the translation
learnings from the present

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But how to practice material diplomacy?

material

_a physical substance (that things can be made from)
_relating to, derived from, or consisting of matter
_substance that constitutes an object, pure or impure, living or non-living matter

architecture built environment

diplomacy

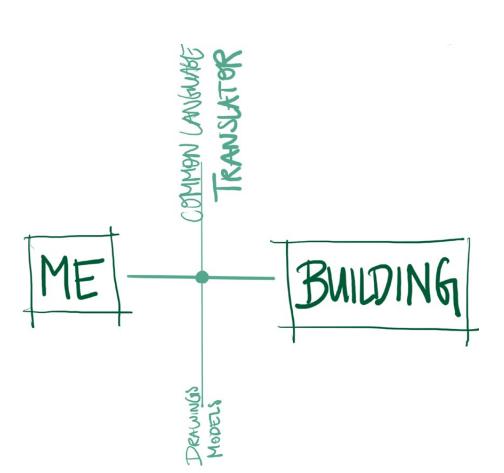
_the art of dealing with people in a sensitive and tactful way _the art and practice of conducting negotiations _derived via french from ancient greek "diploma", composed of diplo = folded in two and suffix -ma = an object two folded object

> dialogue negociations communictation Tête-à-Tête

MANIFEST

Material diplomacy demands that the transformation of existing buildings is approached with sensitivity and consideration, and that the rights of the buildings are balanced with the rights of the re-user.

- 1. Listening before drawing Design should not begin with the imposition of a concept, but with an act of attention. The existing building, its materials, its movements and its wear all of these offer clues. Listening means observing closely.
- 2. Speak not for, but with In architectural authorship, the designer is often the voice and the building the silent background. However, when giving agency to the materials and structures, the design becomes a diplomatic act.
- 3. Design as negotiation, not invention Transformation is not an act of replacement, but of dialogue. Negotiation means taking the existing seriously, asking: 'What can remain?' and 'What needs to be adapted?' This principle shifts the role of the architect from that of creator to that of mediator, balancing the values of memory and function, continuity and change.
- 4. Slow down the eraser Demolition is simple, final and often careless. It not only erases structures, but also relationships between spaces and people, between memory and place. Material diplomacy demands slowness in the face of this erasure. Slowing down is a political and ecological act one that resists the culture of the disposable.
- 5. Design for future dialogues
 Every intervention will one day become the past for someone else's future. Material diplomacy takes into account not only what is inherited, but also what is passed on. Designing for future dialogues means avoiding the final gesture leaving the door open for continuation, reinterpretation or dissent. The project becomes a platform, not a monument; a conversation, not a conclusion.







How to translate

Latour asks us to give up on the idea of being the sole author of meaning. Instead to be a composer of relations.

In order to establish these relations a common language is needed. So how to communicate with the building?

A dance in light and darkness

the play of light and shadow a single spot of light enters the hall a white spot amid the sea of grey it pulls human beings into the light a dance in the light How can the past and present life of a building serve as a guide in its process of transformation?

How can a dialogue be initiated with a non-human entity such as a building?



1. Interview with the building

2. Drawings as dialogues

3. Material experiments that explore how old and new coexist

eye to eye tête-a-tête



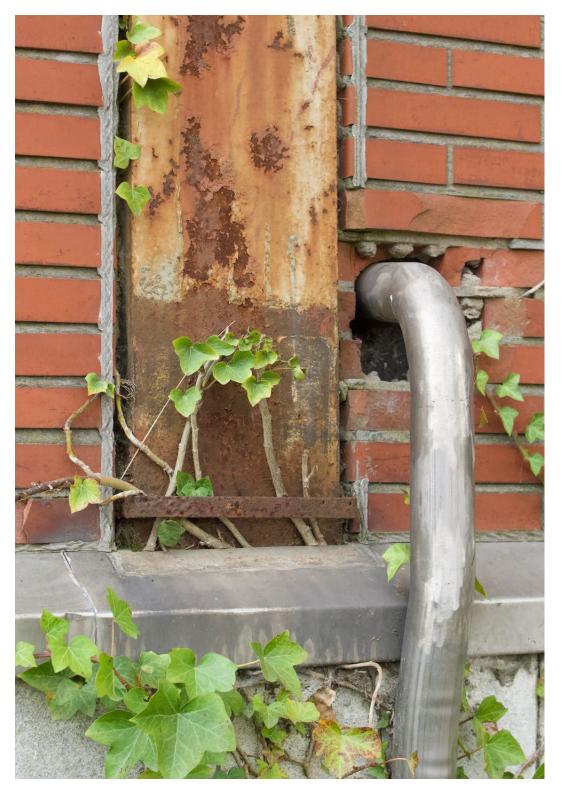


#untitled 1

Have a close look. Detail of the decaying facade. The brick facade deteriorates over time, revealing what is hidden behind it. The supporting steel column.

#untitled 2

Have a close look. At this corner two different facades come together.





#untitled 3

Have a close look. The exposed steel column is rusting. The pipe breaks through the brick facade.

#untitled 4

Have a close look. Detail of the decaying facade. The exposed steel column is rusting, half of its the protective panelling has fallen off

On how to tell a story

the dialogue

sind das Schrike? oder doch nur der Wind lottrere and Glasscherban. Fin landers Vogelightwittscher. Knex. ich diche mich um. Ich bin schreck En gewohntes Gefühl der Vertrausthei Lieson Ort misde sich mit der Une die jede neue Spur vurät.

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und verschiersen.

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Ich sita, Lore, sehe und Knotonpunkt & AHDEN

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Sur windows frame : invoids 3

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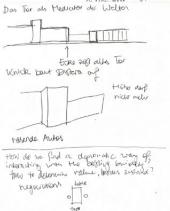
warmehmuz jetzt

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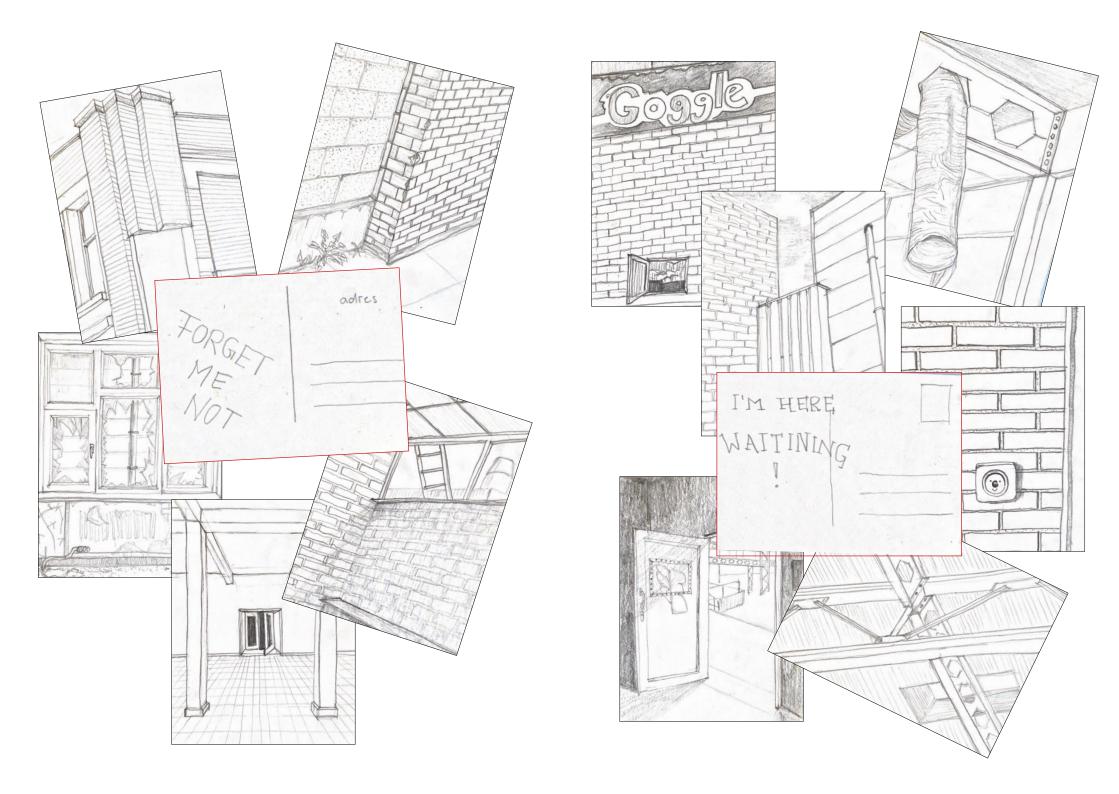
Soine Nutzuro ist vergungen. Wie Ande ich der Dialog Sin einer weum. Piesen ferste in Neder and kein alle bleine im stiden) Wie possi dos Eu einer Wohnwharg. Rohe Holeriolier, Leino Danning zur



what to so with the cit?

Intuitive writing

This story unfolds as an attempt to communicate with a building. Since a dialogue can't be established with words, the protagonist immerses herself in the reality of the building. She seeks to feel and see with the building in order to understand its existence.



Reflection

I understand my research as a journey that guided me through the graduation year, from the search for meaning to come to an understanding of how to work with a building. This journey was marked by dead ends, doubts, and shifting focuses. Yet, only an honest search can lead to new findings. Being lost is part of this. That is exactly how my year began, when I joined the "find the river" research group, which was an invitation to search for the unknown.

This group research sparked my interest: to understand the existing condition of the urban fabric by learning from the history of the site. With that intention on one side, I was also searching for a method to work with the abandoned buildings on the other side. How to touch them? To explore this, I opened up a different angle. The artwork of Gordon Mata-Clark presented the start of my study of material transformation and obsolescence. Through his practice, he forcefully cuts into neglected buildings, slicing through materials with precision and leaving behind voids that challenge the conventional perception of architectural integrity. A form of protest against urban development and demolition, which simultaneously reveals the materiality and hidden structures of buildings. So I come to wonder, could there be an architectural cut that intersects the old and new structures in my design?

Through archival and site research, I learned about the industries that once shaped Hoboken. Yet today, they co-exist as separate islands. My aim became to work with what is found, to open up the formerly closed production site and create new relationships between the neighbourhood and productive activity. Therefore, my design proposed the transformation of the 1960s office building into housing for the youth, apprentices, along with a new factory building, both connected by shared amenities and a courtyard. This architectural approach, in combination with my research and search for a translation of the "cut," slowly led me to a dead end. I come to question the choices I made. I realised that trying to solve homogeneity by introducing a new, monofunctional architecture only created new problems. Moreover, the longer I worked with the idea of the cut, the more I saw the distance it created from the essence of the site. There was no need for a grand architectural statement, but rather, a careful intervention. The destructive force behind the concept of the cut left me wondering whether such an architectural gesture was the right approach.

A reorientation was needed, a literal shift in perspective. All the time I was looking from the south side of the factory building onto the site, but my initial curiosity started from the North, the Lageweg. The office building with its long and narrow body once shielded the production halls from the public, acting as "the face" of the industry. It is connected to an older entrance building from the 1920s. Together, they form a peculiar ensemble.

So I made the decision to refocus on working closer with the existing buildings, in line with the knowledge of the archival research. The aim became to find incentives from the site itself, elements that could guide future transformation rather than imposing a new building block. So, how to work with the existing?

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This question led to a shift in my research towards immersive fieldwork. Valuing what is there, beyond historical and functional value. I started to understand the building as an entity with rights that need to be heard. But how to communicate if we don't speak the same language?

Again, the search for a translation. Could drawings or models act as mediators? I undertook several fieldwork expeditions: a series of tête-à-têtes with the building. I tried to learn from it and about it by documenting my observations and emotions on site. This process finally led me to find answers to the overarching question:

How can the past and present life of a building serve as a guide in its process of transformation?

How can a dialogue be initiated with a non-human entity such as a building? Finally, this research helps me to realise my design in such a way that it continues the movement of the two existing office buildings, which are connected by the common staircase volume. Three distinct parts of the building from different eras are now connected by the joints of the staircases and the gallery as an access system. The oldest part, which contains a restaurant and cookery school, the main part, which houses various work/life and shared living apartments, while the new head is a space where people can tell and listen to stories and come together in the multifunctional theatre space.

I see my project as a hungry caterpillar, a being in continuous transformation. It exists in a state of becoming, shaped by time, materials, and new architectural nutrition. Its hunger is not just for space, but for meaning and renewal. With a long, narrow body stretched along the site, it grows a new segment, nourished by the design.

In the end, I very much appreciate the freedom that this studio gave me to find my path. Only with this ability to take shifts and turns could I develop my interest. I am sure that the results of my work are thus closely tied to this process.