

Carl Kramp Opticians, located in the Dutch city of Maastricht, is remarkable for the scarcity of spectacles on display. The models that are visible are presented like fine jewels in small wall-mounted boxes composed mainly of glass. Direct contact with the merchandise is possible only by asking one of the staff for help. This retail strategy is precisely what optician Kramp wants: a way to distinguish his establishment from the 'specs supermarkets' that have been shooting up like mushrooms in recent years. These self-service shops are glutted with frames, which visitors can handle and try on to their hearts' content. Kramp, who carries a collection of exclusive frames, is looking for the opposite effect. He envisions a return to the early 1900s, when a client visited his optician for personal service and advice on the type of frame suitable for his individual needs. Transforming this concept into reality was a job for Baijens & Partners, an outfit from 's Hertogenbosch that specialises in the design of shops in the optical branch. The sober interior that Jos Baijens created conceals as much as possible: the optometry room, the work space, most of the lighting and even the majority of the frames. He used rich materials to give the shop cachet: A floor of Brazilian slate and doors featuring etched glass are combined with cabinets and other furniture of dark-stained oak. Wiel Schreurs of Interieurbouw Gronsveld manufactured all the furniture according to drawings made by Jos Baijens, who compliments Schreurs for taking the minimal concept even further than he had thought possible.

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ARJEN SCHMITZ

the eyes have it

A photograph of the interior of Carl Kramp Opticians. The space is minimalist and modern, featuring a long, dark-stained oak table with several chairs. The walls are light-colored, and a series of small, wall-mounted display cases are visible on the right side. The floor is made of dark, polished tiles. The lighting is soft and focused, highlighting the furniture and the display cases. The overall atmosphere is clean and sophisticated.