

# REFLECTION:

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This project has never been neutral. From the very beginning, the Anarchisphere emerged not as an abstract design challenge but as an articulation of discomfort: my own inability to reconcile the spaces I moved through with the freedoms I longed for. If the built environment is, as Murray Bookchin reminds us, a diffuse web of power that hides its origins, then my approach has been to peel back those layers – to see what resists, what persists, and what could be otherwise.<sup>1</sup>

The methodology for this project was intentionally anarchic. Entangled, iterative, sometimes messy. It did not seek linear progression but instead embraced dérives, literature webs, site observations, sketching, and speculative design as reciprocal methods.<sup>2</sup> This was not inefficiency but resistance to control; a refusal to impose singular order on a project that is about plurality, autonomy, and possibility.

And yet, the movement from theory into design was where I struggled most. Bringing such an abstract concept into a material reality always seemed to leave me lacking: either the technologies of building lagged far behind the theoretical foundations, or they risked betraying the very principles I was trying to articulate. This was where the iterative and cyclical nature of the project became both liberating and frustrating. I was often lost in how to proceed – not only in the design itself but also in the processes by which I came to it. That sense of being lost was not incidental, but integral: chaos incarnate not just in subject but in practice.

Tutor feedback often circled back to this same difficulty: to ground the work, to clarify the “how” of the design interventions without reducing the “why.” A way to acknowledge these theoretical underpinnings through the design was the site. The Binnenrotte Markt

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1 Murray Bookchin, *The Limits of the City*, 2nd rev. ed (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1991). 44-45

2 Guy Debord, ‘Theory of the Dérive and Definitions (1958)’, in *The People, Place, and Space Reader* (Routledge, 2014).

runs above the train line from Blaak to Rotterdam Central: it's a corridor of speed, surveillance, and order. Along this line, the interventions became less like utopian statements and more like experiments in disruption, reciprocity, and autonomy. Simplifying the ecological thread into reciprocity rather than broad rewilding was also a response to critique, one that sharpened rather than diluted the argument.

But these clarifications did not resolve a deeper contradiction: as an architect, I was asked to design a space that undermines the authority of the architect. Traditionally, the architect is the pinnacle of control in the built environment – one who orders, organises, and shapes. Here, my goal was to use that authority only to redistribute it, to return it to those who would inhabit the space. That paradox was often stifling. Freedom, when absolute, can paralyse. There were moments when the openness of the project, the endless possibilities, felt like the inability to do anything. I postponed my graduation because of this. I felt unsatisfied with how the theory was being represented through architectural design. I wanted to continue to engage with the contradiction between theory and design to find a representation that more fully reflected the values of the Anarchisphere. Throughout this cyclical process of feeling paralysed by frustration and willing myself to begin again, I built discipline, self-motivation, and learned to keep trying to figure out the balance rather than just pushing through with something I didn't believe in ... just to finish on time.

Looking back, this inner conflict was not just an obstacle that I had to overcome, but also a valuable lesson. It revealed the contradictions inherent in designing anarchically for autonomy and freedom. This helped me see how the inherent friction could be integrated into the method itself.

*To design anarchically is not to resolve chaos but to work with it.*

This is also where the project speaks back to the field of architecture. If architecture and the role of the architect have long been one with authority, order, and the production of capital, what happens when it resists those roles? The Anarchisphere, then, is not simply a critique of these practices but a reorientation towards an alternative vision of the role of the architect. It suggests that architecture can be a host for disobedience, for autonomy, for acts that exceed its author's control. This positions the architect less as a master builder and more as a facilitator of possibilities – an unsettling but vital shift if the discipline is to remain relevant in a world increasingly defined by inequality, privatisation, and ecological

collapse.

The value of the project does not lie in a single design outcome but in its presentation. The research academically contributes to discourses of insurgent architecture, commons theory, and anarchist spatial practices by exposing the contradictions in public space between autonomy and authority. Societally, it raises uncomfortable but necessary questions: what does it mean to have public space when “the public” itself is compromised? What does freedom look like when mediated by infrastructure, capital, and control? Its relevance and applicability lie less in the way it has manifested in this project than in the methods that brought about this outcome – *dérive*, disruption, reciprocity, ecology – tools and ways of thinking that can be applied to other contexts, adapted by other hands.

Looking towards the future, the task presented is not to tie the work into closure, a neat little package, but to sharpen its articulation: to show how the spark of the Anarchisphere can unfold over time, how it could provoke awareness, how it might decay, and how it might be re-appropriated by others. It is not a contained entity; it is an expansive and enigmatic process. The Anarchisphere, if it is to matter, cannot be finished. It must remain open to contestation, disruption, appropriation, creation, and refusal.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How can architecture provoke awareness and disrupt invisible power structures without becoming didactic or prescriptive?

How can failure, uncertainty, and struggle be understood not as setbacks, but as integral to an anarchic design methodology?