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TEACHERS

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Ruins and residues of the past have held a moral, emotional, and aesthetic fascination throughout history. In the region of IBA parkstad Limburg there is a lack of cultural identity. The former meaning and significance is disappeared.. In the research the via Belgica, a former fundamental development axis, is used as a backbone to find the characteristics of the area throughout time and to recover the lost identity of Limburg.

The principal question for this research is: 'How to reinterpret the cultural history of the via Belgica, with a focus on the development of the area along the road, with the aim to make the area recognisable and valuable back again using the via as a primary connecting axis.'

GRADUATION SUBJECT IN RELATION TO THE AE GRADUATION STUDIO THEME

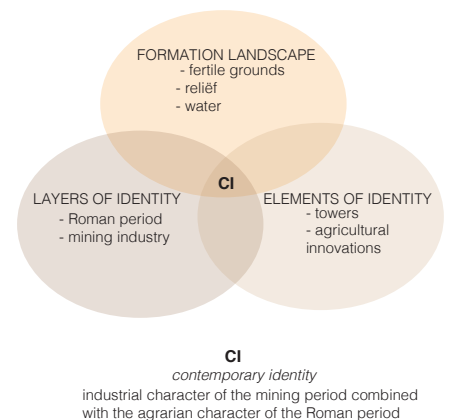
The studio gives the opportunity to develop yourself in your own interest or fascination which leads to the possibility to define your own research and project. The only fixed parameters are the including of thematic research which results in a research paper and to conclude with a architectural design. Several project contexts are proposed by the studio, which you can decide to pick up. But then again, the student has to define the own personal fascination. My graduation project did not start with a technical fascination. I started with a interest in ruins in Limburg, which has led to take the via Belgica as a backbone for my research. The research resulted not only in architectural design principles, but affected also my choices in the technical design principles. Starting with a specific technical research is related with a bottom up research. In my case, starting with the ruins in a region as fascination, the research resulted in a top down process.

RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The AE graduation schedule is divided in two parts: a technical (thematic) research and an overall design research. The first half year of the graduation was focused towards the technical research. The studio started with some introductions, in which also IBA parkstad was introduced. Reading more about this topic has driven me into information about the via Belgica and the Roman villae. The via Belgica was in Roman times of universal significance for government and military

organizations, trade and industry, communication and spread of the Roman culture. Layering the region in different historical layers with the via Belgica as backbone, the identity of Limburg will be recalled. Researching an old road and layering the region is a different approach to the ‘technical’ research part. In my thematic research the cultural history and historical elements are used as an opportunity for spatial development.

The research has defined my design. Researching identity in such a broad context needed continuous selection and framing. The research has led to the project site and desired programme. One of the conclusions of my research is the importance of two historical layers, the Roman time and the mining industry layer. The chosen site is an intersection of the via Belgica with the (former) stone mountain of the Laura mine industry. The design brief, which is constructed in the research, consists of three parts. These are the architectural embedding of the via Belgica, designing of a lookout tower and designing a winery (building and production landscape). Differentiation between different scales was needed to understand and define the project. The via Belgica analysis starts in an urban scale (line), the chosen location needs interventions on a landscape scale (plane) and my final design is on a building scale (point). However, all these scales are related and affect each other.



During the design process it became clear that additional research was needed. In fact, the research continues along the design process. Although, there is a distinction. The research in the first half year establish the project, where the research in the second half year supports and strengthens the design.

METHODICAL LINE OF APPROACH OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE METHOD CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT

The methodical line of approach of the graduation starts with a technical/thematic fascination. This fascination forms the base of your research and connects you to a tutor experienced in this topic. Technical fascinations and innovations are often leading. The design follows the guidelines and principles of a technical research. The method chosen by me is slightly different then the method of the studio. In fact, i started with an architectonic or even archeological, fascination which demands an other method of working. The methodical line of approach which i followed is to make first a inventarisation and analysis to form the identity of the region which resulted in several design scenarios. Because of this different method of working, the research did not end after a half year.



Additional research was needed. This additional research is included in the presentation, but not (yet) included in the research paper.

PROJECT IN WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

In these times there is a fascination for appreciation of ruins. Half destroyed buildings and architectural fragments have existed since the beginning of the human culture. Ruins are places which are open for imagination. Decaying structures and abandoned places have been the inspiration for many architects since long ago. IBA, Internationale BauAusstellung or International Buildings Exhibition, helps to improve a town, city or region. The IBA in Parkstad is a suitable place to develop and transpose cultural history and layering of the landscape to a design proposal, because of the need to change of the region and the search to identity.



The ruins of via Belgica found in Limburg forms an segment of the whole road which runs from Boulogne-sur-Mer to Cologne. Not only in the Netherlands, but also in the other neighbouring countries there are plans to develop and transpose different areas in which the via Belgica is running and to connect them to each other resulting in an international connected public road.