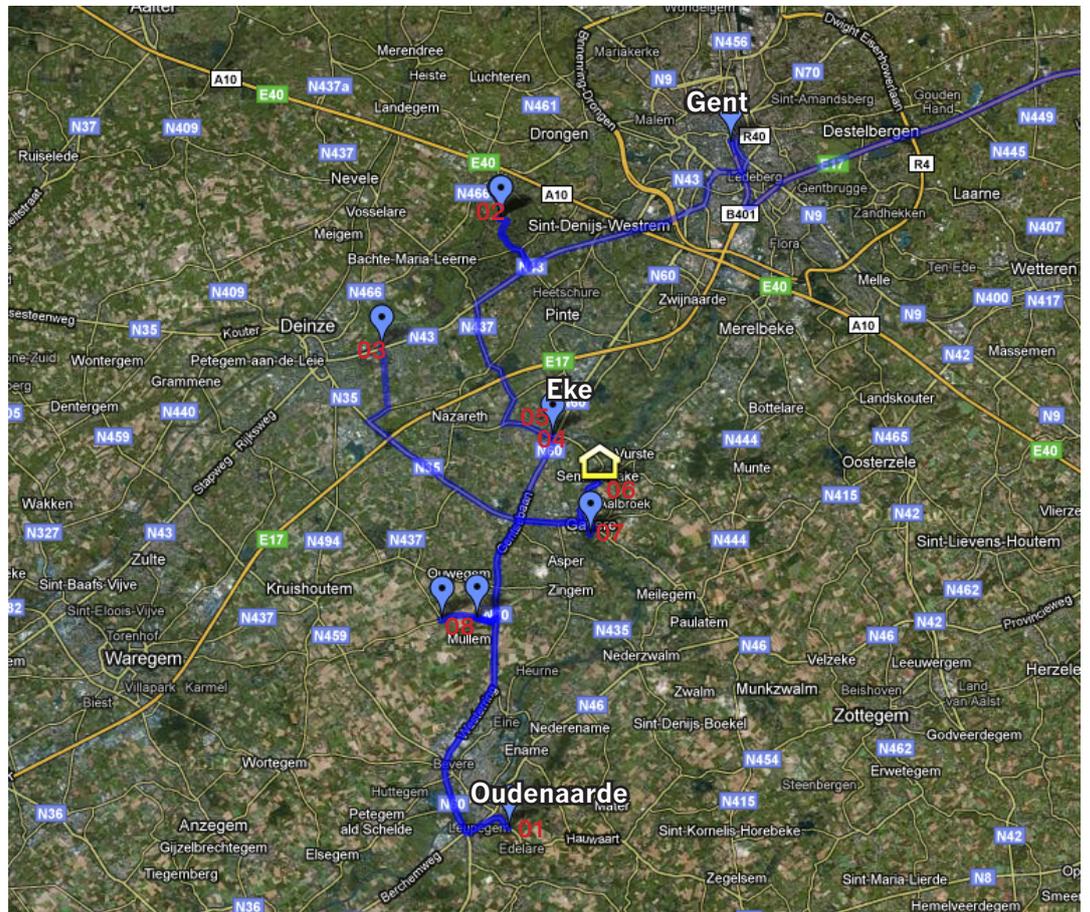
Map

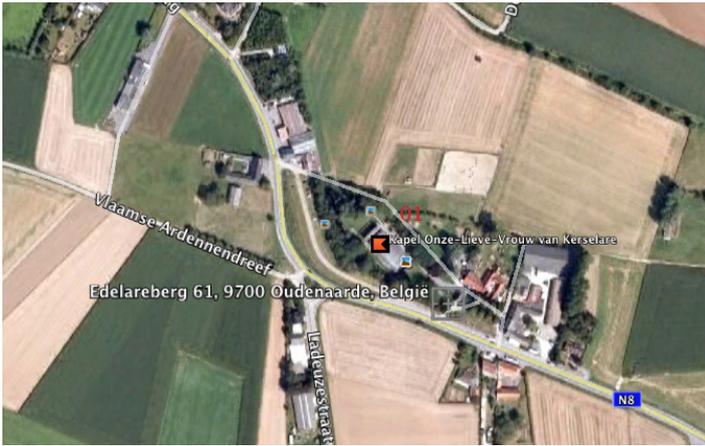
- 01 Pilgrimage Chapel O.L.V. of Kerselare, °1966, Edelare / Oudenaarde 9700, next to Kerselare 92
- 02 Van Wassenhove Home, °1974, Sint-Martens-Latem 9830, Brakelstraat 50
- 03 Velghe Home - Vanderlinden, °2002, Astene / Deinze, 9800, Pontstraat 1
- 04 Juliaan Lampens Home - Vanhove, °1960, Eke / Nazareth 9810, Stationsstraat 12
  
- 05 Eke Municipal Library, °1970, Nazareth 9810, Steenweg 88  
(let op op zaterdag open tot 11.30u)

2 Residences with his sons:

- 06 Lampens Residential - Dierick, °1990, Semmerzake / Gavere 9890, Meersbloemstraat 30
- 07 Lampens Residential - Hartman, °1990, Semmerzake / Gavere 9890, Meersbloemstraat 26
- 08 Vandenhaute Residential - Kiebooms, °1967, Zingem (Huisse) 9750, Lange Aststraat 20

These locations are just south of Ghent, and the distances can easily be covered in a day trip.





01 Pilgrimage Chapel O.L.V. of Kerselare, °1966, Edelare / Oudenaarde 9700, next to Kerzelare 92

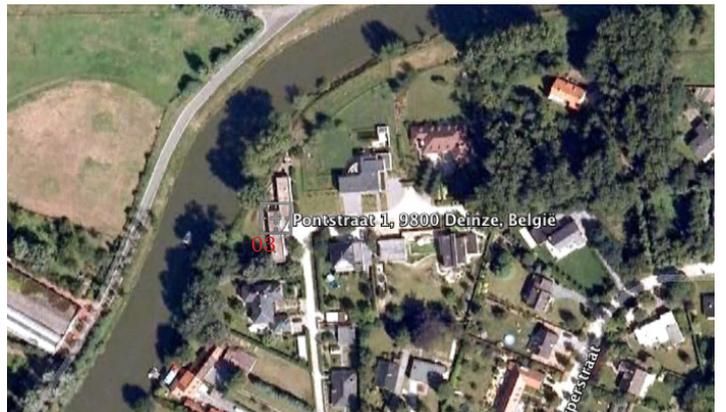


02 Van Wassenhove Residence, °1974, Sint-Martens-Latem 9830, Brakelstraat 50





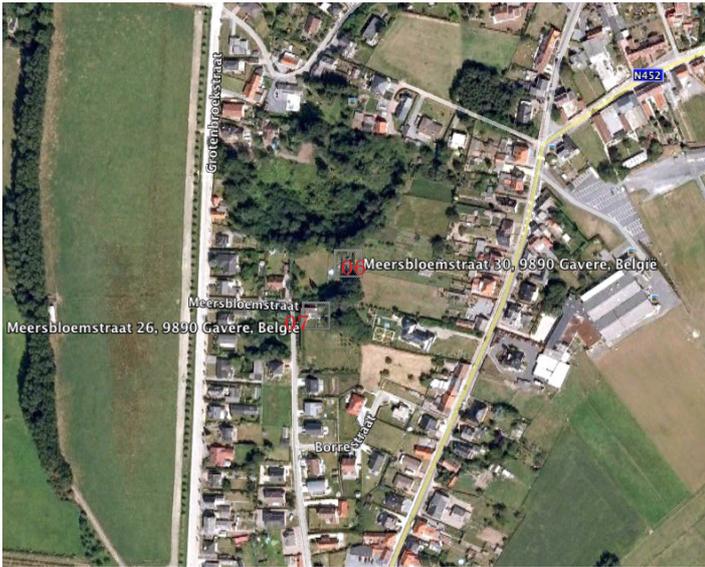
03 Velghe Residence - Vanderlinden, 2002,  
Astene / Deinze, 9800, Pontstraat 1



04 Juliaan Lampens Home - Vanhove, °1960,  
Eke / Nazareth 9810, Stationsstraat 12

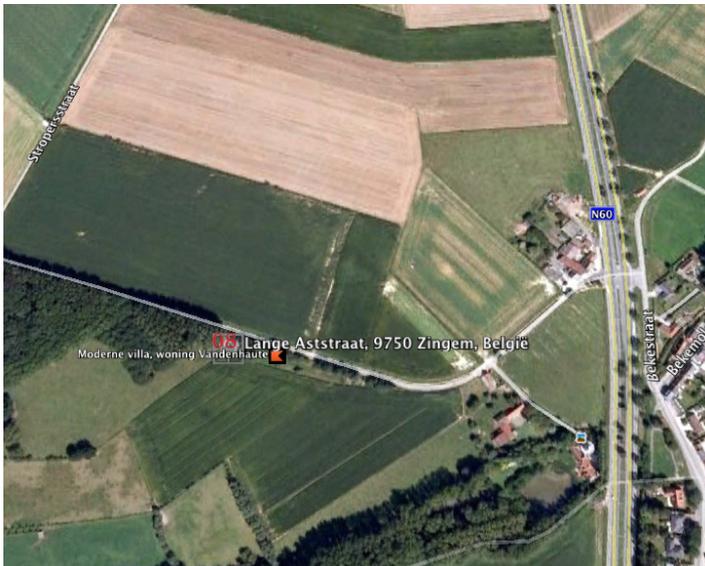
05 Eke Municipal Library, °1970,  
Nazareth 9810, Steenweg 88





06 Lampens Residence - Dierick, °1990,  
Semmerzake / Gavere 9890, Meersbloemstraat 30

07 Lampens Residence - Hartman, °1990,  
Semmerzake / Gavere 9890, Meersbloemstraat 26



08 Vandenhaute Residence - Kiebooms, °1967,  
Zingem (Huisse) 9750, Lange Aststraat 20





#### Renovation of Kerselare Chapel

In October 2012 the chapel was revisited by Local Heroes, and the architectural condition of the building appears quite bad. The Kerselare Chapel urgently needs a thorough renovation. The roof of the church is propped up to prevent further cracking. The concrete of the building has been seriously damaged. It is being investigated how the building, which received monument status in 2009, can be renovated.

The chapel is in desperate need of renovation. To avoid more cracks from forming, the roof has been propped up.

