

Reflection

Fashion Palace Maastricht

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After the Party

Interiors Buildings Cities

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This piece of writing is my personal reflection on development of my design project as part of graduation studio Interiors Buildings Cities, Festive City.

Brief:

Fashion Palace Maastricht. *Search for a new typology of post-industrial, in-city Production Factory for Fashion*

The City of Maastricht had lost a major industry – Ceramique industry, which used to be defining to its image and was also a major employee. Now, like many medium-sized European cities in similar situation, the city is in search of its new identity and ways to gain competitive advantage, as well as retain talent and people.

The City administration wants to emphasize creative industries and one the ways the city chose to position itself is as a Fashion City. The city administration created an association that supports Fashion Festivals, catwalks, pop-up shops and other Fashion related activities. However, my argument is that for Maastricht to become an ethical Fashion City, the city has to actually produce fashion. Thus, I am proposing a re-introduction of production in the city and choosing a site that was historically known and symbolically representative of the production power of the city.

Intention:

Further, within the theme of “Festive City”, my aspiration is to celebrate Production. Particularly, my intention is to search for a new typology of Factory that is reflective and celebrates the spirit of contemporary creative industries, that is very different from the old, outer city mass production factories as well as questioning outsourcing tendency and bringing production back to the city. Just and ethical aspirations of Fashion Industry should be highlighted. I believe the new factory should represent these values of ethical, sustainable production and themes of co-production and permeability with closer (almost interchangeable) relationship between producer and consumer and allow for possibilities of exchange and constant innovation.

Furthermore, as a representative building, the project aims to create a microcosm and project a holistic approach of Fashion, combining themes of ethical production and consumption.

Aspect 1

The relationship between research and design

The theme of the studio was "After the Party" and in a way the studio was rather experimental. There was no set brief or set site and each student was meant to find his own project. The studio stemmed from a proposition that "Festive" in its widest sense could inspire certain kind of architecture and the search for this expression has been the path of the studio's research structure.

It could be then stated that this search for the "festive" comprised the main part of the research. Studio's structured research was outlined by series of exercises that experimented and observed a number of cultural objects and artifacts, that had a distinct festive nature, ranging from movies to buildings.

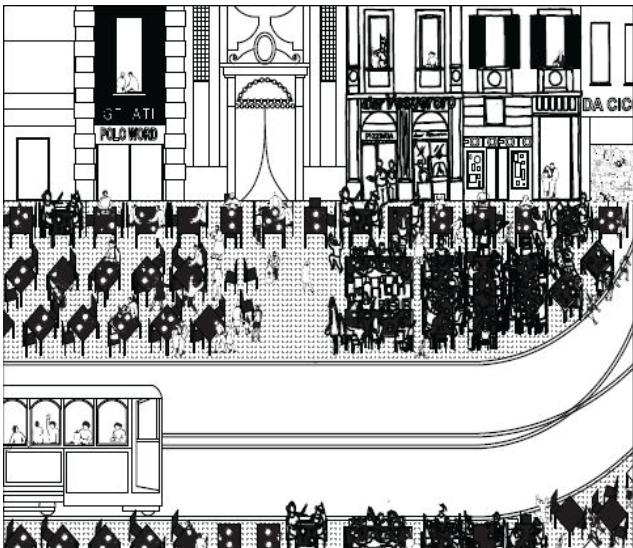
This initial research for me could be divided into 2 parts. The first part was to understand a personal fascination with the festive and then subsequently find spatial expression of that. For me this structure of research proposed by the studio really worked well. The conclusions that I had reached subconsciously as I was completing seemingly unrelated exercises might have not been reached within a more methodological structure.

The first set of exercises helped me to understand my personal fascination with festive. Unconsciously through study of very different objects I found recurring sub themes. The recurring sub themes were then distilled into a precise definition of festive to me which could be described as "seeing and being seen".

Second set of exercises was more precise and comprised of case studies of festive buildings and spaces. After distilling the sense of festive that was important to me, the exercises of second part of studio's research helped me to organize a toolbox of spatial language that instigated a festive situations of seeing and being seen.

Approaching Maastricht after these exercises had really set the tone. I think this kind of set up of research that combined exploration of the theme followed by site specific research really worked for the studio and to me personally.

Early exercise of drawing festive moment from Roma movie that in combination with other exercises helped to distill a theme of seeing and being seen



Aspect 2

The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

The choice behind choosing the studio has been a very conscious one as I believe that buildings should be there to be enjoyed and to at least frame and support the events happening within them in the best way possible if not instigating such events to happen in the first place. As such, I was already on the search for the language of the “festive” building throughout my studies. The studio with its experimental set up really helped to move a little closer to understanding spatial language of “festive” building.

Research into festive typologies as part of studio has been very helpful. Part of research that has been most detrimental to my project was case study of Strada Nuova as part of studies of festive typologies.

The exercise of studying festive typologies was meant to help one to understand the spatial aspect of festive. The exercises highlighted the interrelationship where festive affects the space and space affects the festive. The case study helped me to build a toolbox of festive spaces that I incorporated into my building. In a way the initial proposal of the studio of learning from the festive had really worked for me.

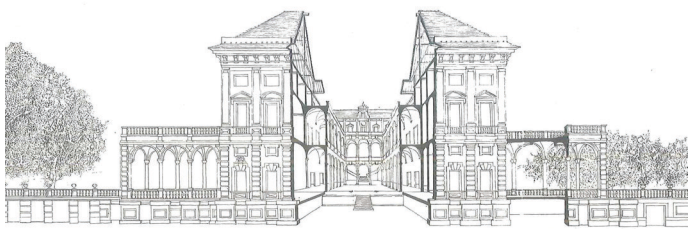
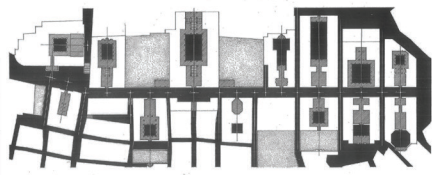
Strada Nuova case study

Strada Nuova in Genoa is a representational street of nobility with palaces of all the important families at the time. The street is really emblematic of other Renaissance projects which comprised as I believe one of the initial inspirations for the studio, where buildings, streets and parts of the city were created in large gestures to accommodate the festive. So in a way the case study is very studio specific.

Yet for me the street has been important as it revealed an interesting aspect of the palaces continuing the street and compromising a public processional route across the street but also across the palaces. As such site created a network of publicness within private street and private palaces. Within program of new kind of factory this typology has been essential. The idea of creating a festive exciting public route through the factory became the essence of my project. The envisioned factory was meant to be different from the factories that are located in the outskirts as well as it was set to be challenging in general the economy of outsourcing, bringing the consumer and the producer closer to establish a more sustainable system.

Within the case study exercise I deconstructed what made the street festive and constructed it back again into my project so the relationship between the studio's theme and my programmatic goal of establishing a new kind of factory really worked.

Case Study of Strada Nuova and Palazzo Doria Tursi, exploring public processional route within private interior



Aspect 3

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

As such the studio's methods and structure with the exercises as outlined before were really helpful. I was intrigued with the studio's proposition initially and as I am approaching the further stages of the studio, the distance is really helping me to understand that studio's methodical line of approach really worked for me.

My personal method was an extension of the studio's method. As such I continued and I am continuing the exercises of deconstructing festive typologies, looking closer into the buildings that I enjoy to see what makes them festive. I am continuing this as I am furthering into the project - looking for case studies and spatial set ups to incorporate.

Another method that was important for me and the one I am also continuing to work with has been anthropological study. The research seminar as part of the studio emphasized the importance of understanding the future user. I have not undertaken such research on a substantial scale before and the findings that came from the interviews were fascinating to me and really helped me to escape the box thinking and embrace the specificities of the program. I worked with field of fashion and I had interviewed many designers and creatives and the spirit of the building really stemmed from these interviews.

The idea of factory being a representational building, similar to the palace came from the interviews, where designers revealed to me a difficult and at times fascinating search for more sustainable ways of producing and creating. Also some sensitive issues and aspects of exposure and creativity were something that was reoccurring and that as I was designing I was aware of. Overall, study of future users really helped not to get lost in the project, as there were certain values that were very clear to me from the interviews and I really tried to work with them, as the task in hand

Study of interviews helped to programmatically develop the project, the spaces and to define values of the project



Hester Coolen, Design Day



Reonald, Juul & Davine
Het Werkegebouw



Lena Berens,
Lena Berens atelier & Store



Milan Palma
Milan Palma atelier & Store



Reinder van Tijen
Demotech



Branco Popovic,
Forza Fashion House



Annie van Stijn
SAM



Mandril



LBB



Sven Simmermas



Maastricht Belvedere

Aspect 4

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

Studio's theme and in general the bigger theme of Interiors Buildings Cities to me has always been about publicness and about the kind of buildings that have role and responsibility within the city. As such by choosing the studio and starting the project I already made a set of conscious choices and I always knew the kind of building that I wanted to create. The programmatic specificity was something to be developed within the studio, but the backbone of creating a building that has large value and meaning to the city has already been there and I was looking for the spatial tools to articulate that.

Similarly, in general, I believe the studio's set up as such instigated buildings with wider social meaning. For my project specifically this was a very important theme. And working with the field of fashion and typology of factory and production the social meaning in a way surpassed the city limitations already.

Fashion is the biggest polluter after oil industry and that is known for its unsustainable in ways it produces and consumes. Similarly the problem of factory is something also present, as the consumer is being further detached from the production, as production moves away from cities and to other places, creating unsustainable chains. I tackled these problems with my project and attempted to create a new typology of factory specifically for fashion. But its specificity based approach could also be seen as a defining aspect and applied for other fields.

Stella McCartney campaign shot in the landfill is emblematic of shift of consciousness in fashion, that project attempted to represent

