

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan

Personal information	
Name	
Student number	4707044

Studio		
Name / Theme	Interiors Buildings Cities	
Main mentor	D. Rosbottom	Architecture of the Interior
Second mentor	M. Parravicini	Architectural Engineering and Technology
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The studio of Interiors Buildings Cities moves, as the name suggests, in between all scales within the larger urban condition, and therefore deals with the community/city/culture as a whole. Personally, I find it important that all inhabitants are accommodated with detailed consideration, individually and collectively. Especially in a city like Brussels, where 143 nationalities live amongst one another, the challenge exists of considering and accommodating this highly diverse population. But with all inhabitants, I mean human and non-human. For example, Brussels knows over 700 natural species of plants. This relation between species, human and non-human, within the social and physical context of the city, is something I would like to explore.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<b>Architecture of Care: a Chance for Life</b>
Goal	
Location:	Brussels, Belgium
The posed problem,	The National Bank of Belgium, as an institution, lacks (bio)diversity.
research questions and	How can the National Bank of Belgium accommodate nature in such a way that it can contribute to (the survival of) our economic system? How can (bio)diversity in the National Bank of Belgium be increased and how can nature improve its working environment?
design assignment in which these result.	The Future Bank: The National Bank of Belgium as guardian of the material forces of nature.

For centuries now, our economy has been exploiting the planet's resources for its own profit. According to professor Gail Schwab, this economic model will eventually lead to extreme environmental destruction. Our system thrives on natural resources and ignoring the costs of this system is contradictory: without natural services, we would in fact produce nothing. For the sake of the survival of our system, we should think of new ways of relating to nature and to the earth. As The National Bank of Belgium has a pivoting role in shaping the country's financial system, the NBB can be an example, a pioneer, a steward in changing to a nature-inclusive institution: is self-sufficiency the future?

## Process

### Method description

The first step into the research is to do case studies and precedent studies of contemporary office buildings which have incorporated nature (agriculture/horticulture) into its designs. An important reading that will complement this research is *Making Urban Nature* by Vollaard et al. which gives practical examples of nature-inclusive designing. According to the book, too many planners and policymakers still consider people to be the only habitants of the city. The authors see nature as an integral part of the urban fabric and, therefore, as important to the quality of life in the city. This book addresses the theory of biodiversity and the maintenance of urban ecology.

Another helpful book is *Relational Architectural Ecologies* edited by Peg Rawes (2013), which examines the social relations of modern cultures and highlights the need to relate architecture to ecology by extending our architectural thinking. This book describes an important feminist discourse on both the current economy and the environment.

## Literature and general practical preference

- Rawes, Peg. *Relational Architectural Ecologies: Architecture, Nature and Subjectivity*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Vollaard, Piet, Jacques Vink, and Niels de Zwarte. *Making Urban Nature*. Rotterdam: Nai010 Publishers, 2017.
- Boys, Jos et al. *Making Space: Women and the Man-made Environment*. London: Pluto Press, 1984.
- Frichot, Hélène, Catharina Gabrielsson, and Helen Runting. *Architecture and Feminisms: Ecologies, Economies, Technologies*. Milton Keynes: Routledge, 2017.
- Lupton, Ellen. *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office*. 1 edition. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997. Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994
- Perez, Caroline Criado. *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men*. London: Vintage Books, 2019.
- Rendell, Jane, Barbara Penner, and Iain Borden. *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Architext Series. New York: E & FN Spon, 1999.

## Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The Graduation Studio of Interiors Buildings Cities deals with the topic of the Future Bank: an agent of change that understands its societal and environmental responsibilities. My graduation topic investigates the relationship between humans and nature and their co-existence within the context of the future bank as a steward of sustainability. This graduation project shows the significance of incorporating nature into the urban fabric, which goes beyond Architecture: nature-inclusive design is relevant in all master tracks of the MSc AUBS.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

The bank as a collective system has been recently scrutinized due to persistent climate change. As Brussels is working towards a Doughnut Economy Model, the National Bank of Belgium investing in climate destructing companies is contradictory. This project re-grounds the institution of The National Bank of Belgium to represent the environmental responsibilities that the bank carries towards society and the awareness that the bank has about its accountability to the natural world.