

ONWARD EDGES

Logbook

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Foreword

This logbook is the accumulation of one year of graduating at the Urban Architecture studio. It is a studio with many free floating open-ended questions asked by thirty or so students about architecture, which lead to diverse imaginaries and narratives. As divergent these might be, they are all gathered around a fascination for the site. This research picks the fruits of continual encounters with my studio-peers and their narratives, consider this the first manifestation of entanglement. I'm proud to be tangled up in this and the collective exhibitions, discussions and excursions attest to the power of encounter, assembly and entanglement, which is the story thread guiding this project.

Every story has a start. This one starts in overlooked territory, escaping most of the lines of thought and intention of post-industrial Antwerp. A complex of obsolete factories, which only have been reclaimed into human life-worlds since 2016. Structures built for the self-contained production lines of capitalist industry seem to be ideal for sheltering a group of pioneers from the rest of Antwerp locked into an

ongoing competition for progress. Here everything ends up that needs to be hidden, which does not pertain to the hegemonic progress narrative; There is material waste everywhere, for the pioneers to transform to gift. This translation of gift to waste requires new ways of looking, freedom, experimentation and breaking of the common sense rules of contemporary economy. The result is a pleasant surprise of unfolding, self-built architectures ever shifting and changing, a polyphonic orchestra of human excitement and attachment.

“Here everything ends up that needs to be hidden, which does not pertain to the hegemonic progress narrative; There is material waste everywhere, for the pioneers to transform to gift.”

However, this is only one part of the start, this project is not about independent entities, it is about relationships. A few kilometres north, we walked the perimeter of the site in a patchy landscape of historical conjunctures, attempting to Find the River. Between the ruins of what had been the largest oil dock in the twenties, an imprisoned Scheldt and an eroding Hoboken, upon layers of anthropogenic earth movements and trash dumps, an akin,

twin narrative welcomed us. Its protagonists are also dedicated pioneers, however wordless, its architectures equally vibrant and exciting, but consisting of leaves, branches, fungal networks and cow dung. Translating waste to gift, surviving in the detritus of capitalism, is not just a human feat. This project is a plea for opening our eyes to non-human stories. Moreover, it is this analogy that redefined ecology, to more than a science researching non-human life, but a mode of thinking to help understand human life better in the face of a troubled reality.

I would revisit these patches in the coming year on multiple occasions. I've become acquainted with the assemblages of agents at play. I would become an agent myself, contributing to its landscape, be it diminutive in the light of relentless efforts of both communities. Both the Blikfabriek and Hobokense Polder I would like to thank for inviting me into their personal spaces and showing me the absurdity of researching architecture as independent themes and threads of thought. In particular Fokke, who helped me construct my own translatable, entangled objects. I write this perhaps as a warning to anyone read-



Maakfabriek during the first site visit

ing the catalogue. Polyphonous narratives weave in and out, encounters could be violent, antagonistic, though also at times harmonic and sensical. This was a rather messy undertaking.

Secondly, it will not provide definitive answers and scalable results. I adhere to Anna Tsing's remark, that there is no one way forward to navigate troubled times, but for now we must stay vigilant and responsive to narratives which could inform us. Architectural design is in the end not an optimization of Science data and technology, it is never perfect, at best a good balance between all the lives that might depend on it. So, this is an expedition into ecologist thinking in architectural design, I hope to provide reason for discussion and encounter. It is open-ended.

Lastly, the ambition for the logbook is to be enjoyable. It is a collection of stories, it is an explanation for my design, it is in extension a reasoning for my current position as an architect. Taking position in architecture is an uneasy exercise for me. If it does not fall into the dictates of Capitalism, it easily comes across as radical. If it doesn't follow the globalised, industrial production lines of building material, it is unrealistic. However, in the current uncertainty and the falling apart of dreams of progress, I trust for now the most context-conscious thing to do.



Oil barrel photographed at the first encounter with Hobokense Polder

“Taking position in architecture is an uneasy exercise for me. If it does not fall into the dictates of Capitalism, it easily comes across as radical.”



The graduation studio in Marseille

P1

I really enjoyed the P1-period. My explorative, active nature was well-balanced by the more structured personalities in the group. Leading to I think to a very sleek and organised product (something I could never achieve on my own). Besides, we managed to keep stress to a minimum and that is an achievement on its own, at least for me. I think P1 was about gathering information and transforming it into something communicative. If we define this as a research period, I would say the latter was rather overrepresented in terms of the amount of the time spent. Naturally in a group, the product is open for discussion, while the gathering of information is an individual task. Nevertheless, I think we could draw some profound conclusions. Examining the narrative of Hoboken, we see a decline in the historic periphery's influence (Hoboken) as a result of globalizing forces. Many peripheral functions are now scattered around the world, making the location of Hoboken less relevant. Although Antwerp continues to be a centre, Hoboken is no longer its periphery.

In reaction to the pretty assistant comment. Though, I don't necessarily feel the need to add to this discussion as a male, I believe it was not a question of gender, but language that defined the roles in the group. In retrospect, Barten and I of course had an advantage being able to read most of the sources and communicating with Hobokenaren and this I have realised only in hindsight. That being said, there has always been an open dialogue over the tasks we preformed, I don't think anyone felt excluded from decision-making.

“Although Antwerp continues to be a centre, Hoboken is no longer its periphery.”



Still of the performance for the P1 exhibition.



Still at "The community embraced this spontaneous nature and fought for its preservation, arguing that it was the last piece of nature for the Hobokenaren."

A tidal river – full story script

The fertile soil of the Scheldt floodplains and the natural inlet of the Kille, led to the settlement of Hoboken. The Kille provided a place for ships to dock, while the rise on which the historic village centre stands offered safety from floods.

As early as 1200, mention is made of the dyke and polder, which the Hobokenaren used to grow crops such as hay, flax, oats and vegetables. On the higher grounds with poor sandy soils, sheep and pig farming gradually developed. The nickname of Hobokenaren 'Strontboeren' is derived from the fact that human faeces from Antwerp were transported by special barge to fertilise their fields and in return, vegetables were sold to the people of Antwerp.

“The nickname of Hobokenaren ‘Strontboeren’ is derived from the fact that human faeces from Antwerp were transported by special barge to fertilise their fields and in return, vegetables were sold to the people of Antwerp.”

The first archeological evidence of a human settlement in Hoboken is a letter to the bishop from our lady's church written in 1135.

Shortly after, the parish became a site for pilgrimage. Popular belief speaks of the famous Black God, a crucifix statue that washed ashore at the Kille. The statue was retrieved by the Parish and placed in a chapel. Remarkably, it disappeared at least twice, only to reappear in the same location miraculously.

In the 16th century the Flemish Renaissance brought wealth to the merchants of Antwerp, leading them to construct lavish countryside estates in Hoboken. At its peak, Hoboken had at least 17 of these estates, featuring ornamental gardens, while also maintaining operations from existing farms.

However, in 1874, the Cockerill company, a key figure in Belgium's industrial development, settled in Hoboken and significantly transformed the village. Originally from Manchester, they established a multitude of industries in Wallonia before moving to Antwerp to start a shipyard. As expansion opportunities were limited in Antwerp, they relocated to Hoboken, utilising the natural inlet of the previously mentioned Kille for their first dry dock, marking the start of a period in which more than 700 ships were produced for clients all over the world.

Their arrival sparked other industrialists, mainly from Germany, to establish busi-

nesses in Hoboken. Notably, 'De Wol' settled in 1885, followed by 'De Zilver' in 1887, both located south adjacent to the shipyard.



De Kille inlet, archival imagery

According to today's standards, the working conditions in these factories were awful, with child labour and numerous premature deaths occurring on-site. Labourers were housed in projects on former estate lands, with Ferdinand Moretus being the first to sell his property.

The population grew quickly from 3,000 to 16,000 inhabitants from 1873 till 1910. Replacing all but three of the estates by housing for the factory workers.

The arrival of this new influx of people contributed to a vibrant community life after work hours. Fanfares, vélocclubs and other associations started developing. Pubs named after famous ships, built by the shipyard, like Moanda and Vera Cruz, were an integral part in the lives of Hoboken's residents. These pubs were strategically located along Kapelstraat, connecting the industries to the centre of Hoboken.

Industries took off and small businesses built factories all over the city, one of the sites being the now Blikfabriek, where a collection of companies such as Schuybroek settled.

One aforementioned industry that stood out, also in a literal sense, was 'De Zilver,' which constructed a 125-metre-tall chimney and engaged in various metallurgical activities. Their influence extended beyond Belgium, as they extracted valuable metals and radioactive substances from Congo. These intensive industrial activities came at a cost: pollution spread throughout Hoboken, and the Congolese workers faced incredibly hazardous and unhealthy working conditions, inextricably

linking these developments to Belgium's problematic colonial history. Alongside these developments, another industry was setting up in the north of Hoboken. After the petroleum storage of Antwerp burned down in 1889, thereby killing 300 people, Antwerp, under royal decree, annexed a part of Hoboken and moved the industry outside the city to Petroleum Zuid. While the facility was just completed in 1904 a three-day fire broke out damaging the installations severely.

Rebuilding began in 1906 and in 1909 a train yard was built to accommodate the export of oil by rail and truck throughout Belgium and Europe. The site quickly became the main petroleum port of Europe. In 1910, more than 200 million litres of oil were processed at the site. A portion of this oil originated from Eastern Europe, while half came from American sources, with the American Petroleum Company being the largest operator at the site.

In the First World War Petroleum Zuid was set alight and again damaged by fire. After the war, Petroleum Zuid quickly recovered and incited the development of other related industries, including CROWN, which began manufacturing oil barrels. At its peak in 1929, there were 233 petroleum tanks on site.

Yet, in 1930, a devastating flood hit the site. Recovery from this disaster was challenging, additionally competition from other ports in Europe became increasingly fierce, leading to a period of stagnation.

“Yet, in 1930, a devastating flood hit the site.”

The final blow came from a German bomb during World War II. By 1953, only 10% of the oil processed in Antwerp passed through Petroleum Zuid. In the 1990s, they began dismantling the obsolete tanks.

Unlike Petroleum Zuid, Metallurgie Hoboken continued its rapid growth. It still relied heavily on Congolese resources, which continued through post-colonial structures after Congolese independence. This was at a time when most other industries had declined in Hoboken.

This growth in the metal industry sparked a second movement of immigration to Hoboken, mainly from Northern Africa. Over time, their culture began to take root in the area. The pastor of Moretusburg secured a building permit for a mosque, which became the first of its kind in Belgium, realised through the efforts of the community. Nowadays more than half of Hoboken's demographic has a family history tied to the immigration of this period.

Meanwhile, the Polder, losing its importance in industrial Hoboken, had become dotted by dump places of household and industrial waste. Moreover, to allow new plans for city expansion, three million cubic metres of soil from excavation works of the ring road, household waste and debris were disposed of on the Polder. After Braem's modernist housing development plan was rejected, private investors and developers came with a new plan which also included housing units, amenities and sport facilities, known as Polderstad.

In the meantime, many industries that settled at the end of the 19th century began to shut their doors. The closure of Cockerill in 1982 was particularly devastating for the community.

Yet, only the first two phases of the plan were realised due to financial struggles caused by the oil crisis in 1973.



Plans for Polderstad 1973. Archival imagery

In the meantime, many industries that settled at the end of the 19th century began to shut their doors. The closure of Cockerill in 1982 was particularly devastating for the community. As a result, the vibrant town life gradually faded away; pubs shut down and local celebrations came to an end. The last major event was the Zwarte God procession, which took place in 1980. Ironically, just one year after Cockerill's closure, Hoboken became a district of Antwerp and lost its status as an independent municipality. As a physical reminder of the Cockerill shipyard, the enormous titan crane still stands, now in use by a different company.

Returning to the Polder, the four remaining phases of the Polderstad plan were put on hold, allowing nature to take over instead. Diverse pioneering ecosystems emerged on the bare soil, and rare species of animals and plants settled in the Polder. The community embraced this spontaneous nature and fought for its preservation, arguing that it was the last piece of nature for the Hobokenaren. Their efforts paid off, and the Hobokense Polder became a nature reserve in 1990.

Place duck and trees on the Polder

This engagement resulted in the creation of an organisation managing the Polder to conserve and reintroduce diverse biotopes, later expanding to the Hollebeek in 2015 and the Tarzanbosjes and Blikvelden in 2018.

The Hollebeek, now constricted by dense urbanisation, used to flow through the Blikvelden. The site was bought by the Antwerp municipality after the last industrial activity at the Blikfabriek ended in 2013. Today, the factory site is managed as a creative hub and hosts a variety of activities.

This marks the increasing interest of Antwerp in its suburbs. Similar to the estates during the Renaissance, the city is expanding its influence beyond the ring road. Additionally, the currently vacant Petroleum Zuid is said to become a hub for sustainable technologies.

The metallurgical industry, now known as Umicore, is also making efforts to become sustainable. Among other initiatives, Umicore is creating a green buffer zone. In order to do so, it has bought out 200 homeowners adjacent to the industry and demolished their houses.

Hoboken is currently facing the decline of its industry, which once served as the heart and soul of the community but also contributed significantly to air, water, and soil pollution. The story of Hoboken is a story of the coming of outside forces, ideas and people shaping the community, landscape and city and in return being shaped by Hoboken. However, as these influences depart, Hoboken's unique identity is slowly merging with that of Antwerp. These successional interrelated actions can be understood as tides moving in and out. In their wake, they have created a diverse and layered collection of spaces and communities known as Hoboken.



Last worker rimfactory (now known as Blikfabriek in 2008. Archival imagery

Research Plan

This proposal attempts to interweave the strings of thoughts I've been fascinated by during the course of the graduation studio. These ideas draw inspiration from first hand experience and a first introduction to relevant literature, but also by attending the course and the findings of my peers I have been led to new perspectives. Additionally, I hope to communicate thoughts on future fieldwork methodologies and interesting literature.

At the root of the research proposal lies my interpretation of the Blikfabriek formed during the first site visit. There was an intuitive understanding that the close by Hobokense Polder and Blikfabriek were related. (Figure 182) Perhaps this intuition was partially grounded on purely cognitive, psychological reactions to the environment. However, there appeared also the first vague outline of a more systematic ontological parallel between both sites.

The two distinct landscapes are both the remains of an intensive industrial past and shaped by the excesses of the city that found its place here at the urban fringe. They became places of refuse and waste that were left in disregard and allowed colonisation, by non-human and human

agents. There is an abundance of waste in the case of Hobokense Polder as landfills and excess soil and in the case of Blikfabriek as existing structures and 'waste' siphoned in from other parts of the city. This 'unwanted' material is reconfigured by pioneering communities into trees, animal bodies and experimental shelters, infrastructure and facilities. Intrinsic of both spaces is that matter is subject to ongoing cycles of (re)composition and decomposition of structures, a process driven by the many agents at play, which questions our perception of waste and may redefine the relationship between humans and material.

These cyclical motions of matter are non-sensical in the linear hegemonic understandings of human progress in modernist capitalist world views and require models designed for cyclical processes with multiple agency to be comprehended, such as ecosystems. Ecology interestingly does not distinguish agent from inhabitant, existence itself is a continual engagement to altering the environment and other agents. Though cross-pollination between ecology and urban transformation has been in scholarly discourse for over a century, it is a field that continues to lend new insights, amongst many developments post-industrialism and post-humanism enlivening the scholarly discourse in the field recent-

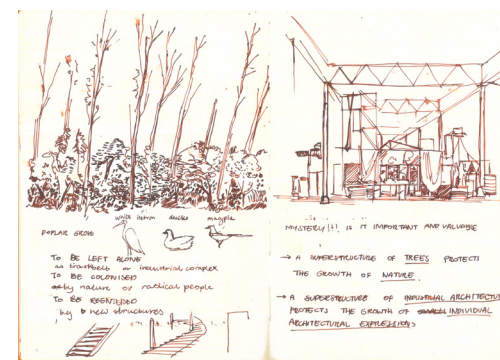
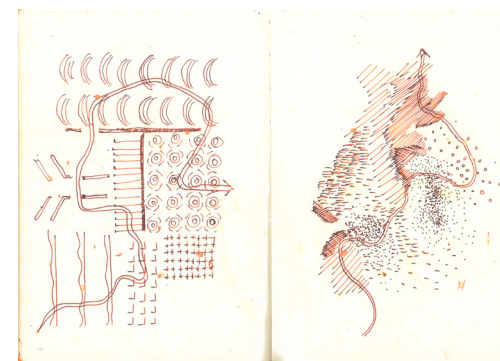
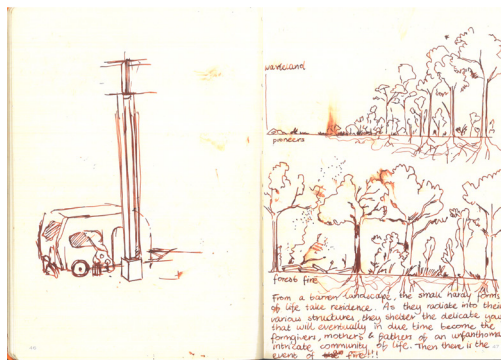


Figure 182

Ecology interestingly does not distinguish agent from inhabitant, existence itself is a continual engagement to altering the environment and other agents.

ly. Two emblematic system definitions in the field of ecology are particularly interesting tools disseminating the complexity of both Hobokense Polder and the Blikfabriek, namely succession and nutrient cycles.

Succession is the continual change in ecosystems, realised by the combined and sequential actions of agents. Key is for one action to happen they need other actions to have happened before, actions are in this sense responses and succession is a complex interweaving of responses that move the ecosystem to certain transformation. (Figure 3) Could imagining the process of succession in the context of Blikfabriek add a temporal aspect that city development often lacks or is exclusive to the few liminal spaces agents are able to appropriate?



Nutrient cycles describe the flow and transformation of organic compounds. In different temporalities material composes different structures and counterparts of an ecosystem. The same material that forms the complex structure of animal cells are decomposed into the disparate nonentity of humus and in a later state could become fungi or plant material or return into the composition of an animal body. (Figure 4) Again these cycles and the reconfiguring of material are largely dependant on organic agents. In the context of the Blikfabriek, the reconfiguration of waste by a creative community could be the first steps taken towards a cyclical processes. How are the cyclical transformations of matter in ecosystems comparable to the treatment of materials and structures in the Blikfabriek?

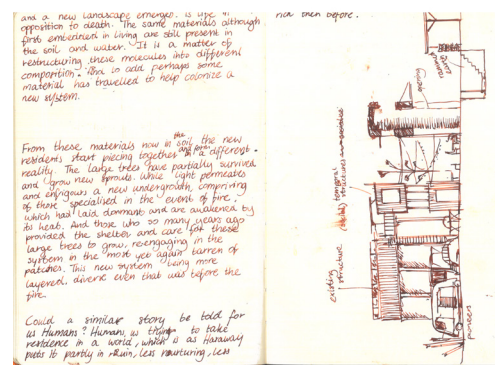


Figure 3

Interestingly, could these questions also be posed for the Hobokense Polder and add to its ontology? On the one

In different temporalities material composes different structures and counterparts of an ecosystem.

hand, the naturality or better said the artificiality of the Hobokense Polder is questionable. Even though, this type of nature has proved itself in many ways more valuable than in terms of biodiversity and productivity than 'pristine' nature (a term which is disputable). In the field of urban ecology, there is the demand to redefine and evaluate these fourth natures.

These questions must be asked, if we are to imagine other relations with the physical environment and humans that do not endanger the conditions that support life on our planet. Furthermore, these models can also be critical lenses to approach multi-agency and equal rights. However, though ecological models can provide a hopeful perspective on the future, the research is cognizant of the irreversible geo-ecological system collapse caused by current industrialisation and capitalism

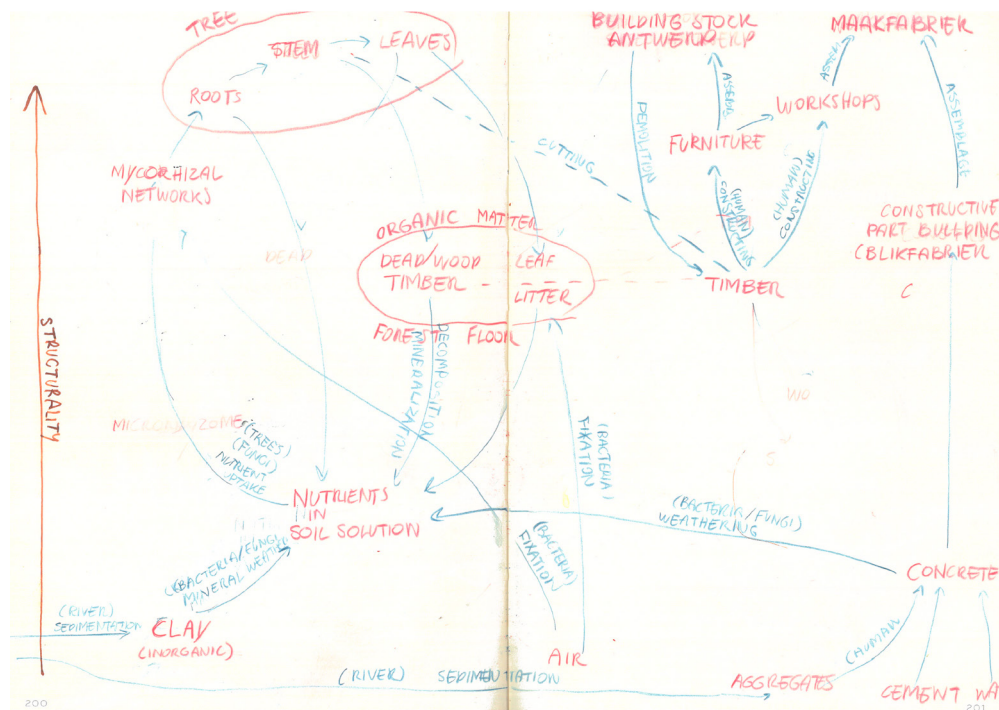


Figure 4



Figure 5

that threaten the conditions for life and by extent our existence. This makes the story of both the Blikfabriek and Hobokense Polder relevant as such landscapes intensively traumatised by industrialisation will become more common. (Figure 5) In a way they are the frontrunners of a bleak, polluted world that Latour and Harraway (and with them many scientists) prophesize will be the reality. How to ensure in these places the quality of life for all? Is almost an arbitrary question.

This research thus attempts to answer: How can ecology be implemented as sustainable model for human transformation of space and human habitation in the Blikfabriek?

'Sustainable' in this case having two meanings. Firstly to be able to respond to the geo-ecological system collapse aforementioned, but also societal change expected to happen as a result of these geo-ecological transitions. Secondly, to not further damage the life supporting conditions of the earth and the immediate landscapes.

Integral to this research is the method with which these systems between agents and ecologies are unearthed. A combination is necessary of different methodologies to document and analyse.

Fieldwork - The proposed fieldwork at the Blikfabriek and its surrounding area aims to uncover possible (future) agent-material relations and will be conducted as a collective effort (for now with Raf and Mariana). We intend to learn by becoming part of the ecosystem of material and agents at the site. We do this by introducing ourselves as gift-givers,

a agent-material relationship that contributes to the ecosystem. The research will start as a temporary installation in which a collection of 'unwanted' materials are presented that could be of use to the different agents of Blikfabriek and the neighbourhood. By means of curation and reconfiguration we explore, how we can change 'waste' into gift, the material will be sourced from Blikfabriek and beyond. As agents we pass on material and forward its (cyclical) motion and transformation; Injecting material into the ecosystem, but also presenting ourselves as engaged agents. As researchers taking care to document the passing of the gifts between different agents and staying in touch with the gift-takers. We hope to document through film and interview. By doing so we hope to answer: Who takes which gifts and is the passing of material continued? How is material used, is it transformed into other constructions/constellations/bodies? (Figure 6)

Literature – As reading continues to provide alternative lenses relevant for research, it is useful to dive deeper into books on the topic 'urban ecology'.

Alongside literature that aims to describe more conceptual notions, the research draws also on other published fieldwork studies. For the Hobokense Polder, there has been a collection of observational studies released since 1978, which have documented the development of the ecosystem in detail. How do non-human agents deal with a 'wasteland' and can their adaptations possibly be of use to human agents dealing with similar conditions?

In case of the Blikfabriek, it is interesting to draw from other research conducted by others in the studio. Already through group discussions and careful readings of the catalogue relevant knowledge has been shared. For example, agents have been surgically dissected into: Caretakers, Bricoleurs and Actors, which all describe various aspects of the agent.

Analysis – Lastly, a tentative proposition for a device of analysis is made in figure . Through means of drawing knowledge gained from fieldwork is organised by an ecosystemic lens developed by reading literature. I am not sure whether the information should be condensed into one medium. (Figure 7)

Reflection - The research for now could become too broad, my first more practical thought would be to focus on the

Blikfabriek and treat the Hobokense Polder as a starting point, but not as a subject of research. Still, to give a conclusive statement on the Blikfabriek through the multi-faceted lens of urban ecology is I think overly ambitious. However, I do think meandering between the practical fieldwork and conceptual understandings of ecology could lead to new insights.

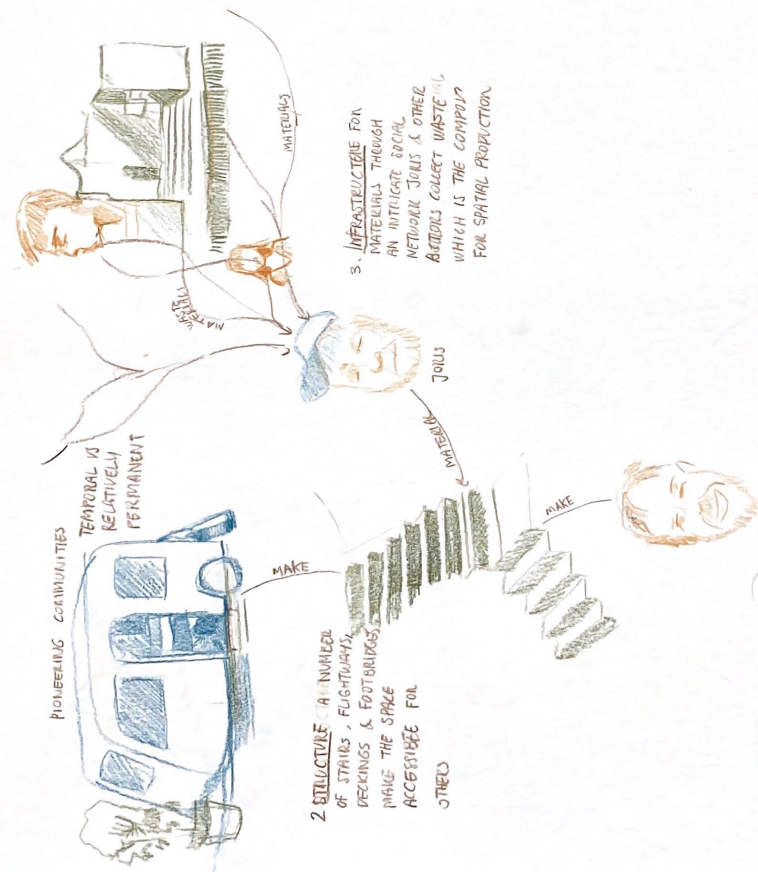
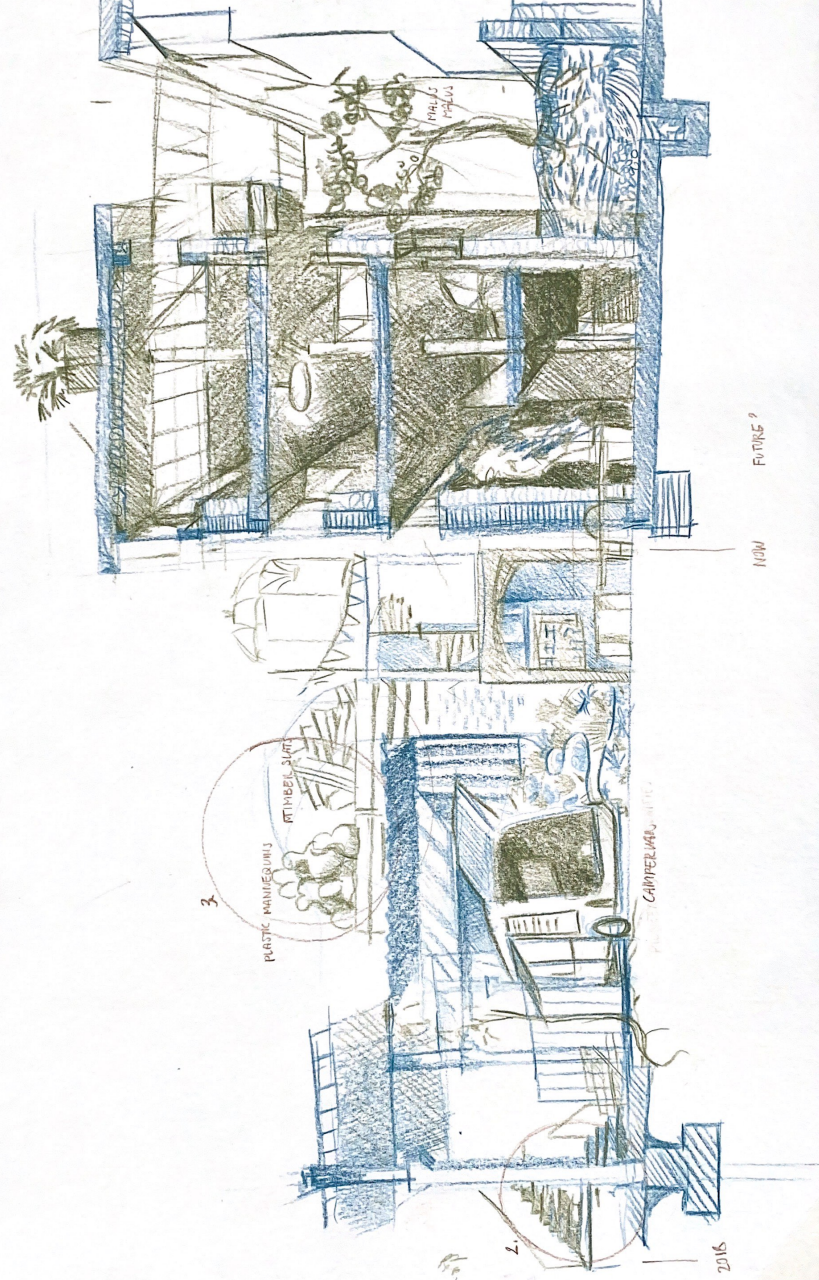
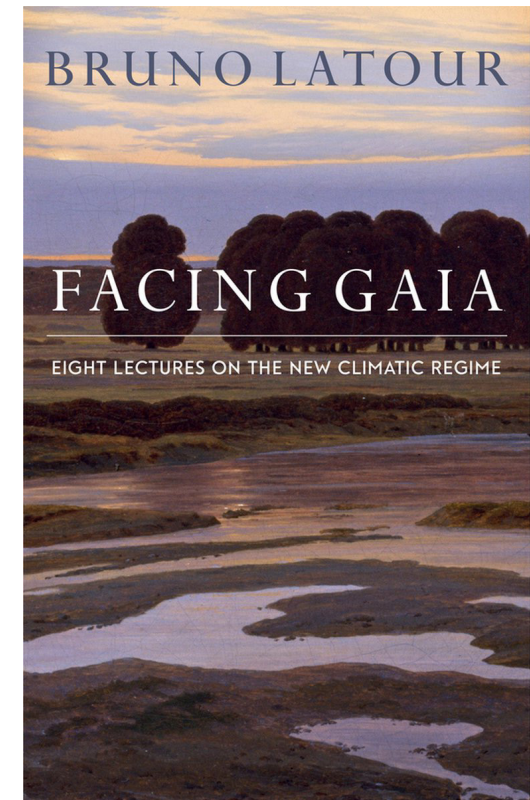
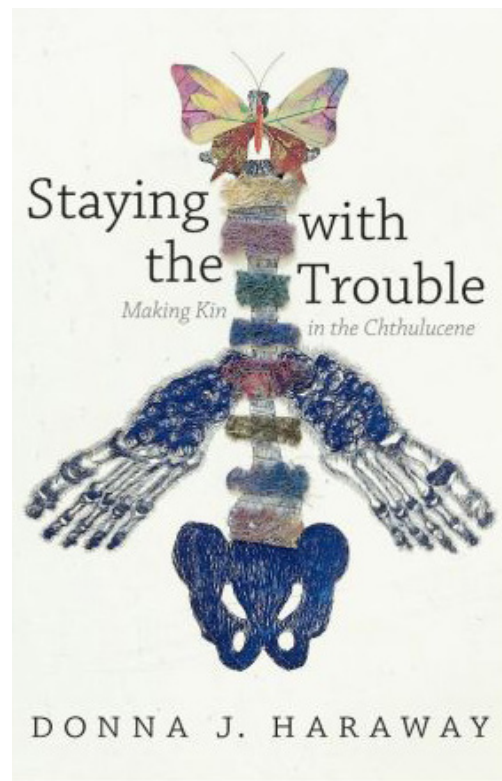
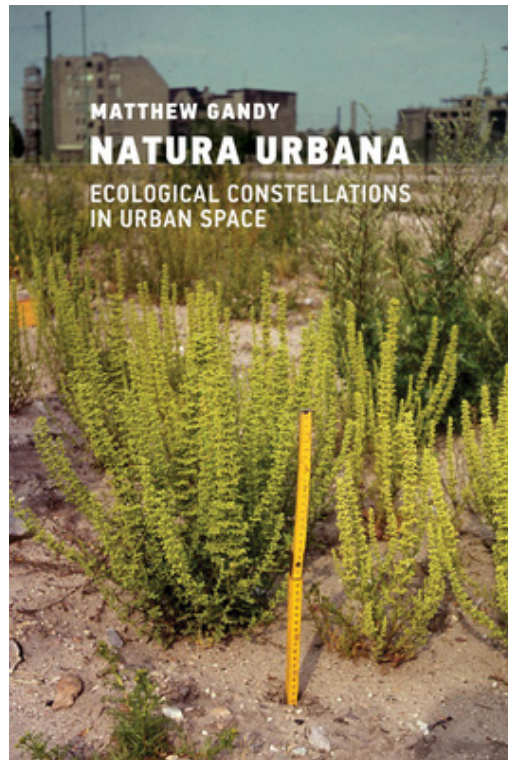


Figure 7: To be viewed as conceptual diagram, Fraxinus Excelsior is actually not that common in the Hobokense Polder, for the Blikfabriek a future of succession is suggested. Though the horizontal axis depicts time, their transformation does not function with similar speeds or starting points.

Literature during the P1



Worlds

Latour discusses the soul of non-human configurations. ~~To be honest~~ If we would be honest to ourselves, a human is no more a configuration of material processes than lets say - a river. Ah, but aren't we self-aware? The river is not, it's just a subject of logic and the physiology of others. But aren't we also a phenomenon of perfectly logical causal relationships. Our self-awareness is also just an evolutionary adaptation, to reflect upon past choices, to position the body and mind in (social) situations. An internal dialogue between neurons twisted into something with close resemblance to mycorrhizal structures. This is perhaps the most clear division between humans and a river we could argue. The human is programmed to proliferate and survive. Water flows and perhaps that could happen somewhere else than this particular route to the sea. It could by all means be in space and its molecules could configure to another state, its atoms to other molecules, the protons, neutrons and electrons and other particles to other ~~part~~ atoms or energies. It wouldn't matter.

However, a human is delicate and its existence is dependant on ~~an intricate~~ the ongoingness of these processes, which is continuously contested. In this matter, self-awareness ~~might~~ is a powerful tool to keep these processes ongoing or ^{at least} the cycle of baby to adult ongoing.

And as we are moving away from the characteristic human-centered perspective of science, we are discovering that "naturally" that ~~other~~ biological units, or say other species are self-aware and conscious of their existence. Moreover, we are also discovering that our background of ~~trees and forest~~ ^{thriving} forests and beautiful ecologies might not be as certainty and they as us struggle for existence. How we'd like to frame the things that comprise the forest as selfish evolutionary units, killing ~~and~~ each other ruthlessly. A better word might be Ruthless ~~is~~ and wild are words to describe our inability to communicate with these creatures in the forest, let alone understand. And if we would observe carefully and attentive, we would discover that many ~~etc~~ 'species' work together and co-evolve. ~~A~~ Trees talk ~~through~~ to each 157

A Braindump of thoughts at the time of reading Latour

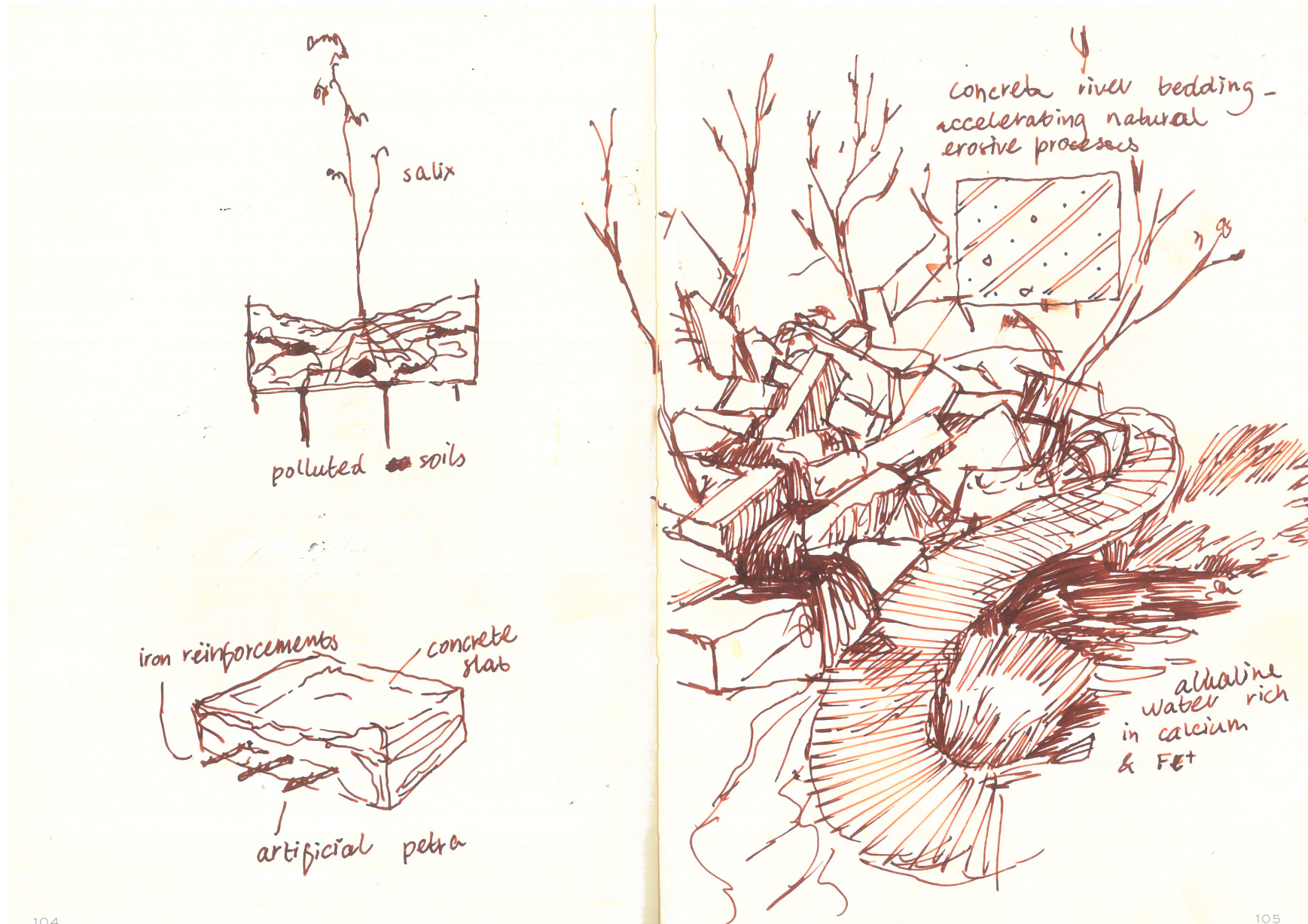
other through fungi. They move through time in relation to each other, like the individual cells of the body. Its collective brain perhaps communicating through mycorrhizae or calls of birds, the change of light. Their signals slow and perhaps on a different time than us humans are familiar with. But they are collectively aware they need the others to exist. Then I would suggest they.

The ecological unit of the forest is self-aware, and move forward together. Parent trees nurturing child trees ~~through~~ by providing them nutrients through mycorrhizae and birds spreading seeds to ~~grow~~ colonize new spaces and wolves killing deer that eat too many ~~leave~~ young leaves. ~~It is~~ an uneasy balance, but our body is just as well a delicate balance, where hormones ^{including self-awareness} and other internal processes ensure that there is not too much of any process.

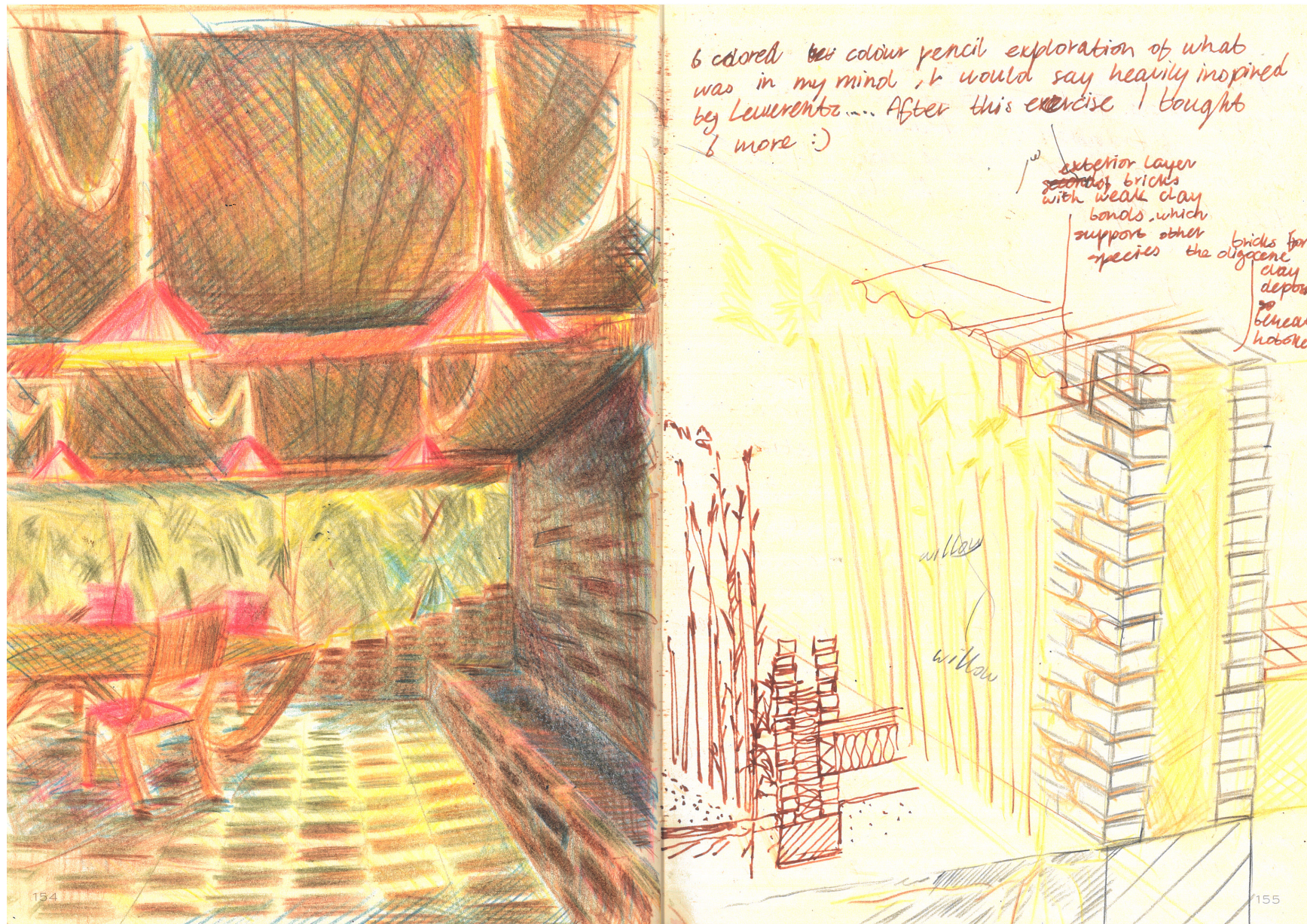
And ~~many~~ ^{few} humans are also still part of this collective aware forest and their collective awareness. ~~Experienced~~ These peoples existences still directly depend on the ecological bodies they take part in. ~~They are~~ Which they express through

rituals and stories, we might call as mysticism or, spiritualism, or better said animism. Which might not explain itself well in the technocratic & thought frame of modern humans. But these beliefs acknowledge the existence of other forms of awareness and though communication with these collective awareness is not achievable through singing and other spiritual expressions as ~~these people~~ ^{these people} attempt. There is an intuitive understanding of each others dependencies, from which affective bonds are formed. A bond of caring and respect. ~~These~~

In a not so far from our reality story. By ~~this~~ ^{us} I mean the ~~star~~ lives of modern city dwellers, I could explain the phenomena of intuitively caring ^{for systems} ~~collectively~~. Me as a citizen of the heavily industrialized small metropole of Rotterdam, ~~might~~ ^{might} feel a so, then strong love for something as both as physical and ~~abstract~~ incomprehensibly complex and symbolic as a city. I wish them to do well at ~~any~~ sport, or host mind culture and ~~more~~ generally feel competition with our nemesis Amsterdam. 59

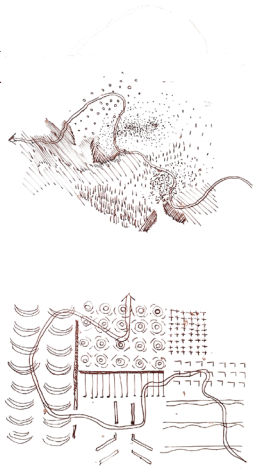
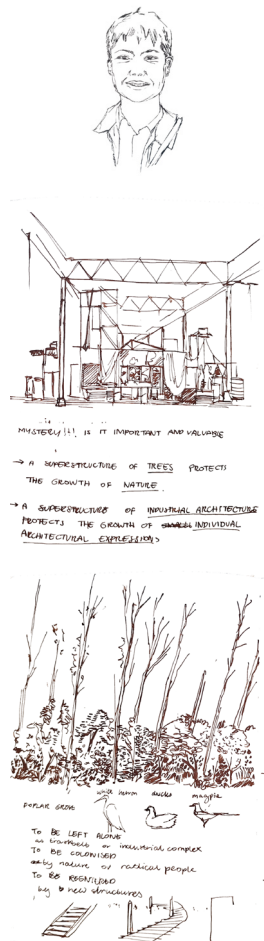


Ideas for artificial rivers even in P1!



Lewerentz inspired, also wanting to use colored pencils.

onderzoek maakfabriek



Beste Maakfabriekers,

Voor de mensen die mij nog niet hebben gezien, wil ik mij even voorstellen. Ik ben Lance, ik kom onderzoek doen naar de Maakfabriek voor mijn afstuderen. Ik doe dit in Delft in de richting architectuur. Je zal mij vaak zien rondlopen en veel tekenen, ik maak ook graag een babbeltje. Dus aarzel niet om mij te benaderen.

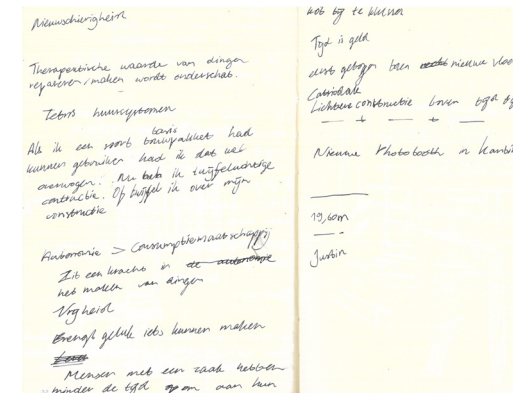
Daarnaast kan ik goed jullie hulp gebruiken! Ik ben erg nieuwsgierig hoe jullie je materialen verzamelen en wat jullie er mee doen. Als u het leuk zou vinden, zou ik graag een dagje/ dagjes met u mee willen lopen. Stuur me dan gerust een whatsappje (+31 6 38549369).

Ook zou ik met dit pamflet iets meer informatie geven over wat ik onderzoek. In mijn onderzoek bekijk ik de Maakfabriek door de ogen van een Ecoloog. Kan de maakfabriek beschouwd worden als een soort ecosysteem? Om die vraag te beantwoorden ben ik benieuwd hoe materialen circuleren en transformeren in de maakfabriek. Wat is de relatie tussen materiaal en maakfabriek? Dit doe ik veelal met pen, papier en potlood, dus aarzel niet om mee te tekenen of om vragen te stellen.

Ik behoor ook tot een grotere afstudeergroep, tezamen ontwerpen we verschillende toekomstvisies voor het gebied als reactie op de huidige LABOXX plannen. Mijn individuele onderzoek gaat dus in specifiek over de Maakfabriek en ecologie, maar er zijn naar mijn weet nog een paar afstudeerders die onderzoek doen naar de Maakfabriek.

Waarschijnlijk tot snel!

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NOTES TAKEN DURING FIELDWORK.

Affiche/poster introducing myself to the Maakfabriek

A Travelogue

I thought to include one of these (the most worked out), bit much to include all.

I had never visited the Maakfabriek in the weekend and as most of its occupants were only parttime Maakfabrieker, a bit of doubt crept into my mind. What if the Maakfabriek would be entirely different during the weekend?

Different already, was the journey to that southwestern somewhat hard-to-reach corner of Antwerp. In the weekends the cheapest train would not stop at Antwerpen Centraal, instead it left me in Antwerpen Berchem. This was unfortunate, because if I were to draw a map of Antwerp's public transport network it was shaped as an unevenly armed seastar, radiating from its centre and not Antwerpen Berchem Station which was located on one of the mono-directional arms extending to the southeast. I didn't mind to walk even though it would take more time, it was sunny and I still needed breakfast. Fortunately, a few housing blocks from the station a bakery served fresh sandwiches. I misread, it only served sandwiches during the weekday. However, the man behind the

counter gave me a 'kaasbroodje', unwilling to make me pay, and told me in all sincerity that there was nothing on my path that would satisfy me. This I of course only

**"I think I know who you are. You are doing research at Maakfabriek and last time you talked to my girlfriend. I already saw you walking at the Brederoedestraat."
- Jeffe**

partially believed and though grateful, I stubbornly continued. The first part of the route, went through a street which housed most of Berchems commercial activity. However no place that sold me sandwiches. It seemed locked in a battle (as so many places are nowadays), its old typical Belgian village-like appearance struggling to keep the city at bay, with its multi-cultural, loud, globalised character often vibrantly and sometimes blatantly imposing upon these humble architectures. Accompanied with the distinct undertone of gentrification, which sought to return to a village allure albeit this distorted image was just as disconnected to Berchem's history.

Brushing against the southern edge of Antwerp's heart, the sound of traffic from the ringroad would occasionally get loud enough for me to know I was walking in the wrong direction. I made sure to trudge

through as many green areas possible, and I did manage to find a place where they sell good sandwiches for a very fair



price! I took two and ate one in one of these parks. The 45-minute walk lead me to the one arm of public transport which could take you to the Blikfabriek and while waiting at the bus stop I saw a younger man with a characteristic poof of curly hair. I immediately felt like there was something between us, which we as two strangers fail to communicate until the end of the bus ride. Both departing at the last stop, he said, "I think I know who you are. You are doing research at Maakfabriek and last time you talked to my girlfriend. I already saw you walking at the Brederoedestraat." Naturally, we rolled into a conversation

both heading to the Blikfabriek. Jeffe struck me as very social and talkative, though quite reserved and I found it difficult to deduct his emotions. I explained my research, in a somewhat derogative way, as I'm always afraid as coming across as this aloof university student. I rather say it is vague and I myself am unsure of what I'm actually doing. In turn, he talked about his background as a social designer. After doing some projects and a pedagogic sidetrack, he wanted to do more hands-on stuff, so he started glassblowing, but as I understood it this was also just an intermezzo (though quite long) before doing something more in the realm of social design. All the while, we were figuring out a way to reach the Maakfabriek, which hibernated with the Blikfabriek behind closed gates. We reached the back entrance and Jeffe kindly showed me around the glassblowing workshop before going to his Kot.

Though there was a distinct but small gallery area where the glassworks were displayed in glass showcases on the left, the rest of the rectangular space was occupied by a scattering of human-sized instruments. Jeffe commenced a narrative which he had probably voiced at least a

few times to visitor and workshop participant, as we moved through the space. There was an oven at the backwall which would be heated to 1100 degrees celsius. A makeshift construction which resembled a bench with addons, to roll the glass blowing pipe over sat in the centre. There were different buckets filled with shards of glass or empty. The source of the reuse glass mattered, he explained that the greenish tint in some of the works was due to the lead content of window panes, the clear works were from bottles.

Admittedly, glassblowing was not the most sustainable activity, neither very social, he remarked with the same factual diction. We entered the Blikfabriek and it was busier then other days. Other symbionts were at work that I hadn't met before. We crossed the square to the furthest Kot, which was Jeffe's. This place he mostly used for make gypsum moulds for his glasswork and his Kot was furnished with various gypsum processing instruments (including again an oven). Not wanting to take more of his time I set off wandering again.

I said hello to Fokke and introduced myself to faces I hadn't seen before, the first being Dorian, who's Kot was looking out over the machine square. A whitish building with a distinct arched roof, its two doors open and inviting, a simplicity and order which was unlikely for any of the structures here. With a sleuth of objects

and material lying in front of it, expanding at least 3 metres from the plot. I guessed him to be somewhere around 30, he was



properly clothed in many layers of fleece and fabric, "Come inside, its cold outside." "My hands can't grip my pen." I joked and I gladly accepted his invitation. The warmth in question was provided by a small electric heater, I had once seen at the action. He appeared to me as laid-back, his cheek often contracting in a half smile, while we were talking. Immediately, I noticed the heavy construction of the ceiling. The space seemed to be divided in two adjoined structures, the first was more of a shelf-like structure and the second on the left had a workbench or bureau, or perhaps something in-between. With

a collection of apparatuses mounted on shelves or small stools around it. "I am planning on building a larger 3D printer." He told me as I inquired about the one on the upper shelf. Although there was a collection of unfinished projects stalled and materials still to be assigned, for Maak-fabriek standards, I would say his Kot was well organised, reflecting his calm, relaxed character. "What are you working on?" I began. He explained he was building a Japanese-style lamp, or more so he showed by haphazardly constructing the lamp, his hands as joints holding delicate timber strips in an orthogonal arrangement. None of the material was particularly reuse. He described the website Dictim, which he used to source noticeably cheap materials, Japanese paper in particular. As well as, other knick-knacks, the coffee machine that he adopted from his parents. The office lamp, which were only 30 euro's and could rightfully flood the place with light. I could use the opportunity to ask about the floor construction, which he simply explained as a measure of excess, "I still had some left-over wood lying around and a big cabinet used to rest upon it, I'm not an architect so I maybe overcompensated a bit." Dorian had a background in

industrial design.

"If you're interested in re-use. I might not be the guy to talk to. You should see if my neighbour Joris has time."

"Here everything ends up that needs to be hidden, which does not pertain to the hegemonic progress narrative; There is material waste everywhere, for the pioneers to transform to gift."

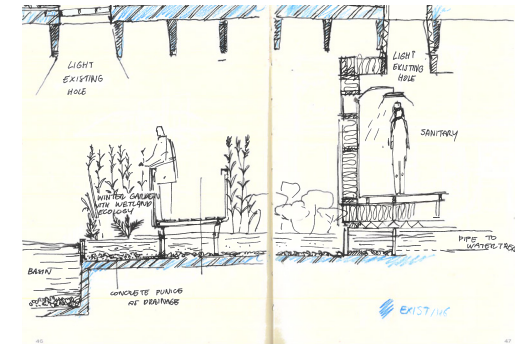
Just before I left, I noticed the large sheets of tree trunk, leaning and stacked upon the rack-like structure next to his Kot. "Are these yours? They're beautiful."

"Yeah, ah maybe I have something that will interest you after all. These are from a guy with a huge sawblade. This wood is from trees that used to stand in private gardens. He is a landscaper that sells timber whenever he needs to fell a tree. This is hornbeam, There is acacia which I mean to craft into a table and these up there are Olm, also known as poor man's oak. It used to be a common tree but at the end of last century it was affected by a sickness. This type of wood is usually hard to get your hands on."

"I imagine it to be better than any

fast-growing tree."

"Yeah, definitely better than anything you can buy at a hardware store."



"Have you already been to Justin's? He's really knowledgeable about timber and besides his Kot looks amazing. I don't think he's here though today. He helps me out sometimes."

I agreed to this point and told him I already visited him. I thanked him, and promised to visit more often, while I took a few steps back to draw the Kot in the square.

In one of the alleys, I saw a couple working behind a long facade comprised of doors of stained and frosted windows. I had already seen them walking back and forth from the back entrance carrying various

precious materials around. Introducing myself, and in turn they did as Wout and Nele. This was Wout's Kot and this was there first collaboration, an experiment. Wout worked mainly with timber and had a brand producing bold state-of-the-art furniture. Nele was a ceramist, which worked on hand worked cheery pieces. It was a long space, a bit too dark and as I was talking to Wout, Nele was kitting a tower of spherical ceramic vases.

"Do you think this is going to work?"

"Isn't there something like ceramic glue, but I think this will also be fine."

"It's going to be a table, with ceramic legs, I'm making the tabletop." Wout added.

"But as for re-use, we mostly buy our material new."

I continued, though both very inviting they were clearly busy. Wout noted before I left, "Well, I'm here the coming days so please drop by if you are around."

Opposite of Dorian, Wouter waved hi, and we quickly got along. He had a large stature, long brown hair and beard and an energetic way of moving about, as if he could continue working relentlessly, but all the while he was happy to chitchat. His Kot, consisted of large dark metal folding frames and a single floor of timber.

He told me, he was making something for a museum. "When do you publish you work?"

"Ah somewhere in June."

"Okay, then it's fine. I'm building two enormous revolving doors." He excitedly exclaimed, continuing: "I have a video, actually. Let me show you. It's a try-out we did in expo hall next to here."

The video showed towering metal frames of 4,5 metres tall welded into a triangular star with trolley wheels beneath, pushed by a man.

"The whole structure will be set around two existing columns. Imagine these are just the frames, we still have to infill the walls." The project was in collaboration with an artist that would expose behind them. "Her work requires to stay hidden, only those with a curious mind will push and discover it. --- That's the idea of it."

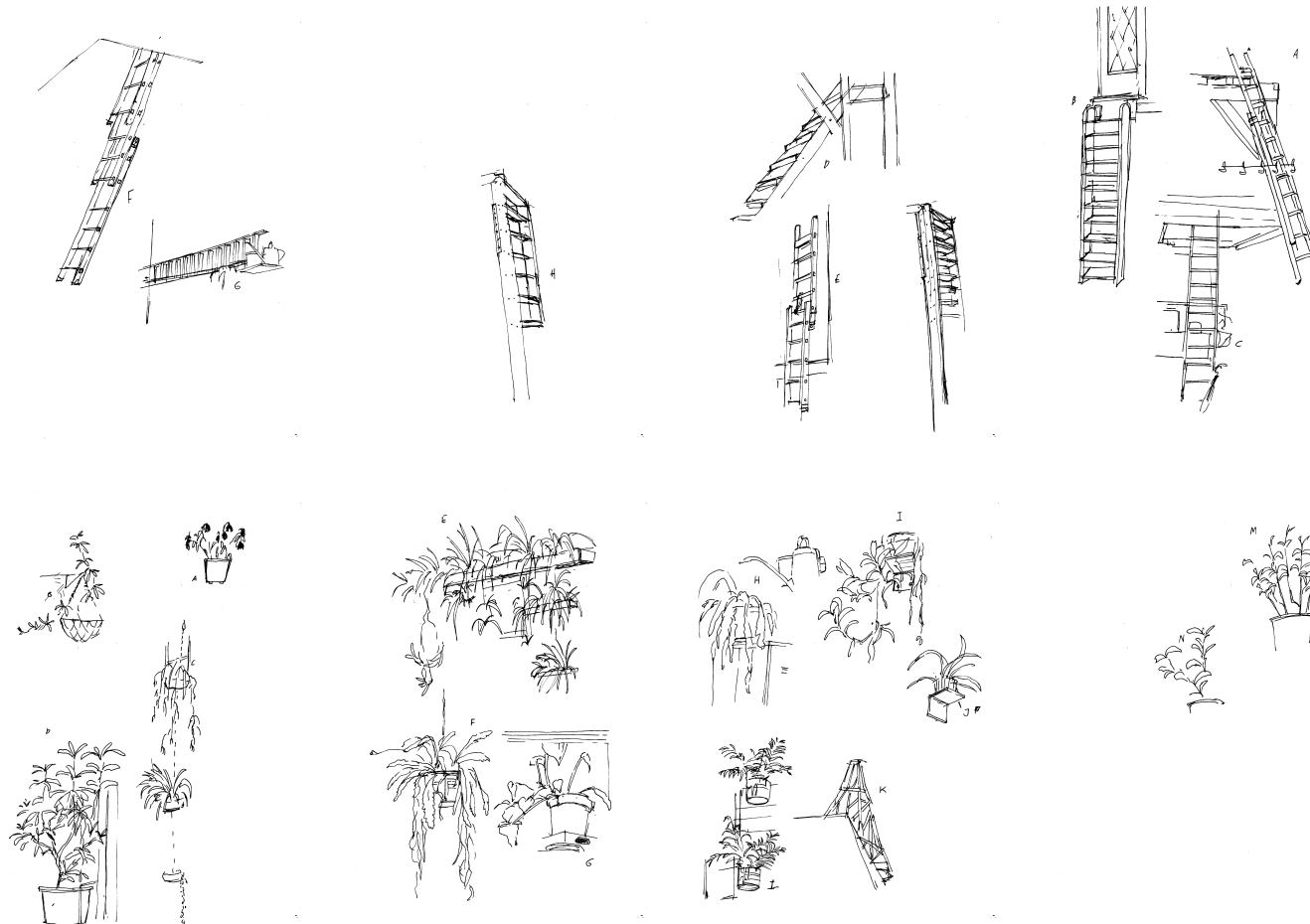
As for my research he quickly remarked, he was not so much into re-use, steel was also a difficult material to transform and it was far more convenient to buy the right sizes from a wholesaler. Though some smaller lengths of steel he could re-use sometimes. His Kot though is made of excess timber. "Building with this make-do approach is hazardous, as an architect I would be most worried about safety." The current Kot had a much more make-shift predecessor, which was haphazardly put together as at that point the tenancy was much more unsure. Then this led me

to question the temporary aspect in relation to safety. "Definitely that makes a difference, the second structure I built much more sturdy to last longer. However, I think it would also be nice to have some handholds in the building process." Eventhough, he explained to be satisfied with his Kot, and enthusiastically demonstrated, the moveability of the workbench, shelves, and folding doors. "I often open the doors and expand to the streetside." The streetside though was under the continual threat of being cluttered by trash. But also continually changing, it had to be a persistent effort to keep the collective area in a workable state. "What about the storage units next to the square you had built?" I asked.

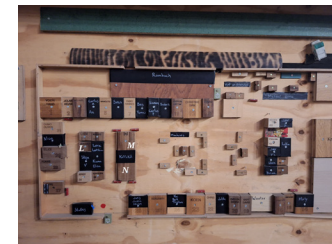
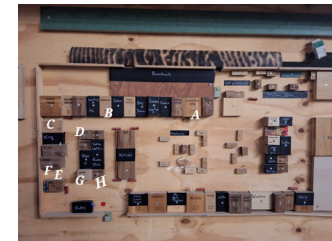
"They aren't much in use, at first people put some materials in, but others mistakenly viewed them as collective and started taking stuff out, which actually belonged to people."

His workspace did appear to me as indeed less cramped and more flexible than the other Kotten, perhaps this was also a result of working with larger material. "I am renting two units in reality, so 30 squared meters. Welding metal on the scale I do is manageable, I have orders. It's sometimes just rather stressful and availability of work can be erratic."

Fieldwork -Species

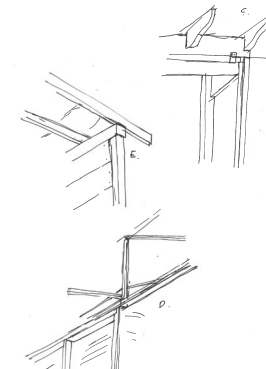
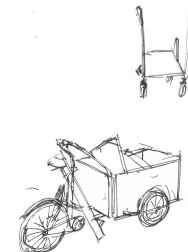
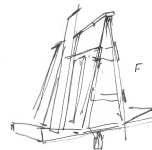
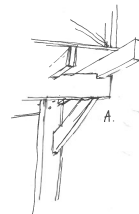
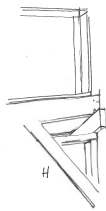
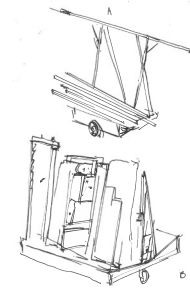
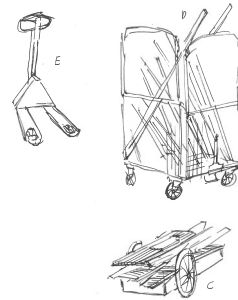
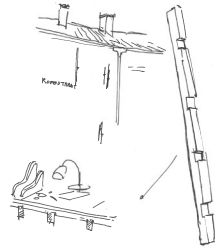
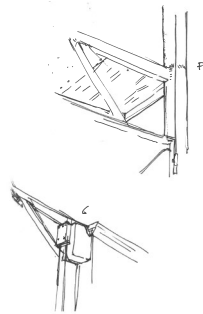
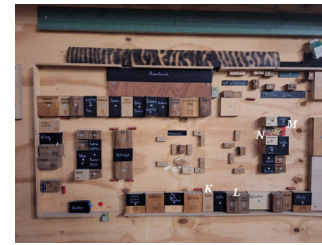
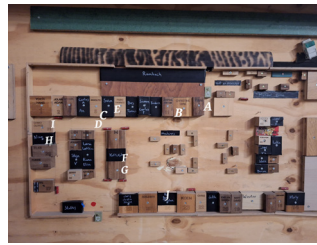


“The spiderplant propagation is a sort of gift-giving system” - Eireen



I initially drew 'species alike botanic encyclopedia's. Noting down their location.

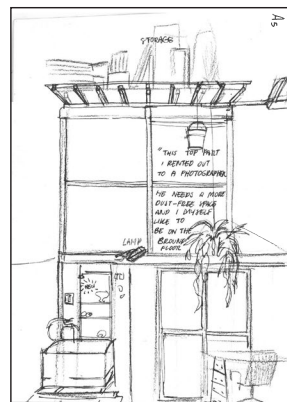
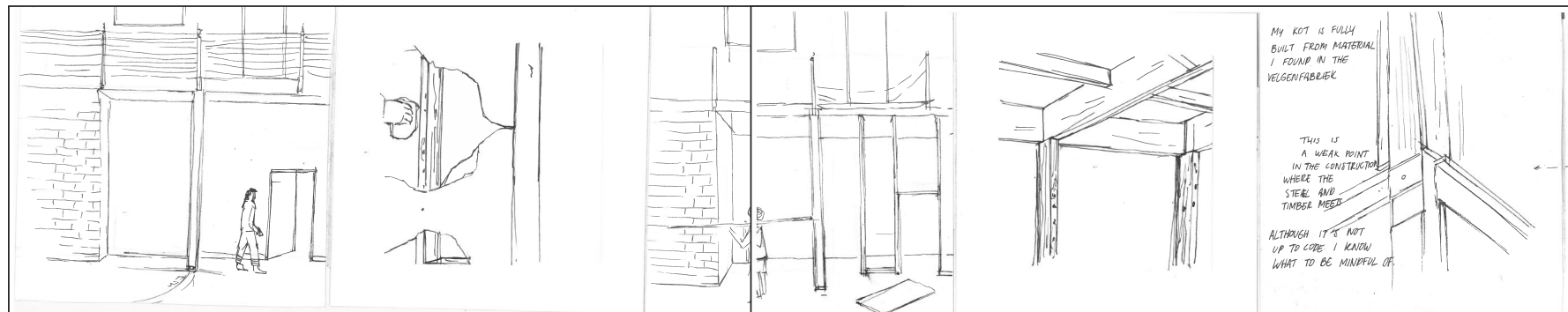
Fieldwork -Species



In the end this proved a bit senseless, since the maak-fabriek is very messy and cluttered, and things move all the time. So a more systematic approach was perhaps necessary.

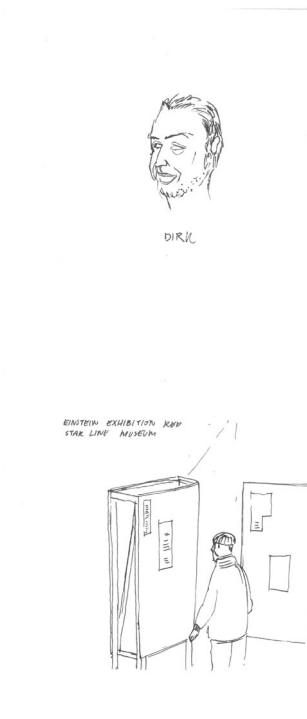
Fieldwork -Species

Instead of merely documenting materials in space. The dimension of time is added in small stories following their origin and making.

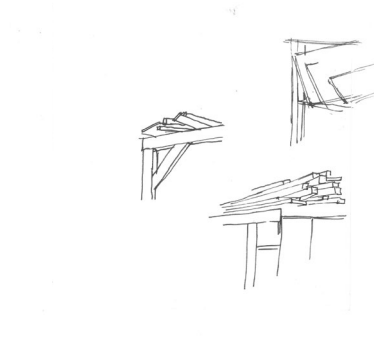
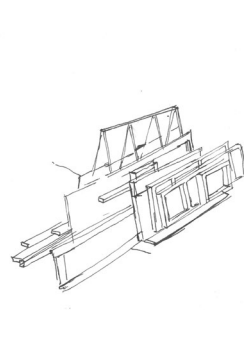
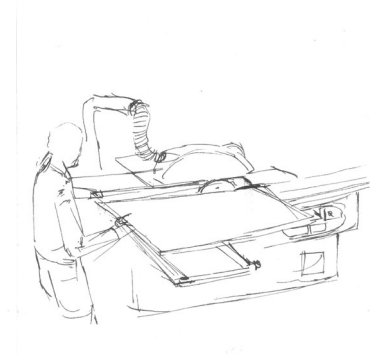


Jeffe's Kot solely uses materials salvaged from the abandoned portions of the halls.

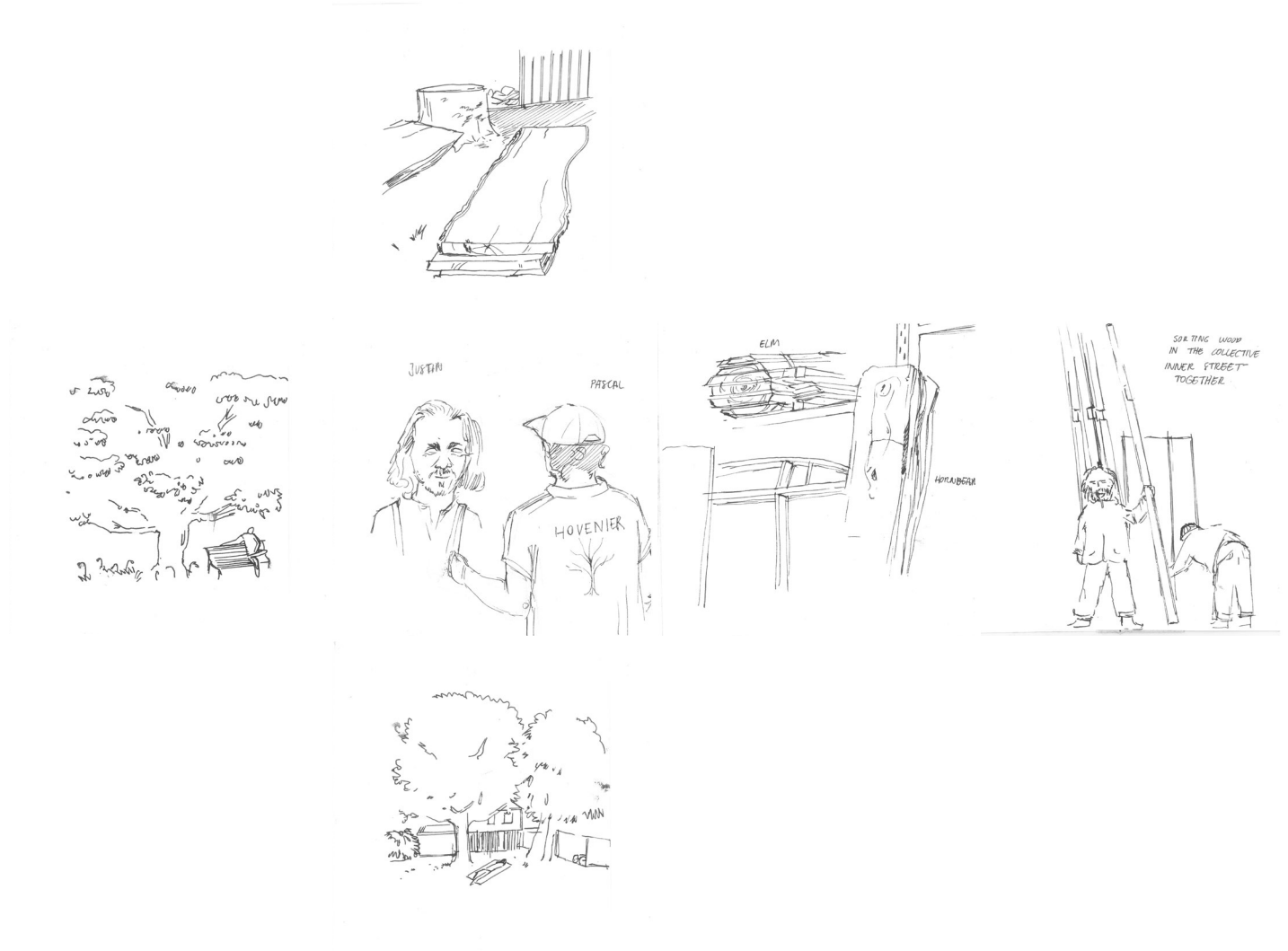
Fieldwork -Species



Could species be something in-between material and life-form. A tree-trunk is mostly non-living wood. Then I would say wood is in that case also a material, but equally part of the species. In that logic species could also be a relationship between material and humans.



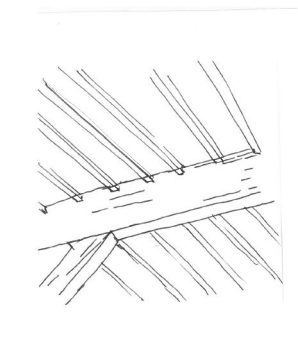
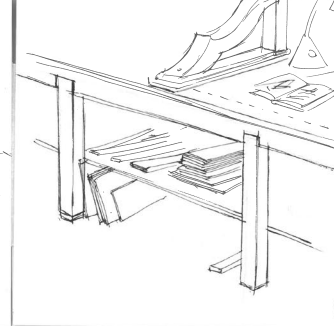
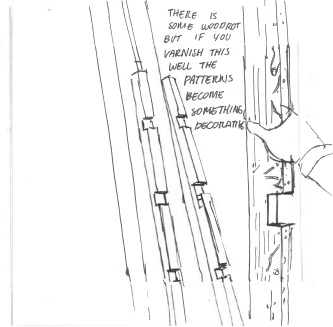
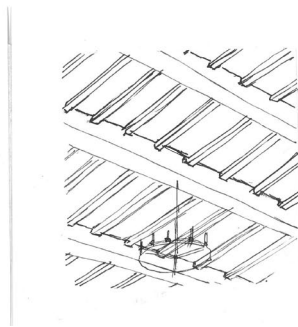
Fieldwork -Species



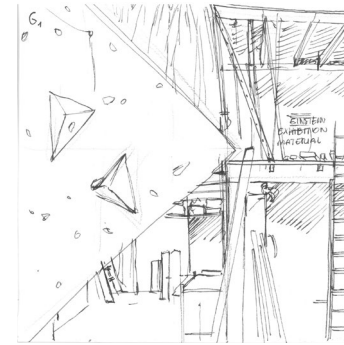
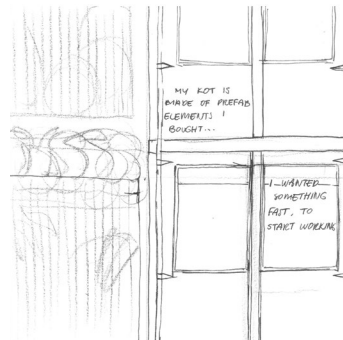
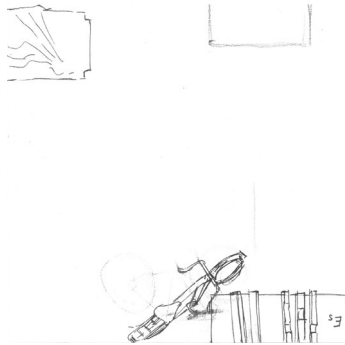
Still one actions follows the other, ecology is succesional. This is a network. No material just belongs to one species. Material is a device with which species interact with their environment and others, but not necessarily their property.

Fieldwork -Species

Also sourcing of material is very species-bound. Not all access the same urban landscapes.



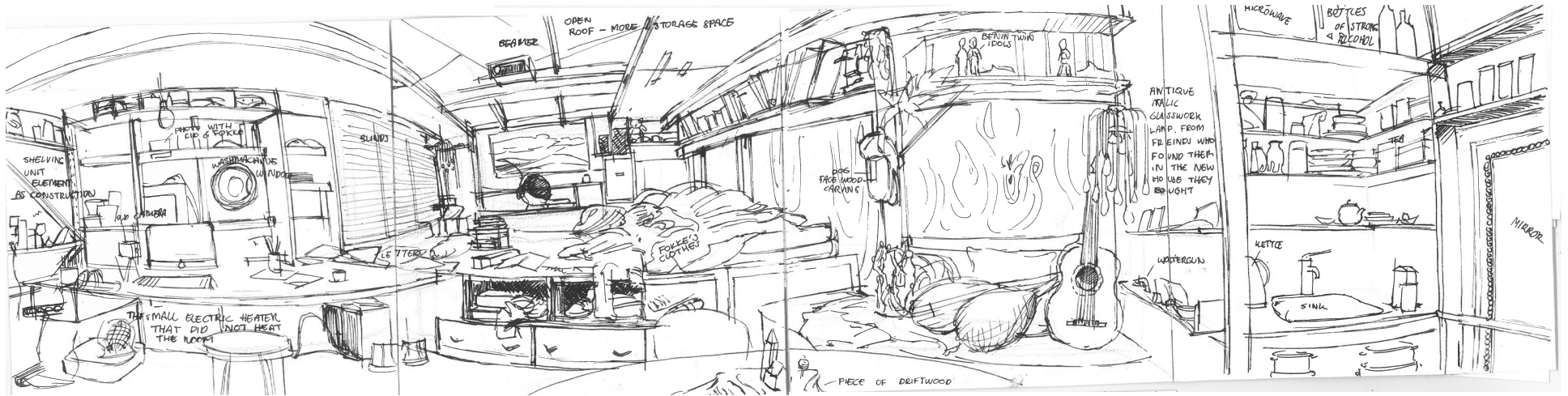
Fieldwork -Habitats



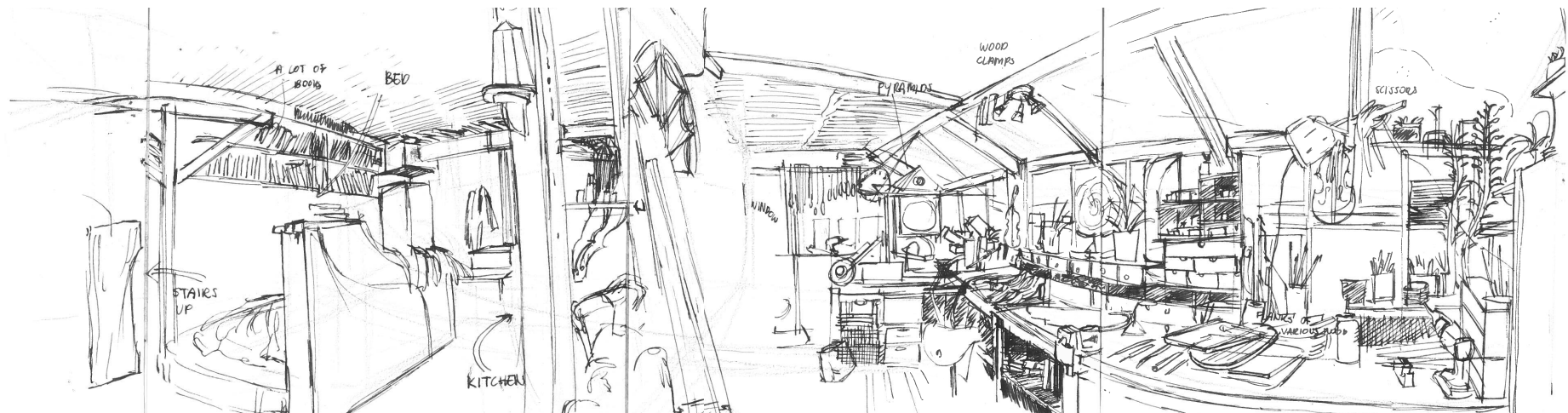
Habitats are resultant of material-human relationships. Architecture in the self-built ecosystem is a reflection of the species.

“Ecology as a metaphor seems to hold up well, they are building their nests from material they can salvage. ‘Hebban olla vogala nestas hagunnan hinase hic anda thu, wat unbidan we nu?’” - Eireen

Fieldwork -Habitats

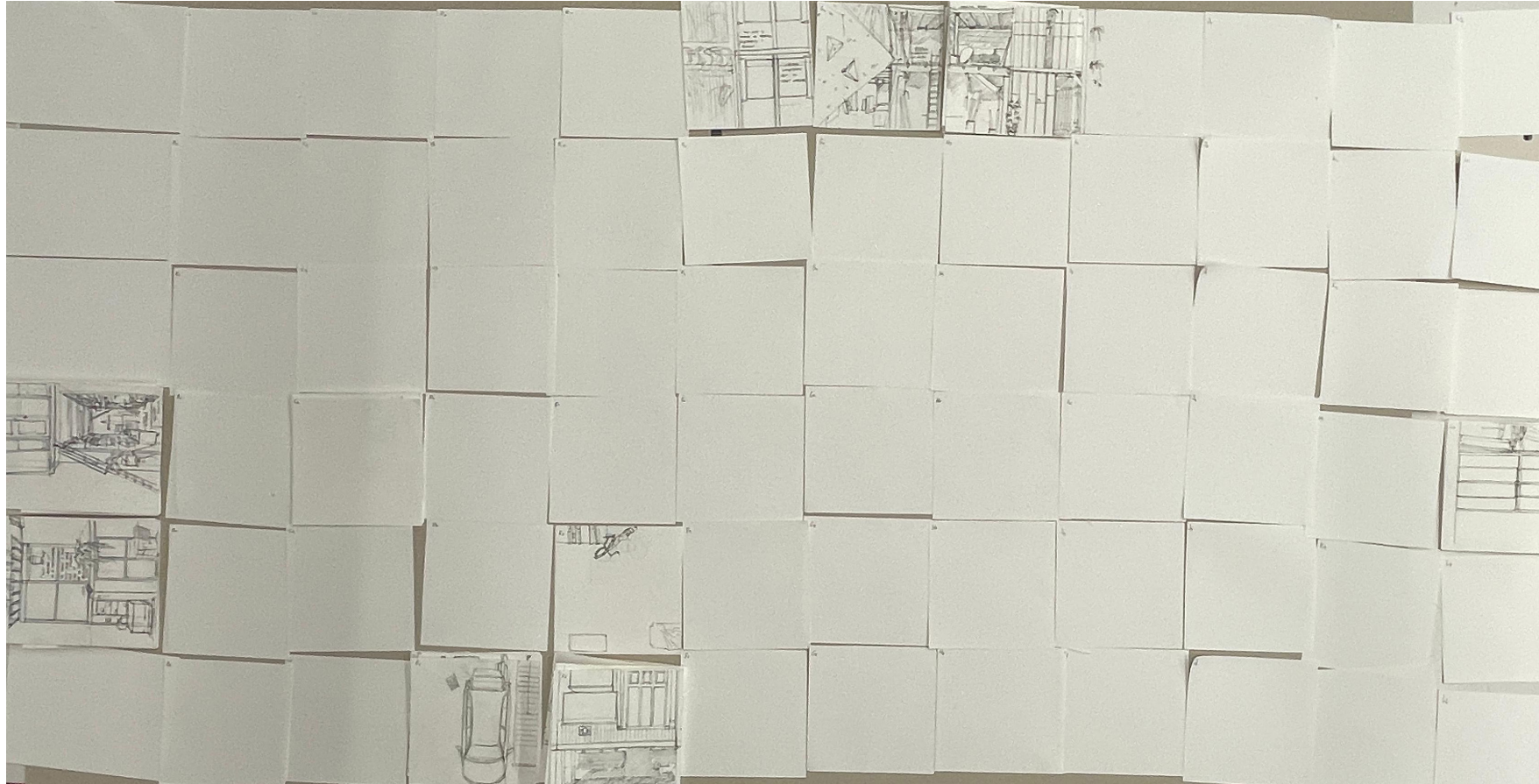


A panoramic view of Fokke's kot interior. Hand drawing

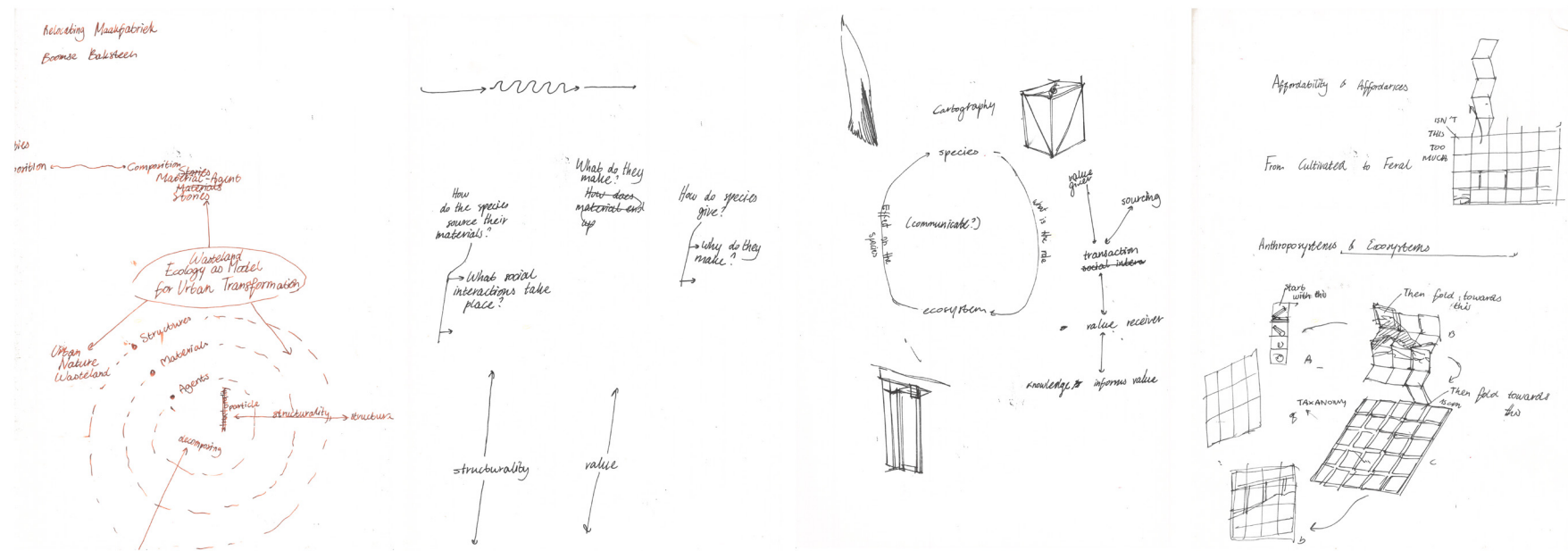


A panoramic view of justin's kot interior. Hand drawing

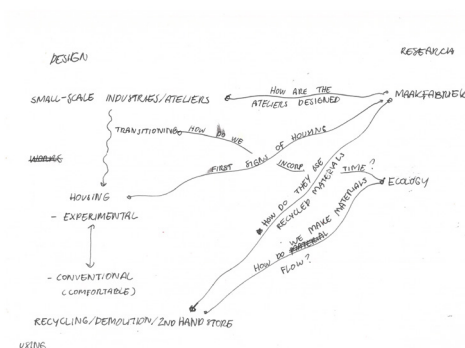
Fieldwork - Ecosystem



If you put all the species and habitats together would that comprise an ecosystem?



Braindump trying to put the observations into words.



Preliminary Fieldwork Observations

urban ecosystem

Is the Maakfabriek an ecosystem? As we could see in the fieldwork, that is not the case. It is in fact very dependant on other environments, so its not a self-standing system yet. The agents in the Maakfabriek rely on other places to acquire food, housing and other basic needs. Rather the Maakfabriek should be understood as a counterpart of a larger urban ecosystem. Material rarely circulates in the Maakfabriek, instead they are sourced from other parts of the city and also after transformed to be used outside the maakfabriek. Even so, by bringing these discarded materials back to use, the maakfabriek could be viewed as an element in the beginning of a material cycle on an urban scale.

cultivated vs feral

This is important as the extent to which the Maakfabriek is cultivated, or organised and politicized says a lot about the interaction between humans and their environment. Inhabitants taking care of their environment is an ideal for the design, that goes hand-in-hand with agency. In the maakfabriek this culture of care is visible in these scenes from the research. The self-regulatory qualities are partly dependant on the size of the community. Although at first glance the maakfabriek might appear as a feral environment, there are also rules and spatial constraints, key in the research is to find out what elements of organising are beneficial, redundant or harmful to the culture of care.

affordances & affordability

In the maakfabriek I noticed at the first site visit the sheltered condition the factory halls provide, not only in a physical sense but also in a social way. This sketch shows on the one hand the Hobokense polder, where a plantation of poplar trees, shelters this rich undergrowth and collection of life. Similarly, in the Maakfabriek the specific physical and social conditions allow and attract the Maakfabriekers to form this phantasmagoria of structures underneath. The ateliers do not have to be rainproof, or take wind loads, neither due to their temporal nature are they subject to all the cultural and social codes and regulations concerning architecture. These conditions as an ecologist would say are affordances, activating and attracting certain people to settle and appropriate space.

Affordability, seemingly a term from a very different context and meaning, becomes in the maakfabriek an affordance. Affordance meaning what the environment offers to the individual in ecology. A watering hole, is for example an affordance that supports large drinking herbivores in a natural environment. I view affordability being the crucial affordance in the environment of the Maakfabriek that attracts the waste-processing community. Because there is small financial impetus in the maakfabriek, inhabitants are forced

to look for cheap alternatives and the desirability and value of waste and efficient space is uniquely stronger. As in the masterplan we aim to process urban waste effectively on the site of my design, it is important similar affordable conditions are met. While balancing out other affordances such as shelter. To achieve this in similar practice the design reuses the existing, discarded factory halls, which come with many opportunities.

I view affordability being the crucial affordance in the environment of the Maakfabriek that attracts the waste-processing community.

Masterplan

Marianna Canteen and Maakfabriek neighborhood

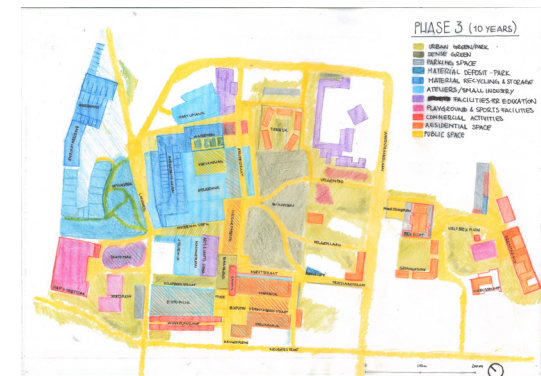
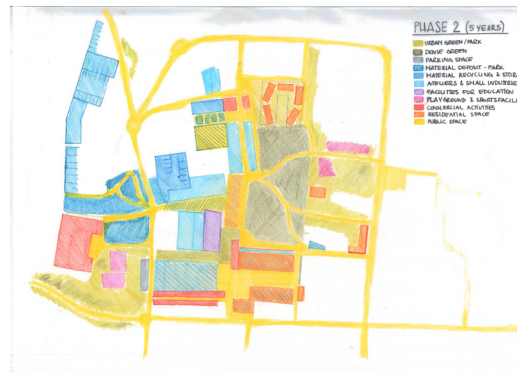
Humanizing a factory hall as a joined endeavour between the architect and the users. How to incite people to appropriate space and build a meaningful relationship to it.

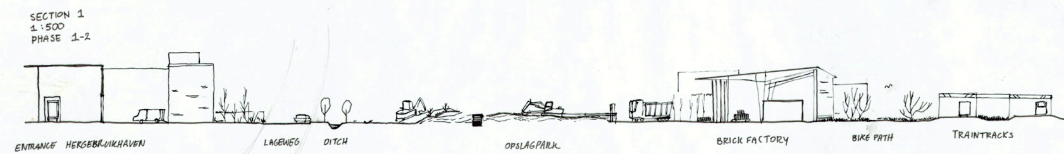
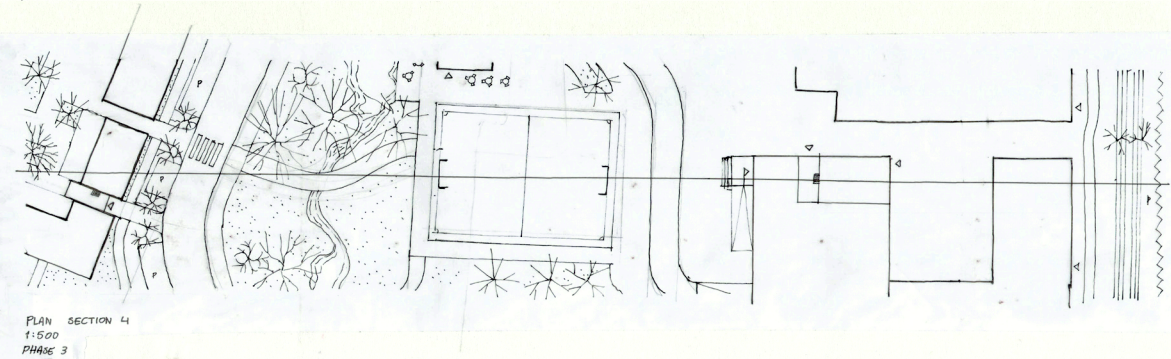
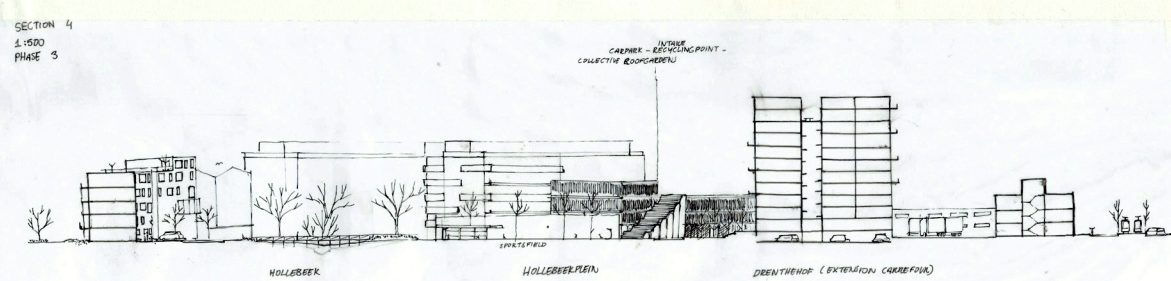


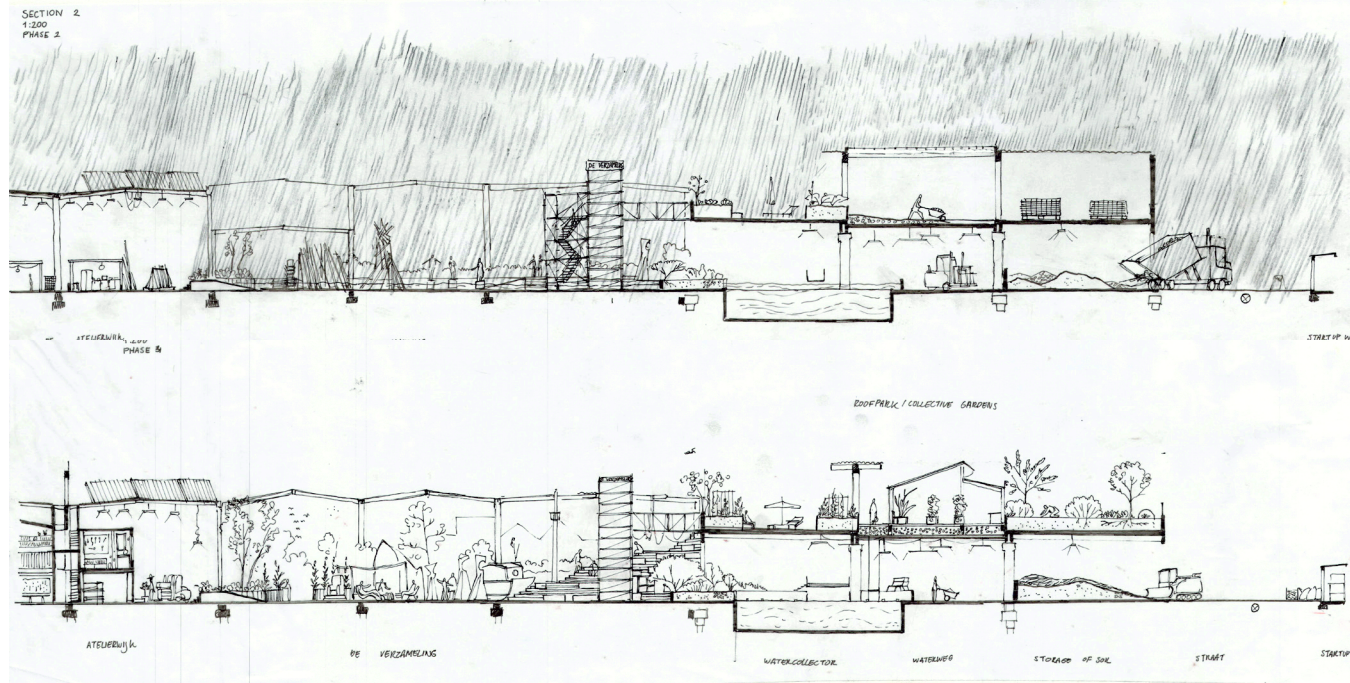
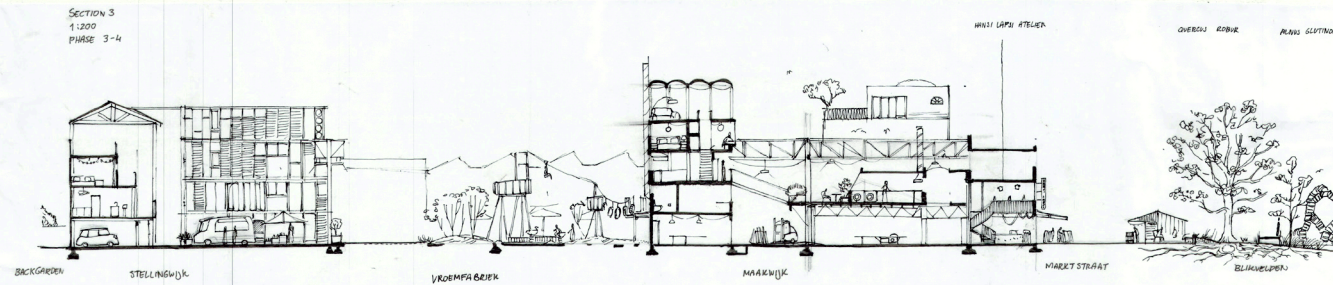
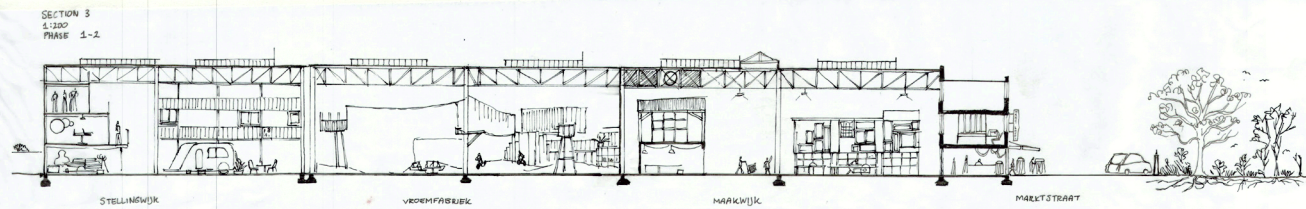
Raf Reconfiguration School

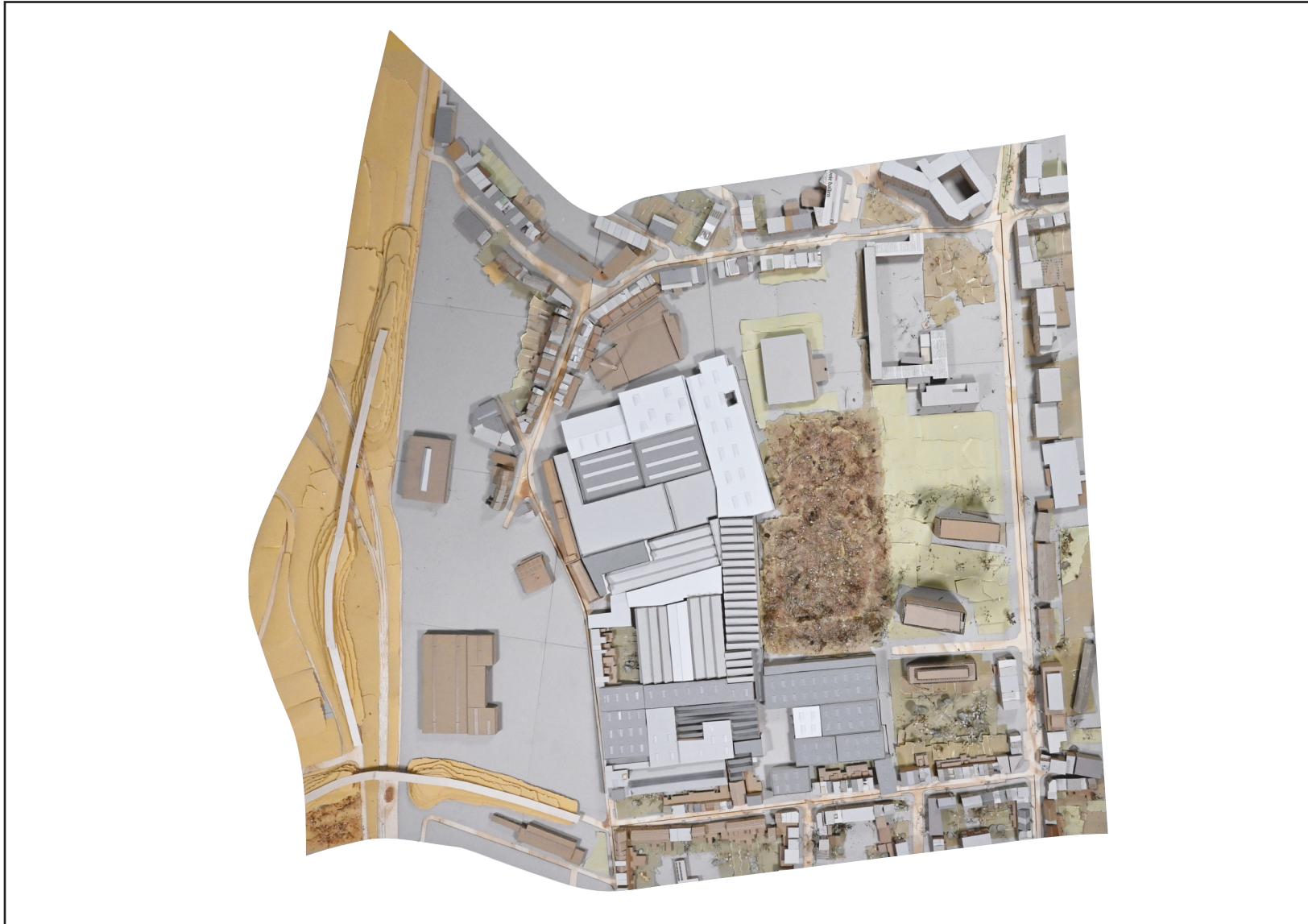
Conceiving architecture through unwanted materials and building. How to bring the discarded back into use?

This Masterplan approaches the site as part of Antwerp's social, cultural and material ecosystem. Inspired by the pioneering community at Blikfabriek, it proposes a strategy of reconfiguration, building on existing qualities of the industrial heritage and material flows. Using time to its advantage, the plan aims to establish a culture of care by reusing discarded materials the city produces. In this way, the Masterplan operates as demolition contractor, recycling centre and thrift shop at once. By focusing on exchange points at the edge of industry and neighbourhood it increases the surface area between materials and residents.

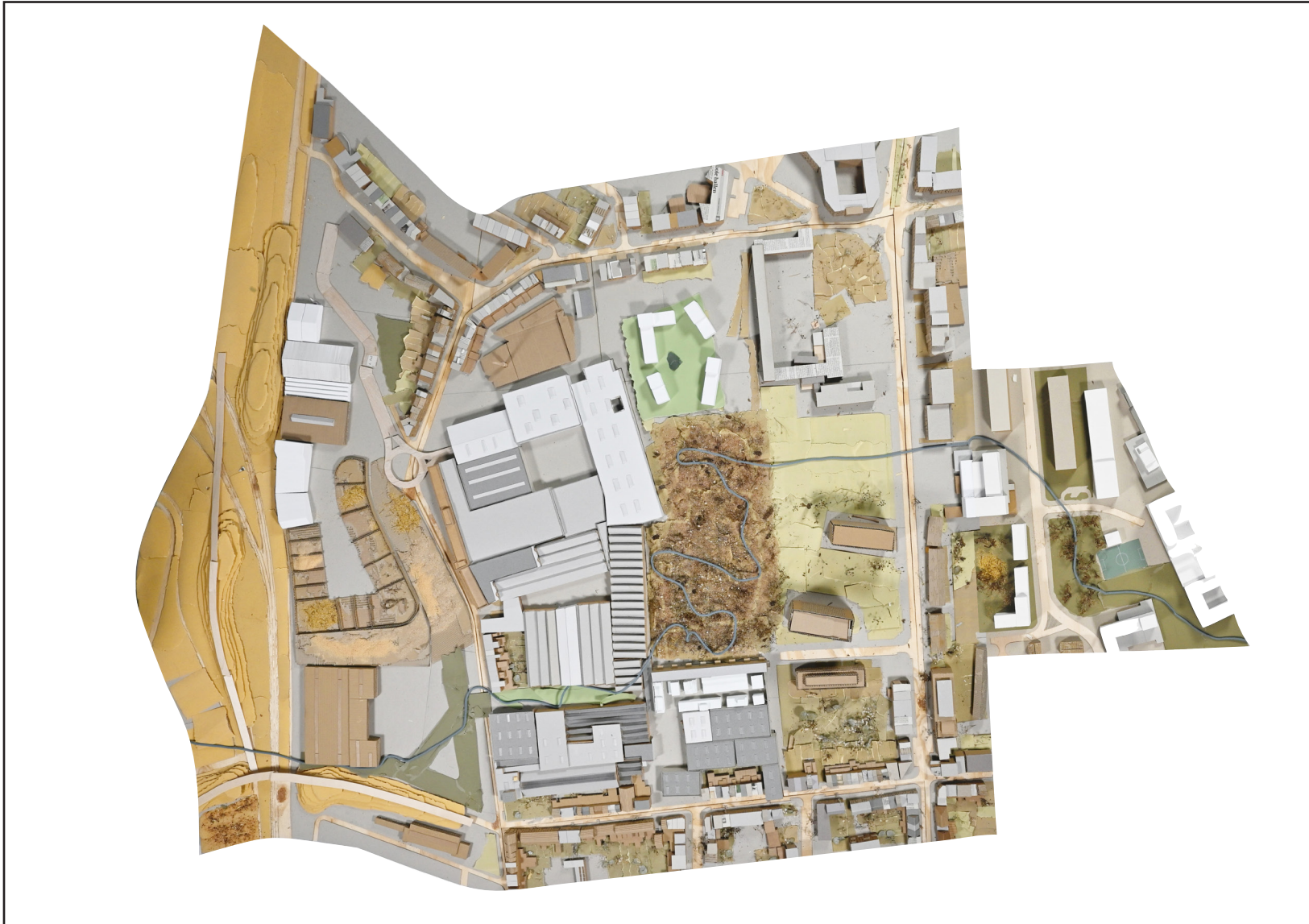








Esisting situation.



Masterplan with a rather minimal change to the halls, for they are to be appropriated by small industries in earlier phases. While densifying on the edge, where there already exists a microcentrality, comprising of supermarkets.

Masterplan reflection - position

Judging from reactions to the masterplan, I believe my position in urban design and perhaps architecture at large should better be defined. In this short text, I will hopefully clarify my thoughts on the discussed themes in the studio and by extent create the foundation for certain design choices in our masterplan. I will start with thoughts on overarching themes and then gradually move towards specific site conditions that cause the diversion of the brief and unconventional approach.

'Low Town Downtown', is the title of the graduation studio and with its multiplicity of meanings, it has sparked a collection of thoughts and interesting observations. In one of its interpretations, the idiom juxtaposes two opposing concepts, Low Town invoking a quiet, overlooked place, far removed from the 'High' Town which looks down upon this part of the city and the Downtown being the bustling centre of activity in the city. Naturally, any city planner dealing with the site and its association to the Low Town, first reaction would be to ensure the site takes on the characteristics of the Downtown. However, from an ecosystemic viewpoint, this approach requires careful consideration. Instead of proposing new facilities, we ar-

gue to strengthen the micro centralities already present elsewhere and introduce new functions that do not compete with them.

Naturally, any city planner dealing with the site and its association to the Low Town, first reaction would be to ensure the site takes on the characteristics of the Downtown. However, from an ecosystemic viewpoint, this approach requires careful consideration.

Then one could argue building 500 - 1000 residences on site would create enough argument to create new urban facilities. However, the resulting 1125 - 2250 new inhabitants (crude calculation based upon the Flemish average household size in 2024) bring the support of facilities such as a library or supermarket into question. Moreover, society embracing technological advancements that automatize, digitalize and individualize many aspects of life, that were previously attested to civic centres would point towards a decrease in urban facilities. In this light, introducing new urban facilities almost always require to be visited by people from the surrounding neighbourhood, this will mean that they spend less of their time in

the existing micro centralities, such as the area surrounding the St. Bernardse Steenweg. Although the facilities in this area are shortcoming, a lot of commerce and infrastructure has developed here. A successful implementation of the downtown on the site, brings the existence and current city dynamics on which citizens are dependant under threat.

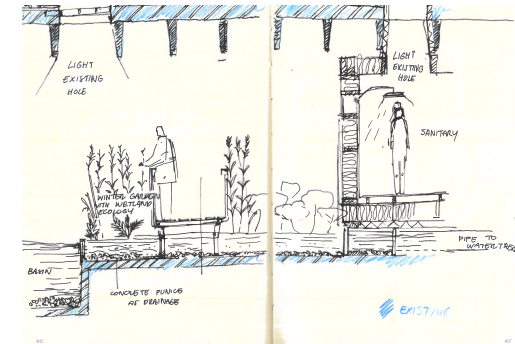
Also, the proximity (5-10min walk) and the position of the site in relation to the St. Bernardse Steenweg, would make urban facilities that serve the site more feasible in this area. Even though, master plans might envision a new demographic for the site, I would still argue that facilities tailored to them be housed at the St. Bernardse Steenweg district instead of on site, to promote encounters between existing and new residents in the neighbourhood.

Both the risk of flooding and the severe pollution of the site, are to be seriously considered when building on the site. Any conventional residential programme, would have to be subject to a rigorous sanitation process. This again undermines the feasibility of a conventional urban renewal development.

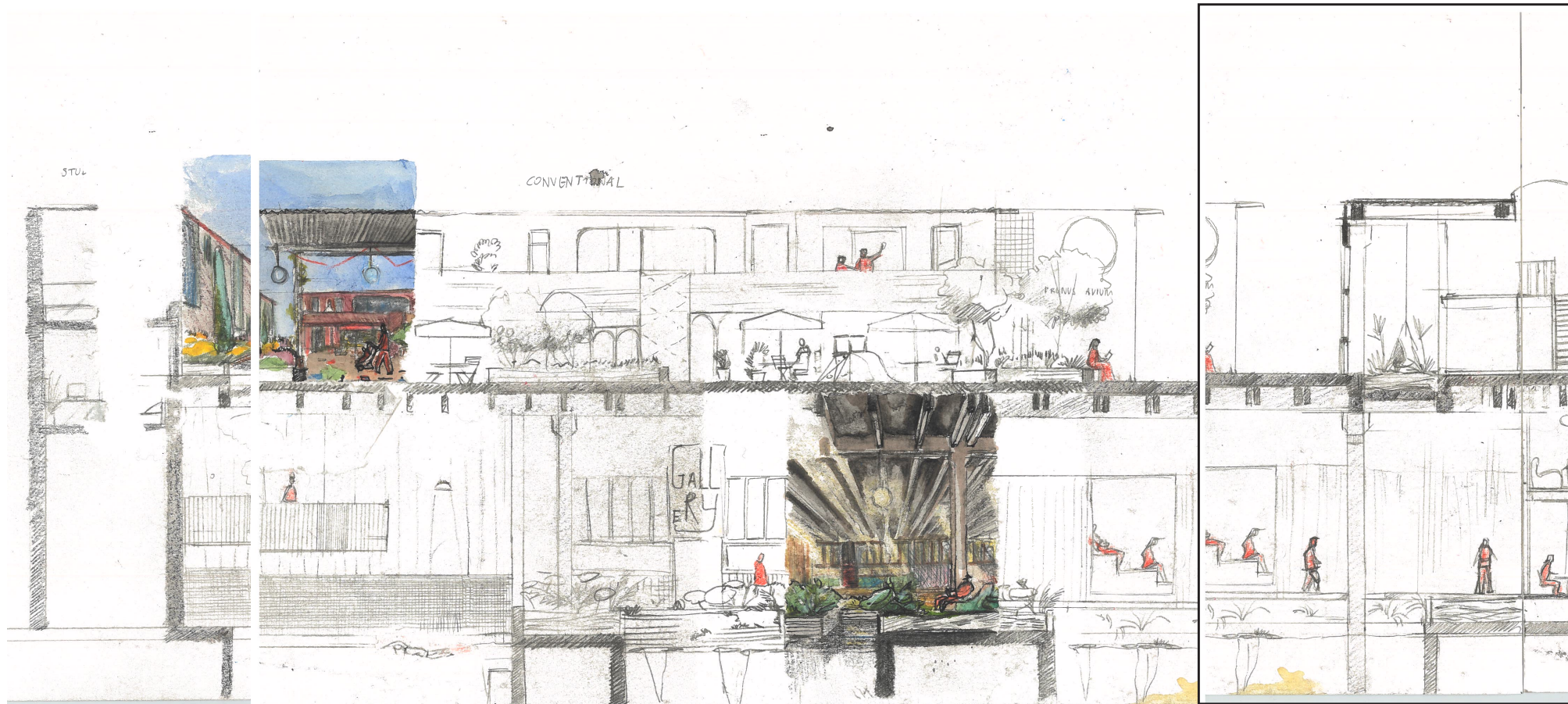
Moving away from urban development schemes focused on the human centre and accumulation of capital and value, we could explore urban configurations that could benefit from a peripheral location; Respecting the periphery as a vital com-

ponent of the urban system. Essentially, I believe that a further extension of the periphery is an unsustainable approach to city-making, if we want a well functioning city we must not only design its (human) centres but also edges. Demolition contractor, recycling centre and thrift shop are critical urban functions that need the uneasy balance to human proximity and comfortable distance the edge provides. I think from this position we designed the masterplan.

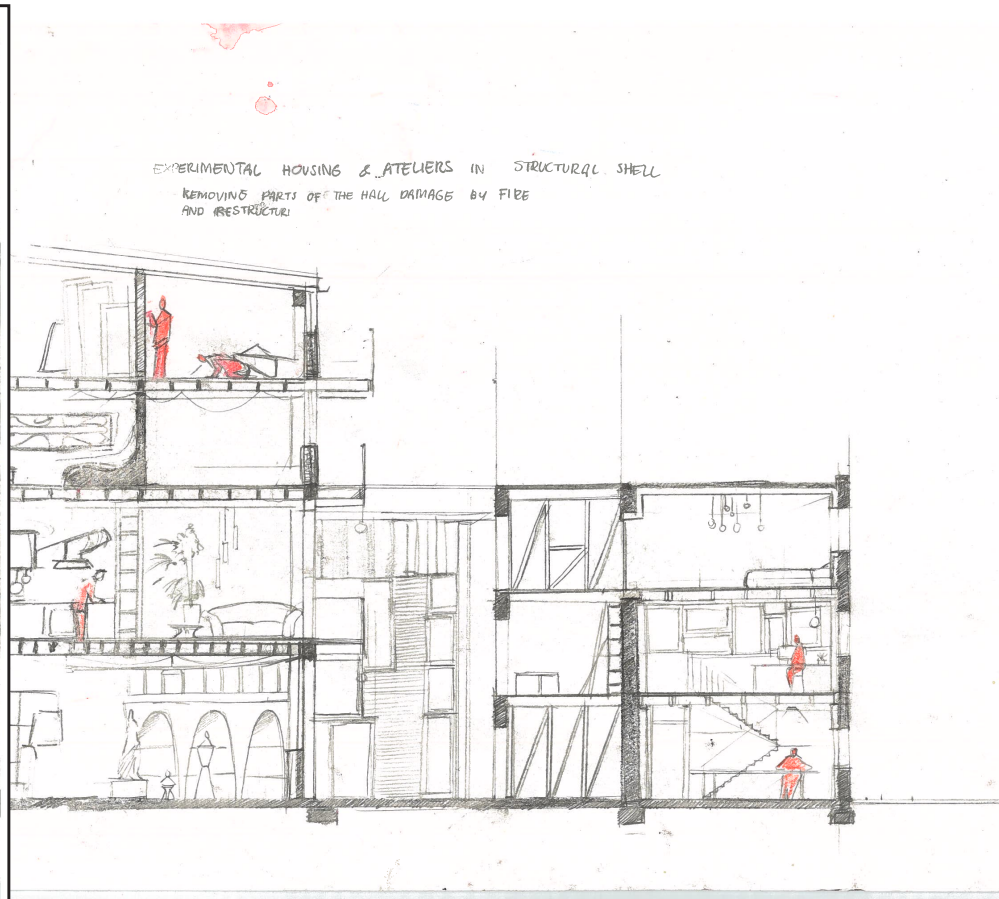
Nonetheless, I think Sam's comment was well-placed in the sense that these industrial functions could become more interwoven with the human. A good edge, even in ecology is a gradient, we could have explored more symbiotic relationships by interposing city centre and edge functions in close proximity to each other, to come to a more effective and efficient use of space.



Essentially, I believe that a further extension of the periphery is an unsustainable approach to city-making, if we want a well functioning city we must not only design its (human) centres but also edges.

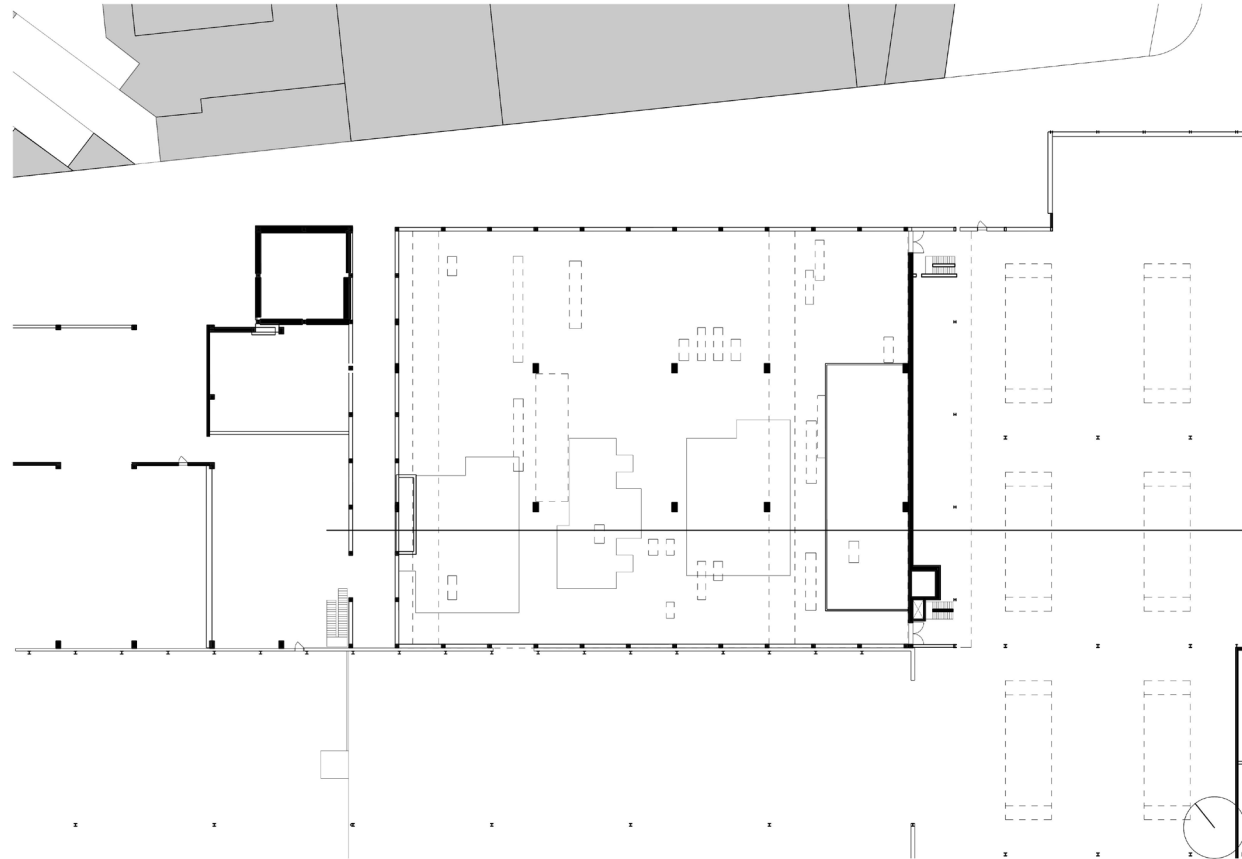


Section drawn for the P2

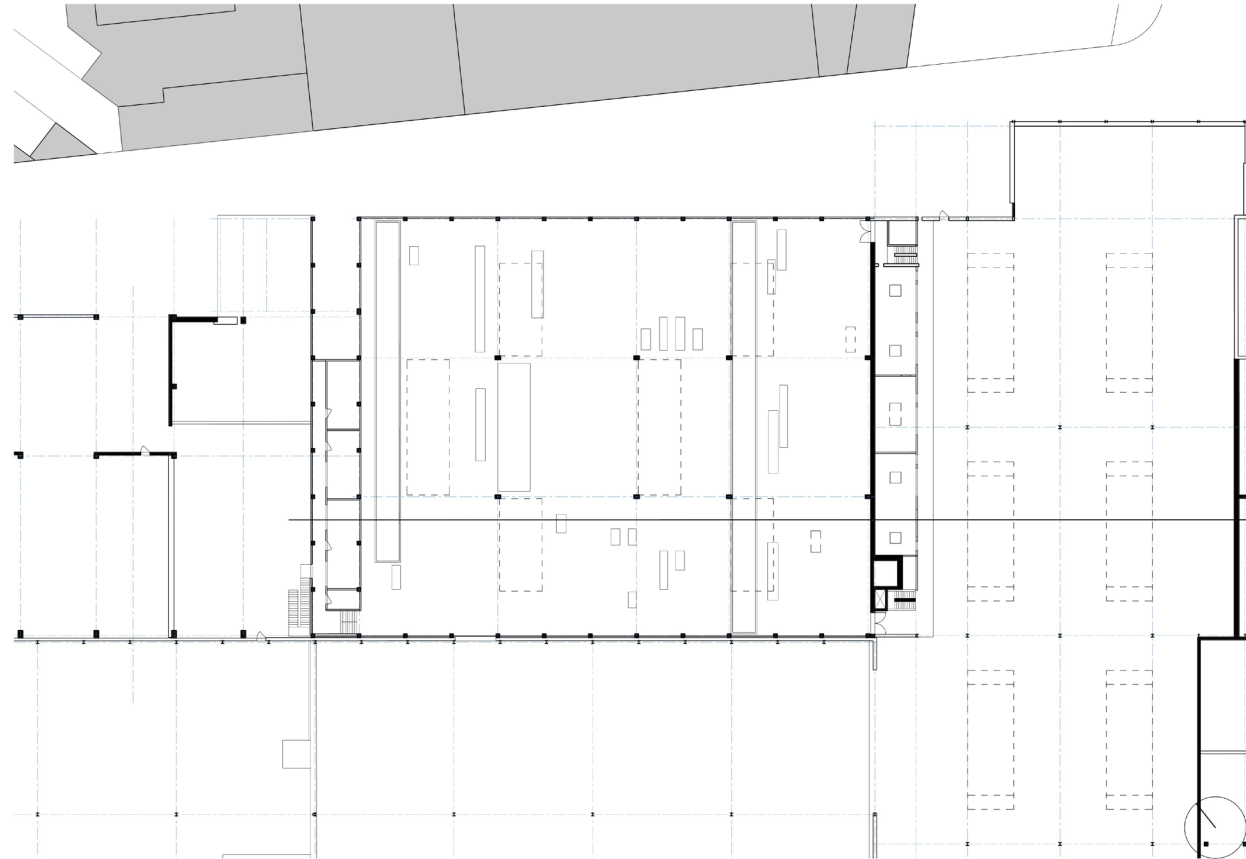


I write this small reflection unfortunately in retrospect, but I remembered to be quite upset about the P2 presentation. I am overcomplicating my work, in such a way I forget to communicate the basics of the project. However, this also makes me realize that it might be too ambitious and I need to cut down certain aspects of the project. I should really work on presenting.

Shows existing ground
floor



Shows existing 1st floor



14.02.2025

Eireen

Try to see communication as a fun challenge for the upcoming half year. How to arrange the information in such a way that it is immediately clear for the viewer what is meant. Ask others to help you and for advise. You have enough material, try now to communicate this with a workable devise.

I think you have already managed to produce depictions of ecosystems. Catalogue is for later, focus on a logbook now. Logbook is everything you do, also the mistakes you make. Catalogue is the final product you show at a job interview.

Anét

God is in the details. Compelling section and programme. What is sustainability?

“Try to see communication as a fun challenge for upcoming half year” - Eireen

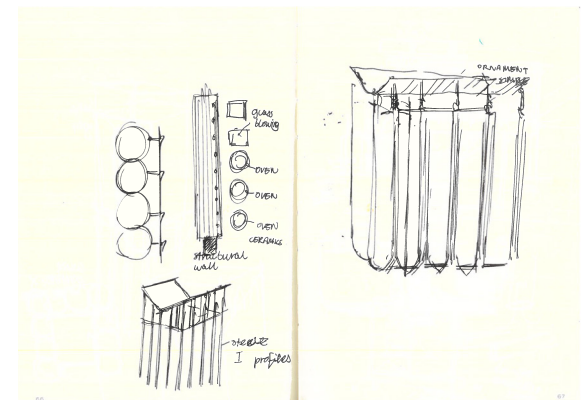
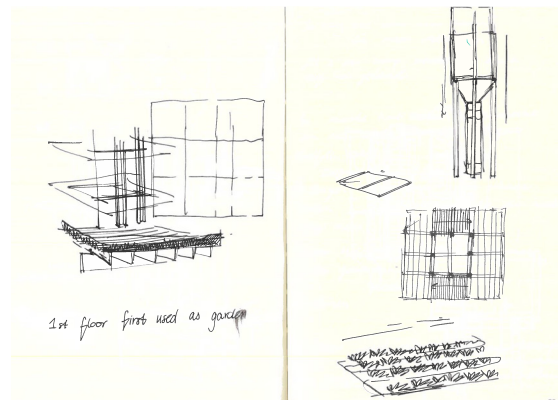
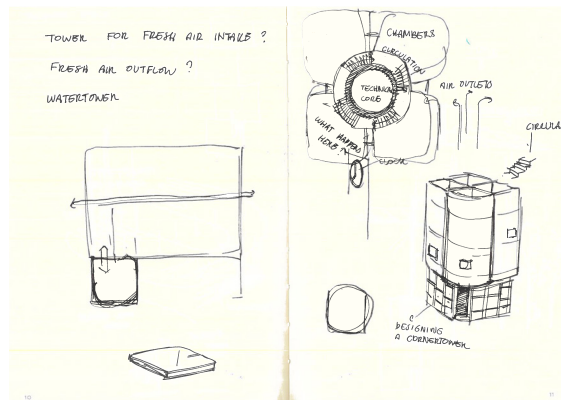
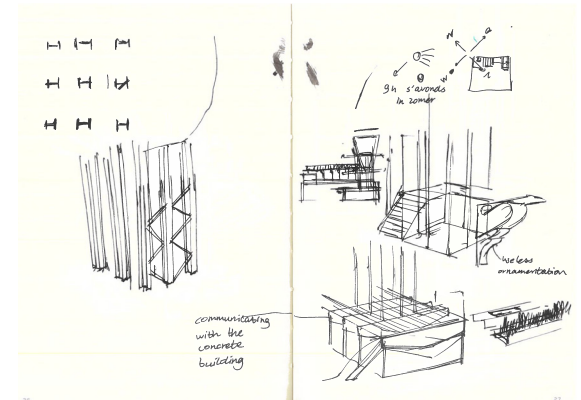
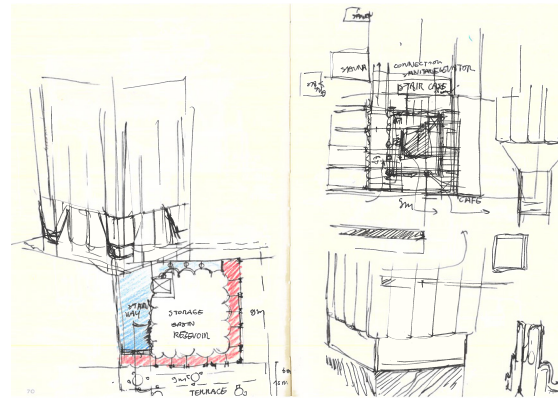
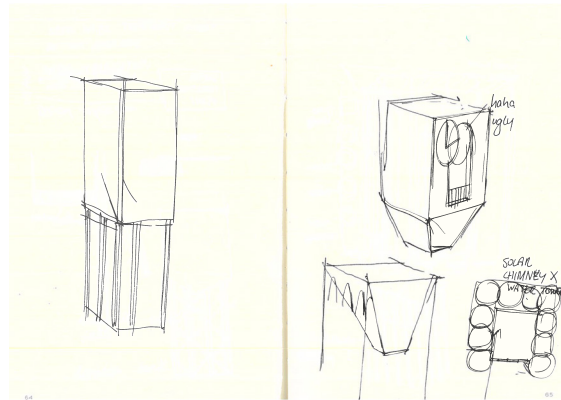
Sam

Don't feel too upset about the P2, I think the ideas were there it just needed a bit more communication.

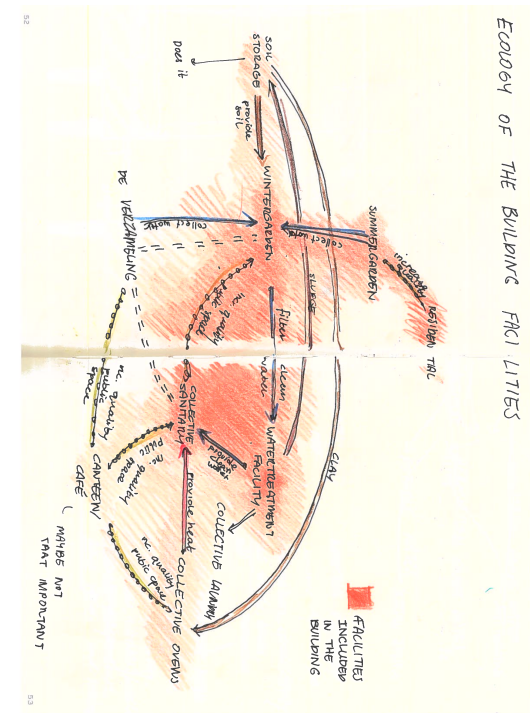
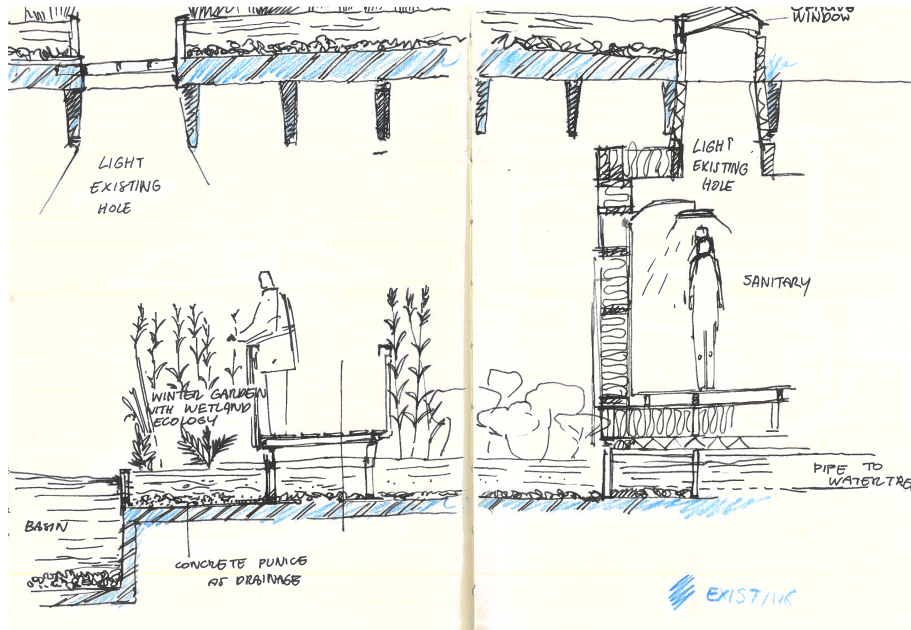
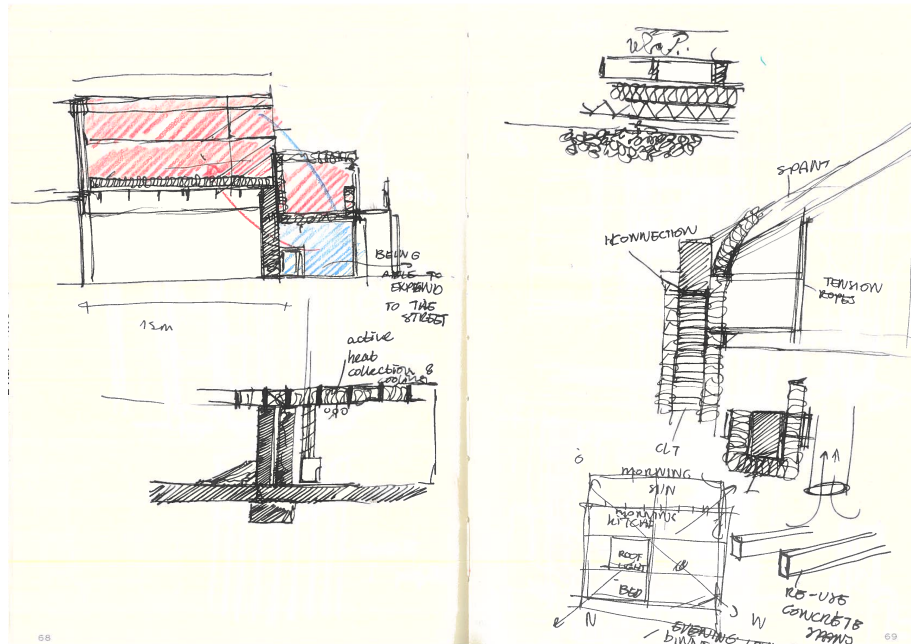
What is the scale of the water treatment equipment? When this is clear, the design of the ground floor could become more tangible. I didn't understand what was happening around the plot from your drawings. In terms of functions, the storage of material seems a bit much and the collective machinery could belong somewhere else. I really like the idea of a wassertreatment facility with a bathhouse a public face. This northern side of the plot is not clear to me. You will have to investigate light conditions of the ground floor more for the programme you envision.

Reflection

Communication is still a big issue for me, in every aspect of the project unfortunately. Now the experimental housing isn't part of the plan, I am unsure how the research connects to the design. Even though I am convinced that the architect should not be involved with the designing of this aspect of the masterplan.



Watertower iterations.



communal bathhouse

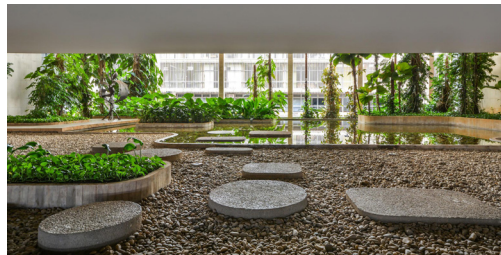


Komeyu Schemata Architects.



Komeyu Schemata Architects.

covered gardens



Oscar Niemeyer.



Filip Dujardin.

cavernous architecture



Aldo van Eyck.

21.02.2025

Paul

You should focus on communicating before skipping to the more detailed drawing you show, I don't understand the project now fully and cannot assess it. I think it doesn't have to take a lot of time, it might just be one or two drawings of the project and the adjusted masterplan. I wonder if enough light will permeate to the wintergarden, but I also understand the muted light conditions you show in the reference of Pastoor van Arskerk. The combination of functions is compelling, though I wouldn't be opposed to leaving the housing out on the higher levels. Now I understand this to be a watertower/solar chimney facing the sun, the angle makes more sense, and the circular gesture doesn't feel out of place, though it could be investigated a bit more.

Anét

It's about mapping the existing structures very precisely. The location for the section you chose is strong. I would now just start with the 1:20. The heavy concrete structures would allow for a light construction on top as you draw it now.

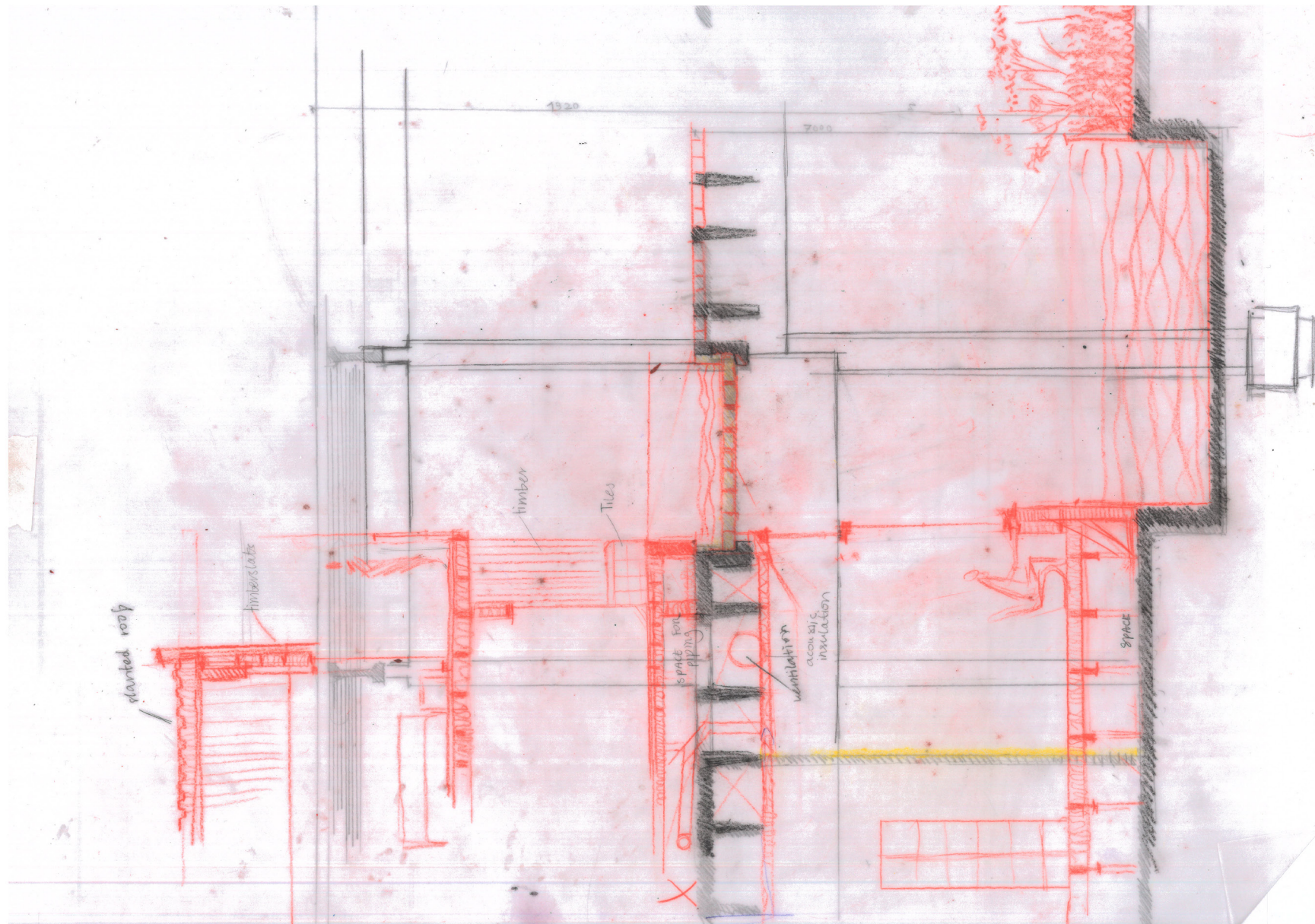
Reflection

Time on time, I fail to communicate the project well. To be honest, it is a bit demotivating to receive this feedback, as I feel like it is something outside of my capabilities. However, Anet was very positive, which makes me suspect it is also a matter of scale. I think similarly to the P2, I have failed to produce a logical step between the masterplan and the architectural design. The detail in the architectural design is well understood, but the architectural design in the masterplan less so.

This week, I tried to understand water treatment and purification plants better. I worked a lot on iterations of floor plans in scales 1:333 and 1:500.

Also I feel quite lost in the research now. I do understand the choosing of relevant data, would make the research more comprehensible and more tightly knit with the design. However, I am unsure of what is relevant for the design and it feels a bit uneasy to look for 'useful' information in the research. It feels like I'm trying to find a solution, instead of collecting data. I would feel more comfortable with the catalogue product being a collection of stories, instead of something already focused towards design.

[illegible]



07.03.2025

Eireen

The way you communicate now is already much better! Although I'm missing visuals, I know you have them. Also, perhaps you can expand more on the Polder vs Maakfabriek

Perhaps also I should respect your work from the smaller scale.

For me, 'Entanglement' is much more represented in the design, so perhaps focus on that aspect in explaining the project. 'Things growing' might also be there, but trying to explain them both is confusing and you are making it too complicated then. With entanglement use the layers we have already proposed:

- Humans
- Non-humans (mainly water, but also other entities)
- Existing (geology)

Do not read all of Gibson

Focus as much as possible on the design until the 18th of March

Reflect the structure of the research to the design, would be ideal. Then think about a uniform visual language. The heart diagram for the masterplan is very strong. Perhaps every layer should have a representation as such.

Critical is the way of ordering, looking, positioning, storing information.

Ecology Seminar

I think in general the series of lectures confirmed the concepts and ideas of the masterplan and the design goals for the building.

Ecology and aesthetics (Elsbeth):

Refresh memory on Latour: Gaia. Viewing inert entities, such as rivers and ecosystems as agents.

What is ecological aesthetic? It is not hard-defined of course, but my own interpretation then would be ecological aesthetics are sensory (visual, olfactory, auditory, etc.) experiences that a building induces, which make the users aware of the ecology they live in (dependency or connection to non-human forces).

The never-ending building (Elzbieta):

Somehow for me, at least the interior, did not emanate the feeling of the building prior, I think it's perhaps good to be critical to the idea of never-ending building and how much the building is a 'continuation'. Why did they choose to focus on one period of time and not show the other developments and changes the building had undergone throughout its history.

I think the 4 typologies she proposed as to deal with heritage was interesting, although I missed the glass cloche.

Research Eireen & Chiara:

Demolition can be quite lucrative.

Don't meld materials together, do not chemically mix them.

- Brick in this case was most lucrative (of before they used cement in mortar (70's))

- Large elements of timber were valuable.

- Concrete is useless

- Concrete and tar roof is toxic waste.

Viewing the human caused movement of material as geology is I think a very strong metaphor. It somehow very powerfully implicates multiple ideas, very telling for the current state of the human ecology.

- Scale, movement of materials by humans is on an enormous scale, comparable to rivers, and tides.

- It strongly implies that not only humans interact with the material, but also non-humans. The landscape humans shape by their interaction with material, causes new human – and non-human ecologies to take place.

KANAL:

Impressive scale of building, but also precision of the research. Colour systems were leading in the project, this was also interesting as now often importance is placed more on the material.

Fire curtains.

4cm of dilatation in the connections between the roof and new structures.

We could be critical about whether the neighbourhood inhabitants benefit from this type of project, as it is also funded largely by the government.

Demolition and construction were sequential, because toxic and hazardous materials were involved in the demolition. However some less rigorous demolition activities were done during construction.

Julia Greb:

Radical subdued architecture, radical concepts are feeding an architecture which does not impose, shout or preform. European conservation institutes are blocking the 'life' of buildings.

Sam & Elzbieta

Good location, very evocative section. Your section could be about showing how the light reaches through and how humans interact with the water. It doesn't have to communicate circulation.

Design: Create snapshots of the garden for the people sitting in the canteen.

Reflection

Stop being frustrated about the time things take, let things come along in their own pace, and don't overwork because it makes you less productive in the long run. Organising is going well, although we haven't reached the point of clear communication through visual material yet. I think also the feedback is increasingly positive. There is a much stronger idea on how research and design connect through the three layers.

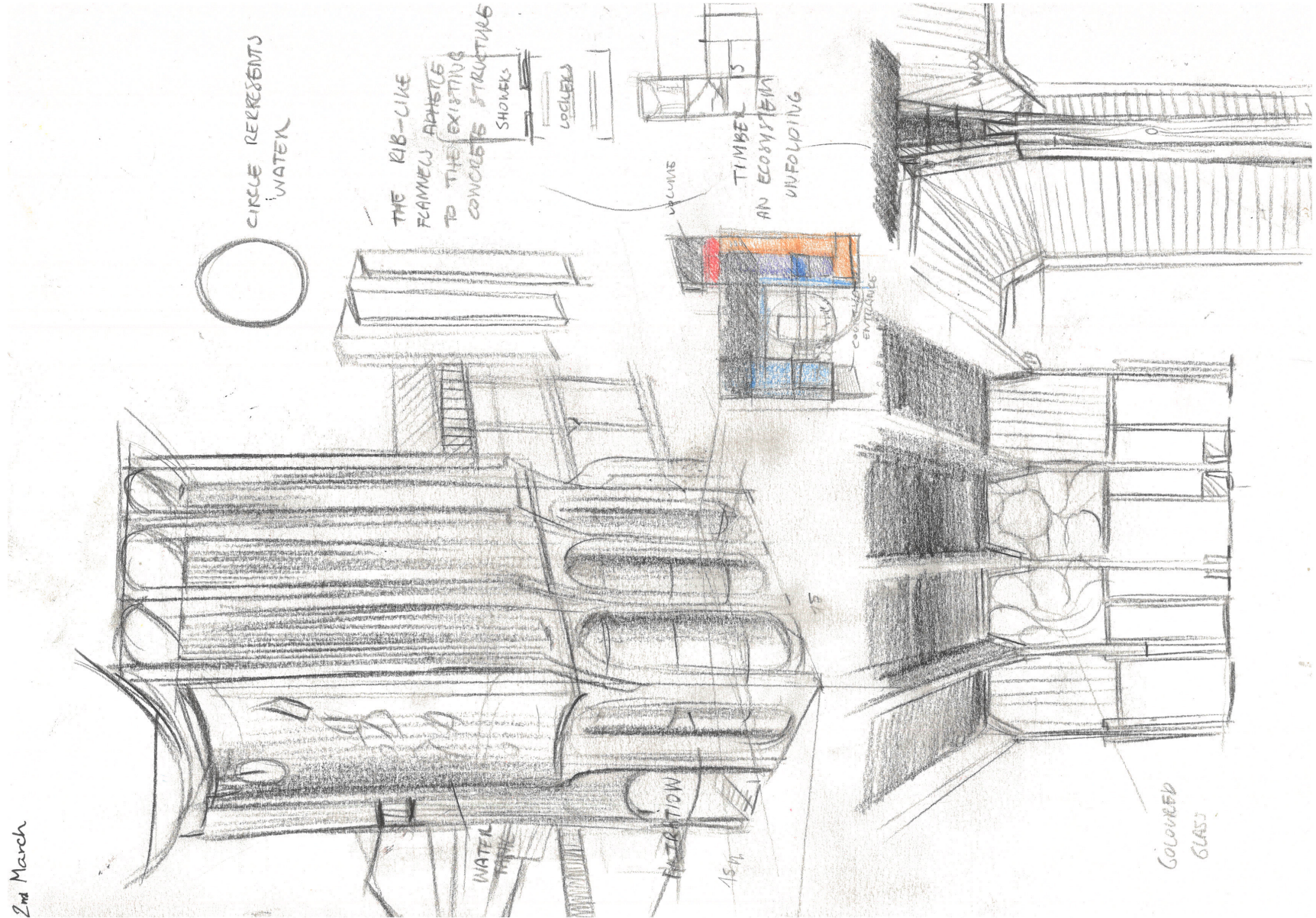
There is a lot of work to do though.

Next week:

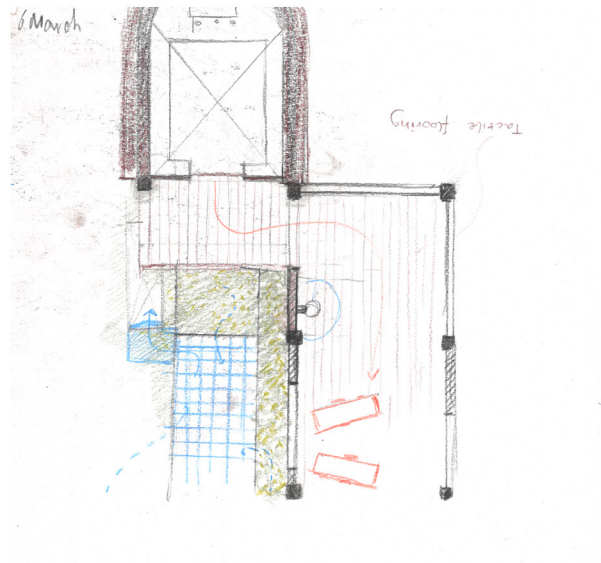
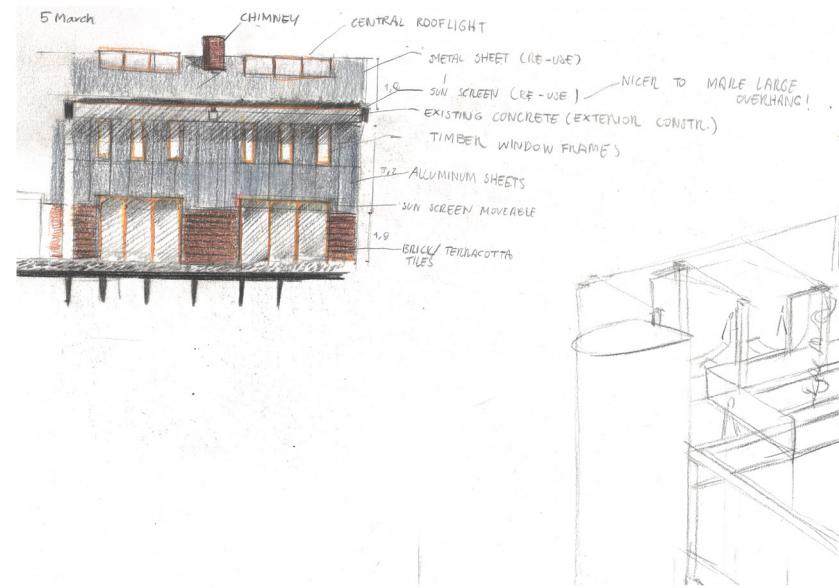
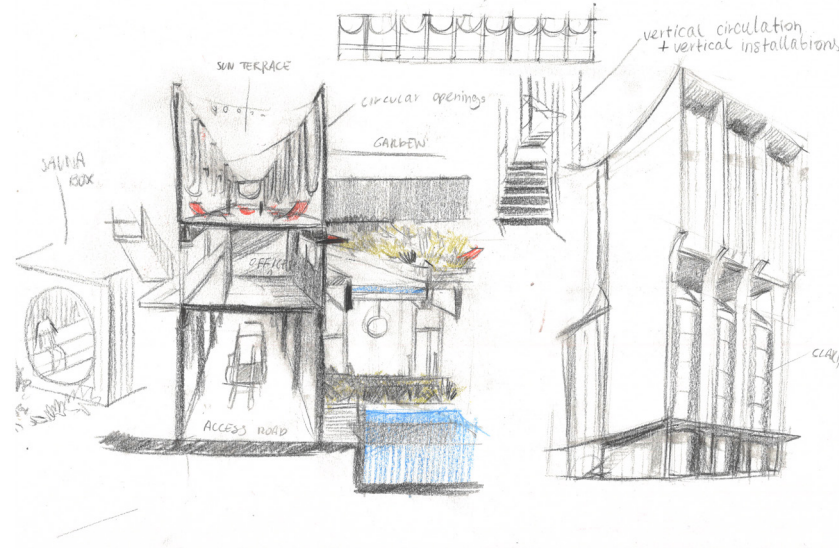
Cold seepage in the floorplan at the height of the glass blocks, is the passageway below inside or outside?

How does the circulation of the bathhouse work. Perhaps two types of usage: just the showers and lockers vs the baths. Perhaps the bathhouse could financially democratise the usage of the showers and lockers.

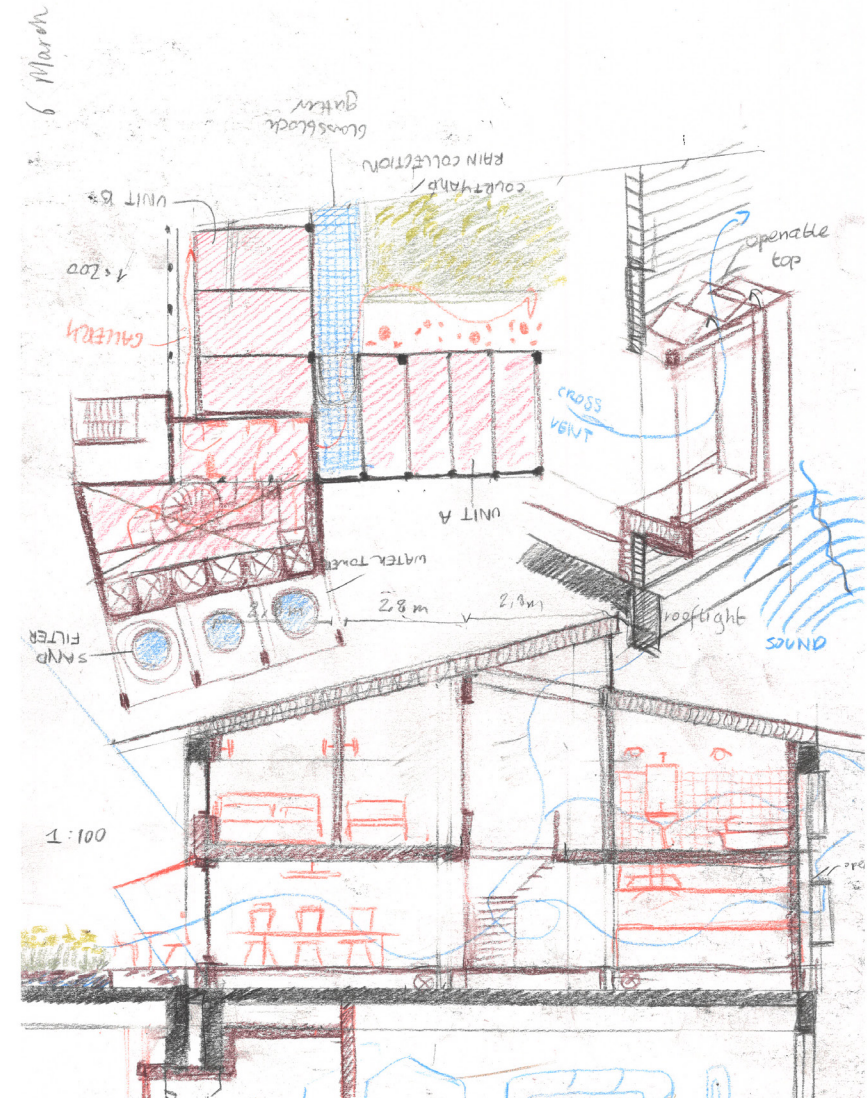
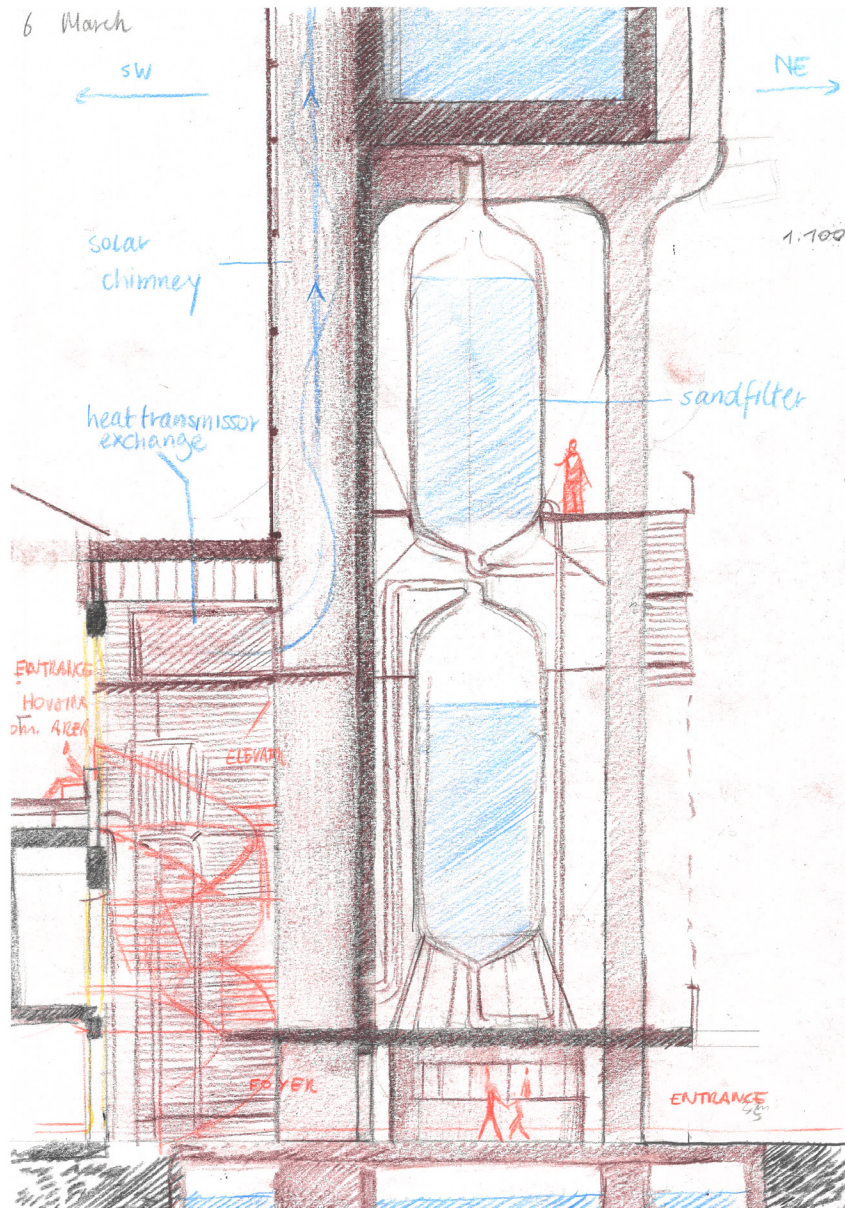
2nd March



3rd MARCH



From here on I started producing daily drawing on an A4 format to document consistently my design process.



13.03.2025

“See the 1-33 more like a sketch model. You could even just draw on a piece of paper and use it as test for the façade”- Sam

Sam

The circulation/working of the public street and changing rooms/showers seems quite well sorted and how the bath-house relates to filtration garden. However, I would expect something more to be there with all this infrastructure, what if you were to make a pool.

Moving from public to protected to public. See the 1-33 more like a sketch model. You could even just draw on a piece of paper and use it as test for the façade. Nice that you worked out the existing in MDF, perhaps you could screw it down.

Everything is there in the drawings, perhaps invest in some way to show all of them at once.

Good work.

Anét

A lot of possibilities. You have to draw it.

Reflection

This week felt quite productive. A lot design decisions were taken. There was a good balance between the 3D and the 2D media. I enjoyed it. However, I'm a bit worried about the research, now sitting very stagnant. I'm afraid there is too little time before the P4 to finish it all.

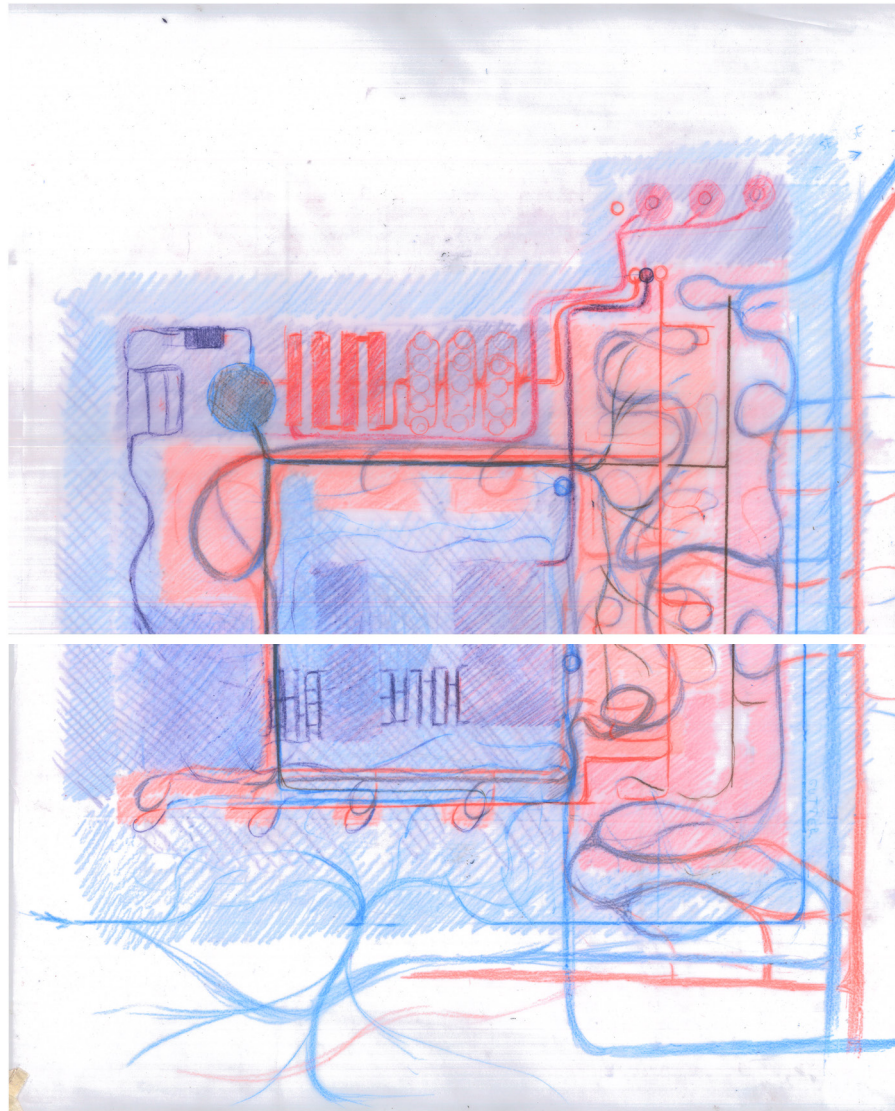
Perhaps talking with Anét not about the 1-33, but the floorplans would be fruitful and installations and the space reserved for them.

Site



1-1000 map situating the building with overdrawing on transparent paper

Flow of water



Watersystem groundfloor on transparent paper. Red = high quality (filtered), blue is low quality (unfiltered).

Reflection

Again I failed to communicate the project to Paul. An earlier experienced underbelly feeling of being a bit of an outsider to conventional architecture practice crept into me. However, this is also a valuable consternation and a moment to reflect on my own position as an architect. In the end, Paul in spite of that left it an open-ended question, a path for further research, which made me hopeful.

To be honest, there is I guess a certain disagreement inside of me with current architectural practices. I am an advocate of diversity, heterogeneity, and sensory stimulus in buildings. After all, I am a landscape architect and cannot bare the neutral, abstract environments we build ourselves opposed to the abundance and vibrance of any natural ecosystem. Contemporary Belgian architecture for me is bland, it's about turning a brick sideways, the way a window meets the roof, all-in-all very subtle gestures I wonder if any non-architect would understand, though personally appreciative of these gestures. It is still a very functional narrative, architecture in fear of ornaments, symbolism or emotional attachment in general. Could we celebrate buildings like we used to in pre-modernist architectures. I would vouch for a counternarrative in architecture. To start caring for our environment, we need as much sensory surface area for our brains and hearts to connect to.

The current state of architecture is still a reflection of a society that glorifies production, industry, capitalism, although we have discarded the strong ideological subjective aspects of modernism. But then again we cannot deny that every alteration of our built environment has impact on our psychology and society. An architecture of neutrality is equally enforcing upon human psychology as one that is ornamental, messy and vibrant. Is it not forceful if we do not provide opportunities for people to engage with their environment, like in nature. Is it not the relation to others that gives us a sense of being? I want to design buildings that acknowledge this fact and be not only functional, but invite an emotional and social engagement that gives it resiliency.

However, there is a balance of course. I return to the analogy of nature. Everything in that romanticised concept is vibrant, alive, but still sensical, somehow visually connected to each other. Species of trees are spatially organised and grow together in patches dependant on the specific conditions of the site. How do we recreate the cognitive interest of nature, but still maintain its coherence in our built environment? And how to be realistic in the capitalist, progress-oriented mode of thought, constructs and landscapes our buildings are attested to?

To start caring for our environment, we need as much sensory surface area for our brains and hearts to connect to.

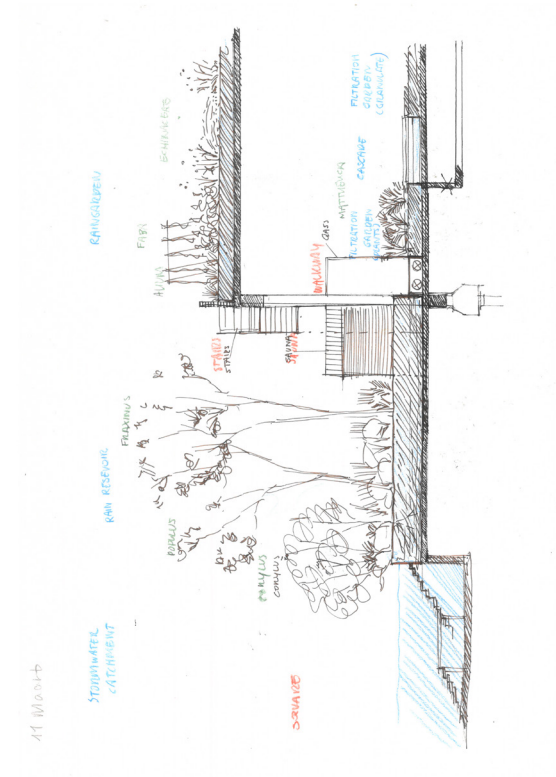
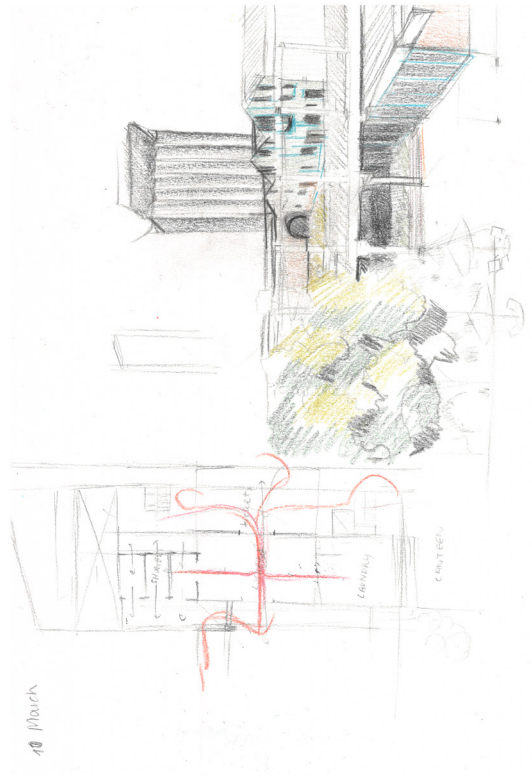
An architecture of neutrality is equally enforcing upon human psychology as one that is ornamental, messy and vibrant.

Façade studies



Sketches on A4 of the inner façade.

Architectural sketch of a building facade. The drawing is oriented vertically on the page. It shows a multi-story building with a prominent staircase on the left side. The building has a textured, possibly stone or brick, facade. There are several windows, some with blue frames or shutters. A sign on the building reads "WILD MATERIAL TELLERD 2" and "CANTSEEN". Below the sign, there is a small entrance with a sign that says "TO BATH" and "CANTSEEN". The drawing is done in pencil and colored pencil, with some areas shaded in grey and blue. There are some yellow and green scribbles at the bottom, possibly representing foliage or a ground surface.



Logbook
P3
Lance Schroten

20.03.2025

Eireen

I think going into the tutoring, I was perhaps a bit worried and scattered about where the research was going and how to relate to the design, but in the end everything I'm researching for my design (including the water systems) is related to research.

Try to make clear what is outside and inside, which portions are climatized or not. Visualize where water comes into contact with humans. Research is looking at the things that are already present. Architecture is looking at things that are still to come. Everything you find out for your design is research.

Maybe your research should be, what material is water, what are its dynamics state and how could you reflect that in the model.

The building aims to entangle the existing structure (geology), water (non-humans) and humans.

Paul

I began the daunting task of explaining a complicated project, for which I knew I lacked the visual material to be logical, coherent or obvious. It was already late and I somehow couldn't convey my ideas in a structured manner. Moving from design decision to decision, whilst scanning his face for a hint of understanding. This moment did not come of course, so unwillingly there came about a silence. He attempted to make a few practical suggestions that were almost immediately refuted after I re-explained the spaces. Until, he came to the conclusion that there was too much happening. Too much shapes and forms. Too much effort to hide the industrial factory. The architecture was like a rambling, weedy rose (this was negative). It was so he said voluntaristic, trying to enforce a certain ideology, an utopia, which wasn't realistic. It reminded him of socialist architectures from the 80's that were idealistic, the appearance of it at least.

I tried to explain that there wasn't so much concrete lost, that replacing the roof, was anyways a necessity. Moreover, puzzled by the referral to 80's architecture. To him, it recalled a certain way of building which was very 'un-belgian' (read non-conforming of the studio). Ending his tutoring to catch a train, with the ambiguous phrase, "It's too much, but maybe it should be more."

"I would call the project voluntaristic, that means you envision a future that is too optimistic." - Paul

Building Brief

The building aims to entangle the existing structure (geology), water (non-humans) and humans.

The existing structure being the heavy concrete building, an addition to the factory complex in 2001 at its northern edge. Its now vacant structure was dimensioned to support heavy machinery, a characteristic feature being large cavities on the ground floor and a distinct patterns of openings and lowered ceilings on the first floor. Alongside the two-floored central hall, the building has two strips with smaller rooms (primarily used as offices). The building both responds to the excess and necessity of water in the proposed masterplan. Leaving many of the factory halls intact, there is a large paved area which requires a facility to deal with rainwater during heavy rainfall for example. Also, the more autonomous, self-built neighbourhood requires a flexible source of clean water. Thirdly, groundwater in the area is polluted damaging ecosystems and humans. Thus the function of the building is to purify water to potable quality and increase groundwater quality. To ensure reliable access to water, it mediates excess and scarcity of rainwater with its infrastructure.

The building supports humans in their re-settlement and reuse of the factory halls as proposed in the masterplan. Creating a bathhouse which on the one hand supports basic physical needs such as collective toilets and washing facilities for the experimental housing and ateliers; and on the other hand facilitates wellbeing and psychological needs being a place of contemplation and reflection amidst the industrious neighbourhood. Additionally on the raised platform, provided by its structure is a place reserved for housing, which could speak to members of the community/ecology which require more comfort.

The three layers entangle themselves through the proposed design interventions:

(existing <--> water) The distinct characteristic existing structures (its cavities and heavy structure) lend themselves for the collection and detention of water. The intensive roof - raingarden utilizes the strong concrete construction of the 1st floor. The cavities of the ground floor are detention and sedimentation pools for the filtration system.

(existing <--> humans) The dark and isolated interior of the existing structure inspires contemplative, reflective human states, which are promoted by the proposed design interventions. While the raised platform of the 1st floor provides another form of shelter from its industrious surroundings, qualities which could raise

comfort to a level of living. The smaller grained structure on the perimeters conform to human-scale and are naturally the most 'inhabited' in the design.

(humans <--> water) The 'healing' properties humans associate with water are exploited by many instances where water and humans interact in the building. Humans are made aware of their role in 'artificial' ecosystems, with the building exhibiting how clean water is provided by a symbiosis between non-human and human actors. The filtration garden forming the fulcrum where the rest of the human functions revolve around.

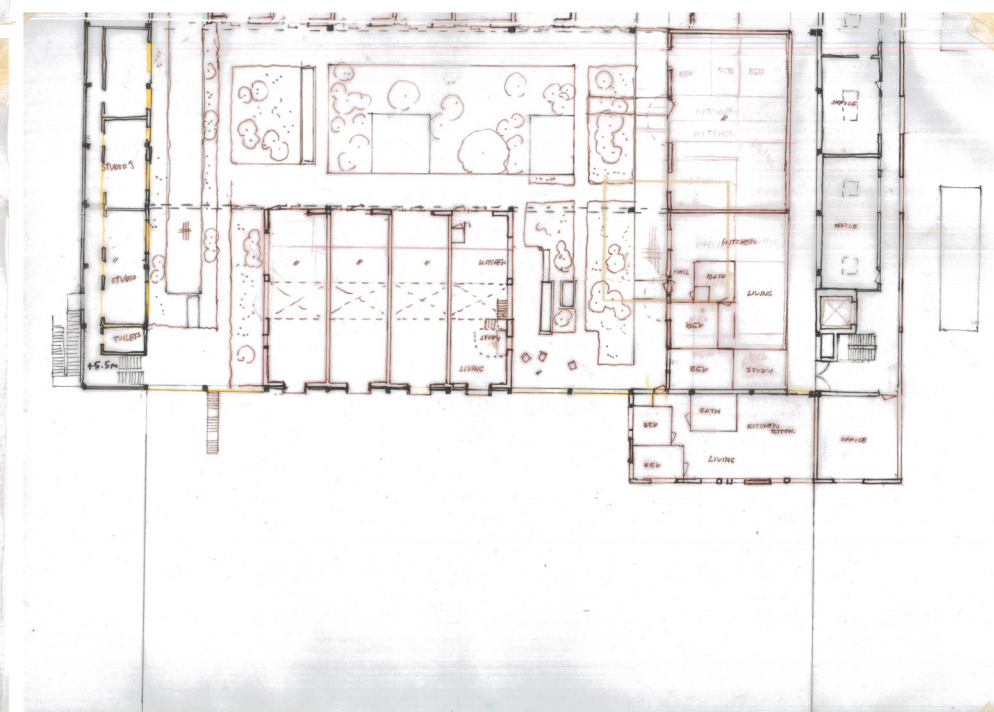
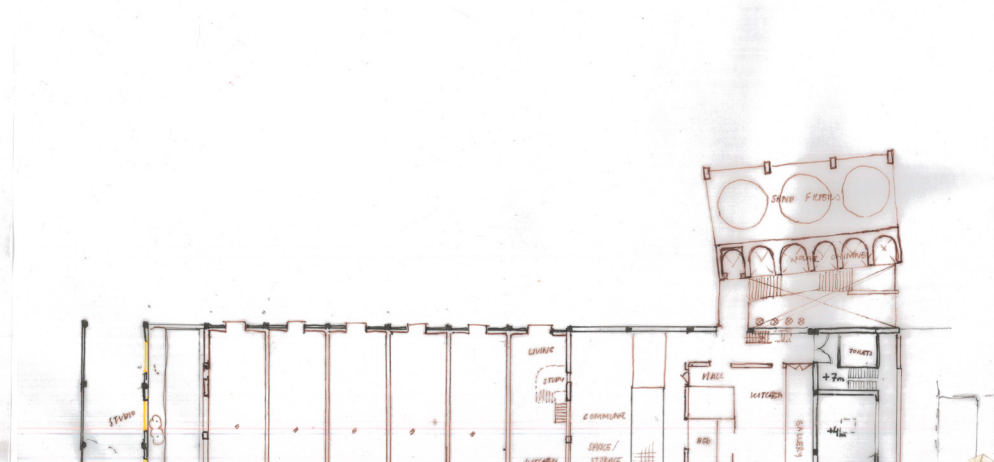
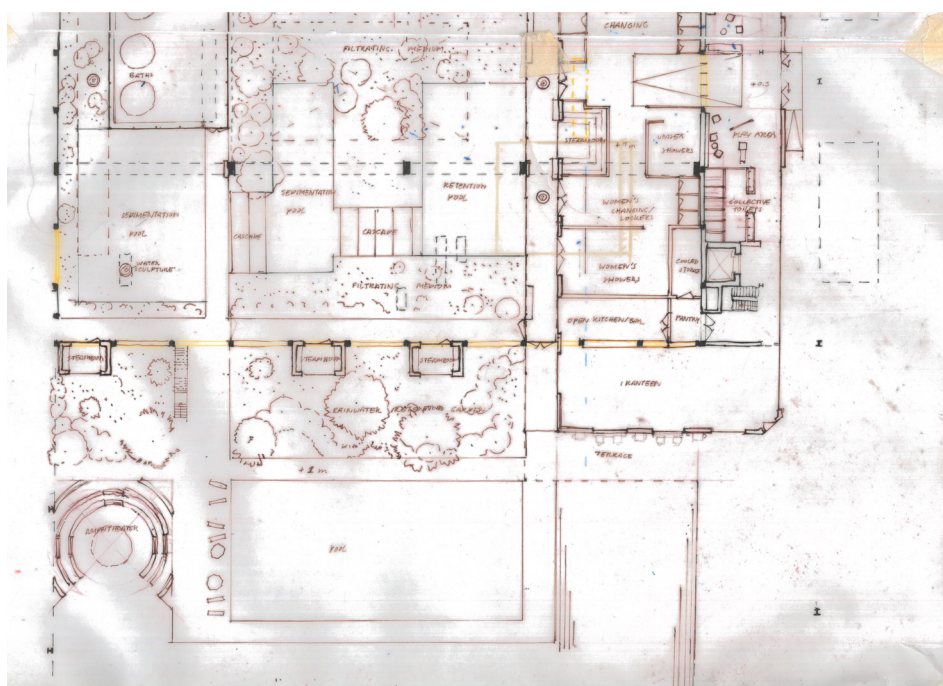
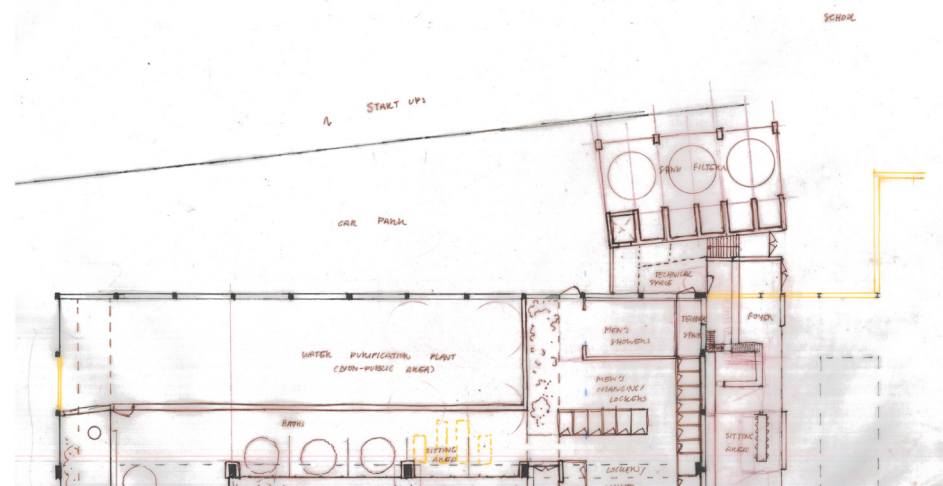
NAME: LANCE SCHROTEN

DATE: 27 MARCH 2025

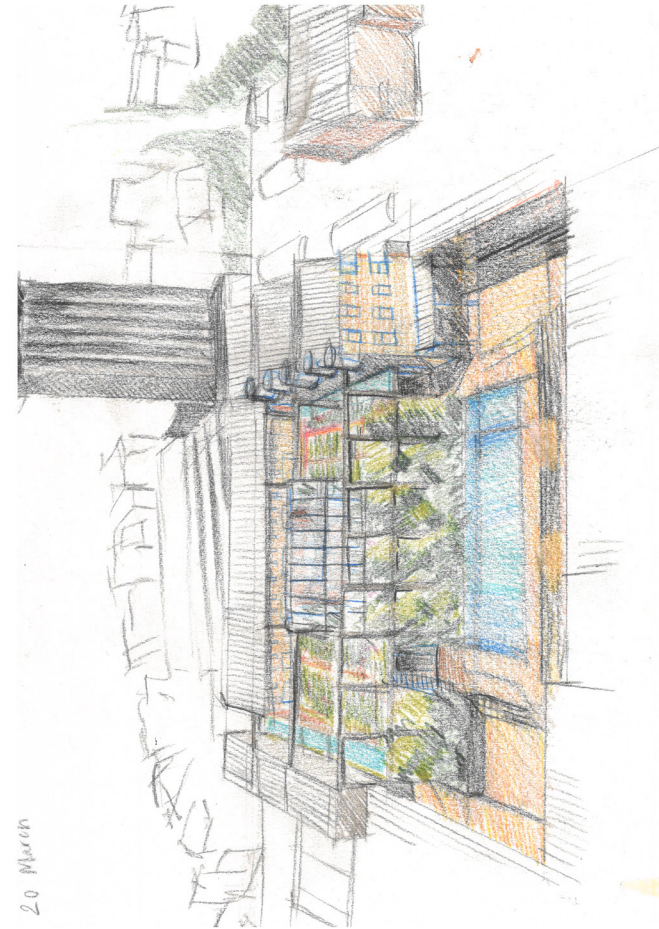
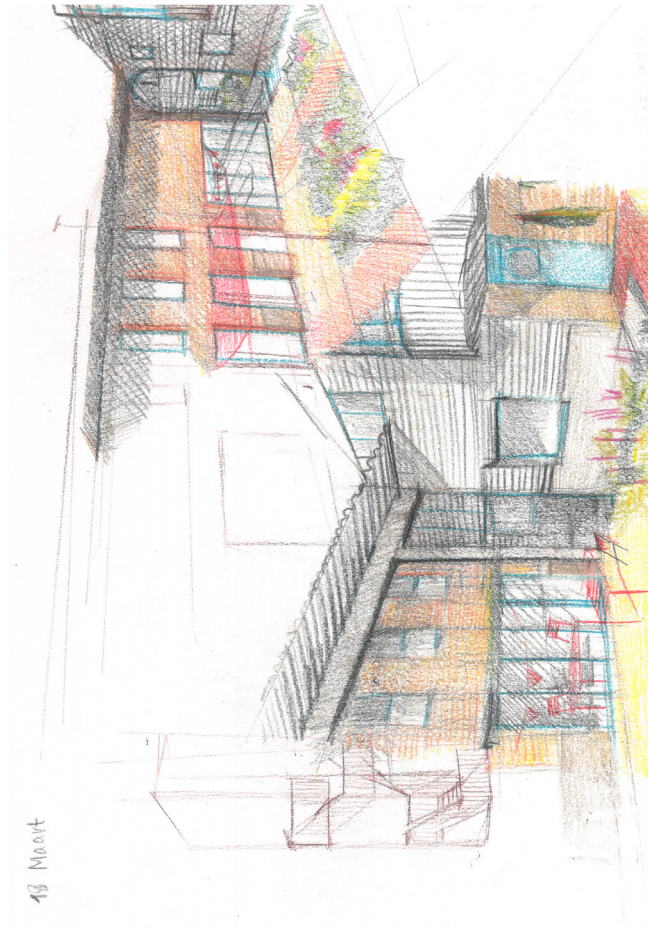
PROGRAMME: WATER PURIFICATION, BATHHOUSE, RESIDENTIAL

■ EXISTING

■ NEW



Plans P3



A4 Sketches.

1-33 P3 Model + P3 Presentation 27.03.2025

The P3 Model was a first attempt at wrestling with the existing structure. The model could easily be stripped down to the bare concrete of the existing building.

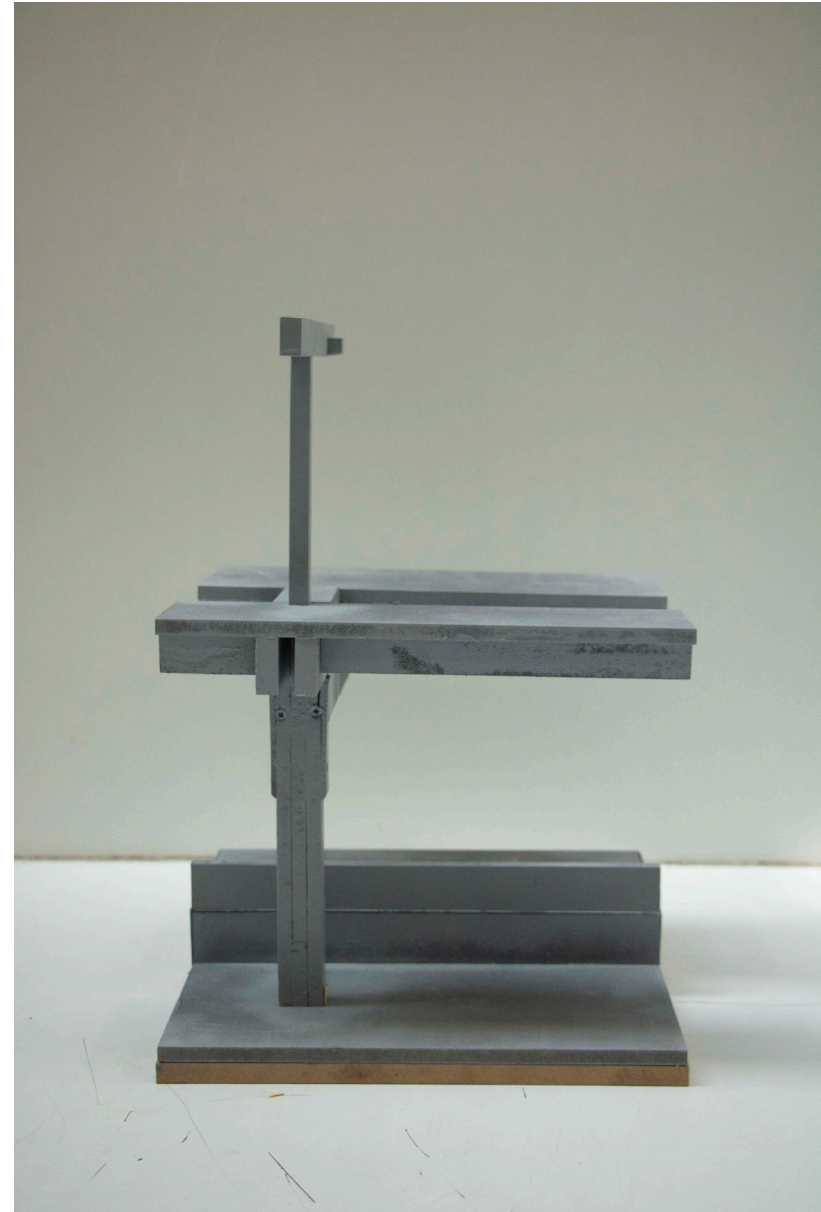
My research is about humans in ecology and ecology with humans

My building is an old lacquering and painting facility that we've encountered a few times before. As we keep a lot of halls in the masterplan. We allocated this hall to manage rainwater as it had large basins and a heavy construction. From there the programme developed first as a facility to manage water and then to purify it for use. To relate this to the neighborhood I created a bathhouse as an oasis and public face amidst all the ateliers and experimental housing in the new neighborhood. The bathhouse overlooking the basins and rock garden filtrating the water. Utilizing the dark cavernous, contemplative quality of the heavy concrete on the ground floor.

While the existing 1st floor provided a different starting condition. Here I raised the light existing steel roof by a metre to house two floors of housing around a raised protected courtyard.

To conclude, my project is about the entanglement of people, water and the existing structure all being part of one ecology.

For the fragment I am researching the intersection between these three elements.





6th April

ceiling

ventilator

ventilator

filtrating medium

at entrance main

As this is insulated we need much less space for piping

filtrating medium

ventilator

1200

1000

800

600

400

200

100

7th April

CONCRETE $\lambda = 1.6 \text{ W/mK}$

INSULATION MACHTA

RAILWAYS BS TUFFE LAMP WELD

FORMCRAFTS

KONVE BRIG

OVERBRICKING BUT PERHAPS NOT NECESSARY DUE TO WRAPPING

light insulation on top because less weight in direction of floor cavity less wind

40mm

40 HEMP / BARKMULLIG

LONG SCREEN

EXISTING

CAVITY FOR INSULATION

7th

0m

14m

15m

20m

21m

22m

23m

24m

25m

26m

27m

28m

29m

30m

31m

32m

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93m

94m

95m

96m

97m

98m

99m

100m

sewage

cavity

Logbook
P3
Lance Schroten

02/04/2025
page 78

Reflection

I am appreciative of this adventurous way of dealing with the existing. It's very complex, but at the same time quite believable because of the heavy structure and the way it has been detailed. The dark atmosphere in the bathhouse could really work. I would however instead of insulating the ceiling structure in the bathhouse, wrap one of these beams and leave the bare concrete.

The southwestern flank of housing, has a gallery on the other side, while the other housing faces the courtyard. What is the front or the back? Why are the housing units not all the same.

Reflection:

Although, I had only to explain a part of the design in a very short amount of time, I was relieved to finally communicate it in one coherent narrative, this time focused on water. Perhaps, I could further these narratives as a means of presenting at the P4. My feeling was that the project was well received by the tutors.

I agreed with ... feedback, it just somehow escaped my mind to wrap the beam as a solution to the thermal insulation, but I think it would add to this 'cavernous' quality of the bathhouse, the integrity of the existing structure and save a lot of tedious labour to make insulation that wrapped around the ceiling structure.

Also thinking about a front and a back for the housing is a strong comment. Ideally, now I would say everyone should relate to the courtyard and all the circulation should go through there.

Although I do want to keep the diversity in the housing as I think it is a quality that I relate to my research. Perhaps it's about creating a gallery facing the courtyard, or maybe individual staircases to every second floor apartment (although I think you can't make these typologies anymore, as they don't allow for wheelchairs.)

I should maybe have not referred to Paul's and Anét's feedback directly, but I think in the end it was an intermediary presentation and I appreciated that later on Paul and Anét came to me to rediscuss and explain the feedback. Paul was positive on how I integrated his feedback into the design. Also, admittedly a bit worried about the strong words he expressed during last session and the vagueness he left me in. Anét in the written feedback commented that there were other solutions to solving the fire problem.



11.04.2025

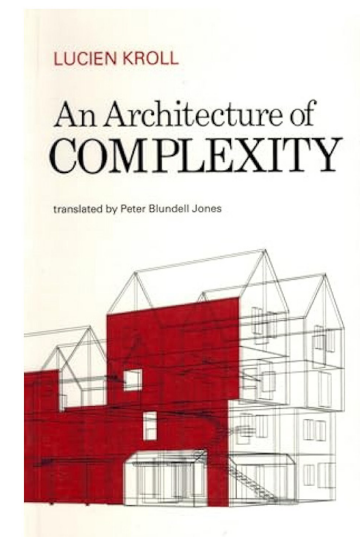
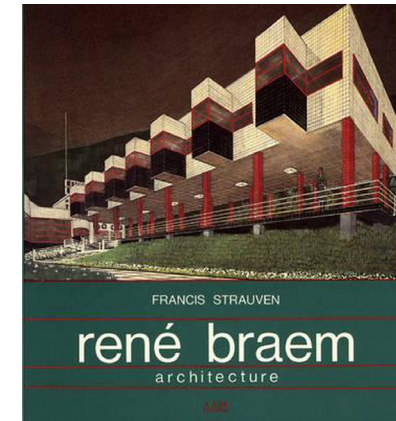
Reflection & Reading

In the week after the P3, I took a bit of rest, between taking down the exhibition, the excursion and being sick. This gave me time to read some of Paul's recommendations he gave in the Feedback session before P3. I started with Lucien Krol's 'Constructie & Element' and then continued with Braem's biography written by Francis Strauven. He made a connection between my work and theirs, I however believe both architects are not very related to my work. Sometimes I agree with both their humanistic intentions, but their perspectives seem entirely different. I share Krol's wish for more diversity in architectural form, expression and more agency for future users. However, Krol is still very much obsessed with industrial process lines. In my view, humanist architecture's power lies in the intimate connection between architecture and human. Diversity is an outcome of a multi-agency relational architecture, but not a goal. The industrialisation of diversity bypasses the human and alienates architecture to a commodified catalogue of options. Intimate connections to architecture require time and genuine human work (not necessarily by hand, but 'real' interactions in the bringing about of architecture I believe are most fruitful).

Braem strikes me as even more dissonant. A round shape is not necessarily an aesthetic to be associated with ecology. There are many misleading terms in this branch of architecture using rounded shapes, as they describe an expressional ambition. Ecology is a system not an expression. In this case, I think it is also the affliction of Braem's later work, I believe these buildings are not communicating with their environment and rather they recall to me space age futures prevalent in pop culture at the time.

The week after, I tried to alternate between making the catalogue and the design that proved more tedious than initially anticipated. It was also the realisation that there were still quite some design decisions to be taken, as well as the alterations from P3 I wanted to implement required more thought than expected. There was a bit of a blockade thinking about which products could be worthwhile for the P4 and the idea of it being final. However, Thursday night most of the decisions had fallen into place in a sensical way.

I was quite happy after both Sam's and Annet's feedback.



25.04.2025

Eireen

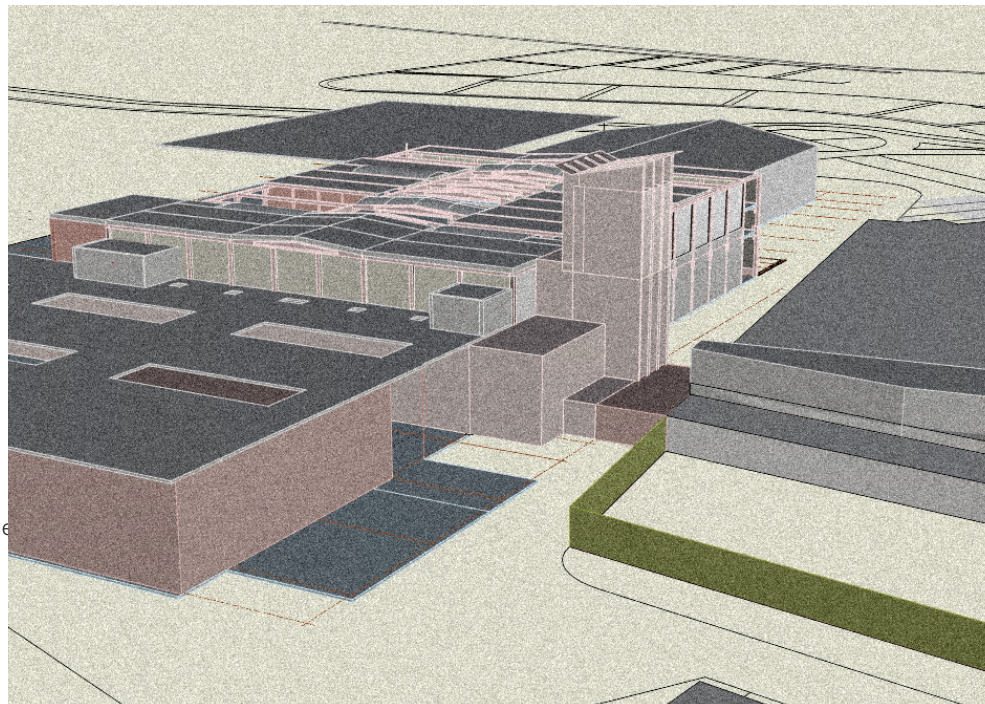
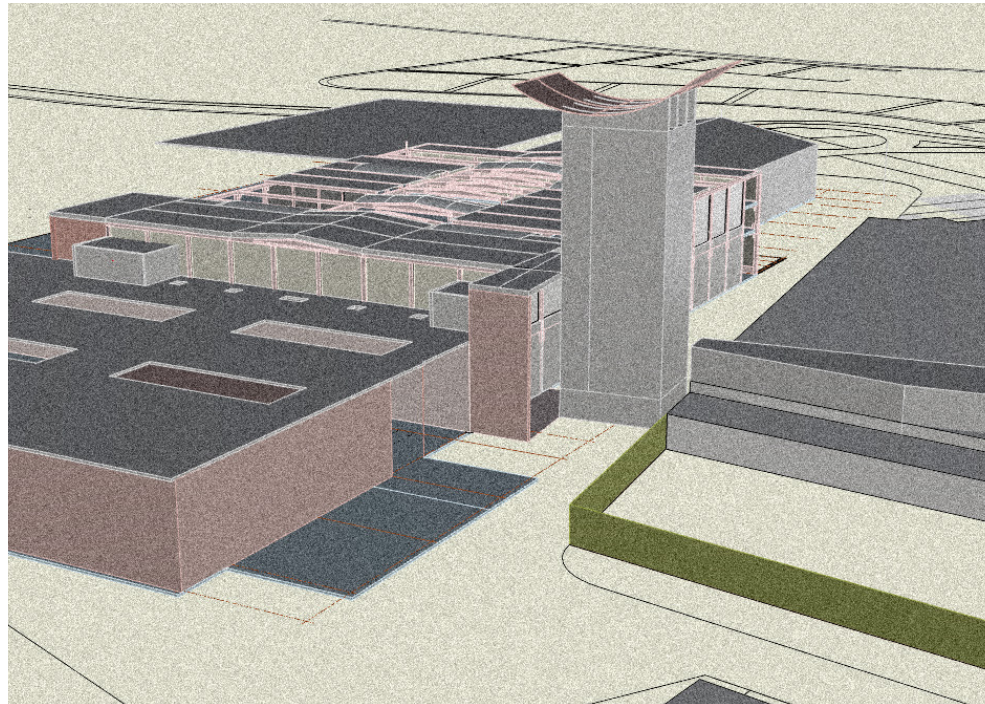
I tried to hide a worried and confused state, appearing I think a bit sceptical of my own research progress. It was in hindsight quite an uplifting, reassuring talk. Eireen streamlined my thoughts in a way, to something that is presentable and doable for the P4's. There is all these things I learned and then there is the catalogue and they are not interchangeable and that is fine. My design becomes now the catalogue and we can fill in more of the research as interludes after P4. I now maybe just have to trust the fact that my research percolates into the design and the narrative that I want to tell. So now the idea boils down to writing these three narratives, which also form the backbone and reasoning in my presentation. On the more practical side, there is the drawings which need to be shown in the P4! Eireen advised me not to make a model, because my power lies in sketching. This is a correct observation, but on the other hand I think my sketches can only go so far and for me to personally understand the project the model is necessary. When I showed the

Sam

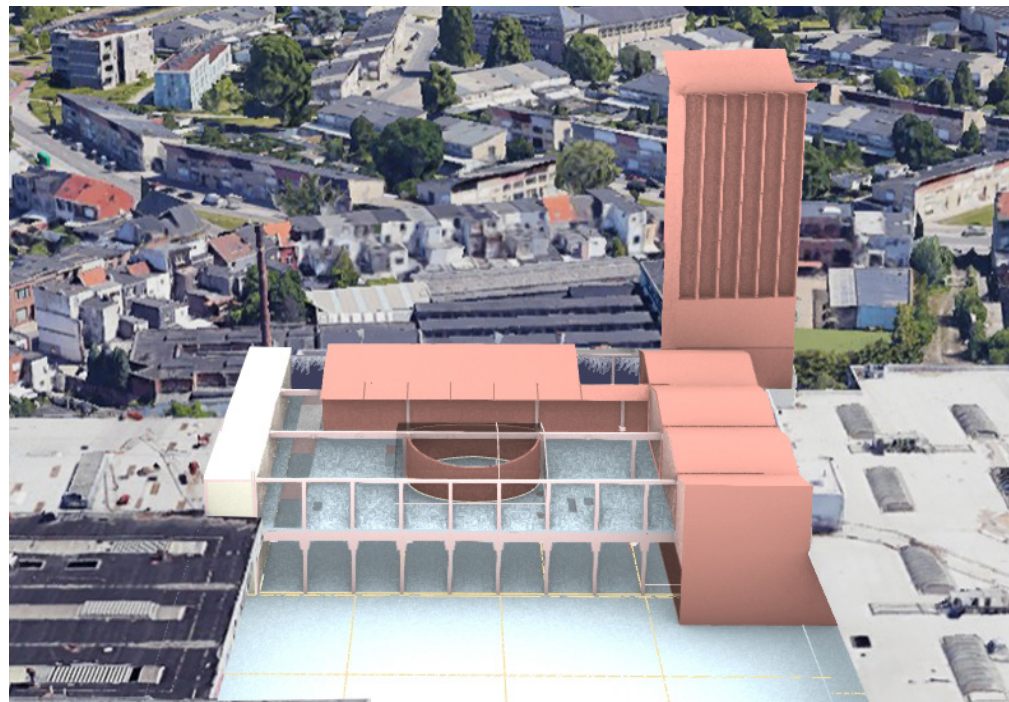
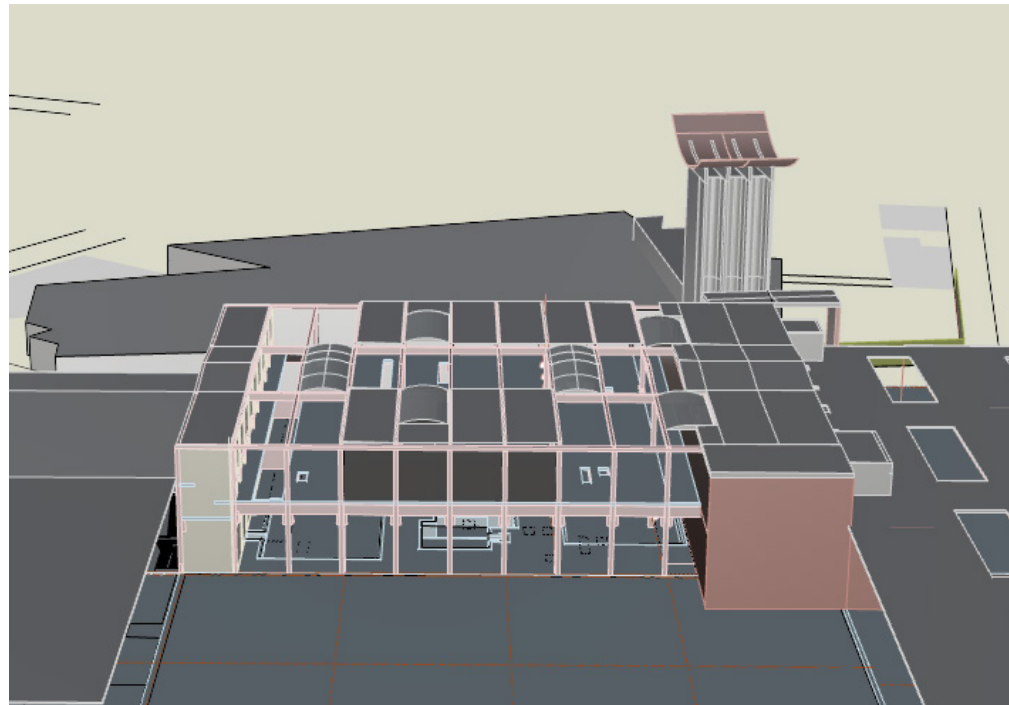
I think I've really reached the limits of 2D analogue representation and the complexity of the project calls for a model. I was a bit disappointed with the fact that it wasn't there again, because of the interjection of the research and the losing myself in the plans. Nevertheless, I think Sam is rather positive about the project, and I myself also feel passionate and enthusiastic. It seems worked out, if so much could be said from the plans and sections. Now it's time for me to lock into production mode. I think the strategy is to work on the 1:100 model during the day as a means of also explaining the narratives that are important to the research. I have this dream of making a video similar to our P1, along which geology, water and humans entangle their stories. While, doing sketches when I'm home, and really keeping the plans and sections to a hand-drawn level.

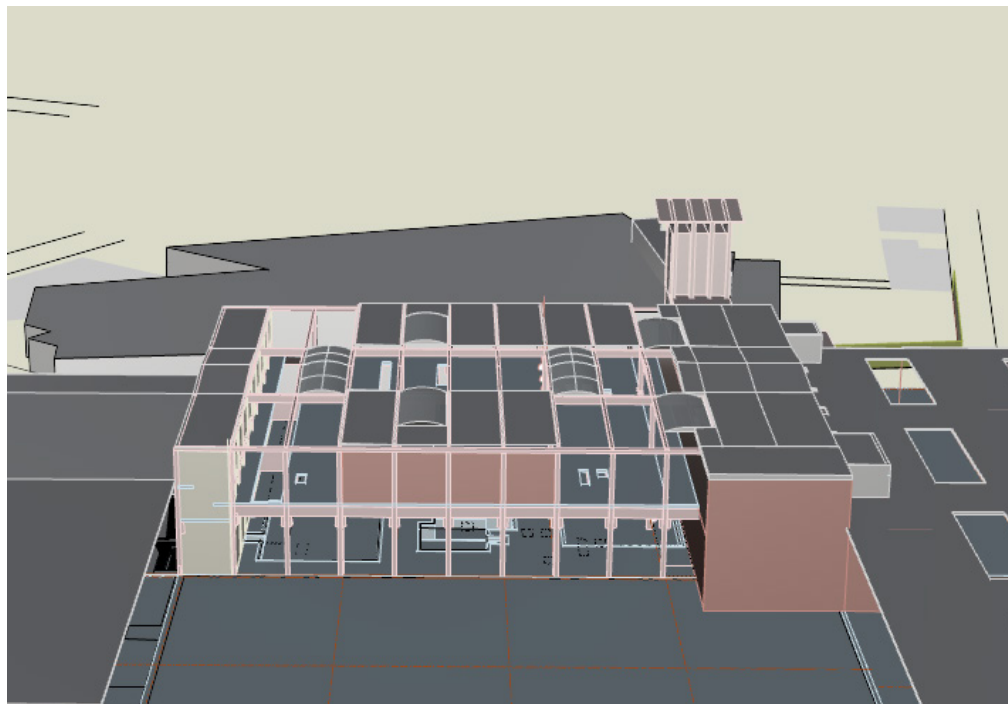
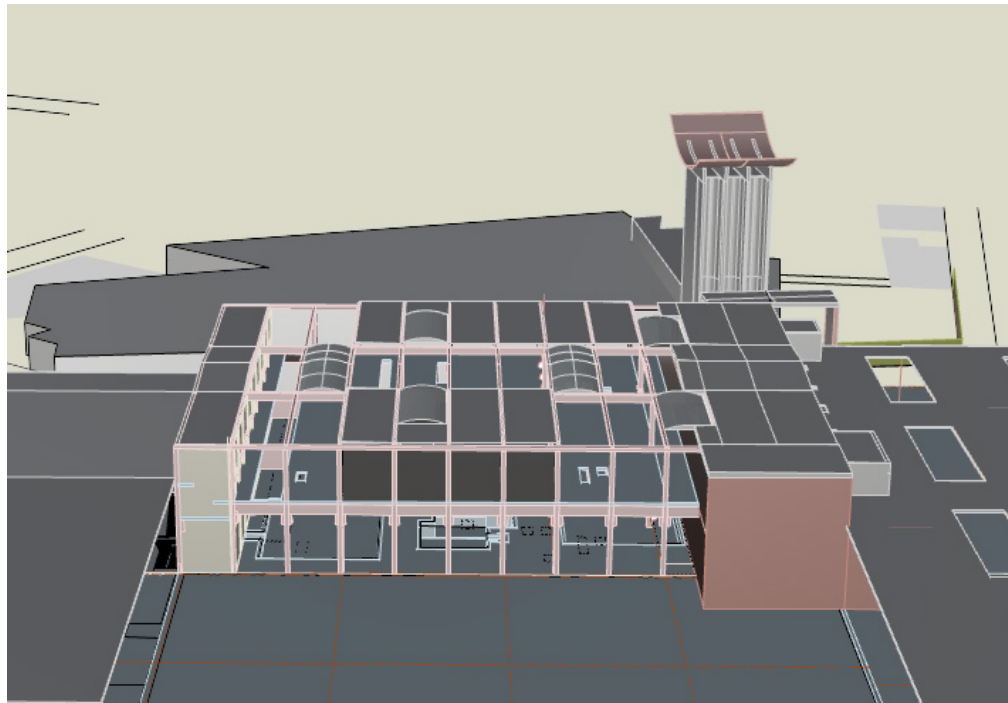
Anét

1:100 section Anét was confused by the fact she didn't fully understand the project apparently. After some discussions about where the water goes, through the timber slats and whether it was logical to make the whole floor underneath watertight, in the end there were only some minor changes to be made. I think BT is well considered now and also for me it's now making details and sections.

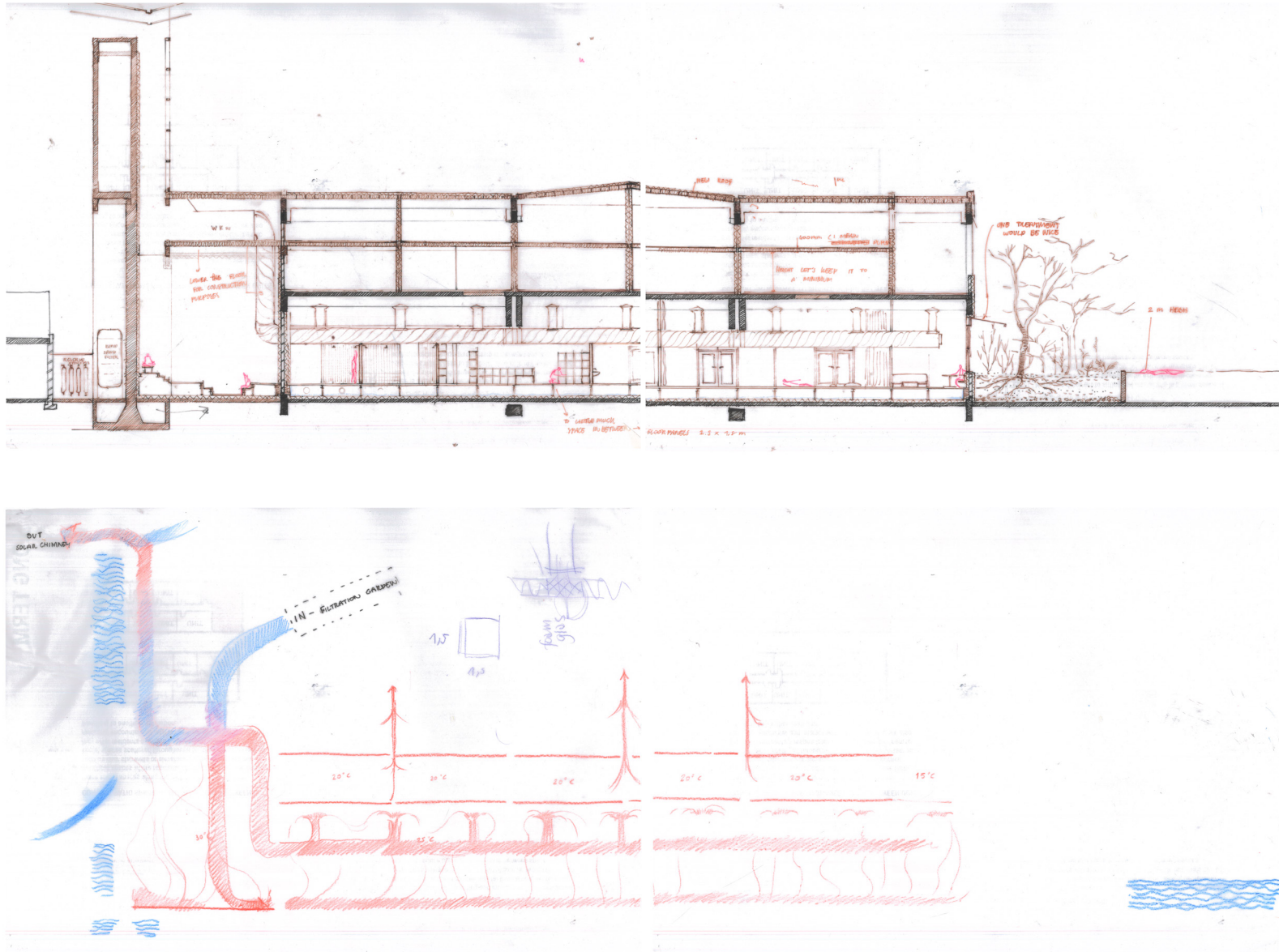


setting the watertowerback to re

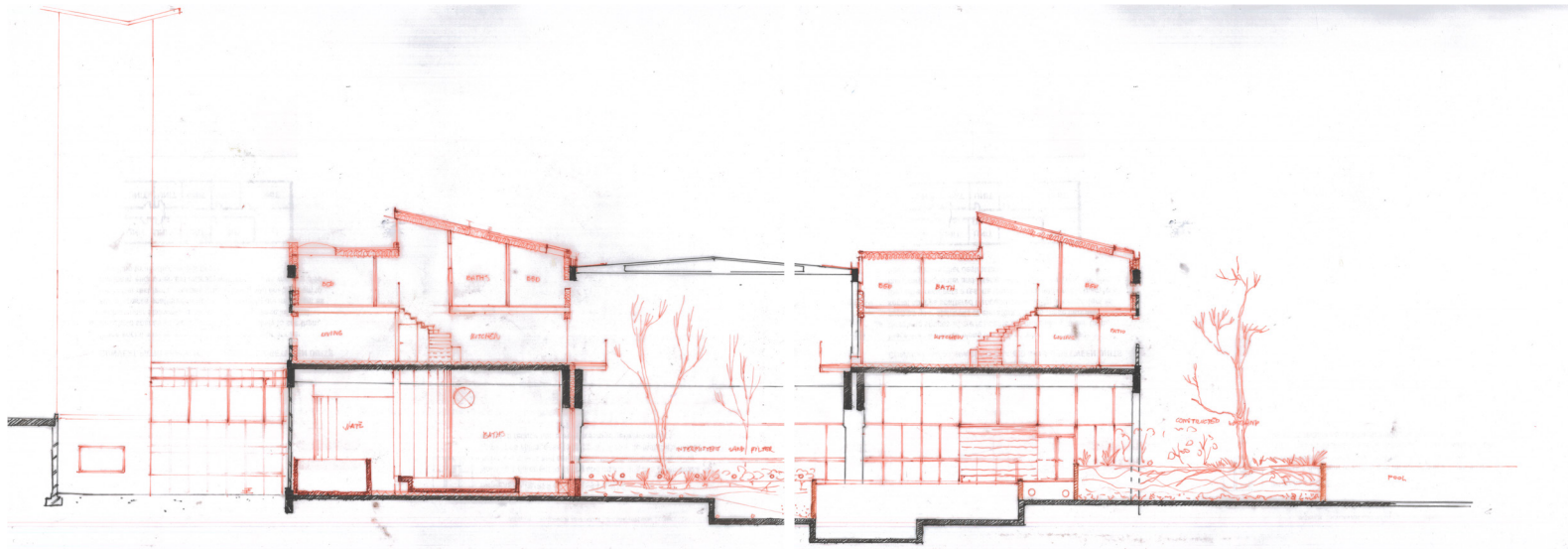




Sections



Building Brief



Section

Reflection & Reading

A bumpy last two weeks, in which research and design interfered with each other in helpful but sometimes violent ways. The week of the 14th of April, as the week before I was struggling with Research quite a lot. There is a general feeling of incompleteness, of having collected a bunch of lose ends, which if I had the time I would like to knot in their complicated intersections. There are stories with a lot gaps, which leave me confused I guess at the end of the year. Or perhaps to put it in other words, I feel incapable of producing a coherent research product, it feels like something I would have done very differently if I had to start this year anew. Also, the topic I deal with is continuously finding new ways of relating and perspectives in my mind, I wish I had some kind of basis or solid ground on the subject before. In this sense, it is also the beauty of the research bulldozing its way through and leaving me many new thoughts. However, I don't have the time to deal with them thoroughly, let alone build something that could communicate these thoughts. I am happy to be curious and have learned a lot of things, yet I feel immature to communicate them.

In the course of an architectural study, there might not be the time to become a proficient designer of space and a knowledgeable researcher. Then my first reaction, to this observation a friend made, would be to say that both things are to be developed after graduating. Secondly, maybe my contribution to research in the field I am interested in, is not a study, but a translation to spatial design. How do the paradigms of the field translate to tangible spatial futures? These two thoughts give me peace.

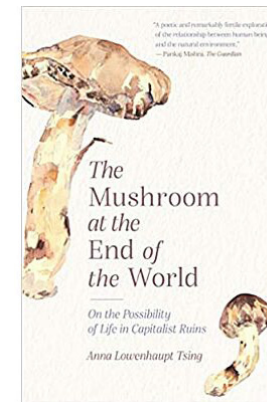
Reading Anna Tsing was very inspiring to me. I could see a lot of parallels between the Matsutake stories and my fieldwork in the Maakfabriek. Some quick conclusions I would like to settle in this regard:

- The Maakfabriek as a pericapitalist economy; Alike the pine forest, where matsutake rely on human (capitalist) 'disturbance', the Maakfabriek requires the constant influx of waste, from an overproducing, consumerist society. It's spatial and social composition (also in multi-species socialities) only being able to develop in the disturbed, but then overlooked corners. They are extremely dependant on capitalist flows of material to function, but also the environment the obsolete industrial hall provides. The protection it provides from the 'outside' (non-human and human forces) is a key

affordance to its inhabitants.

- At the same time, it presents itself as detached from capitalist economies. Firstly, the livelihood or in this case functioning and production of many atelier-builders (inhabitants), is not solely informed by 'free-market' processes. There is a strong social aspect, impacting the procurement of material to be transformed and the selling of products. Whether this is the community of the Maakfabriek, lending tools, knowledge and physical help to each other, or the social network extending beyond its concrete prefab walls.

- Secondly, the practices of the Maakfabriekers do not only serve economic purpose. The atelier-owners express that making art is also a therapeutic, purposeful act.



28.05.2025 - Making of the ornament



Back to the Blikfabriek

Fokke and Louis arrived at 11.

We sat in the sun while already discussing some of our ideas for the project. Immediately, Fokke expressed a strong will of placing the artwork somewhere on Blikfabriek grounds. I who had only imagined the project as a mock-up, experiment, was overcome by this very practical point of an artist. Art is an experiment in itself, and why make it when it has no further purpose. Joris was included into a momentous scouting for possible locations. Within minutes the position of the piece was pragmatically decided to be attached to a gutter draining into one of the koi-ponds.

Also, Fokke had given some thought to the idea of a water gargoyle. It could be these artworks that are to be simply mounted on any common pvc rainpipe. There was this translation to making something reproducible, sellable, compatible with any architecture that struck me.

The position of the watergargoyle in my design of course thwarted these plans. There was an open gutter on the beam, which we named the 'artificial' river and the mouth itself that would cascade its water into the basin below, we called face. Fortunately, I could show the location for Fokke and Louis to see, as we ventured into the unused portion of the factory complex. We found stacked haphazardly on top of a pallet along a broken down wall its concrete blocks in my building, the cement that had adhered them to each other, was easily chipped away. In the attitude of salvaging, such material hidden out of sight and with vague ownership was a resource, so we happily took



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a few. I noticed walking with Fokke, him expressing different perspectives and sets of knowledge, he noted the holes in the stone could become the mouth for the 'face'. Also, he read the basins to be built for machines that condensed, or produced a lot of water, which had to be directed away.

We started work, the concrete block was an interesting starting point, but also an uneasy one as Fokke was used to working with stone. A certain time-efficiency was required, as a to be architect that is an uncomfortable sensation. We would first one to think over the design, draw it, but that is not the attitude of an artist. There are pieces you have to put together and there is a vague vision, you go about doing and imagining at the same time. We found a clay fish oven tray. Fish were symbolically related to ideas of water, so we filled them with a certain type of cement.

There was the driftwood from the Scheldt. One of them featured a carving reminding us of the classical expression of gargoyle, this could somehow be mounted to the side.

There were the concrete blocks, which we composed into a 2-part configuration that would lead water out of one of the holes. Adding cut open plastic bottles as mold for the concrete to flow around.

Time felt precious. The Maakfabriek is not a place to stay. As the day proceeds, the exterior forces of 'regular' life becomes a growing source of discomfort. The fact that Fokke was stressed for a job interview illustrates how the reality and dictates of economy demand temporality. In that light, perhaps temporality is also a defining condition in pericapitalism, at least here in western urban environments.

At the end of the afternoon (when the 'face' was somewhere halfway), I wanted to redirect our attention to the 'artificial' river and call it a day, to end these time-related frustrations. We quickly reverted to salvaging mode and scouted a nearby hardware store and the perimeters of the Blikfabriek for material. Unfortunately, the minister of culture was just guided by Joris into the abandoned portions, so it didn't feel good to openly gather materials here.

The next day, Fokke and I abandoned the idea of the 'artificial river', as also it would probably just be an architectural feature anyways and it was in reality not visible on top of the high beam. This gave us some room to breathe, the concrete blocks were cemented together in their water supporting configuration, now it become a question of art. The time I would spend sculpting whatever 'art' (see this is a most uncomfortable exercise for an architect, making something completely non-functional), Fokke and Louis could delegate to other manifestations of gargoyles.

In the end the time I spend on sculpting this face, which I have to say was a completely unintentional and undesigned thing, Fokke and Louis did manage to produce two other timber gargoyles from left-over Scheldt driftwood. Again, the rhythm of production of an artist is very different to mine. Somehow subconsciously we agreed that it should be a human face on the gargoyle. I was also reminded of tales of gigantism in the 'Earth is an Architecture', viewing the final outcome. Was it some type of rain god I portrayed? Or just the concept of gargoyle that had compiled through multiple experiences in my brain? And was it particularly alarming that the object did not come from reasoning and vaguely followed multiple condensing narratives?

I think a lot of architectural decisions, though we hate to admit it are also instinctual. In the back of my mind, there was still the multi-species interaction that I wanted to bring about through the piece. A beard of chains populated by plants would also make sense from an anthropomorphic perspective.

At the end of the day the caretaker of the Koi-pond happened to pass by. There was now a timber elephant and an African mask-inspired gargoyle hanging above the pond. Uneasy, Blikfabriek was of course a place of conjunctions, multiple agents imposing there will on the environment (if it was allowed so by Joris) and there had to be a reassurance and communication with one another before we placed the concrete piece. Showing the gargoyle actually helped lower tensions,



he thought of it as quite beautiful, something reminding him of a Mayan temple imaginary which fit the aesthetic he was trying create in the pond.

Concrete happened to raise the pH if not soaked in water first for a week. Concrete is of course composed of limestone. The conversation was actually quite nice as we discussed possible other futures for the pond together. There was an albino-sturgeon which would not deal well with changes in pH levels, taking care of its health reminded of the research, were we calibrating to its pH sensitive senses? In the end, we were quite satisfied with the result. Although it needed to dry and I would come back to finish the beard another time. In reflection, I lauded the creative and mental agility artists have here. The way you just fumble through, and are in a continuous state of response to whatever, to material you have salvaged, the process of making, to others that share the space. In this light, 'make-do' is perhaps about responsiveness to environments. Enlisting a contractor, to make reproducible, functionalist designs with the same industrially-produced alienated materials is the other side of the spectrum. This last thought I leave open-ended.



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Back to the Blikfabriek - 05.05.2025

I returned to the Blikfabriek one last time to finish the ornament. Fokke's Kot had been entirely restructured to a point, which even I in his extensive inventory could easily find tools. Again, the sun shone and so again a coffee was enjoyed on the terrace. However, before this morning ritual out of curiosity we unscrewed the concrete casting of our 'face'. Affirmingly, we nodded at the result, both satisfied, but already envisioning the next steps. The crack that formed during the drilling of a support for the face portion, was significant but would probably hold we examined.

Now with the disappearance of these collective narratives, the question arose what ornaments contemporary western society produced.



A beard of iron chains (writing this I wonder how I came to these questions at my graduation to a technical university) we discussed during our terrace session. I flipped through the book 'Object als Bemiddelaar', to find inspiration, but the conversation oscillated between the worlds of native Americans, pre-industrial Belgian Catholics and African cultures these objects came from and the project. Art and architectural ornament as portrayed in this book always had a spiritual connotation. Marvelling at the varied forms of expression practised in the world and personal preferences. Now with the disappearance of these collective narratives, the question arose what ornaments contemporary western society produced. Logo's of companies, statues of poets, fascist symbols, but are they as powerful and mutually understandable as religious artefacts once were?

Anyways back to the project at hand, a concrete face we now compared to the Poseidon at Marnixplaats (I know derived from something religious), needed iron chains. So we scavenged again, asking around the Maakfabriek for any spare, though expecting the chances to be slim someone would impart chains freely. Walking briskly from Kot to Kot, while keeping our eyes peeled for any chains. There were two men working on terrazzo table slabs outside for a restaurant, the older one chit-chatting away in thick

Antwerpian accent. Everyone quickly exchanged the ongoings of their project, if you listened closely these chats were full of helpful tips and practical questions. This is the way of the Blikfabriek. We lastly visited Wouter. He did know a place to buy them in cheap closeby he told us, as he was driving screws into the sidewall of his Kot. But he himself did not have any, luckily in the same corner of the hall, the Recup held a pleasant surprise. Snow-chains were left for the taking and with a bit of work we quickly disassembled the jumble into workable lengths.

The remaining thicker ones we bought at a hardware store, as well as chemical anchor for the concrete to adhere the chain structure. We divided the work, Fokke concerning himself with the hardware, cutting through the larger chains. While I strung them into a loose composition that would hopefully read as a beard. Within the hour it held, and I pressed upon Fokke, to take a break while the chemical anchor dried, knowing him to be quite impatient in the best sense of the word.

In the spring sun cradled between the buildings and Fokke's favourite beer, we could sit for hours. Marieke joined at some point during that day, with a handful of material salvaged at the same banks of the Scheldt, Fokke sourced his

driftwood from. Her interest was not the timber though, she was trying to extract the colourful plastic beads instead, to make a pendulum lamp. There were no simple methods though to differentiating the plastic from the organic material. If there was one we joked the inventor would receive a Nobel prize. This was also a story about futures littered with plastic beads and other lost materials weaving into the conversation. If demolition recovery and urban salvaging were to reach its full potential we need a diverse set of eyes to examine discarded material in our environments. Someone that imagines the plastic beads making a lamp and someone that looks for specific timber embellishments on the banks of the Scheldt. The communication between these two people alerts the others of potential resources. In short, we need a diverse community of waste-processing agents.

Later that day, as I was working on this reflection, I came back to find Fokke casting the beads into gypsum. His idea was that the beads would easily fall off once the gypsum was hardened and crunched, while the organic matter would stay stuck to the plaster.

As I was packing up, our last words exchanged were downcast. Fokke's business of building custom interiors stopped as his prices were too high. It's difficult competing with industrial production lines, even in such niche ecosystem roles. The wry reality is that in the growing trouble I believe we need the agility of these small-scale personal agents, instead of relying on continuous stable provision of material these larger production lines need. Trouble also means out of our control and every erratic change of our environment will need to be met with agility. I think ecology is very clear on this matter, responsiveness goes hand-in-hand with species diversity and careful observation. In other words, these independent translators of waste to gift, mediators between human and non-human worlds, those that can find potential in the capitalist mess and survive in competitive economic climates are valuable guides in our future and it is personally pitiful to see that they become outcompeted.

Trouble also means out of our control and every erratic change of our environment will need to be met with agility.



02.05.2025

Reflection

I aim to keep this reflection rather short, a few short weeks before the deadline. I have begun to realise I am under the false impression that my design is worked out. As every product that I make, is a tedious endeavour, leaving many open-ended questions. It is a complicated design, I need to ensure not succumbing to this (which has happened in previous exercises). A lot of questions require simple answers. I'm most worried about façades, as they haven't received enough attention in my eyes.

I'm a bit disappointed in how I communicated during one of the final tutoring. I feel like there are still a lot of undiscussed perspectives. Somehow it hasn't been assessed critically enough and I fear that once I present my work at the P4 a lot of interventions read as non-sensical, like I've used too many steps. In terms of research, design, but mostly also building construction.

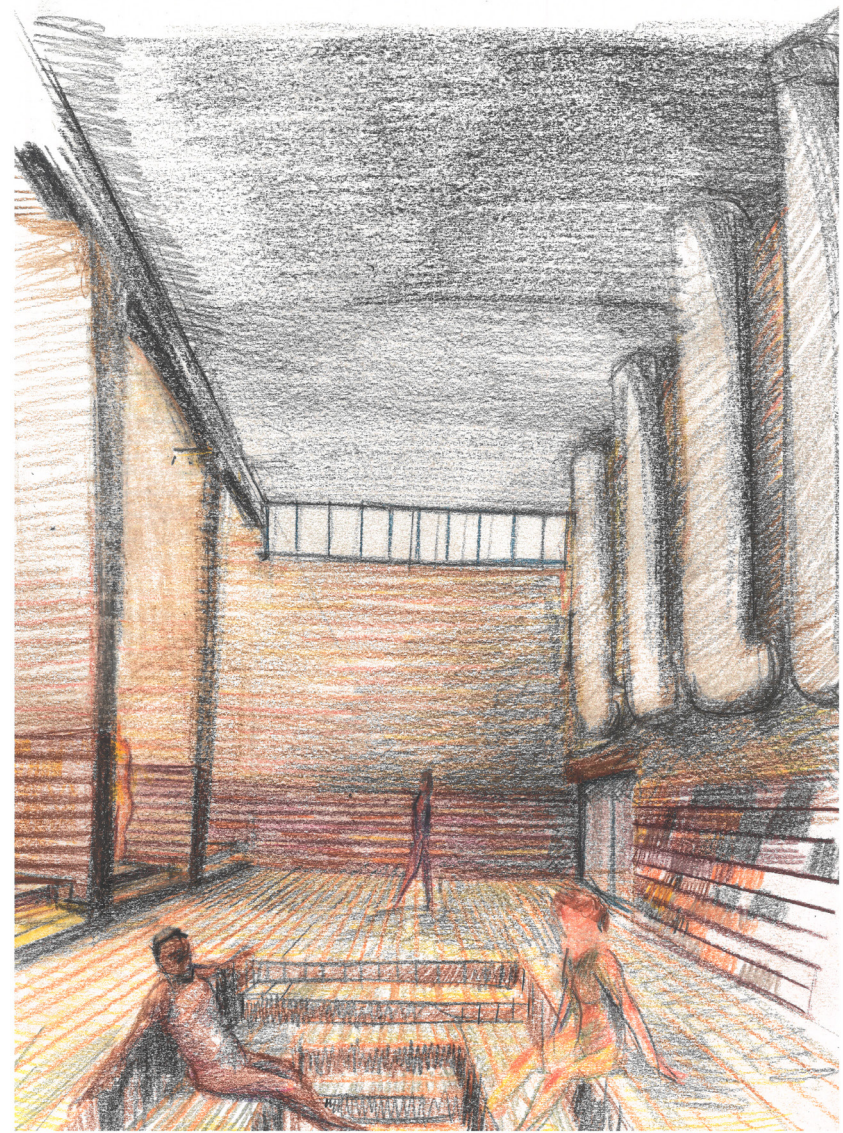
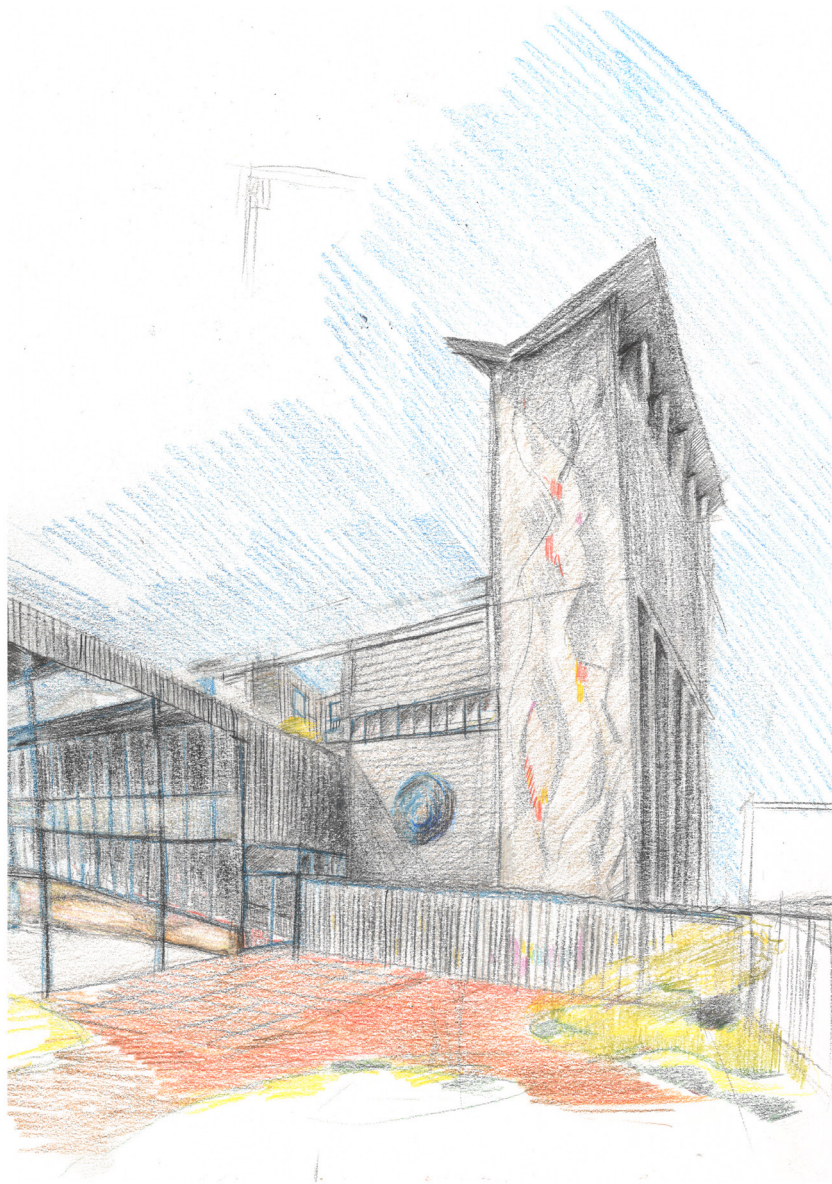
Sam

Start putting together a narrative this will help you find calm in the project and not become yourself tangled up. Perhaps, a good deadline to finish the drawings could be next week Friday. Then the week after you could focus on the model.

Anét

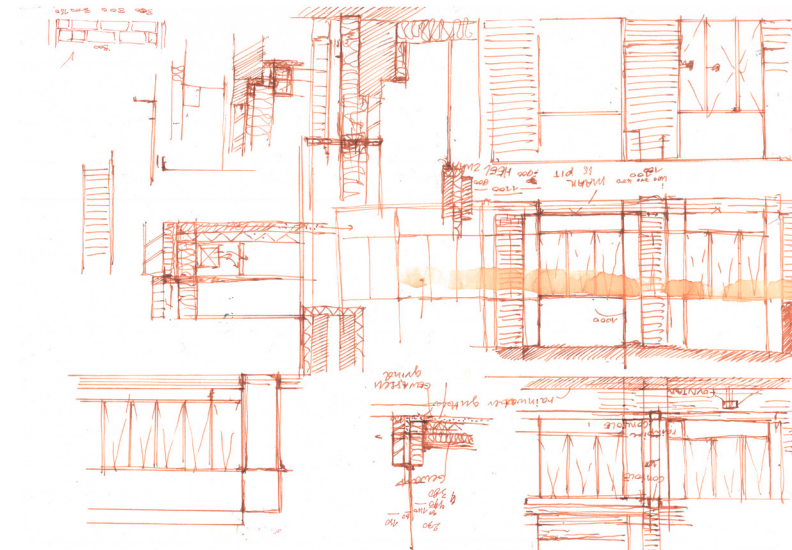
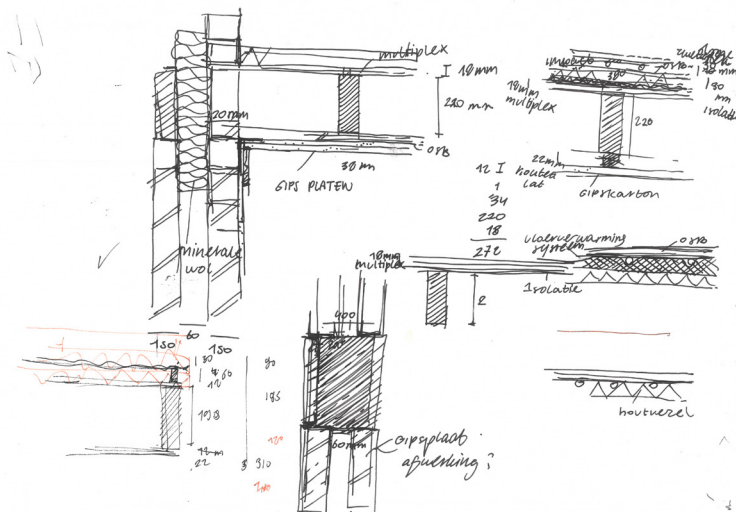
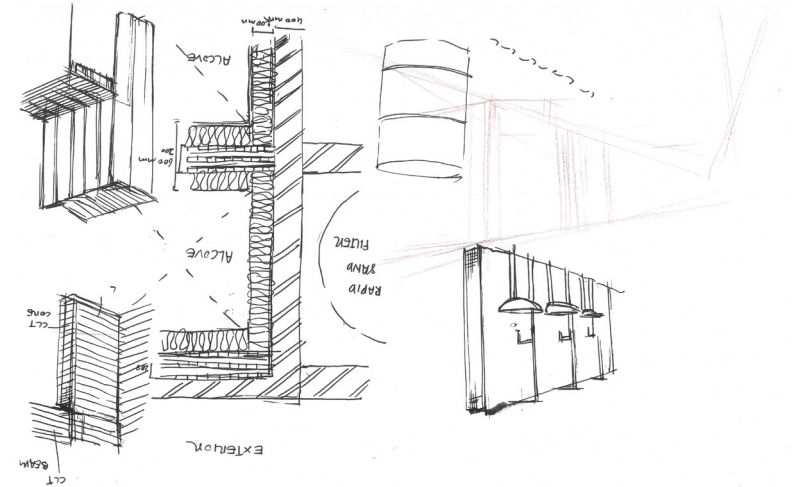
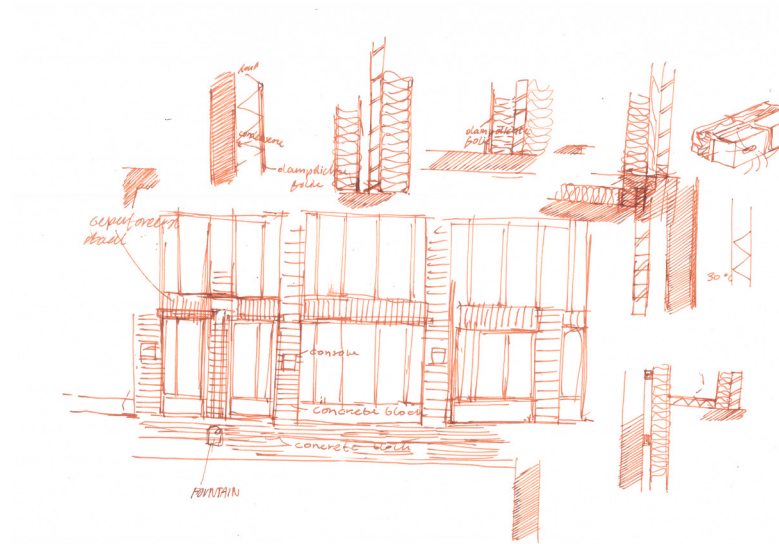
Stijn Brancart: Connecting the water-tower to the building with CLT to lend stability seems like a good idea. Also the raising of the cross-beams wouldn't impose a problem if you can attach it firmly to the main beam, with steel angle or extra concrete/clt block.

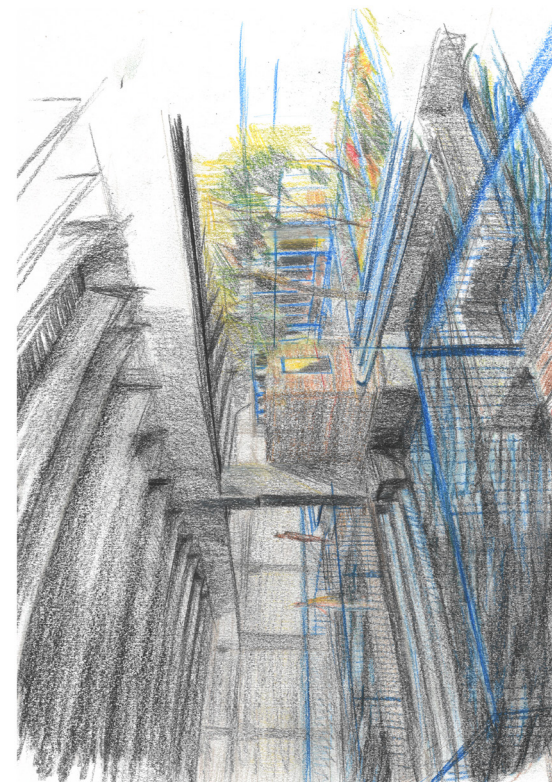
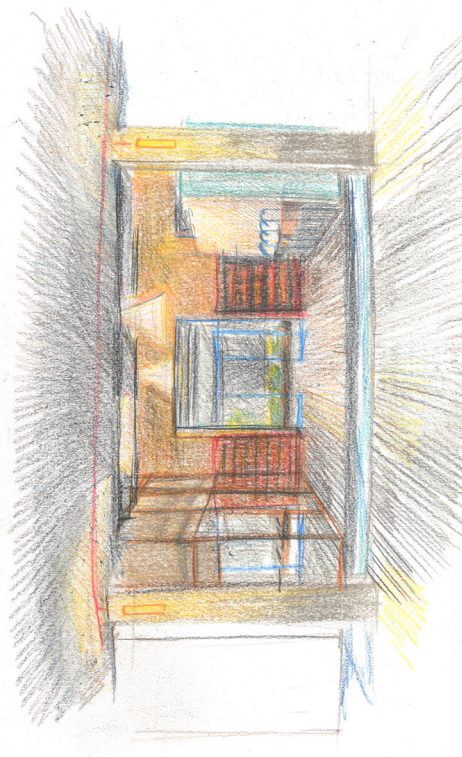
Anet: She was appreciative of the section. Walls of stone could help fire-proofing and acoustically separating the residential units and the construction of the 1st floor seems strong enough to hold stone walls on top.



Two perspective drawings watertower and hammam

details and façades





Perspective drawing vista to filtration garden, installation of ornament on the 1st floor, and water filtration garden.

Final Reflection

Reflection – Lance Schroten 4994566

I believe both the catalogue and logbook already feature a lot of reflection, so I will try to summarize these thoughts here.

I genuinely think this year has brought me a lot. I have been stumbling into many interesting new ideas, albeit in an incoordinate manner. The driving force to this figuring out and curiosity has been the research. It has allowed me to find a position in architecture that could be in some ways judged as outside the conventional.

If architecture dictates our physical relationship with space, then ecology defined in the most basic terms as the relationship between a species and its environment, is naturally related. In the most obvious sense, the species being us humans and our environment the cities and homes we inhabit. Beyond this, more interestingly I found that ecology could also be used as a lens or a sensitivity for which to observe and analyse architectural practices. Since our current relationship to the world is I would say quite artificial, we do not often question the multi-agent ecologies we are dependant on; subject to ever blurring, unclear industrial production lines and

misleading organisations of information. Yet these ecologies that ensure our living are not stable anymore in an increasingly troubled world. Basic western assumptions that dull our capacity of relating to the world, such as a constant supply clean drinking water, become less certain in these new conditions the world faces.

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My position in architecture would therefore become perhaps a bit activist. A change is necessary in the way humans relate to the world I believe, to navigate current and future ecological crisis. I find ecological crisis an interesting combination of terms, as ecology is defined as the relationship between environment and species, which implies not only a physical disorder between humans and environment, but could also entail a psychological or social dysfunction between humans and environments. Although the physical implications of ensuring the quality of our environment, under the umbrella-term sustainability does of course have received my attention. My real interest I've noticed is in how architecture could change peo-

ples disposition towards the environment. My wish would be for humans to care for their multi-agent environment they depend on. This led me to the architectural approach of entanglement. In my own understanding, entanglement attempts to create meaningful encounters between the agents, so they can benefit from each other and the quality of their narratives increases as these other characters happily enrich and interfere. I hope to incite an emotional attachment to ecologies, not because I would like to preserve them, but because they are imperative to our survival.

I might be motivated and curious, but I think I lack strategy. I wish I could channel my efforts in an effective and efficient way.

This I hope to achieve by designing space for human habitation that unapologetically confronts in many ways (I hope also beautiful) with ecologies, that ensure potable water, materials to build shelters and many other multi-agent systems I haven't touched upon in my design.

However, after the P4 Eireen made me rethink the topic in the light of intentionality. As much as ecofeminist writers find ways

to close the rift between human and natural worlds, most non-humans still differ from us in the sense they lack intention. This is critical as architecture requires intention, or is all about giving intention to a space. My role as architecture is actually quite antagonistic to nature, as I now believe nature to be what is left unintended.

I would feel uncomfortable to say I have grasped the topic fully then, or at least translate ecofeminist philosophies into a design approach. The word I love to use now is open-ended, but it is also a bit of an excuse to my disarray and chaos. Everything I did felt rushed, and still concerning both research and design I haven't found a satisfactory level of clarity and overview. For me I failed personally in learning how to contain my thoughts and design. I might be motivated and curious, but I think I lack strategy. I wish I could channel my efforts in an effective and efficient way.

At the same time, I would love to think about a window for a full day, I put too much detail in the drawings. I was particularly disappointed in not being able to produce a 1-100 physical model for P4.

On the one hand, I lack to some extent experience as a modelmaker, but I would have to say also my design is complicated, (complicated in a way also as natural by-

I was overthinking means of representation, while the fieldwork could be something very straightforward. Research in the first period in a way seems to cycle back into relevance.

product of entanglement). From a broader view, I think in my masters not finishing, or would I say overcomplicating has been a reoccurring pitfall. It's altogether a bit of disheartening experience, but I would say then curiosity and a love for design brings me back to wanting to learn architecture. I don't understand what is necessary to keep things simple or contained.

Looking back, I think I should have settled on one method of documentation. I was overthinking means of representation, while the fieldwork could be something very straightforward. Research in the first period in a way seems to cycle back into relevance. I think the overarching ideas of our collective P1 align with the direction I am taking now. Maybe direction is the best way to describe what this year has

brought me. I enjoy above all the process, design does excite me, however producing something final is still difficult for me. In the end, it does feel like my efforts are scattered over lose unrelated subjects and ideas and I'm left something I'm unable to consolidate.

So, strategy is something I would have to keep working on. It entails planning, structure and clear documentation, which ultimately would help me communicate and finish. The tutoring has made me aware of this and given me handholds in becoming more strategic. In the near future I would maybe want to divert from laboriously producing, or creating. I somehow feel the need to invent everything myself, I think it would help me to step away from this and just listen or look for some time. As Paul pointed out funny enough I have no problem with imagining and solving, creating, many architectural shapes and ideas, I just don't really know where to stop.

The P4 presentation alike my P2 was another confirmation of these disabilities. It accumulating in yet again a not understandable presentation. This does frustrate me, but worse the feeling of wanting

Building Brief

to give up. In the short period reserved for self-reflection between P4 and P5, one of my self-diagnoses is that part of this disability is expecting too much from myself and overreaching. While I'm typing this, I'm again unsure if I will finish and I seem to have arrived at the same point as before P4. However, this worry is now a bit less strong and altogether I would say I started believing in the project more. I wonder then if believing, or in other words confidence is another culprit. I think for some reason I did lose confidence between bachelor and master in my ability as a designer, but perhaps that is not a bad thing entirely. Confidence, could also make you less receptive to new methods and ways and maybe for someone learning that is not a bad position to be in. I just think I haven't reached the point for me to create or produce anything complete or final.

Lastly, open-ended is then the opposite of final, presenting itself perhaps as a difficult place to be in as I am nearing the end of my study. However, urban architecture and ecofeminism (amongst many things they have in common I think) show that not everything is to be learned inside, I feel that after studying it will continue in

a more physical and active way amidst the reality of life. In that sense, I do feel grateful in partaking this years graduation studio. For me, we are carefully, with exciting

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eyes observing life and all of its facets interweaved with the design of our built environment and we develop the senses of observation. It's a bit cliché, but I genuinely believe it is the curiosity towards others that the thirty of us have that inspires me the most. There is nothing wrong with feeling, even along the rationality university and society at large might expect from us; And this is then the sensibility with which I would like to continue becoming architect in the next years.

13/06/2025

