

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

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

Personal information		
Name	Joshua Arthur George Jerome	
Student number	5739675	

Studio		
Name / Theme	Borders & Territories/Transient Liquidities along the New Silk Road III	
Main mentor	Stefano Milani	Architecture
Second mentor	Pierre Jennen	Building Technology
Third mentor	Negar Sanaan Bensi	Theory
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The political and physical boundaries applied to the world are essential in the formation of our realities. My interests lie in the personal perceptions that interpret and produce environments, juxtaposed by the grand geo-political and economic foundations these environments are built upon. Therefore, this year's studio theme proved particularly interesting because of its conglomeration of scales and the intertwining of grand global narratives (the New Silk Roads) with its local impacts. Further, I find the studio's comprehensive and concrete approach to production, practice, and theory, essential in balancing the experiential and empirical knowledge I wish to architecturalise.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Becoming the Ouroboros: An Arbitrary Salvation

Goal	
Location:	Panama City, Panama
The posed problem,	It is a common belief that humanity's over-consumption is deteriorating and potentially irreversibly destroying the ecological world. In doing so, society undermines the very foundations of the human world, inevitably devastating ourselves in the process. Humanity therefore consumes itself in its consumption, seeking to become the

	Ouroboros. For the Ouroboros the act of self-consumption is both purposeful and constructive, creating a continuous cycle of death and rebirth in which it reinvigorates itself. However, humanity has not achieved this as we continue to consume outside ourselves, from the world that supports us. Learning from this, consumption is not inherently destructive, if it is met with an equal action of return. I instead propose that the current dilemma of humanity originates in the social, political, and psychological delineation created between the logic of the anthropological and the volatility of the ecological. In which, we theoretically remove ourselves from the ecological system, yet continue to physically consume from it, producing imbalance.
research questions and	Since time immemorial, people have tried to separate themselves from the environment, whether that be to protect oneself or explain our human domination. Nowhere is this delineation more visible than in our metropolitan areas. In Panama City gridded suburbs create a hard edge with the erratic tropical rainforest. The habitational culmination of our intelligence abuts and carves away at the most diverse and valuable biome on the planet. What happens if society were to reintegrate the arbitrariness associated with the ecological, back into our anthropogenic models of habitation? Can we dissolve the distinction society perceives between what is human and what is natural, in doing so acceding to our inherent role in local ecologies? Can we become the Ouroboros?
design assignment in which these result.	Designing an architectural scaffold and governance system that supports and prompts the city of Panama to consume itself. In doing so producing a mutualist and homeostatic relationship with the valuable ecosystem that surrounds it.

Process

Method description

My project hinges on equitable study of both individual perceptions and existent phenomena. Therefore, I am exploring the way we see and interact with the world, particularly focusing on how the perceptual methods of glancing and gazing provide the individual with complementary impressions of reality. This more phenomenological approach is essential as a large aspect of my problem statement is about altering the way people perceive the world. To begin, I completed contextual research about Panama the nation, creating a group mapping that manipulated the way migration is viewed in the country. This was presented as a board game, which leveraged techniques of gamification and storytelling to engage the audience in reconsidering the environmental, political and historical structures of the nation. From this I moved to understand Panama as a place, which I am defining as space once perceived. This is again important in relation to my research question as it defines the reciprocal link between space and oneself. For me intervening in space is insufficient if it does not change minds, therefore I must aim to intervene in place. I did not go to Panama with my studio, so I have been exploiting this distance to see Panama through different experiences, consequently producing a meta-place from the places of others. I have intersected research with artistic methods to do this, forming an 'exquisite corpse' type experiment, which both requires sharing and searching for information while acknowledging the arbitrariness of what we learn. In conjunction I have studied the informal settlement Boca La Caja in central Panama City as a case study for unpredictability in existing human habitats. These ways of knowing will further characterise my process of design, as in their synthesis the factual existences and felt experiences of reality can be valuably manipulated and equitably architecturalised to address my research question.

Literature and general practical references

Key Literature

- Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing* [Video]. Retrieved October 23, 2023, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk
- Calvino, I. (1997). *Invisible Cities* (W. Weaver, Trans.). Vintage (Original work published 1972)
- Casey, E. S. (1997). *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. University of California Press.
- Fransella, F. (Ed.). (2003). *International Handbook of Personal Construct Psychology*. John Wiley & Sons
- Harbison, R. (1977). *Eccentric Spaces*. Secker & Warburg.
- Hubbard, P., Kitchin, R. & Valentine, G. (Eds.) (2004). *Key Thinkers on Space & Place*. (pp. 219-225). Sage Publications
- Kelly, G. (1955). *A Theory of Personality*. W. W. Norton.

Practical Precedent/Experience

- Mecklin, J. (2023). *It is 90 seconds to midnight*. Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. Retrieved January 7, 2024, from <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/>
- Frankopan, P. (2018). *The New Silk Roads*. Bloomsbury
- Ungers, O. M. & Koolhaas, R. (1977). *The City in The City, Berlin: A Green archipelago*. Lars Muller Publishers
- Boca la Caja Suburb Study, Panama City, Panama

Reflection

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

Architecture and the built environment are relevantly the front face of human impact, and it is within this space that we visibly see and experience anthropological dominance. Consequently, the decisions we make as architects and urban designers' impact how we perceive the built world and its habitation. Therefore, the professions of the built environment get to decide how we connect with and understand non-human spaces. With the great dominance of mega-projects like the New Silk Roads that are designed to increase global consumption juxtaposed against the collapse of global systems that require restraint and conservation to solve, it is more important than ever to question our architectural approaches to sustainability, circularity, and the inherencies of humanity.

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

My project is not exclusive to Panama City, the over consumption of humanity, which has been cultivated and projected by western nations, is a global issue that requires global effort to resolve. In saying this, the existing offering of silver bullet solutions, such as the slow shift away from fossil fuels or carbon offset initiatives, while good first steps, do not address core issues like the human instinct of consumption. My project is about rethinking the way we consume generally, rather than vilifying it as an aspect of greed. In doing so it is about reshaping the way society views itself, reimagining the need to

delineate human and non-human spaces and contesting scientific norms to revise the importance of experiential and perceptual understandings of our world. What *is*, loses its value when no one believes it *is*, and my project is an exploration focused on addressing this.