

Narrative-driven design

Roles of narratives for designing the built environment



Fieke Elize Tissink

4062108

Research professor: Pierijn van der Putt

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TU Delft, MSc Architecture

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*'Architects are natural storytellers – it's a process that is inherently built into our creative process
- and when used properly, it's one of the very best tools in our tool bag.'*¹
- Bob Borson -

¹ Borson, B. (2004). *Life of an architect* as viewed on: <http://www.lifeofanarchitect.com/architectural-storytelling-its-my-thing/> on 20-5-2016

Preface

This thesis is about how narratives act in our built environment, whether they are of any importance to architects, and whether they can be influenced or even utilized in the design process.

Architecture and narratives are inseparable with memory, through experiences, expectations and imagination. In museums, expositions and public buildings the association with stories is fairly explicit. Yet the association with narratives is much less present in say dwelling and neighbourhood design. Here lie chances of development, since our living environment is drenched with memories and stories, of our youth, parenthood and lifetime rituals. As architecture students at the University of Melbourne we were asked to build a model of the first memories of our childhood house. It is staggering how detailed and precise one remembers the proportions and materials of spaces as a child.

Memory champions use this well-developed characteristic of the brain to store facts and knowledge in a so called memory palace. Prior to a memory competition their memory palaces are thoroughly stripped to allow new sequences of memories to enter.² Monotonous environments provide less cues to attach memories to, compared to rich and varied surroundings. Also memories stick better when linked with peculiarities, or something that can be heard, felt, smelt or tasted. Therefore memories without a spatial trigger become less embedded in the brain and are easily forgotten. Architecture is part of this spatial dimension, the scenario upon which stories play. Yet the relation between architecture and narratives is of

² Foer, J. (2011), *Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and science of Remembering Everything*, Uitgeverij De Bezige Bij

greater complexity. A relation which I endeavour to research regarding the design of the built environment.

This thesis therefore researches the various approaches to design by use of narratives, striving to result in memorable, location specific and narrative evoking places. Not with the intention to provide a complete and final overview of tools, yet more as a starting point, an introduction of the possibilities of narratives for architecture, to which more methods could be added.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my family, friends, studio colleagues, TU Delft lecturers and research supervisor, Pierijn van der Putt, for their continuous guidance and support.

Fieke Tissink

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The Universe is made of stories, not of atoms.

-Muriel Rukeyser-³

³ <http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/03/understanding-context-environment-language-and-information-architecture.php#sthash.K5NKH7qh.dpuf>, Retrieved on 29-5-2016

Chapter 1 Introduction

Problem statement

The contradictions in our built environment between kitschy museum-like city centres and functional rationally created suburbs lead to schizophrenic cities.⁴ The great stories of both romantic and modern building have been questioned. The psychological background of these big stories is that romanticism is mainly fed by primary emotions, passion and feelings, leading to plain kitsch. On the contrary modern functionalism is fed by dry rationalism. The claim of “what functions well looks good” has not worked out quite as hoped and many argue that the modernism of the past century has failed. As a result architects have built entire new neighbourhoods, mimicking organically grown medieval city centres hoping for a better approach. Yet couldn’t something be missing here...

The topic came to play during a research on the neighbourhood Kattenburg in the eastern part of the centre of Amsterdam. This post-war, rationally built



Figure 1 Brandevoort, medieval mimicked city

⁴ Boer, J. den, 2006. *Passie voor de stad*. Naar een nieuwe betovering van de gebouwde omgeving. Uitgeverij Synthese: Den haag

neighbourhood seems to be led by modernistic functionalism, removing all that would so to say have no purpose, responding to sheer necessity. Housing 600 spacious, comfortable, affordable, well located dwellings Kattenburg seems a successful project. Yet it lacks one very important aspect, which residents have been trying to express through other media like numerous community diaries, a victory arch, art projects and storytelling manholes (figure 3). The possible shortcoming I speak of is narratives. The architects of Kattenburg, A.B.B.T, plainly copied an earlier project in Amersfoort and pasted it into a completely different city, aiming to house yet another 600 families appropriately, without considering the narrative of the place, the history of the inhabitants, or even a story about their own design.

Could it be that a greater awareness and use of narratives in the context of the built environment could solve the shortcomings that romanticism and modernism have suffered? A combination of romanticism and rationalism would mean creating a



Figure 2 Rational functional Kattenburg

complete story, in which passion, emotion and functionality are in harmony.⁵

Thereby narratives could be the mortar, the glue, the thread, the order.

Our built environment evokes stories and everyone has their own stories connected to it. Yet as designers we hardly learn to see, hear or listen to them. As architects, we often struggle to explain the non-physical, emotional qualities of a place. This is perhaps because the tools and strategies we are equipped with in Delft are primarily physical: diagrams, drawings, models, maps and so on. Despite the great emphasis on context, the integral plan analysis in Delft only considers hard facts; Programme, Location, Building mass, Spatial setting and Materiality.⁶ We use these tools to condense large amounts of information into formats that can be easily shared and adapted. This editing is essential for effectively understanding, representing and designing complex places. However, essentially these tools limit us to the physical, literal realm.



Figure 3 Storytelling Manhole in Kattenburg

⁵ Boer, J. den, 2006. *Passie voor de stad*. Naar een nieuwe betovering van de gebouwde omgeving. Uitgeverij Synthese: Den Haag

⁶ Voordt, T. van der, Zijlstra, H., Dobbelsteen, A. van der, Dorst, M. van. 2007. *Integrale Plananalyse van Gebouwen. Doel, methoden en analysekader*. Delft: VSSD 6

Various architects and designers have already turned to narrative as a more animated way to create more meaningful, contextual places. Have they found effective ways to utilize narratives in their design? To be able to consider narratives as a worthy extension of the integral plan analysis of TU Delft it is necessary to gain insight in the ways narratives can serve in the architectural design process.

This thesis therefor researches the roles of narratives that act in our built environment, whether they are of any importance to us as urbanists and architects and whether we can influence them in our designs. Hoping to give answer to the following question:

What roles do narratives play in our built environment?

and sub-questions:

- What are narratives?

- How do architectural firms use narratives in their design?

Aim and Method

This thesis aims to provide a framework through which we can understand narratives and their relevance to designers of the built environment. Therefore the expected result is a practical overview of examples of firms who include narratives in their working methods. This overview is not expected to be complete, nor finalized. It is a starting point to set steps towards utilizing narratives in our design process to possibly overcome the schism between romanticism and functionalism in our cities.

The method to research the roles of narratives in our built environment will be inductive. I endeavour to result in an overview of tools, based on studies on working methods of architectural firms. The selection of firms has been limited to those that explicitly mention the use of storytelling or narratives in their process.

Chapter 2 commences with a theoretical exploration of narratives. It specifies what narratives are, thereby discussing their origin, relevance, problems, potentials and roles for narratives in the design process.

Chapter 3 explores the practical application of narratives. Here the methods of various firms are discussed based on example projects, resulting in an overview of applications for narratives in design.

During research the core of the methods and other important terms are typed in bold and summarized in icons. They can be found in the margins, providing the reader with a quick visual overview.



Chapter 2 Narratives in Theory

To research how narratives can be used by designers it is firstly important to pin down what is meant by narratives. In this chapter three roles to narratives are discussed and exemplified. Furthermore focus is given to narratives placed in models of communication and the importance of legibility and literacy of narratives in the urban environment.

The first narratives

The **first narratives** were probably told by hunters and gatherers. Not sitting by a campfire, but outside in the field. Based on animal tracks, broken twigs and flying hair remainders, humans would try to reconstruct the sequence of events that had taken place. These reconstructed stories were essential information for human survival, for finding food and avoiding danger. Narratives and storytelling would begin by reading signs.⁷ Furthermore storytelling was probably one of the oldest forms of entertainment, and used as a method of memorization.



What are narratives

Narrative comes from the Latin word *gnarus*, which means *knowing*. Derived from it is the word *narratio*, which means story. Narrative implies knowledge (knowing), gained through life experience. From a very young age humans learn complexities using narratives, for example by fairy tales and sages containing educational messages. Thereafter we use narratives as adults to form our identities and as a guide through our lives.

⁷ www.wikipedia.com/narratives

The relation between story and narrative is given in the model in figure 4. Narrative can be divided into two aspects: 1) *the story itself*, the content, and 2) *the Discourse*, the expression or way it is told.

Thus narratives are not simply the content of the story, or the interpretation of the story, but also the way in which the story is structured and presented to an audience by an author. Narratives are twofold in interaction, because they always concern a narrator/author and a reader/listener, similar to how architecture needs an architect and user. The story is the ‘what’ and narratives are the ‘how’ and ‘what’ combined. With narratives the product and the process play a role, the shape itself and the creation of that shape⁸. Every story is thus a narrative, yet not every narrative is a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. Narratives are always linked with two components of the context: 1) *time* and 2) *space*. A story without chronology is hard to follow, a story without a backdrop or stage set likewise. It is here that architecture and narratives meet. Architects give shape to space in an ever changing context.

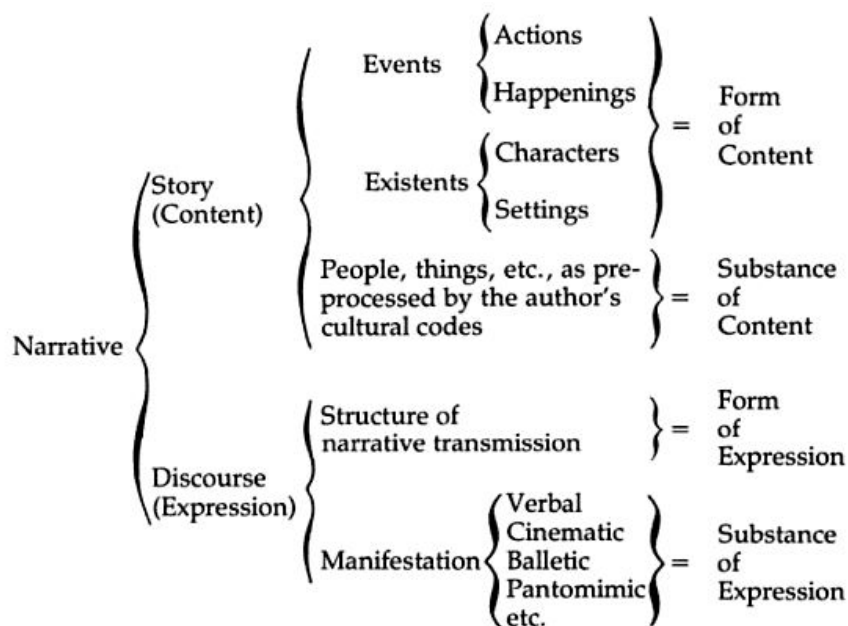


Figure 4 Chatmans Model, 1987. Narrative consists of story and discourse

⁸ Prince, G., 1987. *A Dictionary of narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska: Press. 91.

Now given a small introduction on what narratives are, how can they be relevant to architectural design and what roles can they play for designers? This section will discuss three roles that I myself have derived and identified, from a thorough literature research on narratives, concerning narratives and their relationship with the environment

1 Linking

The first role, the role of linking, gives answer to the first question of the relevance of narratives. It concerns us all and originates from narrative psychology. Narrative psychology is based on the assumption that people build their identity by telling stories about themselves and what happens to them. According to narrative psychology our thinking, interpreting, imagining and decision making happens within narrative structures.⁹ This structure is discussed in the next chapter. In this sense human consciousness occurs through stories.¹⁰ Our consciousness can even be seen as a storytelling machine, as neuroscientist Antonio Damasio claims.¹¹ People derive meaning from experiences by passing them on in the form of

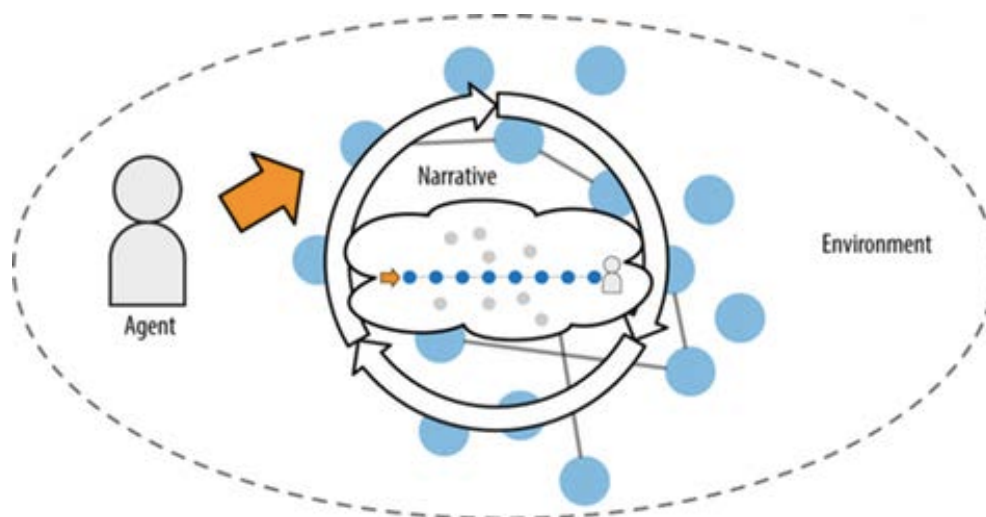


Figure 5 Narratives, the link between us and our context

⁹ https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narratieve_psychologie This structure is discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰ Damasio, A., 2004. *Het gelijk van spinoza*. Wereld bibliotheek, Amsterdam.

¹¹ Damasio, A., 2001. *Ik voel dus ik ben*. Wereld bibliotheek, Amsterdam.

narratives. Through narratives, stories, events and memories we feel connected to our environment and we form our identity. Narratives contain information about where we come from, so we can understand who we are and have an idea about how we see our future. This way narratives form the link between the context, us, others and our environment.¹²

Figure 6 depicts the role of narratives as link with the context according to Fileps theory.¹³ Filep places narratives as the link between nature, the physical environment and our identity. They help us to contextualise relations between our identity and the physical environment. They give us a framework, coherence, structure and perspective in which we see our future cities. This link with a place, a type of architecture, a certain environment helps us generate new ideas to imagine the future, but also colours our imagination, as figure 7 shows. This is why a person from Amsterdam may have a different view of an ideal family home than someone from New York.

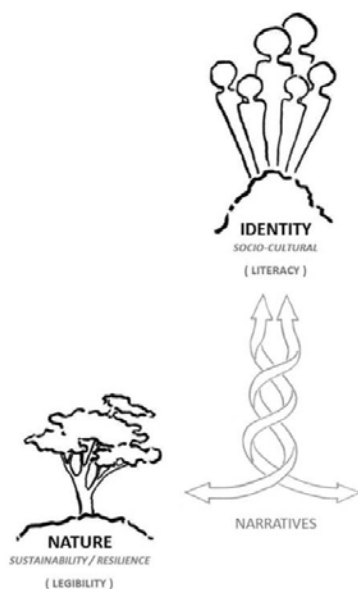


Figure 6 Narratives as conceptual link

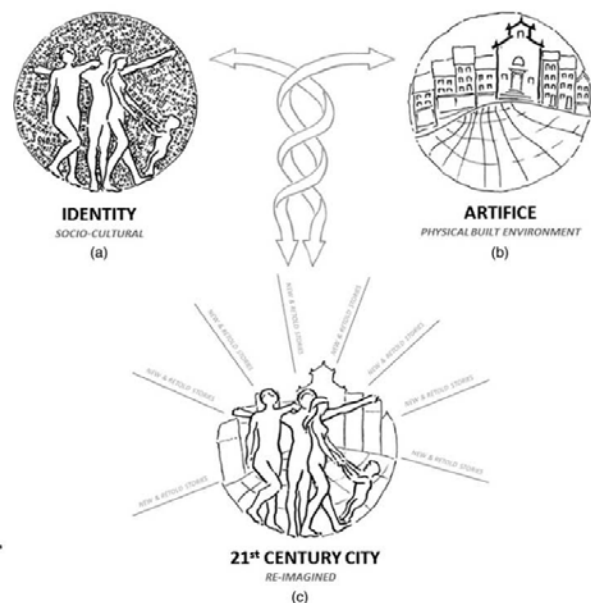


Figure 7 Narratives to generate new ideas

¹² <http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/03/understanding-context-environment-language-and-information-architecture.php>

¹³ Meer hierover wordt uitgelegd in Building Narratives van Filep, C. V., Thompson-Fawcett, M., & Rae, M. (2014). Built Narratives. Journal Of Urban Design, 19(3), 298

In New Zealand, for example, among the Maori, buildings do not only serve as housing for people, but also explicitly for representing histories of their ancestors and imaginations for the future. These stories are integrated into the designs of wall panels and wooden sculptures of the structure of the building.



Figure 8 Maori woodcarvings of ancestors and future dreams

Another example is that of a Gothic church, which functioned as the collective memory in the Middle Ages, as the bible and encyclopaedia for literates but also as a picture book for illiterates.

Linking environment and identity is the reason why narratives can be important for designers. The role of linking is a rather passive one, since it concerns an implicit connection between people and their environment. Creating an identity is a complex process often beyond conscience. The examples of the gothic church and Maori woodcarvings are very culture specific and relate to tradition and old buildings. Modernism and functionalism have banished the possibility of linking ourselves with narratives on buildings, limiting façade expression to sole expression of function. The second role, Structuring, is potentially more applicable in the design process.



Figure 9 Amiens Cathedral with biblical storytelling

2 Structuring

Narratives can also have the role of adding a certain structure to the way we experience things. This role of **structuring**, of combining separate parts into a whole is directed more towards designers or authors. Designing is not a linear process, but narratives can help to act as a core story from which everything else is framed or hung up on. By thinking in narratives architects can specify the programme and the necessities of a design task to give a physical shape to the processes and experiences that it will need to house. To do this designers must create and utilize narratives that lead the design, clarify what the building is and what it is not, help to specify the program and determine the ingredients of the design steps.¹⁴ Narration is thereby the process or 'activity' of selecting, organizing and rendering story material to have a specific effect on the viewer.¹⁵

An example of a structuring narrative was used by Libeskind for the design of the Jewish Museum in Berlin (2001). In this project, the entire building plan derives from a story: the lines in the façade, floor and ceiling are a literal translation of the



Figure 10 Jewish Museum, Dramatic lines on roof and facade

¹⁴ Klaus, 2013. Narrative *Mas Context* Issue 20, Chicago p19

¹⁵ Bordwell, D. 1985. *Narration in the fiction film*, London: Routledge pxi

lines Libeskind drew on top of the Map of Berlin, connecting the homes where Jews were murdered in the second world war. In addition, a second layer of voids is added, attempting to show the emptiness of an incomprehensible history.

*A long corridor leads to a heavy door, behind which a cold, high space emerges, where a narrow strip in the high ceiling provides the only light. Here, the visitor feels the power of the space and the fear. The floor, strewn with heavy cast iron punched head, emphasizes that it is a space where many stories come together, where the sudden cold solitude evokes an intense experience of knowing and an inability to understand.*¹⁶

In a building analysis the experience of that void is almost impossible to condense in a drawing. The first story literally and the second story symbolically serve as the underlying structure for the creation of this museum.



Figure 12 Continuous lines and scars through the interior of the museum



Figure 11 Voids symbolize the emptiness in the Jewish museum

¹⁶ Havik, K., 2014. Urban Literacy. Reading and writing architecture. NAI010

Structuring is mainly useful for the designer himself, since it structures the design method, as a sort of umbrella, a leading concept from which design decisions can be taken. The third role, framing, affects the designers task of manipulating the perception of the observer more and is discussed next.

3 Framing

A third role for narratives involves what the designer shows the observer. It implies the power of designers to manipulate the perceptions of observers. According to the narratology narratives are a series of chronological events connected with other, presented by a narrator.¹⁷ The time dimension creates a sequence. Thereby narratives can function as a **form of representation, framing**, tied to that sequence, space and time.¹⁸ With framing, the reader or observer is directed towards a certain perspective, through a set route, attracted to specific staged out elements, formed by the designer.



Referring to the example of Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin, this building not only structures the design for the architect, it also takes the visitor on a journey through a story, by framing the experience of the fear of that time.

A second example, more used for analysis, is *View from the road*, shown in figure 13.¹⁹ Here Kevin Lynch studies how the perspective of a highway motorist changes, through a series of drawings. The designer steps in the shoes of the observer, aware of his power to modify perspectives on the built environment. This sequence of scenes offers the possibility to emphasize certain elements, or disguise them.

¹⁷ <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narratologie>

¹⁸ Cobley, P. (2001), *Narrative*, London: Routledge p3

¹⁹ Appleyard, D., Lynch, K., Myer, J.R., 1964. *The view from the road*. Joint Centre for urban studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.

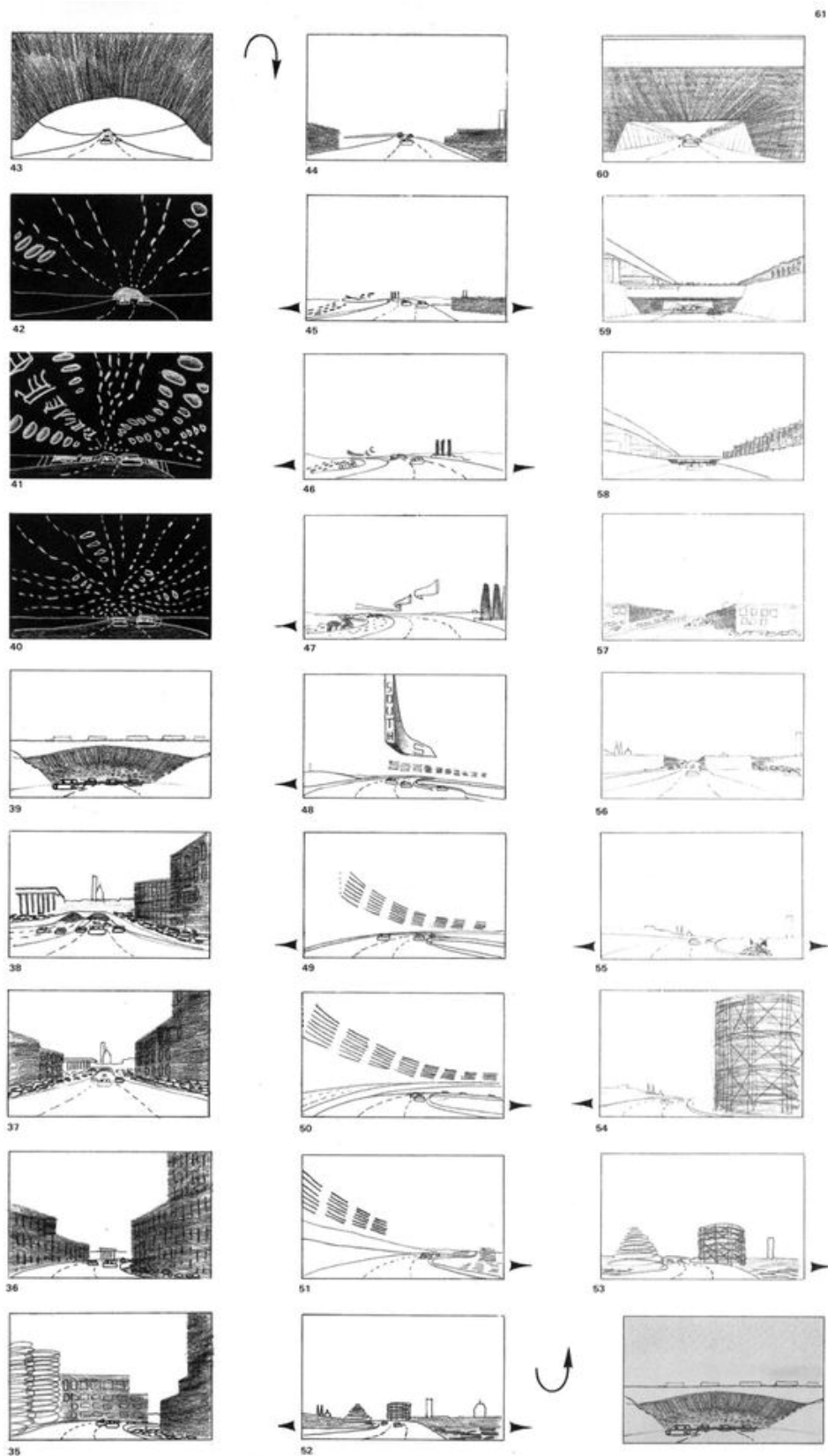


Figure 13 Kevin Lynch's View from the road showing changing perspectives

Narrative communication model

To understand narratives in a larger context we will shortly discuss narratives discussed in models of communication. Figure 14 shows a communication model as used in linguistics. It implies there is a sender with an expressive function and a receiver with a directive function. All communication takes place in the context of reality, which has a referential function. The transmitter sends a message, with a poetic function, to the recipient via a medium.

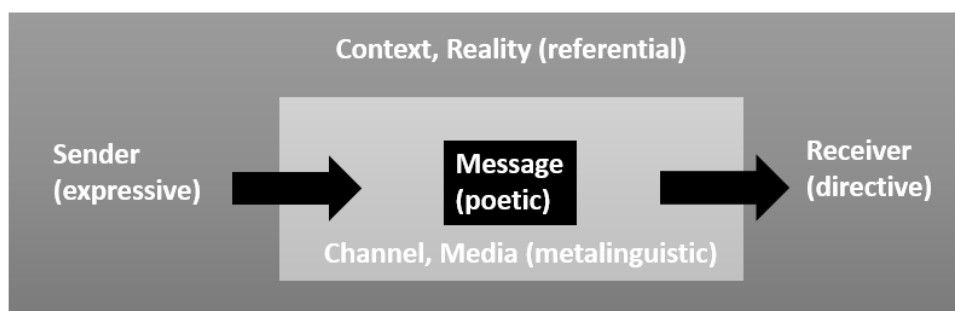


Figure 14 Roman Jakobson's communication model

This prompts the model for narrative communication in figure 15. In this model an author transmits a message through a specific channel to the narrator. The narrator converts the message into a story with characters, actions and events. Sometimes there is a fictive receiver who receives the message through the narration. Then the message comes across to the reader or observer. The poetic function makes it possible that multiple receivers feel **linked**, and connect and identify themselves with the context through the narrative.

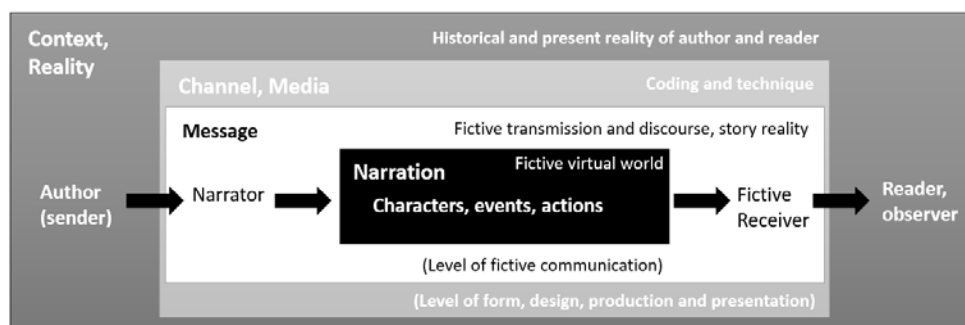


Figure 15 A model for narrative communication

Applying the model of the narrative communication to architecture, explains that when we use narratives for **framing** the environment, the architect is the author. The building can be the narrator, because it tells the story for the architect, or emphasizes, articulates certain elements, manipulating the observed perspective. The media can be symbols, details, materials, sculptures, routes or voids expressed by the building. The message can be emphasizing (or disguising) something about the building itself, about its use, or directing which way to look or go. The receivers or readers can be visitors, passers-by, users, inhabitants.



When using narratives for **structuring** the design, the architect is both author and receiver. He is creating or using a story that contains information about what the building must be or convey or what design steps to be taken next. This message is channelled through models, cartoons, sketches, films, photos or mood boards.



Legibility and literacy

As we have seen in the models of communication, narratives always require a reader and a narrator. This can be problematic, because transmitting the story depends on two aspects: legibility and literacy. Firstly, legibility implies how clearly the story is told by the narrator, or how well the built environment communicates or frames the stories to the reader or user. Legibility simply means the ease with which parts of a city can be recognized and organized into a coherent pattern. Secondly, literacy implies how well the community, users, visitors, inhabitants, or designers understand and identify themselves with the stories.

Legibility can be urban or architectural. Both urban legibility as architectural legibility are used to articulate and convey meaning and stories through form. These two are linked.

Firstly, urban legibility signifies how space between buildings functions as a stage set of everyday stories or fictional stories of the place.²⁰ The exterior walls of buildings shape the public space in which these everyday stories take place. The stories become part of the collective memory of the community and continue leading their own lives. It is not fully understood how urban space does that.

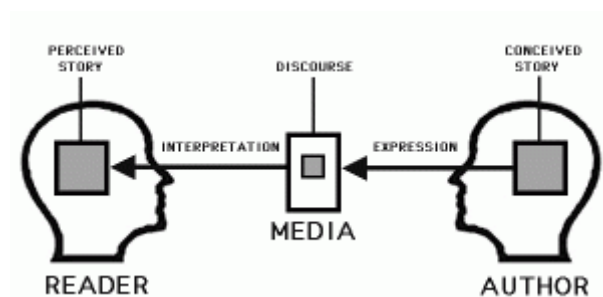


Figure 16 Readers perception interpreting authors expression

²⁰ Childs, M.C., 2008. *Storytelling and urban design* Journal of Urbanism 1 (2) 175

Secondly, architectural legibility is the degree to which the designed features of the environment aid people in creating a mental image, or "cognitive map" of the spatial relationships within a building, and the ease of wayfinding within the environment. Architectural legibility is the meaning that is embodied in architectural forms and languages that frame our urban realm.

Legibility, depicted in figure 17, is obstructed by many things like mobility, cars and roads. Architectural legibility depends on the need of humans to say something meaningful. Today this meaningfulness often limits itself to the more commercial world containing signboards and advertisements. Converting this trend into a more meaningful setting would require literacy of a community, that can actually read the built environment. Since cities develop through an active exchange between built environment and community, the success of them is dependent not only on the legibility of the city, but also on the literacy of its inhabitants.

The urbanist Kevin Lynch (1960)²¹ has attempted to grasp legibility in a tangible way that is useful for designers by introducing five components: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. By linking these five components from one to next, designers

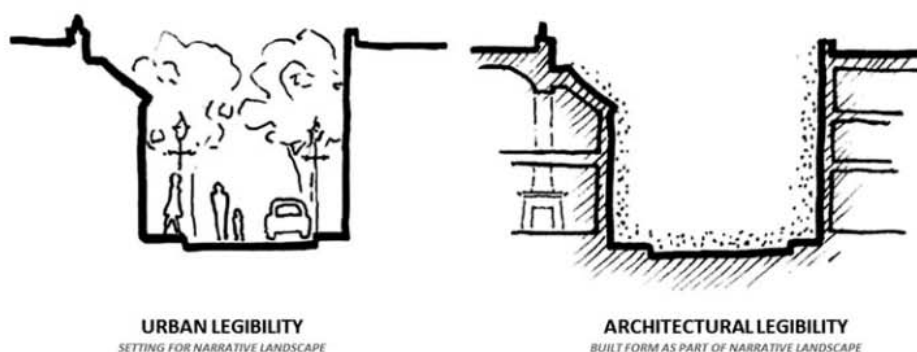


Figure 17 Urban legibility and architectural legibility

²¹ Lynch, K., 1960. *The image of the city*, The technology press and Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

would be able to create urban sequences that enable inhabitants and visitors to create chains of association and memory”.²²

With his research he provides designers with concrete tools and physical implementations that are important to improve legibility. Examples are creating visual hierarchy, clarity of direction, directional shifts, identifiable points and landmarks. He found out that to make sense of the space around us we need sharp edges, like a waterfront or a medieval wall dividing the new and the old city. People tend to need differentiation of urban space to orientate themselves, as to which side is the inner part of the city, and which side the outer part. A place therefore should be distinct, unforgettable, not to be confused with any other. Every district should have its own character, which can be recognized by clues which are continuous and homogenous throughout the area. These clues can be given in building style or a continuity of colour, texture, material or floor surface, scale or façade detail, lighting, planting or silhouette.

When considering utilizing narratives in a design, it is necessary to be aware of legibility and literacy. Figure 18 shows a summary of Lynch’s ten useful themes for designers to implement in their design to facilitate legibility. These are more

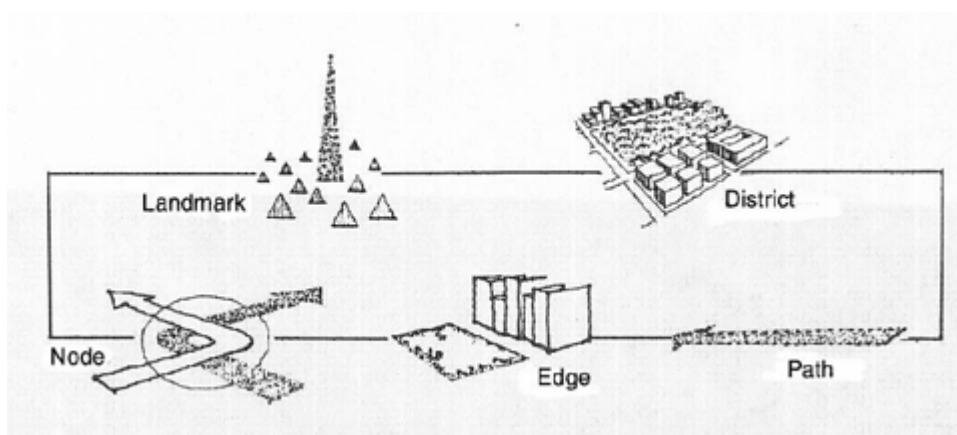


Figure 18 Lynch: Legibility requires paths edges nodes districts and landmarks

²² Raynsford, A., 2011. "Civic art in an age of cultural relativism: The aesthetic origins of Kevin Lynch's Image of the city." *Journal of Urban Design* 16 (1): 45

thoroughly discussed in Appendix 1. Literacy, on the other hand, could be improved on more a social level of educating people.

This chapter introduced narratives and the three roles of narratives for the built environment; linking, structuring and framing. We found out that linking is a more implicit, passive role of narratives in helping form identities. The role of linking proves the relevance of narratives for humans, being a way to make sense and awareness of the built environment and connect memories to it. The roles of structuring and framing however are very useful tools for architects, to aid structuring the design(process) and to actually express a story through the built environment. These two roles will be discussed in the next chapter, regarding methods in which they come to practice.

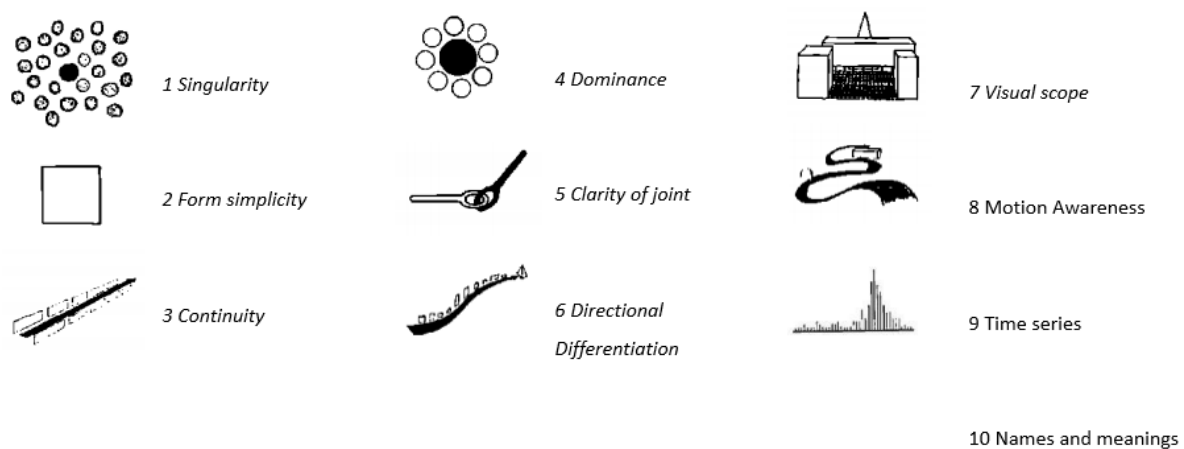


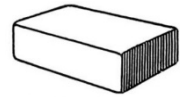
Figure 19 Lynch: 10 design qualities to facilitate legibility of the environment

Chapter 3 Narratives in design practice

In the previous chapter we discussed three roles of narratives relating to the built environment: linking structuring and framing. The first role, linking, emphasizes the relevance of narratives, connecting humans to their environment, helping them to form identities. The latter two roles of structuring and framing enable application by architects. The following chapter researches various uses of narratives in the design process, by studying working methods and examples of architectural firms in practice. The chapter is divided into two parts: Structuring and Framing. Structuring is thereby usually a narrative used by architects for their own design process. Framing is uses narratives more to express and convey towards the users. The chapter concludes with an overview of application possibilities of narratives in a scheme.

Dialogue

On a building site in Philadelphia, an Architect asks a Brick:



"What do you want to be, Brick?"

The Brick says to him:

"I want to be an Arch."

The architect responds to the Brick:

"Look, arches are expensive, and I can use a concrete lintel over you. What do you think of that?"

"Brick?"

Brick says:

"... I like an Arch".²³

This dialogue takes place between architect Louis Kahn and a brick. It is an example of how a story can be used to emphasize the value of material choice and tectonics in architecture. He uses the dialogue between materials, building elements and the builder. Walls, columns, bricks and arches are the *dramatis personae*, the main character.

²³ Kahn, L., 2003. *Louis Kahn: Essential Texts*, ed. by Robert C. Twombly. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. 207

Structuring

Louis Kahn uses stories of talking bricks for emphasizing tectonics and material in his design. But how do other architects structure their design (process) through narratives? Many architects are good storytellers, because they often need to create narratives to guide them through the design process. It is a type of “method acting”. This is a technique used by actors for which they interpret psychological motives and personalities of their role and combine them with own personal experiences and memories to try to act more lifelike.²⁴

Therefore one needs to know the customer and their wishes. When designers start the process they combine all accessible information about the customer to develop a narrative, led by behaviour patterns, to then design a house that is consistent with the wishes of the customer and not necessarily the wishes of the architect himself. Starting with a story of the client, the architect interprets the story, translates it into a new physical setting and then effectively communicates a new story back to the client. This way every process and project is different and location specific. Simply copying projects from other locations like the post-war neighbourhood in Amsterdam, Kattenburg, (from the introduction) could then never occur.

TU Delft Professor and Architect Job Roos, uses the story as a metaphor for analysis. He compares the architect who is engaged in redevelopment with the writer who bases his work on existing stories.²⁵ He describes two types of narrators: those who jot down and freeze popular myths and legends (the Brothers Grimm) and those who want to be original, creative, surprising and aim to enrich the existing with

²⁴ Borson, B. *Architectural Storytelling it's my thing* accessed on 3-5-2016 on <http://www.lifeofanarchitect.com/architectural-storytelling-its-my-thing/>

²⁵ Roos, J., 2007. *De Ontdekking van de Opgave*. Delft: VSSD, 25

their talent, ideas and knowledge (Marlowe, Goethe). The latter goal is more tricky, and requires more knowledge than unchangeably capturing stories. The story must be read several times to understand it. Form, content, structure, grammar, syntax, themes, motifs, and plot, the background. Who is the author, in which tradition did he write, who were his contemporaries, who inspired him or put him off? And above all: which source did he use himself?

Roos has translated and visualized these aspects of the context into the thinking model, shown in figure 20. The column in the middle represents history, the stories, the only straight continuous, always present. The spiral around the column represents the design process. It is visible that the design process sometimes approximates history more, but diverges from it at other times. There are six curved ribs running from top to bottom representing six values of the context; economic,

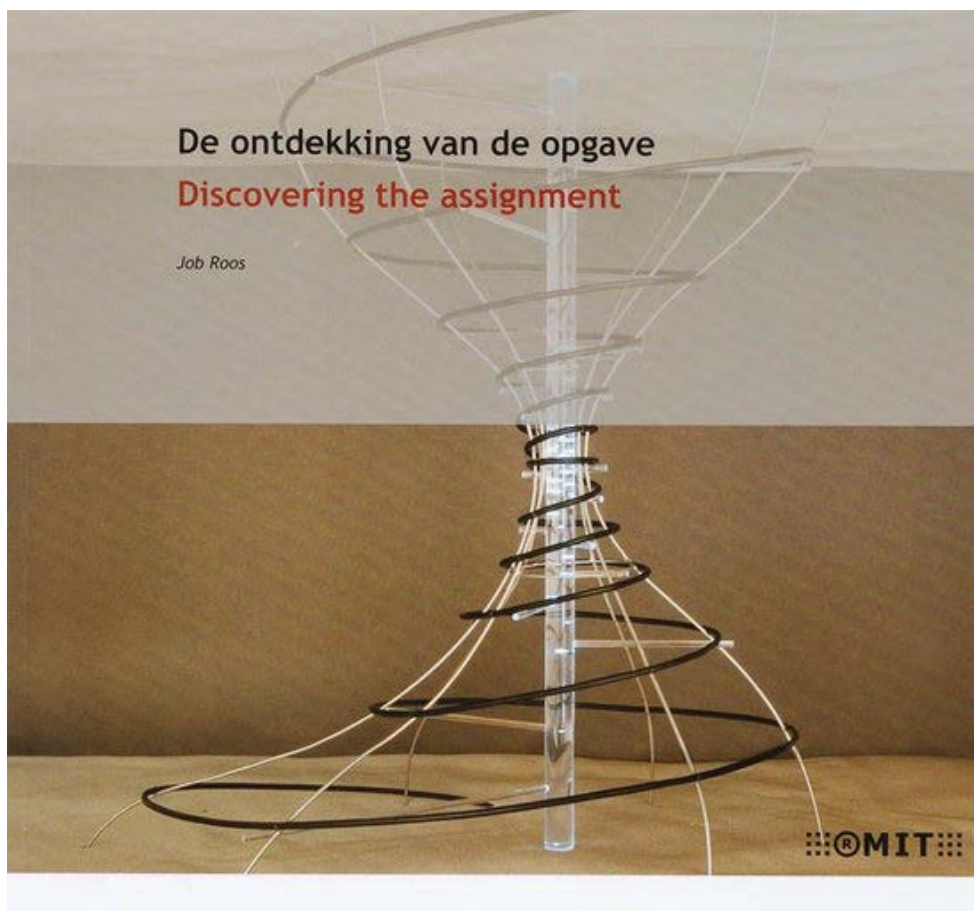


Figure 20 Roos' thinking model, the continuous column of history in the centre

aesthetic, emotional, social, ecological and historical value. Perpendicular to the continuous axis (column of history) horizontal lines are visible. These horizontals connect to the design process spiral and represent the moments the designer takes a decision, taking history and the values into account.

This model is interesting for us because it is a visual abstraction showing where narratives can be placed as a continuous through the design process. At times the circular process of the designer approaches the stories more than at other times, when it diverges away. Narratives exist continually, but depend on the designers' actions and decisions, through the horizontal links, that decide at which point in the process narratives are taken into account for further development.

We will now explore other architecture firms and their way of utilizing narratives to structure their designs. Structuring can happen verbally, in drawings, in scenarios, with photos and more. The following examples in this chapter to be discussed contain spoken narratives, scenarios, comics and critical photo strips.

Spoken Narratives

The first example of how to use narratives to structure the design process is given by Amsterdam based firm Heren 5. Heren 5 consider the analysis of exploring the genius loci not as something to be done with a quantitative questionnaire, but rather as “storytelling by residents”. Their research *families in the city* used storytelling and then translated the stories into concrete, physical patterns, ready for design application. The designers did not start sketching straight away, yet they used **spoken narratives**. Main goal was to find out which themes are important for their users through conversations.



Heren 5 asked five families living in Amsterdam to tell their story of the daily compromises they perceive to be able to live in their city apartment. Their problems were mapped out on five apartment plans. Simultaneously five former foreign interns were asked to draw their families' apartment accompanied by a story of their daily use. This gave comparative stories from other major cities in Europe, Genoa, Albacete, Barcelona, Porto and Bucharest. The in total ten plans were gathered and transformed into a booklet deriving ten important patterns, to be used in future design for improvement of family living in the city.

One pattern was that families would compromise smaller bedrooms in favour of a multifunctional hallway, to play. A second one was *the magical cupboard*, a

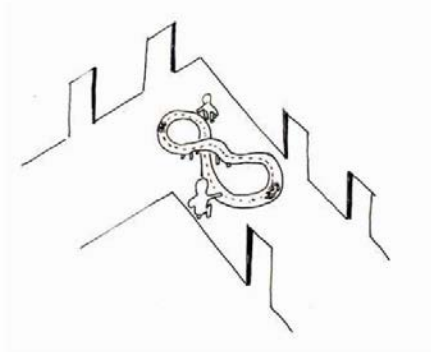
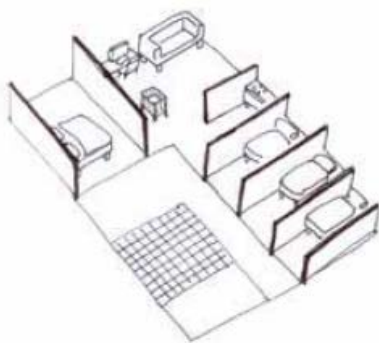


Figure 21 Two of the patterns: Create multiple smaller rooms, make the hallway large enough to play

In a second research, *De Stadsveteraan*, Heren 5 use similar storytelling by residents. Here the storytelling does not concern present residents, but potential future residents. The study contained collecting ingredients to think ahead and build a scenario, a kind of qualitative trendwatching.²⁶ Responding to the fact that housing in Amsterdam is mainly aimed at starters, students and families, Heren 5 targeted a different **focus group**: Seniors, who wish to remain or return to the city. To find out what entices seniors to move to the city, Heren 5 gave the word to the seniors themselves. **Living workshops** were organized for their specific focus group. Paradoxically the group did not consist of seniors, but of people in their forties, the future seniors, with a complete different view on living than their former generations. The workshops consist of questioning small focus groups and eventually lead to **Scenarios** predicting elderly lifestyle and new ways of dwelling.

The advantage of storytelling in this sense is that it is possible to research the unmeasurable to find new, upcoming behaviour. New behaviour often starts in a small niche of innovators, the focus group. It is thus necessary to know your focus group and where to find them. It is important to listen really well to new inhabitants and give them freedom. To be successful Heren 5 emphasize the importance of looking beyond the assignment, for instance by considering the whole neighbourhood, the whole city, instead of just the residents in the focus group. Spoken narratives are a useful way to gain valuable information from residents and future residents. This small scale qualitative research method does not lead to definite answers, but rather to possibilities in the form of scenarios or patterns to consider during further design process. The process is time consuming because it requires meetings and workshops and interviews, but can result in unexpected solutions.



²⁶ <http://heren5.eu/> Retrieved 3-5-2016



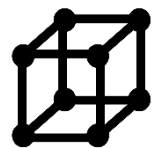
Figure 23 Summarizing drawing of a pitch with focus group done by Heren 5 in Utrecht

Scenarios

To continue with an example of working with scenarios, the method of former OMA partner Ole Scheeren is interesting. Scheeren is fascinated by how architecture can tell certain stories and create memories and how its inhabitants play a part in these stories.²⁷ He wonders how fictive stories of the users of our buildings can write architecture, whilst architecture writes those stories simultaneously. According to Scheeren stories are provoked by or conditioned by spaces, which he calls the psychology of spaces.²⁸ The functional approach of form follows function does not offer enough space to incorporate these thoughts. Therefore Scheeren works under the motto “Form follows Fiction”, aiming to organize built environment not only functionally, but also in an experiential way.

To do this he approaches buildings as an **organizational structure** that generates a series of relations and narratives. This organisational structure scripts relationships and stories within it. These relationships can be between people who use the space, connected by a shared central space. But these relationships can also be between people and the building itself. In that case architecture becomes an active element in people’s stories, a playground where those stories unfold.

By imagining the stories that could unfold within the buildings already during the design process, **scenarios** can be created of possible experiences.²⁹ This is what was done for the design of the CCTV station in Beijing. During the design process the firm created a structure of five fictional characters who would use the space and imagined narratives for those characters to design the building according to those stories.



²⁷ <http://www.archdaily.com/780997/form-follows-fiction-ole-scheerens-ted-talk-on-why-architecture-should-tell-a-story>

²⁸ http://buro-os.com/the_peak_a_star_across_divides/

²⁹ https://www.ted.com/talks/ole_scheeren_why_great_architecture_should_tell_a_story



Figure 24 The CCTV Building By Koolhaas and Scheeren in Beijing. A circulating Skyscraper

This story-driven approach was used for two reasons, firstly to communicate their design and secondly to test the effectiveness of their design. To anticipate the daily life of the CCTV building 192 illustrated cards were made, each corresponding to the hour of the day from 1am to midnight. Each hour included eight illustrations showing how some part of the building would be used at that time of day. The illustrations were computer-generated with photos pasted in of people doing their thing. An impression of these 192 illustrations can be seen in figure 25, a photo of the exposition of the CCTV building at the MOMA, New York in 2012. In the illustrations the five characters appear, who are followed throughout the day to show how they use the building and interact with each other in the space.

An example of the characters, locations, time and actions on the cards could be:

Character: Control room director

Location: F1 Lobby Tower 1

Time: 2:50 am

Action: Enters the building



Figure 25 Moma Exposition in 2012 of CCTV design process. The panel of 192 Illustrations of fictional characters, location, time, actions and events

A next card shows the same character but at a different time, place and action.

Character: Control room director

Location: F3 Open News Studio

Time: 3:15 am

Action: Monitors late night news broadcast

Somewhere else in the building another story takes place:

Character: Actress

Location: B2 Actors' Lounge

Time: 10:05 am

Action: Descends to actors' lounge and dressing room

An hour later:

Character: Administrative assistant

Location: F16 Conference Room

Time: 11:00 am

Action: Meets a client from Shanghai

Some cards even contain two characters, to point out the building's stated goal of blending audiences:

Character: Actress

Location: B1 400m2 Studio

Time: 1:30 pm

Action: Rehearsal for Chinese opera

Character: Tourist

Location: B1 Loop (overlooking studio)

Time: 1:30 pm Action: Watches a performance in TV studio

This narrative way of imagining a building, by creating realistic stories of use, is a way to bring modernistic “form follows function” and the romantic approach of so-called “form follows fiction” together. This method has no limits or implications to what the building will eventually look like, but does assure that the architect has considered how to use the space and has tested it. It incorporates the **dimension**

of time in the process of building design, envisioning not static impressions, but time based, dynamic scenes.



With contemporary 3D computer modelling it is not too time-consuming to create a series of events, users and locations. With some well-located cameras the architect himself and the client can get a good impression of what the design will mean and could offer. It also gives a personality and background to the otherwise anonymous silhouettes in many architectural renders. It is a tool that can be used during the design, to test spaces with an extra time dimension, but also after the design to explain function. A next step could be creating small short movies of characters and how they interact with the building.

Comics

As we have seen scenarios propose various possibilities and uses in different time dimensions. An even stronger method of working with narratives in the dimension of time is that of comics. Parisian Alexandre Doucin considers narratives as an outlet and experimental garden. To **stimulate** his imagination he translates his first thoughts for an assignment into a series of drawings, creating **comics**. In his work Doucin shows how narratives provide insight on the interaction between building and user. Through drawing he imagines and proposes other worlds. Stories about characters, developments, relationships, quirks and attitudes; absurd stories about fake realities. Comics are his method to convey complexities, not just a rendering technique. In his stories buildings are not simple ornamental elements, but also characters, sometimes even protagonists. Comics can convey the complexity of the space with competing perspectives and leitmotifs. In his *Maison de Vair* (2012), in figure 26, he examines what situations may take place in an atypical space entirely

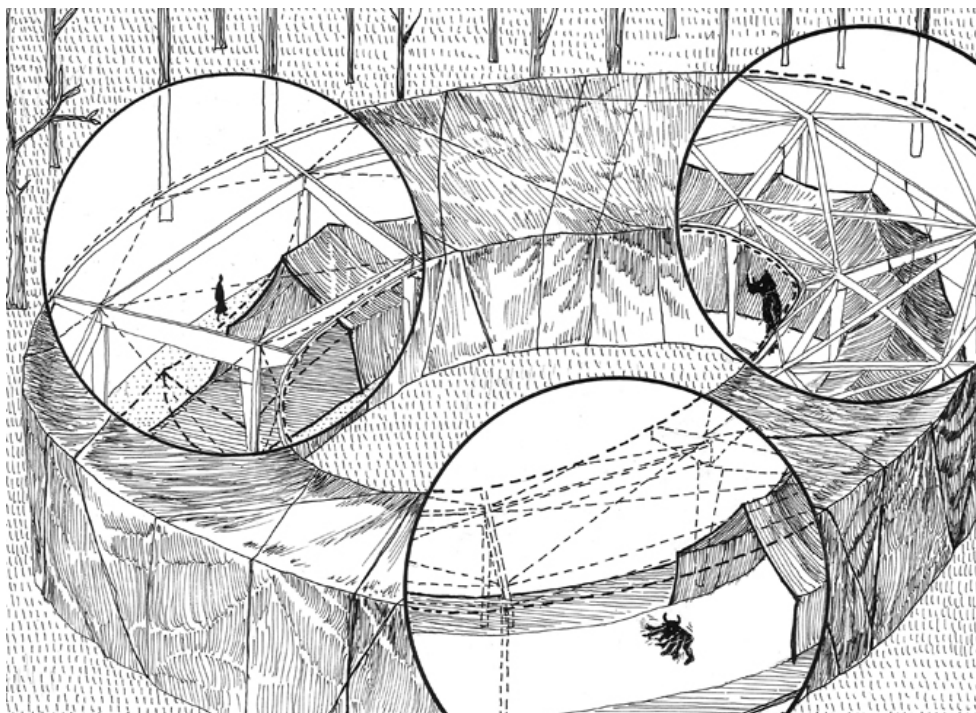
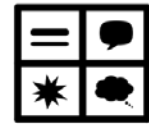


Figure 26 One shot of Doucin's *Maison de Vair* where three characters explore different environments.

constructed of textile.³⁰ The three central figures in the story experience, use and interpret every space in their own way. Their three narrative styles are considered three approaches to that space, which can also be found beside each other in architecture (emphasizing either matter, surface or structure).

A different example of how he uses comics, but then to **explain** a design is Doucins competition entry for the *Adream* competition in 2012; Hollywood.³¹ Through a combination of a model and comic Doucin shows how agricultural technologies can be used to reactivate abandoned areas. He explains step by step how an abandoned supermarket building can be transformed into an autarkic wool production firm.

The advantage of working in comics is the additional **dimension of time**, which gets closer to the spatial experience of architecture. Using narratives or cartoons, the draftsman has more freedom than one actually would in the role of an architect. Cartoons are not restricted to street level, and enable choosing uncommon, slightly confusing **angles**, playing with perspectives to introduce minor elements, which are



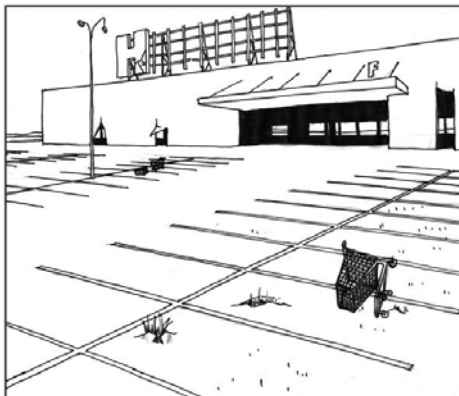
Figure 27 Model and Comics of Hollywood. Doucins Competition entry for Adream 2012

³⁰ Hoorn, M. van der (2013) Building representations and their collapsing one upon another in *Mas Context Narratives* issue 20 Chicago p 37

³¹ <http://www.adream2012.eu/en/node/434>

in reality impossible. Scenario's and stories can be drawn from different perspectives results in a wealth of detail. A danger, however, is that too many ideas are incorporated, making it too subjective or unsuitable for architecture.

Le contexte : les friches commerciales



Fin de cycle. 2 hypothèses: la Campagne ou un Eco-quartier

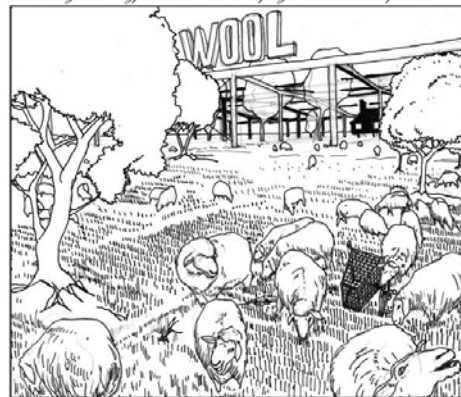


Figure 28 Doucins Hollywool. Adream competition entry: first and last page explaining the conversion of empty supermarket lots into autarkic agriculture and wool factories

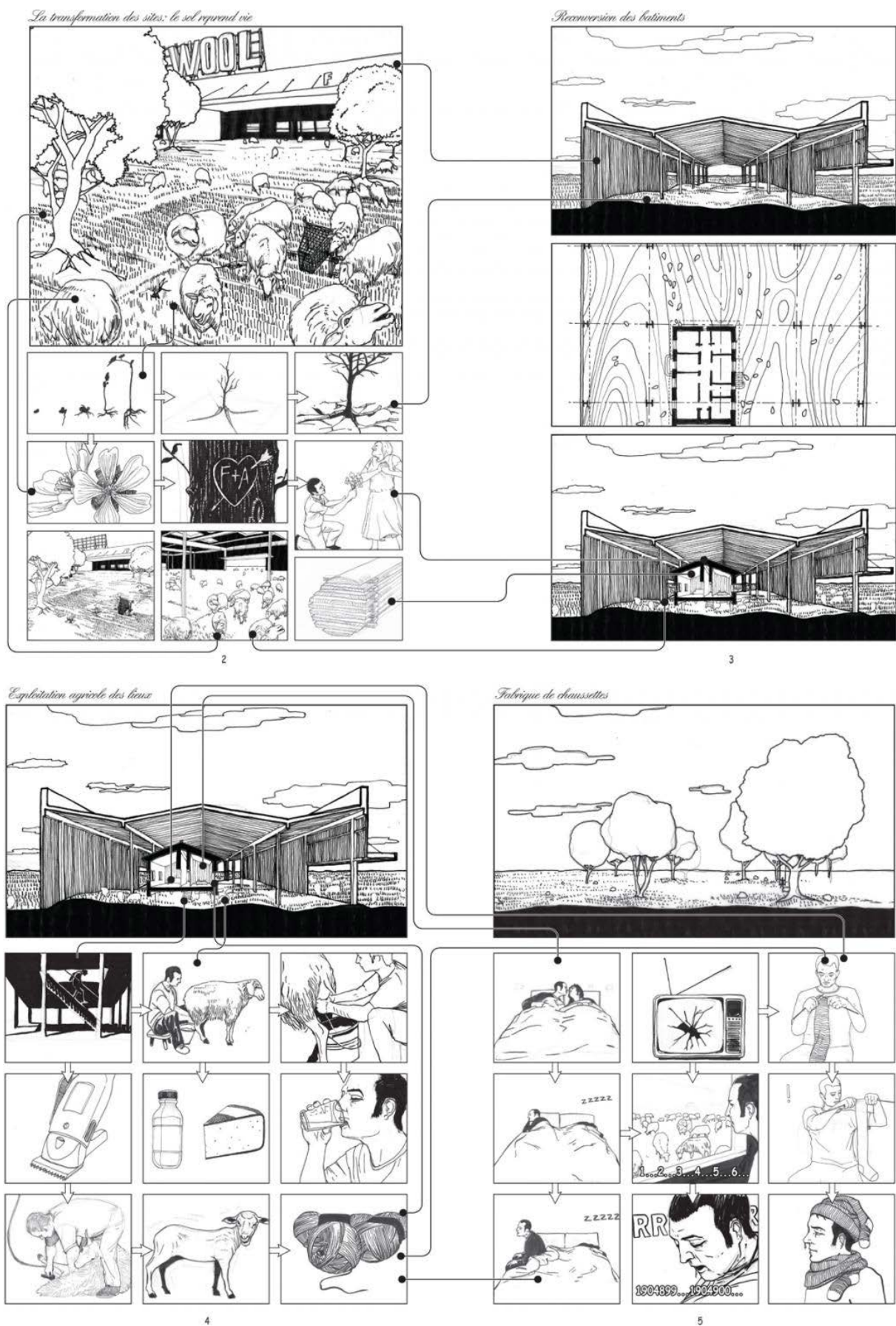


Figure 29 Doucins Hollywood. Adream competition entry: pages 2-5 explaining the conversion of empty supermarket lots into autarkic agriculture and wool factories.

Critical Photo strips

Narratives can also be used to take in a critical position or to present a new concept.³² A rarely used method of architectural criticism is through a story or a photo. **Photo Strips**, photographic stories in which architecture plays the leading role, provide a way to analyse and criticize architecture, rather than by words. A reason to use cartoon characters is firstly because the architect is not satisfied with traditional modes of representation and communication.³³ It is often a critique to the lack of vitality and emotion in sterile computer drawn images, with meaningless vector silhouettes for scale as only relation to reality. Secondly using comic strips is a way to reach a larger or different **target group**. Thirdly, it may be a way to take in a position or **stand out** from the crowd. It is not solely a method of representation,



Figure 30 Peripheriques Architects: The white silhouette is the architect himself commenting

³² Gil, I (2013) Architectural Narratives in *Mas Context Narratives* issue 20 Chicago p 8

³³ Hoorn, M. van der (2013) Building representations and their collapsing one upon another in *Mas Context Narratives* issue 20 Chicago p 34

but also a way of thinking out loud through drawings and a way to identify with a particular method or architect. It goes hand in hand with a certain type of architecture and an attempt to realize specific positions and principles. In addition it contributes to the production of architecture.

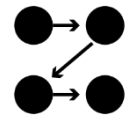
Péripheriques Architects, realized several **photo strips**, as a method to criticize themselves and add personal comments to their project documentation. It was a way to distinguish themselves from the standard anonymous way of architectural presentations.³⁴ A small white silhouette embodies the architect and is placed with a speech bubble containing the comments on renderings, photos and images of the projects. The silhouette serves as a narrator, telling a story about what can be seen. Sometimes even two architects are seen in the photos having a conversation.



Figure 31 Critical Photo strips with comments of the designers, the white silhouettes

³⁴ Hoorn, M. van der (2013) Building representations and their collapsing one upon another in *Mas Context Narratives* issue 20 Chicago p 41

The disadvantage of the method of narratives by comics is that is not suitable for every audience and laborious to make, even though it enables rapid reading later on. The advantage is that it enables framing a **series of perceptions** for the observer. It is important though to maintain a good balance between fiction and reality for it to be successful and taken serious.



Four examples of structuring methods were discussed in the past section; spoken narratives, scenarios, comics and photo strips. Imaginably there are more ways architects structure their design. Spoken narratives are elaborate, small scale and time consuming, but can provide interesting new unexpected ideas. Scenarios are an efficient and effective way to present and test the functioning of the building and are time, space and user related. Creating characters and stories connected to the building bridges the functional with the emotional part of building. For good draftsmen comics can come in handy, especially to stimulate the wacky ideas during the design process. But like for photo strips, it is very target group specific, and can dilute the message to be conveyed and risks not being taken serious. In the next section we will continue to discuss methods architects use to frame the design.

Great architecture should tell a story

-Ole Scheeren-

Framing

*In this section we introduce several ways architects convey stories through their buildings. Framing helps architects to take the observers by the hand and **engage them in their design** or thinking process. This can be during the design process, the design presentation or through the physical building itself. By “walking” people through the design or the design process they possibly perceive the end result in a more appreciated way. Firstly two ways of conveying messages are discussed through museum examples. Thereafter other working methods for transformation areas are introduced: like designating monuments, branding, or giving buildings a face. Then methods for new projects are discussed, like adding a layer, a new fairy tale or expressive experimentation. Furthermore collaboration with artists and detailing are presented, which can always be applied.*



Two ways to frame the message

Museums are one of the first examples that come to mind for experiencing narratives and connecting to the context through a framed story. Narratives in museums link and frame visitors' experiences by building bridges between past, present and future through different media.³⁵ Exhibit makers utilize the fact that we build up our identity and self-perception through stories. These stories are used as a collective language to create empathic connections between topics and visitors. The mediating strategy of museums results in the creation of so-called "narrative environments". These are environments where objects and spaces are integrated with stories of people and places as a part of the story telling process. Museums have the role of storyteller, expressing stories through communicative buildings, evocative landscapes, emotional exhibitions, providing participative, memorable experiences.

To get a better grip on how museums tell their stories, Dr. Psarra of the University College London presents two ways in which an environment can be narrative.³⁶ Firstly through semantic expression and secondly through interpretable variation.

Semantic expression implies hierarchically arranged parts of a building (complex) that correspond with a cultural content and together form a conceptual and narrative entity. This conceptual entity dominates the experience and perception of the visitor so the story can only be understood in one way. In contrast, **Interpretable variation** implies a non-rigid organization of elements that may send an open-ended message. Here perceptual differences are prioritized, allowing multiple forms of narrative expression.



³⁵ Hourston, H. L. M. S. H. (2012). *Museum Making*. : Taylor and Francis. p xx Retrieved from <http://www.ebrary.com>

³⁶ Psarra, S., 2009. *Narrative and Architecture*. The formation of space and cultural meaning. Routledge 40

A dilemma in using narratives in architecture is that shape is abstract and narratives are social. With just one story to tell, the relation between form and function can be made. Yet, if there are multiple meanings and narratives (which there are) then there is no fixed relationship between form and function. This leads to two modes in which buildings can be built, in line with semantic expression and interpretable variation: the generative mode and the conservative mode.

The conservative mode tells one concept that can be understood as a story through experiencing architecture. Furthermore, the generative mode is not based on one concept, but can be seen more as a source with rich potential for generating new concepts. Here there is a creative tension between the conceptual whole and the series of perceptions, the storyline.³⁷ This tension exists in stories, but can be made physical in architecture. Two examples of floorplans of museums show the difference between the two modes. The first floor plan follows a historical sequence, a taxonomy. The second floor plan does not follow a sequence, but uses space to generate various relationships, enabling the potential of creating multiple possible interpretations.

The first example of the Natural History Museum in London has a floor plan that follows morphological rules by physically conveying the Linnaeus' taxonomy (classification of species). It is a very **hierarchical** plan with a rigid geometrical structure and one symmetry axis, with all species' exhibits separated into own divisions. This is an example of semantic expression, conveying a clear, dominant story to the visitor, very geometric, according to one scheme, the visual relations will guide you through the **classification of Linnaeus**, following hierarchy, due to its



³⁷ Psarra, S., 2009. Narrative and Architecture. The formation of space and cultural meaning. Routledge 135
Voor meer informatie hierover lees over het Soanes museum, die volgens deze multi-interpreteerbare indeling is ontworpen.

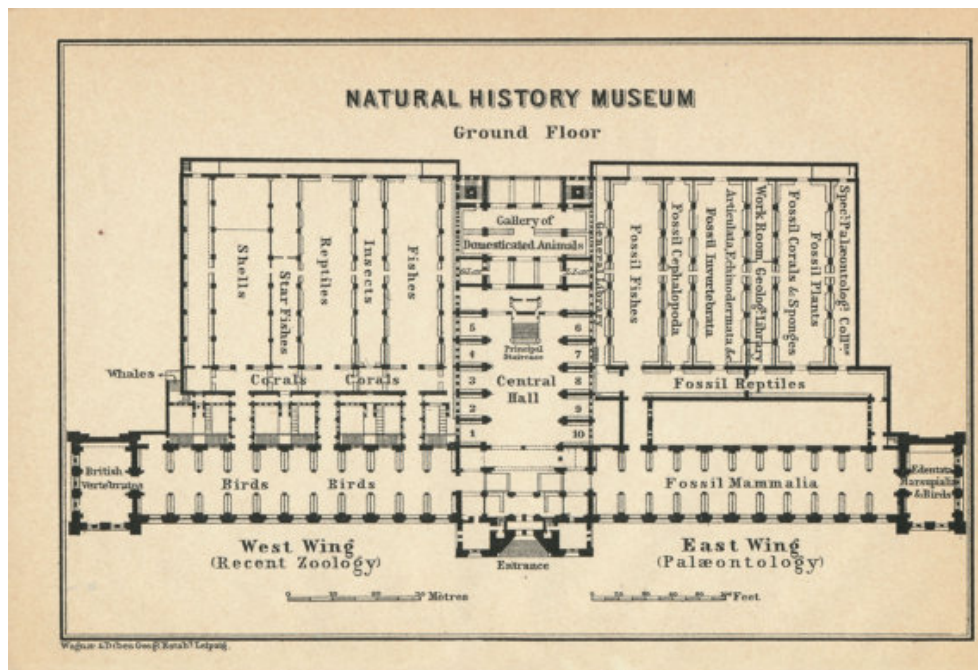


Figure 32 Floorplan of the Natural History Museum in London, organized according to the hierarchy of a taxonomical chart.

axis and setup. It is hard to interpret the building in another way, the setup of the exhibition will be too rigid for rearrangement as it seems illogical to scramble up the story. This building has a more conservative mode.

The second example is the Kelvingrove art gallery in Glasgow. This is a less hierarchical floor plan with a less dominant structure. The central hall leads to two wings for exhibitions, which are an interconnected matrix. The visitor is invited to

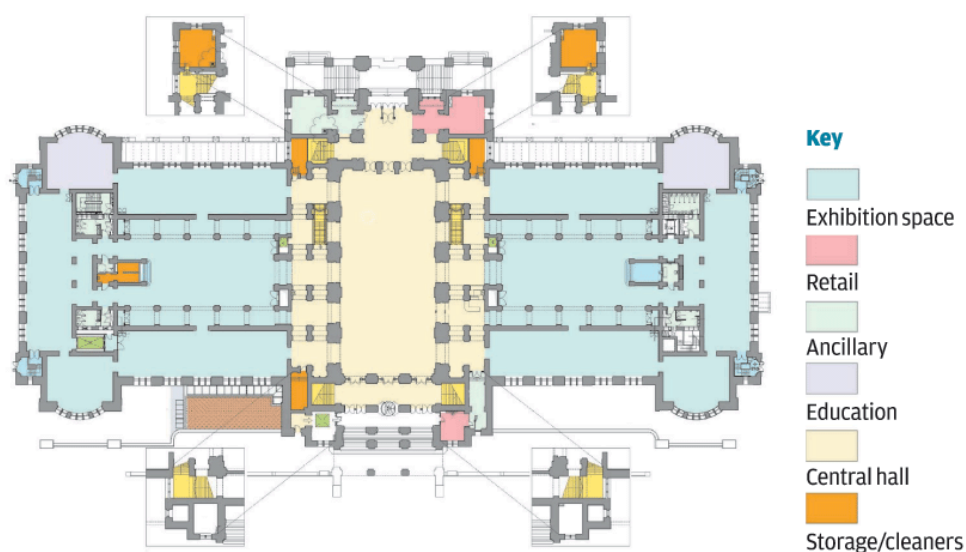


Figure 33 Kelvingrove Art Gallery Hybrid Floorplan open for interpretation less hierarchy

move around following his own route, led by own interests, enabling a new experience or series of relations to be made. Diagonals and circles can be walked, there is a blur of classification and the message is more diluted, but can be didactical in a way that new personal relations are created by the visitor. This more **hybrid** plan, creates a tension in which unlimited amount of new stories and experiences can be formed. Thus this building has a more generative mode and is an example of interpretable variation. All topics can be rearranged through the building, without problems of misunderstanding the logics.

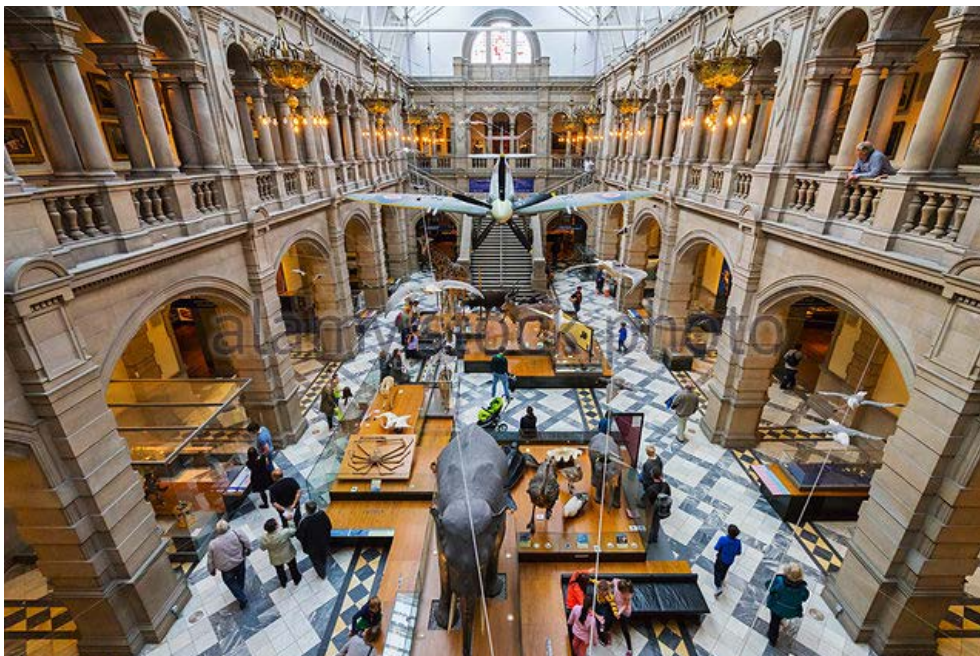


Figure 34 Kelvingrove Art Gallery View from above, main hallway with many different topics

Designating monuments

Moving on from museums towards Industrial heritage a new narrative tool appears.

The historical function of existing buildings often contains rich potential to create or rewrite a main storyline to boost redevelopment. Any building or area that has a history, tells a story. By analysing these stories, the **good ideas** that were at the origin are recognized and used again.³⁸ This is important because tagging into these stories offers continuity. Especially because in transformation of buildings or neighbourhoods you never change completely everything. Therefore it is good and necessary to blend in with the existing character, so you do not disrespect the existing, but **preserve consistency**. A neighbourhood or building has a history, connected with people's **memories**. Maintaining strong characteristics can provide an area with landmarks and justify people's memories.



Tom Bergevoet and Maarten van Tuijl discuss storytelling as a tool in their *The flexible city, solutions for a Europe in Transition* to map out the array of interests of inhabitants of urban densification or transformation areas.³⁹ By making the history and potential future of an area explicit, unique qualities can be highlighted, inviting new users to live there. Unlike new housing estates, old areas have streets, squares and buildings that have acquired a specific meaning over time. People have lived there, specific events have taken place being the site of specific commercial activities. Their definition of *Storytelling* means making the history of a neighbourhood explicit.

³⁸ <http://www.studiols.eu/> Retrieved on 3-5-2016

³⁹ Bergevoet, T., Tuijl, M. van, 2016. *The flexible city. Sustainable solutions for a Europe in transition*. Nai publishers. 84

An example where storytelling was utilized is *The white meat city*, in Copenhagen, Denmark.⁴⁰ Situated in a remote industrial area, this old slaughterhouse with a grim history needed to lure new functions to provide more continuity in the day-night rhythm of the district. The streets were dead and served as a hangout place for dodgy figures at night. Therefore, the municipality **designated** the building a **monument** and made an arty light show, which aided the creation of a new reputation for the area. Many bars and restaurants were attracted and moved in. The functions were made visible to the outside world through large light windows. A mix of features were added to the area. Very important for the story was that the role in the meat industry of the former abattoir was made visible by expressive white tiles.



Figure 35 White meat City industrial area before development

⁴⁰ Bergevoet, T., Tuijl, M. van, 2016. The flexible city. Sustainable solutions for a Europe in transition. Nai publishers. 84

This method of using narratives frames characteristic features that point literally to the past and at the same time invite to pass on the story of the site. Starting point was municipal initiative of designating it as a monument and adding artistic light. The story of the abattoir was then maintained and strengthened by choice of materials like white tiles and the windows were used to frame and showcase the functions and events that happen inside.



Figure 36 White meat city with artistic light with its new lively function

Artist Collaboration



An explicit way to show the history of an area can occur through **art**. Many architects see **collaboration with artists** as a threat, yet it can be a successful way to translate (hi)stories into physical buildings. Amsterdam Firm, Heren 5 overcame the stigma and collaborated with artists to enrich their social housing project of 72 apartments the Polderweg Oostpoort in Amsterdam.

For centuries stained glass was used in houses, public buildings and cathedrals to depict scenes that often referred to the history or a purpose of the place. Artist Stefan Glerum gave this ancient technique a modern twist and created two large stained glass windows, located at the front and at the back of the housing complex. This resulted in a Pop-Art Art-Deco inspired 20 meter high artwork showcasing an array of motifs characteristic for the history of the Polderweg area.⁴¹

Glerum started by historically interviewing the area and condensing his research into two opposite phenomena to illustrate in the artwork. Firstly pollution, symbolized by factories and World War II is depicted on one side, secondly animals and environmental elements are shown on the other. The base of the work itself is a silhouette of the 19th century Oostergasfabriek, a prominent feature of this particular part of Amsterdam. Strange characters climb up the artwork, portraying important events from the history and surroundings. The front façade window depicts a chimney turning into a pool (Sportfondsenbad), with animals from the local shelter diving in while an old plane circles around the building. The back facade window includes personal stories, depicting hidden treasures found in the local synagogue, the local fanfare and numerous World World II references.

⁴¹ <http://www.stefanglerum.com/Stained-Glass-Ymere>

This method of using narratives is explicit, but limits itself to the façade. It is more romantic and less functional, as it can be seen as ornament. If integrated well, it enhances the neighbourhood with memories, but also boosts the entrance and vertical circulation zones of usually less exiting parts apartment buildings.



Figure 37 Oostpoort with Glerums facade high artwork as a lantern of memories

Branding

Not only old stories serve as inspiration for redevelopment, but telling the story of the present can also suffice. An example of storytelling of the present on urban scale is “Made in Marxloh” in Duisburg, Germany.⁴² Marxloh had suffered changing demographical composition, shifting from a traditional German shopping district to being dominated by Turkish family businesses. The artist collective, known as *Made in Marxloh* took action to improve the image of the multicultural district.

Because of industrialisation the district was half empty, attracting many Turkish immigrants with its low housing costs. Also Turkish entrepreneurs settled and their numerous wedding dress shops started to flourish. The area offered cheap workers, cheap land prices and, importantly, a theme. The whole street slowly evolved towards the specific profile of wedding dresses and jewellery. Now the street offers 70 specialist shops and it is Europe’s most romantic street, and Germany’s wedding mile. It attracts people from all over Europe and rents are rising, while not long ago it was a no-go area.



Figure 38 Made in Marxloh branded as a romantic wedding district

⁴² Lecture in Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam March 2016

Made in Marxloh specifically focussed on positive aspects of the neighbourhood, in an effort to change its reputation. Not by ignoring the negative aspects of multiculturalism, but by emphasizing the potentials and advantages of the present. All actions taken by the artists are explicitly aimed at telling a new, different story about the neighbourhood and thereby changing the image. The idea was to give residents a **flashy brand** that they can use with pride and confidence to strengthen their new identity. The used tools, including flash mobs and temporary advertising campaigns, changed the district forever and have become part of the collective memory of the neighbourhood; powerful images of women in wedding dresses. This method of narration lies more on the social and artists spectrum, requiring social action and less architectural implementations.

Adding another Layer



Some designers add an entire new fictive story to a design. This can derive from context or from a personal association of the designer. Usually it is done to give an extra layer, ambiance or ornament to a building, which also evokes association from the observer. Starting up a brand new project, de Nobelhorst in Almere, Heren 5 was asked to create a village with a strong cohesion and also rich in water, like a Dutch polder with a little harbour.⁴³ The project was built in the field, tabula-rasa, thus the context offered little inspiration from stories of human history. Inspired by the history of harbours, fishermen towns around IJsselmeer, Heren 5 proposed to use the knitting patterns from fisherman's sweaters to ornament the facades of 50 brand new houses, barns and storehouses. Knitting patterns appeared very practically applicable in bricks to add a **second layer**.⁴⁴

The second layer here does not derive from the context, but plainly from the task of wanting to convey a certain ambiance, feel or association, by building a harbour in a polder. It seems rather blunt and falling from the sky, but the effect gives diversity and playfulness to the facades.



Figure 39 Fishermen jumpers' patterns on the facade of brand new houses in Nobelhorst, Almere

⁴³ <http://www.nobelhorst.nl/img/mediadoc/f6e7140a508425b21249e981d48c3b94/4781365.pdf>

⁴⁴ http://heren5.eu/bureau/over_heren5/sjoerd-dijs-identiteit/

This type of tool is used often, in many VINEX neighbourhoods, and can be seen as slightly kitsch. It is an easy, time efficient, tool to implement, because there is no real history to research, since it is just a pure association and own interpretation added by the architect himself. Architects tend to frown upon this type of storytelling, yet users are often more content with a building that has some reference to the past. Thus developers like to use this tool to sell their projects well. The project is not completed yet and still in process of development. Adding another layer can be seen as structuring and as framing, since the designer uses a new layer or story for his design which could lead design decisions. If that story is visible in the outcome of the design it is also seen as framing, since the user is guided towards a certain story or through a certain perspective by the design.

Building with faces

A literal example of telling stories on the façade is that of Westerstein Residence, a large modernistic building of 13 floors in the post-war neighbourhood Hoogvliet in Rotterdam. The organizers, Crimson Architectural Historians, who see users and residents as the main characters in urbanism, used stories of the inhabitants as mediator during temporary transformation of the whole area. This project focussed on the memories of occupants of the 80+ senior residence. Selected occupants were interviewed and asked to produce a photograph of a person dear to them. This led to a series of 28 stories and portraits which were monumentally placed on the semi-blind façade of the building. These portraits, usually a cropped version of a family photograph, lead to intensified exchanges between the occupants. The portraits were strongly fragmented pictures to emphasize that what one sees is subservient to what one knows, in other words memory would still have to do the job. By literally turning the building **inside out** and giving it a **face** or a voice, Crimson Historians claim to follow in the footsteps of Robert Venturi, seeing architecture as the carrier of graphical expression.⁴⁵ It is very locally specific result, aimed at compensating the lack of visual romanticism of post-war neighbourhoods. Crimson Historians emphasize that even though these environments often look sad and old, they still offer a unique form of nostalgia and memory: the stories of the first residents, who are often still alive. To soften the hard process of urban transformation and eviction, the project was taken slowly and emotionally, at the pace of the residents.



This type of narrative tool limits itself to the façade and is time consuming. It is a literal way of simply depicting faces on a facade and can be experienced less as an

⁴⁵ <http://www.proartsdesign.nl/spip.php?article266>

architectural quality, but rather as an architectural history or art project. The project was a temporary installation, and functioned as a last memory and conversation catalyst, soothing the mess, uncertainty and chaos usually experienced in an area in transition.



Figure 40 Closed facade temporarily turned inside out showcasing beloved ones of the inhabitants of post war elderly home in Hoogvliet

Fairy-tale evidence

UK based firm, Studio Weave, literally write a new narrative in the form of a **fairy tale** for every project. The projects on their website are never simply presented with a plain project description. They always contain a parallel scrollbar on the right with the accompanying fictive story that takes place on the stage set of their project.



One of many examples is their project of Freya's Cabin and Robins hut, a physical manifestation of a love story embedded in a landscape of Kielder Water and Forest Park in Northumberland, UK. With the firms proposals on two sites opposite each other on a lake, the design seeks to create evidence of an imagined fairy-tale, forming a playful and magical link across the water.

Studio weave literally considers the site a stage set against which they can tell their story. By developing a narrative about Freya and Robin, their characters have guided and informed decisions from start to end of the design process. The full story can be found in Appendix B at the back, but in short the story goes...



Figure 41 Freya's Cabin resembles the layers in a book press and refers to flowers staging a lookout point over the landscape

“Robin built himself a simple wooden structure clad in timber shingles, close to the edge of the woodland among fir trees and rocks, where he loved to climb trees and play with the woodland animals. On the other hand, Freya modelled her cabin on her flower press, with foxgloves at the entrance and an enchanted forest ceiling of twisted branches tickling each other. When she feared Robin was rowing away without her, she cried tears of gold and wrapped them around the cabin’s exterior.”⁴⁶

The story shows how the architects incorporate the qualities of the landscape, diversity of the flowers, the ferns, the view on the water and the opposite land, into the design. In a magical way the reader gets enchanted with the place and the building seems to need no questioning anymore, because it already proves to have a history, even though it is a fictive one.

This method has proven to be an effective tool for architect, client and fabricator to collaborate, because the story connects them and provides a universal understanding. The cabin has been recognised in the wood awards and European copper awards, meeting technically demanding requirements and has been chosen a popular spot for marriage proposal. Studio Weaves method is a very fresh way of thinking about architectural design. It comes closest to narratives in their purest form, as written fiction. Their portfolio, providing every project with a fictive story, is even so inspiring and worth a glance.

⁴⁶ <http://studioweave.com/projects/detail/freya-robin/>

Detailing

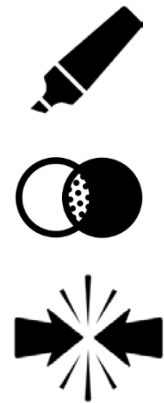
A very explicit way to make stories physical is through detailing. In details, narratives can be leading for **articulation** of a certain element, emphasising **seamlessness** or **collision** of materials. In Freya's hut the layering of wooden sheaths create the idea the building is a flower press. The thin construction bearing the load of the cabin, remind us of thin hollow stems of flowers and ferns.

Studying Carlos Scarpa's Museo di Castevecchio in Verona, Italy, teaches us how details help to tell a story. The castle and church, built by the Scaligieri family, were transformed into barracks by Napoleon, then restored in 1924, but bombed in the second world war. Scarpa redesigned the entire complex in 1957, using bold gestures of combining seemingly incongruent materials and placing air bridges that never touch the beams, cutting through walls showing brick layering. The detailing give the visitor the assumption that construction is halted, and that the objects are still in the process of making or erosion, emphasising the multiple stories attached to this building. The history of the building is told by the tension created by overlapping old and new, the hierarchy in detail, the glimpses of vistas for the understanding of the whole, serving as an architectural discovery tool.⁴⁷



Figure 42 Collision, air bridges, overlap old and new in Museo di Castevecchio, Scarpa

⁴⁷ Ambasz, Emilio. Progressive Architecture. Scarpa Reinhold Publishing, May 1981. pp 117-123.



Expressive Experimentation

Sometimes the designer does not need to tell a fictive story, but just the true story of the design process in the physical building itself. Showing the process of experimentation of materials in the final built result is also telling a story. Like Scarpas' Museu as architectural discovery tool, Alvar Aalto's Muuratsalo Experimental House is designed as an **experimental** place for testing spatial and formal relations and material selections. Eventually the building consists of an L-shaped closed space, enclosing an internal courtyard, like a 'tytä' in traditional Finnish farm houses.⁴⁸



Aalto himself describes the building as a combination of a projected architect's studio and an experimental centre for carrying out experiments. It is a place to try out techniques and materials that are not yet sufficiently well developed for practice and where the proximity of nature may offer inspiration for both form and structure. Aalto's aim was to create a kind of laboratory which would at the same time be combined with a playful approach.

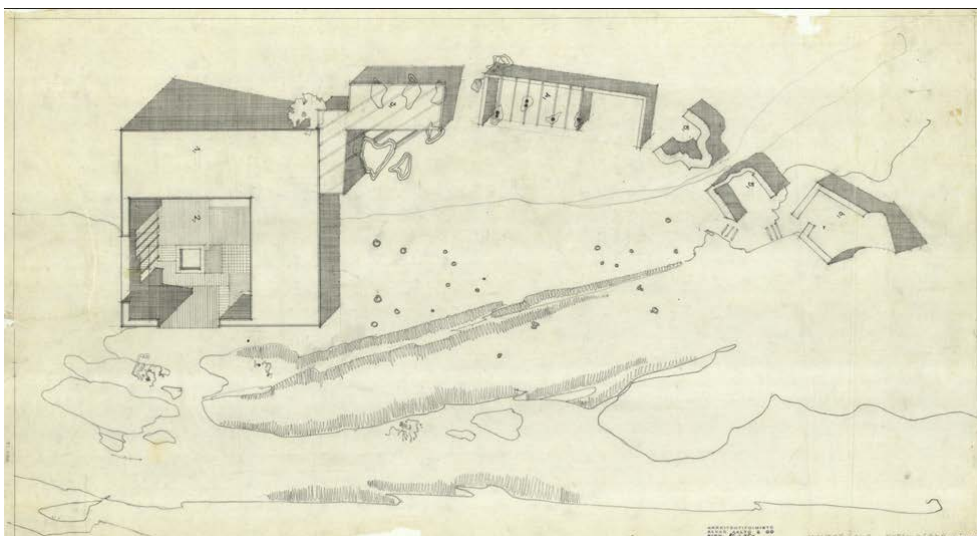


Figure 43 Layout plan and terrain of Aalto's experimental house

⁴⁸ Trencher, Michael. The Alvar Aalto Guide. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996. pp 152-15

Aalto experimented continuously in the buildings at the Experimental House, with a variety of different forms and dimensions. The location of the buildings is unrestricted and playful, profiting from the ideal environmental conditions of the site to incorporate a series of architectural experiences and rituals. Before even reaching the building, which lays on a hill on an island, the visitor would experience the journey (crossing the water), the departure, the ascendance, the arrival at location, and finally the refuge.

The facade treatment of the house changes from white-painted plastered walls on the outside to red brick in the courtyard. The walls have been divided into about 50 panels which have been finished with various different kinds of bricks and ceramic tiles. On the walls of the internal courtyard, the different sectors were tested with a variety of different finishing techniques, from brick and stone to the aesthetic effect and durability of decorative plants and mosses. He tested different ceramic materials, different types of brick pointing, different brick sizes and the effect of different surfaces. The surface of the internal courtyard has also been finished with



Figure 44 The different bricks and materials on walls and surfaces, placed within the overlaying story of a traditional Finnish Typa

different brick patterns, in contrast to the rest of the site, which was left in its natural state.

The building tells the story of this experimenting quite explicitly. Using the story of the Finnish farmhouse as an **umbrella** offered a structure to the overall design experiment. It served as a guiding theme, limiting the boundaries towards a certain traditional layout, traditional building materials, aiding design decisions.



Perhaps this story comes closest to the ideals of modernism and functionality because Aalto attempts honesty in what you see in the building expression. It is not a fictive story, it is non-fiction, the story of the design process, of the experimentation that is leading in the design and expression. Aalto has achieved expressing it in a poetic way, engaging the observer in the process, still long after being built.

Overview

The following scheme is an overview of the roles and working methods of the discussed firms.

Roles

Linking



Structuring



Framing



Structuring

Spoken narratives



Comics



Scenarios



Critical photostrips



Framing

Semantic Expression



Interpretable Variation



Monument Designation



Building Faces



Artists Collaboration



Fairy-tale Evidence



Branding



Detailing



Adding New Layers



Experimentation



Conclusion

This is the last chapter of this document and concludes the entire research. The chapter will firstly address the research aims and objectives. Secondly, this chapter will provide a reflection on the process of the research. Finally, the limitations to the research will be described and recommendations for future studies will be given.

The research aim was to gain insight into the roles narratives play in our built environment. As presented in chapter 2 narratives have three roles. Firstly, they link us with our environment, aiding creation of identities and memories. Secondly narratives play a structuring role, aiding organisation of the design process, either through forming a fictive story, or a past history. Thirdly, narratives play a framing role, aiding the conveyance of certain perspective through built environments.

Narratives consist of the narration and the narrated. Therefore narratives contain the story itself, but also the expression, the way it is being told. Integrating a story into a building can create a level of meaning and connection with the user.

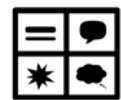
The introduction presented the failure of the great stories of romanticism opposed to rationalism. Romanticism as being too kitschy, and rationalism as lacking emotion and meaningfulness. Using narratives to combine both positive aspects of romanticism with rationalism could help design a more successful environment. This would imply creating a complete story, in which passion, feeling and rational functionality are in harmony.⁴⁹

The second research aim was to gain insight in how architectural firms use narratives in their design. Chapter 3 covers various working methods of firms,

⁴⁹ Boer, J. den, 2006. *Passie voor de stad*. Naar een nieuwe betovering van de gebouwde omgeving. Uitgeverij Synthese: Den haag



showing ways narratives can be used. Depending on the goal, the methods have different qualities to the design. For structuring the design, four firms were discussed. Heren 5, who works with **spoken narratives**, which includes qualitative interviews with focus groups, summarized in drawings, aimed at understanding the needs and demands of future residents. New unexpected ideas could be derived and various scenarios can be created to guide the design. Yet it is very time consuming and does not result in a concrete design. Ole Scheeren uses a successful method of **scenarios** to test and present his designs. By creating 5 characters and imaging the stories of their use of the building shown in renders, the functionality, meeting capacity and day-night rhythm can be tested in a playful way. A third method is used by Doucin and serves to stimulate ideas and brainstorming; **comics**. Comics can be used also to quickly and clearly illustrate stories, in addition to having the advantage of adding a time dimension to the design. Perpheriques' **Critical photo strips** are a forth method, which enable criticizing the design, in a playful, original manner. It is very target group dependent and, like comics, is susceptible to not be taken seriously or offer an overload of ideas.



Methods for narratives as framing tool are more numerous. Firstly there are two ways to convey a message through a floorplan: **semantic expression** and **interpretable variation**. The first is dominant and hierarchic and the latter is open to interpretation and possibly generates new relations, explained through experiencing a museum.



For existing buildings **monument designation** can be useful, to help the story of the building to remain visible and frame further design decisions, as was done in Copenhagen's White Meat city. This has proven to be a clear way of maintaining a story and character, yet not every building has potential monumental value.



If there is no existing story, then **adding a new layer** is a solution. Creating a new story and new associations can give the design a new meaning, like Heren 5s fishermen jumper patterns in Nobelhorst.



On the large scale of neighbourhoods sometimes emphasizing a certain layer or story, like **branding**, can help to positively transform the area, like was done in Marxloh. This task cannot be done solely by architects or urbanists, since it requires long term, complex, social projects, and is thus difficult to realize.



To help expressing the story **collaboration of artists** can be fruitful. Artists can depict on façades and windows the story of inhabitants or an area, like was done in Hoogvliet by Crimson and for the Oostpoort by Heren 5. This is a more literal way of telling a story and limits itself to the **facade** of the building, and can be placed on the more romantic side of the spectrum of adding ornament.



Mostly existing (hi)stories are used as inspiration, but Studio Weave creates completely new fictions, like **fairy-tales**, for their designs. These stories guide the design from beginning to end, aiding design decisions and adding a slightly magical touch to their projects.



Not only fictive stories, but also technical stories can be told through buildings: Alvar Aalto shows his **design experimentation** in his summerhouse. This building will carry its origination story with it forever. This type of method lies closest to rationalism, showcasing its function and scientific approach.



Last but not least a helpful tool to make stories explicit through the design is with **detailing**. Many architects do this already, trying to convey a certain character or message through either overlapping, clashing or emphasizing materials.



For the example in the introduction of the post-war neighbourhood Kattenburg several methods could be more useful than others. People could be interviewed,

applying spoken narratives. The neighbourhood already has a strong identity, so branding, seems irrelevant. Yet its identity offers many existing stories that can be used and showcased with help of artists. The neighbourhood is a copy of Amersfoort so the chance it becomes a monument is very minimal. Finally, Ole Scheerens method of testing new designs by using the stories of 5 fictional characters seems extremely useful and realistic applied in housing projects.

This thesis hopes to call awareness for the possibilities and applications of narratives for designers. If designers are more aware of their role as a storyteller, new types of analysis, strategies, decision-making, presentations and architecture could follow. Consequentially, future designs would provide a more locally oriented, culture specific addition to human wellbeing and the layering of our environment.

If narratives were to be included in the Delft building analysis and design process, the rational approach to architecture would be enriched with a meaningful factor. Narratives could provide a reason to add a certain artwork, ornament or quirkiness to a building, and help take that step beyond sheer functionality. As we have seen the narrative driven design methods to do this are numerous and have lots to offer.

Process

The research process did not run as smoothly as hoped, since firstly I needed to pin down what to regard as narratives. The fact that there is hardly any research on how to use narratives in the design process made it challenging and terrifying at moments. Many firms talk about narratives, but there is not one clear universal definition. The multiple ways of interpreting narratives and the various stakeholders like the narrator, reader and author, made the whole research complex. Also the difference between literacy and legibility, of understanding narratives, or using narratives to aid the design process, or actually conveying narratives through a design created an obstacle in defining what the research question precisely would be. This resulted in wanting to include too many different aspects of narratives, which I eventually needed to leave out to remain clear and concise in my research. These included the axis of narrativity, scale of narrativity and narrative environments. I therefore decided to clearly focus on narrative driven design methods of firms that had already built projects and that explicitly mention narratives in their work. The other topics would be put in a drawer for further research.

Further Research

Further research will need to be done to provide an evaluation of each method to consider narratives as a worthy extension of the integral plan analysis of TU Delft. Also to clearly note when, at which scale and in which situation to use which method could be useful.

Questions would include: Are the methods that architects use successful? Which are more and which are less successful and why? What are the pros and cons

regarding time, work load, technical, social, legal, ethical issues, or organization?

And How can we objectively measure the effect of narratives in the design process?

Secondly, we have researched how narratives can be used, without considering the quality of the stories themselves. A further step could be to research characteristics of successful stories. Interesting literature is written by Steve Denning on effective storytelling, (in the business realm). He introduces types of narratives like *the springboard story*, to rapidly catalyse understanding of the audience and the *anti-story*, which arises in opposition to another, trying to get things done from an audience. Denning claims “*Successful stories are told from the perspective of the protagonist in a clear, simple, brief and organized way, the story is familiar to the audience and has a degree of strangeness or incongruity for the listener, the story sparks new stories in the mind of the listener, and it must have a happy ending*”.⁵⁰

All these aspects are important when considering narratives in the design and should be researched more in depth.

Finally, an interesting further research would be how this research coincides with *Building stories*, an experimental course at the architecture faculty of the University of Berkley, which I came across shortly ago. This course was initiated in an attempt to capture and explore the knowledge capital of architectural practice through storytelling.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Denning, Steven, 2006. Effective storytelling: strategic business narrative techniques, *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 34 Iss: 1, 42 - 48

⁵¹ Heylighen, A., Martin, W.M., Cavallin, H., 2007. *Architectural engineering and design management*. Building Stories Revisited: Unlocking the knowledge capital of architectural practice Volume 3 p 65-74

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Illustrations

Cover: Own illustration: Narratives from neighbourhood diaries of Kattenburg in Amsterdam mapped out.

Figure 1: <http://www.bouwinvest.nl/beleggingen/nederland/bouwinvest-residential-fund/portfolio-highlights/brandevoort/>

Figure 2-3 : Own illustration

Figure 4: Chatman, S., 1987. Story and discourse: narrative Structure in Fiction and Film. Itaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. 26

Figure 5: <http://www.uxmatters.com/mt/archives/2015/03/understanding-context-environment-language-and-information-architecture.php>

Figure 6-7, 17: Filep, C. V., Thompson-Fawcett, M., & Rae, M. (2014). Built Narratives. Journal Of Urban Design, 19(3), 298-316

Figure 8: <http://www.nzine.co.nz/views/northlandtour.html>

Figure 9: <http://www.athenapub.com/14Amiens.htm>

Figure 10: <http://www.e-architect.co.uk/berlin/jewish-museum-building>

Figure 11: <http://zoom.nl/foto/architectuur/joods-museum-berlijn.1020168.html>

Figure 12: <https://www.studyblue.com/notes/note/n/hde3-final/deck/1694082>

Figure 13: Appleyard, D., Lynch, K., Myer, J.R., 1964. The view from the road. Joint Centre for urban studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.

Figure 14: Own illustration of <https://sites.google.com/site/innisre/home/language-signs-and-symbols>

Figure 15: Own illustration derived from <https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narratologie>

Figure 16: <https://kevinmcdougall.wordpress.com/2011/03/23/the-importance-of-narrative/>

Figure 18: <http://www.upp.cn/english/view/DlannIng/article/302737.html>

Figure 19: Own collage made of summary from Lynch, K., 1960. The image of the city, The technology press and Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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Figure 21: [http://heren5.eu/report Het Gezin in de stad](http://heren5.eu/report/Het_Gezin_in_de_stad) Retrieved 3-5-2016

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Figure 23: <http://buro-os.com/cctv/>

Figure 24: <http://buro-os.com/oma-in-beijing/>

Figure 25: Doucin: <http://www.mascontext.com/tag/melanie-van-der-hoorn/>

Figure 26-29: <http://www.adream2012.eu/en/node/434>

Figure 30-31: <http://www.mascontext.com/issues/20-narrative-winter-13/buildings-and-their-representations-collapsing-upon-one-another-architecture-in-comic-strip-form/>

Figure 32: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/207888710/1930-natural-history-museum-london>

Figure 33: Kelvingrove: <http://www.bdonline.co.uk/old-master-in-a-new-light/3073852.article>

Figure 34: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/kelvingrove-art-gallery-and-museum.html>

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Figure 41: <http://studioweave.com/projects/detail/freya-robin/>

Figure 42: <http://archiobjects.org/museo-castelvecchio-verona-italy-carlo-scarpa/>

Figure 43: <http://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/culture/exhibition-on-humanist-modernist-alvar-aalto/8668361.article>

Figure 44: <http://lasafinidadeselectivas.tumblr.com/post/18972246207/aalto-summer-house-muuratsalo-1954>

Appendix A Lynch Form Qualities for legibility

In the Image of the city, Kevin Lynch summarized the clues for a legible urban design in 10 common themes.

These refer to certain general physical characteristics. Lynch attempted to make the theoretical topic of legibility and literacy of urban environment more physical and created categories that can be of direct interest in design. These describe qualities that a designer can use and implement in design.

1. **Singularity or figure-background clarity:** sharpness of boundary (as an abrupt cessation of city development); closure (as an enclosed square); contrast of surface, form, intensity, complexity, size, use, spatial location (as a single tower, a rich decoration, a glaring sign). The contrast may be to the immediate visible surroundings, or to the observer's experience. These are the qualities that identify an element, make it remarkable, noticeable, vivid, recognizable. Observers, as their familiarity increases, seem to depend less and less on gross physical continuities to organize the whole, and to delight more and more in contrast and uniqueness which vivify the scene.



2. **Form Simplicity:** clarity and simplicity of visible form in the geometrical sense, limitation of parts as the clarity of a grid system, a rectangle, a dome). Forms of this nature are much more easily incorporated in the image, and there is evidence that observers will distort complex facts to simple forms, even at some perceptual and practical cost. When an element is not simultaneously visible as a whole, its shape may be a topological distortion of a simple form and yet be quite understandable.



3. **Continuity:** continuance of edge or surface (as in a street channel, skyline, or setback ; nearness of parts (as a cluster of buildings); repetition of rhythmic interval (as a street-corner pattern) ; similarity, analogy, or harmony of surface, form, or use (as in a common building material, repetitive pattern of bay windows, similarity of market activity, use of common signs). These are the qualities that facilitate the perception of a complex physical reality as one or as interrelated, the qualities which suggest the bestowing of single identity.



4. **Dominance:** dominance of one part over others by means of size, intensity, or interest , resulting in the reading of the whole as a principal feature with an associated cluster (as in the "Harvard Square area"). This quality, like continuity, allows the necessary simplification of the image by omission and subsumption. Physical characteristics, to the extent that they are over the threshold of attention



at all, seem to radiate their image conceptually to some degree, spreading out from a centre.

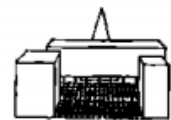
5. **Clarity of Joint:** high visibility of joints and seams (as at a major intersection, or on a sea-front); clear relation and interconnection (as of a building to its site, or of a subway station to the street above). These joints are the strategic moments of structure and should be highly perceptible.



6. **Directional Differentiation:** asymmetries, gradients, and radial references which differentiate one end from another (as on a path going uphill, away from the sea, and toward the centre); or one side from another (as with buildings fronting a park); or one compass direction from another (as by the sun - light, or by the width of north-south avenues). These qualities are heavily used in structuring on the larger scale.



7. **Visual Scope:** qualities which increase the range and penetration of vision, either actually or symbolically. These include transparencies (as with glass or buildings on stilts); overlaps (as when structures appear behind others); vistas and panoramas which increase the depth of vision (as on axial streets, broad open spaces, high views); articulating elements (foci, measuring rods, penetrating objects) which visually explain a space; concavity (as of a background hill or curving street) which exposes farther objects to view; clues which speak of an element otherwise invisible (as the sight of activity which is characteristic of a region to come, or the use of characteristic detail to hint at the proximity of another element). All these related qualities facilitate the grasping of a vast and complex whole by increasing, as it were, the efficiency of vision: its range, penetration, and resolving power.

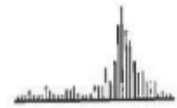


8. **Motion Awareness:** the qualities which make sensible to the observer, through both the visual and the kinaesthetic senses, his own actual or potential motion. Such are the devices which improve the clarity of slopes, curves, and interpenetrations; give the experience of motion parallax and perspective; maintain the consistency of direction or direction change; or make visible the distance interval. Since a city is sensed in motion, these qualities are fundamental, and they are used to structure and even to identify, wherever they are coherent enough to make it possible (as: "go left, then right," "at the sharp bend," or "three blocks along this street"). These qualities reinforce and develop what an observer can do to interpret direction or distance, and to sense form in motion itself. With



increasing speed, these techniques will need further development in the modern city.

9. **Time Series:** series which are sensed over time , including both simple item-by-item linkages, where one element is simply knitted to the two elements before and behind it (as in a casual sequence of detailed landmarks), and also series which are truly structured in time and thus melodic in nature (as if the landmarks would increase in intensity of form until a climax point were reached). The former (simple sequence) is very commonly used, particularly along familiar paths. Its melodic counterpart is more rarely seen, but may be most important to develop in the large, dynamic, modern metropolis. Here what would be imaged would be the developing pattern of elements, rather than the elements themselves—just as we remember melodies, not notes. In a complex environment, it might even be possible to use contrapuntal techniques: moving patterns of opposing melodies or rhythms. These are sophisticated methods, and must be consciously developed. We need fresh thought on the theory of forms which are perceived as a continuity over time, as well as on design archetypes which exhibit a melodic sequence of image elements or a formed succession of space, texture, motion, light, or silhouette.



10. **Names and Meanings:** non-physical characteristics which may enhance the imageability of an element. Names, for example, are important in crystallizing identity. They occasionally give locational clues (North Station). Naming systems (as in the alphabetizing of a street series), will also facilitate the structuring of elements. Meanings and associations, whether social, historical, functional, economic, or individual, constitute an entire realm lying beyond the physical qualities we deal with here. They strongly reinforce such suggestions toward identity or structure as may be latent in the physical form itself.

Appendix B Freya and Robins Story - Studio Weave



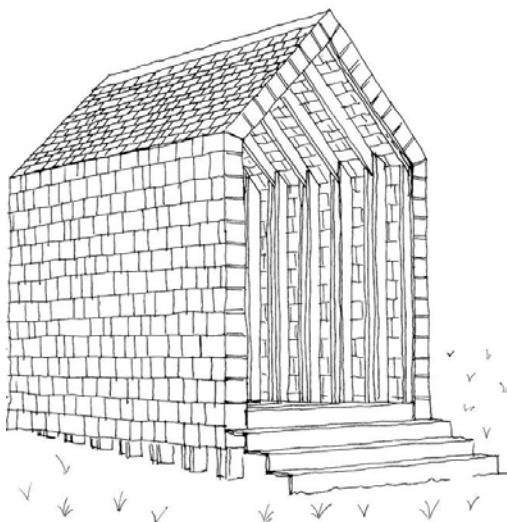
Not so long ago, not so very far from here, there lived a beautiful lady named Freya. Freya loved flowers. She loved the Wood Aven with its little strawberry flowers that smell like Christmas and protect against evil. She loved the Red Campion with their hoof-like petals stretching from the tips of magenta pods, decorated with tiny white curls. But most of all, she loved Foxgloves, tall figures dressed in soft bells, some in pink, some in white, and some spotted with the fingerprints of elves. Freya liked to think of the foxes ringing the bells to warn each other of danger and insects sheltering from the rain under their gentle parasols.

You could find Freya wandering across the moors wearing long dresses with big soft pockets full of flowers she'd collected. She carefully took her pickings home, and pressed them for keeping and to decorate everything around her.



Not so very far away from her, lived Robin. Robin lived in a wooden hut in the woodlands over the water from Freya. He spent his days walking through the woods, looking after the trees and the animals that lived in them. He liked climbing trees and building little wooden houses for the birds to lay their eggs in. He dashed about the forest playing swift and intelligent games with the deer and scrambled about helping the squirrels find their buried nuts.

Freya could see Robin across the water. She could see he was kind and careful with the trees and the animals and that he loved them as much as she loved the flowers. Mostly, he skipped about playing, but sometimes, Freya saw him standing, perhaps sadly, she thought, looking out over the water. She longed to be able to talk to him, to ask him if he was all right or what it was he was dreaming of. So one day, Freya decided to make Robin a gift of a wonderful cabin. She hoped that he would see the cabin from his wooden hut and then maybe he would make a raft or a boat and come to see it.



Over the next few weeks, Freya worked very hard to collect flowers and plants and small branches. She made a big flower press and carefully laid out her collection in the shape of a woodland, just like she imagined the one Robin lived in. For the walls, she arranged the strongest branches from thick to thin. And for the roof she made an enchanted forest ceiling with twisted branches tickling each other. She decorated the entrance with precious Foxgloves to invite the fairies in. Then she pressed everything tight together so they would be strong and crisp and last forever.

While she was making the cabin, she noticed that Robin spent more and more time dreamily looking across the water. She was thrilled for she thought he must be looking to see what she was up to. She was so excited that she went and collected as many tall, straight flowers as she could find and proudly balanced the cabin up on a thousand of the tallest straightest stems to be sure that Robin could see it properly. But Robin couldn't see it properly; he couldn't see it at all.

Freya lived on the South side of the lake, which meant that the sun's rays lit up the landscape in front of her and she could see for miles. But Robin lived on the North of the lake, so when he looked towards the South the sun got in his eyes and all he could see was a golden blur above the lapping blue lake.

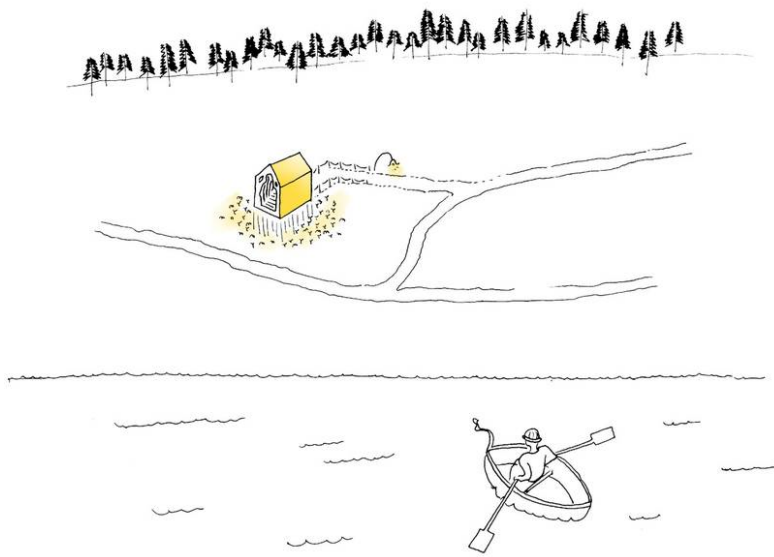
Then one morning, he untied the boat from its mooring, and set off. Freya watched expectantly as Robin rowed towards her. She felt she had never been so happy and excited in all her life. But after a short while, he seemed to be drifting away to the west and soon Freya realised that he wasn't coming her way at all, but instead, was going in completely the opposite direction.

Freya couldn't understand what she could have done so wrong. Not only did Robin not want to come and see the cabin she had made for him, he wanted to leave the lake completely. She sat down in the middle of the garden she'd planted by the cabin and began to cry. As Robin rowed further and further away, she became so upset, her tears turned into gold. She picked herself up and wrapped the cabin in the gold tears streaming from her eyes.



Meanwhile, as Robin was rowing away, he turned his head to look back at the lake he loved. He hoped everyone would be all right while he was gone. As he watched the familiar woodland slipping further and further away, knowing that he might not see his home for a long time, he noticed something glinting in the distance. He thought it must just be the sun in his eyes, but as he took one last glance, he saw it again, even brighter. He was so curious that he decided to row back and find out what it was. After all, he hadn't gone too far yet.

As he approached the glimmering, it grew brighter and brighter and he rowed with all his might. Once he was quite near the shore he could see an unusual golden cabin that looked like it had a forest inside it. Then once he was very close, he could see that next to the cabin, someone was sitting and crying with her face buried in her dress. Robin quickly tied up his boat, rushed over, and gently swept the foxgloves so they sang soothingly. Freya lifted her head at the sound and saw Robin standing there with a concerned look on his face. A little embarrassed, she brushed the tears from her eyes and they fell like gold dew onto the surrounding grass. Robin offered his hand and she unruffled herself as he pulled her up. Seeing she was all right, Robin turned to the golden cabin. He was quite enchanted by it. Freya explained that she'd made it for him. Luckily, he had climbed inside for a better look just before she said this, so she didn't see him blush!



Freya and Robin sat in the cabin all afternoon, talking about the trees and the flowers. Robin almost forgot he was planning to go to find Glimmerfell. He described to Freya, the cloud-collared mountains and the glowing ice-flowers. Freya was fascinated and asked him lots of questions he didn't know the answers to because he hadn't been there yet. Freya offered to lend Robin her flower press so he could collect some flowers to bring home. Robin said he wouldn't know how to press the flowers properly and asked whether Freya would perhaps, like to go with him. Freya said she would love to.

So at sunset, having loaded Robin's boat with some more food and Freya's flower press, they set off on their adventure.

They didn't leave very long ago, so they are still away adventuring, but if you can find them, you can see Robin's wooden hut and the golden cabin that Freya made for him, facing each other across the lake, awaiting their return.

