Reflection graduation project

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Studio

Name / Theme: Complex Projects – AMS MID CITY studio

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Flexible Work, Flexible Stay——The Residential Complex
the relationship between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A, U, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS).

The chair ambition of Complex studio is encouraging students to look critically at their surroundings and cultivate a strong, critical and analytical approach to the design process. This concept is essential for students to ask critical questions and engage intelligently in an increasingly complex world. The starting points of the intervention derive from the existing context and are to solve the issues in the city. The issues concerning different aspects of the city will be tackled and analyzed from the larger scale, like global level, national level or urban level, to the smaller level, building level. Under this frame, the design brief will not only inherit a city context combined with a historical and cultural background but also contribute to the development of the city.

The design background of the graduation studio is the Amsterdam city in 2050, taking into account future technological developments or urban innovations in the field of mobility, energy-water-waste resources and health facilities. Under such circumstance, Amsterdam has many challenges it needs to overcome in the next several decades. In the Msc3, we have made different-level mapping and full around research about the development of Amsterdam in 2050. In the Msc4, I together with my groupmates make the interventions responding to the future challenge.

My graduation project topic is flexible living and flexible working in 2050. My site is located in the Oud Zuid. I developed new urban scenarios and investigate architectural typologies for the City of Amsterdam in a time horizon 2050. There are several expansion plans in the history of Amsterdam including the Plan Zuid. Under those different urban planning policies in the different period, the lifestyle of residents also changed. Accordingly, the working-living space, where people locate their lifestyle, also changed. At present, most part of Oud Zuid is a residential area. In the future, Zuidas will become the new city centre so that people from different social classes will flow into Oud Zuid. And Oud Zuid will be divided into several superblocks. The status of Oud Zuid could not face the challenge in the future. Functionally this working-living complex will work as a social facility providing service to surrounding neighbourhood and help develop the Oud Zuid into a self-sufficient community.

Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.

In order to get a comprehensive overall understanding about the topic of the graduation studio and site, I began with the information gathering from a large scale about the Amsterdam to get to know the logic of city fabric. A research of the current city and site situation is needed. During the early phase of the research, my main methodologies are text-based and graphics research methodologies including praxeology method and typology. To do a future predict, it is important to study the historical development of Amsterdam and study the city context and typology. In Louis Durand's point of view, the type is defined as a combination of stable and changing
parameters. As Rossi stated in his book, *The architecture of the City (1966)*, we should rethink architecture concerning the city as a meaning of collective life, history, and reality instead of from a functional aspect. For this, I compared typologies of the city's urban planning and dwelling plan from the different time and tried to find out the relationship between urban planning and human working-living space. Furthermore, based on the future urban planning of Amsterdam designed by the city council, I can make some prediction about future working-living space. In the future, the boundaries between working and living will be blurred and people will work in a smaller level and a community level. The Oud Zuid will be self-sufficient. Thus, it requires a public program to meet the future urban demands, like commercial functions, community library, exhibition space. And the new program will integrate living and working space. They will be connected with shared facility instead of being separated.

Besides, some case study of relevant projects and typologies are also essential parts of the research. They will help make the design brief more realistic and functional and make me get a better understanding of how different functions are organized together.

**the relationship between research and design.**

Redmen & Mory (2009), defined research as a systematized effort to gain new knowledge. In my opinion, the architectural design process is comparable to a scientific approach, who both can start from research. Architectural research always oscillates between the fundamental level and the applied level, which never remains confined to one or another of the categories. The analytical results and the conclusion drawn after the research will become the foundation of the intervention. Thus, any decision I made during the design process should be according to a certain foundation so that the whole design process will be developed logically.

On the other hand, I can have my own subjective view and personal intervention towards the research results. It's unavoidable that there will be dilemmas during the design process. I should choose the direction of the design. For example, how and why are two important steps towards the final design results. Based in the background of the topic, how to solve the energy problem, with the development of productive force, how people live and work in the future, and so on. The answers could be different, and the connections between existing and intervention also differ. The personal design fascination together with the research results will impact the design process.

Elaboration on the relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project results.

In the Netherlands - and indeed most of the Western world - the prospect of a shrinking population and decreasing economic growth appear to be the most pressing issues. Town planning can greatly contribute to a more sustainable world, and the means it needs to do so are at the heart of the discipline, in the form of rational zoning, that is, the design of urban patterns that minimize the need for traffic. "Densification" is often promoted as a means to
achieve this - though, obviously, everything depends on where it occurs. Besides, in the future, the employment policy will be changed. More and more people will work more flexible especially the female employees and the elderly. Zuidas acting as a business district has to face the challenge of the transition of employment policy. And how is the old historic district like Oud Zuid going to change in the future under the change of employment policy? Under such circumstance, how to design a complex based on the city fabric which is more suitable for the future lifestyle is what I want to solve in this graduation project.

My project is to change an historical residential house into a living-working complex, providing public service like retails, library, exhibition, working space, etc. It is providing a possibility to solve the future problem: a growing number of people will become independent professionals and the urban nomads. Besides, it’s a trial of historical building’s renovation. I hope it could benefit to explore the means to reuse the heritage to meet the future demands.

**Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered in (i) doing the research, (ii, if applicable) elaborating the design and (iii) potential applications of the results in practice.**

Because the topic of the Complex Project is quite open, it's hard to find a starting point to do the research. Sometimes the decision is made in hurry but afterwards, I have to complete the storyline and make the whole research process logical. It's easy to get confused when Doing research on a large scale. There are too many aspects in the urban level. Thanks to the group debate, it makes the personal thinking more critical and comprehensive.

During the design process, there are several issues concerning historical values and building technology. Sometimes it’s hard to balance these two aspects. Because the project is based on the future scenarios, I easily got stuck in making decisions. For example, the issues could be whether it is good or not to blur the boundaries between working and living space, or how to organize the different function in a more rational way. After making the decision, the reasons and arguments should be solid. It’s hard to imagine the feelings from the perspective of the people in the future. Thus, it’s important to test variants and draw a conclusion. And not to be afraid of making mistakes.

According to the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Maslow used the terms "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "esteem", "self-actualization", and "self-transcendence" to describe the pattern that human motivations generally move through. The goal of Maslow's Theory is to attain the sixth level or stage: self-transcendent needs. In the future, people have the fifth level of needs: self-actualization. Under this circumstance, the definition of working and job will be different. That’s the foundation of my project. Thus, if the productive force is not sufficient enough, it is hard to maintain the working space as a public facility.