Playgrounds of commons
Spatial interventions for collective appropriation towards liveability and diversity in Rotterdam South. The case of Oud Charlois and Waalhaven area

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MOTIVATION
Architecture of appropriation and appropriation tactics

In a period of renewed interest in a programmatic approach to the city, Het Nieuwe Instituut is conducting research into squatting as an architecture of appropriation. Architecture of Appropriation is a research project that examines how squatters have appropriated urban spaces using radical improvisation techniques, and how this has influenced the way we think about the contemporary city. Zulis (Zones Urbaines Sensibles) designed the spatial installation in which the research is presented.

https://architecture-appropriation.hetnieuweinstituut.nl/
How can appropriation fuel a spatial strategy?
Time for a small exercise!

Flip your card!

Use your phone
LiveSlides web content

To view

Download the add-in.
liveslides.com/download

Start the presentation.
Defining Collective Appropriation
CONTEXT

Whose city is Rotterdam?
175 nationalities

multi-cultural

port related

More than 33% - problematic neighbourhoods
Highlights recent figures: South and lower educated people benefit little from economic growth

Source: based on Cody Hochstenbach, Wouter PC van Gent (2015), edited by the author
Let's take a closer look

Let's take a closer look
Oud Charlois is a neighborhood that experiencing transition, we are starting to feel that gentrification is moving us out of our neighborhood.

Christina, young architect living and working in Oud Charlois, originally from Greece.

The municipality does not have a Clear vision for this part of the city.

Architect + owner of Charloisaanhet water (QI, 2017)
Research question

Within the current urban renewal plans and trends, what are the spatial interventions and strategies needed and feasible so as to encourage collective appropriation towards liveability and diversity in deprived neighborhoods in Rotterdam?
socio-spatial analysis
an urbanist's approach to inclusive design

official visions + projects
overlay + juxtaposition

on site interaction
interviews and close observation

participatory approach
the game
Understanding Oud Charlois + Waalhaven
- 200 artists
- high presence of migrants (Polish, Bulgarian)
- high presence low skilled-unemployed
CONCLUSION no. 3
MANMADE - NATURAL BORDERS, SQUEEZED IN - BETWEEN

Source: data from nature map LOLA architects, DELTA METROPOL, edited by the author
Conclusion no. 4: Absence of a well-defined centre

No central meeting point

Community centres (not really)
Conclusion no. 5

A lot of green spaces.

Vs. Not calling for activity - unattractiveness
CONCLUSION NO. 6

ANTI - SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS - UNHEALTHY HABITS

[Diagram showing various anti-social behaviors and unhealthy habits in a neighborhood context, with notes and icons indicating issues like lack of local protection, poor green spaces, etc.]
Like the Drinking Table // Karel de Stoutplein
CONCLUSION NO. 7

MOST ELEMENTS ARE FIXED – WITHOUT ENCOURAGING APPROPRIATION.

PROGRAMME: NOT MANY EXERCISE OPPORTUNITIES, ESPECIALLY NORTH.
Conclusion no. 8

Food Sector - Creative Sector

- Missing healthy and affordable food
According to official plans, the conclusion is:

- New Housing
  - Without really mentioning densification potential

- Attractive Public Spaces - Connections
  - Mostly for newcomers

- Craftsmanship
  - Without really mentioning placemaking

- Healthy Lifestyles
  - Somehow a spin off effect for Oud Charlois

- Waterfront Redesign, Attractiveness Connections
Based on the interviews, the analysis and the theoretical framework it seems that the municipality does not have a clear vision for living and working. This is hindered by the local talent and potential. It is either demanding or combining as if following a suburbanization scenario.

Proposals like GodMo from JoMo have a vision for working and living environments, that can attract mixed residents and stimulate local potential.

Legend
- The importance of connections structuring the entrance
- Transformation and connection of the port
- Sense of that part
- Residents and visions agree on the challenge of this part
- Slow mobility and connections dealing with Zuidhawk (residents think it is important, visions, do not mention it that much)
- Naturalization of the street (residents and official visions agree on the urgency of addressing this part)
Scenario _1
Happy together! The ideal commoning neighbourhood

Scenario _2
Neighbourhood re-localized (state coupling)

Scenario _3
Quinoasaladebuurt! The gentrified neighbourhood

Scenario _4
Taking control! Taking space! The DIY neighbourhood
Playground of commons

Social ecologies in Oud Charlois

Active free time ↔ Reimagining connections ↔ Local production

a healthy neighbourhood

a neighbourhhood with slow mobility networks

a productive neighbourhood

a self-sufficient neighbourhood

an open and inclusive neighbourhood

a well – connected neighbourhood

a circular neighbourhood
PLAY TIME!
The Toolkit of Urban Tactics for Appropriation

The Layers of Site Analysis

The Interviews

The smoking girl

I think there are places where people don’t feel safe to go. The area is not safe, especially at night. People feel uncomfortable. I think our funding and activity will generate interest to the site, but it needn’t be a social club. Instead, it should be a platform for the area.

The sociologist

Now, if you talk about the issue of AOD, it’s not just been seen to be problem but also a social problem in the neighborhood. We also have family who prey, people who prey is not only for profit. It’s part of their lifestyle. It’s not to be philanthropic. We also have people who prey on the family. They are not just people but also are part of the communities. I think we can create a safe space for them. There are a lot of people who are in this area, but they are not aware of their safety. They are not aware of the risks they are taking. We need to inform them about their safety and the risks they are taking.

The game
communicate
raise awareness
sense of place
like/dislike
no winners
The map of the site (existant situation)

The box

The extra white cards and pawns

[extra for simulation] the role cards

The photos of the site (existant situation)

The cards (based on the tactics studied, designs for appropriation and initial interviews on site)

The pawns
1 – 1 Gaming Sessions // Local Artists

Ghislain, France
Founder of PEACH

Maziar
Founder of RIB
Rotterdam art scene

Joshua, US
Founder of Wolfart projectspace

ONONO
Social and art space
5 artists, several countries

Vitibuck architects

Simulations gaming sessions // 8 players / 2 Dutch / 1 designer
**Conclusions**

- **Connection** of Skatepark to Karel – attractive entrances
- **Productivity** of green spaces, leisure
- **Safety**
- **Interaction**, craftsmanship, reuse
Conclusions

- Waalhaven – importance of affordability, accessibility, central space and leisure (sports zone)
- Shared green spaces in housing projects
THROUGHOUT ALL THIS PROCESS I IMAGINE (BECAME) A NEW AGENT

WELCOME ALL THE CREATIVE COMMUNITY COACH
The diagram illustrates the involvement of various stakeholders in a project, including the municipality of Rotterdam, policy makers, high power stakeholders, inhabitants, and local organizations. The diagram highlights different tools and community design strategies used to address challenges and potential solutions. It emphasizes the importance of creative community coaches and tools that encourage urban mixing, connectivity, and participation. Additionally, it recognizes the role of a broader network in supporting the project's objectives.
Settling in Oud Charlois I started to wonder

Before
/analysis/

What if a corridor functioning now as...
opportunities for a green promenade

natural biodiversity

low car traffic

cultural heritage

city viewpoints

opportunity for legibility
...could become the backbone of a strategy embodying appropriation
THE PRODUCTIVE ROUTE STRATEGY

leisure _ food _ crafts
**Strategy Principles**

- Re-use it! (reuse of existing building stock, landscape objects and infrastructures)
- Renewable energy (wind, solar and CO2 ledger, biogas)
- Accessible governance (accessible participation, connect it to make)
- Access to facilities and social infrastructures (e.g. greenery)
- Access to public spaces (e.g. green spaces, flexible boundaries, low mobility networks)

**Combine it!**

- Diversity the landscape, mind, body and society (begin differentiated)
- Diversify programme (cultural, housing, eating, parking)
- Diversify public space (art, education and landscape (artistic/urban textures))
hack institutions

7 proposed changes in the planning processes
+ alternative phasing
Please pick up your yellow flyer
SHIFT THE DIRECTION

THE AREAS

THE WaALHaven "BAY" AS A START

RECLAIM THE PARK [3] -
NEW WALKABILITY, HEALTH, STRENGTH, PATIO

SLOW MOBILITY AXIS -
PADO OF THE STREET APPROPRIATION

INTENSIFY + EXPAND WATER CONNECTIONS -
CONNECT TO THE NORTH

THE WaALHaven "BAY" EXPANDS

MICRO - TACTICS TIME -
NEW ARCHITECTURE OF OLD DISTRICTS -
POD - VECTORS - APPROPRIATION

RENOVATION OF BLOCKS -
RENEWAL OF THE CITY
- One example of the zoom map -
4 PROJECTS

The Logics of the project

Zoom in details (only a bit)

Spread the word ("branding")

A Design Proposal
PROJECT A

Reclaiming the Park(s)

The Productive Showroom in Skatepark and Karel de Stouplein
BRIDGING NOSTALGIA WITH APPROPRIATION TACTICS

THE MISSING CENTRALITY
Inspired by the past

Rotterdam (v.m. Charlots)
Muziekent

Musiektent at Karel de Stout.

And the present

Present appropriation practices at Karel de Stout.
THE NEW MUSIC TENT

It will initiate the transformation of the park,
putting forward the reinforced cone back of the pavilions.
Based on the strategy
principles for:

- Diversification of the landscape
- Sports
- Healthy lifestyles
what's happening at Karel de Stoutplein?

jamming at karel de stoutplein
music tent vol.2
Friday 7th of September 2018
at 19.00.
If you want to book with us the tent, call: 0031/635323308
PROJECT B

THE CRANESQUARE
A NEW TYPE OF “SQUARE”
MERGING INDUSTRIAL PAST WITH APPROPRIATION
At the Centre of the Circle — Place a Crane

A Landmark — A Public Observatory

But Also

A Control Tower

Construction Transparency — Local Tourism

An Open, Transformable Structure

A Playground
WHAT IF THE CRANE BECOMES A CONCERT VENUE?

SCENARIO // CONCERT MANIA

the concert stage

the (music) tent

the sheltered triangle
Not only mobile elements

Fixed Urban equipment – domesticity and interaction
PROJECT Γ

SWIM IN WAALHAVEN
Project Δ

Containers' Settlement/ The first housing experiment in Waalhaven
A SETTLEMENT MERGING INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER WITH HOUSING AND MANUFACTURE
Spatial configuration based on the combination of separate entities
DO YOU WANT TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO LIVE IN WAALHAVEN?
YOU CAN MAKE YOUR DREAM COME TRUE!

TRY THE CONTAINER COME
MORE THAN 300 APPARTMENTS
FOR MORE INFO CALL: 0031698393011
CONCLUSIONS
A mix of bottom up and top down solutions for the redevelopment of Oud Charlois and Waalhaven

A new integrative sight to urban renewal through design and planning “disruptions” to the spatial software

Using Oud Charlois and Waalhaven as a starting point to trigger greater discussion and change
From small design solutions to big agendas

But, why this project could generate greater changes?
1. Site perception (transformation areas – urban renewal processes)

Waalhaven as a transformation area and Oud Charlois as a “deprived” neighbourhood

*Boundaries to borders* > border as a potential

Through a flexible design, not a masterplan (heterotopias)

*Relevance at city scale, e.g. Feyenoord City and adjacent neighbourhoods

*Sennett - Open city
**Shane (2003) – Recombinant Urbanism
Site perception result → **water accessibility** (neighbourhood and city scale)
2. Accessibility

accessibility
city scale

1. Increased connectivity Waalhaven - North Rotterdam
   sea transport

2. Alternative daily systems
   less dependence on Rotterdam North

3. Ecological infrastructure Maas river
   accessible waterfront
agents + platforms

city scale
neighbourhood scale
digital space

new agents and platforms for participation
creative community coach, participatory budget, citizen card

alternative models of land tenure
community land trust
4. Urban renewal process and the agency of design

From closed fences to transparent playgrounds
Urban renewal as a processes that raises awareness

Call for engagement through urban form – The invention of new types of urban spaces
Participation as something more than social programmes, identity
5. Living and working

4. Densification, extension on top of buildings or facades. Encourage new activities, avoid displacement.

5. Workspaces on the ground floor. Visible workspace, lightbox.

6. Combining local production + living. The greenhouse addition.
6. Collective spaces

Public spaces, collective spaces
Neighbourhood scale

9
Emphasis on topography, the use of the slopes

10
Investing in education and interventions associated with health, municipality could benefit in the long run

11
Art installations and participation through body movement, lighting strategies in public space

Other forms of exercise

In small dance squares, self-organization

Incorporation of local elements and diverse traditions in design of the urban equipment
Heterotopias are 'ambiguous structures', which facilitate change (Shane, 2003)