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.

Personal information

Name	Catharina (Nina) van den Broek
Student number	4660153

Studio

Name / Theme	Explore lab	
Main mentor	Elise van Dooren	Design mentor
Second mentor	Hubert van der Meel	Technology mentor
Third mentor	Rachel Lee	Research mentor
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Working in explore lab gives me the opportunity to explore my fascination with feminist architecture. I developed this fascination during my bachelors and when the opportunity arose, during the history thesis, to do further research in this area, I started looking at the unseen female architects in the Netherlands. Addressing this topic during explore lab gives me the opportunity to do further research on today's feminist architecture and practices.	

Graduation project

Title of the graduation project	The inclusive community hub - A feminist approach towards architecture

Goal

Location:	Rotterdam – Coolhaven
The posed problem,	In architecture we most often design for the 'standard user' who is usually a man, usually white, usually middle-aged, has a median income, and who has no disabilities. Over half of our society is female. Design is mainly done from the male perspective, even though research shows that women have other needs and desires for public spaces (Perez, 2019; Kern, 2020). More publicly accessible toilets should be available, for example. When you walk in the city Amsterdam, you will see a public toilet called 'plaskrul' that is only accessible for men. And if you have to go to the toilet when you are on the road, I as a woman know that I have to wait in line while the men can all pass through. This is because there are often as many, and sometimes even more, men's toilets than there are women's toilets. This is due to the fact that the bathrooms are the same size, but

	more men's toilets and urinals fit in the same space. This all, despite women spending three times longer on the toilet and also having to go to the toilet more often than men (Mueller et al., 2005). This is just a single example, but it is an example of the things that make a city less livable, accessible, and exclusive. A study form 2019 revealed that 44% of the women in the Netherlands say they sometimes feel unsafe in public places, compared to only 23% of men (SCP). These are percentages which apply to all age groups. For the group of women between 15-17 years, the percentage is the highest; almost 60%. You could say that streets and public spaces are, at times, a place of threat, rather than community. In an interview with DEZEEN, Caroline Criado Perez, the writer of the book Invisible women, told that design should account for the violence against women; "We haven't designed public spaces to account for the violence that women experience, and not just to protect women from the violence, but also to account for the way that it's always in our heads." (Cogley, 2020). So, we could say that the women's perspective is not part of our designs even though inclusive places will ensure more equality, coherency, interactivity, and it will make everyday life more livable. These elements are slowly disappearing in architecture through social reproduction. Architecture should be a representation of the user's needs and not a 'one size fits all' approach, where every user feels comfortable and safe. Feminists fought for all these elements during the battle for emancipation. And this battle for emancipation still continues. The aim of this research is to design a space where everyone, not just the 'standard' user, feels comfortable and safe.
research questions and	How to develop a safe space in Rotterdam Coolhaven, adopting a feminist community-based approach?
design assignment in which these result.	The study clarified which elements on the site could be improved. By mapping out the less pleasant and pleasant places and talking to different kinds of people, a building can be designed in which social mixing is encouraged and in which everyone feels welcome. By designing a community hub that includes a community center, cafe and water park, the needs of residents will be considered. Several spaces have been created, allowing the residents to talk, care and reflect.

Process

Method description

Research can translate into design

The method for the research is focused on the community-based feminist approach. This approach will allow me to investigate the actual reported needs and wishes of the residents of the neighborhood. For the method that I will use, it is important to get a clear picture of the neighborhood and its citizens. That is why the first part of the research paper will consist of collecting existing data on the neighborhoods (Wijkprofiel Rotterdam, n.d.). By looking at already existing data on the three connected neighborhood areas, in comparison to the average data of Rotterdam, it becomes clear where the needs and shortcomings lie in the neighborhood. The second part of my paper will consist of conducting interviews with the residents of the neighborhood. This part will be especially important, because it will allow me to get a clear overview of what the needs and wishes are for this neighborhood. I want to conduct a minimum of twenty interviews to ensure sufficient diversity is included. The people I want to approach for this are not only women. I want to get a clear overview of all the residents in the neighborhood so that I can design a space in which everyone feels comfortable. The interviews will take approximately 5 minutes, and I will interview at different times throughout the day and on different days in order to reach the broadest audience.

To conclude, this research allows me to identify the possible places where the design can take place. What kind of design (building) the residents would like and what kind of facilities it could accommodate.

Literature and general practical preference

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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)?

   – explore lab > answer to be found in 'Argumentation of choice of the studio'

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

Within feminist literature and what can also be seen in this research, it is important not to look at the standard user, but to consider everyone and to involve the user during the design process. This way, a design is created in which everyone feels comfortable and heard. In addition, there are different types of themes incorporated into the design where this can be an inspiration for further designs, such as focusing on inclusivity. For example, everyone can now access the site because a wheelchair-friendly area has been designed. People are also going to feel safer in the place, this is because during the design process, consideration was given to what tools can be used to achieve that effect. The theme of sustainability has also been considered, this is done by looking at the material choices and the possible vision for the future of the site. By creating a floating building, if the function on this spot is no longer needed, the building can be moved to another place.