

Transtopia

Boris Baars
ExploreLab
2020-21

Suzana Milinovic
Hubert van der Meel
Rachel Lee

Editorial

Introduction

Trans people have many obstacles to face during their lifetime, whether health related, employment, or love and relationships.¹ Trans people are at a much higher risk of suicide than the general population, especially at the early stages of their transition.² They experience violence and discrimination at much higher levels than the general population.³ Furthermore, Trans women, especially in the global south, have a considerably lower life expectancy than the general population.⁴ To live their authentic lives and to fully self-actualize Trans people must face an unaccepting and often even hostile society. These are huge problems that Trans people face.

It's clear that the lives of Trans people can be incredibly difficult. The research project attached to this plan aims to understand how the built environment impacts Trans lives and what responsibilities architects have in this. This research plan aims to set out the problem statement, theoretical framework, and method for researching this topic. Furthermore, this plan aims to situate the research and review the literature already on the subject area.

¹ Raewyn Connell, 'Transgender Health: On a World Scale', *As yet Unpublished in Health Sociology Review*, 13 November 2020.
² C. M. Wiepjes et al., 'Trends in Suicide Death Risk in Transgender People: Results from the Amsterdam Cohort of Gender Dysphoria Study (1972–2017)', *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 141, no. 6 (June 2020): 486–91, <https://doi.org/10.1111/acps.13164>.

³ Jody Herman, Taylor Brown, and Ann Haas, 'Suicide Thoughts and Attempts Among Transgender Adults' (Williams Institute, September 2019).

⁴ Connell, 'Transgender Health: On a World Scale'.

Problem Statement

In Hooper-Greenhill's work 'Museum and the interpretation of visual culture', one can see a museum building, the works, placement and order of works, light, textual explanation, routing, and placement of the museum within a city as a script. This script can be read by the visitors of the museum. She goes on further to describe how one's culture, identity, socialization, education, and experiences can influence how one interprets this script, how one reacts, relates, and understands the works on display.⁵ Using Hooper-Greenhill's concept of script, I would argue that all space can be read as a script in a similar way, and that the interpretation of this script depends on the identity of the user of that space. Therefore, an architect's choices influence how people read the script of a building and how a person reacts, relates and understands the building and their own relationship to the building. As Dianne Harris writes, "space is equally significant in the construction of ideas about race and identity."⁶

⁵ Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture, Museum Meanings* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁶ Irene Cheng, Charles L. Davis, and Mabel O. Wilson, eds., *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), 204, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11cwbg7>.

⁷ DIANNE HARRIS, *Little White Houses* (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ct13fth62>.

⁸ Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture', *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 515–39.

Writers like Dianne Harris⁷, Lucas Crawford⁸, Michel Foucault⁹, and others have stated that architecture is means of power and control and that this impacts the users of a building. Especially so for those who are non-normative. These modes of control are partly created by the architect of a building.¹⁰

One mode of control is with the gendering of space. The engendering of space is dependent on the socio-cultural milieu but, within the bounds of that socio-cultural milieu, the architect can choose how to apply that gendered control. This can be done explicitly, such as in the case of prisons, bathrooms, and changing rooms, but also implicitly. Where a space is not prescriptively nominated as being for one gender but the design, layout and framing of that space make it gendered. An example of this implicit gendering of space is the domestic kitchen. Especially the suburban kitchen of the 50s in the USA. Olivia Ahn describes how the domestic kitchen became both a reflection of and constructor of gender.¹¹ During WWII, when many women worked in factories, acted as the head of the household, and generally gained a lot of autonomy, we saw a regression of gendered norms in the 50s. One way in which this was achieved was by the large suburban projects, such as Levittown, where "the kitchen became the female domain of the mother"¹². Not only where these spaces socially the milieu of the 'mother', but they also were designed for the proportions

⁹ MICHEL FOUCAULT, *POWER: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. [Place of publication not identified: PENGUIN Books, 2020].

¹⁰ FOUCAULT.

¹¹ Olivia Ahn, *GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE HISTORY OF SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE*, Website, 13 April 2014, <https://thefunambulist.net/podcast/olivia-ahn-gender-performativity-in-the-history-of-suburban-architecture>.

¹² Olivia Ahn, sec. 13:22-13:26.

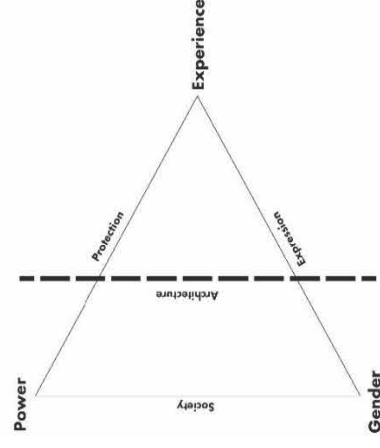
and capabilities that a mother ought to have. As Piet Zwart said in 1936 "[de vrouw] haar arbeid zonder overbodige inspanning kan verrichten"¹³.

Feminist writers have already done much to show these modes of control, and how it impacts the lives of men and women, but, women in particular. If these modes of control impact the lives of CIS people, do they also impact the lives of Trans people?

The question this research project will answer is then, 'How then do architectural scripts of buildings today impact how Trans people react, relate, and understand the buildings and spaces they encounter?'

Theoretical Framework

This research project has three main concepts describing its theoretical framework, that of power, gender, and experience. These three concepts will be further described in this chapter and the theories and the writers that underpin this project discussed.



Foucault's four volume work 'L'Histoire de la sexualité'¹⁴ and 'Power'¹⁵, form the framework for the concept of power and

how gendered relations are a form of power system. His work 'Power', also discuss some spatial aspects of this power.

Foucault's theories on power relations should not be seen as a set of binaries between those that are dominated and those that are dominant, but rather as a constantly changing set of interdependent relations that are situational and have temporal aspects.¹⁶ Writers such as Springer & Le Billon agree with this notion that power relations are situational and temporal. They discuss how violence is part of the spatiality of power relations. Furthermore, they argue that although not all power relations need violence all violence needs some power inequality.¹⁷ These power inequalities are a complex network between individuals, institutions, state actors, groups, as Foucault noted "the human subject [...] is equally placed in power relations that are very complex"¹⁸

This form of power is not only brought on through violent acts, but also through other forms, mental, verbal, and the gaze of those in power. There is a difference between admiration and surveillance. One's ability to avoid visibility if they so choose. In Arendt's opinion, freedom within a space, depends partly on people being able to escape periodically into a private realm. To the extent that actors cannot escape their visibility they experience the gaze of the spectator as a constant judgment that normalizes and even controls their behaviour. Courage alone cannot overcome the unblinking gaze of permanent spectators.¹⁹ Furthermore, writers like Fanon show that if

violence is so saturated that there is no escape or respite, one's mind can become colonized by the violence of others, deeply

¹³ bruynzeel KEUKENS, 'De Geschiedenis van Bruynzeel Keukens', accessed 22 December 2024D, <https://www.bruynzeelkeukens.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis>.

¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

¹⁵ FOUCAULT, POWER.

¹⁶ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*.

¹⁷ Simon Springer and Philippe Le Billon, 'Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence', *Political Geography* 52 (May 2016): 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.03.003>.

¹⁸ FOUCAULT, POWER, 327.

¹⁹ Xavier Marquez, 'Spaces of Appearance and Spaces of Surveillance', *Polity* 44, no. 1 (2012): 6–31.

impacting how one relates to oneself and their ability to self-actualize.²⁰

Judith Butler in her seminal work *Gender Troubles*²¹ and *The Second Sex*²² by Simone de Beauvoir describe the framework for gender this project uses. In short, these frameworks describe gender as being a process of becoming. In which one becomes gendered and a sexed being, that this process of becoming is underpinned by the concept of performativity. Performativity in this context is the habitual actions of a person to be their gender. That this process is relational, can be in flux, and can be a struggle between actors and their milieu. In this framework one's gender is theoretical until one is able to do those habitual performances associated with it. Therefore, if one is unable to find the spaces required to do their habitual performances, that constitute their gender, one is unable to self-actualize.

Thirdly, as already described in the problem statement, the book 'Museum and the interpretation of visual culture', by Hooper-Greenhill, will be used to understand how the built environment is legible and how one's identity and experiences influence how the script is interpreted. Hooper-Greenhill's book *Museum and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* is used to describe the way in which identity and interpretation of culture is to be understood. For the purposes of this paper Hooper-Greenhill's definition of visual culture will be expanded to include architecture. Her description of the museum as a script that can be interpreted can also be applied to buildings as an object of culture.

Literature Review

This literature review will describe works and thinkers looking at the relationship between identity and architecture. This chapter will also describe works and thinkers looking more specifically at the relationship between Trans identities and architecture.

During the previous century there has been a significant amount of academic debate, discussion, and papers written from a feminist, post-colonial, and queer perspective surrounding identity and the perception and use of space. These works describing how identity and architecture are entangled and what consequences this entanglement have on the users of a space or building.

Writers like Adrienne Brown have looked at how architecture is also a reflection and constructor of race in America. She looks specifically during the 20th century and how the construction itself of these buildings was imbued with racism.²³

Dianne Harris' book *Little White Houses* how architecture and the media became tools with which to further oppress POC in the Post-war period in America. The book describes how the representations of post war suburbia reinforced and created mid-century ideas are race and class identities and how these

ideas reinforced the morality of white identities, homeownership, and belong to America.²⁴

Doreen Massey in her book 'Space, place and Gender' have approached the gendering of space from a binary perspective of gender. She looks specifically at how the engendering of space impacts the lives of women. An anecdote she shares "I remember all this very sharply. And I remember, too, it striking me very clearly - even then as a puzzled, slightly thoughtful little girl - that all this huge stretch of the Mersey flood plain had been entirely given over to boys."²⁵, which is emblematic of this impact.

Olivia Ahn, points out how the suburban home of the 1950's was a force of engenderment, both built for and to create, the 'perfect' housewife.²⁶

Joel Sanders looks at the movement from 'Stud: Architectures of Masculinity'²⁷ to the work of the 'STALLED' project. Reflecting on architecture role as a constructor of gender and identity, but how it can also be used to disrupt and exclude Queer identities.²⁸

Writers looking specifically at Trans identities and architecture have started to appear in the past decade, mainly by Trans or Queer individuals.

Joana Parkers 2020 piece 'Architecture is Yet to Come to Terms with Trans Bodies', correctly identifies that architectural education, practice, and discourse is yet to understand the

²⁰ Simone de Beauvoir and Constance Capista-Borde, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011).

²¹ Cheng, Davis, and Wilson, *Race and Modern Architecture*.

²² HARRIS, *Little White Houses*.

²³ Doreen B. Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 185.

²⁴ Olivia Ahn, *GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE HISTORY OF SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE*.

²⁵ Joel Sanders, *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*, 2020.

²⁶ Joel Sanders, 'FROM STUD TO STALLED: ARCHITECTURE IN TRANSITION', *JSA (blog)*, 15 October 2017, <http://joelsandersarchitecture.com/from-stud-to-stalled-architecture-in-transition/>.

²⁷ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, New ed., Get Political (London: Pluto Press, 2008).

²⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge Classics (New York: Routledge, 2006).

needs, wants, and specifics of Trans people in relation to the build environment.²⁹

Jack Halberstam looks at the concept of 'anarchitecture' in relation to Trans bodies, architecture, and art performances. Halberstam discusses the work of Matta-Clark. Matta-Clark is an artist that is most well-known for his work cutting through buildings. Halberstam describes this act as a creative act of both destruction and creation, one which Trans people also go through, whether medical or otherwise.³⁰

Athina Angelopoulou also looks at the act of cutting in a similar vein to Halberstam. Describing the process some Trans people choose to go through. She goes on to describe architectural techniques like the section as being an act of cutting that creates matter, referring back to the similarities of this process for Trans people.³¹

Lucas Crawford looks at how Trans identities disrupt architecture's use of coherence and linearity as fundamental building blocks of architectural discourse and practice. A building process has a clear beginning (a need) and a clear end (the finished project). This process is disrupted by Trans identities and their relation to time, their own bodies and these non-linear processes of becoming.³²

Motivation

This paper looks at the relationship between Trans and Non-binary identities and the experience of the built environment.

The aim is to be part of a larger movement within architecture discourse that will help to better understand what relationship there is between identity and experience akin to the movement that has been seen in many other areas of study but most exemplary in the literature and media studies which has since the 70s created many frameworks through which to try and understand the relationship between identity and experience and interpretation of a piece of media or culture.

Although my motivation for this is to some extent personal and anecdotal, I do truly believe that architects should create architecture which is reflective to individual needs rather than a more modernist 'one size fits all' approach or an architecture that reflects the needs of institutions or capitalist needs which may not, arguably ever, reflect the needs of the individual. I argue that identity and identity politics can be part of a framework that can allow architects to create buildings reflective of the needs of the individual, a force of democratization.

Method

This research project will use interview as its method. The interviews are focused on their own personal experiences. Interview participants should not have any formal background in architecture. The participants are Trans, Non-binary, and Queer people with a wide range of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds. This is to get input from people whose identity and relationship to architecture is being researched. The interviews use semi-structured open-ended question, but also leaves space for more unstructured in-depth style interview techniques.³³ This method and style were chosen for three main reasons. Firstly, there is very little existing data (quantitative or qualitative) on the experiences of Queer people in relationship to architecture. Secondly, the interviews will give a lot of autonomy to the interviewee, not only share their experiences but also reflect on the research more broadly. Thirdly this more open method will allow the interviewee to ask more in-depth questions to better understand the experiences of the interviewee.

To allow this to happen the interview is divided into three main parts:

1. Five standardized open-ended questions
2. Word association

²⁹ Joanna Parker, 'Architecture Is Yetto Come to Terms with Trans Bodies', *FailedArchitecture*, 26 May 2020, <https://failedarchitecture.com/architecture-is-yetto-come-to-terms-with-trans-bodies/>.

³⁰ Jack Halberstam, 'Unbuilding Gender', *Places Journal*, no. 2018 (3 October 2018), <https://doi.org/10.222269/181003>.

³¹ Athina Angelopoulou, 'A Surgery Issue: Cutting through the Architectural Fabric', no. 21 (23 December 2017): 25–50, <https://doi.org/10.7480/FOOTPRINT.11.2>.

³² Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture'.

³³ Nick Fox, 'Using Interviews in a Research Project' (NHS, 2009).

3. Mental mapping
4. Memory mapping

The five open-ended questions are to give the interviewee the freedom to, within a framework, lead the conversation. They cover broadly architecturally knowledge and, identity, and the relationship between the two.

Due to time constraints, 4-6 people are expected to be interviewed. The interviews aim to go into a lot of depth with these limited participants to somewhat make up for the lack of numbers.

Literature review, Research by design, and Plan analysis are used as tools to further the understanding of the interviews and to transpose their personal experiences into an architectural framework.

Bibliography

- Angelopoulos, Athina. 'A Surgery Issue: Cutting through the Architectural Fabric', no. 21 (23 December 2017): 25-50. <https://doi.org/10.7480/FOOTPRINT.11.2>.
- Beauvoir, Simone de, and Constance Capisto-Borde. *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.
- bruynzeel KEUKENS. 'De Geschiedenis van Bruynzeel Keukens'. Accessed 22 December 2024D. <https://www.bruynzeelkeukens.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis>.
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge Classics. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Cheng, Irene, Charles L. Davis, and Mabel O. Wilson, eds. *Race and Modern Architecture: A Critical History from the Enlightenment to the Present*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1.cw11cwb7>.
- Connell, Raewyn. 'Transgender Health: On a World Scale'. As yet Unpublished in *Health Sociology Review*, 13 November 2020.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New ed. Get Political. London: Pluto-Press, 2008.
- FOUCAULT, MICHEL. *POWER: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984*. Place of publication not identified: PENGUIN Books, 2020.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Fox, Nick. 'Using Interviews in a Research Project'. NHS, 2009.
- Halberstam, Jack. 'Unbuilding Gender'. *Places Journal*, no. 2018 (3 October 2018). <https://doi.org/10.22269/181003>.
- HARRIS, DIANNE. *Little White Houses*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt3ft6f2>.
- Herman, Jody, Taylor Brown, and Ann Haas. 'Suicide Thoughts and Attempts Among Transgender Adults'. Williams Institute, September 2019.
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*. Museum Meanings. London ; New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Joanna Parker. 'Architecture Is Yet to Come to Terms with Trans Bodies'. *FailedArchitecture*, 26 May 2020. <https://failedarchitecture.com/architecture-is-yet-to-come-to-terms-with-trans-bodies/>.
- Joel Sanders. 'FROM STUD TO STALLED: ARCHITECTURE IN TRANSITION'. JSA (blog), 15 October 2017. <http://joelsandersarchitect.com/from-stud-to-stalled-architecture-in-transition/>.
- Lucas Cassidy Crawford. 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture'. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 515-39.
- Marquez, Xavier. 'Spaces of Appearance and Spaces of Surveillance'. *Polity* 44, no. 1 (2012): 6-31.
- Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- Olivia Ahn. *GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE HISTORY OF SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE*. Website, 13 April 2014.

- <https://thefunambulist.net/podcast/olivia-ahn-gender-performativity-in-the-history-of-suburban-architecture>.
- Sanders, Joel. *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*. 2020.
- Springer, Simon, and Philippe Le Billon. 'Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence'. *Political Geography* 52 (May 2016): 1–3.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.03.003>.
- Wiepjes, C. M., M. den Heijer, M. A. Bremmer, N. M. Nota, C. J. M. Blok, B. J. G. Coumou, and T. D. Steensma. 'Trends in Suicide Death Risk in Transgender People: Results from the Amsterdam Cohort of Gender Dysphoria Study (1972–2017)'. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 141, no. 6 (June 2020): 486–91. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acps.13164>.

Research



Trans Pals

Ada



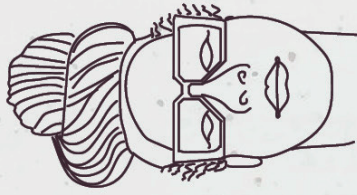
Male, Trans
Studies School Psychology,
From small village around A'dam, Now
lives on his own in a student complexe

Oji



Male, Trans
Studied Social Sciences,
From a large city, lives with his family

Asughara



Male, Queer
Artist/Poet
From Bangalore, lives in a shared
apartment

Malena



Female, Trans
Studies Psychology
Lives in Amsterdam with her family

Kavita



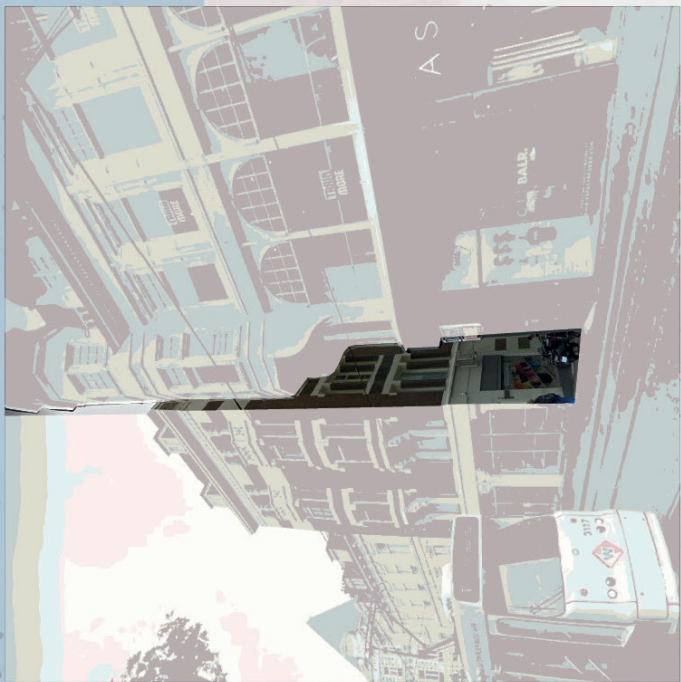
Male, Trans
Healthcare worker
From the Netherlands



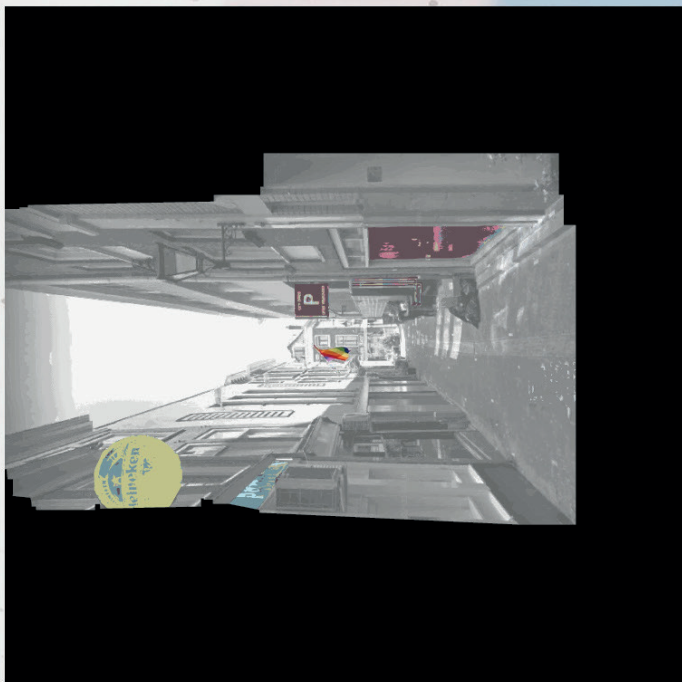
Achterom



Site Map



Hidden



Street



Enclosed



Escape

QUEER | 2010s | NL

Achterom is an important queer spaces to go out and meet people in the Hague.

The street has 2 clubs, 1 Karaoke bar, and 3 pubs on the Eastern side.

Hidden from the main streets, large and small escape routes.

Trans Homes



Trans Homes

This paper aims to show how the current housing stock, especially suburban housing built after WWII, and current conceptions of the real estate life cycle often hinder Queer ways of being. How the home can also become a space of control that disallows certain ways of being.

Lucas Crawford's article 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture' relates the notion of feeling at home in one's skin to the physical realities of the concept of 'the home' in the western world. This feeling of being at home in one's skin is often related to feeling ownership of that skin, a process which is very much focused on the physical aspects of transition.¹ Ada describes how after his mastectomy he was not only more comfortable in his own skin but also more at home in his own room.²

During WWII, when many women worked in factories, acted as the head of the household, and generally gained a lot of autonomy, we saw a regression of gendered norms in the 50s with the return of many men from the war. One way in which this was achieved was by the large suburban housing projects, such as Levittown. The houses were designed to perfectly fit the nuclear family and house the societal moors of what a wife, husband and children should

be and which space belonged to them. As Olivia Ahn points out "the kitchen became the female domain of the mother"³. Not only where these spaces socially the milieu of the 'mother', but they also were designed for the proportions and capabilities that a mother ought to have. As Piet Zwart said in 1936 " [de vrouw] haat arbeid zonder overbodige inspanning kan verrichten"⁴.

Projects such as Levittown were explicitly built for white nuclear families and the way these projects were designed, the laws governing them and the way these projects were depicted in adverts and the media enforced this idea. As Dianne Harris points out, in regard to how these post-war suburban houses were presented, 'favor the perspective or axonometric view and feature pastel colors, biomorphic garden forms, and well-dressed and neatly coiffed women in high-heeled shoes'⁵. The people in the advertisements these houses were always white, often women. The private world of the home was the domain of the women.⁶ The home is synonymous with marriage and the family unit. The home is the spatial manifestation of a good married life. Where the domestic space is given to the women to take care of this family.⁷

For Trans people the home can often be a space of safety but also a place of trauma. "To what extent is the "home" of trans-embodiment a capitalist, middle-class, and heteronormative home? Is it the very kind of owned home

from which so many trans people have been evicted, in which so many have been abused and within which so many have barricaded themselves?⁸. The home is a dichotomy.

Additionally, the real estate life cycle, as we know it today, was largely popularized in the 20th century. Where each life phase is attached to a specific type of home.

1. A starter home, usually a studio in the city. Maybe with a significant other.
2. A small home in the suburbs, small garden and a pet. Extra room for first child
3. A larger home in the suburbs with extra rooms for 2,3,4 children.
4. Empty nester home
5. Finally, a retirement home

This linear type of real estate cycle with a prescribed way of being and clearly defined pre-determined goal are often barriers to Queer ways of being. Queer lives are usually less linear and often times my less defined.

Queer ways of being that are less linear and more fluid. Taking the Hijra communities of South-East Asian as an example. In the Guru Chela relationship. Where domestic labour is given to a Guru for a limited time in return for housing, clothing, food, but also the social skills needed to be Hijra within their community.⁹ One Guru often lives in

¹ <https://thefunambullisist.net/podcast/olivia-ahn-gender-performativity-in-the-history-of-suburban-architecture>.

⁴ bruynzeelKEUKENS; 'De Geschiedenis van Bruynzeel Keukens', accessed 22 December 2024D, <https://www.bruynzeelkeukens.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis>.

⁵ DIANNE HARRIS, 'Little White Houses (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 83, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt3ht6f2>.

⁶ HARRIS, 'Little White Houses

⁷ Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture'.

⁸ Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 526.

⁹ Ina Goel, 'Hijra Communities of Delhi', *Sexualities* 19, no. 5–6 (September 2016): 335–46, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460713616946>.

¹ Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture', *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 515–39.

² anonymous Ada, Interview with Ada for ExploreLab, interview by Boris Boars, 18 November 2020.

³ Olivia Ahn, 'GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE HISTORY OF SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE', Website, 13 April 2014, sec. 13:22-13:26.

the same house with multiple Chela's and often form very close ties with each other, supporting each other; emotionally, financially, and socially.¹⁰

The suburban home is by its very conception one that place the family unit as ones central more important community. Other forms of being and other types of community are near impossible to create in these suburban areas. The home is also a place of trauma and confusion for many Trans people. They often feel as they have no home as this notion of the home is so tied to the nuclear family and too the body.¹¹

Bibliography

- Ada, anonymous. Interview with Ada for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 18 November 2020. bruynzeel KEUKENS. 'De Geschiedenis van Bruynzeel Keukens'. Accessed 22 December 2024D. <https://www.bruynzeelkeukens.nl/over-ons/geschiedenis>.
- Goel, Ina. 'Hijra Communities of Delhi'. *Sexualities* 19, no. 5–6 (September 2016): 535–46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460715616946>.
- HARRIS, DIANNE. *Little White Houses*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt3fh6f2>.
- Lucas Cassidy Crawford. 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture'. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 515–39.
- Olivia Ahn. GENDER PERFORMATIVITY IN THE HISTORY OF SUBURBAN ARCHITECTURE. Website, 13 April 2014. <https://thefunambulist.net/podcast/olivia-ahn-gender-performativity-in-the-history-of-suburban-architecture>.
- Roy, Arundhati. *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. New York: Vintage Books, 2018.

¹⁰ Arundhati Roy, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness* (New York: Vintage Books, 2018).

¹¹ Ada, Ada.

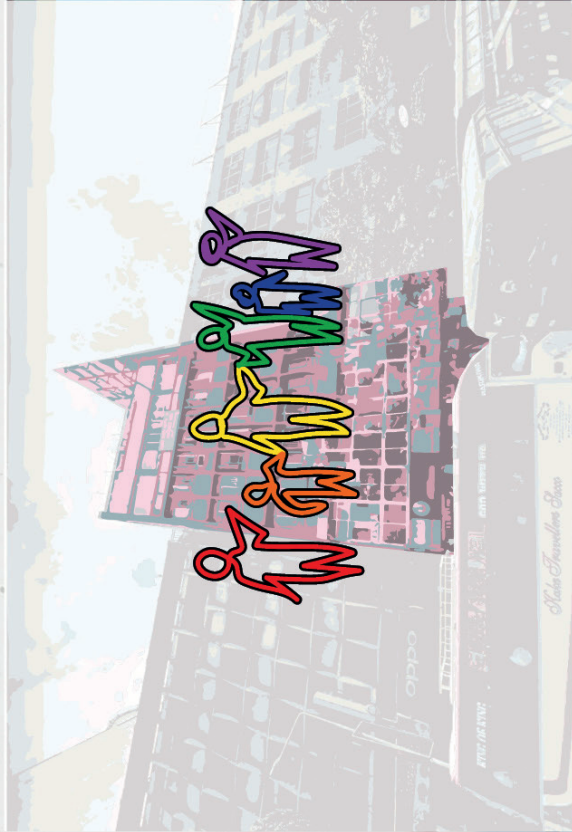


Cosmopolitan Affirming Church

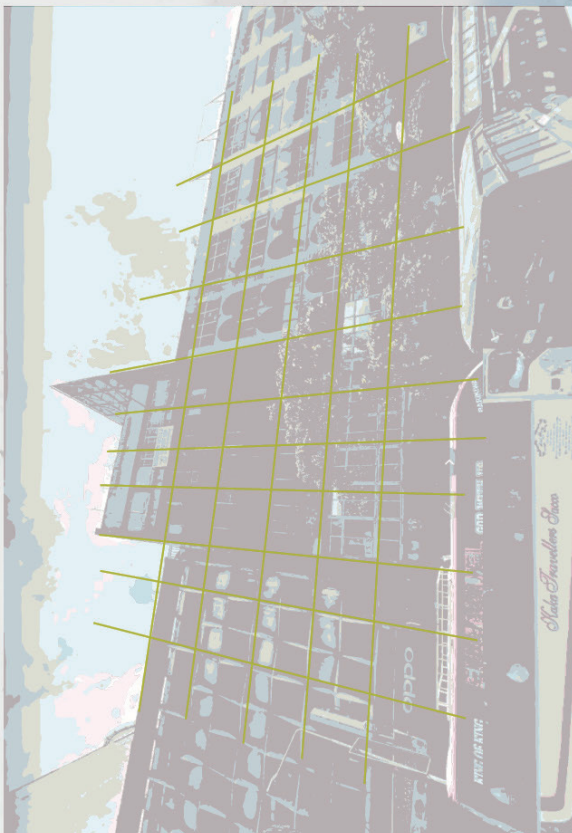


Site Plan

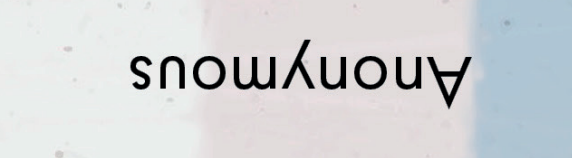
“We have bars and restaurants that are owned by the gay or bisexual people that provide for safe spaces. Some private hospitals too have segmentation for LGBTQI, some churches too have LGBTQI leadership thus making it easy for the community to feel at least home”-Oji



Escape



Community



Anonymous



Crowd

QUEER | 2010s | KE

The CAC is a new Church organization in Kenya with two sites in Nairobi and Kisumu (in 2020).

The Nairobi Site is right in the CBD, close to the National Archives
It is housed on one floor of a small multilevel office building.

The CAC is open for Queer people in Kenya to be part of a church.

Public Space & Violence



Public space and Violence

This paper aims to investigate Asughara's claim that '*public space is violence*'.¹ In an interview Asughara described how all public space is violence and how that in particular affects the Queer community. This paper will look at the validity of Asughara's claim and understanding how this claim impacts how Queer communities interact with public space and 'the public'. This paper looks at various theories around violence and public space and how these ideas can be related to Asughara's claim.

Violence is a difficult term to define with any certainty.

Violence has many connotations and related terms; pain; to harm, to destroy, damage, inflict, unpleasant, forceful, but where exactly violence falls in that list, is more difficult to pinpoint.

We can though at least find the contours of violence.

Violence is often described in terms of violent acts.² Until the 20th century violence was only in relation to warfare and only in its physical forms. This much narrower definition of

violence, as a physical act of one actor towards another was later expanded by Queer and anticolonial theorists. They, pointing out that violence is not just the particular acts but violence 'is constitutive of, intersubjective relations, institutions, language, logic, and subjectivity, the conclusion reached was that, far from being a local and contingent phenomenon, violence is a ubiquitous and even necessary aspect of the human condition'.³ Violence is a systemic force that is used to construct systems of oppression. Violence is always connected to other concepts and is a means of, rather than being an end itself.⁴ One must not understand as violence always having intent, much violence can be done unintentionally.⁵

How is the term violence connected to other terms?

Violence and judgement are closely linked. Judgement being to decide the value of another person in their totality. Judgement uses the systematic, to allow a person to do a violent act.

Violence and power relations a clearly connected, 'One can easily envision power relations free from violence, yet one has difficulty imagining violence free from power'.⁶ In this way we can understand as violence being a means through which power flows. Many writers have spoken about power and violence as 'making others act as I choose', 'an act of violence to compel the opponent to do as we wish'⁷, Sartre and Clauwewitz respectively. Violence

is then a medium through which power flows, forcing others to act as you wish them too.

Autonomy and violence are also closely related. Violence is always a cap on one's autonomy, though not all caps on autonomy is violent. Violence is one force that creates a difference between our potential freedoms and our actual freedoms.⁸ Violence disrupts one's self-actualization, in the sense self-actualization is not only in a person's ability to think about the world and themselves, but must also be in the acts that they are given space to do. Actualization thus has spatial aspects. This difference between potential and actual realization is not only due to violence. Here, some discussion is needed here of how the natural or 'acts of God', play into violence. Can an act of God, earth-quake, disease, age, be violent? As described by Galtung, avoidability of a death, or pain, or mental strife becomes a thing to consider in whether or not violence is at play. He brings up the example of a person dying of tuberculosis in the 18th and 21st century to describe this difference.⁹ Thus, if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence

¹ St. John (Anonymous), Interview between St. John and Boris Baars for thesis project, 14 November 2020.

² Simon Springer and Philippe Le Billon, 'Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence', *Political Geography* 52 (May 2016): 1–3, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.03.003>.

³ Gavin Rae and Emma Ingala, *The Meanings of Violence: From Critical Theory to Biopolitics*, 2019, 2.

⁴ Rae and Ingala, *The Meanings of Violence*.

⁵ Springer and Le Billon, 'Violence and Space'.

⁶ Springer and Le Billon.

⁷ Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970), 36.

⁸ Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (September 1969): 167–91, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>.

⁹ Galtung.

is present'¹⁰. Therefore, violence does not need intention, but avoidable pain still can be understood as violence.

The last contour of violence that must be discussed with that violence which is inflicted on the self, by the self. This self-inflicted violence is one that can often be difficult to identify, for 'the public' there is nothing to be seen of this violence, and too the self, it is often reflexive and automatic that it may no longer feel like violence. As writer like Fanon have pointed out violence that is so systemic and ubiquitous as to effect language, space, and logic become so entrenched that one's relation to oneself becomes violent.¹¹ One no longer has the language, space, and even logic to understand themselves in anything but as an object to which violence is rightly done. A violence that is there even when one is completely in private and in complete safety.

Furthermore, even when one's actualization of the mind is no longer violent, towards the outside it is still difficult to describe that. As described by Ian Danskin, on the life of Samuel R. Delany, 'he found himself describing his life to the group as though being gay were something he was trying to fix'¹², even as he was happy being a gay man in New York.

Violence is always a method of exclusion, for the world but also from the self. As Hannah Gadsby says 'exclusion is not a simple act when you say to a person no you cannot join in, you do not belong to this community. The end of that

sentence is not the end of the story. The ramifications for the individual are traumatic, you actively isolate a human being is nothing short of structural violence'¹³. Violence is always a judgement on the worth of your humanity.

Now we must look at public space, another term with fuzzy edges. Although public space is often associated with architectural typologies, it must be understood as a condition that a space is given. Any space can indeed be a public space but architecture can mediate between 'the public' and the spaces which this public wants to inhabit.¹⁴ Though with enough effort from 'the public' any space can become public. As Vito Acconci said 'private space becomes public when the public wants it; public space becomes private when the public that has it won't give it up'¹⁵. An often-touted definition is, 'A public space refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level'¹⁶. However, this definition is woefully inadequate as it renders all space private. Times square is undoubtedly a public space, but it is however not open and accessible to all. One needs the economic means to get there, the political means to be allowed to enter the city, for example. Furthermore, one's age, race and gender may well change how comfortable and how accepted they are into a space. Accessibility, is not a binary but a sliding scale.

The space in which 'the public' and the individual interact is public space. Public space becomes a space in which both the systemic violence, actors with the means to do violent acts, and the individual judged person come together.

Does public space violently create a difference between the actual and potential realization of an individual? If one's potential realization are aligned with 'the public', then one can do and be, without fear of violence, in public. When one's potential realization are not aligned with that of the public then the private become a place of respite, a space when one can be without violence. This respite is not forever though, if the public continues to berate one, to be violent against who one must be, then the private becomes encroached upon too. A colonialization of the mind takes place and one is no longer free to be who they need to be.¹⁷

All public space is violence, but it is especially violence for people whose identities are not accepted by 'the public', such as Trans and Non-binary people.

10 Gallung, 168.

11 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Newed, Get Political (London: Pluto-Press, 2008).

12 Ian Danskin, 'The Alt-Right Playbook: Mainstreaming', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq0ZHgKT2tc>.

16 UNESCO, 'Inclusion Through Access to Public Space', *Social and Human Sciences (blog)*, n.d., accessed 15 January 2021.

17 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Bibliography

- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1970.
- Asughara, anonymous. Interview with Asughara for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 14 November 2020.
- Avermaete, Tom, Klaske Havik, and Hans Teerds, eds. *Architectural Positions: Architecture, Modernity, and the Public Sphere*. Amsterdam: SUN Publishers, 2009.
- Danskin, Ian. 'The Alt-Right Playbook: Mainstreaming'. 4 April 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gq0ZHgkT2kc>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New ed. Get Political. London: Pluto-Press, 2008.
- Gadsby, Hannah. 'The Wedding of Zoe Coombs Marr and Rhys Nicholson'. Festival Club, 24 June 2016.
- Galtung, Johan. 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research'. *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (September 1969): 167–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336900600301>.
- Rae, Gavin, and Emma Ingala. *The Meanings of Violence: From Critical Theory to Biopolitics*, 2019.
- Springer, Simon, and Philippe Le Billon. 'Violence and Space: An Introduction to the Geographies of Violence'. *Political Geography* 52 (May 2016): 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2016.03.003>.
- UNESCO. 'Inclusion Through Access to Public Space'. *Social and Human Sciences (blog)*, n.d. Accessed 15 January 2021.

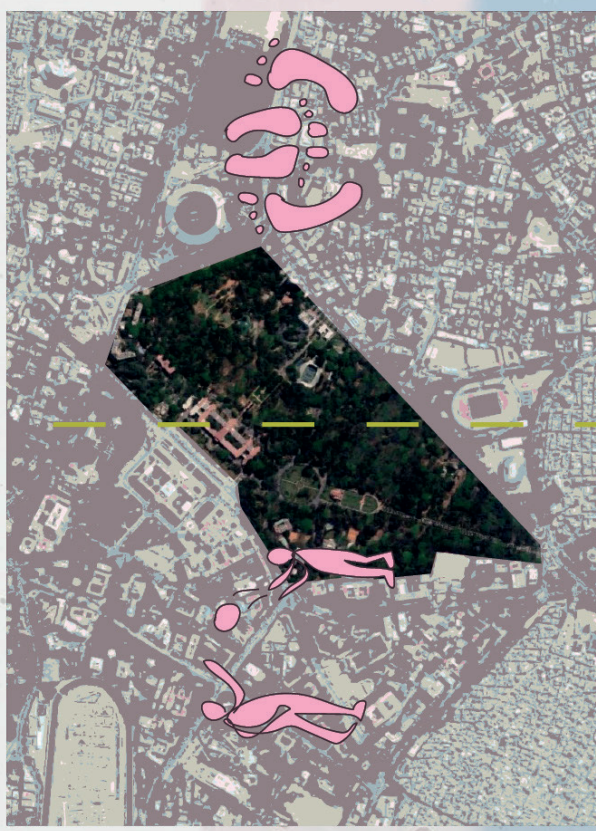


Cubbon Park



Site Plan

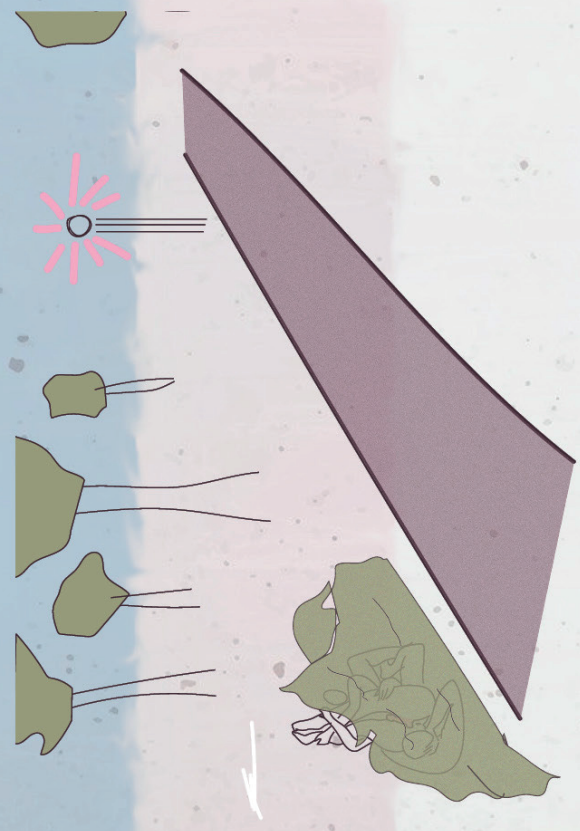
“Maybe playgrounds are supposed to be like for play in the day and they’re supposed to be used for ‘play’ in the night” –Asughara



Day/Night



Escape



Far off lights



Cheeky

**“the universal agreement at that moment is that it is a sexual space for them, it’s a
Badminton space for you”-Asuehara**

QUEER | 2010s | IND

Cubbon Park is an important 'cruising' spots in Bangalor. Used by families and the general public during the day and by Queer people for meet & hook ups during the night.

The park is an 'unsanitized space' whose functions were created through a public democratic process rather than a top-down approach allowing Queer people to use the space.

Virtual Geographies



Virtual space as Geography

Trans people are a community of people who have similar lived experiences, hardships, and needs but who unlike many other minorities are not geographically bound together. The Trans community is a dispersed one and as with many other Queer communities the virtual world can often be a medium through which Trans people can find each other and create communities. How can this virtual space be understood as a form of geography, or physical space?

Virtual space has also been an incredibly important place for "queer discourse and theory that shaped the language and labelling practices used to define queer identities and non-heteronormative gender expressions",¹ and for the mainstreaming of Queer culture and language. The virtual allows socially stigmatized people to interact and find community. It also allows for the creation and dissemination of information. The sharing of resources, aid, and information.² Many transgender social spaces, clinics, and housing facilities are 'underground' and difficult to find. The virtual world can be a place to advertise these spaces with less fear.³

Virtual space and media representations of Trans people came up numerous times during the interviews. Ada's and Kavita's discord group, where they and 6 other Dutch speaking Trans-men come together to play games, talk about trans related issues and generally form a community for each other. Ada also discussed the educational resources that YouTube provided, saying, "meerdere youtube channels die ik echt aan begin van mijn transitie heel vaak heb bekeken"⁴. YouTube and other online spaces allowed him to figure out how to become himself. Malena spoke of her parasocial interactions on Trans forums and with media figures gave her a sense of community. She says, "sense of like community between us because it's like oh, even though you're all the way over there and I'm here we can say that we go through similar things because we're both trans"⁵. She goes on further to say how these forms were also a place to educate herself on "how to do certain things that may feminize you"⁶. How it allowed her to prepare herself for some of the difficulties she may face and how to deal with the, "social aspects of transition, knowing that nearly every trans person ever has been clocked"⁷. This made her feel safer and more ready to face the unknown.

The virtual world also allows people to be themselves for the first time without the time, energy and safety concerns of publicly and non-anomolously 'coming' out to the outside world. In the virtual world we can create "the imagine of whom we would like to be that become real online"⁸. Something especially important for Trans people who live in societies were coming out may not be accepted. Something that Oji stated in his interview that "I haven't come out due

to fear of rejection and stigmatization from the family and the community"⁹. The virtual world and some select safe spaces are the only places where he can be himself. The virtual is then also a place to be a more actualized self, where avatars, user names, speech patterns, and pronouns can be tried in general anonymity. These trials of self-discovery and self-actualization are also much less time and resource consuming. Allowing Queer and questioning people to trial various ways of being, facing a real public but a public that is geographically dispersed and often anonymous too. These creates a sense of safety.¹⁰

Virtual spaces also come with their own language, etiquette, cultural references, and taboos. Allowing individuals to find a space or space's that best align to their current specific needs. These virtual spaces can also space of violence even within Trans inclusive spaces. The TTTT form is mainly used by pre-transition Trans women. Often these women place photos of themselves on these forms asking others to comment on whether or not they could ever 'pass', i.e. be seen as female. Often the other women on these forms post hurtful comments as a form of kindness. Comments such as "lel, this freak thinks he has very soft facial features. His head is fucking huge, lel and the hons on reddit are hugging him and telling him that there are women with big heads. No, there aren't. There aren't fucking women with heads as big as that and ffs won't change shit. You might as well repress." Arguing that you will never be a woman so it is kinder to completely abort.¹¹ This quote is also a good example of how language is created and disseminated in virtual space. This TTTT example is

¹ Barret-Ibarria, 'Remembering the Golden Age of the Queer Internet'.
² LeBlanc, 'UNQUEERING TRANSGENDER? A QUEER GEOGRAPHY OF TRANSNORMATIVITY IN TWO ONLINE COMMUNITIES'.

³ Oji, Interview with Oji.

⁴ Ada, Ada.

⁵ Malena, Interview with Malena for Explore Lab.

⁶ Malena.

⁷ Malena.

⁸ Colomina and Wigley, *Are We Human?*

⁹ Oji, Interview with Oji.

¹⁰ LeBlanc, 'UNQUEERING TRANSGENDER? A QUEER GEOGRAPHY OF TRANSNORMATIVITY IN TWO ONLINE COMMUNITIES'.

¹¹ Wynn, 'Incels'.

reminiscent of what Asughara said in his interview. He speaks about his need to be autonomous sometimes includes going to unsafe space, “like some days I might feel safe but I might go to a completely unsafe neighbourhood and dress completely badly for that unsafe neighbourhood but I know what I’m doing I don’t want people to assume that I’m there because I don’t know what I’m doing right”¹².

In the interviews with Ada, Oji and Malena they all reiterated this idea that there use of virtual space, to try things out, educate themselves, and to feel connected to other was especially important and useful at the beginning of their transition. The further along in their transition the more physical world started matching up with their imagined selves in the virtual world the more they were able to feel connected and become educated in the physical world.

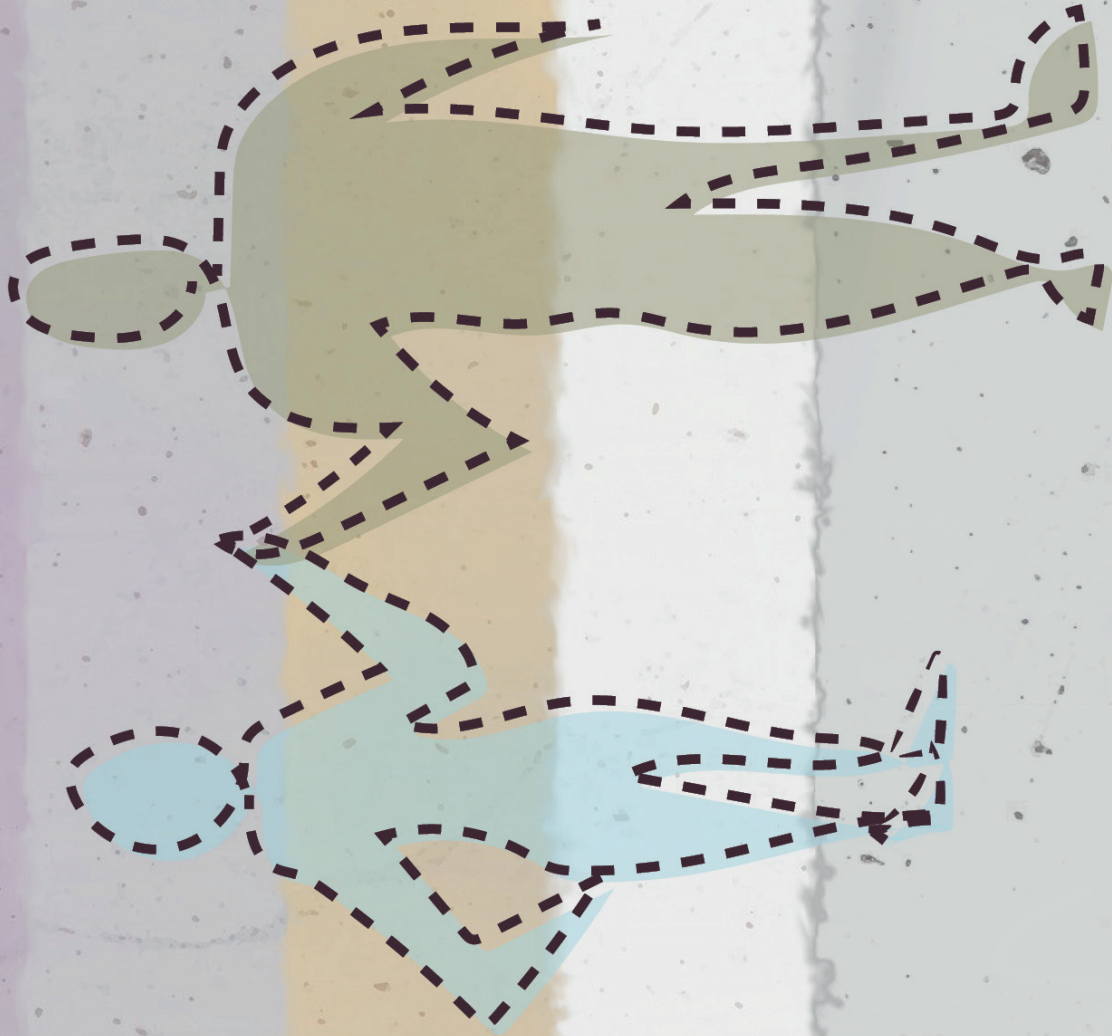
Bibliography

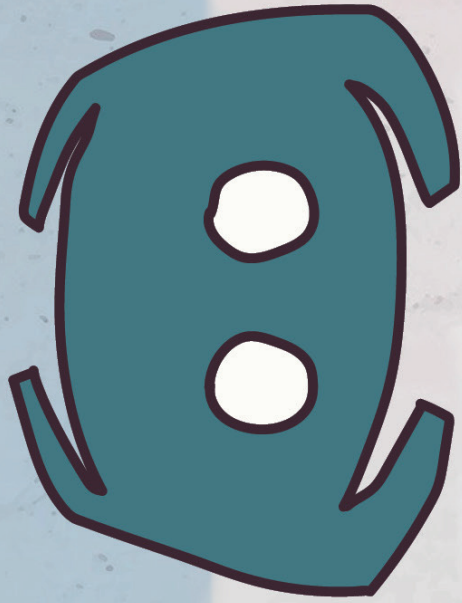
- Ada, anonymous. Interview with Ada for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 18 November 2020.
- Asughara, anonymous. Interview with Asughara for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 14 November 2020.
- Barrett-Ibarria, Sofia. ‘Remembering the Golden Age of the Queer Internet’. *Vice*, 3 August 2018. https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/qvmz9x/remembering-the-golden-age-of-the-queer-internet.
- Colomina, Beatriz, and Mark Wigley. *Are We Human? Notes on an Archaeology of Design*. Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.
- LeBlanc, Joseph. ‘UNQUEERING TRANSGENDER? A QUEER GEOGRAPHY OF TRANSNORMATIVITY IN TWO ONLINE COMMUNITIES’. Victoria University of Wellington, n.d. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41336912.pdf>.
- Malena, Anonymous. Interview with Malena for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 20 January 2021.
- Oji, Anonymous. Interview with Oji, 30 November 2020.
- Wynn, Natalie. ‘Inceis’. Youtube, 17 August 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD2briz6fB0>.

¹² Asughara, Asughara.



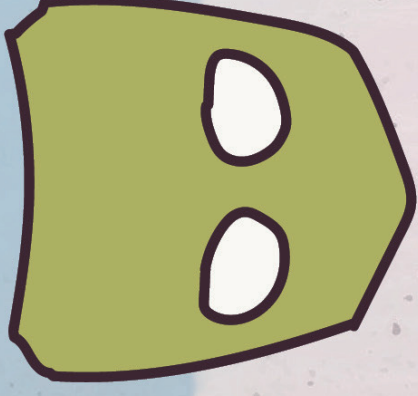
Virtual Space





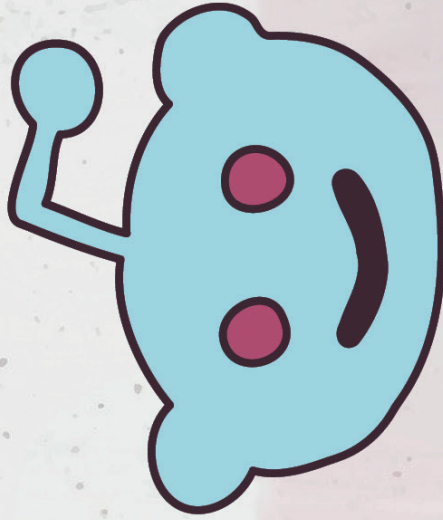
Discord

*Meerdere Youtube Channels, 'hij is een zij', heel laagdrempelig, forum waar ik ook nu niet meer zo actief op zit maar in het begin zeker wel en dat ik dus ook door het forum echt nu in een hele hechte vriendsgroep ben gekomen van allemaal transguys
Ada*



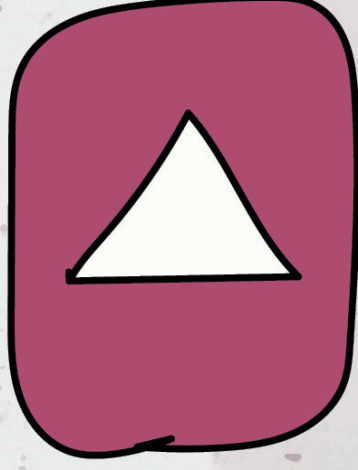
Grindr

Categorization Sanitization No fats No fems Commodification Are you a Bottom -Asghara



Reddit

Has various 'subreddits' on Trans, Non-binary, and Queer subject areas and have become important places for people to speak their truth and find community



Youtube

*how to uh manoeuvre this whole stuff um there would definitely be like tutorials on uh like um feminization like how to do certain things that may feminize you
-Malena*

“Imagine a trans woman to work in sex work for example ,which is a negative portrayal, and then on the other end of that it’s maybe like media or something along those lines being on television blah blah and like a normal, normal everyday example of what a trans woman’s life can be. I really haven’t got like a clear cut path for that yeah like I don’t know really what’s possible” -Malena

QUEER | 2000s | INT

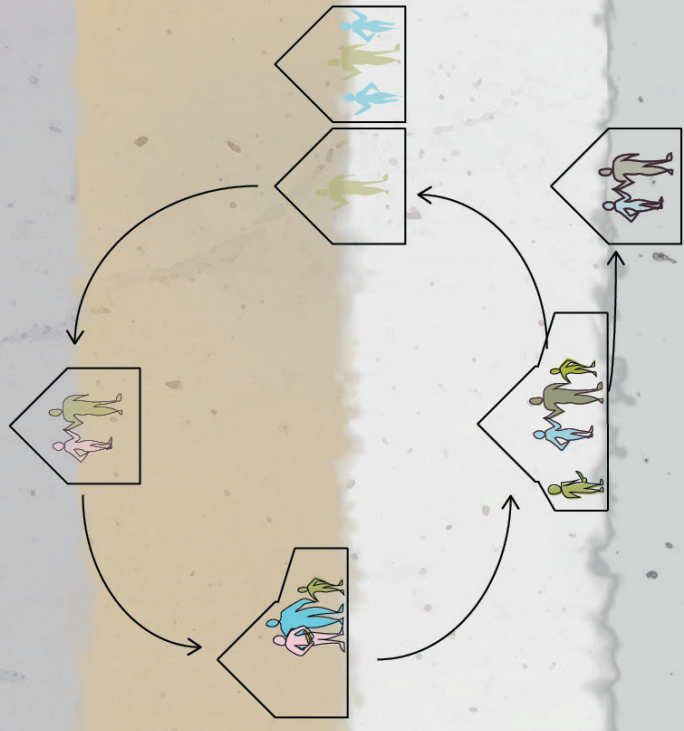
Virtual space and virtual media have become important way for Trans and Queer people to try stuff out, learn stuff about themselves and create community.



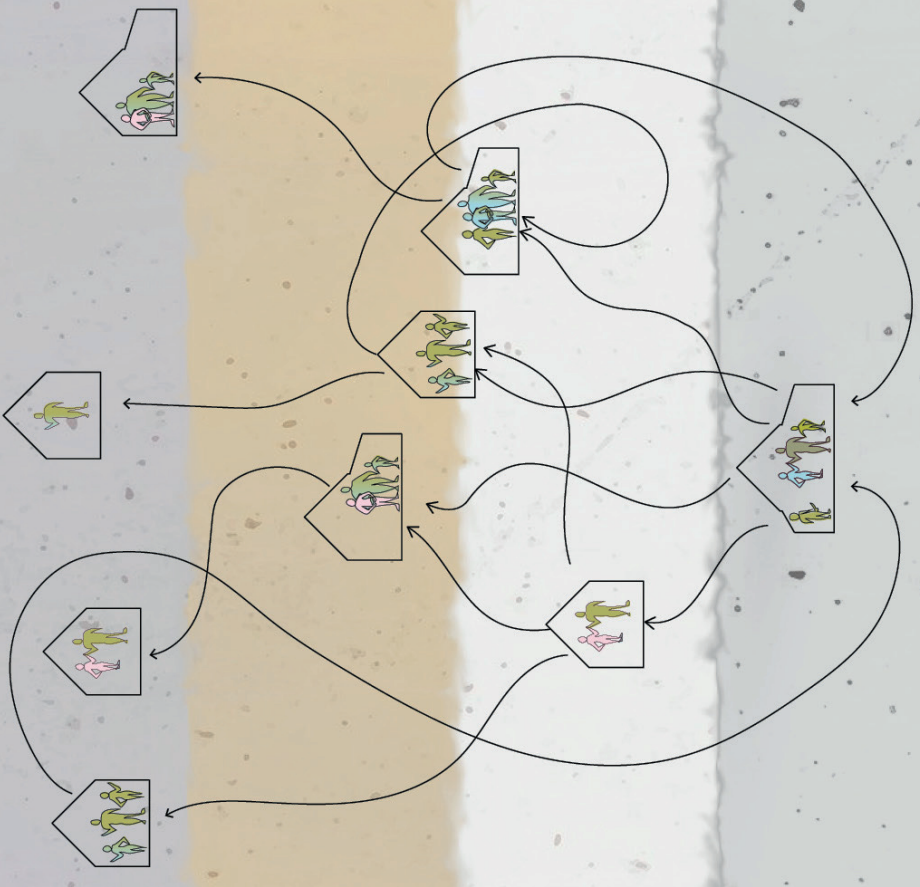
Queer Time

Real Estate Life Cycle

'Traditional'



Queer



“I, like all queer people I know are late to everything, they’re never on time. A lot and people think it’s all because ‘oh, you were wearing something, or you took time to do something’, and I think that yes I did take time to wear something and yes I did do all that but in that wearing, in that action of wearing, or in that action of dressing up to go out, I think I’m mentally prepping” –Asughara

QUEER | 2010s | INT

Queer time has been part of Queer theory since its inception in the 70's. One thing that came up in a lot of interviews was the time it took to face the public.

Whether to make sure they 'passed', too be safe, or just to go through the process to get ready. To be in the right mood, make sure they're safe, and to work up the mental fortitude to deal with a public that might be violent, hostile, confused, or un-understanding. This process of getting ready can be understood as a form of Queer time.

Human



Post-Humanist Vitruvian Man

Renowned feminist theorists and student of Foucault, Rosi Braidotti has a long career in the humanities. In her 2018 presentation 'What is the Human in the Humanities Today?', she asks 'who is the human in humanities today and what are the boundaries of this human. This essay asks 'who is the human we design for and are current definitions appropriate?'.¹

In my own bachelor at the TU Delft, we were often asked to define the users of our building. In particular I remember having to define 5 types of users for the renovation of an apartment building. What 'defining the user' meant was to find pictures on google, make up some facts about these people's wants and need and then completely forget about them for the rest of the project.

My own faults as a student aside, what have the historic notions of the human been and what current definitions do we have? This paper will focus on Western notions of the human in architecture looking at some key moments in how architects understood the human and its relationship to architecture.

¹ Rosi Braidotti, *What is the Human in the Humanities Today?*, Youtube, Futures Lectures Series (School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, 2018), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEMLBRh5Dk>.

² Lucas Cassidy Crawford, 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture', *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 51-5-39.

In *De Architectura*, Vitruvius describes how the principles of architecture stem from the male form. Much of his work lays out precisely how the perfect male body should be and how these portions are related to architecture. He goes on further to define the Roman columns, their relation to the human form, and engenders these columns. Doric being the male, Ionic being the female and Corinthian being some intermediate form, being created out of the other orders.² This conception of the body which was highly idealized, and its close connection to architecture meant that real bodies could never really stack up against the perfectionism of architecture.

The Vitruvian body, recodified during the renaissance, was an ideal, a body perfect, created by and an embodiment of God. This body "was an ideal of which real bodies were no more than mere shadows"³. The human body became a tool, with which to measure, and create dimensions for the building. The body was a both an ideal but also a tool. The realities of the human body were secondary to the 'high-art', the perfection that architects of the Renaissance were trying to create. The human was idealised in a way that the real human could never be, and architecture was designed for this ideal human, whose symmetry was perfect, a body able, and a mind pure.⁴

We also see a deepening of the divide between the mind and body. Western philosophy began to look at the mind as completely disconnected from the body. The "unruly body"⁵ become an object to be concurred and disciplined.

³ Rob Imrie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, no. 1 (February 2003): 49, <https://doi.org/10.1068/d2711>.

⁴ Imrie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body'.

⁵ Imrie, 50.

⁶ Imrie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body'.

One existing of organic matter, to be described as mere components. The mind became disconnected from the matter in which it was housed. Architecture then became a way to bring order to the body.^{6,7} In the 20th century the architectural conception of the human became more and more focused on the physicality's of the human form. The human as a machine, governed by mechanical laws.⁸

Furthermore, the body was normalized and standardized. The dimensions of rooms, furniture, doorways, windows became design to fit a 'normal' body. A fit, abled, mainly masculine body. The division of mind and body into two distinct parts, ranked with the mind as a realm of existence and the body as a mere means to that existence.⁹

In the 1960's 'user' became widely used in architectural practice. Used to describe a broadly anonymous person who uses a space. User became strongly associated with the welfare state and people who were 'disadvantaged or disenfranchised'¹⁰ The term user was a modernist attempt to create a universal human, who could not be attributed any gender, race, culture, or class. A homogenous human that all could see themselves in. Furthermore, as writer such as Lefebvre and Herzberger point out that user is vague, a user of what? What is this user doing it? And why are they doing it here?¹¹

User also implies a lack of ownership, a temporarily of the interaction between human and that space. User was used for residential spaces, but user makes it clear that this is

⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vintage Books ed (New York: Vintage Books, 1970).

⁸ Imrie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body'.

⁹ Imrie.

¹⁰ Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, 1st paperback edition (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 312.

¹¹ Forty, *Words and Buildings*.

temporary, and more importantly, that this space is not theirs to keep but rather theirs to use.¹²

Modernity was focused on the power that architecture could have to change people, rather than reacting to the needs of people. To this end modernity became focused on designing for society as a whole, rather than the individual.¹³

Architectural drawings, renders and the like, we see that more often than not it is white, able bodies that are placed in these drawings, if at all. More often than not they aren't interacting with the space but more a ghostly figure hovering and unaffected by the space.

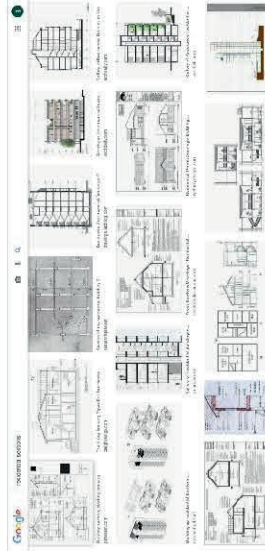


Figure 1 google.com residential sections

Non-white, non-able bodies, Trans, Women, poor people, are usually not represented in these drawings. Although Architects talk continuously of design for people, often it is designing for an idealized body. A way to help people understand the scale of the work rather than a complex thinking human interacting with, reacting to, feeling about, thinking in, a space.¹⁴ As Joana Parker points out, 'architecture is yet to come to terms with Trans bodies', but

¹² Forty.

¹³ Martin Duchs and Christian Illies, 'Editorial the Human in Architecture and Philosophy Steps Towards an "Architectural Anthropology"', *Architecture Philosophy 3*, no. 1 (2018).

maybe more dire that architecture is yet to come to terms with Trans minds.¹⁵

To return back to my own education, design for the deaf, blind, non-able-bodied human is often seen as a specialization. Or seen fulfilling governmental regulations by adding a lift or ramp. However, these bodies are not segregated from the rest of the world, they interact with every space as any idealized body would. These bodies are othered. Architects lacks a definition of the human, lacks ways to deal with real, existing, breathing bodies. "I want to think of queer as something that disturbs the space and the space has to deal with it right, and how does that space deal with it just like it deals with everyone else"¹⁶. Architects has always defined an idealized body living in an idealized world.

Bibliography

- Asughara, anonymous. Interview with Asughara for ExploreLab. Interview by Boris Baars, 14 November 2020.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *What Is the Human in the Humanities Today?* Youtube. Futures Lectures Series. School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEMLBSRh5Dk>.
- Duchs, Martin, and Christian Illies. 'Editorial the Human in Architecture and Philosophy: Steps Towards an "Architectural Anthropology"'. *Architecture Philosophy 3*, no. 1 (2018).
- Forty, Adrian. *Words and Buildings: A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*. 1st paperback edition. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.
- Inmie, Rob. 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body'. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, no. 1 (February 2003): 47–65. <https://doi.org/10.1068/d271t>.
- Joanna Parker. 'Architecture is Yet to Come to Terms with Trans Bodies'. *FailedArchitecture*, 26 May 2020. <https://failedarchitecture.com/architecture-is-yet-to-come-to-terms-with-trans-bodies/>.
- Lucas Cassidy Crawford. 'Breaking Ground on a Theory of Transgender Architecture'. *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 8, no. 2 (2010): 515–39. <https://failedarchitecture.com/architecture-is-yet-to-come-to-terms-with-trans-bodies/>.
- ¹⁶ anonymous Asughara, interview with Asughara for ExploreLab, interview by Boris Baars, 14 November 2020.

¹⁴ Inmie, 'Architects' Conceptions of the Human Body'.

¹⁵ Joanna Parker, 'Architecture is Yet to Come to Terms with Trans Bodies', *FailedArchitecture*, 26 May 2020.



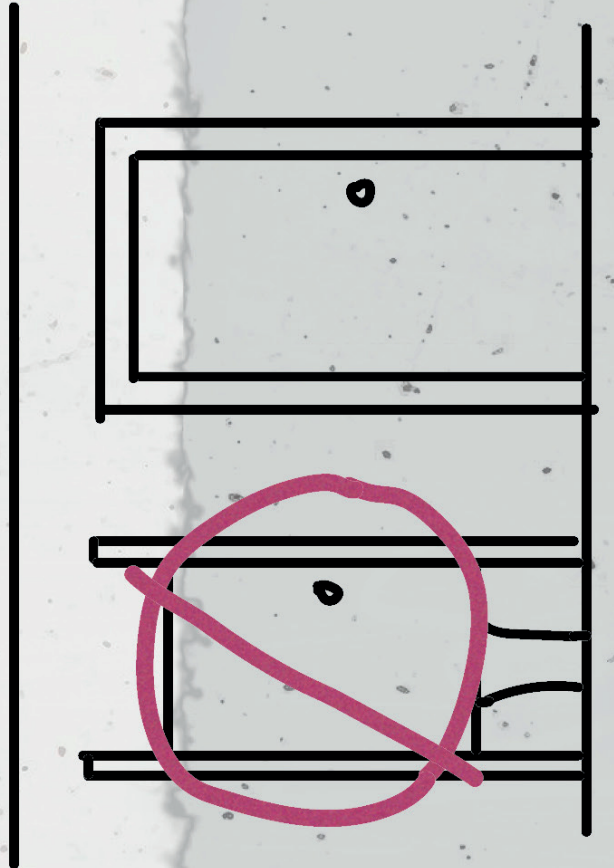
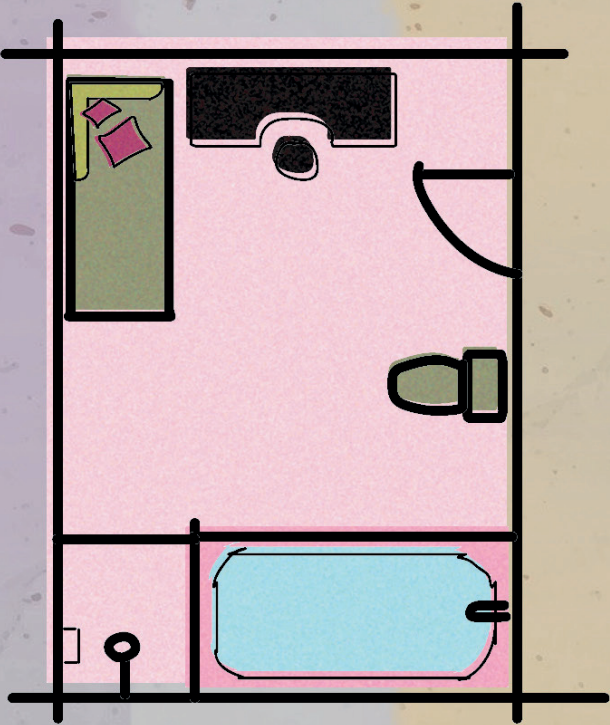
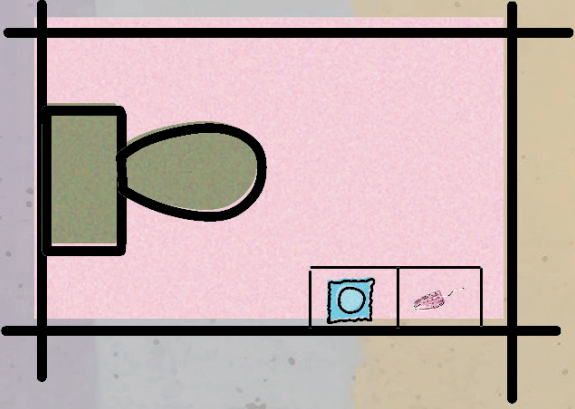
Bathrooms

“Vrouwen gaan altijd samen naar de WC en die gaan kletsen op de WC. Van mannen is dat echt een heel eenzame gebeuren”-Ada

**“Op de hogeschool was ik best wel vaak van streek en dan vond ik, kun je in de toilet
wel gewoon effe
chillen, want daar kun je gewoon janken”-Ada**

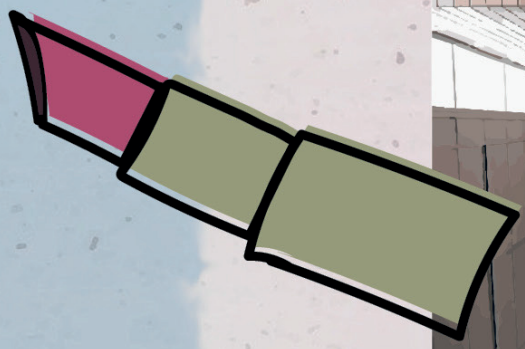
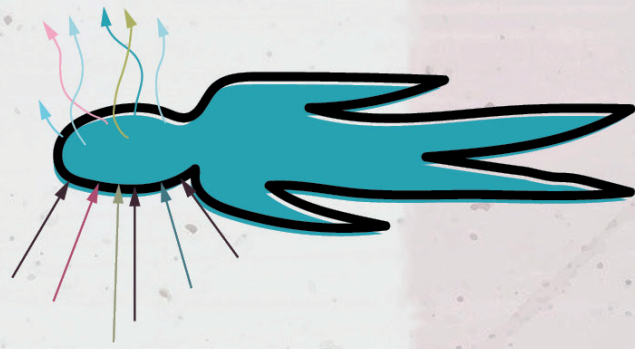
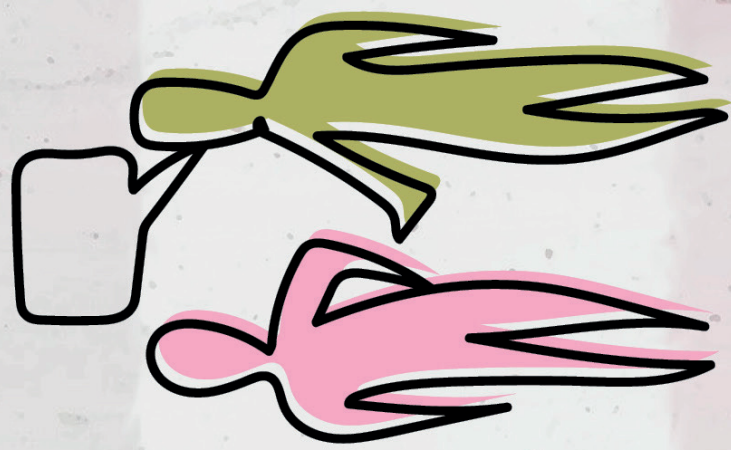
**“I guess maybe for trans people it’s kind of a weird like dichotomy, maybe because
you’re upset and you want some time for yourself to go cry but at the same time you’re
going to a place that maybe gives you anxiety”-Melena**

Asughara's Bathroom



“I think bathrooms should be big, you know. My grandparents bathroom, in their house, had like a chair and a dressing table and a little sofa and I think that’s how all bathrooms should be. I don’t care if they’re men’s or women’s bathrooms. I think all bathrooms should be like this because there’s a sense of like, we’ve taken away leisure from these things” -Asughara

Malena's Bathroom



“I think definitely the bathroom for women is more so a place where you talk as well .It’s not necessarily just, you go in do your business and then get out. There’s a lot of looking at yourself in the mirror, reapplying makeup depending on the person”
-Melena

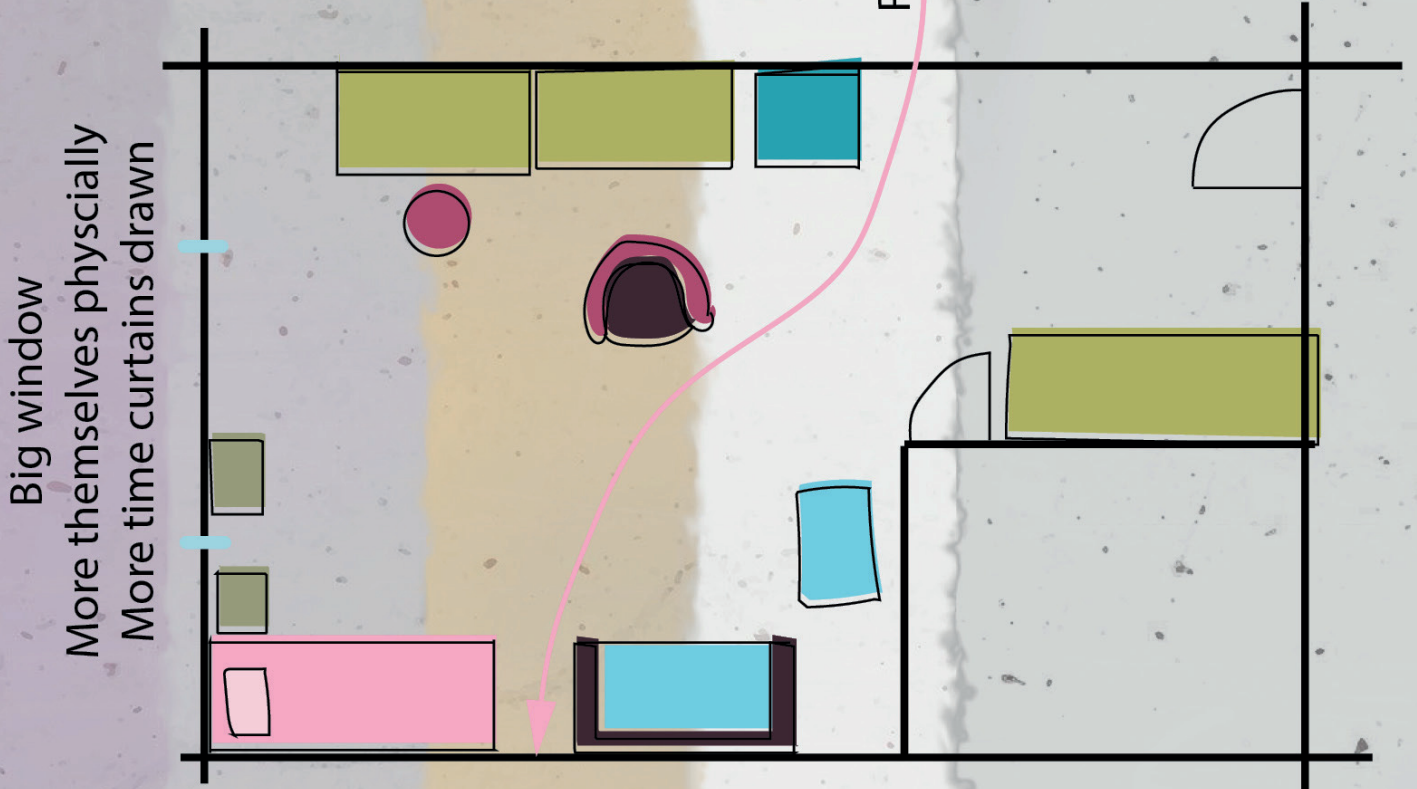
QUEER | 2010's | INT

Bathroom are often dichotomies for Queer users. Places that are both an expression of their gender identity but also place causing stress and anxiety. Bathrooms do not currently fulfil the needs of many users and often create a sense of othering. A space that is both highly private but which the use of is also highly controlled.



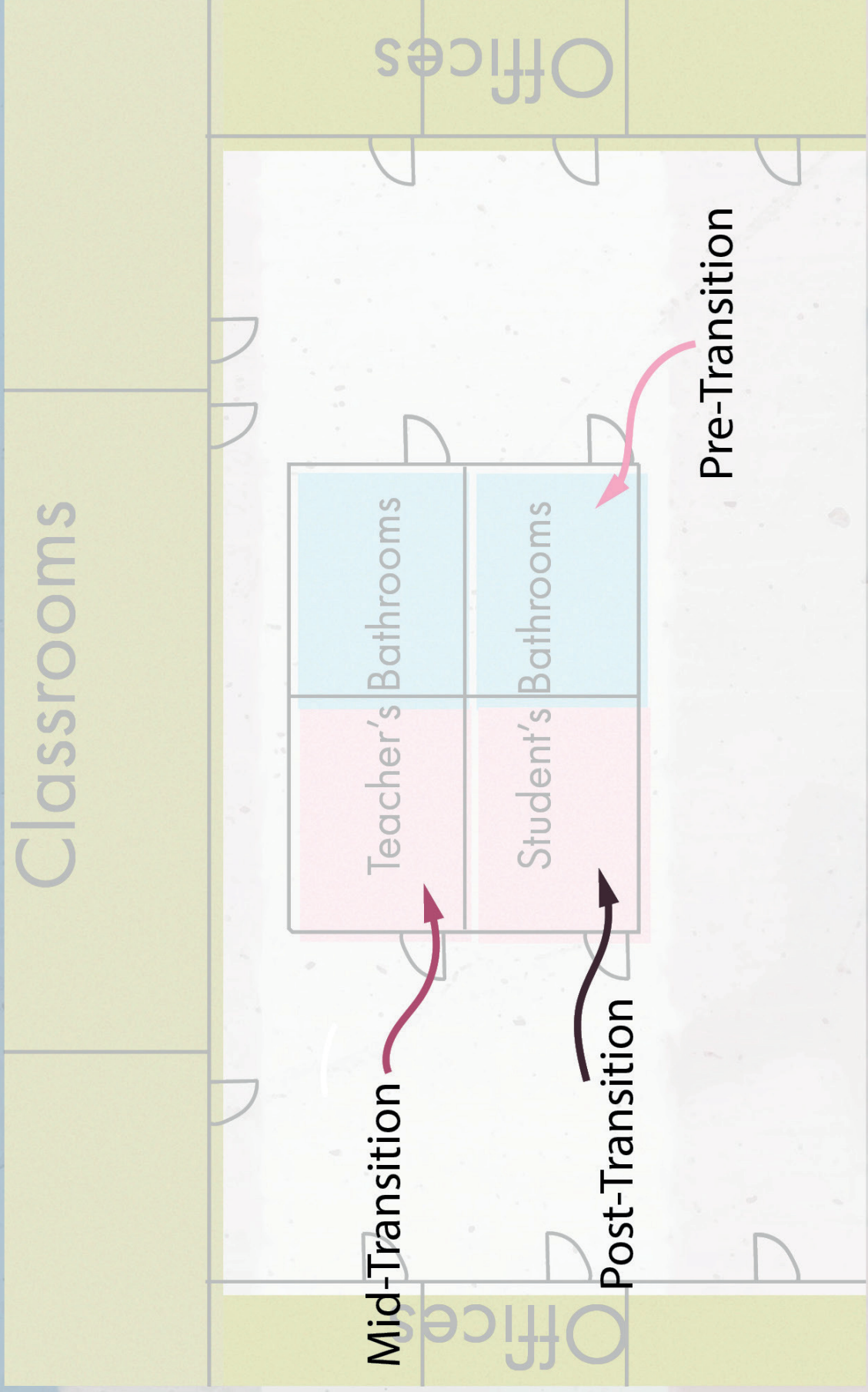
Personal Spaces

Ada's Bedroom



“Nu wel een soort van makkelijker, in de zin van, normaal zou ik helemaal me gordijnen bijvoorbeeld dicht laten, voor ik me ga aankleden en zo. Alleen en u nu loop ik wel gewoon wat makkelijker in mijn boxer door me kamer” -Ada

Malena's Highschool



“Before transitioning I hated going to the bathroom. I felt super uncomfortable so I would never use it. I would actually use the teacher’s bathroom when they weren’t there. I would just go in and use that because I just found it extremely uncomfortable being in that space”-Melena

“I go to five restaurants in Bangalore and I think I only use those five bathrooms and even if I go to other restaurants I will go to the restaurants, the closest restaurant of those five, to use the loo”-Asughara

QUEER | 2010's | INT

These are some spaces that came up in the interviews, how the space changed and their relationship to that space changed throughout their process of becoming.



Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank Ada, Oji, Asughara, Malena, and Kavita for talking the time to be interviewed by me and their incredible kindness and openness in discussing topics so personal and close to their own experience.

I would also like to thank Rachel Lee and Suzana Milinovic for their help during this project. For their resources and giving me the freedom, time, and understanding throughout the research phase of this project. And the whole ExploreLab team for their guidance and expertise.

Also, my fellow students for being inspirational and driven and for helping me to further my own project and also just for their kindness.

And my friends and family for always being kind and supporting me.



Conclusions

Conclusion

Architecture impacts everyone's lives but Trans people are impacted in particular ways. Their relationship to space is always mediated through this double thought of trans experience. Trans lives are impacted by architecture in a myriad of different ways both in public and private space. Their experience also changes depending on their socio-cultural milieu but they all face challenges finding community and interacting with 'the public' and public space.

Although this research project only interviewed 5 people, they came from a wide variety of socio-economic, geographic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. There were many similarities in experiences. All spoke about their experience of public space as a 'thing' that required preparation to face. These preparations included both physical and mental preparations. A process what one needed to go through in order to go into public spaces.

Both Ada and Melena spoke about their 'culture' shock when first using their preferred public bathrooms and how learning the etiquette of these spaces took getting used to. All of the interview participants spoke about the importance of privacy in bathrooms with Asughara and Oji both describing the need for floor to ceiling rooms rather than stalls.

Malena, Ada, and Asughara all spoke about how important that size and comfort of bathrooms were. How bathrooms where often too small to bind, tuck, stuff, and other trans

related actions. How bathrooms are spaces to be in private, be emotional when needed, and to have a space to sort yourself out. Many public bathrooms lack mirrors in the stall to check whether or not anything unwanted is visible.

Virtual space was an important way to gather information and find community. It helped a lot with the pre and early transition stage. Allowing Ada, Malena, and Kavita to know what to expect but also develop the skills in order to be.

Although no one's own space change dramatically during their transition there were small subtle differences. Both Ada and Melena described their more relaxed relationship to visibility while being in their own room. Both describe how pre transition they would close their doors and curtains when getting changed and how the more comfortable they became with their own body the more relaxed they were being visible in their own space.

Trans people, especially those who transitioned after puberty, often find themselves reading a building's script twice. Once as the memory of who they were and once as they are now. Although everyone has a past self and a current self the distance between the two is especially great for Trans people. In a way every space becomes a site of contradiction. This double interpretation of a space makes these interactions with space difficult; a bathroom is both a place of safety and anxiety. Their own home is often both a place of comfort but also a place of trauma.

Using the findings of this research a multi-site design project will be carried out. The three sites (Nairobi, Den Haag, Bengaluru) will be a transformation of an existing building with both private residential spaces as commercial and communal spaces. The buildings internally will react to the

needs of the inhabitants and externally react to the acceptability of trans identities. This external and internal transitioning was developed to react to the transition that the inhabitants of the building are going through and the transition that society at large is going through.

The three buildings have three main goals.

1. To create spaces of for trans community
2. To react to the current needs of the inhabitants and being able to transition with them
3. To be a space of safety and respite

Internally the various inhabited spaces can transition between:

1. **Safety and security**
A space fully closed off from the rest of the world and from the self
2. **Personal exploration**
Closed from the world but not from the self
3. **Public exploration**
Defined to the self, open to the world
4. **Public being**
Defined to the self, defined to the world

These phases are based on John Bowlby *Attachment and Loss* series.¹

¹ Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*.

Externally there are three stages

1. **Shield**
To protect the inhabitants from a violent society
2. **Fight**
To fight for their legal and social rights in a hostile society
3. **Bloom**
Creation of Trans-generational wealth and economic independence

The design phase will continue to collaborate with the interview participants, reacting to their thoughts, needs, and wants, refining the ideas presented in the research.

This design will primarily react to the current needs of trans people in each location but also be able to react to future needs.

Bibliography

Bowlby, John. *Attachment and Loss*. 2nd ed. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Reflection

Introduction

In this paper I will reflect on my graduation project up until P4. Exploring various facets of the research and project: how they relate to each other, the methodology chosen, how they relate to the field of architecture as a whole, and ethical implications surrounding this graduation project. This reflection aims to be engaged with my graduation project and better understand my own process as a designer.

Within ExploreLab each student works from their unique fascination. My fascination was Trans identities and their relationship to architecture and the built environment. This topic of relationality is one that has constantly come up during my studies. Often finding myself drawn to, and playing with the relationship between objects, buildings, cities, and people and how architecture as a medium can alter these relationships. Furthermore, by understanding architecture as a cultural text which can be interpreted by each individual user a deeper understanding of the relationship between user and space can happen. This forms the basis of my fascination and exploration of Trans identities in architecture.

ExploreLab is loosely divided into two parts: research and design each lasting a semester. The research phase was further divided into three segments: literature review, interviews, and processing of the interviews. During the research phase it became clear that two project locations would be needed to fully test, and understand the approach, and to further tease out the general and specific elements of this approach. A project location in the city centre of Den Haag, Netherlands and one in Ngara West, Nairobi, Kenya were chosen. Two countries with large differences in social acceptance of Trans individuals and legal rights.

the relationship between research and design

The research report created a framework for the design phase. This framework comprised of two elements. Firstly this concept of Trans 'Phases' that act on the building. Meaning that the buildings internally will react to the needs of the inhabitants and externally react to the acceptability of Trans identities within the wider social context. This external and internal transition was developed to react to the transition that the inhabitants of the building are going through and the transition that society at large is going through.

The second element comprised of community building, within the residents of the building, the local Trans community, and the global Trans community.

These two elements were instrumental in choosing the location, layout of the building, façade design, and detailing. The locations were chosen allowing for multiple ways of entering the building, and allowing the building to shift from one street to the other. The façade in both projects is designed to allow residents to be able to change how on display they are, how open they are towards themselves, their community, and the world at large.

The choice of two project locations was deliberately chosen to better understand the generic and specific elements of this design process. This graduation project interpret, designs and reinterprets these two locations through a Trans lens.

research and methodology

Interviews were done with Queer, Trans, and Non-Binary folk using word association, and semi structured open-ended questions. The interviews focused on Trans related experiences surround architecture. Topics such as bathrooms, mental safety maps, Trans experiences within a given space, gender dysphoria or euphoria inducing spaces, privacy, among others were discussed. The focus of the interviews were on the impact of architecture on Trans experiences. Architecture as a medium for protection, prosecution, respite, and politics were furthermore discussed. All the interviewees had no expertise in architecture to allow for a first-hand account of these experiences. This form of interviewing allows the interviewees to have a high degree of freedom to lead and steer the conversations. This freedom allows interviewees to feel comfortable in the topic being discussed, accurately describe their own experiences and (hopefully) make them more willing to describe these experiences.

Interviews were done with interviewees in 4 countries, Kenya, India, The Netherlands, and Belgium. Although a sample size of 5 was very small the interviews were in-depth, taking 1-2 hours per interviewee. Furthermore, by having interviewees from a wide range of socio-economic and geographic backgrounds, the research could better understand what experiences were generalized, like bathrooms, and which were geography specific, Cubbon Park.



Figure 1 Screenshot,
<https://transspace.myportfolio.com/work>,
12/05/2021

The interviews were further processed and expanded on through plan analysis and a series of papers. These helped illustrate common themes, spatial components, and relationships with other fields of study. As the interviews focused almost exclusively on subjective experiences extra data was collected through literature review focusing on themes like rates of suicide and homelessness, life expectancy, and housing for Trans people. This was needed to better contextualise the interviews.

The final report was presented as a website with an editorial page as the homepage and below this a collection of pages with individual papers and plan analyses. This format was chosen to present the information in a non-hierarchical form in which readers could make new connections between various elements that make up the research report. Furthermore, a website also made it easier for interview participants to comment on the work and disseminate it how they wished too.

graduation project and its wider context and implication

This project follows in the footsteps of feminist, post-colonial, and queer writers such as Doreen Massey, Dianne Harris, and Lucas Crawford and many others. Asking questions around the topic of identity and architectural experience. Further understanding how people interpret, use, and understand architecture and the built environment is incredibly important, both in academia and practice. Creating frameworks and methodologies to better equip architects to better design for marginalized people is important. Creating architecture that keeps all people safe, comfortable, and happy allows architecture as a field to better serve humanity.

Furthermore, the act of giving space to marginalized communities, formalizing their existence as part of an urban framework allows those communities to better come together and fight for their rights within often hostile societies.

ethics

Many ethical issues came up during both the research and design phases of the project. As the project focuses on marginalized people and the interviews focused on personal experiences that can often be uncomfortable or even traumatic. It was therefore important that the interviewees felt comfortable and safe during and after the interviews. Researching marginalized communities, especially when the researchers are not part of the community, is fraught with ethical dilemmas. To minimise these much care was taken during the setting up and preparation of the interviews. Making sure that I was knowledgeable about correct terminology to use and taking care that my information was up to date. Additionally, during the interviews time was taken to also expand on my own identity and relationship with Queer and Trans communities. The interview followed the NHS guidelines and best practices to ensure that comfort of the interviewees.¹ Trans people are often medicalized in research, this research project aimed to combat this by clearly focusing on personal experiences and moving away from the surgical and pharmaceutical parts of the Trans experience. A document shared with all the interview participants clearly outlines how the data would be used, stored, and disseminated. Interview participants were asked before the presentation to agree to all the clauses they were comfortable with and a discussion was had before commencing about their comfort, describing any triggering questions I may pose, and if any parts of their experience was off limits to be asked about. Furthermore, the semi-structured nature of the interview allowed participants to steer the conversation to where they felt comfortable. Follow up chats were had to discuss the research outcomes and the research report was sent to participants before submission. All data was anonymised to protect the participants privacy.

During the design phase questions around safety standards, often lacking in Kenya, needed to be addressed. Constructions in Kenya do fail and lives have been lost because of this. While keeping in mind the economic situation in Kenya ensuring that the building would be a strong, safe, stable, and healthy environment was important. During the design process Dutch standards (where applicable) were used to ensure this.

Both projects, by their very nature, are designed to keep marginalized users safe and comfortable while being in the project. For this privacy, sightlines, noise, and safety were key factors addressed in

¹ Nick Fox, 'Using Interviews in a Research Project' (NHS, 2009), https://www.rds-yh.nihr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/15_Using-Interviews-2009.pdf.

the design. Adding walls, privacy elements, and making sure that users could not be seen or overheard (unless they explicitly wanted to) was part of the design process from the ground up. Ethics in the context of this project were carefully mapped and addressed throughout this project.