

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners ([Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl](mailto:Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl)), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Chantal Besteman
Student number	4679881

Studio		
Name / Theme	AR3AP100 Public Building	Graduation Studio
Main mentor	Stefan Witteman	Project Design (Architecture)
Second mentor	Ger Warries	Technical Building Design
Third mentor	Stefano Corbo	Architecture Theory
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The choice of the Graduation Studio Public Building came from a pre-existing interest. The goal for the graduation was to design a building where we as a society can question and explore our ideas about sex, desire and gender. Everyone has a conception of what sex is for them (domestic), which can differ from the other (foreign). The inability to accept the other's ideas about sex leads to sex being a decisive and polarising element in contemporary societies. In order to gain acceptance for and be inspired by the "other", architecture, and especially public buildings, can be the mediation between the domestic and the foreign. Public buildings can be catalysers for social change, improve social life and become an accelerator for the development of their surroundings. The studio's aim is to design a Public Condenser with a multifunctional program in order to accommodate many people with many different needs. It is a place where the domestic and the foreign come together, this connects seamlessly to the goal of bringing people with different backgrounds and sexual preferences together in a way that can learn from the "other" and gain more respect for each other's sexuality and boundaries.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<b>Get a Room!</b> Sex and the Commons in Berlin
Goal	

Location:	Friedrichshain, Berlin, Germany
The posed problem,	<p>Sex is a decisive and polarising element in contemporary societies, whether we look at the me-too movement or the reinforcement of anti-abortion laws we can see how political sex can be when it comes to self-realisation, individual will &amp; education. Religions and patriarchal systems have ensured that sex is dominated by the standard heterosexual script and is used as a tool to suppress mainly women and queer people. Changing the standard heterosexual script requires a questioning of traditional sexual gender roles at the societal level, which ultimately responds to the need for social change. As a society, we need to redefine our common values about sex. Currently the debate about sex, desire and gender is mostly influenced by media and political platforms. Media and political platforms are very polarised and informed by top-down dynamics, while real change comes from within a community. We should have a physical place for the community to debate these matters. To speak openly about our sexuality can be completely healing and empowering. It can heal us collectively together, bringing up the taboos so we can support each other in this journey towards embracing our sexuality.</p> <p>The district Friedrichshain, within the bigger context of Berlin, is the perfect place to design a public condenser that accelerates the conversation about sexuality. Friedrichshain is an area that consists of a variety of contrasts; on one hand, Berlin has a very liberal attitude towards sex, there are public events that raise questions about sexuality, gender and identity, clubs where public sex is allowed, on the other hand, there are groups where these topics are never discussed or where certain sexuality is repressed. These different conceptions of what sexuality is and how to behave accordingly causes tension, at worst this translates into violence and non-consensual sexual behaviour. As a counteract, the public condenser will be an inclusive and diverse environment, representative of multiple instances and orientations. The whole community can come together and discuss these issues to better understand their own sexuality and that of the other.</p>
research questions and	How can architecture be used to create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender in the context of Berlin?

	<p>To reach an answer of this question, the following topics need further research: 1) What are the normative codes and how are they embedded in architecture?  2) How does architecture complicit in maintaining that normative coding?  3) How does the atmosphere (size, organisation, acoustics, etc) of a space influences our ability to talk about sex? How can the five senses stimulate us to talk about sex?</p>
<p><b>design assignment in which these result.</b></p>	
<p>A new approach has to be investigated on how we, as a society, define our common values about sex. We should have a physical place for the community to debate these matters in order to better understand their own sexuality and that of the other. This means that in the first place, the goal of this project is to design a sexual education &amp; experience centre in Friedrichshain, Berlin. Next to that, the focus will be on researching if, and how, can architecture be used to create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender.</p> <p>The design location is situated in Friedrichshain. It is on the edge of a residential area. The site is located in between two parks; Wriezener Park and Comenius Platz. There is an opportunity to connect Wriezener Park to Comenius Platz. The public condenser will act as a connecting factor. The new public green space will be used to create a gradual transition from the urban fabric to the building, which will only be accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The building will be placed on the sightlines of the main access roads and will be recognizable from a distance, as it should express that sex is a matter that can be discussed and deserves attention. The façade will translate the interesting moments of the interior to its exterior by playing with opacity, materialization and form.</p> <p>The park will be used to introduce the activities that will go on inside. There will be a water square to introduce the bathhouse. A terrace for the café and the event space is placed next to the already existing event venue so that they can reinforce each other, together they can host outside events during summer. Interactive installations, that trigger a multisensory experience, will be placed throughout the whole park and close to the main entrance an outdoor gallery will transition into the indoors.</p> <p>These and other program are connected to explore our sexuality on three different levels; our bodies, our brains &amp; our relationships. To explore and to be comfortable with our bodies there will be a bathhouse, a dance/sports hall &amp; an interactive gallery. The focus will be on the bodily experience of architecture and should trigger all the five senses. To educate our brains there will be an auditorium, a library and meeting rooms to give space to collectives. The auditorium can host lectures on sex education for the public, and together with the dance hall it can transform in a theatre as well. The library will have open-access shelves with a collection of books related to sex, desire and gender and should be a space where people can educate themselves through reading and discussion. To apply this knowledge to our</p>	

relationships there will be consultation rooms for sex/relationship therapy and workshop spaces for group discussions and practises such as tantra and bondage.

The building will be a continuous sequence of moments of publicness and more individual experiences. There will be thresholds to retreat from the public eye for a moment when necessary. Multiple routings throughout the buildings will balance the dualism of collective and individual. Some will be the fast and/or private routes, and others will act as a public promenade.

## **Process**

### **Method description**

In order to reach this goal, several actions will take place to create enough input for the design assignment as well as to contribute to the broader discourse. To find an answer to the main research question ("How can architecture be used to create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender in the context of Berlin?") literature research will be conducted on multi-sensory design theory and several case studies will be analysed on specific elements such as program, circulation, atmosphere, materialization and how they create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender. This will form the theoretical framework of the project from which a "catalogue of spaces connected to program & atmosphere" can be constructed. This catalogue of spaces will provide general knowledge on what kind of forms, materials & acoustics can evoke what kind of experiences, which will be widely applicable within the field of architecture.

The research method "research by design" will be used to explore several possibilities on how to implement the theoretical findings directly into the design, as well as to get an understanding of the context. The research-by-design method will help to find more profound design solutions that are specific for the location and the studio's ambitions. This process began by examining the definition of a public condenser through a series of tasks concentrating on certain methods, like collages and diagrams. Simultaneously, extensive research on Berlin's history, culture, demography, politics and architecture, as well as a week-long excursion to Berlin, served to further determine the needs of the public in Friedrichshain. During this excursion several interviews with residents of Friedrichshain/Berlin were conducted, the method Participant Observation was used during visits to sex-positive clubs and the 24h Visionskultur festival, a 2 days event next to the chosen site for the Public Condenser, where a workshop on body-positivity and a talk on gender were attended in order to get a better understanding on Berlin's attitude towards sex, desire and gender. Three prospective sites were analysed through diagrams, drawings and 3D volumes studies, along with targeted readings and research on the main issue, how architecture can create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender.

Besides this, research from Rutgers, a Dutch research centre for sexuality and sexual health was consulted to gain additional information on how people respond to discussing topics such as sex, desire and gender. Which setting/atmosphere, method (theatre, lectures, group discussions) and group composition different potential user-groups prefer. This resulted in the first sketches of diagrams, plans, sections and

volumes studies on the chosen site. An interview with the head of marketing of Rouze (erotic storytelling platform) was held in order to get feedback and input on the schematic design and the findings were processed into the design.

After P2, more interviews with potential user-groups and sexuality professionals will be conducted in order to gain more insights on what the users' needs are and to get feedback on design proposals. The "catalogue of spaces connected to program & atmosphere" will be finalised and the conceptual design will evolve into a concrete building form and structure with distinct building technologies components that highlight its materiality, sustainability and urban ecology.

Down below, a global planning of the MSc 4 is described:

Week 3.1 - 3.7: Design Development

- Continuation of research on multi-sensory design, to serve as direct input for the design and to construct the "catalogue of spaces connected to program & atmosphere".
- Further exploration of the design from scales 1:500/200 to 1:100/50/5.

Week 3.8: P3 Presentation (Progress Review)

Week 3.9 – 4.3: Further Design Development

- More detailed and concrete design, technical aspects, models.
- Finishing both research and concept (vision, diagrams), preparation for P4.

Week 4.4 – 4.6: P4 Presentation

Week 4.7 – 4.8: Finalization

Week 4.9 – 5.1: P5 Final Presentation

## Literature and general practical preference

The literature listed below will be used to gain knowledge to be able to answer the posed research questions.

1. Betsky, A. (1995). *Building Sex: Men, Women, Architecture, and the Construction of Sexuality*.
2. Cense, M., de Grouw, S. & Vermeulen, M. (2021). *Gewoon, het taboe eraf halen Wat leerlingen willen van seksuele vorming*. Rutgers.
3. Cense, M. & Oostrik, S. (2014). *Beat the Macho Onderzoeksrapport*. Rutgers.
4. Colomina, B. (1997). *Sexuality & Space* (Princeton Papers on Architecture) (4th edition). Princeton Architectural Press.
5. Döring, N., & Mohseni, M. R. (2022). *Der Gender Orgasm Gap. Ein kritischer Forschungsüberblick zu Geschlechterdifferenzen in der Orgasmus-Häufigkeit beim Heterosex*. Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung (Stuttgart, Germany), 35(02), 73–87.
6. Liddicoat, S. (2017). *Architecture and the design of therapeutic environments: The case of self harm* [PhD thesis]. The University of Melbourne.
7. Liddicoat, S. (2015). *Exploring relations between body, communication and agency in therapeutic space*. The University of Melbourne.
8. Hosey, L. (2001). *Hidden Lines: Gender, Race, and the Body in Graphic Standards*. Journal of Architectural Education, 55:2, 101-112
9. Pallasmaa, J. (2005). *The Eyes Of The Skin: Architecture And The Senses* (2nd Revised edition). Wiley.
10. Rendell, J., Penner, B. & Borden, I. (2000). *Gender Space Architecture: An Interdisciplinary Introduction*. Routledge.
11. Spence, C. (2020). *Senses of place: architectural design for the multisensory mind*. Cogn. Research 5, 46.
12. The Funambulist 19 - *The Space of Ableism* (digital version)

13. Williams, R. J. (2013). *Sex and Buildings: Modern Architecture and the Sexual Revolution*. Reaktion Books.

14. Zumthor, P. (2006). *Atmospheres*. Birkhauser.

The following building, their specific program, circulation, atmosphere, materialization and how they create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender are going to be further investigated:

1. The Victorian Pride Centre / BAU Brearley Architects and Urbanists + Grant Amon Architects (2021)
2. The Origin of Life Museum / Fenhom·URO (2021)
3. RISD Student Success Center / WORKac (2019)
4. Los Angeles LGBT Center - Anita May Rosenstein Campus / Leong Leong + Killefer Flammang Architects (2019)
5. We Hotel TOYA / Kengo Kuma and Associates (2018)
6. Ku.Be House of Culture in Movement / MVRDV + ADEPT (2016)
7. Löyly / Avanto Architects (2016)
8. The Media-Third-Place Library / Dominique Coulon & associés (2016)
9. The 'reversible destiny lofts mitaka' / shusaku arakawa + madeline gins (2005)
10. Jewish Museum Berlin / Daniel Libeskind (1999)
11. The Therme Vals / Peter Zumthor (1996)
12. Divisible by 2 / John Whitehead (1988)
13. The Continental Baths (1968 – 1976)
14. Visiona 2 / Verner Panton (1970)
15. The House of the Future / Peter and Alison Smithson (1956)
16. Josephine Baker House / Adolf Loos (1928)
17. Moller House / Adolf Loos (1928)
18. Szechenyi Baths / Győző Czigler
19. The Baths of Caracalla (c. 212 – c. 537)
20. The Baths of Diocletian (c. 212 – c. 537)

## Reflection

1. Relation between project, studio and master programme.

During my education at TU Delft I have designed a Public House in Amsterdam in the MSc1 Interiors Buildings Cities Studio and a social housing complex and urban plan in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in the MSc2 Global Housing Studio. Both projects were about the transitions between public and private, from the collective to the individual. The Public House is the mediation between a collective public life and the private house of an individual. The project brought the intimate and informal into the public realm. With the social housing project, it was the other way around, namely how to include the collective into private concept of housing. This is important because women in Dhaka are otherwise often excluded from public life. Designing and researching at the border of public and private has challenged me to reframe the notion of how the commons are able to support its public. With the focus of my



graduation project on sex, desire and gender, which are by many considered private matters, I am again challenging to bring intimate and informal topics to be explored and discussed by the public through a public condenser.

## 2. Relevance in the larger framework.

As a society we need to redefine the role played by sex in our interactions. Conception about sex, desire and gender are dominated by the standard heterosexual script, which mainly suppresses women and queer people. In order to change this normative coding requires a questioning of traditional sexual gender roles at the societal level, which ultimately responds to the need for social change. Architecture is a strong tool in regenerating social change, but also in maintaining no longer serving or even harmful standards. Therefore it is important to research how architecture complicit in maintaining normative coding and how architecture can create and experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender. As architects, we need to rethink our disciplinary boundaries. The realm of Architecture has to expand and incorporate questions of sex in its theoretical and operative strategies. Through the connection of architecture to sex, desire and gender a new, interdisciplinary language can be created that can be used to find new architectural forms and principles.