

## Reflection Paper

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My graduation project deals with the topic of “urban scenography”, namely proposing to understand urban environment as a series of scenographic settings, and to see how such an understanding could reveal new potentials in architecture and urbanism, theoretically, formally, atmospherically and so on. Inspired by the movie *The Color of Pomegranates*, the research focuses on small, mundane and quotidian corners of the city to discover the covert yet inherent complex of mystic nature of everyday life in the city of Yerevan. My research followed and explored the overall methodology of my studio (*Border Conditions, Public Buildings*), which utilizes mapping or drawing of specific urban spatial phenomena as an informative and generative agency for architectural design. After field study of *dérive* and taking pictures of scenographic urban settings, I analysed these scenes (spatial setups) in terms of frames and associations, which relate back to important thematics in theatre: respectively the relation between the real (audience) and the other (stage), and the meaningful construction of the other. I selected 9 photos taken in three major theatrical urban spaces of street, courtyard and market, to construct drawings of frames and associations. The drawings of frames delineate the spatial configurations, especially the dual directionality of glass, while the associations exploit symbolic, allegoric and personal imaginations to construct a series of fragmented surreal narratives. Combining the frames with the associations, I then made nine independent drawings of the constructed other scenography, which are further translated into nine models (spatial setups) informed in various ways by the drawings. Each of the interconnected frames contains one sub-narrative (stanza) in the surreal narratives, which are translated into spatial elements, with spatially relevant use of mirrors and glass that indicate surreality. It's hard to define the translation process in a specific way, but its virtue lies in the unexpected, heterogeneous, ambiguous and partly mystic qualities of its outcome, which are to an extent dependent on personal associations and inspirations. Hovering on the edge between collage, literature and theatre, the whole working (research) process of analysing and drawing scenographic urban settings and constructing surreal narratives challenges the boundary of the discipline of architecture, and reveals a new possibility of doing and understanding architecture. It shows a good potential as a generative methodology for architectural and spatial design, which could probably be developed further. It's partially in line with narrative architecture, but the translation of the narratives already departs from the narratives into something else. However, the limitation of the way of working might be its personal nature, either in association or in the translations.

From the models, I proposed to design a library of digital culture. It's related to my research on different levels. Conceptually, the library is seen as a heterotopia of virtuality, which relates back to the nature of my research on scenography and theatre: the relation between the real and the other; methodologically it incorporates the previous nine models in a comprehensive way, with four more narratives from around the site. The nine narratives from the city become different programmes, at the same time transform or disturb them, which are then organized by the four from the site, by means of frames. The building, in short, is a heterotopia of multiplicity of frames with translations of surreal associations. The design, with its scale and the extent of complexity, could test the way of working developed in my graduation project in dealing with practical architectural projects. Besides, it also makes an attempt to discuss the notion of virtuality in architecture by means of constructing the other.

My project mainly deals with exploring new possibilities of architecture rather than any specific social issues. The social relevance might lie in the message such a fragmented, mundane yet

theatrical and mystic building could deliver to the city. It disturbs the institutional powers of urban life, constantly inspiring new and alternative potentials of everyday life.

The graduation project has been an educative experience, not only on a technical, theoretical or intellectual level, but more in deepening my understanding of architecture and many other thematics, and in exploring and developing a specific way of working and thinking that could be beneficial in the long term. The tutors have been really helpful, by clarifying my research into specific thematics, discovering and pointing out potential qualities in my work, and helping me understand architectural issues in a new way.