

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Anna Adriana Vos
Student number	4676939

Studio		
Name / Theme	Interstitial Spaces – solo track	
Main mentor	Saskia de Wit	Landscape Architecture
Second mentor	Suzana Milinović	Architecture & Urbanism
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Interest in sensorial qualities in the landscape and the appearance of Interstitial Spaces	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	(Dis)enchantment of the Interstitial Space
Goal	
Location:	Rotterdam North-East fringes
The posed problem,	Undervaluation of the left-over fringe spaces in Rotterdam and exploring its potential as alternative public space as a protective measure against formalizing or redevelopment of these spaces.
research questions and	What aesthetic and experiential qualities define interstitial space in Rotterdam, and how can these be accessed through design to evoke wonder, care and engagement?
design assignment in which these result.	1 city-wide vision in the urban interstice of Rotterdam, and 1 context specific design in that area at the Spoordijk of Spangen.
Develop a city-wide vision for accessing interstitial spaces in Rotterdam that preserves their looseness while making them mentally, visually, and physically approachable. This strategy should work in tandem with the Field Guide , using it as a tool for navigation, interpretation, and engagement. Alongside this, design a smaller scale intervention in the abandoned train track area of Spangen explores different modes of access , from open invitation to a hidden core, offering a spectrum of thresholds and experiences while respecting the space's existing informal	

uses. Both scales should celebrate the plural affordances of interstitial space found in the research, encouraging **enchantment, care, and attachment** without formalizing or closing them down.

Process

Method description

The research process for this project combines **immersive fieldwork, spatial analysis, theoretical grounding, and design exploration**, all structured around the central question of how interstitial spaces can be accessed and experienced to evoke wonder, care, and attachment.

1. Immersive Site Analysis

The core of the methodology is rooted in on-site **first-hand experience**.

Through repeated visits to the chain of interstitial spaces in Rotterdam, a deep understanding of their **aesthetic and experiential qualities** is developed. Observations were collected through photography, note-taking, listening, talking to people, and sensorial reflection. This method revealed the physical characteristics of these spaces, but also the subtle and personal interactions and emotional responses they provoke and the uses they carry.

2. Modes of Access and affordances

To understand how different people engage with these spaces, a **typology of access** is researched. Elements such as fences, gaps, overgrown paths, signage, and improvised routes were documented and interpreted. These are not viewed as static barriers or entrances, but as **affordances**. Offering different possibilities depending on who encounters them. These modes were later distilled into a visual description, each represented through drawings and linked to various user perspectives.

3. Field Guide Creation

In order to make these hidden spaces physically, mentally and visually accessible to others outside of the usual users, a **Field Guide** is being developed. This small-format, back-pocket booklet collects photos, site stories, found objects, local actors (human and non-human), and fragments of site history. It functions both as a record of research and as a speculative tool for future engagement, encouraging others to enter, talk and think about, and care for these loose spaces.

4. Theoretical & Precedent Research

To ground the site analysis, key texts such as *Loose Space* (Franck & Stevens) and *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (Jane Bennett) were used to frame the potential and fragility of these environments. Precedent studies of informal and ambiguous public spaces turned into design supported a critical lens on how design can enable or shut down looseness in left over spaces.

5. Speculative Representation of Voiddwellers

To explore the **plural meanings** and **affordances** of interstitial space, fictional characters are developed based on real encounters, observations, and interviews. These narrative perspectives are used to **animate and story tell the research findings**, showing how different users experience the same

spaces differently, and thus reveal the political and emotional complexity of access and qualities.

6. **Design experiments**

Early-stage design experiments, primarily collages, sketches, and spatial diagrams, are used to test ideas of how **access might be designed** without disturbing the existing qualities. These prototypes explore boundaries, invitation, and navigation, preparing for a final design that both guides and preserves the interstitial character.

Literature and general practical references

THEORY

1. Understanding the Interstitial Space

Terrain Vague – Igansi de Sola-Morales (1995)

→ Gives the definition of the terrain vague as abandoned, undefined, ambiguous and curious places in the city.

A glossary of Urban Voids – Sergio Lopez-Pineiro (2020)

→ A critical collection of over 200 terms for describing the 'terrain vague' or 'buffer zone'

2. Value of undefined spaces and messy aesthetics

The cute, the bad, the ugly – Zas Bresar (2023)

→ Argues that imperfect spaces can challenge aesthetic norms and create opportunities for new relationships between people and their environments

Manifesto of the Third Landscape – Gilles Clement (2004)

→ The Third Landscape is made up of all the places neglected by human beings. These margins bring together a biological diversity that has not yet been classified as richness.

3. Emotional attachment & Enchantment

Enchantment of Modern Life – Jane Bannet (2001)

→ She sees enchantment as a political and ethical tool: if people feel enchanted by the world, they are more likely to care for it.

Place Attachment Theory

→ About the emotional bond between a person and a particular place. It is developed through experiences, memories, meanings and personal or collective identity.

4. Accessing the Interstitial space

Messy ecosystems, orderly frames – Joan Iversson Nassau (1995)

→ Argues that a need for minimal intervention of maintenance to make people see 'messy' nature as valuable.

A glossary of Urban Voids – Sergio Lopez-Pineiro (2020)

→ Argues that, in order to keep Interstitial Spaces established, one should design the borders.

PRECEDENTS

1. Enchantment / Perception

What elements are there in landscapes, fictional or real, that evoke a sense of wonder or interest to explore or care about that particular landscape?

This is relevant for my project because we might be able to learn what elements there are that intentionally or spontaneously evoke wonder and care. If we can learn what these elements are in a range of all kinds of landscapes, maybe there might be a correlation with Interstitial Spaces.

Use for project: Build a *framework* for analysing interstitial spaces: what emotions, atmospheres, and aesthetics they hold.

Case Study	Use	What you extract
Stalker - Andrei Tarkovsky	Theory	Mood building in forgotten/forbidden landscapes (how do mystery and narrative shape experience)
Colossus videogame	Theory + Tool	Spatial storytelling: exploration, discovery, secret pathways
High Line (pre-design)	Theory	How spontaneous wildness and 'ruinosity' can attract people and evoke care
Wasserkrater Garten	Tool	How design elements, routing and anticipation can amplify experience

2. Framing 'Unesthetic' Landscapes

How have designers, storytellers and artists framed 'unaesthetic landscapes' as valuable, what materials or composition do they use to do this?

This is relevant for my project because designers might already have found ways to represent this kind of nature often found in Interstitial Spaces in a compelling and engaging way. How do they use this kind of aesthetic to flip the narrative.

Use for project: Build *representational tools and theory* to frame interstitial spaces it's nature look enchanting/engaging.

Case Study	Use	What you extract
Derek Jarman - Prospect garden	Theory + Tool	Spatial storytelling through diary. Exaggerating nature to highlight contrast
Still Alive by Wagon Landscape	Tool	Reframing discarded building materials and pioneer species plants with classical spatial composition
Henri Matisse Park by Gilles Clement	Theory	Third landscape theory about post urban Nature
Lucian Freud, Waste ground, oil on canvas	Tool	Representation of messy nature as rich oasis in desolate urban landscape

3. Engaging through Intervening

What type of interventions have designers made in Interstitial Spaces that actually engage people with the place?

This is relevant for my project because there seems to be a fine line between doing too little or too much intervening. Finding out what type of interventions have been done that have a positive effect on the sensorial experience of an Interstitial Space.

Use for project: Develop *design strategies* for light touch interventions: entrances, inaccess, routing

Case Study	Use	What you extract
Stalker/NO movement	Theory + Tool	A guided or narrated path through unknown or 'rough' terrain. Community
Belgium secret garden festival	Tool	Giving access to partially inaccessible urban left overs through designing visual markers
Henri Matisse Park by Gilles Clement	Tool	Making piece of landscape inaccessible to humans (maintenance) creating mystery

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (LA) and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

This graduation project is positioned within the Landscape Architecture track as a solo studio. The MSc AUBS programme brings together multiple disciplines making space for interdisciplinary research like this one. The project takes a landscape approach in its attention to atmosphere, composition, and natural process, while also engaging with urbanist themes of infrastructure, accessibility, and spatial equity. By working across scales, from a city-wide strategy to an intimate, site-specific design, the project reflects both the landscape architect's approach to sensorial and ecological depth and the urbanist's concern with networks and public equity. It also draws on architectural ways of thinking through spatial framing and narrative storytelling, designing thresholds that shape experience. The project's philosophical grounding, which questions dominant ideas of development and resists over-definition, resonates with critical approaches within architecture and landscape architecture that focus on aesthetics, looseness, and urban complexity.

Rather than producing a more conventional programmatic design, the work aims to not decide on a new program but rather protect and reveal the existing value of interstitial landscapes by mediating between users, dynamics, and ecologies. In doing so, it repositions landscape architecture as a reflective, research-based and on the ground practice grounded in observation, care, and site-specific sensitivity.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional, and scientific framework.

Socially, the project addresses overlooked urban territories that are meaningful to specific groups but often invisible in formal city planning. By recognising these informal uses and qualities, the project opens up space for broader engagement, stewardship, and inclusion in the city.

Professionally it offers a design methodology for working with these ambiguous spaces, spaces that do actually not demand new programming, but rather focuses on the framing of

thresholds to guide access and allow greater understanding and care for these spaces. It contributes to ongoing conversations in landscape architecture and urbanism about the design paradox and possible uses talked about on the topic of interstitial spaces and other fringe areas.

Scientifically, the project adds to the discourse of urban nature, enchantment theory, affordances in the public space and the spatial experience of the city. By being able to combine immersive fieldwork, local engagement, theory and design this research demonstrates how aesthetic and affective values could be central to planning and potential design of interstitial spaces.

The hopeful outcome is not just a physical solution but also a framework and invitation for seeing and valuing the left over interstitial space in the city.