

## Reflection

In over 12 months a general interest in museum architecture had developed into a study, and in its turn in a design proposal. This tie was as close as it sounds. The concrete design principles, which were derived from a number of precedent analyses in the research phase, formed the unambiguous guideline towards, and foundation of the established “Leiden Civic Museum”.

Precedent analysis turned out to be a successful, and thus suitable research method in this instance. The results, i.e. sketches, diagrams and texts on the relationship between content and context, showed many promising possibilities; with them translated into design principles emerged a practical “toolbox” for professionals in not just architecture, but due to the huge variation between themselves also in urbanism and art. For example, the principle of *Urban Routing* proposes the museum as turnstile in the fabric of the city, whereas *Inclusive Subject* discusses the social accessibility of a single work of art. Their justification lies in the fact that they are all proved by projects in a real-world environment.

However, this does not mean that the implementation of design principles can go without thought. What works in one case, may be doomed to fail in another. The principles should always be applied according to the project’s specific conditions. For example, an open structure like Rietveld Pavilion may be suitable for the display of bronze sculptures in an enclosed garden, but not for oil paintings on an urban square. In other words, design principles can conflict with the technical demands of a building, as they can conflict with each other or can touch upon ethical dilemmas. This is the case for e.g. *Blockade*, which proposes an aggressive attitude towards the position of a museum in its context.

In the aforementioned toolbox lies the exact use of the study: the applicability in a wide professional context, and naturally in my design project as well. Elise, in her role as research tutor, had the largest part in the process of implementing the principles into the architecture. Her main advice was not to use the toolbox as a starting point, but as a guide along the way. That approach gave me the space to discover the site and museum programme first, and to learn what they really asked for. In answering to those demands the design principles came into use. So, fragments of the Leiden Civic Museum are obviously or more subtly traceable to the thesis. Some ideas were directly translated into architecture, others redeveloped, remodelled or reinterpreted before application. One example is the principle *Spatial Continuity*, the backbone of the developed system of buffer zones between interior and exterior, along the *promenade architecturale*.

In retrospect, it can be concluded that the design process in its turn improved my understanding on the matter of the relationship between interior and exterior, content and context. The improvement lies in the learning of the ways it conflicts technical demands of museums, and in the new ways I found to implement the design principles. Overall, the dynamics between research and design provided me with new tools to approach the design process. I gained experience in constructing a project, by argument founded in society, rather than designing a building. On a more general note, the COVID-19 situation that emerged in the beginning of 2020 asked to develop new ways of (co-)working. The necessity of clear, well prepared verbal and visual presentation in order to successfully pass tutorials was confirmed. In that respect the situation prepared me for efficient cooperation with other design parties in a professional setting.