

# DRAFT REFLECTION AT P3

- on architectonic and social relevance -

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## WALDORF SCHOOL WITHIN THE CULTURES OF CRAFT

*Relation between theme of graduation lab and subject/case study of student within this framework (location/object)*

*Materialisatie: ambacht in architectuur en materialisatie // Educatief: vanuit maken kom je tot leren*

This graduation studio focuses on cultures of building crafts in architecture and the city. The crafts are approached in their widest sense as a process somewhere in between thinking and making. The process of making specific building elements or materials and the culture behind this craft are closely studied. The emphasis lies on the intricate cultural meaning behind tactile topics in the built environment. Every specific culture of craft is based on a long local history with strong traditions, but also on new future-proof developments within the craft.

By studying a certain craft in detail every student shaped his or her vision on the future of that craft in specific and building crafts in general. During this graduation year I studied the relatively traditional craft of making stained glass. While filming and comparing different building crafts I noticed the great amount of real handwork involved in making stained glass. The importance of handwork and the creative freedom of the craftsmen that I analyzed in the craft of stained glass were the personal core values of craft. I learned that these values are of main importance in education of children. By teaching children to appreciate intellectual wisdom and creative crafting, so thinking as well as making, as equal values in society, the children will be broadened in their individual development.

The idea that learning comes through making, thus crafting, is closely connected to the anthroposophical education of the Waldorf School. Craft related courses are strongly integrated into the Waldorf curricula to stimulate the creativity of children and to broaden the development of the individual. By designing a new secondary Waldorf School I aim for a broader appreciation of craft in the city and society.

The personal graduation project is not solely based on the material and tactile side of crafts, but even more so on a craft-based approach in education. While both sides of craft are approached by very differing starting points, these two themes can really enhance each other according to me. The anthroposophical view on education and on life in general can be expressed and enhanced in the building by using specific building crafts. In a way the building and the way how it is made will become a didactic device to show how traditional building crafts can be used in contemporary architecture.

- Stained glass as starting craft later used to enhance anthroposophical education
- Didactic strategy to use certain building ways and materials to raise awareness
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## RELATION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

In this graduation studio *Cultures of Craft* the relation between research and design is rather specific. Especially in the first semester, while researching building crafts and formulating the design project, I noticed that the research was based on seemingly coincidental findings that gave the graduation project a specific direction.

In the studio, we started with a film research in which every student intensively studied a specific craft for a week. Out of this film research the personal core values of craft resulted. The values found in the craft of stained glass were used as a motivation to develop several scenarios and the design project itself. In advance I could never have thought that the argumentation for the entire graduation project would be built on specific findings in the film research. The film research, which was focused on a rather specific and small topic, was a catalyst to think in a certain way about the whole topic of craft and to formulate the direction of the design project.

In a way this seemingly coincidental way of research does not seem to be very scientific. If I would have filmed another culture of craft, I probably would have headed for another direction during the research project. This shows that the starting point, the hypothesis, influences the outcomes of the research itself. While in other research which is solely based on scientific values, the outcome should be the same regardless of the hypothesis, in design research the outcome seems to be influenced by what the designer finds on his or her path. And the path itself again is influenced by the focus and interests of the designer himself.

During the rest of my education at the *Faculty of Architecture* at the TU Delft, I was never before this conscious of the fact that the outcome of design research is influenced by coincidental factors we find on our design path. This is something which makes research in design distinct from purely scientific research and which makes the working method of designers very different. On this moment in my life I have the strong conviction that everything in life is based on and influenced by what one finds underway.

- Are those factors really coincidental or is it even destiny or something else? How independent are we in changing the direction of our own design path?
- Material research: how does (non)possibilities of glass influence design//idea of craftsmen vs laymen

## THE PROJECT IN ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT

### *Relationship between project and wider social context*

The way secondary schools can give added value to the city center could be valuable for other architects and urbanists. Secondary schools are mostly placed at the side of cities, where they work as autonomous building ensembles. Placing them in the city center could create new functional relations and opportunities.

By placing secondary schools in city centers, the scholars are closer to existing companies which enables the school and the city to create mutual collaborations. Companies could for example enable the scholars to do small internships or open days to show what they do and companies could at their turn learn from what happens in the schools. Additionally citizens can benefit from the available resources such as the craft ateliers, which gives them the possibility to practice crafts that would otherwise be out of their range. Next to that it could literally mean that the scholars are placed in society earlier in their lives.

In this graduation project one of the main research questions was how the Waldorf School could engage with and contribute to the city of Delft, bot socially and spatially. As architecture is a very spatial oriented study, the answers

I got until now are mainly on a spatial level. I have tried to design the public exterior and interior spaces as welcoming and contributing to the city as possible.

The answers on a social level stay limited according to me. As a designer I can try to design a building with its surroundings that acts as a catalyst for all kinds of social possibilities. I can come up with social possibilities that I would want to happen there. But the fact stays that we can never proof whether the building will really work like that; in this case whether the building will really engage with and contribute to the city. In order to really proof the social 'skills' of the building, the building has to be build, which requires a real life test.

The only thing we can do as architects is to design the public and private spaces as inviting as possible in order for citizens to make use of the schools crafts ateliers for example. So the real answer will always be given on a spatial level with social aims acting as foundation.

- Do I really have no more social answers to this research questions, apart from all the functions/possibilities that could be happening inside and outside of the building? How do I reflect on that as a future-architect? In the end we design in opportunities, and not in proven outcomes.
- What is more specifically the relation between the Waldorf School and the opportunities for society?

## PERSONAL APPROACH WITHIN THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE INTERIOR

*Relationship between methodical line of approach of graduation lab and chosen method by student in this framework*

Since the beginning of this graduation studio I noticed the particular approach of the chair *Architecture of the Interior*. The phenomenological approach of this chair in which the tactile experience of spaces is very outspoken, corresponds with my ideas about architecture. The tactile experiences and materiality are according to me essential elements of architecture, because they influence what the user sees and how the user perceives the buildings.

Therefore I agree with the emphasis of the chair on real materialistic models and drawings over computer models to study the impact of design choices. By modelling by hand, one learns so much more than one can ever be able to understand in the computer. And it is no coincidence that the craft as educative method is a focus point of my project program.

On the other hand there appears to be a certain consensus in this chair that every model, drawing and product should be made as if it is a final model; every products appears to need a certain degree of perfection that I think is not necessary, at least not always. The method I prefer to choose is to work in a sketchy way in which the product is not made to tell precise and fixed answers, but to give myself the freedom to find unpredicted solutions. In the end it is more about the story behind a product than the product itself.

- **Spatial phenomenology:** architecture for architects or architecture for the user as laymen. I feel that the chair has a very specific focus on what is esthetic and what is not. Esthetic appears to come from simplicity and serenity, from a very specific style. I have the feeling that if we all think like that, in the end we only make architecture for ourselves, for the architects. We have to think more like what the users want. I feel a difference between the overall chair method and my own in that sense.
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