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reflection paper for P5
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THE HAYDARPASA PANORAMA

A chronological bricolage and nostalgic catalyst as a new Eastern gate of the
abandoned Haydarpasa Railyard

project brief (graduation plan)

The former Haydarpasa Railyard at the Eastern shore of the Bosphorus in Istanbul has long been a major traffic hub, until it became obsolete through the construction of the Marmaray Tunnel in 2013. The Haydarpasa Railyard has been shaped by the dichotomy of arrival and departure, by transition and travel. Connected to these aspects, it is deeply anchored in the collective memory, as its wide referencing, but also the big resonance received by citizen movements engaging to preserve the site have shown. Widely expressed demands to re-introduce the function as a railway station are not facing the new realities of public transport, but show the desire to make this unique site part of a public ritual again.

My research questions were the following:

- How can the railyard become a part of public rituals again?
- (How) can the essential function of the site as a portal and node along a continent-connecting network be maintained or even emphasised?
- How can the current tabula rasa be re-attached to the web of the city?

The planned research methods were:

- analysis of previously made research about the area through the essay collection *Haydarpaşa Kitabı* (Kent, Mekân and Mücadele, 2021). It contains perspectives on urban studies, railroad history, the political and social field (civil activism), built heritage, traffic planning and cultural studies (art projects, Turkish cinema).
- special attention to the heritage elements: station building, archaeological site
- nostalgia as a method - importance of thresholds

reflection on approach and process

The design process over the graduation year has been a continuous zoom in from the concept of a park to a loop within the park to finally the Eastern foyer of the park along the loop.

The new Eastern foyer creates a nostalgic catalyst at the new main entrance of the site and provides a ground for various imaginable future development scenarios, which range from the proposed landscape park over a recently discussed terminal station of the new Ankara speed line to less favourable scenarios, such as office development of the high-price segment.

The guiding theme of nostalgia appeared in several different ways:

- *preserving* original traces that tell a story in their current state (park zones, ruin, relics)
- *reactivating* original traces (the loop as a site-internal traffic route, the locomotive depot as a starting and end point, the totality of the turning disc...)
- *rearranging* relics (train parts, tracks)
- *introducing* new stimulators of nostalgia (panorama screen)

The approach of analysing a) the site itself and b) nostalgia in general led to a wide range of material that was used in the design phase, both site- and topic-related. The different layers of these topics led to a collage-like design approach, which in my opinion suits both the character of the site and the concept of turning a site of journeys through space (railway) into a site of journeys through time (panorama).

The research essay “Reproduction as an architectural practice of nostalgia” helped me to create a conceptual approach to the topic of imaginative spaces, a standpoint in navigating through the distinction between the real fake and fake real and opened a thought process of how to create atmospheres that are related to the longing for another place and time.

The approach has worked from my point of view, but could definitely be further exhausted. While most of the research and material focused on the Western, i.e. waterside part of the railyard (especially the station building and the harbour), the project focus shifted to the Eastern part where the Ayrılık Çeşmesi Station is located, for where less documentation was available.

My mentors have repeatedly challenged me to stay closer to the research topic of nostalgia, which led me to a reflection of different ways of dealing with both found and newly added elements. Retrospectively, the project could have profited from a deeper debate from a heritage point of view and a usage of equivalent methods. In the P4 presentation, especially the newly added staircase leading into the locomotive shed was questioned in regards of its relation to the existing structure and grid (i.e. that of the maintenance pits). I have implemented this feedback into the current version.

The approach of repurposing material found on site as well as the topic of architecture as a medium of display (which came through the typologies of the cinema and panorama) led to design decisions that raised discussions with the mentors about the role of the decorum and its relation with the structure. These were productive for the development of the panorama structure and a

specification of layers from which a building can communicate a narrative to its user/observer (structure, cladding, display).

The aspect of reusing materials has been broadened after the P4 feedback, as the assembly process is now also making use of existing structures: the locomotive shed is becoming a workshop for assembling the metal parts used to build the panorama before it is turned into the park foyer, and the building logistics are operated over the left railroad tracks as much as possible.

My mentors have brought me away from the idea of developing a masterplan for the whole site and instead to rather focus on one chosen area and to exhaust its possibilities. Questioning the top-down approach of a masterplan was a good decision in order to maintain the character of the site and its potential to create nostalgia. Having analysed the whole railyard and its different zones and developing a general strategy from that helped to put the design in a broader context.

Repeatedly, my mentors advised me to emphasise and sharpen the connection of the intervention with the surroundings, which I tried to implement in several ways (among others, including the old locomotive depot, opening up the ground floor zone of the panorama). To emphasise this relation, I have built a model representing the transition from the new subway station into the park.

The project shifted from being a landscape zoning plan in form of a park with several interventions (P2) to a circular path following an old sidetrack through this park (between P2 and P3) and in the end to one key intervention at the new Eastern gate of the park and its connection to the path (P4). These zoom-in steps were not aiming at the specific current outcome from the beginning, but helped to conceptually anchor the project within its context.

A topic that has fascinated me since early semesters is that of different forms of collage, bricolage and assemblage. This graduation project gave me the chance to experiment with these techniques once again, rooted in a conceptual framework.

A major thing that I have learned from the graduation project is the connection of research and design and working more process- than result-oriented without a clear final outcome in mind from the beginning, but rather remaining open to take decisions based on findings along the way. This studio-inherent freedom of choices was sometimes intimidating, but I helped to develop a deeper trust.

1 *What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track and your master program?*

As a part of the Borders&Territories Graduation Studio *Transient Liquidities Along the New Silk Road*, the project addresses a continent-connecting site that has lost its function due to the demand for efficiency and progress in times of global connectivity. Re-inventing such a post-industrial site is currently a highly relevant challenge for architects as well as landscape and urban designers.

2 *How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/ recommendations influence your research?*

The research topic of nostalgia has shaped the design in different ways. Both the anachronistic architectural typology of the panorama as well as the displayed panorama image itself represent a longing for another place and time. Including ruinous existing structures, such as the old turning disc and the locomotive depot, build a bridge into the history of the terrain.

3 *How do you assess the value of your way of working (approach, methods, methodology)?*

Closely studying the essay collection 'Haydarpaşa Kitabı' turned out to be essential to develop a position towards the site, as it includes the voice of wide scope of professions such as planners, artists, activists and engineers, and poses questions that were included into the design process.

Also, using nostalgia as a method led to different layers of conservation and imagination that go beyond a mere heritage approach. The approach also included adding atmospheric notions and reoccurring themes related to nostalgia, harvested during the field trip to Istanbul as well as in the following research. This led to a collage-like combination of these themes (e.g. display of relics, i.e. train parts within the structure, creating a space for pigeon-keeping as a nostalgic activity, ...), which in my opinion is closely linked to the nature of nostalgia.

4 *How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?*

Experimenting with different ways of giving space to nostalgia in a rapidly developing metropolis can provide a sense of rooting while at the same time leaving space for imagination. Public cultural spaces that are not related to mere consumption are of high relevance for society.

The design provides a collective recreational space for the inhabitants and visitors of the metropolis and opposes variously previously made proposals for luxury-segment real estate developments that follow a segregative neoliberal logic.

The integration of existing structures as well as the repurposing of materials found on site (railroad tracks, train parts) addresses the urgent demand for a more thoughtful use of resources in face of the climate crisis.

5 *How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?*

The approach is highly site-specific, but can also be applied for design tasks in comparable situations. As it is on one hand sensitive for the existing and its history, but also gives a certain artistic freedom to the architect (in this case as a collage-manager), it can be used to create idiosyncratic stimulators of imagination also elsewhere.

6 (own): *Which aspects / approaches to the topic of nostalgia, also related to the site, turned out to be lacking or insufficiently addressed as a base for the design?*

A highly interesting field that could have been investigated and included further are non-visual sensory stimulators of nostalgia. They have been a topic throughout the research (e.g. smell of childhood dishes as depicted in Orhan Pamuk's Museum of Innocence, locomotive whistle and stomp as a characteristic sound of the

Haydarpasa neighbourhood) and design process (steam generators along the path), but not found their way into the final design. However, nostalgia is a sentiment that gets triggered not only by the visual impulses, so this exploration of perceiving space through other senses could have had a high potential to further enrich the project.

7 (own): *What is the relation of nostalgia and the continuation of progress / How incremental can a nostalgic space be?*

The various processes of destruction and decay that have transformed the railyard into what it is today will of course continue and then again continuously transform the interventions, which will add a new layers of time and thereby enable further stimulations of nostalgia. The design proposal enables such changes, as it is as exposed to the forces of the weather and made from metals that develop a patina. This processual design approach is something that could have been emphasised more in the design concept, as a slow accumulation of layers has a high potential to stimulate nostalgia. However, as the design addresses the current situation of uncertainty and lack of a future vision for the site, the approach of rather immediately introducing a thoroughly designed beacon - the panorama building - as a catalyst for future developments seems justified. The adjacent locomotive depot which is mostly left in its ruinous state offers a ground for the continuation of already ongoing destructive processes.