

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners ([Examcommissie-BK@tudelft.nl](mailto:Examcommissie-BK@tudelft.nl)), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information		
Name	Alex Marcel Kirschstein	
Student number	5362156	
Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Architecture_Glanceurs/Glanceuses	
Main mentor	Paul Vermeulen	Architecture
Second mentor	Lex van Deudekom	Building Technology
Third Mentor	Leeke Reinders	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The graduation studio of Urban Architecture encourages to investigate and work with complex urban environments on a multitude of scales. While there is a general theme to follow, it still provides the liberty to bring personal fascinations into the architectural research project.</p> <p>This year's main topic of <i>Gleaning</i> is one that I can greatly identify with as a designer, but also as an individual. To discover 'things' that were left behind within a specific site, material and immaterial, and to reassemble these into new narratives, inspires a methodology that may lead to innovative outcomes with site-specific qualities hard to achieve otherwise.</p> <p>The cooperation with the belgian design office <i>Rotor</i> further intrigued me to choose this studio, as I imagine their specialisation in deconstructing buildings will help me to incorporate this into my personal project.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Cultures of Industrial Appropriation
Goal	
Location:	Boschstraatkwartier, Maastricht NL
The posed problem,	The Boschstraatkwartier in the north of Maastricht is strongly characterised by the remains of the site's former industry, which began to thrive in the beginning of the 20th century. However, production gradually moved

	<p>away and, apart from a paper factory that is still in use, all other facilities, warehouses, and the Bassin with its canal were abandoned. After years of decay, the municipality launched the <i>Belvedere</i> master plan that aims to revive the district through private developments such as a student hotel, two cinemas, housing schemes and an adjacent park. While the city expresses ambitious goals related to sustainability and social inclusivity, it is questionable if these goals can ever be met with the solely market-driven urbanism the planners resort to. In contrast, the Landbouwbelang, a former grain storage along the Maas that was squatted in 2001, has established itself as an alternative cultural and social hub with regular exhibitions, workshops and events for the public. While its existence has always been at risk, their forthcoming eviction and displacement seems closer than ever since the municipality released a high-priced tender for private redevelopment of the site in the Autumn of 2021. And, although city representatives argue that selling the riverside plot is unavoidable in order to finance other infrastructural investments within the area, they have expressed no interest in preserving the unique cultural and social qualities of <i>Landbouwbelang</i> that cannot be found elsewhere in Maastricht. However, a city that strives for inclusivity and diversity should actively ensure space for social forms, such as squats, “that point to different understandings of the home as a site of cooperation, emancipation and self-organisation” (Vasudevan, 2017). The current political will and the mechanisms of neoliberal urbanism at work will leave no space for their existence otherwise. Moreover, the same tender states that (partial) reuse of structures on site is preferable, but that demolition and new construction is just as possible. A short glance at the first, exemplary schemes for the site further reveals that heritage preservation is indeed just seen as an optional extra. The industrial heritage of northern Maastricht, which has been part of its collective identity for more than a century, is too under threat and it seems like a race against time to preserve what is left before it disappears indefinitely.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>If the Landbouwbelang as an institution is displaced from its current location, how could it be reintegrated into the ongoing development plans of the Boschstraatkwartier?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What value do squats and alternative cultural/social hubs add to an urban environment in general? What value does the Landbouwbelang provide to Maastricht?</li> <li>- What shape should the Landbouwbelang as an institution take architecturally and programatically when reassembled into a new arrangement?</li> <li>- How can architecture stimulate <i>Landbouwbelang</i> and its programme to become more accessible to a larger share of Maastricht's residents, while also retaining its alternative character?</li> <li>- As urban renewal is the reason for the Landbouwbelang's displacement, how can a cultural/social hub be designed to make it more resilient?</li> </ul> <p>What materials could be <i>gleaned</i> from the existing industrial buildings, likely destined for demolition otherwise, (Intermediate Hall and Clay Factory) and reused for construction on a nearby site?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What parts of these buildings should be left on site to be adapted by future users/developers?</li> <li>- How can a site-specific aesthetic derive from historical building components that are reimagined in new ways and be enhanced through details in design?</li> <li>- Once building components are disassembled from their original location, can reassembly be interpreted rather as a continuous action than a finished project?</li> </ul>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The aim is to rethink the LBB as a cultural/social centre and to design a proposal on a new site within the Boschstraatkwartier. The proposal should clearly respond to the lifestyle of the LBB's current residents allowing self-organisation, the possibility to live and work as a community in one building or cluster, and, as an alternative to squatting, a co-operative ownership model that ensures their independence. Further, architectural design and programme should provide space for and empower a wide audience of citizens to come together, cooperate on projects, debate, and through this become</p>

a critical part of social infrastructure in the neighbourhood and for Maastricht. Moreover, the design should respond to the collectively developed urban plan, paying particular attention to the publicly-accessible ecology corridor along the water and the integration of place-makers serving as more temporary urban elements. The proposal should respond to the industrial heritage of the site and make use of existing structures on the site if possible. Finally, the share of reused components 'mined' from industrial buildings in the project's vicinity should be maximised and planned in a circular logic with future deconstruction in mind.

## Process

### Method description

Collective Research on the Landbouwbelang began with understanding the site's heritage through analytical drawings that revealed environmental changes and over time. On multiple site visits we then made photographic studies that document the building and its appropriation by the squatters community throughout the past decades. We identified traces of inhabitation in order to reveal usage patterns and conducted interviews with inhabitants and other individuals that are involved in the project. Building on this collective body of research I will extend the analysis of spatial relations of Landbouwbelang and the surrounding urban area through a "soft map" that highlights networks of actors, organisations and spaces involved. Through this I expect to find and capture relevant information that places the Landbouwbelang into the larger context of Maastricht, ultimately showcasing its irreplaceable value to the city.

As deconstruction and reuse is a major topic of this thesis, the aim is to build an analytical model that demonstrates how *gleaned* building components can be taken down and reused on the new site. The scale will be large enough to experiment and later demonstrate how the assigned program can be unified together with the users' lifestyles and the materials from deconstruction at hand.

Finally, I will continue and process the ongoing literature review to help strengthen my argument and the methodological approach towards the project. Besides themes discussed in the literature mentioned below, key terms to explore and integrate are *Assemblage*, *Actor-Network-Theory*, and *The Just City*.

## Literature and general practical preference

- Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2013). *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. Taylor & Francis.
- Brenner, N., Madden, D. J., & Wachsmuth, D. (2011). Assemblage urbanism and the challenges of critical urban theory. *City*, 15(2), 225–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2011.568717>
- Easterling, K. (2021). *Medium Design: Knowing How to Work on the World*. Verso.
- Harvey, D. (2019). *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (Reprint ed.). Verso.
- Hebel, D. E., Wisniewska, M. H., & Heisel, F. (2014). *Building from Waste: Recovered Materials in Architecture and Construction* (1st ed.). Birkhäuser.
- Heisel, F., & Hebel, D. E. (2021). *Urban Mining und kreislaufgerechtes Bauen*. Fraunhofer Irb Stuttgart.
- McFarlane, C. (2011). Assemblage and critical urbanism. *City*, 15(2), 204–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604813.2011.568715>
- Panta Rhei Collaborative. (2021, November 26). *The City as a University*. Issuu. [https://issuu.com/pantarheicollaborative/docs/prcxfloating\\_finalbooklet\\_issuu](https://issuu.com/pantarheicollaborative/docs/prcxfloating_finalbooklet_issuu)
- Petrescu, D., & Trogal, K. (2017). *The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Sennett, R. (2012). *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*. Penguin.
- Vasudevan, A. (2017). *The Autonomous City: A History of Urban Squatting*. Verso.

## 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 approach to my graduation project is strongly related to the studio topic of *Gleaning* as my approach is to 'harvest' material and immaterial value from the city that is currently overlooked by many. Surprisingly, I also see a strong continuity in topics beginning from my MSc1 studio that dealt with self-build housing, the History Thesis for which I researched about cohousing. In an elective course I designed a

pavilion according to circular material principles and as part of the Architectural Ethnography elective I conducted interviews with a cohousing community and processed my findings in the form of drawings that reflect spatial appropriation. In another studio I designed dwelling units that would bring living and working together, which is also a topic touched upon in my graduation project.

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

The result of my graduation project will demonstrate the necessity and benefit of alternative cultures in urban space and will present an approach on how we can integrate them spatially and socially within the larger framework of society and the built environment. It is important that architecture is imagined beyond the building itself, but already has social struggles and ownership possibilities in mind, so that an effective approach can be found. Further, the construction sector is currently aiming towards a transition to a more circular economy. My proposal will provide a concrete response to an existing site in Maastricht and will demonstrate the potential beyond the mere ecological benefits reuse in architecture can have.