

# Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



## Graduation Plan

Personal information	
Name	<b>Noortje (A.N.E) Kemme</b>
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Studio		
Name / Theme	<b>Urban Architecture 'Low Town Downtown'</b>	
Main mentor	Elsbeth Ronner	Design
Second mentor	Leeke Reinders	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The studio Urban Architecture gives sincere attention to the environment, both physically and socially. The studio intervenes in medium-sized urban sites that need strengthening through an architectural project. Thus, a given site allows for intensive fieldwork, both individually and in collaboration, to develop a growing understanding of the depth of a real place. I appreciate the sensitivity and creativity among the students and tutors and the freedom to take your own path in research and design.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Playtime between the play of everyday life and architecture to play
Goal	
Location:	Lageweg, Hoboken, Antwerp, Belgium
The posed problem,	<p>This year's site is located in the patchwork of Antwerp's district Hoboken, in the periphery's periphery where industry, a can factory and a rim factory, left the stage years ago and artists and cultural entrepreneurs moved in to transform vacant halls into a unique but temporary place (Blikfabriek). The Lageweg area, of which the latter is part, is under attention to be crystallised into a micro-centre.</p> <p>What physical and social structures should be kept or created, enhanced or reinterpreted? In architecture and urban design, there is a tendency to work in a fixed pattern with proposed programs that leave no room for undefined moments. However, the playful spirit of the Blikfabriek can be interpreted as a</p>

	<p>starting point for the (re)development of the site. Beyond that, playing is often dismissed as only a positive activity for children, whilst inappropriate for adults. Play is a term that seems to be something that can be omitted or added to the urban plan through a playground for instance, but what if I argue that play is about the pleasure (of life) for its own sake and that it is an essential human trait to perceive and interact with the environment.</p>
research questions and	<p>The research revolves around the ambiguous notion of play and how it relates to the different scales of people's environment. Therefore the main research question is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is play?</li> </ul> <p>followed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is play in architecture? How is play expressed?</li> <li>• What is a playful space and for who?</li> <li>• How could playing with scale, material, light, (dis)placement and (dis)orientation invite users to play too (to enter a play state)?</li> <li>• What are moments of play at the specific site of the Lageweg?</li> </ul>
design assignment in which these result.	<p>I aim to create spaces and elements that could activate play in everyday life. The user should recognise the possibility to play, but more subconsciously, spontaneous and hidden as opposed to clearly defined play spaces. It touches upon unfinished architecture to appropriate and interact with as well as imagination and wonder within the ordinary.</p> <p>The project will consist of buildings with different sizes, shapes and functions, that activate a public square. The urban space resulted from subtracting two vacant factory halls and adding</p>

	volumes, and lies on a trajectory with a few high marks and various open spaces whereby each could be considered a different play area. Dwellings, a neighbourhood health care centre, a pavilion for nature maintenance and education, and a community cafe are proposed.
<b>Process</b>	
<b>Method description</b>	
<p>The following methods for research and design with the notion of play in architecture will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• field observations through drawings in 'plein air' and notes on moments of play</li> <li>• studies on (spatial) conditions that incite play through drawing on top of drawings and photos of places and projects, as well as collecting movie stills, artworks, texts and short interviews</li> <li>• precedent studies and reference studies on scale, typology and programme associated with the design proposal</li> </ul> <p>The methods will come together as a book that can be interacted with. Perhaps the book can be read in various ways, or drawings can be unfolded. The book will become a collection of material and reflections that engage with the meaning of playing in a spatial context.</p>	

## Literature and general practical references

Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (Eds). (2007). *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Graeber, D. (2014). Wat heeft het leven voor zin als we geen plezier kunnen maken? *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 138 (32), <https://www.groene.nl/artikel/wat-heeft-het-leven-voor-zin-als-we-geen-plezier-kunnen-maken>

Huizinga, J. (2016). *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (1st ed. 1938). Angelico Press.

Stuart, B., & Vaughan, C. (2009). *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul*. Penguin Random House.

Unwin, S. (2019). *Children as place-makers: the innate architect in all of us*. Routledge

Whyte, W. H. (1980). *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Project for Public Spaces.

Alongside this shortlist of books, there will be many practical references, as well as case studies, movies (like *Mon Oncle* by Jacques Tati) and artists or art pieces (Joost Conijn and Francis Alÿs for instance).

## Reflection

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

The studio's theme of low town downtown refers to the peripheral area as outlined in the problem statement. The graduation project addresses the potential of using a playful state of mind to grasp the urban context to reshape through architectural interventions that ignite play too.

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

The project is a personal search for what kind of architecture to create. How do I wish to work, and what spaces would I like to give?