Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences

2020-21
Personal Information
Name
Student Number
Email

Studio
Name: ExploreLab
Main mentor: Suzana Milinovic, Architecture
Second mentor: Rachel Lee, Research
BT mentor: Hubert van der Meel, BT

Argumentation of choice of the studio
This graduation project is heavily research focused and the final design project is too be seen as a case study for the efficacy for this manor of research. Therefore, the particulars of the design are less important that the process by which the project is designed. ExploreLab combines these two aspects, research and process focused, in a way that no other studio does. This is why I have chosen ExploreLab specifically.

Graduation project
Title of the graduation project: Transspace

Goal
Location: Urban Environment

Problem Statement
In Hooper-Greenhill’s work ‘Museum and the interpretation of visual culture’ one can see a museum building, the works, placement, order of works, light, textual explanation and placement within a city as a script, one that can be interpreted. She goes on further to describe how one’s culture, identity, socialization, education, etc can influence how one interprets this script and impacts how one reacts, relates, and understands the works on display¹. Using Hooper-Greenhill concept of script, I would argue that all space can be read as a script. Therefore, an Architect’s choices influence how people read the script of a building. Furthermore, one’s identity can influence how one reads the script of a building and how one reacts, understands, and is impacted by a

building. As Dianne Harris writes, “space is equally significant in the construction of ideas about race and identity.”

Writers like Dianne Harris, Lucas Crawford, Michel Foucault, and others have stated that architecture is means of power and control and that this impacts the users of a building. Especially those who are understood as societally non-normative. These mods of control, and the tools for control at architecture’s disposal are varied but can be used to have both a positive as well as negative impact on the users.

One mode of control is with the gendering of space. Although these modes of control are socio-cultural an architect can, within the bounds of that socio-cultural milieux, choose how to apply that gendered control. This can be done explicitly, such as in the case of Prisons, Bathrooms, and Changing rooms, but also implicitly. Where a space is not prescriptively nominated as being for one gender but the design, layout and framing of that space, make it gendered. An example of this implicit gendering of space is the domestic kitchen. Especially the suburban kitchen of the 50s in the USA. Olivia Ahn describes how the domestic kitchen became both a reflection of and constructor of gender. During WWII, when many women worked in factories, acted as the head of the household, and generally gained a lot of autonomy, we saw a regression of gendered norms in the 50s. One way in which this was achieved was by the large suburban projects, such as Levittown, where 'the kitchen became the female domain of the mother'. Not only where these spaces socially the milieux of the 'mother', but they also were designed for the proportions and capabilities that a mother was to have. As Piet Zwart said in 1936 ‘[de vrouw] haar arbeid zonder overbodige inspanning kan verrichten’. As feminist activist and academics have shown architecture can impact the lives of women with their design, is this also true for Transgender and Non-binary people?

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6 FOUCAULT.
8 Olivia Ahn.
Research Questions
How then does architectural scripts of buildings today impact how Trans people react, relate, and understand the buildings and spaces they encounter. How do gendered spaces, aspects of temporality, process of becoming, control and simple usage of buildings and space impact the lives of Trans individuals?

Research Project
A collection of Essays, Plan analysis, and Research by design object. These will be connected by an Editorial and Final Conclusion.

Design
Designing a 5-bedroom house with office and retail facilities for Trans individuals. 2 short term crash site studios, 3 long term rooms with bathroom but shared common areas. The building as a whole and each individual floor has three phases, protect, fight, and bloom reacting on the individuals need but also the wider social expectance.

Process
Method description
Interviews with Trans, Non-Binary, and Queer people around their personal experience in relation to the built environment. Essays, Plan analysis and Research by Design to further understand and deepen conclusions from the interviews. Using conclusions from these interviews and essays, plan analysis and research by design to design a building that specifically caters to Trans, Non-binary, and Queer people’s needs.

Literature and general practical preference


Reflection
The aim is to be part of a larger movement within architectural discourse that will help to better understand what relationship there is between identity and experience, akin to the movement that has been seen in many other areas of study, but most exemplary in the literature and media studies. In these fields, since the 70s, many frameworks have been developed through which to try and understand the relationship between identity, experience, and interpretation of a piece of media or culture. This graduation project aims to transposes those lessons onto architectural discourse and further develop the relations between Trans identities and architectural experience.
Although my motivation for this is to some extent personal and anecdotal, I do truly believe that architecture should create architecture which is reflective to an individual needs rather than a more modernist ‘one size fits all’ approach. Neither should architecture reflect the needs of institutions or capitalist needs which may not, arguably ever, reflect the needs of the individual. I argue that identity and identity politics can be part of a framework that can allow architects to create buildings reflective of the needs of the individual, as a force of democratization.

Timeline

2020
W. 36  Formulating Research framework and Method
W. 37-39  Initial Research, Choosing Research and Design Mentors
W. 40  Formulating Interview Questions
W. 41-44  Finding interview participants, Research into interview methods
W. 45  **P1**: Presentation: Research framework, Interview Framework
W. 46-51  Doing interviews and research
W. 52-53  Location Research, Formulating Requirements

2021
W. 03  **P2:** Preliminary Research Results, Design Goals and Framework
W. 04  Finalizing Location, Expanding Requirements
W. 05  Design Development, Material Research
        Design Development, Poetics Research
        Design Development, Finalizing Research
W. 13-14 **P3:** Design Sketches, Plans, Sections, Elevations, Model
W. 15-16 Design Development, Technical Aspects. Reflecting on design
        with Interview participants
W. 16-19 Design Development, Plans, Sections, Elevations, Models,
        Details
W. 20-21 **P4:** Presentation of Final Plan and Relations to Research
W. 22-24 Finalizing for P5
W. 25-27 **P5:** Presentation of Final Design and Relations to Research