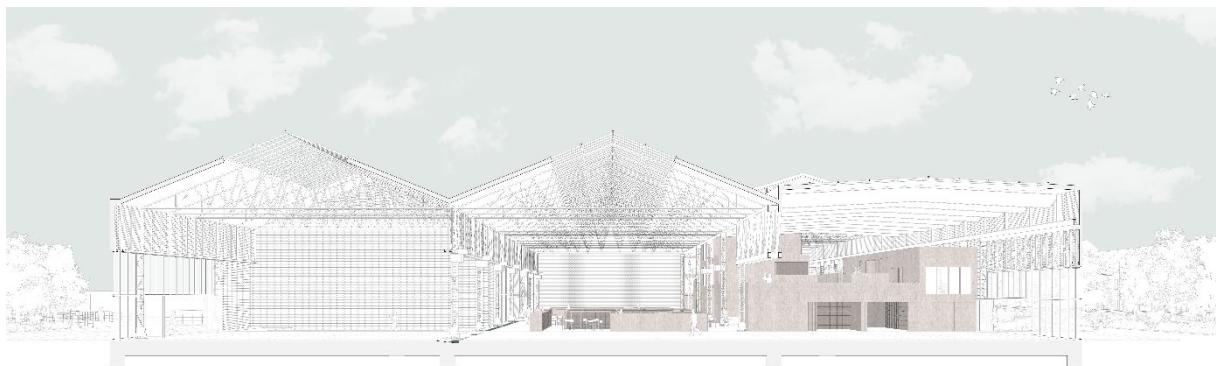


TRANSITIONS AND DIALOGUES

Imagining experimental prototypes along the canal Roubaix - Tourcoing

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Engagement: Urban Cultures



Project Cédric Dubois, master dissertation Heulebeek, Brussels, spring 2020

THE NEED FOR 1000 ARCHITECTURAL PROTOTYPES

In this studio we experiment with architectural prototypes that will install new dialogues between land and city, in order to value the potential qualities and characteristics of dispersed configurations.

Sprawl, nebula, cita difusa, are among many terms referring to a worldwide phenomenon of dispersion. A dispersed configuration is the result of an addition of small-scale individual decisions and initiatives, each with their own logic. As a result, this accumulation of fragments leads to a chaotic configuration in which city and land can no longer be distinguished from each other and function as one structure. A context we refer to as All City/All Land. Every site, every condition is at the same time urban and landscape. As there are no discrepancies between land and city, the AC/AL context is a non-binary structure. Although land and city are juxtaposed there is hardly any dialogue between them.

Caught in a traditional, binary logic between land and city architects and urbanists focus on either the loss of urbanity or the disappearance of natural landscapes. As if the dispersed context is an assemblage of “lost” areas that can never become interesting, characteristic and exciting configurations. Such a binary vision never leads to new experimental architectural types. Yet the resilience of the territory, the environmental qualities, the enormous biological diversity on a small scale, the social inclusion... of dispersed territories are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for new architecture and landscape types.

Ever since the 19th century architects have been experimenting with architectural prototypes as “ideal types” that introduce progressive dialogues between work, housing and landscape. Emblematic projects such as the Familistère (Godin) in Guise, the urban palace Villa Cavrois (Robert Mallet-Stevens) in Croix, the public spaces of the galettes (Secchi-Viganò) in Kortrijk or the reflection “the countryside” (Koolhaas) are **explorations of a new way of cohabitation and thus question, through architecture, the current social models.**



1 Gallettes in Kortrijk Secchi&Vigano

2 Le Grand Hornu, Mons, De Gorge

3 The Countryside Koolhaas

4 Familystere, Guise, Godin

5 Phalanstere, Fourier

6 Villa Cavrois, Croix, Mallet Stevens

These prototypes are often compact, articulated clusters introducing a new dialogue city-land. We are looking for a 21st century reinterpretation of the city-land dialogue. Just as in the 19 – 20th century we face a changing context: climate change, new economic structures, new forms of social in- and exclusion... Our society is evolving towards new models in the metabolism city and land. We need experiments that question and address the next urban question. By imagining new prototypes, we can make a statement on the evolution towards new urban and landscape configurations. We therefore need to question new ways of living, working and new social relations based on the hybridity of the current and future relation city-land. **We challenge you to question and explore the territory through architecture by imagine and experimenting with new prototypes.**

TRANSITIONS AND DIALOGUES

The objective to develop new reciprocal relations between living, work and land by introducing new delineated, architectural clusters carries two risks:

1. The risk of introducing an isolated social island
2. The risk of introducing a micro landscape, a world in itself cut from the surrounding landscape.

In the studio we cover these risks by designing transitions and dialogues.

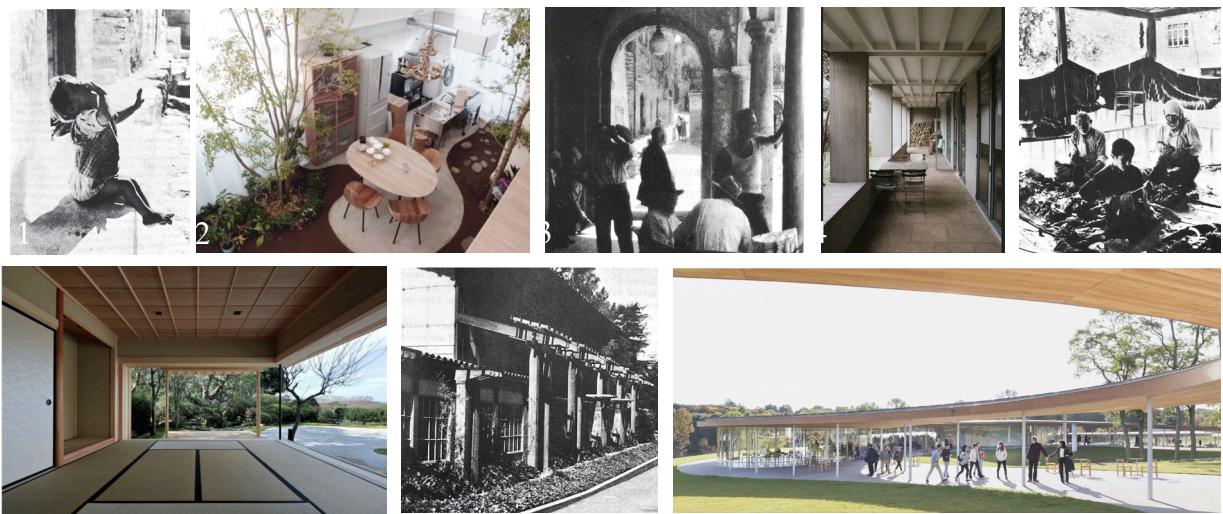
1. We are looking for new social configurations, reinterpretations of co-housing, co-working, urban agriculture, models of sharing and collective use... However, we cannot limit our reflection to the project itself, creating a new form of closed commune. We need to make relations and connections with the surrounding social context in order to anchor the proto-type in the current social structure, thus changing or influencing the existing social configurations. These relations can be indirect comparable to the social importance of abbeys or beguinages.

Which are the spaces and programs that can be shared with the local community
(think of the “chambre en plus” in France, workshops, bike repair shops, storage spaces, party rooms... ? How can the prototype become an urban destination, a point of reference in the daily life of the neighbourhood? Where do we situate these common programs: at the edge as an interface, in the centre or spread over the prototype and the landscape? Which configurations can optimize the dialogue between the prototype and the neighbourhood?

2. Historic prototypes are quite often, but not necessarily, closed delineated forms: a circle, a cross, a square.... These strict forms carry, however, the risk to create a closed, internal landscape in contrast with the surrounding regional landscape. **Can we imagine a domestic landscape that anticipates in the functioning and management of the surrounding landscape** on the level of water management, ecology, habitats, food production...?

The design challenge here is twofold:

- a. How to create a coherent continuous landscape with the surrounding landscape?
How to imagine an artificial landscape that anticipates in the metabolism of the surrounding landscape?
- b. How to make the new open space into a domesticated, collective space? How do we imagine the transition between the new open space and the envisioned architecture? How to use small scale elements to mediate between the private, collective and public realm: sills, changes of height, loggia's and bay windows, canopies, gates, windows...?



1 Sill, a pattern language 2 House with plants, Ishigami 3 Portico, a pattern language. 4 Private house José Van Hee. 5 Outside workspace, a pattern language. 6 T3 house, Saruta. 7 A double wall, a pattern language. 8 The river building, Sejima

THE CANAL ROUBAIX - TOURCOING

We experiment with prototypes along the canal Roubaix – Tourcoing. The canal is situated in the dispersed context of the southwest of Flanders and the Northwest of France. The canal is a cross-section of AC/AL, a showcase of different sequences in dispersed configurations and of dialogues between land and city. As such it offers a wide range of conditions: abandoned industrial plants, housing quarters – working-class quarters, collective social housing, urban palaces;..-, modest heritage, infrastructural nodes, wide landscapes, residual nodes in the infrastructural network, underused farms and agricultural land... Of course, one cannot cover the territory with new prototypical architectural interventions. So, we need to identify strategic sites and configurations to reflect by design on the need and importance of prototypes.

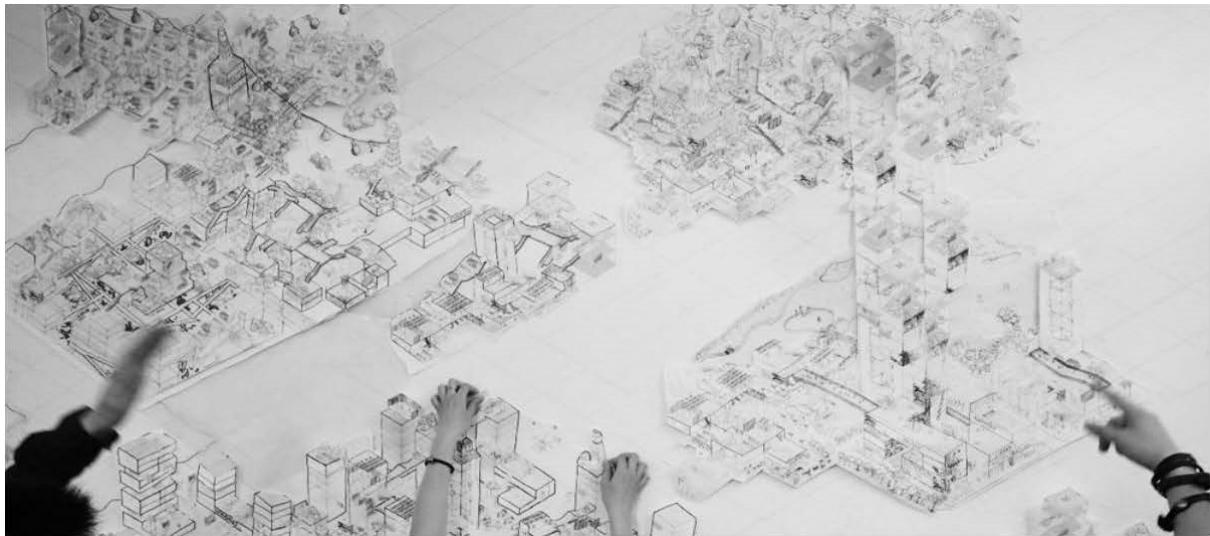
THE STUDENT'S CHOICE

Every individual project inspires the studio.

Based on a project of drifting each student chooses, from his/her personal interest, a site and design theme concerning the introduction of a prototype. **The focus of the studio is on the elaboration of an individual project.** The focus of the design will be on the introduction of dialogues and transitions on different scale levels (see above).

Every personal project **will at the same time inspire the studio as group, as design laboratory reflecting on the canal and the evolution of the surrounding territory.**

Apart from a reflection on the design of the prototype and on the evolution of the territory the studio will **reflect on the use and impact of prototypes by analysing projects and texts of reference.** (an anthology and list of projects will be discussed in the first studio week)



Vb Een groepsreflectie via een interactieve kaart waarbij de verschillende individuele ontwerpen met elkaar worden geconfronteerd om zo een totaalvisie op het territorium te ontwikkelen. The incomplete city Bartlett school London

The studio anticipates in an ongoing research of the research cell All City/All Land part of the research group urban projects, collective spaces and local identities (see <http://www.collectivespaces-kuleuven.be/>) . More directly the studio participates in the transnational project: the blue space of the Eurometropolis (<https://www.espacebleu.eu/>) a project to develop a waterpark in which the canal plays a major role. As such, if corona allows, we will discuss with stakeholders, administrations and specialists in water management, economy, social structures...

This brief is quite theoretical. In order to get a more concrete interpretation of the project you can consult the draft of a film by double clicking the image above. The presentation is in Dutch but the drawings speak for themselves.



OUTPUT

The output of the studio is

1. A set of drawings on A0. The list of drawings (about 7 elaborate drawings) will be discussed in the introduction (individual)
2. A model, scale depending on the design theme (individual)
3. A plan as a synthesis of all the individual plans + an interpretation of the territory of the canal. The format can be discussed. (group)
4. A booklet (individual) with
 - a. Diagrams and analysis explaining the project.
 - b. The key drawings
 - c. Analysis of a text of reference of your choice
 - d. Analysis of a project of reference of your choice
 - e. Additional information used to argument the concept, strategy and project.