

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	Jakub Piotr Biernacki
Student number	5634725

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers - Heterogeneous City: London	
Main mentor	A.S. Alkan	Design Mentor
Second mentor	F. Eckardt	Technical Building Design Mentor
Third mentor	L.G.A.J. Reinders	Research Mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	From the beginning I was aiming to graduate in a research based studio, and the group of Crossovers was already well known before for me. The quality or state of consisting of dissimilar or diverse elements within the urban environment was in line with my first interests I had for my graduation project.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	"Empowering Play: Exploring the Design of Self-Organized Play-spaces in the context of London's Pitch Tribes"
Goal	
Location:	London
The posed problem,	<p>In a rapidly changing city, the disappearance of pitches is an indicator of a lost ludic dimension in the public realm.</p> <p>For an own tribe, the "game pitch" is a priceless site for performing rituals. Its physical and social environment is a provider of the stage for interactions. But cities are unfair. What is valuable from the standpoint of narrow tribal advantage is hostility through the other peoples' eyes. The pitch is an example of how the urban affordances of one tribe have become exclusive to many</p>

	<p>others. Then, it is stigmatized even by the residents, who would gladly replace the pitch with another use. Unfortunately, through the oversight of the change, the replacement of ball courts is entering a gray area exploited perfectly by the greedier stakeholders. The volume of public play space created in exchange is often sacrificed in the name of development and squeezing a pound out of every square meter.</p> <p>The fact is slowly coming to light that, as grown-ups, we have lost the ability to play. And yet it is not an activity reserved exclusively for children. Johann Huizinga argued that human beings have an innate tendency to play and that play is a fundamental aspect of human culture. Not just as a leisure but as a driving force behind the development of civilization. Not coincidentally, modern tribalism has a significant ludic factor within it. Both concepts address similar social issues, such as isolation or the striving to belong. Play can foster a sense of community and can be used to convey complex ideas and emotions. We can't forget that play is essential for well-being, both for children and adults, and only by rejecting the taken-for-granted stigmas will we be able to continue the potential of playspaces in London's urban context. That is what we can learn from many different tribes. We need an alternative approach. We need more humor in our cities, and we need a more playful way of doing architecture.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>How can we reassess the pitch as a meaningful playspace for everyone?</p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	
<p>With the information gathered, I hope to develop a toolkit for uncovering the potential of football pitches as full-fledged play spaces, and then test my hypothesis in the chosen area as a network of interconnected pitches and collaborative architectural programs.</p>	

In terms of the project's participation component, its materialization must be lightweight, widely accessible, and cost-effective, using materials that will foster a local culture of constructing play places. The key to planned environments is the synergy between its many aspects, as well as the fluidity between what is open and closed, created and user made, and so on.

Process

Method description

The first part of my study involves a detailed identification of the featured community and its behavioral patterns. I described the relevance of the tribe terminology in ethnographic studies and the characteristics of modern tribal networks. I addressed both the advantages and disadvantages of it and build my arguments on previous studies of consumer tribes gathered around horse racing or salsa workshops held in different countries.

Following that, I discussed the notion of self-organization in connection to the urban domain. I emphasized its dynamics by drawing on historical examples of interactions between city users and stakeholders. In this approach, I laid the groundwork for a further argument: as architects, we must reclaim our role as spatial agents again creating valuable spaces and buildings committed to their users.

In the last part of the study, I looked at the theme of play. A chronology of play in the urban sphere was an essential aspect. It enabled me to comprehend both the evolution of psychoanalysis over time and the clear architectural connections to the design of playgrounds and play spaces. Its final pieces showing the last decade represent current trends in the realm of creating play spaces. Together with the built reference base, this part of the study gave me a strong base in the topic of how the space I am designing should and should not seem.

My on-site investigation was based on a following steps:

Photo Essay:

The photographic essay helped to move between the tangible and intangible notions of space. I focused on traces that tribe left behind, and on spatial elements

To do that, I took a series of photographs of over 40 football pitches repeated in different locations. All of them were taken on the same camera settings, and with the same positioning (front of the goal, side of the pitch, diagonal with surroundings).

Catalogue of elements:

Gathered photos later were useful in the creation of a set of elements that together form a tribal landscape. From the traces they leave behind, to the spaces and buildings that provide the spatial program. Some of these were also materials found at the site, notes, messages.

The taxonomical matrix of gathered information presents the basic elements of the

pitch tribes' landscape and allows an understanding of the patterns between users and the space.

Auto-ethnography & Interviews:

Conversations with people around the pitch allowed me to involve users in the participatory process of the project. To do that, I was talking to the actors or engage in their play. The conversations I had gave me an otherwise unavailable insight into the situation in the neighborhood or depicted to me the mood of the tribe.

When the conversation was impossible, I left markers and blank posters around the tribal totem with the following queries:

How do you play on the pitch?

Draw me your favorite play space

By leaving posters up this way, within a week, I successfully obtained data that was not accessible by the direct conversation.

Design Agenda:

With all of the aforementioned components, I was able to apply the acquired knowledge towards further design. The first step was back casting of what are the qualities of ideal playspace. Using a quality matrix, I gathered key concepts, and prompts. I rated each on a three-point scale, and developed the most scored concepts into individual booklets. I reflected on how to realize a concept, what architectural elements it carried, and grouped references to it.

Literature and general practical preference

Awan, Nishat, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till. *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. Abingdon, Oxon [England] ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2011.

Boonstra, Beitske, and Luuk Boelens. "Self-Organization in Urban Development: Towards a New Perspective on Spatial Planning." *Urban Research & Practice* 4, no. 2 (July 2011): 99–122.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2011.579767>.

Cvetinovic, Marija, Zorica Nedovic-Budic, and Jean-Claude Bolay. "Decoding Urban Development Dynamics through Actor-Network Methodological Approach." *Geoforum* 82 (June 2017): 141–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.03.010>.

Diaz Ruiz, Carlos A., Lisa Penaloza, and Jonas Holmqvist. "Assembling Tribes: An Assemblage Thinking Approach to the Dynamics of Ephemerality within Consumer Tribes." *European Journal of Marketing* 54, no. 5 (March 7, 2020): 999–1024. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJM-08-2018-0565>.

Dorokhina, Olga, Milan Hosta, and Jacco van Sterkenburg. "Targeting Social Cohesion in Post-Conflict Societies through Sport," 2011.

Gehl, Jan, and Birgitte Svarre. *How to Study Public Life*. Washington: Island Press, 2013.

Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*. Kettering, OH: Angelico Press, 2016.

Latour, Bruno. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Clarendon Lectures in Management Studies. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Lefavre, Liane. *Ground-up City. Play as a Design Tool*. Rotterdam: 010 Publ, 2007.

Lefebvre, Henri, Donald Nicholson-Smith. *The Production of Space*. 33. print. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013.

Mehta, Vikas. *Public Space: Notes on Why It Matters, What We Should Know, and How to Realize Its Potential*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2022.

Mishan, Ligaya. "What Is a Tribe?" *The New York Times*, April 13, 2020, sec. T Magazine. [accessed January 20, 2023],
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/13/t-magazine/tribe-meaning.html>.

Elena Ostanel, Giovanni Attili. "Self-organization practices in cities: discussing the transformative potential," *LUCI - Urban Lab* (blog), July 1, 2019, accessed January 24, 2023, <https://urbanlabluci.it/2019/07/01/self-organization-practices-in-cities-discussing-the-transformative-potential/>.

Portugali, Juval, Han Meyer, Egbert Stolk, and Ekim Tan, eds. *Complexity Theories of Cities Have Come of Age*. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-24544-2>.

Ronfeldt, David. "In Search of How Societies Work: Tribes - The First and Forever Form." *RAND Pardee Center*, 2006, 102.

Sengupta, Ulysses, and Deljana Iossifova. "Systemic Diagramming: An Approach to Decoding Urban Ecologies." *Architectural Design* 82, no. 4 (July 2012): 44–51. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ad.1427>.

Sneath, David. "Tribe." Edited by Felix Stein, Matei Candea, Hildegard Diemberger, Sian Lazar, Joel Robbins, Andrew Sanchez, and Rupert Stasch. *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, September 1, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.29164/16tribe>.

Tan, Ekim. "Negotiation and Design for the Self-Organizing City." Delft University of Technology, Faculty of Architecture, Architectural Engineering + Technology Department, 2014.

Tan, Ekim. "Network of Games: An Ecology of Games Informing Integral and Inclusive City Developments." *Urban Planning* 7, no. 2 (June 28, 2022): 264–77. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.v7i2.5136>.

Till, Jeremy. *Architecture Depends*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2009.

Urbonas, Gediminas, ed. *Public Space? Lost and Found*. Cambridge, MA: SA+P Press, MIT School of Architecture + Planning, 2017.

Withagen, Rob, and Simone R. Caljouw. "Aldo van Eyck's Playgrounds: Aesthetics, Affordances, and Creativity." *Frontiers in Psychology* 8 (July 4, 2017): 1130. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01130>.

Yaneva, Albena. "Making the Social Hold: Towards an Actor-Network Theory of Design." *Design and Culture* 1, no. 3 (November 2009): 273–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2009.11643291>.

Precedents:

Floating University, Raumlabor, 2018
R-Urban, Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée, 2008
Parc de la Villette, OMA, 1982
LJ Works, Architecture 00, 2016
Fun Palace, Cedric Price, 1964
SESC Pompeia, Lina Bo Bardi, 1986
Young Hackney Eastway Sports Hub, muf architecture/art, 2022
Ruskin Square, muf architecture/art, 2012-ongoing
Assemble Play, 2018-ongoing
Sayer Street, Jan Kattein Architects, 2021

Reflection

I believe that the theoretical foundation I have established thus far, combined with the methodology chosen, will enable me to achieve my goals of discovering a novel way to reassess the pitch as an inclusive playspace. Selected terminology and the study of pitch tribes and their habitat place reasonable constraints on the master thesis's future design.

Furthermore, I am confident that producing a good documentary from an architectural perspective will be a valuable contribution to academia, and the topic of self-organized playspaces in the context of pitch tribes is unique and fills previously unexplored voids in architectural-sociological research. The discussion focuses on the need for more adaptable, flexible, and community-driven approaches to urban design. This is especially important in the case of London.

Using the framework developed, architectural researchers can gain insight into how people use and interact with urban spaces in an unplanned and informal manner. This can help to shape the design of public spaces that are more responsive to users' needs and preferences. In other words, it addresses the need for meaningful space design.