

Reflection

For the architectural graduation project 'Sculpting Sensations', I embarked on a journey exploring sensory perception, tactile experiences, and the intricate relationship between materials, space, and emotions in architectural design. This journey unfolded in two main phases: research and design, each presenting its own set of challenges and discoveries. Initially, the research delved into the study of how we perceive our surroundings and experience sounds, smells, tastes and touch, paving the way for a deeper understanding of the sensory realm.

Subsequently, I transitioned into the design phase, where I strived to translate these insights into the creation of a museum with distinct spatial identities. My aim was to transcend conventional architectural norms and create spaces that evoke profound emotional responses. As I reflect on the culmination of this project, I am prompted to explore the guiding questions that shaped my approach and shed light on the insights gained throughout this transformative process. Through a series of reflective inquiries, I attempt to unravel the layers of my work, examining its significance, implications, and potential avenues for future exploration.

The relation between the graduation project topic, the master track Architecture, and the master programme MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences

Throughout the journey of my research and design for my graduation project in Architecture, I embarked on an exploration initially centered around the sensory experience of new biobased materials, with a particular emphasis on tactility. However, as my project evolved, I uncovered a deeper understanding that surpassed mere tactile sensations. It became increasingly evident that my investigation was not solely about the physical qualities of materials, but rather about the profound impact of architecture on user experience.

This realization led me to question whether aesthetics, especially in the context of our studio, Technologies & Aesthetics, could be confined solely to the visual realm or whether it should also encompass other sensory and emotional experiences. Delving into this inquiry, I discovered the intricate interplay between materials, spatial configurations, light, and scale that possess the remarkable ability to intensify sensory experiences and evoke a wide variety of emotions and feelings within individuals. This expanded perspective highlights the relevance of designing for these emotions and experiences in architecture.

While many newer biobased materials are technically understood, their emotional and sensory properties remain less researched, indicating an exciting avenue for exploration and innovation in the field. By bridging the gap between technical advancements and considerations of human experience, my project underscores the importance of a comprehensive design approach that integrates both the pragmatic and the experiential facets of architecture. This holistic approach not only enriches our understanding of architectural aesthetics but also paves the way for the creation of spaces that are not only visually appealing but also deeply resonate with users on an emotional and sensory level, ultimately enhancing the quality of human experience within built environments.

The influence of the research on the design

The journey from research to design in my project was marked by a dynamic interplay between investigation and creation, with each influencing and enriching the other. Initially, my research delved into the sensory experience, focusing primarily on the tactile qualities of specific materials. As I delved deeper into the literature and conducted experimental research, it became evident that while tactile preferences were noteworthy, the essence of the participants' experiences, feelings, emotions, and associations held greater significance.

This realization prompted a shift in perspective, leading me to explore the creation of stronger emotional experiences within architectural spaces. Thus, as I transitioned into the design phase, I found that the initial guidelines derived from my research were insufficient to start the design process. Instead, I sought to integrate materials, light, shape, and size to evoke varied emotional responses within the built environment. By creating contrasting spaces, from open and light-filled areas to sheltered and enclosed spaces, the design aimed to amplify these experiences. This exploration led to the establishment of new design guidelines aimed at intensifying emotional experiences and defining distinct spatial zones within the design.

Moreover, the programmatic decisions were informed by these guidelines, with the museum emerging as the ideal setting to materialize varied emotional experiences. The multifunctional nature of the museum allowed for the creation

of diverse spaces catering to different activities, each paired with its own emotional experience. Additionally, earlier research into cork resurfaced during the design process, with its visual, acoustic, and emotional qualities informing material selection and application.

Thus, the continuous nature of research and design not only shaped the trajectory of my project but also enriched its conceptual depth and experiential richness, ultimately resulting in a design that transcends mere functionality to evoke profound emotional connections within its users.

The value of the way of working

approach, methods, methodology

Reflecting on my way of working throughout the research and design phases of my project, I have come to appreciate the inherent value of a hands-on approach. This method, especially crucial given the tactile nature of my research, has consistently yielded tangible insights and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. During the research phase, this hands-on approach translated into direct experimentation, enabling me to intimately explore the sensory qualities of materials. This not only provided valuable data but also ignited a curiosity that propelled the research forward.

Similarly, in the design process, I found that engaging in model making was indispensable for grasping material assembly, spatial configurations, and the interplay of light within architectural spaces. Through tactile exploration with physical models, I visualized and refined design concepts more effectively, leading to informed decisions. This hands-on approach not only fostered creativity and innovation but also deepened my connection with the design process itself, enriching both the journey and the outcome.

In assessing the value of my methodology, I recognize its role in not only enhancing the quality of my work but also in fostering a deeper connection with the design process itself, ultimately enriching both the process and the outcome.

The academic and societal value, scope and implication of the graduation project, including ethical aspects

Assessing the academic and societal value, scope, and implications of my graduation project, I find it to be multifaceted and far-reaching. Academically, my project contributes to the expanding discourse within architecture by bridging the gap between technical innovation and human experience. By delving into the sensory dimension of architectural design and advocating for a more inclusive understanding of aesthetics, my research challenges traditional notions and offers novel insights into the potential of (biobased) materials. This not only enriches the academic landscape but also lays the groundwork for future explorations in the field.

Societally, my project holds significant implications for the built environment and the communities it serves. By prioritizing the creation of spaces that evoke emotional and sensory experiences, my design strives to foster a more empathetic and human-centered approach to architecture. This has the potential to enhance the quality of life for individuals interacting with the built environment, promoting well-being and connection within communities. Moreover, the ethical aspect of my project lies in its emphasis on sustainability and mindful material usage. By advocating for the adoption of biobased materials and designing for emotional durability, my project aligns with ethical imperatives to lessen environmental impact and promote responsible architectural practices.

Overall, the academic and societal value of my graduation project lies in its potential to reshape architectural discourse, enrich human experiences, and promote ethical design practices that prioritize both people and planet.

The value of the transferability of the project results

In assessing the transferability of my project results, it becomes clear that its implications extend far beyond the confines of the initial research scope. While the focus was primarily on exploring the sensory properties of a select list of biobased, living, earth, and manmade materials, the methodologies developed offer versatile applications. The hands-on experimentation conducted can be effectively adapted to explore a broader range of materials, thus broadening the research's relevance and reach. Furthermore, the sensory mapping conducted at the design location of Lauwersmeer highlights the methodology's adaptability to diverse geographical contexts. Although the mapping provided site-

specific insights, its approach can be replicated in various locations worldwide, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the sensory landscape and guiding contextually sensitive design interventions. Thus, while my project was rooted in a specific context, its transferability lies in its potential to inform and inspire future research and design across different materials and locations, ultimately contributing to the advancement of sensory-driven architectural practices globally.

Evolution of perspective on architecture, design, and the role of the architect

Throughout the course of my graduation project, my perspectives on architecture, design, and the role of the architect underwent a profound evolution. Initially, I approached architecture primarily as a discipline concerned with creating functional and aesthetically pleasing spaces. However, as my project unfolded and I delved deeper into the exploration of sensory perception and emotional resonance, I came to realize the transformative potential of architecture beyond its physical qualities. I began to view architecture as a powerful medium for shaping human experiences and fostering emotional connections. This shift in perspective challenged me to reconsider the traditional role of the architect as a mere designer of buildings and instead embrace a more holistic approach that prioritizes empathy, sustainability, and human-centered design principles. As I navigated the complexities of my project, I discovered the profound responsibility that architects hold in shaping the built environment and the lives of those who inhabit it. This newfound perspective has fundamentally altered my approach to design, instilling in me a deep sense of purpose and a commitment to creating spaces that not only function beautifully but also enrich the human experience in meaningful and profound ways.

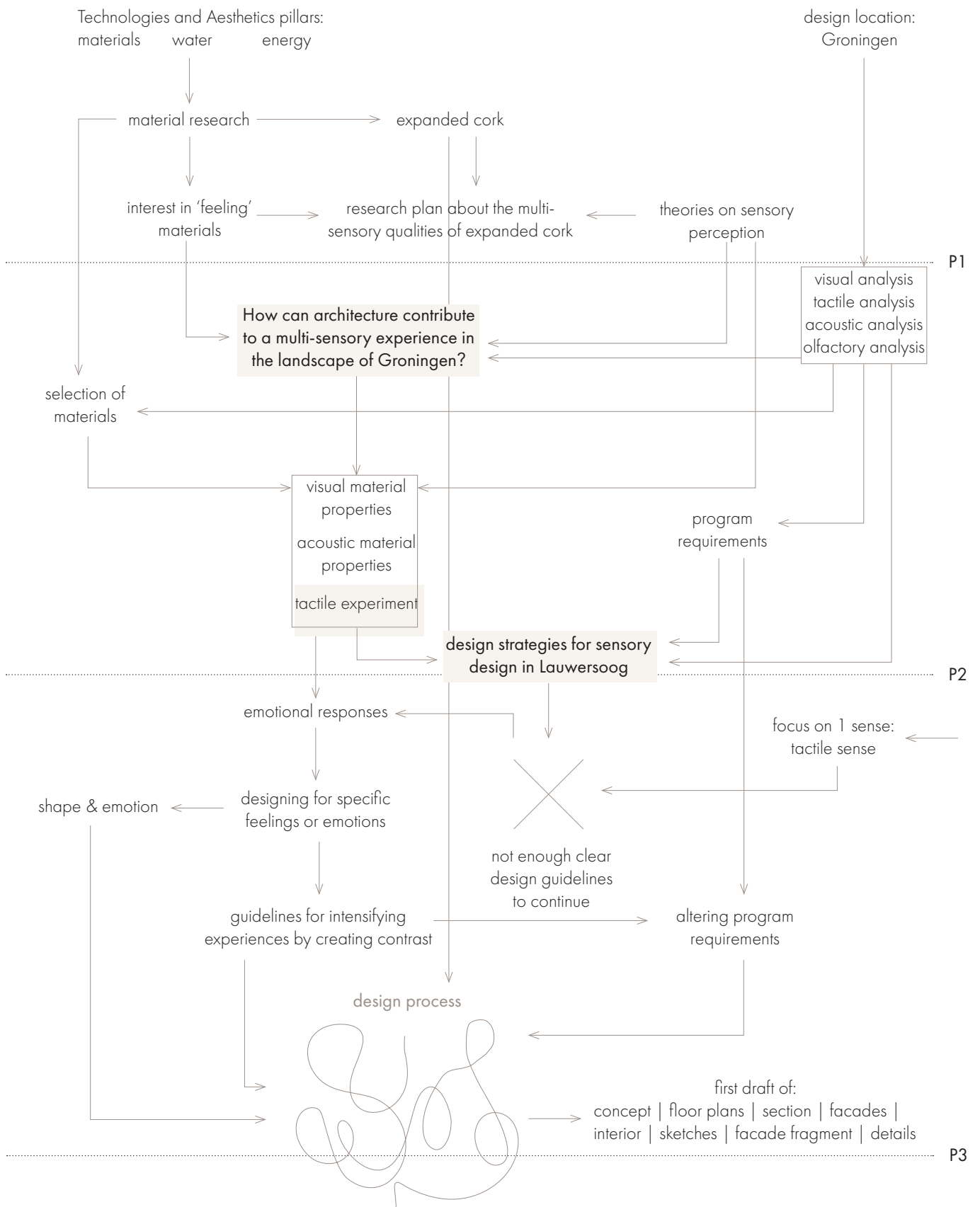
Aspects that could have benefitted from further exploration

Looking back on my project, I believe that further exploration and refinement into emotional experiences could have been beneficial, particularly in the research phase. While the original intent was to investigate sensory perception through all senses, the focus eventually narrowed to the tactile sense. However, as the design process unfolded, it became evident that the emotional experience of users was perhaps more compelling than solely sensory experiences. In this project, the emotional value emerged unexpectedly as a result of the tactile experiments, eventually assuming a significant role, despite not being the primary focus initially.

In hindsight, it would have been valuable to shift the research focus towards exploring the emotions, feelings, and associations evoked by architectural materials and spaces. Understanding how materials can serve as tools to evoke specific emotional responses could have provided deeper insights into the design process. This shift in focus may have facilitated earlier and more informed design choices, ultimately enhancing the overall quality and resonance of the project.

Looking ahead..

As I look ahead to the final P5 presentation, I am filled with anticipation for the next phase of my project's development. With a month remaining, I am eager to delve deeper into refining the interior experience, particularly through the creation of a detailed model that will bring my design vision to life in a tangible and immersive way. Additionally, I am committed to further advancing the technical elaboration of key elements, such as the natural stone and cork cores, by focusing on details that will enhance both their functionality and aesthetic appeal. As I continue to navigate the final stages of my project, I am excited to see how these refinements will contribute to the overall narrative and impact of my design, ultimately resulting in a compelling and comprehensive presentation that reflects the depth and thoughtfulness of my exploration into sensory- and emotion driven architecture.



concept | site drawing & model | floor plans | sections | elevations | interios perspectives | technical report | climate section | axonometric drawing of construction facade fragment | details | process booklet

final interior model | further detailing | finishing booklets | desinging posters