

# Graduation Plan P2

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The choice to graduate with ExploreLab was mostly driven by the desire to write and develop both the frame and the content of an architecture and research project. Secondly, to be able to follow a way of working which is not pushed by program or function, but by the idea of the existence of a relevant condition. Lastly to be able to mend the design process while researching in order to become more capable (and secure) of designing the design and research process of my own projects.

## The Industrial Ruin

### Location and context

The project is situated in the Ruhr area, a former highly industrial region in western Germany. Due to the discovery of (amongst others) black coal, the cities between the rivers Rhein, Ruhr and Emscher started to grow enormously since the end of the 19th century, creating an urban agglomerate around Essen, Dortmund and Dusseldorf. Exhausting the ground, most mines started closing from the mid 20th century onwards. Some sites, (mostly because they were discovered in a later stage) were still in use at the beginning of the new millennium (some still even today). These recently closed sites are mostly situated on the periphery of the Ruhr area, along the Northern and Eastern edges. The conditions in these areas can not be classified as urban, but due to their vicinity to large cities and developed infrastructure are also not rural.

The considered sites, are those that have recently been closed. They are found in different stages of redevelopment, but none of them can be considered 'finished' from a local government or project developers' perspective. Meaning, they are being rebuilt according to a development plan, still closed of to the public or only a partial redevelopment plan has been executed. The pace with which new developments are being executed is quite slow, leaving space for local initiatives and (illegal) appropriation.

The above mentioned conditions make the former mining sites different from the typical 'urban industrial site' as found in for example the city of Amsterdam. In a large (and popular) city like Amsterdam, sudden availability of sites in or near the city centre gives some breathing space in the dense city. The former mines along the northern edge of the Ruhr area however are placed on the outskirts, half in rural areas. The population is shrinking and work opportunities are limited. Former mine workers relocate to the new businesses in the larger cities, which have already 'reinvented' themselves.

## Sites

Through online and on-site research a dozen mining sites in transition have been localized. These sites are all in certain state of re-development. Although their conditions vary, there are many commonalities to be found. They have all been closed of from public use through physical (and mental?) barriers during their productive lifetime. They contain the same type of land use typology and building typology.

## Strategy and design assignment

The design proposal suggests to develop a strategy that can be applied to all researched sites. In this way the different conditions of sites (neglected, being redeveloped from a top-down plan, designed infrastructure, fully controlled and bordered) can be taken 'for granted'. The state as found is accepted and the design departs from the specific state of each site. The strategy to be developed is flexible, meaning it can take on different forms in differing conditions. However, there are set parameters, invariable to change, to control redevelopment and to create a consistent network of interventions in the Northern Ruhr area.

The design task at hand is to develop a repeatable unit, to occupy the former mining sites, and by repetition form a network of urban areas.

## Literature

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## Excursions

Ruhr area, redeveloped sites	18-21 september 2014
Ruhr area, possible sites	5-7 january 2015
Ruhr area, elected sites	August 2015

## Workshops

Coney Island - Proto-Public Space	3-9 November 2014
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## Reflection and relevance

Firstly, the project could contribute to a more refined understanding of public space. Prof. Tom Avermaete, Leeke Reinders and Hans Teerds have coined the term of proto-public space to indicate a condition of public space that is becoming, outside the known and controlled typical public spaces. The on-site investigation of former industrial areas could contribute to the understanding of this term.

Secondly, the design could offer an alternative to the usual economic drivers for urbanizing and revitalizing former industrial sites.

# Planning Graduation Antje Adriaens - fall 2015

