

# 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](mailto: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	Ragna Karin Emilia J Nordström
Student number	5384869

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Main mentor	Micha de Haas	Borders & Territories
Second mentor	Freek Speksnijder	Building Technology
Third mentor	Heidi Sohn	Theory
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Explore Lab format, the freedom and flexibility to explore boundaries of architecture and themes of personal interest: philosophy, biology, spirituality and cosmology. The openness to reflect and criticize and explore the role of the architect and what architecture possibly can be.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	The Hospital of Thinkable Boundaries
Goal	
Location:	Alvastra Monastery Ruins, Omberg, Sweden
The posed problem,	Disembodying medical spaces and structures for healing, especially in regard to mental illness and neurological disorder: perception, cognition, social, spiritual
research questions and	<p>Research question: What new architectural transformations can be achieved when health and life is explored from Noetic perceptions and shamanistic/mystic onto-epistemologies? How can we rethink design on the basis of a such a paradigmatic understanding?</p> <p>Sub-questions: How does the diseased body arrange itself within the conditions of modernity? How can such an understanding cause a material, socio-political and economic reconfiguration of new life-worlds within these conditions? How is reality viewed through the Noetic lens? What is Noetic Body? Where is Noetic Space? How is Noetic Knowledge?</p>

<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The project proposes to rethink the loci, format, program and spatiality of the modern typology of the hospital through the notions of Noetic, ecological and collective healing. The chosen site for the project is the place where the ruins of Alvastra Abbey still stand firmly on the ground, Omberg, Sweden. It carries a history of another world as it echoes a time where healing was considered spiritual. Inspired by the philosophies and cosmologies of the indigenous knowledge-contexts and the medieval monasteries I have researched, the project intend to pursue is to design a 'noetic' spiritual sanctuary of the 21st century. The program incorporates architectures for physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being including healing gardens, baths, saunas and paths for movement, but also meditation spaces, ceremonial rooms, and collective spaces. The notion of practical education of spirituality and consciousness is important, and as such the idea of a 'library' as the consolidation of knowledge will be adopted. The new healing format emphasizes the duration of the visits and offers different types of accommodation. Regarding the idea of decentralization and accessibility there will be some materialization of a healing infrastructure, like the monastic idea it should be open to anyone who is on the journey to healing and who needs sanctuary.</p> <p>Design questions: To what extent is architecture capable of healing? What can be the architectures, landscapes, and infrastructures for healing in the mental health crisis of the 21st century?</p>
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**Process**

**Method description**

This research follows my personal narrative of mental healing; from being stuck in, what was for me, a western pathological configuration; to the liberation of ontological and epistemological perspectives that through the experience of shamanistic therapeutics lead to transformative healing. By spanning from the rigid configurations of modern medicine to the ecological practices of shamanistic healing this project intends to map and explore *Cartographies of Healing*, making visible worlds and perspectives peyorated by the modern West. The process of bringing other perspectives to the table is an important approach of representation, as it seeks to emphasize and legislate indigenous practices by expanding the discourse of western 'scientific' knowledge production.

In chapter one, *The Architect and the Surgeon*, I will trace the etiology of mental illness focusing on the imaginable roots of an eating disorder reflected upon in chapter one. Through the reading of literary references in architectural theory, philosophy, and medicine, I will dissect historical structures, paths, 'causes' and configurations which may have led to this pathological 'adaptation' within the semiotic system of modernity. Reflecting on and interrelating spatial, epistemological, technological, and clinical conditions, I will elaborate on the question: how does the suffering body arrange itself within the conditions of modernity?

In chapter two, *The Architect and the Noet*, I introduce and expand on the philosophical-phenomenological notion of noesis as a tool mediating between the configurations of modernity and the non-western shamanistic practices which will be explored in chapter three. Literary references from phenomenology, philosophy and architectural theory builds the noetic exploration. As an instrument of perception, the noetic has the potential to open up rigid thinking and cognitive prejudice, offering fresh ways of 'seeing' the world. Noetic 'reasoning' should be imagined as a reflexive choreography moving between the existential, the spiritual and the 'conditioned.' When applied spiritually, noetic perception has the potential to cognize our inner structures, the hidden dimensions that constitute human consciousness, something which I've found is reflected in the shamanistic world.

In chapter three, *The Architect and the Shaman*, shamanistic practices and cosmologies will be studied as an expansion and deepening of my own encounters. I will trace several traditions to their origins and contexts, through the reading of literary references in anthropology, journalism and philosophy and semi-structured interviews held with people in close connection to these knowledge-contexts I will explore healing through the lenses of ritual, ceremony, spirituality and temporality as well as ideas of ecology and collectivity.

In chapter four, *The Hospital of Thinkable Boundaries*, I conclude the previous chapters and look into the etymology of hospital to search for European references in typology and program. Here I look into the monastic sanctuaries, typologies which reflects many of the noetic and shamanistic practices, while being located in our historical and cultural context. Rather than providing static architectural 'solutions' to the question of healing spaces i.e., the modern understanding, the research focuses on the dynamic processes, configurations, relations and social realities which architecture may reshape, form and foster. Atmospheric, sentient, immanent aspects – the collective, spiritual and embodied experience – will be emphasized, while also spanning to the ideas of format, program and socio-political structures of architecture.

Each chapter will, while researching the topics of body, space and knowledge, also explore the role of the architect from different perspectives and disciplines, looking at what architecture and the architect – have the potential to become.

## Literature and general practical preference

### PHILOSOPHY

Edmund Husserl, Gilles Deleuze, Karen Barad, Buyung-Chul Han, Emanuele Coccia

### ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

Beatriz Colomina, Michel Foucault, Juhani Pallasmaa, Peg Rawes, Harry Francis Malgrave

### ARCHITECTURE

Aldo van Eyck, Sigurd Lewerentz, Bernard Tschumi, Petra Gipp, Tomoaki Uno, Pier Vittorio Aureli, Anna Puigjaner, Carlo Scarpa,

### ART

Hilma af Klint, Fred Tomaselli, Annie Bresant, Pointillism, Indigenous cosmologies, Scandinavian mysticism

### BUILDINGS

Alvastra Monastery, Gothic Architecture and courtyards, Asclepieion at Epidaurus, Greco-Roman baths and cisterns, Shamanistic healing paths, Skogskyrkogården & Klippan (Sigurd Lewerentz)

## 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)?

I am enrolled at the Explore Lab studio in the Architecture and the Built Environment track. My graduation topic, noetic reasoning and noetic design with an outlook on non-western shamanistic practices, towards the forming of healing environments, challenges preconceptions and prejudice about non-western worldviews and approaches which are not considered 'scientific' and 'true.' This prevailing scientific paradigm can be seen as limiting, unproductive and to some extent destructive. I believe this research is important in how to learn new ways of 'seeing' and understanding the world, to reflect on our ontological and epistemological 'facts.' This will of course have implications on how we think of the 'format' and durations of architecture: program and function, and space, light, and material. For instance, is function really necessary to create a nurturing space? Perhaps this graduation urges the reader to imagine other ways of being and existing, toward oneself, toward the collective and toward nature.

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

The topic of mental health is critical at the moment, spurred by the pandemic, it's rising even more. Because of my personal experience of mental disorder: eating

disorders and depressions *and* my personal experience of healing, I've been reflecting on how such an experience can be productive. How can these insights transform societal and material structures? My research on noetic healing, emphasizes new ways of thinking and seeing but also includes ceremonial and collective interactions with plant medicines that alters consciousness. A notion of community which have been lost in the individualistic western society. These are formats and constellations which are 'new' to the western scientific realm, and because of this, many of these plants are currently illegal – nature is criminalized. What I hope with this research is to illustrate safe, productive and healing settings where these rituals can take place, with the promise to heal a suffering population. And my explicit aim is to – at some point in a near future – realize this project into the world.