THE NEW LIBRARY IN THE OLD CITY
University Library, Amsterdam

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Architecture Track
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Design Task
This graduation studio consisted on the creation of a library building for the University of Amsterdam (UvA), located within the historical city centre of Amsterdam (Binnengasthuis area). The program had a given floor area of approx. 20,000 m² and, therefore, demanded for the demolition of an existing building in order to fit the given program into the location. Due to the fact that the given site is currently fully built.

Approach to program:
What does a library mean?
It is a place of:
- awareness
- discovery
- exchange
It has the potential for representation of a knowledge institution and it projects one further into a future that is not yet there.

Approach to site:
The site is located within the historic city centre of Amsterdam and close to some of the symbolic places of the city, such as the Dam Square and its Palace, the Rokin and the Nes. It also represents currently the biggest cluster of University related facilities within the city centre. However, current market pressures are pushing the same facilities to outer campuses and dissolving the connection between the city/students and the university. Therefore, it becomes important to explore the representation and connection between the academic community and the city through the library. Thus, the potential for visibility and accessibility should be exploited to create a public building.

Approach to building:
The given program is divided in four groups: Services & Staff, Learning and Media Centre, Focused Study Rooms, and Collection + Study Spaces.

The chosen configuration aims to give air to an otherwise cramped site and to provide public space within the building borders. The Mensa site is particularly interesting in this terms. It belongs to the site but also touches its edge, ending one of the most important axes to the site. The building is located at the end of the canal and because of that position has the urban potential to mark the place of a relevant public building.

A library is like a threshold that brings to evidence a here and an elsewhere.

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