

cracks in the language of architecture  
**THE CRACKS IN THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE**  
an anti-architectural manifesto

*(less) fragmented  
considerations*

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border condition graduation studio  
tu delft, 2017

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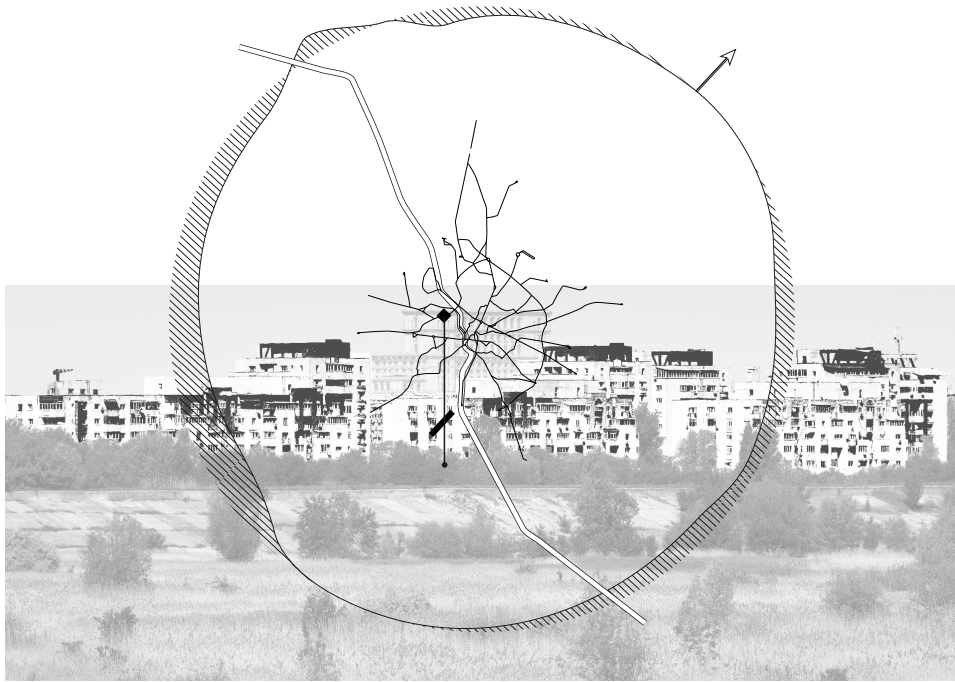
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## INTRODUCTION - ASSUMPTIONS

Still quite far away from visiting the city of interest, Bucharest, a model was the means to subsume personal stories I heard from friends, media reports and interviews as well as resulting subjective expectations on the trip. At the same time it led to the assumption, that all of these stories, but also historical events, even plans - no matter if physically manifested or never executed - left/leave their traces in the city like a kind of imprint into a multilayered plane.

Later on this assumption provoked the rereading of the area of Văcărești in the south-west of the city centre - following Sébastien Marot's elaborations on Ithaca - as a palimpsestous stage which formed several distinct urban elements or characters. Their potential interplay and the resulting clashes and negotiations became the key aspect of my research, which transformed into one of a range of principles for the design.

At this point my focus shifted from the urban scale of the area to the specific site of a abandoned and reoccupied civic slaughterhouse, which comprehends all of the assumed levels at the same time in a smaller, more architectural scale.

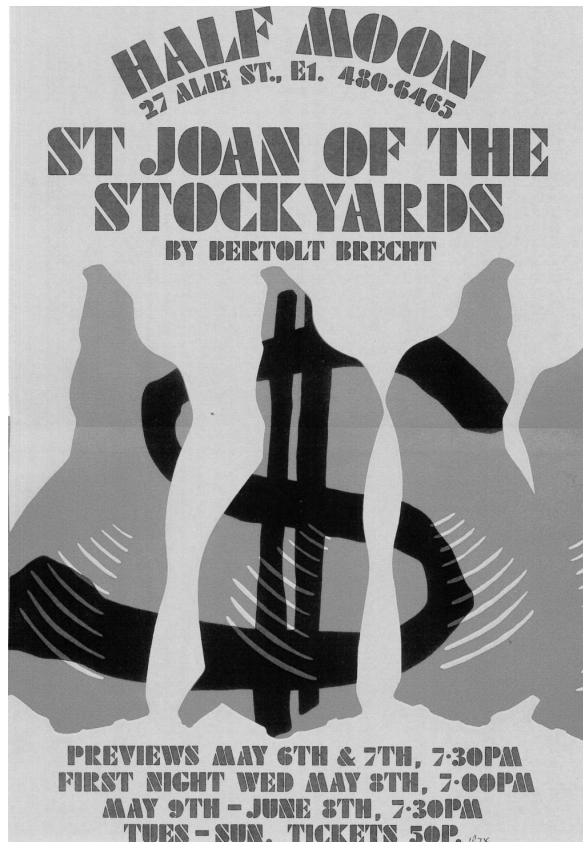


quick overview map of bucharest in relation to my site  
collage, delft, 2017  
original photo shot by mihai petre, 2016

## CONTEXT - TIME - INSTRUMENTS

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the area surrounding the site of my project was still on the outskirts of the city. It was considered to be poor and underdeveloped and therefore a more or less logical site for the civic slaughterhouse. The highly efficiently designed halls were built up in response to the demand for mass production of food and meat, resulting from the rapid increase of Bucharest's population. It is important to mention, that along with Romanian migrants, a greater number of Jews, mainly from Russia, settled in Văcărești. The combination of the suburban condition, the poverty and little power of the local community made it relatively effortless for the Iron Guard, a paramilitary group within the fascist party of Romania, to execute the second pogrom after the first World War in Romania.

Moreover, the fact that this incident happened in the building of the slaughterhouse makes it inevitable that this event has to be read as a consequence of the rise of Western Capitalism that started to dominate the so far rather rural and agricultural society of Romania.



half moon theatre relating the halves of pigs to money  
poster, half moon theatre, london, 1974

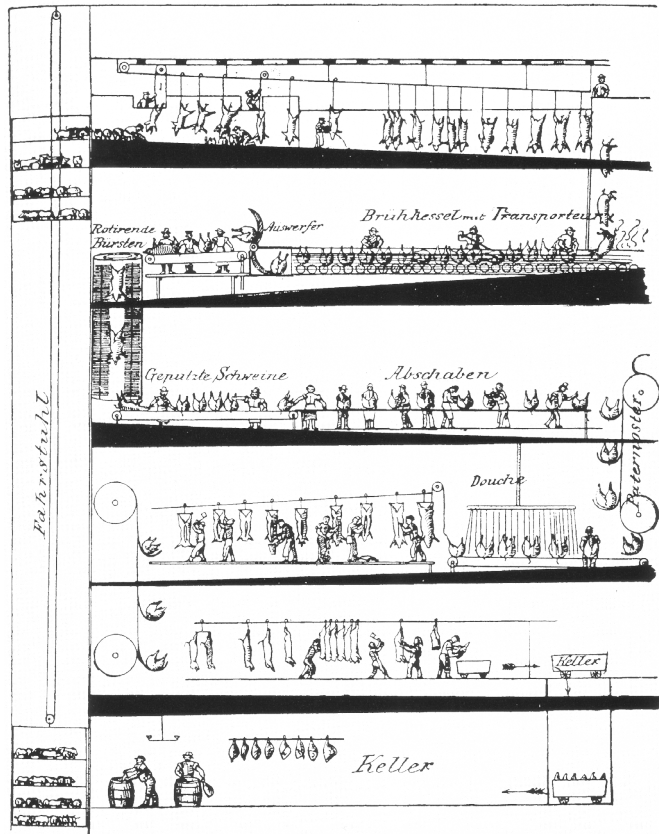
## TEMPORAL) STAGES OF AN ABATTOIR

### act 1) *Beacon of Capitalism*

The German writer Bertolt Brecht discusses the particular shift from the pre-industrial society to market-driven society of the masses - masses of production and masses of workers - in his theatre play *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* from 1929. The 'epic theatre' - a mode of theatre invented by Brecht - always focusses on the criticism of big societal mechanism. In this case he scrutinises the global market system, which acts as a societal dictator with a direct influence on the abattoir, food production and the population itself.

In this piece, Joan experiences the actual condition of labour during three >tours< to the slaughterhouses. These "trips into the deep" (German: *Gang in die Tiefe*) are one of Brecht's dramaturgical instruments and is derives from the Ancient Greek term *Katabasis* - "trips to the underworld" during which heros enter the *Tartaros* and later return to the earthly surface with a new understanding of a certain situation.

In this case, the workers of the slaughterhouse enact as passive players in the market themselves. Their poverty thrives them to ignore the fact that they are exploited and discourages them to take action against their situation in much the same way as her religion discourages Joan. In the end the slaughterhouses are closed and the workers are fired after a planned general strike failed because of Joan's virtuous honesty. The employees are forced to leave the factory by gunfire.



“amerikanische großschlächterei” (american mass slaughterhouse)  
drawing, unknown, germany, 1903

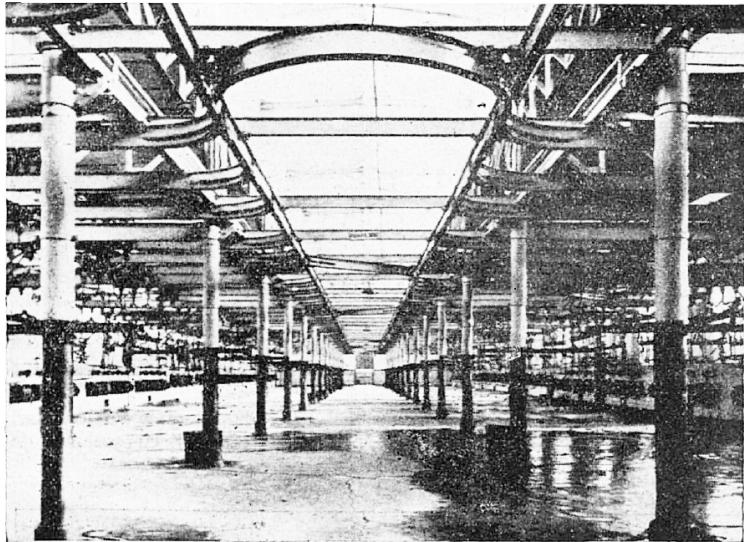
act 2) Place of Violence

Another strategy Brecht uses in his epic theatre is the so called *Verfremdungseffekt* (“alienation effect”) which puts a local societal situation into another, more exotic place and time. So although the text takes place in Chicago and describes the dynamics of capitalism on a more global scale, the connection between the play and the Bucharest abattoir becomes very evident in a cruel incident.

As mentioned before, the actual first pogrom during the Second World War in Romania took place in the area of the slaughterhouse. In total sources speak of between one and several hundred Jews that were killed between 21st and the 23rd of January 1941 by the Iron Guard of which about 15 to more than a hundred people were literally slaughtered, skinned and exposed with the label “kosher” on their bodies in the slaughterhouse.

sources:

- <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/c/carmelly-felicia/bucharest-pogrom.html>
- [http://survivors-romania.org/pdf\\_doc/black\\_book\\_1.pdf](http://survivors-romania.org/pdf_doc/black_book_1.pdf)



interior of the slaughter hall for cattle  
photograph, unknown, Bucharest, ~1900

### *act 3) Ideology and Emptiness*

Besides the eerie emptiness of the compound there is no sign whatsoever scrutinizing the machinery of producing corpses. Today and in general, any discussion of the Holocaust was suppressed by the succeeding regimes and still seems to be a taboo in the Romanian society, if not a matter of active collective denial. I here want to quote the British historian Dennis Deletant, analysing the role of the leader of the Romanian fascist party, Ion Antonescu:

*“Whereas it was not he [Antonescu] who introduced the policy of ethnic intolerance and persecution into Romania, it was he, who extended it. Romanian nationalists deny this and seek to whitewash their country’s record under Antonescu’s rule. In 1991 on the eve of the anniversary of Antonescu’s execution as a war criminal on the first of June 1946, the Romanian parliament stood for one minute in silent tribute.*”

*A fraud understanding of Antonescu was evident earlier this year [2012], when Dan Shova, spokesman of the Romanian Social Democratic Party claimed on the Money Channel on the 5th of March, I quote ‘No Jews suffered on Romanian territory, thanks to Marshal Antonescu.’”*

The controversial relation of the Romanian society to the Holocaust might be one of many reasons, why the slaughterhouses of Văcărești remained abandoned for several decades.

source: ‘Ion Antonescu and the Temptation of Fascism’, lecture by Dennis Deletant at the Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies at Georgetown University



corrupted southern wall  
photograph, bucharest, 2016

#### *act 4) Occupation and Corruption*

However, activities found their way back into the empty halls supposedly after the fall of the Ceaușescu regime. Different smaller companies started to devide and occupy the compound. Especially the southern wall developed a peculiar urban machine since a variety of car-related businesses (sale, wash, refurbishment, changing tires, etc.) in combination with cafés, restaurants and even a small casino started reappropriating the space.

The next chapter will elaborate on this dynamic on a broader scale, but also more in detail. (*See page 19*)





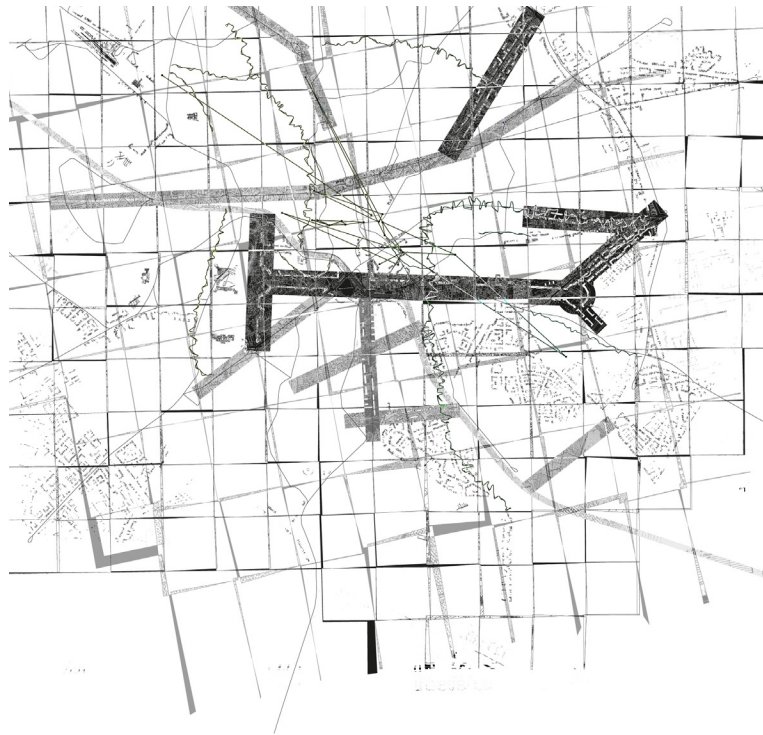
montage of the entrance scene of lars von trier's 'dogville' (2003)  
and a photograph taken at the site, bucharest/delft, 2016/17

*climax 5) the Manifestation of temporal Stages in Space*

In conclusion, the setup and the original design of the slaughterhouses, the strict disconnection between inside and outside as well as of the different functions, encouraged a staging of certain moments during the slaughtering process. Additionally, the reappropriation and the reactivation of a selection of existing spaces provoke an individual theatrical experience for any visitor.

Personally, the theatrical interplay of sequences achieved its peak when I encountered a guarding dog in the slaughterhouse, similarly to the entrance scene of Lars von Trier's film *Dogville*, where the protagonist Grace is discovered by Moses, the dog of the village and in consequence is sceptically observed by the inhabitants.

In reference to Brecht, Trier as well works with the instrument of the *Verfremdungseffekt* and strictly dissects the story line into nine distinct chapters. The gaps inbetween them need to be filled with the imagination of the viewers.



map of urban appropriations / the appropriation of a map / appropriation of vácărești  
sketch/drawing, berlin, 2017

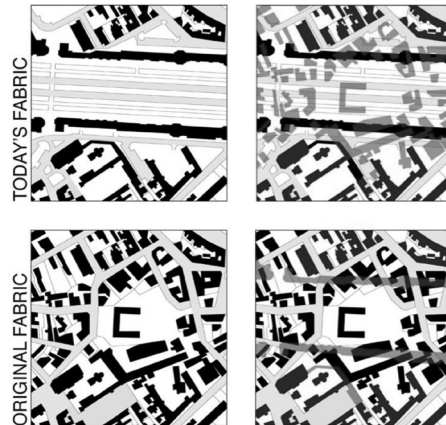
## CONTEXT - CULTURE OF APPROPRIATION - SETTING

Besides the palimpsestuous history of the place, another driving force for is the given *culture of appropriation* that seems to be incorporated in the Romanian spirit. In the example of Bucharest this becomes evident on a wide range of scales over a span of several centuries.

On the level of the urban scale, this observation is proven by the evident encounter of clashes between certain patches of city fabrics. Up till the 19th century Bucharest consisted of a conglomerate of uncontrolled villages (mahalale), where the need of constant reconstruction and therefore a certain habit of (re)negotiating boundaries was caused by the annual flooding and the consequent shift in the flow of the river Dâmbovița. The regulation of the river however stopped the need to appropriate to an unpredictable factor and opened up the potential for planned changes. It was the point when political leaders took over the river's original role.

The rule of the newly elected prince (and later king) Carol I marked the start of a chain of major city-scale transformations following the ruling ideological paradigm in regard of urbanism and society. Before the outbreak of the First World War, several important but wiggly streets were relatively decently appropriated in order to establish a network of Boulevards with the clear aim to mimic a Parisian, meaning an urban and metropolitan atmosphere next to the 'village capital'.

Although the Socialists primarily focussed on the expansion of the city by building huge modernist settlements of apartment blocks at the periphery, the central north-south axis was extended towards the south by cutting a straight line into the existing fabric.



top: analysis potemkin city  
drawing, luigi pintacuda, bucharest, 2012  
bottom: backstage situations,  
collage, aimonas litinas, delft, 2017

Nevertheless, the most obvious and radical change took place under the rule of dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu, who did not fear to wipe out complete quarters “with just a wave of his hand”. The demolition of a strip of the width of 200 metres and a length of about 3,5 kilometres situated tangent to the old city centre was accompanied by several other ‘interventions’ and displacements throughout the whole city and left an unprecedented “scar” on Bucharest and its society.

The gap between the massive residential blocks accompanying the so called Bulevardul Unirii (Union Boulevard) is characterised by its emptiness and two remaining purposes: as a sort of aorta for individual car traffic which serves as a grandstand towards the massive main figure of the city, the Palace of the People (nowadays Parliament’s Palace) in a almost drive-in cinematographic manner.

It is not only here that Ceaușescu built up a sort of Potemkin city, a screen of a fake city which shields one’s sight from reality, simply to demonstrate his longing for immortality, behind a curtain of massive housing blocks. One of its results is a variety of appropriations on a neighbourhood scale took place, which caused several exposed ‘backstage situations’.



top: example of appropriation in ferentari  
photograph, silvia creosteanu, bucharest, 2016  
bottom: part of dan perjovschi's 'balcoanele firii series'  
photograph, raluca paraschivescu, bucharest, 2014

While on the urban scale the need for appropriation usually derived from a sort of wound that needed to heal, on an architectural scale the culture of appropriation could rather be related to a certain resistance and the aim for independency as a counter-reaction to (manifested political) structures.

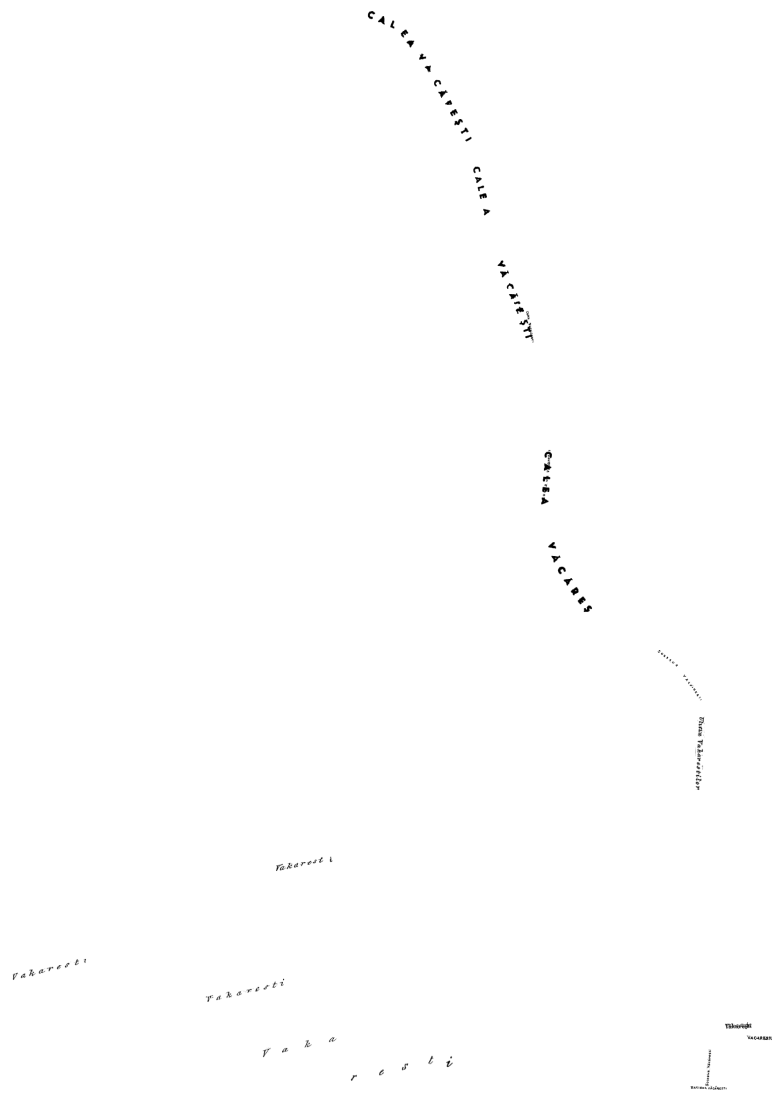
Most of the time there appears a tendency to extend the existing or to 'fortify' one's property mainly without regard on their neighbours. This motivation ends up in an ambiguity of constructions, thresholds and openings, manifesting a habit of rather absurd but temporarily functional and precise detailing.



*Appropriation of map(s)/ping itself.*

The initial map of this chapter also compares three different maps of Bucharest, namely from 1852 - before the regulation of the Dâmbovița river -, 1911 right after the channeling and the introduction of boulevards -, 2016 - the year we visited Bucharest as the result or subsumption of all the urban cuts throughout the 20th century and because it can be considered to be the most adequate one - at least from a mere technical perspective.

The original maps were cut up according to the grid they imply, and either rotated or distorted in order to relate the dislocated places on top of each other again. By doing so, different overlaps of and gaps between the maps appear, which cannot only be interpreted in terms of spatial perception, but also on an epistemological level which describes a change of mapping techniques itself.



multiplicity of vacărești  
drawing, berlin, 2017

### *In Search of Văcărești.*

Another topic which is adressed is the unclarity of precisely detect “where” the area of my intervention, Văcărești, lies or “what” it stands for since it is not a distinct district or quarter in Bucharest.

“Văcărești” can already be found in the city centre with the street named Calea Văcărești which is heading to the place of the former monastery of the same name. Or to the area where the settlement along the street spread as an outpost of the actual city centre. Or maybe even to the estate that the monastery of Văcărești owned which nowadays would refer to the whole southern quarter of the official metropolitan area of Bucharest.

A circumstance which underlines this particularity is the fact, that the nominator for all the described moments, the monastery and later prison of Văcărești, was demolished due to an order of Ceaușescu who was jailed there himself. This means, that a big part of Bucharest lost its identifier and was replaced by a generic shopping mall.

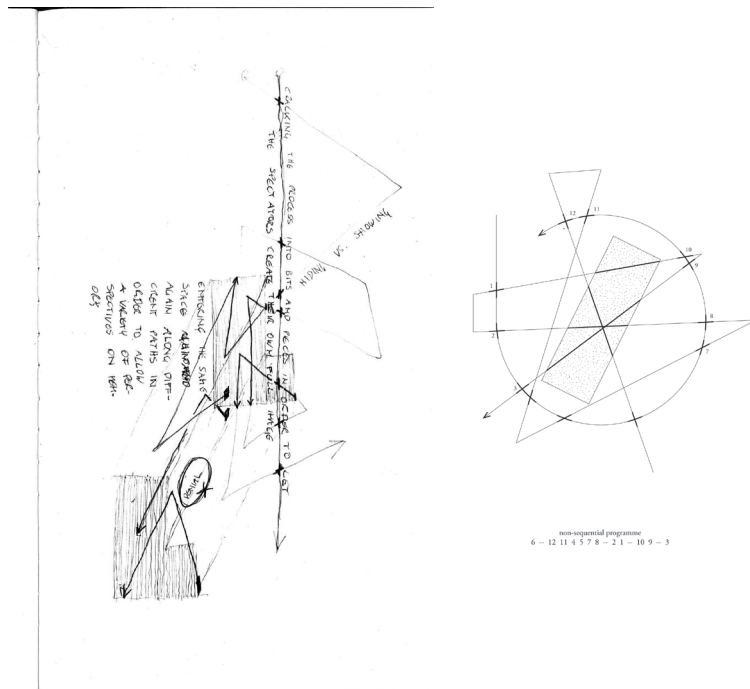
## CRACKING

As indicated in the first chapter, a reactivation of the slaughterhouse with regards to its role in the past and its future performance seeks to open up a highly subjective discussion about the production of meat/animals, the history of the slaughterhouse as well as the production of history and consequently about the production of architecture as the vessel where these things take place as such.

In order to release the meaning of the existing building, to make it possible to un- and discover the various layers of the place, the tool of cracking as developed during the research phase is reapplied and conceptualised in architectural terms.

Similar to the instruments used by Brecht and von Trier as mentioned before but also in accordance to Christoph Schlingensiefel's *Ready Made Opera* and David Lynch's unconventional way of storytelling, I want to introduce the dis- and reconnection of the functioning of the place by emphasising a kind of >anti-narrative<.

Telling two different stories parallelly and the splitting up of these stories encourage the interconnection of fragmented impressions and thoughts in the user, provoke an individual understanding on the side of the visitor and therefore diminish a potential moralistic message. Meanwhile, the dissection of the place's history and its origin also takes place on a physical level: the cutting up of the existing structure should not only be understood in technical terms as a penetration of the tectonics/the structural logics but also as a means to reveal what spatial qualities lie behind their boundaries.



left: initial sketch for the combination of the different thematics  
right: utterly purified version (dismissed)  
sketch/drawing, delft, 2017

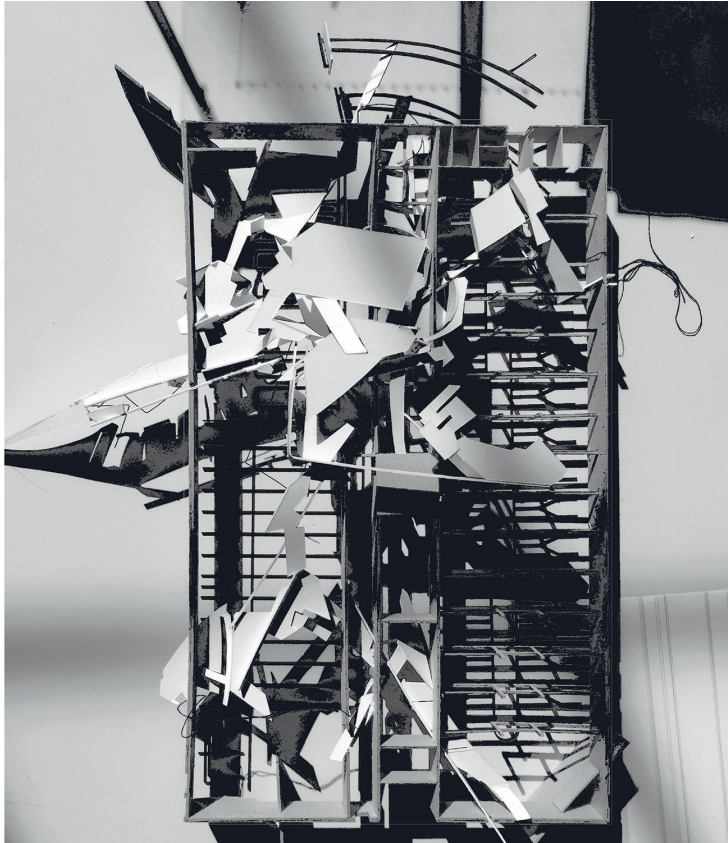


crackwork #35  
interwoven drawing cuts, delft, 2016

While the research phase was mainly focussed on the description of five different urban elements, their potential relations and the cracks that appear between and within them, here, four definitions of theoretical cracks lay the base for a variety of (modes of) models of different scales, serving as tools which started to translate the findings of the research into methods of designing. Although there appear multiple cross-links between the models and the theory of cracks, I'll try to juxtapose the framework with the physical outcome as clear as possible.

*#crack in the (un)conscious #crack in time  
#crack in ice #crack in the voice*



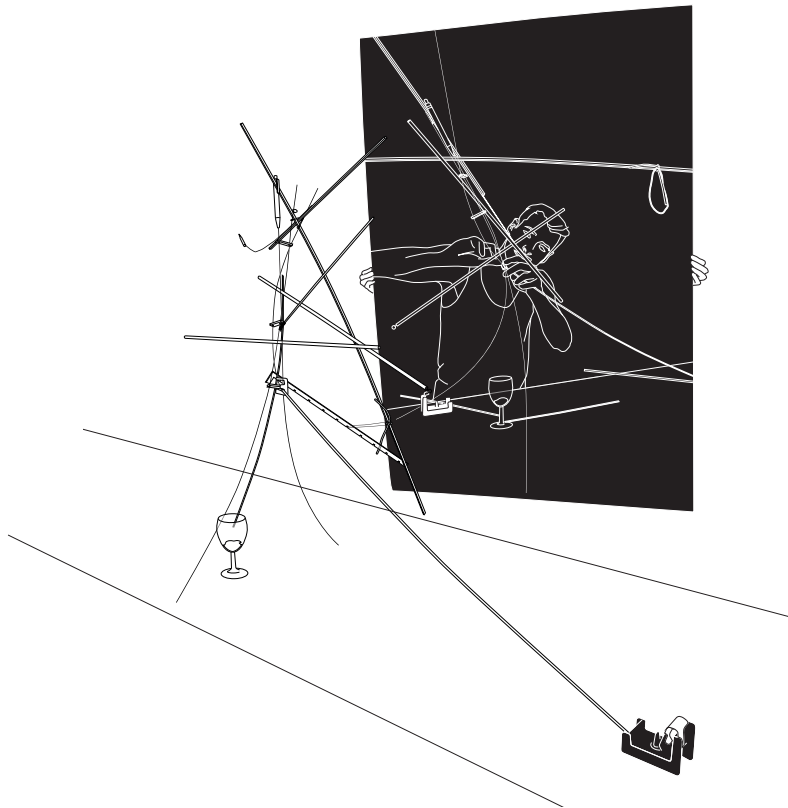


bottom view, intervention model, scale 1:200  
model, delft, 2017

*#1.3.d ice - "the parasite"  
hiding and revealing.*

The strongest impulse for the intervention was given by the transformation of a drawing into a three dimensional space by the means of interweaving it with a model of the site. It can be described as an injection into the particular multifunctional and multi-layered framework of the slaughterhouse, which starts expanding after it hit the outer wall and challenges the different histories and structures that lie behind the bricks. The white structure serves as a kind of general guideline for the actual design, a scaffolding both breaking and sustaining the given structure as well as confronting other mechanisms represented in three more models of the first, explorative generation.

(architectural scale = 1:200)

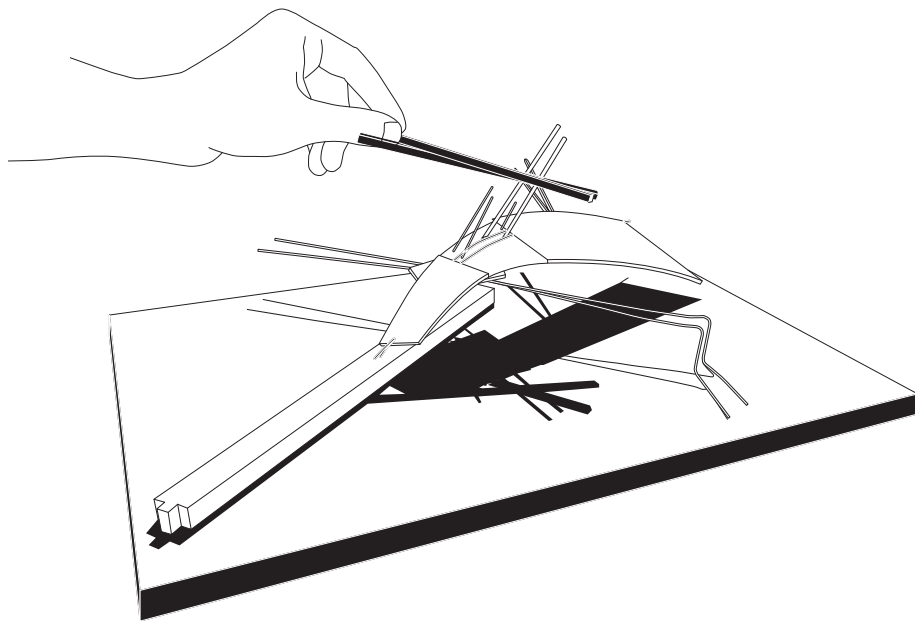


duplicated view on the grasshopper  
model>drawing, delft, 2017

*#1.1.a the (un)conscious - "the grasshopper"  
constant negotiations.*

A combination of found materials with very different properties allowed for a research for how to (re)connect separate entities or elements with very simple, ordinary means like weaving, binding, nesting. Since every joint is very loose and is not fixed, the balance of the structure and the path the bearing forces take till they reach the base gained a high importance and partly informed the future strategy for the applied detailing.

(architectural scale = 1:100, detailing scale = 1:50)

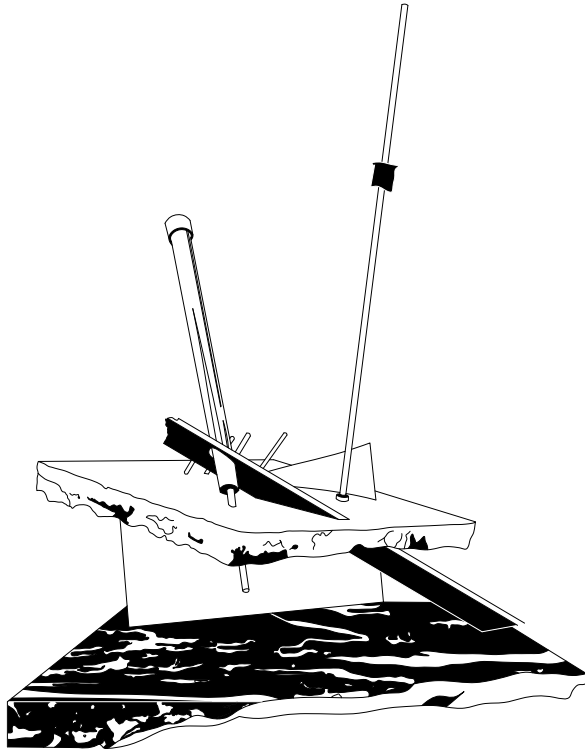


irritating the mantis  
model>drawing, delft, 2017

*#1.4.b the voice - "the mantis"  
an expression of the (un)conscious.*

In order to extract the qualities of the way of production and to give them a clearer, more stable expression a second attempt was evidently necessary. This time the awareness of the danger of sudden collapse influenced 'design' decisions in terms of bending, bringing pieces together and absorbing the disbalance in a counter-structure. Although the model gained more stability, the element of movement was not completely lost and has an influence on the whole structure. However this time only to the extend of a certain shift, avoiding the failure of the structure.

(architectural scale = 1:50, detailing scale = 1:50)



choreographing the collapse  
model>drawing, delft, 2017

#1.2.c time - “  
*production and life, decay.*”

The logical next step lay in the conversation between the previous two models with the aim to incorporate the moment of failure and collapse again, but in a cultivated manner. The idea was to assemble different materials in such a way as to be able to more or less make it predictable where the structure is going to break and in consequence to be able to tell how its body would move.

Furthermore, the phase of production received the potential to influence the lifespan and the phase of destruction by building up the structure in very bad climate conditions like for example (trying to) pour(ing) concrete in a freezer, which theoretically is impossible.

(architectural scale = 1:100, detailing scale 1:37)

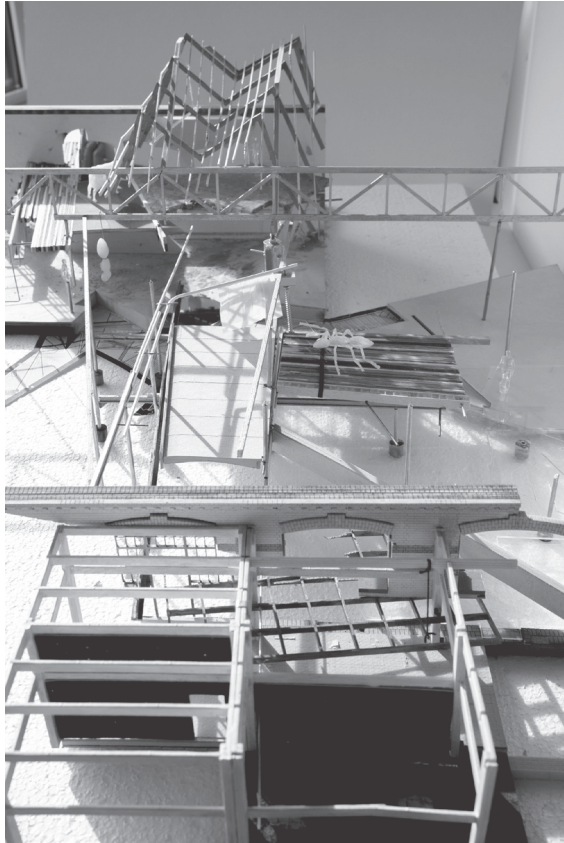


“the spider, the bug and the ant” - 1st september  
model 1:50, delft, 2017

## AMBIGUITY OF SPACES - AMBIGUITY OF PROCESSES

The four models of the first generation represent four hypothetical, sometimes overlapping pieces of a language of architecture. Their individual qualities, modes of representation and techniques of production aim to be brought together in a properly designed, feasible architectural space. This challenge results in a set of two or respectively five models with a strong operational character - the second generation. Similar to the main question of my research, how an understanding of the urban could arise from the navigation between subjective combinations of multiple components and structures from scientific knowledge, the project as well as the following models aim to provoke confusion in order to let the spectator develop different perspectives on architecture and therefore an individual understanding of space.

Each of the models started with a pretty simple concept and grew more and more complex during the building phase. The informative, developing agency soon would become the principal design method itself. It allows investigations on structural as well as spatial aspects of the design in a trial-and-error manner in which methodological principles can be tested and developed further.

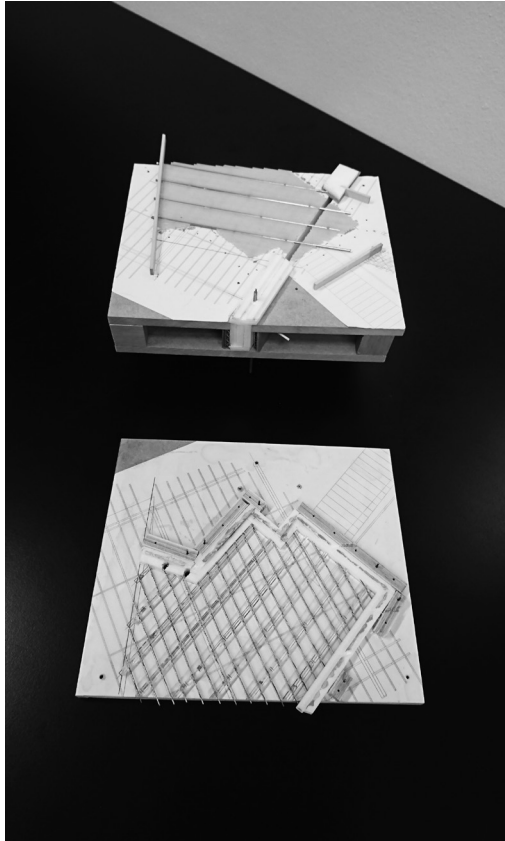


“the spider, the bug and the ant” - 19th october  
model 1:50, delft, 2017

*#1:50 - “the spider, the bug and the ant”  
connecting the fragments and detailing.*

Initially only the moment in which the intervention hits the existing brick wall in the north west of the building should be tested. Yet the model kept on growing since each of the fragments that was built sought for a connection to another one, simply to keep it in position. The existing structure is often removed or replaced to serve this purpose. Out of the necessity to add more pieces the detailing was explored in the model, without the help of a drawing or given examples. They follow two principles: First, the next load-bearing material is supposed to be from another compositional structure and secondly each knot should be solved individually and cannot be copied. Additionally I should mention, that another aim lay on the reversal of gravity - meaning that the structure which would carry the load in reality in the model would be of inferior priority.

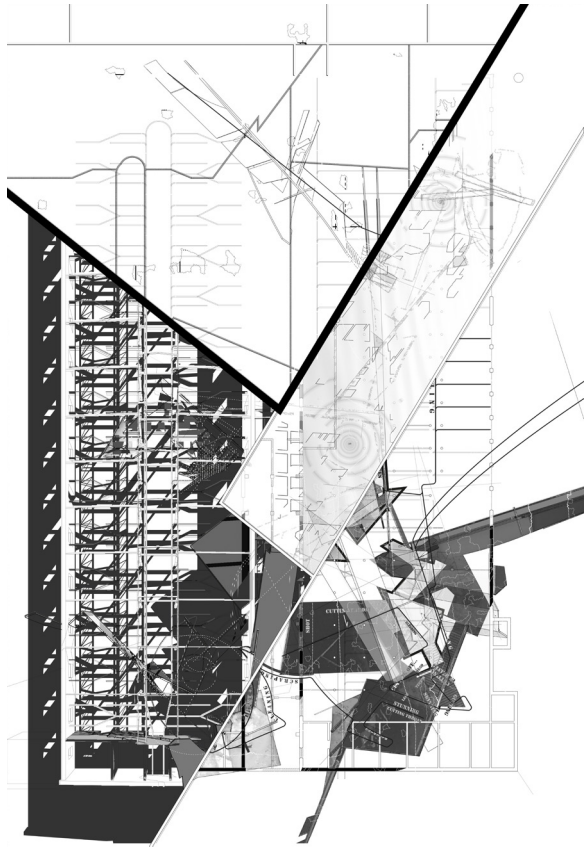
During the act of connecting, the fragments often needed to be slightly appropriated or reconceptualised in order to follow these rules. The model can be described as an aggregation of a variety of fragments in conversation with each other and also challenges different modes of representation as well, by sometimes using the proper material (eg copper), and in other moments mimicking the material (eg copper paint on wood).



mold for fragment/floor #035\_43c  
model 1:50, delft, 2017

One particular element needs to be highlighted at this point, because it incorporates the logic of several (maybe four or five) other pieces: the concrete floor slab (floor #035\_43c) still follows the shape from the initial drawing; but its division, materialisation and way of doing derive from the model itself.

Adding the moment in which the cement reacts with the water, when the copper reacts and turns green and later, when the steel takes over the corrosion and turns red/brown it can be considered an element that incorporates a certain *accumulation of times* addressing the research/design process, material properties and the development of space due to the model.



how to split a model  
drawing, delft, 2017

The idea of splitting the 1:100 model made it necessary for each part to be clearly distinct from the other three on the levels of matter, which materials to be used, in which way the materials were used, appearance and the particular focus or gaze the spectator will experience. In a way, the task lied in four different designs for each part. The gaps between the different parts of the 1:100 model are only to be bridged by pieces of the intervention and the manipulation which therefore reconnect the splits to a larger whole again.





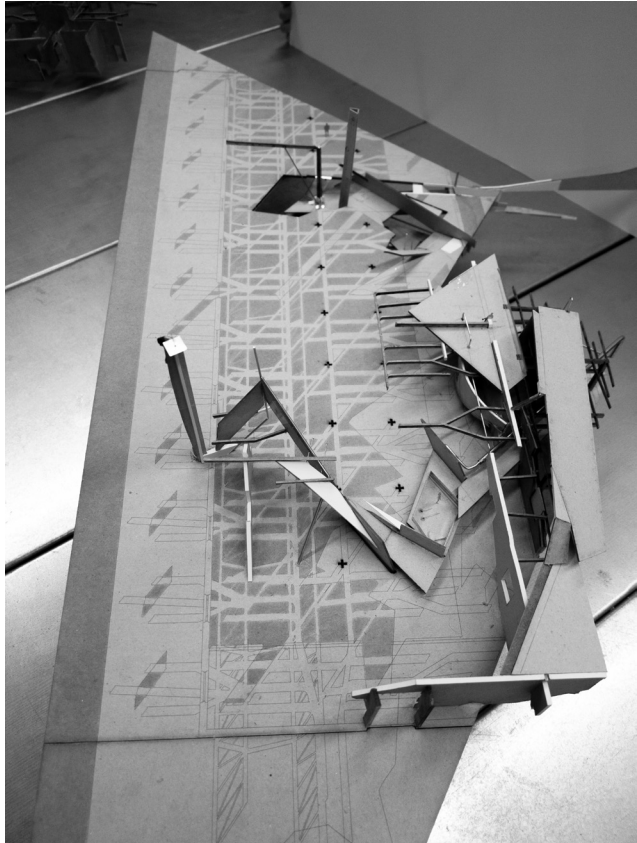
“the cook” (chopped)  
model 1:100, delft, 2017

*#1:100 NW - “the cook”  
assemblage of functions and resulting principal structure.*

This piece focusses on the absurd mix of sometimes antagonising functions. During the building process, it became evident, that the intervention itself required a certain level of appropriation like the existing structure. Additional structural elements are highlighted in neon-colours and show, how the structure starts to stitch the different functions alltogether.

Cuts in the existing structure are painted pitch black, to show the contrast to the explicitly functional intervention pieces. The structure that is necessary to keep the existing building at spot, is also highlighted as black and can therefore be read as a cut itself.

Because of the non-linear sequence of the development of the elements, the model required to be as flexible as possible and therefore >interweaving< became the main method of keeping the intervention in place, while making it possible to remove one or two pieces temporarily.

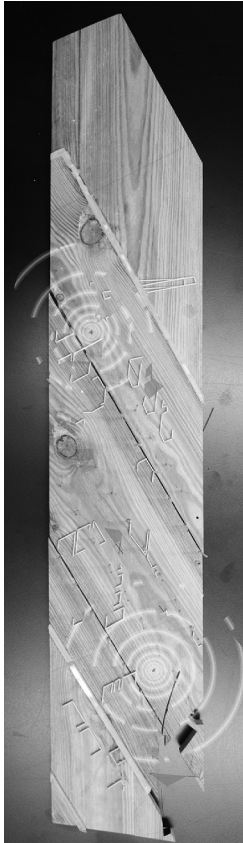


"the wife" (unclothed)  
model 1:100, delft, 2017

*#1:100 NE - "the wife"  
space and process.*

The principle of describing local entities and put them together with other ones, deriving from the initial research-drawing, is most apparent in this purely grey model. Elements start to incorporate parts of the existing structure both in order to maintain its own spatial configuration as well as the existing structure in some sort - a possibility that was opened up by the colourful model

However, this model took mainly space and process into consideration: the monochrome materials should convey the spatial qualities while their differentiation in shades represents the relative temporal chronology. It does not give the impression of an overall temporal sequence, the contrast is only relevant in relation to its adjacent neighbours.



“the lover” (ripped apart)  
drawing+model 1:100, delft, 2017

*#1:100 strikethrough - “the lover”  
decay and artificial lighting*

The lover is supposed to explore the initiated decay as well as the floor as an element that registers the overall history.

The halls will be slightly with the various fluids that derive from the slaughtering-process. The resulting huge but shallow water basin is cut up according to a reductive operation dealing with three different layers of shadows that can be distinguished (massive existing structure, steel structure of the existing building and intervention).

The aim of this operation is firstly the distorted visualisation of someone’s movement through the slaughterhouse because the interrupted concentric waves caused by the steps. Secondly, the reflection of light and sound and their unrecognisable source should provoke a similar confusion in the space as the physically manifested intervention does.

*missing on purpose*

“the thief” (stolen)  
model 1:100, delft, 2017

*#1:100 SE - “the thief”  
infrastructure and floor.*

The absense of the “thief” is caused by the absorbtion of its thematics by other models. This outcome also reflects on the apparent necessity of more than a few selected aspects in order to build up a convincing model. Especially the infrastructure appears to be an overall connective device, which is - to some extend - included in all the other three parts.

In the development of making, the models entered a dialogue, in which failure and success, as much as the resulting knowledge, started to shape the process and the models as well as the project themselves. It means, that the intervention provoked an appropriation of itself during its own formation process. Additionally it required the dislocation of certain existing elements as well as supplementary structures.

This more or less dialectical conversation expanded also over to the 1:50 model, where upcoming ideas could be further developed in the scale of detailing and therefore was influencing following steps in the 1:100 models again. However, in total no element should be seen as the simple result of the other(s) but seeks to keep its strong distinct identity - with the exception of "the thief", which lost its purpose.

## IN ... BETWEEN ... SPACE - MISS MATCH

The aspect that could be criticised is the exaggerated formalism of the intervention as it directly translates flat formal shapes of a drawing into three dimensional space. This manner regards rather on the spatial result and the relation to other shapes whether than a potential meaning of the origin.

However, this problematique is confronted at the moment of the introduction of functions and programme. At this point, pure shapes are linked back to the matter of the constellation drawing and the set of element drawings since the remaining traces are interpreted according to the original meaning. In other words, the random formation is combined with a random distribution of functions.

In that sense, the form becomes rather obsolete and the sublimation of formalism acts therefore rather as an anti-formalistic gesture in contrast to the almost modernist efficient perfection of the original slaughterhouse.

Other crucial moments in the design appear when the relatively independent intervention meets the structure of the old halls. Although the intervention seems to be of higher importance due to its offensive character the two entities influence and manipulate each other: The brickwall is partly replaced by an offset concrete doppelgänger, which sometimes is carried by the intervention or the other way round, similar to the treatment of the original brick wall.

Since the logics of the structure are negotiated in each clash, the consequent space is not (only) a result inbetween the two temporal and initially structural entities, but turns a moment between space as matter and its own performance. The visitor needs to navigate through a variety of instances and therefore the splattered scenes of the meat production process are unconsciously and randomly relinked because of the observer's motions and unknowing decisions.

This concept is also reflected in how the different fragments / stages are planned, constructed and erected. The *absurd sequence* by which the details (but also the models) are developed and the "alogical" combination of materials mimic the urban and architectural miss match and in some sort simulate the culture of appropriation. Although this method in contrast to the visitor's experience provoke a choreographed process of decay, the exact failure and therefore the structure's movement cannot be predicted.

The consequently subjective impressions initiate a theatrical, but only limited choreographed experience and understanding of the place and architecture as such through movement. Again, the consequence is a space, that becomes something in between itself - it is not a space that is in between two or more other entities, but achieves its own body.



splitting  
intervention, gordon matta-clark, englewood, 1974

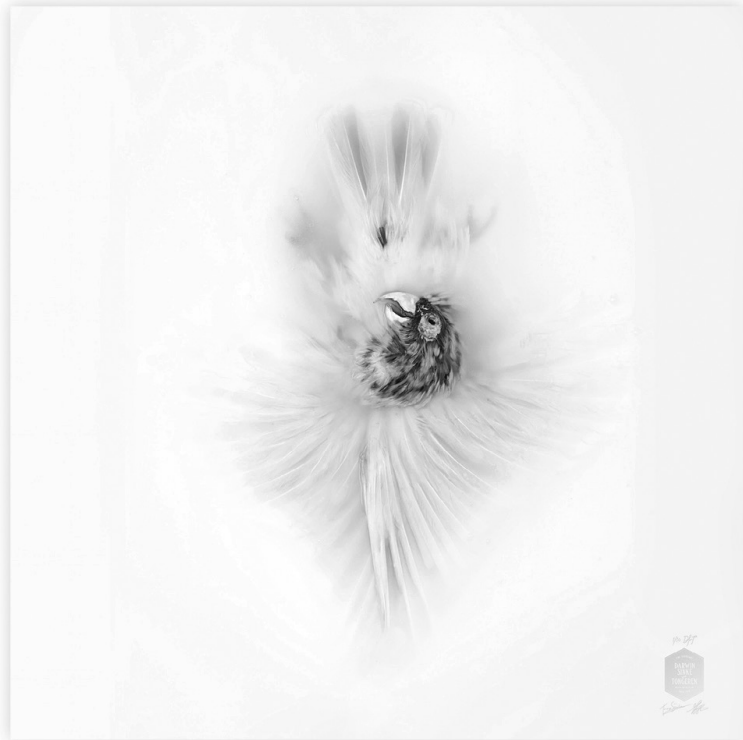
## RESULTING ARCHITECTURAL DEBATE - TAXIDERMIA

The question remains how to relate the interference of the slaughterhouse, on both the physical layer as well as the thematic layer, with the contemporary architectural discourse. It seems that my investigations were channeled in a form of anti-architecture, again physically and thematically. To resume the argument of the anti-formalistic gesture from the previous chapter I would like to compare my work to some reflection around Gordon Matta-Clark, whose oeuvre is mainly dominated by his building cuts in the mainstream debate.

Matta-Clark's works dealt with raising a *creative question* rather than giving a particular answer. His *discrete violations* (the building cuts) sought to change the human experience and can be interpreted as a call for change in the architectural practice and its understanding.

In my case I want to expand a similar strategy towards the production of meat/food and the dealing with the Holocaust in Romania. Similar to the rather unconscious transformation of someone's understanding/reading Matta-Clark is applying on architecture, a proper critical reflection on the other two topics cannot be forcefully evoked but needs to grow slowly in the addressees themselves.





corella  
taxidermia, fine taxidermy (darwin, sinke & van tongeren), amsterdam, 2015 (?)

My personal strategy tries to fulfill this aim, by cutting radically, replace and merge again structure, programme and matter of the space. This manner contradicts Matta-Clark's intention in a way, since he places the cuts exactly between the moment of support and collapse.

These intersections inhabited mainly a critique of modernism and its synthesis of matter and form by revealing as well as maintaining the complexity of the construction. According to Henri Bergson, Matta-Clark in this sense was opposing the Platonic model of the *good philosopher* - "the skilful cook, carving an animal without breaking its bones" - by a sort of *clumsy butchering*, something that interferes with the internal structure of the object. This method cuts open the relation between form and matter into separated positions, which's gaps need to be filled with imagination and eventually understanding.

With my project I act somewhere in between the discrete and the total violation and therefore I would link my intervention more in relation to a *taxidermist*, who knows exactly where to place a cut and replaces - often also rearranges - pieces of the animal he is working on. The discrete taxidermist basically removes all parts that would cause decomposition, while the *expressive taxidermist* cannot resist his desire to impose his own creative ideas upon the object. He treats form and matter differently (not necessarily separately) in order to change someone's perspective on something (un)known, to tell a particular story.

In both cases (the discrete violation and the expressive taxidermia) the imagination of the spectator or user must negotiate between matter-as-stuff and cultivated matter as well as between the stable-form and its variations.



taxidermia  
film still, györgy pálf, hu/aut/fr, 2006

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CRACKS IN THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE

the slaughterhouse in metamorphosis

an absurd assemblage of fragments

the slaughterhouse in decay

the architect as taxidermist

the sublimation of the fragment

a disassembled assemblage

AN ANTI-ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTO