

The image shows two young green plants with several leaves each, growing out of a sandy, cracked soil. The plants are positioned in the middle ground, with their shadows cast onto the sand. The background is a blurred expanse of the same sandy terrain.

INTERSTICES OF FARMLAND

P5 Reflection
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Interstices of Farmland

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Public Buildings - Studio Rome
(A)morphous Space: Interstices of Memory

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Room P 15.00

Urban coffee farm and brew bar
in Melbourne, by Hassell





Rome

Trastevere

Esquilino

Celio

Ripa

Saracinesca

Monteverde

Testaccio

Gianicolense

Garbatella

Portuense

Ostiense

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THEME OF THE STUDIO AND THE CHOSEN TOPIC

In the public buildings studio, there was a choice between three different cities, each city providing its own characteristics and opportunities. My first choice was the city of Rome, the eternal city with its historic city centre, filled with monuments and tourist, that resemble in my perspective some sort of themepark, where you'll have to pay and wait for everything if you want to see anything. But that is not all, Rome has many surfaces and one remotely under appreciated, are its vast industrial areas, some of which are abandoned and shielded from the public (*in Ostiense and Portuense, image on the back*), for which I would gladly have payed money to enter, not because its one of those things "you'll have to see when your are there" but because of its appealing attraction, without the name-tag.

That Rome invest its money in other things than these areas is clearly visible. The bad maintenance of property in general, the poorly paved sidewalks, the 'homeless-camps' alongside the Tiber river and if you go even slightly off grid, there is this feel of lifelessness and abandonment.

The area (*in specific the former industrial brown-field alongside the Tiber river, one in Ostiense one in Portuense*) really asks for an intervention, to be rehabilitated from a memory what ones was, and brought back to life, but nonetheless an intervention that maintains the ambiance of the area.

"When history ends, memory begins."

Peter Eisenman

An area that could be describe as an 'amorphous space' if you will, a space that doesn't have a specific beginning or end, not a definite shape. A space that is hidden in the cracks of the urban fabric of the city and left untouched and uncared for.

Interstices of memory | These cracks, the abandonment brownfield, are in their own way interstices of the urban fabric and offer a change to be re-used. An interstice that I will fill up with a new purpose, which has to be something completely different than its surroundings in order to keep its borders preserved and stand out, but not something that will make it lose its character all together. The image on this page is a great example.



The 'filling' I have chosen is Urban Farming. The reason beneath this choice lies in the analysis of the area, the history of the area related to food altogether and the popularity of the food markets in the opposite area, where the masterplan focusses upon. It is also chosen for its social, ecological and economic benefits that could support the local community, part of which are poor and/or homeless, and then there is always the global question of food security worldwide. In any case the area wont be amorphous anymore, it has a new label: FOOD

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The reasons for choosing food as a main theme, as briefly explained in the chapter above, comes from the analysis of the area. Therefore the relationship between design and research are closely linked.

I could also argue that my mind *-unconsciously-* was already set, after the Rome excursion to the Maxxi museum, which topic was conveniently, food. Food on a street, city, landscape and world-wide perspective, most of them closely related to architecture. Two of my most favourite topics alongside each other. Farming is also something I grew up with, so researching an area that has a rich food history, and popular food markets across the river asks for a intervention of the same topic.

Something that also stood out, where the homeless people. Being confronted with a homeless camp made out of cardboard, garbage, in the damp shore of the river was shocking. Research showed also numbers I was not accustomed with, and at this point I decided that the role of the public building, was to accommodate the homeless.

Designing a building, where the homeless could live, eat and learn about urban farming is not something that goes without research. The homeless need certain things and conditions *-all individuals different-* that people that don't come from the streets might not. Also what is the identity of such a complex building, do you separate all the functions into different buildings, or is it one, a 'social incubator'.

Research and design influence each other both, first there is research and analysing, especially at the beginning of the studio, then there is design. With every step you come further you start over, it goes back and forth. Until it reaches the end and then its more design than research. The more the subject, material, detail, is new to you the more research you need to do. Sometimes it doesn't work out as planned but this is a learning process, and sometimes learning is a process of elimination.

That being said, it is also not exclusive, meaning sometimes where you're designing you make something and then you'll find out if its possible or necessary, there is not strict order, and overtime requires a different approach.

Methods | The methods I like to use for designing architecture, is making models. Small, big, from leftover pieces or nice materials. I also use the foam-cutter a lot, I have one at home and make a shape over and over again until I have 'found' the right one, looking for proportions, possibilities and composition.

Alongside model making I sketch, I make diagrams, conceptual collages/charts *-reducing the information to its core makes it more comprehending-* and a lot of notations. I'm also a big fan of metaphors, they make things easier to understand, and can make a concept more strong.

For the first time, I put my work in digital diagrams instantly and put it already in a presentation, keeping track on the important things and the process. I found this very helpful and time saving.

Studio approach | The graduation assignment provided me with so much freedom, freedom of the location *-only Rome was given-* freedom of the type of assignment, the purpose of the building, its users, the perception of Rome, even the topic was free for interpretation, that is was hard to make all the decisions. You have lots of time and that too makes you want to reconsider everything, so planning everything is crucial, after all this is you're graduation project.

Never before did I start on such a large scale, from a whole city, to the smallest detail, providing all the products that belong to each scale, is a method of working I had never done before, not to this extent, but it makes the project even more valuable, comprehending and complete.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

It has been commonly known that there are a lot of social benefits to urban farming, ranging from gardening a simple vacant parking lot with local neighbours or a whole terminal at New York’s John F. Kennedy International airport activating a whole new community.

The benefits included *“improved overall social and emotional well-being, improved health and nutrition, increased income, employment, food security within the household, and community social life”*¹. People have reported decreased levels of stress and better overall mental health because they participated in urban farming or gardening activities.

The gardens offer a change of scenery in otherwise urban environments, not everybody lives next to a park and everybody can start urban farming, no matter how small.

Then there is the opportunities for the local communities, for job employment, *-if the farm is more than community based-* the urban farms often sell the products directly or to the local restaurants or at local (farmer)markets. The local community also benefits from a increased food security. Most community farming projects even donated food to charities.

¹ Wakefield, S., Yeudall, F., Taron, C., & Skinner, A. (2007). Growing urban health: Community gardening in South-East Toronto. Health Promotion International, 22 (2).





RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Not only the theme of the project has a social factor, also the building, the social incubator will provide a social opportunity for its users, the homeless.

In a study performed by David snow and Leon Anderson, about homeless people living on the street, are three disquisitions made of what makes the term homeless valid. There are striking differences between homeless individuals, their circumstances and what they need.

Three different dimensions have been set to determine whether someone is homeless or not.

01 the first dimension is what is typically considered as homeless, a life-style characterized by the absence of conventional permanent housing. But there are also homeless people, who might not have a proper sleeping place for only a few nights or some weeks in a row. Therefore the second dimension is included:

02 which concerns the absence in different degrees of familial support, weakened or total lack of social bonds, networks. There is no link between the individual and the larger society. The traditional view of the term, home, is missing, home is something more than just a roof above your head. Home is where the heart is.

03 the third aspect the study uses to determine being homeless, is the degree of dignity and moral worth. From a sociological standpoint, to be homeless is to be the incumbent of a basic role or master status. These terms refer to statuses that are central to the way we are viewed and the way we view ourselves.

Homeless street people (not refugees or mass disaster victims) are in the public perception homeless, by virtue of their own imperfections or moral failings.

A building therefore should provide, as well in function and in its architecture in some degree an answers to these aspects of homelessness.

The project offers temporary housing and a rehabilitation program in the form of learning a trade (farming) social skills, how to get through job interviews, learning how to cook and shop saving money, getting clean. Everything in order to get back into society with a job in farming, working at a market, restaurant or other jobs related to food. Or even a previous profession if there was one, but nonetheless skilled and equipped in the production of one's own, cheap and fresh food.

There is even a recorded reduction in criminal activities in places where a daycare centre for the homeless was placed, number go up as much to 18% of reduction in crime!



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