

# Graduation Research

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**New directions in the public interior**



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# **Position Paper**

## **Amsterdam Zuidas**

### **New Directions in the public Interiors**

A social campus

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## Introduction of the topic

My final graduation studio is in an endeavor to find new ways for the public interiors. In order to seek out these “new ways”, we as a studio of 15 students take the promising Amsterdam Zuidas urban area as our testing grounds and field of enquiry. In this paper, I will reflect on the *modus operandi* of designing in a large scale, highly complex and vaguely defined field of problems. We approached the search for these “new ways” by analyzing the old ways of canonical public interiors from all around the world. Furthermore, preliminary studio research included a trip to Madrid with its exemplary reference projects and vibrant public urban spaces. Field work on site include observations, mapping and survey focusing specifically on the current users of Zuidas in order to find out more about their desires and requirements towards a revised Zuidas public interior space. Within the context of the studio, we quickly established a common vocabulary through which description, analysis and eventually design became more communicable between students. In a workshop leading into the P1, we were confronted with this vocabulary and designed evocative configurations for such categories as terrain, place, shelter, structure, light and ground on a weekly basis. These configurations or premature “designs without designing” were supposed to trigger new insight and instantly became a knowledge base for everyone in the studio from where to depart into individual design proposals. The focus of the studio on interiors called for a designing strategy from the inside to the outside, taking the users and their relationship with others and the environment as essential informers of the design decision.

## Background on the topic to explain why it is important

Through this research by design method, I became more familiar with the complex situation at Amsterdam Zuidas while already engaging in a sort of dialogue with it by changing and manipulating it. I was finally able to make an informed selection of a distinct and interesting location for a design intervention after I had designed and formulated also the actual problem itself, for myself. According to Cross this is a critical moment in the design process. Cross states that “in order to cope with ill-defined problems, the designer has to learn to have the self-confidence to define, redefine and change the problem-as-given in the light of the solution that emerges from his mind and hand.”<sup>1</sup> Students of architecture are, in most of the cases, confronted with client-less as well as brief-less, complex situations. There is no doubt that a selected stance, position or paradigm especially guides the designer’s spark of inspiration and intuitiveness to hit the most inflammable haystack. In our present-day relativistic, complex world-situation, the most difficult part of the design process is the selection and prioritization of issues and the levels of intensities in addressing them. The same can be said about the present local situation at Zuidas.

A couple of words have to be spent on the specifications that the Zuidas area imposes and through which the assignment, a new public interior, gains its relevance and complexity. Visiting the Zuidas myself numerous

<sup>1</sup> Cross 1982: 221



times and looking into the so-called vision books issued by the planning commission each year, an extreme gap between the present state of the development and the aspired marketed image of Zuidas as a completed, splendid, vivid and above all corporate, international, urban business quarter is easily disclosed. This vision book is full of claims, an elaborate wish list which includes references ranging from fifth avenue, New York to Potsdamer Platz, Berlin. Zuidas wants to be everything and seemingly irreconcilable terms are thrown together. For 2030, it is envisaged to be a place of business, place to live, place to stay, place to pass through, a place for everyone. In short, something that has to develop organically, something that usually matures under trial and error evolution and that takes centuries in its genesis - "a fully-fledged urban centre in its own right" - is commissioned to be produced almost in a spasmodic contraction only within a fistful of years.<sup>2</sup> Clearly, this vision of Zuidas 2030 drawn up by the city council is commanded by an episteme of economic success and proliferation that has disgracefully neglected its patronage of public social spaces.

## Issues

Taking this self-conception of the Zuidas context as an earnest point of departure for the implementation of a new public interior, I have to mention several issues first that became vital for me. What problems will the new public interior solve (or even introduce) and for whom is it devised? Furthermore, a more clearer definition of public interior should be established. Currently, the public interior and exterior spaces at Zuidas are either too exclusive and articulated (lobbies and semi-public plazas) or they remain as left over spaces between the high rise buildings as unappealing streets and barely used squares. This phenomenon of neglect of the public space beyond the threshold of the corporate lobbies and revolving doors is particularly grave at Zuidas. Users, mainly office workers, find an uninspiring and inanimate environment in which they - on the contrary- are supposed to work or live on a very sophisticated level. Setti and Gregotti call these neglected spaces voids or residual spaces. For Setti, these open and residual spaces are offering themselves for the introduction of shared, relational spaces within the contemporary, fragmented city.<sup>3</sup> We are talking about the streets, pavements, squares and parks, etc. which are all belonging to an urban connective tissue and all of these constituents of public space can stage different aspects of public life. According to Graham and Marvin, the cherished notion about public space as one where physical face-to-face encounters are possible is threatened by the "retreat into the [privatised] corporate, domestic, consumption or transport cocoons of the postmodern city whilst using highly capable networks - particularly highways, telecommunications, television - physically to extend one's actions to link into the wider social worlds beyond the urban region."<sup>4</sup> Zuidas can be characterized as such a cocoon, heavily

<sup>2</sup> Amsterdam City Council 2009: 5.

<sup>3</sup> Setti 2013: 833.

<sup>4</sup> Graham and Marvin 2001: 210

profiting from its infrastructural connectivity but with only limited variety of uses and functions for a broader local public other than its office employees. Here, a public interior could function as a link not just between different user groups but also between the existing, isolated buildings and their vertical organization of offices, departments, floors and firms a “connective tissue [...] able to reunify the wounds of contemporary urban structure.”<sup>5</sup>

## Thesis

The research attitude of the studio particularly focuses on different user groups and their domains and assumes that it is an indication of quality and strength of a public interior the more it is accessible for different users and the more it allows them to claim their share, to use the public interiors and exteriors in their own ways. Hence, my position that a deliberately designed public interior should become a free place of identification and meaning for many instead of only a few, especially in the case of Zuidas. This position was partly concluded after having observed various public spaces in Madrid that promoted freedoms and enabled uncoded production of a public appearance. In the context of Zuidas as a place of more or less big business and abstract services feeding the tertiary sector of the economy, it is important to bring the human scale back into the focus. This can be achieved best by a public interior, a common ground that provides multiple permissive programming and events, flexible suggestive uses and which is responsive to its existing neighboring environs, thus creating the desired urban allure that is capable of countering “the emptiness of corporate culture.”<sup>6</sup> As mentioned before, the new public interior will not merely occupy a designated plot or fit into an urban scheme, but will position itself as an integral part of the residual circulation spaces (the street, the pavement, the square, etc.) with ambitions to become itself the urban master plan and framework for future development. Envisaged is a set of public interiors that through the management of the movements of people, the linking and mediation between existing buildings and redefinition of open spaces, defines a campus or a field. In this urban campus or field, individual and collaborative self-realization and expression would then generate a strong intimate bond between user and location (meaning) and a forum for representation (identification) which is based on its own materialistic and intellectual outputs.

## Counterclaim

A survey conducted with office people of Zuidas revealed an apathetical mindset towards their very own work place environment and that most of the people predominately present at Zuidas just “use” the place rather than enjoying it. In fact, one could argue, that the Zuidas right now should not be more or less than a generic business district. This confirms again, that people tend to accept unfavorable situations and the status quos quite easily and that this undemanding attitude towards public space has also influenced decision makers to be complacent about the provision of such unfulfilling

<sup>5</sup> Setti 2013: 840.

<sup>6</sup> Boomgaard 2008: 16

public spaces. As architects and designers, it is an important part of the vocation to provoke new realities and foster new lusts in users, to raise their standard of living through the provision of space for individual and collective fulfillment.

## Argument

As implied in the thesis mentioned earlier, a public interior nourishes on the purpose and significance its various users are invited to attribute to it. This has strongly to do with the identification value of the public interior and literally its surfaces that the user wants to manipulate in order to occupy or claim it. In contrast to the private interior with its individual, secluded and withdrawn character, where this kind of manipulation or writing and inscribing can take place freely and unobserved, the same type of action, in a public interior, becomes a collaborative effort with others, visible to all and thus debatable. Giedion et al. state that "the people want the buildings that represent their social and community life to give more than functional fulfillment. They want their aspiration for monumentality, joy, pride and excitement to be satisfied."<sup>7</sup> Currently though, the public realm is dominated by publicity and commercial interests. A definitive indication for the yearning for self-expression and excitement in the public realm outside the own home by its very occupants can be seen in the Culture Jamming movement which "seeks to rebel against the monopolization of public spaces by industry and commerce" by means of street art, graffiti or parody of advertisement billboards.<sup>8</sup> The private home can thus be seen as a container or vault for private possessions and most important reference point in the daily routines of its user's livelihood while the places of work or education and respectively the channels through which these places are reached can be seen as the true spaces of being, appearing and experiencing in the world. A public interior which will eventually be evaluated and compared with the amenities of both home and workplace should therefore comprise aspects of both realms, the private and the public. In interiors, we depart design processes from inside out, starting with surfaces that demarcate it and that become the canvas for the esprit of the different users.

A predominating notion about public interiors marks its dependency on other functions, mostly related to consumption and infrastructure. The mall typology, with its enclosed pedestrian areas soon became an accepted synonym for public interior spaces naturally connected to an "indoctrinated compulsion to consume."<sup>9</sup> These functions or programs however public they might seem may impose invisible and tacitly accepted parameters which decide upon who is admitted or tolerated as privileged user over a certain period of time. Augé calls these heavily codified spaces of circulation, consumption and communication "empirical non-places"<sup>10</sup> in which according to Banerjee's "Narrative of loss", the public life and spaces gradually become privatized

<sup>7</sup> Giedion et al.: 1943.

<sup>8</sup> Dorka 2008: 45.

<sup>9</sup> Pimlott 2007: 269.

<sup>10</sup> Augé 2008: VIII.

and where “access to and use of the space is only a privilege, not a right.”<sup>11</sup> The new public interior at Zuidas, even though it will most probably be contained and supervised to some extent, will not follow the manipulative agendas of the public interiors that we are so familiar and comfortable with. Therefore, the goal of this design assignment is also to ask how a public interior can be read and accepted without the common retail functions and conventional program. In fact I want to follow Tschumi’s alternative idea: to replace the term program - which signifies a repeated realm of habits, conventions and well known activities - by the term “event” which conjures the unexpected and unprecedented.<sup>12</sup> The latter qualities are much closer to an episteme of the every-day with its contingent and serendipitous encounters and interactions.

Finally, an important aspect of the tactics underpinning the idea of the coherent public interior is its responsiveness with the given context. I strongly believe, that the immediate surroundings can serve as a valuable informer and design incentive which altogether contribute to the creation of an unique location. We have used the word “situation” before. According to Roche, the architects attitude towards the situation and systems of situations is utterly comparable with that of a military strategist who needs to analyze and gather as much information as possible.<sup>13</sup> Zuidas, in its state of being a work in progress site, shows so many shortcomings that I as a designer almost forget to look for its *genius loci*.

Following the system of Brand’s shearing layers of change, the context or site is “the geographical setting, the urban location, and the legally defined lot, whose boundaries and context outlast generations of ephemeral buildings.”<sup>14</sup> We run into difficulties, when the site or context is actually - as in the case of Zuidas - the most uncertain and tentative factor in the design equation, since it will undergo major transformations in the future. What implications will it actually have, when the reification of a public interior takes place as a framework, as the site and context for other buildings both existing and planned?

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11 Banerjee 2001: 12.

12 Tschumi 2009.

13 Pelkonen 2011: 18.

14 Brand 1995: 13.

## Conclusive remarks

I have highlighted important aspects of my stance towards a new way in public interiors for the Zuidas in Amsterdam. I position myself on the side of architecture, that takes the user as the most important constituent when it comes to designing. Pelli also agrees, that

“Society is the ultimate recipient of all buildings. Owners will change and architects will be forgotten, as will all mentions of the designs in books and magazines, but the buildings will still stand, casting shadows, using fuel, giving form to a street, and providing pleasure or irritation to innumerable people over generations. Citizens have the right to expect that every new building will contribute to a better city and a more humane world.”<sup>15</sup>

Most of the knowledge generating episteme already have the human body and its senses and movements through space as their focus. For me, in regards to a public interior it is crucial to enable identification in order to create a certain degree of loyalty to a location. This can be achieved by a new way of staging events and bringing multiple purposes to the public interior by allowing flexible suggestive use. The public interior should extent its significance by paying respect to what is already there and should also benefit from a dialogue between the new and the existing.

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<sup>15</sup> Pelli 1999: 184

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# **The Real Experience of Shopping**

Report N°.1

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**New directions in the public interior**

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## **The real experience of shopping**

### **The survey**

The general outcome of the quick survey about the shopping protocols of three different generations, conducted in the first week of the seminar, indicated that all of the different generations show different shopping behaviors and patterns ranging from traditional way of shopping and local modes to the innovative, non-physical and global ones. Especially the youngest generation seems to already conduct most relevant shopping transactions over the Internet and via home delivery. Marc Prensky calls this generation that naturally grew up with the new communication technologies and media "digital natives".<sup>1</sup> However, their parent generation and to some extent also the oldest generation of their grand-parents might show different degrees in willingness to shop on the Internet. These generations prefer to handle most of their shopping by leaving the home and going to a particular store in town or near surrounding. Special items and costlier purchases would then lead to a possible increase of distance traveled from home to the shop, while the regular grocery shopping would be done as efficiently as possible. It was also a very important parameter, where the house would actually be situated. Households that are located in the city could much easier do shopping as pedestrians and reach all the needed destinations on foot or by bike whereas households in rural areas have to plan trips by car to the next town and have to keep a good stock in order to avoid driving the distances.

No matter what they would buy or where they would come from, these customers, who are visiting the physical stores in the city centers or even in the shopping malls play a role in a perceived, visible public crowd that fills up and gives life to space that especially in the western hemisphere is identified as a healthy public urban space, which is populated mostly by consumers. What consequences will the invisible growing masses of Internet shoppers have on this cherished image of crowded and busy shopping streets in the city or the shopping malls? What are the future perspectives for public urban life that is so intrinsically connected to physical and traditional retailing and consumption? Will it only be used by certain user groups - the computer illiterates - in the not too distant future, who still deliberately refuse to join in the wave of E-commerce? As the title of the report indicates, there is a good chance, that the advent of Internet shopping and the erosion of public life that arises around places of consumption will not go all the way, since the constituency of public life is still made up of humans with human desires and behaviors.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.marcprensky.com/](http://www.marcprensky.com/)



## The history of shopping and the future

The history of shopping is one tale of displacement of the item or good and its relation to the consumer. Throughout the centuries, the item for sale leaves the simple, ephemeral stall on the marketplace, moves to more permanent stores on the sides of the roads, then finds itself presented behind glass in the great covered passages of Paris or Milan.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the item leaves the congested city centers and is presented in warehouse like mega-stores and shopping malls. Just since the internet became the place to shop for things, the item of desire has moved further away from the grasp of the consumer into the screen that only suggests a certain closeness but leaves the customer no chance for physical contact and experience.

As early as 1997, "Maurice Saatchi, a prominent figure in the advertising industry, forecast[ed] that in 40 years, electronic retailing will eliminate the need for physical stores".<sup>3</sup> Another trend which is a direct response to the emerging Internet shopping idea and that will change the makeup of inner cities is the conversion of retail shops into showrooms with limited amount of stock for demonstration purposes.<sup>4</sup> According to an eBay-survey "Future of Shopping" which was conducted in 2012, more than 48% of questioned individuals between the age of 18-60 can imagine that conventional stores will definitely turn into showrooms, however, the majority remains skeptical towards the showroom concept.<sup>5</sup> The survey also showed congruent results with the small survey conducted in the seminar, that certain items such as groceries, furniture and fashion will more likely stay on the shelves of a physical store rather than being purchased over the Internet.

Before, the discourse about the condition of the public realm connected to consumerism dealt with the competition between inner-city urban locations vs. out-of-town mall solutions, now both are struggling against the pressures of the location-less Internet competition and have developed strategies and niches to make them unique and superior over the convenient Internet marketplace. These strategies try to eliminate the advantages of the Internet shopping. According to Cope, "traditional retailers will need to compete on added value and quality by utilizing the advantages the virtual retailers cannot match. This will mean higher levels of service, more highly trained staff and improved stores that are entertaining, fun and a pleasure to visit."<sup>6</sup> In other words, the Internet does provide convenience and is a very functional tool to do shopping more efficiently, while the conventional shopping provides more than just the function, it is becoming an experience, event, spectacle or leisure activity. This is particularly interesting to customers with different priorities in regards to time efficiency and the added value of experiencing

<sup>2</sup> Welch 2005: 162; Geist 1969: 67-68

<sup>3</sup> Burke 1997: 352.

<sup>4</sup> [www.internetworld.de](http://www.internetworld.de)

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Burke 1997: 357.

the retail world. Burke states that "a growing number of people are time constrained by obligations to work and family. Individuals who are sick, disabled, or elderly may not have the ability to shop. And many people do not enjoy shopping, especially the routine chore of grocery shopping."<sup>7</sup> In contrast to that, the so called "fun shoppers" will always populate the streets and malls despite all conveniences and advantages of Internet shopping. In the pre-internet period, the possibility to have mail order delivery did either not really change the way real shops were used. Kooijman also believes that "simply shopping for essential items and comparative shopping have made way for recreational shopping, which to a large degree is done for the experience and feel-good factor".<sup>8</sup>

### **The urban entertainment center**

In order to attract even the convinced Internet shoppers to the streets and the centers, other functions for entertainment and leisure have been combined with shopping destinations as early as in the very first shopping malls such as Southdale Center in Edina, Minnesota, which opened in 1956. Kooijman calls them "Hybrid Forms" where synergy is created by putting different amenities together.<sup>9</sup> The strategy uses certain functions and amenities that cannot be delivered Online to the same extent like experience of well designed ambiance, social events, sports and leisure and various other forms of entertainment. The Urban Land Institute defines, that "the Urban Entertainment center is a new form of shopping center that must contain three basic components: at least one pure entertainment attraction, usually a new generation cinema complex; theme restaurant; and entertainment-oriented shops in a coordinated, intense sociable environment that draws large and diverse audiences throughout the day to activate the place."<sup>10</sup> This idea of the themed urban entertainment centers has come a long way. Originally, in the renaissance, "Alberti assumed that the [work]shop was typically connected to a domestic dwelling and that location rather than any distinct architectural feature was the key feature for commercial success."<sup>11</sup> Today, this key feature for commercial success, and thus a lively urban space is to provide a seemingly unique experience on top of the actual functional aspect, the shopping. Interestingly, this desire for a spectacle can also be found in the renaissance where "quality was only assured if the customer could actually see the object ordered being made" and thus experiencing the awe and aura of craftsmanship.<sup>12</sup>

Quality of space as well as the qualities of a certain product can never be experienced through a screen or a simple image. Pelli reminds us that "it is useful to remember that essential aspects of architecture, such as the feeling of enveloping walls, the soaring of great voids, the changing

<sup>7</sup> Burke 1997: 353.

<sup>8</sup> Kooijman 2002: 214.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 227.

<sup>10</sup> Kooijman 2002: 215.

<sup>11</sup> Welch 2005: 125

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.: 127

light and sound that modify our sense of space, or the feeling of unease or comfort a room provokes, are not captured in photographs"<sup>13</sup> and that affirms the notion that the real experience of physical realities will always be superior to the virtual realities and the satisfaction it brings to humans. The most important prerequisite for this to be true is that the overall experience has to be a pleasant and comfortable one. Here we understand why architectural experience has been utilized from the very beginning of the department store to serve for an intensive, stimulating shopping experience.

This shopping experience involves the entire human body and all of the senses and even emotions. Banerjee states that "looking, gazing, and watching are all part of our normal stimulus-seeking behavior."<sup>14</sup> The human has great delight in being entertained and in enjoying passively much rather than being engaged actively. The urban entertainment center offers a safe environment for this kind of passiveness. Banerjee though, criticizes that "collectively, the shopping malls, corporate plazas, arcades, gallerias, and many such contrived or themed settings create an illusion of public space, from which the risks and uncertainties of everyday life are carefully edited out" and literally sanitized.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand Pelli argues that "because an entity is responsible for its operation, with explicit commitments to public bodies, it is better maintained and programmed than a truly public space."<sup>16</sup>

Illusions are also used to maximize profits. Seeing, touching, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling are sometimes crudely manipulated by the retail industry in order to attract customers and to keep them in their shops for longer periods of time. According to Kooijman "two well-known indicators of success are the length of stay and through flow. The length of stay has become an indicator of consumers expenditures, and the layout and management of shops are designed to prolong the length of stay."<sup>17</sup> In terms of a vivid and pleasant public interior also, the length of stay and the reduction of pace and through flow is an indicator whether it is successfully designed or not.

The urban entertainment centers try to address several issues that already the early malls addressed, but in a completely new dimension. The creation of highly artificial and themed environments stuffed with retailing and other elements like ice skating rigs, tropical gardens, swimming pools or entire amusement parks. First, they try to convert the overall image of shopping from the mere necessary chore into a leisure activity and thus they try to win the competition against the more convenient Internet shops. The user and his or her emotions and experiences is of key interest to the management of these urban entertainment centers. The actual

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13 Pelli 1999: 185.

14 Banerjee 2007: 14.

15 Ibid.: 13.

16 Pelli 1999: 187.

17 Kooijman: 2002: 218

technical characteristics of a product is of secondary importance.<sup>18</sup> All kinds of different user groups should be simultaneously attracted to the urban entertainment center to create a heterogeneous diverse audience and thus an metropolitan experience. Urban entertainment centers can be found in the middle of the city where they contribute to a vivid public scene (Alexa 2007, Postdamer Platz, Sony Center Berlin), but they can also be implemented the same way, big shopping malls have been, on the edge thus draining city life from the actual city centers (Centro 2006, Oberhausen). It is also important to note, that "urbanity in the Netherlands takes the local area as its point of departure. Foreign blueprints and concepts often do not fit into the existing urban context. Dutch planning policy always takes account of the historical town centers and the existing city scape," and that reference projects coming from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom might not be applicable to the Dutch environments like the Amsterdam Zuidas area.<sup>19</sup>

### **Is it private or is it public?**

The virtual reality is just one of the supposed threads to the vaguely defined notion of a healthy and desirable public realm. As already mentioned above, Banerjee is very critical about the developments concerning the privatization of public life and spaces as it might possibly happen in urban entertainment developments, where "the owner has all the legal prerogatives to exclude someone from the space circumscribed by sometimes subtle and often invisible property boundaries."<sup>20</sup> His "Narrative of Loss" which describes the "atrophy of American public life" also identifies "the growing exposure to television (and today, one supposes the Internet) and the privatization of leisure activities" as key causes.<sup>21</sup> "But there is another concept of public life that is derived from our desire for relaxation, social contact, entertainment, leisure, and simply having a good time. Individual orbits of this public life are shaped by a consumer culture and the opportunities offered by the new "experience economy""<sup>22</sup>. This experience economy is crucial for understanding successful public urban spaces and once again, it cannot be delivered and satisfied by interaction via a screen from home. Also Banerjee agrees, that "it is unlikely that our life as cyborgs and our membership in multiple "cyber-communities" will obviate our fundamental needs for social contact and life in the outdoors. It is quite likely that the demand for parks, playgrounds, and urban open spaces will continue to increase, especially in inner-city neighborhoods with increasing numbers of school-age children and senior citizens."<sup>23</sup> It is interesting, that he mentions these two user groups because they are a typical user group that is so dependent on a good public inventory and have less access to the virtual world.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Kooijman 2002: 218.

<sup>20</sup> Banerjee 2007: 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.: 14

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.: 18.

## Conclusion

The future of shopping and the future of the public domain will remain intertwined. New trends and technologies alongside with new user groups and domains will emerge. It is possible, that even because of the abundance of remote and virtual realms, a strong increase in the demand for strong physical spaces for real and authentic experiences will be observed. An important new aspect in all of this is the simultaneity of different activities and events and also multi-functional use depending on the time of day.

The urban entertainment centers from all over the world such as the West Edmonton Mall, 1981, Canada or the Namba Parks Mall, 2003 in Osaka, Japan are reaction to this heterogeneity and new complexity in the consumer cultures. From an architectural and user's standpoint, the typology still needs refinement. It should not be possible to exclude neither certain activities nor certain types of groups.

The design project situated around Amsterdam Zuid station has to take into consideration different types of users with different desires and agendas. Besides the existing user groups like office employees, students, and residents, new user groups like tourists and international visitors should be considered but also the classical stakeholders such as school children and elderly citizens.

Typical activities that are done after work, or after university and on the way home should be considered for the location, since it is closely related to transit and a major conglomeration of office workspaces and a university. Being on the go could be used as a theme and at the same time it should become an independent destination with a strong local identification by its future users. It is not certain in what ways the area should actually become an emulation of a city center, since it is so close to the actual center of Amsterdam but for sure, the intervention at the Zuidas should provide a powerful efficient public utility with a contrast to what is already available at the historical center of Amsterdam in order to create a unique and individual destination for almost all times of the day and for everyone focusing on the experience of a quality architecture and a meaningful public interior.

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# Merits and Flaws of Railway Stations

Report N°.2

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**MSc3 Graduation studio AR3AI045**

**New directions in the public interior**

Irene Cieraad Research Seminar AR3Ai132

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## Introduction

The design studio to which this research seminar is closely linked is interested in “the organizing, structuring, servicing and materialization of mainly large scale environments for the public”.<sup>1</sup> This year’s graduation project is concerned with the “ZuidasDok” in Amsterdam “as a major and infrastructural node that accommodates many diverse functions” and with the need for a redesign of the current train station in the perspective of a growing mass of passengers using the station and the growing significance of the entire Amsterdam Zuid area as a whole.<sup>2</sup> The Grand Central Station in New York, Atocha Station in Madrid, Stazione Termini in Rome and the Sergels Torg in Stockholm were selected to spearhead these best-practice references for station architecture. All of these train stations are of course touristic attractions and became independent destinations for visitors from all over the world that wished to experience especially the architectural orchestration of space. From these prime examples a closer account of the Atocha station, the only one that was actually visited and experienced by the students, is offered later on in the paper. Since the final design will be situated in the Dutch railway station context with its typical set of retailing and signage, it is also important to look at not so prestigious but similar situation as present at Amsterdam Zuid station. Amsterdam Amstel station was documented in an exercise during the research seminar in order to investigate the users and their behavior in and around the station. Finally, Berlin Hauptbahnhof will be briefly discussed.

It is important to keep in mind, that the design studio does not seek to design the perfect railway station but is more interested in the potential for the surrounding environment and the chance for carefully formulated new public interiors that rather supplement and compliment the station. This potential of course is unleashed by its connection with a relevant infrastructural node and the attractiveness of such stations for retail and other program that highly depend on exposure to flows of people.

The new directions for a public interior related to transit cannot be discussed without talking about the twofold relationship between public life and private places of consumption. This is just one of many interesting paradoxical relationships that evolve around the ambitions dealing with the reinterpretation and redevelopment of station environments towards emancipated destinations for shopping, leisure and entertainment. Hence, this essay is structured by the manifold relationship of these antitheses and the three train stations are commented on according to the following themes:

passenger vs. customer /// fast vs. slow /// city centre vs. train station ///  
experience vs. pragmatism ///

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1 Pimlott and Zeinstra 2013: 2.

2 *ibid.*: 3.

In order to capitalize on these opposing themes, the versus-relationship has to be successfully transformed into a both-and unleashing synergies and complementing effects.

### **A brief History of stations and classification**

Before the three stations in particular are commented on, there is need for a brief historical overview of the development of the typology of the station. From its inception in the 19th century, there are some elements that were essential in order to form the basic early station. Thorne describes the basic inventory of these early stations consisting of a shed to cover the trains, a building for ticketing and servicing the passengers, offices for the railway management and a waiting room.<sup>3</sup> Rapidly thought, "the station was converted into the "temple of technology" where passengers anxiously awaited one of the most important inventions of the Industrial Revolution" which would arrive under much noise and steam and probably was a very impressive experience to witness.<sup>4</sup> Cities went on and created monumental stations that soon became -"more than just the sum of its functional properties-[...] stunning symbol[s] of progress and a lasting monument for the city,[which] is directly related to the power of its architecture."<sup>5</sup> The golden days of the train were those days with no other alternative to travel over long distances. With the advent of the individual mean of transportation and the celebration of a car friendly city, the monopoly of the train on transportation and the significance of train stations was decaying and especially the train stations and their surroundings, in many cases, became unfavorable, obscure and dangerous non-places that were attracting the socially deprived, the criminal and the prostitute to conduct their businesses.<sup>6</sup> Harbor areas also suffer from the same bad image. Still today these corners can be found in many European stations even though the station experienced a renaissance that even the architect started to become interested again in this typology. The fact that "stations must serve a large number of temporary users - users whose needs, purposes of travel, time spent in the station, and demographic profiles vary enormously" made it very interesting for the retail industry - and later on the leisure and entertainment industry - to add shops and other facilities and functions to the stations creating in some cases cities within cities.<sup>7</sup>

Juliane Korn has developed a classification system with three different types of stations in regards to the degree of retail activity. Type one serves mostly its function as a place of transit. Users are passengers coming from the near region and are reluctant to do their shopping at the station. Type two stations are serving a wider urban area in terms of infrastructure as well as a shopping destination. The station has a vivid residential surrounding and 20-30% of the users of the station are using

<sup>3</sup> Thorne 2001:12.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.:11.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.:17.

<sup>6</sup> Corsten 2006: 4.

<sup>7</sup> Thorne 2001:11.

the shopping facilities. Finally type three stations offer almost the same range of retail as a city center. These stations are major infrastructural nodes with a close connection to metropolitan dense residential areas from which 90% of the stations clients are coming from.<sup>8</sup> Here it is interesting to see the special significance of a residential environment for the stations to succeed as major shopping and leisure destination. Mere masses of passenger flows alone cannot be seen as a guarantee for economically successful retail in the station.<sup>9</sup> For the deliberations for the intervention in Amsterdam Zuid, it is important to pay attention to these two facts and to note, that there are some residential buildings and developments within walking distance which forms an important user group to consider when proposing future designs around the station area. Currently, planning stimuli and impulses for Amsterdam Zuid seem to be motivated predominately by quantitative projections about numbers of passengers and the station tends to turn into a profane urban facility with a neglected and uninspired cooperate semi-public ambiance that is not even likely to turn into a type two station.

### **Shop until you drop (into the train)** **The new merit for train stations**

Important urban stations are molted into accepted shopping destinations. Evans and Shaw call it "the rediscovery of transport facilities especially international airports, inter-city rail terminals and metro/ underground interchanges as a value-added property and conduit for leisure development, and vice versa."<sup>10</sup> Here leisure developments also tent to mean retail developments since the line separating these functions is blurred. The implementation of valuable retail floor space provided the rail road companies, or the owners of the stations with a profitable secondary income besides their core business of selling train tickets. It could even be possible that for some regions, the profit from fares is less than the profit from rents of these retail capacities. Another positive side effect of having shops all around a station is the added service and convenience for the passengers and also the visitors that do not intend to board a train. Corsten states that "when a station changes from a mere infrastructural facility to a accommodating retail and entertainment location, the willingness to use the station as a city-center-like place of consumption in the visitors and passengers will grow rapidly" but it should still stay under a general theme and the general allure of a buzzing train station.<sup>11</sup> This is exactly what makes a train station shopping experience so fascinating. Potentially, one can shop and pursue the boring chore of buying things, but at the same time observe the hustle of all kinds of people from different places moving around and all having different agendas - shopping with a spectacle involved - that allows to observe others and to be observed by others. Especially Amsterdam Zuid and the adjacent world trade center yearns for an international allure for the station, similar to that of the nearby international airport, Amsterdam Schiphol.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Corsten 2006: 6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.: 8.

<sup>10</sup> Evans and Shaw 2001: 351.

<sup>11</sup> Corsten 2006: 7

<sup>12</sup> see: Anon.(no date): basispresentatie concept MP ZuidasDok 2.

## **Merits and flaws of three train stations as seen from a user perspective (Amsterdam Amstel, Madrid Atocha, Berlin Hauptbahnhof)**

passenger vs. customer/// fast vs. slow/// city centre vs. train station///  
experience vs. pragmatism

### **Passenger vs. Customer**

#### **Amstel (1939)**

The original station hall was left free of any vending stalls or shops. Only a row of ticketing counters were situated in the main hall. The splendid bright main hall was dominated by natural daylight and the wall paintings. It was truly a place for the traveler.

Today however, the main hall is stuffed with the typical alignment of generic shops that are present in any NS station and this station is not likely to attract other clientele besides the actual passengers passing through. The shops are clearly separated from the fast food restaurants. The station as a place for shopping is of minor relevance.

#### **Atocha (1888, 1992)**

The Atocha station has a designated area where most of the shops and restaurants can be found. It links together the old station hall with the palm garden and the security areas for the high-speed trains. Unfortunately, the architect predominately focused on the shell of the building and left the interior of this interconnecting spine and to some extent also of the palm garden up to the railway company to fill up with shops, restaurants areas that partially destroyed the pure and open nature of the buildings. Both, passengers and customers share the same routings and entrances. Like in an airport, there is a security area where only ticket holders are allowed to enter and where the passenger might have to wait until the departure of the high speed train. Here the passenger might turn into a customer.

#### **Berlin (2006)**

The mere size of the station, which is organized on many different levels almost creates the space of a roofed shopping mall but at the same time still being an exterior space. The critical mass of shops and their variety of items for sale cover everything that a city center would usually offer. Passengers should bring some time to make their way to their platform and to browse through the shops. The platforms could be located either on the top decks of the station or in the basement. It is interesting that "the transportation functions are neither accentuated nor hidden, but are an integral part of the development" which has more similarities with a shopping mall than a station.<sup>13</sup> The shops have extended opening hours and are also open on Sundays, making them the only shopping occasions on Sundays for groceries and other things.

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<sup>13</sup> Thorne 2001:18.

## **fast vs. slow**

### **Amstel**

In the middle of the main hall, some effort has been done to create islands for staying and resting. Some seats and sofa like furniture offers space to sit and eat or to wait for someone but this is not contributing to any quality for the space itself.

### **Atocha**

Fast and slow channels of movement are clearly separated. The palm garden offers a vast space for resting and contemplating. Most of the streams of people do not have to cross the palm garden in order to get to their trains thus adding to the relaxed atmosphere of the grand palm garden.

### **Berlin**

The vertical organization of the station allows for impressive views and vistas. Here people slow down and observe the different decks. The handrail of the glass balustrade is formulated to invite resting ones arms and elbows or to place even a book there. The width of the decks is big enough to allow rows of benches being placed in front of the shops and balustrades. Some areas are purely used for shopping and are not touched by hasty through traffic.

## **city centre vs. train station**

### **Amstel**

The Amstel station serves as a welcoming gate for European travelers that arrive at the international bus terminal. It is located closely to the city centre and does not compete with it in any way due to its relatively small significance besides being a train station. In its direct environment however, a small commercial sub-center has formed consisting of a university and some larger office towers. Especially the area in front of the station with its vast infrastructural spaces will be subject to redesign efforts. The mechanism at play at Amstel station are similar to the ones prevalent at Amsterdam Zuid but on a much smaller scale.

### **Atocha**

Situated in a fringe area of the inner city of Madrid, Atocha station becomes a small sub center itself for the direct environment. The architect's intervention created a "dialogue between the city and the old railway building, while maintaining the symbolic and monumental character of the latter."<sup>14</sup> With the feature of the palm garden, the station offers something unique, which cannot be found in the city center. According to Corsten, this supplementing contrast with the amenities of the city center are of great benefit for both sides.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ferrarini 2004:10-11.

<sup>15</sup> Corsten 2006: 7.

**Berlin**

Since Berlin does not really know one specific and universal city center, the area around the Hauptbahnhof is bound to become yet another potent and busy commercially dominated city pole. With the station being the architectonical mantelpiece in composition with the nearby Regierungsviertel. Currently under construction, in the future, the elegant tube of the Hauptbahnhof will be surrounded by hotel and office towers. The station as a covered interior urban public space has a huge advantage before the weather influenced city streets that make it possible to operate comfortably even during rain, hail or snow.

**experience vs. pragmatism****Amstel**

Since the station is an underpass-type station with the tracks being above the street level, there are darker internal areas beyond the OV-gates that are only light by artificial lighting. Also, the transition to trams via an underpass creates rather unpleasant dark areas. Even though the station is focusing pragmatically on its function to work as a facility of infrastructure, it fails to create the important visual connection of the passenger below and the trains above. This visual relationship would contribute to the railway atmosphere of the place and it also has practical implications on how people move towards the platform.

**Atocha**

Different contrasting types of spaces and profiles can be experienced when exploring the station, ultimately culminating in the high speed train hall with its majestic columns and high ceilings which is belonging to the exterior. Also the three main volumes: the palm garden, the high-speed station and the local station have different architectural features especially concerning the provision of daylight, that the user experiences sequentially. The visitor can chose between the spectacle of watching turtles in a pond, flows of people moving or observing the large train hall with its magnificent high-speed trains departing.

**Berlin**

The station is a perfect mix of pragmatic deliberations about access and structure and the architectonic experience of an exciting complex interior which is dominated by people moving on escalators, in transparent lifts, on decks and in front of shop fronts.



## Conclusion

These accounts of the different aspects of the stations have showed, that a station does not merely have to be a banal piece of infrastructure organizing streams of passengers. Elements such as places for comfortable waiting and observing can be as crucial as an easy to understand signage and wayfinding system. The longer waiting periods for trains are, the more possibilities should open up for passengers to browse in shops.

A careful designed public interior determines the success of the programming and the level of acceptance of the users. This acceptance level can be measured by the length of stay and the extent in which the facilities are used. Pelli thinks that "users are perhaps our most important constituency" for architects alongside the client, the society and the media.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, "when the building is finished, those who use it should feel that it is theirs and be proud of it and their contribution to the design." It is rather vague what this contribution and part-taking in co-construction really is. Especially in large scale urban developments that will affect a wide range of stakeholders, it is crucial to integrate future users and stakeholders into the design process, from an early stage on. The Stuttgart 21 project has proved, that sufficiently. Building is too long-lasting and relevant, that it could be solved and decided solely by a top-down hierarchy, disregarding the desires and needs of the users that otherwise have to "appropriate" failed projects in their own way. A symbiosis of the needs of all potential user groups - also the ones that might not be present now - has to be achieved in order to eliminate the contrasting relationships of the aspects mentioned earlier in the paper. The creation of a positive tension between them will also offer attractive architectural measures to be endeavored.

The public interior in this case, will become the experienced layer, that is touched, smelled, inspected, listened to, altered, torn apart, walked upon, sat down on, walked through; but also the layer that will actively guide and "control" the users in a clearly demarcated terrain.

Still, the most perfect public interior would be one, that benignly contains the users without them being able to notice it.

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<sup>16</sup> Pelli 1999: 183.

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# Where the emptiness of corporate culture reigns

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**New directions in the public interior**

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Smokers outside the lobby doors at the World Trade Center

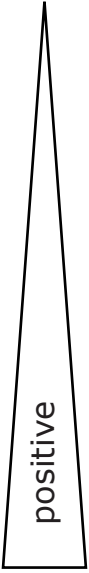


## Prologue

The focus of the research in general is put on the different user-groups present at Zuidas at the moment and their dormant potentials in the future course of the development of the city quarter. Especially in the design field of public interior spaces, the user is central point of reference. The success of any public space is always a function of the quantitative (how much, how long, how many) and qualitative (of what kind) relations that a user or an entire user-group can engage in within a given space, location, building or interior. In order to make this stance towards an ideal and desirable notion of public spaces and public interiors more clear, some axioms or guidelines are proposed at this point, before looking at the actual research and its findings. These axioms can be regarded as the biased mindset, planning paradigm or ideological background of the author and his understanding of the very complex and abstract subject matter of public space and its conception. In general, the axioms postulate an ideal concept of a successful public space which is meaningful, inclusive, human scale, sociable, tolerant and diverse. Its key potential should be to accommodate many different user-groups appropriately in a free and intuitive way. We can readily use the term common ground which is intrinsically placed in urban settings, on which people can meet other people and engage in various activities. The kind of activities and its implications towards the articulation of such public spaces heavily depend on the bandwidth of the target audiences.

These axioms combine well established common-places, personal subjective preferences as well as objectified findings from the literature and condense them into an evocative set of believes that appeared to be most relevant and helpful in the endeavor of new directions in public interiors. The designer needs these self-imposed and sometimes taken-for-granted axioms in order to test and validate design-decisions by them. These axioms do not make the claim to be ultimate truths nor to be complete; they are only a selection of possible prioritized principles floating “out there”, concerning public spaces. It lies in the nature of public space design and its underlying dynamics, that a large portion of the desired outcomes can never be planned beforehand and predictions on the performance and acceptance of such common grounds is difficult. Thus it is important to acknowledge the fact that policy makers, planners and designers can only try to create the opportunity or the framework for public life to happen. During the design process the axioms remain subject to change, revision, revocation, elimination, et cetera. The subsequent research into user-groups present at the Amsterdam Zuidas design location will touch upon some of these axioms and will confirm their validity and relevance.

1. The most important ingredient for a successful public space is the right amount of people using it purposefully. **(Use / Occupation)**
2. The purpose of any public space will always be determined by its users. **(Co-creation, Configuration)**
3. A good public space allows for a high degree of co-creation and re-configurations. **(Flexibility)**
4. The choices any public space offers determines which and how many different user groups will be using it. **(Diversity)**
5. The more different user groups can use a public space, the more comfortable its social climate will be and the more intense its use throughout different time periods. **(Simultaneity)**
6. Movement and accessibility is a necessity, contemplation and seclusion is a desire. **(Contrast)**
7. It is easier for users, to adapt to bad environments than to actively or passively improve them. **(Resignation)**
8. If one user group dominates a certain public domain it becomes difficult for others to make claims. **(Exclusiveness)**
9. Under use of a public space means that there is a better alternative somewhere else. **(Competition)**
10. The more elaborate and sophisticated the private home interiors are, the weaker its adjacent public spaces. **(Redundancy)**



positive



negative

## Introduction

What is researched and why?

It is obvious to everyone, who arrives at Zuidas and who spends some time on the Mahler- or Zuidplein, that this is a place of business, rather than anything else, “where the emptiness of the corporate culture reigns”.<sup>1</sup> There are several hints that make that observation very easy and obvious. Anyone will, with no doubt, be able to read the build environment - the high rise buildings with their glazed facades and seemingly public lobbies and atria- and conceive of the corporate atmosphere it produces. The second hint that presents Zuidas primarily as a business district can be found by observing the people that appear at Zuidas on the weekdays and respectively by their absence during the weekends. The one particular user-group that is most present at the streets and squares of Zuidas is the office employee. Even though, the concept of the casual Friday’s attire seems to having been expanded to a “casual everyday”, there are still large numbers of Zuidas office employees wearing proper suits and ties making it easy to spot them. Other user-groups also have an appearance around Zuidas such as the students of the nearby Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Pupils from the different schools nearby can be easily spotted after school is over. The inhabitants of the few finished prime-dwelling projects of Zuidas form another more or less identifiable user-group and they mingle with those who merely transit from train to bus and tram and vice-versa. All of these users have specific ways of appearing in the public spaces in Zuidas and thus contribute to set a theme and character of the place. Still, the users who proudly call Zuidas their work place are dominating its public spaces in both numbers and appearances.

The overarching research question and following reasoning and advice is interested in the present and dormant potentials that these different user groups (employees, students/pupils, residents and passengers) are capable to contribute to a vivid urban public life based on being, appearing and using the public spaces at Zuidas.

The research in this report tries to investigate some aspects of the behavioral patterns of usage of the public spaces by the most relevant user group, the office employee. The reason for this emphasis is simply because currently they are predominantly populating the streets, places and squares of Zuidas. Hence, the research is particularly interested in two aspects of the daily routines of people who work at Zuidas. Firstly, it is interested in the routines and habits of the users coming to work in the morning and leaving it after work and tries to find out if other supplementing activities happen on these routes. Secondly it seeks to find

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<sup>1</sup> Boomgaard 2008: 16.



out how lunch breaks are spent at Zuidas and if there is intensive use of the public spaces in that lunch break. Within these three time windows - arriving at work in the morning, during the lunch break and going home after work - it is assumed that the office workers at Zuidas, are most likely to be visible and, to a certain degree, active in the streets around their offices and thus contributing to a lively and attractive urban feeling. From the conclusions concerning this dominant user-group and their way of using the public spaces at Zuidas, I will discuss the differences and



Lunch break at Zuidas

potentials of the other user-groups in this regard.

Through the design of a new public interior at Zuidas, the attempt is then made to change the “mono-cultural” way in which this business district has developed so far. In order to bring more diversity and a unique destination to Zuidas, an Innovation Campus is proposed which will occupy and replace the elevated street of the Strawinskylaan. Through its conception as a “breeding ground” for new creative industries and start-ups it will try to make use of the existing excellent infrastructural and economical position of its surrounding. Furthermore it introduces a new kind of public interior which is dedicated to offer these new “breeding grounds” an exposed stage as a natural part of the public domain. One main goal of the design project is to offer attractive places to stay for all the identified user groups.

### **Location - Amsterdam, Zuidas**

What is it now? What will it be?

Up until today, Zuidas is in constant development to become the number one business location in the Netherlands. On top of that, it's most important asset, the station Amsterdam Zuid, is going to be developed into the second busiest station in the Netherlands with more than 200.000 passengers a day in 2020 and more than 300.000 in 2030.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the entire area is supposed to become “a sustainable and successful urban environment of international allure, but with traditional Amsterdam qualities”.<sup>3</sup> It is expected that there will be a balanced mix of residential usage (29%), office usage (38%) and public amenities (33%) provided in the final phase of the design.<sup>4</sup> In the state of Zuidas today, this desired image of a diverse urbanity is not yet fully achieved. Also in the minds of most of the people, Zuidas is purely a business environment which lacks diversity and has no human scale.<sup>5</sup> People only go to Zuidas if they have business to do there. It is not a destination in itself since it lacks attractive public amenities and places to stay.

The public spaces, which are actually quite carefully designed, are supposed to create a safe and nice environment for visitors and passers. Especially the heart of Zuidas, which is formed by the Mahlerplein and the Zuidplein linked by the station Amsterdam Zuid, is designed in a clear and generous way. However, movement from and to the station is dominating these two places and their capacities to retain and invite people to stay is limited. In this regard, the Zuidplein with its compact dimensions, clear

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<sup>2</sup> Benthem & Crouwel, 2013: 7.

<sup>3</sup> Amsterdam City Council et al. 2009: 21.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.: 68.

<sup>5</sup> Aldana 2013: 80-81.



edges that accommodate shops and restaurants and the tree planters with ledges where one can sit, is more successful than the vast and empty Mahlerplein. Looking at the location today, one has always to keep in mind the prospect of immense growth and the threefold multiplication of users and visitors to Zuidas as a whole that planners are expecting over the next decades.

### The Cure? Densification and diversification

With images from all over the world - including Fifth Avenue, New York and Sony Centre; Berlin - the planning commission of Zuidas tries to show what they have in mind for the character of Zuidas. In general, they see a lively, buzzing city quarter that will be an integral part of the city fabric of Amsterdam and its neighboring environments. Attention is always directed to the predicted increases of people making use of Zuidas as a place for transportation, a place for business, a place for living and a place for recreation and entertainment. The public spaces, that hold everything together though, are only vaguely described by naming desirable reference projects from around the world. The design of these public spaces, forming the connecting and integrating tissue of the city, should be granted as much care, attention and elaboration as is invested in the individual buildings that are surrounding and framing it. Gehl reminds city planners that

"it is widely believed that the lively city needs high building density and large concentrations of dwellings and workplaces. But what the lively city really needs is a combination of good inviting city space and a certain critical mass of people who want to use it. There are countless examples of places with high building density and poor city spaces that do not work at all. New urban areas are often dense and fully developed, but their city spaces are too numerous, too big and too impoverished to inspire anyone to venture into them."<sup>6</sup>

In the following, it is explained what is meant by a successful public space in the context of this report.

### **The good inviting city space and the public interior**

As mentioned before, public space is the integrating and connecting tissue of the city that connects all private points and is at the same time only perceivable through contrasting and demarcating it with the different private realms. Public spaces in the city come in the forms of streets, squares, parks, boulevards, waterfronts, alleys, marketplaces, et cetera.

<sup>6</sup> Gehl 2010: 68.

Public interiors are prominently featured in the city and include schools, universities, hospitals, libraries, museums et cetera. Today, the concept of truly public spaces is diluted, since semi-private and privately owned and operated places become more integrated into the everyday routines of people. Examples of this are the shopping malls, train stations, airports, urban entertainment centers, sports venues, and theme parks, as well as the gated residential community.

The amount of people and their duration of stay is a good measure to identify a good inviting city space. A main goal of the design of public city spaces is to be able to retain different groups of people on their daily routes through the public sphere, to slow things down. Then, the appearing and acting in the public space as an individual or as a group becomes the main function of welcoming successful public spaces. As a result, watching, observing, looking, peeking, seeing others doing things becomes the main stimulus that people are enjoying. Elements such as privately owned shops, cafés, bars, restaurants, playgrounds and “other hangouts at the heart of a community” also known as third places will always be wrapping these successful public spaces.<sup>7</sup>

In most cases though, public space is an unconsciously experienced part of our daily routines. With no specific strong purpose or design it provides the ground to move about in the city. It is ubiquitous, abundant, as soon as we step out of the home. We experience and consume this public space more or less consciously and it is the time spent and spaces seen between point A and point B. In contrast to the generic and mundane condition of ubiquitous public spaces stand the special and unique public spaces. These can be grand schemes within the city but also little moments of small and moderate sizes. Both, the generic and the special public spaces have the power to influence the moods of its users. The setting is able to provoke feelings and emotions in its occupants. Through its articulation, its design, its dimensions it is able to allow certain activities and to deny others. In short, a successful public space allows for comfortable and purposeful sojourn where to see and be seen is a major feature. The design of these places play a crucial role in allowing things to happen, feelings and emotions to develop but it is also the users themselves that shape and characterize these public spaces through their activities and postures. Gehl calls this a self-reinforcing process where “people come where people are”<sup>8</sup>. In the next paragraph we will discuss who the different user groups of public spaces at Zuidas are and what expectations they have towards public spaces.

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<sup>7</sup> Oldenburg 1989

<sup>8</sup> Gehl 2010: 65.

## User groups at Zuidas - present and future potentials

Due to the development of Zuidas, the distribution of different user groups is also supposed to shift. Looking at the proposed percentages of square meters of programming in the area, a balanced mix of working, residential and visiting population is sought. Currently the working aspect of Zuidas is the one most outstanding to the observer. Nevertheless, new dwellings are under construction and "Zuidas will eventually be home to over 20.000 residents living in a particularly modern and vibrant setting."<sup>9</sup> Students from the nearby university as well as pupils from different schools are also frequently using the public spaces on their way to and from school. Finally, station Amsterdam Zuid and its adjacent places will become a substantial part of the daily experience of thousands of commuters and visitors who make use of the buses, tram, metro and trains. These 4 user groups are the main actors to be found at Zuidas. They all have different agendas and are inevitably organized in different space and time zones. This allows for temporary shifts in the constellation of the different user groups and the coloring of the Zuidas public spaces. It is evident that there is a natural potential in dealing with these 4 different user groups. The ingredients and precursors for a contemporary successful urban quarter are there. Trying to attract tourists or even a new kind of alternative scene would not comply with the intrinsic character and circumstances of both physical and socio-cultural Zuidas since these two user groups already have well functioning zones elsewhere in Amsterdam. Before each user group is discussed in detail, the new hungers and appetites of the contemporary urban population should be explained.

As early as 1943, Giedion talked about the natural desire of humans for a community life (*Gemeinschaftsleben*). He stated that

"cities would evolve from being mere agglomerations of workplaces and infrastructural items as soon as their inhabitants sensed the isolation and would not suppress the desire for a communal sociable life any longer. He goes on identifying that this desire was linked to a sense of catharsis and an urge for other invigorating influences, beyond the realms of work and family. This experience was supposed to expand the confined private lives of people."<sup>10</sup>

Even though Giedion has real institutions for communal life such as the then emerging civic center in mind, the public spaces partake to a large degree to the formation and staging of such community milieus.

<sup>9</sup> Amsterdam City Council et al. 2009: 75.

<sup>10</sup> Giedion 1956: 38.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow describes basic human needs in his “hierarchy of needs” which is basically a pyramid array with five categories.<sup>11</sup> It is interesting to observe today, that in an urban setting, most of these human needs are and can be fulfilled within the public domain. The urbanite enjoys to eat out, moves about in safe city environments, is sheltered by all kinds of public interiors, meets friends and has appointments in cafés, parks or squares, displays and raises his self-esteem while promenading and shopping on the boulevards, and contemplates the world that surrounds him.

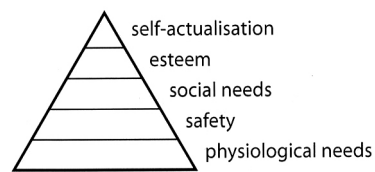


Fig. 1 Maslow 's Hierarchy of Needs

In their book about Squares of Amsterdam, Witman and den Haan think that an

“aspect of the increased importance of public squares lies in the new city dweller’s reappraisal of urban life and their urge to leave the confines of the home, to be out in the city. A study conducted by the Gemeente Amsterdam reveals, that the new urbanite has high expectation towards the outside public spaces in order to be able to read, to have a pick nick or just to make an appointment. Most of the parks in the city witnessed a doubling in occupancy over the past ten years. Sociologists and leisure-scientists indicate that there is a development going on that they refer to as the “mediterraneanisation” of the Dutch culture or “domestication by cappuccino”.<sup>12</sup>

This concept of city usage fits especially to young urban professionals and members of creative industries that are heavily depending on “face-to face contact between producers and consumers [and that] operate in close proximity where knowledge institutions are clustered, at urban gathering places, in libraries, cultural venues, cafés and the like.”<sup>13</sup> This target group of young, urban, creative professionals has been the beacon of hope for economic and cultural city development all over Europe and especially in Amsterdam over the past decade. Following this overview, the different user groups (visitor/passengers, residents, students and office employees) are discussed and recommendations on their behalf are proposed.

<sup>11</sup> found in Dahl 2008: 23.

<sup>12</sup> Witman, de Hann 2010: 14.

<sup>13</sup> Musterd, Deurloo 2006: 80.

## Transit Passengers / Commuters - time is of the essence

Trying to characterize this hasty and fast moving user group, we have to look out for them near the station. All other user groups might also belong to this category since everyone arrives and leaves somehow at the Zuidas as a commuter. The degree of experiencing a public space and its details always depends on the speed and means by which one travels through it. The pedestrian has the most contextual relationships, while someone arriving by car or train has only fast pace visual connections with the environment. Arriving and departing, passing by are the main activities of passengers and commuters. Their duration of stay is limited to the different rhythms of the transportation schedules and time tables. In this regard, they only have a low potential to contribute to a successful public space where one would feel comfortable to rest. However, the constantly changing population of the train station and its hustle and bustle create the atmosphere of traveling and are per se divers and exciting to look at. The station environment usually takes care of an efficient easy to understand set-up with prompt and fast services within perceptual relation to the train platforms. Everything has to be "to-go" when changing trains, buses and metros. The palette of station shops is the same in the entire Netherlands and one can be sure about a basic range of things to buy. For those with Zuidas as their final destination, and meeting point, it might be interesting to create areas within the station to wait and meet. Places to sit that are not hindering the flow of masses of people but at the same time are close to it are important places where people can wait and observe the streams of people arriving and leaving. This can also create occasions for informal encounters and recurring greetings. Since most commuters use the same trains and areas to wait and sit, this could help to create a feeling of a fleeting sociability with other strangers that eventually become familiar by recurring encounters. Through an insertion of a special and unique venue in the station offering a spectacle or something interesting to look at, a focal point can be created that makes appointments and meetings easy and for which the station can become known, famous and popular. The users of the station eventually become office employees, residents, students, visitors, et cetera. Through the constant use and occupancy of stations and prolonged opening hours of the shops and amenities in the close vicinity, a contribution is made to add life to the Zuidas. Through the presence of people and places with long hours of operation near the station, it can also become safer throughout the entire day and evening hours stretching the times of extensive use.

## Residents - soon to arrive promoters of urbanity

The people that are living in the new high rise buildings now can be considered the pioneers of Zuidas as a residential area. They are accepting the unfinished and somehow uncomfortable state of their habitat and the prospect of massive, long-lasting disruptive construction work to come. For now, it is true, that Zuidas cannot offer these pioneers all amenities of an urban quarter yet and that people currently living at Zuidas have to seek them elsewhere. Gradually the lots are filled up with more towers and apartment blocks, public amenities and places to shop will follow and welcome the new clientele which is likely to belong to the higher income group in the Netherlands. The municipality desires a mixture of young couples, families, internationals, students as well as the elderly population to settle down in Zuidas. It is also intended to have a certain amount of social housing units incorporated in the new developments to guarantee an urban mix. The residential, quite heterogeneous user group is most likely to give character and life to their own living environment provided, that there is attractive and welcoming public spaces left between the building blocks and towers receiving enough sunlight and being protected against drafts. It is believed that people are much more conscious about their immediate dwelling environment and more willing to care and identify with it. The one crucial negative aspect of the whole Zuidas design which poses a real blow to all efforts to create successful public spaces with a human scale is the use of residential high-rise buildings. As soon as apartments are lifted too high from the ground, they lose their connection with the public spaces and the streets. People have no touching points with the ground anymore, except for a place in a parking garage underneath. In residential towers, thresholds are also very harsh and there are no communication or buffer zones between the public and the private. There is no garden or front porch anymore. People either if at all meet their neighbors inside the own apartment or on the street. That is why in such large scale residential developments the parks and green spaces with playgrounds proved to be quintessential for the formation of a sociable public atmosphere. Especially places where children can play are most successful because parents, grandparents and whoever is involved in chaperoning the children have the tendency to form important groups of shared interests and social (fleeting) contacts out of which more intimate friendships and associations can evolve. Within these free park settings, social differences are more easily overcome and people of different income groups and social backgrounds can mingle easily. Also places where children play are conceived of as being safe and pleasant also for other user groups. The implementations of third places are also important for residential districts which are ideally within walking distance to the home. Here people can unwind and meet others on a neutral



ground. According to Oldenburg, such places can be cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons or any other hangout spot at the heart of a community. The residents of Zuidas will play an important part in creating vivid and successful public spaces. This user group will have the time capacities and motivation to appear in the public spaces of Zuidas. Their presence is not only restricted to weekdays and working hours but they are present most of the times as the individual schedules allow it. It should be in their own interest to actively take part in considerations about the treatment of public spaces. Initiatives should be encouraged to address important issues of the community and the neighborhood but also to stage community gatherings, events, festivals, and the like, that make the Zuidas habitat known and appreciated for one specific theme and character. These events can help to establish a new image of Zuidas as an arrived city quarter and at the same time it endows communal feeling, identity and specificity and strengthens the community life.

#### Students and pupils - Zuidas' orphans

This group of users that is currently present at Zuidas is a young, dynamic socially active target group. On location, it is observed, that the environment of Zuidas has little to offer for this target group. Places to meet and eat or drink are only provided on campus and are not an integral part of Zuidas. The restaurants, snack bars and cafés currently present in the plinth of the World Trade Centre have a different target audience and succeed in keeping certain groups away through their prices. Students primarily make use of the desperately neglected secondary entrance of the station at the Parnassusweg and on their way to the campus there is nothing to encourage a longer stay in the area. Also, the much younger pupils of close-by schools do not have a public space at Zuidas that would be reasonable and appropriate for them to gather after school and to hang out. The pupils make their appearance at Zuidas predominately along the center Minerva axis and in front of the station on the Zuidplein where they like to linger on the tree planters in peer groups after school with no particular activity or purpose. In contrast to this group forming, the students of the university appear more as individuals and pairs and do not loiter as much as the younger pupils. It is not sure if the loitering of this young user group is experienced as a nuisance that bothers the overall professional, formal, grown up business world around the Zuidplein. As mentioned before, the appearances of the flocks of pupils coming from school, does not coincide with the working schedules of most of the offices at Zuidas. This creates interesting and diversified mood changes in the constellation of the people being at Zuidas, at one instance, the place is full of young people fooling around, and the next, a delegation of business people makes their way through. It is an ever-changing interplay with

all kinds of actors that runs like clockwork. Zuidas could benefit from the presence of students and pupils and they should be embraced as a user group that is capable to bring some contrast to the formal setting of Zuidas as a business district. Will they not be the future brain power that Amsterdam tries to attract so much, in the competition for so called knowledge workers? Gathering places that are appropriate and casual should be provided for students. Instant socializing capabilities and open-mindedness towards strangers are character traits typical for the student population. Pupils prefer locations that are not obliging them to purchase or buy anything, since allowances and financial strength of this young user group are supposedly low. They need robust environments with an allowing character and something to do. At the same time, compatibility with other user groups is an issue to be addressed. It seems that public spaces for adolescents are connected with a negative image of vulgar and defiant behavior, with misdemeanor and loitering. Public spaces dedicated to such young and critical audiences should try to couple compatible user groups in order to create a kind of mutual "soft social control" instead of marginalizing an entire age group by not providing adequate public hangout spaces for them at all.

#### Office employees - The top dogs at Zuidas

As mentioned before, people who work at Zuidas are the most prominent user group at Zuidas. Both, Mahlerplein and Zuidplein have entrances to the office towers that absorb this user group in the morning, release them shortly during lunch break and finally spit them out after work. Since the successful public space is measured here on the possibility of appearing, acting and watching others, the in depth analysis of the office employees work day schedules were of interest in the following questionnaire. First some general comments regarding the working user group at Zuidas. The group can be divided into different hierarchy levels according to their position within the office or firm. The most striking feature of most of the employees is their outward appearance. According to the different positions and hierarchies, people wear typical office clothing but a more traditional attire consisting of proper business suits is still very much agreed upon and also a must within certain spheres of the business world. This unique feature, the corporate uniform has some very interesting effects on how others might experience a place dominated with persons wearing suits and ties. It is both a symbol of membership as well as a disguise. It can evoke certain feelings of respect and trustworthiness. Like a facade it hides personal traits and tastes, covers individuality and creates conformity. In cities like Frankfurt, London or New York, there are areas, where men and women in business suits and costumes are everywhere and where someone easily may feel misfit and under-dressed



if not wearing the same clothing. This awkward feeling to be out of place is a very personal matter but it inevitably influences everyone moving in these dress coded areas of the public sphere. The corporate culture is one where professionalism, discretion, strength and power are championed and individuality is faded out. Logically, a location where the corporate culture is dominant, shares these properties of universality, conformity and surface gloss. This is also true for the heart of Zuidas. It is a heart that keeps the business machinery running. People from all over the world come to Zuidas and they feel right at home because they are used to move in central business districts that are not that much different from one another, whether located in Cape Town, Paris or London. It has international allure, because it lacks a strong specific character and has no charming idiosyncrasies. The presence and dominance of an affluent user group in the public spaces is also noticeable in the kind of public amenities, restaurants and shops that are established in these highly gentrified working areas. User groups that are living on more limited budgets will not frequently visit these expensive and exclusive places. From this point of view, through the presence of a high income group, a diverse and welcoming urban place might not be as welcoming and inclusive for others.

Furthermore, people that are working have only a limited amount of time in which they are actually visible on public spaces. The questionnaire tries to find out more about the potential of this dominant user group to contribute to successful urban public space in terms of use and appearances.

In the following paragraph, the research methods used to retrieve the information for the office employees' daily routines are explained.

## Research Methods

Field research is unavoidable when it comes down to extract data from occupants and users of spaces. Besides from the actual data and facts that the field research can generate, it is the actual conducting of things like interviews, questionnaires, elicitations and experiments in public spaces that are already little ends in themselves. The mere possibility for an instant and maybe disruptive interview to happen in a public space allows important conclusions about the type of space that our target audience is situated in as well as about the target audience itself. As we move away from analyzing the site of Zuidas and its artifacts, as architects tend to do, only from satellite view and plan representation of lines and surfaces and position ourselves right in the middle of public life, we instantly become active participants exerting our right to appear and act in public space. We become part of that Habermasian public space where strangers meet other strangers.<sup>14</sup> With our unexpected questions, we become a contingent encounter in the daily routines of the Zuidas office people and at the same time maybe trigger thoughts and self-reflections about the way things are used to be done.

### The questionnaire

A questionnaire geared towards Zuidas office employees was designed to retrieve the information about patterns and schedules of use of public spaces at Zuidas. Before the formulation of the questions, the underlying assumptions were stated and the questions formulated in the way to test these assumptions. The questionnaires were filled out with the inquirer reading the questions to the participants. Most of the questions that would reveal the habits of corporate office workers were put in the form of scenario choices with the possibility to add individual scenarios. None of the respondents made use of the individual blank response. The survey was conducted in English and all respondents were very proficient and talk-active in this foreign language. The survey was done on a sunny but cold and clear November Friday (08-11-2013). It started at 12.45 and within 2 hours time, 13 respondents had completed the questionnaire. At 14.45, the last questionnaire was completed. The average duration of engagement between inquirer and respondent was 9 min. The location, where the respondents were spotted was in front of the World Trade Center lobby on the Zuidplein (n=10) and inside the Zuidas development office (n=3). It is important to mention, that all respondents from the Zuidplein were approached while taking a cigarette break from the office. It is also important to note down the unsuccessfully approached people who refused to participate in the questionnaire (n=7). Many of them said

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<sup>14</sup> Sennett: 1967.

that they had no time and were in a hurry for a) work or b) a train. It was observed and tacitly respected, that there existed certain codes or signals of occupants that indicated avoidance of any public encounter or engagement by solicitors or in this case, an interviewer. Such signs of isolation or renunciation of encounters where the use of mobile devices for both, phoning and browsing, the use of headphones, reading a newspaper or book and engaging in conversations with a separate group. Body language also provided a clue for the (un)willingness to participate in a survey. Fast paced passersby and grim looking business people did evoke a feeling of distance or even arrogance towards others, and signaled that they were somewhat removed from and above the actual situation. By courtesy, on the part of the inquirer, certain people were furthermore not engaged in the questionnaire. These included people eating, people standing in a group and being engaged in a conversation, people carrying heavy luggage, homeless people.

That is the reason why the smokers outside the WTC lobby were the most adequate target group which also showed a willingness to participate in the survey and members of this group were most likely to be working at Zuidas offices. The smokers in front of buildings and in the streets close to the workplaces are a common phenomenon around business districts in general. In most cases offices do not provide designated or articulated interior smoking areas due to a restrictive and discouraging stance towards smoking and its health consequences. Hence, smokers naturally occupy the closest available outside space, mostly main entrances and sometimes withdrawn side entrances. Their presence in bunches is also a point of nuisance and is an example of negative and disturbing aspect of occupation of space. This however, is not the main concern of this report.

## Questionnaire ZUIDAS

### On the way to and from work and lunch time creation

Please circle your answers.

#### 1. Who are you?

STUDENT      EMPLOYED IN AN OFFICE HERE      JUST PASSING THROUGH      RESIDENT  
OTHER \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: 0-25, 25-40, 40-100      MALE      FEMALE

The way to work / university:

2. When are you usually arriving at work/university/school? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How:      CAR      BIKE      OV (BUS, METRO, TRAIN, TRAM)      WALK

#### 4. Which scenario fits to you best?

- a) I usually am under time pressure and in a hurry to get to work / university.
- b) I have flexible work hours so I have no stress in the morning.
- c) I do chores on my way to work such as \_\_\_\_\_.

Lunch Break:

5. When is your lunch break usually? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How much time do you spent on your lunch break? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. Which lunch scenario fits to you best?

- a) I mostly bring my own food from home. ----> take it outside      ----> eat at my desk
- b) I buy it at a convenience store (snack)
- c) I have take away food from a food stall or fast food.
- d) I sit down in a nice restaurant.-----> close to work / university.      ----> in another area.
- e) I visit the canteen/mensa in our building.
- f) Eat at home.

#### 8. Which scenario fits to you best?

- a) I do other activities besides eating during my lunch break such as \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) My lunch break is too short and restrictive to do other things than eating.
- c) I do not take an extensive lunch break in order to go home earlier.
- d) I spent my lunch break together with my colleges/ fellow students.

After Work:

9. When are you usually finishing a day at work / university? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 10. Which closing time scenario fits to you best?

**chores and errands (shopping, services, etc.):**

- a) I try to do most of my errands and chores on my way home. ---> close to Zuidas /Station OR -->
- b) near my home, such as \_\_\_\_\_
- c) I have to take detours to reach all my destinations.
- d) I go home, and go from there.
- e) I don't do errands myself.
- f) I do errands and chores predominately on the weekend.

leisure activities:

- a) I bring all my equipment to work/university and then I go directly from there. ----> close to Zuidas / Station OR -----> near my home
- b) I have to take detours to reach all my destinations.
- c) I do leisure activities predominately on the weekend.

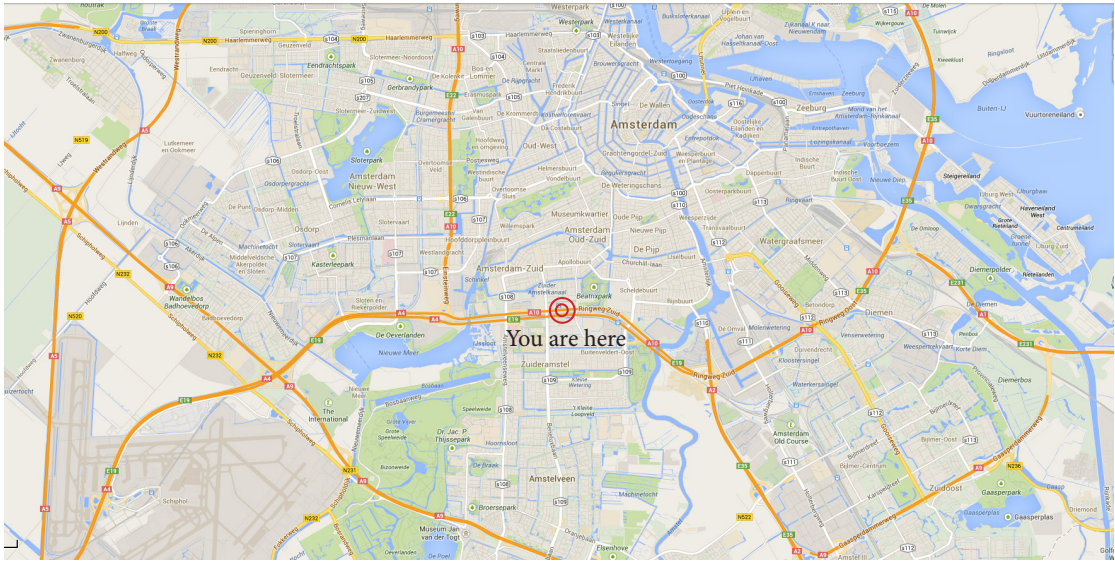
socializing

- a) Mostly with colleagues directly after work near our office / university / workplace.
- b) My social life is separated from work / university.
- c) Mostly on the weekends.

11. Finally True / False

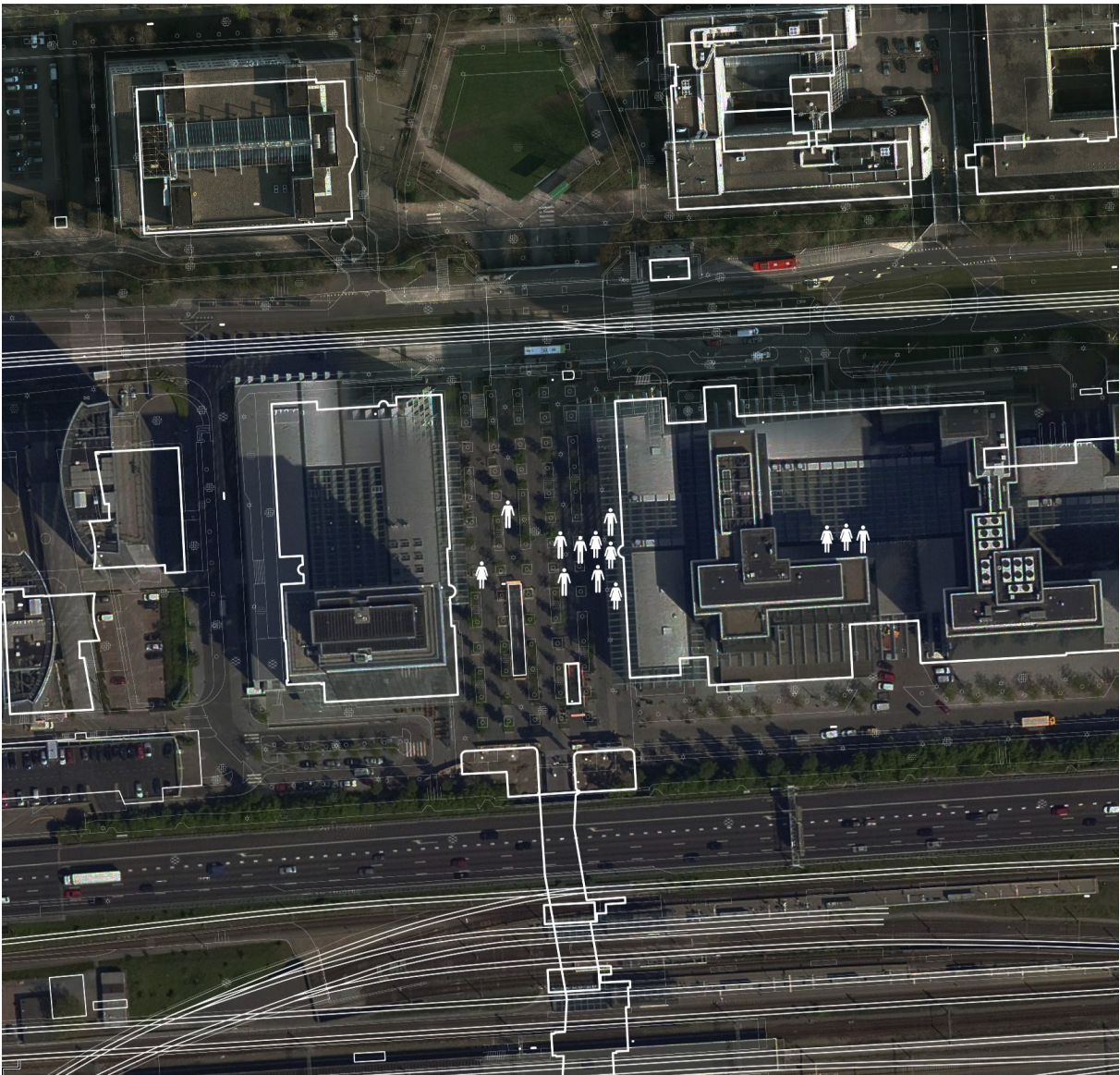
- |      |   |              |
|------|---|--------------|
| 11.1 | Zuidas already satisfies all my demands.  | True / False |
| 11.2 | If the possibilities were there, I would do more of my chores, errands and leisure activities close to my workplace / university. | True / False |
| 11.3 | I do not care much about the environment of my workplace / university.  | True / False |
| 11.4 | Time-efficiency is the most important factor when it comes to chores, errands and leisure.  | True / False |
| 11.5 | Zuidas public space is appealing and reasonable.  | True / False |

12. Please indicate roughly where you live on the map or write down the name of the city:



Thank you very much for your time and patience!





Location of the surveyed respondents.

## Assumptions

As mentioned earlier, assumptions about Zuidas office employees and their usage of public space existed. These blunt assumptions are formed by observation and normative assumptions about a hard-working white collar, post-industrial workforce.

The typical Zuidas office employee would ...

...arrive by car around 9 and have flexible work time so there is no stress in the morning rush hour.

...take quality lunch breaks with colleagues and business partners and take them to one of the restaurants in the plinths of the high-rises or in the WTC lobby.

...not do anything else during the lunch break, since there is a lack of possibilities at Zuidas right now.

...go home at 17.00 and would try to beat the traffic and does chores and leisure activities on the way home.

...be satisfied with the condition, Zuidas is in right now, because most of their livelihood is connected to the home, rather than the workplace.

These assumptions already tend to classify the user-group of the office workers as non beneficial for a diverse, vivid and urban public space due to their strict, channeled agendas and the displacement of significant livelihood aspects into the spheres of their private settlement and dwelling.

In the following main part, the results of the own research are described. 3 results from other research that complement the findings here are mentioned briefly. In a conclusion, a connection to the design project of the urban campus is drawn.

## Results of the questionnaire

### *Who?*

13 participants answered all questions of the questionnaire. More than half of the respondents said they work at an office at Zuidas. The single student in the sample was resting at the Zuidas Zuidplein because he was waiting for his train back to Enschede and he said that his purpose of visiting Amsterdam Zuidas had been a lecture at the nearby Vrije University.

Interestingly, the people that were just visiting or passing through were waiting in front of the lobby of the World Trade Center to meet someone from inside.

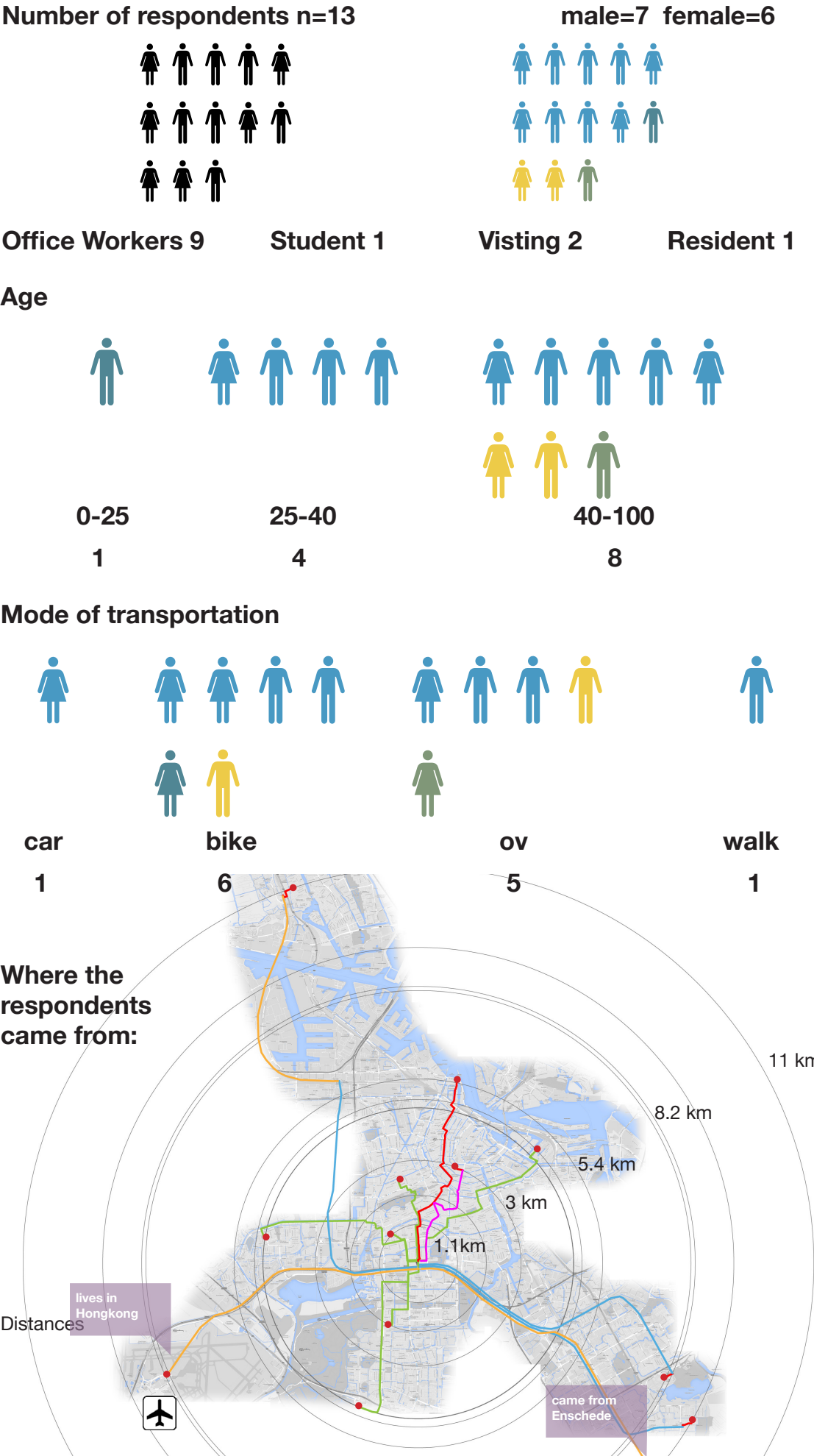
The single resident in the sample was a retired older man who liked to go for a walk in the nearby Beatrix-park and just came by Metro from another quarter south of Amsterdam. He especially was complaining of the construction work that was going on and taking up some of the area of the park.

Most of the participants were older than 40 years old. Most of the people present at that day at Zuidas belonged to that age group. During the time of the surveys (12:45-14:45) another user group made quite an appearance around the Zuidas station. The school children. But they were neither relevant nor available for this research (big peer groups).

### *How did they come to Zuidas?*

Modal Split of the transport movements to Zuidas of the small sample of 13 respondents is almost in line with the overall proportions currently measurable at Zuidas. It is especially worth mentioning the higher average of people that come by bike. (30% higher than Amsterdam City average) The usage of the public transport system is very important for people that live further away from Zuidas (approx. >3.5km) or belong to the older age groups.







I am under time pressure and I am in a hurry to go to work.

4



No stress, I have flexible work time.

8



no answer

1

The daily work schedules of most of the respondents are showing that many are literally following a typical nine-to-five routine. The independent entrepreneur is an exception in the sample since he works the longest of all but also takes the most intensive lunch break. Naturally, the retired person does not possess such a tight schedule but still follows a regular lunch time.

On their route to work in the morning, there is predominantly no stress since most of the people have flexible work schedules (up to a certain degree). However, none of the respondents did other activities such as shopping or hobbies in the morning prior to work.



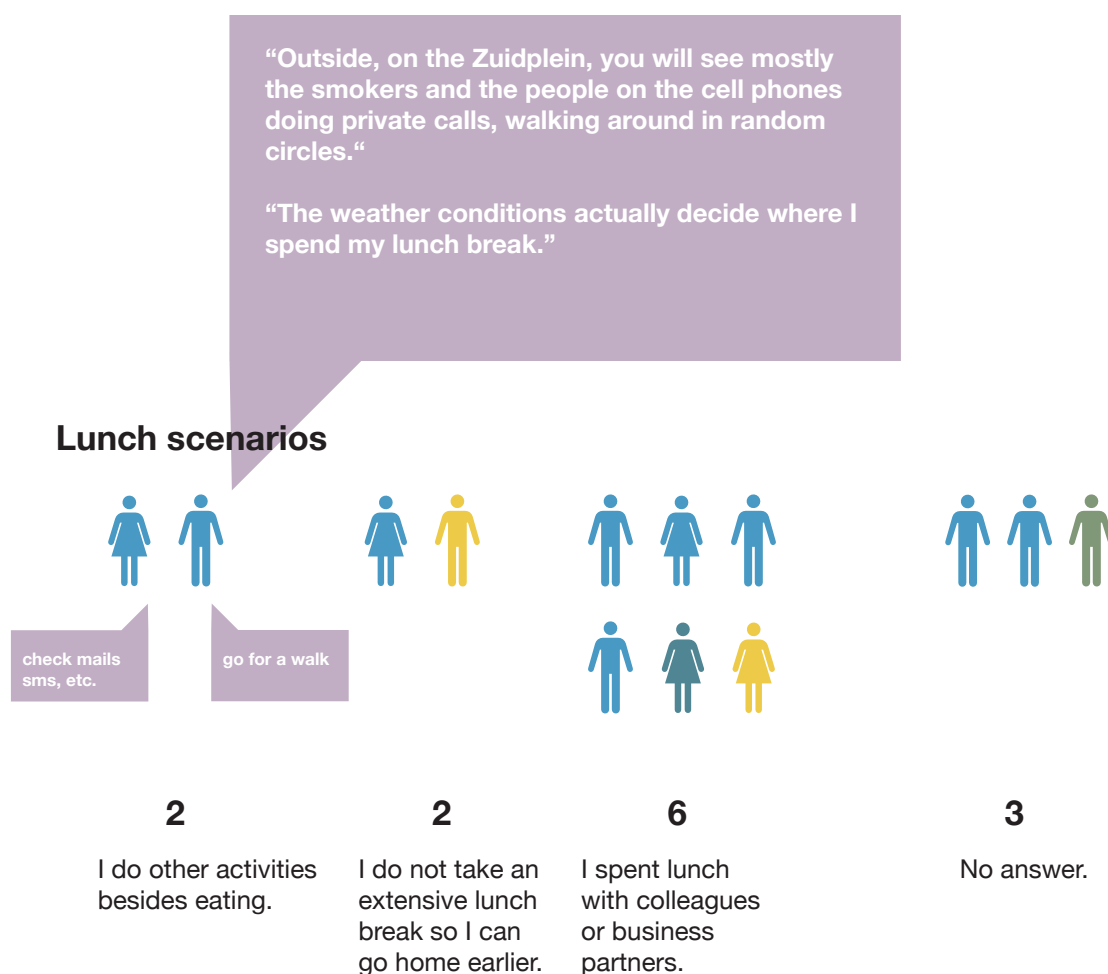
**Lunch scenarios: Statement**



*Lunch break*

Some minor deviations occur, especially when it comes to duration and time of the lunch breaks. The average length of a lunch break is 38min with the shortest lunches starting with only 15min and the more extensive ones lasting for 60-90 minutes. This also explains, why not much activities happen during these short lunch breaks. Most respondents bring home cooked food to the office and also actually eat it inside the offices. Unexpectedly this might also have economical reasons.

One respondent lives close enough to Zuidas, so that it is possible to eat at home. The other home eater is the retired person.



The lunch scenarios show, that most of the respondents spent lunch breaks together with colleagues. Mostly the weather conditions determine if people spent time outside. Even though it was only mentioned once, checking private communications seems to be a common off-time activity as well, besides smoking.

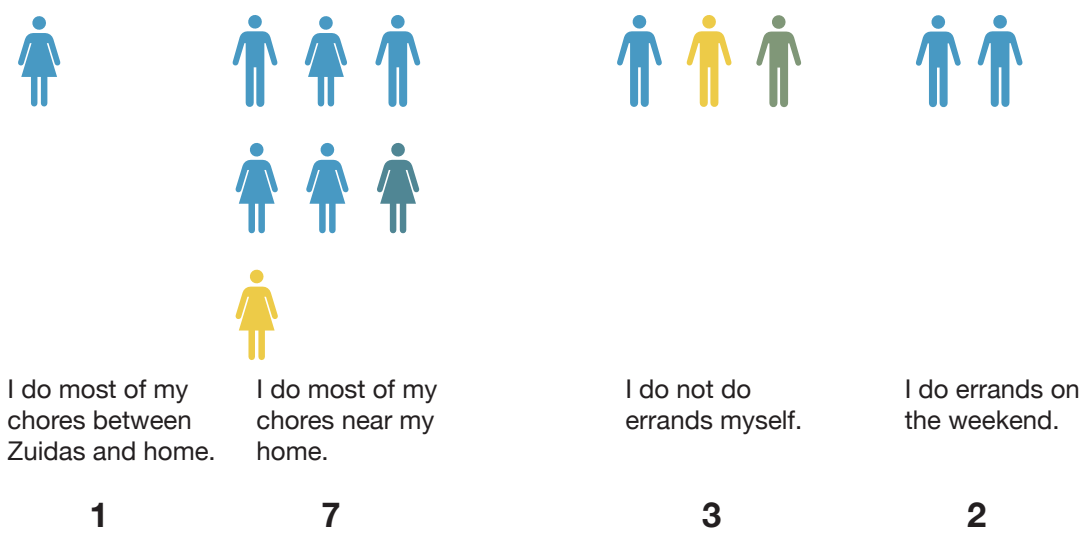
### *On the way home*

One would guess that now, it is the time for some activities to happen, right after work and possibly close to the actual workspace.

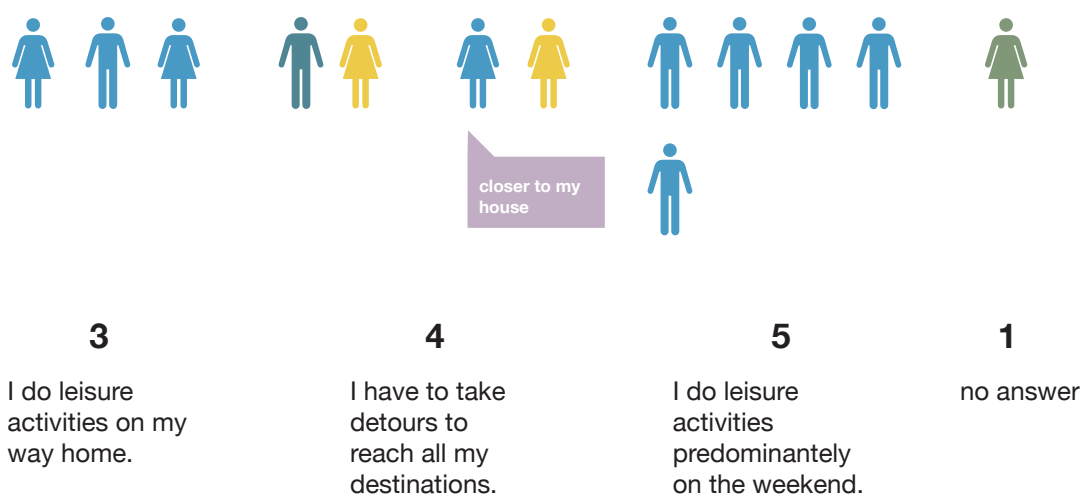
### *Chores:*

When it comes to shopping and chores in general, the respondents prefer to take care of them from the home base. All destinations are reached departing yet another time from home after arrival from work and are closely situated to the home. It is also interesting that a small part of the respondents does not have to take care of any chores themselves.

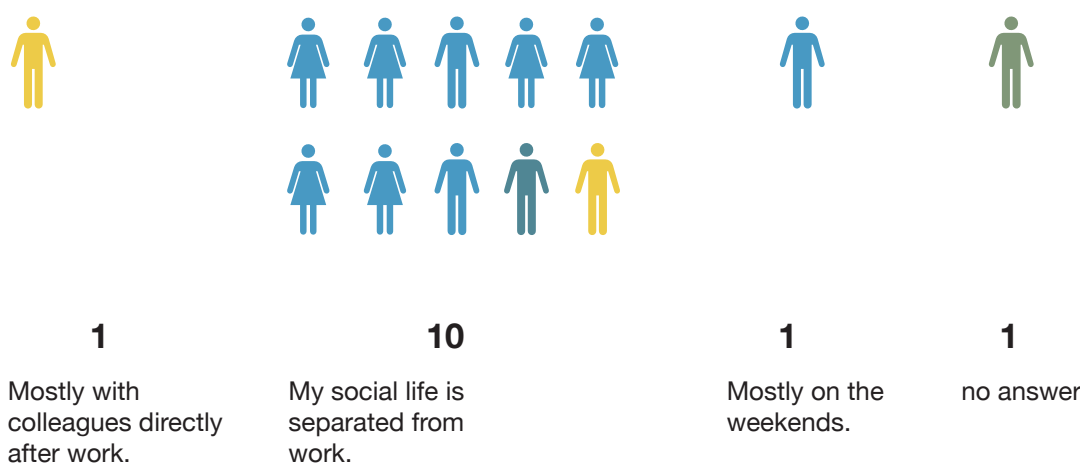
On the way home: Chores and errands



On the way home: Leisure activities



On the way home: Socializing



True / False statements:

Zuidas already satisfies all my demands.

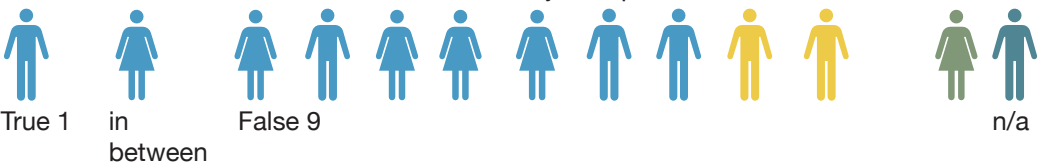


“No, I would not do anything here, because it would probably be too expensive for me. I rather go back to Zaandam, because everything is cheaper there and I live there.”

I would do more of my chores, errands and leisure activities at Zuidas if it were possible...



I do not care much about the environment of my workplace.



Zuidas public space is appealing and reasonable.



Time-efficiency is the most important factor when it comes to chores, errands and leisure.



*Leisure:*

Compared to most of the average chores, leisure activities are likely to happen less frequently and even irregularly. That is also visible in the answers of the Zuidas people. Leisure time is clearly separated from the weekday which is dedicated to working and most of the chores. Leisure activities are something special so that people tend to invest much more effort into reaching the destinations. Furthermore, the availability of everyone's special leisure facilities might not be as good as that for doing chores. 3 respondents actually plan to take the equipment with them to work in order to reach the leisure destination, with great time efficiency, directly from work.

*Socializing:*

Almost all Zuidas office workers strictly separate their professional and private lives. Only one respondent mentioned that socializing was common among colleagues and after hours would be spent at the Zuidas location.

*True and False statements assessment*

These striking true and false statement questions were intended to elicit the user's stance towards their own working environment and the facilities it had ready for them.

Even though most respondents agreed that the current condition Zuidas is in does not satisfy all the demands that they placed on a fully fledged urban center, they thought that they would probably not use added functions, program or facilities at the Zuidas, if it were introduced, anyway. A younger female respondent working in the actual office concerned with the marketing of the Zuidas image revealed that for her personally, the Zuidas amenities were not in her price range.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents naturally insisted that they would care about the spacial qualities of their work place environment and rated it to be appealing and reasonable.

A draw was polled at the last question. Here the respondents were asked to decide whether they valued time-efficiency in doing chores, errands, leisure and socializing, over other factors such as quality of space, service provided, etc.

## **Relation to other research conducted in the seminar**

Briefly, results from related research is mentioned.

Mitchel Verkuijlen, who is interested in the distinct relationship between ABN Amro employees and the outside public spaces concludes, that there is only limited use of the Mahlerplein due to its inhospitable design. He also observed, that public space is mainly used during lunch time, but that there are competing internal facilities inside the ABN Amro building such as a canteen and places to sit and work that attract the ABN Amro employees rather than the actual public spaces. ABN Amro building thus can be seen as an internalizing self-sufficient system of workplaces and places to meet and gather, but only for its own employees and clients, forming a sort of counter-public space.

In the conclusion of K.H. Chung's research about the user's preferences for a future design of a public interior for the Mahlerplein, he draws our attention to the need for a climate shelter, most preferably in the form of a pavilion or as an extension of existing buildings. He also found out, that right now, usage of the public spaces is brief and restricted to only a limited range of different user-groups.

How different and diametrically opposed different user groups can be, shows the research of Anna Dolcetta Capuzzo about students. Contrasting the own findings of the Zuidas office employees, she comes to the conclusion that students think about their university environment and the way to socialize and use public spaces for it very differently. Own research revealed that Zuidas office employees preferred to leave their work place environment as soon and quickly as possible and that they had their places of significant meaning elsewhere (near the home community). The conclusion made by Capuzzo states that students are socializing with each other and also use facilities close and in direct relation to the university to do so. Then they disperse into their homes.

Jing He's research makes a case that one solution to bring more life to Zuidas public spaces is the introduction of touristic points of interest.

All research conclusions identify the need for addition of elements following the positive axioms 1-5 and resolution of negative axioms 6-10.



## Conclusions

The heart of Zuidas, Mahlerplein and Zuidplein, is dominated by the people who work there. These people are most likely belonging to firms that operate in the top financial- and law sector. Most of the firms are internationally oriented. It lies in the intrinsic characteristics of corporate staff and corporate culture, that it imposes a very strong atmosphere upon the public spaces in which it is located. Possible strains include visual dominance, monotony, superficiality, and impersonality, that not only emanate from the corporate architecture but also from the members of this user group. The potential for a welcoming, successful and inclusive public space under this dominant user group is only possible when this dominance is mitigated by fostering presence and appearance of other user groups. Promising potentials are already offered by the multitude of future residents, students and visitors coming to Zuidas without extra effort or attraction. As for now, working schedules are very similar and thus create peak and rush hours of intensive use and on the contrary periods of under-use. Significant periods of notorious under-use are the late evenings and nights as well as the weekends. Here, different user groups with different daily schedules and varying agendas and degrees of presence in the streets and squares can help to bring life to Zuidas more consistently.

The office crowd is only significantly visible on the streets during the three time windows of a regular work day - arriving in the morning, during lunch and at the end of the work day. All of these time windows have their specific atmospheres and characters. Little activities happen in the early morning when people arrive at work. Even though more than half of the respondents do not have to rush to work in a hurry, they would not consider this a good time to do other things. For now, the lunch breaks at Zuidas are short and the majority of respondents stays in the office. It is not very clear, from the results, to say that office workers would change their habits, if further functions and program is just simply provided in the Zuidas area. Most respondents were relatively indifferent about the capacities of Zuidas.

The user group of the office people alone cannot create a successful urban environment. Other user groups have to be nested in Zuidas.

One reason for this is, that people who work at a certain place have established areas of personal significance and social poles that are not congruent with their workplace environment. These "life centers" are more closely associated with the area of the home rather than with the Zuidas. They simply do not appropriate or identify with their work environment.

For them, it is just a work environment. Here we see how important the residential mix will become in the future of Zuidas in order to create these centers of everyday life in welcoming urban public spaces.

The results of the questionnaire have provided implications for design strategies that have already been formulated in the Axioms mentioned earlier. In general, successful public spaces are capable of negotiating between different user groups various needs and desires and are enabling co-existence, meaning and purpose that is collectively experienced.

## **Design Direction Urban Innovation Campus**

Following the tenor of negative axioms 6-10, as well as the conclusions of the other research results, Boomgaard correctly asserts, "until now, everything in the area has been attuned to use, adapted to the interests of particular parties; there is no room for the disruptive element, the individual factor."<sup>15</sup> The prevalent organization of vertically stacked offices, departments and firms in high-rise buildings has removed the user from the actual streets, squares and parks. The existing framework of streets and pedestrian areas is not what Visser thinks it should be: "a framework for the element of chance."<sup>16</sup> Ergonomically, the Zuidas does not meet Gehl's various definitions of good "Cities for people".<sup>17</sup> Everything seems to be too big and too vast.

In order to improve both, the built environment and a broader user occupation, Zoonneveld believes that "more is needed than simply a mix of housing, culture and commerce."<sup>18</sup>

We have analyzed the stiffness and rigidity of the corporate working schedule and its detrimental effects on the occupation of the Zuidas public spaces. We accept the realities present at Zuidas, that no matter what happens the business aspect will remain the dominating factor literally overshadowing the streets, squares and parks of Zuidas. We have identified the need for other user groups such as students, residents and visitors to be allowed to take over parts of the public space in Zuidas in close relation to the corporate culture.

A public interior in the area of the elevated Strawinskylaan should therefore be developed. Zoonneveld confirms that "linking of offices to knowledge institutions such as universities and cultural facilities allows functions to complement one another, and there is a greater likelihood that the area will remain attractive as a location for the long term."<sup>19</sup> The

<sup>15</sup> Boomgaard 2008: 23.

<sup>16</sup> Visser 2008: 38.

<sup>17</sup> Gehl 2010.

<sup>18</sup> Zoonneveld 2008: 52.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.: 57.

campus will replace the embankment and the elevated Strawinskylaan over its entire length thus creating a communicative landscape with pavilions and courtyards. This environment should offer public interior and exterior spaces as “broedplaatsen” for new ideas and new ways of collaboration, communication and presentation. The project is supposed to create interesting relationships between different user groups using this linear public interior in different kinds of ways. It will offer individual work space settings and arrangements for people to choose; it will offer supplementary shops and places to get food and drinks, and it will offer interesting opportunities to just hang out and watch and observe others presenting their work and ideas in both, exhibitions and presentations. The public green spaces, conceived as gardens, create peaceful and quiet areas of retreat between the pavilions and some studio and presentation spaces open up strong spatial relationships with these gardens. Visitors are welcomed to just pass through on their regular way to and from the station or the Zuidplein or to become a part of the collective experience of working, studying and producing in an exposed public setting.

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as well as research from other students in the seminar

## Illustration

Fig. 1: Dahl 2010: 23.

Other graphic materials are own illustrations.

# Reflection

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**New directions in the public interior**



**Reflection on Graduation project P4/P5**  
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**Studio: AR4AI120 The Architecture of the Interior**

Thesis Project: Innovation Campus Zuidas as new public interiors

Site: Amsterdam Zuidas

Reflections:

The matter of public interiors and the dynamics of public spaces in general is complex and difficult. A myriad of conceptualizations and definitions about successful public spaces is existing. Maybe the word "successful" is even contestable since it implies a certain authority that defines the meaning of this success through which public spaces often are becoming means to a devised economical end. The word successful, since it needs further clarification, should be replaced by the term appropriate. Being appropriate already implies the relationship and adaptation to outside - contextual - demands, and an attempt to understand heterogeneous, complex situations. In my opinion the contextual response to the existing location and its more or less manifest problems is the most important mean to design appropriate architectural solutions.

The research that tried to accompany and inform the design decisions was focused on the sociological aspects of public spaces and its multiple user-groups. The goal of the research was to find out how and to what extent the public spaces at Amsterdam Zuidas are used by the most dominant user group, the office employees. The results of this user based inquiry were supposed to provide clues for an appropriate programmatic suggestion. However, the conclusion of this research and observation showed a large degree of indifference towards the performance of the Zuidas public spaces and confirmed its rather dull image of a generic, adequate CBD that was not fully using its dormant potentials. This led to the decision to look for other contextual strengths and possibilities. Even though a variety of different educational facilities can be found around the Zuidas agglomeration ranging from elementary schools to an entire university campus there is no appropriate environment for this utterly dynamic and spirited user group consisting of pupils, parents, students, graduates, staff, researchers, etc. Instead, this potentially vital user group is trapped between and channeled through a generic corporate environment that consists of repellent high-rise buildings, impersonal plazas, empty and windy squares, semi-private lobbies and fancy, expensive restaurants, before being dispensed into the regime of the Dutch railway station outfit. From this contextual circumstance of the seemingly indifferent office employees and the neglected needs of students from different adjacent educational facilities came the idea to dedicate a public interior to educational purposes where an environment for learning, study, work, production, innovation, communication and



performance is placed directly into the existing realm of business and infrastructural Zuidas, thus contributing to its diversity.

The dedication of a public interior to educational purposes immediately rises the question of the type and distinctive functions of the project. It is not a library but it works similarly in the sense that it provides a place apart from home or work, where people can choose between different learning environments and degrees of seclusion. It is not a museum, a static collection of artifacts, but it exhibits the verve of an upcoming generation and their ideas. It is not a theatre, but everyone who enters will play a more or less active or passive part in the interplay of "to see and to be seen". And finally, it is not a shopping mall, a place of consumption. Instead, it is a place where culture is generated, where new ideas and innovative start-up firms can grow literally in the shadows of the established tertiary sector.

In contrast to the sociological user-based research, which motivated the decision to design a public interior dedicated to education and self-realization and improvement, the different case studies of historical public interiors revealed the architectural implications for such a prominent public building task. The most important aspects for the design of the Zuidas Innovation Centre, which replaces the elevated secondary street called "Strawinskylaan", were concerned with the treatment of the ground and the ceiling in between which the public interior develops as a multi-layered system of different levels, communication pits, courtyards and mezzanines. The ease of access to this elevated and somewhat withdrawn Arcadian environment and an intelligible spatial concept in which all working and presentation spaces are staged and visible from the circulation datum plane help to create an open linear campus which is separated into 5 units by exterior gardens. The main idea was to create tension between the animated, inhabited ground planes and the strict grid of the continuous roof structure which keeps everything together and creates a universal condition within the linear environment.

The projects proposed by Frank van Klingereren such as de Meerpaal (1965) and t ' Karregat (1970) showed interesting examples of how all kinds of functions could be fused together in a large public interior shed or container with a minimum of articulated separating elements. This concept however did not prove to be practical throughout the life-span of the buildings and alterations soon destroyed the original intention of the designs as open public spaces. With this in mind it was very important for my own design to have a way to create soft boundaries and thresholds as well as different hierarchies for the different zones within the Innovation Centre and their requirements towards sound insulation, climate and use of natural daylight. The precedent projects by van Klingereren thus can be seen as valuable experiments that show how far apart the architect's intentions and the reality of use and function can be. Fun Palace (1960) by Cedric Price, even though it was not realized probably due to its

revolutionary approach to conceptualize an enfranchised populace using a building like a machine for all kinds of undetermined activities (most of them probably educational), is another related project which helps to understand better the direction for the new public interior that I want to advocate with my graduation project:

A public interior which is freed from its usual dependence on consumerism and infrastructure and that creates a framework to foster and stage meaningful exchange between its various users.

# **Appendix**

Site Analysis

Preliminary designs and approach to prospective site

Analysis of Atocha Station, Madrid

Analysis of Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milan





Stratification - Segmentation - Layering:  
Different levels with different types of means of transportation enable collision-free crossings and help to give intimacy and organization to a vast space; however, they automatically create undesirable spaces that lack proper lighting and that are difficult to inspect.



Temporarily out of use...  
An unfavorable situation, exposure to the elements and no shelter whatsoever allows only for a limited acceptance and thus usage for these benches.  
Whenever environmental conditions such as winds and the amount of sunshine is good, these benches will be used mostly during the lunch break but stay vacant during most of the day.

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# Workshop III: site strategies

## Site Selection: Places, Terrain, Domain

Webster's Definition **Terrain**:  
land of a particular kind /// a geographic area: a piece of land: ground /// the physical features of a tract of land

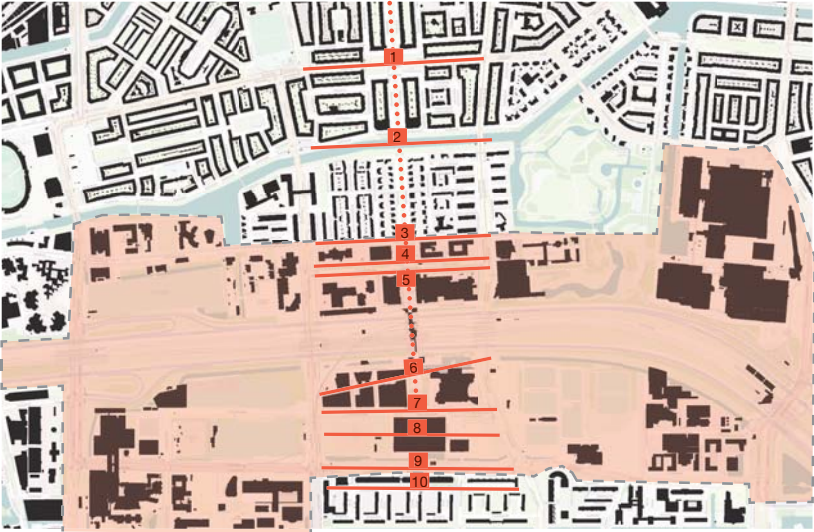
Webster's Definition **Domain**:  
the land that a ruler or a government controls /// an area of knowledge or activity

Webster's Definition **Site**:  
the place where something (such as a building) is, was, or will be located /// a place where something important has happened  
///a place that is used for a particular activity

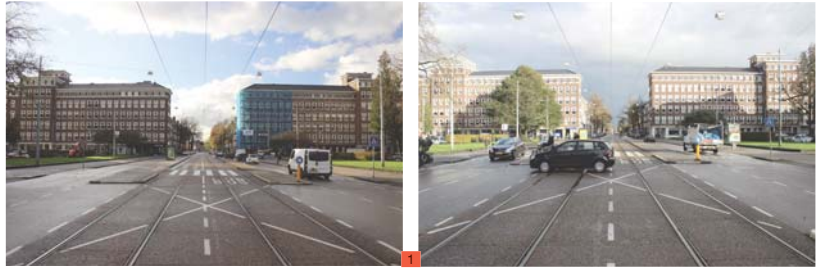
**Zuidas Sequence**

Looking at the urban grain plan, a sequence of different spacial treatments and planning directives of the sites and the terrains can be observed.

On a promenade along the prominent and centered Minerva-Axis, the city fabric is dissected by photographing the streets that run perpendicular to this spine of the Zuidas business district. Eventually this Minervalaan axis turns into the Zuidplein, Mahlerplein and finally Gershwinplein and abruptly ends at the border of the Zuidas development when it is confronted with the wall-like slabs of the apartment houses from the 1960-ties.



Indication of Minerva-Axis and the sequence of photographs taken from the axis in two directions.  
Red area = Zuidas strategic development area



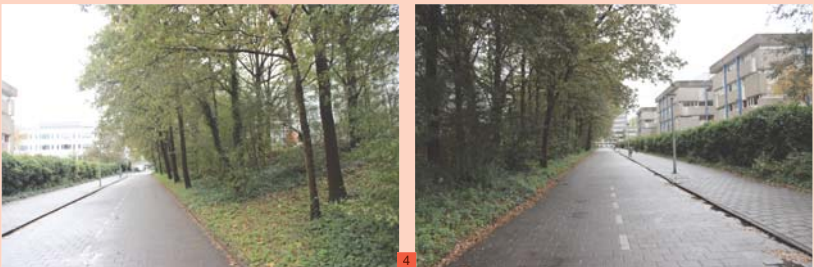
Terrain: urban, residential, through fare street  
Domain: residents, shoppers, visitors  
Site: housing blocks of the same kind, coherent appearance, geometrical pattern of blocks and open spaces



Terrain: waterfront  
Domain: leisure, recreation, pedestrians, bicyclists  
Site: vegetation, lawn



Terrain: suburban, residential secondary street  
Domain: residents, school children, office workers, departing and arriving slow traffic  
Site: low row houses and individual villas, medium sized commercial buildings



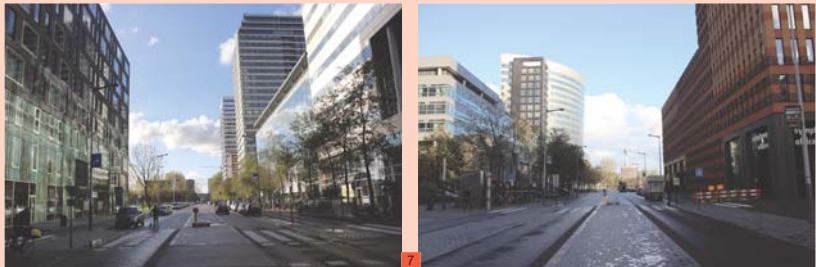
Terrain: circulation channel  
Domain: bicyclists, pedestrians (no man's land)  
Site: elevated road, green embankment, hedges



Terrain: circulation channel  
Domain: motorists, public transportation, no pedestrian, (no man's land)  
Site: intermediary zone between low rise and high rise office towers.



Terrain: square  
Domain: office workers, visitors, clients some residents, pedestrian and bicyclists  
Site: vast square between high rise buildings on front of station



Terrain: pseudo metropolitan street  
Domain: office workers in their car, supply traffic  
Site: secondary street within high rise development



Terrain: square  
Domain: residents, shoppers, customers, clients, pedestrian  
Site: empty, withdrawn square with waterfront



Terrain: circulation channel  
Domain: motorized traffic, bicyclists  
Site: bordered by body of water and housing slab



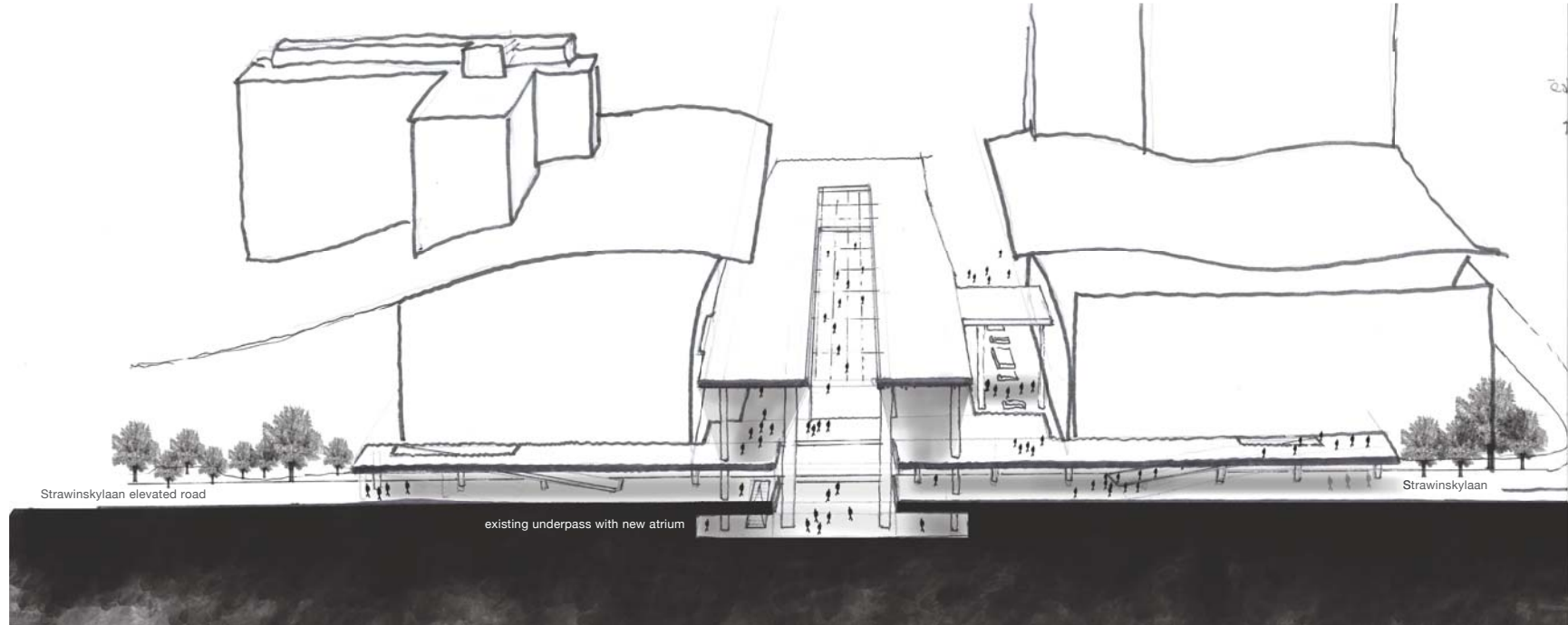
Terrain: suburban secondary street  
Domain: residents, pedestrian  
Site: enclosed, residential area with in between green areas



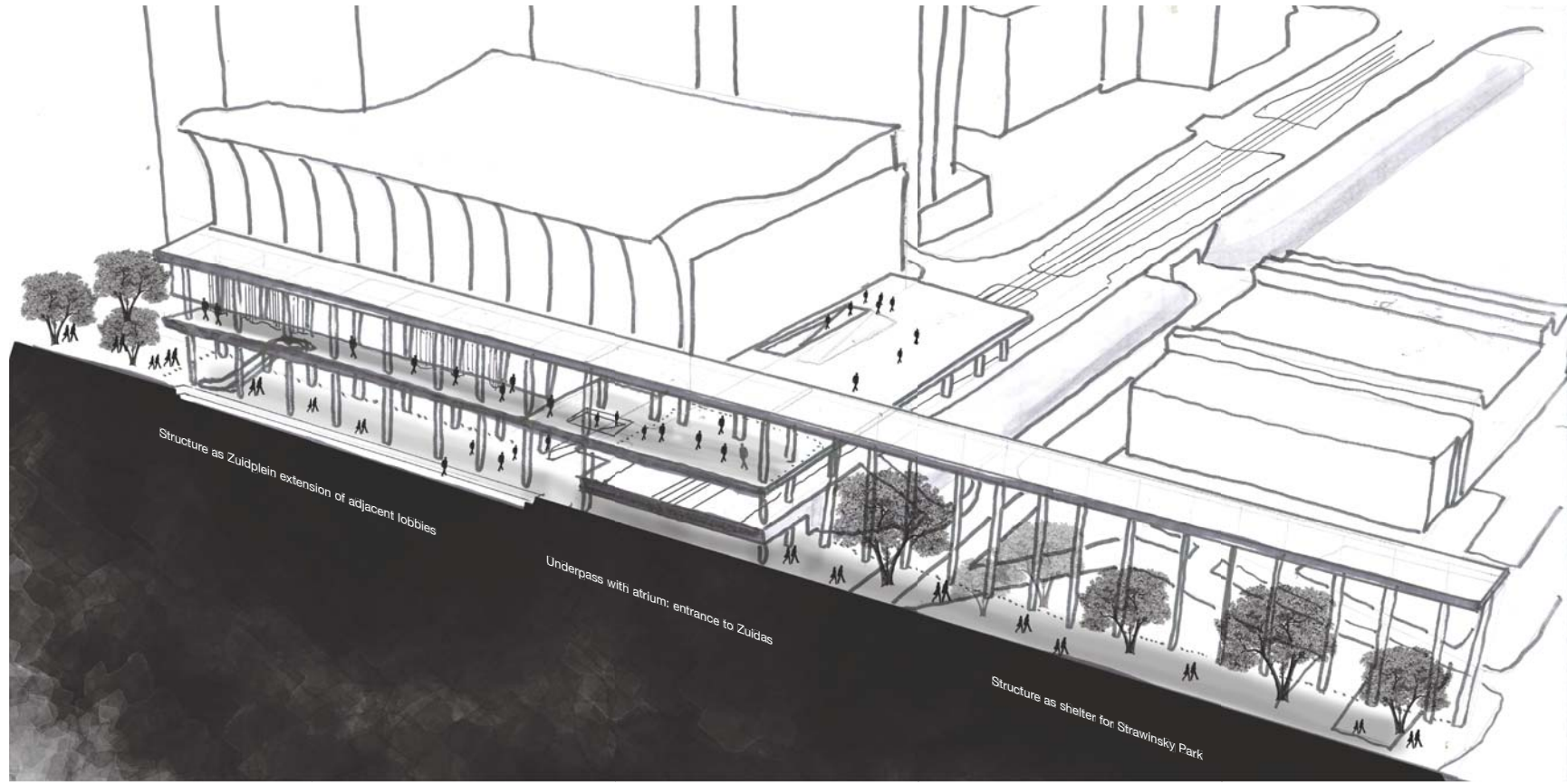


# Workshop III: Site strategies

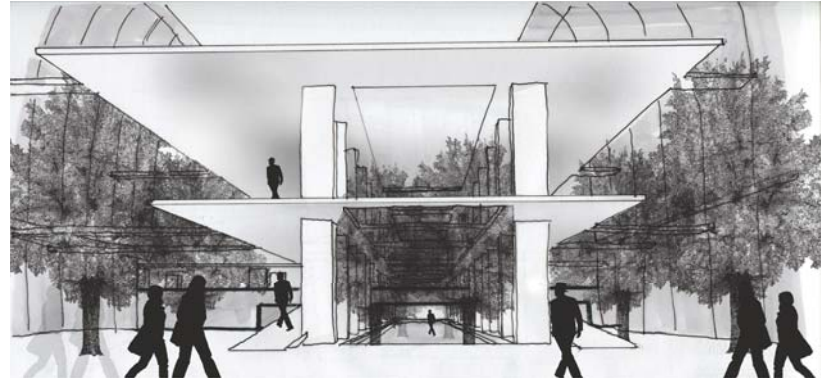
## Fringes, The Container: Space, Shelter, Structure



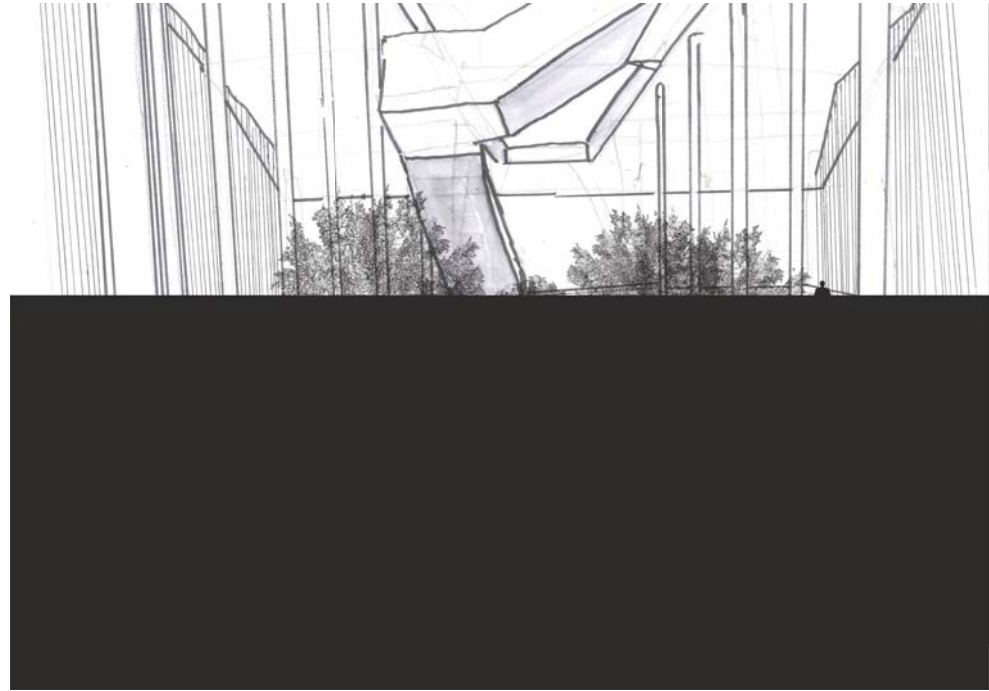
Intersection at Minerva axis and the Strawinskylaan. Longitudinal section of Strawinskylaan as fringe.



Intersection at Minerva axis and the Strawinskylaan. Cross section of Strawinskylaan as fringe.



Perspective view approaching from the train station.



Perspective view inside the container, atrium

### Container

Structure as an all encompassing container of interior and exterior space. It covers trees, streets, parks, benches and could accommodate a bike shelter or other related functions.

Levels are connected by ramps, stairs, escalators and elevators. They have different allegiances towards their relating layer of the city. (The square, the park, the street and the sky)

The structure makes diversification of different spaces with different atmospheres and possible but at the same time assures cohesion as a whole. It introduces a certain degree of hierarchy of spaces.

Atria along the entire length of the structure are creating different spaces, with different daylight situations. There is only a vague differentiation between truly interior sheltered space and the space that is exposed to the elements. The sheltering structure is regarded as an extension of the semi-private cooperate lobbies of the World trade center. It serves as a transition zone between the Zuidas development and the existing city quarter north from it. Public life and public interiors can never be successful without a programme or function. In this regard, the container solution creates vast and generous spaces, where all kinds of functions and programming can be plugged in, to accommodate the needs of the visitors. Here, it transforms or modulates its users, some examples of these transformations are the following: biker - pedestrian, office worker - leisure man/women, resident - passenger, passing trough- resting, car - public transport, consuming - creating, etc....

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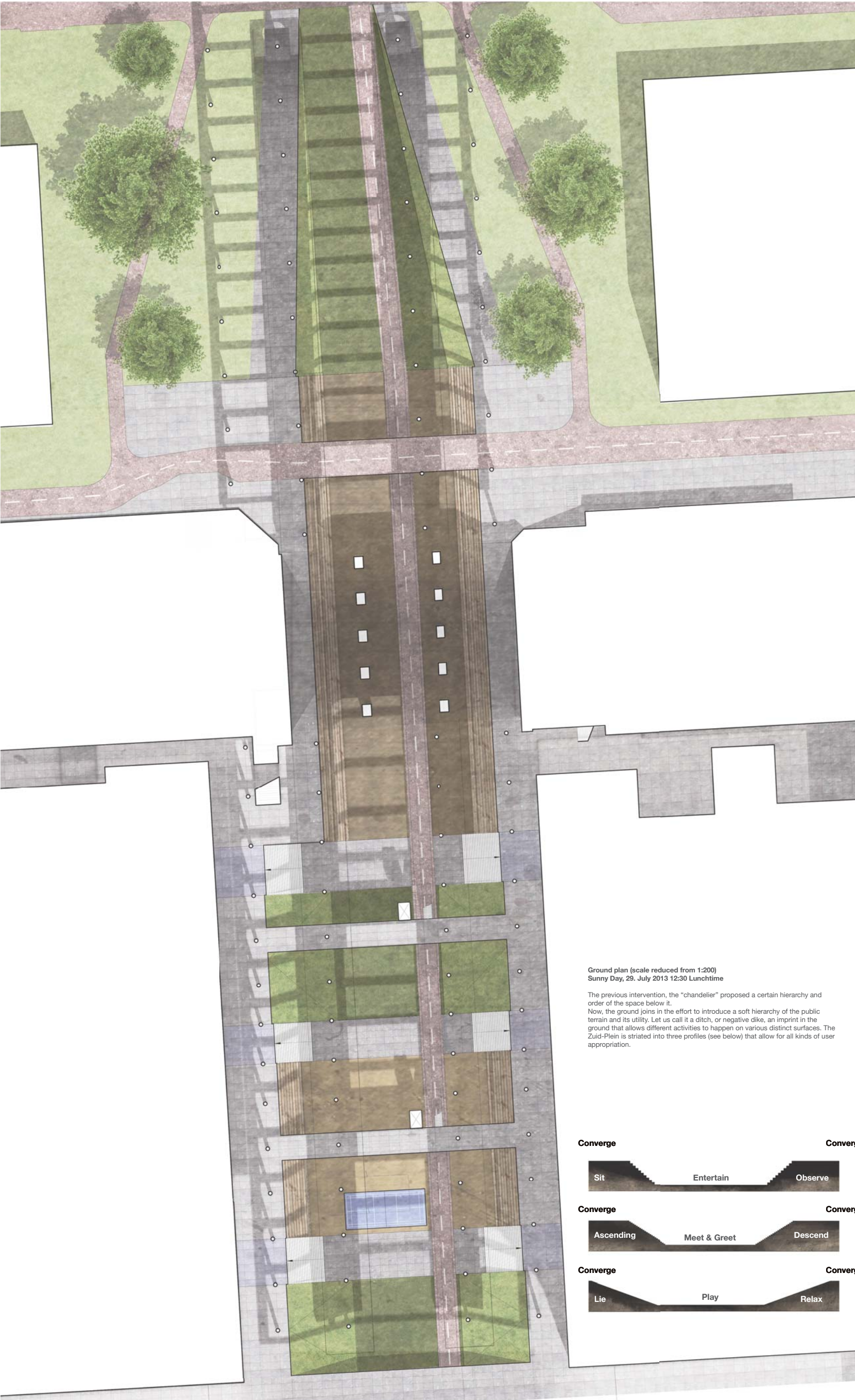






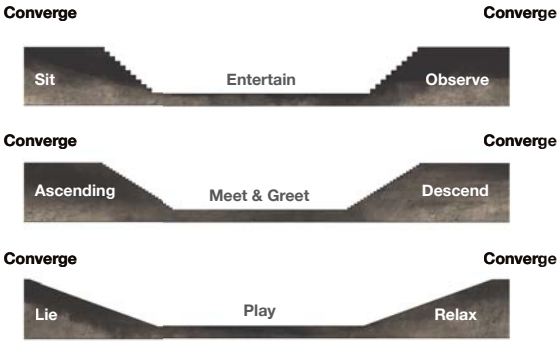
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Ground plan (scale reduced from 1:200)  
Sunny Day, 29. July 2013 12:30 Lunchtime

The previous intervention, the "chandelier" proposed a certain hierarchy and order of the space below it.  
Now, the ground joins in the effort to introduce a soft hierarchy of the public terrain and its utility. Let us call it a ditch, or negative dike, an imprint in the ground that allows different activities to happen on various distinct surfaces. The Zuid-Plein is striated into three profiles (see below) that allow for all kinds of user appropriation.



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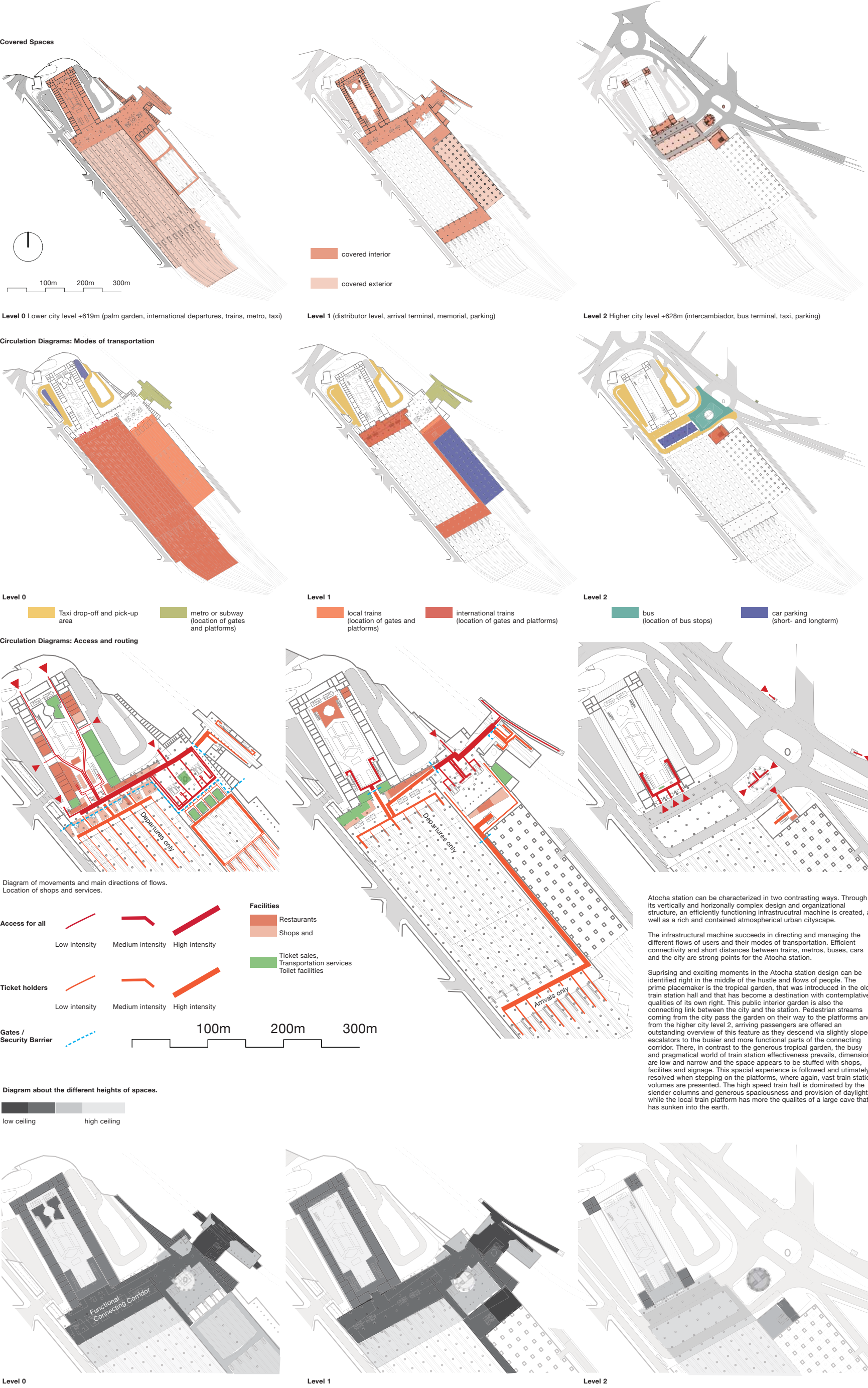
The Container: perspective view

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# Workshop II: Train Stations

## Estación Atocha, Madrid: Functional Organization



Immanuel Tashiro, Jilles van Eibergen Santhagens, Marleen Klompenhouwer  
MSc3 Graduation studio AR3AI045 New directions in the public interior





# Workshop I: Large public spaces

## Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II, Milano



### 1 Different Galleries Compared

Placing the Galleria within the context of the typology of gallery or urban passage. Comparisons in plan and section.

### 2 Urban Context / Floor Qualities

The galleria is located in the heart of Milan. Its main portal, the triumphal arch, faces the Piazza Duomo and finds its monumental counterpart in the cathedral. The galleria finds itself embedded in a system of public squares, pedestrian streets and arcades, the latter being a typical Milanese urban motif. A lot of detail and refinement lies in the quality of the different pavements and floor materials. On squares, large stone formats of granite and marble, laid in patterns, prevail where as in the arcades mostly colorful marble stones are used. Gradually the quality of the flooring material becomes more valuable and precious, culminating in the marble mosaic floor inside the galleria. The mosaic with its coat of arms and geometric patterns looks much like a carpet on which the visitors humbly stroll.

### 3 Interior Environment

Glazed ceiling diffuses direct sunlight, giving a sense of northern light. The subtler lighting corresponds with more intricate ornamentation of interior facades compared to the exterior. The iconography shows the galleria's world ambition, a place that sees itself as central in civilization. The artificial light resembles street lighting, emphasizing the sense of the ideal city.

### 4 Construction/program

The two intersecting streets of the arcade make a cruciform plan with a domed octagon at the center. The streets are covered by iron ornamented beams and the center is covered by an iron dome structure. Both these structures are covered by very translucent glass. With the height of the structure and the use of the glass, it's made the Galleria very bright. It's like walking through a normal uncovered street, because the daylight that's come in and the sky that you can see through the glass. Further there are very smart openings in the arcade and dome roof, where the natural ventilation can come inside the Galleria.

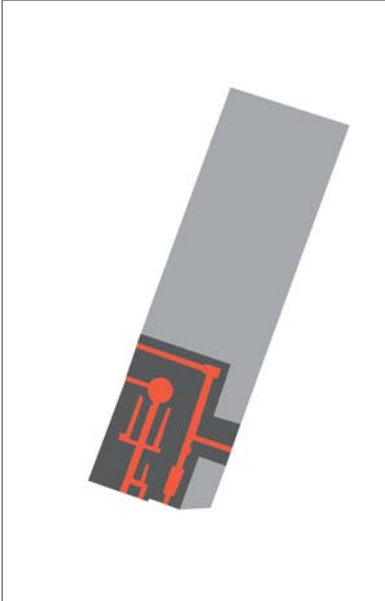
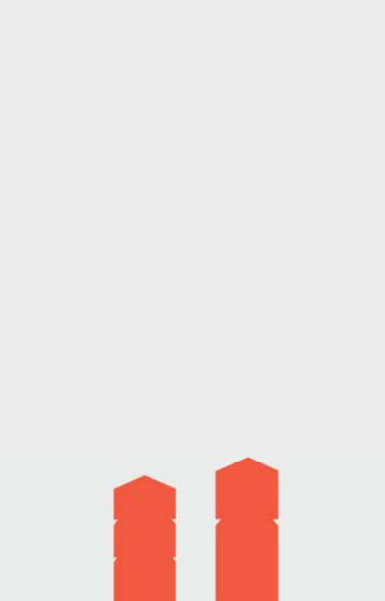


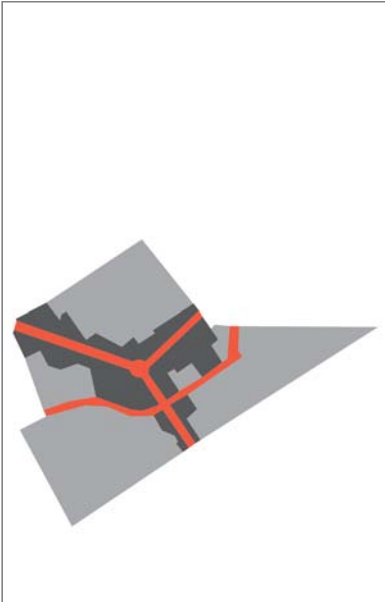
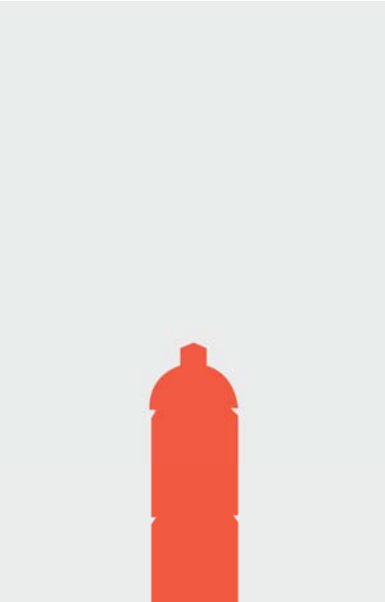








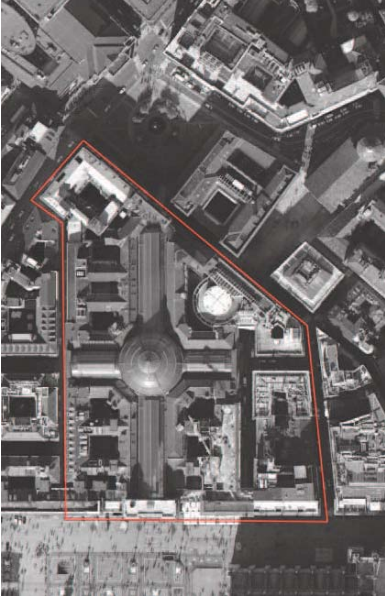

### 5 Images

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# Workshop I: Large publicspaces

## Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II, Milano

Building block with gallery	Section of the gallery	Situation in the city	Photo of the gallery
 <p>Gallerie Colbert / Vivienne in Paris, France Built in 1825</p>			
 <p>Passage in Den Haag, The Netherlands Built in 1885</p>			
 <p>Gallerie St. Hubert in Brussels, Belgium Built in 1847</p>			
 <p>Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, Italy Built in 1877</p>			

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# Workshop I: Large public spaces

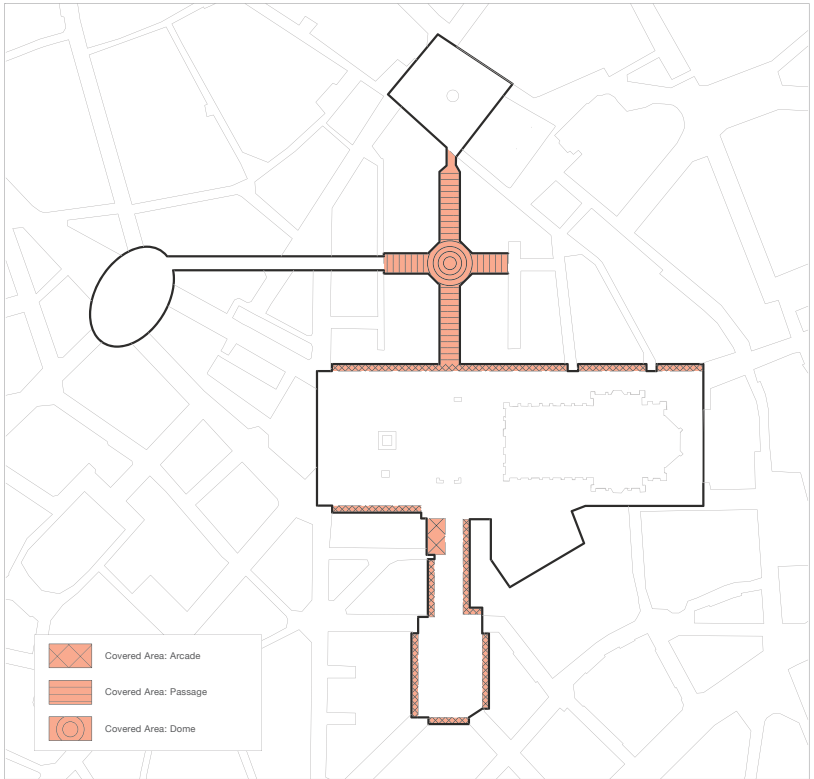
## Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, Milano



Urban Kontext: Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. Squares



Urban Kontext: Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. Pedestrian Areas



Urban Kontext: Indication of covered areas along the axis of the passage and the square of the cathedral.



1 Transition between arcade and street



2 Transition between street, arcade and passage



3 Direction difference in paving patterns according to main axis of passage



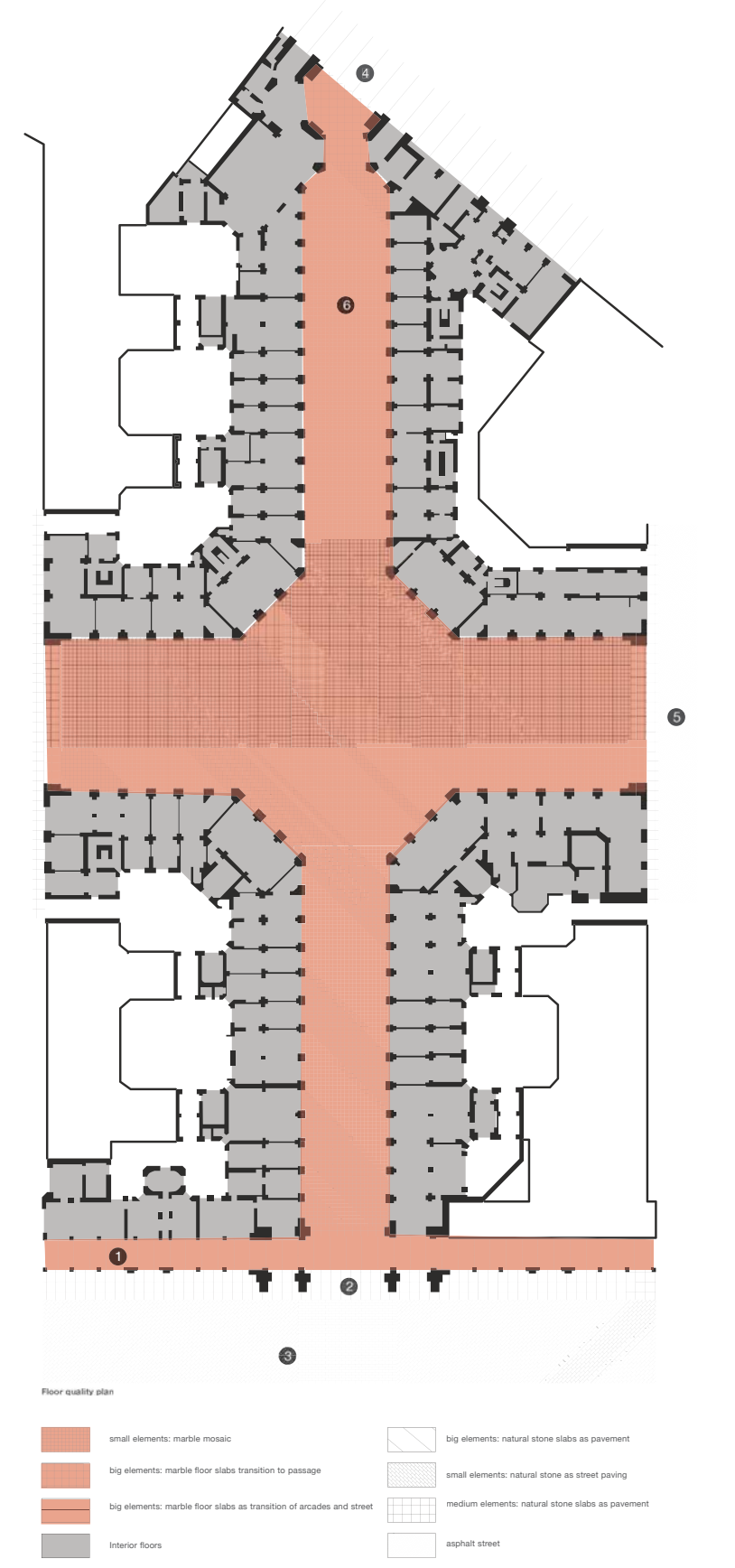
4 Distinction between inside and outside floor surface in terms of quality and sizes of material



5 Abrupt change of flooring materials at the side entrances



6 Refined quality of the marble mosaic creates carpet-like floor surface



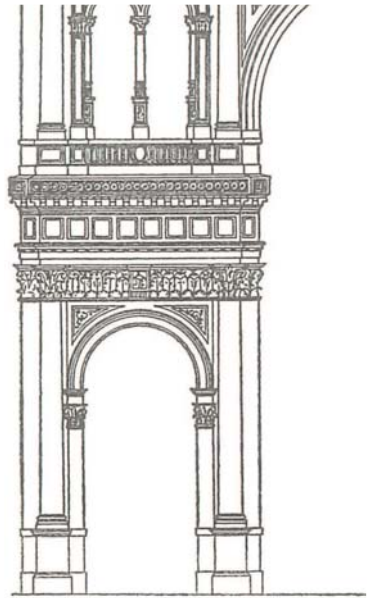
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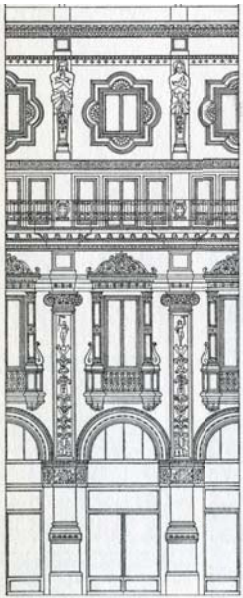


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Entry Archway



Interior facade

"One observes in the design of the [interior] facades a certain sculpted quality which seems to correspond to the filtering of the light through glass and which differs from the solidity of the exterior facades" – Geist, p.394



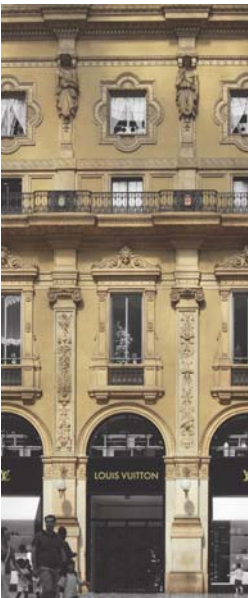
Exterior facade

Fifth story undecorated square windows

Fourth story separate balconies

Third story windows with bold geometric framing, continuous balcony

First and second stories Freestanding ionic columns, framing arcade space



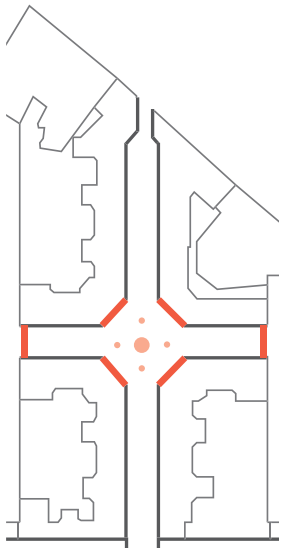
Interior facade

Fifth story richly framed square windows, pilasters become caryatids

Fourth story partially hidden, projecting wreath molding becomes balcony

Third story windows and ionic columns with Renaissance ornamentation

First and second stories Engaged columns with double bases, framing shopfront glazing



Location of paintings and floor mosaics

### Iconography

1. The paintings on the dome's arches are allegories the four continents
2. The paintings on the inner faces over the lateral entrance arches represent the geniuses of art, agriculture, science, and industry, the motifs which appear most frequently in arcades.
3. The floor marble mosaic contains, at its centre, the royal coat of arms of Casa Savoia. Around it are the coats of arms of the past capitals of Italy: Milan, Turin, Florence, and Rome.



Location of paintings

### Paintings (arches of dome):



Africa



Asia



America



Europe

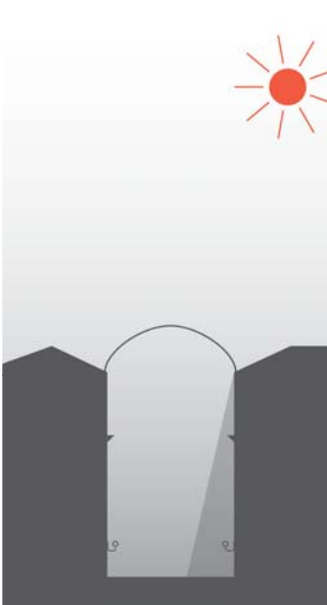
### Paintings (entrance arches of lateral wings):



Geniuses of Art and Agriculture



Geniuses of Science and Industry



Daytime lighting



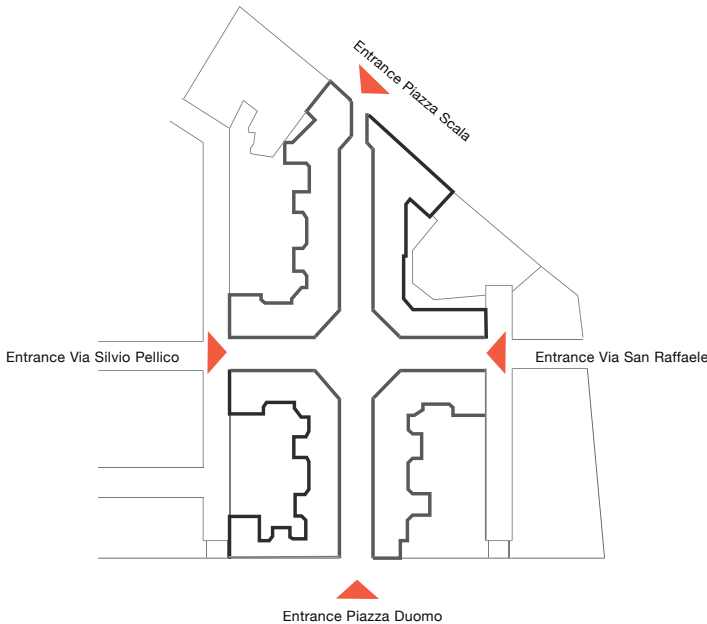
Nighttime lighting



Daytime Lighting



Nighttime lighting



Entrance Piazza Duomo



Entrance Piazza Scala



Entrance Via Silvio Pellico



Entrance Via San Raffaele

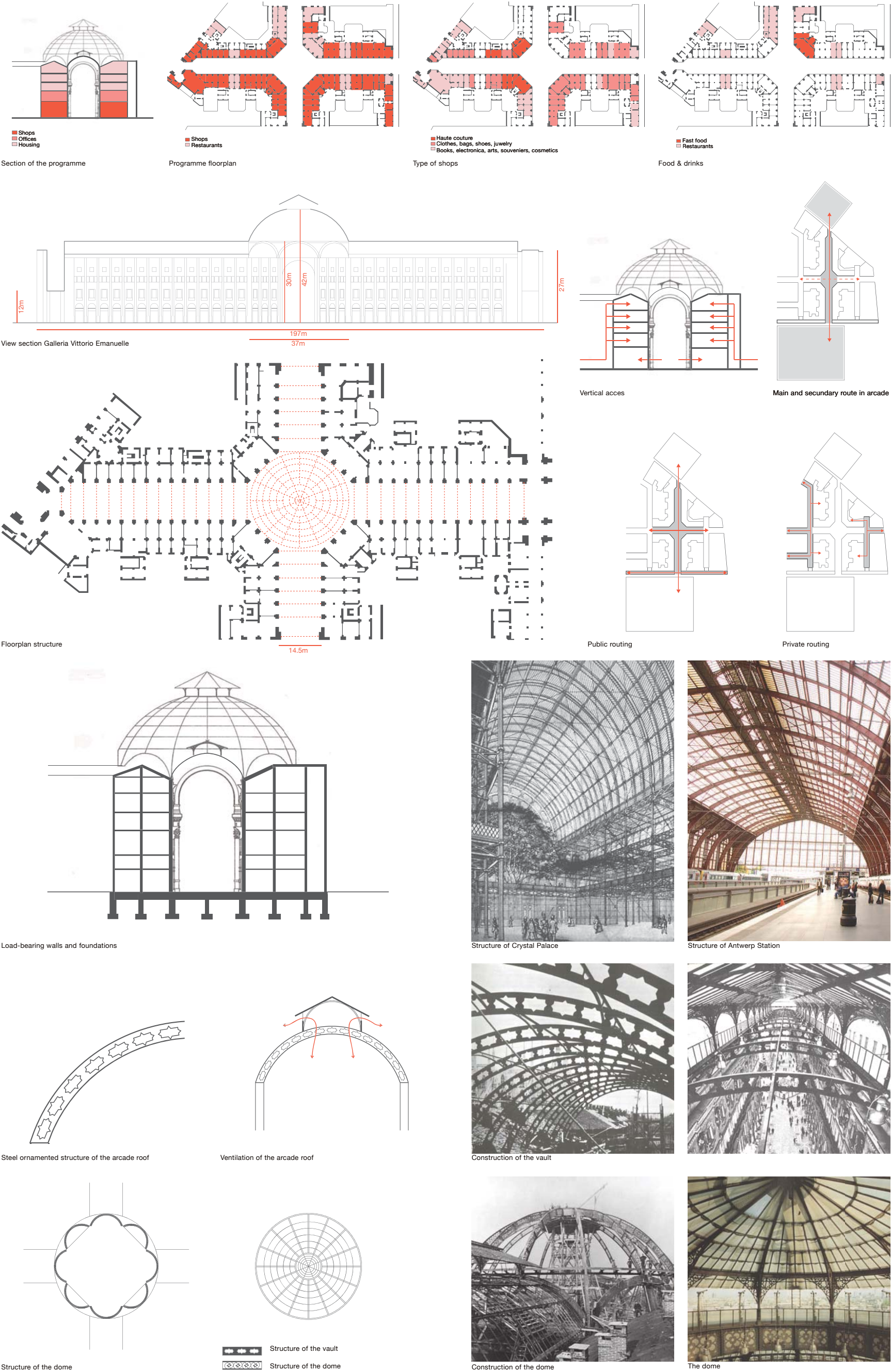
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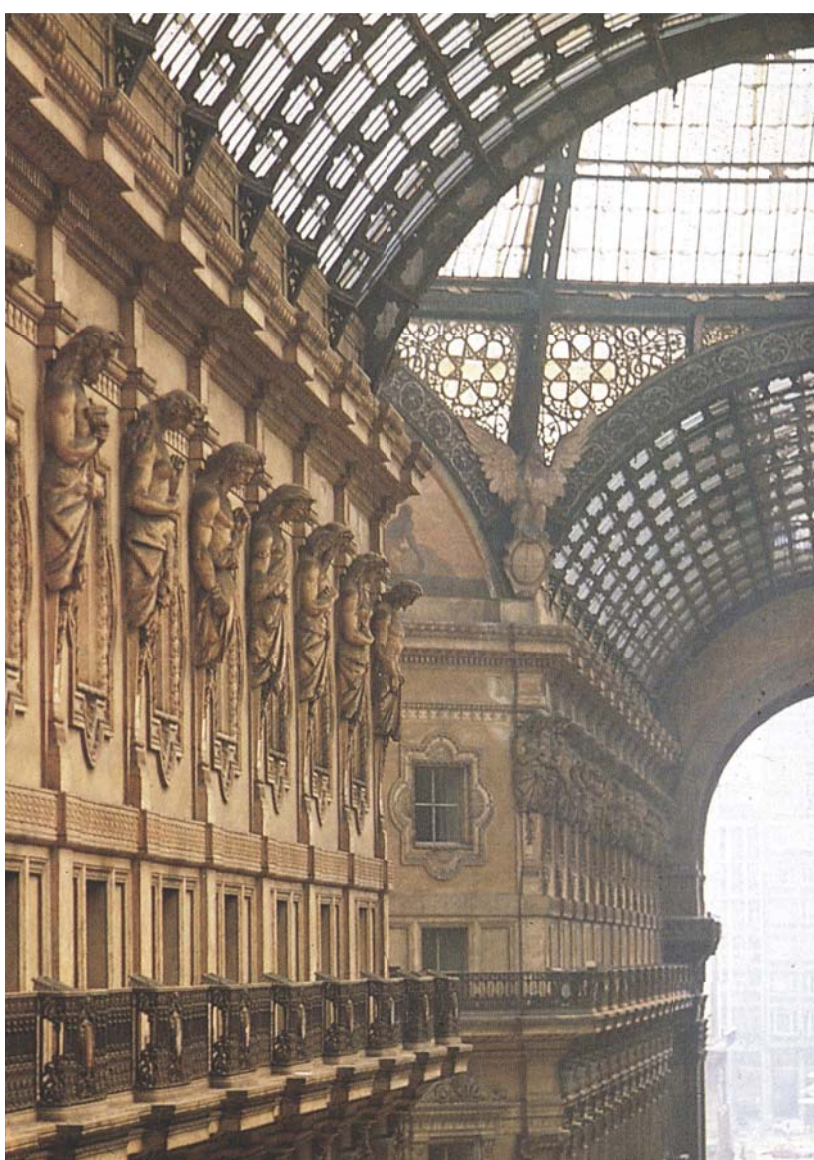
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## Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II, Milano: Images



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