

Spaces of Collection

P4 Reflection

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Our studio started with a given site in Delft but an undefined programme under the theme of the space of collection. It is up to us to find and choose the collection from the university and accommodate it in the site. With the opportunity to re-introduce the university of the city, TU Delft, to its citizen in the city centre, the assignment encourages us to explore their relationships through the project.

While the framework visions a better interaction between the institution and its city, I think it also indicates a bold move that tries to mingle different users that have distinct needs from their nature. Students require an academic and rational setting, whereas the laymen have a different need: residents expect a warm and friendly neighbour and for tourists, a festive and eventful atmosphere.

The balance of the programme is helpful so as to avoid the space turning into either a taciturn box housing unfathomable knowledge nor a naive playground for the seven-year-old. Therefore the content of the project, the collection becomes significant. I think it is the visualisation of the written dissertations and essays. It is the combination of science and art, with a certain of educational and aesthetic values. The object and its space enable an elaborated place of social and intellectual contact between the university and the public. The Space Study Collection of Aerospace Engineering faculty I think is one of the suitable collection for this case. It contains the study collection for the student, from the big scale model of the outer space to the mechanical hardware used in the profession, among which the working model of Delfi satellites that sent into space might be the most prominent.

This collection remains its educational function for the student, that could contribute to the institution, while maintains the potential to be attractive to the public without professional knowledge. In other words, it could benefit both the academic and the public. In an interview with the student whose tutor works for the Delfi programme, a certain of potential scenarios could be unfolded from the object: events that combine the object and performance, such as the Jodrell Bank Observatory whose telescope becomes part of the stage for a music festival, and European Researchers' Night where researchers take their working products out and demonstrate to the public.

Moreover, space, which exists beyond our existence and imagination, contains its unique captivation to most people in my opinion. It can be hardly observed

without the equipment but it surrounds us on our planet. The one who keeps wondering the truth of space, tries to unveil what is far beyond us from where we stand. The discovery of others, makes us realise who we are. Space exploration blurred the location of where we are. This curiosity is embedded within the object of Space of Collection. The beauty of the mystery brings me a lot of imagination of the interior space, the spatial transition from the earth to space reminds me of possible interactions between different 'rooms' in the project.

Starting from the content, the collection of the complex, which can be describe as the interior of the project, the main question that I struggled with was its exterior representation in the city.

The physical condition of the site is one of the first things from the city that the building needs to respond to. It is now serving as a back side of the city, as a parking lot. Its irregular shape was the result of the composition of different elements on the corner after historical development. The existing buildings of different types and different functions, compose a lively scene. A similar situation can be seen in one of the entrances of the former armamentarium in Delft, only a few minutes walking away from the site. Even though the entrance courtyard is highly influenced by its neighbours (the hotel, the former civic office building and the backyard of the residences), the armamentarium achieved its identity through its rhythmically repetitive language: for one building, it is suggested through its proportioned openings on the massive volume; for the whole complex, it is suggested through the gathering of similar spaces. The armamentarium is an archive in itself as an assembly of archives of military history. The relationship between the artefacts and spaces within the armamentarium provides an appropriate local reference for the project. I began to imagine the interior is embodied within a set of solid volumes that shares the same strong visual language. Its existence is static, in comparison of its mostly domestic neighbourhood, with a sense of monument, serving as the cover, the stage and the background of all the potential dynamics.

By doing this, the project is trying to declare itself as a peer with armamentarium, a storage of weapons. This type of storage buildings in Delft benefits itself from the repetitive strategy. Another example is the former

Artilleriemagazijn by the Paardenmarkt. It contains a rectangular courtyard defined by, mostly two ban-shape buildings, running from side to side. The main building by the street is composed by two linear, connected barn-shape buildings. They share the same language of the volume and form, but keep different through their openings considering they are faced with different urban condition: the street and the courtyard. Similar linearity can be seen among this type of buildings in Delft, i.e, the Prinsenhof and het Heilige Geesthuis. They intervene in the urban tissue with their linearity: creating a courtyard or garden within itself, or connecting two streets; and express their identity through the repetition and similarity.

The research on the location and the context led me to a study on the linear and representational composition on the site. It was crucial to carefully reflect on how this strategy will work on a certain plot, during which period radical changes have been made in order to unfold the potential of such presence in the city. Being honest to this typology and make it as a readable element in the urban scale, I used the method of simplification to experiment and help understand own project. In the mean while the idea of interior tried to cooperate in the urban scale. It is expected to have such a conflict, where the urban appearance suggested different activities in a set of parallel buildings while the interior spaces are sprawled from the entrance and connected with each other. Different artefacts, spaces, users are mingled within a world of divisions, where however the transition is encouraged. Distinctions are not erased or mixed roughly. They are however accentuated by a certain architectural strategy, to make you realise the transition across the boundary of the public and the particular, the new and the old, the inside and the outside...

When I look back at the research that I've done, and compare my strategy with my colleagues, I realise there may be a difference in our approach. Most of my colleagues started with the urban condition and then the interior imagination, while I had a strong interior image in my mind first, then the urban presence becomes a shelter for this idea. The radical change in perspective, from the small to the big, requires careful exploration. I think in my case, the reading on the precedents which are faced with similar situation, not only in Delft, but also in other cities such as De Hallen in Amsterdam, plays a key role in helping me understand my proposal.

When I look ahead, I feel this transition in scope will still highly influenced in my project. From the materialisation of the exterior surface and the detail of a window frame, from the design of the routing to the design of the lighting... different elements need to echo with each other. I think the making of big scale models and detailed drawings would help me to make decisions so as to better delivery the ideas to the reader of the project.

