Spaces of Impact

Architecture as a Medium for Social Activation

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Table of contents.

Introduction.

The subject for my graduation project originally came from a frustration that slowly turned into a fascination for my Explore Lab application. While wondering about what I wanted to do after my studies, I realised that throughout my entire time at this faculty, I've never been presented with career options other than those at architectural firms. For my entire bachelor's and the start of my master's program, this led me to believe that I probably wanted to become an architect myself. That idea changed completely when I took a gap semester and interned at an architectural firm in 2023. I was shocked by the reality of the profession. Sustainable alternatives were constantly dismissed, simply because there was no money or priority for them. For me, this was a harsh wake-up call. How could it be that, for years now, we're being educated about how urgent sustainability is, that morally we can't ignore it, yet in practice it's still not happening?

This made me wonder: What's the point of graduating 400 well-educated future architects each year if their ideals are immediately overruled in practice? What's the point of letting all this talent go to waste? There has to be another role we can play in this crisis other than waiting till legislation is in place, if it ever will be at all.

After completing architecture education, we are equipped with valuable skills in problem-solving, design thinking, and creativity, often paired with high ambitions and morals that can be useful in many fields. But why aren't we educated on what more we can do with the skills we've learnt? This question has lingered with me for some time now. It has led me to this graduation project, which is not only a design investigation but also a personal exploration into the kind of role I want to play after graduation.

I believe that the profession of architecture can mean more and be more than 'just' designing buildings people live in. We can, for example, take inspiration from the rising art & technology field, where art installations are being used to translate insights from technology to the broader public (Emergence Delft, n.d.), building upon the benefits of art as a universal language (Yenealem, 2024). Since architecture has those same linguistic qualities, it made me wonder if there's more we could use architecture for. This graduation project researches how architecture can be used as a medium for social activation by taking an interdisciplinary approach. Next to the discipline of architecture, we will also be taking insights from the fields of experience design and narrative psychology.

Problem statement.

Nowadays, it is becoming clearer that there is a lack of priority in solving global challenges like the climate crisis. In today's systems, the most prominent societal structures are driven by short-term and profit-first values (What Design Can Do, n.d.). Getting enough people to see the urgency of global problems and acting on it to find and implement solutions for them is a topic extremely relevant in current times (Solnit, 2023). Of course, there are several global challenges, like poverty and inequality, yet this research will focus on the environmental side, as this problem will also influence the other challenges. After all, the poorer parts of the world are to be hit the hardest by the consequences of global warming (Müller, 2024). Currently, more and more research is being done on how it's possible that even though we know that something has to change in how we live on this planet, we still cannot seem to achieve this change (Toomey, 2023).

There seems to be a shift needed in how we address the urgency of these problems. Presenting climate research data to people tends to only overwhelm them, rather than motivating them to take action. Article 22 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, a result of the 2022 UN Biodiversity Conference, highlights that enhancing communication, education, and public awareness is key to implementing biodiversity policies effectively and reaching the 2030 targets (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2024). It's time to focus on the communication side and to turn scientific facts into compelling stories that inspire action, because we're not only in a climate and biodiversity crisis but also in an imagination crisis. While current challenges in the world are well-documented, their scale and complexity often make them abstract and distant to the general public. This disconnect hinders the urgency and scale of action required (De Meyer, Coren, McCaffrey, & Slean, 2020). Facts and their implications become too overwhelming, or even unimaginable, and when something is unimaginable, it becomes un-actionable.

Relevance

The imagination crisis stems from the disconnect between abstract data and human emotions. The question becomes how to make research data resonate with people on a personal level. Because facts alone don't move people, but emotions do (Toomey, 2023). To bridge the imagination gap, innovative communication strategies are essential. They can help transform complex scientific concepts into compelling narratives that people can understand and care about (De Meyer et al., 2020). As Toomey (2023) states, "Policies alone aren't enough without public engagement and understanding." Currently, science communication isn't moving at the speed of climate change or cultural shifts. It's often outdated and, frankly, boring. If we want to make this work, we need to find new ways, or a new generation of science communication. A relevant quote on this topic, which really resonates with me, is one by Thijs Biersteker (2021): "How can the research teach us, if the research doesn't reach us?" This research will dive into the question of how the research could reach us through architectural design.

Architectural narrative history.

In modern times, it seems like architecture is only aimed at serving comfort, efficiency, and protection from environmental conditions. While these functions are required in most buildings, this utilitarian view underestimates architecture's deeper potential. Since the rise of modernism, abstraction and neutrality have become dominant aesthetic ideals, often at the cost of symbolic and communicative purposes. The modernist ambition to strip away ornaments in favour of clarity, as famously argued by architects like Mies van der Rohe, led to a focus on form following function, which often diminished the power of architecture as a cultural messenger.

Yet historically, architecture has always been a profoundly communicative medium. From the ancient designs of churches, which include numerous symbolic stories, to the Palace of Versailles, which symbolises absolute monarchy, built form has been used to express power, influence belief systems, and ideology. Le Corbusier, despite being a key figure in modernism, recognised architecture's potential when he wrote in Vers une Architecture (1923) that we must choose between "architecture or revolution" (Brott, 2013). He perceived architecture as a crucial instrument in addressing the ills of contemporary society. An appropriate architecture would combat social unrest and could prevent revolution. Similarly, in the 1970s, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown criticised the modernist neglect of symbolism and argued for a more eclectic architecture which used more historic references (Stott, 2019). It was the basis for postmodernism, and in Learning from Las Vegas (1972), they argued that architecture must communicate clearly with the public, not just with architects. With the rise of modernism, it seems like this potential has been forgotten, and architecture's communicative power is increasingly overlooked. As architecture becomes increasingly commercialised or aestheticised, its potential to inspire, mobilise, or educate fades into the background. This research aims to revive that potential.

Architecture Parlante

When looking into Étienne-Louis Boullée's term Architecture Parlante, we see that buildings somehow explain their function or identity through their formal attributes. Boullée, a visionary French architect born in Paris in 1728, was one of the most important characters in neoclassical architecture in France (Naginski, 2020). He designed dream buildings in which he combined enlightenment philosophy and his love for geometry, with a gigantic scale. Boullée is best known for his design for the public monument for physicist Isaac Newton, where he gave imaginary form to Newton's theories with an immense sphere that would serve as a cenotaph. The interior of the cenotaph was to be a hollow globe representing the universe (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025). Boullée was looking into how our senses react to the architectural spaces around us in order to figure out how to make architecture transcendent. Each geometric form somehow thematises a given purpose or use. The result is that the symbolic aspect of architecture suspended all practical implications in his work. He found that the purpose of architecture was to imagine possibilities and convey their purpose to the public (Naginski, 2020). He created an architecture of signs so that the building can be read and the architecture can speak its identity, its character, and its name.

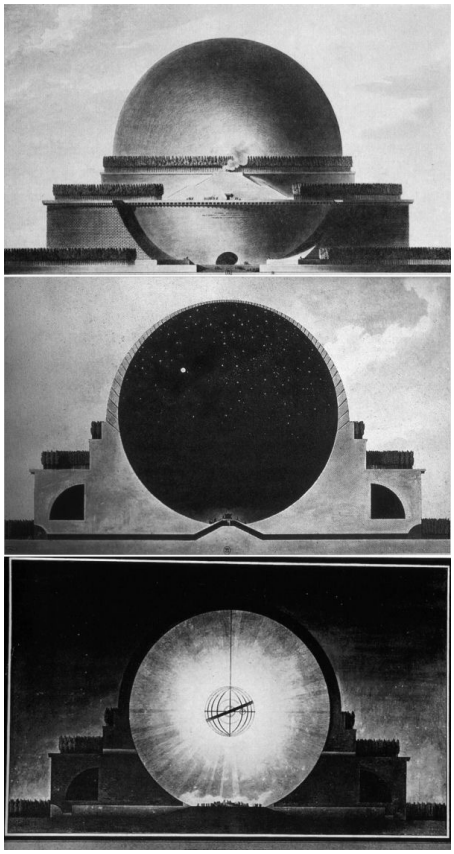


Figure 1 - Newton's Cenotaph (Vohra, 2020)

Figure 2 - Tatlin before a wooden model of his tower, St. Petersburg, in 1920 (Croizier, 2014)

Architectural propaganda

Another example of how architecture was used for its narrative in history is architectural propaganda. Tatlin's Tower, or the project for the monument of the Third International in 1919-20, was designed to be a huge monumental building (Croizier, 2014). After the Russian Revolution, the new socialist regime promised to reform and rebuild Russian society. Artists like Vladimir Tatlin had visions of a new modern art that would express the coming age. Tatlin was given the chance to propose new monuments for socialist Russia. He envisioned creating abstract public monuments that could inspire all people towards a contemplative, meaningful and thoroughly modern future. The design had a spiralling structure with four hanging and rotating volumes in which official public business would be conducted. The tower contained abstract qualities as its four geometric architectural spaces suggested the idealistic collectivism that was supposed to define the modern socialist Russian culture and politics. The upwards spiral of the design was strikingly optimistic, and its material components spoke to the reborn nation's pervasive longing for progress. Its rotating volumes evoked a sense of forward momentum and the march of time. Its hollow frame embodied the abstract, modernist idea of creating volume without mass, and its communication centre symbolised the priority of education, relationship and community. The transparent structure was an abstract promise that, unlike in the past, the new soviet union would conduct its business in full public view (Luedke, 2020). The entire tower was propaganda. It was creating a brand new language of symbolism and trying to use universal ideas, such as upwards slants and spirals, to get across broad, abstract ideas like progress, change, and hope for the future.

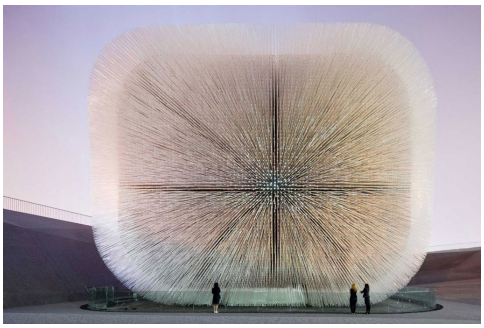
Figure 3 - Wooden Cathedral interior (RAU, n.d.)

Figure 4 - Wooden Cathedral exterior (RAU, n.d.)

Contemporary narrative architecture

Architectural design is currently more focused on practical and aesthetic aspects, with the exception of designs for World Expo Pavilions and Biennales. An example of a contemporary building that tries to 'communicate' something to its users is the 'Wooden Cathedral' for the Triodos bank by RAU architects, completed in 2019. RAU argues that it references a 'cathedral' since it doesn't have a clear front or back side, and as they use wooden trusses around a completely wooden core, combined with high ceilings. Next, they state that it relates to the nature of the estate it's situated in because the composition is inspired by the flight paths of bats (RAU, n.d.). In my opinion, this is not a strong example of narrative architecture. While the architect uses these arguments to justify his design choices, I doubt the building can communicate its story to users without someone explaining it.

This research challenges this contemporary approach to the narrative of architecture, as I believe that there's more that the discipline of architecture could bring to the table. The design by Heatherwick Studio for the UK Pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai in 2010 communicates in another way. The World Expo's theme was the future of cities; thus, the architects looked at the relationship of cities to nature. They cooperated with the world's first major botanical institution, Kew Gardens. Kew's Millennium Seed Bank aims to preserve the seeds of 25% of the world's wild plant species. The collection inspired the idea of making a structure with an extraordinary texture to connect the building with its content. The pavilion became a cathedral to seeds. The 60.000 silvery, tingling hairs extended through the walls of the box into its exterior. Cast into the glass-like tips of the hairs were 250.000 seeds. By day, the cathedral was lit only by the sunlight that was drawn in along the length of each acrylic hair. By night, tiny hidden lights inside the rods illuminated both the seed ends inside the pavilion as well as the swaying tips outside (Heatherwick, n.d.). In my opinion, this architectural design very clearly conveys its message of the interconnectedness of nature and urban life, and the importance of preserving biodiversity to the visitor.



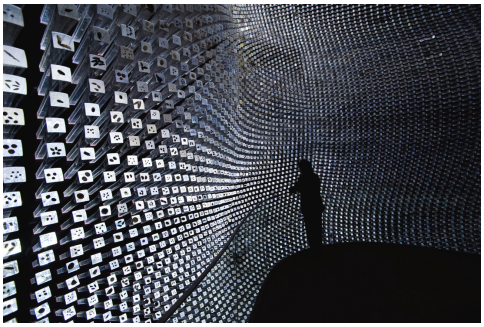


Figure 5 - Seed Cathedral exterior (Heatherwick, n.d.)
Figure 6 - Seed Cathedral interior (Heatherwick, n.d.)

Beyond symbolism.

According to Nigel Coates, in his book Narrative Architecture (2012), architecture can hardly be narrative unless it contains a degree of tension, and incorporates the visitor in a thinking-being experience. To be narrative, the space, the treatment of surface, the pictures that the building forms around your path, all have to engage with you and tease you to create a field of meaning without resorting to fake history or atmosphere. In 1983, the NATO, Narrative Architecture Today, movement emerged from Coates' unit at the Architectural Association; it is seen as the last 20th-century radical movement (Jamieson, n.d.). The group played down the architect's role by shifting emphasis and agency to the inhabitant, which resonates with the idea of this research as it not only focuses on architecture as the building, but also on the way the visitor perceives the spaces.

While narrative architecture has often focused on evoking atmosphere or abstract ideas, this research proposes a shift in focus toward triggering concrete individual action through spatial design. The unique approach lies in combining architectural narrative with behavioural psychology and experience design to create a practical, interdisciplinary design toolbox that goes beyond aesthetics or symbolism. This way, the research doesn't just ask how to communicate through architecture, but also how that communication can activate people meaningfully in their daily lives.

Research goal
The goal of this research project is to investigate architecture as a medium to communicate. The intention is to have a method or framework that I can use to initiate my own design phase in the graduation project, which helps me substantiate why the chosen design implementations contribute to conveying a message and inspiring action. By implementing the framework myself during the design phase, I will test it for future purposes, as the idea is that this method can be used in future projects that aim to communicate their message through architectural design on their own topic. In this way, architecture can be utilised as a medium for:

- Raising awareness on important societal topics
- Translating a message into action
- Raising moral/ethical questions on current developments
- Bringing people closer together (de-polarise)
- Providing space for conversation
- Positive impact on people/society

Research questions
This research goal brings me to the following research question:
How can architecture communicate a societal message that inspires individual action among visitors?

First, a literature exploration will answer three theoretical sub-questions.

1. Narrative psychology:
   What psychological mechanisms help create spaces that make individuals more likely to engage with and act upon messages?
2. Experience design:
   Which spatial and experiential design principles contribute to clear and impactful message delivery?
3. Narrative architecture:
   What makes architecture an effective medium for communicating societal messages?

Next to the theoretical part, my research will also look into practical aspects to make solutions tangible and to be able to implement them in the design part of my project.

- Design research question:
  Which specific design tools can be identified to create architectural interventions that stimulate reflection and individual action?

Methodology

This research aims to identify key design tools that allow an architectural pavilion to effectively communicate a societal message and inspire individual action. The methodology consists of three interconnected phases: literature exploration, project analysis, and a phase of analysing to designing. Each phase builds on and gives feedback to the previous one, combining theoretical understanding with practical application.

1. Literature exploration

The first phase builds a theoretical foundation through three lenses: narrative psychology, experience design, and narrative architecture. The theory read from these 3 disciplines is summarised and combined, and by doing this overlap is recognised. From these fields of overlap, several recurring aspects are recognised, which are translated into key terms that encompass the different aspects. The outcome is a list of five key design qualities that recur in at least two of the three theoretical disciplines. The qualities are: movement, curiosity, interactivity, and the senses, where the last one is measured by the quality of light and of materiality.

2. Project analysis

There are 24 projects selected to analyse for this research. These projects are chosen based on the clarity of message, diversity in medium and style, and their emotional impact. The projects are architectural as well as non-architectural to be able to learn from other disciplines. The selected architectural and additional projects are analysed for their communicative characteristics. Each project is assessed through the five qualities identified in the literature exploration. Visual diagrams will map how these qualities are implemented in their designs. The results form a design toolbox, which is a collection of design tools linked to theory and case examples.

3. From analysing to designing

Insights from theory and case studies inform the start of the design process, where the resulting design tools from the toolboxes will be prioritised by cross-referencing them with the literature. This forms the final result of this research, yet the research remains just a concept. A research-by-design approach will follow, where the resulting design tools will be tested and adapted to the final design's message. To evaluate the impact, a pilot test will be conducted. The feedback will assess how well the design communicates and inspires action, feeding back into the final design and adding on to the research as a reflection. Another part of testing the research outcomes is through a field study. I will visit the pavilions at the World Expo in Osaka and those at the Venice Architecture Biennale this summer. The visit findings will be reviewed in a written reflection, which will be added to the research to substantiate or refute the research findings.

Figure 7 - Methodological scheme (By author, 2025)

Literature exploration.

The literary exploration helps explain how architecture can function as an effective medium for communication, particularly when addressing societal issues. The literature review focuses on three thematic clusters:

Behavioural activation
Reviewing research from behavioural science and cognitive psychology to understand which triggers lead individuals to take action. The field of narrative psychology in this research mainly draws from the insights of the scientific articles by Toomey (2023) and by de Meyer et al. (2020). These authors have, respectively, done research on why facts don't change minds and on how we can transform the stories we tell about climate change.

Experience and engagement
Drawing from experience design and environmental psychology to understand how people perceive, emotionally respond to, and engage with spaces. In this theoretical field, the book Designing Experiences by Rossman and Duerden (2019) provided the most important insights in transferring from the psychological point of view into architectural design interventions. The book presents a comprehensive introduction to experience design, and it combines the fundamental theories and methods from multiple disciplines.

Architecture as a narrative medium
Investigating how architectural design can communicate meaning through atmosphere, spatial sequencing, symbolism, and narrative design principles. This part of the literature exploration mainly draws from the design approach Duncan and McCauley (2012) took for their design of the Brickworks Museum in Zehdenick (Germany), which they evaluate as a case study. Additionally, it also builds upon the book Narrative architecture by Coates (2012), which explores the potential for narrative as a way of interpreting buildings.

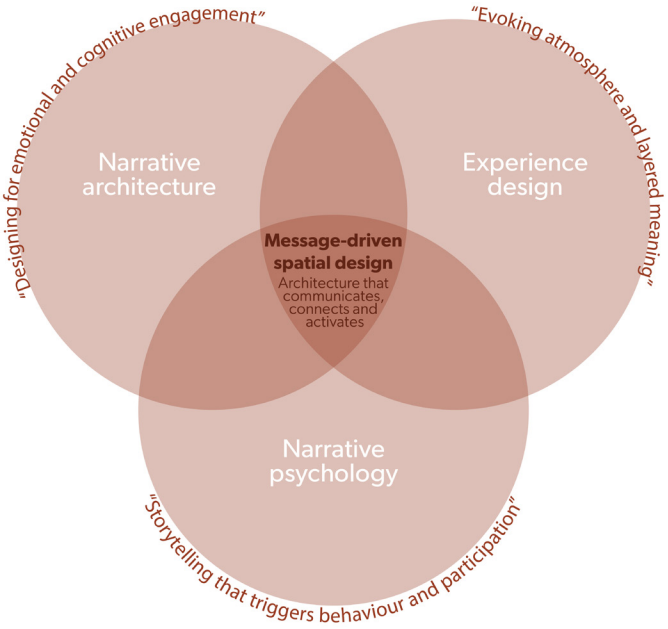


Figure 8 - Theoretical framework (By author, 2025)

Figure 9 - Es Devlin's Memory Palace (Roux, 2019)

Narrative psychology

To stimulate not just interpretation but also action, this research incorporates insights from narrative psychology, which explores how stories influence perception, memory, and ultimately, behaviour. Human decision-making often relies on heuristics, which are mental shortcuts based on experience and emotion rather than logic (Toomey, 2023). Therefore, understanding how individuals perceive space and assign meaning to it is crucial.

Perception is layered and requires multiple viewpoints, both literally and figuratively (Aerts & Mathijs, 1999). Offering physical movement and cognitive variation, such as engaging discussions or diverse interpretations, strengthens the narrative impact. This is because people are more likely to justify their current behaviour unless they're challenged from a perspective they can relate to. Here, moral reframing becomes useful: showing the same message through different value lenses helps individuals reach their tipping point, or in other words, the moment where awareness becomes intention (Bregman, 2024). Action-based storytelling has been shown to be particularly effective in motivating change, as it provides participants with an entry point to meaningful engagement. Highlighting the value and potential impact of small actions helps lower the psychological threshold for participation. This also shows the relevance of studying change moments in history, which are examples of when individuals or societies shifted their thinking or behaviour (de Meyer et al., 2020).

An example from the project analysis that uses this strategy very well is the work Memory Palace by Es Devlin. The large-scale work immerses visitors within a chronological landscape mapping pivotal shifts in human perspective over 75 millennia. From the southern African caves in which humans made their first drawings, to the Swiss study where the World Wide Web was conceived, to the steps of the Swedish parliament in Stockholm, where Greta Thunberg began her School Strike for Climate. The locations and moments represent a personal and subjective cartography and have been selected by Devlin and her studio team to invoke our collective memories and to provoke dialogue and debate. Memory Palace is named after the classical mnemonic technique originating in ancient Greece that relies on the visualisation of physical locations to be able to activate memories and recall information. Devlin identifies a series of rooms in which significant shifts in human thinking took place and plots them within identifiable fragments of cities and buildings to create a personal atlas of the evolution of thought. "Arguably the most

profound and urgent shift in thinking is located at the far edge of the chronological atlas, in the present: it's the shift we are now beginning to undertake as we re-evaluate all of our practices in the light of the climate crisis," said Devlin. With Memory Palace, Devlin hopes to make the viewer feel a sense of possibility that our species can achieve another momentous collective shift of perspective. (Hitti, 2019)

To further enhance motivation, narrative psychology literature shows that agency can be used as a narrative structure (de Meyer et al., 2020). Stories should begin from where people currently stand, be tailored to specific place-based contexts, and use iterative goal setting: one small action at a time. Behavioural modelling, entertainment education, and showcasing positive deviance (those who succeed against the odds) are helpful strategies. Finally, stories should be designed with the flow of information in mind. Knowing how ideas circulate in networks, socially, culturally, and digitally, is essential if a message is to reach, spread, and take hold. Change isn't only about individuals, it's also about redundancy: if enough people act, others will follow. (Toomey, 2023)

Experience design

Because this research aims to reach a broad audience, not just those with architectural literacy, it is necessary to move beyond the disciplinary lens of architecture and explore how people experience and internalise messages. This is where experience design becomes relevant. This chapter mainly uses the work of Rossman and Duerden from the book Designing Experiences (2019). They state that to define what an experience is, it is important to note that an experience demands conscious attention, engagement, and action or in one word, ***participation*** (interaction). Experiences are multi-phased: each experience consists of an anticipation phase, a ***participation*** phase, and a reflection phase. Within each phase, multiple sequential interactions occur between the participant and the elements of the designed experience. The definition of experience design is the process of intentionally orchestrating experience elements to provide opportunities for participants to co-create and sustain interactions that lead to results desired by the participant as well as the designer. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws from a variety of disciplines.

Our brains crave stimulation; they want us to interact with our environment so that we can learn, grow, and adapt.

However, there is a sweet spot between understimulation and overstimulation. Having too many choices actually impairs our decision-making ability. To find this balance, it helps to know the audience of the experience (knowledge, skill level, attitude). But what is it about certain experiences that makes them so captivating? There has to be a certain flow in an experience, which can occur if the experience exhibits the following qualities:

- Clear goals (you know what you're trying to accomplish)
- Immediate feedback (in relation to the stated goal)
- Balance between the challenge and your level of skill
- Merging of ***action*** and awareness (you're focused and engaged)
- Loss of self-consciousness (losing awareness of other things happening around you)
- Time becomes distorted (losing track of time)
- Your ***participation*** is intrinsically motivated

Furthermore, Rossman and Duerden (2019) state that there's a need for purpose in addition to pleasure in experiences. Who we engage with in experiences also matters; social bonding is a key facilitator of positive psychological functioning. Shared experiences, especially those that allow people to struggle together while working to obtain a meaningful goal, build powerful and deep connections between individuals.

A good example of how this can be incorporated into design is the design Tellart created for the Dutch Pavilion at the World Expo in Osaka 2025, designed by RAU architects. As the lead experience designer, Tellart aims to inspire visitors through interactive technology and creative storytelling, showcasing how this harmonious relationship can fuel the energy transition. Upon entry, visitors are each handed a glowing sphere, or Energy Orb, which allows them to engage with the pavilion's interactive displays. Visitors are invited to interact with a dynamic mural that illuminates through interaction with their personal orb. This highlights how, in the Netherlands, people collaborate with water, integrating it into their daily life (Tellart, 2025). The theme of the pavilion is 'Common Ground', and this is literally incorporated into the design as visitors have to gather 5 people and connect their individual globes before being able to enter the dome. Towards the end of the experience, visitors will be invited to create a generative artwork in a physical and tangible way by stepping into a shared space (Al Koshta, 2025). Research by Rossman and Duerden (2019) shows that experiences are more fulfilling when they produce results of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment. To experience

Figure 10 - Charching Station at the Expo 2025 Netherlands Pavilion (Tellart, 2025)

healthy psychological functioning, individuals need to experience adequate levels of ***autonomy***, competence and relatedness. This will make them feel a greater sense of intrinsic motivation.

Designing Experiences (2019) shows that during experiences, individuals are consciously aware of many bits of incoming information being accessed through their five ***senses***: taste, smell, sound, sight, and touch. They are aware of these bits of information for a brief time and then select a few to use in their short-term memory for information processing. Through reflection and interpretation, they further select information to forget or to commit to their long-term memory. Long-term memory is also known as declarative memory, which comprises facts and events that can be consciously recalled. There are two types of declarative memory: semantic, which is learned, and episodic, which is drawn from personal experience.

As stated by Rossman and Duerden (2019), the experience designer's goal should be to create experiences that are memorable. Memorable experiences are recorded in episodic memory. Their physical location (the architecture) and the ***movement*** between sequential-separate engagements (sequence of micro experiences within the spaces) that constitute the experiences matter and become a part of a person's memory of them. Experiences likely to be memorable are those that occur in unique spaces and have special, memorable engagements as part of their design that will facilitate future recall. They should trigger ***curiosity*** within the viewer. Staging experiences is not about entertaining customers; it's about engaging them. End users need to be engaged as actors in the unfolding narrative of the experience rather than simply remaining observers of it; they must become participants. To achieve this, there should be intentional planning of the experience (Rossman and Duerden, 2019). By looking back at the example of the Dutch Pavilion (Tellart, 2025), we can conclude that a lot of these theoretical insights are incorporated into their design. The installations guide them through the shared history of Japan and the Netherlands, as well as the Dutch battle against water. The highlight of the visit is the central glowing sphere, where guests can experience a 360-degree dome film. Finally, visitors are invited to share their own dreams and ideas for the future through an interactive art piece.

Figure 11 - A New Dawn 360 Dome (Zhu Yumeng, n.d.)

According to Rossman and Duerden (2019), there are 5 experience types, and each experience type can progress into the next one.

1. *Prosaic experiences*
   Every day routine. These experiences put us on autopilot and are easily forgotten.
   An example of a prosaic experience is grocery shopping. You're walking through the aisles with a shopping cart, picking up a carton of milk, some bread, and a bag of apples. You wait in line at the checkout, pay, and leave. Everything happens almost automatically, without much thought or emotional engagement.

2. *Mindful experiences*
   Something interrupts the routine and makes us focus, think, and reflect.
   Airlines try to turn their flight-safety briefings from a prosaic experience into a mindful one as they want you to pay more attention to them. Some use humour and others produce clever and humorous videos designed to catch people's attention in order to entertain and inform.

3. *Memorable experiences*
   Emotions enter. These are moments we remember later on, especially the peaks and the endings.
   Consider the following example: As a river guide, you have floated the same sections of the rivers you worked on numerous times. Because of the repetition involved, you do not remember the specific details of each trip, but you can recall experiences on the river associated with emotions: the thrill of running a particularly technical section for the first time, fear when a boat flipped or someone fell out during a rapid. Experiences on the river that didn't produce emotions have faded into the background.

4. *Meaningful experiences*
   Experiences that help us grow, learn, or understand ourselves or the world better. ***Co-creation*** and reflection are key.
   An excellent example of a meaningful experience can be found in a visit to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind (2001), also part of the project analysis of this research. When you step into the Jewish Museum, you quickly realise this is not a typical

museum visit. The architecture itself unsettles you; the sharp angles, empty voids, and stark concrete walls seem to speak even before you read a single word. You walk through narrow corridors that tilt unexpectedly. Some spaces are disorienting, even claustrophobic. You notice the silence. As you move through the voids, empty vertical shafts that cut through the building, you begin to feel absence as something physical. Then you enter the Holocaust Tower. A tall, unheated, unlit concrete silo. The heavy door closes behind you. Inside, it's dark, cold, and nearly silent. A small sliver of light shines far above you, but it doesn't offer comfort. You don't read about history here, you feel it. You reflect on absence, on fear, on what it means for people and culture to be erased. Throughout your visit, you aren't just learning facts, you're participating. The building doesn't just house history; it is part of how you understand that history. You begin to question how space can carry memory, how silence can speak, and how design can make you feel rather than just know.

Figure 12 - Jewish Museum, Berlin: the Holocaust Tower (Halbe, 2001)

5. *Transformational experiences*
   The rare moments that lead to personal change. They often include all the above, plus a shift in belief or behaviour.
   An example of such an experience could be reading a book that shifts your worldview. Imagine you read a book that challenges everything you thought you knew, for example, about history, identity, or justice. It's uncomfortable at first, but you can't stop thinking about it. It changes how you talk, vote, work, and listen. You begin to question and act differently. The question of this research project is the question whether it is possible to create a transformational experience through an architectural design, which eventually also is the goal of this graduation project.

A good story evokes emotion, teaches us about ourselves, and helps us see the world in new ways. Just like good stories, people want experiences with beginnings, middles and endings. The best experiences offer participants a chance to play a participatory role in an unfolding story. Stories help us make sense of the world and our place in it. It can be beneficial for good experience design to ask yourself the question, 'What stories do I want visitors to tell about the experience?' Thinking of the participants as characters within the stories can be a

powerful change in thinking as an experience designer (Rossman & Duerden, 2019). The literary exploration pushes us to think about whether the participants can be the heroes in the story we create with architectural design.

Narrative architecture

Narrative architecture has been the way many architects have tried to search for deeper meaning within their architecture. According to Nigel Coates (2012), "If you want that bit extra in a digital age where every form can be achieved, and every world simulated, narrative provides architects with an additional tool drawn from the rich and wonderful world of human nature." Architecture carries meaning through the arrangement of spaces, material choices, social relationships, and cultural processes. Space can be experienced on both a tactile and a visceral level. The tactile level relates to the conceptual and physical structure; this is how a visitor moves through space and how that movement is guided or invited. The visceral level, on the other hand, is about perception and emotion: the experience of atmosphere, rhythm, light, and scale. Both levels rely on motion, making memory and imagination inherently linked to spatial experience. (Duncan & McCauley, 2012)

Figure 13 - Tadao Ando's Water Temple (Saha, 2012)

This can be experienced in the Water Temple designed by Tadao Ando. It is a compelling example because it creates a space that invites contemplation and discovery, aligning closely with the theory of narrative architecture. The design uses water, light, and carefully orchestrated movement to guide visitors through an experiential journey (Architectuul, 2015). The tactile elements, such as the descent down a staircase beneath a reflecting pool, combined with the visceral experience of silence, shadow, and materiality, activate memory and imagination. This facilitates a deeper emotional connection with the space, embodying the core idea that architecture can be a medium for experiencing and engaging with narrative.

To engage the architecture of memory, designers can create space for viewing, wandering, and discovery. Stimulating the senses, through movement, layering, materiality, and visual cues, enhances emotional connection, triggers curiosity, and activates the imagination. This sensory engagement reveals the power of values, emotions, and embodied experience in shaping perception. When architecture carries narrative elements that support this emotional journey, it can help enable narrative transportation, a state in which people are fully immersed and more receptive to new ideas or behaviours. (Duncan & McCauley, 2012)

An example of a building from the project analysis that complies with this part of the theory is the Blur Building designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (2002). This project engages the architecture of memory by creating space for viewing, wandering, and discovery. The structure consists of a suspended platform surrounded by a continuous cloud of mist, dissolving the traditional boundaries of form and visibility. As visitors move through the fog, their senses are activated through shifts in temperature, humidity, sound, and spatial orientation. This sensory layering invites exploration and increases the awareness of one's surroundings. Rather than offering a fixed narrative, the Blur Building presents an open-ended experience in which perception is constantly negotiated. It uses architecture as a special effects machine that delights and disturbs the senses. It challenges the assumptions about conventions of space and showcases our visual dependence. (Diller, 2008)

Figure 14 - Blur Building (Diller Scofidio + Renfro, 2002)

Conclusion

When considering the literature exploration, there are a couple of qualities to note that emerge from several parts of the theory, as they all support impactful and action-oriented communication. These qualities were specifically chosen as, next to being theoretical, they can also function as a physical design quality. They will serve as a theoretical foundation for analysing the projects and developing design tools.

The first quality is related to ***movement***, which came forward in all three of the literary fields that were explored. In the narrative architecture section, we've learned that both the tactile and the visceral levels are highly dependent on motion. Physical location and movement between sequential-separate engagements matter and become part of someone's memory, as researched in Designing Experiences by Rossman & Duerden (2019). In the narrative psychology part, we've also read that perception is layered and requires multiple viewpoints, both literally and figuratively. Offering physical movement has been shown to strengthen the narrative impact.

The experience design literature exploration shows us that during experiences, individuals are consciously aware of many bits of incoming information being accessed through the ***five senses***. In narrative architecture, we've learned that stimulating the senses, through movement, layering, materiality, and visual cues, enhances emotional connection, triggers ***curiosity***, and activates the imagination. As we also read in the experience design literature, it is important to trigger curiosity because memorable

experiences are those that occur in unique spaces and have special memorable engagements.

Finally, it's important for the design of an impactful and action-oriented space to be ***interactive*** for its visitors. In experience design, we've learnt that experiences are multi-phased (Rossman & Duerden, 2019); they consist of an anticipation phase, a participation phase, and a reflection phase. Within each phase, multiple sequential interactions occur between the participant and the elements of the designed experience, and to create meaningful experiences, co-creation and reflection are key. In narrative psychology, we read that action-based storytelling is particularly effective in motivating change. It is important to incorporate an interactive aspect as it provides participants with an entry point to meaningful engagement.

Project analysis.

The project analysis aims to uncover concrete design tools that successfully communicate societal messages and trigger individual action by examining how various disciplines spatially convey meaning. These insights will support the formulation of a design toolbox and guide the development of my graduation project.

To translate the theoretical findings into applicable design tools, a project analysis was conducted across a selection of 24 projects. These include both architectural and non-architectural works such as art installations, exhibition designs, and immersive experiences. The inclusion of other disciplines is intentional to avoid architectural tunnel vision and to expand the communicative possibilities considered within spatial design. While most architectural projects rely on formal gestures or symbolism to communicate a message, installations from other disciplines show the power of sensory immersion and interactive storytelling. This reveals an opportunity within architecture to embrace a more experiential type of communication. Each selected project was chosen for its clear messaging, emotional impact, and diversity in medium, scale, and approach.

Project selection
The selected projects range from historical activist movements, such as architectural propaganda, to contemporary, tech-based installations. This ensures a variety of insights, from low-tech spatial narratives to interactive, sensor-based experiences. In this selection diversity of senses, forms, audiences, and the used medium was also considered essential. The selection includes works that triggered curiosity, encouraged dialogue, or provoked emotional responses during personal encounters or online research, forming a spectrum of inspirational references that resonate with the aims of this research.

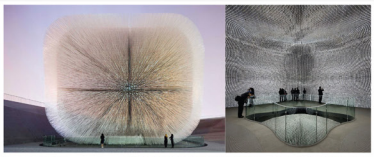
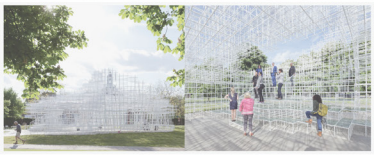
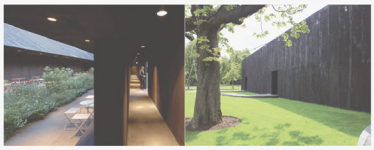
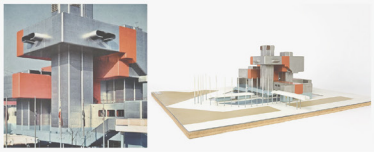
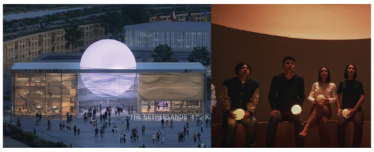
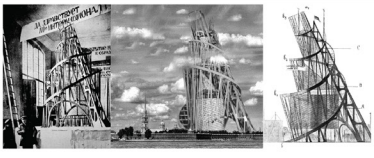
			Message
1.		**Blur Building** Diller + Scofido 2002	Architecture as a special effects machine that delights and disturbs the senses. Challenging the assumptions about conventions of space, showcasing our visual dependence.
2.		**Seed Cathedral Pavilion** Heatherwick Studio 2010	The interconnectedness of nature and urban life, and the importance of preserving biodiversity.
3.		**Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Sou Fujimoto 2013	Weaving architecture with the greenery of the surrounding plant life.
4.		**Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Bjarke Ingels 2016	Embodying multiple aspects that are often perceived as opposites.
5.		**Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Peter Zumthor 2011	Placing nature on a pedestool, framing the garden and the sky, the human can only be an observer.
6.		**Kolumba Museum** Peter Zumthor 2007	Respect the sights history and preserve its essence. Believing in the inner values of art, its ability to make us think and feel.
7.		**Bruder Klaus Kapelle** Peter Zumthor 2007	A building that is being itself, being a building, not representing anything, just being.
8.		**Water Temple** Tadao Ando 1991	A spiritual transition, symbolically passing through water to reach the sacred space, symbolism in Buddhism.
9.		**Dutch Water Pavilion** Weeber & Bakema 1970	Showcasing how the Netherlands lives with the water, lying below sea level.
10.		**A New Dawn Pavilion** RAU architects & Tellart 2025	"Common Ground," emphasizing international collaboration and shared solutions to global challenges.
11.		**The Jewish Museum** Daniel Libeskind 1999	To engage openly and actively with Jewish history and contemporary Jewish life in Germany.
12.		**Tatlin's Tower** Vladimir Tatlin 1920	Inspire all people towards a contemplative, meaningful and thoroughly modern future.

Figure 15 - Architectural projects list (By author, 2025)

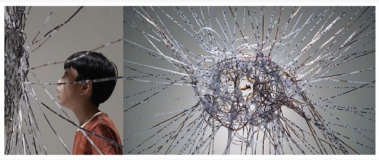
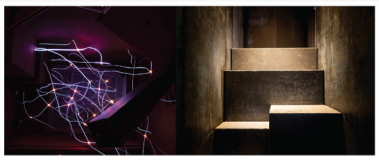
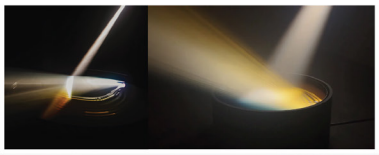
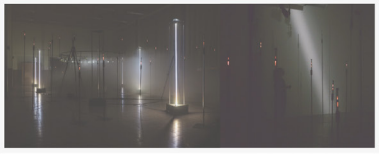
			Message
1.		**Materialism (Beetle)** Studio Drift 2018	We are not in dialogue with our environment and we have come to lose touch with raw materials.
2.		**Pollutive Ends** Thijs Biersteker 2019	Showcasing the impact of a single cigarette butt on our environment and waters.
3.		**Memory Palace** Es Devlin 2019	The power of memory and the potential for humans to shift their perspective and achieve collective change.
4.		**Waterlicht** Studio Roosegaarde 2018	Reminding us of the importance of water innovation and the impact of climate change on the rising sea levels.
5.		**Water Wise** Studio Mast 2024	Creating awareness around personal water consumption and learning how to save water.
6.		**Cathédrale d'Images** Carrières des Lumières 1976 - present	Creating a 'total visual experience', a journey through a cathedral of images.
7.		**Brickworks Museum** Duncan McCauley 2009	Tthe story of brick making in Zehdenick from a technical and cultural perspective. Focusing on the impact of the Kiln for the local village.
8.		**Doloris Anoma Maze** Karmanoia 2019	Let curiosity be your guide, stimulating all the senses.
9.		**Ice Watch** Olafur Eliasson 2014	Raising awareness of climate change.
10.		**Sunbeam, captured** Boris Acket 2024	The ephemeral beauty of everyday life. Striving to freeze time.
11.		**LFS2** Mariska de Groot & Dieter Vandoren 2018	How old and new technologies merge into a dynamic sensory landscape. Light, sound and space blur the boundaries between matter and media.
12.		**Mind Bridges** Jeroen Alexander Meijer 2024	The value of undivided attention between human beings.

Figure 16 - Additional projects list (By author, 2025)

The 5 qualities-analysis

All projects will be analysed on the four different qualities that have resulted as key qualities for communicating from the theoretical exploration: movement, curiosity, interaction and engaging the senses. For each quality identified in a project, analytical diagrams or drawings will be created to visually express how the project succeeds in conveying that element. For example, the quality of ***movement***, as observed in the Memory Palace sculpture by Es Devlin, emphasises the importance of sequential-spatial progression discussed in both Rossman & Duerden's (2019) experience design framework and Duncan & McCauley's (2012) analysis of narrative space. Here, movement not only structures the physical journey but facilitates the cognitive shifts needed for message internalisation.

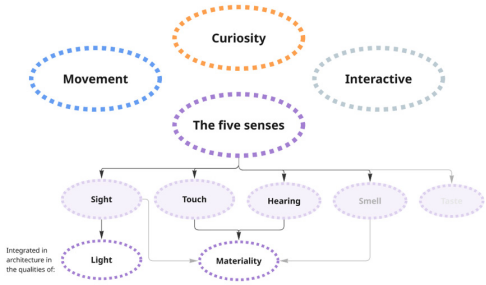


Figure 17 - The five qualities scheme (By author, 2025)

The last quality, engaging ***the senses***, was split up into ***materiality*** and ***light*** to allow a more specific architectural reading. Engaging the senses is a key element across all three theoretical fields, and when looked at from an architectural point of view, it is best represented in the use of materiality and light. As can be seen in the diagram, the sense of sight is integrated in architecture in the quality of light. For materiality, touch and hearing are the primary senses; however, light and smell are also aspects that can impact material quality.

Figure 18 - Project analysis drawings (By author, 2025)

To map how these qualities are spatially manifested, each project was analysed on whether it contained one of the five qualities and, if so, how it implemented them. This was made visible with analytical drawings, which are gathered in the separate *Project Analysis booklet* as well as in a visual and comparative toolbox that creates an overview of all the design tools used. The toolbox not only maps the presence of qualities but also reveals design patterns and strategies across the cases.

From analysing to designing.

In the final phase, which is the start of the design phase, the insights from both theory and case study analysis will be translated into a set of prioritised design tools. This is the part where the research meets the design. The analytical diagrams will be synthesised into a comparative toolbox, offering concrete design tools and techniques. The selection of tools will eventually be substantiated by cross-referencing them with the theory from the literary exploration.

Practical toolbox
We will first discuss the practical toolbox of the architectural projects. All projects have been analysed on the five qualities; if they didn't have one of the qualities, the box was left empty. As can be seen in the toolbox, there are almost no architectural projects with ***interactive*** aspects, only the Expo 2025 Netherlands Pavilion 'A New Dawn' by RAU architects, who cooperated with the experience design company Tellart for this project (Tellart, 2025).

Several projects spark ***curiosity*** within the visitor by incorporating unusual materials into their façades, like the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion of Peter Zumthor (Serpentine Galleries, 2011), who designed the black box, and the complex 3D grid by Sou Fujimoto (Serpentine Galleries, 2013). Some projects feature only the illusion of a façade, like the Blur Building (Diller Scofidio + Renfro, 2002), which uses water as its primary building material, transforming atmosphere into architecture. Within the architectural projects, the quality of ***light*** often refers to the integration of daylight into the building, whereas the quality of ***materiality*** varies significantly from one project to another. Most buildings incorporate the aspect of ***movement*** in their design by looking at how the visitor will move through the building. However, some also suggest a sense of movement with their design. For example, the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by Bjarke Ingels (BIG, 2016) is designed as a structure that looks like it's unzipping from top to bottom, whereas Tatlin's Tower spirals to the top (Architectuul, 2016).

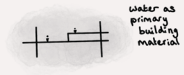
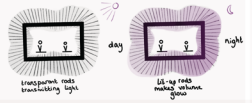
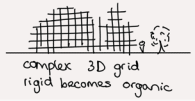
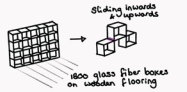
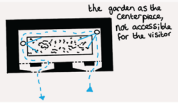
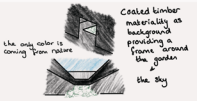
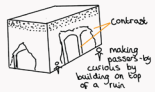
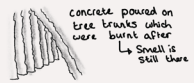
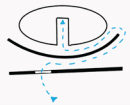
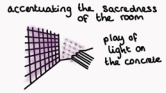
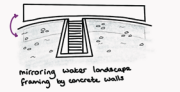
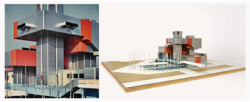
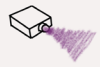
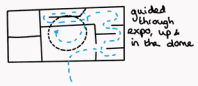
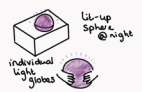
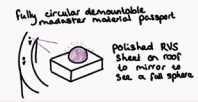
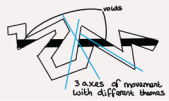
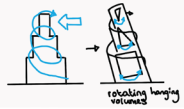
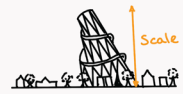
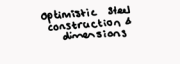
		Message	Movement	Curiosity	Interactive	Light	Materiality
1.	 **Blur Building** Diller + Scofido 2002	Architecture as a special effects machine that delights and disturbs the senses. Challenging the assumptions about conventions of space, showcasing our visual dependence.					
2.	 **Seed Cathedral Pavilion** Heatherwick Studio 2010	The interconnectedness of nature and urban life, and the importance of preserving biodiversity.					
3.	 **Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Sou Fujimoto 2013	Weaving architecture with the greenery of the surrounding plant life.					
4.	 **Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Bjarke Ingels 2016	Embodying multiple aspects that are often perceived as opposites.					
5.	 **Serpentine Gallery Pavilion** Peter Zumthor 2011	Placing nature on a pedestool, framing the garden and the sky, the human can only be an observer.					
6.	 **Kolumba Museum** Peter Zumthor 2007	Respect the sights history and preserve its essence. Believing in the inner values of art, its ability to make us think and feel.					
7.	 **Bruder Klaus Kapelle** Peter Zumthor 2007	A building that is being itself, being a building, not representing anything, just being.					
8.	 **Water Temple** Tadao Ando 1991	A spiritual transition, symbolically passing through water to reach the sacred space, symbolism in Buddhism.					
9.	 **Dutch Water Pavilion** Weeber & Bakema 1970	Showcasing how the Netherlands lives with the water, lying below sea level.					
10.	 **A New Dawn Pavilion** RAU architects & Tellart 2025	"Common Ground," emphasizing international collaboration and shared solutions to global challenges.					
11.	 **The Jewish Museum** Daniel Libeskind 1999	To engage openly and actively with Jewish history and contemporary Jewish life in Germany.					
12.	 **Tatlin's Tower** Vladimir Tatlin 1920	Inspire all people towards a contemplative, meaningful and thoroughly modern future.					

Figure 19 - Architectural Practical Toolbox (By author, 2025)

Compared to the architectural projects, the toolbox resulting from the analysis of the additional projects has a lot more ***interactive*** features. The projects provide space for own interpretation, and spaces for reflection and discussion. They also include interactive elements that the visitor can take along on their journey, which gives them a sense of autonomy as it lets them join in and decide for themselves what path to follow. This complements the literature findings as the theory has already learnt us that this is a great way to communicate a message and incorporate a sense of agency.

The quality of ***light*** is often incorporated into the design by using light projections. The quality of ***materiality*** varies a lot from one project to another, similar to the Architectural Practical Toolbox. ***Movement*** is represented in moving around the space or the object(s), but a sense of movement can also be created by moving light projections. The quality of ***curiosity*** is achieved by playing into cognitive links; for example, it immediately becomes clear that Waterlicht by Studio Roosegaarde (2018) imitates waves of water. Ice Watch by Olafur Eliasson (2014) immediately sparks curiosity as they are natural elements placed out of its context in a city environment. They directly communicate their message because, as we read in the literature exploration, they trigger affect, which is a crucial tool in effective decision-making. It combines personal experience, seeing the ice melt right in front of you, with embodied knowledge, knowing this is what's happening in the Arctic and that we're the ones causing it.

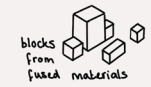
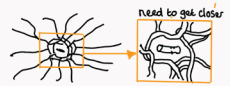
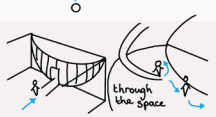
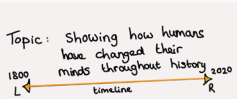
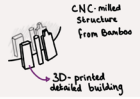
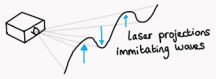
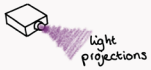
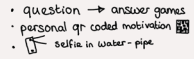
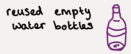
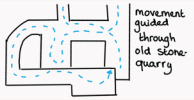
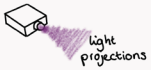
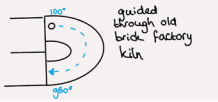
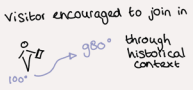
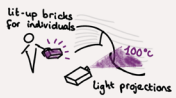
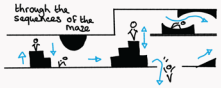
		Message	Movement	Curiosity	Interactive	Light	Materiality
1.	 Materialism (Beetle) Studio Drift 2018	We are not in dialogue with our environment and we have come to lose touch with raw materials.					
2.	 Pollutive Ends Thijs Biersteker 2019	Showcasing the impact of a single cigarette butt on our environment and waters.					
3.	 Memory Palace Es Devlin 2019	The power of memory and the potential for humans to shift their perspective and achieve collective change.					
4.	 Waterlicht Studio Roosegaarde 2018	Reminding us of the importance of water innovation and the impact of climate change on the rising sea levels.					
5.	 Water Wise Studio Mast 2024	Creating awareness around personal water consumption and learning how to save water.					
6.	 Cathédrale d'Images Carrières des Lumières 1976 - present	Creating a 'total visual experience', a journey through a cathedral of images.					
7.	 Brickworks Museum Duncan McCauley 2009	Tthe story of brick making in Zehdenick from a technical and cultural perspective. Focusing on the impact of the Kiln for the local village.					
8.	 Doloris Anoma Maze Karmanoia 2019	Let curiosity be your guide, stimulating all the senses.					
9.	 Ice Watch Olafur Eliasson 2014	Raising awareness of climate change.					
10.	 Sunbeam, Captured Boris Acket 2024	The ephemeral beauty of everyday life. Striving to freeze time.					
11.	 LFS2 Mariska de Groot & Dieter Vandoren 2018	How old and new technologies merge into a dynamic sensory landscape. Light, sound and space blur the boundaries between matter and media.					
12.	 Mind Bridges Jeroen Alexander Meijer 2024	The value of undivided attention between human beings.					

Figure 20 - Additional Practical Toolbox (By author, 2025)

Results
The results of the practical toolboxes are gathered per quality (as can be seen in the appendix) and summarised in a mind map-like scheme (see below). As made visible in the scheme with the dotted lines, quite some design tools are interlinked within the different qualities, which makes them more relevant to take into consideration as they occur more often. By taking this into account, these qualities can be bundled into three parts, which makes up a list of the most effective design tools identified through the project analysis:

- Different viewpoints
  - Space for dialogue
  - Moving around in the space
  - Reflection spaces
  - Room for own interpretation

- Visitors can make their own choices
  - Routing
  - Engaging in
  - Co-creation

- Use of projections
  - Sensors
  - Guiding the view
  - Framing with daylight
  - Mirroring
  - Optical illusions

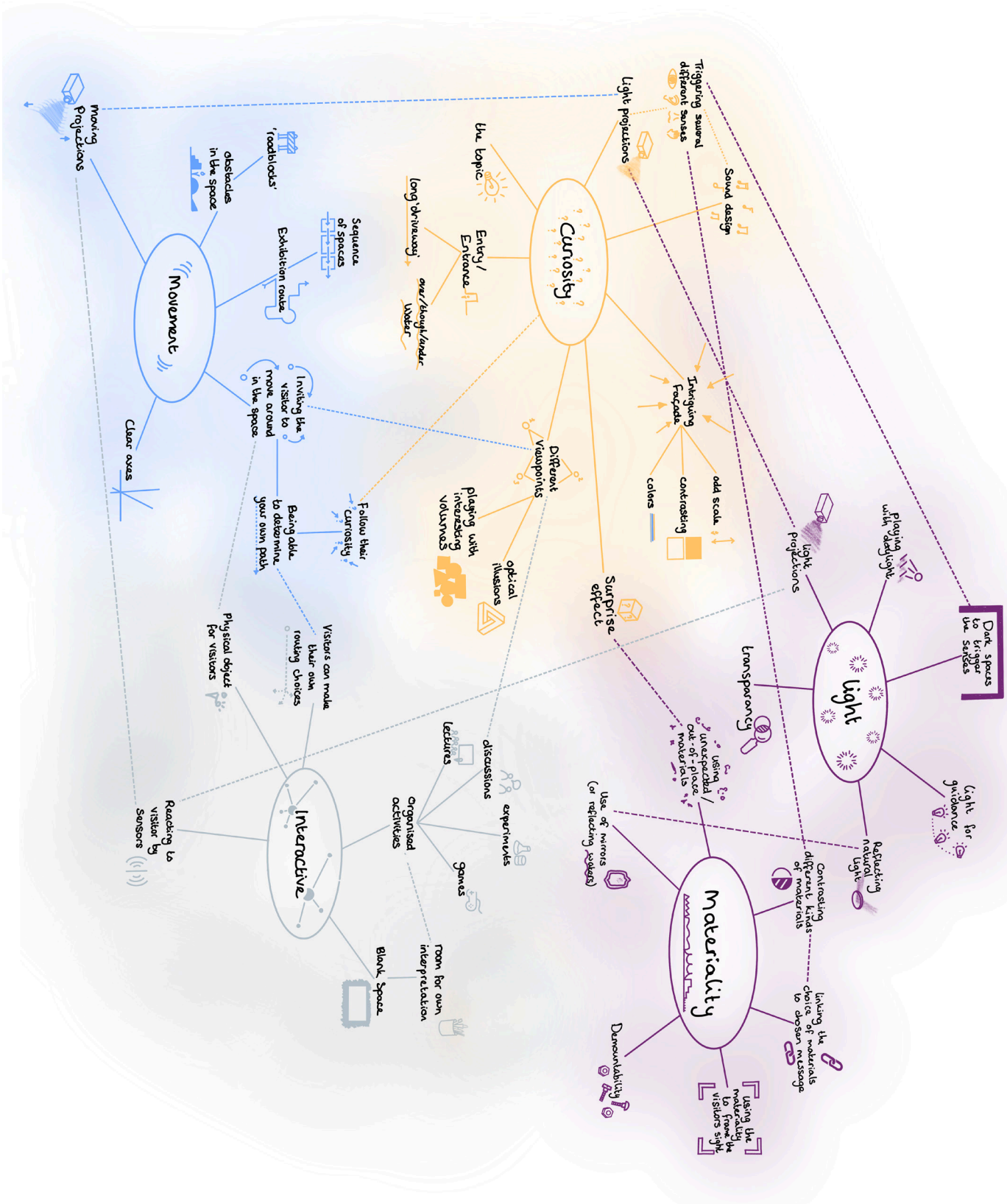


Figure 21 - Resulting design tools scheme (By author, 2025)

Prioritising
In this final step of the research phase, the most effective design tools found during the project analysis are prioritised by linking them back to the theoretical insights. The tools that occurred most frequently across the analysed projects have been grouped into the following five overarching categories of design tools. For each of these five, it was examined which theoretical fields support them. Tools that appeared more often in the analysis and that are also supported by the most theoretical fields are given a higher priority than the others. This ensures that the tools selected for implementation in the design phase are not only practically validated but also grounded in theoretical reasoning.

1. Design tool: *Different viewpoints & moving around in the space*
   Linked to: Narrative architecture, narrative psychology, experience design

All three theoretical perspectives emphasise the importance of movement. From the narrative architecture lens, spatial movement (both tactile and visceral) is essential to creating a journey through the space that triggers memory and imagination. In narrative psychology, offering various perspectives, both physical and cognitive, helps challenge people's preconceptions and encourages deeper reflection. From the experience design literature, sequencing and rhythm of space enhance immersion and memory retention. Movement allows people to construct their own story through space, increasing their engagement and sense of agency.

2. Design tool: *Space for dialogue & room for own interpretation*
   Linked to: Narrative psychology, experience design

Creating space for dialogue (with others or internally) encourages reflection, which is crucial for shifting attitudes and behaviour. In narrative psychology, moral reframing and diversity of interpretation are essential to help people reach their tipping point. In experience design, reflection phases enhance meaning and transform a memorable experience into a meaningful or even transformational one. Space for ambiguity and interpretation increases the chance that the message will resonate across different worldviews.

3. Design tool: *Visitors making their own choices & engaging in co-creation*
Linked to: Experience design, narrative psychology

Experience design literature stresses the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness for psychological fulfilment and motivation. Allowing visitors to make their own choices and participate actively turns them from passive observers into engaged co-creators. In narrative psychology, self-persuasion and agency are shown to be crucial for motivating individual action, especially when paired with iterative goal setting and relatable narratives.

4. Design tool: *Guiding the view & framing with daylight*
Linked to: Narrative architecture, experience design

Framing and guiding vision are classic spatial techniques that support narrative structure in architecture. As noted in the narrative architecture literature, spatial sequencing and the use of light play a major role in setting the atmosphere and directing attention. In experience design, they contribute to focus, flow, and emotional impact, all of which are necessary to create lasting memories. These techniques help ensure that the message is not only seen but also felt.

5. Design tool: *Use of projections, sensors, mirroring, and optical illusions*
Linked to: Experience design

These interactive and sensory techniques are directly related to the engagement principles from experience design. They allow for micro-experiences that trigger curiosity, surprise, and personal relevance, helping to shift users out of "autopilot" into mindful, memorable experiences. Especially when combined with narrative and participatory framing, these tools help transform abstract messages into lived, embodied experiences.

Conclusion.

This research set out to answer the question: 'How can architecture communicate a societal message that inspires individual action among visitors?' Through a combination of theoretical exploration and project analysis, it has become evident that architecture, when designed with intention and interdisciplinary insight, can indeed become a medium for social activation.

The integration of narrative psychology, experience design, and narrative architecture has led to the identification of five design qualities (movement, curiosity, interaction, light, and materiality) that together form the foundation for effective communication through space. From these, a practical toolbox of design tools was constructed, of which the tools were prioritised by cross-referencing them to the literature. This resulted in a top five of powerful design tools: spatial movement and multi-perspectivity, space for interpretation and dialogue, co-creation through participatory design, framing the visitors' view, and the use of projections. These tools work because they connect emotionally, cognitively, and physically with visitors, helping them reflect, relate, and respond to the provided content.

The two projects that stood out most in the practical analysis was the A New Dawn Pavilion for Expo 2025 by RAU Architects and Tellart, and the Memory Palace by Es Devlin. Both projects implemented all five of the identified design qualities. Interestingly, these were also the projects that left the strongest personal impression on me; they were projects I had already explored in depth before this research, and they played a significant role in inspiring the direction of this graduation project. The messages of both projects come closest to what I intend to achieve with this project; they both address the urgent topic of climate change, and in their own distinct ways, they inspire people to take action on it. The Dutch Pavilion demonstrates how green energy alternatives can meet today's demands, while Memory Palace reminds us of our ability to shift perspective and behaviour by showcasing pivotal change moments from the past. These approaches resonate strongly with the theoretical insights gained in the literature exploration.

The outcome of this research is not only theoretical, but also operational: it provides a method that can be reused and adapted to different design projects tackling other urgent societal messages. The upcoming design phase of the graduation project will test these insights through a research-by-design process to further validate their impact.

Ultimately, this research proposes a shift in approach: from a story to explain the design, often used in the architectural profession, to a design to explain the story. The architectural design is not just a structure; it becomes a storyteller, a catalyst, and potentially, a quiet activist.

Discussion.

This research proposes architecture not merely as a backdrop to societal narratives but as an active, communicative medium with the capacity to influence perception and spark action. While the findings are promising and the methodology carefully constructed, several critical reflections must be addressed to contextualise the outcomes and acknowledge the boundaries of this approach.

1. Ethical considerations
A central tension within this work lies in balancing message clarity with visitor autonomy (Rossman & Duerden, 2019). The goal is to inspire individual action without imposing it. However, by designing spaces that deliberately evoke emotional responses and guide perception, there is a risk of manipulation, even if the intention is ethically grounded. The intention is not to manipulate the visitors into action, but to inspire and inform them in an accessible and transparent way. This raises a critical design question: How much narrative direction can be embedded in a space before it compromises open interpretation? This tension between activating and allowing remains an ethical dilemma and an important area for continued reflection. The design aims to respect the autonomy and interpretative freedom of each individual, acknowledging that messages may be received differently depending on personal background. The message chosen for the design part of the graduation project will be carefully considered in relation to the societal context, cultural sensitivities, and potential unintended consequences.

2. The role of the architect
One of the more implicit yet transformative contributions of this research lies in rethinking what it means to be an architect. As the British architects Alison and Peter Smithson put it in the 1950s, good design is "an ethic rather than an aesthetic" (Colomina & Wigley, 2016). This quote refers to the idea that Brutalism favours functionality over aesthetics. 'Ethics', as used by the Smithsons, goes into their belief that Brutalism was about the quality of the material and not about what material was used. In the design approach I will take in this graduation project, the 'ethics' will refer to the message the architecture conveys to its users. Rather than aesthetic choices, this storytelling purpose will be the driving factor in decision-making during the design process. Rather than focusing solely on form, function, or aesthetics, this approach positions the architect as a facilitator of dialogue, emotion, and civic engagement. However, this shift raises questions about professional recognition and integration . Can this expanded role be adopted within the traditional frameworks of architectural practice?

3. Evaluating impact
The proposed pilot study marks an important step toward validating the communicative strategies defined by the research. However, it must be acknowledged that, within the scope of a graduation project, measuring long-term behavioural change is not realistically feasible. While short-term feedback through observation or surveys can offer valuable initial insights, it cannot fully capture the depth or persistence of impact over time. This limitation is important to recognise.

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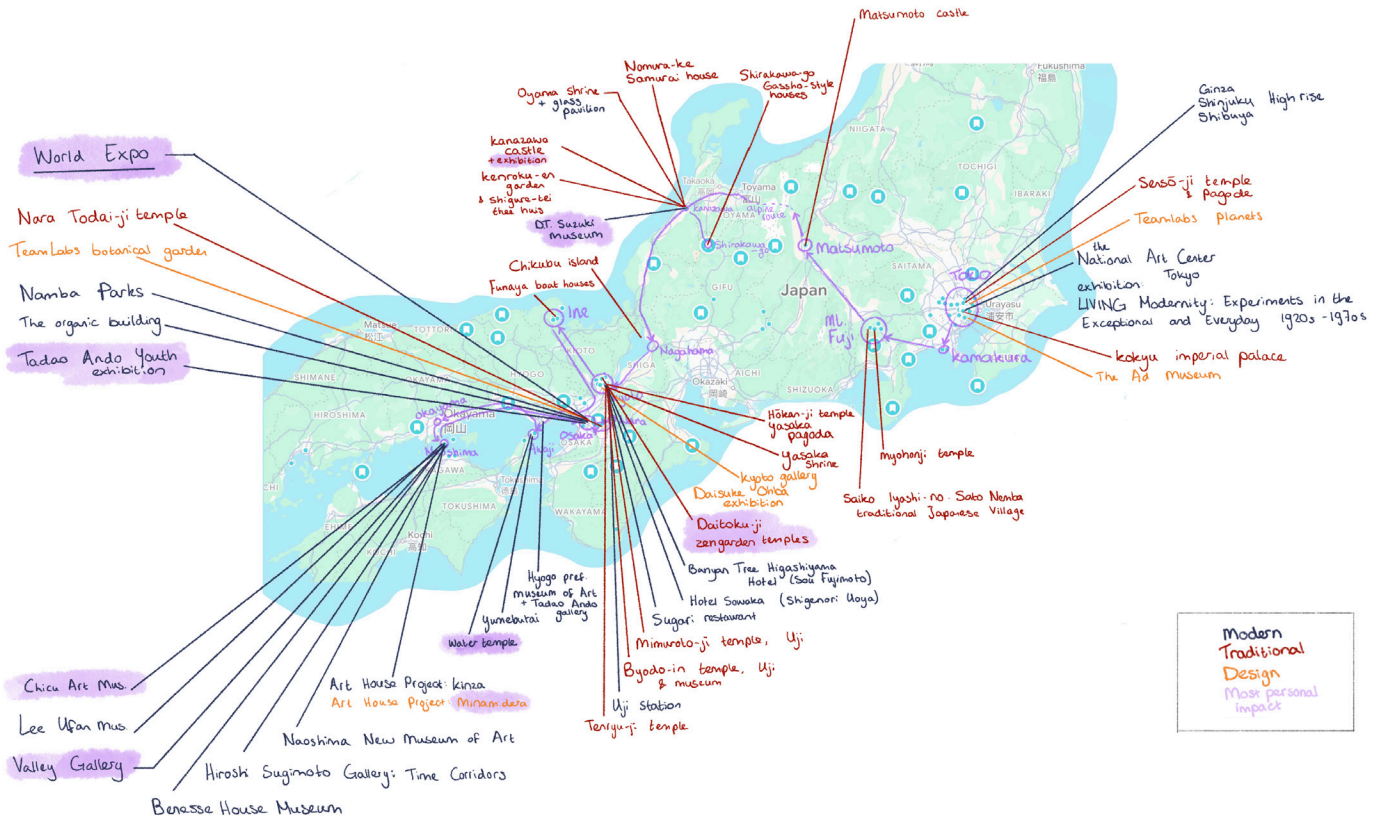
Appendix.

Reflection field study Japan.

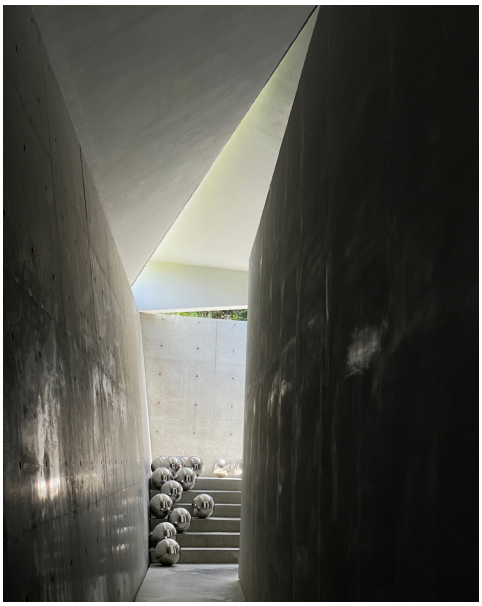
Travelling through Japan during my graduation project offered a great opportunity to confront my theoretical framework with real, embodied experience. While the literature review and project analysis allowed me to understand narrative architecture on a theoretical level, testing this knowledge on existing projects revealed its emotional, spatial, and behavioural impact in ways that texts cannot capture. The field study, next to being inspirational, functioned as a crucial validation moment; a test of whether the five design tools developed from research actually resonate with a visitor and contribute to activating personal meaning-making.

In the image below, my travels through Japan have been visualised, including all sights relevant to this field study. These sights are categorised in blue for modern architectural projects, red for traditional architectural projects, and orange for design projects. Nine of these projects have been highlighted in purple, as they impressed me the most. Across the nine selected projects, I experienced how architecture can guide perception, stimulate curiosity, construct narratives, and call for reflection. These visits strengthened certain theoretical assumptions, while also exposing new nuances and limitations.



Chicu Art Museum – Tadao Ando
At the Chichu Art Museum, the spatial experience is carefully created by playing with tension and gradually revealing space. The structure appears to be heavy, yet it hovers visually, walls shift and slope, and daylight filters through hidden openings, which guides movement intuitively without signage (design tool 4). The museum sits entirely below ground, enhancing disorientation and curiosity, which makes you constantly wonder what lies beyond the next corner. This confirms how movement and changing viewpoints can fuel narrative and exploration, as stated by design tool 1.

Confirming design tool 5, integrated artworks by James Turrell use perceptual illusion, showing how projections and optical tricks can make visitors question what they see and therefore attend more consciously. Quiet pockets for pause and conversation invite personal interpretation and dialogue (design tool 2), rather than instructing meaning directly. The project demonstrated how a space can communicate through atmosphere rather than language.



Valley Gallery – Tadao Ando
In the Valley Gallery, the roof folds like origami, opening up parts of the sky that turn daylight itself into an artwork. The reflective spheres multiply your own presence, making visitors both observer and subject, an example of how mirroring technologies can increase awareness, as stated by design tool 5. When first entering, little is visible, but at the end, a dramatic reveal appears only when you turn around. The experience lives in movement; meaning unfolds through changing sightlines and individual navigation rather than from a fixed perspective (design tool 1).

Art House Project: Minamidera – Tadao Ando & James Turell
Minamidera relies on darkness, patience, and sensory adaptation. Visitors sit still, staring at a faint rectangle of light until, because of their eyes adjusting to the darkness, an image appears, while in reality nothing moves. This is pure perceptual design: light, vision and expectation form the artwork. It confirmed how illusion, absence of stimulus and controlled light can create memorable experiences without explanation or narrative content. This whole experience revolves around an optical illusion, which is in line with design tool 5.

Water Temple – Tadao Ando
The Water Temple showed most clearly how architecture can shift one's mental state. A long approach along the concrete

walls frames the vision (design tool 4) and slows the body down into a ritual pace. While descending the steps, sound dissolves into footsteps, and the smell of incense meets you halfway. The stairway is a threshold that prepares the mind for reflection. Reaching eye level with the water surface is impressive; intimacy emerges from spatial choreography.

Curving walls hide the temple entrance until the very last moment, showing how suspense can be built architecturally, in line with design tool 1. The project demonstrated that guiding the gaze with form and daylight, combined with a narrative sequence of spaces, can move visitors emotionally.

Tadao Ando Youth Exhibition
Sketches drawn directly over models revealed how Ando communicates spatial intention visually, indicating how the designer chooses what the viewer should notice first (design tool 4). Immersive representations allowed visitors to sense material, proportion and atmosphere almost as if visiting the buildings themselves, reinforcing the importance of visual storytelling and clear framing of viewpoints.

Daitoku-ji Zen garden temple – Shigemori Mirei
Unexpectedly, the Zen garden was the most impactful experience. The space invites slowness, stillness, and contemplation; it does not require explanation to be understood. The designed route directs exactly what visitors see and when, yet the meaning is open and up to personal interpretation. As a visitor, you can walk alongside the garden, but never enter, emphasising that the visitor is a witness rather than an actor.

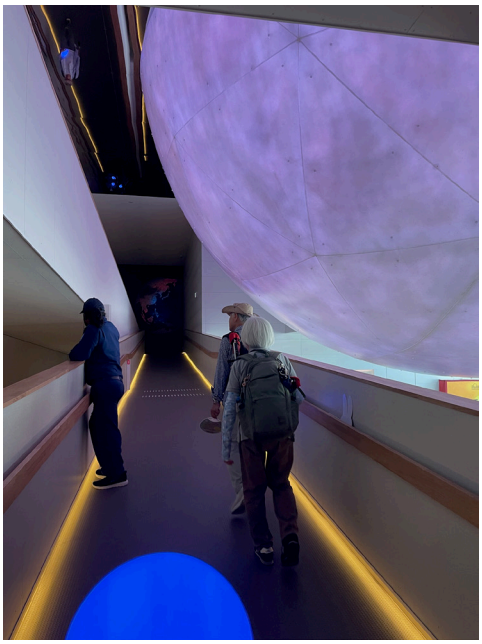
Benches offer time to sit, observe and reflect. Subtle changes in viewpoint reveal new compositions with every step. This project exemplified how dialogue, self-reflection and personal interpretation can be encouraged not through interaction, but through restraint and carefully framed orientation (design tools 1, 2, 3 and 4).

D.T. Suzuki museum – Yoshi Taniguchi
The exhibition of the museum unfolds through a thoughtfully designed sequence of spaces. You begin in a narrow corridor, drawn forward by a strip of light to the other side (design tool 4). You then move outside along a reflective water surface. Here, the ripple effect is visualised in the pond surrounding the building, acting as a metaphor for individual action with a big effect, which all aligns with design tool 5. Finally, you arrive in a perfectly

symmetrical contemplation space where you can sit down, look inward and reflect (design tool 2).

Kanazawa Castle exhibition
This exhibition celebrates timber craftsmanship as art. Visitors are not only shown joints; they are invited to build and test them, turning learning into tactile participation (design tool 3). The clarity of models and material demonstrations reflects a culture that values technical understanding over abstract narrative. It showed how allowing visitors to handle, experiment and interpret gives ownership of meaning. Having to enter barefoot intensifies spatial awareness, grounding the body in tradition and ritual.

World Expo Osaka
France pavilion – Coldefy & CRA
The French 'theatre of life' pavilion aimed to explore coexistence between natural and artificial habitats and initially seemed promising. However, the experience became overstimulating due to the amount of projections, rotating installations, sound and visitors. Although many of the design tools were present, reflective surfaces, projections, and multiple viewpoints, the amount weakened the message rather than strengthening it. It served as a valuable counterexample: spatial clarity and rhythm are necessary to prevent sensory overload. A reflection garden was included but functioned poorly due to crowds, showing that time and pacing are as important as design intention.



The Netherlands pavilion – RAU architects & Tellart
The story behind the experience design in the Netherlands pavilion sounded more promising than it turned out to be in reality. In accordance with design tool 5, many reflective surfaces and light projections were used, and the experience was interactive with the glowing, colour-changing spheres given to each visitor at the entrance. They also made good use of the remaining design tools by providing enough movement in the space and letting visitors engage in co-creation; however, in the end, it did not turn out to be a positive example from my field study. Dutch innovations for the future, which was the pavilion's main message and the purpose of the expo, were too small and tucked away in the end. The art installation with the water basin showing visual patterns created by water vibrations had the strongest narrative. Its message was clear: "Look, we can predict water behaviour, so we can learn to live with it."
The overall design of the pavilion was not a great showcase for designing with demountability in mind; the building looked somewhat improvised. On top of that, visitors rushed through the

space and didn't take the time to read the explanations. Large blocks of text are unappealing, whereas Miffy-style explanation booklets for children worked surprisingly well. Presenting information as audio that plays before moving to the next room might work better.

Future of Life Pavilion – Endo Jiro & Ishimoto Architects
In this pavilion, water leading role. A "water membrane" façade flows continuously, drawing visitors by curiosity. Mist gathers, refracting light and softening edges, a reminder that climate narratives can be emotional rather than explanatory. The pavilion represents evolution, showing how organic and technological futures might merge. The experience affirmed water as a versatile medium for atmosphere, symbolism and spatial rhythm.

Conclusion
Across all visits, one contrast stood out: quiet, slow architecture invites reflection; fast, spectacular architecture demands attention but rarely impresses emotionally. Ando's temples moved through silence, light, and material, while immersive domes relied on intensity and spectacle. One calls for introspection, the other consumption.

The field study left me with some general insights:
- Spaces must allow individual exploration, not enforce movement through crowds.
- Day/night behaviour matters; the atmosphere shifts dramatically with light.
- Façades act as invitations; they must spark curiosity from a distance.
- Water proved to be one of the strongest narrative materials, reflecting (sunlight), as a building material, its predictability, sound and magic.
- Overstimulation weakens memory, while calm sequencing deepens impact.
- Meaning grows through freedom; visitors should be allowed to discover, not only to observe.

This field study verified that the design strategies found earlier in my research work in practice when applied with sensitivity and balance. The insights gathered here directly informed my pavilion design that followed, especially in choices regarding framing, pacing, viewpoint choreography, and the use of water as both medium and message.

Reflection pilot-tests.

The research-by-design experiments formed a crucial addition to the research as it temporarily shifted the focus from theoretical knowledge to spatial design translation. While the literature indicated how movement, curiosity, materiality, light and interactivity contribute to narrative impact and emotional engagement, these qualities remained abstract until tested physically. The pilot studies, therefore, served two purposes: (1) testing which atmospheres evoke what kind of emotions, and (2) transforming conceptual understanding into spatial knowledge that could immediately inform the design. This reflection evaluates both pilot phases, first the individual mood experiments, then the spatial contrast mock-ups, and describes what they revealed about human response to space, emotion, pacing and narrative potential.

1. Pilot tests round 1 – Emotional atmosphere
The first pilot experiment involved presenting scaled mock-ups to the participants and asking open questions about what emotions and associations the spaces evoked. The aim of this round was not to test spatial navigation, but to understand how the atmosphere shapes receptivity. Especially to help understand how the transition space, as the start of the pavilion, could set visitors in the right mood to be receptive to new information and ideas. The hypothesis, informed by experience design theory, was that emotional tuning influences how open visitors are to receiving a message. If the architecture could create a mood shift, this might prime visitors for engagement instead of passive observation. Across responses, several patterns became clear. Calm, minimal, 'cold' spaces triggered introspection but also loneliness. Brightness alone did not necessarily cause comfort; visitors appreciated subtle texture, softness and being able to touch and feel materials. Spaces that engaged the body physically, with soft form, fabric movement and light gradients, were consistently described as more alive, memorable and emotionally resonant. Conversely, clinically white, sharply geometric models were often perceived as cold or distant, even when visually striking.
This confirmed a key insight: Architecture can guide emotional state, but only when sensory stimuli are balanced. A space that is too neutral becomes empty; a space that is too explicit loses room for its own interpretation and therefore curiosity. Users need something to perceive, touch, follow or wonder about. Engagement happens when perception meets slight friction. Looking back, this first round was quite small in scope but highly formative. It shifted the design approach from "spatial narrative as concept" toward spatial narrative as felt experience.

2. Pilot tests round 2 — Spatial contrasts & behavioural response
The second phase introduced six contrasting spatial configurations, ranging from labyrinth vs. void, narrow vs. wide, dark vs. light, angular vs. round and organic vs. geometric. Instead of asking what participants thought, this round aimed to observe how they behaved — did they slow down, speed up, explore, hesitate, reflect? By putting contrasting spaces right next to each other, it becomes easier for the test person to reflect on the effects of the different spaces. The goal was to test whether spatial cues could influence movement and mental state without instruction, supporting the ambition to inspire action rather than dictate it.

Key patterns across all six contrasts:
1. Ambiguity triggered exploration
The maze spaces encouraged movement, searching, playful behaviour and curiosity, even when disorienting. Visitors wanted to find out what comes next. This demonstrated that controlled confusion can activate agency, an important ingredient in action-driven storytelling.

2. Simplicity triggered reflection
The empty room was described as meditative, even spiritual, but also isolating. It became clear that such a space should not stand alone, but rather function as a pause between experiential peaks, similar to Rossman & Duerden's participation-reflection cycle.

3. Light is not decoration but direction
Vertical light invited upward focus, side-light guided horizontal movement. Moving light patterns created excitement, while diffused light calmed. This directly supported design tool 4.

4. Spatial progression matters more than shape alone
Spaces that open gradually draw people in (narrow ⇢ wide), while the opposite (wide ⇢ narrow) makes people feel afraid and avoidant. The design of the pavilion can use tightening for tension and opening for relief intentionally.

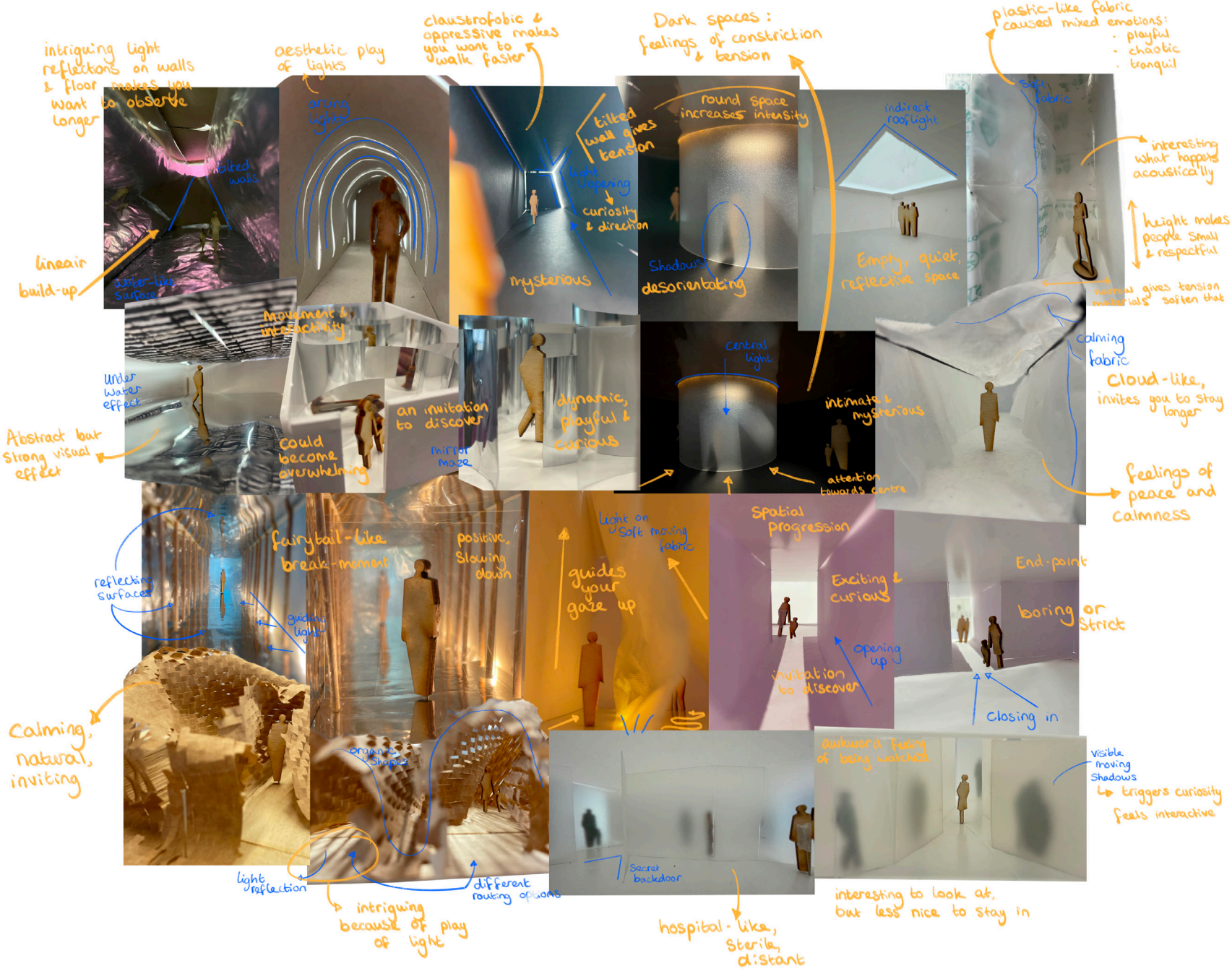
5. Material warmth determines emotional tone
Organic textures and earthy colours consistently created comfort, trust and presence, ideal for the introduction space. Sterile white geometry activated curiosity but limited the amount of time people were likely to remain there.

6. Roundness centralised attention, angled walls distributes
The round spatial mock-ups focused gaze and emotion inward, while slanted geometries encouraged movement and scanning. This finding directly shaped the decision to design a central core in the pavilion.

How the experiments changed the design
Before piloting, the narrative ambition of the pavilion existed primarily as a concept: a space that moves visitors emotionally toward individual climate action. After piloting, this ambition became more explicit in spatial form. The results not only confirm theoretical insights, but they also translate them into design decisions. Some direct transformations:

Pilot finding	*Design decision*
Maze triggers curiosity & agency	The resolution section adopts exploratory routes and branching choices
Dark ⇢ light reads as tension ⇢ relief	Sequence structured as build-up ⇢ reveal
Organic = comfortable, geometric = distant	Organic formed the central core of the pavilion
Narrow ⇢ wide creates anticipation	Key transitions use spatial opening for momentum

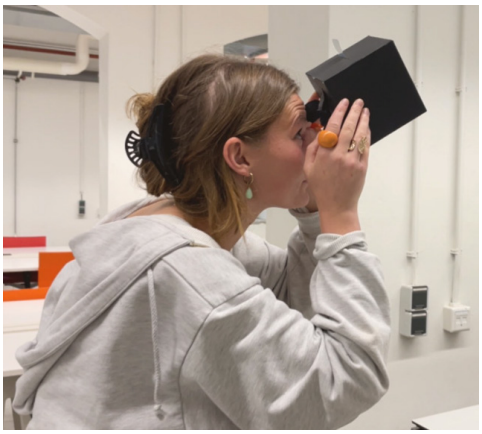
The experiments also showed the importance of emotional rhythm. A singular spatial tone becomes numb, while contrast awakens the visitor. The pavilion, therefore, uses architectural mood in the same way as storytelling uses pacing, quiet chapters, tense chapters, moments of wonder.

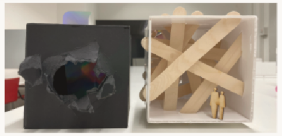

intriguing light reflections on walls & floor makes you want to observe longer
aesthetic play of lights
claustrofobic & oppressive makes you want to walk faster
Dark spaces : feelings of constriction & tension
plastic-like fabric caused mixed emotions:
. playful
. chaotic
. tranquil
linear build-up
tilted walls
curving lights
tilted wall gives tension
light opening → curiosity & direction
mysterious
round space increases intensity
Shadows desorientating
indirect rooflight
Empty, quiet, reflective space
soft fabric
interesting what happens acoustically
height makes people small & respectful
narrow gives tension materials soften that
Under Water effect
Abstract but strong visual effect
Movement & interactivity
could become overwhelming
an invitation to discover
mirror maze
dynamic, playful & curious
central light
intimate & mysterious
attention toward's centre
calming fabric
cloud-like, invites you to stay longer
feelings of peace and calmness
reflecting surfaces
guiding light
fairytail-like break-moment
positive, slowing down
Light on soft moving fabric
guides your gaze up
Spatial progression
Exciting & curious
opening up
invitation to discover
End-point
boring or strict
Closing in
Calming, natural, inviting
organic shapes
light reflection
different routing options
intriguing because of play of light
Secret backdoor
hospital-like, sterile, distant
awkward feeling of being watched
visible moving shadows
↳ triggers curiosity
feels interactive
interesting to look at, but less nice to stay in

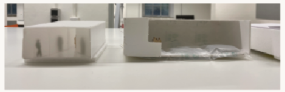
Conclusion

The research-by-design approach proved essential to bridge theory into form. Testing with physical mock-ups brought insights that reading literature alone could not provide. Participants behaved, hesitated, smiled, sped up, slowed down, insights that would never surface through literature. The method enabled rapid iteration and grounded every spatial gesture in human response rather than assumption. This aligns with the project goal of translating architectural narrative theory into a communicative design strategy, and supports the societal aim of changing not only what visitors see but how they feel and act.

The success of the methodology was not validation but transformation: research became space. The mock-ups became the first iterations of the pavilion spaces. The pavilion is now the grown version of those models. The process moved from a story that explains a design, to a design that explains a story.







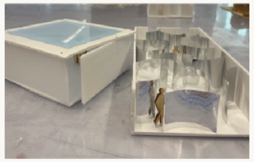
Abstract → **Realistisch**

Test persoon	Zwarte kubus	Witte kubus	Kijkdoos	Zwarte gang vierkant	Zwarte gang driehoek	Witte gang	Blurred muren	Plastic ruimte	Spiegel labyrinth	Onderwater ruimte	Zen ruimte	gelaagd water
1	Maakt nieuwsgierig en trekt je naar het licht toe, je vergeet daardoor even de wanden om je heen, snee daarachter is heel abrupt	Spiegels zouden ook aan de zijkant kunnen dan ontstaat er een soort houten bos. Ruimte nodigt uit om veel om je heen te kijken en je eigen route erdoorheen te vinden om het van verschillende hoeken te bekijken	Licht daarachter is mooi, nodigt je uit om daarheen te lopen, geeft een heel lineair gevoel van route. Lijkt op gebroken glas, of bijna iets buitenaards	Licht spleten zijn erg mooi, het eindpunt van de ruimte is duidelijk zichtbaar, als de gang wit zou zijn zou ze er langer blijven hangen waarschijnlijk	Zou hier erg snel door willen lopen, wordt er een beetje claustrofobisch van, geeft een gespannen beknellend gevoel	Hier zou ze langzamer doorheen lopen dan de donkere gangen, geeft het gevoel alsof je aan het vliegen bent, rustiger in de wolken. Als de stof beweegt in de wind zou je er nog langer naar blijven kijken en wordt je daar nieuwsgieriger van, dat leidt je af van het eindpunt, wat je hier ook niet heel duidelijk kunt zien.	Deze ruimte is heel cool en maakt erg nieuwsgierig, lijkt ook een beetje alsof je in een spiegelpaleis bent en niet weet waar je heen moet, ook omdat je het eindpunt niet duidelijk ziet, spiegel op plafond zou coole toevoeging zijn	Doordat je moet opletten waar je loopt ben je veel bezig met naar de grond kijken. Omdat het een afgesloten ruimte is geeft het een beetje het gevoel alsof je in een luchtkussen zit, als het meer open zou zijn zou het minder beknellend voelen. Het zou een ruimte kunnen zijn waar je tot rust komt als er ook nog met kleur gewerkt wordt bijv, maar nu lijkt het vooral een chaotische ruimte waar kinderen zullen rondrennen	Door alle trappen en dynamiek zou ik worden uitgenodigd om steeds door te blijven lopen en alle hoekjes te willen zien, dat maakt wel nieuwsgierig. Een kinderlijke apekooi	Interessante ruimte, maar moeilijk te duiden wat het voorstelt dat nieuwsgierig maakt, alle aandacht gaat zo naar het plafond	Half-transparante materiaal voelt alsof je wel afgesloten bent maar toch niet alleen bent. Door de kiezels weet je niet goed of je in een binnen of buitenruimte bent. Contrast tussen het strakke (wanden) en organische (kiezels). De ruimte geeft een rustig gevoel, zen, niet het gevoel om gelijk door te lopen	Hier zou je wat langer naar kijken, wat is dit precies? waar kijk ik naar? waar moet ik nu heen? nieuwsgierig. Patroon doet denken aan water, dat geeft wel meer een rustgevend gevoel, nodigt uit om stil te staan en langer te kijken als het zou bewegen en hoe het licht reflecteert op de spiegels
2	Zou zich overprikkeld voelen omdat het zo donker is, het gevoel van er moet hier meer zijn dan dat ik nu zie, wel nieuwsgierig maar ook bezorgd, want bang om in een donker hoekje perongeluk tegen iets aan te stoten	Geïntrigeerd door de ruimte, doet denken aan boomstammen die samen een geweven patroon vormen, zou zich uitgenodigd voelen om er doorheen te lopen, ziet het niet als obstakels maar dat komt ook door het kleur en materiaal gebruik, als het donkerder was geweest dan was dat waarschijnlijk anders	Lijkt een soort overgangsruimte, een introductie op wat je in de ruimte daarna zal tegenkomen. Het trekt je mee naar de ruimte erna. Zou wel even blijven kijken, maar er ook redelijk snel doorheen lopen omdat het het gevoel geeft alsof de ruimte die hierna komt de headliner is, het bouwt op	Alsof je in een bioscoop naar de ruimte loopt. Neutrale gang dient als een soort paletcleanser. Hangt van de inhoud van de expositie af hoe zo'n donkere gang overkomt	Als hij wit gekleurd zou zijn zou het lichter en luchtiger aanvoelen. Een donkere gang zou wel duiden op een meer impactvolle inhoud, meer beladen. Donker zou nieuwsgieriger maken	maar lichter zou je je meer uitgenodigd voelen om doorheen te lopen, rustige ambiance. Zou een goede ruimte zijn om te resetten & terug te leiden naar de echte wereld na een impactvolle expositie	Zou hier langer blijven staan en observeren, omdat je prikkelingen krijgt van de mensen achter de schermen, je blijft wachten om te kijken of het iets is dat gepland is of dat het mede-bezoekers zijn. Zou zich niet perse heel bekeken voelen, omdat je wel gewoon schimmen ziet	Roept kinderlijke herinneringen op. Is meer een ruimte waar je naartoe gaat, als eindpunt, geen doorloop ruimte. Luchtige, bijna hemelse sfeer. Zou vredig en rustig voelen	Hier zou ik helemaal onrustig worden, loop ik geen mensen in de weg? Heel overprikkelend, maar wel heel cool. Het maakt wel nieuwsgierig genoeg om te blijven kijken (waar ben ik eigenlijk?), maar wel alert/op je hoede	Doet denken aan het zwembad in voorlinden, door de spiegelvloer gaat je aandacht naar het plafond. Licht aan het kleurgebruik of je je hier rustig voelt of gespannen	Heerlijk als patio, rustgevend, goede plek om pauze te houden. Door de kalmerende kleuren en semi-transparante, lichte materiaal. Hier zou ze even blijven zitten om te ontspannen	Zou leuk zijn als het interactief wordt en je er doorheen zou kunnen lopen. Patroon doet denken aan water, een druppel die uitloopt in golfjes
3	Eerst zie je die lichtspleet niet meteen en dat voelt het een beetje beklemmend, maar als je je eenmaal focust op dat licht gaat al je aandacht daarheen en voelt het minder beklemmend. Het holografische zeil voegt juist aan het duistere toe ookal is het best wel kleurrijk	Coole ruimte, heel indrukwekkend omdat het best wel groot is en door de weerspiegeling zie je heel veel. Zou er niet zo snel mogelijk doorheen gaan maar een beetje rondlopen en ontdekken	Lijkt op een soort ijsgrot, het materiaal weerspiegelt een beetje waardoor het lijkt alsof er reliëf zit in de zijkanten, waardoor het meer op een grot dan op een lineaire tunnel lijkt, ze zou er niet snel doorheen lopen maar er even in verblijven	Hier zou ze een beetje claustrofobisch van worden, hier zou ze niet lang in stil blijven staan, de schaduwen zijn wel cool maar verder is het gewoon een zwarte gang. Licht aan het einde trekt wel aan, maar in deze vorm (kleine opening) minder dan zoals bij de kijkdoos	In het wit was het wel minder benauwend geweest, dat doet meer denken aan de lucht, meer open en vrij. Zwart is meer beangstigend. Opening in de driehoek is al imponerender, trekt iets meer dan alleen een spleet. Door de driehoek vorm is deze ruimte interessanter dan de vorige	Doet denken aan een wolk, alsof je door een wolk loopt. Sfeer is luchtiger, blijer. Hier zou ze minder snel doorheen lopen dan de vorige, hier krijg je ook een rustiger gevoel van dus pas je je tempo aan	Als de mensen achter de schermen nep zouden zijn/niet bewegen, krijg je er een beetje een naar gevoel van, alsof ze opgezet zijn. Als ze bewegen is het een interessant samenspel, iets meer interactief, dan zou je langer blijven staan om te observeren wat er achter de schermen gebeurt, hoe mensen zicht gedragen en bewegen	Ziet eruit als een heel groot springkussen, zou een leuke ervaring zijn, als een soort kinderlijke indoor playground. Omdat het heel speels is zou ze zich wel fijn voelen in deze ruimte, niet perse beklemmend	Doet denken aan een doolhof, maar dan 3D. Leuk om doorheen te lopen en te ontdekken	Doet denken aan golven, juist ook door die weerkaatsing, lijkt alsof je onder water zwemt in de zee. Het is wat meer abstract maar wel pakkend, je blijft ernaar kijken	Doet denken aan een Japanse tuin, het is mooie decoratie maar nietecht een kunstwerk. Als je toch al wilt gaan zitten zou ik hier even de tijd nemen, maar als ik geen behoeft heb om te zitten dan niet perse	Zou indrukwekkender zijn als je er doorheen kan lopen, als je er alleen voor kan staan doet het niet zoveel. Patroon doet denken aan een zebra of zand (duin), als je beweegt dan maakt het het wel iets indrukwekkender
4	-	-	Ik zou in de spiegel kijken	Het donkere wakkert een beetje donkere emoties aan	Krijg van die driehoek vorm een beetje claustrofobie waardoor ik er sneller doorheen zou lopen	Hier zou ik de behoefte hebben om te gaan liggen, dit materiaal zou ook lekker meewaaien als je er langs loopt	Hier zou ik sneller doorheen lopen, er is nietecht ruimte om te blijven staan en het langer te ervaren	Springkussen, ik zou hier ook wel de behoefte hebben om te gaan liggen maar alleen als iedereen hun schoenen uit moet doen vantevoren	Ik zou wel in ieder geval iedere ramp opgelopen willen hebben, tikkertje spelen	Die golven zijn mooi met het licht erdoorheen	Ik zou me wel uren kunnen vermaken met stenen zoeken, je gaat je hier wel gedragen en tot rust komen	Patroon doet denken aan water en golven
5	Het gat oogt best agressief, waardoor het een beetje grimmig wordt	Oogt gelijk wat lichter en meer ontspannen door het kleurgebruik, ik zou er veel doorheen lopen	Als er verder niks gebeurt of beweegt zou ik er niet heel lang in blijven staan, ik zou verwachten dat er een film wordt afgespeeld op de achterwand	Als het wit zou zijn ipv zwart zou ik me heel anders voelen, veel opgetogener	-	Voelt zacht & cozy aan, doet denken aan de westfield world trade center in new york, heeft ook iets weg van een kathedraal	Leuk, als er een pad al voor je is gemaakt zoals hier heb je misschien ook sneller het idee dat je hier doorheen moet lopen	Ik vind dit geluid juist wel fijn asmr, als deze hele ruimte dicht was is het een soort dode kamer, dat zou wel verstikkend aanvoelen	Leuk omdat je door de weerspiegeling alles kan zien en iedereen in de gaten kan houden	Ik denk dat het wel snel overprikkeld, maar voor kort verblijf zou het een leuke ervaring zijn	Mooi als je niet veel te doen hebt, door dat grind kan je er nietecht iets doen, nodigt niet uit om daarin te gaan staan/lopen	Statisch omdat je er nu alleen naartoe kijkt en niet doorheen kan lopen, net zoals die vorige is deze ook statischer, het nodigt geen activiteit uit
6	-	Je wordt wel nieuwsgierig van wat er achter die obstakels kan zitten, ik zou achter alles kijken en kijken of je erop kan klimmen	Doet denken aan een soort lachspiegel, het licht veranderd ook als je er zelf doorheen beweegt	Wordt snel naar het licht getrokken	Of de kleur invloed heeft hangt af van waarnaartoe je onderweg bent	Deze variant ziet er heel zacht uit, cozy, zou de walkway van een bruiloft kunnen zijn	Je voelt je wel een beetje bekeken hier denk ik, ik zou hier ook snel doorheen lopen	De akoestiek lijkt me hier vreselijk, als je er alleen bent zou ik het een confronterende ruimte vinden, maar met mensen zou ik me hier wel goed vermaken	Heel cool dat het weerspiegeld, zou wel veel mn hoofd stoten	Golven, het is laag maar door de weerspiegeling lijkt het hoger	Japans paviljoen, mis het water, ik zou hier ook niet echt verblijven ook omdat het best donker is door het papier	Je hebt wel interactie met de weerspiegeling
	- Nieuwsgierigheid naar licht trok mensen aan, maar tegelijk werd de ruimte als beklemmend of zelfs agressief ervaren. - Donker en abrupte contrasten versterkten spanning.	- Positieve reacties: open, uitnodigend en ontdekkend. - Mensen wilden rondlopen en meerdere perspectieven verkennen. - Materiaal en kleurgebruik (licht en houtachtig) zorgden voor comfort en nieuwsgierigheid.	- Lineaire route naar licht gaf richting en opbouw. - Sommigen zagen het als overgangsruimte of "intro", anderen wilden juist langer blijven door spiegelingen en bijzondere lichtwerking.	- Vaak claustrofobisch en drukkend, sneller doorheen willen lopen. - Lichtopeningen zorgden wel voor nieuwsgierigheid en richting. - Vorm (driehoek vs. vierkant) maakte verschil in intensiteit van de ervaring.		- Licht en zachte materialen riepen rust, vrijheid en zelfs associaties met wolken op. - Mensen liepen er rustiger doorheen, sommigen wilden zelfs liggen.	- Riep nieuwsgierigheid en speelsheid op: mensen wilden observeren wat er achter de schermen gebeurde. - Sommigen vonden het ongemakkelijk of "bekeken worden". - Interactiviteit (bewegende mensen achter de schermen) maakte de ervaring positiever.	- Veel kinderlijke associaties (springkussen, playground). - Sommigen vonden het chaotisch en confronterend, anderen vredig en speels. - Akoestiek werd vaak genoemd als bepalend.	- Zeer dynamisch en speels, maar ook overweldigend en onrustig. - Nodigde uit tot ontdekken, maar gaf kans op desoriëntatie of botsingen.	- Abstract maar sterk visueel effect, vooral door lichtreflecties en plafondelement. - Meestal rustgevend, maar soms riskant om te snel te veel prikkels te geven.	- Rustig, kalmerend en intiem, vaak vergeleken met Japanse tuinen. - Geschikt voor pauze en contemplatie, maar niet voor lange activiteit. - Sommigen misten dynamiek of licht.	- Intrigerend visueel, riep associaties met water en golven op. - Toch vaak als statisch ervaren, vooral omdat men er niet doorheen kon bewegen. - Interactie zou de ervaring sterker maken.

Samenvatting outcomes

De ruimtes riepen sterke en diverse emoties op, waarbij vooral **licht, kleur, vorm, materiaal en mate van openheid** bepalend waren voor de ervaring. Donkere ruimtes gaven vaker gevoelens van beklemming en spanning, terwijl lichte of speelse ruimtes nieuwsgierigheid en rust opriepen. Interactiviteit en beweging werden vaak genoemd als factoren die uitnodigen tot langer verblijven of actief deelnemen.

Contrast



Vierkante ruimte ⟷ Doolhof

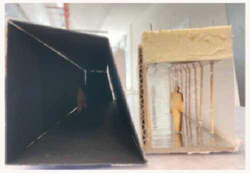
Test persoon	James Turell	Spiegel labyrinth
1	Geeft een gevoel van leegte, lichtspel in het plafond is heel intrigrerend, verder wel heel wit.	Heel modern, dit is meer een ervaring, dat je iets doet om iets mee te maken. Ik zou niet heel snel in mijn vrije tijd denken van ik ga hiernaartoe. Je komt hier wel echt met een doel. Het ziet er cool uit waardoor je wilt uitzoeken wat erachter is.
2	Cool dat die rand in het plafond nu extra licht geeft, zorgt dat je blik naar boven wordt getrokken. Ik zou me wel een beetje alleen voelen in deze ruimte. Hier zou je meer stilstaan en geeft je een reflectie moment.	Cool, een beetje trippy door alle spiegels. Dat je een beetje gedesoriënteerd voelen. Ik zou wel willen ontdekken waar de uitgang zit, maakt je nieuwschierig en geeft je een verwonderd gevoel. Deze is dynamischer dan de vorige en ben je bezig met hoe je eruit komt, want ookal is het interessant en leuk is het wel iets waar je op een gegeven moment uit wilt komen.
3	Deze ruimte voelt heel stil, bijna meditatief. Je blik gaat automatisch omhoog door dat licht in het plafond. Het is mooi, maar ook wel kaal en een beetje kil. Ik zou er niet heel lang willen blijven, eerder als een korte pauze.	Dit voelt echt als een soort spel. Je wordt uitgedaagd om erin rond te lopen en te ontdekken waar je heen kan. Dat maakt het spannend en ook wel leuk, maar het zou me op een gegeven moment ook een beetje teveel worden.
4	Mooi door zijn eenvoud, maar misschien ook té leeg. Ik denk dat je hier vooral geconfronteerd wordt met jezelf. Dat kan heel sterk zijn, maar ook ongemakkelijk	Dit is veel actiever, je moet letterlijk bewegen om de ruimte te begrijpen. Het is een beetje overweldigend, maar dat maakt het juist interessant. Je voelt echt dat je een ervaring meemaakt.
5	Minimalistisch en bijna klinisch, alsof je in een kunstgalerie staat. Doordat er niet veel gebeurt, ga je sneller op de details letten, zoals dat randlicht. Dat trekt je aandacht	Heel dynamisch, maar ook chaotisch. Het voelt minder als een ruimte en meer als een installatie. Ik zou wel benieuwd zijn naar hoe andere mensen hier reageren
6	Rustig en plechtig, het licht van boven maakt het bijna religieus. Maar ook een beetje eenzaam, ik zou er niet graag alleen in zijn	Veel speelser, je wordt echt uitgenodigd om te bewegen en om je weg te zoeken. Dat maakt nieuwsgierig, maar kan ook wat claustrofobisch aanvoelen
	vaak omschreven als leeg, stil, bijna religieus/reflectief. Het licht van boven wordt als sterk punt genoemd, maar de ruimte voelt soms ook kil, eenzaam of confronterend. Meer geschikt als pauze- of bezinningsmoment.	ervaren als speels, dynamisch, nieuwsgierig makend en 'trippy'. Mensen voelen zich uitgedaagd om te bewegen en te ontdekken. Tegelijk ook overweldigend of chaotisch na verloop van tijd.

Conclusie: leegte roept contemplatie en introspectie op, terwijl complexiteit en beweging eerder leiden tot nieuwsgierigheid en speelsheid.

Hoog & smal ⟷ Lang & breder

Test persoon	Verticaal plastic	Pommery gang
1	Lijkt op een soort luchtkussen, erg leuk. Vrij smal en door het materiaal kan het wel een beetje verstikkend aanvoelen.	Hier ontstaat door het licht een cool relief/licht-spel binnen in, hier zou ik veel foto's in willen maken, erg aesthetic I like it.
2	Deze is heel hoog. Interessant want normaal gesproken als je je omsloten voelt in een ruimte dan zijn de wanden best wel hard, maar hier zijn ze juist zacht, dat zorgt ervoor dat je wat langzamer door de ruimte zal bewegen omdat het je nieuwschierig maakt. Maakt je benieuwd naar welke ruimte volgt.	Hier zou ik sneller doorheen lopen dan de vorige. Lijkt me cool om te zien hoe het licht draait door deze ruimte door de lichtspleten heen, kijken hoe het licht verandert.
3	De hoogte maakt meteen indruk, ik voel me hier kleiner dan normaal. Omdat de wanden zacht zijn geeft het tegelijk ook een gevoel van veiligheid, je wil ze bijna aanraken. Ik zou hier langzaam doorheen lopen en omhoog blijven kijken	Deze bredere ruimte voelt opener en lichter, maar daardoor ook wat vlakker. Ik zou er sneller doorheen lopen, zonder echt stil te staan
4	Hier voel ik me een beetje opgetild, alsof de ruimte je dwingt om naar boven te kijken en rustiger te bewegen. De smalheid geeft spanning, maar het materiaal verzacht dat weer	De bredere ruimte richt je aandacht meer op het licht. Het is mooi om het spel van licht en schaduw te volgen, maar het nodigt minder uit om er zelf iets mee te doen
5	Ik vind dit indrukwekkend. Je voelt je echt klein en dat maakt dat je langzaam beweegt, alsof je respect hebt voor de hoogte	Dit voelt meer als een doorgangsruimte, je kijkt vooral naar de lichtinval. Mooi om even doorheen te lopen, maar niet om te blijven
6	Hier ben je meer deelnemer in de ruimte, omdat de wanden zo dicht op je staan. Het is spannend en prikkelend tegelijk	Deze bredere ruimte geeft meer vrijheid, maar ook minder intensiteit. Ik zou er sneller doorheen lopen en minder onthouden
	indrukwekkend en spannend. De hoogte maakt mensen klein en respectvol, de smalheid geeft spanning maar zachte materialen verzachten dat gevoel. Beweging is trager en aandachtiger.	opener, lichter en esthetisch (lichtspel), maar ook vlakker. Wordt sneller doorlopen en minder intens beleefd.

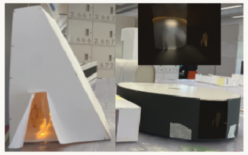
Conclusie: verticale intensiteit nodigt uit tot langzaam ervaren en reflectie, terwijl horizontale breedte sneller als doorgang wordt gezien.



Donker ⟷ Licht

Test persoon	Zwarte gang	Lichtjes spiegel gang
1	Erg donker, deze ruimte lijkt me een beetje eng/ onheilspellend.	Dat reflecterende materiaal is cool, leuk dat er zo met het licht gespeeld wordt.
2	Onduidelijk waar je heen loopt, de lijnen van licht zijn heel strak en intrigrerend. Door de donkere ruimte is het een beetje onaangenaam en loop je wat sneller door, ben zelf best wel snel bang voor het donker. Deze ruimte voelt meer als een aanloop/opbouw naar een volgende ruimte met de climax, van vraag naar antwoord.	Dit geeft een beetje een sprookjesachtige sfeer. Dit doorzichtige zeilen waar je tussendoor moet lopen doet denken aan van een binnenzwembad naar buiten zwemmen. Deze ruimte voelt meer als een intermezzo tussen twee ruimtes waar je ook even meer de tijd kan nemen.
3	In de donkere gang voel ik me niet helemaal op mijn gemak. Het is spannend, maar ook een beetje dreigend. Ik zou sneller doorlopen, omdat ik wil weten wat erna komt	De lichte gang voelt luchtig en bijna sprookjesachtig. Je wil hier juist even blijven staan om te kijken hoe het licht beweegt en hoe je er zelf in zichtbaar bent
4	Het donker maakt me alert, maar ook gespannen. Je let meer op waar je loopt, maar het is geen plek om te blijven	Hier word je vrolijker. De doorschijnende wanden en het spel met licht maken het speels, ik zou hier rustig doorheen lopen en meer ontspannen zijn.
5	Hier word je vrolijker. De doorschijnende wanden en het spel met licht maken het speels, ik zou hier rustig doorheen lopen en meer ontspannen zijn	a.De lichte gang voelt juist als een pauzemoment. Je kan even ademhalen en het licht geeft een gevoel van opluchting.
6	Het is interessant, maar ook beklemmend. Het donkere maakt dat je niet weet waar je heen gaat, dat geeft spanning maar ook ongemak	De lichte gang voelt vriendelijk en uitnodigend. Het spel met licht maakt je nieuwsgierig om langzamer te lopen en meer te ontdekken
	spannend en mysterieus, maar vaak ook onaangenaam of beklemmend. Zorgt dat mensen sneller doorlopen, gezien als aanloop naar een volgende ruimte.	luchtig, sprookjesachtig, ontspannend. Wordt gezien als intermezzo of pauzemoment waar men juist langer wil blijven.

Conclusie: donker creëert spanning en urgentie, licht biedt ruimte voor vertraging en positieve emoties.



Hoog & schuin ⟷ Rond & gelijke hoogte

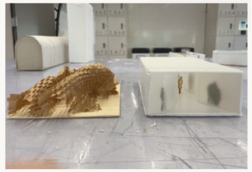
Test persoon	Boris Acket ruimte	Zwarte cirkel
1	Leuk dat je en de fysieke experience hebt van het tastbare van de stof die beweegt in combinatie met het licht. De vorm spreekt ook wel aan doordat het zo ruimtelijk is opgezet. Afhankelijk van de kleur licht die wordt gebruikt wordt de sfeer in de ruimte bepaald, met geel/oranje licht voelt de ruimte heel zen.	Coole vorm, wel erg donker, maar zou me toch uitnodigen om naar achter te lopen door het licht in het midden. Door de persoon die je daarin ziet wil je uitzoeken hoe je daar ook komt.
2	Vorm van de ruimte is interessant, aan de rechterkant (waar de muur schuin oploopt) kan je wat meer stilstaan en observeren, je blik wordt door die schuine muur ook omhoog getrokken. Terwijl aan de linkerkant lijkt het meer de looproute doordat het zo lineair is. Leuk hoe je in een ruimte verschillende sferen kan hebben.	Door de ronde vorm weet je niet echt waar je heen gaat en dat maakt het nog spannender. Door die persoon in de binnenruimte laat het je afgezonderd voelen, ik zou wel benieuwd zijn hoe je daar bent gekomen. Doordat het rond is gaat alle aandacht naar het centrale punt.
3	De schuine muur trekt je blik omhoog, dat vind ik boeiend. Je kan in deze ruimte echt verschillende kanten ervaren: stil blijven staan of juist verder lopen	De ronde vorm maakt het mysterieus. Doordat je niet ziet waar je heen gaat word je nieuwsgierig. Het voelt intenser omdat alle aandacht naar het midden gaat
4	Ik hou ervan dat er binnen één ruimte al verschillende sferen zijn. Het is alsof de ruimte je dwingt om een keuze te maken hoe je je erin beweegt	In de ronde ruimte voel je je meer afgesloten, maar daardoor ook meer gefocust. Het is spannend en intiem tegelijk
5	Dit voelt groots en dynamisch. De schuine muur maakt dat je het gevoel hebt dat er iets boven je hangt, dat geeft spanning	De ronde ruimte draait echt om het centrum. Je aandacht wordt gestuurd en dat maakt het bijna ceremonieel
6	De ronde ruimte draait echt om het centrum. Je aandacht wordt gestuurd en dat maakt het bijna ceremonieel	De ronde vorm haalt je oriëntatie weg. Dat geeft spanning, maar ook onzekerheid. Je weet niet goed waar je heen moet
	dynamisch, trekt blik omhoog, meerdere ervaringen in één ruimte. Wordt als groots en interessant ervaren.	intiem en mysterieus. De aandacht wordt automatisch naar het centrum getrokken. Kan spannend en ceremonieel voelen, maar ook desoriënterend.

Conclusie: schuine vormen stimuleren observatie en variatie, ronde vormen sturen focus en creëren intensiteit.

Breed naar smal ⟷ Smal naar breed

Test persoon	Hamer	Hamer
1	Niet zo vrolijk, door die versmalling achterin de ruimte en doordat hij zo hoekig is.	Zo is hij aantrekkelijker omdat je uitkijkt naar een grotere ruimte.
2	Doet me een beetje denken aan een spa, een soort binnenruimte waar je tot rust kan komen, ook omdat het heel clean is. Deze richting op lijkt het echt een eindpunt voordat je naar de uitgang gaat. Bouwt niet echt op, trekt je minder om naar achter te gaan en meer om nog even in de grotere ruimte te verblijven.	Spannning bouwt op omdat het smal en laag is maar het maakt je wel benieuwd wat er in de meer open ruimte daarachter zit.
3	Het voelt alsof je vastloopt. Die versmalling maakt dat je minder zin hebt om door te lopen	Smal naar breed voelt juist als een belofte, je wil weten wat erachter ligt. Het maakt nieuwsgierig
4	Ik ervaar dit als statisch. Het trekt me niet echt om verder te gaan	Dit voelt veel actiever, de spanning bouwt op en je wil ontdekken wat erachter zit
5	De vorm maakt het hoekig en streng wat ervoor zorgt dat het niet heel uitnodigend voelt	Hier wordt het spannender, je voelt dat er iets groters komt en dat wil je meemaken.
6	Dit voelt meer als een eindpunt. Je blijft eerder in de grotere ruimte ervoor dan dat je echt verder wil	Hier word je echt getrokken door de belofte van de grotere ruimte erachter. Het maakt nieuwsgierig en geeft energie
	ervaren als eindpunt of afsluiting, soms saai of streng. Minder uitnodigend om door te gaan.	spannend en nieuwsgierig makend, belofte van ontdekking. Zorgt voor verwachting en energie.

Conclusie: ruimtelijke progressie werkt beter als ze opent naar iets nieuws (smal → breed) dan als ze afsluit (breed → smal).



Organisch & bruin ⟷ Geometrisch & wit

Test persoon	Organische tunnels	Blurred walls
1	Ik zou hier wel ingaan, door het relief en de speling met het licht krijg je coole patronen. Doet me een beetje denken aan het bos, of een blaadje in de herfst door de kleur en het materiaal. Earthy en daardoor wel rustgevend. Ik zou er wel doorheen lopen, maar zou niet perse het van alle kanten willen ontdekken.	Heel wit en steriel (ziekenhuis achtig) daardoor geeft het niet echt een ontspannen gevoel, interessant dat je ziet dat daar mensen staan maar niet meteen hoe ze daar zijn gekomen, dat wil je dan gaan uitzoeken.
2	[illegible]	Cool dat deze ook van smal naar breed weer naar smal gaat. Interessant dat je vanaf een kant de toegang naar de ruimte erachter niet meteen ziet maar dat die pas later tevoorschijn komt als een soort geheime achterdeur. Deze ruimte houdt korter je aandacht vast doordat het door die geblurde muren onoverzichtelijk is. Ook wel interessant om te kijken hoe iedereen beweegt.
3	Dit voelt heel natuurlijk en warm, bijna alsof je een grot of een bos binnenloopt. Het geeft rust en je wil er even in blijven	Het geometrische en witte voelt juist klinisch en afstandelijk. Mooi om naar te kijken, maar minder prettig om in te zijn
4	Door de aardse kleuren en vormen voel je je dichter bij de natuur. Het is vriendelijk en kalm	De strakke witte ruimte voelt steriel, bijna ziekenhuisachtig. Het wekt nieuwsgierigheid, maar ook afstand
5	Dit voelt intiem en dynamisch. Je ontdekt telkens nieuwe details door het licht en de organische vormen	Deze ruimte is koeler en abstracter. Het is interessant om te observeren, maar niet om lang in te verblijven
6	Door het spel van licht en reliëf blijft dit boeiend. Het voelt uitnodigend en rustgevend, je zou er langer willen blijven	Het witte geometrische voelt juist kil en onpersoonlijk. Je wil er snel doorheen lopen en niet blijven hangen
	rustgevend, natuurlijk, warm en uitnodigend. Vergelijkt men met natuurervaringen (bos, grot). Blijft langer interessant door licht en reliëf.	klinisch, steriel, afstandelijk. Interessant om naar te kijken, maar minder prettig om in te verblijven. Wordt sneller verlaten.

Conclusie: organische vormen en natuurlijke kleuren roepen warmte, rust en verbondenheid op, terwijl geometrisch-witte ruimtes eerder koel en observerend blijven.

Algemene patronen

1. **Beweging & nieuwsgierigheid** ontstaan vooral bij dynamische, onoverzichtelijke of zich openende ruimtes (doolhof, smal→breed, rond).
2. **Reflectie & stilte** worden opgewekt door leegte, hoogte, en licht van boven.
3. **Comfort & verbondenheid** hangen sterk samen met organische vormen, aardse materialen en zachtheid.
4. **Onrust of spanning** komt vooral door duisternis, smalle afsluitingen of steriele witte omgevingen.

Overall reflection.

1. Methodology and Academic Relevance
Connecting frustration, theory and design aims
My graduation project originates from a personal frustration that grew into a fascination: the disconnect between architectural education and practice regarding sustainability and climate responsibility. During my internship, I realised that sustainable ambition often collapses under economic and legislative pressure, which raised the question for me of how architects could contribute to climate awareness outside conventional building design and production. This led to my research question: 'How can architecture communicate a societal message that inspires individual action among visitors?'

After researching literary fields of narrative architecture, experience design, and narrative psychology (for behavioural activation), I gathered the theoretical insights into five design qualities: movement, curiosity, interactivity, light, and materiality. These guided my project analysis, my research-by-design experiments and later influenced my design decisions, allowing research and design to continuously inform one another.

Looking back on the terms chosen for the five design qualities, I would have reconsidered choosing the word 'curiosity' as a quality since it actually is the effect caused by the use of the other four design qualities. By using certain movement, interactivity, light and materiality design choices, you make the visitor experience curiosity. For future improvements, it might be better to place the quality of 'curiosity' next to the other four qualities to more clearly distinguish cause from effect.

Positioning the work in the body of knowledge
My work situates itself in the growing discourse around architecture as a communicative medium. Authors like Venturi & Scott Brown discussed that architecture should clearly communicate with the public, not just with architects, and Le Corbusier framed architecture as a driver for societal revolution. However, with the rise of modernism, it seems like this potential has been forgotten, and architecture's communicative power is increasingly overlooked. My project aims to revive this potential and investigates how spatial storytelling, combined with psychological triggers, can stimulate individual action above merely conveying meaning. The project contributes to ongoing discussions on experience-driven design and climate communication by proposing a methodology that makes behavioural activation an architectural tool rather than an external layer.

The project adds to the discourse by introducing a cross-disciplinary bridge between narrative psychology, spatial design and architecture, a methodological framework for testing emotional and behavioural response through experiments with models and a design that treats visitors not only as observers, but as agents capable of change.

Strong and weak sides of the methodology
A strength of my approach is its iterative structure; from theory to project analysis, to a field study in Japan, to research-by-design, to a design translation. This made the process reflective rather than linear, allowing unexpected findings to influence the design and to add back onto the research with written reflections.
The research-by-design experiments gave valuable qualitative insights into spatial experience and confirmed the relevance of atmosphere in activating curiosity and reflection. The insights from the experiments functioned as a tool to translate the story about dark data into an architectural design.

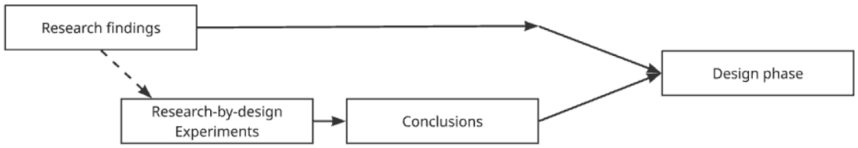
However, there were also limitations. Working with small-scale mock-ups and a limited test group means emotional responses cannot be generalised. The methodology aimed to test behaviour, but long-term action cannot be measured within the timeframe of a graduation, which I acknowledge as a gap between intention and feasibility. I discussed this limitation with external experts in the field of experience design, and they pointed out that it will always be hard to measure impact, even when the project is physically realised. One way to try and do so could, for example, be to let visitors fill out a small questionnaire before and after the experience.

Generalisation and what others can learn
The developed framework that resulted in five prioritised design tools is transferable to other creative projects that want to convey a message to their visitors. As several theoretical fields were taken into account for the research, it will not only be applicable for architectural projects but also for a wide variety of projects. From exhibition design to art installations, to pavilion design, for example. Future designers could use the toolbox as a lens to analyse and modify narrative potential in their design, or adapt the research-by-design method to evaluate early design decisions.

2. Design Content

From reading to writing to designing

The research phase taught me to move from analysing existing narrative projects to creating my own narrative structure. Literature guided my thinking, but design became the place where theory materialised. Feedback on the P3 contained to elaborate more on the link between the research and design. As I then stated, I started the experiments phase 'blank', to avoid unintentionally reproducing the existing designs of the projects from the analysis. To be creative and design different spaces, all with different qualities, it is necessary to have an open mind and keep iterating to come to unique results. Although all the insights from the research and field study were already in the back of my head and influenced the entire trajectory, and therefore subconsciously influenced the different spaces I made for experimenting. Eventually, you can see all the influences of the research and the field study coming back in my experiment models.



Research-by-design phase trajectory

The pavilion evolved into a "journey of awareness" using transitions, contrasts and sensory cues to move visitors from passive observation to personal reflection and agency. By elaborating on all aspects of the visitor's experience in every (sub)space, including which senses are being triggered and how, a comprehensive image is outlined, which suggests what the experience would be like in real life.

Working across scales

Throughout the project, I learned to shift continuously between abstraction and materialisation: from conceptual storytelling to spatial sequence, from emotional intention to technical detailing of a floating, demountable structure. Designing a modular pavilion taught me to consider logistics, structure and quality architectural space, without losing the narrative aim as telling a story with the design was the driving factor for all. Ultimately, going from a story to explain the design, to a design to explain the story was one of the main objectives of this project from the start. Water became both a climate tool and a metaphor by reflecting, showing its ability to change form and connecting the visitors to each other.

Through insights from external experts, the three-act structure from the film industry became an important factor in the design. In the beginning, the idea was to make the research part of this project a toolbox that can be used for different projects and to make the design of the pavilion story-specific. However, by implementing the three-act structure (+ break-moment) in the design, the structure of the pavilion can be used to tell a variety of stories as all stories will have the same structure of set-up, confrontation, break and solution.

3. Societal and Moral Aspects
Societal relevance
The project addresses an urgent societal need: activating climate awareness beyond data and policy. In a world where facts often fail to move people, design has the potential to speak through experience rather than instruction. The pavilion aims to spark small-scale individual action by emotionally engaging visitors, creating an experiential alternative to the existing sustainability narrative. This method can be used to communicate various important insights from sustainability science to the general public.

Moral issues and ethical considerations
With persuasive design comes responsibility. A key dilemma in my process was how to inspire action without manipulating emotion or restricting interpretation. Narrative space must remain open enough for personal meaning, and it must not overstimulate.
I practised balancing guidance and freedom by designing suggestions rather than instructions, for example, by leaving different routing options for the visitor to decide which one to take, inviting them to discover.

4. Personal Reflection Questions
How effectively did the research methodology support the translation from theory into design, and what would I adjust if I repeated the process?
The methodology proved to be effective because it created a clear bridge from abstract theory to specific qualities, to spatial design tools, to research-by-design experimenting, to an architectural design. The iterative process helped refine ideas based on user responses, personal experience and theory rather than assumptions.

However, if repeated, I would allocate more time to the testing phase and expand the participant group to gain broader behavioural insight. A bigger-scale prototype or VR walkthrough would likely generate richer results and better test emotional impact.

Which part of the design–research process contributed most to my learning, and how will I carry this forward into the final graduation phase?
The experiments and project analysis were the most instructive phases. They showed which architectural gestures evoke curiosity, calm, tension or reflection, allowing theoretical ideas to become tangible design decisions. In addition, the visits to different external experts functioned as intermediate reflection moments, which forced me to keep being critical about my project and made me implement critical feedback about not losing focus on the initial goal of the project.

Moving forward, I will use these insights to guide the finetuning of the spatial sequencing of the pavilion, intentionally applying contrast, light, material tactility and movement to steer emotional experience. By prioritising the story to tell and the interaction of the different elements with the visitor, this learning will continue shaping the final design development.

Practical toolbox results per quality.

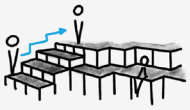
Movement

Architectural projects

Blur Building
Diller + Scofido
2002

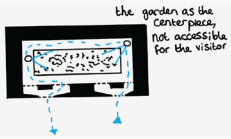
Seed Cathedral Pavilion
Heatherwick Studio
2010

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Sou Fujimoto
2013

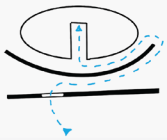


Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Bjarke Ingels
2016

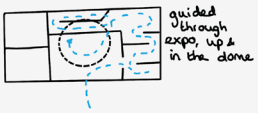
Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Peter Zumthor
2011



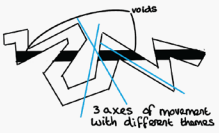
Water Temple
Tadao Ando
1991



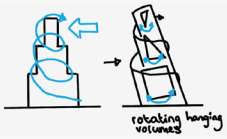
A New Dawn Pavilion
RAU architects & Tellart
2025



The Jewish Museum
Daniel Libeskind
1999

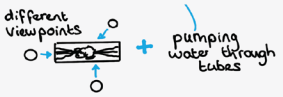


Tatlin's Tower
Vladimir Tatlin
1920

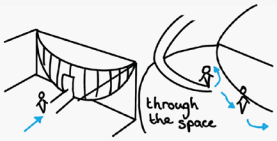


Additional projects

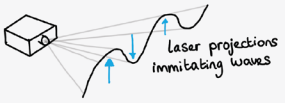
Pollutive Ends
Thijs Biersteker
2019



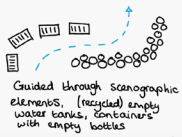
Memory Palace
Es Devlin
2019



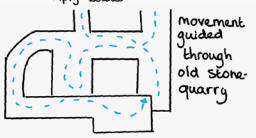
Waterlicht
Studio Roosegaarde
2018



Water Wise
Studio Mast
2024

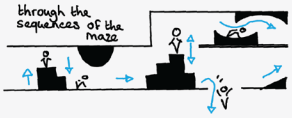


Cathédrale d'Images
Carrières des Lumières
1976 - present

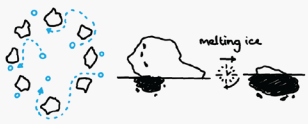


Brickworks Museum
Duncan McCauley
2009

Doloris Anoma Maze
Karmanoia
2019

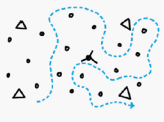


Ice Watch
Olafur Eliasson
2014



Sunbeam, captured
Boris Acket
2024

LFS2
Mariska de Groot &
Dieter Vandoren
2018



Mind Bridges
Jeroen Alexander Meijer
2024

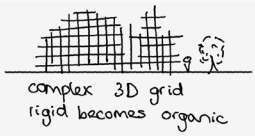
Curiosity

Architectural projects

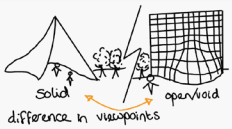
Blur Building
Diller + Scofido
2002

Seed Cathedral Pavilion
Heatherwick Studio
2010

Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Sou Fujimoto
2013

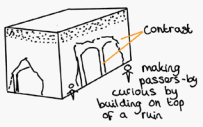


Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Bjarke Ingels
2016

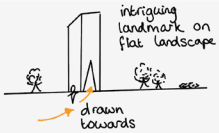


Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Peter Zumthor
2011

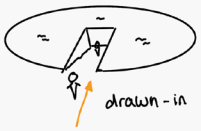
Kolumba Museum
Peter Zumthor
2007



Bruder Klaus Kapelle
Peter Zumthor
2007



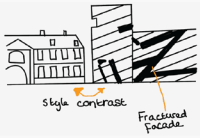
Water Temple
Tadao Ando
1991



Dutch Water Pavilion
Weeber & Bakema
1970

A New Dawn Pavilion
RAU architects & Tellart
2025

The Jewish Museum
Daniel Libeskind
1999

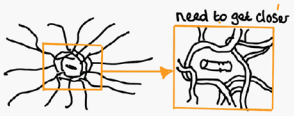


Tatlin's Tower
Vladimir Tatlin
1920

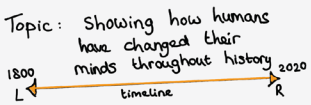
Additional projects

Materialism (Beetle)
Studio Drift
2018

Pollutive Ends
Thijs Biersteker
2019



Memory Palace
Es Devlin
2019



Waterlicht
Studio Roosegaarde
2018

Cathédrale d'Images
Carrières des Lumières
1976 - present

Doloris Anoma Maze
Karmanoia
2019

Ice Watch
Olafur Eliasson
2014

Sunbeam, captured
Boris Acket
2024

LFS2
Mariska de Groot &
Dieter Vandoren
2018

Mind Bridges
Jeroen Alexander Meijer
2024

Interactive

Architectural projects

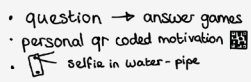
A New Dawn Pavilion
RAU architects & Tellart
2025

Additional projects

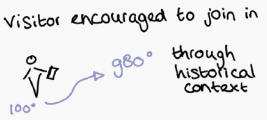
Pollutive Ends
Thijs Biersteker
2019

Memory Palace
Es Devlin
2019

Water Wise
Studio Mast
2024



Brickworks Museum
Duncan McCauley
2009



Doloris Anoma Maze
Karmanoia
2019

Ice Watch
Olafur Eliasson
2014

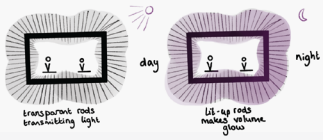
LFS2
Mariska de Groot &
Dieter Vandoren
2018

Light

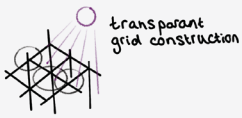
Architectural projects

Blur Building
Diller + Scofido
2002

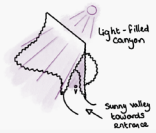
Seed Cathedral Pavilion
Heatherwick Studio
2010



Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Sou Fujimoto
2013



Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Bjarke Ingels
2016

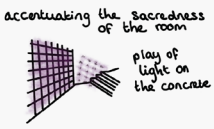


Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Peter Zumthor
2011

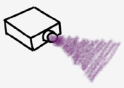
Kolumba Museum
Peter Zumthor
2007

Bruder Klaus Kapelle
Peter Zumthor
2007

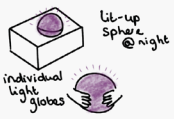
Water Temple
Tadao Ando
1991



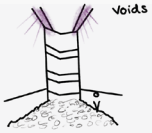
Dutch Water Pavilion
Weeber & Bakema
1970



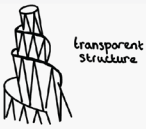
A New Dawn Pavilion
RAU architects & Tellart
2025



The Jewish Museum
Daniel Libeskind
1999



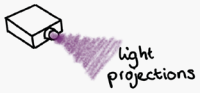
Tatlin's Tower
Vladimir Tatlin
1920



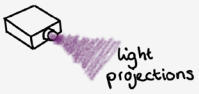
Additional projects

Memory Palace
Es Devlin
2019

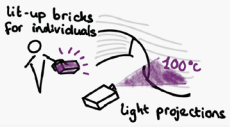
Waterlicht
Studio Roosegaarde
2018



Cathédrale d'Images
Carrières des Lumières
1976 - present



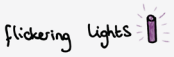
Brickworks Museum
Duncan McCauley
2009



Doloris Anoma Maze
Karmanoia
2019

Sunbeam, captured
Boris Acket
2024

LFS2
Mariska de Groot &
Dieter Vandoren
2018



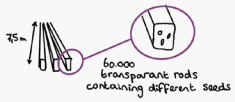
Mind Bridges
Jeroen Alexander Meijer
2024

Materiality

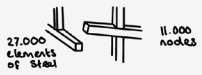
Architectural projects

Blur Building
Diller + Scofido
2002

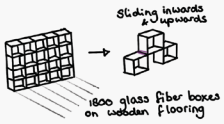
Seed Cathedral Pavilion
Heatherwick Studio
2010



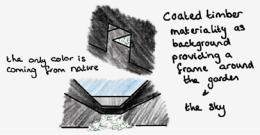
Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Sou Fujimoto
2013



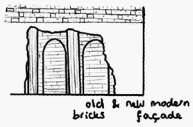
Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Bjarke Ingels
2016



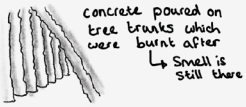
Serpentine Gallery Pavilion
Peter Zumthor
2011



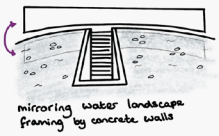
Kolumba Museum
Peter Zumthor
2007



Bruder Klaus Kapelle
Peter Zumthor
2007

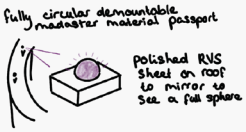


Water Temple
Tadao Ando
1991



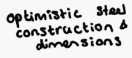
Dutch Water Pavilion
Weeber & Bakema
1970

A New Dawn Pavilion
RAU architects & Tellart
2025



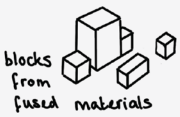
The Jewish Museum
Daniel Libeskind
1999

Tatlin's Tower
Vladimir Tatlin
1920

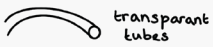


Additional projects

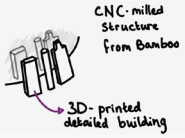
Materialism (Beetle)
Studio Drift
2018



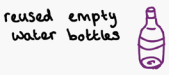
Pollutive Ends
Thijs Biersteker
2019



Memory Palace
Es Devlin
2019



Water Wise
Studio Mast
2024



Doloris Anoma Maze
Karmanoia
2019

Ice Watch
Olafur Eliasson
2014

Sunbeam, captured
Boris Acket
2024

LFS2
Mariska de Groot &
Dieter Vandoren
2018

From a story to explain the design,
to a design to explain the story.