lost in altered perspectives
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public building graduation studio
Bucharest border conditions 16 17

The project’s research is based on the use of film and montage techniques to develop an altered perspective towards architecture and public surroundings. Through abstraction, manipulation and interpretation of the material, illustrations were developed and used as a base for the design strategy. The emphasis lies on the notion of a renewed and triggering perception of our surroundings, contextuality, abstraction and experience in movement.

There were 15 sites picked in and around Bucharest by a semi-random approach, subjectively searching for anomalies in Bucharest, that were consciously or unconsciously associated by form, programme or context with the 15 drawings.

The assigning of sites to the 15 illustrations was done randomly at first, but as a second arrangement the 15 sites were rearranged by my subjective association, just as the picking of the sites in the first place. I noticed the associations were mainly based on the distributions of an area, idiom, the programme and/ or formal language.

To proceed, a filtering of material needed to take place. 15 sites and 15 drawings could have endless possibilities for a foundation of a design.

I filtered the amount of combinations mainly by the ambiguity of the site and drawing, the complexity and the overall fascination for the site.

After bringing the combinations down to 3, I developed a statement on how to approach the translation of the 2D drawings into a spatial design:

Every illustration contains a foundational projection of every necessary architectural drawing, such as plan, section, landscape design and the spaces in between.

A period of translating these drawings into possible designs followed and by ambiguity, potential challenge in further development and personal fascination, illustration “35_2” was chosen to proceed the design strategy.

first model;
the site was a circular train depot. a lot of differences in height, stairs & dramatics were obvious, very interesting landscape potential for a more landscape based design.

second model;
the second model turned out to be a composition of multiple elements, resulting in a base for a design which was not yet too self-evident as a spatial design: there was a greater challenge in translating this illustration into a spatial design.

third model;
the context had a lot of influence on the design, resulting in a design for the site as an extension to the military cemetery with different characters incorporated.
The base for the design was the second model, based on the illustration shown on the right page, “illustrations 35_2”. The expression of movement, framing and the suggestion of several perspectives showed most potential for a challenging, intriguing and provoking design translation. The different layers of projection and unconventionalities.

The approach of the statement on the architectural meaning within the drawing was gradually evolved, starting with an analysis of the context.

The site is located in the North East of Bucharest in Pantelimon, on a peninsula accessible from only 2 dams. The fact that the peninsula is surrounded by water, at a considerable distance from the mainland and the centre of Bucharest on the other side of the lake, can be considered the first layer of isolation.

In 1750, a monastery was built on this peninsula. A century later, the monastery was expanded to a monastery-hospital for mainly the care of tuberculosis patients a.o. which the isolated character of the hospital allowed. The hospital being surrounded by a dense amount of large trees adds up to the isolation as well, and at last the typology of the hospital with its courtyard can be experienced as the third layer of isolation.

After several earthquakes and Ceaucescu demolishing the monastery in 1986, the complex was transformed into a luxury hotel complex called Hotel Lebada. This facility has been abandoned again since last year, but has been re-owned by the Romanian Orthodox church.

The abandoned hotel is a heavy, monumental building, isolated from the surroundings, which compliments the secluded characteristic of the previous functions. The decision to initiate an intervention that cuts through the orthogonal existing structure with a 45 degrees angle evolved from the provocative character of the drawing, the cinematographic intentions and the religious, isolated factors of the building and the peninsula. The drawing would stand on its own as a design but the provocative aspect of cutting out and in something of such strong historical means and material only strengthens the experience of the design.
The projection of the lines, planes and patterns onto the context have evolved throughout the last period in terms of exterior radical incisions, interior experience of unconventional angles, viewpoints and material combinations and extension of the programme of the function as a hotel.

The projection resulted in addressing the former spot of the monastery, cutting of the two dams, the two access points and creating a real island, a new entrance from the South side direct towards Bucharest and adding a new experience of entering the site only by boat.

The extension is separated from the existing building, by clean cuts made by the sectional aspect of the illustration. The directionality within the design, de connections in opposite directions and the obstacles that have evolved from the drawing into the experience of the interior and exterior spaces have a strong link with the approach of the research. The obstructions in the film mappings, the montage techniques and the abstraction of objects out of its context reveal themselves when exploring the design.

The approach of the hotel is the start of a continuum of spaces, chained to one and another by abrupt, smooth, light, dark, slow, fast, repeating elements, corners and so on, influenced by the research on the montage techniques used in films. The continuous stream of moments can be experienced in countless sequences as scenes.

The main used materials might look straightforward; concrete, steel, aluminium and wood. But the development of the design together with the structure resulted in a complex structural design in which black steel beams follow the lines of the abnormally formed cores to enhance the route of movement, all visible concrete walls are slanted and made of glass fibre reinforced concrete that result in up to 12 meter high dark plates “leaning” against the cores, and the aluminium skin of sandwich walls separates the intervention from the existing building, folding around the stacked spaces - each representing different characteristics and experiences - to reunite with the slanted concrete walls and dive into the depth of the pool in the landscape.
In the previous reflection before P4 I had written certain things I want to reflect on now, looking back on the presentation and the months that came after:

"The translation from the research based illustration to a spatial design was not the hardest part; to not lose the complexity and ambiguity of the drawings and the research within this process was more of a challenge. The 15 illustrations, the 15 sites and the many interpretations developed with them resulted in an endless amount of possibilities for a foundation of a design.

Picking a site by means of the method, made me realise how I have started to change my approach of architecture and that the horizon of knowledge and creativity has grown in the studio of Border Conditions. The rational way of thinking I jumped back to temporarily once in a while showed me how I was taught during the bachelor of science - modernistic and rational - and what I had already learned and discovered during the graduation studio. The mappings, the abstractions and the approach towards a method have brought the project to another level."

Reading this part of the last reflection (15/05/17), shows me that I was not fully ready to finish my project as I wish to finish it. I do believe that my observation of me jumping back into rational thinking was on point, but at the P4 presentation I did exactly that. The products that were presented did not represent what my project was actually about. There was a layer (or layers) of spatial quality missing, which included an integration of the structure and material use in the design of the spaces and the meaning of the spaces. The experience of the building, the feeling of getting lost in the project and yourself, discovering new corners, new views and altered perspectives, have increased in the last couple of months by trying my new technique of adding an axonometric layer with material textures in a trajectory leading you through the building.

"With the development of the method, I realised that this amount of explorations, options or possibilities could take me years and years, and I would still not have tried all the options. I do believe this is a strength of the approach in the project, and it reveals the fruitfulness of the method that I have developed in the last 8 months. It also has confronted me with the difficulty but necessity of being able to make choices in designing."

I still agree on this reflection, that a great strength lies in the approach, the method and mainly the development of the design through a method. I also realise that the process of repeating a method of drawing, doing, reading, writing, learning, modelling, drawing, writing, doing, is utterly important and can result in an intriguing spatial, architectural and scenographic project.

In the next weeks up to my final graduation presentation, I will develop the characteristic and materialistic qualities even more in both physical form (model), spatial details and axonometric sequences of spaces to convey the spacious and cinematographic qualities and experiences in this project. To get lost in altered perspectives.

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