

P4 Reflection  
The Festive City : After the Party  
The Maastricht Distillery & Nightclub

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## 0 - Introduction

This document is part of my final graduation project, where I reflect on my working process, products and planning during the MSc4 course. The document consists of four chapters as I look to summarise my thoughts on the challenges as well as the results within this final year course.

I hope to graduate this summer by coming to a comprehensive conclusion with which the final project reflects my ideas, thoughts and process experienced within the full year studying.

## 1 - The Theme and Framework

The decision to graduate through the Interiors, Buildings, Cities chair, came with the idea that I would really explore the smaller scale while designing. Too often within other projects, I found myself not knowing how the entirety of the building worked, because it was too large of a project for a single person to design. By having the ability to choose a site, choose the building type and choose the project brief, it allowed me to delve into the scale that I wished to explore. This also allowed for a great amount of freedom, which brought with it many more challenges, but also more interesting results.

The idea of researching the 'festival' theme in Maastricht, interpreting this and then formulating my own design project, appealed to me more than any other studio. By being able to explore through researching and experimental making tasks, to then produce a project brief, also interested me, as it follows a similar guide to the ways in which I have previously attempted to work.

The studio began by studying the 'festive city; in general and then relating that to the city of Maastricht. As a collective studio we studied three festivities. The Maastricht carnival was the particular festive scene that I chose to research and influence my ways of thinking. Topics of discussion covered social and architectural stand points on procession routes, fashion, organisation, the ritual and representation. The early stages of the research involved creating diptychs and illustrations which specifically showed the place of the festive and the architectural moments which both create the festive and are created by the festive.



Maastricht Train Station - During Carnival

The decisions on the brief, program and site all came very quickly after the early exploration. The structure of the course however allowed for all of these variables to be tweaked over time and subsequently it strengthened the project. For P2, a site, brief and program was all decided upon and formulated into a rough design. The intense period of work before P2 really helped bring the ideas together into a representation through the formation of a building. After P2, the project then began to question more architectural aspects in relation to my personal festive themes, which resulted in the site boundaries being changed and explored as the project developed.

## 2 - Design by Research

Alongside design studio products, a different research was carried out within the Research Seminar course. This allowed me to look more specifically into a subject that included a kind of festivity, but could also be linked back to the city of Maastricht. Through development, the idea of eating and drinking was what I wanted to explore. The moments of release or 'letting go', then became a direction from this point. The introduction of researching alcohol and the effects it has on the different generations in Maastricht, would then lead towards a starting point for a project brief.

The Research Seminar was based upon the side of anthropological research. For this course I produced a report with the main question being;

How do attitudes towards drinking differ between different generations in Maastricht and how can this influence my approach when designing a distillery combined with a bar, café and nightclub?

During the process of the seminar I visited Maastricht several times, interviewing people and visiting as many places of drinking as possible. Throughout the anthropology research I also wished to continue looking the subject from an architectural view and begin thinking about spaces in relation to the 'festive city' theme.

Although I did not have a site pinned down during this phase, it was beneficial to spend lots of time in the city itself and get a feel for the different environments both in and outside the city. This seminar also pushed me to start linking ideas together. Pieces of research slowly started to overlap within the two courses, building up my stand point on the festive theme.



### 3 - The Method and Process

The process of designing felt quite fluid as decisions on the directions to follow were discussed on a weekly basis. With the programmatic scheme of my project being quite complicated technically, in the form of both a distillery and a nightclub, as well as the restrictions of the site that I chose, it meant that the method of plan and space making became key. The program technically has to work within the project and so research was almost continuous as I tried to get in the loop of knowing the technical side of the distillery, whilst also trying to link all other aspects into design.

Whilst technical specifications of machinery had to be learnt about and decided upon at an early stage, the exploration of architectural elements and questions perhaps came later within this project. In a specific two week task of creating a stop motion film of a key space within the building, was when the project really started to materialise as atmospheres and internal discussions were created.



Distillery Tour Scene - image 2 of 5

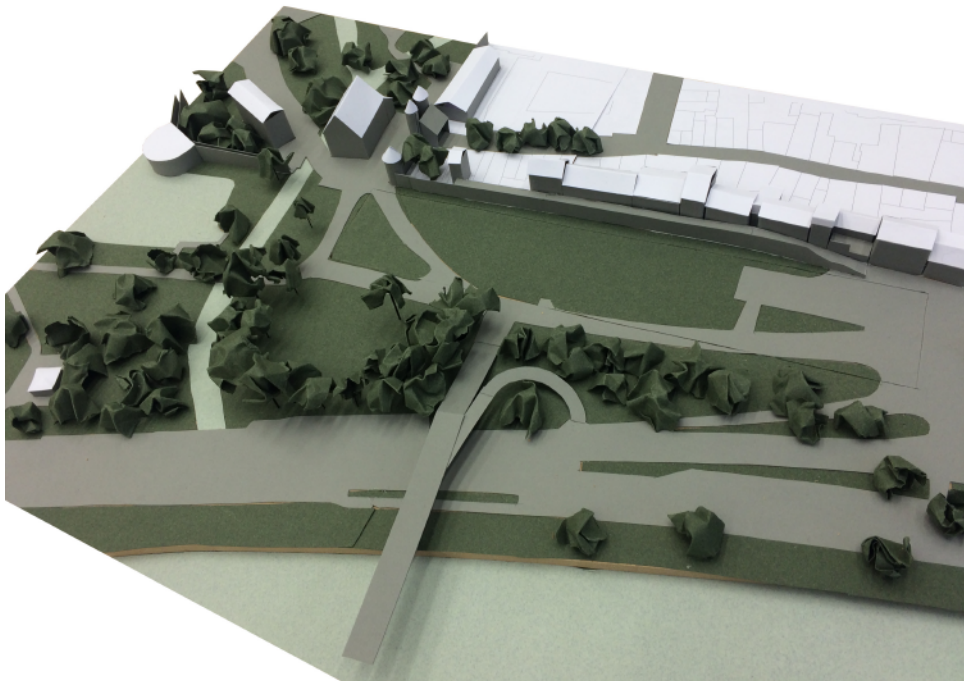
The restrictions of the underground space that the project sits inside, meant that there were specific dealings with light that was important for the project. The cutting and sculpting of the existing underground car park also had to be visualised by using a computer model, where many variations of voids and solids could be tested.

The making of a physical site model allowed me to explore the project on an urban scale, this gave me ability to test forms within the surrounding context. I also continued to produce simple massing illustrations throughout design changes, which helped picture the project from the perspective of the user. Later the creation of a 1:50 concrete model of the existing underground structure allowed me to materialise the existing form and see once again the very unique form of the columns and heights within this structure. Towards the end of the process, a revised, 1:100 model of the full project allowed for the overall scheme to be represented in one unique object. This again made the spaces more clear in my own mind upon the completion of the model.





Concrete section model



Site model

I would say that throughout the process these models, together with the meticulous plan creation became the driving force in shaping the project physically, both in form and in other architectural qualities. The issue of timing when to make specific models was one of the challenges. I do enjoy making models and so take care with how I create them, seeing them each as individual pieces. Trying to design within physical models tended not to work for myself, even though the Interiors course attempts to use this mentality of creating. I think that the ways in which I sometimes focused on the complexity of the program maybe restricted me using physical models to design. The fact that the space was underground and within an existing structure also made it more difficult, as rather than simply adding forms together in a typical form making model, I was also taking away, cutting and sculpting and so to do this efficiently and within reasonable amounts of time, it became a challenge.

#### 4 - Conclusion

Throughout the full year I have explored so many different aspects and concepts, through so many different methods. By starting with the research of the 'festive' topic and concluding with my own project, with which I created the brief, chose the site and evolved, is something that I will look back upon and feel proud in the amount of tasks and body of work I have created, not only for the final presentation, but with the whole development behind it.

In the beginning there was quite a lot of pressure to start creating a brief from what felt like not enough specific research, but as time progressed the flexibility allowed for the project to mature and develop, through my own thinking.

With the flexibility of the studio projects however, it did mean that every person within the course chose a different site, had a different brief and program from one another. This meant that the people within the studio became detached from each other and after the group research phase finished, people began to separate off and delve into their own projects. I was never able to fully understand another persons research or project enough to really have a thought provoking discussion about a project, which was a real shame from my perspective. The studio culture in a way was lost and all the projects became very individual, where people would come into the studio once a week, just to have meetings with the tutors.

On a personal note I found the quantity of research and development which was needed to start a brief by myself to be quite stressful, and perhaps this process was not always represented in drawings or in writing seen by the tutors. A large quantity of time at the beginning of the process was spent on visits to precedents for example, or reading through pages online about the technicalities of things that I began thinking about. Continuing and developing my own idea was also very intensive at times and so I had very few moments in which to take more time to maybe produce visually attractive diagrams and drawings. Having said that, I will take an immense amount of pride and enjoyment out of completing the project from start to finish knowing the amount of effort gone into the entire process.