

REFLECTION

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Urban Architecture Graduation Studio Urban Architecture Graduation

I initially decided to choose the Urban Architecture graduation studio for my graduation year due to an interest in the freedom that the studio presents in terms of project brief, as well as the site specific approach. However, beyond my initial understandings of the studio and its teachings, I decided to approach the year with an open mindset, to learn as much as possible, and to develop myself, not only as a student of Architecture, but also as a person.

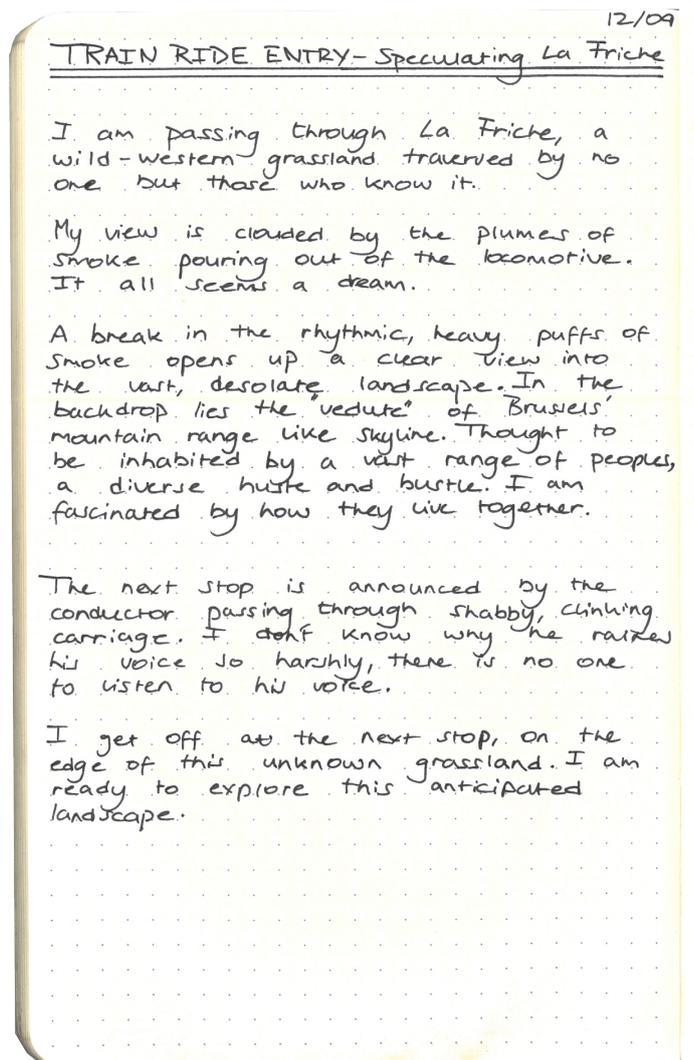
The graduation year started with a group trip to Brussels, where the project site for the year was to be visited for the first time. The site, La Friche Josaphat, a “wasteland” found in the neighbourhood of Schaerbeek spiked my curiosities, but I decided to not investigate into the site prior to the visit.

The first product I decided to produce for the forthcoming graduation year was a piece of writing, in which I intuitively speculated the atmosphere of the site (to be read in the image below). Based upon my knowledge of La Friche being a large open area, and having a train line splitting it through the middle, the writing resulted in an imagined wild, mystical atmosphere. The way in which the Friche is faced turned out to influence my perception, where throughout my project, this theme came back. Most prominently reflected in the video I produced for the P1 presentation.

During the first visit to Brussels, we as a graduation group were introduced to La Friche Josaphat through a commons initiative found in the south of the site. Learning about the site from this perspective introduced me to the fact that La Friche is not only a place of ecological value, but a place which carries a significant social value, as a space of otherness, not only on the scale of the neighbourhood, but on the scale of Brussels. I decided to maintain this important sentiment throughout the process of my project.

This sentiment is especially influenced in my research of threshold spaces in Brussels. Where through the year, I found myself interested in looking into spaces between the public and private, all of which had some sort of an emancipatory quality. The interest in this topic stems from my daily observations, as well as a longing for expression and informality in my day-to-day urban life.

I found myself researching as a continuous process as the last months have gone by. I feel like I do it somewhat subconsciously through taking in what goes around me. My thoughts are



influenced by things I see, and are thus image based, the best modus for me to capture these thoughts physically is through photography. I am most often interested in the more banal day to day things, which, although I say banal, I find very interesting, as these are the interactions with the built environment that accompany us the most.

This research has influenced my design greatly, as I have strived to include these moments I observe in my project, and this is reflected at all scales. The inclusion of these elements in my project have been a continuous imperative process. My design is influenced by my surroundings, and the elements that I design also have an influence on what spikes my interest. However, I must state that this continuous process has also been difficult to map and make sense of immediately, it most often requires me to take a step back to realise the inevitable correlations. Throughout the year I have ordered my thoughts on a large digital board, consecutively, in order of dates, this has allowed me to make sense of my thoughts. However, the huge disperse in information also makes it difficult for me to produce a product which I see as a unity.

After the P4 I have managed to take a little bit more time for myself and have fun with the work I am producing. Throughout the process of the year I had always wanted to build a model. In lead up to the P5 I built a model which for me brings the project together, as it is the combination between the research, the design, and building technology aspects too.

I have never worked on a project for as long as a period as the graduation year. This has led me to allow myself to spontaneously allow the project to flow in the order of my thoughts. My process has been guided by a constant reconsideration of what I am working on. This reconsideration is often put into perspective during the weekly tutoring sessions, which have allowed me to not only focus on the input I receive, but to also intuitively allow myself to take a step back. The space and time given to me to view the project from a different scope, and to also just follow the rhythm of life, which naturally changes throughout different times in the year, has been of utmost importance in supporting my process. I have greatly valued allowing myself to take time on things, and to trust a process which has its ups and downs. I hope to take this with me beyond the graduation year.



A timeline of images I pasted on a digital board to gather my thoughts .