

Reflection

The whole research process of exploring the possibility in improving the accessibility of military heritage in Soesterberg is composed with defining, analyzing and creating.

Relationship between research and design

The relationship between research and design is interwoven during the whole period. This work leads by Research by Design strategy, which means I can develop design principles by searching supportive evidence, as well as fill the theory framework by exploring design possibilities. This method allows me to always look back to reflect and refill.

To answer the question of how to improve the accessibility in Soesterberg area, the main research approach I applied in the design is defining and specifying, and the main theory I applied is 'Heritage as sector, factor and vector'. I tried to answer the research questions by defining further the nouns of 'accessibility', 'heritage' and 'understandability'. By recognizing the fact that accessibility not only means physical roadway connections, but also mental awareness of the destination, the design approaches emphasize the importance of experiential design. In that sense, research conclusions of landscape biography, symbolism landscape and experiential landscape by senses are transformed into spatial expressions.

Challenges in the research

The research process of biography study could be the first and biggest challenge I met during the whole process. I come from a different culture outside Netherlands and Europe, so I hold a different perspective towards wars happened on this continent. It is a challenge for me to understand the history 400 years ago and the complexity between different countries. I tried to separate different war times and picked the most struggling character in each of them to clarify the war influences on the currency. Also, in order to better understand people's feelings about different wars, interviews were conducted not only on my mentors, but also on my classmates and friends who came from Europe. This kind of communication between different cultures towards the same historical period of the same time inspires me in creating the diversities in my design.

Generalization of the result

Another issue also related to the methodology is the synthetic generalization of the design strategies. The initial orientation of my topics are heritage, urbanization and forest landscape, so the implementations are conducted in different scales using these elements to make it consistent.

Graduation studio and lab

The Flowscape Graduation Studio in landscape track aims to explore the identities of landscape in living environment and my project corresponds with the 'landscape as infrastructure'. The typical layered approach in landscape design is more specified in my work by splitting the geography layer, mobility layer and cultural heritage layer. In addition, the proposed solutions are landscape-based and the routing design explains how the 'flow' works on the landscape context.

Being in the lab of Urban Fabric, it is a transdisciplinary cooperation with urbanist to look more into societal needs of landscape. Fragmentation problems in my project not only trigger threats in nature fields, but also social development and recognitions. Understanding the spatial configuration as well as social-driven purposes helps me better generating the toolkit.

Transferability of the result

Scientific relevance

Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility, innovative mobility development in future and the relevance with other subjects such as transportation, civil engineering. How the pedestrians interact with cycling paths could be more studied in the professional fields of engineering. Materials I applied in the detailing chapters could also be further explained by connection knots in between.

Societal relevance

Heritage topic is related to everyone on this planet because it is the welfare of the total human being. Meanwhile, what I want to emphasize in this project is the military heritage that reminds people about past, current and future. Some of the past stories are still continuous nowadays or their influences impact on current living. The issue lies in the potential relationship between every individual with war even though it is not our willingness. And the awareness of that can be raised by design the approaching process to understand the wounded story behind the physical elements.

Reflection about my role

As a designer and participant

The last historical design element translation makes me realize that the participant experience may not turn into what the designer wants. That means, there are lots of uncontrolled randomness in the conversion of design proposal. So as a designer, what I can do is to express what I feel about the history and site, and express it in the design. Trying to make the atmosphere more straightforward for the participant so that the understanding can be more easily got.

As a landscaper and an urbanist

I may not always play the singular identity in the project. Since I got the urban planning background during the past education years, sometimes I need to jump out of the landscape frame and perform as an urbanist to look into what is right for me, personally. Over this year, it becomes more clear for me that not to limit myself in one role, but positively and actively change the ground I stand greatly broadens my view and helps me understand different perspectives. Chaos occurs of course, but it brings discussions, reflections and inspirations.