

Response-ability: building together as performative political practice



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Introduction

Wayfaring – reading guide

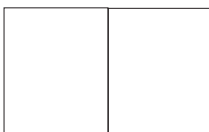
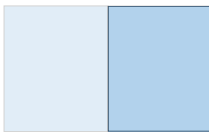
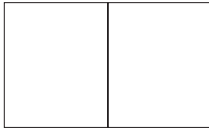
In this document, I am concerned with *building together*. Building together, for me, is about both how we relate to existing space (how we use existing spaces, and how these spaces afford, or obstruct, those uses) *and* about building new spaces. Both of these, after all, are about responding to the environment you are in, with the tools and materials that are available. And responding to the environment that we are in in a meaningful way is made very difficult in a neoliberal economy, because everything has to have a place and a specific function, start and end date (this I discuss more in the paper). Building together is about changing that, by relating to the spaces we inhabit in another way, in which the distinctions between finished and unfinished, between durable and ephemeral, between representation and experience (what I call performativity), between public and domestic are somehow stretched and played with.

The examples that I use in the paper and in the case study analysis are not all strictly “architectural” projects – some could be called art or landscape – but they all respond to the environment in a specific way, and I try to learn from that here. I think (or: hope) that building together is a form of doing architecture in a way that is more responsible, response-able, and I hope that if more people would practice architecture in this way, the architectural profession could contribute a bit more to making society a fairer, better place. This is why I also think that it is important to frame this also in terms of ‘architecture’.

Parallel to my researching and designing, I am also working with the Rotterdams Wijktheater (RWT) on a project in the neighbourhood that is also my design location. Although my experiences and conversations there shape my understanding of IJsselmonde and have influenced my writings in this document, I did not include the RWT explicitly in this project. That is mostly because the project at RWT has its own pace; it is concerned with stories around poverty in IJsselmonde and is only in its starting phase, while I already need to have a finished design soon. But in these last two months I plan to organise one or more walks with inhabitants in IJsselmonde and we will hopefully work together on that, so that it can be part of both this graduation and the long-duration project at RWT.

Since I started my graduation project, I have walked paths that I did not know before. I have learned and thought about participation, care, responsibility, materiality, ephemerality, inequality, politics, architecture, and more. Some of these thoughts have found their way into this document. Although I would do things otherwise if I were to start again (I would have wanted to spend more time on site, walking and mapping, and maybe less time writing and defining, which would have changed the methodology and contents) I am happy with this document. It feels like the condensation of my thought movements over the last months. It also feels like the start of many new movements and routes – one of which will result in the design that I present in a few months’ time. I hope you will enjoy reading it, that it will spark movement in thought and body.

This document consists of 5 parts (with distinct lay-outs).



- A research paper, in which I question how the material conditions affect the social aspects of building together, and propose that this happens through balancing 5 fields of tension. The methodology used here is literature analysis and case study analysis. (1)
- A short description of each of these fields of tension, in which I relate them to the case studies. These tensions are never resolved: any answer will always be site-specific and context-dependent, which is why it helps to use them to look at specific situations or cases. The methodology used here is literature analysis and conceptual analysis. (2)
- A site analysis of IJsselmonde, my design location, which I use to test the usability of the fields of tension developed in the paper, and which is the place where I explore how these tensions can be made productive in a specific situation in the design part of my project. It discusses how social relations and the physical space of IJsselmonde are related, now, and as imagined in the past. This is the groundwork for exploring how the design of a physical space could influence social relations, which is the question in my design project. The methodology used in this part is walking-writing-thinking (explained on ppxxx). *One version of this analysis is now finished and included in this paper. It is still very much based on my experience. I plan to take more walks through IJsselmonde, with inhabitants and people who work there, and this will of course influence my understanding of this place. It will then also lead to a new and richer version of this site analysis at P4.* (3)
- A case study analysis in which I use the five fields of tension as ‘parameters’ to analyse specific situations. All case studies can be seen as situated instances in which the tensions are balanced in a specific way. Based on each case study analysis, I will draw the architectural methods that are used to achieve this balance. These methods are then usable in my design as well. The methodology used here is case study analysis. *This is mostly related to my design process and is not finished yet. It will be finished at P4.* (4)
- A reflection in which I describe how the research is embedded in and related to the design project. The methodology used here is research on design. *As the design process is in an early state at the moment this reflection will be finished one week before p4.* (5)

The first 2 points (paper and fields of tension) make up the ‘research’ part of this project. This is where I develop the theoretical framework that I use to analyse case studies, develop architectural tools and methods, analyse the site and to design. I understand this as the part that is finished and graded now (April 2019). The last 3 points (site analysis, case study analysis and reflection) discuss where the research ‘lands’: this is where it is connected to the specific design location and to the design. This last part is therefore still becoming, still unfinished – it will only be finished at P4, because I am developing it simultaneously with my design. I think this is part of the second research grade (how the research is related to the design) that I get during p4/p5. For me, the way research and design are related is because I develop a way of thinking (and specifically these 5 tensions) in my research that I use as my guiding themes in my design; and that I use to better understand the context of IJsselmonde that I work in.

1. Research paper

Building together as performative political practice

Se hace camino al andar (The path is made while walking) – Antonio Machado

Abstract By building together people do not just build what they build; they also build relationships, become inhabitants, develop skills, and engage in direct, performative, non-representative political action. How do the material conditions and methods of construction affect the social and the political aspects of building together? Through parallel literature and case study analysis, this paper proposes that building together involves balancing 5 fields of tension. These fields of tension can be made productive when looking at, organising or better understanding collaborative building processes. They are never resolved; but always situated and context-dependent. Practices of building together find a balance between pure representation and direct action (performativity); between improvisation and scriptedness throughout the building process and use; between publicness and domesticity and between ephemerality and durability. By arguing that building together means more than creating a physical structure, this paper starts from an understanding of architecture as an emergent, collaborative practice that includes both responding to existing situations at hand and adding new structures. Architecture can be a tool that gives more agency and power to inhabitants. People and their surroundings influence each other so that the people become inhabitants and the surroundings become inhabitable. Engaging in the bodily action of building something together with the materials at hand can be seen as a direct, performative, political action. These kinds of building projects often happen in crisis situations or as temporary festivities. I argue in this paper that they carry potential to *do it otherwise*, to anticipate and perform a different status quo, in which people relate to each other in a caring and collaborative way. By creating a 'different practical landscape' it can be understood as a political action that creates a more inclusive public sphere: one that is not just based on supposedly rational, linguistic communication, but on doing something, moving, responding together. It is direct, not-representative action: opposed to the many architectural projects just *represent* certain values but do not actually support *living* or *performing* them. All of this matters because it gives more agency to the beings who use their spaces. Gaining more agency and by seeing the possibility of 'doing it otherwise' goes against polarisation and violent abstractions and helps to create another, caring, common, collaborative future.

Keywords building together, performative practice, improvisation, public space, micro politics, spatial tactics, inhabitants, non-representational theory, participation, alternative spatial practices

Introduction

Building together means to act together, to respond to each other, the surroundings, the materials at hand. Together with your neighbours, your friends, your family or with people unknown before, "brought together by divisive matters of concern" (Latour 2005, via Hyde, 2017). It is a risky practice, full negotiations, in need of care and attention. Or, in Haraway's words: "'With' demands works, speculative invention, and ontological risks... [and] [n]o one knows how to do that in advance of coming together in compositions" (Haraway 2008, via Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 137). Building together can mean that people come together, gain agency over their surroundings, learn skills and respond differently than before to their environment and each other. It can be a political action; the creation of a small instance of a world as it could be, a collaborative, a caring world.

Building together happens in many forms and places. These practices are by nature very local: they are concerned with the immediate surroundings and issues at hand. That brings up a problem: if they are political, if they are architectural actions, how to understand them in relation to each other, and how to understand and learn from their architectural and political nature? What are things that you have to relate to (even if it is implicitly) if you are to build together?

There might be many answers to this question, dependent on who writes and thinks, on how and where. Following Hélène Frichot (2016) the answer is successful 'as long as it works' – it does not matter too much what the answer *is*, but what it *does*. In this case, this exercise is successful if it provides a 'tool for thinking', if it makes connections between (thought) practices where previously there were none. If it helps to relate various instances of building together, in different places, built and unbuilt, by drawing out common themes or tensions.

It matters to think about building together, I believe, because it is a way of working

that could give power to the people who use and inhabit spaces, that allows us to learn skills and gain agency; rather than outsourcing our habitat and leaving 'building' to the complex web of developers, municipalities, contractors and sometimes architects. It sees architecture as a performed and embodied practice and not as a representation of power, capital or as an asset. Building together is a way of 'doing it otherwise': it is no big critique voiced in traditional political terms, but it is a temporary, always unstable assemblage of site and people around something we care for: the spaces we inhabit. It is an object, an issue, that "bind all of us in ways that map out a public space profoundly different from what is usually recognised under the label of 'the political' (Latour, 2005, p. 15). Building together is another way of doing politics, a form of direct political action instead of just representation through voting, one that asks for care and connection, for response-ability¹ rather than distance, experts and facts (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012; Stengers, 2005).

In this paper I try to understand building together as an architectural and political practice, that alters the ways in which we relate to each other, to the space we inhabit and to the political. My guiding research question is *How can the material conditions and methods of construction relate to or affect the social and political aspects of building together?* Through a literature analysis of writings about practices that in some way build together (most of which start from feminist points of view) and through testing and applying my ideas to case studies and my own design site, I draw out 5 fields of tensions. These tensions are eternally unresolved: their answer always depends on the specifics of a situation. They can be made productive by using them as 'parameters' to look at or understand case studies, projects or practices. In this paper I do this by including a section called 'from thinking to practicing' in each part, which applies the thought and tension developed in the text above on the specific situation of IJsselmonde, my design site. A more extensive elaboration on these tensions and the case studies that I applied them to can be found in another part of this research document.

In what follows I firstly position 'building together' as architecture. By focusing on the process rather than the object of architecture, it draws upon understanding architecture as *performative* (direct, lived, experienced, embodied) rather than just *representational* practice. The first field of tension lies between performativity and representation. I then focus on what this means for our understanding of space, its inhabitants and their relation. How do people actually build together: what does a site afford, and how can people respond to it? I concentrate on the tensions between *scriptedness* and *improvisation*, during the building process and in existing spaces. Lastly, I develop an understanding of building together as a political action that has to find a balance between *publicness* and *domesticity* and between *ephemerality* (related to immediate, temporary, local, 'marginal' action) and *durability* (more easily associated with conventional architectural practice).

Building together as architecture

Practices that engage in building together as architecture see the building process not as a time in which a previously designed plan becomes real, but as a site of emergence, that informs and changes whatever is built in the end, and as a space of encounter, between people, materials, a site. muf architecture/art calls this "premature gratification": by not planning everything in advance, but by creating a place for (shared) pleasure from which you can get in the position to develop, build and think further. In a project in Birmingham, with a group called Law, Learning and Leisure, "their first architectural act was not to secure the roof or the structure, but to install a sauna. The idea here is that the gratification of the whole completed project is experienced prematurely: up close and personal in the wellbeing of the body relaxing in heat (...) It is the antithesis of 1940s and 1950s town planning." (Shonfield, 2001, p. 17)

The conventional architectural building process is a timespan in which the building site is closed-off for everyone but construction workers. It is completely separated from the period before building – which includes architects, constructors,

municipalities and occasionally a citizen meeting to ask questions and comment on the plans - and from the period after use, when the responsibility of the contractor ends² and the building is handed over to its future inhabitants or users. Speaking in muf's terms, if 'premature gratification' is "like starting your meal with the best bit", this kind of planning means that "the smoked salmon and asparagus rarely made their presence felt and the dry outlines of ghostly place settings, viewed from an immense distance, were the only sense of meals to come." (Shonfield, 2001, pp. 17–18)



1. Assemble studio builds together and does it in non-conventional ways; and their buildings also represent these values by the materials & aesthetics that they use. They speak the languages of community work and of architecture, of performativity and representation. . See pp 62 for a case study analysis & see pp 25 for a discussion on speaking both languages. image source: assemblestudio.co.uk

When building together, then, the "construction site is no longer the place of uncertainty where the design contends with reality, but the context in which the project can be enriched by the unexpected opportunities that occur on site" (Constructlab, 2019). This means understanding architecture in a performative way: it is about what happens on site, rather than what is represented through a built object or drawn design. It goes against an influential tradition in architectural discourse that sees architecture's main role as "representative" (see figures 1, 2).

Kenneth Frampton is one of these theorists who understands architecture as essentially intentional and representative, as opposed to 'building', which for him is a means to an end and driven by economic forces. While it is tricky to use a specific writer to symbolise 'the other' discourse, I use Frampton's argument here to make clear how building together understands architecture differently than traditional architectural discourse. In Frampton's reading³ of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition* (1958), he uses her categories of work, labour and action to analyse architecture. Labour is cyclical, instrumental action for basic-self-preservation. Work on the other hand is the building of durable objects in the world. Action alludes to public life and politics. Frampton understands 'building' as a form of labour, while architecture is a form of 'work' that gives durability to the world and represents public values. Citing a discussion on vernacular architecture written by Loos, Frampton writes that

Loos was aware that, like the pure instrumentality of engineering, this rooted vernacular had nothing whatsoever to do with the traditionally representative role of architecture. (1979, p. 363)

Frampton understands architecture's "traditional role" as essentially *representative*. To him, the home built by the peasant that Loos describes is focussed on process, it is a means to an end, a work of labour. The church, on the other hand, is an artifice that represents the durability of human life in this world, it is an end in itself, a *work* of art. Building relates to the "how" of utility and process; architecture to the "what" of representation and reification (1979, p. 366). Frampton suggests that in modern, capitalist times we seem to have 'lost'⁴ this capacity for building artifices (architectures), and it is unclear if we will every 'return' to it:

Whether architecture, as opposed to building, will ever be able to *return* to the *representation* of collective value is a moot point. At all events, its *representative* role would have to be contingent on the establishment of a public realm in the political sense. (Frampton, 1979, p. 374)

Frampton seems to understand 'Architecture' as something separated from 'collective value' or 'the public realm'. It *represents* it, but does not *perform*, *live* or (*re*)*produce* it. These kinds of processes for him belong to the realm of building, not architecture. But is it not so that even the church, which he takes as an example of architecture that has become 'a representation', only means something because of the rituals and the everyday practices in many lives that it enables? Architecture is often used as a commodity: one that 'represents' certain values or that is 'iconic'. Its spaces become something abstract; what matters is its abstract value in relation to something external, not its actual use and impact on people's everyday routines. But "buildings only begin to make sense when considered through, and in, 'use'" (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017, p. 25). Representation is not the only thing that matters in architecture: how buildings can be experienced and used is important too. Building and architecture, the what and the how, cannot be separated – they are intimately intertwined.



2. The ARCH by ConstructLAB, a Berlin-based collective, is both representative and performative. The (temporary) wooden structure supports the development of a (permanent) artwork, an arch. See case studies and tensions.

From thinking to practicing

Understanding building together as architecture reveals a tension between representation and performativity. Performativity could also be called direct action or direct impact: it refers to what architecture *does* rather than what it *is*. There are many voices who think about architecture and space, and it is too easy to say that there are just two camps: one that thinks that architecture is representation, and one that is not interested in what architecture represents, only what it does on an immediate scale. But this tension between representation and performativity is something that everyone who builds or acts spatially takes a position in – even if that position is not articulated explicitly.

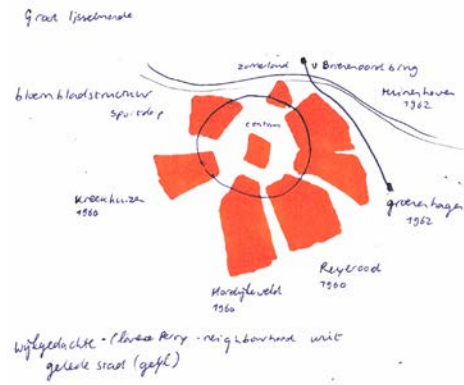
This field of tension is also *productive*: it helps to make sense of projects we want to build or understand. Looking at IJsselmonde, my design site, this tension helps to shed light on the relation between the physical and the social city. IJsselmonde was designed in the 60s and the plan was overlaid on the existing landscape structure of dikes and polders. The new plan was based on ideas of the “neighbourhood unit” (source [wijkgedachte](#)). But I believe these plans were more representational than performative: although the plan, when looked at from afar on the map, represents a flower that connects a centre, fanning out into 7 leaf-shaped smaller neighbourhoods. In this plan (figure 5) one could see the representation of a ‘neighbourhood structure’. But when walking through the neighbourhood these values do not seem to be fully reproduced or performed by the physical and social structures: the plan does not seem to work as planned. This is due to many things – budget cuts in the planting schemes (source), which turned all green space into prickly bushes that are easy to maintain; a lack of benches and social functions (see map); social inequality and poverty – and this is not to say that there is no social life whatsoever, like everywhere, people make do, and there are many neighbourhood initiatives like (...). But the relation between inhabitants and their surroundings is not really facilitated by the planning. The planning ideals only worked on a representational scale: on maps and policy presentations, but in reality it turns out that a community cannot be created by just making green spaces between houses.

Building together as (re)productive, responsive, relational practice

Understanding building together *as* architecture draws upon an understanding of architecture as walking, weaving or nesting, as put forward by mostly feminist scholars such as Tim Ingold (2008, 2013b, 2013a), Doina Petrescu (Blundell Jones, Petrescu, & Till, 2005; Petcou, Petrescu, & Clement, 2007; Petrescu, 2007b, 2007a) and many others (Altés Arlandis, 2018; Bouchain, 2013; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Rose, 2013; Schneider, 2017). They understand architecture more as a performative practice than as a representational object. Architecture can be more than a professionalised practice of constructors, building managers, develops and architects. It is also a relational practice of leaving traces and making spaces. “It is an architecture which speaks about space not as being contained by walls but as made of routes, paths and relationships.” (Petrescu, 2007b, p. 89).

In this understanding of architecture, a space and its users or inhabitants are intimately connected. As Ardener puts it: “behaviour and space are mutually dependent” (Ardener, 1981, p. 12 via Rose, 2013). Following Lefebvre (1991), Petrescu and Trogal also argue that “space is never something that simply comes into being and then goes on to exist, but is produced and reproduced through human – or social – interaction” (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017, p. 25).

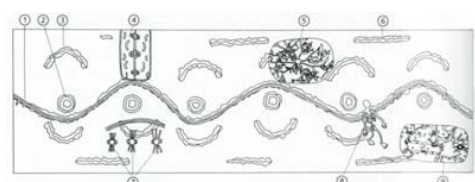
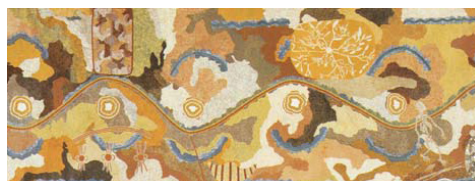
A clear example is the *path* (figure 3). A path is created by its active use – many feet walking over it prevent grass or trees from growing on the path, carving out the way. But if the path falls out of use, it will disappear. That walking, path-making, can exceed the immediate situation is shown by the example of the “songlines” (figures 4 and 5), the Aboriginal re-enactment of their founding myths through singing and walking, tracing their Ancestors’ paths who wrapped the world in a web of song and paths (Careri, 2017; Chatwin, 2012; Watson, The Yolngu community at Yirkala, & Wade Chambers, 1989). The re-enactment, re-



6. Groot IJsselmonde shaped like a flower, central functions in the middle, neighbourhoods/dwellings fan out.



3. Desire path in Amsterdam. Photo: Jan Dirk van den Brug (2011). Olifantenpaadjes: Kruislaan, Amsterdam.



1. Dreaming journey lines
2. Resting places in the Spirit journey
3. Windbreaks for the Corroboree Men
4. Old Man's Dreaming
5. View Dreaming
6. Running Water
7. Campsites
8. Death Spirit Figure
9. Sun and Moon Dreaming

4. upper figure: Napperby Death Spirit Dreaming, 1980. Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, c. 1939-84, assisted by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, b. c. 1943, Anmatjera, Papunya, Central Australia.

5. This painting, on a canvas 7 metres long, shows a central stylised songline and depicts many of the Dreamings which pass through the artist's country. One of these, Yam Spirit Dreaming portrays the full ecological associations of the yam plant. Images and text via <http://singing.indigenousknowledge.org/exhibit-5.html>

production, performing of, tending to or caring for a space is as important as the space itself. The example of the path also shows that this '(re)production of space' is not necessarily for humans alone: animals make paths, too; and many forest-paths are used by people and animals alike.

If this (re)production of space is architecture, it is something that is continuously created (or perhaps rather performed) by people walking, living their everyday lives (Petrescu, 2012). This means that the distinction between an architect as professional, and the residents of a building or neighbourhood is softened. All users co-create the spaces they are in, they become with the spaces they are in. This has impact on our understanding of the material situation at hand (the space, or the physical building) and on the social practice of the actors or inhabitants.

Becoming inhabitants

"I must always be/ building nests/ in a windy place"

- Audre Lorde, "Portrait"

Through (co-)constructing the spaces in which we live, we become inhabitants of those spaces. Inhabitation is something that emerges out of active engagement with the material situation at hand: it is like a skill that all of us have the possibility to acquire. Ingold (2008) provides a helpful model to relate to this idea in "When ANT meets SPIDER: Social theory for arthropods". ANT stands for *Actor Network Theory*. SPIDER is a new acronym, proposed by Ingold in this paper and stands for *Skilled Practice Involving Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness*. Ingold tells a tale of an ant and a spider, "both philosophically inclined", conversing on the forest floor. The ant understands the world as a network, in which all actants and objects are related equally. The spider criticises that, arguing that it is a misconception to claim that all objects and act-ants are equal entities, and that 'agency' is an autonomous force. Instead, Ingold argues through the spider that agency *emerges* from the "skilled action-perception of an organism that inhabits a particular milieu" (C. Knapett & Malafouris, 2008, p. xvi), like the spider and her web. The web is not an entity, as the Actor Network Theory would represent it, but a condition for agency to emerge. "The world, for me [the spider], is not an assemblage of heterogenous bits and pieces but a tangle of threads and pathways." (Ingold, 2008, p. 212). We can develop and practice the skills to respond to the environment we inhabit in such a way that agency can emerge.

A clear example is the practice of Andy Goldsworthy. He responds to the environment he encounters, a landscape full of things, rocks and plants he knows intimately. Through that responsiveness, he is able to make small interventions: collecting leaves of a particular colour and type and arranging them in a circle; collecting iron-rich stone to turn a puddle red. Even though the interventions are small, they have an almost magical quality (figure 7). Goldsworthy actively inhabits the spaces he is in. This requires developing skill and knowledge (of landscape, plants, stones, trees) – so he can become to respond to his habitant, alter it, become an inhabitant. While this is not an architectural example, but one belonging to landscape/art, it shows how responsiveness to the landscape can create new things, which also bears potential for doing architecture.

In contemporary cities, however, it seems increasingly difficult to change our habitat, to change the houses in which we live, to really inhabit them. They become things we use – temporarily – rather than things we make, live with, and respond to. At most, we can change the colour of the walls or 'features' like the kitchen or the bathroom – but mostly, building/constructing/changing these houses is something that only 'professionals' can do. This, I think, is mostly because we live in a neoliberal economy in which companies and industries have a massive influence that influences even our most everyday practices. Everything is professionalised and privatised.

Of course, even if it is difficult, practices of inhabiting the city already happen on different scales, and in all cities. In Rotterdam, an example of this is the widespread practice of making "geveltuintjes" (figure 8), organised by inhabitants, and often subsidised by the municipal government. By making a small garden on the



7. Floating Hole Loughborough, Leicestershire, September 1986. Photo: Andrew Goldsworthy (1986). via <https://www.goldsworthy.cc.gla.ac.uk/>



8. After having made a facade garden with our neighbours in May, we harvested foods and shared dinner at the end of August, inhabiting the sidewalk by treating it as a place for a dinner party.

sidewalk, the sidewalk becomes a place for inhabitation, for meeting neighbours, for staying instead of just passing by. A garden requires regular attention and is in this way performative, and when watering or trimming, many people come by, meet each other and share a moment.

As Audre Lorde's words "*building nests in a windy place*" show – to build something (together) means to respond to the environment you are in. This environment might be windy, and simultaneously affording the possibility of building something – without the tree, the pole, the roof and the sticks and stones, perhaps even plastic, there would not be a nest. A building site is never a *tabula rasa* – "the ground, the site, is layered with strata of the past, busy with current activities, and provides the support for the dread or excitement of an anticipated future." (muf, Shonfield, & Dannatt, 2000, p. 54). The built and the lived are interdependent.

Space, habitat, affordances

Responding to and inhabiting our surroundings is not a state that can be achieved, it is a continuous *practice*: it needs continuous tending and care – and it is dependent on the inhabitants, their surroundings, and their relation. We become inhabitants and make our surroundings *inhabitable* by responding to it and working with it. This also means that our understanding of space changes: it is no longer something that just *is*, but something that is dependent on continuous performativity or reproduction. It is something that develops and changes through time: something that becomes, not something that is stable.

The spaces we inhabit become indeed a kind of "meshwork" like that of the spider (Ingold, 2008) – something we respond to, from which possibilities and changes emerge. Doina Petrescu describes this other way of relating to space in her discussion on the practice of walking as discussed by Careri in *Walkscapes*:

By considering 'walking' as the beginning of architecture, Careri proposes another history of architecture – one which is not that of settlements, cities and buildings made of stones but of movements, displacements and flows.... It is an architecture which speaks about space not as being contained by walls but as made of routes, paths and relationships. (...) If for the settler, the space between settlements is empty, for the nomad, the errant, the walker – *this space is full of traces: they inhabit space through the points, lines, stains and impressions, through the material and symbolic marks left in the landscape*. (Petrescu, 2007b, p. 89, emphasis mine)

Another way in which this "space full of traces" could be understood is through the theory of *affordances* (Rietveld & Kiverstein, 2014). This theory sees surroundings as a rich landscape *affording* the possibility for actions and responses to emerge. Some architectural practices, like RAAAF(RAAAF [Rietveld Architecture-Art-Affordances] & Visser, 2014), use this theory actively in their design practice. But it can also be made productive by letting us see our everyday surroundings differently: a pavement becomes full of tiles that can be taken out to make place for a garden; trees become a site for gathering; street lights become potential structural elements.

From thinking to practicing

The material conditions at hand affect the ways in which building together can emerge. Inhabiting is an active action, that requires developing responsiveness to the environment one is in, and that hopes for an environment that is rich in affording many possible options. The (re)production of space and of inhabitants through active engagement with those surroundings as a *performative, responsive, relational practice*. It is *performative* in that it needs to be re-enacted, re-produced, it never just is. It is *responsive* in that it is dependent on the specific situation at hand. It is *relational* as it the 'building together' also brings people together and builds relationships around a common cause (the (act of) building).

But this remains still rather abstract: what does it mean if one is interested in actually building together and organising these processes? Practices that somehow

relate to building together always have to mediate between improvisation and scriptedness. To what extent is the relation that inhabitants or builders have to their surroundings designed, and to what extent is it open for interpretation and improvisation? This is well illustrated by this quote of Ingold:

Does making proceed through the hierarchical assembly of performed parts into larger wholes, and these latter into still larger ones, until everything is joined up and complete? Or is it more like weaving a pattern from ever unspooling threads that twist and loop around one another, growing all the while without ever reaching completion? Is it a matter of building up or carrying on? (Ingold, 2013b)

This relation is not just decided by the extent to which something is designed – it is also dependent on the materials at hand. The amount of change that the material and social conditions at hand allow for *while or after* building matters. Some materials and building methods are very difficult to alter once they are there. Others, like wood or straw, are relatively easy. It also depends on the tools available as well as on the skills of participants.

The tension fields between improvisation and scriptedness during building and during use are useful when thinking about what architecture could do, for example in IJsselmonde, my design site. How could inhabitants take agency over their surroundings and respond to it in such a way that it starts affording new uses and actions? That disrupts the passive nature of the space as it is? A building process needs to afford sufficient structure so that there is something to respond to, and so that it is easy to add to, change or amend it. At the same time, if a structure stands in public space, it needs to be rather robust. What are the social strategies to make sure that it can be changed according to current needs or wishes, and that it accommodates future uses? These are the main questions that I am exploring through designing, and I hope to have a better answer during my p4 or p5. However, in the case studies (pp 44 onwards) that I discuss later in this document, I draw out specific architectural methods or materials that enable change while providing structure.

Building together as political practice

I have argued that building together can be architecture; and that it leads to a changed understanding of space, its inhabitants and their relation. Now, I will argue that building together can also be a direct political practice – and one that goes further than most so-called participatory projects.

Building together as direct political action

Traditional ways of doing politics are all based on verbal and cognitive communication to the exclusion of other ways of ‘acting in concert’ (Arendt, 1958). Dutch democracy, like most democracies around the world, is a *representative* democracy: citizens elect representatives on various levels of government (e.g. water boards, city council, province) to represent their interest. Although it is possible to influence decision-making by attending meetings, writing letters or protesting, there are very few ways of *direct* political action that are recognised within the system of representative democracy. The widespread democratic ideal, e.g. as theorised by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1984; Koekoek, 2017) is that people engage in ‘communicative action’: by engaging in rational argumentation, taking into account each other’s position and beliefs, you can try to convince each other or ‘agree to disagree’. But, I argue, this is not the only way of doing politics. By stimulating direct political action, politics can become much more inclusive. And by engaging in direct action on a small scale, rather than the abstract or representative scale of parliamentary debates, it also becomes necessary to take the reality of the persons you are engaging with into account, which I believe helps reducing polarisation and is therefore urgently needed as alternative political practice (but this is for another research).

Engaging in direct political action can mean to build something together: to take agency over your (shared) environment. These kinds of practices are called many things: micro-politics, spatial tactics, spatial agency, alternative spatial practices. One of the things they all do is that they, like building together, allow for more than just cognitive and linguistic action. Building together is physical action that means working together rather than just thinking together - it is 'thinking-in-action', 'thought-in-the-act' (Manning & Massumi, 2014; Springay & Truman, 2018). In this way, it is much more inclusive than traditional democracy. After all, it is not easy for everyone to travel to The Hague or the municipal council to attend a meeting: many people need to care for relatives, work to sustain their families, or do not have the financial resources to travel. And whether people feel comfortable to express themselves in a 'political arena' depends on confidence, language proficiency, education and more. All of these factors (and more) make that there are limits to the level of inclusiveness in representational politics. Building something together is something that happens on a local scale: it happens closer, can be more easily accessible, and includes many ways of knowing and doing, not just that of language and debate.

Building together can be political precisely because it provides a direct, non-representative but performative way of gathering agency over the world that we inhabit. It means 'doing it otherwise': rather than engaging in a big critique, it means to enact or (re)produce a place as the world could be, should be, according to you. It is a microcosm: acknowledging the world as it is, but trying to think beyond, for, with and through that situation to other potential worlds that do not yet exist. Doing it otherwise means engaging in direct political action, that is not just based on cognitive and 'rational' communication, but on affect and moving together (Thrift, 2008). In this way it also challenges what is and is not considered as political, or as public action; and opens up 'the political' to people and practices who were traditionally underrepresented.

Beyond participation

Building together in relation to politics might suggest participation. But as Petrescu & Trogal (2017, pp. 3–4) claim: "contemporary conditions demand that we go beyond participatory or 'socially engaged' approaches to work with more radical forms of politics and values. (...) The right to the city and a right to architecture involve not any architecture, but a just, ecological, creative, imaginative architecture, that we claim as users, managers, citizens architects." Here, I do not use the term participation because it is an extremely loaded term that is often used for processes that amount to manipulation or tokenism rather than more agency for inhabitants (figures 9; Arnstein, 1969). The term is also appropriated by a neoliberal discourse, e.g. the Dutch 'participatiemaatschappij' (participation society, like Thatcher's 'big society') that seeks a smaller government, cuts healthcare and privatises public functions (Kolowratnik & Miessen, 2009; Miessen, 2011). But more fundamentally, participation necessarily implies taking part in an *already existing* project. It presumes an already defined idea of the scope, power, potential, process of the project. I am interested in processes that are not fixed from the outside, asking people to participate, but that emerge from a continuous relation between a place (the material conditions) and its inhabitants (social relations).⁵

Moreover, participation can be purely representative instead of performative. This is why the word does not necessarily resonate with the everyday practices of people who supposedly 'participate': they are gardening, bake pancakes, plant plants – but would never say that they 'participate'. A clear example of how participation in architecture can be purely representative, without a lived experience of 'acting together' is the Deventer townhall by Neutelings Riedijk. It was built during the last economic crisis and gathered a lot of protest. Two municipal governments fell due to this debacle, and citizens engaged in protest marches. Nevertheless it was built, called a 'small palazzo' by the press. Neutelings Riedijk, the architects, left the infill of the facade to the Deventer people. A local artist decided to ask a random sample of Deventer inhabitants to contribute by giving their fingerprint and letting those be made into wooden facade ornaments

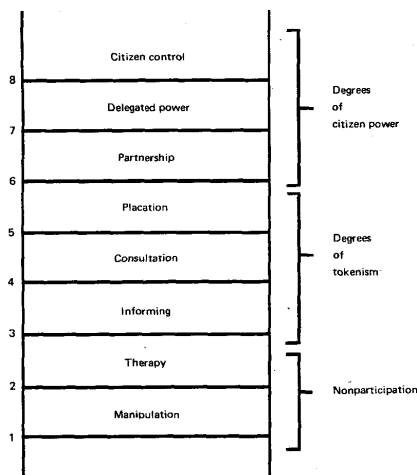


FIGURE 2 Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation



FIGURE 1 French Student Poster. In English, I participate; you participate; he participates; we participate; you participate . . . They profit.

9. Images from The Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)



10. Deventertownhall, NeutelingsRiedijk. Photo Luuk Kramer. Source <https://www.volkskrant.nl/cultuur-media/het-nieuwe-stadhuis-van-deventer-is-een-fraai-hedendaags-palazzo>

-also serving as sun shade (figure 10). To those who were still against this plan, the artist told: you can also give your middle-finger print. “The Deventer townhall is now not just for, but also by and of the people of Deventer”, the Volkskrant wrote. But one can question if people’s power equals their fingerprint on the façade – I would argue that it does not. It is just representation, no performativity.

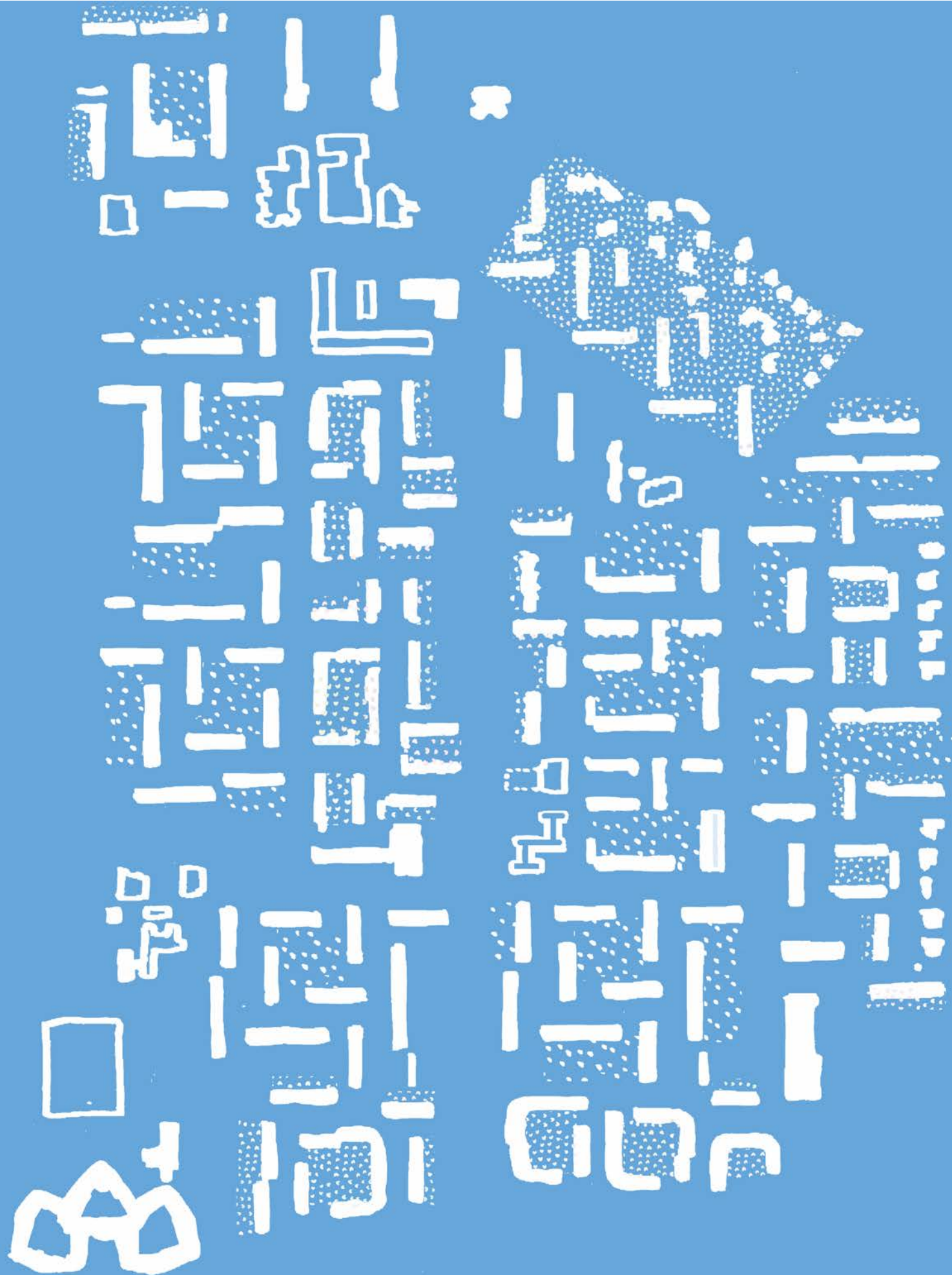
From thinking to practicing

Thinking about building together as a political practice brings up two more fields of tension. If we accept that building together can be a political practice, this also means that we widen the scope of what is considered ‘political’. Much like the feminist slogan “the personal is political” during the second feminist wave (Hanisch, 2006) building together challenges what is considered as ‘public’ and thereby ‘political’: it questions what belongs in the public sphere and what remains an individual problem. It also challenges *who* is traditionally represented in “the public sphere”. By starting to use public space with people who were not traditionally represented in politics (marginalized people like women, people of colour, queer and lgbtqi+ people) the political is widened. By building together people ‘inhabit’ public space to make it respond better to their (collective, negotiated, emerged during the process) needs. And inhabiting, traditionally a domestic and thereby private act, a public space is already a political action (Krasny, 2017). Moreover, by creating a micro-instance of society as it could be (collaborative, not for profit), a micro-kosmos through building together is a political action that happens in different ways than traditional political actions. It is not a linguistic, spoken or written action. It is not a manifest. It does not necessarily say what it is: it does (performs) it, doing it otherwise. In this way these actions of building together challenge traditional politics by doing politics differently.

The two tensions that this leads to are situated between ‘the public’ and ‘the domestic’ and between the ‘marginal’ and the ‘durable’. We need to acknowledge, however, that these are not in opposition to each other: they often work together. Something can become more public *by* using domestic functions, such as eating together. And what is considered as ‘marginal’ is dependent on the norm – and vice versa.

Practices that include building together navigate these tensions by balancing the domestic and the public; and by working on a local scale and sometimes having ‘traditional political’ impact beyond it. Some practices find ‘representational’ politics less important than others: some only focus on the local and the immediate, others try to do both, and another might focus solely on political representation through gaining attention for a specific issue through architecture. If, however, the value of these projects is exactly to be found in their locality and site-specificness, how does it still have effect on a larger scale? Issues like economic inequality or discrimination are, after all, not solved by building a barbecue or a sauna together. More structural forces are at play. This is the micro-political dilemma (Butler, 1997; Nussbaum, 1999). Some practices choose to focus mostly or solely on the locality and direct impact of these projects – others also use representation to connect it to more traditional ways of politics and governance. Any answer will always be site-specific: I dwell more on this throughout the case studies in the next chapters.

In IJsselmonde, almost all public functions take place within the ‘ring road’. In the dwelling neighbourhoods like Reyerwaard there are almost no public spaces; except for the extensive green fields between the houses and between the neighbourhoods (see figure p. 12 - this Nolli map shows in blue public spaces; blue with white lining public buildings, of which there are very few, and patterned the private and sometimes collective gardens). These outside public spaces are rather underused however; except for dog owners and sometimes children who use the play structures. They are difficult to use, too, with almost no benches or places to sit. They mostly function as paths to pass through. In this case, it is likely that some of ‘publicness’ does not happen in traditional ‘public spaces’, but rather in various kinds of more domestic spaces



7 noord
 10m 50m
 DOMESTIC (HOUSES) IN REYEROOKO

private gardens

public building

collective green spaces

domestic building

that are opened up. The living room can be more public than the square. In a neighbourhood like Reyerwaard however, where poverty is a real issue, the possibility for 'domestic publicness' is sometimes impaired, for example when people with financial issues feel shame about their situation, or sometimes their house. The house then loses its capacity to be -even temporarily- public.

If there is a field of tension between publicness and domesticity, Reyerwaard is heavily reliant on the domestic, while the traditionally public spaces do not really function. A public space only becomes truly public when it is in use, when it is temporarily turned into a domestic space, in a way. When people care for it and events happen. When an object, event or encounter creates an anchor point around which people can temporarily assemble (Hyde, 2017; Latour, 2005). I believe these 'anchor points', that create a place of publicness by domesticating and caring for a no-one's space, are what Rory Hyde calls 'spaces of gentle publicness' (2017).

"These spaces are civic in that they allow the capacity for generosity which is greater than the individual. Difference is maintained, not flattened. (...) the physical aspects of these spaces shouldn't be overstated. The concrete manifestation sits at the intersection of complex social and cultural systems. It is architecture which allows these factors to be embodied in space, and to be reproduced over time." (Hyde, 2017, p. 301)

The spaces of Reyerwaard are almost entirely built in 'conventional' architectural ways. There is very little spatial informality, or places of ephemeral architectures or urbanism. Building a more performative, more ephemeral, gentle public space or structure could perhaps help to restore this balance and become an anchor point at the 'intersection of complex social and cultural systems'. This is what I set out to explore in my design.

Conclusions

How can the material conditions and methods of construction relate to the social and political aspects of building together? This was the question I set out to reflect on in writing this text. By undertaking a literature analysis, looking at case studies and thereby drawing out five fields of tension, it seems that to answer this question means to find a balance between improvisation and scriptedness throughout building and use; between performativity and representation; between publicness and domesticity and between ephemerality and durability. They are never just on one side of these spectra but eternally navigate between them – acknowledging everyday complexities and contradictions.

There is not one way in which this question can be answered: any answer will always be context-specific. But using these five fields of tension can help to make sense of the situation at hand, and can draw connections between situations and projects in unexpected ways. These tensions are therefore eternally unresolved, but can be made productive by using them as 'tools for thinking' (Frichot, 2016), they can be activated by using them as 'parameters' to look at and better understand specific cases. These productive tensions are also the guides or pathways throughout my design process.

Through balancing these factors, it is possible to build together in various ways and in doing so, create a small instance of a world as it could be – with, potentially and in some cases, impact beyond the immediate situation. These specific, local instances can become stories, examples, representations that travel far beyond their immediate surroundings, that inspire or evoke a sense of wonder: 'ah, it can be done otherwise'. It is therefore a political act: one not just done through speaking or writing, but through building together, using your bodies together to respond and alter the environment you are in – and in this way opening up what 'the political' consists of (Krasny, 2017).

In altering and responding to the space it is also essentially an architectural act, if

one upholds a conception of architecture that is not just representative. Building together can be a ‘real’ alternative to ‘traditional’ modes of practice. It is located between ephemerality and durability: not just in the timespan of these ‘other’ projects, but in the sense that they exist in the ‘margins’ of architecture. They happen when there is a festival, a crisis or another extraordinary situation. What would happen if we would use ways of building together in more conventional, more durable architectural assignments or projects? Architecture that refuses to be just representation, just a beautiful façade and some profit or loss on the account balances?

I believe that building together, in its various ways of making -acting-thinking-together are especially important now. Polarisation is increasing, just like inequality (source). Traditional political parties do not have an answer to the election of populist, post-truth presidents throughout the world – ‘post-truth’ politicians are very effective despite often contradicting themselves, which is something traditional democratic thinking and acting cannot accommodate (Chouraqi, 2017; Koekoek, 2017). Because of this, I believe that we need to go beyond representational democracy, and act directly, facing the people we disagree with and making something together, rather than disagreeing in the abstract, making a strawman out of each other. We might find out that it is; but it is about more everyday issues. We are all human. Perhaps this is naively optimistic – but I do not know how to act if not like this in the current world. Building small scale communities of care, trying to enact and perform a world as it could be, learning together to respond to our surroundings again in a more meaningful way. *Se hace camino al andar* - the path is made while walking.⁶

Endnotes

1 Karen Barad: “First of all, agency is about response-ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly re-configurings. So agency is not something possessed by humans, or non-humans for that matter.” (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012, emphasis mine)

2 This is different when Design-Build-Finance-Maintenance-Operate (DMFMO) contracts are used. In that case the consortium of architects, contractors, managers continues to be responsible for the building after it has been built; up to a specified time (e.g. 50 years).

3 Frampton’s reading of Arendt is not uncontested. Especially feminist scholars have done important work on acknowledging the dichotomies in Arendt’s work not as mutually exclusive categories, but as productive, agonist tensions. They have also problematised the relation between the ‘private’, the ‘social’ and the ‘public’, and the role of the process of making in her discussion on art. See for example (Benhabib, 1993, 2000; Canovan, 1983; Fowler, 1984; Honig, 1995; Zerilli, 2005).

4 For a critical discussion on other perceived losses humans have supposedly suffered since modern times according to Frampton, see Perucci’s chapter “Intimate (tele)visions” in *Architecture of the Everyday* (Harris & Berke, 1997).

5 This does raise questions about “the role of the architect” in this. Markus Miessen discusses this in *The Nightmare of Participation*: “Becoming a vector in the force-field of conflicts questions how one participates without catering to pre-established needs or tasks; or from the point of view of the traditional architect, how possible it is to participate in, for example, urban micro-politics by inserting friction and asking questions rather than doing local community work through section 106 agreements or bottom-up participation following protocols of social inclusion.” (Miessen 2011, p. 56)

6 From Antonio Machado’s poem *Caminante no hay camino*.

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2. Five fields of tension

One of the results of the position paper above is that I indicated five fields of tension. These tensions are deliberately unresolved. Rather than finding an answer, these fields of tension are most useful when they are put to use. There is no general answer to the question of representation and performativity; or to the question of what is seen as marginal practice, and what as durable. There is not one answer to how much freedom a building process can afford. All of these questions only make sense when considered in a specific site and context. In this part of this document they will therefore be used as parameters to analyse case studies: they provide useful 'tools for thinking' (Frichot 2016; Stengers 2006) for analysing the relation of specific projects with politics, with power and freedom, with mainstream practice.

In the following pages I will elaborate a little bit more on each of these tension fields. I have written a short text for each of them, to hint at the literature and the issues at stake - and why this tension matters. Surrounding these texts some case studies are listed in which these tensions specifically come to the fore.

temporality

ephemeral

conventional

building process

improvisational

scripted

use

improvisational

scripted

politics

representational

performative

publicness

domestic

public



Baltic Street Adventure playground is not a building but quite literally, a site of emergence. It is a space that has the resources and people to help people build their own adventure playground. Almost nothing is designed in advance – continuously, children are building, changing and responding to the site in different ways. See pp xx



Refuge II by Wim Goes Architects is much more process-focused than most of their works. The building process is open for 'amateurs', people who did not have previous experience with building. However, while the used materials could make it possible, it was fully designed before it was built. See pp xx

tension 1: building method

Improvisational / Scripted

In most current-day professional building processes, a building exists 'virtually' before it exists physically. The contractors, specialists, architects and process managers sometimes even use the same digital file, using BIM (building information modeling). In this way, even the most difficult details can be 'solved' before the first brick has been laid, and unexpected surprises that might cause delays can be reduced to the minimum. Even before the building has materialized, everything has a designated place, order, and role. Nothing is unintentional. The building process is scripted as much as possible.

But this is not always the case. Many private buildings, houses, were never planned – they were simply built, according to custom and craftsmanship that was taught from master to apprentice. Knowledge was, and in many contexts still is, learned and transferred through working together rather than writing and drawing. In the Netherlands, this way of building has largely disappeared to make place for a professional building industry, although it still happens occasionally. It was much more common even until the 1950s: my great-grandparents still reclaimed a plot of pete land in Drenthe by themselves, and slowly built a house - first out of tram wagons, later out of bricks.

The building materials and methods at hand (as well as the demands and wishes of the client, who might want to 'see what they get' before starting to build) all influence the possibility of improvising during construction. A building often needs to attend to certain requirements; and is constrained by regulations and plot size. But within this, it might be possible to allow for a certain level of improvisation.

Some construction methods, like building with wood or straw, are more fit for this than others. Materials need to be carried by people: this limits their weight (by law, for building in the Netherlands, anything heavier than 50 kg may not be moved manually; not even by multiple people). Building with wood (and for example straw) is relatively easy to assemble and disassemble – to 'play with'. But if the wood is nailed, this already complicates the amount of possible improvisation.

Aside from the material conditions and materials than can be used, allowing for openness during the building process also means to be open to other expertise and knowledge than that of "the professional". It means acknowledging "that your expertise is as good as the expertise of others, but different. (...) the means of communication needs to be adapted so that all kinds of knowledge can be brought to the table." (Jeremy Till in MONU Magazine 2016).

Scriptedness or improvisation are not intrinsic values; they are not ends in themselves. But being aware possibilities of playing with the tension between improvisation and script can be interesting and enriching. It can transform the building site from a "place of uncertainty where the design contends with reality" (Constructlab 2019) to a site of emergence, a space of encounters, affordances and unexpected opportunities. And that does require some openness to the situation – as well as the possibility to react to it with the building methods and materials at hand.



The Arch by ConstructLab is a layered project that includes an elaborate building process. The wooden structure, while not being built improvisationally itself, supports a summer research project on recycled plastics, from which eventually an artwork in the shape of an Arch is built.

11. See pp xx



In the Domesticity workshop with On/Off Studio objects were created from and with domestic objects and wood – I imagine they were not really designed before, but the materials at hand influenced their outcome to a large extent. See pp xx



Matt & Fiona built a hybrid classroom/shelter with school children in their garden. It was designed and built with the children, made possible by wood & paint that was easy to handle. See pp xx



Arakawa & Gins' Reversible Destiny Lofts & Life Extending Villa's challenge inhabitants to use their bodies otherwise & force them to respond differently to the environment. See case studies



Jean Debuffet's magical landscapes like *Jardin d'email* are open for a wide variety of bodily responses. See case studies.

tension 2: use

Improvisational / Scripted

Use: improvisational (open, indeterminate, ignorant, agnostic) – scripted (defined, certain, measured)

The use of most buildings are rather defined. It is known which activity is supposed to happen where, even before the building is used. These buildings are often designed with the use of books like Neufert's *Architect's data*. Inscribed in the very floor plans is an idea of what a body is and how it is supposed to act when encountering a specific space or element of architecture (Alkemade, 2019). In the Rotterdams Wijktheater building this is especially tangible. It is very difficult to *not* act according to plan, to disrupt the logic of the spaces, or to change anything about the space that is there.

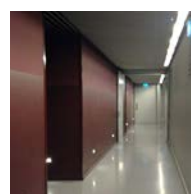
There are also other ways of designing buildings, ways that do not focus on what we know about bodies, but that “embrace a certain ignorance over what a body truly is – or, more specifically, over what a body is *not*” (Lambert, 2017, p. 12). This is for example practiced by Arakawa & Gins, whose designs and spaces allow for a variety of activities, bodies and practices to emerge. The Reversible Destiny Lofts, for example, disrupt what is generally expected of a home. It forces the body to move otherwise, stimulates and challenges the senses, and allows it to “discover the full potential of the body” (Reversible Destiny Foundation, n.d.).

Buildings or spaces that can be used in a variety of ways (of which the designers did not decide beforehand how they will be used) *afford* endless possibilities for every body. Practices like RAAAF aim to incorporate their understanding of ‘a theory of affordances’ (Rietveld & Kiverstein, 2014) into their designs. “The end of sitting”, for example, is an installation that explores a future office space in which users would not just sit at their desks, but stand, hang, stretch, lay down in office situations – and find other, yet unthought of, ways of being in the office. But when thinking about non-normative spaces, that do not decide on the forehand how users will engage with them, I am also reminded of installations by Jean Debuffet, for example ‘Jardin d'email’ – a mythical black and white garden landscape open for interpretation and different responses.

I distinguish a field of tension between buildings and spaces that allow for a certain openness in using them – that are, in a way, ignorant, indeterminate or agnostic over what will happen within their premises, and how - ; and spaces that are defined, that (pretend to) know what people will do where, and that are difficult to use otherwise. Most buildings and spaces are positioned somewhere in between: they give a bit of structure and afford openness in varying proportions.



RAAAF & Barbara Visser's *The End of Sitting* explores other ways of being in the office. It affords new responses to the environment.



The building of RWT, designed by the all-male team of AGS architects, restricts using it in different ways. Everything is defined and it is difficult to change anything about these spaces unless you're a professional builder.

“There is an inherent transparency to that process, or rather *the material process of making is equivalent to the making of meaning.*” (muf, Shonfield, & Dannatt, 2000, p. 106, emphasis mine). See case studies.



Neutelings-Riedijk's facade of the Deventer townhall is an example of pure representation: it does not practice what it preaches. It preaches participation; showcasing fingerprints of Deventer citizens - but there's nothing of that sort in the building or design process.



Richard's Meier's Town Hall The Hague represents transparency by its light, open passages, and lots of glass. Does it also perform it?

tension 3: politics

Representational /~& Performative

For many thinkers in architecture, architecture is essentially representative (e.g. Frampton, 1979). Buildings, in this view, can represent certain values through their aesthetics and experience. They are examples of specific paradigms, styles, politics. Another way of understanding architecture (or, more generally, space) is to understand it in a non-representational way (e.g. Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Haraway, 2016; Ingold, 2013; Latour, 2004; Manning & Massumi, n.d.; Petcou, Petrescu, & Clement, 2007; Thrift, 2008). These thinkers-writers-actors do not see a building as *representing* something externally or as part of a sign-system (Hauptmann & Radman, 2014). Instead, buildings *work* in specific ways, they *affect* their users and inhabitants. And in that way, they *reproduce* values or ways of being in and relating to the world (Petrescu & Trogal, 2017). They do not represent, they *perform* values and responsiveness – “[non-representational theories] share an approach to meaning and value as ‘thought-in-action’”.

Focusing on the performative means to focus on what something *does* rather than what it *is* or *looks like* (Lieberman & Altés, 2015). It means focusing on practice and habit as constituents of the everyday world; and on the influence of that world on behavior, practice and habit. The performative is transformative, it is a process that continuously changes, that is embodied and material (Dewsbury, 2015; Thrift, 2008). It is concerned with the immediate experience of the situation at hand, instead of ‘symbolic’, abstract or far away. But space also *performs* values. It can be more or less difficult to change or inhabit a space. It can be more or less accessible for a variety of bodies. And space can only sensibly be understood through *use* – “buildings only begin to make sense when considered through, and in, ‘use’.” (Schneider, 2017, p. 25) In performative practice, values are *embodied* in use not (just) *represented*.

Both performativity and representation are ways in which architecture can be political. Buildings can both represent and perform meaning and political ideas. When a building represents a certain value (e.g. transparency) this can be a strong statement, example or symbol of transparent governance (e.g. the The Hague town hall by Richard Meier Architects). But if this value is not also *performed* (e.g. if the The Hague municipality is in fact not open at all) it merely pays lip service. Or if a building *looks* sustainable (representation), but does not work in a sustainable way, it's called greenwashing. On the other hand, if a building performs certain values, it might be more effective if it also represents these ideas visually. So representation and performativity need each other; and the balance between the two depends on the practice and context at hand.





NOW office designed a self-initiated public sauna (the Kulttuurisauna) in Helsinki - 'taking the role of making the city' and reviving the public role of the sauna in Finland. "what we need more than ever are not public buildings, but public hosts" (Hyde 2017, p. 306). See case studies.



muf architecture/art transformed the V&A museum in London into a domestic space by placing tables and chairs with felted feet in the imposing colonnades; hosting discussions with refugee women.

tension 4: publicness

Public /~& Domestic

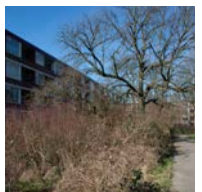
Public space is often not so public. The ideal of climbing a soapbox on a busy market square and trying to convince people of your ideas is not really what politics, or people's lives, look like on a daily basis. Even so, public space is still supposed to represent an essentially political space, a 'space of appearance' in which people can express their differences or act in concert (Arendt, 1958; Benhabib, 1993; Fowler, 1984). Nevertheless most public spaces do not really support that. They have traditionally excluded women and other minoritized groups – fights for emancipation have often been (are still) fights for opening up what 'publicness', what 'politics' means. Moreover, public spaces are often strictly governed, neatly organized, sometimes privatized, and not necessarily open for collective action. Or, more commonly, they are simply spaces that people use to pass through. No one really uses or cares for them. (This is not to say that 'real' public space is an impossibility. It might exist in playgrounds, bodegas (HNI, 2018) or everyday spaces. Sometimes it may even exist on the archetypical market square)

Reyeroord, the site that I design in, for and with, has many of these supposedly public spaces. They are green spaces, rather large, but not public at all. They are no-one's land: unused, except, maybe, by animals and sometimes their owners. In this context, a living room, hosting meetings or dinners, might be more public than the space outside. Although the potential publicness of living rooms can also be reduced by issues like poverty, and related shame, that sometimes restricts people from inviting others to their house. (more on this on pp. xx).

Domesticity and publicness are in a mutual relation; they need each other. Their dependency is beautifully described by Pascucci in "Intimate (tele)visions": the television in a domestic suburban living room can evoke a sense of publicness and emancipation that in this case was performed and experienced, many years later, in the public space of a gay pride in New York. Public space may only truly public when it is used: when it is "domesticated", in a way. When people start caring for it, it invites others to join, it invites encounters. Public space is not just a space: it needs use, and everyday practices that activate it. 'Publicness' is perhaps not a static state, but an event.

In her discussion on 'ways to be public', Rory Hyde (2017) discusses real, makeshift, imperfect, challenging ways of publicness, or 'creating publics', of *gentle publicness*. They produce an instance of "the social", and "their effects are not financial, but cultural". This is often done by creating some kind of domesticity, [producing] "a space of gentle publicness (...) where none existed before." (Hyde, 2017, p. 300).

By acknowledging the field of tension between domesticity and publicness I am not interested in labeling what is public or what is domestic. I am interested in pinpointing the manifold ways in which domesticity and (gentle) publicness are mutually dependent and work together to create instances of social encounters, responsiveness, relations and "makeshift (dis)agreement" (Latour 2005, 13 via Hyde, 2017, p. 299). This always happens somewhere: the extent to which a space or building (together) can facilitate or obstruct these gentle publics just depends.



Existing 'public spaces' in Reyeroord are very hard to inhabit.



Svartlamoen housing is an 'alternative project' in the sense that it leaves a lot of space for appropriation and change by the inhabitants, and the project came about in working together with an existing community. What makes it 'conventional' is that it is a lasting building, not temporary but a real alternative: this is how housing could also be done. See pp xx

tension 5: temporality **Ephemeral / Conventional**

Collaborative, participatory or other 'other ways of doing architecture' (Awan et al. 2011) are often temporary, ephemeral projects. Equally, they often remain in the 'margins' of architectural practice, as described here by Awan, Schneider and Till in their book *Spatial Agency: other ways of doing architecture*.

We didn't want to hide behind something that could be seen as marginal because of its associated implication of being ineffectual, so the large number of examples collected in this book are intended to present a powerful counter, an otherness, to this centre. The book does not see these actions as marginal, because as soon as one accepts the dialectic of margin/centre then one inevitably submits to the terms of reference of the centre. *If the centre has been found wanting – as was so spectacularly exposed in the 2008–2009 economic collapse – then what right has it to define, and so control, what constitutes the "margins"?* (Awan et al. 2011, 27, emphasis mine)

Many projects that somehow enable agency for its users and inhabitants are conceived out of a situation that is somehow out-of-the-ordinary. The economic crisis of 2008 gave rise to many 'alternative practices' (Džokić, Neelen, and Gibson 2018; Klooster and Lahr 2013). The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and the middle east and the perceived 'refugee crisis' in Europe gave rise to many architectural projects concerned with building temporary shelters or homes. Other 'alternative practices' often happen in relation to festivals, or temporary use of spaces awaiting redevelopment. What publications like *Spatial Agency* show is that this 'doing otherwise' carries the potential to become a new, better, but 'normal' way of doing architecture (to let the margins affect the centre; or rather, to disrupt this dichotomy).

Architectural practices that give agency to users – that enable users and inhabitants to co-create and influence the spaces that they will use and live in – are often considered as "naïve and irreverent" ideals (de Graaf 2017). Reinier de Graaf claims that "architecture routinely loses itself in overwrought mental constructions [I would say: representation rather than performativity – CK] to justify the physical ones. It seems that a new revisionist movement is needed. After making a convincing case of being *for* the masses in the twentieth century, architecture will have to be *with* the masses in the twenty-first." (de Graaf 2017, 143). It is interesting that De Graaf, partner at OMA, one of the most renowned architectural offices claims this – but even a large office such as OMA seems somehow unable to put these ideals to practice – it's 'words, no deeds' (van de Bergen 2017).

Nevertheless, it is interesting to think what would happen if these "alternative" practices that are often temporary would become more durable and 'normal'. If a practice is process-oriented, influenced, built and adapted by its users and their uses, habits or practices, this also influences the material possibilities; it has to be *durable* rather than lasting only a few months. And some materials are easier to handle by 'amateurs' than others. And the timelines of building processes will change – the distinction between 'building' and 'use' will soften.



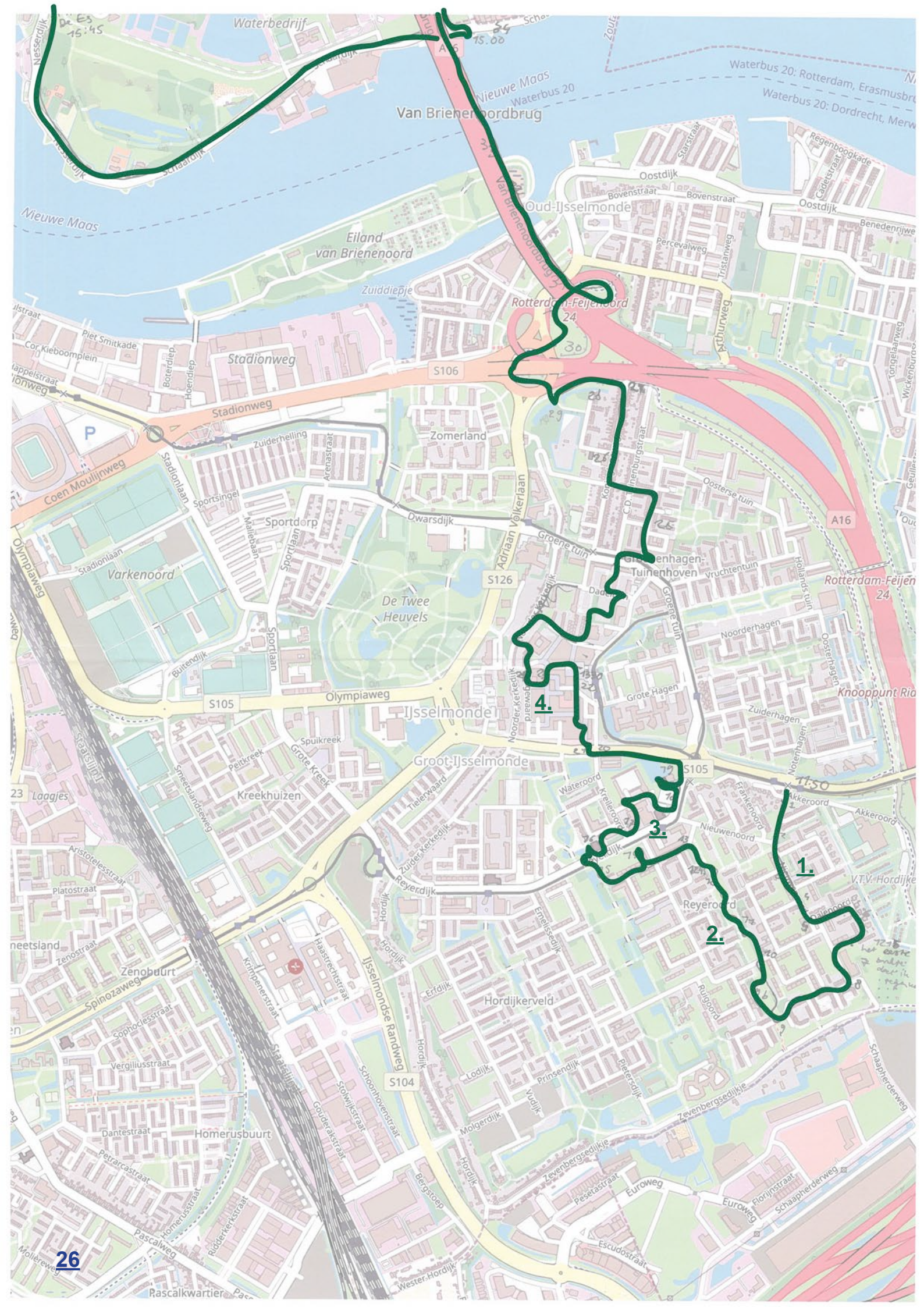
De Luchtsingel looks like an ephemeral project but has somehow managed to become part of a durable alternative to commercial development in Rotterdam.



The projects of AAA often do no "pass" as conventional architectural projects - rather, they are political actions - while Assemble wants to speak both the language of architecture/art discourse and of real people & conditions in the city. AAA embeds itself in real conditions and does not really care if others consider it architecture or not. What matters is a project/process's impact on democratisation and ecology. This also means that 'conventional' architecture media don't really cover their work. See case studies.



muf architecture/art also works on 'conventional' assignments; but does it 'otherwise'. They also play the tension between marginal and normal; and seek to carve out a way to make work in a way that suits them within existing conditions See case studies.



3. IJsselmonde walk

Introduction & methodology of walking

Walking in IJsselmonde is one of the research methods I use to better understand the site where I design, and where the ideas of my research are put to the test of reality. In my research paper above, I have tried to start discussing how the fields of tensions developed through my research can be of use when thinking about and working in IJsselmonde. This is an unfinished process; how these tensions can be of use when working in this specific situation is the main question I try to answer in my design. But also the site analysis will be extended before p4 to include, among other things, materials on the site, locations of playgrounds and cultural centres, specific stories and experiences of inhabitants.

The walk that I describe below is part of a detailed site analysis of IJsselmonde. This site analysis is not finished and continues as I continue to work in and engage with this location – through my design and through experiences at the Rotterdams Wijktheater. The walk described below is almost like a first encounter with this location. It is a personal and embodied experience, and it will become more layered when I talk to and get to know more people who live and work there.

Walking is an embodied experience. It means to relate to your body and the surroundings, often implicitly, it happens without thinking about it. Rebecca Solnit suggests that one aspect of walking is ‘thinking made concrete’ – “the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts” (Solnit, 2001, Chapter 1). This is also what we experience in the walks that we organize with Night(s) of Philosophy: by reading out texts and sharing thought while walking, these thoughts cease to be abstract, they are suddenly experienced and recognized, embodied, in the landscape around us (Night(s) of Philosophy, 2019).

In writing about and through my walk in IJsselmonde (by “walking-writing” (Springgay & Truman, 2018, p. 130)), I overlay my experiences with archival research. This transforms the archival research: it is suddenly put in the context of actual experience instead of remaining abstract historical documentation. History is put in the present. But archival research also changed my experience, in hindsight, and all my experiences to come. I start to place things that I notice into a context of written work, of ideas and ideologies. I think it is important to let the archive influence the experience *and* the experience the archive – and not to let any writings or previous ideas about IJsselmonde overtake the actual experiences of people there, now. Walking-thinking-writing means being to be open and responsive, response-able, towards the environment you are (I am) in. The text below is a start, and captures a moment in the route of this graduation project. But I will take more walks in IJsselmonde, with others, and it will (and should) change these thoughts and writings.

I took the walk that became the text below on the 26th of February, 2019. During the walk, I took photos while walking, and sat down every half an hour or so to write down specific moments or experiences, that I also indicated on the map with a number (see fig.xx). Afterwards, I returned to my desk, and looked at historical pictures (mostly from the fantastic resource of the facebook page of ‘Oud-IJsselmonde’, where inhabitants share memories and pictures); read municipal documents and ‘cultural-historical analyses’ (e.g. Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004; Meijel, Hinterthür, & Bet, 2008), read texts written by the planners and designers of IJsselmonde (van Drimmelen, 1962), or those who influenced them (Bos et al., 1946; Geyl, 1948). I then turned this into a text in which I describe my experience walking through IJsselmonde, and add to this a history of the building of this neighbourhood. As I wanted this mapping/walk to be readable for inhabitants and the people at Rotterdams Wijktheater, I wrote it in Dutch. Later, I have translated it to English, so the version below is bilingual. Some of the concepts described by the original planners make perfect sense in Dutch however, and turn out to be difficult to translate. The English version is therefore sometimes longer, because I needed to contextualise it more.

The walk is anchored on four moments, that relate to specific places (indicated on the map on p. 24) and to specific objects in the landscape.

1. The pump used to extract oil from the ground in IJsselmonde. Oil winning contributed to the development of the Dutch welfare state that allowed for this neighbourhood to emerge. Now, however, it is faced with the necessity for energy-transition: no more gas, but green electricity and insulated houses. The welfare state and the energy consumption/climate are both under threat. While it seemed in the 50s that everything would get better and could be designed, it now shows that it cannot.

2. The one-person bench, one of the few places to sit on in the entire neighbourhood. I connect this to discussing the ideological, utopian idea of a neighbourhood in which everyone knows each other & is connected by the green spaces between the houses. However, in reality, these green spaces turn out to be hard to inhabit. Sometimes they are intentionally made difficult to inhabit: in the case of this bench, apparently the municipality has decided that people should not stay, sit or group in this area. I think it is a hostile, maybe even brutal, move to not allow people to inhabit the green spaces in their own neighbourhood, their own habitat.

3. The dike “oude kerkedijk”. In the city plan it was desired that this dike would disappear. It didn’t, which is one of the ways in which the city plan design is very abstract but does not actually respond to on-the-ground conditions - such as height differences and dikes. While built on social utopian ideals it does not really perform these values in real life.

4. The shopping centre “keizerswaard”. Once a modern example of a shopping mall, in the centre of 5 neighbourhoods, this place is now not actually part of any everyday routine because it is not in the neighbourhoods. This is the same for the cultural spaces that are in the centre of the large-scale plan. It opens up questions about the roles and places of community and culture in IJsselmonde.

deze kaart heeft net dezelfde schaal als degenen die ik heb gebruikt).

1. Bomen en doornenwanden. Veel groene perken. Wat voor bomen, die, geknat, zijn dit? Viltuutjes van de rechtstreekse aan de weg, rijtjes huizen aan perken, met schuren en achtererven, links.
2. Ik hoor vogels in de bomen, het blijven twee parkieten die verstoppertje spelen. Ik besluit om lopende foto's te maken, te kijken, ruttelen, luisteren, en zittend op te schijnen. Anders onderbreekt het me te veel. Er zijn geen bantjes.
3. Een bloemenstrijk aan de andere kant van de weg rukt heerlijk, ik steek over en rukt van dichtbij - dit is het inderdaad. Ik zie 3 kinderen spelen op een tiggelshoofd op het veldje dat groeit aan rijtjes huizen, schuttingen en fluit.
4. De bomen op dit veldje zijn een stuk jonger. Zonder bladzijden moeilijk te zien, want het zijn.
5. Centruimpje. Er staat wat leeg.
6. Meer bouwsets of aanpassingen aan de buitenrand van de wijk? Niet echt. Op de rand bungalow-villaatjes, er staat een busje van een kunstgrasspecialist op straat. Mene die langshome groeien, 'magen'.
7. Het eerste bantje (2) dat ik tegenkom is lang en vaart, en veldje, en een kunstgras veldje met speeltoestellen daarin.
8. Er hangen huisregels op de gevel en er is Whistapp buurtprovenant. Veel betegelde tuintjes. Bomen hoe ik ergens maar prater, honden blaffen.
9. Aan de andere kant van het water villaatjes. Een groene as, je kan heel ver lopen. Het Nij meer huisregels ('goede voorname's').
10. Basischool de kintus, er loopt een straatje langs van ik snachts nooit langs van lopen, aan de ene kant priesterbosjes, aan de andere kant de lege school (lunch-pauze?). Een scooter rijdt heel langzaam achter me, zelfs nu krijg ik daar al knikbels van. Ik loop langs een paraveldje en iemand roept tegen de jongen die op zijn sokken voetbald op het kunstgras (je schaamt zijn e!).
11. Bomen! Als ik dichtbij kom word ik o war minde volgt van, overvloedige personen vol priesterbosjes en plastic afval op de grond.
12. Het word wel wat gebouwd, deze penen hebben veel difant-prandjes, soms snellere route te nemen.
13. Ik zie op een heel gea bantje; voor een persoon. Het wordte wel veel getrukt getruide de bierdappes, penen, wat plastic. Tegenover me bouwte een cluster een nest, uitsteeg af en aan met rapjes. Het is een lunchpauze: veel ouders en kinderen, veel mensen die grote handen uitsteken. Dit is een uitlaatgebied. Een moeder met 4 jonges, een huiler en roept omme, en in een kinderwagen voor 'lenny'. Zou dit bantje een persoon zijn om hangen te voorkomen? Of zou het in gebruik zijn voor een iemand die hier altijd zit? Het is heel warm in de zon, ik ga weer door.
14. Een woep, een zomestudio, een vrouw zit buiten in de zon (ik wil groeten maar ze maakt geen oogcontact).
15. Ik dacht dat ik tussen deze flats door kon maar dat kan niet. De wanden van een boom hebben de tegels achtericht.

16. Omdat dat ik hier ook niet meer dan een kintus maar het kan wel, langs het water lopen ('inter voeren'), bierblikken hode brotjes.
17. Deze keer heeft een kintus die wandeltoestanden door groenervice. Er komen wat mensen bij groenervice die net een perke hebben aangept, veel parken. Het lijkt een soort lokale werkmak, in deze keer is binnenvaar en rommelmarkt, er zijn uithuiverdelijke diavse, zelfde (geen wotke aan verstand). De parkeerplaats heeft een bord 'pas op spelende kinderen'. De kintus heeft informatie over nos en andere dingen en ligt er verder gezellig rammelig bij, anderhonden zou ik het zeggen.
18. Een rustwink, een hloep, een kinderdag verblijf. De kintus van het kinderdag-verblijf is vrolijk, vol bouwsets. Verloep nog een keer, er zit een man op de stoep voor de deur.
19. De schaal van de weg wordt grote, hier is het veldje lopen. Soet je van dat je een schakel hebt. Flage flats, een overblijft, in dacht er tussenom te lopen naar uithuiverdelijke diavse, zelfde (geen wotke aan verstand). De parkeerplaats heeft een bord 'pas op spelende kinderen'. De kintus heeft informatie over nos en andere dingen en ligt er verder gezellig rammelig bij, anderhonden zou ik het zeggen.
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21. Maar plekje, een beeld, boom, een bantje.
22. Ik won dat ik een zombiet had een kintus reisje ziet er fabulous uit met een grote zombiet met bloemparson.
23. Hier voelt het echt als een kintus, wat een zon, bantjes en mensen, wandelaars, fietsers, mensen op weg naar het winkelcentrum. In het midden van het kintuspunt is een zeezicht, je kan er mossels eten en ook voetbal spelen.
24. In het winkelcentrum is het ook druk. De sfeer aan de andere kant is heel anders, alle bantjes van dit gekke plein uit zo te zien van een meer, amusements van het stranddeelt? met lunchpauze. Oude mensen met dichte bruine wijnen naar verrijngingen. Ik ga ook zitten op een bantje (handpomp op 't veldje) om dit te schrijven. Ik heb al best veel taken gehoord op deze wandeling.
25. Ik hoop gesinterde gember en studeer hure bij een notariswinkel in het winkelcentrum (andere kintus ik het niet wil).
26. Nichte het winkelcentrum is een delfje, je ziet de auto's en de minne.
27. Maar je kan de armade wel een beetje zien, het voelt hier als minde gemakdelijf dan waar ik begon: betegelde voortuintjes, alle gordijnen dicht. Ommebewaking.
28. De woningbouw ligt onder een deels een bierkintus.
29. Langs de schaal is een groene delf met bomen, best prettig wandelen.
30. Het lijkt wel een woongroep? Zijn dat gedeelde tuinen?
31. Ik zie een paard, is dat een boerderij? Of iets anders?
32. De Oze neten van paden en tunnels licht kintus, het heeft een veldje Schoonheid. Ik volg de bordjes voor oud vissersmarkt.
33. Hee, ik wil daar beneden zijn, niet hier! Geen uitgang gevonden naar oud vissersmarkt blijft altijd aan de andere kant van een snelweg, brug, of andere sportveld. Dan maar de brug over, misschien kan ik nog ergens naar beneden, anders see you on the other side.
34. Als je still staat, rilt de brug. Op het Van Buren-oordeland zitten mensen in de zon. Ik kan zie de enige die loopt, fietsers delft me aan.
35. Ik moet plastic, of je. Waarom heb ik geen zombiet? zweet. zweet. zweet.
36. Toch nog maar naar het water gelopen. Uitpuffen. kintus 2000 Ik ben

notes that I took during the walk

12:00. 1. Nieuwenoord. “echt tuinstadweer”

Het lijkt wel alsof iedereen vandaag de ramen lapt. Reyeroord toont zich van haar beste kant op deze uitzonderlijk warme februaridag: het is echt tuinstadweer. Groene gazonnen, bloeiende krokussen onder een strakblauwe lucht (fig.17). Ik doorkruis vandaag IJsselmonde te voet, van zuid naar noord, van Reyeroord naar Keizerswaard, Zomerland en Tuinenhoven naar de Van Brienenoordbrug (zie kaart p. 24). Ik ben geïnteresseerd in hoe bewoners van deze geplande stad hun sporen achterlaten op de fysieke ruimte, en hoe tegelijkertijd die fysieke ruimte het alledaagse, sociale en politieke leven van haar bewoners beïnvloedt. Aan de hand van vier plekken doe ik hier verslag van een veranderende wijkgedachte.

Reyeroord werd begin jaren 60 gepland en gebouwd, als een van de uitbreidingswijken ‘op zuid’. Lopend door de wijk kan je het modernistisch idealisme voelen: het is licht, lucht en ruimte ten top (fig. 14, 15, 16, 17). Keurig geknipte gazonnetjes, doorzonwoningen, alles fris en schoon. Er was na de oorlog een grote woningnood, dus er moest gebouwd worden, en snel. Gestandaardiseerde bouw, zoals in IJsselmonde op grote schaal toegepast met het Dura-Coignet systeem, bood uitkomst. In een paar jaar tijd werd wijk na wijk uit de grond gestampt. (afbeelding wijken om ring heen). De economie trok langzaam aan, Nederland werd minder afhankelijk van buitenlandse wederopbouw gelden, en in wijken zoals Reyeroord investeerden private partijen in middenklassehuizen (Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004; Van der Horst, 2016). Tegelijkertijd werd de welvaartsstaat opgetuigd uit de inkomsten uit de gaswinning in Groningen. De Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij (N.A.M.), verantwoordelijk voor de gaswinning in Groningen, pompte ook in IJsselmonde aardolie uit de grond (fig. 12, 13). Alles leek maakbaar.

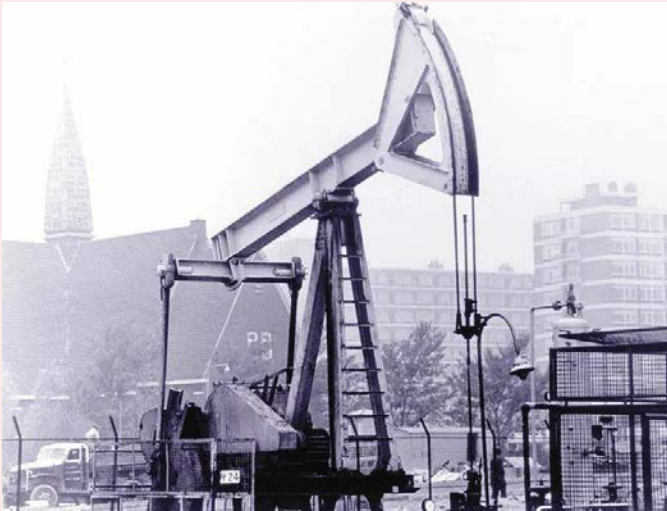
Zo’n 60 jaar na de bouw van deze wijk is de gaskraan in Groningen dichtgedraaid, na jaren van aardbevingen en protest. Delen van de welvaartsstaat staan onder druk: alhoewel de economie sinds na de crisis van 2008 alweer een poos groeit, stijgen de lonen niet mee. Nederland moet verduurzamen, de publieke sector staat onder druk, en Reyeroord moet als een van de eerste wijken in Rotterdam ‘van het gas af’ (Rotterdam, 2019). Zowel de welvaart als het gas waarop wijken als deze zijn gebouwd worden minder. Daarnaast zijn er in Reyeroord problemen met waterhuishouding en de riolering, die in de komende jaren vervangen gaat worden. Wat betekenen deze veranderingen voor de fysieke en sociale ruimte van deze plek?

12:00. 1. Nieuwenoord. “garden city weather”

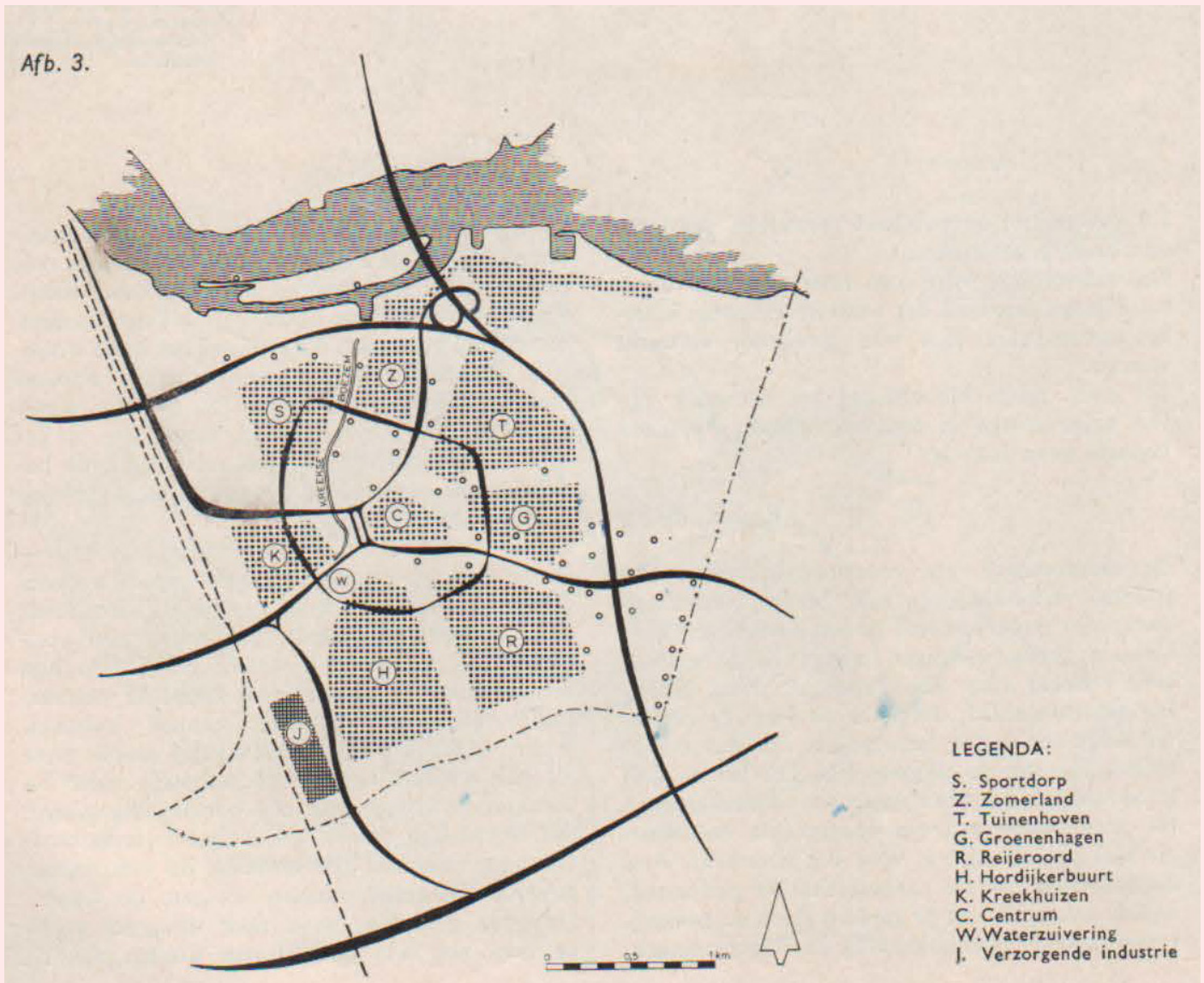
It seems like today is the day to clean your windows. Reyeroord shows her best side on this extraordinarily warm day in February: it is real garden city weather. Green lawns, flowering spring flowers, a clear blue sky (fig. 17). Today, I will be passing through the suburb of Groot-IJsselmonde by foot, starting south, heading north, from the neighbourhood of Reyeroord, through shopping centre Keizerswaard, the neighbourhoods Zomerland and Tuinenhoven to the vast Van Brienenoord bridge (see map on p. 24). I am interested to see how inhabitants of this planned city leave traces in their environment, and how, simultaneously, that physical environment influences the everyday, social and political life of its inhabitants. 4 places I encountered on my walk will guide this reflection on ever-changing neighbourhood life.

Reyeroord was planned and built in the 60s, as one of the post-war extensions on the south banks of the city of Rotterdam. It radiates modernist idealism: the slogan ‘licht, lucht en ruimte’ (‘light, air and space’) proves itself true while walking through the neighbourhood (fig. 14, 15, 16, 17). Neatly trimmed lawns, ‘doorzonwoningen’ (terraced houses with a living room that faces both sides of the house, allowing the sun to penetrate through the entire dwelling) – everything in order. It is the same orderliness that is so striking when arriving to the Netherlands from abroad. When this neighbourhood was planned, the economy had just started growing again, and The Netherlands was becoming less dependent on foreign aid like the Marshall funds that had helped build up the country immediately after the second world war. Housing shortage was becoming a pressing issue. In response to this, private investors started to develop housing in neighbourhoods like this one. They were built quickly, made possible by the newly available standardised building methods like the Dura-Coignet system that was widely used in IJsselmonde (Güth, 2013; Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004). Simultaneously, the welfare state was built up, funded by gas production in the northern province of Groningen. The Dutch petroleum company (Nederlandse Aardolie Maatschappij, N.A.M.) that was in charge of the gas exploitation in Groningen also extracted oil from the soil of IJsselmonde (fig. 12, 13). Everything was growing; everything seemed possible.

Some 60 years after the building of this neighbourhood, the gas extraction in Groningen has been put to an end after years of earthquakes and protests. The welfare state that was built on its foundations is also under pressure: while the economy has started growing after the 2008 crisis, wages have not increased, and work pressure in



the public sector notoriously high. The Netherlands is also facing a challenge to respond to climate change. Reyerroord is selected as one of the first neighbourhoods in Rotterdam to replace gas with alternative, sustainable energy sources (Rotterdam, 2019). The welfare state that was built on gas extraction is burning out – as is the gas itself. On top of that, Reyerroord faces problems in its water management and sewage system, that has to be replaced in the coming years. What do these social, ecological, political changes mean for the physical and social space experienced here?



12. boven: ja-knikker in Zomerland / above: crude oil extraction pump in Zomerland. [Oud-IJsselmonde FB](#)
 13. onder: plankaart met locaties ja-knikkers in Groot-IJsselmonde / below: planning map of Groot-IJsselmonde.
 The dots indicate the oil extraction locations. [Bouw 1962](#)



14. linksboven: Kinderen in Hordijkerveld net na oplevering / upper left: children in Hordijkerveld just after building. [Oud-IJsselmonde fb](#)

15. rechtsboven: Appeldijk in Hordijkerveld net na oplevering / upper right: Appeldijk in Hordijkerveld just after building. [Oud-IJsselmonde fb](#)

16. linksonder: woningen langs de binnenste groenstrook in Reyeroord / below left: dwellings neighbouring the inner green strip of Reyeroord. [picture of the author](#)

17. bloeiende krokussen aan het Akkeroord / flowering crocusses at Akkeroord. [picture of the author](#)



19. links: 'onderhoudsarme bosbeplanting' in Reyeroord. Overwoekerde borders met wilde bramen. left: *easy to maintain, cheap bushes to the left. Prickly blackberries have taken over.*

20. rechts: de border van de groenstrook wordt hier gebruikt door een bewoner om makkelijker naar de achtertuin te komen / right: *appropriation of the borders with tiles to make a path from the park to the backgarden.*

18. Een bankje voor één persoon in Reyeroord. Het wordt wel veel gebruikt, getuige de sigarettenpeuken, ijsjesverpakkingen, mandarijnenschillen en meer / *A one-person bench. Looking at the cigaret butts, mandarin peels and ice cream packaging around it, it is very much in use. Is it a policy measure to not have any benches, to prevent people from 'hanging around' -in their own neighbourhood? [all pictures of the author](#)*



12:45. 2. Reyeroord (park). “Een bankje voor één persoon”

Terwijl ik wandel, maak ik foto's. Na ongeveer een half uur ga ik ergens zitten en schrijf ik mijn ervaring op. Maar in deze wijk is dat moeilijk: pas aan het eind van dit gigantische park kom ik een bankje tegen. Een eenpersoonsbankje (fig. 18), ik heb nog nooit zoiets gezien. Het enige 'zitmeubel' in de wijde omgeving. Alhoewel het idee van deze wijk was dat het eenzaamheid en individualisme tegen zou gaan – de grote hoeveelheden collectief groen zouden daaraan bijdragen – is deze groene openbare ruimte best moeilijk te gebruiken of te bewonen. Alles heeft al een plek. Er zijn weinig uitbouwen, geen extravagante voortuinen vol tuinkabouters, geen moestuinen of koffielekken. Geen buurtcafé of snackbar. Wel veel gras (honden mogen los, geen opruimplicht), kijkgroen (hier en daar overwoekerd met braamstruiken, zou er in de zomer geplukt worden?) en hier en daar een speeltuin op kunstgras (honden verboden). Het laat weinig aan de verbeelding over. Juist doordat alles een functie en een plek heeft is het moeilijk voor te stellen dat het anders zou kunnen. Deze architectuur en stedenbouw is niet langzaam gegroeid, aangepast aan de wensen en gewoontes van haar gebruikers, maar in een keer uitgerold vanaf de tekentafel.

Het is een bijzonder warme dag vandaag, en het is vakantie, maar er zijn maar weinig mensen in deze buurttuin: een paar mensen die hun hond uitlaten en ouders met kinderen. Van Drimmelen, de ontwerper, had bedacht dat het centrale groen in de wijk vooral voor kinderen tot 10 jaar geschikt zou zijn en voor mensen die slecht ter been zijn. Hier kan vanuit het keukenraam een oogje in het zeil gehouden worden. De groenstroken tussen de wijken hadden een “wilder karakter”; er kon in gewandeld worden en oudere kinderen konden er spelen of hutten bouwen. Voor de “zo nodige tolerante sociale gezindheid” zijn “de open gebieden, waar door de grote stadsbewoner nog iets beleefd kan worden van de met de jaargetijden wisselende aspecten der natuur zijn daarbij van de grootste waarde” (Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004; van Drimmelen, 1962). De beplantingsschema's waren er ook op gericht om onderscheid aan te brengen tussen de buurttuinen en de groenstroken tussen de wijken. Vanwege bezuinigingen werd uiteindelijk overal ‘onderhoudsarme dichte bosbeplanting’ geplant, waardoor de verschillende typen groene ruimtes erg op elkaar zijn gaan lijken (fig. 19, 20).

12:45. 2. Reyeroord (park). “A one-person bench”

I take photos while I walk. After some 30 minutes of walking I try to find a place to sit and write down my experiences. This proves to be quite difficult in this neighbourhood – only after traversing through the immense park at the heart of this area, I come across a small bench. A one person bench (fig. 18) – I have never seen something like it. This neighbourhood was planned with the ideals of community instead of individualism – and these large patches of green were to contribute to that. But they are hard to use or inhabit, vast fields of grass and prickly bushes to the sides, they bear almost no traces of use or appropriation. Everything is in order, everything has a place already in this post-war neighbourhood. Few homes have been extended; front gardens are neat and empty, often tiled – no extravagant displays of garden gnomes or creatively tended boxwood bushes. No local pub or snack bar. Only the occasional Astro turf playground, a safe haven in a sea of dog dirt. What is left to imagine here? Perhaps because this neighbourhood was planned so quickly and was built so sudden, it is difficult to imagine it otherwise. It did not grow, slowly adapting to the wishes and habits of its users – it is projected at once, fresh from the drawing board.

The temperatures are extraordinarily high today, and it's spring break – but even now not many people are using this ‘community garden’: just some people and their dogs, parents and their children. Van Drimmelen, the city planner, imagined this central green space suited for young children, their mothers (or fathers) keeping an eye out from the kitchen window. A domestic green space. The green strips *between* the different neighbourhoods were to be “wild” – these natural greens were a perfect place to build huts, to play and get lost – and to get some sense of nature. For the “so urgently necessary tolerant social inclinations”, the “open grounds, where the city dweller can experience some of the seasonal aspects of nature, are of vital importance”, the planner wrote (Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004; van Drimmelen, 1962). The planting schemes were designed to distinguish the community gardens from the wilder grounds. But due to budget cuts, the eventual planting looked the same everywhere – easy to maintain, cheap prickly bushes (fig. 19, 20).



22. links: 'speelplaats, hier geen honden uitlaten' / left: a sign reading 'playground, no dogs here'. [picture of the author](#)
23. rechts: speelplaats in Reyerroord / right: playground on green strip in Reyerroord. [picture of the author](#)

13:05. 3. Reyerdijk. “a street not made for walking”

When I arrive at the Reyerdijk after winding, detouring path through Reyeroord, I feel the energy seeping out of my body. This is a boring road to walk (fig. 28, 29): the scale of this street is not made for humans but for cars. To get to the shopping centre Keizerswaard I have to detour around a roundabout, what I thought would be a shortcut turns out to be a dead end, my way is blocked by a large pond with ducks and swans. Imagine having difficulty walking, these roads would seem endless.

The Reyerdijk is part of Groot-IJsselmonde's ring road. It's a central aspect in the design of this plan, based on the “wijkgedachte” (A Dutch version of the “community unit” idea) (Bos et al., 1946; Geyl, 1948). The plan looks like a flower: smaller neighbourhoods fan out from a centre (fig. 25, 26). Green spaces (with hidden oil extraction pumps) fill up the space between the petals. The neighbourhoods are connected by the ring road that I am walking on.

It's a beautiful plan, seen on the map. But walking here, it's an abstract fact. One of the reasons for that might be that this ring road does not feel like a ring: it's constantly interrupted by other big roads or by the old Kerkedijk, an old dike that was planned to be demolished (van Drimmelen, 1962, see fig. 25), and that cuts Groot-IJsselmonde in two (fig. 26, 27) The dike was never levelled – a municipality report from the early 2000s notes:

The highly conceptual nature of the design drawings conceals the fact that the ring has been partially laid over the existing dike structures, which interfered with the establishment of a coherent and even street profile. (Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004, p. 20; van Drimmelen, 1962)

This was no tabula rasa: it was an area full of polders and dikes lined with houses. The sea reigned here until the 16th century: shifting, unstable land, sometimes flooding, returning to the sea. While the then island of IJsselmonde seemed relatively stable at 1300, poldered and diked in, a flood in 1373 changed that and the island became sea again. In the 200 years that followed the river carried thick packs of silt and clay to the IJsselmonde shore: turning the soil into clay over the peat that was

13:05. 3. Reyerdijk. “niet voor mensen gemaakt”

Wanneer ik via een omweg aankom op de Reyerdijk en verderga naar winkelcentrum Keizerswaard word ik even heel moe. Het is sáái lopen hier, schrijf ik op in mijn notities. Deze schaal is niet voor mensen gemaakt maar voor auto's (fig. 28, 29): om vanaf waar ik ben bij het winkelcentrum te komen moet ik omlopen, ik stuit eerst op een grote vijver waar ik niet langs kan. Stel je voor dat je slecht ter been bent.

De Reyerdijk is deel van de ringweg van Groot-IJsselmonde, een centraal aspect in het ontwerp van de “wijkgedachte” van dit plan. De wijk is ontworpen volgens een “bloembladstructuur”, met uitwaaierende wijken om een centrale kern gevouwen (fig. 25, 26). Tussen de wijken en in het midden is het groen. Onderling zijn ze verbonden door de rondweg waar ik nu op sta.

Het is een mooi plan als je het ziet op de kaart. Als je hier wandelt merk je er weinig van. Een van de redenen daarvoor is dat de rondweg niet voelt als een rondweg: hij wordt steeds onderbroken door andere grote wegen en door de Kerkedijk, die het centrum diagonaal in tweeën snijdt (fig. 26, 27). De ontwerper, van Drimmelen, had eigenlijk gepland dat deze dijk afgegraven zou worden. Dat is nooit gebeurd. Een rapport van de gemeente naar de cultuurhistorische waarde van Groot-IJsselmonde merkt op:

Het hoog conceptueel gehalte van de ontwerptekeningen verhult echter het feit dat de ring deels over bestaande dijkstructuren is heen gelegd, wat de totstandkoming van een coherente en gelijkmatige profilering bemoeilijkte. (Jansen & Ruitenbeek, 2004, p. 20)

Dit was geen tabula rasa, maar een gebied vol bebouwde dijken en polders. Tot de 16e eeuw had de zee hier min of meer vrij spel, en was het niet vastomlijnd wat water was, en wat land. Rond 1300 leek het eiland IJsselmonde weliswaar redelijk stabiel, het land was ontgonnen en bedijkt, maar in 1373 liep bijna de hele polder onder water. In de daarop volgende twee eeuwen zet de rivier en het getij er dikke pakketten klei en zand af, waardoor de bodem nu geen veen, maar klei is. Het land werd langzaam teruggewonnen door eerst de drogere plekken te bedijken, wat leidde tot losse, eiland-achtige polders.

there before. The land was slowly reclaimed by diking in circular plots of the higher land, from there expanding to slightly lower parts, and so on. This resulted in a patchwork of ring-shaped dikes and circular polders. Only by the year of 1580, when the Koedood kreek was dammed, IJsselmonde was land again (Meijel, Hinterthür, & Bet, 2008; Palmboom, 1987). The Oude Kerkedijk is one of the remnants of this dike and polder structure.

IJsselmonde's old dikes are still remarkable in the landscape. The Kerkedijk a high dike, raising a physical and visual barrier between the west and the east side of the neighbourhood. When you walk on it, it also feels like walking in a small rural village – the contrast with the garden city 50 meters down can hardly be bigger.

Doordat er steeds nieuwe stukken werden ingedijkt en oude dijken werden afgegraven, werd het uiteindelijk een lappendeken met een patroon van ringvormige dijken. De Oude Kerkedijk is daar een overblijfsel van. Pas in 1580, met de indamming van de Koedood, was het gebied weer opnieuw geheel bedijkt (Meijel, Hinterthür, & Bet, 2008; Palmboom, 1987).

De oude dijken die IJsselmonde zijn nog steeds bijzonder opvallend. Niet alleen is de Kerkedijk (noord en zuid) hoog en vormt daardoor visueel en fysiek een barrière tussen de west- en oostkant van de wijk, maar het zijn ook oude straatjes met oude bebouwing die aandoen als een plattelandsdorp. Het contrast met de tuinstad waar je je vijftig meter verder in bevindt, kon nauwelijks groter zijn.



24. Verkavelingsstructuur van Rotterdam (afbeelding: Frits Palmboom, 1987). Goed te zien is dat IJsselmonde stukje bij beetje bedijkt is, wat leidt tot de ringvormige dijenstructuur. / Parcellation of Rotterdam (via Frits Palmboom, 1987). IJsselmonde, to the south of the river Maas, has been diked in bit by bit, leading to ring-shaped dikes.



25. plankaart van IJsselmonde, inclusief vlakmaking van de Kerkedijk. Vergelijk fig. 26. / Design of Groot-IJsselmonde. The Kerkedijk has been levelled in this plan - compare fig. 26. Bouw 1962



Basiskaart van de woongebieden Groot-IJsselmonde, 1961

26. Plankaart van Groot-IJsselmonde zoals het gebouwd is.. Van midden boven met de klok mee: Zomerland, Tuinenhoven (1962), Groenenhagen (1962), Reyeroord (1960), Hordijkerveld (1960), Kreekhuizen (1960) en Sportdorp. In het midden van de ring het centrum. De donker-gearceerde diagonale strook duidt de oude Kerkedijk met bebouwing aan. / *Planning map of Groot-IJsselmonde as built. Clockwise from upper midsts: Zomerland, Tuinenhoven (1962), Groenenhagen (1962), Reyeroord (1960), Hordijkerveld (1960), Kreekhuizen (1960 and Sportdorp. The centre in the middle of the ring. The dark diagonal strip indicates the old dike and its buildings.* [Jansen & Ruitenbeek 2004](#)

27. De Oude Kerkedijk met op de achtergrond het contrast van een galerijflat / *The Oude Kerkedijk (one of the old dikes) with a large flat in the background.* [picture of the author](#)



28. links: de schaal en het straatprofiel van de Reyerdijk (ringweg) / *left: scale and street profile of Reyerdijk.*

29. rechts: shortcut nemen kan niet vanwege vijver / *right: impossible to take a shortcut due to large pond.* [pictures of the author](#)

13:45 4. Keizerswaard. “publiek leven?”

Rond winkelcentrum Keizerswaard (fig. 30, 31, 32) wordt het drukker op straat. Het is de eerste plek met bankjes en cafés. De grote weg die het plan hier opnieuw doorkruist doet dienst als een soort boulevard: mensen flaneren, eten een frietje van Bram Ladage. Het terras van Zeezicht, een café op een vluchtheuvel van de Herenwaard, zit vol.

Binnen de ring van Groot-IJsselmonde, hadden de stedenbouwkundigen bedacht, zou het publieke leven zich afspelen (Bos et al., 1946; Geyl, 1948; van Drimmelen, 1962). De woonwijken waren vooral bedoeld voor ontspanning in het groen en voor het gezinsleven. Dit centrum zorgde ervoor dat Groot-IJsselmonde als relatief autonoom stadsdeel kon functioneren. Er werd een groot park aangelegd, park De Twee Heuvels (met daarin weggestopt een heleboel ‘ja-knikkers’, machines om aardolie op te pompen). Winkelcentrum Keizerswaard moest de allure van een openluchtwinkelcentrum als de Lijnbaan krijgen. Het was bijna twee keer zo groot gepland, maar doordat de Noorder Kerkedijk niet afgegraven werd, ging dat niet door en wordt het begrensd door de dijk aan de westkant. In de jaren 70 (?) werd het winkelcentrum overdekt.

Hier werd in 1973 ook het buurthuis van IJsselmonde gebouwd: De Klimmende Bever (fig. 34, 35), naar het wapenschild van Oud-IJsselmonde. Er waren feestzalen, hobbyruimtes, een jongerensoos, concerten en films. In 2006 werd het gebouw gesloopt, om in 2011 vervangen te worden door een nieuwbouwtoren die stichting Islamunda, de bibliotheek, een brasserie en het Rotterdams Wijktheater huisvest (fig. 35). Ook het plein ging op de schop.

Het gebied binnen de ring doet wanneer je er vandaag doorheen loopt wat chaotisch aan. Het lijkt een samenraapsel van bouwstijlen die op het moment van bouwen standaard waren, doorsneden door autowegen, dijken, en een groot maar moeilijk te betreden park. Het voelt niet alsof het in ‘organische verbinding’ staat met de zeven omliggende wijken. Dat alle culturele en publieke voorzieningen binnen de ring, buiten de woonwijken liggen, betekent ook dat niet zomaar deel zijn van de alledaagse routes en routines van bewoners.

13:45 4. Keizerswaard. “public life?”

The streets get busier when I get closer to shopping centre Keizerswaard (fig. 30, 31, 32). This is the first place with benches and cafés. The main road that crosses here again feels like a kind of boulevard: people parade on the sidewalk, eat fries. The terrace of Zeezicht, the restaurant in the middle of the road, is full of people.

The planners of IJsselmonde imagined that this area, within the ring, would be the space for public life (Bos et al., 1946; Geyl, 1948; van Drimmelen, 1962). The residential quarters were meant for recreation in the wide green spaces, for family life. This public centre made IJsselmonde a relatively autonomous part of the city. It includes a big park, De Twee Heuvels (the two hills), hidden amidst the green some 20 pumpjacks for the exploitation of crude oil. It also hosts several schools, the library and neighbourhood council, and shopping centre Keizerswaard. This shopping centre was planned to be twice as big, but was restricted by the dike that was never levelled. The shopping centre was roofed in the 70s.

This is also the place where in 1973 community centre De Klimmende Bever (the climbing beaver, after the IJsselmonde coat of arms) was built (fig. 34, 35). It replaced the city centre of the old town of IJsselmonde, that was cut in two by the A16 highway and the Van Brienoord bridge. De klimmende beaver included party and hobby rooms, a youngster club, concerts and movies. It was demolished in 2006, to be replaced by a large office tower with public plinth in 2011 that hosts the Islamunda foundation, the library, a café and the Rotterdams Wijktheater (Rotterdam community theatre). The square was also rebuilt to make space for tram connections, a market, some benches (and another astrotrurf playground) (fig. 33).

The area within the IJsselmonde ring feels chaotic when I walk in it today. It's a collection of islands, of styles and buildings that were in fashion at the moment of construction, cut through by roads, dikes and a park that is difficult to enter, despite its size. It does not feel like it stands in ‘organic connection’ with the 7 surrounding neighbourhoods, as the planners envisioned. And that all social and cultural affordances take place within the ring and outside the dwelling quarters, also means that they are not necessarily part of people's everyday routes and routines.



30. linksboven: Winkelcentrum Keizerswaard in de jaren '70. / upper left: shopping centre Keizerswaard in the 70s. [Oud-IJsselmonde fb.](#)

31. linksonder: Winkelcentrum Keizerswaard voor overkapping. / lower left: Shopping Centre Keizerswaard before it was roofed. [Oud-IJsselmonde fb.](#)

32. onder: winkelcentrum Keizerswaard nu / Shopping centre Keizerswaard now.



33. boven: Keizerswaard/Herenwaard. Vervanging van de Klimmende Bever is Stichting Islamunda, dat onderdak biedt aan de bibliotheek, het Rotterdams Wijktheater, een bioscoop en een grand café. / above: Herenwaard/Keizerswaard square. This building replaces community centre *De Klimmende Bever*, hosting a library, the Rotterdams Wijktheater, a café and a cinema. [picture of the author](#)
34. Sloop van De Klimmende Bever (2006?) / Demolishing of community centre *De Klimmende Bever*. [Oud-IJsselmonde fb.](#)
35. Logo van de Klimmende Bever, naar het wapen van Oud-IJsselmonde. / Logo of *De Klimmende Bever* (the climbing beaver), after the insigne of the old town of IJsselmonde.

Afterthoughts

According to the ‘wijkgedachte’ (community unit) ideals, as formulated by the commission Bos in their publication *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad* (the city of the future, the future of the city, date), people need connection and decentralisation. While the “individual, grown lonely in capitalist society, [stands] outside any real sense of community” (Bos et al., 1946, p. 17), every person is reliant on other people to develop themselves and grow. This community life is dependent on one’s dwelling place: “good surroundings [can] stimulate mental growth to a large extent” (Bos et al., 1946, p. 17). Making those surroundings means in the first place the “creation of a dwelling place, that can be a frame for person and community to develop their personhood, and that invites and affords people to connect and enter into many forms of collaboration and cohabitation.” Inhabitants are firstly part of their family, their dwelling community in their neighbourhood; the neighbourhood is part of a district, the district part of a city.

The ‘bloembladstructuur’, the flower shape of IJsselmonde, was to afford the ‘wijkgedachte’, the planners’ community unit ideals – combined with the anthroposophic thinking of the designer, Van Drimmelen. But because these ideas have been projected on the actual situation rather abstractly, because of budget cuts along the way and due to the large scale of the project, especially within the ring, this is not the lived experience when walking through IJsselmonde. The neighbourhood unit remains a representational idea: not a performative experience. Neighbourhoods like Reyerwaard need more than a field within the houses to become a place of cohabitation. Without shared stories and meeting places, without places that afford “gentle publicness” (Hyde, 2017) this does not work. Cultural meeting places on the scale of the neighbourhood could mean a lot here. It is exciting to speculate on what the starting of a wijktheater dependence, or a series of site specific story telling, improvisation and performances could mean here: how it would alter the physical and social fabric of this neighbourhood.

Concluderende gedachten

Volgens het idee van ‘de wijkgedachte’ zoals geformuleerd door de commissie Bos in *De stad der toekomst, de toekomst der stad*, hebben mensen behoefte aan verbinding en decentralisatie. Terwijl “het vereenzaamde individu in de kapitalistische maatschappij buiten ieder echt gemeenschapsverband” (Bos et al., 1946, p. 17) staat, is elk mens op de medemens aangewezen om zich te ontwikkelen. Dit gemeenschapsleven is sterk gebonden aan de woonplaats: “een goede omgeving [kan] de geestelijke groei ten eerste bevorderen” (Bos et al., 1946, p. 17). Het maken van de omgeving is hiervoor in eerste instantie het “scheppen van een woonplaats, die voor mens en gemeenschap een kader kan zijn, dat gelegenheid biedt voor de ontwikkeling der persoonlijkheid en er als het ware toe uitnodigt, in te gaan op verlerle vormen van samenwerking en samenleving”. Bewoners zijn in eerste instantie deel van hun gezin, van de ‘woongemeenschap’ in hun buurt, die buurt is deel van een wijk, en de wijk is vervolgens weer deel van een stad.

De “bloembladstructuur” van IJsselmonde zou tegemoet komen aan de wijkgedachte, gecombineerd met het antroposofische gedachtegoed van de ontwerper, Van Drimmelen. Maar doordat dit wat schematisch op de situatie is geprojecteerd, er onderweg wat dingen werden wegbezuinigd (beplantingsschema’s in de groenzones, het afgraven van de dijk) en door de grote schaal van het project, met name in het centrum, is dit niet de dagelijks ervaren realiteit wanneer je door IJsselmonde loopt. Buurten als Reyerwaard hebben meer nodig dan een grasveld tussen de huizen om een ‘woongemeenschap’ te worden: zonder gedeelde verhalen en sociale ontmoetingsplaatsen werkt het niet. Juist culturele voorzieningen op wijkniveau, zoals een locatiespecifieke performance met het wijktheater, zou hier veel kunnen betekenen. Het zou op die manier kunnen worden wat Kim Trogal een plek van “gentle publicness” noemt.

4. Case study analysis

Wooden Hut - Kawahara Krause Architects

This project, a small chapel in a private garden, made of wood that also serves as firewood storage, is relevant as a case study because of its construction method. The wooden structure, but especially the firewood stacking, are relatively easy building methods that could also be done by non-professionals - also due to the small scale. The firewood stacking is also easy to disassemble and make into something new.

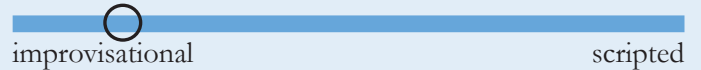


size	11 m ²
location	Leonberg, Germany
architect	yes: Kawahara Krause Architects
built by	professionals: Bartholomaeus
built in	2013
used by	2-4? (private house)
permit	no?
affordances	firewood in the garden
materials	wood, firewood

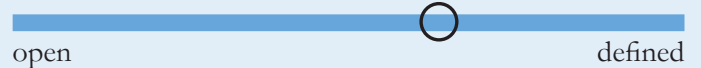
temporality



building process



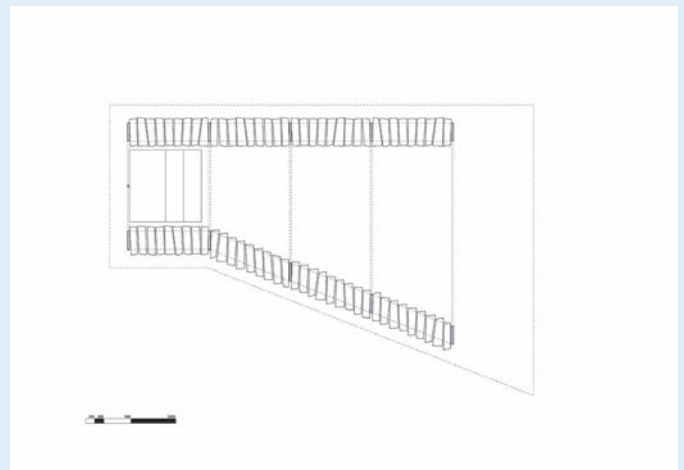
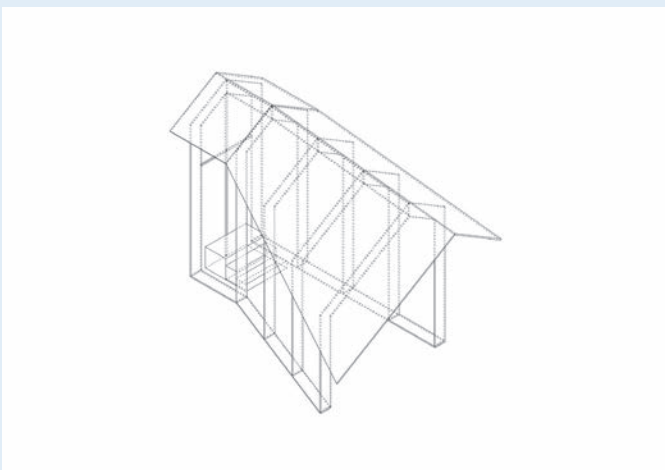
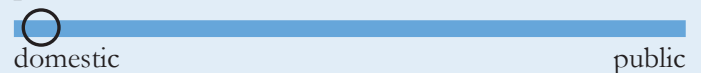
control: use



politics

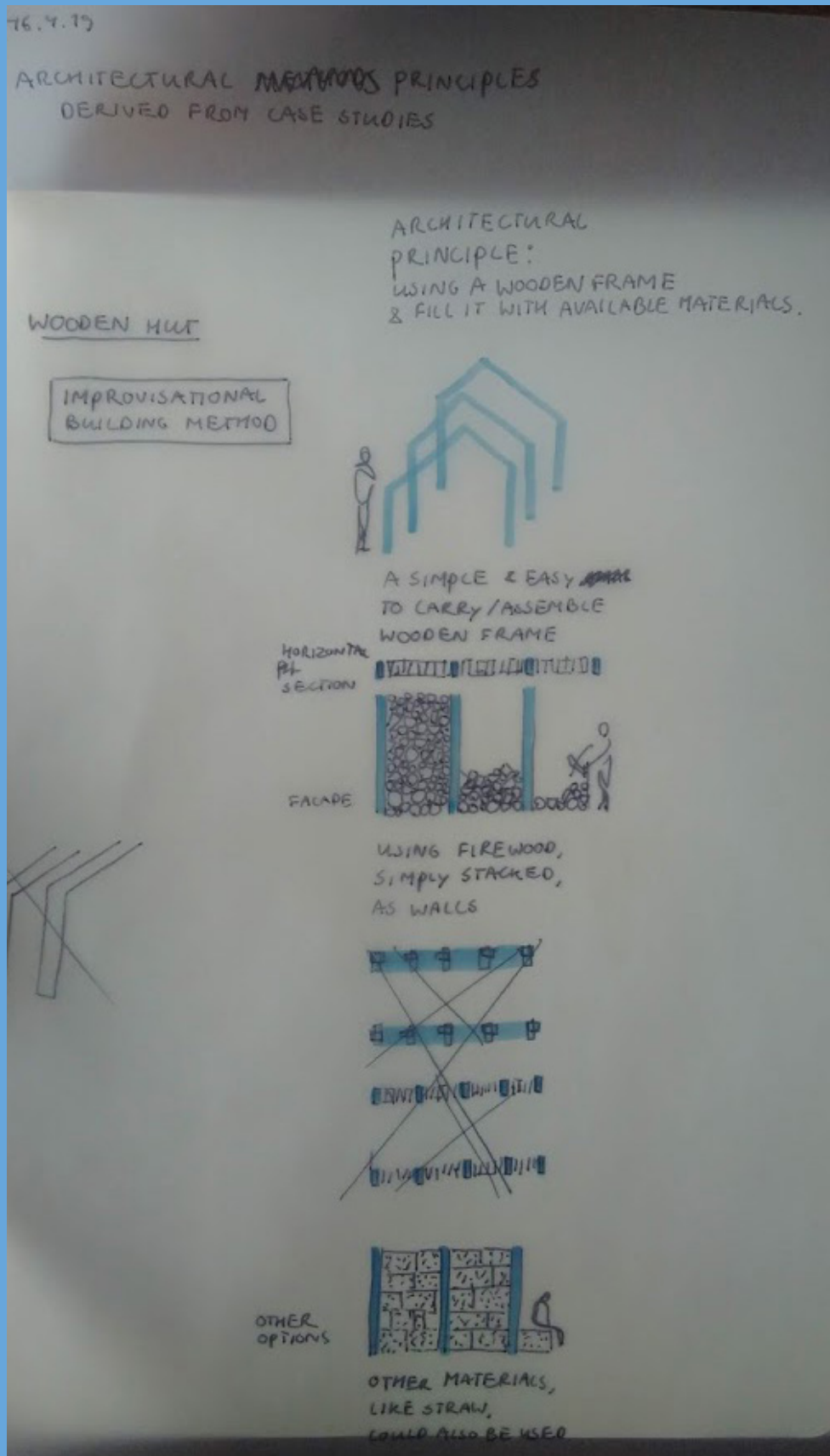


publicness



architectural methods

On these blue pages I will include drawings of the architectural principles that I derive from the case study to the left. These architectural principles are the tools that are used to balance these tensions in this case.

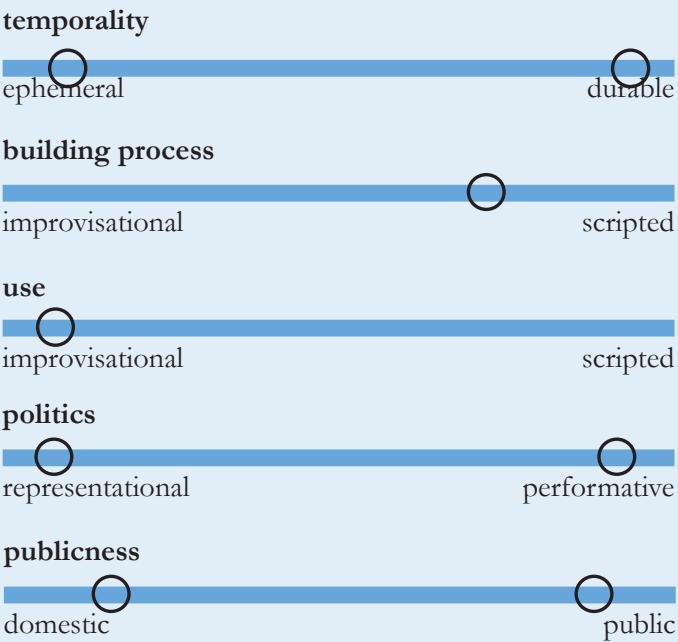


The Arch - Constructlab

The Arch is “a living support structure” in Genk, a former mining town in Belgium. It plays with temporality: the relation between ephemeral and durable. The wooden structure “supports” the building of the Arch - by a team of 15 workshop participants - and social events for the larger community. In this way, it supports/performs the building of relationships. It creates a ‘public space’ where previously there was none - and does so by ‘domesticating’ this space, even, literally, sleeping in it. The arch that remains, made of recycled materials and produced on site, ‘represents’/recollects the community that built it. Next to the event, it also creates something durable (the plastic arch; knowledge about recycled plastic).



size	165 m² footprint
location	Genk, Belgium
architect	Constructlab
built by	15 workshop participants
built in	May 22 2017 - September 17 2017
used by	
permit	no?
affordances	firewood in the garden
materials	wood, firewood



Domesticity - On Off Studio

During a 5-day workshop led by On Off Studio, a collaborative interdisciplinary design studio, participants reflected on domesticity by “turning day-to-day objects into hybrids, so called „street animals““. In this way they inhabited public space and made that space “more public”: suddenly spaces that were previously unused or even scary became inhabitable. Unfortunately this did not last beyond the workshop - perhaps that would have been different had it been done with neighbourhood participants, instead of architecture students.

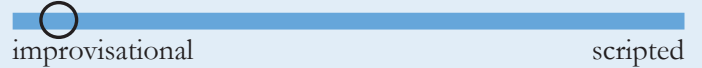


size	~
location	Bratislava, Slovakia
architect	on off studio
built by	workshop participants (architecture students)
built in	5 days, autumn 2015
used by	~
permit	no
affordances	city spaces became places for gathering by inserting these elements
materials	everyday objects, wood, stove, fabric, paper

temporality



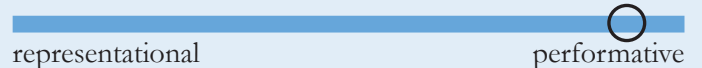
building process



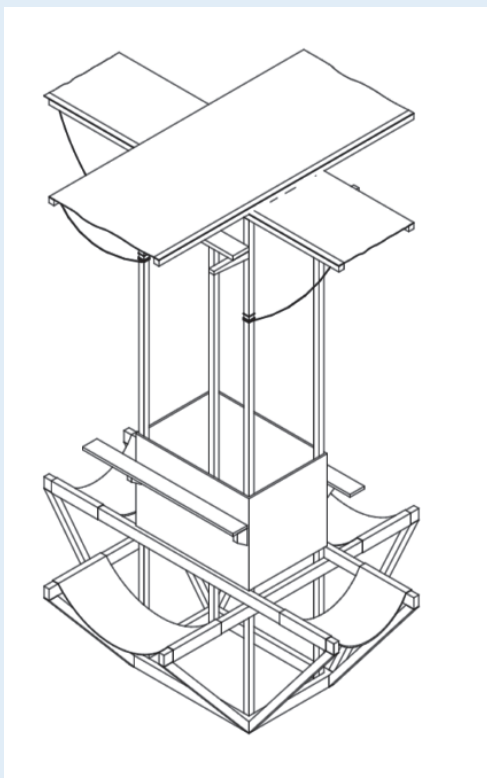
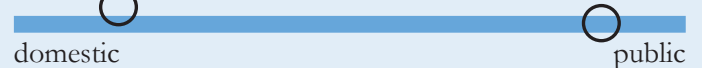
control: use



politics



publicness



Facade garden - neighbour initiative

With one neighbour I initiated to make a 'facade garden' (geveltuintje) in front of our flat. Our downstairs neighbour had to give permission to do so, and he also helped a lot. The plants cool the south-west facade quite a bit, and transform the wide side-walk into a more pleasant space for inhabitants and passers-by alike. By building this together we also 'became inhabitants' of the place where we were living - we met each other, as well as other neighbours, and eventually transformed the pavement into a living room by inhabiting it with a dinner table, food and drinks, and inviting the other neighbours.



size	15m x 0,45m = 6,75m ²
location	Statenweg, Rotterdam
architect	No
built by	6 people
built in	6 hours
used by	10 people (dinner); 32 households (flat); many passersby
permit	No; agreement with neighbours
affordances	Removable pavement stones
materials	Plants (sponsored from GroenNoord and my mom's garden; bought with municipal budget); tools (neighbour; bought with budget); food and drinks for neighbours (bought with budget)

temporality



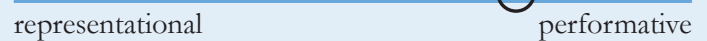
building process



use



politics



publicness



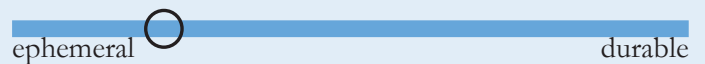
Refuge II - Wim Goes Architectuur

In this project, built for a client diagnosed with ALS and with no time to lose, a temporary no-threshold dwelling is built as an extension to his existing dwelling. The project is constructed by over 100 friends and family members, which changed the building process into a gathering, a mourning, a celebration. The possibility for building this process together (thereby temporarily inhabiting this space, a space of celebration, and a space of loss) is made possible by the specific materials and building methods used. Straw-building is something that also inexperienced builders can do, and so is, to a lesser extent, the rest of the building. Only the piping and drainage were done by professionals. Interestingly, Wim Goes Architectuur is an office that is often quite object- rather than process-focused. Perhaps because of that, this project resulted in a clean aesthetics, which makes it more likely to be acknowledged in the architectural discourse as an “architectural project”, while other projects with a more open process and messier aesthetics are not always considered ‘architecture’.

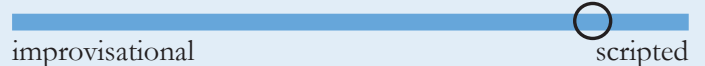


size	4,5m x 12m: 54m ²
location	Nevele, Belgium
architect	Yes: Wim Goes Architectuur
built by	+100 people
built in	1 summer
used by	1 person + many visitors
permit	? (private property > no?)
affordances	Concrete carport (structure; roof)
materials	straw; loam; ventilation & heating installations (sponsored); wood.

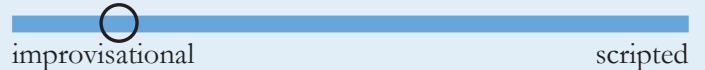
temporality



building process



use



politics



publicness

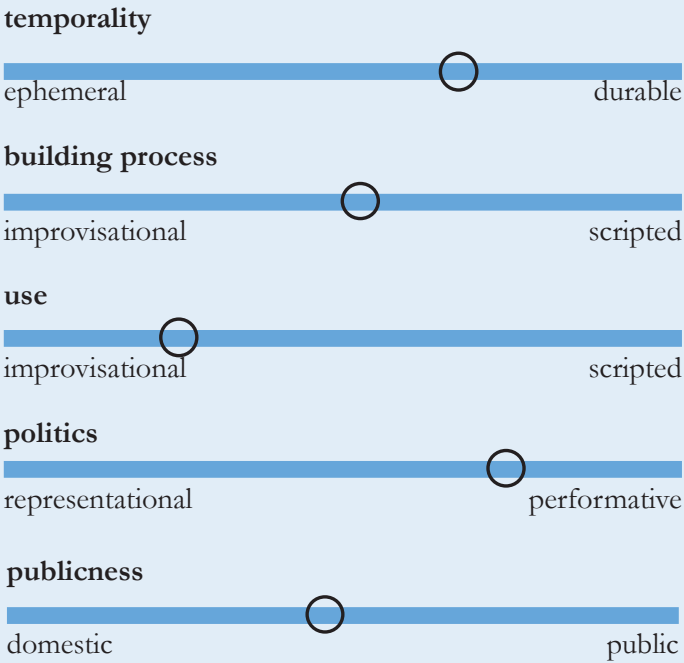


The Den - Matt & Fiona



The Den is a satellite classroom for extra-curricular activities and a shelter on the allotment garden. It was designed with its inhabitants - a class of school children - who emphasised that they wanted to build a proper building, not a rickety shed, a fold-out and a lookout. It was designed and build with a group of volunteers and the children themselves: this was made possible by the materils (wood and paint) and the help of the architects-educators-facilitators Matt & Fiona.

size	~30m ²
location	Oakfield, Hull, UK
architect	Matt & Fiona, architects/educators
built by	+20people?
built in	1 week
used by	+ - 20 people - by a class of kids on a special school
permit	?
affordances	School allotment
materials	Wood, water-proof rubber paint

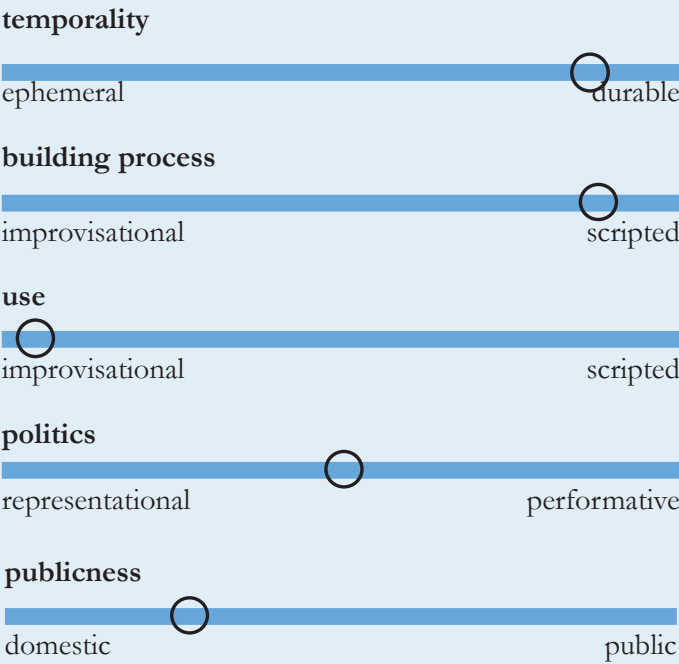


Reversible Destiny Lofts - Arakawa & Gins

Arakawa & Gins' Reversible Destiny Lofts & Life Extending Villa's challenge inhabitants to use their bodies otherwise & force them to respond differently to the environment. In this way it affords improvisational uses.

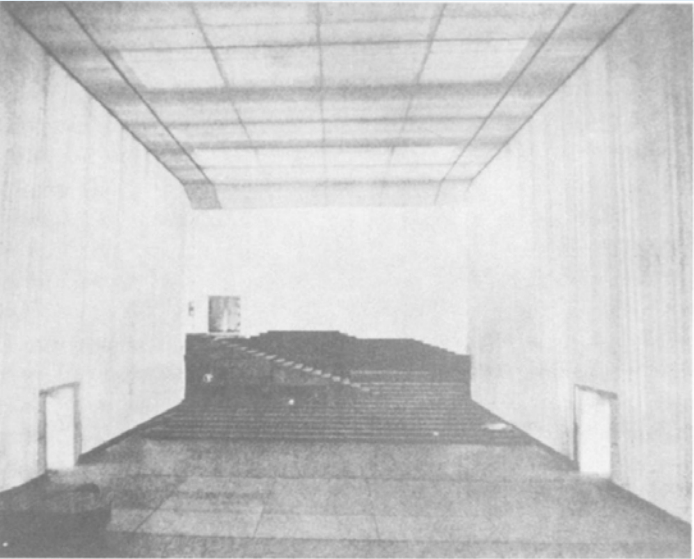


size
location
architect Arakawa & Gins
built by
built in
used by
permit
affordances
materials

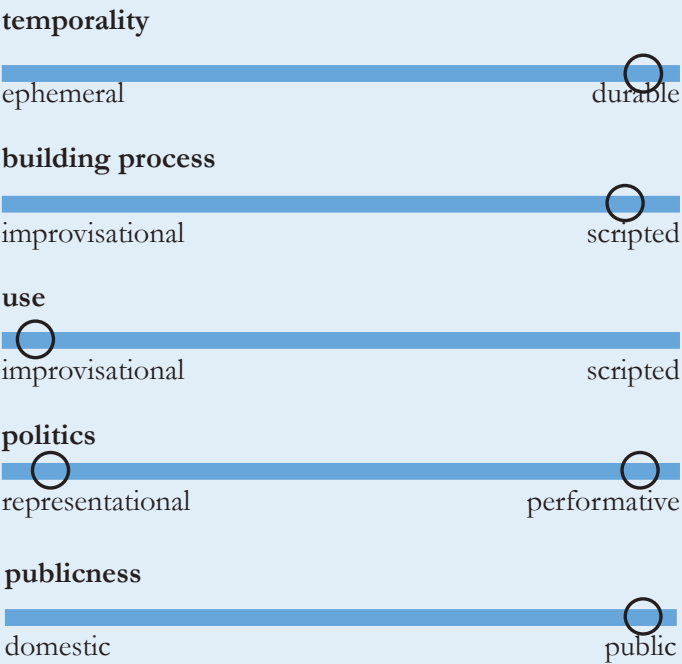


Tessenow, Festspielhaus Hellerau

The Festspielhaus in Hellerau meant a leap from the representative to the performative in theatre and performance art. Décors were no longer just images of something else; they were a space in themselves, with different heights, steps. They did not represent an elsewhere but provided a stage for action happening there and then.



size	
location	Hellerau, Dresden, Germany
architect	Heinrich Tessenow
built by	
built in	
used by	
permit	
affordances	
materials	



36. The Great Hall (theatre) of the Dalcroze Gerhard Weiss, Heinrich Tessenow (Essen: Bacht, 1976)

Aldo van Eyk Pavilion, Kröller-Muller museum

The Sonsbeek Pavilion by Aldo van Eyk, now on display as the Aldo van Eyk pavilion in the Kröller Muller museum shows a relatively simple construction, made of rather cheap materials; nevertheless affording a wide variety of uses and interpretations.



size

location

Otterlo, Netherlands

architect

Aldo van Eyk

built by

built in

used by

permit

affordances

materials

temporality

ephemeral



durable

building process

improvisational



scripted

use

improvisational



scripted

politics

representational



performative

publicness

domestic



public

Assemble - Baltic Street Adventure Playground



Baltic Street Adventure Playground is not a building; rather, it's a literal side of emergence, full of possibilities, affordances and resources to make these happen. It's a children-led space where children can make the spaces they wish to inhabit and play in. Adults facilitate this, by teaching methods of construction and making sure it remains a safe space.

size	+ - 40m x 120m = 4800m ²
location	Glasgow, UK
architect	Yes: Assemble
built by	board of six, a staff team of four and a community of some 250 children
built in	2013 ~
used by	260+
permit	Yes?
affordances	Unbuilt land; trees
materials	ropes; mats; nets; balls; wood; tools (child- and adult-sized); water-pump; pool; sand pit; vegetable garden...



Building a habitat for adventure and play

temporality

ephemeral durable

control: construction

open defined

control: use

open defined

politics

representational performative

publicness

domestic public



photos: assemble.co.uk and balticstreetadventureplay.co.uk

Svartlamoen affordable & student housing



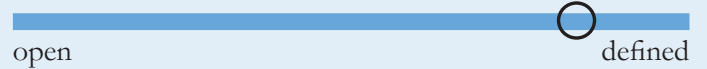
Svartlamoen affordable & student housing is an interesting project because it is a durable, rather conventional assignment: an apartment block. But it's done otherwise, by making it of CNC load-bearing wood and by leaving the functions of the different spaces in the apartment undetermined, while offering affordances (like a 'counter') that could easily be transformed into a kitchen. It leaves maximum space for its inhabitants to become inhabitants.

size	+4 x 23 x 8 + 2x18x6 = 952m ² living
location	Svartlamoen, Trondheim, Norway
architect	Yes: Brendeland Kristofferson Ark.
built by	professionals; adapted by everyone
built in	unknown amount of time (in 2005)
used by	+30 inhabitants
permit	Yes
affordances	N/A (designed + built from scratch)
materials	wood (CLT); concrete; outside steel stairs; ...

temporality



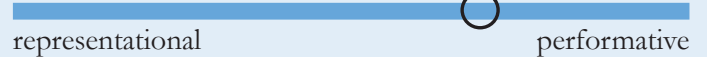
control: construction



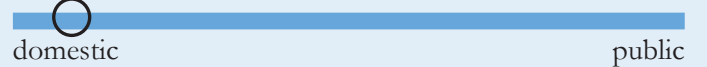
control: use



politics



publicness



photos: David Grandorge & BKArk

5. Reflection

How does everything relate to each other and how does it relate to my design?
I will write this before p4, so that I can analyse my design based on the research
and show how the research has influenced the design.

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