

Reflection p4

Title: In-between territories, re-assembling of the Spoorzone in Delft

Student: Yanthe Catharina Marte Boom

Student number: 4139496

Studio: ExploreLab 24

Mentors: Robert Nottrot
Ype Cuperus
Stavros Kousoulas

Research and design

As an ExploreLab student I developed my own research and design task. The cohesion between the research and design was not always present from the beginning of the studio. At the start of this graduation project I focussed mainly on the research and formulated the design project after biggest part of research was done. By the time I choose the location, I was able to explain the research with examples related to the location. The more I knew about the design project, the more the two became integrated.

Although the relation became more evident, the research did not give straightforward design answers how to deal with the location or the design task. Instead, the conclusions of the research offered me insights on the role of the architect and a method how to deal with a design task in general.

For me, it was not always entirely clear how the research was implemented in the design process. However, I always designed with my research in mind. Maybe it didn't come out every step of the design process, but this project as just the first try.

Topic

I chose ExploreLab because it has no topic which you have to follow. The topic was something that grew along the way. I started studio with a strong feeling, but incapable of pinning it down. ExploreLab gave me the freedom to do a theoretical research and find the right mentor and right handles to formulate my questions and topic.

For me, it was/is more important to explore more broader questions about the future of our buildings and the role of the architect than choosing a specific topic. Therefore, a regular studio didn't fit my interests, I thought it would be too much focussed on a typology, topic or specific location. For me those aspects mattered less, I just wanted to know what my position as an architect would be.

Looking back, I am very happy I made this choice. I was not always the easiest way, but I do think it was the most challenging and interesting way.

Method

The students of Explorelab are free to choose and develop their own methods. In my project, a distinction can be made between the research and design method. The first was a very specific literature study, the second was more a combination of methods with trial and error.

I tried to find a clear distinction or way to order and structure the methods before doing it. But both the research and mentors learned me to just start and do it. In the chaos is always a starting point and the things I find important will come together anyway. Now that the research and design are done (for the biggest part), I can finally filter what my method was and what find out what worked for me.

The way I structured the research (breaking down, and reassemble) became a method for my design project as well. The method I developed can still be improved over the years, and I see this as just a starting point.

In perspective

During this project I read texts about how the world can be seen in a more abstract way. In the Netherlands we are taught to think in boxes, but the world is a more complex system, with structures in every scale and not all things are visible. This project taught me that you can't always make a distinction between things and see things separate from each other.

I wrote my research with a target group in mind of young architects, like myself. I think this way of thinking about architecture, as dynamic, as something that moves us, is way undertaught at the faculty. What impact your design has and how users will be affected by your design should be way higher on the agenda, instead of slick final images

Research in general can be very worthwhile if one is allowed to test a design method again and again or ask more general questions which can be taken to the future career. I think the master is a phase in which a student get the chance to develop academic skills and I am happy I took this chance. I already learned a lot compared to a few years ago, but I am certainly not finished learning.

Yanthe Boom

23/05/2018