AD HOC CONDITIONS

The historic city centre of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius is formed by an urban fabric consisting out of courtyards creating introvert voids within the traditional urban solid. These courtyards contrast the traditional and formal public spaces of the city by the way they operate on the levels of public-private accessibility, spatial compositions and architectural aesthetics. The 'ad hoc' manner by which these courtyards come into being gives them an unique heterogeneous but ambiguous aesthetical quality.

In a broader perspective the notion of adhocism proved to represent the city of Vilnius and the Lithuanian people as a whole. Therefore the research into adhocism within architecture and society became the theoretical framework supporting both the research and the design phase of the graduation project. This resulted in the main question whether if adhocism can provide a modus operandi for architectural design without becoming a mimicking of stylist aesthetics? So a way for architecture to go beyond the conventions within architecture.

Preliminary Research

The term *ad hoc* is defined as: *"for the particular end, case or situation at hand without consideration of wider application"*.[1] However it is not to be confused with random or undirected action. The preliminary research done during the first semester focused on creating a theoretical understanding of adhocism by researching notions as 'Bricolage' put forth by Live Strauss. However also "context applied" examples where investigated such as the famous work by Rowe and Koetter: Collage City. The Vilnius Courtyards from which the theme originated where used as a testing ground in which principles where investigated which derived from the theoretical framework. These analysis where made by creating mappings of particular courtyards and its phenomena's in which notions such as the joint, junction, Heterotopia, etc. where made explicit.

The research done during the first semester has led to an understanding of Adhocism as a potential modus operandi instead of a stylist phenomenon. By having theoretically established ad hoc principles in correspondence with the courtyards, notions such as 'junction', 'urban sediment' and 'Heterotopia' have developed within this context. These theoretically investigated principles have been used to inform the design process and to substantiate decisions on the levels of process, aesthetics, program and location.

Modus Operandi Adhocistus

As stated before, an important part of the graduation project consisted out of trying to address and conceive a methodology which allows designers to reach beyond the existing, or in general applied, conventions within architectural design. Conventions created and stimulated by using assumptions such as typology and program as a preliminary framework of conditions.

"Practical adhocism requires paying perhaps undue attention to

the parts as parts with consequent joints and connections.".[2]

As investigated during the research semester, Adhocism allows designers to break with such pre-conceived conventions. For instead of harmonizing it allows for different parts which are at hand to collide with each other. And by doing so unforeseen synthesis might come into being. For the project this means that the process becomes just as important as the product. The process is used to establish a modus operandi within architecture that works on adhocist conditions. Meaning that the parts at hand, and the parts as parts are of utmost importance (a part can be a material object, building fragment or even a design method).

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[1] The online Merriam-Webster dictionary: www.merriam-webster.com /dictionary/ad%20hoc - Accessed 11 December 2015.

[2] Jencks, C., & Silver, N. (1972). Adhocism: The Case for Improvisation. London: Secker & Warburg. p. 169.

This starting point resulted in a method and process of *adding*. Adding a new and alien part to the part which is at hand, being the design at a particular stage. However no preconception was made whether the one is more important than the other. As will be explained later, this way it could occur that not the part at hand but the alien part becomes the most important element to further evolve and so reset the focus of the design process.

As stated before, program can be a "trap" for design to result into conventional architecture where for example the diagram becomes the building. However to provide a testing ground for the modus operandi to evolve in, a program was preconceived in which the design should result. Resulting out of the theoretical understanding of the notion of Heterotopia by Foucault, the choice was made to add a new columbarium to the historic city centre of Vilnius. Its social relevance being the creation of the parallel between life and death where the living live among the dead and vice versa. A phenomenon which over the centuries went lost in Vilnius as in many other cities because of the demolition of old cemeteries within their borders.

Design Process

Bringing this "modus operandi adhocistus" into practice resulted in retrospect in a five stage design process. These five stages can be clearly defined because each time a new stage was started it was done so by using the material at hand, the design up to the previous stage, which was brought into contact with a new part. As mentioned before this part could be an alien building element, a certain material or even a different method of working.

Phase 1. Reading between the lines As stated in the graduation plan, as the starting point a drawing taken form an analysis served as a preliminary design. Do the drawing had a certain meaning during the research part, its relevance to the design process needed to be re-evaluated. To make the drawing workable it was manipulated into a set of lines. This was done to make the drawing less suggestive in terms of form and shape. In order to let the lines inform the project, a certain act was linked to certain numbers of a dice. This act transformed the drawing into a playing field which manipulated the surface of a sheet of paper in being folded or cut. Because the drawing consisted out of diagonal and orthogonal orientated lines, a division was made where the diagonals remained lines and the orthogonals marked surfaces which were to be cut out of the surface. In order to already introduce the location into this early and conceptual stage of design, its outlines where superimposed onto the lines and surfaces creating the outline of the shape. The surface was then to be folded and cut as the lines direct creating volumes which could be used as building masses. This way context was used in a less conventional but more abstract manner within the project.

Phase 2. Ad hoc adding By having established a building volume it became the part at hand. Because it was only a shape or even a shell, the construction would become the second part that would be added. Instead of creating a tailor-made construction, a core was implemented into the center of the design. As with the theory of the junction the transition between one part and the other now became important. Because of the suggestion present in a constructed scale model that the shell was falling away form the core, the design decision was made to hang the shell onto the core. This was tested in several models scale 1:50. The design now consisted out of three elements being a generic core, the amorphous shell and the space filled with cables in-between.

Phase 3. Working in circles, testing potential Because of the potential of combining the amorphous and generic elements a side-investigation was done into what would happen when the principle is reversed and the shell is folded inwards into the generic core, imploding the concept as it where. This would result in enlarging the core structure to 8 by 8 meters in which spaces would be formed by cables which also supported the walls, stairs and floors. The holes in the generic structure would be used to join the cables and beams necessary to create the structure. This research resulted in clarifying the potential of the process.

Phase 4. Concretizing the design, adding program The fourth phase consisted out of concertizing the design. Do the side investigation resulted in some interesting insights, the decision was made to stay with the original plan of the amorphous shell outside of the generic core. However important insides where integrated such

as the articulation of the balancing act which was created by the cables. Also other insights that were made, or where lost during the evolution of the design where reevaluated. This way the shell became a lightweight netting structure that was hung around a heavy and controlled core structure where a tension was created by the way they seemingly danced with each other. The third element, the in-between space, was further elaborated by introducing balconies as the main accessible parts of the building. The part where the program, the actual columbarium was situated.

Phase five: Re-locating Do at first, as site one of the courtyards was chosen, gradually the question arose whether the design, that had evolved for a long time without direct relation to the site context, needed to stay in the same location. What would be the value of adding even more adhocism to a site already saturated by it? This is why another site, a site with a turbulent history within the urban fabric was chosen to relocate the design to. The Reformation Park on the outskirts of the historic centre was chosen for its historic and esthetical qualities. The park was erected in the 1980's to remember Soviet Partisans which died during the Second World War. The rigidly designed park follows a strict north-south orientation and consists out of modular concrete blocks which are stacked on top of each other. Nowadays the remembrance statues, being a reminder to soviet rule, are removed and the park is nominated to be torn down and restored into a park which is inspired on a cemetery which was there before the Soviet park. However the present park possesses unique qualities which could be re-evaluated by adding new program to it in the form of the columbarium. The part at hand is again confronted with a new part and new potential arises. The one starts to influence the other. The core starts to become part of the rigid structure in contrast to the shell which starts to interact with the amorphous qualities of the surrounding trees in the park. The in-between space is used to harbor program such as a chapel, the columbaria and a dove cote.

In General the project has resulted in an unconventional, unexpected and conceptual design for a columbarium without trying to mimic the adhocist stylist aesthetics which could be criticized as being an as large as possible accumulation of contrasting parts. By making throughout the process sometimes illogical leaps, by for example adding the concrete core to the amorphous shell, new potential is created which deviates the heading of the process and so prolongs a clear heading towards an endpoint. Its relevance to the social context is found in the way it re-uses places that are nominated to be demolished because of their historic and most of the time political connotation. Furthermore it tries to show a way in which life and death once again form an intrinsic part of the city as a whole.