

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	Just de Bruin	
Student number	4219570	
Studio		
Name / Theme	Design crossovers – Heterogeneous City, London	
Main mentor	J.P.M. van Lierop	Design mentor
Second mentor	J.D. Fokkinga	Building technology mentor
Third mentor	R. Cavallo	Research mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>My favorite word is sonder: the realization that everybody around you, even strangers, is living a life just as complex as yours. I often have this feeling, especially when walking around crowded places in the city, and fantasize about the passerby whose lives have endless possibilities but yet they stay hidden from the observer. Could the mundane-looking businesswoman blow off steam in an obscure fetishist erotic club? Or could the rough hooligan type have a ritual with his grandma, coming over for a cup of tea and starting knitting together on a Sunday afternoon?</p> <p>These unknown lives reflect upon the hidden complexity of the heterogeneous city. We only thoroughly know our own lives and therefore our perception of the street, neighborhood, and the city is very personal. So, it differs from person to person. However, the city facilitates all these personal lives, thus becoming an assemblage of different experiences and perceptions, which are mostly hidden due to the personal aspect. Only the diversity of functions brings this aspect to light. But fails to show the connections.</p> <p>So, for me, the fascination for the heterogeneous city is not about researching a certain system within this complexity. But, how the city is formed through a heterogeneous crowd, and how we can deal with this as architects.</p>	

Graduation project

Title of the graduation project	The architecture of concurrence. Resilience towards transitions through negotiation.
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Goal

Location:	43 Andrews Rd, Hackney, London
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The posed problem, research questions and design assignment in which these results.	[Design Assignment]
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Problem statement.

The transformation of a uniform society towards a pluralistic one had as a consequence that the emphasis has been laid upon the self-construction of identity or lifestyle. However, this creates a fragmented reality wherein the individual through a tremendous amount of choices can meticulously stage their own identity. The availability of choice reduces the interdependency with our direct environment. Thus resulting in a decline in social cohesion between groups of different backgrounds.

So, the narrative of present-day society has become the inability to integrate with sites/actors outside of the comfort of our own created lifestyle. This does not necessarily form a problem unless certain groups are threatened by friction caused by others. That is the case with the phenomenon of gentrification.

First of all, I do not want to undermine the positive effects gentrification can have. Through this process, urban neighborhoods are upgraded physically, socially, and economically through the flow of the middle- and upper-class towards the city. However, gentrification can become a victim of its success. Homogenization is said to take place in the form of Disneyfication as a result of advancing commercialization.

Homogenization is the result of identity as a consumption choice. We strive for a static and overdetermined urban environment for it gives us control over a certain identity. This creates enclaves, that function as urban islands whose connection to the city evaporates. Which in turn becomes unobtainable for the more fragile marginalized poor classes in the city.

Add to this the fact that the search for identity inflicts a decline of social cohesion in general and it becomes more clear why there is a growing tension between the lower classes and the higher classes in cities all around the world and London in particular.

Main Research question:

How can architecture become a medium of negotiation for cultivating the acceptance of transitory difference?

It is a little bit of a mouthful, but it captivates what I am trying to produce. A place that can develop a mindset for people to face unexpected situations again and therefore encounter differences. Implying the act of negotiation fundamental to overcoming friction and tension between various groups. Keeping in mind the temporalities of the city and its citizens. While at the same time having a critical view towards the limits of architecture as representation for these processes.

Secondary research questions:

How can a static production of architecture represent the ambivalence of space?

Where are possible sites of conflict and exclusion in London?

What are the possibilities for developing concurrence and cooperation?

Design assignment

Subject to the research is the east-London borough of Hackney. Lower-class and upper-class people are juxtaposed with each other in this area. It is acknowledged that through gentrification people from different backgrounds are mixed in this borough. However, they do not tend to get entangled in each other's lives. Furthermore, there is a general concern towards this transformation amongst the original inhabitants that feel alienated by the new influx of people and functions. Therefore the borough is divided into two separate worlds.

To gap this division and integrate these different groups there is a need to find a common ground in the literal sense. The railway through London Fields in Hackney lends itself for this purpose. It intersects a variety of different environments and therefore is a continuous and stable object in a transitional area. It provides a recognizable and neutral background on which diversity can be superimposed.

In reaching out to the different groups it is important to unravel the reciprocal relationship between space and the actors within. We form connections and relationships through the realm of objects as well (the urban environment in this case), however, space is derived from experience and is therefore personal and ambiguous. So through architecture, we can evoke meaning but we do not control how or what. For attracting different actors there needs to be an incentive in the form of a community hub. However, this ignores the understanding of the multiplicity of desires by the different actors. So around the community hub space will be designated for creating one's own place. The community hub, therefore, becomes the infrastructure for creating functions according to people's needs and desires.

By controlling a framework to build openness and flexibility, a system is developed that makes it possible to reach a bigger crowd.

The added functions are made through the concept of self-building. This will be a more indeterminate and evolutionary process.

For the success of this project, a critical bottleneck need to be overcome. The implementations of predestined functions in the community hub need to be elaborate. On the one hand, those functions should be in synergy with the goal of building the speculative functions. And on the other hand, they need to be functioning on their own. Providing in necessities of their regular function.

Process

Method description

The subjects of spatial relations and architectural representation have been developed through literature research, thus far. First by relating two concepts of the ideal society: utopia and the open city. The first is to create an ideal environment through a very determined design. The latter is the opposite by embracing flexibility. Neither one is the solution for coping with the ambiguity of space it is more in the in-between. The most intriguing part of this research is the fact that architecture in fact can be a representation of the ambiguous concept of space. Although, it is very difficult to provide one with enough distance to truly contemplate the mechanisms. This part of the research will be expanded by interviewing different inhabitants within Hackney. So that the scope not just becomes theoretical but showcases the differences of perception towards Hackney as well.

The search for conflict and exclusion in London is clarified through mapping. First by looking at the scope of the city of London. Which resorted to research at the level of Hackney, where the biggest juxtaposition is between different classes. The first layers were provided by information from the government about deprivation and gentrification. They were helpful at the start, however too general for a good overview of the tensions that reside in Hackney. Therefore two new layers were added: one of drill, and one of transitions. The drill map shows the location of different drill rap groups, which are heavily associated with crimes in general, the darker aspect of living in estates in London. This gave a good insight into the overlap of their territory into areas where the new influx of higher classes is present as well. The transitions in Hackney gave an extensive image of the large number of estates that have been demolished to make place for new apartment blocks. Both the drill and the transition map are seen as the extreme but specific realms of tension. Furthermore, collages have been made to express the atmosphere felt through different areas in Hackney. This is a reflection of the passer-by who has not been

influenced yet by earlier experiences. It is interesting to know that these images might be very prejudiced.

In the search for common ground, it is necessary to research the topic of borders and boundaries. The boundary is an edge where things end; the border is an edge where different groups interact. So through these concepts, an inventory is made of thresholds and their porosity or closure. Moreover, interaction has been researched through the lens of disruption. Since we have become very good at avoiding each other something extra has to happen to create the confrontation. However, disruption is a provocative concept and probably too extreme. The concept of self-building is much more approachable and has certain qualities in the same direction. Just the act of making while learning at the same time gives cause to experimentation and failure, therefore also to interaction, confrontation, and eventually negotiation. Relearning how to cope with uncertainties. Moreover, building something yourself signifies a greater affiliation with the object. The Gecekundo is a case study of this principle. By externalizing their cause into an architectural object the protest movement became bigger than expected. However, they had the incentive and this speculative project is fragile on that subject. Therefore, it can be interesting to research and develop a strategy for social marketing.

Literature and general practical preference

How can a static production of architecture represent the ambivalence of space?

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Where are possible sites of conflict and exclusion in London?

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What are the possibilities for developing concurrence and cooperation?

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Graham, Stephen. *Disrupted Cities When Infrastructure Fails*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Reijndorp, Arnold. "The City as Performance." *POA Series*. Lecture. Accessed June 3, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6C3r8NcTxQ&t=2460s>.

Sharr, Adam. *Heidegger for Architects*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Tajeri, Niloufar. "The Gecekundo Protest Hut of Kotti & Co: a Space for Housing Rights in Berlin." *The Funambulist* no. 23, 2019.

Precedent: La escuela crece by Recetas Urbanas
Gecekundo by Kotti & Co

Reflection

1. The core of the relevance of my graduation topic lies in architecture and representation: the reciprocal connection between human activity and architecture, for that which we call social, is not only applicable to human relations but also between human and object. If you compare this subject to the studio topic, the resemblance is straightforward, namely an interest in the heterogeneous city. However, the studio has a general focus on heterogeneity as a product of underlying forces, I would call it an external point of view. While my point of view is on the internal. Heterogeneity in the city, not as a consequence but as a way of perceiving. Our perception and experience of the built environment are subjective and multiplicity. Therefore the representation of certain architecture to an individual is personal

From the perspective of the master architecture, it is more of a research into the control and abilities that we have as designers over a certain project, and how we tend to deal with this.

On the broader scope of the master program I think I can include this project under the category of sustainability. Not in the sense of technicalities, or functionality of the urban environment, but in a sense of a sustainable society. This means acquiring sensitivity to how the social relations are implied by architecture, and how to coop with the temporal and indeterminate city.
2. In a larger context we ought to look at the problem statement. This research is developed from the notion of gentrification. This phenomenon tends to eventually homogenize the neighborhoods in which it takes place. Lower incomes are pushed out and the transformed environment suits only those who can afford to live there. Which develops into tensions and segregation. This project acknowledges this problem but does not interfere with this process. Instead, I try to find common ground, shaping society on a smaller scale by integrating different groups, hoping to change perspectives: For housing to be a right, instead of an investment.