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Willem Baalbergen
Ephemeral Eternity or Eternal Ephemerality?
405 ROOMS AN ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL
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Graduation Plan

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools

Ephemeral Eternity or Eternal Ephemerality

P2 Tiles

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Graduation Plan
Radical Empiricism

Ever since I study architecture, I always have been very much interested in architectural theory and always enjoyed writing my essays and other texts. Rather than spending my graduation year on making one last ultimate design I wanted to exploit this last year to read a lot and thus expanding my academic knowledge and skills in abstract and analytic thinking. This, also in order to create a strong foundation for knowledge to be added in the future.

Moreover I always felt that I lacked knowledge on how things are perceived. The Architecture Thinking studio from the DSD on Radical Empiricism (launched under the title of Somaesthetics) offered me to both develop my skills in analytic and abstract thinking and to develop better understanding of the way in which architecture is being perceived and what architecture can do.

Title
Title of the project  Productive Space: NICHES
In reviewing the middle to be a compromise, architectural practice has the tendency towards the extremes, producing rhetorical architectural gestures and self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet dichotomies such as fixed/flexible, static/dynamic, reactive/pro-active could not provide for satisfactory solutions. Being overdetermined and overcoded, the former proves to be too slow to keep up with the pace of time, while its antitheses, in its indeterminacy, produces an architecture of mere spatial redundancy lacking the enabling constraints necessary for the use and appreciation of space as such.

Starting from the points of inflection (intrinsic singularities) rather than extremities (extrinsic singularities), this project tries to seek a more humble approach. In accepting that the truth is somewhere in between, an architecture departing from the middle – or the Deleuzian milieu – could create buildings with more humble, multiple optima. The middle finally breaks with vertical thinking (dialectics), and taps into horizontal thought (dialogics) instead. We need to start thinking from difference rather than identity. Thus one could argue that the middle is even more radical than any extremity and in its shift from vertical to horizontal thought even the antithesis which, up to now, has been avoided.

The design project will focus on the redesign of the old faculty of architecture in Delft which burnt to ashes in May 2008. Such a large educational institute is full of contradictions and paradoxes such as the tension between the wish for personal workspaces and the flexibility of shared workspace concepts, to name but one. Rather than celebrating the gap between the incompatible terms creating such paradoxes or turning them into dialectical syntheses (averages) these paradoxes could be avoided by starting from the middle. The main research question in this respect thus becomes: how could one start from the middle? What spatial concept would start from the
middle in order to avoid chicken or egg absurdities as presented by these paradoxes? Could architecture create or be a plane of consistency which, through its immanence, would engender intrinsic singularities to emerge?

**Goal**

The intention of the research and the design project is to develop my skills in critical, analytic and abstract thinking and to develop a better understanding of how we perceive things and thus what architecture can do. The goal design is to utilize it for the development of the above mentioned skills and to explore how architecture could engender intrinsic singularities. With the project itself I hope to be able to create a more humble architecture that is more than an average and thus develop an alternative in the debate on architectural positions.

**Process**

The methods intended to use are mainly literature research and research by design. Knowledge from theory and practice will be in a reciprocal relationship throughout the process of research and design. Spatial experiments in the form of models and drawings will be utilized to explore concepts and ideas developed from the literature research and ultimately this will feed back into the literature research and give new insights and new sources to tap into. As such there’s thus no real distinction between product and process for both are in a continuous reciprocal relationship. In order to make this happen I intend to keep a matrix of images, words, pieces of text, models, drawings, references etc. that will inspire me. From this matrix however, also new relationships and ideas can emerge by accidental and unforeseen combinations of its content. Another way of working I intend to continue working with is creating spatial exercises in physical models which I call Inflections (a term borrowed from Bernadr Cache). By coupling these models with their inverse I intend to create virtual extremities and define their vectors.
By making combinations between these virtual extremes also new vectors emerge. The resulting field of potential between these vectors thus becomes a relational space or a plane of consistency out of which change and temporal solutions could emerge.


Leupen, Bernard, *Frame and Generic Space* (Rotterdam, 010, 2006)


Relevance

This project tries to break with a tradition in the field of Architecture in which Architects think form a logic of the excluded middle thus creating a practise of oppositional swings. In trying to start from the included middle instead this graduation project seeks a more humble approach which starts with thinking from difference rather than identity. In this way this project contributes to a wider discussion on positions in architectural design and proposes an alternative that starts from the Deleuzian milieu instead in which architecture is considered to be relational. Moreover such a relational practice will also engender a more flexible less determinative architecture in which change becomes emergent relation. So the agenda of this graduation project is twofold. Not only it has an ideological agenda but also it tries to tackle practical problems such as flexibility by starting from the same way of thinking which is horizontal.

Time Planning

Week 36-41 Preparation for Venice & Working on Project
Week 42 With DSD @ Venice Bienale
Week 43 Preparation P3
Week 44-45 P3
WEEK 45 FINAL APPLICATION DATE FOR P4

Week 46-47 Working on Project
Week 48 Preparation P4
WEEK 49-50 P4
Week 51 Preparation P5
Week 52-1 Christmas Holiday
Week 2 Preparation P5
WEEK 3-5 P5
Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools
DSD: Architecture Thinking - AAA
graduation studio - MSc3
TUDelft Faculty of Architecture

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools

Tutors:
Andrej Radman
Marc Boumeester

Bo Hoogenberk
Dirk Huibers
Ellemieke van Vliet
Martje Roks
Michela Mattioni
Willem Baalbergen
Institut für Architektur
1962-1969
Berlin, Germany
Bernard Hermkes (highrise) & Hans Scharoun (lowrise)
Escola Técnica Superior de Arquitectura da Coruña (ETsac) 1973-1980
La Coruña, Spain
Rodolfo Ucha Donate, Juan Castañón & José Maria Laguna

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools - C4
Pavillon de Design de L'Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) 1992-1995
Montreal, Canada
Dan S. Hanganu, Architects

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools - A3
Fakulta Architektury
1964-1970
Prague, Czech Republic
František Germák, Gustav Paul, Jaroslav Paroutšek
George Gund Hall (Harvard GSD) 1968-1972 Cambridge (Massachusetts), USA John Andrews - Anderson - Baldwin

S.R. Crown Hall (IIT) 1950-1956 Chicago (Illinois), USA Ludwig Mies van der Rohe
Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo (FAU)
1966-1969
Sao Paulo, Brasil
Joao Batista Villanova Artigas

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools - BH
Die Bauakademie
1832-1836
Berlin, Germany
Karl Friedrich Schinkel

AHO Arkitektur- og
Designhøgskolen
1936-1938 & 2000-
2001
Oslo, Norway
Oslo Byarkitektkontor
w/ Harald Eng. &
Jarmund/ Vigsnes AS

Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools - D1
Hochschule für Gestaltung
1953-1955
Ulm, Germany
Max Bill

FIU School of Architecture
1999-2003
Miami (Florida), USA
Bernard Tschumi
Ephemeral Eternity or Eternal Ephemerality
Ephemeral Eternity or Eternal Ephemerality
THE ARCHITECTURAL OXYMORON
The Transition from Vertical Towards Horizontal Thinking in Architecture
ABSTRACT

In judging the middle to be a compromise, architectural practice has the tendency towards the extremes, producing rhetorical architectural gestures and self-fulfilling prophecies. After the coining of the term modernity in 1863 by Beaudelaire, as being the conjoining of the ephemeral and fleeting with the eternal and immutable Architecture has wavered from opposition to opposition. However oppositions, up to now, could not provide for satisfactory solutions.

Whereas modernism still tried to conjoin the “ephemeral and the fleeting” conditions of modernity with the “eternal and immutable” conditions of architecture, postmodernism merely celebrated these conditions without even bothering to provide for answers. In that sense, both modernism and postmodernism as such can be regarded as tendencies towards extremes. Moreover modernism was even able to produce extremes within its own thinking. Hence functionalism claimed that every function could have its own single optimum. Thus the Raumplan provided many functions in an array of single optima while the Plan Libre, in its spatial redundancy, provided many functions, yet no optimum at all.

In desperate attempts to catch up with their Zeitgeists, architects thus sought answers in polarities. Almost negativist like: If not A than B! Architects thus seem to avoid the middle. However, accepting that the truth might be somewhere in between, the middle - or the architectural oxymoron - could provide the best of both worlds. Thus creating buildings with more humble, multiple optima. The middle finally breaks with vertical thinking, which remained predominant in architecture, and taps into horizontal thought, which is thinking from difference rather than identity. Thus one could argue that the middle is even more radical than any extremity and in its shift from vertical to horizontal thought even the antithesis which, up to now, has been avoided.
INTRODUCTION

In judging the middle to be a compromise, architectural practice has the tendency towards the extremes, producing rhetorical architectural gestures and self-fulfilling prophecies. Ever since the uprise of modernity, architects find themselves confronted with questions related to the paradoxical relationship between the conditions of modernity and the intrinsic conditions of architecture. In their quests for the right answers architects tend to choose for extremes leaving the middle obsolete while the middle could produce rather humble architecture with multiple optima. Architecture's seeming anxiety of the middle however, is based on a misconception of the middle as an average. For polarities are based on vertical thinking the middle should rather be conceived of as a break with this vertical thought. Thus the middle might even be more radical than any extreme.

Whereas modernism tried to resolve the paradox presented by modernity through new aesthetics compatible with the era of the machine, postmodernism simply embraced the paradox, celebrating its aporia. The negativist critique on modernism presented by postmodernism simply speaks in binary terms: on OR off, yes OR no. What we are now left with in architectural theory is a theoretical framework based precisely on such Hegelian Dialectics in which the middle is a mere syntheses between thesis and antithesis. Consequently things can be nes or yo but never yes AND no there seems to be no other middle than the hybrid.

This paper will review the emergence of modernism and postmodernism precisely from this viewpoint – the middle - thus giving a new insight in the emergence of these two major movements from the past century, and their relation to the paradox in architecture presented by modernity. In this way this paper tries to map the dialectical landscape surrounding contemporary architectural theory in order to provide a basis to start from the middle instead. Moreover reviewing them from the middle will show how much they are the same in being different.
In order to understand the uprise of modernism and postmodernism its important, first of all, to turn to the conditions of modernity. After all, both major movements from the past century depart from these conditions. What’s of particular interest here is the paradoxical relationship with architecture that these conditions brought about. For the definition of these conditions David Harvey (1990, p.10) turns to the coining of the term modernity by Charles Baudelaire in his essay The Painter of Modern Life published in 1863. ‘Modernity’, says Baudelaire, ‘is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is the one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable’ (Harvey, 1990, p.10). Harvey takes up this definition to continue on this ‘dual formulation’ of modernity in order to create a better understanding of ‘some of the conflicting meanings of modernism’ (Harvey, 1990, p.10). Because, Harvey states:

‘The history of modernism as an aesthetic movement has wavered from one side to the other of this dual formulation, often making it appear as if it can, as Lionel Trilling (1960) once observed, swing around in meaning, until it is facing in the opposite direction.’ (Harvey, 1990, p.10)

Baudelaire’s notion of modernity as the conjoining of the ephemeral and fleeting with the eternal and immutable is easy to translate to architecture in particular. Probably this conjoining is the true nature of modernism in architecture. The ephemeral and the fleeting being the new conditions entailed by new social, technological and economical developments and the eternal and immutable being the intrinsic conditions of architecture. This ‘dual formulation’ - or paradox - is at heart of the problematique of modernism since the oppositional swing in meaning that Trilling observed is precisely what modernism did.
To take an example of the outcome of this paradox one could look at the Raumplan (Adolf Loos, 1870-1933) and the Plan Libre (Le Corbusier, 1887-1965). Although both concepts are tributary to modernism they are genuinely different. One could say, taking again Baudelaire's definition of modernity, the Plan Libre adheres more to the ephemeral and fleeting while the Raumplan adheres more to the eternal and immutable. This exemplifies the paradox modernity entailed. Departing both from the functionalist paradigm and searching for spatial optima for their functions le Corbusier and Loos ended up in completely different corners of the same universe. Whereas the Raumplan would provide many functions in an array of single optima the Plan Libre, searched for the conjoining of many functions in one single optimum through spatial redundancy.

Functionalism's preoccupation with single optima made it look as if every question would have its own single solution. Yet up to now, even with our advanced
computers, this has not been proved to be true. Recent research in dynamic systems theories however show how for instance children grow and learn not from a predetermined genetic code multiplied by external factors – nature/nurture – but rather through a cascade of processes put in motion by larger and smaller effects like temperature, light and gravity (Thelen & Smith, 2005, p.265). This unfolding of a cascade of processes is very much similar to transduction, as Massumi describes it. Transduction, according to Massumi, is ‘the transmission of an impulse of virtuality from one actualization to another , and across them all’ (Massumi, 2002, p.42). Hence such transmission – transduction – would produce the unfolding of a cascade of processes. ‘The Enlightenment project’ however, ‘took it as axiomatic that there was only one possible answer to any question’ (Harvey, 1990, p.27). This preoccupation with single optima made it impossible for functionalist projects to bare the potential of such an unfolding of effects in a cascade of processes. The only possible outcome
for functionalism would be the one envisioned by the architect thus becoming self-fulfilling-prophecies that had to be fulfilled in order to be successful. The sheer fact however that any project is always subject to external factors that are impossible to be controlled by the architect, made these projects highly unstable. Take for instance the Unite d’Habitation in Marseille. The same concept was applied in several housing developments in different cities including Berlin, however here it became less of a success. Twice the same optimum, applied in different localities, one became a success (Marseille) the other didn’t (Berlin). The concept turned out to be so much culturally determined and thus culturally dependent that the Unite as a prototype, didn’t function as envisioned by the architect.

Another, much less innocent, example of modernity’s paradox is the notion of creative destruction. This notion ‘derived from the practical dilemmas that faced the implementation of the modernist project’ (Harvey, 1990, p.16). After all, how could a new world be created ‘without destroying much that had gone before’ (Harvey, 1990, p.16). Moreover the modernists themselves were very much aware of this, as Harvey points out, modern thinkers from Goethe to Mao have stated that ‘you simply cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs (Harvey, 1990, p.16).

In a way the idea of creative destruction, or at least abandoning what has gone before for the sake of progress and change reverberates in Brian Massumi’s descriptions of change. ‘It is only by leaving history to reenter the immance of the field of potential that change can occur’ for ‘change is emergent relation’ Massumi says (Massumi, 2002, p.77). Although, like the modernists, Massumi advocates a break with history there’s also a very big difference. Whereas Massumi states that change is immanent and thus in any sense unrelated to history whatsoever, while the break with history advocated by modernism was indeed relative. Modernism didn’t escape history in order to return to the immanence of the field of potential its emergence was rather a rupture with history and by that retained ‘a necessary reference to the already-constituted’ (Massumi, 2002, p.70). Moreover one could even say that modernism
destroyed the field of potential making it impossible to reenter its immanence.

Being a break, in its reference to the already-constituted modernism preserved a 'crucial role for formations of power' (Massumi, 2002, p.70). And the formation of power necessary to implement the modernist project lies at heart of its problems. As Horkheimer and Adorno write in their The Dialectic of Enlightenment (1972) the logic of enlightenment was one of domination and oppression. This was off course an inevitable outcome of the forceful break with history. That's also why postmodernism in the end wanted to abandon the enlightenment project entirely, for the sake of human emancipation (Harvey, 1990, p. 14).

Even though modernists adduced the Zeitgeist, which would be immanent in their present, as their main motivation for change one could argue whether the implementation of modernism truly was a result of the Zeitgeist and question whether the Zeitgeist modernists adhered to was but a ‘contingent effect of that which it conditioned’ (Massumi, 2002, p.77). In other words, one could even question whether the modernist project was truly immanent or if it became a self-fulfilling-prophesy. ‘Rather than a definition, what you have is a proposition, less in the logical sense than in the sense of an invitation’ (Massumi, 2009, p.2). Modernism however precisely was full of such definitions over propositions.

Although modernism could be regarded as an attempt towards resolving the new questions and paradoxes entailed by modernity it only raised even more questions and paradoxes. This paved the way for a negativist critique of modernism. That critique would become postmodernism.

!? –› ?!

Returning to Baudelaire’s definition of the condition of modernity as the conjoining of the ephemeral and the fleeting with the eternal and immutable and
hence modernism as an attempt to resolve this paradox, we can see the relationship with postmodernity. For in this definition postmodernity should be regarded to be only on one side of this dichotomy, being the ephemeral and fleeting (Harvey, 1990, p.44). Rather than searching eternal answers and trying to resolve the paradox, postmodernism embraced the paradox, or as Massumi puts it, celebrated the aporia (Massumi, 2002, p.69). Thus, postmodernism, totally accepted the ephemeral, fragmented, discontinued and chaotic and didn’t try in anyway to transcend or counteract it with a notion of the eternal or immutable (Harvey, 1990, p.44), as modernism did.

Postmodernism simply saw modernism’s struggle with the conjoining of the modern paradox and saw how this struggle only raised even more questions and more struggles. The only answers modernism seemed to have given to this paradox were new paradoxes. Its implementation through creative destruction is rather exemplary here. As a result modernism had become a rather oppressive movement. Hence, this was the main issue for the global movements of resistance against ‘the hegemony of high modernist culture’ in the course of 1968, out of which eventually postmodernism would emerge (Harvey, 1990, p. 38).

In order to escape the oppression of high-modernism postmodernism did away with any meta-language, meta-narrative, or meta-theory for universal and eternal truths for, if they existed at all, they couldn’t be specified (Harvey, 1990, p.45). This rejection of meta-narratives also returns in Hassan’s schema of differences between modernism and postmodernism, where he opposes the ‘grande histoire’ to the ‘petite histoire’ (Hassan, 1985, pp.123-124).

Postmodernism’s break with meta-narratives – or grand histoires – also retains a reference to the definition Scott Lash gives for universalism as a mode of critique. Lash explains how the universal is a ‘critique of the particular’ through the universal (Lash, 2002, pp. 5-6). As an example he turns to the late Marx, ‘in which capitalism is seen as a particular criticized from the universalism of Marxian theory’. Whereas
modernism, taking this definition, can be regarded as universal, the postmodern tradition may than be reviewed as the opposite. Hence postmodernism would be a critique of the universal through the particular.

To elucidate this we can return to the notion of the 1968 ‘resistance against the hegemony of high modernism’. In turn postmodernism wanted to ‘give people what they want’ (Harvey, 1990, p.60) rather than lumbering them with “enlightenment”. Because, as Venturi put it in the New York Times (22 October 1972), ‘Disney World is nearer to what people want than what architects have ever given them’ (Harvey, 1990, p.60). Hence, Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour turn to the study of ‘popular and vernacular landscapes’ such as commercial strips (Learning from Las Vegas) and Suburbs (Learning from Levitown) (Harvey, 1990, p.40). Postmodernism can therefore also be regarded as an anti-avant-gardist movement (Harvey, 1990, p.76).

‘Refusing (…) all authoritative or supposedly immutable standards of aesthetic judgement, postmodernism can judge the spectacle only in terms of how spectacular it is.’ (Harvey, 1990, pp.56-57)

In rejecting both the immutable and avant-garde and in celebrating the ephemeral and fleeting, postmodernism also became a movement pursuing ‘instant impacts’. This however also entailed a ‘parallel loss of depth’ (Harvey, 1990, p.58). Earlier Frederic Jameson (1984) already described postmodern architecture as ‘contrived depthlessness’ (Harvey, 1990, p.58). In his eponymous essay on the Generic City Rem Koolhaas retains a similar position for postmodernism. ‘Postmodernism’, according to Koolhaas, ‘is not a doctrine based on a highly civilized reading of architectural history but a method, a mutation in professional architecture that produces results fast enough to keep pace with the Generic City’s development’ (Koolhaas, 1995, p.1262).

As Koolhaas shows us this reading of postmodernism is very much related
to its preoccupation with the ephemeral and the fleeting. The only way to have architecture keeping pace with the ephemeral and fleeting seemed to be by speeding it up. Or maybe, in the case of postmodernism, its more correct to say to have it at least not slowing down. Not only is this related to the idea of universalism as a mode of critique, but also to Manuel DeLanda’s idea’s of the ‘linkages between the micro and the macro’ – and the question of mechanisms of (causal) emergence – in relation to social theory. Related to the emergence of social groups DeLanda (2006, pp.32-33) explains how the group as a whole – or as an assemblage – is related to its parts and how its parts are in turn related to the whole.

Similar to the universal-particular/particular-universal dichotomy for critique, based on Scott Lash, one could distinct between an macro-micro and a micro-macro approach of society for modernism and postmodernism. Here, micro and macro refer to the scale of a social entity – or assemblage, as DeLanda calls them. Micro then refers to the smaller parts of a social entity that constitute the group, organization or family as a whole – which is the macro. In this sense modernism would clearly adhere the macro-micro approach and postmodernism would adhere the micro-macro approach. The former might ontologically be characterized as top-down and the latter as bottom-up (DeLanda, 2006, p.32). It’s important to note however that Delanda doesn’t see salvation in either approach for the two are always in a reciprocal relationship:

‘We need to elucidate not only micro-macro mechanisms, those behind the emergence of the whole, but also the macro-micro mechanisms through which a whole provides its component parts with constraints and resources, placing limitations on what they can do while enabling novel performances.’ (DeLanda, pp. 34-35)

Its easy now to understand why postmodernism mobilized the micro-macro mechanism. For, as DeLanda says, ‘spatial scale does have temporal consequences’
(DeLanda, 2006, p.42). Similar to Newton’s second law of motion, DeLanda explains that ‘the larger the social entity targeted for change, the larger the amount of resources that must me mobilized’. In it’s aim for instant effects, for postmodernism it was easier to broach the micro rather than the macro. Moreover this seemed the only logical consequence of emphasizing the ephemeral and fleeting from Beaudelaire’s definition of modernity.

It’s clear, however, that the paradox brought to the fore by modernity also by merely celebrating it, as postmodernism did, doesn’t provide any solution either, for the paradox is still present in contemporary architectural debates. For instance in parametricism the next step would be to speed up architecture and in a way return to the eternal and immutable conditions of modernity (finding one single truth through parameters) by conjuring away the eternal and immutable condition of architecture itself (making architecture interactive and movable). This would however retain the paradox. If we take the one side of Baudelaire’s definition as the new modern condition and the other as the intrinsic conditions of architecture than modernism would try to conjoin them by addressing the ephemeral and fleeting through the eternal and immutable. Hence, speeding up architecture itself would turn this around and the eternal and immutable would be addressed through the ephemeral and fleeting. It would simply turn the synthesis around but it would remain a synthesis. But than, how to approach this paradox in stead?

?! → !!

The paradox of modernity is rather tenacious and introduced some importunate problems and pitfalls. After reviewing the emergence of modernism and postmodernism the conclusion must be that it’s impossible to overcome this paradox through the conjoining of incompatible terms – as did modernism – nor is it sufficient
to merely celebrate the aporia – as did postmodernism. In other words, it's insufficient to think of this paradox in dialectical terms in which its synthesis could build a bridge nor is it sufficient to think of this paradox from aporetics and merely celebrate the gap. The paradox should be approached from the middle in stead, which would be neither building a bridge nor celebrating the gap. In stead starting from the middle will be starting from the problem itself rather than the terms defining it. Its necessary to elucidate this a little bit.

'What would it mean to give a logical consistency to the in-between? It first would mean realigning with a logic of relation. For the in-between, as such, is not a middling being but rather a being of the middle – the being of a relation. A positioned being, central, middling, or marginal, is a term of a relation.' (Massumi, 2002, p.70)

Building on Deleuze Massumi states that the relation 'has an ontological status' of its own. The relation is a term itself rather than the middling of the terms defining the relation, for only than we can 'step towards conceptualizing change as anything more or other than a negation, deviation, rupture or subversion' (Massumi, 2002, p.70). Which was off course the case with both modernism and postmodernism. This refers also back to the notion drawn earlier from Massumi that change is immanent and also to the notion that a complete rupture would destroy the field of potential from which change could emerge. In this sense, being in the middle also means being in the midst of such a field of potential. Hence the middle is purely relational.

This in-between condition – or middle – that Massumi describes is also closely related to the eco-logic that Guattari describes in his essay The Three Ecologies (1989). Guattari’s eco-logic is ‘a logic of intensities’ that ‘concerns itself solely with the movement and intensity of evolutive processes’ rather than a logic of discursive sets that seek ‘to delimit its objects’ (Guattari, 1989, p.4). Note here the relationship with
the immanence of change that Massumi describes. Moreover Guattari gives, from this eco-logic a description of the tension between small and ‘large scale struggles’ that is similar to DeLanda’s distinction between micro-macro and macro-micro approaches. Like DeLanda Guattari makes also a statement that we should put emphasize neither solely on the former nor on the latter:

‘The objection might be, of course, that large-scale struggles are not necessarily in synchrony with ecological praxes and the micro-politics of desire. But this is precisely the point. Not only is it necessary not to homogenize the various levels of practice – not to join them under the aegis of some transcendent instance; we have also to engage them in processes of heterogenesis.’ (Guattari, 1989, p.6)

To return now to the emergence of modernism and postmodernism we can conclude that whereas modernism introduced ‘large-scale struggles’ that were not ‘in synchrony with the micro-politics of desire’ postmodernism became precisely a critique of this. Postmodernism’s main issue with modernism was precisely its universalism and homogenizing effects that oppressed the ‘micro-politics of desire’. However postmodernism, in turn, addressed solely the particular – or micro. Hence both modernism and postmodernism can be accused of not addressing the relational, intentional and reciprocal conditions of the middle. In contrast modernism and postmodernism merely adhere to oppositions – the terms that constitute the paradox – and to the opposition itself.

Thus we can conclude that modernism and postmodernism, although being oppositional, both departed from the same mode of thinking. A mode of thinking that is vertical, a mode which is thinking from identity rather than difference (Radman, 2011, p.1). However rather trite, this verticality manifests itself best in the ontological characterization of modernism as top-down and postmodernism as bottom-up. This is to say that starting from the middle cannot be an average for it entails a shift from
vertical towards horizontal thinking in architecture. By horizontal thinking is meant a thinking from the middle, the problem itself. This shift entails a shift from hierarchical oppositional and dialectical thinking towards a flat, non-hierarchical, relational thinking. Hence it also means a shift from the logic of an excluded middle towards ‘a logic of the included middle in which black and white are indistinct, in which the beautiful coexists with the ugly, the inside with the outside, the good object with the bad’ (Guattari, 1989, p.7). This would entail oxymorons.

CONCLUSION

Ever since the uprise of modernity, architecture is confronted with a pertinacious paradox producing oppositional swings from one extremity to another. Architects thus present a reflex towards extremes. Following the logic of the excluded middle they judge the middle to be something mediocre. However, the middle is more than an average or a hybrid. It’s important for architects to be aware of this.

After reviewing the emergence of modernism and postmodernism we can conclude that neither oppositional swing provided satisfactory solutions, for they maintained the paradox of modernity. Moreover this paradox is the true nature of the critiques and problems of both modernism and postmodernism. Modernism, in it's striving for eternal and single truths, became simply too homogenizing, universal and oppressive. Postmodernism on the other hand became an agency of capitalism producing fast-food like architecture – an architecture that's producing results fast enough to keep up with the ephemeral and fleeting conditions of modernity.

Since these oppositional swings depart from vertical thinking a shift towards the middle would entail a shift towards horizontal thinking in stead. Horizontal thinking than, starts from the paradox itself rather than the oppositional terms constituting it. In the middle there is no need for oppositional swings, for – as Massumi showed –
change is immanent. Moreover we learned from Guattari that it’s more about a logic of an included rather than an excluded middle where oppositions can coexist and be indistinct. Thus there’s no need to built bridges nor to celebrate gaps anymore. Architecture could become architecture again.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


P2 tiles
Productive Space: **NICHES**

In reviewing the middle to be a compromise, architectural practice has the tendency towards the extremes, producing rhetorical architectural gestures and self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet dichotomies such as fixed/flexible, static/dynamic, reactive/pro-active could not provide for satisfactory solutions. Being overdetermined and overcoded, the former proves to be too slow to keep up with the pace of time, while its antitheses, in its indeterminacy, produces an architecture of mere spatial redundancy lacking the enabling constraints necessary for the use and appreciation of space as such.

Starting from the points of inflection (intrinsic singularities) rather than extremities (extrinsic singularities), this project tries to seek a more humble approach. In accepting that the truth is somewhere in between, an architecture departing from the middle – or the Deleuzian milieu – could create buildings with more humble, multiple optima. The middle finally breaks with vertical thinking (dialectics), and taps into horizontal thought (dialogics) instead. We need to start thinking from difference rather than identity. Thus one could argue that the middle is even more radical than any extremity and in its shift from vertical to horizontal thought even the antithesis which, up to now, has been avoided.

The design project will focus on the redesign of the old faculty of architecture in Delft which burnt to ashes in May 2008. Such a large educational institute is full of contradictions and paradoxes such as the tension between the wish for personal workspaces and the flexibility of shared workspace concepts, to name but one. Rather than celebrating the gap between the incompatible terms creating such paradoxes or turning them into dialectical syntheses (averages) these paradoxes could be avoided by starting from the middle. The main research question in this respect thus becomes: how could one start from the middle? What spatial concept would start from the middle in order to avoid chicken or egg absurdities as presented by these paradoxes? Could architecture create or be a plane of consistency which, through its immanence, would engender intrinsic singularities to emerge?
Diagram showing how Niches work from the milieu
Just-Off-Geometry

Toyo Ito, Tama Art Library, 2007

OXYMORON/PARADOX

Gijs van Vaerenbergh, Reading between the Lines, 2011

Rorschach Inkblot Test

Immanence

Gijs van Vaerenbergh, Upside dome, 2010

Spacegroup, Oslo Central Station, 2008

Atelier, Kempe Thill, Europan 5 R’dam, 1999
Isometric drawing of possible matrix 2
The possibility of a building
Chrystallization

Anne Holtrop, The House of Glass Was Suddenly All Solide Walls, 2006

Epidermal Cell

Void

Jhrrik Ouburg, Europan 11 Havenkwartier, 2011

David Hockney, My Mother, Bradford Yorkshire, 4th of may 1982, Polaroid collage, 142.1 x 59.6cm

Niches

Vincent de Rijk, Blok B/V, 2010

Henri Labrouste, Bibliotheque St. Genevieve, 1850
Charged void 1
3000 people 3000 chairs 3000 tables

Relational gradient 1

Relational gradient 2 (inverse)

Charged void 2
3000 people 3000 chairs 3000 tables
Artificial Landscape

Frank Lloyd Wright, Guggenheim Museum NY, 1959

OMA, Jussieu Library, 1992

M.C. Escher, Waterfall, 1961, lithograph, 38 x 30 cm

Aoki Jun, Fiber, 20??

Sou Fujimoto, House NA, 2011

Anne Holtrop, Trail House, 2010

Charged Void

Anne Holtrop, Trail House, 2010

Anne Holtrop, Trail House, 2010
Model study 1, Tectonic Matrices
Model study 2, Stereotomic Matrices
Model study 3, 3D Matrix or Ephemeral Substance
Matrix

Loose fit, tight fit, NO FIT

Peter Zumthor, Meelfabriek Leiden, 2010

Shigeru Ban, Furniture House, 1995

Bas Princen, Former Sugarcrane Cairo, 2009, 35x26 cm

Yves Lion, Domus Demain, 1984

Robert Rauschenberg, Pilgrim, 1950

Mixed mediums with wooden chair, ca. 79 x 54 x 19 in.

Buol & Zünd Architekten, Musicians’ Apartment, 2011

Louis Kahn, Phillips Exeter Academy Library, 1972
Modelstudy, Vertical Matrix

Modelstudy 4, 3D Matrix Space

Modelstudy, Just-off-geometry, Distorted grid 2
Floorplan 1:500
Elevation 1:500
Ecologies of Architecture
Position Paper: Research Methods

Ecologies of Architecture

Realigning the epistemes with a logic of relation

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TUDelft: DSD graduation studio, ArchitectureThinking: AAA,
The Asignifying Affordance of Assemblage
INTRODUCTION

The aim of this position paper is to position the research and design of this graduation project in relation to existing, so-called epistemes within the field of Architecture which are: typology, phenomenology, semiology and praxeology. These epistemes are frames of thought in the margin between ‘objective’ scientific research approaches and the more ‘subjective’ positions taken by the architect. However, rather than starting from the premise of either of these epistemes this graduation project starts from the logic of relations (the Deleuzian milieu). So instead of positioning the research within the framework of these epistemes, the aim of this paper will be instead to reposition and realign these epistemes within the mode of thinking of this studio.

LOGIC OF RELATIONS

Although even the scientific nature of Architecture is often subject to debate, too much emphasize has been put to Architecture as a science of objects. On the other side of the spectrum we find the social sciences that we might, in this sense, characterize as the sciences of subjects. What tends to be forgotten in this traditional scientific dichotomy is the reciprocity between object and subject. Taking into account that action and perception are inseparable within the field of architecture, such a distinction becomes incomprehensible for both action and perception as well as object and subject are intricately entwined.

Rather than starting from this, and other, dichotomies, the aim of the AAA studio (launched under the title of Somaesthetics) is to start from the middle (milieu) instead. This middle, however, should not be conceived of as an average, for ‘the in-between, as such, is not a middling being but rather a being of the middle – the being of a relation’ (Massumi, 2002, p.70). This way of thinking thus means to realign with a logic of relation, or eco-logic as described by Guattari, which is ‘a logic of intensities’ that ‘concerns itself solely with the movement and intensity of evolutive processes’ (Guattari, 1989, p.4). Thus, the traditional object-subject schism becomes obsolete. Rather we should think of this in relational terms.

DIALOGICS, IMMANENCE AND EMERGENCE

Thinking from a logic of relation also means leaving Hegelian dialectics in favor of dialogics. Dialectics can be reviewed as a vertical mode of thinking: linear thinking that starts from identities and absolutes and follows a logic of an excluded middle. Rather this research and design project tries to address a horizontal, non-linear mode of thinking: a mode of thinking that starts from difference and relations and follows a logic of an included middle.

In a lecture delivered in 2012 at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Richard Sennet refers to this as dialogics. Whereas dialectical reasoning looks at situations in a problem solving manner which seeks to find closure – thesis, antithesis, synthesis – dialogics, according to Sennet operates in a problem finding manner and thus focusses more on the process itself rather than its closure (Sennet, 2012). Like the logic of relation defines change as ‘emergent relation’ (Massumi, 2002, p.77) rather than a ‘negation, deviation, rupture or subversion’ (Massumi, 2002, p.70) the dialogue resultant of dialogic reasoning similarly creates a field of potential from which solutions might emerge.

This dialogical reasoning also is the basis for the research method used for this
Attractors

- Silent, muted, quiet
- Good acoustics, not too much noise
- Motivational noise (people discussing)
- Noisy (not to understand)
- Inspirational
- Interactive
- Stimulating
- Ongoing
- No distractions

SOUND
- Loud, echo
- Noise (not to understand)
- Bright space
- Medium light
- Dark
- Warm
- Cool
- Fresh (air)
- Monochrome
- Colourful
- Polychrome
- Serene
- Calm
- Strict
- Serious
- Playful
- Vibrant
- Nice/cheerful
- Relaxing/loose
- Cosy
- Intimate
- Gezellig
- Personal
- Informal
- Like home
- Inspiring
- Interactive
- Stimulating
- Ongoing
- No distractions

ILLUMINATION

COLOUR

MOOD
However it should rather be called a way of working because it would not be in line with a logic of relation to employ a systematic and established procedure – a method – for this would follow a linear way of thinking. Rather this project follows a heuristic approach where knowledge is produced through trial-and-error. In this respect research by design becomes very important for this project. Closely intertwined with literature research this process of research by design should create a reciprocal dialogue similar to dialogic reasoning, thus creating a field of potential, emergent solutions.

PHENOMENOLOGY: SENSORY PROPERTIES VS SENSORY CAPACITIES

With the studio’s emphasize on the perception of architecture, phenomenology, of all epistemes, probably comes closed to this research. Phenomenology too takes into account that perception involves the entire body and not just the eye (Avermaete, Havik & Teerds, p.113). The focus on the role of the body in perceiving the environment in phenomenology seems to address a reciprocal object-subject relationship. With its emphasize on the role of imagination and memory, however, phenomenology retains the object-subject schism for it still takes the object (environment) as a subject of study and subsequently tries to find out what this does to the subject. In phenomenology the emphasize is on the sensory properties of the environment rather than its sensory capacities.

In stead of the eco-logic as proposed by Guattari, phenomenology is not a ‘logic of intensities’ but rather a ‘logic of discursive sets that seek to delimit its objects’ (Guattari, 1989, p.4). The phenomenological object-subject relationship is thus characterized by one-way-traffic and doesn’t take into account the reciprocity of this relationship in which the body acting on the environment is equally important in sensory perception. Guattari therefor regards ‘the apprehension of a psychical fact as inseparable from the enunciative assemblage that brings it into being.’ (Guattari, 1989, p.1).

PRAXEOLOGY: FUNCTION VS AFFORDANCE

An alternative for Phenomenology which would address this reciprocal relationship would be to focus on our environment’s sensory capacities rather than its properties. The focus will than shift from function to affordance. The concept of affordances was introduced by the psychologist James Jerome Gibson in the late ‘70’s. Gibson defined affordances as that what the environment ‘offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes’ (Gibson, 1979, p.127). Affordances, thus, truly start from a logic of relations, they start from the reciprocity between user and environment. ‘Gibson is concerned with the world at the level of ecology, in which animal and environment form an integrated system of mutual constraint’ (Braund, 2010, p.2).

Not only does the concept of affordances pave the way for an alternative for the phenomenological approach, also it provides an alternative for the episteme of praxeology. Rather than studying an object’s functions one should take into account what it is that the object affords.

This shift from functions towards affordances means a huge difference in the way we start to design things. Now one doesn’t start by analyzing the different functions of the brief and try to equip them with what functionalism would claim to be the best solution for those functions but rather one will start from the relation between the environment and its use and study what it is that affords a certain use.
Fig. 1
Diagrams of Art and Architecture Schools: typological research organised around diagrams in a way that resembles the periodic table of elements. Image by Willem Baalbergen

Fig. 2
Phasespace of a dynamic system 1: mapping of the change of color in a chemical clock (Belousov Zhabotinsky reaction). Image by Willem Baalbergen

Fig. 3
Phasespace of a dynamic system 2: mapping of the movement of a pendulum towards its attractor state. Image by Willem Baalbergen
This approach, therefore, doesn’t claim to have such one single optimum but has multiple optima instead by virtue of what the space affords. The space than, doesn’t become overcoded with linguistic and praxeological functions thus limiting its options but becomes open for different interpretations.

Within this studio we thus do not start by analyzing the brief’s functions. We do not start from spatial properties but from spatial capacities in stead. In order to do this one of our group members made a questionnaire for the users of our future designs which’s purpose is to find out what spatial capacities (affordances) are desirable for a certain use.

**SEMIOLGY: LINGUISTIC SIGNIFIERS VS ASIGNIFYING AFFECT**

The concept of affordances brings us also to reposition the episteme of semiology. Where thinking from function would be truly signifying, the concept of affordances brings us to a mode of perception that is asignifying instead. Functions and their derivative concepts – e.g. sitting as function and chair as concept – are linguistic signifiers. The affordance on the other hand focuses on the affect, which is asignifying. The affect slightly differs from affection. Whereas affection is individual, the affect is pre-individual. A single affect can produce several affections amongst different people (Radman & Boumeester, 2012, p.12). The affect mediates the individual and the milieu, ‘affect gets oriented along a series of of processes of becoming in order to become (conscious) emotion.’ (Shaviro, 2006).

This is to say that any semiological approach to design would try to work on the plane of affection rather than the affect. However meaning is produced by individuals, not by architects (Radman & Boumeester, 2012, p.12). Architects can only act on the plane of the affect, for instance through affordances. This is what makes this approach asignifying. Meaning is not a derivative of ready-made concepts or functions that are produced linguistically – signifying – but rather meaning becomes a derivative of the pre-individual affect – asignifying intensity – produced by affordances.

**TYPOLOGY: REDUCTIONIST ESSENTIALISM VS GENEALOGY OF ASSEMBLAGES**

The essentialism of the typo-morphological episteme flattens al differences. Through reduction it tries to capture the essence of historical references, that are considered to be types (Engel & Claessens, 2007, p.134). By this the typological approach, again, tries to define the essential properties of objects and claim that this “historical essence” would engender the emergence of ‘endless formal variants’ (Engel & Claessens, 2007, p.134). However this essentialism in typology would undermine the notion that all form is an outcome of the intricate interplay of many forces and intensities. As in dynamic systems theory is stated that ‘form is a product of process’ (Thelen & Smith, 2006 p.271).

Within this studio the emphasis will therefor be on history and typology in a continuous unfolding of flows and processes. Therefor history will be regarded to be genealogy and types are regarded not to derive from a certain essential or ideal type but rather as belonging to a certain family of diagrams (Fig. 2). Like the table of elements buildings can thus be characterized, positioned and compared but are not brought down to a certain (difference flattening) essence.
CONCLUSION

This position paper tried to critically reflect on existing epistemes within the field of architecture. However rather than positioning this research within these epistemes this paper tried to realign these epistemes with the scope of the research and design studio.

The modus operandi within the studio therefor cannot be regarded to be following a certain method following such an episteme nor should it be reviewed as a new episteme with another method on its own. The approach within this studio is heuristic in stead. Research by design therefor is very important as a way of working. Knowledge is thus produced through experimentation and design in a close relationship with literature research.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Restoring Reciprocity
RESTORING RECIPROCITY
in the Contemporary City

“OBSTRUCTION #3: COMPLETE FREEDOM” (van Trier, 2003)

Was it not the modern project that separated the individual from the collective and the collective from the individual. Whereas it’s hard to make distinctions between individual and collective domains in old city centers drawn up in maps such as the most famous Rome map by Nolli, similar maps made from modern cities show an easily represented binary opposition between the built (individual) form and the open (collective) space.

Every student of architecture, once in his studies, has been confronted with the Nolli map. The task is simple. Separate the built form from it’s counter form which shapes the urban space, resulting in a map in which private, individual and public, collective space are rendered in oppositions. However the objective seems simple the task is almost impossible.

During the process of drawing such a map one finds oneself all the time confronted with all the complex gradients between built form and spacious counter form – or individual, private, spaces as opposed to collective, public spaces. Thus while drawing such a map one is confronted with the complexity of the urban fabric which is hard to represent in a determinist map.

This complexity is often mistaken for density. It is however too easy to fetishize the density of the traditional town nor the gradients it establishes and bash the emptiness characteristic of the modern city. What is far more interesting in reading these seemingly binary oppositions is the reciprocal relationship between individual and collective, mass and space and part and whole (to name but a few).

What we could start to conclude that what the modern city fails to establish
Parma

St. Dié (Le Corbusier)
in opposition to the old traditional town, is a reciprocal relationship between the parts and the whole. In the traditional city it's clear however that the “parts” - whatever that precisely might be – succeed to built a whole. In this sense this whole is nothing more than the complex web of reciprocal relationships between all kinds of parts and wholes, in which its almost impossible to distinguish between where the parts start and the whole stops, for this whole is, in return, part of another whole and the parts are wholes of other (sub)parts.

In the traditional city it thus becomes impossible to distinct the parts from the whole nor the whole from its parts or mass from space. Aldo van Eyck (unjustly filled under the umbrella called structuralism) called such oppositions twin phenomena. Although van Eyck could be accused of fetishizing the in-between realm, he was very right to conclude that two oppositions can never be seen apart from each other.

Taking this idea of twin phenomena we can conclude that, whereas the traditional town succeeds to built space through built form and equally to built form through space (form and contra form are equally important) the modern city fails to establish such a reciprocal relationship. We should however not draw the conclusion, which has too often been drawn, that the modern city merely lacks density. However we could say that a lack of density more importantly means a lack of heterogeneity, and thus a lack of reciprocal part to whole relationships.

Taking the form counter-form opposition, what the moderns city fails to achieve is a reciprocal form counter-form relationship. Nor thus (as is dominant in the traditional town) does the form (matter) succeeds to built a counter form (space) which in return feeds back on the form itself, neither thus the space (as form) succeeds to built a comprehensible built (counter)form. What is gone in the modern city is a coherent form-counter form reciprocity. Moreover its not just this relationship that has lost its reciprocity in the modern city.

What is established now is an approach on how to work in an seemingly obstruction-less environment such as the modern city. At first glance it seems as if
there are no constraints to start with. It seems as if the modernist city leaves a space open as a void. In which anything seems to be possible leaving us with merely one constraint, which is complete freedom. The foregoing analysis shows how the modern city lacks any form of reciprocity. Thus we need to, in such conditions, try to restore the “mild gears of reciprocity (van Eyck, 1960?). We thus need to restore the reciprocity between parts and wholes, form and counter-form, mass and space, individual and collective without fetishizing one over the other.
Biënale Sessions
Program of functions and program of capacities

- Studio (9.000 m²)
- Office (8.000 m²)
- Lecture (2.000 m²)
- Library (1.000 m²)
- Educational f. (3.000 m²)
- Laboratories (2.000 m²)
- Conference (1.000 m²)
- Restaurant (2.500 m²)
- Public facilities (2.000 m²)
- Storage (2.500 m²)

- (3.000 m²) Thinking
- (3.500 m²) Learning
- (2.500 m²) Relaxing
- (6.000 m²) Working
- (1.000 m²) Studio meeting
- (1.000 m²) Listening to lectures
- (3.000 m²) Reading
- (3.000 m²) Model making
- (5.000 m²) Discussing
- (500 m²) Exhibiting
- (1.000 m²) Eating

Program of functions and program of capacities

103
Centrality of program/capacities in building
Gradient grid 1: spatial proportions and surfaces

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Gradient grid 1: movement and rest
Gradient grid 1: doors
Gradient grid 2: spatial proportions and surfaces

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Gradient grid 1: columns
Gradient grid 3: spatial proportions and surfaces

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Gradient grid 3: movement and rest
P4 Reflection
RELATIONSHIP WITH THE THEME OF THE STUDIO

The theme of the AAA (Asignifying Affordance of the Assemblage) studio led by dr. ir. Andrej Radman and Marc Boumeester was radical empiricism. From hereon the research carried out within the studio focused on the perception of architecture not as a world out there that is there to be perceived and described and maybe emulated but rather from the idea that a perception is the product of the reciprocal system between the perceiver and its environment. The environment creates affects that are virtual yet real and therefor the focus of the perception of architecture is on what architecture can do rather than what architecture is.

The starting point of my personal graduation project could be summarized as a dissatisfaction with the oppositional swings in the architectural discourse. In reviewing the middle to be a compromise, architectural practice has a tendency towards extremes resulting in an endless chain of changes as negations. If it’s not white, it must be black etc...

However, this obsession with change altogether starts with a misconception of what change exactly is. Change is NOT negation. Change, according to Massumi, is emergent relation. Change is difference. Thus change cannot be unrelated to anything that has gone before. This relation is the middle. Since the middle is not a middling being – an average, a synthesis – but rather a being of the middle.

What is needed to overcome this tendency towards thinking of change as negation is a shift from vertical towards horizontal thinking in architecture. This means a shift from – amongst others – thinking in absolutes and identities towards thinking in relations and differences. In other words, we need to start from the middle instead.

This is what I try to do with my project. I try to start from the middle and
Fig. 1 Gradient grid: proportions and surface
overcome the deep attractor state of binary oppositions with the notion of change as something more than a negation and difference can be more subtle than opposition. The main opposition I'm working with in my project is the tension between the fleeting conditions of life and the mismatch of this ephemerality with the intrinsic eternal conditions of the edifice. However from this bigger theme also concrete design questions appeared such as the articulation of load-bearing and non-load-bearing elements for instance.

The tension between the more permanent and less permanent is very much present in a school of architecture where the uncertainty of changes in education, technology etc. leads to a solution that tends towards the biggest common denominator: which often is spatial redundancy. However such solutions lack the enabling constraints for the use and appreciation of space as such. It’s the problem of the glove that fits all and therefore never becomes a hand as van Eyck called it. This problem, especially in a school of architecture, also extends towards the tension between the need for big (flexible?) collective spaces and the desire for smaller personal workspaces.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

In order to achieve this I'm aiming at constructing a Body Without Organs. The BWO is a Deleuzian concept that describes the organism not as a collection of pre-defined functional organs, but rather as a body containing thresholds and levels. Thus the building I'm designing doesn't start from the pre-established identity of functional entities actualized in spaces, but rather with the differences and affects from which these functional entities could emerge. In this way it is taken into account that the structure is not static at all but rather are part of a dynamic perceiver-environment system. In other words: the structure is approached on the level of its affect.
In this way space as such, is produced between the perceiver and the environment – user and edifice. As architect, however, I work with the environment. I design the edifice and accept its intrinsic long duration. But I do this with the notion that, although the edifice stands still, its architecture moves.

In order to achieve this I followed one simple system. Based on a regular structural grid I introduce a set of 405 rooms in which no room is the same.

First of all I set the rule that, the higher you get in the building the more quiet the spaces become since they are disconnected from the ground floor with its entrances. Moreover these spaces can do with lower ceiling heights than the more collective functions which are more convenient to be located on the ground floor. So from bottom to top the ceiling height decreases with 0,8m per floor.

Second I introduce a gradient grid that, as opposed to a traditional grid that has fixed intervals, has an interval that decreases or increases with 1,8m or 1,2 meter (fig.1). In this way I introduce a whole range of different spaces with different proportions that, coupled with their relation to their neighbors, their position in the grid and their relation to the site engenders a certain functionality. The identity of this functionality however is a contingent emergence, a derivative, offered by the structure 's capacities – the eternal – and not a fixed, pre-established property. This places the ephemerality of life and the eternity of the edifice in a reciprocal relationship that is dynamic through and through.

RELATIONSHIP TO METHODICAL LINE

As mentioned in my graduation plan I saw the relationship between research and design as a reciprocal relationship. Therefore the border between where research stops and design begins became obsolete. In retrospect its still hard to say where the research stopped and design began. The research did not stop after P2. After P2 I
started designing but while designing, new questions appeared which made me return to more specific literature linked to the design questions I faced.

The absence of a clear border between research and design however took a lot of time. It was only around P3 that I had the definite outlines of my design project clear. It's hard to pinpoint how this delay might have been avoided because in retrospect I clearly needed this transition phase. This phase was also the moment where the reciprocity between research and design became most apparent.

At some point in the process the project got stuck. In retrospect this was the moment when technological questions were entering the design. But as soon as I realized that my architectural ambitions were not simply possible without a proper technological underpinning the project took a leap. In the same way that the theory and practice were in a reciprocal relationship the architecture and technology also started a dialogue that required decisions based on thinking on a more abstract theoretical level. In this way technology not only helped me to develop the project but also to develop my theory.

Now the project is almost finished I wish there also was a moment of retrospection and the possibility to write a theory thesis. I feel like the design project truly influenced the research. Not only did the research led to a design but the design also led to new theoretical insights. It would therefore be worthwhile to have another transition phase where the design can feed back on the theory as well.

RELATIONSHIP TO SOCIAL CONTEXT

This research and design project tries to explore the possibilities of what architecture can do. This broad theme of the perception of architecture is, in my project, linked to the problem of flexibility. This project tries to bridge the gap between the too specific and the too generic. In this sense the project tries to explore how
generic architecture can be in a fast changing social and technological context without losing the possibility to be very specific at the same time. In this sense the possibility is explored of an architecture that is generic and flexible enough to endure changes in time without becoming mere containers for life but rather becoming structures that are part of life itself. It’s about the possibility of a changing architecture without changing the edifice itself.