

Reflection of Graduation Project

Space of Collection, Interiors, Buildings, Cities, Architecture

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The Theme of the Studio is 'Space of Collection'. The aim is to design a type of space embedded into the context of Delft's city centre through research and experiment, which is not only to solve the problem with a place for the collections of TU Delft, but also to build interactions between university and historical city as an 'Urban Institution'.

Therefore, there are two keywords for the project, one is 'Collection', the other is 'urban institution'. All the researches and practices are about the keywords.

The keyword 'collection' is about what the essence of collection is, including its physical aspect and motivation behind the behavior.

Chronologically, I first investigated collections in TU Delft and Delft City to learn about the situation of the collection, which includes its history, content, space-platform, way of management and openness. It is an intuitive feeling of the definition of 'collection', like the 'Sluyterman Collection' in the underground storage of the university library, impressing me by the atmosphere of countless pieces of collection displayed on the shelves, with specific function through an organized and professional way. And it is also a theme that I would like to present in my scheme, which is a real archival space, accommodating all the collection underground the library, so that the archive can be more public and its collection would never be forgotten.

Then I researched the historic line of western collection, psychology of collection behavior, management of collection and interaction among space, people and collection. What the most valuable I concluded is that the behavior of collection includes 'storing' and 'displaying', both of which symbiotically influence with each other. On one hand, the scale of a space is limited, but the collection is relatively infinite. So a space for collection would ideally be better accommodate as much collection as it is able to; On the other hand, historically, the displaying aspect is significant for a collection, because it is a way that the collector show off for social events and financial support. If there is a lack of displaying of collection, regardless to visitors or collectors,

the charm of collection would be no longer there.

For these reasons, I discuss the behaviors of 'storing' and 'displaying' separately, so that spatially, they are different architectural types, but meet with each other on a certain point. Each of behavior is not alone within its territory because of their symbiotic relationship.

My precedent, Sandbergvleugel, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, is also an important case of space and institution for collection. Sandbergvleugel is a reflection of museum space in 1950s. As an extremely simple modern architecture, with a volume of pitched-roof-house, structural authenticity, transparent, no decoration, the purpose is to create a relatively pure space for collection which is the major character of the space rather than architecture itself, and an open expression of urban institution to the public. It owned a unique identity among museum district, but stood in a modest posture.

Authenticity is what I learn from the precedent, which is the architectural expression that respond the requirement of collection and relation to city. Modesty is also a quality that is an attitude to context, collection and visitor by control the scale and position of the volume, but the identity of the design is simple and clear.

The second keyword is 'Urban institution'. In this theme, I focus on what the urban institution is, what the relationship among urban institution, environment, history and citizen is and what the identity of urban institution is in current context.

In research workshop, I investigated Delft City as field trip and chose one urban institution for further research. My research is a school building of Poly Technical School, 'De Engelenbak'. The building was transformed for several times during centuries. And finally, it had transformed from a rectangular volume to a centralized one, with a long, symmetrical facade and continuous hip roof covering previous two separate buildings, to express the formality and neutral identity of urban institution. Although the facade is different from a canal house one which is the most representative street facade in Delft, the proper application of scale, proportion and material makes it as one part of the old Delft's context.

In research seminar, I conclude that the urban institution is the place where people gather for collective values, including safety, religion, healthy, education and cultural influence. Among them, education and cultural influence related to university and my design. The archive and

university used to be a merely educational institution, which is far away from the more general public. But a theatre and cinema of Delft City is popular among all the groups of citizens, from which I learnt that cultural expression of knowledge have potential to influence those who haven't known about the pleasure of studying one specific field, so as to help the spread the knowledge. Despite their cultural product, the success of cultural institution is that they offer a place to sit down, so that even a short break with a cup of coffee, they collect the most fragmented time of the public for the potential of the visit, the vitality of the place and combining them as collective values.

Putting the two keywords together, there are 3 groups of inverse but symbiotic definitions, 'storing' and 'displaying', 'formality' and 'modesty', 'knowledge expression' and 'cultural influence'. As I tried converting 'storing' and 'displaying' to architectural expressions above, the 3 groups of definition can be re-organized by the same method: one is 'archive', containing the definition of 'storing', 'displaying' and 'formality', the other is 'long gallery', a public exhibition space with a cafe, containing the definition of 'displaying', 'modesty' and 'cultural influence'.

The volume of 'long gallery' through the volume of 'archive' seems a conflict, but the articulation with both advantage and characteristics, which presents the magnificence of the theme of the Sluyterman collection in an expressive way. The 'long gallery' contains more motion of visitors, so that the 'long gallery' is subdivided into shorter rooms for specific events by the respective identities of the surrounding environment and is a place for views of gardens and typical Delft's facade.

To the city, walls are introduced to deal with the complexity. As a Delft way of dealing with the opening of the street, visitors firstly come into the courtyard behind the wall and entrance, which is the exterior entrance hall of architecture. The changing direction of entry enables the long gallery as a container of publicity rather than a link between both openings of west and east street facades. The 'archive' is centralized, balancing its scale of volume by keeping a distance from the environment. One integral volume with brick has different expressions from the transparent 'long gallery', with more formality and identity of urban institution. The tectonic and interior design is to integrate two different identity into one building. As I mentioned, they are from 2 starting points, but is symbiosis and share the common value.

My graduation project try to find a position and a solution for educational institution in contemporary context , discussing the essence of collection and studying the complexity of simple spatial organization in a complex environment.