

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

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

Personal information	
Name	Tim Stoop
Student number	4450124

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Main mentor	Peter Koorstra	Architecture
Second mentor	Jan van de Voort	Building Technology
Third mentor	Mieke Vink	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The main motivation for the Explore Lab studio lies in its fundamental quality that it offers, which is the freedom of choice for both the field of research and design. This open platform offers the possibility to focus on a personal fascination and development which allows me to find meaning in what I do. This fascination of the presence of place in Swiss Alpine villages grounded itself last year during a one year working period in Switzerland. It was clear that Explore Lab would be the only studio which could offer a place to research the topics which were embedded in this fascination. Moreover, the studio allows the student to implement physical research methods - drawing and model making- which are not prescribed by the studio itself, but come from within the student, again emphasizing the quality of freedom in the studio.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The intensity of intensive places
Goal	
Location:	Lower Engadine, Switzerland
The posed problem	The small villages of the Lower Engadine struggle with their identity. Local inhabitants who lived their entire lives in the village in which they grew up are no longer able to live in their houses: the price of renovation has gone up drastically, forcing them to sell their old homes to people from outside the valley for an exorbitant price. These new dwellers unfortunately do not start to live in these

	<p>villages, but rather use them as holiday homes for only a few weeks during the year. The local inhabitants start to build new houses at the edges of the village since new regulations prohibit to build close to the old village structures, making these new houses appear incoherent, loose objects with no direct relation to the old village. Simultaneously, the ever-growing surge of (winter)tourism demands more holiday housing and large skilifts. A tourism that swallows up and changes the old structures of these settlements. Luckily, the lower villages of the Engadine valley are not completely overrun by this phenomenon yet. It is now the will of these communities to protect their architecturally intact village while also simultaneously promoting sensible developments to enhance the life and work of the people that live there.</p> <p>Concluding, one could say that the domestic residents who brought the life and the beauty of these places are literally pushed to the side in new, soulless houses, while the village structure is being drained from life. The adverse prospect is that these villages become preserved museums for mass-tourism without any possibilities for further organic development. It is exactly this romantic amoebic essence that the village always was and what made it strong.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>The aim of this project is to research and understand these villages from the perspective of craft and the development of the act of building in close connection with the landscape and its history. The main goal is to identify which values are embedded in these rural Alpine settlements and how they are formed, prior to attempt to add new objects to these existing structures.</p> <p>How does craftsmanship and the sense of materiality influence the embedded architectural qualities of Alpine villages in lower Engadine to create a strong presence of place?</p> <p>In what way is the physical history stored in the villages and its natural surroundings?</p> <p>How are the villages organized? What are the defining archetypes and how do they work?</p> <p>What materials are being used in the built process, what are their characteristics and how are they applied?</p>

design assignment in which these result

The research proved to give a thorough understanding of the villages and how the old structures work. From this perspective the project proposes to elevate the existing structures and highlight their qualities in a contemporary way. The ambition is to create two new buildings. A small theatre and a moderately sized hotel. These two architectural objects have a direct relation with one another. They lay on walking distance, one in the landscape near the ruins of the old settlement of Gonda, the other in the existing village of Guarda. While standing at one, the other is visible and acts as a point of recognition and familiarity and vice versa.

The goal is to design a set of buildings that belong together and speak a similar language while also addressing the specific qualities of its direct surroundings and telling the story of the valley. The theatre addresses the place of a forgotten settlement, destroyed over time by invaders and natural disasters. It moreover acts as a point of reflection while walking from the village of Lavin to Guarda. A stop along the way to look back and to look forward. The hotel is dealing with how to add to a century old village structure in a respectful, but contemporary manner. Its program is small, no more than 10 rooms and is an establishment of a special nature. It's small and distinguished for a special kind of guest who come from near and far. A hotel that brings a balance between now and then, a balance of locality and the world, celebrating the existing potential.

Process

Method description

The research focused itself primarily around a visit of the valley in the middle of October of 2021. Eight Villages were chosen to investigate their structure and architectural elements by means of photographing, recording sounds, mapping, interviews, and writing. With these first experiential steps a profound understanding of the villages and their differences was formed. By conducting the same notions per village repeatedly the places have been dissected to reveal their layers of time. Upon return, these finding were transformed into drawings, mappings, and physical analytical models. The latter formed a big part of the further understanding of the valley and made it possible to get a grip on the landscape, the positioning of the villages and how the architectural elements work together to form a whole.

The architectural design will continue with the use of the previously applied physical research methods of physical modelling and drawing. The models will first research the site more specifically on the scale of 1:500 and how the objects will be positioned

in the landscape and the village. After this the goal is to design from the model to reach a detailed drawing rather than following the more common path of drawing a plan and making a model out of it. For this, various scales will be touched upon. For example, 1:200 massing studies, 1:50 facade explorations and rough interiors and 1:20 for more precise interior and light studies. Photographing of these models to visualize the design proposal is also a crucial step. Hand sketches using aquarelle and charcoal will be used to give the first suggestions of organization of the plan and at the same time guide the atmosphere of the spaces researched in the models. Simultaneously, studies into the materiality and constructing of these buildings, most probably in how massive stone or brickwork can be used in a contemporary and sustainable way, will be done parallel with the overall design of the buildings. The story of stone and landscape is again leading in how these objects will take shape.

Literature and general practical preference

The interviews conducted with the craftsmen, architects and locals met during the site visit are taken as an important source of knowledge. Throughout these findings, the problem statement was formed and refined. Specifically, the conversations held with Urs Padrun, architect in Guarda as well as with Riet Fanzun, architect in Tarasp eventually led to the forming of the design assignment. Additionally, the following literature and precedents are relevant:

Literature:

Blaser, W. (1976). *Der fels ist mein haus*. WEMA.

Böhme, G., Eliasson, O., & Pallasmaa, J. (2014). *Architectural atmospheres: on the experience and politics of architecture*. (C. Borch, Ed.). Birkhäuser.

Caminada, G. A., & Aicher, F. (2018). *Gion a. Caminada: unterwegs zum bauen: ein gespräch über architektur mit florian aicher*. Birkhäuser.

Canonica, F. (Ed.). (2020). *Thinking in thin air: anthology of a decade: engadin art talks*. Lars Müller.

Diener, R., & Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule in Zürich. (2006). *Switzerland, an urban portrait. book 3. materials*. Birkhäuser.

Gschwend, M. (1971). *Schweizer bauernhäuser: material, konstruktion und einteilung* (Ser. Schweizer heimatbücher, 144-147). Paul Haupt.

Heidegger, M. (1971). *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*. Harper Colophon Books. Retrieved from <http://faculty.arch.utah.edu/miller/4270heidegger.pdf>.

Latour, B. (2013). *Rejoicing: Or the Torments of Religious Speech*. Polity Press.

Norberg-Schulz, C. (1980). *Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of architecture*. Academy Editions.

Olgianti, V., & Breitschmid, M. (2018). Non-referential architecture (First English). Simonett & Baer.

Pallasmaa, J. (1996). The eyes of the skin: architecture and the senses (Ser. Polemics series). Academy Editions.

Weiss, R., & Egli, H. (1959). Häuser und landschaften der schweiz. Rentsch.

Zumthor, P., Lending, M., & Binet Hélène. (2018). A feeling of history. Scheidegger & Spiess.

Zumthor, P. (2010). Thinking architecture (3rd, expanded). Birkhäuser.

Precedents:

Giovanni Netzer & Walter Bieler - Theatre Tower on the Julier Pass

Gion A. Caminada - guesthouse in Fürstenu

Valerio Olgianti - Theatre Neuchatel

Peter Zumthor - Hotel Tschlin

Peter Zumthor - Bruder Klaus Feldkapelle

Reflection

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

Explore Lab lets the student focus on their fascination rather than endorsing a certain agenda. A similar quality of freedom I have experienced during previous studio sessions and workshop I followed which were mainly in the department of Form & Modelling studies. Their methodologies were often oriented towards the composition and perception in the field of architecture with an emphasis on the exploration, visualization and explication of elementary phenomena using physical models. Researching systems of proportions, scales and material assemblage have been a returning notion during the master. This project takes on these multiple scales and sensitivities of the landscape in a similar fashion and tries to add to the idea of the model as a functioning design tool.

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

The project provides an example on how one could cope with two sensitive sites: an archaeological zone and a preserved heritage settlement. Rather than sheltering these places from any new developments, the project reacts on them and shows us a different way of dealing with this kind of physical history. Furthermore, the way in which the research was conducted acts as illustration on how places can be observed. By taking the time, which we appear to have less and less of nowadays, looking closely at a given situation and therefore seeing the differences, I hope to pave a way towards an appreciation of the hidden beauty of places, a phenomenological beauty that binds us all unknowingly.