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	Jingwen Gan
Student number	

Studio	
Name / Theme	Complex Projects: Bodies & Building Berlin
Main mentor	Henri van Bennekom	Architecture
Second mentor	Georgios Karvelas	Building Technology
Argumentation of choice of the studio	With a rational attitude, Complex Projects focuses on the complexity of architecture. Berlin, the location of the studio this year, places this discussion of building in the emblematic and charming context of a hectic metropolitan. I believe that I could explore the multifaceted mechanism behind the various chaotic beauties of the modern metropolis through the Studio.

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Live and Live: Academy of Alternative Music

Goal	
Location:	Köpenicker Straße, Berlin
The posed problem,	Berlin has a rich soil for alternative culture, the exploitation of which has brought economic growth but also entails human-space contradictions. For instance, many buildings squatted by poor artists have been repossessed. The artists have no choice but to leave the place where they live and work for decades. On a larger scale, the gentrification of Berlin is gradually expelling the alternative culture and its creator and audience.
research questions and	What is the appropriate way to institutionalize the alternative culture of music in the design of a music academy in Berlin?
design assignment in which these result.	The project is aiming at proposing a music academy dedicated to the ever-evolving music industry with a focus on alternative music. The design will be a collective living-learning campus consisting of two main reciprocal programs, the Academy and the Housing. The Academy part provides space tailored for mutual learning, collaborative creating, and unconventional performing. The Housing part explores the architectural solution for an affordable, creative, and sustainable way of collective living.

Problem statement
Berlin has a rich soil in alternative culture, the utilization of which has brought economic growth but also inevitable human-space contradictions. For instance, due to the increasing land price, poor artists and musicians have to leave Berlin, and the promoted cultural transition to the mainstream media industry causes disappointment.

Though there are several music conservatories and universities in Berlin, they mainly focus on mainstream music, and the spatial quality of such educational space is too conservative for accommodating contemporary music creation. In contrast to the open, collaborative and flexible spatial layouts emphasised in many contemporary educational buildings, the most common spatial layout of music buildings throughout history has been the functionalist classroom and corridor approach. While this solution ensures the acoustic performance of each classroom, it is spatially incompatible with the communication and collaboration that is so important in today's music industry, and limits the definition of performance.

Thus I propose my research question: What is the appropriate and creative way to institutionalize the music subculture in the design of a music academy in Berlin?

Design Ambitions

The project ambitions can be formulated referring to the famous notion of Berlin: "Poor but sexy." Each of the words leads to some objectives to address the problem in the typology of music schools or the context of Berlin.

- "POOR": The school should be affordable for young musicians, and the design should represent a strategy of financial feasibility.
- "SEXY": The school should be dedicated to the spatial settings of learning, creating, and performing alternative music. It should propose feasible innovations beyond the boring spatial quality in common music schools.
- "BUT": As a conjunction word, "BUT" refers to the value of connection and transition that the project will bring to its physical and cultural context.

Design Assignment

Through analysis, a comprehensive design brief is concluded to be the guidelines to achieve the design ambitions in architectural languages. The guidelines can be shown in three categories, respectively client, program and site.

- Client: The project employs a financial strategy of cross-subsidization. There are three parties of clients, respectively the Federal State, the sponsor, and private patrons.
    - The Federal State requires the project to accommodate cultural events which will bring tourism economy and the public life of surrounding neighbourhoods. Thus, both indoor and outdoor public spaces should be included.
    - The sponsor, which is Red Bull Music, requires a digital and physical showcase of their brand spirit of adventure, and some defined space for administration and regular events.
    - The private patrons, who are reputed and commercially successful musicians, require music studios in an architectural framework which allows for personalization. They also need space for interactions with their students.
- Program: With 600 students and 350 faculty staff, the project consists of an academy of 13,000 sqm and a collective residence of 12,000 sqm. These two parts can intersect and interact in certain ways.
    - The research on academic programs and curriculum leads to a program inventory of the academy section: public space, performance space, music studios, classrooms, technical classrooms, practice booths, administration, circulation and logistics. The numbers can be adjusted following the principle of the hybrid of programs. The programs are arranged according to their acoustic publicness requirements, resulting in some prohibitions of spatial arrangement.
    - Based on the case studies of musicians' spontaneous definition and adaptations of space, some human-scale prototypes of spatial interactions are concluded. This forms the asset towards spatial innovation.
    - The housing section consists of affordable housing for 400 students and potential personalized living-producing studios for 30 musicians.
- Site: The site is located at Köpenicker Straße No. 14, Berlin. The site area is 20,250 sqm. It is located by the Spree River and next to the remains of a former bridge, Brommybrücke.

- ■ Regarding the success and problems of the former Mediaspree area, the site should address three objectives respectively in the city scale, the district scale and the property scale: Connections of resources, public accessibility, and affordability.
- ■ The project should include the reconstruction of a cycling and pedestrian bridge. The existing building on the site should be reused.
- ■ The ideal entrance orientation, building height, waterfront setback, continuity of street façade are exploded through massing studies.

Process

Method description

Regarding three key aspects—client, program, and site—diverse methodologies are employed to formulate the design brief, incorporating methods such as case studies and multi-scale comparisons. The highlight of the methodology employed in the program chapter is modernology.

Coined by Japanese architect Kon Wajiro, modernology seeks to document the different idiosyncrasies of material-related human life. This approach has notably influenced contemporary Japanese architects, such as Yoshiharu Tsukamoto and Momoyo Kaijima from Atelier Bow-Wow, whose works get inspiration from records of people's interventions in daily domestic and urban spaces. This project learns valuable insights from modernology.

In contrast to conventional case studies that often focus on successful projects of the same typology by acknowledged architects, this research places emphasis on the value of spontaneous spatial practices by users. Many cases exemplifying spatial creation, adaptation, and definitions by musicians are collected, including the transformation of sheds into a beer garden in urban vacant lots, the installation of partitions in squatting buildings for a music studio, and the collaborative definition of street music places by musicians and audience together. Most of these cases are sourced from diverse locations in Berlin, contributing to a rich tapestry of insights from various perspectives.

Literature and general practical references

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Reflection

The project delves into an innovative architectural strategy to counteract the effects of gentrification. Aligned with the core theme of the Complex Project, it emphasizes that the crux of architectural design lies in streamlining intricate elements of the social and physical milieu. In navigating the complex history and diverse stakeholders in Berlin, the project honed its design aspirations and tasks to ascertain the most straightforward approach to avoiding the negative aspects of urban development.

A key focus of the project is on cultural sustainability within the realm of contemporary alternative culture. Given the distinctive developing trajectory of creative industries in Berlin, alternative culture is a catalyst and facilitator for economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. However, managing alternative culture is more challenging than conventional mainstream culture. The project sheds light on the way of preserving and harnessing the potential of alternative cultural forces for a more balanced and sustainable urban future.