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in-between architecture  
for peripheral  
entanglements.

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This Catalogue is the accumulation of one year of graduating at the Urban Architecture studio. It is a studio with many free floating open-ended questions asked by thirty or so students about architecture, which lead to diverse imaginaries and narratives. As divergent these might be, they are all gathered around a fascination for the site, it's condition subtly hinted at by the studio's brief lowtown downtown. This research picks the fruits of continual encounters with my studio-peers and their narratives, consider this the first example of entanglement. I'm proud to be tangled up in this and the collective exhibitions, discussions and excursions attest to the power of encounter, assembly and entanglement, which is the story thread guiding this project.

Every story has a start. This one starts in overlooked territory, escaping most of the lines of thought and intention of post-industrial Antwerp. A complex of obsolete factories, which only have been reclaimed into human life-worlds since 2016. Structures built for the self-contained production lines of capitalist industry seem to be ideal for sheltering a group of pioneers from the rest of Antwerp locked into an ongoing competition for progress. Here everything ends up that needs to be hidden, which does not pertain to the hegemonic progress narrative; There is material waste everywhere, for the pioneers to transform to

gift. This translation of gift to waste requires new ways of looking, freedom, experimentation and breaking of the common sense rules of contemporary economy. The result is a pleasant surprise of unfolding, self-built architectures ever shifting and changing, a polyphonic orchestra of human excitement and attachment.

However, this is only one part of the start, this project is not about independent entities, it is about relationships. A few kilometres north, we walked the perimeter of the site in a patchy landscape of historical conjunctures, attempting to Find the River. Between the ruins of what had been the largest oil dock in the twenties, an imprisoned Scheldt and an eroding Hoboken, upon layers of anthropogenic earth movements and trash dumps, an akin, twin narrative welcomed us. Its protagonists are also dedicated pioneers, however wordless, its architectures equally vibrant and exciting, but consisting of leaves, branches, fungal networks and cow dung. Translating waste to gift, surviving in the detritus of capitalism, is not just a human feat. This project is a plea for opening our eyes to non-human stories. Moreover, it is this analogy that redefined ecology, to more than a science researching non-human life, but a mode of thinking to help understand human life better in the face of a troubled reality.

*Spread of my notebook, sketches made during first site visit.*



POPLAR GROVE



white heron

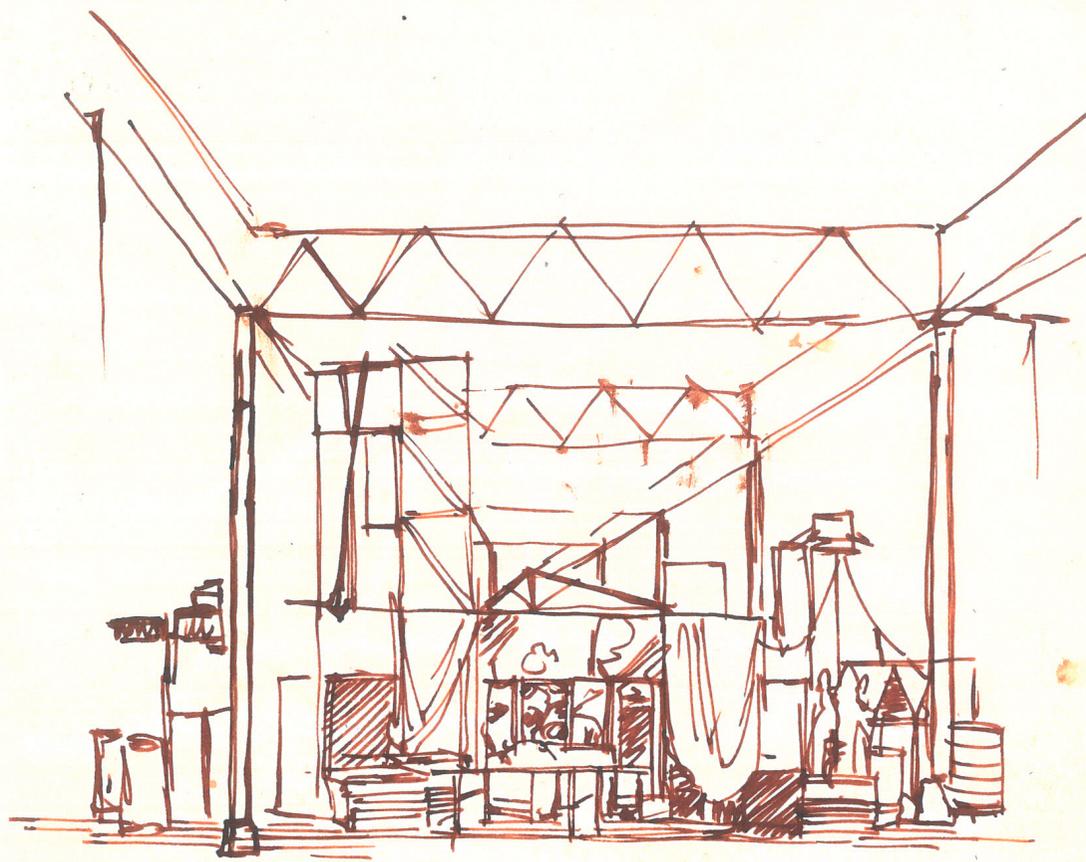
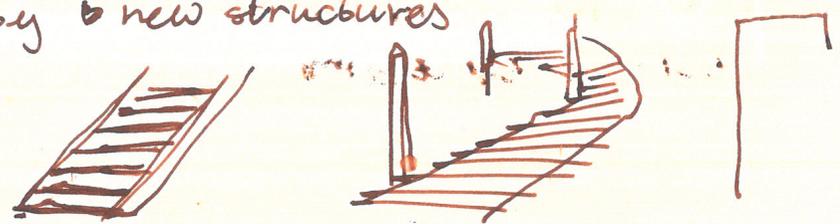


ducks



magpie

TO BE LEFT ALONE  
 as trashbelt or industrial complex  
 TO BE COLONISED  
 by nature or radical people  
 TO BE REENTERED  
 by new structures



MYSTERY!!! IS IT IMPORTANT AND VALUABLE

- A SUPERSTRUCTURE OF TREES PROTECTS THE GROWTH OF NATURE.
- A SUPERSTRUCTURE OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHITECTURE PROTECTS THE GROWTH OF SMALL INDIVIDUAL ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSIONS

I would revisit these patches in the coming year on multiple occasions. I've become acquainted with the assemblages of agents at play. I would become an agent myself, contributing to its landscape, be it diminutive in the light of relentless efforts of both communities. Both the Blikfabriek and Hobokense Polder I would like to thank for inviting me into their personal spaces and showing me the absurdity of researching architecture as an independent field. In particular Fokke, who helped me construct my own translative, entangled objects. I write this perhaps as a warning to anyone reading the catalogue. Polyphonous narratives weave in and out, encounters could be violent, antagonistic, though also at times harmonic and sensical. This year in short was a rather messy undertaking.

Secondly, it will not provide definitive answers and scalable results. I adhere to Anna Tsing's remark, that there is no one way forward to navigate troubled times, but for now we must stay vigilant and responsive to narratives which could inform us. Architectural design is in the end not an optimization of Science data and technology, it is never perfect, at best a good balance between all the lives that might depend on it. So, this is an expedition into ecologist thinking in architectural design, I hope to provide reason for discussion and encounter. It is open-ended.

Lastly, the ambition for the catalogue is to be enjoyable. It is a collection of stories, it is an explanation for my design, it is in extension a reasoning for my current position as an architect. Taking position in architecture is an uneasy exercise for me. If it does not fall into the dictates of Capitalism, it easily comes across as radical. If it doesn't follow the globalised, industrial production lines of building material, it is unrealistic. However, in the current uncertainty and the falling apart of dreams of progress, I trust for now the most context-conscious thing to do.

*Successive  
development of  
the Hobokense  
Polder and  
Maakfabriek*



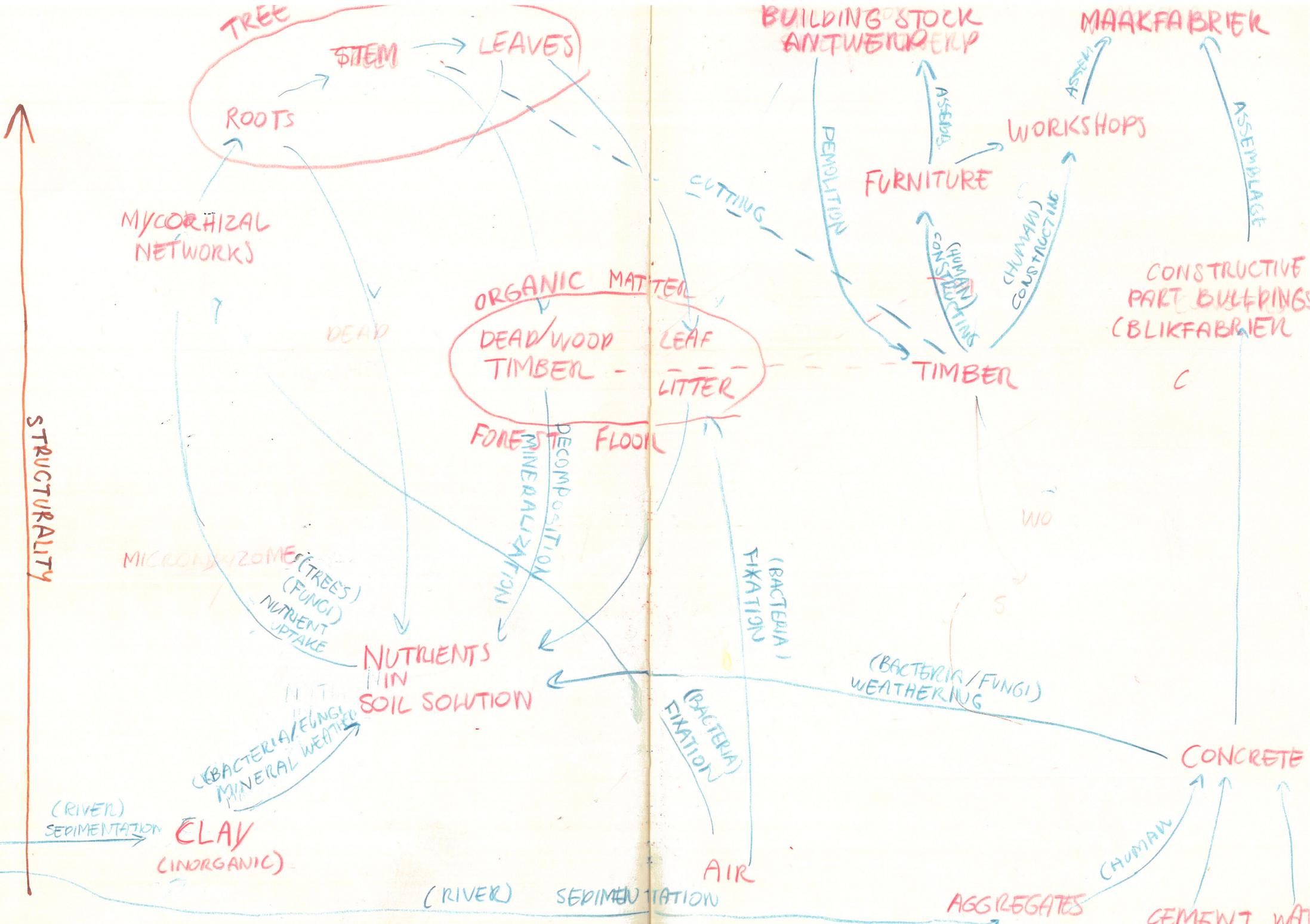
Ecology and architecture are naturally interrelated worlds of knowledge. They are both shaping and responding to environment. Even though the question of Architecture is in continual debate among scholars, it is to say the least not hard to miss when encountered. Ecology has during this research come by as something far more ambiguous, an automatic process happening somewhere in the backdrop of human progress, which often requires other modes of observation and science to be unveiled. The deliberateness of architecture, its singular vision has often clashed with the multi-agent spontaneous assemblages that cope, benefit, alter and simply live with their environment ecology describes. However, between these opposites this research is convinced of a grey space and room for interaction.

That grey space is explored by the works of influential eco-feminist thinkers. Latour, in 'Facing Gaia', makes us aware of the shortcomings of our current relation to environment and that our ways of thinking are incapable of finding solutions to eco-geologic collapse. Tsing's "The Mushroom at the End of the World", teaches us to the art of noticing and the vocabulary to interact with non-capitalist and pericapitalist environments. While, Harraway's 'Staying with the Trouble', provides perspective and ways of living in troubled times with other species.

This grey space of interaction between human architecture and ecology is derived from the point of view that humans are dependant on ecosystems, as indirect and forcefully alienated these connections might be. We are unable to survive without them, even after years of 'progress', if not physically than emotionally we require non-humans. Capitalism does not provide human life. And perhaps unexpectedly (reasoning from capitalist modes of thought) non-humans living in the ruins of their once biodiverse domains, need us now as well to thrive. On this cross-roads, Gandy's fieldwork in 'Natura Urbana' points us to the field of Urban Ecology. Its critical analysis inspired by findings from contemporary relational ecology, redefines the self-contained city as a 'natural' resultant of socio-ecological relationships. It is the academic container which within this research could also be categorised.

So where does this perspective put me as an architect? Is a quintessential translation from the theoretic and social imaginaries to spatial design. It could perhaps be a short answer. The architect thinks about alterations to the environment interwoven with all its (eco)systems, in such way it could best accommodate and sustain human life interwoven with all its (eco)systems.

*Speculative drawing of material cycles based on nutrient cycles in ecology.*



Though short it is not a simple answer. Many analysts before me have already dissected the failure of the 'capitalist dream' of collective progress, which architects (at least those wanting to be taken seriously, as Elsbeth noted in the introduction of *Aesthetics of Ecology*) have aligned themselves with. The 'troubled' condition of this time is a reality we will often encounter even amidst the perceived wealth of Antwerp. In the face of global multispecies immiseration, caused by capitalism, the allegiance of architects to post-colonialist industrial production lines is unacceptable and neutrality is not good enough for a position responsible for the life-worlds of so many in my view. However, as perhaps Anna Tsing best explicates imagining a world without capitalism is unrealistic and besides not within the role of I as an architect to propose. Instead I aim to research how architects and architecture can overcome this post-modernist paralysis of neutrality and imagine new ways for humans to relate to environments that could bring about care and response-ability.

Intensively scarred landscapes are more abundant than the hegemony of techno-optimistic progress dictates present us and are expanding. The site of the design as well is encumbered in its ability to support life, by soil contamination, barred access to light, soil and water, to name a few aspects. The

plot of the design, is an obsolete lacquering and painting facility. An architecture of alienation, isolating a past industrial production line from life-worlds, a structure that does not seem to be built for humans. A blank box of concrete that could be placed anywhere as long as the threads of capital and industry align. It is lifeless and hard to understand without the machinery it used to support. Designing a space for life, becomes an exercise of dealing with landscapes traumatised by industry. The narratives of the Blikfabriek and Hobokense Polder guide me in the imagining of new spatial configurations in these conditions. As they were also once barren landscapes which now support human and non-human interdependencies.

The project attempts to distil an architectural approach that could effectively respond to the trouble. It requires another way of (regenerative) thinking, as Haraway advocates. Critically we must differentiate ecology from biology, as ecology is beyond a body of knowledge, also a system of thought. In real space, subjects are in continuous response to their environments, their beings and characters transforming as they encounter others and conditions change, it is not worthwhile for ecologist to alienate species from their surroundings for research as these conditions are never experienced in reality. In real space also the subject of architecture, processes are open-ended

*The plot's position in the site.*

ANTWERP

PRIMARY SCHOOL

ST BERNARDJE  
STEENWEG

SECONDARY  
SCHOOL

STAMMBOOM  
PARK

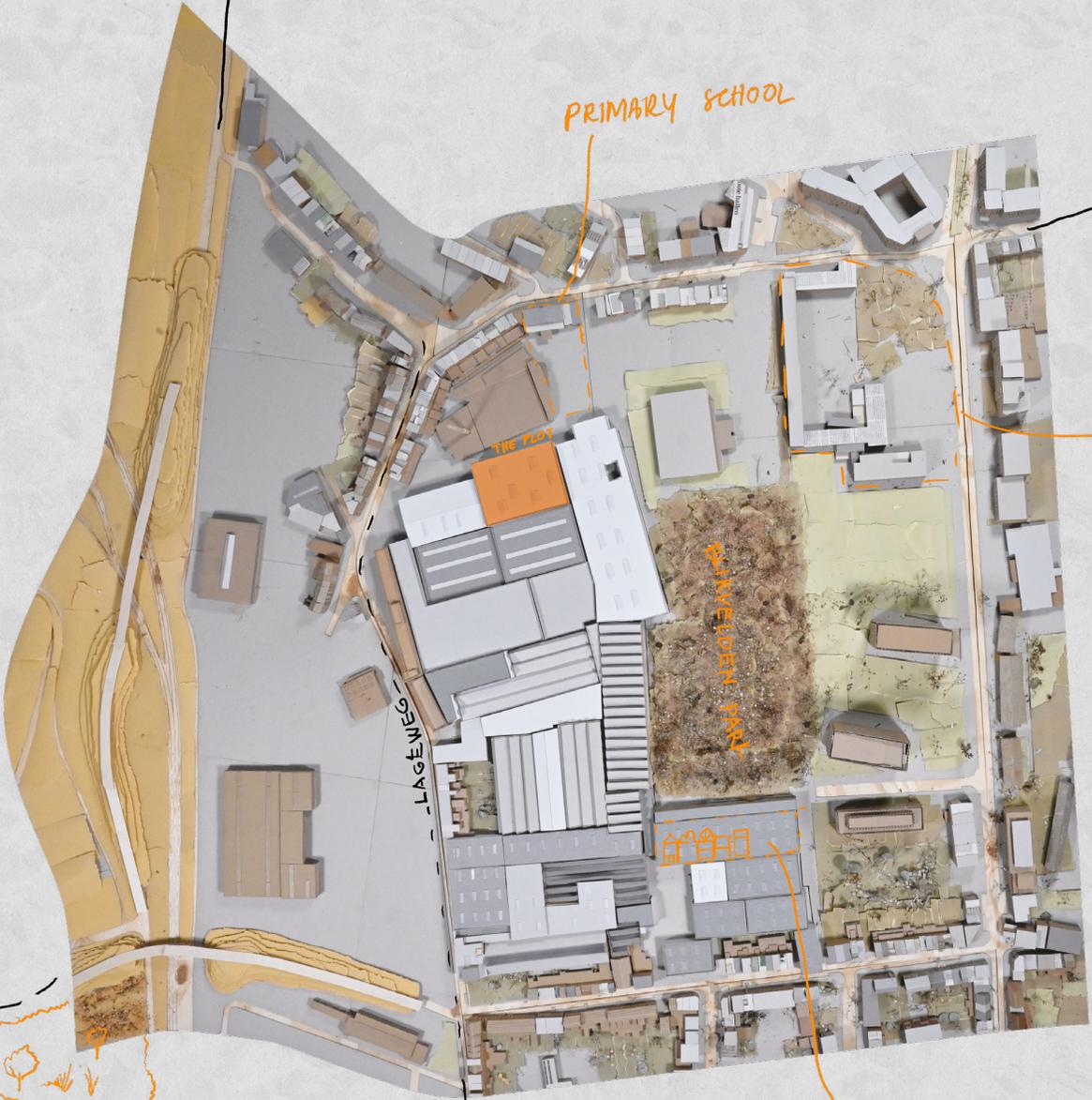
LAGEWEG

MAAKFABRIEK

SCHELDT

HOBOKENSE  
POLDER  
RESERVE

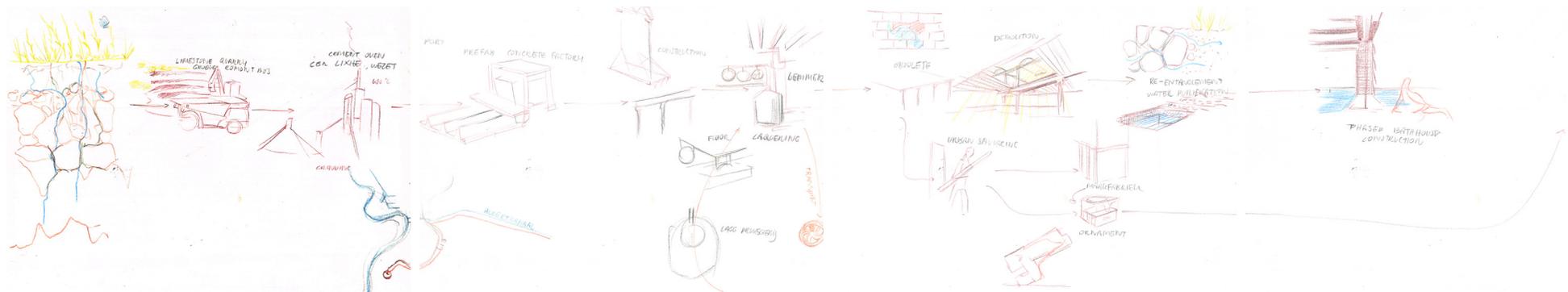
HOBOKEN



and defined by encounter and relation. Architecture aligned with conventions of western science, presents itself in concepts and themes, which are self-contained goals serving a specific group of people. While in actuality, architecture impacts many different assemblages, with interwoven narratives. How could I be cognizant of this?

We might start from the perspective of one of Haraway's cherished kin, the octopus. Its nine brains continuously surveying and feeling its surrounding might have a better time at identifying the many-sided, interdependent relationships between architecture and its occupants. Its central brain being able to interweave these narratives through alteration of the environment into symbiotic encounters. The 'tentacular' architect is required to think of interacting and engaging with multiple systems in one space, relying on many strings of situated knowledge. Tentacular thought, leads to entangled realities in which many different agents could benefit from each other. The approach of entanglement in architecture is one that starts at the meaningful encounter and ultimately hopes to create mutually beneficial relationships between the different beings, and between the beings and their environment. Simulating our complex interdependent future, is a messy approach to architecture with many characters in constant interference I noticed.

The main protagonists of this narrative I determined are the existing structure (understood as a geology), water (all its modes of being) and humans. These are not the conventional protagonist of a book. Their character will continuously evolve throughout their narratives shaped by encounters. Moving through scales and in past, present and future tenses. Geology, being the slowest concerning itself with the configuration and movement of earth-sourced material, its narrative explicating a careful and sensitive approach to materials, both introduced and already present in the design. Water, circulating through the building in a span of months, transforming into its life-giving character, its narrative highlighting new ecological assemblages of different species. And lastly humans, in a capacity to engage as agents and inhabitants. Their story exploring how relations between interdependent ecosystems and humans could be improved to bring about a culture of care.



Geology describes the hard material ecosystems are founded upon. It's shape, known as topography and its materiality known as soil dictate the form of (natural) ecosystems. The non-living stuff of endogenic processes, transforms through encounters with wind, water and organisms to useful nutrients and materials, the building blocks of ecosystems and cities. It is continually transacted (in violence or collaboration) amongst humans and other species and configured into myriad forms, shaping leaves, branches, buildings and pavements.

In my opinion geology nowadays is also a social process (with this I also mean to include politics and economy). The scale of displacement caused by human lines of production is alike natural phenomena. Our presence dictate landscape and we have incarcerated the non-human agents such as rivers that used to shape geology, in fear they would meddle with our agenda's. This human interference leads to novel types of geology, who other species have only started to acquaint themselves with.

In Hoboken, we find a collection of materials that have travelled great distances through human infrastructures. The interplay between the geology and human practices I noticed have become increasingly disparate over time. As Hoboken's start

as a relatively high place near a natural harbour along the Scheldt is inextricably related to the geologic condition, it's last noteworthy expansion Polderstad, demanded a complete overhaul of the lower-lying floodplain to become an artificial rise of sand. The industrialisation marked a turning point, from faeces from Antwerp to precious metals originating from mines in Congo, the currents of material have spiralled outwards.

If Antwerp and Hoboken are built on a rise along the Scheldt, the in-between built up during industrialisation resultingly sits in a depression. In the case of the current site, I consider geology to be mainly resultant of human action. The hard stuff provided for life to root upon is almost entirely from one type of artificial stone, namely concrete. It has covered the soggy natural soil for 30 years. Its cavernous structure raising a new ground level 7 metres up and then extending a further 5 metres upwards into a leaky steel canopy. Enclosed on all sides by concrete blocks, this is a space built for and from environmentally alienated production lines. However, even spaces as removed from ecology, have landscape altering impact. Most Belgian concrete from this time relates to quarries near Visé, excavating 350 million year old limestone. The movement of concrete constituents from landscapes of calcium-rich grasslands, riverbeds, sand plains is of geologic proportions. Approach-

*Parents taking children from school, at the schoolsquare underneath the watertower.*



ing the site as a geology, means to be conscious of these timescales and volumes. However, also because I'd like to view my building as neutral grounds for other than human agents to settle, I use the term geology.

In years of abandonment, more easily procurable and valuable material has been eroded away by informal urban salvagers. But roof, though leaky and concrete remain.

It's first formal encounter with the design will be the transferral of the corrugated steel roof and some of the concrete blocks composing the walls to the Materiaalhaven. Also, a central portion of the prefab floor element is removed. These materials are temporarily stored at the Materiaalhaven to come back into the story later. These interventions allow light and life to penetrate its cavernous interior, while opening to the atelier thoroughfare and the verzameling plein.

In the underbelly a new topography of concrete is constructed, re-using basins as water carrying organs and introducing new containers with train platform retaining walls. Different soils, containing concrete aggregate, soil and sand are strewn on the newly constructed beds to form a low tech water treatment facility. Water from the surrounding blikvelden encounters this geology and

is stripped of contaminants, to become a more reliable partner in these first stages of resettlement of the site. On the 1st floor where the roof is removed, new water directing structures are implemented, in rain gardens and open gutters.

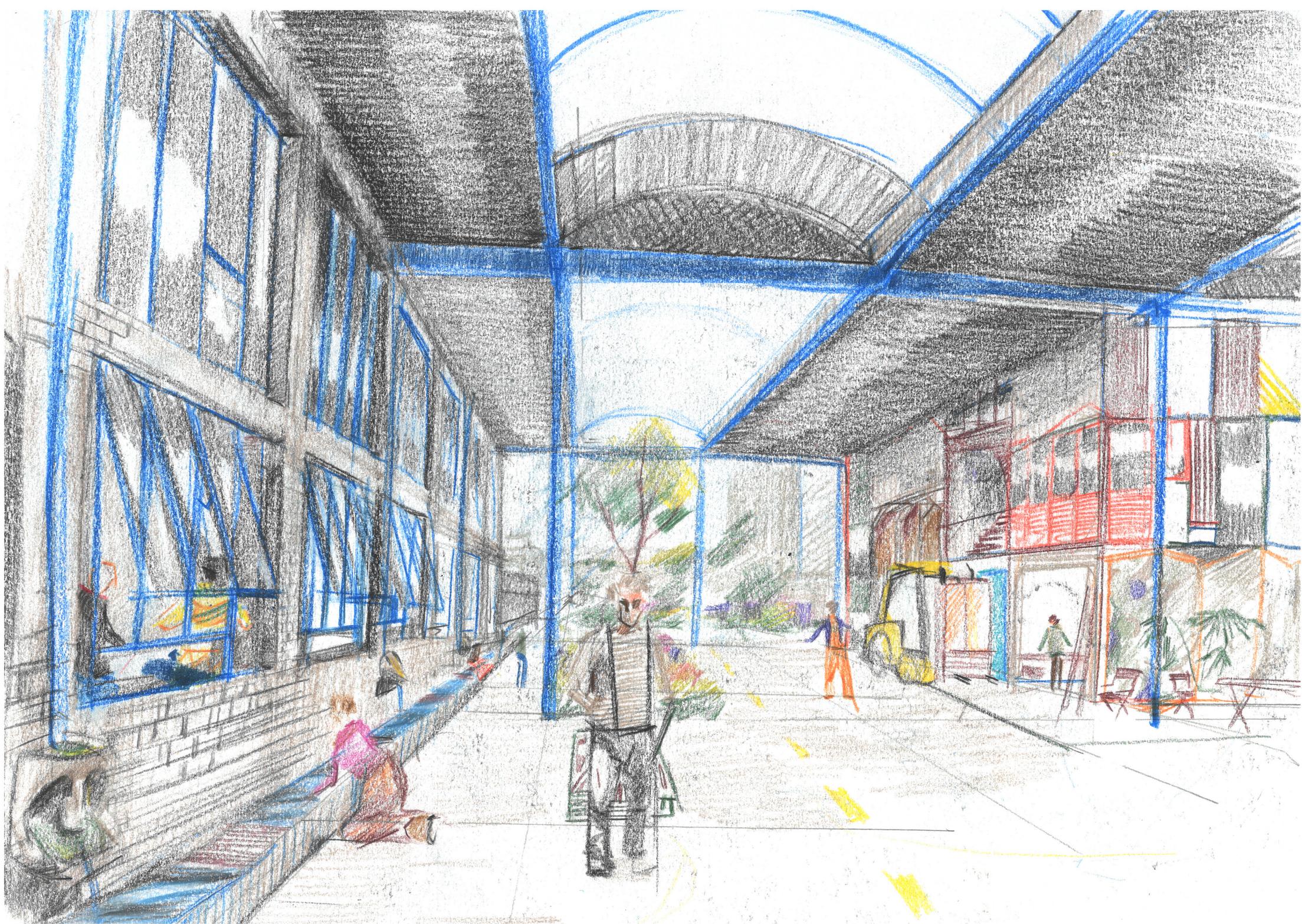
Lastly, timber slats in different sizes are assorted by width and sanded, arranged into linear configurations of raised perimeter walkways around the gardens. They rest on the retaining walls, above the water, and are easily removable so they can be replaced or the pipework and shafts below can easily be accessed.

## Phase 2

As nearby human activity picks up, geologies are re-carved to shift water cycles into motion throughout the site. The epicentre of this infrastructure is a newly raised water tower that follows the concrete ribbed rhythm into a vertical motion. The new wing transforms rainwater and pre-treated surface water into potable quality. Lending stability to CLT connections with our existing building.

Heavy concrete is accompanied by loam hemp walls, with similar calcareous origins, albeit this time in a less ecology disturbing manner. These first walls encompass mainly functional showers

*Bathroom overlooking the expositie-as, an important thoroughfare through the masterplan*



for after a busy workshop day. The sheer thickness of the wall tolerates different sizes of timber that might be reused for their constructive frames, while also insulating acoustically and thermally. In the lower water prone portion also re-used rooftiles are cladded against these walls. This materiality maintains the older geology cavernous atmosphere. In contrast, partitioning walls are of light material and rest on the grid of beams of the raised floor and can easily be moved around. This is mirrored on the first floor with lighter structures re-using the corrugated steel sheets for the interior facing facades and concrete blocks for exterior facing facades to become the first two residences catering to the care-taker of this environment, while working together with the bathhouse below thermally.

Furthermore air-tight cemented walls section of the northern flank, to reduce noise from nearby start-ups in the geologies serene garden interior and houses a new facility for sewage treatment. While, lighter structures of timber start growing along the garden perimeter walkway and shape into sauna's, seating areas and pools.

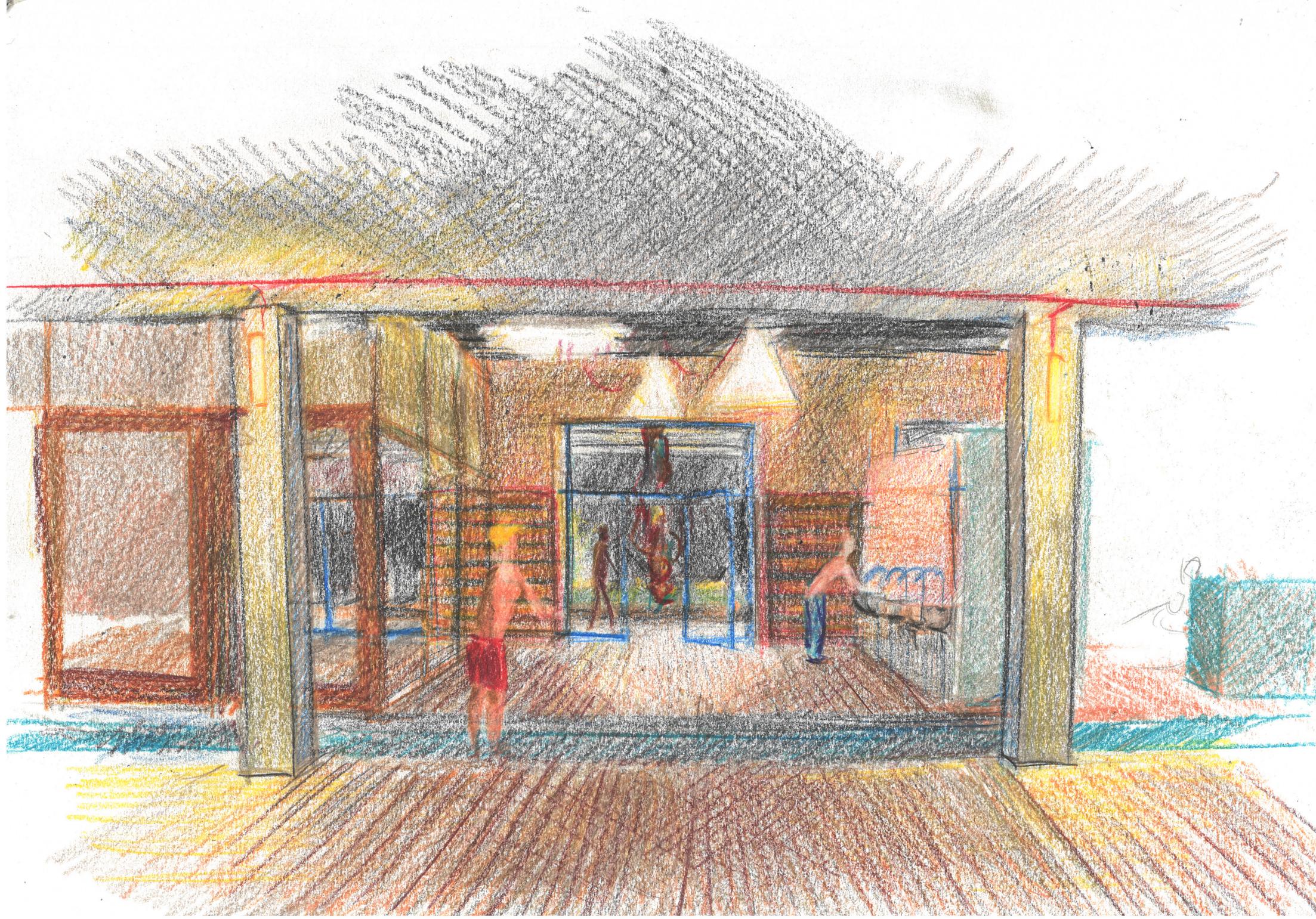
## Phase 3

Materials are moved and applied with a sensibility to their availability in the incremental ex-

pansion of the bathhouse. Low-tech construction methods allow for engagement with the neighbourhoods hands-on residents, while also tolerating materials of various sizes and properties. Concrete blocks, timber slats and steel panels extracted from site, but also materials from other demolition projects continue to be transplanted in this process.

Materials used for thermal insulation are as much as possible of biological origin and can be sourced nearby. However, the design does propose new steel window and door frames, due to their long life-span, their re-usability and the fact that the thermal standards for glass nowadays require different frames.

*View from the Foyer to the filtration garden through the central nave.*



Water is the preconditional affordance to life and catalyst for our ecologies. Water is perpetually crowded with organisms and substances that affect its personality.

Find the river, the lens our research group was assigned during the first quarter of this year, is a funny coincidence to the development of the research. The project is still clarifying waterways. From early on our research team viewed river as a metaphorical notion, a string of human stories that squiggled like rivers through space time shaping the landscape. There was supposedly a culverted historical brook that used to dissect the site, repeatedly asked about in our tutoring sessions. However, this brook always escaped our direct interest and we would argue that the brook's effect on the current landscape was minimal thus we never had the intention of including it as a principle theme in our research. The fact that the non-human entity of the brook in the end proved to be an inferior agent to humans in the development of the landscape is indicative of the relationship we have with water now in western Europe. It is widely available, limitless and how it arrives to us is a complicated infrastructure and system beneath the surface.

The story of water becomes entangled with the history of the building, as constituent of paint and

lacquer, as medium for the machines that incessantly process human products. The heavy construction of the building is built for water laden machines. The adjacent hall flanking the north-western side housed a former on site water purification plant.

It has become apparent that many different forms and characters of water exist on site. There is the rain that leaks through roofs and lays stagnant on bare concrete floors. There is the marshy water that sits polluted in Blikvelden fields slowly disappearing as it is disconnected from the culverted Hollebeek. At the same time, water floods the factory halls during heavy storms. By an account of a former factory worker, the halls flooded every high tide and on one such event it would mingle with the chemicals from the water purification plant. In it's current form I would judge it to be unreliable.

In the future I hope to change its erratic and polluted character into its life-giving and accommodating personality. I orchestrate three flows through the building: Polluted surface water including that of the Hollebeek is cleaned to remediate the quality of water and soil at the site and allow communities of humans and non-humans to settle. Rainwater is collected and stored to be processed into potable water, helping the neighbourhood function autonomously. At the same

*Interior facade bathhouse facing filtration garden. People observe the rainwater guiding artwork (right) or take a meditation class (left)*



time, waste water from the neighbourhood is also treated.

From wet polluted Blikvelden and urbanised Hollebeek streambeds I am pumped into the first retention pool. Heavy particles sediment here while my less turbid upper column cascades down series of baffles, aerated I attain my oxygenated life-responsive form. Communities of micro-organisms start breaking down harmful constituents of me, outcompeting pathogens. From here I am distributed in a sequence of beds. The first filled with concrete aggregates, releasing their incipient lime increasing my alkalinity. In this new state, solvents such as manganese and iron precipitate into salt and acids react to expunge into air. In the second bed, bacterial sludge is supported by ecologies associated to limestone springs, the opening above this bed allows species as golden saxifrage, northern bog sedge and European ash to root. The last bed, is filled with finer sand, it's schmutzdecke thoroughly covering and washing last of my harmful particles. Before being oxygenated again in baffled cascades. To finally diffuse through a constructed wetland continuing my transformation to a life supporting personality, they neutralize my alkalinity, while I support in nutrient-poor, calcareous states a distinctive assemblage of urban nature. However, not all of me is omitted back into my Blikvelden origins, in dryer periods I

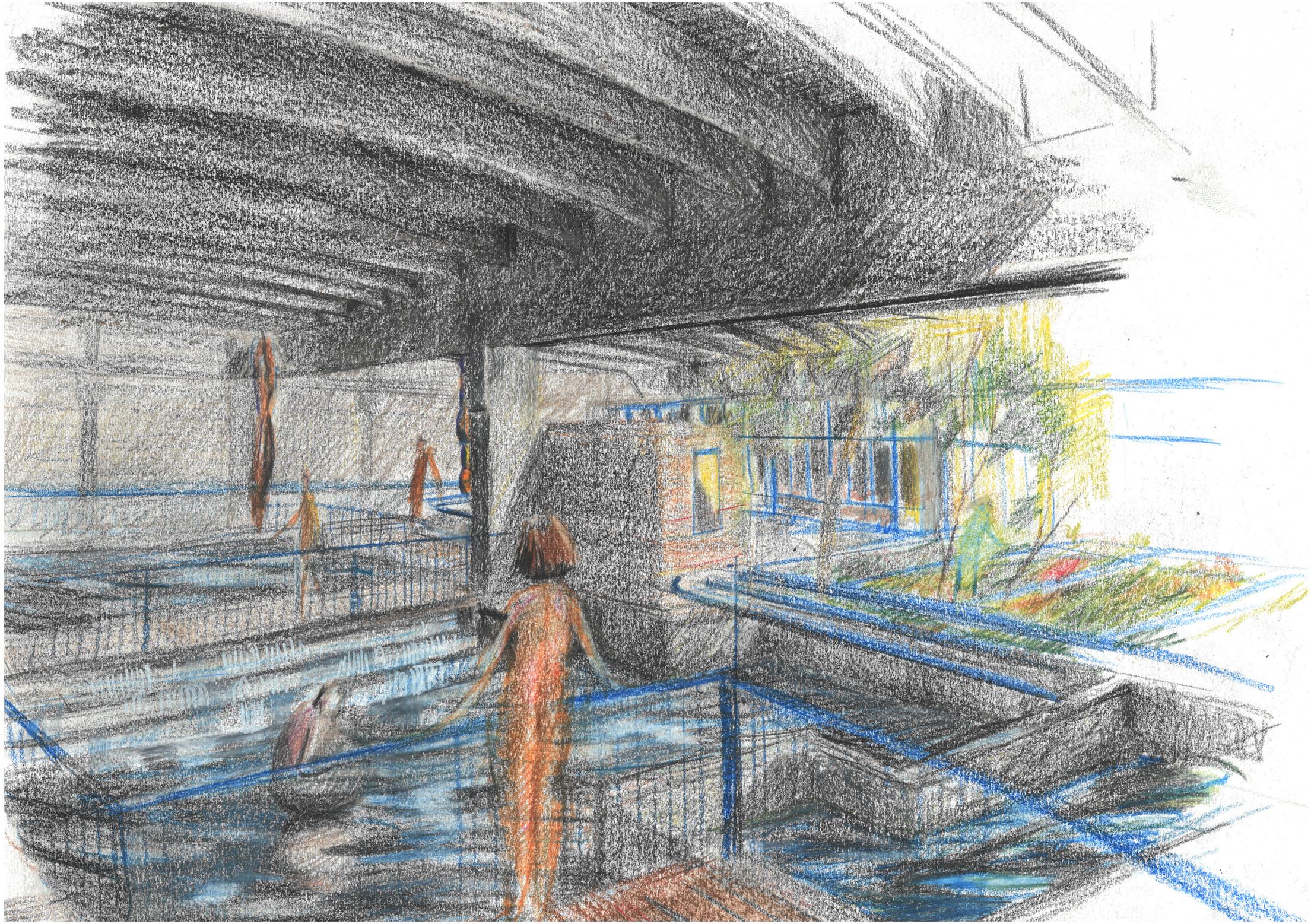
accompany rainwater in a system that transforms me into potable water.

This part of me enters the environment as rain on steel roofs. Passing through anthropomorphic human crafts to end in concrete containers resting on the existing first floor. Species associated with peatbogs, enjoy nutrient-poor waters, such as white beak sedge, downy birch and peatmoss. As I trickle downwards to slowly adjoin other rainwater sources in the area in a reservoir. My erratic appearance is mediated by these topographies to continue in a constant flow. This flow passes active carbon filters or engages in reverse osmosis to achieve acceptable quality for drink water purposes.

Pumped upwards into the watertower, gravity pushes me along pipes spiralling outwards in neighbourhood covering webs. Closerby, some of these pipes lead to the bathhouse. I'm heated by a heat pump system borrowing warmth from one of the earlier traversed basins and later by electric heaters. At human body temperature, I travel through visible tubes, to accommodate showers, baths, steam rooms and the pool.

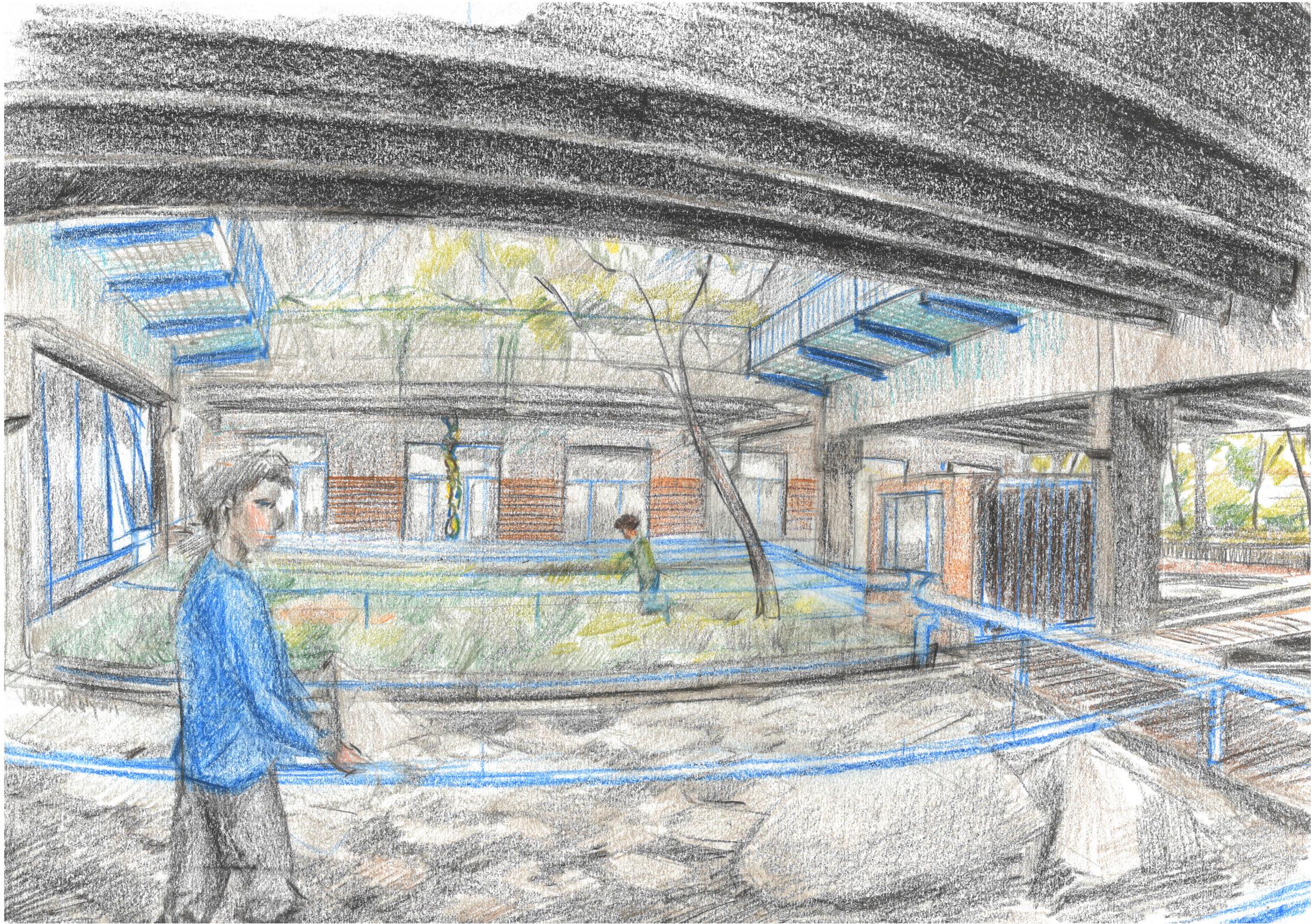
Other parts do not only touch, but also enter human bodies. Released as urine or in the midst of faeces, I am washed away to the north corner

*This image shows the filtration garden with a series of cascades*



of the building. Here I enter a septic tank, where mats of anaerobic micro-organisms transform me yet again as they extract compounds and eliminate other harmful microbes, methane comes free and is collected. The second structure is an anaerobic baffled reactor, in which the same biological processes take place, removed of odour I'm clean enough to rejoin the surface water cycle. And thus my story starts at the beginning of this one.

*Maintaining the  
filtration beds  
before opening  
hours.*



In the previous chapters interaction with the other protagonist have made clear the physical abilities of humans and their tight hold on the landscape. Still it is worthwhile to tell the stories from their perspective, as we discover internal worlds affected by progress.

But other than this increasingly one-sided physical relationship to the environment humans have in Hoboken, which only tells the story of a select few who had the power to change environments, progress also affects the internal relationship between environment and humans for all. Capitalism requires a subject's alienation from life-worlds, humans are also subject to this. Alike, the other protagonists, many are also forcefully displaced and disconnected from ecologies they depend upon.

I believe the purpose of entanglement is thus not merely to bring about a functional, transactional interaction for humans to benefit from ecosystems. It is an emotional interaction with ecosystem that will help humans understand the importance of ecosystems to their survival, close to Harraway's call for making kin. The Anthropocene leaves the faith of these ecosystems up to humans and thus at the mercy of social and political developments, this implies that a counterculture of caring is necessary to ensure the ongoingness

of human and non-human living. Breaking away from industrial, economy-driven, desensitized architectures, the last story hopes to conceptualize new architectural principles that could empower a culture of human care and practices them in the design.

In particular, reconsidering the ornament (after years of functionalist neglect) as a useful architectural feature, becoming a mediator between human identities and ecosystem. In this search, I return to lessons learned in the Maakfabriek, where the ornament is celebrated architectural feature, notably contrasting with the contemporary architecture beyond its perimeters. Here we will enlist the help of the resident artists to rediscover how to effectively construct an ornament for the architectural design in the shape of water gargoyle. Perhaps, best quoted from one of the artist, "An artist goal is to shape physical material in such way it emotionally affects the beholder."

Songs of birch dwelling birds, and the rhythmic sputter of rain on the metal sheet roof wakes you. Below thick concrete beams, those that belong to your home gather around the central kitchen, embraced by diffused light from the north facing roof lights. It's a summer's day, warm and clammy, an increasingly frequent weather type in a changing climate. Luckily these same rooflights ventilate

*People watching the installation of the water spewer ornament.*



excess heat, but better to enjoy breakfast on the sheltered patio overlooking the cool filtration gardens below. Neighbours pass by with small chit-chats before heading to work. Speaking of which, it's time to head to your atelier, now the day is still cool.

You are working on the finishing touches of a piece you have dedicated to your communal living environment. It's a pleasant pass-time in the relative calm of summerbreak. But as soon as the august sun pries through the clouds, temperatures rise, it is time to retreat into the cool cavernous expanse below your home. Below the characteristic watertower you enter the bathhouse. It silently stands guard next to the schoolsquare and signifies the entrance to the neighbourhood. As a gentle ramp of clay tiles leads upwards the foyer folds open into the lobby. On the benches you can take your shoes and jackets off, here some familiar neighbourhood faces greet you. Whether they've come to do laundry chores, to wash of sawdust from a day of work, or come to enjoy a day at the pool with the family, you are all attracted to the promise of water, already visible and hearable from vista's to the filtration garden. Alike water cycling through the garden, your body weary from exercise journeys through a sequence of equally transformative spaces. Every consecutive chamber providing a different interaction with water. The

interior chambers are floored with sanded timber slats, through which heated air rises. After the showers and changing room, the first space you enter is the hammam, which allows for easy conversation, but also quiet reflection in one of the alcoves extending vertically into the solar chimney. The opposing wall reacts to these vertical voids with aluminium ventilation ducts extending upwards, for above the main technical space of the bathhouse is located.

After the Hammam, you follow a walkway adjacent to a functional, but sensory garden. A robe has been provided to traverse the outside spaces. The path leads you first to the baths. Here there are different flavours for you to chose, cold, hot, medicated or fragrant.

Lastly, you decompress in one of the more intimate sauna's overlooking the secluded garden, where water tumbles down cascades and seeps into improvisational rock and plant arrangements of the filtration beds. It brings you to a calm, perhaps it is better to not visit the busy outside pool today then, shielded by rustling alder and ash trees from the serene bathhouse.

Though perhaps a drink could be enjoyed before leaving at the bar. In the adjacent room, curtains fold downwards as a meditation class commenc-

*Barbeque in the central courtyard and installment of the ornament in the background.*

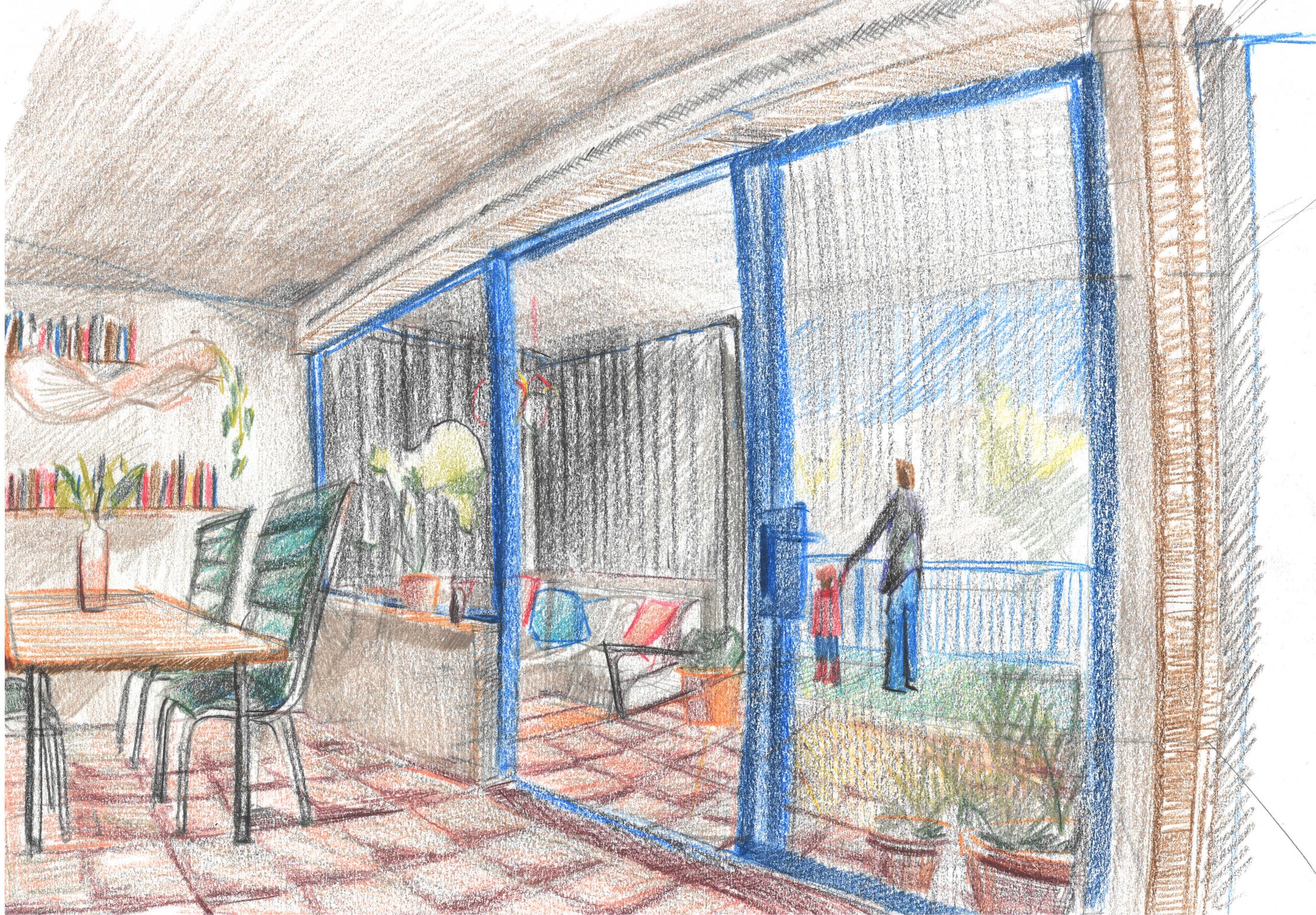


es. Changing back into clothes, taking with the artifice you finished this morning before heading home.

Already neighbours have gathered around a barbeque, something that has become somewhat a ritual for every brightening up of communal space. You install your artwork to replace the existing rainwater guide upon the concrete console below the gutter. A small cheer goes out and a demonstrative bucket of water is released to show the workings of this piece. It relates to the other water and symbol-laden human handcrafts. In fact, the building every once and a while enjoys a new ornament installed by one of the residents of the neighbourhood. An ornament is a physical and emotional entanglement to the building and water. Now for just the rain to return.

Onward edges is an attempt at shifting the focus from the centre to the edge. How to continue to living on the margins, the spaces suffering most from the progress fixated centre, polluted, unwanted and unseen. The edge is also where things come together. Moving from object to relations.

*Neighbour  
passing by the  
patio, accessed  
by sliding doors.*



After P4, Eireen made an apt remark on the way I wanted to think of architecture. Non-humans lack intention, which is a rather crucial component for creating architecture. While nature thrives without the intention of men, it is the architects role to bring intention to a space. Perhaps the border between the nature and urban, is not so much a physical one, but socially defined as a gradient between human intent and non-intent. As it does seem by example of the Hobokense Polder that the condition of unintentionality is necessary for nature to develop and thrive in urban areas.

Ecofeminists engage with the definition of nature, to in one way or the other encompass or interweave as seamlessly the human world with that of other species. From Matthew Gandy's discussion on 'pristine' nature to Donna Haraway kin, they all rush to close the rift between humans and nature that modernity has caused. However, my definition of nature would be a disenchanting confirmation of our differences, or moreover I would base its definition on the difference itself. In my view, nature is what lacks (human) intention.

In the foreword, which I wrote prior to this post-P4 finding, the line describing the site I wrote, I read now as foreshadowing: "This one starts in overlooked territory, escaping most of the lines of thought and intention of post-industrial

Antwerp." In this sense, the Maakfabriek was perhaps comparable to the nature reserve as it also albeit temporarily lacked intention.

So come to see it now my role as an architect, might be the opposite of nature. Then how to incorporate it in our spatial designs as we have come to the conclusion that its valuable and crucial for our quality of life? We could perhaps leave spaces intentionally unintentional. Or are we even capable of producing nature, if at the root nature describes something that cannot be produced by humans. Another way of looking at it, would be architects mimicking or learning from unintentionality. This is a discussion that I cannot respond to yet, so will I leave it at this, open-ended.

*Hammam with alcoves connected to the solar chimney on the left and ventilation shafts on the right.*

