

**Reflection P4 and P5: Architecture**

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The Architecture of the Interior

## **Personal information:**

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## **Studio**

**Theme:** The Architecture of the Interior  
**Teachers:** Mark Pimlott, Mauro Parravicini and Jurjen Zeinstra  
**External examiner:** Regina Bokel

## **Aspect 1:**

### **The relationship between research and design**

The main research was about changing the identity of a certain typology. This typology is based on public and open spaces. In the case of the graduation studio of the architecture of the interior, this open space is the Mahlerplein situated in the area of Amsterdam South. The current situation of the Mahlerplein is that it is an empty space in between large and high office buildings. Based on the research of William Whyte, a square should have several basic aspects like relation with the streets, visibility, sun(light), water (as sound blocker or an element to touch), trees for shelter, support (reason to go to a square) and triangulation. Almost each aspect is missing within the Mahlerplein, resulting in an empty and too large space with no direct relation to its context.

The first step in researching the Mahlerplein was to observe the current situation, to see how the square is actually used. This resulted in the image of a square that is only used as a traffic area, so there is no actual reason to stay at the Mahlerplein. Also by its proportions (too large and no sense of human scale), the square is not a place to feel welcome or safe.

Based on the idea of Han Meyer that a well-functioning square needs to be 'feed' by its context or surroundings, to give meaning to a square. In the case of the Mahlerplein, the surrounding exist mainly out of office building. Office building are 'open' during the day, but closed during the night. This means that the square during people's free-time is not occupied and basically gives the image of an empty area. Yet, when the 'working-people' are finished, the square is than only used for transition towards the station or the car park, so it remains empty. The main aspect is to find a specific program out of the existing surroundings to give the square its 'nutrition'. This 'nutrition' can be found the ABN AMRO bank which is situated next to the Mahlerplein.

The ABN AMRO bank plays a very dominant role in the forming the image of the Mahlerplein. Basically in the current situation, the Mahlerplein is divided into two owners. The main square is owned by the municipality, the garden area is owned by the ABN AMRO bank. To give meaning to the Mahlerplein, the ABN AMRO has to play a role in the design, it has to give function to be part of a larger interior space. Based on this research the main function of the design is a place for the art owned by the bank. The ABN AMRO has a huge collection of art and historical artefacts and documents, which could be the 'nutrition' for the Mahlerplein.

## **Aspect 2:**

### **The relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)**

The main theme of the studio is about creating a public interior, creating space by architectonic elements. The Mahlerplein is an problematic area because it shows no relation with its direct surroundings. For the studio of the Architecture of the Interior it means that the Mahlerplein should become an interior space, which means that certain architectonic elements should form a space with interior qualities. How this interior spaces are formed is based on the previous observational study.

Looking back on the observational study again, several guidelines for the design could be formulated; how the square is used and how it should be used. This resulted into a threefold solution, based on how the square should be approached. Designing the actual limits of where the design on the Mahlerplein should be situated becomes the main aspect. The sides of these limits all have their specific relation to the surroundings, to filter the empty space into a unique and contrasting space in the heart of the Mahlerplein.

The sides along the main buildings adjacent to the Mahlerplein (the Ito building and the ABN AMRO building) are the most important zones for transition and traffic (bicycles included). Along the Ito-building (which is facing the ABN AMRO building) this traffic idea could be transformed into a street. This means that the design at this side needs to be more closed to actually form an independent street. The side facing the ABN AMRO building is a limit which should be function as a filter. This means that it should work as a transition space from openness to a more closed environment. The side facing the station should have the same identity as the one facing the ABN AMRO building; to guide the openness. The last limit is the one at the south, facing the Symphony towers and the George Gerwinplein. A more open relation gives a new meaning and a new start of the urban context.

The Mahlerplein is part of a larger axis, the Berlage axis. This axis contains several different areas like the station, the Zuidplein, dwelling areas and ends into a park like environment with a hotel situated in it. The other end of the axis is not so clear, because the axis as a structural sightline is weaken at several places starting with the Mahlerplein. For the design this gives opportunity to create a new environment; ending the Berlage axis as a landscape and creating and new series of public open spaces.

## **Aspect 3:**

### **The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework.**

The methodical line of approach within this studio is about how space is represented, is about how spaces are formed and created into a larger context. In this framework this interior is formed out of concrete portal constructions. On the smallest scale it is a spatial concrete portal construction with on the inside the 'service' functions of the main program. The portal construction is on the outside also a planter system used to create a landscape on the outside of the portal construction. If the portal construction are placed one after another it forms a small building.

In the design for the Mahlerplein the portal constructions results in a typology of pavilions which by their configuration form and outside interior in the form of an inner central park. The sheltered area that the portal constructions create forms a cave like interior. It is like an opening in the landscape to enter a totally different area than the office environment of the Mahlerplein.

On the largest scale The Mahlerplein is divided into smaller, more human scale, areas, using the portal construction also as space dividers. The shelter that the portals could create are not always 'filled' with functionality. It marks different kind of areas, like a new entrance area for the ABN AMRO building, a filter like entrance from the station and create the possibility to cover a space with planting. The empty square becomes a place to discover with different kind of interior spaces.

**Aspect 4:****The relationship between the project and the wider social context**

This project is about the transformation of an empty square into a space with interior quality. It is about the transformation of an ancient square typology into complete different type of use and representation. Seen on in a larger context, there are quite a lot squares that doesn't functioning as described by William Whyte. Especially office squares are often unpleasant areas with a lot of design issues. Today's squares have the tendency to function just like the historical examples, but with new functionalities and human social habits, this is no longer possible. The square has to have the ability to adjust itself to contribute to society. With the tendency of people becoming more and more individual, it is the challenge to have architecture and urbanism contribute to places where people can become part of. The use of the square should help to feel welcome and safe in the world, as a part of a whole. The redesign of the Mahlerplein into an interior environment could be an example in the transformation of public squares.