Reflection report: Architecture

Personal Information

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Studio:

Interiors, Buildings and Cities – Urban culture and new openness
Mentor: Jurjen Zeinstra, Laura Alvarez and Mauro Parravicini
Title: The new Rijndam Rehabilitation Center: Merging borders

a) The relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

As described by its name the studio is called Interiors, buildings and cities. This is where different layers of context are discussed and dealt with. The studio focuses on the larger proposal of urban integration to the image of the building and lastly the perception of the users.

The theme “Urban culture and new openness” was used to describe this Msc4 graduation course. This theme seems to be a perfect keyword in describing a public interior space.

However, with this academic year’s theme, the new Rijndam rehabilitation center in Rotterdam makes it hard at first glance to imagine how an urban culture and openness be introduced within in private and enclosed facility, especially when the building is to be situated on central Rotterdam, the area with high urban fluctuation.

This is a tough assignment to find a compromising solution to create the certain quality in the program that functions with a high contrast to the theme. On the other hand it is a challenge in design, for a student to propose a new idea on how to merge in these two different poles.

My framework in correspondent to the theme of the studio is to introduce different elements into the program that will allow urban integration while maintaining the functionality of the rehabilitation center.

b) The relationship between the project and the wider social context

Wellness and healthcare are the basic structure of a society. I would like to propose the design that not only integrates in its physical context, but also becomes a part of the society. In my design I introduced different layers of social contacts. Starting from integration with its surrounding as an extension to the lifestyle of people to an institution where the knowledge of rehabilitation is passed to families of the patients, other rehabilitation technician or even to the public.
Therefore, the space within this rehabilitation will be able to accommodate different needs while keeping the remaining programs function normally. The public or collective spaces inside the building perimeter will not only be used to introduce the different atmospheres into the complex, but will be an indication of the layer difference that each section of the building manipulates.

c) The relationship between research and design

The assignment in proposing the new rehabilitation center over the existing site and program raised the question on how important a research should be conducted in affiliation to the design. The current building appears to be functioning well, so why not taking the existing program and redesign the new building according to its current norm?

On the other hand, the view towards “the new” rehabilitation center is not only limited to its physical appearance. As mentioned above in other bullet points, in the studio we deal with different layers of social infrastructure, and atmospheric perception of building users. Therefore this assignment is not only to focus on how beautiful this new design will fit perfectly on the given site, but how to propose the new concept in rehabilitation to the given program.

Main point of the research in relating to design is to first understand what the functions of a rehabilitation center are. The objective of a rehabilitation center is not only rooms with different types of medication for patients. The objective of a rehabilitation center is to provide patients with opportunities to live with their new physical limitations.

A research that I used as my main theme in the design was conducted through the Research seminar course which was conducted along the Msc3 studio. The report I worked was on how to provide extra public function in a rehabilitation clinic. With that report I decided to initiate my design around the idea of giving away a part of my building program to the public as a shared facility.

With the sharing idea, some of the building’s main functions were given the new purpose. Meeting spaces were as well used for the conference regarding rehabilitation techniques. Pool and gym facilities were made larger and used as a wellness center.

By that, the opportunities given to patients are not about how well the building allows them to reside as comfortable as possible, but how this building allow them to have a chance to stand in the society and perform as much of their existing everyday tasks as possible. Which leading to the research that focuses on finding the possibilities to appreciate the environment socially and physically for the patients of a rehabilitation clinic. This resulted in the design on how I tried to bring in different level of contexts into this rehabilitation center. Not only that for the patients to appreciate their lives but also for them to appreciate where they live, and where they will be living in after they graduate from this rehabilitation center.

d) The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework

“Interiors, building and cities” is not a fancy name for the studio, but the name itself indicates the levels of focal point in the design. Understanding the city, was the first framework put upfront by the studio. The students must understand the physical context of the site while study the importance of having a rehabilitation clinic situating in Rotterdam. What should a building appear to the eye of the
residences of Rotterdam? Should the largest rehabilitation center in South-Holland represent its uniqueness in various prospects?

Next level we started designing a building, the question of how design a building that fits to the expectation in the design that one came up with while studying the city. Typologies, spaces and appearances of the building are discussed here mainly through “learning by doing” method. We studied different proposals by making drawings, sketches and physical models. This concentration method of studying allowed us to dive down to the very detailed aspect of the building.

As we moved to the very detailed layer, we analyzed and design the experience of the building. Here, the same “learning by doing” method is used in affiliated with building technology instruction. The benefit of this integrated learning method is when we know how to realize our imaginative spaces.

While developing the design, the students are guided by the tutors, who allow us to explore the design of the building with our own’s strongest skill. I personally preferred hand sketching. Most of my details and space design were initiated on tracing papers, before they were made digitally.