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	**Lara Walter**
Student number	

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore lab	
Main mentor	Janina Gosseye	Architecture and Urbanism
Second mentor	Rufus van den Ban	Architecture
Third mentor	Leeke Reinders	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Explore Lab provides the ideal setting to dive into my fascination with narrative-driven design, offering the **freedom to explore unconventional approaches** within architecture. Its emphasis on self-directed research aligns with my ambition to challenge static notions of design and uncover new possibilities for spatial development.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	**Building Narrative: The Living Archive**
Goal	
Location:	Bagijnhof/Oude Delft 211 (2611 AN, Delft)
	Traditional architectural practices prioritize functionality, efficiency, and quick problem-solving, often resulting in static and rigid spaces. This approach, although not invaluable, often does tend to overlook the evolving relationship between buildings and their inhabitants, as well as the intangible qualities that shape our experiences within them. Using Bethel, a former vacant hospital in Delft now inhabited by a community for over 50 years since squatted in 1972, as a case study, this research explores how buildings can act as co-creators of human stories. It seeks to understand

	how architecture can move beyond its static, predefined outcomes by embracing imagination, human experience and storytelling as integral parts of the design process.
research questions and	How could architecture move beyond static and predefined outcomes, using narrative to encourage engagement and leverage imagination as design tool, revealing **the potential of vacant spaces to transform into meaningful environments that evolve with human stories and needs?**
design assignment in which these result.	This project seeks to transform a vacant building into a dynamic, evolving environment that showcases how such spaces can be enriched by human stories. Rather than offering predefined solutions, the project will inspire imagination, encourage ownership, and challenge conventional views of architectural spaces. The proposal is therefore to design an immersive architectural/spatial exhibition within a vacant structure, in which the building/architecture itself is an integral part of the installation. The design will blend spatial design, storytelling, and human interaction, emphasizing the non-tangible aspects of architecture. This way visitors will explore the vacant building's latent potential, rather than its predefined goal...

Goal:
The project should generate insights into how a narrative-driven process can transform perceptions of space, offering a model for reimagining vacant structures in meaningful ways, and empower people to engage with and take ownership of their own living spaces.

Process
Method description

To address the research question, this study employs a multidisciplinary approach:

(**1)Ethnographic research** will involve detailed fieldwork at Bethel, including sketches, photographs, and notes on spatial usage, with a focus on how interactions shape the space's function and identity. **(2)Interviews** with residents will be conducted through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires with current and past inhabitants, capturing emotional and experiential narratives, and exploring the atmosphere and intangible qualities of the space. **(3)Archival** research will delve into Bethel's history through an analysis of over 5,500 photographs, documents, and personal accounts found in the communal archive, providing insights into the evolving relationship between the space and its inhabitants.

Finally, these viewpoints will be synthesized into a cohesive narrative framework. **((4.)Narrative mapping)**

Literature and general practical references

[The literature (theories or research data) and general practical experience/precedent you intend to consult.]

Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.

Bachelard, G. (1958). *The poetics of space* (M. Jolas, Trans.). Beacon Press. (Original work published 1957)

Coates, N. (2012). *Narrative architecture*. Wiley-Academy.

Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
McGuire, R. (2014). *HIER: A brief history of space*. Actar.

Perec, G. (1987). *Life: A user's manual* (David Bellos, Trans.). Harvill Press. (Original work published 1978)

Van den Bergen, M., & Vollaard, P. (2003). *Hinder en ontklontering in het werk van Frank van Klingeren*. 010 Publishers.

Reflection

1. For my graduation project, I am exploring *narrative-driven design* in architecture, with a focus on how buildings evolve through human stories and interactions. This aligns with the overarching principles of the *Master's Programme in Architecture* at TU Delft, which emphasizes an interdisciplinary and context-driven approach to architectural design. My project goes beyond the traditional focus on functionality and efficiency, exploring how spaces can be more dynamic and engaging through storytelling and human experience. This directly connects to the Dutch tradition of working in a multi-disciplinary way, as my project combines elements of architectural theory, anthropology, and community engagement.
2. In terms of my *Explore Lab* track, the laboratory's focus on research-driven exploration is an ideal platform for my unique fascination with the intersection of narrative, space, and human experience. My project fits perfectly within the Explore Lab framework, as it delves into an unconventional approach to architecture, one that looks at how vacant or repurposed spaces can transform into environments that evolve with people's needs and stories. This approach allows me to create a personalized curriculum through workshops, excursions, and lectures that can deepen my exploration of narrative in architectural design.
3. Overall, my project integrates well with the principles of the *Architecture* master track by pushing boundaries and challenging conventional design norms, while simultaneously benefiting from the flexibility and research-driven exploration offered by the *Explore Lab*. It fosters a deeper understanding of how space can be shaped by the lived experiences and evolving stories of its inhabitants.

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

Socially, my work explores how spaces can foster deeper connections and a sense of belonging, moving beyond the static, function-driven designs that often dominate conventional architecture. By focusing on how buildings transform over time through human interaction and storytelling, the project invites a broader audience to reflect on how their environments can be co-created and adapted to better suit their needs. This can have a significant impact on community-driven architecture, particularly in areas with vacant or underutilized spaces, where imaginative and narrative-driven approaches could re-engage people and help revive forgotten places.
Professionally, my project challenges traditional architectural design processes that prioritize efficiency and functionality above the emotional and experiential aspects of space. It offers an alternative approach that emphasizes engagement, imagination, and the intangible qualities of architecture, which are often overlooked in conventional practices. This could inspire new ways of thinking within the architectural profession, pushing for more inclusive, adaptive, and human-centered design processes, especially in the context of repurposing buildings for contemporary uses.
Scientifically, my project contributes to the field of architectural research by expanding the understanding of how narrative can be a tool for shaping space. It integrates theories from cultural anthropology, architectural history, and spatial theory, offering new insights into how spaces are not merely functional structures but living environments shaped by the stories and interactions of their inhabitants. By examining a real-world case study, Bethel, a former hospital turned community space, the project applies these theoretical frameworks in a practical, hands-on way, creating a bridge between abstract research and real-world applications in architecture.

In sum, my graduation work offers a fresh perspective on how architecture can move beyond predefined, static outcomes, fostering spaces that evolve with human stories and experiences. This has far-reaching implications for how we design and inhabit spaces, both within the professional field and in wider social contexts.