



Practices In Research

practice-based research journal for architecture

Tour d'Horizon

issue #02 - May 2021

Practices in Research #02 - Tour d'Horizon - May 2021

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edited by

Benoît Burquel (ULB); Benoît Vandembulcke (ULiège); Harold Fallon (KU Leuven)

scientific committee

Georges Pirson (ULB); Julie Neuwels (ULiège); Pauline Lefebvre (ULB); Rolf Hughes (KU Leuven); Iwan Strauven (ULB); Robin Schaeverbeke (KU Leuven); Harold Fallon (AgwA & KU Leuven); Céline Bodart (ENSA Paris La Villette); Benoît Vandembulcke (AgwA & ULiège); Cécile Chanvillard (A Practice & UCLouvain); Asli Çiçek (Asli Çiçek & U Hasselt); Caroline Voet (Voet Architectuur & KU Leuven); Lisa De Visscher (A+ Architecture in Belgium & ULiège)

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Rue des Palais 153 - 1030 Brussels
T. +32 (0)2 244 44 36
info@architectureinpractice.eu
www.architectureinpractice.eu/pirjournal

In Practice explores the multiple ways in which architects can engage their professional practice in academic research and reciprocally. *In Practice* seeks to open a space for architecture practices in research through the development of methodologies, conferences and publications.



In Practice



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INTRODUCTION

Tour d'Horizon

This second publication is a project of the interuniversity research group In Practice, supported by ULiège, KU Leuven and ULB. 'In Practice' invites practicing architects to explore the multiple ways in which architects can engage the professional practice in academic research and reciprocally. 'Practices in Research #02 - Tour d'Horizon' broadens the work initiated in the first issue, increasing the diversity approaches, subjects and profiles.

This publication is based on an open call and follows the conference organised in October 2020 at CIVA (KANAL, Brussels), articulated with a double evening lecture by Office KGDVS and AgwA in the framework of the booklaunch of 'Raamwerk In Practice : Lichtervelde Youth Centre'. From ten initial proposals, five are finally selected and developed according to an in-depth double-blind peer review process. The members of the scientific committee must be thanked for their dedication and precision in the reviews.

The five contributors to this publication are involved in academic research and/or in pedagogy. They are practicing architects. In a variety of ways, their contributions address

the interactions that emerge from these overlapping and complementary activities. They illustrate different positions, attitudes, strategies and point of views.

Laurent Didier, Mathieu Le Ny and Louis Leger are partners of *BAST*, an architecture practice in Toulouse (France) addressing the making - and the teaching - of architecture through economy of means, utilitarian programmes and straightforward constructive systems. They teach architecture at ENSA Toulouse.

Marie Pirard is a civil engineer architect currently leading the project of the Palais des Exposition in Chaleroi for the association of *architecten jan de vylder inge vinck* and *AgwA*. She teaches architecture and pursues a doctoral research in the history of architecture at UCLouvain (Louvain-la-Neuve).

João Quintela and Tim Simon are the partners of *JQTS*, an architecture studio situated in Lisbon and Hamburg. *JQTS* proposes an explorative practice based on empirical processes. They both teach and pursue a PhD at ETSAM (Madrid) and TU Berlin, CEACTION/UAL (Lisbon), HCU Hamburg.

Aurélie Hachez runs *AHA* in Brussels, an architecture practice with a specific interest in the poetics of architectural detailing and the blurring of borders between edition, art and architecture. She is teaching architecture at TU Delft.

Dries Rodet is the partner of Charlotte Truwant at *Truwant + Rodet +* in Basel. The office proposes a pragmatic yet speculative approach with interest in the conditions and representation of architecture. Dries teaches architecture at ENSAV (Versailles).

‘Practices in Research #02 – Tour d’Horizon’ embodies a diversity of locations, of contexts and institutions, of architectural approaches and academic positions. This variety offers evidence of the richness of the field to explore. It shows the adequateness of placing architecture practice at the heart of a research practice - and vice-versa.

‘Practices in Research #02 – Tour d’Horizon’ is also the opportunity of interrogations and reflections about the relationships between research and practice, about the position of practicing architects in the institutions, about the aims, the criteria and the methods of research in architecture practices.

After the conference, an open online closing session was organised. The intense conversation was transcribed and edited for this publication. Pauline Lefebvre (ULB) and Robin Schaeverbeke (KU Leuven) must be particularly thanked for their crucial participation to this closing event, which raised important questions and considerations.

The editors

Benoît Vandenbulcke, Harold Fallon and Benoît Burquel

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Periurban infrastructure

Laurent Didier, Mathieu Le Ny and Louis Leger

BAST Architects

ENSA Toulouse (France)

Our practice within BAST is committed to «ordinary contexts» and «programs devoid of architecture» in rural or peri-urban areas, such as clubhouses, refectories, communal homes, multiservice centers, municipal workshops, extensions of town halls. Because we continuously question the use of material resources, programmatic recurrences, innovation and the economy that govern the act of building nowadays, we consider that these architectures can serve the production of commons. We ran a studio with 24 bachelor students of ENSA Toulouse in 2020, which aim was to design a small equipment based on a real program while developing a constructive system of its own. The proposals are simple and pragmatic constructions tolerating small budgets and seeking to enhance contemporary artisanal or industrial know-how.

The relatively small scale of the projects allows to manipulate different design tools and representation techniques. Orthophotography is used as «impartial» realistic photocollages. Isometric axonometries provide a graphic synthesis of plan, section and elevation. Real size prototypes are constructed to anticipate the construction and to test their constructive implications of the materials.

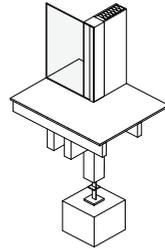
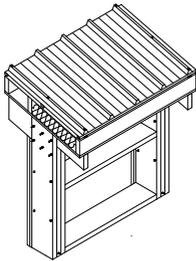
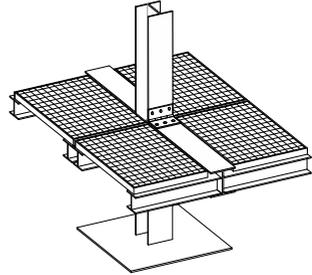
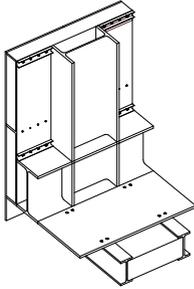
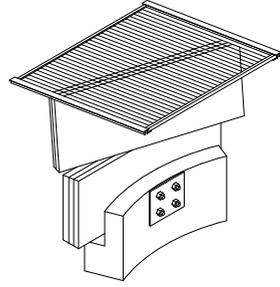
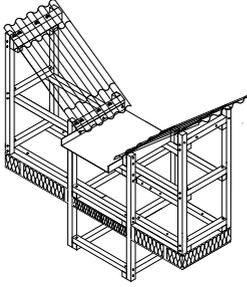
The following pages contain these documents realised during the studio at ENSA Toulouse, together with work of the practice at BAST. The identical canvas blurs the borders between practice and pedagogy, showing their mutual intrication.

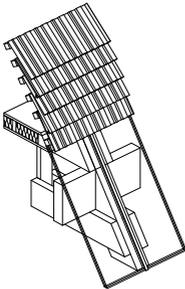
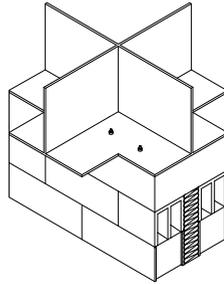
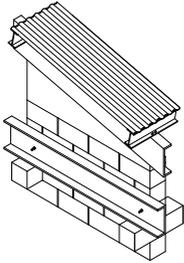
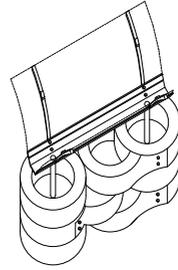
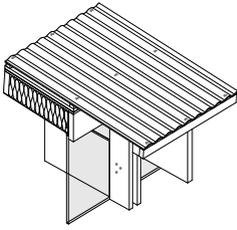




- halting area for travellers
- area for car sharing
- municipal workshops
- nautical base
- bakery
- campsite
- club house
- municipal recycling center
- bus station
- covered hall
- production unit

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wooden three-dimensional structure
 wooden beam network
 metal framework
 metal frame
 wooden frame
 wooden post and beam
 half wooden portal frame
 earth ship tyres
 masonry
 coffered metal ceiling
 wooden frame





assembling wood
drilling to anchor
assembling wood
cutting tire
welding steel profile
welding steel profile
cutting cement blocs
cutting steel plate
assembling wood
assembling wood
fixing roof tiles

S611



S611

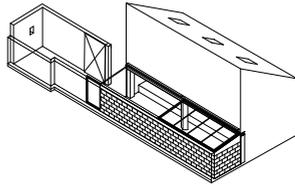
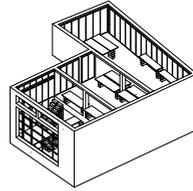
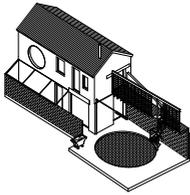
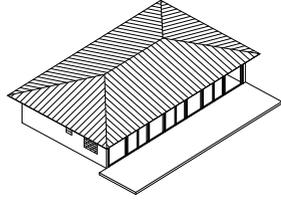
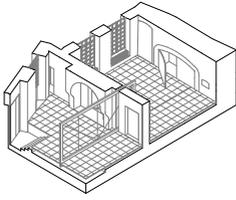


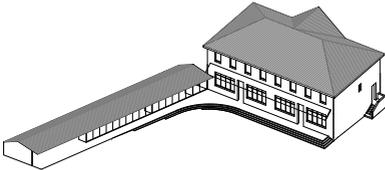
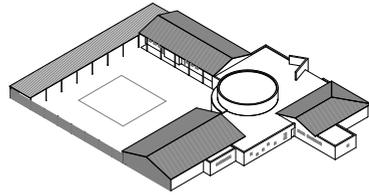
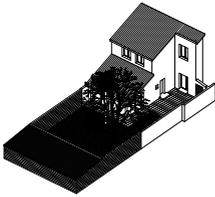
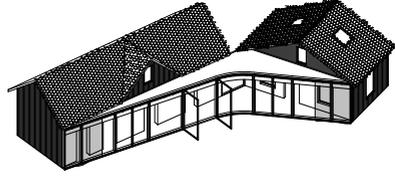
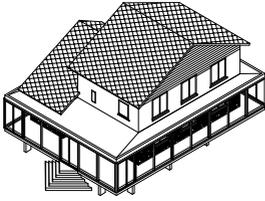
douglas fir battens 40x40
LVL spruce 75x450
IPE 500 + 320
IPE 120 + 80
LVL spruce 50x250
douglas solid wood 160x160 + 160x400
LVL spruce 50x200
16 inch tires
concrete block 20 + UPN 320
concrete block 20 + IPE 1750
glued laminated timber 120x320 + 140x440





- T09- Photographer studio
- M27- House refurbishment
- M23- House extension
- M26- House extension
- M24- House refurbishment
- T12- Offices
- M21- Dependance
- E37- School yard
- E23- Club house
- M20- House extension
- E26- School refectory





- T09- steel fame
- M27- wooden frame
- M23- wooden frame and steel pilars
- M26- wooden frame
- M24- steel beams and pilars
- T12- wodden frames
- M21- steel frames
- E37- steel frames
- E23- wooden frames
- M20- steel structure
- E26- clt wooden w



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- T09
- M27
- M23
- M26
- M24
- T12
- M21
- E37
- E23
- M20
- E26

Living with externalities

The refurbishment of Charleroi's *Palais des Ex-* *positions* in a post-growth context.

Marie Pirard

AM architecten jan de vylder inge vinck - AgwA

UCLouvain LOCI (Belgium)

As a part-time collaborator with the association of the architectural practices *architecten jan de vylder inge vinck* and *AgwA* (further referred to as *AjdvivgwA*), I have been involved for four years in the refurbishment of the *Palais des Expositions* in Charleroi, a post-industrial city in the south of Belgium. At first, I was the project coordinator, then, when the construction started, I took the role of following and controlling the construction site. In my other part-time, I am a doctoral student in architectural history. In line with this situation, the article is divided in two. First, I develop a reading of the construction site based on the concept of ‘externalities’ borrowed from the environmental humanities, a disciplinary field that I explore in the context of my research.¹ Secondly, I use this conceptual framework to describe the development process of the project, during which I noticed that some decisions were consciously outsourced. By interpreting this observation, by linking it to my reading of the construction site, I seek to open the debate on the posture of architects in a contemporary post-growth context.

LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



Charleroi's *Palais des Expositions*, 2019, ©Filip Dujardin

An old colossus in between the city center and the metropolitan landscape



Charleroi's *Palais des Expositions*, ©collection Archives Ville de Charleroi

The frenzy of the great popular fairs during the years of the *Trente Glorieuses*

Externalities :

‘damages caused by a company’s activities for which it does not pay, or something positive created by it for which it does not receive payment.’

Cambridge Business English Dictionary ²

Reading the construction site

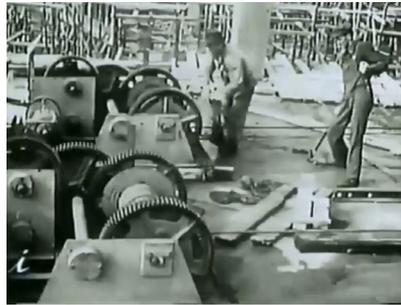
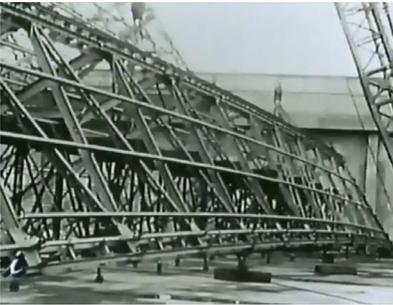
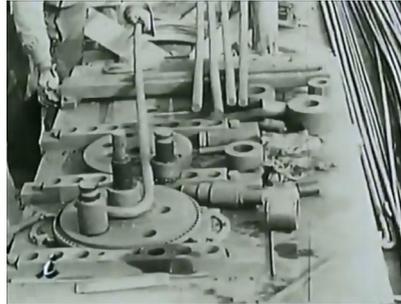
In 2013, Céline Pessis, Sezin Topçu and Christophe Bonneuil, three French environmental historians, published the book *Une autre histoire des Trente Glorieuses*.³ The publication deconstructs the French expression invented by the economist Jean Fourastié and the idea it conveys of a joyful modernization, in which the artificialization of the territory, the use of new technologies and the mass production of goods are presented as profitable for all and infinitely applicable. Among their methodological advices for a counter-history of the period, the authors call for the reintegration of the environmental and social externalities of the postwar de-

velopment model into the historical narrative. They focus on the industrial nuisances and pollutions. They tell the story of those who put these externalities on the table and therefore contested the consensual visions of progress and growth. Borrowed from economic sciences, the word *externality*, is turned upside down here. From being a secondary, supposedly marginal, collateral effect, it reaches a central position: it is a marker of the failures of the capitalist industrial economic system and an anchor point in the deconstruction of the myth of exponential endless growth.

Obviously, the construction sector has played a key role in this postwar western model of development. In Europe, the fifties, sixties and seventies were a booming era for the building of large-scale infrastructures, as well as for private and public architecture. Today, the physical presence of these constructions manifests the frenzy of the period, and explains why architecture, as a part of the construction sector, is frequently charged with the burden of having been complicit with this predatory attitude towards the environment.⁴ Moreover, architecture's burden is doubled as materiality is accompanied by a cultural influence. By shaping new monumentalities or by inducing transformative spatial experiences, a significant part of postwar architecture has promoted consumerist lifestyles and thus led to the sedimentation of the *Trente Glorieuses* myth.⁵

Charleroi's *Palais des Expositions* constitutes a perfect embodiment of this material and cultural burden. A 1950s documentary film by René Richir shows the worksite of this 60,000m² mastodon.⁶ It highlights that the building was

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Film extracts, René Richir⁶

The construction site as a demonstration of the strength of the secondary sector in Charleroi

designed as a showcase to demonstrate the local industry strength. A list of superlatives accompanies the images: 70.000 m³ of infills, 25.500 m³ of concrete, an equivalent quantity of reinforcing bars and a steel roof structure with a record free span. According to the filmmaker, the mass of materials used is frightening but also constitutes a source of pride. Being big, demanding materials and work force was exactly what was asked of the building. Once built, the site was quickly devoted to popular events that showcased modern lifestyles and leisure. These included domestic arts fairs or holiday fairs where people could buy a new car, a mobile home, a fridge or a good vacuum cleaner. The advertising pictures of the fairs testify to the unbridled proliferation of manufactured objects that - this time through consumption - continued to transform the building into a symbol of productivist ideology.

Today, the postwar boom is over in Charleroi, which has become a post-industrial city. But construction materials have accumulated and left traces. Once extracted and used, they remained on site and constitute today a stock that can only marginally be recycled.⁷ These stocks, accumulated over the last 75 years of frenetic construction and consumer culture will not magically disappear. They condition today how we can work as architects, as well as the effectiveness of future policies regarding societal and environmental issues such as climate change.⁸ Postwar buildings thus implied a vertiginous inertia that we only start to get to know and deal with. Within this dynamic, some of the conceptual tools developed by environmental historians - such as unravelling externalities - might be helpful.

Week after week, as I follow the work in progress in Charleroi, I cannot stop thinking about this situation. As soon as my train starts to follow the Brussels-Charleroi canal, the landscape itself becomes a manifest of externalities: rubbish dumps in the foreground, slag heaps in the distance, abandoned gas pipes running between the canal and the motorway, the dismantling of a warehouse, but also Quechua tent camps under the bridges, torn mattresses and forgotten objects that litter the ground.

On the worksite too, we faced externalities at first. Almost two years of work were dedicated to emptying the building and to dismantling and demolishing the leftovers of its first sixty years of activities, reversing René Richir's list of superlatives. Kilometres of insulated asbestos pipes and tons of fibre-cement panels were removed. Old carpets, broken furniture, faded advertisements were evacuated. The demolition workers were the ones who tidied up the site when the party was over. Trucks came and went, simply transferring elsewhere what was no longer desirable here.

The description could seem pessimistic, but what happens on site is also fascinating and contains its own kind of poetry. It echoes the interrogations raised by environmental humanities: how can contemporary society deal with the legacy of productivist ideologies and their material traditions;⁹ how can reflexive interventions be developed on the basis of the material and imaginary traces produced by the existing constructed infrastructures? On the fringes of the emerging practices of material recycling and building adaptive reuse, the issue I intend to address here is rath-

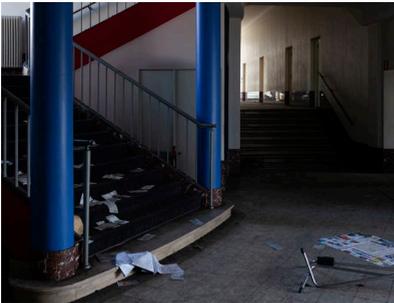
LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



Charleroi's *Palais des Expositions*, images extracted from an undated advertising booklet.

The building transformed into a temple of consumption

LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



Charleroi's Palais des Expositions, 2019, ©Arvi Anderson

First part of the works: traces left behind by sixty years of fairs to be 'cleared'

er: which potential cultural identities and imaginaries are shaped by living *with* externalities? How could that change the design process of a project and the posture of a team of architects?

The process of the project

How does the refurbishment project for the *Palais des Expositions* address these issues? A first answer that comes to mind is the reduction of the building size and the poetry of the ruins. Selected demolitions allow to create a smaller building, easier to manage, to heat and to occupy. The demolitions, in the center of the building, are only partial. The primary concrete structures are maintained and transformed into pre-ruins among which the visitors will circulate. The work of the first architect, Joseph André, created for and by a society of affluence, is dissected to face a new context that is defined by scarcity instead. Future visitors, by walking between the unveiled structure of the building, will physically experiment it. But the strategy of re-activating post-industrial ruins by transforming them into contemplative or recreational parks is far from being innovative, nor is the idea of compacity.¹⁰

It is thus another particularity that I would like to discuss here: the seemingly abusive use of conceptual externalities to make choices in the project. Beyond this first cen-



Demolition of the central part of the building, 2020, photo by the author

tral intervention, a lot of further decisions in the internal design process were outsourced. They were not defined by the decision of an architect-composer, nor by the necessity to fit with a 'winning concept' but rather by the hazard of a discovery on site, the literal application of a regulation and the budget restrictions.

Infills

The site occupies an edge of the city center, straddling its old city wall. Opening up the central part of the building, transforming it into a 'garden of ruins', made it possible to create a connection between the upper and lower city, and by extension, between the city center and the metropolitan landscape of Charleroi that appears beyond its ring road. In the first steps of the project, a new topography was created to embody this link. A slope extended throughout the whole garden and incorporated the structure's upper floors. Later, during one of the many explorations on site, we discovered some existing embankments, hidden behind the peripheral walls. The building had been built on an already disturbed ground, raised several meters in height thanks to the addition of infills, most probably taken up from a nearby slag heap.¹¹ To avoid building retaining walls, the first contractors had simply kept and covered the slopes of the infills as they were, along the building, ready to be unveiled. They were steep and not walkable, but were available without heavy nor expensive interventions. They were thus kept as found, first welcomed as a matter of fact, then enjoyed as a way to sharpen the project by helping to contrast the garden as a continuous ground with the concrete

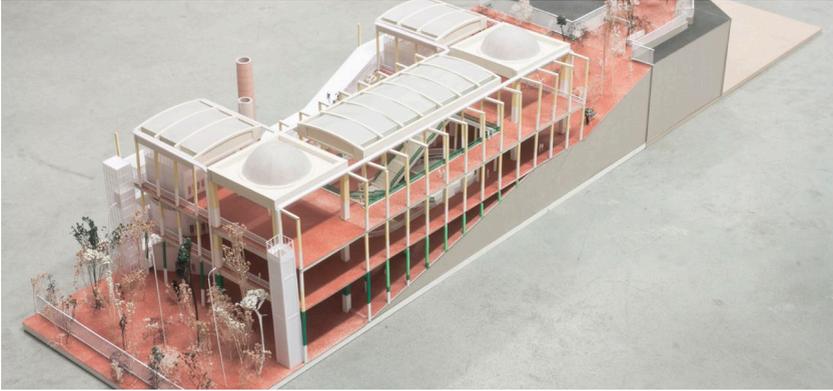
structures floating above it.

Then, an existing basement in the lower part of the garden was transformed into a planted moat with a narrow bridge to cross over it. By avoiding to cover up the basement completely, we induced an entry sequence. A small staircase was spared from demolition to be reused as a technical shortcut for the main exhibition building. Concrete columns were kept along the street, to manage the interface and support the fences. Although the choices of keeping some construction elements were led by opportunism, we appreciate the character that these elements give to the site.



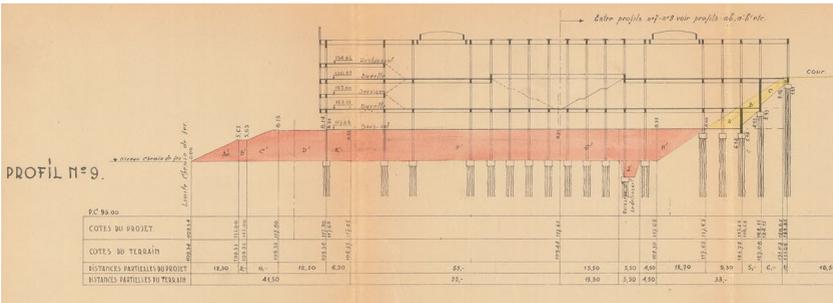
The discovery of the infills, 2017, © AjdvivgWA

LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



Models by *jdviv* and *AgwA*, 2017, ©Filip Dujardin

The evolution of the garden's topography



Altmetric profile of the site by Joseph André, 1949, ©collection Archives Ville de Charleroi

LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



The existing basement, staircase and columns along the street, 2020, ©Filip Dujardin

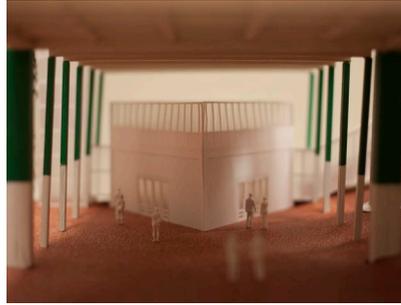
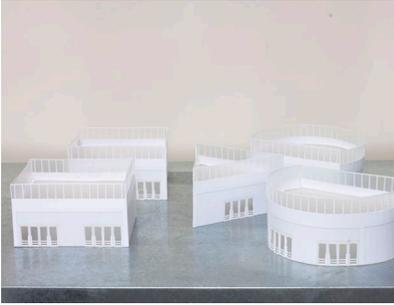


New railings and steel reinforcements superimposed onto the existing, 2021, ©Filip Dujardin

Energy performance regulation

The demolition of the central buildings to create the garden revealed new facades. Some walls that were previously inside the building, became exterior. According to the energy performance regulation in Wallonia (PEB), these walls are the only ones for which insulation works are compulsory as their atmospheric context is changing. The already existing facades, on the other hand, can stay as they are. The regulation induced, in this case, a thermal aberration with randomly positioned insulated surfaces. We had no other option than to literally apply the rule as it was financially impossible to insulate the entire building and as the regional authorities had refused our request for a derogation. However, from this apparently confusing situation, something appeared: by insulating only the old interior walls, a pattern was created. New white plasters called ‘sparadrap’ punctuated the façades in the spots where the building needed reparations. In the end, we found a formal pleasure in the mismatch of singular rationals that the building brought together. The ‘sparadrap’ – alongside other punctual interventions such as the new railings adjoined to the old ones to conform to the new standards or the metal reinforcement structure – interacts with the existing building. They reveal it - not by contrast nor in a patrimonial approach - but by frontally superimposing themselves on the existing, like in a building-size collage.

LIVING WITH EXTERNALITIES



Scale models, 2017, ©AjdviwgWA

Evolution of the design for the vestibules

Trial and error

The solutions adopted are preferably punctual, plural and fragmented, which makes the architects' intervention difficult to trace. Yet defusing the overall decision-making was not easy. Most of the time, we attempted several designs before realising that an element did not really need to be designed. Small vestibules in the entrance of the exhibition halls, for example, were conceptualized at first as autonomous volumes (a circular, a square and a triangular plan), then as a set of large glassed walls before being finally reduced to the minimum requirements: the entrance doors were replicated five meters further and the space in between covered.

The process was never linear or absolute. Sometimes the lack of choice was strategically overplayed to fit into the conceptual framework that was progressively being defined around the project. Non-choice paradoxically became a choice. Because the process was extensively debated and carefully developed, it was far from being a sign of resignation from the architects. The experience could rather be seen as an open exploration of another posture towards the architectural project. We tried to distance ourselves from the idea that, as architects, we should define a general guidance able to orientate *a priori* the shape, the structure, the details and the technical aspects of the project. We also gradually abandoned the idea of finding a mediation between these different constraints. Instead, from my point of view, we accepted and appreciated to be in the fray, dealing with the network of multidisciplinary actors surrounding

the project, trying to find new allies, or to understand and accept the multiple rationalities that surrounded us. The existing building, like Tim Ingold's definition of landscape, or like Bruno Latour's actor-network, was neither a totality observed from outside, nor a passive, static object. It was always inclusive and active. All actions and opposing forces, including those coming from the building itself, were to be understood as an intersubjective immersive dialogue, from which the project is the direct result.¹²

Of course, the economic system's externalities as explored and defined by environmental historians is not the same externality as the one stemming from decision-making processes in architecture. But the architects' relinquishment towards keeping all the pieces of a flawed puzzle together could maybe be interpreted as a critique of the technocratic authority that we are still professionally asked to represent. In the context of Charleroi, where it is difficult to deny the omnipresence of the material and social externalities of the *Trente Glorieuses*, and where the reinvention of a collective imagination around these is urgently needed, a small change in the way architects work is, at least, an interesting attempt to shake things up. It is not sure yet if this experience will create a meaningful object. But it allows us to grasp the work in progress differently.

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2. Cambridge Business English Dictionary, retrieved from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, accessed 17/04/2020.
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- In his introduction, Christophe Van Gerrewey stresses the difficult situation faced by the discipline regarding its environmental burden.
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- Andreola, Florencia, and Riccardo M. Villa. «Free(D) Time: The Spatialisation of Leisure from the XIII Triennale until Today.» *San Rocco* 14 (2018): 31-39.
6. René Richir was an amateur filmmaker in Charleroi. For an overview of his work, see : Arcq, Pierre, Carine Gouviene, and Christian Joosten. *René Richir Ou Le Folklore Sur Pellicule*. Archives de Charleroi (2019).
- The film to which I refer in this text is not registered in the archives of the city. But it has been shown on the tv show “inédit” at the national television channel (rtbf). It is now only visible through this unofficial link : <https://www.facebook.com/luigi.spagnuolo.9066/videos/10217102579188827/UzpfSTey-MDc2Njk3MjA6MTAyMTk3Nzg1MDcxO-TIzMDA/>
7. In Brussels, the cooperative Rotor is influential in exploring the potential for recycling materials during demolitions. Among others principles, they argued that, for a generalization of this emerging practice, the economy of the construction sector should be reformed by integrating a financial consideration of the environmental nuisance induced by a demolition (without recycling). That means: revealing and taking financially into account what has been, for now, an externality in the construction sector. This point of view is explained in : <https://www.circulareconomy.brussels/interview-opalis-le-guide-michelin-du-reemploi-de-matériaux-de-construction/>, accessed 17/04/2020.
8. Magalhaes, Nelo, «Accumuler De La Matière, Laisser Des Traces.» *Terrestres.org*, 2019, accessed 17/04/2020.
9. Ibid
10. An interesting temporal comparison: it has been now more than 30 years since the 1989 IBA Emscher Park program was launched, in order to explore the cultural and recreative potential of the industrial heritage in the German Ruhr region.
- Lefevre, Pierre. «L’art Du Paysage À Emscher Park. Génie Hydraulique Et Ingénierie Culturelle.» *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine* 85, no. 1 (1999): 190-95. <https://doi.org/10.3406/aru.1999.2300>.
11. The hypothesis was developed by the soil pollution expert of the project, Unisoil, based on the samples that were collected and analyzed.
12. Ingold, Tim. «The Temporality of the Landscape.» *World Archeology* 25, no. 2 (1993): 152-74.
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From the hand to the mind to the hand

Construction as an act of design

Between Reason and Intuition

Drawing as an act of analysis

Between Intuition and Reason

João Quintela and Tim Simon

JQTS

ETSAM (Spain), TU Berlin (Germany)

CEACT/UAL (Portugal), HCU Hamburg (Germany)

A mere thing is, to take an example, this block of granite. It is hard, heavy, extended, massive, unformed, rough, colored, partly dull, partly shiny. We can notice all these features in the stone. [...] Obviously the thing is not merely a collection of characteristics, and neither is it the aggregate of those properties through which the collection arises. The thing, as everyone thinks he knows, is that around which the properties have gathered. One speaks, then, of the core of the thing.

Martin Heidegger

Construction as an act of design

Between Reason and Intuition

The authenticity of architectural experience is grounded in the tectonic language of building and the comprehensibility of the act of construction to the senses.

Juhani Pallasmaa

The process of construction in architecture has necessarily a rational condition. It is framed by the eternal laws of nature such as gravity and it depends on the characteristics of the materials and how they dialogue between them as to define an architectural space. From this perspective, if we consider architecture as the art of construction it will be always grounded to the same common language, that is to say: structure, material, construction, form and space.

At this point architecture can be determined by a mental process of design or, instead, it can be complemented with an empirical knowledge where building is learning, building is deciding, building is designing. Like this the architectural design would be a process of going back and forth, in a reciprocal attitude. Asking the brick what he wants to

be indeed and waiting for his answer at the very same moment. This is also what we can learn from the past when buildings were done by a trial and error method and each builder used to go a step further than his predecessor until failure reveals the limits of a certain structural system.

So, construction should be an act of design and not just an act of building. It can definitely be a learning process where one becomes an active part and has the possibility to carry a load on his shoulders and to feel the gravity in his own hands. It will be than inscribed in our body and mind. Our body is the most important tool to experience architecture. By moving through space, we make ourselves aware of its characteristics. We can touch the surfaces. We can feel the materiality and its temperature. We can feel how the forces of gravity are being conducted to the ground. These are common experiences that are grounded in the tangible physicality of the architectural object.

We have had the possibility of developing several self-built projects which gave us the possibility to experience the construction of a building not just in an abstract way. By this, the gap between designing and building is filled by the experience with the materials themselves. That means that our task as architects is also redefined within the framework of the overall process. Those projects - some academic and others not - allowed us to become part of the act of construction and to take the most important decisions directly

in place by testing and building just like being in a laboratory and doing experiences with our real scale research object. We could hold the elements, feel their weight, notice their temperature, get aware of the strength and touch the surfaces. Through this process the materials inherent properties are becoming physical experiences that bring us in close relation with the materials themselves. Rationally we understand their possibilities of construction and intuitively we test solutions that could go beyond the technical and structural needs in order to transform the act of joining into an aesthetical process that can define the character of the architecture. This approach follows a generic way of dealing with the materials that is driven by the intention of achieving a specific architectural expression.

Like this we are addressing common principles of construction which allow us to build spaces with our hands, with the use of basic tools and analogic processes. And those principles that are based on a common knowledge have also the capacity to be shared with the others both in the process of building and in the experience of the architecture. Accordingly, anyone can participate in that process to turn the act of construction into a new ritual. A simple building becomes than a new common structure and the tectonic language makes it comprehensible to everyone. We all share the same physical experiences of feeling the heaviness of the element and therefore we become grateful for the supporting wall that does the job of carrying the load. The static phenomena of the loadbearing system - the

bones of the architecture, we could say - is than a comprehensible result and its meaning is replaced by the idea of a new symbol. Christopher Alexander states that there is a timeless way of building inside each one of us. It is an organic and natural process that grows spontaneously due to the inherent human desire to create something and inscribe himself in that process.

Being part of the act of construction creates the possibility of reacting to external conditions and transform generic principles into specific ones. While there are aspects that are defined from the beginning in order to create a clear framework, other decisions are taken spontaneously, while the performative act of building is taking place. By this the rational nature of construction is complemented by instinctive intentions. The act of construction is turned into an act of design as it goes from the hand to the mind.

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



INSITU, 2015
KAIROS, 2012

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



POVERA, 2015
HEARTH, 2020

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



UNTITLED, 2020
ALBERTO, 2019

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



VERTIGO, 2014
ULISSEIA, 2019

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



VIATICUS, 2018
KAIROS, 2012

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



ULISSEIA, 2019
GALLERY, 2017

Drawing as an act of analysis

Between Intuition and Reason

“The eyes are the organic prototype of philosophy. Their enigma is that they not only can see but are also able to see themselves seeing. This gives them a prominence among the body’s cognitive organs. A good part of philosophical thinking is actually only eye reflex, eye dialectic, seeing-oneself-see.”

Peter Sloterdijk

Drawings are a common language and a tool to communicate and share ideas. We can see their potential from the childrens’ intent to express themselves to the architects trying to explain how the building was planned. But we could argue that a drawing is an act in itself, particularly if it is made by hand with the use of analogue methods. It can be at the very same time a tool of representation as well as a tool of analysis. One comes back to the idea of how the body connects to the mind and how the mind is expressed through the body.

In architecture several kinds of drawings are produced during the process of design with the goal of exploring and testing different ideas. Sketches, perspectives or collages they work as tool for design. We used to explore drawing techniques not just as a design tool but rather as a process of analysis and expression. We try to extend this process of drawing to a step further when the project is defined so we can look back and analyze its intrinsic architectural qualities which are usually related to the material, the construction, the structure and the space that comes out of the design process. But in the same way as the project is a physical construction where one feels the heaviness and the texture of the materials themselves, we do believe that these drawings must be done by hand through a physical act that inscribe the process of making in our minds. The project informs the drawing and the drawing reveals the project. It does not create a narrative but instead it adds a new layer of understanding.

Different methods such as painting, engraving, scratching, serigraphy or others are applied into different surfaces such as paper, cardboard, wood, steel or concrete depending on the specific characteristics of each project. We could say they are a direct consequence of the origins of each project once they relate to a certain constructive detail, loadbearing structure or spatial structure.

Those works are produced in retrospect which means they were realized after the project was already defined or even built. They are the eye reflex. They are a tool of investiga-

tion and try to clarify the principles of the architecture that come out of the designing process. By this, the act of drawing is turned into an act of analysis as it goes from the mind to the hand. It's a way of looking back and understanding our own work and trying to recognize what makes the architecture specific and what gives it a particular quality or experience.

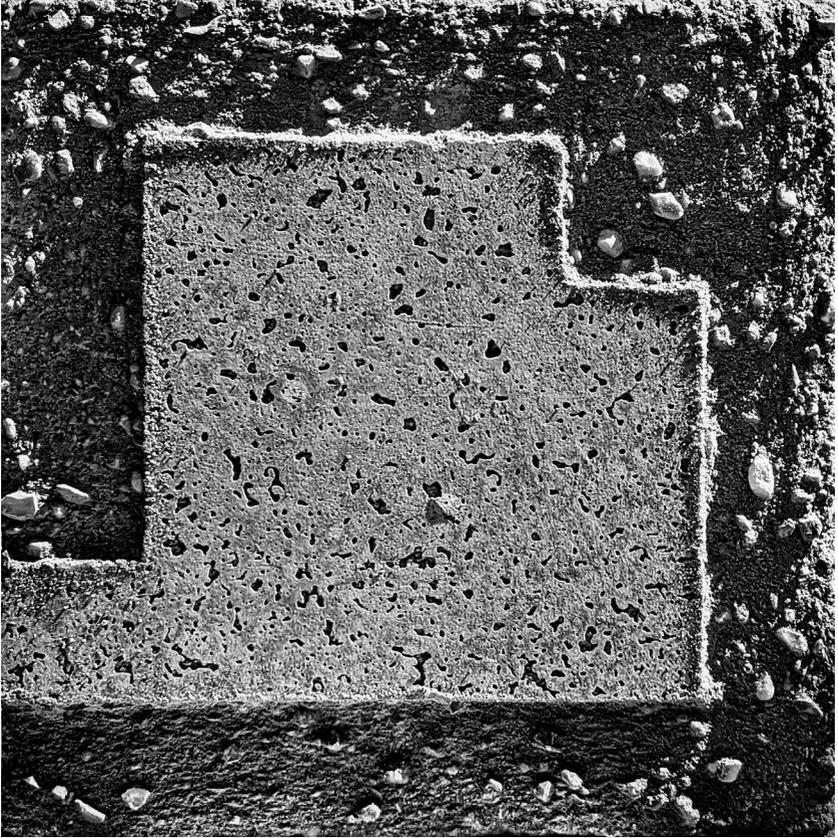
Despite of being done by hand it is important that these drawings are done in a very precise way. They want to bring the experience and the poetic of the space to the precision and rationality of the architectural construction once again. Because of that we can see how the most prominent aspects are underlined and some others are ignored. This doesn't mean that they must be in a certain scale or have the right measures but they do have to express with clarity the architecture and the relation between the parts. In that sense the use of the same material of the project within the drawing allows us to create a mental link with a certain atmosphere that one feels while visiting that space. In that way the drawings have to be as abstract as possible in order to focus as much as possible on the main qualities.

Due to their abstraction, the drawings have their own expressive qualities. There is a point where the representation is no longer attached to the represented object but it can be the object in itself. It arises the question of representation in architecture as these handmade drawings aspire to a certain autonomous body of work. They have been creating an independent collection of works over the years.

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



ALBERTO, Acryl on Plywood, 2020



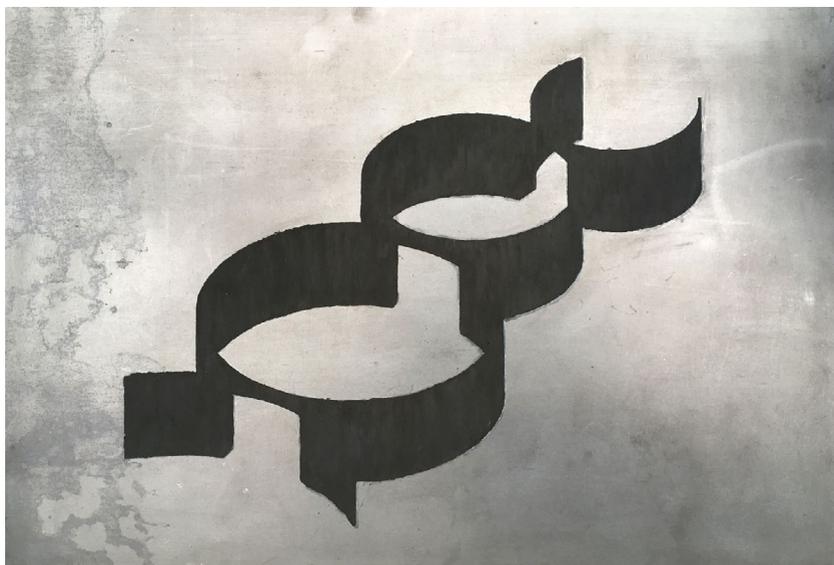
KAIROS, Concrete Relief, 2019

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



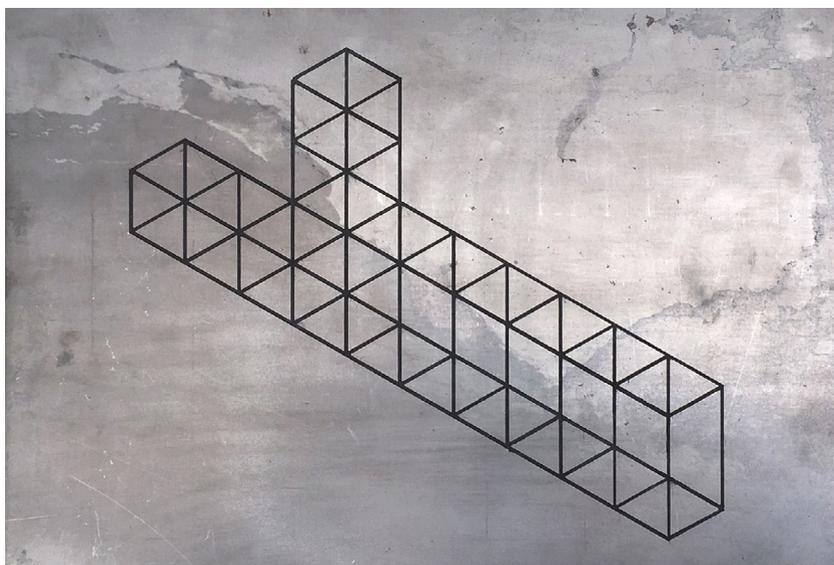
POVERA, Colored Powder mixed with glue on wood, 2019

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



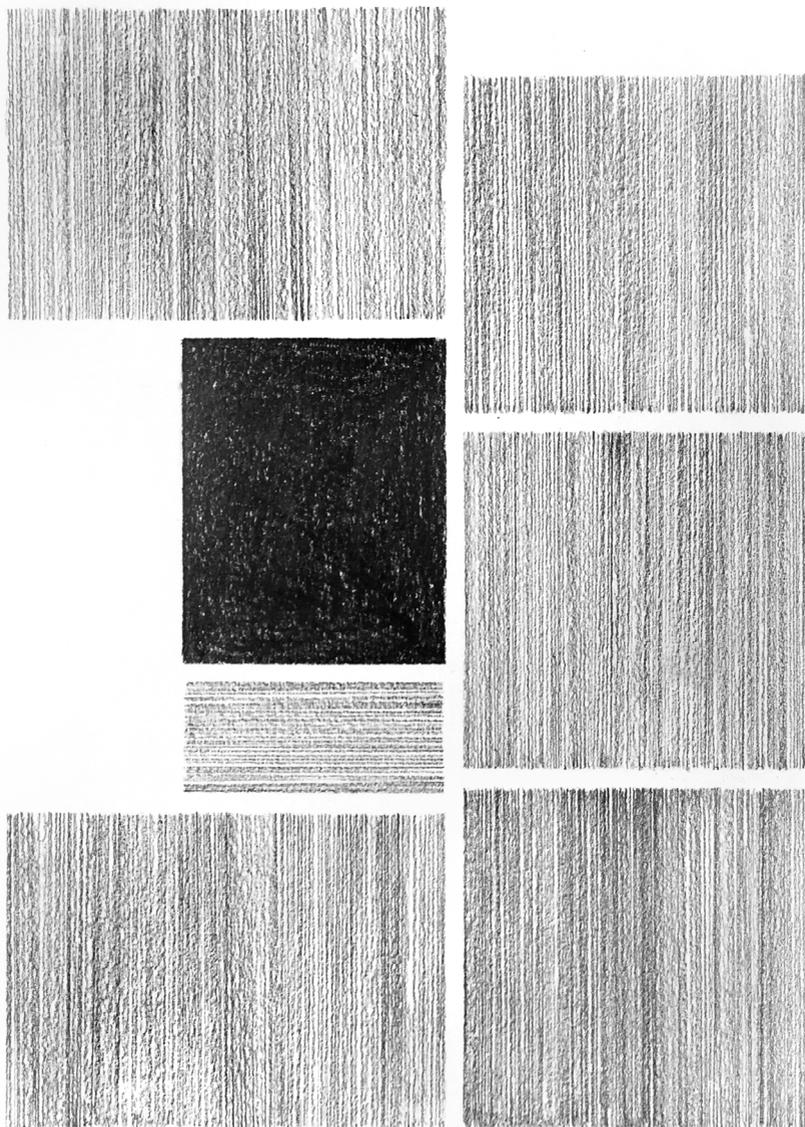
ULISSEIA, Ink on Steelplate, 2018
NOVERCA, Ink on Wood, 2018

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



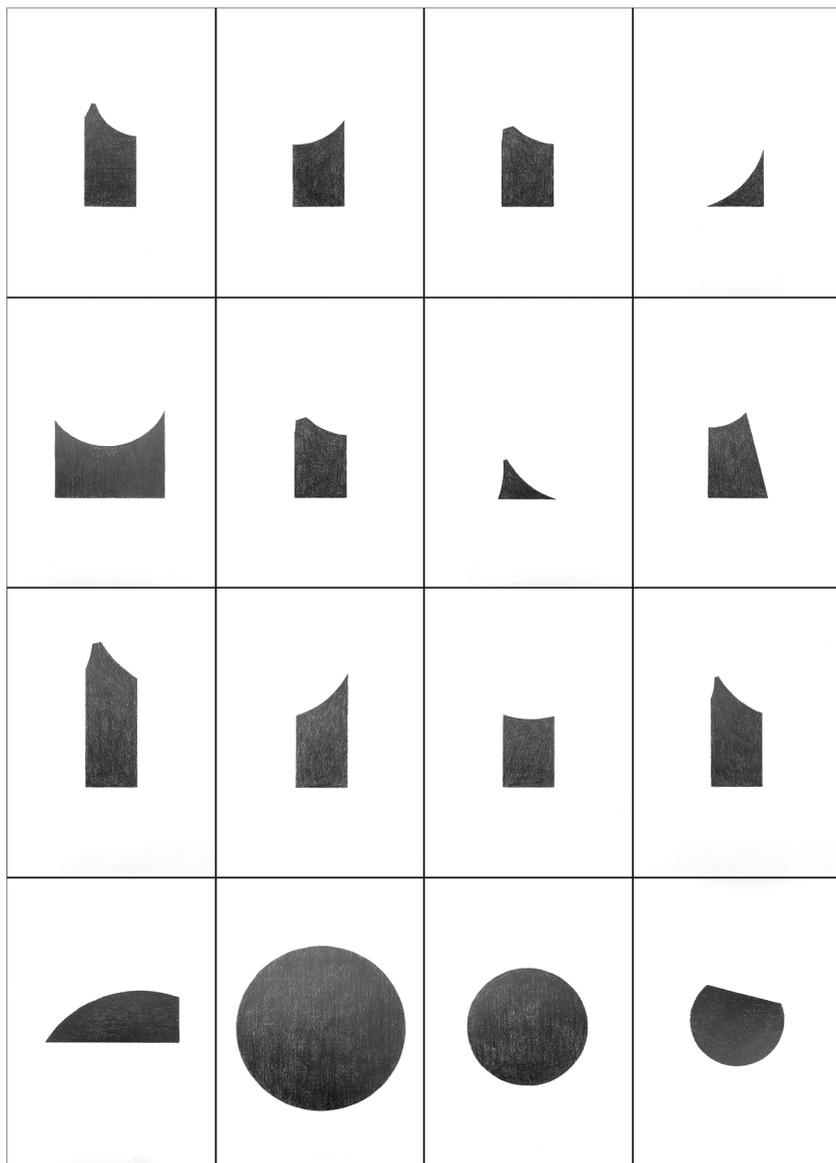
ULISSEIA, Ink on Steelplate, 2018
VIATICUS, Ink on Steelplate, 2018

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND

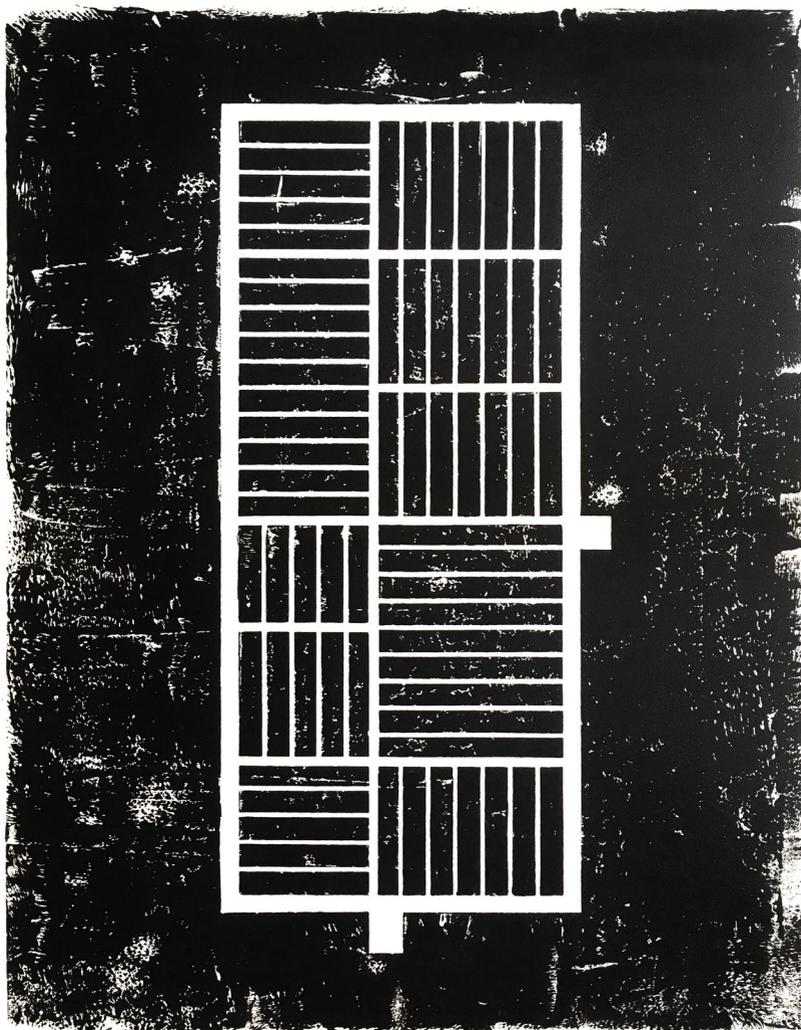


RIBUK, Graphite on Paper, 2019

FROM THE HAND TO THE MIND TO THE HAND



ULISSEIA, Graphite on Paper, 2018



UNTITLED, Linoleum Printing on Cardboard, 2019

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<https://drawingmatter.org/>

#01#02#03

Aurélie Hachez
AHA
TU Delft (Netherlands)

ange of an Appetite

urice had an appetite for expensive patterned shirts. He



Inner page spread of #01#02#03 with movable insert. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

A mechanism that confers consistency and coherence to an architecture practice can be one that departs from architecture. This is not to say that such mechanisms outside one's discipline must be completely alien to that discipline. Think of a surgeon who makes wooden furniture to train his or her hand.

Architecture is the discipline of juggling between disciplines: engineering, building, economics, law, accounting, politics, sociology, psychology. What would this mechanism be for a practicing architect, something that is outside the discipline but not entirely alien to it? Producing an artwork might be an answer.

Even if for an architect the finality of work is building, detour must be taken for a reason. How can art and architecture cross-fertilize each other?

A speculative comparison between domestic architecture and conceptual art can be made. Domestic architecture defined by the condition of being a materialized and non-movable production, elaborated in the private realm can be considered as the very opposite of conceptual art, broadly marked by the notion of dematerialization as put forward by Lucy Lippard in her 1973 “The dematerialization of the Art object from 1966 to 1972”. However, the common denominator between domestic architecture and conceptual art can be understood in how their specific characters make them inaccessible to the public. Quoting Kosuth’s claim that conceptual artists act as theorists and operate merely among themselves contributes to the reputation of conceptual art as being inaccessible to the public – a stigma that is still very active today (Zonnenberg 2019).

Seth Siegelhaub, an independent curator that played a vital role in the emergence of conceptual art, declares in a “manifesto” interview that because the artwork is not visual in nature, it does not require the traditional means of exhibition, but a means that would present the intrinsic ideas of the artwork (Charles Harrison 1969). Following this idea, Ursula Meyer’s 1972 publication *Conceptual Art* also states that the book has become an important new space to show art along with its (format of) presentation. This statement is relevant in the context of domestic architecture too, which can mostly be experienced by the owner and is explicitly related to the context in which and for whom it is developed.

#01#02#03

Hence, the survival of this architecture is merely secured in the way it is documented.



#01#02#03. Photography: Aurélie Hachez

Printing matters?

*#01#02#03*¹ is an artist book made in 2019 as a collaboration between architect Aurélie Hachez and editor-designer Piero Bisello, that was presented in the exhibition CCP Import Wallonie Bruxelles–Export Barcelona 2019. Taking three architectural domestic projects as a starting point, the artist book was envisioned as a detour, challenging the typical architecture portfolio.



The pictures by fashion photographer Piotr Niepsuj were turned into foldable posters in *#01#02#03*. Photography: AHA

In architecture the presentation of a finished site often follows the tenet of transparency, that is to deliver the project as bare information to those who didn't experience it, providing the best simulacrum technology allows. Instead, this artist book wanted to reflect on the act of making architecture, exposing what occurs during the conception of projects rather than showing the projects themselves. In the same manner, conceptual artists like Lewitt or Robert Morris, conversely acted in a manner to "engage the mind of the viewer." (Kosuth 1968).

This attitude also reacts to the context of the exhibition, which was curated to establish a connection between two European cities, emphasizing the idiosyncrasies and the cultural background of the invited architectural practices.

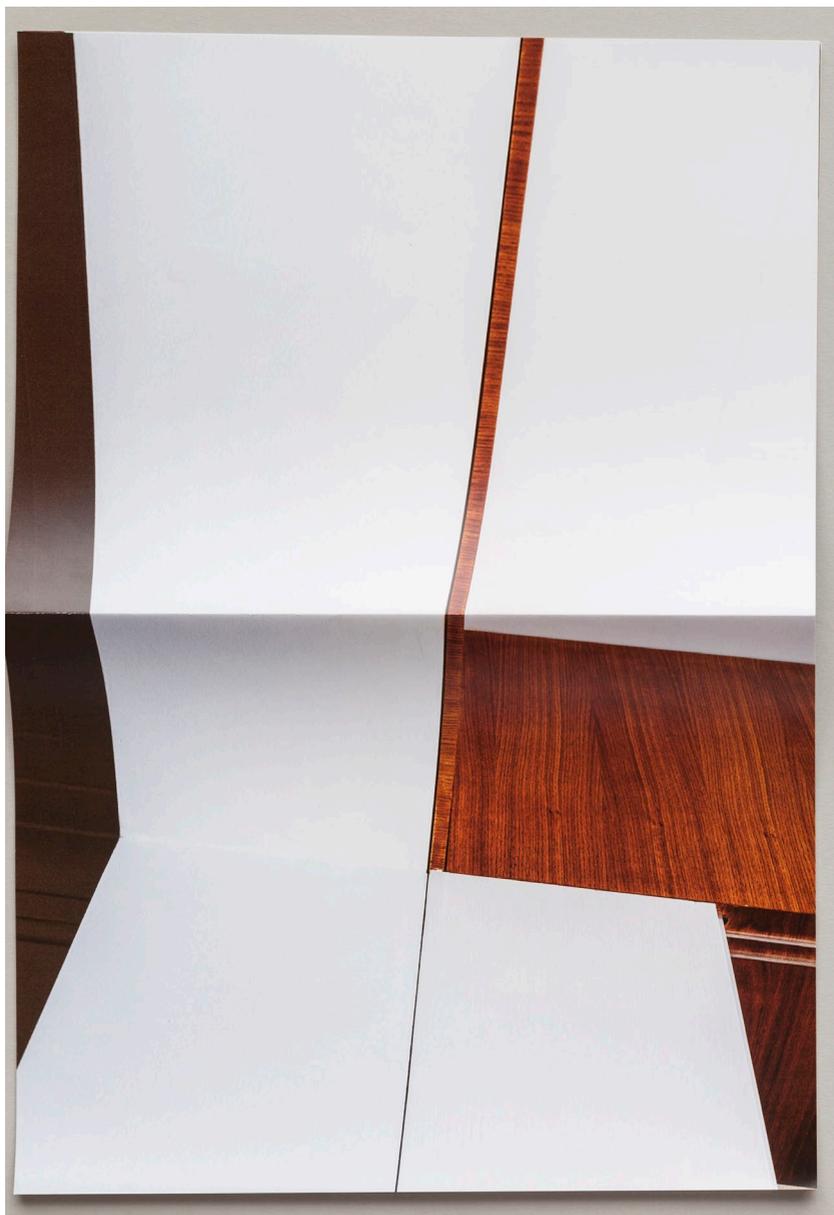
To do so, three architecture projects are documented in the artist book as three different booklets. Each of them is thought through individually with a custom layout, chosen to convey the design process of every project, their essence as well as their specific narration. Mediums are mixed, depicting projects more as spatial phenomena defined by objects, artifacts, and perceptions rather than by the bordering of interior architecture elements of walls, floor and ceiling.



For example, in the booklet l'Ermitage, the non orthogonal close-ups displayed as unbounded posters only suggest the very refined furniture, emphasizing an aesthetic specificity rather than revealing it in full. On the contrary, for the Ulysse booklet the large pictures made during the worksite phase depict the project as a concrete structure, brutally expressing itself in the Belgian rural landscape as a new ruin: no pictures but images of architectural processes.

Some additional documents are provided as inserts. Through them, the reader is given a second narration by asking to place these elements in specific parts of the booklets, thus activating an associative dimension. Again referring to the way of documenting conceptual art, this artist book resonates in the idea of Siegelau about primary information, the format of this publication being considered as an accurate vehicle, a potential exhibition space in itself, making visible for a broader public the intrinsic designs of these 3 domestic projects.

#01#02#03



A detail of *L'Ermitage*, AHA's renovation of an art deco apartment in Brussels, The picture by fashion photographer Piotr Niepsuj was turned into foldable poster in #01#02#03.

#01#02#03



i. materiality roughness zoom

Inner page spread of #01#02#03 with movable insert. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

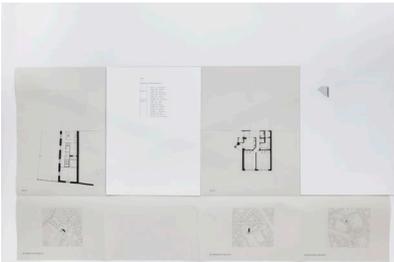
#01#02#03

Eventually, the three booklets are packed into a folded cover where all the pragmatic architectural graphic information is printed on the inside, which functions as an interpretation of the folded plans, the most banal architectural tool.



#01#02#03. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

#01#02#03



#01#02#03. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

Another compelling aspect resides in how the making of the artist book could be seen as a “mise en abyme” for the designer. The reflection of the architect during the design and execution of her own projects is both reported and furthered in the artist book. The different medium of the printed matter serves as a vehicle for the information regarding a specific practice, as well as the excuse to research again on that practice. In this regard, the artwork becomes the result of this double reflection, which helps individuate the features of a specific architecture project through the side-effects and the concept of undesigning.

Side-Effects

As mentioned, the intention was to frustrate a traditional format of “transparent publication” where side-effects are often unwelcomed in the process. The challenge of making an artist book out of an architecture project falls within a separate category, that is the moment of addition to what’s already done. Indeed, the process of looking back in detail at a past project prompts unexpected thoughts.

Through reflection and constrained by the parameters of the artistic medium of choice--in this case the printed matter, but also graphic design, literature, photography, found text--serendipitous findings are both common and precious. The resulting book presents possible answers to thought experiments. For example, one booklet might respond to the question of what a renovated Brussels house becomes when it is coupled with literature in the space of a page; another booklet delves into the issue of how the perception of a reconstructed Wallonian farm changes when it is presented in the form of an art catalogue for a performance.



Inner page spread of #01#02#03 dedicated to AHA's project *Oriel*, a renovated Brussels 20th century house. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.



Detail of #01#02#03 booklet dedicated to AHA's project *Ulysse*, the renovation of a Walloon farm. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

These thought experiments were carried out during the making of #01#02#03, which can be now seen as an exploration of an architecture practice a posteriori, clarifying a specific attention to the role that side effects have within these processes.

Like the unexpected results happening within the composition of the pages, side effects here might be close to what Irenée Scalbert described through the concepts of chance and non-decisions. He analyzes them in his book on 6a architects titled *Never Modern* (Scalbert 2013), referring to unexpected events and unwanted signs emerging during the architecture-making process, embraced instead of being dismissed as mere disruptions of an original design.

In the project Oriol for example, concrete poetry reveals some architectural gestures such as *cuts* that were made on some of the interior designs. They express a subtle visual distortion that attests to a change of either form or materiality instead of trying to blend it into the new design. A metal plate, rupture attesting a change in levels of the stairs. Likewise, an amputated window, adapting to the new furniture as well as keeping the room's character.

#01#02#03



Concrete poetry by Piero Bisello and amputated window detail of AHA's Oriel in #01#02#03. Photography: AHA



Detail of AHA's Oriel in #01#02#03. Photography: AHA

Undesigning & Lengthening the Journey

Aldo Rossi compared projects to unfinished love affairs, saying they are most beautiful before they end. Working on #01#02#03 refers to this open-ended approach. For example, a Wallonian farm becomes again a sculpture rather than a house thanks to the layout of the page in which it is presented. The resulting booklet attests to the way in which the architecture was envisioned during its making, but also to the reactivation of this feature within the experience of the artist book.

This parallelism between the architecture practice and the making of #01#02#03 takes shape not so much as a visual identity but as a specific inclination instead, a stance that has to do with undesigning and a particular form of inefficiency.





Detail of AHA's project *Ulysse*, the renovation of a Walloon farm. The worksite seen as a sculpture. Photography: Delphine Mathy.

To clarify these terms, one can take the framework put in place by artist Leonard Koren, who talks about three metaphors regarding undesigning. More specifically, he applies three concepts to the making of baths in his book on the same topic (Koren 1996).

The first is the idea of discovery, which somehow coincides with serendipity, chance and the non-decisions mentioned above. His motto seems to be: “you don’t design it, you find it.” He compares the making of architecture to a mushroom hunt, where you don’t know what you end up with. Mushrooms are not always easy to see even when they are right in front of you.



Details of *L'Ermitage*, AHA's renovation of an art deco apartment in Brussels.
Photography: Delphine Mathy.

#01#02#03

The making of #01#02#03 and the architecture projects in it resembles this hunt. For example, a fireplace is modelled from a serendipitously found basement window, just like images of these two elements are chancely floating within the book.



Inner page spread of #01#02#03 with movable insert. Photography: Fabrice Schneider.

Secondly, Koren mentions the metaphor of “making nature” for the undesigner, which in his lingo stands for letting the context be present. In architecture, this metaphor translates into an attention to the vernacular and to the history of the place where you build. #01#02#03 touches upon these topics by including specific content. For example, passages from the history of early 20th century Brussels society and ways of living are coupled with the project of renovating a house from the same time and place a hundred years later. The painting “Le Balcon” by Edouard Manet illustrates how the noble spaces were uplifted on what is called Le Bel Étage, (literally the “beautiful floor”), which would open towards the street and the public activities. Images of the project conception show how the spatial system has been reversed to have the roomiest and brightest spaces on the backside, as today we tend to fold back into the private sphere.





above : Edouard Manet, Le Balcon, 1868, Musée D'Orsay.

left : Details of *Oriel*, AHA's renovation of a house in Brussels, Photography: Delphine Mathy.

Finally, Koren mentions poetry for the undesigner, a sense of simplicity, one that allows contradiction as a departure from conclusions that are too reasoned. #01#02#03 includes simply intuitive choices, artistic decisions that don't always need rational justification the same way scientific decisions do. Even if architecture must include science, it doesn't mean it must equate it.

An idea of inefficiency follows from the concept of undesigning. In economics, efficiency is defined as the greatest output through the smallest input. Given an architecture task like the renovation of a house, or even the making of an architecture portfolio, any constraint that reduces the ratio input/output is a form of inefficiency. Think of architecture details that don't add to the main purpose of a building, or using time to learn about the specificities of a site when anything could be built there, or slow printing techniques that give the same result as fast ones.

The process of making #01#02#03 can be seen as free and strained at once. Freedom comes from the openness of printing an architecture portfolio for an exhibition. Constraints come from responding to the task by choosing a more artistic approach for it.

#01#02#03



#01#02#03. Photography: AHA

#01#02#03

If the purpose of #01#02#03 is to show architecture projects on paper, such purpose is not necessarily attained by browsing archives, using experimental graphic design, slow printing techniques, etc. These constraints are put in place for the sake of adding something more to three finished projects and the books containing them. Just like in the case of undesigning, #01#02#03 shows how an artistic approach can mirror an architecture practice.



#01#02#03. Photography: Fabrice Scheinder

Clients can ask why they should take a detour and spend time brainstorming, why they should look at artworks when thinking about renovating their house, why they should care about history when their commission is today. These constraints can be and are seen as forms of inefficiency. Yet a longer journey can lead to a different destination, most likely a more fruitful one.



Inner spread of #01#02#03 dedicated to AHA' s project *Ulysse*, the renovation of a Walloon farm. Photography: Fabrice Schneider

What is the voice? What is the word? ²

“*Syntax and language*, as well as the materiality of *manuscripts and books*, affect *what* is written as much as individual authorial style – for all its residues of the author’s voice.” (Hughes 2007)

The collaborative work on this artist book resonates in this paper with the “drowing method” described by Rolf Hughes, in the sense of a perspective research writing that departs from the typical structure of scientific literature. The research led by a creative process did not feature a specific question followed by the presentation of objective research findings trying to answer it. Conventional questions could have been: How is architecture enriched when it is put into an artistic perspective during the making process? Or, how can a publication enrich an architecture practice?

The chosen path is instead a hybrid genre, where results and answers are presented through experiential and sensory knowledge. What Hughes says about literature could be applied to the making of the artist book and the present paper too. He reminds us to seek greater imaginative and intellectual freedom while making greater demands on the tools and materials of our professions, so that we may persuasively communicate such freedom with others. (Hughes 2007)

Architecture might be the discipline of juggling between disciplines, among which there is art. The Artist book #01#02#03, shows how an architect can take the “art side” during the juggle, only to come back to the juggle enriched with extra keys to understand, situate and make an architecture practice coherent for itself and to the viewer.



A potato stamp for the cover of #01#02#03. Photography: AHA

Notes

1. The publication was realised with the great help of the AHA team composed of Francesco Sarao, Gautier Rey and Camille Paty.

2. The title refers to this passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions*: "The voice precedes the Word and it makes possible its understanding (...) What is the voice, what is the Word? Examine what happens in you and form your own questions and answers. This voice which merely resonates and offers no sense, this sound which comes from the mouth of someone screaming, not speaking, we call it the voice, not the word (...) but the word, if it is to earn its name, has to be endowed with sense and by offering the sound to the ear it offers at the same something else to intellect." As found in: Hughes, Rolf, 2007, "The Drowning Method", in Jane Rendell, Mark Dorrian, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser (eds.), *Critical Architecture*, New York, Routledge, pp. 92-93.

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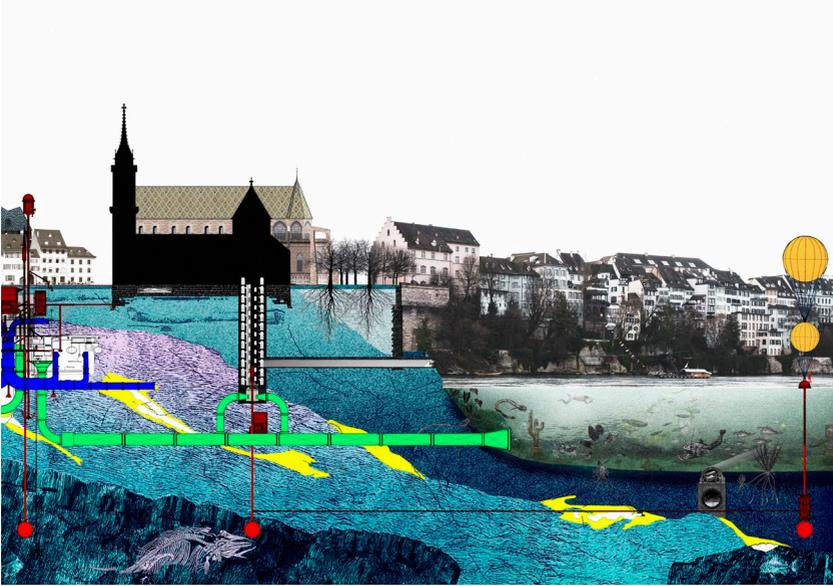
ABOUT CONDITIONS

Dries Rodet
Truwant + Rodet +
ENSA Versailles (France)

The seemingly arbitrary traces of nature growing in-between two buildings, the transient density of a fog, the unstable logic of the course of the Mississippi river, the controlled humidity in a botanical greenhouse.

Can architecture focus
on what is ephemeral and
generate similar condi-
tions?

ABOUT CONDITIONS



Truwant + Rodet +, Naturgemälde, Lasting Long, Coming Soon, CH-Basel, 2019

Like most of today's monuments, the Münster Cathedral in Basel appears mostly as an idealized collective memory depicted without its context, like a landmark in a snowball. But the real history of the 1000 years old cathedral is linked to its geomorphological condition. Historically the Rhine used to flow straight between today's Grenzach-Wyhlen and Weil am Rhine.

But during the last glacial period the enormous rubbles and gravel deposits of the Feldberg glacier were transported down the Wiese forming a wide delta and forcing a bend in the riverbed of the Rhine. Carved out by the river and the accumulated sediments, the Münster plateau naturally arose on the southern bank. Its specific morphology became a major asset for the Celts and the Romans who sought to settle along the course of this important navigable waterway. It offered a strategic vantage point 40m above the water level, ideal to erect in first instance an oppidum for control and defensive purposes, and later on a cathedral as a demonstration of religious power.

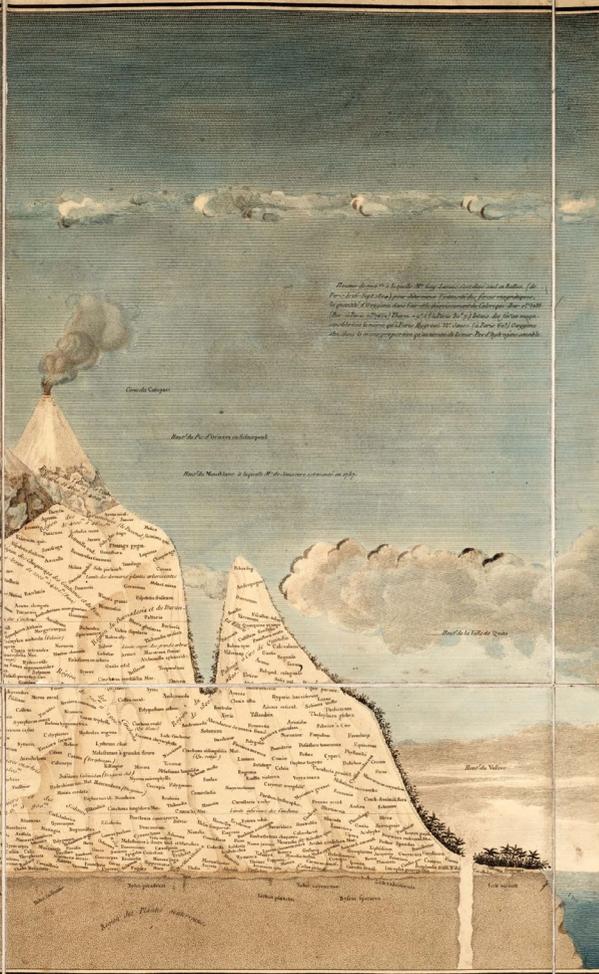
The proposed image is an imagined cross section through its bigger context, revealing exciting geographical, geological and cultural clues informing us about all its ecosystems, historical layers and even potential futures.

The cathedral is a small element in a web of interrelations and stories. Without the river bend of the Rhine, there would be no settlement, no defense, no power, no Münster, no pontifical council, no university, no research, no chemistry, no ...

Since the Industrial Revolution western civilizations have tried to control the environment with the objective of turning it into productive resources. Architecture is at the core of this transformation. And as a result, our landscapes have turned into a continuous carpet of settlements, networks of roads, commercial sheds, polluted soils, displaced fauna, disrupted flora, predicting a future of natural disasters and social distress.

Today, in the midst of this ecological crisis this shift cannot be denied anymore. And though we begin to see the consequences of centuries of abuse, the approach to architecture isn't changing and remains self-centered. This act of domination will persist as long as we keep on referring to architecture as "buildings" and relegating landscape, public space, service spaces, interstitial spaces, infrastructure, etc. to the background.

The classical practice of architecture is inadequate to tackle our contemporary condition: that of an ultra-complex urban, political, social, ecological structure where the boundaries between disciplines are no longer clearly pronounced. A condition that requires a non-discriminatory, non-segregationally, non-compartmental attitude. A mindset where one accepts dissolution, vagueness, informality, hybridity, fauna, and flora. An approach that accepts that everything is part of the same environment.



CARTES en MÈTRES	PROFONDEUR de l'Air à une certaine hauteur par un baromètre de l'Air atmosphérique à une certaine hauteur.	HAUTEUR de la limite inférieure de la Neige perpétuelle différentes latitudes.	ÉCHELLE des ANNAUX selon la hauteur de la différence de latitudes.	DEGRÉS de l'on baussante hauteurs Thermomètre ensigné.	VUES <i>Geologiques</i>		PROFONDEUR de la Lacune de la Mer selon un niveau de la Mer de la Lune	ÉCHELLE en TOISES
					La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.		
6500					En toises 575 (67 1/2) Rus 77 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	5500'	
6000					En toises 515 (61 1/2) Rus 70 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	5000'	
5500					En toises 455 (55 1/2) Rus 63 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	4500'	
5000					En toises 395 (49 1/2) Rus 56 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	4000'	
4500					En toises 335 (43 1/2) Rus 49 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	3500'	
4000					En toises 275 (37 1/2) Rus 42 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	3000'	
3500					En toises 215 (31 1/2) Rus 35 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	2500'	
3000					En toises 155 (25 1/2) Rus 28 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	2000'	
2500					En toises 95 (19 1/2) Rus 21 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	1500'	
2000					En toises 35 (11 1/2) Rus 14 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	1000'	
1500					En toises -25 (-7 1/2) Rus 7 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	500'	
1000					En toises -85 (-17 1/2) Rus -10 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	0	
500					En toises -145 (-29 1/2) Rus -17 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	-500'	
0					En toises -205 (-41 1/2) Rus -24 1/2	La nature de la Mer par un nivellement géométrique de la surface de la Mer et de l'Atmosphère. Mais on ne considère que le premier de ces deux cas, et on suppose que dans chaque région l'air est toujours homogène et de même densité.	-1000'	

ANTES ÉQUINOXIALES.

Andes et Pays voisins

Sur les lieux depuis le 10. degré de latitude boréale
en 1799, 1800, 1801, 1802 et 1803.

L. J. B. L. D. T. ET A. M. B. O. N. P. L. A. N. D.

Paris en 1803, gravé par Rouquet, la Lettre par Bouché, imprimé par Langlois.

Complex systems & Naturgemälde

The contemporary understanding of the interrelationships between society, nature and politics found its origin in the work of the Prussian scientist and visionary thinker Alexander von Humboldt. He is seen as one of the last Homo Universalis, who was living in the 19th century, during the heydays of the industrialization, at a moment where ironically all disciplines were encouraged to become hyper-specialized.

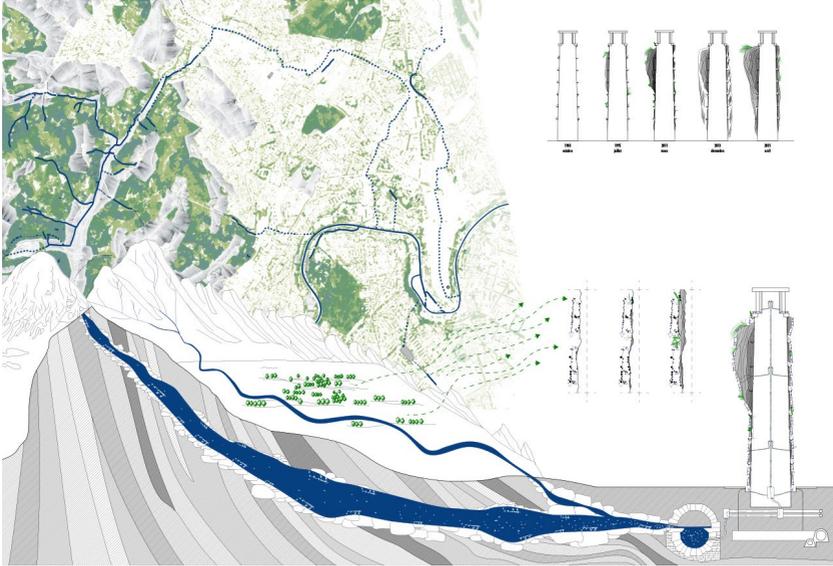
But Von Humboldt had an interest for the whole world around him and this unsatisfiable curiosity drove him on extreme excursions to the mountain ranges of Europe, Latin America, Russia and the United States of America. During these travels, he started to organize plants according to their altitude and climate. He concluded that the flora from different locations but similar height were comparable. This finding helped him to understand that everything was linked and that there is a “unity in variety”¹. But his recognition of the whole world as one complex eco-system went much further than understanding its botanical interconnections. His interest in economic, political and social conditions made him see the effect of human behavior on the environment. He connected for example, very early-on, the negative influence of colonialism and slavery on ecosystems and predicted the devastating consequences of deforestation on future generations.

Alexander von Humboldt understood the world as a web of connections and he was at the origin of the definition of ecology as “the study of the interrelationships of organisms with their environment and each other”²

The extensive reports of his travels made him one of the most influential people of his time. And probably as important as his findings were the numerous illustrations of ecosystems in his renowned publications. In 1802, during his five year-long exploration of the Andes which was crucial in the shaping of his perception of the world, Alexander von Humboldt started to draw his first *Naturgemälde*, trying to translate a “micro cosmos on one page”³. The 54 cm by 84 cm drawing *Ein Naturgemälde der Anden* that is based on the Chimborazo sketches shows a cross-section of the volcano, linking altitude with flora, temperature, gravity, humidity.

Later on, Von Humboldt developed together with a set of artists his paintings of nature in which infographics were used for the first time to show these interrelationships and made his theories understandable for a much bigger audience. The *Naturgemälde* became a crucial tool in the understanding of ephemeral conditions, invisible correlations, and transcontinental connections.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



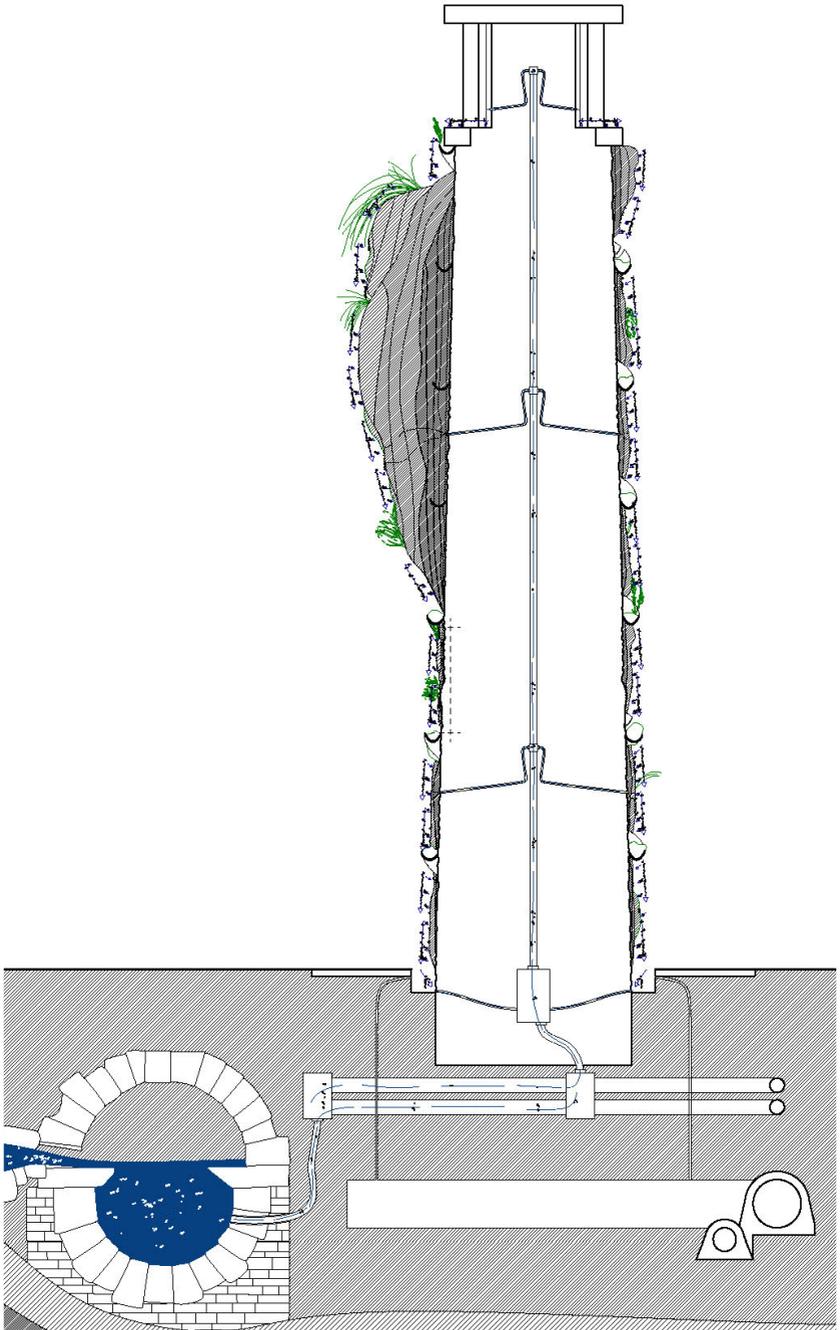
Juliette Villechange, Maya Mouttapa, Theophane Lefebvre Delean, Analysis of the fountain of Meret Oppenheim, Ensav, FR-Versailles, Studio Truwant + Rodet +, Spring Semester 20

In 1983, a modernistic looking concrete fountain was erected on Waisenhausplatz in Bern. But in that year, the column-like sculpture by Meret Oppenheim didn't reach it's final form yet. The artist had just put the perfect conditions in place so the calcareous water from the Bernese mountains could leave a tuff deposit on the structure. This new rocky landscape becomes the perfect base for a vertical wild garden of mosses and wild grasses whose seeds are carried along by the wind.

The simple structure put in place by Meret Oppenheim, reveals a whole existing ecological system. It creates a dynamic sculpture that is never finished and that connects the city to its surrounding landscape.

During the spring semester of 2020, our studio at the Ensav was focussing on the topic of Uncertain Conditions. The students analysed projects that dealt with concepts like Liquid space, Time as material, Climate, Habitat, and Nature & Technology. The drawings of Alexander von Humboldt served as a starting point to represent the ephemeral and to illustrate the processes used by for example Meret Oppenheim.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



Proposals for uncertain conditions

Rather than viewing architecture as an authoritarian discipline that produces fixed and hermetic objects, we, Truwant + Rodet +, would like to think of our field of study in the light of Humboldt's work as part of a bigger complex system. In our work and practice, we define architecture as a more fluid and transversal discipline, lifting the separations between landscape, structure, art, science, territory, technology, biology, botanism.

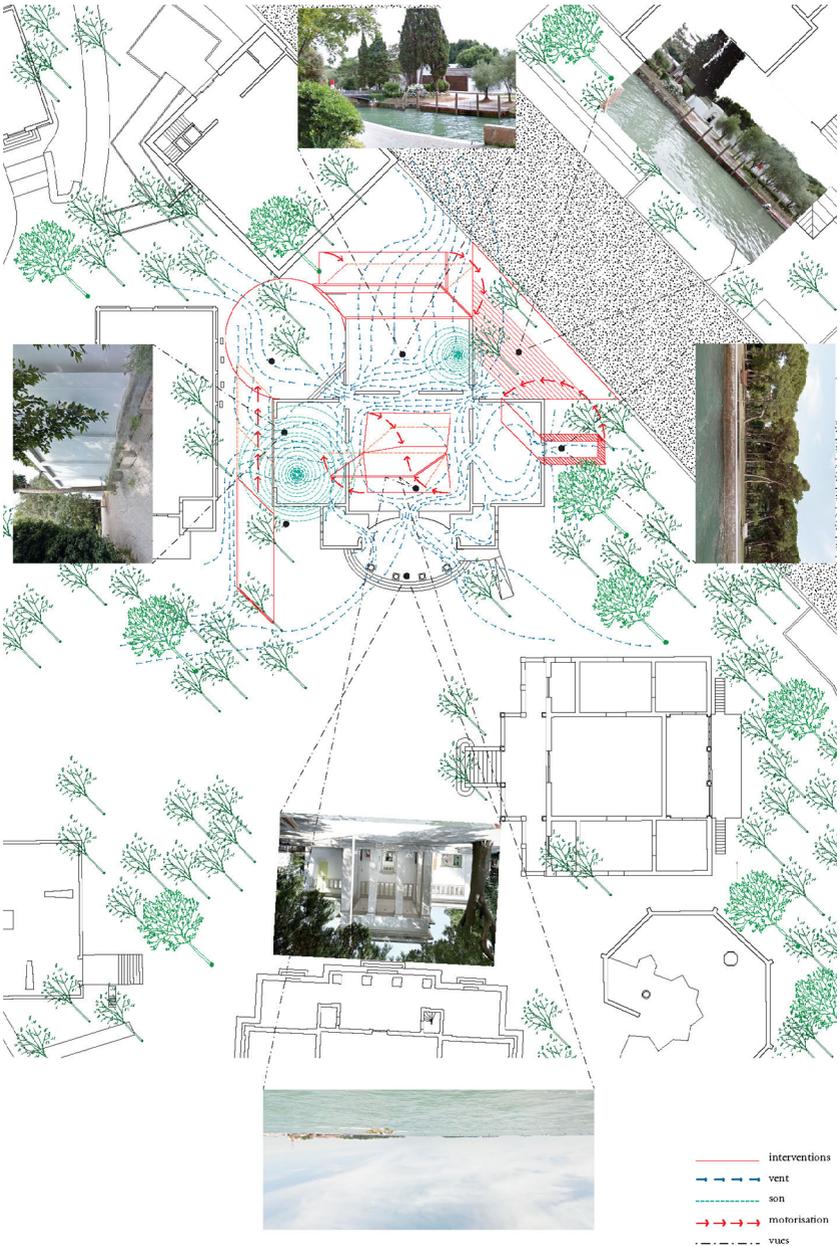
Architecture as a generator of potentials and conditions could be regarded as a living organism or what one could call an adaptive system similar to a colony of ants, the stock exchange, users of a library or even the development of a construction site. All involve a dynamic network of entities and actors whose behavior and retroaction cannot be predicted. Architecture could have a pulse, a rhythm, could grow, or dissolve following unpredictable parameters. Architecture could be made interdependent with the context, temperature, humidity, light, fauna and flora.

This ambition is translated in many of the projects of Truwant + Rodet + by means of programmatic, spatial, technological and material manipulation with the aim of blurring limits between the built mass and its surroundings, allowing for spatial fluidity between inside and outside. Our search for a "Liquid Space" becomes an investigation on thresholds as a space of potential, that can be stretched, pierced or dissolved, to generate new conditions for acoustic, thermal, visual, political and social exchanges.

The threshold not as a limit in classical conception, but as a transitional space that articulates interior/exterior, landscape/building, urban/rural, natural/artificial.

Following the concepts of von Humboldts researches, the question arises if architecture, like nature, can be conducive to evolution and transformation over time? Time can become a design tool within the practice. Planning the rules and conditions for a project, becomes a bigger priority then searching for a final form.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



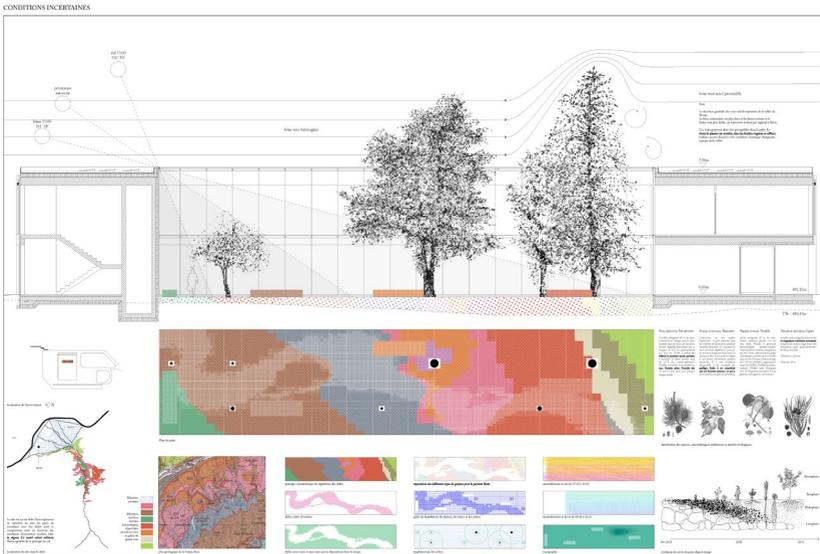
Truwant + Rodet + Bruther + Carlotta Daro + Laurent Stalder +, proposal for the French Pavilion, IT-Venice, 2017

ABOUT CONDITIONS



The project for the Venice Biennale 2018 proposes an update of the French Pavilion through a transformation that involves 3 types of long-term interventions: the integration of the outside spaces in the spatial organisation of the pavilion, the articulation of the thresholds through a series of openings, the transformation of the pavilion from a static and hierarchical architecture into a dynamic and interactive device provided with technical equipment adapted to the current requirements of its programming. The project aims not only at transforming the pavilion to match the contemporary needs of the Biennale, but also at showing the spatial, constructive and atmospheric, and thus aesthetic, potential of the architecture.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



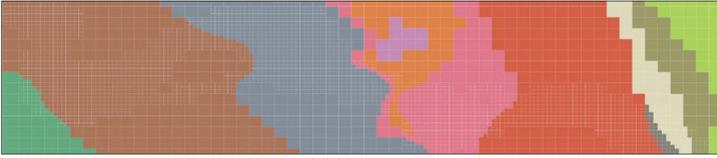
Truwant + Rodet + Oxara +, proposal for a transformative courtyard, CH-SION, 2020

A hidden courtyard in a new public building is cut off from its direct surroundings and presented in the competition brief as an empty piece of land. But when located in its bigger context, the courtyard becomes part of the Delta of the Bramois river.

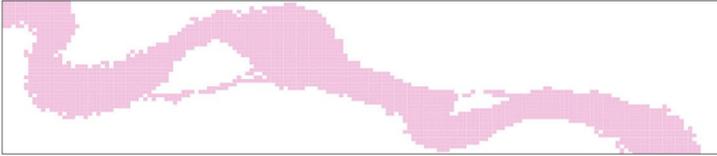
Truwant + Rodet + proposes to use the different types of soil along the river as raw material for a set of cement-free concrete tiles, a method developed by Oxara. The different treatments of the tiles will determine the longevity of the concrete, foreseeing a possible decay of parts of the courtyards. With the dissolving of certain tiles, seeds will come to the surface, creating a transformative garden, that will create a very specific piece of nature, grown out of its context. The project sets in place a set of conditions that in time will shape the appearance and evolution of the courtyard.

To project is represented in one panel that combines, like Alexander von Humboldts Naturgemälde, infographics with sections and plans, representing simultaneously the existing conditions like climat, wind,... and the projected conditions that script a possible future.

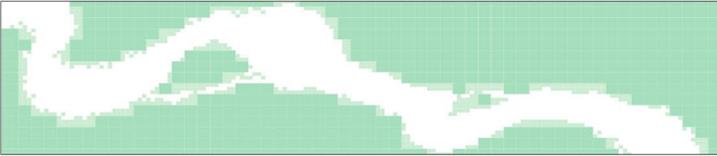
ABOUT CONDITIONS



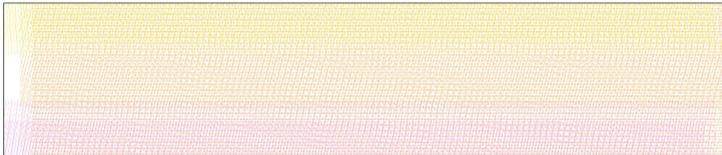
principe colorimétrique de répartition des dalles



dalles cuites et traitées



dalles semi-cuite et non cuite qui se dissoudrons dans le temps



enseillement en été de 07:15 à 19:15

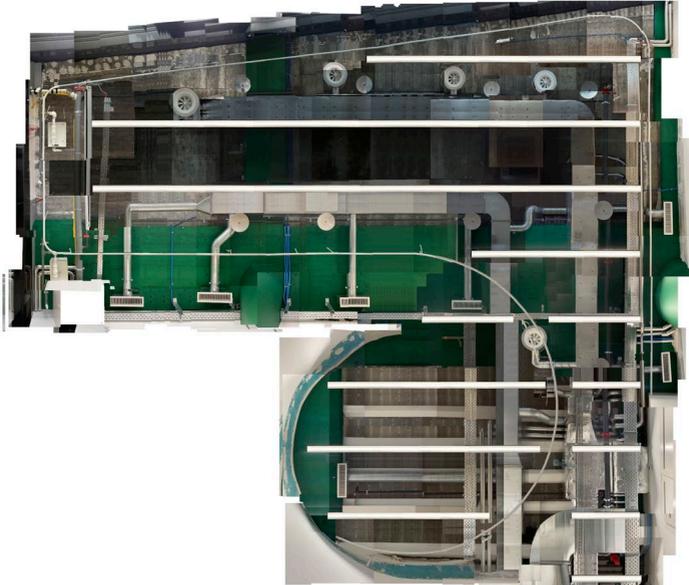


enseillement en hiver de 09:30 à 15:30



topographie

ABOUT CONDITIONS

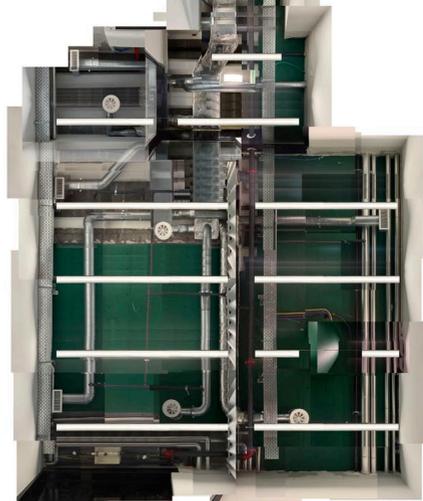


Truwant + Rodet + Hilbert +, Flexible Structures, CH-Basel, 2021

The transformation of a shop into an office space demands an update of the technical equipment that control the spatial conditions.

By removing the fake ceiling, the structure of the building and its history are revealed. The structure is painted in a strong green and links the accidental space back to the bigger building. The existing ventilation system is adapted to the new demands. The existing metal beams are wrapped for fireprotection. New curtain rails give the possibility to divide and darken the space. An new grid of lightning links the front and the back and can create contrasting atmospheres in separate zones.

The whole spatial intervention is reduced to the ceiling. An image composed out of a big amount of pictures of the ceiling shows the overlapping layers that control the spatial and atmospheric conditions. The ceiling functions as a 5th facade.



ABOUT CONDITIONS



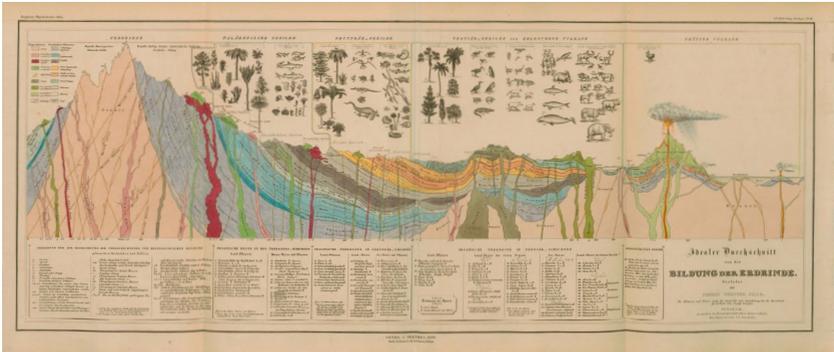
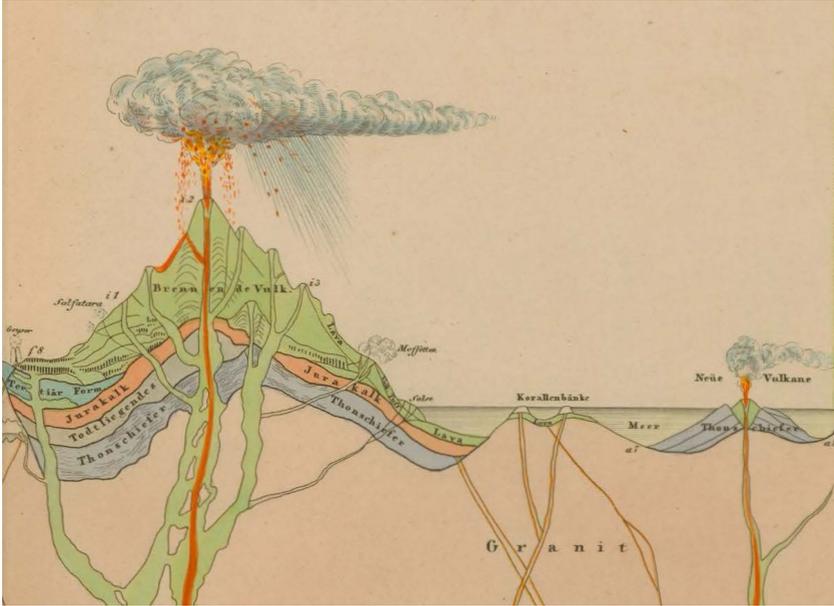
Truwant + Rodet + Hilbert +, Strange Encounters, CH-Basel, 2020

The brief for the transformation of a one-family house, can be summarized to 3 topics: the renewal of the heating system, a new staircase that resolves the connection with an first renovation that happened in the 80's and a structural element that makes it possible to organize an open floor plan.

The 3 new elements are combined in one central element that becomes the center of the house, a strange hybrid between heating, circulation and structure. The new element ties together the previous renovations of the house, forming a new whole.

A collaged image combines the planned future of the project (a render), a ruin of the past (the building site), together with an axonometry of the new intervention and proposes that the new renovation is another intermediate state of a house that keeps on transforming with every new owner.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



Berghaus, Heinrich Karl Wilhelm: Dr. Heinrich Berghaus' physikalischer Atlas : eine, unter der fördernden Anregung Alexander's von Humboldt verfasste, Sammlung von 93 Karten, auf denen die hauptsächlichsten Erscheinungen der anorganischen [...]. Gotha : Verlag von Justus Perthes, 1852. ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, Rar KA 52, <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-68876> / Public Domain Mark

Modes of representation

What is the role of the drawing in this shift of perception? In order to instigate new proposals, it is necessary to challenge our communication means to translate movement, time, blurriness & climatic conditions. It was through the use of his *Naturgemälde* as a research tool that von Humboldt managed to develop and communicate his understanding of the world as complex ecological system.

Colours and arrows translate temperature and wind speed, but the beauty of Humboldt's pictorial proposals is the capacity to encapsulate all of it in one image. Within our practice, we are exploring how we can visualize these ephemeral qualities through the combination and overlapping of different media. Uncertainty, vagueness and lack of control provide design opportunities. A project image can combine renders with pictures of the building site and a technical drawing. A collage can become a representation of an imagined past and a possible future. Or a plan can be simultaneously an axonometrie that shows only phenomenological qualities while abandoning every representation of form.

And like learning from von Humboldt and his *Naturgemälde*, architecture could look at contemporary scientific research to find new tools in an ever-growing challenge of revealing and depicting complexity. Seeing the new composite images from NASA, that combine x-ray and infrared data, offering an incredible spectacle of explosions gas emissions and radiation, yet invisible to humans, helps us to visualize and to understand the complex systems in which we live.

ABOUT CONDITIONS



The Pillars of Creation in the Eagle Nebula taken by the Hubble telescope in 1995, NASA, Jeff Hester, and Paul Scowen (Arizona State University)

In 2014 Nasa revisited one of their most popular images, the Pillars of Creation, representing “three giant columns of cold gas bathed in the scorching ultraviolet light from a cluster of young, massive stars in a small region of the Eagle Nebula, or M16.”

Although the image has a photorealistic quality, it actually combines different views (near-infrared as well as visible light) into one image. “The blue colors in the image represent oxygen, red is sulfur, and green represents both nitrogen and hydrogen.”⁵ Introducing a natural phenomena to a wider audience.

ABOUT CONDITIONS

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2. Smith, Robert Leo & Pimm Stuart L.. Ecology, Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., February 07, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/science/ecology>, Accessed September 02, 2020
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CLOSING FRAGMENTS

About practice and knowledge

In *The Matrix*, the movie of the Wachowski brothers, Neo exclaims «I know Kung Fu!» after the cerebral loading of the martial art. Kung Fu (Gong Fu in Mandarin), refers to any kind of practice, from writing to martial arts, and from carpentry to painting. The practice of architecture can be seen as Gong Fu.

Following Neo's exclamation, the ship's captain Morpheus proposes: «Show me». In the consequent practice fight in a virtual dojo, it becomes clear that theory and practice are not identical. Obviously, they overlap, but practice and theory both have their reserved domains.

Practice contains knowledge which seems not to be reducible to theory. This gap is probably related to the multiple ways in which theory can be put into practice. The modalities of the practice are the space in which its relevance and operability can be revealed.

The closing session of the “Practices in Research” conference of the 22nd of October 2020 was held online on the 17th of November.

After a brief summary of the contributions, the underlying modalities and challenges of practice-led research were debated as they were experienced during the seminar. Eventually, the conversation concluded with reflections towards future seminars and publications.

This text assembles a set of re-edited fragments focusing on epistemological and methodological considerations. These fragments do not necessarily form a linear argument. As happens in a dynamic conversation, the themes bounce forward and back, side tracks are explored and shortcuts are taken, contributing to a vivid debate.

The authors of the fragments are identified as follows:

PL – Pauline Lefebvre (chair session 1) - ULB;
RS – Robin Schaeverbeke (chair session 2) - KU Leuven;
BV – Benoît Vandenbulcke (organizer) - U Liège;
HF – Harold Fallon (organizer) - KU Leuven;
DR – Dries Rodet (contributor) - Truwant+Rodet+, ENSA Versailles.

1.

It is useful to reflect transversely on the initiative and on the contributions. What does this set of proposals mean all together? I was very curious about this and I wanted to discuss it with all of you. These questions are crucial. What is research, what is, in particular, academic research? What is research in architecture? What is architectural research? And maybe, more importantly, how can they relate to each other if they are different things? What is nice about an event like this is that we can reflect on a series of contributions. We have empirical material to work with to address these questions.

(PL)

2.

It is very clear that most presentations were established from the perspective of a professional architect who was discussing a project or several projects he or she or they had designed, themselves or their companies. That was a constant. Some contributions were embedded in an educational setting, which is important to mention. A few participants also came with the hat of a researcher as they were developing a PhD. If their doctoral research was not foreign to what they presented, they were also, just like the other contributors, trying to depict an attitude that architects take when they design.

(PL)

3.

I noted two elements in particular.

First, the presentations were about making design decisions in very different times along the process. There are decisions beforehand when the architects discover a site, during the design itself; there are decisions on the construction site, and also after the construction is completed.

Second, the contributions shared the idea that design is about the very choice of the things that are to be taken into account in the development of a project. They were investigating the intellectual tools, whether conceptual or concrete, but also about the media being used.

(PL)

4.

In most cases what was considered research was an effort to describe the operations by which architects (here the contributors themselves) design, build, situate and document their projects. The line is very thin between what constitutes research on the design process and what is more of an effort to document the project. So what's the difference between documenting the project and doing research on the design process?

That is the question that I'm left with: when is this line crossed? When does a reflection by practitioners on their modus operandi become research?

(PL)

5.

In his discussion* with Bart Decroos, Rolf Hughes highlighted some elements like the fact that it needs to be generalisable and shareable. To my students in a methodology course in the master thesis, I said recently :

”OK, you are in the university, you need to do a master’s thesis, whatever form it takes. It can be really very free. It can be whatever topic and it can actually have a lot of different forms. But if it is to be academic, which a master’s thesis at the university is supposed to be, then the process that leads to the conclusions needs to be explicit and transparent”. Science is the community of knowledge producers and the community needs to be able to understand the results. Also, the researcher’s task is basically to contribute to knowledge, to the mass of knowledge

that there is in the world. A researcher has the responsibility to position her/himself or herself within the field in which he or she wants to intervene.

*conversation between Rolf Hughes and Bart Decroos on the occasion of the presentation of the book *Raamwerk In Practice* : Lichtervelde Youth Centre on the 22nd of October 2020.

(RS)

6.

The question is what kind of research we are facing here. Actually, I came there with a question that I still don’t have an answer to. I would love to hear you about it.

This question is: “Why would architects – professional architects, I mean – who are doing such a beautiful, useful and important work, which is very specific and has its own tools etc., why would they want or need to do scientific or academic research?”

(PL)

7.

Now, why do architects have to engage in research? There are different answers to that. First, in order to maintain the academic position of practicing architects, they have to do it. It is also about the possibility of maintaining the position of being a practicing architect while engaging in academia. We need architectural faculties with diversity, including practicing architects. Second, practice-based research is an opportunity for the involved practices. This kind of research proposes to re-engage with a practice and to delve deeper into the things one is already working on, to know them better, to make them more performant, to situate them in theory and in practice and to expand or make them more precise. But also to understand

how these things you are doing question the world. Also, it is not about understanding the practice as a given, stable thing, but as an evolving and changing matter. How does a practice change and turn into something new? That is also an aspect of practice-based research. (RS)

8.

You are right to raise the question of the academic value of this kind of work. But often we limit this academic value to scientific academic value.

We need also to consider design-based academic value.

This value involves different modalities of knowledge. There are scientific methods and there are design-based methods. They coexist. They overlap and are complementary to each other.

(RS)

9.

Let's talk about the academic value of architecture and design. One big problem is that the material we work with is never there. Architecture is out there and we have to find ways to make it present. That is maybe why architectural exhibitions are most of the time complete rubbish. There are photographs and drawings, nobody understands what it is about - but architects. They often fail to reveal what the architecture is about in an effective way. Of course, there are exceptions, but it is a big challenge to find ways to convey architecture and to provide a rigorous and inspiring account. This can be an aspect of the academic value of such research.

(RS)

10.

The cultural relevance of architecture is underestimated today. Looking from an academic point of view to our practices as architects can also contribute to a collective understanding and appreciation of what architects are doing when they are designing and researching.

(RS)

11.

Research engages with “theories of” and “theories for”.

This is something Gerard De Zeeuw and Ranulph Glanville introduced. So, in the first idea, if you present “theories of”, then you present a reflection about something, which can be observed or verified. If you present “theories for”, which in their view design-based research should do, then you present a reflection that you can do something with.

(RS)

12.

Verifiability is a problem in design-based research. Different architects will always propose different alternatives to a single assignment, situation or context. There is no right or wrong answer in design. In this sense, the academic sense of verifiability is something you have to work around or to understand in the light of the nature of design-based research. A way to address this aspect of verifiability or reproducibility, could be the idea of internal value and external value, which is something overlooked sometimes in academics. The internal value of a research project means that it's very valuable to the context you are working in including yourself. The external value is that other people can pick something out of your research and start working

from there. Perhaps that is somehow comparable to the verifiability: the possibility to view the realised research in a new context. You need to acknowledge that you will never reach the same result, because that is the nature of design. However, you can use a method or an attitude or you can refer to precedents or preferences. It is not like a hypothesis theory in which you are able to prove that, for example, mosquitoes are always attracted to warmth or to sugary blood, to give a classical example, and replicate the results of your investigation. However, we can work with the ideas of generalisability, of shareability and of the usability .

(RS)

13.

It is possible to use architectural tools to explore and to make a shareable account of design practices. In my Ph.D. I had a long discussion with my supervisor about the reproducibility of my work. I studied the work of some architects and first I attempted to obtain the documents from their design processes, not only the publicly accessible material. I never received these documents. I could not go to their offices to open their archives to steal their drawings and sketches. So I started re-enacting the design process by myself with fragmentary documents I could find in the accessible publications. Being an architect myself, I could rebuild coherent accounts of a possible *modus operandi*, of what I called also design forces*. You can shed light on a design process, you

can explain these mechanisms to your students or to others or you can reuse them in new contexts. That was the goal of my research. It was first about specific design practices, and it became about how to extract sharable and usable knowledge from them through a design-based methodology. At the end, my supervisor told me: “OK, it is very interesting, but now, you have to go to them and confront your research to verify your hypotheses”. Of course, that did not make sense, it was not the question. The question was: can we develop understandings that are usable and sharable, making use of the point of view and tools of a practicing architect and who is doing the research?

* in French a “ressort de projet”. “Ressort” refers to the hidden forces that allow action.

(BV)

14.

It was not
that much
about truth
but rather
about opera-
tionality.

It was not that much about “what is it?” but rather “how can we interpret it in order to use it?”, which is also a way of understanding that which is researched.

(HF)

15.

A few weeks ago, I had a talk with a colleague. He said that he was doing research in his office, that his practice is research. However, to my opinion there is a differ-

ence between doing the research for your own practice and clients and looking for ways to share your material with a broader community, which is related to academic research. Making it verifiable, usable or applicable for others and confronting your work with others, you avoid staying like a mad professor in the attic doing what you always do. Staying in the attic does not devalue the work you are doing, but the idea of the academia is to exchange ideas, to make them debatable, usable, understandable and operable. I always liked the idea of an academia which is there to inspire you to be part of a community that shares new ideas and that you can perhaps pick up to try something different or to push it further. I think that’s why practitioners should enter in this arena of academic research.

(RS)

16.

I do not really want to engage in the debate of what is research and what should research in architecture be, because there are lots of models around, which we can use. You have artistic research, practice-based and practice-led research and research through design practice... There are many labels, nuances and focusses. There are lots of theories about the specificities of each model. So I'm not very convinced that it is very fruitful for the participants to question that here in general terms. I would rather suggest listen and observe what is at stake in the proposals and presentations, to try understand what they try to do and how we can help them to be better, sharper and stronger. We can look for the promising aspects

of these contributions and imagine how to push them forward in research in a rigorous and open way. (HF)

17.

In some conversations, it feels like an architecture practice in itself is not enough as a subject of inquiry, even when there are external markers of its relevance. It is as if you would need make use of a specific tool or lens in order to make it worth of being investigated and to be able to call it research. Or as if you would need to explain that your practice is related to a specific theoretic subject in order to convert it into a subject suitable for inquiry. It is as if understanding a practice is not worth of being a subject, as it needs to be excluded from the field of knowledge. By the way, the attitude of connect-

ing explicitly and a priori a practice to an external topic or to a tool is often quite wrong.

A practice is more than the illustration of a theory.

A practice is more than the result of the use of a tool. I wonder if it would not be less biased and more honest to acknowledge the reality and the complexity of an architectural practice. Simply starting by the observation of this practice and its context, its inspirations and motivations. Then reflecting on it, situating it, re-engaging the practice again,

and so on. One would also relate the practice to tools, theories, topics and so on, but it modifies the priorities and avoids to create dead angles in the research.
(HF)

18.

External concepts and tools can mean something at some point when researching a practice. But I would be very skeptical about the claim that a practice is essentially focused on the use of a tool, or that it results from the application of a concept from the humanities. There is much more happening in a practice and it's important to acknowledge that in order to understand what is really at stake in this practice.

which feel safer like the humanities or applied sciences, in order to confirm that they are doing research. Maybe because you have to explain all the time to fellow academics why and how this is research. But then, by doing that, people put themselves in a biased position that maybe is not the most fruitful to consider their practice in all its complexity and layeredness. (HF)

Curiosity and naivety are often lacking a little bit.

It is as if people need to refer to other fields

19.

I had a discussion with some students. They are writing their first research paper on drawing. Somebody asked: “can I really write from my own point of view? In academic writing it is not allowed to write in the first person”. This is a fallacy. It is a matter of making the point of view explicit. In this kind of events, it may be useful to establish a general framework explaining the point of view from which we are looking at research. As Rolf Hughes said, you have to make people listen from where you are talking. Otherwise, you will never resolve the discussion. There could always be people saying that it doesn’t fit into the scientific model, because they do not situate the complementarity of the practice-based model and of the scientific model.

(RS)

20.

People think that a lot of things should happen because of research, like the formal bibliography, the strange rule of the third person, the referring to humanities or other fields, etc. In this seminar, this is probably why many people have talked about their practices through the lens of problematisation and of the tools. It happens because people always ask: “what is your research about?”. Of course, the research will lead to understanding about the tools, the context, the inspirations of the practice and maybe other fields. But the real subject is originally to understand what happens in a particular practice, how to challenge it and to situate it, in order to make it better and more conscious, shareable and re-engageable.

(HF)

21.

These two strategies or lenses – the use of tools or concepts – aim at turning these practices into research or to do research about these practices. Maybe we should then rather observe if it changes something for these practitioners to look at their own practice through these filters.

The question is not if a practice is defined by some tools, but what difference they make.

(PL)

22.

There is one thing you said on which I really want to react. I don't agree that, because there is already a lot of theories and discussions about these different sorts of research, we would need to stop there. One of the reasons why I do research and why I stopped working in a firm was that I wanted to have space for reflection. I wanted to have space and time for that. And of course, there is reflection in practice. And actually, there is also a kind of hybrid way of doing both. But we cannot say that the question is closed. We cannot just wipe it from the table. It is interesting. It also adds to the knowledge base and to how we do the next event of this sort. The reason of being of this seminar is also to keep this question open.

(PL)

23.

At the same time, we need to avoid to get drowned in epistemological considerations because there is already a lot of literature about it. For example, Rolf Hughes who was mentioned a couple of times today is professor of epistemology of KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture.

Epistemology is a field of research in its own right.

It becomes a little bit complicated when researchers systematically have to develop epistemological models or justifications about what they are doing. Of course, at

some point of the doctorate it needs to be there: the position in the field needs to be clear. But in this kind of event, we can also expect the people attending to be aware of the field. It does not need to be specified each time and we can reflect in depth in the contributions we have.

(HF)

24.

People presented a fragment of what they are doing, one aspect under development, one specific interest. These bricks may come together in the PhD. At some point when they want to bundle everything in a PhD, they may be able to position it more sharply. It would be strange to apply the mortar before placing the bricks – it happens along the way. It is also what happened in your case, Benoît, right? It was at the end of the PhD

that you discovered how your work could be positioned. Of course, it could be useful to also consider the epistemological position of each contribution, but I would tend to look at this in a positive way. If it is not clear yet, it may become clear with time. Maybe someone would come to the conference and just pick out one project to unravel all the work documents to understand something about the process, or maybe make a transversal survey of a series of projects and references to identify genealogies, similarities and differences, without having to justify «and by the way, this is research because ...». Because then the debate goes about the epistemological considerations, and not about the work itself.

(HF)

25.

Then maybe the main issue is with the format. In this publication, the work included has been “peer reviewed”. As organizers, you chose the reviewers and they all share a common profile: a group of academics, a few of them sharing their time with practice. Then, of course, as members of the scientific committee, we feel that we are invited to make use of our academic filters. Is this the most suitable format for this kind of work? There are other formats, like monographic books or exhibitions... Maybe the peer review process and the seminar format are not adapted for the kind of proposition that you make?

(PL)

26.

The choice of peer reviewing has a double aim.

The first one is to create a network of people aware of what is happening here, and to be able to exchange, to confront arguments and to share understandings. With time, the aim is also to create a broader group of people interested in research in architecture practices.

The second one is that, unfortunately, publications that are not peer reviewed are worth nothing in the track records of our current academic system. So you need to make it peer reviewed. That's it. At KU Leuven, we are working on other kinds of output, like creations in the arts, but for the moment it is not solved and not appreciated in academic contexts.

(HF)

27.

Then you need to play the game of your reviewers and you need to agree that we are going to confront the research that is proposed to some of the criteria that we hold dear as academics, criteria we believe guarantee good research. And they are going to be more or less open to this kind of research.

(PL)

28.

I am not completely sure of this is a one way situation. You can organise the peer review to address topics and criteria in specific ways. This is related to the framework suggested by Robin. We need to make that more explicit and clear maybe, but then we could expect that the reviewers would look at things through the lens of the questions that are proposed to make a re-

view, rather than through supposedly universally valid lenses of which they would be the depositaries. By the way, it is not only an issue with the reviewers, but also with the contributors because the contributions are quite traditional in the end. And also with the editors, because the format that we proposed for the publication maybe suggests this type of contributions, even if we mentioned that contributors should experiment with combining visual and textual elements in their narratives. We are all full of this kind of reflexes. We could all together, try to play the game stronger, I think, and to give it an identity which is stronger, more recognizable and more coherent.

(HF)

29.

Yes, maybe we have to define more precisely what is expected from the contributors, but also from the reviewers. On the one hand it is quite interesting that people can present an extract of their work without needing to reframe all their research, or maybe this framework is not so clear but the reflection is ongoing anyway and needs to be formalized at some point. But also, it is useful to have more scientific profiles in the room, challenging views on academic research. So everybody would benefit from a clear framework.

(BV)

30.

What I notice here is that you are setting up a very clear dichotomy between the research and the design practice. In a way, you are approaching this from a similar point of view, with which I disagree to a certain extent. A practice should not be reduced to architects sitting in an office designing some building.

A practice covers a wide spectrum of activities. But it's very hard to define the boundaries of a practice. Maybe academic research is more scripted, more formalized in predefined expectations? In our practice we have been working and thinking for quite a while about the topic that I presented. The publication is not an opportunity to propose and define a topic, it is rather an opportunity to formalize it. (DR)

31.

Writing within this quite clear peer-reviewed framework gave us the possibility to take the time to pin down the subject that we read and discuss about on a daily basis in our practice. I appreciate that somebody with an academic background reviewed the article.

The perspective of the external reviewers invites us to be more precise.

The article focusses on one topic and does not represent the totality of the practice.

Academic research allows for a much clearer focus on singular topics, which is the opposite of the constant adapting plurality of a practice.

The format of the symposium gives the possibility to construct a clear train of thought that peers can follow, reflect and comment upon. But that doesn't mean that it reflects the entire practice and research as a whole. It is rather one thread within the whole.

(DR)

32.

What Robin said about internal and external value is important too. The contribution is there not only because of the reflection, but also because it matters and it can have consequences on future endeavors. It is not only about grounding the work in some things that have passed, it is also about projecting it towards other things to come.

(PL)

33.

Intentionality is an interesting notion. It is a driving force to develop the research and the work. On the other hand, many things happen which are not intentional. When you make a project, at some point maybe you put the model upside down. It's completely crazy, but then you see things differently and maybe it opens new ideas. In research in architecture practices, you cannot make a precise plan for four years, including literature review, field work, interpretation, and so on, because you don't know which kind of projects you will be working on, which kind of experiments you will do, what kind of drawings will happen. This is inherent to architecture practices. The academic expectation of intentionality is an issue because when you write

a research proposal, you are asked for a detailed research plan when this is contradictory with the nature of an architecture practice.
(HF)

34.

Writing a proposal aims at defining where you think the research will take you; it doesn't imply that you will actually end there. In experimental or laboratory science, you do indeed have to define which procedures and tools will be used, but there too accidents happen, something breaks or didn't happen the way you wanted it. Especially in the humanities, one reading can just shift your entire idea about what you're writing about. So there are diverse research contexts and models, even though they share some common traits. I appreciate the fact that the

way I do my research is not the way she or he does her or his research. So we can learn from each other. I believe a potential quality of what you propose with this kind of encounter between academic research and design practice resides precisely in the differences between these approaches. We need to acknowledge and appreciate how distinct they are, and work towards fruitful alliances based on the recognition of their specificity.

(PL)

35.

Some differentiate hypothese-led and discovery-led research*. Maybe we should take this into account and address the notion of intentionality differently in discovery-led research.

*Sarah Rubidge, "Artists in the academy: reflections on artistic practice as research", in "Dance rebooted: initializing the grid", 2004

The point is to create fruitful conditions for the emergence of discoveries.

In general, there are opportunities to be found in the encounter of practice as such and academic research, be it scientific or practice-based. These two models overlap because they strive for similar objectives and are based on similar premises. On the other hand, they extend and complement each other.

(HF)



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