



Toward Anti-War Architecture

An Exploratory Redesign of *Bunkerpark Oostduinlaan*



Research

ExploreLab Final Research Report

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"The world is always ending over and over again in one place but not another and that the end of the world is always a local event, it comes to your country and visits your town and knocks on the door of your house and becomes to others but some distant warning, a brief report on the news, an echo of events that has passed into folklore."

~ Paul Lynch, *Prophet Song*

We live in a globalized world shaken by local conflicts. The digital space that has emerged through technological advancements enables the free flow of information across the globe. As a result, war has become more difficult than ever to conceive as a spatially finite phenomenon¹. Regional conflicts stem from global political and economic dynamics, meaning that we all, citizens of democracies, bear responsibility and are, in some way, involved. However, rather than being incentivized to act, Western citizens have been transformed into mere spectators of these events. The media inundates us with photos, videos, reports, and stories from war-affected regions, providing ample information. Yet, it remains unclear how - or even if- we are truly affected. Meanwhile, due to hyper-exposure to information, the observer loses interest in the issue². We have the potential, but not the motivation to intervene.

Through my graduation project, I want to challenge our preconceptions regarding political crises and our roles as citizens in them. I aim to create a space that allows people to empathize with victims of warfare and serves as a backdrop for discussions and debates among individuals with different beliefs and backgrounds. I believe that through education, empathy, and willingness, people have the potential to civicize their everyday lives and, together, discover how to bring about change.

¹ Abujidi, 2014, p. 12

² Fuller and Weizman, 2021, p.120

What urban, architectural, and art means are there to challenge the individual's role in, and responsibility towards, seemingly unrelated global conflicts?

To address this research question, the project employs two complementary research methods: a comparative analysis of fifteen projects concerned with the spatialization of armed conflict, and an online survey conducted among citizens of (predominantly) Western democracies. The following chapters examine these two methodologies in detail and discuss their respective findings.

This report serves as the theoretical foundation for the design proposal presented during my defence and as a companion document to the design booklet provided.



Project Studies

Data Collection





To outline key characteristics and design guidelines that could help shape the concept of “anti-war” architecture, and to better understand the positions of designers engaging with the spatial representation of warfare, a series of projects were analyzed using a criteria matrix. The study was structured around the following research sub-questions:

How can architecture go beyond the realm of knowledge and make its visitors realize or feel the urgency of a problem?

How can architecture exist on the threshold between comfort and discomfort, both attracting and challenging at the same time?

A total of fifteen projects were selected for this study, spanning diverse fields such as the built environment, the arts, and military technology - areas that, at first glance, appear to have little in common. What unites them, however, is their shared connection to the concept of war. These projects are analyzed comparatively through a structured set of criteria designed to position them relative to one another, thereby revealing underlying relationships and recurring elements.

To select the projects for analysis, the following criteria were developed:

- The project engages with the spatial representation of warfare.
- The project holds global significance in relation to the issue it addresses.
- The project is well-documented.
- The project has a unique aspect worth exploring.
- Preferably, the project has been or can be visited by the author.

In the following pages each of these projects and the corresponding findings are presented. This part of the report is accompanied by a poster in which the findings are visualized for further clarity.



General

Completion: 2025

Location: *various*, Ukraine & Russia

Category: First person view drones

Creator, Nationality: Unmanned System Forces, UA

Position of the Creator: A promoter

Methodology: Sharing FPV drone footage from the war front alongside “talking head” videos on Instagram.

Format: A social media page.

Goal: To promote the Unmanned System Forces of Ukraine.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Scrolling through an Instagram page.

Response

Rational: Informative posts; Self-promotion.

Emotional: Aestheticized images; Overwhelming videos.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Threatening; Bombing; Human life at risk.

Moment of Relief: Glorification.

Souvenir: Parallel to playing video games.



General

Completion: 2005

Location: Tze'elim, Israel

Category: Military Training Facilities

Creator, Nationality: Israel Defense Forces (IDF), IL

Position of the Creator: A military trainer.

Methodology: Using Arabic architectural and cultural elements.

Format: A simulation of an Arabic settlement.

Goal: To prepare soldiers for urban warfare.

Access: Closed for the public.

User Experience: Exercising in a 'foreign' settlement.

Response

Rational: Developing new military skills; Designed in detail.

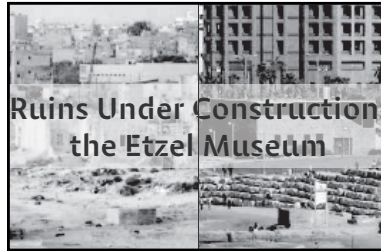
Emotional: Portraying the enemy; Designed acoustics.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Approaching the village; Meeting the enemy.

Moment of Relief: Getting together; Seeing your family.

Souvenir: Designed narratives.



General

Completion: 1978 | 2013

Location: Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

Category: Contested Memory Sites

Creator, Nationality: A. Niv, D. & A. Schwartz, IL | DAAR, PS & SE

Position of the Creator: A designer | A critic.

Methodology: Erecting a new building atop historic ruins. | Analyzing and comparing historical photographs.

Format: A commemorative museum. | A report.

Goal: To honor Etzel. | To reveal the negation built into the museum.

Access: Residents and visitors of Tel Aviv. Entrance: € 5.00. | Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Visiting a (guided) exhibition. | Reading a report.

Response

Rational: Informative exhibit. | Architectural studies & analysis

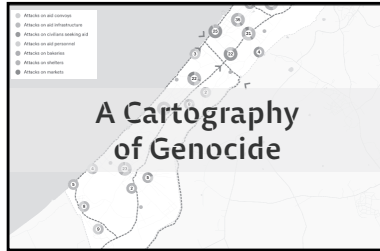
Emotional: Patriotic; Public partaking. | Powerful phrasing.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Artifacts of conflict. | Exposing contradictions.

Moment of Relief: Glorification; Educating future generations. | ---

Souvenir: Different sides - different pasts.



General

Completion: 2024

Location: Gaza, Palestine

Category: Documentation Projects

Creator, Nationality: Forensic Architecture, UK

Position of the Creator: An investigator.

Methodology: Using data mining and geolocation to identify various data inputs and pattern analysis to categorize them.

Format: An interactive cartographic platform, a report.

Goal: To present patterns of 'incidents', attacks conducted by the Israeli military in the Gaza strip.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Exploring on the cartographic platform.

Response

Rational: Thorough documentation; Showing interrelations.

Emotional: Powerful phrasing; Overwhelming footage.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Seeing violence unfold; No one is safe.

Moment of Relief: ---

Souvenir: Documenting; Seeking justice.



General

Completion: 2022

Location: Kyiv, Ukraine

Category: Investigation Projects

Creator, Nationality: CST, UA & Forensic Architecture, UK

Position of the Creator: An investigator.

Methodology: Using 3D modeling, image analysis, and geolocation to locate primary sources and construct a narrative.

Format: A video.

Goal: To examine the confluence of past and present at the location of the Kyiv TV Tower.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Watching a video.

Response

Rational: Presenting both sides; Uncovering layers of history.

Emotional: References to the past; Showing the casualties.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Multi-angle reconstruction; Erasing history.

Moment of Relief: ---

Souvenir: Documenting. Remembering



General

Completion: 1993

Location: Washinton D.C., USA

Category: Memorials

Creator, Nationality: James Ingo Freed, USA

Position of the Creator: A visionary.

Methodology: Collecting and presenting a variety of sources that bring together different narratives.

Format: A memorial museum.

Goal: To raise awareness about the horrors of the Holocaust and help prevent future genocides.

Access: Residents and visitors of Washington D.C.

User Experience: Visiting an exhibition.

Response

Rational: Informative exhibition; Asking critical questions.

Emotional: Personal stories; References to the past.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Dark atmosphere; Distrucing exhibits.

Moment of Relief: Remembrance.

Souvenir: Is history repeating itself?



General

Completion: 2013

Location: Belgrade, Serbia

Category: Re-Examining History Projects

Creator, Nationality: FA, UK & Grupa Spomenik, New Yugoslavia

Position of the Creator: A critic.

Methodology: Conducting fieldwork and using digital tools to weave together the layers of history embedded in a site.

Format: A site investigation concluded with a public forum.

Goal: To challenge the framework of contemporary commemorative politics.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Reading a report.

Response

Rational: Juxtaposing historical layers; Using uncommon methods.

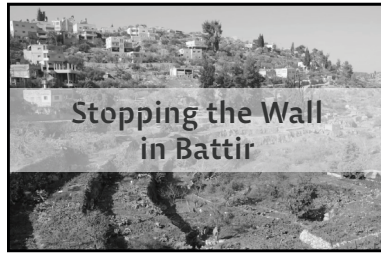
Emotional: Personal stories; Elements of surprise.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: The loss of home; Unlayering violence.

Moment of Relief: Public interest.

Souvenir: The paradox as a starting point.



General

Completion: 2015

Location: Battir, West Bank

Category: Forums

Creator, Nationality: Michael Sfard Law Office, IL

Position of the Creator: An advocate.

Methodology: Conducting fieldwork and using 3D modeling to build a case for court defense.

Format: A legal contention in the Israeli High Court.

Goal: To preserve the natural integrity of a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Access: The Israeli High Court.

User Experience: Reading an interview.

Response

Rational: Interviewing a professional; Explanatory materials.

Emotional: Interviewing affected communities; Imagined futures.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: The possibility of disruption.

Moment of Relief: The natural environment; Winning the case.

Souvenir: The common environment as a start for understanding.



General

Completion: 2017 - current

Location: *various*

Category: Conflicting History Education

Creator, Nationality: Parallel Histories, UK

Position of the Creator: An initiator.

Methodology: Creating educational resources, training teachers, and fostering inter-school debates.

Format: Teaching resources and guidelines.

Goal: To prepare students to be active citizens in thriving, pluralistic democracies.

Access: High school students and teachers. Price: € 340.00

User Experience: Watching, reading, exploring, thinking, debating.

Response

Rational: Learning through dual narratives; Asking questions.

Emotional: Forming a personal position; Understanding both sides

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: ---

Moment of Relief: Debating; Listening; Guidance; Self-expression

Souvenir: Educating against hate.



General

Completion: 1986 - 1993

Location: Hamburg, Germany

Category: Counter-Memorials

Creator, Nationality: Esther Shalev-Gerz, LT & Jochen Gerz, DE

Position of the Creator: An initiator.

Methodology: Building a structure designed for visitor interaction and engagement.

Format: A lead-clad column that sinks into the ground over time.

Goal: To ratify a public statement against fascism.

Access: Residents and visitors of Hamburg.

User Experience: 1986 - 1993: Collectivizing the monument by inscription;
1993 - present: Reading the story of the monument.

Response

Rational: Information screen; Minimal impact on the environment

Emotional: Non-erasable messages; A memorial? A funeral?

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Imposing structure.

Moment of Relief: Self-expression; Discussion; Shared experience

Souvenir: Capturing the moods of the time.



General

Completion: 1954

Location: Hiroshima, Japan

Category: Peace Memorials Creator, Nationality: Kenzo Tange, JP

Position of the Creator: A visionary.

Methodology: Blending built and natural elements in curating an experience.

Format: Museums and monuments in a park anseble.

Goal: To raise awareness of the devastation caused by the atomic bomb detonation and advocate against its future use.

Access: Residents and visitors of Hiroshima. Entrance: € 1.25

User Experience: Walking through a park anseble, visiting museums and memorial statues.

Response

Rational: Informative exhibition; Animated models.

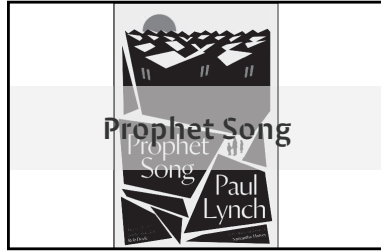
Emotional: Personal stories; Anomalities.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Dark atmosphere; Disturbing images.

Moment of Relief: Bright spaces; Views outside; Being in a park.

Souvenir: Busy, but quiet.



General

Completion: 2023

Location: *fictional* Dublin, Ireland

Category: Anti War Art

Creator, Nationality: Paul Lynch, IE

Position of the Creator: A questioner.

Methodology: Using the form to imprison the reader in the story.

Format: A social realist novel.

Goal: To question the stability of democracy and encourage empathy for those affected by global conflicts.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet. Price: > € 7.00

User Experience: Reading a novel.

Response

Rational: Challenging assumptions; Exploring; Questioning.

Emotional: Honesty; Empathy; Immediacy with the characters.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: No false sense of resolution; Lack of humour.

Moment of Relief: The presence of the mundane.

Souvenir: Radical empathy: cannot look away.



General

Completion: 2025

Location: Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Category: Anti War Exhibitions

Creator, Nationality: Anselm Kiefer, DE

Position of the Creator: An explorer.

Methodology: Using a wide variety of materials for the creation of grand paintings and physical models.

Format: One exhibition in two museums.

Goal: To challenge Germany's postwar identity.

Access: Residents and visitors of Amsterdam. Entrance: €27.50

User Experience: Visiting an exhibition.

Response

Rational: Layers of history; Told stories contradict painted ones.

Emotional: Invoking feelings; Imagines stories emerge.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Distorted forms; Abstraction; Cold materials.

Moment of Relief: Recognizable forms; Static composition; Bright.

Souvenir: Immersive through its dimensions.



General

Completion: 2025

Location: Ottawa, Canada

Category: Virtual Reality Exhibitions

Creator, Nationality: The War up Close Project, UA

Position of the Creator: An activist.

Methodology: Using 360° panoramic photos, drone footage and 3D models to create an immersive experience.

Format: A travelling VR exhibition.

Goal: To expose Russia's aggression, preserve the memory of it, and seek justice.

Access: Residents and visitors of Ottawa.

User Experience: Visiting an exhibition.

Response

Rational: Exposing urbicide; Alternative journalism.

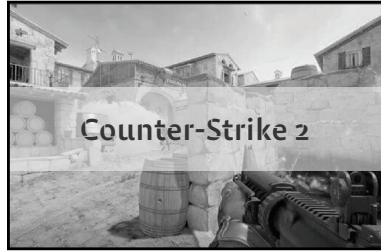
Emotional: Witnessing destruction; Seeing children's art.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: Destroyed homes; Robbed childhood.

Moment of Relief: Physically still in Canada.

Souvenir: Evidence on every scale.



General

Completion: 2023

Location: fictional

Category: Video Games

Creator, Nationality: Valve, USA

Position of the Creator: An entertainer.

Methodology: Using a player-centric, iterative, and data-driven approach to design a video game.

Format: A free-to-play first-person shooter game.

Goal: To compete in tactical matches and complete objectives.

Access: Open to the public on the Internet.

User Experience: Playing a video game.

Response

Rational: Using tactics; Communicating with your teammates.

Emotional: Immersive experience; Unpredictability.

Narrative Techniques

Building Up Tension: High-pressure moments; Getting one-tapped.

Moment of Relief: Successful strategy; Rewards; Dopamine rush.

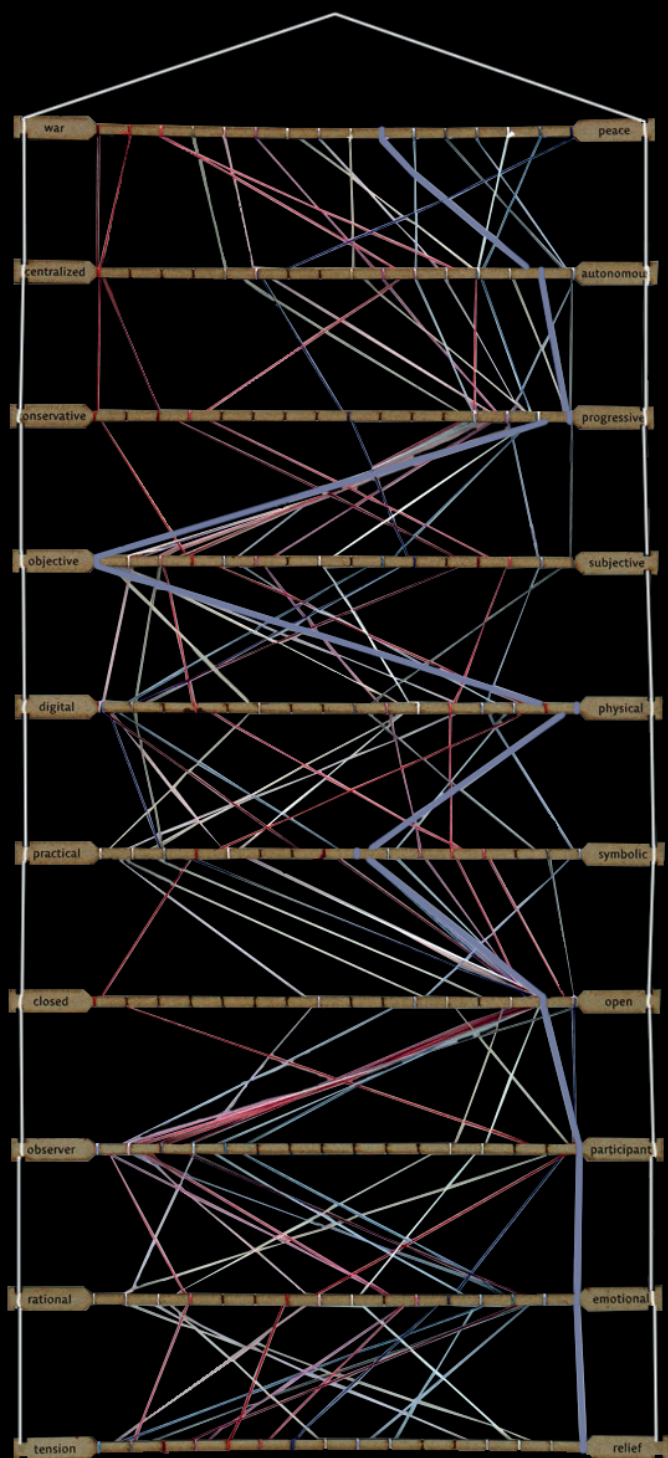
Souvenir: A simulation of a Moroccan settlement.



Project Studies

Comparative Analysis





After all projects are presented using the established criteria, the findings are compared. For each criterion, a conceptual axis is defined, representing a gradient between two opposing poles. Each project is positioned along this spectrum according to its characteristics. For example, the conceptual axis for the criterion Category spans from *war* to *peace*: a military training facility is located toward the war end of the axis, while anti-war art aligns with the peace end. A project such as a legal hearing would occupy an intermediate position.

This shared conceptual framework across all axes enables a coherent comparative analysis, revealing relationships and patterns among otherwise disparate case studies.

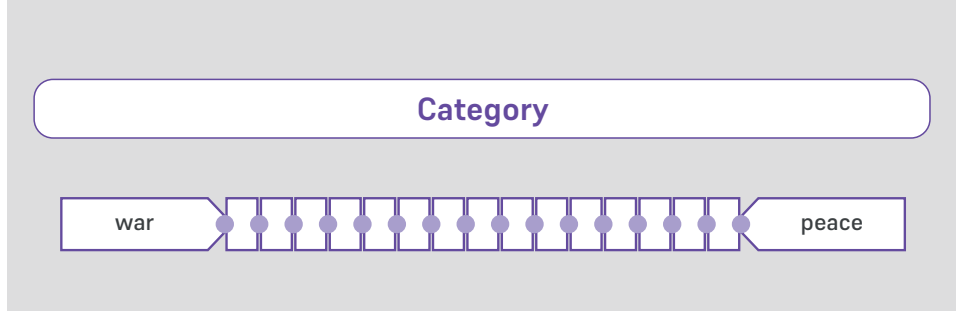
The following pages explain the conceptual axes used to analyze the projects and highlight the main findings. A final diagram brings the studies together in a unified overview.

Year of Completion

The projects selected for these studies have all been completed within the past 75 years, with 11 out of 15 originating in the last 15 years. All of the projects still exist and can be visited or referenced, ensuring that the studies focus on projects that remain relevant today.

Location

The projects are located across multiple continents, with examples from Europe, North America, and Asia. Some locations appear more than once, particularly those that are current conflict hotspots - most notably territories in Israel and Palestine, which account for four of the fifteen selected projects. Additionally, two of the projects are set in fictional locations: one in a mentally constructed space (a novel) and the other in a digitally created environment (a video game).



Each project is categorized according to its focus, ranging from military training facilities, through conflict history education to anti-war art. Despite their differences, these categories are unified by a common thread: their relation to the concept of war.

To organize such diverse projects, a conceptual axis is introduced - framed by the opposing poles of *war* and *peace*. While all projects engage with the idea of war, they occupy different positions along this spectrum. At the war-oriented end are initiatives directly engaged in conducting warfare, such as the conduct of a FPV drone team. At the midpoint lie projects connected to negotiation, such as forums. On the opposite end are cultural productions, such as anti-war art and exhibitions and first-person shooter (FPS) video games - where war is either simulated to raise awareness or presented for entertainment, respectively.

The projects at the two extremes - FPV drones and FPS video games - serve profoundly different purposes, yet share a strikingly similar format: in both, the user views a screen and targets military assets to complete a mission. The crucial difference lies in the nature of the targets - fictional in one case, real in the other. Nevertheless, the comparison inevitably blurs the line between entertainment and violence, raising a critical question: How easily can leisure activities become instruments of war? This parallel also underscores the normalization of violence within liberal capitalist democracies, where elements of warfare are seamlessly woven into everyday life.

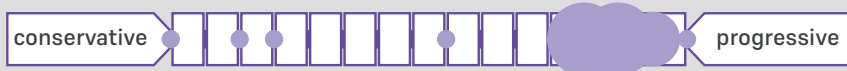
Creator



The name of each project's creator(s), along with their country of origin, is provided. However, the nature of these creators varies significantly - ranging from governmental bodies to educational and commercial institutions, as well as independent artists. To reflect this diversity, a second conceptual axis is introduced, with the opposing poles of *centralized* and *autonomous*. At one end are military organizations, defined by strict hierarchies and centralized control; at the other are independent artists and self-employed individuals, who operate with a high degree of autonomy. Positioned between these extremes are various organizations with differing levels of affiliation to established institutions, forming a gradient along the axis.

Mapping the creators in this way reveals that the majority fall toward the moderate to highly autonomous end of the spectrum. This distribution suggests that many of the projects engage with non-traditional, often critical, perspectives on warfare - offering alternative ways of studying, understanding, and representing conflict beyond the narratives shaped by state or institutional actors.

Position of the Creator



One of the key goals of the project studies was to understand the position of each creator in relation to their work. This understanding was essential in shaping the author's own critical approach. To grasp how creators perceive their role, it was important to identify primary sources in which they spoke directly about their projects. In most cases, these sources included interviews, while in others, they were in the form of published statements. In three instances, where no direct commentary was available, the position the creator was established based on the nature of the work itself.

The creators' roles varied - they could be initiators, critics, visionaries, educators, promoters, activists, etc. As with previous categories, it became necessary to establish a unifying framework to interpret and compare these diverse positions. The conceptual axis for this category ranges from *conservative* to *progressive*. On the one extreme the creator relied on established methods and ideas, while on the other he/she sought to challenge them and propose alternative, less conventional perspectives.

Positioning the creators along this axis revealed that the majority of the projects are driven by progressive actors who question dominant discourses and explore new approaches to understanding and representing warfare.

Methodology

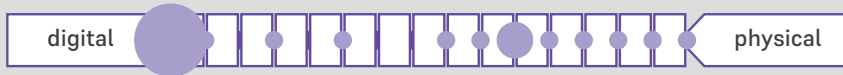


This criterion focuses on how each project was created. It closely relates to the previous criterion—the position of the creator—since the creator’s perspective often influences methodological choices. More progressive projects tend to experiment with emerging technologies and innovative approaches, while more conservative ones rely on established, traditional methods.

Each project represents an attempt to spatially reconstruct warfare, and in doing so, each constructs a narrative. As such, the projects are positioned along a conceptual axis based on their degree of objectivity. At one end are projects that are *objective*, aiming at factual representation; at the other are *subjective* interpretations that invite for critical reflection and for discussion.

The projects appear to be relatively evenly distributed along this spectrum, thus combining both subjective and objective elements. For example, content from a FPV drone team’s Instagram channel provides some seemingly objective data - such as the number and type of targets hit - but it is also highly curated, shaping viewer perception through selective presentation. A project positioned closer to the objective end might be a conflict history education program, where students engage directly with primary documents from all sides of a conflict. A purely subjective approach could be represented by writing a novel, where the narrative is entirely imagined. In the end most projects use in varying proportions a mix of objective and subjective tools to build a narrative.

Format



The forms in which these projects are delivered to the viewer vary widely, ranging from museum exhibitions and public hearings to online videos and social media pages. To facilitate comparative analysis, all projects are organized along a conceptual axis that spans from the *digital* to the *physical*.

Mapping the projects along this axis reveals two underlying trends. First, a cluster appears at the digital end of the spectrum, including projects that exist entirely online - such as video games, investigative documentaries presented through videos, and social media pages. The remaining projects tend to fall closer to the physical end, yet many of them incorporate digital elements. For instance, a museum exhibition may be affective not only through its architectural qualities and physical collection, but also through its use of digital media, such as animated models.

Projects that successfully integrate both the physical and digital realms suggest the potential for new, hybrid forms of storytelling.

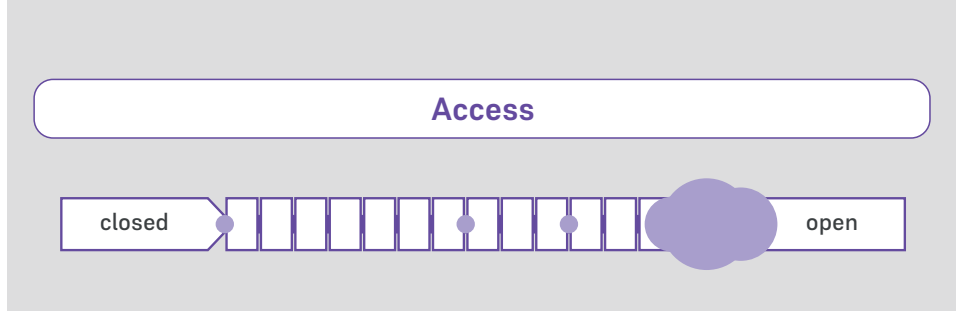
Goal



This category outlines the goal of each project, which can vary widely - from commemorative and educational to promotional or critical objectives. To enable a meaningful comparative study, all projects are mapped along a conceptual axis that ranges from *practical* to *symbolic*.

Three key observations emerge from this mapping. First, about one-third of the projects exhibit a predominantly practical orientation. For example, conflict history education projects aim to combat hate and prejudice. The FPV drone team's social media page serves mainly as a promotional tool. Second, only two projects are characterized by a strongly symbolic focus. For example, an anti-war novel designed to provoke critical reflection and challenge dominant narratives. Finally, more than half of the projects occupy a middle ground, combining both practical and symbolic elements. These include monuments that serve both educational and commemorative purposes, as well as investigative initiatives that expose injustice while also functioning as symbolic acts of resistance against the status quo.

In conclusion, most projects blend practical and symbolic goals, indicating that initiatives addressing conflict often seek not only to inform or take action, but also to express deeper values and challenge prevailing norms.



The next aspect by which the projects are organized is accessibility: how and to what extent the public can engage with them. To conceptualize the findings, a scale from *closed* to *open* access was established.

Compared to previous categories, there is greater consistency in this one, with most projects falling into two main sub-categories: those with open access via the Internet and those open to residents and visitors of the city in which the project is located. Only three projects fall outside these categories. These include a military training facility, which is closed to the public; a legal hearing, accessible only to the court; and conflict history education guidelines, which are available to educational institutions for a fee but remain less accessible to private individuals.

These three exceptions can be clearly pointed out on the axis, while all other projects cluster around the “open” side. Projects that are free and accessible online or in person are considered fully open. However, the majority require some form of payment. For instance, an exhibition with a €1.25 entry fee is considered more accessible than one charging €27.50.

In conclusion, while a few projects remain largely inaccessible to the general public, the overall trend points toward openness and public engagement - emphasizing that true accessibility depends not only on availability but also on affordability.

User experience



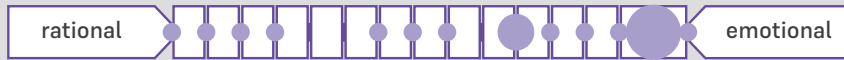
The user experience across all the projects oscillates between two extremes: the user is either a passive *observer* of the project or an active *participant* in it. These two positions form the poles of the conceptual axis used to categorize this aspect of the projects.

At one end of the axis are projects that actively engage the user as a participant. These vary widely in form and purpose - for example, playing a video game, taking part in a military training session, participating in a conflict education class, or inscribing a personal message on a monument.

At the other end are projects that treat the user primarily as an observer. Interestingly, there is more variation on this end of the spectrum. While some projects, such as a novel or an investigative report, place the user in a purely observational role, with no opportunity to influence or interact with the content, others introduce small participatory elements. A social media page, for instance, allows users to comment on content, offering a limited form of interaction. Exhibitions also primarily position the user as a viewer, but often include opportunities for limited engagement and self-expression.

It is noteworthy that the format of a project does not necessarily determine the user's role. Both digital and physical projects can be designed to position users as either observers or participants.

Response



This is one of the two fundamental categories necessary to understand and extract meaningful insights from the project studies. It is framed in relation to one of the sub-research questions, namely:

How can architecture go beyond the realm of knowledge and make its visitors realize or feel the urgency of a problem?

This sub-question defines the two poles along which a project's effectiveness can be positioned: knowledge, referring to the *rational*, and realization/feeling, referring to the *emotional*. All projects are positioned along this spectrum - do they have a predominantly rational or emotional effect?

It becomes evident that projects tend to lean toward the emotional side, suggesting that they offer valuable insights in relation to the research sub-question. However, given the significance of the question - and the reality that any impactful experience engages both the rational and emotional - each project is analyzed in depth, with examples provided of the tools used to evoke each type of response.

The following pages focus on recurring elements found across the projects. These elements represent design tools that transcend specific project types and could be applied to any design initiative aiming to achieve a particular emotional or rational effect.

Response: Rational

Rational design strategies that recur across the projects include informing, challenging assumptions and posing critical questions, revealing interrelations between historical layers, and facilitating dual narratives.

First, the most traditional method of conveying knowledge is through the presentation of textual information - whether in a museum exhibition, a social media post, or an article. This remains a direct and effective way to communicate facts and context.

Second, many projects actively challenge underlying assumptions by raising critical questions. This strategy encourages visitors to reflect on their own beliefs, particularly when confronted with information that contradicts their prior understanding.

Third, several projects highlight the complex interconnections between historical layers within a given site. By doing so, they reveal how conflicts are often deeply rooted and multifaceted.

Finally, presenting dual or opposing narratives is a powerful method for prompting self-reflection. Viewers are confronted with alternative perspectives, which may challenge their existing biases or incomplete knowledge, inviting them to reconsider.

In conclusion, these rational strategies lay the groundwork for critical awareness and more informed perspectives on conflict.

Response: Emotional

Emotional design strategies identified across the projects include the use of personal stories, **immersive experiences**, stimulation of the imagination, moments of surprise, and overwhelming visual content.

Notably, projects that incorporate personal narratives often focus on exposing violence: whether through investigative work or acts of remembrance. Whether they take the form of architectural interventions or written reports, these projects rely on emotional resonance to leave a lasting impact.

Immersive experiences are another powerful tool for creating emotional engagement. For example, soldiers in military training facilities are immersed in simulated villages of the “enemy” through visual and auditory stimuli, while visitors to a VR exhibition are transported into the reality of a war-torn region through both visual and spatial immersion.

Many projects also refrain from offering clear conclusions. Instead, they raise questions or leave the narrative open-ended, prompting viewers to reflect and imagine.

In addition, curating a moment of surprise appears to be a recurring and effective technique. Whether through unexpected spatial transitions or sudden shifts in tone or content, these moments disrupt the viewer’s expectations and heighten emotional awareness.

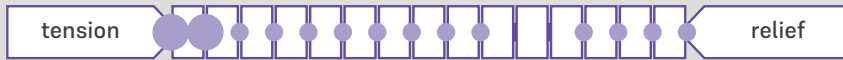
Finally, the use of overwhelming footage - unfiltered, raw, and at times graphic - is a method employed in several projects to convey the gravity of violence without softening its impact. These visceral images confront the viewer directly, ensuring the message is felt as much as it is understood.

In conclusion, these recurring elements demonstrate how emotional impact in design can be intentionally crafted. Regardless of medium or

Response: Emotional

scale, these tools offer strategies that go beyond conveying knowledge to evoke realization, empathy, and urgency.

Narrative technique



This is the second fundamental category necessary to understand and extract meaningful insights from the project studies. It is framed in relation to the second sub-research question:

How can architecture exist on the threshold between comfort and discomfort, both attracting and challenging at the same time?

This question establishes a spectrum between two extremes - comfort and attraction on one end, and discomfort and challenge on the other. After analyzing the projects, these poles are refined into the concepts of building up *tension*, moments when the visitor feels unease or is provoked, and moments of *relief*, instances when the visitor is reassured and re-energized to continue engaging with the project.

It becomes evident that many projects tend to lean toward building up tension, indicating a focus on discomfort. For most projects, design strategies for both aspects are identified. When a project clearly emphasizes only one of the two aspects, the corresponding part of the matrix is left unfilled on the poster. This creates a visual representation that highlights the dominant emotional dynamic of each project.

The following pages focus on recurring elements observed across the projects. These elements represent design tools that go beyond specific formats and can be applied to a wide range of design initiatives aiming to produce a specific (dis)comforting effect.

Narrative technique: Building up tension

Recurring techniques used to build up tension include dark atmospheres, the loss of home, and the implication of violence

On an architectural scale, many projects that aim to evoke discomfort create a dark, enclosed atmosphere. Visitors are led through black-painted rooms, with no view of the outside, immersing them fully in the exhibition. This spatial strategy reinforces a sense of confinement and emotional weight.

In exhibition curation, the theme of losing one's home is frequently emphasized. The concept of "home" is a universally shared, deeply valued by both victims of war and individuals living in peaceful contexts. This shared understanding allows for strong emotional resonance, allowing viewers to empathize more readily with victims.

Additionally, several projects imply the presence of brutal violence. Often, this violence is only partially described or visually suggested, leaving gaps that the viewer must mentally fill through personal associations.

In conclusion, these recurring strategies for building tension reveal how design can provoke emotional discomfort in nuanced and powerful ways.

Narrative technique: Moment(s) of relief

Strategies used to create moments of relief include glorification, togetherness, opportunities for self-expression, and using familiar features.

Glorification is a common tool in military or traditional remembrance projects, often used to honor past deeds. It reassures those who have suffered that their pain had meaning, whether through successful outcomes or the heroism of individuals.

Togetherness is another powerful source of comfort. Whether it involves reuniting with ones family, participating in a class, or gathering with members of one's community to reflect on shared experiences, the act of being with others fosters solidarity. Unlike the dark, enclosed settings used to evoke discomfort, spaces to get together are typically bright, open, and welcoming.

Self-expression is a powerful means of emotional relief. It can take many forms, such as inscribing a message on a monument, engaging in debates, or participating in group discussions. By contributing their voice, visitors become part of the narrative, fostering a sense of agency and offering a meaningful outlet for emotional release.

Finally, the use of recognizable forms, whether in architecture or exhibition design, can provide a sense of familiarity and stability. These known spatial or visual cues help ground the visitor, making the experience feel safer and more approachable.

In conclusion, these strategies show how relief can be thoughtfully designed into projects, balancing moments of tension with ones of emotional reassurance. In doing so, they allow visitors to process difficult content while staying engaged and supported.

Souvenir

The “Souvenir” is the final criterion used to analyze the projects. It is intended to capture any significant aspect that did not fit into the previous categories. It also serves as a final takeaway, something lasting that the project leaves with the viewer or participant, not necessarily tied directly to the author’s specific research topic.

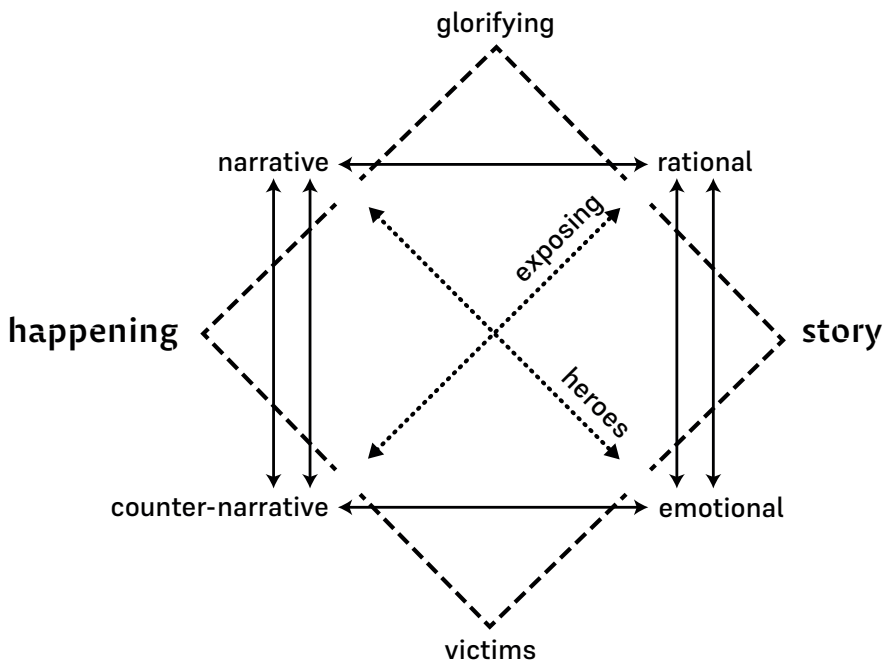
In some cases, this includes offering additional tools for creating impact, or clarifying key concepts, for example, defining what radical empathy could be. In others, it may involve posing a critical question, such as: *Is history repeating itself?*

Conclusion

Through the extracted information on the poster and the research findings presented in the previous pages the author hopes to have provided meaningful insights into the research question:

What architectural, art, and social means are there to challenge
the individual's role in, and responsibility towards,
seemingly unrelated global conflicts?

In order to synthesize the findings into a conclusive visual framework, the following diagram has been developed, based on *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* by Rosalind Krauss.



Conclusion

At its core, it is a methodological tool that illustrates how a happening can be translated into a story. It does so by mapping narratives (ex.: in military institutions or commemorative projects) and counter-narratives (ex.: in investigative projects, counter-monuments, or anti-war exhibitions), alongside the emotional and rational strategies each approach could employ.

The diagram suggests that dominant narratives often focus on glorification and the construction of heroic imagery, whereas counter-narratives tend to expose forgotten layers of history, giving voice to victims.

This framework informs future designers of the two distinct narrative paths they might choose when translating a historically significant event into a narrative. The broader research findings and conclusions offer a corresponding set of design tools, equipping architects and curators with strategies to shape meaningful, emotionally resonant, and critically reflective experiences.

Thank you!



Online Survey

Questions & Results



To gain a better understanding of the target audience, and to provide an additional point of reference when selecting a site and defining the program requirements, a survey was developed. Its purpose was to address the following sub-research questions:

Are citizens of Western democracies interested in politics, and do they believe their actions can bring about change?

What opportunities might encourage people to step out of their comfort zones and engage with topics they may perceive as irrelevant to their everyday lives?

The survey was distributed among the author's friends and family, within the faculty, and via online survey platforms. It was designed to be quick and easy to complete. So far, 50 responses have been gathered and analyzed.

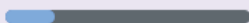
The respondents are primarily young adults, mostly from European countries. The group is roughly evenly split between students and professionals. A key finding is that although respondents show interest in politics, they are not confident in their ability to express their opinions constructively and doubt whether their actions could lead to any political change. Participants tend to be drawn to affordable, easily accessible and recommended locations. While they show interest in established forms of presentation, such as lectures and museum exhibitions, they express an even higher desire for new, "out of the box" experiences.

On the following pages, the survey questions along with a brief analysis of the responses to each can be found.

Politics & Architecture

This survey aims to grasp the respondents' positions towards politics and to explore their interest in politically engaged architecture.

Thank you for taking the time to fill the form in!

[Next](#)

Page 1 of 5

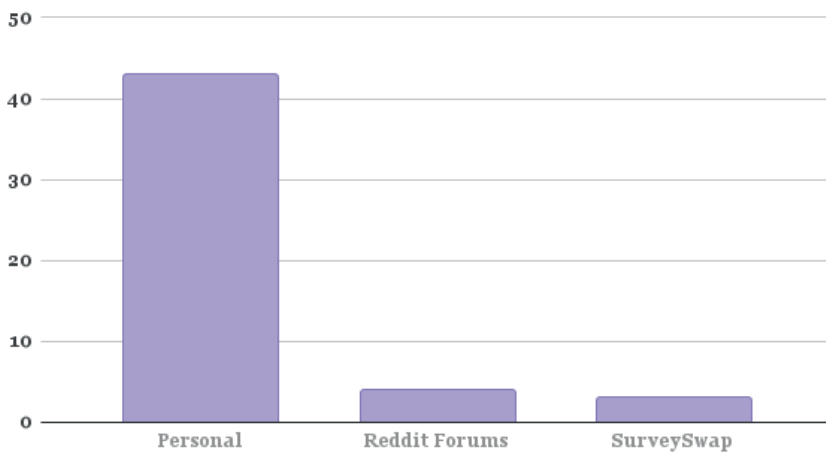
[Clear form](#)

I. Access

Redirected from: *

- ☒ Personal (Re)sharing
- ☐ SurveySwap (P.S: This survey contains Karma to get free survey responses at SurveySwap.io)
- ☐ Reddit Forums
- ☐ Facebook Groups

Redirected from:

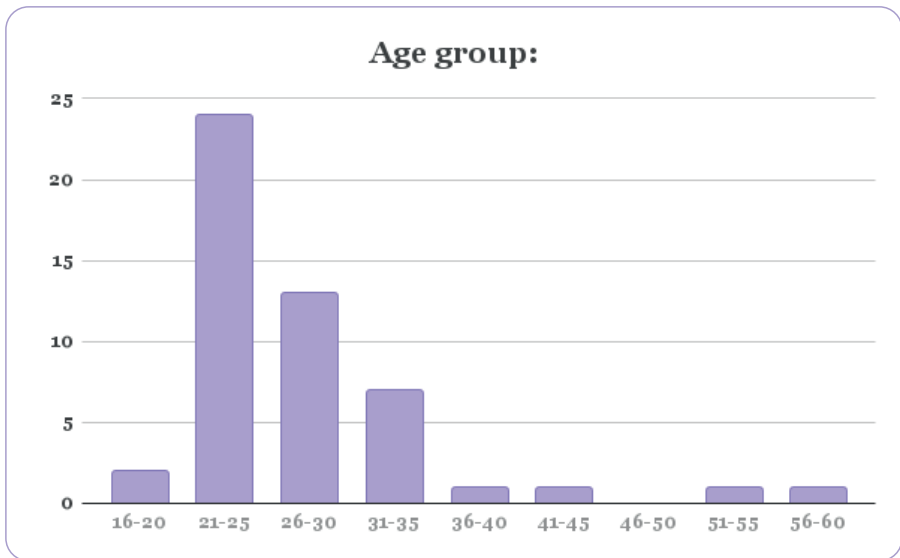


This is a pre-filled question indicating how the survey has been accessed. Unfortunately, very few responses came from anonymous participants—specifically, those who accessed the survey via a Reddit forum or through the Survey Swap portal. The survey was not shared on Facebook. This category exists to help verify whether respondents are personally altering their answers to this question. A total of 50 responses were collected.

II. General

Age: *

Your answer

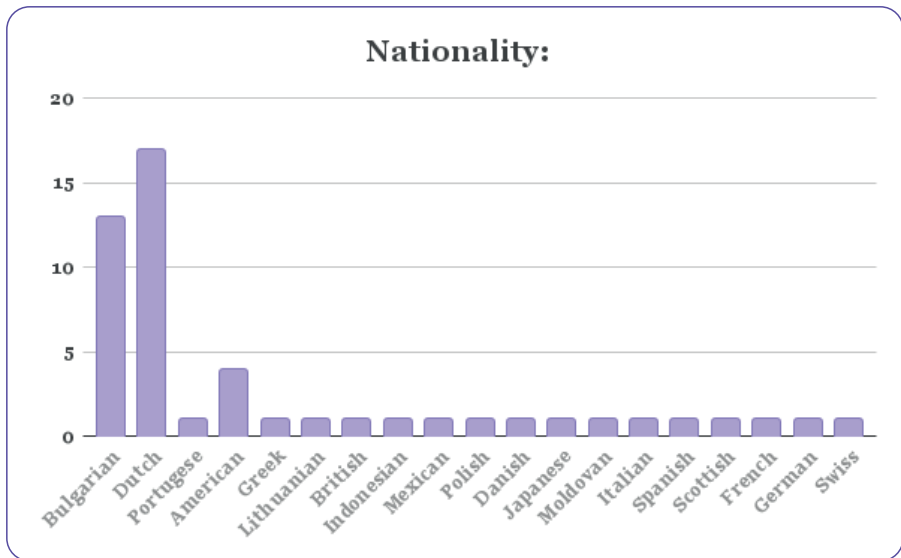


The bar chart displays the distribution of individuals across various age groups, with the 21–25 age group having the highest count at 24 people. This is followed by the 26–30 and 31–35 age groups, while participation declines significantly in age groups beyond 35. It can be concluded that most of the participants in the survey are young adults.

II. General

Nationality: *

Your answer

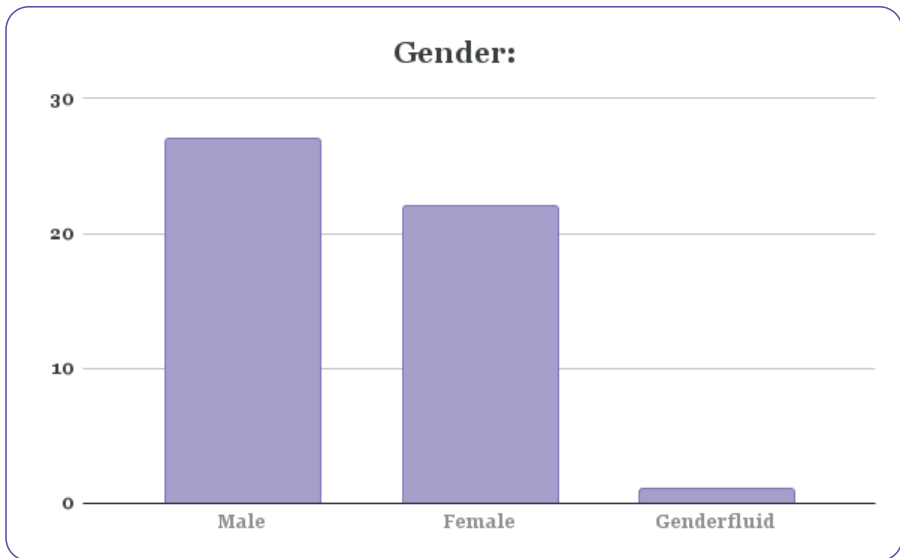


The chart shows a highly skewed demographic, with Dutch and Bulgarian nationalities being the most represented, with around 17 and 13 individuals respectively. American nationality follows at a distant third, while all other nationalities, such as Greek, French, and Japanese, are represented by just one person each.

II. General

Gender: *

Your answer

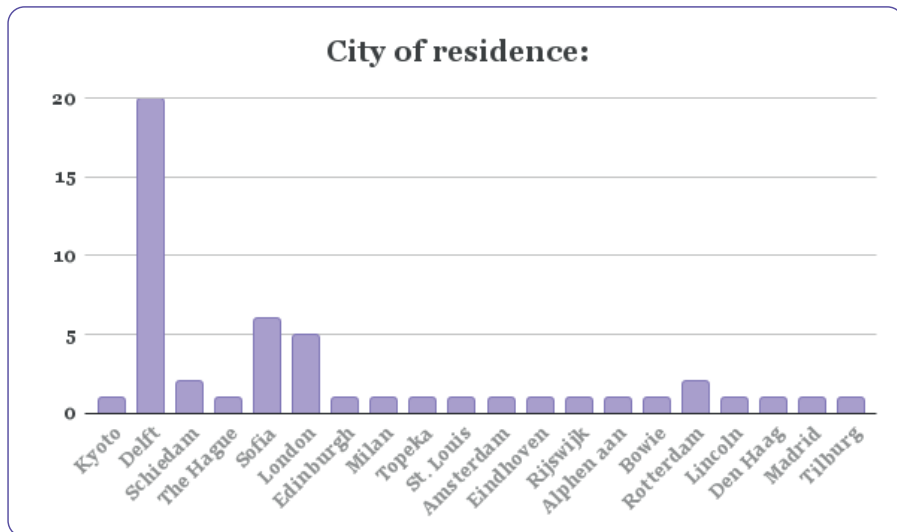


Out of all the respondents, 27 are male and 22 are female, with only one person identifying as gender-diverse. The gender distribution is thus relatively balanced, with a slightly higher number of male participants.

II. General

City of Residence: *

Your answer

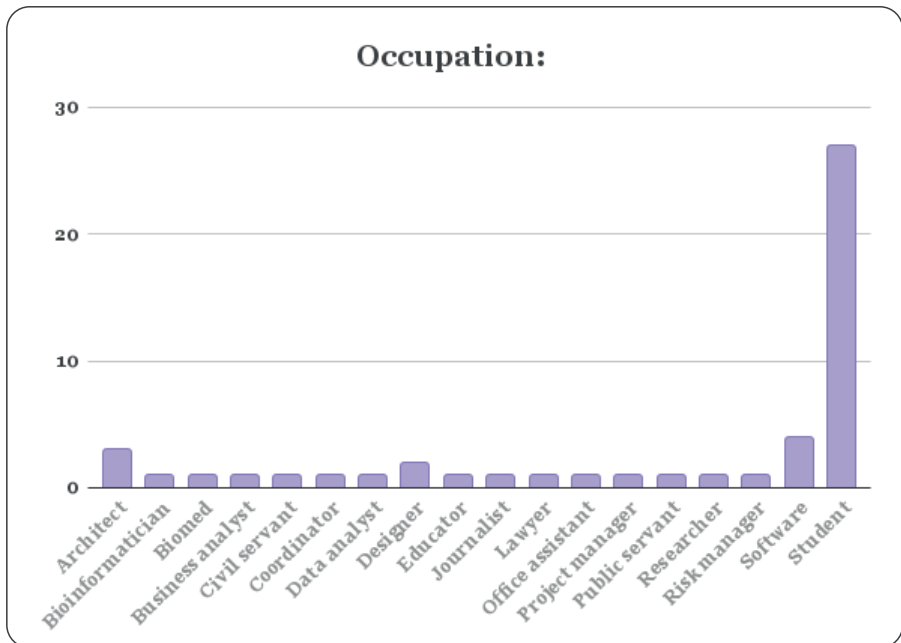


The bar chart displays the distribution of participants by city of residence, with Delft standing out as the most represented city, accounting for 20 individuals. Sofia and London follow with six and five residents respectively, while all other cities have only one or two participants each. 11 additional participants reside in other Dutch cities, bringing the number of respondents from the Netherlands to 31 out of 50. In contrast, representation from other countries such as the USA, Scotland, and Spain is more scattered.

II. General

Occupation: *

Your answer



Based on the chart, the respondents can be divided into two main occupational groups: 27 individuals are students, while the remaining 23 are working professionals. The most represented profession among the latter is in the software field, with four participants, followed by three architects and two designers. All other occupations are represented by only one individual each. The high number of students aligns with the age group findings, which showed that most participants are young adults. Overall, the results suggest that at least half of the participants have an academic focus.

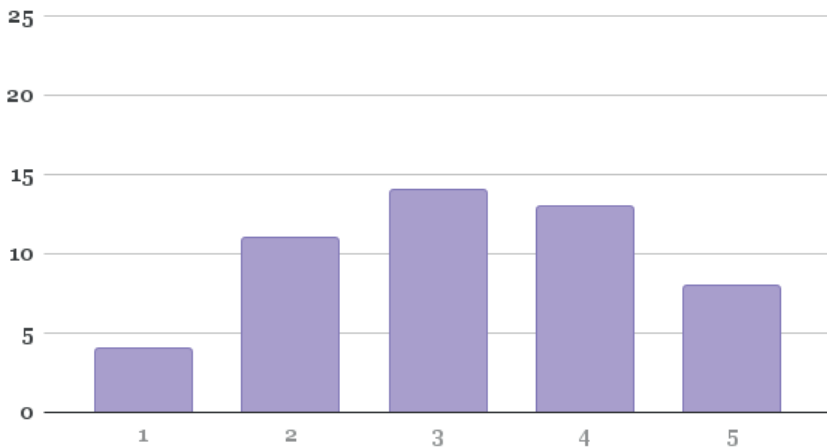
III. Politics

Are you interested in regional politics? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not interested at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Really interested

Are you interested in regional politics?



The chart shows that most participants express a moderate level of interest in regional politics. Responses are fairly evenly distributed around the midpoint of 3, indicating a balanced but not strongly polarized engagement with the topic.

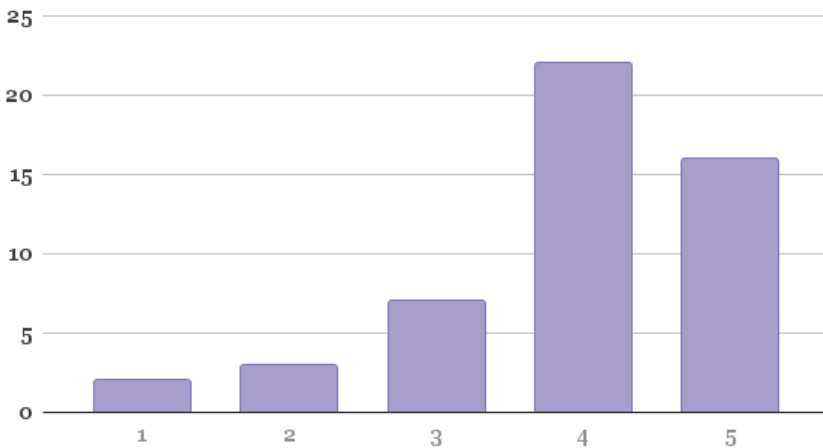
III. Politics

Are you interested in global politics? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not interested at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Really interested

Are you interested in global politics?



The chart shows a strong interest in global politics, with most responses clustered at the higher values of 4 and 5. Comparing to the chart on the previous page, the survey indicates that respondents are notably more engaged with global political issues than with regional ones.

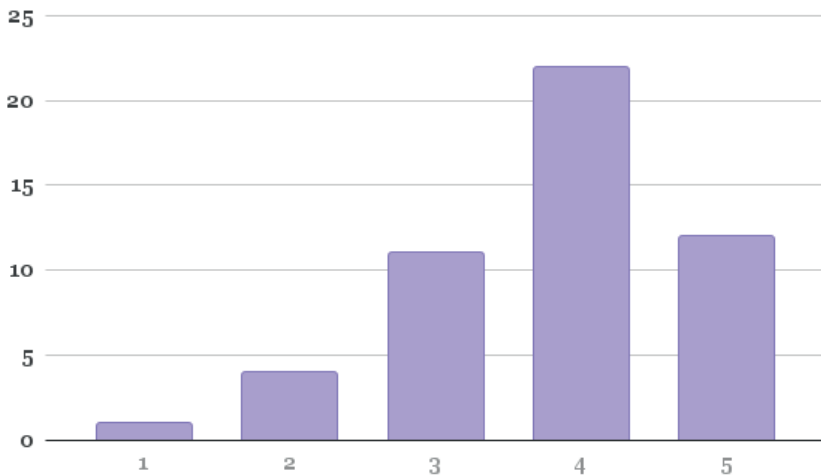
III. Politics

If you are dissatisfied with a particular issue, do you feel confident to express your opinion? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not confident at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very confident

If you are dissatisfied with a particular issue, do you feel confident to express your opinion?



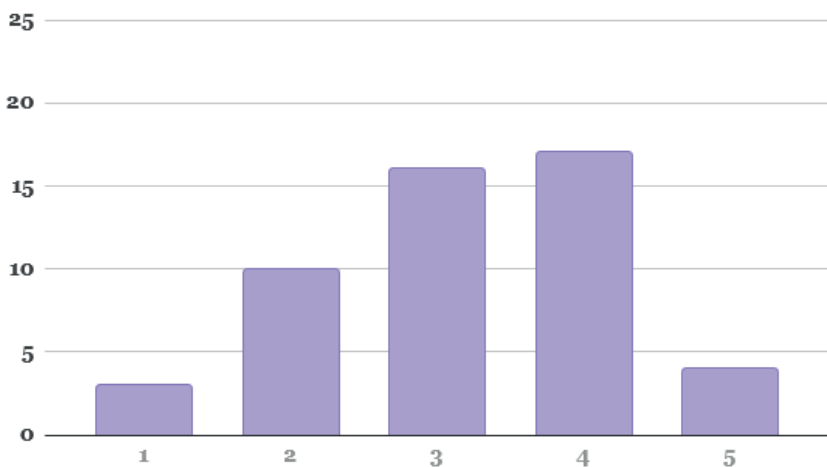
The chart indicates that most respondents feel confident expressing their opinions when dissatisfied with a particular issue, with the majority (22 individuals) selecting level 4 and a significant number (13 individuals) choosing level 5. About 20% of respondents selected the neutral value of 3, while only 10% indicated low confidence by choosing 1 or 2.

III. Politics

If you are dissatisfied with a particular issue, would you know how to express your disapproval in a constructive way?



If you are dissatisfied with a particular issue, would you know how to express your disapproval in a constructive way?



The bar chart shows a moderate level of self-assessed ability in expressing disapproval constructively, with most responses clustering around levels 3 and 4, chosen by 16 and 17 individuals respectively. Additionally, approximately one-third of respondents selected low scores (1 and 2). Unlike the previous graph, where high confidence (levels 4 and 5) was more dominant, this chart reflects a more cautious and uncertain stance.

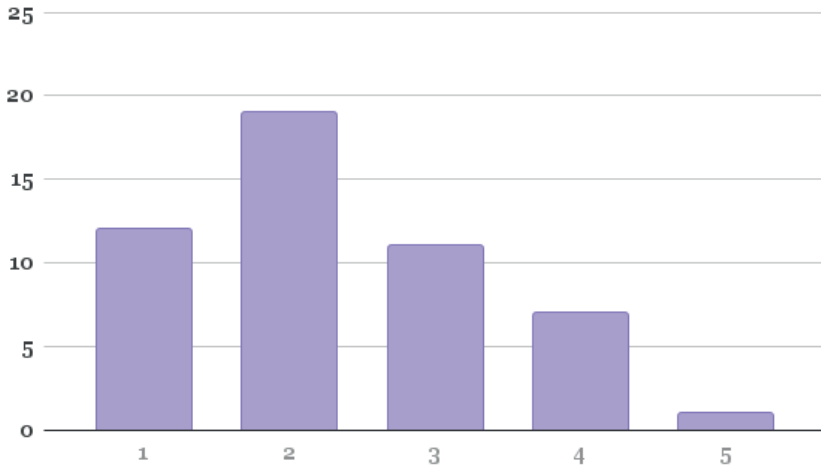
III. Politics

Do you feel like your actions have the potential to bring about political change? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes, certainly

Do you feel like your actions have the potential to bring about political change?



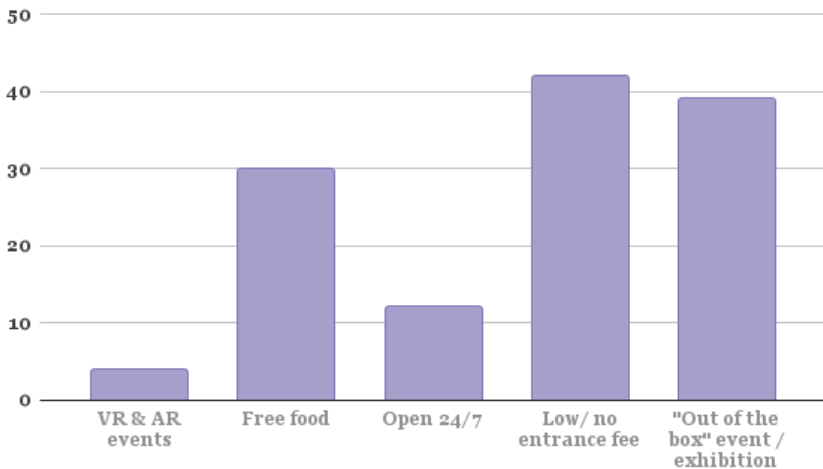
The chart reveals that most respondents do not feel their actions have the potential to bring about political change. A significant portion selected low values—12 individuals chose level 1 and 19 chose level 2—accounting for around 40% of the total responses. These results suggest that, although participants feel confident expressing their opinions and somewhat capable of doing so constructively, they lack a strong sense of political efficacy.

IV. Politics & Architecture

What type of activity/service would encourage you to visit a place you typically wouldn't be interested in? *

- ☐ Low/ no entrance fee
- ☐ Open 24/7
- ☐ Free food
- ☐ 'Out of the box' event/exhibition
- ☐ Events related to VR and AR

What type of activity/service would encourage you to visit a place you typically wouldn't be interested in?



Around 80% of respondents consider financial accessibility and unique experiences as key motivators for visiting places they typically wouldn't be interested in. Additionally, 60% find the availability of free food to be an influential factor. In contrast, extended hours and VR & AR events appear to be less appealing.

IV. Politics & Architecture

What other activities/services would encourage you to visit a place you typically wouldn't be interested in? *

Your answer _____

What type of activity/service would encourage you to visit a place you typically wouldn't be interested in?

Art festivals, Cats, Competitions, Coworking spaces, Debates, Discussions, **Easy access**, Events, Free activities, Free drinks, Possibility to go with friends, Good music, Green spaces, Explanatoray materials, Guided tours, Meeting important people, Lectures, Good marketing, Movies, Networking opportunities, Meeting new people, **Nothing**, Photo opportunities, Places to reflect, **Recommended**, **Something new**, Variety of stimulus, Visitor service, Welcoming atmosphere;

Building on the previous question, respondents also identified convenient location and recommendations from friends or social media as key factors that would attract them to a new place. Other commonly mentioned aspects include effective marketing, engaging lectures, good music, and the presence of green spaces. A few respondents noted that nothing would motivate them to visit a place they are not already interested in.

IV. Politics & Architecture

How would you describe a politically engaged space with three words? An example of such a space could be a government building, a memorial, a court, a museum, etc. *

Your answer _____

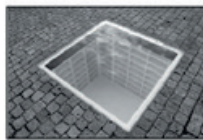
How would you describe a politically engaged space with three words?

Accessible, Authoritative, Bold, Bureaucratic, Business-like, Central, City block, Classical, Collaborative, Complex, Contentious, Current events, Democratic, Dignified, Discussion, Dull, Educational, Egalitarian, Emotionally charged, Energetic, Engaging, Establishment, Exhausting, Expressive, Formal, Functional, Gloomy, Government, Historic, Iconic, Identification, Important, Imposing, Inclusive, Influential, Informative, Inspiring, Institutional, Intentional, Interesting, Intimidating, Introspective, Intuitive, Inviting, Maintained, Meaningful, Memorable, Memorial, Monumental, Necessary, Neutral, Office, Old-fashioned, Open, Orderly, Peculiar, Pictures, Political hotspot, Powerful, Prominent, Public, Quiet, Redevelopment, Reflective, Responsible, Responsive, Rigorous, Safe, Serious, Slow, Stern, Stiff, Stuffy, Symbolic, Taking a stance, Tension, Thought-provoking, Traditional, Transcendence, Transparent, Valuable, Vocal;

Imagining a politically engaged space evokes a wide range of associations among participants. Frequently mentioned categories include accessible, historic, informative, thought-provoking, and transparent. Other responses range from more negative associations, such as “dull,” “gloomy,” and “stiff,” to more positive ones like “egalitarian,” “meaningful,” and “inspiring.” This suggests that politically engaged architecture has the potential to elicit a broad spectrum of emotional responses.

IV. Politics & Architecture

How interested would you be to visit the places presented below? *



Empty Library
Berlin



Brandenburger Tor
Installation



Holocaust Memorial
Museum



Hiroshima Peace
Memorial Park

Not at all

Not really

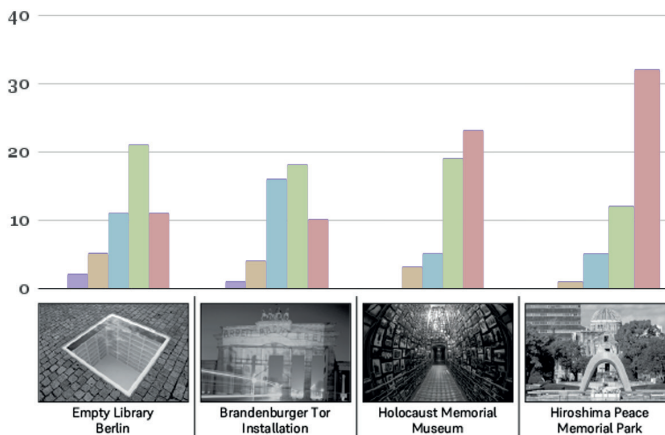
Neutral

Interested

Very
interested



How interested would you be to visit the places presented below?



The chart shows varying levels of interest in visiting politically significant sites. The *Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park* received the highest level of interest, followed by the *Holocaust Memorial Museum*. The *Brandenburger Tor Installation* and the *Empty Library Berlin* received moderate engagement. Overall, respondents appear most intrigued by well-known sites with high symbolic significance.

IV. Politics & Architecture

How appealing are the different activities presented below to you? *



Conflicting History Education



Playing Video Games



Exhibition in a Museum



VR Experience

Not at all

Not really

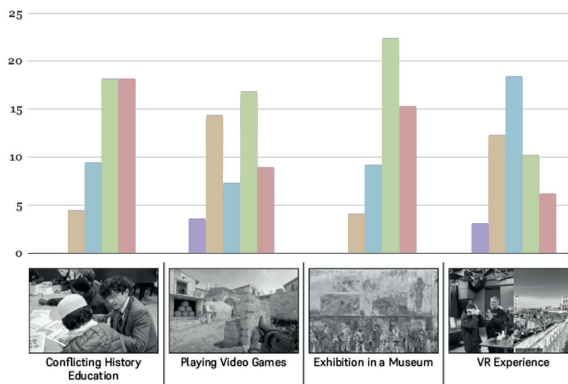
Neutral

Appealing

Very appealing



How appealing are the different activities presented below to you?



The chart illustrates how appealing different activities are to respondents. The traditional option, *Exhibition in a Museum*, received the highest overall interest. Closely following, with slightly more respondents rating it as very appealing, was *Conflicting History Education*. *Playing Video Games* had more polarized responses, with both high and low ratings. The *VR Experience* generated a relatively neutral response.

IV. Politics & Architecture

Do you have any comments or remarks?

Your answer

Do you have any comments or remarks?

No, "Nice survey.", "With regional politics I assumed it was about national politics. If regional meant city or province, my interest would be a 2/5.", "24/7 is a nice convenience but wouldn't necessarily "pull me" into a place.", "VR makes me nauseous.", "Good luck!", N/A.

Only nine participants responded to the final, optional question for additional remarks. Of these, only three responses were considered relevant. They provided explanations for previous answers. However, as a result, no significant new information could be extracted from this question.



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