van brienenoordbrug
zuidwijk
by willem van tijen
pendrecht
by lotte stam-beese
tecnikon
by hugh maaskant
lijnbaan
by van den broek en bakema
bijenkorf
by marcel breuer
change
(re)construction
progress
Complex Cities

graduation studio
2011-2012
‘the metropolis and five stages of modernity’ is an explorative research on contemporary ecologies and the historic (re)-emergence of public domain, infrastructure and urban form in Los Angeles.
1888 1929 1970 2011

4 stages of modernity - isolated

critical concept reflection

design laboratory

thesis
the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
1888 the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
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the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
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the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
1888 the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
If once, Downtown LA those days was a City as a Work of Art - more or less the prototype traditional city. Where the cityscape was designed and viewed as a theatrical stage, displaying monuments that spoke of exemplary deeds and national unity (Boyer, 1994).
the ecology of walking, tasting modernity

collective modernity; the ecology street cars

autopia; persuasive modernity

a supermodernity of residual ecologies

linked by the sky; intopia

1888
1929
1970
2011
2028

part 1

Thesis
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars

fsi  1.33
gsi  0.46
osr  0.40
sid  0.53
“new experience of moving through the city tended to erase the traditional sense of pictorial enclosure as the cityscape was transformed into a series of fleeting impressions and momentary encounters” (Boyer 1994: 40).
1929 collective modernity; the ecology street cars

“The psychological foundation, upon which the metropolitan individuality is erected, is the intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli” (Simmel 1999:11).
“Everything seemed to speed up, the stimuli of urban living became, according to many accounts, more and more overwhelming” (Harvey 2006:8).
“... there is something characteristic of the sociology of the big city. Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear. The main reason for this is the public means of transportation. Before the development of buses, railroads and trams in the nineteenth-century, people had never been in a position of having to look to one another for long minutes or even hours without speaking to one other” (Benjamin 1985:38)
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity

“a single comprehensible place, a coherent state of mind, a complete way of life” (Banham, 1978).
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
“The spatial fix (in the sense of geographical expansion to resolve problems of overaccumulation) is in part achieved through fixing investments spatially, embedding them in the land, to create an entirely new landscape for capital accumulation” (Harvey 2011:28).
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
1970 autopia; persuasive modernity
In the City of Spectacle the collective memory is replaced by a false or at least manipulated historical image, mainly articulating the message of consumerism (Boyer, 1994).
“In the Disney utopia, we all become involuntary flaneurs, global drifters, holding high our lamps as we look everywhere for an honest image […] Like television, it is a machine for the continuous transformation of what exists […] into what doesn’t […]. It’s a genetic utopia, where every product is some sort of mutant” (Sorkin 1992:232).
part 1
Thesis

Donald Judd 1984 'Untitled', Laumer Sculpture Park, St. Louis, Missouri
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies

“The postmoderns have sensed the crisis of the moderns and attempted to overcome it; thus they too warrant examination and sorting. It is of course impossible to conserve their irony, their despair, their discouragement, their nihilism, their self-criticism, since all those inequalities depend on a conception of modernism that modernism itself has never really practised” (Latour 1999:134).
a supermodernity of residual ecologies

“We could say of supermodernity that it is the face of a coin whose obverse represents postmodernity: the positive of a negative” (Auge 1995:30).
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies

“In postsuburbia, daily commutes would be from exurban center to exurban center. The resultant diffuse, horizontal sprawl reconfigured the existing traffic patterns, radically undoing the predictable flow of traffic into and out of the city, in favor of a homogeneous and eventually evenly gridlocked field” (Varnelis 2005: 181).
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies

“The serenity of the Generic City is achieved by the evacuation of the public realm, as in an emergency fire drill. The urban plan now only accommodates necessary movement, fundamentally the car; highways are a superior version of boulevards and plazas, taking more and more space” (Koolhaas 1995:1251).
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies

fsi 0.20
gsi 0.13
gsr 4.31
sid 0.62
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
2011 a supermodernity of residual ecologies
“[...] Joseph Paxton’s Crystal Palace, erected in London in 1851, is the paradigmatic building. It forms the first hyper-interior that offers a perfect expression of the spatial idea of psychedelic capitalism. It is the prototype of all later theme-park interiors and event architectures” (Sloterdijk 2009:128).
part 2
Concept

1888
1888
1929
1970
2011
2028

the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
collective modernity; the ecology street cars
autopia; persuasive modernity
a supermodernity of residual ecologies
linked by the sky; intopia

THE NAKED CITY
ILLUSTRATION DE L'HYPOTHESE DES PLAQUES
TOURNANTES EN PSYCHOGRAPHIQUE
linked by the sky; intopia

These urban singularities are the residuals of former ecologies and arise out of a complex junction of natural setting, civic events and collective memories (Rossi, 1966).
Place as the locus of collective memory. Being a site where identity is created through the construction of memories. Being able to reveal hidden memories that hold out the prospect for different futures (Harvey, 1996).
“Alles ist Wechselwirkung” All is interaction. Form and nature are expressions of this interactions, more or less incorporating and synthesizing the environment. (Alexander von Humboldt 1869-1835 (Kwinter, 2011)).
part 3
laboratory

1888 the ecology of walking, tasting modernity
collective modernity; the ecology street cars
autopia; persuasive modernity
a supermodernity of residual ecologies

2028 linked by the sky; intopia

1929

1970

1988
2028 linked by the sky; intopia

7 themes

CONNECTIVITY

INTENSITY

IDENTITY

EXPANSION

SPEED

DISCLOSURE

ASSOCIATION
2028 linked by the sky; intopia

7 themes
System-Object-Territory
2028 linked by the sky; intopia

7 themes
System-Object-Territory
Rail-Station-Zone
1. Interconnect
2. Intensify
3. Manifests identity
4. Appropriate
5. Temporise
6. Reveal
7. Iconize
2028 skytrain
historic layers
2028 skytrain route + emptyness + existing
2028 skytrain
route + existing + new
2028 skytrain reactivating downtown LA
2028 Station

1. Interconnect
2. Intensify
4. Appropriate
5. Temporise
6. Reveal
7. Iconize
2028 station
2028 station
2028 station
2028 station
skywalk on gaudi/gothic columns
2028 station platforms
2028 station
a braking train
2028 station
complex diagonal forcefield
2028 station
body out of 50cm concrete
2028 station transforming column in station
2028 station
connecting station and skywalk
2028 station
fast to fast
2028 station
slow to slow
2028 station
the outer slab
2028 station
a 40m² pavilion activating the skywalk
2028 station
magnificent views from the rooftop
2028 zones

Interconnected through the Skytrain, connected through a lively pedestrian network.
Flexible grids allow developers to densify and re-develop
A radically new typology for LA, creating vibrant zones where specific urban qualities are expressed to the fullest.
2028 zones

1. Interconnect
2. Intensify
3. Manifests identity
4. Appropriate

...always, at least three quarter of the pedestrian zone is connected on the street and one quarter through the air...
Elevation points [...] shopping to the ground and leisure to the Skywalk. Assuring maximal vertical motion and dynamics.
Inverting the public domain makes the experience more intense, more exciting. Smaller alleys seduce anyone to discover intensive urbanity.
8th and Olive
masterplan
8th and Olive
another public domain
8th and Olive
skywalk
little tokyo
vibrant urban space

little tokyo
reintroducing an ecology of walking

little tokyo
pershing central
skywalk
pershing central
dramatic interiors
pershing central
intopia interpersonal, interconnected, intense.
perspective 1
studying a laboratory

- LA might be exceeded but unique
- Ageing continuous, layers will add. More density, more democracy, more exclusion, more genericness, more modernity. More questions
- Comparative studies as next step
1. unsatisfied with common reasoning
perspective 2
project and thesis

1. unsatisfied with common reasoning
2. focus on pure emperics, only questions
perspective 2
project and thesis

1. unsatisfied with common reasoning
2. focus on pure emperics, only questions
3. take a position, a manifest
perspective 2
project and thesis

1. unsatisfied with common reasoning
2. focus on pure emperics, only questions
3. take a position
4. architecture as matter of discussion
perspective 3
method and product

project
1. fragments and explores scales
2. fragments and explores concepts
perspective 3
method and product

project

1. fragments and explores scales
2. fragments and explores concepts
3. combines and isolates in time
perspective 3
method and product

project
1. fragments and explores scales
2. fragments and explores concepts
3. combines and isolates in time

thesis
4. no problems, no solutions
5. design as a new hypothesis
“Well I pretty much mentioned it. There is no hierarchy, what you do is reinventing yourself - From moment to moment. People literally have to do that. There is no status quo. They are not tethered to anything. Thats a great word, tethered” (Daalder, 2012).
The figural split of doing research and design is the paradigmatic vulnerability of the Faculty of Architecture. Architecture as art, Urbanism as science? Practical design education or academical skills?

Does the middle actually represents something?

Not the architectural refinement, not the pragmatic planning skills, the theoretical sophistication, the feeling for policy, the understanding of geography.

Often brought as an asset, being the ‘spider in the web’. Hopeful impotence?

Maybe as an discipline eventually yes. As a graduation project certainly not. The thesis as an pleasant avalanche, unsure where to crystallize.
“Why should a postwar sunbelt "city" that consists of nothing but cookie cutter chain stores, cubicle farms, and ticky-tacky houses claim our attention, when we have hundreds of historic downtown cores with underused infrastructure, beautiful buildings with empty upper floors, and great social amenities like churches, restaurants, cafes, and pubs [...] Why should we make slight changes to people's overburdened, unhealthy, unsustainable lives in the auto zone, when we can just make it easier for them to move downtown?”