SPACES

for

SEX

for

for

WORK

A SPACE FOR SEX WORK

An intersectional feminist approach to brothels
in the context of decriminalisation

IRENE FERIA PRADOS

Master thesis
Research and Design Project
ExploreLab
TU Delft

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RESEARCH PROJECT.
SPACES FOR SEX WORK

A relational study of sex-work-spaces

The presented research for the thesis outlines a critical study of the discursive relation between sex work and architecture, intending to reveal possible emancipatory potentials for the sex workers in the ongoing sociopolitical climate of fight for decriminalization of the practice by starting a design discussion in architecture.[1] Sex workers[2] definitely have to face difficult conditions every day, such as stigma and legal pressures. They reflect, organise and fight against those, stressing the subdued position to which they are forced. The term sex work is used in this project according to this fight, in order to emphasize the recognition of the practice as labour.

The coupling of two, in appearance, dichotomic words, sex[3] and work, makes clear why this is a feminist concern. Although feminists have long been fighting to liberate female sexuality from the "pussy patrol" of the state and moralist society since before the 70s,[4] this fight is still ongoing and recreative female sex is still thought of as "something too special to be sold" and subjugated to taboos.[5] On the other hand, female labour such as housework has and continues to be largely unpaid, under the argument of a higher 'biological destiny of women'.[6-7] Prostitution has historically been one of the only ways for women to work and obtain a wage, but sex work is still considered the "wrong kind of sex, and the wrong kind of work".[8]

In the architectural field, feminist researchers have claimed how the city and practice is male-designed and male-dominated. Many works of female architects strive to overcome the paradigm of the male star-architect figure and the influence of this practice in public and private spaces. This mainstream approach to feminism in architecture should be extended with works of different nature, such as the need to design for women who are working in spaces of neglection. 'Women of the streets'[9] should be the subject not only of gender studies, but studied in an interrelated way with the architectural discipline: the acknowledgement of her existence and presence in the city is what this project upon.

2 La Grande Odalisque Censored
Own collage
(Original base image: Ingres, D. La Grande Odalisque, 1814)

[1]**The legal model that decriminalises the sex worker, the client and third parties (landlords, assistants, managers), and regulates the practice through labour law. Human trafficking and any kind of abuse are stil considered a crime, and easier to detect, due to the legal position of the sex worker.**
[2]**Sex work refers also to a variety of sexual and erotic professional practices beyond the most know prostitution**
[3]**In this work, I refer to sex as sexual intercourse, and not to a person's sexual anatomy.**
[4]Smith and Mac, 2020, 14
[5]Idem, 34
[6]**When I use women in this work, I refer to trans- and ciswomen**
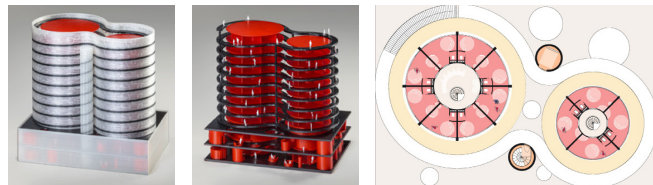[7]Federici, 2014, 14
[8]Smith and Mac, 2020, 30
[9]**A prostitute, or a streetwalker. Margaret Soltan reflects interestingly on this notion in 'The Lost narrative of the Lost woman'.**

DEHUMANISING POWER
Problem statement

3 *Actual brothel interiors, De Wallen Insight, Tess Jungblut, 2015*

4 *New Eros Center in Amsterdam, Moke Architects, 2020*

Political debates and the consequent legal decisions surrounding sex work are mainly dominated by people external to the practice, therefore obscuring the voices of the actual workers, while using puritanist feminism as a political weapon. Due to their ignorance of the real situations and material conditions of the workers, they create conceptual personae[10] such as the 'Exited Woman', the 'Happy Hooker' or the *Victim*, which are are dangerously inaccurate with reality and propagate a dehumanized idea of the sex workers.[11] Through these personae they simplify the issues around sex work by falling into a patronising, moralist position instead of facing a reality that is way more complex to tackle.

The absence of discussion around spaces for sex work in architecture and urban planning as part of these material conditions contributes to this process of dehumanisation of the worker. In Amsterdam's red-light district, De Wallen, sex workers have had a presence in the city since its origin, but are still submitted to extremely high rents for cell-like conditions (see images on the left page). Due to the gentrification of the area, De Wallen is now the target of a political project of the closure of the windows, in order to displace the red-light district to an eros-centre in the outskirts of the city.[12] Not satisfied enough with urban isolation, the new design layout displaces the female workers to the interior of the tower, with no direct access to sunlight, while the clients are free to walk along the facade.

This spatial hierarchy, in which the workers are secluded into a highly controlled environment, serves as an example of the manifestations of power imposed on them through architecture in the European context. This research departs precisely from this notion, proposing the hypothesis that these spaces are designed to impose a certain control over the sex workers (potestas), instead of allowing them decide how to take control (potentia). It is this destabilising factor between *potentia* and *potestas*[13] of architecture that I would like to challenge during this project, by answering:

How are spaces for sex work an expression of power (potestas and potentia) over the sex workers?

Power is not something tangible and it can't be measured: it is a multilayered, complex accumulation, visible in discourses that can be expressed differently in the built environment. This research aims to disentangle these layers and complexity, throughout 3 sub research questions:

1)How are the power discourses constitued, under which spaces for sex work are created?
2)How do spaces for sex work relate to the 3 ecologies?
3)How do the networks of the sex workers conform alternative figurations?

[10]Braidotti, 2018, 31-40
[11]**The 'Exited Women' is a former sex worker that suffered harm in the sex industry and therefore supports decriminalisation. The 'Happy Hooker' is the one that is in the industry because she enjoys the work, leaving aside the economical aspect. Victims of abuse and trafficking exist in the sex industry and therefore what they need is a system that protects them, while usually these personae are used arguments in favor of criminalisation.**
[12]**Sex workers in Amsterdam refer to the rental spaces not as brothels, but as windows, since they all work and rent independently in 'windows'.**
[13]**Spinoza refers to potestas and potentia, two forms of power included under the English word (power). Potestas refers to repressive structures of dominant subject formations, while potentia refers to emancipatory potentials.**

How are spaces for sex work an expression of power (potestas and potentia) over the sex workers?

3 ecologies

SEX ——————— **WORK** ——————— **SPACE**

Foucault	Colomina	Mac, Smith
Wallenstein	Frichòt	Edlund, Korn
Preciado	Rendell	
Braidotti	Preciado	
	Fornós, Esteve	

Genealogical approach

Feminist and queer perspective on architecture

Material conditions of sex work

Critical Cartography

Figuration

Braidotti
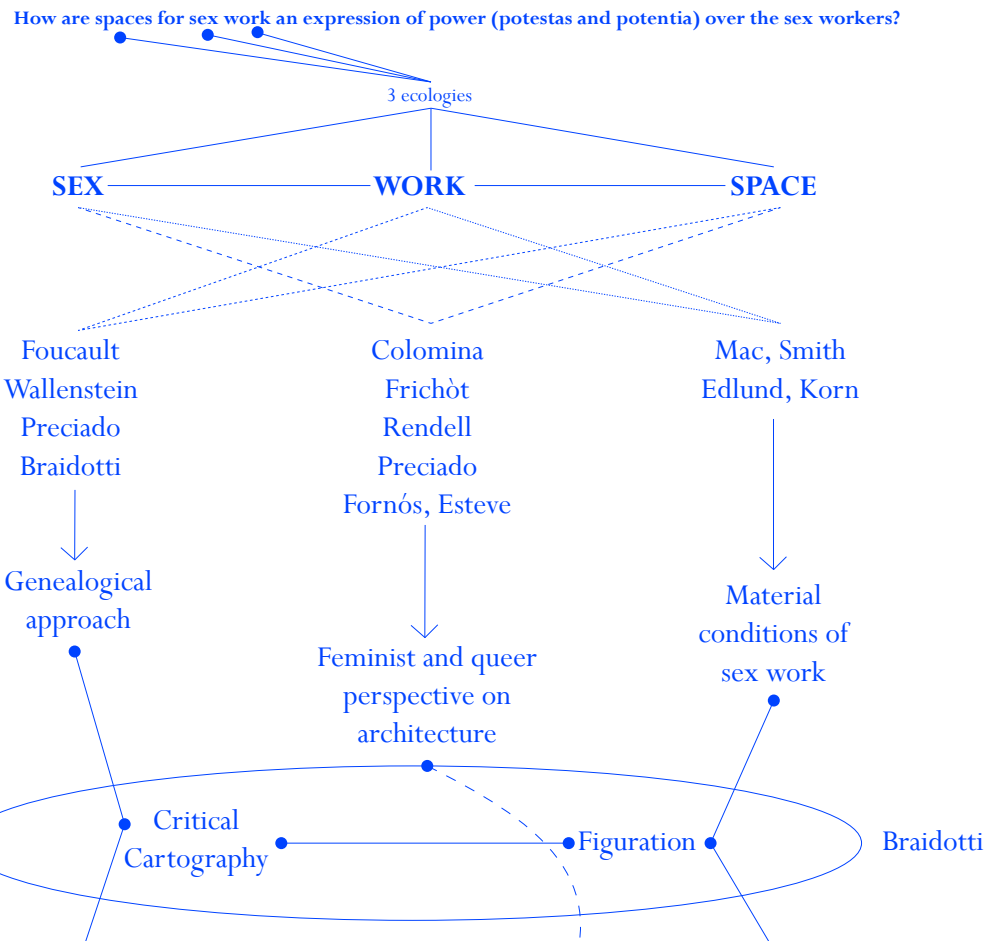
At the theoretical level, this research is constructed within a relational and causal understanding of the 3 ecologies proposed by Guattari, in order to offer a comprehensive framework for 3 key words.[14] In this work, the term *space* does not refer to a static container but to an environmental ecology, thought of as an 'Umwelt':[15] the circumstances, objects and conditions that surround one. *Work* refers to the practice and its social ecology, while mental ecology is the socially-considered more intimate, closer to the subject-ive level; *sexuality*. The relations in-between the tripod of ecologies Environment - Labour - Sexuality is what this project builds upon, hence the study of those takes place relationally.

[14]**study of complex phenomena, household of which we are part (Frichot)**
[15]**Environment, um (around) and Welt (world)**

The relationship between space and work has been a longstanding question in architectural research, especially by post-Foucauldian historians, such as Wallenstein in *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture*, who study the discourses of power behind changes in material realities.[16] Following Foucault's genealogical approach as of *Birth of the Clinic* and *Discipline and Punish*, identifying historical periods with epistemes, and understanding the transformations/changes of those in terms of causality. As feminist theoreticians have often appointed, this Foucaldian approach focuses on the anonymous history and discourse of power, being oblivious to the role that gender, race and class play in those discourses.[17]

The relationship between sex and space has been researched by feminist theorists such as Beatriz Colomina and, contrary to post foucauldian scholarship, this feminist epistemology brings to light that the discourses behind spatial changes are not equally applicable to every subject. These texts focus more on the experience of the subject *and* refer to the power discourses. Jane Rendell in *Gender, Space and Architecture* and Helene Frichot in *Architecture and Feminism*, focus on the more explored linkage between gender and architecture (as space and practice), being sexuality a component of these works but not the central focus. Colomina, on the other hand, discusses female sexuality and its historical seclusion to the domestic, during the conference *Sexuality and Space* and the latter homonymous publication.[18] Her research explores how architecture becomes a tool to position women as object of the male gaze.[19] Following this line of research, his former student Paul B. Preciado analyzes architecture as a biopolitical dispositif during his PHD and consequent publication *Pornotopia*.[20] His work opens the field of research towards sexuality beyond the household, from the Secret museum to Playboy architecture.[21] This exo-domestic sexuality has been part of the analytical work of Pol Esteve and Marc Navarro Fornós, throughout their research of darkrooms in Barcelona. These spaces are closer architecturally to spaces for sex work due to their function and design in 'modernist logistics', and hyper functional, but the different character of the relations that unfold in space directs the research to the third connection.[22]

The relationship between sex and work has long been neglected in academic literature and is basically unstudied in the field of architecture. There are only a few articles that focus on the impact that spaces for sex work have on the surrounding public areas, but those do not consider a relational ensemble of the three ecologies as in this research.[23] Especially considering how the factor of money makes sexual relations a capitalised practice has an influence in how we understand the tripod Environment - Mental - Social. Sex workers such as Molly Smith and Juno Mac[24] focus on the material conditions of their practice that they face everyday, inseparable from their own corporeal experience, reinforced by theorists such as Lena Edlund and Evelyn Korn in *A Theory of Prostitution*. These texts offer a valuable source for my research in the way that they refer to the sex worker's Umwelt and I refer to them as a counterreaction to the neglection of their voices in the architectural feminist discourse.

To draw these three relations together, my research follows the work of the feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, whose work combines Foucauldian genealogies with feminist standpoint theory, to conceptualize 'situated' alternative positions.[25] As she refers to in *Posthuman Ecologies* and *Nomadic Subjects*, a cartography is "a theoretically-based and politically-informed account of the present".[26] Central to her cartographic work, is the notion of figurations (conceptual personae), that function as navigational tools to explore the discourses.[27] Refering to both, this research aims to take a feminist stance of analysing the discourses of power dominating the 3 ecologies of sex work, understanding the Umwelt of this exo-domestic sexuality, and create adequate figurations that help navigate this discourse. These new figurations of subjectivity are accurate with the material reality of the sex workers: they are affected, embodied, enacted and embedded. They are consciously entangled with the discourse, and consequently with their Umwelt, being produced within those, but also able to navigate and affect them. Thus, the research finds itself in between the tripod of relations sex-work-space, being an intensive work that concerns the three ecologies not done yet.

[16]Discourses refers to systems of thought
[17]Federici, 2014, 15
[18]Laura Mulvey and Mark Wigley also refer to these ideas in their essays within the publication Sexuality and Space.
[19]Wilson, 2022
[20]Paul B. Preciado explains in his PHD the issue of the power and the body in relation to architecture discourses and practices through a genealogical method
[21]Preciado, 2013, 2-9.
[22]de Loz, 2022
[23]Such as Subaltern bodies in the digital urban imaginary by Alison Brunn, chapter 8 of Architecture and Feminism, mentioned before
[24]In Revolting Prostitutes, Smith and Mac give a complete overview of the different legal systems regarding the sex work industry from their own perspective as sex workers.
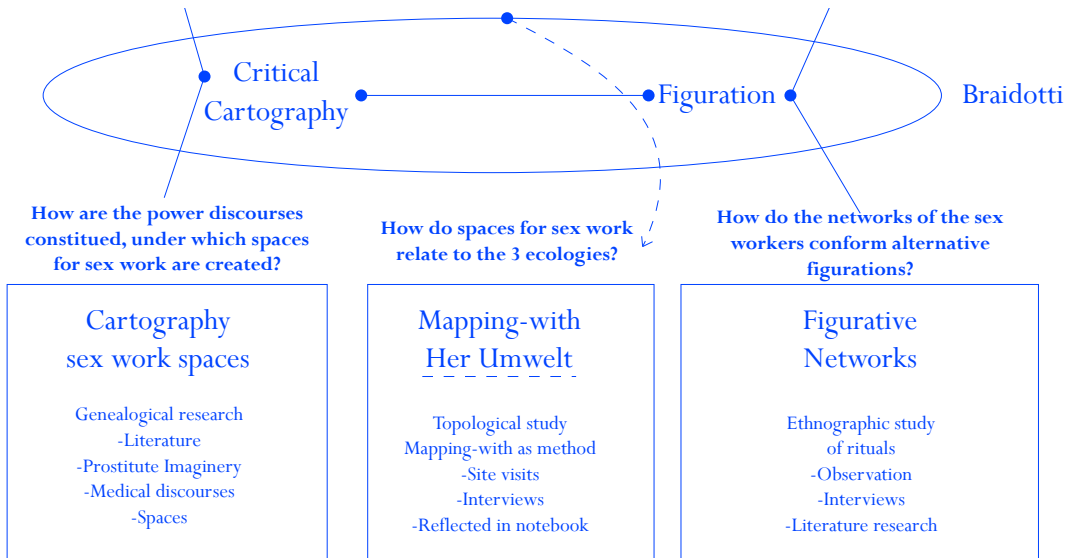[25]Braidotti, 2018, 31-35
[26]Idem, 33
[27]Idem

RESEARCH METHOD(S)
Cartography-Umwelt-Figurations

Critical Cartography — Figuration — Braidotti

How are the power discourses constitued, under which spaces for sex work are created?

How do spaces for sex work relate to the 3 ecologies?

How do the networks of the sex workers conform alternative figurations?

Cartography
sex work spaces

Genealogical research
-Literature
-Prostitute Imaginery
-Medical discourses
-Spaces

Mapping-with
Her Umwelt

Topological study
Mapping-with as method
-Site visits
-Interviews
-Reflected in notebook

Figurative
Networks

Ethnographic study
of rituals
-Observation
-Interviews
-Literature research

In order to understand this un(der)studied relation between the three ecologies, this research is conducted in three interrelated parts, with complementary methodologies: (1) a 'Cartography of spaces for sex work', (2) 'Um-welt mapping-with', (3) 'Figurative networks'. These parts build upon the relations exposed in the theoretical framework, and correspond to the 3 sub-research questions, as it is clarified through in the diagram on the next page. Those studies are in Brussels and Amsterdam, as cities with a different and interesting relation to sex work throughout history and until now.[28]

[28]**The Netherlands follows a regulationist mode, while Belgium full decriminalisation. While Amsterdam is known for sex-tourism, red-light distric being in a gentrified neighbourhood, Brussels has a considerable sex clientele due to historical migration flows to me city, and the EU headquarters. In both cities there is a certain activist movement of sex workers, fighting for better rights, which makes the communities easier to access for me as a researcher.**

[29]**The cartography refers in this context to a process, it is a performative cartography**

[30]Smith and Mac, 2020, 29

The cartography consists of a genealogical analysis of spaces for sex work, through research in archives, historical books and dissertations, aiming to reveal what has been recorded and what has been omitted.[29] This analysis understands the past as multilayered, therefore the research will be divided into subcomponents. A first subcomponent of this cartography are the references to sex work in legal texts and literature, followed by a historical analaysy of the 'prostitute imagery'.[30] The third subcomponent is the medical discourse, materialised in medical tools and studies. Lastly, the last subcomponent is a genealogical study of spaces for sex work, and how are they represented (or not) in plans or in writing. Once these different aspects are researched, the aim is to identify causes in between epistemic changes, expressed through architectural transformations.

The second part 'Umwelt. Mapping-with' demonstrates how the three ecologies of sex work extend beyond mere typological concerns.[31] They require a more complex mapping of relations between the sex worker and her workplace in order to understand their interdependencies, that is, a topological study. This study builds upon *Dark room atlas* but reaches further by studying the three ecologies of the spaces from the perspective of the sex workers, embracing their subjectivity. For this, I firstly obtained practical information of the spaces via rental agencies. Secondly, I organised site visits, using the method of mapping-with[32] as proposed by Donna Haraway, as a way of thinking-with-others and their relation to the three ecologies. The mapping-with sessions were reflected on a notebook containing our reflections through sketches, notes and annotations. This part of the research aims to reveal the sex-worker's Umwelt in relation to the three ecologies as part of the discourse researched in part I.
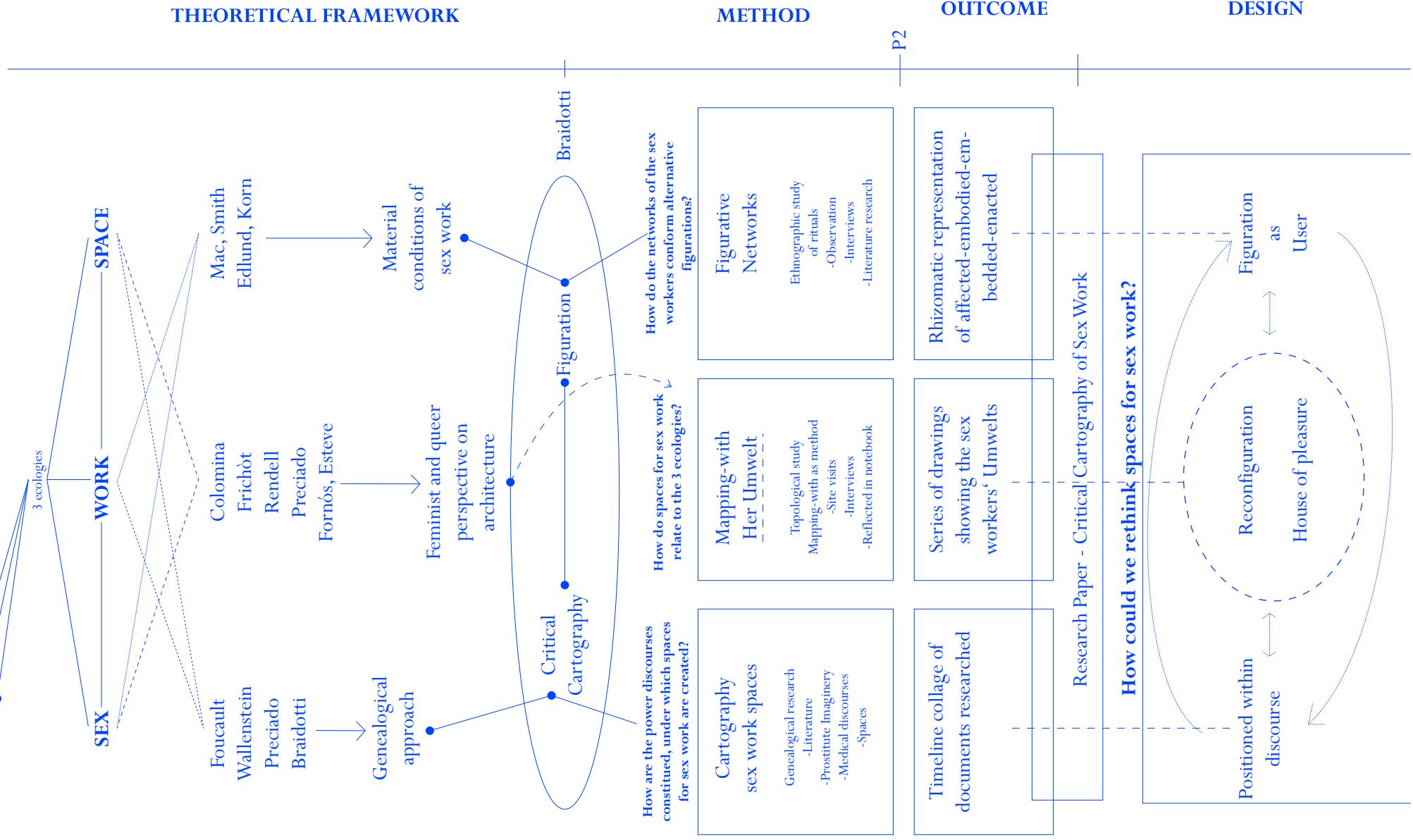
The third part of mapping of 'Figurative networks' uses the notion of figurations, as mentioned before, aiming to create more adequate personae than the dehumanised notions mentioned in the problem statement.[33] For this, identifying different 'profiles' of sex workers was the base, in order to map their network of relations to the 3 ecologies. With this aim, I did an ethnographical research through literature and interviews with different practitioners within sex work, in order to track down and map the constellation of relations of the sex workers. The mapping is divided in 4 subcategories referring to these figurations as a) embodied (humanised) b)enacted (representational), c)embedded (positioned) and d) affective (capacity to affect and be affected). For instance, the *embodiment* is researched by representing different 'profiles' of workers humanised, and the *affective*, by representing the relations of each one of these profiles of workers to rituals related to the practice. These networks of rituals and embodiments manifest power discourses studied in part I drawing the inseparability of the discourses from matter. During this last part, I intended to represent accurate subjectivities with a re-configurative aspect that help navigate the discourses researched in part I and the Umwelten in part II.

[31]**Moneo defines a type as the 'inner formal structure of a building or series of buildings', a typology being a study of these type, in his Essay On Typology. Most of these typological studies take place isolated, instead of situated.**
[32]Rogowska-Stangret, 2022
[33]Braidotti, 2011, 33-34

P2

How are spaces for sex work an expression of power (potestas and potentia) over the sex workers?

3 ecologies

SPACE

WORK

SEX

Mac, Smith
Edlund, Korn

Colomina
Frichòt
Rendell
Preciado
Fornós, Esteve

Foucault
Wallenstein
Preciado
Braidotti

Material
conditions of
sex work

Feminist and queer
perspective on
architecture

Genealogical
approach

Braidotti

Figuration

Critical
Cartography

How do the networks of the sex
workers conform alternative
figurations?

How do spaces for sex work
relate to the 3 ecologies?

How are the power discourses
constitued, under which spaces
for sex work are created?

Figurative
Networks

Ethnographic study
of rituals
-Observation
-Interviews
-Literature research

Mapping-with
Her Umwelt

Topological study
Mapping-with as method
-Site visits
-Interviews
-Reflected in notebook

Cartography
sex work spaces

Genealogical research
-Literature
-Prostitute Imaginery
-Medical discourses
-Spaces

Rhizomatic representation
of affected-embodied-em-
bedded-enacted

Series of drawings
showing the sex
workers' Umwelts

Timeline collage of
documents researched

Research Paper - Critical Cartography of Sex Work

How could we rethink spaces for sex work?

Figuration
as
User

Reconfiguration
House of pleasure

Positioned within
discourse

Enclosed spaces for reproduction

Heterotopic apparatus of female submission

Protecting boundaries for the other

Moral construction of sexual encounters

Playhouses for ritualised spectacl

Desacrated spaces for propaganda

Controlled exposure of the domestic theatre

Virtual spaces for (re)production

Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisatio

CARTOGRAPHY
OF
SPACES FOR SEX WORK
Genealogy of power discourses

Cartography of spaces for sex work

This graphical genealogy aims to show the evolution of spaces for sex work through the mapping of events, which are analysed under 4 subcategories:

- The medical discourse
- The imagery of the sex worker
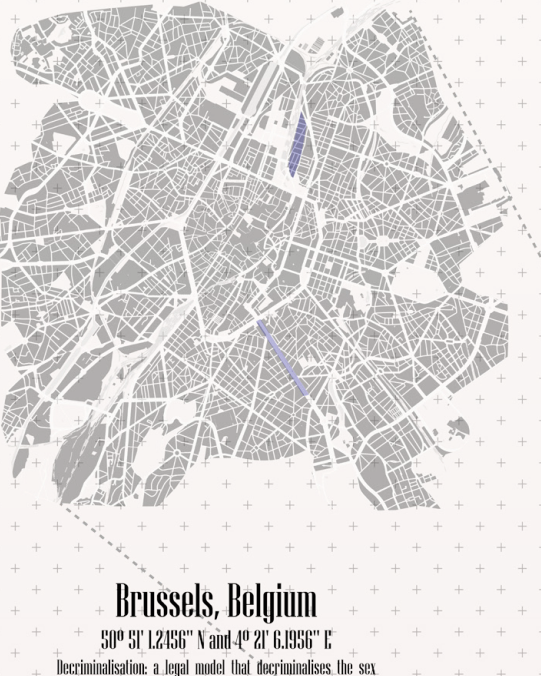- Establishment and changes in legislation
- Spatial changes

After acquiring a causal understanding of spatial changes through the marking of relations between events, 9 main relations were mapped. These signify the most important correlations that led to spatial changes, or to discourse changes that evoke spatial mechanisms. The 9 relations are the following:

- Enclosed spaces for (re)production
- Heterotopic apparatus of female submission
- Protective boundaries for the other
- Moral construction of sexual encounters
- Playhouses for ritualised spectacle
- Desacrated spaces for propaganda
- Controlled exposure of the domestic theatre
- Virtual spaces for (re)production
- Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation

Section headings (upper band)

- Enclosed spaces for reproduction — *Fictional apparatus of (re)production discipline*
- Heterotopic apparatus for female submission — *Spaces for intersexuality and discipline of the female body*
- Protective boundaries for the other — *Formation of moral discourses based on binary oppositions*
- Moral construction of sexual encounters — *Evolution of spaces as resulting from legal measures*
- Play houses for ritualised spectacle — *Commodification of the body for erotic purposes*
- Desacrated spaces for propaganda — *Authoritaristic occupation asks the sex worker as ally*
- Controlled exposure of the domestic theater — *Window as protection from the male gaze*
- Virtual spaces for (re)production — *Commodification pharmacos pornographic regime*
- Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation — *Bottom-up spaces for bottom-up decriminalisation*

Section headings (lower band)

- Enclosed spaces for reproduction — *Fictional apparatus of (re)production discipline*
- Heterotopic apparatus for female submission — *Spaces for intersexuality and discipline of the female body*
- Protective boundaries for the other — *Formation of moral discourses based on binary oppositions*
- Moral construction of sexual encounters — *Evolution of spaces as resulting from legal measures*
- Play houses for ritualised spectacle — *Commodification of the body for erotic purposes*
- Desacrated spaces for propaganda — *Authoritaristic occupation asks the sex worker as ally*
- Controlled exposure of the domestic theater — *Window as protection from the male gaze*
- Virtual spaces for (re)production — *Commodification pharmacos pornographic regime*
- Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation — *Bottom-up spaces for bottom-up decriminalisation*

Maps

- Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Brussels, Belgium
- Paris, France

Timeline

1700 — 1750 — 1800 — 1850 — 1900 — 1950 — 2000 — 2020

2022 — Decriminalisation of sex-work in Belgium

"A cartography is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present. A cartographic approach fulfills the function of providing both analytic and exegetical tools for crtical thought and also creative theoretical alternatives."

-Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic subjects

The first part of the research consists of a genealogical analysis combined with feminist critical theory following Braidotti's notion of cartographies. A cartography, as indicated before, is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present.[1] This analysis aims to cartograph the power discourses (*potestas* and *potentia*) under which spaces for sex work have been created and to trace these back to the present. In other words, the cartography will trace the construction of discourses that configure societal views on sex work, that is, the social and mental ecologies, and map how these discourses relate to the production of the environmental ecology.

The cartography follows a genealogical approach, a method to write critical history, framed through an intersectional feminist lens: addressing how gender, class and race have an influence on the way these discourses apply. This method reinforces that, in order to overcome gender inequalities, "generalization about women should be replaced by cartographic accuracy".[2] Therefore, the cartographic approach is an accurate and situated genealogy that offers a feminist lens to look at the discourses that dominate the history of sex work, and that are behind changes in material realities. The situated aspect of the cartography refers to acknowledging the location of one in terms of space and time.[3] Therefore, the cartography of sex-work-spaces depicted on the following page contextualizes graphically events regarding sex work and their medical, legal, imagery and spatial components from the 18th century and until the present (X-axis) and in the cities of Amsterdam, Brussels in Paris (Y-axis). On the X-axis, I chose this certain time frame due to the information available for the period and the number of remarkable changes regarding sexuality. On the Y-axis, the three chosen cities roughly coincide with three different moral and religious beliefs that can be understood as historically characteristic of central European mindsets. At the same time, cartographing the history of three cities was a conscious choice to go further than national borders, addressing the migration aspect of sex work. This method traces a geography of power relations, that have simultaneously a global and a local dimension.[4]

The first step in organising the cartography was to map *what happened*, that is, situating relevant historical events in the document. The next step was to understand *how these events came to be*. Tracing the relations between events allowed me to understand those in a context, as part of a broader discourse that changes over time. While establishing some causal relations between historical events, certain relational clusters started to appear. Although all the events are connected, the stronger interrelation between some of them provoked a denser clustering, which I refer to in this work as *Networks*. These *Networks* mark different moments in the history of spaces for sex work: they refer to notorious changes in the spatial environment or to discursive changes that evoke spatial mechanisms. The 9 networks configure the coming 9 parts of this first block of the research, offering an overview of the until now anonymous history of the discourses behind spaces for sex work.

1 *Cartography of spaces for sex work*
Own work

1 Braidotti, 2018, 31
2 Braidott, 2011, 56
3 Braidotti, 2018, 31
4 Braidotti, 2011, 54

Enclosed spaces for reproduction
Fictional apparatuses of (re)productive discipline

The first network, depicted on the following page, illustrates a fictional establishment of enclosed spaces as disciplinary apparatus for reproduction in eighteen century France. King Louis XIV was an absolutist monarch and authoritarian ruler, who enjoyed being referred to as Le Roi Soleil.[5] His emblem declared that "Nec pluribus impar" (none is equal) a motto that transgressed beyond the walls of the Royal Palace of Versailles.[6] This monarchical emblem reveals how extremely stratified French society was. In these social strata, as the lower classes were subjugated to the higher ones, women were subjugated by men's wills. Since the rigid social structures made social mobility difficult, aristocratic women could only seek a better (or different) life by climbing the socioeconomic ladder through their relationships with men. This would take place through flirtation, but also by becoming the mistress of the right person. Similarly, peasant women engaged occasionally in prostitution, in order to escape critical economical situations, since other types of working opportunities were less common.[7] These social processes of female economical liberation through relationships with men construct a view of female sexuality as dangerous. Flirtatious women (a group that included sex workers) are dangerous as they tease and provoke men's sexual desires that at the time, are considered uncontrollable and adultery is considered solely a female crime.[8]

This view on female sexuality, bundled with a proliferation of disease, configures the idea of the prostitute as an agent that needs to be disciplined. This disciplinary intention is materialised in the institutionalisation of prison-hospitals, such as *La Salpetriere* in Paris. In these

5 Britannica
6 Ibid
7 Signely, 1993
8 Riley, 1990, 39-40

1700,
Spinhouses
'house of correction for prostitutes in which inmates were made to work at spinning'

1769,
Le Pornographe
Nicolas Restif de La Bretonne
Parthénions
houses of pleasure
houses of populationism
"so that no 'fille publique' appear in the streets or at a window."

1698,
Bon Pasteur
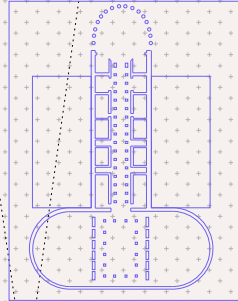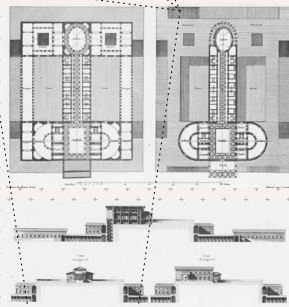christian rehabilitation centre for repentant sex workers

1773-1806
Oikema House of Pleasure
The ideal City of Chaux
Claude-Nicolas Ledeoux
"fragment of a Greek temple"
from oikos, house, and nomos, law

rel. 1

rel. 2

rel. 3
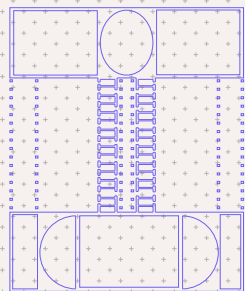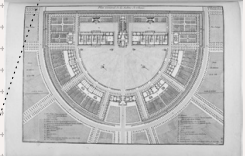
Analytical drawing Oikema
Enclosed spaces for (re)production

1684,
'Réglament du Roi'
1768,
re-issue of Réglament du Roi,
All women who are suspected of can be arrested
prostitution

1785,
Les 120 Journés de Sodome, ou l'École du
M. de Sade libertinage,

1656,
Hôpital-Géneral
Including
La Salpêtrière
prison-hospital for women

2 Network 1: Enclosed spaces for (re)production
Own work

institutions, women that were found "guilty of prostitution, fornication or adultery" were locked up until a religious authority claimed that they had "cleansed their morals".[9] Parallely, other Christian rehabilitation centres open for repentant sex workers such as the *Buon Pasteur* in Brussels.[10] In those spaces, women would be "moralised" by labouring without a wage.[11] These disciplinary buildings emerge in order to control the 'criminal' women, as well as the spread of disease.

Under the more licentious rule of Louis XV, writings on sexuality from a social and political point of view started being produced. Nicolas Restif de la Bretonne published *Le Pornographe*, a publication in form of letters between two pornographers (*porne*, 'prostitute' and *graphein*, 'writing'), reflecting on how to sterilize/hygienize the practice of sex work.[12] During this epistolary exchange, the author describes a project for the regulation of prostitution in the city of Paris. The publication also proposed a new type of building, the *Parthenions*.[13] These architectures are called houses of pleasure, but also a technology to exert what Foucault calls biopower: the management of life through institutions.[14] The state-managed institutions of the *Parthenions* would have the power to organise and control life, by limiting the spread of disease and fomenting reproduction: these places were houses of pleasure and houses of populationism.[15]

As a response to Bretogne's ideas, Ledoux proposed the House of Pleasure of Oikema in 1780 within the ideal city of Chaux.[16] In the framework of a Foucauldian analysis of the proposal, Oikema envisions the spaces as a biopolitical instrument for a utopian, already *disciplined* society. The proposal was a response to the failure of the former disciplinary technologies. In Oikema, the women are state sex workers, and they offer not only their procreative sexual labour but also their reproductive force. They served as a working force that gave children to the state, to regulate the demographic situation and guarantee a productive function of the contractual relations.[17] The proposed plan depicts two levels: one destined for sexual encounters, and the lower one as a 'domestic' space for the women. In Ledoux's project, the workers are not allowed to leave the precinct, meaning that the phallus shape of the walls in the floorplan symbolizes and literally materializes the enclosure of women who are forced into reproductive labour since contraceptive and abortion methods are forbidden.[18] The monumental presence of the phallus is the material re-enactment of an almighty patriarchal surveillance of the state. And in Ledoux's vision, women serve this state through their enclosure, sexual and reproductive force.

9 Carrez, 2008
10 Conner, 2011, 179
11 Pluvinage, 2016, 23
12 Restif de la Bretonne, 1769
13 B. Preciado, n.d.
14 Foucault, 1977-78
15 Conner, 2011, 184
16 Preciado, n.d.
17 Ibid
18 Ibid

Heterotopic apparatus for female submission
Spaces for heterosexuality and discipline of the female body

The second network explores the legalisation of *Maisons close* (enclosed house, brothel) in Paris as a way to control the *filles publiques* (public girls), while creating other worlds for the clientele. The painting *La Grande Odalisque*, painted by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, represents a naked woman relaxedly laying, turning her look delicately towards the spectator. She is not soliciting,[19] instead, her laying position in a bed can be interpreted as a symbol of high social status. The sex worker is represented as a powerful sexual being, but she is also framed as an object of the male gaze, which becomes voyeuristic- as she seems to have just found out that she is being observed.[20] The body of the sex worker starts being sexualized, not because of the nudity, but because of the social construction of the male gaze. Through idealized representations of the body of sex workers during Orientalism and continued by Impressionism in France, there is a process of commodification of the female body. The representation of the body of the sex worker and its exposure to a wider audience contributes to the social construct of the male gaze. The *Odalisque* is a slave,[21] and her idealised representation contributes to the construction of the 'Prostitute Imagery'.[22] The imagery representing the fantasy of the sexual slave fascinated many painters at the time and constitutes a visual reminder of the male gaze in this period.

With the implementation of the French system in order to regulate prostitution, the workers are legally divided between *soumises* and *insoumises*- 'submissive' and 'insubmissive'. The *insoumises*, or not registered workers, could now be tracked down by the *police de mours* 'vice police' and incarcerated.[23] The *soumises*, on the other hand, work in the *Maisons close*, a space that serves simultaneously as working and domestic spaces. In the *maisons*, the workers are forced to undergo violent gynaecological inspections, supposedly to control the spread of disease.[24] During this time, the worker is extremely conditioned socially because of two extreme imageries. As an example, Nana, a Parisian sex worker, is represented as faultless and clean in the homonymous painting by Manet, and as a "heap of puisad blood and putrid

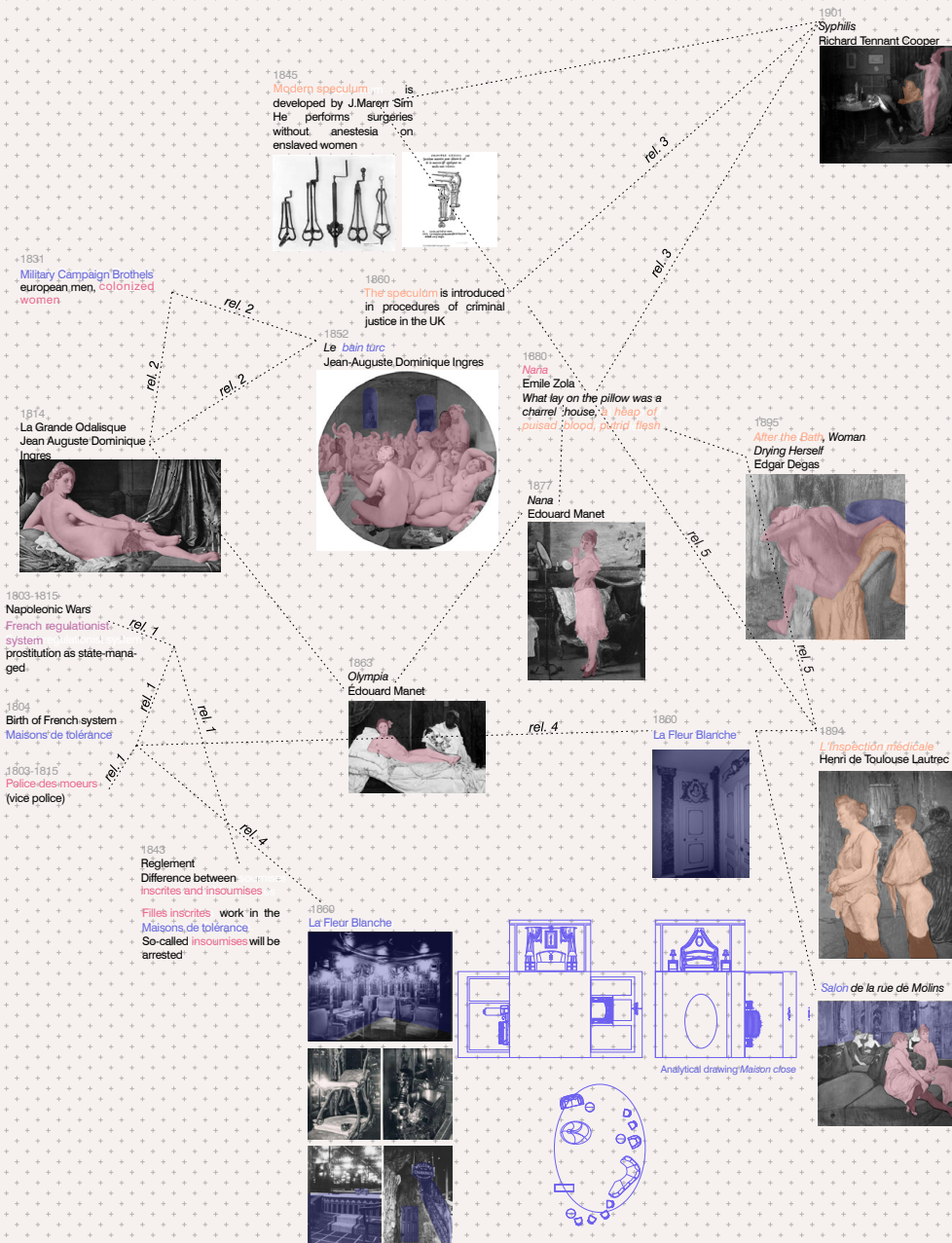19 **Soliciting meaning to offer one's services as a sex worker**
20 Kerchman, 2022
21 Kerchman, 2022
22 Gira Grant, 2014
23 Mathieu, n.d.
24 Smith and Mac, 2018, 23

1901
Syphilis
Richard Tennant Cooper

1845
Modern speculum is developed by J.Marerr Sim He performs surgeries without anestesia on enslaved women

1831
Military Campaign Brothels
european men, colonized women

1860
The speculum is introduced in procedures of criminal justice in the UK

1852
Le bain turc
Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres

1880
Nana
Emile Zola
What lay on the pillow was a charnel house, a heap of puisad blood, putrid flesh

1895
After the Bath, Woman Drying Herself
Edgar Degas

1814
La Grande Odalisque
Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres

1877
Nana
Edouard Manet

1803-1815
Napoleonic Wars
French regulationist system
prostitution as state-managed

1863
Olympia
Édouard Manet

1804
Birth of French system
Maisons de tolérance

1860
La Fleur Blanche

1894
L'inspection médicale
Henri de Toulouse Lautrec

1803-1815
Police des moeurs
(vice police)

1843
Reglement
Difference between inscrites and insoumises
Filles inscrites work in the Maisons de tolérance
So-called insoumises will be arrested

1860
La Fleur Blanche

Salon de la rue de Molins

Analytical drawing Maison close

rel. 1 rel. 2 rel. 3 rel. 4 rel. 5

3 *Network 2: Heterotopic apparatus for female submission*
Own work

flesh" by Zola in his work *Nana*.[25] The sex worker is either an obedient, exoticized slave or a filthy, disobedient clandestine worker. The persona of the sex worker at the time symbolizes men's sexual desires within extramarital encounters inasmuch as it represents their anxieties towards sexually transmitted diseases.

The emergence of Maison close means the state-managed development of a type of enclosed architecture for sex work. Following the ideal state-brothel of Oikema, architecture becomes the technology through which the women are disciplined. The Maison close builds up on an exoticized view of the Harem during the colonial era. The Harem refers to the reserved spaces for women in the traditional muslim aristocratic home. It is a private space that serves to maintain the modesty and protection of the women, and that in several cases, constituted a space for support within the female community. During Orientalism, European artists and writers re-imagined the Harem as a hidden sexual world, a space where men could fulfil their sexual fantasies with exotic women:[26] the harem is appropriated and revisualized through an Eurocentric, colonial male gaze.

As in the Harem, the Maison close is considered a space reserved for women, which positions the man as a visitor, as an intruder. The clients are the ones who need to have a certain socioeconomic status to enter, as well as passing a certain social ritual so that they are granted access. In the Maison close, the workers waited in the collective space of the Salon, where the clients would enter and be solicited by the workers. Subsequently, the worker would lead the client to one of the private rooms, and the sexual encounter took place behind closed doors. The private rooms and the shielded access resemble the heterotopic dimension of the brothel[27]: they are conceived as *other* spaces that recreate an illusion of being in a different space - such as the garden, the Arabic bath, the church, and Versailles.[28] These themed *Maisons close* juxtapose in a single place, several ones that are, in reality, incompatible with the sexual act.[29] The sexual act behind closed doors is the heterotopic dimension of the brothel, a new step in the ritual of filtering the sexual act. This process of filtering at the door of the private room gives the worker emancipatory power, as she can choose when, where to go, and with whom. The way that this sequence is configured creates a ritual that can empower the worker. But it can also exert power over her. Indeed, this emancipation of the sex worker is destabilised through the introduction of a hierarchy, a panoptical view that controls them. This panoptical view is imposed on them through different elements: the figure of the madame, or the client. These figures of panoptical control can decide for the worker, interrupting a social sequence where she has free will. The introduction of the hierarchy and lack of social control is what provokes the relationship to potentially become abusive, as it happened in the historical *Maisons close*.

25 Zola, 1877
26 Kerchman,2022
27 Foucault1993, 23
28 Greene, 2008, 97
29 Foucault, 1993,23

Protective boundaries for the Other
Formation of moral discourses based on binary oppositions

The third network refers to a qualitative change in moral judgement of sex work. Although at the beginning of the 20th century the Maisons closes were legalised, Victorian society was characterised by strong moral standards. But the enforcement of those was selective: loose for the elites, and stricter for the masses.[30] These ideas pretty much determine a bipolarised view on sexuality that drives society to live in a gendered double standard on sexuality. On the one hand, it was socially accepted that men have sexual desires and needs. On the other hand, women supposedly lack sexual desires and needs and should only engage in sexual activity to procreate (or to please their husbands). This view on sexuality discloses the Victorian idea that gender is merely biologically based, and determinant of every individual's role and character. This biological classification based on opposition favours a process of social schismogenesis[31] that reaches all levels of social conditions and relations taking place at the time.

Following this line of thought, there was a process of classifying human beings, and sex workers are no exception to this phenomenon. They were defined as "fallen women", and prostitution as "the great social evil", as it endangered the two main ideas on female sexuality: that women could, indeed, have sexual desires and be economically independent outside of

30 Britannica
31 Schismogenesis refers to the process of creation of division

the marriage.[32] Women, and especially sex workers, were socially defined by their anatomy, rather than legally confined in a space.

In this context, the increasing mobility of the female population, especially within the working class, was the catalyst for new societal anxieties. Women of the working class started a rural exodus towards the city, as well as leaving the domestic spaces for the public, gaining socio-economic independence. In this climate of change, there are registers of the first cases of the so-called 'white slave trade', scandals of white women who are forcedly displaced to the cities to practice sex work.[33] This incidents of which there is barely proof, were sensationalised and exaggerated by the media, becoming "journalistic pornography".[34] These few cases quickly become moralist arguments for the abolitionist movement, which identifies the prostitute as a 'white slave'. The posters alerting of the 'white slave trade' at the time reveal the anxieties of colonial countries - they represent a man of colour taking young white women, following the colonial discourse of *they* are taking *our* women.[35] Indeed, the Eurocentric and abusive colonial behaviours considered local men from the occupied territories (*they*) as unable to control their sexual impulses, and therefore, dangerous for the Eurocentric hegemony ('*our*' women). The abolitionist movement, a movement that sought the complete prohibition of sex work, developed as a response, almost a moral obligation of bourgeois society to "rescue" these "fallen women",[36] revealing the depth of the colonial and sexist view on the issue. Their contradicting line of thought were synthesised in this saviour complex.

This movement was closely related to the first feminist wave, which followed the contradictory line of thought of abolitionism: as feminists were protesting for the female vote, they defended the institution of marriage and the gendered roles within it. Josephine Butler was one of the main figures of this feminist movement, as well as of the prostitution abolitionist movement. She publicly expressed her opposition to extra-marital sex but also against celibacy, which she claimed would lead to depravity, and proposed marriage as the solution.[37] Parallelly, she rightly called "chirurgical rape" the violent health checks that the sex workers were forced to have with the means of the speculum.[38] Unfortunately, the aftermath of this movement was not a better health infrastructure to prevent disease in the workers by checking the male clients; the ban on prostitution was approved in 1869.[39] Under these oppositional and classificatory logics, there is a border that is created to separate *our* women from *other* women, *proper* women from *fallen* women, etc. This network does not refer to a change in spatial arrangements, but these ethics and 'logics' of thought evoke spatial mechanisms of segregation based on an idea of *otherness* being based on gender, class and origin.
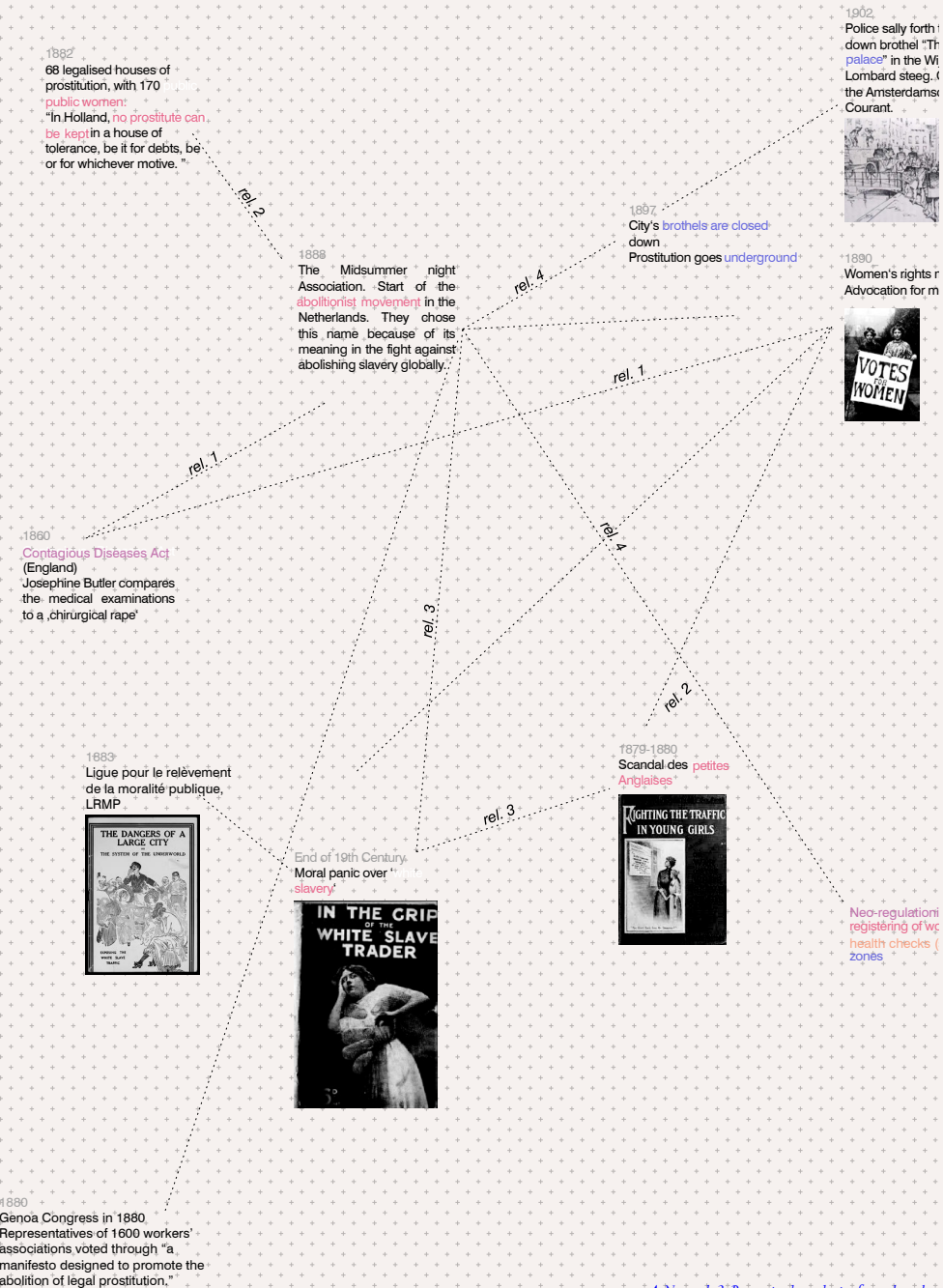
32 Ripa, n.d.
33 Ibid
34 Herzog, 2011, 7
35 Ibid
36 Every woman that would have extra-marital relations would be considered a 'fallen woman'
37 Ripa, n.d.
38 Smith and Mac, 2011, 6
39 Ripa,n.d.

1882
68 legalised houses of prostitution, with 170 public women:
"In Holland, no prostitute can be kept in a house of tolerance, be it for debts, be or for whichever motive. "

1902,
Police sally forth down brothel "Th palace" in the Wi Lombard steeg. the Amsterdamse Courant.

1897,
City's brothels are closed down
Prostitution goes underground

1888
The Midsummer night Association. Start of the abolitionist movement in the Netherlands. They chose this name because of its meaning in the fight against abolishing slavery globally.

1890,
Women's rights r Advocation for m

VOTES for WOMEN

1860,
Contagious Diseases Act (England)
Josephine Butler compares the medical examinations to a ,chirurgical rape'

1883,
Ligue pour le relèvement de la moralité publique, LRMP

THE DANGERS OF A LARGE CITY
THE SYSTEM OF THE UNDERWORLD

End of 19th Century,
Moral panic over slavery'

IN THE GRIP
of the
WHITE SLAVE
TRADER

1879-1880,
Scandal des petites Anglaises'

Fighting the traffic in young girls

Neo-regulation registering of wo health checks (zones

1880,
Genoa Congress in 1880
Representatives of 1600 workers' associations voted through "a manifesto designed to promote the abolition of legal prostitution."

rel. 2
rel. 4
rel. 1
rel. 1
rel. 3
rel. 4
rel. 2
rel. 3

4 *Network 3: Protective boundaries from the other*
Own work

Moral construction of sexual encounters
Evolution of spaces as resulting from legal measures

The fourth network studies comparatively the divergence of the abolitionist movement in the two contexts of Amsterdam and Paris. The two cities are depicted here as exemplary of two legal models for prostitution, abolitionist and regulationist, following also each one of them two different moral standpoints based on religious beliefs.

On the one hand, the municipality of Amsterdam radically prohibits prostitution through the *Zedelijheitwet*, or the 'moral law'.[40] This ban meant the closure of the brothels that existed in the city, and it also forbade any type of activity that is suspected to be prostitution, such as the act of soliciting by women on the streets. Protestantism was the main religion in the Netherlands at the time, meaning that the morals that sustained society were based on moderate standards, but their enforcement on society was quite strict.[41] In other words, religious beliefs were one thing, but the practising of those was another. At the time, non-procreative sex was pathologized, a heritage from Victorian morals, that valued sex only in its procreative function. Parallely, the increase in the spread of venereal diseases such as syphilis, created fear and anxiety towards sexual relations, reinforcing its moral pathologization. Representations such as *Syphilis* painted in 1900 by Richard Tennant Cooper, depict the direct identification of the sex worker, as a symbol for non-procreative sex, to a potential disease. Around this time, 'heterosexuality' appeared as a new term that could be defined as a "morbid and incontrollable attraction to people from the same sex".[42] Heterosexuality was a psychological disorder that had to be cured by marriage. In as much as heterosexuality refers to 'other' sexuality, heterotopias are those 'other' spaces that need to be abolished. The ban on brothels materialized the pathologization of non-procreative sex, 'heterosexuality'.
The prohibition on brothels can be understood as a hyper moral reaction to the emergence

40 Pulskota, 2017, 42
41 Britannica
42 Katz, 2005

1919
The bowed bed of a prostitute, Antoniesbreestraat.

1911
Brothel ban nationalized
Zedelijkheidwet (moral law)

Neo-regulationism
registering of workers
health checks (speculum)
zones

1924
One-two-two

rel. 1

rel. 1

rel. 2

rel. 2

rel. 2

1968
Cor Jaring,
a window prostitute.
Women started soliciting through the windows of their homes

1956
Le Sphynx
Frank Horvat

ca. 1950
At Sphynx
Alberto Giacometti

1930
Chez Christiane
A brothel specialised in BDSM. Appearance of new types of pleasure establishments

5 Network 4: Moral construction of sexual encounters
Own work

of the fear of the 'white slave trade'. The legal framework elevated social consciousness (or unconsciousness) in regard to prostitution, being the practice judged and prosecuted not only legally: its social judgment became more important. The spatial consequence of such a movement was the displacement of sex work to clandestine spaces.[43] The former discussion on prostitution focused on a moral judgement of whether it should happen or not, instead of focusing on determining the conditions of how it will happen. The abolition took away the social cohesion that developed throughout the century. And this forced change materialised in a degradation of the spaces, those becoming a failed technology for the protection for the worker.

On the other hand, Paris followed a neo-regulationist approach, enforcing its moral standards more loosely. Since the Napoleonic Wars, there had been an incorporation of adultery into the moral customs within the French capital. Extra-marital sex was socially accepted, seen as something "inevitable" and actually preferred to happen with sex workers rather than with "other women", meaning women that were married. This view was deeply bundled with catholic religious morals: these practices were tolerated, as long as the client would redeem himself. In this context, neo-regulationism was introduced as a new legal approach, which meant the conversion of the *Maisons* to non-domestic spaces, and the establishment of zones in which prostitution would be allowed.[44] As an example, the extreme heterotopic dimension of the Maison close was tolerated, as long as it was enclosed. The social cohesion was created detached from the protection of the worker, but with a permissive focus on the freedom of the client. Neo-regulationists envisioned a hygienic future in which medicine would become ever more exacting and effective, and sexuality more permissive.[45] At this time, places such as the One-Two-Two and Le Sphinx were inaugurated, which signify a maximisation of the interior heterotopia of the brothels. The establishments start being specialised in practices such as BDSM, going further in the spatial recreation of other spaces.
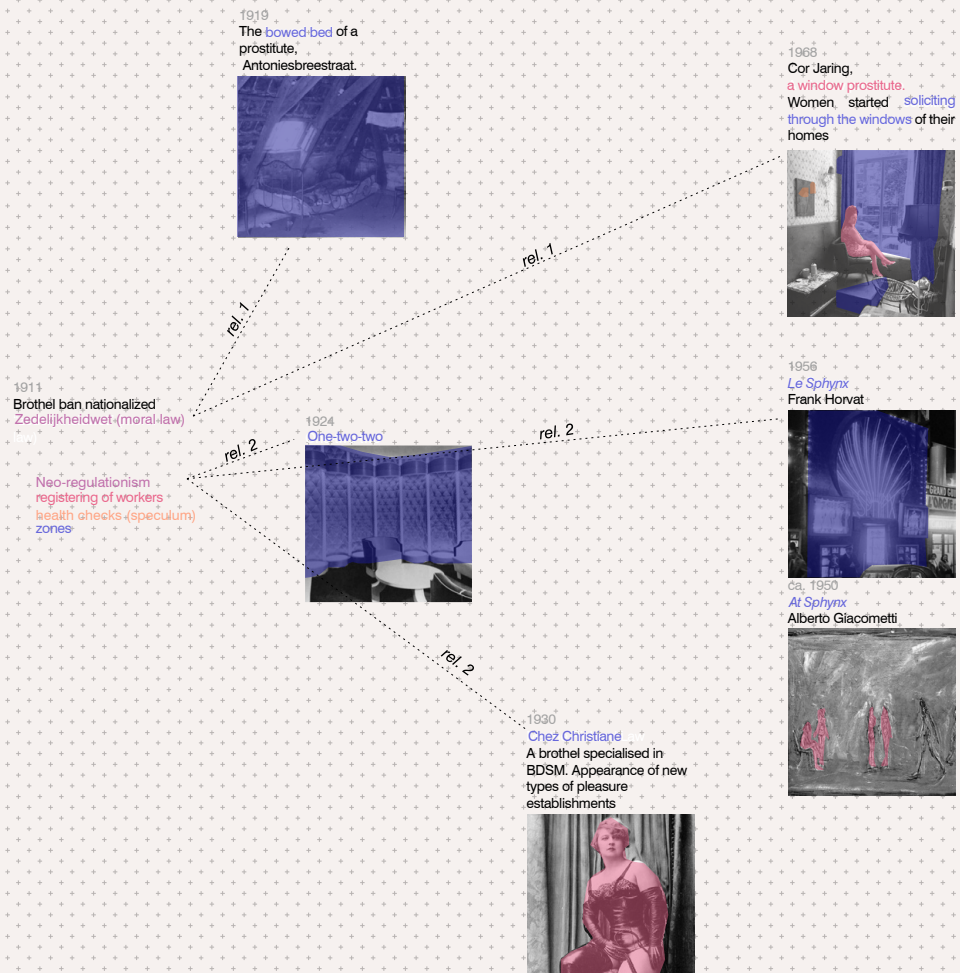
43 Pulskota, 2017,42
44 Conner, 2017, 188
45 Herzog, 2011

Play-houses for ritualised spectacle
Commodification of the body for erotic purposes

The fifth network reveals a change in the way sexuality is being consumed, which favours the emergence of new architectural types in the realm of sex work. Due to a certain economic prosperity, the Interwar period meant social mobility for the middle class. During the *Annés Folles*, the urban centres were booming, as they symbolised the sociocultural innovation and freedom that the middle class was looking for.[46] The massive displacement of citizens from rural areas to urban centres changed the conditions of communal living, and we could consider Paris to be at the heart of this cosmopolitanism. This demographic change provoked agglomerations of people in the urban nucleus that the city infrastructure was not prepared to handle. The spread of disease started to increase as a consequence of insalubrious living conditions. At the same time, this agglomeration of people influenced a decline in the importance of reproduction, while normalising recreational sexual relations. Therefore, the medical discourse changed its focus into trying to fight the disease spread caused by this normalisation through the opening of several institutions such as the *Commission de prophylaxie des maladies vénériennes*, or the *Office national d'hygiène sociale*. The efforts of such institutions focus on distancing people from casual sex due to the incapacity of controlling the disease with the available protective methods.

This change in medical discourse marks a shift in the perception of sexuality. At the same time, in a cultural climate marked by intellectual expatriation to Paris, sociocultural movements emerged, such as the *Négritude*.[47] The consequent *Années Folles* provided the sociocultural ground for experimentation, favouring the emergence of new types of entertainment.[48] Those were part of what is called 'night-life' today: establishments such as cabarets, music

46 Also known as the Roaring Twenties, a period of intense social, cultural and artistic activity
47 Négritude was an anti-colonial cultural and political movement founded by a group of African and Caribbean students in Paris in the 1930s who sought to reclaim the value of blackness and African culture.
48 Pluskota, 2011, 34

WWI
Encouraged use of condoms
(sheep intestines or rubber) or
prophylactic injections of
antiseptic liquids on soldiers

rel. 4

rel. 2

1923
*Les maladies sexuelles et
leurs conséquences*

REGENT

n.d. –WWI
Next Gentleman, Please!
Brothel in Belgium in WWI
Heinrich Zille

1905
Mata Hari dancing at Musée Guimet

rel. 3

rel. 3

1890
La baraque de la Goulue
Henri de Toulouse Lautrec

1927
Josephine Baker
Performance at Folis Bergere

1905
Bal Tabarin, Poster
Jules-Alexandre Grün

rel. 4

1924
One-two-two

rel. 1

rel. 1

1690
Cabaret Le Chat Noir
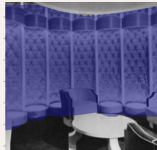
rel. 4

1930
Chez Christiane
A brothel specialised in
BDSM. Appearance of new
types of pleasure
establishments

6 *Network 5: Playhouses for ritualised spectacle*
Own work
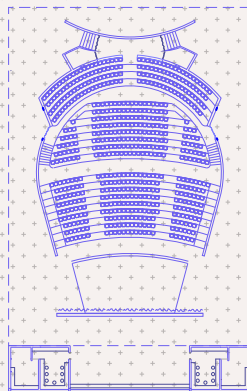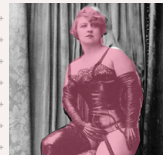
Analytical drawing Theatre

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halls, clubs, etc. The development of these new spaces marked a change in the way people consumed sexuality: they signify a change in *consummation*: in consumption and consummation. This, bundled with the aforementioned change in the medical discourse, marks a change in the sense that the male client starts paying to consume sex, instead of paying for having sex. This transformation effectuated a change of mindset, in which sexuality becomes a much more abstract concept: sex is not only the act of penetration. As a consequence, the palette of sexual services broadens, marking a clearer differentiation between erotic and sexual work: works that are of sexual direct contact and works that focus on provoking, and teasing. Therein, we find a change of use-value of women's bodies, where they are not there only as a reproductive force, but their bodies are a productive force in the spectacle.[49] This separation, first between worker and client, and secondly between sexuality and eroticism are the conditions that create new emerging forms of spectacle.

These new sexual spectacles generate the opening of new types of 'leisure' spaces for sex. Those spaces mark a change from the panoptical control of the Maison close to the theatre building type, which features an inverted panopticon as a form of control. In this construct, the worker or workers are in the spotlight. They are being looked at, becoming an object of the male gaze, but at the same time, the inverted panopticon refers to a change in the social construct of this male gaze. As the workers are the ones centrally performing in the spectacle, they regulate and control the way in which they are perceived. It is at this moment when erotic dances, such as strip tease, become a usual part of the spectacles, initiated by the actors. Dancers such as Mata Hari and Josephine Baker and spaces such as Moulin Rouge gained recognition worldwide, changing the perception of woman working in the sexual realm as an agent to be respected and admired.

Following up on this new type of sexual spectacle, brothels with mixed functions start to appear. There, the paid-for intercourse between client and worker came to be seen as an additional service to the spectacle, which was the more general form of consumption at the time. Due to its new exposure to the public, this change in type involved new social rituals within the new space, creating a social cohesion that was more protective for the worker.

This ritualization of the practice came alongside recommendations for time limitations in sexual encounters with sex workers with the aim of hygienic control. The schedules as part of the rituals contributed to the sequential composition of the practice that we know now. One of these consequences, for example, is the idea of 'quick sex' within sex work, which is now usually found in Red Light districts.[50] These rituals establish limits, which are empowering for the worker, as the limits to the relationship are socially pre-established at the moment of the encounter: they create a certain social cohesion in which the worker is in a socially controlled exposure.

49 The use-value, following Marx, are physical properties of a commedity
50 Pluskota, 2018, 34

Desacrated spaces for propaganda

Antisemitic occupation adn the sex worker as ally

The sixth network depicts the consequences that the German occupation of Paris during the Second World War had in the social and political imagery of the brothels and the sex workers. The soldiers of the Wehrmacht were clients of the Parisian *Maisons Close*, at the time of the occupation. This (mis)use of the female sex worker for the means of serving the desires of the military front had already historical precedents such as the so-called Military Campaing Brothels in the 18th century. During the occupation, the sex workers, as the rest of the French population, were to act in accordance with what the German authorities would say, or else they would be punished. That meant working for them, and - in the case of the *filles*-having sex with them, in exchange for a wage; or simply in order to stay alive.

1956
Le Sphynx
Frank Horvat

1924
One-two-two

rel. 1

WWII
NS military brothel establis-
hed in a synagogue in Brest,
France

rel. 3

rel. 2

1946
Closing of Le Sphynx

rel. 1

WWII
Nazi "Psy-op" propaganda
flyers. The aim was to divide
Allies from each other by
challenging their
masculinity through the
encounter with women.

1946
Marthe Richard Law
Association with NS, german
Wehrmacht
prostitutes were "spreading
disease like shotgun pellets"

7 Network 6: Desacrated spaces for propaganda
Own work

Within their antisemitic agenda, after forcing the Jewish population to concentration camps, the Wehrmacht often occupied the synagogues. In their presence in spaces of sex work, the Wehrmacht went as far as opening brothels in these synagogues, as it happened in Brest, France.[51] These acts were a further attempt to desecrate the spaces of Jewish belief, with a further tone of disrespecting any building part of their religious beliefs or lives. The pop-up brothels in synagogues were a propagandist dispositif that would leave a mark on the Jewish, and sex worker's community. The aim was not only to desecrate the space; it was enacting a possessive and intrusive attitude that is a part of the construction of dominance and virility at the time.[52]

This creation of a dominating masculine ideal has in this case very real expressions and re-alisations.[53] Considering it in biopolitical terms, this masculine ideal imposes an antisemitic management of life that is carried out by the extermination of the Jewish population. More-over, the biopolitics of antisemitism control procreation with eugenic reasonings behind it, simultaneously fostering a supposedly superiority of the Arian race. Fascism was born from the attempt to give order to a disordered world, where impulses and emotions risk calling into question traditional masculinity.[54] The Nazi virility reinforces their superiority through violence, 'courage' in the military, but also in the realm of the domestic: their interpersonal relations. The figure of the family is subjugated to the one of the man - who is at the same time protective of the fatherland, through aggression and sexual domination. The figure of the man converts into a new role, which has consequences for women: they are subjugated in a broader plan of biopolitical management to a reproductive force, but also as a sexual object for male pleasure as ways to reinforce the idea of the new dominant masculinity.

The emancipatory potentials of the sex workers within this biopolitical discourse were very reduced, not to say non-existent. They were subjugated in the private and public sphere, to the point that, even after the end of the German occupation, they continue to be marked as the last remains of the propagandist *dispositif* of Nazism. To deal with the social and politi-cal trauma caused by the abusive occupation of the Wehrmacht and the military defeat, the French political body aims to erase all traces that remember and refer to this time. As part of this process, the sex worker was used as a scapegoat. Her figure was called an "ally to Nazism" and a "traitor to France".[55] This process of erasure concluded with the closure of the broth-els in 1946, through *La Loi de Marthe Richard*.[56] This legal approach illustrates the creation of a conceptual persona, a traitor that is unfaithful to the heterosexual family, but also to the state. This demonization of the female sex worker reveals how her social position favours abuse from both sides: the Nazi occupation, as well as the posterior process of erasure of the occupational trauma.

51 Herzog, 2011, 89
52 Texeira Pinto
53 Benadousi, 2020, 77-81
54 Ibid
55 Smith and Mac, 2020, 28
56 Herzog, 2011, 91

Controlled exposure of the domestic theater
Window as protection from the male gaze

The seventh network refers to the development of the practice of *window* prostitution in Amsterdam. Throughout the 20th century, prostitution in the Netherlands was illegal but socially tolerated, especially in the red-light district of De Wallen.[57] Tolerance, here ought to be understood in terms of the specific socio-cultural background of the Netherlands. Inasmuch as there is, traditionally, a Dutch willingness to accept other beliefs and behaviours, especially for commercial purposes), this attitude is characterised by certain limitations and an individualistic mindset.[58] In this context, tolerance can be understood within this context in an immunological way: internalisation of externalities. If there is an externality to be internalised, it can be accepted in its right dosage. In other words, if events happen in a controlled way, they can be tolerated. This form of control is, for example, the enclosure of certain behaviours, as in De Wallen. Inside the confines of the walled canals that blocked the views, sexual attitudes could be more liberated.

57 Pulskota, 2018, 43
58 Ibid, 34

1919
The bowed bed of a prostitute, Antoniesbreestraat.

rel. 1

1947
Increase of women soliciting from windows

rel. 2

Analytical drawing *Window*

1952
Sex worker in De Wallen

rel. 2

1968
Cor Jaring, a window prostitute. Women started soliciting through the windows of their homes

1980
AIDS pandemic

2000
new legislation
more rights for workers
requirements for the space: minimun of conveniences and a panic button
medical checks enrcouraged

rel. 4

rel. 4

1990
repossesion of buildings where illegal activities were engaged

End 90s
regulating prostitution and brothels

rel. 3

1970
organized crime
hard drugs

498+
Protest in De Wallen against intravenous drugs

8 *Network 7: Controlled exposure of the domestic theatre*
Own work

During the 1950s, this tolerance in a gated area reinforces a social acceptance and cohesion that regulates the practice of sex work, as well as the spaces in which takes place and around there. The social cohesion contributed to an evolution of the underground condition, that is, the heterotopic dimension of the brothels, to become more transparent. In this context, permanent and casual sex workers start soliciting from the windows of the entrance level of their domestic space.[59] They would usually sit on a chair beside a table while being on a little self-constructed stage so that their legs would be visible to the clients. They would further stage their domestic space to signify its labour use through the positioning of underwear, erotic clothing or sex toys. Here, the spatial conditions of Dutch housing already pre-condition this use: each house and apartment has an individual entrance. This favours the use of individual working and domestic spaces for sex workers, different to the French brothels that were communal and collective working spaces.

The staging of the domestic space towards the street, where the client is located, gave rise to the architectural type known as *window* prostitution.[60] Contrary to the Foucauldian model of panopticism, in which there is a person that overviews, De Wallen and in general red-light districts present a synoptic model. It marks the discursive change from normality that is centrally controlled (as in the historical Dutch Playhouses) to a decentralised model of control. The latter involves an emancipatory potential for the workers, as it physically represents flat hierarchies in a community of female support: workers survey each other and can intervene if needed. The 'controlled exposure' behind window prostitution benefits the worker.

The levels of emancipation of this spatial model changed during the 80s and 90s. After the arrival of hard drugs to the area and during the AIDS crisis, the authorities decide to "reappropriate the buildings in which illegal activities were engaged",[61] and to implement new legislation in order to regulate prostitution. Through these new measures, the spaces become highly regulated in terms of hygiene and safety, forbidding also using those as domestic spaces.[62] The spaces start being privately owned by investors that see a business opportunity in the rental prices of the spaces.[63] The windows in the facades are transformed into glass doors, in order to display the complete body of the women and grant direct access to the clients. The emancipatory potentials of the synoptical system are disrupted through the commodification of the female body, and the further loss of authority for the worker in her space. From a model based on social cohesion and support within the sex worker and queer community, De Wallen's model of red-light district has become the target of political and economical projects. Even though pimping is highly prohibited by law, the worker's forced submission to unjustifiable high prices for spaces in decay is legally encouraged: she is left unprotected.

59 Ibid, 35
60 Ibid
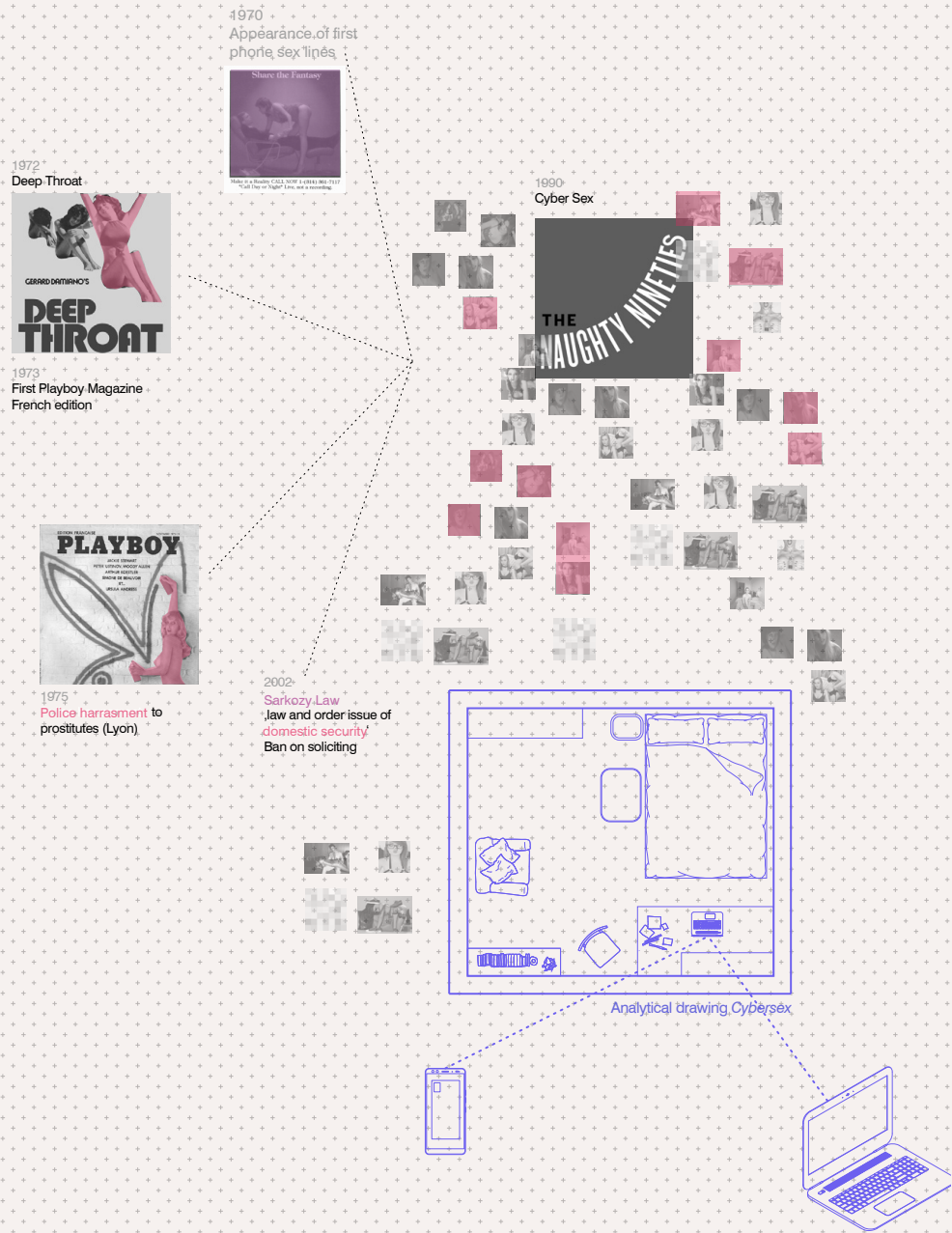61 Ibid, 43
62 Ibid
63 Failed Architecture

Virtual spaces for (re)production
Commodification pharmaco-pornographic regime

The eighth network focuses on the change in the technology through which sex work relations are mediated. During the second half of the last century, events such as the commercialization of the contraceptive pill, the impact of the AIDS pandemic and the awareness of STDs marked a change in the medical discourse. The contraceptive pill, for example, is remembered as part of a supposed process of female emancipation through her possibility to control pregnancies. The AIDS pandemic provoked the enlargement of a stigma already existent towards the gay and broader, the queer community, as well as sex workers - as communities where the disease was proliferating. This medical discourse is levered by the normalisation of the use of pharma, to control disease and ease anxieties related to it. This commodification of drugs grants the Pharma industry a distributed hyper control over bodies and sexualities: drugs are everywhere and used for everything.

Parallelly, the development and commercialization of new types of communication, such as televisions, computers and smartphones, took place. Throughout the last decades and the normalisation of these technologies, it has become common for domestic spaces to feature several screens through which our relation to the outside is mediated. This process of virtual mediation is part of a new mode of control that differs from the panoptical and the synoptical: a form of distributed hyper control. As well as being subjected to surveillance through the data stored by virtual platforms in our devices, we also can access the information and to surveil. As there is a process of virtualization in the mediation with the outside world, there is an embedded process of the virtualization of sexuality. This virtualization of sexual practices will start with telephone sex to forms of so-called cybersex.[64] The easy access to sexual content and distributed control that these new technologies reinforce a commodification of

64 Cybersex refers to sexual arousal using computer technology

1970
Appearance of first phone sex lines

Share the Fantasy

Make it a Reality CALL NOW 1-(814) 861-7117
"Call Day or Night" Live, not a recording.

1972
Deep Throat

GERARD DAMIANO'S
DEEP THROAT

1973
First Playboy Magazine
French edition

ÉDITION FRANÇAISE
PLAYBOY

1975
Police harrasment to
prostitutes (Lyon)

1990
Cyber Sex

THE
NAUGHTY NINETIES

2002
Sarkozy Law
law and order issue of
domestic security
Ban on soliciting

Analytical drawing Cybersex

9 Network 8: Virtual spaces for (re)production
Own work

soft-core pornography. This process, combined with the aforementioned commodification of drugs marks the existence of a pharmapornographic regime, in the words of Paul B. Preciado. In post-industrial, global and mediatic times, he references both processes of bio-molecular and semiotic-technical government of sexual subjectivity.[65] A combined commodification that pretties up a process of capitalization of sexuality and health.

Within and at the core of the pharmacopornographic regime is the capitalization of desires. The idea of online dating, for example, starts through advertising and contacting buying and selling platforms such as Craigslist. Online dating quickly became its own phenomenon with reserved and specialised sites for both practices.[66] These virtual platforms grant our access from everywhere to another person, a possible date, that could be physical or virtual. Sex workers saw potential in this way of advertising since it facilitates finding a client and offers spatial and time comfort. In the last few years, there has also been an emergence of platforms such as Onlyfans, that offer direct payment in exchange for videos and pictures. These platforms try to fill in a 'market gap' by simplifying extremely the process of selling pornographic content. Onlyfans, together with location-based dating media, such as Grindr or Tinder, and social media based on likes, such as Instagram, have influenced a process that - for some people- shifts from the desire for sexuality to a collective assessment of verified "lovability and fuckability".[67] As the architect Andrés Jaque has studied, this virtualization of the relation can help people to connect easily, but also reinforce physical isolation, influencing even the way our cities are shaped.

As architecture was before that technology that mediated the relation between worker and client, now this relationship is mediated through interfaces. Through the process of virtualization, a process of diversification of sex work took place, favouring other types of sex work - non-heterosexual, or where not only ciswomen are the ones offering a service, since the process became safer. This diversification is positive towards fighting the stigma towards this specific community of sex workers, allowing their emancipation. But this material-discursive technological change from architecture to interfaces has also negative consequences.[68] The shift affects the entire interaction: it changes the dynamics established in the practice, as it takes place behind closed doors and there is no social cohesion that can support the mental health of the workers. Moreover, the process of virtualization reinforced a commodification of the female body as something that can be easily consumed. In this context, sexuality can turn into a selfish practice, and that is easy to access to gratify one's own desires. Especially in the context of sex work, if the female sex workers are subjected to dehumanisation and hyper sexualization through their reduction to an image on the screen, the practice can become for the client a narcissistic way of self-assessment.

65 Preciado, 2008, 217-8

66 Jaque and Office for Political Innovation, n.d.
67 Ibid
68 Alaimo and Hekman, 2008, 4

Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation
Bottom-up spaces for bottom-up decriminalisation

The ninth network focuses on the evolution of legal systems until the achievement of decriminalisation of prostitution in March 2022 in Brussels. In the last decades, the sex workers experienced a decay in their working and living conditions. This decay is partly caused by the speculation around the red-light district mentioned in the 7th Network, as well as through the pharmacopronographic regime introduced in the 8th Network. The exploitation of the industry of sex work, as well as the hyper-sexualisation of the sex worker, influence a loss of social cohesion around the practice. The increased violence towards sex workers (not only by the clients but also by the media), is proof of the social failure of the regulationist system. A system that is supposed to 'protect' the workers, when its focus lies on a form of personal control of migration while leaving the sex workers unprotected in the neoliberal capitalist market.

2007
Project 1012
Gentrify red-light district

2020
Proposal of new Eros center
in the outskirts of the city

2015
'Prostitutes' protesting the
closure of window brothels

rel. 3

rel. 3

2022
Decriminalisation
of sex-work
in Belgium

1948
Local regulations abolished
in Belgium.
government regulates in
regards to prostitution, but
municipalities are still
permitted tOregulate when
it creates 'public order
issues'.

rel. 4

1960
Abolitionism
UN Convention 'Traffic in
Persons and Exploitation'

rel. 4

rel. 1

rel. 2

2019
Sex worker Eunice got killed
by the member of a drug
dealing band in her
workspace

2001
Red umbrella becomes an
international symbol for
the fight for sex workers'
rights

rel. 2

2013
Nordic model
Fine on clients

10 Network 9: Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation
Own work

In the 2010s, several protest movements such as 'Yo también', 'Me too', 'Balance Ton Porc' or 'El Violador eres tú' emerged. These movements mark the start of the fourth feminist wave. As part of this movement and following up on unsolved debates from the previous feminist wave,[69] sex work is a central question in this process. That is, how to deal with contractual female sexuality. Even though currents within feminism strongly opposed its regulation, a mindset inherited from processes of thought studied in Network 3, a part of the movement is deeply supportive of the women that practice. Slogans such as 'Sex work is work, being a landlord is not' or 'feminism includes trans and sex workers or it isn't feminism', refer to these forces. This is part of probably one of the most important introductions: the idea of intersectional feminism, a term coined by Kimberly Crenshaw.[70] Of these collectives of women, the sex workers are discriminated against by their gender, class and race often. In this feminist revolutionary climate, and as a reaction to the social failure of legal systems, workers continue to fight for their rights, claiming the need for new measures.

Because of the problems brought by legal approaches such as regulationism or the Nordic model, sex workers start organizing to protest for their rights, within the wider revival of the feminist movement. These protests aim to denounce how sex workers are targets of political and moralist projects, and want to bring attention to their situation in this process of deterritorialization, in which the social relation of the worker to the wider society is damaged.

New Zealand offered a positive frame of comparison in this fight: the decriminalization of sex work was approved in the country in 2003 through the Prostitution Reform Act.[71] This legal measure has favoured the protection of sex workers, improving the relations between them and the police. At the same time, it has allowed for sex workers to work together, discarding penalties and regulating their practice through labour law. All these measures have intensified the protection of the well-being of the workers, while at the same time, lessening the stigma around their practice. With this example in mind as the only solution to improve the conditions of sex workers, collectives such as *Utsopi* and EspaceP started publicly advocating for this legal model. After a long process of managing to get their claims to the Parliament, they finally achieved the approval of decriminalisation of sex work in March 2022, as the first country in Europe. Therefore, this legal achievement is just an event that marks a broader moment of emancipatory potential for sex workers. Differently from the previous networks, at this moment of the present-past, they are being heard.

69 The so-called sex wars opposed anti-pornography feminists to sex-positive feminists during the second feminist wave
70 In the words of Crenshaw: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

71 Smith and Mac, 2011, 191

A HISTORY OF THE PRESENT
Concluding the Cartography

This genealogical study constitutes the base of the research, as it addresses history in a relational way and contextualizes the built environment within it. The first network addresses the fictional proposal of enclosed spaces for sex work, followed by a heterotopic imitation in the Maison close, the spatial change that is central to the second network. The third network relates to the creation of a moral frame under which sex work is heavily punished, followed by the fourth network, which explores the legal measures that diverge from this moral judgement. The emergence of new ways of consuming sexuality and the spaces produced for it during the interwar period is the core of the fifth network. In contrast, the sixth network is based on the use of sex workers for propagandist purposes by the Nazi regime during WWII. In a posterior climate, network seventh addresses the domestic origin of what we know today as 'window prostitution', the main type of sex work present in red-light districts, followed by the virtualization of relations (sexual or not) and its influence on paid sexual services on the eighth network. And lastly, the ninth network cartographs how Belgium approved decriminalisation, marking a historical change in the discourses around sex work, and offering a legal framework for the improvement of the sex worker's well-being.

This relational analysis points out how spaces don't exist per se: they are products and producers of a certain period of time. This genealogy maps a history that is not written yet, a history of spaces for sex work, while contextualizing it. The mapping of the cartography reveals how spaces for sex work have historically been designed in order to control the worker, that is, to exert power over her. Examples of this process can be seen on the second network, where the *Maisons close* appeared as a legal measure to domesticate the workers, or in the eighth network, which explains the appropriation of the Red-light district for economic and political purposes. This genealogical analysis offered a method for tracing back the *potestas*, or limiting power, under which the spaces developed.

Therefore, the evaluation of the power discourses gives historical and theoretical tools to locate changes in material realities, and how this has mostly taken place to control the worker. Locating the aforementioned *potestas* over the sex worker offers historical and theoretical tools to appreciate the *potentia*, that is, the emancipatory power of the sex worker. It gives a frame of reference where affirmative powers can be identified. Compared to the events that were explained from the first to the eighth network, the ninth network presents a clear change in the discourses. The approval of decriminalisation in Belgium is a historical change, in which the destabilisation between the *potestas* and *potentia* becomes higher in favour of emancipation. The 9th Network represents a novel process that can help redefine the relationship towards sex work, finally favouring the workers.

By mapping the complex networks and relations that dominate how the practice is constructed, we can understand the functioning of the spatial production, while contextualising it. This document shows a history of the present: it explains where we are and why - and how to make history a present upon which we can act. The last network refers to a qualitative change, with no spatial changes involved. But this qualitative change evokes spatial mechanisms: the approval of decriminalisation offers a legal framework to rethink the spatialities in which sex work takes place. It is precisely in the spatial transposition of the emancipatory discourse of the ninth network where I locate my design project.
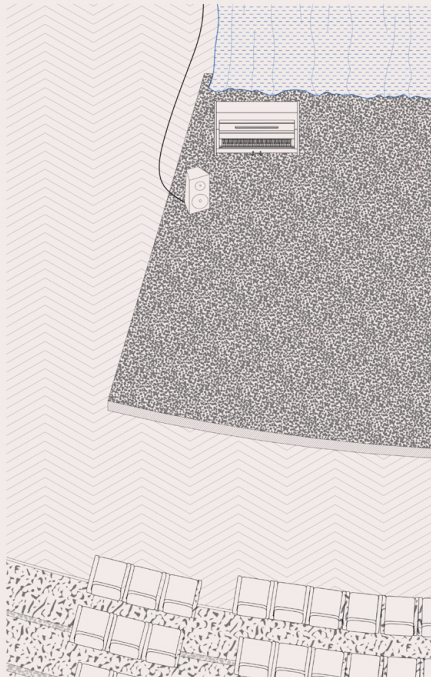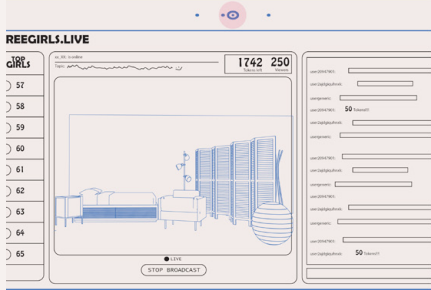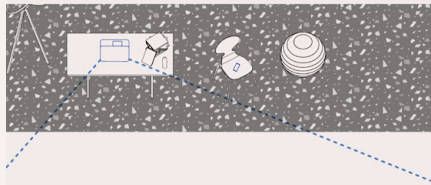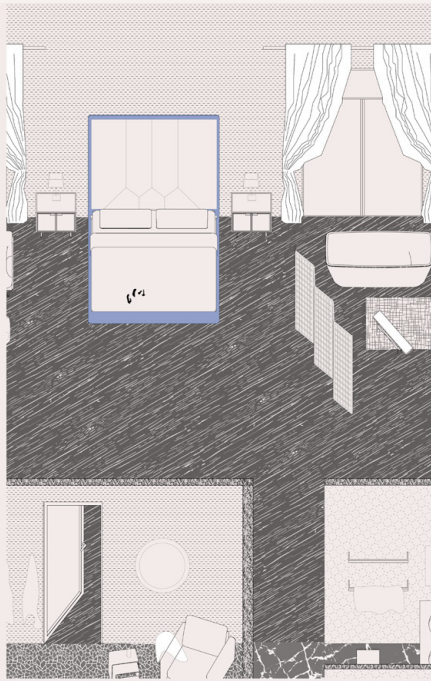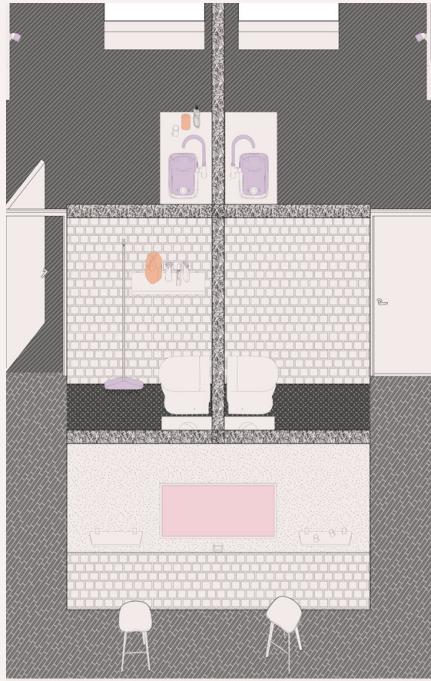
UMWELT
MAPPING
Materialisation of discourses

insight
interiors of window brothels

photos by Tess Jungblut

Based on the cartographic overview of the first part, the second of the aforementioned three research components is a topological study of spaces for sex work. The Umwelt mapping refers to a study of the spatialities of sex work today- in which decriminalization has been achieved, but the spatial arrangements have remained unchanged, referring to the social climate of pre-decriminalization. These spaces are not understood in this work as static containers, but as an 'Umwelt': the circumstances and material conditions that surround and affect the workers. The aim of this research component is to study and reflect graphically and theoretically on the environmental ecology of the sex worker, and its relation to the social and mental ecologies. Acknowledging the importance of discourses that make of architecture a technology to exert power over the sex workers, as it was displayed in the cartography, the Umwelt mapping will focus on how exactly concrete material elements are a *dispositif* of this power[1].

1 A dispositif is, following Foucault, a heterogeneous network of elements

Throughout this analysis, I intend to reflect further on the spatialities of sex work by addressing the importance of material acknowledged by feminist epistemology. New materialism addresses the material-discursive, that is, the inseparability of the discourses to the matter.[2] In other words, this part of the research builds up on a combination of Foucauldian understandings of space and feminist new materialism, acknowledging the tension between both.

In order to do so, the Umwelt mapping consists of two levels. The first one is a relational drawing of the spaces, following Haraway's technique of mapping-with[3] and thinking with others. Following this method, I conducted interviews with the sex workers and listened to their observations on the Umwelten before I visited them, making the drawings a collaborative process. These drawings don't aim to be accurate and universal but to reflect the relations within the materialised space that affect the bodies of the workers every day. The drawings are folded, and the perspective is flattened, as well as some elements highlighted, in order to show the material relations that the workers highlighted during the interviews. On the second level of the Umwelt mapping is a written reflection on the spaces that unveils how the spaces are part of a *dispositif*. For this, the location of a male gaze,[4] as well as the spatial form of control over the workers are the conducting line for the analysis. That is a theoretical analysis following feminist theorists such as Laura Mulvey and Beatriz Colomina combined with Foucauldian notions of power expression in space.

This in-depth and multi-layered study of the Umwelten allows for uncovering the *potestas*, or subjugated power, embedded through the material conditions of the spaces - while foreseeing emancipatory potentials for the workers. For this, four Umwelten in which sex work takes place is analysed: the Umwelt of a 'window' worker, the Umwelt of an escort, the Umwelt of an erotic performer and the Umwelt of a cam girl. The choice of four different spatialities aims to show the variety of spaces as well as to destigmatize the practice.

2 Alaimo and Hekman, 2008, 4
3 Rogowska-Stangret, 2018
4 the act of depicting women in the visual arty from a masculine, heterosexual perspective that presents and represents women as sexual objects for the pleasure of the heterosexual male viewer
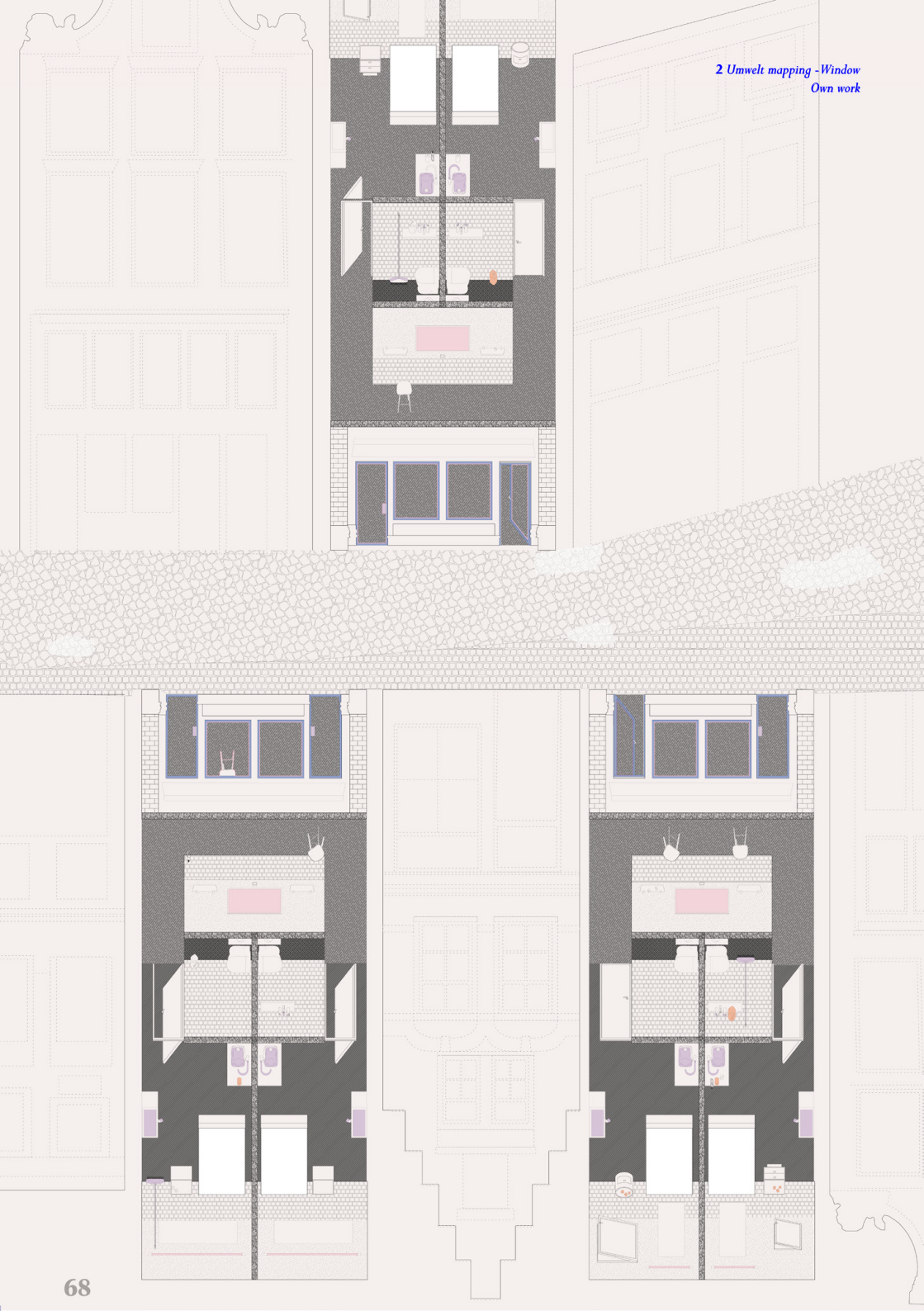
WINDOW

RECONFIGURATION OF THE FILTER

THIS UMWELT ORIGINATES IN
R.7: CONTROLLED EXPOSURE OF THE DOMESTIC THEATRE

The graphical study of the Umwelt of *Window sex work* concerns the working spaces for 'window' services in De Wallen. The origin of these spaces was introduced in Network 7: *Controlled exposure of the domestic theatre*.

As I addressed in the aforementioned Network, through the workers' loss of ownership of the rooms and houses this spatial system underwent a process of reduction of emancipatory potential. The apparition of private investors meant the worker's submission to extremely high rental prices: a window costs approximately 100€ per 8h shift in De Wallen,[5] meaning that the workers need to have at least 3 clients in order to cover the costs of a space. Parallelly, a process of introduction of pre-established spatial conditions that focus on legal and sanitary aspects rather than on her as the main user.[6] Even though sanitary aspects are important to protect the worker, in reality, the establishment of these extreme disciplinary hygienic measures follows an agenda of 'cleansing' the body of the worker that constantly reminds us of the stigmatisation of the practice. The contractual sexual act is still considered 'filthy' and the body of the worker as 'diseased', even though the workers use more sanitary and health measures than any casual sex. This stigmatisation of hygiene within sex work can be identified through different elements in the Umwelt. The use of foam rubber mattresses covered with a changeable plastic or paper-based cover, or of white tiles on the floor and walls conform a *dispositif* that constantly reminds the worker of the supposed dirtiness of her practice - while recalling the client of the impersonality and standardisation of it.

5 Amsterdam Red Light district tours, 2022
6 Pulskota, 2017, 43-45

Counteracting this process of hygienic and legal control over the worker, the synoptical spatial disposition within the red-light district facilitates collective organisation and support between workers. Although this spatiality has its origin in a legal framework of a forced individualist practice, the perception of the material reality is one of flat hierarchies. All women are positioned at the same height and can survey each other, as well as the neighbours when entering and exiting their domestic and/or working space. This spatial form of collective female emancipation is debilitated through the social construct of the 'male (heterosexual) gaze'. The dominant patriarchal and heterosexual views on sexuality have favoured for decades a hypersexualised exposure of women in popular culture, while neglecting her pleasure and agency, turning her into an 'image', an 'object'.

Therefore, the original value of the synoptical disposition for the workers is debilitated, due to a process of objectification of women through their bodies. As well as freely exposing the body can be empowering for some women, it is problematic once a woman *must show her body* in order to attract clients - while being the target of stalking and intimidation from strollers. This complex construction of an objectifying male gaze and its negative influence on the social cohesion of window sex work is materialised in the window. The evolution in size of the window refers to this process, as the original 'windows' have been converted to doors- in order to completely show the body of the worker. The glass refers to an attempt at proximity and closeness, but it also grants the stroller, who doesn't pay for any service, certain access to the worker, exerting power on her. Inasmuch as the window allows the workers to have direct decisions and actions on who are their clients, it also grants visual and social access to men who are not going to pay for any service. The window, in this sense, is part of a *dispositif* that enhances and maintains hierarchies that domesticate women, while leaving choices of power to men.

HOTEL ROOM

IMITATING DOMESTICITY
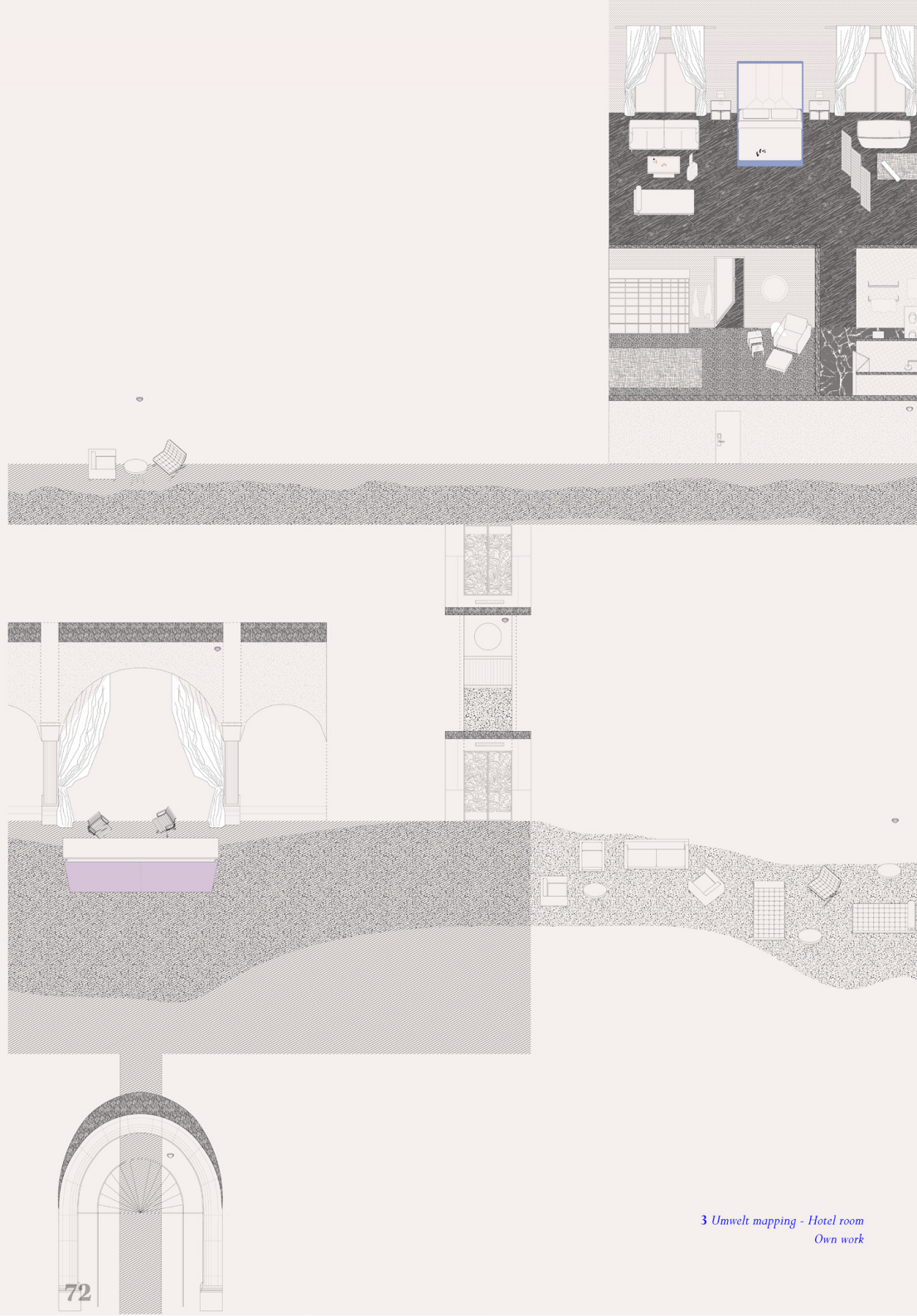
The graphical study of the *Hotel Room* refers to the working space of an escort. The origin of these spaces was introduced in *Network 2: Heterotopic apparatus for female submission*.
Working in hotel rooms is common for escorts, and it can be very safe and pleasant for them. The rooms offer privacy and the comfort needed. On the contrary, the access to those is characterised by a form of panoptical control. This form of control over the worker doesn't search for the worker's wellbeing, but rather the 'mediatic' safety of the hotel[7]. This power is expressed through the entering sequence in the hotel: how workers are legally not allowed to book a room and therefore are usually stopped at the lobby. Sometimes, the workers are even rejected for entrance. In these situations, there is an equilibrium between anonymity and safety that the worker should be transmitted, whereas right now, it depends on the social cohesion of the hotel establishment, highly influenced by the stigmatisation of the practice.

Once in the room, workers and clients are granted the privacy needed. The decoration of hotel rooms usually features the in-between of domesticity and impersonality. In the private context again, it is this interplay between safety and anonymity that the sex worker needs for the space to facilitate her practice. This interplay allows her to calm her client and make him or her feel comfortable, as well as to remind the client that what is taking place is a con-tractual and consensual relationship with very clear limits. For example, the placement of a proper bed on parquet flooring, and a bathroom with two sinks can suggest a home-like at-mosphere. On the other hand, the absence of personalised items such as pictures or valuable objects helps to protect the privacy and safety of the worker. The quite simple materialisation of the heterotopic dimension of 'fake domesticity' is emancipatory for the worker, proving that architecture can as well configure a *dispositif* that enhances emancipatory potentials.

7 Escorts in Amsterdam mention how some hotels just forbade them the entrance, even though they offer a legal service that is pre-arranged through an escort agency. They fear of mediatic repercussions of a possible 'trafficking scandals' is behind this reasoning.

3 *Umwelt mapping - Hotel room*
Own work

A Umwelt mapping - Theatre
Own work

THEATRE

CURTAIN AS BOUNDARY

The graphical study of the Theatre for erotic shows refers to the working space of erotic performers. The apparition of this typology was investigated in Network 5: Playhouses for ritualised spectacle. This spatiality features the disposition of an inverted panopticon, where the sex worker has control towards the gaze. In as much as she is exposing her body, she is positioned above the spectators and has control of how and when she does so. The proximity between the worker and client is limited by the superiority of the worker in the spatial relation. This relation introduces a very clear hierarchy that underlines the fact that she is the one offering the service and therefore, she is the one in control. Moreover, the act of going to a theatre is translated as a public coming to see someone, expressing a certain respect and admiration. The social rituals of theatre-like spaces contribute to more respect from the public compared to other types of sex work, such as window work.

Moreover, the theatre serves as a great example because it reinforces the understanding of the fact that the worker is, indeed, performing. She has a professional role and is playing it, as in any profession that is in direct contact with the public. This sensation of the spectacle is transmitted through a spatial mechanism that separates the stage from the public through spatial distancing in plan and in section. In the section, the elevated platform of the stage puts performers at a higher point in the spatial hierarchy, over the clients. In the plan, the separation of the stage from backstage reinforces the idea of performance. The curtain is a spatial mechanism that makes clear a distinction between spaces of preparation (private for the workers) and spaces for performance (towards the public). In the case of sex work, the often-individual practice can be granted a degree of collectivity and communality in the space of the backstage. The curtain is, in this sense, part of a *dispositif* that evokes the emancipatory potential of collectivity and privacy - while clearly making a statement about the performativity of sex work.

CAM

(NO) ARCHITECTURE AS MEDIUM

THIS UMWELT ORIGINATES IN
R.8: VIRTUAL SPACES FOR (RE)PRODUCTION
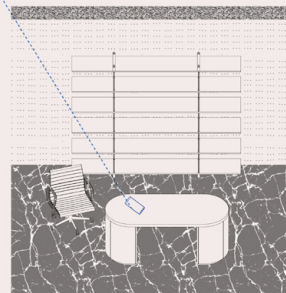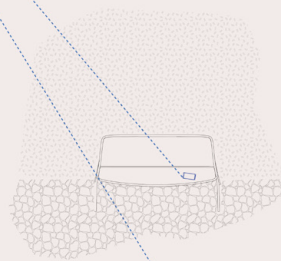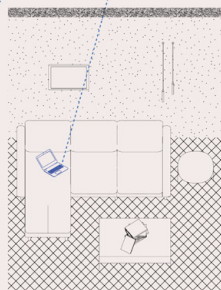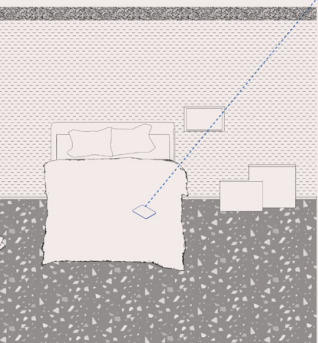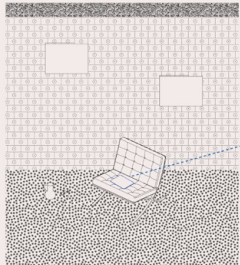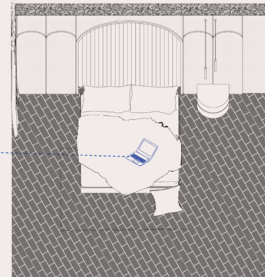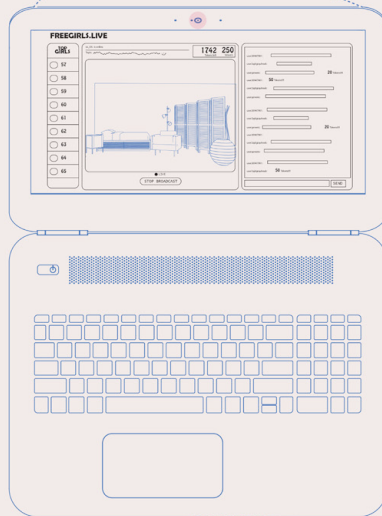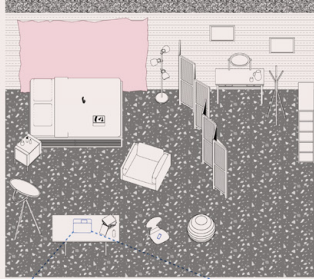
The graphical study of the *Bedroom of a cam girl* refers to the working space and domestic space of a cam girl. The origin of this space was analysed in *Network 8: Virtualisation of spaces for sex work*. The relations in this 'Umwelt' are strongly determined by the mediation of the sexual encounter through virtual processes, instead of through spatial ones. The connection between the spatialities, and also the relation between client and worker happen through softwares behind a screen. This digital connection refers to a distributed form of control. As well as the client can see the working and domestic space of the worker, she can do so too, while still being physically distant. This medium allows the worker to be physically safe and comfortable while being able to control her exposure to the gaze. Similarly to working in a theatre show, she can regulate what is being seen of her Umwelt, as well as of herself, while having control also of who sees it. Usually, she configures a ritual of the practice beforehand, and leads the virtual encounter: she can therefore regulate who is going to see her, how, and doing what. The medium of the encounter allows for her to have a controlled exposure that grants her emancipatory power.

At the same time, the heterotopic dimension of this virtual medium can be distancing. When the technology changes from architecturally to virtually mediated, the material conditions are extremely altered. The *dispositif* is not changing from an individual setting to a shared one, reinforcing more selfish attitudes. Parallelly, not facilitating a physical connection - between bodies, but also in relation to the space - means the loss of an essential part of an intimate professional relationship. And the consequence can be that the nature of the relationship becomes impersonal, making it easier to dehumanise the worker. Contrary to interfaces, the medium of architecture can be a *dispositif* that helps the worker to facilitate creating the atmosphere that she needs for her job- be it intimate, explicitly sexual, fetish, etc.

MATERIAL CONSEQUENCES
Concluding the Umwelt mapping

The analysis of the 4 Umwelten reveals how the discourses studied in the cartography have material consequences.[8] Evaluating the constitution of discourses, and their physical manifestation is essential in tackling how architecture reinforces patriarchal and heterosexual views on female sexuality, especially in the realm of sex work. Moreover, these spatial studies reflect further on how the matter of the Umwelten affects the workers in their practising of sex work.

8 Barad, 2008, 120

The analysis of the Umwelt of the cam worker reinforces the value of architecture as a medium between client and worker. In the case of cam work, this negotiating power is left to interfaces. An architectural element, on the other hand, has the capability of materialising an emancipatory practice that is already existing as discourse. One of these elements could be the curtain and stage analysed in the Umwelt of the performer. Both elements reinforce the performativity of sex work, granting the worker of power as a spatial hierarchy in her relation with the public. Equally, the backstage is a space of collectivity between workers that contributes to the existence of a supportive community. The Umwelt of the escort and of the Window workers display another scenario, one that forces the worker into an individualistic environment through spatial separation. In this situation, emancipatory networks such as the ones in the red-light district, that feature a synergical mode of collective protection and/or surveillance between workers are disrupted by the individuality of the cells disrupts the protection granted by collectivity with the other workers. Similarly, in the working spaces of hotels, the workers are pressured to work and enter individually, while being subjected to panoptical control during the entrance to the space.

These processes of individualisation of the practice of sex work are argumented as anti-trafficking and anti-pimping measures. Initiatives such as No place for sex trafficking[9] wrongly identify sex work as pimping and focus their efforts on offering certifications for hotels that denounce sex work, instead of educational tools to understand how can they help the workers. These initiatives usually lead to situations of insecurity/public shaming for the workers, instead of granting them safety. Window sex work is as well a target of this process of individualisation. Proof of it is the murder of Eunice in 2019 a window worker in Rue Linné,[10] in her working space in Brussels, which shows how this individualistic spatial segregation only harms sex workers, having the most awful consequences.

Both situations in the Umwelt of the Hotel Room and the Window reflect how sex-work phobic discourses have material consequences that at the same time affect the workers and their bodies. Considering the deep safety issues that derive from these material consequences, I argue that it is an extremely urgent matter to rethink those. The legal framework of decriminalisation offers alternatives to these spatialities, regulating the practice and the space where it takes place through labour law. Decriminalisation offers the legal option for sex work to be practised in other spaces. This legal measure offers the possibility to rethink and create spaces that are part of a *dispositif* that reinforces the emancipatory potentials present now in the socio-political climate in Belgium. The in-depth analysis of feminist new materialism addresses how these spaces can be rethought from an intersectional feminist point of view, not only discursively, but also materially.

9 https://www.noplaceforsextrafficking.org/pages/home
10 Walker, 2021

FIGURATIVE
NETWORKS

Situated stories of sex workers
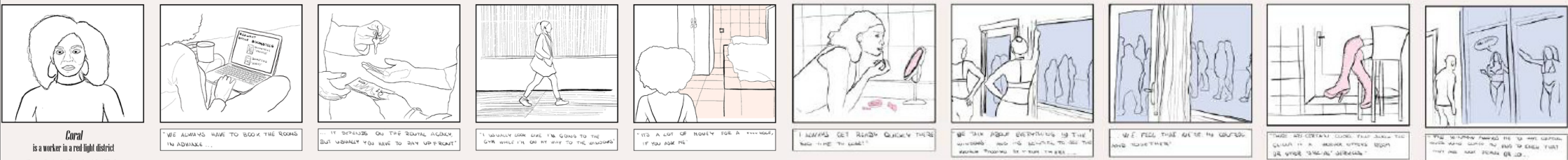
Coral
is a worker in a red light district

She works in the Unwelt of the *Window*

"WE ALWAYS HAVE TO BOOK THE ROOMS IN ADVANCE ..."

"IT DEPENDS ON THE RENTAL AGENCY, BUT USUALLY YOU HAVE TO PAY UP FRONT."

"I USUALLY LOOK LIKE I'M GOING TO THE GYM WHILE I'M ON MY WAY TO THE WINDOWS"

"IT'S A LOT OF MONEY FOR A ..., IF YOU ASK ME"

"I ALWAYS GET READY QUICKLY THERE AND COME TO WORK"

"WE TALK ABOUT EVERYTHING IN THE WINDOWS AND IT'S RELATED TO SEE THE PEOPLE PASSING BY ..."

"WE FEEL THAT WE'RE IN CONTROL AND TOGETHER"

"THERE ARE CERTAIN CODES THAT SHOW THE CURTAIN IS A 'MEANS OTHERS ROOM' OR OTHER SPECIAL SERVICES"

"WE ... ALWAYS HAVE TO ... OURSELVES AND CLIENTS, IN END TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT FRESH OR ILL."

Eric and Joelle
are erotic performers in sex shows.

They work in the Unwelt of the *Theatre*

"WE HAVE MEETINGS EVERY MONTH TO SCHEDULE THE SHOWS AND TALK ABOUT HOW EVERYONE IS DOING ..."

"... PERSONALLY, I LOVE HAVING A FIXED SCHEDULE AND INCOME, AS WELL AS A TEAM."

"SINCE WE ALWAYS ACT TOGETHER, I THINK WE SUPPORT EACH OTHER TO PREPARE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY BEFORE A SHOW..."

"... AS WELL AS WITH THE OTHER PERFORMERS. I WOULD SAY THAT THE DRESSING ROOM ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SPACE FOR US ..."

"IT CREATES A SENSE OF COMMUNITY THAT HELPS US 'FACE THE PUBLIC'"

"THE SHOWS ARE LESS AND QUITE SERIOUS ... THERE A BRIEF SCENE BEFORE 'BUT TELL THAT THERE IS LAUGHING QUICKLY"

"WE MOVE & SCRATCH OF OUR INTIMATE ON THE DAY. WE GET SOME WATCHED US TO WATCH OUR SEX."

"AND YES, WE DO HAVE SEX 'FOR REAL LIVE' BUT DIFFERENT THAN ON STAGE."

"WE TOGETHER IN THEIR LIFE. GETTING NAUGHTY TO DO THE JOB BUT I THINK IT BECAME HARD."

Kristina
is an escort for female and male clients

She works in the Unwelt of the *Hotel room*

"I ALWAYS HAVE A SUITCASE READY. THE BOOKINGS ARE USUALLY ON SHORT NOTICE."

"THE SUITCASE HAS EVERYTHING I MIGHT NEED"

"MY LUCK, THE BOOKING ALWAYS COME IN WHEN I'M OUT..."

"... SO I HAVE TO RUN HOME TO GET ALL DETAILS AND PREPARE"

"SHOWER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING FOR ME. OBVIOUSLY FOR HYGIENIC REASONS, BUT IT ALSO CALMS MY NERVES."

"DEPENDING ON THE AGENCY, I HAVE TO WEAR DIFFERENT CLOTHES. THE HETEROSEXUAL ONE ALWAYS EXPECTS EXPENSIVE LINGERIE."

"WHEREAS AS THE LESBIAN ONE I CAN WEAR A BIT MORE LIKE MYSELF."

"I'M A BOSS ALWAYS RUSHING WITH THE BIKE AND THEN I ARRIVE SUPER SWEATY!"

"THE HOTELS CAN BE VERY ANNOYING. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT I DO..."

Chantal
is a cam show artist.

She works in the Unwelt of the *Cam*

"I THINK THAT THE HARDEST PART OF MY JOB IS THE PREPARATION. I ALWAYS HAVE TO THINK OF NEW SHOWS TO STAY INNOVATIVE"

"I USUALLY WEAR A WIG. HELPS ME TO GET INTO THE PERFORMER MOOD. TYPES OF CLOTHES IT DEPENDS ON THE SHOW'S THEME"

"HERE WE GO"

SO, WHICH ONE IS IT GOING TO BE TODAY?

"I ALWAYS MAKE IT PLAYFUL THROUGH ASKING MY VIEWERS FOR A PREFERENCE ON TOYS. IT GIVES THEM A FALSE ILLUSION OF CONTROL".

"SOMETIMES I DO A CUM SHOW BUT THAT'S NOT ALWAYS THE CASE. CAMMING IS MUCH MORE..."

"I ALWAYS END THE SHOW WHEN I FEEL LIKE IT. I HAVE TO SAY..."

"... I DO LOVE MY HOME OFFICE"

1 *Figurative Networks*
Own work

Film d'Amore e d'Anarquia
Linda Wertmüller, 1973

Hustlers
Lorene Scafaria, 2019

Ex-Machina
Alex Garland, 2015

Mona Lisa
Neil Jordan, 1986

Pretty Woman
Garry Marshall, 1990

The Girlfriend Experience
Steven Soderbergh, 2009

Whore
Ken Russell, 1991

Blade Runner 2049
Dennis Villeneuve, 2017

Love, Death & Robots
Tim Miller, 2019

2 *Dehumanisaion of sex workers in cinema*
Own work

"A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self (…). Figurations differ from classical metaphors in precisely their commitment to account the material conditions that sustain these different subject positions."

-Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic subjects

The Figurative networks refer to fragments of an ethnographical study of the practices of sex work. The aim of this study is to understand and present the routines within different 'types' of sex work. That is, to reflect on the social (practice) and mental (sexuality) ecologies while looking for emancipatory potentials within those through their relation to the environmental ecology, the Umwelten.

The study of the people performing these practices takes place following Rosi Braidotti's notion of figurations. As mentioned before, dehumanised notions of sex work saturate our culture, creating inadequate personae. These representations of workers in mainstream media (see image on the left page) are deeply inaccurate to reality, and "as far as we know, they have no ideas, no feelings, no political beliefs, no relationships, no past, no future, no humanity".[1] Marx referred to this as a process of character mask, the social role in which a practice is acted out.[2] Even though all practices are socially acted out in a way, the term is used to refer to a deliberate misrepresentation of a collective, usually part of the working class, with the intention of demonising it.

The feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti proposes her notion of figurations, "a living map, a transformative account of the self, it is no metaphor".[3] The notion of figuration is as well a persona, a theory of the subject. But these personae distinguish themselves from the 'character mask' or the personae in cinema precisely because of their commitment to addressing the material conditions that each one of these subjects is affected by and affects to.[4]

These figurations challenge the separation of critique and reason from the imagination. The ethnographical study of the practice took place through several interviews with the workers, planned and spontaneous, as well as directly approaching them in their working space. The comics are a graphical synthesis and reflection of these encounters: they reflect directly thoughts or assumptions that the workers had during our conversation, as well as scenes I have myself experienced while wandering around. I reflect on these ethnographical studies in the form of 4 figurations, each one of them reflected in a comic: Kristina, Paula, Carmen, and Joelle. The comics explain their practice, their material conditions and their ethical response to it, situating these figurations within the discourse while at the same time addressing their reaction to it. Rendering them visible, as well as representing them as enacted, embedded, embodied and situated.[5]

1 Levy, 2018
2 Matzner, 1964, 131-133
3 Braidotti, 2018, 10
4 Ibid, 11
5 Ibid

Coral
is a worker in a red light district
She works in the Unwelt of the *Window*

Chantal
is a cam show artist.
She works in the Unwelt of the *Cam*

Eric and Joelle
are erotic performers in sex shows.
They work in the Unwelt of the *Theatre*

Kristina
is an escort for female and male clients
She works in the Unwelt of the *Hotel room*

3 *Figurative networks: Coral, Chantal, Eric, Joelle and Kristina*
Own work

Coral (she/her) works in the windows of the red-light district. She is originally Cuban but has been in the Netherlands for "as long as I can remember"[6]. Her clients are always male and heterosexual. She has some 'usuals' but she admits that without the occasional tourist or bachelor party, she wouldn't be able to sustain herself economically by the work on the windows. Even though she refers to the individualisation and standardisation of spaces, as well as the unjustified high price, she is eager for the collectivity that exists with the other women. They support each other in difficult situations with clients, as well as psychologically.

Chantal (she/her) works as a cam show artist from home. She is from the Netherlands, and after she had to stop working in gastronomy during COVID, she decided to give cam work an opportunity. She strongly insists on the solitude and parallel comfort of a job that she can do from home while maintaining very clear boundaries with the clients. As I ask her how useful architecture/ space is for her practice, she explains how much atmosphere counts, while reminding me of how there are abusive behaviours in the practice that she can simply avoid by working as a sex worker through the computer.

Joelle (she/her) works as an erotic performer in a theatre. She continually insists during the conversation on how she feels in power in her relation to their clients and the public in her shows. Equally, she mentions how a sentiment of collectivity with her partner, as well as with the other performers has a huge influence on her experience. She feels supported and surrounded by equals, making her practice less lonely and dangerous.

Kristina (she/her) works as an escort specialising in BDSM. She usually works in hotel rooms that the clients book. She works with male and female clients and is eager to explain the differences in behaviour that she encounters between both. The male clients feel more at ease in the role of paying for sex, whereas female clients quite often feel like imposters in this relationship, needing more time to get used to this role. Kristina refers to space as very crucial to her work and the insecurity and surveillance that she usually feels in the entrance and lobby of these places. She thinks that having a place with co-workers (illegal during regulationism), where she doesn't have to go in the individuality of a room, would be beneficial. As well as having contact with other workers, their own space would allow Kristina to have all the sex toys and clothes that she needs, instead of having to constantly move.

Besides Kristina, Chantal, Joelle and Coral, I talked to several sex workers: Bare (they/them) who works in the queer porn industry, Lucie (she/her) a 65-year-old window worker, Kittie (she/her) an Albanian escort living in the Netherlands, Lazare Lazarus (he/they) a French artist and sex worker and Gabriela and Aleksandra, (she/her) two Bulgarian window workers. Their insights were extremely helpful for this research, informing it in all 3 parts. Mentioning them here is my humble way of saying thank you to all of them for being so trustful and open with me, as well as encouraging with the project. I also wanted to thank Daan from Utsopi and Iris and the whole team of PIC for providing me with further information and facilitating the first contact with sex workers, as well as the access to the spaces.

6 Coral, 23, 1

4 *Sketch of collective of sex workers*
Own work

RESPONS-ABLE FIGURATIONS
Concluding the Figurative Networks

This part of the research offers accurate personae to understand the practice of sex work, represented as figurations in the comics. These figurations remind us that the workers are no passive agents, but response-able subjects. They are a necessary tool to navigate the discourses analysed in Part I while at the same time addressing the material conditions that they face every day, analysed in part 2. Moreover, the figurations humanise the workers from an intersectional feminist point of view, addressing how the discourses can affect each one of them differently. In the end, sex workers are usually cis or transwomen, quite often migrants, and a lot of these workers are racialized. Therefore, they are a collective that suffers systemic violence, that operates at several levels. The visualisation of this collection as well as pointing out the value of their personal experiences is crucial and the least we can do to support them against this violence. These comics are a synthesis of my research but mostly, an educational tool for the public in fighting against the stigmatisation and violence towards workers.

Parallelly, their personal experiences help us to understand how architecture can contribute to their emancipation. Erotic performers and cam girls such as Joelle and Paula generally see a lot of advantages in their actual spaces of work. They experience a certain control over the client, as well as they feel respected by them. The relation, virtually or architecturally mediated, is a tool for creating the necessary distance from their practices. Besides that, the network of support that erotic performers have facilitates an idea of collectivity that is emancipatory for the workers. In comparison, window workers and escorts such as Carmen and Kristina suffer more often uncomfortable and even dangerous situations, due to their more direct contact with the public. This is partly caused by the aforementioned controlled exposure, as well as the spatial individualisation of the practice.

Moreover, the figurations reveal the emancipatory potentials that the sex workers encounter within their practice. One of the most important ones is the notion of collectivity. The workers relate to each other, and they are each other's bigger support structure, even though the spaces force them in an individualistic direction. Within and due to their community, the sex workers are able to find smart and safe ways to work even within their spatially, legally and socially subjugated position. Decriminalisation in Belgium can be seen as the most contemporary example since the collective efforts of the workers were the force behind this legal achievement. Finally, this legal measure, contrary to regulationism, allows sex workers to collaborate and organize collectively in a non-hierarchical way. The already existing social structures can become a legal bond that contributes to the emancipation of the workers - being able to practice safer in every sense.
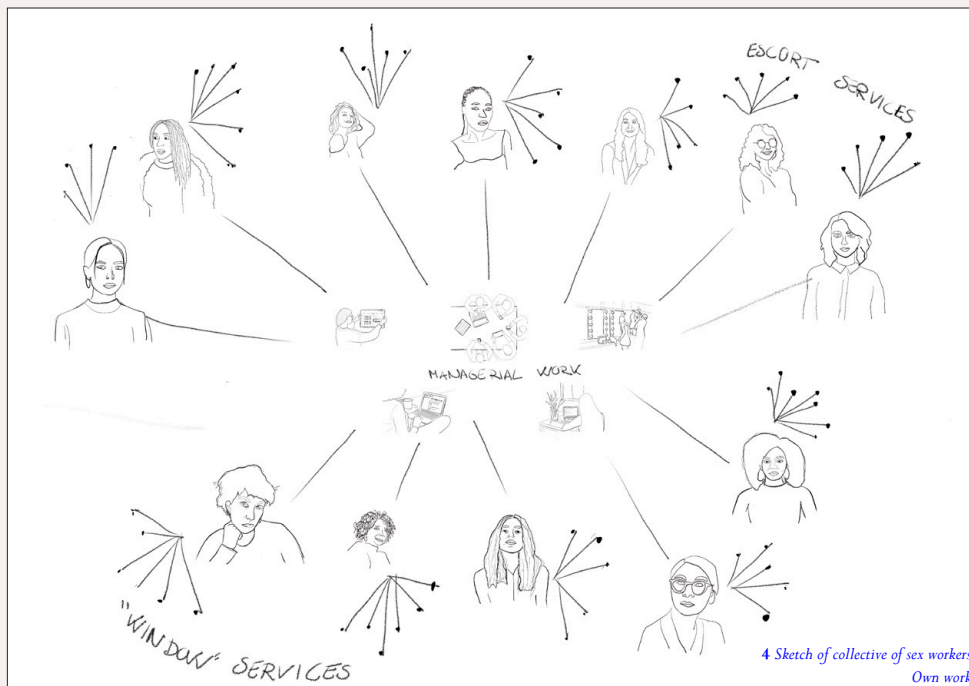
# COLLECTIVE EMANCIPATION
Conclusion and design brief

The research has offered an overview of spaces for sex work in its discursive and material dimensions. Firstly, the Cartography concerned an analysis of the discourses that are behind spatial changes in the realm of sex work. It gives an understanding of how the present material conditions of spaces for sex work are historically constituted while evaluating the imbalance between the *potestas* and the *potentia* throughout changes in discourses. The Cartography clearly shows how the emancipatory power of the workers is getting right now momentum which is marked by the approval of the decriminalisation of Belgium.

Secondly, the Umwelt mapping focused on the material consequences of the discourses studied in part 1. That is, understanding the materialisation of sex work and what are the implications for the workers. The research clearly showed how individualistic and isolating tendency in the spaces leads to dangerous situations for escorts and window workers.

Thirdly, the Figurative networks evaluated different urgency levels of an architectural intervention as the medium that sex workers use. Escorts and window workers are the ones that suffer the most limitations produced by the spatialities in which they work, and therefore, where an alteration of their environmental ecology would have the most positive effect on their social and mental ecologies. The Figurations of the escort and window worker have therefore a re-configurative aim: they will serve as guidelines to re-shape the Umwelt of sex workers while situating this in the discourses of deterritorialization presented in Network 9, our present moment.

This research paper has reflected on the power that is exerted on sex workers through the space, as well as their emancipatory potentials within the three ecologies of sex work. The aim of this project is not simply to expose this imbalance between *potestas* and *potentia*, but to reflect on how architecture can be a medium for their practice to become more emancipatory for them from an intersectional feminist point of view and to translate these reflections onto a design project.

The framework of decriminalisation, whose constitution is studied in Cartography, gives alternative legal scenarios that are beneficial and correspond to the emancipatory power of the figurations researched in part 3. It allows them to work collectively, as well as more rights that address the character of their practice. But after this legal change, the spaces remained unaltered. The aim and brief of the following design project are essentially to problematize how these spaces can be rethought in the framework of decriminalisation.
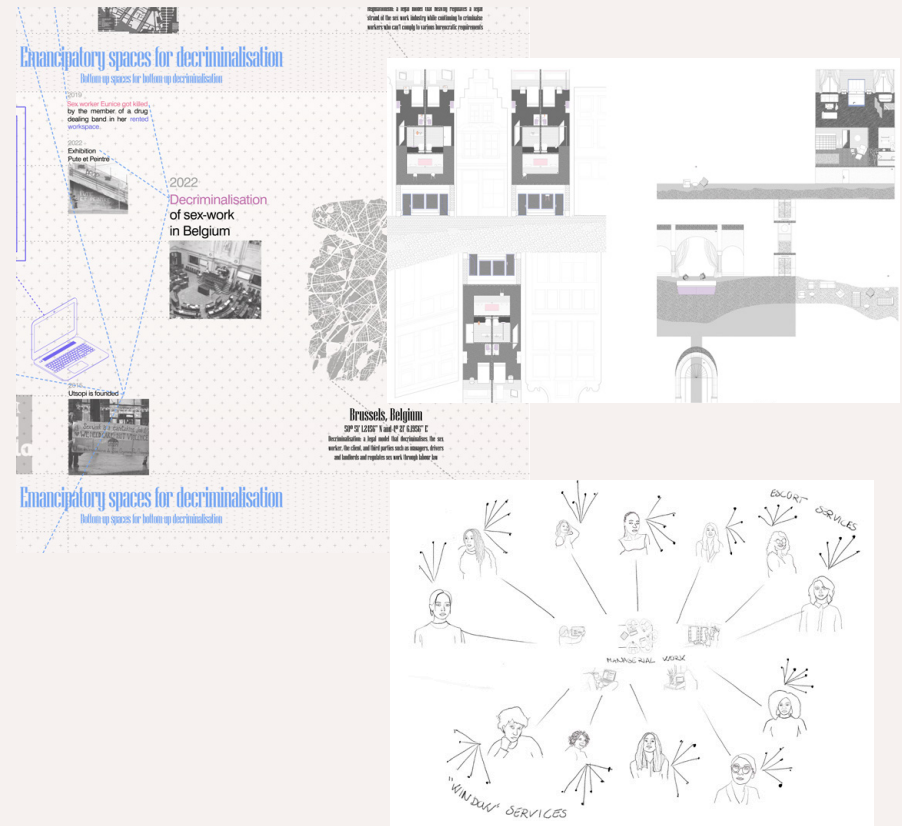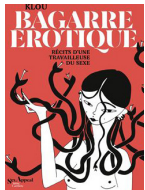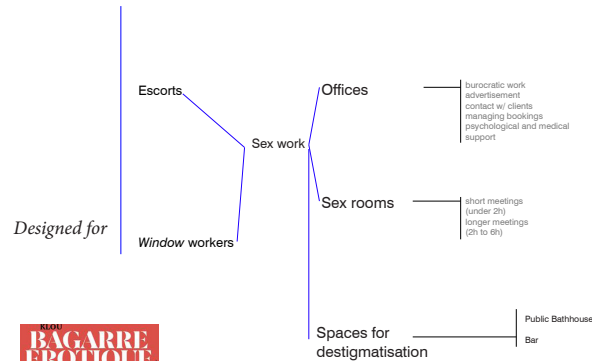
The design project will not address spaces for decriminalization as a problem to be solved. Architecture cannot solve and/or change societal, economical or political issues, but it can enhance social movements that are already taking place. In the case of spaces for sex work, designing alternative spaces can contribute to the current destabilisation of patriarchal and heterosexual discourses. To do so, the project should be designed from an intersectional feminist point of view, aiming to materialise emancipatory discourses. As the research showed, "discourses have material consequences that require ethical responses".[7] The design project should be situated within the and embrace the sex worker's ethical responses to their situation through a design. That is, to understand how the conditions can change in the framework of decriminalisation by enhancing the *potentia* in the spaces. The proposal will aim to explore how can emancipatory discourses be materialised in a space that houses adequate figurations of sex workers.

7 Barad, 2008, 120

DESIGN PROJECT.
A SPACE FOR SEX WORK

Rethinking Brothels in the framework of decriminalisation

HÔTEL
DE LA
BAGARRE EROTIQUE

HÔTEL: PROGRAM OF FUNCTIONS

Escorts

Offices — burocratic work
advertisement
contact w/ clients
managing bookings
psychological and medical
support

Sex work

Sex rooms — short meetings
(under 2h)
longer meetings
(2h to 6h)

Designed for

Window workers

Spaces for
destigmatisation — Public Bathhouse

Bar

The graphic novel 'Bagarre erotique', by Klou Bagarre, was published right before the approval of decriminalisation of sex work in Belgium. It tells from a sex woker perspective, the practice as a space for queerfeminist struggle.

The Hôtel de la Bagarre Erotique combines working spaces for window workers and escorts. Besides sex rooms with different needs (window workers have rather short meetings, whereas escorts have longer ones of a more intimate quality), they both need offices to do managerial and bureaucratic work, as well as meetings as a collective and workshops towards the public. These specific sex work functions are combined with public ones, such as a Bathhouse, a Bar and several public gardens. The addition of qualitative public spaces serves to invite external people to the practice to the compound. This favours the destigmatisation of the practice, while concurrently reinforcing the social control on site.

1 *Programmatic scheme for Design*
Own work(Including Cover of Bagarre Erotique, by Klou Bagarre, 2022)

The decriminalisation of sex work in Belgium in 2022 marks a positive change in the legal discourse around sex work. This new legal framework allows sex workers to work more safely, with the rights and protections of any other profession. But legal working conditions do not directly mean the achievement of justice. Although the law has changed, the practice of sex work is still subject to taboos and stigma from society at large. Following sex workers, I believe that fighting this stigma can improve their working conditions. To this end, in the post-decriminalisation context, I advocate focusing on achieving justice through its socio-spatial dimension. That is, addressing inequalities in the material conditions that sex workers face every day, such as the spaces in which they work.

The system of decriminalisation allows for non-hierarchical collectives of sex workers to emerge. Sex workers are not forced anymore to an isolated and individualistic practice: they can work in turns, cover for each other when one of them is on sick leave, share benefits and losses, etc. This offers them and the people that they are responsible for greater safety in their work environment. The social dimension of this collectivity, as we saw, is already existing in red-light districts: sex workers look out for each other from window to window. With decriminalisation, this collectivity becomes possible in its legal dimension. The central idea of the project is to go one step further: to rethink this collectivity in its spatial dimension. To reimagine brothels as collective and non-hierarchical spaces for sex workers in the context of decriminalisation.

Moreover, the research reflected on sex workers engaging in more than sexual activity with clients, being emotional support and intimate companionship the main ones. Besides that, sex workers do not always have men as clients, they also work with women - sex work can be a lesbian practice, too. This is a central aspect within the project: to make visible the reality of sex work, far from stigmatised pre-conceptions on it. In order to do so, sex workers' ideas and experiences of the space are at the forefront of the design process.

The name of the brothel is chosen so as to honour the sex worker's activism. The graphic novel Bagarre Erotique, by Klou Bagarre, explains the practice as a space for queerfeminist struggle from a sex worker perspective. Indeed, sex work is a conceptional space for erotic struggle- deterritorialising sexuality outside of patriarchal and heteronormative standards. The practice needs a physical space in which this struggle can continue to take place. In this project, the space is called Hôtel: an ambiguous space that can be at the same time a guest house, as well as a public space. That is how the project understands brothels: a space that facilitates access to the broader public, while maintaining its specific sex work program. This duality in the spatial conception of the project transgesses norms imposed by the legal discourse in the context of pre-decriminalisation, breaking free from its patriarchal heritage and favouring a new relationship between sex work and the public, in order to destigmatise it.

FROM THE FEMALE GAZE
Design methodology

The design of the *Hôtel de la Bagarre Erotique,* was approached through an intersectional feminist methodology. This methodological framework addressed the different layers of discrimination faced by sex workers: the gender they identify with, their sexual orientation, their migration background, their status as workers, etc. It understands the conditions imposed on sex workers in order to accurately design as needed for them. The intention of the design project is to address the spatial dimension of inequalities in sex work and to provide sex workers with a safer and more appropriate environment for their practice.

Moreover, the intention of this methodology was to design from the female gaze. That is, designing from a queerfeminist perspective that leaves outside a neocolonial, sexist and patriarchal view on sexuality, labour and space. The female gaze does not refer to a binary opposition to the male gaze: it goes beyond binary genders. It aims much more to problematize the absence of non cisgender, male, white and heterosexual perspectives as subjects with agency in the design process. This issue has been broadly studied in the framework of theory and history of architecture. However, designing from the queerfeminist gaze is still a topic to be researched and practised. The design project explores this, building up on queerfeminist theories by Katerinna Bonnevier, Paul B. Preciado and Rosi Braidotti. Following these three thinkers, I worked with a composed methodology that helped me address the project at 3 levels.

Firstly, to understand space in a referential way. Following Katarinna Bonnevier in her PHD *Behind straight curtains* I believe that studying and referring to spaces of queerfeminist emancipation is crucial to change the hegemonic way of designing in architecture.[1] A design does not emerge by itself, but refers to other spaces that the designer knows personally, has studied, etc. This refers to understanding architecture not as an autonomous practice, but produced by its context. Choosing and studying references carefully contributes to a process of designing from the queerfeminist gaze. Therefore, the design is informed by historical and contemporary feminist references, which are mapped in the design Cartography, depicted on the next page.

[1]Bonnevier, 2011

Column headings

Enclosed spaces for reproduction
Political apparatus of biopolitical discipline

Heterotopic apparatus for female submission
Spaces for heterosexuality and discipline of the female body

Protective boundaries for the other
Formation of moral discourses based on binary oppositions

Moral construction of sexual encounters
Evolution of spaces as resulting from legal pleasures

Play houses for ritualised spectacle
Commodification of the body for erotic purposes

Desacrated spaces for propaganda
Authentic occupation onto the sex worker as ally

Controlled exposure of the domestic theater
Window as protection from the male gaze

Virtual spaces for (re)production
Commodification pharmaca pornographic regime

Emancipatory spaces for decriminalisation
Bottom up spaces for bottom up decriminalisation

Right panel

Cartography of feminist references

This graphical genealogy aims to map feminist references for the design of the Hotel de la Bagarre Erotique, which connected and organized in 3 subcategories:

Emancipatory spatial sequence

Gardens of queer pleasures

Interiors for exo domestic sexuality

These relations offer a theoretical and referential base for the project in an intersectional feminist perspective: a cartography to navigate emancipatory discourses surrounding sex work.

Section labels (inline, coloured)

Emancipatory sequence

Gardens of queer pleasures

Interiors for exo domestic sexuality

Selected timeline entries

- 1644 — Béguinage de Courtral
- 1700 — Grand Béguinage de Louvain
- 1800 — Le Grand Béguinage de Bruxelles
- 1800 — Parc du Cinquentenaire is inaugurated. It quickly becomes a meeting place for the homosexual community
- 1895 — House Van Eetvelde, Victor Horta
- 1900 — Hotel Solvay, Victor Horta
- 1855, 1915 — Kitchenless House, Marie Howland and Alice Constance Austin
- 1875 — Marthe, Histoire d'une fille, Karl Huysmans
- 1910 — Temple of Friendship, Nathalie Clifford Barney
- 1905 — Princess Jeann Ghika in the garden of Villa Gamberaia near Settignano, where she lived with her lover, Miss Florence Blood
- 1923 — Boudoir de Monte Carlo, Eileen Grey
- 1943 — Site plan of the „lesbian garden" of Jeann Ghika and Miss Florence Blood, drawn by Edward Lawson
- 1975 — Women's Land Trust, Oregon
- 2010 — Jinwar Kurdish for „Women's land"
- 2018 — Kitchenless City, Research on Anna Puigjaner
- 2010 — Megan Gabrielle Harris, Representation of WOC
- 2010 — Ania Hobson, Female gaze
- 2022 — Bagarre Erotique, Klou Bagarre
- 2022 — Decriminalisation of sex-work in Belgium
- 1899 — Kaiserbründl Bathhouse, Vienna
- 1965 — Space Capsules, Galina Glashova
- 2015 — Sex workers, Julia Fullerton Baten

Interiors for exo domestic sexuality

Bottom

Brussels, Belgium

Timeline axis

1750   1800   1850   1900   1950   2000   2020

Secondly, it is crucial to understand space in a relational way. The focus does not lie only on individual rooms, but how they are arranged in relation to each other, and the transitions between them function. This refers to Paul B Preciado's reflections on transitioning. He does not understand transition in binary terms, that is, going from one gender to another. He believes in inventing new vocabularies that allows us to move beyond an imposed duality of male-female.[2] The project follows this line of thought, intending to go further than thinking of space in terms of interior-exterior, private-public, but as a gradient of transitions from different environments. The relational drawings, depicted on the left page, function as a continuos representation of this transitional understanding of space.

Thirdly, the design is thought of in a performative way, that is, investigating how the practice is carried out within the materialisation of the project. This way, the practice is in the foreground and configures how the workers and clients move through the building, and how this building affects the practice — in an emancipatory way. This refers to the enactment of architecture, as understood by Katerinna Bonnevier: to present or perform through action.[3] For this, the figurations as Braidotti proposes are extremely necessary, so as to accurately navigate the enactment of architecture.[4] The collages intend to represent these figurations and their enacment, as can be seen on the right side.

[2] Preciado, 2021, 24-29
[3] Bonnevier, 2011,16
[4] Braidotti, 2018, 33

2 Relational drawings of trasitions
Own work

3 Performative collages
Own work

4 *Mapping of connections from and to the red-light district, Brussels*
Own work

RUE ROGIER

Contextualising the intervention

5 *Existing synergical network of support for sex workers*
Own work

The design project aims to offer a physical structure that houses the collective social structure of sex workers. Consequently, the compound then is designed to enhance collectivity while maintaining the safety of the workers – without the need for further safety mechanisms other than the social control of the community. By designing this way, the project proposes positive changes in the material conditions of sex work, that challenge hegemonic power relations.

For a project of such spatial complexity, it was crucial to also analyse the urban context in depth. The proposed intervention is located in the Rue Rogier, two blocks away from the red-light district - within an already existing network of synergic support for sex workers. With organisations closeby such as Utsopi, that advocates for destigmatisation and legal emancipation of the practice or Espace P, that gives sex workers advice on health and digital safety, the site offers a strong base for sex workers to practise in an emancipatory way.

In order to analyse the complexity of the interior of the block, and how it relates to the surrounding buildings of the site, I worked with a 1:100 model. This approach offered a detailed framework to understand the urban context at the scale of the intervention, addressing different functions in the neighbourhood and how to merge them carefully with the function of sex work. The site was chosen for its variety in surrounding functions: the LUCA School of Arts, dwelling, small commerce and public offices. It was important to think relationally the interior functions of the block with the surrounding ones, so as to propose a design that disrupts the status quo in architecture for sex work, but can be accepted by the context in which it is designed. This recreation in a working model helped me to think about the design in terms of regulating safety, intimacy, as well as contributing to destigmatizing the practice with a welcoming intervention.
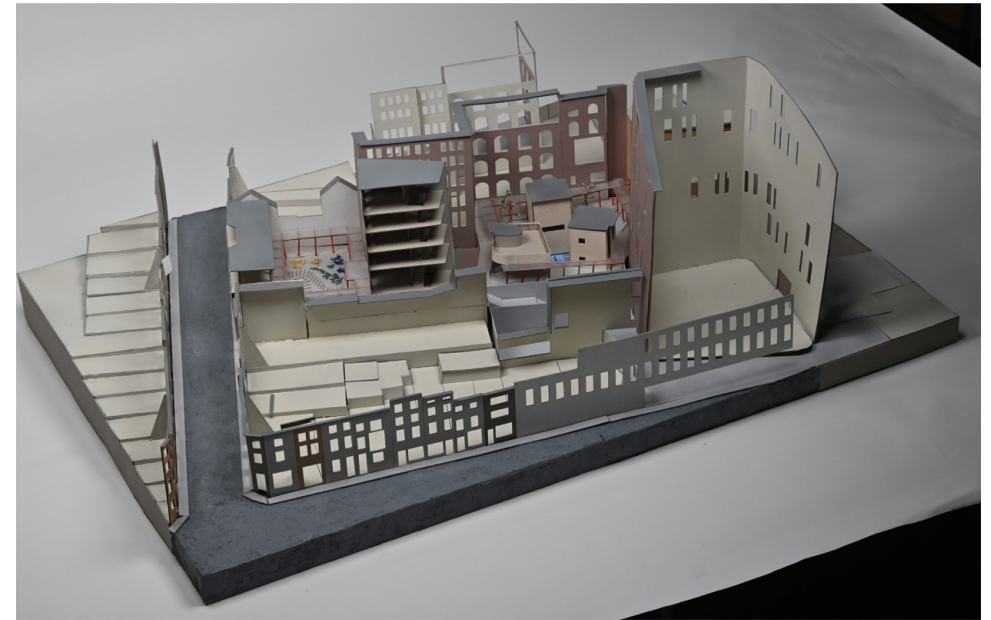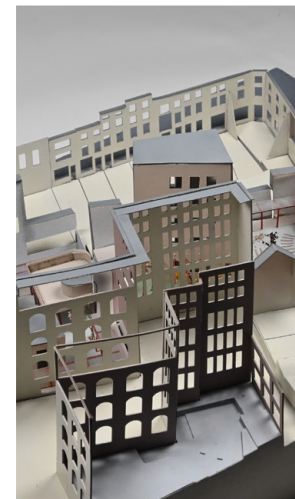
LUCA University of the Arts   Dwelling   Small shops, Offices

6 *Pictures of surroundings of the block*
Own work

LUCA University of the Arts   Dwelling   Small shops, Offices

7 *Pictures of 1:100 model of the site*
Own work

HOTEL
DE LA
BAGARRE EROTIQUE

The design of the project took place at three levels and/or layers, hence three chapters that will explain the proposal in its entirety. The Emancipatory Spatial Sequence is mostly focused on the design as perceived by the broader public. The Gardens of Queer Pleasures concern the encounter of these public aspects with the most intimate ones of sex work. And lastly, The Interiors for Exo-domestic Sexuality address the creation of intimate spaces outside patriarchal standards.

I. EMANCIPATORY SPATIAL SEQUENCE

II. GARDENS OF QUEER PLEASURES

III. INTERIORS FOR EXO-DOMESTIC SEXUALITY

8 *Axonometry of intervention in the site*
Own work

EMANCIPATORY SPATIAL SEQUENCE

Synergical arrangement of spaces

"Caring for each other is political work"

-Molly Smith and Juno Mac, Revolting Prostitues

The emancipatory spatial sequence refers to an arrangement of rooms that allows the sex worker to take control of her relationship with the client. To do so, the spatial disposition within the design facilitates synergic support between sex workers. References such as the beguinage (as communal, female spaces) and the Abbeys were central.[1] Spatially, the Abbey functions as a semi-enclosure that includes buildings with different functions.

In the context of spaces for sex work, the design translates this into a semi-enclosure that excludes, in order to provide safety. That is, an exclusivity that grants inclusivity. In other words: some people that might be dangerous for sex workers are excluded from the place, through a form of passive control at the entrance. The first building closes off the block and features a soft boundary that sex workers can overview synoptically from the office, so as to grant access to the broader public but limit the entrance to possibly dangerous and harmful visitors. Therefore, the design intervenes leaving the site porous and accessible, adding public value to the urban block. The ground floor interior merges with the different outer interventions. The geometry of the volumes varies in each building, to adapt to the surrounding urban context.

As the ground level is accessible to the broader public, the necessity for a system that regulates the circulation to the working spaces emerges, to protect the intimacy and safety of those. This regulatory system is introduced through round-shaped circulation cores. Inside these, a form of passive control takes place in the vertical plane: clear visual connections over the staircases regulate the entrance to more intimate (and safer) parts of the building. The 4 staircases within the compound feature softer or harder layers, depending on the space to which they provide access. This way, the design creates layers of protection, while leaving the compound accessible.
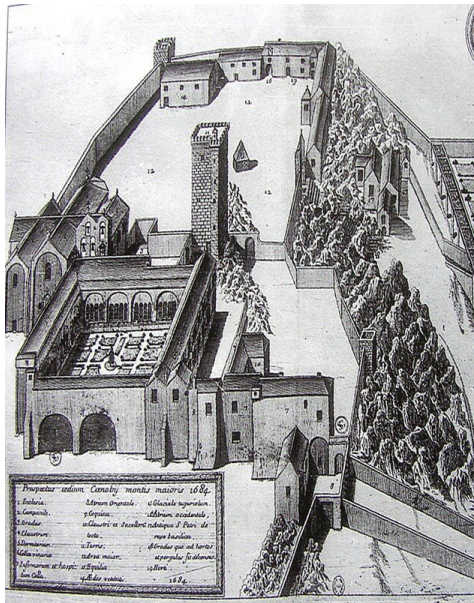
Abbaye d'Montmajour

Grand Beguinage de Louvain

1 *References for Emancipatory spatial Sequence*
Extracted from Cartography

[1]Vranken, 2018
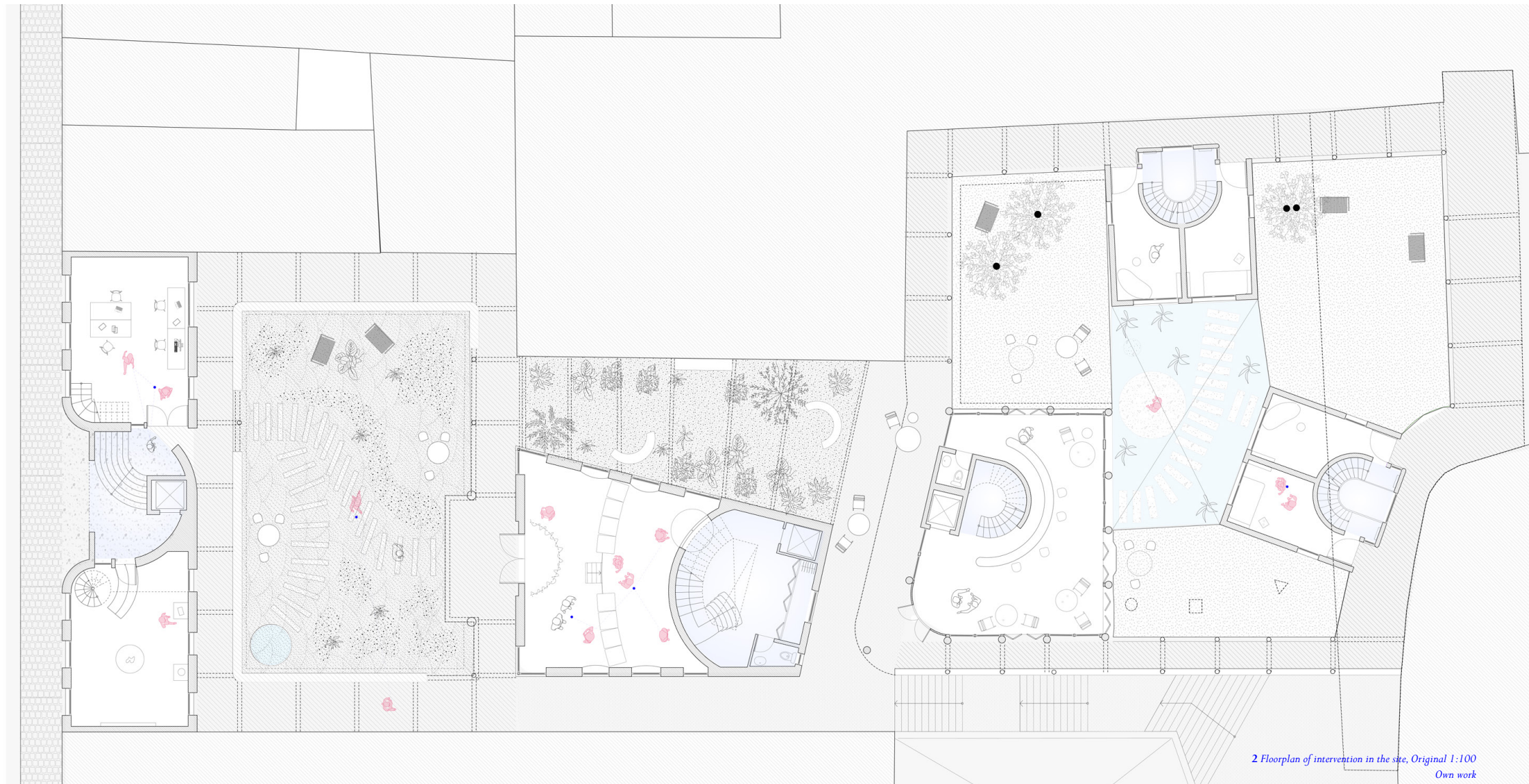
2 Floorplan of intervention in the site, Original 1:100
Own work
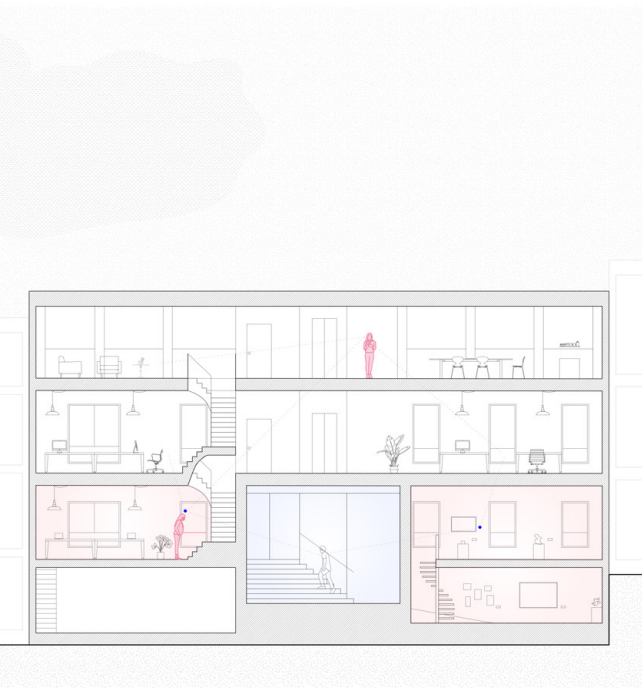
Offices
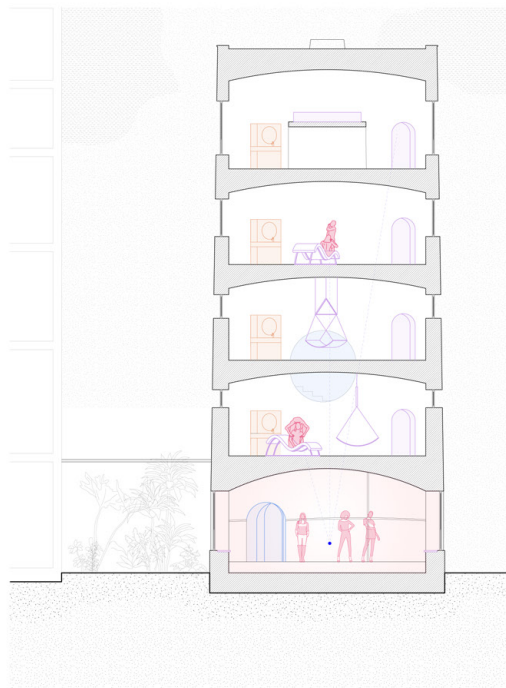
Tower
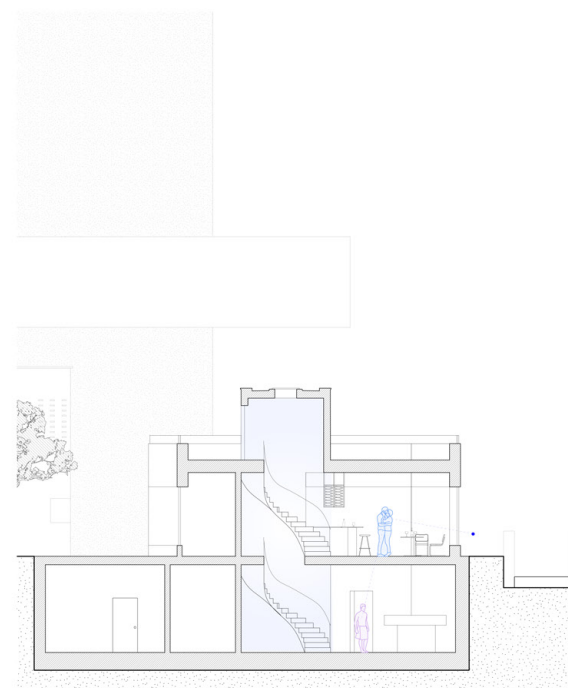
Bar / Bathhouse
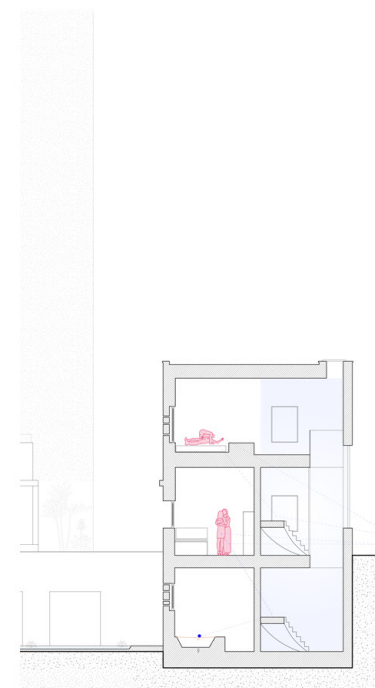
Bathhouse / Escort spaces

3 *Section of interventions in the site, Original 1:100*
Own work

The following collages depict the sequence of spaces in the intervention from the perspective of external visitors - it could be you, for example. This walkthrough in the first person intends to give a clearer idea of the functioning of thecompound, mostly focused on the public level of the intervention.

To read this part of the booklet, please rotate the document!

~*The stroll to the Bathhouse*~

The first intervention is a building that delimits the interior of the block, housing offices for the sex workers. As we approach the entrance to the compound, the first image is a destigmatising one - the sex workers are perceived as what they are - workers.

As we cross the entrance, framed with green tiles and approach the stone staircase, we witness two sex workers kicking out a drunk man that could give some trouble to the other workers. The first entrance serves as an initial filter for the sex workers to regulate who enters the compound and take care of each other.

We continue towards the gallery, composed of a steel frame structure supported by red pillars. There they see several sex workers taking a break in the garden, as well as a client coming out of the tower. We, as visitors, are drowned into the synergic relations that the patio facilitates.

Following the gallery, we walk next to the tower to finally arrive at the Bar. There, we see a safe meeting space for the queer community, as well as for clients and sex workers.

We descend the staircase within the Bar, located hidden in the red core of the building. This staircase leads them to the Bathhouse, located on the underground level.

The Bathhouse receives daylight from a sunken patio, a comfortable place to take a break from the Hammam. The sunken patio connects the Bathhouse with the escort pavilions. Through an open door, we witness two women: a sex worker and her client, making use of the intimacy and atmospheric conditions that the patio provides.

After the Bathhouse, we could go back to the bar, and grab a beer. Losing track of time, when it's already dark. Walking back to the entrance it becomes clear how the patio continues to be a safe space using illumination in the tower, as well as in the gallery.

4 *Collages of Emancipatory spatial sequence*
Own work

GARDENS
OF
QUEER PLEASURES

Encounters between the intimate and the public

"(Gardens functioned) as physical and spiritual arenas in which women strove to assert control, define their identity, struggle with sexual feelings or embrace the world"

–Sue Bennet
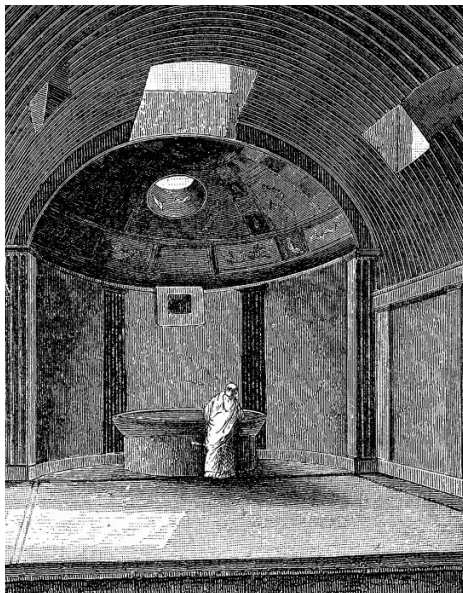
Caldarium,

Harry Thurston Peck

PLAN POPULAIRE DE L'EXPOSITION NATIONALE DE 1880
PUBLIÉ par LOUIS LAMOTTE
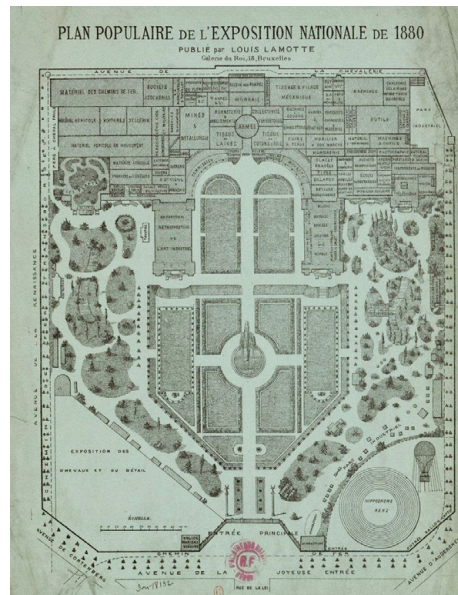
Parc du Cinquentenaire,

Louis Lamotte

1 *References for Gardens of Queer Pleasures*
Thurston Peck, Lamotte

The second design level is the Gardens of Queer Pleasures. These Gardens mark the encounter between public functions and sex work. In this level of the design, the gardens are addressed as safe sexual spaces for the gay community, as well as how they have been used by sex workers as working spaces when their practice was criminalised. As an example, the Parc du Cinquantenaire in Brussels was upon its opening an encounter place for the gay community.[1] It offered safe and private niches for those who deviated from what was the sexual status quo at the time.

Parallelly, gardens have been spaces where lesbian women could reassert their identity. The lesbian Garden of Jeanne Ghyka provides a strong base for this. The "domestic" garden provides a protected space for the gatherings of the lesbian community; it is a space for women to reclaim the traditional association between nature and female erotica.[2] The project brings the eroticism from inside to the outside, making the gardens part of the intimate space. To call it queer means to go beyond heterosexuality and the binary opposition towards the garden as the exterior, as opposed to the interior, understanding the garden as an exterior with interior qualities. The compound is composed of 3 gardens that feature different qualities: The Flower Garden, The Secret Garden and The Wet Garden.

[1] Pluvinage, 2016
[2] Serbest & Mahall, 2022, 110-115

Flower garden

Secret garden

Wet garden

3 *Relational drawing of transitions in the Escort spaces*
Own work

The Wet Garden is located on the sunken patio, and it connects the Bathhouse to the escort pavilions. The garden t features a flooded surface where aquatic plants can grow. This sunken patio is created through the implementation of a waterproof reinforced concrete tank. It features a floating path, made from stone that is supported by polyurethane feet. On the interior of the tower, the rooms are also water related. As meetings between escorts and clients last longer and are usually of a more intimate quality, a bath can help the client to relax, as well as establish a connection between the worker and her or him.
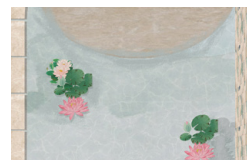
***Nelumbo Nucifera*
Lotus flower**

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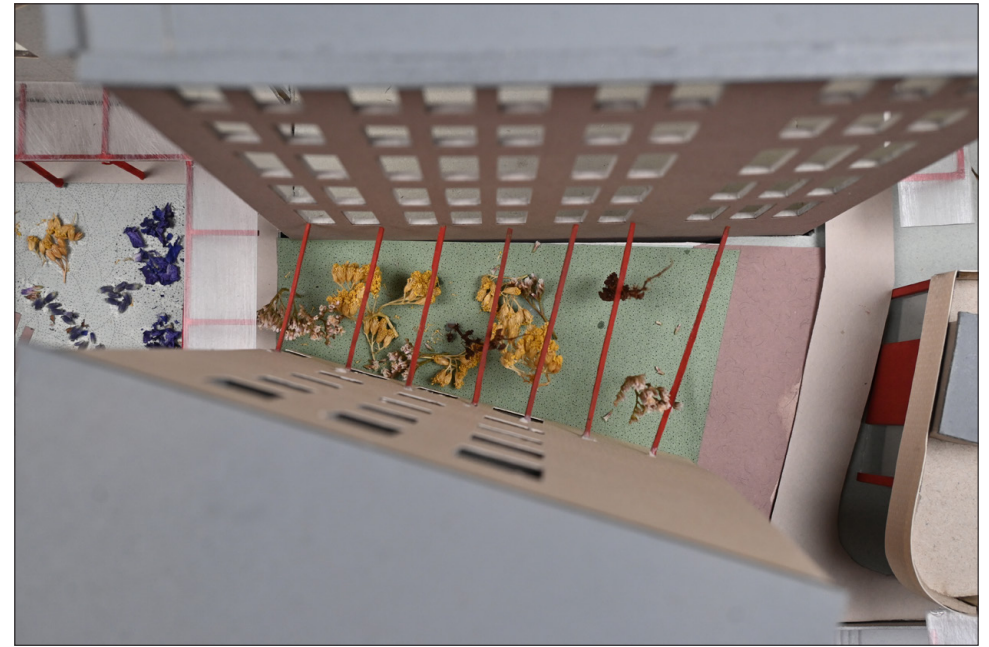
6 *Picture of Secret Garden in model 1:100*
Own work

The Secret Garden is located between the tower and the neighbouring building of the University. It features more dense vegetation. Therefore, it is thought of as a space for more intimate, romantic encounters, mirroring what takes place inside the tower. For this, several banks are provided, hidden between the bushes. This protects the view from the neighbouring University office building while maintaining the visual connection from inside the tower. This way, sex workers can oversee that it keeps being a safe public space.

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7 *Relational drawing of transitions in the Office spaces*
Own work
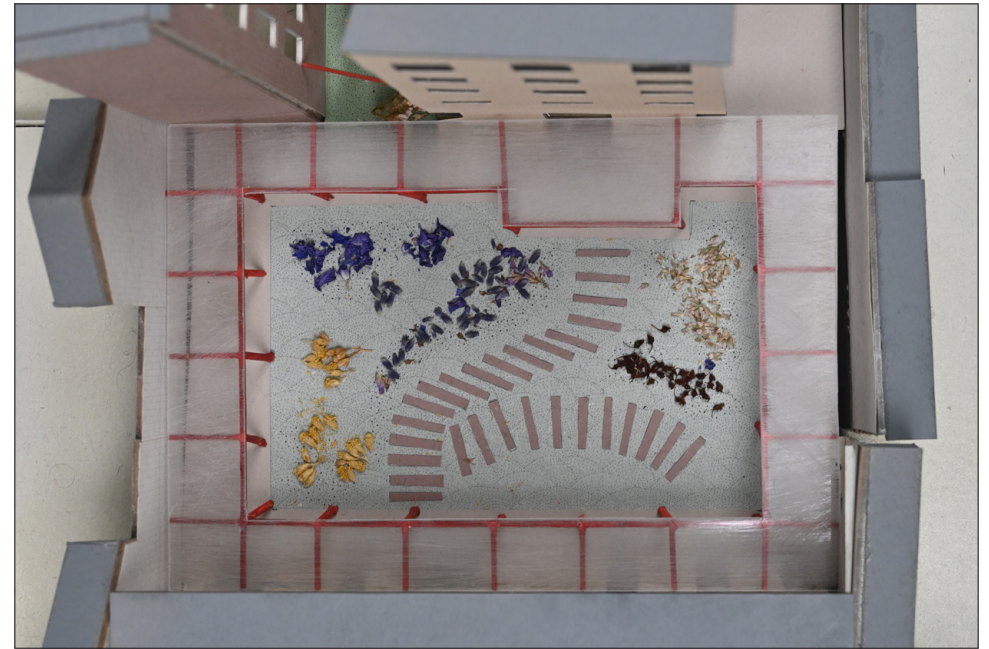
8 *Picture of Flower Garden in model 1:100*
Own work

The Flower Garden is located on the first patio. It features low greenery, mostly composed of floral plants, some of them aphrodisiac, such as lavender, passiflora, etc. Enclosed within a canopy and visible from the office building, as well as the tower, it establishes visual connections making it not only an exterior space but an in-between - another step in the safe sequence of accessing the spaces for sex work. The low height of the bushes allows for the garden to be a safe public space while enhancing the eroticism of the compound.

Maticaria Recutita
Chamomile

Lavandula
Lavender

Echinacea
Coneflower
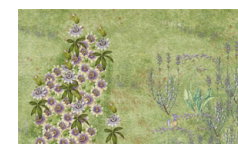
Passiflora Incarnata
Passiflora

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INTERIORS

FOR

EXO-DOMESTIC SEXUALITY

Rethinking intimacy and eroticism from a queerfeminist perspective

"The space doesn't need to be sexual (…) The sex worker can bring the 'sexyness' with her. What I would like is a space that is clearly used for what we do, without becoming a sex dungeon (…). A space that I can adapt to create a safe relation with the client"

-Sira, worker in a lesbian escort agency, Interviewed in April 2022 in Amsterdam


2 System axinometric for sex rooms
Own work

The temple of Friendship,

Natalie Clifford Barney

Monte carlo Boudoir,
Eileen Grey

1 References for Interios for Exo-domestic Sexuality
Barney,   Grey

With Interiors for Exo-domestic Sexuality, the design proposes spaces for sexuality out of heteronormative, patriarchal standards. To do so, the project is informed by references that strove to rethink female sexuality outside of the domestic, such as the literary salon of Nathalie Clifford Barney. This was a little temple-like structure, situated in the back of her garden. The space was used for meetings so as to socialise and discuss literature, art and music.[1] Miss Barney used the temple as a painting studio and for private one-on-one meetings with members of her salon. She was openly Lesbian: "My queerness is not a vice, is not deliberate, and harms no one".[2]

[1] Bonnevier, 2011, 129
[2] Quoted by The MNC Editorial Team, 2022

Heat

Ventilation - Summer

Water

Ventilation - Winter
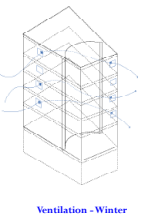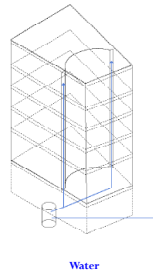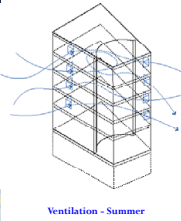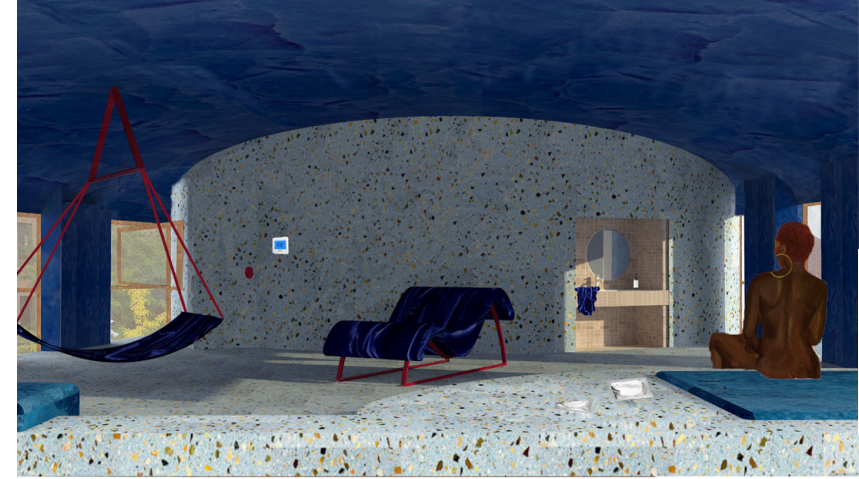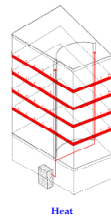
3 Climatisation and use of sex rooms, collages and schemes
Own work
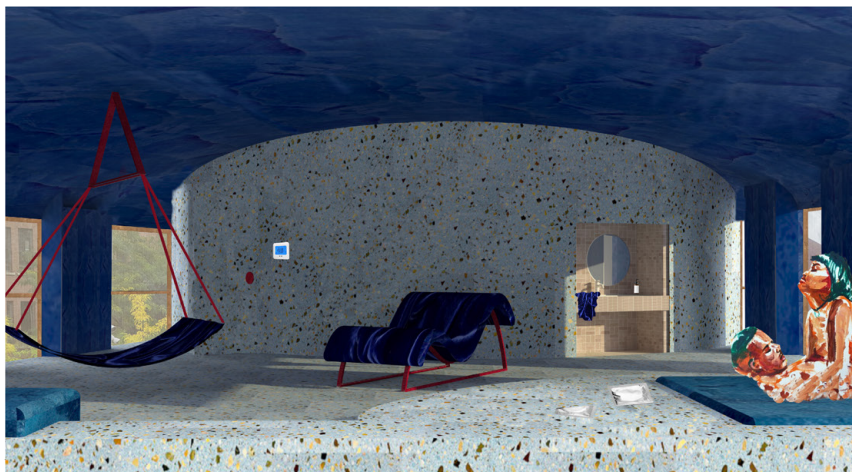
Parallelly, the project considers the desires and ideas that the sex workers have on the spaces. As mentioned before, for them it is important to have a space that facilitates their practice, meaning where the client feels comfortable, and where they can have agency in the space. With this aim, the project proposes sex rooms that are clearly designed for their function, while leaving flexibility for the sex worker. The ceiling and load-bearing walls become a continuous element that creates an immersive experience, laying on top of the floors and core - also covered in one continuous material that integrates all needed elements: a laying possibility, a seating possibility and a sink for hygienic reasons. These fixed elements are combined with flexible ones: a tantric chair, a sex swing and other sexual furniture are also to be found in the space. These pieces of furniture can be situated at different points of the space, or removed completely from it, depending on the wishes of the sex worker.

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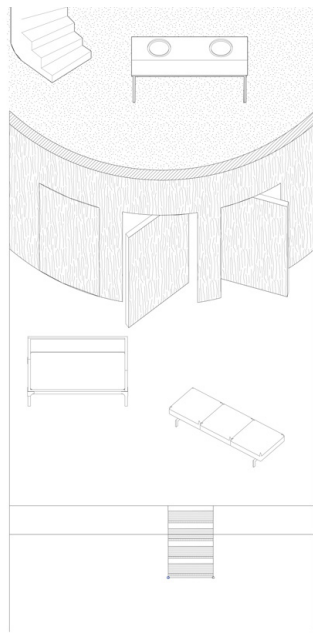
4 *Relational scheme of circulation*
Own work

As mentioned before, when thinking about the interiors, the importance doesn't lay in an individual room, but rather, how does the access to that room take place safely? The sequence within the sex rooms of the building is created following the idea of the boudoir. The boudoir has historically been considered a female space, sometimes collective. It has been often ridiculed or hypersexualised. In the project, the boudoir is central, reaffirming its collective and feminist aspects. The idea of the boudoir as a space for female collectivity and exchange is recreated in the lobby of the building. Instead of individual and isolating space, the sex workers wait collectively in the interior, sitting on a stage while reading, talking to each other, etc. The spaces are designed with soft and long-lasting materials, so as to create an atmosphere that is comfortable for the workers, as well as imposing a feeling of respect to the possible client as he enters.

Within this spatial setting, the sex workers engage in conversations with the possible clients as they enter, inviting them to discuss the contractual conditions on the windowsills. Once they agree on the terms of the encounter, the sex worker opens the door to the staircase - hidden behind the round shape of the core. The staircase marks an important moment of the client's social acceptance by the worker, and so, it is designed as a highly crafted space.

Using the 1:33 model as a tool, I recreated scenes where I saw myself in red-light districts and stories that the sex workers told me. However, their current working spaces often hinder these emancipatory aspects of their relationship with the clients. The design proposal offers a space where this emancipation can take place, where sex workers can practise safely and comfortably.

5 *Relational drawing of transitions in tower*
*Own work*

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~The Meeting in Velvet~

The following pictures depict the sequence of spaces within the proposal in which the first interaction between sex workers and possible clients take place. The 1:33 model serves as a theatre setting to recreate accurately the functioning of socio-spatial relationship, focused on the newly developed spaces for window workers.

To read this part of the booklet, please rotate the document!
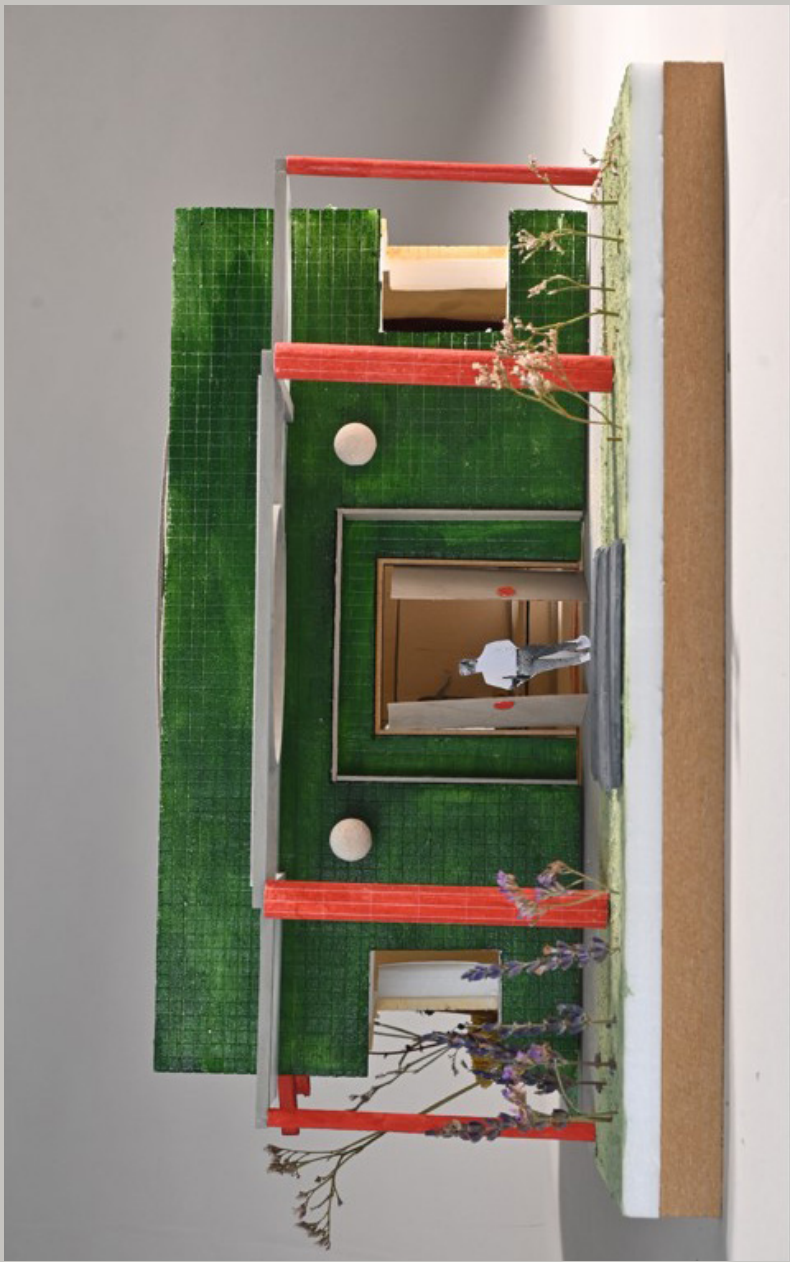
The client approaches the entrance of the tower, after passing by the garden, which has an intense lavender smell that calms the nervousness.
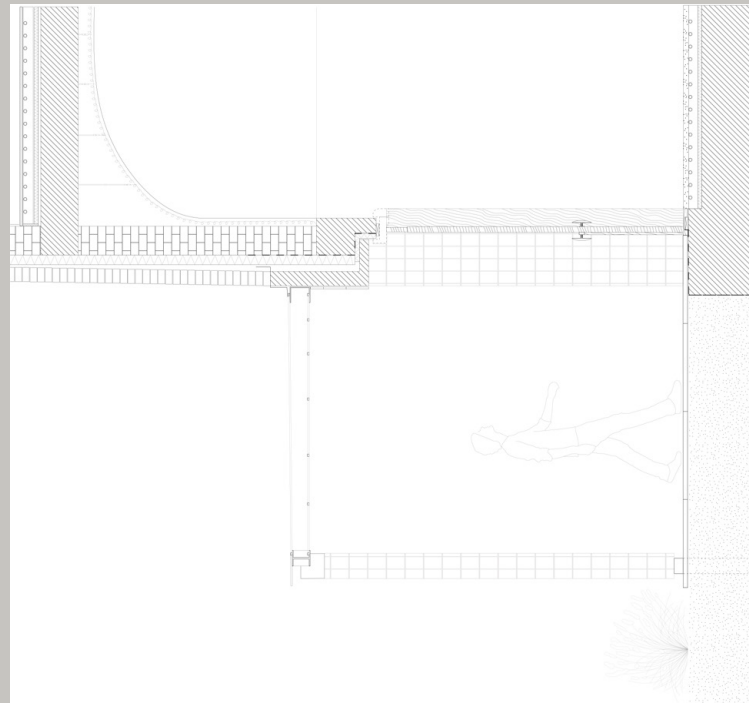
He comes under the canopy, supported by two columns covered in red tiles. He touches the red doorknob that opens the door to the lobby.

As he enters the space, he glimpses some sex workers in front of a continuous wooden background.


He comes inside the lobby, where sex workers are waiting collectively. Some of them read, others talk to each other, and others just look at the phone in the meantime. One of the sex workers calls the potential client: she knows him from a previous time. He approaches the stage, and she invites him to sit.

They both sit on the windowsill, where they conversate about a potential meeting. The sex worker communicates to the client the services she offers, and he chooses one of them in which he's interested.

After the negotiation and agreement have taken place, the worker invites the now-client to come on the stage.
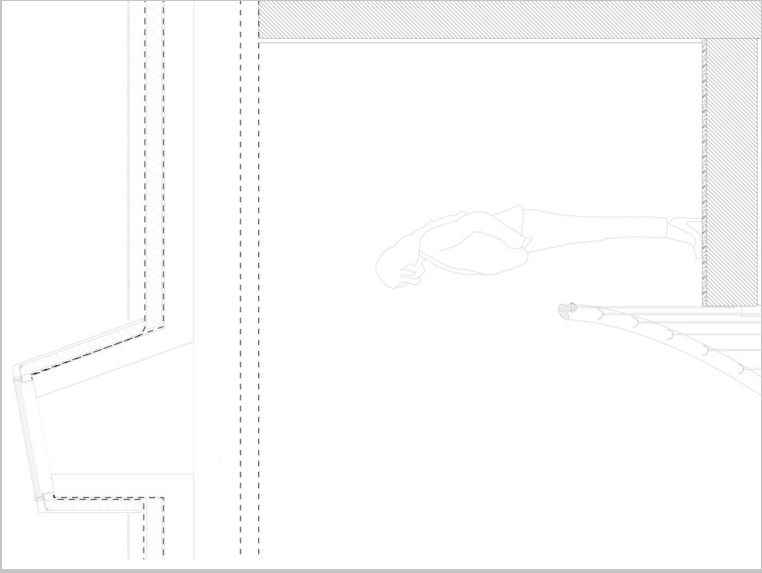
She opens the wooden core that gives access to the circulation of the building. The circulation space is mostly marked by two elements: a staircase, illuminated by a skylight.
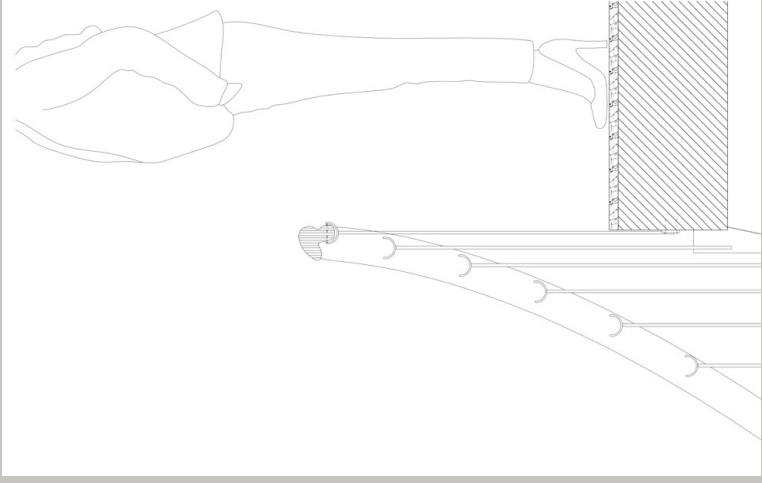
The staircase is carefully designed and crafted, as it marks one of the most important moments in the design: the one of social acceptance by the sex worker, since only this process can grant the client access to the intimate spaces.

~ The End ~

I used this story to create a glimpse of the core of the project: offering sex workers a space where they can practise in an emancipatory and safe way. Moreover, to create empathy: to avoid stigmatisation and generalisation, it was important to talk about how they practise in a realistic way, while still maintaining a certain abstraction that architectural models can grant. Within the project, and especially the walk-throughs, I recreate scenes that I saw myself and stories that the sex workers told me. The aim of this was to show how the spaces were created specifically so that these emancipatory practices could take place.

As the research demonstrated, the typology window that in the red-light district now is threatened because of an abusive male gaze. This disposition between sex worker and client is rethought in this project: the window puts emphasis on the contractual relationship between client and worker, as well as on the collectivity between workers. It is framed through the female gaze, an understanding of the sex worker's agency over their relationship with the client, as well as over the spaces.

6 Pictures of model 1:33, Details 1:5 and 1:10
Own work

A FINAL NOTE
On silencing systemic issues and Academia

The project intends to offer an ethical response to the material consequences of discourses. It aims to 'respond' to these material conditions in a challenging way, and not to solve them. It questions and experiments with how a certain materialization of feminist discourses can contribute to the well-being of the workers, as well as fighting the stigma against sex work. Even though my choice of graduation topic had a lot to do with my personal interest in feminism, its relationship to sexuality and material-based design, I realized that the underlying question was the role of the architect and/or researcher within society. That is, whether architecture can 'change' social questions such as gender equity, racism and classism. For me, it's clearly a negative answer, since architecture, in this sense, is not a problem-solving practice. On the contrary, I believe that the role of architecture is to problematize existing societal questions through critical thinking. In other words, to challenge existing power structures and offer ethical alternative responses. In the academic framework of Explore Lab, I found a space to have the academic freedom to deal with a topic that does so: putting an academic ethic in order to fight oppression.

Although it has been an extremely exciting project for me, I wanted to lastly reflect on the complications that it has entailed. Due to the stigma around sex work in our society (even though sex work takes place in almost every European metropolis, the practice is strongly perceived as something morally bad, dirty, abusive, etc.), I have since the beginning intended to be careful how to deal with designing for sex work. The intention behind this was a conscious choice of avoiding the repetition of already existing patterns that silence the voices of the workers and take over a paternalizing and stigmatised view of the workers. Already getting in touch with the workers and gaining their trust was highly challenging, as they mistrust external researchers — for clear reasons on how they have systematically been silenced for decades if not centuries. But with a difference, the most difficult aspect of the project was actually bringing this topic into discussions at the University. On the one hand, I have encountered a network of support that understood my intentions, formed by individuals that wanted to overcome the prejudices around the practice and to learn, with and through me, what the sex workers think and want. But on the other hand, I encountered resistance and discomfort towards the topic, questioning the capabilities of the workers to reflect on their practice, as well as interrogating the societal relevance of the topic.

In my opinion, this reaction clearly revealed why it is necessary to deal with these topics at the University. Even though it is uncomfortable to talk about certain topics; such as sexuality or sexual violence, sexism and discrimination towards workers take place every day — sometimes leading to physical violence. These subjugating processes also happen towards women (cis and trans), the queer community, PoC, etc, in the very spaces that we, architects design. And by being silent and oblivious to reality, we won't change these behaviours. Even though I won't avoid discrimination towards sex workers with this project, it is mostly intended to bring attention to this societal issue. Moreover, to motivate my surroundings to trust their critical thinking and question the system (academic and professional) that we find ourselves in.

7 *Collage of sex room in use*
Own work

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