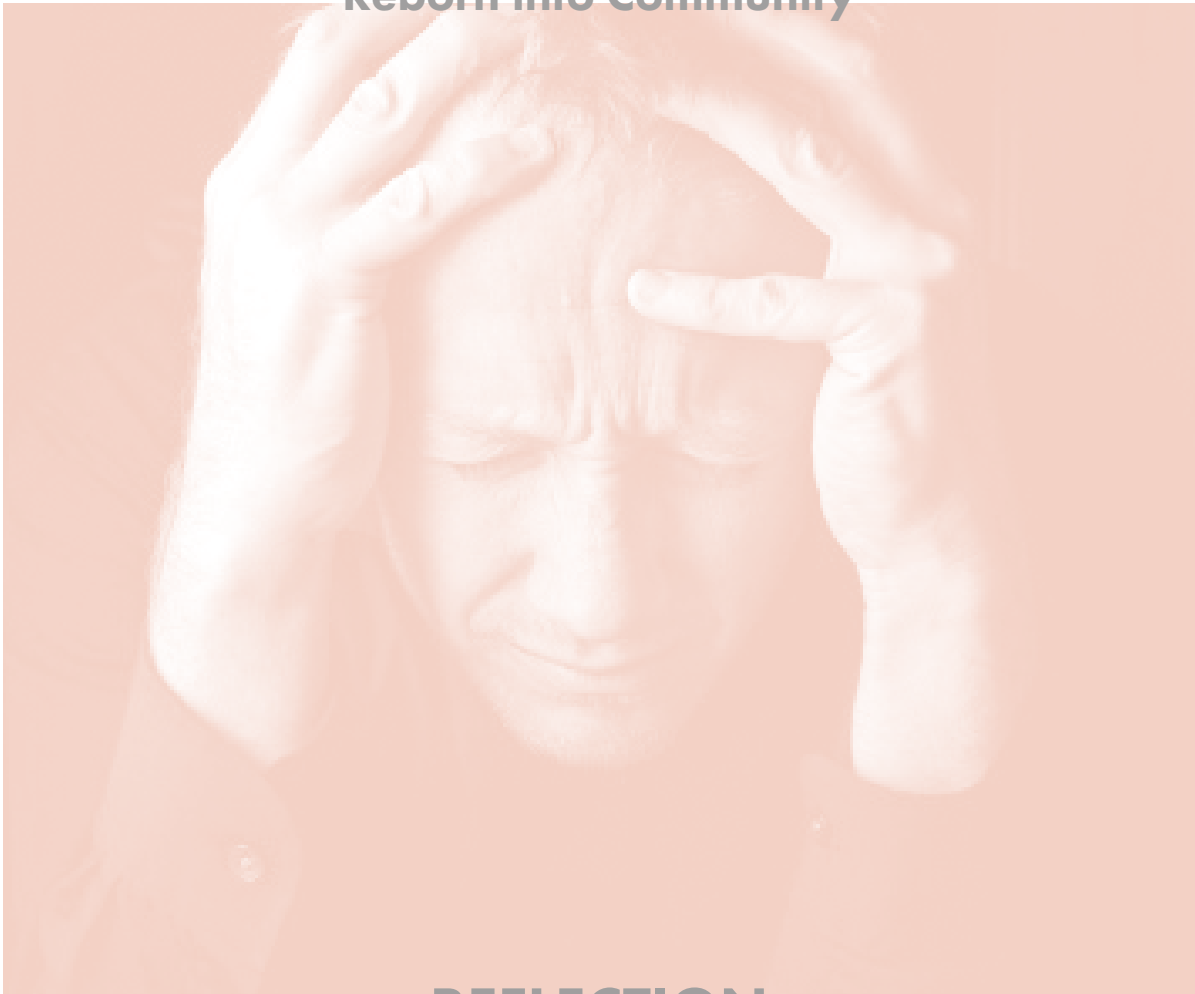


PHOENIX:

Reborn into Community



REFLECTION

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Figure 1: Photo by One Eighty (2017), edited by author



REFLECTION

Figure 2: Photo by Garber (2021), edited by author

1. What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track (Ar, Ur, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation topic focuses on designing a rehabilitation facility for people with severe mental illnesses. I aimed to create a residential building with different activities for both patients and the community surrounding them which also aims to reduce the stigma towards mental health facilities and push the community integration of the patients. My master's track: architecture, aims to teach students to create innovative buildings while encountering technical, social, and spatial challenges. I believe that creating a rehabilitation facility that aims to decrease the stigma towards mental health facilities while also designing a sustainable and aesthetically pleasing building created many technical, social, and spatial challenges that I had to undergo which made me learn a lot even during my graduation year.

2. How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

The research for me came in unison with the design and I tried to base every design decision on my research and asked myself "What would the target group want?". I believe that in architecture but also especially in healthcare it's important to base important decisions on the needs and wishes of the patients therefore during every step of the design phase (conceptual, landscape, building, and building technology scale) I always tried to relate research to my design. Additionally, while designing, I also encountered situations where I didn't know what the patients would need/ want, therefore many times in the process, I went back to research or asked the specialists for advice. For example, while designing apartments, I encountered a dilemma regarding the inclusion of private outdoor spaces. However, after talking to a psychiatrist, I was advised to create shared outdoor spaces instead to encourage social interaction. Therefore, my process wasn't research and design, but they always came together in the process.

3. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

I believe that my approach worked well for me as I first tried to focus on the problem, the background of my topic, and the opinions of professionals and my target group. This way, I could get good outcomes from my research without adding my opinion. Afterward, during the design phase, I tried designing the building based on the research and then I started adding my opinions on aesthetics and how I want people to perceive the space. However, as a self-criticism of my method, I could have used my case studies more efficiently since I can say that I learned from them, but I did not put that much attention to them during the design process except while forming my functions list.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope, and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

As mentioned before, I think that rehabilitation facilities, especially for mental illnesses, face a big stigma and often are not wanted in a closed community, therefore, for me, it carries an important societal value. I strongly believe that the way a building is designed can have a big influence on how the community perceives the target group that uses the building. For example, one of the reasons why mental facilities are seen as "scary" is the fact that they are usually put outside of cities, have tall and monolithic facades, and do not add anything to the community surrounding them which makes them an "unknown". However, creating a building that is transparent to the outside, offers interaction between the community and the users, and encourages the patients to add something to their communities would help unravel this unknown.

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

In this way, I could avoid mistakes like this in a future project.

I believe that to a certain extent, my project is transferrable when it comes to rehabilitation in terms of the program, material choices, and concept. In my project I saw rehabilitation as a step rather than a destination in healthcare, therefore my building concept pushes the patients to move up the apartments and slowly become detached from the facility. In this sense, I think the project concept can be adapted to other rehabilitation facilities and perhaps would solve the issue of rehabilitation facilities being seen as a final resort than a place to grow and be integrated into society.

6. If you could go back to the beginning of the design phase, what would you have done differently? (own question)

Even though I am happy with the design I developed, there are some parts in the design that I realized later that could be different too late in the process. The first thing that I would have done differently would be a change in the master plan. I used the master plan while developing my concept and forming the mass of my building and I didn't go back to the master plan until later in the design process where I realized that it would be better if my building had the main entrance in another direction in the master plan. Even though I do think that I managed to solve the problem by introducing new roads/ paths, it would have been a better choice.

7. What did you learn from the graduation process that you would integrate into your future projects?

Especially after making the mistake that I explained in the previous question, I learned that it is important in the design process to always work on different scales and not to focus on merely one scale. I believe that when developing my building I always worked on different scales which allowed me to be in control of my research, building technology, and architecture, but I did not do the same for the master plan scale. Therefore, something that I learned in a challenging way is to always be in control of every scale and rethink the results of a design decision on every level.