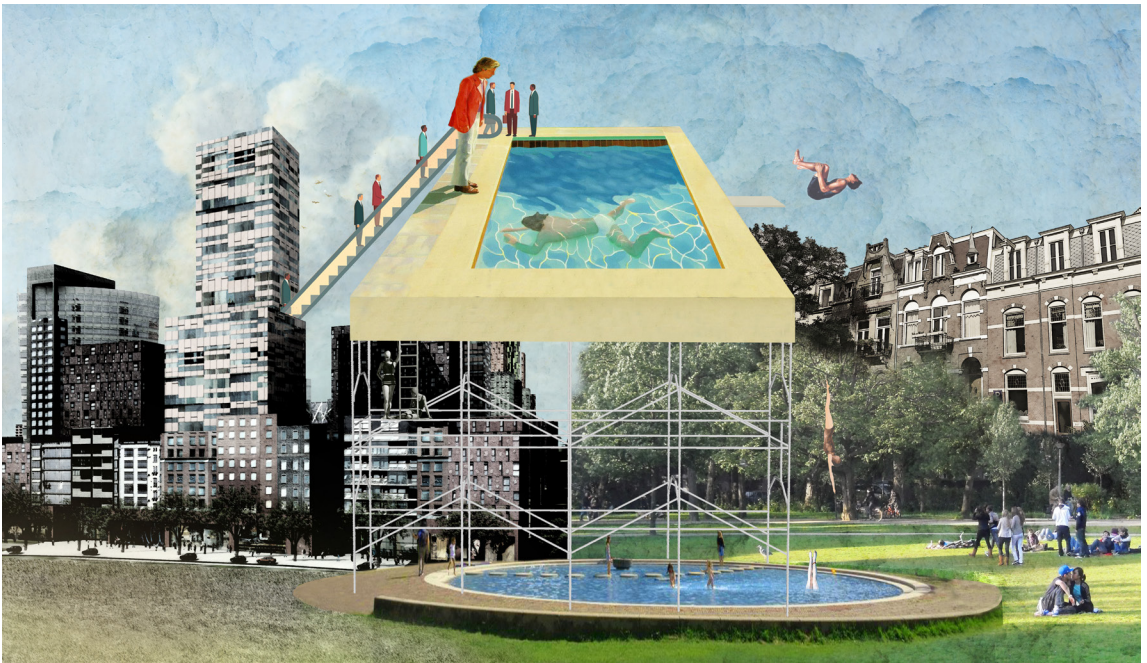




P4 REFLECTION

AMS-MID CITY
COMPLEX PROJECTS
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May 2018



collage I made for P1

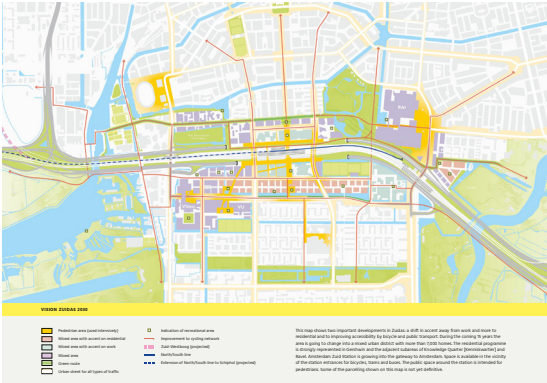
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The studio generates future scenarios in Amsterdam, 2050. The disconnection between the fast-growing business area Zuidas and the tranquil residential area of Oud Zuid, and the lack of amenities raised my concern about the living quality and sustainability of development in the future.

My project will be a swimming complex in Oud Zuid, as a part of the public sports and leisure network in the city. Dutch people are the 4th most active among EU. 80% people in Amsterdam Zuid exercise at least weekly. There are already a lot of sports facilities in the Oud Zuid Area but more than half of the sports facilities are private, and

the traditional sports club system is obstacles for the poor, the newcomers to the city or people do not belong to a certain social group to enjoy them these sports facilities.

Apart from getting physically healthy, the face to face accompany of friends or even strangers will be very crucial for the future digital world to enhance mental health. Our appearances and the form of swimming itself also break down some barriers between different social groups. In the smart but probably also very expensive and crowded Amsterdam in 2050, I believe the primitive kind of leisure will have even bigger meaning to the city than now.



Zuidas Vision 2016 document summary



vision of Zuidas and Beatrixpark as I see it

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

In an architecture school's curriculum, to design a building is usually the ultimate task of the study. Research always serves as the key to open the door for the studio to start the design. When I worked for an architectural practice, an engineering consultant complained that architects always generate problems. In defence of the accusation, I would say that architects see the world in a more critical way. We collect information for the surrounding and observe the changes in the world, form questions, and try to provide solutions. To ask the right question is far more important than rushing to the solution. As James Snyder defined in his book *Architectural Research*, research is "systematic inquiry directed toward the creation of knowledge". Through research, we develop comprehensive knowledge and rational thinking process about the topic, which enables us to discover the problem and ask the right question.

The primitive research raises questions and realises the problems of the site, the people or the system to solve. And the more in-depth research allows us to find theoretical answers to them. For me, design comes after you have the questions and the answers. Design is the thinking of ways and visualisation of the result of solving the problem of answering the question. There is no good design without certain level of research, although design is adjustable and can never be perfect just like no one can obtain all the knowledge in the world.



construction site in front of Amsterdam Zuid station

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MY GRADUATION TOPIC AND THE STUDIO TOPIC

The aim of the studio is to highlight interesting cases that explain the acceleration process of the future and examine different examples in order to understand how to turn the cities challenges into design opportunities for a city to grow, thrive and set an example for others to follow. To ensure that, Amsterdam was investigated and compared with other major cities, aiming to access the urban qualities and understanding the effect of data-driven city developments.

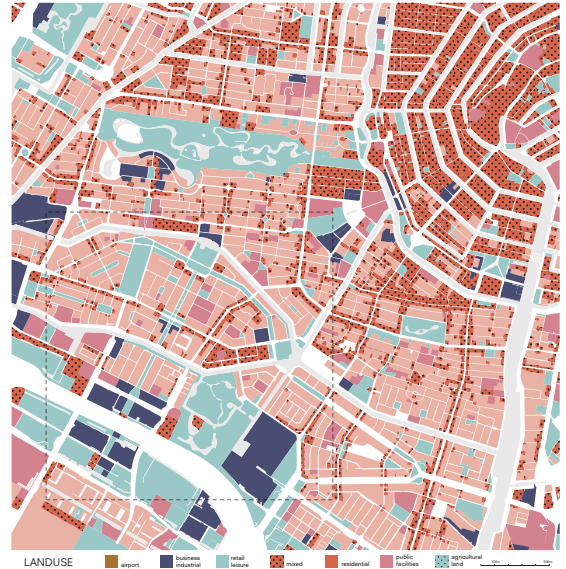
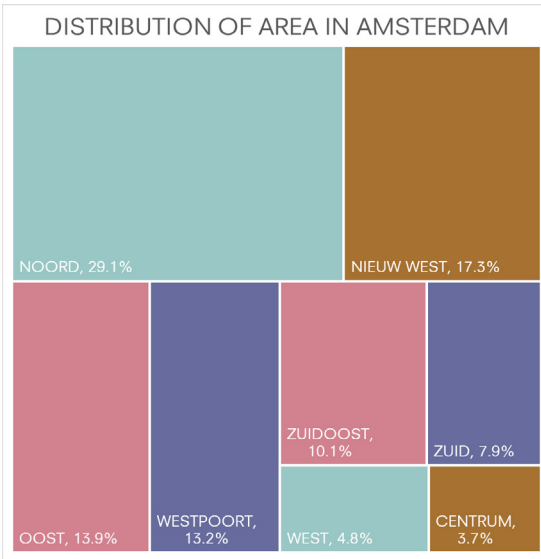
There is no limitation for topics in the studio, only the location (Amsterdam Oud Zuid) and time (2050) are set. However, the studio encourages us to look in a bigger picture, in terms of the system behind the phenomenon and the long period of research phrase allow us to browse a wide range of topics and pick for our owns eventually.



site visit

In my opinion, the site and the studio group have a bigger impact on our personal project topic than the studio curriculum. The Olympics Stadium in our site drew my attention at the first glance. Moreover, the questions we raised the problems we found on the site brought me to my certain topic, sports and leisure, for the great need and the absent or mismanagement of them. Our group as a whole, also addressed the lack of amenities, social imbalance and disconnection of the site as general problems realisation at the very beginning and inspired me to look into these basic amenities in the Amsterdam neighbourhood.

Afterall, the project topic is most related to our personal experiences and interests. Even with the same curriculum and site setting, we still see the site in different ways. The peaceful neighbourhood seems strange to me since I lived in Hong Kong before and used to the lively Asian city setting, at the same time someone grew up in the farm with vast land might find it overcrowded. I am very keen on sports and personal health. After moving to the Netherlands I found it difficult to use the facilities and manage time to work out, so that could be the most significant reason why I chose it as the topic of my graduation project.

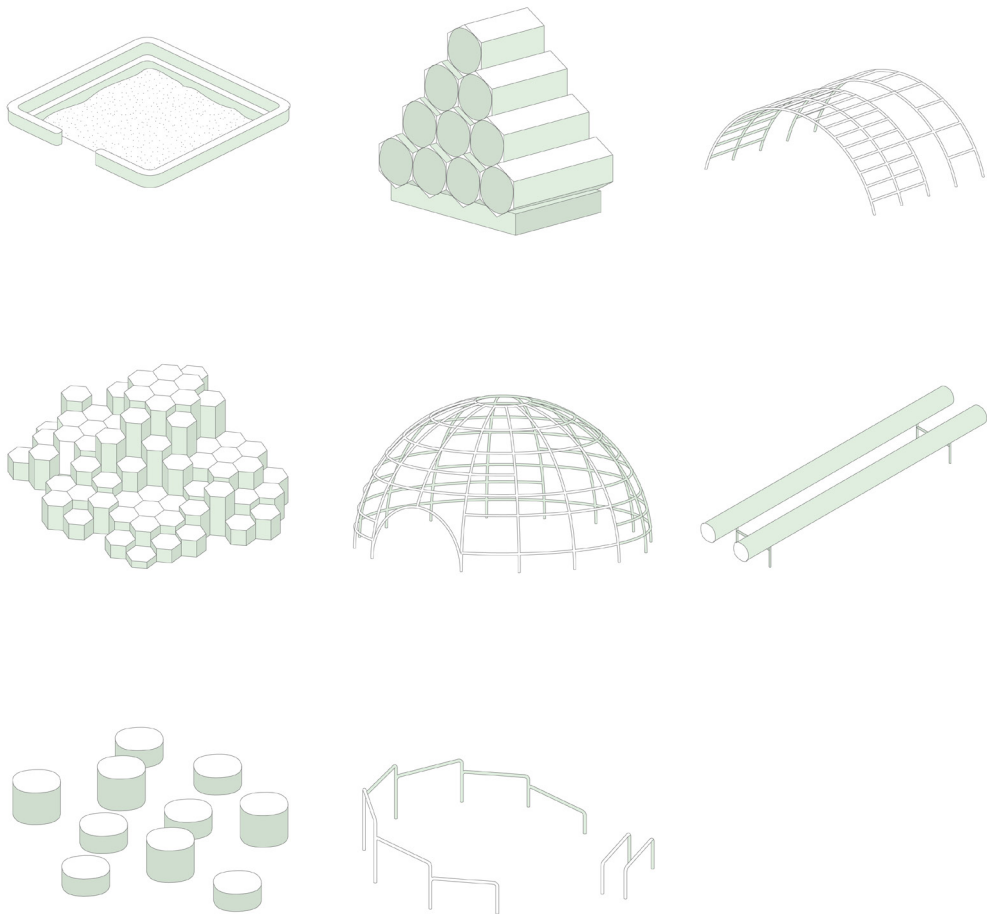


ELABORATION ON RESEARCH METHOD AND APPROACH IN RELATION TO THE GRADUATION STUDIO METHODOLOGICAL LINE OF INQUIRY

Compare to most of the architectural research I have done before, which had one or more buildings as the research body, the research in Complex Chair is more resembling urban research. The research started with background historical research about the city of Amsterdam. Fred Feddes' A millennium of Amsterdam spatial history of a marvellous city was recommended to us to have a basic knowledge about how the city was founded and became prosperous. With the aid of maps from the city archive drawn in different centuries, we could see that how the city grew and the change of morphology. A big part of the site is within

Berlage's plan Zuid and the morphology remains today. It was fascinating to see how different this urban development plan made the area different from the rest of the city.

The public space was also a big concern of mine. The study of morphology told me the shape and size and distribution of the public space in a very flat and shallow way. We also built a site model so that the relation between buildings as content and public space as void could be recognized better.



elements in the Aldo van Eyck's playgrounds

According to the same logic, I built 3D models of the basic element of Aldo van Eyck's playgrounds in Amsterdam and it certainly contributed in my choice of project topic. Furthermore, we zoomed into blocks within the site. With the information from the city archive, we drew building plan, sections and axonometric drawings of the block of our own choice and compare the typology of different blocks. This approach is more architectural and less urbanist. Through the drawings, we had more cognition of the spatial quality of the buildings. As well as drawings, computer 3D modelling has the potential to enrich the perception of the spatial quality and can be used as stimulated models for various analysis, such as loading and sunlight.

After I decided my project topic, the research narrowed down to sports, health and leisure related issues to me. For a foreigner like me, the easiest and seemingly objective way to know more about these in the Netherlands is to read. Therefore I downloaded all the official publication of sports I could access. Naturally, the tune of these publications promised people a better future, while the true situation for individuals was neglected. Then I moved on to reading news, articles and comment about the system and policies about sports and leisure and had some brief interview on site with the bystanders.

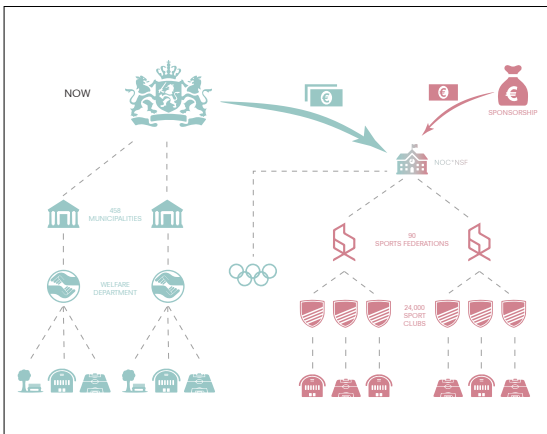


new luxury rental apartments in Zuidas

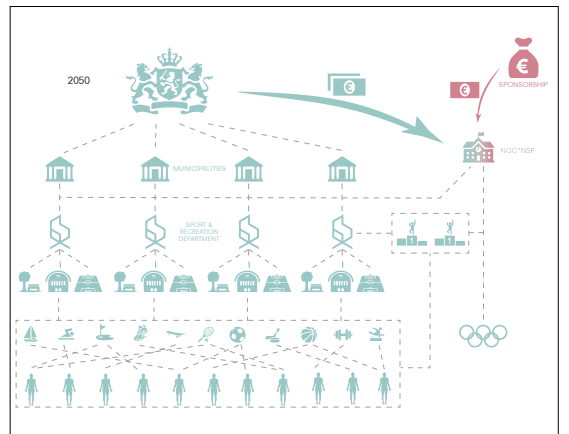
ELABORATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATION PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL, PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC FRAMEWORK

Amsterdam is experiencing an inevitable change of scale from an ordinary European capital to a global metropolis. The city centre is full of tourists all year round and hence becoming too expensive for the poor to live. Due to the natural process of city growth, the preservation of the UNESCO world heritage site, and the huge amount of locals being pushed out from the city centre, the sub-centres are gaining more and more power and became the most crucial part of the post-millennial city development of Amsterdam.

Zuidas, being the most significant new financial district, sitting on the A10 highway at the boundary of the city's ring zone and on half-way to the Schiphol Airport, grows around Amsterdam Zuid station, has the full potential of growing to another global business centre. However, sitting at such a prime location, it does not bring much good to the surrounding highly residential area. Oud Zuid area, right to the north of Zuidas, was designed as a social housing neighbourhood but has been taken over by upper-middle class for its closeness



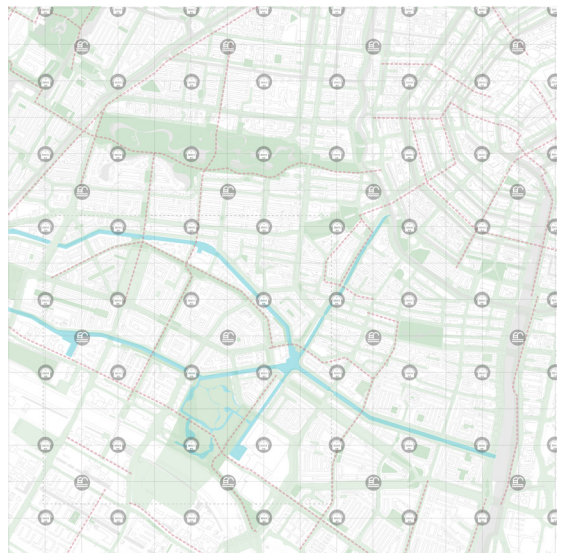
existing system of sports facilities in the Netherlands



new system of sports facilities in the Netherlands, 2050

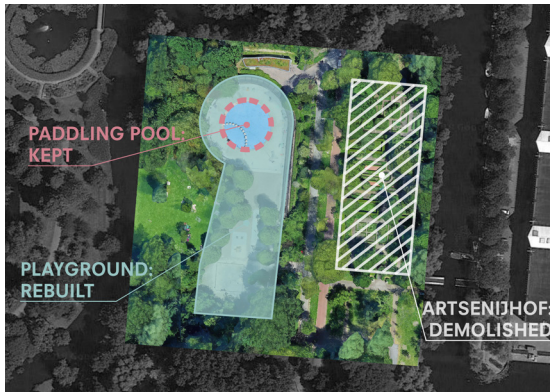
to the city centre and remains peaceful. On the other side of the A10, the neighbourhood is still occupied by mostly social housing, but only temporary due to the annexation of fast-growing Zuidas. The office sky-scrapers also brought also barely any facilities. Walking in Zuidas, apart from the standard chained stores in the station, you cannot even find a cosy restaurant to dine. It seems like everyone works in Zuidas just go home after work to probably the other side of the city.

Business area in between two big residential neighbourhoods sounds quite convenient, but it is not the case for Zuidas and Oud Zuid. For the lack of amenities and the high rent prices, there are barely any people walking on the streets in Oud Zuid or Zuidas in the off-hours. Even if you are lucky enough to work in Zuidas and live in the nearby Oud Zuid, there is nothing to do around the area other than to work and to go home. What I see important for the area for the future, giving that Zuidas will keep growing and the population will keep increasing, is to facilitate the area to be a better place to live and work in, that people would not need to go back the city centre to do anything other than to work and to stay at home. Apart from the saturated economic development, we will focus on ourselves and our health more than ever. The replacement of human labouring by machines will ensure that we will have more time for leisure in the future.



group strategy and network of sport facilities

I hope the swimming complex I am designing can be an example for public sports and leisure projects. Instead of making a monument or a landmark, I focus on the community level and merely design it as a branch among a bigger network of facilities in the city or even national level. For this one building and the extensive research we did about the site, the project is somehow site-specific but also can be applied to other location with very minimum adaptations. I see it as a prototype and always keep in mind that the project should be very public-friendly and feasible to different social groups.



site strategy



Artsenijhof, Beatrixpark

ETHICAL ISSUES AND DILEMMAS I HAVE ENCOUNTERED

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The whole research approach is massively based on subjective data collecting, interpretation of form and typology, mapping and modelling. That is the biggest problem for me in this studio, which I believe can be solved by years of research, a bigger team of researchers, or personal experience of every bit in the system. Hence it is not likely to be improved much within the studio time frame. What I acknowledge of were merely some dull statistics and opinion of different people in different life situation. I address the project by these research and from my personal cognition as a newcomer. I was talking about how exclusive the traditional sports clubs seem to me, without actually joining the sports team at school as the majority of Dutch people. I hope to break the system since I am not able and not willing to participate, but people in the system might find it very genuine and safe. When it comes to public matters, it is impossible to please everyone. What I can only do is to read a lot, talk to many people, and imagine the perspective of different social groups, and add them to my personal cognition to make the decisions.

Another dilemma I encountered was quite specific to the site and I assume all the architects, developers and city planners also have to face in almost all the projects. The site I chose is in Beatrixpark. No buildings need to be removed or relocated and but a botanic garden. For me, the botanic garden has not much value compare to removing people's homes or even occupying the rare open green area in the city. The supply of bare land is very limited especially in this booming capital city, hence there will be opportunity cost no matter what we build or where we build. The possible impact of the decision I made here is relatively low, which was also why I picked the park instead of in the neighbourhood. But in real practice, there could be a much bigger impact caused by the projects in the urban context. Certainly, project architects are not usually the decision maker. But we have no excuse to introduce aliens to the living environment or not to minimise the impacts.