

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

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

Personal information	
Name	Thomas Ibrahim
Student number	5312566

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Main mentor	Stavros Kousoulas	Architecture Theory
Second mentor	Heidi Sohn	Architecture Theory
Argumentation of choice of the studio	The capacity to work on the topic of ideological and nationalist myths as they affect the urban environment and factors of economic, social, and cultural development in hyper-nationalistic, post-Soviet <i>developing</i> economies.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project:	The House is Never Complete: A Cartography of Idiosyncrasy in Sociopolitical Maelstrom
Goal	
Location:	Sololaki, Tbilisi, Georgia
The posed problem,	In Tbilisi, Georgia, nationalist myths are exploited by local and imperialistic power structures (i.e. Russia) resulting in the undermining of economic, social, and cultural development, while furthering the production of low-quality <i>neoliberal</i> urban developments. These phenomena, which are not exclusive to Georgia, lead to the further cultural reductionism, urban <i>uglification</i> , and government-backed gentrification. These often inconsiderate urban renovation projects, which are often erroneously justified by the open-ended and elusive goal of <i>profitability</i> via their abstract development of the tourism and service industries, are usually the erosion of culture and future economic viability.

<p>research questions and</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In environments of cultural and economic deterioration, which critical focal interventions can be made to catalyze the processes of social, cultural, and economic development? 2. Which initiatives can energize local prosocial behavioral tendencies and create cultural foundations for emerging identities, while ameliorating tense social conditions? How does this materially affect architecture, and how can these tendencies continue to be reproduced? 3. Which contextual inputs are needed to form a meaningful architectural response (particularly in developing economies) to larger social and political problems while avoiding politicization? 4. How can an architecture be problematized to include cultural layers which would otherwise be lost? What technical procedures are needed to produce a contextual work?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The design and production of an impermanent reflection space which enables the temporary, critical inhabitation of a derelict <i>ezo</i> (courtyard) house adjacent to a recent government-renovated (gentrified) public square. The reflection space will consist of an access staircase which follows the local tradition of producing idiosyncratic housing entrances, emphasizing the material and architectural qualities being lost with new construction methods, and their implication on social dynamics.</p>

[This should be formulated in such a way that the graduation project can answer these questions.
The definition of the problem has to be significant to a clearly defined area of research and design.]

Process

Method description

[A description of the methods and techniques of research and design, which are going to be utilized.]

The research methods here include the reading of several Georgian history books, as well as conversations and interviews with local anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, historians, architecture and art historians, political figures, and several other social actors. I will also consult years of practical experience and operations within the environment, as it is the consultation with several actors in an environment that enables the production of a work that can produce *shared meaning* and *positive creative effect*.

Since the particular problem that I am addressing is the systemic loss of cultural heritage monuments, along with the layered appropriations which they have subsumed over the course of their existence, I will be consulting the works of architects who have dealt with issues of palimpsest (namely, the works and design methodologies of Enric Miralles in the *Utrecht Town Hall* and Carlo Scarpa in the *Castelvecchio Museum*), while attempting to further elaborate the social dimensions (which are not represented in either of these works).

I will demonstrate political, social and cultural phenomena through images and diagrams to help build a case for an architectural intervention.

Literature and general practical preference

[The literature (theories or research data) and general practical experience/precedent you intend to consult.]

As previously mentioned, I will consult the works of Enric Miralles and Carlo Scarpa, as well as books on Georgian vernacular architecture and late-19th century architecture.

I will also consult political history books such as "Georgia: A Political History Since Independence" and "Statehood and Security: Georgia After the Rose Revolution", as well as the writings and lectures of the philosopher Slavoj Žižek, Michel Murawski, and Yuri Bezmenov. These works will be supplemented with interviews and conversations with Georgian historians, political theorists, and first-hand witnesses to historic events.

Finally, I will be reflecting on several years of practical experience in Georgia working on architectural initiatives focused on the topics of identity, ideology, and appropriation of public spaces through focal interventions and public architectural workshops.

Reflection

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

This graduation project is related to the Architectural Track because it emphasizes the relation between architecture, territorialization, politics, psychology, and urbanism. The project is an attempt to further problematize architecture through a deep understanding of the urban context and political history, and formulating a response which takes into consideration the political, social, and economic implications of previous interventions which do not work, not only in Georgia, but in other developing contexts. This project is a first step of reflection and emphasis on what should be prioritized to keep urban environments from rapidly disappearing, in post-colonial environments.

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

The relevance of this process socially, is that it has the potential to catalyze a process of reflection on urban history, as well as demonstrating future potentials which are untapped. This is a part of an ongoing process of professionals (artists, architects, and activists) to take action in Tbilisi to stymie the process of gentrification (and sterilization) of urban spaces. Furthermore, the scientific value that it will have is directly related to problematization of social and architectural conditions, and the production of responses and initiatives which can prevent the loss of valuable urban environments.

