portfolio

design ideology and projects

Jorrit Kiestra
Delft
fall 2025

jorritkiestra@gmail.com
+31 0627354126
LinkedIn: jorritkiestra

introduction

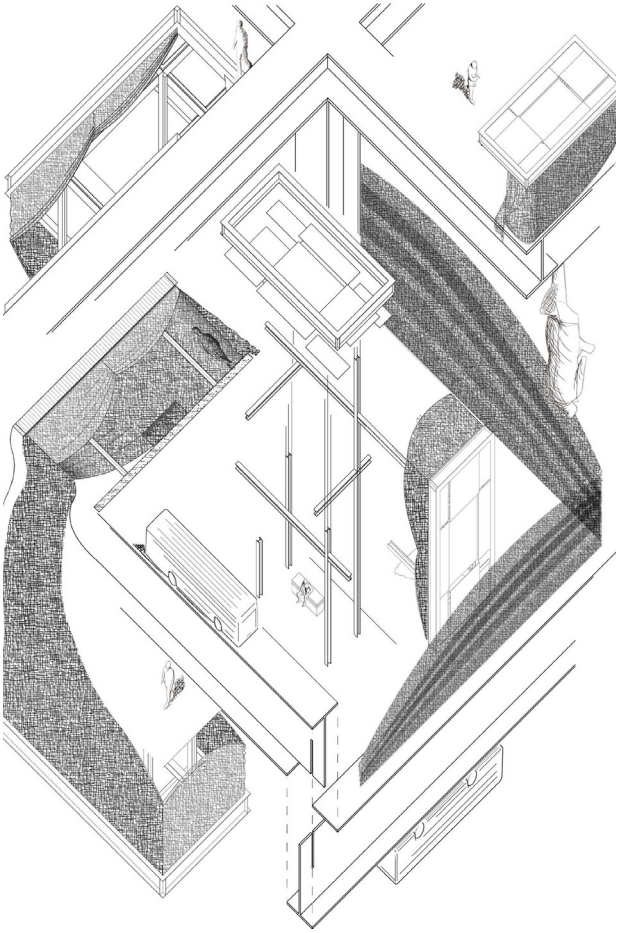
the new architect

With modern developments in artificial intelligence repeatedly overwhelming every expectation, outsourcing thinking and creativity has become the new standard. Romantic naivety has long made it difficult to embrace these developments. Yet, it is only realistic to predict that this technology will continue to develop uninhibitedly in the near future. If this is true, we can only assume that the twenty-first century *starchitect* will be artificial. Although this prediction might be a bitter pill to swallow for a conservative industry, one must not underestimate the potential benefit this might have for our built environment. If a design process can become more efficient, it might form a possibility to shift the savings in time and investment into the realization of higher quality architecture.

When used adequately, that is. As when used indifferently, these technological advancements may disrupt the integrity and morals of our social structures. It will become a tool to express the notion of the digital world: one that worships life-shredding efficiency and negotiates only with the highest bidder. We've seen the digitalization of our lives devaluate human contact and experiences, alienate us from each other and create a system that values data and money above all else. This notion has infiltrated our physical world to the point that we've been convinced to live our lives as fast, easy and cheaply as possible. In the appraisal of an impoverished definition of efficiency, we've let excessive digitalization take away the small things that make us feel human. Artificial intelligence is the most powerful tool produced by this movement and if we are not careful, it will only create according to these beliefs.

For the built environment this will not simply mean the thriving of ugliness, it will inevitably result in the further demise of the middle class and the auctioning of our cities. With their creative power being outsourced, the twenty-first century architect must instead fight for their place at the controls. It will be their job to establish, defend and implement the right design morals. The mature modern architect will not design *buildings*, but rather decide the *principles* on which they are generated.

This portfolio is dedicated to sharing my personal perspective on these principles. Therefore and logically, all text and projects provided are written and designed by *natural* intelligence. The portfolio consists of three chapters that explicate my ideology regarding *user*, *monumentality* and *dwelling*. This theory is supported by architectural projects undertaken between 2022-2025. All these projects share a belief in architecture as an empathic practice and underline the necessity to redevelop a symbiotic relationship with our buildings. This belief shines a new light on the qualitative potential of future buildings. If technology overtakes all productivity, it grants us time to acknowledge the value of the inefficiencies of living. □



experimental drawing on
overcomplication in
architecture (2023)

curriculum vitae

experience

Architecture internship
Fokkema & Partners Architecten (Delft, NL)
2023-2024
assistant at several large interior and architectural projects

assisting junior designer
Fokkema & Partners Architecten (Delft, NL) *2023*
assisting designer for large interior design

drawer at construction engineering firm
Buro Wietze Dijkstra (Terherne, NL) *2019-2020*
assisting drawer for small scale renovation projects

site model building for offshore energy innovation project
DOB academy (Delft, NL)

practical skills

physical modeling
experienced in building and interpreting physical models in all stages of the design process

CAD modeling
experienced in working in CAD programs Rhinoceros and Autocad

Adobe creative programs
sufficient knowledge of Adobe creative programs such as Illustrator, Photoshop, Lightroom, Acrobat, etc.

Microsoft office programs
sufficient knowledge of microsoft Office programs such as Microsoft Powerpoint, Word, Teams, etc.

website building
basic experience in coding in HTML and JavaScript

education

BSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences
TU Delft (Delft, NL) *2020-2023*
cum laude

exchange minor Collaborative Urbanism and Architecture
Lund University (Lund, SE) *2023*

master Architecture
TU Delft (Delft, NL) *2024-present*
current occupation

language proficiency

Nederlands
moedertaal

Frysk
memmetaal

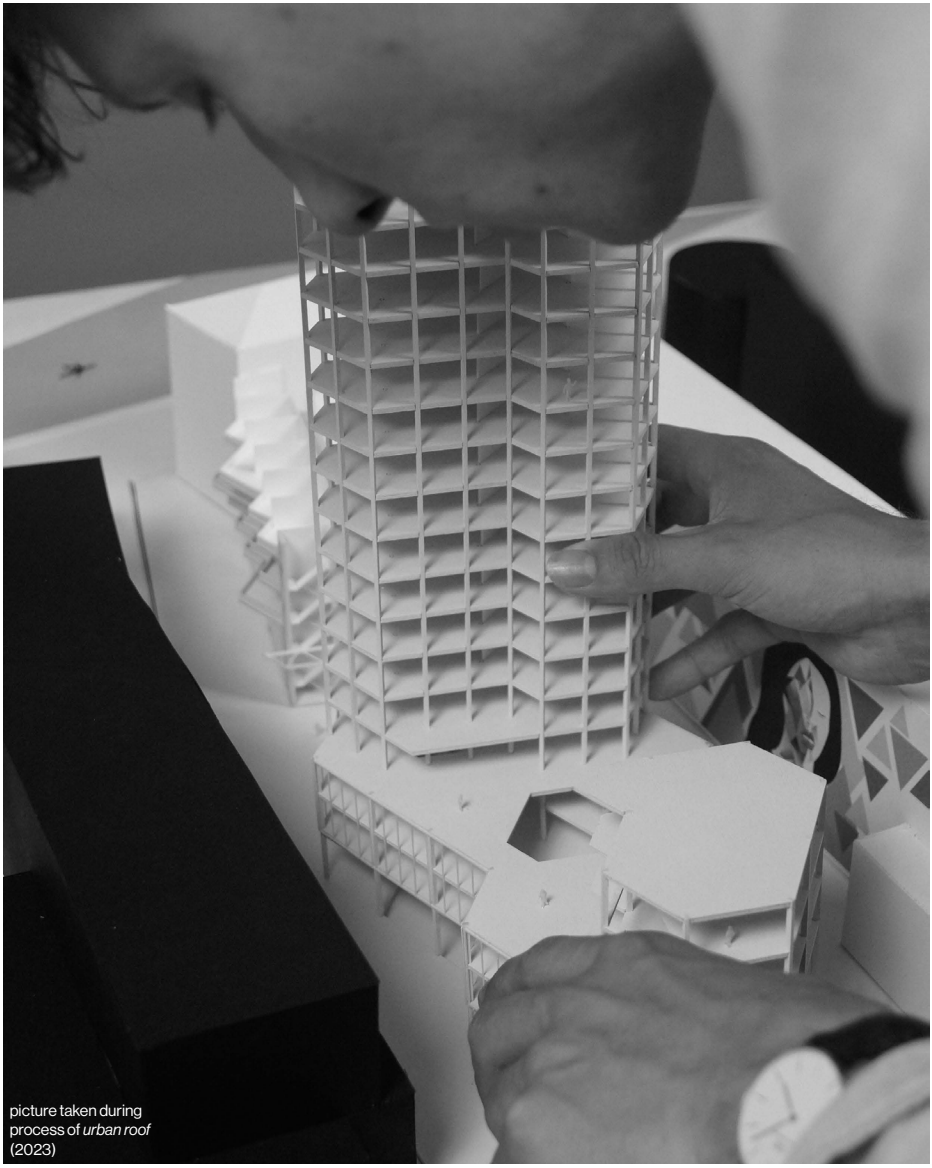
English C1
Cambridge University certificate

Deutsch B2
Goethe Institut Zertifikat

other

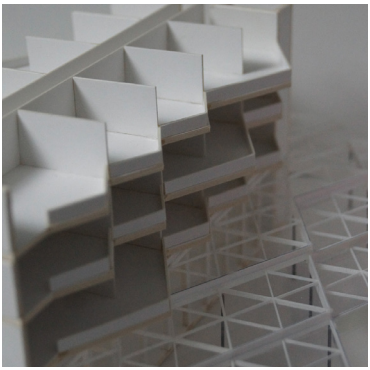
crew rowing at Proteus-Eretes
national-level competitive rowing (2022 - present)
two-time national indoor rowing championship winner
U23 RP3 lightweight 6k world record holder

fundraising committee for association building
Proteus-Eretes



picture taken during
process of *urban roof*
(2023)

index



user 10

designing less 12
communal library

monumentality 18

interventions 20
elementary school

materials 26
music and cultural center

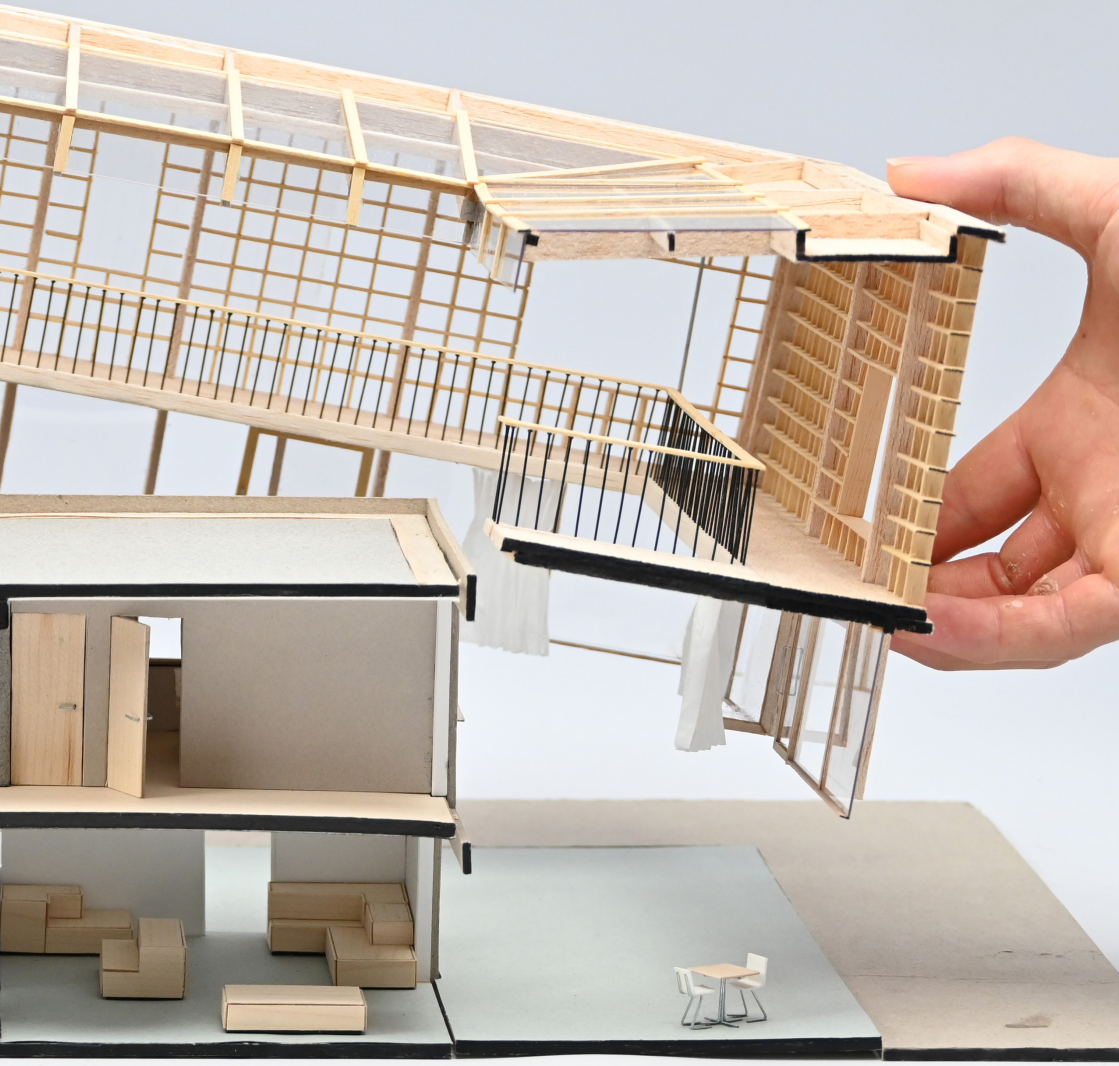
dwelling 32

architecture as contraband 34
residential building / mixed use

typologies 40
residential building

user

The relationship between building and user is commercializing. Recreating a durable relationship requires revitalizing the integrity of our buildings. Through modest and valuable design, buildings can fit closely to the needs of the user and play a meaningful part in its environment.



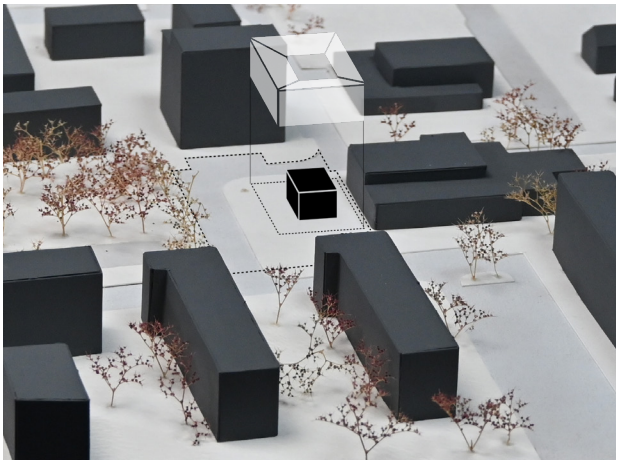
1:50 section model
from *bieb!*

designing less

Mature architecture requires humble architects. On the opposite, immature architecture relies on ego and resultingly renounces any modest qualities a user might value. A building shows humility by the extent in which it answers to the banal needs of ordinary life. This sense of humility must not be confused by a lack of creativity or inspiration as it by no means discourages from adding a new quality. It ensures the idea of architecture remaining a conversation rather than an imposition. For a designer, *designing less* means restraining oneself from overdesigning and maturing from a mindset that favours the architect more than the actual user.

Many outdated neighbourhoods undergo significant restructuring to comply with contemporary construction goals. When a neighbourhood is not beautiful in a conventional sense, any imbedded emotional attachment to the physical environment is easily misunderstood. The 2025 design project *bieb!*, which takes place in a seemingly uninspired neighbourhood in Gouda (NL), challenges this idea as it proposes the reuse of a vacant building as the central part of a library. The simple 1930's brick and concrete building had previously functioned as a doctor's office and mosque. Visiting the site and talking to the people from the neighbourhood made it apparent that this simple structure holds more cultural significance and emotional connection that any flashy new building would.

In response, *bieb!* proposes the addition of a new separate structure around the existing building. The new layer revalues the existing structure by creating a dynamic interaction in and around. The added layer divides the library into an old inner structure, a light new structure and an open space in between. It creates a dynamic interaction in the building as both structures *conversate* instead of compete. ▽▽



bieb! (2025)
left
1:000 site model, south view

right
1:50 section model

designing with humility means listening to the needs of the user;

finding and adding a desired quality;

and restrain from overcomplicating the design.

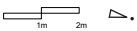
top and bottom left
collage renders from 1:50 model. Display of the desired dynamic interaction in between the layers.

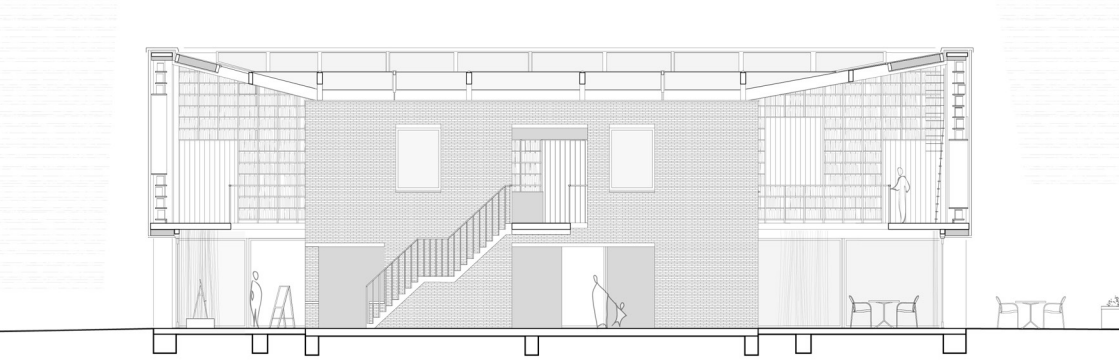
right
1:20 detail model collage. The model illustrates the spatial relations between the layers, as well as the facade image.

As the existing structure is an important part of the building, the appearance of the added structure is designed in relation to it. Its contours are an offset of the existing ones and the irregularly placed columns correspond to the existing lines and facade openings. Moreover, a transparant outer structure ensures the old building remains visible through the new facade. This facade divides itself into a transparent ground floor and a translucent first floor - opening up the ground floor while retaining a semi-private appearance on the first floor. The structure of the facade is designed in the scale of a book - functioning as book shelving and creating an inspiring image of a wall of books through its translucent shell.
The open plan leaves room for many free-to-use spaces to encourage social interaction. Social spaces such as a communal kitchen, workshop spaces and a room suitable for cultural gatherings are located in the inner building and are meant to be used freely by people from the neighbourhood. The offset facade creates space for circulation around the inner building, allowing a free organization of the plan that fits the specific needs of the users.
This project strongly exemplifies the possibilities of humility in establishing functional buildings that add value to its surroundings. *bieb!* finds its modesty in embracing existing buildings and cooperating rather than overshadow. Its added qualities relate closely to the social needs of the neighbourhood while realizing a pronounced piece of architecture. □

left
1:200 N-S section with view on retained structure

right
1:400 main floor plan





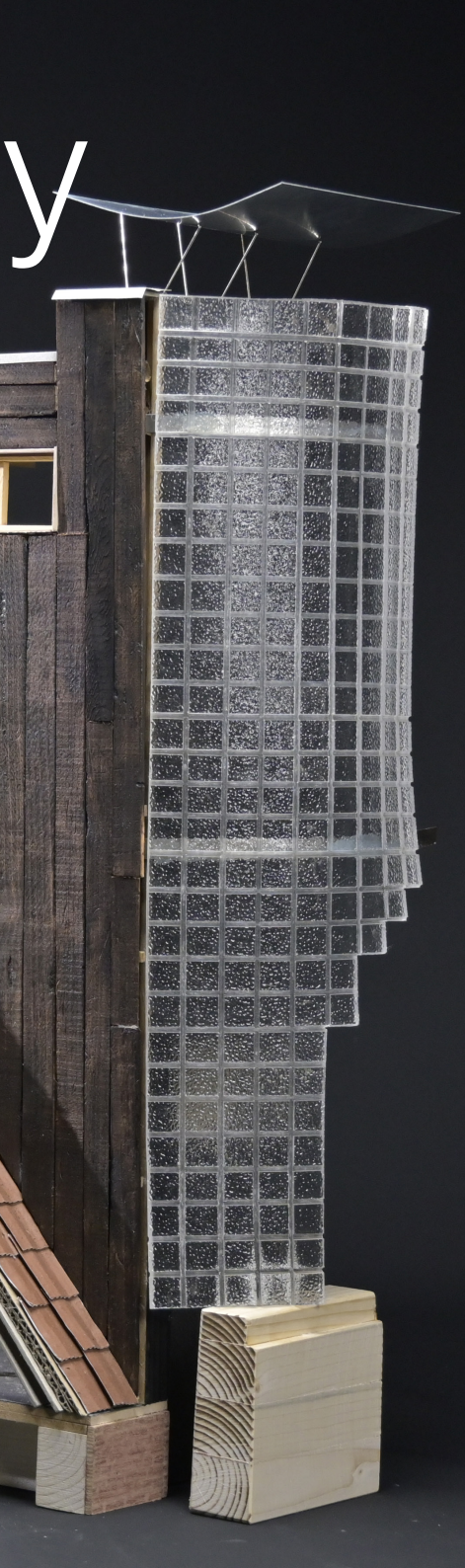
storage
disabled's toilet
toilet
toilet
kitchen
communal space
cafe
reception
flexible space: exhibition
children's /
multi-purpose room
technical room
flexible space: seating

monumentalit

The most sustainable buildings are the ones worth preserving. A building does not obtain its monumentality through to its age, but rather through its character, integrity and message. Designing with and around monuments requires adequate interventions that praise the past while acknowledging the future.

1:12 detail model from *chimney*

y



interventions

At some point we started making buildings that become uglier as they age. Frightened by the process of aging, our definition of beauty narrowed down to young and undamaged. Buildings started dying young and their wastefulness had to be justified by creating detachable buildings that economize the romance of architecture. We live emotionally detached in temporal vessels of materials that lost their invitation to be touched. If sustainability is measured in terms of durability, then our most sustainable buildings are already built. Our monuments have become a tribute to the lost art of craftsmanship and integrity. What if, instead, they remind us to create buildings we want to preserve?

It raises the question what a 21st-century monument should look like and whether or how an existing monument may be adapted to meet contemporary demands. If the renovation or conversion of monuments helps their revival and preservation, it is more than desirable to pursue these projects. Addressing this challenge, however, requires a clear rebuttal against the inviolability of monumental buildings. Whether a juxtaposed building should imitate, interpretate or even ignore the archaic is a matter of opinion, but nevertheless requires a pronounced design perspective. The renovation project *chimney* (2025) explores this perspective by shaping its response to the charisma of a monumental building. This project aims to offer a solution to building climate and spatial problems through relatively small interventions in the roof and facade. The existing building, a 1960s primary school in Delft (NL) suffers from heat stress in several of its classrooms and lacks the space needed for individual guidance. To address this, *chimney* introduces a strong architectural element to collectively solve these problems. This element, a solar chimney, elegantly revises simple principles of natural ventilation. A large glass surface proved challenging to integrate into a monumental context, prompting the extensive use of glass blocks to approach the existing form language. The end result is a balanced roof and facade intervention that adds a new quality to the building without compromising its character. ▽▽

chimney (2025)
right
1:36 building intervention model, view on east facade

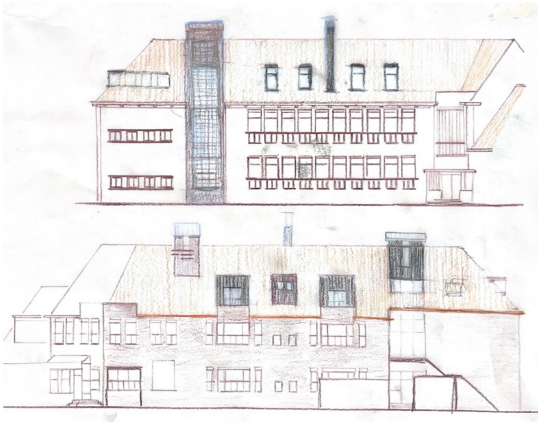




chimney
top left
1:36 model, elevations and section

bottom left
provisional intervention sketch (top: east, bottom: west)

right
1:12 detail model of chimney to roof connection and interior space

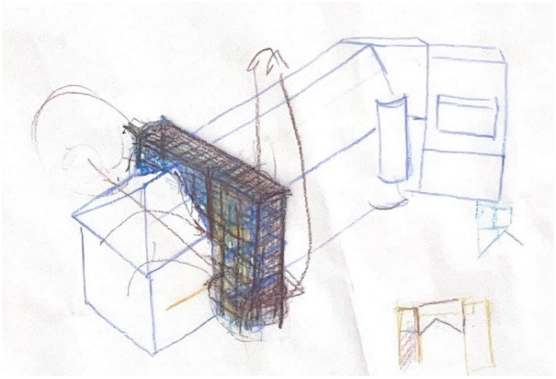


The introduced solar chimney operates on the simple, old principle of hot air ascending and creating a pressure difference. A large glass surface on the east side acts as a shaft that warms the air and accelerates it upward. This façade was chosen for its appropriate rhythmicity, as well as its location near the rooms that experience the greatest heat stress. By insulating the heat chamber from the building and connecting it with ventilation grilles, the warm air in the rooms can be immediately extracted as soon as heat stress occurs. Fresh air is drawn in through the cool west side of the building. Because the chimney must extend above the roof ridge, the structure can be extended across the entire roof width. The resulting space is naturally lit and provides the necessary space for individual support.

The approach to materials in this project is closely linked to the characteristics of the characteristic building. The elegance and detailing of the existing materials demand a suitable approach to form, texture, and scale.

An analysis of the existing rhythm provided the basis for the lines of the intervention. The interrupting verticality of the chimney divides the facade and forms a counterpart to the atrium located on the right. The elegance of its form and lightness are echoed in the design of the chimney, which takes on the form of a high curved wall in textured glass blocks. The rest of the extension is crafted from Yakisugi wood, adding to the texture and character of the extension.

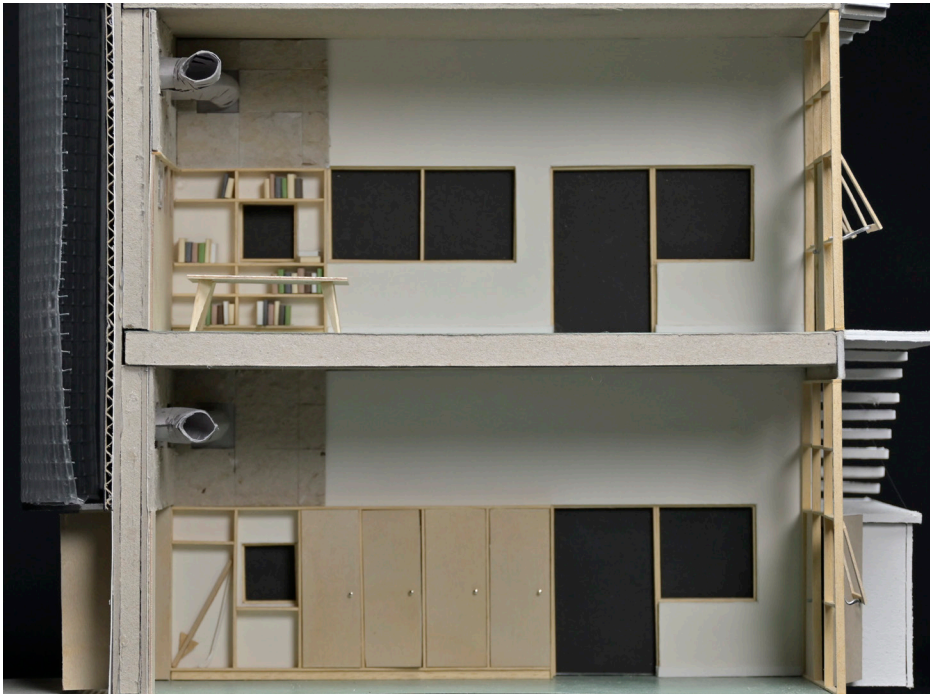
Central to *chimney* is reading and understanding an existing building structure and its translation into a suitable intervention that meets contemporary requirements. It shows a contemporary intervention does not have to either imitate or challenge an existing monumental context, but can use it as inspiration in shaping its own identity. □▽



left
conceptual sketch on airflow concept

top right
1:36 model, first floor interior details

bottom right
1:36 model interior section, first and second floor view



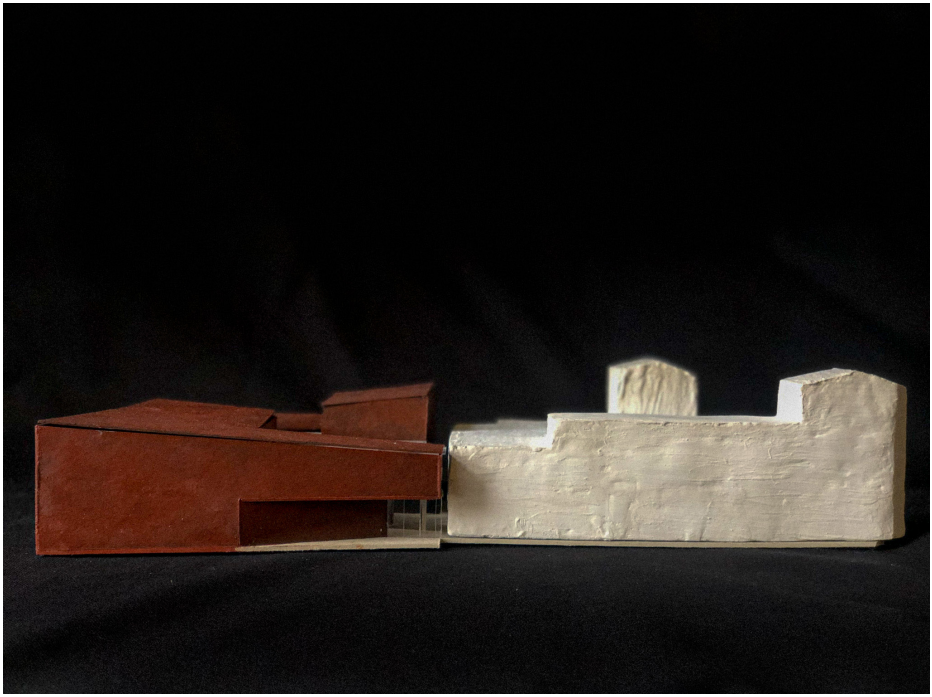
materials

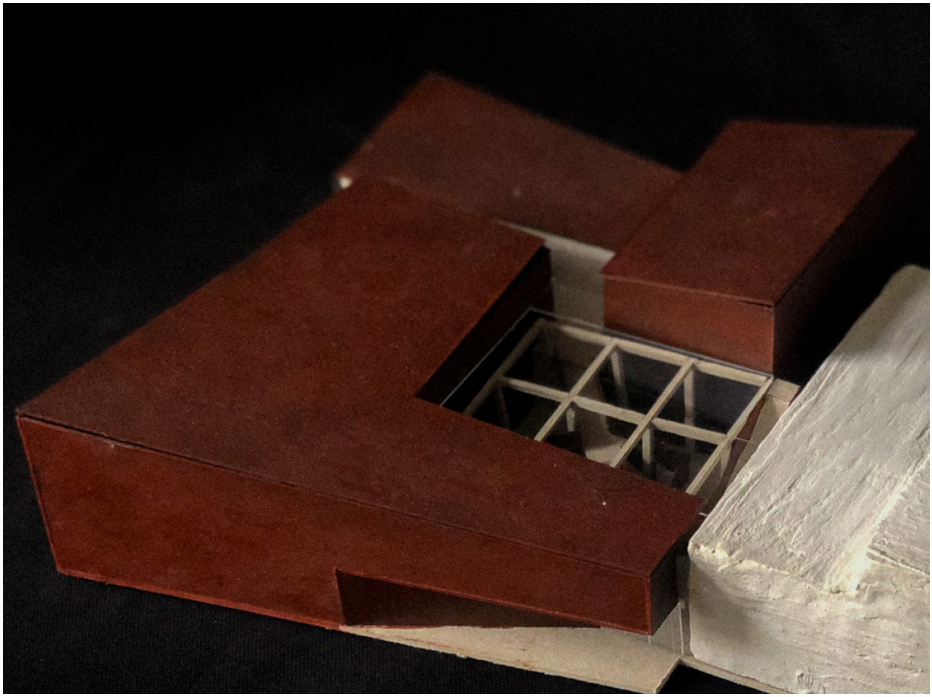
Adding an extension to a monumental building is a delicate matter. It gets even more challenging when the required scale of the addition defies that of the existing structure. This is especially true when the counter-part is designed in an archaic architectural style that orchestrates a high level of detail appropriately and specifically to its existing scale. Now that the vagaries of the 21st century no longer permit the same quality of materials and craftsmanship demanded at this level of detail, a large-scale project must adopt a different approach to maintain the existing quality. For this, architects often resort to glass. Like a kind of transparent Kintsugi (the Japanese art of repairing broken objects with gold-powdered glue) it is the most cautious and therefore safe option: displaying contemporaneity without disguising monumentalism. While this approach certainly deserves considerable praise, the emerged contrast also creates a contradiction.

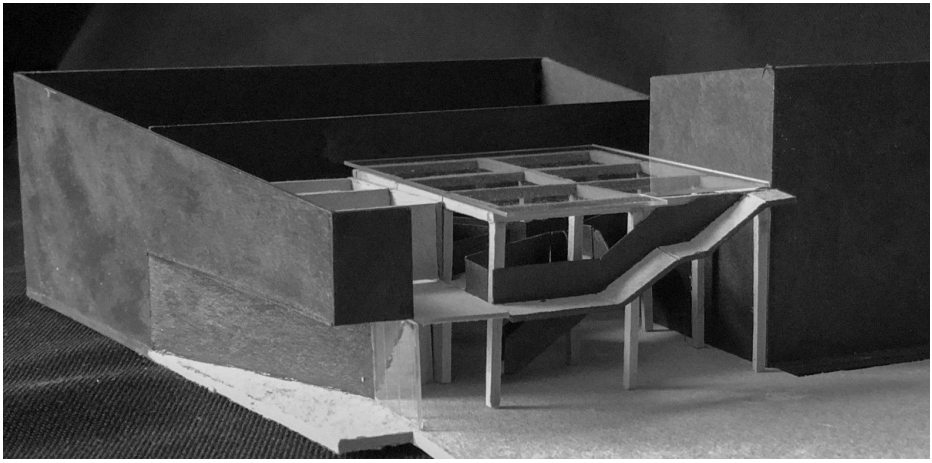
Glass is beautiful when it shines, brick is beautiful when it cracks. When old beauty is strung together by a material that itself dares not age, a friction arises in our thinking. Have we become afraid of creating monuments, or have we become afraid of creating buildings that will become old and ugly?
k!ngs, a 2024 monumental reuse project, addresses this topic in its approach to materials and scale. The project takes on the challenge of transforming a monumental factory building in Delft, NL into a podium for music and culture, a technically and spatially demanding building function. The project juxtaposes materials that can embrace aging in a similar way, namely monumental brick and contemporary steel. This approach to materiality arose from a material study that studies the changing character of the material. As realistically the monument's level of detail cannot be matched, the project attempts to derive its tactility from the texture of the aging material. ▽▽

k!ngs (2024)
left
1:2000 site model, oriented at southwest facade

right
experimentations with corten steel, detail connection







k!ngs
top left
1:200 building model, view on south facade

bottom left
1:200 building model, roof view

top right
experimentations with corten steel, total composition. Model is composed in raw steel plates and designed to corrode.

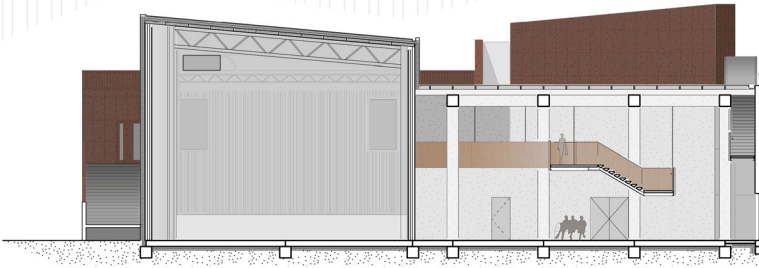
bottom right
1:200 building model, interior view. Floating walkway bridge and stairs connect atrium to the monument.

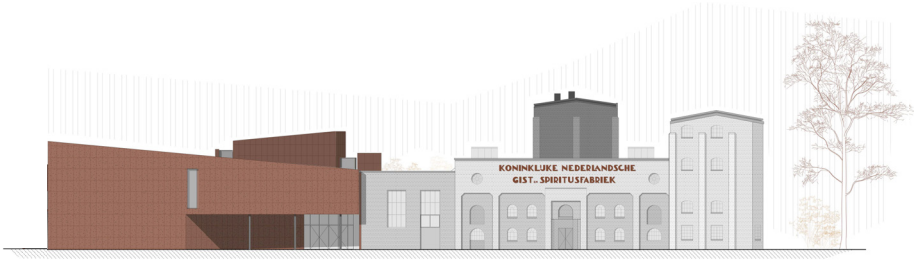
k!ngs derives its name from an abbreviation of the building's former function as a spirit factory. As the monumental status of the factory building disallows altering interventions, the project proposes the placement of three massive volumes that form a balanced composition with the existing building. The composed volumes accommodate the programmatic requirements of a pop music venue. The spaces amidst the volumes, such as the central atrium, form a light and open contrast with the massiveness of the volumes and initiate an interaction with the monumental building. It creates a route that connects the division between old and new.

k!ngs attempts to integrate materials that meet contemporary standards into a context with a monumental character. Like *chimney*, it takes on a position that focuses on interpreting monumentality in the design of buildings with new functions, forms, and qualities - buildings that long to age. □

top right
elevation,
south facade / main entrance

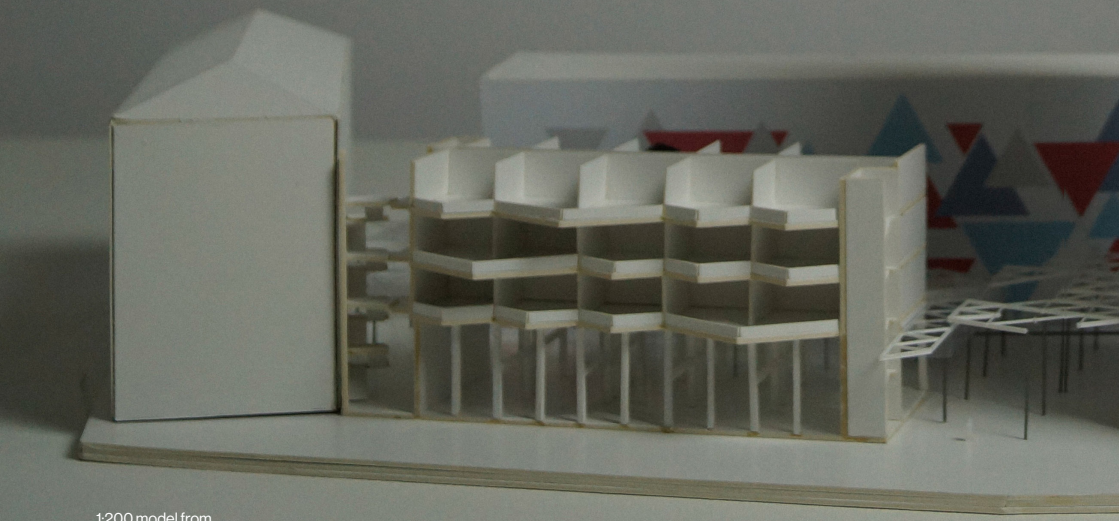
middle
1:400 cross section
(E-W)




KONINKLIJKE NEDERLANDSCHE
GIST- SPIRITUSFABRIEK

dwelling

Pressing housing shortages demand designing with efficient use of space and materials. Large residential projecs and urban densification are seen as a viable solution to this proble, however, it has proven to be quite a challenge to create liveable environments in such *dwelling machines*. To ensure a high quality of living amidst these grand scales, the human scale must be kept in sight.



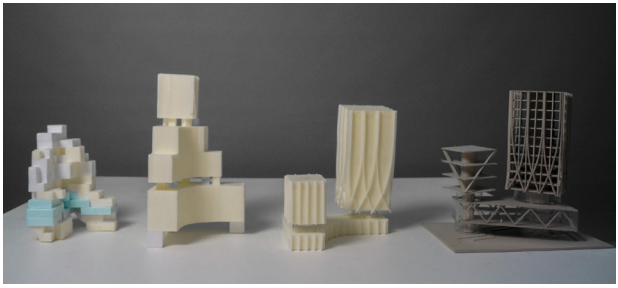
1:200 model from
urban roof

architecture as contraband

Architecture distinguishes itself from art by its necessity to be pragmatic. Although theoretical debates about purity, honesty, and beauty will always remain necessary, it is important to stayin touch with the practical world. A housing shortage of roughly 400,000 homes, for example, demands an effective hands-on approach to the construction of residential buildings. Yet, as quantity becomes top priority, architecture becomes contraband. Amidst urban densification, this means we have to smuggle spaces where we can breathe; when constructing residential buildings we have to smuggle a sense of community and when designing homes we have to smuggle a specialty that upholds a quality of living.

It is a common idea to consider densification of the city when addressing the housing shortage, and high-rise buildings are often a promising candidate. However, designing high-rise buildings in an urban environment is a daring practice. A building of such a scale has to do with a vulnerable and interconnected environment and neglecting this can have serious spatial and social consequences. It is therefore necessary to take a critical stance on high-rise buildings in the urban environment and assess their social and spatial intrusion.

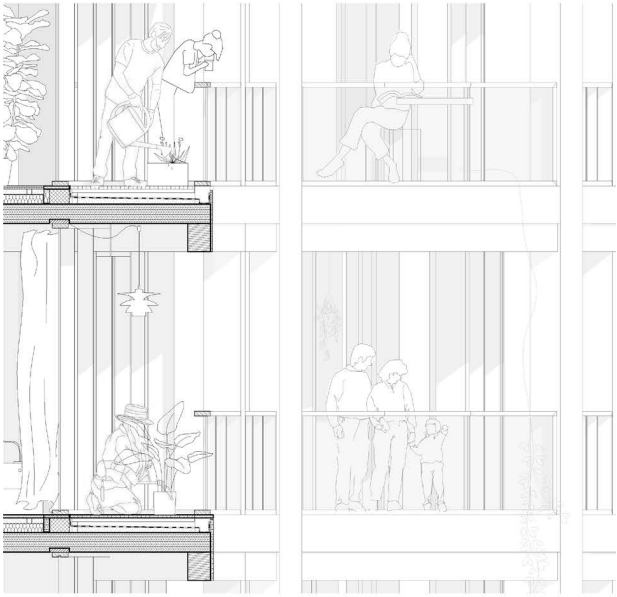
urban roof (2023) illustrates this challenge by realizing a high-rise building in the heart of Malmö (SE). Malmö's previous attempts, like *Turning Torso* (Calatrava, 2001) have an image of working spectacularly on postcard images but offer little in the way of residential quality. Instead, *urban roof* introduces a sense of spatial identity and quality as it realizes an efficiently densified building in the heart of the city. Its main approach is introducing a continuous roof structure that softens the scale of the high-rise and draws the entire plot together. The continuous triangular grid shapes the contours of a new mixed-use highrise and balcony extensions on an existing building. ▽▽



urban roof (2023)
left
1:200 models as volume studies in context

top right
1:200 model in context, view on south facade

bottom right
1:200 model in context, top view



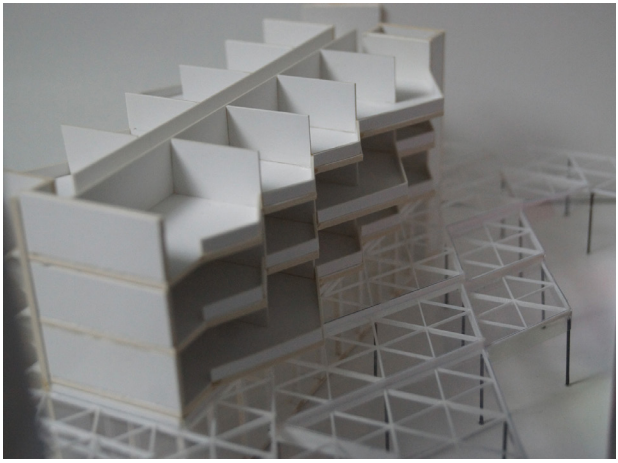
top left
1:100 balcony section.

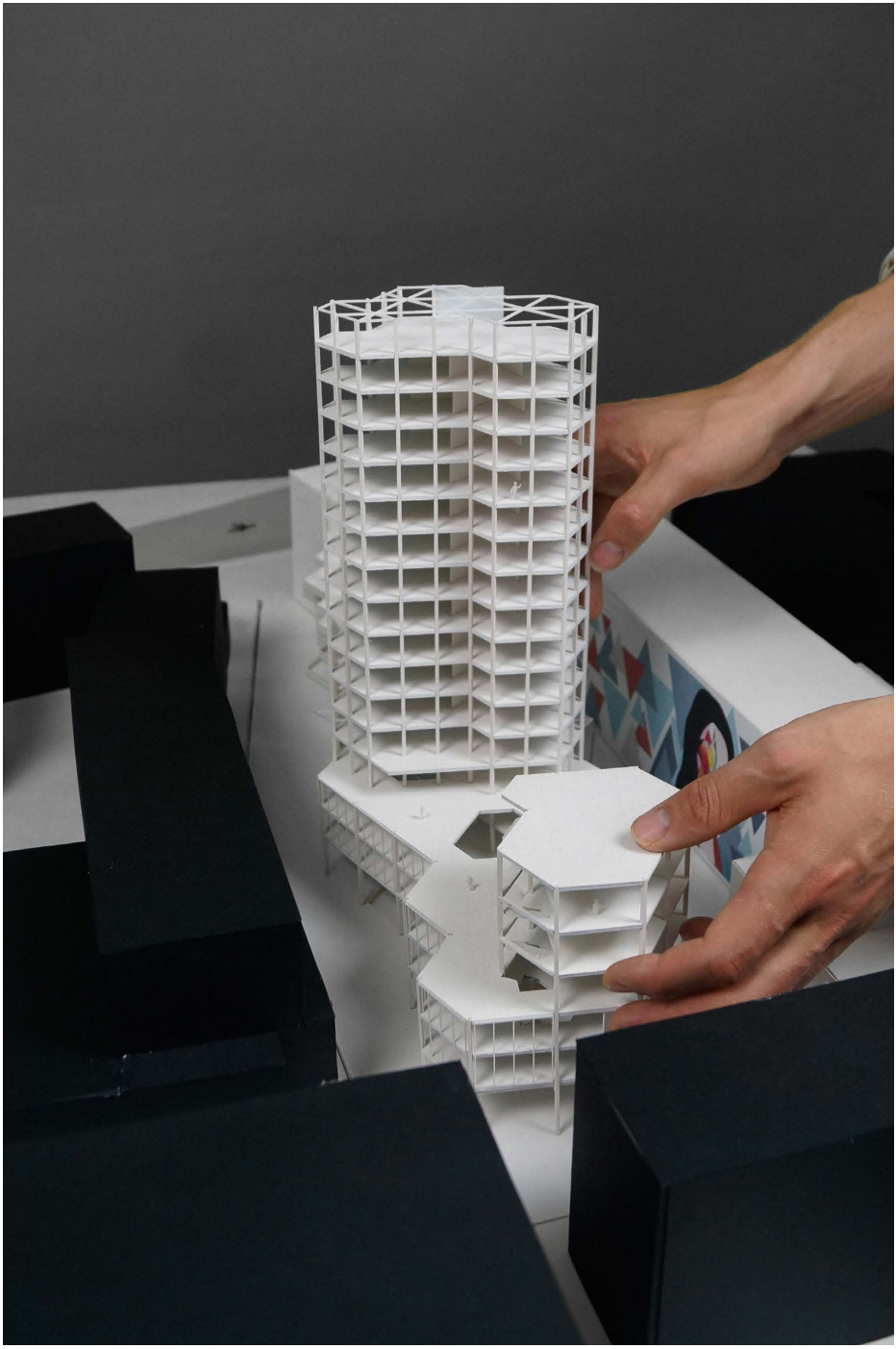
1m

Balcony functions as connecting buffer zone between in and outside.

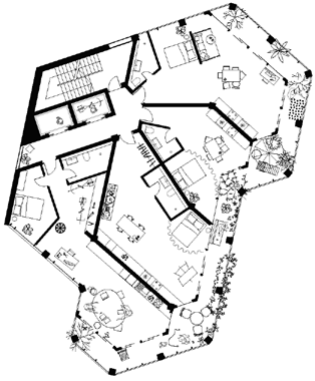
bottom left
1:200 model detail of renovated building and added roof structure. The semi-covered structure flows over in the plinth of the apartment building.

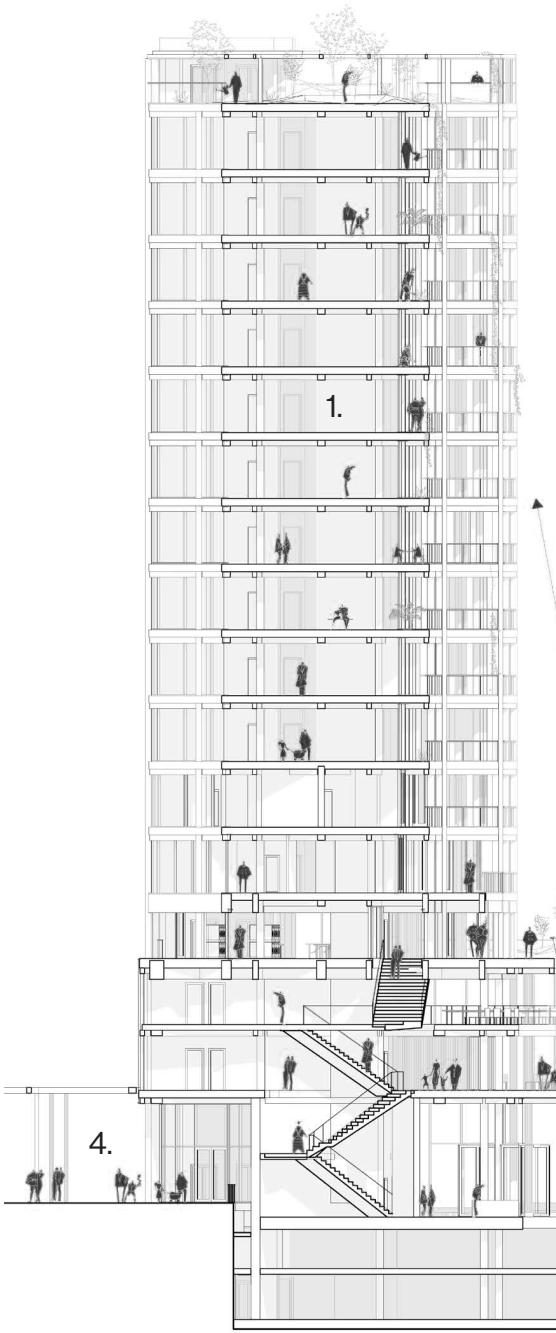
right
1:200 model in context





The new high-rise consists of a horizontal and two vertical volumes, with this volumetric separation distinguishing the various functions within the building. The horizontal volume floats above a lowered plaza and opens up its roof for a terrace. This houses a library (2) which offers ample space for public functions. The tall tower (1) contains 48 two-person apartments with an organic floor plan. A gallery runs around the apartments, serving as a balcony and connecting the adjacent apartments. The smaller, stacked volume blends more boldly into the street profile, thus posing its cultural function as an art depot. The contours of the volumes closely follow the triangular grid laid out in the plot. In addition to its function as a spatial organizer, the space under the roof also functions as a freely divisible market space (4), connecting with the plinth of the reused building. The resulting whole is much more than an anonymous residential building and becomes a cohesive structure intertwined with its surroundings. □▽



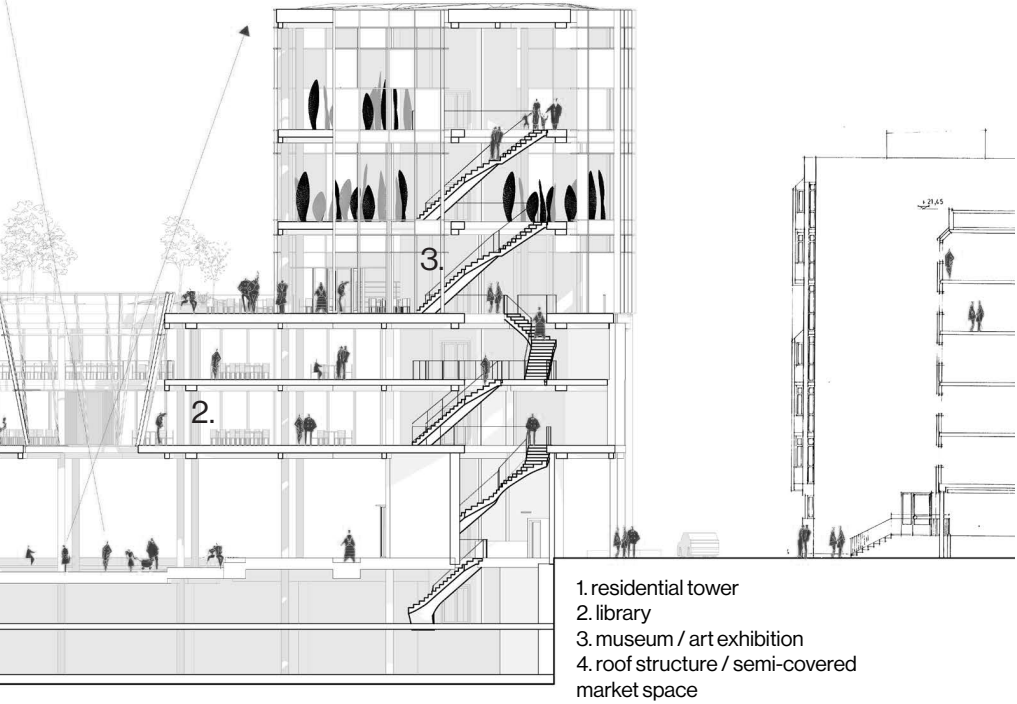


bottom left
1:400 dwelling floor plan

1m 2m 4m

middle
1:400 cross section (E-W)

1m 2m 4m

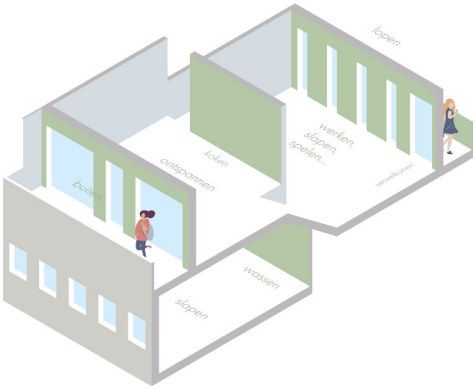


1. residential tower
2. library
3. museum / art exhibition
4. roof structure / semi-covered market space

typologies

Residential buildings are essentially a puzzle with countless facets: the designer plays a game of Tetris with living spaces, walking spaces, utility rooms, parking areas and elevators. Just as the zigzag piece can be troublesome in a Tetris game, a housing typology often gravitates towards the shape of a simpler square or rectangle. The generic blueprint of the modern residential tower has thus become a medium-height brick cube with a central elevator shaft and glass balconies at the corners. Besides an uninspiring appearance, this also results in uninspiring living qualities. However, any experimentation with housing typologies quickly backfires - as it is sometimes forgotten that someone actually has to live there. Ultimately, this may mean a lower quality of living against higher living costs. Experimenting with such typologies should therefore primarily safeguard this quality of living, or rather aim to improve it. This may encompass fresh views on thresholds, spatial dynamics and effective distribution of circulation areas.

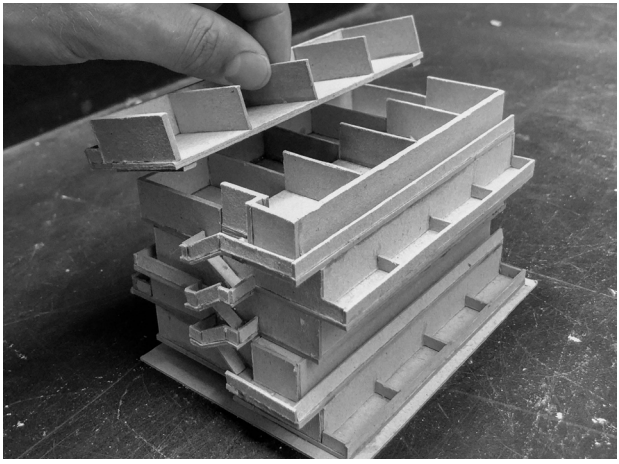
A begin can be made by rethinking the typically adynamic approach to thresholds and zoning. *Split-level living* (2022), a housing project in a densely populated suburb of Rotterdam, explores this idea by designing a split-level floor plan. The building stacks compact family homes, alternating their orientation into a carefully coordinated whole. The configuration arose from designing in the scale of a single residence, where a dynamic separation of spaces formed the starting point. The resulting floor plan creates a nuanced division between sleeping, working, and living over three *half* floors. The alternating placement of the homes creates a repetition in the façade rhythm of gallery, horizontal glass, and balcony. ▽▽

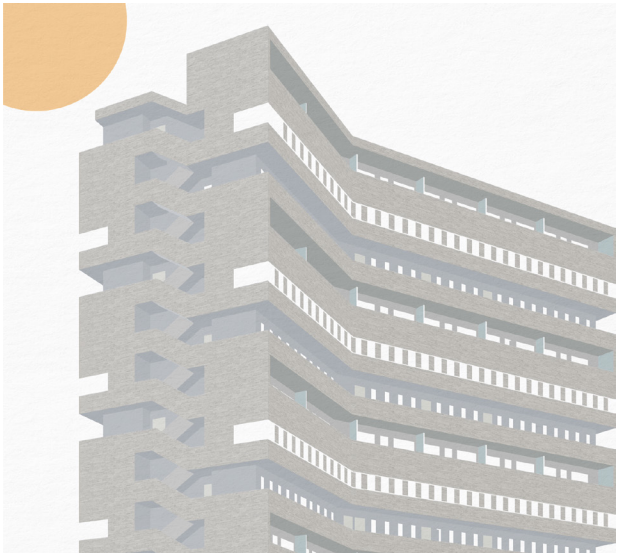


split-level living
(2023)
left
isometric residence concept

top right
interior render

bottom right
building volume study





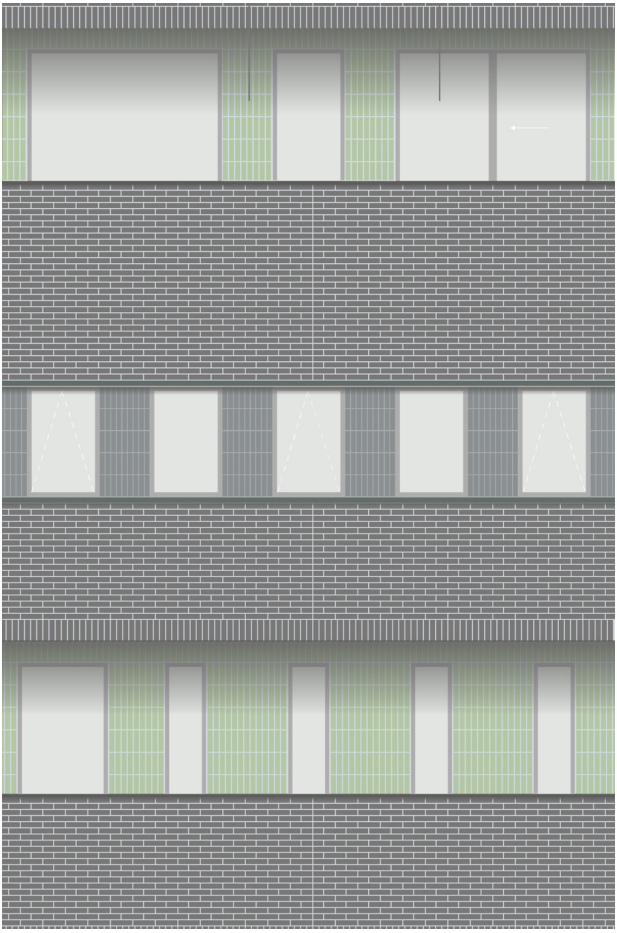
top left
building exterior drawing

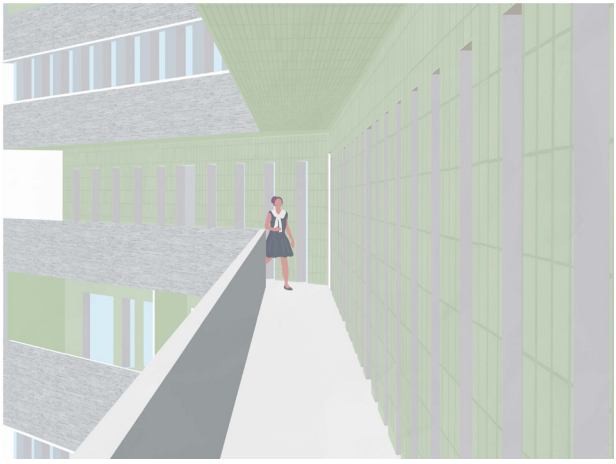
bottom left
building section in context (E-W)

top right
1:100 facade elevation

1m

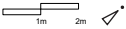
bottom right
gallery drawing



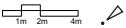


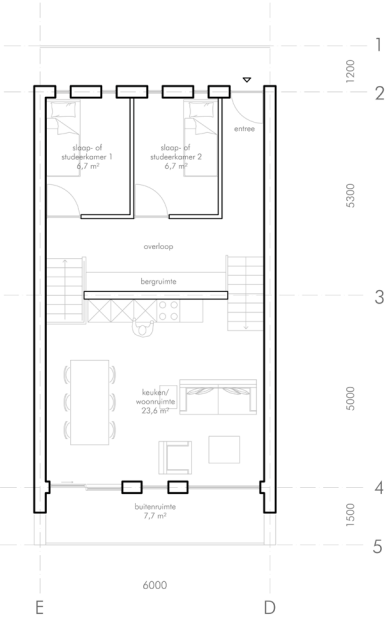
The family dwelling is split in the middle with two stairs placed circling around a centralised structural wall, resulting in a dynamic circulation between floor spaces. The second of three floors is labeled as the living area, continuing into a spacious balcony. The larger open space creates a balance in the residence, opening up the dwelling and letting in natural light. The residences are accessible through a gallery that runs long the facade and inbetween two fire exits on either side of the building. This space is softly materialized with green glazed tile, whereas the facade is made up of dark molded brick. This contrast in colour, weight and texture magnifies the difference between outside and inside, softening the interiour experience. In the end, this interiour experience was most important for this project. It shows an urban living machine can create small yet human homes by smuggling a sense of softness. □

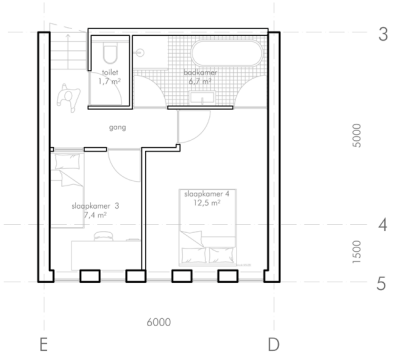
left
1:200 dwelling floor plans

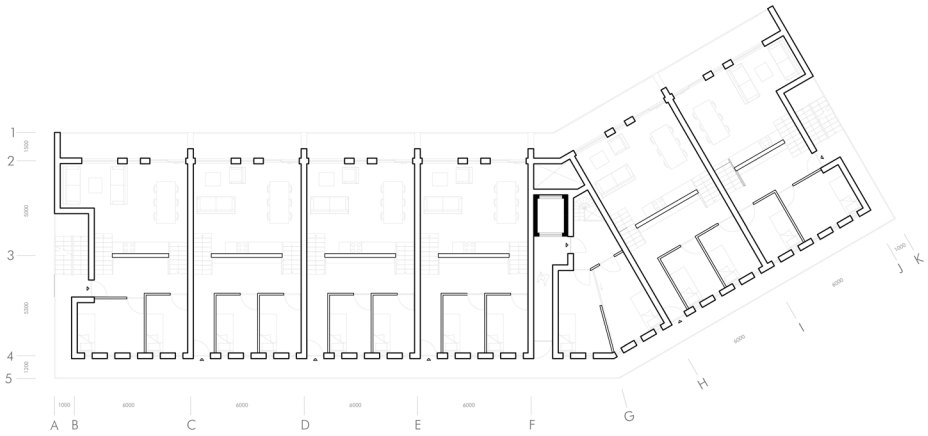


right
1:400 building floor plans

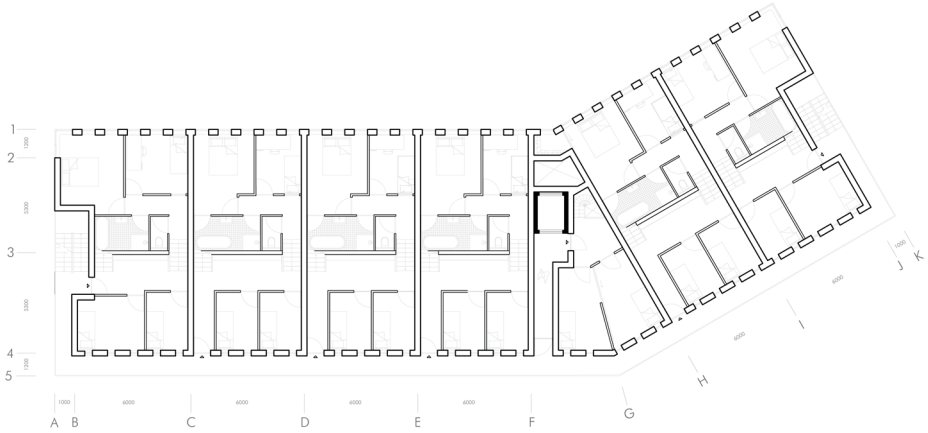








first floor - top split floor



first floor - bottom split floor

epilogue

In 1989, professor David Cope from the University of California performed a number of pieces by Johann Sebastian Bach at the Santa Cruz Baroque Festival. The enthusiastic audience praised the inspired and touching performance. However, the atmosphere changed dramatically when Cope revealed the pieces were instead composed by an artificial *composer*. The audience was stunned and furious. What an attack on the emotional nature of music! Yet, anyone unaware of its artificial origin would still describe the music as emotionally captivating and undistinguishable from 'real' music.

The story of David Cope's artificial composer has greatly influenced my perspective on contemporary digitalization and its influence on the built environment. What stuck to me in particular was Cope's response to the question whether he was bothered by his own invention, as he himself was a big *normal* classical fanatic. His response speaks volumes:

> *"I can understand why it's an issue if you've got an extremely romanticized view of what art is," he says. "But Bach peed, and he shat, and he had a lot of kids. We're all just people."*

What the audience at the Santa Cruz festival failed to acknowledge was that embracing such a technology as a creative power does not have to intrude the emotional response it brings about. For a long time I felt part of this audience. Initially even, this portfolio was a critique on all digital advancements and their impact on our experiences in the physical world. It was an emotional response to all unnecessary digitalization of banal experiences. Weary from streetviews littered with commercials, QR code interactions and intrusive app subscriptions, I had primarily been pre-occupied with the negative implications of contemporary and future technology. Similarly, I see architecture firms adapting resistively or to limited extent to this vision of future design. Rather than adapting to the awaiting shift in creative power, they underestimate its fundamental influence on the future design process.

I do not have the technical expertise to further develop these technologies, but I am steadfast in its potential of its application for good, humane and beautiful design. The recent surge of these technologies shaped my design principles regarding needed efficiency of design and wanted inefficiency of living. Moreover, it made me aware of the changes this entails for the future profession of architect, changing from designer to an advocate of the user. It made me realize that in this negotiating with a new creative power we need architects to make sure we design *with*, not *like* machines. □

contributors

bieb!

mentors
Mikel Van Gelderen
Tomas Dirrix
Anne Dessing
George Karvelas
Elina Karanastasi
Oliver Ebben
Cecilia Dobos

project partners
Jan Stolwijk
Iris Meijer

chimney

mentors
Eireen Schreurs
Paul Vermeulen

project partners
Joyce Hess
Johan Speyart

k!ngs

mentor
Arjan van Toorenberg

urban roof

mentors
Maria Rasmussen
Andreea Marcu
Pontus Åqvist (Open Studios Arkitekter)
Project partner
Rasmus Kallenberg

split-level living

mentors
Gijs Baks
Joost Baks
Robbert Guis


TAKE ME AWAY