Reflection P4 and P5

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AR3AI113 Interior graduation studio – Urban culture and new openness
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The Relationship between research and design

In Research seminar (AR1AI132), we are asked to do a research about social relationship in the design program physical rehabilitation center. I decided to focus on disabled children as my target group. My research topic is Schooling and Rehabilitation for Children. They are very special users compared to adult patients because of the stage of their lives. Despite their disabilities, they can be the same as normal kids. However, there’s one thing, which is indispensable in their lives after they are diagnosed and treated, that is ongoing rehab therapy. Spending time in a rehabilitation center all the days or several times a week, fighting for their recovery and future, could be boring and exhausted. In a word, disabled children are different. So I held this perspective at the beginning of the design by creating an individual section for children’s department. To fit in with the site, the children’s section is only one floor with an individual entrance facing the Museum Park. It is also protected from the busy street Westersingel so that children’s department is more safe and quiet. The block of children’s department in return complete the mass model of my building and give a balance to it. My research about Mytylschool – a custom school for children with disabilities– gave me more insights about the layout. As 90% of children who visit rehabilitation center are outpatients, I put the treatment& therapy part close the entrance, and patient rooms deeper in the department.

The Relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study

The theme of my studio is urban culture and new openness. It concerns not only about urban context of the new building but also the interior atmosphere that extends from the urban context and dominates the ambience of the building. For physical rehabilitation in particular, the program is very sensitive in a kind of way that we should both consider the privacy of patients and the openness of this building for the urban context. The Museum Park and the main street are two important elements in the urban context. The former one can provide good healing environment for patients and the latter one has positive impact on openness but
negative influence on privacy. To achieve this balance, I began to look for monastery building as case study. This type of building usually sits in a quiet suburban area. It is usually individual and protected but also embracing the nature surrounding the building. The flowing route inside a monastery building is usually a loop that is continuous. The building also contains public space like refectory, chapel, and living space as cells. I tried to transfer the ambience of monastery building into a rehabilitation building. For patients, they need simple layout that is easy to understand and orientate, and also peaceful atmosphere to heal their mind. For urban context, the building is a self-standing object (as for Westersingel) but also has certain openness to surroundings. From my point of view, the study of monastery buildings could be an inspiration of my design.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen in this framework

The working progress of the studio started with a 3 weeks workshop of intensive case study and site analyze at the same time. During this period, I’ve learnt the typology of healthcare building and the urban context of our building site. This combination of working at small scale and larger scale at the same time has continued during the whole process. When I was dealing with site plan and mass model of the building, I also need to think about the programme inside. The position of functional space is deeply related to the environment in my scheme. Later on, the façade is also related to the special experience of my building and the realization of façade has to be supported by the feasibility of detailing. So I need to zoom in and out at the same time in order to develop the design.

The relationship between the project and the social context

Social context is related to the openness of this building. At the beginning of the design, I assume that the building is not only used by inpatients and outpatients, staff and visitors, but also partly open to the general public. The café near the main entrance could serve general public. And the swimming pool, gym, (near park) and auditorium (near main entrance) could also used by general public with certain reservation. The public functions of the building are put on the ground floor and museum park level to create openness towards the public. Also the office wing is facing the Westersingel as a continuous of row houses. On the opposite, the therapy space and patients rooms are above the ground floor to keep a distance from the street. To conclude, the project has contributed to certain public functions towards the street and park, but still keep the privacy of individuality as a healthcare building.