The creative city challenge,
Pushing the labor challenged towards the knowledge challenged.

Aspect 1: The relation between research and design.
The Research “learning from Rotterdam” aimed at three topics, the image, the urban fabric and the urban block typologies.

Introduction:
Rotterdam, firstly the water gate to Europa. Famous for its harbor area, the cities main generator of work and economic capital. Secondy, its part of the metropolis the Randstad, connecting the city center to the world by a land, sea and air network.

The location of the design question is the ABN plot at the Lijnbaan in Rotterdam. This part of the city center is the “Cool” district. The changing of Rotterdam’s Cool district has been vivid since the Second World War. Mainly because of the bombing of the center that destroyed almost the whole Cool area. After this disaster the front-runners of the modernist movement saw their chance. The urbanist van Traa used the ideas of modernism on light, air and space, to react on the Dutch post war zeitgeist, a statement had to be made. The reconstruction of the Netherlands and for most importantly the way the Dutch will reconstruct. Van den Broek en Bakema where able to fill in the urbanism plan of van Traa and created the famous Lijnbaan and the Lijnbaanhoven.

The intention of our research “Learning from Rotterdam” is to understand how the existing fabric operates and how it reacts to its surroundings.

The formation of enclaves on urban scale as on urban block scale, how does this effect the daily life?

In order to understand the fabric of the Cool district we did empirical research on the urban block level. The urban block holds a crucial position in daily life as it defines the public, the private and the collective domain. It shows not only the social position of its era but more interesting it shows its position to the public realm.

The research lead to a conclusion of three morphological urban block typologies active in the Cool district:

The Pre-war or “urban fabric block”
The “urban fabric” block. Holds a clear position towards the public realm and the collective domain. The outer building curtain, holds a formal architectural expression and enables the public to enter the courtyard. This transition is experienced as moving from public to collective space.

The post-war or “modernism block”
The “Modernism” block. Holds an unclear position towards the public and collective domain. As it introduced an open inner courtyard, which is dominated by the surrounding dwellings. This creates the collective aspect of the courtyard, yet the physical disconnection of all dwellings creates an unclear space.

The separation of the leisure in the courtyard and the functional program to the service road defines the expression of the building curtain. Along the service roads the facades hold clear functional program and along the public and collective domain, the facades hold formal and residential program. This programmatic separation could be questioned in position to the continuity of daily life.
The post modernism or “hybrid block”

“Hybrid” block the Hofdame at the Binnenrotte shows the most advanced version of a hybrid in the city center of Rotterdam.
The outer building curtain holds the key elements to the hybrid. The two main, diagonal situated, entrances for the dwellings enable social control on all edges of the block. The plinth holds public functions making it permeable for the public. Unlike the urban fabric block, the courtyard is visible to the public yet inaccessible for the public. By mingling the functional program and residential program in the inner and outer facade the continuity in daily life is stimulated along all facades.

The research gave a strong insight in the connection and disconnection of the urban block from daily life. Where as the pre-war urban block is still showing continuity in use the post war and modernism blocks show congested compositions in their envelop, exhausted enclave like set ups which show no flexibility towards re-use or change.

It has be the challenge for the design of the block to react towards the continuity of daily life in the city center. Therefor a permeable block has been the main goal. Mixed use facilities opening up towards the city enabling diversity in use, in time, and in knowledge. The openness and mixture of social and cultural program should counteract towards the unstable social ten dens in the Cooldistrict.

Aspect 2 : the relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

The studio’s theme is public realm, this is just an container word which does not elaborate anything about the position towards the public realm.
In perspective to the current position of Rotterdam and its municipality’s challenge towards a creative city, our case study has been devoted to enhance the quality of daily life by the use of attracting and to keep the creative class inside the Cooldistrict. A separation or division inside the hybrid has been constructed where each participant of the research group will design according his or her vision the necessary amenities to fulfill this objective. The ground floor will be design by Lennart Krijger who’s aims for retail and cultural facilities, the middle will be designed by Loet Smeets who aims at the IT sector and the top will be designed by myself where a dens mix of small office home office shared office and dwellings will be created.

To understand the creative class a variety of theoretical text has been consulted:
- Terug naar de stad by Jos Godet
- Reflec #05, Creativiteit en de stad, hoe de creatieve economie de stad verandert.
- Creative knowledge cities, myths, visions and relations, by Marina van Geenhuizen en Peter Nijkamp
Through the theoretical research we gain insight in who the creative dweller is and what his position towards the public domain is. There has been chosen for an orientation on three creative class dwellers. First the short stay dweller, this person can be described as an active researcher in the IT sector of the building or in the Cooldistrict. His name “short stay” already elaborates his condition in the urban fabric. Where he or she is likely to stay inside the envelop of the Cooldistrict or the envelop of the plot, he or she will be interested in open minded area’s of social and cultural activities. The public and collective program will have a high priority for he or she will not invest in personal space and belongings for the small period of stay.

The second can be described as the “graduate”, bachelor or master graduates form cultural and creative sectors have a rough time in momentarily economic position of Europe. Unlikely to find a job fast just alone find a well paying job it is not in their interest to find a large expensive apartment or house. No the location “urban centers” connection to the public transport and shared amenities combined with small apartments are the important factors for the graduate. He or she will be used to sharing and maintaining collective space because they are likely to come from dorm housing/student housing.

The third is the creative class it self, they are already successfully active in the knowledge based economies. They are in surge of housing near the same amenities as the previous dwellers are. Looking for the buzz atmosphere, social and cultural openness in public and collective domain.

These three users have been chosen to live on top of the hybrid building, through out the whole building their can be spoken of a clear gentrification:

- The creative production and consumption mileu, creative city challenge, framework 6.1, by Arie Romein en Jacob Trip
- Practice of daily life by M. Certaeu

Gentrification is a pre composed set of users being included or excluded form the public sphere.

1) Public sphere, accessible by all user groups; inhabitants, bums, tourists, skateboarders, etc. A characterized domain by retail mixed with active third places. Servicing excess to the creative, the IT and the Dwelling domain.

2) Inner domain of the block and its periphery, social controlled atmosphere. This is done by the dominant group of users, being like-minded people, interested in the creative and it center. They are actively participating in the “buzz” atmosphere.

3) Physically controlled domain - Creative and It center - public functions jet controlled by the physical. A large diversity in users; students, cultural interested inhabitants and tourists, resurges, artists, labor class.

4) Physical and social controlled domain, reintroduced human scale, mixed use in office dwelling and small home-offices. A tolerant open domain where face-to-face encounters are stimulated in the collective domain.

Secondly to the theme Public realm, the team of temporality has main position in the studio.
To react on this theme we have researched in topic flexibility. Where we have learned from the urban block research of Rotterdam that the post war and modernism block lake the possibility to react on the changing demands of society.

Flexibility in the first degree:
The loadbearing system is designed in steel, making it demountable and re usable when the building needs to be changed or removed.
To complement this idea the dimensions of the steel structure have been over dimensioned. Taking the safety factor of the light office into account instead of the safety factor of the dwelling. Enabling the building change from dwelling to office function. The steel structure is combined with a slim-line floor system, this has been chosen to create the necessary amount of flexibility and demountable quality of the building. Non-loadbearing walls enable temporary division of functions. All dwellings and offices have been designed to connect to the modular façade system.
Flexibility in the second degree.
Design space excisable from two dwellings, enables the possibility of three to four typologies and can stimulate specified designed dwellings for the user/client.

Flexibility in the third degree.
so²ho shared office home office: Shared office space for the starters enables them to lower their cost for professional workspace.

Flexibility in the forth degree.
Enabling the user/client to rent out their shared or home office space, stimulates not only diversity in use but enables the client an new amount of freedom according to theirs requirements.

Aspect 3 : The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework.

We followed the methodical line of approach from the studio according the planning research and documents. Aside to the several researches has ben done to strengthen the position of the design theoretical and architectural. For instance the previous mentioned research has been done from personal motivation and interest.

Aspect 4 : The relationship between the project and the wider social context.
The relation between the project and the wider social context can clearly been found in the research of the urban block typologies and the drawn conclusions from this research towards the social conditions of the public realm. The connection that has been laid between the intentions of addressing the social in cohesion of the Cooldistrict through attraction the creative class. And the connections toward the creative city challenge of Rotterdam should clarify the relation between the project and the social ten dens of Rotterdam / the Netherlands.