

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	Androniki Charalambous
Student number	5997135

Studio		
Name / Theme	Veldacademie	
Main mentor	Wing Yung	Architecture mentor
Second mentor	Leo Oorschot	Research mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I am interested in the social side of architecture and participatory design. I am also interested in undertaking my project in a location where I can visit often in order to deeply understand the context and people I am designing for.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The Silent Epidemic: How can a living environment centered around the notion of play alleviate the feeling of loneliness?
Goal	
Location:	Pendrecht, South of Rotterdam
The posed problem,	Loneliness and how this can be alleviate through intergenerational interaction through play
research questions and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the specific causes and manifestations of loneliness among the three different age groups in Pendrecht, Rotterdam Zuid in relation to the physical environment? 2. What constitutes as 'play' universally but also specifically to the different age groups in the physical environment of Pendrecht? 3. What are the general spatial configurations that facilitate intergeneration play? 4. How can spatial configurations of play dismantle the barriers to intergenerational play, instead fostering social connections across generations specifically in Pendrecht?
design assignment in which these result.	Design Guidelines regarding housing and public space to create intergenerationally interconnected spaces to alleviate loneliness.
<p>When it has been said that 'loneliness does not discriminate', there is evidence to suggest that some are at higher risk of being affected than others, with the government of UK identifying this as 'growing social injustice'. The topic of loneliness has been discussed heavily during the Covid pandemic with headlines urging for attention towards the elderly, single parents and young people as the most susceptible.¹ When this conversation has slowly died down, do we find these groups in a less isolated and vulnerable position? or are we simply less interested in the discussion because of its reduced broader relevance to the rest of society?</p>	

Process

Method description

The thesis uses a multi-method approach in order to create a comprehensive understanding of the notions of loneliness and play and their everyday lived experience through physical space in Pendrecht. Each sub-question is addressed using theory combined with grounded, site-specific data.

More specifically, the first and second sub-questions, are approached first through a literature review to acquire a broader but academic understanding of the two notions and their physical manifestations. Additional to this, quantitative data is gathered from municipality documents and papers specifically on demographics, health, loneliness, social statistics particularly in Pendrecht. Following this, sessions will be conducted with the three age groups of diverse backgrounds in order to gather personal records and stories at a much smaller scale than before, following the regulations of Human Research Ethics of Architecture of TU Delft. This step is to capture common environmental factors associated with loneliness. To do this effectively the interviews are conducted mostly using non-verbal methods such as mental mapping, drawing and photographing. This is because of the language gap that might exist between the interviewees and me as the interviewer. Lastly, ethnographic mapping is utilised as a reconstruction of the entanglement of narratives, observations, quantitative and qualitative data to formulate an understanding of what causes loneliness in the physical space and then it turn how loneliness manifests in physical space as well. The output is displayed in the form of scriptwriting and film making (animation) to narrate the internal monologue and experience of the inhabitants. Film-making or animating is a retroactive method in reconstructing 'as found' spatial sequence realities as well as to portray a network of meaning absorbed by the locality.

The third sub-question is approached through analysing case studies of different scales (urban, building, installation) that are either successful or not in bring people together and foster intergenerational connection. This is then analysed through theoretical work on spatial arrangements and environmental psychology to identify configurations that support or hinder social interactions. The output of this is a set of general architecture design guidelines that support intergenerational play in relation to building layouts and open space.

Lastly, the fourth sub-question requires a thorough analysis and mapping of the existing condition within Pendrecht specifically. Basic maps are used from data from the municipality like 'Leefvelden Voorzieningen Dashboard' [Living Fields Amenities Dashboard] and the 'Buitenspeelkaart' [Outdoor Play Card]. The mapping produced by the author is to understand the routes, paths, nodes people experience as extracted from the sessions with the locals but also through architectural analysis of existing playgrounds, junctions etc. Then, the output from the previous sub-questions is synthesised in order to produce a spatial configuration matrix of architecture design guidelines, specific to Pendrecht, that can address loneliness through play. A second-part of the aforementioned animation can explore these potentials and variations to produce scenarios.

Literature and general practical references

This thesis follows the book *Homo Ludens (Playing Human)* by Johan Huizinga written in 1938, where the Dutch historian and cultural theorist discusses the importance of the play element within culture and society. This book offers a ground breaking perspective on play as the cornerstone for the development of civilisation and culture. This book has reshaped academic discussions in anthropology, sociology, psychology and cultural studies and even urban planning. Huizinga breaks down play into its elements and what constitutes this an important element within human life such as the concept of the 'magic circle' which allows people to step outside their own reality for a while. Despite this, the book lacks in empirical evidence and the argumentation is solely based on romanticised examples of the past through a Eurocentric perspective. Furthermore, the author highlights the contrast between our perception of play as 'unserious' and the effects on politics, war and law, on a societal level, but not the health of individuals. Despite this, the thesis positions itself in a way to align with the overarching theory presented as that of play as central to our human lives and way of existence.

Other than literature the thesis takes inspiration from visions created by artists across different media. One such example is Pieter Bruegel's painting 'Children's Games' that was inspired by the work of Huizinga. He depicts children being completely absorbed by the world of play reflecting on the fundamental need for community life and escapism through the world of play within an unstructured environment which is not isolated from the rest of the urban fabric but, at the heart of it. Furthermore, the New Babylon project by Dutch artist and architect, Constant Nieuwenhuis, explores utopian cities where humans are liberated from workload and free to engage in creative play as a form of social resilience. Other point of departure include Aldo van Eyck's over 700 playgrounds made in post-war Amsterdam and Group Ludic's playful urban interventions.

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 relation between the my graduation topic and the studio is the link to looking at architecture through a social lens and the method of field research in order to understand the area. The broader relation to the Architecture master track and Master programme is the analysis of the topic from its influence on/ and from physical space. For example, how loneliness manifests in physical space but also how our physical space has perpetuated this idea of a solitary existence. Furthermore, the analysis and consistency across scale, from a masterplan, to an ensemble, to the building scale and down to the detail. For example, the ideal of playfulness and interconnection should be read at a 1:20 scale in the same way as a 1:2000.

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

I think the relevance lies in mainly in the methodology and also the focus on social issues and working with the people you are designing for, in a sort of more sensitive approach. The methodology, I believe in a way also is developed across the scales: from a more universal, bigger scale research through literature to very site-specific through individuals' stories obtained from the specific neighbourhood. The typology in the end will also be relevant in the design guidelines developed to create universally accessible and hence interconnected playful environments, but I believe the methodology is even more broadly relevant to the field.