

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information		
Name	Yaying Zheng	
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Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Architecture / Spolia	
Main mentor	Paul Vermeulen	architecture design
Second mentor	Aur�lie Hachez	architecture design
Argumentation of choice of the studio	At the chair of Urban Architecture, the site in Anderlecht is the starting point of the studio. This medium-scale urban site needs us to critically read and assess the given situation with relatively rational design methods. Meanwhile, the design theme of the graduation studio is Spolia. A term from archeology, spolia are the left-overs or 'spoils' of a building, which find themselves back in a new structure. The above two points together means that we need to switch from a macro perspective to a relatively micro perspective now and then, not only from a structural and material perspective but more importantly from an emotional perspective to find an atmosphere that evokes people's emotional resonances, in another word, "Genius Loci". This kind of sensibility drew my attention, for the first time I realized that we can treat a building as the interior of the city: Adding a building thus means (re)designing an environment. Besides, the unstable status of the site attracted me the most, personally I'd be curious about whether we can bring a so-called 'quasi-autonomy' to the chaotic but vivid site through architectural intervention after thoroughly study about site.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	the Beauty of Ordinary - Renovation of three industrial buildings in Anderlecht
Goal	
Location:	Anderlecht, Brussels

The posed problem,	Since the nineteenth century, Anderlecht has evolved into a community of highly mixed programs of working and living at different scales due to the development of industry. The neighborhoods now accommodate a wide variety of programs, including residences, workshops, communal services, gardens and many other amenities. Working and living activities are interwoven together, they can feel each other in many aspects but with hardly any nuisance. Outside the street, the productivities are vivid which sets a base industrial tone for this area. However, the block which is chosen as the site is in somewhat disorder. It can be concluded to be very fragmentary and complicated in terms of relation between working and living. While the development of the two collective housing and the park resulted in the character of separation across the block, the opposite side is characterized by a former plan with various productive activities accommodated nowadays and houses with backyard workshops. Despite these vibrant activities, the district is nevertheless characterized by one of the highest unemployment rates in the Brussels-Capital region, as well as by a loose and enclaved urban fabric, notably bordered by the railway viaduct. While investigating in the site, we received complaints from the residents about the drug and criminal problem running in the neighborhood. Even during daytime, it's considered to be unsafe hanging out alone at the street especially for women and children. By observing the daily routine of the people in the collective housing in the site – Les Goujons, as well as the workers in the big manufacturer – Roter, we found that the social relationship is relatively cold and thin, maybe due to tasteless spatial organization of the contemporary buildings. Same problem posed in the urban planning. Only simply set some vacant slot as a non-purpose gardens enclosure by steel fencing, the current outdoor spaces cannot meet the needs for comfortable encounters. And as aforementioned unsafe outdoor street life, the community also has suffering from an insufficiency in terms of safe gathering indoor environment.
research questions and	Through the preliminary group study during P1 period, we have come to a conclusion that the site is neither a monofunctional industrial plot nor pure residential area, but accommodates diverse programs, which posing a co-existence status bonding living and working activities tightly, both in time and space. This co-existence is the result of consistently historical evolution, instead of coming out of thin air. Therefore, compared to the traditional definition of material remnants, the intimacy relationships between different groups of people or social networks, between body and space, is

	the real spolia in the site, which acting as an invisible string to bond people together. Although the co-existence actuality hasn't occurred strong collisions and frictions, this chaotic site is far to claim to a total balance status. Indeed, the district of the site has been coined a district of harmonic disorder, in which a sensational confrontation that maintains an inherent balance: Such complexity and diversity are worth detailed study. Therefore, in my individual research I dedicate to find out the expression of this coexistence relationship and the reasons why it could exist for such a long term. If both productive and residential life in this area can be closely linked together somehow, is there a spatial characteristic that can be translated into an architectural language? Meanwhile, can we apply this method to the new buildings would be placed in the site, to reshaping the current cold and thin social relationship in this area to the intimacy status there used to have? - How the co-existence status expresses itself in the daily life of the site? - Why this diverse environment which could have been disorder can reach a relatively harmonious status for now? - What elements contribute to a sense of place and how could they develop an architecture that is situated and affective as well as forms a deliberate intervention enabling various human activities to occur harmoniously? - Is the intimacy relationship contained in the continuous activities among people the real point which this co-existence reveal that deserved to be kept? If so, how is or could the relationship be spatialized and/or generate form? - Can we develop a spatial language to describe the experience when we go through different spaces?
design assignment in which these results.	Combining the results gained from the interviews I did about what the residents in the neighborhood need into the urban design, I decided to place a new volume consist of a market and a learning center for the locals. This place would become a new gathering point in this block. The program would replace some old buildings as a new street façade, meanwhile a new volume would be placed along the depot of Belgium sanitary company and take part of the space of the current park. This position enables the learning center and the market to keep their needs for intimacy and openness, respectively. The main target group would be the women and children, which to

	be the vulnerable groups in the neighborhood, having a stronger need for an intimacy and privacy space. Children as the young generation have the more potential to change the basic tone of the community. The program of learning center would take care their needs both physically and mentally, acting as a pedagogic space as well as a recreation place. I treat the positive relationship between living and working as the "spolia" which remains in the site. To answer the research question about how to develop a spatial language to translate the experience when we go through different spaces, I decide to use "thickness" to describe the different feelings when people go through spaces. In the graduation project I would like to juxtapose two contrasting spatial types within a single building. One is "thick space", which is architecturally dense, small scale and discrete, whereas the opposite is "thin space", which is open, large scale and indiscrete. By moving through difference spatial types, we are presented with an architecture that celebrates spatial experiences of gathering, encountering, exploration and communication. So that the purpose of reshape the cold and thin social relationship could find a way to be achieved. I wish to design a new compact spatial experience towards the architecture as Robin Evans referred to as "an architecture that recognizes passion, carnality and sociality."

Process

Method description

Before P1, the studio dedicated to assessing qualities of the site by asking the question 'what to keep'? The research period involved a field study in Brussel, the whole studio split into five sub-themes, in order to document research holistically both qualitatively and quantitatively. After we came back from the field, observations were distilled in narratives, drawings, models and even comics to reinterpret the atmosphere.

P2 Research: define co-existence status on site and find the spatial characteristics

- reinterpret the co-existence status: film montage, photography, recordings, narratives, diagramming
- explain the harmonic disorder: drawings, narratives, film montage
- sort out elements contribute to a sense of place: reading, typology analysis
- translate feelings into architectural language: diagramming, collages, narratives

P2 Design: recreate the spatial sequence which coherence with the relationship between living and working

- Concept and composition: sketching, model-making, drawing, diagrams, writing
- develop a spatial language: develop own architectural language "thick and thin space"
- Case study of markets and learning centers.

Literature and general practical preference

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- L.B. Alberti, *The Ten Books of Architecture*, translated by Leoni, Edited by Rykwert (London, 1955), book I, chapter xii. draw attention to the doors in Roman buildings.
- Mateus, A., Márquez Cecilia, F., & Levene, R. (2011). Aires Mateus. Madrid: El croquis.
- Painting: Lu Huancheng, Spring in the Han Palace, 17th Century
- Robert Kerr. *The Gentleman's House* (1864)
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- Tschumi, Bernard, "Space and Events", *Architecture and Disjunction*, MIT Press, 1994.
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- Yorgancioglu, Deyra. "Steven Holl: A Translation of Phenomenological Philosophy into the Realm of Architecture." 2004
- Zumthor, Peter. "Atmospheres: Architectural Environments, Surrounding Objects." Birkhäuser. 2006.
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Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation project is a mix-function program placed in a medium scale urban context. I organize the spatial sequence by a self-defined spatial notion of "thickness" based on the large amount of research and knowledges of phenomenology. The idea of using "thickness" to describe the space derived from the complicated relationship rooted in site between living and working. This kind of harmonic disorder relationship is the core characteristic I treasure in the site, which just share the same notion with the theme of my graduation studio – "Spolia." I really appreciate this exquisite perception of the studio towards architecture field, not only in a small interior scale, but also could be applied in the urban scale. The attitude that architects should treat architecture as the interior of the city really change my epistemology of architecture study.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

Brussels is facing a reality problem about the conflicts between productivities and daily life. Mix-used building has claimed its dominance in the city. Generally speaking it's a disordered society however a vivid life meanwhile happen under the industrial background, which present an oddly harmony. My graduation work is supposed to present with an architecture that celebrates spatial experiences of gathering, encountering, exploration and communication. So that the purpose of reshape the cold and thin social relationship could find a way to be achieved. I wish to design a new compact spatial experience towards the architecture as Robin Evans referred to as "an architecture that recognizes passion, carnality and sociality."