Reflection P4 -- May 2014
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I. Motivation and Relevance

A number of industrial cities are striving for new directions for their own development in the post-industrial age nowadays. Two common problems are inevitably there for most of these post-industrial cities: one is how to re-develop the huge amount of area of land remaining from booming industry in history while somehow existing as blank spots within urban fabric at present, and the other is how to achieve a new identity for city -- at least for inner city area -- in order to provide citizens and people from outside a positive image of urban environment. Essence of these two problems is the need of enhancing both the quality of spatial environment of city and the quality of social life of citizens. Such need for a social-spatial development is, generally speaking, an urgent condition for most of these post-industrial cities.

There are various efforts -- in different scales -- trying to solve at least one of the problems stated above. Most of these projects often focus more on a proper re-development of brown field -- spatially and ecologically -- while less on the urgent condition of social structure of post-industrial cities. Although a number of projects have indeed provided different kind of good public space, the question of how to achieve new identity for these cities through enhancing the social life of citizens is still under discussion. Therefore, spaces are still here for more research and interventions on the theme of re-development of post-industrial cities, especially on the aspect of social impact and cultural identity. This graduation project, together with other relative research and thesis for other courses at the same period, is part of the efforts in this broad field from a landscape architectural point of view.

II. Relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen within this framework (location/object).

The general theme of Landscape Architecture graduation studio Flowscapes is to define landscape as a form of infrastructure:

“The studio explores infrastructure as a type of landscape and landscape as a type of infrastructure, and is focused on landscape architectonic design of transportation, green, and water infrastructures. These landscape infrastructures are considered armatures for urban and rural development. With movement and flows at the core, these landscape infrastructures facilitate aesthetic, functional, social and ecological relationships between natural and human systems.” (Nijhuis, Jauslin, & De Vries, 2013, p. 1)

The studio provides a broad framework around the themes of flow, movement, landscape and infrastructure. Varies potential areas with distinct characteristic and different problems are provided for students to choose according to their own interests. The chosen area for this project is Duisburg in Germany, one of the most struggling post-industrial cities in Ruhr area. Reason for
this city as the project site are as follows:

Firstly, as one of the most crucial industrial territory in history with its great geographic advantage as the crossing point of different transport infrastructure, Duisburg is at present correspondingly suffered a lot from the influence of its previous industrial development throughout the whole city. Therefore, this city is greatly valuable in terms of research and design projects focusing on redevelopment of post-industrial cities.

Secondly, a number of efforts are already there in Duisburg to help this city, including the Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord, Innerhafen redevelopment, and Rhein Park. However, these efforts mainly covered some certain types of vacant industrial land -- waterfront site and mining site, while leaving other main typologies -- railway land site and quarry site -- untouched. It is of great significance to include these untouched brown field into the big plan in order to draw a new image of the city.

Thirdly, Duisburg has been gradually developed towards a relatively clear direction with a new identity of cultural city. It was one of the most important five cities of the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010. Sadly, the big music festival held in Duisburg in the same year ended into an astonishing tragedy of 21 people dead and hundreds injured. Such tragedy has raised us a condition that Duisburg is lack of a proper public space to hold large social events, and such a large public space for different social events is no doubt crucial for Duisburg to achieve its new identity as a cultural city.

Following the statement above, this graduation project proposes to create a large, green public space -- a eventscape -- in Duisburg to help its ambition as a new cultural capital in Germany. Under such proposal, the “flowscape” is defined as the flow of people in different scenarios happening in this new event park. The relationship between nature and human system is, therefore, expected to build through the complexity of social and daily activities.

III. Relationship between research and design

In a way that the project is defined as eventscape on urban brownfield, the research before design phases needs two main directions: one is the research of “event”, including social and daily activities, public spaces, and how people interact in these activities, the other is a complementary research on brownfield and industry in order to provide enough historic and ecological information for further design. To this aim, the urban condition of inner Duisburg is analyzed into a coexisting and cooperating system. The idea of “complementary city” by O. M. Ungers is the theoretical support of such systematic urban analysis.

“The city is now a structure made up of ‘complementary places’ that can be divided in different places, areas, recreation, culture, commerce, residence and work, that together and with a good connections from the city... That every individual part of the city have its own special features, without being complete by themselves, always need the others.” (O. M. Ungers, 1999)
Through such research, inner city of Duisburg is defined as a system of patches due to its scattered urban fabric from former industry time. These system characterizes Duisburg as a series of programmatic patches -- including commercial cluster, heritage cluster, sport cluster, etc. -- connected by infrastructure system, in which the patch of culture, or to say the patch of social events, is missing. Such a culture patch is crucial not only because of its program in its own, but also due to its ability to provide this city a culture corridor that will link most of important existing patches (see Figure 1&2). Further research of urban event and urban brownfield is taken in order to pinpoint the location of such event patch and to find the programs and scales of these programs in such event patch. These pieces of research together provide a big context for the project, thus composing the underlay system for further design of the eventscape.

![Figure 1. Patch system: existing condition](image1.png)

![Figure 2. Patch system: proposal for future](image2.png)

**IV. Relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework.**

The methodical line of approach of the graduation studio might differs according specific project by each student. In general, students are encouraged to develop their own methodology within the Flowscape studio and build it following distinct characteristics of their projects. Two courses are provided to help students with their methodical line of approach -- AR3LA020: Research Methodology in Landscape Architecture, and AR3LA030: Design with Ecological Processes.
Basic steps that lead the project from starting point, through research and analysis, into finalization of design, follow the general framework of the studio: fascination, problem statement, research question, aim of project, context analysis, diagnosis, case study, design proposal, methods of design, finalization of design, etc. Such ideal order of research and design is sometimes inevitably hard to keep due to certain phase in which design and research always overlap with each other. However, looking backwards from this moment, several breakthroughs within the graduation project still compose a relatively clear logic and methodical line.

Two main methods are applied in this project: anatomy as the way to analyze urban context, and layering as method to lead design. These two methods are separately used for research and design phase, while under a same idea of layering, destructuring and restructuring. Two pieces of academic research are important as theoretical support for these methods -- “complementary city ” from O. M. Ungers and “Manhattan Transcripts” from B. Tschumi. These remarkable works provides broad horizon of regarding city as a spatial and social complexity and entity, which are of great significance for this eventscape project.

V. Relationship between the project and wider social context.

How to re-develop post-industrial cities are a common question throughout the whole world in the general condition at present. In Europe, especially, logic between compact urban fabric and sequence of public spaces are missing in most of post-industrial cities. Such relatively low quality of public space system has led to separation within social structure and lack of social cohesion. What's more, large amount area of abandoned land left from industry era has brought great difficulty in terms of building a environmental friendly spatial system in larger scale. Recently an ambient proposal of IBA Emscher Park is raised as a valuable plan to re-develop water front brownfield in Ruhr area in Germany into a green network for people (see Figure 3). Such ambition successfully drew a new image for this most important industry corridor in Europe, while somehow will not be realized easily without cooperation at local scale. Therefore, this project would support the big plan of Emscher Park in Ruhr area, as an important part in the whole ambition.

Figure 3. IBA Emscher Park. Master strategy.
Appendix
