

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Eva Ventura
Student number	
Telephone number	
Private e-mail address	

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Main mentor	Roel van de Pas	Architecture
Second mentor	Martijn Stellingwerf	Research
Third mentor	Hubert van der Meel	Building Technology
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I previously graduated from Landscape Architecture at TU Delft. There, like in Explore Lab I got complete freedom to come up with my own project and pursue my own goals. I got so much energy from that graduation year which made me realize that my talents shine in a flexible setting. So the Explore Lab way of approaching the graduation year was appealing to me. Besides this, my fascination that sparked my thesis project didn't seem to fit in any of the other studios within the architecture track.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Coney
Goal	
Location:	Coney Island, New York, USA
The posed problem,	Coney Island is a special place. It is both a chimera and a relic. A chimera (is a mythological creature with multiple faces) that shifts and vanishes and reforms right before our eyes. And a relic that has seen so many different stories and has been part of many lives in so many different ways. For most, Coney Island is an escape from daily city life. A place to let go at, within its explosiveness, absurdity and extremity. It's amusement parks and their rides and attractions seem to be a collection of all bombastic parts of life, to be experienced in a day. Coney Island mocks, exaggerates, questions and predicts life in the city. Through history, its rides and attractions are metaphors and the parks are testing grounds for technical innovations and social developments.

	<p>These types of places are an important part of city life. A place to feel free in, to find your inner child at. A place that is both a palimpsest, layer on top of layer, and a kaleidoscopic, ever changing landscape. Places promising to be like this, that have formed out of necessity and that don't seem to disappear are worth studying. So my project's starting point doesn't really come from a problem, but rather from an urgency. From a special phenomenon, that is worth preserving, or enhancing even. Therefore I need to understand Coney Island within its present context.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>This urgency leads me to wonder, what is this moving NY skyline, this extreme, irresistibly synthetic, enigmatic place Coney Island like today? Is Coney Island still what history showed it to be? Does it still work as a place to escape to? Do we still long for this type of escape? What makes Coney Island valuable in this day and age?</p> <p>But first: <i>What is Coney Island like today?</i></p> <p>Further along the research process, after the site visit, another question arose. <i>What type of architecture both embodies the Coney experience, and enhances its role as escape from city life ensuring it's time-resistance?</i></p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The initial design assignment had three directions depending on the research results obtained visiting Coney Island:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coney Island in its current state remains to be desired in its current context → Apply it's ingredients to another location - Coney Island in its current state remains to be desired in its current context → Stress its qualities with a design on location - Coney Island in its current state is no longer desired in its current context → Improve it with a design on location <p>After the surprising and enlightening location visit during off season, it became clear that the research was going towards a combination of the directions. Coney Island revealed something I didn't expect (which is exactly to be expected from Coney).</p> <p>From studying Coney Island's history, 4 themes could be recognized: energy, escape, relic and chimera. However after visiting the site, it turned out one was missing, one that literature didn't and maybe even couldn't reveal. And that last theme is: intimacy.</p> <p>It is special to be there at this time of year. It feels intimate. Like CI is showing its more vulnerable side. Exposed, without the yelps and cries of children dropping down exhilarating rides to hide behind. Without hordes of people waiting to be amused. The place gives off energy even though stagnant and turned off. It is alive with embodied intensity. This gives its visitors a form of strength, empowerment.</p>

Most literature and history books on CI forget or ignore its off season flair. They describe it when its fully active, flooded with people, during summer. But like a roller coaster, it is not fun to keep going, you have to get off at one point to take it in and appreciate it. In high season Coney Island is so bombastic, it needs a break too. And this break really shows its power. It is a landscape that always gives and pulsates energy, even though turned off.

This side of Coney is underappreciated. I want to design something that can highlight Coney throughout the whole year. Something that like Coney Island, one can escape to. Something that is kaleidoscopic, can flow along with Coney's changing landscape, absurd shapes and colors and can be a base to create more stories and memories. A place that fills up with these stories and embodies them, pulsating energy.



So looking back at the 5 themes: intimacy, energy, escape, relic, chimera, *what type of architecture both embodies the Coney experience (the 5 themes), and enhances its role within city life ensuring it's time-resistance?*

For multiple reasons this lead to a hotel. The first reason is a more poetic one.

- A hotel is a place away from home, a break. It stands through time collecting stories enabling it to fit to certain moments and all the moments - like Coney Island does.

The second is related to Coney Island's historical context.

- The upper class New Yorkers that came down to Coney Island built hotels to take in the landscape which ignited the development to the Coney we know today.

The third reason has to do with the architectural expression:

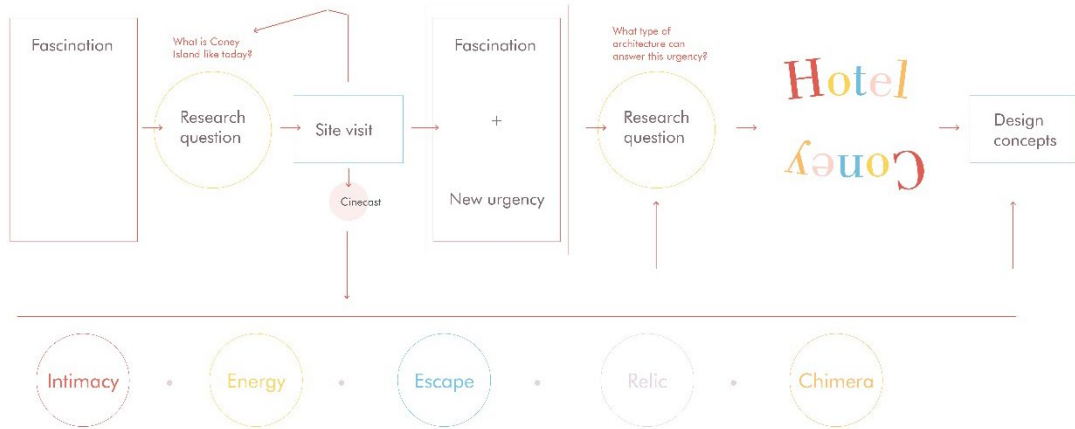
- The architectural expression of hotels is less restrictive giving freedom to go along with the absurd shapes and colors in the Coney Island landscape.

And the last reason is a more pragmatic one:

- A hotel will make it possible for visitors to experience the off season flair I experienced without having to open the parks.

Process

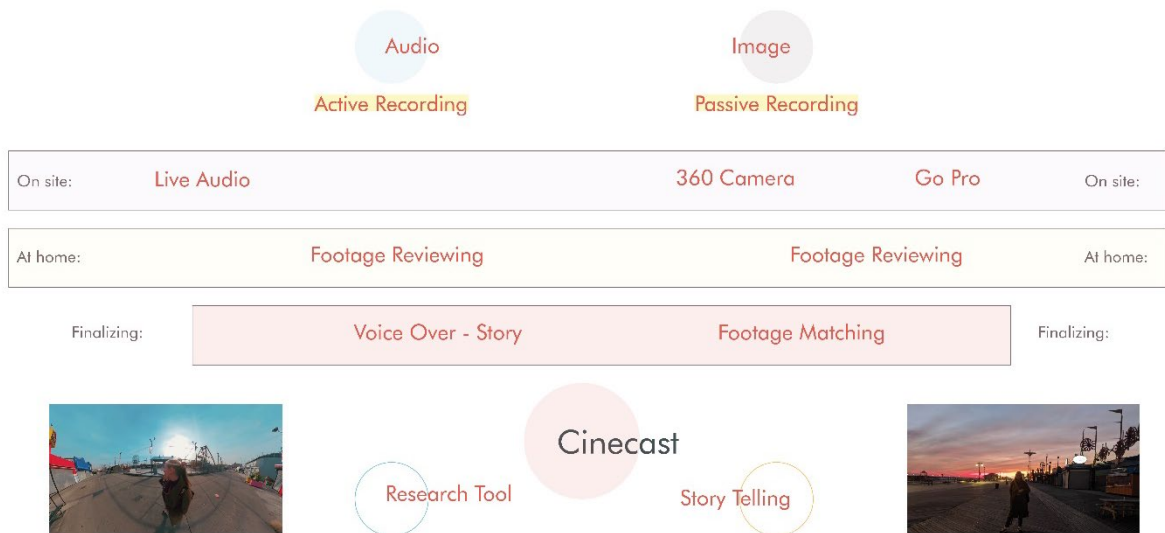
Method description



To answer the first research question the site was visited. During the first day of the visit I recorded myself describing what I see, hear, feel and think by audio, like a vlog without image. The following days I filmed my experience from exiting the subway station to walking through the parks to roaming over the boardwalk.

Upon return, the answers to the question: 'what is Coney Island like now?' were expressed in a cinecast, a podcast with images (see diagram on next page). A film's language has the ability to transport audience to a the time and place. It tells a narrative and is a meaningful construction of emotional space within the context. In this project, film will function as architectural theory. It will test how creative cinematic techniques can be extremely valuable in an architectural research. Combined with a descriptive 'podcast' way of narration through audio both live and as voice over, it will show how applying this method can give a holistic understanding of the place researched both during creating it as part of the research and as communicative tool to express the conclusions of the research.

Here is a diagram of how I set up creating the cinecast which made it possible to use as such a tool:



As addition mapping and analytical drawings will specify the spatial ingredients that lead to what is expressed in the film-cast, the conclusion. They can also function as design principles or ingredients.

From this film-cast combined with mapping and drawings, a location can be chosen and the first hints design implications can be abstracted.

During the whole process literature and any source of information on Coney Island (movies, songs, news) will be studied. Finally, along with the presentation and general requirements, I want to present an explorative booklet.

Literature and general practical preference

“Saving” Coney Island: The construction of heritage value by *Juan J Rivero*, 2016

Coney Island: The People’s Playground by *M. Immerso*, 2002

Boredom by *Gorky*, 1907

A Coney Island Reader: Through Dizzy Gates of Illusion, *Parascandola, Louis J., and John Parascandola*, 2014.

Urban cinematics: Understanding urban phenomena through the moving image, *Penz, François, and Andong Lu*, 2011.

Learning from Las Vegas, *Venturi, R., Brown, D. S. and Izenour, S.*, 1969

And many more...

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

In the Explore Lab studio there is no specific topic for the students to relate to. What students do have in common is a high motivation and obsessive interest in a specific question or phenomenon. The students are able to lead themselves and others in theoretical and design research that in some cases may be atypical. This thesis is related to the Explore Lab studio because it explores a new and valid way of doing architectural, spatial research. By creating a cinecast as research tool and story telling tool it shows that the freedom Explore Lab provides for its students to come up with such methods, adds value to the track of Architecture. By developing this method and presenting it in this graduation, I hope to show the next generation of student alternative ways of research, that are personal and still just as valid.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

As mentioned before, studying places like Coney Island, is valuable in maintain city's health. Coney Island was formed not out of pre-strategized plan, but out of necessity. A place for people to escape from their city life without being completely removed from it. Visiting a place like that is a true escape because it is not perfect, like a fantasy world, its also rough and sometimes even sad. But because of that it recharges the battery of life and passion, breaking through the city routines. Places like this show such resistance in an almost schizophrenic way. They are worth studying to make sure time doesn't get rid of them.

Doing an architectural research on this place reveals how a place doesn't always have to be 'turned on' to add value to city life. It shows how sometimes places can become a valuable landscape when not constantly outputting commerce. Places like Coney Island, but also like music venues that were previously squad houses, are essential in city life because they create a bond with the inhabitants and stand through time. Creating an architectural design that both embodies and enhances this, will make sure that they are not left forgotten as part of city life.