



Practices in Research

practice-based research seminar

Beyond the Mandate

7th of March 2023

Venues

Morning : C I.II.III.IV. A - Rue de l'Ermitage 55 - Brussels

Afternoon : ULB La Cambre Horta - Place Eugène Flagey 19 - Brussels

front cover image © Aurélie Hachez Architecte

back cover image © Atelier Julien Boidot



In Practice

C I.II.III.IV. A
Culture — Architecture



Flanders
State of the Art



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Benoît Vandenbulcke (AgwA, ULiège)

www.architectureinpractice.eu

Program

09:30 Arrival at C I.II.III.IV. A

Introduction to the research seminar

'Practices In Research #04 - Beyond the Mandate

10:00 Session 1 - parallel session

8000.agency - Clues

Blaf architecten - Big Brick Hybrids

Robbe Pacquée & Mario Rinke - Learning from Converted Buildings

Wissel architectuur studio - Open, Fast and Slow Practice

discutants

Juliane Greb - chair

Emilie Morales

Cédric Libert

Virginie Pigeon

Session 2 - parallel session

Michal Kulesza & Tomasz Swietlik- The Mandate

Variable State

Bento - The Architecture of the Living

VVV - Contradictions

ANMA - Uncertain Soils, Soils in Experimentation

discutants

Wouter Van Acker - chair

Christine Fontaine

Johan De Walsche

14:00 Arrival and welcome at ULB La Cambre Horta

14:30 Session 3

Benedetta Di Leo & Maddalena Ferretti - Making Things.

Laura Muyldermans - De Denkbeeldige Opdrachtgever

Ouest - Teatro, lo Tuyo es Puro Teatro

discutants

Cédric Libert - chair

Martina Barcellona Corte

Martin Outers

Karen Kesteloot

16:30 Round Table “Audiences”

Christine Fontaine - chair

Juliane Greb

Nikolaus Hirsch

Cédric Libert

Wouter Van Acker

18:30 Booklaunch

“Dyvik Kahlen In Practice, Villa RuBa”

Max Kahlen and Christopher Dyvik

discussion with Pieterjan Ginckels

Lecture

Aurélie Hachez

Julien Boidot

C I.II.III.IV. A - Rue de l'Ermitage 55 - Brussels

ULB La Cambre Horta - Place Eugène Flagey 19 - Brussels



IN PRACTICE

AURÉLIE HACHEZ & JULIEN BOIDOT

TUESDAY 7TH OF MARCH 2023

09:00 - 13:00 C I.II.III.IV. A
rue de l'Ermitage 55 - Brussels

14:00 - 20:30 ULB LA CAMBRE HORTA
place Eugène Flagey 19 - Brussels

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architecture practices at the heart of research
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PRACTICES IN RESEARCH #04
practice-based research seminar

09:30 sessions 1 & 2

14:00 session 3

16:30 AUDIENCES
round table and closing session

18:30 DYVIK KAHLEN IN PRACTICE
booklaunch
AURÉLIE HACHEZ
JULIEN BOIDOT
lecture

BEYOND THE MANDATE

For all projects, architects receive a mandate, be it explicit or implicit. There are expectations and results to be obtained: programs to fulfil, budgets and timelines to respect, regulations and norms to obey or to negotiate, authorization to obtain and works to assess. But these mandates also come with a freedom, the possibility to address individual or collective ambitions, pleasure, sensibility or responsibility. Additionally, designing architecture is a public matter. It entails engagements and societal duties that reach beyond the immediate interest of a commissioner. Moreover, practicing architecture is a cultural performance, involving a larger public than the individual commissioner. Maybe this margin, this freedom of proposals, but also this societal duty, is at the same time what lies beyond the mandate, and what enables the mandate.

What do architects do for free, which is not asked for explicitly? What drives them beyond the expectations inherent to their mandate? What is the motivation of their work? Which implicit or explicit duties?? Dispositions and inclinations in their designing? Reflections and inspirations that feed their design practice? This space beyond the mandate, the freedom or the unexpectedness in responding to the expectations, is what moves any reflective or inquisitive practice. It is a condition of the relevance of a practice to the discipline itself, society, culture, theory and pedagogy. It is where a claim, an assertion or an observation can be made. In a word, what makes a practice worth sharing with an audience resides beyond the mandate.

Similarly, research related to practice always covers a space that goes beyond this practice. Independently of the multiple models of research by, for or in practice, research is never a simple account or description of undertaken actions. Research creates and explores a margin around the reality of the practice. While focussing on specific topics, it embeds the practice in a broader field. Is research relating to a practice then also about its motivations? Is it then exactly about understanding what goes beyond the mandate?

(extract from the call for contributions)



Illustration by Thibaut Barrault and Cyril Pressacco

in "Practices in Research 03 - Explorations and Cartographies", In Practice, 2022

CLUES

Three journeys on working with the morelli method.

Oliver Burch, Jakob Junghanss & Lukas Ryffel

ETH Zürich, Institut für Entwurf und Architektur
8000.agency

We perceive our world as ambivalent and unpredictable, always being confronted with a multitude of content and objects. What surrounds us has evolved from processes of change, adaptation and failure, on a material and immaterial level. To make use of these conditions as architects means to observe carefully, spot latent potential and create momentum for transformation.

We work with “clues”, a term borrowed from the “Morelli method” as described by the art historian Carlo Ginzburg. This method is offering an interpretative tool to detect seemingly irrelevant details as revealing moments: “reality is opaque; but there are certain points – clues (...) – which allow us to decipher it.” Similar to the work of a detective, we watch out for the overseen or unnoticed details in our environment – and transform them into productive reactions. By doing so, we often have to leave our comfort zone and travel far beyond our mandates.

In our graduation project, we investigated the reality of a 1970s housing estate in Zürich in the months before demolition and replacement. Redeveloping the existing city is not only connected to material loss, but also to social displacement. People are forced to leave their homes, but where do they go?

During our research we felt the need to shift perspectives: We offered residents help to move. By doing so, very personal stories were shared, which were highly connected to the place of investigation itself. We learned what residents appreciated about their homes, what they would



A poster to advertise our help brought us into contact with residents. We offered a moving service by architects, unprofessional but for free. They contacted us and weren't sure if we really wanted to help them for free.



We spent a whole day, helping a young scientist to move out of his studio to a new place. We did not only learn about his personal story but understood what it means to redevelop the existing city.

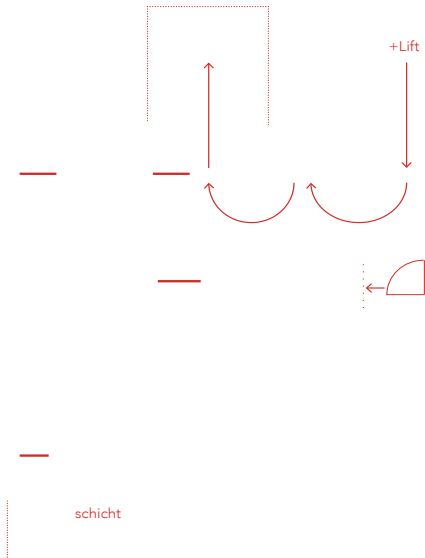
have changed, and what they think about the arguments for demolition. Spending a day with them and helping to carry their belongings out of their flats changed our role – and we became actors ourselves. Experiencing this other viewpoint made clear what drastic consequences planning decisions might have for the lives of individuals.

Translating the experience from our graduation project into an attitude of practice, we are often urged to go beyond the brief. This means: To question the decisions already taken by developers and reconsidering the situation on site. In the preparation for a housing competition in Zürich – where the brief was to replace the building – we went for tea with current residents, getting to know their conditions of living there.

We developed an alternative approach to the desired replacement and started to include the reality where life had accumulated. The qualities of the existing buildings and their potential to be extended or transformed were the vocabulary of our proposal – so far without recognition by the competition jury, unfortunately. But we realised that the premises for a careful development were not given.

This led to another act. We got aware of the importance of these premises, of strategic decisions which are taken so long ago that no one dares to question them within an architectural competition. We understood that if we want to change practice, we have to intervene much earlier in the process: To create fertile ground for a productive discussion on how to dwell on the existing.

CLUES



The existing floorplan allowed to reshuffle the bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, so the mandatory lift could be integrated into the house after transformation. A Rochade of uses within a generic floorplan of the 1950s.



Visiting residents and getting to know about qualities and difficulties within the existing flats, was the starting point of going beyond the brief.

With a group of friends, we reworked premises and organised an unsolicited competition for an outdated public housing estate – which was meant to be demolished by the city government. With 45 submissions being exhibited publicly, our intentions were multiplied and sparked a much-needed debate on affordable housing within the existing city.

Working with “clues” allows us to navigate into yet unpredictable realms. For us, this method offers a short moment of an outside view onto our field of competence. Arriving back home in the role of architects, we might use our knowledge and tools differently and act more consciously, also taking the unnoticed into account.



1 AUFGABE

1 AUSGANGSLAGE

Ein Rückbau der drei ehemaligen Personenhäuser war ursprünglich für Anfang 2023 geplant. Da unklar ist, wenn die Türme in Zukunft ersetzt werden, wird derzeit eine 10-jährige Verlängerung der heutigen Zwischenlösung diskutiert und geprüft. Die Stadt Zürich plante bis vor Kurzem, die drei ehemaligen Personenhäuser des Stadthotels Triemli ab Anfang 2023 rückzubauen. Schon in der Spaltplanung von 1994 wird der Ersatz der 1971 errichteten Personalmöblier vorgesehen, was in der Überarbeitung von 2003 wiederum bestätigt wurde. Gründe für das Abschreiben der Türme waren damals "Erneuerungskosten, die sich auf mehr als 80% der entsprechenden Neubauskosten belaufen würden", die "fehlenden Nasszellen" und "zu kleinen Raumgrößen" der Personalmöblier. Ausserdem würde sich die Anlage im "zukünftigen Schatteneffekt" des damals geplanten und mittlerweile fertiggestellten Bettenhauses befinden. Auch in der aktuellsten Strategie des Stadthospitals von 2018 wurden die drei Personalmöblier nach dem Auslaufen der Betriebsbewilligung 2022 zum Rückbau festgelegt. Aufgrund der Unklarheit, welche Gebäude die drei Türme in Zukunft ersetzen werden, wird derzeit in der Politik eine 10-jährige Verlängerung der heutigen Zwischenlösung diskutiert und geprüft.

Während die 750 Personalmöblier der drei Türme in den ersten Jahrzehnten nach Erstellung noch vorwiegend als solche genutzt wurden, hat sich deren Funktion seit den 1990ern gewandelt. Einerseits haben sich die Arbeits- und Lebensgewohnheiten des Spitalpersonals verändert, andererseits eröffnete die bereits abgeschlossene Struktur Ausweichmöglichkeiten für verschiedenste Nutzungen. Heute werden die drei Türme teilweise als Unterkunft für Geflüchtete und als temporäre Altbauwohnungen genutzt, oder sie dienen als Praxisräume und Studierendenzimmer. "Die Zimmer entsprechen energetisch nicht den Zielen und Normen, die wir uns gesetzt haben", meint der Zürcher Stadtrat 2022 zur Angelegenheit – und formuliert damit das Dilemma, wie heutige Ansprüche mit gebauten Realitäten in Einklang zu bringen sind.

Aufgrund der diversen bestehenden Potentiale in den drei Personalmöblier und dem akuten Mangel an Wohnraum in der Stadt Zürich hat sich die ZAS* im April 2022 entschieden, einen spekulativen Ideenwettbewerb im offenen Verfahren durchzuführen, der

1981 Quelle: BAZ (NACHSCHAUEN)
Blick auf Seite 10/11

Investigating the case of the demolition of the city-owned triemli towers let us organise an unsolicited competition to question their fate, together with the group ZAS*. All information was gathered and put together a competition brief.



The 45 submissions were juried publicly, opening up the debate about the future of the triemli towers to a wider public.

BIG BRICK HYBRIDS

Lieven Nijs & Bart Vanden Driessche

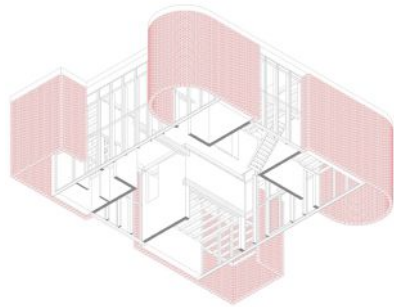
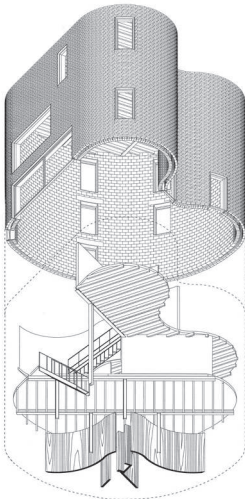
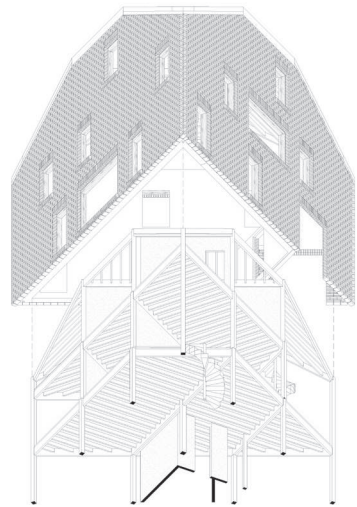
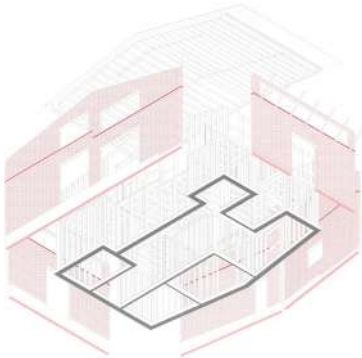
UGent
BLAF architecten

The (re)searching nature of the architecture practice of BLAF develops beyond the scope of the singular project. In fact, what happens beyond the mandate is often at the heart of the practice. BLAF architecten have shifted the practice of designing and building ‘the same but different’ (each time a house, promoting the tailor made to serve the private considerations of the client and the so called nontext), to ‘different but the same’ (optimizations of the same technical and design principles from a general concern).



A. Hendrickx "The (re) searching Practice".
In *Flanders Architectural Review* #14. *When Attitudes Take Form*.

The **'Big Brick Hybrids' series** feature the repeated act of building as an epistemic trajectory, a knowledge acquisition process, from the long term engagement with one particular design question: the paradox of brick faced buildings in the face of our current epoch. Each individual client becomes an accomplice, a facilitator of the practice based research beyond the mandate.



BLAF architecten, Big Brick Hybrids.
Top left: tmEK House; Top right: wSt House ; Bottom left: gjG House; Bottom right: fmM House

The conference contribution takes as a starting point shared observations of the dependency of architecture on forces from the outside (climate, history, material technology, regulatory policy, discourse), the notion of confusion, and the multi-layered nature of design and construction in practice. It will present a number of productive concepts that allow for design decision making, and have added to the genealogy of the Big Brick Hybrids (non exhaustive preview):

Geometry / The geometry of construction enhances the economy of building materials and the gains that can be generated from the principle of compactness and the rational scheme. The geometry of the house is used for both the stability of the shell and the internal structure. It is responsive to the agency of the materials and the energy system. It stages the private space of the house and the distortions of the inhabitation.

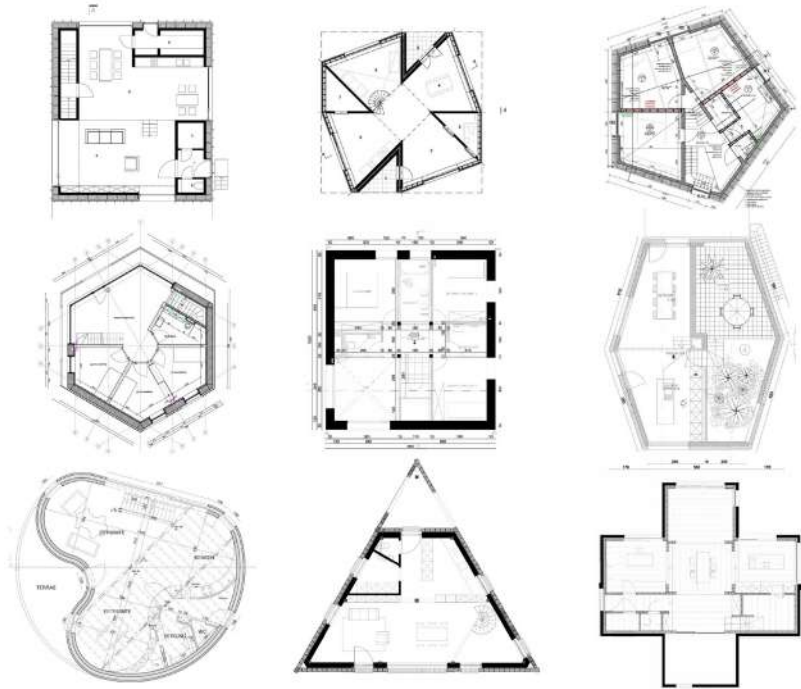


BLAF architecten, dnA House.



BLAF architecten, hkZ House.

BIG BRICK HYBRIDS



BLAF architecten, geometric houses.

The Ruin / The ruin moves us to simultaneously look backward and forward in time. The awareness of the ‘future ruin’ of the house triggers design and construction considerations like materiality, permanence and temporality, appreciation, deconstruction and circularity.

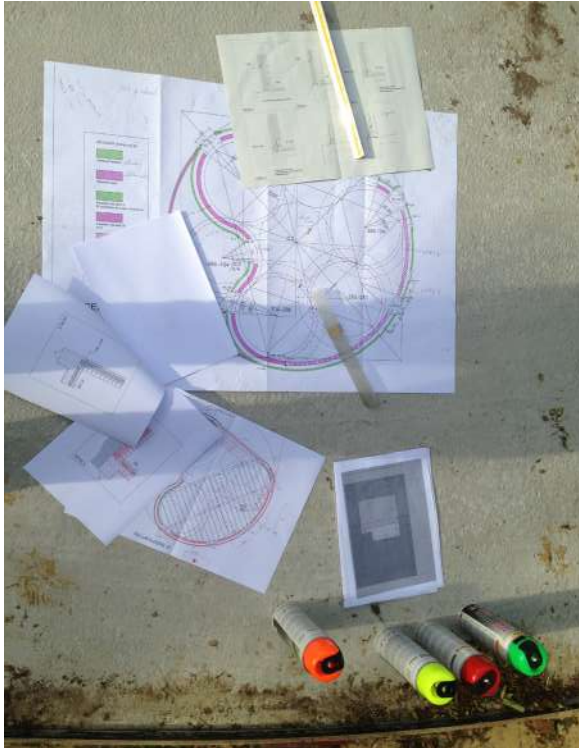


Unknown, St.Elizabeth Hospital Washington DC



BLAF architecten, dnA House.

DIY / The self-builder puts the architect's drawing to the test. For the occasional builder, design choices must be assessed in terms of feasibility, risks, materials, sequentiality, logistics, tools and skills.



BLAF architecten, gjG House.

The Cavity / Although invisible, the cavity has become one of the true battlefields of architecture in the last two decades. As it has revealed its heavy relatedness with the complexity of construction, the notions of sustainability and circularity, and the expression of architecture, it is to be addressed as a design question.



BLAF architecten, jtB House.

LEARNING FROM CONVERTED BUILDINGS

Porosity as a strategy to plan adaptable buildings

Robbe Pacquée & Mario Rinke

Henry van de Velde Research Group
UAntwerpen, FWO Flanders

One key mandate the architect receives is to fulfill the detailed functional program defined by the client. Focusing on initial demands, the design brief addresses the short-term needs of the user. Nonetheless, throughout the building's lifetime, its use changes. *'All buildings are predictions. All predictions are wrong'* concluded Stewart Brand in 1995. Designed and evaluated tailor-fit to initial functional demands, many recent buildings have proven difficult to adapt to changing functional needs, causing vacancy and consequentially premature demolition.

Countering this tendency, a few best practices are using different schematic user scenarios as an additional tool in the early design phase, to study how the building's most permanent layers, i.e.: the structure and circulation, allow different uses. These practices move beyond their initial mandate, to allow future functional changes.

Unfortunately, today the ground for the evaluation of such user scenarios is lacking, leaving adaptability and flexibility neither integrated into legislation nor in general practice. Evaluating the building structure not only on its initial program but on an array of possible uses, defined by its urban setting, can allow an easier organization of mixed-uses in both time and space. In this sense, the building structure can be seen as a set of porous spaces, with building layers arranged meaningfully as permeable membranes, allowing or blocking certain paths of change.

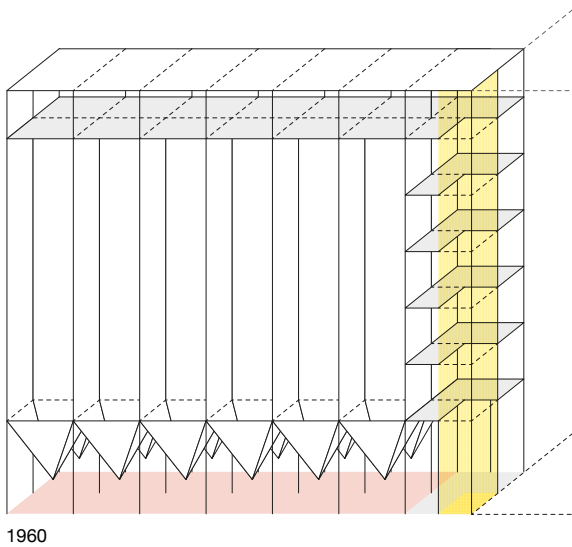
This research project uses the empirical analyses of existing conversion projects to study the reciprocal relationship between the building's most permanent layers and func-

tional changes. This contribution focuses on the early design process of De Silo, an old grain processing facility that was converted into a multifunctional building including an architecture office, theater, and local youth program, located in Hasselt, Belgium. The study combines a quantitative analysis of the planning material with a semi-structured interview with the project architect to unravel the decision-making process during the design stage of the conversion. In the interview, the findings are positioned in the broader context of the design process, including aspects such as fire regulations, building codes, and building costs.

The findings are presented thematically, focusing on two building layers: the building structure and the circulation. The first part of this contribution discusses the reciprocal relationship between the building structure, defining the initial spatial setting, and the changing program. This relationship is characterized as the *porosity* of the building. It considers aspects such as the structural system, dimensions of the structural grid, room height, plan depth, and positions of the structural cores. The second part of the presentation focuses on the primary circulation of people within this physical setting. Characterized as the *permeability* of the building, it includes the locations and dimensions of corridors, vertical circulation cores, and secondary circulation routes. On a larger level, it describes the functional relationship of the building to its context, including the orientation of the building, the accesses, and its visual connections to and from the city.

The findings are presented visually through novel mapping techniques and spatial diagrams, revealing different zones of permanence within the building, each posing a different type and level of resistance against changing use. In essence, the findings help to move beyond a generic technical description of adaptability on the building level and contribute to a growing spatial understanding of adaptability in architecture, characterizing the spatial features of the building structure that influence its adaptability and flexibility.

LEARNING FROM CONVERTED BUILDINGS



structure circulation production office technical

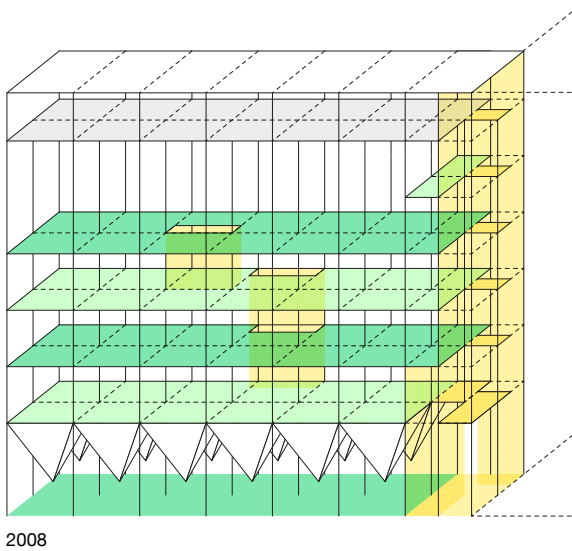


Diagram showing the structure, circulation, and functional layout of De Silo in Hasselt. Originally a grain processing facility (top), it was transformed into a mix of offices and cultural functions (bottom).

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE

An understanding of our design methodology

Felix Schiettecatte, Lennart Vandewaetere & Marius
Vaneckhoutte

KU Leuven
Wissel architectuur studio

“Wissel” is metaphor to our way of working. It is an interaction between drawing, model and image. We draw from sketches to details, we build models from paper try-outs to full materialized maquettes and we use photography to produce images. The analogue way of designing creates room for coincidences by cutting, shifting and pasting. This methodology between the three of us, regularly create unexpected turns in our thought process that go beyond the obvious of the design question, the mandate of our client. Models are used not only as a design tool, but also as a basis for conversation between ourselves, the client and the contractor. In each project references are a big part of the design process. We strongly believe in looking at the past, transforming it into our own language and search for the unexpected.

Our methodology focuses on three scales:

Scale 1 are conceptual thinking models and furniture, self-built scale 1:1, referred to as *open practice*.

Scale 2 are spatial temporary constructions and scenography, referred to as *fast practice*.

Scale 3 are architectural projects, commissioned by a client from design to construction, referred to as *slow practice*.

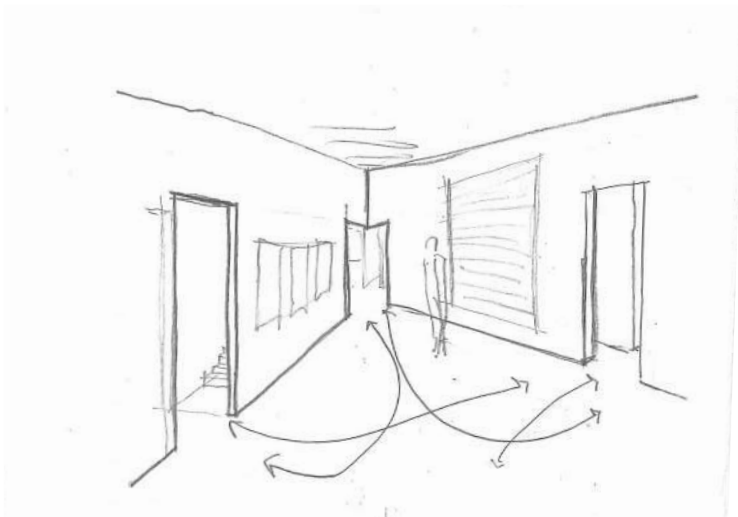
The shifting between these three scales keeps us focused and entertained in a profession as time consuming as architecture.



wissel architectuur studio
januari 2023

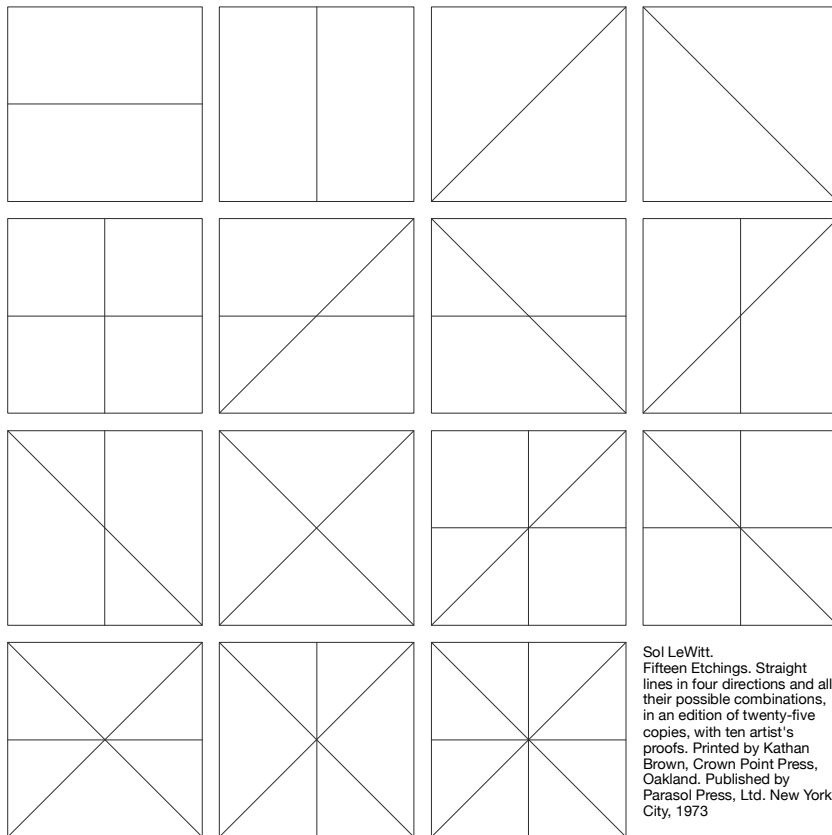
The first example of reference transformation is the project 'Tower of Sol' (scale 1)

'Tower of Sol' stems out of our fascination for the work 'fifteen etchings' by artist Sol LeWitt. We were inspired by his work because of the spatial value. As a paradox, our project transforms his abstract work into an architectural object, a tower. We create a spatial playfield on the verge of art and architecture, translating the fifteen two-dimensional combinations into a three-dimensional model of a tower consisting out of fifteen floors. The lines are translated into walls, the walls are deduplicated into staircases. By climbing the tower to higher levels, the spaces become larger and the structure purifies. The work of LeWitt is free to interpret, thus the tower stays abstract and free of context. 'Tower of Sol' is a celebration of Sol LeWitt, but also a celebration of Imagination.



Early sketch idea, 2016

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE



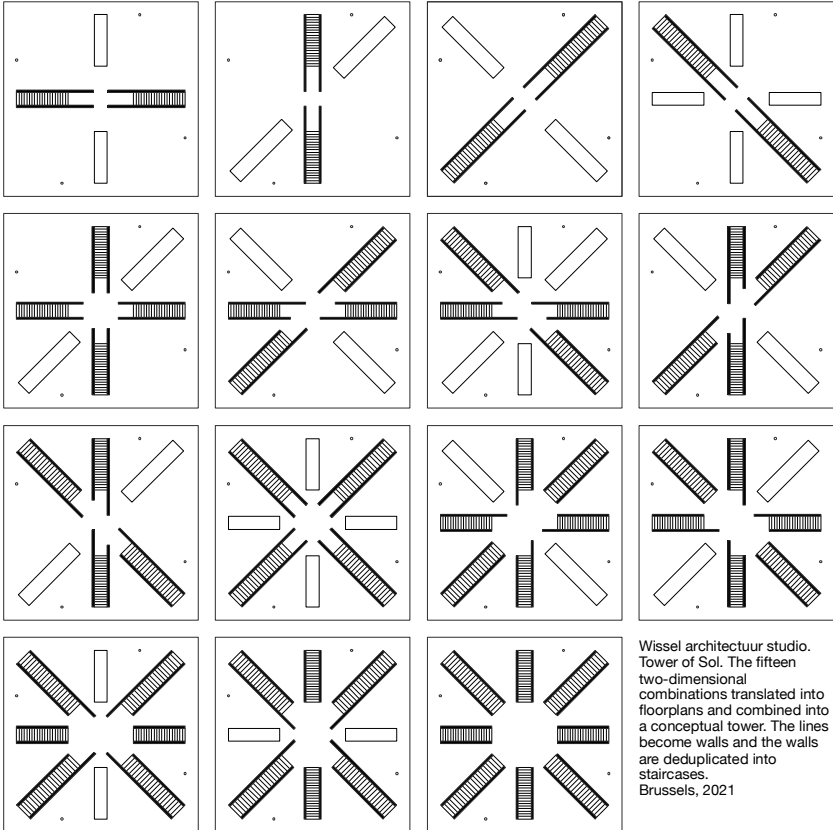
REFERENCE #1, Sol Lewitt, Fifteen Etchings

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE



Tower of Sol 2021. Photo by Severin Malaud

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE



Wissel architectuur studio.
Tower of Sol. The fifteen
two-dimensional
combinations translated into
floorplans and combined into
a conceptual tower. The lines
become walls and the walls
are deduplicated into
staircases.
Brussels, 2021

Tower of Sol 2021. Plans

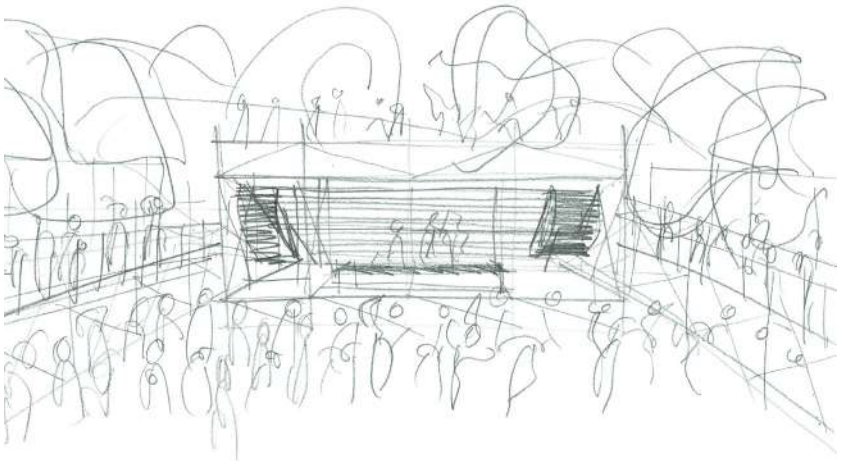
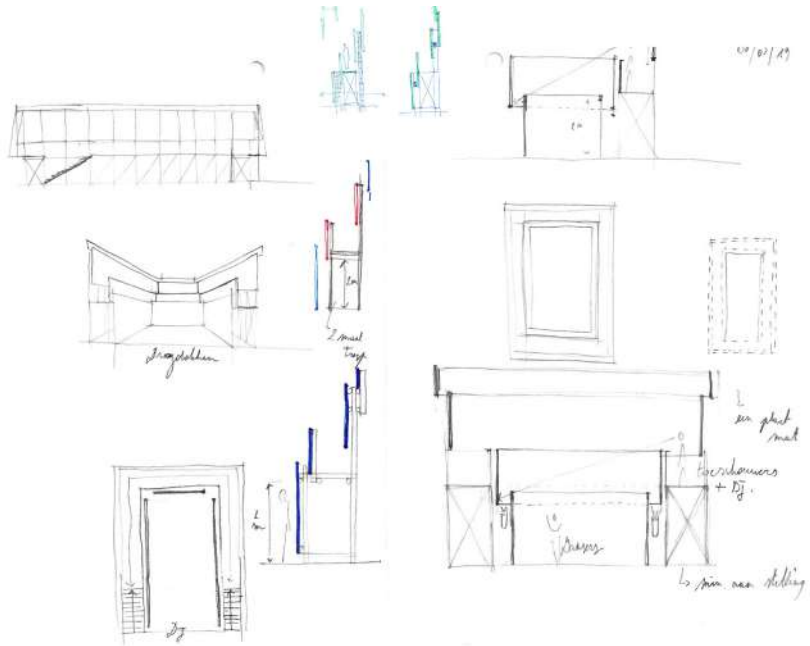
“Hush Hush Stage3, Contrair Open air 2019 (scale 2)

A Similar approach was used to design the ‘Hush Hush Stage’ for Contrair Open Air festival in 2019. The idea grew out of the Port of Antwerp, more specific the dry dock which is located next to the site. This unique construction allows the water level to be controlled and boats can be maneuvered. As the water pours into the dry dock, dancing people stream up to the Hush Hush stage. The visitors are enclosed along either side by dance platforms, which seeks tension with the crown of the existing row of trees. Physically enclosing the place creates an intimate club atmosphere. The DJ booth is located in the heart of this ‘tub’ and is integrated under a staircase construction that functions as a meeting place in the treetop near the main entrance to the site.



REFERENCE #2, Dry dock 4, Antwerp. Archief Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE





Contraic Open Air, June 2019

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE



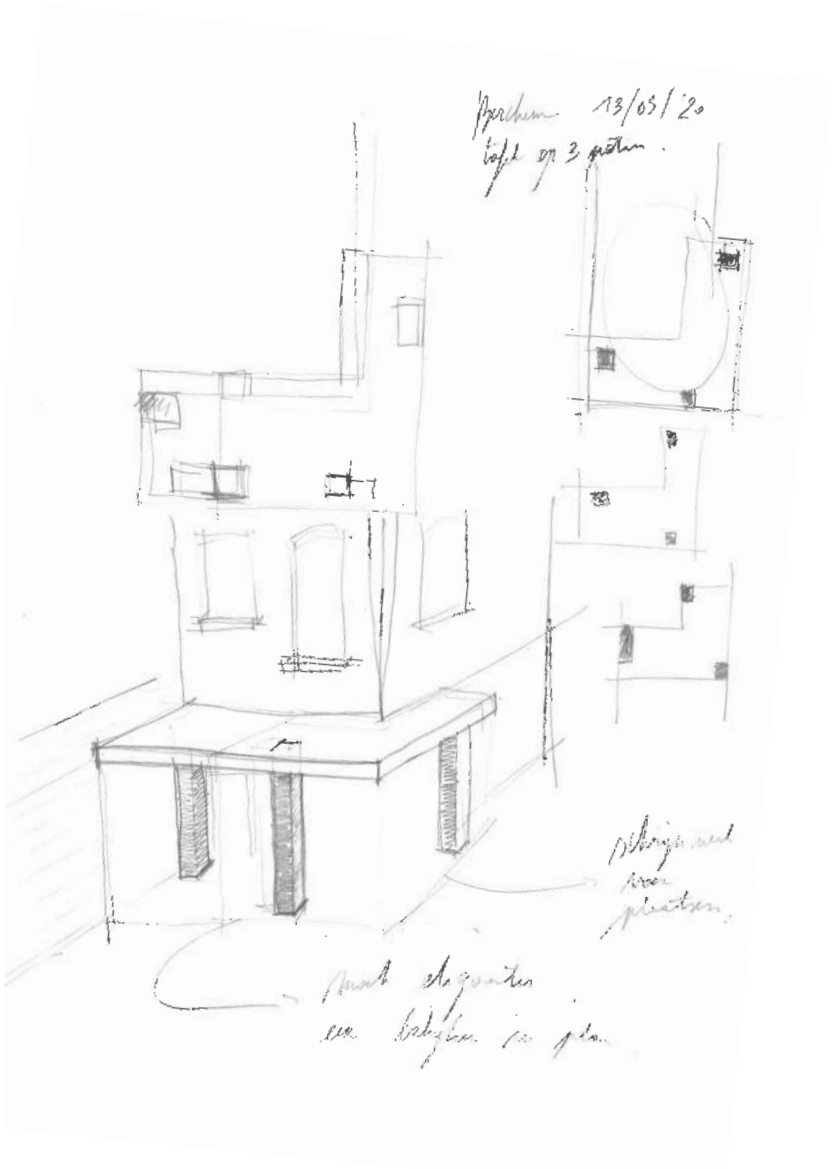
Contraic Open Air, June 2019

“Berchem”, Renovation of a house 2020-2022 (Scale 3)

It started by understanding and decomposing the house in its materiality and structure. Our goal was to strengthen – or perhaps merely support- the identity of the place through an addition or elimination. The house is solid and spacious, but the living room areas are lacking natural light and visual connection to the garden. Our main addition was the introduction of a concrete table, which on the one hand supports the valuable bathroom volume on the first floor and on the other allows us to eliminate the volumes underneath. This action created an opportunity to reorganize the spaces on the ground floor and allowed us to create a sequence of four rooms. This sequence creates a feeling of togetherness for the residents and allows light all the way through out the groundfloor plan.



Pre-design, model 1/50



Pre-design, sketch idea of a concrete table

The garden is oriented north, we positioned an sky-light structure on the concrete table between the bathroom volume and the neighbor wall.

In the tendering fase we took inspiration out of history and art to design logical thus refreshing construction details. For the skylight structure we looked closely at the botanical winter garden of the Ursuline Institute in Mechelen. We were drawn to the structural idea of the L-profiled structure held together by steel cables which form the base for the skylight. We filtered out the art nouveau ornamentation and transformed the reference into a minimal structural principle.



REFERENCE #3, Winter garden, Ursuline Institute, Mechelen

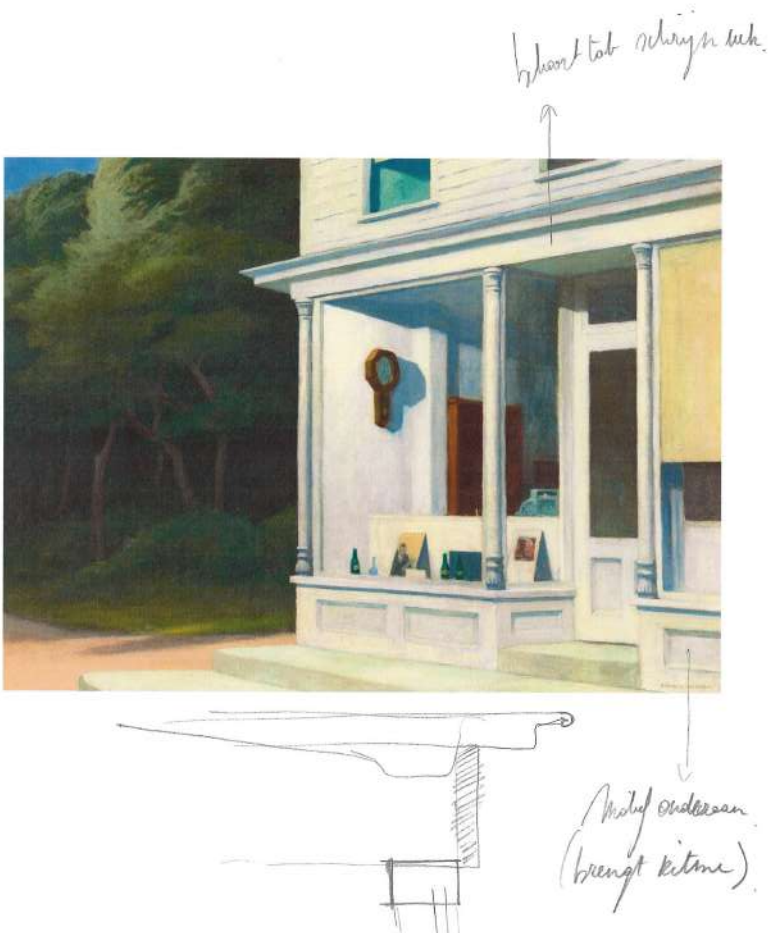


Tendering fase, model 1/33



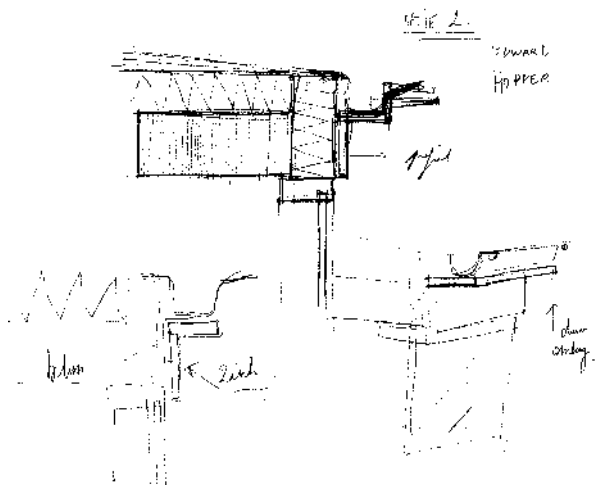
Final result, summer 2022

For the roof detailing we were charmed by a painting of Edward Hopper. The profiling was elegant and not particularly modern, which we found exciting to transform into our project. Together with the plinth out of bluestone which reflects on the front facade, we found our extension between modern and existing architecture styles.

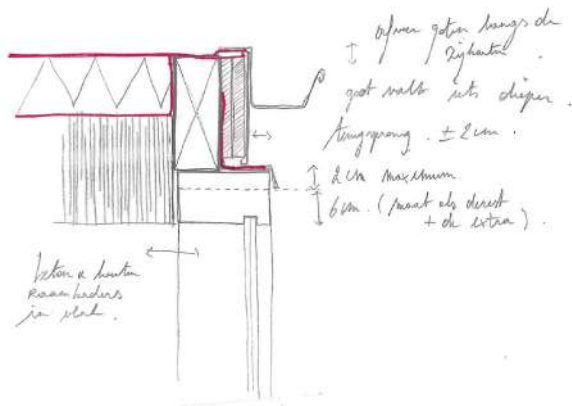


REFERENCE #4, Edward Hopper, 7A.M. 1948

OPEN, FAST AND SLOW PRACTICE



Schets opbouw n/d met hout (niet op schaal!) 31/11/2020





Tendering fase, model 1/33



Final result, summer 2022

THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE

Michał Kulesza & Tomasz Swietlik

The focus of the article is the structured reflection on the unrequested activity of the architects (and authors of the article at the same time) during the design of the exhibition for the “Warsaw Under Construction” festival. The tradition of this annual event organized by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw is that every year it is located in a different place, which engages the audience to explore the city. The 10th edition was placed in an abandoned modernist icon constructed in the 1960s - the trading pavilion “Cepelia”. The theme of the exhibition was: “The Neighbors” and concentrated on Polish – Ukrainian relations.

The aforementioned unrequested activity of architects during the design and realization process of the project concerned two areas of engagement. The first was the historical and condition inventory of the building, which led to numerous unexpected explorations and the need of expanding the initially contracted mandate. The second was an unusual process of close collaboration with artists and curators, which resulted in a set of architectural interventions emphasizing the theme. The article aims to present a structured analysis of these two areas of engagement “beyond the mandate” and formulate the conclusions.

The process of work in the field of art is characterized by short deadlines, incalculable situations, and dynamic decisions. Furthermore, in this particular case, the access to location was provided in small advance before the exhibition, so the architects had very limited information

about the building that would host the event before starting the design. These dynamic circumstances made the precise role of the architects in the process difficult to predict. The authors put forward the thesis that flexibility and an open-ended range of duties should be a part of the “architects’ mandate” definition in such collaborations.

In the first part of the text, the authors would like to explain the theme of the exhibition which forms a base for understanding the following parts of the article. The 10th edition of the festival “Warsaw Under Construction” took place between October and November 2018 and responded to the observations of intensified migrations from the eastern neighboring countries. The theme covered the subjects of individual experiences, social integration, and working conditions as well as changing political and economic realms of Poland and Ukraine.

Secondly, the location of the exhibition would be explained. The choice of the former trading pavilion of the Cepelia (Folk and Artistic Industry) was not accidental. This building in the center of Warsaw used to delight with its simplicity and design. During the system transformation in Poland, beginning in the 1990s, the building lost its primary identity, received low-quality conversion, and finally got fully covered with big-scale advertisements. For many years it stood forgotten. In this chapter, the authors would like to present the results of their investigations of the building as well as explain the reasons for placing the festival there.

Finally, the third part of the work would focus on the close collaboration with the artists, which led to the architectural design becoming an artistic tool that unified the building with the exhibition and its artifacts. This part of the article would consist of a narrative explanation of the project with a focus on using architecture as a story-supporting element developed thanks to that close collaborations.

In conclusion, the authors would like to emphasize the unpredictable matter of the architects' mandate and try to re-formulate its stereotypical definition based on their experience explained before.

THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



"Cepelia" Pawilion in 1971, Fot. Polish National Archives



"Cepelia" Pawilion in 1971, Fot. Polish National Archives

THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



"Cepelia" Pawilion in 2018, Fot. Wojtek Radwański

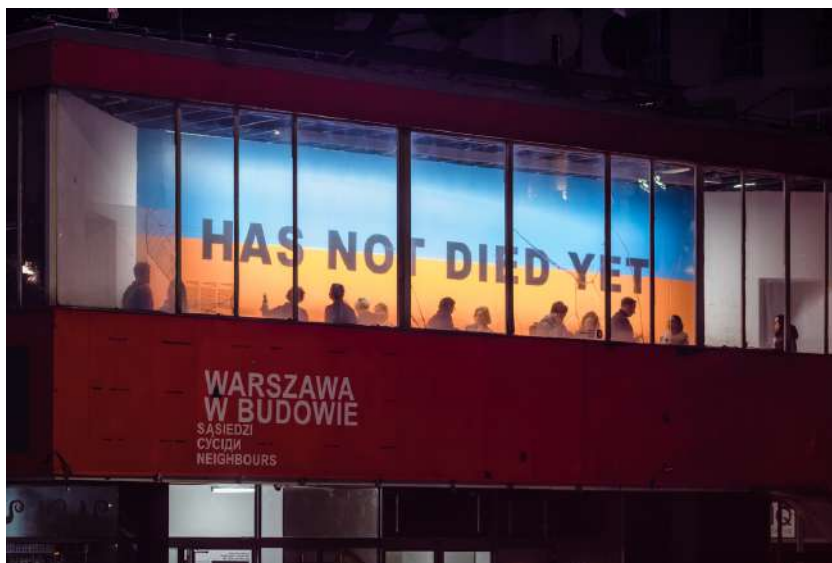


"Cepelia" Pawilion in 2018, Fot. Wojtek Radwański

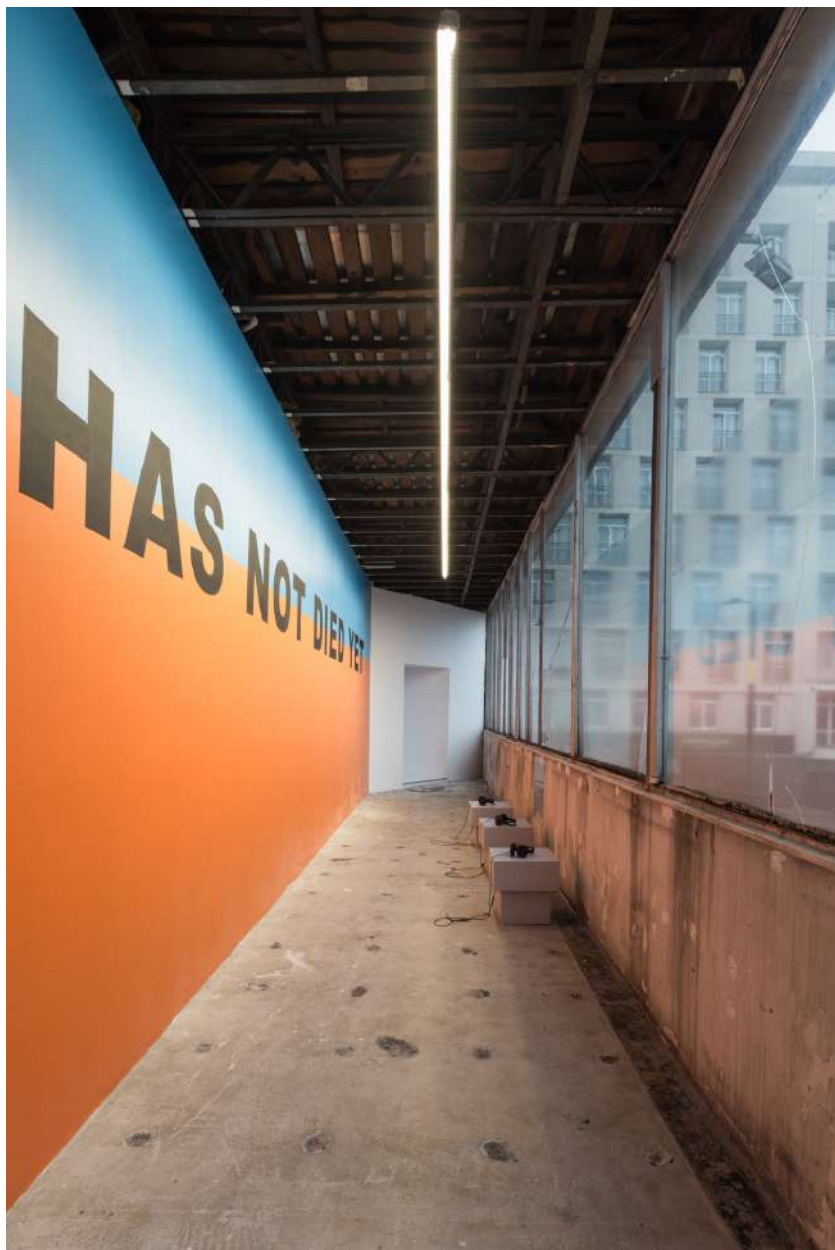
THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



Festival "Warsaw Under Construction" in October/November 2018, Fot. Wojtek Radwański

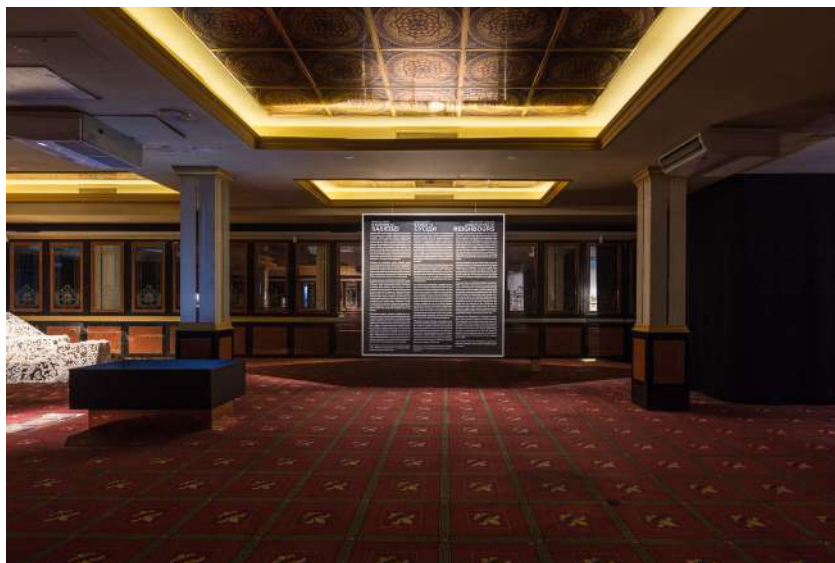


Fot. Wojtek Radwański

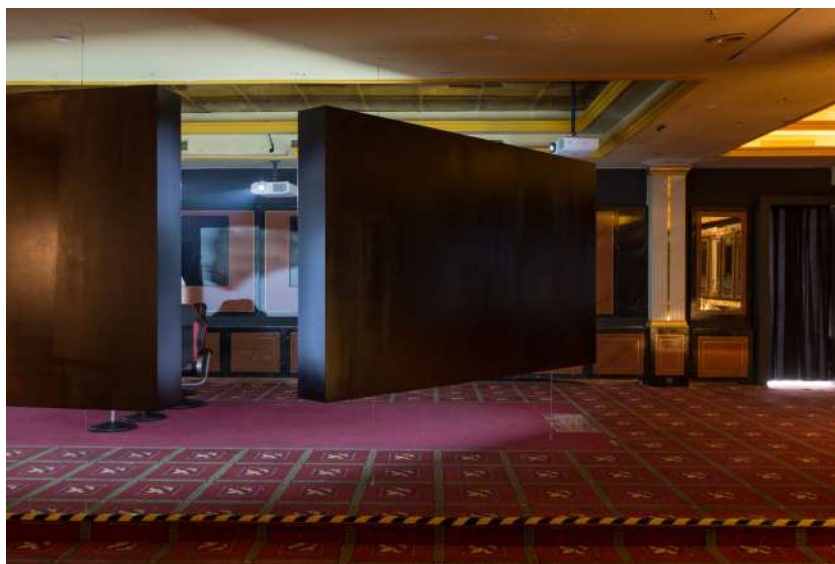


Fot. Rita

THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



Fot. Rita



Fot. Rita

THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



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THE MANDATE VARIABLE STATE



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Fot. Rita

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LIVING

Rethinking construction
through living materials.

Corentin Dalon, Florian Mahieu & Charles Palliez

Bento

How can we think about architecture in a world of finite resources? Accustomed to responding to defined commissions with finite processes, how can living matter re-interrogate us on our practices of producing objects and spaces? As architects, we must engage our practice. We must replace lines with walls, which integrate materials, production lines and know-how.



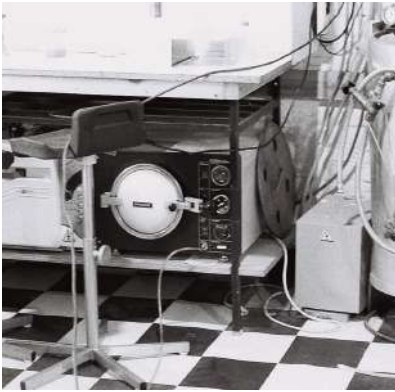
Fig.1 - The MB15-C brick, a mixture of sawdust and hemp. Some mushrooms grew, to show the living aspect of mycelium

Our practice is that of architect-explorers, moving back and forth between the manipulation of materials and the production of spaces. The organization of the text will be chronological, to illustrate our reflections and our desire to change scale, moving from the experimentation of raw materials, from the object to the inhabited space. Engaging in an iterative practice that puts living matter and ‘making’ at the centre is our interpretation of acting ‘beyond the mandate’.



Fig.2 - A growing material. The mycelium is harvested, cloned, selected, cloned again...

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LIVING



The sterilized process, from top to down.
Fig.3- sterilized shoes; Fig 4. Autoklav tp
sterilize substrates; Fig 5. Sterilized substrates
put into the mold

From top to down. Fig.6 - First step: the
mycelium is fed and first grow in sterilized
boxes...; Fig 7 Second step: ... before being
inoculated into microperforated bags ; Fig 8.
Third step: the mold is than sterilized, before
inoculation

Experimenting with the living

Our research in practice, or our practice in research, is interested in the mycelium, the root network of the fungus, a positive material, a binder that grows to “uncage” a plant body, along a structure, in a network or within the limits of a mold.

Firstly, we will develop the discovery of this material, which bridges the gap between engineering, architecture and microbiology, between the laboratory and the workshop. After developing recipe tables, we created bricks that allowed us to apprehend the material, and then, by changing scale, furnitures.

However, the material can be contaminated and reminds us of how capricious the living can be. We were confronted with this when we wanted to go from a stool to the construction of a ceramic oven during an artist residency at the CACLB, the alternative having been to build in burnt wood.



Fig 11. The mycelium grew into the mold, along "waiting woods", which are maintained by the mycelium. The wooden seat is then fixed into those waiting woods. It could be applied to prefabricated mycelium-based insulated wall.



Fig 12. The final banch.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LIVING

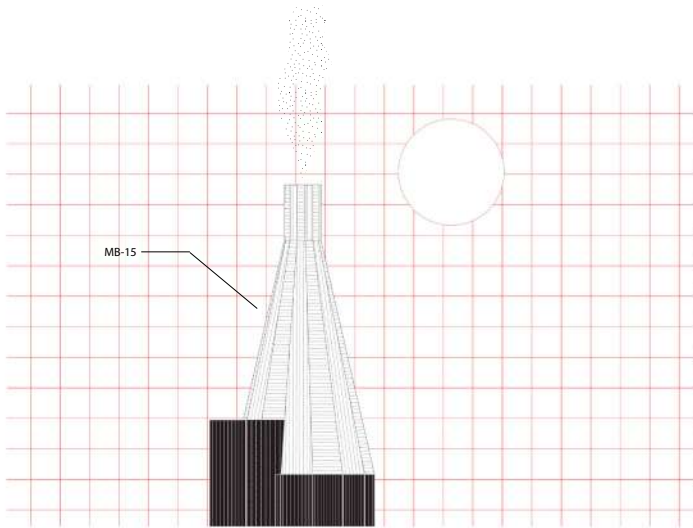


Fig.13 - The hoven was imagined with a burnt wood basement and a mycelium body but, during the process, all the substrates were contaminated, reminding that the process with the living is really fragile



Fig.14 - The hoven being built



Fig.15 - Front view of the oven

Building with the living

Chronologically, as time goes by and we gradually learn about the material through experimentation, we wanted to build a space, a pavilion. It was with this idea in mind that we proposed “In vivo” for the next Belgian pavilion at the Venice Biennale, which will mark out the text in a second phase.

With a beech skeleton from the sonian forest, a facing of mycelium panels and a slab of raw earth from the Brussels construction sites, the central installation aims to question the transposition of a soil, of the resources of a territory, with their specific characteristics, into architecture.

The central installation responds to the spatiality of the pavilion. Indeed, built along the limits of the skylight, the central installation is a “rudiment of space” that works on simple dualities: seen/unseen, light/dark, noisy/calm, mineral/vegetal.

This geometry refers to houses with patios, to the spatialities generated by galleries, with an outline and an affirmed centrality.

The grid of the panels, 50 by 50cm, gives the scale, as much as it abstracts. It refers to the lab’s grids, to the generic grid of periodic elements, also manipulated by the utopias of the 60s and 70s.

Putting the material at the centre of the practice also requires making, in addition to the recipes previously mentioned, its own tools, such as the counter-moulds and presses necessary for the production of the mycelium panels and the prototyping.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LIVING



Fig.16 - View from the interior of "In Vivo", the next belgian pavilion for the Venice Biennale of architecture.



Fig 17 - View of the wooden skeleton of "In Vivo"

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LIVING

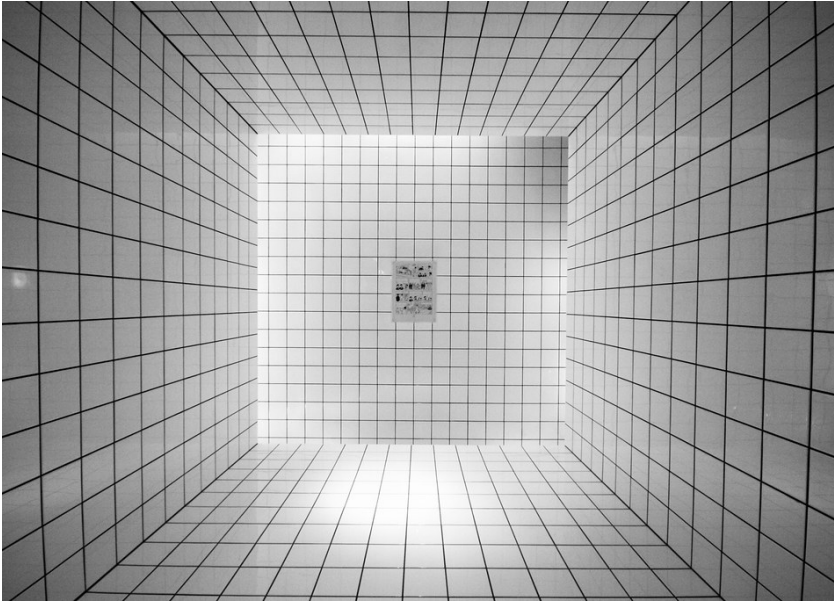


Fig.18 - *Container Zero*, Jean Pierre Raynaud (1988) - The abstraction of the grid and its relation to scale and space



Fig.19 - *Thoronet Abbey* (XI century) - The power of the cloister, the relation to dark and light, to mass ,through the gallery.



Fig.20 - *Tadao Ando, Bourse du commerce Paris (2021)* - The monumentality of a central space, built from the interior.

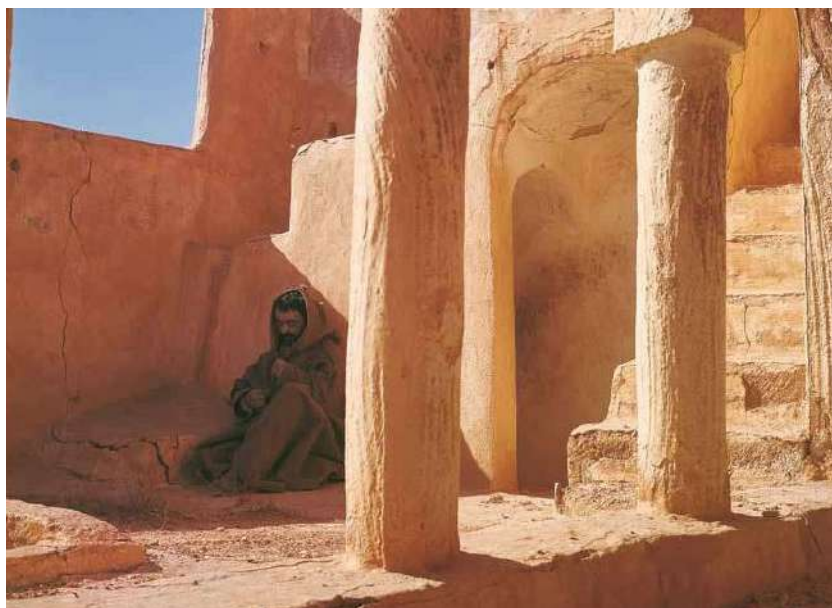


Fig.21 - "*André Ravéreau, l'atelier du désert*", *PICON Antoine & POTTIE Philippe (2003)* - The Mزاب architecture, which became famous through the André Ravéreau's work, is about materials, soil, but also about climate and social habits. It interrogates us on the system that founds architecture.



Fig.22 - A specific counter mold made to press the plastic mold for mycelium panels



Fig.23 - The press to maintain substrates dense enough into the mold



Fig.24 - Mycelium panels produced by PermaFungi



Fig.25 - Prototype of the beech wood skeleton into Sonian wood coop workshop

Generative and regenerative materials

However, in a third part, the panels do not fully illustrate the possibilities left by the mycelium. They show the material on a larger scale but do not explore the possibilities left by the living nature of the material. If the material is not killed by a thermal shock at 70°C, it can proliferate again and reconstitute itself. In this way, the mycelium can grow, bind and regenerate.

The related exhibition rooms in the pavilion will be organised around these themes, as openings to the possible. One will explore the possibility of mycelium binding aggregates to create blocks that work in compression. A second room will explore the tactile possibilities of working in tension, through a range of fungal leathers, also showing the capacity that a mycelial leather could have to reconstitute itself, to reweave itself. Finally, a last one will explore proliferation as a gateway to imagine a place, a growing city.

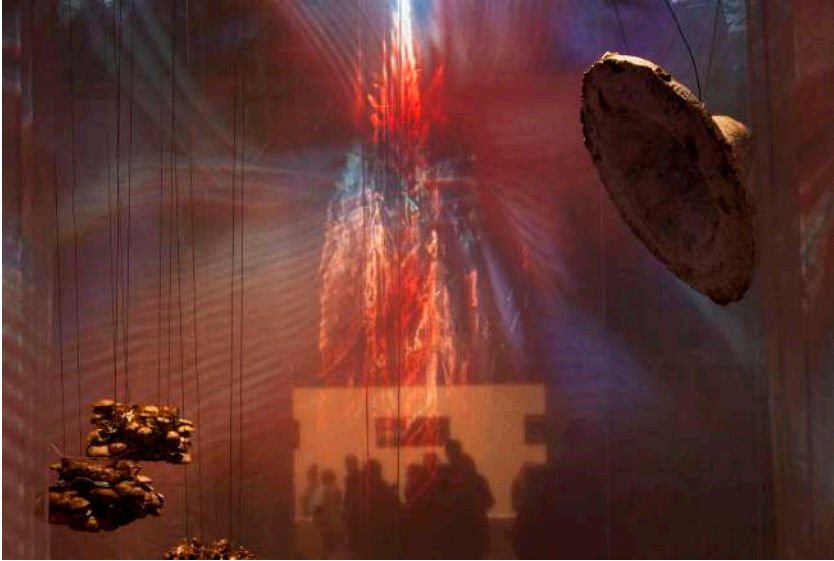


Fig.26 - Installation in Amsterdam (2022). Artists: De Anima, Mycelium producers: Bento - A mycelium parabola, communicating with recorded sounds of growing mushrooms.



Production and process of mycelium leather, ELSACKER Elise & VANDELOOK Simon (VUB) - From left to right : Fig.27 - A 35 x 50cm mycelium leather ... Fig.28 which is then decomposed into few steps, showing the generation AND, because of the living aspect, the regeneration of a damaged mycelium based leather



Fig.29 - *Maitu biomaterials* - A scan of mycelium leather



Fig.30 - *Maitu biomaterials* - A scan of mycelium leather

CONTRADICTIONS

Guillaume Vanneste & Nicolas Willemet

UCLouvain

ULiège

vvv

Contradictions

To address what is beyond the work of the architect or the designer, we departed from a series of contradiction in the attitudes, the postures, the behavior or the “états d’âme”, that an architect can have or encounter in relation to his work or his “mandate”.

Exhausted and excited ; freedom and for free ; passion and patience ; service or care; prestation or performance; work of labor

Wondering in the brief why some part of the work had to be beyond the mandate, distinguishing from a more banal and ordinary work, to be acknowledge as research, passion or center of interest, we found in the contradiction pairs some resetting ground to reflect on what is then a mandate.

To make and do projects – which is for us the work of the architect – require some positions in regard to societal values, culture, professional world, and one’s own ethical thinking. Taking these positions is a duty, but also what makes the work vibrating, sometimes leading to bring closer some contrasted state such as mentioned here above in the list. Defend a specific typology or urban implantation for the quality they bring to the city is an exciting part of the work, which when becoming a battle with actors against it – for whatever reason it is – becomes an exhausting cause to negotiate or defend.

Mandate

From the elaboration of those contradiction, we are then able to reflect on the definition of the mandate itself. What's the mandate actually? And in the relation between the architect and the client, who is mandating the other one ? Quite often, the mandate itself, within its own boundaries, namely financial or legal contours, doesn't allow much freedom, space for experimentations or simply for fun and pleasure. To reach space for manoeuvre in his work, the architects often put more than a simple reply to a request. Often, the brief is critically questioned. Often, the mandate is taken as an excuse to proceed transversal research within an architectural practice. Thus, this understanding let us assert that architects also have the mandate to question the question. We, as architect, have also the intellectual or artistic interest to build up a larger knowledge crossing the mandates, to be shared.

Beyond

Therefore, more than the missions, their limits and what is done on top of it, “beyond” is an opportunity to reflect on what our action as architect are actually at work for, what fundamental mandate do we establish in our own practice and towards the architecture of the city as a collective entity, that goes beyond a client brief..

This bring us back to the contradiction. We are eager to go beyond, most of the time, the limit of our mandate. Either by drawing more than “just” request. Either by taking the time to think at our work, by making projects speak together, or by revisiting old one constantly in the one. Either by taking active part in civil society initiatives or in the public debate. It might seem these acts are part of the intrinsic methodology of a design oriented practice, and there are, but most of the time, they are properly beyond the strict limit of the mandate. Making the edge very thin between being excited or exhausted, doing things with freedom, or for free, envisioning the work as a way of taking care of our environment or just as a liberal service. There, we see an opportunity to question the position of architects in society today.

CONTRADICTIONS

UNCERTAIN SOILS, SOILS IN EXPERIMENTATION

Pierre Bouilhol, Mélusine Hucault & Agrippa Leenhardt,

ULB Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta
Université Paris 8
ANMA

Urban soils, long considered by architects as surfaces to be urbanized, are moving. They provide essential ecosystem services in the fight against climate change; they are the subject of land tensions at a time when France is aiming for Zero Net Artificialization; they are «returned

to nature» when they are exposed to natural hazards; they are the subject of citizen mobilization to defend the «commons»; etc.

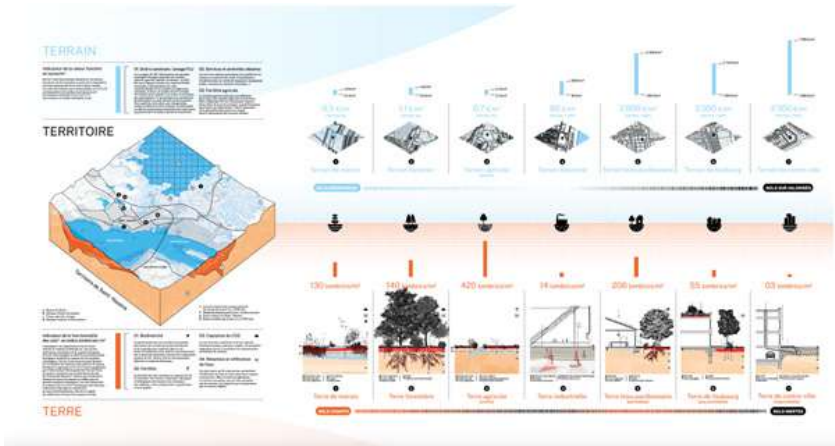


Extract 1. from the exhibition Terre Terrain Territoire, CAUE 69, February 2022 (ANMA)

ANMA is an architecture, urbanism and landscape agency founded in 2001, based between Paris, Brussels and Bordeaux, with 70 collaborators. ANMA considers that the role of architects is to accompany the actors of the urban fabric in a moment of transformation of the look of urban soils. This role is played within the mandates, but also beyond.

Urban soils: from objects to subjects

While soils have long been studied and represented by the earth and life sciences, it would seem that the field of architecture has only very recently taken hold of them in a broader way. Since 2016 in France, soils (re)emerges as a subject of concern for architects, who mediate their complexities and dynamics by experimenting with modes of representation that renew the methods of project and their setting in narrative. With the Zero Net Artificialization (ZAN) voted in 2020, the French state has set the objective of reducing by two the rate of artificialization of soils by 2030 in order to reach a net artificialization of zero by 2050, and this, at all territorial scales. ZAN highlights the ecological functions of soils and the effects of artificialization, while creating a tension between territorial development (economy) and the preservation of non-artificialized soils (ecology). Through its projects, ANMA has observed the contradictory injunctions to which soils are subject. These experiences constitute the impetus for this research.



Extract 2. from the exhibition Terre Terrain Territoire, CAUE 69, February 2022 (ANMA)

A need for research beyond the mandate: about the exhibition Terre Terrain Territoire

ANMA is now supported by 6 associates with complementary skills, requiring enhanced listening and collaboration. ANMA is currently redefining the contours of an agency founded in 2001, at a time when climate change, which has become increasingly apparent in recent years, is disrupting and renewing the way cities are told and built in Europe.

ANMA began a research project that led to the exhibition Terre Terrain Territoire. This work examines the ways in

which value is attributed to urban soils: between memory, economy and ecology. This work firstly allows us to train internally on the dynamics of urban soils, to acquire the language of other disciplines (pedology, geology, ecology, hydrology, etc.), and to experiment with ways of representing urban soils. The exhibition allows us to transmit this knowledge to a large public, but also to sensitize the actors with whom we work to other ways of looking at soils, considering that the direct collaboration with technical services and politicians is not limited to the project but can be played in other arenas than the mandates.

Synergies between research beyond and within the mandate

This research allows us to accompany the actors in the change of logic that the future application of the ZAN represents in urban planning projects. ANMA has been trained to accompany the actors in the revaluation of soils, and in the narration of the project, through its beneficial role in the fight against the fall of biodiversity and climate change, but also for its cultural attachment in the territory. This research feeds back into the projects. For example, the agency is studying the mutation of a sector of the French Atlantic coastline subject to the risk of marine submersion, through the “Brière urbaine” study. This project is the sub-

ject of tensions between institutional, industrial and citizen actors. These soils, which have long been the subject of urban requalification projects, must be “returned to nature” to allow the potential waves of marine submersion to pass. At the same time, ANMA is coordinating an eco-neighborhood project that is the subject of a citizen’s mobilization in struggle against part of the project, claiming the status of “common” by experimenting with self-managed market gardening. This research, carried out beyond the mandates, allows us to take a “step aside” to return to our projects in a different way: the collaboration with other experts, the representation of soils and their dynamics, the narration of projects, constitute new fields of research that ANMA wishes to explore in new mandates.

MAKING THINGS.

Practicing co-creation in the marginal territories of central Apennine.

Maddalena Ferretti
Benedetta Di Leo

PRIN - Branding4Resilience
DICEA - Department of Construction, Civil Engineering and
Architecture
UnivPM – Università Politecnica delle Marche

This contribution aims to discuss two interconnected and ongoing research projects working on the re-activation of some municipalities in the Marche Region central Apennine in Italy with the goal to regenerate them through architecture: a Project of Relevant National Interest, “Branding4Resilience”, and a connected PhD research “RESEtting APPennines”.

The methodology adopted by these research projects is based on a combination of on-field research, action-research (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992; Swann, 2002; Herr, 2017) and collaborative processes, thanks to which researchers can understand potentials and risks of the place and have a more direct relationship with local communities.

The researcher goes beyond the mandate of investigation in that he/she begins a dialogue with the administration and the community to guide them through analysis and interpretation of data, towards the identification of strengths to be further enhanced (Ferretti et al., 2022).

MAKING THINGS.

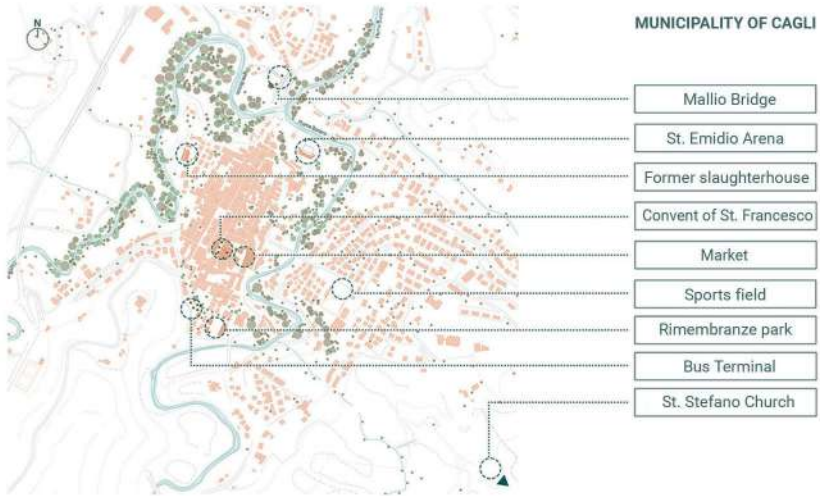


Fig. 1 The selected "potential spaces" to be re-activated in the municipality of Cagli: an abandoned cover market, an underused stadium, a former convent, a roman bridge, an ex-slaughterhouse, an arena, an oversized bus station, a park near the city centre and a church without the roof.

Co-design workshops are one of the tools used by researchers to address the ‘wicked problems’ (Rittel, H.W.J., Webber, M. M., 1973) of the selected inner areas (Barca et al., 2014). Co-design was used also in Sassoferrato, in the Italian central Apennine. Here community and local stakeholders were involved in round tables; researchers produced meta-projects on the topics of mobility, natural resources and reuse of the abandoned industrial heritage; and finally public discussions were opened to envisage alternative futures for the architectures and the territory. The intention is to implement similar experiences in other municipalities, such as Cagli, where citizens will be involved in imagining new public spaces, engaging them also with new digital and immersive technologies.

These approaches initially contribute to increase the awareness of the place by the community, its ability to network and care for the territory. They become an opportunity to co-think the reactivation of ‘potential spaces’ (Ferretti, Quattrini, Di Leo 2021). This helps to address common goals towards the enhancement of the city and to set strategic priorities at the intercommunal level.

In the framework of the research on the marginal territory of the central Apennine, the analysis, the interpretation and the dialogues have merged into the co-design process and have resulted in meta-projects on urban and landscape contexts.

MAKING THINGS.



Fig. 2 Co-design workshop, Sassoferrato: (clockwise from top left) surveys at the abandoned cement factory, researchers listen to the citizens' stories about the abandoned pasta factory, the dialogue with the local actors, presentation of the results to the local administration. © Branding4Resilience, 2020-2023. Coordination Ferretti M. Photos by Rigo C., 2021

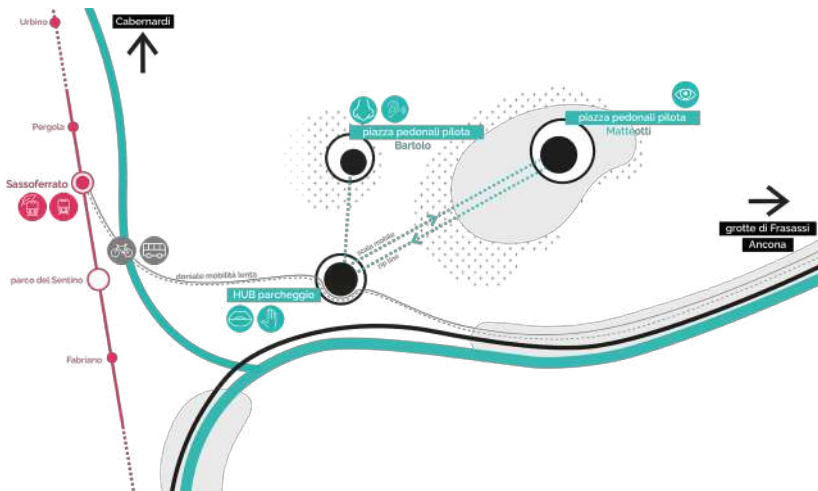


Fig. 3 Filoferrato. One of the output produced by the researchers during the Co-design workshop in Sassoferrato: design and mobility strategies to reconnect the historic centre with the rest of the city. © Branding4Resilience, 2020-2023. Coordination Ferretti M. Elaboration by: B. Lino (group coordinator), M. Mengoni, B. Di Leo, C. Andreani, A. Barreca, M. Pasquali, L. Moretti, 2021

The researchers, but also the students with their master theses, work on and with the territory, transfer their knowledge and competences and aim to produce short, medium and long-term impacts, using the architectural design (Amirante, 2018) as a regenerative tool to change the physical contexts they are working on (Wakkary, 2005). In the practice of co-creating public places, indeed, the architectural design is not only a trans-scalar and multidisciplinary research tool (Pietrzyk, 2022), but it is also a means to activate new networks of culture and knowledge, and thus produce new meanings for the territory: “making things to make sense of things” (Jungnickel, 2018). Moreover, the researcher-designer, in making things with and on the territory, especially in small towns such as those investigated, must handle the fundamental and fragile relationship with local actors, avoiding top-down solutions that are unrelated to the context and favouring instead new collaborative practices.



Fig. 4 Renovation project of a former pasta factory, Sassoferrato (Ancona), Italy: the building becomes a space not only for producing pasta, but also for co-cooking sessions and exhibitions. Elaboration by M. Campanelli, 2020

The relationships engaged with municipalities try to show how the university can support them in achieving more sustainable and resilient futures, demonstrating the importance of investing in the existing built and natural heritage, but also in human capital and local expertise. The meta-projects that have emerged and will emerge from the experiences described above cannot be built by researchers-designers, as the Italian regulation doesn't allow it. Yet, they produce unexpected impulses, lead to new collaborations and become ideas that, as it has already happened, administrations can use in calls for tender to obtain funds for new interventions. In these complex and multi-layered contexts, going beyond the mandate means exploring new fields of possibilities for architecture by making things happen together with the people that inhabit, or re-inhabit, this remote but central territory.

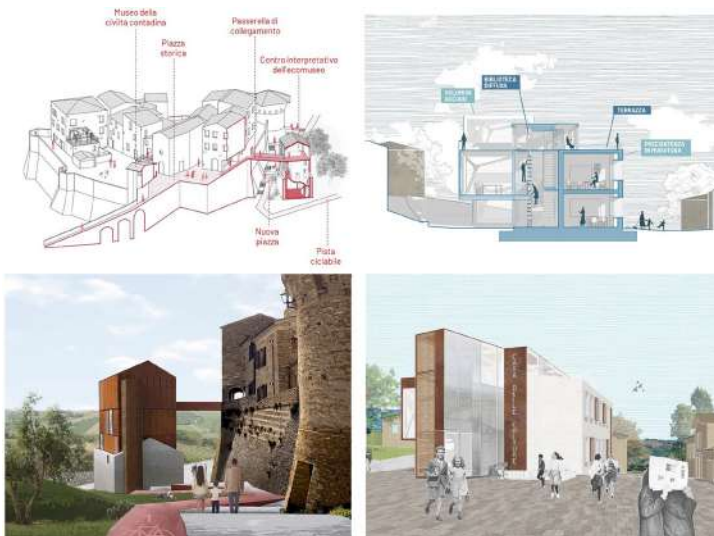


Fig. 5 The ecomuseum of agrarian historical landscape. Recycling strategies for the creation of an interpretive center in Lorettello and educational spaces in Palazzo, Arcevia (Ancona). Elaboration by: L. Marconi, L. Moretti

MAKING THINGS.



Fig. 6 A vision of the future Application "Reactive Map": an incremental and interactive virtual environment that over time will be enriched by data collected during the design thinking workshop. Elaboration by B. Di Leo, 2021



Fig. 7 A project for Piazza Garibaldi and its spaces: a hypothesis developed with the municipality of Cagliari to participate in a regional call for funds. Elaboration by B. Di Leo, 2021

MAKING THINGS.

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DE DENKBEELDIGE OPDRACHTGEVER

I don't know and I may not
want to know.

Laura Muyldermans

KU Leuven, Faculteit Architectuur
spiegel- en architectuurpraktijk

english version bellow



Léon Spilliaert - Les Flèches et la faux (1935)

Tijdens een eerste kennismakingsgesprek zitten drie partijen rond de tafel; de architect, de opdrachtgever en de denkbeeldige opdrachtgever.

De laatst vernoemde figuur neemt ongevraagd deel aan het gesprek. Het zoekt, voorbij het mandaat, naar diepgaande motieven en wenst deuren te openen voor maatschappelijk relevante experimenten.

Wat is het mandaat van de vreemde aan de tafel? De verbeelding als een verpersoonlijking van alles wat met architectuur te maken heeft, maar voorbij gaat aan de dienstverlenende vraag. Geïnspireerd door dat wat een kunstenaar als een mandaat beschouwt zoekt het naar mogelijkheden om als architect te ontwerpen vanuit een andere noodzaak.

Er zweeft hierdoor een bijkomstige vraag die Derrida eveneens aanhaalt in 'Over gastvrijheid': "hoe kun je openstaan voor iemand die vanuit het vreemde op ons toekomt?" Wie is die vreemde zielsverwante die het vrij, kritisch denken van de architect ten aanzien van het gevraagde wenst te vrijwaren?

De vreemde figuur wijst een weg vanuit een andere noodzaak en bepaalt zo mee het breder kader voor het verdere bouwproces.

¹ De bouwdriehoek bestaat uit de opdrachtgever, de aannemer en de architect

DE DENKBEELDIGE OPDRACHTGEVER



Januskop, de Romeinse god van ingangen en uitgangen, van deuren en stadspoorten, van verleden en toekomst. - Museo del Duomo sculpture

De denkbeeldige opdrachtgever wordt in leven geroepen door de architect.

Ze neemt op vraag van de architect deel aan het tafelgesprek.

De architect wordt een persoon met twee gezichten en krijgt een dissociatieve identiteit.

Een persoonlijkheid die door de erkenning van hun onverzoenbaar karakter via dialoog wel degelijk een geheel vormen.

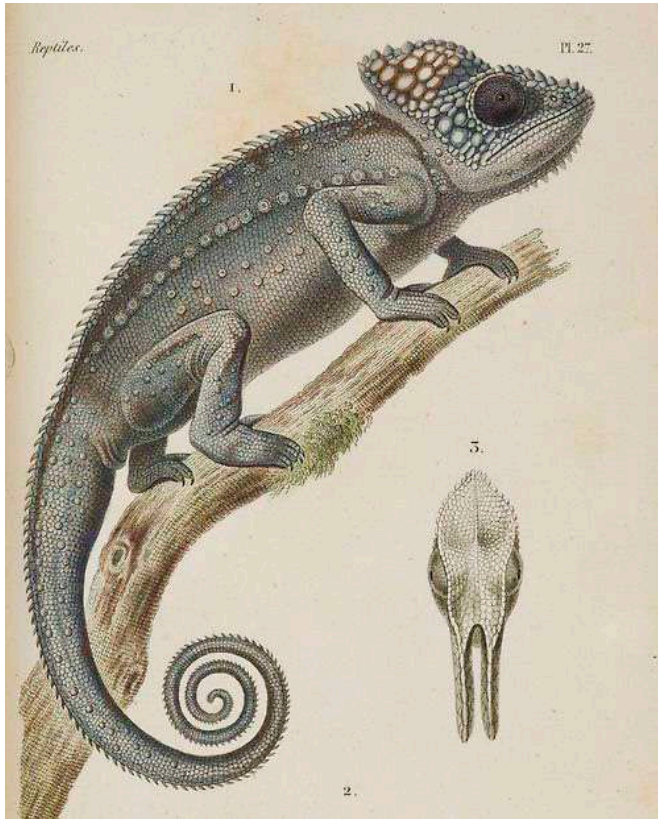
Het is een onafhankelijke verpersoonlijking, bevrijdt van elke vorm van artificiële coherentie in het oeuvre van een architectuurpraktijk.

De denkfiguur wordt ter bescherming van zijn eigen dubbelganger op een sokkel geplaatst.

De architect vertegenwoordigt het rijk van de macht en de schaduwopdrachtgever het rijk van het verlangen.¹

De erkenning van deze onverzoenbare identiteiten maakt een compromisloze samenwerking mogelijk.

¹ Oase – Wat hebben architectuur en filosofie met elkaar te maken? – Eric Bolle – 1987. Het rijk van de macht: de beheersing, de politiek en de techniek, arbeid, kapitaal, ... Het rijk van het verlangen: de overvloed, de ervaring van het er-zijn, van de kunst, van de poëzie, religie,



Ovit vento qui ad utatiumque consequere peliquas eicimos de volorest, sero exceptati nos tem harchitis autemperorum eniminus, officiant faceper ibusam conserovitas ut faci dolorro velluptam.

Om het dialectisch denken -die de Januskop lijkt te suggereren- te overstijgen, stuurt de denkbeeldige opdrachtgever aan op differentiedenken en een heterogeen wereldbeeld.

Ze neemt hiervoor een ambigue vorm aan waardoor de denkfiguur meerdere stemmen kan vertegenwoordigen.

Als architect komt het erop aan om een voorstel te formuleren die de vraagstelling van beide bouwheren gelijkwaardig benadert, ook al zijn deze schijnbaar tegenstrijdig.

De rol van de architect verschuift hiermee van privaat dienstbaar naar creatief en kritisch dienstbaar.

De denkfiguur gelooft in een positieve samenhang is tussen het kunnen omgaan met dubbelzinnige beeldtaal enerzijds en openheid voor de ander anderzijds.²

² Over de kwestie 'identiteitspolitiek' van Pascal Gielen – de witte raaf maart 2020

DE DENKBEELDIGE OPDRACHTGEVER



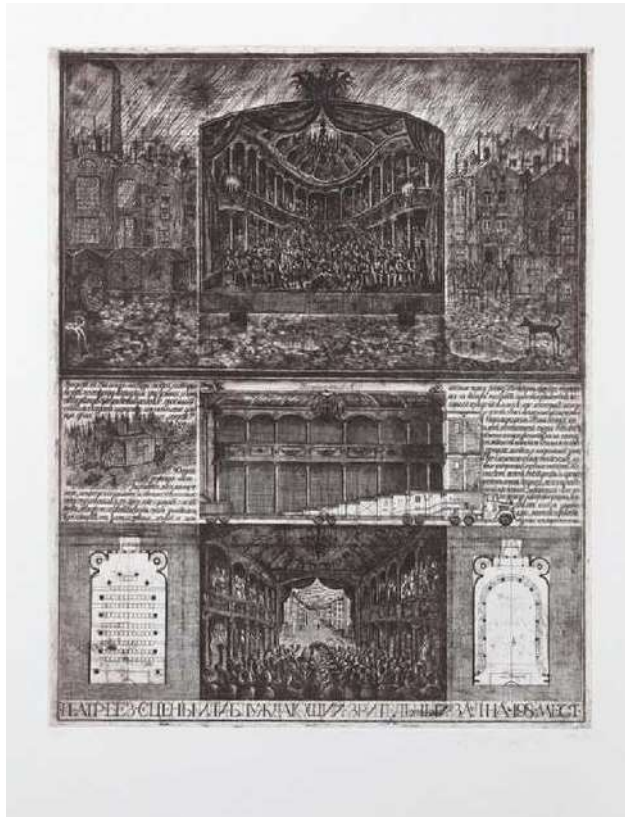
De 10 avatars van Hindu God Vishnu – “in de hindoeïstische filosofie betekent het incarneren of verschijnen van een (abstracte) god in de wereld in de persoon van een levend wezen.”

De denkbeeldige opdrachtgever is ten allen tijden en ongevraagd aanwezig.

De denkfiguur vertegenwoordigt bij aanvang geen éénduidige visie.

Op een gegeven moment neemt de vreemde positie in en creëert een eigen mandaat. Er vormt zich een concrete gedaante ten aanzien van een specifieke situatie. Dankzij de tijdelijke verpersoonlijking van een inzicht kan het, als schaduwopdrachtgever, actief deelnemen aan het gesprek.

De Avatar treed in werking vanuit een urgentie. Het kan bijgevolg afwezig zijn of ook zonder opdrachtgever verschijnen. Hij beschikt over de mogelijkheid om desnoods alleen, als opdrachtgever, het dialoog te voeren met de architect.



Alexander brodsky - stageless theater (1990)

Het heeft geen zin om de schaduwopdrachtgever te helder te beschrijven.

Het gaat in tegen zijn integriteit als Januskop, Kameleon en Avatar.

Wel is het belangrijk om zijn geest te voeden en te onderhouden.

Hans Holein verwoordde het in 1968 als “De manier waarop de architect in staat is om waar te nemen is afhankelijk van de mate waarin hij/zij verlengstukken voor zijn zingtuigen weet te creëren.”

George Perec trachtte de atmosfeer van een plek te vatten in ‘Tentative d’épuisement d’un lieu parisien.’

Umberto Eco spreekt over het “waarneming door het oog van de geest”.³

George Perec trachtte de atmosfeer van een plek te vatten in ‘Tentative d’épuisement d’un lieu parisien.’

Wat als de architect en de opdrachtgever, zonder vooringenomenheid, zintuigelijk en maatschappelijk waarnemen?

Luisteren naar datgene waarvan ze nog niet weten dat ze het kunnen krijgen.

³ De geschiedenis van de schoonheid.

English Translation (deep translate)

During an initial introductory meeting, three parties sit around the table;
the architect, the client and the imaginary client.

The last named figure takes part in the conversation uninvited. It searches, beyond the mandate, for profound motives and wishes to open doors for socially relevant experiments.

What is the mandate of the stranger at the table? The imagination as a personification of everything related to architecture, but beyond the service demand. Inspired by that which an artist considers as and mandate, it looks for opportunities to design as an architect from a different need.

Through this, there floats a secondary question that Derrida also cites in 'On hospitality': «how can one be open to someone who comes to us from the strange?» Who is this strange soulmate who wishes to safeguard the architect's free, critical thinking in relation to what is requested?

The strange figure points a way from another need and thus helps define the broader framework for the further building process.

The imaginary client is brought to life by the architect. She participates in the table discussion at the architect's request.

The architect becomes a person with two faces and acquires a dissociative identity. A personality that by acknowledging their irreconcilable nature through dialogue does form a whole.

It is an independent personification, freed from any form of artificial coherence in the oeuvre of an architectural practice.

The figure of thought is placed on a pedestal to protect its own double. The architect represents the realm of power and the shadow client the realm of desire.

The recognition of these irreconcilable identities allows for uncompromising collaboration.

To transcend dialectical thinking -which the Janus head seems to suggest-, the imaginary principal directs differential thinking and a heterogeneous worldview. To this end, she adopts an ambiguous form that allows the thinking figure to represent multiple voices.

As an architect, it comes down to formulating a proposal that takes an equal approach to the two building lords' questions, even if they are seemingly contradictory. The role of the architect thus shifts from private servant to creative and critical servant.

The thinker believes in a positive connection between being able to deal with ambiguous imagery on the one hand and openness to the other.

The imaginary client is present at all times and uninvited. At the outset, the thinking figure does not represent a unified vision.

At some point, the stranger takes position and creates its own mandate. A concrete form forms with regard to a specific situation. The temporary personification of an insight allows it, as a shadow principal, to actively participate in the conversation.

The Avatar operates from an urgency. Consequently, it can be absent or also appear without a principal. It possesses the ability, if necessary, to conduct the dialogue with the architect alone, as principal.

There is no point in describing the shadow principal too clearly.

It goes against his integrity as Janus head, Chameleon and Avatar.

However, it is important to nurture and maintain his spirit. Hans Holein put it in 1968 as «The architect's ability to perceive depends on the extent to which he/she manages to create extensions for his/her senses.»

George Perec tried to capture the atmosphere of a place in «Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien.

Umberto Eco speaks of «perception through the eye of the mind».

George Perec tried to capture the atmosphere of a place in 'Tentative d'épuisement d'un lieu parisien.'

What if the architect and the client, without bias, perceive sensually and socially?

Listening to that which they do not yet know they can get.

TEATRO, LO TUYO ES PURO TEATRO

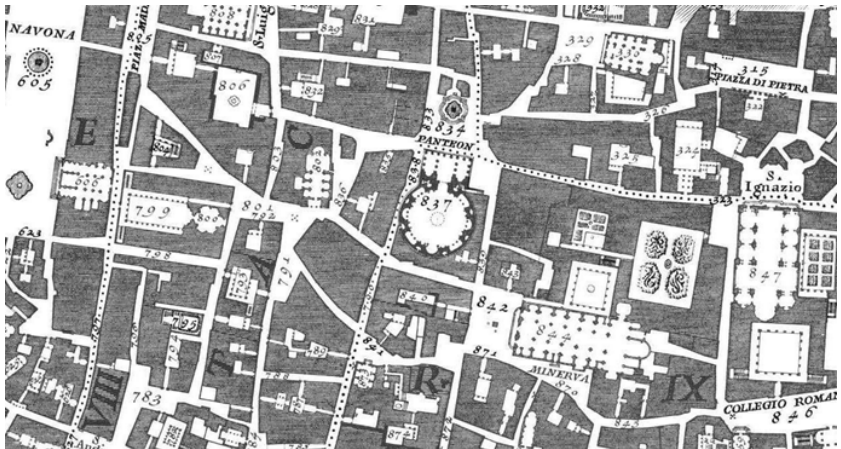
From the song "Puro Teatro", 1969 – La Lupe

Stephane Damsin & Jan Haerens

ULB Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta
Ouest

The city is the starting point, the framework and the goal. Our interest in architecture stems from the fascination of exploring the hidden and the ambiguous. Nuances and comprehensive complexity as ways of approaching the unexpected, the intriguing, the mystery and ultimately the fictional.

In the city, one can put on the incredible mask of anonymity, the most beautiful invention of mankind (intrinsically linked to the birth of cities). One can push the door of an ordinary building and find oneself in a much larger and different universe than what it seems from the street. The city does not stop at the facades, it enters through the doors and windows into the heart of the blocks and the inhabitants, in a complex and fascinating role-play. A constant and each time different update of Giambattista's drawing and understanding.



Giambattista Nolli: Nolli Map, Pianta Grande di Roma, ichnographic plan of Rome; 1736 - 1748

Our drive beyond the mandate is to link our architectural practice - a very tangible and pragmatic discipline by definition – with an understanding of urban fictions and narratives, to approach architecture as a setting and as an actor in our daily urban tales.

It's not by accident that our inspirations mostly come from cinema, literature, music, theatre, visual art or comics. But how can those fictions act not only as simplistic validations or references to the projects, but rather work in a mutual way? Where and when do the fictions shed light on the architecture, and how may architectural projects feed the different urban imaginaries ?

If we clinically dissect this fascination and see what is made of, three main ingredients would appear under our lens:

PALIMPSEST

The condition of *unfinished symphony*. A city is never done, never accomplished. In an architecture magazine, even about projects working with existing, there is often a clear *before/after* dialectic where the *after* is not only way better than the *before*, but moreover considered or presented as a *final result*. It's a kind of self-satisfied way of seeing, which fortunately disappears as soon as you walk around the city.

One of the ways of bringing this fascination of the palimpsest back into architecture is to carefully – and paradoxically, for our discipline ? – try not to *solve* all the problems, or to *finish the job*. Only that way, we can leave space for adaptation and evolution. There are many sustainable reasons to work this way, but the prior intuition to do so clearly comes from from the *fictional* power of leaving it open, as a built *cadavre exquis*.



Atelier Théâtre Jean Vilar,
model



Atelier Théâtre Jean Vilar,
view from the square



Conical intersect, Paris, 1975
Gordon Matta-Clark

BROADER

The awareness of the neighbors, of the surrounding city, even for a small private housing project can lead to finding answers not only for oneself, one's client, one's plot, but also for what is happening around.

A wider concern that brings both humility, feeling of the community, interaction with others. Also a possibility to challenge the program, often autonomous, while parts of the program might be existing or cared by a neighbour.

It doesn't always work, it adds complexity to the question. But let it be part of the scope ! And when it works in a way, you get the feeling that you are doing right.



Théâtre "Le Rideau",
the central patio



Théâtre "Le Rideau",
relation to the street (detail)



Rear Window,
Alfred Hitchcock

AMBIGUITY

The beautiful ambiguity and specificity of the city lies mostly in the fact that you can't read at first sight what happens behind façades. Still, a consequent part of the urban story occurs behind the walls, in a complex relation of hiding and showing, intimate and collective rituals and spaces. Limits between programs, buildings, users might be blurry also, and accentuate the equivoque.

The experience of pushing a frontdoor and entering in another world, or the sudden lost of understanding of clear limits or perimeter are powerfull yet subtle ingredients we could play with, trough architecture.



Atelier Claus,
from the street, two houses



Atelier Claus,
from the inside, a wider concert room



Alice in Wonderland,
Alice is looking behind a curtain to reveal a hidden door, John Tenniel

Practices In Research
7th of March 2023
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