

urban architecture graduation studio

LOW TOWN DOWN TOWN



sep. 24 - may 25

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journey through the graduation year

this logbook functions as a diary to keep track
of all the emotions and developments of the
project behind the scenes
in chronological order

we will read three different voices

my experience at the time

notes in retrospect

input from the tutorings

week 1.2

FIND THE RIVER

- > lost & free in beginning: starting research at physical meet
- > walking on the border between the Hoboken folder and the new develop area, with plots yet to be developed the petroleum industry close to river
- > rusty remnants of previous oil pipe guiding us on the way
- > as we cross the barrier of the tall trees sounds of cars and screaming birds tell us that we're back in civilization
- > our exit was blocked by construction, a sign is promising a café close by
- > following a townlike street into the city, sign on the signaling us that we finally found food in a hidden courtyard
- > café serving Starbucks & Moco's Toast
- > arriving at the river, docking slot ships docking on their to fill up oil
- > feeling of distinct disconnection to river, walls and dikes blocking it
- > turning towards the nature park, a different world, black cars for us, only connected to outside by noises
- > leaving courtyard we explored the church, heading back to Stillfabrik along the Lagersch
- > small 20th century workers houses framing the streetscape, big structures behind, signaling the industrial past
- > walking around the back of Stillfabrik, strange mixture of different typologies that did not rise to each other
- > The abandoned factory next to Stillfabrik is covered in graffiti, closed off from outside

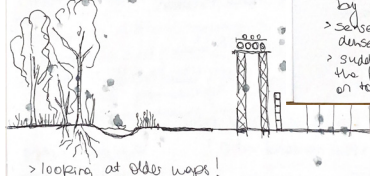
FASCINATION

- forest vs. factory analogy
- understanding Hoboken
- disconnected islands

big industries in Hoboken

- > Umicore
- > brick industry
- > yarn factory

> looking at older maps!




Start – September 2024

Overwhelmed, three days on-site, sleeping, the unknown: Hoboken, new people, new insights, what to do with all the emptiness?

It is my graduation year, big fear, big ambitions

group work: I chose „find the river“ – appealed by the idea of endless possibilities through a journey into the unknown

The Belgian singer and filmmaker Tom Barman says:
“Antwerp is not a city because you can’t get lost in it”

This studio aims to challenge that idea.

‘Find the river’ is the title of a song by the American pop band R.E.M., which reflects on the human search for meaning and connection.

Hoboken has lost its river. The halfway city, as it appears in the lower part of Antwerp, seems to develop without reference or connection to the available water sources.

Getting lost is part of life and is necessary for discovering new things. Acknowledging the unknown is an integral part of acquiring knowledge.

Your stories will unfold without a predetermined script or prescribed ending.

— *only now I come to see, is the ending of that story not with the p1 but p5?*

week 1.3



in search of the river, being lost, wandering through Hoboken, finding the actual river
How to communicate? Storytelling as a play, a travelogue to follow our journey

Curiosity: finding a variety of spaces and places (looking back at it now completely different view with the knowledge that we have gathered) but back then:
_seeing the bricks and parts of debris in the polder landscape, no understanding
_wanky staircase, no knowledge of the soil conditions
_rusty oil pipes, where do they come from?

Back in Blikfabriek: the studio, a stage, a story and an audience, searching for objects that represent places and spaces that we've discovered = a play is born

Back in Delft: being lost, how to make sense of what we've found? – more field trips are needed

week 1.4

Back in Hoboken: a new route, more to explore

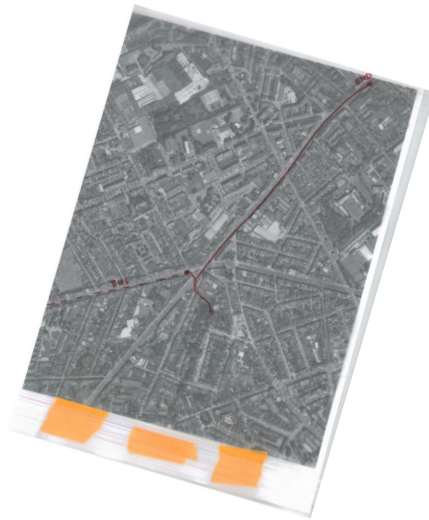
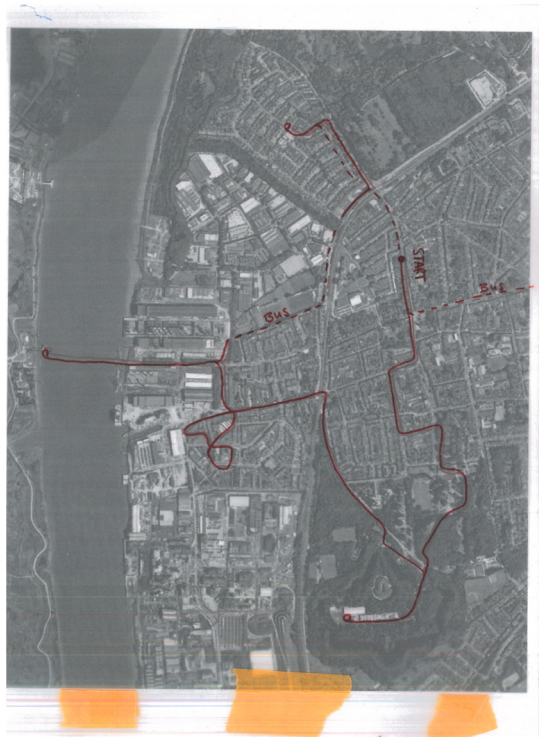
We find so much more:

- _a castle surrounded by a big garden
- _empty bars and cafes, no liveliness on the street
- _a lonely house in the middle of excavated soil
- _a mosque neighbouring a church
- _the big titan crane watching over the whole city

We are amazed

To understand where all of this is coming from, we start diving into archival research, searching for clues and explanations

tutoring: what is the river in width and length? what is the presence of the river?
are contemporary politics part of the flow?

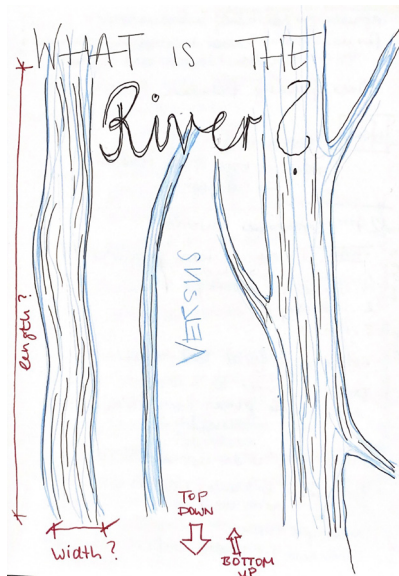


week 1.5



we stumble upon a treasure: the „Heemkundige Kring Hoboken 1135“ local history association of Hoboken, who documented and archived and collected everything they could find about the history of their city. Very passionate and as a non-profit organisation

Hugh help in filling the gaps of our so-far collected knowledge, very welcoming and interested in sharing
Fruitful visit to their archive



week 1.6

We dive deep into the online archives. To make sense of the findings we start to order them chronologically for a first understanding of the historical developments.

Upon all the archival photos, we see that there are many postcards, presenting proudly the city of Hoboken to the outside world.

tutoring:

do the order thematical not chronological!!
fit the findings under an umbrella of themes

what is the role of Blikfabrik???

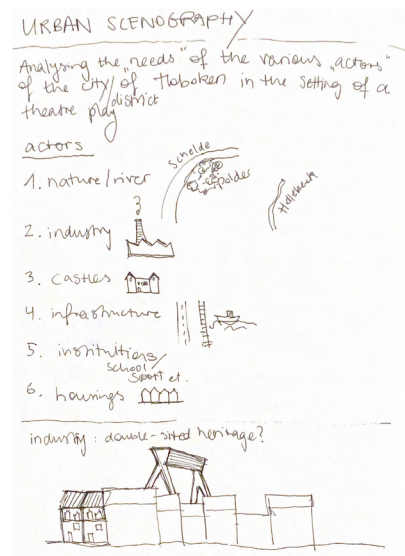
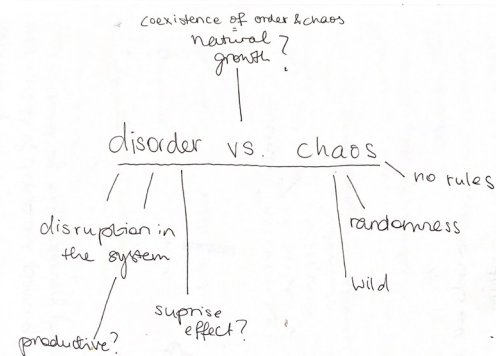
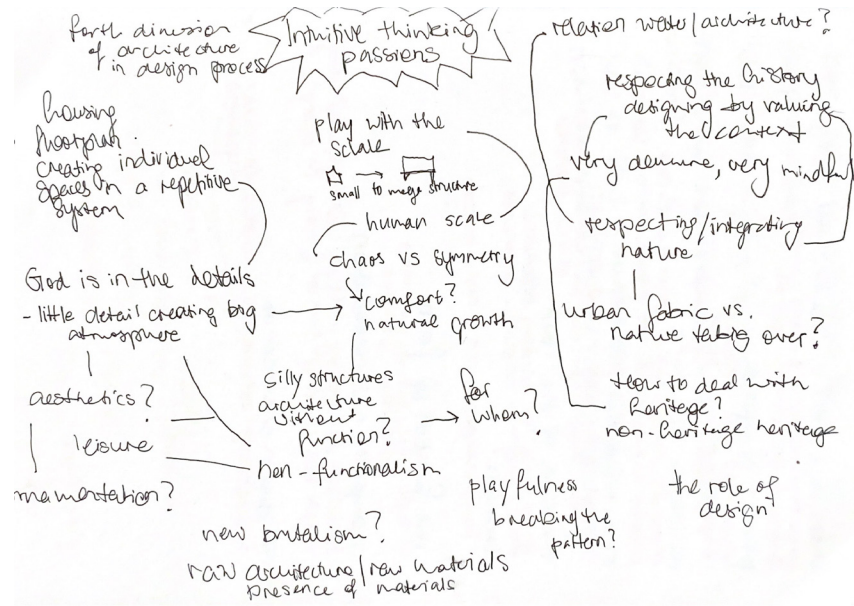
feel the geographical power, the Schelde connects Hoboken to the world

Where is the poetry???

and how to visualise the motion of the tides?



week 1.7



Start thinking of the individual project!

Chaos and disorder as natural co-existence to order. As architects we create order, designing order. But disruptions within the regular systems create a sense of excitement for me. The Blikfabriek could be seen as such a disruption within the order and rules of urban life?

A chaotic heterotopia within the structured urban blocks.

Funny to see that I wanted to turn the chaos in my head into a research

tutoring: let the surprises in!
the new part of the research is about **me - an original approach**

what kind of disorder are you looking for?

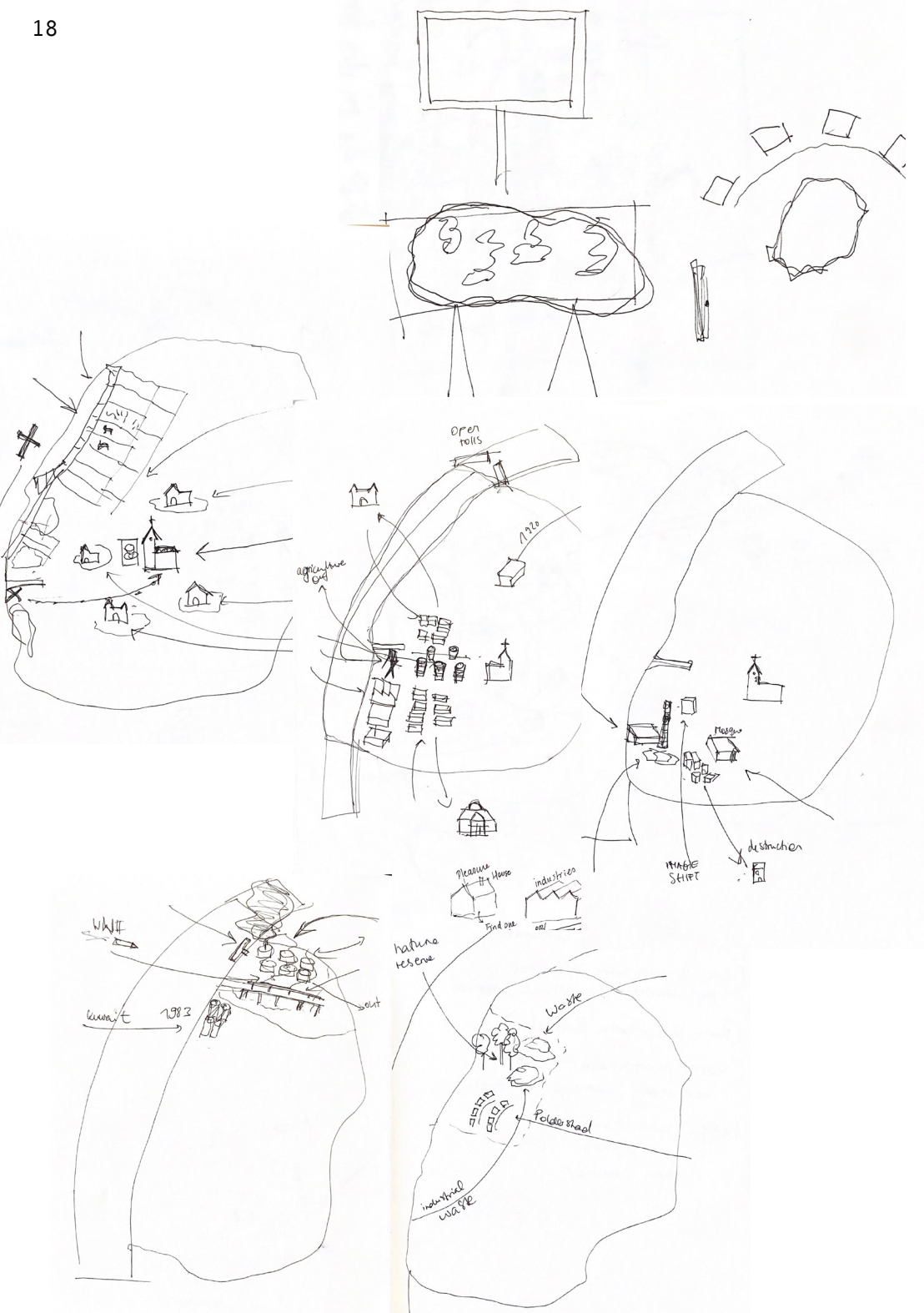
week 1.8

tutoring: what is the right medium to tell your story? how to show the different relationships?
start selecting the highlights and think about the right media.

After working with different layers of maps to tell our story we come to the conclusion that our story is all about movement. So we need actual movement to tell the story.

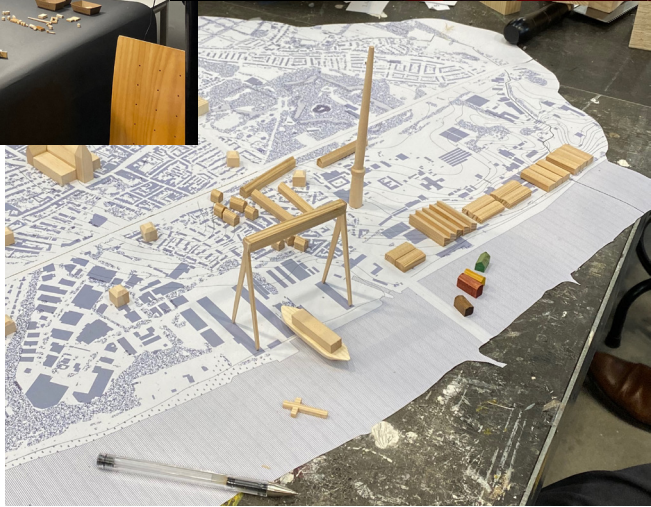
What do we have: remnants, tides that wash them away and tides that bring new influences to Hoboken.

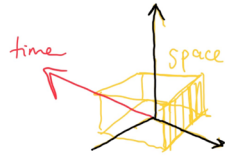
Inspired from the play in the Blikfabriek, we come to the idea that we have to act out the ties of the river ourselves.



week 1.9

P1





Presence/ research framework

The theoretical framework for this research is formed by the analysis of temporal artworks from the perspective of various theories that examine the relationship between time and architecture.

The *Conical Intersect* by Gordon Matta-Clark in 1975 was such a temporary intervention that only existed for a short time before the building was demolished. The structure of the new building is already eating itself around the last standing house. With his incision, the artist criticises the gentrification of cities when these 17th-century buildings are demolished to make space for new urban development (guggenheim.org, 2024). Passengers get a glimpse of the internal skeleton through the void of the building to consider the architectural layers and history that are about to be erased. This temporal artwork memorialises the building just before its disappearance. Thereby creating awareness of time: this cut is a moment to stop and acknowledge the transience in this world.

Furthermore, this act can be interpreted as an analogy to the Blüchfabrik. The lifetime of the Blüchfabrik as an operating industry ended in 2013 when the last companies terminated the production on site. (gva.be, 2024) Ever since a temporal haven for artists has been created, that has permission to stay until the developer erects a new residential block instead. The question is what remains of this past or whether everything will be washed away to make space for a new start?

Baudrillard states, „Architecture is a mixture of nostalgia and extreme anticipation (. . .) we have to be in these two orders of reality: we have to confront what we've lost and anticipate what's ahead of us; that's our brand of fatality.“ (Baudrillard, 2002) Architecture exists in two realms simultaneously. This duality implies that architecture is not just a physical structure but an expression of temporal tension, thus architecture serves as a constant reminder of the passage of time. Equally, architecture embodies society's vision for the future. The in-between use of the Blüchfabrik was created for something meant to disappear, making space for new housing and residents that eventually gentrify the area. Is this 10-year temporal use, perceived as a short time or long-term architectural intervention?

Retrospect/ introduction

My interest in this research is sparked by the findings of the first explorations of what is found in the fabric of Hoboken. Wondering around between the diverse and seemingly random urban fabric, stamping through a natural reserve, touching the rusty structure that leads oil pipes into the pier, being surveilled by a colossal steel crane that keeps a watchful eye over the residential neighbourhood, finding a mosque land in hand to a church and ending up in an ornamental English garden with a castle. What do these different artefacts have in common? They have been shaped by time and left as the remnants of a rich history. Through the initial group research, these historical developments were identified and understood as tides that bring in and simultaneously wash out traces of the past. It is a story of disappearance; some remain, while others are invisible in today's urban fabric. New structures are being erected on the soil, which survives as the only witness to the past.

Investigating the relationship between the temporal dimension (*time*) and spatial dimension (*architecture*) is by no means a new topic, yet it never loses its relevance. Time is our omnipresent companion. Contemporary concerns about time, for example, are reflected in the discussion about sustainability. Do we construct buildings that can be dismantled when their time is up, or do we use materials that defy time and last as long as possible? Can a building be transformed over time, thereby delaying its decay? The goal is not to answer these questions but to strive for an understanding of the complexities of the relationship between architecture and time through the lens of temporal artworks. This research aims to develop an approach that embraces the temporal aspect of architecture and conceives transience as a strength with no loss of presence.

How can temporary installations serve as interruptions in the rigid urban fabric, and how can transience in architecture be conceived to enrich our sense of time?

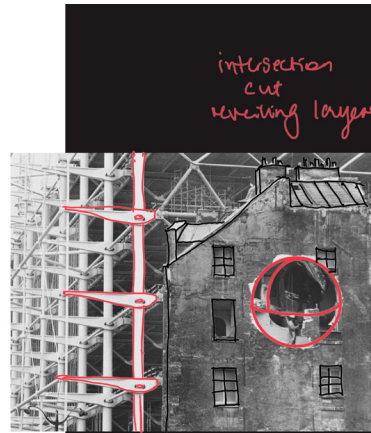


Figure 1: Gordon Matta-Clark, Conical Intersect 4

Documentation of the action „Conical Intersect“ made in 1975 in Paris, France)
1975, printed 1977, <https://whitney.org/collection/works/43325>

Our perception of time has changed throughout history, from measuring time from chimes every half an hour, to every minute with industrialisation, to seconds today. Today's technological era leads to a collapse or even implosion of the dimension of time on a flat screen. (Franck, 2016) The world can be simultaneously experienced everywhere through technology. Speed can be seen as a currency for production, transportation and services. The faster, the better. This aligns with the capitalist desire to treat today's city as a product. There's no time for a slow transformational process. The city needs to be sold as a package. (Sennett, 2020) The architecture becomes a consumable product that is constructed for profit. Paul Virilio argues that the high technical speeds even result in a disappearance of our consciousness and thus our presence. The acceleration of time blends everything into one mass. (Virilio, 1991) So how do we perceive a city in daily life? Can we escape this fast-paced life only with the help of unexpected interruptions?

Such an interruption was the *Oase Nr. 7* by Haus-Rucker-Co, constructed in 1972. This temporal artwork aims to increase the consciousness of the environment by disrupting the usual perception of physical reality. The inflatable structure was intended to serve as an oasis within the city's static and concrete environment. (kunsthal.nl, 2024) The intervention takes the form of an inflatable dome that can be attached to the facade of a building. A bubble-like space is created that radically contrasts the rigid and often isolating nature of urban architecture, allowing people to escape the hectic pace of city life. Yet, the easily demountable structure emphasises a temporality that offers the potential for adaptation to social needs in contrast to the static urban fabric.



Figure 2: Haus-Rucker-Co Oase Nr. 7

Documenta 5, Kassel 1972, <https://www.kunsthal.nl/nl/plaats-besocht/temoreinstellingennimind-expansie/>

week 2.0

Research plan/ question:

Investigating the relationship between the temporal dimension (time) and spatial dimension (architecture). This research aims to develop an approach that embraces the temporal aspect of architecture and conceives transience as a strength with no loss of presence.

The theoretical framework for this research is formed by the analysis of temporal artworks from the perspective of various theories that examine the relationship between time and architecture.

Leeke calls me radical: am I? – I feel insecure and detached

I really don't know what I am doing

Reading these passages again I can really see how this research reflects my struggles, the search for meaning – wanting to produce research that rescues me from the apparent insignificance of my own work. Help - how can I give meaning to my work?

Self-doubt and comparisons with my fellow students consume me and while I find protection in the group, I try not to drown in it at the same time.

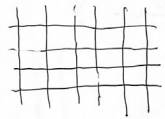
week 2.1

Marseille

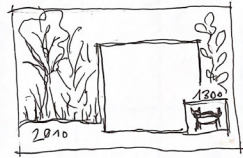
Very important for my well-being. Sunshine within the grey, very inspirational – architecturally and socially. Good vibes



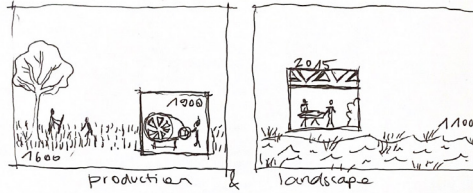
week 2.2

typologies of categories
overlapping images

producing livelihood

Brick
↓
Steel as
material
of
production

landscape of production



past



Present



future

production
Urban metabolismWhat remains
what to re-purpose
traces of each stage of cycle
matrix of traces
typography, water supply

time materials



living and non-living

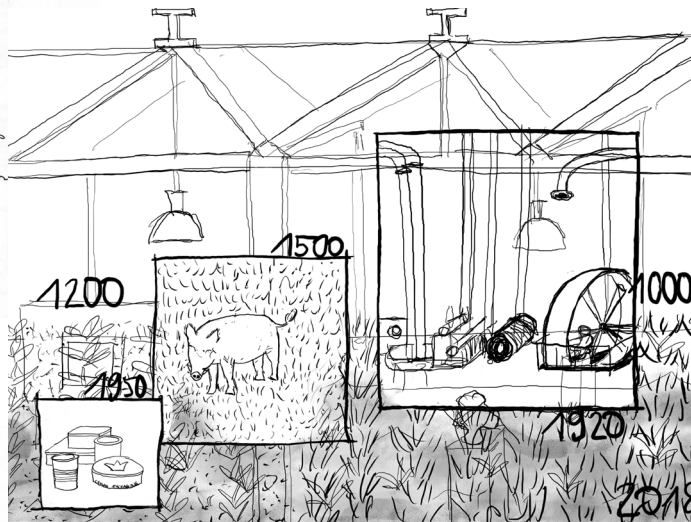


5 kinds of materiality

1. untouched nature
2. changed by presence of humans
3. intentionally transformed
4. materials into tools and weapons
5. built environment

material presence

Process of inspiration

influence of
class & disorder
in urban
planningP1 research
diving into archives
and the history
of Heboeken

First little turn:

after being placed in Leeke's research plan
lecture into the category: take care of these
people my doubts were reinforced, what is this
abstract research? What am I doing?

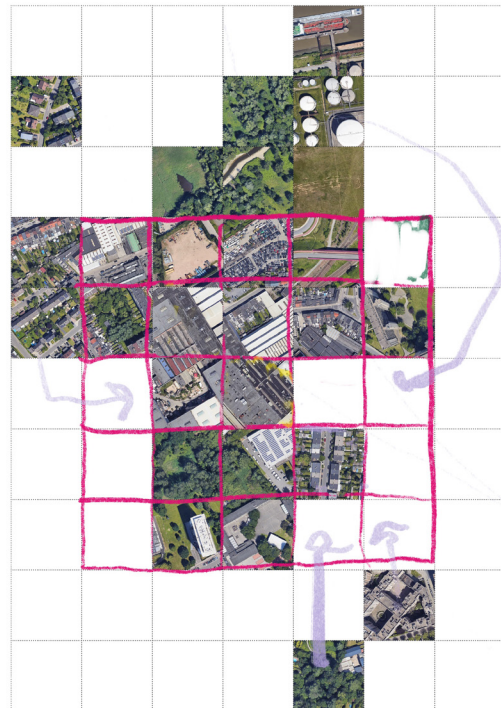
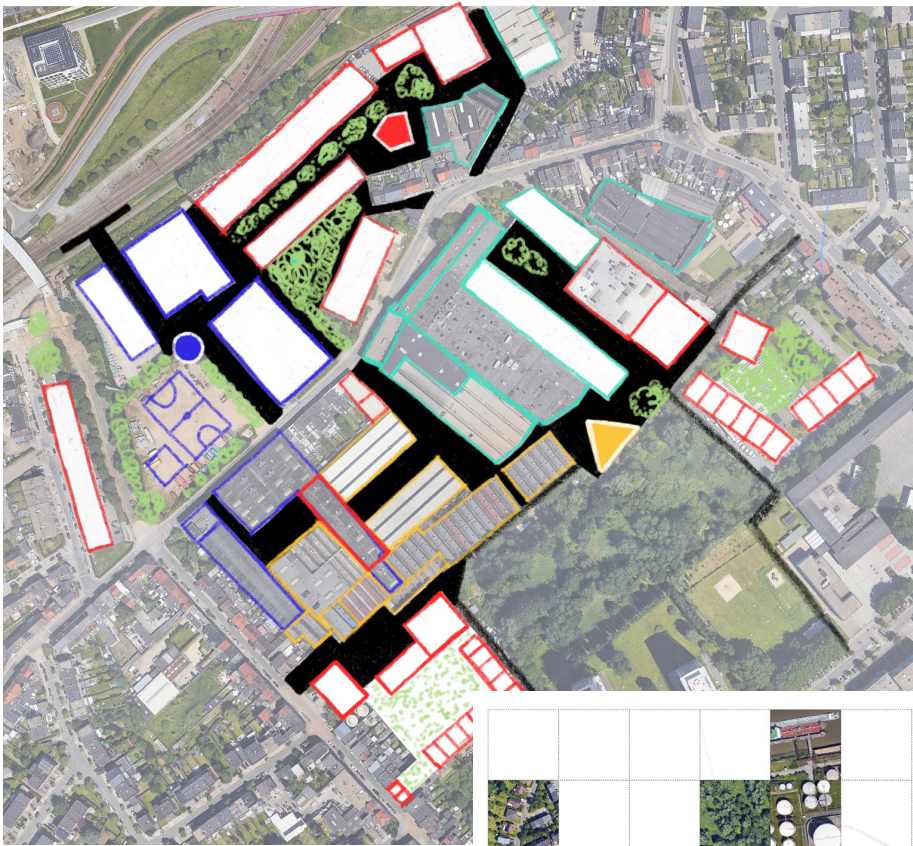
I need something tangible to research, going
closer to the site: Productive activities that
have happened there interested me, from agri-
cultural production to can/rim production to
art today

All happening at the same place – in different
time periods – the topic of time is still with
me

Chiara encourages me in the tutoring to not
fully move away from my research plan. So I try
to find a balance. How to combine my interests?

Tutoring: Avoid overlap with what is already done from p1.
Take the risk! Start doing things!

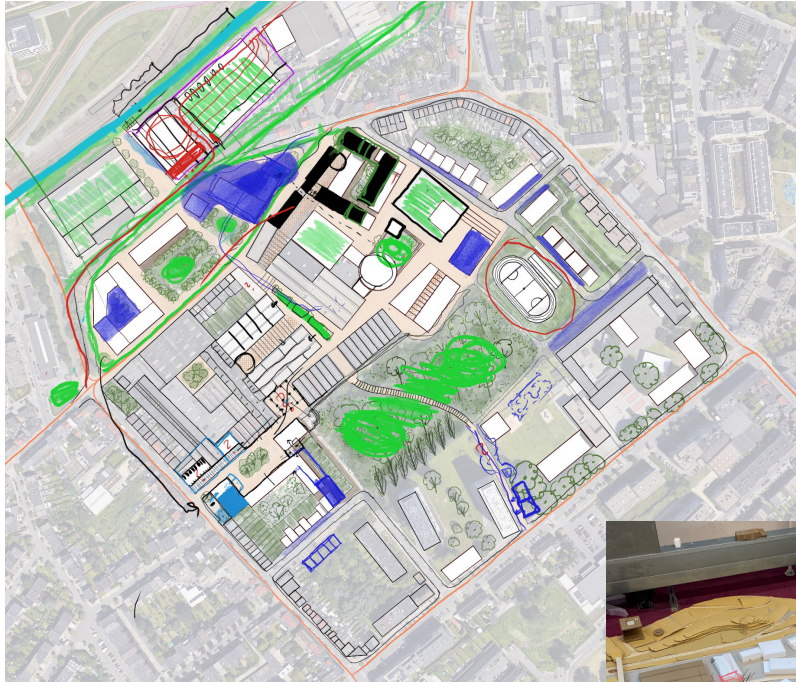
week 2.3



New group for the Masterplan:
while the first group work was very much determined by my struggles to find a grip in the studio and to find my own voice (literally) – not because of the people but the state I was in
This group work offers me a new start to find a grip

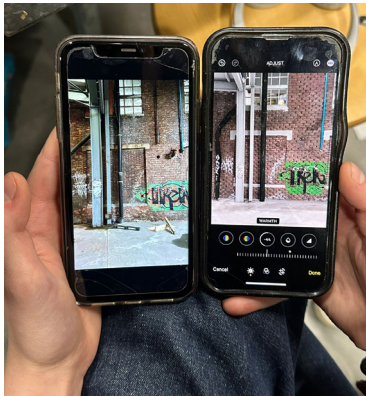
tutoring: look careful what is on site. what is valuable to you?
How to experience layerdness?
what knowledge to we take with us from the p1?

week 2.4

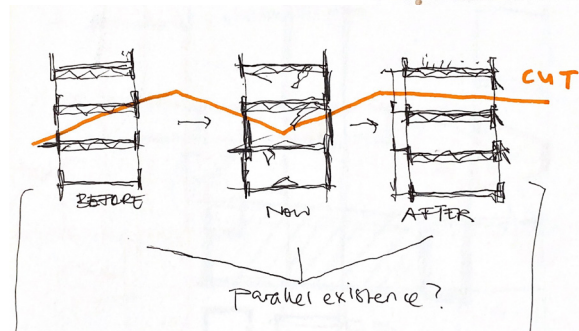
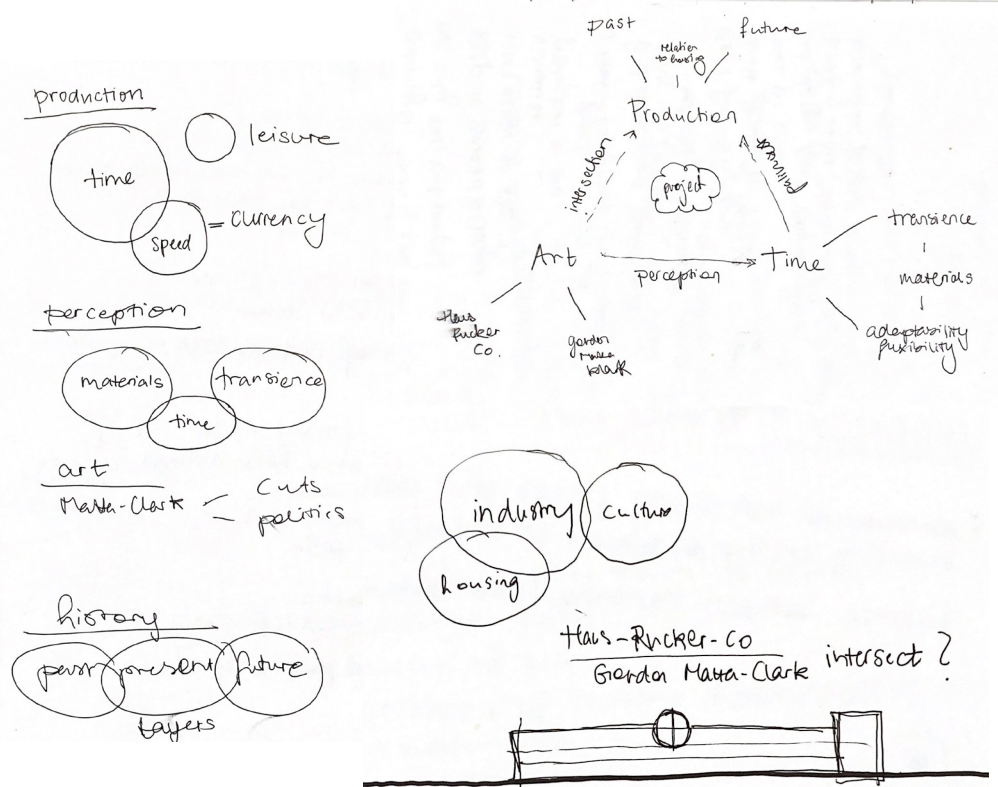


week 2.5

Presentation of the Masterplan



week 2.6

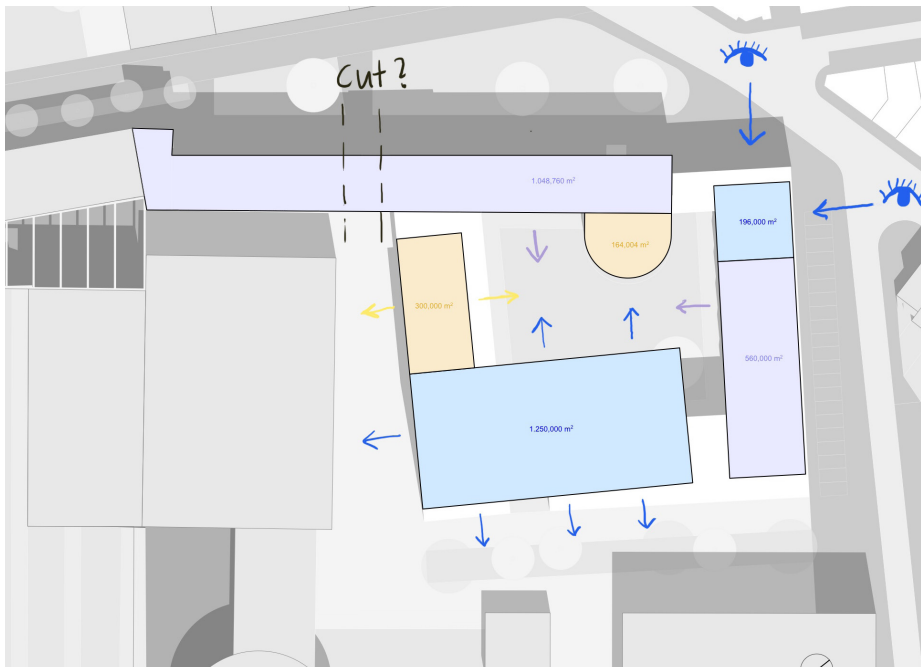
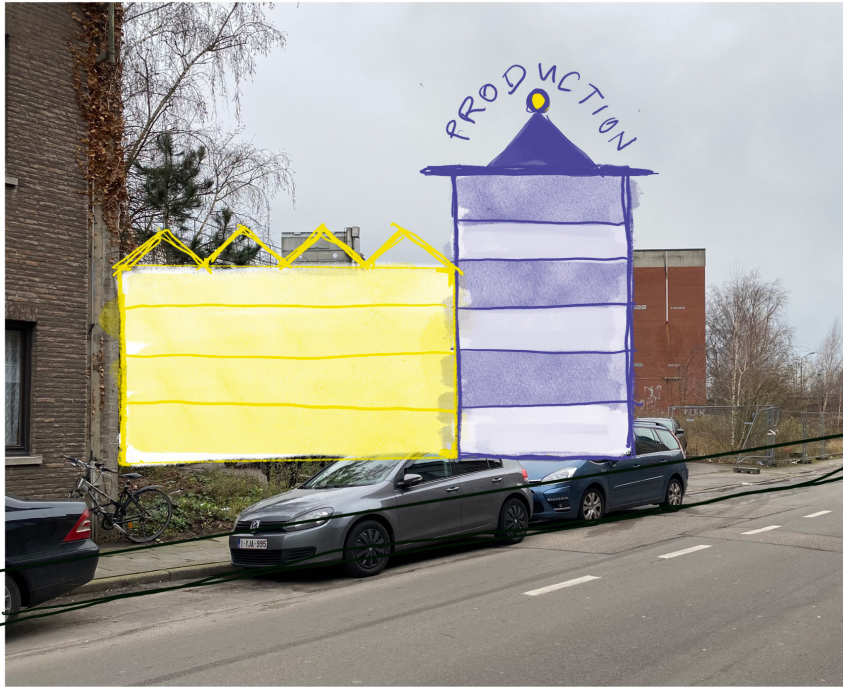


tutoring: ATTACK A BUILDING!

what is the urgency???

political statement behind Gordon Matta-Clarks work?

week 2.7



week 2.8

tutoring: How to bring Gordon and my building together??

explain more. give substance. give meaning

I research by collecting. You could call me a horder. My digital mindmap is full and I continue searching for new links and clues. I struggle to settle. To settle and start diving deep into one direction is scary to me. I'm not confident with what I have yet, so I continue searching. But further searches only lead to more chaos.



week 2.9



Trying to make sense of the chaos, Therefore I transform my digital mindmap into the physical world. A crimeboard is created,

Who is the suspect to be found? my research.

The findings of my research lead me to choose my site around the factory's entrance building from 1965. This long and thin building represents the skin or protective wall of the factory to the outside. It has a representative street facade, shielding off all activities behind.

It used to be a passage and transition building accommodating the changing rooms, canteen and offices, workers started their day there, had a break in-between and ended their day in this building.

Therefore it had a functional value over architectural value. Since the architecture can be described as simple or ordinary.

Not to be afraid of deconstruction, but with only a purpose!

Studying the artists and their artwork is guiding me in the treatment of the existing. Also, how to I make sure to not exactly repeat the urban transformations that the artists criticized? How not to change the character of an area with new developments?

week 3.0



The Program: Mix of production, housing and communal amenities.

The new building: Production space on the ground floor with an energy distribution centre accompanied by a shop to sell the goods. The intersection of old and new creates a link between the different functions and offers shared spaces. The office building will be transformed into Housing.



P2 feedback:

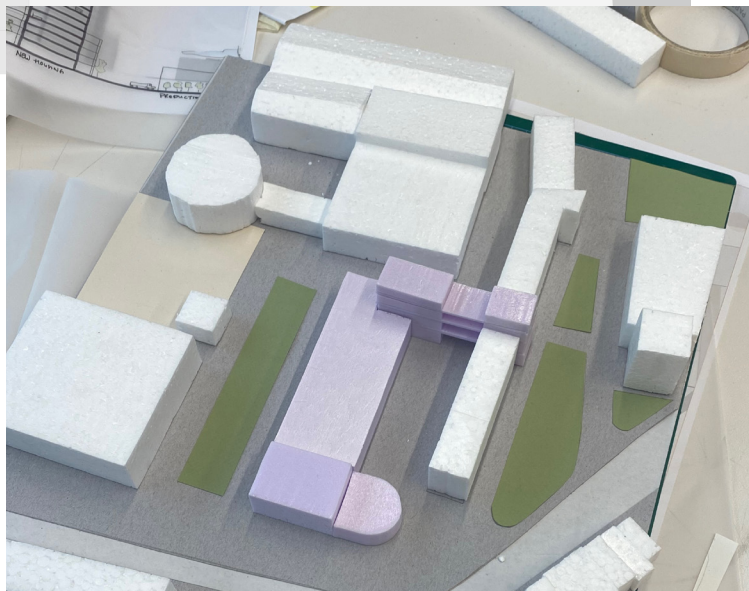
what do you see as the product of your research?

„i would be interested in understanding the work of gordon in a more nuanced way, what you have been trying to do is much more nuanced than not getting rid of what was there before.

I would be interested if you could make a more nuanced statement than just a blunt cut.“

the topic you are addressing is more of a gesture. Physical. Is it a cut is it a hole, it's about definition.

where does the confusion lie? - It seems like u are fully in control - am i?



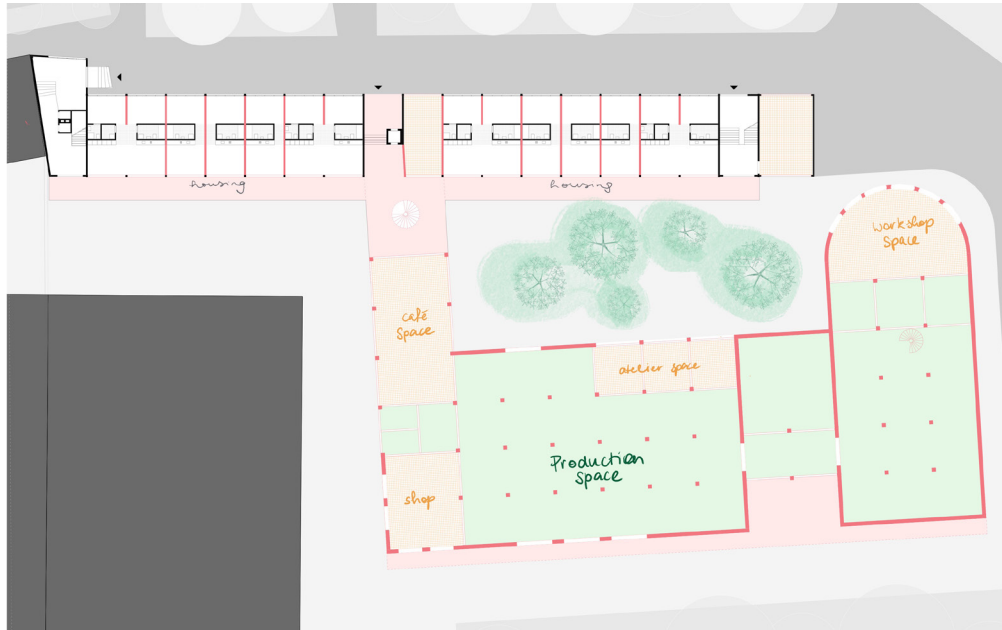
week 3.1



I have ZERO clue what to do as a physical outcome
 CUT in time?
 hole = loss?
 what if the cut is a gap?
 the building as a producer itself?
 -producing in the building
 -the building producing
 What if the cut is more about the act of doing than
 the void that is created?

Paul: why only low-rise? why not more into the verticality???

Make it something new. Don't repeat what is already there.



week 3.2

elsbeth:

learn from the language of the masterplan!

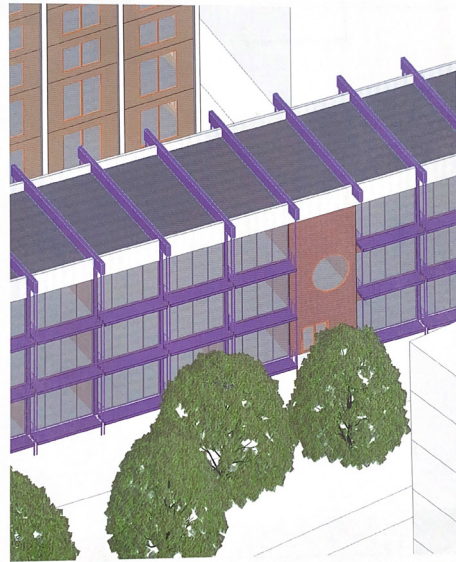
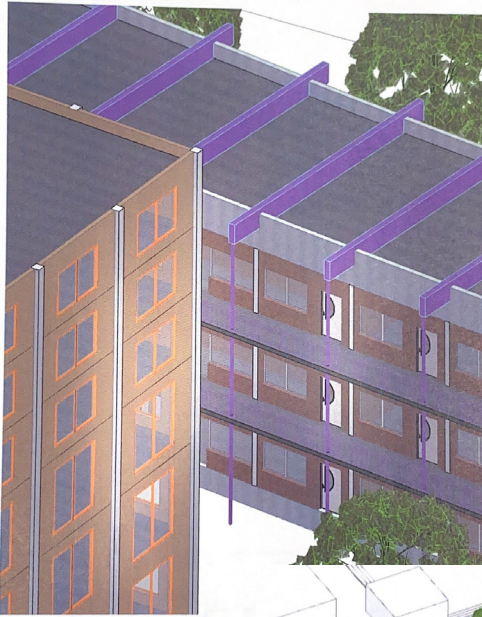
study the entrance moment identify the program more specific to give characteristics to the building

Jos:

embrace the freedom of the trusses!

how to define the the image of the building

how to live in that building?

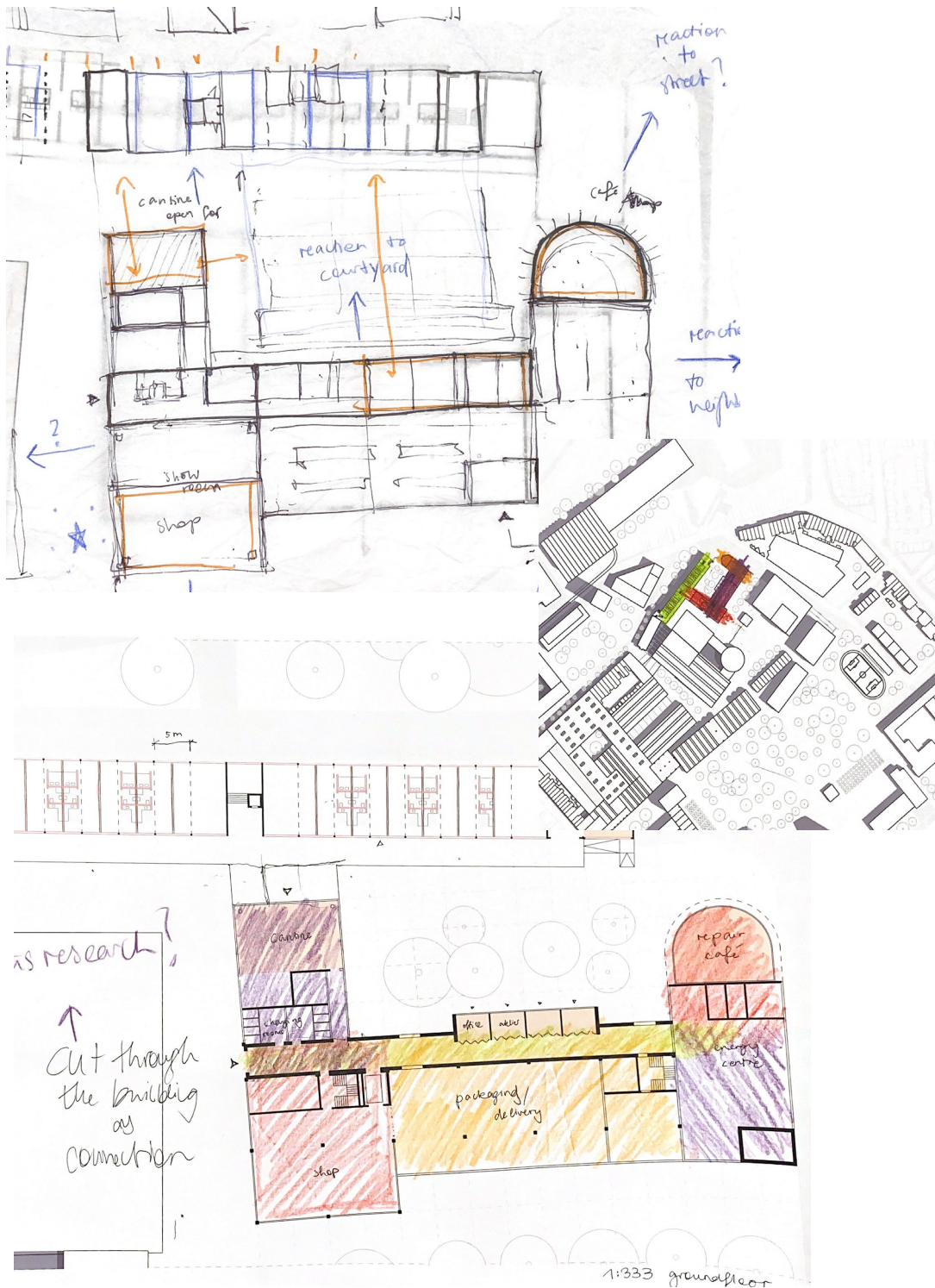


week 3.3

tutoring: elaborate on the concept of the cut!
 how is it represented in your design??
 what is the translation?
 study the rhythm of the existing building.

The big new building is slowly turning into a monster for me. How to I tame it??

No physical cut of old and new building anymore. This attempt didn't feel like the right translation. Too aggressive, too literal. I really like the idea of the shared courtyard that is created by the relationship of the old and new building



week 3.4



looking outside my window

obsolete materials waiting for their disposal

wondering where they come from

I hear noises of construction

curiously I step outside my house

knocking on the neighbours door

a friendly man greets me

I ask him about the materials

He kindly invites me to the construction site, hidden from the outside the house is completely being gutted internally

The cut out materials are dumped in the container, waiting for their disposal

I save a few

What do I do with them?

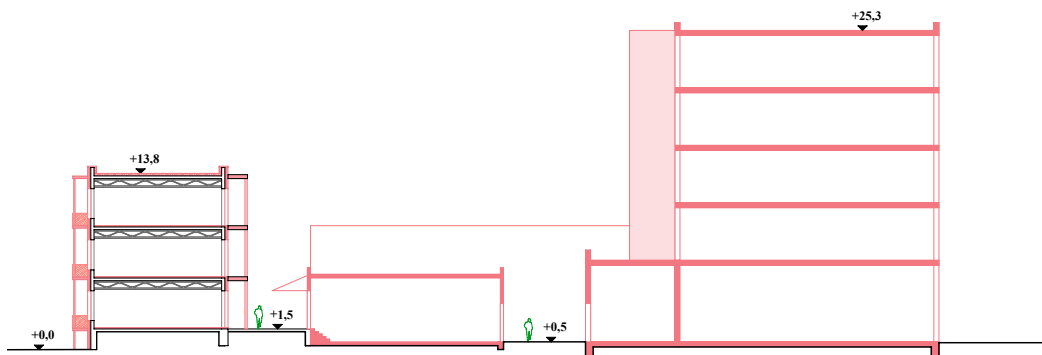
week 3.5



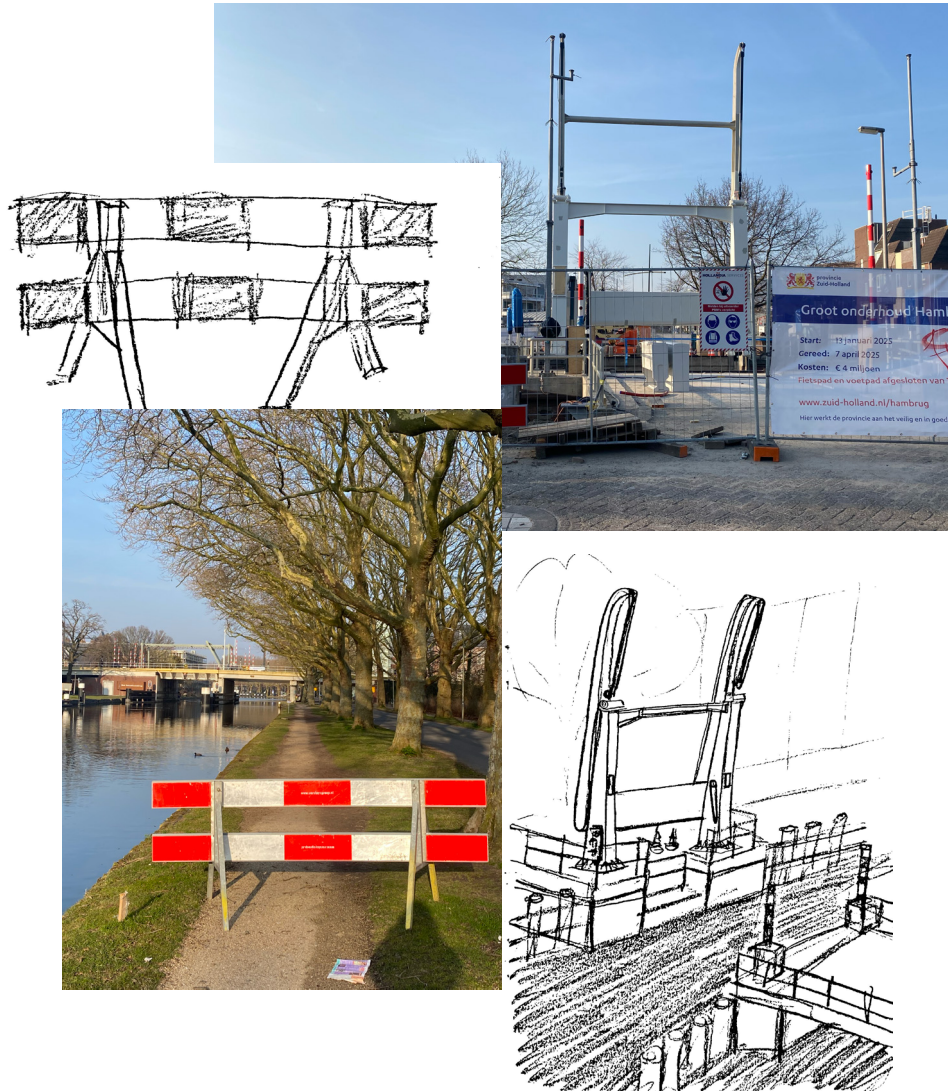
I try to find qualities within the big complex. The corner to the Lageweg still fascinates me, What happens at this important firstencounter moment of the site?

A little canteen volume as a mediator between the new factory building and the existing?

A big new production tower is watching over it, What happens in there?



week 3.6



How to grasp a cut?

I start with my personal experience. The everyday life. I begin to wonder. What even is a cut? A disruption? What is the order being disrupted? Is a canal a cut in the ground? Or a street, a cut through the urban mass? A crossing a cut through the street?

Route(ines)

Every day the same route to the University. No thoughts, just a ten minute tranquil bike ride. I know it by heart.

However, for almost two months, my way has been disturbed. The connection is cut. I have to adjust to a new path.

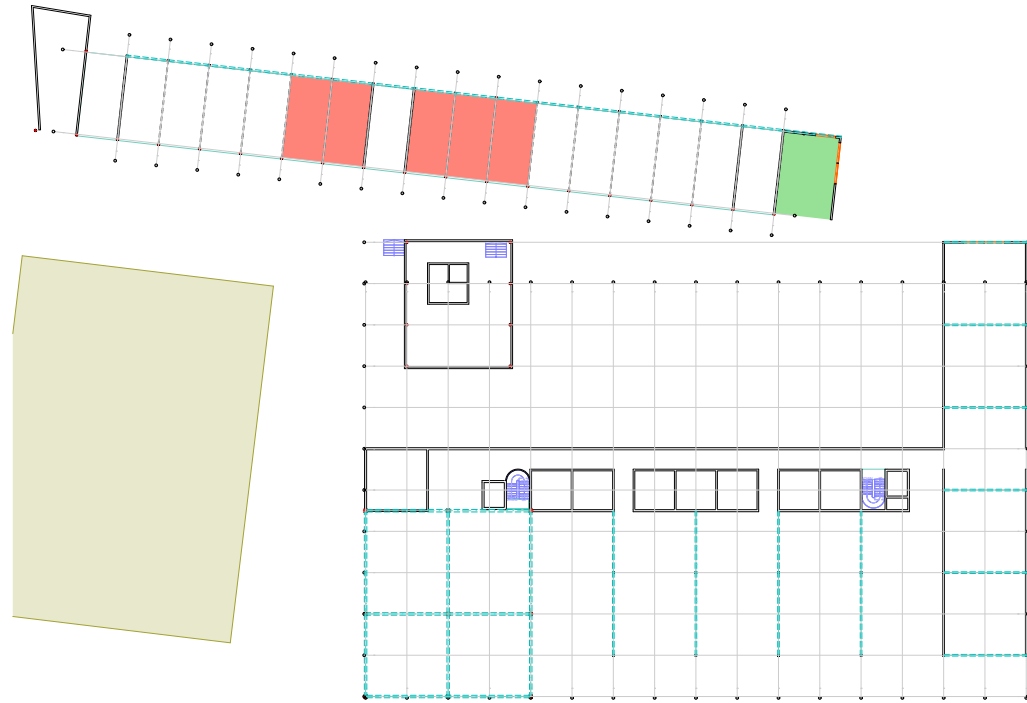
The impact of this infrastructural piece is first apparent when it's gone: the bridge. Closed for maintenance.

The sturdy steel beams that otherwise carry the street and allow for the carefree passage are stretching their arms to the sky now. The street is cut over the water.

A piece of infrastructure is missing.

An object cutting off my way. Cut through space. These barriers signal the disruption. The path is closed. The connection over the water is cut.

Eventually I realise that this might not only be the dead-end of my route but also the path of this research. My gut feeling tells me to adjust my path.



DESIGN CRISIS

I can't stand this idea anymore. I translated working with the existing in working with the existing function but creating a new building for it? Why?

I wanted to work against the existing monofunctional urban structures, more diversity and urban mixtu-re but why do I choose two monofunctional building programs?

Why do I want to create this huge new factory building on site? Is that really the appropriate answer to working with what is found?

I don't see a light at the tunnel with this design. I feel like I am creating a massive monster. Yes it will have a shared courtyard with the residents, but who wants this factory next to it?

I feel like I don't have time to really work with the existing building that started my fascination because the big neighbour is taking up all my energy. The longer I work on him the wronger its existence feels to me.

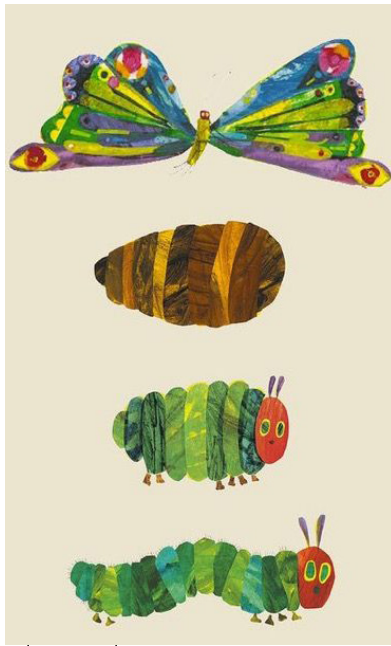
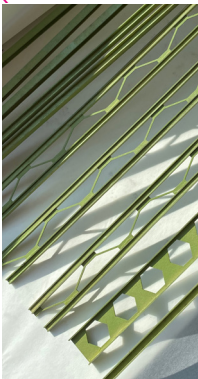
week 3.7

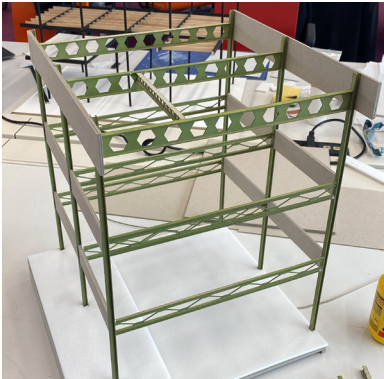
NEW PERSPECTIVES

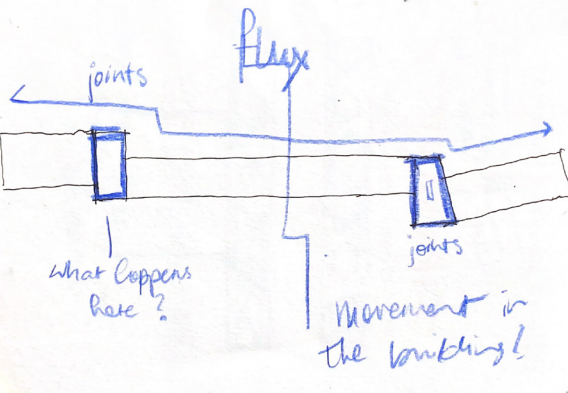
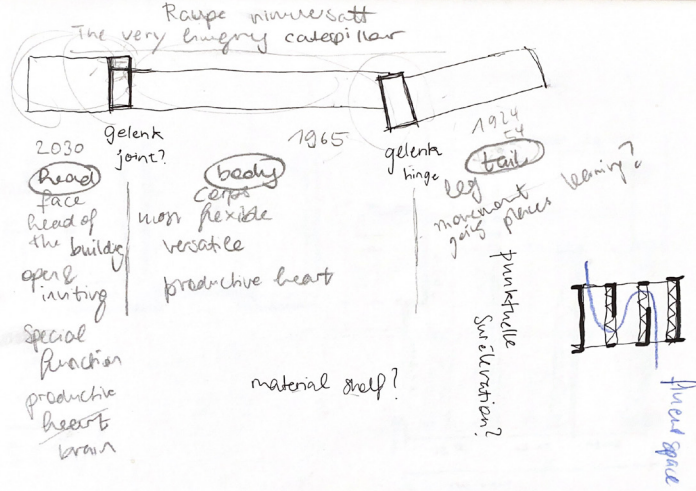
A shift in perspective. That is what I needed. I always looked from the south side to my building where the factory was. But my initial interest started from the opposite side, From the Lageweg, where the office building served as the representative face of production. Its long and narrow body specially adapted to that function.

This is where I have to dive deep and have my focuss on. Furthermore the older building part that before couldn't be included finally gets my attention. Both office buildings are connected through a shared staircase and form an interesting longitudinal movement together.

This body feels somehow incomplete. I start to think about a new head for it. I go back to the start of the masterplan. My building is part of the multi-functional housing block. No monofunctions anymore, I am happy. Finally I see a light again.

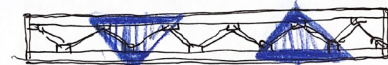
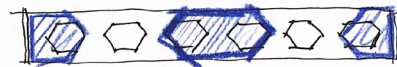






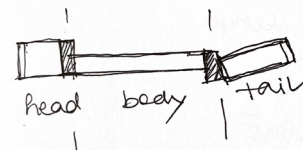
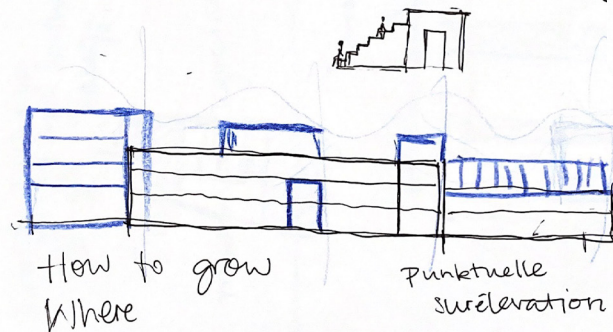
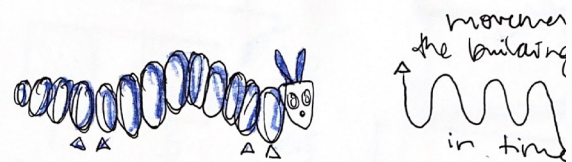
How to balance flexibility & function?

! FIRE SAFETY !



pièce de résistance

How to support it to keep it?



How to move horizontally vertically? in the building



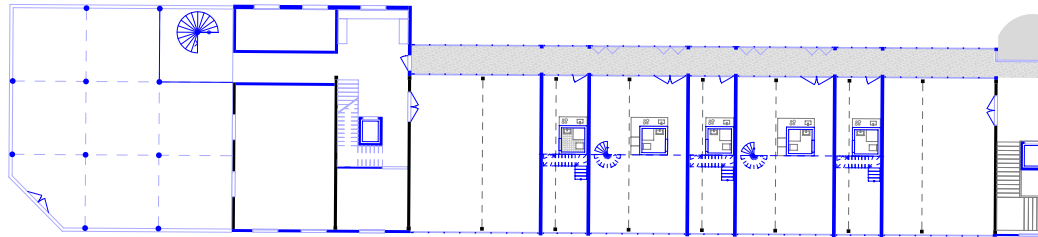
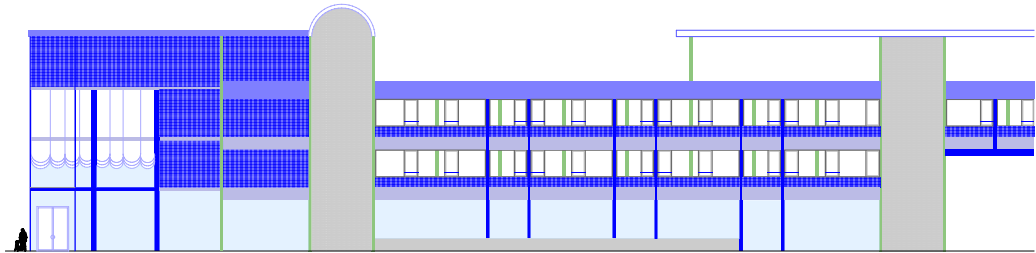
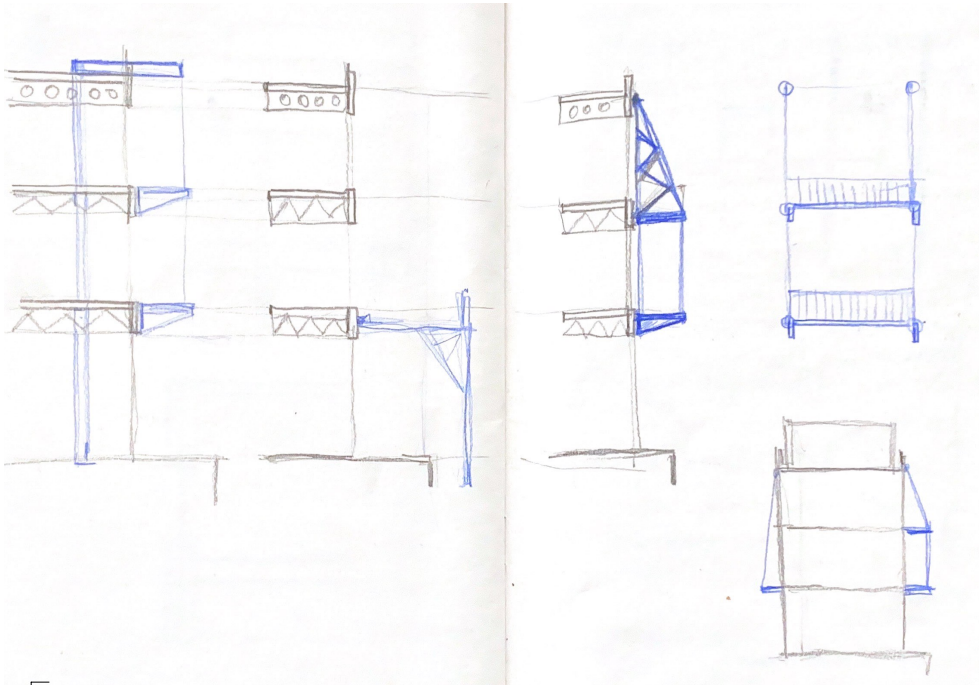
material

- ↳ a physical substance (that things can be made from)
- ↳ relating to, derived from, or consisting of matter
- ↳ substance that constitutes an object
pure or impure, living or non-living matter
- ↳ materials are the things that you need for
a particular activity
- ↳ the matter from which a thing is or can be made

- substance - - matter - need -

diplomacy

- ↳ the art of dealing with people in a
sensitive and tactful way
- ↳ the management of relationships between
- ability to control a difficult situation
- ↳ the practice of conducting negotiations
- ↳ handling affairs without arousing
hostility
- ↳ need of influencing decisions & behaviour
- ↳ via french from ancient greek diploma
- ↳ word of diplo = folded in two and
- ↳ suffix -ma = an object
- ↳ folded document



what to do with the cat?

