

## REFLECTION

Studio Explore Lab 19

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1511734

*Graduation Committee*

Robert Nottrot, department of Architecture

Jan van de Voort, department of Building Technology

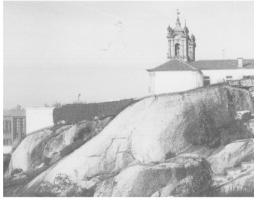
Inge Bobbink, department of Landscape Architecture

Daan Vitner, external examiner

This graduation project was set up around a fascination for landscape and its relationship to buildings. I am also interested in the transformative processes of time and history. Looking at the environment we live in, we will always find evidences and remains that tell us that a good deal of the past lives on. One of the beautiful and poetic theories that captures the continuity of history is that of the palimpsest. The palimpsest is about an ongoing process of rewriting through time, thus linking the past with the present and future. The palimpsest metaphor reflects how landscapes, buildings and objects are layered through the passage of time. It makes us aware of the many different layers we as designers are constantly working with and to which we are adding new things. I believe that the concept of palimpsest, is relevant because the layering of things through time could be a method in bringing depth to buildings and places.

The research project that I carried out resulted in a book in which I have portrayed a variety of key projects from different disciplines, both classical and contemporary, to reveal notions of palimpsest within all scale levels (landscape, city, building and detail). In order to describe how palimpsest is present in architecture, I have identified six personal observations: place, reuse, memory, traces, materiality and dialogue. These observations are discussed in my book as separate chapters. Still, they are all very much related; they can work together, be overlapped or used individually. Although the research reflected my personal interests to a large extend, the six themes are also intended to reveal new design strategies and attitudes that can inform the design practice. In order to translate the knowledge - which the themes provided - to the design, six case studies were analyzed in depth.

I. PLACE



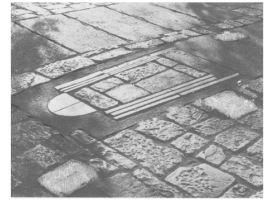
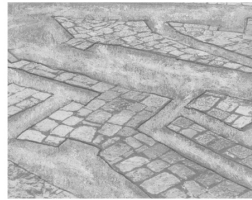
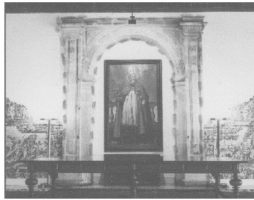
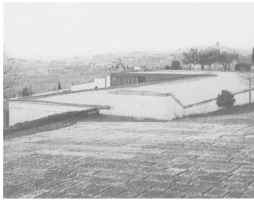
*Fernando Távora*



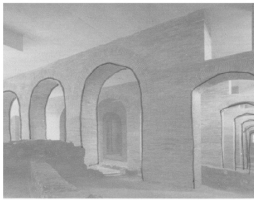
II. REUSE



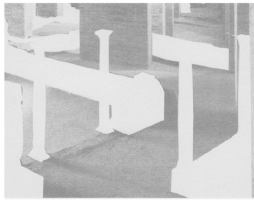
*Dimitris Pikionis*



III. MEMORY



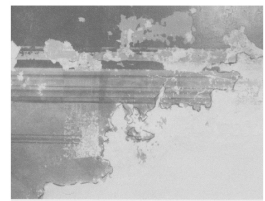
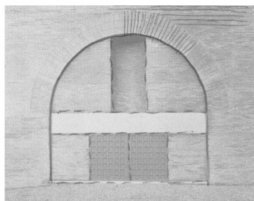
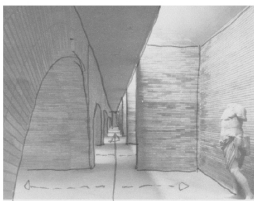
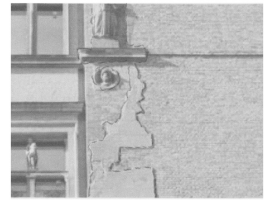
*Rafael Moneo*



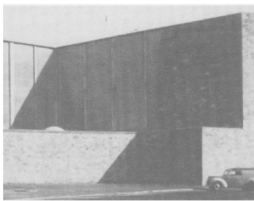
IV. TRACES



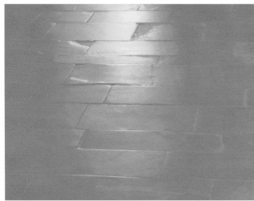
*David Chipperfield*



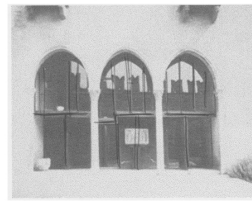
V. MATERIALITY



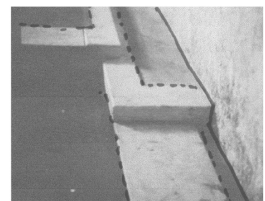
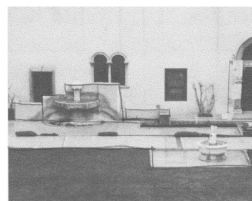
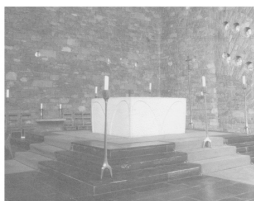
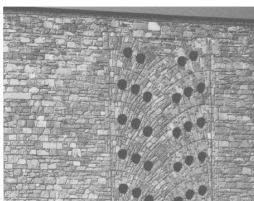
*Rudolf Schwarz*



VI. DIALOGUE



*Carlo Scarpa*



Overview of the six case studies (from top left to bottom right):  
 Fernando Távora's Pousada Santa Marinha da Costa in Guimarães (place), Dimitris Pikionis' pathway of the Acropolis (reuse), Rafael Moneo's Museum of Roman Art in Mérida (memory),  
 David Chipperfield's Neues Museum (traces), Rudolf Schwarz's St. Annakirche in Düren (materiality) and Carlo Scarpa's Castelvecchio Museum in Verona (dialogue)

The analysis of the six case studies - that formed the main focus of the research - proved to be a useful method that added to the design part. The design project also had to deal with a variety of scales and layers. For the location, my teacher Robert Nottrot suggested to look at a place that he knows from his youth town. The proposed site contained all the elements I was looking for in my research project. The location is the traditional Dutch village of Huisduinen situated almost at the end of North Holland. On the edge of the village there is a terrain of about four hectares containing three abandoned buildings made by the Germans during the Second World War. One of them partially burned down five years ago and is now a ruin. The surrounding landscape is diverse and rich and marked by the presence of dunes, bunkers, the sea and the polders. Huisduinen, within the region of Den Helder, contains many traces and remains of history such as the Fortress of Kijkduin commissioned by Napoleon. But also traces of the fishing history, seaside resorts and the Second World War. Today this presence of the past lives on.

The proposed program for the design project is to make a retreat center; accommodating a restaurant, hotel, spa, horse riding range and a garden. The site and the existing structures are remodeled and adapted to the new function. In order to do so the whole terrain is re-thought and re-designed according to the idea of palimpsest, thus respecting relevant traces, qualities and aspects of the site, while adding layers and introducing new elements. A circular garden is designed that captures the loosely positioned existing structures and landscape to create a micro climate for both the visitors that will use the retreat center as for the villagers that live around it. The idea of the circle enhances the feeling of contemplation by engulfing the visitors. With my intervention I have added a new layer of meaning to the site without erasing its legacy, creating a palimpsestuous continuum. What is important to me is to bring different scales together; therefore I have treated landscape, buildings and objects as more or less the same without giving more significance to one or the other. Designing landscapes, buildings and objects involves in fact the same philosophy.

For the design project there was a chance to test the six observations from the research book (place, reuse, memory, trace, materiality and dialogue) and to apply certain design strategies that the case studies provided. Consequently, I used the following architectural motives: Fernando Távora's use of inscribed elements of place; Dimitris Pikionis' collage-like example of reuse; Rafael

Moneo's reinterpretation of tradition and the quality of memory; David Chipperfield's traces as patina; Rudolf Schwarz fundamental use of materials and the relation to nature and landscape; Carlo Scarpa's attention to the detail and the aspect of creating dialogue by excavating into parts of materials.

What should be said is that the case studies also left me with a question, one that is very essential to my design project: to what extent can we, as architects, design every detail of a project? If we would accept that architecture is about a "remaking" as well as a "making", can a project by Carlo Scarpa for instance be remade? I think not, because his buildings are so precisely constructed, they are pieces of art done by an extraordinary talented architecture. However in most cases I believe buildings and places do - and should - allow for multiple transformations. In my own project I have therefore tried to also leave things untouched with the idea that in the future the project can be adjusted on certain aspects. To give an example: in my project some parts of the ruin are left as is with the idea that nature will grow over it or that new structures can be added in a time still to come. The introduction of materials that weather also indicates the transformative aspects of the place, hence confirming to the idea of "building with time".

I started my project by considering the six personal observations as equals. Throughout the research and the design process I noticed a slight appreciation for some observations that - to me - became more important than others. The final chapter, on dialogue, became the most fundamental within the whole project. The reason is probably because through dialogue I see all my ideas coming together. It reflects, my vision towards a palimpsestuous architecture in which we shape the meeting of different elements, time periods, materials, ideas and so on. How to articulate this reciprocal dialogue is perhaps the essence of architecture. Architecture is about a creating and a recreating as we progress through time, as a palimpsest, without ignoring the past.

