

P4 REFLECTION



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INTRODUCTION

This paper is to be reflected on the Graduation project created within the studio of Explore Lab 35 in the academic year 2022-2023. It will describe the process of design and research in relation to the Ar master track, the influence between design and research, methods used, and the social and other relations.

THE PROGRESS

With a passion of how architecture can manipulate behaviours and emotions through the sensation of space, this Graduation project was created with that in mind. The question of how design could affect movement and behaviours to be more present and release a sense of stress brought me to Explore Lab with the intention of creating a meditational retreat. As nature has a healing effect on people's wellbeing, I believe that certain environmental features in nature may therefore positively impact the mind. This led me to the research question "Which environmental forms and patterns within landscape ecology can manipulate rhythms and behaviour, and how can these be extracted to be reimplemented within the territory of architecture to promote wellbeing?". I chose to take the research in an unconventional direction by researching how people choose spaces in nature to hold rituals. When picking a space in nature to do a sacred act, the group of people search for a space that hold a sense of sacredness to it. The specific composition and atmosphere of this space may often be overlooked by the ritual itself, but the ritual would not be possible without the specificity of the space. My research led to a catalogue which was created from the spatial qualities found when researching how the Sami people, the Celtic people and the Neo-Pagans choose their sacred space within the landscape ecology. These features have then been architecturalised in my design phase and used as a guidebook for intuitive designing.

Discovering that the environmental features and our sensorimotor response have a great impact on the well-being and behavioural patterns, one can start questioning certain design decisions made in the urban environment. Therefore, this project is investigating the environmental impact landscape ecology has on the individual and how landscape-inspired patterns and forms can positively adjust the individual's behaviour for more mindfulness living. The focus is on the amalgamation of rhythms and rituals conducted between landscape ecology and humans, and how to translate and transform these









towards the interiority and exteriority of a retreat for self-healing and self-awareness. The formation of landscape ecologies does in many cases show a lasting and intimate relationship with anthropology through its human impacted patterns and morphosis. It becomes the spiritual relationship between people and ecology through powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional customs. However, the harmonious human-nature relationships are decreasing, and with it disappears the cognitive healing power it holds. In The Netherlands, this might be due to the overly ordered urban expansion. This is why the integration of translations of these features are important to the architecture of the future. With this said, there is an urgency to rebuild the relationship between humans and nature through re-learning the knowledge and philosophies landscape ecology produces and reintegrate it in the daily human life.

For the design phase, I propose a retreat where people can come to reground themselves through the teachings of rituals and restructuring of rhythms for mindfulness living, which they can reimplement into their everyday life. The retreat is to be located in the Rotterdam Zoho district, a man-made city with a lack of landscape environmental forms located in the man-made country of The Netherlands where the term 'landscape' was founded. The reason for choosing The Netherlands and not the country of my own origin, Norway, is due to its lack of immediate nature. Dutch people have to travel a lot further to experience less organised and more diverse environmental landscape ecologies than a Norwegian living in Norway for example. I found that this country has more necessity for a retreat which can offer ecological stimuli and stress relief through the use of nature-inspired elements that advocate inner healing. The area of Zoho is an up-and-coming area with future plans for more urban living and integration of more natural features. I want to take part in this transition of the area and connecting to its identity from the bottom up. Just as nature forms from the soil, I am creating construction methods that base its creation from the soil and the already existing structures on site. By designing the façade with the same principles as the interior, the behavioural change will start when walking up to the building. With its location close to business, leisure, and residential, this area is easy to access, yet, with a location in a quieter spot which is an important factor for its programme.

Through reflection I realised that the building should not necessarily be open and connected to its surrounding but closed off and somewhat hidden to enhance the sense of the escape from the existing urban environment. However, not to downcycle the building I needed to keep as much as possible of the existing car garage structure that is already there. This was somewhat challenging as it put some restrictions on placement of rooms and walls due to the existing columns and ceiling heights. Furthermore, its shape is though interesting as it allows for a small entrance, yet as you move further into the building it opens up and becomes larger. In this sense, it can be compared with walking through nature as you never know what to expect as entering the first threshold on a hiking path. When walking through nature you can also take different paths leading you to open spaces with water or more enclosed spaced in the woods. Some paths are steep, and others are flatter. One may take pauses on the way for reflection and recharging. However, the paths always lead to a destination where one feels like they can state their intentions. I wanted to create a diversity of rooms, routes and experiences through my building by integrating the contrast of darkness and light, texture, wet and dry, openness and more enclosed spaces, and typography. Therefore, the approach of this project was to create an interior landscape which was moulded by the making process. The building aims to create open or semi-private spaces which guides one up to the first floor with a more open nature. Just as a hike where one follows the light for orientation and views, this building starts darker and more private and becomes lighter and opens up at the next floor.



CATALOGUE OF ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES









ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE	FEELING	CASE STUDY	BENEFIT
PRIVACY		Neo-Pagans	Sharpens focus, Encourages engagement
GROVE OF TREES		Neo-Pagans	Feeling of protection, Enhance prosocial behaviour, Attention and evaluation
ORIENTATION		Neo-Pagans, Celtic People	Phasic arousal, Curiosity and interest, Heightened focus
CIRCLE		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Reinforces individuality, Drawn to the centre, Notion of protection
FIRE		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Enthusiasm, Strength, Gathering
WATER		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Recovery, Directed attention, Release tension, Reflection
BOUNDARIES		Neo-Pagans, Celtic People	Reinforce focus, Changes the perception of the environment, Cautiousness
STONE AND WOOD		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Heighten holistic wellness, Increase empathy, social connections, generosity

ENVIRONMENTAL
FEATURE

FEELING

CASE STUDY

BENEFIT

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE	FEELING	CASE STUDY	BENEFIT
SCALE		Sami People, Celtic People	Balance, Redirects focus, Change movement, Duration of stay, Feeling of importance
UNEVEN SURFACES		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Stimulates fantasy, Seem heavy and powerful, Warmth and intimacy
SILENCE		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Allows to fully sense oneself and the space, Contemplative, Concentrative, Ascetic
SEMI TRANSPA- RANCY		Sami People, Celtic People	Communication, Intuitive movement, Light travel further
EARTH		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Grounding, Humbleness, Brings worries to a solid footing
AIR		Neo-Pagans, Sami People, Celtic People	Embodies the complexity of the mind and mental health
OPENNESS		Celtic People	Limit interaction and initiation, Might create a feeling of disorientation
MEGALITHIC CIRCLE		Celtic people	Define, orientate, protect, gather, exclude, and measure time

THE PROCESS

The main research recognises patterns and forms that are re-occurring and rhythmic in the landscape ecology, specifically focussing on landscape ecologies with wood and stone. Many forms and patterns found in the ecology and cosmos have been used as inspiration sources for architecture tracing back to ancient times. However, the research focuses on the interest of their rhythmic behaviours that may alter perception and affordances.

For the case studies, the research investigates three groups of people that worship nature. The underlying interest is to how these people pick certain locations and prepare them in ways that will fulfil the worshipping, and in return attain nature-healing. They are important aspects to my design as I am trying to recreate this sense of state in an interior architectural landscape. The environmental forms and patterns specifically looked for when inaugurating the space for rituals, and actions of territorialisation (subtraction and addition of elements) in preparation for the act to happen, is the outcome of interest in these case studies. Implicating, complicating, and are the three main investigation focuses when investigating the case studies which will allow for the understanding of why certain forms and features are used, where the emphasis is, and patterns that are created. The findings have then been translated to physical forms through intention, attention, and repetition. The elements found during the investigation identifies features that draw the perceptive eye and stimulate the sensorimotor cognition. Correspondingly, the act of territorialisation demonstrates how humans subtract and add elements that will allow an outdoor room to be formed. The act itself is rooted in the memory of the body and mind, leading the human to territorialise the landscape ecology in certain ways that allow the basic human's instinct of rituals to take place. As a result, this outdoor room will catalyst certain behaviours and emotions that psychologically changes the rhythms of the individual and allows for rituals to take place. As a translation of the outdoor room, the Graduation project aims to incarnate the catalogue into an interior landscape that will facilitate certain behaviours, emotions, and actions.

The process of construction will happen on site. Here, the walls are moulded by the earth below the existing structure. When removed, the ground will be shaped by the imprint of the wall construction. By cutting openings in the existing floor structures, connections are made between the different levels and sources of light are let in and transferred to the ground level. The construction process leaves the outcome to the coincidences to a degree which also are the processes of nature. It is important that the main architectural features are not premanufactured but constructed by the site and on the site.

INCARNATING THE CATALOGUE

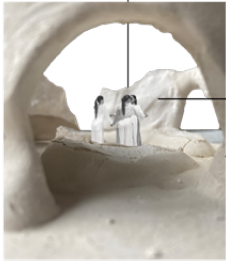
STONE

Heighten holistic wellness,
Increase empathy, social connections, generosity



BOUNDARIES

Reinforce focus,
Changes the perception of the environment,
Cautiousness



ORIENTATION

Phasic arousal,
Curiosity and interest,
Heightened focus



OPENNESS

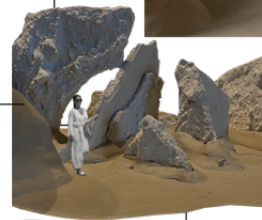
Limit interaction and initiation,
Might create a feeling of disorientation

PRIVACY



SILENCE

Allows to fully sense oneself and the space,
Contemplative,
Concentrative, Ascetic



Sharpens focus,
Encourages engagement

EARTH

Grounding,
Humbleness,
Brings worries to a solid footing

CIRCLE

Define, orientate,
protect, gather, exclude,
and measure time

UNEVEN SURFACES

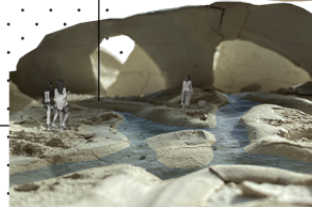


SCALE

Balance, Redirects focus,
Change movement,
Duration of stay,
Feeling of importance

Communication,
Intuitive movement,
Light travel further

SEMI TRANSPARENCY



WATER

BOUNDARIES

Recovery,
Directed attention,
Release tension,
Reflection



THE CONTINUATION

For the period between P4 and P5 I aim to reflect the feedback and do adjustments to my project accordingly. I will also complete my drawings and visuals making them fully represent and create a feeling of the building. Technical aspects will also be elaborated on with all feedback from P4 in mind. For the P5 presentation I want the audience to feel like they are within my building by adding features like sounds that may occur in the building, material testing for sensation and other sensory features that adds an atmosphere to the room without taking away from the presentation itself. I will continue working on my 3D model and completing it for final visualisations. I see potentials that the final presentation could be presented in a way of constructing a ritual, structuring it through implicating, complicating, explicating / intention, attention, repetition where research, design and building technology go hand-in-hand throughout.

WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN YOUR GRADUATION PROJECT TOPIC, YOUR MASTER TRACK (AR, UR, BT, LA, MBE), AND YOUR MASTER PROGRAMME (MSC AUBS)?

In my graduation project, I see the possibilities for architecture and nature to be a healing agent in the treatment of one's wellbeing and, overall, to enhance positive mental and physical behaviours. Rituals and ceremonies are basic human instincts that can be traced back over ten thousand years ago. They create comfort and continuity enabling human daily lives to be lived more mindfully (Montley, 2005). In comparison with mindfulness, rituals are also argued to strengthen humans' wellbeing which has been supported by neuroscientific and psychological research (Lamb, 2020). I wanted to tackle the psychological realm of architecture through a larger focus on form, detail, nature, and the individual through architecture as a spatial sensation and landscape rather than an envelope with designated different functions. This led me to Explore Lab which allowed me to go deep within my field of passion and explore architecture through learning from unconventional human-nature relationships. Explore Lab offers the ability to set self-chosen boundaries which can lead to research situated in the personal. However, it also stimulates the development to a collective understanding which may add to the potentials of future architecture and built environments in the topic of wellbeing.

HOW DID YOUR RESEARCH INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN/ RECOMMENDATIONS AND HOW DID THE DESIGN/ RECOMMENDATIONS INFLUENCE YOUR RESEARCH?

My research influenced my design through analysing spatial and environmental features that may hold positive values which focuses the mind and allows for presence. These features are ideal for a meditational retreat and helped form the building and construction process. As my design initially had a different approach at the very start of the academic year, my research was also harder to define. When I realised that the best way of creating a space for rituals was somewhat more public and somewhere to escape rather than an environment one occupies oneself in most days, my research approach turned too. I now changed the approach from analysing already built architectural spaces and their possible affect on humans to how humans choose spaces in nature to gain the optimal sensory and spatial effect they need for their intentions. I found this approach more interesting as no one tells these people what space they may go to for certain activities and instead lets their intuition bring them to a space that feels right for their intended action. In contrast, existing buildings that have much written content on how rooms or buildings are supposed to make people feel during a pre-designated action and therefore leaves little opportunities for other actions or understandings of the room take place. Therefore, the rooms in my building are not to be designated but rather open for interpreted actions through affordances and intuition based on qualities found in my research that are sought for when holding rituals in nature.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE VALUE OF YOUR WAY OF WORKING (YOUR APPROACH, YOUR USED METHODS, USED METHODOLOGY)?

I believe that we as humans holds a lot of intuitive knowledge that sometimes may be forgotten as we structure our lives and movements to a grid-like structure that is predefined by our society. By designing from the study of people towards form rather than the other way around I believe that architecture can become a tool which increases the overall wellbeing of the society if used on a larger scale. The method of designing and constructing from the inside out allows for an interior landscape to be formed that are not necessarily restricted by a predefined envelope but allows the building to grow with the making process. The carving of space becomes the sculpting of time.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL VALUE, SCOPE AND IMPLICATION OF YOUR GRADUATION PROJECT, INCLUDING ETHICAL ASPECTS?

People are constantly and automatically adapting their behaviour according to the environmental features that evoke exogenous attention during their daily interaction with the environment. Exogenous attention is an automatic, involuntary, and stimulus-driven component of spatial attention (Carrasco, 2011). By learning from the landscape ecology and to identify environmental features which holds psychological values, future architecture and how we perceive it can radically change the overall interactive relationships, social behaviour, and mental wellbeing. This may lead to more presence, focus, and intuitive ways of life which affect the larger society if used in more architecture. People's mental health are important, not only when it is broken but also to maintain and uplift it in the everyday life. We spend most of our days within or around architecture which stimulates, or the contrary, our minds and affects our focus, movement, and behaviour. This topic, therefore, is extremely important as we construct and build to shape the standard of wellbeing of the future.

HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL VALUE, SCOPE AND IMPLICATION OF YOUR GRADUATION PROJECT, INCLUDING ETHICAL ASPECTS?

I believe the social, spatial, and constructive values of this project have a high value for the future of architecture. It not only places the people in the centre of importance but adds tools that stimulate their focus, intuition, fantasy, and wellbeing. I understand that not all construction methods (like uneven flooring and thick walls) may be as practical in residential or administrative buildings. However, these buildings have still much potential to adopt methodologies of how people behave in nature and the spatial and atmospheric features that are valued in nature to construct more calm and positive environments for occupation.

Humans both shape the environmental field and are continually being shaped by it. For instance, the calm atmosphere that one might find within landscape ecologies can automatically give rise to the deceleration of actions that are associated with that environment, like rituals. Correspondingly, urban environments in the city hold rich sensory information which can automatically give rise to accelerated actions, also associated with that environment. As some encounters emphasise the internal physiological changes reflected as emotions, others emphasise the movement (Fich, et al., 2022). However, both processes are constantly unfolding. The sensation, which can come at any moment, is interrelated with what has immediately passed and what is immediately incoming. Therefore, one environmental feature cannot be considered a behavioural and stimulating tool by itself but needs to be considered as a component within its larger compositional environment. There is a flowing trajectory which reflects the behavioural actions partially consequential of environmental instances constituted by objects, events, and other human beings (Fich, et al., 2022). In this manner, sensations and the processing thereof are directly related to affordances.

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