

# GRADUATION PLAN

## Student Details

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## THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE INTERIOR

### 'THE PLACE OF WORK' GRADUATION STUDIO - NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE PUBLIC INTERIOR

**Studio Tutors:** Mark Pimlott and Laura Alvarez

**Building Technology Tutor:** Mauro Parravicini

**Title:** The Place of Work

**Argument of Choice of the Studio:** Great Interest in the public interior. I am fascinated by public spaces in the city and by interventions on already existing architecture. The topic of the future work place in the city is from big relevance, as the blurring of the borders between work and leisure entail architects to create resilient and sustainable future concepts.

## PRODUCT

The design assignment is to redesign an existing building in The Hague. The renovated building will house the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry for Infrastructure, and parts of the Ministry of Immigration. In addition to that, I will expand the public notion of the building by including public functions in my layout of the program for the whole building complex. These will be counseling services like legal assistance and business counseling, but also cultural collective spaces, like an auditorium space and a gallery. The project will deal with the future work place, the environment and the relation to the city. The combination of the partially governmental and partially public usage of the building, generates friction and shapes the project to deal with an important topical issue, namely the inclusion of the citizens and people of the Hague with their governmental institutions.

### Problem statement

The building being a ministerial building shapes it to be a highly political building. Nowadays modern architecture often attempts to demonstrate transparency by using glass to create metaphorical and physical windows into representational offices or buildings. However, it is only an utterly illustrative transparency that is not able to uphold the claim of fostering community between the government and the citizens. In contrast to that, I am proposing a design that looks to open up the space to the people again by creating shared public spaces within the ministries. Rather than implementing a purely representational architecture with the main purpose of political branding for the Dutch government, my design shall feature a number of versatile spaces for the citizens of The Hague, opening up the urban space for joint use. I want to design these spaces in a way that they draw citizens and visitors into the ministries and foster their engagement with politics directly within the walls of a governmental building. The new building will offer spaces that enable and embrace the gathering of socially diverse groups, by facilitating them to undergo a collective experience.

The new ministerial building will house spaces that are designed to facilitate private workspaces for office workers, service facilities for citizens and spaces for other visitors and tourists, such as auditorium, reading rooms, observation decks and information points during the day. At night these spaces can shift to host all sorts of civic meetings, performances or simply just be a space on offer. In addition to the big scale urban intervention, this project will address the question of the future work place. At this time, we experience a major change in the way we work. Our life is not structured by the division between work and leisure anymore, instead the borders between these two main components of life are blurring. The architectural form of the workspace has experienced growth and progress, especially in the time span of the last 60 years. The development of office floor plans has come from separate, hierarchy-expressing offices in big office buildings around the 1950s; over open work floors with separation walls to the nowadays widely known standardized cubicle grids. Today we have arrived at a flex-work, hot-desk open office landscape. This state of the art office design trend derived from the need for efficiency and productivity in order to satisfy the employers and their employees. Nevertheless, the open office flex-work spaces are subject to criticism. Even though the 'traditional' way of working with personally assigned work spaces is economically rather inefficient, the new way of an anonymous work environment with empty tables cleared from personal ownership is not yet accepted by workers and is often associated with creating an unproductive environment and unsatisfied, unproductive workers. This thesis project aims to find a solution for this problem through offering a thorough proposal for a future work environment.

## Goal

The overall goal of the design proposal is to foster basic principles of democracy, community and engagement through inclusive design, real transparency and direct access, which will be expressed and transported through the design of the public interior. Instead of focusing on architectural symbolism, my goal is to open the ministerial building to be a space used by both, the citizens and the government. The building shall become a space for the people. The project aims to overcome pseudo representational architecture and instead wants to bring the public life back to where the government is, in order to physically connect the people with politics and shape a versatile and important public space in the city.

Besides from this overall concept and the big scale intervention in terms of the public interior, this project questions the traditional workspace with the aim to develop a well functioning work environment for the civil servants of the ministry. This will be approached in small scale detail, and therefore will be designed in-depth and with much precision given to the materiality and usability.

## Relevance

By questioning the current state of the place of work and formulating a future-oriented space, this project addresses an important issue of our time: the changing workplace. Due to the blurring of boundaries between work and private, the notion of the traditional work place has been undergoing severe changes in the last 15 years, for instance with the implementation of hot-desk systems and flexible working hours. In the ministries, most of the administrative work tasks can be done via networks and are not necessarily bound to one specific location anymore. Unlike the traditional way of working, with an office building being the physical and symbolic manifestation of work, a lot of civil servants already have home working days or travel in between different destinations from meeting to meeting. Still, the social component of the workers workday experience can be mainly established within the office-building walls. This development has not found an architectural typology representing its flexibility and advantages for the workers yet.

In terms of the big scale, urban intervention and the alteration to the existing building, the project will address broader, urban issues. The currently unused building on Rijnstraat carries the potential of a great public space. A public passage cuts through the building as the main connection between central station and city center, making the building a significant urban 'gate' to the city. This public space is considerably frequented by the citizens of The Hague. It is from utmost relevance to create a resilient and defined public space in these premises. This important function has to be strengthened by a brave intervention, as the current state is rather desolate and not fully appreciative of the potential of the space.

# PROCESS

## Method Description

During the first term (MSc3) of the thesis year, the studio group researched in different group constellations and individual, on the development of the workplace. The research-oriented term started off with a 4-week group research on 2 reference buildings that are from special significance for the development of the contemporary office spaces we know today. To broaden our knowledge about different places of work, the studio group visited different referential office buildings during an excursion to Madrid. This research was followed by another 4-week workshop engaging with the building on Rijnstraat. In small groups, us students developed big-scale interventions for the existing building focusing on different topics, for instance circulation, urban development or extension. In addition to the two studio research workshops, the whole MSc3 went along with a separate research seminar, in which us students investigated on individual research questions. In my research, I focused on the effects of the changing work place on the workers psyche. Through this, I gained theoretical knowledge based on my literature research and further, was able to gather practical information and develop a small-scale design approach based on my qualitative research. Through interviews, questionnaires with the civil servants of the ministry and other office workers, I was able to get an insight on the reality of the workers workday experience. This versatile research, consisting of theoretical foundation and the developed big-scale and small-scale approaches forms the base of the development for the individual proposal.

## Literature

Aureli, Pier Vittorio.: The possibility of an absolute architecture. Cambridge, MIT Press. 2011

Braid, George: Public Space: Cultural / Political Theory; Street Photography. Amsterdam, SUN architecture Publishers and author, 2011

Bo Bardi, Lina: Stones Against Diamonds. London, AA Publications, 2013

Grafe, Christoph: Peoples Palaces. Architecture, Culture and Democracy in Post-War Western Europe. Amsterdam, Architectura & Natura Press, 2014

Gottschalk, Ottomar: Flexible Verwaltungsbauten. Quickborn, Verlag Schnelle, 1961

de Waal, Martijn: The City as Interface. Rotterdam, NAI Publishers, 2014

Vischer, Jacqueline C.: Space Meets Status. Oxon, Routledge, 2005

## Precedents

### David Chipperfield Architects

City of Justice,  
Spain, Barcelona, 2009



### Lucio Costa

Ministry of Education and Health Brasil,  
Rio de Janeiro, 1943



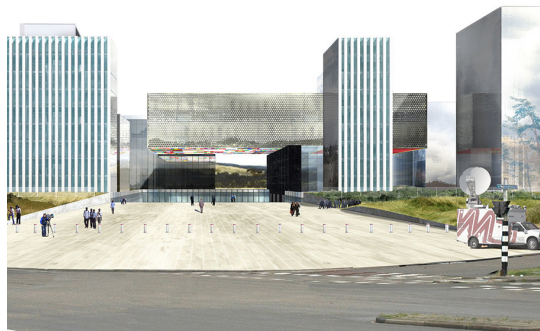
### noArchitecten

Town Hall  
Belgium, Menen, 2007



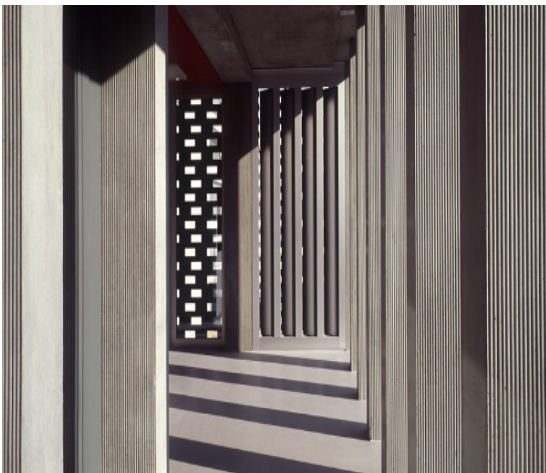
### Xavier de Geyter

International Criminal Port  
Competition 2008



### Burkhard Meyer

Berufsbildungszentrum,  
Switzerland, Baden, 2006



### Hild und K

Bauinformationszentrum  
Germany, Munich-Riem, 2003





# TIME PLANNING

## MSC3

### September (Week 1-4)

Week 1: Introduction meeting for the graduation studio, Assignment for design studio group research on 2 reference buildings : Bürolandschaft/Quickborner; Willis Faber Dumas building Ipswich/Foster Associates. First discussion about group research material

Week 2: Site Visit of former VROM ministry Den Haag, Rijnstraat 8. Meeting: Discussion about Site Visit. Introduction to research seminar

Week 3: First presentation of design studio group research on 2 reference buildings

Week 4: Further discussion about design studio group research and the group site model 1:1000. Excursion to Madrid to see reference office buildings and public interior

### October (Week 5-9)

Week 5: Final presentation of design studio group research on 2 reference buildings

Week 6: Workshop I: Ministry VROM as infrastructure / the OMA project / the public realm. Competition of group site model 1:1000

Week 7: Workshop II: Ministry VROM as infrastructure / public to state / interior domains.. Models of existing and proposed conditions, photographs

Week 8: Workshop III: Ministry VROM as infrastructure / interior domains / working domains  
- Models of existing and proposed conditions, photographs

### November (Week 09-12)

Week 9: Workshop IV: Ministry VROM as infrastructure / working domains / the individual. Models of existing and proposed conditions, photographs

Week 10: **P1 presentation:** conclusion of VROM workshops / problem statement regarding The Place of Work / presentation of Design studio workshop and VROM workshop book / Model 1:50

Week 11: Start of individual work: Major strategies: the public realm / space, material and light

Week 12: individual work: Major strategies: the public realm / space, material and light

### December (Week 13-16)

Week 13: Individual work: major strategies: the public realm / space, material and light III

Week 14: Individual work: major strategies: the deep interior / working domains / places of work

Week 15: Individual work: major strategies: the deep interior / working domains / places of work

Week 16: No teaching

### January (Week 17-21)

Week 17: No teaching

Week 18: Individual work: detailed strategies: the deep interior / the places of work / the stuff at hand / materials and illumination

Week 19: Individual work: detailed strategies: the deep interior / the places of work / the stuff at hand / materials and illumination

Week 20: **P2 presentation:** project description, problem statement, graduation document/exhibition with P1 workshop book at display/1:500 model/group site model/other individual models

## MSC4

### February (Week 01-04)

Week 1: Reflection P2, first building technology meeting

Week 2: Development of floor plans and technical structure, light studies, materiality, facade

Week 3: Development of sections and technical details, light studies, materiality, facade

Week 4: 1:100 Model

### March (Week 05-08)

Week 5: Development of view and technical details, materiality, collages/images expressing intention

Week 6: Development of collages with photographs of 1:100 model

Week 7: Model 1:20 of the work space

Week 8: **P3 Presentation** proposed date

### April (Week 09-12)

Week 9: Reflection P3

Week 10: Development of Floor Plans, Section, Facade

Week 11: Development of technical drawings

Week 12: Development of technical drawings, first test model concrete columns

### May (Week 13- 16)

Week 13: Development floor plans, sections

Week 14: Alteration to 1:100 Model, Development of technical drawings

Week 15: P4 presentation preparation

Week 16: **P4 Presentation** proposed date

### June (Week 17-20)

Week 17: Design revision and refinement

Week 18: Design revision and refinement. Presentation drawings.

Week 19: Presentation drawings and models. Final updates and corrections to booklet. Test print of Plans.

Week 20: Finishing of presentation models. Preparation for final presentation.

### July (Week 21-24):

Week 21: **P5 Presentation** proposed date