



the gardens of deviation

graduation thesis

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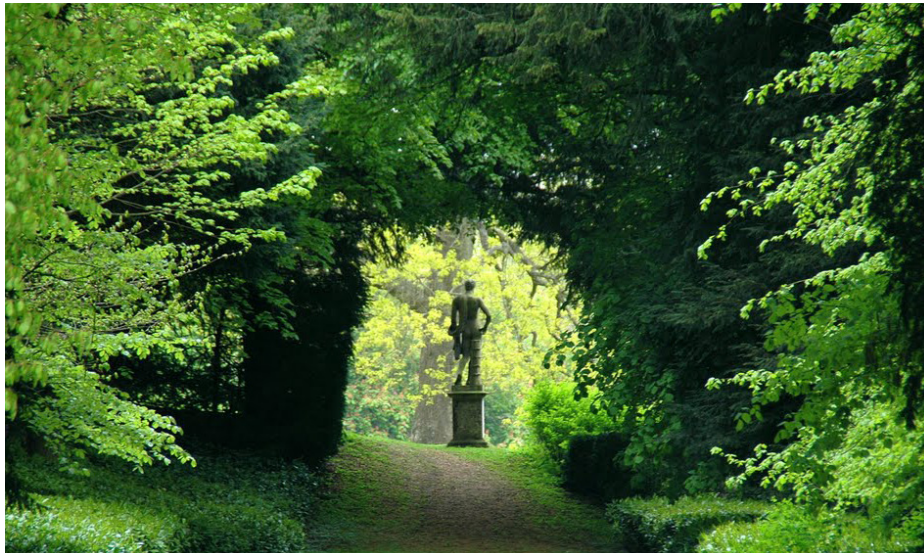
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01.a. The Rousham Garden: where the actual and the mythic meet

<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/42054536>



01.b. "The Decameron", painting by John William Waterhouse, garden and villa act as an asylum: away from the plague of Florence people could retreat and narrate stories enjoying the virtues of the garden (based on the homonymous book of Giovanni Boccaccio)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summary_of_Decameron_tales

“Vous qui construisez des jardins, ne faites pas des parcs, des espaces verts; faites des marges. Ne faites pas des terrains de loisirs et de jeux; faites des lieux de jouissance, faites des clôtures qui soient des commencements ; ne faites pas des objets imaginaires ; faites des fictions. Ne faites pas des représentations, faites des vides, des écarts ; faites du neutre.”

[You who construct gardens, no longer make parks, or green spaces; make margins. Do not make leisure and game terrains; make places of jouissance, make closures which are openings; do not make imaginary objects, make fictions.]

[Lectures traversières, p.77].

01.1 fascination & problem statement

Gardens have always been a fascination for me. Being in a garden or reading about it (as in a novel) unfolds new worlds, one feels free to imagine new possibilities and develop his personal mythology in order to keep up with reality's problems: [...] *it has been the Garden, whether real or imaginary, that has provided sanctuary from the frenzy and tumult of history* [Gardens, An Essay on the Human Condition, p.ix]. What triggers me mostly in the gardens is this sense of mythic that they convey and this promise of a different reality where one can escape from what is unpleasant to him, a place where the unfriendly “other” is excluded. The garden has always been considered a condensed earthly paradise that simulates in one or another way the image of the lost Eden where the “evil” was excluded: *His Eden is closed to all who began outside of it. His only sources of power are isolation and exclusion, and thereby an acceptance of a marginality* [The Meaning of Gardens, p.77].

Moreover, we could say that gardens within their walls can be considered as asylums: places with a sense of secrecy that allow behaviors out of the normative ones, places where one can be himself but also someone else. They seem to be the places where all potent desires can be actualized, where one could reach ecstasy through the surpassing of their own limits: *It is a desire for ecstasy, not serenity; for self-transcendence, not self-possession; for heaven, not Eden. As Dante depicts it, beatitude is not a homeostatic state of reconciliation but a dynamic, intoxicating process of self-surpassing* [An Essay on the Human Condition, p.144]. Gardens satisfy the desire, a desire that cannot be tamed by the society and its rules: *In the garden occurs an amoral play of sentiments and feelings, with the strictures of society represented by the garden wall and what lies beyond* [The Meaning of Gardens, p.100].

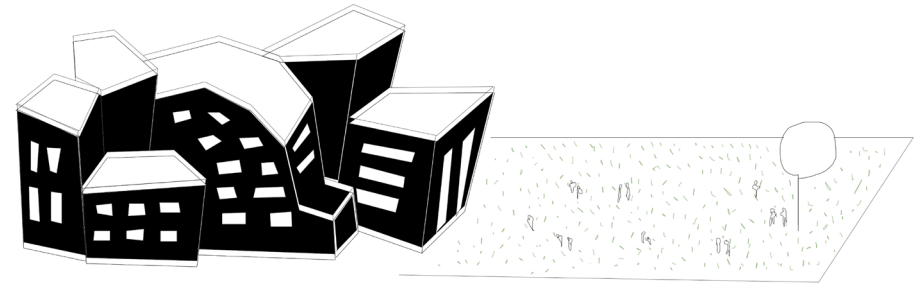
With all these in mind we could suggest that the gardens as parts of a city could act as revitalizing elements for the citizens by becoming places of deviation¹ from the rigidity of everyday practices. Yet, I believe that in the present situation most of

the public gardens but also most of the green spaces, in general, inside the cities are in such a way designed that this is difficult to achieve. Most of the urban green spaces- private gardens, parks, city gardens, botanical gardens, playgrounds- are fully programmed, corresponding to the hard lines of urbanity. They remain striated² even though they have a soft ground. They have gates and restrictive opening hours and all of them require abilities from their visitors, physical or social ones, but that are always the same: [...] *that we remain wary of increasingly sophisticated and prepackaged, spectacular “pseudosituations” that falsely promise liberty of choice and action... many designed “public” spaces that may seem, at first glance, to be looser than they actually prove to be when used* [Terrain Vague_ Interstices at the end of the pale, p.1].

But, it isn't only the strict design of the current green spaces that can be an impediment for such a non-normative experience but also the way people experience the city. As most of us citizens of urban complexes, we have a strictly fixed schedule where every action that we make and every deed that we do is restrained in specific blocs of time and in specific spatial settings. The capitalistic cities constitute a composed chaos as they produce multiple 'mechanisms of desire' that is supposed to fulfill the citizens' needs: *Generating and constituting flows of desire, capitalism is a “very special kind of delirium” with uncertain limits and origins* [Deleuze and the city, p.7]. These needs are not only related to the struggle for our mere survival (food, water, shelter) but also go beyond that, towards a more extensive experience. I am referring to all these 'unnecessary' needs such as entertaining oneself, playing or relaxing, that pretend to help citizens to 'take a break' from their obligations.

However, in my opinion, all these mechanisms are dividing even more people's time and although they imply a break, they more than fill this “void” in time. Most of the times they require consumption and they are addressed only to specific groups of people: eating at a restaurant, drinking a beer at a bar, shopping down town are everyday practices that fulfill the needs of those that can afford it:[...] *consumption is what justifies the frenzy of production, which in turn justifies consumption, the entire cycle serving more to keep us busy than to satisfy our real needs* [Gardens, An Essay on the Human Condition, p.165]. If we consider the city as a backdrop of emergent subjectivities -*The city, any-city-whatever, is situated amid mental, social and environmental*

1. The term is borrowed from the “heterotopias of deviation” of Michel Foucault, introduced in his text “Of Other Spaces”. According to Foucault there are two categories of heterotopias, of crisis and of deviation. The heterotopias of crisis are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis while the heterotopias of deviation are those in which the individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed (like prisons, psychiatric hospitals etc.). Although it could be dangerous to make such an analogy with Foucault's philosophy, this reference reminds the existence of the non-normative, of the “anomalous”, something that is divergent from the ordinary. [Of Other Spaces, p.4-5].



01.c. The green spaces as just another striated urban space
sketch by the author



01.d. The striated green spaces of a City: rigid and strictly defined
sketch by the author

2. The term *striated* was used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* in opposition to the term *smooth*. According to them, striated is the space of the State, static and preconfigured while smooth is the space of the nomad which is fluid, a space free of norms and codifications. Although opposite to one another, they both exist in a mixture and from them the City emerges. In the present thesis I consider the striated space as that of rigidity, where everything is planned and defined, the homogeneous. Smooth, on the other hand, is a space that allows freedom, a deviation from the normative behavior, the heterogeneous.
<https://nooshinesmacili.wordpress.com/2009/09/24/sep-25-the-smooth-and-the-striated-deleuze-and-guattari/>

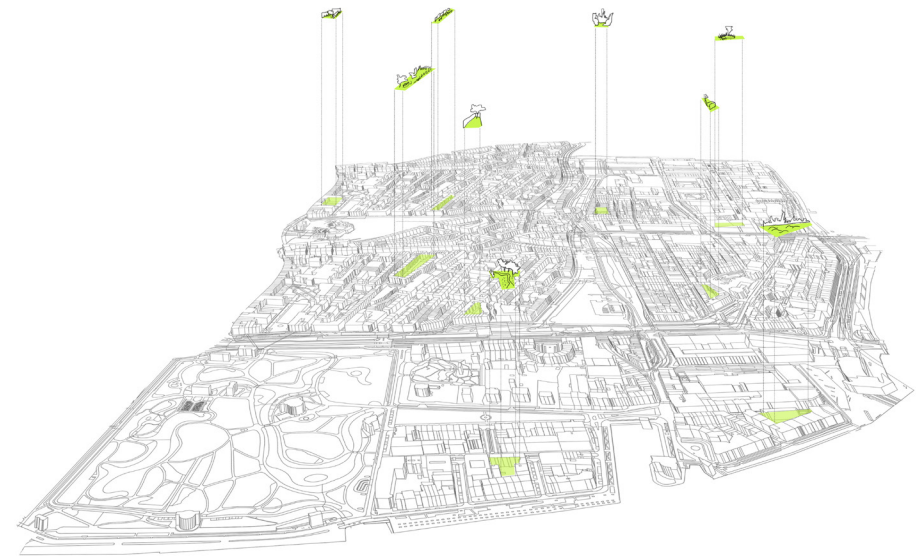
ecologies that serve as witness and backdrop to emergent subjectivities, collective enunciations, continuously heterogeneous and confused admixtures of the natural and the cultivated [Deleuze and the city, p.2] - then we could see that very often it fails to satisfy the needs of these different subjectivities. I feel that there is such a homogeneity in the way the entertainment mechanisms-including the green areas- are organized that there is no room for out-of-the-ordinary experiences.

Having said that, I, as a citizen firstly and as a landscape architect secondly, feel the need for a different kind of green places, part of an “otherness” of a city. Places that could offer something out-of-the-way and could act as counter-stories to the ordinary rhythms and norms of the urbanity. These ‘other’ places could offer the opportunity to those who crave for new events to happen to constantly become someone else. Someone that can forget his stress and deadlines and that is allowed to stop thinking in the same tiring way that he is used to: *Within the garden we can abandon thought; outside the garden we must think about the world and we must think about thinking* [Meaning in Landscape Architecture & Gardens, p.154].

I imagine these new places to be gardens as gardens are compact and condensed, clothed with the feelings of mystical and delusion, of surprise and wander. The introduction of “out-of-the-ordinary” gardens would intrigue citizens to reboot their mind and to actually have a pause: [...] *une parenthèse dans le temps des affaires et de la politique, une vacance, un moment intermédiaire, comme l’écrit More lui-même : un écart aussi dans l’espace officialisé des lieux des négociations.* [a break in the time of business and politics, a vacancy, an intermediate moment, as More writes himself: a gap also in the space that is formalized by the places of the negotiations] [Lectures traversières, p.77].

These new gardens would become a new, differentiated element of a city, a constellation that functions in its own rhythm and that next to all the existing green spaces would offer new affections to the citizens’ routine.: [referring to Henri Lefebvre]...*be asserted the ‘right’ to the city as a place of pleasure and enjoyment, independent of the imperatives of the economy...to oppose every day life and re-organize it until it is as good as new, its spurious irrationality and authority unmasked and the antithesis between the quotidian and the Festival.*

[Aldo Van Eyck, Humnaist Rebel_ In betweening in a Postwar World, p.61]



01.e. The new gardens popping out of the city's striation
sketch by the author

01.2 research objective

But in what way could gardens address the problem of homogeneity and of the extreme fixation of time? My research objective is to find the tools and to understand the conditions under which a network of public “gardens of deviation” in an urban realm can be designed. More specifically, I want to research on how can new gardens that would be introduced into a city diverge from the homogeneity of the ordinary practices and environments and act as triggers for new thoughts and new affections that are “out-of-the- ordinary”.

Although acting as well as gardens of repose and relaxation, the new gardens aspire to create new nodal points in the city and intrude the ordinary flows of it in a unexpected and sometimes shocking way. My intention is to design places that are pliable and not rigid, that play with the existing surfaces and membranes of the city and that trigger activities and states of mind that are outside the usual. New places that would bring to the surface the unintended and the blurry: *paradoxical spaces [...] where we find “intriguing irrationality” and quirky riddles* [Terrain Vague_Interstices at the end of the pale, p.18].

Although “network” may imply a literally connected structure, in the present proj-

ect is seen as a fabric that sits over the urban lines of movements and activities and creates new opportunities and new “cracks” to explore. It is not about concrete connecting lines but rather about constellations in the city that consist of several spots-stars that one can meet all of a sudden on their way into the city. Such a system can be related to the strategy of acupuncture. One garden would not suffice to relieve the tension of a whole city and thus to make a change. What is needed is the existence of several spots-gardens around the urban tissue that could be addressed to people in different neighborhoods and in different times of day.

The research objective is focusing not only to the spatial configuration of the existing city’s structures and of the new gardens but also seeks to explore the relations of their materiality and expressive qualities (touch, smell, sound) with the body’s perception and reaction. What atmospheres and hues do the current spaces evoke and in what way could the atmosphere and the experience of the new gardens be different? The body and how it responds to sensory information (stimuli) given from the environment will be a guide in order to explore the capacities and virtualities of these places of deviation.

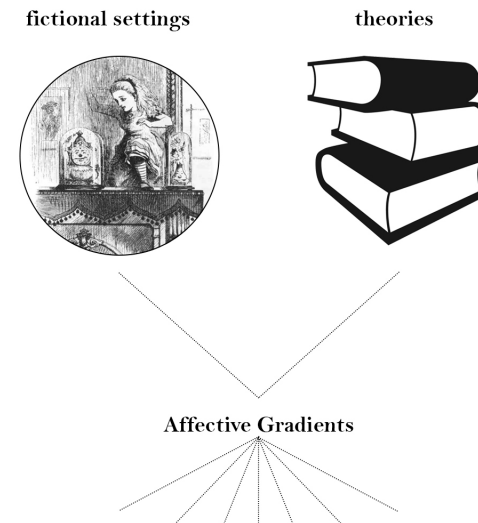
Although the research objective asks for a generic answer the design objective is far more specific as it is addressed to a testing site-area. The tangibility and actuality of the testing site will be the base for the application of research principles that would eventually be formulated into design: the design will emerge from the intertwining of the site’s actuality (what is already there) with the virtualities that it “carries” (potentials) and the whole procedure will act as a testing experiment to see what will be the effect on the city’s rhythm and flows and on citizens’ routine. I aim to generate solutions applicable to a unique situation but that may also be useful answers to the more generic research objective.

01.3 research questions_steps

Working in parallel, the studying of theories and references as well as the formulation of generic and unique design principles will generate new thoughts to address the research objective. Understanding the different problems in each step and testing the principles that will be developed, will help me to get deeper to the situation and constantly renew my view.

The main objective that will guide this research is to find which experiences are opposed to the “homogeneity” of the city and are out of the ordinary. But how can experiences that will affect people in a particular way be created? The searching

for tools in order to design based on the affections that the environment has on people, will take me not only to the studying of theories but also to the studying of references and to the testing of existing sites. As important references I use imaginary settings that have always intrigued me: the study of fictional settings (settings/gardens “written” in novels) will be an important input for the formulation of my design “principles” as these gardens act to the imaginary as the places of paradox and delusion. With the input from theories and references and their further elaboration, the design principles will start to formulate. The elaboration includes the breaking down of specific notions-experiences with which I would like to infuse the testing sites and which I call Affective Gradients. How can notions such as “mystery” and “extension” be translated not only into spatial settings but also into temporal terms (experience)?



01.f. From theories and references to design gradients

sketch by the author

Moreover, next to the more generic research one needs to get into the heart of a testing area in order to get a grasp of how people experience the current situation in a city. How people move and are affected by the city’s “mechanisms of desire”? What are the existing attractors of the specific city and where can one intervene? The intervention will follow the strategy of acupuncture thus, as this project is addressed to a large area it is needed to start from the wide scale in order to understand the city and the neighborhoods. What are the existing voids in the area of intervention? Do they “work” together? What are their places and significance in the different neighborhoods? The theory of Assemblages and Milieus³ as well the

theory of Affects⁴ will be key factors in analyzing the area of intervention.

Except for the study of the relation between the city and the citizens that the affects create, I will analyze the characteristics of three specific sites that will act as testing cases. A closer study of the relation between these sites and the neighborhoods that surround them will give me a more detailed understanding of the multiple conditions that may or not mingle with each other and through which the city emerges. Furthermore, this study will be an input for a parallelism of the three “situations” in order to get to the uniqueness of each. How are each neighborhood and site coupled together?

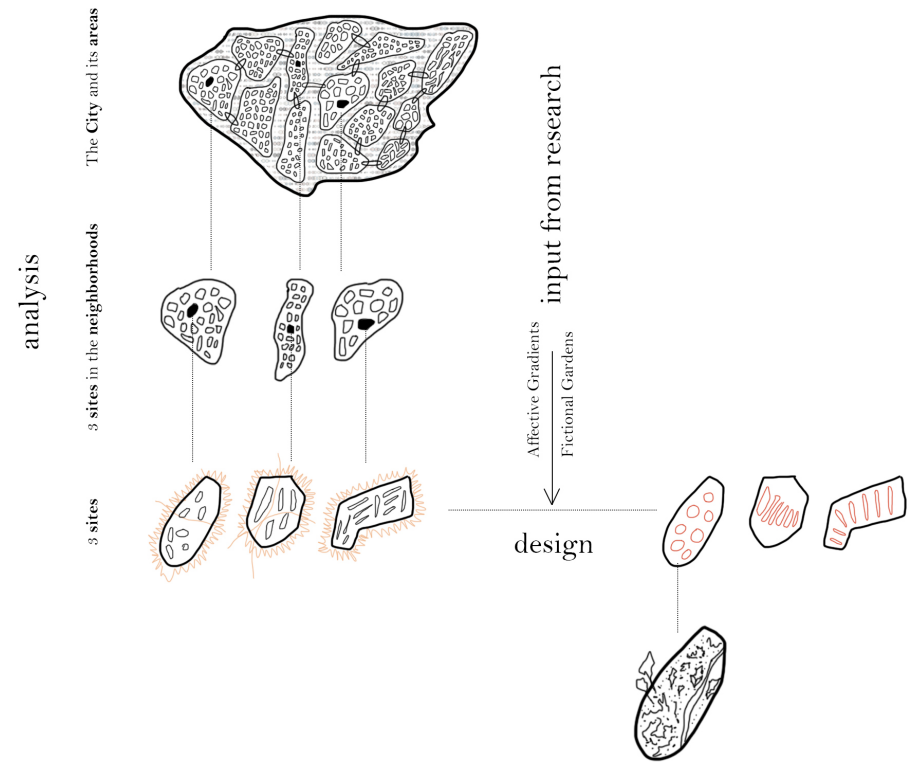
Except for the interrelations and exchange of each site with the surroundings and the whole city what will interest me is the internal organization of each site. By organization I do not refer only to the analysis of the spatial aspects of the sites but also of all the expressive qualities (sounds, colors, textures) that create the specific “hue” of each one. All these aspects will be once more infused by the Affective theory as well as that of Affordances⁵.

But how will I translate these findings to design principles? The formulated Affective Gradients as well as the insights from the fictional settings, the theories and of the analysis will be re-evaluated once again to give me the base for my design. These three inputs will form the vertical axis that will infuse each of the sites and through this procedure the design will emerge. Three designs for three gardens that although infused by the same logic they will be different due to the singularities of each site.

The new designs after completed will be then assessed in parallel in order to figure out if there are some generic manipulations that apply to all of them. The aim is to make clear which specific design choices connect with which Affective gradients but also how do these choices affect the existing homogeneity and rigidity of the

3. The Assemblage theory next to these of the Milieus and the Territories were developed by the french philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus*. It was a new theory/way of assuming a society and a city far different from what existed previously. The contemporary philosopher Manuel DeLanda has dedicated much of his work and writings to the elaboration of these theories where in his books *A New Philosophy of Society* (2006) and *Assemblage Theory* (2016) analyzes and “expands” these terms in further detail.

4. The notion of Affects was first introduced by the psychologist Silvan Tomkins that had formulated her own categories of nine affects [Positive: Joy, Excitement / Neutral: Surprise/ Negative: Anger, Disgust, Dismissal, Anguish, Fear, Shame] with different intensity labels and physiological expressions. The term was then borrowed by other disciplines such as social sciences and one can find it in several texts and books as those of Gregg Seigworth, Brian Massumi and of Manuel DeLanda.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affect_theory/



01.g. Diagram of research and analysis through scales

sketch by the author

city. How would these new design ‘principles’ affect the experience of people? Do these gardens work in parallel, in isolation, or even both? What if we designed not three but many of the existing voids? It is also important to explore what new they can offer to our understanding of how do the Affective Gradients work together.

After having clarified in what way do the designs “interrupt” the city’s rhythms by offering something new, the focus will be onto one specific site. Only through detailed design will I grasp the intertwining of the intensities and the contingent events that I want to create. The materiality of the site with its expressive qualities will be weaved into detail to evoke specific reactions, new affects.

5. Affordances is a term similar to those of Affects and was invented by the psychologist James J. Gibson. In his book “The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception” he includes a definition of the term: *The affordances of the environment are what it offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill. The verb to afford is found in the dictionary, the noun affordance is not. I have made it up. I mean by it something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.* Gibson (1979, p. 127) The term was also adopted in various disciplines but my acquaintance with it was through the text of Anthony Chenero “An outline of a Theory of Affordances”
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affordance>.

Finally, the reflection will focus on the feedback from the detailed design to the more generic research question. That way we would see what lessons could be learned and which generic answers could be given if wanted to design such gardens in other places.

01.4 introduction of the testing-site



01.h. The area of focus: Rotterdam city center

sketch by the author

A project as such can be a motivation for similar projects in many cities. However, for the present graduation thesis I chose as a testing site the district of the city center of Rotterdam. This city was built in phases but after the bombardment of 1940 (“Rotterdam Blitz”) modern architecture took over the re-development of the destroyed area. From then on it has evolved into a city that’s very different from all the others in the Netherlands which makes it kind of unique. High-rise buildings, new shiny materials, big roads and infrastructure lines are some of the elements that prevail. It is quite widespread leaving many large voids between buildings and its neighborhoods are quite strictly separated and organized according to the desires they fulfill.

I have known Rotterdam by its neighborhoods which are quite different from each other and I feel that there are many lively places that could catch your attention. As for the green spaces that exist, there are indeed some in the district with the biggest one being the “Museum Park” and “The Park”. There also exist some community gardens (tuinen) such as the “Jacobustuin” and the “Historische Tuin Schoonoord” as well as small playgrounds, sports fields and squares. All of these green spaces are mostly dedicated to entertainment, cultivation or education.



01.i. Shiny buildings outside the train station

photo by the author



01.j. The Theatre Square, a lively place

<https://gr.pinterest.com/pin/404549979009610414/?lp=true>



01.k. Jacobustuin

photo from the article *De stad schreeuwt om rust punten*
written by Rob Aben and Saskia de Wit



01.l. Het Park

photo by the author

However, I think that it is a city that lacks of places that trigger the mind, of places that are unexpected and would act as cracks to the ordinary life of its citizens. I feel that the existing designed lines are hard and rigid and thus, do not leave room for the “random”. Furthermore, Rotterdam offers many open spaces to intervene to: not spaces that are already given a clear purpose (such as parks and squares) but spaces that lack of a specific character and function as vacuums without the active

role of people in them. More details about the city of Rotterdam and its rhythms will be given later on, in the chapter of the city's analysis.

Zooming in, I think that the center of the city would be ideal for examining new virtualities for it: it is there that the flows of people are most intense and the pace of movement is at its highest speed. It is there that the fulfillment of all different desires of its citizens meet in the most condensed way: the center is closer to their everyday practices and routine. I hope that intervening in such a complex system, in the heart of the city's rhythm, will have a more positive effect on people's escape from the ordinary.

01.5 relevance

The current graduation thesis aspires to offer a new way of experiencing our cities and it suggests to conceive them as more open and flexible assemblages than striated and fixed totalities. The homogeneity and the extreme fixation of spaces that characterize many urban complexes may have a negative effect on the freedom of thought and action of the different subjectivities. The repetition of similar actions and practices in every day routine may be extremely tiring or even dull and it can become a restrictive factor for regenerative and creative thoughts. Even though the mechanisms of entertainment and consumption may pretend that satisfy the citizens' needs, they seem to leave no space for the random and the blurry and as a result people may even forget that there is also this side of theirs, a side that needs the unsure and the indeterminant to act as a counterpoint to the fixed and the programmed.

The current project uses as a key to oppose homogeneity and striation the creation of 'leakages' in the expectedness of current experiences in the urban realm: creation of places that will trigger peoples' mind and stir emotions. Urbanites will have the chance to feel intensified emotions, to diverge from expected behaviors and through such experiences to reboot their mind. If the experiences that the city offers could allow many different behaviors and if the same environments that create such experiences evoke each time a new feeling and trigger different actions, then there will be room for constantly becoming someone else.

A society that allows the indeterminant and the random to take place, is more open to changes and new thoughts. The new gardens aspire to alleviate people from stressful and repetitive thoughts, even if it is for few minutes. A break from the ordinary thoughts, an instant "shock" in between the scheduled actions can

be revitalizing not only for individuals but also for the way the city emerges. The city, that way, will have the potential to always be a surprise, an infinite source of emotions and relations. This thesis deals with finding these virtualities of the city and trigger their becoming actual.

01.5 reading itinerary

The project is organized in two basic parts that each one is divided in several sections-themes. The first one, **Chapter 02** deals with the study and the application of notions from the theoretical framework and describes the way design principles are developed. **Chapter 03** includes the analysis of the testing area as well as the experimentation and design of specific sites through the guidance of the principles that emerged from Chapter 02. The last chapter, **Chapter 04**, will be a reflection back on the findings of the project with the aim to enrich the research objective with generic but also with specific, site-related answers.

More specifically, in the following chapter -**Chapter 02**- I will introduce the notions that inspired me from several theories and describe how I will use them as tools for the analysis and for the design. [02.1/2 a.b : *Theories of Assemblages and Affects, Milieu and Territory, Affordances and Stimuli, Acupuncture*]. Furthermore, there will be an analysis of references and theories that will lead to the extraction of specific feelings that are evoked in specific environments [02.2.c: *Fictional settings: Alice in Wonderland/ Through the Looking-Glass/ Hypnerotomachia Poliphili/ Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse + Restorative principles*].

The third section of Chapter 02 will be dedicated to the formulation of general principles which derive from the research and the analysis of them [02.3.a.b: *Affective Gradients: Silence, Extension, Absorption, Surprise, Mystery, Symbolism, Inverted meaning, Suspense, Anticipation, Doubting, Venture, Anxiety, Rest, Fear*].

Finally, in the end of the chapter one can find the personal glossary that was developed throughout the above procedure [02.4].

Chapter 03 is divided in three sections: analysis on the wide scale of the testing area [03.1/2], analysis and generic design on local scale- 3 sites [03.3], design in detail scale-1 site [03.4].

More in detail, the analysis on the wide scale will explore the relations between the City and its Voids, the City and its Neighborhoods, the Neighborhoods and their Voids as well as the Affects of the city's structures on citizens [03.1]. Next comes

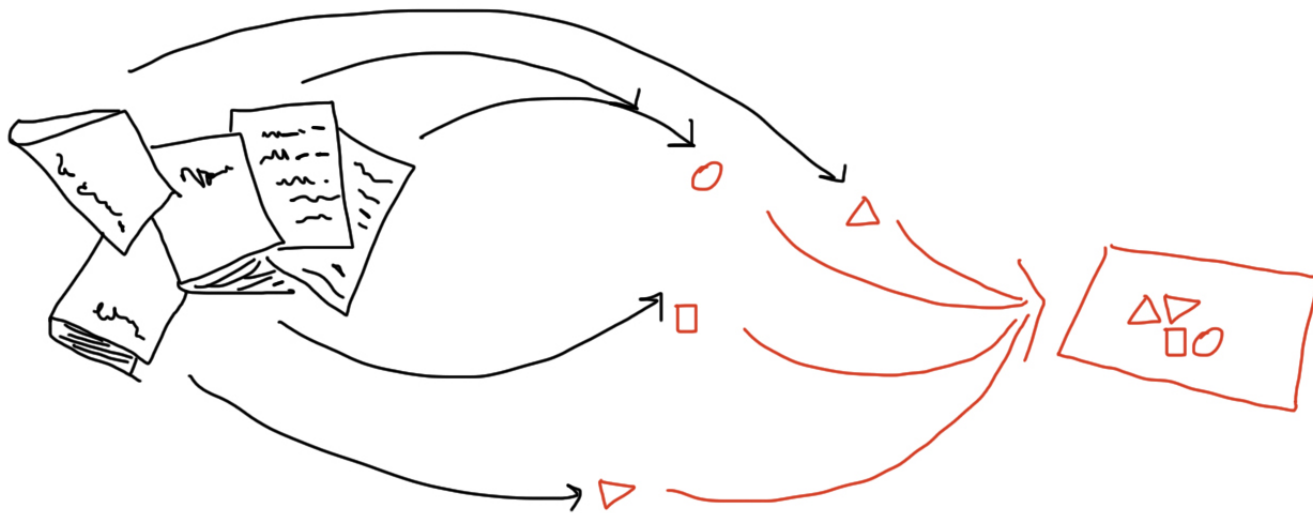
the identification and categorization of the existing voids of the area and the selection of the potential specific types from the categories [03.2] This research will result in the selection of three specific types of sites appropriate for experimentation.

In the next section, I will pick up three sites and dive in the singularities and the special characteristics of each of 3 sites exploring their spatial aspects and expressive qualities always by the filter of the Affective Gradients[03.3].

The last section of this chapter will be dedicated to the design of the three gardens, the first one more detailed than the others [03.4].

Finally, **Chapter 04** will be a reflection on the contribution of the design outcomes to the research. In this chapter I will compare the specific solutions of the detailed design with the more generic design principles that I have developed in previous stages of the project and see how they can both offer insights to the research objective. The aim of this final chapter is to enrich the research through design tools and to “discuss” over the extension that this research could have on a wider scope: the role of such gardens and subsequently of landscape architecture in seeing and experiencing urban actuality in a different way.





02. theoretical framework

02.1 use theories as a tool

The theoretical framework that I studied gave me many insights on the complex relationships of the city and its structures as well as on the experiences that are in a way out-of-the-ordinary. The aim is to use the acquired knowledge in an instrumental way, as a tool for the analysis both of theoretical notions and of actual settings.

Perceiving the city as an **Assemblage** -and not as a totality- will give me a more “open” understanding of its different parts and of their interrelations. Neighborhoods act as different triggers for people to think, move and create and this is a condition that will be explored. How do the different parts in the urban tissue interact with each other and what lines of flight are created between the “cracks” of each part? Which capacities are exercised in this exchange? Mapping these relations will give a clearer image of the complexity that characterizes a city. [Deleuze and Guattari, Manuel De Landa, Levi-Bryant]

The theory of **Affects** will be the guide for the analysis of the relation that is developed between the several neighborhoods of the testing area and the citizens’ flows: how and why people go to a place in the city center? What is attracting them there and at which time of the day? The term “flows” here is not seen as an abstract term, rather is seen in the reality of the city and as dependent on different motives. To explore this I will make observations in the city in different days of the week and define the reasons why people visit specific places in maps of gradients. This tracking of affects is useful as it will help me define the current ordinary attractors of the different neighborhoods and subsequently inspire my design for creating experiences out of the ordinary. [Manuel De Landa_ G. Seigworth & M.Gregg, Brian Massumi]

From the Deleuzian theory of **Milieus** and **Territories** I was inspired by the four environments that characterize a milieu and its relations to the surroundings: interior milieu/ exterior milieu /annexed milieu/ membrane. This fourfold consideration will act as a guide for the analysis of the three testing sites: analysis of their internal organization, their surroundings, the membranes-borders of them as well as the passages-“cracks” to the outside through which information is exchanged. [Deleuze, Elizabeth-Grosz, Kleinherenbrink]

The theory of **Affordances** although very close to that of Affects, will be used specifically for the exploration of the internal organization of the three sites. Affordances denote the potential capacities for action that an environment offers

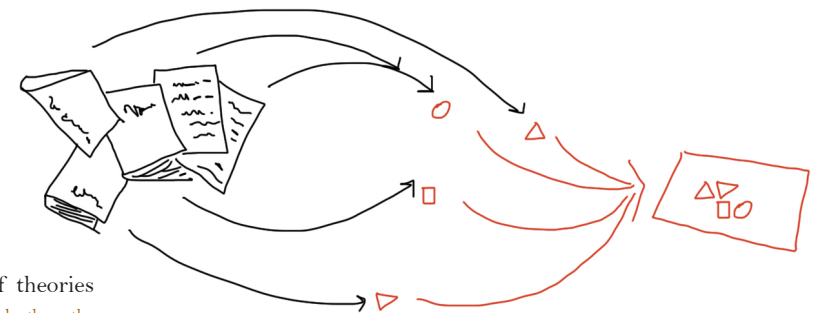
to a body. A bench affords sitting for a man but also affords many other different behaviors depending on each different body. This concept is a useful tool for extracting not only the actual (current) behaviors of people in it but also for imagining virtual ones through design. Registering the capacities for action offered in each site (equipment) as well observing and recording how people use the site (behavior-body) will be the basis for exploring more capacities that the site could afford. [Anthony Chemero]

While Affordances and Affects are related to action sensory **Stimuli** is more related to perception and experience. Stimuli will be my guide for analyzing the expressive qualities of the three sites: sounds, smells, colors, textures all sensory information that each site is carrying and that could act as trigger to a body’s reaction to it. [Saskia de Wit, J.J.Gibson, M.Malnar & F.Vodvarka]

The study of **fictional settings** aims to explore how abstract ideas can be translated into spatial settings. I will analyze written gardens and settings in terms of the feeling that they convey by making imaginary drawings: this is to show my interpretation of the written plot. The study of the fictional gardens aims to give insight on the “out of the ordinary” experience of the project’s gardens.

Finally, next to these concepts I was inspired by the **Restorative principles** developed from Rachel and Stephen Kaplan in their book “The Experience of Nature”. I am using some of their principles as a starting point to develop my own which I call Affective principles. They are all derived from the objective to oppose to the homogeneity of the city through the design of gardens. These principles will be tested in terms of their application on the three testing sites. [R. & S. Kaplan]

The following section will be a more thorough view on each theory and how it relates to the present project.



02.a. Use of theories
sketch by the author

02.2 elaboration of theories

02.2.a

City: Assemblages, Affects: City as an Affective Assemblage

What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of a co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'...

[Assemblage Theory, p.1]

...assemblage thinking is not at all a form of thought that suppresses the subject, but one that breaks it up and distributes it systematically, that contests the identity of the subject, that dissipates it and makes it shift from place to place, an always nomad subject, made of individuations or of singularities

[Deleuze and the City, p.29]



02.b. Assemblages at interrelations

cover from the book *Assemblage Theory*, Manuel DeLanda

The theory of Assemblage gives us an idea to perceive the City as open and flexible, an entity that is continuously in the process of becoming. The term was introduced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). One of the main aspects of an assemblage is that it is consisted of heterogeneous parts, not uniform, and that these parts interact with each other: *the assemblage actively links these parts together by establishing relations between them* [Assemblage Theory, p.2]. The interactions between the components gives an assemblage its properties, properties that are irreducible to the properties of the components but also decomposable. This is the trait that differentiates an assemblage from

a totality: its components keep their properties instead of being fused in a mere collection as is the totality. The parts of an assemblage are characterized by relations of exteriority: they retain their identity and they can be detached from one assemblage and be attached to another [A New Philosophy of Society, p.10]. The assemblages are composed of materials and of expressive components. The material components could be bodies, food, tools as well as complex machines, buildings and neighborhoods and the expressive ones linguistic and non-linguistic gestures [A New Philosophy of Society, p.12].

The City could be seen as an assemblage composed of infinite smaller assemblages that interact with one another and give it properties that makes it powerful, more powerful than if the parts were taken apart. If we see the city as *a decentred socio-material formation enacted in multiple overlapping urban assemblages* [Deleuze and the City, p.21] then we would grasp its complexity and its continuous becoming-of-something-else through the relations of its parts. The properties of the city as an assemblage are not fixed but are continuously produced through the interactions of its social assemblages with its other material and expressive components: *if the properties are viewed as produced by the interactions between components, and their existence and endurance explained by the continuity of those interactions, then the properties are contingent: if the interactions cease to take place the emergent properties cease to exist.* [Assemblage Theory, p.12]. So, a City is not an organism where every organ has its own place but could rather be seen as *a body just bones, flesh, skin, musculature, an entity that can only be occupied by the intensities that circulate through it, that cross it in all directions...* [Deleuze and the City, p.22]. It is *the site for continual transformation, genetic metamorphoses, and becomings, as opposed to the stratification and organization of static being* [Onto-Ethologies, p.170].

What I am interested in are these intensities, these interactions between the social assemblages and the materiality and expressivity of the City. The flows of a city can be interpreted as the circulation, the movement in-between its assemblages, through their cracks, in-between subjectivities. I would like to think of a city as the place for contingently occurring subjectivities, where people do not have fixed identities but are always becoming-someone-else and transcend *the dominant moral codes and subjectivities* [Deleuze and the City, p.28].

In order to go towards new modes of subjectivities we need to seek for new affective relationships within the city. **Affect**, *at its most anthropomorphic, is the name we give to those forces that can serve to drive us toward movement, thought and extension[...] affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations.* [The Affect Theory Reader, p.1]. In short, Affect is the ability to affect (take action) and to be affected (expe

rience affection), it relates to the execution of the multiple capacities that a body has, through its encounters with an environment (material and expressive components). Thus, the body could be considered as a composition of relations with the world and these relations are its affects. Affects are a process of bodies and this process produces always new selves, stabilized or destabilized: [...] *affects might threaten, strengthen, accelerate, increase, decrease, or even destroy the body* [Onto-Ethologies, p.159]. The notion of Affects is important for the current project as it could be the motive and the way in which to redesign places in the city, the new gardens, which would offer new affective relationships, ones that would destabilize the assemblage of the city, creating new forms of becoming.

The affects are connected to emergent subjectivities as they participate in the process of individuation: *the individuality of these becomings is not given by the subject or the substance that is touring or desiring, but by specific vectorial qualities (a certain speed, a certain direction, a certain force) or affective relations (desire, eat, pollute, etc.)* [Deleuze and the City, p.29]. It is as if the city is made only of affective interrelations, or intensities as mentioned above, not only between humans but also between humans and infrastructure lines, humans and animals, humans and plants or even in more abstract terms humans and smells, sounds, textures, colors of their environment.

If we produce more intense affects then reality could be more intense. The homogeneity and the extreme fixation and striation of the city would leak at points and that leakage would give new ways of reaction to the world, new sensations and affects 'out of the ordinary': [...] *an overabundance of resources beyond the need for mere survival...that enables the production of the frivolous, the unnecessary, the pleasing, the sensory for their own sake* [Chaos, Territory, Art_ Deleuze –and-the-framing-of-the-earth, p.7]. The actuality of the city could be described as all the elements of its environment and the rhythm that binds them together. That is the ordinary for me. Virtuality on the other hand, denotes all the innumerable potentials that this environment has and that depend not only to spatial capacities that it offers but also to the multiple abilities of people to use them in a different way. There is a virtual city (virtual as potential) parallel to the actual one, that lies below the surfaces and within the walls and if we create cracks, that virtual place, the non-city, may emerge, even temporarily, even if it is short-lived: (talking about the Situationists) *They left their territory of fixed identities, normative subjectivity and habitual practices in order to uncover the virtual, intensive properties buried underneath the extensive, actualized systems of streets* [Deleuze and the City, p.38].

Thus, perceiving the City (and more specifically the city of Rotterdam) as an Affective Assemblage opens up more possibilities to discover its hidden niches, its

surprises and its unexpectedness: [...] *the city as an haecceity: not as an image but as an affective assemblage that through the enfolding of spaces and temporalities dissolves the outlines of the subject, becoming-other to itself* [Deleuze and the City, p.10]. The smaller assemblages that consist the city affect humans in specific ways but are not fixed, they always embed in them their virtualities.

The analysis that I will attempt on the big scale of a city will focus on the affective relationships between its smaller assemblages. Neighborhoods can be seen as such assemblages and the affective relations they create with citizens define and constantly redefine the circulation of them. People go to a place in the city because it affects them in a particular way, it attracts them for a reason. The different desires that the several attractors inside the city satisfy drive people to move through different assemblages, in different ways and at different times of the day.

Milieu, Territory and the Refrain: Neighborhoods and Sites in exchange

It is therefore clear that a territory is not just a demarcation of a certain place. Rather, it is an intense center in which living beings act out interrelated patterns of behavior and as such is something that happens. A territory is therefore an act or a set of acts. [Territory and Ritornello, p.218]

In the realm of a city, there are many environments interacting with each other that we could characterize as "milieus" and these milieus communicate with one another due to a rhythm that is located between them [Onto-Ethologies, p.175]. Milieus do not have dimensions and are not tactile but are always characterized by a uniformity, a "force" that assembles heterogeneous elements. Whenever there is a singularizing process through expressions a territory is drawn from all the different milieus. Deleuze and Guattari name this singularizing process the refrain or ritornello: [...] *we call a ritornello any aggregate of matters of expression that draws a territory and develops into territorial motifs and landscapes* [Territory and Ritornello, p.215]. I consider the refrain as this process through which something is staked out of the homogeneity, when it becomes differentiated due to its expressive qualities: [*milieus*], *through the ritornello, become dimensional and expressive instead: colors, sounds, and postures now mark where a territory begins and ends, who lives there, who may enter and so on* [Territory and Ritornello, p.217]. If we consider the city as a plane then the different assemblages that compose it are territorialized through their expressivities: gestures, postures, sounds, smells and thus,

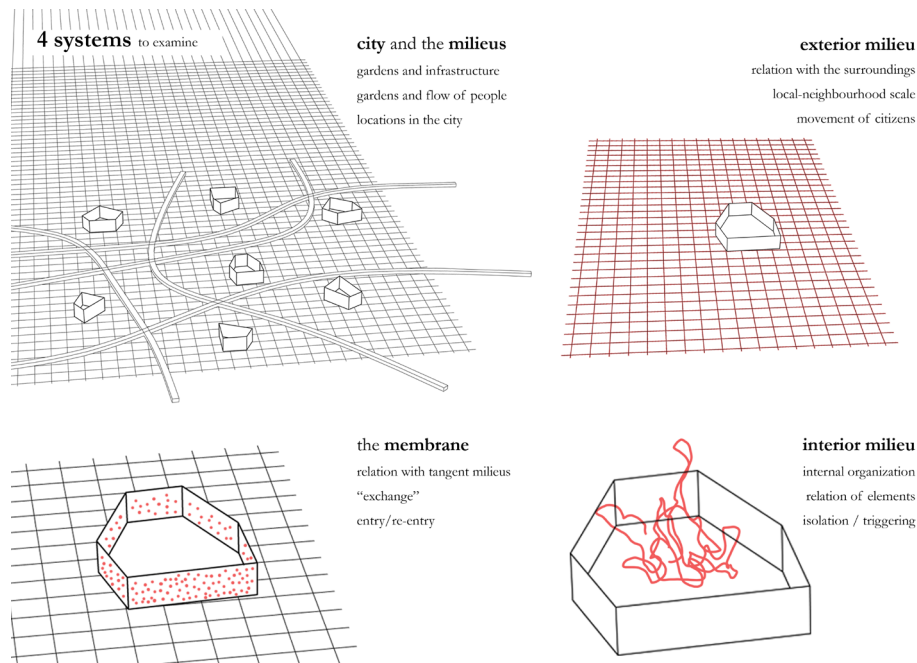
stake out as different entities.

Territories and their refrains can help us understand more the relations between the different territorialized assemblages of the City, relations that include exchanging of resources through their ‘cracks’. According to Deleuze a territory has three aspects (that can be seen as four): an interior milieu, an exterior milieu and an annexed milieu. These include an internal organization or zone, the external zone of its domain, energy resources and a membrane through which these resources are exchanged [Territory and Ritornello, p.213]. This fourfold ‘organization’ is important as it allows us to perceive more clearly the interrelations of the different territorialized assemblages of the city, to see how the one can affect the other.

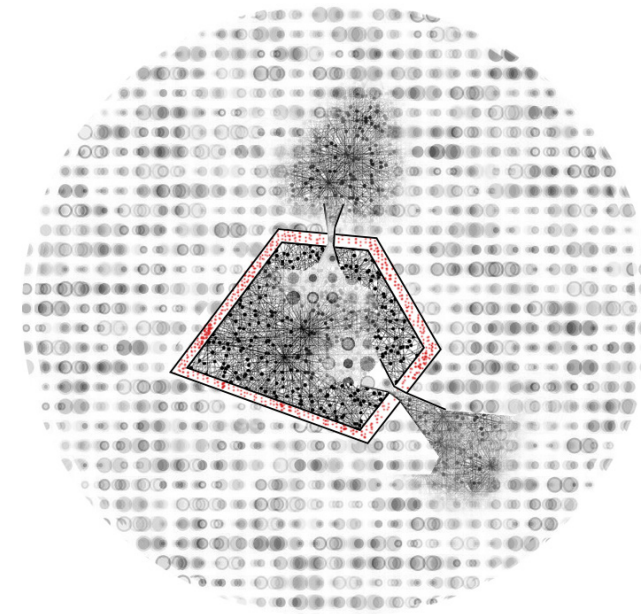
Both the concepts of the refrain and the fourfold organization of a territory will be a guide for the analysis and elaboration-design of the testing sites of this project. The refrain is connected with the interior milieu, the internal composition of the site-garden made up of expressive elements and materials all ‘functioning’ in a parallel way. It denotes its uniqueness due to its singularities, the elements that are relevant to it and significant for it. These qualities of the garden (living

and non-living) would create different affective relations with humans through engaging in experiences and sensations that would be intimate as well as out of the ordinary.

At this point comes the exterior milieu as it acts as a counterpoint to the affects of the interior. If there wasn’t a neighborhood around the site where people circulate, or sounds of cars and smells of food and rubbish then the affects of the garden would not be so intense. Its extra-ordinary character would not have the same impact on people. Furthermore, the membrane of the territory can be seen as the cracks of the site-garden to the outside, the moments of exchange that belong both to the interior and the exterior. Again these cracks presuppose the existence of the two milieus and show in what degree the one penetrates the other. How open is a territory to its surroundings? How can the exchange of resources through its membrane change it constantly creating always a new version of it? *The refrain has a point of stability, a circle of property, and an opening to the outside* [Onto-Ethologies, p.181] and it is this opening to the outside that allows the territory to renew itself, to be deterritorialized and reterritorialized.



02.c. Milieus and different scales of analysis
sketch by the author



02.d. A milieu with two cracks of exchange. The scheme is an interpretation of the theory if related to spatial settings. The translation between the two should not be direct but this is how I imagined the relations of exchange between one site and its surroundings
collage by the author

Seeing the new gardens as territories means also that they are made of smaller ones, the contained smaller territories in the interior milieu. Although this seems complicated, it is a helpful aspect for finding the singularities-the refrains of the different environments that constitute the one territory of the garden. Moreover, the degree of enclosure or openness between them can be seen as ‘cracks’ of exchanging. Moving from a micro-territory to another consists a constant exchange of experiences and sensations and this exchange will be different if the movement is reversed. These relations and movements through the ‘cracks’ will be examined later in the designing process.

If we imagine a City as an Affective Assemblage made up from smaller territorialized assemblages with expressive and material qualities that interact with each other and exchange resources that could lead to the re-territorialization of these assemblages then we could make room for freedom: for new practices to be attempted and new subjectivities to emerge constantly.

Affordances and Stimuli: Sites of material and expressive elements

To achieve an out-of-the-ordinary experience through designing specific territories in the city, I need to examine which practices are already there, the ordinary ones and which could be the ways to enrich them. The theory of Affordances will give me insights towards this direction. According to Chemero, affordances are *the relations between the abilities of animals and features of the environment* [An Outline of a Theory of Affordances, p.181] and these relations I would like to examine. Each environment due to its spatial and qualitative characteristics affords an (x) behavior to the body, and the affordances denote the potential capacities for action that an environment offers. They relate to features of the environment as well as to the abilities of organisms and their relation could be outlined by this structure drawn by Chemero: Affords- φ (feature, ability) [An Outline of a Theory of Affordances, p.189]. For instance, the following structure: Affords-climbing (riser’s height, climbing ability) could be interpreted as: a stair affords climbing from a person and this stair climbing and descending affordance is a relation between the climbing ability of the person as well as the height of the stairs’ risers.

I am interested in two aspects of this theory. Firstly, on the innumerable potentials of affordances a material object has. Even if a bench usually affords sitting for human it also affords climbing or lying. We could also say that it affords sitting for a cat or eating for a woodworm. Exploring the different affordances of existing objects would give new insights of how they can be (temporarily) inhabited by subjects, thus, new ideas that diverge from the ordinary practices. The second

aspect that interests me is that of the variation of ways to satisfy an ability. When new objects are to be introduced in the site the procedure may not only be to first introduce the objects and then see how they can be inhabited but also the reverse. If my desires for designing abilities come first, then I could explore the many ways in which these abilities could be exercised: the ability to hide can be satisfied by a wall but also by a high shrub or by a niche of a building.



02.d. What could a cylinder afford?

<https://uxdesign.cc/affordance-in-user-interface-design-3b4b0b361143>

Moreover, the structure of affordances mentioned in the first paragraph of the section hides another aspect that I want to explore. Because both factors in the parenthesis are variables we realize that not only the features of the environment can change but also the abilities of people. Although the latter change more slowly according to Chemero, it is more capable of changing the affordance itself: *The very same stair no longer affords climbing to an individual whose stepping abilities have decayed because of old age* [An Outline of a Theory of Affordances, p.193]. With this in mind I could enrich the plurality of the patterns of use through my design. Considering people of different ages exercising or being discouraged to exercise their abilities in the gardens opens my view for promoting different subjectivities through them.

Except for the behaviors that the material components of a territory may afford, its expressive qualities can function as triggers or as stimuli for the enhancing of the senses. The sensory perception of a territory gives us another aspect of its ‘melody’ and signals the body’s immersion in it and in the world. By sensing the world the body is continuously in the process of becoming: In sensory experience, there unfolds both the becoming of the subject and the happening of the world [...] *The Now of sensing belongs neither to objectivity nor to subjectivity alone, but necessarily to both together. In sensing, both self and world unfold simultaneously for the sensing subject; the*

sensing being experiences himself and the world, himself in the world, himself with the world [Chaos, Territory, Art_ Deleuze –and-the-framing-of-the-earth, p.8].

The sensory experience (body) and the environment are in a bidirectional relation as it's not only the environment that affects the body but the opposite also happens: *perceptual experience –which includes sensory elements, as well as memory, knowledge, and the conditioning and habits of the body- affects the range as well as the character of any environment* [Hidden Landscapes_ the metropolitan garden and the genius loci, p.33]. Thus, the affects that the stimuli or expressive qualities of the territory have on subjects depend on the specific reception of each body, making the experience intimate and unique for each one.

Moreover, even though when referring to sensory experience we are referring to all the senses the information one gets from stimuli is a combined information: senses cannot be separated from one another. Senses work in parallel and although at points some are more triggered by the others, every each one is lying there. All the information received through the senses is a trigger for action or better, reaction to the environment: *Human functioning depends on information [...] There are signs, both verbal and non-verbal that provide guidance to behavior* [The Experience of Nature, p.3]. Senses are extremely connected to affects and they can evoke the feeling of pleasure and comfort or fear and uneasiness or both of them at the same time.

What interests me is to examine the existing stimuli of the testing sites as well as to explore new ways in which different reactions and sensations could be triggered. The way expressive qualities affect the living being could also be sought between the micro-territories inside the site. Another aspect that could be examined is the proximity required for the 'reception' of a stimuli and its 'translation' to a reaction: *Proximity makes one attentive to the material reality of earth, plants and water, like mass, grain, fragility or suppleness. On the other hand [...] visual experience distances us from the tactile experience, it dematerializes the world* [Hidden Landscapes_ the metropolitan garden and the genius loci, p.33]. The analysis of the current expressive qualities and of the current affordances will be the basis upon which I will design new virtualities.

02.2.b Acupuncture

Mondrian's 'Starry Sky' [...] moved away from the classical, closed monocentered compositions towards an open, anti-classical compositional strategy based on randomly distributed , polycentered galaxy of nodal points.

[Aldo Van Eyck, Humnaist Rebel_ In betweening in a Postwar World, p.70]

The discipline of Architecture has borrowed the term of acupuncture from the traditional chinese medicine (or best, alternative medicine) to describe interventions at spots on an urban scale. Although it implies a relief from the city's tension through design, in the present project its role will be less "grandiose". The aim of the thesis is not to relieve pain neither to pretend that it will act as some kind of a savior for the urbanites. This would show a dramatic and pessimistic view of current life in the city. The project, on the contrary, aims to add new different settings and events next to the existing ones with an ambition that all together would enhance the way the subject experiences the city *as it makes its way through an increasingly urbanized lanscape* [Delirious Cities: Lisa's Robertson's Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture, p.239].

What I want to borrow from the use of Acupuncture in the realm of architecture is the polycentric kind of intervention that it announces. The need for this kind of intervention emanates from the fact that a city is already built with its materiality fixed in one way or another. If there is no plan for demolitions or official "re-arrangements", then what is left is its given structure. The places for this intervention would be the available ones, the cracks in-between the rigid spaces and structures (rigid not only in terms of materiality but also in terms of uses and norms). These cracks could mean spaces that are "dead" in relation to the active role that people have in them: spaces that are devoid of meaning for citizens even if they have a concrete use (e.g. a parking lot in-between blocks).

In order for an intervention to have impact on the bigger scale of an urban assemblage one needs to trigger changes in smaller scale, stimulate the emergence of new knots that are individual but at the same time profound: *Their presence must be felt everywhere throughout the area – on the way to work, on the way to home, as well as during the lunch hour. If such a system of parks is to succeed, there must be a PROXIMITY as well as a PROFUSION* [Green Galaxies; An Interstitial Strategy for Restorative Spaces, p.1]. Of course, the profundity that is needed depends on the scale of influence of each small intervention. Furthermore, by profundity I do not mean openness or visibility but that the small interventions should happen when there is the chance depending on the appropriateness of each situation.

And this brings us to the coincidental fact of this strategy. An intervention of acupuncture is like a constellation but with stars-interventions that pop up with their own rhythms and whenever that is possible. Not a stable constellation but a constantly-becoming one. *Its internal logic, determined by situation, dependent on time, coincidence and circumstance, is derived from the in-between and coincidental character of the gardens, simultaneously autonomous and situational. Overlaid upon the existing urban fabric it would offer a counter current to the rush of urban activity* [Green Galaxies; An Interstitial Strategy for Restorative Spaces, p.1]. This is important as it emphasizes the autonomy of each intervention even though it can vaguely imply that is a part of a “network”. The site-specificity of each available void plays crucial role in the form and expressivity that each new design will carry.

In correspondence with the project, we could say that the three new gardens will emerge as a first step to a long term procedure. Both autonomous and situational they will affect on a first level the sites they are designed upon and the neighborhood that surrounds them. Through time more such gardens could pop up throughout the city, on sites similar to the first ones but also very different in character and hue. The existence of a specific plan of which places are going to be activated is impossible as the procedure will take place in a random, non-hierarchical way and whenever the conditions allow it (citizen’s initiative, collaboration of neighborhood communities with landscape architects, initiative from the state, etc). This way of long-term vision makes us understand the city as an infinite, *open-ended pattern* [Aldo Van Eyck, Humnaist Rebel_ In betweening in a Postwar World, p.69] that is always in the procedure of becoming something else, unexpected.

At this point, I would like to prevent any disambiguity that may arise. Even if through time the gardens become known and function as pieces of the city, their design and internal organization would still oppose the ordinary of peoples’ practices. The aim of the project is to create such a design that could afford many alternative reactions that even when experienced for decades, even when loaded with new meanings and memories, they would still trigger whoever make his way through them. There is also a chance that according to changes in building industry or regulatory laws some of the gardens need to vanish. That would be an interesting phenomenon of gardens popping up and out through the years, in accordance to the city’s rhythms.

02.2.c. In search for intriguing affects

In the search of how to design green places that would oppose the homogeneity-the ordinary of a city I came across references that give insights for ‘extra-ordinary’ environments. I wanted to research on the affects that an environment could have on citizens who are tired from dealing with their everyday practices or even bored-indifferent from the ‘sameness’ of their surroundings. Affects that would create ‘lines of flight’ in-between the fixed actuality of citizens. I had this first thought that to deal with this fixed actuality I need a design that would reveal the virtualities of already used places of the city. A design that would transform the ordinary into extra-ordinary that will excite-intrigue people and drive them into oblivion.

Fictional Gardens: an endless source of the extra-ordinary



02.e/f/g Alice's Adventures in Wonderland/Through the Looking-Glass/Hypnerotomachia Poliphili

illustrations from the books

That is the magic of gardens and stories: they transfigure the real even as they leave it apparently untouched.

[Gardens_An Essay on the Human Condition, p.95]

My fascination for imaginary environments led me to study fictional settings, settings that unfold throughout novels-fiction. These fictional environments that vary from gardens and caves to forests and plains functioned as a trigger for exploring the out-of-the-ordinary aspects that my design could stimulate. Although not tangible and imaginary they are in a way real. Real in their own context when one follows their unraveling that is parallel to actual life.

Novels create margins, holes in time, where the threshold from the real to imaginary is fuzzy and the one feeds the other constantly. Fictional settings for me, have many qualities similar with the gardens I desire to create. First of all, they evoke this feeling of isolation that seems to ease the mind and that eliminates as if by magic the everyday thoughts. They are an opening, a small crack in the homogeneity of things, heterotopias. When absorbed in a novel's pages the attention one is exercising does not feel tiring and this is because reading fiction is not a matter of obligation but of joy: it is just for the sake of it⁶. Secondly, what the fiction allows is the unbelievable to happen. The paradox is excusable, or does not even need to be excused. Because it is in this specific context the readers have no objection, they believe in it as if it was real. *Stories do not alter reality any more than gardens do; by offering asylum from reality, both stories and gardens answer very real human needs, including the need to gain, from time to time, a distance from reality* [Gardens_An Essay on the Human Condition, p.95]

One more aspect that intrigues me in novels is the fact that in most cases there are no illustrations to represent the settings so it is only through description that one receives all the information. Thus, one can imagine these non-places in their own arbitrary way. Moreover, very often the descriptions are not based on the details of the physical aspects of the settings but rather constitute descriptions of the heroes' feelings. This correlation between words and experiences can give us insights for a design that is based on evoking feelings or affects rather than designing mere spatial settings.

The next lines are dedicated to the analysis of four fictional settings. I tried to extract the experiences that are described to afterwards correlate them with my desires for the new gardens in the city. Although the analogy is not 1 to 1, I nevertheless made some sketches of specific scenes described in the novels in order to give my imagination an image and to make the extracted feelings clearer to the readers. Next to these drawings and parallel to the description I sketched some more abstract schemes that try to translate the feelings into relations in space. The selection of the four novels is based for one more time on my searching for settings that trigger exploration and excitement as well as for settings that would make one feel tranquil and secluded.

6. We could see this pure joy as standing opposite to the extremely fixed and programmed ways that the 'mechanisms of desire' use to satisfy the supposed citizens' needs (reference to the problem statement in chapter 01.1). Joy is an affect, something unexpected, intangible and dependent only on the moment it is created and thus, it represents some kind of ecstasy for me. Such moments of "ecstasy" are the ones that I seek in the new gardens

fictional setting. 01. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, by Lewis Carroll

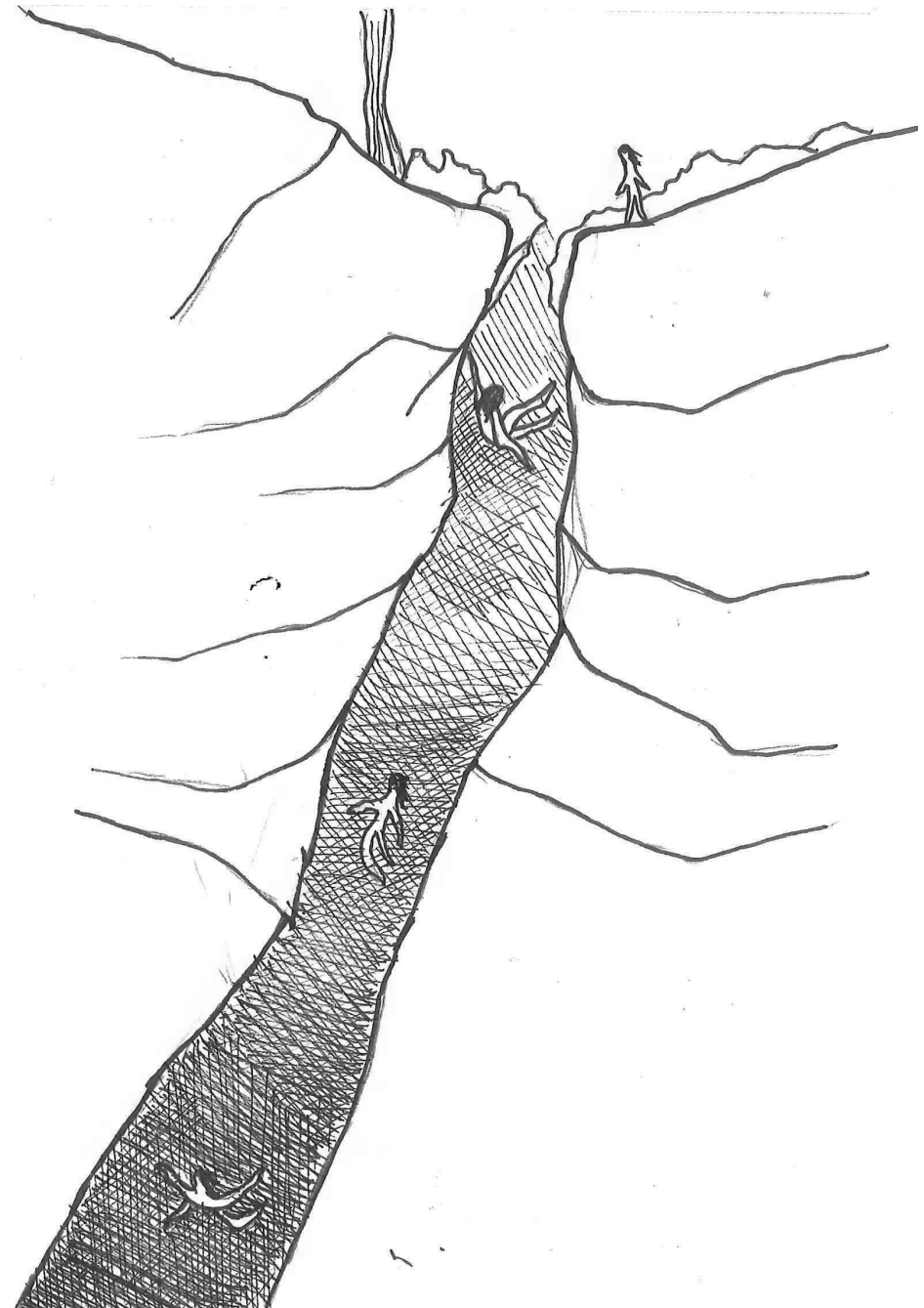
How queer everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual, I wonder if I've changed in the night? [*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, p.24]

This novel represents for me the longing and the unattainable, the anxiety and the paradox. Although it is supposedly addressed to children it is a dark story, full of stressful moments: *the first fictional garden many of us encounter lies at the bottom of a rabbit hole and, though beautiful, it is a far from happy place* [*The Most Beautiful Gardens Ever Written*, p.192]. It is about the dream-nightmare of young Alice. Throughout the dream she encounters multiple weird and unbelievable things and situations before she finally gets to the long-desired Queen of Heart's garden from where she eventually wants to escape by any means. This is already a paradox: the whole story is about this anticipation for a garden that is destined to be her prison at the end. What interests me is the journey before ending up to the garden and more specifically the initial scenes described from the moment she falls asleep on.

But first I would like to comment on the title's "Wonderland" that reassures my general feeling of the novel. At first sight it means the land full of wonders, of things out-of-the-ordinary: *For, you see, many out-of-the-way things had happened lately* [p.19]. But through a second reading we could also interpret it otherwise. If we consider the word "wonder" as a verb then it could imply all of Alice's hesitation and oscillation at many moments of her way to the garden. She is always talking to herself, trying to believe the unbelievable and to ease her fear of the unknown that is coming, unable to decide quickly what to do and which way to take: *she felt a little nervous about this; "for it might end, you know", said Alice to herself; "in my going out all together, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then?"* [p.21]. Moreover, if we replace the word with its homonymous "wander" then the endless wandering of Alice through difficulties becomes more prominent. In all three ways, the title already reveals that the whole story is about the anticipation and exploration, the anxiety and the surprise.

Diving into the beginning of the story three incidents-stages caught my attention. The first one is Alice's falling into the rabbit hole which is not an ordinary one. When one falls (in the actual world) it just takes some seconds to land on the earth but Alice's falling seems never-ending. It includes fear and danger but also a bit of excitement in her eyes: *Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her, and to wonder what was going to happen next.* [p.16]. Her 'journey' starts from the very first moment with curiosity and anxiety.

7. All passages are taken from the book

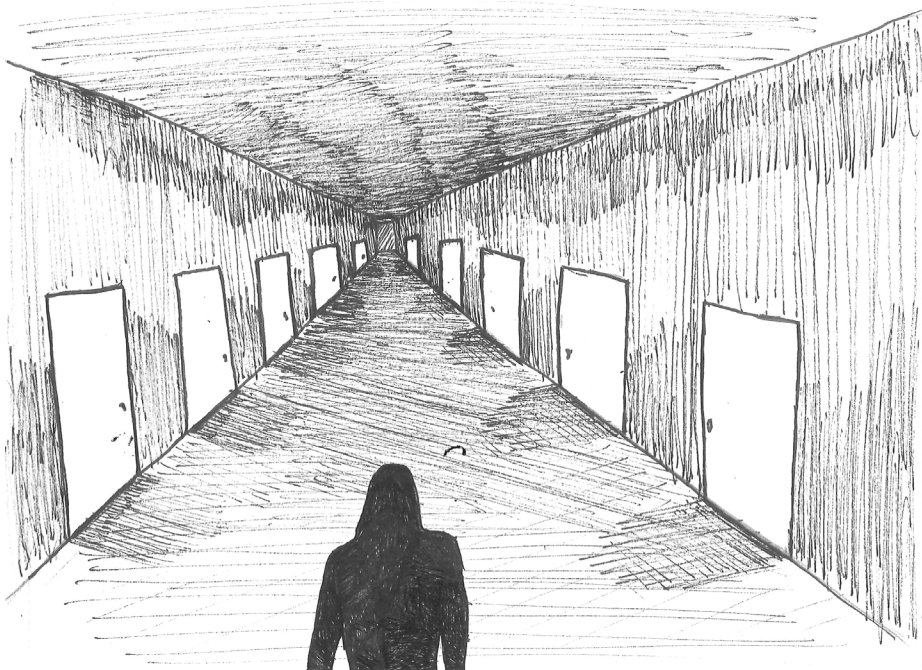


02.h. Falling down the rabbit hole: fear, curiosity, anticipation
sketch by the author

The endlessness of the falling is a prolonging of a route towards the end which also increases the feeling of anticipation. However, while falling with her anxiety growing she tries to console herself thinking of countries and geography, of her beloved cat Dinah while she also sings-murmurs words that make sense only to her. These thoughts and reactions show her need to feel protected and at comfort in an uneasy situation. Consolation balances anxiety.

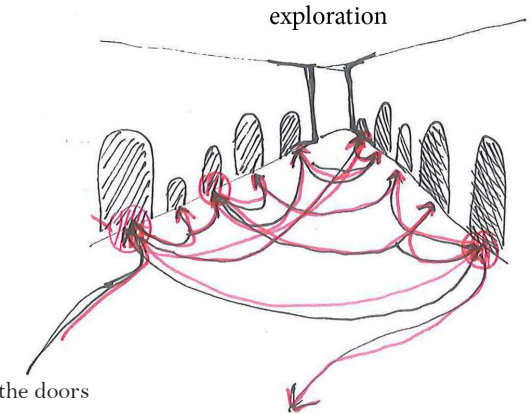
The second incident is after Alice's fall was over. When in the bottom of the hole she finds herself in front of a long passage. This passage is dark with only dim lighting and all around there are doors. But, after she tries every door with desperation she finds out that they are locked. This feeling of entrapment increases her anguish and fear and again prolongs her anticipation for what comes next: [...] and when Alice had been all the way down one side and up the other, trying every door, she walked sadly down the middle, wondering how she was ever to get out again [p.18]. We can see that her anticipation makes her explore the place but then it gives its place to disappointment and stress and even to a feeling of incompetence. And again, when worn out from her attempt she 'wonders'.

After a while, Alice still being in that hole she finds a way to unlock one door that is behind a curtain. But she cannot get in because the door is too small for her



02.i. Alice in front of the locked doors: longing, anxiety, frustration, mystery, disappointment
sketch by the author

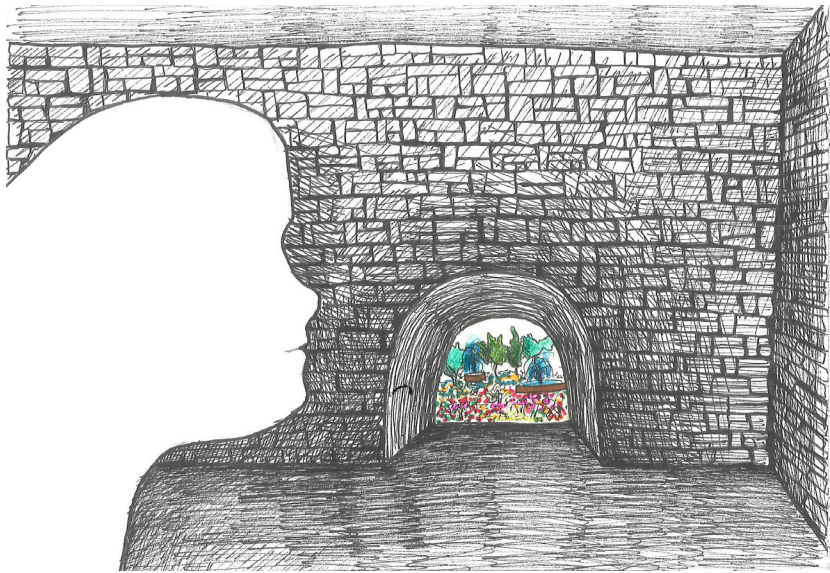
size. First, a hidden item that is discovered after exploration driven by her drive to escape that unpleasant place: a surprise and a temporary relief. Secondly, she cannot manage to get through. Here comes again disappointment and stress and even frustration. But what makes these feelings more intense is the 'object of desire' that is revealed on the other side of the door: a magnificent garden. She sees it but



02.j. The attempts of Alice to open the doors
sketch by the author

she cannot go, she cannot touch or smell it and that makes her for one more time both excited and desperate: *How she longed to get out of that dark hall, and wander about among those beds of bright flowers and those cool fountains, but she could not even get her head through the doorway* [p. 19]. Here we experience this contrast between the darkness and confusion on the one hand and the light and promising pleasure on the other.

The dream ends in the way it usually does: at the most intense and frightening moment. Her sister is waking her up worried from the little screams she makes. Alice in spite of all the stressful and scary experiences she went through in her dream she recalls it again thinking *what a wonderful dream it had been* [p. 118]. All the intense feelings, the agitation and the uneasiness were not seen as a nightmare in her mind but as something curious, an escape from reality: *she knew she had but to open them again [her eyes], and all would change to dull reality* [p. 119]. The ordinary and dull are counterpoints to the extra-ordinary and the exciting even if these include uncomfortable experiences.



02.k. In front of the unattainable garden of wonders: longing, decisiveness
 sketch by the author

fictional setting. 02. *Through the Looking-Glass*, by Lewis Carroll

This book is the sequel of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and it is about a new series of adventures for Alice that now has already grown up a little. The description of the garden and of the multiple other settings that unfold begins once again when Alice falls into sleep in her living room and starts dreaming (although in this book the fact that she is dreaming is not made clear to the reader throughout the story but only in the end).

The whole plot is activated through a contrivance of the writer: a looking-glass, a mirror, through which Alice passes on to the 'other side' of her house. Through this glass she enters a parallel world that seems to be the same but also completely different from her familiar world and house: *First, there's the room you can see through the glass- that's the same as our drawing-room only the things go the other way[...]You can just see a little peep of the passage in Looking-glass House, if you leave the door of our drawing room wide open: and it's very like our passage as far as you can see, only you know it may be quite different on beyond* [*Through the Looking-Glass*, p.12]⁸. What intrigued me most was this inverted, or better, distorted reality: a glass that does not reflect reality but through its permeability offers a new, more interesting way to see and experience it. There Alice could escape the dullness of her real house and be unbothered.

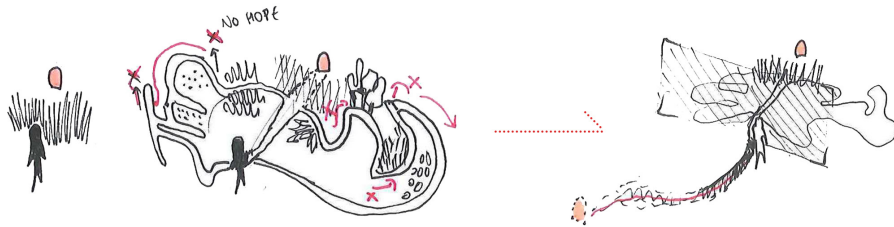
8. Passages with just the indication of page number are taken from the book

After having passed through the Glass she encounters the Looking-glass garden, "The Garden of Live Flowers". Here, the exploration and mystery begins. The garden is planted with a lush vegetation and Alice's desire is to reach the hill that she watches from far away in order to have a better view of the overall. But no matter how much she tries it seems impossible to make it: she can see the hill but she cannot go. She tries many different paths, even one that seems to lead straight to the mound but every attempt fails. It is as if something is making fun of her and the things seem paradoxical: *if I could get to the top of that hill; and here's a path that leads straight to it- at least, no, it doesn't do that- [...]Well this turn goes to the hill, I suppose- no, it doesn't!* [p.143]. The curiosity and the mystery that she experiences feed the longing for the unattainable hill and even though she may be disappointed from her failing attempts she each time sets anew for another route. Her moods alternate among eagerness and decisiveness to impatience and disappointment to decisiveness once again.



02.l. In front of the path that seems to lead to the hill. The unattainable feeds the mystery and the longing feeds the exploration
 sketch by the author

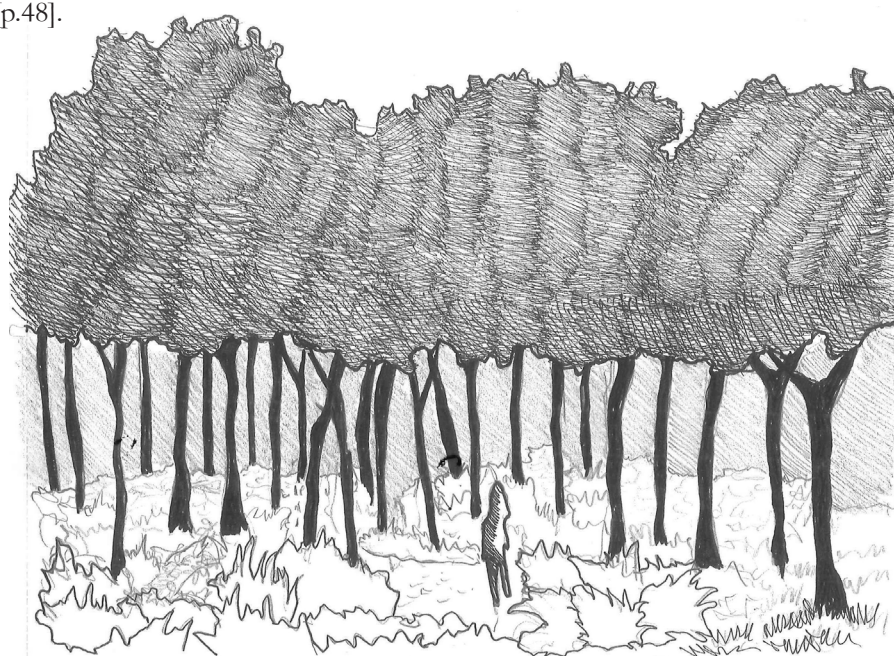
After a long wandering through the sinuous paths, she stopped trying and she simply wandered through the garden having conversations with talking flowers (!). Only when she suddenly saw from far the Red Queen and she tried to find her she accidentally gave the solution to the garden's riddle: she had to follow the opposite direction! This is when we recall that all this is happening to an inverted world.



02.m. The failed attempts towards the “object” of desire and the solution

sketch by the author

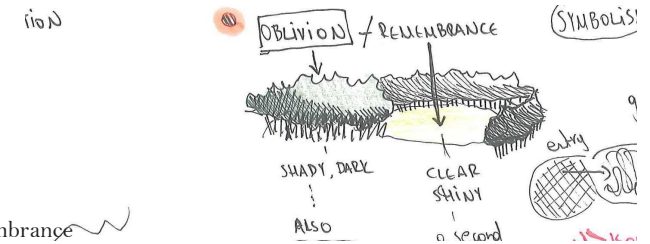
The next setting of the story that intrigued me is the passage of Alice from a forest *where things have no name* [p.46] to an open field. In the dark forest she first finds relief but at the same time she starts to forget the name of things: [...]it looked very cool and shady. ‘Well, at any rate it’s a great comfort,’ she said as she stepped under the trees, ‘after being so hot, to get into the— into what?’ she went on, rather surprised at not being able to think of the word. [p.46]. She is surprised, wondering even who she is, and her curiosity raises more. When she finds a fawn she feels again relieved as she now does not feel the solitude. She feels less scared and they both keep on strolling in the wood without remembering neither their names neither the names of the objects. When they accidentally find a glade then at once all the forgotten names come to their mind: ‘I’m a Fawn!’ it cried out in a voice of delight. ‘And, dear me! you’re a human child!’ [p.48].



02.m. In the shady forest of oblivion

sketch by the author

This setting has a strong symbolic meaning: the passage from oblivion to remembrance. The dark, shady forest symbolizes the oblivion that although it may seem scary, it has some moments of comfort: *But when Alice escapes language and logic, she enters, for a few moments, an idyllic state. In contrast to the garden Alice finds the wood... both pleasant and without meaning* [The Most Beautiful Gardens Ever Written, p.64]. It is where Alice can be whoever she wants or at least have a different name and that thought entertains her: *I wonder what’ll become of my name when I go in? I shouldn’t like to lose it at all- because they’d have to give me another, and it would be almost certain to be an ugly one. But then the fun would be, trying to find the creature that had got my old name!* [p.46]. The shiny clearing brings her relief but also it means the end of a “game”, the return back to reality and the ordinariness of real names...



02.n. From oblivion to remembrance

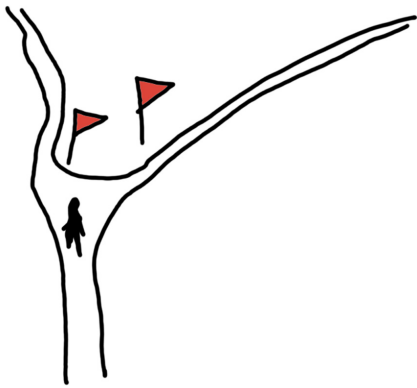
sketch by the author



02.o. In front of the glade of remembrance

sketch by the author

I would like to refer to one more incident that happens after Alice passes the glaze and she keeps walking into the wood. At first, there is only one road clearly defined and there are two finger-posts that show the same direction. Alice is sure that the two posts will divide later on, giving different directions. However, to Alice's surprise and wonder these signs kept on showing the same direction even whenever the path forms a fork! The signs include similar words but in a different order: *She went on and on, a long way, but wherever the road divided there were sure to be two finger-posts pointing the same way, one marked 'To Tweedledum's house' and the other 'To the house of Tweedledee.'* [p.48]. This is a paradox that brings Alice to doubt and confusion and imbue her wandering with mystery and curiosity. Once again Alice is alone and she has to figure out-explore how things should work out.



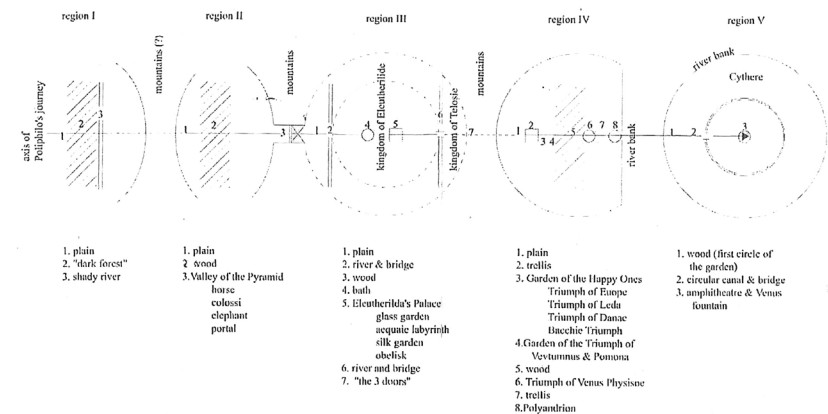
02.p. Doubt and confusion in front of the paradox of the signs: keep exploring
 sketch by the author

The story ends with Alice's waking up, again in the living room of her house where it all started. Once again the dream ended in an intense moment: a "fight" with the Red Queen. Despite the intensity and some uncomfortable situations that she encountered in her dream, Alice really enjoyed it and she keeps on wondering about things that happened in it. Although she recognizes it was a dream she acts as if it wasn't, as she just passed through all these adventures in reality and now she has the time to reflect upon them. It is a mingle between dream and reality, dreaming and daydreaming have a thin line to separate them...

fictional setting. 03. *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, by Francesco Colonna

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili or *The Strife of Love in a Dream*, is one of the weirdest novels written, especially if one considers the date of its publication: 1499. The plot is unfolding inside a dream of the hero but things here get more complicated as the second part of the book is about the dream of another person. A dream inside a dream. The book describes the adventures, hardships and misfortunes, that the hero, Poliphilo, experiences in his "journey" to find Polia, the love of his life. *Poliphilo* means the one that loves (philos/φιλος from Greek) Polia. The whole story is triggered by the feeling of rejection: in reality Polia is unattainable for him, as it is made clear from the beginning, before falling asleep, that she would never return his love: *I sighed and wept for my importunate and unsuccessful love, thinking over point by point the nature of unmatched affection, and how best to love someone who does not love in return* [*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, p.12].

What is surprising with this novel is its innumerable descriptions not only of spatial settings and architectural elements but also of Poliphilo's feelings each time he comes across a new adventure. Although exhausting most of the times, these descriptions give us very clearly the alternations of his mood: he is very often scared and terrified, a coward we could say that despite his heart shaking and fright he continues his journey fueled by his love for Polia. The plot unfolds in a linear way and it is structured by different environments in succession. The end of his journey is also the end of his dream. All these different "worlds" that he passes act as gardens according to Jane Gillette: *[...] Poliphilo's extended dream-construct can be called a garden in its entirety. More literally it is a nightmare landscape studded with hallucinatory gardens* [*The Most Beautiful Gardens Ever Written*, p.21].



02.q. Diagram of Poliphilo's journey through different settings to the Island of Cythera
 Scheme from the book [*The Afterlife of Gardens*]

Gillette in her book also indicates that the whole novel is imbued by Poliphilo's anguish to be loved by Polia: *Poliphilo's obsessive desire, his deluded hopes, his never-quite-attained sexual satisfaction create a state of anxiety transferred to buildings, gardens and artifacts (including women's clothing, shoes, and hair), all endlessly described in the first-person voice of Poliphilo* [The Most Beautiful Gardens Ever Written, p.22]. The most intriguing fact for me is this endless alternation between stress and relief, of wandering and stasis (stop) as well as the sudden changes from one condition to the other. I chose to analyze three "moments" of the story to make that clear.

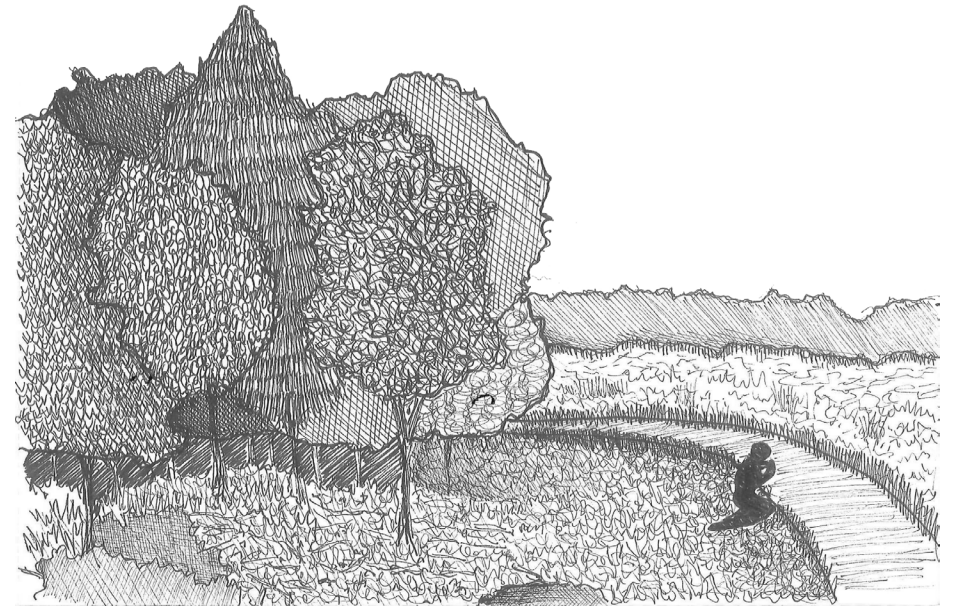


02.r. Stress/Relief _ Sudden change _ Wandering/Stasis
sketch by the author

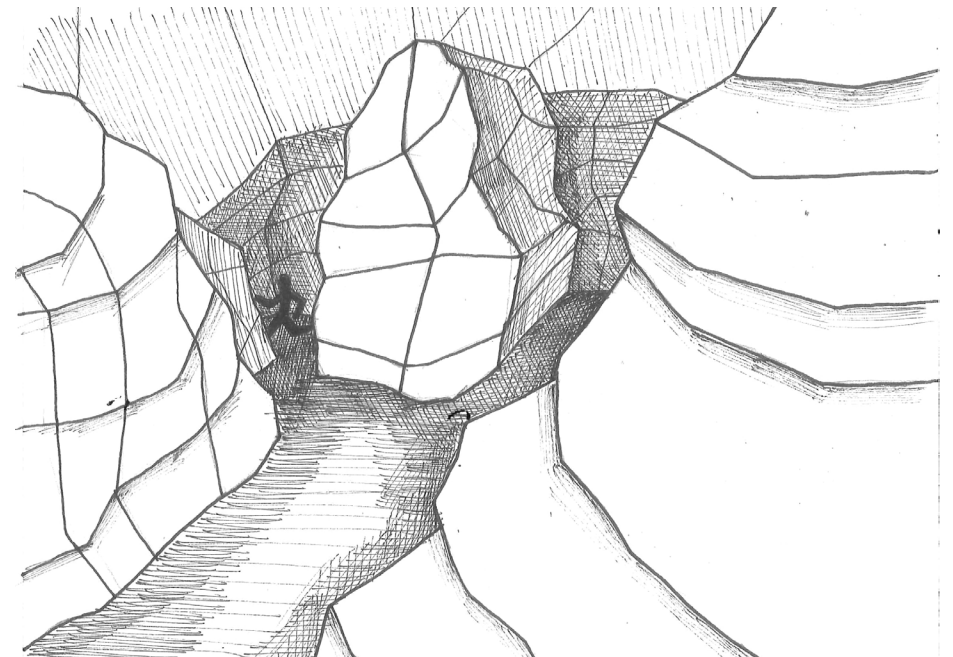
The first setting, in the beginning of his dream, is Poliphilo's passing through a forest. From his descriptions we can understand that due to the darkness and wilderness of the forest he is in panic and he stressfully seeks to find an exit as soon as possible. His wandering seems endless and we can feel his constant fear that something bad may happen: [...] *I imagined howling wolves falling upon me and devouring my dismembered flesh. My fear made me waver, but I cursed my inertia and determined to lose no more time in finding an exit and escaping the imminent danger. I forced my besitant and wavering paces to hurry on, often falling over roots protruding drom the earth, seeking at random now this way, now that, now right, now left, now forwards, now back again, not knowing where I was going* [p.14]⁹. He is hastily searching for an exit like a blind person and puts a lot of effort to avoid brambles and thorn-bushes with his anguish growing bigger as he cannot still see a visible path that would indicate an exit: *Seeing no indication of a viable path or trodden way, I was much confused and dismayed* [p.14]. His fears finally stop as he suddenly comes across an open field. Without knowing how he got there, he feels relieved as his *spirits began to revive* [p.15] and he is heading for a stream that he discovers to drink water: a stop of relief and regeneration after a struggle of fear and anxiety.

The second setting is an even more stressful one: Poliphilo after being chased by a dragon he achieves to escape through a gate that leads to a complex of dark caves. The fact that nothing is visible and the caverns are like a maze increases his desperation and anguish: *I fled through many twists and turns, many devious paths, which made me think I was in the inextricable maze of clever Daedalus[...]because it contained so many baffling turnings and returnings, with frequent doors that led nowhere but sent one back to make the same errors again* [p.63]. He is still afraid of the dragon as he is not sure where he is going

9. Passages with just the indication of page number are taken from the book



02.r. Poliphilo's moment of stasis and relief: water
sketch by the author



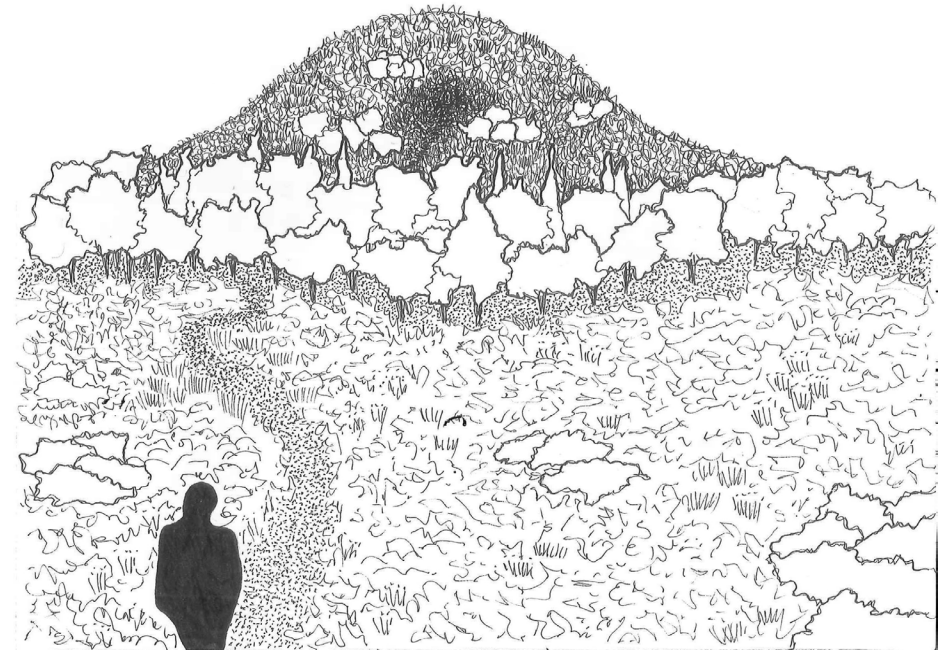
02.s. Running in the dark cave
sketch by the author

and he fears he could end up again in front of the monster.

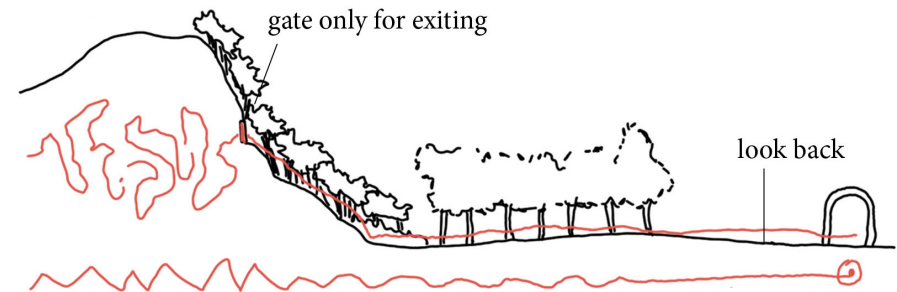
In his effort to escape he stresses his arms on the walls of the cave to gain his orientation: the touch here acts as a defensive mechanism. All this endless running has exhausted him, but also provokes his exasperation as well as an affliction. He is once again scared for his life. Just as in the previous setting, the end of his suffering comes very abruptly : *And behold! I began to descry a faint light* [p.65]. He hasten as much as he could, with all his senses at an extreme tension and with his optimism starting to re-invigorate: *Having been somewhat consoled by the blessed light, my depressed and discouraged spirits revived, and my debilitated energies recovered fully* [p.66]. The caves represent the affliction, the suspense, the agitation as well as the oblivion. Poliphilo forgot who he was as he had no time to think about anything rather than his escape. The light that came through a *narrow funnel-like tube* [p.65] was the good sign foretelling his future, his source of relief.

The third setting comes in continuation with the previous one. It is about Poliphilo making his way towards an open field that he distinguishes from far away. Once outside the caverns he blends into a forest but this time the atmosphere is pleasant with light penetrating through the light foliage of trees: [...] *I descended some way down the slope and came to a thick copse of chestnuts at the foot of the mountain* [...] *I enjoyed passing through its damp grass and pleasant shade* [p.69]. He passed by two cooling brooks with murmuring water ,then crossed a bridge to find himself on a shiny plain full of vegetation. This brightness and calmness of the plain eased his mind and he went on to reach a fountain-sculpture. He can see again that water acts as the total relief point after his adventure. Only when he turned to look back he realized which way he followed to reach the plane and he gazed at the mountain he discovered something interesting: the gate from which he came out was so hidden with vegetation and shrubs that only if someone had made the same way would understand its position. It was where the shrubs grew bigger and denser: [...] *concealing its entrance with climbing shrubs, especially ivy and other such leafage, so that one could scarcely see any exit or opening. The place served only for exiting, not for returning, though it was easy enough for me to discern it, because it was all surrounded by the thick, dark foliage that would prevent others from knowing it was there* [p.68-69].

The journey of Poliphilo keeps on for other almost 400 pages. His ending at the isle of Cythera is the resolution of the story. There he achieves to get at the closest possible with Polia but it is then that his dream-nightmare ends. Although that leaves him with a feeling of sadness, he seems more comfortable with accepting the rejection of his love as he sighs *Farewell, then, Polia* [p.465]. The journey, even if it was full of misfortunes, was reviving for him and at many points he stopped



02.t. Looking back at the mountain: dense vegetation as indicator for the gate
sketch by the author



02.u. Transition from intensity to relief: refuge with water / retrospection
sketch by the author

and reconsidered his life, his goals as well as the meaning of his love. Only in the last stasis at Cythera he could understand what he passed through and the same happens with the reader: [...] *it is only in retrospection that we have understood fully what we have encountered* [*The Afterlife of Gardens*, p.62]. His journey resembles a delirium where everything is allowed to happen and each time: the moments of anxiety,

fear and pain are there but always before relieving ones. His effort for Polia's love is condemned as all this happens in a dream: *The only perfect garden would, after all, be one in which Polia returns Poliphilo's love* [*The Most Beautiful Gardens Ever Written*, p.22]. But...who cares about Polia when he had some of the most delusional and crazy experiences?

fictional setting. 04. *Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The last fictional setting is a fragment of Rousseau's book *Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, an *epistolary novel* [<https://www.enotes.com/topics/new-heloise>] weaved from many brief letters between the main hero and other characters. The garden which I analyzed is described at the section "Lettre XI à milord Edouard", a letter that the hero, Saint-Preux, sends to his dear friend describing his visit to the garden of Julie, his "forbidden" lover. This setting is quite different from the other three as it is not about the paradox or the anxiety, but rather about the marginality of the garden and the tranquility and seclusion one experiences in it.

Louis Marin in his book *Lectures traversières*, dedicates a chapter on a philosophical analysis of Julie's garden. One of the most important interpretations, in my opinion, that he is highlighting is that of the garden's border and subsequently of the moment of entering in the garden. According to Marin, there are two times, *deux temps*, one of the timeless present of the limit/border and the other that of the open present of the garden. These two times are "activated" by this instant of the passage from the outside world to the garden: *Between these two times, between the timeless present of the limit which excludes from the represented existence the closed place and this other timeless present of the inside where the limit itself vanishes and where the other space of the place opens which is not seen but radiates to the extent of the walk that makes it born, there is this instant that conjoins and separates them from each other, this instant-moment between two permanences, that of the forbidden representation and that of the perpetually productive fiction* [*Lectures traversières*, p.67]¹⁰.

The limit represents the enclosure but it is the elaboration of it, its texture and form, its spatial hypostasis that enhances or not the feeling of seclusion. The first setting is exactly this passing of the hero to the garden. What excites him is the fact that the garden is completely hidden from the rest of the house, making its existence clothed with mystery. It is withdrawn and detached from Julie's every day

10. Original text: *Entre ces deux temps, entre le présent intemporel de la limite qui exclut de l'existence représentée le lieu clos et cet autre présent intemporel du dedans ou s'annule la limite elle-même et ou s'ouvre l'espace autre du lieu qui n'est pas vu mais rayonne a la mesure de la promenade qui le fait naître, il y a cet instant qui les conjoint et les écarte l'un de l'autre, ce présent-instant entre deux permanences, celle de la représentation interdite et celle de la fiction perpétuellement productive.*



02.v. The garden absolutely hidden from the house by the alley
sketch by the author

affairs even though it is located next to the house. The only thing that separates house and garden is an alley of alders and hazel trees but the way the limit is treated makes the inside of the garden seem like the secret garden of Eden, something that you cannot imagine in advance: *This place, although very close to the house, is absolutely hidden by the covered alley that separates them, in such way that we don't perceive none of its parts. The thick foliage that surrounds it does not allow the eye to penetrate it, and it is always carefully closed with a key. I had just entered inside and because of the door being hidden from alders and hazel trees that do not leave but two narrow passages at the sides, I could not see, turning round, from where I had entered and noticing no sign of door, I found myself there as if I had fallen from the clouds* [*Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse*, p.296-297]¹¹.

Actually we could say that there are three "times" in this passage through the crack of the limit/membrane from the outside to the inside: the past, which is that of the the daily affairs of the house, the timeless present of the limit and



02.v. Thick border with specific but imperceptible slits/entrances
sketch by the author

11. Original text: *Ce lieu, quoique tout proche de la maison, est tellement caché par l'allée couverte qui l'en sépare, qu'on ne l'aperçoit de nulle part. L'épais feuillage qui l'environne ne permet point à l'œil d'y pénétrer, et il est toujours soigneusement fermé à la clef. A peine fus-je au dedans, que, la porte étant masquée par des aunes et des coudriers qui ne laissent que deux étroits passages sur les côtés, je ne vis plus en me retournant par où j'étais entré, et, n'apercevant point de porte, je me trouvai là comme tombé des nues.*

the open-present/future of strolling in the garden. This separation of times, of course, is not happening literally but it helps us share the experience of the hero: he feels like he is in a place extremely different and separated from the earthly life.

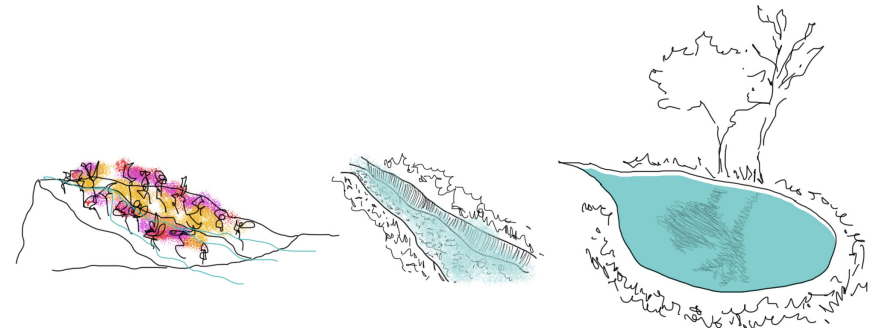
The second setting is from when Saint-Preux is already inside, making his way through the garden, with the company of Julie's father. What amazes him is the seeming abandonment of the garden: even though it is very carefully created from the owners, this care is "hidden" so it seems random and left to nature: *This place is charming, it is real, but also rural and abandoned; I cannot perceive any sign of human intervention...here and there, without order, without symmetry* [Julie on *La nouvelle Héloïse*, p.297-298]¹². This "fake" wilderness makes his feeling of seclusion and of being in a whole other world more intense: the garden acts as an asylum. Furthermore, the hero is astonished by all the *sensible effects*¹³ that the garden creates. He gets lost in the enjoyment of sounds from water and animals, the touch of the ground, the taste of fruits, the sight of huge syntheses of trees, brambles, flowers and climbing plants. All these elements "speak" to his senses and he feels absorbed by all the events that happen simultaneously around him and on his way further in the garden. This absorption automatically makes him forget more about the outside world and about thinking: *I was more zealous of watching the objects than examining their impressions, and I loved to indulge to this charming contemplation without making any effort to think* [Julie on *La nouvelle Héloïse*, p.299]¹³.

Among the things that are happening inside the garden, the element of water plays an important role in the whole experience of the hero. Although it is never fully visible, its presence is felt through its sounds and the freshness it produces. Its form changes throughout the garden making the experience more intriguing for the visitor: sometimes it is running imperceptibly through the grass and the flowers, other times it runs in small streams and creeks while some others it is resting in deeper canals. All these water bodies other than different forms, they also produce different effects: the water is dirty and silent when running on the ground, more bright with bubbling sounds when running on stream with gravel bottom and more calm and reflective when it is gathered in bassins-deep canals.¹⁴

12. Original text: *Ce lieu est charmant, il est vrai, mais agreste et abandonné; je n'y vois point de travail humain...çà et là, sans ordre et sans symétrie.*

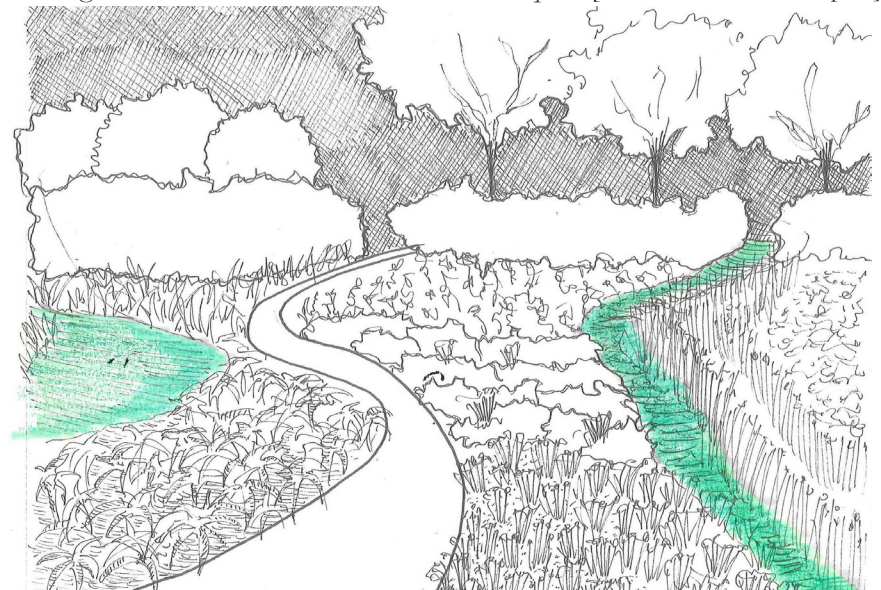
13. Original text: *J'étais plus empressé de voir les objets que d'examiner leurs impressions, et j'aimais à me livrer à cette charmante contemplation sans prendre la peine de penser.*

14. *Toutes ces petites routes étaient bordées et traversées d'une eau limpide et claire, tantôt circulant parmi l'herbe et les fleurs en filets presque imperceptibles, tantôt en plus grands ruisseaux courant sur un gravier pur et marqueté qui rendait l'eau plus brillante. On voyait des sources bouillonner et sortir de la terre, et quelquefois des canaux plus profonds dans lesquels l'eau calme et paisible réfléchissait à l'oeil les objets.*



02.w. Three forms of water- three effects
sketch by the author

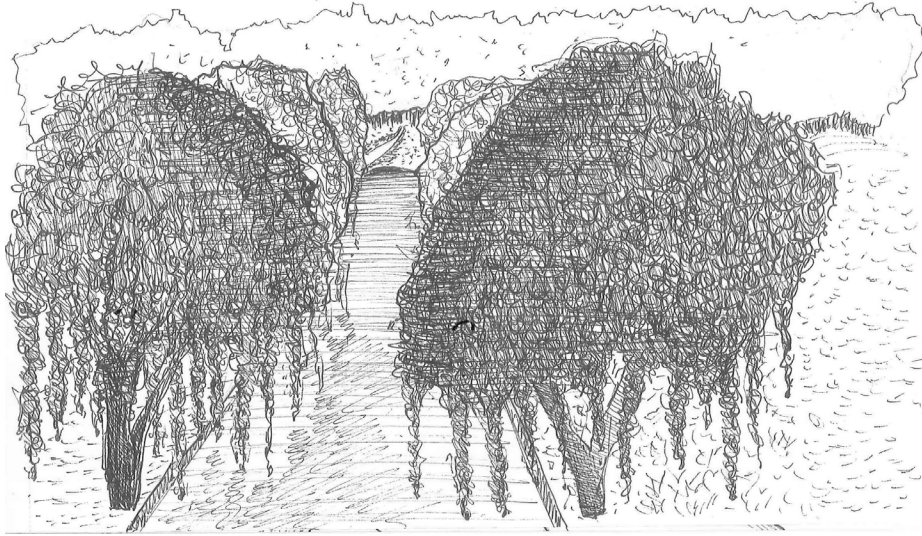
Another interesting fact is that the sinuosity of the paths and the waterways gives an air of mystery to the journey through the garden. A visitor can never realize the size and the articulation of the garden because everything is curved and put like random. This enhances the feeling that this secluded world is infinite and that everything is implied: *The essential idea. Is to hide the vanishing point of perspective by curvature. We would gain the advantage to enlarge to the imagination the place where one is .. one would think oneself lost in an immense park ... all that gives rise to the imagination excites the ideas and nourishes the spirit* [Lectures traversières, p.68]¹⁵.



02.x. The unexpected lies at the end of the curvature
sketch by the author

15. Original text: *L'idée essentielle. Est de cacher le point de fuite de la perspective par la courbure. On gagnerait l'avantage d'agrandir à l'imagination le lieu où l'on est...on se croirait perdu dans un parc immense...tout ce qui donne prise à l'imagination excite les idées et nourrit l'esprit"*

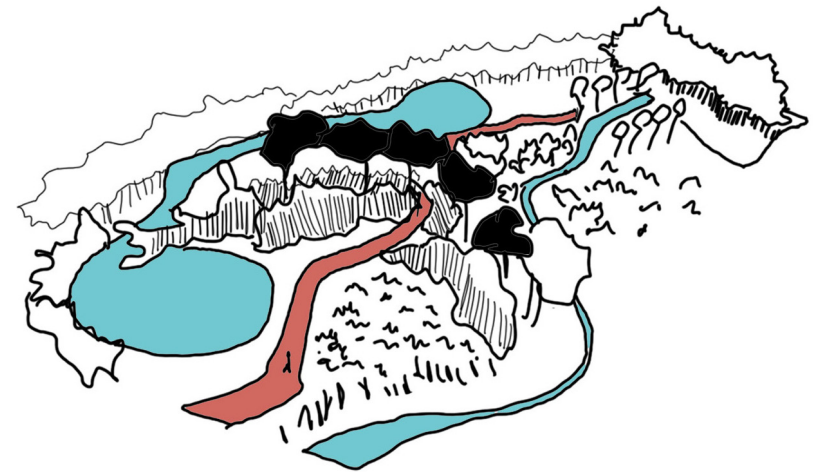
The last setting is at the end of the garden, or better, at the other limit of it, where it meets the rural areas outside. This is where all the sources of water that mysteriously ran and traversed the garden, meet: they end up in a stream that runs between two rows of old willows. After the willows there is a small basin and a slope planted with different vegetation in order to cover the limit that is on the other side.



02.y. The isle of willows with the high trees as background
sketch by the author

I could imagine this setting as a quite intimate place where everything is calm, still and silent. The water that slightly ripples absorbs the eye and the foliage of the willows that mingle with each other, touch the water and dive into it, has a “tranquilizer” effect. The view of the background in the distance does not imply any limit but seems again like the garden is going on endlessly. There are indeed walls of the garden but they are successfully “disguised” and everything works at intensifying the experience near the limit: *These two sides, he continued, were closed by walls; the walls have been masked, not by espaliers, but by thick shrubs the boundaries of the place for the beginning of a wood. On the other two sides there is strong hedges, well stocked with maple, hawthorn, holly, troëne, and others mixed shrubs that remove the appearance of hedges and give them that of a coppice. You do not see anything aligned, nothing leveled; never did the cord enter this place; the Nature does not plant anything; sinuosities in their fake irregularity are spared with art to prolong the walk; hide the edges of the island, and enlarge the extent apparent without making inconvenient and too frequent detours* [Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse, p.302]¹⁶.

The hero visits the garden once again the next day but this time he is alone. We can see his anticipation to go again in that *deserted island* as he calls it [Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse, p.306]. The feeling of seclusion that the garden evokes makes him feel protected, away from the bad things that happen to him in the ordinary world: *This morning I got up early and with the eagerness of a child I went to shut myself up in the desert island. What pleasant thoughts did I hope to bring to this place solitary, where the sweet aspect of nature alone should drive out of my memory all this social and artificial order that made me so unhappy!* [Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse, p.306]¹⁷. The garden as an asylum, a whole different world that through its seeming randomness and indeterminacy acts as a core of absorption and oblivion. The garden is at the margin of the every day life but also a margin itself. As Louis Marin points out, the garden is like a parasite: *The creeping plant, parasite of the tree; the garden, parasite of the domain; the letter XI, parasite of the novel of Saint-Preux and Julie: marginality at all levels* [Lectures traversières, p.78]¹⁸.



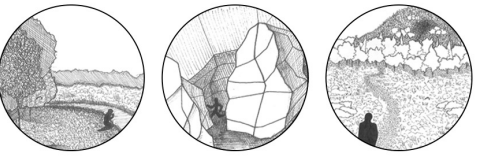
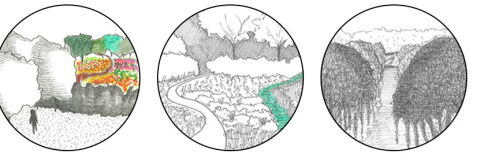
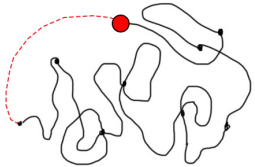
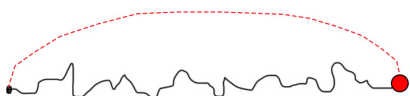
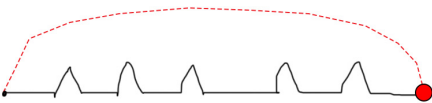

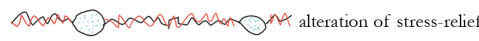

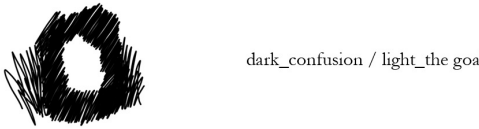

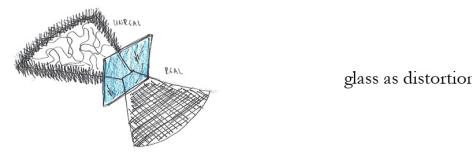





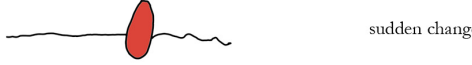

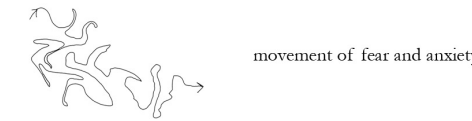






02.z. The journey in the infinite garden of absorption and unexpectedness.
sketch by the author

16. Original text: *Ces deux côtés, continua-t-il, étaient fermés par des murs; les murs ont été masqués, non par des espaliers, mais par d'épais arbrisseaux qui font prendre les bornes du lieu pour le commencement d'un bois. Des deux autres côtés règnent de fortes baies vives, bien garnies d'érable, d'aulépine, de houx, de troëne, et d'autres arbrisseaux mélangés qui leur ôtent l'apparence de baies et leur donnent celle d'un taillis. Vous ne voyez rien d'aligné, rien de nivelé; jamais le cordeau n'entra dans ce lieu; la nature ne plante rien au cordeau; les sinuosités dans leur feinte irrégularité sont ménagées avec art pour prolonger la promenade; cacher les bords de l'île, et en agrandir l'étendue apparente sans faire des détours incommodes et trop fréquents.*"

17. Original text: *Ce matin je me suis levé de bonne heure et avec l'empressement d'un enfant je suis allé m'enfermer dans l'île déserte. Que d'agréables pensées j'espérais porter dans ce lieu solitaire, où le doux aspect de la seule nature devait chasser de mon souvenir tout cet ordre social et factice qui m'a rendu si malheureux!*

18. Original text: *La plante rampante, parasite de l'arbre; le jardin, parasite du domaine; la lettre XI, parasite du roman de Saint-Preux et de Julie: marginalité à tous les niveaux*

<p>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</p> 	<p>Through the Looking-Glass</p> 	<p>Hypnerotomachia Poliphili</p> 	<p>Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse</p> 
<p>plot's route</p> 			
<p>spatial settings/ experiences</p>  <p>alteration of stress-relief</p>  <p>the unattainable</p>  <p>dark_confusion / light_the goal</p>  <p>exploration and anxiety</p>	 <p>glass as distortion</p>  <p>exploration and disappointment</p>  <p>the inverted as a solution</p>  <p>moment of choice and doubting</p>	 <p>alteration of stress and relief</p>  <p>from confusion and discomfort to relief</p>  <p>sudden change</p>  <p>wandering and stasis</p>  <p>movement of fear and anxiety</p>	 <p>two times and the border</p>  <p>no evidence of entering</p>  <p>curvate_the unexpected</p>  <p>no evidence of the limit</p>
<p>extracted affects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● anxiety ● anticipation-longing ● mystery ● curiosity ● disappointmet ● surprise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● surprise ● paradox ● mystery ● oblivion ● curiosity ● suspense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● fear ● doubting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● anxiety ● agitation ● mystery ● curiosity ● disappointmet ● surprise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● suspense 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● absorption ● anticipation ● solitude ● curiosity ● silence ● surprise

02.a.a. The four fictional settings in parallel

sketch by the author

Parallelism and Conclusions as basis for the design

experiences

The insights from the four settings that have been analyzed can function as a theoretical basis and a trigger for the design. In the next lines I attempt an interpretation of this analysis. It is not that much about the specific settings and their spatial organization as it is about the affects they create and their relations. Through the analysis of the novels we could see that there is a common fact that binds them together, a common logic that creates all these states of extra-ordinary experiences.

Although in each micro-setting (micro-assemblage) of the novels there are specific feelings -such as fear- that are highlighted, these feelings are not working alone: the mental states of agitation and tranquility, of seclusion and fear, of boredom and surprise coexist and are interdependent. They weave the plot together and it is their contrapuntal relation that makes the setting that strong, as much real as imaginary. I will elaborate more in detail this relation in the next chapter where the affective gradients will be formulated.

If we look carefully, we will see that after every scene of intensity there is another of relief, a partial resolution of a specific problem. The same happens the other way around. In fact, the key element for the intensity of the novels is this alternation of ‘contradictory’ experiences whose succession drives the heroes to move on. A novel would not be so intriguing if there was constantly one level of intensity: if everything worked well or if there was a continuous feeling of anguish and tension, the plot would be boring or disturbing. In three out of the four novels (fictional settings .01/.02/.03), there is this constant **oscillation between comfortable and uneasy situations** and this oscillation is triggered by the need for exploration.

This **exploration** does not always stand alone. In the case of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, the trigger for exploration is the final goal of the heroes: for Alice to go to the idyllic secret garden and for Poliphilo to meet with his beloved Polia. This is **the unattainable** which gives them power to move on. However, we notice that the heroes are extremely absorbed and caught in every moment that there is a ‘test’ and what helps them come through it is not only the thought of the final goal but also their ‘mechanisms’ to deal with each tribulation. This conclusion points out the importance of the hero’s/person’s own **perceiving of each setting and their reaction to it.**

Another worth of noticing condition that is linked to the alternation between easy and uneasy situations is that of the **alternation between wandering and stasis** (from the Greek word στάσις that means stop). For me, wandering is a process while stasis is a moment. Wandering in the novels can be pleasant (*Julie ou La nouvelle Héloïse*), intriguing (*Through the Looking-Glass*), but also annoying and stressful (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*). It moves the heroes forward even though not always in a straight way. But what wandering needs is a counter-point and that is the moment of stasis. The ‘game’ is played always between these two. By stasis I do not always mean the action of standing still. Rather, it is about the moment when one takes a break, a pause, and contemplates on situations: they may retrieve something from their memory or try to figure out how they will move on or even stop thinking in order to clear their mind from preceding confusion. The moments of stasis are more connected to the easing of the mind, the tranquility, whereas the process of wandering is an expression of exploration.

Another condition that is common in all four fictional settings and closely linked to the exploration is the feeling of **the unexpected**. This feeling works on two levels: it affects as much the reader as the hero of the novel. Neither of them knows what is going to happen next: although readers may have a clue about the continuation of the story, they still cannot imagine the plot’s resolution until the very last page. For the heroes the obstacles getting in the way of ‘seeing’ clearly are the different micro-assemblages of fear, anxiety and confusion they come across. Even when such uneasy situations does not exist, as in Julie’s garden, the hero carries throughout his journey this feeling of the unexpected that is enhanced by the maze-like organization and the seeming randomness of the garden: all these, contribute to a gradual and slow revealing of the overall setting. As for the readers, the obstacle is each next page, the open-present of the action of reading. The fact that everything is anticipated, that everything is virtual till it becomes actual, is one of the main triggers for moving on.

The plot’s route is also a fact that will be useful for the design later. Some of the plots are **maze-like**, such as in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* while others are more **linear**. That is not translated in spatial terms but rather in the image of the hero’s journey that the readers delineate on their mind. In the novels that have a labyrinthine weaving one can follow the hero passing from the same settings **more than once**, each time with a different attribute that helps the plot move on. In the linear ones, the heroes follow a straight route ahead passing from different environments but they **never go back**.

Where they end up also has a significance in terms of the route. The fact that the first three novels constitute dreams of the heroes predetermines the end: they wake up exactly where they were without having a second chance of experiencing the delusional journey they have been through. They made their way till the end but no one returned through the same settings. In the last novel, on the contrary, the hero makes his way back to the beginning of the garden and he also visits it a second time the next day. In my opinion, as far as the new gardens are concerned, this difference of a **closed and an open ending** of the settings can play an important role in defining the experience on three levels: from the city into the garden, within the garden, from the garden to the city.

reactions

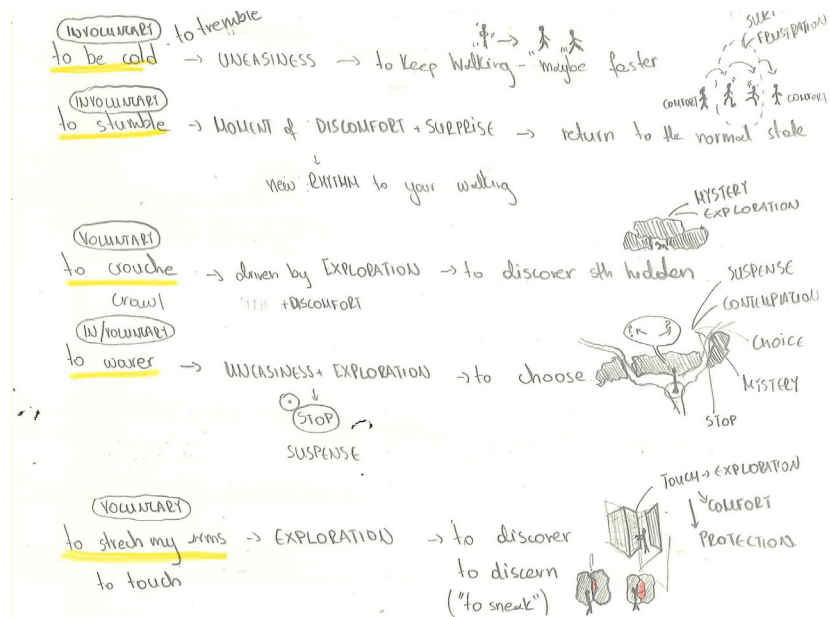
While reading the novels I found some of the bodily actions of the heroes to be intriguing, especially the ones that seem uneasy and uncomfortable. I was interested in studying which experiences triggered certain reactions, an information that will be useful when designing in later stages of the thesis. The bodily behaviors I am referring to are linked not only to the affordances of the settings but also to the heroes' sensory reception of them. These small actions, even though a tiny part of a larger experience, are inseparable from it. An experience is made from many 'smaller' events that are the basic building elements of its specificity.

The richest source of these reactions was *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. The author had dedicated pages of describing the actions and the emotions of Poliphilo so that there is no room for doubt for the readers. Poliphilo **trembles** and **feels cold** when he is scared. This reaction is involuntary and is triggered by frightening sounds, the darkness and the hiding of a clear view, the difficult and unclear path on the ground or the thorns of shrubs that he passes through. The hearing, the vision and the touch play essential role to the emergence of the feeling of fear and subsequently to the reaction of the body with shivering.

Fear and anxiety can cause a chain of reactions that mingle with each other in a vicious circle. When he is frightened by the dragon in the cave, he wants **to hasten** to escape but the fact that there is absolute darkness makes him **stumble** over things. The urge to escape activates a mechanism of protection-surviving so he **stretches his arms** on the walls in order to gain orientation. This row of actions gets him out of the cave at the end.

Another reaction that I singled out is triggered by a pleasant situation this time. At one point of the plot he suddenly listens to pleasing songs and smells flowery perfumes coming from a nearby garden. He is extremely intrigued and aroused by these stimuli but the place is completely enclosed by thick shrubs and he cannot easily enter. His longing for the secret garden grows bigger and bigger till he decides **to crouch** among the bushes, some even with thorns, to **make way with his hands** through the branches and the foliage to finally see what is happening on the other side of the hedge. The longing and the curiosity for the unattainable pushes him to act in a way that he didn't expect.

I have singled out two more reactions, this time from the novels of Lewis Carroll. In both books Alice has a characteristic behavior when she feels trapped, scared but also curious about something that she sees or something that is going to hap-



02.a.c. Bodily reactions and their causes
 sketch by the author

pen. Actually, most of the times Alice finds herself in such situations that seem insecure or terribly undefined. Her mechanism of feeling safe comes through her mouth: she talks to herself and sings. She asks questions to herself and she even plays with words. That way she enjoys herself and she unconsciously creates a 'protective layer' around her to deal with the paradoxes she comes across. This reaction to fear reminds also real situations that we may all have been into: singing or murmuring in the darkness because one is scared. It is the unexpected and the blurry of a situation that triggers this reaction.

The other reactions come more specifically from when Alice is in the rabbit hole, in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. When she stressfully endeavors to find the way out she attempts to put the keys that she found in every keyhole that she meets. The anxiety, the confusion but also the decisiveness lead her to take action by trying to open the doors. These failed efforts trigger more exploration and only when she had walked up and down for much time, she discovers a curtain. Her curiosity 'moves away' the curtain and the right door is finally revealed. The stressful situation of entrapment leads her to use potential tools and to 'make way' in the search of escape.

Of course the chains of experience and the reactions of the heroes in the novels

are innumerable. My intention was to highlight some common lines of the four novels but also to select some specific elements from each one that intrigued me. These conclusions will be the starting point of the formulation of the affective relations that I desire for the intervention gardens.

Restorative principles: recovery from the mental fatigue of the ordinary

Next to the study of the fictional settings I got influenced by another source that also offered insights on the affects of the environment that ease the mind. It is about affects that create the feeling of 'being away': *The distinctiveness and separateness of the experience from the workaday experience may be as important as the literal distance [...] like being quite distant from the world of pressures and obligations [The Experience of Nature, p.189-190].* The book of Stephen and Rachel Kaplan *The Experience of Nature* [1989] gave me many insights about the aspects of restorative environments, aspects that have to do both with the tranquility of the mind and the need for exploration. They call restorative the environments that function as recovery from the mental fatigue of people.

The mental fatigue according to the Kaplans is caused by all the confusion and frustration people feel in many facets of their everyday life trying to deal with obligations and deadlines. Mental fatigue, they argue, is most connected with the constant exercise of directed attention. It is this attention that requires effort and that gradually wears people out: *At the end of the work day or the work week or after months of steady effort one feels worn out, ready for a break or respite. In fact, all of us have experienced such a state, even in a matter of a few hours, such as after a protracted meeting, intense effort to complete a project, a period of worry and anxiety, or even just a period of trying to do too many things at the same time. The worn-out state in these situations is generally not physical; in fact, one might even complain of a lack of physical activity. Rather, these situations involve what we are calling mental fatigue [The Experience of Nature, p.178].* This type of attention is contrasted to involuntary attention, one that is caused by stimuli such as *strange things, moving things, wild animals, bright things, pretty things, metallic things, words, blows, blood, etc. etc. etc. that absorb one's mind in an undramatic way [The Experience of Nature, p.179].*

The Kaplans investigated for years the reactions of groups of people that stayed for days in nature -sometimes alone, sometimes together with others- seeking the factors that made people feel at comfort in a natural setting. After years of studies they came up with 'principles' that could create a restorative environment. What was interesting to me was the parallelism they made with what they call *nearby na-*

ture, meaning the natural settings that are close to people living in the cities. People do not have time to travel miles away in order to rest and feel the exciting. That requires time but also money. The Kaplans contend that if we design places at hand, in-between citizen's diary routes and customs, they would have the opportunity to 'escape' even when ten minutes away from their home: *The simple knowledge that a place[...] is nearby may be a source of pleasure* [The Experience of Nature, p.157].

But this escape for them is not achieved only by tranquil environments but also by settings that trigger the mind through exploration. People need both to clear their minds of the same ordinary thoughts but also to keep their interest, not to be bored. I staked out six aspects of restorative environments from their research outcomes that will be useful for formulating my own drives of the design: **Solitude**, **Silence**, **Soft-Fascination**, **Complexity**, **Mystery** and **Extent**. Some of them relate to the degree an environment eases the mind while others are more addressed to the degree of exploration. These aspects along with others (Coherence, Legibility, Being away, Compatibility) work in parallel, according to Kaplans, and render an environment capable of make people feel at comfort and put away stressful thoughts.

Solitude is not an easily definable aspect. For them it is not about being alone in a room as it is to be in an environment where there is *minimal evidence of human influence*. Solitude is more about a solo experience and is different for feeling lonely. It is not a scary experience, rather it is a source of comfort as many answers of their research participants indicate: *just being alone, the silence, peaceful, not lonely, a great experience*. Next to Solitude many of the participants referred to **Silence**. In the wilderness some of them experienced for the first time a high degree of silence and that was shocking usually in a pleasant way: *Silence is a funny thing. I don't hear it often. Last night I think I experienced the most I ever have*. Solitude or solo experience and Silence were both connected to being-with-ones' self and contemplate, to a condition that makes room for thoughts to come to the surface or even for forgetting because of being absorbed by what is happening around in the wild. [The Experience of Nature, p.140/138/129]

Next to Silence and Solitude I put the aspect of **Soft-Fascination**, even if these three are not mentioned together in the book. For me this notion is more related to the experience of being absorbed by an event: *patterns readily hold the attention but often in an undramatic fashion. Some fascination is so powerful that one cannot at the same time think of anything else. Soft fascination, by contrast, permits a more reflective mode* [The Experience of Nature, p.192]. This kind of fascination triggers the involuntary attention that in its turn allows the mind to forget. To evoke this feeling is not necessary

to trigger only the feeling of awe and wander but it can be achieved by simple repetitive events: watching a waterfall or a river flowing can also function in that direction.

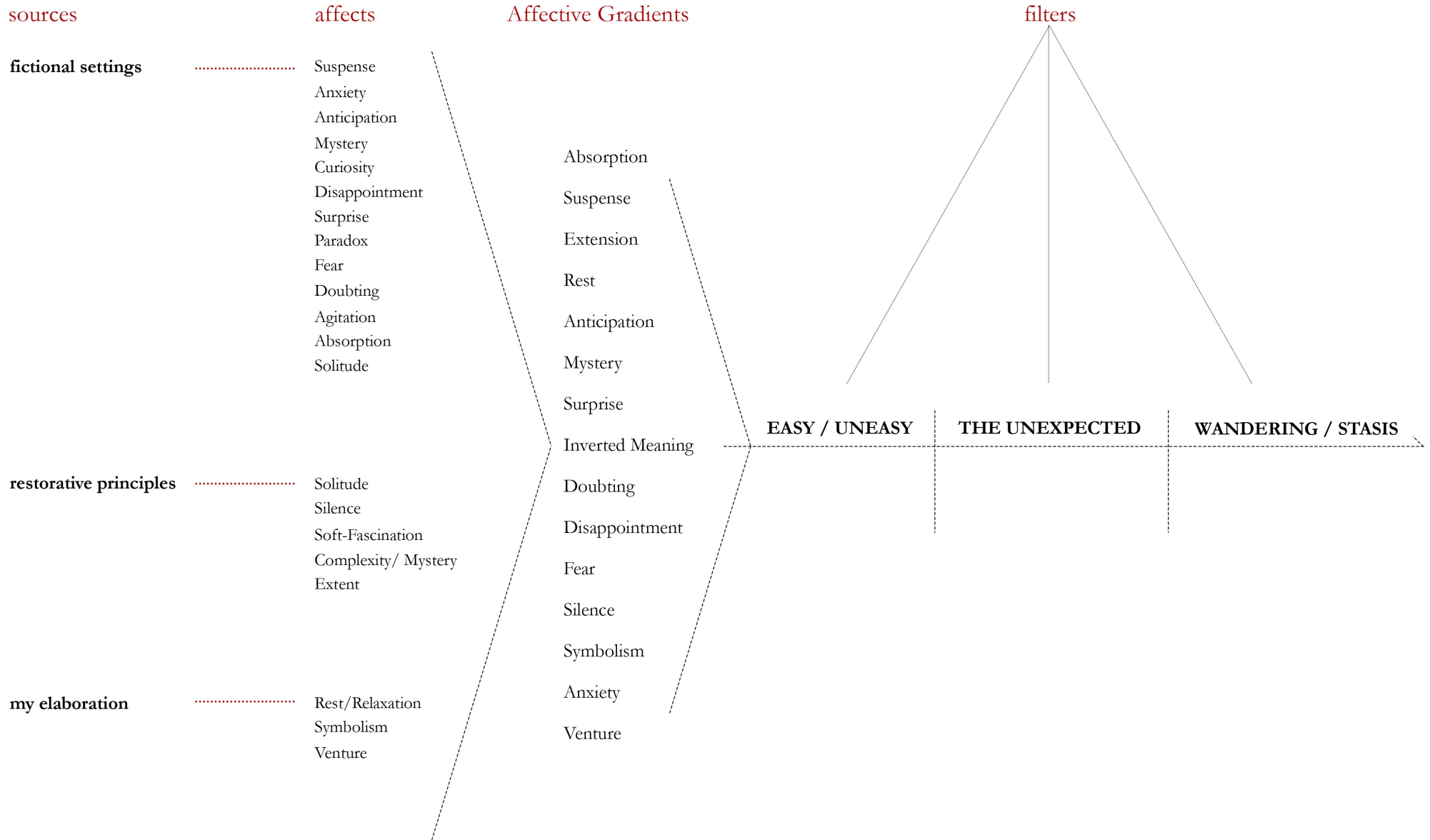
Complexity and **Mystery** are informational factors that relate to the triggering of one's mind by an environment. Complexity for the Kaplans is about *how intricate the scene is; its richness [...] how much is going on in a particular scene, how much there us to look at whereas Mystery is a promise[...] that one could learn more* [The Experience of Nature, p.53/p.55]. What differentiates them is the degree of inference required to extract the information one needs from a setting. Complexity is more about the information that is immediately available to someone whereas Mystery is about the hidden, the implied. Mystery is what is piquing one's curiosity whereas Complexity is something that fills one's mind with the plurality of a scene.

Extent, at last, is in simple words what makes you feel like "being in a whole other world". When there are elements in the environment that you could mentally link together and make associations with larger wholes. The aspect of Extent helps us realize the unimportance of the size of a setting. The composition of a place, no matter the size of it, could make one feel he is in an extended setting, infinite, that suggests there is always more to explore. This aspect could be associated with exploration but also with the feeling of comfort in terms of the safety one feels being in another world, a whole different setting where their imagination have room to develop.

All these aspects acted as an inspiration for elaborating the affects that I desire for my design. Even though not used as they are, they were the starting point for me. Along with the insights I got from the analysis of fictional gardens (described in the following section), they became the basis for the definition of my guiding 'principles' which I call Affective Gradients.

02.3 Affective Gradients

02.3.a input from theory



02.a.d. Formulation of Affective Gradients: Scheme of the procedure
 sketch by the author

Affects already exist around us: to feel stressed or alone, to get lost or to be excited and surprised, are situations that we all experience in the city. What the new gardens aim to trigger is new assemblages of affective relations as well as different ways in which these affective couplings could emerge. The formulation of these relations require, first of all, the determination of the specific affects that I desire to create. The sources for the formulation of the affects were the fictional settings, the restorative principles as well as my own elaboration of experiences that I find appropriate in order to oppose to the homogeneity and the expectedness of the city.

The collection of the affects from all the sources was the first step. Some of them coincide as they describe the same experience with other words. After combining them in a way that I have one basic affect for each experience, I formulated the affects that I will use in my design, what I call Affective Gradients. Each one has different degrees of intensity: what matters is not if they exist or not, a 'black and white' consideration of things but the degree of their emergence. That is why I call them "gradients". But what does each one mean? These notions are not generic and absolute, neither the settings that could create them is unique. For this reason, the Affective Gradients were broken down in the more basic relations that create them.

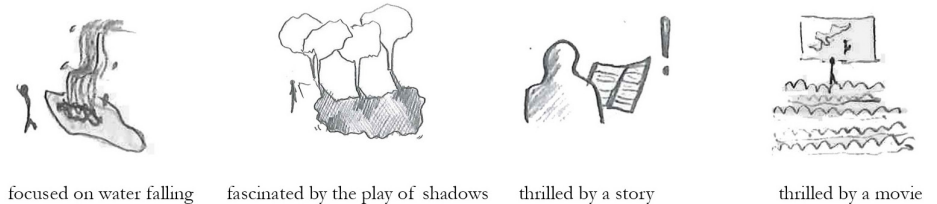
After having formulated the Affective Gradients I filtered them through three conditions, the ones that came as conclusions from the analysis of the fictional settings: the alternation between uneasy/easy situations, the unexpected and the alternation between wandering-exploration and stasis. Through this filtering we can see that some affects can be grouped together according to different criteria but the most important thing is that these groupings will be the guides for the design in the next stages.

02.3.b formulation and analysis of Affective Gradients

Absorption

This Gradient was taken from the fictional settings but also coincides with the Soft-Fascination of the Kaplans. It emerges when one is fascinated by an event and they get to be so focused on watching the procedure that they forget everything else. It is about the triggering of the mind but in a rather calm way: reading a book, watching a movie or even watching the bubbling water of a waterfall or a fountain, catches the attention and inhibits all other thoughts to emerge. It is about the inhibition of potential distractions as well as the creation of an event-setting that includes movement or sense-catching patterns. The triggering of the mind in

this absorbing way could for instance be achieved by a very intense smell, a continuous repeating sound or a light effect with the foliage of trees, all events that allow 'observation' and have a sedative effect on tensed senses.



focused on water falling fascinated by the play of shadows thrilled by a story thrilled by a movie

02.a.e. Searching for conditions that could trigger Absorption

sketch by the author

Suspense

The affect of Suspense is connected with the uncertainty. It is neither negatively nor positively charged but I think of it as an intermediate level, between tension and relief. It emerges when one is unaware of what is going to happen but at the same time he/she is eager to find out. It is an affect that does not stand alone but is connected with the affects of Mystery and Anticipation. Actually the first characterizes the indeterminacy of the setting that creates it whereas the latter represents this feeling of longing for continuation and finally resolution. The tension I am referring to is more mental than bodily as it is about the simultaneous considering of all the possibilities before one of them becomes actualized, the end of suspense. The gradient of suspense can also be connected with another affect which is Doubting. Whenever one is at a critical point of choice or a dilemma, they elaborate all the potentials that could come with each choice and try to figure out what would be better. Suspense can carry with it Fear but also excitement, an ecstasy. It can be pleasant but also uncomfortable and that depends on the specific setting as well as on the mood and the precedent experiences of the person.



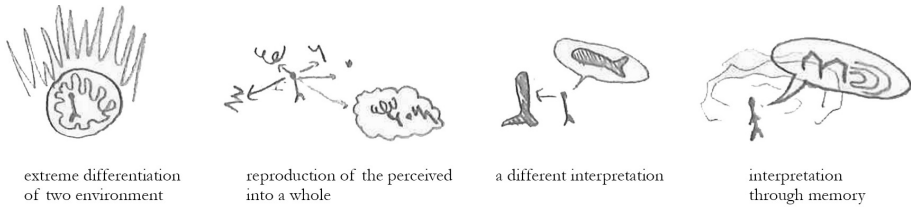
02.a.f. Suspense increases when prolonged / Mystery and Anticipation before resolution

sketch by the author

Extension

This Gradient is borrowed from the Kaplan's restorative principles with a bit changed name (Extent). It is a positive charged affect and is related with the feel-

ing of inclusion and wholeness. It is about that feeling of “being in a whole other world”. This Affective Gradient is connected to the coherence of a setting no matter how big it is and it emerges when one can easily imagine that the place they are into is infinite and has a rhythm of its own. Memory can play important role for the emergence of Extension as it tends to combine the perceived things with past experiences interpreting reality in a personal way. The extreme differentiation between an ordinary and an extra-ordinary setting could also trigger this gradient. Extension can be linked to Absorption and safety.



02.a.g. Potential conditions that could trigger Extension
sketch by the author

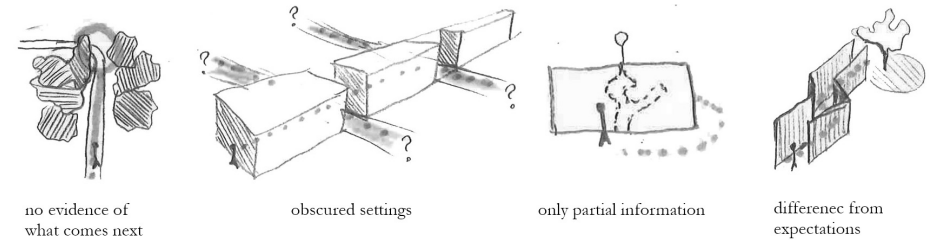
Rest

Rest is a quite general affect as it can have many different expressions. It is nevertheless connected with a pleasant feeling. I think of Rest as a condition of relaxation of body and mind, a pause for regeneration and of brief contemplation. Rest is connected to fatigue but also to Anxiety as it functions as their counterpoint. One needs to relax and have a break after being tired and this tiredness may be the result not only of a physical effort but also of a mental one such as the stress due to a deadline. Rest does not necessarily include calm and slow movements such as sitting or lying down. Walking or even running may have an impressively positive effect for the easing of the mind. That is why Rest is also connected, for me, to the affect of Absorption.

Anticipation & Mystery

These Gradients are, in my opinion, complementary. Mystery emerges when there is an incomplete understanding of the immediately perceived and it requires from the environment, even though obscure, to often give a promise for further information. The information given must be gradual and partial in order to keep the Anticipation on a satisfying level. A curvature of a path or a riddle that one needs to solve give out only few features and the mind tries to draw conclusions from them. Both Mystery and Anticipation are gradients of a procedure, of a route and not of a moment and they are escalated when the giving out of information is prolonged. These Gradients are sometimes linked to the affect of Surprise: in some cases, Surprise may be the moment of resolution of Mystery. Although both

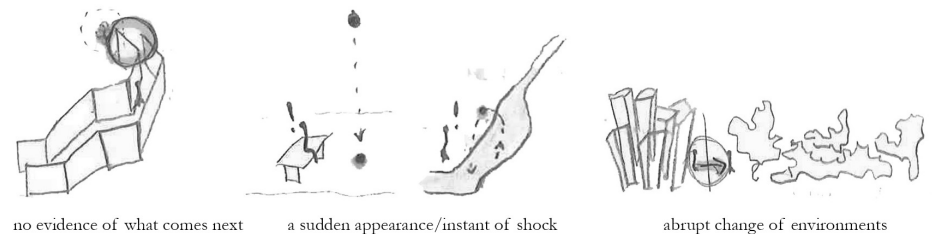
Mystery and Anticipation can be revitalizing for the mind, they also can be a dramatic experience connected to Anxiety and Fear.



02.a.h. Mystery and Anticipation: where there is deficient information about the whole
sketch by the author

Surprise

As previously mentioned, Surprise is an affect of the instant. It has a brief duration, maybe seconds, and is shaking the mind. It is triggered when the perceived environment/element is not expected, when there is an ‘attack’ to the logical row of thoughts. Surprise is closely connected to Mystery. If the experience of Mystery is prolonged, then the moment of shock will be more intense. We could trigger Surprise if we created ambiguous situations: when one is given specific information from the environment, they have specific expectations but if then something extremely irrelevant happens, they will be shocked. Surprise is this instant between the virtual and the actual, the moment of change, and the more this change is abrupt, the bigger the ‘attack’ will be. This moment can carry both excitement and joy but also Disappointment when the expectations are far greater from the reality.

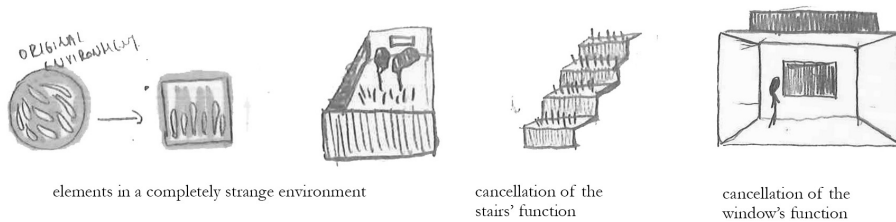


02.a.i. Moments of shock
sketch by the author

Inverted Meaning

This Gradient relates to the affect of the paradox that we met in fictional settings. It is about the contradiction between the representation and the represented, the divergence from the expected. Inverted Meaning is connected to memory and precedent experiences that have already consolidated some relations between the perceived environment and its interpretation. If, for instance, there is a staircase

but the steps have such inclination that is impossible to climb, then for one's mind something paradoxical happens: the stair's function is for climbing and if this ability is cancelled then one feels confused and tries to adapt to the new information. This Gradient is about depriving a setting of its affordances, of its specific relations to the surroundings and to people. It can be connected with the gradient of Surprise as both evoke this 'shock' of the brain.



02.a.j. Divergence between expected and reality
sketch by the author

Doubting

Doubting is more about a moment than a procedure. It is the elaboration of information from the environment and from the experiences with a specific goal. Doubting is a dilemma, not always obligatory or important, and it is most of the times the instant before making a choice. This moment includes oscillation, sometimes even expressed through the body, and it can carry with it stress, Anxiety or even Fear. This Affective Gradient plays a key role to the experience of the environment: the succession of many of these instances of doubting create a specific experience and route which could be extremely differentiated if other choices have been made. Doubting can be followed by Relief but also by Disappointment.

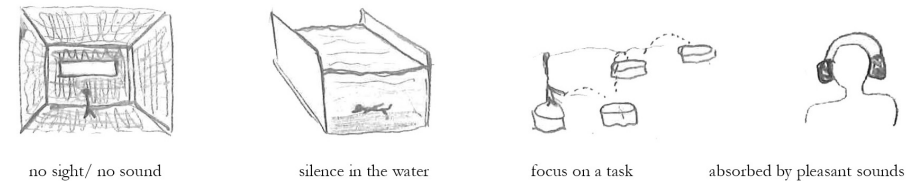
Disappointment

Disappointment always follows a situation. It is clearly connected to the fulfillment of someone's expectations and it requires a previous anticipation about something. This Gradient is also a momentary one and it is more intense when the precedent experience one has before that moment implies a different result. Although disappointment is considered an unpleasant feeling, it can also function as a trigger for further exploration and decisiveness.

Silence

Silence is a Gradient that could bear many interpretations. What is important for me is its aspect of making an experience more intimate and dense. It is about experiencing serenity and tranquility, feeling isolated. It doesn't imply the elimination of every possible sound as that would be impossible. It is about minimizing

sounds that are unpleasant or that recall stressful situations such as traffic or work. These disturbing sounds I am referring to are not necessarily loud: most of us, for instance, find continuous hissing sounds extremely unpleasant. One can experience inner Silence if they are focused and absorbed by a specific sound that is not disturbing for them: listening to the water of a fountain or listening to music on our headphones highlights one interesting sound that covers all else. Silence thus, is linked to Absorption. Furthermore, this gradient can emerge when someone is extremely focused on something that he/she needs to do: the extended attention mutes everything around them and this way helps them to complete the task. Silence although more often connected to tranquility, can also intensify a state of Anxiety and Fear as one feels alone and helpless.



02.a.k. Different 'forms' of silence
sketch by the author

Fear

Fear is caused by the feeling of being at risk, of being threatened from a situation (other people, environment, animals). It is not necessary that the situations that cause it are real: in many cases it is a game of the mind that doesn't need any justification. However, it is a hardly predicted affect that can influence the whole body: trembling, feeling cold, lack of breath are some of the symptoms. Although it is a negatively charged feeling, there are cases when it can be revitalizing. Watching a horror movie makes us feel scared even if we know that nothing can affect us in reality but it can also act as an out of the ordinary trigger that renews the mind. Many times it is related to Mystery and Suspense as with these affective gradients there is a lack of understanding of a situation and a worry about what may come next. Fear can be instant, as a shock, but it may also endure for longer time. What is scary depends on each person separately and many times it is related to bad memories-experiences. This gradient is followed by several reactions that aim to escape from the 'danger' and sometimes it even causes a temporal paralysis from the shock.

Anxiety

Anxiety is an affect similar to Fear but it is more based on the expectation of an unpleasant situation and not on the immediately perceived one. Most of the times it refers to an imminent event-situation and it expresses worry about the outcome

of it. It is a situation of inner agitation that may also become externalized and take the form of scratching the body, biting the nails, walking up and down nervously. Anxiety is related to Mystery, Suspense and even more to Anticipation that has grown bigger and bigger. It can also relate to the moment of Doubting if the choice that needs to be made is of high importance. Anxiety calms down when the situation is resolved and it may give way to relief if the outcome is positive but also to Fear.

Symbolism

This Affective Gradient is quite vague when one tries to perceive it in spatial terms. It is connected to the representation of things and its implication of other things or situations. It is a surplus meaning with which a setting is infused and it is open to interpretations. These interpretations depend on the past experiences as well as the imagination of the subject: they bring up their own analogies. It can relate to Doubting when the latter emerges at a low degree: doubting what a painting implies may be a fun procedure even if you never find the right answer. It is as if Symbolism lays out riddles for resolving and when nothing is prominent or forcibly implied then the procedure of finding an answer is refreshing.



translation into something similar but different



recalling of archetypal schemes



sense of a 'higher' spirituality



reminder of harsh feelings

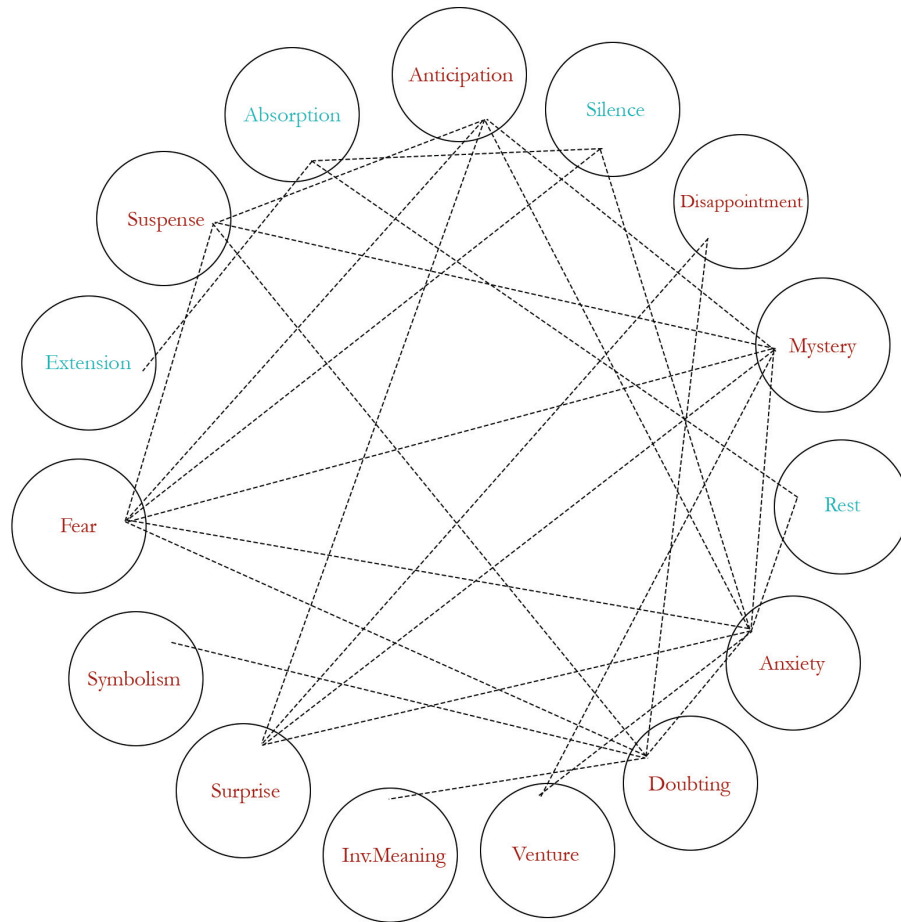
02.a.1. Symbolic perception of settings sketch by the author

Venture

Venture is a trigger on its own. It is the action-journey one undertakes but in a situation that can be dangerous and risky. It often relates to moments of Doubting and oscillation -critical moments that have to be surpassed-, or it can be a spontaneous reaction to the promises of information that an environment offers. The dangers it includes are not always physical threats but also mental ones. Venture can be linked to Mystery and Anxiety as the process of the 'journey' cannot be predicted from the beginning and sometimes it is already negatively predisposed. Venture expresses decisiveness to move on.

19. Important note: I chose not to include Solitude in the Affective Gradients as, in my opinion, it is a condition that hovers over all the experiences: it can be related to almost every gradient and depending on the situation it makes them more intimate and dense or more intense and stressful. The same effect has the condition of Enclosure. Both of them will be elaborated in the process of the design later.

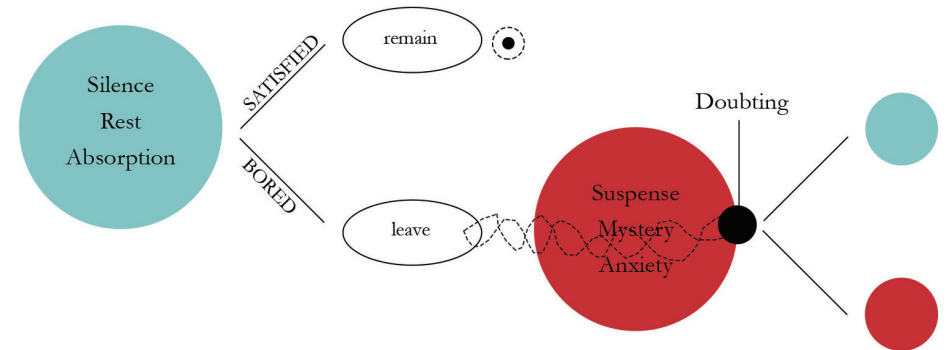
couplings, successions and coexistence



02.a.m. Display of the affective relations: red expresses intensity and effort while light blue represents the calmer and less demanding affective gradients
sketch by the author

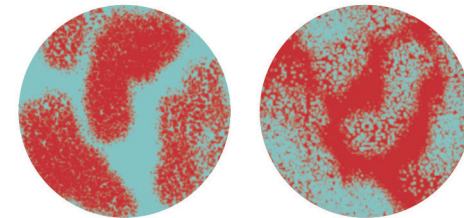
As we have seen from the analysis of the Affective Gradients, there are very often couplings of two or three together that create a succession of experiences. What matters most is their interrelations: some of them cannot 'function' on their own, they only emerge after a succession of other affects. The affective couplings have many variations and it is through the design that these variations can be expressed in order to offer different effects. Furthermore, we could see from the scheme that there are many couplings for each affect and that it is mainly the most intense Affective Gradients that blend with each other and create a specific assemblage.

We could think of many possible successions but the basic logic is once again that the long procedures of uncomfortable situations need their counterpoints of moments of relief. Important role in this alternation play the mood/satisfaction of the perceiver as well as the moments of choice.



02.a.n. A sample of a succession of experiences and the role of satisfaction and choice
sketch by the author

Another worth noticing conclusion from the analysis is that we should not consider these successions as monopolizing a place. There is not a single place that evokes only specific feelings but the affective relations of tension and relief coexist in the same assemblage. In some cases the one can be more prominent than the other but, as we will see in the design, there are always 'small' moments of both.



02.a.o. Intermingling of the successions: pleasant and uneasy in the same environment
sketch by the author

Last but not least comes the reminder that the Affective Gradients that I have highlighted are not closely connected to the articulation of spatial settings. I tried to avoid making such connections because what I refer to is feelings and relations and the causes that trigger their emergence. The first basic level was to find these relations. When it comes to the design, I will research how can these relations become spatialized.



filters and groupings

The basic conclusions from the analysis of the fictional settings and the restorative principles are used as filters for grouping the Affective Gradients that have just been formulated. Considering the succession of easy and uneasy situations there is a new insight that came up. The gradients can be divided in three instead of two 'categories': easy / uneasy/ intriguing. Many of the gradients even though they may require effort and include tension they seem more intriguing than unpleasant. Although they may 'shake' one's heart at points, they function more as triggers to move on for further exploration.

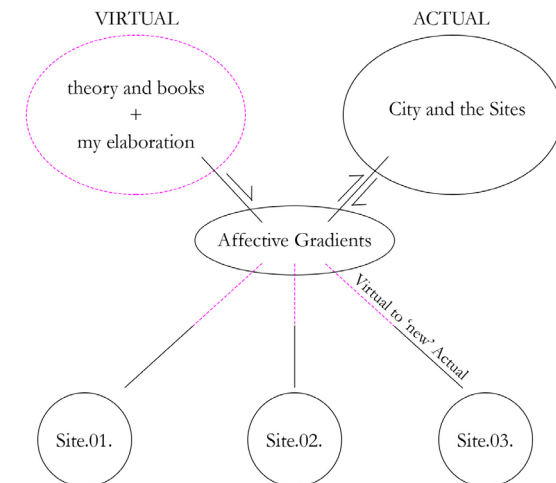
Some of these "intriguing" gradients are the ones that also create the feeling of the unexpected: they start to seem very important for the design of out-of-the ordinary experiences. The unexpected is the pivotal point that may organize all the different assemblages of affects around it. It is connected to momentary (Surprise) but also longer experiences of affects (Mystery). Whatever the succession of easy/uneasy/intriguing affects may be, there should always exist this feeling of indeterminacy and shock.

Furthermore, when we connect the alternation of pleasant/unpleasant situations with that of wandering and stasis there are also some interesting insights that emerge. This combination, on the one hand, could tell us which of the Affective Gradients require movement and are more connected to the exploration and which of them are more linked to moments of immobility. On the other hand, we could see that many intriguing gradients are not necessarily connected to exploration but their intensity may emerge from the fact that they happen at an instant.

These groupings as well as the Affective Gradients individually will be a guide throughout the analysis of the areas of intervention as well as the design. The analysis of existing urban spaces and the testing of the Gradients on them will be the starting point for revealing the hues of each area of influence of the 3 sites. The groupings will function as generic design principles that could be applied in all 3 sites while the different combinations of Gradients will be the tool for the translation of these principles into design on each site (according to its special characteristics -refrains). It is important to say that the use of the Gradients will play a complementary role in the procedure of designing: the process of design takes also into consideration all the expressive elements and the details of each site and has its own rules. Last but not least, I would like to point out that the formulation of these relations of Gradients will not be strict and absolute but they will leave space for the indeterminate and spontaneous, the unprogrammed.

EASY / UNEASY	THE UNEXPECTED	WANDERING / STASIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● uneasy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety Fear Disappointment ● intriguing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspense Anticipation Mystery Inverted Meaning Doubting Symbolism Venture Surprise ● easy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absorption Silence Extension Rest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surprise Mystery Inverted Meaning Symbolism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suspense Anticipation Fear Anxiety Mystery Inverted Meaning Venture ●  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rest Absorption Silence Extension Disappointment Doubting Surprise Symbolism

02.a.p. Groupings of different criteria
sketch by the author



02.a.q. From the Actual and the Virtual to the new Actual
sketch by the author

02.4 glossary

actuality / virtuality

actuality could describe all the elements of an environment and the rhythm that “binds” them together. The actual is the real. Virtuality denotes all these innumerable potentials that this environment has and that depend not only to the spatial capacities that it offers but also to the multiple abilities of people to use them in a different way. In each actuality (a given situation) there is a virtuality implied. *Virtual is the structure of spatial possibilities. It is real but not actual* [M.DeLanda, 2011]. If a virtuality gets actualized then the environment’s actuality changes.

affect

the ability to affect (take action) and to be affected (experience affection). Affects relate to the execution of the multiple capacities that a body has, through its encounters with an environment. *Affects are those forces that drive us toward movement, thought and extension: a body’s ongoing immersion in and among the world’s obstinancies and rhythms* [G.Seigworth & M.Gregg, 2010]. Studying the City and its Neighbourhoods as environments that have specific affects for people will make one understand in depth their motives for movement and their image of the urban complex they are living in.

affordances

the relations between the abilities of animals and features of the environment [Chemero,2003]. Each environment, due to its spatial and qualitative characteristics affords an (x)behavior to a body. Affordances denote the potential capacities for action that an environment offers to a body. A bench affords sitting for a man but also affords many other different behaviors depending on each different body. The concept of affordances is used for the analysis of each site of intervention as it is a useful tool for extracting not only the actual (current) behaviors of people in it but also for imagining virtual ones through design.

assemblage

a whole that consists of parts that interact with one another ,cannot be reduced and has properties of its own. An assemblage is not a totality because, as opposed to the latter, it is decomposable. Thus, the elements that constitute it keep their properties instead of being fused in a mere collection. Perceiving the City as an assemblage and not as a totality gives one a more “open” understanding of its different parts. This way, one can study the interrelations that exist among them and the way they affect citizens’ life as they act as triggers to make them think, move and create (triggers to people’s flows and behaviors).

affective assemblage

the City can be perceived not as a totality but as an assemblage made up from several “smaller” assemblages (organizations, communities, neighborhoods, transportation systems, etc) that affect people in specific ways. This is different from perceiving the City as a mere image where everything is fixed and cannot be changed: [...] *the city as an baecceity: not as an image but as an affective assemblage that through the enfolding of spaces and temporalities dissolves the outlines of the subject, becoming-other to itself* [Frichot, 2016]

affective principles

the principles that were developed through the initial analysis of the project. They constitute ways of dealing with the research objective: they oppose to the frenzy and dullness of the every day environment. They belong under the two main objectives which are Isolation that implies comfort and Triggering of the mind that implies exploration. I call them affective because they are not perceived just as some abstract notions but according to the way they affect people. The appropriation and the application of each will be tested on all testing sites and the results from this experiment will guide a designing method. It is important to mention that all these principles are perceived as gradients and not as solid notions: there are many fluctuations that define the intensity of each one.

_solitude

being alone but not lonely. It denotes the value of a solo experience, of not being disturbed from other people and enjoy a tranquility and a sense of peace. A state of serenity. It can be created not only by physical borders such as those that evoke a feeling of enclosure but also by mental ones: someone that has experienced an intense event or that has a demanding task to fulfill ignores everyone or everything that surround him experiencing a state of solitude

_silence

when annoying sounds are muted. As it is extremely difficult to create complete silence, I am going to focus on minimizing sounds that are annoying and could contribute more to one’s mental fatigue. I am going to research where sounds that remind of stressful situations are and with which ways could my design manipulate them. Silence could

_enclosure

the condition of enclosure is mainly linked with spatial articulations that create an environment-a place that is at hand for the one that experiences it. However, it is not only defined by spatial borders but also by mental ones. If one walks in dark place it feels the darkness surrounding him (be that frightening or relieving). Also if someone is with people he knows and loves then he feels enclosed. Thus, it is more about the feeling of ease and safety where one feels free to act.

_extension

that is a difficult notion to grasp as it is too abstract. It is inspired by the term “Extent” introduced by Kaplan & Kaplan that means *the sense of being in a whole other world-physically or perceptually* [Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989]. For the present project it is understood as the mental procedure of perceiving a given environment as part of a whole through the mechanisms of imagination and memory. When one sees a “story” behind a scene or recalls a memory that takes him to a world different from the present one, then the extension is intense.

_surprise

the feeling created by a sudden appearance of something (an element, a setting) that one did not expect. It is this momentary feeling that lies in the threshold between the Virtual and the Actual. When one is unprepared for facing a situation completely different of what he imagined.

_mystery

it is the experience of trying to figure out and to recognize in instances what is not easy to be perceived. It is about triggering one’s mind with what could come next and it derives from an absence of control of a given situation. Mystery is fascinating as it triggers someone to make assumptions and to follow a thread of something in order to gradually acquire a bigger picture

_symbolism

when there is a difference between the representation and the represented, a surplus meaning of a given environment. It is based on analogies: one brings up memories of past experiences that resemble to a current situation and that creates the feeling that there is something more than what it seems. Symbolism is not only related to memory but also to imagination and it could function as another trigger for creating new worlds from a normal, ordinary setting.

_inverted meaning

a paradox. When one experiences a situation that does not fit in the expected-normal way of thinking and perceiving. It is about “dis-abling” an environment and its elements to re-assemble it anew, de-coding and re-coding. Inverted meaning could be found for instance when in an urban environment someone encounters a forest or if plants that grow in the bottom of the sea are used as vegetation elements for a subterranean garden.

_absorption

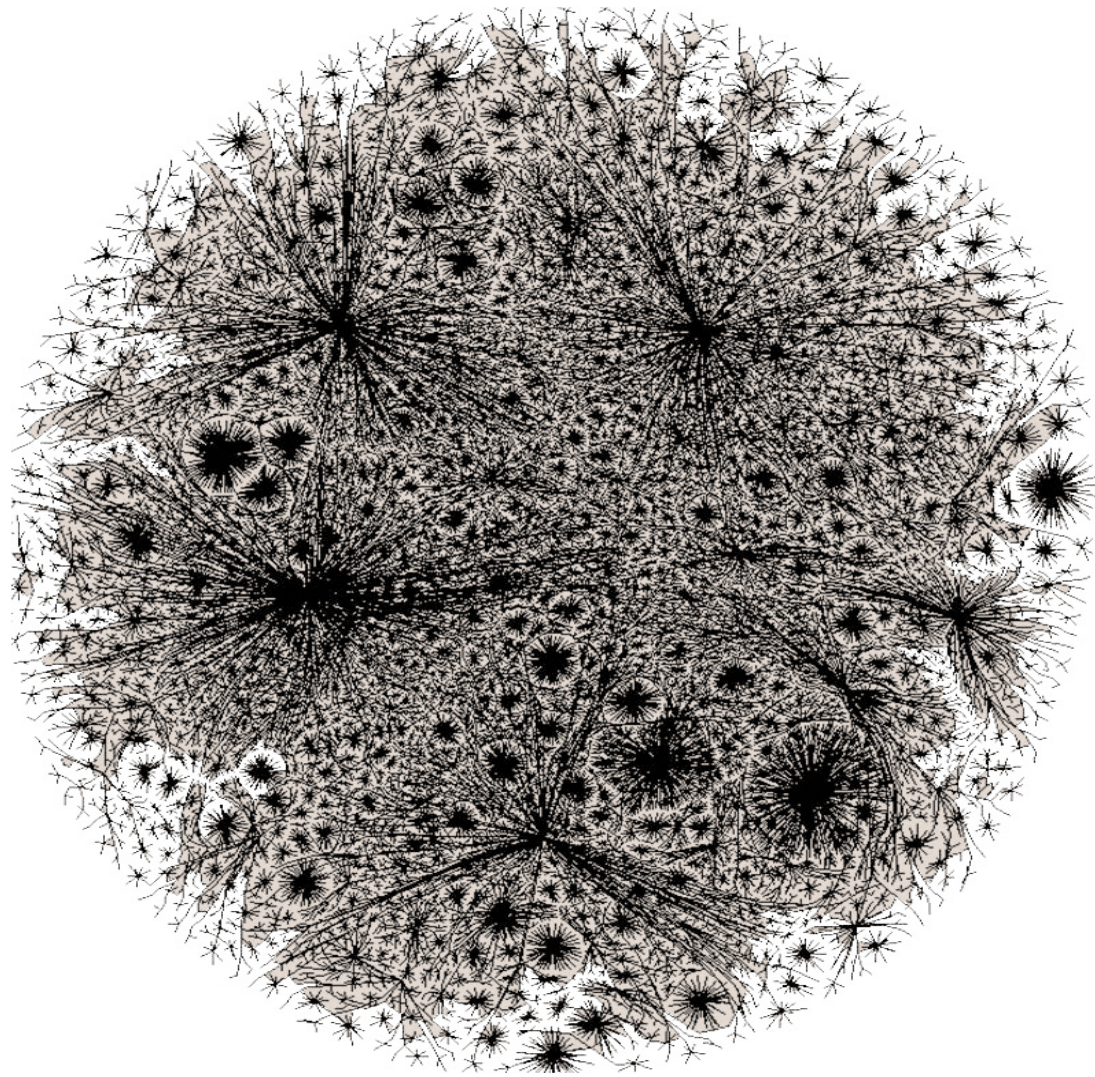
an alternative way of directed attention that is not tiring. When fascinated by an incident that is not so intense and that makes one focusing on that procedure. Absorption could inhibit potential distractions and ease the mind from multiple stressful thoughts. Kaplan & Kaplan are referring to absorption with the term “soft-fascination”: *patterns that readily hold the attention but in an undramatic fashion* [Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989]. Someone can experience absorption when staring at a waterfall or at the foliage of trees “playing” with the sun

attractor

a spot in the urban tissue that motivates people to act in a specific way. It is related to the “mechanisms of desire” that a City has in order to keep its citizens in “rhythm”. The flow of people is not defined a priori because it is a complex notion that cannot be studied only through maps but also by constantly observing people’s behavior. If desired to change the strict fixation of citizens’ time and schedule then it is useful to analyze the urban neighborhoods and sites also in terms of the current attractors.

directed attention/ mental fatigue

the focusing on a demanding task that creates what the Kaplans name as ‘mental fatigue’. To succeed maintaining one’s focus on a specific thought or task one is struggling to inhibit all possible distractions: *the greatest threat to a given focus of attention is competition from other stimuli or ideas that can be the basis of a different focus* [Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989]. Directed attention can work subconsciously and could have very negative effects. The project explores ways of easing the mental fatigue by introducing alternatives to directed attention that could create a condition of involuntary attention (no effort to focus).



03. Center of Rotterdam: analysis_tools_application



03.1 analysis of the City: interaction of its assemblages



left: **03.a.** The city center of Rotterdam

[google maps](#)

right: **03.b.** Zooming in: the area of testing and intervention

[sketch by the author](#)

With the back-up of the theoretical elaboration and taking into consideration the conclusions of the previous chapter, I will analyze the city center of Rotterdam to reveal the existing-actual situation and its features. What I am focusing on is the different parts of the city center that interact with one another and the affective relations that make this interaction possible. Through the studying of these inter-relations I am interested in investigating the ‘cracks’ that this area may have: voids of the city that are ‘un-functional’- lack of specific meaning for the citizens- as well as behaviors that escape the homogeneity.

The center of Rotterdam is a lively assemblage of many smaller assemblages: from districts to neighborhoods, blocks and buildings and from crowds to individuals, plants and animals with their expressions. People are moving from one place to another eager to satisfy their needs and to complete their tasks. Sometimes they even wander with no particular reason. What triggers these flows are the attractors²⁰ of the city: places to shop, to eat, to play, to dance, to work etc. In Rotterdam these attractors are very often clearly concentrated in specific districts which are dispersed throughout the city. Of course each district has more than one attractors but there

20. Attractor is a term borrowed from the field of mathematics. It briefly denotes *a set of numerical values toward which a system tends to evolve* [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attractor>]. For the current project it means something that attracts people for a specific reason: a place that satisfies specific needs.

is very often a most prominent one that may characterize even a whole area: for instance, the district of Lijnbaan is immediately connected with commerce and the area next to the river Maas with companies' premises.

The fact that these attractors are grouped in specific districts indicates the rigidity and the homogeneity of the city (**scheme 03.e**). Moreover, one has to go through long distances to satisfy their need. This is why, in my opinion, the flows of people are intense here. Flows are constant and they are also differentiated depending on the time of the day: some activities are more appropriate for the morning, while others are emerging in the evening or during the night²¹.

An important relation that needs to be examined is the one between the city's micro-assemblages and the affects they evoke. The different places in the urban tissue have specific 'hues' that are connected to the feelings one experiences in them. These different districts can be seen as the micro-assemblages of the city that have some characteristic properties and that coexist in constant exchange. The affects of these discrete areas can be created by a combination of the existing attractors with the spatial organization, the materiality and the expressive qualities that characterize them. Furthermore, we could say that the interrelations between the different micro-assemblages create successions of affective experiences just as we saw in the fictional settings.

The recording of the affects of the city's assemblages will be a basic information and criterion for picking specific areas for intervention. As the design aims to act as acupuncture for the city center, it is important to see which areas need it the most. The determination of the city's affects has as its basis the Affective Gradients that were formulated from the research. Via my expeditions in the city, I am testing which of the Gradients are already evoked in the city's areas and how do they work together.

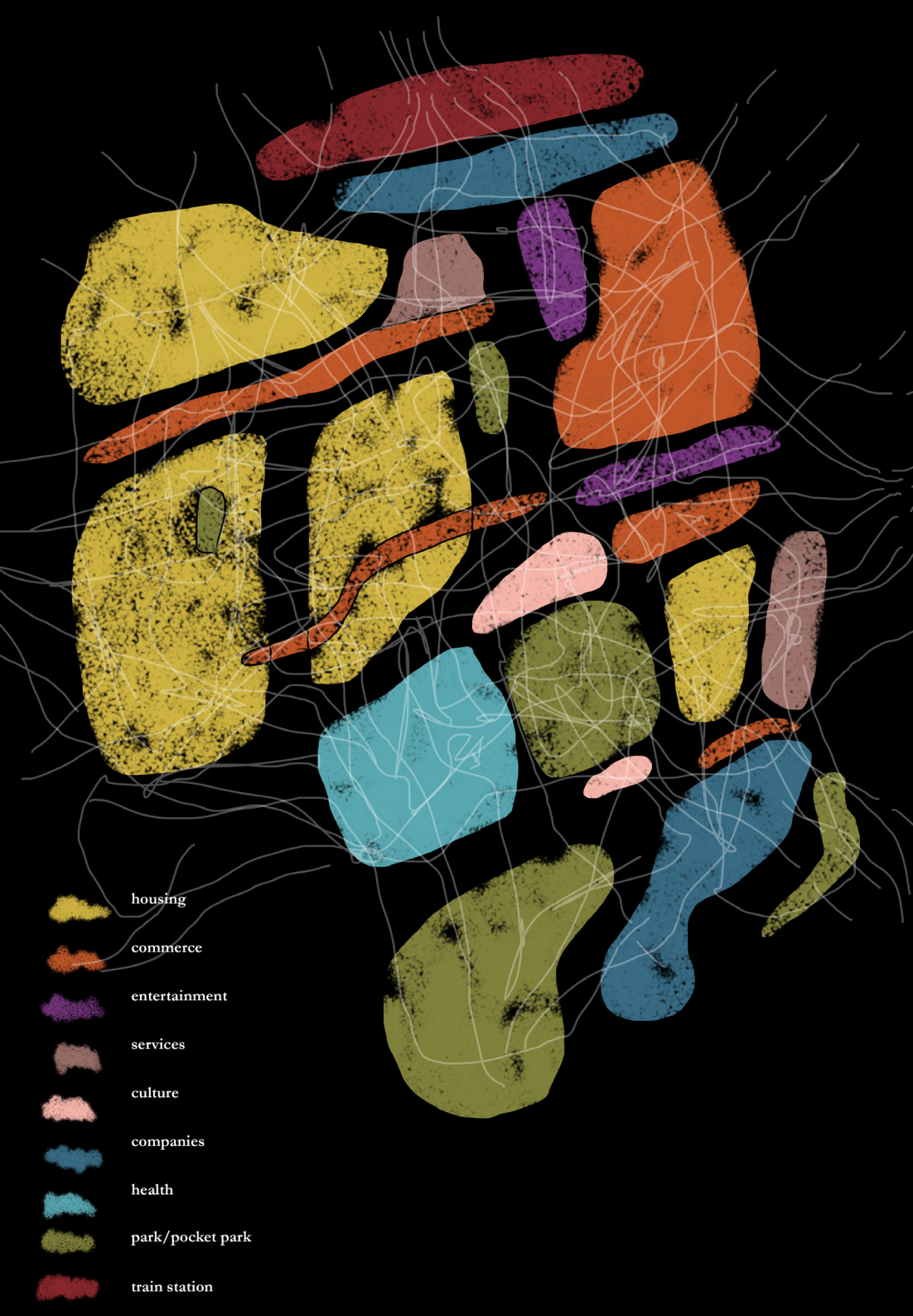
As we can see from the **scheme 03.f**, many of the Gradients extracted from the analysis are missing. However, there are some that are indeed created and they define the character of specific areas. There can be more Gradients in the same

03.c. Recording of uses in the center of Rotterdam

sketch by the author, source from: <http://www.edugis.nl/>

21. Here, we could make a distinction between activities that are defined by programmed spaces and activities that depend only on each individual. The city's 'mechanisms of desire' define quite rigidly the behavior of citizens as well as the time during which they are allowed to stay. Services, stores, restaurants or clubs have specific opening hours and each one has their norms of behavior. Outside this rigidity, people should have the chance of behaving more freely according of course to what the environment offers to them.





03.d. The attractors being absorbed by the assemblages of Affects

sketch by the author

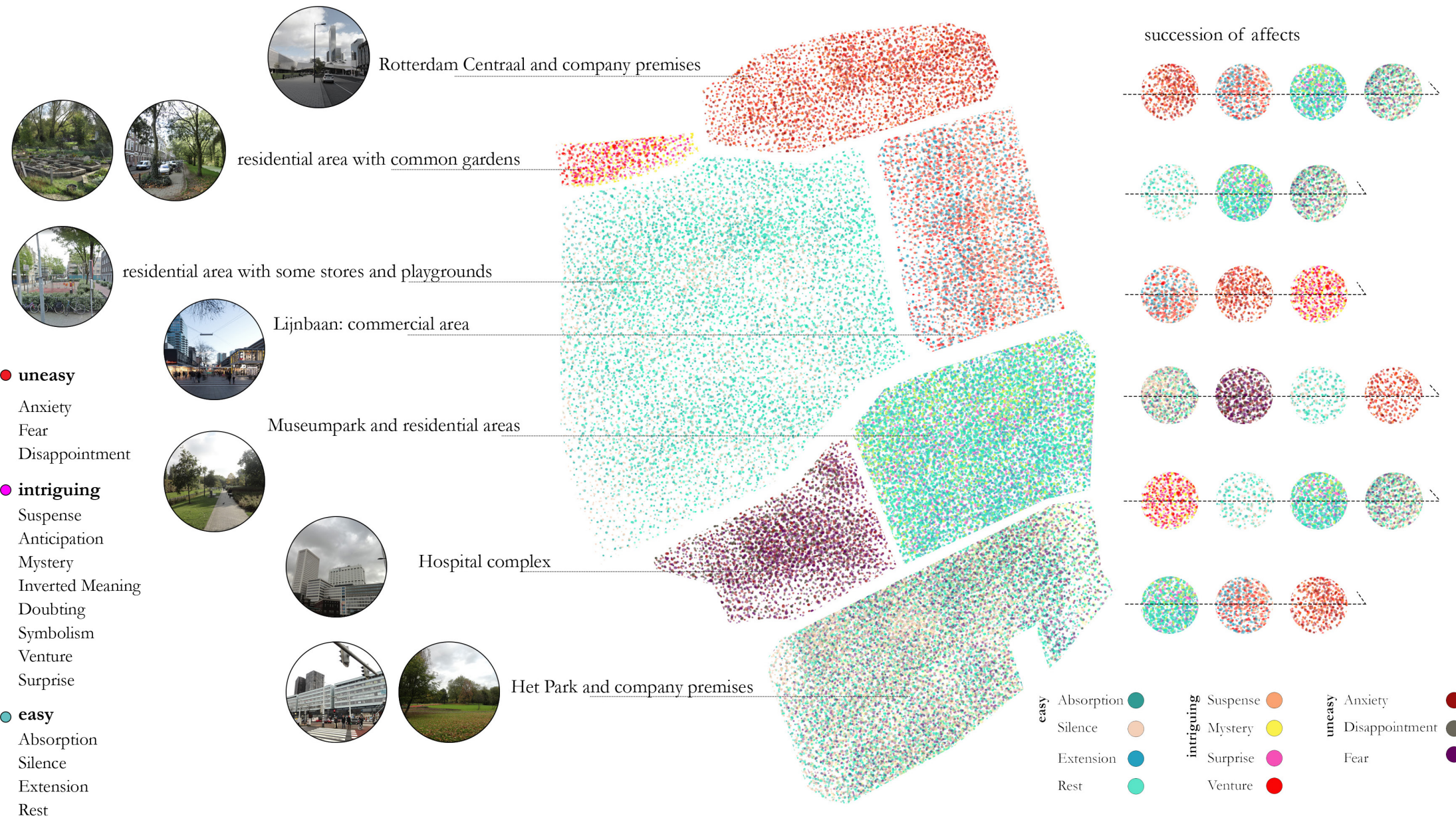
area but what is prominent is that there is no big alternation between them. Considering that the selected areas are quite big (till even 90hectares)we could say that this manifests that there is homogeneity in the way the affects are produced. Moreover, the affects define the interrelations of the assemblages and we could see that there can be indeed succession between easy, uneasy and intriguing experiences. However, a citizen needs to travel a long distance in order to have this effect of alternation (around 2 or 4 kilometers).

Of course, there can be many smaller Affects during a journey in the city but these are drowned in the most prominent ones of the areas. The wandering through the urban realm may seem tiring and boring as the feelings of each area last too long. Furthermore, the fact that there are not many of the intriguing Gradients in the city denotes that most of the things, even mystery for instance, are already known and there is no room for the unexpected.

What is needed are in-between places (in between assemblages but most importantly in between areas of the same assemblage) that could trigger the emergence of more Affective Gradients and in a more intensified way. These in-between places could be found if one searches the voids of the City: existing areas that function as elements of heterogeneity in the urban realm because they deviate from the ex-

03.e. Main attractors of the districts of Rotterdam Center: grouped and outspread

sketch by the author



03.f. Districts of Affects: Homogeneities

sketch by the author

pectedness of the every-day experience. We could call these voids ‘unfunctional’: although they may have a use, they do not carry a specific character or hue and the affects they evoke are less defined than in other places in the city. The fact that they still remain a bit random and indeterminate turns them into potential sites for designing the unexpected.

03.2 categorization of the existing sites

In order to find the potential areas for intervention I proceeded to the recording of all existing open areas in the city center (**scheme 03.g**). I formulated three basic categories depending on the accessibility to public and to their location in relation with building blocks: inside the block_private use / inside the block_public use / in-between the blocks_private & public. Each category is furthermore divided in sub-groups depending on their spatial form and the types of uses they carry. In the next pages we can see the different categories, the location of the specific voids, their spatial form and some samples of such spaces. Next to these three categories there is a mapping of the open spaces that are officially defined as “green areas”. This mapping is an important input in the research: one needs to know the existing in order to add something new and different.

In **scheme 03.h**, one can see that some of the voids that are of public use are concentrated together and that the analogy of space they occupy presents big differentiations. We can also see that here is high potential in the voids of private use, as they exist in the inner space of almost any block of buildings in the city center. More specifically, in **scheme 03.i**, one can notice that the spaces inside the blocks that only the residents of the specific block have the privilege to use, may vary and that the majority of them include private gardens. In many cases (40) there are only gardens that are inseparable but in some other cases which are also many (35) there is space that is empty and devoid of any use in between the private gardens or between private gardens and the inner facades of buildings. There are also some few cases (7) where next to the gardens there is already an intervention addressed to relaxation or play such as common garden or sports courts. More or less equal in number are spaces that are only occupied by parking facilities reserved for the residents.

Moving on to the next category, one can see (**scheme 03.j**) that in contrast with the previous category, it mainly covers the east side of the city center, where there are more public buildings, company premises and commercial areas. All of the voids are open but in different ways: some completely open on one side, some partially open and some open only through small passages on the ground floor. The first



03.g. Recording of all existing voids in Rotterdam city Center
sketch by the author



03.h. Voids of private and public use

sketch by the author

group's voids are mainly neighborhood-parks (pocket parks) that can act as nice breaks for relaxation but they represent only very few places in the city center(4) and . The last three of the sub-groups all include parking facilities but they differ in their spatial configuration. The difference with the precedent category is that most of these parking lots are used for the supply of the stores at the front of the block and are not preserved strictly for the residents.

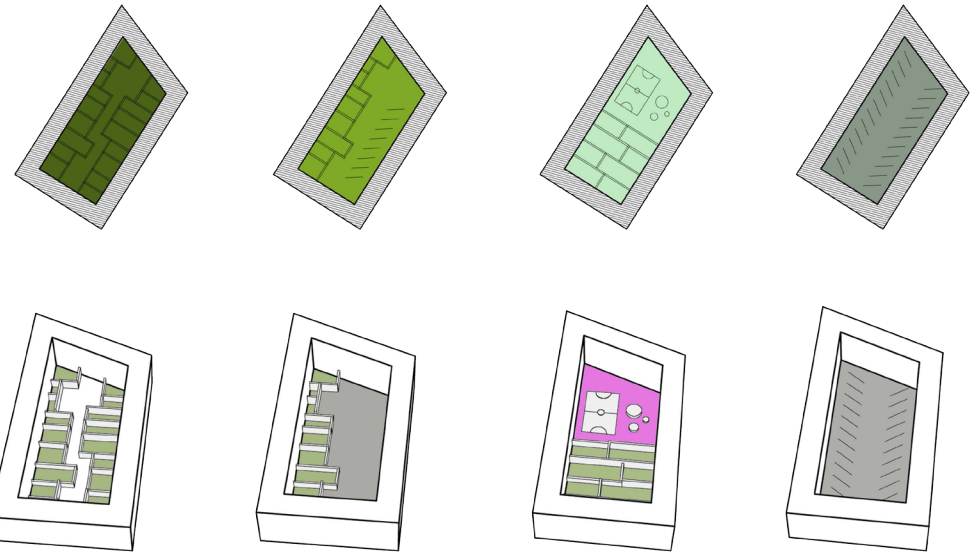
The last category (**scheme 03.k.**) is mostly about free-access spaces (only two are closed and private) that are in-between blocks or houses. Their size differentiates a lot -from small pocket parks, to huge lawns and parking lots- and their character also varies. Some of them are more intimate and green while others (last sub-group) are harsh and 'cold'. The first sub-group is about places closed to public while the second one is open to public. Both have the same characteristics: tiny size and little vegetation. They are addressed mainly to people that live in the neighbouring areas. The third sub-group includes bigger sized spaces that are used as parking lots: empty spaces that lack any intervention or vegetation and that do not allow for any more actions than that of parking a car. The last group includes mainly linear lawns, most of the times related with a bigger green space (city park, neighborhood park).These lawns are surrounded by trees but still, they are not so much used from the citizens as they seem empty and with no interest.

Finally, in the map of the defined green areas of the city (**scheme 03.l.**) we can see that there is a big discrepancy in their size with the bigger ones concentrated in the south. Although there are smaller such areas in the center they are devoted to sports or play and most of them are 'hard' and grey. However, there are some places that have a more random configuration and they convey a feeling of the wild: they are condensed cores of lush vegetation with unclear paths that may trigger a more deviated and unexpected behavior. Unfortunately, there are only two such places in the area of examination (Hondentuin, Historische Tuin Schoonord).



03.i. Inside the block _ private use

enclosed_hidden_silent



only gardens



gardens and other space



gardens and common area



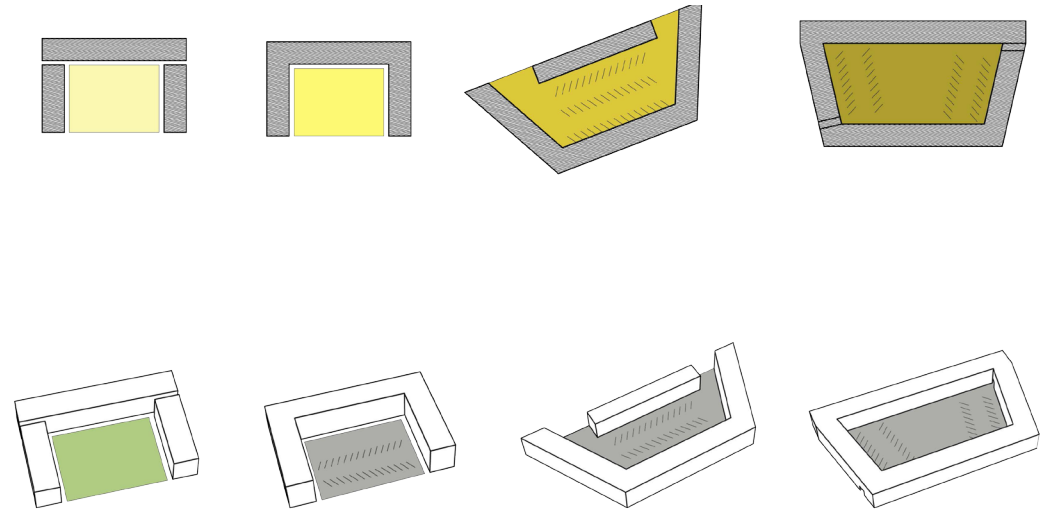
parking lot



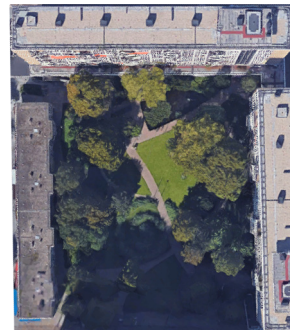


03.j. Inside the block _ public use

semi-enclosed_semi-hidden_semi-silent



one side open - green



one side open-parking lot



big openings - parking lot



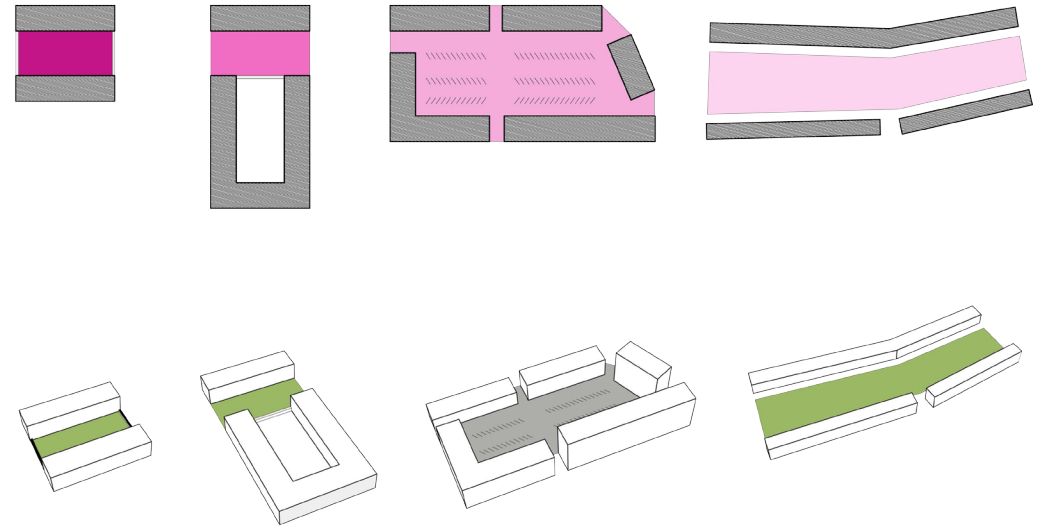
ground floor openings- parking lot





03.k. In-between blocks _ private/public use

enclosed/open_not hidden_not silent



public use - green



public use-parking lot



private use - green



public use-green





03.1. defined "green areas"_public use



square on Schiedamsesingel



play field on Gerrit Sterkmanplein



Hondentuin at Essenburgsingel



Educatieve Tuin at Essenburgsingel



Historische Tuin Schoonoord



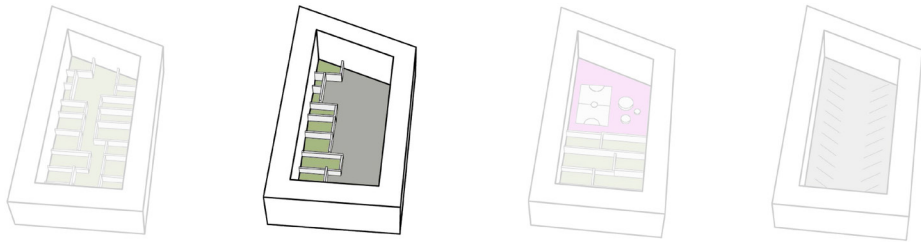
city park: Het Park

03.m. Tuins, City parks, playgrounds and squares

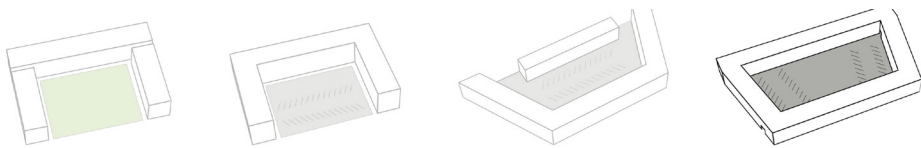
photos by the author

03.2.a selection of the potential types for intervention

After the recording of all the existing voids of the area I chose one sub-group of each category that I think is most relevant and intriguing for intervention. From the first one I chose the type of sites that include an empty unused space next to the private gardens. This space could be considered unfunctional and random as nothing happens there: it is only the backside of gardens and residences that is left abandoned. What intrigues me in this type is its special condition of the limit, the borders -physical and mental- between it, the private gardens and the residences. It will be a challenging task to operate on that border and create a whole different world in an already rich in hues environment. Furthermore, this type of space may allow for an intervention that does not have to deal with the expropriation of the existing private gardens as it is just a 'corridor' that runs along garden fences and almost no one uses it.



From the second category I picked the typology with the ground floor entrances. This condition of entering from a small, covered passage already creates a sense of mystery and of extension like entering in a secret world. However, inside it is always full of parked vehicles and even if there are some elements that could create a sense of 'something different' they are eliminated by the harsh presence of cars and their noise. Such places although they are given a specific use they do not have a defined character and they are rigid and fixed. Also, most of the times they are spatially interrupted: we could say that this spatial condition is creating different 'rooms'. The task will be to deal with the interruptedness and the hardness of these places and to overcome this rigidness that they carry.

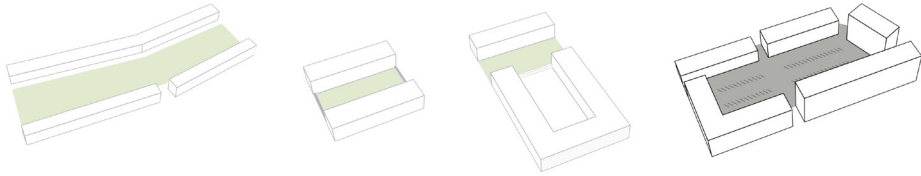


The type of sites that I picked from the last category was the one that can be entered from all sides and is devoted only to parking facilities. These sites are quite unpleasant to me as they create a feeling of anxiety and fear. It is difficult to



03.m. Potential voids for intervention
sketch by the author

grasp their hypostasis as they are like non-places: you experience it but you never feel that you are there or that something affects you in an important way. They are open from all sides and that makes them even looser, less specific. The only presence there is that of cars and in most cases these sites are surrounded by big and solid buildings occupied by offices and companies. The homogeneity and the harshness here is even more extreme and does not allow any variety of actions.



The choosing of only these three sub-groups was made on the one hand due to the time-limitation but also because in some cases I really believe that is difficult or not right to intervene. Such cases can be the ones that would require the expropriation of private gardens or the destruction of already designed places that are dedicated to entertainment or relaxation. Also, in general, my preference tended towards spaces that are more enclosed than others because that already creates a condition of feeling in an 'other' place.

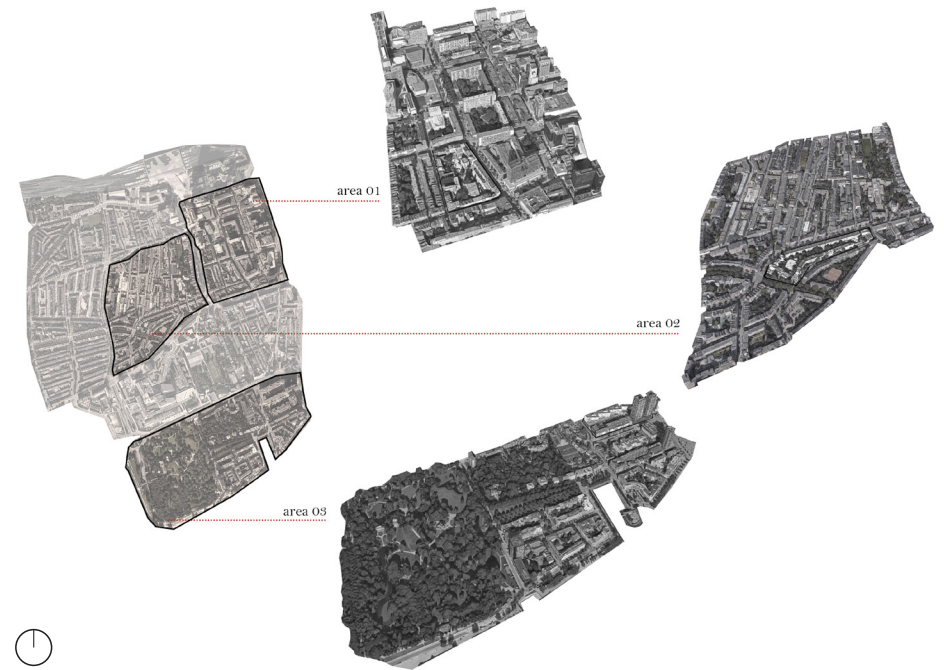
03.3 picking of 3 sites

My desire for creating new gardens of deviation found its actualization in three specific sites, selected from all the potential ones. The three sites had to differentiate in terms of their character-hue (expressive qualities) but also of their articulation (spatial qualities). Furthermore, I wanted that they belong to completely disparate regions and neighborhoods in terms of uses, existing open spaces but also of what the citizens do there and why they are attracted in each area.

It was important to me that there is variety in the samples where I am going to test my design desires because that way the research would become richer and not narrow-sighted. Dealing with each situation in a unique way and then comparing the conclusion of different cases could give more insights in the generic problem that triggered this thesis. Also, intervening in various parts of the city followed the desire for a more extended effect that the new design would have on the life of the Rotterdam urbanites.

03.3.a external milieu: the three areas

The areas that 'accomodate' the three sites have a unique mixture of uses, facilities and public open spaces as well as specific things to offer. This mixture is what gives each area its character.



03.n. The three areas that accomodate the testing-sites

sketch by the author

There is Lijnbaan (**area 01** on **scheme 03.n.**), a primarily commercial area, full of stores and chains of big brands, places to eat and drink, to watch a movie or even to visit a casino! It is the area with the most intense 'show-off' of the 'mechanisms of desire' -commerce and entertainment namely- with big flows of consumers dispersing in its streets, most of them pedestrianized. This region seems like a delirium where everyone seeks to fulfill their needs where the glossiness of the showcases promises the unattainable. People are mixed in crowds moving up and down and sometimes they have brief breaks mainly to continue shopping afterwards. Among medium-rise and some high-rise glossy buildings there are only few open places where one can relax but they are not used as much as expected. There is a big square that people use especially when the weather is nice, some small pocket parks and the hidden Jacobustuin but they are passed by. Bars and cafes are mainly gathered in one street called Oude Binnenweg. It is the noisiest area among

the three with the biggest concentration of mixed uses.



03.o. People shopping or taking a break in the commercial area of Lijnbaan
 photos by the author

The second area is quite calm and mostly occupied by residences. There are many quiet streets where nothing seems to happen but there are also two main streets that carry a series of small stores, super markets and cafes. All the buildings' facades are similar, made of bricks, and most of them do not exceed the four floors. It is an area that, for me, represents to a big extent the routine of Rotterdam and carries this feeling of the neighborhood and of the smaller scale that the other two areas lack of. The most intense flows of people are concentrated on the two main roads, Nieuwe Binnenweg and Mathenesserlaan. One can see people drinking smoothly their beers while watching people and cars passing by, women and men carrying groceries or old ladies walking their tiny fluffy dogs with a slow relaxing pace. On the rest of the streets, although it is mainly quiet, there are some spots and corners where lively activities are randomly popping up: at several times of the day the playgrounds and the small sports fields gather people from around the neighborhood, people of different ages and cultures that seek a place to relax and play.



03.p. One main street and two smaller ones with different presence of people
 photos by the author

Area 03 is very different from the other two. It is located at the edge of the north part of Rotterdam, where the city meets the river Maas. It seems like it evokes two atmospheres: one that created by the big city park and the rich residences that are adjacent to it, and one that stems from the company premises that are gathered together on the other side of the area. Smooth and loose feelings coexist with harsh and unfriendly ones. The area is 'cut-off' from the rest of Rotterdam due to Vasteland, a wide and always busy road. Along this road there are some commercial stores while there are some few bars and cafes in smaller streets more towards the river. The buildings are mostly high-rise and occupied by company premises and offices while most of the streets on the ground are left quite abandoned and devoid of people and activities. The scale here seems gigantic as there are no chances to 'grab yourself' onto something and it feels like you are in an industrial area. There are huge voids and too much wind coming from the river. One can see few people walking along the riverfront, some people sitting at bars enjoying their beers but also tourists underneath Erasmusbrug looking with awe the tall building made by OMA at the other side of the river.



03.q. Quite empty grey streets with some spots of life
 photos by the author

The following schemes show the recording of the different uses in each area as well as the type of the existing open spaces. In **scheme 03.r.** we can clearly see the concentration of the attractors in very specific areas, something that I already mentioned in **chapter 03.1.** The discrimination is quite clear as each area is a condensation of specific uses -commerce & entertainment/ residence / company premises- and the dispersion throughout the city is intense: the three areas although quite close to each other they seem much further apart. In **scheme 03.s** one can see that although in some parts it seems that there is a lot of open spaces, like in area 02, the access is forbidden to the public. That makes the specific area quite rigid, turning its 'back' to the citizens. This fact acted as a trigger for intervening in it, trying to change the current situation in favor of the the experience of people while walking on street.

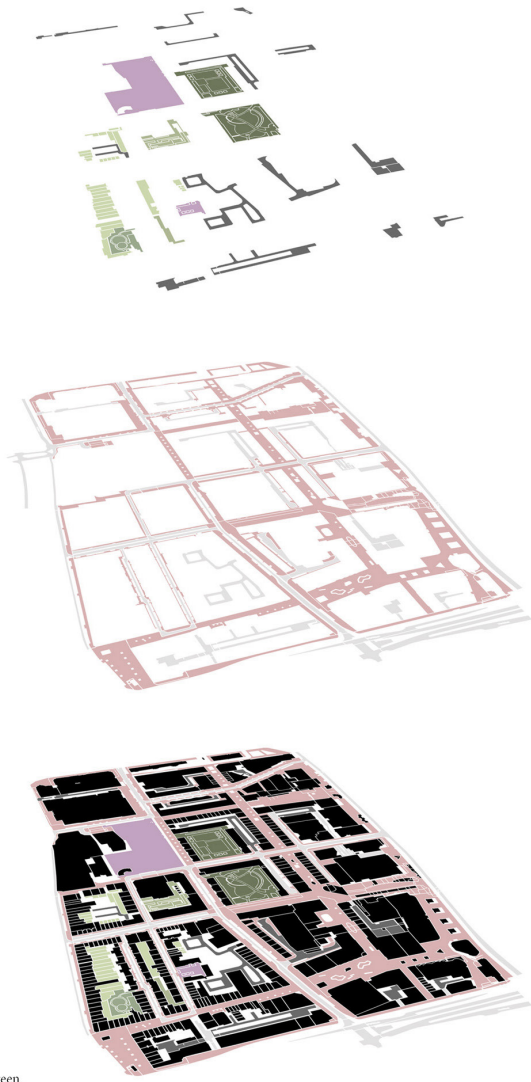
- resi
- con
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- cas
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03.r. The three areas with their different uses

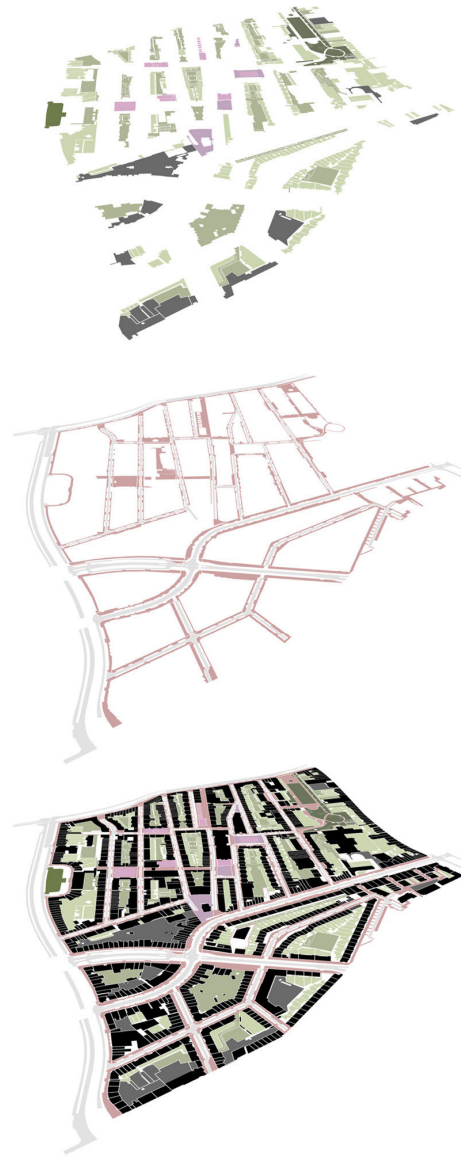
sketch by the author

area 01

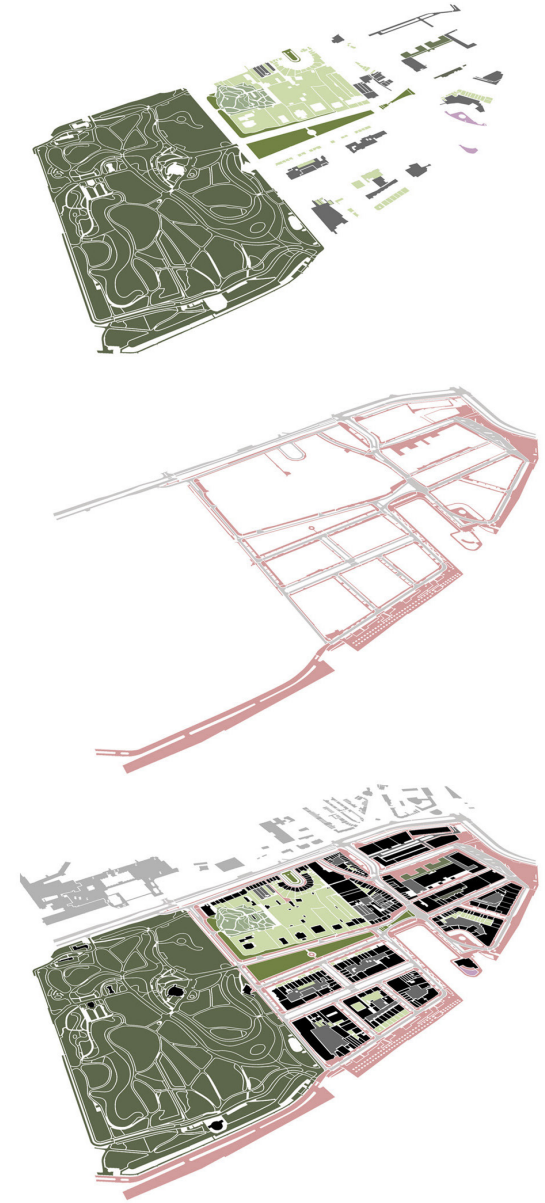


- pedestrian
- car
- square
- playground
- neighborhood park
- private common green
- open field
- private garden
- parking lot/street passage

area 02



area 03

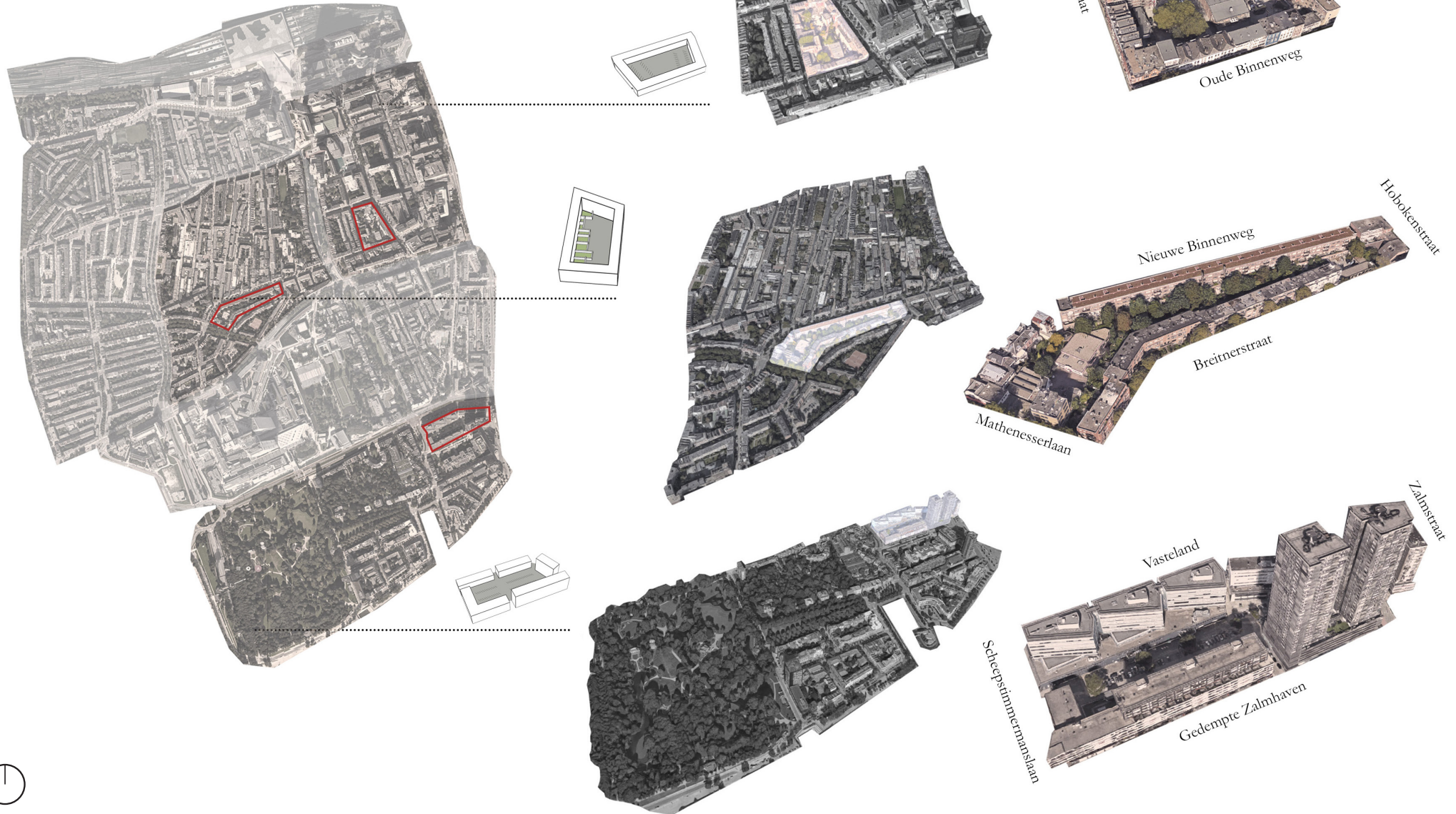


03.s. Discrepancy in the presence of open spaces in each area

sketch by the author

03.3.b interior milieu and membrane: the three sites

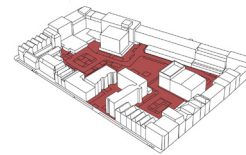
The three sites that I selected as the testing cases of my design desires are quite representative of the character of the areas they are located into. Apart from the different conditions in the surroundings of the sites there are also big differentiations on the inside among the three. Both the interior milieu and its relation with the outside via their membrane requires a unique manipulation in each case.





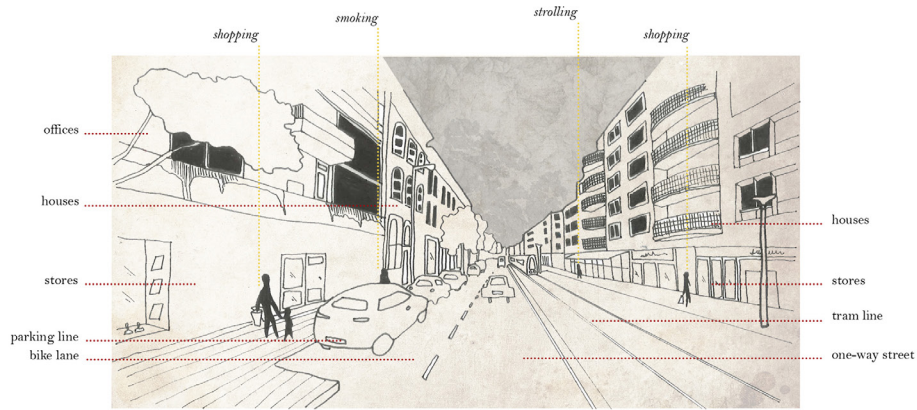
- • • • • institute's backyard
- • • • • • • • • • playground
- • • • • small square
- • • • • small square

site.01.



The first site lies in the heart of Lijnbaan and it has an urban character. It is the back side of ground-floor stores, houses, one culture center (Folkhouse Matrix), an educational institute (Piet Zwart Institut) and a casino. It is currently used mainly as a parking lot and supply 'road' for the stores. The presence of cars there is big and constant. However, there is a spot with a small playground, a delimited area addressed to the students of the Institute and two quite enclosed spaces that seem like small squares. The presence of people is not so often although there are times that one can meet a mother with her children playing, people traversing the site it as a shortcut or residents that walk their dog.

Around the site most of the streets are quite busy and noisy during the day and one of them, Oude Binnenweg, also during the night as it is full of bars and cafes. Mauritsstraat is the only street that is quite different from the others: it is a narrow, one-way street, with residences' facades and it is completely quiet during both day and night. There are pedestrians and cyclists that pass by every now and then but it seems like nothing is going on there. This is a big contrast with the parallel street, Karel Dormanstraat, where you feel that everything is happening: people shopping, drinking coffee, eating at a cafe's terrace, cycling, driving. A busy two-way street that concentrates big amounts of traffic and noise.



Van Oldenbarneveltstraat



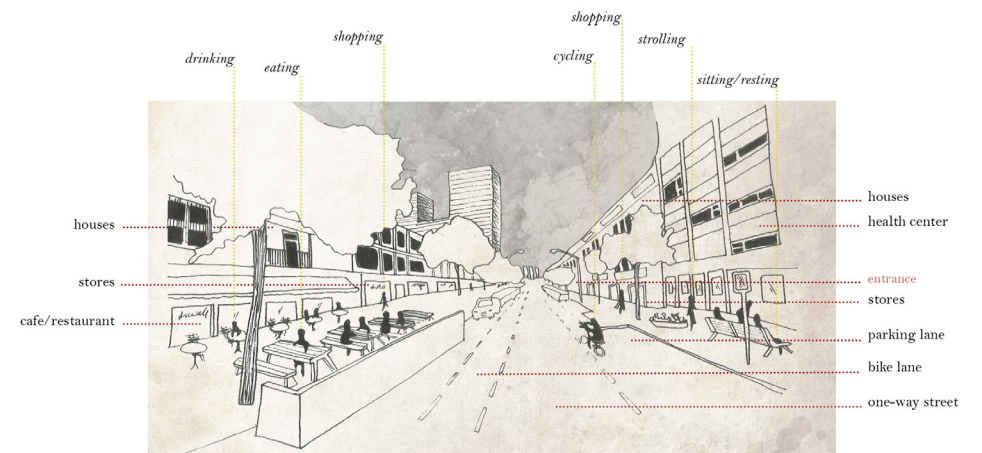
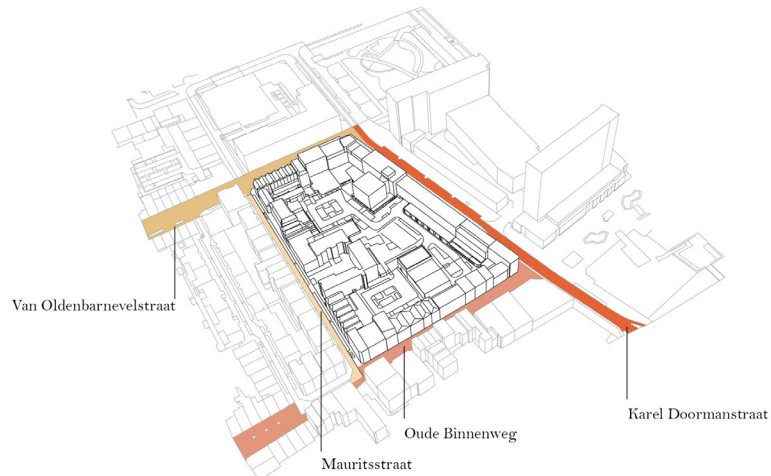
Oude Binnenweg



Mauritsstraat

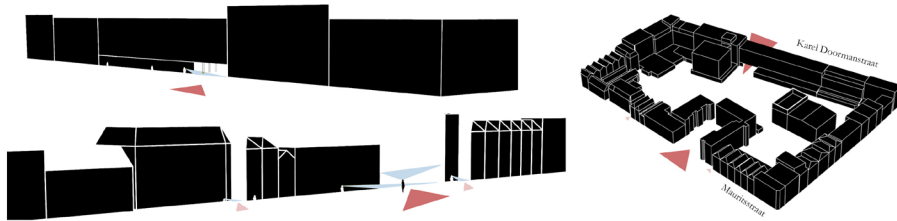


Oude Binnenweg

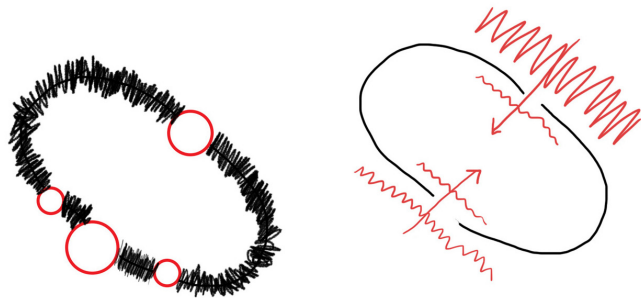


Karel Doormanstraat

The limit of the site from its exterior milieu (membrane) is quite thick and impervious. There are two main openings that differ in many aspects. One is on the busy street of Karel Doormanstraat. It is a covered gallery of 3 metres high that allows the passage both for pedestrians and cars. The transition from the noisy street to the quiet interior of the site is abrupt and acts as a surprise. This passage leads you to the centre of the site. There is another opening, wide and transparent on the parallel quiet street of Mauritsstraat. There, the transition is far smoother; in fact, although there is a steel railing with an open door that separates the site from the pavement, it is like there is no border at all. In contrast to the other entrance, here there is the same feeling both on street and when in the site, that of silence and calmness. After passing that almost invisible door, one finds themselves at the small square with the trellis and the high trees that seems cut-off from the rest of the site. What is interesting is that on Mauristraat there are two more small openings among the buildings' facades, with metallic doors leading to narrow passages. These corridors evoke a feeling of mystery but currently they are locked and accessible only to the residents of the block. Both these openings lead to different spots of the site.



03.v. Current and potential entrances of the site
 sketch by the author



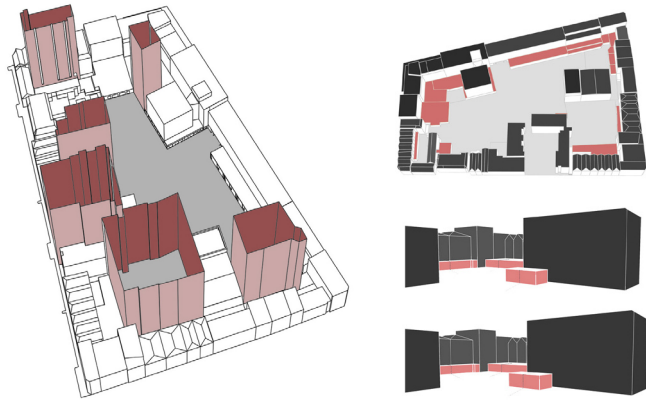
03.w. Thickness of the membrane and different types of cracks (left)
 Different degree of transition from the exterior to the interior milieu (right)
 sketch by the author

Inside the site, the space is interrupted mainly by buildings that diverge from the perimeter creating small niches in corners. Like the massive building with the blind brick facade that intrudes the space and divides it to two more enclosed areas. Its facade is only interrupted by two doors and it confuses the eye as it dissolves the scale of the space around it and makes you wonder about what is hiding inside. There are also many smaller buildings one-floor high in the interior perimeter that shape an intermediary level between the ground and the four-floor buildings (scheme 03.w.). These small buildings create harsh corners that hide parts of the site and at points, when the big buildings come too close, they also shape corridors that one cannot discern where they lead to.

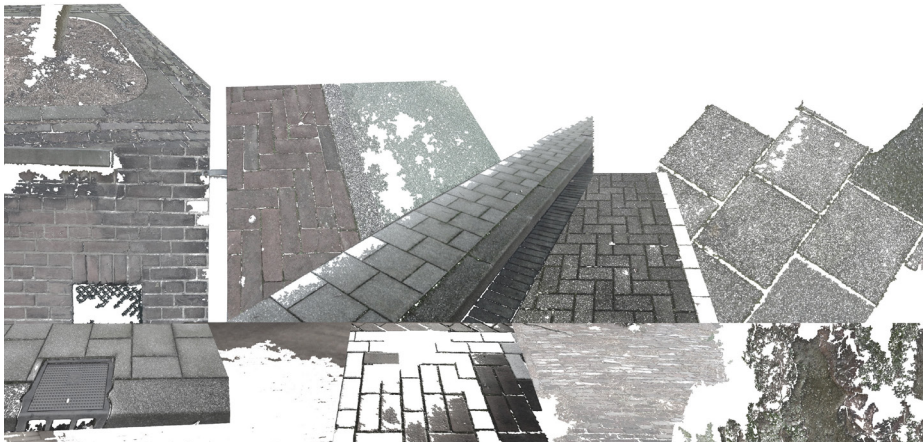
The little variation of expressive elements like colors and sounds denotes the homogeneity of the site. There is very little going on and very little to grab onto or to watch. Its ground is mainly hard, covered with all kinds of patterns with only few spots of soft soil (scheme 03.x.). Once again, the space feels like an interior. You can never get dirty, everything seems clean and cut to fit its limit. The colors are the usual greyish and reddish of the asphalt and the bricks but there are some intriguing spots as the colors of the doors or those of some flowers that catch the eye. The vegetation is mainly felt as spatial element and not as something that can offer you pleasure or relaxation. There are singular trees dispersed in the site, but also some clusters and rows that have different effects in the space: enclosure and concentration on the one hand, linearity and orientation on the other (scheme 03.y.).

A special characteristic of the site is the dispersion of structural elements all around its territory (scheme 03.z.). There are big steel staircases tangent to the buildings facades, external complementary elements that lead you to several floors. On the ground floor multiple doors in different colors and of various materials promise the entrance to buildings or the passage to narrow corridors. Two trellises with dark ivies and other climbing plants stand in the middle of nowhere and seem like out of context: symbols of lush gardens that you have seen in books they seem now as if they just landed on a site in the midst of a city. In the backyard of Piet Zwart Institut there is a strange glass room that attracts your attention and your curiosity. It is like an installation but maybe it is just for the smokers to not get wet when it rains. Among all these elements, there are some few benches, fences and light poles in several spots that are some of the few elements that remind you that you are in an exterior space!

The feeling that this site evoked to me was unique: an exterior space that feels like an interior, a disassembled house with several rooms in different levels separat-



03.x. The niches (left) and the intermediary level created by the small buildings (right)
 sketch by the author

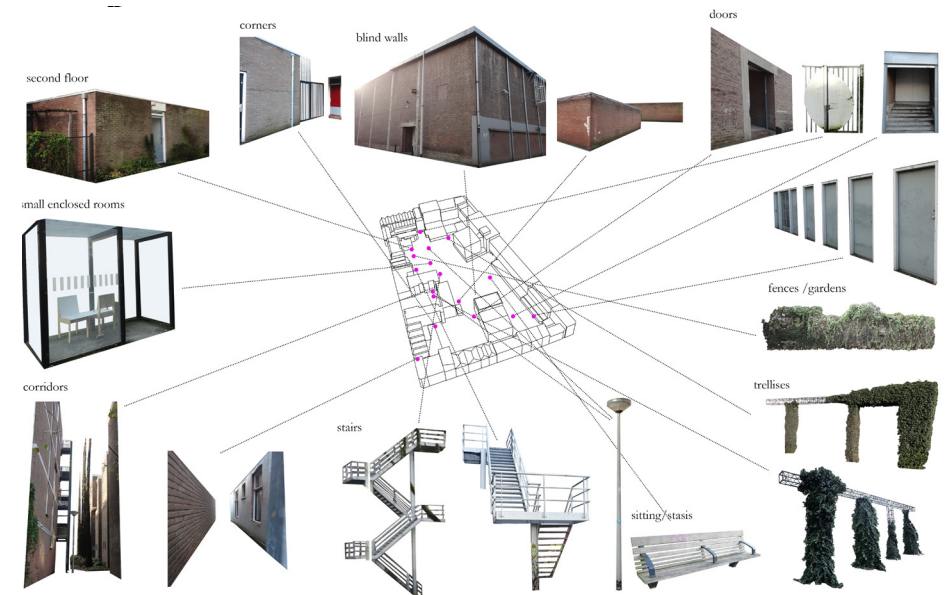


03.y. Coexistence of different patterns on hard grounds
 sketch by the author



03.z. Trees in line and in cluster in the small 'squares'
 sketch by the author

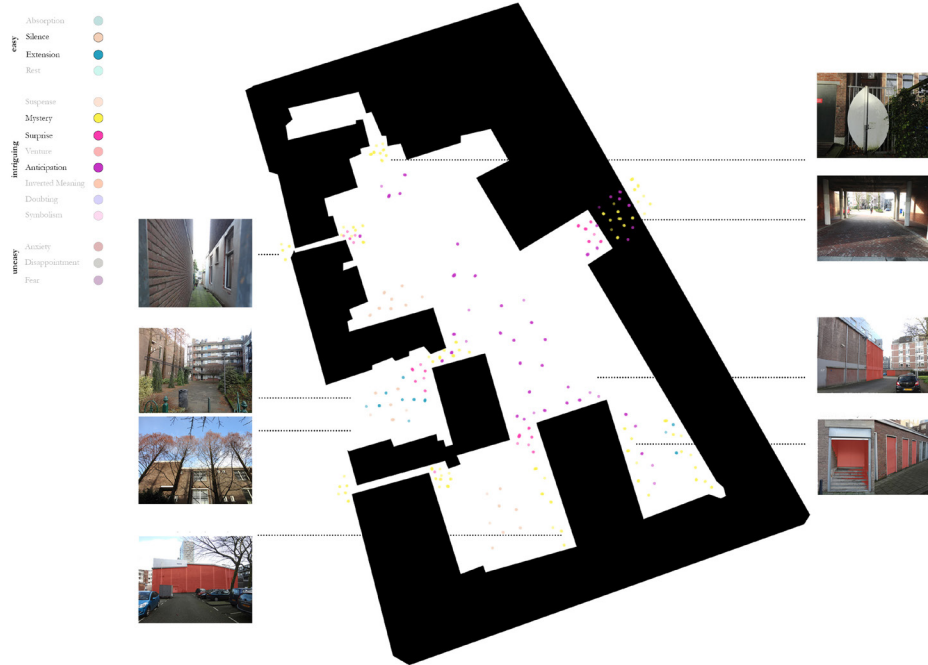
ed by corridors, stairs and trellises. A weird amalgamation of places that hide in niches challenging you to discover them by constantly exploring the place, going around, climbing and descending stairs and then start again. It is like a maze where you have to move around and repeat movements .



03.a.a. Dispersion of structural elements all around the site
 sketch by the author

It felt like I am Alice in her adventures in Wonderland. The discovery of the several 'rooms' in the site reminded me the multiple scenes she had to pass through in order to get to the much-longed secret garden. I could imagine the doors on the groundfloor buildings as the locked doors that she encountered and the small passages to the outside as the dark corridor she fell into from the hole on the ground. I, like her, felt surprised at moments and I anticipated to see what is next and sometimes I felt confused and disorientated.

After visiting the site many times, I recorded in what way it affected me. The recording was based on the Affective Gradients that I extracted from the analysis. The most prevailing gradients were these of surprise anticipation and mystery along with some moments of silence and extension (**scheme 03.a.a.**). These gradients were quite similar to those extracted from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland novel.



03.a.b. Existing Affective Gradients: prevalence of intriguing gradients/easy at a low degree
sketch by the author

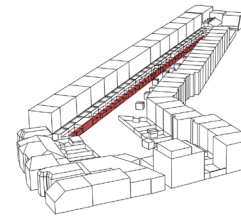
Inspired by all these thoughts I recreated the image of the site in my mind in many versions of how it could be changed to be more intriguing and out of the usual. I imagined it then with even greater confusion with things that are disassembled and more dispersed. With doors and staircases cut away from their complementary surfaces, acting on their own hypostasis, with more corridors to disorient you and multiple trellises to encircle you making you feel anxious and trapped. A profound confusion of environments that are mixed together in a blurry way (**scheme 03.a.b.**).



03.a.c. An imaginary re-assembly of the site
collage by the author



site.02.

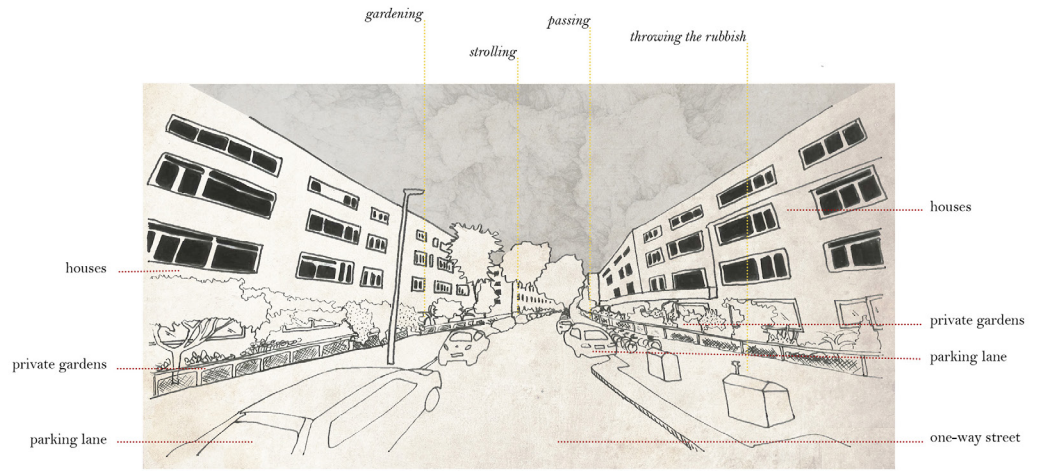


The second site is quite peculiar in terms of its spatial configuration, its character and its relation to the surroundings. It is inside a block that is mostly occupied by residences. It constitutes a longitudinal corridor situated in-between the back facades of buildings and a series of private gardens. It is an intermediary zone that is not used for anything rather than a 'dump' for placing useless objects. It is closed to public and no one can see it from the outside. On the one side it is adjacent to the back facades of ground-floor stores and houses on the upper floor while on the other, it is separated from the private gardens with a very long row of fences, different in type and materiality.

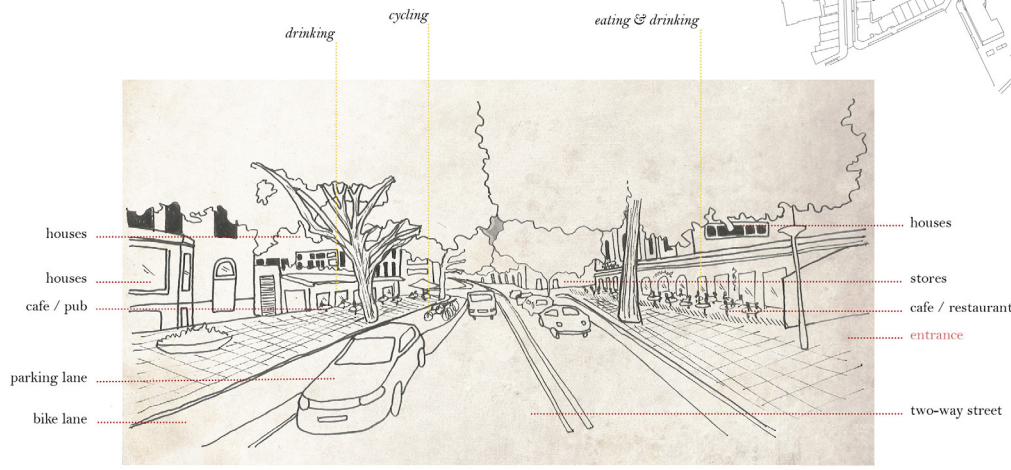
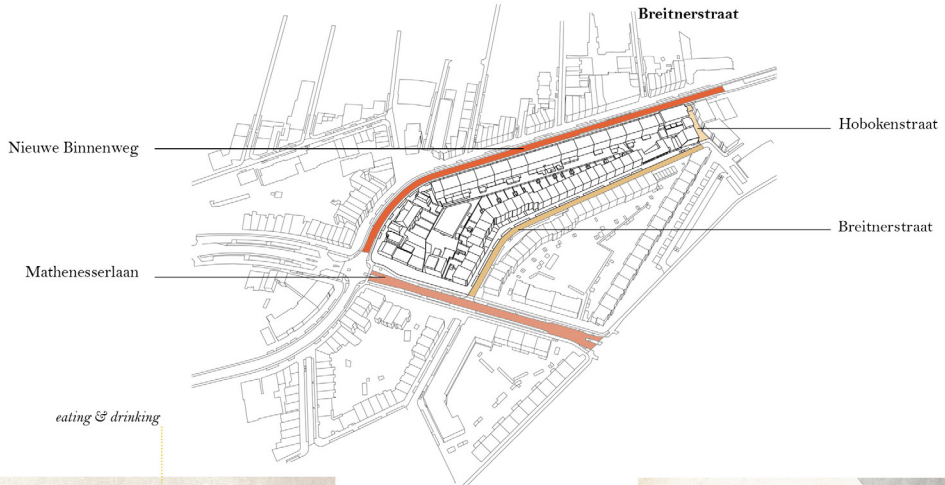
Two of the streets around the site, Nieuwe Binnenweg and Mathenesserlaan are quite busy and noisy as they concentrate uses of commerce and recreation on the ground floor. There is traffic both day and night and that makes them friendly. The other two streets are much less populated and very calm, one is even pedestrianized (Hobokenstraat), and there you can see nothing but residents leaving or returning home, throwing away the rubbish or in some cases some kids playing on the street. At night there is complete silence and that can be sometimes scary.



Nieuwe Binnenweg



Breitnerstraat



Mathenesserlaan



Hobokenstraat

03.t. Life on the streets
sketch by the author

This site is even more enclosed than the first one. The membrane is bold and hard leaving only three small and narrow openings to break it. These narrow passages are never obvious from the outside ending, this way, the existence of the site with an atmosphere of secrecy. There is one passage on Nieuwe Binnenweg at a gap between two buildings with the interior of the site hiding after the corner of the four-floor building. The passage is closed to public by railing but there is a detail that catches your eye: before the turning of the passage there is a blue door signaling 'danger'.



03.a.d. The striking blue door warning for electricity danger

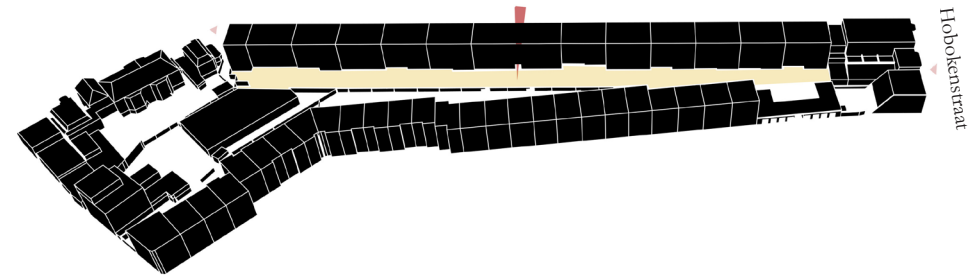
photo by the author



03.a.e. The entrance in Hobokenstraat (left) and the secret door in Nieuwe Binnenweg

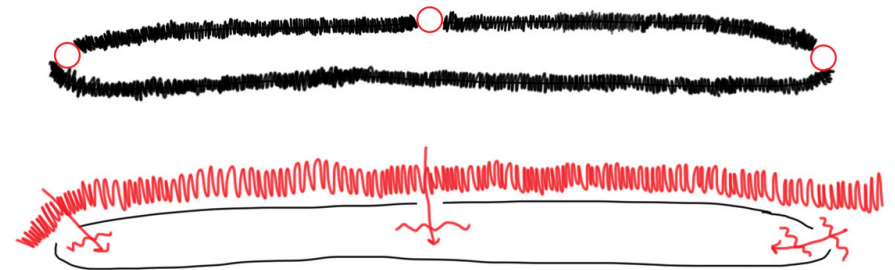
photo by the author

The second entrance is on the calm Hobokenstraat and it is completely closed with a metallic door for which only the residents have the key. If you go closer you can see in-between the railing that there is a long passage that leads to another similar door. The site seems even more distant and unattainable. The third way to approach the site is even more intriguing than the others. It is situated again on Nieuwe Binnenweg but this time its limit is a wooden door, similar to all the others that exist on this endless facade. If you have never entered the site you wouldn't know which of the doors to choose for entering. Currently this entrance is your only chance to get inside if you have the key...



03.a.f. Current and potential entrances of the site

sketch by the author



03.a.g. Thickness of the membrane and different types of cracks (up)

Different degree of transition from the exterior to the interior milieu (down)

sketch by the author

When you pass the door, there is a dark corridor and you only see some blurry light at the end. You keep on walking and suddenly, you find yourself in the midst of a longitudinal axis. You enter transversely and the only thing that you see turning your head both left and right is a tube of plants. You cannot discern what is happening next but it feels like you are standing in the place of a mirror that reflects the same thing: fences, plants and a building facade (**scheme 03.a.1.**).



03.a.h. The dark corridor and the tubes on your left and right

photo by the author

Throughout the site, everything seems dirty and random and its character is more similar to a wild natural than an urban setting. Its ground is soft with materials alternating between mud and soil, dead leaves, crashed rocks and pebbles. In winter you can smell the humidity of the ground. Walking there is not easy as there are many plants and objects getting in your way. It is completely silent except for the sounds of birds or even some human voices coming from the terraces especially in the summer. From the one side it is exposed to the eyes of those working at the ground-floor stores or sometimes of those leaving above while from the other side it is protected from the fences.



03.a.i. The different materials on the ground: dirty and uncontrollable

photos by the author

The fences are a very characteristic element of the site and they play the role of an interior border. Although there is a first membrane of the buildings at the perimeter which play the separating role between the interior and the street, the fences are shaping a second membrane restraining even more the available site to a corridor. Most of them are made of wooden planks in various random formations and

sometimes with dark ivies on them making the border bold and extremely opaque. However, there are few fences made of wire that break this impermeability of the border and allow a look inside the private gardens.



03.a.j. The second membrane of fences

collage by the author

All this constraint to a long linear space makes the journey into the site seem infinite. It is like there is a vertical bubble that encloses you and what you experience is multiple frames of alternating scenes. In this frame-journey the verticality is prevalent and gets your attention: the relation to the sky is constantly changing from clear and open to thick roofs of foliage over your head. Vegetation joins the game giving each frame a different atmosphere: sometimes dark ivy is hanging from a wall, sometimes it is just shrubs on the ground and some others some bamboo plants along with medium rise trees rising from the inside of private gardens create the effect of a tunnel.



03.a.k. Frames and membranes

photo by the author

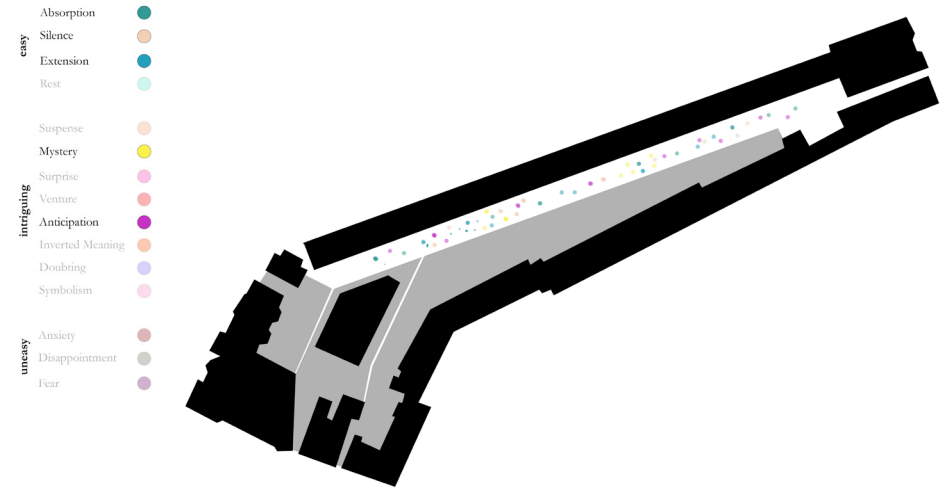


03.a.l. Different relation to the sky along the site
collage by the author

The feeling of isolation and seclusion is intense in this site. The experience is very tactile and intimate: everything is at hand. Although it is linear and doesn't hide any big surprises, there is heterogeneity due to the random formation of things, the dirt and the abandonment that characterize it. Although so near and adjacent to peoples' life, it is a marginal place where time seems to have stopped and where the ground is free from clear paths that would dictate your way. The fact that it has such a lush and haphazard vegetation makes it seem like a wild landscape and that is paradoxical considering the location of the site.

The prevailing feelings are calm and easy. There are few unexpected moments but the endlessness of the route makes the anticipation grow bigger and bigger. Yet, there are not many things to do and you get pleasure mostly by wandering, sometimes going 'up and down' many times, discovering different details each time. The feeling of solitude and absorption by the foliage of the plants give at times their place to curiosity. And you do the route again and again.

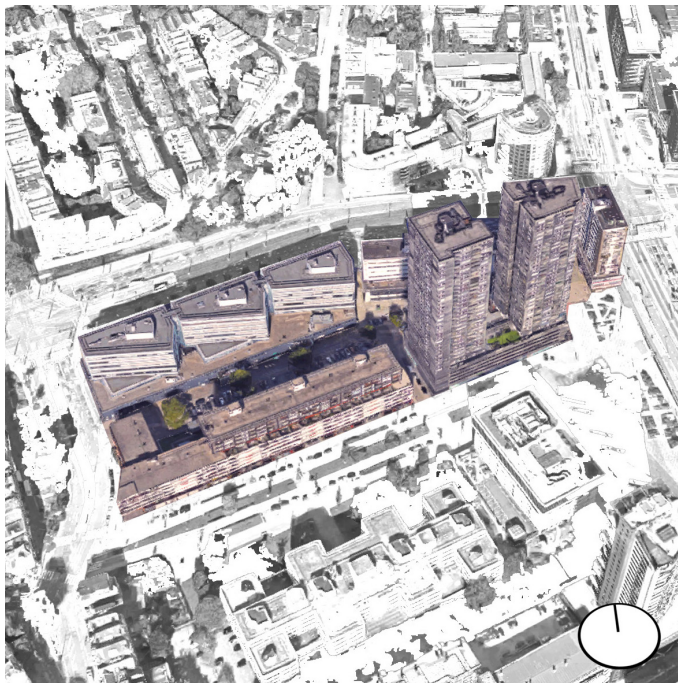
This site reminds me both of the novels *Through the Looking-Glass* and *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*. The first one because of this alteration of reality that the Looking-glass created: a mirror that made everything intriguing, just a piece of glass that in a way distorted the reality offering it to Alice in new pieces. The paradox and the curiosity mingled with an extreme sentiment of isolation and oblivion. The same happens in the second novel. It is these affects of absorption and extension, of solitude and silence that gave the hero pleasure. The feeling of marginality, of world outside the usual that once you enter you forget its limits and its relation to the outside.



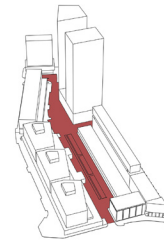
03.a.m. Existing Affective Gradients: prevalence of easy feelings and of anticipation
sketch by the author



03.a.n. Different frames in an infinite journey
collage by the author

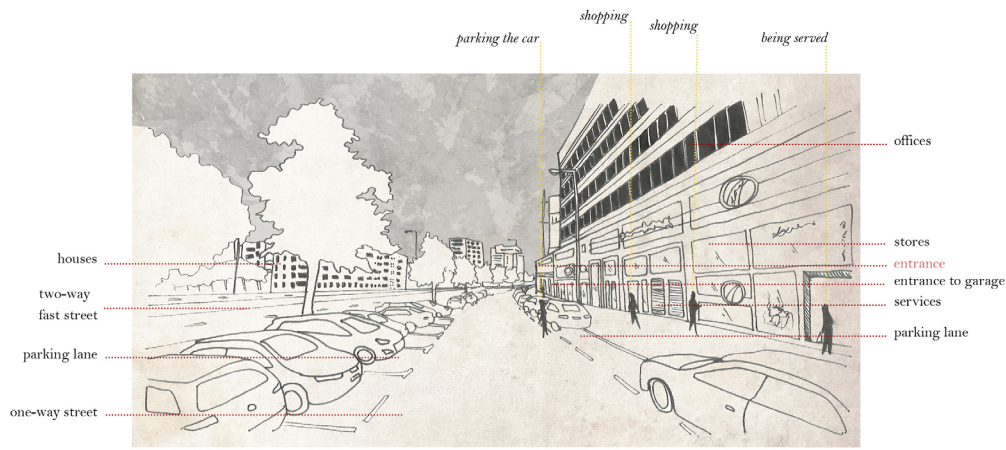


site.03.

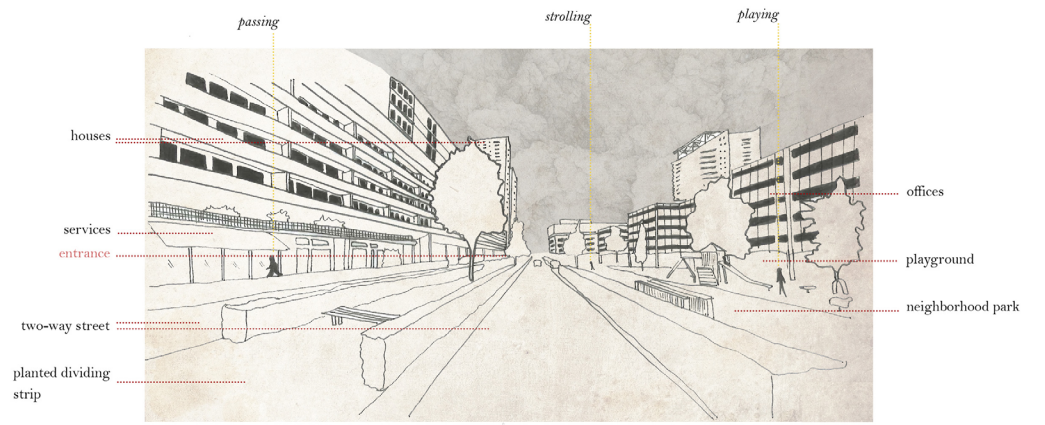


The third site lies at the edge of the city where it meets the river Maas. It is used as a parking lot and is completely overrun by cars. It is not at the inside of a block but a space in-between building complexes, mainly company premises, commercial stores and residences. Most of them are of medium height and with an industrial style but the most striking one is the complex of residences that climbs to 30 floors (**photo 03.a.p.**)! One main feature about the site is that all the groundfloors of its inner membrane are occupied by big garages and you can see entrances with signs and ramps all around. It is a wide and long space and is accessible from all different sides: only one of the openings is only addressed to pedestrians.

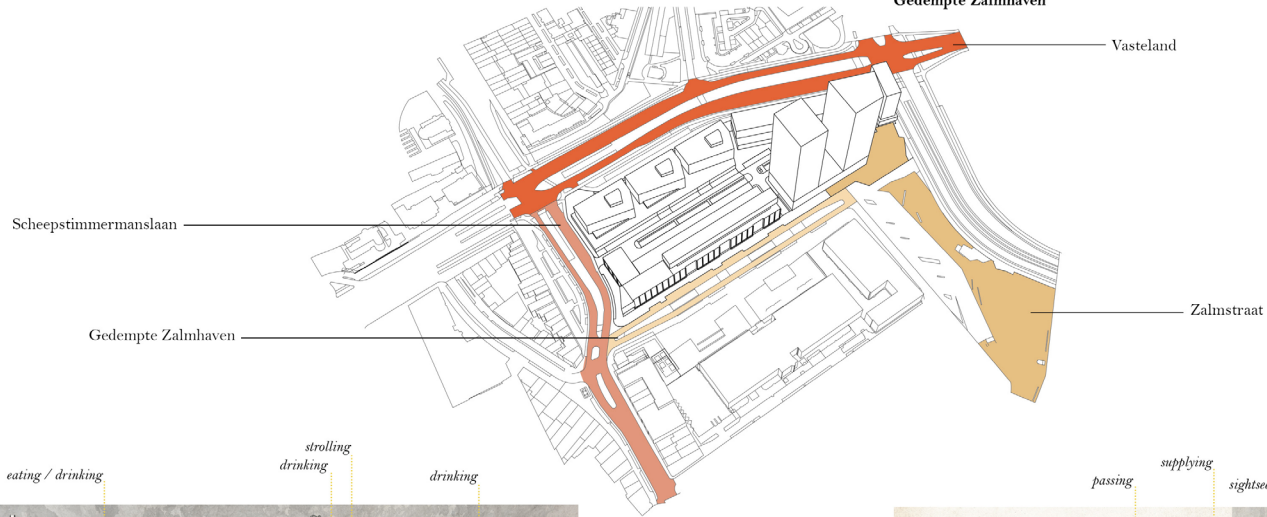
The site is quite noisy because of the constant presence of cars but also of the wind that is so often there. The fact that it has huge gaps on all of its sides makes it even more vulnerable to noise coming from the traffic on the Erasmus bridge that is right next to its east corner. The streets that surround the site differ in character and flows. In the north Vasteland carries heavy flows of cars as it is an important artery. It is unfriendly because of its huge width, the noise and the high speed. This road is like a disconnecter with the rest of the city. On one of its sides, where



Vasteland



Gedempte Zalmhaven



Scheepstimmermanslaan



Zalmstraat

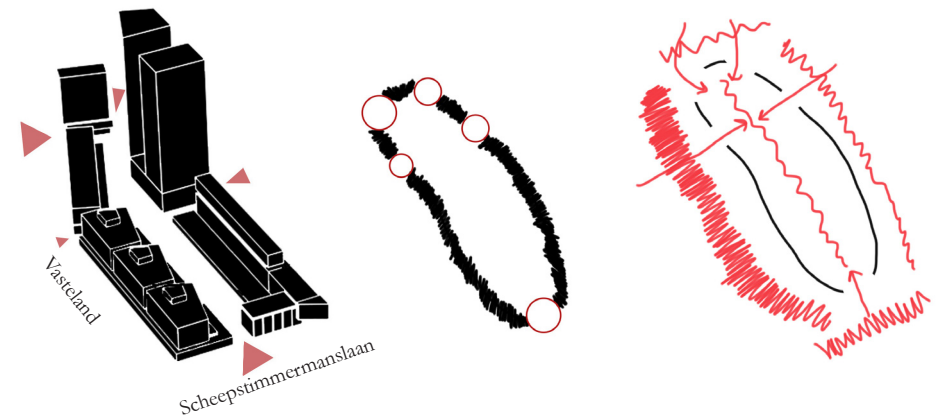
03.a.o. Street life
sketch by the author

it meets the exterior membrane of the site, there is a series of big commercial stores, super markets and services. Scheepstimmermanslaan, on the west side, is also a busy road but not in that intense degree. Apart from cars and trams though, it has a row of bars and cafes on a submerged level, and that keeps the street live during day and some hours of the night. The other two streets are far calmer with Zalmstraat being pedestrianized to a large part of its surface. In fact, it is the continuation of the riverfront intervention that runs along the water and can get you also under the Erasmus bridge. In this street you mainly see tourists, not in a large number though, along with some Rotterdamers strolling around (scheme 03.a.o).



03.a.p. The high-rise towers on the west corner: height as element of the sublime and scary
photo by the author

The membrane of the site is quite open but even if there are many gaps all around it still feels opaque as the volumes of the buildings are massive. Most of the gaps are wide and have no specific character; actually there is no feeling of entering somewhere but rather that you keep on walking in the street. The main entrances for the cars are from the sides of Scheepstimmermanslaan and Vasteland while the other two are used less often. The most interesting and intriguing entrance is a small gap on Vasteland that is only for pedestrians. It is the most intimate of all as it is narrow and like a wedge between the huge volumes of dark grey buildings and it starts with some steps and a light pole in front of them (scheme 03.a.r). When entering from here there is a mystery as you cannot see what is going on

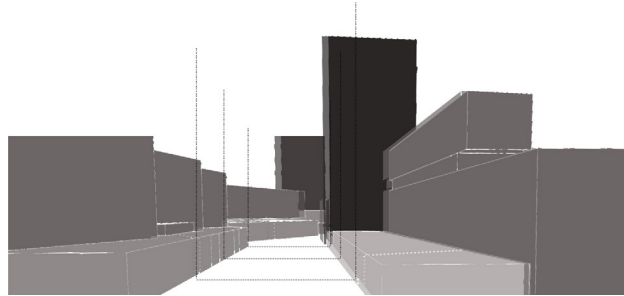


03.a.q. Gaps as entrances: difference in intensity of flows that enter the site (left)
Different types of cracks and various intensities of transition (right)
sketches by the author



03.a.r. The wedge between the massive volumes: intimacy and mystery
photo by the author

in the site something that doesn't happen with the other entrances. The interior membrane of the site is divided in more than one surfaces and levels due to the different height of the buildings. There is a gradual escalation: ground-floor, four meters high buildings with garages and then medium rise buildings to end up to the 'skyscrapers' (scheme 03.a.s.).



03.a.s. Escalation of height
sketch by the author

In the interior nothing seems to be going on. When 'inside' one can only walk on narrow pavements that are tangent to the walls of the garages. The space is completely striated and harsh, leaving no room for spontaneous actions. It is covered with hard surfaces full of patterns (scheme 03.a.t.) without a single trace of soft ground. The space is unfriendly and intangible as there is nothing to grab onto and it evokes unpleasant affects such as fear and anxiety. Its big width makes it seem like an empty basin of concrete, where everything is greyish and cold, like in industrial complexes. The wind coming from the river makes it even more unpleasant and the extreme height and rigidity of the buildings make you feel uncomfortable but also numb and surprised. Furthermore, the shut openings of the garages' facades and their endless surfaces evoke a feeling of mystery and anticipation when one walks along them. Anticipation that is never rewarded, though...

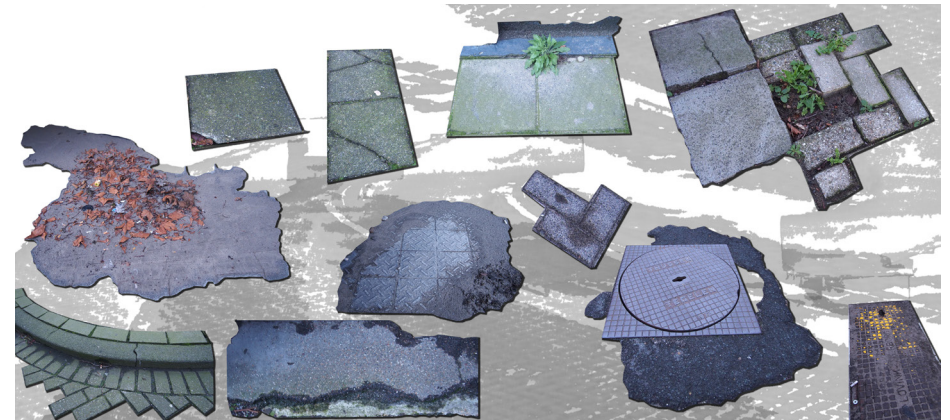


03.a.t. Multiplicity of patterns on hard surfaces 'squeezed' next to each other
sketch by the author



03.a.u. An empty basin of concrete
photo by the author

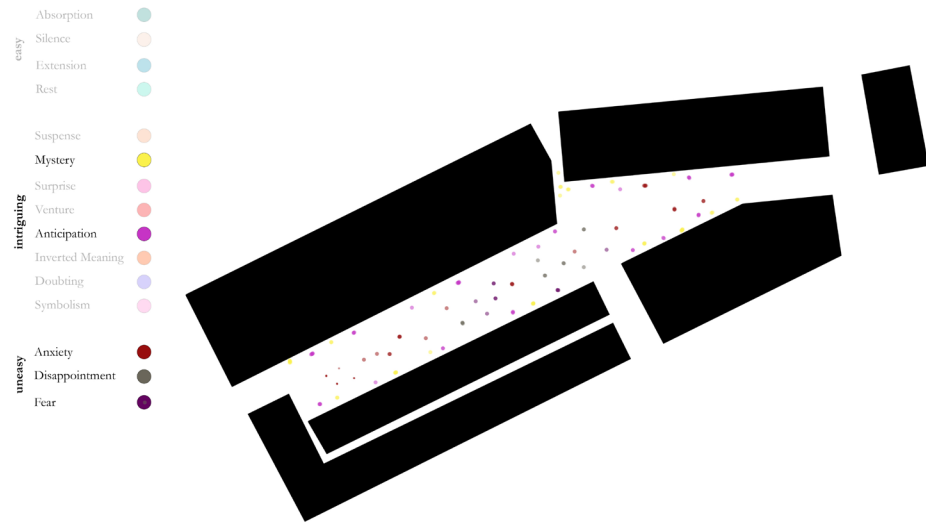
However, while exploring the site I found out something that seemed interesting to me: if you notice more carefully, you will see leakages all over the place! I'm referring to all these tiny cracks happening at spots where the hard surfaces break, moments of 'breathing' in a site that suffocates beneath the concrete slabs. Cracks of decolorization, of dirt and decay, of dead leaves and tiny grass (scheme 03.a.u.). I imagined the whole city with its rigidity inside this basin and all these cracks as the places that deviate from the normal and the fixed, just as I wish my gardens to be for Rotterdam.



03.a.v. Leakages in every corner
collage by the author

I could relate my experience in this site with that of Poliphilo in *Hypnerotomachia*. Although the settings have nothing in common, the feelings of stress, anxiety and fear brought Poliphilo in my mind in his endless journey filled with anticipa-

tion and with his desires never being fully satisfied. I could imagine him passing through all these adventures, going up and down, running through caves and cracks from darkness to light. The linear formation of the site seemed to me like his linear journey to the isle of Cythera: wandering around through a succession of multiple environments with few moments of rest and stasis where there is always water to ease his agitation.



03.a.w. Existing Affective Gradients: prevalence of uneasy feelings/ mystery and anticipation at a low degree

collage by the author

03.3.c conclusions + general intentions

From the analysis of all three sites one can see that they have indeed distinct hue and character, what I call refrain. They do not only differ in their spatial formation but also in their expressive elements. The degree of hidden-ability, enclosure and homogeneity also varies. The interior milieus of all three seem to have their own rhythms with their membranes function in a unique in each situation way. Nevertheless, all three do not seem to have substantial relations and exchange with their exterior milieus.

The actual situation of each made me imagine different virtual happenings; the sites in more intriguing and out of the usual conditions where the homogeneity and the fixation of actions and existing affects would be diluted and infused with more intense experiences. The parallelism with the fictional settings gave a stronger push to these fantasies of mine as I started to mix my experience with the paradoxical situations of the novels and the actuality of these three places in the city. The tactile and the real, even ugly and dirty at times, mingled with the imaginary and the still intangible creating new images.

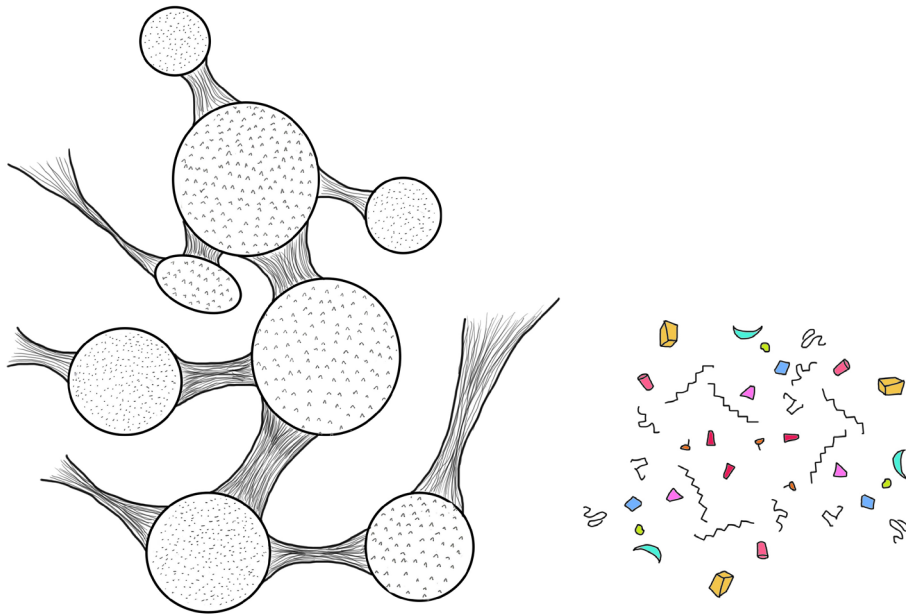
Furthermore, the specific refrains evoked to me different feelings and at various intensities: some affective gradients are more prevalent than others in each site. This functioned as a guide for me. As the aim of this project is to intensify the succession of easy, uneasy and intriguing affects, the design attempts to create new affective relationships by adding affects that are missing while enhancing even more the existing ones.

03.4 concept drawing and design

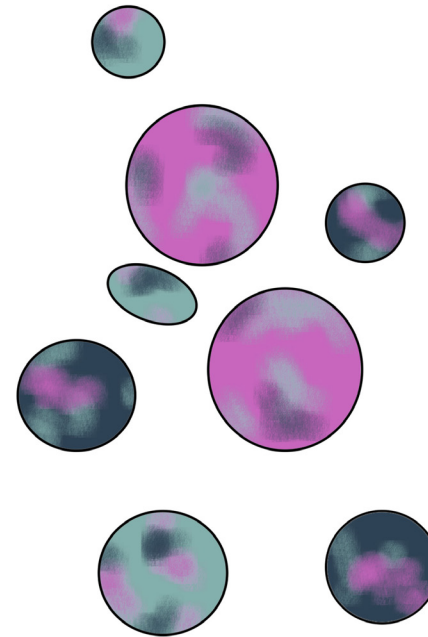
03.4.a The garden of rooms

As I find it again in my retrieved childhood memory it is not a building; it is completely divided up in me: a room here, a room there, and a piece of corridor that does not connect these two rooms but is preserved by itself, as a fragment. Everything is scattered around in me in this way: the rooms, the staircases that unrolled downwards with great complexities, and other narrow, spiral staircases whose darkness one negotiated like blood in the veins [Delirious Cities: Lisa Robertson's Occasional Work and Seven Walks from the Office for Soft Architecture, p.235]

The concept behind the design of the first garden is that of a maze made up of different rooms and dispersed elements. The rooms are seen as micro-assemblages that have their own rhythm but that at the same time, play a significant part on the overall experience of the garden. All rooms are infused with more of the existing but also with new Affective Gradients: the intriguing ones are multiplied while more easy and uneasy are added. The design enhances the wandering and exploration while it generates brief moments of stasis and rest. The idea of the maze aspires to create a delirious experience that finds its way through blurry and random settings: the clean-cut apparition of the site is broken apart and disturbed.



03.a.x. A maze made of different micro-assemblages and dispersed elements
sketches by the author



03.a.y. The intermingling of existing and new Affective Gradients
sketch by the author

The rooms of the garden (to which we could also refer as “sections”) are shaped based partially on the current situation: the enclosure of existing niches is strengthened while more elements are added for the further division of the space. Each section has its own refrain and it adds to the multiplicity of experiences of the garden. These sections are created with the use of existing structural elements as well as the addition of new ones. They are not in clear succession and most of them are hidden from one another due to vegetation and to partition elements-corridors. One can never see the overall of the garden and there is difficulty in perceiving it in its entirety.

The room of pools (scheme 03.a.z.) -previously one of the small squares- of the garden consists of four concrete water bodies that break the homogeneous surface of the existing concrete. It is a system of pools that connect to each other playing a constant game of empty and filled: an ever-changing condition. Although two of them -the bigger ones- are always filled with water, the rest are empty till it rains. The water collected from the roofs of the adjacent houses starts ‘feeding’ the two pools and when they are over-filled the water passes to the other pools. At the bottom of the these other two there are concrete elements that could be used as surfaces to sit or even lie on. This affordance of the objects is activated



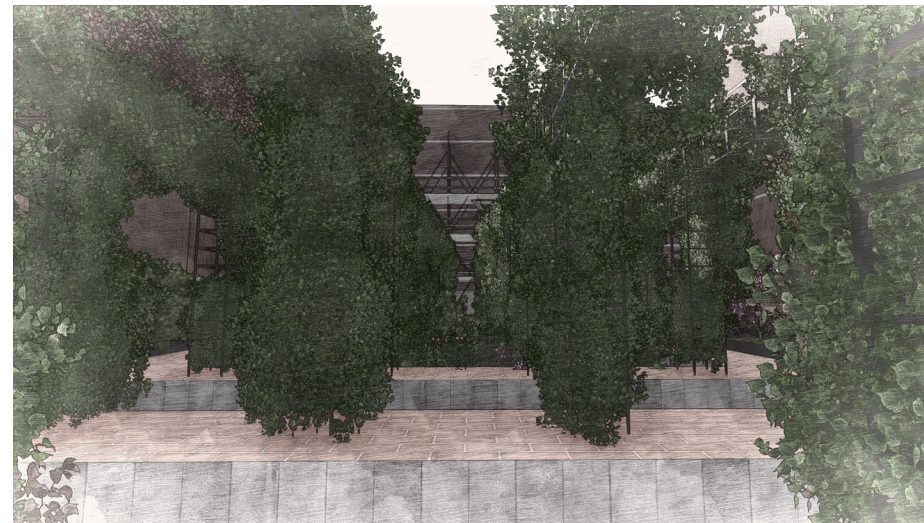
03.a.z. Watching the reflections in the filled pools: absorption and surprise
sketch by the author

only when the pools are empty. Otherwise one could use them as steps to hop on over the water.

The existing trees are kept and are now part of the pools as they rise from within them. More trees and shrubs are added surrounding the water bodies. One could walk over the water on concrete slabs or sit on the side and be absorbed from the reflection of the foliage and of the blind brick facade of the building tangent to the pools.

The room of trellises (**scheme 03.a.a.a.**) is on the other small square of the garden. I used the existing trellis with dark ivy hanging from it and multiplied it creating a dense and dark setting. On the ground there are five rectangular shaped cuts of concrete, each one with different depth. Some of them are empty while others are filled with random-shaped plants. These cuts are transversal to the trellises both of them creating a grid. One could sit down with their feet hanging in a hole and see the trellises with the irregular ivy leaves framing his view of the sky. This environment seems protective but it can also arise feelings of fear and discomfort.

There are more sections to experience in the garden: the glass rooms with their small gardens, the maze of doors, the inverted staircase or the small square with a tree and a bench hidden behind a complex of buildings. Sometimes a room is created only by the placement of a structural element like a door, a staircase, a



03.a.a.a Among the dark ivies: mystery and fear mingled with rest
sketch by the author

scaffolding or a light pole with little intervention of its surroundings. Although the formation of rooms is an essential part of the design, it is important to say that some parts of the site are left undesignated and free of elements. This creates a chance for a more random and spontaneous exploration of the garden avoiding the concrete dictation of one's movements.

What makes the experience of the garden more complex is the over-imposition of a second level that runs parallel to the first one (**schemes 03.a.a.b./c.**). This idea was triggered by the existence of many one-floor small buildings tangent mainly to the inner membrane of the site. The second level constitutes mainly an elevated path that hovers over the garden and it leads to four rooms on the top of the small buildings. These rooms are what I call the "small urban squares" of the garden where there is only a seating surface and some vegetation. These squares are places to sit and rest, clothed with more regular and clean-cut materials as if they were indeed interior spaces. The two levels are in contrast: on the groundfloor there is a delirium of experiences while on the 'upper floor' things get calmer.

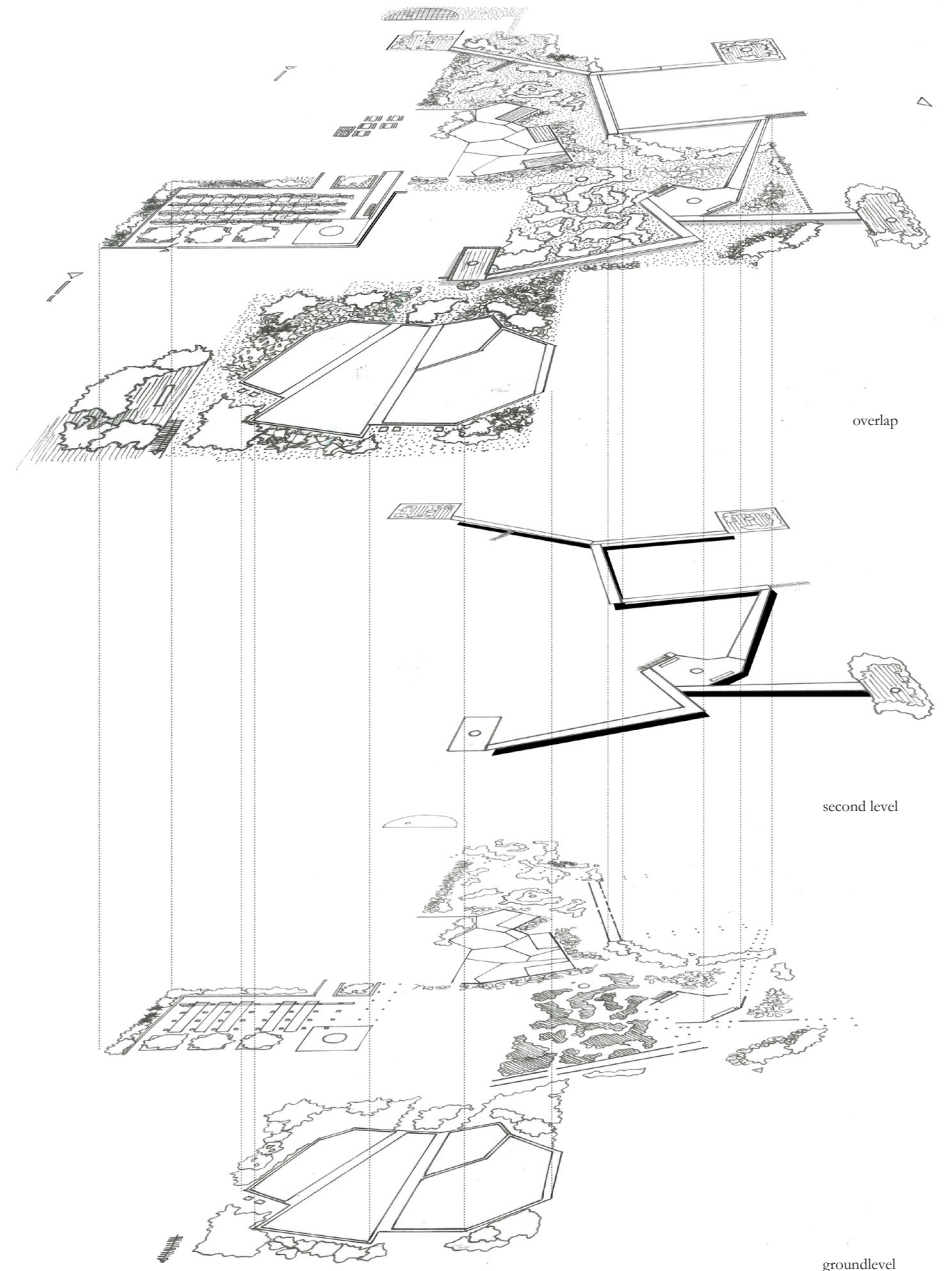
Just like in a residence, the groundfloor and the first floor are connected with staircases. There are two steel staircases to the ground level and one of them is next to a platform (**scheme 03.a.a.d.**) that in a way is the meeting point of all the elevated paths. There you can select several ways to go, either continuing up or going down. Passing through the points of interference, from the one level to the

Van Oldenbarneveltstraat



Oude Binnenweg

03.a.a.b. General plan of the garden
sketch by the author



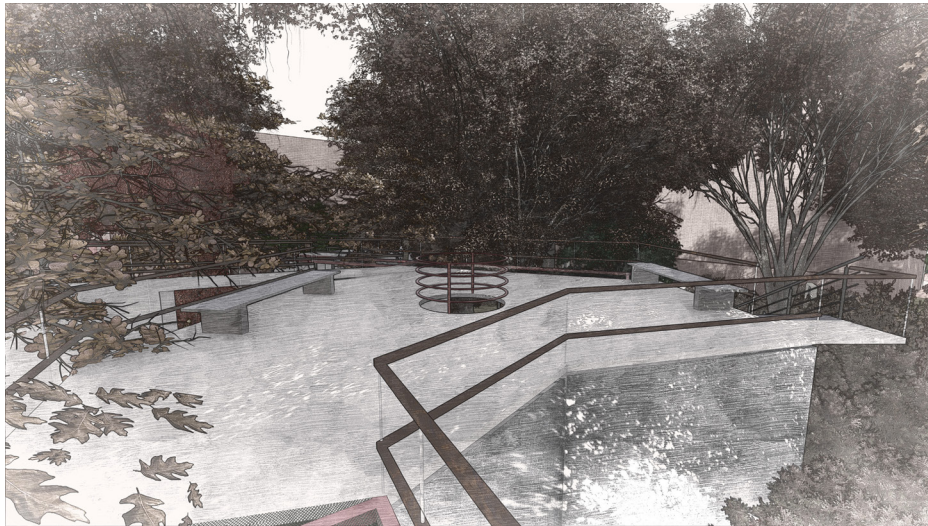
overlap

second level

groundlevel

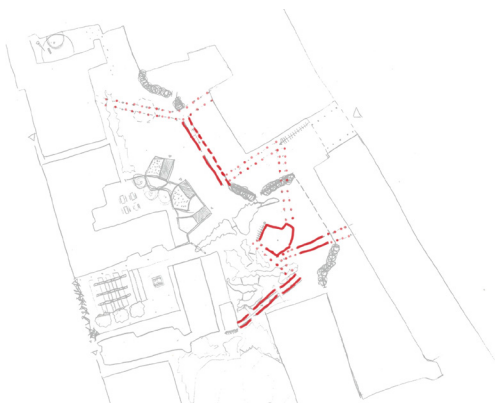
03.a.a.c. Over-imposition of the two levels
sketch by the author

second and back again, the different affects will mingle with each other creating intense affective relationships.

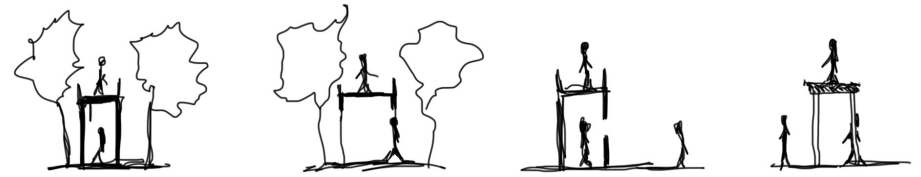


03.a.a.d. Elevated platform: the meeting point of the second level paths
sketch by the author

The elevated paths create various relationships with the ground level depending on the structure of their basis. When the stepping surface is transparent metallic grid then the basis consists of steel columns. When it is opaque concrete, then the basis is made of concrete walls with small openings. While walking on the ground level you can walk between the light steel columns and see the feet of people above you or you can enter the dark corridors of concrete walls, enclosed in a dark tunnel (**scheme 03.a.a.f.**). These corridors created by the elevated level may act as



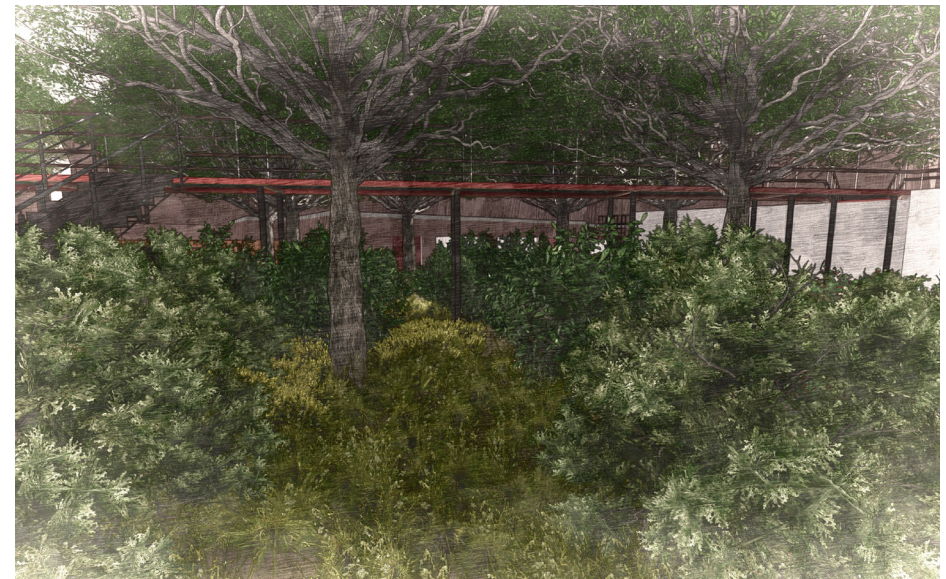
03.a.a.e. The different 'traces' of the elevated level on the ground
sketch by the author



03.a.a.f. Various relations created by the corridors under the elevated paths
sketch by the author

partition elements between the different sections of the garden but also between the garden and the rest of the site. When the corridors are opaque and concrete they also become places: they contain their own experiences, like the other rooms of the garden.

Except for these corridors the shrubs that are dispersed in the garden also function as separating elements. Some rooms are already enclosed and isolated due to the spatial articulation of the buildings but when there is not such enclosure the vegetation plays this role. One main feature of the garden is that most of its parts are planted with dense trees and this creates the sense of being in a forest. The trees seem like gathering under their foliage all the different sections of the garden and unite them. Trees and shrubs enhance the feeling of confusion and mystery and make the scenery blurry: you feel lost because your sight is constrained and your curiosity moves you forward. When the leaves of the trees fall the evergreen



03.a.a.g. Blurry wandering in the garden
sketch by the author

shrubs continue to create this blurry effect (scheme 03.a.a.f.).



03.a.a.h. Blurry wandering in the garden

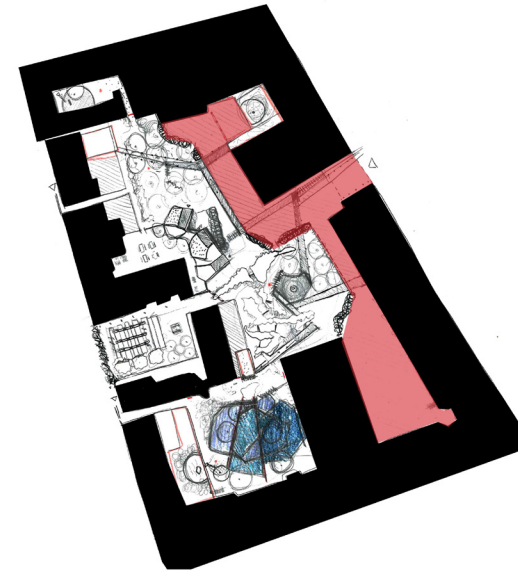
sketch by the author



03.a.a.i. The garden planted with trees

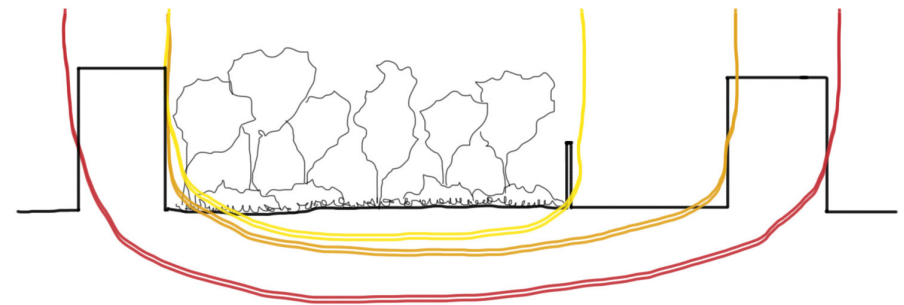
sketch by the author

The garden coexists with the ordinary aspects of the site. Instead of superimposing a plan on its whole surface erasing the existing, I designed the garden taking into consideration the ordinary practices that still use this space such as the supply of the stores. The garden leaves space for the movement of the cars by receding from the buildings on the east side of the site (scheme 03.a.a.j.). There is still space for driving and parking. This recession creates a second membrane at the interior, a membrane inside a membrane and its thickness and relation to the tangent environment change along its borders.



03.a.a.j. Place reserved for the cars (red): ordinary and out-of-the-ordinary in coexistence

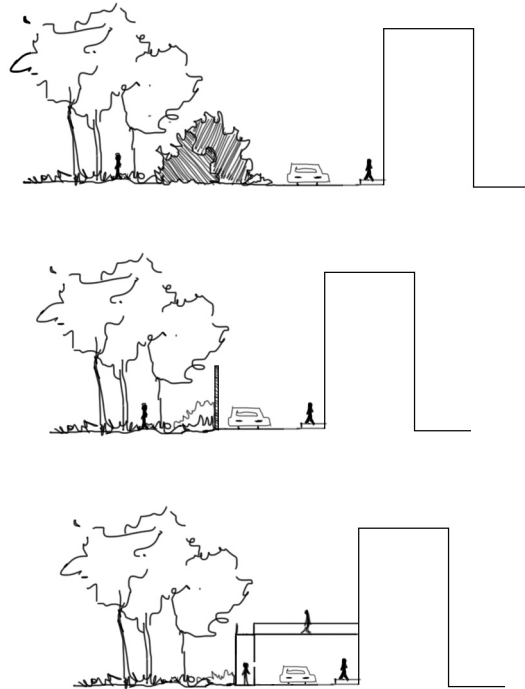
sketch by the author



03.a.a.k. Successive membranes: from the exterior to the interior milieu of the garden

sketch by the author

Sometimes there is an optical connection with the things going on parallel to the border, sometimes there are only small slits and some others, the membrane is opaque. Although there is never clear view of the outside, the small snapshots of it and the sounds that keep on resonating make you always aware of its existence. If you go further in the garden, the sounds will fade and they will appear and disappear again depending on where you are moving each time.



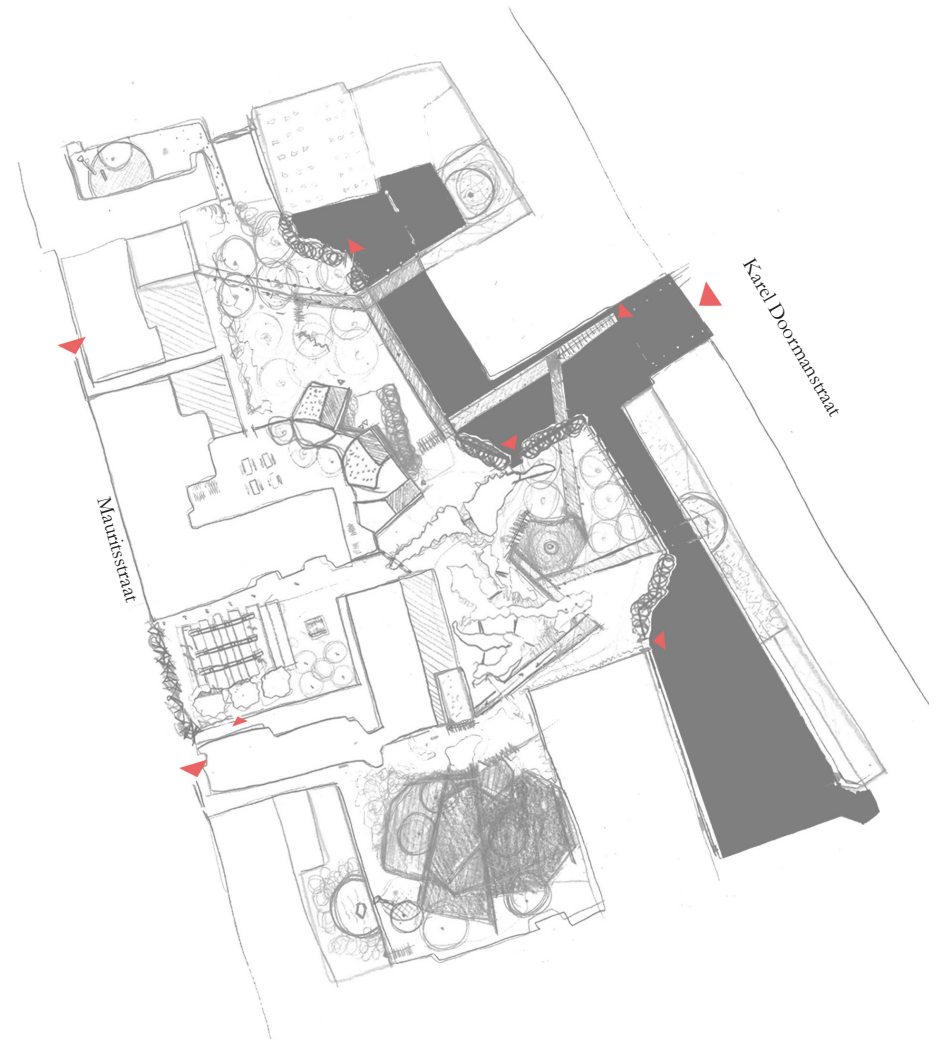
03.a.a.1. Different types of borders and relations with the ordinary

sketch by the author

The entrances of the garden are also formulated in various ways. The design activates-opens the two narrow passages on Mauritsstraat while the existing entrance on the same road changes character: it is relocated on the side of the small square hiding from the immediate view of the pedestrian. The narrow passages offer an intimate and mysterious experience that rises the anticipation. They lead to different sections of the garden, the room of pools and an area of the forest with weeds and high shrubs. One reaches the interior surprised by this fast and abrupt change of environments. From there, they can barely see what is happening further away.

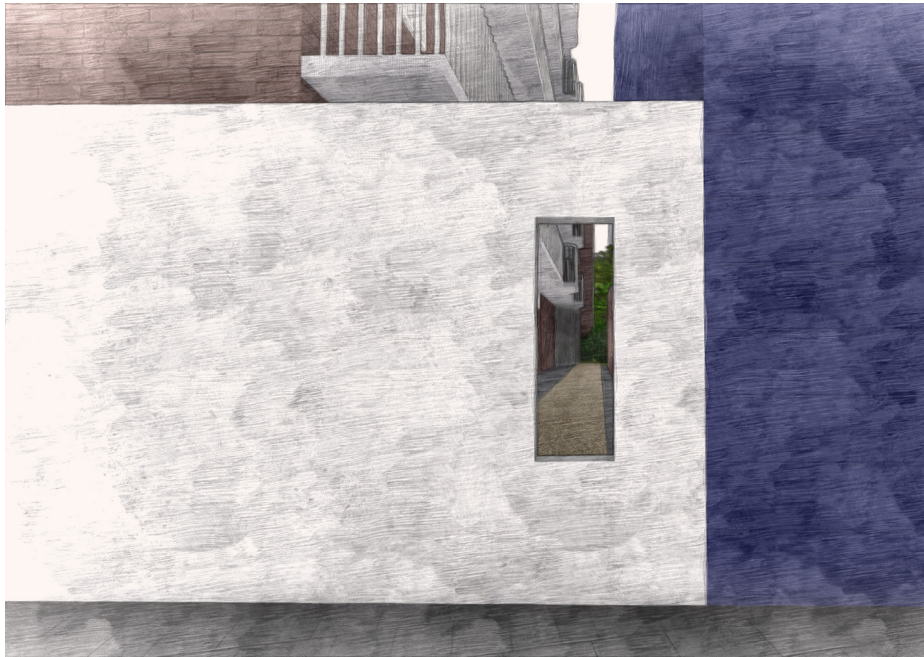
The other entrances to the garden are generated by the main entrance-covered gallery on Karel Doormanstraat. From there, one can walk along with cars on

the ground level and discover three small openings among plants that lead you in the garden. However, there is an alternative route: entering the site you can climb some stairs and find yourself on the second level in few seconds. From then on, you can start your exploration. The existence of various entrances promotes a freedom of choice and movement: for one more time, nothing is dictated. The fact that each entrance leads to different room-section of the garden increases the complexity and the feeling of being lost or confused.



03.a.a.o. Multiple entrances to the site lead to different sections: the alternatives are many

sketch by the author



03.a.a.m. Mysterious passage on Mauritsstraat

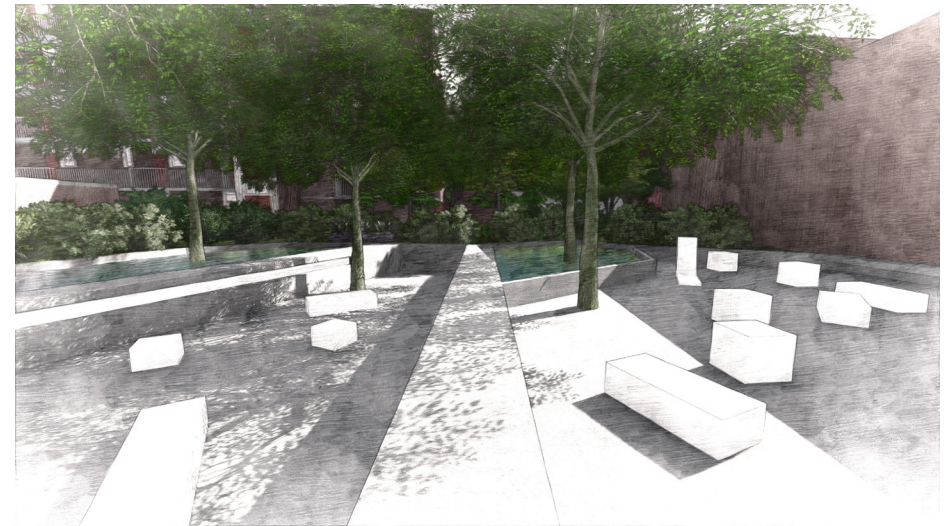
sketch by the author



03.a.a.n. Small and hidden entrance to the room of trellises

sketch by the author

The garden of rooms enhances the intrigue and the feeling of unexpected. Each time one visits it it can be different. When it rains the pools are filled with water reflecting the foliage of the trees but when it is dry you can even lie down on the seat at the bottom of the small pools. In summer the environment around them gets dark and shady and you are absorbed by the reflection but when it is winter the room becomes more unfriendly and scary with the only reflections that of nude trunks and the cloudy sky. The evergreen ivies hanging from the trellises although always blossomed they grow bigger and more random every year, disrupting the cleanness of the small square. The soil on the ground of the forest feels soft and you cannot hear the sound of your footsteps. When it rains, you can smell the humidity while your shoes are getting more dirty the further you go in the garden.



03.a.a.o. Empty pools

sketch by the author

The garden never tells you what to do. This is because many parts of it are only partially designed. The paths in most of the cases are unclear and the multiplicity of the entrances and exits confuse you. You can experience this garden in many ways and that doesn't only depend on the specific articulation and the expressive qualities of it but also on the 'type' of person you are. An old lady may never choose to walk on the narrow boards that pass over the water of pools but she may like to sit on the bench of the small square under a tree. If one wears high heels then they would prefer to go at the small squares on the second level of the garden and just enjoy looking at the foliage of the trees that rise from the ground level.

Furthermore, with the new design the affordances of the site are increased: now one has more chances to activate their body through the interaction with the different micro-assemblages. You can stumble while walking on the gravel floor of the dark corridors or on the weeds of the blurry forest. There, between the bushes, you may see a fountain and you would have to make room with your hands, scratching your skin, to get to drink water. You could try to climb the upside-down staircase that lies on the ground and find a nice seat among its railings or even climb higher and higher at the scaffolding with your body getting numb from the feeling of height.

Passing from one room to another, you experience surprise and mystery, anxiety and anticipation along with relief and extension. The garden offers different affective relationships that depend on your own choices. No matter which 'version' you follow, the things are there to grab if you choose to. Anxiety follows curiosity and anticipation comes next till a surprise makes you smile or nod your head. Relief and silence take over for some time and then the experience continues...



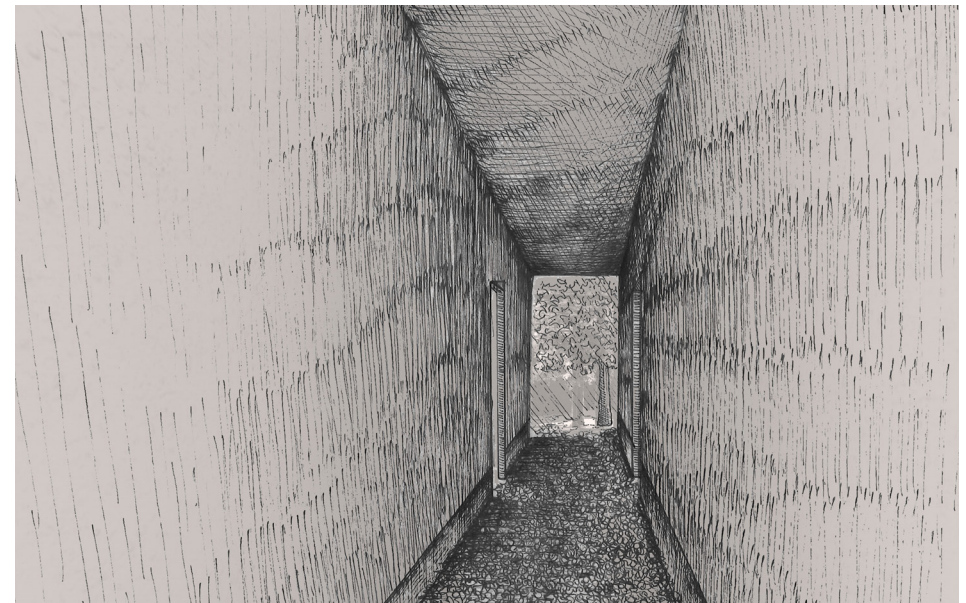
03.a.a.p. On the second level: curiosity and anticipation

sketch by the author



03.a.a.q. Shrubs and trees that hide the rest of the garden: mystery

sketch by the author



03.a.a.r. Dark corridor: mystery and anxiety

sketch by the author



03.a.a.s. Doors in the middle of the forest: confusion, mystery and anxiety

sketch by the author



03.a.a.u. Watching the reflections at the rippled pools: absorption and relief

sketch by the author

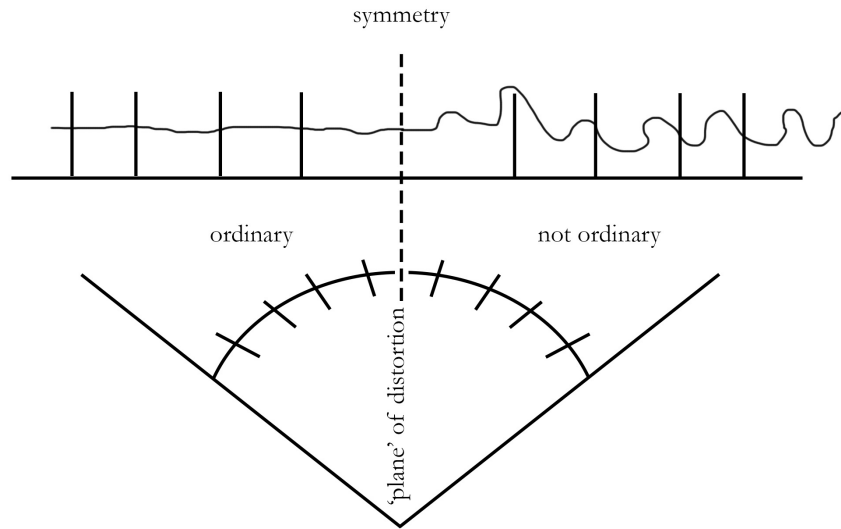


03.a.a.t. Stairs to chaos: confusion and anticipation

sketch by the author

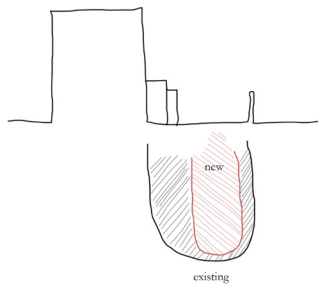
03.4.b The garden of distortion

The concept behind the garden of distortion is the creation of a tube of successive experiences with a pivotal point that acts as a threshold from one succession of experiences to the other. We could imagine this point in the middle of the intervention as a transparent plane that distorts the symmetrical successions: ordinary and easy experiences from the one side are distorted into extra-ordinary and intriguing situations on the other.



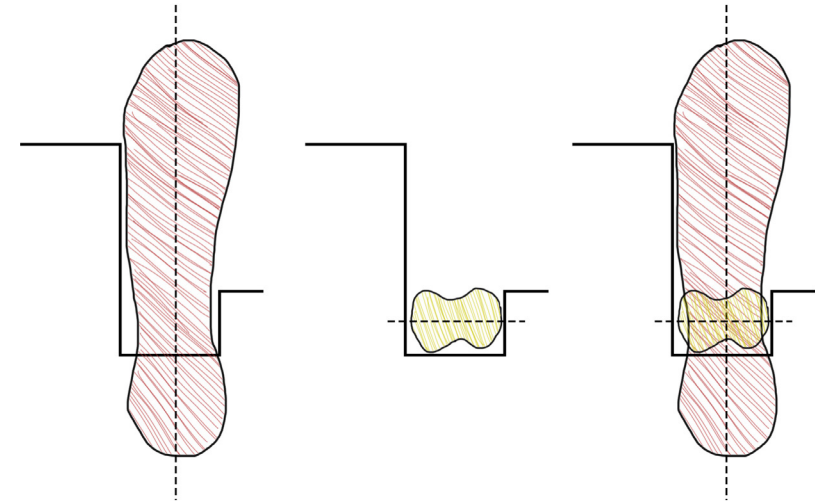
03.b.a. The unfolding of the successive experiences symmetrical to the plane of distortion
sketch by the author

The successive frames of experiences are taking place in the existing territory of the longitudinal path of the site and are restrained even more to a narrow tube. This restriction avoids the intrusion to the private gardens as well as minimizes the contact, visual and tactile, with the building's facades. Thus, a second membrane is created on the inside of the existing isolating even more the experience in the garden.



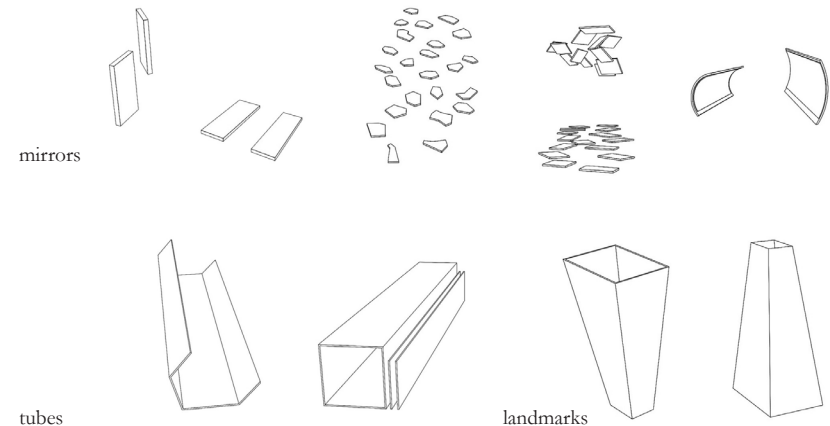
03.b.b. Functioning in-between: two layers of membranes
sketch by the author

The design emphasizes two relations throughout the garden: a vertical that concerns the connection with the sky and an horizontal one, where things that happen on the sides affect the experience on the inside of the garden.



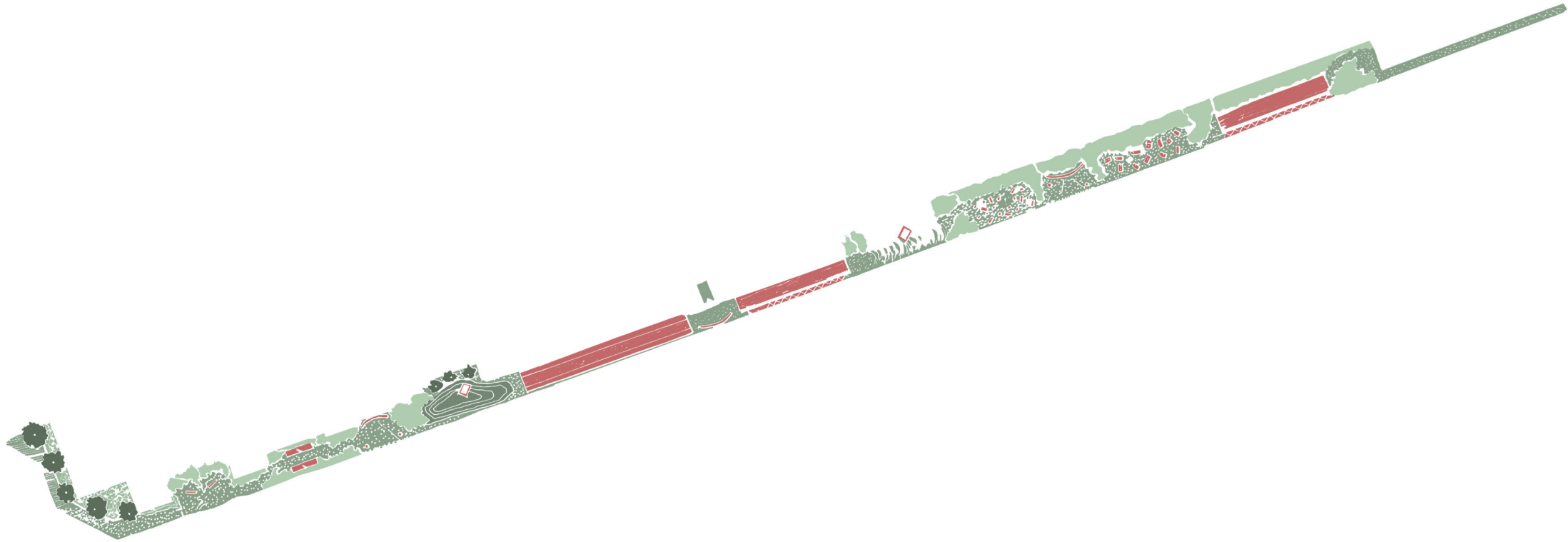
03.b.c. Manipulating two relations along the garden
sketch by the author

To create the frames of experiences I used some elements-contrivances which vary in their form, location and effect depending on which side of the plane they are. I used several types of mirrors, wooden tubes and pyramid-like landmarks that are placed along the garden in various formations. The rest of the site stays untouched except for the new vegetation that is introduced in order to create the second membrane that isolates the garden from the residences' windows.



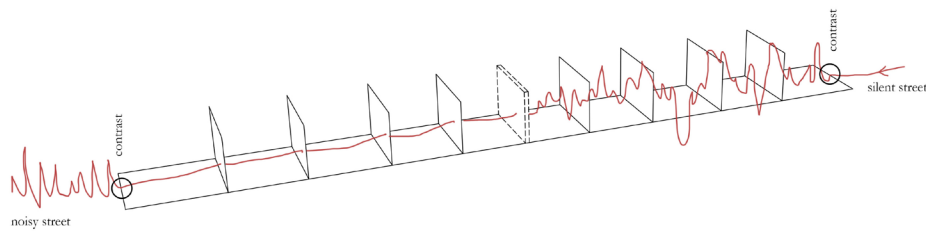


03.b.d. Plan of the garden with the surrounding buildings
sketch by the author



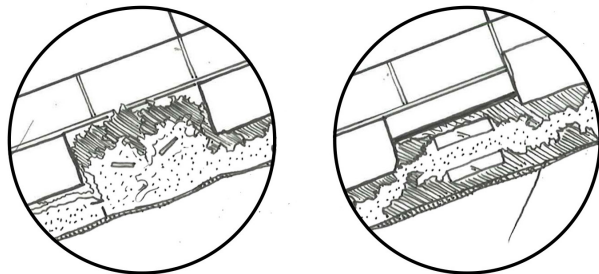
In order for the succession of sections to function in an intense way, the two entrances, one in Hobokenstraat and one in Nieuwe Binnenweg, are activated. This way the entering in the garden starts in one of the edges of the tube. Both entrances are narrow and evoke a feeling of mystery. The central door that used to be the only access to the site is still active but with no indication or sign implying that there is a garden inside. Thus, people mostly use it when exiting the garden. That reminds us the hidden by vegetation gate in Hypnerotomachia Poliphili: it was only for exiting.

The section of the ordinary experiences start when one enters from Nieuwe Binnenweg while the extra-ordinary ones start some meters after entering from Hobokenstraat. The experience within the garden comes into contrast with the experience of its exterior: the garden's gates are the thresholds of the intense passage from a noisy and busy street to a calm and smooth environment on the one hand, and from a really calm and silent street to a confusing and sometimes disturbing setting.

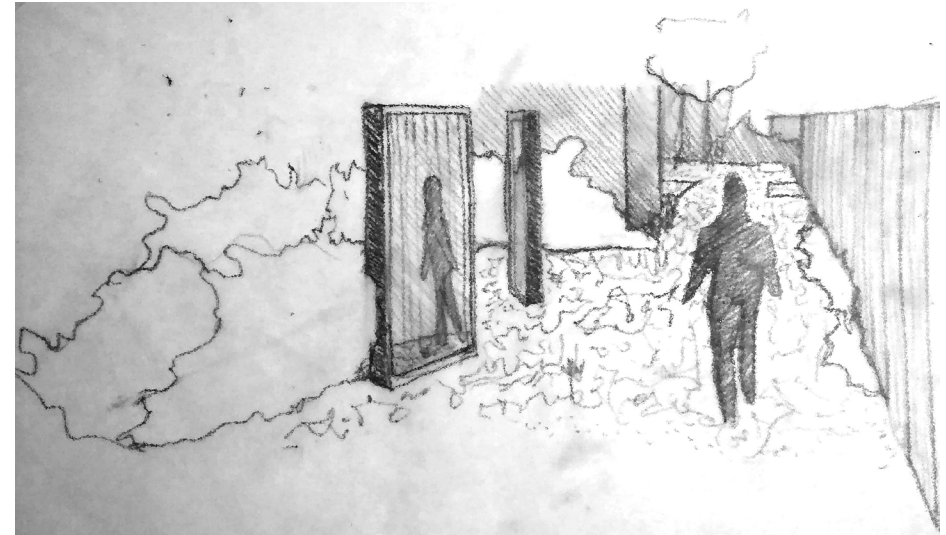


03.b.e. Contrast at the two thresholds
 sketch by the author

The mirrors play key role on the creation of affects both easy and uneasy. At the first section (ordinary), you could meet mirrors on the ground parallel to your way through the garden or upstanding ones on your side. The reflections depict reality as it is: the sky, your feet, your body and the fences standing at the opposite side. The reflections absorb you and ease your mind.

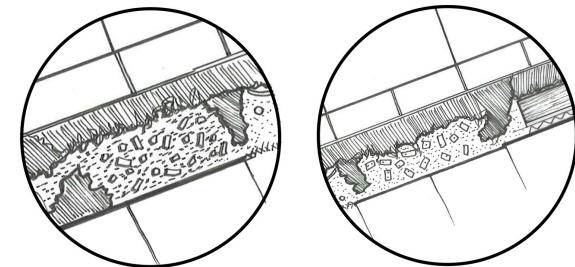


03.b.f. Mirrors standing and lying
 sketch by the author

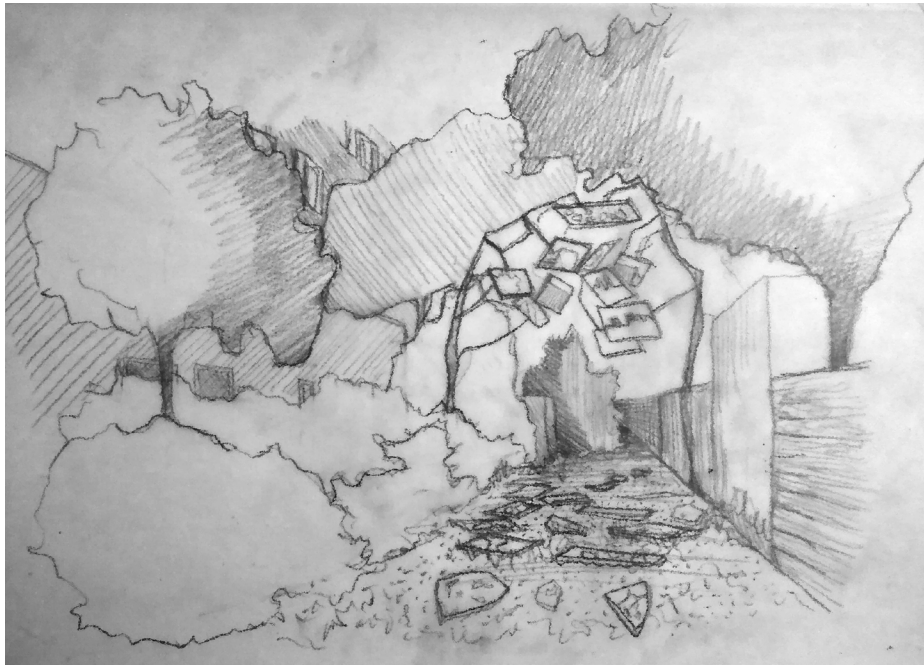


03.b.g. Reflection of reality
 sketch by the author

On the contrary, at the other side of the 'plane', mirrors are creating effects that surprise you but also may confuse or annoy you. There are two sections with pieces of mirrors but this time they distort the real and create a delirium with its fragments. The first section consists of small and big pieces of mirroring surfaces dispersed on the ground. The reflections of the foliage and the sky multiply and mingle with each other under your feet and your walking starts to get difficult. The next section intensify even more this fragmentation as pieces of mirrors are added in a structure high over your head. These hovering mirrors have different inclinations thus, reflecting different parts of the surrounding. They bring what is outside the membrane on the inside with a shocking and surprising effect. You may even feel dizzy.



03.b.h. Broken pieces under your feet and over your head
 sketch by the author



03.b.h. Broken pieces under your feet and over your head
 sketch by the author

Another kind of mirrors play a different game and this time they do it with the fences. Along all this endless row of fences there are two spots where they are transparent (wire fences). These two spots are the rest areas of the garden and they contain nothing but two elements: seating surfaces and a bended mirror that stands exactly opposite and parallel to the wire fence. When one is seated he can see the reflection of what exists behind the fence and this way, there is the illusion that the garden continues beyond the wire. The two gardens become one without any spatial intrusion.

The wooden tubes have two different formations. The one at the ordinary side is a semi open, like unfolded tube where one can just walk along its length or sit on small bulges on its side surfaces. Once again a place of brief rest. The two tubes at the symmetrical side have completely different effect. They are completely enclosed with sliding doors and on the side adjacent to the existing fences they have small slits. In between the tube and the fence there is another very narrow space where there are mechanisms of artificial light or sound. The waves of the mechanisms intrude the tube through the slits and the phenomenon of diffraction takes place.

Either the sound waves create a resonating effect inside the tube either there are dotted lines that begin to shape on the opposite surface of the tube. Both phenomena evoke surprise, mystery but also a bit of fear: in a dark room suddenly something weird begins to arise. This experience is intense and far more intriguing than that of the open wooden tube of the 'other side'.



03.b.i. The phenomenon of diffraction of light waves
 sketch by the author

An important feature of the design is that it enhances the alternation of the relation to the sky. Due to the verticality of the site the design of the garden plays with the manipulation of the 'border' above. When you are inside the pyramid-like landmarks you have a feeling of the sublime and the scary at the same time as you watch the framed sky. In the tunnel of plants you experience the absorption but also a bit of mystery and discomfort while when under the broken mirrors the sky gets so fragmented that you don't even perceive its existence.



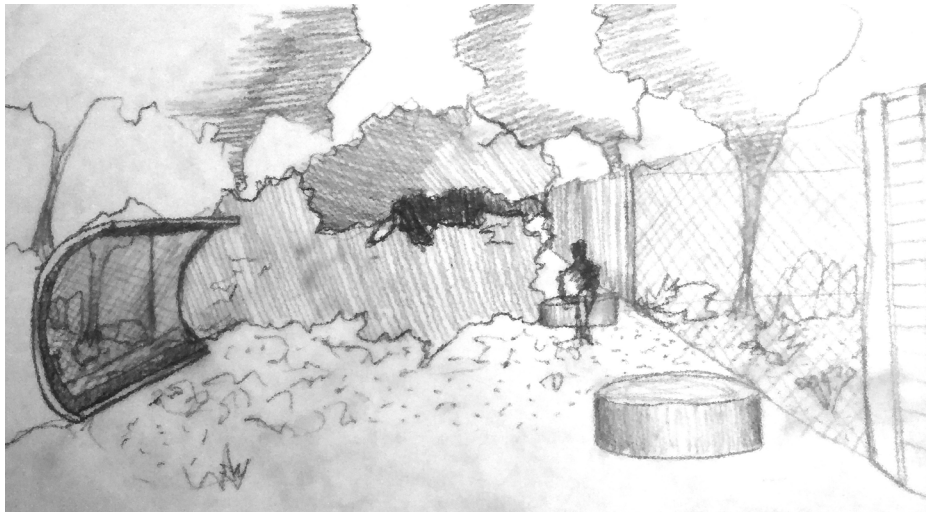
03.b.j. Relations to the sky
 sketch by the author



03.b.k. Under thick and low foliage you discover the landmark

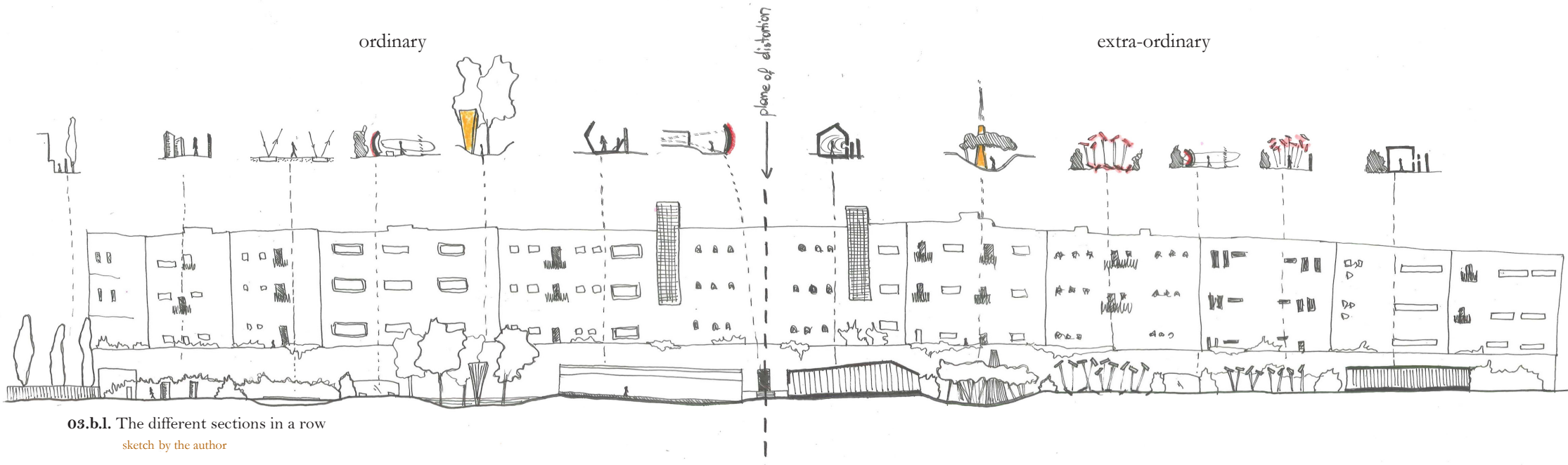
sketch by the author

The experience in the garden is an alteration of intriguing and easy feelings. No matter what entrance you choose or you run into, the longitudinal journey aims to offer a combination of affective relationships that would make the place feel even more distant from the real, like a dream world. When at the middle of the garden there is another surprise for you. A curved mirror looks on a dark opening of the opposite facade of buildings. While you pass by it, you see the reflection of the dark corridor and driven by your curiosity you will discover a closed door. If you open it you will find yourself amidst the traffic of Nieuwe Binnenweg. It is your decision to choose if you are going back again.



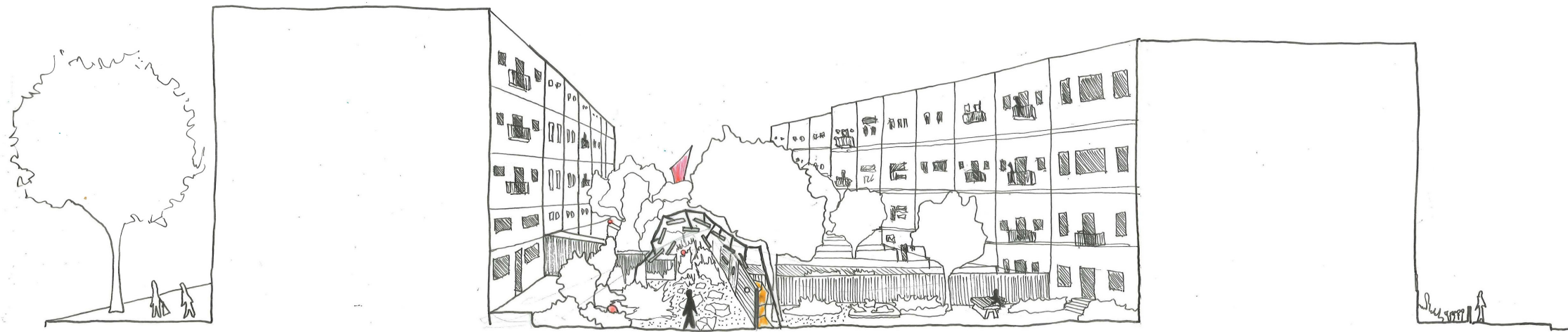
03.b.k. When one garden 'intrudes' the other becoming one entity

sketch by the author



03.b.l. The different sections in a row

sketch by the author

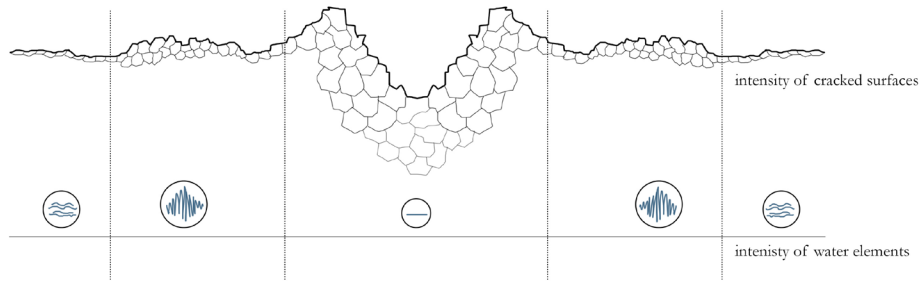


03.b.m. The membranes and the sections in coexistence

sketch by the author

03.4.c The garden of cracks

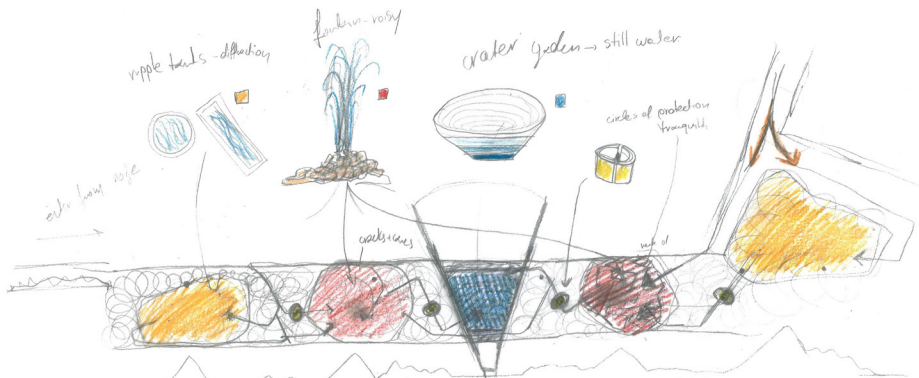
The design of the first site is inspired by all the small cracks and leakages of the existing situation. I felt the need to multiply and enlarge those cracks in order to break the rigidness and suffocation of the existing concrete ground. The main idea behind the design is the creation of micro-environments which will vary in intensity in terms of the cracking of surfaces and the state of movement of water. The different environments are dispersed in the garden but there is a special condition: they all meet at the center. Here, there is a contrast: while the intensity of cracks increases towards the center, the opposite doesn't happen with the intensity of water.



03.c.a. Intensification of cracks and water.

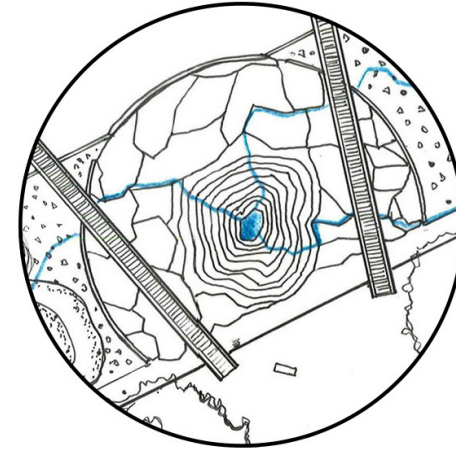
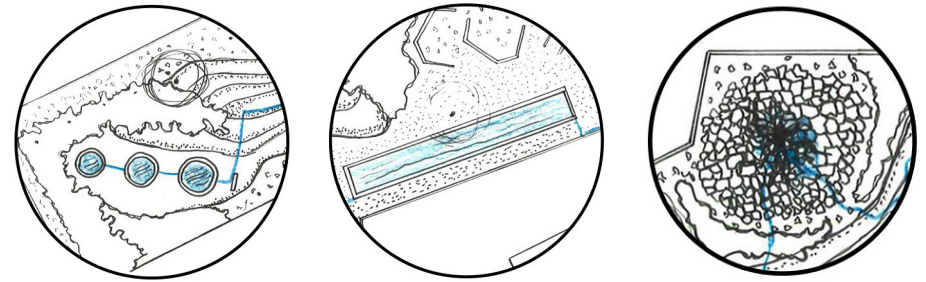
sketch by the author

Cracks and water elements work in parallel. The elements that are designed are concrete pools where the water is rippled, piles of small concrete cracks from which small fountains arise and a 'crater' of huge cracks where there is still water at the bottom. The pools and the fountains although dispersed on the garden, they are symmetrical to each other pending from the center where the crater is located. However, their form and their placement differ.



03.c.b. Placement of elements throughout the garden: cracks and water work in parallel

sketch by the author



03.c.c. The ripple tanks, the fountain and the big crater

sketch by the author

In-between the different sections you can also come across a cylindrical tube, made of two concentric circles one into the other, which looks at the sky. There are two of these tubes in the garden, placed at corners and hidden. These tubes can be seen as cores of isolation and rest: if you discover them, you have to find the opening to the central point where there is a seating surface. There, you can rest. Looking up, you will see framed the extremely high building of residences and the feeling of the sublime will overwhelm you.



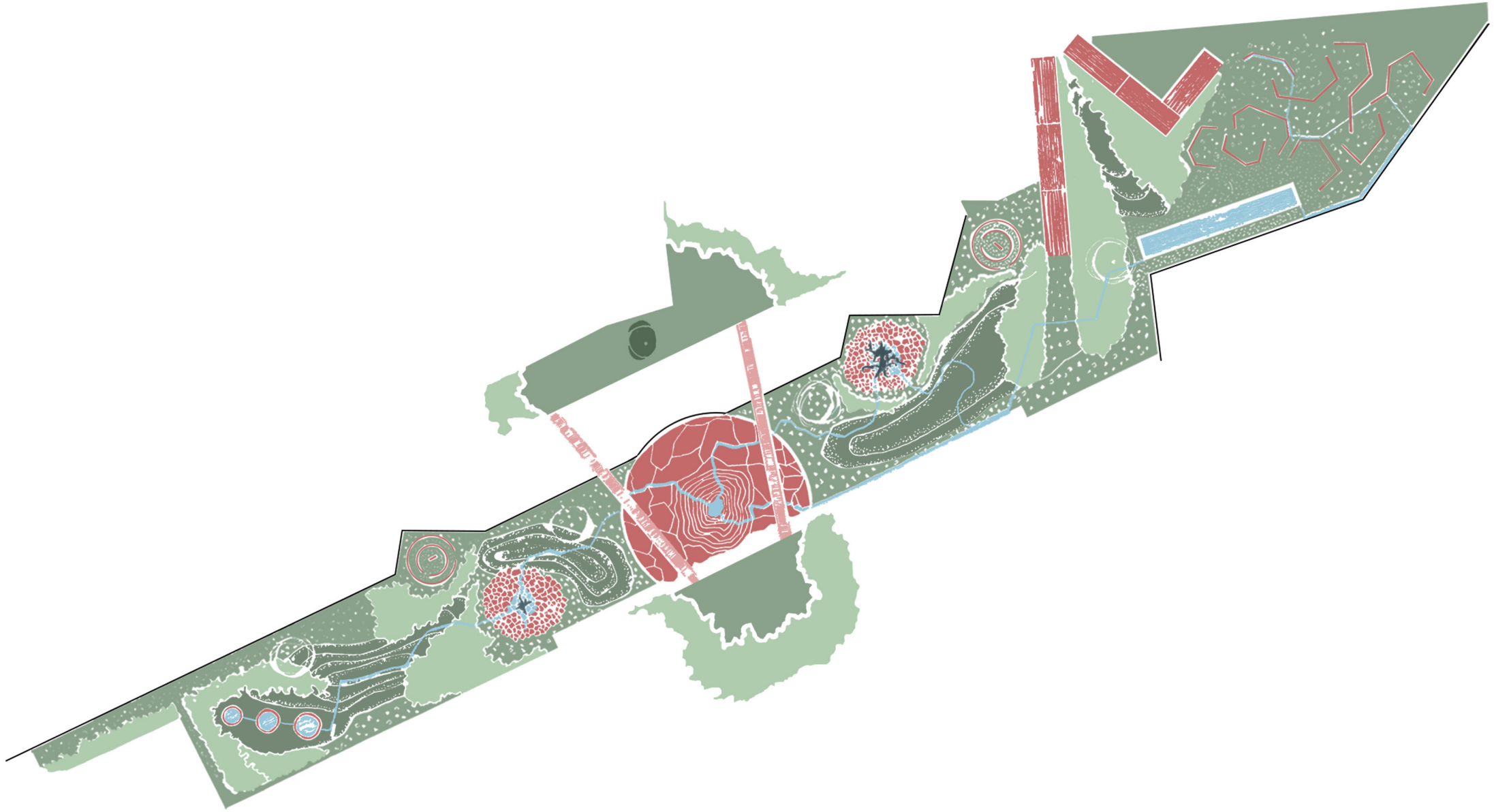
03.c.d. The resting tube at one of the garden's edges

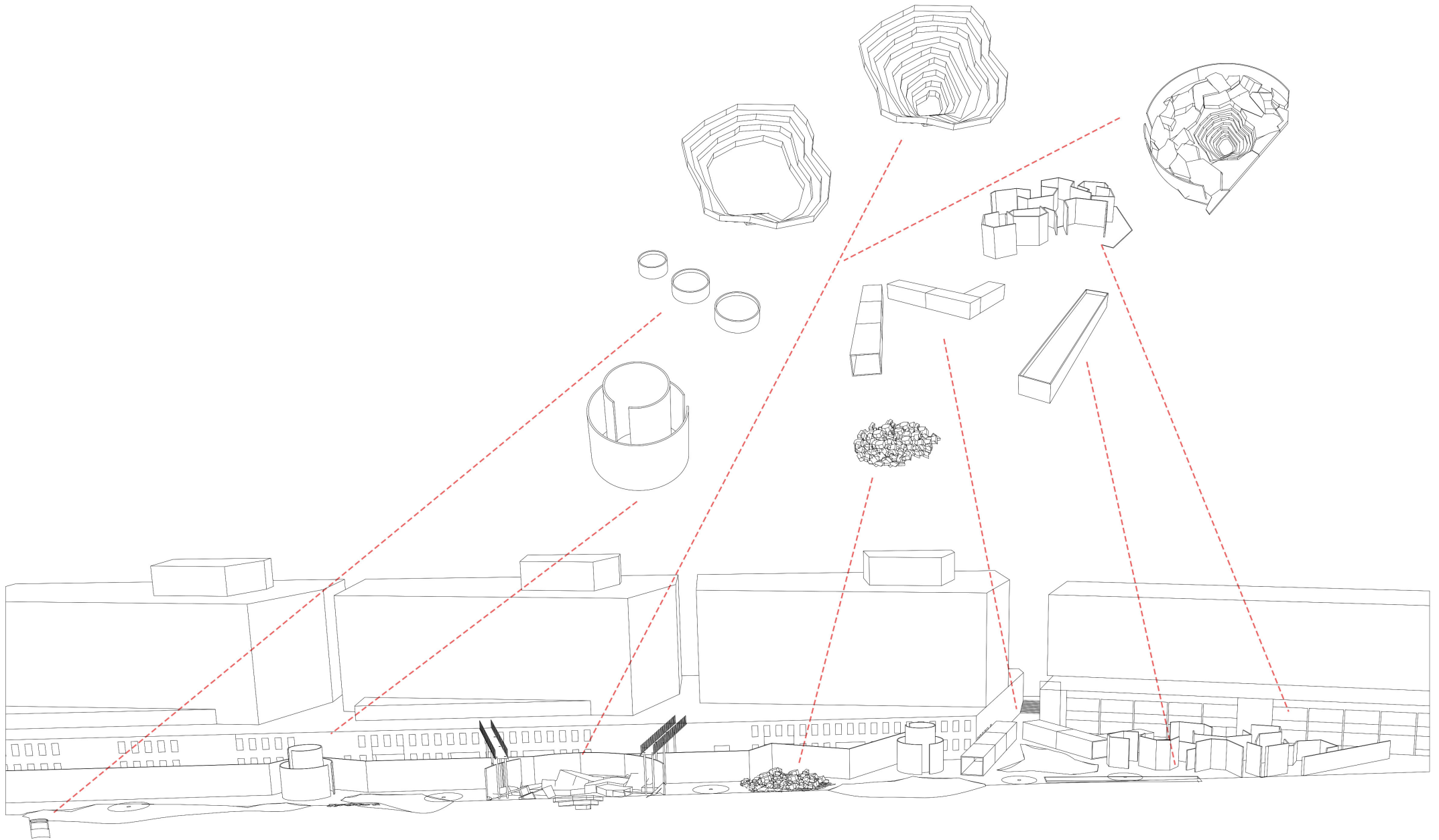
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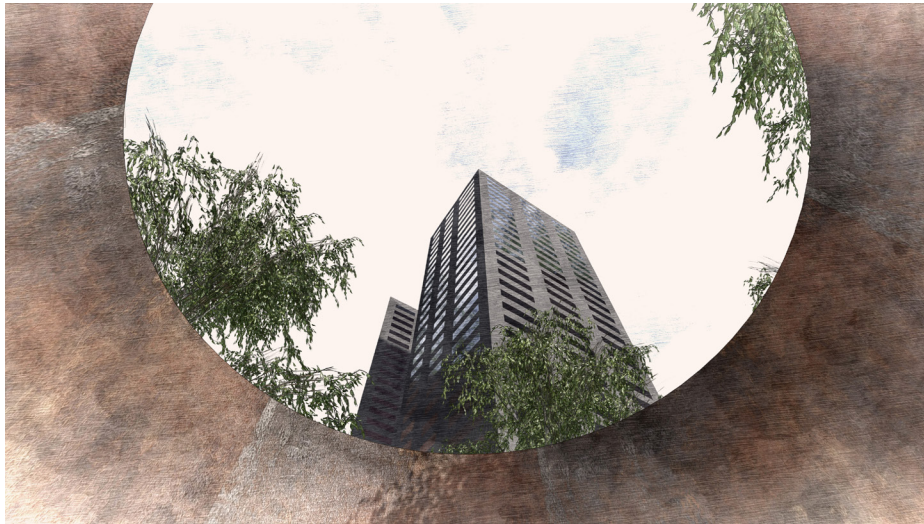
03.b.d. Plan of the garden with the surrounding buildings
sketch by the author







03.b.d. Longitudinal section of the different micro-environments with their elements
sketch by the author



03.c.e. The feeling of sublime in isolation

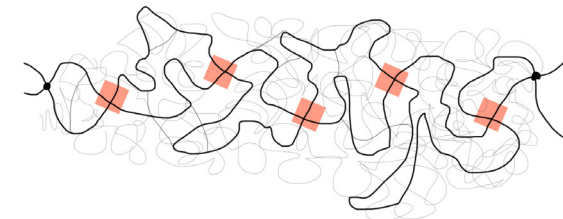
sketch by the author

The different 'events' are the fixed elements of the garden. Except for them, the rest of the site stays quite undesignated. The experience throughout the garden triggers exploration and wandering (**scheme 03.c.h.**). While walking around exploring the garden, stumbling on small and bigger rocks with shrubs and trees impeding your clear view you suddenly come across an event and there you stay intrigued and absorbed, surprised but also feeling the extension of the environment. Just like when Poliphilo would discover the fountains and rivers across his tortuous journey.



03.c.f/g. Wandering in random

sketch by the author

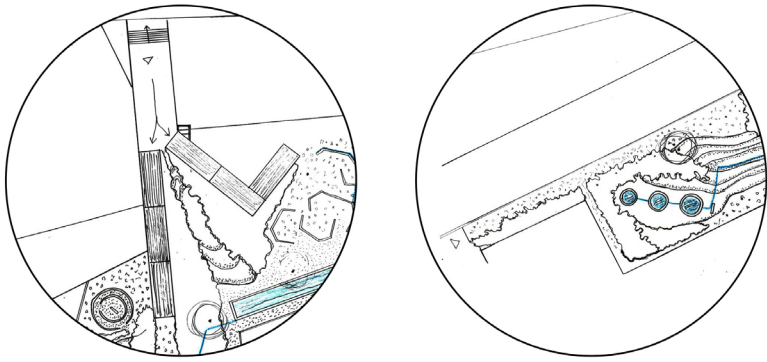


03.c.h. Events: in location / routes: wandering

sketch by the author

The entrances to the garden are two and they are both narrow and intimate. From the beginning there is blurry scenery and intimacy both resulting in a sense of mystery. I used the narrow entrance on Vasteland that already evokes this feeling of mystery. After descending the few steps you come across a fork with two tubes-corridors. You doubt but you have to choose. The tubes are long and dark increasing the anticipation and each one leads to a different setting: a maze of walls or a corridor with dense and high shrubs on the side. Both settings increase the feeling of being lost and trigger the venture and exploration. The entrance from Scheepstimmermanslaan is also narrow with shrubs on the side and trees above and it keeps its linearity till it meets again a fork. You have to choose and start your journey in the garden (**scheme 03.c.i.**).

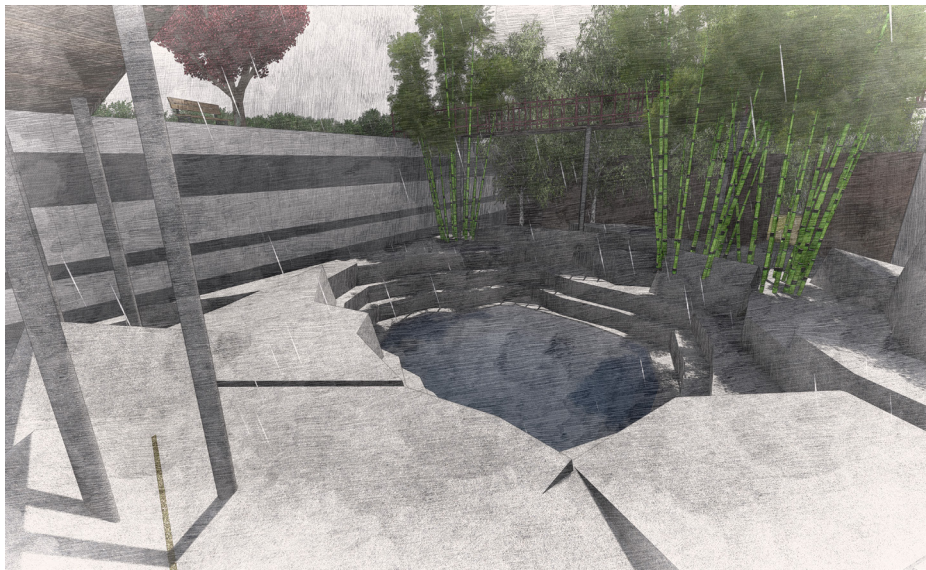
Another important element of the design is its differentiation of relief. Some areas



03.c.i. Two entrances: starting the journey with mystery

sketch by the author

are of the areas are submerged, creating basins of grass and shrubs. The water bodies of the garden are all connected to each other with each one feeding the other. The connecting line of water is also running through the submerged basins. When it rains water from the adjacent building blocks is brought to the garden, starting from these basins. The basins start to fill till they are flooded and the water travels through the connecting line to the crater. The still water of the crater is coming from underground as it is three meters deep and its level starts to rise in the upper steps.



03.c.j. The crater in rain: a melancholic scene of absorption

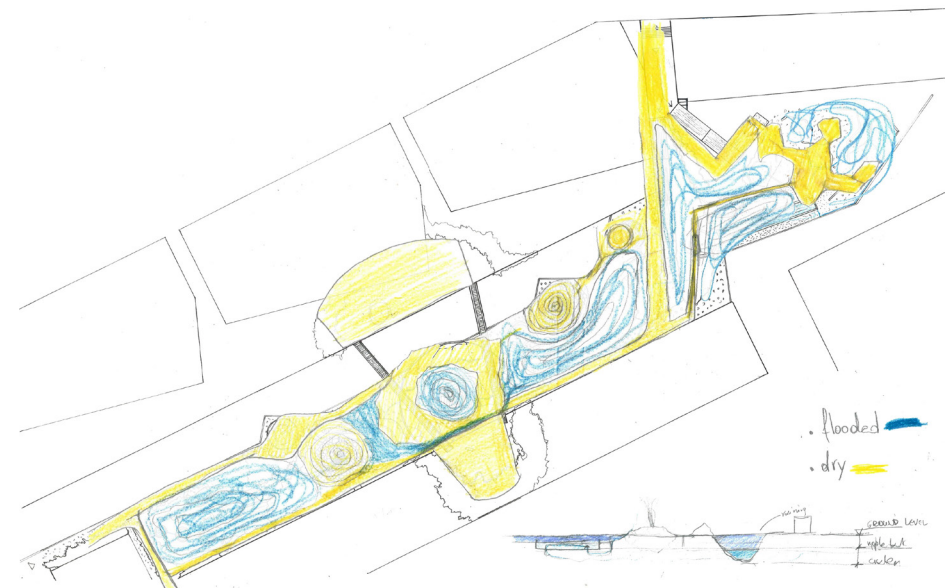
sketch by the author



03.c.k. One of the basins filled with water

sketch by the author

This special condition makes the garden ever-changing as you can experience it in different ways depending on the weather. When it rains the plan of the garden changes restricting your options: you cannot walk everywhere unless you are willing to get wet!



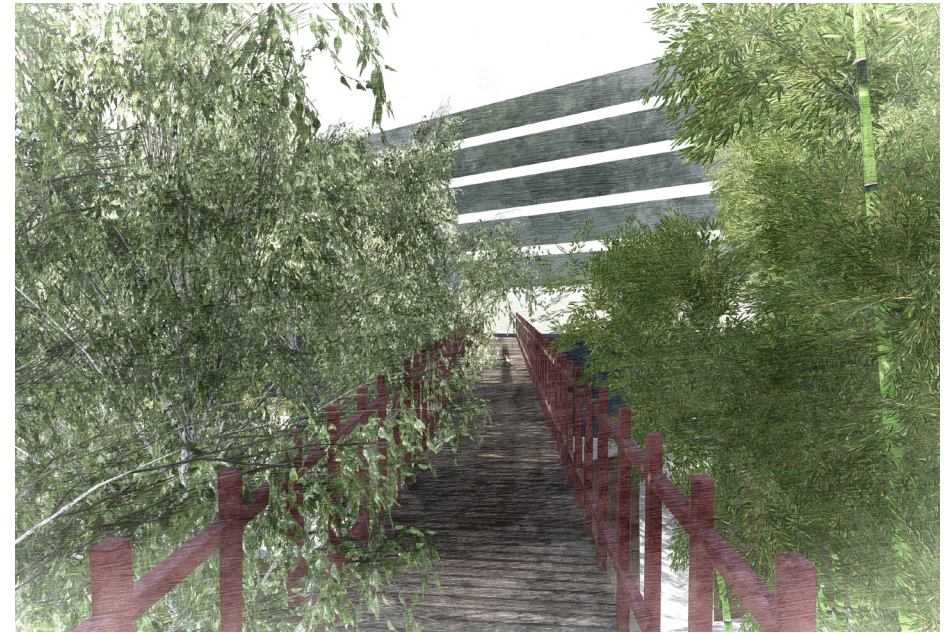
03.c.l. Dry and flooded areas

sketch by the author

The garden doesn't occupy the whole site and coexists with the presence of cars, just like the garden of rooms. It leaves room for the movement of the cars and for the entrances of the garages to stay open. The garden is separated from the car lanes with a high wall, sometimes straight and sometimes inclined but once in a garden you cannot see cars anymore. The entrance of Scheepstimmermanslaan is creating a contrast between the noisy and harsh outside and the silent and smooth inside. The high wall divides in two the width of the opening and you can see while entering this intense partition, even from the opposite street. Next to you a car is entering the small road. As you move further it disappears and you hear only its sound till you get deep into the garden: then, the sound of the car had disappeared but something else like water flushing takes its place..

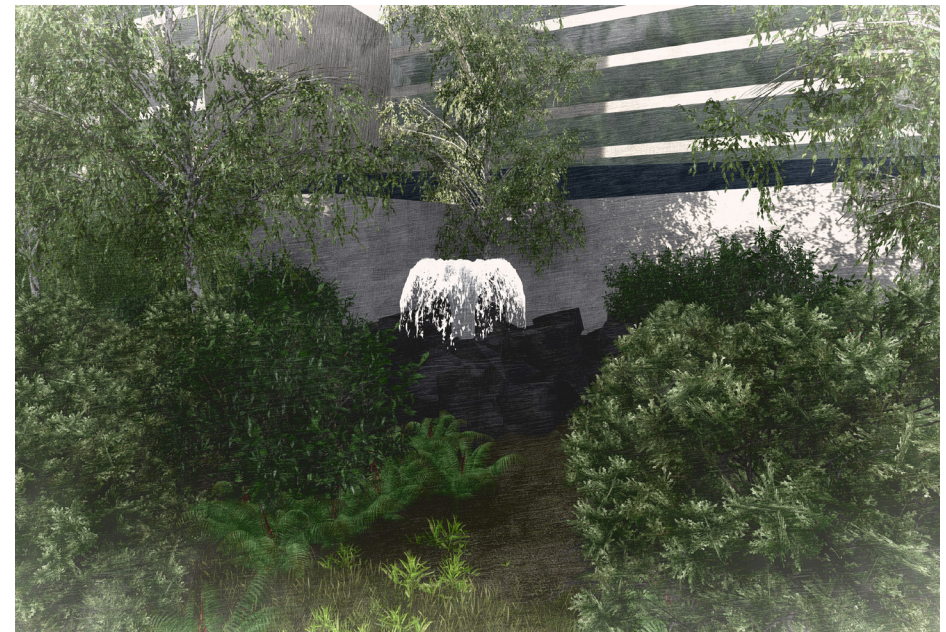
Finally, another feature that complements the garden is the two viewing points that are located on the roof of the adjacent buildings. These two points are connected with two wooden bridges that hover over the crater in a symmetrical way and it is there that you can mainly perceive their existence. The access to the roofs is made only by one point that is not easy to find and it is not more than a ladder that stands on the facade of the garage-building. Both viewing points are semicircular spaces with a bench to ease your tiredness and a small tree to protect you from the sun or the rain. Surrounded on their perimeter they have shrubs that prevent you from walking at the rest of the roof.

The viewing points act as panoramas from where you can see an overview of the garden. Although planted with trees in his largest part, one can still perceive better their wanderings through the garden and orient themselves with the crater in front of them as point of reference. While walking on the wooden bridges you pass by the folliages of trees and you're absorbed by the still wataer while passive above the crater. These bridges become a transparent intermediate level between the deep hole of the ground and the huge scale of the buildings that surround the garden. Big contrast and surprise are created when passing through the threshold of the bridge: from the garden, over the road and then again to a part of the garden. The usual, ugly and noisy mingles with the extra-ordinary just by walking.



03.c.m. Transversing the garden by the air

sketch by the author



03.c.n. Surprised by discovering a fountain

sketch by the author

the gardens of deviation

Graduation thesis
Karampournioti Alexandra
May 2018

reflection

societal relevance

“it may perhaps also generate a non-city, an ‘outside’ to the city that can no longer be envisaged as the wilderness beyond, nor as external forces confronting the city walls, but as the element of struggle that stirs trouble on the city’s striations from within” [Deleuze and the City]

The current graduation thesis aspires to offer a new way of experiencing our cities and it suggests to conceive them as more open and flexible assemblages than striated and fixed totalities. The homogeneity and the extreme fixation of spaces that characterize many urban complexes may have a negative effect on the freedom of thought and action of the different subjectivities. The repetition of similar actions and practices in every day routine may be extremely tiring or even dull and it can become a restrictive factor for regenerative and creative thoughts. Even though the mechanisms of entertainment and consumption may pretend that satisfy the citizens’ needs, they seem to leave no space for the random and the blurry and as a result people may even forget that there is also this side of theirs, a side that needs the unsure and the indeterminant to act as a counterpoint to the fixed and the programmed.

The current project uses as a key to oppose homogeneity and striation the creation of ‘leakages’ in the expectedness of current experiences in the urban realm: creation of places that will trigger peoples’ mind and stir emotions. Urbanites will have the chance to feel intensified emotions, to diverge from expected behaviors and through such experiences to reboot their mind. If the experiences that the city offers could allow many different behaviors and if the same environments that create such experiences evoke each time a new feeling and trigger different actions, then there will be room for constantly becoming someone else.

A society that allows the indeterminant and the random to take place, is more open to changes and new thoughts. The new gardens aspire to alleviate people

from stressful and repetitive thoughts, even if it is for few minutes. A break from the ordinary thoughts, an instant “shock” in between the scheduled actions can be revitalizing not only for individuals but also for the way the city emerges. The city, that way, will have the potential to always be a surprise, an infinite source of emotions and relations. This thesis deals with finding these virtualities of the city and trigger their becoming actual.

process, method and tools

The process of researching the ways in which ‘deviant’ places could be created was quite indeterminate and blurry at the beginning, I was searching for out-of-the-ordinary experiences and what could make them happen. I had the idea of analyzing fictional settings as they are an infinite source for non-normative or paradoxical experiences. On the other hand, I was influenced by the theory of Affects. This theory excited me because it can directly get to the point of things: all that exists around us may be described by the relations that people and other creatures have with their environment. These relations are triggered because of the affects that the environment has on them. Although these two tools, affects and fictional settings, worked separately at the first stages of the thesis, they gradually coincided: Affects was the filter through which I analyzed the fictional settings. This procedure triggered the formulation of Affective Gradients that I desire for the new gardens and of the principles concerning their interrelations.

Parallel to this theoretical research, I analyzed the testing area. My criteria for this analysis were the affective relations that emerge in the area but also the determination of its singularities. There was a need for a various-scaled analysis as the intervention would take place in more than one sites and that was a big difficulty. One cannot talk and make conclusions generally for a whole city but at some points that is necessary for the procedure to move on. These conclusions came from my personal experience and perceiving of the city and that was another thing that made me hesitant: how much should someone avoid expressing personal views and feelings?

After analyzing the city and picking three potential sites of intervention I used the formulated Affective Gradients to test the specific sites. This testing was based on the singularities that each site carries: the intermingling of the spatial characteristics and of their expressing qualities. This testing helped me to find the virtualities for the creation of new affective relations on each site and design with them. The designing procedure considered the three sites in parallel and that was very helpful

in comparing design decisions and testing the appropriateness of their application: this relates not only to the interior of the sites but also to the character of the neighborhood around them as well as their wider area of influence. The design emerged gradually and was linked on the one hand in the application of the principles of affective interrelations and ,on the other hand, to the specificity of the sites.

ethical issues

An intervention as such can bring up moral issues due to conflicting interests: the new design will have benefits for some against others. For the current project these issues may originate from people that are already using the sites that will be designed or from those that live close to them. Especially because it is a part of an acupuncture intervention and thus, more gardens will gradually pop up in the city, there is a necessity for thinking of ways that would deal with potential moral issues.

For instance, people may complain that with the new design some of the available parking seats will be reduced and the circulation of cars will be restricted. As I am intervening inside and in-between blocks there are always circulation issues that may occur. However, such an issue can be smoothened if the designer tries to preserve as much as possible from the current uses and abolish them only when it is necessary. That is also the most sincere way to deal with reality: being careful with the effects that a design may have on practical issues, no matter how ‘exciting’ it is.

In two of my sites that there are cars involved I am preserving some of the parking seats, especially those who are needed for the supply of the stores and whenever I impede the circulation is due to the restricted available size of the site. Both sites have large garages located around them or really close to them so, that could be a solution for convincing people.

Another issue that may occur is that of the disturbance of the residents, especially on the site with the path in-between the private gardens. Again, I am trying to restrict the design as much as possible in order not to intrude in the private gardens. Furthermore, by enclosing the path from both sites with a ‘membrane’, I try to minimize any visual or acoustic contact with the houses. This ‘membrane’ also can make them feel safe as it impedes any intrusion in their gardens.

In any case, the intervention on sites with such fragile balances should always in-

clude the involvement with the residents. There need to be discussions that do not aim only to the persuasion of them but also to the exchange of opinions about the project. Although that procedure may delay the project, the residents will see it as a common initiative and they will feel part of it. In this way also, there are more possibilities that they collaborate and give away some parts of their properties for the project.

generalization of results and thoughts

The area of intervention worked only as a testing case that would give insights for the application of the method in other situations and conditions. I am not referring only to other areas of the same city but also for sites in other urban complexes. The design was based partially on the specific sites but also on the insights from the theory. These insights could be tools for testing other cases. Filtering a site of intervention through the Affects and their relations can be a useful start for similar researches that deal with the experience of people and their relation-reaction to the environment. Such researches do not necessarily originate from the realm of Landscape Architecture or Architecture but also, for instance, from Medicine, Psychology and Sociology.

As far as the design outcome is concerned, we could extract the successions of experiences that create specific affects and use it as a test on other areas. Furthermore, it is also useful to see which design decisions created these successions and if possible generalize them in relation to their spatial conditions. For instance, the connection of enclosure and darkness with the affect of fear can be used as a tool that even if applied in other situations and constructed by other materials, it would have the same impact on people. Also, the designing of the borders and the membranes of the testing-sites could give many general insights about the manipulations of the moments of entering in a place.

Looking back at the whole procedure I could say that one of the things I found difficult was the combination of all the insights from the theoretical research with the filtering of the analysis and with the design. It was a bet to have always in mind the principles that have been formulated during the designing procedure because for me, sometimes, designing can be spontaneous and intuitive and it can be based only to the analysis and recording of the existing situation (sites, neighborhoods, city). Combining theory and design was a new and difficult process for me but it gave me more tools to use and these tools acted as basis that consolidated the design.

Another thing that I noticed is that I could have used much earlier the insights from theory as tools for the analysis: at the first stages my visitings of the city of intervention was more random and with less concrete purposes. I wanted to feel the atmospheres that emerge and to observe how people move in it. Although that gave me many impressions about the city and its neighborhoods, it could be even richer and 'safe' to have imbued this analysis with features from theory from the early stages.

Finally, if I had more time, I would like to test the design principles on more categories(sub-groups) of the existing voids because that would give the research more variations and different insights that would enrich it. Furthermore, another thing that would be really interesting for me and that could act as support to the thesis would be a detailed study, based even on statistical facts, of how could indeed different gardens pop-up and even pop-out through the course of time at the city of Rotterdam.

gains

Throughout the whole procedure I became richer in knowledge and thoughts. My mind was intrigued by all the philosophical texts that I came across as they offered me many new perspectives not only for the city but for all the relations and emotions that trigger life's continuation. That was unexpected for me. One of the most important things I learnt was the need for a constant consideration of things and situations on all scales and in parallel: nothing works on its own but it is the interdependence of the living and the non-living that makes a place. Finally, I realized that staying grounded in relation to your project and your aspirations is the only way to be sincere with your intentions, the design, the result and the effect that it would have on a bigger scale.

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