

Reflection

In the reflection the student uses a short substantiated explanation to account for the preliminary results of the research and design in the graduation phase (product, process, planning).

Personal information

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Studio

Name/ Theme: Explore lab
Teachers: Martijn Stellingwerff, Engbert van der Zaag, Jan van de Voort
Title of the project: 'Het Nabestaandenhuis' (a place for mourning - grieving therapy)
Location of the project: Scheveningse bosjes, Den Haag



A brief introduction to the research/design topic.

Dealing with mourning in today's society; We all mourn in our own way! Some mourn together with relatives/ close friends and some mourn alone. Some mourn with professional guidance and some without. Some wonder whether they mourn in the right way or how to actually mourn. Some get lost in their grief and some ignore their grief. In the past there was more space and place for grief and mourning. Mourning occurred in everyone's life and was part of life. In today's society mourning is not always negotiable. Lost in their own grief, nowadays mourning increasingly results in mental health problems. To make mourning open for discussion again, to acknowledge it and learn from each other. With my design I am looking for a place where relatives can meet and support each other. Where you can experience grief and learn to live with grief? Where there is professional guidance, and knowledge is shared.

Mourning is also at the faculty of Architecture not a well-discussed topic, that's why I almost a year ago started my research at explore lab. With the research I searched for an answer to the following research question: How can we as architects implement the interactions between the dimensions social, time and space in a design that supports at the loss of a loved one as learn to live with loss?

During my research I have done several case studies: Roosenberg Abbey from Dom Hans van der Laan, Zuiderhof Crematorium from Dudok & Crematorium Stuifduin from a2o architects. And ten interviews with various professionals who work with grief and mourning care. A grieving therapist, a funeral director, an architect, etc. By carefully studying, analyzing and interpreting the projects and interviews I have filtered various corresponding elements. These elements become the starting points for my design. In addition the research also taught me a lot about how to deal with mourning and nabestaanden.

The method, doing case studies and interviews. At first I only wanted to do interviews, but after the first interviews I realized that it is more difficult than I thought to get an architectural overview of the wishes / requirements of the interviewee. Doing case studies was a good addition to the interviews. The case studies gave me architectural examples of elements that make architecture specific for mourning. I tested the knowledge of the case studies with the interviewee, to supplement and adjust the information. With a satisfactory result.

Another point of the research is that I only did the interviews with professionals, while the design mainly has nabestaanden for the target group. I chose to do the interviews with professionals, because of their knowledge about dealing with nabestaanden. And because mourning is so personal and the professional has a better overall picture. However, I have already shown my first design at a meeting via Esmee (mourning therapist). I hope to do this one more time in a further stage of the design to let nabestaanden think along about my design.

In the end, my project is about designing a building that meets my design principles. The principles that have emerged from the research and specific architectural elements that connect with mourning, consolation and reflection. An investigation into architectonic elements that will result in a design for het nabestaandenhuis.

The first design was already created during the research period. However, this was quite fast in the design process and I decided to design further. During my p3 I came up with a different design than during the p2. This design complied with my design principles but not with my architecture style, so I didn't get any satisfaction from the project. I then decided, under the supervision of my teacher, to change the design again and to incorporate both my wishes and the design principles. The design is a better version of the design during my p2, and I am now working on it with pleasure.

Moreover the relationship between my graduation project and the master track Architecture; A more conscious approach to the design process when it comes to buildings with emotion and more specifically mourning. Although my interviews had a different approach it was often mentioned that current crematoriums do not meet the requirements. With my research I want to investigate what architecturally fits in with the emotions around sadness and consolation. This then is not only applicable to my design but also, for example, to a crematorium. My design could serve as an example for nabestaanden architecture.

Working on the research and my design has not only led to my graduationproject but it has also given me the confidence to be open about my own mourn experience and to tackle the negotiability of death. The confidence and the result have developed during the course of the research but also thanks to the support I received from my supervisors and loved ones, thank you very much.