

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

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

| Personal information | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Name | Ruoyu (Lulu) Song |
| Student number | 5231884 |

| Studio | | |
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| Name / Theme | Urban Architecture – Glaneurs/Glanceuses | |
| Main mentor | Paul Vermeulen | Design Mentor |
| Second mentor | Leeke Reinders | Research Mentor |
| Third mentor | Lex van Deudekom | Building Technology Mentor |
| Argumentation of choice of the studio | <p>I wanted to join the Urban Architecture graduation studio because the studio is particularly site sensitive, focusing first on developing a deep understanding of the context of the site, and then working with the existing urban fabric.</p> <p>I also really like that the studio has a socially inclined (anthropological) approach which aligns with my personal design interests.</p> <p>With the theme of this year's studio being 'Glaneurs/Glanceuses', I thought it would be a really rich and fascinating exercise in interweaving the old and the new.</p> | |

| Graduation project | |
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| Title of the graduation project | Open House |
| Goal | |
| Location: | Maastricht, The Netherlands |
| The posed problem, | <p>Maastricht is a shrinking city; although the number of students in Maastricht is higher than ever, the city struggles to keep these students after they graduate. Why is this? What is it about Maastricht that does not make it an appealing place to live for young people?</p> <p>My hypothesis is that Maastricht has a preoccupation with image and identity, catering towards tourists, but not offering as much to its own residents. There are so many spaces for consumption in the city, and far less spaces for production and creation. Ironically, one of the most authentic destinations in the city, the cultural free zone of the Landbouwbelaag, is being shut down by the municipality who plan to redevelop the site for commercial purposes. History of urban</p> |

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| | renewal in Maastricht has shown stark examples of gentrification and displacement, and this is an issue that persists in the city to this day. |
| research questions and | <p>The latest urban redevelopment project in the city is the Belvedere Plan, which encompasses the area of Sphinxkwartier. My research question is:</p> <p><i>How can the urban renewal of Sphinxkwartier be generated in a way that resists gentrification?</i></p> <p>Sub-questions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What are the architectural elements that contribute to invisible boundaries, and how can we design to be as open and accessible as possible?</i> - <i>In what way can architectural elements facilitate social interaction and collective activities?</i> - <i>What is the role of the architect in designing social architecture? How can they act as an agent rather than a top-down authoritative force?</i> |
| design assignment in which these result. | <p>The aim is to create an architectural proposal that addresses the issues of privatisation and commodification, by producing a design which should be able to facilitate appropriation, should be open and accessible, and could even encourage social mixing.</p> <p>I decided to design a public arts centre, with artist ateliers. The idea is to connect artists to the public, forming a mutually beneficial relationship. Typically, artists studios in existing building stock are the initial trigger of the process of gentrification, but this project tries to resist gentrification by giving artists a permanent place in the city, specifically designed for their needs.</p> |

Process

Method description

Firstly I will undertake theoretical research which will underpin my design work. This involves literature studies and discourse analysis on the topics of Spatial Justice, Gentrification, Spatial Agency, Authenticity, etc. The research product will be an anthology of essays.

Design based research will be also conducted, this involves:

- Precedent study
- Adjacency diagrams
- Cartography and mapping
- Interviews
- Collaborative/participatory design
- Socio-spatial analysis
- Future use studies

Literature and general practical preference

Awan, Nishat, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. Oxford: Routledge, 2011.

Boer, René, Marina Otero Verzier, and Katia Truijen. *Architecture of Appropriation: On Squatting as a Spatial Practice*. Rotterdam: Het Nieuwe Instituut, 2019.

Fisker, Jens, Letizia Chiappini, Lee Pugalis, and Antonella Bruzzese. *The Production of Alternative Urban Spaces*. Oxford: Routledge, 2019.

Franck, Karen A, and Quentin Stevens. *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*. Oxford: Routledge, 2007.

Gehl, Jan, and Birgitte Svarre. *How to Study Public Life*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2013.

Gieseking, Jen Jack, William Mangold, Cindi Katz, Setha Low, Susan Saegert. *The People, Place and Space Reader*. Oxford: Routledge, 2014.

Janssen, Bert. *Cultural Freezone Landbouwbelang*, Maastricht. 2013.

Klinenberg, Eric. *Palaces for the people : how social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarization, and the decline of civic life*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2018.

Lacaton, Anne, and Jean-Philippe Vassal. *Freedom of Use*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2020.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Right to the City*. Translated by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. 1996. The Anarchist Library. <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/henri-lefebvre-right-to-the-city>.

Soja, Edward W. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Tschumi, Bernard. *The Manhattan Transcripts*. London: Academy Editions, 1981.

Zukin, Sharon. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Reflection

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

Gleaning is an act of equalisation – distributing resources to the poor and needy. My graduation project 'gleans' a derelict and underutilised part of the riverfront in Maastricht and gives it over to the everyday people of the city in the form of a public building. Architecture is not just about designing and detailing a singular building; it is part of a larger system, shaped by social and political processes. With my work, I aim to design a building that responds to social needs and can contribute to a more just and better functioning society.

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

In a world with increasingly deepening inequalities, the need for an examination of spatial justice is paramount. Capitalist attitudes have resulted in architecture becoming increasingly commodified and aestheticized and this sometimes carries through to architectural education, where students become preoccupied with image and form. My graduation work will try to shift focus back onto the lived experience of architecture; it's social and political dimensions. I hope to demonstrate to the municipality of Maastricht the value of public, non-commercial urban development.