Trace
Notes on adaptive reuse
N°1 On Tradition

The authors are members of the research group with the same name, TRACE. The research group is part of the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Hasselt University (BE) and is closely connected to the teaching staff of the International Master on adaptive reuse. TRACE has a focus on the emerging discipline of adaptive reuse in architecture and heritage, developing a theoretical framework from a designerly approach. Studying the historical context of a building or site, they identify and select specific traces – defined as bridges between past and present – of tangible and/or intangible (re-)sources as anchors for the design process. Exploring the spatial potentialities and the poetics of the existing, they consider the transformation of buildings and sites from within.

Etymologically, “trace”, both in English and French, derives partly from the Latin trahere and its noun tractus (genitive tractūs), meaning: drawing, draught. The Old French tracier also refers to ‘looking for’, ‘following’ or ‘pursuing’, probably deriving from the vulgar Latin tractiare. In old English it could also refer to ‘following a course, making and outline of something’, or figuratively: ‘to ponder or investigate’.

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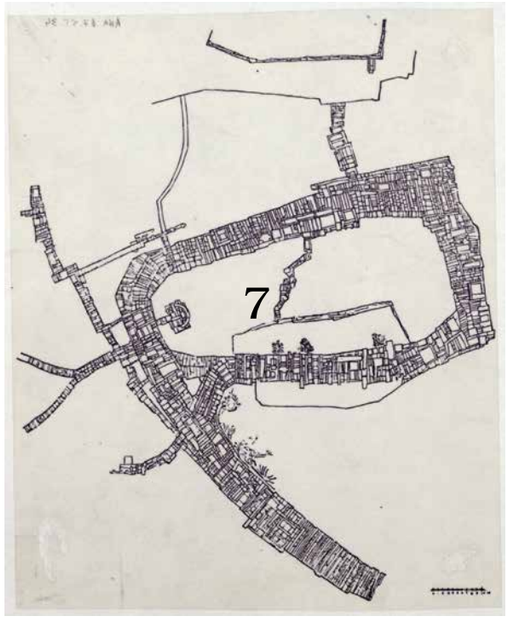


Preface

R. Cuyvers . . . . . .

The interior space of buildings is the most intense place that we occupy and live in. The workplace, the warm restaurant or the rather functional cafeteria, the wild environment of a night café or the quiet coffee house, the machine room or the clean lab, the functional operating room or the snooze room in the psychiatric clinic, the large auditorium or the coloured corner for toddlers, the baroque environment of an antiquity museum or the high-tech environment of a science museum, the functional kitchen or the soft space of the bedroom. The interior gives us a place where we feel good, a place where the most important and most intense moments of our lives take place.

The discipline of interior architecture – and especially its research – is developing in rather interesting directions. However, it may come as a surprise how few master's programs in interior architecture are offered in the higher education arena, especially research-based programs on specific subjects.

The interior program at the Faculty of Architecture and Arts at Hasselt University organizes its research and master education on four subjects: retail, scenography, designing for all and adaptive reuse. The subject of the latter became the concept for a new master program and the results of its first year are the subject of this booklet.

In Western Europe pressure on space in the urban environment is strong, and this will increasingly be so. At the same time, over the past decades, the same cities have been built up, rebuilt and expanded. Rapidly, however, the use and functioning of this urban environment are shifting. Buildings with a variety of typologies, scales, and meanings are losing their function in large parts of Europe and there is a need for new approaches and skills to find appropriate programs to adapt them in a smart and sustainable manner.

In the introduction Koenraad Van Cleempoel explains how the master program also focuses on finding appropriate ways of preserving buildings through design interventions, taking into account the layered memory of the site; both in its material and immaterial values. This entails the assumption that historical sites are part of a continuous process allowing for an ongoing dialogue between the 'old' and the 'new'. The built fabric is considered as a palimpsest.

The essay 'The emergence of the memory' by An Fonteyne and Saidja Heynickx discusses how the design process and the work with models and drawings are used to connect past and present. Taking the medieval Gruuthuse Palace in Bruges as locus, the ultimate aim was to envisage another future for the ensemble, that would allow its rich history to be experienced in a contemporary, active and direct way. The students were encouraged to propose a series of interventions that would integrate an ensemble belonging to the past in the city life of today and tomorrow.

In the article 'The interiority of the Landscape / The hortus conclusus as a leitmotiv for adaptive reuse' Nikolaas Vande Keere and Bie Plevoets describe the potential strength of a closed outdoor space in the design assignment for the Zwartzusters convent in Antwerp and various final master's projects. They provide a reflective framework for new interpretations of empty religious buildings. Paradoxically, the outdoor space becomes an essential condition to study the interior.

It is not only in the obvious redevelopment of heritage sites that there is a need for fundamental regeneration. Also in urban areas there are shifts in meaning, interpretation, and users. In the articles, 'Hybrid Business District' (Freek Persyn and Dieter Leyssen) and 'Traces of trauma' (Marijn Van de Weijer) the problems of the once glorious office district in the Brussels North Quarter is critically addressed. The office district could manifest itself thanks to the destruction of a lively Brussels quarter but now looks at its decline itself. The search for a way to continue to build on what is and what can be is a challenge in which students took part.

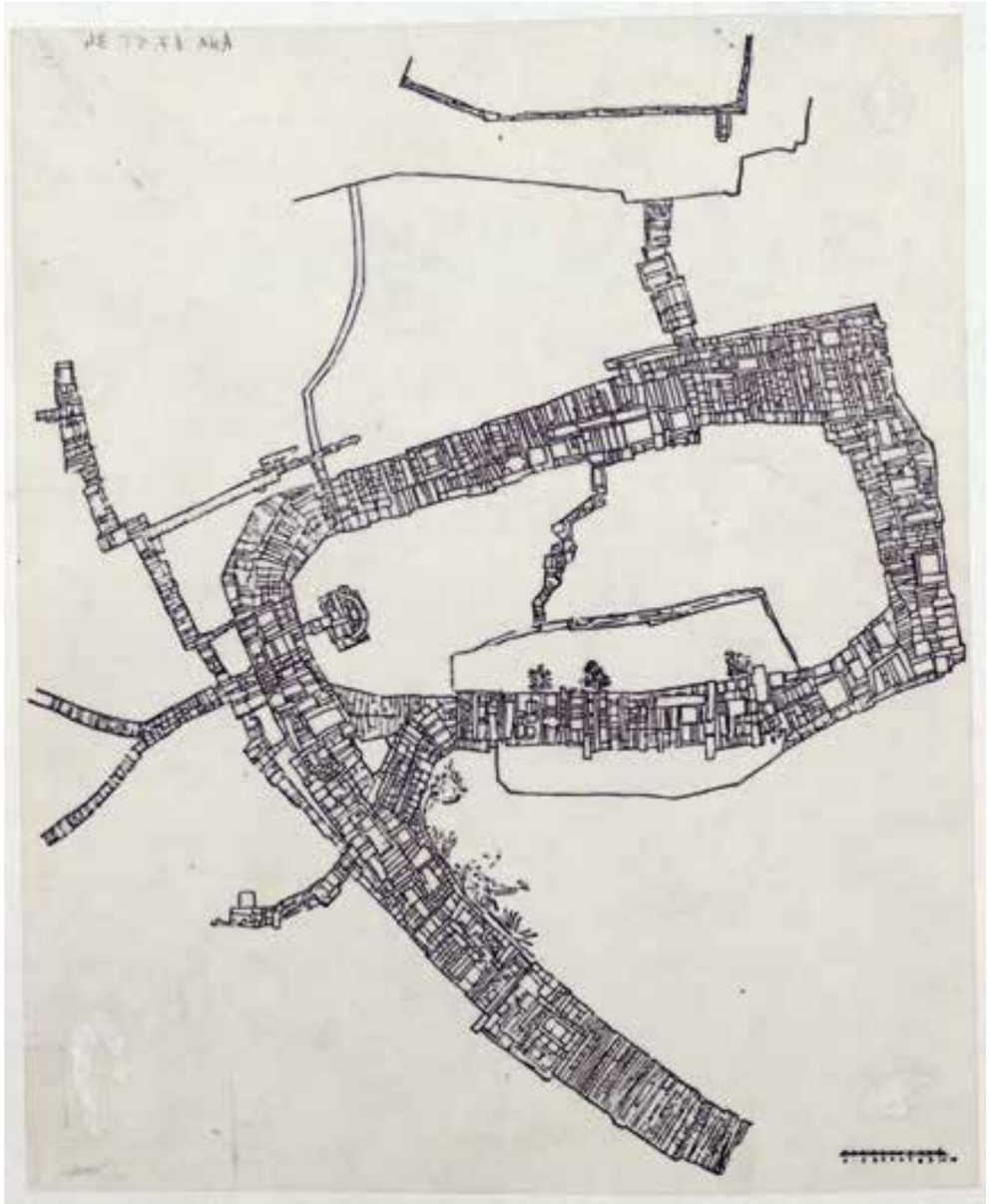
Cities and neighbourhoods are constantly changing. Residential and workplaces, museums and services, cafes and restaurants, shops and offices, there is an ever-increasing shift of functions and use. It seems that this process will develop even more intensively in the coming decades.

A sustainable interpretation of the built environment starts with the creation of buildings that can be used differently in a later life. Intelligent ruins, as bOb Van Reeth formulated, become a relevant concept. In other words, knowledge about adaptive reuse is at the same time meaningful in reformulating the old, but also in redefining new functions of the building.

At the same time, there is the intellectual challenge of taking the past into the future. In his article 'Traditions: forms of collective knowledge', Christoph Grafe reflects on the collective memory and collective knowledge as a basis for new narratives.

A short note on traces and memory

K. Van Cleempoel. . . . . .



[1] The reorganisation of the pathways along the archeological sites of the Acropolis in Athens was intuitively designed by Dimitris Pikionis. The routing ensures an optimal sequence of sites, landscapes and vistas while the paving of reclaimed stonework blends seamlessly with the fragments of the Hellenic past.

Visiting and interpreting the traces and documents of our past, invariably with fresh eyes, to discover hitherto hidden potentialities for the future, as one recovers coral from the bottom of the ocean or extracts pearls out of ordinary looking molluscs.

A. Pérez-Gomez, 'Architecture as Science: Analogy or Disjunction?', 1999.[1]

We will also be able to find, in time, as we are led by the architectural act's temporality, the dialectic of memory and project at the very heart of this activity. And I will show above all, how much putting into narrative form, projects the remembered past onto the future.

P. Ricœur, Architecture and Narrativity, 2002.[2]

Introduction

This series of essays reflect upon the initial year of the new master's degree: 'Adaptive reuse. Exploring the potentialities and poetics of the existing'. The basis for the new master's degree is the simple concept that young designers will increasingly have to deal with the already built. We move from a 'white-sheet' architecture to a situation where existing conditions invite alterations, additions, remodelling or, in short, adaptive reuse. We believe that this may require specific competencies and attitudes that we discuss with our students. The design studio takes centre stage, shouldered by a series of seminars and theory modules. This booklet presents the work of two studios, a two-week workshop and theoretical essays that emerged from the research seminars. The reader will soon discover that we approach (heritage) sites from an architectural angle, rather than that of restauration and conservation. Archaeologists and historians are primarily interested in understanding the site as it *was*, we try to explore what these sites from the past *could become*. Historical sites are considered as active forces in a continuum, rather than frozen in time. In his seminal work, *Building in Time*, Marvin Trachtenberg observes how in modern practice time is conceptually excluded because in "preservation the time of a work from the past is simply stopped by techniques of conservation, or even in extreme cases turned back through radical restoration measures, to an imagined, immaculate initial state."[3] There is a risk of heritage becoming a 'fetish' with its unique reference to itself and to its past, facing a challenge to create legitimate meaning for the present, and, more importantly to the future.

Transition or translation from the past into the present seems therefore logical. Fred Scott frames alteration as the mediator between preservation and demolition.[4] In the city, he continues, uses and occupations migrate from quarter to quarter. Change of use causes a change in the rituals of occupation. Buildings change as the city changes. Questions on methods for finding suitable programmes are therefore an essential part of the process. We are interested in finding appropriate ways of preserving buildings through design interventions, taking into account the layered memory of the site; both in its material and immaterial values. This entails the assumption that historical sites are part of a continuous process allowing for an ongoing dialogue between the 'old' and the 'new'. The built fabric is considered as a palimpsest.[5] Indeed, we argue that there is a paradigmatic shift from conservation to adaptive reuse. This will require a great sense of empathy and a capacity to engage and dialogue with a layered context. A thorough site analysis is obviously essential, taking into account material and immaterial values. Many examples are at hand to illustrate this desire but Dimitris Pikionis' path to the Acropolis of 1957 condenses elegantly the result of weaving past, present and future in a spatial intervention that blurs the boundaries between old and new.[6] Architecture becomes a cultural object that embodies a critique, or rather, a poetic reflection on its own past.[7] Traces of the past are considered as anchors and references for a new use.

Traces & memory

Etymologically, 'trace', both in English and French, derives partly from the Latin *trahere* and its noun *tractus* (genitive tractus), meaning: drawing, draught. The Old French *tracier* also refers to 'looking for', 'following' or 'pursuing', probably deriving from the vulgar Latin *tractiare*. In old English, it could also refer to 'following a course, making an outline of something', or figuratively: 'to ponder or investigate'. *The Concise Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford, 1964), gives nine different meanings as variations on 'sketching', 'copying' and 'following the track or path'. The final one is: 'visible or other signs of what has existed or happened'.

The richness of the concept of trace opens various possibilities to move swiftly between past, present and future. The hermeneutic spectrum from 'drawing' to 'memory' enriches the discourse. These lines not only refer to the *topos* itself and how drawings represent the existing sites in its past and current condition. They also represent a horizontal section in time; a chronological bridge between the past and the future.[8]

Because adaptive reuse is still an emerging discipline with a limited, but growing body of theoretical knowledge, it might be helpful to enrich it with other vocabularies. Paul Ricœur's metaphoric approach to architecture might be instructive. He explores the analogy between the architectural project—inscribed in stone—and the literary narrativity—inscribed in language. The first one would be located in space, the other in time. For Ricœur, architecture and literature perform as two different sorts of built form; both the architect and the author activate the same human faculty—'anticipation' and occupy the same human dimension of time—'present of the future.'

Mediating between anticipation and the 'present of the future' is memory, which links Ricœur's essay so elegantly to the transition of the meaning of architectural projects that receive a new life. His notion of memory is not limited to the physicality of the site. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, for example, it is linked to the concept of *eikon*, and to 'making the absence present'. There are two kinds of absence: the absent as simply the unreal, which would then be the imaginary, and the absent-which-once-was, the previous. Honouring the definition of the Ancients, Ricœur elaborates the concept of the previous-made-present. He considers the discipline of architecture as a medium to illustrate this mediation in time: the glory of architecture is to make present what is no longer. The memory of the *topos*, one could thus argue, opens up forces and generates energy to project itself into the future.

The intimate and respectful relationship with tradition—in its layered meanings—is, therefore, an important environment for this master's degree. The essay of Christoph Grafe appropriately addresses this by studying Eliot's beautiful essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' of 1919.[9] Reflecting on the particular relationship between a contemporary poet and the tradition of his discipline, Eliot encourages young poets to study in depth the history and the *métier* of their discipline. At the same time, however, he warns them not to copy these schemes. An engagement with the 'tradition' so he argues, should result in a historical condition operating as a compass for the future: 'historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence.' Young poets should not only dwell in the 'pastness of the past' but instead, use it for its presence. Eloquently, Eliot continues how this process operates in two directions: 'what happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it.'

Slightly bending Eliot's concept towards the discourse of this new master's programme could result in 'the futureness of the past', stressing the intimate chronological relationship between both conditions. A mere 'new future for the past' is weaker as it only refers to an ambition for finding a new life for a (heritage) site, 'futureness' expresses much more. It suggests the energy and the potential that is locked inside the past. This reflection does not want to seek legitimisation for bringing 'new' architecture in 'old' sites, it rather opens up for a possibility in which both appear in a unique synthesis. It is not about a suggestion of the past through the medium of architecture, which would be rather anecdotal; but about the realisation of an entirely novel situation. Of an entirely new—following Ricœur's vocabulaire—'configuration' that continues the existing narrative of the site by adding a new layer to it. By considering the built environment as a narrative, we would now like to focus on methodological aspects that can/could/might/may be relevant for adaptive reuse. Successful physical interventions can become the result of qualitative readings of the site's historical narrative, both in its material and immaterial values.

The art of reading the existing

We are thus interested in an approach that generates design parameters with relevance for engaging with historical artefacts, with or without heritage values. Such information can be gathered by 'reading' the site in two ways. First, via recognised scientific methods of various disciplines: archaeology, history, art history, anthropology, engineering and philosophy, among others. They provide primary and secondary sources. Second, through less orthodox methods, but of equal value to the designer. They operate in a more intuitive, associative manner. Other media, such as historical paintings, can, for example, be included as carriers of a particular atmosphere relevant for the specific case. Antonello Da Messina's Saint Jerome in his study of

1 A. Pérez-Gomez, 'Architecture as Science: Analogy or Disjunction?', in The Architecture of Science, Galison P. and Thompson E. (eds.), Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999, pp. 337-351.

2 P. Ricœur, Architecture and Narrativity, in Études Ricœuriennes, vol. 7, no.2 (2016), pp.31-42.

3 M. Trachtenberg, Building-in-Time, From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion, Yale University Press, 2010.

4 F. Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, London & New York: Routledge, 2008, 17.

5 F. Machado developed some 'pre-theoretical thoughts on remodelling that could be developed as concepts to consider what is specific to remodelling, how it differs from architecture in general, how it can be dealt with on a theoretical level, and what its most important potential, critical, cultural and educational values might be' in 'Old buildings as palimpsest. Towards a theory of remodeling', *Progressive Architecture*, 11:72, 1976.

6 A. Tzonis and L. Lefaivre, 'The grid and the pathway. An introduction to the work of Dimitris and Suzana Antonakakis', Architecture in Greece (1981) 15. The authors include the intervention of Pikionis in an argument to consider the specifics of the actual situation or the vernacular—coined here for the first time as 'critical regionalism'—as a potential for design parameters.

7 J. Utzon, 'Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of a Danish Architect' (1962), reprinted from Zodiac, 10, 112-140, in *Content*, University of New South Wales, no. 2-01, 2001, pp. 36-45.

8 Ersoy, U. (2014) Narrative Architecture: Paul Ricœur's Metaphoric Approach to Architecture, *International Society for the Philosophy of Architecture*, [blog] 30 April 2014, Available at: http://isparchitecture.com. [Accessed: 9 December 2017].

9 in: T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*. 1921

[2] Visualisation for public study room proposal in St. Martens Church, inspired by the atmosphere of Antonello Da Messina's *Saint Jerome in his study* (1575)

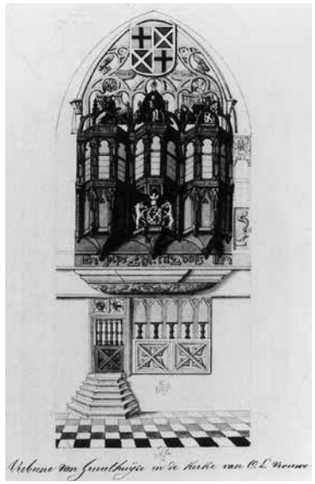
1575 was used in one of our seminars as a reference to create a public study room inside a neo-Romanesque church in St-Truiden. There is a particular quality in the intimate and serene atmosphere of the reading saint which is in harmony with the vast gothic space. The painting became a compass to remodel the *meaning* of the Gothic church: from a 'domus dei' to a 'domus studiorum'. The library-church of the Escuelas Pias de San Fernan—a converted baroque ruin destroyed in the 1936 Spanish civil war—operates in a similar way.

The result of these two methodological approaches—objective and subjective—eventually is a rich reservoir of potential design 'anchors'. They create a more or less stable environment to operate in. They are vanishing points in either direction. Let's take both studio assignments of the first semester as an example.

The first studio assignment by An Fonteyne on the late medieval town palace of Gruuthuse in Bruges was approached through the concept of manuscript illuminations. This association was helpful on two levels. First, it referred to the exceptionally rich private library of Louis de Gruuthuse (1422/7-1492) once housed there. After Philip the Good, he owned the largest collection of illuminated manuscripts in Europe, with some 190 volumes. The memory of that unique collection on that specific location was an important value to be included in the set of design parameters to remodel the site. Second, on a more conceptual level, the illumination was approached as a vehicle to communicate a particular atmosphere as well as a spatial model of representing interiors and their relationship to its environment. The students were introduced to the rich discipline of medieval manuscripts in 'Illuminare: Center for the Study of Medieval Art' of the Faculty of Art History of the University Louvain. But at the same time, they were invited to condense their design concepts into a miniature which they had to draw themselves as a starting point of their design process. They had to engage in a creative fashion with the medium of the illumination, also trying to incorporate aspects of the intended atmosphere. An interesting characteristic of the miniature is how it simultaneously combines many elements in one image: interior, exterior, landscape, movements, human relationships and sometimes even chronological anomalies (e.g. Mary reading the gospel in front of a medieval fireplace). Such iconographical considerations are the result of an art historical analysis. But for our purpose, they were only the starting point for a design process. This approach was further enriched in Saidja Heynickx' seminar 'Tactics', showing students the potentials of 'reading' a medieval space by the slowness of hand drawing and model making.

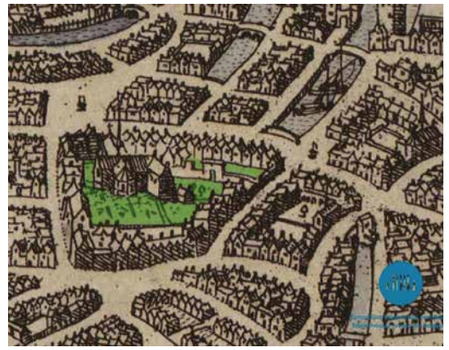
[10] *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance, 1936* M. A. Holly, *Panofsky and the foundations of art history*, Cornell University Press 1984.

[11] (Panofsky, 1972, p. 7)



[3] "Tribune of Gruuthuse in the Church of Our Lady"; private chapel connecting the secular palace of Gruuthuse in Bruges with the church, offering direct view onto the altar. ©KIK-IRPA Brussels

A second studio assignment studied the design options for an abandoned monastery in the historical tissue of Antwerp: De Zwartzusters. Again, starting from a medieval image—hortus conclusus—the iconographical richness was used as a metaphor to explore the meaning of the site in relation to its enclosed gardens. It was considered simultaneously as architecture and landscape, as a finite and infinite, introvert and extravert space. The typology of the *hortus conclusus* and its programmatic variants were to be used as potential 'building stones' for the regeneration of the convent. Nikolaas Vande Keere and Bie Plevoets explain in their essay 'how concepts, motives and narratives from the past can be translated into a contemporary context by encouraging students to get lost in metaphors and to interpret its typological flexibility and meanings in a personal and poetic way'.



[4] The accumulated inner gardens of the historical city block of the Zwartzusters convent in Antwerp (adaptation of fragment from *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, 1598 ©Royal Library Belgium)

Iconology of the palimpsest

Both studio assignments reveal what we referred to earlier as 'anchors' needed to stabilize a conceptual construct for the design process. Because of the particular relationship with the layered history of these heritage sites, we could name it 'iconology of the palimpsest', for lack of a better definition. It refers to the mentioned method of activating meaning hidden in the historical layers of the site. By establishing a methodological frame for interpreting images from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Erwin Panofsky differentiated an iconographical analysis—as a first layer of meaning—from an iconological interpretation, which he associated with exploring the intrinsic meaning.[10] This level communicates 'things that the creator of the image may not have consciously been thinking about. Through what we know of the world and linking the objects or codes in the work, this level allows us to reveal the underlying 'basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion—unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work'.[11]

The typical hermeneutical condition of iconology —as opposed to the more descriptive iconography— becomes a corridor between the *past and the future.* It offers the designer a set of instruments within a recognised methodological context. It can elevate the design concept to an unexpected horizon, so well described by Pérez-Gomez: 'Visiting and interpreting the traces of our past, invariably with fresh eyes, to discover hitherto hidden potentialities for the future, as one recovers coral from the bottom of the ocean or extracts pearls out of ordinary looking molluscs'.[12]

Despite the fact that two heritage sites in Flanders were used as studio examples, this approach is certainly not limited to a Flemish or European heritage situation. At least one splendid example from the master's projects testifies for this. Coming from South Africa, Rifqah Allie's project addressed the historical and artistic value given to heritage in Cape Town. She observed the loss of traditional crafts practised by the first generations of emancipating slaves. Much of their culture and crafts was passed on from generation to generation as tacit knowledge. As this immaterial heritage is steadily disappearing, it was Rifqah's intention to link it to the potential of material heritage by remodelling a listed neo-classical monument that has been vacant for many years, due to a lack of a suitable programme. She was interested to start off a process of adaptive reuse to exhibit a living heritage as opposed to just framing them in glass boxes and displaying them.

[Image sources]

[1] A. Dimitris Pikionis, Acropolis – Philipappou, The paved road towards Acropolis ©2018 by Benaki Museum Athens

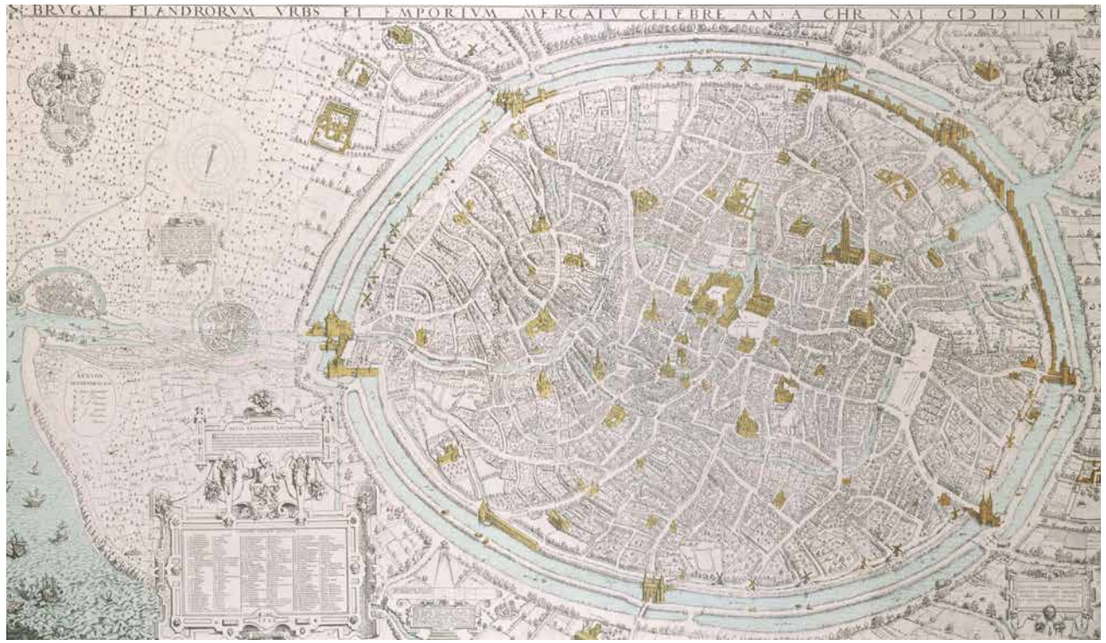
[2] St. Martenskerk, Sint-Truiden; Saidja Heynickx

[3] "Album met Brugse grafmonumenten: Bidtribune van de heer van Gruuthuse"; Steinmetzkabinet, Veurne. ©KIK-IRPA Brussels

[4] Adapted fragment from: Skelton. Civitates Orbis Terrarum, t.I, p. XXVII; t. III, liber V, (27). Retrieved from http://uurl.kbr.be/1035817. © Royal Library Belgium

12 A. Pérez-Gomez, 'Architecture as Science: Analogy or Disjunction?', in The Architecture of Science, Galison P. and Thompson E. (eds.), Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999, pp. 337-351.

The emergence of memory
A. Fonteyne, S. Heynickx. . . . . .



[1] Map of Bruges by Marcus Gheeraerts, 1562

This then, I thought, as I looked round about me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above, see everything at once, and still we do not know how it was.

W.G. Sebald, The Rings of Saturn[1]

When working in architecture, we are surrounded by the past. Even if we make a purely theoretical exercise, unbound to place or brief, thinking about form, material, space and light will be informed by what has been made before us.

But what elements of the past do we allow to advise us, which aspects do we select to ponder upon, where do we start? Sooner or later we discover that history has many faces and that there are different ways to approach the past stories and images that present themselves to us.

Working with monuments—buildings treasured as representations of a past worth remembering—helps us to make the ambiguities of this process explicit. It is in this context that we invited the students to study the ensemble of the Gruuthuse Palace in Bruges. We handed them the tools to start an in-depth reading of the place to give meaning and discover ways to interweave stories of the past, with the meaning of the present and potentialities for the future.

In Bruges, we notice that its fame and success has also become its main challenge. The city is occupied by tourism; visitors own its past, and it proves difficult to combine this with the pleasures of contemporary urban dynamics. This has to do with the impact of mass tourism but is not to be detached from the general approach implied to its built heritage. To monumentalise a site, and in this case, isolate the Gruuthuse Palace from its historical embedding in the city, seems to imply that it is discarded from any possible contemporary use. The past is turned into *History*, the city's best-selling product, with the ultimate desire for it never to change again.

The aura of authenticity

As a possible solution for the economic crisis that hit Bruges in the late 19th century, the newly elected Catholic city council decided under the stimulus of a cultural elite to focus on the celebration of the city's heroic past. Influenced by the writings of Augustus Pugin (1812–1852) and Viollet-Le-Duc (1814–1872), the city architect Louis Delacenserie (1838–1909) prepared a general plan for the restauration and embellishment of the city. New large-scale industrial developments were located in the periphery of the town to cherish the small scale and emphasize the medieval character of the city centre. Next to recreating public buildings to realise the urban ambition, financial support was offered to private initiatives helping to spread the desired image. People were encouraged to restore the brick appearance of their houses by removing plasterwork and paint from the facades.[2] With the upcoming cultural tourism in mind, the picturesque character of the city is precisely orchestrated adding bridges, loggias, monuments, squares and buildings where necessary. It proves to be the beginning of an economic revival that still has its merits today.

Gruuthuse Palace

Next to the Church of our Lady, the Gruuthuse Palace proudly takes position. It is by walking through a monumental gate that one enters the courtyard revealing the main façade. Behind the house, looking over its shoulder, stands the massive brick church tower. Although the house is a free-standing structure, it is impossible to perceive it as a whole. The possible views of it have been well composed, presenting the differently designed facades in relation to the idyllic canal streaming alongside it. The imposing church is standing behind it, seen from the picturesque alley covered by its oratorium descending from it.

[2] Gruuthuse palace in the shadow of Our Lady, ca. 1912

1 Sebald, W.G. (1998). The Rings of Saturn. London, Harvill.

2 Beernaert, B. (2009). Louis Delacenserie (1838–1909) De uitvinder van Brugge? De uitvinding van Brugge: de stad van Delacenserie. K. Vertongen, T.-H. Borchert and R. De Nolf. Brugge, Vrienden van de Stedelijke Musea Brugge. 29: 15-20.

[3] model by students showing the dialogue between Gruuthuse palace and the Church of Our Lady

Lodewijk van Gruuthuse (1422/7–1492) lived here in the 15th century. The house carries his motto 'Plus est en vous' carved in the wooden ceilings of its impressive interiors, cut out of stone above the grand entrance door, drawn in golden letters in the engaging attic space. The words are omnipresent, together with his initials and coat of arms as well as those of his wife; Margareth Lady of Borssele. One is immediately convinced by the rich history of the place, experiencing the monumental hall with its grand staircase, the great sequence of rooms—vast spaces of indeterminate use—the myriad decorative effect of symbols, the many secondary staircases connecting the labyrinth structure, the proliferation of landings and loggias. An iconic ensemble.

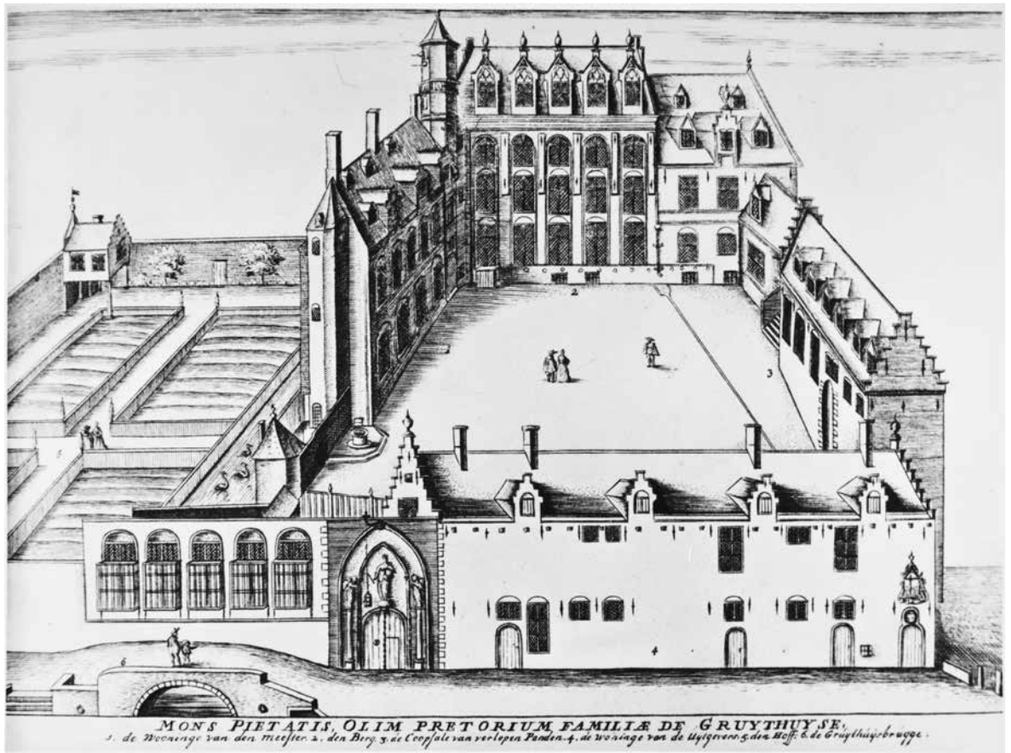
[4] Louis of Gruuthuse, 1472-1482

That is, until one learns about Louis Delacenserie's refurbishment of the palace. One slowly starts to understand that most of these architectural testimonials stem from the imagination of the 19th-century architect, picturing a palace more medieval than it ever was: it was under his direction that the palace was cast as a house dedicated to representation, as a storehouse of values, offering visitors a narrative of success illustrated by objects from the past collected by the members of the Cercle Archéologique.

Today still, the house is used as a museum on the history of the Bruges, guiding the visitor past objects, paintings, carpets and sculptures and offering the possibility briefly to step into the life of Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, most literally in his private chapel, one of the few original spaces in the building.

The monument and the everyday

As we are interested to investigate whether the everyday is also capable to honour the monument, we asked the students to look at the Gruuthuse Palace in a more intuitive way, not being restricted by the overwhelming presence of its stones, but by looking into the history of the house and its physical embedding in the city together with finding out more about the ways of its first inhabitant. The



[5] drawing of Gruuthuse ensemble while in use as pawnshop (Mons Pietatis) shows the connecting plot accross the channel

[6] student workshop around the site model

ultimate aim was to envisage another future for the ensemble, which would allow its rich history to be experienced in a contemporary, active and direct way. The students were encouraged to search for a potential outlook serving the citizens of Bruges rather than the numerous tourists and to propose a series of interventions that would integrate an ensemble belonging to the past in the city life of today and tomorrow.

The students looked at the house and its context in detail. They discovered anomalies in the relation between the public realm—street, canal, park, courtyard, churchyard—and the complex as a secluded whole. In the acts of building and rebuilding that occurred over time, important connections had been lost that are essential for a good use and a good understanding of the Gruuthuse Palace.

Two discoveries helped to formulate a way to reintegrate the house to the city. One is of a profane nature, the other concerns a sacral space.

[3] Beernaert, B. and J. D'hondt (1995–1996). Het Huis Arents, Dijver 16: een aanzet tot huizenonderzoek? Jaarboek Stedelijke Musea. Brugge, Stad Brugge.

The physical connection

The Gruuthuse Palace used to be located on a much larger plot. Towards the east, the public park across the canal belonged to the premise and functioned as a Lustgarten. The 1562 panoramic map of Marcus Gerards (1520–1590) shows both plots being linked by a bridge. A wooden platform gave access from the palace courtyard to the garden and linked it functionally to the Gruuthuse kitchen. The land provided the food.[3] Towards the West, the courtyard was enclosed and separated from the church cemetery by (subsequently?) a wall or a building.

The spiritual connection

The Lord of Gruuthuse owned a private chapel. Being part of the house, it reached out to the church and formed a physical connection to it. This oratorium offered the possibility to participate in the liturgy of the main church from within the private sphere, not only with a view of the main altar but also in a direct visual relation with the graves of his ancestors. The oratorium is one of the few original architectural elements of the house and helps us to understand the relation between the city and the church, the individual and the collective.

The chapel also explains the introversion of the devotion, the way religious life enters the intimate atmosphere of the house. It depicts the ultimate way to experience religion in the most private circumstances.

Both garden and chapel, cooking and contemplation, collective and private became important anchors and references for the students' quest for a relevant future use. Their collective proposal reinterpreted the ensemble as a common house, a house for a group of families using it together, maintaining it and benefitting from it. A house offering room to activities that no longer find a place in the average modern city house: growing one's own vegetables, cooking together for large groups of people, finding a place of solitude to study or contemplate. Activities that benefit from a scale allowing collective endeavours or from the luxury of a beautiful space.

The illumination as a mental drawing

Lodewijk van Gruuthuse owned one of the most impressive libraries of his time, consisting of about 200 illuminated manuscripts. By studying the technique of illumination drawing and reading the illuminations as a narrative expressing the experience of time and place, we understood that drawing in architecture can also be a means to focus on the impression that spaces make, rather than being a representation of their spatial logic. At that moment, we deal with the mental space and not the strict image of built architecture.

The students used this tactic of the illumination to concentrate on and express the essence of their designs. The use of the specific medieval language of perspective and the combination of interior and exterior scenes is an appealing instrument for a mental drawing. Using an unfamiliar language for expression, here the medieval depiction forces the speaker to articulate very precisely.

[7] Manuscript illumination *Annunciation, birth and education of Maria*, Jean Mansel, Fleur des histoires, ca 1450-1458 © Royal Library of Belgium

[8] illuminating the essence of the design project

Towards a new modelling of the site, step by step

The first step to understand the site and to get a grip on the elements was the collective construction of an extensive site model, focusing on the ensemble in its historical context, rather than on the palace itself. The group effort of making this site model, in an abstract form by volumetric scaling, forced the students to understand the setting and the proportions of the site. The model became the central focus of discussion during the two-day-long workshop on site. Hence, the omnipresent feeling of the church, the awareness of the potential green of the lost enclosed garden, the different levels of interiors and the complex interconnection with bridges and gateways were inserted in this model.

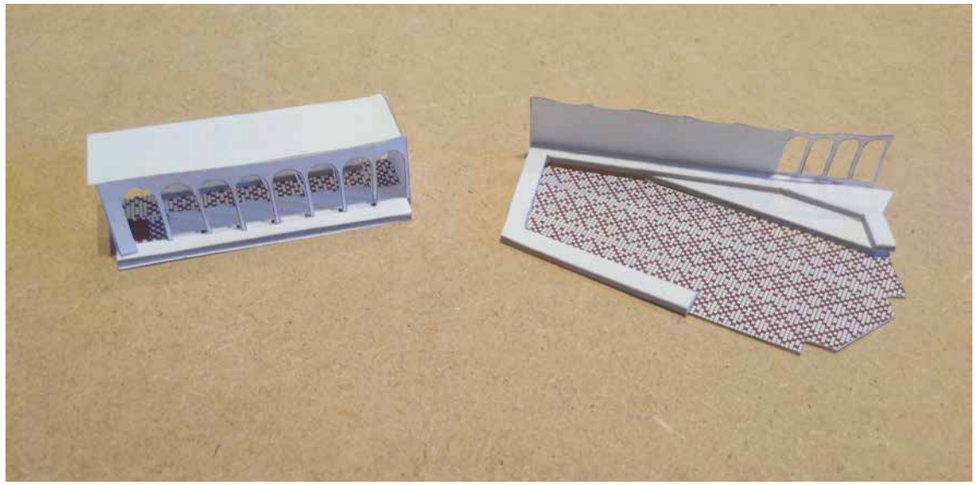
The model was the collective result of a process of making individual parts and combining them. This aspect of making is important to connect to the layers of time on the site. Tim Ingold states that making is also a practice of weaving. The process of actions creates a new dimension, like the weaving of a fabric. This process entails '… reading it forwards, in an ongoing generative movement'.[4] The final design is not the important target at the moment of the construction of the, in this case, existing site. The two anchors mentioned before, connections on a physical and a spiritual level, are intertwined and experienced through the making of the model.

Finger exercise with tiny white models

To alternate the act of making the site through modelling—no design question was stated at this moment—we started with some first exercises of interventions onto the site model. These small spatial interventions in white paper without a well-fixed programme served as intuitive finger exercises, reflections on space without strict outlines or rules. The only question/request was to look carefully at the potentialities of the site and to enrich the existing by inserting tiny adaptations. It is a strategy of giving small presents to provoke enthusiasm.

The students learned that the introduction of an arcade could become the solution for a lost connection and a resting point next to the water, while alterations to the west side of the palace courtyard immediately provoked discussions about privacy and the exchange between the individual and the collective. A little tower inserted into the former Lustgarten installed a new perspective on the historic landscape of towers and facades.

These intuitive interferences proved to be an important second step in the approach to the site: studio work and design interventions were used to rephrase the site in a non-categorical way. The discussions and interactions between ideas, physically present in the first site model, led eventually to the common ground necessary to continue the research. The object of the model as a starting point as stated earlier becomes a subject at that moment.



[9] the repetition of arcades and tile paterns are used as a design strategy

4 Ingold, T. (2010). 'The textility of making.' Cambridge Journal of Economics 34(1).
5 Flores, R. and E. Prats (2008). Through the canvas, architecture inside Dutch paintings. Sydney, University of New South Wales.

[10] the decorative tower of Gruuthuse palace is repeated in the context of the lustgarden

The site and the surroundings of the Gruuthuse Palace act like a canvas, a constellation of elements that interreact. In this regard, there is a parallel with the pedagogical work of contemporary architects Ricardo Flores and Eva Prats. In an elective design studio in 2008, they used Dutch paintings from the 17th century as a starting point, intertwining the direct historical reading of the painting and the spatial qualities in the strategy of the studio. Ricardo Flores explains the value of the studio: 'All this overlapping of different thoughts and materials produces new ideas which spark new work. In the end, it is difficult to separate thoughts and works.'[5] For Flores, the 'pursuit of knowledge' in the studio is conducted through this specific interaction.

Time for thinking is essential for an architect. The two first steps, the construction of the site model and the little experiments, were followed by the individual design of a well-defined part of the ensemble. We will illustrate this with three projects.

In the project of Linde Van Den Bosch, the direct connection with the meaning of the book and illuminated manuscripts is used as a spatial representation tool. The expression of a programme in the interiors of the Gruuthuse Palace takes the complexity of the private library and the connection with the Church of our Lady as a starting point. The circulation and programmatic insertion of a new open library are represented in a model that works as a book. The model is a sum of sections, out of laser-cut cardboard and placed on top of each other. Drawing the space and the making of it are the same. The trajectory in making the space is like pacing through time. Precise interventions are explained in a second set of models: new bookcases use the roof and the spatial quality for an articulation in detail of the library project.

The act of studying, an important activity in the palace, is (re)introduced and expanded in the building by the introduction of cabinets by Michiel Houben. This approach on a furniture level finds its conceptual base in the Renaissance idea of the studiolo. The studiolo as an enclosed and almost secret space was the most private of places in former palaces. The offer of a space for concentrated thinking and working in a private atmosphere is an important re-reading of the meaning of the past. The desire temporarily to leave contemporary society—

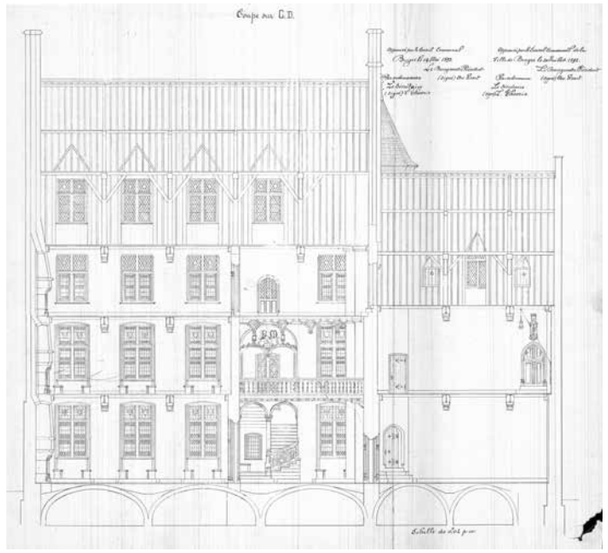
[11] book made out of laser-cut sections investigates the smallest wing of Gruuthuse palace

[11] book made out of laser-cut sections investigates the smallest wing of Gruuthuse palace

with the omnipresent access to all information through the wi-fi—to focus on individual study in isolation is the starting point of the spatial intervention. The detailed model shows a defined conceptual approach. The injection in the Gruuthuse Palace with the new studiolos, enclosed boxes for meditation and concentration on its own, is a strategy of contrast. Similar to a piece of furniture, the boxes can be removed after some time.

The layering in the work of Tahnee Turelinckx is different. To understand the levels of time and the subsequent perspectives on the importance of the façade in the city, she made a model with a representation in three dimensions of drawings and old historic material. The model combines an analytical and chronological approach with the reconversion of the interior use of the house. Not the pacing through time and space as mentioned in the first project or the conceptual insertion of a Renaissance idea, in this case the studiolo in the second design proposal, but the rephrasing of the kitchen on the waterside forms the core of this project. Can the kitchen become a new gateway of the site? And what with the view on the boats full of tourists on a journey of exploration? New windows, which contrast with the existing situation but also connect to the complex history of the façade, visually relink the two sides of the canal and conceptually reflect on the private use of the monument as an object of a mass consumption.

The method of taking the liberty to design after a detailed survey with models develops a more intuitive approach of looking, reading and questioning a design potential. The result is a series of sensitive and meaningful interventions in the Gruuthuse Palace and—very important—its immediate context. The personal aspect, whether this is a fascination for the library or a strong belief in an analytical approach of a façade history, questions the site as a vivid element. The results show that looking at sites in a historically relevant way, but without prejudice and exclusion, opens up possibilities for everyday use that are often overlooked. A house has a history of its own, and through isolating heritage and freezing it in a certain state, history is not only conserved but also terribly lost. The aura of authenticity must be unlocked for the monuments to be appreciated for their spatial and spiritual qualities.



[12] section through main wing by L. Chooris, 1892.

[13] model of historic study of facades, project by Tahnee Turelinckx

Conclusion

We feel that approaching conservation in a static way, in dealing with history as a finished part of time, does conserve history but also isolates it from many layers of meaning. We believe that allowing the present to offer new ways of use, always in relation to historically relevant stories, adds meaning to living today, but also keeps the past alive in a much more relevant way. A way that strives for continuity and a way that allows people living today to learn from the past, activating the past by having to walk in the footsteps of others using the buildings before us. The process of weaving the past and the present offers a new way to learn from history, to look at history, to experience history and to open up our imagination—by using the model—of the here and now. Appreciation will grow, respect will grow, as it will be possible to experience the past first-hand. And at that very moment, the intervention with the model becomes an interwoven connection with time.

[Image sources]

[1] Map of Bruges by Marcus Gheeraerts, uitgave en © Koninklijke Gidsenbond van Brugge en West-Vlaanderen v.z.w..

[2] "Zicht op het Guido Gezelleplein". J. Declercq, 1912, Bruges, Erfgoed Brugge, Beeldbank. https://zoeken.erfgoedbrugge.be/detail.php?id=323760510

[3] sitemodel by students, Linde Van Den Bosch

[4] Portrait of Louis of Gruuthuse, Collectie Musea Brugge – Groeningemuseum C. Lukas – Art in Flanders vzw, foto Dominique Provost

[5] Brugge (Gruuthusemuseum), België: Bladzijde 270 van de Flandria Illustrata van Antonius Sanderus. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gruuthuuse_Sanderus.jpg

[6] studio workshop on site (Bruges), Burcu Esentepe Beyit

[7] Jean Mansel, ca. 1450-1458. Fleur des Histoires. Brussels, KBR, ms. 9231, f. 179r. © Royal Library of Belgium

[8] Gruuthuse illumination, drawing/montage, Rifqah Allie

[9] tiny model of arcade. Michiel Houben

[10] tiny model of tower. Linde Van Den Bosch

[11] model as a book, project by Linde Van Den Bosch. Emma Boelen

[12] L. Chooris 1892, Archief Dienst Monumentzorg Stad Brugge

[13] study of facades, Tahnee Turelinckx

The interiority of the landscape
The *hortus conclusus* as a leitmotiv for adaptive reuse

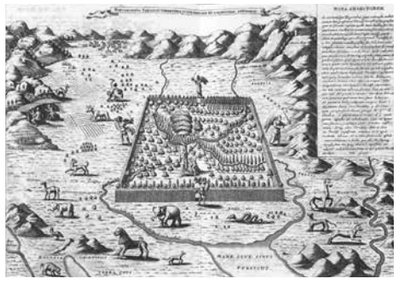
N. Vande Keere, B. Plevoets. . . . . .

[1] Little Garden of Paradise, by Upper Rhenish Master, circa 1410-1420

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride; a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up."
(Song of Songs 4:12)

Hortus conclusus

Hortus conclusus literally means enclosed garden. It is often referred to as the archetypical figure of the garden as humanised nature, an outdoor space sheltered or protected from the inhospitable world outside. Its typology is most likely imported from eastern culture and proved to be versatile to be applied in different configurations. Historically, the garden is commonly conceived as a cultivated piece of land confined by a fence or wall. As a courtyard of a building, it acquires an architectural role: a flexible and open space allowing multiple uses and offering light and air into the indoor spaces surrounding it. As a model for a monastery or cloister garden, it isolates itself from the outside world and invites introspection and prayer. Characterised by the typical surrounding corridor or cloister, four paths lead to a central fountain. The typology is also suitable to transform and lend itself to different functions like the yard of a farm or housing estate. Or even obtain a public quality as the bustling urban square in a dense city centre.



[2] Representation of Paradise, using the *hortus conclusus* as an archetypical figure of the garden as humanized nature, an outdoor space sheltered or protected from the inhospitable world outside.
Arca Noe, typography of paradise, by A. Kircher, 1675

The term *hortus conclusus* is charged with spiritual meaning and symbolism. First mentioned in the poetic Song of Songs in the book of Solomon in Genesis, it is part of both Judaic and Christian tradition. The text plays a varying role in religious but also secular culture throughout time. Different interpretations are a witness of the historical development of its meaning or interpretation and seem to also reflect on the depiction of its garden, fluctuating between a realistic and allegorical quality. In a literal interpretation of the text, the garden forms the setting for King Solomon's nuptial song, a primal love story most likely recited at weddings in ancient (pre-Christian) times. As an allegorical tale, the story recounts the relationship between god and the faithful, transforming in a Christian context in the love between Christ and his church.

In medieval and renaissance paintings, the *hortus conclusus* is used as a symbol for love and for purity. The garden is depicted as the place of Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, but many times also in the presence of the child Jesus or as the setting for a larger company, deliberately confounding its religious origin with a more secular quality of a garden of love, referring in its turn to the garden of Eden; the painting '*The little Garden of Paradise*' [1] shows somehow an ambiguous image as it places religious figures in a secular, playful decorum.[1] The (intended) confusion about the meaning of the painting is characteristic for the *hortus conclusus* as a leitmotiv in literature and visual arts. Both text and its setting of the garden clearly are fertile ground for the imagination, its spirituality not limited to a Christian background. Its poetic interpretations have achieved a multiple quality in time and have therefore been borrowed by others even recently. The garden is still often used as a metaphor for the soul or a gateway to the inner self.[2]

In this essay, we depart from the *hortus conclusus* as a spatial form[3], more particularly as a room or interior, but open to the above. We approach the *hortus conclusus* simultaneously as architecture and landscape, finite and infinite, introvert and extravert space. Given this ambiguity, the space has the potential to acquire different meanings both functionally and symbolically. The metaphor for an interior space or room takes a step back from the (imaginary) inner space suggested above but is of course allied to it as the room is the intimate space *par excellence* to come to oneself.[4]

1 See also Gothein, M.L. (1928) translated by Archer-Hind, L. (2014). *A History of Garden Art.* Cambridge: Cambridge Library Collection, (pp. 193-195). The author describes the features of the painting (Figure 1) and traces some of them back to older drawings of a garden of love.

2 Examples of thinkers who have used the *hortus conclusus* as a metaphor for the human soul are Vernon L. (1931). *Hortus Vitae. Essays on the Gardening of Life.* London & New York: John Lane: The Bodley Head; Kluge, A. (2011). Gardens are like Wells. In P. Zumthor & P. Oudolf (Eds.), *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011: hortus conclusus* (pp. 18-21). London: Koenig Books; Pint, K. (2017). *De wilde tuin van de verbeelding, Zelfzorg als vrolijke wetenschap.* Amsterdam: Boom Uitgevers.

3 See also Aben, R., & De Wit, S. (1999). *The enclosed garden: history and development of the hortus conclusus and its reintroduction into the present-day urban landscape.* Rotterdam: 101. This book presents an in-depth study of the history of the enclosed garden as an architectural typology, its meanings, and programme and aims to show how this typology can be reactivated in the contemporary urban landscape as generator and counterpart of urban processes. Although the richness of the concept of the *hortus conclusus* is recognized by the authors, they do not fully capture its ambiguity in their theoretical exploration. In our view, the design proposals presented as a concluding chapter do not exploit the metaphorical power of the *hortus conclusus* to the full.

4 See also Praz, M. (1964). *The house of life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. In an autobiographical account of his own apartment in Rome the author considers the interior as a representation of the individual.

[3] The intangible quality of the hortus conclusus has been employed by Peter Zumthor in the Pavillion which he designed for the Serpentine Gallery in 2011. The pavilion which is freely positioned in the landscape and looks like a black box from the outside, reveals an enclosed flower garden to the visitor. The garden, surrounded by a gallery evokes silence and functions as an intimate space for retreat in contrast with the open and public character of the park.

The garden as a room

The garden as an interior space or room is intuitively easier to understand if we refer to its most recognisable characteristic: its atmosphere, this intangible quality that hints at both a historical character and a personal experience. Regarding the atmosphere of the garden and by extension the landscape as the home for a multitude of atmospheres was the starting point for several design projects in this year's International Master's programme. Using the atmospheric and imaginative quality of the *hortus conclusus* as a tool, the second design studio in the first semester investigated the adaptive reuse of the Convent of the *Zwartzusters* in Antwerp. The approach also inspired some of the master's projects during the second semester, mostly the projects that dealt with religious heritage.

In many of the buildings and sites at stake, the historical typology of the *hortus conclusus* has been shaped through a process of transformation, addition, demolition or ruination. We encouraged students to (re)activate those enclosed gardens, both their functions and meanings as a catalyst for adaptive reuse of the site. In what follows, we present the assignment for the *Zwartzusters* convent and three master's projects.

The Convent of the Zwartzusters

The convent of the *Zwartzusters* dates back to the 14th century and is one of two monasteries historically dominating the neighbourhood of Saint Paul in the old centre of Antwerp. Together with the built heritage, most of the inner gardens of the city block

originally belonged to these monasteries and have therefore a religious character. Today, their remains are still visible but largely neglected with some of the buildings partly in ruins. The aim of the design assignment was to give back the abandoned site to the city. This by reviving the old convent through its transformation into a co-housing project and by introducing a conceptual framework for the transformation of the inner area into public space.

The studio started with a guest lecture by landscape artist Rudy Luijters on the historical programmatic and symbolic variants of the *hortus conclusus*, and their potential for a contemporary translation:

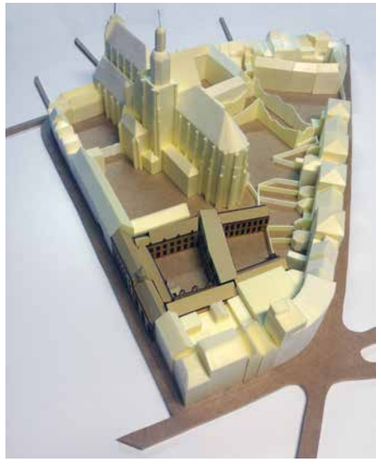
1. *Hortus ludus*: pleasure garden or 'garden of love', intended as a social space for games and play. The *hortus ludus* finds its origins in court life.
2. *Hortus catalogus*: geometrically arranged garden of plants (vegetables, herbs, flowers, ...), beyond its nutritive, medical, botanical or other use often also expressing knowledge or wealth
3. *Hortus contemplationis*: garden of contemplation with minimal vegetation and the sky as a celestial ceiling. The *hortus contemplationis* is surrounded by the cloister or claustrum and is considered the most sacred and intimate place of a convent or monastery.[5]

The typology of the *hortus conclusus* and its programmatic variants were to be used as potential 'building stones' for the regeneration of the urban site of the Zwartzusters convent, however, not necessarily limited to the three described types. At the start of the exercise, the students spent four days in the convent to survey and analyse the existing building and its surrounding gardens. The following questions guided their research: What could be the appropriate atmosphere(s) for the inner area of the convent and city block? How does this collection of inner gardens relate to the surrounding streets and how are they layered and connected? Can they (still) function as a spiritual oasis in the city centre? Do they offer newfound public space close to the commercial heart of the city?

Students were invited to develop an alternative approach to 'mapping' the different inner spaces to show more than its topographical properties—to read and represent the site from a more personal perspective. As such, we wanted the students to create a basis on which they could start playing with the various poetic interpretations of the *hortus conclusus* in the programme and design proposal that they developed for the site.[6]

One of the students, Linde Van Den Bosch, was struck by the fragmentation and impenetrability of the site as a whole. Considering these characteristics as an obstacle for reuse of the site, she proposed several interventions to open up and at the same time reconnect the different (parts of the) buildings, as well as the gardens. Wandering through the site, she also recognized the atmospheric qualities (often as the involuntary result of time and ageing) and preserved or strengthened the distinct characters of the different buildings and gardens as found. For example, the rich biodiversity within a ruined part of the site was strong enough to preserve and protect by making the ruin into a garden without entry—an impenetrable *hortus catalogus* for weeds, mosses and fungi to gaze upon rather than sit in or walk through.

[4] The convent of the Zwartzusters, the inner gardens of the city block of Saint Paul have a lay-out reminiscent of their monastic origin.



[5] The convent of the Zwartzusters, model of the city block with the convent more in detail in the foreground.

[5] The same variants are presented and illustrated by Aben, R., & De Wit, S. (1999). *The enclosed garden: history and development of the hortus conclusus and its reintroduction into the present-day urban landscape.* Rotterdam: 101, pp. 37-56.

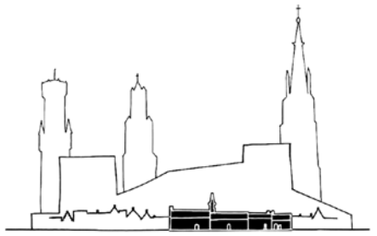
[6] This methodology is indebted to the phenomenological approach in architecture, see for example Pallasmaa, J. (2012 [1996]). *The eyes of the skin.* West Sussex: John Willey and Sons; Pérez-Gomez, A. (2007). The City is not a Post-Card: The Problem of Genius Loci. *Arkitektur*, 4, pp. 42-47. This method also resonates with anthropological methodologies for making field notes as a way to register one's experience of a place, which was further explored during the seminar Tactics, see also Hendrickson, C. (2008). Visual Field Notes: Drawing Insights in the Yucatan. *Visual Anthropology Review*, 24(2), 117-132; Heynickx, S., Plevoets, B., Van Cleempoel, K., & Vanrie, J. (2014, 18-19 September). *Vivisection in Architecture: a comprehensive reading of the room by drawing.* Paper presented at the Body & Space, Middlesex University London.

[7] See also Lens, K. and Vande Keere, N. (2017). The Monastic Landscape—Carrier of memory and potential catalyst in conservation and adaptive reuse processes of material and immaterial heritage, Conference Preventive Conservation of the Human Environment 6. Architecture as Part of the Landscape. 24-25 October 2016, Warsaw, Poland.

Transforming timeframes: a layered reading of the St. Godelieve abbey in Bruges

For her master's project on the *Sint-Godelieve* abbey in Bruges, Linde Van Den Bosch built further on the methodology that she applied for the convent of the *Zwartzusters*. She approaches the monastic landscape as the layered group of (inner) gardens and courtyards with their particular rituals and connections—as the 'negative' of the built corpus of the site.[7] In her reading of and wanderings through the site, she finds that the religious roots of the abbey are most strongly present in its gardens, each of them with a distinct atmosphere and character shaped through time by vegetation, walkways and vistas. Contrasting old postcards with contemporary pictures, she tries to capture the *genius loci* of the place.

Given the particular location of the site, within the historical centre of Bruges but just off the tourist track, Linde proposes a new program that serves the local community: a cultural centre for children. This program relates to but at the same time counterbalances the nearby Concert Hall by architects



[7] Project St. Godelieve abbey, the abbey as a humble part of the city in contrast with the nearby Concert Hall and the historic towers of Bruges.

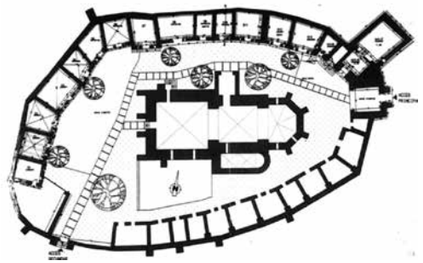
Robbrecht & Daem. Where the Concert Hall architecturally relates to the historical towers of Bruges, the abbey humbly blends into the streetscape, giving it a more friendly and protected character. In the new program, the gardens each have their own function and atmosphere: the south garden and orchard are offered to the neighbourhood as an enclosed public space while a small-scale farm operating as a social workplace occupies the northern part of the outdoor area.

[6] Project St. Godelieve abbey, inner garden – confronting old and new, procession becomes vegetation.

Heritage Heresy: curating decay of religious artefacts

In the context of adaptive reuse of religious heritage, often, artefacts cannot be kept in situ. Usually, these are moved to and conserved in centralized heritage depots. In his master's project, Sven Labie takes a critical approach to this act of displacement as it reduces the religious artefact at best to an object of art while neglecting its sacral and folkloristic meaning as an object of devotion. He introduces an alternative way to deal with religious objects, namely to create a sort of 'cemetery' where objects from nearby sites can find a place where they can slowly and gradually decay through exposure to the forces of nature. This concept is inspired by canon law, prescribing religious artefacts out of function to be demolished through burial, ignition or dissolved in water, but applies it in a softer and humane way because of its gradual process.

For his design proposal, Sven selected the site of the Hoksent chapel in Eksel, located in a protected rural environment. The existing lime trees create a soft enclosure of the site at the west; in the east, a new enclosure is proposed in the form of a curving wall with different outdoor rooms. In the niches of the wall, artefacts can be placed partly pressed in concrete while (temporary) open niches allow see-throughs to the surrounding landscape. The design has a strong scenographic character: the act of placing the objects in the wall is conceived as a ritual, comparable to a burial or interment ritual. In this project, the *hortus conclusus* takes the form of in-between spaces separating the chapel from its surrounding landscape, different and intimate rooms within the landscape for silence, retreat or mourning.



[9] Project Heritage Heresy, plan of the fortified All Saint's church in Axente Sever (Romania) as shelter for the inhabitants of the village in times of trouble.

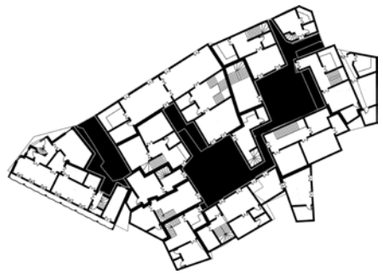
[8] Project Heritage Heresy, an impression of the Hoksent Chapel with a new surrounding wall functioning as the final resting place for religious artefacts of the region.

[10] Project Heritage Heresy, examples of the various religious artefacts.

The Walled City of Lahore (Pakistan): creating a public interior

The ancient city of Lahore in Pakistan has its origin roughly 2000 years ago and has been home to many cultures and dynasties. Its history and culture are reflected in the day-to-day lives of the Walled city's residents, arts, traditions, architecture and the very layout of its narrow, winding streets. However, many problems cause the deterioration of the urban fabric: increasing population, commercialisation, subdivision of properties, closing up of courtyards and open spaces, and the lack of public space for residents and tourists. In her master's project, Iqra Qadeer searches for a concept that could set an organic process in motion for the rehabilitation of the urban fabric and the creation of informal public space in the walled city.

One particular site is chosen as a model: an ancient *Haveli*, a large family mansion, which in the course of history had become fragmented, subdivided and densified. According to existing conservation plans for the walled city, this *Haveli* had to be preserved and used as a cultural centre. Iqra took the reunification of the property as a starting point for her project and combined the proposed cultural programme with the creation of public space by surgically replacing built zones with new, small-scale courtyards. By programming some of the surrounding buildings with (semi-)public functions she fortified the (re-)introduction of open public space. The new courtyards can be interpreted as different forms of a *hortus conclusus*, an intimate space, enclosed by buildings and rooms. Their introduction has an architectural advantage—adding spatial quality to the dense fabric by offering light and air into the surrounding rooms—as well as social quality by defining it as a space to withdraw oneself from the vivid urban life of the streets. The introduction of courtyards somehow hinges back to the historic layout of the city, in which the interior courtyard is omnipresent. However, inspired by their originally private character these courtyards in Iqra's design become public interior.



[12] Project Walled City of Lahore, ground floor plan of an ancient Haveli – surgical replacement of built fabric by new, small scale courtyards.

[11] Project Walled City of Lahore, the bustle of city life with commercial activities occupying the limited public space in the narrow streets of the city.

8 Aben, R., & De Wit, S. (1999). *The enclosed garden: history and development of the hortus conclusus and its reintroduction into the present-day urban landscape.* Rotterdam: 101, pp. 10-11.

9 Scott, F. (2008). *On Altering Architecture.* London: Routledge, pp. 81.

10 Pérez-Gomez, A. (2007). The City is not a Post-Card: The Problem of Genius Loci. *Arkitektur*, 4, p. 42.

Transcending time

The history of the *hortus conclusus* is not only a history of flowers and trees; instead, as phrased by Aben and de Wit, its history tells about '*a centuries-old, ever rejuvenating tradition in which man tries to reconcile himself with his surroundings by bringing these within the closest proximity. … It is a report on the ever-changing vision of nature, through one which essentially has remained the same. Awe at the grandeur of nature translated into architectural space—not to trivialize it, but for man to be able to relate to it*'.[8] We have seized this rich history and meaning of the *hortus conclusus* as a way to bring new life into sites that have somehow lost their function and or meaning—as a means to re-establish the physical and emotional relationship between people and places.

Elaborating on the leitmotiv of the ancient *hortus conclusus*, we want to show how concepts, motives and narratives from the past can be translated into a contemporary context. Scott writes on the use of the archaic in the emphatic process of translation of poetry: '*the suggestion too of attaining something out of time by these means, that is something seemingly timeless, by consciously avoiding the contemporary.*'[9] This '*seemingly* timeless' is not to be read as a static historical sense but rather one to be manipulated, rewritten or redesigned to make it fit. Instead of looking for a precise definition or application of the *hortus conclusus*, the students were encouraged to get lost in metaphors, so to speak. To use its typological flexibility and the multiplicity (or even ambiguity) of meanings and to interpret them in a personal and poetic way. Indeed, as stated by Pérez-Gomez, '*Artistic products from the most diverse cultures touch us by virtue of their paradoxical universality; they both belong to a time and place and transcend it, contributing to our self-understanding regardless of our own particular culture.*'[10]

[Image sources]

[1] Little Garden of Paradise, by Upper Rhenish Master, circa 1410-1420; Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meister_des_Frankfurter_Paradiesgärtleins_001.jpg, accessed 24/11/2017

[2] Arca Noe, typography of paradise, by A. Kircher, 1675; ©The Wellcome Library, retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arca_Noe,_topography_of_paradise,_by_A._Kircher._Wellcome_L0013367.jpg, accessed 24/11/2017

[3] Hortus Conclusus - Serpentine Gallery Pavillion 2011, Peter Zumthor; retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peter_Zumthor_Serpentine_Pavilion_2011.jpg, accessed 24/11/2017

[4] Plan city block surrounding Zwartzusters Convent (Antwerp)

[5] Model city block surrounding Zwartzusters Convent (Antwerp)

[6] Composition past-present garden of the St. Godelieve abbey (Bruges), Linde Van Den Bosch

[7] Drawing relationship between St. Godelieve abbey and Concerthall, Linde Van Den Bosch

[8] Impression wall and church, Sven Labie

[9] Plan of the fortified All Saint's church in Axente Sever; retrieved from http://www.axentesever.com/english.htm, accessed 24/11/2017

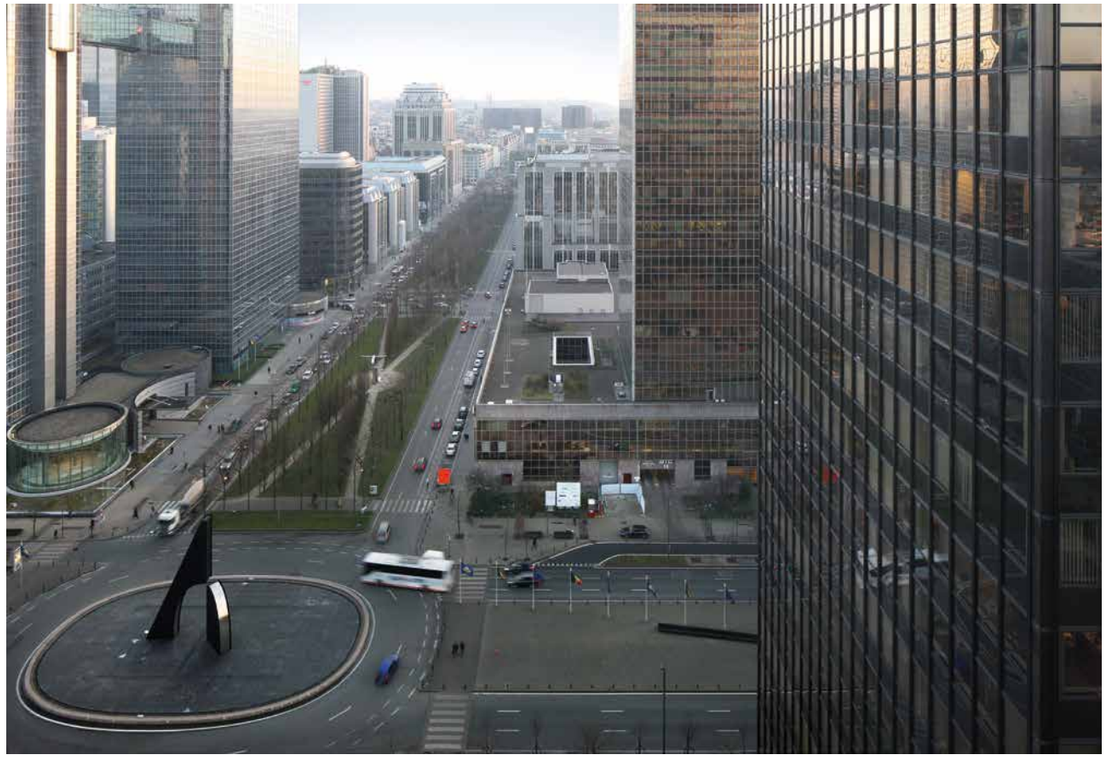
[10] Photo composition immovable heritage, Sven Labie

[11] Walled City of Lahore, impression

[12] Plan intervention in city block, Iqra Qadeer

Hybrid Business District – Studio Brussels North

F. Persyn and D.Leyssen of 51N4E . . . .



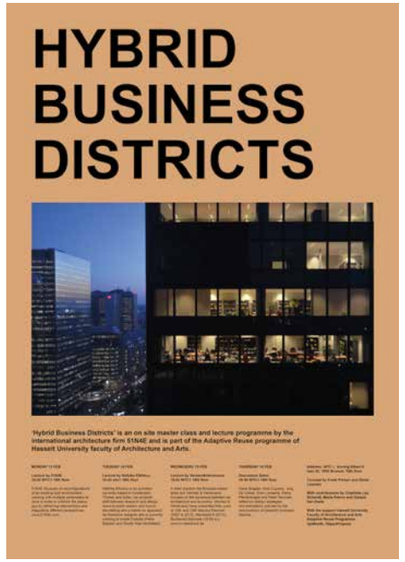
[1] Koning Albert II laan, central axe of the Brussels North District. ©Filip Dujardin

Often based on extremely rudimentary views of what a living and working environment should be, modernist business districts propose a new scale of buildings and public space, often eradicating whole neighborhoods to achieve that goal. Its architecture is standardized and influenced by a globalized economy. Often also, the life cycle of these districts lasts only one generation, and –save for a proactive government- many of them have trouble of being rebooted. We propose to look at these areas, and at the potential they offer: the potential of scale, of redefinition, of temporary use. Our test-case, the North Quarter of Brussels, started in the 1960's as a catalyst for a new global economy yet in reality predominantly leased to the national and regional governments and large national companies. A lot of these leases are currently ending, making the question of how to reactivate the North Quarter all the more urgent. Looking at the district through the lens of adaptive reuse, not by planning the district once more from the top down, but instead investigating how a transition could be imagined, building on the (odd) qualities and the forms of life that have already taken shape there.

In the winter of 2017, twenty-four students in the architectural masters and adaptive reuse program of Hasselt University participated in a two-week on-site studio in the World Trade Center in the North District of Brussels. The master class investigated how the mono-functional, commuter-oriented district could shift towards a hybrid and multiple district that is integrally part of Brussels' urban environment. As approach, 'adaptive reuse' was proposed. Adaptive reuse entails going beyond restoration of conservation of existing sites, towards exploring, in a designerly way, their potential for new types of uses and (temporal) interventions. Parallel to the student workshop, a public lecture and discussion-program was organized, allowing the public to enter the World Trade Center and participate in the discussion. Artists, architects, academics, developers and policy-makers joined the students for a dialogue on the upcoming transformation of this type of city fabric. The master class was an attempt to understand and learn from a certain context by emerging in it. In the academic year of 2017-2018 the masterclass is being continued by a full-trimester semester studio.

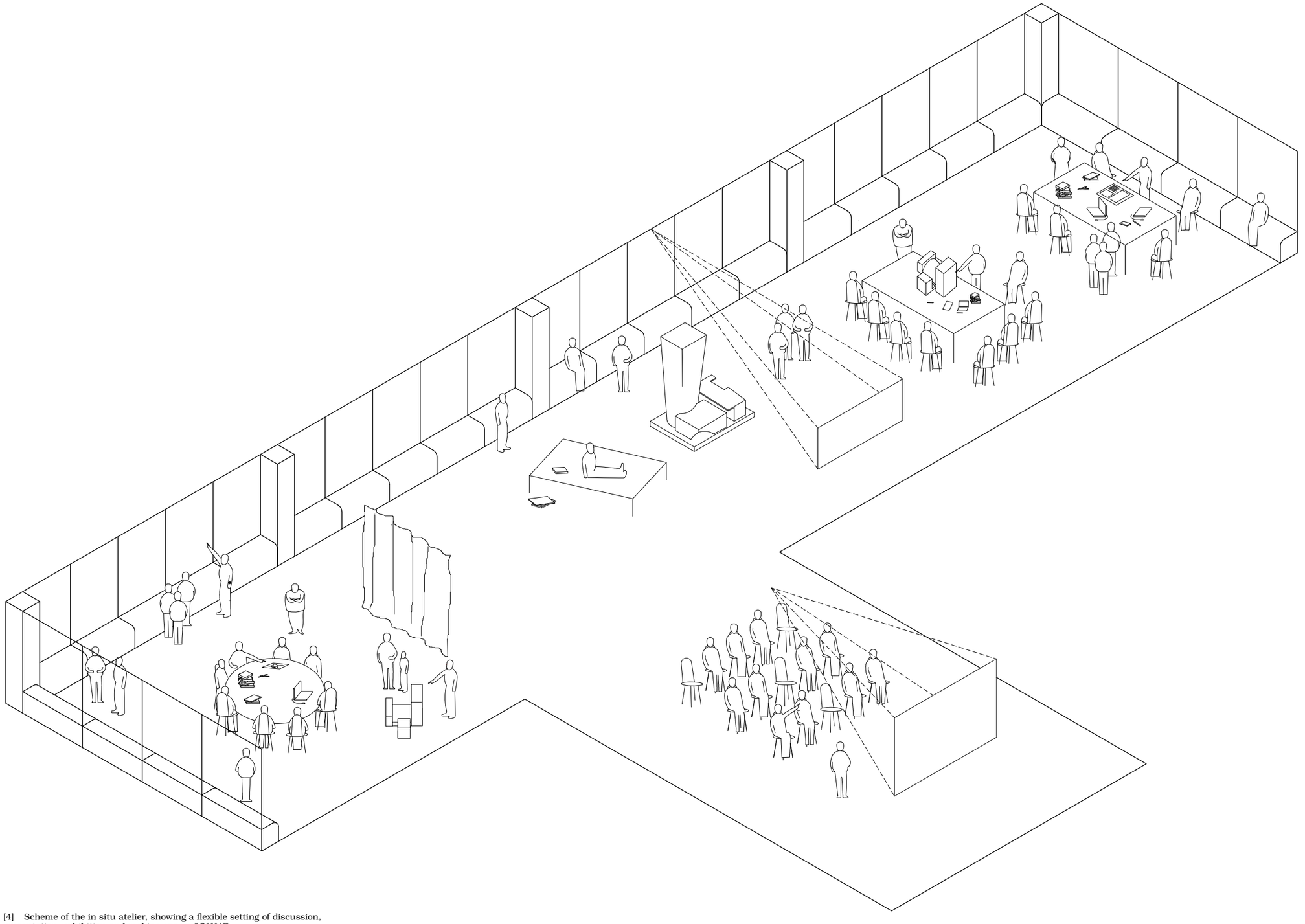
The semester studio starts from a hypothesis: to take the predominant direction of the district, designed as an over-scaled boulevard, and to turn it 90°. This means abolishing the main axis, the Koning Albert II lane, and instead focusing on the transversal connection. This radical shift makes the East West direction into the main boulevard, leading directly from the North station across the district and the Maximiliaan Park towards the canal and the site of Turn and Taxis. This new transversality is no longer an entity in itself, but rather becomes a device that connects differences: spatial, functional, social, economic… Investigating this hypothesis does not imply that the goal of the studio is to produce a masterplan. Rather we want to investigate, on the scale of specific architectural interventions, what this shift produces and means for individual projects. In that sense, the hypothesis also produces an exercise that incubates reality, which is also a development of gradual reconstruction and adaptation, without overall formal coherence or strict coordination. Concretely, in this studio, you learn how to make urban architecture and deal with urban space. It is an exercise in understanding and designing the impact a building (or a space) can have on its surroundings.

Like many other office districts, the North District will transform in the coming decade. The master class and onsite studio anticipate on this transformation and experiment with the format of an academic studio as a way to mobilize people around it. Sharing time together with students, academics, architect and developers in a studio-environment, serves as a catalysis for a more intense and ongoing dialogue. It might even be an interesting approach for architectural practice at large in questions of adaptive reuse. In urban renewal projects of a certain scale and nature, emerging it, could generate a more profound understanding of the spatial and social conditions, ensuring more interesting strategies with a better economy of means.



[2] Poster of public program of the Hybrid Busines Districts Masterclass. ©51N4E

[3] In situ atelier on the 19th floor of the World Trade Center. ©Filip Dujardin



[4] Scheme of the in situ atelier, showing a flexible setting of discussion, presentation, exhibition and making space. ©51N4E

Traces of trauma
Initiating adaptive reuse of the North Quarter in Brussels

M. Van De Weijer . . . . . .

[1] The construction of World Trade Centre tower 3, part of the Manhattan Plan, with two WTC towers in the background

The contemporary weight given to heritage in cultural, social and economic discourses invokes questions on how to deal with ambiguous memories and interpretations of history, which affect how we perceive and use our everyday environment. When dealing with issues of heritage, it cannot be avoided that we are also confronted with traumatic events—wars, oppression, displacement—caused by human actions. By acknowledging relics of trauma in the status of heritage, we intend to do justice to victims, to remember wrongdoings and to warn future generations against the risk of again treading in such pitfalls. Furthermore, memories might reflect a diversified perception of historical occurrences because a conflict or confrontation results in different memories kept by the heirs of opposing parties, for example, those who are later seen to be inflictors or victims. Especially for the victims, the commemoration of an injustice, a negative event in history, serves to define and reinforce a bond among individuals.[1] Material relics testifying to conflict in the past, and representing the contrast between negative and positive interpretation, often become monuments that feed into the construction of cultural narratives.

The inheritance of (late) modernism in this sense contains traces of such trauma, especially in relation to the displacement of people. Many European cities demonstrate such traces upon close inspection. The development of the Barbican Estate in London occurred in lieu of a district destroyed by World War II bombings; the deteriorated Jewish quarter of Amsterdam faced intrusive urban renovation and infrastructural redevelopment in the 1970s; the Paris business district La Défense was constructed at the site of peripheral industries and poor residential areas. Especially in Brussels, the drastic manner of replacing existing urban tissues with intrusive modern complexes has obtained very negative connotations, which have precipitated in the *vox populi* under the term *Bruxellisation*.[2] In the modernist district in the Brussels North Quarter, urban transitions interrelated with the development of a discourse of undermining social and urban cohesion. This discourse became the upbeat to a complete erasure of 19th-century urban fabric and the replacement with a new urban model. The apotheosis of this process was the so-called Manhattan Plan, a late modernist high-rise scheme for the Brussels World Trade Centre that was finalised in 1967 by the design group *Structures*. Hence, the reflecting curtain walls of the contemporary North Quarter hide a traumatic history, which is kept alive in oral histories and photography.

Dealing with the negative connotations of heritage becomes even more salient when relics continue to serve societal purposes beyond monumentality and remain integrated into everyday life. Momentarily, this district is gaining attention from the architectural vanguard in terms of its continued usage. Some of the built high-rise buildings now face an end to their primary life cycle and await the challenge of initiating a new one—a situation that is shared with other complexes built in the 1960s and 70s. Formal aspects of modern architecture usually determine this search for a prolonged lifetime: the advantages and disadvantages of its rationalized floorplans and building systems. Seeking new programmes revolves around drawing forward and capitalizing on these architectural characteristics and the manner in which they could house contemporary programmes.[3] But designing and planning adaptive reuse equally involves decision-making on how to incorporate, translate, mitigate or exacerbate negative connotations inscribed in the built environment.

Although the Brussels North business district is not formally protected as heritage, it is closely related to aspects of heritage that are underexposed in architectural discourse, yet have the potential strongly to inform processes of adaptive reuse. As the heritage scholar David Lowenthal argues, there is a reciprocity between heritage and aspects of loss, change and instability. This reciprocity deserves attention in the field of architectural design, as, hypothetically, memories of trauma and displacement might inform the search for a new cycle of usage.

Urban transitions and trauma: observations from Brussels North

The Manhattan Plan demonstrates the shadow side of modernity, which relates to the creed of the functionalist city: the tabula rasa approach in relation to programmatic separation.[5] The 53-hectare modernist plan consisting of some 60 high-rise buildings and an intrusive urban motorway infrastructure was to be superimposed onto the popular *Quartier Nord*, which had come to development between the railway line and the Brussels Canal, two industrial infrastructural figures orientated north–south. The presence of the North train station in the 19th century provided the positive incentive for a mixed and vibrant urban development of residential, commercial, industrial and cultural programmes.

Already in 1927, the modernist architect and planner Victor Bourgeois, a member of CIAM, proposed a plan to clean up this unplanned pattern and to replace it according to a functionalist scheme. In the 1950s, the neighbourhood, which had already been separated in two by the railway track, became the subject of several plans that deconstructed its integrity. The original railway station was replaced with a new one, along with an elevated railroad which introduced a huge closed wall into the district. The site of the old station was used to build the International Rogier Centre, a modernist high-rise project. An urban motorway (Leopold II) was introduced, along with plans to make the North Quarter the crossing between two international motorways. The river Senne was vaulted and disappeared from sight. These interventions and plans rapidly undermined social cohesion, and this new condition played into the hands of the developers of the Manhattan Plan.[6] This 1967 plan proposed to erase what was framed by those in power to be chaotic and malfunctioning urban tissue, replacing it with a high-rise district fitting the metropolitan ambitions of Brussels. Because it demonstrates 'a situation of unbalance and confusion caused by rapid urbanization [and by] socio-economic mutations',[7] the North Quarter became susceptible to displacement induced by modernity.

The North Quarter hence became the site of urban expansion to release pressure on the densely used city and the locus for urban design experimentation.[8] Over 11,000 inhabitants were directly or indirectly forced to move out as a consequence of this plan.[9] Employment opportunities disappeared, and the social cohesion vanished with the buildings that facilitated this cohesion: housing, nightlife, places of culture, worship and gathering.

[2] The North Quarter seen from one of the WTC towers (1988). In the foreground: the now demolished low rise housing. In the background: the railway tracks, station and the International Rogier Centre.

1 Ashworth, G.J. (2008). The memorialization of violence and tragedy: Human trauma as heritage. *The Ashgate research companion to heritage and identity*, 231-244; Ashworth, G.J., Graham, B. & Tunbridge, J.E. (2007) *Pluralising Pasts. Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies*. London: Pluto Press.

2 Doucet, I. (2012). Making a city with words: Understanding Brussels through its urban heroes and villains. *City, Culture and Society*, 3(2), 105-116.

3 See for example the initiative lab north, online: http://www.labnorth.be/nl (accessed 16 January 2018).

4 Lowenthal, D. (1998) *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 6.

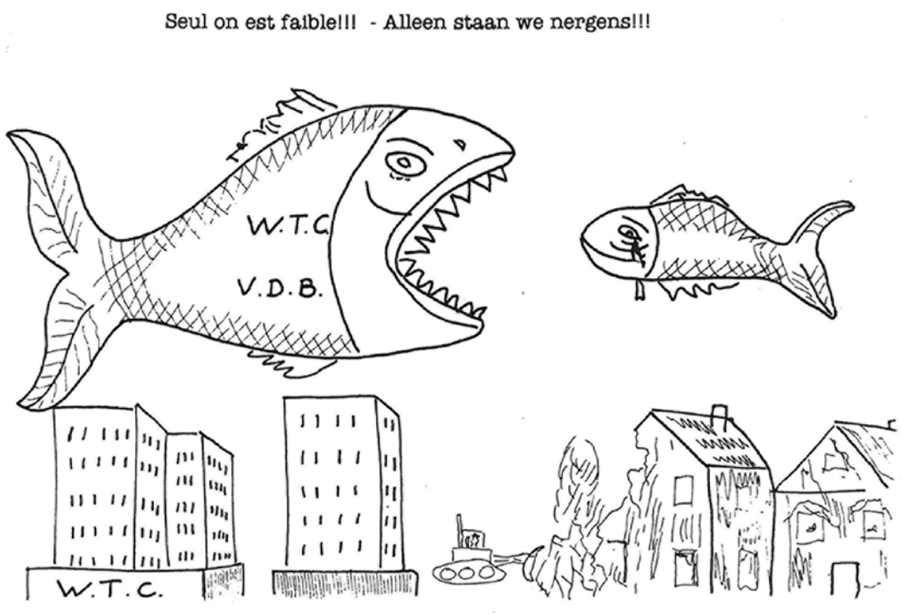
5 Mumford, E.P. (2002). *The CIAM discourse on urbanism, 1928–1960*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

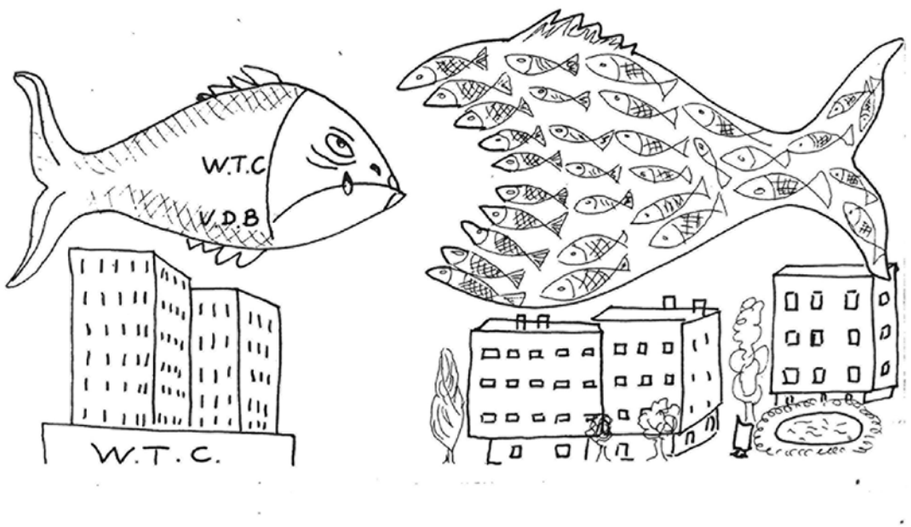
6 Personal communication with Joris Sleebus, 14 and 20 February 2018.

7 Heynen, H. & Loeckx, A. (1998). Scenes of Ambivalence: Concluding Remarks on Architectural Patterns of Displacement. *Journal of Architectural Education* 52(2), 100.

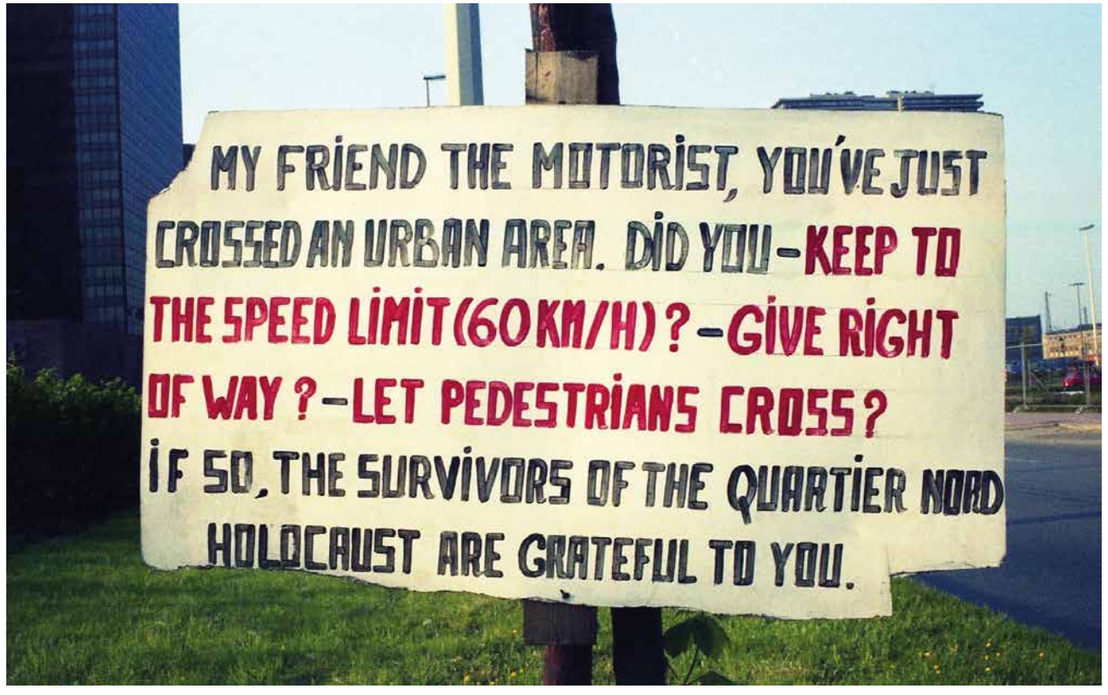
8 Smets, M. (1991) Een tijd van aarzeling en uitdaging. In: *1951–1991, een tijdsbeeld*. Brussels: Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, 316-323.

9 The history of civilian resistance in the quartier Nord is documented online: Martens, A. & Purnôde, N. (2011) *Quartier Nord*. Online: http://www.quartiernord.be/nl/indexnl.html (accessed 16 January 2018). For a detailed account of the history of the Quartier Nord in face of the Manhattan Plan, especially see Lievens, J., Brasseur, N. & Martens A. (1975) *De grote stad: een geplande chaos? De noordwijk van krot tot manhattan. Leuven: davidsfonds*.





[3] Pamphlet advocating civic organization: "Alone, one is weak! Together, we are strong to demand houses ..." (translation by the author).



[4] The local residents frame the urban trauma of the North Quarter as a kind of "holocaust".

This occurred at a time that interest in heritage exclusively covered the core of Brussels. Decisions in this field were urged by opportunities of framing the historic centre of the city as heritage, providing it with tourist-based infrastructure and concentrating administrative activities in other sectors.[10] In coherence with the urban aspirations of Brussels to develop a modernist district on the edge of the historic core, the values assigned to residential heritage by actual inhabitants were ignored.[11] The reimagined district thus testifies both of the programmatic zeal of modernism to induce growth, development and a new economic future, while to the former inhabitants, modernity rather shows its transitory face, as traditional values were depreciated and the well-known traditional neighbourhood gradually was broken down.[12] It is exactly this imposition that incites a sense of loss over the fragile heritage of what once was—the deliberate destruction of an urban tissue, the condition of displacement it induces, and the instrumentality of modernist architecture and top-down planning in facilitating this transition.

On top of the rupture with local urban history, the plan was never executed in full. The plan had promised 5,350 new residential units, offering residential typologies tailored to the expected new population of white-collar workers. By 1992, not even half this amount had been realised in nine projects on the edges of the Manhattan project, and these were only for a minor part occupied by original inhabitants of the Quarter.[13] Furthermore, it failed to provide the compensation job opportunities that the plan had promised. In the streetscape, infrastructure allowing for pedestrian connectivity and street liveliness was omitted. In its incompletion, it has continuously been a bone of contention for the Brussels metro-

10 Lagrou, E. (1982) Het naoorlogse stedebouwkundig beleid voor de Vijfhoek. Zwenking van grootschaligheid naar perceelsgewijze aanpak. In: Abeel, G; et al. (eds.) *Straten en Stenen. Brussel: Stadsgroei 1780–1980.* Brussels: Generale Bankmaatschappij/ Sint Lukasarchief, 309-359.

11 See the discussion of authorized heritage discourses in Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage.* New York: Routledge. The specific neglect of the factual material character of Brussels in face of modernization in the slipstream of the 1958 World Exhibition and of its new role as capital of Europe is discussed by Uyttenhove, P. (2011). *Stadland België. Hoofdstukken uit de geschiedenis van de stedenbouw.* Ghent: A&S Publishers, 270-271.

12 Heynen & Loeckx, Scenes of Ambivalence, 105.

13 By 1992, 1397 social houses had been built or renovated, and private development had delivered 1051 housing units. Local activists and researchers have stated that the number of rehoused locals, mainly elderly and migrants was 'disappointing'. Vanden Eede, M. & Martens, A. (1994). *De Noordwijk. Slopen en wonen.* Berchem: EPO, 203.

politan region. Consequentially, the history of the Quartier Nord and the implementation of the Manhattan Plan retain a negative connotation.

Negative as it has been perceived, the tabula rasa approach and the rigour of top-down planning equally incites civil protest and empowerment among social classes that are directly affected by such interventions. Self-organisation against speculation and urban destruction occurred on a global scale from 1968 onward.[14] In Brussels, The Quartier Nord was actually one of many sites where sanitation and redevelopment plans were proposed. A comparison can be drawn with the *Marol* neighbourhood, close to the South Station of Brussels, where local, organized inhabitant revolt successfully prevented the destruction of its specific urban tissue in favour of gentrifying slum clearance and redevelopment.[15] The Brussels collective ARAU (*l'Atelier de Recherche et d'Action Urbaines*) became a key factor in voicing concerns and prepared new proposals with respect for local inhabitant interests.

This occurrence marked a turning point after which local communities learned they could exercise the power of decision-making, which had previously been the domain of developers and technocrats. The success attained in the *Marol* in resisting developer interests, a first time in the Belgian context, spread to the Quartier Nord.[16] Pointing out the sadness of the failed modernist scheme and emphasizing its hubris, ARAU from 1972 onward equally worked on alternative plans in The Quartier Nord. Their proposals were drafted while the Manhattan Plan had already partly been implemented, and ARAU pointed out its poor performance. Providing novel design directions, their drawings show how the high-rise buildings could be combined with an alternative proposal for the public domain of building plinths and public infrastructure. ARAU proposes to reshape the dysfunctional Boulevard Jacqmain according to the concept of a 19th-century boulevard with ample space for strolling, aligned with six-storey building blocks. The abstract formal language is replaced with facades showing more diverse tectonics reminding of Renaissance principles, and the plan claims functional heterogeneity to reconstruct urban liveliness. This proposal was formally determined by its historicizing elements introducing a strong clash with the underlying Modernist scheme, aiming at the restoration of urban diversity and continuity. Although it proposes formal changes in the urban project without clear suggestions about societal and functional conditions behind the Italianized facades, it added to a dossier of bottom-up resistance against the intrusiveness of modernism.

Drawing on the intangible as a way forward

This brief overview of the urban history of the North Quarter offers a lens through which current approaches to appropriation and reprogramming of obsoleted and underperforming spaces might be framed conceptually. Assuming that heritage does not exist as an essentialist concept, as it is continuously constructed and reconstructed,[17] how may the traumatic history of the Quartier Nord influence ongoing development in a positive manner? Three aspects of trauma-related heritage issues come to the fore. These are, primarily, the intrusive effects and the failed implementation of late modernist planning schemes; second, the negligence towards local popular interests and historic urban tissue; and third, the response from afflicted citizens—supported by activists, designers and researchers—who seek empowerment to battle expropriation and destruction. As a consequence of the business interests eclipsing popular interests, no official heritage values were acknowledged that could withstand the clean-up process and urban redevelopment.
The insertion has driven a regional community into displacement. As such, another form of heritage was being constructed around a central notion of collective trauma over a gradually disappearing urban context, and a resilient, lasting effort of civil self-organization, protest and seeking spatial alternatives. The gradual loss of its subject makes this into an intangible heritage.
This intangible heritage, joining both negative and positive memories concerning late modernist architecture has the potential to inform contemporary adaptive reuse. Taking this aspect of history, hardly visible in public or private space of rigorously transformed districts, supports the search for strategies that reconnect to the defence of human dignity and the appreciation of societal capital. In this respect, the recent history of the district, where during the recent European refugee crisis displaced people had found shelter and support in the local Maximiliaan Park, reconnects with that intangible heritage. In addition, the iconic CCN building, an obsoleted office building attached to the Brussels North train station has been in use to house refugees on a temporary basis.

Students of the International Master of Adaptive Reuse as well as students in the Master of Architecture at Hasselt University have scrutinized this district in workshops and design studios, exploring potential strategies for a 'Hybrid Business District' remedying its architectural and urban shortcomings and seeking connection with the contemporary demands of urban liveliness in the Brussels Capitol Region. Mohamad Al Kour, a Syrian student of the

[14] The development of civil protest in the global public domain since 1968 has been analyzed by Crimson Architecture Historians in co-operation with Hugo Corbett, and exhibited at the Van Abbe Museum in Eindhoven (20 February 2016 – 31 March 2019); also see: Crimson Architectural Historians (2016) Do You Hear the People Sing? Online: https://www.crimsonweb.org/IMG/pdf/vanabbe-booklet_en.pdf. Accessed 12 January 2018.

[15] Uyttenhove, *Stadland België*, 261-296.

[16] ARAU (1984) Au Quartier Nord 'Le Meilleur des Mondes', in: *Quinze Années d'Action Urbaine. Ou, Bruxelles vu par ses habitants*. Brussels: Commission Française de la Culture de l'Agglomération de Bruxelles, 110-115.

[17] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 11.

International Master of Adaptive Reuse, deduced a design challenge from this situation: his master's project proposes the provision of housing units and collective green spaces for refugees in the vacated offices of the CCN building. Hence, he investigated how traces of trauma may relate to historically rooted interventions. Such investigations critically address oversized dimensions and proportions, towers stacked for efficiency and lacking connectivity. Foregrounding resilience in the face of trauma as an intangible heritage, architectural and urban redesign attains a grounded body of arguments for functional diversity, fine-grained accessibility and the re-establishment of the human scale in this overdimensioned district.

[Image sources]

[1] Construction of WTC tower 3, photo by Francois de Cugnac © Joris Sleebus

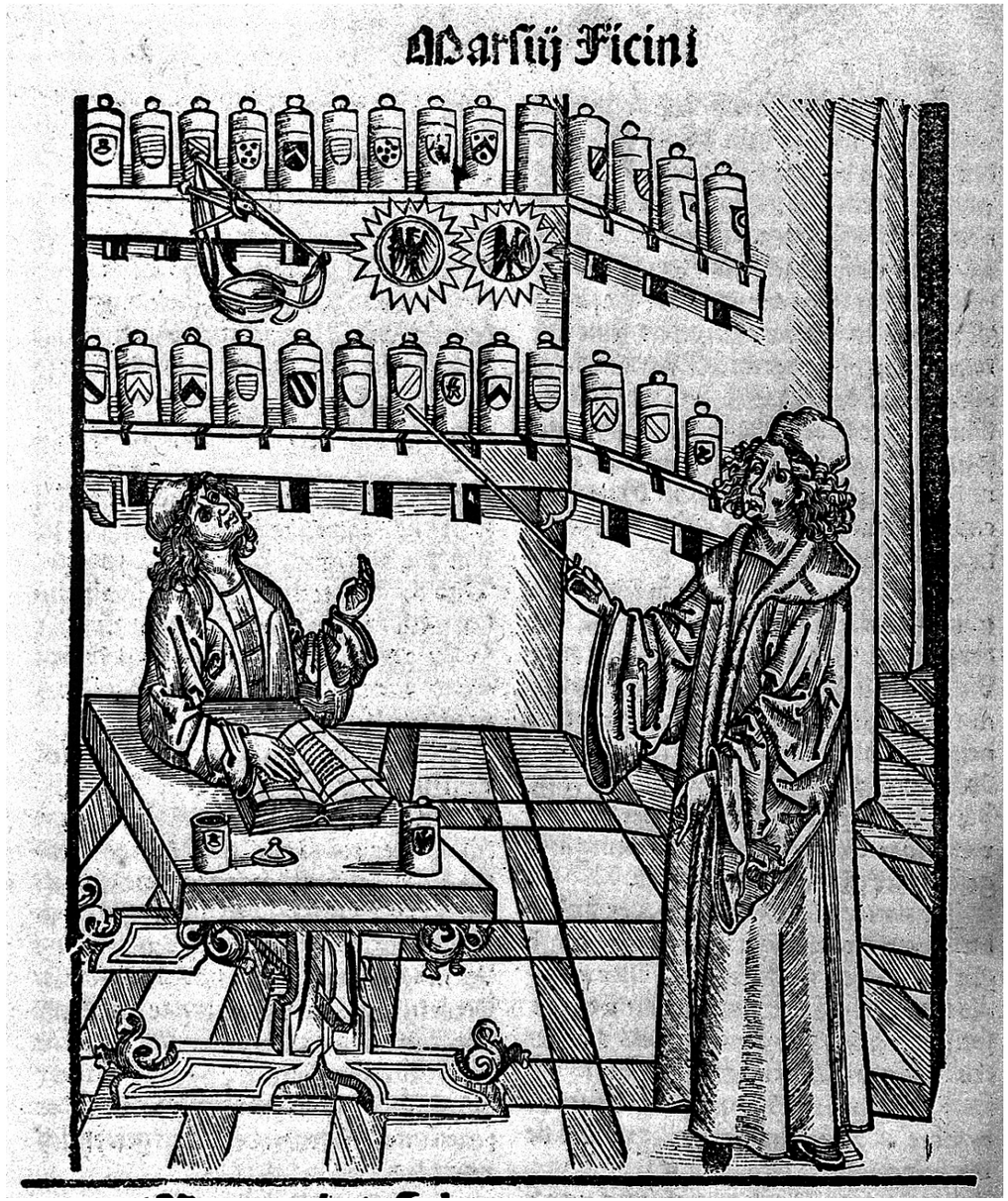
[2] The North Quarter seen from one of the WTC towers (1988). photo by Francois de Cugnac © Joris Sleebus

[3] Pamphlet, Reproduced with permission from Vanden Eede, M. & Martens, A. (1994). *De Noordwijk. Slopen en wonen*. Berchem: EPO, 149.

[4] Sign made by residents, Undated photo by François de Cugnac, © Joris Sleebus.

Traditions: forms of collective knowledge in architecture

C. Grafe . . . . . .



[1] Traditional roles of master and apprentice as pictured in *Das Buch der Gesundheit*, 1505.

The problem of tradition in architecture has historically often been addressed from two opposing points of view. Especially in the 20th-century, accounts of architectural history were constructed around the distinction between 'traditionalists' and the representatives of a modern 'avant-garde'. In the context of the latter 'tradition' appears as a highly problematic notion, one which is associated with reactionary or conservative political visions, regressive tendencies in society and a sense of nostalgia.

Perhaps it would be good to start with a few general observations about the definition of tradition. Aristotle noted in his Metaphysics that from memory there is experience and that *many* experiences constitute the proficiency of experience.[1] In the small text devoted to Memory and Reminiscence, the philosopher takes this further: memory is not exclusive to human beings; all creatures can have a sense of memory, provided they have a sense of time.[2] Tradition might be seen to imply a sense of memory connecting generations of people over time, a memory that is connected to the tacit knowledge of doing things. This knowledge is handed down from one generation to the next without explicitly describing it. Ways of making and seeing the world, including notions of propriety and of representation, are being transmitted from one generation to the next. This applies to the craft of the maker but to some degree also the craft of the designer. This handing over of information could be described as a pre-reflexive experience, unformulated in language and never entirely reproduced, but always evolving. When we talk about a tradition, this is usually related to a series of social practices. These practices could be embedded in craft, but these practices can also be thought and they can also be ritual. Each of these social practices has a very particular context. Tradition is handed over without being rationalised, without being formulated, without being put into words.

This 'un-reflected' character is an essential aspect of tradition. Yet it creates a very particular problem against the background of the Enlightenment. It could be said that modernity and modernism are synonymous with reflexivity and forms of rational legitimation as established by the scientific mapping of the world and its rationalisation. The 18th and 19th centuries were characterised by very broad and general tendencies towards professionalisation and the emergence of experts. Experiences are no longer just handed over but need to be rationalised, implying that experience that *cannot* be rationalised has to be discarded. Peter Sloterdijk pointed to this when he said that the 'real and true basic notion of modernity is not revolution but that the world is being made explicit'.[3] It is no longer acceptable to refer to implicit and shared forms of knowledge. Rules and the arguments for operating in a particular fashion have to be made explicit, implying also a return to a supposed origin of explanations beyond, and before, their socially embedded form, implying a shift from practical knowledge to technical procedural knowledge. One form of knowledge that has been implicit—tacit—and which has been handed over from master to pupil (but also other types of knowledge that were transmitted in the female line) tends to be replaced by rational explanations: forms of knowledge, which are rooted in technology, which are generated by means of empirical procedures or that can be scientifically deduced.

Masters and artists

Implicit knowledge is essentially collective knowledge. It only makes sense if it is shared by a social group and if it is embedded in a collective practice. Technical procedural knowledge may rely on science as a collective construct—each scientist standing on the shoulders of others, to paraphrase Isaac Newton—but it addresses the individual. Knowledge is transmitted and learned through manuals or encyclopaedic publications, and thus collectively produced. Neither its acquisition nor its application is, however, necessarily a shared or collective practice.

By contrast, tradition is by definition shared. Referring to Stradivarius, Richard Sennett points to this when he observes that the excellence of the violin maker may be the result of an essentially individual gift and talent, but that its emergence relied on the existence of a collective of excellent craftsmanship in the town of Cremona.[4] It is only because in this environment which has established a culture of craftsmanship over centuries, that the one person who then creates something that goes beyond that culture of craftsmanship can emerge. Excellence in craft, therefore, is necessarily linked to a collective culture of craftsmanship.

The pastness of the presence

Tradition has and lends social authority. A tradition that is no longer in the possession of that authority will not survive, otherwise, it will be relegated to a subculture. Tradition has to be self-explanatory and non-reflexive. In his article *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, the poet T. S. Eliot tried to explain tradition from the point of the modernist writer, who makes an attempt to understand the sustained value of tradition and its significance for literary

1 cf. Rudi Laermans, 'Het heden van het verleden, Over traditie, erfgoed en canonisering', *De Witte Raaf*, November/December 2015.

2 Aristotle extends this thought. Memory is not exclusive to the intellect but can also be found in animals. It is, however, linked to a sense of time: 'Hence not only human beings and the beings which possess opinion or intelligence, but also certain other animals, possess memory. If memory were a function of (pure) intellect, it would not have been as it is an attribute of many of the lower animals, but probably, in that case, no mortal beings would have had memory; since, even as the case stands, it is not an attribute of them all, just because all have not the faculty of perceiving time. Whenever one actually remembers having seen or heard, or learned, something, he includes in this act (as we have already observed) the consciousness of 'formerly'; and the distinction of 'former' and 'latter' is a distinction in time.' On Memory and Reminiscence, translated by J.I. Beare, University of Adelaide, https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/memory, accessed 13 February 2018

3 Peter Sloterdijk, *Sphären III: Schäume*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2004, p. 87

modernism. Elliot writes 'Tradition is a matter of much wider significance, it cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour'.[5]

The reference to labour, it seems to me, is of particular significance. Labour is in itself a practice. It relies on repetition and on the fact that something is being understood intuitively by being repeated. This intuitive knowledge often acquires a profundity that is entirely the result of its painful and socially embedded acquisition. Eliot continues: 'It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, which we may call nearly indispensable to anyone who would continue to be a poet beyond his twenty-fifth year; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence'. Elliot allows us to see that tradition, as a form of implicit knowledge acquired through labour and repetition, is not locked in what has gone by. On the contrary, although it is active in contemporary practices it relies essentially on a sense of this pastness of the past, its presence and, one should extend, its future.

For Elliot, this historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless alongside with the chronologically defined, and a simultaneous understanding of timeless and of the temporal, is a precondition for literary and artistic production. One could interpret this statement as an invitation to historicise, to have a clear notion that any practice in the past is always of a particular moment and historical context. It means that each practice finds part of its explanation in the situation from which it has emerged. At the same time, there may be, and those are much more difficult to grasp, timeless aspects to all human practices. If one thinks of the practice of architecture, which is essentially an activity that produces objects that endure and outlive those who conceived and constructed them, this question is of particular significance. What is timeless in a building or in architecture? What is temporally defined and can be—even needs to be—historicized?

Eliot writes, 'No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artist. … To proceed to a more intelligible exposition of the relation of the poet to the past: he can neither take the past as a lump, an indiscriminate bolus, nor can he form himself wholly on one or two private admirations, nor can he form himself wholly upon one preferred period'. Eliot here writes about how he thinks the artist needs to treat tradition, how he or she might deal with the past. In architecture perhaps this is much more difficult, or perhaps it's also more straightforward. When a writer finds his or her voice, it's clearly a choice that takes from a very extensive range of languages, of narratives, the possibility to, for example, revivify a particular literary tradition of the Middle Ages in the present, or relating to one particular kind of 19th-century novel. There is, thus, a specific choice of which tradition is selected, and which ones are de-selected. What Eliot tells us here is that there is a conscious and reflected choice, which introduces an essentially modern aspect to his understanding of tradition, as it implies an explicit power of decision that was not available before the Enlightenment.

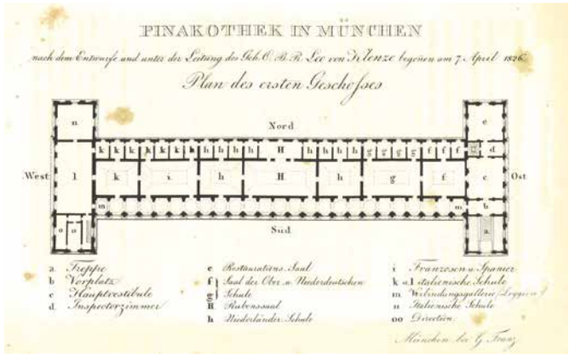
I would like to go back to what the problematised tradition means and where it comes from. In the field of architecture, there has been a long debate between so-called traditionalists and modernists. It should be noted that *traditionalism* is different from *tradition* itself. In essence, Traditionalism is a *Doppelgänger* of modernism—both positions imply the existence of the other. Traditionalism is formulated as a sort of counter-position, often related to political conservatism, that can only exist because it has been problematised. If Eliot writes 'You have to choose the tradition that you want to follow', this also means this antagonism between tradition and modernity, and therefore traditionalism and modernism is a particular ideological problem, of modernity. You might say that the reflexivity, which is part of modernity, generates in fact also the moments of defence and the intellectual traditions that describe themselves as traditionalist. There no longer is a natural, implicit, tacit link with the past. Instead, this past is explicitly addressed as being the reference that gives meaning to the artistic practice and the argumentative edifice. As Rudi Laermans has pointed out, this slightly paradoxical point was clearly expressed by the sociologist Karl Mannheim in his essay on Conservatism, when Mannheim states that traditionalism is actually another form of modernism.[6] It is one position that addresses modernity, as a defence mechanism that can only exist as a kind of reaction to the difficulties posed by modernity.

In architectural thought, the intellectual controversy in 17th-century France became known as the *Quarrel of the ancients and the moderns* after a reference to Charles Perrault's text on the *Parallel of the Ancients and the Moderns*. It arose essentially from an explanation of the position of artistic production against the background of the French absolutist state. In 1687 Charles Perrault published a poem praising the achievements of the modern world, judging them equal to anything that the ancient world has produced and indeed claiming

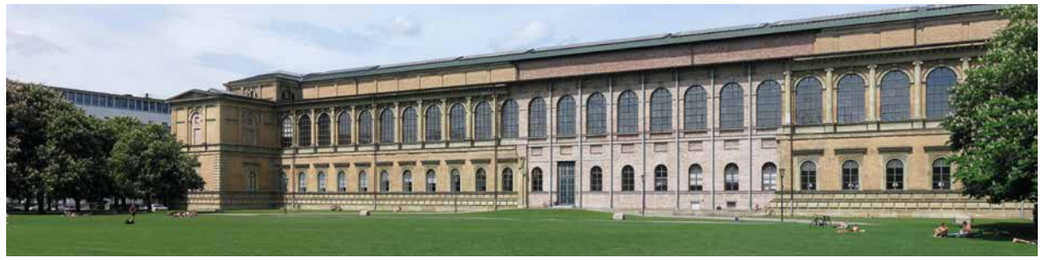
4 Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, London: Allen Lane, 2008

5 T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and The Individual Talent', *The Sacred Wood, Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, New York: Knopf, 1921

6 Karl Mannheim, Conservatism: *A Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge* (edited by David Kettler, Voler Meja and Nico Stehr), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1986, pp. vii, 255



[2] Floor plan after the design of Leo von Klenze, displaying the dysfunctional South corridor, 1838.

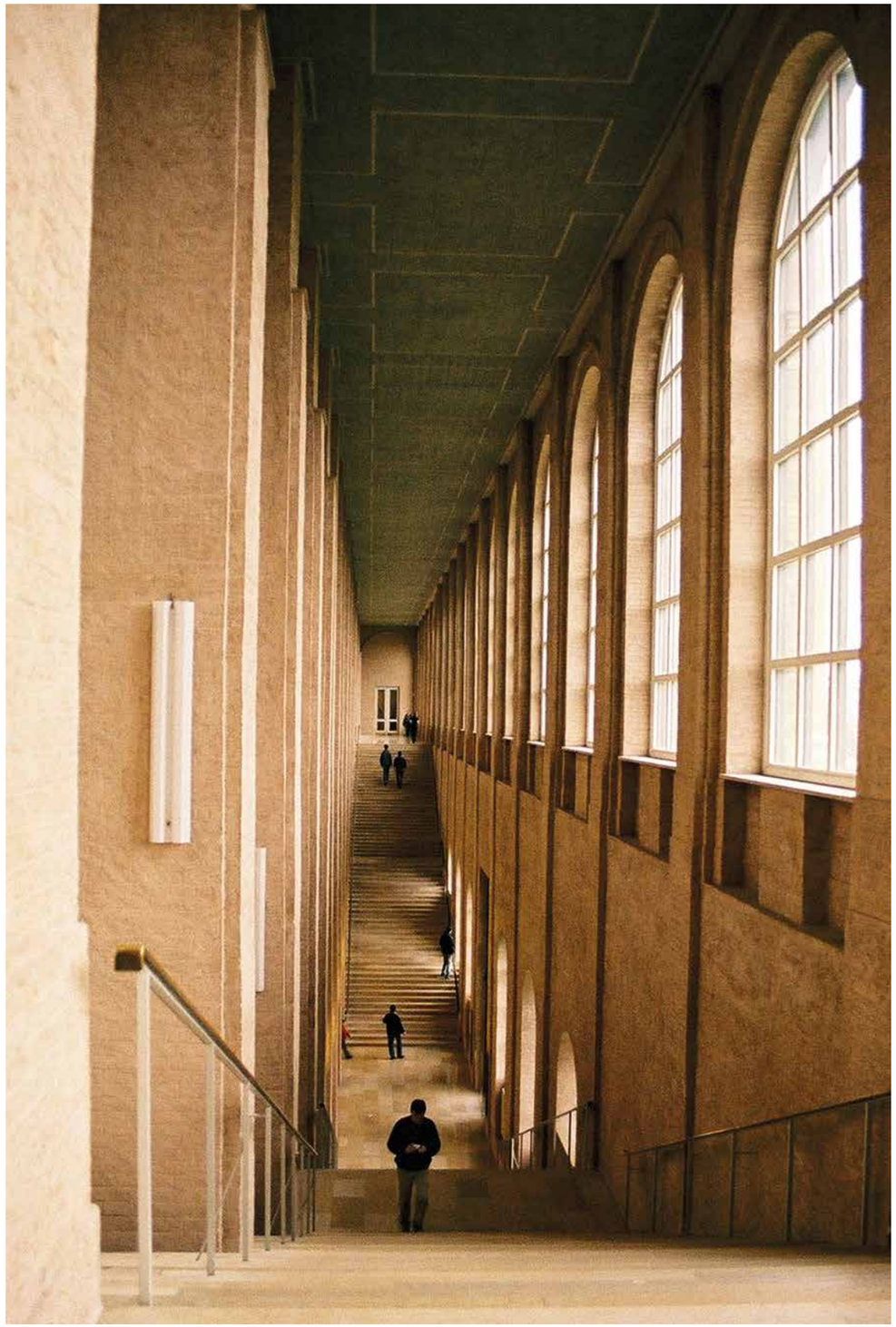


[3] South Façade of the Alte Pinakothek, München, 2012.

the superiority of modern culture to the culture of the ancients. Up to this moment, the majority of treatises on architecture and the arts had taken the model of the ancients as absolute and unsurpassed, as a datum that also could in fact not be improved, but which had to be taken as the ideal model. The Moderns, according to Perrault, emphasised the progress of human knowledge and understanding since antiquity. They considered classical works as admirable in certain respects, but also crude and in need of correction and improvement. In the course of this debate in France, human knowledge, which previously had been regarded as an undifferentiated whole, began to be divided into broad categories. Areas of inquiry such as science and mathematics, which depend upon the intellect, were for the first time distinguished from the pursuits of art and literature, which rely upon the imagination.

Past and present in architecture

In architectural discourse, specifically the idea that it is possible to start from scratch, was of course seriously challenged from the late 1950s, when it dawned on a whole generation of architects that the rejection of the past, and with it the rejection of tradition, was, in fact, limiting and reducing architecture. Its counter-proposal is that of *continuità*, of continuity. If you allow yourself to talk about the pastness of the past and its presence, as Eliot talks about it as being divided into two parts, then it's clearly implied that you can also think in terms of continuity. Ernesto Rogers, the architect of the Torre Velasca in Milan, formulated this position clearly: 'We will be much better disciples, the less we will be condescending to the forms of thought and previous works and the more we see with prospec-



[4] Intervention by Hans Döllgast, 2008.

tive detachment what was before us to establish the autonomy of our judgement and affirm our right to create for contemporaries'.[7]

Pictorial strategies

Hans Döllgast's post-1945 rebuilding of the Pinakothek in Munich may offer a useful illustration here. The Pinakothek, one of the major works of Leo von Klenze, constitutes one of the most important models for a museum in the 19th century, explaining art history as a chronological order, in a series of large rooms and cabinets. After the destruction during World War II, Döllgast proposed a partial reconstruction. Operating in a situation of scarcity, he rejected the idea of recreating the decorative carvings in sandstone and decided to show the wound, at the same time taking up essential aspects of von Klenze's architecture in the overall composition in the regularity and the proportion of the bays, but also, essentially, in the colouration. The way in which the brick in the rebuilt middle section is treated allows the onlooker to see the slight change of colour. This new brickwork introduces a language that is related to the inside of the building, and to the engineering structure that formed the core of the architecture that von Klenze had created.

Invoking Eliot, we might say that Döllgast chooses a series of languages or a series of dialects, that are sufficiently similar to be understood as mutually coherent. These are elements and structural logics related to the classical tradition, the vernacular or the architecture of engineering. On the inside, we see that this freedom, the fact that he does not expect himself to recreate the building but actually allows himself to sort of depart from the state before the destruction, also allows him to change the internal organisation fundamentally. Where there had been a long corridor between two staircases—which had impeded the vertical organisation—Döllgast now prioritised this aspect in the new staircase. By introducing a new kind of circulation device, the architect infused the existing building with a new kind of monumentality and a new scale. At the same time, the new staircase appears almost as an aspect of the language of the original building, which has been excavated beyond the creation of the 19th century, rendering the Pinakothek more Roman than von Klenze had ever realised it.

The question is, which kind of strategies may be productive in architecture? Döllgast's building, which relied on an archaeology of the underlying structure of the existing building, was not merely an attempt to heal and make complete again what was broken. But how could one generate a valid reference if no remnants exist, not even in the form of spolia? To some degree, Paula Rego's painting based on Velázquez may offer an avenue of procedure here. The new image is a recreation of the known painting. However, the meaning of this painting or the meaning of the elements in this painting has changed completely. What was the depiction of a family with a certain social status, is now portrayed as a kind of motley collective of figures of the 20th century. The compelling aspect of the painting is not what the artist depicts but the way in which she does it. The painting derives its meaning from the painterly procedure and the fact that came because the painting has actually been made in the same kind of language as that of Velázquez. Had the artist allowed a level of painterly abstraction, the reference might not have been quite so effective. It is exactly because there is a similarity in the treatment of the figures and in the application of the material, the paint, that this reference—which places the painting in a broken figurative tradition—works.

How then to deal with existing architectures in a way that acknowledges a living tradition, in a productive sense, while at the same time also finding strategies that detach themselves from the past, in a way both relating to the pastness of the past and expressing its presence? The strategies, as we have seen, can be manifold. They can include imitation, as we saw in the case of Paula Rego. However, they can also include a reading of the essential geometric and compositional qualities of what is found, as we saw in the case of Döllgast's Pinakothek. Either way, the understanding that invention will have an element of relating to the pastness of the future is essential.

[Image sources]

[1] Pharmacy: master pointing at flasks and apprentice seated behind a desk. Woodcut Medicinarius. Das Buch der Gesuntheit. Ficinus and Brunschwig Published: 1505; © The Wellcome Library retrieved from: https://wellcomecollection.org/works/jyuha2pp; accessed on 28/03/2018.

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[3] Alte Pinakothek Suedseite Muenchen. ©Rufus64 retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alte_Pinakothek_Suedseite_Muenchen-1.jpg; accessed on 28/03/2018.

[4] Muenchen Alte Pinakothek bjs. ©Bernhard J. Scheuvens. Retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Muenchen-Alte-Pinakothek-bjs-1.jpg; accessed on 28/03/2018.

[7] Ernesto Rogers, quoted in Alessandro Mauro, *Il realismo e l'architettura italiana*, Siracusa: Lettere Ventidue, 2017, 31/32

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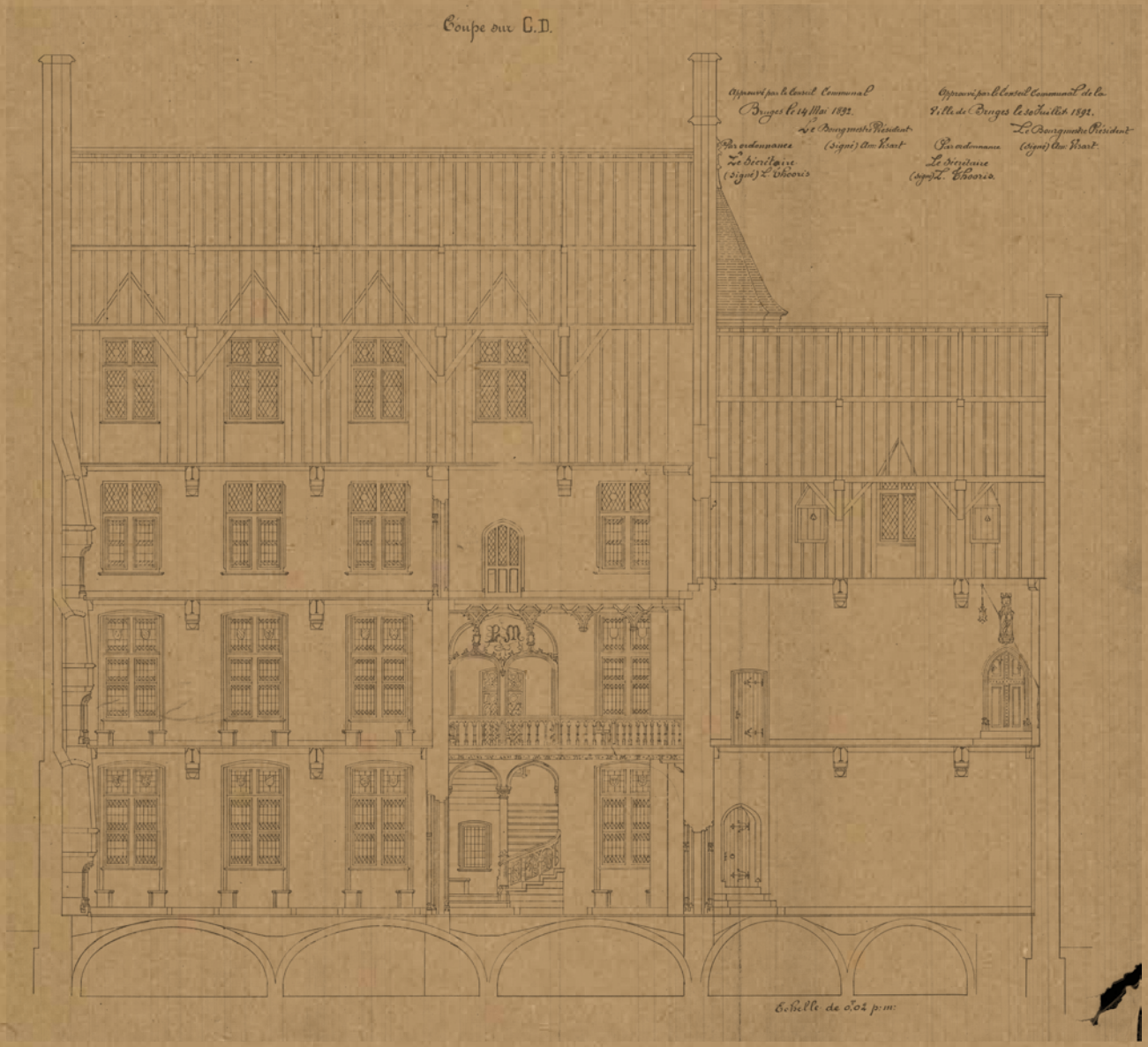

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