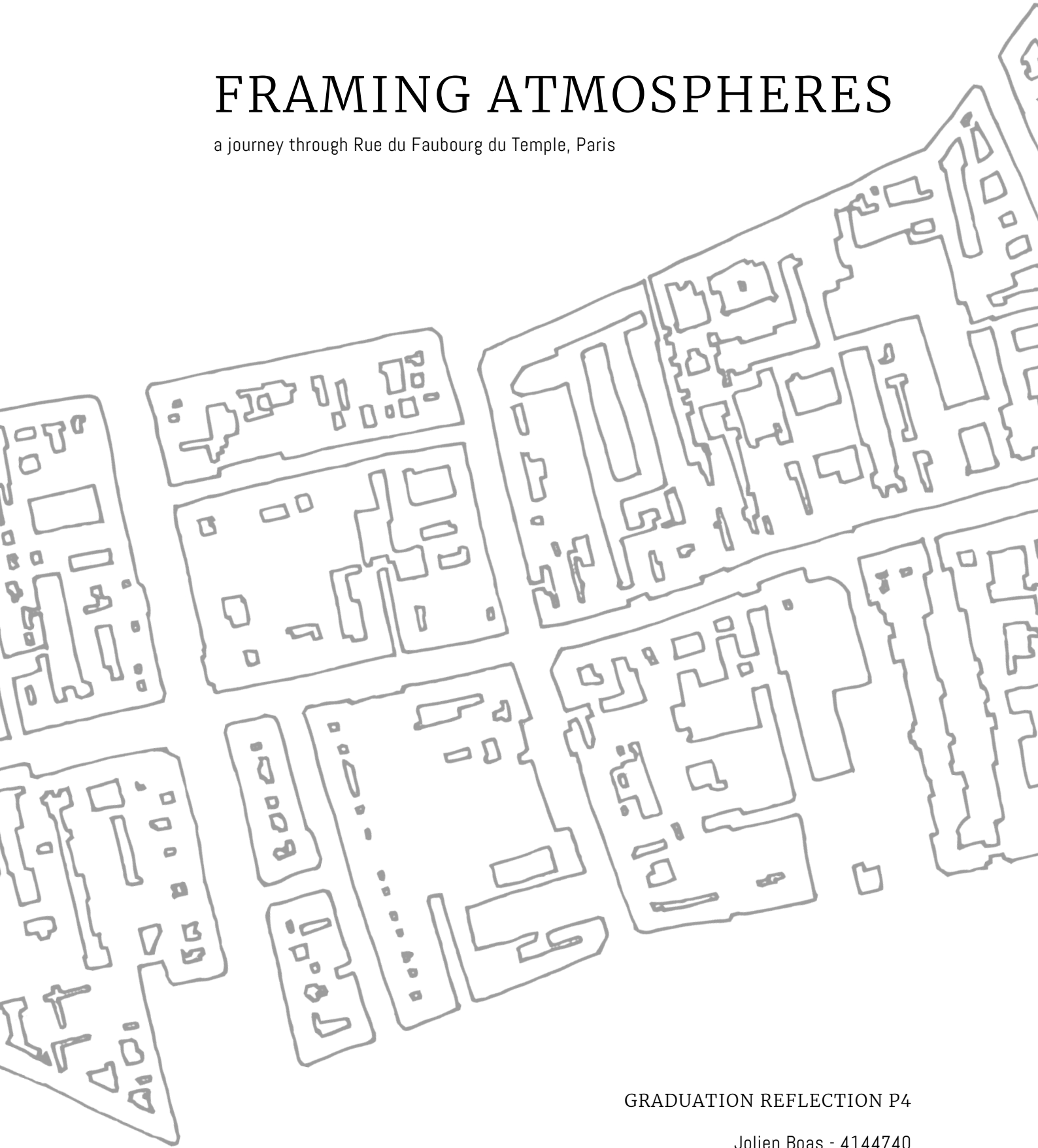


FRAMING ATMOSPHERES

a journey through Rue du Faubourg du Temple, Paris



GRADUATION REFLECTION P4

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WHY ?

Starting my graduation project I had a desire of finding a new way of doing my architectural projects. This desire finds its origin from doing design projects throughout my studies in which the teacher established the design question. A location and problem statement were given and also the list of requirements was set. The student's task for these projects was coming up with a fitting solution to the problem meeting the requirements as good as possible. Because of this approach I always felt like I was missing an in depth research towards the problem and the location. If the location of the project was somewhere in the Netherlands we would maybe go there for a day, but for projects with a location further away this was not often the case.

A good example of such a project is the Extreme studio I did for my MSc 1. The exercise of this project was designing a concert hall in Tokyo. My immediate thoughts were: Why in Tokyo? Why this specific location in Tokyo? How do people live, move and behave in and around the location in Tokyo? Etc. Unfortunately there was no time to answer these questions. Already a week after the start of the project we had to come up with a concept for the building, something that I couldn't do with these questions being unanswered. The studio didn't organize a trip to Tokyo, therefore knowing the place and its users was not possible. Everything I knew, I knew from Google maps. The design I eventually made for this project was something I didn't believe in myself. I thought that it was a building that could stand all over the world. The concert hall didn't have an important relationship with its surroundings.

The Extreme project was to me a perfect example of what I was missing within the projects throughout my studies. For my graduation project I therefore wanted to define my own research and design task. And find a way of defining this that would satisfy me and give me a feeling that my eventual design is making sense.

To start my project I defined a fascination I always have had, the atmospheres in cities. What are these atmospheres, which elements define these atmospheres and what are the borders of these atmospheres. After clarifying my fascination I started looking for a city on which I could focus my project. Over the last couple of years I have been spending a lot of time in Paris. This city fascinates me mainly because of its atmospheres. The

city possesses a lot of different atmospheres close to each other. To me this diversity in atmospheres is mainly caused by the high density of the inner city. The size of the inner city of Paris, within the périphérique, is compared to other big cities in the world very small. Because of the périphérique a harsh border is created between this inner city and the surrounding areas. A big problem of city of Paris is the fact that the surrounding areas are not well connected to the inner city. In many of the surroundings people are living that come from a lower social class. Criminality rates are higher and comfort of living is lower. Therefore people want to live in the inner city, causing for a shortage of housing within this area. The division of the inner city in different arrondissements and quartiers causes for clusters of people from different social classes. Therefore every neighbourhood is having his own specific atmosphere.

HOW ?

After choosing the city for my graduation project I did some general research on the inner city of Paris and decided quickly that I had to go there. In total I spent around 2 weeks in the city. First walking and wandering around throughout the whole city after which I slowly started to define my scope more and more. Eventually I found one street, Rue du Faubourg du Temple, that for me was very interesting. This street is a long shopping street creating the boarder of 5 different arrondissements. Within the street a development of different atmospheres was well feasible. This intrigued me and therefore became the location of my graduation project.

Dérivé

My location was chosen and now the research could begin. As explained before my research was about finding my own way of getting to understand the location, it's users and atmospheres. I had never done this before, so starting it was a bit scary for me. I planned a next visit to Paris of 2 weeks. During these two weeks I spent every day in Rue du Faubourg du Temple. I went there at different times of the day. With me I had a small notebook and an analogue camera. Every day I took a different route and every day I used a different way of looking at things. Everything that strokes me I wrote down, I drew or I photographed. I observed the people, the shops, the architecture, the infrastructure, the surrounding areas and the historical context of the street.



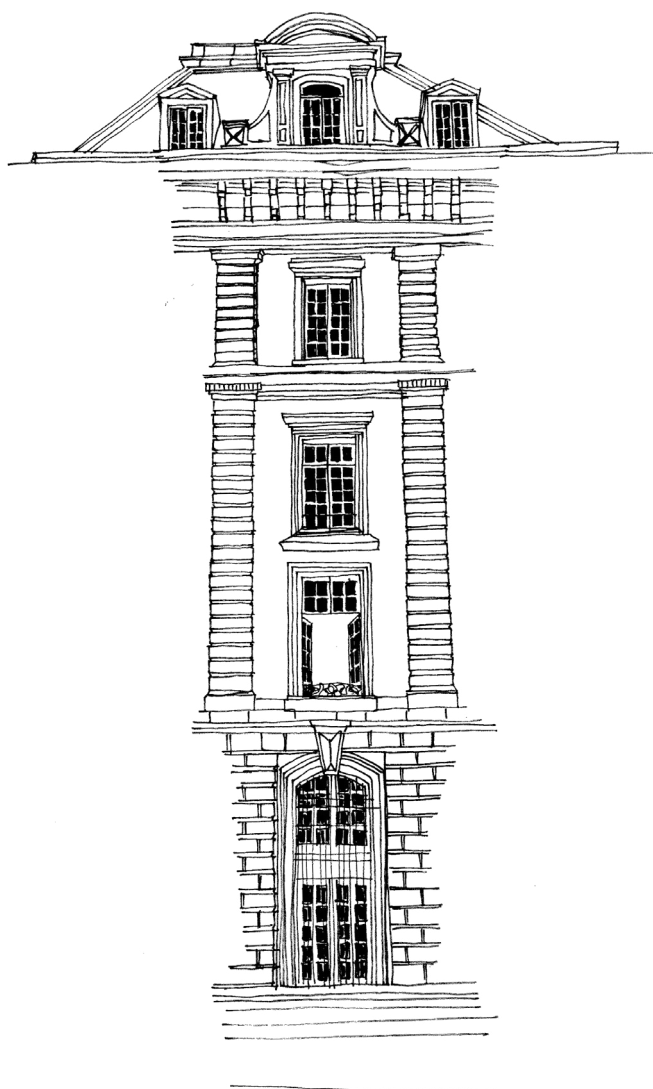
After these two weeks I obtained a lot of material and now I had to figure out how to process all this information. This was completely new to me and I struggled with finding out how. I felt I had to open up myself more than what I was doing, but I didn't know how. While talking with my research mentor, Leeke Reinders, I also felt like he wanted more. I have always been an organized person and therefore it's hard for me to be playful to try something, I was afraid to fail. I was a bit stuck and I didn't know how to continue, but I had planned a new trip to Paris already longer before so I decided to go again, maybe it would help me.

This trip was again 2 weeks and I used a same approach, but now I was more looking into details. The goal of my first trip was to get a more global understanding of the street and its surroundings, this second trip I was interested in some specific things. I organized visits to two architecture offices, one located in Rue du Faubourg du Temple and another in the same area. These offices could tell me some more background information about the street and also they told me about some hidden elements that I didn't look at yet. One of the tips I got from one of the architecture offices was going into the courtyards of the buildings. The courtyards are sometimes open, but sometimes there's gate. They said to try to enter as many as possible, even if they are gated. I did what they said and it showed me another side of the street. Also this side I tried to document by taking pictures, writing down notes and drawing sketches.

Towards my P2

After this second visit I had to start preparing for my P2, which was two weeks ahead. I obtained even more material than after my first visit and I was more lost. Eventually I decided to visualize the whole street by making one big poster with all my notes, photo's and drawings combined. It ended up being a poster of almost 7 meters which I stick to the wall for my P2. Together with this poster I made a PowerPoint presentation to explain the background of what I was doing. Making the poster gave me a lot of joy, which I wanted to show during my presentation. I wanted to tell my mentors about my journey of the last couple of months. As a feedback I got that what I had so far was pure documentation, which was good, but it needed an extra layer. This documentation had to be processed into something. This something could be anything, but it had to get some extra depth. I

exactly knew what my mentors were meaning, but it was difficult for me. I didn't know how to do this. After my P2, over the summer holidays, I therefore struggled in finding out how to come up with this extra layer. I started making drawings, not knowing if that was what I had to do, just to keep on working. Somewhere half way the summer holidays, one month after my P2 I finally knew what to do. Everything finally fell into place. My approach contained everything that my mentors were saying before and also it made me come out of my shell. I finally dared to do something.



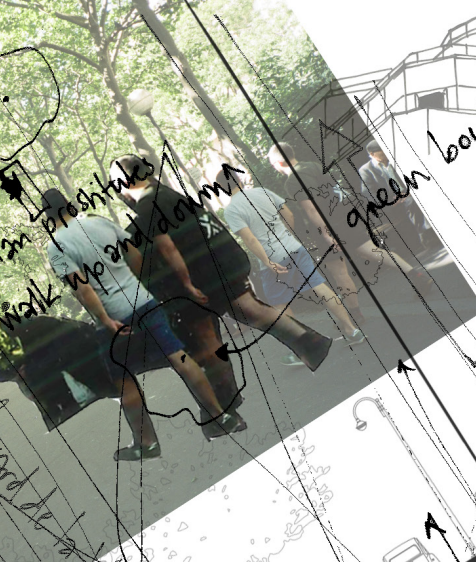
Intersections

I decided to focus on the 6 intersections that are in my street. While walking through the street I noticed that these intersections are important elements for borders of atmospheres. Also these intersections gave me some kind of spine to work around. It split my street up in different segments which made it more easy to deal with. Every intersection I wanted to explain in different layers. By putting these different layers over each other a visualisation of the intersections was created. Putting together these 6 different visualisations resulted in a final conclusion illustration of the whole street. Adding different transparencies and sizes gave an extra layer of hierarchy.

Knowing exactly what I had to do from this moment gave me a super productive period. I had to finish as quickly as possible because my P3 was approaching and I wanted to finish my research by then. Both my research and design mentors were enthusiastic about what I was doing so I just continued as good and fast as possible. Eventually I made my deadline, but I didn't manage to bind everything yet. For this I had a very specific idea, which I would do later, at least before my P4. My research mentor was okay with this and marked my work for what I had at that moment.

Design

I had one more week until my P3 and I had to come up with a design. Already in the last phase of my research I was thinking about a design, it had to be something that was coming out of my research. My research showed that gentrification was an important issue in the street. The beginning of the street already undergoing the process where as the last part still being more authentic. Knowing that the gentrification process will also arrive in this last part of the street, I wanted to make a future design for this part, which would enhance the current qualities of the street but also give room for the future demands. By this I'm hoping that a part of the authentic identity will still exist after the gentrification process has taken place. My design would therefore focus on this last part of the street.



prostitute
walk no not down

green boulevard



I AM

OUT OF MY COMFORT

People leaving / people coming



ONLY MEN

M

Busy road

Rue de Belleville



Standing

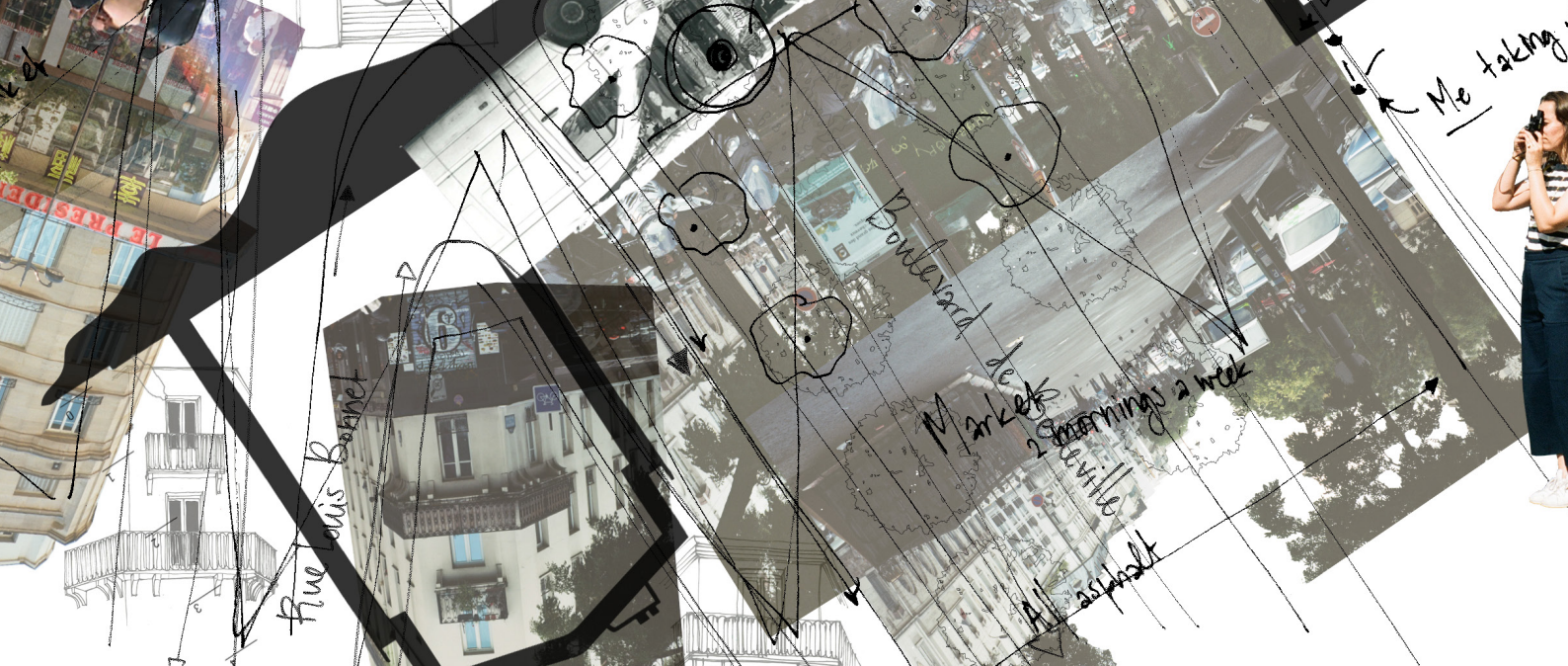
Looking

Many cars



- Asian
- Arabic
- African
- French

Multicultural



Rue Louis Bonnet

Boulevard

Market 2 mornings a week

All asphalt

Me taking

People (Asian) selling things (illegals?)

CREATIVITY

It was difficult to find a fitting design and at this phase it changed almost every week. I wanted to design a frame within the street to which the shop owners could attach. These shop owners were very important to me since they were playing an important role of the identity. After trying out some different ideas I chose one design to elaborate during the week towards my P3.

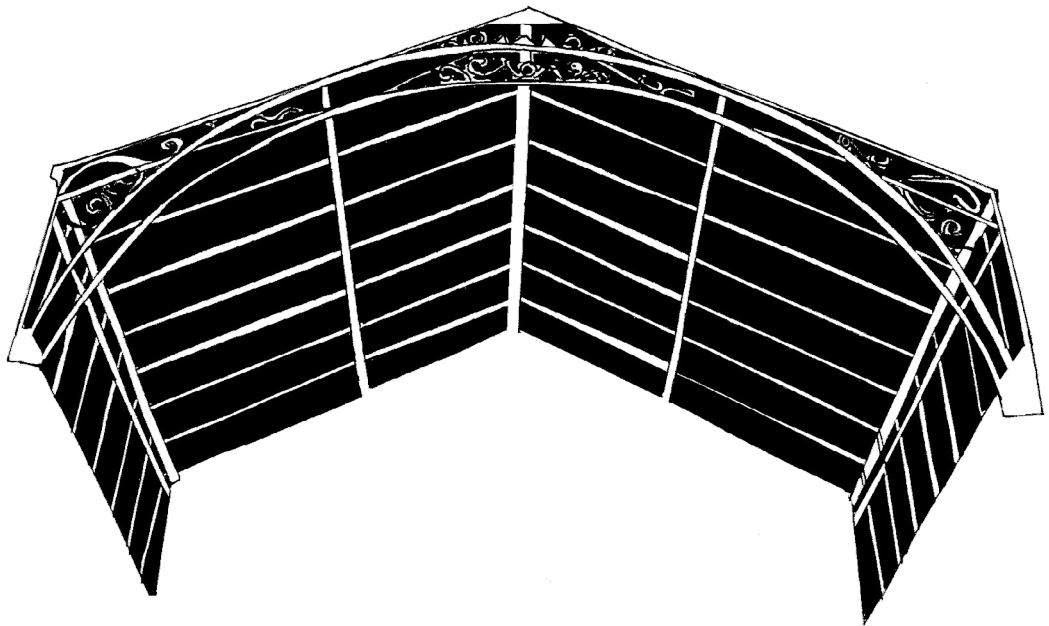
P3

At my P3 my mentors had many questions. This was tough for me, but I felt what they were feeling. This design was not the solution just yet I had to experiment more. This time was stressful because already within a month my P4 would take place. It actually meant I had to design a complete project within 4 weeks. This was doable if it wasn't so hard for me to find a solution for the design. I was struggling with the length of the street and the fact that it is so narrow. Also I was designing something in the public space, it was not a building but a structure. I had never done this before, so I had no idea where to start and what strategy to use.

My P4 was approaching sooner and sooner and when it was one week before and I was still not finding the solution I decided to postpone my P4 towards the next period. This was a tough decision for me because I really wanted to finish my graduation, but I also wanted to develop a design I was satisfied with and that was not the case just yet. Both my design and building technology mentors, Robert and Ype, agreed on my decision to postpone. They also felt I was not coming to a solution just yet. Postponing the presentation gave me some time to take some steps back. I started looking at references again. Also, I put on paper the intention of my project and I looked at the conclusions of my research.

The new passage of Paris

Towards the Christmas holidays I found a solution. Where I was constantly trying to design a frame within the street that needed to be covered I decided I had to design a roof for the street that had to be supported. This small nuance difference in my approach gave me a new way of thinking. I started to look for references again and I found one references that gave me a lot of inspiration. The building for the Kanagawa Institute of Technology designed by Junya Ishigami consisted of a roof supported by a lot of slender columns put randomly into space creating zones. This concept was exactly what I needed. Within Rue du Faubourg du Temple I had to create different zones, one in front of the shops, one fore the street market and one for emergency and transport. Around these zones I wanted to create space for people to wander, to sit, to meet and to cross.



Towards my P4

This concept I developed the weeks after. I crossed borders, where I first tried to put a roof in between the houses I decided to go higher and to put something over the houses, using the courtyard spaces I found during my research. A very important time arrived; it was the week after the Christmas holidays. Both my building technology and design mentor were enthusiastic about the idea, but I had to develop it completely. On top of that I was moving to Paris in the beginning of February so I had one month to take the big decisions and to meet all the people I needed to see. I worked extremely hard and luckily my mentors stayed positive about the developments I went through. I moved to Paris and after this it was one month before my P4. This month was about processing and developing the design until the detail. It has been and still is a lot of work, but I know what I have to do so it's a matter of doing it.

After my P4

I'm extremely motivated to pass my P4. I'm ready for the next step in my life. Personal events made me already move to Paris before my graduation, this is not the most convenient but unfortunately this is what it is for the moment. My planning is extremely tight because of the distance I'm having. The period between my P4 and P5 is already planned out. This time I have to use to process the input of my mentors I got during my P4 and I have to come to the Netherlands to work on my model. It will be a stressful and busy month, but I really want to do this!

BACKGROUND

Relationship between research and design

My graduation has been a quest to myself on how to define a design task that is fitting within the location and is answering the demand of the people using and living in this area. This was important to me because I wanted to feel that my eventual design was making sense, that it could really mean something for the society. Because of this my research and design are completely related to each other. For my research I wanted to define the identity of Rue du Faubourg du Temple. By spending a lot of time in the street I documented everything I saw with which I created an illustration of the street. This illustration became my personal journey through the street and from this I defined the qualities of the street that are important for the identity. This illustration of the street marked the "end" of my research after which I continued on my design task.

For my design task I continued my research towards the future. When I did the fieldwork in Rue du Faubourg du Temple I noticed a slow start of gentrification. This is a process that is visible within the whole city of Paris. Gentrification is caused by the lack of houses within the inner city, which makes every spot an interesting spot for everyone. Because of this renting and selling prices of houses increase drastically. People who can't afford these houses are therefore obligated to move to other parts of the city where houses are still affordable. These areas are outside of the périphérique creating an inner city of a monotonous character. Rue du Faubourg du Temple is at the beginning of the gentrification process. Slowly buildings are renovated and rented for much higher prices causing for a new user group to appear in the street. This new user group has other demands for its living environment. Therefore I see in future a change in shops within the street. The identity I defined within my research will slowly disappear and an area comparable to other neighbourhoods of Paris will arise. To me a monotonous Paris is not a positive future scenario. The surroundings of Paris will be filled up with people who couldn't afford living in the inner city anymore. Creating areas where "problem groups" are clustered. The problem areas will become more problematic and finding a solution for the problem will become harder and harder. Instead of finding a solution for this problem I would like to be one step ahead and come up with a design that causes for people to not be pushed away in the first place.

Therefore with my design I want to enhance the qualities of the identity of nowadays, but in a way that these qualities will fit more in the future needs and demands. By this I'm hoping that a part of the authentic identity will still exist even when the gentrification process has taken place.

ExploreLab in relation to my graduation project

ExploreLab is a studio for students that have a fascination about a certain subject, which they can't find in other graduation studios. I wanted to do ExploreLab to be completely free in my research and design process and to start my personal journey in creating a research and design task.

Also ExploreLab is a studio in which the student is completely free planning wise. This is something that fits me very well. I'm someone that works the best when I feel I can do my own thing without being put within boundaries.

Research method

The research method I have chosen is purely personal. It's my way of looking at Rue du Faubourg du Temple. It is what I have experienced there and the qualities I distinguish. If someone else would do this research it would come up with different conclusions and a different way of visualizing them. Nevertheless I think you can say my research is scientific. This because I'm always aware of the fact that it is my point of view, I'm not generalizing my findings. Next to that I'm searching for a way of dealing with a problem, the gentrification process. This way of dealing with the problem is an experiment. I think it might work, but only after my design is realized one can say if that's really the case.



this intersection feels as a
transmission zone in between
different zones.
4 different zones come
together here

Rue du Faubourg du Temple

Busy terraces
gives nice feeling

Flowers sold which
gives a nice feeling

Small city
supermarket

Rue de la Fontaine au Roi

Boulevard
Bules Ferry

Green Boulevard
very drunk guys
Mainly men sitting
on these
benches

My graduation project in relation to a wider social context

With my design for a future scenario of Rue du Faubourg du Temple I hope to give a new approach on how to deal with gentrification. I would like to be a step ahead of the process instead of waiting until it's too late. Within my design I'm not denying the process because I think it's something that's bound to happen. I would like to give a strategy in order for the process to fit more within the existing context. Of course it's not possible to test my design, therefore it's not clear if my approach is a solution to the problem. Nevertheless I hope that with my design and way of approach a discussion can be started to deal with gentrification in a different way.

Addressing the ethical issues I have encountered

Using the research method I used made me sometimes get into some difficult situations. In a big part of Rue du Faubourg du Temple and its surroundings social control is very much present. People spent most of their days on the street. They meet each other here and hang around almost the whole day. A girl, like me, walking around with her camera, small notebook and yellow backpack is therefore quickly noticed. Even though I was there to observe the people, I often felt being observed. People noticed me taking pictures, which for some people was feeling like I was invading in their personal space. By two people I've been attacked during my visits. Luckily nothing bad happened, but it did make me realize that I was entering a zone that was a space of other people.

Because of these events I'm very much aware that with my design I'm making a very strong gesture, I'm invading the space of other people. The last thing I want is for these people to be driven away. What I'm doing is creating space for these people to do what they do every day, but for which at the moment is no space reserved. I hope that by giving them the space they need they will continue behaving the way they do and hopefully they will be stimulated to behave like this.

Since my design is so big and space invading it's not sure if this will be accepted the way I would like it to be, that is something that can only be decided once it's built. Designing these big monumental and strong sculptures in the public space will always be argued, there will be people who like it and who don't.

Since this is my graduation project and the design will not actually be realized I deliberately make the design so extreme and strong. I do this to make a statement and to show in what different way we can treat the public space.

