

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Izabel Atanasova Todorova
Student number	5391423

Studio		
Name / Theme	Interiors, Buildings, Cities	
Main mentor	Mark Pimlott	Architectural Design
Second mentor	Matthijs Klooster	Building Engineering
Third mentor	Jurjen Zeinstra	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I am interested in architectural design on all scales and, when choosing my graduation studio, the Interiors, Buildings, Cities seemed to address precisely that.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Future Bank
Goal	
Location:	Brussels, Belgium
The posed problem,	The National Bank needs redefining, as its traditional role is becoming obsolete. Previously a pillar of the status quo – the neoliberal narrative, which has proven itself to be detrimental to the ecosystem and to us as a society, now the Bank faces the challenge of promoting change and a more sustainable way of living.
research questions and	How does the Bank become an agent of change and how does it promote that change? How does the Bank aid the transition to a more sustainable economic system and what system could that be? How does the bank contribute to the city of Brussels, to the life of its citizens and to its own employees wellbeing?

design assignment in which these result.	How does the Bank communicate its new agency to the public and to its staff in terms of its architecture and organization?
<p>The problems that this project poses are neither purely ideological, nor only of physical character, but an amalgamation of these two. The Bank, being a financial institution, cannot be divided from the notion of the economic system in which it operates. Currently, we refer to that in terms of 'free market' – a scene that has been largely defined by the neoliberal narrative which emerged in the second half of the XX century. There is hardly need to illustrate the detrimental effects of that frame of thought, but the 2008 financial crash and the global climate crisis are a few of the examples brought about by such a profit-prioritizing linear economic model, that is the current global status quo. The Bank, one of the pillars of this system, is gradually losing some of its traditional functions in the increasingly digital today, leading to a tectonic shift in its role as an institution.</p> <p>The problem consists in its response to that change. However, there also lies the opportunity to bring forward more sustainable economic and social alternatives. The Bank, perhaps unlike any other institution, can set an example in precisely that field; it can become a catalyst in reshaping the economy and society's attitude to resource extraction. Its monumentality, anonymity, fortress-like condition can step down in favour of ambitions for a more open, transparent and publicly engaged institution. The Bank becoming an agent of change and promoting that agency to the public is namely the research and design focus of this project.</p>	
<p>Process</p>	
<p>Method description</p> <p>The research question was approached with an extensive literature study, supported by the group studio assignments dealing with the topics of working and the bank (seminars, precedents studies, model-making, social plinth design task). Subsequently, surveys and case study analysis were employed as well. All data was routinely evaluated and was used as a stepping stone for further, more specific questions. An iterative process was actively pursued.</p>	

Literature and general practical preference

Literature: alternative economic systems (specifically collaborative economy, Time Banking and LETS), office design (Francis Duffy, Arja Ropo), design of public spaces (Mark Pimlott, Jan Gehl, Richard Sennett).

Precedents: Lacaton & Vassal – School of Architecture in Nantes and Palais de Tokyo; Frank van Klingeren – De Meerpaal and 't Karregat, Lina Bo Bardi – SECS Fabbrica Pompeia and Teatro Oficina

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation topic aligns with the studio topic and although its focus may appear ideological, it has concrete dimensions in the body of the Bank building. Due to operating within the frame of an existing edifice and peculiar conditions of the site, as well as the given competition brief, issued by the Bank itself, the intervention needs to consider in greater depth aspects which may usually be regarded as secondary in an architectural design project. Multiple scales must be addressed, from urbanism, through architecture and the specific topographic conditions of the site, down to technological details. The wishes of the Bank – the client, and the financial feasibility are other prime concerns for the project. In this sense I believe the graduation project represents a holistic overview of multiple facets of the master programme. It fosters a multidisciplinary approach and encourages the invention of creative problem solving techniques in complex situations.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework?

The graduation project goes further than the physical dimensions of the built environment and incorporates the notion of agency in architecture. It develops the understanding of the architect as a part of society, an engaged citizen and an advocate for sustainability. It pertains to the ability of the architect as a professional to communicate meaning and to contribute to change through the deliberate and rational design of the physical environment. Through my research and design, I hope to address the detrimental effects of the neoliberal status quo and to offer a sustainable alternative, that is clearly legible in the architecture of the Bank.