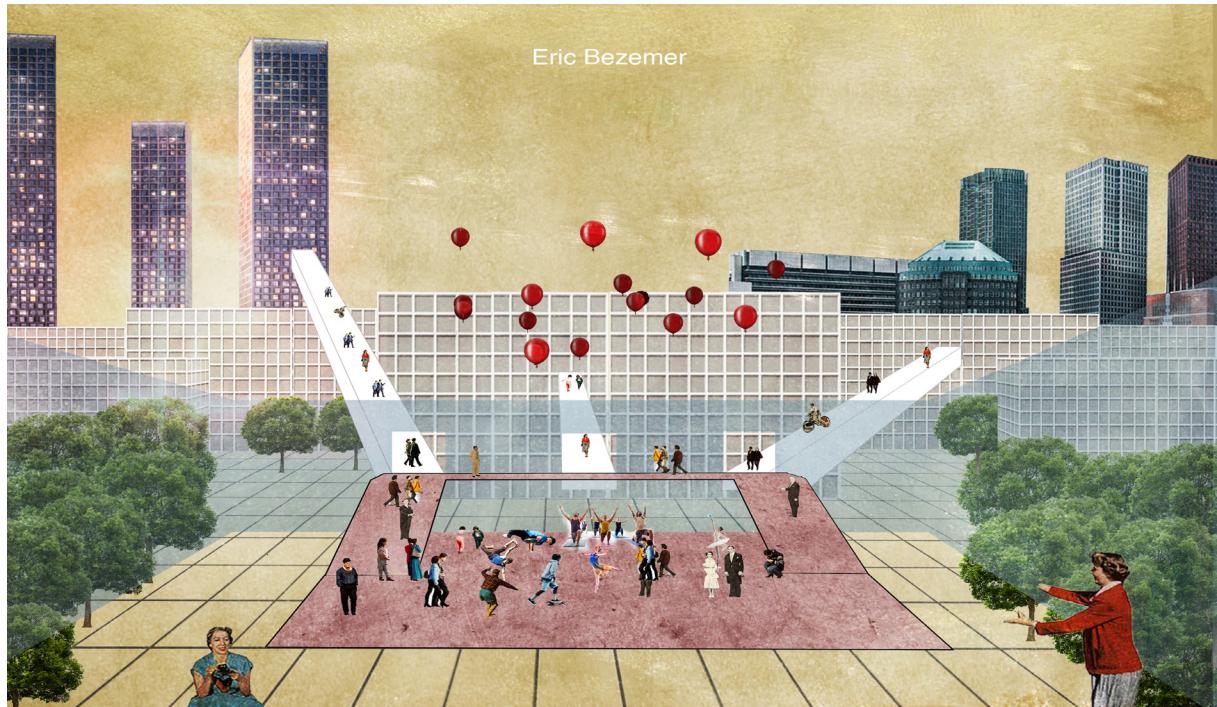


## A new landscape of interchangeability



P4 Reflection  
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## **1 Relationship of the Studio and the students graduation topic**

The chair of Public Building is addressing a new type of building that serves new communal purposes and emphasizes the notion of 'Multiplicity' as primary property of such new phenomena. The notion of 'multiplicity' acts as the umbrella theme throughout the graduation studio and proposes a shift from single-use buildings to a profound transformation resilient and multifunction buildings, or so to call public condensers. Consequently, these condensers are already emerging in the European cities, in which these buildings contain multiple leisure functions, community services, libraries and informal spacing with the walls of one building. Furthermore, multiplicity is not only referring to hybrid aspect of functions but is also addressing the multiple cultural communities, aged groups and social classes.

The organization of the chair provides a theoretical framework in which all participants of the studio were divided and appointed to a specific research topic. The themes consisted out of City, Connection, People and Power, which got distributed to subgroups of three persons and eventually subdivided in themes related to the general topic. Subsequently, our group was responsible for the theme People, whereas, every individual was responsible for a subtheme, which, in my case, was the topic of bottom-up. The studio focused its attention on two site specific conditions in Copenhagen and The Hague and students were enabled to choose between the cities after the completion of the research part based on the research findings and personal interest. This part shifted towards the social-economic status in the neighborhood of Morgenstond. Investigating the actual people who live in the neighbourhood is of essential importance. In this graduation studio, the public building is more conceived as a community building which serves communities rather than a public building that represents high cultural value on a city scale. Consequently, the research concluded gentrification already made its way on site.

## **2 Relationship of the Studio and the students graduation topic**

After the first research phase, I've made the choice to design a building for the city of The Hague. The site-specific conditions such as post-war rigid urban scheme, combined with unilateral poor social cohesion, and the future agenda of gentrification, offered for me an interesting framework. Due to the emerging process of gentrification subjected to the neighbourhood of Morgenstond (the main site), this new public building will have to deal with a new co-existence of several new population's groups, contrasts in society and differences in social classes. New tensions in contemporary society demands for a type of public building that deals with these issues and enables the empowerment of interchangeability between different groups and leisure classes. Within this framework of conditions the new public building is considered as a device of interchangeability of a wide range cultural activity and between contrasts in society in terms of age, social class, high and low culture. And which can offer a new layer of cultural richness in the society and the building. Furthermore, the building should contradict the current modern condition of function divisions and should plead for a building that merges with borders of the existing urban lay-out and landscape. How should a public building act in the process of gentrification and densification? How can architecture facilitate interchangeability between different groups in society? How should the site in The Hague fit in the future developments of gentrification?



**3. Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.**

The approach of inquiry regarding the research topic of 'People' moved the group into the direction of the social, economical and cultural status of the citizens of the city. By investigating this subject on multiple territorial and scale levels, the site-specific conditions of the actual future use and users of the public building could be identified. Derived from the research phase, the ambition of interchangeability of the new future model becomes relevant. The question formed the prominent design and research topic to answer the question of which architectural composition is able to facilitate this ambition of the exchange and empowering of different cultural and economic milieu's in one building.

The question of how these architectural elements needs to be shaped is supported by the theoretical research conducted in the seminar's courses. The research results pointed out some prerequisites that proved to be highly valuable for the design of the spaces of exchange. So, the landscape of interchangeability must contain the property of activity centered approach of social spaces rather than human-centered. For the building this means that the spaces of exchange must contain the property that different activities become attractive for each visitor. Consequently, these spaces ought to be designed so several activities of different zones can take place in these 'common grounds' of interchangeability. From the perspective of interchangeability, the architectural objects (structural/architectural) must primarily emphasize the activity in which the socio-cultural milieus are not immediately relevant for engaging with the space. It is at this point where shared engagement, with a common enactive sign, that social connections are established and exchanged. Therefore, it is important to note that the design of these elements shouldn't be done in a way that behavior is fixed and predictable but should attain a degree of freedom and flexibility. This notion was translated in a study of architectural elements that on hand encourage and invite informal activities, but simultaneously does not fix the function to much by its shape. Still a degree of flexibility should be provided by the architectural form. With some theoretical conditions laid out to the design process of these spaces began. The first method of accomplishing these properties was to filter each type of program of each zone in order to arrange the potential of flexible activity centered spaces. Sketching, 3D-modeling and modelmaking were the first instruments that were used to test the potentials of exchange.

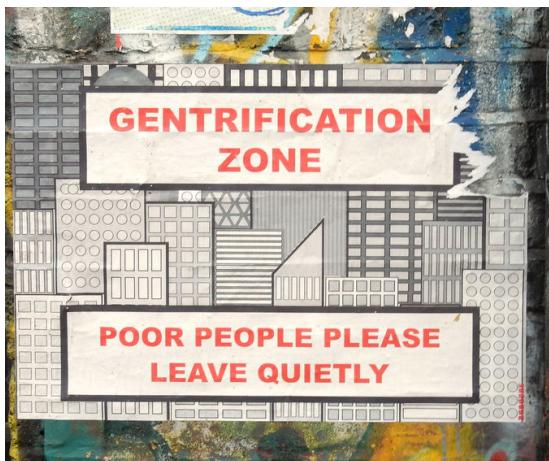
The lockdown caused by the Corona-virus limited the amount of design methods usually available for students. Hence, modelmaking and testing scale to scale becomes highly difficult. Therefore, the technique of collage became a new valuable method in determining the atmospheres, scales and typologies of the in between spaces of the landscape. Via this technique you must carefully compose spaces that exist of material and light, and after composing generates a model for reflection. Each image proposes solution and new problems or subjects for debate.



#### **4/5 The relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project results.**

The rapid shifting demographic condition within cities and neighbourhoods, caused by the process of gentrification, is not only bound by the borders of The Hague. Neighborhood-improvement occurs on a nation-wide scale, in which post-war neighbourhoods, predominantly designed with the modernistic ideology, undergo the process of gentrification. The graduation inquiry identifies on one hand the poor social cohesion and the unilateral demographic situation and on the other poorly performing public spaces and now quality of sustainability. Reasons enough for municipalities and regulators to improve the conditions. However, several precedents illustrate that gentrification resulted in the displacement of current inhabitants as a result of increasing house prices. The paradoxical effect of gentrification causes better quality of public space, sustainable housing and more densification, but is also responsible for the loss of diversity, cultural mixture and communities. The recognition of governments that with the current policy they are displacing the current communities and inhabitants and affordable housing for these groups. This policy now results, in the case of The Hague, in strict economical borders of new and old inhabitants, rather than a new mix. For future gentrifications processes the notion of interchangeability of public buildings possess opportunities to help and facilitate this process and create a common ground for the exchange of culture, sport and knowledge.

The research phase experienced one fundamental ethical feature worth discussing. The proposed public building, and within the philosophy of the graduation studio, is to contain as many function and multiplicity to a degree that remains qualitative. Research in a social-economic tends to rank certain people, communities, target groups and other layers of society in categories and groups. Since, quite a lot of information is about the financial situation and new housing development are based upon certain target groups. Therefor it remains crucial to design the public building as an activity-based place, rather than a people-based building, since activity is not based on socio-economical status.



Pamphlets of the notion of gentrifications experienced by the neighbourhood