

P4 reflection paper

The potential of art and culture
Netherlands, Amsterdam, Sloterdijk, Jan Evertsenstraat

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"Beauty is a basic service."
Theaster Gates

INTRODUCTION

The number of tourists is a daily struggle the inner city of Amsterdam has to deal with. Thereby the inner city is loveable but not livable. Quick measures must be taken otherwise Amsterdam will disneyficate.

On the other hand, Sloterdijk is one of the underdeveloped neighborhoods of Amsterdam. A big part of the population consists of first- or second-generation immigrants, predominantly Muslims. These immigrants are badly integrated with the rest of Amsterdam and the country.

Attracting tourism to Sloterdijk will relieve the inner city and at the same time, connect Sloterdijk to it. The museum building is by default the first thing which attracts the average tourist in Amsterdam.

However, the museum should add something to the potentials and issues of the art scene in Amsterdam and should offer something extraordinary in the framework of Amsterdam. Currently, artists are leaving the city. The middle segment of the artistic infrastructure disappears. Amsterdam is in need of low cost studios for artists. Besides that, lots of small galleries close because the inner city is too expensive. In the same time, the larger museums are overcrowded and contain millions of artworks in their depots that can never be shown due to lack of space.

Research question:

How to revive a neighborhood with imagination, beauty and art?

Design assignment:

A project which opens the door to Sloterdijk and broaden the tourist path on Amsterdam with a unique public art platform.

Creating an entirely new museum typology that attract tourism, strengthen communities, offers a stage for the middle segment of the artistic infrastructure, and support in the expansion of several museums in the inner city.

ASPECT 1 - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

Art and culture are fixed components in city planning and for the development of neighborhoods. Attract tourism to suburbs will relieve the inner city and support physical and social connections. In the same time, it will increase the level of education and stimulate spatial, economic and social developments.

Museums which offers a stage for the beginning artists, start to become scarce. Almost all small museums have disappeared over the last 5 years, through competition with the main museums, the expensive inner city and cuts in funds. This disappearance of the middle segment of the artistic infrastructure is even worse if we look at the high number of art universities and schools located in Amsterdam. Currently, just graduated artist are leaving the city.

Due to its geographical location, situated about 2,5 km northwest of the city

Centre, low rents and a broad mix of different cultures, Sloterdijk positions itself as an ideal environment for the beginning artist, an ideal stepping stone. The artists of this creative community design in the public space, between the local citizens. They change the nature of the subject and transform desolated objects or throw-away-environments into an act of communication. Showing how small civic actions could be beautiful. However, Sloterdijk is disconnected with the inner city because of the border conditions, railway and ring road dividing the sites. The question is how to attract tourism to a movement from the inner city (where the main museums are located) to Sloterpark (contemporary art of the beginning artists).

The artists in Sloterdijk inspired me to come up with a concept, which eventually led to a project which could be the biggest but smallest art museum in the world. Be it a 3m-wide cubic room, or a 2km elongated domain, the museum comprises a series of buildings and sites, each containing one work of art.

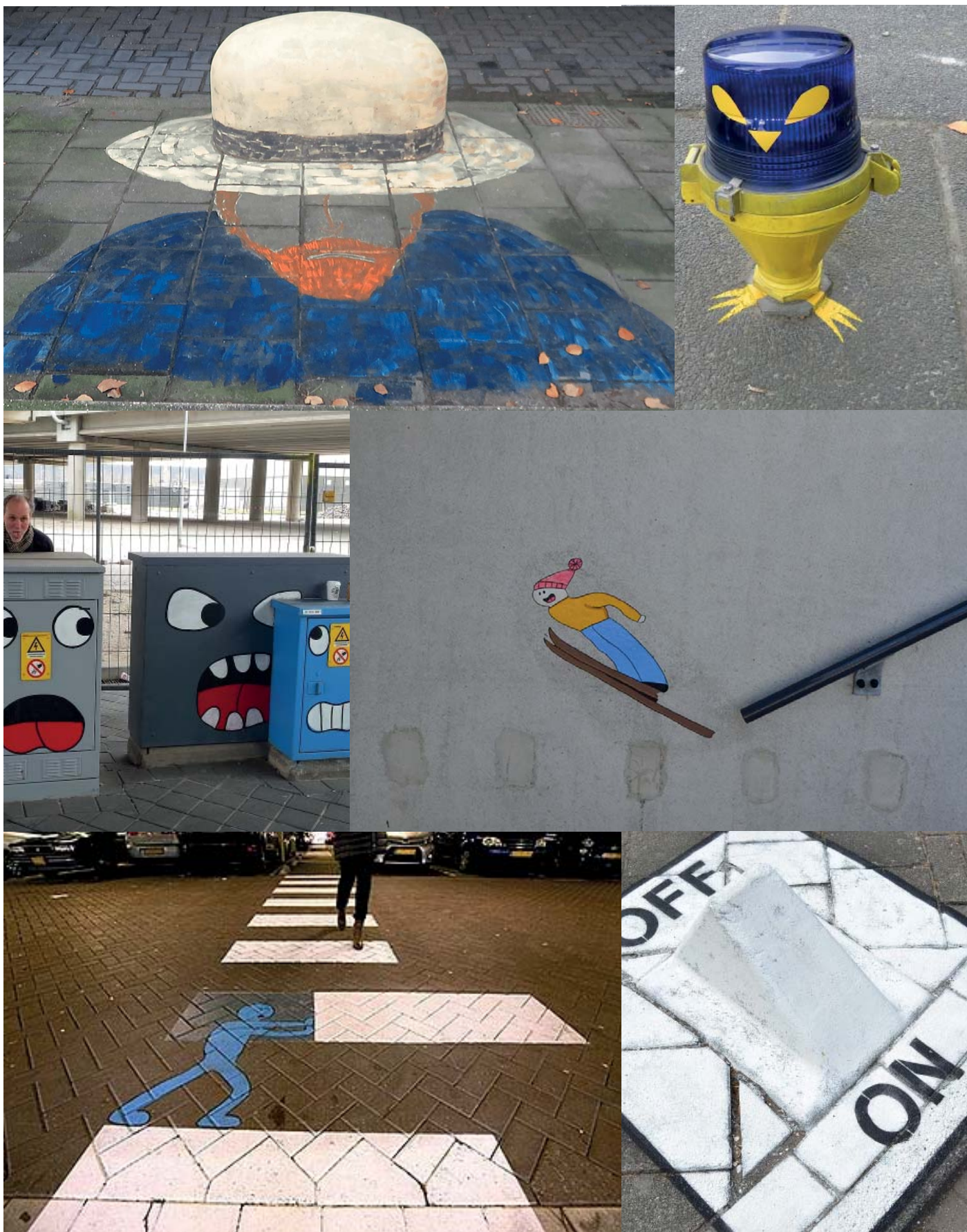
One museum consisting out of seven different volumes, located on abandoned spaces on the route from Dam Square to Sloterdijk. The last volume on this route will become a hardcore node of cultural activity. The volumes are located on places which often still have a pulse. It is my job to identify this pulse and bring back the heartbeat. The architecture will help to ignite those places.

Changing the nature of those structures gives a new dimension to urban elements. It becomes possible to do something about the sorry state of this neighborhood and in the same time offering a stage for the artists. Latter are now able to share their stories through with the whole city. An ideal environment is created together with an entirely new building typology.

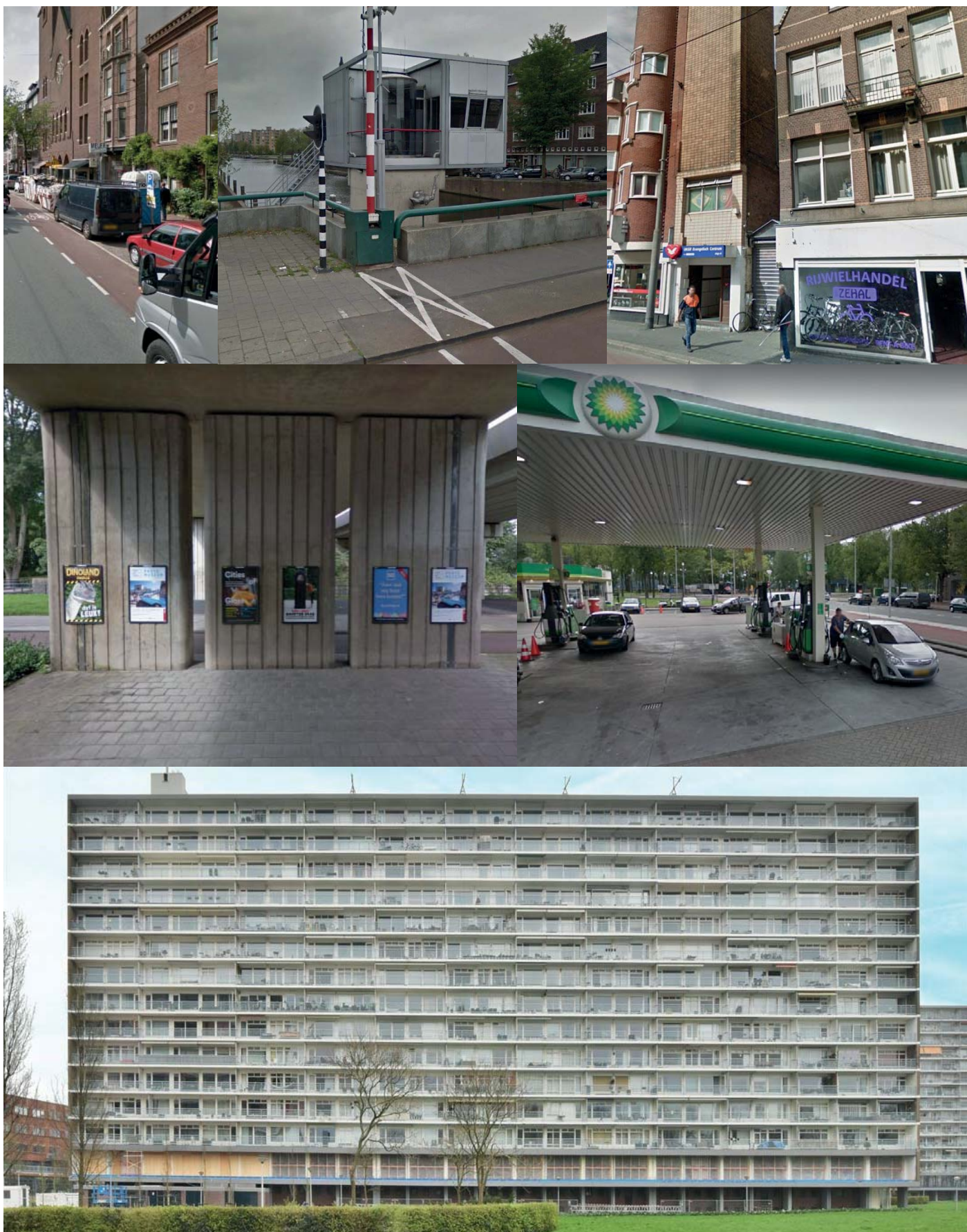
The structures become places where different people and ideas meet and can have a dialogue to improve physical and social connections. They have the potentials to change lives and strengthen communities. Together they will put Sloterdijk on the map, and in return attract tourism and cultural energy.

The volumes are acting as an architectural experiment in space, form, and how those relate a person's ability to recognize and interact with art. Special places, close to the bustle of daily routine and fashion trends, but in the same time far away. The places are an invitation to enter into the adventure of a direct encounter with art and the city. Wandering through the museum park, the visitor passes through seven volumes. Each room is unique but together the museum act as one family.

Form follows fiction, the fiction of the beginning artists in Sloterdijk. That's why is chosen for a modest museum, using basic local materials. This in contradiction with the main museums in Amsterdam. Latter are using expensive materials, forms and locations to expose expensive art. Built of recycled structures, rough bricks, concrete and glass, these minimalist buildings have a cloister like feeling. The volumes functioning themselves as huge sculptures to be experienced both from outside and inside. The volumes will be truly evocative, mystical sculptural



Artist in Sloterdijk; Focused on the identity of the immediate environment in connection with local participation and aimed at improving the development and quality of life of the local community, using art as a tool to a social dialogue.



A selection of some abandoned inhabitable structure on the route from dam square to Sloterdijk; throw away environments, architectural waste, empty, hidden and forgotten inbetween spaces, unexpected locations, no invitations, no uptown mystique, meaningless, unused potentials, or spaces which are undefined in the future.

environments, an architecture of hollows decorated only by one art work and the matter that forms them. The dimensions of the volumes are most affected by the structures and proportions of the abandoned places. The volumes facilitate the use of natural light to illuminate a number of the exhibits, changing their appearance at different viewing times throughout the day and, in essence, encompassing the building itself within the same realm as the art on display. The art and the city will be seen in a completely new way.

ASPECT 2 - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEME AND GRADUATION LAB COMPLEX PROJECTS

The goal of the graduation studio is about creating a methodology to address complex problems that emerge when architects engage with design assignments that are formed by a larger context. By becoming both project developer and architect, we are able to get a better grip on the process and all aspects of the design on a broader context, on a city scale framework. In doing so, the idea is that we as aspiring architects engage the field as both architect and urban planner.

In the context of Sloterdijk, the complex issue is the close link with the inner city and the complex relationship between art, architecture and urbanism. The number of tourists is a daily struggle the inner city of Amsterdam has to deal with, in which Sloterdijk could be the helping hand. But at the same time Sloterdijk has to deal with its own struggles as one of the underdeveloped neighbourhoods of Amsterdam.

ASPECT 3 - RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDIO AND METHOD CHOSEN

Being aware of the short distance this plot actually is located from the studio, site visits were the most effective method to be used to assimilate with the culture and the context. The first half of the studio was marked with research. In this period information, products and knowledge on unexplored matters colour new insides in the potentials and issues of the artistic infrastructure.

To close the gap between hard data, found online, and the experience on the site drawing by hand was used as an effective research method. The plot is very complex and by drawing it becomes possible to see and deal with this complexity and map the actual spirit of the place. Furthermore, individual interviews with a divers spectrum of respondents were used to explore the perspectives of the main participants in the current art scene. Mental maps will be used to translate those thoughts into visual drawings, which resulted into the perception and mental representation of the problems in the art scene.

The research methods are mainly concentrated on distilling core elements from the plot by mapping data, drawing existing constructions, reflecting to reference projects and making conclusions. This is practiced at every scale to secure research depth in all the levels the project affects.

A broad research about the typology of the museum building is done. It showed a profound change in the museum as an institution and describes concepts and philosophies of the museum building. This research is used to formulate a statement, explore precedents and typologies of the museum building. In the final designs the characteristics of museums are abstracted and implemented in its own way. The intention of this museum is to create space for activity and interaction, rather than adopt the conventional museum typology. Besides, all the sub-typologies, like the offices and the restaurant for example, that form the program of the building were researched individually in their most ideal form in order to form a solid frame of reference.

ASPECT 4 - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Looking into the relationship between art, architecture and urbanism. It is not necessary to divide the city and architecture or architecture and art. By melding them together, you are able to apply the principles to create a totally new building type. A museum which aims to attract local, national and global attention, bringing in tourists and activating the neighborhood economy. The project reshapes how people think about Sloterdijk.

It shows modern art, architecture and city planning in a different way. Using the transformed abandoned spaces as a tool to create rooms for the citizens of Amsterdam and visitors from all over the world to meet and have a dialogue. Overthinking the relationship between art, the city and people. Creating a perfect symbiosis between art, architecture and the city. The Museum dispenses with signposts altogether – visitors are free to find their own way in the extensive urban landscape and make their own discoveries of art and the city alike. The museum allows for visitors to walk through the city with a sense of freedom and opportunity for exploration and discovery. This freedom of the spirit is at the heart of the Museum's particular charm. A day at the museum will awaken the senses.

The series of buildings exploit the functional, spatial and aesthetic potentials of the city. The priority of this museum is the urban setting and the experience of moving out of the city center, from piece to piece. Transforming abandoned structures to create community hubs that connect and inspire those who still live there (and draw in those who don't).

It opens a door to Sloterdijk and broaden the tourist path on Amsterdam with a unique public art platform.