

4

THINKING BY BEING

AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF WORKING FOR ARCHITECTS

4.1 PRECEDENTS

Originally, the church in Ronchamp was situated on a hill. Until 1751, when a church, called Notre-Dame du Bas, was completed in the village center of Ronchamps, it was the only church in the area. After the French Revolution, the church and the hill, like all ecclesiastical property, were taken over by the French republic. In 1799 the hill was bought by people from Ronchamps, including the pastor, since then the hill has been privately owned. After this a series of events struck the church.:

In 1913 the old church burned out after a lightning strike.

In the period 1922-1925 a new church was built on the hill. The last old building was demolished in 1930.

In the Second World War, this church was completely destroyed by a bombing.

After the war, in 1950, Le Corbusier (1887-1965) was commissioned to design a new replacement chapel. Over the course of the five consecutive years, he created a building full of character, a place of which he, not being a believer, said: "of silence, of prayer, of peace, of spiritual joy".

His assignment was to design a small, intimate building that could be used by both the village community and the pilgrims who wanted to visit it. Because of the high-rise roof and the curved white walls, the chapel is reminiscent of a sculpture rather than a building. Each side is completely different from the other and the building has reminded people of the most diverse things, from the scale of a crab to a pigeon, from an airplane to a miter. In the 5 years it took to build the chapel, Le Corbusier kept a diary in which he noted his opinion about the building. He said: "The keyword is light, and light illuminates forms and forms possess emotional power."

Le Corbusier also faced many technical problems. Because it was so difficult to transport huge blocks of stone to the top of the hill, he used the ruins of the destroyed church to build the new chapel. He then smeared the walls with concrete to get a rough surface that could be painted white. The roof construction is also special, it is completely hollow and made of reinforced concrete over a skeleton of beams and bars. All this is protected by a few layers of water-resistant material that has been pulled over the structure.



The RUHR Area was once the largest industrial region in Europe. Coal was extracted and steel was produced on a large scale. In the 1980s, however, the decline of heavy industry was a fact, and most mining and steel workers became unemployed. With the IBA Emscherpark regional project, the Ruhr area underwent a major change.

New companies from innovative sectors were attracted. The impressive landscape of coal mines, blast furnaces and coke factories now houses museums, educational institutions and science centers. The extensive infrastructure of railways, streets, gas lines and conveyor belts has been absorbed in industrial landscape parks. The richness of the industrial heritage in the Ruhr area, combined with new cultural and educational functions, is unique on this scale and in this complexity and multiplicity.

The Zeche Zollverein is a good example of industrial architecture that has been spared by the demolition hammers and has been declared a monument by UNESCO. Besides a Design Center (by Norman Foster) and the Coregraphic Center, the Kokerei (coke factory) with its battery of coke ovens and chimneys is the most impressive building. As part of a new master plan (OMA), additional functions are currently being realized in the mine area, such as a design school delivered in 2006, designed by Japanese architects SANAA.

In the Duisburg Innenhafen, to cite another example, grain silos have been reused as offices, homes and a museum (Herzog & De Meuron). Gardens have been realized in the coal bunkers of the Duisburg Noord landscape park, while at other locations you can dive or climb into old blast furnaces.



C-Mine is the name for a development project of the former coal mine of Winterslag in Genk, which I found interesting with its company town history. The name has been chosen through a competition. The C stands for creativity. The city of Genk has owned the complex since 2001.

Location. Part of the mining buildings and installations has been preserved and has monument status. The buildings in neoclassical and neo-Flemish renaissance style date from the period 1912-1925. Behind it are two shaft goats: one from 1916 (the oldest in Limburg) and one from 1963, the last ever built. Furthermore, the retrieval machine building and the power plant of the mine can still be viewed.

As the restoration and refurbishment progresses, more and more institutions are settling in C-Mine. In 2008 a cinema (Euroscoop) and a number of catering establishments will be established in the complex, later expanded with facilities for meetings and congresses. Designer and ceramist Piet Stockmans also has his studio in part of the former mining buildings. In September 2009 the Media & Design Academy, a college with creative training such as animation film, communication and multimedia design, photography and product design, will be established there. From the 2010-2011 theater season, the multipurpose hall and the completed cultural center will also be located there. In addition, a number of offices and services have been established that are related to culture, design or the mining history, such as the Mijnerfgoed Heritage Cell. From May 2012 a new attraction has been added: the C-Mine expedition. In addition, an old air passage from the former mine has been transformed into an experience center of mine stories to be recalled, recognizable mine sounds and the ability to compose odors.



4.2 ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT

The project SECS POMPEI did not end when the last building element was placed for its architect Lina Bo Bardi. Not only did she design the building, but she also actively engaged in its becoming a cultural center by curating and being present very intensely in the first years. As described: *"during the first years under her supervision, the Pompéia Factory was the great novelty on the Brazilian cultural scene. There Lina, worked on the architecture of human behaviour, designing spaces and altering them, creating contexts and giving birth to life. Conviviality between people is the great generator of everything."*¹

Her way of working during this period is described as: *"this ode to the appropriation of space, this both humanistic and social vocation, with 'revolutionary' connotations in the design is an extension of Lina Bardi's professional practice. By installing her studio on the job-site and refusing to be represented by executive technical drawings, the architect became involved in the everyday happenings of the work, solving details as problems appeared, always in partnership with engineers and workers. Her form of expression is through sketches, as strong as her constructive gestures, usually highly colourful, where the main idea of the design is shown by compositions that include general drawings, measurements, details, brief conceptual and explanatory texts."*¹



1. Cecilia Rodrigues Dos Santos (1990) Lina Bo Bardi: Leisure Center SESC Pompeia

"The Grote Pyr is not a squat. It was developed as the replacement for the Blauwe Aanslag, a building (former tax office) in The Hague that had been squatted for 22 years and that was demolished around 2004. The municipality recognised the value of the squat community (the Blauwe accommodated, for instance, a restaurant, a library, the Kurdish parliament in the Netherlands and many small companies and of course residents) and offered the former HBS school at the Waldeck Pymontkade as a replacement, but then a legal one. The group could buy the building for 500.000 gulden (or euro?) and our office at that time, "architectuurwerkplaats de ruimte", some of the members of which had been residents of the Blauwe, developed the building. It now accommodates residents, artist studios, a restaurant, a children museum and more. Every participants pays a low rent but is obliged to spend a certain amount of hours for the maintenance of the building."
(Havik, 2019)



A great case to look for is the project that is initiated at the former NDSM-warf in Amsterdam. I have looked at this project specifically for the way that is dealt with ownership and the way the project deals with existing social and physical structures. In *Make Your City*, De Klerk¹ explains about the reason to work with existing structures. "Our starting point for diversification results in a first difference of opinion with District Noord, which wants to focus on the creative industry and believes this does not include the already present boat builders, social enterprise Stichting Kerk en Buurt, knife grinders and flea market. We oppose them because starting from the envelope approach, we take on development on the basis of existing physical and social structures" I see the redevelopment of NDSM as a prime example of why thinking on site and working closely with existing groups and social structures can bring meaningful energy to a city. This project has worked in overall because the project has an integrated consciousness to deal with ownership in all phases. The problems that occur during the project, as described in *Make Your City*¹ have their origin in the way the ownership is organized.



4.3 PROCESS

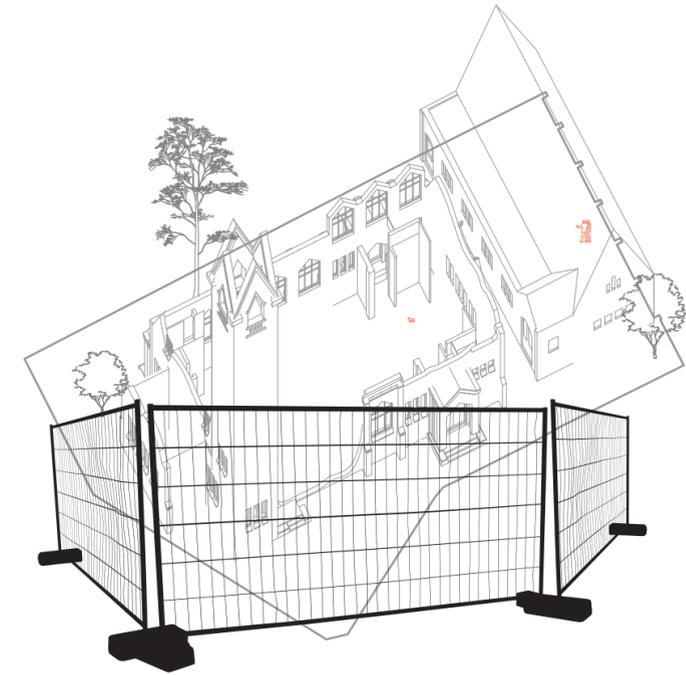
This sub-chapter is just a accumulation of process-photos that I can refer to in the essay at the end of the booklet. It might also give a sense of how the events unfolded chronologically.



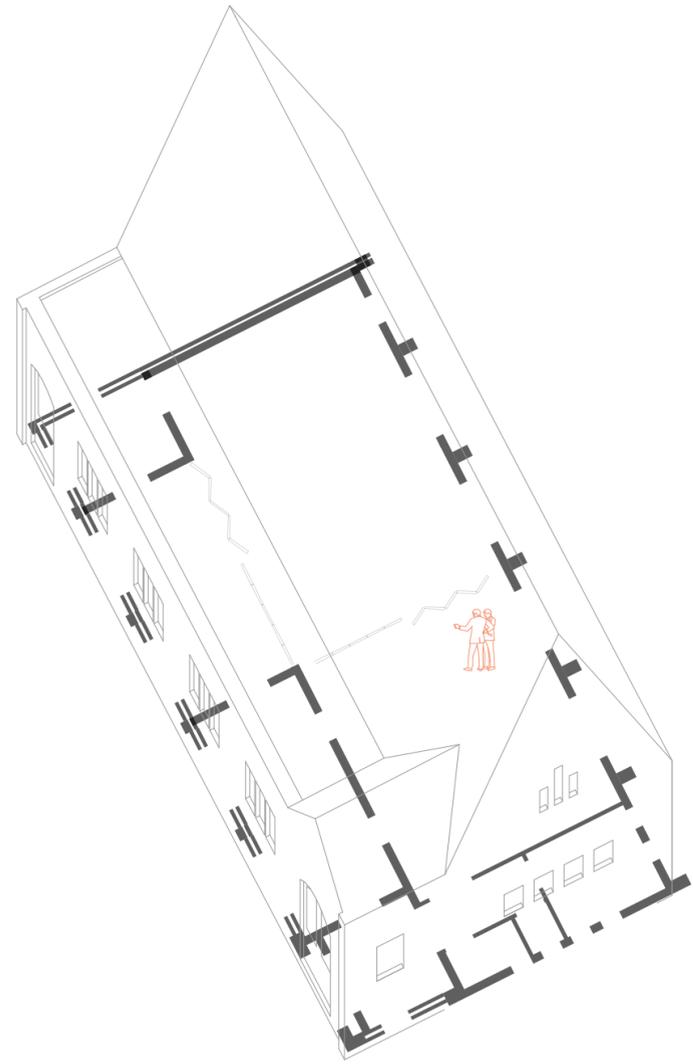


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CENTRE FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT
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Juul voelt zich 😄 enthousiast.
Gepubliceerd door Nima Morkoc [?] · 23 september · 🌐

Muren verstevigd. Bitumen tegen vochtopname bakstenen. Vloer opgehoogd om komende tijd weer leuke dingen te organiseren! We hopen maandag klaar te zijn met de werkzaamheden. Excuses voor de zanderige voeten op de zaandijkstraat, gaan we schoonmaken!

En ohja: 250 kaartjes Pleinbios uitverkocht!

1.110 Bereikte mensen 1.008 Betrokkenheidsacties Bericht promoten

Annie Sch, Ozlem Suzen en 48 anderen 8 opmerkingen 1 keer gedeeld

Leuk Opmerking plaatsen Delen

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ESSAY 4

CONSIDERING THE ARCHITECT AS ONE WHO MOUNTS THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

With this booklet and essay I am expanding on my personal thoughts towards the current climate of the architecture profession and why I think it can use some reviewing. In the coming paragraphs I will describe the problems I (fore)see as a (yet to be) starting architect and how I see a gap in what desired ways of working are. These are personal ideas. As a solution, I will describe one alternative way of working for a future architect, reflecting it together with literature and common practices.

PROBLEMS & THOUGHTS

• Lost time and research

As architects the most forward way of starting a project (may it be a commission, competition or house for a friend) is with research of the site and then the design. What the emphasis of the research is, will differ for every architect and is personal. I will not argue against other methods of doing or researching, if it is a conscious choice. The site-research however, is often times a poor investment as it is only being used once and can merely influence the decisions that have been taken prior to the start of the architectural activities. The results of research are mere advice for the initiators and real decision-makers.

• Authority

When a doctor advises the patient to start taking a certain drug, it is not common for the patient to suggest all sorts of alternatives or laugh the proposal away. That kind of authority has long been gone in the architecture profession and righteously so. The urge of a whole profession to come up with distinctive work has its seed in an education where one is educated to be an architect at the table of very elitist projects (and only in the concept-phase). This results in unsuitable behavior within 'normal' projects and a 'silly' appearance within the building profession. I am not judging the urge to get 'above

the clouds' in order to work on more customized projects and work with more motivated clients. The current status quo within the architecture profession that depicts who has earned its way to do this has however not resulted in a coherent profession. To the contrary, this has resulted in scattered architectural philosophies and design languages. Where are we going?

The architect is furthermore more and more used as a tool during the process of building instead of a serious expert. Joost Ector notes: *"As with any large public building project, the costs are undoubtedly estimated too low, because that is almost always necessary to keep the parliament on board. If the inevitable disappointments then indeed come, you just throw your architects overboard and give them an agile kick with which you also score points. Two birds with one stone: "debt" cost overrun parked and put yourself down as conscientious with tax money."*¹ The architect has become a minority group that is placed at the front of the firing-line by the generals, there is simply no authority.

• Competition

One of these ways to distinguish and get 'above the clouds' is through means of doing design competitions. In the past I have worked at various architecture practices and worked on far-away sites that I have never been and know very little about; I never understood how this kind of desk-approach could ever come to an integrated, healthy solution for users of the built environment.

Especially in the architectural culture of competitions the focus has shifted far away from the idea as a pivot point to the means of communicating any idea. The effort and time that goes into portraying the idea has come to ridiculous heights. During an interview Francine Houben reacts to the current way of allocating assignments. *"for architects, many tenders are issued by the government. You have to*

do an incredible amount of work and often even put complete plans on the table. These can cost 50,000 to 100,000 euro in hours and we have to do that for free. That is no longer possible at a given moment" sighs Houben². In order to stick out, and win a tender or competition, the amount of time that goes into the communication of the idea has gone overboard. The (art)work is the final building, not the image of the final building; *ceci n'est pas un bâtiment!* Leave alone the absolute impossible financial and time investments that are harming the profession as a whole. There should be an alternative way where the profession allocates design jobs and disregards the competition as a whole. I believe its mostly due to the fact that -apparently- there are too many architects. Otherwise this would have never come to this point. It is especially bad that big architecture firms that exploit young architects are very active and present in university environments.

The worst is that, even when a lucky architect arises to get a design job, their role within the project is over quick. The architect sticks around for the whole ride less and less, especially with firms that are working on the more prestigious projects one may even not see any work done after submitting the idea. The result is that (methods for) evaluation of what has been produced to be in the built environment is/are lacking, and how can one improve its work when not having evaluated the last?

• Ownership

I see the redevelopment of NDSM as a prime example of why thinking on site and working closely with existing groups and social structures can bring meaningful energy to a city. This project has worked in overall because the project has an integrated consciousness to deal with ownership in all phases. The problems that occur during the project, as described in *Make Your City*³ have their origin in

the way the ownership is organized.

• New roles emerging

Koolhaas stated *"this is us and this is them"* during the Venice Biennale pointing to a white wall (us) and the technique behind it (them). The profession is becoming conscious of this fact and that leads to all of these revised methods of working. Whether it be the architect with a robot that takes up the whole building process or the architect that only mediates between parties. These roles create a whole new way of researching and being.

AN ALTERNATIVE ROLE

Adding all these problems I simply come to the conclusion and suggest that one branch of alternatives consists of the architect that also takes up the role of the developer. This graduation project is based on a true project, where I have bought and initiated a project on the site of the Julianakerk in Heijplaat. The approach where the architect is also the developer and owner of a project poses a new set of conditions and approaches of intervening in an area. These set of conditions allow alternative ways of working and doing research for an architect that may have advantageous effects for the built environment. I will describe the method that I have developed and used, of which the accumulation I call 'thinking by being (there)'. As described earlier in the first booklet, the research question that this essay has to answer is:

In what way is the process of building influenced when 'the architect' is also the owner/developer (and making plans while being on site)?

4.4.2 THINKING BY BEING (THERE)

The architecture profession can find itself more grounded when being involved in taking the initiative of projects and thus taking more risks; investing time and even money. These investments are already being made in the hope to get commissions, to win competitions or just to market one-self. It would seem that thinking about alternative investments is a sensible act in the current state of affairs.

I will try to structure this thought by explaining the role and the method in which I have 'handled' the change of conditions. Braae explains that "...practice-based research. In recent decades, it has become clear that research can be produced more directly through a practice as well as through more conventional academic activities. Conducting research by simply doing architectural design is increasingly important to architecture, and represents an academic recognition of alternatives to the production and consumption of literature as ways of thinking. This is often expressed as the idea of 'thinking by doing'."⁴ If 'thinking by doing' can be considered a method for research; the research conducted for my graduation project can be described as 'thinking by being (there)'. The reason for this is that my main source of information has been through field research whilst putting an emphasis on exploring existing social structures rather than the physical ones. Adding to this that I was simply thinking, exploring and getting informed whilst being on site.

When being on site and taking the role of the developer alongside being the architect of a project alternative ways of working become more obvious. The time invested by working with this method is realistic because of the change in condition of the role of the architect in this process. Summing up the main points that this alternative way of working results in, are:

1. Temporalities become a basis for (creative) thinking
2. A need for (additional) legal and building planning knowledge
3. A need for different ways of documentation.
4. A possibility to have a gradual design process and beyond
5. Building upon the social monumentality of a place can become a conscious act.

In the following paragraphs I will elaborate more on these points.

1. TEMPORALITIES AS A BASIS FOR THINKING

As seen in booklet 3, chapter 6 'Temporalities', trajectories of redevelopments take 6-8 years on average.¹² For developments from scratch this period could be assumed shorter. Fact is that, this is a very long time. Working on these projects from beginning until the end, and perhaps even beyond delivery, a different way of adapting research and design work is possible as there are enough moments of 'nothing to do'.

These times can be a time of creative try-outs and valuable experiments in order to see what kind of program or structure is suitable for the specific (re) development. These temporary solutions can lead to involvement and support of the neighborhood. These times can make it easier to find funding if there is already a proof of concept. Temporary solutions can be a way to test different new 'software' for the building 'hardware' as every building or area has different qualities and characteristics, this requires custom investigation

It is very important to consider all alternatives before building something as these buildings will be in our cities for decades. Time in between phases of the project should be taken to sort this out.

Still being an owner or being involved after delivery has several desired side effects such as being able to evaluate the way in which the object functions. Temporalities before, between and after building phases can become a basis for (creative) thinking instead of times where nothing happens on site.

The consequence of being bound to a place for a long time is that it becomes more logical to stay active in a certain area (like a urban planner at a municipality or residential doctor). The investment that is done in the research can be re-used and is not lost. One becomes an expert of a place, the architect of a place. This could result in more authority, perhaps even an additional role can be to consult with projects in that area.

2. ADDITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The curriculum of an architecture student at TU Delft does include basic legal and planning material in the bachelor, but this is not deepened unless one chooses the Management in the Built Environment track. The condition of being an architect and developer requires to have sufficient knowledge on this area as well. This has been the reason to also spend time on the third booklet of this graduation, to gain a deepened understanding of private and public laws within the building process. This results in understanding the boundaries of a project in legal terms. This should not be viewed as boring. In order to create creative space to think during the design process one has to find out creative ways to deal with these boundaries too instead of being annoyed by it.

The only downside is that these boundaries may cloud one's creative mind, but definitely not one's judgment of what is good.

3. SUGGESTED METHOD OF DOCUMENTATION

Instead of classically analyzing the place (in my case Heijplaat) through its physical presence, it has been more valuable to relate my findings through the events that have unfolded itself on this place (or its social monumentality). As my main source of information has been through conversations with residents and stakeholders (on all levels) it has been helpful to structure it in a more scriptive manner, inspired by Urban Literacy. Havik⁵ proposes the idea of urban literacy to architectural research and practice as a threefold literary bridge:

- a. *Description*: implies the meticulous observation of urban atmospheres, addressing phenomenological, material and heritage aspects of a site.
- b. *Transcription*: involves the local citizens and takes into account the role of users in the way a site is socially embedded in a city. Here, narrative is the crucial technique to (re)construct the social and temporal aspects of the site. //analyze existing stories and interview local actors, users and other stakeholders.
- c. *Prescription*: Scriptive methods such as scenario writing are used to develop new urban proposals taking into account the descriptions and narratives of phase a and b.

For my specific research I have combined a) and b) through one series of comics ('events'), describing not

through words but materials (pictures, plans, schemes, etc.) as a base and b) through words. See Booklet 2. The prescription c) has been laid out through another series of comics ('prescriptive events') in order to form a dense narrative of singular, but ultimately interrelated events on a specific, geographic site. This site specificity has been the leading the method of structuring my thoughts for the project. Braae⁴ shares this site-specific approach: "...these vast areas are cleared to leave room for new economy-driven or branding-steered projects based on offices, housing, shopping and other object-centered programs, resulting from time to time in saving a crane or two from demolition, which we think is not enough to justify calling a project site-specific."⁴ It has been my frustration of this very fact that I have spent more than a year on the specific site (living and working in the parsonage next to the church) conducting evolving (or dynamic) methods.

In my experience the danger of understanding the place through a narrative or script has been that it is difficult to accept the script as it is and to imagine and write the next chapter. The constant re-reading of the objects, places and events often lead me to see gaps that should have been filled and I am not sure how strong retrospective measures are, nor do I know how strong repetitiveness in the script is. For this reason I am viewing the place as a accumulation of essays with (inter-)related themes and not a continuous book.

I can see that focusing my research from within this site has its negative side effects where there is an deficit of an 'bird-eye's' view/distance from the project, but as long as I am aware of it, there are measures that can be taken, such as finding new methods to fill that gap (as a good solution usually takes multiple methods of investigation).

4. A GRADUAL DESIGN

"I need you to draw me 20 houses, with sloped roofs, 110,3m² usable space per dwelling, 3 bedrooms, a front and back-garden. Within two weeks!" For all architects I propose the following one-liner as a response: "Does it look like I am a wedding musician?" Although having an assignment at all can be seen as a relief for an architect, good solutions in the built environment need time. Being the developer

and architect at the same time does not depict that the building process will be shorter or longer, it just means that you have your architect present at the very initiative of the project, namely yourself. This results in having more design time and an informed architect, even if it is unconscious.

When there is time to design, one can also go beyond the aesthetic design of a place. When building upon the social monumentality of a place, designing interactions and events prior can be a part of the design process. This is a method of working that is possible with these new conditions, but other ways of working are surely also possible. The methods of researching designs in our profession are often ambitious and intelligent, always argued for and backed with kilograms of literature, fully academic when speaking about the social, semi-academic when speaking about the humanities/arts aspect of it. I argue for a combination of the 'etic' and 'emic' as discussed by Lukas¹ as a method for research. Researching by being there and taking distance when needed. "Van Eyck described the traditional settlements in the Algerian desert as the remainders of a long lasting tradition that "do not differ that much from the situation five thousand years ago: these are the same laboriously formed stones...the same spaces around an interior court; the same embryonic intimacy; the same absolute transition of dark to light."⁶ Not only are buildings not site-specificity anymore as they are all conditioned and not vernacular. Modern ways of dealing with the climate such as air conditioning has made architects lazy¹⁰, one does not need to understand the place, the climate, the conditions in which the building is placed anymore. And as a result cities start to look more and more alike. Therefore I believe that by being close to a place and the users that the pure purpose and design of a place can be found.

Considering just the physical appearance of the built environment there is not a relevance in choosing a method (if one consciously chooses at all). What it usually comes down to is: should it fit with its physical environment or should it contrast it in some way? It is a personal decision that could never be argued for with 'real' arguments, it can only be communicated in a convincing way; it is not scientific. Arguing from

the social, there are processes that are impossible to circumvent and there are social sciences that can back it up. It is this interplay between the humanities and social sciences side of architecture that causes much confusion (the science of building is a lot clearer). One can see that the whole profession makes big shifts between these three main categories of academic disciplines over the history of architecture. In the texts and talks of Avermaete⁶ one can see the way the discipline is scattered over these categories, but one can also see that if one just looks around. Offices like Barcode Architects and Powerhouse Company are actively taking (parts of) the role of the developer so that they can effectively question the program/brief and therefore have a much bigger social influence than only the physical appearance of buildings (unfortunately they are not using this influence to solve societal problems). Another stream of offices (such as Studio Rap) is shifting to the robotic fabrication processes and taking up a bigger chunk of the science of building. It is because of these new possibilities that architects can now be busy more often doing very social projects as "the syndicalist" try. "It is against this background that left-oriented and engaged architects like Georges Candilis, Shadrach Woods and Roland Simounet define a new professional role. From both grids emerged an image of the architect as "syndicalist," speaking in favor of migrant workers and condemning their dwelling conditions in the international forum of the CIAM congresses."⁸ The gradual design process can help to facilitate bigger ambitions.

RELATION TO SOCIAL MONUMENTALITY

Monumentality relates to the relevance/importance to a community. Therefore it would seem to me it is more interesting to think more intensely about the social monumentality of a place instead of its physical monumentality or appearance. The social monumentality relates to the events taking place that are in demand which in turn have human interaction as a consequence; positive or negative. My main question during this graduation has been: how can the social monumentality of Julianakerk be restored in a way that Heijplaat can benefit from it? In order to answer this I have put an emphasize on the method of researching, discovering a place through its events,

because I think it is important for reasons that are in the end political and thus personal. I argue for a city where there one builds consciously, where one builds upon the social monumentality of a place. One can also argue for a generic city, but I am convinced that a sense of community and convivial living is not achieved with this approach.

It is by the condition of being on site and experiencing what happens, understand what happened, imaging what could happen, that a term like social monumentality is relevant to me. It is by this way of working that I started investigating 'social monumentality', something that is invisible but present. Klaske and Zumthor speak about atmospheres and history. Zumthor describes: "The Eames chair, I like this chair with its history. History provides ground to stand on. We come from somewhere. Most of the things around us are older than we are. Even trees survive us. That is good. History is a good thing for human beings. Without it we would feel alienated and displaced. I am not talking about history taught at universities. I'm not interested in that. Rather I would emphasize the history that is stored in the landscapes, in cities and buildings, stored in the objects we live with. When you ask me what comes to my mind when I think of the theme of atmosphere, it is this presence of history: old factories, industrial buildings – specifically old brick factories actually: pure constructions, full of atmosphere."¹ It is clear that Zumthor consciously understands what his own priorities are/what he finds important personally when thinking about the built environment. This seems to me as the essential step before any method(s) for research are formed/chosen. In our education I have found ourselves (students) often having a standard method of morphological dissection (perhaps it is tradition) for site research that is expected to have been conducted for all projects, especially in the bachelor. This is not necessarily bad as an educational tool, one cannot be expected to start architecture education with a (clear) architectural position. The point is that one can only start to critically reflect on the method after taking a clear position.

My research takes the stance that the 'presence of history' that Zumthor speaks about – within a new project - cannot be solely considered through the (surrounding) bricks, or physical forms, but should

rather also consider the existing and past social structures and events. A very important precedent has been the redevelopment of the former NDSM-warf in Amsterdam. De Klerk⁵ explains "Our starting point for diversification results in a first difference of opinion with District Noord, which wants to focus on the creative industry and believes this does not include the already present boat builders, social enterprise Stichting Kerk en Buurt, knife grinders and flea market. We oppose them because starting from the envelope approach, we take on development on the basis of existing physical and social structures". Naturally one should in the course of re-intervening in an area/building look at the practical problems of physical structures (from infrastructure to signage) too; this should be called design. But one should also look at the existential problems of an area; combined with thorough design, it is architecture in its full extend.

4.4.3 CONCLUSION (OWNERSHIP IS EVERYTHING)

One thing that I have noticed is: there are a lot of very good architects, with excellent ambitions and ideas, but there are only a handful of motivated clients that want to build extraordinary spaces for humans. If the goal is to have more places of value in the city, there is no point in competing within the profession of architecture, the profession has to expand. It is, and it will.

Taking on the role of the developer alongside is just one of the alternatives of where one can expand on. I believe that in the current state of affairs - where the generals of the building industry are going overboard- this requires an activist approach of taking the role of the developer and if possible the ownership too.

I do not believe in passively demonstrating against what is happening. I do not believe in being teary-eyed when groups of entrepreneurs pioneer in an area and then get kicked out as prices rise. Whether it be BAR in Schieblok or Fenix Food Factory in Katendrecht. If the current reign of builders, investors and developers have the power to do what they please, only caring about maximizing profits; I believe in fighting power with power. Projects such as on NSDM show that ownership is everything.

Lukas argues that "Architecture is an ever-developing body of knowledge concerned with space: how we dwell and occupy, establishing meaningful places and giving form to the world around us. How we build is informed by how we understand the world, and how we understand the world is framed by what we have built there."⁵ That is a profound way to look at the built environment, but now it is time to have something to say about what "we have built there" once again.

An inspiring example is by a group of British artists and volunteers that bought the rights to advertise in the London underground and put pictures of cats on it instead. The initiator James Taylor explains: "*this isn't a clever marketing stunt for a pet food brand or a guerrilla campaign for a new TV series. The people behind it are volunteers who raised the money using Kickstarter. We want to inspire people to think differently about the world and realize they have the power to change it.*"¹¹ I agree with this fully. These kind of actions also show the power of organizing oneself. Also looking at the

case of Ronchamp is a great example where a whole hill was bought by people from Ronchamps, including the pastor, since then the hill has been privately owned. Not having enough money to initiate a project just means that more people with shared values have to be convinced to join. A rain forest can not be chopped when you are the owner of it, nor can maximizing profits destroy valuable (social) structures in a city.

4.4.A THINKING BY BEING | SOURCES

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