Reflection P4 and P5

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Board of examiners:
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Research and design
During the start of the graduation period, many definitions were reviewed. The 'public interior' was reinterpreted, which gave a clear point of perspective of this studio. One of the first things I understand was that the public space around buildings, should be developed with the same care as the interior spaces; it all belongs to the same design. So optimizing the accessibility, which defines the routing into the building, isn’t enough. The most interesting part of designing the direct environment of a building is pulling people in by creating the right sightlines. This creates a connection in both directions.

This studio began with the excursion to Milano, a city where the climate has a significant influence on the public behaviour. People are living on the streets, which are designed in a proper way. In the Netherlands, terraces are created every summer, by placing furniture in the public space. During the winter, they will be removed. What interested me in Milano, is that the streets are shaped in a way that people are able to use it as a Dutch terrace. Most public buildings have stairs in front of them to sit on, which provides possibilities for people to come together.

It was hard to find a realistic way to project these principles on the business district of the Zuidas. The climate in the Netherlands doesn’t really allow people to live like the inhabitants of Milano. Furthermore, the cultural differences between employees of the Zuidas and the people in Milano are enormous.

Theme of this studio
My own perception of the theme of this studio is defined by our visit to the current situation of station Amsterdam Zuid. The lack of a well-integrated routing system resulted in a chaos of travellers, all walking through each other. There is no architectural atmosphere at all.

Therefore I visited a lot of other Dutch railway stations. Specially Rotterdam Central Station was helpful during my own routing design. Hereby, I focused on the perspective of the user. The most important issue about a station is that people can find their way without getting lost. Rotterdam Central station has such a specific system. The sightlines on the routing, access of daylight and differences in height are instruments that are used to help the traveller choose their interior direction. I’ve project my own interpretation on these instruments towards my new design for station Amsterdam Zuid.
During the oriental phase of this project, we used existing icons (Gallaria Emanuele, Milano; La Defence, Paris) in order to get an idea of the character of the public spaces of the Zuidas. These icons formed the fundament that we used to design different proposals for the P1. This was actually a group process, but had some individual aspects as well. Because we worked in sub groups, the feedback during the weekly meetings was personal.

**Methodical line of approach**

The group process became personal after the P2. The individual meetings were flexible and dynamic, because the feedback was sometimes given face to face, and another time in little groups. These changing conditions worked very efficient for me.

The design instrument that we’ve used most is the section. Drawing techniques couldn’t be underestimated and we used this in order to design our spaces and clarify our building during presentations. This two dimensional approach doesn’t have my personal preference, because I prefer to design in three-dimensional (digital) models. I’ve learned to appreciate the prescribed method as well and I understand that a two-dimensional section can give much more information than I thought.

**The social context**

The social aspects of this project are filled in by the course about our personal research. The relationship between this research and the graduation studio was a bit vague, but we had a lot of interesting discussions about ‘spontaneous encounters’, which finally resulted in a very useful research. We also studied the human behaviour in the public space, and analysed this. In this way we learned that people would move however they want. In my interpretation, the architect should be aware of these predicted movements and just has to make them possible.

My new design for the station of the Zuidas, has a very important influence on the social level. This building is going to be much more then just a station, because of the interesting public interior, combined with the iconic value on the long term of the Zuidas. The idea of the municipality of the Zuidas was to tunnel the train tracks as well. And as soon as they have the financial budget for this operation, they will. That is when my design becomes really interesting. It will grow out to be the social centre of the Zuidas. Not only because of its central position, but in a functional matter as well. The open centre, where the tracks are situated will be turned into a huge open stage, where tribunes with spectators can rise around.

Until this moment, this building will function as a station very well, because everything in and around this building is designed with a focus on wayfinding. Therefore, the traveller can always determine their position. This is where the routing to a destination starts.