

# Reflection TU Delft

## A Found Palace for the Anti-Museum

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Interiors Buildings Cities offers its students a highly organized and well-structured process throughout the graduation period. Besides providing the project, site, and architecture brief, the studio segments the year through a series of smaller studio briefs requiring research or design at varying scales and topics. Collective research played a large role in the early design phase to synthesize a large amount of information. In the first quarter of the year an integrated *Research Plan* course ran in parallel where we read, discussed, and wrote about issues surrounding art, its display, and the museum. This structure and working environment created a particular and peculiar process that could not be replicated individually.

The first studio brief was to research museum precedents, and I was assigned the Tate Modern by Herzog and de Meuron. A deep investigation into the workings of the building through drawings, texts, and a documentary allowed many of their ideas to permeate my thinking. The architects' ideas of re-use, excavation and the *found*, exemplified not only in Tate Modern but also in their other works, along with Lacaton Vassal's FRAC museum, left a strong impression on me and was a factor in the decision to keep the existing building on the site. Later in the process, these ideas returned when I carried out an obsessive study and redrawing of the foundation plan and the archival lock drawings which would become a fundamental part of my design.

The second studio brief was the ensemble project that required us to design a space to display the work of an artist in the M HKA collection, which for me was Luc Tuymans. When I came across Tuymans' large-scale mosaic installed in the Palazzo Grassi in Venice I became aware of other seemingly serendipitous connections between Italy and Antwerp. But perhaps these connections are not entirely coincidental due to the city's history as a center of wealth and art in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, exemplified by Peter Paul Rubens' palazzo he designed for himself. Encouraged by my mentors, the palace/palazzo played a central role in my project as an idea, in its organization, and in its symbology. Further research into the history of M HKA revealed elusive photos of their "occupation" of the royal palace in Antwerp, further strengthening this idea.

I was surprised that the separate assignments from the beginning of the year, done before even looking at the project site or brief, had such a profound effect throughout the design process. These investigations and ideas were seeds, unconsciously planted, that when rediscovered had become the roots or foundations of my project. For the Research Plan course, I wrote a small conclusion text, "Everything, for everyone, all at once: the real problem of the museum," which expressed the multitude of contradictions inherent to the museum. Embracing these, my project, titled: *A Found Palace for the Anti-museum*, seeks to weave the multitude of dualities together: existing/new, found/invented, palace/warehouse, open/closed rooms/landscape, spectacle/composed, traditional/contemporary.

While I do not see my project explicitly about sustainability, it does touch upon relevant issues within and beyond architecture. The adaptive re-use of existing buildings has a potentially significant sustainability advantage over demolition and new build. Furthermore, I believe *finding* as an attitude for design can lead to more empathy and sensitivity to its site and surroundings, revealing value in things overlooked and buried.

In the period between P4 and P5 I would like to bring all the drawings and images to a presentation level. There are also the assignments of the final brief that need to be done: the gallery curation and the animation. Ideally, I would also like to make a 1:100 model that reveals the basement and the interior.