PERSONAL STATEMENT

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REFLECTIONS ON THE ARCHIVE

WHY ARCHIVE?

- TO PRESERVE?
- TO HIGHLIGHT?
- TO PERPETUATE?
- TO IDENTIFY / BUILD NARRATIVES?
- TO CREATE AN IDENTITY?
- TO EDUCATE?
- TO BUILD PRECEDENTS?
- TO EXHIBIT (PURPOSEFULLY SHOW)?
- TO PROMOTE SEARCHING (PURPOSEFULLY HIDE)?
- TO ELICIT FINDING
- TO BUILD MEMORY (COLLECTIVE/INDIVIDUAL)?
- TO MEMORIALIZE?
- TO BUILD LATENCY (STORE POTENTIAL)?
- TO AMOUNT DATA?
- TO ORGANIZE KNOWLEDGE?
- TO CREATE A FOUNDATION?
- TO OBJECTIFY HISTORY?
- TO ALLOW TANGIBILITY?

- TO IMMORTALIZE?
- TO PATH-FIND / TRAVERSE IDEAS?
- TO MAP EPISTEMOLOGY?
- TO FACILITATE CONNECTIONS?
- TO PREVENT DISPOSAL?
- TO MITIGATE THE ANXIETY OF LOSS?

HOW...

- ARE ARCHIVES ORGANIZED?
- ARE THE SPACES IN AN ARCHIVE?
- DOES ONE MOVE IN AN ARCHIVE?
- DOES ONE GO THROUGH MATERIAL IN AN ARCHIVE?
- CAN ARCHIVES BE BETTER?
- DOES THE ARCHIVE ENGAGE THE PUBLIC?
- DOES THE PUBLIC PERCEIVE THE ARCHIVE?
- DOES THE ARCHIVE PRESENT ITSELF?
- IMPORTANT IS THE ARCHIVE?
- EFFICIENT IS AN ARCHIVE?
- DO ARCHIVES PROVIDE VALUE?
- ENGAGING ARE ARCHIVES?
- CAN ARCHIVES BE MOST USEFUL?
- SHOULD ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES BE ORGANIZED?
- CAN THE MATERIAL QUALITIES OF THE OBJECTS IN AN ARCHIVE BE BETTER EXPLOITED?
- CAN ARCHIVAL CATALOGS BE ARCHITECTURALIZED?
- CAN COLLECTIONS FLEXIBILIZE THE MEANS OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN ITS CONTENT AND THE PUBLIC?
- DO PEOPLE SEARCH THROUGH ARCHIVES?
- INFLUENTIAL IS THE ARCHIVE?

Fig. 1. Personal Sketchbook - Reflections on the archive

The process of research, discussion and production has, so far, been extremely engaging to me. It has led to much reflection on the topic and has helped me formulate some of the first provocations on how I would like to frame my approach to this project as we move forward. I have found the discussion sessions during our seminar meetings to be the most stimulating part so far, as it is in that space where I have found myself thinking the most at, as I hear the perspectives of peers, tutors and guests.

These sessions have put me into contact with many existing positions about the archive, its history, shortcomings and possibilities for the future, and has steered me towards the thought that maybe this typology has been entirely under-explored so far, and that none of the positions put forth is yet representative of a strong ar-

chitectural attitude towards a new archival design. So, although the discussions have been very rich and productive, I have always been left with the thought of "is that it?". Almost hinting to me that a solution may lie slightly at the fringe of our discussions, still out of reach at the moment.

This though has brought to me a slight sense of disconnection, which I am currently unsure if it is peculiar to me and my personal way of thinking or if it is shared by the class as a whole. I experienced a similar feeling when working on the "Looking Carefully" assignment, where I found myself repeatedly disagreeing with the approach by Arhov Frick to the archival design for the ArkDes. When studying the project, and the architect's intentions of creating a more flexible, accessible and interactive archival experience for the public, I couldn't help but ques-

Fig. 1. Personal sketchbook - reflections on the archive

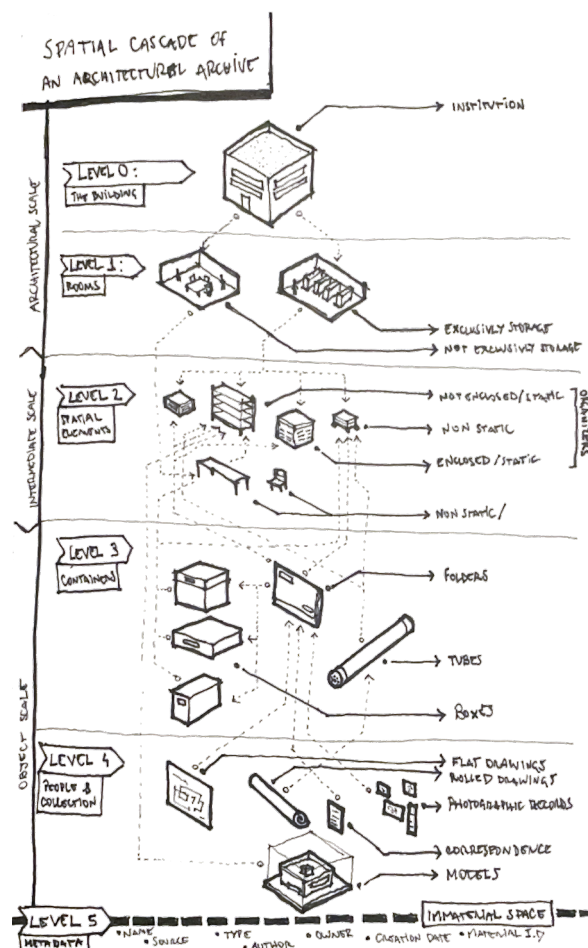Fig. 1. Personal Sketchbook - Reflections on the archive

Fig. 2. Personal Sketchbook - Deconstructing the archive's spatial cascade

tion if what I was looking at could even be called an archive at all, or if it was just a regular exhibition space. That thought would later prove to be true, as we found out that the actual archive remains in isolation within the basements of the institution, which was disappointing to say the least, but did solidify a personal position for myself by showing me what I would not want to happen at the end of my project.

Aside from this part of the work we have done at the faculty, I find it important to mention that visiting the VAI archive in Antwerp might have been the most important event of the course until now. Inhabiting that space and listening to those who work there was more enlightening than all of the talks we could have had. Operational problems were addressed and were immediately observable, allowing for a much deeper understanding of the issue at hand. And the cold, isolationist and technocratic nature of the archival space revealed itself, truly, for the first time. Along with all the interesting aspects of wonder, discovery and serendipity it can foster in those who get to inhabit it.

My current fascinations about the archive revolve around a few core topics:
- The materialistic logic of the archive and its impacts on the relationship with the people/the public
- The nature of the archive's user experience and how it can be re-imagined
- The latency of the archival space and its cathartic potentials
- The idea of architecture as a spatial cascade, and the creation of space through the manipulation of levels of interaction determined by the material (and sometimes immaterial) nature of the discrete parts that compose the archive.

I mention these topics because they address some of the points which were not sufficiently explored in our discussions, and yet were always hinted at indirectly. I see potential in these, and they spark my intuition in a way that drives me to want to study them more deeply, which makes me think they will become fundamental pillars of my upcoming research.

Fig. 2. Personal sketchbook - Deconstructing the archive's spatial cascade