

a hard rain's a-gonna fall

Life & Work
TOWARDS LIQUID LABOR

The strict zoning of urban programs, which for decades has governed the design of the modern city, has resulted in a territorial inequality between residential towns on the periphery of bigger urban agglomerations and dense work centers at the main capitals. Generating a unilateral dependence between them and causing the shortage of large metropolitan areas due to their deficit of mixed programs.

Consequently, the public and private spheres have been held captive in watertight enclosures. Faced with this inequality, a hybridization of Life and Work is proposed. A new metropolitan paradigm which would be not simply urban but social, in which new models of the Life / Work also allow the balanced coexistence of both. A mixed territorial structure that integrates new urban tools such as teleworking, co-working and co-living, generating interactive, more heterogeneous forms of metropolitanization.

HOME + LABOR + LEISURE
In the contemporary city, Home and Labor are not anymore opposed realms but merged realities. They are not radicalized terms of a much more blurred reality. Work has been merged with domestic activities as well as domesticity has been released from the home in order to take place within labor spaces.

The primary division of labor spaces and domestic space that sustained the triumph of modernity during decades has been dismantled by the subsequent release of the person's biography, the world wide web and the smartphone, among others. The technologies that those devices and systems involve have constructed a change in the medium by which publicness is constructed in the contemporary society.

With the new medium a new notion of publicness is designed as well as new societies. That medium has collateralized to blur the lines that distinguished work spaces from those of the daily domestic activities. While work and home have been opposite spheres in the modern life, in the contemporary city, digital technologies have generated a medium that constantly mediates between both, enabling much more complex situations and conditions where new publicness is achieved and performed.

Labor is not anymore developed uniquely within work spaces. As consequence, domesticity is not anymore solely rendered within the home, nor urbanism is exclusively developed in the streets. Both of them have escaped the restricted boundaries that Modernity gave them in order to define a whole series of in-between spaces that are shaping the economical, political and cultural spheres of our societies.

Everyday, more and more, we have to be equipped with the tools and strategies that would help us to navigate within these uncertain blurred territories.

FROM ZONING TO HYBRIDIZATION

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[PANEL No. -1]

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The activation of the whole study site of De Kaaien is achieved through three main urban strategies that operate at three scales

Legiti's Trigger

INFRASTRUCTURAL SCALE

Currently, Flanders presents an unequal distribution of its industries that, contained in large cores distant from the metropolitan area, increase the tension and inequality between capital cities and territories.

For De Kaaien we propose a gradual transition towards Industrial 4.0, consistent with the European energy. Reaching a territorial model that exploits the large industrial, logistic and energetic hubs and disperses them throughout the territory in multiple small local industries and integrated energy productions, as well as ecologically responsible.

This new model has a reduced impact on the territory and activity, as well as a more balanced metropolitan and natural areas. Discarding the more speculative conventional model that, due to its low density, prevents the coexistence of industry and society, of energy and nature.

In a new model of industrial occupation and use of logistic infrastructure, here we are proposing a rigorous treatment of the existing model: decentralized and democratic instead of emphasizing more and more the central model, which concentrates big logistic cores, we propose a series of dispersed nodes. A constellation of small logistic, industrial and transportation hubs that, democratically distributed over the territory, help to homogenize the great infrastructural inequalities between metropolitan and peripheral areas. According to this model, central territories would become obsolete concepts since, like a natural network, all points are equally accessible and are perfectly connected with the others.

For this, the existing Hard Infrastructure conventional model and our model are implemented with new models of Smart-Modular and Soft Infrastructure. Consequently, single-family houses and collective housing are not anymore opposed realities. They are not anymore urban typologies. Through two different types of formalization, the same architectural strategy allows for the creation of a new type of domesticity where independence and autonomy are no longer contrasted, but rather coexist in the same architecture, within the new models proposed for this.

Ecological Distributor

ENVIRONMENTAL SCALE

The Deender river is not a mere waterway but an active distributor of ecologies and programs.

The river will no longer be a differentiated and isolated element, rather, it will integrate and hybridize with the architecture, ecologies and urbanisms of the project.

Conceiving the river as an architectural element, a medium for the coordination of many sites, many programs and events.

Conceiving the river as an architectural element, allows to understand the Urbanism and Nature will now be both as simultaneous elements of the same ecological development strategy.

Under this paradigm, Nature is no longer a stage environment from which urban activities, like Barthes, is no longer discarded but built, which are no longer founded but created, which are no longer reversed but mutated.

Programmatic Activator

SOCIAL SCALE

Tragel Zuid becomes a node from which other un-programmed spaces could be activated, appropriated and temporarily used for cultural production. These productive un-programmed spaces are urban islands that metropolitan opportunities to arise.

As in a town full of constructions that coexist perfectly. A metropolis in which the urban form is not approached from the informal. Planning can be reactivated around a very particular urban condition: deliberately un-programmed. The post-industrial architectures that characterize the urban fabric of Flanders have the potential to function as Urban Dockets where unexpected activities happened. Building the metropolitan diversity, heterogeneity and hybridization that characterizes the region.

De Kaaien is a potential prototype for such a programmatic, defining a Urbanism of 'Contingency'.

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[PANEL No. -2]

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Anamorphic View - from South West - ...Esc. 1/1000

Timeline

CURATING URBANISM THROUGH THE YEARS
2022 - 2045

Time plays a significant role in the design of the project. As the whole masterplan is conceived as a timeline, using a pilot script in which several formal and informal interventions are counterpointed through the years.

Basically the script is articulated in two main acts.

ACT 1

1- Pop-Up Architecture
1b- Protocols of Appropriation
1c- Ecological Environments

On the first one a series of informal architectural devices will activate the site, supported by protocols of appropriation of the existing architectures and followed by the insertion of ecologies in the form of vegetation, energy and soft industries.

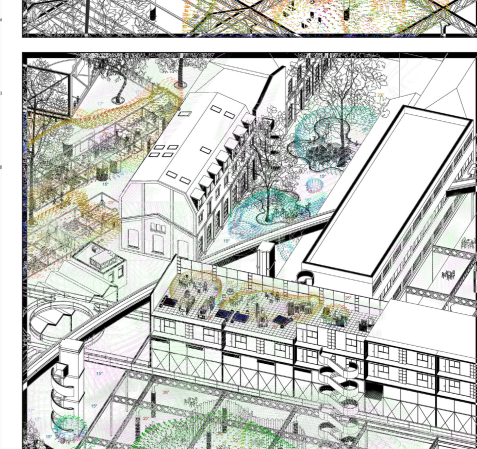
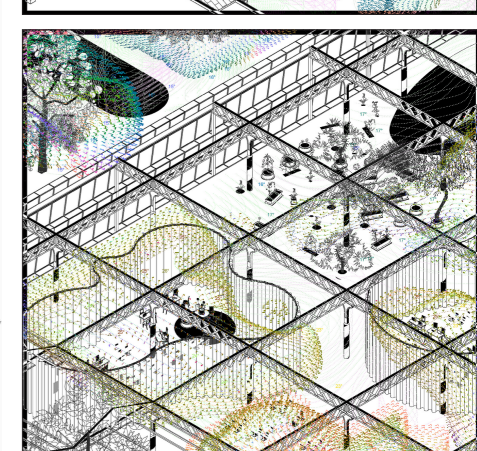
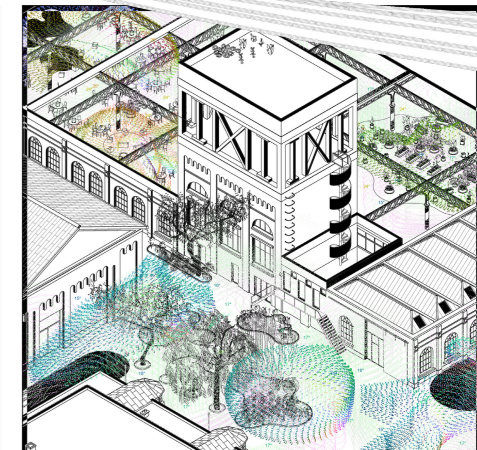
They are not conceptual centers for the future requirements of the site, before the construction of harder architectural infrastructures.

ACT 2

2a- Architectural Structures
2b- Anamorphical spaces
2c- Permanent Lines

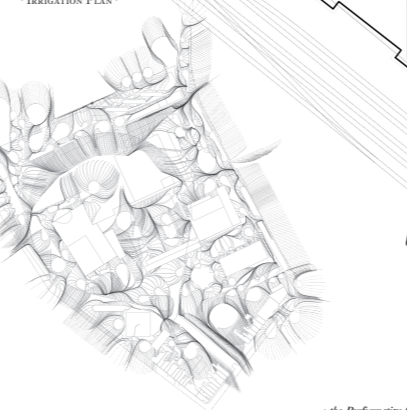
On a second act, more permanent architectures will be given to the programs and uses that are proved to function during the first phase. Accordingly, the natural growth of the introduced ecologies will help to construct a series of atmospheric contexts that will help to accommodate the future uses.

Catalogue of Vegetation



INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

IRRIGATION PLAN



Tragel Zuid

FROM 'BUILDING' A CONTEXT TO 'CURATING' A CONTEXT

Instead of defining a rigid masterplan for the whole site, the project embraces time as an architectural tool. Tragel Zuid is conceived and projected over time, using fitting and overlapping urban mechanisms that will define the singularity of the project.

The proposed Masterplan for the whole Tragel Zuid area uses two urban tools:

- 1- On the one hand, a series of Urban and Architectural Artifacts. They are activities and analyses of contexts. They are devices that would trigger certain urban conditions to take place. These artifacts are classified in three categories, depending on their function:
 - A- Connection Elements such as new roads, pedestrian pathways, bridges, and bicycle tracks.
 - B- Activation Devices: pavilions, kiosks, cultural buildings, pop-up markets, sport facilities and urban docks.
 - C- Absorption Spaces such as plazas, esplanades and atmospheric alleys.

- 2- On the other hand, a series of 'Regeneration Strategies'. They stand as urban protocols of action over specific areas. The masterplan defines the distribution of ecologies, energies, atmospheres as well as new pavements.
 - A- Protocols of action over specific areas.
 - B- Protocols of action over Singular Pieces. Historical and cultural singular architectural pieces would be reactivated and incorporated to the masterplan with a calendar of updated uses.

At the beginning of the whole process strategies of appropriation would be used, defining the modes of occupation by which architectures would be used by local collective. On the long run, architectural pieces would fill up this process, assigning certain more permanent uses to specific ones.

AN URBAN PROTOTYPE

The project for Tragel Zuid is the first step of this bigger strategic masterplan that involves the whole De Kaaien area at the riverbanks of the Deender.

Tragel Zuid will act as a Urban Prototype for other selected sites among De Kaaien, serving as a testing ground from where to define an urban model where the dichotomies between work, life, and nature vs. urbanity are no longer rigid, but blurred into intermediate states where the city becomes an ecological active trigger in which leisure and labor overlap in time within the same spaces, contexts and atmospheres.

ECOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The project is not merely achieved through planning strategies and architectural designs. Instead, infrastructural design plays a significant active role.

A whole network of irrigation facilities is designed and deployed over the territory of Tragel Zuid, allowing the area, distribution and scale of ecologies, atmospheres and programs.

ERASING TRAGELWEG

Regarding the planned road of Tragelweg that will cut the site in two unconnected pieces, the masterplan relies on a very basic architectural gesture: raising the planned road over an elevated structure of pillars that liberates the floor plan for green, sport, cultural and public spaces. Such an essential action, elevating the street, unfolds a new context of possibilities for urban connections underneath. The whole site becomes pedestrian and public when the border or the road is deleted by raising it up.

Once such a barrier is erased, the whole area is ready for a masterplan that would regenerate and prepare a whole series of new uses plus a reactivation and installation of certain peripheral ones.

