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Document Version

Final published version

Citation (APA)

van den Heuvel, D. (2025). Triangulation of Sources, Practices and Critique in Architectural Education. In D. van den Heuvel, & C. M. Sentieri Omarrementeria (Eds.), *Collective Living: Dutch Housing Through an Intersectional Lens* (pp. 5-7). Universidad Politecnica de Valencia.

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July 2025

Collective Living at the Intersection examines how housing projects, from the 19th century to today, have responded to intersecting forms of oppression such as race, gender, class, and ability through communal forms of living. Inspired by Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality and Sara Ahmed's theory of capitalist space-making, the exhibition explores how marginalised communities have created alternative spatial practices to support one another and resist dominant systems. Although many of the featured projects were not originally conceived through an intersectional lens, their design and use reflect what V. Mitch McEwen calls "intersectional work." Through a transmedia approach—including Augmented Reality, oral histories, drawings, and digital tools—this exhibition reactivates architectural archives to uncover multiple, layered narratives. Visitors are invited to scan QR codes throughout the exhibition space, revealing new perspectives and engaging with housing as a site of solidarity, care, and collective resistance. Experience how architecture becomes a medium for social transformation.

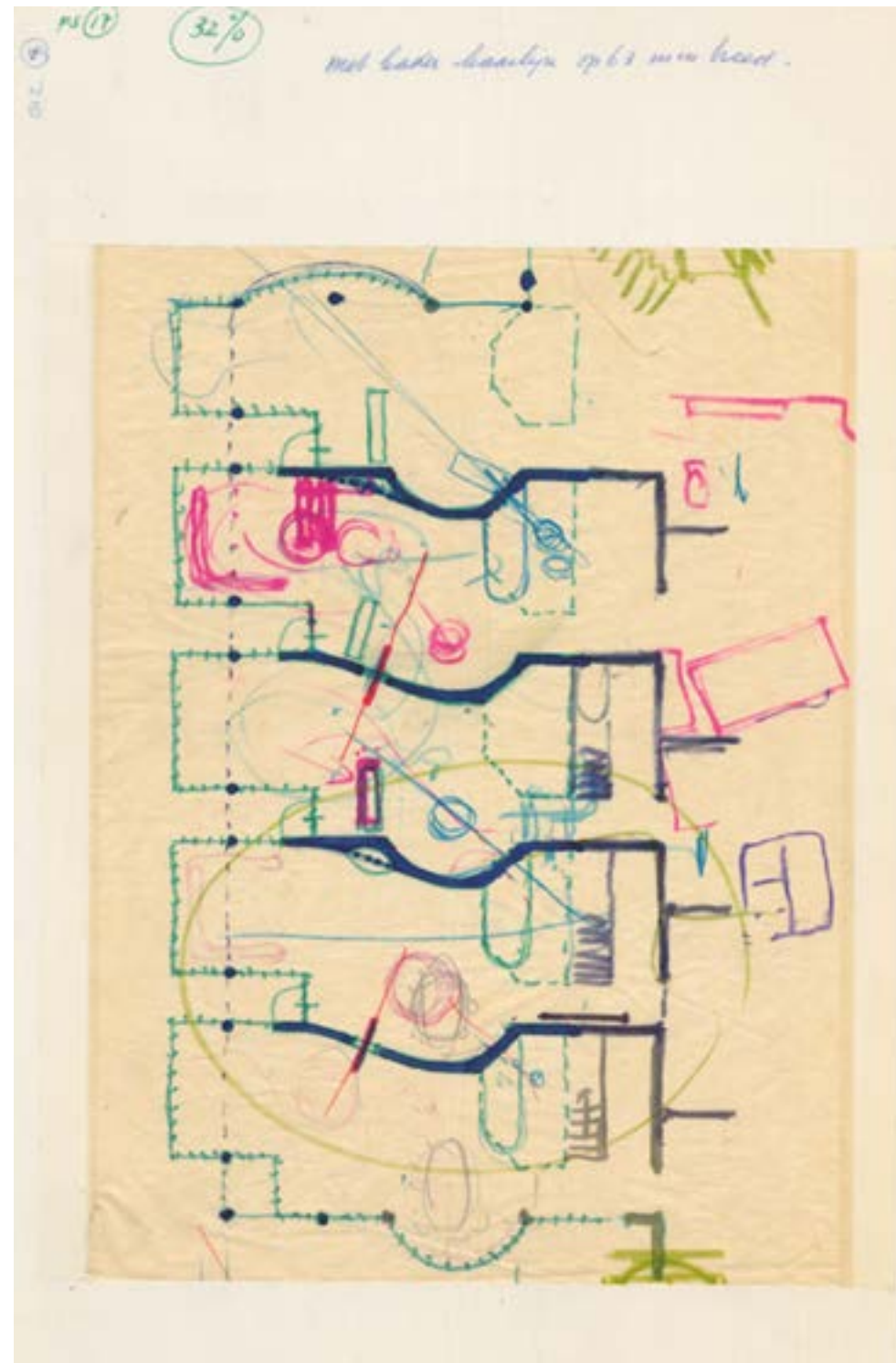


Image 01. Aldo van Eyck, sketch for the Mothers' House in Amsterdam. Collection Nieuwe Instituut.

TRIANGULATION OF SOURCES, PRACTICES AND CRITIQUE IN ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

Dirk van den Heuvel, TU Delft

Introduction

The Master course Housing Studies: An Open Intersectional Archive stands in a longer tradition of architectural education at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of TU Delft. At TU Delft we have a three year Bachelor curriculum for all students. The Master curriculum provides various distinct tracks of two years, one of them is devoted to Architecture. The Housing Studies course is part of the second semester of the first year of the Architecture Master track, just before the students move to their final year in which the students have to deliver their final thesis project. It is a moment where they can reflect on and test: their new skills, their personal interests and their ideas for the last year, in which they can chose and develop their own design project, which will be crucial in terms of their entry to their post-academic career and building a portfolio.

The number of students is about 40, and the course is designed as a collective enterprise from the start with guest lectures and collective conversations about 'difficult' topics related to gender issues and political questions of marginalization of minority groups as part of planning policies, today and historically through the ages. The course is supervised by a teaching team of four professors, who also work as a collective. It allows for flexibility and a diversity of theoretical, and methodological input. Guest lectures of colleagues provide extra information, ranging from reflections on the importance of oral histories to overviews of collective housing production in the Netherlands. Since its start, the course has seen three editions, each articulating a different aspect of the intersectional critique of architectural history and housing design. The first edition, taught in the Spring semester of 2023 and coordinated by Vanessa Grossman and Dirk van den Heuvel, titled *Housing Designs and Histories*, focused on the lack of female representation and recognition in architectural discourse, particularly regarding the contributions of female architects to housing design. The second edition, in Spring 2024, coordinated by Alejandro Campos and Dirk van den Heuvel under the title *The Non-Compliant*, advanced critical tools for analyzing and projecting non-normative collective housing projects of the twentieth century, turning its attention to housing projects for groups that conventionally fall outside normative design templates—such as students, the elderly, disabled individuals, asylum seekers, and migrants. The third edition, in Spring 2025, coordinated by Eytan Mann and Dirk van den Heuvel, titled *Augmenting Housing Studies: Photogrammetry and AR in Housing Studies*, explored new archival strategies by engaging digital media and computational techniques for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of architectural design knowledge, thereby contributing to the foundational steps toward an open intersectional archive.

Housing is very popular among students these days, very much related to students' wishes to be able to make a relevant contribution to society and the built environment. Collective housing holds a special place here, in that it embodies the aspirations for a social and sustainable society. Critical and socio-political conversations are therefore a natural ingredient of the design of the course as part of the analyses and interpretations that students need to deliver.

Aims

The overall epistemological aim is that students learn how to unlock architectural design knowledge as precipitated and embodied in the historical production of precedents. These precedents can be built or unbuilt, belonging to the classical canon of the discipline or local variants, historical or contemporary ones. For this course we have chosen to focus on built projects in the Netherlands, to ensure students can visit the projects, engage in fieldwork and interview inhabitants.

There is a strong methodological aspect to the course, which is -- paradoxically perhaps -- transmitted to the students through learning by doing over a period of ten weeks, in which they have to produce in parallel various deliverables, from fieldwork reports (films, photos, interviews) to critical archival research (selections of materials, redrawn design analyses). These deliverables are to be presented in a collective effort, an exhibition in the hall of our department, which opens on the final day of the course with public presentations, including guests.

Behind this cognitive aim there is another aim: to provide the students with tools for housing design which they can use in their studio work and later, in professional life. Therefore, the analyses and research the students must undertake are in service of design driven questions: from composition, typology and spatial organisation to a variety of contextual aspects especially user agency in its historical and contemporary perspective.

The highest level of complication is at the level of relating the various sources and outcomes, and how to understand the many differences, even contradictions they will inevitably encounter: from the many different approaches to collective housing design, to sources and voices which don't present a straightforward, unified picture.

One can think of user histories, through which different, divergent appreciations will come to the fore, especially when one takes the life of built projects into account, and a gap opens between the intentions of the architect-author, the experiences of users, and all sorts of maintenance and investment cycles. One can also think of the different sources that students will gather from the archive and other historical sources. All too often the students will have to negotiate gaps, or even outright contradiction. A third complication to note is the very different, hybrid nature of all the media the students have to face, grasp and work with, from texts and comments, sketches, working drawings and portfolio presentations to the actual building and its inhabitants. A method of triangulation of these sources, voices and findings is therefore inevitably part of the learning trajectory for the students: faced with this multitude of information -- often of a disparate nature -- they are forced to critically make a qualitative assessment beyond the sheer material and quantitative approach: that is, a speculation or hypothesis, which they have to present and demonstrate at the final presentation.

Beyond design analysis

The course goes back to the Delft tradition of so-called plan analysis, Max Risselada is one of the early pioneers from the 1970s, together with many of his contemporaries in architectural education in those years¹. As mentioned, in this approach, the tacit knowledge embedded within architectural design and practice is studied to unlock that implicit design knowledge from historical precedents, to make it once again available for design, both in terms of objectification of architectural knowledge and an understanding of its specificity in the case studies under scrutiny. It involves a combined method of deconstruction and reconstruction. Already then the production of exhibitions was very much part and parcel of this approach, to channel the research production and more importantly, to share the outcome in a time when there was no digital open access system in place.

Initially, this plan analysis was very much focused on the objectification of architectural knowledge, and to establish architecture as an autonomous discipline, in response to heavily politicized debates of the 1970s and to build a proper epistemological foundation within the context of an ever more competitive and demanding academic, institutional environment.

It means that architectural knowledge and the methods of de- and reconstruction were very much focused on the design and its composition as such: by redrawing and remodelling projects, in which the selected precedents were abstracted and reduced according to the research questions, from functional organisation and structural concepts to aesthetic devices. Societal relevance and context were brought in only through a distinct practice of history, theory and criticism. In the three years we have been developing this course for Housing Studies we have attempted to integrate those separate trajectories. One of the considerations behind this was the wish of students to contextualize the architectural design and relate housing projects to the larger social questions of today. This was also a strong wish of the teaching team, especially Vanessa Grossman and Alejandro Campos Uribe, who introduced the questions of intersectionality and ethnographical analyses to focus on user agency and contested histories in architecture.

In the last edition of our course, we expanded our methodological approach to also include AR technologies, to bring the field work and documentation of the site into the exhibition. Through photogrammetry, 3d modelling and 360degree photography and filming, together with available software packages it is now relatively easy to 'visit' the analysed precedents while being in the exhibition. It also allows to integrate voices on site into the analysis and exhibition, by documentation, portrayal and interviewing. Eytan Mann brought this new media practice to the course, and it will be further developed in the future editions. It helps students and researchers to further explore the case studies at hand. At the same time, it adds a new and also productive chapter to study the nature of the inherent transmediality of architecture, including the architectural archive. It offers new possibilities to unlock the implicit, tacit knowledge as embedded in architectural precedents, and re-assess it by triangulation of the many media in which architecture exists and is practised, all in order to make it available for future design.

Note 01. For more on this history: Dirk van den Heuvel, Madeleine Steigenga, Jaap van Triest, *Lessons: Tupker\Risselada. A double portrait of Dutch architectural education 1953-2003* (SUN publishers: Amsterdam, 2003). An open access pdf version is available: <https://books.bk.tudelft.nl/press/catalog/book/495>