

TU Delft

Faculty of Architecture

Delft School of Design (DSD)

GRADUATION PLAN

Finite version for P5

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REFLECTION

DSD GRADUATION STUDIO, TU DELFT, 2012-2013

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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STUDIO

Theme	Delft School of Design (DSD)
Teachers	Andrej Radman, Huib Plomp

Argumentation of choice of the studio

The architectural thinking studio allows for a wider and more theoretical research on architecture and the built environment. The reciprocal process between theory and design as a practice generates a 'rich' architectural graduation project.

Theme	The Assignifying Affordance of Assemblage
Location	Berlin, Museum island
Title of graduation project	Monument to the Undetermined

GRADUATION PLAN

PRODUCT	4
PROCESS	5
STUDIO PLANNING	6
REFLECTION	7
LITERATURE AND GENERAL PRACTICAL REFERENCE	9
PLANNING	10

PRODUCT

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In this time of scientific progression and groundbreaking discoveries in the realm of the environment, sociology and neurology, both architectural theory and practice find themselves in a self-determined, ignorant position. In our present time, with its complex systems and highly dynamic progression, architecture is incompetent of adapting nowadays needs of creating spaces. Today's (popular) architecture seems to strive to create icons as city- and / or institutional branding, leaving far behind buildings designed for a temporal function. On the other hand, the progression of technology since modernity and the industrial revolution leaves us, with exceptions, 'alien' structures that men find hard to dwell and inhabit.

To engage in the question how to 'spatialize' the globalized world, it is important to 'construct' models as a way to understand the world. In this time of technological progression, computer models and artificial intelligence help us to 'render' the world and give us answers to practical questions. However, the same technology-based models are unable to solve our irrational human needs such as emotion, memory, subjectivity and imagination. The missing 'link' is the 'mapping' of subjectivity, that 'touches' the realm of memory and identity, a link that connects past, present and future.

4

Visions on architecture and its objectives lose ground in contemporary society (through market models and short-term profit models). Whereas buildings for reuse, without a clear program, seem to be timeless and capable of adapting different functions over time. Why can't we build "new" monuments. Thomas Mayne pinpoints this by saying "What is ironic in a time of unprecedented advancement in scientific and technological inventions is the reactionary and superficial appropriation of historical forms. The problem here is not just one of form, but of the tendency for this architecture to be acquiescent to the day-to-day demands of utility and economics. . . . This romanticising of an earlier time as 'simpler,' fails to grasp that it is in the realisation of complexity and contradiction that we begin to find our way out of the psychological malaise we're currently suffering."(1)

Research question: How to intervene in the built environment, to unite nowadays demands, together with the collective, subjective demands, creating a 'modern' monument.

GOAL

The goal of this design proposal is to design a 'Modern Monument' which addresses issues of past, future, present, local and global. In doing so, this project becomes the a new space and place for architecture as it unifies the formerly isolated layers of the city.

The function of a school for architecture is raising the question how to educate architects and those interested in the built metropolitan environment. The buildings itself has to create an awareness of the wider metropolitan field , creating a space of (undertermined) possibilities. The question of how to deal with the past, the present and the future (time) and local, regional and global factors (space), combined with the complexity of metropolitan life, asks for a different method of developing an architectural project.

The design of a school for architecture, tries to give an answer to the question what a 'monument' today 'can be'.

5

PROCESS

METHOD DESCRIPTION

By seeing the past as virtual, the past becomes real. (2) The past, being not 'actual', is in the opposite state: the 'de-actual'. Transferring the notion of time into the virtual, the past becomes something that is, rather than something that was. According to Henri Bergson and Gilles Deleuze, time is a living concept that we interact with. (3) With this notion, architects can construct a mapping of experience, memory and movement, and this puts them in a position to be more critical and take a 'imaginative' stance on the topics of the future.

The 'activistic' architects and urbanists Rem Koolhaas, O.M. Ungers and Guy Debord used a radical mapping of subjectivity's and context, that reveal a different perception

of the past, present and future in time and space. Their use of the “virtual” plays a decisive role in making grounded discussions in developing their architectural or urban critique and proposals. Their method of research open up new ways of seeing space and even more important new ways of intervening in the built environment, escaping the paradigm of regressive or progressive architecture. Their method strengthens the position of the architect by creating new scenario’s.

The combination of the mappings of these architects, together with the philosophical writings of Deleuze and followers, are the methods of research and become the framework for their design projects.

With the design for a monument to be determined, this method is further elaborated by flattening ontologically past, present, future, and local, regional and global, compressed into one object. The working on these scales (space) and time creates a design strategy that is non-linear. Today’s paradigm of (western) architectural design starts with program and the site, and ends with space and materialization. The design method for this graduation project is testing ways of stepping out of this linear process, and instead work in a cloud of input, derived from mapping, creating one final object.

6

REFLECTION

RELEVANCE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The research focused from the beginning on space and time in the realm of Berlin. Research on literature about architecture, built and unbuilt, destroyed or future plans together created a ‘virtual’ map of Berlin, revealing formerly isolated projects and plans compressed into one image. The mapping of what was really going on, instead of what it is, around the chosen site, delivered important input for design strategies.

Instead of the actual historical surroundings, ‘ghosts’ of project opened up new ways of seeing and interpreting the site. Knowledge taken from architects and urbanist that are destroyed or still on the drawing table, all together can be used. In this way the design is not working in the now, but creating a continuity between past present and future, making it easier to adapt for further progression in and around the building itself.

It was important for the progress of the design to stay in a constant dialogue between on the one hand research and production, and on the other hand the small and bigger scale, flattening the boundary between the actual and the virtual.

The relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

This approach is close to the theme of the studio, the Assignifying Affordance of Assemblage. The paradigm of the studio for structuring is the assemblage of the “parts” constituting the whole. Structuring these parts means to start from the middle, to leave the modern paradigm of architecture as a linear process. Structuring these parts means to map relations and differences, revealing new insights in the studied objects and space. The breaking between the actual and virtual, generates a relieving spirit to study objects, and reopen and reconsider existing paradigms on architecture from the postmodern era. Instead of the cartesian, dialectic approach, the parts create a frame of heterogeneous parts.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT.

7

The opposing ‘powers’ of on the one hand the fast progression and technical inventions, and on the other hand the slow, subjective memory of the collective, seem not to merge in architectural design. It is necessary for architecture to take a stance in contemporary society by unifying these formerly isolated phenomenons and therefore constructing the future city, uniting past, present and future.

Mayne exemplifies this by saying that with “the acceleration of telecommunication, as well as the mutation of lifestyles that this implies, have replaced traditional communities founded on the physical proximity by way of multiple interactions in a network. [As a result,] in the urban space, it is more and more difficult to find a satisfying articulation between a “public” and “private” sphere, like that between city and country, center and periphery.”(5) The classic notions of architecture and urbanism, are unable to keep up with the pace of our time. It is unavoidable to radically change our methods of research on, and our interaction with reality, to translate todays questions into

sustainable answers. “To overcome this crisis, Mayne affirms the necessity of abandoning conventional ideas about urbanism, which tend toward a simple and homogenous order, and to take account of the complexity of the actual urban experience, which can only be understood in terms of the relations between heterogeneous experiences.”(6)

According to Bergson and Deleuze, time is a living concept that we interact with. The meaning, importance and actuality of history is a concept we have the potentiality to change. In this time of rationalising, it is important to work on a more critical position, towards the subjectivity of the virtual and thus history, “in which man now appears destined not only to ‘react’ but to ‘act’.” This can construct “our search for the condition – the ‘structure of experience’” - to be more critical and take a ‘imaginative’ stance on the topics of the future. The architect can be at the position to reconsider, reinterpret, re-imagine, the un-actualised virtuality’s.

In this way architectural form can be seen as a result of time: past, present and future. The paradigm of form follows function, or the function that creates the site are in this design process turned upside down. It is the site that creates the form, and the form the program and the function. With the followed method the layers of the project, the site, versus building, versus program configure themselves to the logic of stable versus meta-stable versus unstable.

CONCLUSION

The different stages of the design process generated various input enabling the creation of the object as a whole. During the starting phase of the design, different from the proposed method of starting in the middle, a linear design method that students are familiar with. To escape the idea of starting with the big scale seems counter intuitive. Nevertheless the different method of starting with the bigger scale, taking into account the virtual of the site, generated a starting point unthinkable without the used method of mapping and research.

The moment when creating the object from “inside out” took the design out of the linear structuring of the object. The process of creative structuring could have been more defined and planned retrospectively. Structuring phases and putting emphasis on different aspect will help structuring the parts more coherent. Nonetheless the final object was before hand not imaginable. The different scales, from urban to detail, the constant reciprocal dialogue with the research, created a range of tools to use from beginning to end during the design process.

FURTHER RESEARCH

In the world of the built environment, taking into account the investors, developers, users and contractors, is at first hand not adapted to create a building with an undetermined function. At the other hand, the current state of affairs asked for new methods of developing new buildings, and or the reuse of buildings. Especially the ever faster change of use as an outcome of more and more differentiation labour market, asks for structures adapting heterogeneous users, highly dynamic in the current time. Further research has to be done, especially in the field of developing strategies of creating such object. The assemblage of investors, developers, designers can only proof if the proposed design strategy can be a model to built. Answering this question is only the very first phase of the object. With the progression of time, the decay and transformation of the building and it's use, will have an undetermined outcome.

Notes

1. Thomas Mayne is architect of the USA based architecture firm Morphosis. Thomas Mayne, "Connected Isolation", Quoted from Manola Antonioli 'Virtual Architecture' Trans. Julie-Françoise Kruidenier and Peter Gaffney in Peter Gaffney (Ed) *The Force of the Virtual: Deleuze, Science, and Philosophy*.
2. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 1980)
3. Hauptmann, 'The Past which Is: The Present that Was: Benjamin and the Bergson trajectory' pp. 353
4. Manola Antonioli 'Virtual Architecture' pp. 179
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.

literature and general practical preference

Literature:

- Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2011)
- Peter Gaffney (Ed) *The Force of the Virtual: Deleuze, Science, and Philosophy*.
- Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Chris Turner, "Material World," *New Formations* 8 (summer 1989)
- Brian Eno, *One Year with Swollen Appendices*, *Brian Eno's Diary* (London: 1996, Faber and Faber Ltd.)
- Reinhold Martin, *Utopia's Ghost* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010)
- Peter Lang and William Menking, *Superstudio, Life Without Objects* (London: Skira, 2003)
- Arie Graafland and Deborah Hauptmann (eds), *Cities in Transition* (Delft: 010 Publishers, 2001)
- David Frankel (ed), *Mies in Berlin* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2001)
- Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault (eds), *Anxious Modernism. Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002)
- Oswald Matthias Ungers et al., *Cities within the city. Proposals by the Sommer Akademie for Berlin* in "Lotus international", 1978, No. 19
- Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *Small, Medium, Large, Extra-large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture*. (Köln, 1997, Taschen)
- Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999)
- Libera Andreotti and Xavier Costa (eds) *Situationists: art, politics, urbanism* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 1996)
- Roberto Gargiani, Rem Koolhaas / OMA: *The construction of Merveilles* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2008)
- Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: The Principles of Heterotopia" (1984)

Objects:

- Berliner Schloss, Berlin – Andreas Schütler (18th century) [institution]
- Bauakademie, Berlin – Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1836) [university]
- Palast der Republik, Berlin - Heinz Graffunder (1976) [institution, cultural centre]
- Fun Palace, London – Cedric Price (1961) [education, cultural centre]
- Fakultät Architektur TU, Berlin – Bernhard Hermkes (1968) [university]
- Berghain, Berlin – Unknown architect, reuse of former power station (1954) [industrial, cultural centre]

STUDIO PLANNING,
MSC 3 SEMESTER (20 WEEKS)

week 1.1 – 1.5

individual: research theory
collective: theory, group reading / viewing

week 1.6

individual: research theory, presentation + products for P1
collective: theory, group viewing

week 1.7

Venice Workshop, informal P1 presentation

week 1.8

individual: draft graduation plan
collective: first set up group research

week 1.9

P1 presentation, compulsory progress review

week 1.10

individual: research theory
collective: theory, group reading

week 2.1

individual: research theory
collective: theory, group viewing

week 2.2

individual: contextual research
collective: theory, group reading

week 2.3

individual: contextual research and conclusions (map)
collective: theory, group reading

10

week 2.4

individual: develop design principles
collective: theory, group viewing

week 2.5

hand-in concept reflection essay
individual: preliminary design

week 2.6

dress rehearsal P2
individual: preliminary design, building technology principles

- Christmas holidays -

week 2.7

producing requirements P2 presentation

week 2.8

P2 presentation, formal assessment
reflection essay, graduation plan, group research (booklet)
preliminary design; siteplan 1:2000, floorplans, sections, elevations 1:500, building technology draft

week 2.9

individual: reflection on feedback P2
collective: finalise group research produce booklet

week 2.10

individual: collect digital drawing material etc.
collective: hand-in research booklet

STUDIO PLANNING,
MSC 4 SEMESTER (20 WEEKS)

- week 3.1 – 3.2
programatic spatial translation
- week 3.3 – 3.4
volumetric studies
construction studies
- week 3.5
create drawing
materialisation studies
- week 3.6 – 3.7
detailing
- week 3.8
first complete design (drawings + models)
make presentation (posters + screen + map)
- week 3.9 – 3.10
P3 presentation, compulsory progress review
reflection and elaboration of the design after feedback
reflection and elaboration of the building technology after feedback
- week 4.1
drawing for design
drawing for building technology (integration of architecture and building technology)
- week 4.2
finalise design
finalise building technology
- 11 week 4.3
make presentation (posters + screen + models)
- week 4.4 – 4.5
P4 presentation, formal assessment
reflection and elaboration of the design after feedback
reflection and elaboration of the building technology after feedback
- week 4.6
work on models (scales and fragments to be determined)
work on final map (urban intervention + research)
- week 4.7
work on models
work on final map
- week 4.8
finalise models + map
finalise drawings
finalise building technology
- week 4.9
finalise presentation
finalise booklet
print posters + booklet
- week 4.10 – 4.11
P5 Public final presentation