

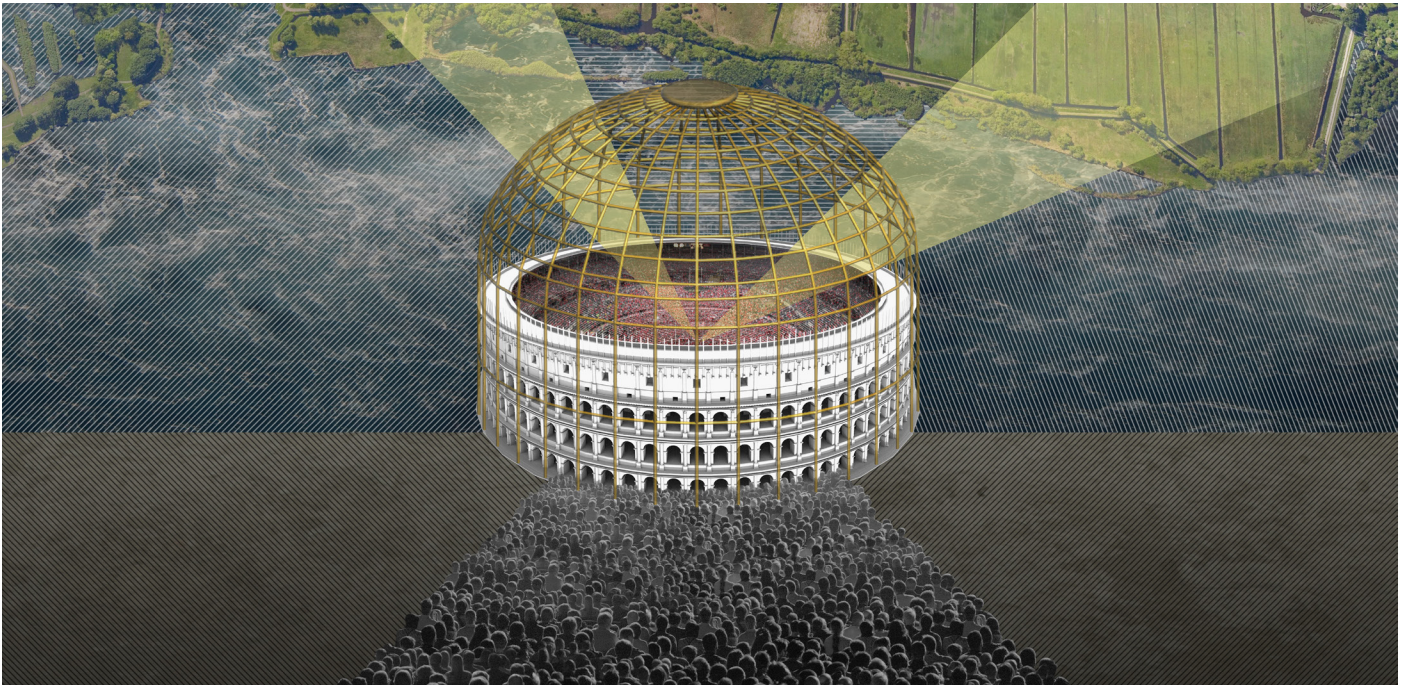
The New Amsterdam Arena REFLECTION

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TU Delft
Complex Projects Graduation Studio
Amsterdam Mid-City
Schiphol Corridor

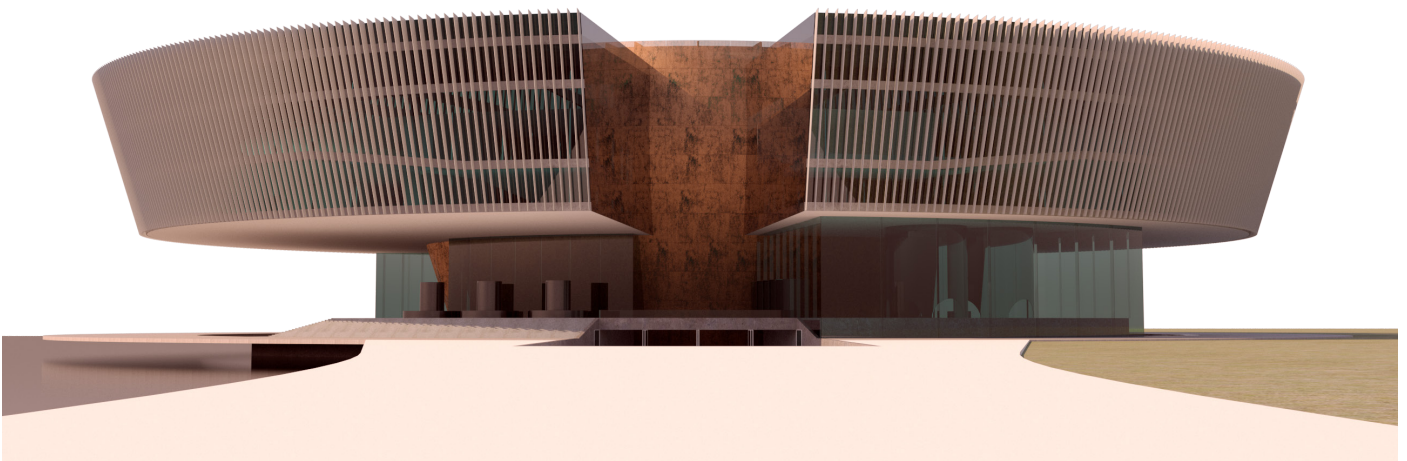
Relationship between Research and Design



Though research and design are integrally linked in any architectural process, the setup of the studio makes a distinction between the two, with the period until P2 focusing on the research aspects. The second semester then builds upon the previous efforts and focused more on design, though of course not in isolation, and with further research to substantiate design decisions.

The process of the graduation project was initiated from a personal fascination that in retrospect probably stemmed from the previous summer's time spent in the United States. Witnessing the consequences of relatively unbridled capitalism, leading to a very visible inequality aroused an interest in exploring the consequences of how changing markets could influence society and architecture in the Netherlands. Particularly when taking into account the influence that AI will have on automating processes that will replace over half of current jobs in the country, very real and significant questions arise of how markets will allocate resources when people's labour is no longer required, and how people will spend their time. This led to the topic of distraction and a research question of how will games be used in the future to provide fulfillment and pacification.

Though certainly an interesting topic, the chosen perspective of a somewhat dystopian future and the question of how architecture can contribute to controlling the masses proved to be problematic towards the P2 phase, as the research led to a brief that in essence proposed an undesirable future, and a building to contribute to it. Thus, the initial research was in a way preemptively disconnected from the design, and required to be steered in a more neutral direction to allow a workable project, leading to the ambition to design a stadium resort for pacification and fulfillment, facilitating captivating and engrossing entertainment for the masses.



Relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject

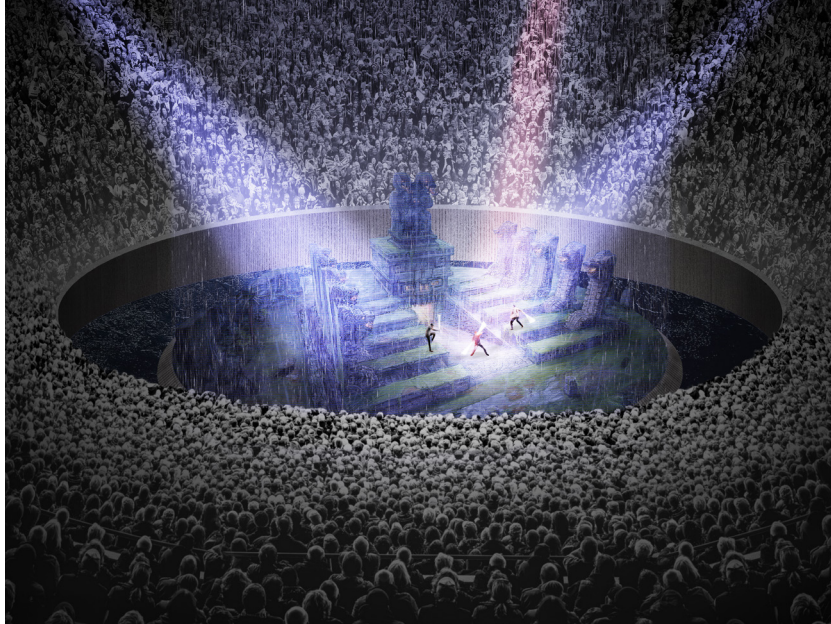


The Complex Projects studio is centered around the development of Amsterdam towards the year 2050, with specific sites located on the current fringe belt of the metropolitan area. Though the field of study permits a very wide range of topics, typical projects respond to issues including energy efficiency, climate, health, and mobility.

Amsterdam is an interesting city to study in the context of 2050, as though its established areas are somewhat fossilised, as a city it is very much occupied with its future and considering long term planning. This is reflected in the partnership with the AMS institute, which provided interesting insider insights. The specific site of the Schiphol Corridor, between the important economic hubs of Schiphol and Zuidas is a very relevant area to study in the context of 2050. This is due to a unique situation of there being a very high potential for development in an area that is currently marked by its rural, villagelike character. As such there is much room for speculation and exploring scenarios of development for the site.

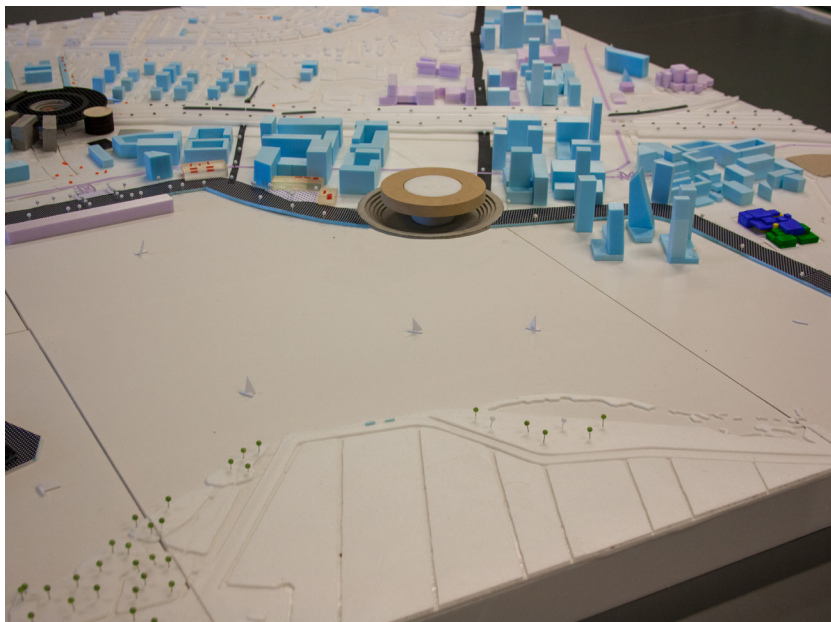
As an area that has been historically designated as a hub of leisure and sport for the city, it is very much relevant to the topic of the project; as the site develops and intensifies, so will the way in which these functions are exercised. Rather than going to a lakeside park to relax, perhaps people will unwind by going to experience a spectacle in the stadium on the lake.

Relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student

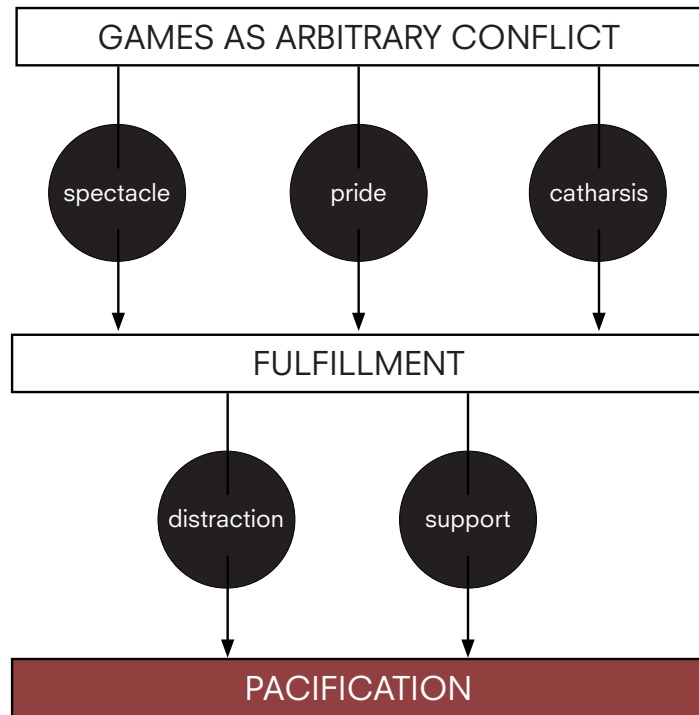


The Complex Projects graduation studio allows for a wide range of multidisciplinary research methods, though with a focus on typology as the apparatus connecting the current state of architectural knowledge to the future scenario developed through narrative. Furthermore the research process and schedule is quite standardised through an emphasis on group work for the future scenario research and urban approach, and a deliberate effort by the studio to make student projects comparable through setting strict guidelines for the formatting and presentation of research. The main approach towards the research is to develop a personal fascination for a topic which can be based on site visits, theoretical framework, or even just a previous interest. This is then a starting point for using hard data and a wide range of interdisciplinary sources to lead to find a relevant and delineated research question within the greater context of the future vision for 2050. Typological research allows for the translation of concepts and ideas into a physical building which serves as the case study for the broader research question

The focus on production and deliverables were certainly a way to guarantee a steady rate of work from all the students, but perhaps did not facilitate an optimal design process as there was little time for reflection or more abstract experimentation. In general the rigid structuring of the studio was at times beneficial, but personally also restrictive, and not always in line with my own design process. Particularly the modelling study phase around the P2.5 was a lot of work with relatively little return, and in retrospect for me not the most effective way to start the design process. In my personal project the translation from the research towards a specific design brief was not the strongest point, and still really needed elaboration and reflection after the P2. The fact that this never really happened influenced the rest of the active design process and made it much more difficult to make decisions, when the framework was not sufficiently elaborated and clarified.



Relationship between the project and the wider social context



The project is firmly rooted in a scenario of a possible postcapitalist social context of the year 2050. Without employment as a source of fulfilment, alternatives would have to be found for society to continue functioning in a stable manner. As my original fascination pertained to dystopian societies, particularly as portrayed by Aldous Huxley, it led me to consider a range of ways in which populations may be controlled in the future, finally choosing on sports and games as a form of distraction. Looking at historical precedents such as Rome's bread and circuses and current day Las Vegas as a beacon of America's capitalist dream, I try to identify the underlying processes in order to extrapolate a future vision. This in no way a search for an absolute or objective answer, but rather the formulation of possible social scenarios that can be investigated through architecture.

The design of the stadium is then focussed around how the building's architecture can facilitate the pacification of people and provide a fulfilling experience; as such the concept is a building that embodies the conflict and opposition that it houses. Furthermore, this arbitrary conflict, which is in essence a form of story telling is represented in a routing through a sequence of spaces through which the visitor moves. Thus, the stadium provides not a stationary experience but a movement through the building with spaces that offer exposition, rising tension, a climax and finally a conclusion.