

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

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Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Tessa Koenig Gimeno
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Studio		
Name / Theme	The Independent Group	
Main mentor	Sam de Vocht	Design Mentor
Second mentor	Mauro Parravicini	Building Technology Mentor
Third Mentor(s)	Mark Pimlott (and Daniel Rosbottom)	Research Mentor(s)
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Belonging to the Interiors Building Cities Chair, the studio aims to develop socially conscious projects within a specific urban context. As a collective studio which encourages students to develop their own, unique project, independently and as a group, I wanted to be part of a studio that values collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to design, and celebrates the sensitive and political nature of architecture.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Architecture and Protest: Decolonising the City
Goal	
Location:	Santiago, Chile

<p>The posed problem,</p>	<p>This thesis considers the phenomena of protest as a manifestation of collective conscience translated into the physical occupation of public space. On the 18th of October, 2019, the city of Santiago erupted into protest. Triggered by a rise in metro fares, the protests responded to the consequences of an austere neoliberal system that has commanded the country since its military dictatorship in 1973. In the wider context of Latin America, similar frustrations have been muted over the course of many centuries, throughout the exploitative ruling of both external and internal hegemonic powers.</p> <p>Chile has presented extreme cases of social hierarchy and political turbulence, in which systemic corruption masks an extremely unequal society. This context has produced a culture of protest in Chilean society. The most recent social uprising disrupted these very structures which previously gave illusions of order and control. Urban networks, communication systems and social conventions have all been overturned and redefined by the revolution. Personally experiencing this dystopian reality, emphasised the fragility of our cities and their dependency on rigid systems that cannot adapt to the demands of our rapidly evolving society.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>This thesis is concerned with the re-appropriation of public space in the context of protest, in order to understand the democratisation of space. The genesis of the investigation is centred around my personal experience of the Santiago protests in Chile, commencing October 2019. Acknowledging the act of protest as an essential part of Chilean culture, this event is an extremely relevant example that demonstrates how 'deliberative democracies' of 21st Century Latin America are being challenged.</p> <p>Therefore, using Santiago as a case study, this thesis will investigate the phenomenon of protest and its ability to de-power a space, by answering the driving questions:</p> <p>"How does protest decolonise an urban territory?"</p> <p>"Through archeological documentation, how can the process of ruination as a result of protest, communicate the framework for an architectural project?"</p> <p>"How can architecture advocate spatial agency?"</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>In order to translate these questions into an architectural project, my thesis focuses on the spaces occupied by protest, namely the site 'Plaza Italia,' which is considered the beginning of the protest route. The design assignment seeks to provide an architectural response to the dualistic function of the sites: during the everyday and mass protest.</p> <p>A thorough investigation into the significant sites during the Santiago 2019 protests provides the framework delineating the specific areas of intervention. The interventions include a memorial park and documentation centre, in order to redesign the aforementioned 'Plaza Italia' as a civic space, and a collection of 'follies' which appropriate the removed and/or vandalised monuments along the protest route. The resulting project will produce a series of sensitive interventions that aim to provide spaces for public agency (spatial agency) within the existing political landscape.</p>

Process

Method description

This thesis aims to answer the research questions by applying an ethnographic research methodology and relevant theory to the specified context across various scales, in order to produce a graphical documentation of the spatial decolonisation as a result of protest. Alongside an in-depth theoretical exploration into the historical, cultural and political contexts of protest, the site-specific fieldwork surrounding the 2019 protests in Santiago provided the framework to continue with a more in depth post-situ ethnographic investigation, which defined the initial stages of design. This involved documenting the site in its state of ruination, through the examination of the material traces of protest. I used archeological drawing as a primary technique in order to produce an analytical site survey, which would delineate the potential sites of intervention and provide a thorough understanding of the site conditions. In conjunction with the carried out fieldwork and theoretical research, I have collected data from digital online sources including Google Earth and social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter etc.). This information is used to mobilise the archeological survey drawings, as an explicit means to understand the entanglements and relationships between objects and people on-site, in order to further understand the process of decolonisation and its resulting design implications.

The contiguous design process is continuously informed by the preceding research investigation. The chosen methods and techniques explored in my research, as a method of ethnographic research have provided a thorough and truthful inquiry into the social, material and historical conditions of the chosen site. The trans-disciplinary approach to research and design references fields such as sociology, political theory and material culture alongside architectural practice, to ensure a more scientific and thorough analysis of the context, that has initiated a well-founded design process with a clear intent and direction, and hopefully contribute to a more democratic architecture.

Literature and general practical preference

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Reflection

Since commencing my studies in the master track of architecture at Tu Delft, my individual position has always been to engage with the architectural production of democratic spaces. Thus, my chosen graduation topic is concerned with the advocacy for spatial agency in cities by understanding how public space can contribute a form of cultural resistance against questionable political contexts. Considering the socio-political context of my graduation topic, I feel the choice of studio has been very relevant to the progression of the project, considering that this semester has focused on the 'agency of citizens' and the 'right to the city.'

Regarding its relevance within a wider context, this graduation project responds and engages with ongoing global social, political and cultural conditions. Within the context of Latin America, specifically Chile, the continent is witnessing the consequences of a socio-economic colonialism that has impacted society, where developed countries have used capitalist private market economies to influence and maintain a form of dependency. Stemming from an in-depth trans-disciplinary research investigation, this project aims to provide alternative architectural solutions that challenge this form of neo-colonialism, through the design of a civic space and documentation centre that can provoke a more engaging dialogue between architecture and protest.