Composition & Tectonics
Research and Essays on Rotterdam and the relation to the public realm
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STUDIO THEME
Composition & Tectonics of Rotterdam’s Lijnbaan area

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2. participated in the research group 2: “Learning from Rotterdam” | Hendrick de Keyzer, The Netherlands, Amsterdam [hybrid research]
3. participated in the research group 3: “architecture vis-a-vis society” | Il Lingotto, Italy, Turin [hybrid research]

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The past months of the 2012 spring semester we have studied the complexity of Rotterdam, and the Lijnbaan project location in relation to the public realm. Through personal interest we have formed three groups to hunt and study the public realm of Rotterdam. While each group has walked the same preliminary city-tour and saw the same images, we all became inspired by different aspects of city life. This book is first, a collection of research and hunting of the three studies. Each research has led to a specific interpretation of the site connected to its public realm - evolution or revolution? - as an urban scenario. Second, it shows a series of individual essays which addresses the collective interest and research. Third, it portrays the hybrid research on The Downtown Athletic Club, Hendrick de Keizer Stock exchange, and il Lingotto in plan, section, and elevation.

Each collective has been guided throughout the process of site visits, literary studies and research by our tutors; Dr. Ir. Susanne Komossa and Dr. Ir. Nicola Marzot. With this publication we want to use the opportunity to thank Susanne Komossa and Nicola Marzot for their guidance and knowledge, we also would like to thank student assistant Francesco Cinquin for his help and advice concerning the hybrid research.

After the mid-term presentation [p1] we have travelled to the inspirational city of Istanbul to hunt the public realm and investigate the neighbourhood ‘Haliç’ along with Turkish students of the İstanbul Kültür Üniversitesi. We would also like to thank Esra Fidanoglu, Demet Dinçer and all the students for their warm welcoming to their university and for showing us Istanbul in a unique way. The study results are not part of this book, but are combined in a separate booklet.

We look upon our researches and essays as the starting blocks of our upcoming term and therefore hope to prolong this in the following semester. The second semester is oriented on the crystallizing and exploiting of our design proposals into an elaborate design as a graduation project.

Regards,
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INTRODUCTION

The teaching of the Msc3/4 Graduation Studio within the research program ‘Architecture and the City: Public building / Public Realm, Composition & Tectonics’ of the Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, Delft University of Technology aims at the integration of specific architectural research methods in combination with notions derived from the field of urban sociology, geography and economics, philosophy and, last but not least, architectural and urban history and theory. The research and design methods applied have a considerable broad scope. In fact, we assume that the combination of different methods, all with their own means, forms the path, which leads to new design strategies and innovative architectural models. Moreover, we would like to formulate the hypothesis, that the kind and combination of methods allows architectural design to be an instrument of knowledge production.

CONTEXT

In the broadest sense, the research program addresses the theme of ‘Architecture and the City’ in the beginning of the 21st century, in Europe but also abroad. Research and teaching focus both first and foremost on the quest for a well-functioning public realm. Due to worldwide migration the population of Dutch (and other European) great cities changed drastically during the last 20 years. Today, 50% of the inhabitants of Amsterdam and Rotterdam have a foreign background. As a consequence, these cities are in need of a public realm, may it be physical or virtual, where a variety of city inhabitants with a diversity of backgrounds can meet, manifest themselves and (ex)change opinions, knowledge, labour et cetera.

Assuming the above-mentioned context as the main framework of the Msc program, we aim at questioning the “architecture of the city” in regard to site specific, additional perspectives. First of all, we are interested in understanding the role of the Dutch city with respect to the relation between local and global. Especially Rotterdam plays a crucial role, being simultaneously the Middle East gate towards Europe, because of its industrial and commercial harbour, and forming a pivotal element of the Randstad system. How these relations manifest themselves in the construction of the public domain, and especially in the type of the public building, is a fundamental issue within our approach.

Secondly, we are interested in a better understanding of the specific “patchwork like” quality of Rotterdam, which results from the city’s singular, under laying polder landscape and the after war policy of modernist building following the axioms of the Modern Movement in architecture. Basically, the question is posed if these
axioms correlate with the needs of the contemporary society or where they are up to revision.

Thirdly, we are interested to focus on the capacity and possibility of the “architecture of the city” to clearly express the societal changes, which it embodies. Or, to put it in other words, to use architecture as a privileged means to understand the contemporary relationship between city, society, economy, culture and politics.

TOPICS
Regarding today’s context, especially economical and technological change, we question the way in which the physical structure of buildings, blocks and cities can accommodate the public realm and also the small-scale, emerging knowledge driven businesses. For the emerging new creative industries the public realm forms the physical domain of knowledge (ex)change. Unlike general knowledge, which can be obtained more or less virtually via libraries, magazines, the internet and other media, specific knowledge is mainly acquired by direct face-to-face contact. Moreover, physical contact and gaining trust in the ‘other’ is inevitable within the mutual sharing and spreading of (business) risks. Also due to economical alterations, i.e., the shift from large-scale industrial labour to knowledge driven service and creative industries in combination with the broad availability of technical innovations like iPhones, tablets et cetera, cause public space to become more and more a working space. Additionally, with reference of limiting our ecological, specifically energetically footprint, contemporary cities have to become denser. In fact densification, for example within the urban model of the ‘compact city’, will be the only way out. As a consequence, most of the future architectural design briefs are located within the existing, condensed cities will have to deal with the transformation and re-use of buildings, blocks and urban fabric.

The urban block is assumed as a pivotal element to understand the relation between the society and its “architecture of the city”. In fact, within the European city’s long lasting history, the urban block forms a continuous ‘work-in-progress’ of endless adaptation of individual needs to public values. The wide variety of the urban block morphology, which we can map, embodies a corresponding wide spectrum of interpretations of this relation and its changes through time. In particular the MSc course investigates the way in which urban blocks relate to each other, define streets, squares and or urban green. It questions the way they graduate and control the relation between the inside and the outside world, private and public; the way blocks transform from a traditionally horizontally orientated development onto a more accentuate vertical skyline, and the changing mixture of functions. Last but not least, the relation between building type and the morphology of the block in general forms a major topic of investigation.

PREPOSITIONS
The design, teaching and research method of the ‘Architecture and the city’ program starts with the assumption, that the articulation of new contemporary, innovative architectural and urban models has to focus on the actual transformations and quests challenging our discipline and our societies.

Subsequently, architectural design is understood as a cyclic process in which analysis/research and design alternate constantly. Within this cyclic design process, the moment of innovation/evocation of a future reality or ideal has to be positioned on the interface between analysis/research on one hand and design as an activity on the other.

The method’s prepositions implicate, that the interconnection between all scales of the city and its territory have to be questioned and researched too. With other words, findings and designs appropriate on one scale are not necessarily adequate on all others. For example: what to think about a building design that is perfectly energy neutral but positioned in a site, which is only reachable by cars?

As such, linking research and design is a constituent and continuous part of the design process. Within this process the architectural drawing holds a unique position, fundamental to the research and the design of architecture. Positioning drawing as product and activity in a central position assumes also that the design (or scale model) is an independent carrier of architectural knowledge. This assumption actually distinguishes architectural research and design from more reflective, but related disciplines like architectural history, theory or critique, which by nature have to rely on written text. Usually in these fields the drawing is no more than an illustration.

Finally the question comes up, how to measure the quality of an architectural design? Basically we would like to state, its value is not absolute, but is based on measuring up and comparing with others, how it contributes to the architectural and societal discourses and further more, the actual performance of the realized project on short and long term.

RESEARCH AND DESIGN METHODS
As said, in order to address today’s complexities the combination of different research and design strategies has to be considered. Furthermore, these methods must be fit to form part of the cyclic design process i.e. must be based on ‘drawing’ and enable the designer to act by design in a given context and moment of history.
in regard to theme, site, program and future ideal is an important step. Students combine reading, writing and drawing in order to formulate and depict their actual design theme, building program and urban intervention.

Plan analysis, the comparative study of precedents focusing on hybrids buildings enlarges student’s knowledge in order to bridge the gap between analysis and design.

Typological research, interpreting basic building on all scales and learning how to manipulate, re-use and transform existing typologies to arrive at new ones.

Typo-morphological research addressing the physical structure of buildings, blocks and the territory helps together with the plan-analysis to understand the historical transformations of city and site, but also to understand block and typological transformations.

Morphogenetic research deals with the performance of architecture, in regard to use, reuse and transformation, and everyday life and its practise. This research poses the question how the actual use influences the buildings and spaces, and vice versa.

General and site specific Analysis of architectural composition in regard to phenomena, like architectural colour & ornament including the impact of modern art. This research addresses explicitly the material aspect of architecture and how it is perceived.

Research-by-design, developing the architectural design brings together conclusions drawn during the earlier stages of the research process. It uses for example design alternatives as explorative tool. As knowledge producing tool research-by-design has to meet a set of criteria:

- the design has to offer a solution for a previously defined range of problems;
- the approach and rules which are applied during the design process have to be documented;
- the design delivers new knowledge or innovative skills or shows the way in which existing knowledge and skills are applied and transformed to produce a new and unique design.
- the design adds to the body of architectural knowledge and indicates how this knowledge can be applied to certain types of design problems in the future.

AIMS

As said, the research and teaching program is questioning today’s role, meaning and physical structure of the public realm within cities. Specifically, it addresses this quest in regard to the transformation and development of new architectural models of urban blocks, of public and hybrid buildings and more recently, the changing meaning of urban green/verdure within the condensed city. Next to the search of new architectural models, strategies and typologies the program pays attention to the notion of the local identity within a globalizing world. Generally one could say, the program on one-hand questions the way in which architectural models reflect but also should be constructed in regard to the contemporary socio-cultural and economical context. On the other hand, it focuses on the actual materialisation and perception of buildings.

THE MSc3/4 GRADUATION STUDIO PUBLIC BUILDING, PUBLIC REALM ROTTERDAM

Within the design graduation studio, students work as small teams. They analyse and map the city and actual design site in different ways and according to different methods -as stated above- including photography, film and interviews. Together with their group mates they develop an urban scenario and narrative. Subsequently they develop their architectural design as individual members of the team aiming -as said- for alternative models for a new architectural and urban type of hybrid building.

In the studio the hybrid building is especially studied as an extremely condensed urban block rendering a divers stacking of functions, which increases the city’s density and contributes to the innovation of the public realm of the city -horizontally- from the local to the global scale. Moreover, the hybrid “ground scraper” is not only public because of the character of its plinth facing surrounding streets, but also in regard to
its interior space that is partly accessible to public.

The interest in hybrid building is based upon the strong conviction that this type of building is the most evident and coherent result of the contemporary network society- i.e. a society, which no longer inhabitable the "loci", but the space between the local and the global sphere. Its members are systematically commuting within a upmost congested accumulation of opportunities, which in the end leads to a new “architecture of the city”, where the relation between the city and its own territory is not anymore hierarchically framed and static, but dynamic and continuously changing and producing unexpected configurations. Urban and Architectural Design is therefore asked to face this new condition, and deliver coherent critical and operational devices. Furthermore, we focus on the challenging interface between the hybrid congested spots and the traditional city, to understand the way they mutually affect each other, especially in regard to the contemporary way of living, working and having fun in the city. In order to understand the specific and local nature of hybrid buildings within the city of Rotterdam, students are asked to study and document the city’s transformation over the last century, with a special attention paid to the transformations of the twentieth century. They are mainly fostered to focus on the ongoing relation between urban form and the corresponding civil institutions. This teaching goal leads them (and us, as teachers) to the increasing awareness that architecture, more than an autonomous and self referred discipline, is still an ever-changing craftsmanship, which is open to accept and absorb society’s alterations and transformations. Shifting through different scales, students are furthermore guided to focus on a selected district - over the last two years it was the Cool area in the inner city- to investigate its architecture more deeply. In this perspective they are forced to move from original problem statements, which led to a certain idea of the city, to its transformation due to the changing idea of the corresponding society, both combining existing and new proposals. As a result, bringing students closer to the scale of the urban block they are forced to focus on the “collage like” quality of Rotterdam’s urban tissue and regard it as a living performance of the issue of architectural ideology in general, of different ideas about the relation between private and public domain, of the even more ‘modern’ condition of claims and coexistence of different cultures, of the mixture between informal and planned activities, between the request of generic and/or specific special arrangement.

Parallel to a systematic site investigation, students are guided to investigate a series of (inter)national ‘great buildings’ from different periods, ranging from the nineteenth century till today which have proved their relevance for the city’s public realm and grandeur. Working on precedents is considered a fruitful way of understanding the relation between societal data and building typology. Elaborating them, offers students “learning by doing” while shifting from the analytical phase to the actual design. Indeed, a special way of drawing is developed to document, analyse and compare historical and contemporary representatives of the species to understand possible derivations. The method includes manaply of scales ranging from the morphological arrangement on the scale of the city, the typologies of stacking an array of diverse programs down to the architectural features that establish the mutual relationship between the public space of the city and the interior of the building. Basically the features analysed within the series of drawings are also constitutional for (the success of) every future hybrid-building model.

Next to the graduation program/studio students follow parallel a lecture series in research methods, and participate and comment actively in a tutorial where PhD students present their research in related fields. Within a studio specific seminar they analyse texts, which deal with the studio theme and architectural design theory. Last but not least they write an essay on a topic relevant to the studio theme as preparation for the development of the urban scenario and narrative.

[left] Rotterdam, historical twins & new kids on the block, morphological foot print, 1:16.000 (TU-Delft) and Schemes ‘increase of Scale’ and “Cruise ship versus Flea” (Theo Deutinger, TD Netherlands Austria).
In Spring term 2012, the research and design studio of Public Realm will explore the meaning of public realm in the light of current urban redevelopments occurring in the city centre of Rotterdam, taking into account the progressive shifting from a period of ever increasing real estate pressure to the current situation, characterized by paying more attention to the transformation of the existing fabrics. The designated theme refers to the area fenced by the Coolingsel, Binnenwegplein, the Lijnbaan and Van Oldenbarneweideplein. It consists of an existing urban block at the south edge of the inner city area after war re-structuring in the light of Van den Broek & Bakema Lijnbaan proposal, which hosts the early modern headquarter of ABN AMRO bank. The building curtains facing the Coolingsel and the Lijnbaan has to be preserved, while the inner core, actually filled in by a multi layer car parking, will be demolished, according to Rem Koolhaas/OMA proposal, called the “Kubus”. Southward, Jungerhans Tower permanence is discussable, according to student proposals. On a broader perspective, the city municipality has already expressed the intention to densify the Lijnbanquartier, to attract the so called “creative class”, defined an overall framework, which is part of the Studio delivered materials, according to which individual proposals have to fit. Students also have to investigate the most important work in progress design and the already delivered proposals in the nearby areas, as inspiring suggestions to criticize and/or develop further: Claus en Kaan Lijnbaan Masterplan, Kees Christiaanse Rotterdam Centre South Overview, UN Studio Post Office refurbishment, OMA New Municipal Office etc.

A functional program is also provided, but students will be invited to develop different programs based on thorough research and own insights, notwithstanding size and envelop limitations shall be respected. In potential the site can house offices, dwellings and shops but also social-cultural facilities. Mixed programmes and new strategies have to be developed to meet the social, cultural, political and economic problems and needs of the Rotterdam city centre in the 21st century Network Society. Such strategies can involve themes such as a public realm for a diversity of city inhabitants, users and visitors, densification, stacking of programs offering facilities for specific groups, integrating production and consumption, working and dwelling, and so forth. Innovative concepts and typologies, like the urban hybrid building that address the search for a new public realm and accommodate these new programmes are thus important. Through the analysis of precedents of the “European ground scraper” (see the above listed bibliography) and on-site fieldwork we will develop tools in order to understand and address the issue of public realm in relation to actual urban spaces.

The architectural design assignments resulting from these programmes and strategies can involve the public realm on several levels. On the one hand, they may accommodate social, cultural and educational institutions that can function on the level of the city region as a whole. On the other hand, solutions can be generated for local problems, such as the lack of space for the small-scale urban economy in the city centre of Rotterdam. Thus the studio public realm can result in projects and visions on a larger urban scale, as well as in site specific interventions that take into account the character of the modern Dutch city.
The fact that the hybrid building as an extremely condensed urban block which increases the city's density and contributes to the public realm of the city – horizontally as well vertically - is one of the key interests of this Studio Public Realm.

The “ground scraper” is not only public because of the character of its plinth facing surrounding streets, but also because of its interior space that is partly accessible to public. As such the European ground scraper potentially extends the city’s public domain horizontally and vertically into the building’s interior and links the public domain inside and outside. Potentially it acts as a city within the city by hosting everyday life, work and leisure for a diversity of city inhabitants and visitors, and sometimes by holding even large-scale programs and events where citizens can manifest themselves. Moreover, the ground scraper - because of its hybrid character – represents a truly urban architecture. Already in the seventeenth century the building for the First Stock Exchange in Amsterdam (1609), which was located right in the middle of the city centre, stacked a diverse program consisting of infrastructure and commerce. The inner court, where the goods were actually traded, supplied the city with a completely new public realm where citizens could meet, (ex)change goods and ideas, participate in VOC undertakings by buying stocks etcetera. The fact that Amsterdam was considered “the cradle of news” of the world at that time was not only due to an extended printed press at hand but basically also because of the provision of such an condensed and centred public realm as a locus that was physically able to bring together the global and the local, high and low, trade and leisure et cetera.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth, for example in Rotterdam, the new urban hybrid buildings like the shopping arcade at the Coolsgil and the Hofplein Station represented the embelished civil engineers’ city that rendered the urban and architectural designs for the new middle-class public sphere in the great Dutch cities of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Again panoply of diverse functions and, in the case of the Hofplein Station, infrastructure was integrated. The shopping arcade opened up the interior of a perimeter block and hosted dwellings, a shopping gallery and spaces for an underground market, which were later transformed into a public steam bath. The Hofplein station was the very heart of the city’s entertainment area that hosted on one hand all kinds of theatres and venues along the Coolsgil, and on the other hand the station, which brought together a hotel, the famous Café Loos and the train that connected all the Rotterdam venues with their hinterland.

The Atlantic House (1928) as the “head” of a perimeter block facing the Veerhaven in the Scheepvaartwarter (Shipping quarter) represents American ideas of Louis Sullivan and George Wyman/Lewis Bruberry for a new ‘architecture of the city’ in the Netherlands. The building introduces an innovative arrangement of commercial and office spaces that are accessed from beautifully designed galleries at the inner court of the block. From their very beginning hybrid buildings make use of advanced technical findings. Often without these findings they couldn’t even have come into existence. In the 19th century artificial light and the large-scale production of flat glass, mechanical transport systems such as lifts and escalator stairs were together with new steel and concrete structures fundamental. And still today advanced systems of inner climate control and information technology are essential features for the condensed urban hybrid. In regards to the hybrid’s typology Joseph Fenton distinguishes three basic types: the fabric hybrid (weefsel hybrid) which is directly derived from structure and the measurements of the surrounding urban fabric, the graft (geést) which consists of a combination of


[1] De Beurs van Hendrick de Keyser, the Netherlands, Amsterdam, 1611-1823


fabric hybrid

graft hybrid

monolith hybrid
different building forms within an urban block and the monolith (monoliet) which is usually a high rise structure. All kind of combinations between these three are thinkable. The Rotterdam Building (OMA 2010) combines the fabric hybrid of its ‘basement’ with high rise ‘monoliths’ that are grafted on top of it.

Apparently, also today large buildings within the city remain fascinating. They vary from untouchable ‘Groß’-form aus einem Guß’, to endless super structures, but could also be a friendly ‘grafted’ city block that combines multiple building forms. Hybrid buildings, including their technical findings are the continuous stage of exchange of knowledge and architectural ambition not only within Europe, but also between the United States and Europe. Because of their size they reflect hope and awe at the same time. Do they absorb city life into their interior while sucking life from the surrounding streets or do they contribute to and extend the city’s public domain? Already at the end of the nineteenth century, John Wellboorn Root stated: ‘In America we are free of artistic traditions...we produce works of architecture irredeemably bad, we try experiments that result in disaster. Yet somehow in this mass of un gover ned energies lies the principle of life.’

Today, new frameworks for the city, like the “compact city,” ask for innovative interpretations and designs of building types, worthy to be investigated and proposed. The architectural type of the hybrid building, (re)defines and expresses the relation between architecture and the city in a specific manner. Its inner degree of complexity could additionally increase if new types are connected to already existing definitions, by actually absorbing the existing city into the new urban condition. Additionally, the concept of the ‘city aloft’ as a new way of introducing green into the condensed city is worthwhile investigating. Within this line of thought it is interesting to reconsider Rockefeller Center as the “Garden City aloft”. ‘Rockefeller Center is the epitome of what Koolhaas regards as the fundamental principle of New York City: Manhattanism. Koolhaas points out that New York architects and city planners have never really been serious about reducing congestion. In fact, “the real enterprise of Manhattan’s architects” is a “culture of congestion,” which is the final expression of the inner logic of Manhattan’s grid, laid out in 1807’.

To begin with, the city of Rotterdam forms the first test-case of the Hybrid’s project to document and discuss statements, such as “the hybrid building has a long-standing tradition within this ‘modern city’, “it is a machine for urbanity,” “it enlarges the city,” “it innovates because of its ambitiousness but also because of necessity,” “it combines to activate,” “it asks for extraordinary design intelligence and craftsmanship.”

In order to do so and to understand the nature of various hybrid buildings within the city of Rotterdam and their often-historical ancestors, a special way of drawing is developed in the course of Studio Public Real, as a key part of its educational training, to document, analyse and compare historical and contemporary representatives of the species. The method includes panoply of scales ranging from the morphological arrangement on the scale of the city to the architectural features that establish the mutual relationship between the public space of the city and the interior of the building. The Studio will offer students the Template according to which redrawn plans, section and axonometric views of listed building, among which students will select their own case study.


images

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RESEARCH TOPICS

The here mentioned research themes are related to topical issues in urban development, especially today’s inner city developments in Rotterdam.

THE NEED FOR A WELL-FUNCTIONING PUBLIC REALM

At the beginning of the 21st century the Dutch population has changed fundamentally due to worldwide migration. City inhabitants cannot be expected to share the same cultural and social backgrounds anymore but are characterized by a great variety of cultures, habits, ways of life, daily practices et cetera. The Dutch city needs a public realm, outside but also within buildings, where all city inhabitants can manifest themselves and take notice of ‘the other’. At the same time there is the need for change in the public realm where people exchange and form not only opinions, labour and goods but also knowledge and sometimes even get in conflict with one another.

The public realm can be defined as the place ‘where strangers meet’, where different people and groups can exchange opinions, see and be seen in public. In recent years, many writers and theorists displayed great concern about the decline of the public realm. In the Dutch-speaking world, Lieven De Cauter, in his treatise on the fear society, analysed how the ground under public urban life threatened to erode. To a growing extent, people are afraid of meeting the ‘other’, and public spaces sometimes become no-go areas. Since the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers in New York, also media and politics seem to be obsessed by safety. This can be seen, for example, from the progressive privatization of former public services, and the greater presence of surveillance systems, such as security cameras, in public spaces. What is the cause of such fear and how can it be addressed? How does fear relate to space and how can design encourage people to actively engage in public urban space without being afraid to meet the ‘other’?

CREATIVE CLASS, SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES AND URBAN ECONOMY

The great Dutch cities, and within them the Dutch urban block, have to transform again due to global economical changes and large-scale migration. The contemporary urban block and today’s city should – comparable to the seventeenth and the end of the nineteenth century – once more be able to offer a public realm for all inhabitants, visitors and migrants. When we take economical alterations into account, the development of the service sector, the knowledge and creative industries are of crucial importance for the future of Western great cities. Especially the knowledge- and creative industries generally start with small-scale businesses. These industries depend for their exchange of knowledge and spreading of risks on a well functioning public domain and cheap smaller spaces. Urban blocks, city and public domain create in a certain sense the ‘natural environment’ for these industries. The smallscale urban industry is also of importance for the economical emancipation of migrants. They share the need for small and cheap (shop) space and a good public domain with the innovative knowledge- and creative industry.

HEALTH, SPORTS AND PLAY

Research has shown that people of lower income and lower social classes and youth more often face health problems. It has been argued, that stimulation of sports and outdoor activities of play can improve social circumstances and health. Moreover, sport can be an activity that allows to overcome cultural and language differences.

1. ‘the city is where strangers meet’ in: Sennett, Richard, The Fall of Public Man. New York (Vintage), 1967
2. Innovation also includes failure. Spreading risks by participating through stocks or the creation of smaller business reduces possible financial losses. Jacobs, Jane, The economy of cities; Penguin, Harmondsworth 1972, p.89
barriers. Within recent policies, special attention is therefore given to the improvement of health, sports and physical activity. New programs for sport and play facilities should be added to the existing built environment, or that public spaces should be redesigned in order to stimulate active use. Contemporary forms of sports and play in public space, such as skateboarding, parkour, street art and other forms of urban exploration can also play a role when conducting research in this field. How can new programs such as sports and education stimulate a good use of public spaces?

CULTURE, LEISURE AND TOURISM
In the past decades, leisure has become a decisive factor on the way landscapes and urban spaces are used and designed. Tracy Metz has shown how the Dutch landscape is highly influenced by leisure. Michael Sorking wrote his critique on the commercialisation of public space in ‘Variations on a themepark’. Today’s public space is increasingly programmed to serve leisure activities and tourism. Shopping streets are packed even on Sundays, café terrace culture, thanks to outside heaters, is no longer limited to the summer months or to southern climes and there is a profusion of festivals and special events. While the public space seems to be put to more intensive use than ever, the question arises whether the design of the public space in this form is still connected to an idea of providing ‘open’ space or unprogrammed space in which different groups can encounter one another. On the other can, can leisure and tourism serve as catalyst for positive development of the public realm? Could the presence of a diversity of cultural backgrounds be seen as an attractor for a larger public?

PUBLIC-PRIVATE-COLLECTIVE SPACE IN RELATION TO CONDENSED AND MIXED BUILDING TYPOLOGIES
The contemporary relation between public and private and the Functionalism distinction among different activities is not anymore clearly defined. While Sennett and Habermas characterized the public realm with clearly defined meeting places where social interaction takes place, today the situation is different. Instead, the contemporary public realm exists of many gradations and overlaps between public, collective and private, blurring each other into new spatial arrangements. Public and private are thus no longer to be seen in binary terms. The public realm is also to be found in the collective courtyards of housing blocks or in privately owned urban spaces. A comparative analysis of condensed block types (hybrids/groundscrapers) can show how gradations between private, collective and public can be influenced by design. Which requirements have to be met in the program brief in order to facilitate a good public domain for various user groups?

SPATIAL PRACTICES OF EVERYDAY LIFE
In his book La production de l’espace (1974), Henri Lefebvre introduces a notion of space that extends further than strict physical space. For Lefebvre space does not exist in itself, but is created by human actions and other spatial practices. Also the French theorist Michel de Certeau addresses the spatial practices of everyday life. Instead of a rational structure, in De Certeau’s view, the city is a complex and barely visible conglomeration of the patterns of its users, full of turns, rituals and narratives. For Bourdieu, praxis means the relationship between man and the world. This relationship comprises looking, speaking, acting, etc. – in short, all of the ‘acts’ we perform in relation to external reality. The relationship between space and social practices is not only addressed by the social sciences. In modern architecture, too, the relationship between physical space and spatial practices has been a constant, fundamental theme. A study of patterns of everyday life can reveal how the public realm is functioning, and how inhabitants experience it. For this research theme, sociological research methods such as interviews and surveys can be used in order to analyse and conceptualise the use of public space.

DENSIFICATION
Due to the densely populated character of the Western part of The Netherlands, an urgent question is how to offer good living environments for inhabitants without endangering the rural landscape. One of the goals of the Dutch government is to concentrate urbanisation in the existing urban fabric (Nota Ruimte). However, most urban space is already actively used and for an urban society to function, enough open, public spaces are necessary. Therefore, innovative solutions for densification in existing neighbourhoods have to be developed. Some possible solutions are to build underground or on top of existing buildings. How could densification strategies be developed for urban areas such as the inner city of Rotterdam without losing the quality of public space? In which way does the issue of densification play a role on this site? How can the quality of public space be guaranteed and how can social problems be prevented? What role do parks, squares and streets play in this development?
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GROUP 2: learning from Rotterdam
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THE VITALITY OF NETWORKS
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INTRODUCTION
During the research we specifically focussed on the network of the city since it directly influences the vitality and architecture of the city. By analyzing this through different perspectives all focussed on network as perceivable ability of urban networks and architecture, formal language of building blocks related to network and a programmatic analysis along different networks, we aimed for a comprehensive approach toward the topic.

RESEARCH FRAME
Like the vascular-system is directly relative to the placement and logistics of the human’s organ-system and it’s subsidiary network of nerves, muscles & glands, the versatile and vivid city is constantly acting and reacting upon its operational system of transportation network. Not only the economy of a city is heavily depended on the cities ‘artery-system’, in contemporary society the complex and fast urban structure’s vitality of the public domain become inextricably linked to the urban network. In a dysfunctional urban context of the ABN-Location were this urban ‘vascular-system’ consists out of a complex congregation of different [sub-] layers, the question how to intervene with an integrated urban solution is significantly depended on the sifting of the complex system.

artery-system/organ-system
Within the periphery of the ABN-location, these different synthesis are manifested in the different layers of the urban tissue. We analyse how the different network systems relate to public and private domain, how they affect the morphology of the urban structure and how they relate or potentially contribute to a stronger vital public domain of the Lijnbaan area. To clarify how the Rotterdam network operates we separate into three main layers and two bearing sublayers.

DEFINITION OF MAIN LAYERS
- Fast network: the system that is occupied by the automobile, which is full capsulated throughout its travel and bound to the limitations to the network’s morphology.
- Slow network: operated by the ‘slow’ pedestrian. Free to move through the city structure only limited by potential danger or physical boundaries.
- Mechanical network: the metro system connecting north & south and east & west and intersects at the ABN-location. The fast network creates a discontinuous perception of the city, while being constantly part of the public domain.

DEFINITION OF INTERMEDIATE LAYERS
- Cyclists network: whilst being part of the public domain of the ‘slow’ pedestrian, the cyclist is mostly bound to the limitations of the fast network. Where the slow and fast network collide, the cyclist instantly increases the reach of the pedestrian and vice versa.
- Slow mechanical network: whilst the metro system is focused on the external fast transportation. The system of tram and bus is relatively slow but strongly linked to the internal city structure. The tram would be an intermediate between the mechanical and the slow network.

HYPOTHESIS
The hypothesis is that vital urban areas are co-dependent in the way some of these different layers superimpose or collide in one urban ‘artery’.

THEORETICAL FRAME
Le Corbusier already addresses in 1922 the importance of the mechanisation in private transportation; In his synthesis for the mechanisation in urban structure he created a utopian plan, strongly influenced by Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City which already had a clear segregation of the industrial mechanic transportation systems and the housing areas, named ‘Ville Contemporaine’. Le Corbusier shows in the diagram how the modernisation of the network collides with the old historical city of Paris, which is not able to adapt to the evolution in transportation. In his urban design the pedestrian is the only active contributor to the public realm, all other forms of [mechanised] transportation are raised above this domain and therefore solely increase the range of specific public spheres. In contrast, his sketches on the perception of the urban morphology is seen through the eyes of the automobilist. Frank Lloyd Wright along with Henry Ford saw the developing private transportation systems as a possibility to increase the size of property, broad acre city, 1932, and the expansion of city limits into sub- & exurbs without having any significant negative influence on the economy; energy was virtually free. In contrast to Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn, whom was strongly inspired by ancient structures and it’s social convention, saw the automobilist within the city centre of Philadelphia as a threat to the social domain as a cause of decentralisation [Ford & Wright]. Kahn made a proposal design, 1956, where the ‘civic’-‘historical’-centre is surrounded by large cylindrical parking structures called the ‘forum’. The idea relates to the idea of ancient greek society where ‘men’ was expected in the city centre to participate in the public domain.

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PERCEIVABILITY OF URBAN NETWORKS

The following diagrams and images clearly illustrate how the city is perceived through the different types of network. As Lieven de Cauter theorized the capsulated experience of the city, these differently functioning systems illustrate the same but with a degree in capsulation.

FAST NETWORK

The fast network of the city, occupied by the automobile, are directly connected with the ‘Louis Kahn’ parking structures. This fully capsulated and fast experience of the city is enforced by the scale and grainsize of building blocks as well as the abstractness of the facades and (scale of) program.

The map on the right map shows the level of integration of the fast network withing the city and how the main arteries are directly linked to the parking structures.
SLOW NETWORK
The slow network, occupied by the pedestrian, show a different degree in capsulation. Although the city center is a capsule in itself, the capsule/ shopping domain of the pedestrian, the experience of the city is continues. The pedestrian ‘escapes’ only by entering a shop or by using one of the parking structures.

Within the map this continues experience is visible in mapped domain of the pedestrian.
MECHANICAL NETWORK

Opposed to the fast and slow networks, the mechanical network is a fully capsulized network. While it connects the multiple destinations, there is no experience in between. People move through the city with a discontinues experience.

INTERMEDIATE NETWORK

The intermediate/mechanical tram network strongly connects the internal structure of the city. This fully capsulized network does create, opposed to the fully capsulized metro network, a continues experience of the city. The same can be observed with the intermediate bicycle network. While they perform on an intermediate level, they continuously contribute to the public domain.
RESEARCH the vitality of networks

NETWORK VERSUS TIME

Part of the research related to program started with the analysis of public and private spaces as Giambattista Nolli’s historical map of the city center of Rome dating from 1746.

If we take the same strategy Nolli used, private spaces indicated in black and freely accessible public spaces in white, a map of the center of Rotterdam would result in an abstract map without any complexity of the public domain. Semi-public spaces is not distinguished within this map.

The first level of complexity becomes visible is we add the payed public spaces which are in first instance not freely accessible but part of the public to the public domain. This map still gives an incomplete image of the complexity of the public domain today.

Another factor that increases the complexity is the condition of the borders. This map indicates the permeability of the borders which directly related to the level of publicness.

Additional to the previous two maps this map shows the difference in activity per street. The main shopping street remains the most active during daytime.

The complexity of the public domain can not simply be measured by public and private, but consists out of different degrees in publicness which also change over time. This map indicated a missing complexity of Nolli’s map and adds semi-public domain as grey space during daytime.
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During nighttime the situation changes. All semi-public spaces turns into private inaccessible space after 6 pm.

In addition to this, the permeability of the border between the levels of publicness changes from permeable to non-permeable.

After 6 pm the public escapes from the inner city of Rotterdam through the fire escapes (Louis Kahn parking structures or one of the metro exits).

As a result of the clear differentiation of network types (slow, fast, mechanical and intermediate networks), all networks operate in an evasive condition. None of the networks collide on a location like on the vivid Witte de withstraat or Karel doormanstraat.

In addition the different evasive networks, the public group of the Coolsingel does not collide with the different orientated public group of the Lijnbaan.

The current urban condition (left diagram) appears to be less vivid than the urban condition in which different networks collide (right diagram).

After 6 pm when the shops close the lijnbaan area turns into an area without any activities.
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FORMAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE CITY

ROTTERDAM SYMBOLISM
The following images show a transformation of the city starting in 1935, just before the war, 1950, right after the fire raid, 1980, the reconstruction of the city and 2012 the current situation of Rotterdam. During this period there is a clear transformation visible from a low rise city in which the church was still the highest building to a highrise city in which the church is no longer part of the symbolism of the city.
The vitality of networks

This same observation can be made with the following photography analysis showing different images relating to time of the same street. The Coolingsingel shows a clear increase in scale and grainsize compared to the Lijnbaan which does not change over the same period.

On block level this transformation throughout time is also visible. By categorizing the block according to two different categorization theories we related the transformation to influential parameters. The first strategy is Lefèvre's categorization theory, isotope and heterotope, focussed on the behavior language of the blocks. The isotope is characterized by public domain, multifunctionality, overlap of functions, lively, soft transitions from public to private, introvert on blocklevel and extravert on citylevel and an interior space. The heterotope is an urban enclave. It is an enclosed/introvert space, excluded and interwoven and surrounded by other typologies. These blocks have their own rules. Because not all block could be categorized according to these two categories, because some could be places under both of these groups, we added to other groups. The monotope is defined as a bad mixture of the isotope and heterotope. This block is mainly public domain but unlike the soft transitions in the isotopes, the monotope has hard transition from public to private. The homotope, a counterpart of the heterotope surrounded by different, is surrounded by the same blocks. According to these four groups all blocks could be categorized. Then by mapping the blocks the influence of transformation could be traced.

What we found out with the first strategy was that there was a direct relation between the behavior language of the blocks and the planning of the blocks in time. There was a clear transformation visible from the isotope in the west to the heterotope in the east.
## RESEARCH

### The vitality of networks

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topology-timezone</th>
<th>Isotope</th>
<th>Monotope</th>
<th>Heterotope</th>
<th>Homotope</th>
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<td><img src="image" alt="Heterotope border interiorspace" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Homotope border interiorspace" /></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The second strategy is based on Joseph Fenton’s formal categorization strategy consisting out of three groups, the fabric, graft and monolith. These groups refer to the formal language and composition of the block-typology. The fabric, a perimeter block, confirms to the existing urban fabric, the graft is a block consisting out of multiple building forms and the monolith is a singular building form.

With the second categorization we discovered that the block configuration is influenced by the adjacent urban network.

Network-typology(form)

- Fabric
  - Perimeter block, confirming to the existing urban fabric.

- Graft
  - Building block consisting out of multiple building forms.

- Monolith
  - Singular building forms.
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By concluding the two catagORIZATION theories: the behavior language of the blocks relates to time while the formal language of the blocks is influenced by the adjacent network.

By combining both strategies into one scheme, the scale reveals that all monotope (the bad-mixture of the isotope and heterotope) are also grafts and all located in between the Lijnbaan and the Coolsingel.

Network-Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>isotope</th>
<th>monotope</th>
<th>heterotope</th>
<th>homotope</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fabric</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>graft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monolith</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

students | Glenn den Besten, Damien Driessen, Peterjan van Gelder
The previous research has shown how the different networks operate within a proximity of the Lijnbaan area, in relation to its perception. This rational study attempts to exploit the relation between the different networks and the city’s public, semi-public, and private functions. This research renders the insight on interest, regularity, layering, juxtaposition, and identity.

The following research maps show the relation of a specific urban function in relation to its dependent networks. The map below shows the different shopping areas and streets within the periphery of the Lijnbaan area. What is clear that the area itself is fully occupied by commercial use, while the surrounding traffic arteries operate as a way to enter and exit the area.
RESEARCH  the vitality of networks

Mauritweg - urban boulevard

West Blaak - Cultural chain

students  |  Glenn den Besten, Damien Driessen, Peterjan van Gelder
SLOW NETWORK

The Lijnbaan-area is a very specific urban plan developed over the fifties and sixties. The segregation of functions, with the main goal of the area being shopping, and the first pedestrian only area creates a very isolated zone. While the occupants of the Lijnbaan-area slowly move, parallel to it the pedestrians on the Coolingsel vastly move along the uninviting terrain towards their destination or one of the exit point, either being a garage or metro stop. The restrictions on the Lijnbaan also effect the intermediate cyclist, which shares the limitations of the fast network. The cyclist is only able to cross through the Lijnbaan-area on the Aert van Nesstraat. The lacking interest shows through the absence of any bicycle-parking facilities. This also effects the network directly adjacent to the ABN-location; all faces are only accessible for pedestrians.

Since the pedestrian is within the area either solitude or in a rather ethereal state, with little space of congregation with the intermediate cyclist network. The slow network is highly dependent on the other main networks that are only accessible at decentralised locations. While the slow network has a clear -over- dominate presence in the Lijnbaan-area, the fast and broad Coolingsel prevents the slow -commercial- network from advancing east. The Beurstraveze, an ambiguous zone which is solely preoccupied with transcending to a lower level, is the only space where this eastward movement is attained by literally tunnelling their way underneath the Coolingsel.

The combination of the mono-functional Lijnbaan-area and the superimposed “pedestrian-only” zone which only relates to other network systems on the edges results in a commercial ‘civic’ centre in daytime but at night the ‘sponge’ turns into a wasteland of closed store shutters. This change over time also effects the transition points and adjacent program on the edges. Most of all urban public program is decentralised around the Lijnbaan-‘bubble’, which is linked to different urban arteries, West-Blaak, Coolingsel and the Mauritsweg, which capsulate bubble. In popular alternative shopping streets like the Meent and Witte de Withstraat the urban structure is not solely occupied by the pedestrian, but the combination of cyclists and automobiles create a vivid and versatile street.

FAST NETWORK

The main -fast- arteries are manifested in the Coolingsel and the Blaak, directly connecting the location to external adjacent conglomerates and other part of the regio. The capsulated system is ‘limited’ to the edges of the Lijnbaan-area. The fast network has little relation to the slow network.

The Lijnbaan-area is disclosed by a set of parking structures which are located mainly on the edges. This principle strongly relates to Louis Kahn’s design proposal for the Civic-centre. This creates a a very abrupt central transition point with the slow network, resulting in the avoiding networks and clear segregations of automobile and pedestrian areas. The very fast Coolingsel stands in contrast to this “Kahn concept” where the slow network is subordinate to it’s psychical presence. In the Karel Doormanstraat, running straight through the Lijnbaan-area and parallel to the Coolingsel, both networks are interwoven with in the same fabric.
Success of the shopping bubble is therefore co-depending on accessibility the fast network. These carparking co-results in a capculated highly dependent shopping zone. This contrasts with Kahn’s civic centre, where the structures are located around a highly versatile vital centre. The Coolingsel is a generic economical barometer dependent on the greater accessibility of the network. The street generates strong built ‘fronts’ on the east and drafted fronts on the west. The ABN-location is rather absent in this manifestation of generic images.

While the Coolingsel is mostly dependent on it economical ‘identity’, where it intersects with the West Blaak a cross-pollination of urban- and economical program occurs in both arteries.

MECHANICAL NETWORK
The mechanical network connects a external chain of conglomerates and city extensions. Lines ABC follow the city’s orientation along the Maas, connecting most of the adjacent towns. Lines DE follow the Coolingsel, reaching from The Hague to the Rotterdam Centre and Rotterdam Zuid. While both arteries intersect next to our location, the metro system is mostly focused on connecting of greater distances. Opposed to this external network, the sub layer of tram and bus forms an intermediate between the slow and the mechanical. Although they form a capculated entity, the amount of people being transported on short range is far greater. Because of it’s size and speed this subsystem is interwoven within the urban fabric while the user perceives the city in a continuous -yet limited- flow. The user of subsystems is more dependent on the public domain of the city and therefore more committed, while the user of the metro seeks the fastest way of transport only committing to the city when it solely need to.

In the urban frame of the Lijnbaan-area the mechanical system, as the fast network, is disclosing the area on the three main axis. Only one tramline crosses through the pedestrian-only zone in the Van Oldenbarneveltpiazza directly north of the ABN-location, with one stop at the Jan Evertsenplaats. This double tramline contributes to the ambiguousness of the Beurstravere areas because it shares the limited space with it’s pedestrians. The external on the other hand is superimposed with the main fast arteries; the West-Blaak and the Coolingsel. Both lines perform as the collective -cheaper- way of transportation, with the same reach of the automobile.

It’s collective and ‘cheaper’ propose reflects the programmatic chain formed also the West-Blaak. The artery, in contrast to the Coolingsel, performs as an institution chain of cultural and educational program along the Maas-area, while beyond this perimeter it reaches out the suburban areas of Schiedam, Spikernisse, Capelle, etc.. In relation the Lijnbaan area -as shopping bubble- the external network supports the area as citygate to the highly popular daytime function and helps the temporarily occupant to ‘escape’ the site when the store shutters start rolling down. The DE-system makes the extension of the economical strip along the Coolingsel possible. Around the exitpoints various clusters of hotels, bars & restaurants co-exist with economical centres along this axis.

The research hypothesis is partly based on the presence of the intermediate cyclist. The Lijnbaan area is surrounded by this layer, but actually passing through is not possible. This system of the Lijnbaan disqualifies itself from being part of the interwoven urban fabric.
**DESIGN STRATEGY**

Design question
When the segregated perceptive systems become an essential part of generating a vital city centre. How can architecture: programme, momentum & situation, respond to these abruptly colliding 20th century networks?

CONCEPT
Responding to the harsh juxtaposition of network layers, sub-layers, and flows, with a cacophony of successive architecture and urban plans whom are all contradicting the previous and following styles, motivates the fundamentals of our design project. Nodes, spatial and fluent stratification, super-commercial, modern, and momentum are the main criteria to reconstruct connections between the Coolsgel and the Lijnbaan-area generating a more vital city centre.

ZONING
The ABN-location, situated on a verge line between two zones, the modernist Lijnbaan-area occupied by an audience of wandering shoppers and the Coolsgel, the former city border and now the economical barometer and network artery running through the city for the fast city dwellers. Right along these intersecting zones, the location lies adjacent to the West-Blaak. An intense artery, cutting through the different morphological urban layers of Rotterdam, forming an institutional chain of cultural and educational facilities. The ABN-location may be one of them.
While located on the edge between the geographical, commercial city centre and the Coolsgel axis, the site lacks any clear identity and is only surrounded by a forest of vacant symbolism. Forsaken public space is either a wasteland of backdoors and air conditioning units or suffused in concrete and padded pavilions.
CONNECtinG

While all different artery systems co-exist, they merely meet in abrupt transition ‘valves’. There is little space where these different networks join in urban structure. Complexity of superimposed systems is currently resolved by evasive structures. The ABN-location is the gate between the segregated domains of fast, slow and mechanical arteries. The location’s potential introduces the concept of the ‘urban transistor’ for the centre of Rotterdam, reunites the city with the different network flows and creates interesting unpredictable situations with its program. The different streets are located on different levels, this triggers the design to confirm to a spatial network of flows and transfer points.

Fast - Instead of building yet another parking garage on the outskirts of the Lijnbaan area, we use the top of the existing bridge to create a link between the parking garage opposite to the location. This connects the flows generated by the fast network adjacent to the vivid Karel Doormanstraat with the transistor.

Mechanic - The mechanical network consists out of two parts fire-escape and one part intermediate urban space. One escape south side of the Coolsingel, one escape on the north side down below in the Beurstraverse and an intermediate zone parallel to the ABN AMRO frontal facade. The building would work as a node leading the pedestrian along a public path from the Lijnbaan and the Binnenweg to the different levels of mechanical transition zones.

Slow - The pedestrian has the primary commitment to the building network. It temporary adopts itself to transcend into a system or network. The transistor is also a connector of slow-pathways that relink existing and new urban programme. The building becomes path of orchestrated passages and voids connecting the existing elements: Lijnbaan to the Coolsingel and the -extended- Binnenweg to the Beurstraverse, with direct crossings and a diverted circulation as possible detour along other program. The circulation extends the horizontal orientated city into a vertical boulevard connecting the ground bound with the higher-level program. The pedestrian moving up and down becomes the subject of social interaction and explorative encounters with unfamiliar urban spaces and public program.

ADDITION OF FLOWS

Although the location is virtually the geographical epicentre, the ABN-location is isolated within the Lijnbaan-area only accessible to the pedestrian. The Dutch cyclist as intermediate flow between the slow and the fast network and therefore an essential part of vital public domain, needs to be re-introduced in urban structure of the Van Oldebarneveltpleats and the Binnenweg. This creates the opportunity for new program and interaction with in the public domain. In addition the concept of ‘urban transistor’ the location will house a bicycle storage to stimulate these new flows and the building as active part of the public realm.
INTRODUCTION
Rotterdam, firstly the water gate to Europa. Famous for its harbour area, the city's main generator of work and economic capital. Secondly, its part of the metropolis the Randstad, connecting the city center to the world by a land, sea and air network.

The location of the design question is the ABN plot at the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam. This part of the city centre is the “Cool” district. The changing of Rotterdam’s Cool district has been vivid since the Second World War. Mainly because of the bombing of the center that destroyed almost the whole Cool area. After this disaster the front-runners of the modernist movement saw their chance. The urbanist van Traa used the ideas of modernism on light, air and space, to react on the Dutch post war zeitgeist, a statement had to be made. The reconstruction of the Netherlands and for most importantly the way the Dutch will reconstruct. Van den Broek en Bakema were able to fill in the urbanism plan of van Traa and created the famous Lijnbaan and the Lijnbaanhoven.

The intention of our research “Learning from Rotterdam” is to understand how the existing fabric operates and how it reacts to its surroundings. The formation of enclaves on urban scale as on urban block scale, how does this effect the daily life?

In order to understand the fabric of the Cool district we did empirical research on the urban block level. The urban block holds a crucial position in daily life as it defines the public, the private and the collective domain. It shows not only the social position of its era but more interesting it shows its position to the public realm.

Main topics in the research have been the qualities in the “urban fabric” in relation to the “creative class” and the knowledge based society. And how could this urban fabric enter Rotterdam?
After the old city wall (that was on the Cool Vest) was torn down, the city grew westwards. This map clearly shows the distinction between the older part and newer part of the city. West to the Cool Vest the blocks are divided more in straight lines and the buildings are not as small as on the east side. There is also a difference in open spaces within the blocks.

1886

The Cool Vest has been closed and became Cool Singel. On its west side not much changed, only that some open spaces were filled up and the Luxor was built. On the east side though a lot has changed. New buildings with specific functions were built, as the stadhuis (1920), the post office (1923) and the stock exchange building (1940), to support the growing population and business.
These are the remaining buildings after the bombing and subsequent fire. Rotterdam would have been a completely different city, if the old structure would still be in tact. The plan for the Rotterdamse Bank (ABN) is already drawn.

In the eighties an iconic tower was added to the stock exchange building of Staal. The Koopgoot is a phenomenon in retail design. It connects the shopping areas on the east and west side of the Cool Singel. Here and the city is densified through the years, which will be the trend for coming decades.

The city government of Rotterdam decided to make a selection of buildings that should stay, other building that did survive the bombing where demolished. On the west side of the Cool Singel (accept for the Luxor theatre) a complete new range of buildings was erected, with the new Lijnbaan as main axis.

In the seventies new high rise was added to the existing blocks. The ABN tower is an example. In recent plans most of the buildings from the seventies (like the ABN tower) will be demolished, which is notable, because earlier buildings are incorporated in the new plans. So are the seventies buildings not flexible enough?
RESEARCH  learning from Rotterdam

The top down morphological study of the Cool district has been done before the bottom up empirical research on the urban block can start. The previous moments in Rotterdam’s history have had a large effect on the Cool district and will be interesting to keep in mind when the empirical research is done. What interventions where implemented with what kind of zeitgeist and how do these interventions translate or relate to the contemporary city life.

The district that will be explored (highlighted in the image below) has been set off by borders or boundaries. Can we relate urban blocks active in the Cool to certain periods in time and what conditions in the fabric are created? How do they relate to each other and what do they mean in daily life?

Karel Doornmanhof shows a glimpse of pre-war Rotterdam, a historical image that has been lost while it still exists. Typical Dutch curtain facades present houses each with their own character, while old and new exist next to eachother in the block.

This pre-war image is only visible in the facades of the block, as the morphology of the block changed drastically in comparison to the 19e century morphology. A snake like row of buildings following the edges of the block, creating a semi public inner world with in the block.
This block has a lot of variety. Along the Coolingsel is the monumental bank building, with a solid concrete structure and a brick facade. It encloses the inner space of the block, which acts as service road, because on the west side is a lowrise Lijnbaan building. In the south west corner is a white monumental building, which consists almost completely out of a staircase. Its facade is made of white brickwork.

The bank building is set back from the Coolingsel, so extra space exists there. This used to be empty, like a square, but since the seventies four pavilions dominated the open space. In the south east corner is another open space, which isn’t used that much now, but has potential because one of the entrances to the ABN building is situated there.

Sixteen urban blocks have been categorized and put in perspective to each other. This revealed a clear trichotomy in the urban block typologies. The pre-war typology “urban fabric”, the post war typology “modernism” and the post modernism typology “hybrid”. This notion gives the possibility to create an advanced specified research on three blocks that represent the three typologies.
The “urban fabric” block. Holds a clear position towards the public realm and the collective domain. The outer building curtain, holds a formal architectural expression and enables the public to enter the courtyard. This transition is experienced as moving from public to collective space. The courtyard holds more private functions and the inner building curtain expresses in an informal way.

The continuity in daily life has been activated by the use of public functions; this makes the plinth of the block permeable to public life.

The “Modernism” block. Holds an unclear position towards the public and collective domain. As it introduced an open inner courtyard, which is dominated by the surrounding dwellings. This creates the collective aspect of the courtyard, yet the physical disconnection of all dwellings creates an unclear space.

The separation of the leisure in the courtyard and the functional program to the service road defines the expression of the building curtain. Along the service roads the facades hold clear functional program and along the public and collective domain, the facades hold formal and residential program. This programmatic separation could be questioned in position to the continuity of daily life.
“Hybrid” block the Hofdame at the Binnenrotte shows the most advanced version of a hybrid in the city center of Rotterdam.

The outer building curtain holds the key elements to the hybrid. The two main, diagonal situated, entrances for the dwellings enable social control on all edges of the block. The plinth holds public functions making it permeable for the public. Unlike the urban fabric block, the courtyard is visible to the public yet inaccessible for the public. By mingling the functional program and residential program in the inner and outer facade the continuity in daily life is stimulated along all facades.

Hunting the public realm in the Cool district leads us to an extensive urban block research. Sixteen urban blocks have been analyzed on the previous shown topics. This results in an understanding of the existing fabric of the Cool district. A clear disconnection of three zones active in the Cool district defined by their urban blocks.

- The pre war urban fabric zone, south west of the Cool district
- The post war modernism zone, center of the Cool district
- The post modernism zone, north east of the Cool district

The next phase has been the position of the urban blocks juxtaposed and superimposed to each other. What type of public realm do they create and which position do the collective domains take? And how do we perceive this in the broader scale of the Cool district?
Recognizing the north-south direction of the Cool district and the three street typologies: Kareldoornmanstraat, Lijnbaan and the Coolsingel.

The Kareldoornmanstraat is an active street, as Sennett* would call it: a ‘border’. Defined by the pre-war and post-war urban blocks. Daily life is vivid in the street because the diversity in functions and users through out the day. In contradiction to the Lijnbaan and the Coolsingel. The Lijnbaan loses continuity in daily life because of its monofunctional set up and its disconnection to the east west direction of the Cool district. The Coolsingel has been revised by the municipality from a six car lane to a four car lane, small pavilions have been introduced to address human scale. But it stays a boundary between the Cool district and the east area from the city center.

* Richard Sennett writing on Boundaries and Borders; In natural ecologies, borders are the zones in a habitat where organisms do not stray.

The position of the collective domain.

Three types of public and collective space can be recognized in the Cool district. Firstly is the unilateral public domain, which is manifested in open spaces. Because of the lack of diversity, these open spaces have a unilateral character.

Secondly the enclosed collective domain, which is manifested in the inner spaces of urban blocks. These spaces are mostly used by dwellers.

Thirdly are the service roads, the second collective domain introduced by the modernist. These mono-functional streets hold a central position in the Cool district. Their influence is not noticed when one passes through the cities center. But its effect is bigger then expected, what we show on next pages.
The effect of the service roads towards the public domain.

The Lijnbaan is a north-south orientated shopping street. Famous since the reconstruction of Rotterdam, a monofunctional shopping street. What kind of effect holds its structure towards the continuity of daily life in Rotterdam?

Zooming in on the junction of the Lijnbaan and the Aert van Nesstraat the impact of the service roads behind the retail becomes visible. A clear separation of the retail from the Aert van Nesstraat and the Lijnbaan. Complementary to this the modernists van den Broek and Bakema designed blind corners for the retail buildings at the Lijnbaan.

This discontinuity in the urban fabric subtracts quality from the Cool district and disrupts the connection between north-south and east-west direction.
Urban fabric:

‘An apparently chaotic, but dynamic ‘system’ of interaction, idea and tolerance.’
Jos Gadet in ‘Terug naar de stad. Geografisch portret van Amsterdam’, 2011
ENCLAVE’S IN AN ENCLAVE!

Rotterdam city center has been subtracted from its surrounding context. Because of the Second World War bombing a major part of the Cool district burned down. This created a scar in the urban fabric which has never really healed; it created disruption in the continuity of the Rotterdam’s urban fabric.

CONTEXT

West of the Cool district, the pre-war urban fabric is operating in the appropriate manner of complexity, diversity and continuity. Vividness in daily life is visible throughout the day. This can be related to the variety in morphology of the urban blocks as well as the different lots. Each urban block facilitates a plinth enabling entrepreneurs to start small shops or companies to participate in daily life and effectively enlarging the quality of daily life. Dwellings are placed on top of the plinth. This fabric is able to enter the Cool district by crossing the Mauritsweg and is partly active in the west side of the city centre.

North of the Cool district, between the train track and the Weena, a whole monofunctional business area has been erected. A large and impenetrable boundary between the northern part of Rotterdam and its core (the city center). The pop podium Perron is creating their name in the cultural scene of Rotterdam. Codum2 has reopened the doors of the Schieblok building, since 2010, to small scale institutions and companies active in central district. Operating as a small urban lab, where the creative class actually benefits from the empty office buildings in the city. Dwelling, 3% of the city center inhabitants are living in this part they are mainly starters from the age of 25 -35 and are characterised as rich in cultural as economic capital.

East of the Cool district, disconnected form the Cool district by the Coolsingel and the enclave like urban blocks like the Beurs, Stadhuis and the post office. The area holds an urban character with a wide profile, middle high towers and a diversity in urban block morphology. Continuity in daily life is being addressed by public functions; retail; cafés; bars etc. Mentionable projects are the Hofdame by Klunder architects; a hybrid building which is operates very pleasant in the urban fabric and the Markthal by MVRDV which is still in construction.

South of the Cool district, disconnected by the city centre by the Maas. The “kop van Zuid”, addresses the high segment in dwelling retail and offices. It is the waterfront site of Rotterdam, architects like Rem Koolhass, Alvar Siza, Foster & Partners have designed high-rise buildings which watch over the Cool district. An interesting side effect of this high class inhabitants is their economic and cultural capital. Which is visibly spent in the southern area of the kop van zuid where small scale specialized businesses are popping out of the ground like fresh mushrooms.

CENTER

It is clear that Rotterdam is struggling to reconnect the urban core to its surrounding. The largest obstacles to overcome in the urban fabric are the Lijnbaan and the Coolsingel which operate as clear boundaries between east and west. The connection between Northern Rotterdam will always be weaker, because of the train track, which can only be crossed by the use of tunnels and bridges. Southwards will also be a challenge, which could develop in a rapid speed when the quality of daily life in the city centre has been raised to the expectations of this high segment.

To address and enlarge the complex character of the metropol image of Rotterdam it will be necessary to reduce the enclaves and monofunctional blocks active in the Cool district. To stimulate daily life and the quality of daily life, the municipality should aim at densification of the city centre and an equivalent ration between dwelling – retail – office.

To effectively stimulate vividness in daily life dwelling, office space and retail for starters, creative workers’ and students will be complementary. These groups are all active through the day. They are rich in cultural as well as economic capital, which they gladly exchange for products of quality. These groups will be able to grow, invest
and actively participate in the daily activities of the Cool district.

Site

It will be the challenge to fully integrate the design in to the existing fabric of the Cool district. Therefore the public realm needs to be seen as the quality and the connection to the district. The old enclave-like typologies for the urban blocks are no longer feasible. So the intention for the design is to retract the public realm in to the core and if possible even up in to the design. And thus giving a dimension to the public realm which has yet to be exploited in Rotterdam. This enlarges the total amount of the public domain and it is the public domain which functions as an intermediate space between groups. Throughout the day various users from different groups can use/meet/interact and exchange between one and the other.

The earlier mentioned users of the design have been selected to address the social quality of the Cool district. Their knowledge, cultural and economic capital works cyclic, meaning the one enhances the other. If the design addresses these groups, the design will act as an attracting device for more starters, creative workers and students to settle in the Cool district.

Why focus on the creative class and the knowledge based economy?

Rotterdam is mainly focused on labour based economy, which is highly active in the Harbour district. This economy is located outside of the city centre and the gained capital usually doesn’t end up in the pockets of the labourer or the Rotterdamer but goes to large companies. It is the intention to use the creative class to generate knowledge, economic and cultural capital. Facilitating them in the Cool district shall bring an large scale exchange movement in these three capitals between regular inhabitants and the new economic group the creative class. This can be seen as cross fertilization, as both groups have mutual benefits from their presence.

1) Urban fabric: urban sphere with: diversity, continuity, flexibility, density. These characteristics manifest themselves in architecture, infrastructure, function, public and collective space.
2) http://www.codum.nl/
3) voorontwerp bestemmingsplan stations kwartier Rotterdam, DS+V Rotterdam, September 2005.
4) Information society / knowledge-economy:
   ‘A significant part of the economic growth in society comes from (technical) knowledge. It is a society in which the production factor knowledge obtains an important place, next to labour, nature and capital. This image fits within the shift from agricultural labour to industrial activity to services.’ (Dutch wiki)
INTRODUCTION

Rotterdam’s municipality has expressed the intention to densify their city-center, which should also generate a diversity of activities city inhabitants, users and visitors. The diversity of use is currently lacking because this part of the centre is mainly mono-functional, namely shopping. The municipality foresees a CityLounge, a city-center which invites the dweller to stay and hang around.

The appointed site is fenced by the Coolsingel, Binnenwegplein, the Lijnbaan and Van Oldenbameveltplaats. The urban block is part of the post war re-structuring by Van den Broek & Bakema. It hosts the early modern headquarter of ABN AMRO bank and a part of the Lijnbaan strip, both buildings have to be preserved. The inner core, which consists of parking, will be demolished. Our task is to design a hybrid building on the site. It’s density and combination of functions should generate a more lively and divers public life.

RESEARCH

We decided to focus on research about creating public space, before jumping into the specific site. The relevant research results have to inform and feed the design process.

The public realm studio focusses on public life in the city. Life involves people. How do people use the public space? And what is the relation to the buildings? Our premise is that the lives of the people, which together form the society, are reflected in their buildings. And vice versa. The built environment of a society tells us a lot about what was predominant in their (mental and physical) lives.

The research theme can be summarised as: Architecture vis-a-vis Society, Typology vis-a-vis Spatial practice, Form vis-a-vis Event. This asks for a combination of a typological research and a reading of the society in which the typology is used. We applied this method to several historical societies: greek, roman, medieval, renaissance, burgeois (early-modern), modern and eventually on contemporary society. The research became a combination of several case studies, such as Agora - Athens, Forum Romanum - Rome, Boulevards - Paris, Passage - Rotterdam, Market square - Lubeck, Market square - Delft, San Gimignano - Italy, San Marco square - Venetie, Stock exchange - Amsterdam, Felix Meritis - Amsterdam, Lijnbaan - Rotterdam, Kulturhuset - Stockholm.

Our readings of the different societies were mainly socio-cultural, socio-political and socio-economical. During the research we found out which parameters were relevant, so we could apply them to analyze contemporary society in a consistent manner.
The type developed according to both needs and aspirations to beauty; a particular type was associated with a form and a way of life, although its specific shape varied widely from society to society.

Aldo Rossi

Architecture society

Why

'New social relations demand a new space, and vice-versa.'
Henri Lefebvre

Typology spatial practice

Why

'Social production of urban space is fundamental to the reproduction of society.'

Architecture Society Typology Spatial Practice

How

Readings of societies through art

Typology Praxeology Image Narrative

How

Study of Built Form Study of Everyday Life

Historical paintings reconstructions plans, sections

Historical texts & data historians at TUD

Reasearch architecture vis-a-vis society

Start

City

Premise

Public Realm

Inseperable

Aim

To understand the way in which society is represented and reflected through the architecture of public buildings and public spaces.

Urbs City Civitas

Place Domicile Sanctuary

Reference

Religious/political association. Social body of the cives, united by law.

'The type developed according to both needs and aspirations to beauty; a particular type was associated with a form and a way of life, although its specific shape varied widely from society to society.'
Aldo Rossi

Architecture is a social institution related to building in much the same way that literature is to speech.'
Aldo Rossi

Students | Roxana Abdollahi, Herman Gaarman, Sijme van Jaarsveld
The research architecture vis-à-vis society examines the transformation of form and use in relation to society, politics, economy, and nature. It discusses the evolution of architectural typologies and their impact on public spaces and urban societies.

**Greek (500-300 BC)**
- Settlements were rooted.
- Roman law (could be applied everywhere).
- The concept of citizenship was rooted.

**Roman (300BC-27BC)**
- The concept of trade (local) and self-providing production became dominant.
- Expansion drift and wealth by conquering.
- The concept of imperial power was embodied through architecture.

**Medieval (476-1500 AD)**
- The concept of controlling and engineering emerged.
- The concept of dependency (feudalism) was introduced.

**Renaissance (15th-17th century)**
- Humanism, revaluation of nature, and democracy were introduced.
- The concept of rationalization and industrialization was introduced.

**Early-Modern (17th-19th century)**
- The concept of urbanization and rationalization was introduced.
- The concept of social and political revolutions was introduced.

**Modern (20th century)**
- The concept of globalization and rationalization was introduced.
- The concept of fragmentation and industrialization was introduced.

**Contemporary (21st century)**
- The concept of hybridity and global interdependency was introduced.
- The concept of revaluation and consumption/choice was introduced.

The study highlights the role of architecture in shaping society and the impact of societal changes on architectural forms and uses.
For a more elaborated narrative on our contemporary society, we looked into the theories of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. This is a summary of his ideas on our society. (Liquid modernity)

- chaotic / ambivalent lives
- individualisation, design of own life is central theme
- identities no longer derived from rigid social order
- identity constructed out of variety of offers/possibilities
- (in this situation) people are searching for grip/hold
- our freedom is problematic
- freedom of the individual consumer, which is building on its biography, brings responsibility.
- (no longer interference of the welfare state, so people have to live with the consequences of the failed choices)
- globalisation: space-time compression
- institutions as well as lives are liquid, constantly changing, no rigid patterns. because they have no time to solidify.
- rational calculation based on by itself generated uncertainty
- this leads to disintegration of social life
- global capitalism and communication streams are liquid, they demolish barriers
- but they also bring selectivity: they separate the winners from the losers
- this results in: green light for tourists, red light for vagabonds
- tourists travel because the want to, vagabonds because they have to (no choice)
- divided we shop. identity is liquid: over and over new excitement/incentives are sought, which kill durability.
- shopping is an individual act
- humans have to be flexible and adjust to the speed of liquefaction of the existing
- people follow a lifelong education project: this is typical for the controlling society
- fort europe guarantees liquidity for people who are inside, outside the hardness/solidness rules
- neo-tribalism: desire for a degree of identity (ambivalent), to be found in smaller social groups of like-minded
- reduction of the welfare state creates outsiders
- ambivalent and paradoxical of a time without absolute certainties, in which all action brings new uncertainties
- social forms: structures which limit individual choices, institutions which bring routines, acceptable behavioral patterns
- these can't keep forms - we don't expect this - because they disintegrate and melt faster then the time they need to solidify
- because of their short lifespan they can't function as frameworks for human acts
- separation power and politics. from efficient action/intervention in de modern city to an uncontrollable global atmosphere poltics can not act effective on a planetarian level, because it stays of local nature
- this separation forces state organs to subsidize and reduce their tasks. they become a plaything of the erratic market
- society: a matrix of coincidental engagements/commitments and fractures and endless possible permutations.
- a life which is fragmented promotes a more lateral (instead of vertical) orientation in time
- successes from the past don't bring guarantee for the future: short shelf life of habits and strategies.
- the individual carries all the consequences, every choice brings risks.
- there is no dogma, there are no rules to follow, the virtue is flexibility, willingness to switch tactics.
- liquid life is under circumstances of constant uncertainty: the fear of being caught napping or failing to catch up with the fast moving events, overlooking the use by dates, being saddled with worthless possessions, missing the moment calling for a change of tack/track and being left behind
- contradiction: unending series of new beginnings, yet precisely for that reason it's full of worries about swift endings.
- getting rid of things takes precedence over their acquisition.
### RESEARCH architecture vis-a-vis society

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#### Rootlessness
- Nomadic
- Fragmented lives, sequence of episodes
- Genius locus, emphasizing the here and now.

#### Choice
- Culture of congestion
- Value of complexity
- The in-between as a stage: expressing yourself and thus regaining identity through the individual action.

#### Customization (Identity)
- Creating conditions
- Customization by user
- Scaffold for events
- Customization by architect
- Fluid connective tissue
- Open & continuous
- Continuity of nature: embedded in the site
- Discontinuity on larger scale: disconnected from the world by filtering
- Focus on the senses: filtering the overload (images) and creating new atmosphere for stimulating the senses.

#### Capularity (Dis)Continuity
- Urban living room
- Continuous urban landscape (instead of fuck context)
- Functional bubbles: capsules & zoning lead to discontinuity
- Overload within the capsule
- Complex as generator of form
- Strong reaction: city branding

#### Information Overload (Incentives)
- Embracing lack of identity
- Anti-formalism
- Formlessness: emphasis on defining public space (Tschumi) and not on building (Hadid)
- Anonymity
- Pixel: generic form, identity-less
- No expression through form, only scaffold for events, introduction of the in-between
- Extremely expressive to generate identity

#### Genericness
- Formlessness: emphasis on defining public space (Tschumi) and not on building (Hadid)
- Multi-cultural (173): 010 is scaffold for 'unrooted people'
- Shopping bubble: consuming based society strongly represented
- Little space for expression
Rotterdam is a rich combination of many layers. This is the result of 100 years of high ambitions and radical historical events. Nowadays we can clearly identify the different layers. They have no cohesion, but are strongly reacting on each other.

1920s. Monumentality.


1970s. Search for a compact city. The c’70 introduced pavilions, concentrated around Coolsingel.

1970 - now. Dominance of the skyscraper: a continuous serie of more and bigger towers.
The idea is that the different scales we see in Rotterdam are going to be imported into the site. The ABN-AMRO and Lijnbaan figure as the middle scale. This means that we have to implement the small and the big scale. The question is how should the different scales work on site, what form should they have and what is their relation? We tested this by making different models that have a specific quality and then evaluate them.

The different scales are not implemented on site for no reason. The bigger idea is that the ensemble together will form an urban living room. This room, which we also say in the medieval square of Delft, will function as a dense spot within the urban tissue. Our aim is to create hybridity of form and typology. The room will be qualified as with terms as density and diversity.
**RESEARCH  architecture vis-a-vis society**

**THE SMALL SCALE**

We tested the small scale on topics like human experience, ability to define space, and versatility on functions and composition. We found out that the concept of the molecule, or pixel, is suited for what we want to achieve. The molecule can define the space outside the block, it can adapt and reflect to the fast changing society and it can easily be arranged in every way imaginable because of the fact that it can function on its own and the small size.

**THE LARGE SCALE ROOF**

The large scale plays a big role in defining the living room. We tested how the scale can do this. First concept was to create a roof. This roof had to define the space horizontally and create enough spatial quality for what is happening under the roof. Other topics to test the roof on was its ability to define the leftover spaces outside the block and its quality to work on the global scale. The roof has the ability to do all that, but it causes the roof to expand a lot. This causes that the roof was totally disconnected from the rest of the composition.
THE LARGE SCALE

Second concept for the large scale is to stack different functions and form a block-like fill in on the site. The block with its stacking ability can create a lot of density on the spot. This causes the interior space to disappear completely. This can be solved by moving the slabs and breaking the volume, or adding large voids. Changing the dimension and making a tower instead of a block is the solution. The tower also makes it more visible from far away, causing that the scale works on a city of global level. The tower also defines the space better than a block. The block, because of its position in the middle between the ABN AMRO bank and Lijnbaan, only divides the space.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SCALES

All the scales have to work together to make the urban living room. So the connection and the relation between the different scales is crucial. The small scale, the molecule can, because of its size be connected to Lijnbaan. With the large roof this is more difficult. This has to be done in a more subtle way. This mean that the roof needs to be scaled down and it needs to be lowered. By placing it above ABN AMRO the roof is totally disconnected. Also the let the room function as a dense and diverse hybrid building it is crucial that the different scales have a clear connection and relation with each other.
Hinduism

- The purpose of existence is to love and serve God.
- The Day of Judgement and the resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- The basic unit of Islamic society is the family.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
- The importance given to mindfulness, to paying attention to one's everyday life.
- Karma.

Islam

- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
- Recitation from religious scripts, singing devotional hymns, chanting mantras, reciting scriptures, sacred dance and music.
- The distinctness of the Jewish community.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.

Buddhism

- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.

Christianity

- Belief in the Day of Judgement and the resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- The basic unit of Islamic society is the family.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
- The importance given to mindfulness, to paying attention to one's everyday life.

Islam

- Belief in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Day of Judgement and the resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
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- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
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Christianity

- Belief in the Day of Judgement and the resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- The basic unit of Islamic society is the family.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
- The importance given to mindfulness, to paying attention to one's everyday life.

Islam

- Belief in God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
- The Day of Judgement and the resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- The basic unit of Islamic society is the family.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.

Buddhism

- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
- The development of mindfulness and practice of meditation.
- The temple's simple courtyard type can be generated.
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INTRODUCTION

This essay focuses on the Museum of the Roman Theatre of Cartagena by Rafael Moneo. In which he has practiced, as he has before, the connection between past and present by linking, through architecture, exhibits, movement and archaeology, the passage of time through museum buildings.

Many of his works show that his designs are morphologically and materially sensitive to the city, without being simple-minded or scenographic. (Miller & Moneo, 2003)

Buildings designed by Moneo make the visitor intensely aware of the architecture, while equally making them aware of their presence and surroundings within the architecture. Within these environments visitors often find themselves climbing and turning around twisting paths, while emerging to high and bright vantage points, or into dark caverns and caves. These paths offer the users choices in the route to explore, or traverse, allowing them to interact with the building in their own chosen way, on their own adventure.

This is also reflected in the way in which Moneo describes and writes of his buildings, behaving more like an author than an architect, writing as to perceive the view point of the visitor, a fictitious character imagined by Moneo. Instead of describing the building as an object or artefact, he describes it more as an event, or sequence of events, in the life of the character witnessing the building. Furthermore Moneo goes further in believing in the consciousness and feeling of the building itself. When writing about the Museum of Roman Art he describes “the wish of enclosure that is always present in the architecture of the Museum.” It is clear that Moneo designs with these two characters in mind, by trying to understand the social and intellectual encounter between the building and the visitor, in that they meet, they exchange glances and inquire of one another, all at a particular time and place. (Campbell, 1996)

Museum of the Roman Theatre of Cartagena

In the beginning the project was commissioned, by the investors of the city of Cartagena, to design a museum next to the ruins of the unearthed Roman theatre that were found in archaeological searches in the late 1980’s. Moneo’s vision for the project was to create a passage from the present day surroundings of the town square to the Roman theatre, along which the story of the Theatre and its discovery would be told. In doing so he took control of many aspects of the project, and developed this original plan to fit his idea of this story.

This essay discusses the project and analyses its capacity to perform its primary functions; those of a public attraction and in the function of providing a backdrop from which to tell the story. It more specifically analyses...
the techniques and themes utilized, such as the use of temporarities, and provides an opinion of their success.

MONUMENTALITY

In this museum, as with his designs for the Museum of Roman Art and the Prado Museum, Moneo places connecting buildings between two historic structures. In Cartagena, he connects the 20th Century, City Hall Plaza, at sea level, with a recently uncovered Roman Theatre at the top of a hill overlooking the town (As shown in the picture below). He achieves this through the use of what he describes as a “spatial promenade” with the use of internal tunnels and escalators; he connects these structures of different elevations which cross under and over “the conventional ground plane of the urban fabric”. In doing so Moneo manages to transform the impact of the buildings on the three dimensional “Collage City”, in a similar vain to that of Colin Rowe’s (Rowe & Koetter, 1978). In restoring the 18th Century Riquelme Palace, within the town square, he manages to allow the museum entrance to be fittingly set within the surroundings of the main city square and Cartagena town hall.

Lewis Mumford (Avermaete, Hawk, & Teerds, 2009) believes that a building should be representative rather than utilitarian to be monumental, “The very notion of a modern monument is a contradiction in terms; if it is a monument, it cannot be modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument.” Smithson and Smithson (1974) also write that, “At a time when our sets of values were still determined by the church and the monarchy, and later by local governments and banks, it was important to demonstrate this power in the construction of buildings. Now that we are simultaneously influenced by many different factors, the time is over for any rhetoric in individual buildings.”

The Museum of the Roman Theatre of Cartagena is a modern project but it is not a modern building, it is a collage of buildings in different time periods. Each of these elements of the project might not be a monument in itself but as a whole it has some characteristics of being a monument. It has the scale of a monument, but this scale is not shown as standing lavishly or outstanding in its environments like some other monuments. The building merges into its environment subtly. It is not exactly a utilitarian building, and isn’t constrained by the boundaries of one; it has its own functions however if it were supposed to be utilitarian the scale of the project would have been smaller and more concise.

Moneo’s approach towards monumentality in his work is somewhat reminiscent of that of Javier Sáenz de Oiza, for whom Moneo worked as a student, and said “I wanted to become an architect in the same fashion of Oiza with all of the enthusiasm professed by him in his work.” It is similar in that Oiza strived to blend his work into their surroundings (Glancey, 2000). It could be argued that by being so successful in his goal to blend, so seamlessly, the public facade and the city fabric that he overlooked the very need for the building to attract its visitors. By merging the project into the city fabric, Moneo dismisses having a public entrance for a public building that should be inviting.

Other museums and art galleries such as the Tate Modern, the Louvre and the British Museum are set in decadent architecture that draws the visitors, however perhaps Moneo’s goal was to present the architecture of the theatre, without overshadowing it by his own. For instance critics have described the “Tate Modern effect” as being more about the building and its location than its exhibits. However, Moneo’s design seemingly hides the theatre from the city itself, and as a public monument many would argue it belongs to the people and landscape of Cartagena.

In hiding the main exhibit and by morphing the buildings into the city it is hard to see how this design has served in the marketing of this public attraction.

STORY TELLING

The Museum of Roman Theatre in Cartagena has a defined story, which every visitor has to follow it to get to its end; that is the core part of the project. It has a hierarchy that starts at the sea level and ends on top of the hill which has the view of the whole city and the harbour. Like many Roman buildings of stature and importance, the theatre was constructed on the high ground of the town at a point of strategic significance; Moneo maintains this hierarchy with the theatre remaining the high point of both the museum and the spectacular end to its story.

All stories have a start and an end, and they can be defined as a line you traverse between them, especially in Moneo’s story of this project after you become involved with the story there is no way back, it is a one way route that you have to continue till the end. This storyline is often forceful in its design; For instance within the Museum building there is a wall of escalators raising the user from ground level upwards, in a constant flow, but only in one direction, upwards, and there is no way back. In the picture above the passage of the story is illustrated by the line. It shows how the twists and turns of the path taken reflect the plot of the story before it climbs to its physical peak at its end. It start is the 18th Century Riquelme Palace which works like an arcade, or the introduction to the story.

In the initial stages of the story small exhibits are revealed in the framed architecture, which can be considered as minor events in the plot which result in short pauses, slowly building the back plot to the main events. As the story continues, in the main museum building, the visitor is presented with larger and more significant artefacts and elements of the bigger event waiting to unfold at the end of the story. The picture on the following page highlights the passage and flow of visitors through the exhibits of the museum over which the story is narrated, en route to the theatre.
The one way flow of visitors around the narrow passages of this story, force the visitor to observe the story as told by the building, in the way in which Moneo intended. The story can be seen as a play rather than a book, as the visitors observe the exhibits from the flowing rhythm of the buildings. The theatre analogy can be continued further with each building framing the separate acts of the play with the finale in the suitable setting of the Roman Theatre. As with all plays, for some the end can be the answer to lingering questions while for others it just opens up further questions, and finally the narrator leave you literally in the street to ponder those unanswered questions. Maybe this theatrical approach, with no rewind, was Moneo’s intention, mirroring the former purpose of the theatre. However for many the purpose of a museum is to educate and answer as many of those questions as possible, and in this way it could be argued that Moneo’s design fails, especially in this media driven world, which demands instant access to information and answers to such questions.

By manipulating techniques of temporality a sense of time travel is achieved internally with the exhibition moving through the time of the exhibits and externally by moving through the age of the buildings. The movement itself also produces a sense of passage of time. The initial entrance, working as an arcade to the story, dates from the 18th Century while it’s renovated interior houses the exhibits. The visitor then travels through a tunnel, Moneo’s “Spatial Promenade”, and further in to time within the exhibits, under the street to a second building housing older archaeological exhibits. In this second 21st Century building Moneo has managed to blend the building into the city, in scale, material and design, whilst still clearly modern. The museum then raises the visitor in a zigzag of escalators high on to the hillside and through the ruins of Santa Maria la Viela Church, which serve as an entrance to the theatre itself; the path to which the visitor is shown the layers of archaeological finds originally uncovered, as though the visitor themselves were present as the theatre was uncovered. Moneo describes the idea behind the design as: “The museum … has been designed as a ‘promenade’ from sea level to the higher ground of the city, climaxing with the unexpected appearance of the theater’s imposing space.”

In this travelling back through time Moneo has tried to tell two overlapping stories simultaneously; that of discovering the remains of the theatre and the history of the theatre in context of the town of Cartagena. In doing so he attempts to tell the same story but from which both viewpoints can be observed. However, often the timelines of these overlapping stories become confused, for instance when old ruins are framed by the modern structure of the building.

Moneo manipulates light, materials and structure to frame the various
components of the museum and to aid in telling this story. For instance the height of the various zones of the project changes throughout the storyline. In doing so this results in change in the lighting empathizing different parts of this story. How element such as light, thickness and height frame each scenes of this plot can be studied for a better understanding of the whole story.

The main museum building, in the middle of this story timeline, was newly constructed to house the main exhibits in this project. Moneo’s approach, particularly in this building, is to overlap layers over each other to achieve walls and space of varying thicknesses. In doing so he is able to manipulate light and visual framing as to place a focal point on elements of both the building and its contents. In particular this building is constructed of a double layer on two sides, while one side encloses and hides service functions, such as plumbing, wiring and escape stairways; the other is used as means to manipulate and directs the light and its shadows. By allowing the natural light to flow in the voids between these layers shafts and beams of light can be controlled to highlight important aspects of the museum and story, while giving the general space a bright and airy feeling.

He frames the old ruins by adding new layers to them. These new layers can be materialized with physical materials, light and placement. More often the past is framed by a modern layer, however in other parts of the museum Moneo uses new layers to provide viewpoint and means to traverse and immerse the visitor in the past.

Through framing, layering and light manipulation, Monoe constructs an astonishing conceit of time and place, with the museum rising from the ruins of the past, appearing itself to be an older building renovated for its present use.

The conceit that is the museum expresses three eras: a genuine past, a fictive past, and a candid present. At one point there is an actual Roman wall exposed outside behind glass, as an artefact; it is framed behind by an exterior wall of the Museum (as shown in the picture above). It is as though the architect is presenting his own work as archaeology. Your awareness of time and materiality is intensified by proposing this metaphor that spans two millennia. (Campbell, 1996)

His handling of the interior daylight and artificial lighting is also masterful, with the ever-changing sunlight contrasting with the pale ancient ghost-like antiquities on display. Each section is lit with a particular purpose for telling the story. The passage of the museum and the story is mirrored by the intensity of the light; from the dark initial tunnel housing the first tantalizing archaeological findings, which contains no natural light, to the bright entrance to the theatre itself, which one could easily compare to the stairway to heaven in its lighting. In this way Moneo has used light to convey the feeling of excitement and discovery that both the archaeologists felt and that one could envisage the original Roman audi-
CONCLUSION

In this work Moneo has managed to use temporality in movement and light, for many functions. He has managed to blend the various components of the museum into the urban fabric of the city, while the theatre, and its museum, remain subtly hidden as they had done for many centuries in the urban sprawl of the city centre. In doing so, and through his use of light and the paths taken by visitors, he manages to instil in the visitor a sense of time travel, which is heightened further by careful addition and positioning of exhibits, with the building, under Moneo’s narration, telling the visitor its story.

It is clear that his experience and time in Rome greatly influenced him and aided in the careful design of this building, managing to blend the ancient aspects of Roman architecture with more contemporary design in a subtle way.

In many ways this group of buildings works, its approach maintains the Architects vision of storytelling while providing the visitor with his interpretation of this story. Moneo’s role here is like a director of a performance in a theatre. The different buildings stage the various acts of the plot in sequence one after another. The joints between the buildings are left raw and unhidden by the Architect to signify this change of stage, scene and act en route to the finale. However as the director of this play many would consider his failure is that he literally leaves his audience in the street outside wondering about what just happened, or perhaps this was his intention leaving a thought provoking cliff hanger, mirroring the ancient aspects of Roman architecture with more contemporary design and aided in the careful design of this building, managing to blend the various components of the museum into the urban fabric of the city, while the theatre, and its museum, remain subtly hidden as they had done for many centuries, giving value to the past you make sure that the present can be secure in the future as well. With all these characteristics introduced in this project, by the architects various tools and techniques, Moneo generates (fabricates) a complexity which merges into the urban fabric.

It is architecture that helps us achieve a presence in both time and space; it creates one moment, one place. Moneo hopes that this function continues aiding us by providing us with our identity, and by creating an awareness of when and where we are, and as such who we are. His buildings create this awareness of time by remembering and respecting what came before, by layering this memory against the purpose and function of the building in the contemporary world. A perception of place and this Roman theatre with his name.

However in becoming the narrator of this story and placing it in his building, he has indelibly marked both the story, the building, Cartagena and this Roman Theatre with his name.

Further reading:

After expanding outwards and upwards, what will be the next stage of urbanity? Will the city no longer expand outward or upward but inward instead? What is the next dimension of the city’s public realm? These questions seem to be partly answered with the upcoming popularity of the hybrid building which is currently one of the main actors in the continuous transformation of public space. Hybrid buildings are condensed urban blocks which are created by a combination of program. They concentrate many social activities which are public, collective, private and complex gradations within an urban block, and within the perimeters of the whole site. Mixing of program transforms the current public domain into something new and something unfamiliar because it is mainly driven by innovation. Hybrid buildings are typologies that extend this public domain both horizontally and vertically on the plot and into the interior and therefore it links the domain inside and outside. They tend to blur the border between public and private, between programmed space inside and outside. But even though the composition and the blurring of borders are differently within each hybrid building and even though they are differently interpreted by different architects, they do all share one characteristic. Because of globalization and the on-innovation-driven anti-type, public spaces within hybrid buildings become more alike and indistinguishable, regardless the city it is projected in. The question is how contemporary hybrids transform public space. Do they really offer new manifestations of public space, something that changes the perception of public space and something that shows us what public space could be? Are they contributing to the endless creation of ‘non-places’ or are they the twenty-first century’s ‘places to be’? To what ultimate configuration is it aspiring?"
In terms of accessibility the spaces have different rules and turn into private inaccessible space after closing hours. And because they arise out of nothing, they lack of any historical reference or strong identity and therefore become ‘placeless’. They are not embedded in a larger public urban framework and are disconnected from urbanity. What makes these places placeless is that it occurs inside buildings which can be located anywhere in the world.

The center of the city is becoming too small to life in because of the continues population expansion. More and more people are moving to the center and living in cities and also because of the increasing mass tourism the centers are unable to support this increase. But not only too small, ‘it is no longer the real center but an overblown mirage on its way to implosion’. What he stresses is that centers have to be constantly maintained and modernized. The past is unable to adapt to new needs and requirements and so it has to be transformed or replaced. Offices are being transformed to houses, warehouses into lofts, churches to nightclubs, historical buildings to expensive shopping malls, they are all being modernized. With this transformation the city loses its realness in relation to what it was before and so its identity and identity is being replaced by blankness or the generic. The center of the city is no longer the center attention but the city is ‘liberated from the captivity of the center’ and simply transformed, extended and increased into something new. The hybrid building as Koolhaas explains the typology here forms the new center and is created by a sudden necessity of program and its impotency to extend the city’s domain. Instead of extending the city center, it tends to replace it. These heterotopes or urban enclaves can even be seen as the precursors of the hybrid building.

**NON-PLACE**

Marc Augé’s describes places that lack of meaning and places without an identity rooted in history or social relations of inhabitants as ‘non-places’, which he wrote 3 years earlier in 1992. For Augé one of the main features of ‘a place’ is that it has inhabitants. The non-place does not have any inhabitants and is therefore not capable of creating an identity or history. What this implies is that ‘a place’ can only exist if there are different participants both public and private, users and owners that interact with each other on different levels. That place needs owner which identify themselves with that place. The different owners will create a tension between spaces. The result can be found in the complex gradations and the blurred borders between public and private. The heterotopes without inhabitants have their own rules and turn into private inaccessible space after closing hours. They do not have any gradations but a hard defined border between public and private.

Within the network of the city, the network between program, a non-place is not the ‘place to stay’. These places are more places of transit which streams of people pass, or spaces that are created by their surrounding program and spaces that are not of any significance if there was no surrounding program. Within the city these places are part of the network and contribute to the continu-places. We daily encounter these non-places and they are located everywhere, in shopping malls, airports, hotels, stations, but also airplanes, trains and cars. According to Augé these non-places are created by an excess of time, space and individuality. The excess of time is caused by the speed of history and the imposition of events. Koolhaas refers to this by both the population expansion, the related need for program and the transformation of the city as the result. The excess of space is a result of the increasing range of action of people. There is more space needed for the increasing population and the range in which we move and act. The excess of individuality is a result of the increasing individualism. People less and less identify themselves with certain groups of people.

**CAPSULE**

Lieve de Cauter extends upon this idea of the hybrid from the perspective of the network. Within the network of the city a hybrid building is part of a capsular network. Within this network people move from capsule to capsule without really experiencing the city. People actually live in capsules which he specifically defines as enclosed and connected entities within the network. The house in which we live is a capsule. When we travel to the city we use different capsules to reach our destination and in the most cases our destination is also a capsule. In his essay ‘The capsule and the network’ (2000), he describes the heterotope as counter part of the placelessness, non-place or place of transit and as an attempt to create ‘a place’ or ‘place to be’. He calls those places simulations of the city in which the atrium is an simulation of outdoor space.

Within the heterotope’s center space, public life is accommodated in the atrium. 51% of the volume consists of atrium. The atrium and voids are replacing the city’s open space. A non-space in between program and not very different from the non-space in between buildings. It is the place that connects the building both horizontally and vertically, in which the elevator and the escalator play an important role. Those two elements are what the cars and subways are to the city.

**AIRPORT**

The ultimate transformation of public space and the ultimate hybrid building today is probably the airport. It is also a proof of Koolhaas’s statement that public space is disappearing. The airport forms a city in itself and it contains all we need. It contains public space with sometimes even real trees, shops of all kinds, hotels, restaurants and cafés. Next to this, a large variety of different transport possibilities to get from and to the airport, move within the airport to different sections or terminals and to

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3. R. Koolhaas, B. Mau, idem., p. 1248
4. R. Koolhaas, B. Mau, idem., p. 1249
5. R. Koolhaas, B. Mau, idem., p. 1249
6. Marc Augé, Niet-plaatsen, in Dit is architectuur, uitgeverij 010, (Rotterdam, 2000), p. 613-614
7. marc Augé, idem., p. 613-614
9. L. De Cauter, idem., p. 122-134
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Student | Glenn den Besten

The program also contains temporary and long term residences which are the different owners of the building. By the accessibility of the building and the temporary and long term residences the building is able to create a history and become a place which people identify themselves with. The different users and therefore a constant occupation of the area results in a lively environment.

The mixture of program does not directly result in new programs but there is space where these different users with different purposes can mix and interact. Both the urban interior and the public network tend to reshape public space. Public program in the top of the towers offer new spaces and add another dimension to the city as escape from the hectic urban surroundings. With the mixture of public program and network which result in new manifestations of public space, this block contributes to the twenty-first century’s ‘places to be’.

THIS IS HYBRID

The hybrid building is an attempt to recreate a city center. But just like the center itself the hybrid building is integrated within the city. Therefore it forms an extension of the city and an active part within the urban frame. It is both an enclave and it remains connected with the external network. The airport and other heterotopic precursors are hybrid and programmatic extensions of the city but they are not connected. The program of hybrid buildings, which contains living, working, recreation and also cultural program, adds something new to the city and because it includes dwellings it also houses new communities. It should have the opportunity to build up a history and spaces where people identify themselves with, like Koolhaas and Augé discuss. Another important part of the program is public space in relation to the network of the building. Integrating a public space means connecting the external network of the city with the internal network and the public domain of the building. The hybrid building tends to shape new public space spatially, in which diagonal and vertical movements result in new spatial experiences, and programmatically, by the mixture of program inside and outside. These are the new spaces where the expected and unexpected activities could occur. The place where naked boxers eat oysters and socialize.

AND THIS IS NOT, ROTTERDAM

In regard to the Rotterdam project, located in a city centre which is far from hybrid, in order to become hybrid the building has to break the monofunctional centre. The city center is only focussed on the shop and does not offer spaces for other users or opportunities to create spaces where people identify themselves in terms of housing. A mixture of different programs remains absent in the city centre.

The monofunctional centre is enforced by the city’s urban frame which consist out of colliding networks. A slow network owned by the pedes-
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triangulates with a fast network owned by cars on different axis and a
mechanical network owned by the metro, instead of merging into one.
An intermediate network does attempt to merge these networks on some
places but is not always successful. Each type of network has different
users and different program. Only public spaces which accommodates
(integrates and connects) the different networks and different programs
(existing and new) will be able to hybridize the city centre. Until this hap-
pens Rotterdam is on its way to become the ultimate opposite.

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images
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3. Linked Hybrid, Steven Holl, http://www.stevenholl.com/media/files/Beijing/Steven-Holl-LH-
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    veRtical.jpg (Accessed on 21th of May, 2012)
8. Porosity block, Steven Holl, http://www.stevenholl.com/media/files/381/0339-WPRoJECT-
    VERTICAL.jpg (Accessed on 21th of May, 2012)
For a long period the city tissue of Rotterdam was dominated by closed blocks characterized with small streets, houses built against each other and a courtyard filled with private gardens. In this urban structure the street was the public space where all sorts of events took place that were related to living, shopping and working. The street was the zone where people met and socialized. The private entrance was always directly connected with the city street and therefore the transition between private and public was extremely short. Because society was changing and city streets became more busy behaviour in these streets changed. Where kids once played and wives had to do their washing and other household activities, it was now changing into a street that became more public and other people came by as well. It is a compact transition that still in large numbers can be seen in city centres such as Amsterdam, Utrecht and other old city centres. It was a very dominant typology, but after WWII when the city centre of Rotterdam was almost completely destroyed, a new urban structure appeared. The designs of urban blocks were mainly overlooked by the CIAM ideals and therefore architects and urbanists ped for the open block, in order to obtain more ‘light and air’, and more ‘compatibility’ with future changes. From the perspective of the inhabitant it was all very pleasant and the designers were very enthusiastic after all they incorporated plenty of ‘collective’ and ‘public’ space. This too much of public space and the lack of congestion were eventually some of the aspects that made these typologies unsuccessful. Compared to the closed block it wasn’t able to create well-defined spaces. Spaces also became larger and therefore it was much more difficult to get a good occupation of the public space which extended into the block. The public green space in the core of the block that was intended to emphasize the social behaviour between inhabitants and neighbours did not work, and the elemental character and function division of program in buildings at that time were highly criticized. Eventually densification of the city became an important topic. The wide streets had to be in balance with the adjacent buildings in order to get a better definition within public environment. The hybrid building became one of the typologies with potential for Rotterdam. Different than the traditional blocks that existed before the war and the post-war modernistic urban blocks that were opened up, this new ‘typology’ reacts on the change of society and increasing urbanization. To continue further on this topic two research questions are formulated: how did transitions develop between public, collective and private space and what kind of transition could be incorporated in the upcoming hybrid buildings in Rotterdam?

In order to understand the benefits of the hybrid building the transition or route between different spaces within the public and the private needs to be understood. In the book ‘The Dutch Urban Block And The Public Domain’ Susanne Komossa speaks about collective space in the beginning of the 20th century in between
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.ones traditional urban blocks in Amsterdam. Public space and private space were bordered and overlapped each other. The streets did not only serve for connection with the rest of the city but also as a space where neighbours interact. During the change of civilization and urbanization with its increasing multiplication of inhabitants, the streets became more public. It became a space that was no longer only for the neighbour and their household, but also for the visitor, shopper, worker and other ‘strangers’ and therefore these where more perceived as unsafe. Streets also changed because of the inevitable verticalization in cities, especially in Rotterdam. The application of collective space in buildings and building blocks was eventually linked with densification and urbanization. Collective space was becoming a tool to give a collective social behaviour back to the inhabitants of the city and there for transition between public, collective and private had to return in other forms. Collective space is place where people can interact because the space is part of their neighbourhood where they share, use and manage certain facilities. A similar transition can also be seen when one is travelling from a city to a suburban area. In this situation, the collectivity of the street is preserved by the distance between city streets (extremely public) and the suburban streets (collective) and therefore especially families feel comfortable in these areas with their social control.

.Space that has been applied in order to create a circulation and to emphasize social behaviour can be categorized in public space, collective space and private space. The transition between these spaces can already be seen in early examples of buildings that desired to densely the urban landscape. One of these examples is the traditional block still existing in grate amounts in Amsterdam. Because society started to change and old streets were losing there social quality which was caused by the growth of inhabitants and strengthening of individualism, collective space in the beginning of the 20th century starting to occur in the form of café’s positioned in street corners. It attracted people from the neighbourhood into a space where one could socialize and share the same interests.

.An urban block that has a further developed transition of spaces is the Spangen Quarter Housing of Michel Brinkman that was completed in 1921. It is a closed block with still a few passages directing to the public courtyard that people can enter in order to reach their apartment. The courtyard has a variety of spaces such as private gardens, collective gardens and playgrounds. Although the courtyard is public, the closed block with its variety of spaces, from streets, gardens to corridors still tries to stimulate collective behaviour among neighbours. The design was a major break trough in the Netherlands and acted as an example for other building blocks. Although the design was successful still it wasn’t compatible for the modern requirements for the modern city of today.

.During the reconstruction of the bombed city centre, the modernists pleaded for an opened up urban block such as the Lijnbaanhoven. An


‘urban environment’ where green space had to be adjacent to the apartment buildings. The open character of the block had to function as a public space and collective space at the same time, an ambitious idea that eventually never succeeded mainly caused by its lack of secure and bordered nature. Eventually the spaces in between these apartments were more perceived as non-places. A place that is neither public nor collective because its lack of definition and bad connection with the transition of the urban block

Another building in Rotterdam that contains an interesting transition is the Hofdame building of Klunder Architects, along the Binnenrotte in Rotterdam. The program consists of shops and food & beverage on ground level that are enclosed on street level with room for parking and housing on top. The building contains a large collective space in the form of a courtyard. After people entered the building they will automatically pass trough the collective courtyard towards the elevator or stairs. Because the public functions are only positioned on ground level a collective space other than the public is not needed in this building and therefore it can not be categorized under hybrid buildings but the typology can definitely serve as one of the elements in the further developing hybrid.

THE HYBRID AND ITS TRANSITIONS

In the necessity of hybrid buildings in recent years, architects try to create buildings which on the one hand try to combine densification and multi layering of functions like in the Downtown Athletic Club and on the other hand a well functioning collective space as often seen in ordinary low dense neighbourhoods, existing in more traditional urban tissues. The two aspects are an important element in creating a social transition where each function, public or collective has its own qualities.

.Besides collective space for inhabitants within the dense block another type of space within the transition has been occurring as well. Besides dwelling functions as offices, cultural institutions, shopping, green and recreation are becoming more integrated into the city and in urban blocks. Because these functions get more disconnected from the street due to the increasing developments in the third dimension and the change in scale of buildings - ‘social behaviour’ between its users is evaporating as well. Herman Hertzberger talks about these spaces in his book Articulation: ‘Whereas people once gathered together in churches, but also in public baths or in the Stoa, now they do that in shopping malls’. These events can be caused by the increasing of publicness of the city street as well. In big cities, streets are becoming much more dominated by the consumer and their needs. The barber shop and the ordinary baker have to make way for the much bigger stores such as the

[2] Hofdame Rotterdam
ESSAYS | Transitions and highrise

H&M or the Bijenkorf, which are more orientated to different users and the bigger public. Because streets sometimes get too occupied and too ‘public’, new spaces in buildings occur such as plazas, the public halls of libraries or other public interiors where people gather to share the same interest where there is homogeneous use. Hertzberger aims here on so called social space, ‘Social space is a model for the city; a potted version of the space of the city’, ‘Buildings where large numbers of people come together take to functioning as tiny cities’[3]. As collective space for the private can be the equivalent for the ‘village street’, can the public interior or public chamber be the equivalent for the ‘city street or square’. It is a space where people gather not because they live in the same neighbourhood but because they share the same interest. Social space can be an addition in the transition in between collective and public space. In the book ‘This is Hybrid’ Aorora Fernandez Per, Javier Mozas and Javier Arpa speak about two types. On the hand there is the social condenser where collective space function as a tool to emphasize social interaction and on the other hand there is the hybrid which actually combines collective space and social space. ‘The ideal hybrid feeds on the meeting of the private and the public spheres. The intimacy of private life and the sociability of public life find in anchors of development in the hybrid building’[4]. In essence the hybrid building tries to emphasize both social qualities that were lost during modern urbanization. A few examples that incorporate a large transition are starting to be realized such as the Metacity of OMA and the Sliced Porosity block of Steven holl.

The Metacity (Stadskantoor) building of OMA also contains a large diversity of program. From commercial functions and office function to apartments it is in a complex manner combined with transition that starts with a public interior for the public on ground floor that eventually leads to the more collective spaces for offices and dwelling on higher floors. The transition from public to private which in traditional building blocks takes place on the outside of the building is taken inside. It is a building that consists of different typologies stacked on top of each other and every typology reserves space for the user to emphasize on collective and social behaviour. What in this case study would probably function less effective is the collective space for the inhabitants. The developer probably diminished its size as much as possible, probably because of financial reasons.

The design of Steven Holl has similarities with the description of Hertzberger, ‘The more people who come together for performances, meetings or parties in large spaces, or indeed to work in small rooms behind closed doors, the more city-like the organization should be. Collectively used buildings require an internal structure of streets and squares with a division into relatively ‘public’ parts, and parts for insiders only that are distinguished from the network of streets as buildings-within-a-building. It is a hybrid building that fully includes the transition between public, collective and private space is the Sliced porosity block of Steven Holl. With its measurement of a skyscraper and experience of a closed block it is a building that represent a strong densification. Although it has an almost inhumane size, it still possesses spaces in different degrees. The gigantic courtyard functions as a public space for the users of the building that also function as a large social space for the entire block. This space is eventually connected to smaller and more specific functions on higher levels that purely work as collective spaces. Interesting is that these collective areas are not the ending point of the transition but even continue further into smaller transitions in the form of indoor streets.

Rotterdam a city that tries to overcome the underlying structure and problem caused by the modernists after the war by heading towards a future of density and congestion. In order to make the city less frightening for the inhabitants, buildings and urban blocks need to contain a strong transition between public and private in order to obtain quality for the public and the private domain: the visitor, the worker and the inhabitant. The early building blocks only consisted out of short transitions, which were the public spaces bordered against the residential entrances. The transition eventually developed towards a typology that fully utilized collective space such as the Spangen Quarter Housing of Brinkman and more dense building such as the Hoftdame. Both are examples of buildings with collective space, a space where there is chance for contact between neighbours, which can almost be seen as a semi-public place.

The hybrid is a building type that is a next development in this series of buildings with increasingly longer transitions that eventually will become more visible in the cityscapes of the densified, high-rise city. A contemporary example of a hybrid in which density and a large variety of transitions from public to private are incorporated is the Sliced Porosity Block of Steven Holl. With its diverse program and enormous size it can be an example for cities that are struggling with densification. In this building the transition from public to private is extremely long involving several collective spaces that are present at different gradations. In essence the building has a city-like organization, buildings within a building all in order to preserve different domains. A transition like in the Sliced Porosity block can in theory exist quite well in Rotterdam but like the Spangen Quarter Housing of Brinkman one can only speculate. It may be much easier to create such a transition in China where the private domain and the public domain are closely connected to each other. In that sense the Dutch may be different.

We know that collective space can work well, but collective space connected to a bigger social space is a combination that until today hasn’t reached Rotterdam and the rest of the Netherlands yet.

3. Bergeijk H, ibidem
4. Per A.F., Mozas J., Arpa J., (2011), This is Hybrid, A.T.
5. Bergeijk H, ibidem

[3] Sliced Porosity Block, Steven Holl
The shape of the Dutch urban block until 1934 has been very constant. It is a block that is composed by tiny houses with a garden. All houses together form a block and the gardens form a courtyard. It is the classic scheme of a courtyard on an urban scale. Typical for a courtyard is that the spaces are inward looking and that the vertical extension is not possible. The courtyard can only be extended horizontally. This is because of the functioning of the garden. The block is proportioned in such a way that the garden functions well; it gets enough sunlight. When the proportions change, e.g. when more floors are added, the qualities of the courtyard change as well until the scheme has no qualities left. In other words; the typology has a limit.

A courtyard can only create a specific amount of density. How big this density is, is hard to quantify. SpaceMate quantifies the courtyard block as a mid-rise closed block and the diagram shows the level of density that can be created with such a block. The position in the diagram is related to the large GSI and relative small FSI of the block. The big GSI causes the block to have a large (public) plinth, but the small FSI indicates the small amount of floor space it creates. The large plinth gives the courtyard block the opportunity to have a good connection with the public space. The plinth can house a great variety of public functions like shops, cafés and restaurants. These functions make the plinth public and this influences the surrounding streets. The plinth creates activity on the street. The proportions of the courtyard cause the block to have its limits. Because of the functioning of the garden a lot of square meters cannot be created, so the block has a low FSI and a low density.

In the modern development of the city it was clear that there was a need for more density. This is caused by the high ground prices and the ever growing cities. The courtyard block does not fit with this development, because the so-called ‘courtyard city’ cannot generate enough density. The modernists rather choose the typology of the pavilion to shape the growing city. Pavilions have the characteristics that they can be extended vertically, creating towers. So they can create a big surface (FSI) on a small plot (GSI), this can result, when the towers are positioned close to each other, in a denser city than the courtyard city. This so-called high-rise developments create a highly urban city.

The tower is the symbol for the modernistic view on the city. The modernist saw the city as an urban carpet with towers placed on it. The carpet was for the public and they could use it in any way they wanted. The, mostly

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1 Komossa, S. Hollandse bouwblok en het publieke domein, uitgeverij Ventil Nijmegen, 2010, p.30
2 SpaceMate quantifies building block with four magnitudes; FSI (Floor Space Index), GSI (GroundSpace Index), OSR (Open Space Ration) en L (Layers).
3 Meta Berghausen Pont and Per Haupt. SpaceMate, Delft University Press, 2004, p. 63
In the second world war the city centre of Rotterdam was bombed in such a way that the municipality chose to rebuild the complete city centre. So also the remaining of Lijnbaan had to go. For the reconstruction the municipality chose a daring concept. The city was going to be rebuilt via the modernist idea. Architect of this plan was Witteveen and later Van Traa. The centre of the city was meant to be for all people and thus it served on the pality chose a daring concept. the city was going to be rebuilt via the modernist idea. architect of this plan was Witteveen and later Van Traa. The centre of the city was meant to be for all people and thus it served on the one hand as a collective thought, and on the other as a collective, functional program to be understood. The Lijnbaan was the symbol of this new thought, and the new Rotterdam.

The change from courtyard city to park city is exactly the change that Lijnbaan underwent. Before the war the city centre of Rotterdam was, just as other European cities, build up with courtyard blocks. These block consist of mainly small shops on the plinth and dwellings on the top layers. This caused that the blocks have both a public and a private character. The distinction between public and private was pretty blurry in the block itself, but outside the block it was very clear. The streets where all public but the inner courtyards private.

This scheme of the urban block has been taken apart and put together in a inimitable way. The Lijnbaan is shaped by a wide shopping street, this street is not accessible for cars and it is provided with supplies via the expedition street parallel to the shopping street. The shopping street, designed by Van den Broek and Bakema, consists of two floors above and one floor under ground. The shop owners who had their shops on the Lijnbaan before the war were also the shop owners on the new Lijnbaan in 1953. Next to the expedition street are three apartment buildings. The buildings, designed by Maaskant, Krijgsman and Bakker, are designed with the same principle, same structure and same materials to from a unity. The apartments have many qualities. They are light, have a nice view and have a good sun orientation. The apartment buildings play an important role in the city of Rotterdam. Not only do they provide the city with a lot of houses, this is one of the things that is really lacking in the centre of Rotterdam, they are also a big part of the success of the Lijnbaan concept. Because of their shape and position they are one of the structuring elements of the rebuilding of Rotterdam. Therefore they have a big volumetric, urban and architectural value.

The gardens in the courtyard block had a totally different function. You can say this when the gardens in the courtyard block had a totally different function. You can say this when the gardens in the courtyard block had a totally different function. You can say this when the gardens in the courtyard block had a totally different function. You can say this when the gardens in the courtyard block had a totally different function.

But is it really a public space, or is it more a collective space? The gardens are mainly used by the residents of the apartment buildings. They walk their dog and they enter their house via the entrance situated at the garden. Also the architecture ‘says’ that the garden is more collective than public. The gardens are, on a subtle way, disconnected from the public carpet. They face a street, but they are disconnected from this street by lowering the garden a couple steps. Another element shows that the garden is shielded from the street are

[Diagram 1: Top diagram that positions different building blocks (Spacemate)]
[Diagram 2: Bottom diagram that positions different types of cities (Spacemate)]
the trees that are positioned parallel with the street. These trees define the garden even more as a unit. On the other three sides the garden is defined by buildings. This makes the garden not so easy to access. The fact that the street next to the garden is only a backstreet between two larger shopping streets causes that there is not a lot of movement. You would not accidentally walk into the park.

But is it a park, or is it a garden? The scale of the space is in between the two so that does not say anything about the identity of the space either. The feeling of the park is quite unpleasant as well. The architecture of the buildings that define the garden are all backsides. The plinth of the building is not inviting or inspiring. It is clear that the architects where struggling with how to handle the public space around the towers. What is its identity and how should the space function? The hybrid block: The best of both worlds

This study of Lijnbaan shows clearly the downside of the disconnected tower in relation with the public space. The municipality is aware of the fact that the gardens at Lijnbaan lack quality. She also is aware of the fact that now a day even more density (dwelling) is needed in the city centre to create a good functioning public space and lively city. These are a couple of many reasons why the municipality have asked architectural firm Claus and Kaan to come up with a proposal that solves all the ‘problems’ regarding the Lijnbaan area.

To deal with these problems the architects introduce a new architectural urban model. Instead of completely changing Lijnbaan as Witteveen proposed after the second world war, Claus and Kaan propose ‘the hybrid’ as the new urban model. The hybrid is developed to deal with the divers activities of the city.10 The hybrid does this by housing different functions in one building. These functions respond to the diversity of urban life. The hybrid, in a way, absorbs or sucks the city life up. This model can only work in bigger cities since the potential for functional blending increases as the degree of urbanization rises.11

There are three sorts of hybrid buildings: the monolith, the graft hybrid and the fabric hybrid.12 All these types have the same size as a building block, but their scale is a lot bigger. Hybrid buildings have the advantage that
ESSAYS  |  From courtyard to hybrid

the cafes at the Karel Doormanstraat.

The biggest ‘problem’ with the non functioning garden was the fact that it was not defined properly. People did not know if it was a public or a collective garden. The architects solved this in a very clear, for all people understandable way. They introduced a second ground floor on top of the plinth. This second ground floor will be used as a collective garden for the residents. By placing the collective garden on top of the plinth the architects disconnect this garden from the urban carpet in such a way that everybody knows that it is not a public space up there.

The old garden will be made smaller so the scale of the garden is clear. The downsizing of the space makes the use of the space more specific. This is being strengthened by surrounding the garden with a specific function, in this case restaurants, bars and cultural facilities. This surrounding with functions gives the space identity, which is also important for a public space. With these two main interventions on the former garden the architects create a public space that serves as a urban resting point and enriches the existing public space in Rotterdam.

What the architects do is with the hybrid is designing a building without a backside. This is very visible in the way they treat the movement of people around the building. Because the building is located at both the two shopping streets the movement of people there is enough. On the two connecting streets it is not. To enhance movement on those streets that is place where the entrances of the building will be situated. Because of this movement the plinth has to be designed with great care.

As the architect of Claus and Kaan stated, the plinth plays an important role of the success of the hybrid. The plinth is the element to articulate and enhance the public life and space of the city. The diversity and overlapping of functions is expressed in the plinth. This diversity and overlapping of functions can play an important role in Rotterdam. In the city centre of Rotterdam it is clear that the whole plinth is dominated with shopping. And because of the fact that above this layer of shopping not much is happening the centre becomes a monofunctional space. This is not something that matches with the international stature and allure of Rotterdam. Rotterdam is a vibrant city with 600,000 inhabitants which have a lot of different cultural backgrounds. In my opinion this vibrant city should be reflected in the city. And to express this the plinth plays an important role. In my opinion the plinth cannot express the monofunctionality of the city. It should express the practice of the everyday life. This is a thing that the city of Rotterdam should adress more and the hybrid can play an important role. Not only can it densify the centre of Rotterdam, which is needed badly, it can shape and define the public space better, but it can also express the city better via its large plinth and overlap of different functions. So in my opinion the city of Rotterdam should be tranformed to a hybrid city.

images
1. Het concept Masterplan Lijnbaanhoven is gemaakt door: Gemeente Rotterdam (OBRI, dSv+), 2006
2. Spacemate gemaakt door: Meta Berghauser Pont and Per Haupt, 2004
3. ibidem
5. Herman Gaarman
6. ibidem
7. ibidem
8. Google Earth
9. Het concept Masterplan Lijnbaanhoven is gemaakt door: Gemeente Rotterdam (OBRI, dSv+), 2006
10. ibidem
11. ibidem
12. ibidem
13. ibidem
14. ibidem

[10] Existing section (Claus & Kaan)
[11] New section (Claus & Kaan)

[12] Treatment of the plinth on the corner of Karel Doormanstraat and Van Oldenbarnewieltstraat (Claus & Kaan)

[13] Urban resting point seen from the Karel Doormanstraat (Claus & Kaan)

[14] Collective garden at the Aert van Nesstraat seen from one of the Lijnbaan apartments (Claus & Kaan)
INTERLUDE

What if the empirical perception of Koolhaas’s Generic City is hypothetically correct. Not primarily through the lost of identity as a by-product of exponential human growth, but as a cause of the economical straightjacket as a by-product of neutral city grids (which is in fact rather imperial instead of utopian). Most historical European cities are immune to whatever may cause neutrality, because of their stronghold built up out of a foundation of framed identity. Only places whom have seen radical political, economical or physical change are likely the to be adequate for this hypothesis. Their framed identity has either violently been replaced by a rough image, like the surgical scar tissue left after burning the epidermis, or has never existed and has filled up this vacuum with the pseudo-religion of [most-likely] capitalism. In these cases the lost of identity is not problematic. But where identity strongholds counterbalance the negative side of society by a strong collective mind and a pub-


[1] Physical stress followed by social and economical stress: Rotterdam after the bombardment of 14 may 1940
ESSAYS | the possibility of a “social Piranesi”

unitary urbanism appeals to this notion of ‘social Piranesi’, but yet it could not manifest the principles of ‘basic urban life’ through the lack of different social interests and segregation in urban space. The dystopia rendered by Superstudio in the Supersurface, creates a similar social setting. Like New Babylon, the surface does not have any expectations it only serves the social. Releasing humanity from the ‘burden’ of the workingman and potential danger, Constant creates a society with no interest towards the specificity [identity] nor maintenance of social space. Inevitably it only enforce the capsulation of basic urban life into a semi-privatized state. To put it in Rowe’s thermology:11 New Babylon would solely consist out of scaffolding with little circumstance for exhibition.

SUPER CONFORMIST SPACE

In contrast too Constant’s ‘super social’ structures, Koolhaas’s depiction of ‘Junk-Space’ opposed this idea through the essence of interest and control. “If space-junk is the human debris that litters the universe, junk-space is the residue that mankind leaves on the planet”.12 This phrase from the introduction of junk-space is rather cynical, Koolhaas reacts on what the scrupulous ignorance mankind is leaving behind and currently are building in the 20th and 21st century. It’s prime examples are shopping malls, train stations, airports, all those whom are stable in impermanent time and space. Junk-space is able to be infinite endorsed by conditioned air, artificial lighting and the commercially stitching togeth- er of interiors. Junk-space is only the impact for the seducing visually oriented urban life, its transitions are like television programmes passing into commercials and back. Some spaces are ancient Greek, some are baroque, some are Disney. “There is no progress: like a crab on LSD, culture staggers endlessly sideways…. The average contemporary lunch box is a microcosm of Junk-Space: a fervent semantics of health – slabs of eggplant, topped by thick layers of goat cheese – cancelled by a colossal cookie at the bottom… Junk-Space is draining and is drained in return”.13 It’s all about the tension between the perceptual element in relation to sequence of time-lapse. The perceptual element is the decorum of space, constructed out of sheetrock, Styrofoam, a cacophony of flooring and sheets of plastic. This is used in Junk-Space as a tool to cover the discontinuity of space and ownership. It’s only inhabitants are shop attendants and maintenance personnel; changing ‘guard’ during the graveyard shift. Society is only a masked trajectory either occupying courts, shops and benches or moving through this endless structure, like a refugee trying to get from A to B the fastest way possible. Often has men ravaged through space during peak hours, Junk-Space is recovered to instant gratification for the next peak by it’s moving sculptures. In contrast to Constant’s super social space, Junk-Space is ultimately a globalized commercial sphere. Although the shop attendants are claimants of permanent occupied of its space, they lack interest in the commercial sphere. If society is a 2nd

5. Unitary Urbanism, original in Dutch, unpublished manuscript of a lecture held at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam on December 20th, 1960.
7. Nieuwenhuys joined the Situational International group. He got inspired to join this group after attending a reading of the Dutch Historian and founder of the cultural history, Johan Huizinga on his book Homo Ludens and may also have formed a basis for his idea on the utopian city. In the group he becomes acquainted with founders Aarten Jann and Guy Debord, whom have
8. ‘Greened’ town a result of Nieuwenhuys, member of the Situationist International group from the late fifties, addresses the notion of the public sphere manifested in large structures of the project New Babylon. Constant’s hypothesis for this project is based on the impact of the unburdening consequences of a society where machinery has relieved the working man from labour. The theory derives from the condemnation the Situationalists have towards the downdwelling and privatized modernist cities. “Our conception of urbanism is therefore social. We are opposed to the conception of a ville verte a ‘greened town’ where well-paced and isolated skyscrapers must necessarily reduce the direct relations and common action of men. Conurbation is indispensable for the direct relations and common action of men. The proposed structures rely on a strict segregation of the mechanical world, occupied by machine enhanced labour and transport, and the social world. “The cultural significance of social space makes it necessary to isolate this function form the purely utilitarian functions….. the prospect of more free time - or rather a freer disposal of life – given also the prospect of an as yet unlimited increase in population and traffic, an absolute prerequisite.”14 What is left is solely time spent in the public domain. It becomes inevitably a large layered city of technical superiority. The unitary spaces are largely inaccessible to sunlight nor natural air, therefore it is artificially lit and air-conditioned. The theory relates to that of Koolhaas’s perception of the Genetic City, the infinite structures proposed by Constant have a very limited amount of private space where the hotel would be the ultimate temporary habitat. There are little occupants, mostly dwellers of the social space. In order to extend Constant’s private, interior and exterior. Which is relatable to Koolhaas’s description of the radical relocation of the sedated public sphere. This essay is an exploration on the possibilities of everyday urban life with all its tension present in relation to this ‘Piranesian’ concept of hybrid buildings. With everyday urban life, I do not solely mean the possibility of generated public life but the tumilt, which Jacobs describes in her observation of Lower Manhattan; Greenwich Village. Is there place for a Mr. Corbachia’s delicatessen who safe keeps neighbourhood keys or a Mr. Jaffe who safeguards small children playing on the sidewalk? Hypothetically, is there place for a sidewalk; a zone with defines safety. And if there exists the notion of safety in a social Piranesian structure, is there room for danger? These curiosities which we find endearing, are excelled by all the different kinds of interest public spheres, whether a group or individual, has within the public domain. If Jacob’s Greenwich Village is the prolific un-written society balanced out by the interest of the private and the public sphere. The writings of Constant and Koolhaas define the destructive outskirts of this balance within the conditions of an ‘endless’ structure.

SUPER NONCONFORMIST SPACE

The artist, theorist and supposedly utilizing Marxian Constant Nieuwenhuys, member of the Situationist International group from the late fifties, addresses the notion of the public sphere manifested in large structures of the project New Babylon. Constant’s hypothesis for this project is based on the impact of the unburdening consequences of a society where machinery has relieved the working man from labour. The theory derives from the condemnation the Situationalists have towards the downdwelling and privatized modernist cities. “Our conception of urbanism is therefore social. We are opposed to the conception of a ville verte a ‘greened town’ where well-paced and isolated skyscrapers must necessarily reduce the direct relations and common action of men. Conurbation is indispensable for the direct relations and common action of men.”15 The proposed structures rely on a strict segregation of the mechanical world, occupied by machine enhanced labour and transport, and the social world. “The cultural significance of social space makes it necessary to isolate this function form the purely utilitarian functions….. the prospect of more free time - or rather a freer disposal of life – given also the prospect of an as yet unlimited increase in population and traffic, an absolute prerequisite.”16 What is left is solely time spent in the public domain. It becomes inevitably a large layered city of technical superiority. The unitary spaces are largely inaccessible to sunlight nor natural air, therefore it is artificially lit and air-conditioned. The theory relates to that of Koolhaas’s perception of the Genetic City, the infinite structures proposed by Constant have a very limited amount of private space where the hotel would be the ultimate temporary habitat. There are little occupants, mostly dwellers of the social space. In order to extend Constant’s
ESSAYS | the possibility of a “social Piranesi”

party, both are a 3rd in service of the first and the second. Each separate part of junk-Space is exploited by a different property owner, or ‘junk- landlord’, which sets out rules and regulations. Another 3rd party with the intention to maintain the state of safety and prevent any kind of involuntary discomfort endorses these constraints only active in that particular area, which it is hired for.

In retrospect Koolhaas is ‘warning’ for three elements in architecture. Conditioned [in literal as well as on a regulatory basis] endless structures of consumerism lead to a graveyard of Baudrillard’s hyper reality.13 The vacant experience is through the prevention of discomfort a rather limited and futile activity. Segregating roles of occupant, owner and ‘maintainer’ whom have an ethereal presence, public space has no strong interest to any of them. By a fully privatised commercial space society is not a vital ‘servant’, but has become a product of owners and employment shopkeepers, mopppers and security guards. Third, the concept of a Piranesian structure is auto-disqualifying if it purpose is to create infinite —scenic— space instead of accommodating basic urban life within a spatial structure. It would be subject of well-preserved commodity instead of the urban tension where it would thrive on.

THIS IS NOT SOCIAL PIRANESI

Although the cases of Constant and Koolhaas are difficult to compare, since Unitary Urbanism is a synthesis projected in the architectural evidence of the New Babylon models and Junk-Space is already a retrospect criticism on the build debris of the 20th century. What could be concluded is that both recognise the defect of the same type of architecture, only within an other state of time.

What both show, is what happens if the architectural purpose of the structure is to serve as a vessel of commodity instead of an apparatus of society. Whether the supposedly hybrid building would be defined as conformist or nonconformist, the lack of clearly articulated borders and balance in the physical, social and economical presence is impending to the basic principles of urban life. It is essential that every part of society, while acting within the public domain with all a unique purpose, whether children playing, a shop owner handling day business, an office worker driving home or a ‘stranger’ visiting a local attraction, have a certain kind of interest which does not only create a commitment to the use of the public realm it creates indirect relationships and tension between the unique.

While these unwritten rules of engagement derive from the ‘conventional’ city, the same apply to the vertical [not solely bound to the ground floor] structures of hybrid buildings. Although some of the obvious events, like traffic or wandering through, of the conventional do not naturally apply to what’s a structure. The way of conditioning and liberating the ‘endless’ structure is crucial to manifest urban life. The Bryghusprojeket is a clear example of how this ‘way’ is translated into a very dialectic piece of architecture.

NUTSHELL SOCIAL PIRANESI

The Bryghusprojeket in Copenhagen, designed by the Office of Metropolitan Architecture, signifies the principles of what a social Piranesian structure could be. The project is located on a former beer brewery site between the historical ‘stagnant’ city and the transforming waterside, which is the new metropolitan zone of Copenhagen. The building consists of a bricolage of program: housing, offices, DAC Danish Architecture Centre, a museum, restaurant and mechanical parking. What OMA recognises in the site and the program, is what makes it prolific. The Bryghusgrunden has no clear spatial nor public definition and it’s historic neighbours are monolithic closed off structures focused on their inner private courtyards. Adjacent spaces are cut off from the waterside through the Christians Brygge motorway. These circumstances triggered the buildings premises to act in a very precise manner. Not to only stack program, but by creating an extraver accumulation of small scale programmed elements, motor & pedestrian networks, and public spaces and roof gardens designing optimal horizontal and vertical circumstances.

To reestablish a connection between the surrounding context and the waterfront, a broad underpass crosses the Christians Brygge through the building. The underpass extends into a corridor linear to the Harbour front which connects the children’s playground on the city side to park along the waterfront. This new layout of networks and spaces create the basis for the design to react upon. Each program is placed in smaller autonomous elements on the building site creating a ‘heap’ of solids and voids constantly interacting with the different layers of network. The different types of program are accessed through the underpass and engage to specific situations on the ground level. This juxtaposition of program, society and network is what makes it so exemplary. The planned collision of private, public, collective, and semi-public creates the possibility for unplanned and unexpected encounters between the different realms. While modernism has made us sleep, work and life separately, the Bryghusprojeket enables the tension of Jacob’s neighbourhood; Greenwich Village, within, on top, and around the built structure.

In retrospect of Koolhaas’s Junk-Space and Constant’s New Babylon, the project is owned by several owners and maintainers although it is very well defined in clear borders to what is public and what is private. The intricate vertical orientated program and network makes the structure an architectural translation of these basic principles of urban life. The tension of the autonomous elements, whom form the porous block like a Chinese cross puzzle, makes the structure into continuous experience of fragments, unstitched, uncut, unconditioned.
CONCLUSION
This search on "Social Piranesi" taught me how important the factors of conflict and interest are on the different levels of urban life. While urbanism is a composition of theories, images and feeling where this tumult occurs in a more spontaneous way, the Piranesian structure is a utilized object by the mind of an individual or group overtaken by the reality of the rational. In retrospect this search show me a new way how to address the situation of the Lijnbaan- and Coolingsel area. While both area’s are only one block apart both worlds differ. The Lijnbaan has the identity of an open-air conformist enclave of generic shopping, shops close, shoppers leave, lights go out, space abandoned. The Coolingsel is on the other hand an little desiring nonconformist artery of mechanical and automotive transportation with her adjacent parking silos it enforces the curfew of the Lijnbaan area.

Coming towards a clearer image the design assignment is conceptualized as: Responding to the harsh juxtaposition of network layers, sub-layers, and flows, with in a cacophony of successive architecture and urban plans whom are all contradicting the previous and following styles, motivates the fundamentals of our design project. Nodes, spatial and fluent stratification, super-commercial, modern, and momentum are the main criteria to reconstruct connections between the Coolingsel and the Lijnbaan-area generating a more vital city centre.
All public buildings should become a folly to some degree. A folly is seen as something useless, to which no specific utility is ascribed. It is this uselessness which is an essential, but often missing, quality in the current fully programmed cities. We should aim at combining the programmed with the un-programmed; not only being specific, but also focussing on creating potential; being a function in itself, while being a stage for public events. The folly brings complexity in use, and thus creating intensive hybridity.

Building can be seen as extraction of space from the public. In return it should add quality and potential (for passive and active use) to the public space. The brief can never be just an introverted one. A building should always be seen as a piece of furniture in the scale of the city, a tool for generating public life. Bakema stated ‘Elke kamer is een huis, maar de wooneenheid is ook als een huis met vele kamers’.1 We can apply the same principles to every object, regardless scale or size. In this respect, it’s not difficult to realize we can use the city as we use our chairs. ‘From Chair to City’ becomes ‘Like Chair, like City’.

The urban landscape – as we know it – is A result of modernist functionalist ideas. We imagine ourselves in a warehouse, wondering where the forklift is. The place stands for clinical efficiency, human movement is channeled. Human presence is not desired, may be even destructive (to the process).

And B capitalistic driven iconography, where the power of the image is celebrated. This legacy of the eco-economic prosperity of the last decades has turned us in passive consumers of space. We imagine ourselves in a museum – surrounded by artefacts – touching anything is prohibited. Stay in your capsule2 and move along.

Let us be inefficient. Let us ‘fare dolce niente’. Let us go beyond the superficial relationship with the images around us. Let us touch the material world around us. Let us play with our surroundings.

These qualities are currently only attributed to the park (with an occasional pavilion). Which can be red as the modernist idea of programmatic zoning; we are told where to go to have fun, to behave inefficient. Instead, every building should contain this ‘park quality’, interweaving it all over the city’s public space. Focussing on the public use of a building, as being a piece of furniture, adds another layer of interpretation to the city.

Jan Gehl emphasizes ‘social activities’ as being of primary importance to street-life.3 But he is mainly talking about the life between the buildings, the buildings thus being a dead passive décor. Instead we should try to see our buildings as devices that help generating any sort of public activity, we should use them as we use our furniture. Here furniture suggests bodily and tactile engagement. ‘Life between buildings: using public space’

1. Bakema, from chair to city.
2. Lieve de Cauter, Capsulaire samenleving.
ESSAYS | Like chair, like city.

becomes ‘life with buildings: using public furniture’. Why is this approach relevant? The general design thoughts are very clinical, we tend to forget the concept of the city goes beyond its buildings. Noll already told us this story a while ago: a story, not about buildings as such, but about human behaviour related to them. His famous maps centralised the city dweller - they coloured the public accessibility – and thus stating the ‘in-between-space’ as the dominant element in the functioning of the city. The city shouldn’t be regarded as a dense ensemble of individual buildings, but as an in-between-landscape to which the buildings give meaning, as a chair would to a room. A city is not the static sum of its buildings, but a dynamic expression of its citizens living between them; the domain of activity. ‘Cities are people, they are manifestations of people...they exist to facilitate people coming together, interacting, having conversation, producing ideas, innovating and so on.’

What is our aim? What kind of behaviour do we want our buildings to stimulate? How do we want to serve the people? Do we want to serve Homo Consumers or Homo Ludens? In contemporary society we relate our freedom to the ability to choose between the enormous diversity of products around us; we are focussed at consuming. This is reflected in our city-centres, which have become shopping bubbles. Rotterdam’s city-centre is a good example of such a mono-functional area, which indeed does attract a lot of people. The misconception can occur that the high density of shoppers indicates a dynamic expression of its citizens living between them; the domain of activity. ‘Cities are people, they are manifestations of people...they exist to facilitate people coming together, interacting, having conversation, producing ideas, innovating and so on.’

Huzinga discusses thoroughly the phenomenon of play. He defines play as ‘een vrije handeling, die niet als gemeend en buiten het gewone leven staande bewust is, die niettemin den speler geheel in beslag kan nemen, waaraan geen direct materieel belang verbonden is, of nut verworven wordt, die zich binnen bepaalde regels ordelijk verloopt, en gemeenschappelijke omringing of door vermomming als anders dan de gewone wereld accentueren’. However crowded they may be, there is nothing collective in the place of collective consumption. Shopping areas don’t contribute to the sharing of public life. Huzinga talks about the immense phenomenon of play. He defines play as ‘een vrije handeling, die niet als gemeend en buiten het gewone leven staande bewust is, die niettemin den speler geheel in beslag kan nemen, waaraan geen direct materieel belang verbonden is, of nut verworven wordt, die zich binnen bepaalde regels ordelijk verloopt, en gemeenschappelijke omringing of door vermomming als anders dan de gewone wereld accentueren’.

Understanding the act of play as free choice, disconnected from regular life, without any profit, though performed convincingly, shows us it has nothing to do with program, nor efficiency. It is of primer importance to the individual and a generator of culture. ‘Het is onmisbaar voor het individu, als biologische functie, en het is onmisbaar voor de gemeenschap om den zin, dien het inhoudt, om zijn betekenis, zijn uitdrukingswaarde, om de geestelijke en sociale verbindingen, die het schep, kortom als cultuurfunctie.’

Kevin Lynch mentioned the freedom allows one to create temporary rules and to experiment with diverse types of behaviour. Huzinga Student | Sijme van Jaarsveld emphasizes the value of expression, the exchange of expression as a generator of culture and social life. All forms of play can be seen as a way to explore and express ourselves. An action that connects us to the collective in our own individual way, as Hanna Arendt would say. The urban sphere as a domain of action instead of consumption.

Rotterdam aims at a centre which invites you to wonder around and stay for hours. The city’s vision for the centre, entitled CityLounge, describes the centre should become a place for meeting, staying and amusement and serve citizens, companies and visitors. Nonetheless Rotterdam’s very own Rem Koolhaas states that the street is dead and public life will take place indoors. This means we need to take a closer look at Rotterdam and its buildings.

At the start of the 20th century Rotterdam was already dreaming of becoming a metropolis. As the harbour grew in importance, the city’s face should grow along. The WOII bombing created a tabula rasa, which gave the city the chance to realize projects at a bigger scale. Through time this resulted in many big projects, which evolved in a love for skyscrapers. These aspirations have come with high costs: a degeneration of the street. The ever growing buildings suck up the temptations of the city life; big-ness devaluates the outside. The introspective approach of the brief is as big a problem as the dimensions. The building becomes a medieval citadel; at the gate your right to enter is verified. Your right to enter the safe zone, protected against the wilderness of the urban outdoors. They function as autonomous entities, while the relationship with the surrounding is minimised; a world of capsules and exclusion is the result. Together they form the image of the skyline, but they certainly don’t collaborate in forming the urban space which can inhabit the public domain. The introverted brief to create a functional building should always be accompanied with an extraverted brief, which aims on enriching the cityscape. Bauman recognises the same shortcomings in our cities and brings forward the example of La Defence. ‘Fantastically shaped buildings which encircle the huge and empty square are meant to look at, not in...they manage to turn their backs to the square they face. They are imperious and impervious to the eye.’ A detail as the reflectiveness of the glass in these facades tells a much bigger story about the buildings willingness to communicate with the outside. Similar to the blinded car-windows, which aim on total disconnection. This results in a space ‘whose sole destiny is to be passed through and left behind as quickly as possible’, with ‘a dull regularity of the metro timetable’. Public space becomes traffic space; reduced to the connection between the different capsules.

Behaviour is always the response to various stimuli or inputs. Furniture supports humans to express themselves by action, creation and participation. Architecture should function likewise; it should provide incentives. Such an approach is clearly practiced by the architect Bernard Tschumi,
as he was interested in the interaction between space and user. Henri Lefebvre’s call for unprogrammed space strongly influenced French architect and theorist Bernard Tschumi. Instead of focussing on program and form, he states that architecture is determined by events and actions, the ex-post-facto programs happening within the structure. For example, by practicing worship in a space it becomes a church. The event gives meaning to the architecture.²

In his Manhattan Transcripts he researches the balance between space, event en movement. In his work Tschumi tries to realize an ‘in-between’, a ‘ leftover space’, a space for the unexpected and unpredict- able, were movements and events can happen. The famous red follies he realized in the Parc de La Villette in Paris, for example, are mostly open to interpretation. They are points in the park, which represent the concentration of activities.

Tschumi’s theory to create space for potential events, has already been practiced by the early Greeks. Their stoa, a covered walkway, was initially installed to provide shade for the public square. This typology – followed by the Roman basilica – defines a zone, an informal in-between, which has no specific program. The people floated in, and so did their initiatives. Through the columns of the stoae and basilicas were associated with activities, the teaching Aristotle was to be found at same column all his life.

A similar principle can be ascribed to the barnyard. A farm can be seen as a composition of sheds, slowly developed and often changed in time, according to the particular needs. Each farm grows into an unique informal spatial organisation. The ‘negative’ space becomes the protected semi private area, the barnyard. Between the diverse sheds – while themselves serving pragmatism and efficiency - arises an atmosphere for experimentation. This flexible situation serves as an ideal educational environment; generating an active attitude and stimulating to be inventive, to create. Growing up at a farm enables a child to create every day another type of playground. Diverse loose objects were used as ingredients for the realization of the fantasy, from tree-house to soccer game. The barnyard as a daily stage for various plays. The abstractness of form is also practiced by Aldo van Eyck, mainly in his famous Amsterdam playgrounds. Amsterdam was faced by an increased pressure on outdoor space, due to a rapid growth of traffic. Combined with the post-war babyboom this has led to the disappearance of outdoor space for play. He was asked – as the municipality’s architect – to design dozens of playgrounds. He wanted children to use their imagination, to impose their ideas and activities on the different play devices. These devices were nothing more than abstract and sober forms, which could be used in many different ways. Interaction with abstract forms; objects as an extension of the mind. Notice the clear contrast with recent play-devices, where the object moves instead of the child.

² The irregular fabric creates spaces which are used intensively by locals (and tourists). Fener & Balat, Istanbul. A useless’ space which we certainly try to avoid, appears to have a very important meaning for the local life.

²² Tschumi’s follies, the Greek stoa, the barnyard and van Eyck’s playgrounds may represent different scales and settings, but illustrate a similar principle: evoking, inviting and teasing the citizen to act or create. To improve public life in Rotterdam’s centre, we should focus on these qualities, we should transform the centre into a dense edition of Parc de la Villette.

Parc de la Villette creates conditions, its identity is dynamic, it is formed by interaction, by colliding particles. The more density, the more collisions. Sennet states this results in a truly public space, where ‘the overlay of function in a single territory creates complexities of experience on that turf’.²¹ In the shopping oriented bubble complexity is undesired and killed by ‘channeling obedient bodies’.²² Even Koolhaas recently acknowledged the value of complexity. After a long fuck-the-context-period, his design for Rotterdam’s city hall shows a focus on accommodating public life. It is designed as a continuation of the urban landscape; the building adds an ‘urban living room’ to the city. We can say Koolhaas moves towards Tschumi’s approach of ‘donne lieu’: opening place rather than imposing limits.²³ The porosity interweaves the building with its surroundings.

To successfully realise Rotterdam’s CityLounge, the latter should be understood as a combination of many public living rooms. We need to regain – especially being confronted with the legacy of modernist open city ideals – focus for defining public places. As Camillo Sitte stated ‘public squares, like rooms, should convey the feeling of enclosed space’.²⁴ Buildings should be used as tools to generate these public rooms. Every building should add such a room to the urban landscape, like follies combine specific use and the useless. Zones to customize by the city-dweller scattered all over the city: the park reinterpreted in dense urban conditions.

²³. Avermaete, Hauw, Accommodating the public sphere, Oase 77, into the open.
²⁴. Camillo Sitte, Der Städtebau nach seinen künstlerischen Grundsätzen, 1889.
INTRODUCTION

The public space is constantly changing. From an outside space to an inside space and back again. Developments on different areas, like the economical, sociological and technical areas, have influenced the public space tremendously. These developments do not only determine how the public space is used, but also contribute to the appearance of these spaces. A major development that is influencing the city of Rotterdam is the migration from people to the city. A good example is the Lijnbaan, designed by Van den Broek en Bakema, it still functions as was designed by the architects. It’s a long shopping promenade built in the center of Rotterdam that is restricted to cars and bikes. In 1953, when the Lijnbaan was finished, a pedestrian only area in the heart of a large city was something new, and therefore it attracted a lot of international attention. A major downside is the loss of attraction for the public after closing hours of the shops, the area becomes extinct. The city of Rotterdam has come up with several ways to solve this problem, one is to add housing space. Another solution is to add functions to the buildings that offers space for activities in the evening. Because the area is densely built implementation of another type of building, the hybrid building, was necessary. This building is characterized by the fact that it is designed with a multifunctional purpose, built up from different functions. Housing, offices, retail, culture and leisure are combined in the same building. Although these buildings already exist throughout history, they developed most rapidly in the twentieth century. In the prologue of the book “Hybrid Buildings” Steven Holl expresses his opinion on the development of hybrid buildings as follows: “The modern city has acted as fertilizer for growth of architectures from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous in regard to use. Urban densities and evolving building techniques have affected the mixing of functions, piling one atop another…”.

The city of Rotterdam works as a good example of this quote. A new building will be built in the heart of Rotterdam with multiple functions incorporated, a heterogeneous building. The urban density of Rotterdam has led to this implementation. In some cases they have so many functions that they behave like a small city of their own. One of the many functions these buildings have is the public space that represents the public domain of the city. It is an extension of public space into the building. This space is important because it binds all functions, thus the building, into a whole. With the rise of hybrid buildings, public space inside is increasing. When I think of such inside spaces, my mind often wanders to the arcade at the Coolingsel or the Alexandrium shopping mall. The arcade is a building type which already exist a long time. It is a covered shopping street often build in the city center. One could say that the arcade is the precursor of public space inside hybrid buildings. But my
perception of these spaces is completely different than the public space outside. The entrance through a door, the overhead roof and the rigid space makes the experience different. In my opinion we cannot design public space inside a hybrid building like we did in the arcade. The public space, and the value it has right now, is too important to commit it to one single purpose. To know why the arcade doesn’t work that well as a public space, we have to know why and how the arcade is established. With that in mind the central questions become: what are the characteristics that have determined the arcade? And what do we have to change to create a public space inside a building that attracts people? To answer these questions, it seems important to me to take a closer look at a few main characteristics that have determined the arcade throughout the history. To look at them today, but more important to conclude for the future.

THE ARCADE HISTORY
The first arcade was created around 1800 by the wealthy bourgeoisie. They built an arcade that sheltered people from the influence of the weather and nuisance of the streets, like noise and filth. The street dated from the medieval times and was not modified since. On the contrary the community did develop throughout the years and so did the requirements for this outside space. The amount of traffic, the pedestrians, carriages pulled by horse and other traffic all used the same road in a not organized way. The streets did not have any sidewalk and were dirty. This caused a dangerous situation for walking or window shopping. Another downside of these poorly paved streets was that they lacked any form of drainage. The street transformed into a sea of mud and dirt during rainy periods. The arcade was the answer to those specific needs and desires of the community. It was a search of a public space that protected the people. It was the foundation of the reason why a new public space inside emerged. A space that could be designed and controlled completely. A space which lifted itself up from the poor quality conditions outside.

The word arcade comes from the French word passage. It expresses the transitional nature of this building type. In France it was used in the early eighteenth century as a referral to the narrow private streets which made a connection between interior spaces of large buildings. There are many different definitions about the word transitions, but the most descriptive one is the following: Movement, passage, or change from one position to another.

The dictionary comes with a general description of the word. But in almost all other languages it has one common similarity, it means transition. Also the history makes it clear that this transition zone is an important element. Large building blocks build between two or three heavily crowded streets, were cut in such a way that the pedestrians could escape the terrible bustle of the street and shorten their travelling distance. They build the arcade with the intention of making a street for pedestrians only, with façades designed as exterior façades, but placed inside. Often these façades were constructed symmetrical. The quality and the success of the arcades were determined by the location of the building. They were only successful when it was built in the main commercial district and the connected streets were equally busy. In this way it fulfilled a purpose to ease traffic congestion, as a short cut between two streets.

Historically speaking, these characteristics were important for the development of the arcades. They ensured that the arcade had right to exist. In my opinion they are also important for the perception of the public space inside today. Although the arcade represents in a way a lot of the same functions as the space outside in the cities nowadays, it gives it a whole different experience.

THE ARCADE OF TODAY
The first characteristic that I mentioned is that the arcade was developed because of the terrible condition of the public space around 1800. The lack of different domains for pedestrians and carriages and the lack of an adequate drainage system made the streets a dangerous and filthy space. The current, modern day situation is completely different. In the last century a sewerage system was developed and implemented. This system ensures that the water from the street can be easily drained. This in combination with good pavement ensures that the public space is a lot safer to use and remains passable. The quality of these facilities is being monitored by the municipal services. They also take care of trash collection and cleaning of the streets. The public space today is cleaner and in better condition than in the first growth period of the arcade. Another important element was that the pedestrian didn’t have their own domain, they had to share their domain with other traffic. This changed over years as well, for almost every kind of traffic is designed a different domain. The pedestrians have their own domain, separated from bicycles and cars. Especially the Lijnbaan of Rotterdam is unique in this way, the shopping center is off limits for bicycles and cars, which means that people can shop in safety. In the early years the arcade was a necessity to escape the terrible bustle of the street, nowadays the arcade lost a part of this function. With the transformation and with different domains for all the users of the public space, the function of safety for pedestrians isn’t needed anymore. Apart from the rearrangement, the people nowadays have the choice between two good shopping spaces. The space outside and the space inside.

Athens had previously the agora. A public space outside that not only functioned as a market, but also as a meeting space and a place to gain information. Because the tremendously changed conditions around 1800, the bourgeoisie decided to build the public space inside. In the following years the conditions of outside space improved and it became
interesting again. The current public space outside is completely different from the old agora. People nowadays go to the public space for social and physical interaction. It is a space where people want to stay, where things like see and being seen are very important elements. Everybody needs such spaces. In his article “inhabiting space- the lost and recovery of public space”, Juhani Pallasmaa says: “The public space is a space for human and social interaction, a rich spatial instrument to see and to be seen, to participate and to withdraw, and to be the actor or the spectator in the theatre of social interaction at one’s will”.

He is telling us that the public space is a space for social interaction. A space where people can choose to participate in or to withdraw from, making the social aspect of the public space very important. The public opinion is formed in the public space and people go to meet one another there. This aspect should not be underestimated, because it determines whether people want to stay in the public space or not. In comparison to the arcade and its original intention we see that they are completely different. One of the main points that allow the arcade to behave differently from the shopping center is the fact that it is set up as a transition zone. The arcade was intended to be a shortcut from one busy street to another. There is no space to participate in or to withdraw from. In comparison with a public space outside, this is a fundamental difference. There is no aspect of being, of having interaction with other citizens and to meet one and another. It is all about consumption. This shows the field of tension between outside public space and inside public space in the arcade.

An important point of the arcade is that it is a public space inside a building. The entrance is either through a gate or a door. In some cases you may even have to use a stair to enter. This is essential for the functioning of the internal public space. An upwards entrance is a barrier in the public space. It will cost energy to use the stairs, which makes it unattractive. The fact that people have to cross a gate or use a door doesn’t work in the accessibility advantage of the arcade either. The door, gate or stairs works like a kind of boundary. A topic discussed by Richard Sennet in his article “Boundaries and borders”. He talks about the border as an attractive element, and about the boundary as a place nobody wants to go to. He uses the example of the city wall of Aix-en-Provence or Rome. A place where houses and informal markets are created. Walls like this work like a membrane, porous and resistant. Let people trough and block people. It attracts people and something is developing there. An example of an arcade which deals with this subject in a right way is the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan. This example makes clear that the arcade is much more than just space inside. It is also about the front and the back. The entire square in front is an element that contributes to the arcade. The entrance is designed large, the feeling of a door or a boundary is not there. In these cases it works like a border. The space in front becomes more interesting. People make use of the space. Like the

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shows us some facilities there. People use these facilities, but more important they use the space around it. They make the space more vivid. The square in front of the entrance benefits to the liveliness of the arcade. It works differently for arcades without any facilities or a space at the entrance. In these cases the entrance works like a boundary. A closer look at the “Passage”, an arcade in the center of The Hague, makes this clear to me. There is no square and there are no facilities at the entrance. This makes the transition from outside to inside larger. The lack of activity ensures that it becomes a dead spot, it decreases the accessibility of the arcade. It becomes a boundary between the inside and the outside, instead of a fluid transition in one another. Furthermore, the second relation between inside and outside, the visual one, is small. Only at the entrance people see what happens both inside and outside, but once people are inside, contact with the outside is lost. This relation between inside and outside is important. Micheal Sorkin goes further into this subject. In his book “variations on a theme park” he claims: “The history of cities is contained in the way their elements relate to each other, the structures of art and law that have made a town into a whole.”

Sorkin makes clear that it is important of how the elements of a city relate to each other. A space that doesn’t connect with another space lacks a relation. It excludes itself, and is not part of the whole. The building could be placed in the center of the city as easily as it could be placed in the desert, because the relation with the other spaces, with the history is gone. It is a separate world, a world that is completely designed. The inside world of the arcade is often ruled by two symmetrical facades. The sensation of two opposite and competing façades gives a feeling of an accessible public space. Often the arcade exists of long hallways with shops on both sides. These arcades are built in a monotonous way. Geuze also speaks about this subject. His opinion on the public is that it should provoke city dwellers, but the public space nowadays is designed too much. Architects like to design arcades because they can control everything. They get the chance to manipulate space and light to achieve the density and bustle of a city. By designing an arcade they can control, or banish, the negative aspects like weather, traffic and unwanted people. But exactly this zone of dialogue, of friction, of diversity is necessary to achieve a vital public space. Geuze advocates a strategy in which the people themselves should explore the space and make it their own. That is not possible in arcades, where there is no space for exploration. Like Geuze says in his article “Accelerating Darwin”: “… every hit of land is accorded a color, code or crosshatching”.

This is an addition on the words of Pallasmaa, I’ve quoted him earlier. A part of our culture in the Netherlands is that almost everything is designed and thought through. We therefore miss sometimes the spontaneity in designs. This also applies for the arcades, which are designed to focus

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on selling articles instead of designed for the social aspect. People don’t have the possibility to go and explore the space, because almost every movement is designed.

THE PUBLIC SPACE INSIDE OF THE FUTURE.
The characteristics that have ensured the creation of the arcade are not longer present. The quality of modern public space is much better now which ensures we no longer have to escape to the inner world. Where people in the past used to escape the terrible circumstances of the outer world, nowadays it is a voluntary choice to enter the arcade. But what does all of this mean for the public space inside of the future? And what does this mean for the public space in the hybrid building at the center of Rotterdam?

The developments on different areas influence the public space. It will provide a constantly changing atmosphere for the public space. It is therefore important, in my opinion, to create a strong relationship with stable elements that won’t change trough the years. For the public space inside the relationship with the surrounding is incredibly important. Like Michael Sorkin says, it is especially this relation with the history of a city which makes a city whole. The first point is the relation between the outside space and the inside space. The surrounding area, the outside space, has to be an attractive area in order to enhance the inside space. A good example, mentioned before, is the Galleria Emanuele Vittorio II. It shows the influence of a vivid outside space on the public space inside. The space around the area needs attention as well. By designing an inside public space we also have to take a close look to the space in front and back. We have to design them as well. We have to design a vivid space with functions that create a residential area. The second point is the entrance to the inside space. It needs to be an easily accessible space and should not give the feeling of an entrance. Therefore it should be open which leads to interaction between the inside and the outside space. The third important point is the relation from inside to outside. It should not only be at the entrance. This relation should be found throughout the entire building. It is essential that users experience the surrounding area for their orientation while they are inside. This way it gives the space a solid foundation in the urban fabric of the city. Allowing the public space to become a part of the free movement and feeling that this space is our best expression of a desire for collectivity.

Another starting point for the design is the social interaction. Especially today, where modern technique makes it possible to do everything at home, the physical contact between people is incredibly important. Maybe even more than it ever has been. The public space in the hybrid buildings should offer space for social interaction. A space where people could be the actor or spectator of the theatre of social interaction at one’s will, like Pallasmaa is saying. The words “at one’s will” are at this point very important, because people should have a choice whether they participate of withdraw. It is not only about the real physical contact, it is also about seeing other people. We can stimulate this contact by providing spaces to sit and relax and to look at other people passing by. This implies that we have to implement functions that enhance these spaces, like food and drink establishments. And space for interaction. Like some kind of square where people can meet each other and can stand to chat and linger. In my perception the influence of sunlight is important, it will make inside space more experienced as an outside space. This in combination with spaces to sit and relax, which have to be placed very carefully, and more relation with the rest of the city should increase the quality of the space inside considerably.

The final point is that the public space needs spontaneity. The space inside, which in the arcade nowadays lacks spontaneity, needs is badly. The opinion of Geuze contributes to the opinion of Pallasmaa. People should be able to make choices in the public space. The people should have the choice where to sit and where to walk. Whether they participate or withdraw. The public space doesn’t need to be entirely dictated by architectural decisions, but should have room to let spontaneous things happen. Let the people see and be seen and let there be social interaction possible. The space needs diversity, not only in form, nor functions but also diversity in people. People from different gender, age, social class, and ethnicity should be attracted. By designing these spaces we have to take this point in consideration as well. Giving the people more opportunities to stay, but also let the people discover these spaces and discover each other. This will put less focus on consumption, but increas-
INTRODUCTION

In World War II the center of Rotterdam was bombed, which destroyed it almost completely. After the war, the ‘new’ center was built with a modernist urban design. There are monofunctional urban blocks. Function groups like offices, shops and dwellings are separated. There is some green space, which divides the functions, instead of connecting them. The new urban blocks have become enclaves in the middle of the city. There is a clear distinction between the ‘new’ center and its surrounding areas, there is a border. The urban fabric can hardly get grip on the center. And urban fabric is exactly what Rotterdam needs. The urbanization (at least in European countries) of the past and coming decades is mainly based on the growing ‘knowledge and creative industry’.

The ‘product’ knowledge is what makes cities affluent, like labour and capital did in the past two centuries (labour and capital are still vital products, but not anymore solely responsible for prosperity and well-being of societies).

Knowledge is a product which is made by small scale companies, self-employed workers, freelancers and knowledge is gained through innovation. The best context for this product is a small-scale urban economy, which is a breeding ground for new ideas, products and services. The level of welfare of a city depends on a structure with diversity, complexity and even chaos and inefficiency: urban fabric. This also applies to the knowledge and creative industry. The center of Rotterdam (to be more specific; the Cool district) does not meet all of those conditions. One of the aspects which is not sufficiently available in the Cool district, is the third place.

The American sociologist Ray Oldenburg introduced this term. He distinguished the first place (dwelling, home), the second place (office, workplace) and the third place, which is a neutral, safe and informal place where people can meet like a bar or bookstore. Since his renowned book ‘The great good place’, which was written in 1989, many people have used the term third place, but also gave it new meaning.

Could this new third place contribute to the development of an urban fabric of the Cool district in Rotterdam?

What are the possibilities for third places in the Cool district?

THE THIRD PLACE

Although the meaning of the third place has changed, I think it is still useful to understand the original meaning.

of the third place, because it is still largely true. The third place is a café, coffee shop, bookstore, bar or hair salon. It is a hangout at the heart of the community. Third places exist on neutral ground and serve to level their guests to a condition of social equality. I think this is the biggest difference with the first and second place, with the home and workplace. The neutral ground is an essential element of a city. Inhabitants of cities are used to encounter strangers in public space (of course, there are far more people you don’t know than people you do know). When meeting a stranger, it is best to keep some distance, so you don’t just throw yourself out there. Because of this distance it is easier to scan and understand the other person, which results in a certain degree of tolerance and respect for each other. These encounters are typical for a city’s public space, thus also for the third place. Here are encounters with friends and relatives more common, but even for these situations neutrality of the place is crucial.

Within third places, conversation is the primary activity and the major vehicle for the display and appreciation of human personality and individuality. Most of the third places have a low profile. Since the formal institutions of society make stronger claims on the individual, third place are normally open in the off hours, as well as at other times. The character of a third place is determined most of all by its regular clientele and is marked by a playful mood, which contrasts with people’s more serious involvement in other spheres. Though a radically different kind of setting from the psychological comfort and support that it extends. A theme of ‘at-homeness’ is the feeling of being at ease or ‘the freedom to be’. It involves the active expression of personality, the assertion of oneself within an environment. In the home this freedom is manifest in the choice and arrangement of furniture and other decorative elements. In the third place, it is exhibited in conversation, joking and teasing. In either case, it is a matter of leaving one’s mark, of being associated with a place. This actually still explains a difference between the home and the third place, although in both situations it serves the same purpose, namely ‘the freedom to be’. Something which both the home and the third place might have in common, is the perception of the spaces through the peripheral vision.

‘Peripheral vision integrates us with space, while focused vision pushes us out of the space and makes us mere observers.’ One thing that this means is that everything we receive through our eyes, except that on which we focus, plays an important role in how we perceive space. For the third place one could state that the interior arrangement has similarities with place of the home. Chairs and tables are made of wood and have regular sizes, the scale of the place is not to big, the place doesn’t have to be closed off, there might be a bookcase and a fireplace. So in that sense the third place is trying to simulate the space of a home, to achieve the same warmth as can be felt in a home.

In the description of the French café, Oldenburg notices a telephone next to the bar: ‘A vintage-era telephone is available to serve nearby residents who don’t have one, and there is often a small line of people waiting to use it.’ This is clearly a function of the third place which does not exist anymore. And actually there are new functions added to it since the knowledge and creative industry obtained an important role in the urban centers. Planners and philosophers predicted at the end of the past century that public space would be dead, because of the new (mobile) technologies. There would be no need to physically meet up with other people outside the first and second place. But the third places flourishes because of two things. First the fact that people are now capable of having spontaneous meetings, because they are able to find everyone everywhere whenever they want. The second thing is the distinction Gadet makes between general knowledge (available through libraries, the Internet and so forth) and personal knowledge. He believes that personal knowledge is mainly exchanged in face-to-face conversations, which depends on physical proximity.

THE AUGMENTED THIRD PLACE, FOURTH AND FIFTH PLACE

I would like to distinguish three new types of places. The first new type I would like to call the augmented third place. This is a place which could be seen as a hybrid third place, where people can have a drink or something to eat, where they have informal and formal meetings, where they read the paper, or where it’s possible to study. It is like an original third place, but with some facilities for working and studying, like power points for laptops and wifi for mobiles devices. But the emphasis is still on the traditional meaning, that it still is the neutral ground apart from the home and the workplace. Examples of augmented third places are Starbucks or the Dutch variant Coffee Company. These coffee places serve good coffee and some food, but they also offer comfortable chairs and large tables for studying or reading. And they offer wifi, so people can work with their laptop and have small meetings for work.

The second type of place is the fourth place. An example is given by Jos Gadet. He hailed the café-restaurant Dauphine in Amsterdam, nearby the trainstation Amstel. It is a place where ‘at 9 o’clock in the morning people open up their laptop, search the web and start their workday. There are clients received and working arrangements handled. There are meetings and deals are closed.’ Although it is still a restaurant, there are also special closed off meetingrooms and the concept is mainly focussed on the working class. That is why I think it is more like a fourth place, it doesn’t cover all facets of the original third place. Richard Florida introduced the fourth place. He predicts that when the use of space in cities is finally adjusted to the new forms of work, the office will be dead. While Koolhaas wrote in 1995 that ‘offices will have to be converted to homes’. Because everybody will work at home, there would be no need for the second place. Again, but from another perspective: the office will be dead. Could define another new type of place, the fifth place. In Koolhaas’ Generic City® the street would be dead and the public realm would be transported to highways, to the realm of the car. Now, almost twenty years after Koolhaas wrote the text, the car is a popular vehicle but the public realm is not dead. But the public realm is spread over new places and spaces. The fifth place is one of these new spaces. This fifth place is not a place on a static location. It is the space of the network, of moving, of transportation, of travelling. It is the space of the in-transit condition. It can be in the car, in the train, the trainstation, the airport and in the plane. With the connectivity through wifi and 3G and with mobile devices like cellphones and laptops, the transportation vehicle has become more then just a device to move from A to B. In the train, car, or airplane people are able to have personal conversations on the phone with relatives and friends, but also conversations for work. Or they can work with their laptop, being connected with colleagues from all over the world. And this ability will be expanded in the near future. Recently in the Netherlands a new train interior composition is introduced, with working spaces with bigger tables. Will the new meetings held in the train? And what about airports, will companies have meetings there with clients and employees, who are on their way to other cities in the world?
Will these meetings be planned as 'regular' meetings that are planned in some meetingroom in an office building? The fifth place is yet another reason why the office will die. A third place though, in every form, stands or falls with its location. It needs to be in or near urban fabric. The diversity of people entering third places is crucial. The clientele needs to consist out of regulars (mostly people who live in the proximity of the third place), people of the creative and intellectual class to have conversation and strangers like tourists or expats. The third place needs to be in the proximity of residential buildings, office buildings, universities, museums and theatres so there will be clientele throughout the day and evening.

DIFFICULTIES AND POSSIBILITIES IN THE COOL DISTRICT FOR THIRD PLACES

The Cool district in Rotterdam misses some basic elements for an urban fabric. There is not enough diversity in functions, in scale, in infrastructure and in public space. The Lijnbaan is the best example of this missing diversity. There are dwellings, offices, shops and some cultural facilities, but all of these functions are strictly separated and the public space is unilateral (is it to much defined?). Another problem is the ratio of people living in the center of Rotterdam and people who work there, it is 1:4 (while in Amsterdam it is 1:1). So many people come to the Cool district during the day, but they will not stay. Recently new residential buildings have been planned or almost finished, so there will be new dwellers which should be an opportunity for Rotterdam to set up a stronger base for urban fabric. Of course there are restaurants and bars in the Cool district, but most of these places don’t have the character of third places. The bars along the Stadhuisplein have a unilateral clientele. Youngsters who live elsewhere come there for drinks and to party. At day some tourists on their way to the museum quarter, sit down at the terraces for a bad cup of coffee, because they can’t find any alternative. Some restaurants along the Kareldoormanstraat are nice, but are mostly filled with residents of the nearby Lijnbaan flats. In the areas adjacent to the Cool district there is more ground for urban fabric and third places, for example in Oude Westen, around the Binnenrotte and of course around the Witte de Withstraat. The choice for the first two establishments of the Coffee Company in Rotterdam illustrates this well. One Coffee Company is on the Eendrachtsplein, right on the border between the Cool district and Oude Westen. The second one is on the Meent, in the north corner of the Binnenrotte. Some spots in the Cool district have potential to become good third places. The restaurant of the concert hall De Doelen can count on a variety of people, like people who go to the theatre, to a music show or the movies and students of the nearby Codarts school. Nearby the World Trade Center are some spots which could benefit from the people who work, live and go shop-

CONCLUSION

The original third place will not disappear, because it is the glue of the public space of a city. The neutral ground of third places is where people can be anonymous and individual and it is essential for the public realm of a city. A very good coffee chain in Amsterdam, called Koffiesalon, removed their wifi connection. The nuisance of people who were working behind their laptops was too much for the original customers; the ones reading the paper or chatting with friends while enjoying a nice cup of coffee. For the augmented third place and the fourth and fifth place wil and other forms of connectivity is indispensable. One of the reasons why these new places (will) flourish is the ability to step in the virtual world and connect with friends, relatives and colleagues at any time and any place. This also suggests a more vague distinction between the third, fourth and fifth place, because for the virtual world the geographical position doesn’t matter. But in that light all the other conditions for the new places are omitted. The connectivity is still one of the conditions, not the only one. But the center of Rotterdam still needs to establish some good third places, before it can even start with augmented third places or fourth places. And to reach that goal, the Cool district needs to make (physical) connection with the urban fabric of its surrounding areas, like Oude Westen, Binnenrotte and Witte de Withstraat. This also means the center has to densify with various functions on different scales.

5. by author, Loet Smeets
INTRODUCTION

Not knowing the user, is it possible to design? This text elaborates on how, by whom, and why a district is used. How to read city blocks, and their relation to daily life. The ability to read the social environment and the possibility to address its user by design. The context of this text writes about this idea of reading the city by means of exploring the city. Rotterdam Cool district has been explored to test this manner of reading the city.

For this perceptual research manner the notion made by Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter has to be mentioned before the journey starts; The neutral observer is surely a critical fiction, if among the multiplicity of phenomena with which we are surrounded we observe what we wish to observe, if our judgments are inherently selective because of the quantity of factual information is finally indigestible, any literal usage of a ‘neutral’ gridlabours under approximate problems.\(^1\)

ENTERING ROTTERDAM CITY, READING CONTEXT.

Scale is first to be related to, as using the car to enter a dense urban area like Rotterdam is no longer feasible. I arrive by train. The station [1] is still under construction but it already elaborates on where I am and with who I am. A metropolitan gate, aces to a great amount of destination, speed, no one stands still, everyone knows where he is and where he is to be going. As the station district is still in development it does not speak truthfully of its context yet. The built surrounding does, so I enter the city centre following the directions of its entities.

Rotterdam city centre might seem unclear, but its rational setup makes it easy to understand, filter the subjective and an understanding is gained. For example, loosening track of your trajectory in Amsterdam is much easier than loosing it in Rotterdam\(^2\). The district that will be explored is set of by clear borders, the Wena, the CoolSingel, the Blaak and the Mauritiusweg [2]. It is set up in a grid, dating before the Second World War, partly reified according to the modern plan of van Traa.

POST-MODERN URBAN BLOCKS

The high rise dominates as I leave the train station and cross the junction in front of it, to the left, offices in

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2. Intecline ammonium 1e radial canal (the Singel) dating back to the 15th century, the conditions of the more “natural” arized urban fabric dominates. A complex arrangement of streets and buildblok follow the geographical conditions combined or interacting with human needs. Where as the Cool district of Rotterdam is set up by an more sophisticated structure, comparable to the grid structure of Le Corbusier Plan Voisin.
the Delftse Poort [3] and right in front the Manhattan hotel [4]. Closer to the cantilevered pathway, I am led into the city block extracting me from world above the second floor. Guided by the cantilevered path, I’m inclined to enter the block through a passage. This is where retail rules, advertisements draw the attention while I follow the passage. On my way I pass an escalator piercing through the ground, facilitating the exit of an underground parking garage. The passage leads out on to the Karel-Doornmanstraat.

The cantilevered side of the block is a very strong and commonly used tool in the urban blocks of Rotterdam. Together with the columns they create space in a blocks boarder, a grey area where the pedestrian is subtracted from the road, but he is still part of public life. It usually extends public life into the block by using shops. The passage is a second tool, one which allows access to a city block, and shows an inside perspective of the block to the public. Of course it can be discussed on what level the passage is still public space, but that discussion would not benefit the intention of this text.

These typological blocks have one more manner of connecting or disconnecting to daily life; the use of the service road. The service road is a collective road facilitating all the functions in the urban block. This part of the post-modern urban block has been extracted from the daily life of the Cooldistrict. The architectural language translates the back entrance of the block as a separated part of daily life. Clearly noticeable is the modernistic influence which can be seen as the founder of the service road.

This fist block can be seen in a broader perspective as one of the three morphological block typologies active in the district [6]. These blocks have let the rules of modernism go and allowed a diversity of functions represented by diverse architectural entities. On block scale it could be seen as hybridism, as it facilitate diverse functions for diverse users at diverse moments during the day. But the quality of hybridism lay’s in the possibility to exchange time, space and knowledge between these functions and users; mutual benefits and unexpected correlation.

These blocks are more like a collage[7] of mono-functional architectural entities, each facilitating their own transition from public to private life. They are an effect of the densification process of the city centre but they are not yet as Jane Jacobs promotes; complex arrangements of entities and functions serving the population. The underground parking and retail on ground level are the start for hybridism but the post-modern blocks show a clear disconnection between this lower level and the monofunctional entities above.

The Karel Doornmanstraat leads to the Schouwburgplein[8], a square boxed in by theatres, a cinema and one side of the Lijnbaan hoven[9].

A VOID VIS A VIS POST-WAR URBAN BLOCKS

Schouwburgplein is not the like the typical Dutch square, it has been
raised two steps to literally create an public stage; the benches, lights and other structural elements have been directed towards the blind wall of the cinema. This neglecting the built side of the Lijnbaan hoven, which is representative of the reconstruction period of Rotterdam after World War II and thus holds a strong monumental status for Rotterdam. In front of this side of the Lijnbaan hoven public life is vivid, shops and bars open up to public life on the sidewalk whilst on top lay two stories of dwellings. The row of trees in front of the bars create an extra quality to the atmosphere, while the cycling lane in front of the sidewalk creates a clear boarder between the square and the bars. Just as the food stands on the opposite side of the cycling lane direct their attention towards the Lijnbaan hoven instead of the square. A strong separation has been created between the old and the new, and the old holds a vivid public life while the square lacks public life.

This phenomenon can be seen as an indicator for possibilities. The public stage is clearly not the function that is stimulated by its own design nor by the setup of its surrounding context. The square shows that the Cooldistrict is ready for integrated densification.

I continue my walk further into the heart of the city centre, following the famous Kortelijnbaan. A hardcore shopping street, two stories high with canopies above the first floor. Like a rollercoaster ride I get shot into the shopping street, a tunnel like experience, which has been directed towards a pre-war building, the city hall. But the shopping roller coaster has grasped my attention, I leave the square in front of the city hall as it is and continue to follow the shopping facilities on the lijnbaan. A short dazzling ride and I have already passed one junction and two city blocks.

POST-WAR URBANISM AND URBAN BLOCK CONFIGURATION

The Lijnbaanhoven have been designed by van den Broek en Bake- ma, a modernist plan, where functions have been separated; light, air and space where clear nominators. This separation of functions is the essence of the success of the Lijnbaan. Because of the functional continuity, the user understands the Lijnbaan instantly. At every junction between the blocks blind corners make sure that nothing interesting is distracting the user from leaving the Lijnbaan.

In contradiction to the post-modern block which holds an ensemble of diverse buildings, the Lijnbaanhoven have a clear functional setup [8]. This setup being a broken up U footprint letting light into the ensemble towards the dwellings; which have been separated from the retail by the use of a service road. As the Lijnbaan is famous it is also notorious, when the shops close the daily life changes quick from pleasant to unpleasant.

This dilemma of social, cultural and operating quality of the block has been addressed by Aldo Rossi in his "The urban artefact". This urban artefact often causes it become identified as a monument, and that a monument persists in the city both symbolically and physically". This status can be adorned onto the Lijnbaan, a representative for the post-war reconstruction of Rotterdam. Rossi speaks about the ability of reading cities and the understanding of its structure, are we able to unravel the positions of disciplines that take precedence over others? Rossi revers to Poete’s hypothesis: based on economic consideration that relate to the evolution of the city, an historical theory centred on the phenomenon of persistence. He rejects quality of this statement in the sense that it is based in the past; the persistence of an urban artefact is thus based on former importance and thus not always relevant to the present and future.

THE MUNICIPALITY ADDRESSING THE DISCONTINUITY IN DAILY LIFE

The municipality of Rotterdam made a plan [10] to address this dilemma of the monumental status. The spatial setup will be used while keeping the architectural entities with their social and cultural value. The retail will be enlarged by connecting it to the first floors of the dwellings, and thus taking over of the former service roads. This way a connection will be created with the Lijnbaan and the core of the city block, vitalizing public life in the small parks of the blocks centre. Still this plan does not answer to the social problem of the Lijnbaans’ nightlife. It is even their intention to close all of the block to the public as soon as the shops close, thus creating a closed enclave at night. Will the social quality of the Rotterdams nightlife benefit or be pulled back down even further? This is not answered nor addressed by the plan.

Having passed two city blocks of retail, I am now standing in front of the junction with the Oldenbarnevelplaats and the Lijnbaan. A physical disruption in the continuous plan of the Lijnbaan, a curved pavilion [11], directs my attention away form the Lijnbaan towards the famous Koopgoed. A tram line cuts the Lijnbaan in two sections clearly confronting with two choices. One, to follow the new direction of the Koopgoed and two, to cross this cluttered junction and follow the Lijnbaan. I know the Koopgoed will lead me out of my research district, thus I choose to cross the junction and follow the modernist. I expected the same environmental quality of the first two parts of the Lijnbaan, yet in this part a square [12] has been introduced and for the first time since I entered the Lijnbaan the high-rise is clearly visible and influences the experience of the Lijnbaan. From here, I am able to enter even further into the core of the block by a covered shopping area. I choose to continue on the Lijnbaan which brings me to the square called Binnenwegplein; the end of the modernist experience of shopping.

The Binnenwegplein gives a strong image of Rotterdams’ solution on of the quality of the nightlife atmosphere. This is ever more obvious by the erection of 105 dwellings on top of the Lijnbaan [13]. Again the choice has been made to keep the modernist building repre-
senting the reconstruction period of Rotterdam. The idea of introducing more dwellings inside the city centre to intensify the use of the public realm and the social control is a good strategy. Yet unlike dwellings in Amsterdam, where they are also above the retail plinth, the choice has been made to locate the entrance to the dwellings not on the Binnenwegplein directly into the daily life of the shopping district but on the back side of the building inside the core of the urban block. Understandable from an logistic point of view, but the direct connection between dwellings and the shopping area is lost and thus the maximum benefit of the social control by its inhabitants on daily life is partly lost. Secondly it needs to be mentioned that the dwellings are realized above the sixth level, meaning that visual connection and vocal interaction possibility has been lost between dwelling and street life.

Moving from the Binnenwegplein towards the Oude Binnenweg, I realise that this is the first square I cross where a large number of people actually stay and enjoy the public realm. Relaxing on the benches watching other pedestrians passing by while enjoying the sun and a freshly baked snack from the pavilion on the square. Psychologically this little square might even be a bigger public stage than the Schouwburgplein itself as it holds a continuous stream of users during daytime.

PRE-WAR URBAN FABRIC

Entering the Oude Binnenweg I am introduced to a new image of Rotterdam, or better said the pre-war image. The typical Dutch perimeter block [14] presents itself, every house has its own distinctive expression and just like the Amsterdam shopping street the dwellings are above the retail but still have their entrance at the street. The atmosphere of the public realm has also rapidly changed in comparison to the Binnenwegplein and the Lijnbaan, i.e. a more at ease or naturally mixed environment.

This change of the atmosphere can be explained by S. Komossa’ writing on the vitality of the public domain. She explains that the overlay of diverse functions stimulates the interaction between diverse populations and thus enriching the public life. The pre-war blocks hold cafés, restaurants, shops and dwellings on ground level. Some of the blocks have been scarred by the bombing of Rotterdam. These parts have been refilled by new buildings and thus enlarge the diversity in architectural functionality, expression and scale. This diversity stimulates the unexpected encounter between diverse groups during the day.

From the Oude Binnenweg I turn right, the Mauritsweg opens up to me; a proper boulevard. Each block facing the boulevard shows neo-classical and eclectic architecture creating the block curtain already seen at the Oudebinnenweg. The Mauritsweg has a broad spatial setup, and in the centre an extra public domain has been created by the use of broad pedestrian path ways filled with art and benches to enjoy the view over

the channel on to the grass filled tramline and the old architecture of Rot-
tterdam [15].

Realizing I’m already moving back in the direction of the train station
and that the east side of the Cool district has mainly been neglected in
my journey, I cross the district from West to South. Schouwburgplein,
Lijnbaanhoven, and a third block passes until I end up at the east edge
of the district, the CoolSingel.

MAURITSWEG VS A VIS COOLSINGEL

There is a clear distinction between the Mauritsweg and the CoolSingel,
yet they are both edges of the Cooldistrict. This phenomenon can be
explained using Richard Sennets writing on Boundaries and Borders⁸; in
natural ecologies, borders are the zones in a habitat where organ-
isms become more interactive, due to the meeting of different species
or physical conditions. The boundary is a limit, a territory beyond which
a particular species does not stray. Clearly the Mauritsweg is a border,
approachable from both districts at each side. Urban facilities create an
atmosphere for exchange and interaction between the districts. On the
other hand, the CoolSingel is a clear boundary with its broad set up of
double car lanes and tram lane, it is not a space for interaction. This is
partly why the Koopgoot has been created; an underground shopping
tunnel allowing pedestrians to cross the CoolSingel safely and carelessly.

Walking back north along the CoolSingel, I realize I’m introduced back
to the metropol image of Rotterdam. The built scale has increased dra-
tically. Big cantilevers announce the entrances to corporative buildings,
while the plinth along the CoolSingel is a continuous shopping area. The
large pedestrian side walk holds all kinds of urban furniture from bench-
es to art and pavilions. Unlike at the Lijnbaan where the high-rise has
been set back and hardly noticeable, the CoolSingel shows a continuous
ensemble of high-rise offices. This experience continues while I move
along the Wena back to the start of my journey through the district; the
train station.

Mentionable is the attempt of the municipality to revitalize or the inten-
tion to create coziness at the CoolSingel. All the green, the remarkable
scattered ensemble of pavilions and the reduction of six to four car lanes
are evidence of this notion. They have been implemented to reintroduce
the human scale on the CoolSingel. A feeble attempt in comparison to the
weight of the post-modern and monolithic monumental blocks dominat-
ing the CoolSingel’s periphery.

REFLECTING ON THE EXPERIENCE OF READING ROTTERDAM.

Rotterdam might seen as a shattered city with diverse images to var-
ied users, but it is this shattered image that could be seen as the hid-

⁸. Sennett. Boundaries and Borders, p. 1

and architecture behind. The changes in block morphology, typology, the
functional organization and management of social hierarchy can be seen
as a large collage. This collage is possible to strengthen the public realm
at a great scale. Truthfully this is easier written than done; the social qual-
ity of Rotterdams’ daily life still has to be improved. On the urban scale,
the disconnection between the urban blocks, as with the disconnection
of the ‘in-between’ space, should be addressed to effectively intensify
the use of public and private space. It is clear that all the block typolo-
gies have their qualities and their flaws. The perimeter block, which has
ideal conditions for the knowledge-based economy, is good but the scale
does not fit the “zeitgeist”. The modernist blocks show possibilities in the
management of the transition from public to collective to private. And
the post-modern blocks address the densification in urban blocks. These
diverse block typologies show the changing needs from society during
history. We now experience a large movement from suburban to urban;
this movement has been linked by different theorists to the shift from a
production-based economy to a knowledge-based economy.

On the urban block scale, it is now the challenge to reconnect the daily
life between diverse groups; meaning less separation and more inter-
twining to intensify the use of space. The main intention is to stimulate
activities; incentivise the spontaneous emerging of interaction (i.e. the
creation and exchange of knowledge). This asks not only for a mixture of
functions and diversity in the built and unbuilt scale, but importantly, the
possibility of temporality in architecture (reacting on the demands of an
endless changing society).

images
2. Google earth
5. by author, Niek Slijkerman
6. Palmboom en van den Bout (2009) Stedenbouwkundig plan Lijnbaanhoven, concept,
   Gemeente Rotterdam dS+v, 24-3-2009
7. by author, Niek Slijkerman
8. by author, bidam
9. Google street view
10. CoolSingel – Rotterdam, Stedenbouwkundigplan Lijnbaan, Urban Fabric en Steenhuis
    stedenbouw/landschap (2009), p 49
11. by author, Niek Slijkerman
12. Cultuurhistorische verkenning en analyse CoolSingel: Rotterdam, ABN Amro-
    blok/referentiekader voor herontwikkeling, Urban Fabric en Steenhuis stedenbouwandscap-
    (2009), p 34
14. by author, Niek Slijkerman
15. by author, bidam
GROUP 1: downtown athletic club, new york
DAMIEN DRIESSEN 1402927
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In Spring term 2012, the research and design studio of Public Realm will explore the meaning of public realm in the light of current urban redevelopments occurring in the city centre of Rotterdam, taking into account the progressive shifting from a period of ever increasing real estate pressure to the current situation, characterized by paying more attention to the transformation of the existing fabrics. The designated theme refers to the area fenced by the Coolsingel, Binnenwegplein, the Lijnbaan and Van Oldenbameveltplaats. It consists of an existing urban block at the south edge of the inner city after war re-structuring in the light of Van den Broek & Bakema Lijnbaan proposal, which hosts the early modern headquarter of ABN AMRO bank. The building curtains facing the Coolsingel and the Lijnbaan has to be preserved, while the inner core, actually filled in by a multi layer car parking, will be demolished, according to Rem Koolhaas/OMA proposal, called the “Kubus”. Southward, Jungerhans Tower permanence is discussable, according to student proposals. On a broader perspective, the city municipality has already expressed the intention to densify the Lijnbaankwartier, to attract the so-called “creative class”, defining an overall framework, which is part of the Studio delivered materials, according to which individual proposals have to fit. Students also have to investigate the most important work in progress design and the already delivered proposals in the nearby areas, as inspiring suggestions to criticize and/or develop further: Claus en Kaan Lijnbaan Masterplan, Kees Christiaanse Rotterdam Centre South Overview, UN Studio Post Office refurbishment, OMA New Municipal Office etc.