

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	Michalis Psaras
Student number	5359171

Studio		
Name / Theme	AR3AD100 Advanced Housing Design/ Ecology of Inclusion	
Main mentor	Ir. Olv Klijn Dr. Anne Kockelkorn	Architecture Mentor Research Mentor
Second mentor	Ir. Ferry Adema Dr. Clarine J. van Oel	Building Engineering Mentor External Examiner
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>-To grasp the opportunity touching upon issues of social inclusivity, interaction with non-human species and nature's integration in the design</p> <p>-To critically question the anthropocentric binary of human (us) and nature (them)</p> <p>-To contribute to the interdisciplinary quest on "how will we live together"</p> <p>-To learn from the long tradition of the Netherlands in housing and have the chance to revisit archetypes in a contemporary manner</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	<p>Synanthropic* Habitats: 'Hofjes' as Thresholds for Diverse Human and Non-Human Environments</p> <p><small>*sin-an- ' thräp-ik: : on the basis of Greek synanthrōpeúesthai, synanthrōpízein "to live with others"</small></p>

Goal	
Location:	Blijdorp/Walenburghof, Rotterdam
The posed problem,	<p>The site under investigation is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the large undefined spaces -a high traffic lane that dichotomizes the site into two smaller islands -the noise pollution of the nearby railway -the limited and scattered plantation as well as -large-scale buildings that do not comply with neither the tectonic typology and materiality of the neighboring

	<p>buildings nor with the general urban rhythm of the adjacent neighborhood with the row houses</p> <p>In tandem with the wider urgencies of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the climate change as the spearhead of the Anthropocene' era ecological catastrophe -Rotterdam's efforts for a climate-proof adaptation strategy -Dutch imperative need of housing provision and density -Rotterdam's Social Degradation -the necessity for affordable and sustainable housing <p>form an amalgam of problems that constitute the bigger problématique of the need of thresholds as 'eventful' spaces of encounter on the basis of a sustainable (socially, economically, environmentally) and ecological inclusive hofje typology.</p>
<p>research question and</p>	<p>(Main) RQ: How can the introduction of thresholds and a re-definition of "hofjes" (Dutch courtyard) -as the publicly accessible enclosed space, a shared green place, and a collective infrastructure- allow for the coexistence of human and non-human in Blijdorp today?</p> <p>(Selected) sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -How can the archetypical space of hofje be revisited within the contemporary context? -What are the inherent qualities of hofjes that make them a continuously inhabited housing typology since the Middle Ages? -Which are the epistemologies of threshold and how can be implemented into an architectural design to establish the intermediate zone of encounter? -What is the role of the courtyard in the cohabitation game, but also in the quotidian human activities?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>Ecological and Social Inclusive Housing Design</p>
<p>The coupling of the need for an ecologically resilient environment with the imperative need of reducing residential segregation and improve the social cohesion dictates a new typology that will shift the paradigm of Dutch Housing. I argue that this has to be developed on the basis of cooperative housing, injected with the concept of <i>synanthropic habitats</i>, in the sense of harmoniously living with the otherness - implying everything that holds a sense of heterogeneity either between a group of strangers or amongst humans and non-humans. The construction of such a paradigm requires the introduction of green threshold spaces where the overlapping quotidian practices among people as part of the human system, and the existence of non-</p>	

humans can participate in a game of blended cohabitation. I advocate that the common ground of this coexistence can be traced back to the traditional Dutch 'hofjes' as places of encouragement of encounters, but also as refuges for both species and the dwellers belonging to the local community. The ultimate goal is not to reduplicate the historic hofje but to develop a new dwelling type having the spatial and social key-aspects of the archetypical space as principle points for an innovative synthesis.

Process

Method description

I. In situ observations (Praxeology) – Group & Individual Work

The studio site visit and the subsequent division of the students into seven thematic aspects for the area's urban analysis, in order to read the site under a variety of research lenses, has been the primary yet rudimentary method. The three-week long analysis has revealed insightful facts for the Blijdorp on both the social and the ecological level that are instrumental for the formation of an urban strategy and a programme for individual design. Distilling the salient conclusions of each of the categories/ perspectives with an emphasis on the scopes of this research proposal the main issues that emerged are epigrammatically concerning the following: poor quality of public space, a car-oriented neighborhood, the scarcity of green spaces, the isolation from the existing biodiversity corridor, the unhealthfulness of the adjacent rail tracks (air and noise pollution), the prevailing campus-like character of the area as well as the lack of safe transitional spaces that lead to the entire cut off condition with the surroundings. All of the above has shed light on the innate identity of the interrogated area and has been the essential stepstone to envisioned possible futures for Blijdorp and the metropolis of Rotterdam. This method will be an ongoing process taking place throughout the entire graduation year in response to any new queries that might arouse along the way.

II. Precedent Analysis (Typology/Morphology)

The idea of revisiting hofjes has been born from the problématique and the guiding quest of finding an architectural space with such qualities that can encapsulate the triptych of an enclosed human-scale but publicly accessible inner block space, an opportunistic habitat for other living organisms and a place for interaction and encounter among all the human and non-human actors. In order to delve deeper into the hofje type but also to the notions of threshold and coexistence through the cooperative model a number of relevant case studies will be analyzed. The typomorphological analysis aspires to: (i) explore the reasons behind the sustainable longevity of hofjes type through the examination of historic and contemporary case studies, (ii) to discover the beneficial ambivalence of establishing the intermediate zone of threshold and to (iii) learn the opportunities for affordability and inclusivity derived from the cooperative's financial model. The intersection of those findings and the complementarities between them will provide a solid framework and design toolkit for the architectural synthesis.

III. Literature Research on Thresholds and Commoning

Thresholds and commoning have been relatively new terms for the metropolitan urbanized context. Stavrides in his book *Towards the City of Thresholds* (2019) unravels new forms of socialization and uses of space—self-managed and communal—by representing the city as a stage of manifestation of social antagonism and spatial emancipation. The theoretical findings of his work which are intersecting the Lefebvrian and Foucauldian philosophies are critical in subverting the predominant despotism of housing design norms, largely employed in cities like Rotterdam. In this directive, cooperative housing as the non-commodified collectively governed resource (Huron 2018) provides the spatial paraphernalia for the creation of commons and community -without the one necessarily preceding the other. In this housing models, the rules of use are also having a threshold character, constantly changing while the subjects (commoners/inhabitants) are open to negotiations with the newcomers. The epitome of this theoretical framework is vital to structure the matrix wherein the lexis will eventually lead to the praxis.

Literature and general practical preference

Selected Bibliography on the following topics:

Hofjes:

Cieraad, Irene. 2017. "Worldwide Courtyard Typologies Throughout History." Studio Specific Research.

Wilms-Floet, Willemijn. 2009. "Dutch Almshouses." In *DASH #01 - New Open Space in the Housing Ensembles*, by Dirk van den Heuvel, Olv Klijn, Harald Mooij, Pierijn van der Putt Dick van Gameren, 16-23. Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers.

—. 2016. *Het Hofje: Bouwsteen van de Hollandse stad, 1400-2000*. Nijmegen: Uitgeverij Vantilt.

—. 2011. "The social missions of Dutch 'hofjes' in architecture." *Almshouses in Europe from the late Middle Ages to the present: Comparisons and peculiarities*. Haarlem: IISH.

—. 2021. *Urban Oases: Dutch Hofjes as Hidden Architectural Gems*. Rotterdam: nai010 publishers.

Wilms-Floet, Willemijn, Coumans G, Stellingwerff, . 2019. *Analytical Models: Hofjes*. Exhibition Document, Delft: Delft University of Technology.

Thresholds:

Boettger, Till. 2014. *Threshold Spaces: Transitions in Architecture. Analysis and Design Tools*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH.

Gennep, Arnold Van. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Hans Teerds, Christoph Grafe, Catherine Koekoek. 2020. *Table settings : reflections on architecture with Hannah Arendt*. Rotterdam: OASE Foundation.

Laurent Stalder, Anke Hagemann, Elke Beyer, Kim Förster. 2009. "Schwellenatlas: Vom Abfallzerkleinerer bis Zeitmaschine." *ARCH+ 191/192*.

Stavrides, Stavros. 2015. "Common Space as Threshold Space: Urban Commoning in Struggles to Re-appropriate Public Space." *FOOTPRINT: Delft Architecture Theory Journal vol. 16* 9-20.

—. 2016. *Common Space: The City as Commons*. London: Zed Books.

—. 2019. *Towards the City of Thresholds*. New York: Common Notions.

Teyssot, George. 2005. "A Topology of Thresholds." *Home Cultures Vol.2 - Issue 1* 89-116.

Teyssot, George. 2008. "Mapping the Threshold: "A Theory of Design and Interface"." *AA Files, No. 57* 3-12.

Turner, Victor. 1977. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Viganò, Paola. 2018. "Porosity: Why This Figure Is Still Useful." In *Porous City: From Metaphor to Urban Agenda*, by Sophie Wolfrum, 50-58. Basel: Birkhäuser.

Walter Benjamin, Asja Lacin. 2019. "Naples." In *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, by Walter Benjamin, 167-175. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Cooperative Housing:

ACSA/AIA. 2018. "Living Together: Equity through Commoning Domestic Space." Housing Design Education Award.

Andrew Ballentyne, Chris Smith. 2012. *Architecture in the Space of Flows*. New York: Routledge.

Brott, Simone. 2012. "Collective Equipments of Power: The Road and the City." *Thresholds* 40, 47-54.

Huron, Amanda. 2018. *Carving Out the Commons: Tenant Organizations and Housing Cooperatives in Washington, D.C.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Kaja Kühl, Julie Behrens. 2018. "Housing as intervention: Architecture towards social equity." *Architectural Design* v88 n4, July 01: 86-93.

Neeraj Bhatia, Antje Steinmuller. 2018. "Spatial Models for the Domestic Commons: Communes, Co-living and Cooperatives." *Architectural Design* vol88 n4, July/August: 120-127.

Anthropocene & Post-human Architecture:

Dodington, Edward M. 2009. *How to Design with the Animal*. Master Thesis, Houston: Rice University.

—. 2013. *How to Design with the Animal: Lesson in Cross-species Architecture and Design*. Houston: Lulu Press.

Haraway, Donna J. 2008. *When Species meet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Harrison, Ariane Lourie. 2013. *Architectural Theories of the Environment: Posthuman Territory*. New York: Routledge.

Turpin, Etienne. 2013. *Architecture in the Anthropocene*. Ann Arbor: Open Humanities Press.

Wilkinson, Tom. 2018. "Typology: Buildings for animals." *The Architectural Review*.

Yusoff, Kathryn. 2018. *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

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

1. My graduation topic and the studio topic are sharing the same guiding queries on how one can create/regenerate with architectonic means domestic environments where the registers of social and ecological inclusion are catalytical protagonists instead of superficially incorporated elements into the design. My topic falls under the wider scope of the studio for *an ecology of inclusion* by giving a certain dimension to it both in terms of the societal issues and ecological concerns, while profoundly retaining a spatial character. Particularly, it takes a robust Dutch type (cf. the definition of type in the work of N.L.Durand and 'La Tendenza' architects) of co-living that has traditionally been a shelter for vulnerable group of people as well as an ecological refuge for non-human actors, and seeks through the research on commons, on thresholds, and on the financial model of cooperative to revisit the relationship with nature and assure social inclusion while addressing the housing issue that afflict the city of Rotterdam. This research would not be feasible outside the MSc AUBS, and the specialization of Architecture as it was the clear pathway towards a fertile ground of questioning deeply rooted perceptions while also be the constructive environment where you gain all the necessary practical tools to concretely address contemporary challenges.
2. My graduation topic aspires to contribute to the wider scientific discourse on 'how will we live together' posed amongst others by the prof. Hashim Sarkis for the purposes of the Venice Biennale and became even more imperative after the pandemic outbreak. This discourse surpasses the field of Architecture, opening new avenues in the intersection of other disciplines and reflects to the ancient human endeavor to take a position in relation to nature as well as to the disparities between the various social strata. In line with that, *synanthropic habitats* design attempts to encapsulate the tensions of the

evolving climate change and the increasing social inequalities by providing a synthetical proposition that holistically answers to the site-specific problématiques and the global urgencies. The project, despite the fact that is developing within the framework of academia, is an evidence-based design that is supported on data and established examples, and devises an economic strategy that assures the long-standing sustainability of the living environment. Hence, it aspires to become a new model of housing design, that can be adopted by the profession as a newly generated approach to architectural design, that understand the building -and cities in general- as performing ecologies rather than merely ensembles of built entities.