

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

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## Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners ([Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl](mailto:Examencommissie-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	Mariana Alvarez Serra
Student number	5616492

Studio		
Name / Theme	Methods of Analysis & Imagination - Positions in Practice	
Main mentor	Dr. Jorge Mejía Hernández	Methods of Analysis: Studio Coordinator
Second mentor	Ir. Pierre Jennen	Building Technology
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I have always been fascinated by the potential of architecture to elicit diverse behaviors and emotions in its users through their experience of space. As Andrei Tarkovsky once noted, 'a book read by a thousand different people is a thousand different books.' This perspective led my theory thesis to be a visual (re)interpretation and defragmentation of the inexecutable cities written and imagined by Italo Calvino's. By decoding Calvino's work, I concluded that these cities are 'invisible' because everyone's perception of space is highly subjective, shaped by our unique life experiences and emotions. This ignited my passion to explore how architecture not only affects our emotions but also plays a pivotal role in our mental health and overall well-being.	

	<p>I have chosen the Methods Studio because it focuses on developing innovative approaches and tools for understanding and shaping the built environment. It challenges traditional views and inspires new ways of thinking, seeking transdisciplinary encounters between architecture and other fields. It aligned perfectly with my interest in exploring architecture through the lenses of theoretical perspectives provided by neuroscience, but also deconstructivist and phenomenological philosophies. Through these transdisciplinary collaborations, diverse perspectives enrich architectural discourse and practice, making both the design process and my personal growth as an architect highly stimulating.</p>
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<b>Graduation project</b>	
<p>Title of the graduation project</p>	<p>TRANSITIONS Re-activating the historical legacy of swimming in the Danube through a spatial study of architecture - as a verb</p>
<b>Goal</b>	
<p>Location:</p>	<p>Vizafogó, Budapest, Hungary (47.527607, 19.055614)</p>
<p>The posed problem,</p>	<p>Our whole built environment has an impact on how we find ourselves in the world. Learning from neuroarchitecture, I believe that mental health and wellbeing are both topics which can be addressed by the architect, through finding knowledge about how we experience a city and how we feel and behave in certain places within it.</p> <p>Regarding Budapest, despite long history with water and rich bathing traditions, District XIII residents are spatially and emotionally disconnected from the Danube river due to the non-humanized riverbanks, which are lined with heavy traffic.</p>

	<p>This riverfront's borderline was subordinated to numerous man-made transformations throughout the years, such as the construction of roads and parking lots, which altered and contributed to the current weakened physical relationship between the citizens and the river.</p> <p>This territory embodies an absence of qualified public spaces, poor accessibility or stimulating pedestrian circulation, resulting in its detachment from its restraining mesh. Thus it is crucial to redesign the space making use of the public space as the link between various urban elements.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p><u>Main question</u> How can the redesign of Vizáfgo's Riverfront forge a deeper physical connection between the people of Budapest and the Danube River?</p> <p><u>Sub-questions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How can the design of a retreat, with a public roof, improved accessibility and pedestrian circulation around, strengthen the bond between citizens?</li> <li>- How does architecture influence how we feel?</li> <li>- How does the proximity to nature contributes to our overall well-being?</li> <li>- What are the effects of natural light, color, and spatial layout on our psycho/physiological well-being?</li> </ul>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>A retreat</p>

This project comprises two parts. The first is a private bathhouse facility, sheltered within a public layer which serves the outer world holding functions like an atrium bustling with life, a shop for the curious, a panoramic slow food haven aloft a terrace, a walkable roof that acts as new public space and a ground-level health-conscious café, all overlooking an urban river-facing staircase. The latter element is a public floating structure, paying homage to the evocative reminiscences of old pontoon pools.

Its purpose is to re-activate the historical legacy of swimming in the river.

The shape of the building evolved from a biophilic perspective that nurtures an unmediated connection with nature.

Therefore, also the building's layout was initiated by respecting the existing trees on site.

Drawing inspiration from the tenets of phenomenology and a deconstructivist mindset, the design radiates a sense of fluidity and fragmentation. Here, predictability is eschewed in favor of spaces that beckon exploration, akin to the enigmatic charm of Budapest's famed ruin bars.

## **Process**

### **Method description**

#### Research methods

1. Observation and analysis of current conditions along the riverfront in Vizafogo
2. Interviews with local residents to gather their perspectives and experiences
3. Exploration of existing literature on the relationship between architecture and mental health
4. Perceptual mapping (Disconnection)
5. Story-telling (Relation)
6. Poetry (Reconnection)

#### Design Methods

To design a repurposed riverside front that aims to create a physical spatial connection between the community and the river

1. Draw plans based on a journey like experience (of discovery)
2. Physical and digital modelling
3. Rendering perspectives + Sketching atmospheres (Hybrid drawings)

## Literature and general practical preference

Baumgartner, J. C. (2021) A neuroscientific vision of architectural space (online) Available at: [https://www.ted.com/talks/una\\_vision\\_neurocientifica\\_del\\_espacio\\_arquitectonico?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/una_vision_neurocientifica_del_espacio_arquitectonico?language=en)

Calvino, I. (1978). *Invisible cities*. New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,

Calvino, I. (1990) *Under the Jaguar Sun*

Cearreau, M. (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press.

Coates, N. (2012) *Narrative Architecture*. Chichester: Wiley.

Cook, P. (2003). *The city, seen as a garden of ideas*. New York, NY: Monacelli Press.

Earley, T. (2002). *Somehow form a family*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Havik, K. (n.d.) *Writing Urban Places (Journal)* (online) Available at: <https://writingurbanplaces.eu/wup-members/klaske-havik/>

Havik, K. (2012) *Urban Literacy: A Scriptive Approach to the Experience, Use and Imagination of Place* (online) Available at: <https://repository.tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid:6eb74e99-29aa-41fa-bba9-c5ae887999f7?collection=research>

Jodidio, Philip (2016). *Zaha Hadid: The Explosion Reforming Space*.

Kanekar, A. (2014) *Architecture's Pretexts: Spaces of Translation*

Koolhaas, Rem (1978). *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*.

Le Corbusier, *Vers Une Architecture (Towards An Architecture)*

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1974). *Phenomenology of perception*. London : New York :Routledge & K. Paul; Humanities Press

Pallasmaa, J. and Robinson, S.(2017) *Towards a neuroscience of architecture in Mind in Architecture: Neuroscience, Embodiment, and the Future of Design*, Eds. J. Pallasmaa, H. F. Mallgrave, M. Arbib (MIT Press, 2013), pp. 5–21.

Pallasmaa, J. (2015) *Architecture and Empathy* (online) Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292783014\\_Architecture\\_and\\_Empathy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292783014_Architecture_and_Empathy)

Parent, C. and Virilio, P. (1969). *The Function of the Oblique*.

Proust, M. (1922). *Swann's Way*.

Richards, I. (1924) *The Principles of Literary Criticism*.

Robinson, S. (2021) *Architecture is a Verb*. Routledge

Roniger, T (2022) *You Are Where You Are: Sarah Robinson's 'Architecture is a Verb'*. (online) Available at: <https://www.interaliomag.org/author/troniger/> Interalia Magazine.

Tschumi, Bernard (1994). *Architecture and Disjunction*.

## Key reference projects

Győző Czigler (1914). Széchenyi Thermal Bath. Budapest, Hungary.

Enric Miralles (1984). Igualada Cemetery. Barcelona, Spain.

Peter Zumthor (1996) Therme Vals. Switzerland

Kengo Kuma (In construction) New Kamal Theatre . Kazan

Dorte Mandrup (2021) Visitor Center. Greenland

Amanda Levete (2016) MAAT Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology

BIG + JDS (2003) Harbour Bath. Copenhagen, Denmark

Bjarke Ingels Group (2019) Copenhagen Harbour Bath. Aarhus, Denmark

José Antonio Coderch (1964) Casa al mare. Spain

## 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)?

My 1) graduation topic 2) studio topic 3) master track and 4) master program are all interconnected because there is a clear intersection between the topics of 1) Phenomeonology, emotional design and neuroscience 2) through the experimentation of new methods of analysis 3) in the field of architecture 4) urbanism and building sciences.

Architecture exerts a profound influence on our well-being. Considering that most of the world's population living in urban areas spend approximately 90% of their lives indoors, it is thus unquestionable that environments have an impact on our brain and subsequently a direct influence on our behaviour and emotions, just as "if the whole organism resonates with the qualities in which we are immersed." (Robinson, 2021).

As an architecture student, I believe that we must be always careful when designing to stimulate positive behaviour and emotions in the users, and never influence them negatively. Marcel Proust in Swann's Way once wrote "Thus the most significant human experiences are those that provide opportunities for such associative memories and these memories are often created distinctly outside the domain of visual reception" (Proust, 1922).

What I would like to untangle is that, as "creatures of the place we're in" (Jeffery, 2017), architects should not solely design buildings, but should also anticipate and facilitate connections. The connections that we establish with places are allowed through a series of decisions - these decisions that will determine how architecture makes us feel and the impact that has on our well-being.

This said, the relevance of this graduation work resonates on the understanding of how architecture can play a role in addressing mental health and wellbeing, and provides insight into the design of a public facility that promotes community engagement and a strong connection to nature.

Throughout this thesis research, I will therefore focus on how architectural designs, with little impact on the planet, can have a lasting impact on our cities and most importantly on the mind and bodies of the people who experience and perceive them. As mentioned previously, Vizáfgo's riverfront is used as a laboratory to test these fascinations, and the retreat is the physical place/case which gives continuation, hopefully in a more up-to-date- modern-architecture way, to what is already a present theme in Budapest.

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

Architects are now curators of experiences, entrusted with the task of facilitating profound connections between individuals and their surroundings. My work advocates for an architectural ethos that transcends mere functionality, prioritizing the augmentation of emotional and psychological experiences within architectural spaces.

In essence, my graduation project is a timely response to contemporary societal challenges. By focusing on the intricate nexus of architecture, emotions, and cognitive responses, it paves the way for the creation of urban landscapes that proactively enhance the lives of their inhabitants.