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I'm Marita Bijlsma and I'm an architect at **ATELIERFRONT**. Together with Thomas Buijs, I started this firm five years ago and we're now in our office in The Hague.

*What drew you to circularity?*

When we started our firm five years ago, we just knew that we didn't want to build the old-fashioned way anymore. It just felt really logical to build as much circular as possible. I was always really attracted by this bio-based design. Even during my studies, I designed a rammed earth building and a wooden building, but then it was not that common yet, so it was really difficult to get help in making good details. So I really enjoyed then working on it, but I also didn't feel that comfortable yet in it, because nobody sort of could help me. I really had to do all the research myself and now it's really great that people know much more, people are more willing to talk about it. So I think the interest was there already for a long time, but now it felt really like the right moment to really do it.

*Can you discuss one of your projects in terms of circularity?*

We as **ATELIERFRONT**, we designed the *Gibbon Pavilion* and it's a wooden pavilion in *Artis* (zoo) made for Gibbons. What we always want to do

in all our projects is to design something that's good for the place, but also good for all the users. And if you look to this in the broader context, it really has to do also with doing good for the world and all the animals and plants living in it. And by doing this, I think each project becomes circular, always in a different way. In this case, we really focused on using bio-based materials and reducing the footprint of the pavilion while still giving the gibbons as much place as possible. But we also made a green roof, we used a lot of natural daylight, we made natural sun shading, so we had to use less energy, and all these kinds of things. So the circularity, we really looked at it at different levels. So from material use to energy reduction, but also by reducing the footprint.

The main challenge for this project was actually at this beginning, to really make *Artis* see that we had the same interest, but we could build something in a different way. And once they saw this, there weren't that much difficulties anymore. And I think what is really nice about circular design is that people also are really willing to share because we all have the same interests. Sometimes with new technologies, people say, "Oh, no, I discovered this, this is mine." But with this, we all have the same goal. So yeah, people like sharing their knowledge, and it really helps everybody in the end.

I think uncertainty really is an opportunity. It helps you to look differently at things. You open up to search for different answers. It also means that you look for different expertise somewhere else. You can learn from other people. I think it really helps in a project.

*How does the transition towards a circular built environment challenge the role of the architect?*

Building circular really, I think, is still for everybody a learning process that in the end, of course, there's so many parts that have to change, but you just have to start somewhere because otherwise it's never changing. And the change is now going quite rapid. And for us, we feel quite comfortable and passionate about bio-based building, and nature inclusive. So for us, that's the way to go. But for other people, they might feel more attracted to reuse. It's all helping. We all have the same goal, I think.

It starts with just trying and taking small steps. So steps you're in a way comfortable and passionate about, but maybe not completely sure yet. And then just by doing it, you will discover things. Yeah, how it works, what works, what maybe you should alter the next time. And then each time you can take it a step further. For us, that really works.