

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Personal information	
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Architecture / Spolia	
Main mentor	Vermeulen, Prof.ir. P.E.L.J.C.	Urban Architecture
Second mentor	Hachez, A., Jennen, Ir. P.H.M	Urban Architecture AE+T
Argumentation of choice of the studio	My choice to participate in this studio is based on the philosophy of the studio to see architecture as a tool to make improvements on the scale of the urban landscape. I'm concerned with the connection between architecture and the urban landscape which is often neglected because of the habit of architects to create spaces that are individual bodies in itself instead of 'ecologies' that can enrich each other. The studio seems to provide a space to carefully consider these connections. Also, Anderlecht fits with my personal preference to work on environments where change feels like a necessity rather than a luxury.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Education and Research Institute for Textiles and Ceramics in Cureghem.
Goal	
Location:	South of Cureghem, Anderlecht, Brussels.
The posed problem,	<p>The main problem on the site is the absence of spaces that provide a base for social belonging, care and public identity. In Kureghem, the absence of these spaces generates a lack responsibility for space. If space does not care for humans, humans do not care for space. Also, the lack of social belonging limits human needs, such as the exchange and appropriation of thoughts, emotions and materials.</p> <p>First of all, there exists a culturally diverse community that might not feel supported by the material quality of their surroundings. Simple examples are the acoustic comfort of Goujons or the park furniture. As a result, people do not feel that they belong to the public spaces and tend to introvert themselves to their interiors. Apart from some male-dominated cafes and grocery shops, the outdoor public spaces seem to be care-free. The lack of care and belonging prove them appropriate spaces to dump rubbish or improvise temporary uses.</p>

	<p>It could be argued that this introverted character is part of certain cultural identities. Life closed in the domestic interior behind borders is more common to some cultures from the middle-east. However, the spatial organization of the social housing, the garages, the industry of Rotor and small craft-industries, often misfits the functional needs. For the unknown dweller the spaces are unreadable which does not add value to the public life. The improvised and introverted character is on one hand part of the identity, and on the other hand a barricade for the potential of the site to develop.</p> <p>The second problem is that the neighborhood has a lot of knowledge and know-how about waste materials (Rotors reuse industry + shop) and craft education (schools) in the neighborhood, which is invisible and underappreciated. There is the innovative industry of Rotor. A company that is an important innovator in re-using and upcycling waste material. Rotors presence, together with the presence of other education institutes, creates the uncanny feeling of an urban landscape that carries innovation but has no space to breath, exchange and appropriate these qualities.</p>
research questions and	<p>I would like to research the argument that; if space start to care for humans, humans will start to care for space. Therefore, space needs to start articulating the way it cares for humans. I believe this articulation of care comes to being when the expression and character of space is readable from the bordering spaces. Therefore, 'the borders, the façades, the walls' are key in expressing spatial appropriation and the possibility to exchange human needs such as thoughts, emotions and knowledge and materials.</p> <p>Main research questions: How can a series of new public and educational spaces, <i>specifically in the borders between outside and inside</i>, create an expression and understanding of spatial appropriation, social belonging and exchange?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be defined as a border or edge, what do they consist of, and are they culturally defined? - How are the borders on the site defined? <p>Design related question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do public and educational spaces and their 'borders, walls, facades' relate to the expression of spatial appropriation, social belonging and exchange? - How do borders respond to the introduced and existing program?
design assignment in	

<p>which these result.</p>	<p>The design assignment consists of the design of an educational and research institutes about material restauration and reuse. It offers public spaces, such as a canteen/cafe and small library. These public spaces are essential in connecting the institute with bordering public spaces, such as the street and the park. The design institute will be closely connected to Rotor, so material exchange and upcycling can benefit both education and retail. Therefore, Rotor will move to the ground floor of their existing building. And the institute is located partly against Rotor.</p> <p>The institute also consists of more private spaces, to work, learn and exchange thought. This challenge is to design spaces that contemporary education in craft, and thus is not made up out of traditional classrooms. Therefore, case studies need to be consulted. Also, in order to allow researchers and students to temporarily use the institute, a small 'artist-in-residence' / student room facility will be situated inside the institute.</p> <p>Context-wise, the spaces will be connected to the public park and the new institute courtyard located east of the existing building of Rotor. In order to create a continuous meaning in the design, these outdoor spaces will have to react to the urban changes and thus redesigned. But also, larger connections of movement is important for the entrance and visibility of Rotor and the institute. The entrance of the institute and Rotor will most likely be shared so the outside gesture of the institute signifies its meaning.</p> <p>Program-wise, it needs to be considered how the main end-users (Rotors, Goujons residents, visitors, students, researchers) can all benefit from the spatial intervention. The different user groups, and their spatial and emotional needs, should benefit from the new spaces and borders. To give Rotor more face there will be a shop front of their material shop, to the street side.</p> <p>Material-wise, the border research focusses on the brick culture that is present in the largest part of the existing borders. This is already discussed in the research, but will be a continuous investigation throughout the design phase, as the design assignment alters the existing borders.</p> <p>Last, with the program reacting to material waste and upcycling, it would be awkward and strange to ignoring the problem of building waste in the design assignment. Therefore, I would like to take the upcycled products of Rotor into account and other methods of re-using building materials such as bricks etc. to make sustainable choices in the materiality.</p>
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Process

Method description

Method per question:

What can be defined as a border or edge, what do they consist of, and are they culturally defined?

- Literature on border conditions, cultures and borders, but also material construction of tectonics in facades and walls.

How are the borders on the site defined?

- Site photography and drawing.

How do public and educational spaces and their 'borders, walls, facades' relate to the expression of spatial appropriation, social belonging and exchange?

- Literature on the functional and aesthetic expression of borders, walls, facades, in architecture and landscape architecture.
- Example studies from case-studies of brick facades.

The design phase will focus on:

- Case-study research of surface areas and uses of educational spaces in craft education (dutch: kunst academies and vakscholen)
- Modelling, and making prototypes of different interventions based on the outcome of the research
- Experimenting with the possibility of reusing building materials in the construction by drawings and models

Literature and general practical preference

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Tilley, C. (2006). *Handbook of material culture* (Repr. 2009 ed.). London etc.: SAGE.

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Warnier, J. (2006). Inside and outside: surfaces and containers. In C. Tilley W. Keane & S. Küchler *Handbook of material culture* (pp. 186-196). London: SAGE Publications Ltd doi: 10.4135/9781848607972.n1

Wingender, J. (Ed.). (2016). *Brick: An exacting material*. Amsterdam: Architectura & Natura Press.

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The relation between the project and the studio topic is mostly situated in altering the spolia of existing structures and borders. On the urban scale it is related in the way that it tries to make an urban gesture / improvement through an architectural intervention. The theme of spolia of the unstable city is also addressed by redesigning the park and making some borders more 'porous', allowing for more vibrant interactions of functions and social interactions. In relation to the master track the project reacts to the sustainability issues of material re-use and green structure improvement (park) as discussed in the Architectural Sustainability and Aesthetic lectures. Furthermore, in its methods it is continuous of my previous studios of Interiors and Form Studies. By this I mean, in thinking-through-making didactics. Also, the geological part and urban design has some similarities with my previous studies in landscape architecture in Wageningen. All in all, I find this really interesting and see the design as an effort, or experiment, to combine these practices.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

Socially, I believe it is relevant, as we have a kind of a crisis in terms of the privatisation of public spaces in cities and more controlled spaces in cities. Control relates to territories and borders. Aiming to create spaces for the public, with a feeling of social belonging and care therefore protests against this trend. The design makes a new, more public border to a park. In terms of landscape theory this is interesting; it reacts to questions of what a contemporary public park should be. The

project also looks at materiality, geology and geography from early in the research. It aims to combine landscape and architecture theory in a design. In the past years the uprising of landscape urbanism has been caused by the lack of urban strategy and bad ecological infrastructure. In my project the urban design takes the position of not proposing a masterplan or rigorous new green structure. On the contrary the approach fits more in the framework of punctual interventions and local transformation. It therefore is related to the literature of *The Architect As Bricoleur* by I. Scalbert. In this work he is inspired by Bruno Latour's ideas of the architect that shall be *premodern*; making the best of both old and new techniques and embracing circumstance and accident in his craft, and therefore it is better to add, tamper and transform the contexts that lie before the architect. Much earlier in the 1960s', in the essay *Transformation* of Hermann Czech, this position was even argued more radically.¹⁶ In this essay he perceives the masterplan as something that can't have any influence on decisions made on the smaller scale, therefore urban life can only be long-lasting by constantly transforming the smaller scale.