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Site-specific Design Approaches in Contemporary European Harbour Transformation

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**This Ph.D. thesis has been submitted to the Ph.D. School of the Faculty
of Science, University of Copenhagen**

SUMMARY

TRANSLATING HARBOURSCAPES
SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN APPROACHES IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HARBOUR TRANSFORMATION

One of the main tasks of contemporary urban planning is the transformation of the spatial lef-tovers of late 19th- and 20th-century heavy industry. This industrial legacy comprises various large-scale production sites, including disused harbours. All over the western world today, one can observe that despite the greatly differing geographical, social and historical backgrounds of harbours, their extended wastelands are often developed in the same generic way so that they can be reintegrated into the urban fabric of their respective cities. These standard development projects consist of newly built architectural objects such as office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres and leisure facilities, and they sometimes preserve single harbour objects for folkloristic reasons. In this thesis I argue that this is not enough to unfold a harbour's existing site qualities. I question if there are local answers to the global question of harbour transforma-tion that would result in a specific urban reintegration situated between a total make-over and a museification of harbour areas. This thesis explores ways of valuing that which exists on harbour sites and of reusing the 'existent' to drive a transformation project. Reuse provides some advan-tages over design from scratch. It presents alternatives to homogenisation, it supports a cultural climate that values the multi-layered, the heterogeneous and the complex, and it saves resour-ces that affect ecology and, to some degree, economy.

Since the 1980s, industrial transformation in Europe has become current practice within archi-tecture and urban design. When reviewing the short history of urban reintegration of derelict industrial areas, one can identify a set of design projects that build on local driving forces. In particular, the huge industrial sites, such as the coal mines, blast furnaces and production plants of the Ruhr area, have been transformed specifically with the help of designers. Asking if this approach could be applied to derelict harbour areas, I engage in a search for site-specific alter-natives to generic harbour transformation under the following research question:

Can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in European harbour cities be de-veloped site-specifically with the help of designers?

This investigation is meant to add insight to the broad societal debate about the global and the local, about the generic and the specific. I aim to discover how designers handle these contras-ting concepts within harbour transformation. The purpose of this research is to observe if and how designers develop site-specific answers that build on the existing particularities of a site. At the same time, this research scrutinises the concept of site specificity to find out what it means and how designers refer to it, while eventually updating the understanding of it among actors involved in harbour transformation.

The empirical material of this thesis consists of design projects for disused port and port-related areas slated for transformation or already undergoing transformation. Out of the large variety of projects available, this thesis focuses on European projects designed or built during the last decade and involving multi-disciplinary design teams. I comprehensively scrutinise two projects, the Euromediterranée 2 project in Marseille and the Île-de-Nantes project in Nantes, as they illustrate in a prototypical way the two poles I defined for site-specific design: the place-bound

and the transient. Between these two poles I disclose other site-specific approaches in four more projects, which are presented in a synthetic way: the Tagus Cycle Track through Lisbon's harbour, the Port's Visual Quality Programme in Rotterdam, the Right Bank redevelopment in Bordeaux, and the open space plan for Bjørvika Bay in Oslo.

I investigate harbours through the theoretical lenses of landscape architecture — something that has not been done before. The contemporary landscape architectural theories this thesis relies on posit that in landscape architecture, natural spatial conditions and the processes of nature are considered on an equal footing with man-made elements and human practices, and that a scrutiny under a landscape perspective be understood as action- and design-oriented. The landscape perspective thus offers an overarching and transversal approach to studying harbour transformation; it allows the entangling of issues that are usually not put into relationship with each other because they belong to different specialised fields of knowledge. Inspired by pragmatism and opposing the modern paradigm of radical newness as well as the essentialist tendencies of postmodernist historicism, I settle the larger theoretical frame of this thesis within post-postmodern thinking.

Within this strand of thinking I elaborate on the concept of site as a dynamic relational construct. I discuss how design can be apprehended as transformation of the existing rather than as creation *ex novo*. I thus am lead to understand the design work as non-finite, and the design process as successive processes of translation. I explore the concept of site specificity, often referred to by contemporary designers but having emerged and evolved in post-modern art. I deliberately understand site specificity in a stricter way than designers usually do, namely as oscillation between a place-bound and a transient pole. At the same time, I invoke a recent tendency in the arts that addresses site-specific works as time-specific works. I revisit the definition of site specificity as an oscillation between two poles. I point at its limitations as a dualistic figure which does not focus on the evolutionary qualities of design that I identify as playing an important role in the design approaches.

Methodologically, this thesis involves qualitative research. It is laid out as a collective case study, building upon a number of harbour transformation projects, and it is 'instrumental', that is, the projects help me understand an overarching issue, namely site-specific design. Case study methods are inspired by grounded theory and by hermeneutic work- and context analysis as practiced in landscape architectural research and project critique. The sources of this case study comprise visual material, literature, my own on-site observation, and interviews with relevant actors. From my theoretical inquiry I elaborate a particular analytical framework for my case study, synthesised in an interpretation tool that allows the detection of site-specific design approaches in contemporary large-scale harbour transformation projects — an academic method to evaluate artistic work. The interpretation tool proves useful to identify site-specific design and, furthermore, to capture its nuances. This is due in particular to the translation filters of the tool, capable of distinguishing modes of translation and degrees of interpretive freedom. Apart from this differentiation, the tool also reveals commonalities throughout the projects, enabling me to formulate a set of game rules for harbour transformation as a framework of conditions for site-specific design.

The outcome of this research is twofold. First, in scrutinising harbour transformation projects, the work discloses site-specific design approaches as alternatives to the standard development pattern for derelict harbour areas. Hence, I can answer my research question positively: contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in European harbour cities can be developed site-specifically with the help of designers. Second, in exploring the concept of site specificity, this study reveals how designers work when referring to a site's specific qualities, and it therefore updates the current understanding of this concept while also proposing a shift towards another concept, that of translation. This thesis invites further investigation of translation as a powerful metaphor for a way of transforming a site's existing qualities, rather than erasing and rewriting them, and thus an investigation of how this metaphor can foster design for harbours or other post-industrial sites.

To sum up, this work delivers the first investigation of contemporary harbour transformation from a landscape perspective. Is provides an updated discussion of the concept of site specificity, an interpretation tool for the evaluation of site-specific design approaches, a collection of alternative harbour transformation projects in Europe and game rules for site-specific design. These deliverables are relevant for various reader groups: The audience of associations promoting new forms of development for harbour cities, such as AIVP and RETE on an international level, gains access to new knowledge about harbour cities, namely the approach from a landscape perspective. Municipalities and port authorities involved in concrete harbour transformation projects receive a best-practice collection illustrating how harbour areas can be developed more specifically than with standard procedures. Municipalities, regional authorities and developers involved in the transformation of other derelict industrial sites are offered a work from which knowledge can be easily transferred to their field of action. Professionals of the design disciplines, such as urban planners, urban designers, landscape architects, and architects, receive an in-depth discussion of the concept of site specificity, through which they might discover their own tacit knowledge. Professionals, students and teachers in the design disciplines, especially in architecture, gain access to an alternative understanding of design as transformation or translation, as opposed to the commonly taught version of design as creation *ex novo*. Landscape architects, who still frequently work at a small scale, can discover how their expertise supports large-scale projects and how they can widen their professional scope. Scholars in the design disciplines are offered a new method for the scrutiny of design work and for design critique, based on an epistemological position that bridges the gap between positivistic and phenomenological approaches.

DANSK RESUMÉ

OVERSÆTTELSE AF HAVNELANDSKABER
STEDSSPECIFIKKE DESIGNTILGANGE I NUTIDIGE HAVNETRANSFORMATIONER I EUROPA

En af de største opgaver indenfor nutidig byplanlægning er transformation af de overskydende arealer fra det 19. og 20. århundreds tunge industri. Denne industrielle arv består af forskellige produktionsarealer i stor skala, blandt andet nedlagte havne. I dag kan man i hele den vestlige verden observere, at selvom havnene har vidt forskellige lokale geografiske, sociale og historiske sammenhænge, bliver deres vidstrakte øde arealer ofte omdannede på den samme generiske måde, med det formål at genintegrere området i de respektive byers bymæssige struktur. Disse standardiserede omdannelsesprojekter består af nybyggede arkitektoniske objekter som kontorbebyggelser, luksus boliger, shopping centre og fritidsfaciliteter. Sommetider bevares enkelte havneobjekter af kulturhistoriske grunde. I denne afhandling argumenterer jeg for, at dette ikke er tilstrækkeligt til at udnytte en havns eksisterende stedsmæssige kvaliteter, og jeg sætter spørgsmålstegn ved, om der er nok lokale svar til det globale spørgsmål om transformation af havne, der ville resultere i en specifik bymæssig genintegration mellem total ombygning og total bevaring af havnearealer. Denne afhandling undersøger måder at værdisætte det der eksisterer på havnearealer og genanvende det 'eksisterende' for at fremme et transformationsprojekt. Genanvendelse har nogle fordele i forhold til total ombygning. Det præsenterer alternativer til homogenisering, det understøtter et kulturelt klima som værdsætter det lagdelte, det heterogene og det komplekse, og som sparer ressourcer, der påvirker miljømæssige aspekter og til en hvis grad økonomi.

Siden 1980erne er industriel transformation blevet en stor beskæftigelse i Europa indenfor arkitektur og bydesign. Ved undersøgelse af den korte historie af bymæssig genintegration af forladte industrielle områder, kan man identificere et sæt designprojekter, der bygger på lokale drivkræfter. Især de enorme industrielle arealer som kulminer, stålværker og produktionsfabrikker i Ruhr-distriktet er blevet omdannede stedsspecifikt ved hjælp af arkitekter, landskabsarkitekter og planlæggere, herefter benævnt 'designere'. Jeg spørger om denne tilgang kunne anvendes på forladte havnearealer, og jeg søger stedsspecifikke alternativer til den generiske havnetransformation under det efterfølgende forskningsspørgsmål:

'Kan nutidige storskalahavne i europæiske havnebyer omdannes stedsspecifikt ved hjælp af designere?'

Det empiriske materiale for denne afhandling består af designprojekter for forladte havne- og havnerelaterede arealer, der er tiltænkt transformation eller allerede er under omdannelse. Ud af det store udvalg af projekter, der er til rådighed, fokuserer denne afhandling på europæiske projekter, som er tegnet eller bygget i løbet af det sidste årti og involverer tværfaglige designhold. Jeg undersøger to projekter grundigt, Euromediterranee 2 projektet i Marseille og Île-de-Nantes projektet i Nantes, da de på en prototypisk måde illustrerer de to poler, jeg definerer for stedsspecifik design: det stedsbaserede og det foranderlige. Mellem de to poler fremlægger jeg andre stedsspecifikke tilgange, som er anvendt i fire andre projekter, som præsenteres på en syntetisk måde: Tagus Cykel Rute gennem Lissabons havn, Havnens Visuelle Kvalitetsprogram i Rotterdam, Right Bank omdannelsesprojektet i Bordeaux, og den åbne områdeplan for Bjørvika i Oslo.

I denne afhandling er havne undersøgt ud fra landskabsarkitekturens teoretiske perspektiv – noget som ikke er gjort før. De nutidige landskabsarkitektoniske teorier denne afhandling bygger på lægger til grund, at naturlige forhold og processer betragtes på lige fod med menneskeskabte elementer og menneskelig praksis, og at en undersøgelse i et landskabsperspektiv giver en overordnet og transversal tilgang til at studere havnetransformation; det gør det muligt at sammenknytte problemstillinger, der ikke normalt sættes i relation til hinanden, fordi de tilhører forskellige specialiserede fagområder. Inspireret af pragmatisme og i modsætning til det moderne paradigme indenfor radikal nyskabelse, såvel som de grundlæggende tendenser i postmoderne historicisme, udleder jeg den bredere teoretiske ramme for denne afhandling ud fra post-postmoderne tænkning.

Indenfor denne teoretiske ramme, uddyber jeg stedskonceptet som en dynamisk relationskonstruktion. Jeg diskuterer, hvordan design kan forstås som transformation af det eksisterende snarere end nyskabelse, hvilket fører til en forståelse af designværket som ikke-afsluttet, og designprocessen som en successiv transformationsproces. Jeg undersøger konceptet om det stedsspecifikke, som nutidige designere ofte henviser til, men som er dannet og udviklet i den postmoderne kunst. Jeg forstår bevidst det stedsspecifikke som en svingning mellem to poler, og jeg peger på dets begrænsninger som et dualistisk koncept, der ikke fokuserer på de evolutionære kvaliteter i design, som jeg påpeger, spiller en væsentlig rolle i designtilgange.

Metodologisk inddrager denne afhandling kvalitativ forskning. Den er fremlagt som et samlet casestudie, som bygger på et antal havnetransformationsprojekter, og den er 'instrumental', det vil sige, at projekterne hjælper mig at forstå et overordnet spørgsmål, navnlig stedsspecifikt design. Casestudiemetoder er inspirerede af 'grounded theory' og af hermeneutisk arbejds- og kontekstanalyse, som praktiseres i landskabsarkitektonisk forskning og projektkritik. Kilderne til dette casestudie består af visuelt materiale, litteratur, mine egne observationer og interviews med relevante aktører. Ud fra min afhandlings teoretiske tilgang udvikler jeg en særlig analytisk ramme for mit casestudie, sammensat til et værktøj for forståelse der tillader påvisning af stedsspecifikke designtilgange i nutidige transformationsprojekter af storskalahavne – en akademisk metode til at evaluere kunstnerisk arbejde. Dette værktøj er anvendeligt til at identificere stedsspecifikt design og derudover at fastholde dets nuancer. Dette skyldes især oversættelsesfiltrene i værktøjet, som gør det muligt at skelne forskellige former for oversættelse og grader af tolkningsfrihed. Ud over denne differentiering, viser værktøjet også ligheder mellem projekterne, hvilket gør det muligt for mig at formulere et sæt spilleregler for havnetransformation som en ramme for stedsspecifikt design.

Resultatet af dette forskningsarbejde har to sider. For det første, ved nærmere undersøgelse af havnetransformationsprojekter, viser arbejdet, at stedsspecifikke designtilgange kan anvendes som et alternativ til standardudviklingsmønstre for forladte havnearealer. Derved kan jeg besvare mit forskningsspørgsmål positivt: nutidige transformationsarealer af storskalahavne i europæiske havnebyer kan udvikles stedsspecifikt ved hjælp af designtilgange. For det andet, ved at udforske konceptet 'det stedsspecifikke', viser denne undersøgelse, hvordan designere arbejder, når de refererer til et areals specifikke kvaliteter, og derved opdateres den nuværende forståelse af dette koncept, samtidig med at der også foreslås et skift imod et andet koncept, nærmere betegnet 'oversættelse'. Denne afhandling indbyder til videre undersøgelse af oversættelse som en stærk metafor til at fostre design for havne eller andre post-industrielle arealer, hvis eksisterende kvaliteter bør oversættes snarere end udslettes og omskrives.

For at opsummere, denne afhandling præsenterer den første undersøgelse af nutidig havnetransformation fra et landskabsperspektiv, en opdateret diskussion af konceptet stedsspecificitet, et værktøj til evaluering af stedsspecifikke designtilgange, en samling af alternative havnetransformationsprojekter i Europa og spilleregler for stedsspecifikt design. Disse elementer er relevante for forskellige læsergrupper: medlemmer af foreninger som fremmer nye former for omdannelse af havnebyer, som AIVP og RETE på internationalt plan, ved at give dem adgang til ny viden omkring havnebyer, navnlig tilgangen fra et landskabsperspektiv. Kommuner og havnemyndigheder, som er involverede i konkrete havnetransformationsprojekter, får en best-practice samling, som illustrerer, hvordan havnearealer kan udvikles mere specifikt end gennem standardprocedurer. Kommuner, regionale myndigheder og bygherrer, som er involverede i transformationen af andre forladte industrielle områder, tilbydes et arbejde fra hvilket viden nemt kan overføres til deres virkefelt. Fagfolk inden for designfagene, som byplanlæggere, bydesignere, landskabsarkitekter og arkitekter får en dybdegående diskussion af konceptet stedsspecificitet, igennem hvilket de kan opdage deres egen tavse viden. Fagfolk, studerende og undervisere i designfagene, især i arkitektur, får adgang til en alternativ forståelse af design som transformation eller oversættelse, i modsætning til den almindeligt underviste version af design som nyskabelse. Landskabsarkitekter, som stadig ofte arbejder i mindre skala, kan opdage, hvordan deres ekspertise understøtter storskalaprojekter, og hvordan de kan udvide deres professionelle felt. Akademikere i designfagene tilbydes en ny metode til undersøgelse af designværker og til designkritik baseret på en epistemologisk position, der bygger bro mellem positivistiske og fænomenologiske tilgange.

ABSTRACT

TRANSLATING HARBOURSCAPES

SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN APPROACHES IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN HARBOUR TRANSFORMATION

This thesis investigates site-specific design approaches in contemporary harbour transformation. The integration into the urban fabric of disused harbour areas, those spatial leftovers of late 19th- and 20th-century heavy industry, is a major task of contemporary urban planning. Common solutions for these areas feature generic office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres and leisure facilities, built on the tabula rasa of the former harbours, only preserving the occasional old object from a harbour for folkloristic reasons.

This research explores more site-specific ways to transform harbours, where certain design approaches integrate the site into the urban fabric by making use of that which already exists on a harbour site. The current understanding of site, design and site specificity is discussed and updated to define the analytical framework for the thesis's case study. Six European design projects are scrutinized for their site specificity, namely the Euromediterranée 2 project in Marseille, the Ile de Nantes project in Nantes, the Tagus Cycle Track through Lisbon's harbour, the Port's Visual Quality Programme in Rotterdam, the Right Bank redevelopment in Bordeaux, and the open space plan for Bjørvika Bay in Oslo. The nuances of site-specific design emerge from examining the designs, as does a panorama of possible approaches ranging from low to high interpretive freedom. A universal recipe for how to treat disused harbour areas is impossible to generate; rather, game rules for site-specific design are proposed for all actors involved in harbour transformation. The study ends with an invitation to further investigate translation as a powerful metaphor for the way existing qualities of a site can be transformed, rather than erased or rewritten, and to explore how this metaphor can foster new design ideas for old harbours and other post-industrial areas.

In memoriam Malene Hauxner

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INTRODUCTION

HARBOUR TRANSFORMATION AS A GLOBAL QUESTION

For urban planners today, on the threshold of 21st century, one of the main tasks is the transformation of the spatial leftovers of late 19th- and 20th-century heavy industry. This industrial legacy comprises various large-scale production sites, such as derelict mines, coke plants, blast furnaces and steel factories — just a few examples from the coal and steel industry — including their corresponding infrastructure of abandoned roads, pipes, hubs, rails, shunt yards, freight terminals and, last but not least, disused harbours. These components of infrastructure are themselves composed of a multitude of spatial elements, such as docks, piers, platforms, hangars, cranes, workshops, warehouses, related production sites and workers' districts. All these industrial and infrastructural installations initially served urban settlements. When industry expanded, these facilities took on dimensions that dominated the cities they once served. Now that industry is retracting or moving elsewhere, the oversized industrial devices have become huge urban redevelopment areas — this is the story of the rise and fall of industry from an urban planning perspective. Today, some leftovers of the industrial era have already been incorporated into the urban realm — train stations and rail yards, for example, now host museums, parks and whole urban ensembles. Other relics, such as harbours, are in the middle of their transformation or still await redevelopment.

In the terms of larger evolutionary processes, harbours, like other industrial facilities, can be seen as small parts of the bigger puzzle of human settlement on this planet. They can furthermore be understood as transient states of particular sites over their long development: tectonic shifts bring about a bay, a river or a delta, where people first create mooring places and then develop into a harbour city and might further develop into metropolitan harbour regions. The industrial epoch in this evolving picture is still very young and while we are not yet at the end of it, indications suggest it may be rather short, but it has had a huge spatial, societal, economic, and ecological impact on human settlement and human life, conveyed by the term often used for it, the 'industrial revolution'. Based on limited fossil energy, this epoch is today expected to come to an end and make place for a new era relying on renewable resources, supposingly accompanied again by such change for society and human settlement that contemporary authors speak of yet another revolution. In Europe and elsewhere in the western world, the decrease of heavy industry and the developing new forms of high-tech production can be considered as stepping stones out of the old and towards a new human organisation. The recuperation of harbours and other old industrial areas for urban purposes is the spatial part of this shift. In this thesis we address harbour transformation as the period of change from industrial to post-industrial times, being fully aware that this period is expected to be revolution-like but also occupies only a small span of time on the much larger time line of ongoing change. This means that harbour transformation is not considered as an operation leading from a static point of departure towards a fixed address, but as a complex move at a precise historic moment within the larger, ongoing evolution of human settlement on this planet.

Standing on the threshold of this global historic move, the multitude of cities with old industrial areas have an interest in generating knowledge about the spatial aspects of industrial transformation in order to master future development. Harbour cities are especially attractive areas to

study, as they comprise greatly differing locales that have been continuously linked to global trends. In Europe, their exposure to an increasingly globalised economy began in the age of the colonial explorers of the 15th century and continued with the development of maritime trade in the centuries that followed. During the age of industrialisation, with the development of big production and transshipment business, this exposure to a global economy has culminated in harbours serving as logistics, distribution and high-tech hubs of the post-industrial 21st century, which will certainly evolve in line with forthcoming universal trends. These drivers of change have created and will continue to create huge areas of harbour wastelands, which evolve alongside a public interest to redevelop and integrate them into the urban realm, each city under its own conditions (Braae-Diedrich 2012). This means that harbour cities have embraced ongoing global structural changes on a local level, and they will continue to do so (Meyer 1999, Bruttomesso and Alemany 2011, Warsewa 2012). Harbour cities can be considered as meeting points par excellence of the global and the local.

Ironically, when reviewing how derelict harbour areas have thus far been integrated into the urban fabric, we observe all too often a generic redevelopment pattern. The stable economic conditions of late 20th century allowed for big investments and fast project implementation, so that standard programmes in international style architecture were erected on the formerly cleared port grounds — office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres, restaurant and leisure facilities [fig. 1–4], complemented here and there by a preserved old crane, a lonesome warehouse or a historic facade [fig. 5–8]. Both programmatically and formally, transformed harbour areas look very much the same all over the globe despite their greatly differing local geographical, social and historical backgrounds. Apparently, the global problem of harbour transformation has generated a global solution, as if the generic recipe of the harbour's industrial set-up were mirrored by an equally generic method for the harbour's post-industrial reintegration. We wonder, however, if there is an alternative to the standard developments on the tabula rasa of derelict harbour areas and to the standard preservation of single historic harbour objects. Are there local answers to the global question of harbour transformation that would counteract global trends on a local level and result in a specific urban reintegration situated between a total makeover and a museification of harbour areas?

SEARCHING FOR SITE-SPECIFIC ANSWERS

While the global sameness of transformed harbour areas has now become a widely accepted norm among port authorities, developers and public powers, opposition arises from different levels. In defence of local residents, urban researchers point at the numbing homogeneity of the transformed areas. Such interchangeable settings are difficult for the users of these areas to accept, especially when, as is in most cases, they appreciate specific experiential or memorial qualities of the harbour sites as they exist. Andrea Kahn writes, 'A stroll at Canary Wharf in London is virtually indistinguishable from one at the World Financial Center in New York's Battery Park City; stores in Covent Garden, London, present exactly the same wares as those exhibited in the historic market at South Street Seaport, New York' (1998: 62). The experiential particularities of harbour cities and harbour areas have delivered main plots and atmospheres to a whole strand of contemporary literature, such as Claudio Magris and Angelo Ara's portrait of Trieste (Trieste. *Un'identità di frontiera*, 1982), Jean-Claude Izzo's crime thrillers about Marseille (i.e. Les marins perdus, 1997), or Roberto Alajmo's portrait of Palermo (*Palermo è una cipolla*, 2005)
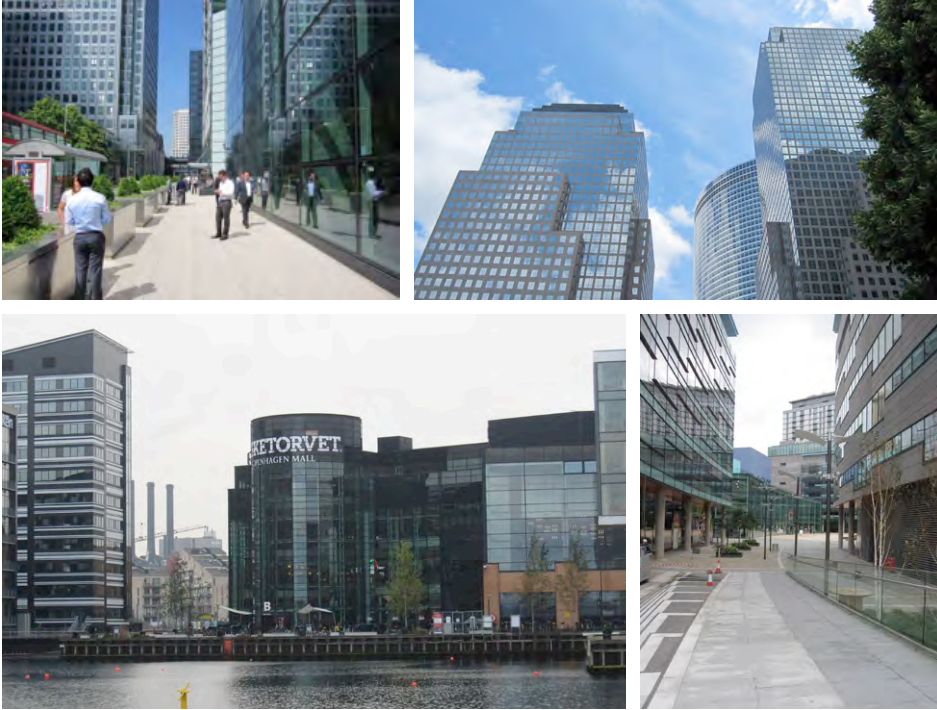
Fig. 1-4. Canary Wharf at London's Docklands 2010; World Financial Centre at New York's Battery Park 2011; Fisketorvet mall and office complex in Copenhagen 2012; Manchester's Salford Quays 2011, (photos: L. Diedrich)

Harbour transformation on the tabula rasa of former harbour grounds relies on standard urban typologies built in a standard architectural language: office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres, restaurant and leisure facilities.

[1]. Readers are taken into the innumerable life worlds of harbours, harbour environments and harbour stories, so specific that nobody would imagine these sites are being replaced by international-style developments. My own on-site observation confirms the astonishing variety and richness of derelict harbour areas [fig. 9–14]. Do we really want to give these specific qualities up for the sake of new generic city districts? Is there a way of valuing that which exists on harbour sites and use the 'existent' to drive the transformation project?

The question seems all the more legitimate because standardisation and homogeneity has never characterised harbour cities. German sociologist Günter Warsewa writes that the harbour cities' varied water landscapes, their heterogeneous built environment, their ever changing maritime business, the flux of manifold goods and people moving through them and the resulting customs and mindsets have always been acknowledged as particular features, differentiating harbour cities from other cities, as much as the local particularities of each harbour city distinguishes it from other harbour cities (Warsewa 2011). In this respect, harbour cities are particular places par excellence. They are characterised by their tradition of maritime trading, seafaring, shipbuilding and related activities, a history that has exposed them to specific tensions which have brought about a respective local culture [2], tangible through its 'wide range of material artefacts as well as collective values and shared basic assumptions, which are reflected in typical daily routines, particular customs or manners' (2). Even if the tradition of harbour cities has been disrupted by the current global structural changes, their local culture survives and can be addressed as 'an efficient resource extrapolating the individual logic of the place' (1). Instead of disdaining local culture as a 'folkloric remnant', Warsewa recommends it as a strong agent for globalising harbour cities, as 'an active mechanism for driving, coordinating and thus influencing the development of the port city in many different ways' (3). Local driving forces are both generated by and counteract globalisation.

If we review the short history of urban reintegration of other derelict industrial areas, we can identify a set of design projects that build on local driving forces. Indeed, since the 1980s industrial transformation in Europe has become a current practice within architecture and urban design. Such major design events as the competition for the Parc de la Villette in Paris (1982) and the urban renewal in preparation of the Olympic Games in Barcelona (1992) were among the first ones to be attended and discussed across national borders, and they have generated a common European design culture. Within a short time, projects of industrial transformation became widely acknowledged across Europe and comprised examples on the scale of buildings and open urban spaces, such as the Grande Halle of the former La Villette slaughterhouse area in Paris, or Parc del Clot in Barcelona, which hosts the remnants of former railway workshops and factories. Large-scale industrial transformation, however, entered the scene a little later, the most prominent example being the IBA Emscher Park in western Germany's coal and steel district of the Ruhr, a redevelopment enterprise carried out from 1989 to 1999. Conceived in the 20th-century tradition of the German international building exhibitions (Internationale Bau-Ausstellung, IBA), this event aimed at being a laboratory for a new design task, namely the testing out of how urban planning and landscape architecture could prepare 'the future of old industrial areas' (Minister für Stadtentwicklung 1988). It eventually became a European if not internationally acclaimed model. IBA Emscher Park focused on the transformation of more than just single industrial objects, and instead engaged the physical, economic and social structure of a whole

Fig. 5-8. Old crane and buoy at Canary Wharf in London's Docklands 2010; Warehouse at Canary Wharf 2010; New York's Southstreet Seaport 2011; Bergen's historic timber houses at the old harbour 2011 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Harbour transformation sometimes involves the preservation of single historic objects of the old port, such as old cranes and buoys, warehouses or historic facades.

metropolitan region moulded by the mining and metallurgic industry, an area of 70 by 30 kilometres. It began from the strict premise of reusing the existing industrial landscape and it developed with the help of designers [fig. 15–20]. The finale of the IBA displayed many transformed sites, a better connected metropolitan area, a new planning culture and a new design paradigm, not to mention the affirmation of residents' self-worth. The transformation continues under the auspices of regional and communal authorities, with an ever-growing oeuvre and knowledge of industrial transformation, and it will remain a work in progress. Urban planner Thomas Sieverts, a former IBA Emscher Park director, believes that its success relies on developing local particularities and countering international tendencies to sameness (Sieverts 2008: 263).

If such huge industrial sites as the coal mines, blast furnaces and production plants of the Ruhr area have been transformed specifically with the help of designers, why not the endless variety of harbour areas in various harbour cities? This thesis will set out to search for site-specific alternatives to generic harbour transformation while formulating the following research question: Can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in European harbour cities be developed site-specifically with the help of designers?

This investigation will add insight to the broad societal debate about the global and the local, about the generic and the specific. We want to find out how designers handle these contrasting concepts within harbour transformation and how they counter the solutions of global development that do not pay much attention to that what exists on a particular site. The purpose of this research is to observe if and how designers develop site-specific answers that build on the existing particularities of a site instead of erasing and replacing them with generic features. At the same time, this research scrutinises the concept of site specificity to find out what it means and how designers refer to it, while eventually updating the understanding of it among all actors involved in harbour transformation.

In the current debate within the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning, design approaches for industrial transformation areas are often linked with the notion of reuse. Reuse provides some advantages over design from scratch. It presents alternatives to homogenisation, it supports a cultural climate that values the multi-layered, the heterogeneous and the complex, and it saves resources that affect ecology and, to some degree, economy (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 20). This thesis will also strive to find out if the disciplinary debate about reuse can draw lessons from harbour transformation through the identification of outstanding design projects, design methods and designerly mindsets.

A EUROPEAN OVERVIEW

To answer the research question we will look at contemporary harbour transformation projects. The empirical material of this thesis consists of design projects for disused port and port-related areas slated for transformation or already undergoing transformation, in the first decade of the 21st century. Out of the large variety of projects available, this thesis focuses on projects that involve large-scale sites of a higher spatial complexity than a mere waterfront; long-term planning processes running over larger time frames than single building or open space projects do; and multi-disciplinary teams taking a design approach to site.

Fig. 9-14. Port grounds slated for transformation in Copenhagen 2010; Aalborg 2010; Saint Nazaire 2012; Palermo 2008; Rotterdam 2010; Oslo 2011 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Alternatives to standard solutions value the local particularities of derelict port areas and drive transformation out of what exists on site, relying on a local culture both generated by and counter-acting globalisation.

The scrutiny is restricted to a selection of European sites. Harbour cities across Europe vary tremendously in size, topography, climate, legislative frameworks, people's mentalities and many more aspects. This is precisely what provides us with the panorama of particularities that enables us to observe how designers approach and develop them.

The European scope of this study is an acknowledgement that our object of scrutiny, design practice for harbour transformation, has developed within a common European framework, even if designers operate individually and in different local contexts. Professional practice has been debated on a European level since the 1980s, and beginning in the 1990s, when the European market for the design and building professions was deregulated, the market has been open to all European practitioners, and European corporations and professional associations have been created alongside. At the same time, academic exchange programmes for student mobility have shaped a European space for design education, and research programmes have since been defined on a European level [3].

This focus on Europe does not imply that ongoing research be restricted to empirical material provided by European design projects. It is instead only the beginning of a larger account to be fed by international examples.

HARBOURS FROM A LANDSCAPE PERSPECTIVE

Harbour transformation has been internationally addressed in urbanism and urban studies since the 1990s (cf. Prelorenzo et al. 1997), mostly evolving from the general critique of modernistic economy-driven tabula rasa developments and gentrification and other social issues. In 1999, the Dutch researcher Han Meyer published a first comprehensive case study on the transformation of four harbour cities from an urban planning point of view, namely London, Barcelona, New York and Rotterdam. More recently, the interaction of global economies and local properties in port cities has been in the focus of urban planners (Bruttomesso and Alemany 2011; Hein 2011, Schubert 2011). Since harbour areas are mostly not part of the city in administrative terms, professional associations created in the 1990s set up a dialogue between municipalities and port authorities that coordinates the development of harbour business in line with urban planning issues [4]. Urban redevelopment, and especially the urban design of waterfronts, has since been discussed in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture [5]. From this body of professional and academic literature we understand that the city-harbour relationship has been constantly evolving. Originally a unified entity, city and harbour have for some time been driven by different development principles. The result is that city and harbour are two radically different administrative and physical entities that only now are attempting to re-establish closer links, to face the economic, ecological and societal challenges of the 21st century (Meyer 1999, Schubert 2011).

In this thesis we will investigate harbour cities from a landscape perspective — something that has not been done so far. Practitioners of landscape architecture, which is both a profession and an academic discipline, work with dynamic living environments and complex systems. In landscape architecture, natural spatial conditions and nature processes are considered on an equal footing with man-made elements and human practices. This mindset relies on the assumption that things do not exist in isolation from one another, but are moving parts in a complex
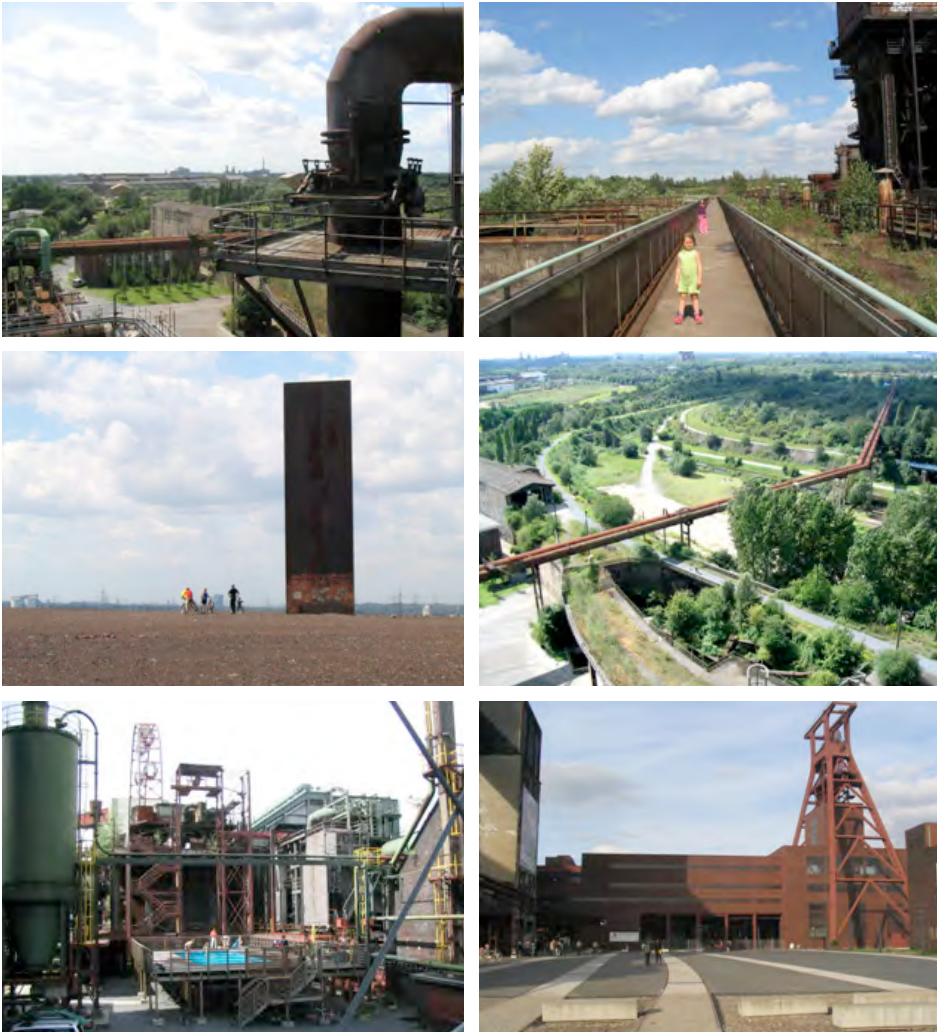
Fig. 15-20. Accessible blast furnace at Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord and view over the area 2004; Richard Serra's Bramme on top of a slagheap in Bottrop 2004; walkway over Sintergärten in Duisburg-Nord 2004; swimming pool at Zollverein coke plant in Essen 2004; Ruhr Museum's square at Zollverein's coal washing plant 2006 (photos: L. Diedrich)

The transformation of the former German coal and steel district of the Ruhr was initiated by the IBA Emscher Park in 1989 under the premise of reusing the existing industrial landscape and developing it with the help of designers. It is an acclaimed European model.

network of simultaneous, multidirectional exchanges. Looking at harbours from a landscape perspective allows escaping such specialised sectoral agendas as follows:

- Urban planners and real estate developers, who focus on future uses
- Cultural heritage researchers and conservationists, who concentrate on preservation
- Architects, who work with buildings
- Urban studies researchers, who are concerned with societal issues
- Environmentalists, who deal with identifying ecologically relevant aspects
- Artists, who engage in expressing experiential features

The landscape perspective offers an overarching and transversal approach to studying harbour transformation. It entangles issues that are usually segregated, not put into relationship with each other because they belong to different specialised fields of knowledge. Research conducted under a landscape perspective can be characterised as

- less administration-oriented than urban planning research
- less preservation-focused than heritage studies
- less object-centred than architectural research
- less confined to societal descriptions than urban studies
- bridging the gap between the arts and the sciences when linking up interpretations and measurements of a site understood as both natural and man-made
- encompassing the segmented branches of the sciences when putting natural spatial conditions and natural processes into a design orientation.

Landscape, generally speaking, is an ambiguous concept. In this thesis, we base our inquiry on the definitions of four contemporary landscape scholars.

German researchers Hille von Seggern and Julia Werner posit that one possible way of looking at space is as landscape. They explain that 'this means not only that natural spatial conditions and nature processes are considered alongside and on an equal footing with human and man-made processes, but also that we abandon the categories of natural and artificial. By considering space from the viewpoint of landscape, we stress both the way in which landscape is perceived as a whole that integrates many aspects yet is still not clearly definable, as well as the fundamentally positive connotation of landscape. The perspective of landscape also emphasises the relevance of the 'ground' and the long-term effects of climate, water, soil and vegetation dynamics' (Seggern et al. 2008: 55). The researchers point out that the concept of landscape, at least within the profession of landscape architecture, has long since overcome its popular association with picturesque sceneries of gardens, meadows, valleys and mountains, and has become the vector of an action-oriented scrutiny of space at smaller and larger scales, including the large scale of urban and regional planning.

The foundation for such a holistic and dynamic understanding of landscape has been laid by the American writer John Brinckerhoff Jackson in the 1980s. He traces the evolution of interpretations of landscape, calling the medieval meaning of landscape as a territorial or political unit 'Landscape One' and the romantic concept of landscape as a scenery or an Arcadian picture

'Landscape Two'. The latter understanding still haunts current ideas of landscape while hindering the rise of an urgently needed new understanding of landscape which, according to Jackson, should embrace landscape as 'no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the surface of the earth', or 'Landscape Three' (Jackson 1984: 156) [6].

Even if Landscape Two, the static picture, is a past concept for contemporary landscape practitioners and researchers, it still dominates the popular discourse today, confirms German landscape scholar Martin Prominski. All too often, people understand landscape as a green scenery with meadows, cows and the Alps in the background. Even the neighbouring disciplines of architecture, urban design and urban planning usually subscribe to this misleading picture. However, Prominski expects the concept of Landscape Three to become a leading idea in the future. He argues that through the current shift from an analytical and reductionist modernist understanding of the world towards a complex and evolutionary world view and a mode-2-society, relying on a new mode of knowledge production, 'Landscape Three' will play an important role as the metaphor and embodiment of our present and prospective culture (Prominski 2004: 80).

Landscape is not only a product of culture, says landscape architect James Corner, but also, and especially, an agent producing and enriching this culture: '*Landscape* as noun (as object or scene) is quieted in order to emphasize *landscape* as verb, as process or activity' (Corner 1999: 4). Corner proposes to shift our attention from the formal characteristics of landscape, its simple appearance, to its formative effects over time, to how it works and what it does, to 'the *activities* of design and the *effects* of constructed landscapes in time'. If we can acknowledge landscape as design activity, we can see it involves ongoing transformative action and not description of a static scenery. We can then understand the landscape perspective, under which we address harbour transformation projects, as action- and design-oriented.

Our larger theoretical frame is to be seen within postmodern thinking, even 'post-postmodern', to quote French art historian Nicolas Bourriaud (2009: 177). This position opposes both the modern paradigm of radical newness and the essentialist tendencies of postmodernist historicism. It is inspired by pragmatism (Moore 2010, Menand 1997). According to Charles Sanders Pierce, the father of pragmatist thought at the end of 19th century, one should understand objects for what they do instead of what they are: 'to use one of Pierce's examples: what we mean when we call a substance "hard" is that it will scratch glass, resist bending, and so on; and those practical effects are all that the concept of "hardness" consists in. "Hardness" is not an abstract property or essence; it is just the sum total of what all hard things do' (Menand 1997: xiv).

To sum up, a landscape perspective of harbour transformation invites us to consider the harbour area's peculiarities as a product of culture, and the respective design projects as (trans)formative processes, as agents having an effect on this culture.

Considering harbours as landscapes may seem a strange concept. Harbours, like other heavy industrial facilities, are motivated by industrial rationales, installed to fulfil production and logistic tasks, conceived as huge machines to operate with the newest available technologies in view of a maximum throughput of goods: generic isolated devices, without history, without aesthetics. The landscape perspective, however, breaks with this isolated view and relates the generic apparatus with its site. It reveals what the industrial rationale overlooks: the harbour's specifici-

ties. From a landscape perspective, each harbour can be seen as a small moving part of a bigger mobile. Harbours can be addressed as very specific sites at precise moments in time. The landscape perspective allows us to perceive harbours as results of a particular culture, as cultural goods, which we apprehend in view of shaping their future, of 'landscaping' them.

DESIGN PROJECTS AS CASE STUDIES

This thesis builds upon a case study of harbour transformation projects in six European cities. The focus on these cities does not mean that they are scrutinised from an urban planning perspective, as done by Han Meyer in his seminal case study of London, Barcelona, New York and Rotterdam. He examines these cases in their historical development, and readers learn about the approaches operative within each case over time and according to local circumstances, cultures and lessons learnt. Meyer's case study reveals urban planning strategies. The present study, to the contrary, analyses harbour transformation projects from a 'landscape perspective'. With landscape defined as design activity, we aim at disclosing design approaches — in each harbour city's project but also beyond, as particular work modes and mindsets of designers within harbour transformation.

This thesis involves qualitative research. It is laid out as a collective case study, building upon a number of harbour transformation projects, and it is 'instrumental' (Stake 1995), that is, the projects help us understand an overarching issue, namely site-specific design. Case study methods are inspired by grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998) and by hermeneutic work- and context analysis as practiced in landscape architectural research and project critique (Hauxner 2010). The sources of this case study comprise

- visual material (project drawings, maps, photos, other visual documents)
- literature (project texts, related publications, other text documents)
- my own on-site observation (exploring the sites by foot, bike, boat, car)
- interviews with relevant actors.

In the methodological construction of this research, harbour transformation projects are used in two ways. A critical mass of contemporary design projects for harbours, around thirty, were first inspected, through examination of documents and quick site visits, in order to identify alternative answers to the global question of harbour transformation, and to grasp the key aspects that distinguished them from standard development enterprises. Next, these key aspects — ideas of site, transformation and site specificity — were investigated in the literature to reveal the underlying theories. From this theoretical foundation was built an analytical framework for the in-depth scrutiny of the design projects. Then, six harbour transformation projects — the 'cases' forming the larger case study — were selected that featured particularly distinctive design approaches and work modes for a site-specific transformation of harbour sites. The concluding part, finally, discusses the results of the case study.

UNDERSTANDING SITE-SPECIFIC DESIGN

The outcome of this research is twofold. First, in scrutinising harbour transformation projects, the work discloses site-specific design approaches as alternatives to the standard development

pattern for derelict harbour areas. From these findings, game rules for site-specific harbour transformation are formulated. Second, in exploring the concept of site specificity, this study reveals how designers work when referring to a site's specificity, and it therefore updates our understanding of the concept. From this insight, the concept of translation is promoted as a powerful metaphor to foster design for harbours or other post-industrial sites whose existing qualities should be translated rather than erased and rewritten.

This work delivers the following elements:

- the first investigation of contemporary harbour transformation from a landscape perspective
- an updated discussion of the concept of site specificity
- an interpretation tool for the evaluation of site-specific design approaches, adaptable to other design projects and situations
- a collection of alternative harbour transformation projects in Europe
- game rules for site-specific design, transferrable into professional jargon and practice

These outcomes are relevant for various reader groups:

- The audience of associations promoting new forms of development for harbour cities, such as AIVP and RETE on an international level. These bodies address a wide range of different professional actors within harbour city transformation in particular and urban transformation in general, from local authorities to developers to heritage specialists. The associations can offer these stakeholders access to new knowledge about harbour cities, namely the approach from a landscape perspective, adding a new aspect to the panorama of perspectives under which harbour cities are apprehended by these associations. The concept of translation may help mediate between irreconcilable fronts such as those of urban developers and heritage preservationists.
- Municipalities, their urban planning services, port authorities and their developers involved in concrete harbour transformation projects. They receive a best-practice collection illustrating how harbour areas can be developed more specifically than with standard procedures. For these reader groups, a heuristic version of the interpretation tool and the game rules for site specificity can be developed.
- Municipalities, regional authorities, their urban planning services and developers in volved in the transformation of other derelict industrial sites. They are offered a work from which knowledge can be easily transferred to their field of action. These reader groups can equally expect a heuristic version of the interpretation tool and the game rules for site specificity to be developed as an adaptation to their particular situations.
- Professionals of the design disciplines, such as urban planners, urban designers, landscape architects, architects. They receive an in-depth discussion of the concept of site specificity, through which they might discover their own tacit knowledge and become more aware of the own mental drivers.
- Professionals, students and teachers in the design disciplines, especially in architecture. They gain access to an alternative understanding of design as transformation or translation, as opposed to the commonly taught version of design as creation *ex novo*. This insight invites to teach and develop design differently.

- Landscape architects, still frequently working on small scales. They can discover how their expertise supports large-scale projects. This might encourage them to engage as co-designers in multidisciplinary teams and widen their professional scope.
- Scholars in the design disciplines. They are offered a new method for the scrutiny of design work and for design critique, based on an epistemological position that bridges the gap between positivistic and phenomenological approaches. It proposes an analytical framework that captures physical, dynamic as well as immaterial aspects of design projects.

ROAD MAP

This thesis begins from the observation that all over the western world, extended harbour wastelands are developed in the same generic way so that they can be reintegrated into the urban fabric of their respective cities. Standard development projects consist of newly built architectural objects such as office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres and leisure facilities, and they sometimes preserve single harbour objects for folkloristic reasons. Arguing that this is not enough to unfold a harbour's existing site qualities, we ask if contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas could be developed more site-specifically with the help of designers. In search of alternative development approaches in Europe, we prepare to look into harbour transformation projects that involve multi-disciplinary design teams. The projects will be scrutinised from a landscape perspective, relying on this discipline's theoretical and practical knowledge about dynamic living environments, considering natural spatial conditions and processes of nature alongside and on an equal footing with man-made elements and human practices, and understanding landscape as a design activity.

In part 1 (THEORIES: SITE), the theories part, we begin with a review of post-modern understandings of site, and we overcome essentialist as well as positivistic positions in defining site from a pragmatic point of view. This strand of thinking is elaborated through the concept of site as a dynamic relational construct. On this basis we reconsider the prevalent understanding of design and discuss how design can be apprehended as transformation of the existing rather than as creation ex novo, leading to an understanding of the design work as non-finite, and of the design process as successive processes of translation. Finally, we explore the concept of site specificity, often referred to by contemporary designers but having emerged and evolved in post-modern art. We understand site specificity in a stricter way than designers usually do, namely as oscillation between a place-bound and a transient pole. At the same time, a recent tendency in the arts is put forward, that addresses site-specific works as time-specific works. On the basis of this theoretical inquiry we set up an analytical framework for the following case study, complete with an interpretation tool — an academic method to evaluate artistic work — that allows the detection of site-specific design approaches in contemporary large-scale harbour transformation projects.

With part 2 (CASE STUDY: ON SITE), the case study, we provide a broad international overview of large-scale, long-term harbour transformation projects. The report focuses on European projects designed or built during the last decade and involving multi-disciplinary design teams. Two projects are comprehensively scrutinised, the Euromediterranée 2 project in Marseille and the Ile-de-Nantes project in Nantes, as they illustrate in a prototypical way the two poles of site

specificity: the place-bound and the transient. We disclose other site-specific approaches between the two poles of site specificity in four more projects, which are presented in a synthetic way: the Tagus Cycle Track through Lisbon's harbour, the Port's Visual Quality Programme in Rotterdam, the Right Bank redevelopment in Bordeaux, and the open space plan for Bjørvika Bay in Oslo. The report presents a selection of examples for alternative harbour development.

In part 3 (DISCUSSION: INSIGHT), the discussion part, we answer the research question positively: yes, contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas can be developed site-specifically with the help of designers. The interpretation tool proves useful to identify site-specific design and, furthermore, to capture its nuances. This is due in particular to the translation filters of the tool, capable of distinguishing modes of translation and degrees of interpretive freedom. Apart from this differentiation, the tool has also revealed commonalities throughout the projects. From the common patterns, a set of game rules for harbour transformation is derived, sketching out a framework of conditions that foster site-specific design. Finally, the theoretical outset — the definition of site specificity as an oscillation between two poles — is revisited, pointing at its limitations as a dualistic figure which does not focus on the evolutionary qualities of design that might play an increasing role in the transformation of harbours and other urban redevelopment areas in the future. Since the translation filters of the interpretation tool have allowed a nuanced description of dynamic design approaches, we conclude this thesis on the invitation to investigate further the concept of translation to enrich knowledge on evolutionary ways of designing post-industrial landscapes.

Notes

1 Historical sources equally apprehend the local particularities of port cities in many different aspects, reaching from physical properties to immaterial ones. In my master's thesis, I recount the literature on the port city of Marseille written by central Europeans over the last two centuries, including Schopenhauer's and Stendhal's travel journals of the first half of 19th century to Walter Benjamin's novel Myslowitz-Braunschweig-Marseille of 1930, Blaise Cendrars's Vieux Port of 1945, and a whole set of German-Jewish emigrant literature like Anna Seghers's Transit of 1963 (Diedrich 1992).

2 Warsewa outlines how port cities have faced the tensions of maritime business in developing specialised systems of functions that both change and persist over time, fostering risk communities with specific forms of cooperation, public spirit and maritime consensus. As hubs of flow they adopted foreignness as normality, and being both the periphery of a nation-state and the centre of an international market, they developed autonomy and self-confidence. For Warsewa local culture represents 'an ensemble of common practices, attitudes, symbols and the use of language and meanings, which express and collectively reproduce shared expectations, norms and conventions' and 'forms the commonly accepted and locally defined framework for decision-making and shapes the actions of both individual and collective players' (Warsewa 2011: 2–3).

3 Professional communication across national borders began in the early 1990s, for example, in landscape architecture through the magazine Topos European Landscape Magazine, founded in 1992. In 1999 the CCCB Centre for Contemporary Culture in Barcelona organised for the first time a European symposium on public space which evolved into the European public space award, issued by the CCCB together with three other architectural institutions across Europe. The European Landscape Biennial set out to celebrate an event in Barcelona in 2001 and has become a major site for professional encounter and debate. Since 2006, the book series Landscape Architecture Europe publishes triennial deliberated accounts. Since the 1980s, professional associations have been active on the European level, such as the European Federation of Landscape Architects, Euro-

pean Council of Town Planners, Architects' Council of Europe. Since the 1990s, European directives increasingly regulate aspects of professional practice, such as the attribution of public contracts to project consultants resulting from the directive 92/50/EEC on architecture competitions in the European Union. In education, programmes like ERASMUS have increased student mobility across the European countries. Research is also set in a European context, as testify the European Union's Framework Programme for Research, or the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) programme.

4 In Europe, two main associations exist. The Le Havre-based Worldwide Network of Port Cities (AIVP), which operates on an international level, runs regular local seminars and international congresses, manages a professional archive and publishes a weekly newsletter. The Venice-based Association for the Collaboration between Ports and Cities (RETE), which operates on a Mediterranean-Latin American level, runs professional seminars, training workshops and research encounters, and publishes the quarterly magazine Portus and the annual online research journal Portusplus.

5 For example, in a comprehensive way within the 10th Venice Architecture Biennial in 2006, which had a satellite show in Palermo called City-Port, or in Topos 48 (2004), entitled Coastlines and Harbours.

6 Like the German researchers around von Seggern, Jackson asserts that the separation of natural and artificial features is irrelevant, and that the concept of landscape has to be dynamic: 'Whatever its shape or size it is never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment; it is always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden or unpredictable change. We create them and need them because every landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time. It is where the slow, natural processes of growth and maturity and decay are deliberately set aside and history is substituted. (…) A landscape is where we speed up or retard or divert the cosmic program and impose our own.' (Jackson 1984: 156).

PART 1/ THEORIES: SITE

In our search for site-specific approaches for the transformation of derelict harbour areas, we recognise that the disciplinary theories and tools currently available do not completely match our investigative intention. Deriving from various disciplines and supporting various sectoral agendas, they deliver fragments for analysis but do not allow a comprehensive examination. Urban planners and real estate professionals, for example, focus on the future uses of harbour wastelands and analyse them accordingly. Heritage professionals support the preservation of the past and concentrate on historical harbour issues, and architects and investors aim at developing new buildings and look for suitable locations in the harbour areas. Cultural scientists are interested in working out societal issues related to the harbour, while environmentalists build their advice on environmental factors featured on harbour sites, and so on. Each discipline and profession possesses its own analytical methods, supported by respective theories. Relying on the available theories and tools of any one of these disciplines would mean consenting to capture only parts of the harbours' qualities or the designers' strategies. Our aim, however, is to look at harbour areas from an overarching point of view, offered by the landscape perspective: it allows considering natural spatial conditions and natural processes alongside man-made elements and human practices, grasping ways of design that enhance the qualities of these particular areas in a more comprehensive, and presumably more site-specific, way.

But what is site specificity? Substantial theory on the subject is scarce, and no analytical method or tool exists that can help detect site specificity. However, both theory and method are indispensable for the intended scrutiny of harbour transformation projects, and indispensable for answering the research question of this thesis: can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in Europe be developed site-specifically with the help of designers? For this reason, in this part of the thesis we will search for theoretical elucidation in fields that have not yet been fully exploited or combined. These ideas will provide the basis for an analytical framework, which we will derive from the synthesis of our insights, complete with an interpretation tool that enables us to engage in the case study of harbour transformation projects.

Site specificity is a concept that contemporary designers refer to widely, without, however, being aware of its genealogy, its components and its potential meanings. To clarify this concept, we will dive into theories stemming from architecture, landscape architecture, ecology, urban planning, urban studies and the arts. We will first explore understandings of site to position ourselves within a strand of thinking that recognises site as a construction. We will then question the concept of design and propose to comprehend it as transformation. Finally, we will introduce the notion of site specificity as a double-play bringing together two seemingly opposed ideas, namely the place-bound and the transient. These theoretical clarifications will allow us to set up the interpretation tool for capturing site-specific aspects in the design of derelict harbours.

SITE AS CONSTRUCTION

The attempt to elucidate the notion of site specificity leads us to concentrate in this chapter on the first constituent of this term and to elaborate on the question of what is meant by 'site'. Because we aim at detecting site-specific design approaches, we limit our search to the understanding of this notion in its meaning for designers. The design disciplines have been evolving theories about site and related terms since the beginning of the post-modern era. We will therefore also explore the genealogy of site understandings, thus introducing site as a notion which has been theoretically apprehended in changing ways.

Today a number of opposing but still widely accepted theoretical positions persist. This chapter proposes to overcome them with a new strand of thinking in which site is posited as a dynamic relational construct, and in which designers are attributed an active role with which they decide both how to apprehend a site and how to change it. This reflection leads us to value the **DESIGNERS' READING OF THE SITE:** their site findings and their consideration of site as a bearer of a programme instead of a receiver of a programme, programme being understood here in architectural terms, i.e. describing the planned functions and uses of a site. Finally, we will see how designers express these ideas in narratives which describe their findings and at the same time prefigure proposals for change, for the editing of a site.

SITE UNDERSTANDINGS

Modernism in architecture, with the tabula rasa as a blank sheet on which a work can be conceived *ex novo,* has been severely criticised since the end of World War II, and especially since the 1960s, for its lack of respect for local particularities and practices, by which everything is erased that does not correspond to the universal idea of design as an 'international style'. Almost as devastating as the damages of the war, the post-war critique of modern architecture and urbanism attempted to reintroduce and value local identity and human environments through notions like genius loci, place, identity, context, (critical) regionalism and other terms (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 22—23).

One of the most prominent authors promoting this approach is the Norwegian architectural theoretician Christian Norberg-Schulz, who (re)formulates the theory of a site's 'genius loci' (1979), embedded in the naturally given landscape and determining how man-made architecture can become meaningful and authentic. Partly relying on metaphysical categories, he distinguishes three landscape archetypes, namely the romantic, the cosmic, and the classic, and associates them with three different geographical areas, the North (the northern European forest landscapes), the South (the northern African desert landscapes), and in between (southern Europe, Greece, Italy). Kenneth Frampton's *Towards a Critical Regionalism* (1983) alludes to the particular environmental factors that inform design responses—topography, light, climate and context—emphasising their tactile and phenomenal influence on the moving, sensing body. Both Norberg-Schulz and Frampton stress an essentialist mindset, which is searching for the origin of things, while employing a phenomenological approach that raises knowledge through direct experience and immersion in a place. In this extreme form, place has gained absolute value in the late 20th century and is to be revealed by the skilled expert.

Another position, which likewise rejects the abstract, place-unbound ideas of modernism to re-value local specificities, is personified by Scottish-American landscape architect Ian McHarg, who wrote the seminal book *Design with Nature* (1969). Based on his idea of deconstructing nature's components into a layered system, he suggests examining, mapping and evaluating every aspect of a locale with the greatest precision and all necessary specialists. His purpose was to reveal the components of a specific natural environment, such as geology, hydrology, vegetation cover, surface waters, climatic conditions etc., and to consider them as the base to be respected by people's land use, urbanisation, infrastructure, etc. His work led to an integration of ecological knowledge into urban planning, fostering an environmentally conscious approach to land use. This eventually paved the way, in the 1970s, for the rise of the environmental movement. If McHarg refused the universal design ideal of modernism, he nevertheless took over its epistemological model to legitimate design through proper science while applying empirical methods.

With Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, one and a half decades later, the reverse position, expressly disqualifying the claim for identity, authenticity and local values, gained popularity. In his seminal article 'The Generic City' (1995) Koolhaas depreciates identity as a senseless straitjacket and instead promotes in a provocative way the idea of a 'city without properties'. The generic city contains what anthropologist Marc Augé calls 'non-places', the constituting elements of a supermodernity (1992).

Undoubtedly, Koolhaas has inspired those Dutch architects who are termed 'the data school architects'. The firm MVRDV exposes most significantly how to turn the idea of the generic, formless site into an understanding of site as defined by local facts and figures. In a provocative way that recalls Koolhaas's work, MVRDV demonstrates this approach through their design proposals for the Spanish coast and Dutch pig farming landscapes, or through manifesto-like writings, as in the book *Metacity Datatown* (1999). This method proposes obtaining the necessary information about a site from local facts and figures from which the design almost automatically arises — this universal, even mechanistic method corresponds to a strictly empirical approach and is meant to enhance the local.

Norberg-Schulz's phenomenological approach promotes the designer as a sensitive skilled expert, but MVRDV's positivistic method only requires an expert administrator. Both approaches posit site as an absolute authority to which designers are subject. In this thesis, however, we want to investigate designerly ways of addressing site actively and deliberately.

Understandably, the late 20th-century version of submission to site causes unease with certain contemporary researchers who see a door opening to the romanticism of the 19th century and its potential deformation into a blood-and-soil ideology (Hvattum 2010). Norwegian art historian Mari Hvattum even warns against the 'tyranny of site'. This inspires us to ask if contemporary designers are dominated by site when they refer to either a genius loci or a facts-and-figure position today. In fact, both approaches can be identified as deterministic. In the first case, we understand that the genius loci virtually sits in the earth and needs to be heard by a sensitive medium, obviously the designer, who then transmit its message into the design. In the second case, the truth resides in facts and figures which need to be retrieved by a measuring device, which is actually the designer, who then applies the received data to the design. In a search for the origin of things, the genius loci position is essentialist and legitimises a design through me-

taphysical, even arty arguments. Therefore it obscures the role of the designer as a reasoning decision-taker. Looking for facts from which things result, the facts-and-figures position is positivistic and legitimises design through precise measuring and seemingly scientific warrants. Therefore it negates the role of the designer as a sensitive decision-taker. The two positions persist as canonical, a role we can observe in professional life: designers can have an interest in obscuring or negating their decisive and deciding role in a design process and hide behind the site as a determinate given, because clients easily take the genius loci or facts and figures as a good reason for a design decision, while they are more inclined to doubt and discuss a designer's ideas that lack such accepted warrants. [1]

To escape this ambiguous anchoring in the two accredited positions, let us explore a new strand of thinking that supports designerly ways of addressing site actively and deliberately, and that defines site differently. We can build our understanding of site specificity upon this new approach.

SITE AS A DYNAMIC RELATIONAL CONSTRUCT

Next to the two accredited positions mentioned above, we can today recognise a third position which retains the local in its focus but avoids essentialist and positivistic traps. It relies on pragmatism, challenges the separation between the senses and intelligence and considers how things work rather than what things are (Moore 2010). Being constructivist and non-deterministic, this understanding is able to capture the designers' perception and construction of sites, processes that are negotiable by clients and designers for every site, every time anew (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 23-24).

The American researchers Carol Burns and Andrea Kahn, who have introduced this understanding into the design disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning, define site as a dynamic relational construct: Designers 'construe and construct' site from an exchange between what they see in front of them and what they wish to have there, between ideas from outside (the physical site) and inside (disciplinary norms, personal convictions, societal ideals), between the real as observed and the real as defined (Burns and Kahn 2005: xv).

Three areas of site
To sharpen our vocabulary as a basis for analysis and discussion, let us follow Burns and Kahn's definition of what constitutes a site in design. If, in popular language, a site is the ground on which something takes place, a site in a design context is first of all the area a designer receives from a client, to develop and shape. It is a given, and has clear boundaries. However, when the designer begins to explore this site, interest generally shifts to features that connect the delimited area of intervention with larger systems, and the designer's creative act often introduces elements that have an influence beyond the site itself. Burns and Kahn therefore speak of three distinct areas of site. The first, most obvious one, is the area of control — it corresponds to the site within its property lines. The second is called the area of influence — it comprises systems and forces that act upon the given site even if they do not take place within its boundaries, such as the solar system, hydrological features, and geomorphology. The third is the area of effect — the domains beyond the given site that are affected by design, such as the growth of a metropolitan region, water cycles, infrastructural systems. All three areas belong to different geographi-

cal and temporal frames, but they overlap nevertheless. Even if designers are only provided that area of control from a client required to take design action, they cannot conceive their design without considering the other areas. Even if a site needs delimitation to become a proper site of intervention, it defeats delimitation when understood in terms of design. 'No particular locale can be experienced in isolation', write Burns and Kahn; 'the concept of site, then, simultaneously refers to seemingly opposed ideas: a physically specific place and a spatially and temporally expansive surround. Incorporating three distinct geographic areas, two divergent spatial ideas, and past, present, and future time frames, sites are complex' (2005: xii).

For the scrutiny of harbour transformation projects, the distinction between the three areas of a site will help us sort out how different designers grasp the complexity of their given sites. In the harbour transformation in Marseille, for example, the designers conceive the interventions in their area of control in view of disentangling local from regional traffic flow, thereby influencing a much larger area of effect, the metropolitan region. Furthermore, they acknowledge a river course crossing their area of control in the geographical extension of its influents, carrying water and sometimes flood, and so they identify the whole catchment as an area of influence.

Site thinking and thinking about a site
With their book *Site Matters* (2005), Burns and Kahn have emerged as the initiators of a much needed cross-disciplinary discourse about site by inviting various design disciplines to contribute their respective understandings of site. They notice that each discipline has developed a discourse independently from the others, each focusing on particular site matters and leaving out others, thereby producing for each one its own disciplinary site knowledge. Even if much of it has so far remained tacit, this specific site knowledge is influencing the various designers' site thinking, i.e. their disciplinary convictions and design methods. Burns and Kahn invite the unearthing of these disciplinary 'habits of mind' through further research, since 'grappling with site-based issues evokes the analogy of seven blind men describing an elephant: each depicts vivid aspects within reach but non correlates to another, and altogether they miss the sense of the overall object of study' (xiv). Leaving every design discipline alone means letting their members uncritically iterate their own conceptions of site. However, an increasingly complex and connected professional practice calls for a discourse on site as both an object of design concern and a subject of theoretical study. This discourse can identify strands of sectoral thinking with which to critically transect them and in so doing, generate an evolving panorama of trans-disciplinary site knowledge. Only when that which a certain discipline's designers take for granted is challenged can we reveal their site thinking, can we literally get under their skins. In the words of Burns and Kahn: 'Design does not simply impose on a place. Site and designer engage in dialogic interaction. At once extrinsic and intrinsic, a site exists out there in the world but acquires design meaning only through its apprehension, intellectually and experientially. Therefore, we claim the site as a relational construct that acquires meaning and value through situational interaction and exchange. This relational condition of the site derives from uninterrupted exchange between the real and the representational, the extrinsic and the intrinsic, the world and the world-as-known.' (xv)

Burns and Kahn distinguish between 'site thinking' — a mindset which is general and proper to every discipline or designer — and 'thinking about a site' — thoughts about a concrete plot of land in its physical condition. They argue that 'a specific locale provides the material ground for

action in design practice, and the designers' ideas about site provide a theoretical background against which design actions are taken' (viii). Relying on this approach, we assume that we can learn about the designers' general site thinking and hence get information about their understanding of site specificity through the analysis of their particular 'thinking about a site', that is, through the study of their design projects.

Site reading and site editing
To stress site as a dynamic relational construct, we will furthermore separate the designers' thinking into two mental moves, namely their apprehension of a site and their imagined or realised transformation of it. If in a designer's project these two have nothing to do with each other, we can confirm that this project does not pay attention to the site as it was given to the designer, as a locale with existing qualities, and we will not label it site-specific. As our aim is to detect site-specific design approaches, we will build an analytical tool that enables us to understand if and how closely these two moves are linked in the designers' projects. Invoking a metaphor out of the linguistic realm, we will call the apprehension of site 'site reading' and the transformation 'site editing'. In so doing, we intentionally avoid speaking of 'site writing', which has associations with the activity of writing on a blank sheet of paper and would therefore contradict the point of departure of our analysis — sites that feature existing qualities. The term 'site editing' should conjure not such editing in which the last commas are introduced into a written text, but rather where a given text is further developed — and where a harbour with its existing qualities is transformed.

In the harbour transformation project of Nantes, for example, the designers start from a meticulous site survey, intending to keep as much as possible of the existing materials, be they entire buildings of the old shipyard or the 1960s housing area, mere ground cover materials like contemporary asphalt and historic cobble stones, or the pioneer vegetation on the slipways of the heavily built-up river banks. They discover these materials as site values they want to enhance instead of replaceing them by a new design, and accordingly their design project proposes a site that remains materially almost unchanged. Their site reading is therefore crucial for their editing of the site, and it stands exemplary for what site editing is meant to express here.

We finally assume that we can learn about the designers' site reading — their apprehension of a site — through the study of their site editing — their transformation of a site. How they transform a site can be retrieved by scrutinizing specific aspects of their design project for that site. In the analytical framework for detecting site-specific design approaches, proposed at the end of this part of the thesis, the study of the designers' site reading and editing plays a crucial role. The case study in the following part of the thesis is based on studying the designers' site reading separately from the designers' site editing, to understand their relationship and conclude on the project's site specificity.

SITE AS PROGRAMME

In our intention to learn about the contemporary designers' site reading in contemporary harbour transformation projects, we need to increase our knowledge about it. Available literature in urban planning, mainly of the last quarter century, like Kevin Lynch's *What Time Is this Place?* (1972) or Lynch and Gary Hack's *Site Planning* (1984), touch upon the theme but not on prob-

lems of the 21st century, and they do not dive into the exploration of design approaches. Very recent literature on research in design, like Nigel Cross's *Designerly Ways of Knowing* (2007), Tim Brown's *Change by Design*(2009) and Roberto Verganti's *Design Driven Innovation* (2009), explore design processes but concentrate on industrial design and economic strategies. Only recently have researchers in architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning started to explicitly investigate the question, How do designers read a site, what do they find, and how do they formulate their findings in order to make them operative for the site's editing? We will study their answers here.

Structures, materials, atmospheres
The American scholar of landscape architecture Elizabeth Meyer states that a site's qualities as individually experienced cannot be just the framework for a designers' creative act but are indeed the very starting point of it: 'A site's physical and sensual properties are sources for design expression.' (Meyer 2005: 93). She noticed that contemporary landscape architects frequently refer to the notion of site and would never begin a design without having been on site, in bodily immersion, to capture a multitude of site aspects personally. She rejects the idea of site reading being a neutral site analysis which precedes the creative act of site writing or editing: '[The] repositioned site concerns challenge the modern divide between rational site analysis and intuitive, creative, conceptual design: design as site interpretation, and site as program, not surface for program' (93). At the same time Meyer wonders about the scarce body of contemporary site theories able to elucidate and support such design attitudes — they remain to be written. She identifies a similar site orientation only among late 19th- and early 20th-century American landscape architects, at the front end of modernism, who relied on significant 18th century scholarship on site matters. In an attempt to filter out of these early designs some representative 'site-reading strategies' and 'site-design tactics', she lays the foundation of a record that would merit completion with research into contemporary designs, in the aftermath of modernism. Meyer's parameters of scrutiny provide lenses for a site reading that starts from the assumption that 'plots are not empty canvases, but full of spaces, full of nature and history, whose latent forms and meanings can be surfaced, and made palpable, through design' (102). She identifies guiding principles to start with: site as armature or framework; site as geomorphological figure; site as ecosystem or geological fragment; and site as temporal phenomenon, *haecceity*, and subjective experience. [2] These principles describe structural and material properties of sites, and they also address a site's atmospheres — qualities that are also worth capturing during our investigation of harbour projects.

In the harbour transformation project of Rotterdam, for example, the designers read the Port of Rotterdam as a huge structure, a global transportation and logistics installation, and at the same time they acknowledge it materially as a particularly dense and artificial landscape within the coastal dune landscape of the Dutch North Sea coast. They also recognise the contrasting atmospheres of this port landscape, as both a high-tech place of work for many people and a place of leisure for others at the westernmost beaches or on the crossing bike paths.

We thus find Meyer's considerations of particular use, and introduce into our interpretation tool a set of filters that aim at examining the structures, materials and atmospheres that designers read on their harbour sites.

Natural processes

The reading of temporal phenomena, as invoked by Meyer, points at the dynamic dimension of sites. How do designers address it in their reading of sites? Another American scholar of landscape architecture, Kristina Hill, identifies the rise of a more kinaesthetic aesthetic in contemporary landscape architectural design practice as a 'slightly delayed response to the evolution of non-equilibrium views of the world' and invites designers to stop 'seeing sites as evidence of equilibrium states' (Hill: 151). The notion of site, according to her, implies dynamics, whereas the notion of place is still defined by stability and boundaries, even if this understanding is about to change in line with the changing ontological assumptions in the ecological sciences, supporting flow and the so-called non-equilibrium paradigm. This understanding identifies landscapes as composed of shifting nodes of interaction rather than as bounded places, propelled by dynamic temporal relationships rather than by deterministic trends. Ecological scientists are thus enticed to completely rethink the type of descriptions and predictions of patterns and dynamics of a site. Instead of apprehending landscapes and human bodies as separate entities, each contained within a bounded organism, ecologists today tend to see both as part of the same system of energy flows and exchanges, with nodes instead of boundaries. [3] Design theorists and designers have mostly involved geographic aspects to describe sites and their relationships, and so view sites as bounded organisms. If they followed up-to-date ecologists, they would instead address sites as nodes in energy flow systems and stress the nature of sites as open spatial systems.

The harbour transformation in Bordeaux exemplifies this thought. Here the designers acknowledge the existing ribbon of trees and ripisylvian vegetation on the former industrial right bank of the river Garonne as a string in the ecological structure of the region that accompanies the river in its traversal of the dense urban fabric of the city. This string is not read as a disconnected, stable element but as part of an entity constitutive of the city's buildings and the region's green structure, which are in continuous exchange and evolution. In this project, the natural processes of this open system become the main drivers of the design project.

In our analysis of harbour transformation projects, we will employ Hill's thinking to cast a particular light on the designers' acknowledgment of natural processes as bounded or open systems. Our interpretation tool will therefore contain a filter that enables us to scrutinise the designers' reading of natural processes.

People's practices

Both Hill and Meyer doubt that conventional site analysis and the related theories propose an acceptable frame for reading sites in a design context. Referring to urban planning and urban design theory and practice, Andrea Kahn confirms that standard site studies and their tools do not generate any new knowledge on particular sites but rather perpetuate what is already known. They produce inventories organised into such standard place-based categories as building typologies, usages, infrastructures, and formal urban patterns. Despite this production of inventories of what is on site, urban sites are increasingly apprehended through the existence of diverse and often conflicting spatial practices, ranging from the physical through the economic and political to the ideological — all of which escape conventional scrutiny. In the words of Kahn, 'What remains unaccounted for is anything that cannot be assigned a "proper" place: fluid reciprocities, interlocking events, and tensile relations that constellate vital urban situa-

tions and evade simple classification' (Kahn 1998: 57). Such sites, from a conventional perspective, are easily considered 'unsightly sites', and derelict harbour areas definitely can be counted among them: 'apparently unprogrammed or residual places (...) appropriated for temporary (or permanent) use, areas designated for specific activities re-occupied by others, ruins of other lives in a city's history' (66). In Kahn's understanding of the contemporary metropolis these unsightly sites present the physical location and at the same time the ground for envisioning a new urbanity; they are able to 'host a vital urban citizenry and hold the promise of diversity that marks urban existence' (66). Instead of a site analysis, which would be inappropriate, Kahn suggests 'site construction' as a designerly method to disclose a site's complex qualities. Site construction breaks with analytic objectivity and can be seen as bodily site exploration, a field trip, because unclassifiable aspects of the site can be grasped only through immersive practice. Kahn's method and its objects of study are both acknowledged as practices on the move, the objects of study almost becoming subjects in their autonomy as guides for the researcher's path. The researcher's findings and encounters epitomise a site through narrative plotting rather than through conventional plans and drawings — Kahn points to John Brinckerhoff Jackson's 'The Stranger's Path' of 1957 and at the Situationanists' *dérive*. If site analysis prepares a site through diagrams to receive a standard programme, site construction leads to 'urban programming from the ground up' and uses urban narratives 'that propose stranger paths through the city' than the official discourse about a city's qualities and development puts forward. Urban narratives, Kahn writes, 'reveal hidden characters and adapt to appreciate their value' (69). With Kahn we see how closely the aspects designers or other site actors read on site are linked to the tools and working modes with which they approach and record their sites.

If we compare, for example, the harbour transformation projects in Marseille and Nantes, we see that the designers' work modes differ substantially: in Marseille, the designers rely on diagram investigation (maps, cartographic information) and generate a static, structural design; in Nantes, the designers also include the dynamics of people's practices into their project, as they derive their design from on-site observation. The harbour transformation in Lisbon proves to be mainly motivated by practices, since the existing harbour sites on the banks of the river Tagus are still port property and can only be performed as public space in the form of a temporary bicycle track, cycling being a practice that complements existing practices such as fishing or sailing and that has already enticed other practices to engage the site, such as strolling, jogging, temporary sports facilities, cafés and night clubs. These site-performing practices have the capacity to shape site as well, both temporarily and over time.

In our scrutiny of designs for derelict harbour areas, we will thus devote particular attention to the designers' apprehension of people's practices. To find out how they read them, we will scrutinise if they address their harbour sites through conventional diagram-based research or through immersive on-site observation, and we will look into their way of grasping time-based site aspects in addition to the site's static features. Consequently, our interpretation tool will include a filter that captures people's practices.

 SITE NARRATIVES

Another way of studying designers' site reading is asking what they have not read from their sites, i.e. what they have overlooked, and why. Knowing what has not been addressed helps us

disclose the tacit agendas of the designers, especially in how they think about urban planning and design, where various readings of sites often coexist as narratives and are formulated by actors on different power levels. References to narratives found in current theoretical literature of urban design and architecture are skimmed here, allowing us to extract some essentials to introduce into our interpretation tool.

Reading and not reading
In an earlier paper, Andrea Kahn (1996) has explored the notion of overlooking in all its possible meanings — as a distant point of view, when hovering over a site as a detached observer; as omission, when certain aspects of a site are forgotten to be addressed; as disregard, when these aspects have intentionally been dropped; and as supervising, when looking down upon the site to control it. The acts of overlooking, according to Kahn, can be seen from a gender perspective, personifying site as female and site actors as male, for the moment of scrutiny of the question of how site readings are produced by or support a dominant societal order. Such a gender personification allows us to ask whether site actors approach site conditions as hindrances, standing in the way of some previously established plan with the site as passive receptacle of it (the site as a discrete object of desire), or if site actors respect and deploy a site's properties as active forces of a site which they do not intend to dominate but with which they negotiate and cooperate (the site as an 'other' kind of feminine, a lively, open, ever-present situation).

In the harbour transformation of Marseille, for example, the designers do not read the practices of the poor population currently on their site, nor do they read its predominant materials, such as the bold roads and railways of the port. This enables them to acknowledge the site's topographical structures that were more visible in the past, such as a coastal cliff and a river valley, with the respective visual and atmospheric qualities they propose to enhance today. In the harbour transformation of Nantes, the designers do not devote much attention to the site's distant past, when it was a river archipelago, which enables them to focus on the recent history: they read their site as an industrially shaped river island.

An investigation of what designers have not read in a design project can help clarify what indeed they have read and shall therefore enter our scrutiny of harbour transformation projects.

Memories
We have begun our investigation with the consideration of a site possessing existing qualities which can be either acknowledged or overlooked by the designer, in order to replace them with a pre-established plan or programme, in the architectural meaning of planned functions and uses. In conventional urban planning and architectural practice all over the western world, the value of the programme is absolute, and theoretical writings of these disciplines rarely challenge it. However, our previous thoughts about a site's existing qualities, and its potential role as a driver of site development, imply that acknowledging these qualities requires rethinking conventional site programming. That is why we will take a closer look into the few current theoretical writings about the relationship between site and programme.

The French philosopher Sébastien Marot, like Elizabeth Meyer, promotes the idea of the site bearing its own programme instead of receiving a predefined one. He explored this antagonism in the context of urban design theory through what he calls 'sub-urbanism' and 'super-urbanism'

(Marot 2006). He identifies the latter with a radical modernistic imposition of a programme onto a site and illustrates it with OMA's unrealised project for the Parc de la Villette competition of 1982 in Paris, a design consisting of the drawing of a striped tapestry of functions that was meant to be laid out on the cleared park ground. At the opposite extreme, Marot understands sub-urbanism as the post-modernistic idea of site acting, this acting being the driver of a design project, a subject from which a programme can be deciphered. Marot illustrates this idea through landscape architect Alexandre Chemetoff's Bamboo Garden, built as a theme garden within Parc de la Villette in 1987: this sunken garden is cut into the urban subsoil, and there, Chemetoff discovered a subterranean infrastructure which he introduced into his design as the main spatial structure and the main material, guiding the public to discover the recent history of urban engineering within the city's ground. Marot claims that the super-urbanistic hierarchy of programme over site is outdated and encourages future sub-urbanistic practice, to help emerge the suppressed, subordinate, subsurface aspects of site.

This plea augments Marot's original research on the art of memory, to which the term sub-urbanism was added in the English translation of his writings (*L'art de la mémoire, le territoire et l'architecture* (1999) is translated as *Sub-urbanism and the Art of Memory* (2003)). In this study, he elaborates on the importance of memories, frequently overlooked even when constitutive of the identity of urban sites. Marot gives his reflections plasticity through various examples, the most interesting for our context of harbour transformation certainly being the study of the walks, works and writings of Robert Smithson in the 1970s, about and across his industrial hometown of Passaic, part of the larger suburbia of New York City. Smithson dares an aesthetic glimpse onto the urban landscapes of Passaic, strolling through it for entire days and photographing its elements as if they were monuments, such as a bridge, an abandoned production site or the water pipe system of a channelled river. He comes to identify these built structures as together comprising a dump of scattered elements of half-built urban visions, discarded when new ideas for other visions were built over and around them, ruins before having been reality, deprived of their initial meaning, forgotten in their *raison d'être* — 'inverted ruins', Smithson calls them. Marot finds it interesting that Smithson accuses the common amnesiac view of this suburbia for this forgetting and that Smithson poses against it a literal unearthing from the ground the urban landscape's memories and meanings. Accordingly, Marot calls for an urban design building on anamnesis, meaning the acknowledgement of site memories and all kinds of site aspects that are hidden beneath physical, mental or ideological surfaces.

With such thinking about site and memory, Marot has grasped essential aspects of the design practice in his country of origin. French landscape architects of his generation commonly design projects that address existing features below the surface of the earth, even if this practice remains mostly related to physical subterranean features. Chemetoff's Bamboo Garden of 1987 shows this clearly, but so does the reestablishment of a buried water course in the present harbour transformation project in Marseille, conceived by a design team which includes the French landscape architects of Agence Ter. Chemetoff's current harbour transformation in Nantes shows that his understanding of site memories has overcome the unearthing of physical subterranean material: in this project, the designers take up various memories of the shipbuilding history that range from workers' experience of spaces to relics of production processes.

Harbours sites are derelict industrial sites, often with an overlooked history and with discarded futures transformed into memories, just as in Smithson's Passaic. Smithson's goal was to grasp these memories as site qualities, and in view of probing similar approaches in the design projects for derelict harbours, we will include a filter into our interpretation tool that captures the designers' reading of a site's memories. As we have seen, memories can be addressed by an authoritative version, as collective history, like in the project in Marseille, and also by an individual one, as personal memories, as in the Nantes harbour transformation (Assmann 2007).

Discourses

So far, we have extracted from our theoretical investigation a series of filters for an interpretation tool capable of capturing the designers' reading of site qualities that are not addressed or not combined by current analytical methods: structures, materials, processes, practices, atmospheres, memories. If we want to escape a fragmented analysis in which an object of study is again divided into unrelated elements, we have to build into our tool a synthesising element. The facets of the insight gained through filtering need to be interrelated by such an element, which will also help us understand how the designers combine acknowledged aspects of site into a foundational thought from which to develop their design intervention on a harbour site, their site editing.

The combination of aspects of site into a synthetic thought is discursive. To elucidate the mechanisms of this process, let us select a couple of sources from the abundant literature on discursive practices that focus on discourses in strategic planning and relate them to design projects and the sites they start from. We will see that site properties are often disregarded intentionally through a discursive act that mirrors a political programme or a local planning strategy. These operations correspond to the domination of site and the superimposition of a programme on site, as addressed by Kahn and Marot. It is, however, elucidating to acknowledge that this power play uses the same discursive method as the designers' creative act of formulating a design concept for a site: narratives.

Narratives in a design context are particularly well explained by Robert A. Beauregard (2005), an American scholar of architectural history). To him, narratives are exemplified in the ideological and planning discourses of the 1950s used to prepare the implantation of the Brazilian capital of Brasilia far from chaotic Rio on the Central Plateau, where the narrative of the desolate place was easy to update with development promises and nation-building ideas to claim the plateau's destiny as capital territory. In Beauregard's terms, this site was narrated as a place to make it into the right site for an immense building project. On the other hand, Beauregard points at the American Operation Breakthrough, launched at the end of the 1960s by the national department for housing and urban development, who wanted to demonstrate the value of industrial housing and modular building systems, and was subsumed in the narrative of industry's ability to produce spatially rich housing environments. Eleven sites were selected from across the country, all very different from each other and situated in various urban contexts. They were equalised in terms of building codes, trade union work rules, market regulation, accessibility, existing built-up structures — basically everything was erased to allow every site to host any of the mass-produced housing systems and develop spatial richness. Here, Beauregard speaks of converting a place into a site to turn it into a new place. In these two cases, design narratives are strictly linked to official political and planning discourses.

Comparing the harbour transformation in Oslo to Beauregard's cases, we recognise that the design narrative of the Oslo project, focusing on the site's harbour atmospheres, has developed its autonomy independently from the official planning discourse, which is to develop Oslo into a 'fjord city' along its formerly industrialised harbour shores.

In our study of harbour transformation projects we will therefore distinguish between narratives in their authoritative and individual versions, the former being identified as local planning and development discourses. We will probe the designers' compliance with present urban discourses, and consequently, a respective filter in our interpretation tool will enable us to discover if the designers acknowledge such discourses within their site reading.

To distinguish the designers' individual discourses, we will address them as narratives and have a closer look at the role they play in the transmittal of site reading results — the designers' findings from site — into the site editing process.

In philosophy, finding what you have not been searching for is called serendipity. This idea seems to align with site reading in a creative site investigation, as discussed above. French urbanist and researcher François Ascher (2009) states that serendipity addresses the context of uncertainty, in which the research alone does not suffice to tackle problems: uncertainty furthermore requires the ability to deploy the unexpected. He comprehends the contemporary world as being increasingly calculated and reflected — therefore more complex — and decreasingly traditional — therefore reposing less on well-known patterns ('hypermodern' in the words of Ascher). Ascher observes that to produce new, profitable knowledge in relationship to multiple individual and collective actions and decisions, the nature of research is slowly changing. This research is mobilising more reflection and knowledge for every action and decision and is consequently producing an increasing complexity of choice, and of uncertainty. Ascher is convinced that contemporary research needs to shift from casual serendipity to conscious and intended serendipity, which would entice a considerable shift in epistemology and methodology, encouraging findings produced through situational interaction and exchange, with uncertainty as a starting point (Ascher 2009: 88). Uncertainty can be understood as the total openness of a design at the start of a designer's site reading process. Site reading can then produce unexpected findings — and these findings, in the present progressive, designate a process of continuous finding rather than a fixed result. In other words, immediate and evolutional site knowledge overlaps with the act of editing as part of the same creative enterprise.

Site reading in this definition rejects the idea of an objectified site to be approached through scientific site analysis. Often enough designers and authorities intending to legitimate design proposals hide behind deterministic figures they put forward as the results of an objective analysis. This objectivity is a myth. From our definition of site as a construction, it becomes clear how much site reading is a reflected act of design, a 'designed understanding', to use Andrea Kahn's words (1998). It is clearly construed by site actors, be they authorities or designers, often merging into each other as collective site-makers.

In the harbour transformation project in Rotterdam, for example, the designers conceive a narrative that becomes the narrative of the port, their client. Through this narrative, they invite the port to see itself in another light and develop itself accordingly: instead of a polluting transship-

ment machinery with no spatial qualities, they read the immense Rotterdam harbour site as a high-tech working environment and a fascinating artificial landscape.

Narratives help the designers express their site reading in a condensed way, combining the most important aspects they have captured on their harbour transformation sites. For this reason our interpretation tool will resume the designers' site reading in asking for the main narrative their project relies on. The question for the main narrative helps us connect facets of insight we gain through previous filtering, and it discloses the foundational thought from which the designers develop their harbour transformation, their site editing, elucidated in the following chapter.

Notes

1 Looking into architectural practice, attentive researchers have also pointed at designers who proclaim a theoretical position while their built oeuvre contradicts it. For example, in an analysis of two recent buildings in Berlin, the Dutch embassy by Rem Koolhaas and a mixed-use complex at Potsdamer Platz by Renzo Piano, Danish scholar Helen Sværke observes how Koolhaas's precise fitting of his building into the urban context conflicts with his claim for a universal architecture, and how Piano's glass curtain walls override his 19th-century Berlin-inspired brick facades and instead cosies up, against his well-known genius loci credo, with modernistic vocabulary (Sværke 2012).

2 Site as armature is evidenced through Olmsted Sr. and Vaux's Prospect Park in Brooklyn, oriented along a local topographical ridge — the designers have read the site's topographical structure. Topography can also be read as a figure, as Meyer demonstrates with the example of Olmsted Jr.'s Wesley College campus, whose buildings are placed to accentuate the landform. Jens Jensen's Columbus Park in Chicago elucidates how site can be read as a fragment, in this case as a piece of the Midwestern prairie landscape's mosaic transposed into the city. Finally, Meyer evokes site as a temporal phenomenon, and here she is in line with Jensen's works and writings that praise immaterial qualities of sites, such as seasonal blossoming, microclimates or the effect of a morning's or an evening's particular sunlight.

3 Hill argues that this insight be motivated by the human experience of embodiment and quotes ecologist Sandra Steingraber with a telling case. Steingraber posits that humans literally eat their landscapes in incorporating molecules of the fields that brought about their food: 'All Americans have become the embodiment of the Midwestern prairie, given the amount of corn syrup consumed (an ingredient of common prepared foods that originates in that region)' (Hill 2005: 140).

DESIGN AS TRANSFORMATION

Our intention to cast light on site specificity has taken us, in the previous chapter, to explore site as a dynamic relational construct, and to distinguish between the designers' site reading and their site editing. By studying related theories, we refined our understanding of the designers' site reading and defined a couple of filters for a new tool to interpret our case study of harbour transformation projects, which enables an identification of aspects of a site that designers may or may not read.

In this chapter, we will look at sources that help us understand the DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING — that part of the work with a site that is commonly associated with design. Just as we did for the notion of site, we will introduce a particular understanding of design, namely as transformation of that which already exists, as opposed to the still prevalent architectural concept of design as creation *ex novo*.

There is little contemporary literature on urban-planning-oriented transformation theory and any related understanding of design. The mindset of design as transformation being also rare in today's urban planning practice, we illustrate it through a loose collection of theoretical writings and reports on practical urban interventions that are an alternative to conventional planning. These particular urban interventions will provide the panorama in front of which our search for alternative harbour transformation is carried out. To orient our case study, we will look through the panorama of urban interventions to find out how the practice of design as transformation can connect the formerly closed-off harbour areas with the urban fabric of their cities and metropolitan regions, and how design as transformation allows people to appropriate these old industrial areas as part of today's world of urban living. We refer to those professionals and researchers of urban planning and urban studies who themselves invoke connectivity and appropriation as an important strand of thinking and acting in design.

The urban planning examples and explorations are complemented by theoretical sources in the field of heritage and of philosophy of the arts. Design as transformation is a mindset that refers both to preservation and to creative invention, and so we search for a definition of designerly work as an open work, bridging the gap between museification of sites and a total make-over of them. Within the field of heritage and historic research, there are few researchers who examine design issues, although design for heritage sites appears to be an emerging research topic. In the field of philosophy of the arts, many contemporary researchers define creative activity and works of art beyond the idea of a single author and an unambiguous oeuvre; in fact, two early scholars deliver the most illustrative theoretical references for our understanding of design as transformation.

Our two key notions for the analysis of harbour transformation projects, site reading and site editing, rely on a linguistic metaphor, and we will take inspiration once again from this theoretical field and investigate translation theory from a semiotic point of view at the end of this chapter. Semiotician Umberto Eco has studied how authors translate texts into other languages and other semiotic systems, and he defines a range of translation modes along two particular tendencies, the domestication and the foreignisation of texts. These tendencies will help us understand two contrasting designerly ways of editing harbour sites.

Furthermore, translation theory proposes a scale on which translation modes can be ranked in grades of interpretive freedom, from low to high. Applied to harbour transformation, these translation modes and their ranking prove useful to understand the nuances of the designers' site editing in harbour transformation.

TRANSFORMATION

From a design perspective, transformation involves a change of something from one state to another. Danish landscape architect and scholar Ellen Braae, who experiences transformation issues in practice, acknowledges that neither state is static, that in fact the former 'something' of the transformation is related to the new 'something else' (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 24). The art of transformation is basically hermeneutic and closely linked to the existent, and hence indirectly involves theories of preservation in these discussions as well as the question about the relationships between past, present and future. Landscape architects have a long tradition of interpreting landscape, but post-industrial landscapes, and the tendency of public authorities to include them in the urban realm, challenge the conceptual framework of both landscape architecture and urbanism. There is also a growing interest in acknowledging what is already there, the remnants of the post-industrial landscape that persist in the urban fabric, and this leads us back to the notion of site specificity and the possibility of apprehending all aspects that might be associated with the existent (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 24).

Even though the above definition of transformation may seem well known, it differs fundamentally from the methodological basis on which architecture — historically constitutive for landscape architecture and urban planning practices — has been grounded since the Renaissance, and hence it also differs from traditional design practice as it was understood throughout most of the 20th century. Following this line of thought, the dominant conception of architecture and hence of design is connected with creating new forms; architecture is an assemblage of ideas, desires and activities that constitutes a driving core of western culture and what we have come to know as 'progress'. Design is an act taking place in a remote media in terms of character, scale and geography, and it is handled by means closely linked to the development of the perspective as a visual and graphical way of perceiving and representing the world (Bek 2010). The resulting diagrams — plan, section and perspective — provide, on the one hand, a privileged viewing angle, and on the other, constitute a matrix for thinking about and producing architecture; they entail a certain working method. Creation as an act of design implies a clear start — constructing a representation of the project in mind on a blank sheet of paper. The project hence fully reflects the intentions of the author in terms of originality and is ideally an entity of its own right: an oeuvre (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 24).

Transformation, conversely, takes the existent as its point of departure and oscillates between finding out what is there and testing what it could become; the reading and the writing are two reflexive and mutually constituting processes. This double reflex can be understood as creative engagement in the site by means of intervention. These interventions can be designed as additions, subtractions, superimpositions, détournements, etc., and their presence and impact can vary from hardly anything to an almost complete makeover. While the traditional design act is associated with originality, with creating 'the new', novelty in transformation is rather associated with the ability to create a dialogue with that which already exists on a site, and depends

on site-related knowledge. 'New views' develop on uses, aesthetics etc., and are ideally focused on enhancing relations between the place-bound and the transient, between the material and the immaterial, and between the present (including the past) and the future. How the design process integrates and balances the aesthetic reality found on site is therefore affected. The notion of aesthetics is understood broadly here as 'aisthesis' (Böhme 2006) — not the traditional privileged, mediated and hence also distanced overview, as previously described, but rather the immediate perception through all the senses and the intelligence. Within transformation the existent becomes the main driver, and design thus becomes a hermeneutic agency privileging a conception of novelty in the sense that it focuses on creating new perceptions of the existent rather than an ex nihilo creation of new objects. Transformation does not necessarily imply that the future is subordinate to the present. The result is the sum of the dialogue between the existent and the intervention, without a predetermined relationship. Furthermore, the outcome is not complete or concluded. It is a priori open for further design intervention due to its heterogeneous and compound character that relies on a paradigm of complexity rather than harmony (Braae and Diedrich 2012: 25).

This thesis proposes investigating design projects for derelict harbour areas through the lens of design as transformation. Speaking of this lens in terms of transformation confirms the terminology we have adopted in the previous chapter; we can speak with validity of a site editing by designers that is different from site writing, where the term 'site writing' corresponds to the idea of writing on a blank piece of paper.

As found
How can we imagine design as transformation in concrete terms? Post-war art and architecture in Great Britain delivers a telling example which has almost been forgotten today but is interesting to recall in the context of present harbour transformation.

In the post-war years, an understanding of design as transformation emerged. It was a reaction to the precarious situation of those societies who possessed no means for a complete makeover of cities and buildings but had to make do instead with the spaces they had inherited and with whatever material was simply available. To meet the ethical and aesthetic challenges of these limitations, in the 1950s a group of young British architects and artists, including the architects Alison and Peter Smithson, began to practice an approach that the Smithsons would later call 'as found'. It inverted the perception of something already existing as being old worthless stuff into an evaluation of it as the fascinating raw material for something it could become. The Swiss architects and theoreticians Claude Lichtenstein and Thomas Schregenberger, researchers on the topic, explain that 'the As Found attitude is anti-utopian, and the properties of the things it brings to light are those of directness, immediacy, rawness, and material presence. As Found is a concern with the here and now, with real and the ordinary, with the tangible and the real — not with high-flown visions and enraptured ideas.' (Lichtenstein and Schregenberger 2001: 9)

Lichtenstein and Schregenberger situate the creative act of works with an 'as found' attitude between pure aesthetic perception, i.e. the act of finding or selecting, and pure poetic invention, i.e. the act of creating something new. Works created with such an 'as found' point of view stand on the threshold between perception ('aistesis') and production ('poiesis') (10). Such works come into being through the transfer of findings into things as they are found, the trans-

fer itself being as much the work as the results of the transfer. Implied by such a transformation is a work mode of immersion with things or sites, of a meticulous and never-ending survey of everything possible to transfer. [1]

Making is remaking
In line with post-war design practices, analytical approaches to artistic issues in philosophy have been changing, too. With *Languages of Art* of 1968, Nelson Goodman began an intellectual trajectory of exploring reality as a multiplicity of worlds through all kinds of things, addressing on an equal footing the arts, common knowledge and scientific theories. In *Ways of Worldmaking* of 1975, he posits that every creative act is one of remaking the world from those worlds that have existed so far: 'The many stuffs — matter, energy, waves, phenomena — that the worlds are made of are made along with the worlds. But made from what? Not from nothing, after all, but from other worlds. Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking.' (Goodman 1975: 6)

Goodman points out how one world can be made from another, or, in the terminology we have set up for harbour transformation projects, how the existent can be transformed. Transformation, according to Goodman can involve many types of actions, such as composition and decomposition, i.e. taking apart and putting together. It can consist of weighting, i.e. sorting out what we have in front of us into relevant and irrelevant kinds and emphasising them accordingly. It can imply ordering, i.e. looking from a particular angle at things, to (re)organise them for perception and action. It can rely on deletion and supplementation, i.e. excising old material and replacing it by something new. And finally, transformation can happen through deformation, i.e. alteration of the existing, ranging from correcting to distorting (7–17). Goodman does not claim to deliver an exhaustive list of methods, nor does he pretend that transformative actions belong to only one category. [2]

The mindset of making as a remaking delivers results such as the British 'as found' movement. This mindset is foundational for understanding design as transformation, and for looking at site editing in the context of harbour transformation.

URBAN INTERVENTIONS

How does the concept of design as transformation enter urban planning studies and practice, especially in areas of practice that engage with post-industrial sites? One of the main challenges posed by the transformation of industrial complexes is how to extract these areas from their original realm of production and to legitimise their presence as part of the urban sphere. Since harbour areas are often situated as a nexus between the urban core and the water, their future use is also defined by their ability to link the urban core to the water and to provide spaces of appropriation for people — all this identifies their transformation as a task within urban planning and urban design. Let us see how urbanism specialists approach this topic.

Multi-dimensionality
The French urban researcher François Ascher examines today's expanded, discontinuous, heterogeneous and multi-polar urban landscapes, including derelict industrial areas, in their historic development of society. He embraces two 'modernities': first, the enlightened societies

of post-medieval thinking, and second, the industrial revolution and the resulting fordist mass production, which in this present moment heads towards a third modernity characterised by its inability to rely neither on rationalist principles nor on a foreseeable future (Ascher 2009: 31–48). [3] Ascher claims that metropolises of today, consisting of much more than their physical, visually tangible parts, should be called 'metapolises', precisely because of their multilayered composition of spatial and other issues. Their spatial appearance is the result of a new form of society which he calls the 'hypertext society' (63–83). He explains that the way today's individuals perceive and compose their lives and their living environments has fundamentally changed, from a socially and spatially predefined one-dimensional stability into individually and spatially selectable options and combinations at n dimensions — 'hyper', in the mathematical sense. In linguistics, a hypertext describes an undefined number of texts in which the same word appears with different syntaxes and meanings. Ascher sets the individual as a word and its various social contexts as the variety of texts it is part of, in ever-changing constellations. It becomes clear that the members of this dynamic hypertext society imagine and build their urban spaces differently — in more dimensions, or n — than have the members of the static, former societies.

Sébastien Marot (2011), a French philosopher, suggests we reconsider the metaphor of hypertext that André Corboz ascribed to landscape as a way to replace the outdated yet still widespread meaning of landscape as scenery. For designers, this would mean that the design of landscapes overcomes object design and resembles instead the design of a vehicular system. Marot writes that, 'in a way, the hypertext could be compared to an indefinite book without binding, or to a superpalimpsest made almost as transparent as sky or water: the fourth dimension as if you were there, and not subject to gravity' (106). Even if it is difficult to imagine what such a landscape would look like, it becomes clear that design will have to do much more with dynamics than it has. In particular, designers will have to work with the local dynamics of space, of people and of the design project itself. In our case study we will probe if and how harbour transformation projects take the route for such an adapted dynamic design of the 21st century.

Connectivity and appropriation
In line with Ascher, German urban planner Thomas Sieverts describes today's societies as standing on the threshold of a new era, driven by resources other than fossil fuels. The result is a third 'urban revolution', after the agricultural and the industrial one. Urbanists and other professionals may prepare the approaching urban post-oil era in many ways, but no one can predict how exactly post-oil cities will function or what they will look like. Not a single planner or politician dares to admit this fact, even if the confession of this uncertainty would free more minds to reflect on and research it (Sieverts 2004: 13). Sieverts claims that the raison d'être of urban planning will not change in essence, though — the profession that was born from the need to organise the expanded cities of the industrial epoch will continue to do so; or more drastically formulated, it will continue correcting the undesired secondary effects of market-oriented capitalistic developments through design-based and socially and ecologically motivated interventions (Sieverts 2004: 19). According to him, what changes essentially, however, is the way urban planning composes and ameliorates cities: instead of expansion, the transformation of the existent will be the only way for development (13). This prediction is shared by many urban planners and researchers across the whole of Europe, and it certainly makes Europe's urbanism considerably different from that of other continents, especially Asia, characterised by tremen-

dous urban growth. While the main part of future architectural work in Europe will have to deal with transformation of existing urban areas and their materials, however, little theory has been produced in this field so far (Arrhenius 2011: 88).

There are practical examples, though. Sieverts frequently refers to the lessons learnt in almost a decade of work (from 1989 to 1995) as one of the directors of IBA Emscher Park. The goal of this project was the upgrading and structural reorganisation of the old industrial area of the Ruhr region, stigmatised by the numerous spatial relics of the once famous coal and steel industry. Given the extremely large scale, 70 by 30 kilometres, and the extremely ossified politico-administrative local environment, work could only be done step by step, but with a main orientation: the creation of the Emscher Park, a new type of post-industrial urban landscape. Sieverts calls the IBA Emscher method 'perspective incrementalism'. [4] Recognition of a site's own distinct character, in all its strangeness, he says, is the prerequisite for setting in motion a process of transformation. This also means accepting disorder within order as a conditio sine qua non: 'According to the theories of evolution and complexity we can be certain that surprising new developments will always occur and that erratic new things will always emerge. As problems increase so, too, do chances to generate creative solution strategies' (Sieverts 2008: 263). Sieverts explains that design on a large scale is most successful when it addresses large paralysed systems at the moment they are opening up to transformation — then they suddenly become messy and chaotic, and new things are allowed to happen.

Increasing attention is given to works of urban transformation that develop newness from existent states. Klaus Overmeyer, a younger German landscape architect and urban planner, researches informal appropriation processes of urban wastelands in the eastern part of Berlin, Eastern Germany and other European metropolises since the turn of the century. He analyses how bottom-up initiatives link with standard top-down urban planning practices and eventually lead to an 'open-source urbanism'. [5] Pioneer initiatives develop all over Europe, from Copenhagen's Supertanker to Den Haag's Hotel Transvaal and even Madrid's Occupy camp at Puerta del Sol. Such projects are the subjects of case-study research and other publications by numerous contemporary European authors (Riesto et al. 2012; Manolopoulou 2011; Schutten 2011; Overmeyer 2010 and 2007; Kvorning et al. 2010; Lindemann et al. 2010; Brandt et al. 2008).

The harbour transformation projects can be seen in this light as well. The bike trail through Lisbon's harbour is a port- and city-promoted, bottom-up initiative, limited in time but open for appropriation, a feature noted by many authors writing about European urbanism. The project in Nantes proposes a clever way of integrating bottom-up initiatives into top-down planning, thus overcoming standard practices. The Nantes project could become a model for urban transformation that builds on appropriation processes. In Nantes we can also observe how connectivity plays an important role, because the main driver of the project is the opening up of formerly closed-off industrial plots into part of an evolving street network.

Let us understand this opening up of sites both in the concrete sense of removing fences to give physical access and in the figurative one of removing mental barriers to trigger people's awareness and involvement. Sieverts states that only when people take notice of formerly forgotten sites will those sites escape a state of anaesthesia. Only then can they turn into spaces of opportunities for people who are eager to develop emotional links and responsibility for them — the

basis for integration into the urban life world (Sieverts 2008: 257). Our further exploration shall thus be based on the idea that making derelict industrial landscapes accessible and attractive is equated with creating connections and inviting appropriation of a site. Designs can support both strategies, and in our case study we shall scrutinise the harbour transformation projects accordingly.

Performativity
Elaborating on the idea of performance within urban development, German architect and urbanism professor Sophie Wolfrum promotes a performative or situative urbanism (Wolfrum 2010, 2008a, 2008b), whereas composer and theoretician Christoph Dell (2011) suggests improvisation as a performative urban technique of space production inspired by musical practice. Relying on Henri Lefèbvre's theories on the production of space through social interaction over time (1974), both researchers look into the capacity of performative acts in precise situations where urban space is a more than a sheer physical container for these acts. Rather, they treat urban space as a dynamic constellation to be continuously reproduced by an interplay of people and space. Site, for them, is the dynamic relational construct that we have developed above, extrapolated here into the realm of transformative action, and thus design. More conventional urban design, argues Dell, reduces, deforms and freezes contemporary urban spaces instead of taking advantage of their richness, complexity and provisional nature. Improvisation, however, plays on the provisional and evolutional, transgresses occasionally and repeatedly the static structure of a given score, and unpredictably transforms it in a creative way, situation after situation. In transferring ideas of music into urban theory, Dell acknowledges the processes of people's urban practices not only as visual structures but also, if not more, as musical ones. Music with its complex time-based forms of organisation, its degree of abstraction and its immateriality might enrich those urbanistic practices that are so far outlined mostly along utilitarian lines (Dell 2011: 10–15).

Again, the transformation project in Lisbon's harbour illustrates these thoughts. As the property status of the harbour areas could not be changed, the designers had to elaborate a temporary bike trail project that improvises new urban uses on old port land, transgressing its static structure through the bikers' and other people's 'performance' on site. In the harbour transformation in Nantes, the designers' working method reveals a performative approach, as they survey emerging uses on site in regular intervals and include them in their ongoing transformation project.

From this review of European urbanism emerge certain key terms: the opening up of the formerly closed-off, bodily experience, dynamics, intervention instead of invention. These terms speak of urban development methods that aim at transforming sites beyond conventional urban planning practices. In this context, connectivity and appropriation prove to be important vectors of site editing, and consequently they become two filters for our interpretation tool by which we can detect site specificity in harbour transformation projects.

OPEN WORKS

A design approach relying on the valuation of what exists on a site implicitly involves preservation and heritage issues. In the context of harbour transformation we are facing a particular kind

of heritage — industrial. The goal of integrating industrial heritage into an urban transformation project is not essentially about preserving this heritage but about reusing it. Few heritage researchers tackle heritage from a design orientation. The following strand of thinking is only the beginning of a field of research likely to evolve within the contact zone of heritage and design.

Rejuvenation of the heritage
Industrial heritage is detected, discussed and defended on an international level by the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage (TICCIH), which in 2003 also formulated the Nizhny Tagil Charter for Industrial Heritage, which includes guidelines for the handling of industrial heritage. However, the main goal being preservation and not transformation, the charter does not recommend anything more than to 'accept the adaptation of an industrial site to a new use to ensure its conservation' (TICCIH 2003). In European countries, national heritage institutions and heritage survey methods exist, but few are adapted to industrial sites. In the proceedings of a congress on the culture, heritage and regeneration of port cities, the chief executive of English Heritage, Simon Thurley, remarks that current heritage methods deliver questionable results in practice when 'well intentioned and well informed attempts to capture historic flavour [appear to] be difficult to implement' (Thurley 2008). He provocatively points at recent English harbour transformation projects where heritage studies had been carried out in line with legislation but were then simply archived and forgotten instead of being exploited for urban transformation. Thurley warns that heritage studies would be simply irrelevant if they did not inspire urban planning in any way. This leads us to ask if the definition of heritage, in its mono-orientation of preservation, is a dead end and requires a theoretical update.

Major input on this question comes from Dutch historian Jan Kolen, who recognises a paradigm shift from conservation to transformation in our theorising about heritage. He even stipulates a new approach to history for informing the design disciplines. Surveying Europe, he sees that the old paradigm of conservation, called the 'Grand Conservation Project', has led to a comprehensive body of laws, conventions, and institutions aiming at the protection and classification of single objects: archaeological sites, historic buildings and monuments. This conservation project was built up by the elite of experts, and the value of the preserved objects was seen in the significance they possessed in the past, even if this was not obvious and had to be discovered through special studies. Heritage was regarded as a closed system, addressing a specialised public (Kolen 2006: 50).

According to Kolen, the paradigm of conservation has given way to a new paradigm of transformation, particularly since the 1990s. Heritage can now play an active role in very different cultural and spatial transformation projects: 'The emphasis has shifted from local, tangible objects to the environment in the widest sense of the word' (Kolen 2006: 52). This means that not only buildings and museum pieces are meant to be heritage but broader physical entities as well, such as whole expanses of land of the urban environment, including such material elements as soil, vegetation, buildings and climate, and the immaterial word of collective memories, stories, experiences and traditions. In this sense, heritage is becoming more and more accessible to a broader audience within society, offering participative action in creating common identities and cultural and political cooperation. Heritage is no longer a closed system but undergoes a process of democratisation towards being an open domain. Parallel to the broadening of its audience,

heritage is moving forward to the present. No longer would only century-old buildings and ancient sites be considered as heritage, but, given the interest of a broader audience, so would memories of the present generation itself, be it the cultural landscape of the 20th century or the post-war architecture of a city district. Kolen discerns the 'rejuvenation' of heritage, which 'is expanding in our time like a widening web of buildings, tracks, lieux de mémoire, historical stories and symbols, into which new objects, places, memories and significance are continually being interwoven' (Kolen 2006: 52).

However, the wider acknowledgment of the past and the public wish for developing the city with respect to its history has led to a design attitude that tends to package the past into contemporary shapes and events that do not tell more about the past than how it is understood — and frozen as such — in the present moment. In the physical design disciplines the result is a standardising approach, a museification of the multitude of varying matters that are part of the expanded web of heritage. Observers of European architecture, landscape architecture and urban design practice over the last quarter century confirm that contemporary designers have brought about an extensive oeuvre of such senseless restorations (Diedrich et al. 2009: 14, Luiten 2012: 217). The misuse of heritage and history remains a trap for designers confronted with transformation tasks.

Kolen believes that this situation can be remedied from within the historical sciences, if historians can formulate a transformation-oriented theory of history which would pay more attention to the processes of cultural and spatial change where heritage preservation and contemporary change interact, and in so doing they interact with the spatial culture of the 21st century (Kolen 2006: 53). [6] Dutch landscape architect Eric Luiten, on the other hand, calls on the design professions to elaborate a conceptual framework, lacking so far, for transformation projects involving heritage (Luiten 2012: 217). While historians will always aim for the most comprehensive historical research without establishing a ranking of historical findings, designers need to make choices.

We can deduce that the designers' site thinking will have to be updated by new knowledge in order to transgress the disciplinary norms, societal beliefs and personal convictions so far at hand. Only then can they reposition themselves, reading sites differently and editing them accordingly. This new knowledge, however, still needs to be generated and disseminated. [7] From such a reflected design perspective, scholars in the field of heritage preservation could theorise about an open-ended version of history. Instead of calling for museification, they could advocate ongoing interpretation and adaptation to the changing social prospects, and declare past, present and future environments as a work in motion.

The harbour transformation projects of this thesis's case study testify to attempts to lend heritage preservation a design orientation. If we compare the Lisbon project, where almost nothing could be altered because of property conditions, to the Oslo project, where almost every part of the industrial harbour installations is to be taken down, we recognise that the designers in both projects preserve and transform at the same time. In Lisbon, change is operated through performative action while preserving the material spatial frame; in Oslo, the atmospheres of the harbour are preserved through use of similar materials, colours and spatial situations in a completely new material environment.

Infinite transformation

'Works in motion' is what Italian writer and semiotician Umberto Eco calls the aleatory music of Stockhausen, Calder's mobiles or Mallarmé's 'Livre'. In his seminal book *Opera aperta* ('The Open Work', 1962), he ascertains that a 'non-traditional' work of art, from across all disciplines, offers a multitude of possible arrangements rather than a single definitive one. The rest of its composition is left to hazard or to the audience: '(1) "open" works, insofar as they are in *movement*, are characterised by the invitation to *make the work* together with the author and that (2) on a wider level [...] there exist works which, though organically completed, are "open" to a continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of incoming stimuli. (3) *Every* work of art, even though it is produced by following an explicit or implicit poetics of necessity, is effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, each of which causes the work to acquire new vitality in terms of one particular taste, or perspective, or personal *performance*' (Eco: 21).

If we want to consider a work as an open work, we must, according to Eco, rely on a radical shift in the relationship between artists and audience. Eco's perception of changes underway in how artist and audience interact is similar to the observations made by urbanism and heritage researchers on the changing interplay between designers and public in large-scale urban transformation works. As with an open work of art, an open work of urban planning calls for a much greater degree of collaboration and personal involvement of other actors than ever before. Shifts in art and design attitudes can be read as reactions to a changing world for which traditional attitudes no longer deliver any valuable interpretations and solutions. In the preface to his first edition of *Opera Aperta*, Eco writes that contemporary art seeks a solution to a crisis by suggesting 'new ways of seeing, feeling, understanding and accepting a universe in which traditional relationships have been shattered and new possibilities of relationship are being laboriously sketched out' (Robey 1989: xv).

Open works are therefore intentionally breaking the rules of conventional expression; they formalise the elements of any work of art in ways that cannot be deciphered with conventional codes. They provide much more information that does not automatically carry meaning, and they offer a much greater degree of interpretative freedom, which we can also understand as ambiguity. Eco proposes 'an equation between the degree of openness, the degree of information, the degree of ambiguity, and the degree of contravention of conventions in a work' (xii).

While urban planners and heritage specialists have expressed a desire for open works in urban transformation, such works are not easy to implement. They imply breaking the rules of conventional planning procedures and formal architectural expression, and charge the involved actors with information but no predefined meaning, therefore producing ambiguity, which requires the ability to interpret it. In the following case study we will see how contemporary harbour transformation projects play out these ideas.

Expanding the concept of openness, French philosopher Roland Barthes proposes moving 'from work to text' (1971). Along with apprehending cultural products as works, he advocates embracing cultural production as text. In his essay 'From Work to Text' of 1971, Barthes, a linguist, draws on metaphors from literature: 'The work can be seen in bookstores, in card catalogues, and on course lists, while the text reveals itself, articulates itself according to or against certain

rules. While the work is held in the hand, the text is held in language: it exists only as discourse. The Text is not the decomposition of the work; rather it is the work that is the Text's imaginary trail. In other words, *the Text is experienced only in an activity*, a production. It follows that the Text cannot stop, at the end of a library shelf, for example; the constitutive movement of the Text is *a traversal (traversée)*: it can cut across a work, several works.' (In Harari 1979: 75)

Transformation in design, then, can be understood as the traversal activity of single design projects, as the never ending text of these concrete works, as the ongoing translation of already translated works. For harbour transformation, this means that each harbour area, each harbour city can be seen as a small part of a bigger puzzle, and it can furthermore be understood as a transient state of this space over its long evolution: from the tectonic shifts that brought about a bay, a river or a delta, where people created the first mooring places, to the transformation of those moorages into the port city of today that people will further transform into the metropolitan port region of tomorrow. Under this perspective, the harbour transformation projects of this study are very specific sites at precise moments on the time line of a much longer story.

TRANSLATION

To capture the mechanisms of the designers' site editing and to better understand how designers transform, we will investigate how translation works. For this reason we will remain for a while in the realm of linguistics and semiotics. We have stated initially in this chapter that transformation in a design perspective is a situation when something is changed from one state to another — relating that former 'something' to the new 'something else'. Comparing this transfer to the translation of works of literature from one language into another, or into other art forms, helps us understand the ways in which both transformation and translation are ideational constructions and rely on permanent processes of negotiation.

Domestication and foreignisation
In Eco's theoretical writings on translation, he ponders on his own experiences writing novels and philosophical treatises, working with translators of his own work, and translating himself that of other authors. For all these experiences, he comes up with the term *negotiation* (2003). Eco writes that between the theoretical argument that languages cannot be translated at all, because of their different structure, and the practical observation that people all over the world do translate and understand each other, the only idea corresponding to human experience is the one of translation as a process of negotiation — between author and text, between author and readers, and between the structure of two languages and the encyclopaedias of two cultures (34).

Let us confer this idea into the context of harbour transformation and understand transformation as negotiation — between designer and site, between designer and public, between the industrial and the urban structures, and between the respective semiotic systems and spatial vocabularies. A closer look into the principles of translation depicted by Eco helps us identify a couple of parameters for the analysis of design approaches in harbour transformation.

Negotiation, according to Eco, implies losses and gains. Never can a translation comprehensively transfer every single level of a text — beyond the most obvious lexical level a text also conveys syntactical, rhythmic, referential, stylistic and graphic levels (Eco 2009: 67–96). Translation therefore

To illustrate the process of negotiating losses and gains, Eco points at two literary works and their translation into Italian: Camus's La peste and Shakespeare's Hamlet. Both texts feature the word rat in their original languages. In Camus's piece, one morning Doctor Rieux finds a dead rat on the doorstep, the first sign of a terrible epidemic. In Shakespeare's work, Hamlet, intent on killing Polonius, pretends to see a rat behind an arras, exclaims in surprise and passes his sword through the arras, and into Polonius. The Italian language does not distinguish between 'rat' and 'mouse' in everyday language; 'ratto' (rat) is only used as a very technical term and 'topo' or 'sorcio' (mouse) can be applied to any of the rodent animals. Eco appreciates that most Italian translations of Shakespeare's piece have Hamlet screaming 'Cosa c'è? Un topo?' before he knifes Polonius, but Eco laments reading in an Italian translation of Camus's text that Doctor Rieux discovers 'un sorcio morto'. According to him, in the Hamlet case the translators negotiated well which portion of the expressed content was relevant in the given context, and in the La peste case, they did not. In Shakespeare's passage, because the translators 'needed a rodent that generally makes people scream, a topo or a mouse is enough even though [they] lose other properties (size, for instance, or risk of plague) that on the contrary should be preserved at any cost in Camus's context' (Eco 2003: 34).

Fig. 1. Negotiating the relevant content in a translation between natural languages (text: L. Diedrich based on Eco 2004/2003)

When speaking of remote texts, Eco uses Luther's translation of the Latin bible into German as a blatant example of a domesticating translation (Eco 2003: 91). In the realm of contemporary literature Eco illustrates the choice between a domesticating and a foreignising translation through the example of the transfer into English of the tender French appellation 'mon petit chou'. Literally translated as 'my little cabbage', the expression would completely fail its meaning and simply be wrong, nothing to negotiate — according to Eco, exactitude is a questionable concept in the world of translation. A domesticating translation would be 'my little sweetheart'. However, Eco suggests taking a look into the source text to find out where these words are expressed, and if the scene takes place in France he would rather recommend a foreignising translation which would preserve the French expression within the English text. The readers would probably not understand the exact meaning of the words but would 'detect something very French-like and [...] guess that this is how French people speak when they are in love' (Eco 2003: 91).

Fig. 2. Domesticating and foreignising translations between natural languages (text: L. Diedrich based on Eco 2004/2003)

Translation is a form of interpretation and relies on negotiation, says Italian writer, translator and linguist Umberto Eco, and it can furthermore domesticate or foreignise its source text — as illustrated here through examples from literature. These principles can also explain transfers between other semiotic systems, such as between literature and music. In this thesis, they constitute the theoretical foundation for the analysis of design approaches in harbour transformation.

always operates between faithfulness to a source text and freedom of interpretation in view of a target text: 'Faithfulness [alone] is not a method which results in acceptable translation. It is the decision to believe that translation is possible, it is our engagement in isolating what is for us the deep sense of a text, and it is the goodwill that prods us to negotiate the best solution for every line. Among the synonyms of faithfulness the word exactitude does not exist. Instead there is loyalty, devotion, allegiance, piety' (Eco 2003: 192). [fig. 1]

Part of the negotiation preceding translation is the decision of the translator to domesticate or foreignise texts, which is related to source-oriented or target-oriented translations, in the terminology of translation studies (Eco 2003: 88–103). A translation is target-oriented when it adapts a given text to the linguistic and cultural universe of the readers, and the translation mode is then domestication. A translation is source-oriented when it pushes the readers into the linguistic and cultural universe of a given text, and the translation mode is then foreignisation. In the first case the text is altered considerably to come closer to the reader, in the second the reader's mind must be extended to approach the text. [fig. 2]

In the context of harbour transformation, a domesticating intervention comprises considerable changes of the industrial site to make it fit contemporary urban needs and expectations. This happens, for example, in the harbour transformation project in Marseille, where the proposal is to change the present coastal cliff with its port feeder roads and heavy infrastructural installations into a coastal promenade for pedestrians. A foreignising intervention, on the other hand, would aim at changing considerably the appreciation of the urban audience of the industrial sites. The harbour transformation of Nantes illustrates this translation mode; the materials on the site — ground covers, pioneer vegetation, hangars, entire built ensembles — are preserved as much as possible to host new uses.

Translation as oeuvre
An extreme understanding of translation is formulated by Walter Benjamin. It has to be considered, however, in the light of the particular context in which it was written, namely the preface to Benjamin's translation of Baudelaire's collection of poems called 'Tableaux Parisiens' into German, in 1923. Benjamin formulates how the committed apprehension of a source language can influence and enrich the target language: 'It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. For the sake of pure language he breaks through decayed barriers of his own language. Luther, Voss, Hölderlin, and George have extended the boundaries of German language. — And what of the sense in its importance for the relationship between translation and original? A simile may help here. Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point, with this touch rather than with the point setting the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity, a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux'. (Benjamin 1921–23: 80)

Here we understand that translation plays out beyond the transfer of single pieces of literature. Translation can renew, extend or update an entire language to include concepts so far unknown or inexpressible. Along with Barthes' move from work to text, translation would then operate not only on the level of the work but also of the text, as an infinitely creative work mode.

In literature, translators such as Umberto Eco are often addressed as 'author-translators'. Their translations count as literary oeuvres — like any other piece of literature. Some writers, such as the contemporary German author Hans Magnus Enzensberger, who has translated many poets over the course of his career, even confess their fascination for translation and state that their art of writing is due to the translating experience. Enzensberger writes, 'Almost everything I know about poetry is thanks to my predecessors and road companions' (1999: 394). He describes how foreign poems have always haunted him like ghost voices, and simply to master them, he translated them into his own language, choosing for his victims those visitations that tickled him most, that he felt most attracted by or that were of use to him. The translator of poetry, he states, is a 'brotherly egoist' (391). Enzensberger explains that translating brings to light how the authors, the ghost voices, made their works, and by dissecting and recomposing them, one can catch the artistry and tricks of writing and also the particularities and seductive forces of both the foreign language and one's own (392). If a work allows it, translation would always be one-to-one, but if not, one has to operate with a greater degree of freedom. Enzensberger states that in this case, a translation shifts into something else, for example a paraphrase, an imitation, a capriccio or a parody (394).

Translation, as we see, is not a boring transfer automatism but an infinitively creative activity. This supports the idea of design as transformation being an equally creative endeavour in harbour transformation.

Translation modes
Inspired by Enzensberger's dissection and recomposition of 'ghost voices', let us study the craft patterns of translation to make them operative for the analysis of design approaches in harbour transformation. Eco's detailed analysis of his experiences of translation is the source of the following considerations (Eco 2010/2003 in Italian; Eco 2009 in German; Eco 2004/2003 in English).

Eco notices the potential shift of translation proper into other interpretation modes, and he adopts the term interpretation to embrace them all. Under the umbrella of interpretation, we can account for various modes within or across semiotic systems, fully knowing that their continuous evolution through negotiation, work by work in an ongoing text, impedes setting up a strict typology. The following set of modes (bold font), in line with Eco's proposal (2009:279–409), helps us generate an increased awareness of the innumerable options for interpretation, which we will call 'modes of translation' to highlight the concept they originate from.

Eco speaks of **TRANSLATION PROPER** only when a piece of writing is transferred from one natural language into another one. Translation proper involves a change in substance, since natural languages are substantially different in linguistic structure, components, etc. However, the matter of expression — the material by which the expression is made — is the same in English, Italian, Chinese or ancient Greek: language. Translation proper can therefore be classified as an intersystemic interpretation with a substance change. The same goes for other transfers from one semiotic system into another, such as the transfer from an industrialised city district, in the Nantes project, into a de-industrialised one; the substance changes, from industrial to post-industrial, while the matter of expression — the urban district with its existing buildings, streets, other materials — remains.

Transfer can also occur within the same semiotic system: when a piece of writing is reworded within the same language; when a piece of music is transposed from minor to major; or when parts of a port are reorganised spatially but remain port, like in Rotterdam, conserving its existing materials, structures and functions. This transfer implies a **KEY CHANGE** rather than a translation — an intrasystemic interpretation. Substance and matter do not change.

In between the intra- and the intersystemic interpretations we encounter an ambiguous mode, that of **PERFORMANCE**. A piece of music or a theatre play that features the same score or script can be performed in ever-changing ways, with ever-changing musicians or actors. Performing is part of the semiotic system of music or theatre, but the individual performances produce ever-changing expressions, potentially involving changes of substance, almost translations. A harbour area, like in Lisbon, performed as city while maintaining its legal status of port property and all its material port premises, can be considered being subject to the same translation mode.

Within translation, poetry occupies a particular position, as we have seen with Benjamin. As pointed out by Enzensberger, a one-to-one translation is rarely possible, and the transfer calls for a greater degree of interpretive freedom. Eco speaks of **TRANSLATION AS ADAPTATION**, still situated in the realm of intersystemic interpretation with a substance change, but without change in matter. Applied to harbour transformation, the freely interpreted transfer of a harbour area into an urban area can involve an adaptive translation, when the main matter is preserved, like the growing green grid in the project of Bordeaux.

Even more interpretative freedom is involved when a piece of literature is transferred into a movie or a theatre play. Within intersystemic interpretation this shift involves change not only of the substance of expression but also of the material by which the play is expressed — the matter of expression. Reciting Hamlet in Italian means that the substance of expression is altered while the matter of expression is preserved — sound produced by a human throat. However, the matter of expression changes when painting the scene of Hamlet killing Polonius: instead of sound in space, paint on surface is used. Instead of translation, Eco qualifies this transfer as **ADAPTATION**. Accordingly, we can call adaptations those spatial transfers of harbour areas into urban areas that involve not only alteration of substance but also heavy changes of matter. In the Oslo project, uses, materials and structures of the port are abandoned so a new city district can be built, and the atmospheres of this new urban district form because they are adapted from the ones the designers identified in the former harbour.

In intersystemic interpretation with changes in matter, the interpretive freedom increases the more the semiotic systems differ in their matter by which expression occurs. Eco imagines the transfer of a poem into music. Debussy's 'Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune' has been composed on Mallarmé's poem 'L'après-midi'. Even if it is possible to evoke certain atmospheres of the poem through sounds, we would never recognise the poem when listening to the music without learning its identity through some other way. The musical score is an independent work, and that is why it is definitely not a translation but an **ADAPTATION AS NEW WORK**. Similarly, serious changes of matter also occur in port-city transformation. When urbanistic interventions inspired by something that already exists become independent from it, through considerable material, structural or functional changes, as happens with the coastal promenade and the valley park in

TRANSLATION MODE	semiotic systems	grade of interpretive freedom
	literature, music, theatre, film, dance	
		low
intrasystemic interpretation	rewording/ shift from minor to major	**KEY CHANGE**
between intra- and inter-systemic interpretation	performance of a score or a script	**PERFORMANCE**
intersystemic interpretation with substance change	translation between natural languages	**TRANSLATION**
intersystemic interpretation with substance change	translation of poetry	**TRANSLATION AS ADAPTATION**
intersystemic interpretation with matter change	rewriting a novel as a movie script	**ADAPTATION**
intersystemic interpretation with matter change	turning of poetry into music	**ADAPTATION AS NEW WORK**
		high

Fig. 3. Translation modes (scheme: Lisa Diedrich based on Eco 2009)

the project of Marseille, such interventions are also adaptations as new works.

Eco defines this range of translation modes along two particular translation approaches, namely domestication and foreignisation, as we have seen. These tendencies can help us understand two contrasting designerly ways of editing harbour sites. Consequently, we will include them as filters of scrutiny in the interpretation tool for harbour transformation.

Let us finally picture the scale on which translation modes can be ranked in grades of interpretive freedom, from low to high. [fig. 3] While the scale is far from exhaustive, it illustrates that translation proper in Eco's definition is just one mode of interpretation among a rich panorama of other translation possibilities that begin from the idea of translation as a wide creative space for artistic expression. When we shift the panorama of possibilities to our research on harbour transformation, they enrich our understanding of design as transformation.

Before applying the principles of translation to harbour transformation, we must acknowledge that a linguistic source, when translated, continues to exist next to the translation, while a harbour area, once translated, is replaced by the translation. In our search for the mechanisms that drive design approaches in harbour transformation, we can, however, overlook this difference as long as we concentrate on understanding the translation modes as such and their interpretation for design — an intellectual project in its own right. These translation modes and their ranking prove very useful to understanding, first, the nuances of the designers' site editing in harbour transformation, and eventually, aspects of site specificity, the concept we will examine in the following chapter.

Notes

1 The British architect and architectural historian Rayner Banham, linked to the As Found group, in 1955 described their work as brutalist in their uncompromising frankness with materials. He would eventually call the whole movement 'New Brutalism', while praising its 'je-m'en-foutisme, its bloody-mindedness' (Banham in Lichtenstein-Schregenberger 2001: 130). At that time, the visibility of raw technical equipment such as water pipes, sewers and static structures in a building like the Smithson's secondary school in Hunstanton (1954) was unconventional and groundbreaking, setting the agenda for a new architectural language.

2 Goodman suggests that tighter systematisations be elaborated, and he stresses that never will they be ultimate, as worlds keep transforming, and ways of worldmaking with them. Indeed, contemporary authors like Paul Lukez (2007) have adapted and refined such inventories for practical planning tasks in urban design and urban planning of the American suburbia, for example. It is, however, questionable if such a detailed morphological classification makes sense at all for covering the wide range of existing sites as varied and different from each other as a derelict harbour or other post-industrial areas. A more general classification like Goodman's literally leaves the designers' room for a detailed interpretation in every case.

3 Ascher, however, dares to trace a perspective for the future of the city, claiming that economic activity will incorporate increasingly urban features, with production businesses and service deliverers stepping out of the walls of the classical factories and into the urban realm, fully exploiting the city in its future form as a productive territory, thus blurring the boundaries between business spaces, in all their variety, and other urban spaces (Ascher 2009: 49–62). This tendency can be observed in port cities in an extreme form over the last ten to twenty years. Port authorities have converted themselves from simple trans-shipment businesses into multifaceted logistics providers and network companies that are more dependent on the city's human resources and services; these more complex operators are looking for an integration of port and city in various forms (Meyer 2011). The spatial connections are only the visible part of this process.

4 Sieverts recommends the method of perspectival incrementalism for similar transformation enterprises, stating, however, that it requires a favourable political background, at least on a supra-local level, and some devoted leading figures across all levels of the technical services and in the project man-agement itself (Sieverts 2011: 63, 67). Charismatic professionals with an administrative background such as IBA director Karl Ganser are probably very rare, but such people are precisely those Sieverts thinks possess the ability to imagine, direct, and convince. According to him, only the best urban planners should take on the task, almost herculean, but fascinating, in its power to deploy local political, cultural and social forces (67). After a quarter century of transformative action, most urban researchers across Europe praise the change achieved in the Emscher region and consider it as proof that it is possible to reshape large-scale, old industrial areas through the activation of forces and particularities of a specific site, thereby counteracting the numbing homogeneity of standard development practices observed all over the world.

5 Locally driven pioneer initiatives can be observed all over Europe. Case-study-based investigations into such initiatives have begun to emerge. In Germany after the reunification, for example, cities in the former East German area discovered their derelict industrial and residential premises as new spatial resources for urban actors that had thus far excluded from the redevelopment of the city because they had less capital than public authorities or standard private developers. The urban planner Klaus Overmeyer, a leading observer of informal appropriation processes of urban wastelands in the eastern part of Berlin, eastern Germany and other European metropolises since the turn of the century, analyses how bottom-up initiatives can be linked with standard top-down urban planning practices and eventually lead to the transformation of the latter into what he calls an 'open-source urbanism'. Especially in Berlin, the contrast between abandoned and newly built-up areas, profit and non-profit initiatives, empty and overcrowded districts, the planned and the unplanned, first-class and niche locations had produced urban 'fault lines' that became catalysts for new uses. First temporary, then often consolidating, these new uses mostly oscillated between the private and the public realm: skate and sports parks, youth hostels, bike repair and other shops, cultural initiatives like theatres and art galleries — whatever suitable programme a particular location with its actors could generate. European cities increasingly recognise this 'urban software', writes Overmeyer, as their main capital to play out in the competition against each other, valuing 'their specific locations, styles and identities, as bases in which to anchor new as well as established economies' (Overmeyer 2010: 218). This vocabulary identifies Overmeyer as a child of the internet age and resonates with Ascher's hypertext society and

with Corboz's and Marot's hypertext landscape. He overtly states that the participation methods of his open source urbanism have nothing in common with the outdated participation methods of urban planning in the 1970s. Participation in the age of internet takes on totally different practices of autonomous action and networking, accompanied by the corresponding mindset so strikingly displayed by those IT professionals of kindred spirits who, on the basis of a free exchange of views, collective creativity and collaboration that could integrate ever-new members, developed the open source method in computer science. Overmeyer claims that open source methods and conventional urban planning can be merged, and that only an intelligent interlacing of bottom-up and top-down processes, a combination of open spaces for unpredictable uses and predetermined programmes, will produce 'future-proof' urban development (221).

6 Together with other researchers in human geography, archaeology and history, Kolen has begun to develop a new method for spatial analysis called 'landscape biography' (Roymans et al. 2009: 337–359). With landscape biography as a heuristic strategy, we can investigate the ever-changing character of a location in a trans-disciplinary perspective to deepen our understanding of what constitutes a site that has to undergo design intervention (Riesto 2011). The landscape perspective guarantees, in the eyes of the historian, that the resulting method introduces a greater balance of naturalistic and culturalistic approaches, that interactions between the material and immaterial world of societies, between social and ecological dimensions, are studied (Kolen 2005: 298).

7 For sites understood as historically loaded, Luiten makes a start in distinguishing between the material, morphological and semantic levels that possible design interventions can address. Material interventions can imply strategies of excavation, partial conservation, labelling or superposition. Interventions on the morphological level of a site can work with abstractions, distortions, stylisations or reincarnations of something lost. On the semantic level, strategies can aim at reviving the immaterial heritage of a site in reconnecting with its significance through such means as hyperboles, repetition or irony (Luiten 2012: 218).

SITE SPECIFICITY AS DOUBLE-PLAY

Having explored in the previous chapters the designers' site reading and their site editing, based on the elaboration of site as construction and design as transformation, we now want to mine the notion of site specificity. The previous theoretical considerations enable us to establish an interpretation tool for the case study of harbour transformation projects, with a set of filters for identifying aspects designers may or may not read on their sites, and another set of filters for examining ways of transforming or editing sites. If we find close links between the designers' reading, their apprehension of the site as found, and their editing, the transformation of the site, we can testify that the design approach to a site is respectful. Is this all we need to detect a **PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY?**

To answer this question, and to feed the resulting insights into the interpretation tool, the concept of site specificity must be explored. Today, site specificity is a common, perhaps overused, argument in the design disciplines, legitimating those design operations that designers claim enhance a site's specific qualities. The term's lack of a proper definition or substantial theoretical foundation does not prevent the concept from being widely accepted as a normative instance of positive value in art, architecture, urban design and planning and urban theory. This usage is young, though, and outside the arts, its rise is unexplored. That is why we want to look at art theory to trace the genealogy of site specificity before attempting a definition to serve the analysis of harbour transformation projects.

This definition will propose an understanding, from a pragmatic point of view, of site specificity that brings together aspects of fixity and flow, similar to our approach taken toward understanding the concepts of site and design. At the same time we will challenge this definition as subject itself to the flow of continuous evolution. Indeed, recent theoretical writings inspire a new understanding that is forthcoming.

OSCILLATION

Over the period of mid-century modernism, from the 1920s until the 1960s, the western world proffered norms in total contrast not only to site specificity as we appreciate it today, but also to artistic traditions inherited from 19th century, in which works of art were place-related and rooted, like a statue on its base. Art works of mid-century modernism, however, no longer demonstrated any relationship to a particular site; they were meant to be universal, uprooted, homeless, siteless, self-referential, introverted, such as Brancusi's *Endless Column*, which is simply the opposite of pre-modern art, a negation. Starting from the definition of modern art as negativity in her seminal essay 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field' (1979), the American art historian Rosalind Krauss analyses the emergence of new art practices since the late 1960s. She reveals that the art work's location is reinvested, be it within architectural interiors or outdoors in the urban open space or the wider landscape. If art works were once conceived in opposition to and closed off from their sites — strictly bounded existences — by the late 1960s they 'expanded their field' while merging with their location through operations ranging from 'axiomatic structures' in architecture towards 'marked sites' in the landscape. They would eventually be positioned as 'site constructions' in the largest possible site-affirmative sense (Krauss 1979: 38–41). At that time artists such as Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Richard Ser-
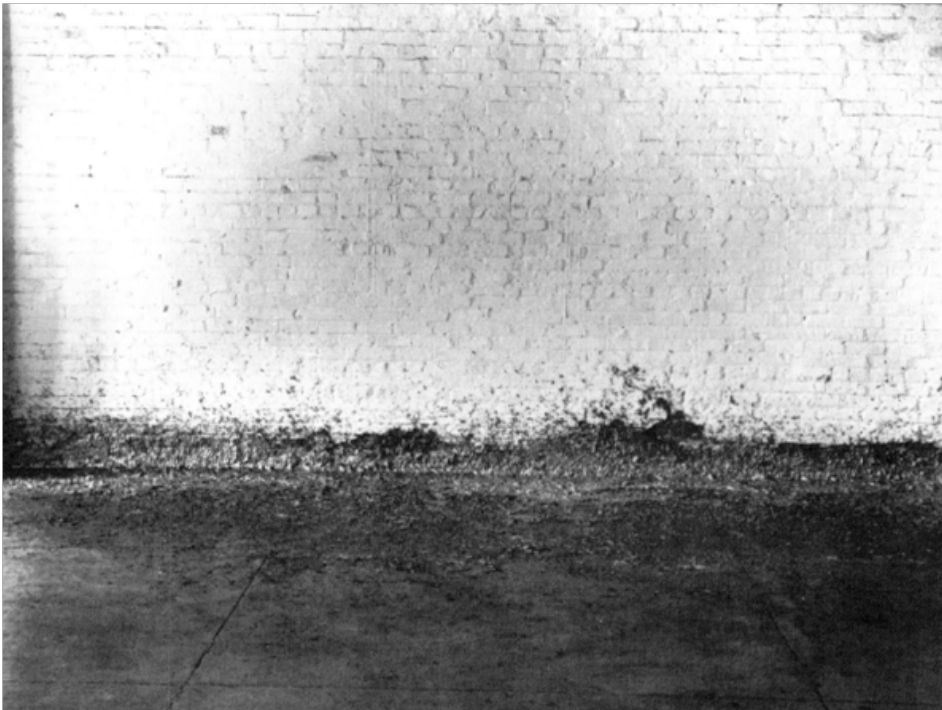
Fig. 1. Richard Serra, *Splashing* (1968), Castelli Warehouse, New York (source: Kwon 2002: 34)

With *Splashing* (1968), part of an unconventional, even shocking, exhibition installed by minimal artist Robert Morris in an old warehouse at Manhattan's Upper West Side, used by the Leo Castelli art gallery for storage, Richard Serra tossed molten lead along the juncture where wall met floor. Neither sculpture nor painting nor even a relocatable object, but a work that was once part of the old warehouse's structure, *Splashing* merged with the physical site of its installation, condemned to be either abandoned forever after the exhibition or to be scraped off and destroyed. 'To remove the work is to destroy the work', stated Serra later in the context of the public debate about the removal of his *Tilted Arc* (1981) from Federal Plaza in lower Manhattan.

ra, Walter De Maria, Robert Irwin, Sol LeWitt, Bruce Nauman, Nancy Holt and Christo produced works engaged with their sites, thereby abandoning modern sitelessness while laying the foundation for the post-modern affirmation of site as the tangible, immediate locus of an artwork (Krauss 1979). Site specificity, also introduced as a term in that period, brought the site back into the relationship that thus far had been composed of work and audience. The art critic Douglas Crimp writes, 'The coordinates of perception were established as existing not only between the spectator and the work but among spectator, artwork, and the place inhabited by both' (Crimp 1986: 43).

Richard Serra's *Splashing* (1968) is a significant illustration. It was site-specific because of the physical inseparability of work and site; it focused on the physical attributes of the site, the axiomatic structures of an architectural site, in Krauss's terms. [fig. 1] Other examples of marked sites in the open urban space or in the wider landscape, again in Krauss's words, are comprised in works such as Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in the Great Salt Lake (1970), widely known and today emblematic, or Mary Miss's *Perimeters/Pavilions/Decoys* (1978). Their site specificity was built on the inherent fluidities of their sites, documented — and stabilised — in photos or films or, in Smithson's case, through so-called non-sites, formalised material excerpts from site exposed in gallery spaces. [figs. 2-4]

These early site-specific works enticed the rise of urban public art as a new art category during the 1970s and 1980s, and site specificity entered the public realm, finding its way even into social issues. The public repudiation of Serra's *Tilted Arc* at its specific location, the debate that followed among artist, art specialists, urban professionals and authorities, and the eventual removal of the work, all testifies to the fact that the site was understood far beyond its physical nature. According to the art historian Rosalyn Deutsche, public art discourse was itself 'a site of political struggle over the meaning of democracy' (Deutsche in Kwon 2002: 80). According to art theoretician Juli Carson, Serra composed his work from the very beginning as specific not just to the physical site of its implantation but to discourse: 'In written defence of the integrity of this physical body, and in protest to its wronged execution, there emerged another body, the corpus of writing as both the executor and progeny of Serra's own word in (and on) the space of site specificity' (Carson in Ehrlich and LaBelle 2003: 89).

Reacting with the critique of authoritarian decisions made by institutions, implicit in the debate on the *Tilted Arc*, public artists of the late 1980s and 1990s developed an understanding of site specificity as community based, thus running into another struggle, as John Ahearn's *South Bronx Project* (1991) illustrates. In its embrace of site understood as social networks rather than physical locations, the artists of site-specific works encountered the conflicts inherent in these social sites [fig. 5 and 6].

As a reaction to the experience of sites as multicultural, composed by fluid identities and nomadic individuals, site specificity took an 'ethnographic turn' in the 1990s, as formulated by artists and art theoreticians (Coles 2000). The physical site was, in some cases, identified with the artist corporeally inserting him- or herself into local situations as the 'participant observer' defined in ethnography (Kwon in Coles 2000: 74). In the work of American artist Nikki S. Lee, the personal experience, coupled with personal interpretation within participative observation, lays the foundation for site specificity, which oscillates between personal, transient experience and the static documentation of the 'having-been-there'. [figs. 7-9]

Fig. 2. Smithson working at *Spiral Jetty*, Great Salt Lake, 1970 (source: Schmidt 2012: 100)
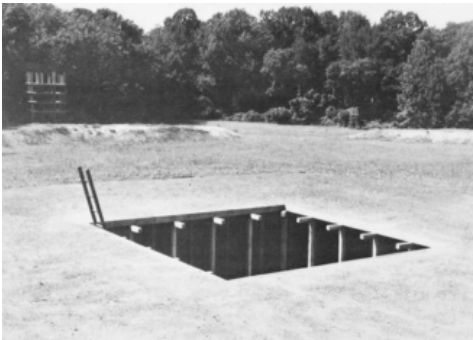
Fig. 3-4. Mary Miss's *Perimeters/Pavillions/Decoys* (1978), Long Island, New York (source: Miss 2010)

Just as with *Splashing*, two other projects highlighted the physical properties of the site: Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in Great Salt Lake, Utah (1970), and Mary Miss's *Perimeters/Pavillions/Decoys* (1978), the latter composed of two semi-circular mounds, three tree-like timber structures and a subterranean courtyard realized on the clearing of a woodland park belonging to Nassau County Museum, Long Island. The artists worked with the temporalities imposed by local conditions, with *Spiral Jetty* subject to the ebb and flow of the lake's waters, eroding the piece over time, and *Perimeters* exposed to the elements and weathering.

Now, in the early years of this century, artists themselves theorise on the tensions that have arisen from the concept of site specificity, and they also recognise to what extent a whole range of design disciplines beyond the arts have assimilated the concept. In their book *Surface Tensions — Problematics of Site,* artists Ken Ehrlich and Brendon LaBelle bring together various projects, creative writings and historical analyses that testify to the broad range of activities termed 'site-specific'. [figs. 10–18]

Site specificity has become such an expanded and shifting field that it threatens a loss of orientation. Nevertheless, this concept continues to be widely referred to, especially in the design disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning.

Between the place-bound and the transient
With her book *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002), the American art historian Miwon Kwon provides a comprehensive answer to why the concept of site specificity is still so widely used, through an analysis of site-specific art of late 20th century. She explains how over several decades the term 'site specificity' moved away from its initial phenomenological-experiential meaning in the 1960s and 1970s (site as an agglomeration of physical attributes), as we have also seen through the examples above. With the detachment of the idea of the purely physical site from the concept of site specificity, the understanding of site specificity shifted into a social-institutional one (site as network-related spaces and crossings), then into a discursive one (site as public realm, as a theoretical concept). It became a way to describe the struggle about the role of site in a nomadic and market driven art practice, and eventually became used, often confusingly, to explain authorship in a community-oriented perspective. Kwon emphasises the resilience of site specificity despite of — or because of — its continuous shifts, and she recognises in all site-specific approaches a vague yet persistent aspect, 'the idea of singular, unrepeatable instances of site-bound knowledge and experience' (Kwon 2002: 8). She finds that this 'search for place-bound identity in an undifferentiated sea of abstract, homogenized, and fragmented space of late capitalism' corresponds with the post-modern condition of individuals at the beginning of the 21st century, and accordingly explicates the persistence of site specificity from both compensatory and opposing attitudes of these individuals.

At the same time, Kwon doubts the possibility of choice between the two poles, 'between models of nomadism and sedentariness, between space and place, between digital interfaces and the handshake' (166). It is possible to overcome the duality between the place-bound and the fluid, if site specificity is redefined as a relational cultural practice oscillating between distant poles — seemingly opposite ideas thought about together: 'the nostalgic desire for a retrieval of rooted, place-bound identities on the one hand, and the anti-nostalgic embrace of a nomadic fluidity of subjectivity, identity and spatiality on the other' (8).

This oscillation relies on a pragmatic mindset, in line with our understanding of site as a dynamic, relational construct and design as transformation, and we can postulate relational sensibility as the basic condition for site-specific practices, in both the arts and the design disciplines. In urbanistic practice, especially in industrial and harbour transformation, the two poles can be identified with, on the one hand, the total make-over, the tabula rasa, and on the other, preservation, museification. Site-specific harbour transformation would consequently oscillate between the two.

Fig. 5. Richard Serra. *Tilted Arc* (1981-1989), Federal Plaza, New York (source: Kwon 2002: 71)

Fig. 6. John Ahearn, *South Bronx Project* (1991), New York (source: Kwon 2002: 85)

The public repudiation of Serra's *Tilted Arc* at its specific location, on Federal Plaza in New York; the debate that followed, among artist, art specialists, urban professionals and authorities; and the eventual removal of the work, all testify to the fact that the site was understood far beyond its physicality. John Ahearn's *South Bronx Project* (1991) encountered the problematic of site-specific art understood as a community-based art form. As a Bronx-based white American artist having worked for decades with and within the local African-American and Latino community and practising a figurative style through portrait paintings and sculptures, Ahearn seemed to be the perfect community artist to realise a sculpture project on a local square in front of a police station. He erected three sculptures of living personalities from the district. Their appearance immediately prompted a heated debate within the community around the belief that the artist, as a white man, could never understand and represent accurately the African-American and Latino people, whose representatives eventually labelled his sculptures as 'racist totems'. Five days after the inauguration Ahearn took his sculptures down at his own cost (Kwon 2002: 83–99).

Between the local and the global

Stressing another oscillation, namely between the local and the global, British geographer Doreen Massey invokes another facet of site specificity: 'a sense of place, an understanding of "its character", which can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond'. She also writes: 'A progressive sense of place would recognise that, without being threatened by it' (Massey: 156). Such a concept, she explains, needs to be everything other than static, and needs to evoke places as processes, without boundaries but multiple relationships, without a single unique identity but consisting, instead, of a multitude of conflicts, which all together does not deny the importance of uniqueness of place. Globalisation, shadowed by its homogenising effect on local cultures, would be able to foster geographically uneven development through its globalising social relations and therefore uniqueness of place, concludes Massey. Massey's re-defined meaning of site specificity as 'a global sense of the local' (156) corresponds particularly well with the condition of harbour cities in their extreme exposure to a global economy.

Local culture helps transform the harbour city, German sociologist and labour economist Günter Warsewa finds. Warsewa objects to the idea that global dynamics are the determining factor for the local development of port cities and cites a set of examples for the autonomous and individual ways in which harbour cities have renewed and reinvented themselves in the recent decades of industrial decline (Warsewa 2011; 2012). He explains that the 'paradoxical simultaneity of persistence and changeability is a typical character of periods of uncertainty and decline', in the course of which local culture has proved to be the 'strongest force for stability and configuration in the interplay of local economic and social structures, institutional arrangements and culture. Even when the economy and institutions lose their functions, local culture takes over as a steering mechanism and a reservoir for important resources that make a considerable contribution to defining the direction of local development' (Warsewa : 13). For him, the oscillation between persistence and change, between a harbour city's persisting images, symbols, material objects and their changing functions and meanings is typical of historical threshold situations, in which economy and technology shift from one mode into another, such as today.

Acknowledging that site specificity has already changed meaning various times over the last decades, and that these shifts might be part of the passing of that same historical threshold, we can assume that its meaning will continue to evolve in response to new thinking or factual developments. If we cannot predict the latter, we can still investigate the new thinking.

ON THE THRESHOLD

Some theoreticians have observed strands of thinking in their disciplines which they consider strong enough to influence wider cultural practices. One such strand stems from the design discipline of landscape architecture. In the past thirty to fifty years, shifting paradigms in the sciences, especially ecology theory, have substantially influenced the broader socio-cultural milieu, reports landscape architectural scholar Kristina Hill. An illustration is the scientific interest in ecological diversity, a diversity that in turn has been extrapolated into the socio-political realm where a concern for human diversity is increasing. Hill writes, 'Theoretical metaphors can cross disciplinary boundaries and inform an emergent zeitgeist, perhaps becoming even more influential as we begin to take them for granted' (Hill 2005: 132). Hill notes that ontological assumptions in the ecological sciences are changing, and explains the world along criteria of flow rather

Fig. 7-9. Nikki S. Lee. *The Hispanic Projec*t (1998); *The Young Japanese* (1997); *The Ohio Project* (1999). (source: Coles 2000: 81, 85, 88)

In the work of American artist Nikki S. Lee, personal experience, coupled with personal interpretations made while participating as an observer, lays the foundation for site specificity. Over a number of years, Lee introduced herself for one to two weeks into different subcultural environments — Hispanics, Japanese tourists, punkers, lesbians, etc. — with the intent of adopting their dress codes, postures and activities and thus to pass for one of them. Each time, she had herself photographed in these situations, and her work is the ensemble of those photos.

than of fixity, summarised in the so-called non-equilibrium paradigm. In this paradigm, landsca-pes are composed of shifting nodes of interaction, propelled by dynamic temporal relationships rather than by deterministic trends. Ecological scientists have therefore completely rethought the type of descriptions and predictions on patterns and dynamics of a site: 'a non-equilibrium view of natural processes has literally changed the way scientists think about the nature of nature; they now frequently see change as probabilistic and multidirectional, rather than as a progressive march toward clear endpoints' (131). Place, on the contrary, thus far has been un-derstood as a stable asset in the design disciplines, argues Hill, but this understanding is about to change — exactly at the moment when new theories in the sciences are emerging. This mo-ment of theoretical instability, according to Hill, is also a moment of critical self-reflection, as it will likely produce cultural metaphors that will challenge and renew designers' conceptions of place. This challenge will however not last for long, because successful metaphors have the tendency to be reified and turned into a dogma, and prevent designers from self-criticism again. Today, both the sciences and the design disciplines virtually have a window open both to the past and to the future, which they might take as an opportunity to critically look backward at past thinking and forward to future theory.

We have taken the first step in understanding the concept of site specificity, looking into its genealogy. Let us now explore emerging theories that help reveal what makes a design site-specific.

RADICANTITY

Going beyond familiar studies of globalisation from social, economic and political points of view, French curator and art theoretician Nicolas Bourriaud takes a fresh look at the *aesthetics* of glo-balisation. He surveys contemporary works of art on the threshold of the 21st century — those works that still act along 20th-century modernist paradigms yet proactively formulating creative approaches to another epoch to come; such works since the collapse of the communist bloc in 1989 have been identified as 'globalised' (Bourriaud 2009a). In his study of concrete art works, Bourriaud investigates how globalisation affects the 'life of form'. His thoughts and related vocabulary prove extremely helpful for sketching out what the idea of site specificity might be, beyond the dichotomies of museification and total make-over, of the static and the fluid, of two opposite poles situated on a line which only an oscillating movement is able to bring together.

In his book *The Radicant* Bourriaud refers to Jacques Lacan's idea of the *erre*, the wandering, easily associated with 'erratic', even 'erroneous' movement, but which is understood as positive, as a driving force into the unknown: '[The erre] is something like momentum. The momentum something has when what was formerly propelling it stops' (Bourriaud 2009b: 93). The modern engine has stopped, the car keeps going; today's societies are caught in the forward motion initiated by modernism. They sit in their cars and try to find a different fuel, try to keep their forward momentum going according to the present topography, along wondrous ways, in a movement of wandering. The new direction of the car will only become clearer the more the forward motion slows down. Bourriaud assumes that it is possible to recognise and cultivate the emerging forces if our societies cease looking back and considering their epoch as post-mo-dern, out of the wish to rid themselves of the forward-looking modern ideology (Diedrich 2012: 155–158).

Fig. 10-18. Cover page, inner pages and CD page of the book by Ken Ehrlich & Brandon LaBelle, *Surface Tension. Problematics of Site* (2003) (photos: L. Diedrich)

Ehrlich and LaBelle submit an 'inherent plurality of site itself' (Ehrlich and Labelle 2005: 22) which 'appears variously as: the city, the body, the built environment, automobiles, autobiography, a vacant lot, bathroom plumbing, 'sociopolitical interventions', the history of site specificity, and the book itself (with […] blank pages, shifting font sizes, and differently textured pages)' (Dawsey 2005).

'Altermodernity' is the concept Bourriaud coins as a name for the new field society is currently exploring. Europe's societies have not yet left modern and post-modern thinking (the run-down engine), says Bourriaud, but at the same time he sees them situated within an alternative state of mind (the new driving forces), relying on the awareness that 20th-century predictability has been replaced by 21st-century precariousness. He challenges the radicality of 20th-century's modernism and post-modernism — the obsession with beginning from scratch or from history, to design through a total make-over or museification — and introduces a pragmatic alternative, based on the following metaphor: 'To remain within the vocabulary of the vegetable realm, one might say that the individual of these early years of the 21st century resembles those plants that do not depend on a single root for their growth but advance in all directions on whatever surfaces present themselves by attaching multiple hooks to them, as ivy does. Ivy belongs to the botanical family of the radicants, which develop their roots as they advance, unlike the radicals, whose development is determined by their being anchored in a particular soil.' (Bourriaud 2009b: 51)

Immigrants, exiles, tourists, commuters and urban wanderers all seem to Bourriaud the dominant figures living under the precarious conditions of a globalised world. He coins a term to describe both these global inhabitants and their way of anchoring and translating themselves into the spaces they enter: *radicant*. Their first roots are somewhere and then they need to settle elsewhere, so they grow secondary roots, which adapt to the particular soil they find in the places where they happen to arrive. Radicants are in a constant dialogue and in constant motion. They are 'caught between the need for a connection with [their] environment and the forces of uprooting, between globalisation and singularity, between identity and the opening to the other' (51).

Contemporary art works can provide us with examples of the aesthetics of this precariousness. Bourriaud distinguishes between precarious materials, which since Kurt Schwitters have been used in the Western art world over the course of 20th century, though not with the same meaning as today. Today's world is perceived by many artists as rich, saturated, even overabundant. Material precariousness is not the problem. Artists never consider their activities as taking place on a blank sheet; the opposite holds, in fact: 'Chaos is preexisting, they operate from within it' (87).

Bourriaud points at two artists whose oeuvre developed aspects of precarious aesthetics very early — the Californian Jason Rhoades and the Argentine-born Thai Rirkrit Tiravanija. [figs. 19-20 and 21-23] In a 1993 exhibition in Cologne, Rhoades gathered together the most heterogeneous objects one can imagine, new or used, edible or solid, scrap or noble, taped together or isolated, clustering them into a scaffolding-like structure with no perceivable order — in total, an overwhelming mass of materials, a work that seems nomadic and indeterminate, alluding to the encampments of the homeless. The same year, Tiravanija installed a soup kitchen in a gallery in New York and arranged his exhibition as a cooking event, inviting people to join him having dinner. The remains of the event look similar to the material clusters of Rhoades, a mixture of kitchen tools, disparate furniture and leftovers of the dinner party. Here, art itself is precarious, the 'exaltation of instability. Born of the general excess, these compositions are in keeping with what the urban landscape has become, a precarious, cluttered, and shifting environment', writes Bourriaud. Art differs from life only 'through a slight symbolic displacement' (88).

Fig. 19-20. Jason Rhoades. *Black Pussy* (2006). Solo exhibition at Gallery David Zwirner, New York. (source: Gallery Zwirner 2006)

In a 1993 exhibition in Cologne, Jason Rhoades gathered together as many of the most heterogeneous objects one can imagine, new or used, edible or solid, scrap or noble, taped together or isolated, and clustered them into a scaffolding-like structure with no perceivable order. The result was an overwhelming mass of materials, a work that seems nomadic and indeterminate, alluding to the encampments of homeless people.

Today many European harbour transformation areas can be characterised by conditions of precariousness. They are the recent fallout of the epoch of heavy industry, and in the current situation of economic instability, many of them do not attract global capital and big business. They do not have the conditions for radical installations, and consequently they do not call for radical 20th-century solutions. However, their built-up material presence, sometimes overabundant, and their pending state of affairs, together open the field for negotiation. It is precisely here that Bourriaud's idea of radicantity can further enrich the meaning of site specificity for spatial design. By integrating uncertainty, by always playing out in space over time, radicant works accentuate the temporal aspects of site specificity. Through negotiation across time and space, and with continuous enquiries, interventions and evaluations, radicant interventions can evolve endlessly into a dialogue of many actors and agents (Diedrich 2012: 158).

This evolution and the related design processes, according to Bourriaud's strand of thinking, can be considered as much part of the design work as other various elements, persons, materials, events, memories and atmospheres. The work cannot be described as a classical form anymore; it is a progressing form, a 'journey-form' (Bourriaud 2009b: 106). Its authorship is blurred: the classical framework of designers, clients and public no longer fits — all are co-creators. Not that these evolutionary and cooperative work modes would be unfamiliar to designers — on the contrary — but they did not propel 20th-century design discourses.

If the aesthetical expression of Bourriaud's concept of altermodernity is the 'journey-form', its ethical mode is 'translation'. To counteract standardisation as the only answer to globalisation Bourriaud wants to 'invent […] a common world [and to realize], practically and theoretically, a global space of exchange' that would be 'shared within the space of translation', defined as a 'space of horizontal negotiations without an arbiter'. This common world is actually both one and many at the same time, a multitude of individual representations of the world among which we move, 'practic[ing] translation and organiz[ing] the discussions that will give rise to a new common intelligibility' (Bourriaud 2009b: 188). As an alternative to standardisation, continuous translation seems to merge the local and the global: 'What if twenty-first century culture were reinvented with those works that set themselves the task of effacing their origin in favour of a multitude of simultaneous or successive enrootings?' (Bourriaud 2009b: 22).

Site specificity has been understood as a way of negotiating between two poles, the place-bound and the transient, between museification and total make-over of sites. If it was an answer to late 20th-century conditions provoked by the winding down of the modernistic paradigm, then we might acknowledge that at least in Europe the meaning of site specificity will change, and maybe its name, to adapt to the precarious conditions of 21st-century Europe to come, with the century's as yet undefined driving forces. Instead of site specificity, for example, we could start to speak of radicantity. Instead of a line, whose two poles oscillate between each other, we could imagine rather a pulsating sphere, in which everything existing is continuously reused and recycled in a process of translation that allows for continuous enrootings.

For harbour transformation, speaking of radicantity instead of site specificity would mean highlighting the idea of harbour areas being ever changing pieces of a bigger mobile landscape puzzle. These pieces would continuously develop new roots in space and over time. Radicantity would proffer an understanding of site editing as ongoing translation of already translated

Fig. 21-23. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Untitled (Who's afraid of...)* (2011). Art Basel 42, Basel (source: artnet 2011)

In 1993, Rirkrit Tiravanija installed a soup kitchen in a gallery in New York and arranged his exhibition as a cooking event, inviting people to join him having dinner. The remains of the event look similar to the material clusters of Rhoades's structure, a mixture of kitchen tools, disparate furniture and leftovers of the dinner party.

works, a never-ending text. We could consider a single harbour transformation project as a short moment on a longer time line — which puts the respective design intervention into the perspective of its own temporality and open-endedness. Radicantity would accentuate aspects of time as drivers of design for harbour transformation.

Both definitions, of site specificity and of radicantity, stress fluidity and transience as important constituents of site-specific practices. These definitions challenge the intuitive idea of site specificity with which we began, helping us focus instead on the existing features of site as it is understood rather than as a static entity. Clarifying the concept of site specificity as we have done here helps building up a more nuanced understanding, to be transported into the evaluation of design approaches for harbour transformation projects.

The definition of site specificity as oscillation between a place-bound and a transient pole informs our analytical framework, as does the definition's potential shift to radicantity. These two aspects of the definition of site specificity provide us with two more filters for the interpretation tool to be applied on harbour transformation projects.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

To combine knowledge gained from the exploration of theories and make this insight operational as an analytical framework for a case study, we will set up an interpretation tool to detect and evaluate site-specific aspects in design projects for derelict harbours. This tool will help answer the research question of this thesis: can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in Europe be developed site-specifically with the help of designers? It is intentionally termed a 'tool' for 'interpretation' because it will be a fine-grained instrument of evaluation, on the one hand, while leaving room for interpretation in a hermeneutic understanding, on the other. The purpose of this tool is to disclose qualities and nuances of site specificity rather than a way to rank site-specific projects, although it can also be combined with a scale for grading projects according to their degree of interpretive freedom, as derived from translation theory.

A tool based on transformation and open to transformation
Because this thesis does not intend to scrutinise design projects from the perspective of a traditional design understanding but from the one of transformation, i.e. the transfer of something existing into something it can become, the available analytical methods do not suffice. The interpretation tool we establish here can only partly rely on current methods out of the realm of architecture, urban planning or landscape architecture. Its development began with Malene Hauxner's analytical method for drawing and reading, elaborated at the University of Copenhagen, by which a work of design is investigated through both a focused analysis of architectural work — an analysis inspired by modern principles — and a broad contextual analysis, relying on post-modern thinking (Hauxner 2010). To apprehend a work's site-specific aspects, however, we need to complement the tool with methods stemming from those disciplines that are more familiar with theorising and analysing transformation processes, drawing thus from preservation theory, urban studies, contemporary art and translation theory, as was done in the previous chapters. The interpretation tool presented here is based on an earlier conception (Braae and Diedrich 2012), updated to fit the purpose of this thesis. The tool remains flexible and ready to be modified again and again to match other investigations and their particular analytical needs.

Bridging the gap between subject- and object-related positions
To evaluate the design approaches in harbour transformation projects, we will take a closer look at design proposals and harbour sites. As the role of designers should not be obscured or negated with deterministic understandings of site, be they essentialist or positivistic, subject- or object-related, we adopt an approach embracing aspects of both positions, such as investigating the object before and after transformation, or the subjective bodily experience and memory of it. This pragmatic approach is characterised by an understanding of site as a dynamic relational construct. In adopting this view we hope to bridge the gap between the traditionally contrasting philosophical and theoretical positions of phenomenology and constructivism for the sake of capturing ways in which designers construe and construct sites.

Bridging the gap between site reading and site editing
The research question of this thesis is to find out if contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in Europe can be developed site-specifically with the help of designers. The theoretical considerations of the previous chapter suggest two sub-questions. The first one will elucidate the designers' reading of a site: what site components do designers point out as existing qualities? The second question will investigate the designers' site editing: how do designers

develop their sites from the detected qualities? We will therefore scrutinise the designers' editing to learn about their reading. This scrutiny implies before–after and transfer analyses based on the study of design documents, historical and other sources, site visits and interviews with designers and other actors.

The interpretation tool, accordingly, builds on the two sub-questions: the reading analysis involves a comparison, from various aspects, of the site before and after design intervention, while the editing analysis implies scrutinising the translation and intervention modes the designers use. The results of these two examinations allow a conclusion of something about a project's site specificity — a design can be said to be site-specific if we are able to detect close links between the designers' reading and their editing and if we discover that those designers combine place-bound as well as transient aspects in an oscillating relationship. The two examinations and the conclusion compose the three-part structure of the interpretation tool, and reiterate the line of thought of the theories part of this thesis: site as construction (the designers' reading) — design as transformation (the designers' editing) — site specificity as double play (the project's site specificity).

THE DESIGNERS' READING

To find out about the designers' site reading — how they address existing qualities of a site — we select a set of filters alimented by the previously studied theories. Heritage studies distinguish between material and immaterial heritage, which designers identify as material and immaterial site qualities and consider their evolution over time. The fact that time is involved invites us to observe how designers read their sites' dynamic features along with their physical and immaterial properties. This provides our interpretation tool with three main categories of a site's properties: the physical, the dynamic and the immaterial.

Physical aspects
The filters for investigating physical site aspects can be drawn from research in landscape architecture which highlights both existing spatial structures and existing materials. The physical filters will allow scrutiny of STRUCTURES, ranging from syntax to open space to infrastructure, and MATERIALS, including everything from mere building material to large objects and even built-up ensembles.

Structures can be identified via formal comparative analysis of the situation before and after design intervention, mainly through diagram study. Materials and their reuse can partly be examined by a formal comparative analysis, too, but mainly by on-site observation.

In requiring both diagram studies and on-site observation to examine the before and the after, the interpretation tool supports the idea that site properties detected in this double perspective are more appropriate site-specificity indicators than site properties detected through the more traditional analysis of work. The traditional analysis is based on a linguistic model which distinguishes between morphological elements and syntax in the perspective of the resulting work.

Dynamic aspects
Landscape architecture, ecology and preservation theory all aliment the first dynamic filter whose purpose is to help detect the designers' attention to natural PROCESSES. A natural process is, on the one hand, an objective site-specific aspect, an understanding that relies on natural-scien-

ce-driven landscape architectural theory as put forward by McHarg and updated by the contemporary non-equilibrium view of the world elaborated within ecology theory. On the other hand, a natural process is a subjective appreciation of the aesthetics of succession and decay inherent in the processes of nature, once theorised by Ruskin and now part of landscape architectural theory.

The second dynamic filter relies on sociology and urban studies and investigates **PRACTICES**, in other words, people's usage of site. A practice is a societal site-specific activity involving the continuous appropriation of space by people, in the sense of Certeau or Lefèbvre. To examine the designers' reading of processes and practices we will again use formal comparative analysis, literature study, and on-site observation.

Immaterial aspects
Finally, the immaterial filters of our tool will help assess how designers read **MEMORIES, ATMOSPHERES** and **DISCOURSES**. Theories of urban design and landscape architecture, cultural studies and phenomenology are implicated in the function of this type of filter.

The first filter, memories, is understood in two ways: as a multitude of personal experiences and histories, and as collective authoritative history, intentionally composed. Because memories can help apprehend space, as proposed by Sébastien Marot (2003, 2006, 2011), this filter can become a particular site-specific aspect. Memories are difficult to grasp, because the transformative approach per se can be declared to rely on memory, so we will focus on those memories quoted by the designers in written sources and in interviews.

The second filter allows an investigation of atmospheres, which are a central issue for site specificity. In phenomenological theory, atmospheres are described as temporal phenomena produced between the subject and the object, between the site and the visitor — and also by them (Böhme 2006). Designers refer to them, just as to memories, as conceptual motors of their work. To capture the ways in which designers read atmospheres, we will involve the study of visual, modelled and written design documents and on-site observation.

The third filter looks into the designers' reading of local urban planning discourses as a site-specific issue. Similar to the way memories are understood as authoritative collective history, local planning discourses are an authoritative collective idea of the future, politically enacted but in need of social acceptance and transfer into people's lives through spatial reification. This filter requires the study of visual and written design documents because the designers' intentions are compared with those captured in official urban and regional planning documents, intentions fleshed out with interviews with designers and official urban planning actors.

The case study of harbour transformation projects will feature a report for each project about the designers' site reading. After a scrutiny of each harbour transformation project through the interpretation tool, this report answers the following questions:

- Which aspects do the designers prioritise over others?
- How are these linked?
- How does this combination bring about the main narrative of the design?

THE DESIGNERS' EDITING

To investigate the designers' site editing — how they develop their sites from the detected qualities — we will again select a set of filters fed by the quoted theories. Semiotics, literature and translation theory deliver the filters for identifying the designers' translation modes, a translation's need of interpretation being the transformative step preceding actual spatial intervention. Transformation theory provides us with filters to scrutinise the designers' intervention modes, which urbanism research specifies for the perspective of urban transformation. Translation and intervention are the two categories of the tool's editing filters.

Translation modes
From those possible filters that can be extracted from semiotics and translation studies we pick two, namely **DOMESTICATION** and **FOREIGNISATION,** which reveal how the designers manage their complex transfer operations. Indeed, we are confronted with sites of extremely different nature, both old industrial sites as well as urban sites, as foreign to each other as texts written in different historical epochs or texts stemming from different cultural realms. The transfer from one into the other implies bridging considerable gaps — as in translation. A site-specific bridge respects the existing sites' otherness. The designers create such a bridge by translating these sites within or across semiotic systems with a variable degree of interpretive freedom, either through integrating the old industrial site into the urban site, in the mode of domestication, or through opening up the urban site to the old industrial one, in the mode of foreignisation. Looking through these translation filters into the design projects requires, again, a before–after study of visual and written design documents and on-site observation.

Intervention modes
From those possible filters for intervention that urban transformation research has to offer, let us select two again, namely **CONNECTIVITY** and **APPROPRIATION**, which enable us to scrutinise the designers' main operational instruments for the transfer of old industrial sites into the urban realm. Both filters expose most significantly the main challenge for designers in operational terms.

The first filter, connectivity, draws attention to how designers overcome the industrial logic of enclosure of the harbour sites, and how furthermore they reconnect the city with the waterfront which has been cut off by the industrial ensemble. The connectivity filter demands a relations analysis involving a comparison of spatial and functional linkages on all internal and external scales before and after the design intervention, mostly through the study of design documents and other diagrams but also through on-site observation.

The second filter, appropriation, focuses on the existing and future users' interaction with the area undergoing transformation. It enables us to understand the designers' ability to establish the site as a platform for people's future dialogue with the existent. This is all the more important as harbour transformation runs over long time spans which cannot be programmed from the first moment on and therefore need to engage a larger community. Appropriation aspects can be revealed through a process analysis, in which the design project's set-up and process management are inspected through the study of design documents and observation of the factual appropriation of the spaces by various users on site before, during and after the design intervention.

The case study's report for each harbour transformation project discusses the designers' site editing. After employing the interpretation tool to scrutinise each harbour transformation project, this report answers the following questions:

- Which translation modes do the designers adopt?
- Do they translate their sites in a foreignising or domesticating manner?
- Which intervention mode do they apply?
- Do they operate their transfer operations through connectivity or appropriation?

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

The interpretation tool draws on research in the contemporary arts and allows scrutiny of site specificity based on an understanding of it as double play of the place-bound and the transient. This definition reveals the need to investigate how the designers tie together the apparently opposed ideas of the static and the fluid within a harbour transformation project, be it through detecting those static and fluid components of the site the designers involve and combine, or through disclosing static and fluid work modes of the design itself. Accordingly, the interpretation tool aims at detecting **OSCILLATION**.

Furthermore, a last filter captures a project's **RADICANTITY**. When investigating the designers' work mode we will be able to see if the amplitude of the oscillation between the place-bound and the transient points toward the transient pole, and if time-based components are constitutive parts of the design. If so, we are identifying the project's radicantity.

The reports of each harbour transformation project will include a section on site specificity. The previous site reading and site editing analyses are completed by the following questions about site specificity:

- What is the project's oscillation made of?
- Does the project feature a tendency towards radicantity, and if so in what way?

When we combine the above-mentioned analytical steps, categories and filters, we can picture the interpretation tool. Illustrated in figure 1, this diagram will constitute the basis for the case study in the next part of this thesis. [fig. 1]

Site as construction	Design as transformation	Site specificity as double play
THE DESIGNERS' READING	**THE DESIGNERS' EDITING**	**THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY**
comprehensive analysis through reading filters:	comprehensive analysis through editing filters:	

physical	structures materials	translation	domestication foreignisation	oscillation
dynamic	processes practices	intervention	connectivity appropriation	radicantity
immaterial	memories atmospheres discourses			

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE	**SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES**	**CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY**

Fig. 1. Interpretation tool for disclosing and evaluating site specificity in contemporary harbour transformation projects (figure: Lisa Diedrich)

PART 2/ CASE STUDY: ON SITE

This part of the thesis is dedicated to a collective case study of harbour transformation projects that feature a design approach to their sites. It applies the interpretation tool, which is based on the theoretical discussions in the previous part of this thesis, to six harbour design projects in Europe in order to investigate their site specificity.

In the initial stages of my research, I studied a number of harbour cities in Europe and internationally that feature contemporary harbour transformation projects involving large-scale urban sites and long-term urban planning. These sites were more spatial complex than a mere waterfront and required planning over greater time frames than would a single building or open-space project. Among the many sites I studied, I have visited some three dozen. These sites constitute the broad horizon of my case studies, and served as my initial empirical material for it.

Harbour cities visited in Europe

Bergen, Norway

Oslo, Norway

Aalborg, Denmark

Aarhus, Denmark

Fredericia, Denmark

Copenhagen, Denmark

Køge, Denmark

Helsingborg, Sweden

Malmö, Sweden

Flensburg, Germany

Hamburg, Germany

Duisburg, Germany

Basel, Switzerland

London, Great Britain

Manchester, Great Britain

Liverpool, Great Britain

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Antwerp, Belgium

Brussels, Belgium

Nantes, France

Saint Nazaire, France

Bordeaux, France

Marseille, France

Barcelona, Spain

Valencia, Spain

Palermo, Italy

Catania, Italy

Lisbon, Portugal

Harbour cities visited outside of Europe

New York, USA, North-America

Brisbane, Australia

Sydney, Australia

Melbourne, Australia

Shanghai, China, Asia

I have built up my empirical material in view of answering my research question: Can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in European harbour cities be developed with the help of designers? My research focuses on those large-scale and long-term projects that have been designed or built during the last decade and that involve multi-

disciplinary design teams, to find out if these recent design-oriented projects disclose any alternatives to generic harbour transformation.

Scrutiny of this empirical material through the filters of the interpretation tool revealed that two design projects deliver outstanding results:

- Euroméditerranée 2 in Marseille, designed by François Leclercq with Agence Ter, Rémy Marciano, Jacques Sbriglio, SETEC (competition 2009, construction starting 2013)
- l'Île de Nantes in Nantes, designed by Alexandre Chemetoff/ Atelier de l'Île de Nantes (competition 1999, construction 2001–2010)

The Marseille and Nantes projects illustrate in a prototypical way the two poles of site specificity defined in the theories part—the place-bound and the transient. The analysis of these two design projects is documented in depth in the first two chapters of this part of the thesis.

The following four chapters complement the two prototypical projects by disclosing site-specific approaches between the poles of site specificity. In contrast to the comprehensive analyses of the two prototypical projects, however, the four complementary cases are displayed and discussed in a synthetic way:

- Tagus Cycle Track in Lisbon, designed by Global Arquitectura Paisagista (João Gomes da Silva) and P06 (Nuno Gusmão, designer), (design and construction 2008–2009)
- The Port's Visual Quality Programme in Rotterdam, designed by West 8 Urban Design and Landscape Architecture b.v. (design 2007-2012, construction starting 2013)
- The Right Bank in Bordeaux, designed by Landscape Architects Michel Desvigne (Right Bank study 2000–2004, landscape charter 2002, park construction 2010–2017)
- Bjørvika Open Spaces in Oslo, designed by SLA with Gehl Architects (competition 2004, construction since 2011)

Each chapter follows the general structure of the interpretation tool, which allows to investigate the designers' site reading and site editing to conclude on the project's site specificity. Subchapters correspond to the filters of the interpretation tool: structures, materials, processes, practices, memories, atmospheres, discourses for the designers' site reading, and domestication, foreignisation, connectivity and appropriation for the designers' site editing. Instead of keeping the order of these topics as displayed in the interpretation tool, in each chapter I have organised them according to the importance the designers attribute to them.

To analyse design projects is to work with design documents and other visual material. That is why this part of the thesis takes on another visual form through the interweaving of text and images. Each project analysis contains conventionally written pages. These are followed by image pages which display the line of argument. I extracted visual material from the design projects and other sources, then arranged it according to what I learned during my investigation, so that the images illustrate the textual analysis. In order to distinguish

between my own visual language and the ones of design material, the image pages are laid out according to the following standards:

- In the visual analysis, images are displayed at a small size to contain them in their role as supportive elements for my interpretation of them.
- Each image spread contains a text block (in grey typeface colour), or an interpretation block, in which the main findings are extracted from the conventionally written pages and adapted to guide the interpretation of the images.
- Each image is labelled as a figure, with a figure number and a caption, stating its topic and its source. The captions are placed underneath the images in a small typeface size, to distinguish them from the free-standing interpretation blocks, and they appear in two different typeface colours, green and grey, to visually differentiate images created or forwarded by the designers (green), from those that come from my own investigation of the site or other sources (grey).

EUROMEDITERRANEE 2, MARSEILLE

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INTRODUCTION

CASE STUDY

To evaluate the site specificity of Marseille's harbour transformation project, I will first present the materials and methods used. This case study is based on sources comprising visual material, literature, own on-site observation and interviews with relevant actors.

The visual material consists first of all of the design documents from the designers' competition entry of 2009, provided by the design team Leclercq: ground plans, axonometric views, perspectives, sections, sketches, and photomontages, as well as photographs by a commissioned photographer. This material is complemented by the drawings and mappings of the hydrological study on the Aygalades valley by the design team Leclercq after the competition, in 2011. Also included are the conceptual sketches and photos, produced by landscape architect Olivier Philippe, partner at Agence Ter and member of the Leclercq design team, that illustrate the landscape architecture of the competition entry.

The literature comprises the publications of the competition entry by the client, EPAEM; a book I edited in 2008 about the work of Agence Ter, partners in the Leclercq design team; and contextual literature on Marseille's history, geography and recent urban and economic development. It also includes the topical publication of student work from the Marseille architecture school on the Marseille port areas, along with my own unpublished text collection and diploma work, from 1992 at Stuttgart University, on Marseille's northern harbour districts.

My own on-site observation is based on three one- to two-day visits, in 2010, 2011 and 2012. The first one, by foot and by bike, took me into the northern harbour districts and the development areas of Euroméditerranée 1 and 2. The second one, by coach and foot under the guidance of the Marseille port authority and the Marseille architecture school, led me into the active port areas in the northern part of town and the Rhône delta. Following this visit, I lectured at a student workshop at the architecture school. The third visit, by bike, allowed me to reexamine in detail the project site of the Euroméditerranée 2 development area.

I interviewed landscape architect Olivier Philippe of Agence Ter, part of the Leclercq design team and based in Paris, and architect Rémy Marciano of Marciano architects, a project partner based in Marseille. On the side of the urban planning authorities, I interviewed architect Frank Geiling, head of architecture and urban planning at the public developer EPAEM, responsible for the Euroméditerranée development, and urban planner Frédéric Roustan of Marseille's urban planning service AGAM.

As with all the chapters of this collective case study, the present chapter follows the structure of our interpretation tool. Instead of keeping the order of the filters as displayed in the analytical framework chapter, I have organised them in correspondence to the importance the designers attribute to them.

In ancient times, a natural harbour gave rise to the city of Marseille. It is situated within the hilly, amphitheatre-like terrain of the bay of Marseille, surrounded by mountain ridges, from which various rivulets run down to the coast. The city developed around this harbour, which in industrial times was dislocated and grew along the coast north of the old harbour to the foot of the northern mountains. With containerisation, the harbour moved again, this time occupying flat expanses of land in the nearby Rhône Delta at Lake Berre, where a major petrochemical hub was built in the 1960s. Behind the urban port, port-related industries and working class settlements grew up, incorporating old villages and pastures. Even if the urban port remained active, these industries fell into decay, bringing the whole city into a phase of economic decline. In the late 1990s the French state initiated a large-scale urban transformation project, Euroméditerranée, to revitalise the port city, run by the state-owned developer EPAEM (Joutard 1988, Bonillo et al. 1991, Roncayolo 1996, Bertoncello and Dubois 2010).

The first phase, Euroméditerranée 1 (Euromed 1), has been under construction since 2000, and involves the urban renovation and restructuring of 311 hectares of an underused area behind the urban port just north of the city centre. Euroméditerranée 2 (Euromed 2) addresses the terrain to the north of this first renovation area, comprising 169 hectares. This second parcel of land extends from the coast and its urban port over a ridge with old industrial fabric into the valley of an old water course, the Aygalades river, occupied by a rail yard, and up again into a residential district with structural defects. An architecture competition held in 2009 awarded first prize to the urban development proposal by the Paris-based architect François Leclercq, with landscape architects Agence Ter (Paris), architects Rémy Marciano (Marseille), Jacques Sbriglio (Marseille) and SETEC engineers (EPAEM 2010a/ 2010b).

In the current urban planning discourse, the Euromed 2 project is presented as the extension of the Euromed 1 enterprise, directed by the French state in cooperation with the city of Marseille and its metropolitan region (EPAEM 2010a/ 2010b). The urban development of Euroméditerranée 1 aims at extending the city centre of Marseille northwards, into the former port districts, linking the centre with the northern periphery and with the metropolitan region that is also north, behind the mountain ridge that frames the bay of Marseille. The dilapidated and underused port districts are to be upgraded functionally and spatially, and the border between city and port is to be reformulated, while the continued separation of port and city grounds will persist — the port will remain active. Euromed 2 is the second step in this operation, extending the perimeter of the whole enterprise to 480 hectares, the largest urban redevelopment in Europe (EPAEM 2010a).

Port and city agree on the formula that Marseille is founded on the port as its 'maritime ground' ('sol maritime') and that from the port the city is built up as an 'urban super-ground' ('sursol urbain') (interview Roustan 2010). The port's maritime ground will continue to separate the city's super-ground from the water, except for the first port platform called J4. This platform has been handed over to the city to install public uses. The city invited the French state and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region to erect two public facilities by the beginning of 2013, the year of Marseille-Provence cultural capital of Europe, namely the state museum
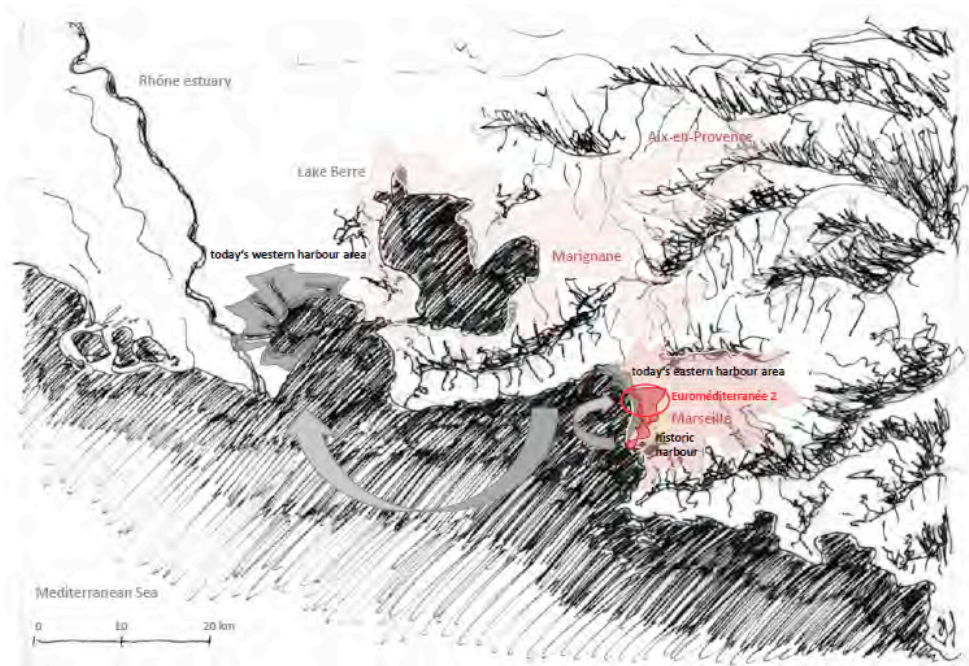
Fig. a. Harbour development within the topography of the Marseille metropolitan region (sketch: Lisa Diedrich)

for European civilisation MuCEM (Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, arch. Rudy Riciotti) and the regional centre of the Mediterranean CeReM (Centre Régional de la Méditerranée, arch. Stefano Boeri) (EPAEM 2010a). Emblematic architecture is part of Euroméditerranée's strategy. The urban plan sketches out a skyline at the border of city and port, made up by privately funded towers, of which the first one has been built until 2012 by the Marseille based shipping company CMA-CGM (arch. Zaha Hadid).

In the urban planning discourse Marseille is identified as part of a metropolitan region (1,6 million inhabitants) that reaches far beyond the city boundaries (850 000 inhabitants) and includes the university city of Aix-en-Provence in the north and the settlements and the larger port installations at Lake Berre in the west (traffic 86 million tonnes per year). The Euroméditerranée project is a key element in the construction of this metropolitan region (EPAEM 2010a, EPAEM 2010b, Bertoncello 2010).

Fig. b. Map of the Euroméditerranée 1 area in the north of Marseille's city centre, and of the planned extension Euroméditerranée 2 (source: EPAEM 2010a)

Fig. c. Skyline of the future water-front, with the office tower of the shipbuilder CGA-CMA to the left (source: EPAEM 2010a)

Fig. d. View of the converted port platform J4, with CeReM and MuCeM (source: EPAEM 2010a)
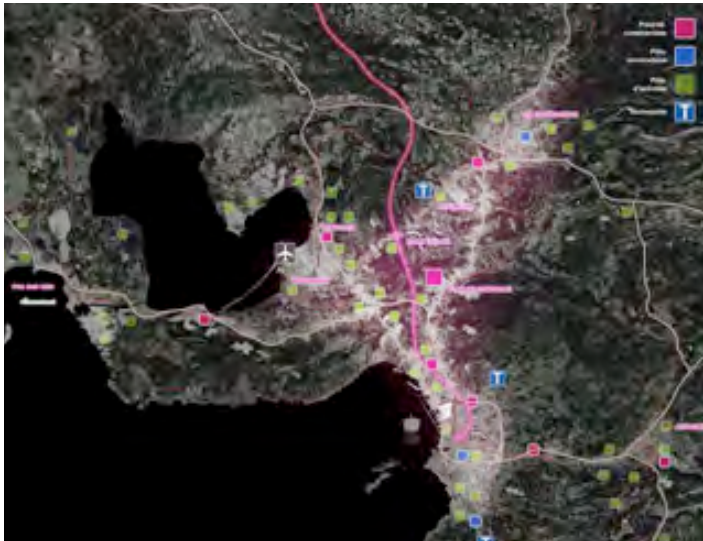
Fig. e. Structure of the metropolitan region Marseille-Etang de Berre-Aix en Provence (source: EPAEM 2010a)

DESIGN PROJECT

The winning design proposal for Euromed 2 was created by architect François Leclercq with landscape architects Agence Ter, both of Paris, architects Rémy Marciano and Jacques Sbriglio of Marseille, and SETEC engineers. The designers propose to create a floodable park as the backbone of the redeveloped district. Toward the seaside, overlooking the port, they imagine a coastal promenade to be realised on a covered motorway. The districts in between are suggested for urban renovation and partly for intensive upgrading.

 The designers' main competition drawings of 2009 consist of an aerial oblique perspective rendering, a bird eye's view, showing how they imagine the site after transformation within its urban context. This perspective is completed by a ground plan highlighting the transformed Euromed 2 area. In addition to these overview documents, a twofold perspective further features the proposed Aygalades river park, displaying two states of the park: a normal state, as a lushly planted valley hosting a low-level water course, and its state at the moment of heavy Mediterranean precipitations, retaining and slowly draining the massive storm water. Finally, a perspective illustrates the proposed coastal promenade overlooking the port and the bay with its surrounding mountains.

The designers do not directly associate any photos from site to the diagrammatic documents. Instead they augment their proposal by detailed drawings (shown in the following analysis) specifying various topics such as programme, infrastructure, hydraulics, vegetation, urban design and architecture of the Mediterranean city (EPAEM 2010/ 2011; designers' documents).

Fig. f. Bird eye's view of the Euromed 2 design project by the Leclercq design team (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

Name of operation
Euroméditerranée 2
Location
Marseille, France
Contracting Authority
EPAEM établissement public d'aménagement Euroméditerranée
Prime Contractors
François Leclercq with Agence Ter, Rémy Marciano, Jacques Sbriglio, SETEC
Area
169 ha
Competition
2009
Construction
2013 onward

Fig. g. Ground plan of the Euromed 2 design project by the Leclercq design team (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

Fig. h-i. Perspectives of the Aygalades floodable park, in normal state with low water, and after a thunderstorm with high water (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

Fig. k. Perspective of the coastal promenade (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Marseille is a Mediterranean port city, characterised by a multiethnic population and a variety of cultures, from working class to bourgeois. Its port is among the most important ones in the Mediterranean area, and France's biggest. Marseille is situated in an outstanding topographical setting, an amphitheatre of rocks surrounding a central bay area that opens up westwards to the Mediterranean sea. The Marseille landscape has been shaped over millennia by natural processes, mainly erosion, and in the last century and a half by human practices, mainly port and other industrial and trade activities.

Having lived there myself for a year in the past, and as a continuous visitor since, I have been attracted and repelled at the same time by both the dramatic and rough landscape beauty and the pragmatic and rough way of establishing urban life. Urban planning has been conducted under a provincial mindset in the past quarter century, respecting more or less the big cultural and economical differences of the inhabitants and the respective spatial organisation of the city: a wealthy South and a poor North behind the harbour. With the French state imposing its rules through the Euroméditerranée project, another mindset has been introduced into urban planning. This new mindset seeks to overcome the traditional geographical segregation and to bind the city closer to regional networks, so as to lay the foundation for improved economic performance, complete with the attributes of office towers and seaside promenades. This challenge is understandable and seems a great opportunity to push this city out of its status quo of getting along with the hazards of economy and with accepting a low standard of existence. Many commentators of the event 'Marseille-Provence cultural capital of Europe 2013' point at the risk of heavy interventions destroying a well-established social equilibrium that accommodates the poor and the rich culture emerging from it (reported in Le Monde and other media). The critics fear this city will be converted into yet another hub of the global economy where local culture is levelled out to reach a standard observed elsewhere and judged of more value.

Fig. l-m. Motorway at the cliff on Euromed 2's northernmost tip; feeder road to motorway and harbour (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. n-o. Square in one of the old village cores of the Euromed 2 area; mixed-use harbour district at the southern tip of Euromed 2 (photos: L. Diedrich)
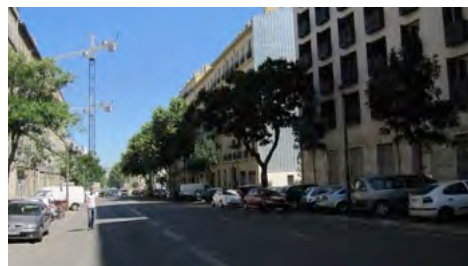

Fig. p-q. Main street in Marseille's south with a vista to the northern mountain ridge; street under renovation in the Euromed 1 area (photos: L. Diedrich)

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THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

STRUCTURES

Let us have a look at how the designers build up their project from their personal readings of the site. Their initial use of diagrammatic sources indicates their preference for reading physical and functional structures first, as they are easy to detect on maps. However, when I asked team member Olivier Philippe, of Agence Ter, for their first sources of inspiration, he sent over a series of photos capturing the larger geographical setting of their project site, complete with a conceptual sketch showing the 'metropolitan challenge' ('enjeux métropolitains'), identified as two hidden axes discovered in the larger site which the design intends to bring back to life (Philippe 2011). From these photographic overviews and large-scale maps, we can trace the structures the designers read at their site, a reading they extend towards a larger 'area of influence'.

If the designers' records from the site, mostly mappings, reveal their site reading, how does this reading appear in their design, how do they imagine the site after design intervention? A detailed analysis of the design proposal discloses how the designers intervene in their site, and how the 'before' and the 'after' are linked: the road structure of the motorway, as running out of the proper Euromed 2 site, helps the designers illustrate the impact of their design proposal on the metropolitan level. The perspective rendering, in a bird eye's view, of the topography of the metropolis shows the Euromed 2 site as the building block of a larger functional system. In its actual state, the site is a hinderance (dysfunctional infrastructure, lacking urban programme, flood risk), but it has not yet fully developed its urban potential, and therefore it can serve as a prime element in repairing the larger urban structure. Philippe, the leading

landscape architect of the Leclercq team, says the designers believe that 'this project has the capacity to break up a dead end in the urban fabric through precise design interventions' (Philippe 2011).

Which precise interventions do the designers propose? How do they scale down from the metropolitan level to the district level and even down to the level of the open urban space within the district? When we examine the design drawings, we see that the designers focus on two main operations as kick-starters for the urban transformation of the Euromed 2 area, and in so doing they think across the scales — after having 'enlarged' their site they now 'shrink it' to the size of manageable engineering and open space interventions. The fact that they use photorealistic renderings tells us that they see a link between mapped structures and structures as observed in space by humans. They observe structures as static features of the physical site, and they use the architectural tool of vista drawings to reveal such features for their audience: the larger geography, its mountains and river valleys, the urban form with its street axes and emblematic buildings.

As the designers refer to static structures of the larger geography and propose access and views from specific locations, I tried to find them myself on site, to verify how closely the designers' proposal interprets their site reading. On a two-day bike trip, I explored the topical state of the water structure of the Aygalades river and of the urban balcony at the coastal road. I understood that they are both difficult to trace on site as it exists now, but characterising the site in the design drawings.

The competition drawings show clearly that the designers read their site as composed of an urban structure, namely two axes linked up by lines at a right angle, like a ladder. This structure can only be understood, however, if one looks far beyond the boundaries of the competition area and into contemporary and historical diagrammatic sources. The first axis is the Aygalades river catchment, the second an urban street alignment. Both axes are identified as latent structures in the competition area: invisible, hidden, abandoned or repressed on site. The river has disappeared into a discharge pipe below a railway yard, but the Aygalades valley landform testifies clearly to its hydrologic origin. To read the Aygalades valley, the designers had to take a wider view onto the landform of the surrounds, the site of hydrologic influence.

The urban composition, mainly of the 19th century, is based on a long street axis running north–south across the southern part of the city, parallel to and at a certain distance from the coast, connecting with the historical centre and the edge of the industrial port. Further north, behind the port, the historic axis fades out and converts into intertwining threads of a coastal motorway, port feeder roads and minor district roads. In their project, the designers propose to prolong the historic urban axis by a coastal promenade. To proffer this idea, they had to open up their view onto the urban fabric of the central and southern parts of the city, extending their site to a larger site of compositional influence.

The designers identify the urban fabric of the Euromed 2 area as a heterogeneous puzzle of urban fragments, a statement that can be easily verified by on-site observation. They also claim that this fabric is held together by a structure, partly distorted and frequently interrupted, of district roads running at right angles to the coastline, an assumption that

evolves from the analysis of cartographic sources. To capture the pattern of the district streets and of the through-roads, the designers had to study city and regional maps, the latter opening up again to a larger site of functional-infrastructural influence.

It is illuminating to point out what the designers haven't read: instead of the fresh Aygalades valley they could have identified the existing harsh mineral rail yard as part of the working port structure, and instead of taking the winding coastal road as a prolongation of the straight historic axis they could have read it as resulting from the winding coastline shaped by the original topography of hills and coves, now shaped by the port's platforms and piers. Both facts are easily retrievable from on-site observation, as I could verify myself: the rail yard operates overseas containers and is connected by a clearly visible rail track to the port's seaside rail yard, as confirmed by a simple city map. To date the coastline is formed by the port's landfills built into the water, but the original coastline is easily identifiable where port and city meet. On site, the original coastline is easy to discern from the bundle of roads, partly a motorway connection to the larger region, constructed on stilts to fly over the rails and roads of the port, partly old local roads following both the former coast at sea level and the ridge of the hills overlooking the bay. Taking into consideration that the port of Marseille continues to operate on its strip of ground along the Euromed 2 area, it would have been possible to imagine a design built upon active port roads at the coast and upon an active rail yard in the district behind the port. While sketching out what design could have evolved from this reading is pure speculation, neither the coastal promenade nor the Aygalades floodable park would have been part of it.
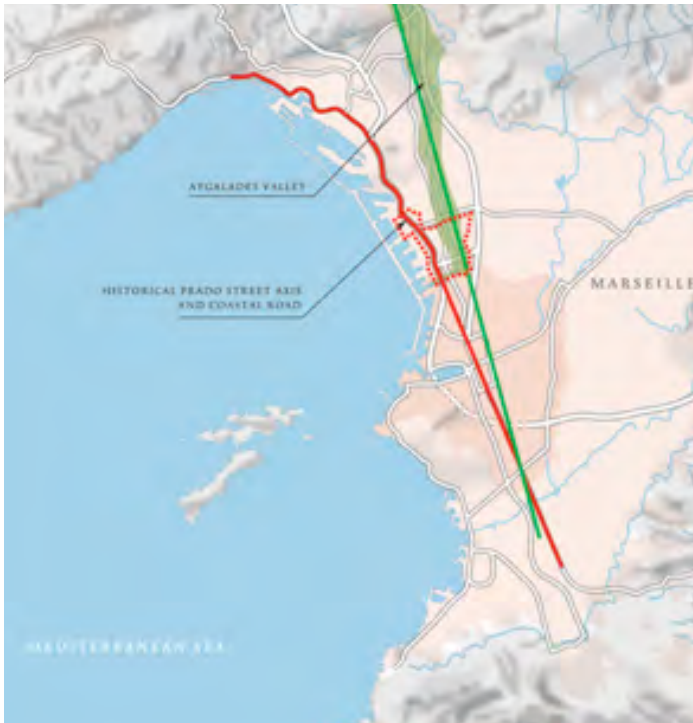
TWO STRUCTURING AXES

Fig.1. Conceptual sketch 'metropolitan challenges'
(sketch delivered by O. Philippe, team Leclercq, redrawn by JoLA)

The designers read the site as bracketed between two urban axes, the Aygalades valley and the coastal road. They read the valley as being connected to the larger Aygalades catchment, and the road as evolving out of the historic street axis in the south of the city. According to them, this structure is hidden 'underneath' a layer of urban materials.

Fig. 2. View from the northern tip of the Euromed 2 site (photo delivered by O. Philippe, team Leclercq)

Fig. 3. Map of the Aygalades catchment (sketch delivered by O. Philippe, team Leclercq)

The designers show this photo as a reading of the Euromed 2 site, which is part of the larger topography, made up by mountain ranges in front of the Alps. The Euromed 2 site is situated on the slope of the Etoile range, in the foreground, whose waters drain into the catchment area encompassing the Euromed 2 site.

The designers read the Euromed 2 site as a small part of the extended catchment area of the Aygalades river system, collecting the waters of the Etoile ridge in the north of Marseille.

Fig. 4. The Euromed 2 site in its surroundings (photo delivered by O. Philippe, team Leclercq)

Fig. 5. Urban streets and major roads around the Euromed 2 site; major roads trespassing the Euromed 2 site (drawings: team Leclercq)

The designers put forward this photo when reading the larger geography of the Euromed 2 site, acknowledged as an urbanised bay framed by a mountain ranges in the hinterland and by a bundle of infrastructure on the coastline.

The inwardly connecting structure of the design project is composed by the district street grid. The designers read the main district streets as the steps of a ladder, a structure supported by the two observed axes, the historic street axis and the valley.

The outwardly connecting structure builds on the motorways and through-roads. The designers read these major infrastructural lines as a structure that links the Euromed 2 site with its metropolitan region, disconnected from the project site.

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The designers' reading of the catchment area results in their proposal of a park along the Aygalades valley, reaching beyond the given Euromed 2 area and connecting with the water system of the Etoile range. Their reading of the historic street axis results in the proposal of a coastal promenade, connecting with the district's street pattern, whereas the coastal motorway, which would run beneath the promenade, is meant to connect with the metropolitan infrastructure and reaches out far beyond the given area.

Fig. 6. Oblique perspective of the Euromed 2 site in its urban context (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

AYGALADES VALLEY PARK

COASTAL PROMENADE
ON MOTORWAY COVER

COVERED COASTAL
MOTORWAY

GRID OF DISTRICT STREETS

Fig. 7. Ground plan of the Euromed 2 area (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

The designers' reading of the Euromed 2 site as part of a ladder structure encourages them to propose the repairing of structural deficiencies of this ladder through focused physical interventions. These changes would affect an area much bigger than their proper site of intervention, namely the metropolitan region of Marseille-Lake Berre-Aix en Provence.

Fig. 8. Perspective rendering of the Euromed 2 site within its metropolitan region (drawing: LABTOP for team Leclercq)

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Fig. 9. Perspective of the coastal promenade (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

THE DESIGNERS REVEAL THE AY-
GALADES PARK AS AN ELEMENT OF
THE LARGER HYDROLOGICAL STRUCTURE

Fig. 10. Aygalades park in a view towards the south and Marseille's main church hill Notre-Dame de la Garde, with new buildings framing the park (drawing by LABTOP for team Leclercq)

The design for the Euromed 2 site supports the reading of the larger geography through vistas. From the proposed coastal promenade, these vistas embrace the port, the city, the coastline and the southern mountains. From the imagined Aygalades park, sight lines reveal the land form of the valley and, on a hill in the distance, the main city church, Notre-Dame de la Garde.

A bike trip downhill from the North of the Euromed 2 site allows comparison of the designers' reading with the reality found on site (figs. 13-18).

The view from the road North of the Euromed 2 area reveals the Aygalades slope, with vistas towards the southern mountains. The Aygalades water course appears along the Billoux park, at the Northern fringe of the Euromed 2 site.

Here, the outlet of the Aygalades water course borders the rail yard. The rail yard seals the valley and covers the water course.

A construction sign announces hydraulic adjustments of the Aygalades water course in the mixed-use port districts at the southern fringe of the Euromed 2 area, where the water is channeled in an underground pipe.

Village square of Le Canet, close to the rail yard.

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ THE RAIL YARD AS A PORT STRUCTURE BUT AS A SUPPRESSED WATER STRUCTURE

AYGALADES VALLEY AND WATER COURSE AS OBSERVED ON SITE TODAY

Fig. 11. Ground plan Euromed 2 (team Lecleercq)

Fig. 12. Current city map of the district (Blay Foldex 2011)

Fig. 13-18. On-site impressions 2012 (photos L. Diedrich)

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THE DESIGNERS DON'T READ THE COASTAL
ROAD AS AN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE
BUT AS A TOPOGRAPHICAL FEATURE

URBAN BALCONY AND COASTAL
ROAD AS OBSERVED ON SITE TODAY

Another bike trip along the coastal cliff from North to south and further down the historic street axis reveals the reality of this structure, and allows comparison of it with the designers' reading (figs. 19-24).

From the highest point of the coastal motorway, the view focuses on the emblematic CMA-CGM tower and the southern mountains.

The northern mountains can be seen from the same spot.
The winding coastal district road slopes northwards underneath the motorway, following the former coastline.

When the coastal road swings from the port fringes into more central areas, it meets the straight geometry of the urban fabric.

Within the Euromed 1 renovation area, the straightness of the historic axis becomes apparent.

In the southern part of town the straight historic axis can be fully experienced, opening up a vista towards the northern mountains.

Fig. 19-24. On-site impressions 2012 (photos L. Diedrich)

Fig. 25. Ground plan Euromed 2 (team Lecleercq)

Fig. 26. Current city map of the district (Blay Foldex 2011)

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DISCOURSES

With their structural proposal, the designers testify to a close reading of the current urban planning discourse by conceiving of the Euromed 2 project as an the extension of the Euromed 1 programme.

They subscribe to the identification among planners and city officials of the 'maritime ground' and the 'urban super-ground' in proposing to accentuate the Northern districts' topography through a coastal promenade, hovering like an urban balcony over the port. They adopt the value shared among practitioners of erecting emblematic architecture when they suggest lining this promenade with a series of sculptural buildings.

The designers also support the idea of a metropolitan region reaching far beyond the city boundaries up to the settlements and the larger port installations at Lake Berre and the university city of Aix-en-Provence, with the Euromed 2 project being the key element. The designers propose new structures for this key element, suggesting that they ameliorate the regional network and negotiate between the district and the metropolitan infrastructure.

The designers' commitment for connection also fits into the way public authorities conceive of Marseille-Provence Cultural Capital of Europe 2013, which celebrates not just the city of Marseille alone but the whole metropolitan region of Marseille-Provence, communicating the idea of the larger metropolis to a broad audience.

Fig. 27. View of the converted port platform J4, with CeReM and MuCeM (source: EPAEM 2010a)

EMBLEMATIC ARCHITECTURAL OBJECTS

Fig. 28. View of the coastal promenade (perspective: LABTOP for team Leclercq)

Fig. 29. Emblematic architectural objects proposed by the designers along the main connecting arteries of the Euromed site (source: team Leclercq)

CONNECTING URBAN AND
METROPOLITAN STRUCTURES
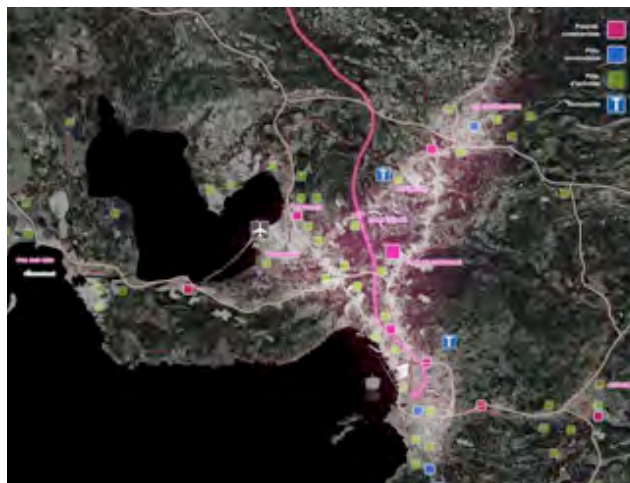
Fig. 30. Structure of the metropolitan region Marseille-Etang de Berre-Aix en Provence (source: EPAEM 2010a)

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PROCESSES

What natural processes are the designers reading at the Euromed 2 site? From their drawings it is very obvious that they are aware of the floods that the Aygalades river course causes seasonally. However, they do not propose any photos of the channelled river or the inundated district nor give any figures or facts about reported floods. In the case of rare but heavy Mediterranean precipitation the park is proposed as a device to drain stormwater from far beyond the project site, namely the whole of the Aygalades catchment. Under dry weather conditions the designers imagine the park as a hydraulic and hydrating machine for the adjacent districts, fed by cleansed roof and road stormwater. After the competition, the designers were commissioned to elaborate on their proposal and do a detailed hydrological study to define the earthworks necessary to reshape the Aygalades valley into a park that also operates as a retention basin (Leclercq team 2011). On site in 2012, I have observed municipal information panels announcing that the hydraulic underground structure carrying the waters of the Aygalades is subject to readjustment.

Here, the designers read an element of flux of the site, namely the Aygalades water course with its changing water levels, sometimes extreme and risky ones. Accordingly they develop a fluctuating, changeable design — a park that works well with all possible water levels, able to serve as a retention basin at moments of extreme precipitation, protecting the whole part of town from flooding. Flood protection measures could have been simple engineering solutions readjusting the existing tube hosting the Aygalades waters; instead, the designers' reading of the suppressed structure of the valley leads to a complex operation combining urban planning,

engineering and landscape architecture, namely dismantling the existing rail yard, building massive earthworks, reshaping the valley and installing a public park. The resulting landform, itself a predefined and static physical feature, is meant to appear and disappear with the changing states of water, and the vegetation will evolve over time, in a state of permanent flux.

The designers have drawn sections to show how water is channelled under the existing rail yard, and the topographical change necessary to reach the water table and create a retention basin intended to host the floods from seasonal storms.

Fig. 31. Section of the existing rail yard (drawing: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

Fig. 32. The rail yard in 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

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The designers' hydrological study depicts the Aygalades park as a retention basin in extreme meteorological situations, here at a 50-year flood. The engineering is part of the landscape architectural modelling that would considerably transform the existing state of the valley.

capacité de rétention environ 150 000m3

WATER DYNAMICS:
NORMAL WATER LEVEL

Fig. 33. Map with Aygalades' retention capacity of stormwater (Leclercq team 2011)

Fig. 34-35. Sections of the Aygalades park with low water and with flood drawings: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

Fig. 36-37. Perspectives of the Aygalades park with low water and with flood (drawings: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

WATER DYNAMICS:
FLOOD

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MEMORIES

Memories play an important role in the designers' reading of the Aygalades valley. A comparison of historic material with my own on-site observation and an interview with chief landscape architect Olivier Philippe casts a light on the way the designers imagine a parcel of Mediterranean vegetation where there is now an active mineral rail yard with scarcely a tree or shrub. Indeed, when biking uphill from the existing rail yard, I quickly reached districts abundant in wild macchia and other vegetation, garden walls, and paths, vestiges of past lives as Mediterranean gardens and pastures. A review of historic literature, photo archives and other records and conversations with inhabitants helped me to trace the past: poets and painters, mainly of the 19th century, depicted the Marseille countryside in words and images, Marcel Pagnol being among the most famous. This memory is alive today. When inhabitants tell the stories of the past, they stress the connection of the city with the Provençal hinterland which once stretched out where today the Euromed 2 site is situated. Even if the designers do not refer to precise historic sources or memories told in town, Philippe, in our interview, mentions practices of old in the Marseille countryside, as written and painted, namely in 19th century when city dwellers were hiking through the Aygalades valley towards the mountains where they were seeking freshness in the summer. These memories have clearly contributed to the idea of the Aygalades park, even though the landscape architect denies a 'nostalgic revival' of the countryside through his city park design (Philippe 2011).

Despite his reticence, a comparison of the design documents with some sources of memory and with on-site photos of the hills north of the Euromed 2 site reveals the role of memory played in design.

Memories are difficult to grasp, especially if no sources are cited by the designers. But in this case, the reading of the site's memories is obvious from documents that are local cultural heritage and very well known. The memories of the Marseille countryside, not only as carried in literature and art, but also living on as imagery in the memory of today's inhabitants, legitimates the designers' proposal of a contemporary version of practices that no longer exist on site. Retiring to such fresh shady places as offered by the designers' Aygalades park is no longer easy to do, nor can residents readily enjoy panoramic views of sites exposed to the elements and embracing the active city, as the designers provide from their coastal promenade, installed over the port and the bay. If these practices cannot be found on site right now, however, they are retraceable from memories.

Even if the designers do not themselves refer to the locally well-known paintings of Emile Loubon, similarities are obvious: the panoramic views upon the bay area and its mountains, the vegetation patterns and the atmospheres created from the interplay of people and the landscape. Even the formal composition of the paintings and of the design drawings is alike.

Fig. 38-39. Emile Loubon. View of the Aygalades 1853 (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille, top); ascent to La Viste, 1834-35 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

PAINTINGS OF THE SITE
IN 19TH CENTURY EVOKE
MEMORIES OF THE PROVEN-
CAL LANDSCAPE

GARDENS CLOSE TO
THE SITE TODAY EVOKE
MEMORIES OF THE
FORMER AGRICULTURAL
LANDSCAPE
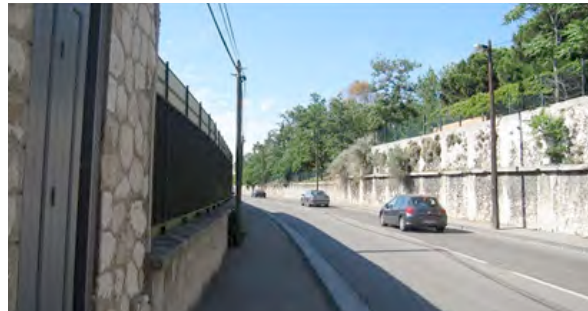
Fig. 40. Driving uphill from the Aygalades valley, on-site impression 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 41-42. Coastal promenade; Aygalades park (drawing: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

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MATERIALS

When investigating what the designers found on the site to visually connect their proposal to the location, I found that they conceive of sources as architectural form, which I call 'materials'. I distinguish three groups of material sources for the proposal: the rough escarpment on the seaside paralleled by the coastal motorway on stilts, the built-up stock of Mediterranean vernacular houses and old industrial buildings, and the Mediterranean vegetation. For these three groups the designers propose a reading that is not necessarily based on the materials that are prevalent on site. Instead, they pick what is actually rare on site as a foundation for their design.

The result of my analysis is that the designers negate to a great extent the reading of what is actually found on the Euromed 2 site. They do not consider the elevated motorway with its asphalt and concrete, the rail yard with its hangars, the stock of old industrial buildings with improvised reuse here and there. They rather import sources from elsewhere, this 'elsewhere' being the extended site. Indeed, the designers embrace sources beyond the boundaries of their area of intervention, from what they define as areas of influence, namely a larger geographical district and historic time frame.

Their proposal for reshaping the rough escarpment into a new coastal promenade on top of the covered motorway shows the same canon of material sources for residential and office buildings as the Euromed 1 district, of which Euromed 2 is an extension. The same is true for the completely new housing blocks proposed along the new Aygalades park. Mediterranean vegetation is scarce on site but grows uphill of the Aygalades valley, recalling that before the river went into a tube the

valley itself must have hosted a landscape with similar vegetation. Historical records testify to it, even if the designers do not overtly cite those records. The designers read vegetation sources for their proposal not from the present but from the past of their site.

These reflections also explain why the designers propose massive interventions to decrease the prevalent materials found on site, and propose to increase the stock of scarce materials or to introduce new ones — they read Euromed 2 as a combination of Euromed 1 and the Aygalades valley. As a result, they embrace the visual source of contemporary architecture and vegetation but not old industry and motorways. The gap between materials found on the proper area of intervention and the areas of influence is huge, and therefore the proposed material change is enormous.

In terms of mere construction materials, the Euromed 2 site offers concrete, asphalt, metal, rocks, and stone where it meets the coast and the port. The designers do not respond to this material canon but rather identify materials with an architectural value: the rocky cliff as a volume offering a view, the covered coastal road as a room with a panorama window.

Fig. 43. The coastal motorway and the bay with the CMA-CGM tower seen from highest point at the northern tip of the Euromed 2 site (photos: Eric Lion for Leclercq team)
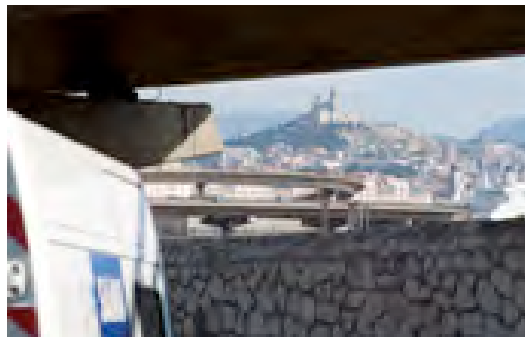
Fig. 44. View of the Notre-Dame de la Garde hill from the coastal district road that passes underneath the coastal motorway at the southern tip of the site (photos: Eric Lion for Leclercq team)

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The existent situation at the coast side of the Euromed 2 area shows the steep slope of the cliff. In front of it sits the coastal motorway on stilts, bridging the port's rail yard. On top of the cliff scattered vernacular houses and old industrial hangars compose the district.

As the first step, the designers propose to clear the cliff's top and to enhance its form with new architectural objects, consisting of refined contemporary office buildings and their architectural materials.

In the second step, the designers suggest building up the cliff's slope to host the gallery for the coastal motorway, installing the promenade on top of it, connecting the district and offering a new public space.

THE PANORAMA WINDOW

Finally, the designers intend to relocate the through-traffic into the new gallery and to dismantle the old motorway on stilts. By doing so, they propose to enhance the cliff as an architectural material in itself while removing the mere materials existing on site today.

THE ROCKY CLIFF
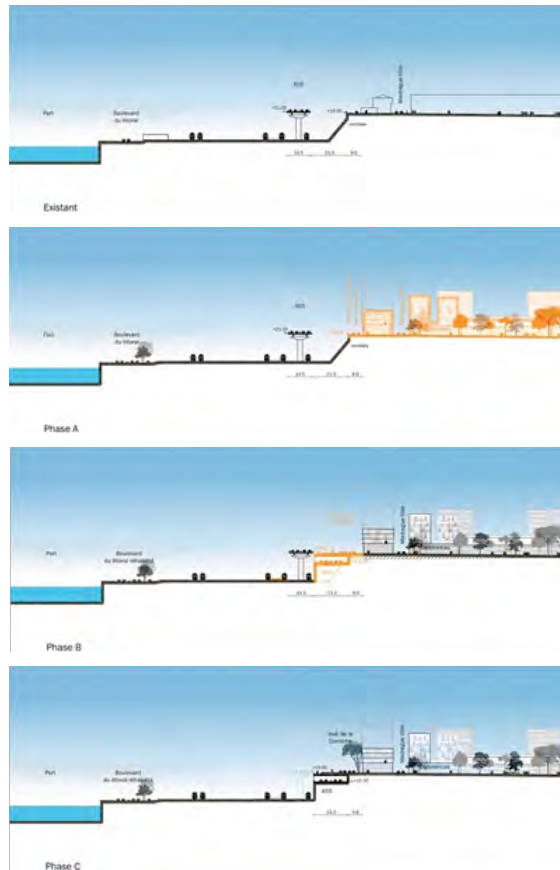
Fig. 45-48. Process proposal for dismantling the existent coastal motorway on stilts to place it into an open tunnel incorporated into an extension of the northern cliff of the Euromed 2 site (drawing: Leclercq team)
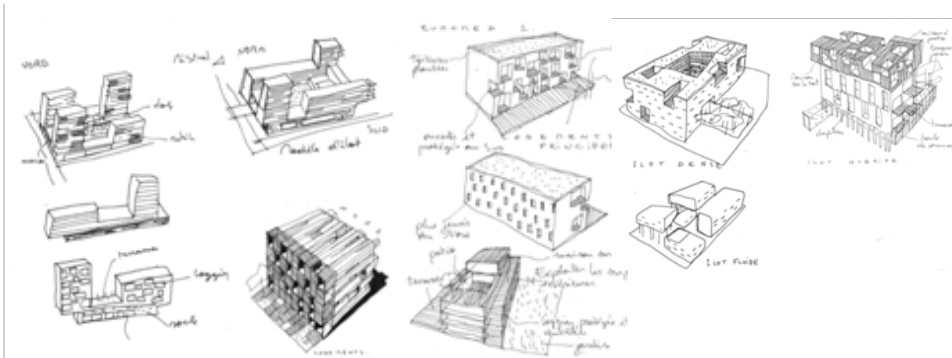
Fig. 49. Typologies of Mediterranean housing (drawing: Leclercq team)

NEW RESIDENTIAL
ARCHITECTURE

For their proposal for Euromed 2, the designers studied housing typologies of different densities, heights and porosity, which are adapted to the Mediterranean climate. They imagine buildings designed from scratch and produce a canon of new architectural materials, as exemplified by the scenario for a housing block next to the new Aygalades park. Park and housing blocks are situated on the area of the existing rail yard, whose materials the designers obviously do not take into consideration.

Fig. 50. Proposal of a housing block opening up to the Aygalades park (rendering: Leclercq team)

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ:
THE EXISTING RAILYARD

Fig. 51. Existing rail yard at Aygalades (photo: Eric Lion for Leclercq team)

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Vegetation constitutes a prime material for the designers, as it is the backbone of their Aygalades park proposal. As the site photo by their photographer shows, vegetation is not the prevalent material found on site, because the rail yard is mainly made from abiotic materials. However, the sparse flora along the uncovered parts of the Aygalades water course is enough source material for them to imagine the ripisylvian flora that must have once existed in the Aygalades valley, a fact confirmed by historical sources. This reading leads the designers to propose introducing to the site a palette of ripisylvian vegetation, as specified in their plan of vegetation types.

NEW RIPISYLVIAN VEGETATION

Fig. 52. Vegetation types of the Aygalades park (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig.53. Vegetation features of Aygalades park (drawing: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

Fig. 54. Reference photos of ripisylvian vegetation (collage: Leclercq team)

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ:
THE EXISTING RAIL YARD

Fig. 55. Existing rail yard at Aygalades (photo: Eric Lion for the Leclercq team)

Fig. 56-58. Views of the existing village type settlements in the Euromed 2 site (photos: Eric Lion for the Leclercq team)

The designers refer to the site as it exists, with its basic construction materials and its architectural elements, when they suggest a subtle upgrading of the existing residential areas of the Euromed 2 area. Their before–after collages and prospective sketches show that they do not start from scratch here but reuse a maximum of found architectural source material.

Fig. 59. Upgrading through architectural additions (sketch: Leclercq team)

Fig. 60-61. Upgrading through addition of vegetation (collage: Leclercq team)

PRACTICES

The literature of the area, along with my own observations, reveals that the Euromed 2 district, like the whole northern part of Marseille, hosts a poor population that does specific things. People dwell in old village-type houses on streets with small shops and dense local traffic, they relax on village type squares, and for their bigger shopping needs they go to the big discount stores and the huge Sunday flea market, all housed in derelict hangars at Capitaine Gèze boulevard, next to multitudes of smaller precarious businesses. In addition to these local practices, infrastructure threads traffic across the district and along the coast and channel regional traffic. The result is two practices which the designers read as conflicting, as testified by their proposed reorganisation of the driving practices into separate traffic types: district traffic and metropolitan through-traffic. The latter moves through the area via a multimodal transport hub that the designers embed in a business hub of metropolitan relevance. Here a conflict arises as the designers do not take into consideration the business practices of the locals, even if their photographer impressively captures the size of the flea market crowds.

Like the material analysis, the investigation of practices reveals that the designers negate a good deal that is found on site. Their imagined transport and business hub with prominent programmes and architectural volumes has very little to do with the practices I have observed at this place over the last decades. The designers' perspective of the coastal promenade features nicely dressed middle-class people who do not resemble the inhabitants of the district. Again the designers read their site as part of a larger area of influence and effect, namely the metropolitan region with its business poles. Through the business hub at the northern tip

of Euromed 2, they suggest turning this part of Marseille into part of the metropolitan region and attracting the respective practices. However, the fact that the designers use a photo of the flea market crowds and the indication of a 'market of the 5 continents' within the proposed business hub proves that they are aware of local practices and that they might imagine them to be integrated in the upgraded northern tip. We can therefore doubt the idea's feasibility and wonder if this would not simply entice gentrification.

The designers propose an experience of the different practices through a gradual shift in location, from the new metropolitan practices, to be installed on the coastal cliff, down towards existent local practices along the valley. However, the new business hub with hotels, office towers, markets and space for events is unlikely to host the current precarious business practices, without which the population loses a function of their everyday lives.

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Fig. 62. Locals at the Sunday flea market (photo: Eric Lion for Leclercq team)

Fig. 63. Through-traffic at the coastal cliff, 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 64. Local traffic and small businesses on local roads, 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 65. Leisure practices on a village square, 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS PROPOSE NEW METROPOLITAN BUSINESSES

Fig. 66. Proposed metropolitan transport and business hub at Capitaine Gèze boulevard (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 67. Programme sketch with 'masterpieces' at the northern tip of the Euromed 2 site (drawing: Leclercq team)

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ATMOSPHERES

As the competition documents show, the designers address two atmospheres: on the one hand is the Mediterranean harbour city with bustling people, views of the harbour and the sea, and exposure to the wind and the sun, and on the other hand is the pastoral Provençal landscape in the river valley with its fresh microclimate, with intimate places sheltered from wind and sun, an introverted universe of Mediterranean plants.

When comparing the atmospheres of the Euromed 2 area today and with the ones the designers imagine after their design intervention, it becomes clear that they read the current site as being industrial, and they evaluate this fact both positively and negatively: on the coastal fringe they accept the bustling port atmosphere as found today, but in the Aygalades valley they reject the rough atmosphere of the rail yard. There, they propose to reinstall the Mediterranean landscape with its relaxing atmospheres observed farther uphill that are also found in historic sources, such as the well-known paintings of landscapes that once existed in the valley.

THE DESIGNERS READ AT DISTANCE: FRESHNESS, SHADE, PROTECTION, RELAXATION
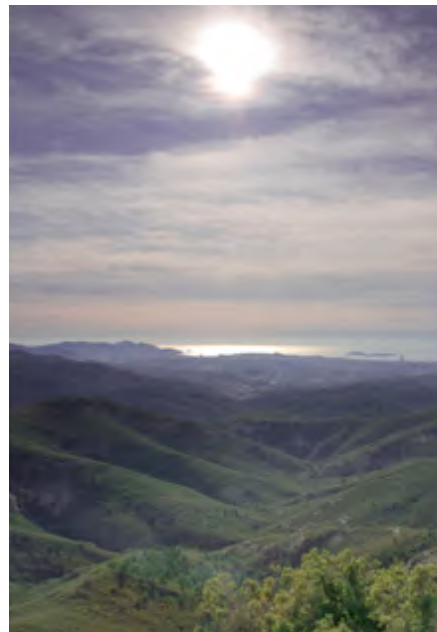
Fig. 68. View of a valley in the Etoile ridge (photo provided by O. Philippe for team Leclercq)

Fig. 69. View of the coastal motorway (photo provided by O. Philippe for team Leclercq)

Fig. 70. View of the coastal promenade as proposed by the designers (perspective: LABTOP for team Leclerca)

The designers identify the atmosphere of exposure, bustle, and dryness with the coastal fringe of the Euromed 2 area, and their drawings clearly refer to photos of the site that illustrate this atmosphere. Their reference photo shows an overview, visible from the highest point of the area. Scenic qualities are captured first of all, as a photo does not communicate other atmospheric on-site experiences like noise or the feeling of insecurity. The designers do not read the site's atmosphere from direct immersion but from a distanced point of view.

THE DESIGNERS READ ON SITE:
DRYNESS, EXPOSURE, OPENNESS, BUSTLE

THE DESIGNERS READ ON SITE:
FRESHNESS, SHADE, PROTECTION, RELAXATION

The designers associate an atmosphere of immersion, coolness, and contemplation with the Aygalades valley. They did not experience this atmosphere on the site proper, a rail yard, but in the wider catchment area and in historic sources. Their reference photo shows the same distance to the landscape as their photo of the coast does. However, their park drawing suggests an immersion into the site from a less distant point of view, which communicates the softness of the grasses and the shimmering light on the walkway. This drawing demonstrates that the designers have read this site's atmosphere from direct experience, even if not on the site proper.

Fig. 71. View of the Aygalades park (drawing: LABTOP for team Leclercq)

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SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

When looking into the Euromed 2 design project through the 'reading filters' of our interpretation tool we notice a strong emphasis on large-scale structures that reflect the urban planning discourse of the Marseille-Provence metropolis. This first level of site thinking is founded on the designers' reading of hydrological processes and collective memories. Materials, practices and atmospheres support it.

The competition drawings show clearly that the designers read their site as composed of an urban **STRUCTURE** that can only be understood if one looks far beyond the boundaries of the competition area and into contemporary and historic diagrammatic sources. The structure is built on two axes, the first one being the topography of the Aygalades river catchment, the second one a historic street alignment. Both are identified as latent in the competition area: invisible, hidden, abandoned or repressed on site. The river has disappeared into a discharge pipe below a disused railway yard, but the Aygalades valley landform testifies clearly to its hydrologic origin. The urban street composition, mainly of 19th-century origin, is based upon a long street axis running north–south across the southern districts, parallel and at a certain distance from the coast. This axis connects the southern parts of town with the historical centre and the edge of the industrial port, while farther north along the harbour it is abandoned, replaced by the intertwining threads of a coastal motorway, port feeder roads and minor district roads. The designers identify the urban fabric of the area as heterogeneous, a statement easily verified by my own on-site observation, but they also claim that this fabric is held together by a (partly distorted and frequently interrupted) grid of district roads running at right angles to the coastline, a proposition that evolves from their analysis of cartographic sources. The two axes and the streets at right angles form the figure of a ladder, with its beams and steps.

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

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The competition drawings show clearly that the designers read their site as composed of an urban **STRUCTURE** that can only be understood if one looks far beyond the boundaries of the competition area and into contemporary and historic diagrammatic sources. The structure is built on two axes, the first one being the topography of the Aygalades river catchment, the second one a historic street alignment. Both are identified as latent in the competition area: invisible, hidden, abandoned or repressed on site. The river has disappeared into a discharge pipe below a disused railway yard, but the Aygalades valley landform testifies clearly to its hydrologic origin. The urban street composition, mainly of 19th-century origin, is based upon a long street axis running north–south across the southern districts, parallel and at a certain distance from the coast. This axis connects the southern parts of town with the historical centre and the edge of the industrial port, while farther north along the harbour it is abandoned, replaced by the intertwining threads of a coastal motorway, port feeder roads and minor district roads. The designers identify the urban fabric of the area as heterogeneous, a statement easily verified by my own on-site observation, but they also claim that this fabric is held together by a (partly distorted and frequently interrupted) grid of district roads running at right angles to the coastline, a proposition that evolves from their analysis of cartographic sources. The two axes and the streets at right angles form the figure of a ladder, with its beams and steps.

Even if the designers initially read this structure from on-site observation, they tend to legitimate it through cartographic sources. Furthermore, their on-site observations approach the distant view that maps allow for, a tendency made clear by landscape architect Olivier Philippe, talking about a visit to another project site: 'While I was gazing at the distant foothills of the Cévennes, a colleague who had come with me, a professional ecologist, was searching the ground surface. All of the sudden he gave a shout of delight: he had found a star anise plant growing at his feet, and he went into raptures over its subtle perfume and culinary virtues. His horizon was manifestly different from my own: he was up close, tactile, alert to tastes and scents, while I was staring into the distance' (Diedrich 2009: 71). A map as the reading tool and distant observation as the reading mode both condition the designers' site thinking to a great extent.

The narrative of the Euromed 2 design project builds upon the **DISCOURSE** port and city authorities agree on, namely that Marseille is founded on a 'maritime ground' , the port, and builds up an 'urban super-ground', the city (Roustan 2010). The port will remain active in the whole of the northern bay and continue to separate the city from the water, except for the first port platform, called J4. With J4 now handed over to the city, the city invited the French state and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region to erect two public facilities for 2013, the year of Marseille-Provence cultural capital of Europe. Emblematic architecture is therefore an

important part of the strategy for Euroméditerranée, and here the example of Bilbao is useful. When interviewed, the responsible for architecture and urban planning at EPAEM in Marseille, Franck Geiling, acknowledged that 'there is a handful of internationally operative architects who you can call to accomplish this kind of urban planning task' (Geiling 2010). The urban plan for Marseille sketches out a skyline at the border of city and port, made up by privately funded towers, of which the first one has been built. The designers of the Euromed 2 project adopt this architectural discourse in continuing to build up the coastline northwards, along their proposed coastal promenade, and especially at the Capitaine Gèze hub, where a series of emblematic towers rise up over the coast.

The metaphor of the ladder also points at the urban planning discourse on the metropolitan level and at a mid-term perspective, as this structure is meant to repair the metropolitan metabolism beyond the city boundaries, connecting the city with its metropolitan region in a more effective way. This narrative is anchored in the political wish that construction on Euromed 2 begins after 2013, the year Marseille-Provence celebrates as cultural capital of Europe. Just as the cultural capital Essen and the Ruhr area did in 2010, the public authorities, and with them the designers of Euromed 2, identify Marseille as part of a metropolitan region reaching far beyond the city boundaries. The region extends up to the university city of Aix-en-Provence in the north and the settlements and the larger port installations at Lake Berre in the west, already functioning together today but hindered by deficient infrastructures and the lack of a common identity in people's mind. The narrative of the linking ladder structure remediates both the missing infrastructure and the missing figures of thought.

Present **PROCESSES** are considered important because, according to records from maps and archives, the catchment area of the former Aygalades river keeps collecting stormwater and seasonally inundates the district, a dysfunction the design aims to abolish. Landscape architect Olivier Philippe explains that solving technical questions of such flux is part of every spatial project of his office Agence Ter, part of the Leclercq design team. He reveals his site thinking: 'The struggle for the survival of the planet and the need for independent energy sources (...) compel us to make use of the resources that are closest to hand to manage shortages. The result is a major weakening of what we might call 'pipe engineering', a costly and cumbersome technique, the invisible, buried character of which has made ordinary citizens isolated, dependent and unable to comprehend the forces of nature. (...) There can be no doubt that we are passing out of the era of the pipe into that of the catchment and the exposed channel' (Diedrich 2009: 70). The Euromed 2 design clearly illustrates the transformation of the pipe system currently hosting the Aygalades water course into an exposed water feature.

The designers assert that collective **MEMORY** plays an important role in their project. The stories and paintings of the Marseille countryside of pre-industrial times are still present in contemporary publications and discourses and commemorate the spatial practices of this area: the pastures were used by shepherds and the Aygalades valley by leisure seekers on their way to the freshness of the mountains.

The designers use **MATERIALS** for their design that are actually features of the bigger landscape: the rocky cliff on the port side of Euromed 2, and vegetation on the side of the Aygalades valley,

for example. Neither are prominent features of the site: the cliff as a topographical form is covered by numerous roads, rails, embankments, ramps and industrial installations, while the ripisylvian flora of the Aygalades is now almost nonexistent, but according to the designers must have once grown in the valley, an assertion that stems from the study of historical maps, photos, paintings and other records. On the other hand, but to a minor extent, the designers read other features that are actually found on the site, namely the built stock of the old industrial district and the village-like settlements which they propose to upgrade through minimal insertions and transformations.

The different **PRACTICES** of the people who currently use the site are recognised as unrelated by the designers, even conflicting: the big infrastructural thread along the coast channels regional traffic while the Euromed 2 district hosts local traffic and pockets of everyday life. In particular, business and leisure practices are acknowledged as stemming from an expanded site, comprising the Euromed 1 business district and the bay's coastal promenades. By viewing both types of practices as contained within the broader region, the proposal results in an occultation of the locally found precarious business and village-like leisure practices.

The designers distinguish between two **ATMOSPHERES** for their proposal. In their design documents, we have identified one atmosphere of the site that resides in the experience of overlooking the port and being exposed to the wind and the sun. The other one emerges from historical sources, recalling the pastoral Provençal landscape of river valleys, with intimate places sheltered from wind and sun and an introverted universe of Mediterranean plants.

Synthesising our detailed analysis of the Euromed 2 project through the 'reading' parameters of our interpretation tool, we can resume the designers' narrative in the static figure of a ladder of which the beams comprise fluid elements, namely water and traffic. Because of these fluctuating aspects we could also talk about a metabolism, or, in a man-made world, a mechanistic system, constantly operating, constantly in flux but within a static structure. This main structure, the ladder, is partly visible on site but is only clearly detectable from maps and historic sources. The designers heavily legitimate their narrative from sources by presenting such a mediated version of the site. They identify this ladder structure as deficient and recommend repairing it; how exactly is illuminated in the following chapter through the 'editing filters' of the interpretation tool.

Fig. 72. Ground plan of Euromed 2 (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 73. Perspective of Euromed 2 (drawing: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

The main design drawings of the Euromed 2 project consist of a ground plan of the district; an oblique aerial perspective of the same perimeter; a perspective of the coastal promenade as seen from a pedestrian's point of view; and a perspective of the valley park with normal and raised water levels, also seen from a park visitor's point of view. All these documents display the site after completed transformation, an end-scenario.

Fig. 74-76. Perspective of the coastal promenade; perspectives of the Aygalades park with normal water level and flooded (drawings: LABTOP for Leclercq team)

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Fig. 77. Conceptual sketch 'metropolitan challenges' (sketch delivered by O. Philippe, team Leclercq, redrawn by JoLA)

The designers' narrative is based on the reading of **STRUCTURES** from cartographic sources: a hydrological system and a historic street axis. They identify the hydrological system as a catchment area, accompanied by **PROCESSES** such as floods. When apprehending the street pattern, the designers read two infrastructural systems, the district streets and the express roads, which they identify as part of the metropolitan system, a reading that corresponds to the urban development **DISCOURSE** aiming at a better integration of the city into the Marseille-Provence metropolis.

THE DESIGNERS READ TWO INFRASTRUCTURES:
DISTRICT STREETS AND REGIONAL ROADS

THE DESIGNERS READ PROCESSES:
AYGALADES CATCHMENT

Fig. 78. Aygalades catchment (sketch: team Leclercq)

Fig. 79-80. Infrastructure patterns (drawings: team Leclercq)

THE DESIGNERS READ THE
OFFICIAL DISCOURSE OF MET-
ROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

Fig. 81. Structure of the metropolitan region Marseille-Etang de Berre-Aix en Provence (source: EPAEM 2010a)

Fig. 82-83. Emile Loubon. View of the Aygalades 1853 (Musée des Beaux-Arts de Marseille) ; ascent to La Viste, 1834-35 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

At the area proposed to host the Aygalades park, the designers do not read the existing rail yard as it can be experienced today. They read the **MEMORIES** and **PROCESSES** of the site, retrievable from archives and other sources: the river valley would be walkable, as it was by leisure seekers in the 19th century, and the water dynamics of the proposal would unfold seasonally when the river is opened up in a floodable park instead of being buried under the rail yard.

THE DESIGNERS READ BURIED PROCESSES, IMAGINING THE AYGALADES RIVER'S POTENTIAL WATER LEVELS

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ THE AYGALADES SITE AS IT EXISTS TODAY

Fig. 84-88. Sections through the existing rail yard and the planned park in dry and wet states (top); perspectives of the Aygalades park in dry and wet states (drawings: Leclercq team)
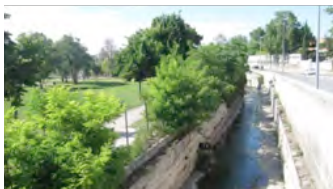

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ THE RAIL YARD UNDER WHICH THE CHANNELED RIVER DISAPPEARS

Fig. 89-90. Rail yard and channeled Aygalades river, 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

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The designers selectively read **MATERIALS** and **ATMOSPHERES** found on site as sources for their coastal promenade proposal. They acknowledge the visual presence of the port landscape and the bay, with their atmosphere of exposure and openness. They also exploit the material presence of the escarpment that hosts the Euromed 2 district. However, they reject both the materials of the traffic infrastructure installed at this escarpment and the business practices of the present population.

THE DESIGNERS READ THE EXISTING LANDFORM OF THE COASTAL CLIFF AND THE HARBOUR LANDSCAPE WITH ITS ATMOSPHERES OF OPEN-NESS AND EXPOSURE

Fig. 91. Harbour landscape in front of the site (photo: Leclercq team)

Fig. 92. Perspective of the coastal promenade (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 93. Express ways at the coastal cliff (photo: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ THE EXISTING ROUGH MATERIALS OF THE COASTAL CLIFF AND THE LOCAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Fig. 94. Flea market at Capitaine Gèze boulevard (photo: Leclercq team)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

DOMESTICATION

How do the designers transfer their Euromed 2 site readings into their design proposal? What are their main transfer instruments? In our interpretation tool we have defined two translation modes that allow for comprehending the existing site's otherness. Designers interpret sites within or across semiotic systems with a variable degree of interpretive freedom, either through integrating the old industrial site into the urban site in the mode of domestication, or through opening up the urban site to the old industrial one in the mode of foreignisation. Let us first examine what the designers choose to translate into their design in order to get an idea of their translation mode.

We can identify a strong tendency for domestication — translating aspects of their readings of the site into easily identifiable and accessible features for the audience of today. The designers' goal is to translate the rough road and rail landscape in front of the active port on the one hand and the lush plant universe of the Provençal valley on the other. In order to make these landscapes accessible and admirable for an audience of today they decide to adapt them to today's value system and to today's desirable experiences.

The designers reformulate the infrastructural landscape at the coastal cliff into a contemporary promenade which overlooks the active port and therefore provides the feeling of being part of it. However, the promenade features all kinds of contemporary amenities: separate lanes for pedestrians, floor materials suitable for skaters and high heels, benches and lighting, shops, a transport hub. The opposite of such domestication, foreignising the infrastructural landscape,

would have driven the designers to leave the coastal cliff as found, with all its heavy roads and big trucks driving over rough asphalt. They might then have proposed a toe-hold for the district in the middle of this strange universe, along a port feeder road, or on the edge to the fenced-in port ground, perhaps a special business as a do-it-yourself car repair, or an improvised discotheque. The audience for such 'foreignisation' would have been invited to understand the foreignness of this uncomfortable landscape. In the present case it is clear that the infrastructural landscape is domesticated for the sake of the audience.

The first step the designers undertook at the Aygalades valley was to interpret the rail yard as a cover for the water course and to read the Provençal valley from it. In a next step they translate this river valley into a contemporary urban park through domestication, to provide their audience with the feeling of immersion into what the designers call 'the Marseilles nature' (Leclercq team 2009). Just like the promenade, the park is equipped with everything a park needs today, offering nature experiences for urban dwellers: walk- and bike ways, areas of rest and contemplation, areas for play, access to the district, well-maintained vegetation, platforms by the water, and even specialized leisure opportunities after a thunderstorm when the water course swells and invades the space. The park's second function is to domesticate the water within a retention basin. The opposite operation, foreignising, would probably have invited the designers to consider the rail yard as an industrial ruin and let the vegetation invade it, imagining a Mediterranean version of the Duisburg Nord landscape park here.

Fig. 95. Express ways at the coastal cliff 2012
(photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 96. Coastal promenade (drawing: Leclercq
team)

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE FROM
MARSEILLES' NATURE INTO AN UR-
BAN PARK

Fig. 97. Emile Loubon. Ascent to La Viste, 1834-
35 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

Fig. 98. Aygalades park (drawing: Leclercq team)

The designers decide to
domesticate the two main
elements of their ladder
structure. They translate the
rough coastal infrastructure into a
refined urban promenade and the
suppressed Provençal landscape
into an urban park.

Fig. 99. Ground plan Euromed 2 (drawing: Leclercq
team, highlighting by L. Diedrich)

FOREIGNISATION

Even if domestication is the main translation mode of the Euromed 2 project, applied to the 'beams' of the ladder structure proposed by the designers, we can also observe a 'foreignisation' where the coastal fringe of their site touches the active port area and the expanses of the water, and also within the residential areas of the site, where the designers propose to upgrade the existing structures.

While the active port lies beyond the boundaries of the area of Euromed 2, the designers embrace this inaccessible landscape. By making it visually tangible without intervening physically in any way, they do not propose to transform the harbour landscape but rather to expose it in all its exciting foreignness. A domestication would have required property negotiations between port and city authorities, a scenario that Marseille has officially put aside to date as the port wishes to remain active on its grounds.

The village-type and working-class settlements to both sides of the Aygalades valley feature small houses, narrow streets and traditional building materials. The design drawings show that these are maintained in their state of foreignness, of being outdated. The designers propose to update these settlements through minor interventions such as introducing sidewalks instead of parking lanes, planting supplementary trees along the streets, building a new park nearby, and adding new architectural volumes here and there. Domesticating the built stock, however, would comprise a major programme of urban renovation which is probably beyond economic reach and social acceptance in this area.

Fig. 100. Harbour landscape in front of the cliff (extract of photo of team Leclercq)

Fig. 101. Harbour landscape in front of the coastal promenade (extract of drawing of team Leclercq)

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE
THE VERNACULAR DISTRICTS
AS FOUND

Fig. 102. Street in Le Canet before design intervention (photomontage: team Leclercq)

Fig. 103. The same street after design intervention (photomontage: team Leclercq)

The designers decide to translate, through foreignisation, the port landscape, situated out of their site of intervention, and the old residential districts on both sides of the imagined Aygalades park.

Fig. 104. Ground plan Euromed 2 (drawing: Leclercq team, highlighting by L. Diedrich)

CONNECTIVITY

Let us now examine the Euromed 2 design proposal in terms of transformation, in order to get an idea of the designers' intervention modes. What are their main instruments? In our interpretation tool, we have defined two intervention modes designers use for the transfer of old industrial sites into the urban realm. Intervening through means of connectivity offers ways to overcome the industrial logic of enclosure of the harbour sites and allows reconnecting the city with the waterfront from which it had been cut off. Intervening through means of appropriation focuses on the users' interaction with the area and aims at establishing the site as a platform for people's future dialogue with the existent.

We have understood from the designers' reading that they build their editing upon their site's structures, such as the metropolitan road network and the catchment of the Aygalades river. They identify these structures as connecting elements, and they detect deficiencies in the structures that should be repaired as well as repressed structures that should be reinstalled. Consequently, the predominant editing instrument is connectivity — installing missing links, reintroducing lost threads, fixing dysfunctional ones. By proposing actions that would establish connective elements, the designers are calling attention to the two lateral borders of their area of intervention. Each lateral border, they suggest, like the beam of a ladder, would be a bold linear structure: the park and the promenade. These bold lines, easily visible in their plans, will then be connected by the rungs of the ladder: a system of smaller, well-spaced linear interventions. These connecting operations, which follow the figure I have called a ladder, with beams and rungs, are the result of the designers' site reading. The image of the ladder also legitimates the steps of the basic editing operation, which must consists first in installing the ladder beams, conditio sine qua non for inserting the rungs. The designers declare the bold construction work on the park and the promenade as essential and first to come, preceding the internal linkwork which can follow later.

One of the two main connecting operations, the park, involves an element of flux in the form of natural processes. To revitalise the water system of the Aygalades river and connect it with its catchment, the designers reshape the Aygalades valley as a seasonably floodable park. It will be created by removing the rail yard and carrying out major earthworks that will enable the topography to host new hydraulic functions, protect the district from occasional inundations and reinstate the leisure uses of the valley as retrieved from historical paintings.

The other main connecting operation, the promenade, implies again working with flux, this time in the form of people's practices: their traffic movements. The designers suggest disentangling local from metropolitan traffic. They recommend connecting the urban fabric of the core city to their site by prolonging the historical street axis northwards in the form of a seaside promenade that presents itself as an urban balcony with views over the active port and the sea. It is situated on top of the coastal motorway, which channels the regional traffic. The promenade is covered and incorporated into the flank of the terrain and remodelled by reusing earth excavated from the Aygalades valley.

Both park and promenade promise to perform as highly connective. They will provide major public spaces for the inhabitants of the adjacent districts while also attracting citizens from the entire metropolitan area, just as other promenades and public spaces in town do. Connectivity is the main driver for the editing of the Euromed 2 site.

Fig. 105. Existing street pattern
(drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 106. Analytical sketch (Leclercq team, redrawn
by JoLA)

The designers decide to transform the site through an intervention on what they consider its main structure, a ladder, namely the coastal road and the water line of the Aygalades valley. The figure of the ladder implies that the 'beams' must be there to install the 'rungs'. The beams are materialised through the coastal promenade and the valley park, the rungs are formed by selected streets to be planted and drained in order to serve as extensions of the valley park, and by a completion and revision of the existing connections within the whole street network.

THE RUNGS OF THE LADDER:
PARK EXTENSIONS

THE RUNGS OF THE LADDER:
DISTRICT STREETS

Fig. 107. Existing street pattern
(drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 108. Street network (drawing:
Leclercq team)

Fig. 109. Park plan (drawing:
Leclercq team)

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APPROPRIATION

The competition documents and related sources provided by the designers do not show major editing instruments developed around how people might appropriate the proposed spaces. The designers' masterplan proposes a structure that on the plan looks like a ladder, a finite image relying on the main connecting structures which need to leave room, as the designers put it, for changes in the detailing. However, they materialise the 'beams' of the ladder through open urban spaces (promenade and park) which are likely to attract people and therefore to create a momentum of appropriation once they are installed. Within the design project as defined by the competition documents, these open urban spaces can be seen as the main tools for appropriation by future users, both on a district level and on the level of the Marseille-Provence metropolis.

In an interview about the post-competition development of the project, local architect Rémy Marciano, part of the Leclercq design team, explains that the competition masterplan is considered a 'plan and guide map' ('plan guide') which means that it is subject to modification over time while 'proposing spaces of appropriation'. This means that the designers intend to incorporate changes resulting from deeper investigation into local conditions, available budgets and negotiation with actors stepping into the project. Marciano reports that this process has already begun. The city has invited the designers to define the urban development of the first part of the Euromed 2 area in conjunction with local politicians and representatives of the district. The designers imagine the upgrading of the district over a long time span, depending on local circumstances and relying on fine-grained interventions, always bearing in mind the aim

of enhancing the parallel street pattern that connects to the main ladder structure and opens up views to the sea (Marciano 2012). However, the design documents, as of now, do not provide a more precise method for this locally driven appropriation process. The imagery used in the plan is of future users whose use differs substantially from the present users we can observe on the Euromed 2 site today. The designers' imagery rather reflects the expanded site, including other city districts with a wealthier population.

The designers do not build their transformation upon their perception of appropriation by the current population of the Euromed 2 district. If their proposed open urban spaces are meant to attract people to appropriate this part of town, it does not address the local residents but rather the wealthier people from the metropolitan region.

Fig. 110. Flea market at Capitaine Gèze boulevard (photo: Eric Lion for Leclercq team)

Fig. 111. Coastal promenade (drawing: Leclercq team)

THE PROPOSED SPACES ARE NOT
MEANT TO BE APPROPRIATED BY
THE PRESENT USERS

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

When scrutinising the Euromed 2 design project through the 'editing filters' of our interpretation tool, we can detect some of the designers' translation and intervention modes. In terms of translation, they interpret their project differently in its constitutive parts, the main structural elements being transferred through domestication, while other parts are translated through foreignisation. In terms of intervention, connectivity is the main driver of the project, because the main structure is a connecting figure, a ladder, while appropriation is not an important transfer instrument, at least not for today's inhabitants of the Euromed 2 area.

The coastal promenade is a translation of the current chaos of expressways, port feeder roads, district streets and railways at the coastal cliff. This translation is clearly a **DOMESTICATION** of a heavy infrastructure into a public amenity space. The same is true for the Aygalades park, where the domestication is twofold: first, the designers have decided to read the suppressed Provençal valley underneath the rail yard which buries the old Aygalades river in a subterranean pipe, and second, the translation is implied of this Provençal vegetation into a cultivated urban form, a public park.

If the infrastructure separating the port and the Euromed 2 district is domesticated, the port and the residential district are **FOREIGNISED**. The port, because no physical intervention is possible, is not translatable because of its active status. The designers decided to expose it in front of the domesticated cliff, to make it tangible through views and sounds in its exciting foreignness. They treat the urban district similarly, because a heavy make-over would simply be unrealistic. The residential parts of the Euromed 2 district are transferred into the design in their foreignness, subtracting here and adding there, hierarchising anew here and reorganising there.

These choices point at the designers' **MODES OF TRANSLATION**: the main elements of their design, the beams of the ladder, are an intersystemic interpretation, namely of the existent industrial port district into an urban district, which requires a substantial change of matter. The designers propose to remove main substantial functions for which the coastal cliff is classified as infrastructure for motorised traffic, and the Aygalades valley as a depression hosting a rail yard of the port. They also recommend installing new materials which link back to the existent site with an interpretive freedom that is beyond the transfer, in the arts, of a novel into a movie, where many elements are known and only need adaptation to the other semiotic system. This transfer comes closer to the one of a musical score into a ballet — a transfer into another semiotic system that is so different that many elements of the source system simply have to be reinvented, so that we speak of such an adaptation as a new work.

Beyond the main structure of the design, we can detect two other translation modes: the designers do not propose a change of matter for the built-up stock of the residential districts to both sides of the Aygalades park. Rather, the material structures of these areas are preserved as much as possible, and the buildings are to change in substance only. They are transformed from old port-city buildings into new urban buildings, as if translating from one language into another —the mode of translation proper.

Finally, the port and bay area — beyond the designers' area of intervention — evidences yet another translation mode. As the port must remain the port, the designers cannot operate an intersystemic interpretation from port-city district into urban district, and that is why they come to exert an intrasystemic interpretation here, a change within the same semiotic system. The port, so far apprehended as a utilitarian-functional area, is acknowledged in an aesthetic-experiential way as a port landscape. To use another analogy to music, this experience is like playing the same piece of music in a minor instead of a major tone: we speak of a key change.

CONNECTIVITY is the main driver for transformation in this project. The designers propose to edit the site where they have noticed repressed structures that disconnect it from its spatial and functional context. They propose two main interventions at the 'beams' of the ladder. To revitalise the water system of the Aygalades valley and connect it with its catchment area, they sketch out a seasonally floodable park, to be created by removing the existing rail yard, with major earthworks, enabling the topography to host hydraulic functions, protect the district from occasional inundations and reinstate the leisure uses of the valley as translated from old paintings. Secondly, the designers propose connecting the urban fabric of the city to their site by elongating a historical street axis northwards in the form of a seaside promenade that presents itself as an urban balcony with views over the active port and the sea, situated on top of the coastal motorway that they recommend covering and incorporating into the flank of the terrain, connecting with the broader metropolitan region. Both measures play connective roles, as they offer major public spaces to the inhabitants of adjacent districts while also offering a traffic corridor to the whole metropolitan area. Besides these two bold interventions, the designers propose a meshwork of smaller connective interventions. The 'rungs' of the ladder are installed step by step through a completion and revision of the existing district street network, and through the planting of selected streets to serve as extensions of the valley park.

These open urban spaces provide the main tools for **APPROPRIATION** by future users, though less on a district level than on the level of the Marseille-Provence metropolis: the design documents, at least, leave some doubt about who is intended to appropriate the main design elements of the seaside promenade and the floodable river park. The imagery of depicted people differs substantially from the people one can observe on the Euromed 2 site today, apparently assuming users will come from the expanded site, including other metropolitan districts with a wealthier population. Beyond this, appropriation is not a substantial part of the design. The competition documents do not provide a more precise method for a locally driven appropriation process but propose it in negotiation with local authorities in rather generic terms.

From the above we understand that the **INTERVENTION MODE** the designers have selected is first of all to concentrate their activities on the main connecting parts of their project area: namely the coastal cliff and the Aygalades valley. These two main structuring axes, the ladder beams, are completed by smaller linear interventions in the form of streets, the rungs, intertwining the whole site through a 'pointillism' of projects. When sketching these transfer operations as a figure, we obtain a project area bracketed by two lines of intervention that reach out to the expanded site, punctuated by interventions of various sizes in between.

Fig. 112. Express ways at the coastal cliff 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 113. coastal promenade (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 114. Rail yard at Aygalades 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 115. Emile Loubon. Ascent to La Viste, 1834-35 (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

Fig. 116-117. Aygalades park with normal and high water levels (drawing: Leclercq team)

DOMESTICATION drives the designers' translation. On the coastal cliff, they translate the existing heavy roads and rails into a refined urban promenade on top of the covered motorway, and on the valley side, instead of translating the existing rail yard, they refer to memories and translate a historical version of the valley into a contemporary urban park. Both operations imply a high degree of interpretive freedom as adaptations, and are in effect new works.

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE THE AYGALADES VALLEY IN A
DOMESTICATING WAY FROM PROVENCAL LANDSCAPE TO
URBAN PARK

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Fig. 118. Existing street pattern (drawing: Leclercq team)

Fig. 119. Conceptual sketch of the ladder structure (sketch: Leclercq team, redrawn by JoLA)

Fig. 120-121. Aygalades park plan and street network (drawings: Leclercq team)

CONNECTIVITY drives the designers' interventions. Starting from a structural comprehension of the site, and having detected an uncoordinated network of connecting elements (regional through-roads, district streets, open spaces and green structures), the designers propose to intervene mainly to repair the deficiencies of these structures.
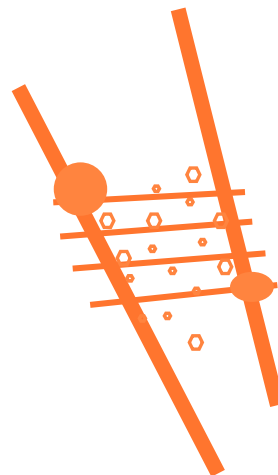
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TRANSLATION MODE:
KEY CHANGE

TRANSLATION MODE:
TRANSLATION PROPER

Fig. 122. Analytical sketch of Euromed 2's translation mode
(sketch: L. Diedrich on ground plan by Leclercq team)

INTERVENTION FIGURE:
LADDER

ADAPTATION AS A NEW WORK is
the main translation mode the
designers use in the Euromed
2 project. It is restricted to the
two main areas of intervention,
the coastal promenade and the
valley park. They constitute the
'beams' of the ladder structure
which is meant to hold the whole
design. It is static, a **FIGURE OF
INTERVENTION.**

Fig. 123. Analytical sketch of Euromed 2's
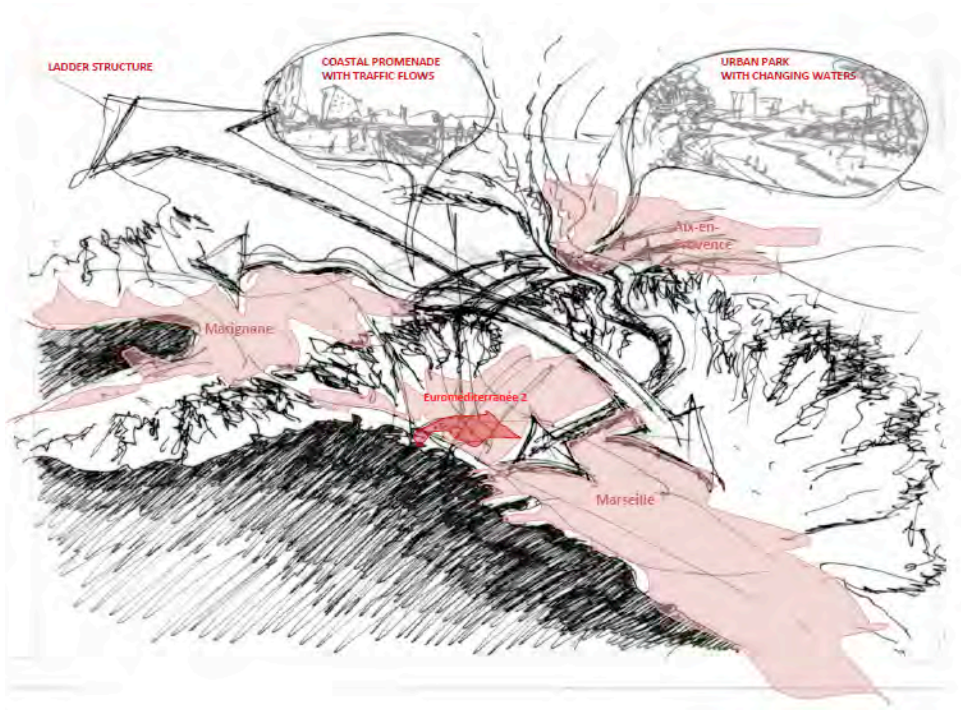intervention mode (sketch: L. Diedrich)

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Fig. 124. Analytical sketch of Euromed 2's site specificity (sketch: L. Diedrich)

The design **OSCILLATES** between the static figure of a ladder and its dynamic beams, which comprise the fluid elements of water and traffic, respectively. The designers have observed this structure as suppressed on site, verified its existence through cartographic material, a mediated form of the site, and propose to make it tangible again on site in the form of a park and a promenade. Time is not taken into the design as a conditioning element.

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

As defined initially in this thesis, a design can be said to be site-specific if we are able to detect a close link between the reading and the editing while embracing place-bound as well as transient aspects in an oscillating relationship. Let us conclude the interpretation of the Euromed 2 design project and ask if it is site-specific, partly site-specific or not site-specific at all. In the case it is site-specific, through what narrative do the designers evaluate and bind together the different aspects captured with our filters? Let us further find out what the project's oscillation between place-bound/static and transient/fluctuant is made of, in order to finally investigate to what extent time and open-endedness play a role in a potentially radicant design.

The Euromed 2 design shows close links in almost all aspects of the designers' site reading and editing. The project's narrative, its main concept, evaluates two structural characteristics of the site in particular, namely the urban fabric with its connecting traffic lines and the landform with its hydraulic function. This accent on structures supports the urban planning discourse which aims at a structural improvement of the whole metropolitan region of Marseille-Provence. The hydrology involves states of water, from low to flood, as a process component. It furthermore involves memories, as the water landscape has only been apparent in historical times while surviving in the collective memory until today. Structures as supporting a discourse first of all, combined with processes and memories, serve the designers as a foundation to construe their project. The designers' reading of materials and atmospheres is closely linked to their editing, it supports the narrative but is less constitutive. Actual practices of people, however, reveal weaker links between the reading and the editing; appropriation is not a major transfer instrument of this design.

We can detect an **OSCILLATION** within the project's narrative, namely in the static, place-bound formula of the ladder of which the beams comprise fluid elements, water (processes) and traffic (as the practice of people in motion). Because of these flux aspects we could also talk about a metabolism, or, in a man-made world, a mechanistic system, constantly operating, constantly in the flow yet within a static structure. The transience, part of site-specific design, can be observed as embedded in the two main beams of a static, place-bound figure.

If the project qualifies as site-specific from the above statements, let us look into its particularities. The designers apprehend their site in its discursive presence. As rather distant observers they verify their on-site experience on their urban planning documents and in debates, through the collective memories as retrieved from local talks and archives, and with the help of a variety of cartographic material. Their proposed ladder structure, which is only partly visible on site, is only detectable through a nearly archaeological survey of which the findings need confirmation from maps and historic sources. The designers heavily legitimate their resulting narrative from sources presenting a mediated version of the site. Site specificity in this case is driven by a confirmation of on-site findings through cartographic and historical studies with the objective of detecting latent structures, invisible on site but

retrievable from these diagrammatic sources. These mediated structures evolve as the main building blocks for the designers' vision of a transformed site in which structural deficiencies are repaired and experiential qualities reinstated. This vision is translated into a general perspective of the site, illustrating a static moment towards which the transformation process is meant to lead. Even if this spatial vision leaves quite open the question of how single spaces will look in the future, it nevertheless presents a finite image after transformation, sketched from a distant, privileged position. It does not matter what the Aygalades valley looks like today as long as cartographic documents provide evidence of its latent structure as a water catchment area from whence the vision of a floodable park can arise. Diagram investigation is the warrant for site specificity.

The place-bound predominates over the transient, a mediated site exploration over an immediate one, and the design clearly suggests an end-scenario. The Euromed 2 project can be declared a prototypical case to illustrate one pole of site specificity, namely a place-bound design, a mediated site exploration, aiming at producing a predefined end-scenario.

While the Euromed 2 development is very ambitious and heavily state-supported, one might be sceptical about the public and private funding coming across in these times of unstable economy. Reaching the end-scenario may take a while. First preparations are underway: the Aygalades discharge tube has been under inspection since 2012, the designers of the Aygalades park carry out hydrological studies, and a competition launched by the metropolitan body MPM for the Capitaine Gèze multimodal public transport hub at the northern tip of the site was judged in 2011 and is to be built by 2014 (EPAEM, MPM) – if all works to plan.

Unpredictable factors appearing over time are not part of the design, and the static ladder structure does not allow for any alteration in reaction to whatever might occur in the course of time. This makes the project fragile. It heavily depends on public actors to invest in the foundational interventions composing the ladder structure, namely the park and the promenade, extremely bold constructions which in times of economic uncertainty are at least lengthy if not improbable to be realised, and definitely **NOT RADICANT.**

ÎLE DE NANTES, NANTES

INTRODUCTION

CASE STUDY

The sources I have used to evaluate the site specificity of Île de Nantes's harbour transformation project comprise visual material, literature, my own on-site observations and interviews with relevant actors.

The primary visual material is all of the design documents from the designers' competition entry of 2000, published by the client, SAMOA, and by the local cultural magazine, *Place Publique* (edited by Frédérique de Gravelaine). The designers also provided me with a series of unpublished brochures of their detailed design work for various plots at the Île de Nantes, carried out between 2001 and 2007. Furthermore, I was offered access to the slides used by chief designer Alexandre Chemetoff in his lecture at the University of Copenhagen in the context of the annual conference 'World in Denmark 2010/ As Found', of which I was the conference chair.

Chemetoff's own writings, published first of all in a comprehensive monograph about his work (2009) and a small book about his planning method, the *Plan & Guide Map* (2010), and in professional magazines, form a key part of the literature consulted for my analysis. In addition, the writing of various authors on Nantes' history, geography and recent urban and economic development, provide context.

My own on-site observation is based on four one- to two-day visits, in the years 2009, 2010 and 2012. During the first one, by foot, I discovered the Île de Nantes project at the Western tip of the island in 2009. In 2010, I went back with colleagues of Copenhagen University on a research trip, exploring the whole of the Île de Nantes by bicycle. Again in 2010, I took part in a symposium on urban development in Nantes and Saint Nazaire, called Atelier Projet Urbain # 39, organised by the French state, and explored the harbour transformation sites in both cities by foot, bicycle and coach over two days. Finally, in 2012, I attended the 13th World Congress of Cities and Ports, organised by the International Association for Cities and Ports (AIVP) in Nantes and Saint Nazaire. Half a day was dedicated to site visits in Saint Nazaire, by coach and foot, half a day to the exploration of the Loire estuary by boat, and I spent another half day exploring by bicycle the advancement of works at the western tip of the Île de Nantes. As the project is constantly evolving, my frequent site visits allowed me to capture the dynamics of this harbour transformation and to observe the changes of the built-up stock and its materials, the evolving uses of buildings and open spaces and the atmospheres of this city in its becoming.

Twice I interviewed Alexandre Chemetoff as part of the research trip undertaken with my colleagues of the University of Copenhagen in 2010, once in Chemetoff's office in Gentilly/ Paris, and again in his project office in Nancy. When Chemetoff gave his lecture at the University of Copenhagen in 2010, I posed further questions as the chair of the conference.

Instead of interviewing the urban planning authorities, I took part in the Atelier Projet Urbain # 39 in Nantes and Saint Nazaire, during which all relevant actors gave speeches and engaged

in discussions, fleshing out their statements which are also well documented in professional literature.

As with all the chapters of this collective case study, the present chapter follows the structure of our interpretation tool. Instead of keeping the order of the filters as displayed in the analytical framework chapter, I have organised them in correspondence to the importance the designers attribute to them.

Some 60 km inland from the Atlantic coast, where the rivers Erdre and Sèvre flow into the river Loire, the meandering waters have shaped a number of river islands, facilitating river crossings. Here, in the first millennium BC, a settlement was established on the northern banks of the river — the origin of Nantes. Over the centuries it developed into a wealthy port city. During the 19th and 20th century several islands of the meandering river were merged by landfill to form the Île de Nantes, to host first the residential districts of the extending city and later, port activities and naval industries. With the creation of a new port in Saint Nazaire in the 19th century, closer to the sea and not threatened by the silting of the river Loire, Île de Nantes's port industries fell into decline, and in 1987 the last workshop and shipbuilding company, Dubigeon, ceased its activities on the western tip of the Île de Nantes. The island, of 337 hectares in total, began to accommodate spontaneous uses here and there, from trivial car parks and storage areas to artistic workshops and events, complementing the still-active commercial and residential districts of the area (Pétré-Grenouilleau 2008/2003, SAMOA 2007, Gravelaine 2010).

After the closure of the Dubigeon workshop and shipyard in 1987, which was a hard blow for Nantes, demolition began immediately, despite the protests of inhabitants, heritage professionals and local associations. When Jean-Marc Ayrault was elected mayor of Nantes in 1989, his administration decided to protect the shipyard's main workshop building and rehabilitate it. From an initial study carried out by architects-urbanists Dominique Perrault and François Grether from 1991 to 1994, the project of redeveloping Nantes's industrial river island gradually arose, envisioned as a key enterprise within the process of reuniting the cities of Saint Nazaire (70 000 inhabitants) and Nantes (290 000 inhabitants) into a greater metropolitan region (550 000 inhabitants) with a common port (traffic 30 million tonnes per year): a metropolis along the estuary of the river Loire. Opening up both cities to the river and its estuary therefore became essential.

The regional district's administration adopted this policy between 1995 and 1997. In Nantes, the respective project was termed Île de Nantes: 337 hectares of urban-industrial built-up stock. When redevelopment began, the area was partly active (13 000 inhabitants, 15 000 jobs), partly derelict (the former shipyards on the tip, related shipbuilding workshops), and despite the closeness to the historic city centre it was perceived by the locals as a remote place. In 1999 the city of Nantes invited three design teams to draw up proposals for the Île de Nantes. The architect–landscape architect team of Alexandre Chemetoff and Jean-Louis Berthomieu was chosen. Chemetoff created an office on site, the Atelier de l'Île de Nantes, from which he carried out his project during the 10-year period from 2000 to 2010. In 2003 the local public developer SAMOA was founded and commissioned as the project manager of the Île de Nantes, with urban planner Laurent Théry as a head. Under the auspices of the Atelier de l'Île de Nantes, a multitude of major and minor projects have been carried out between 2000 and 2010 on the Île de Nantes, attracting new residents, businesses and facilities. The Île de Nantes is now considered part of the central city by the locals (Luneau 2010, Gravelaine 2009b; Métropole Nantes Saint Nazaire 2009; SAMOA 2007).
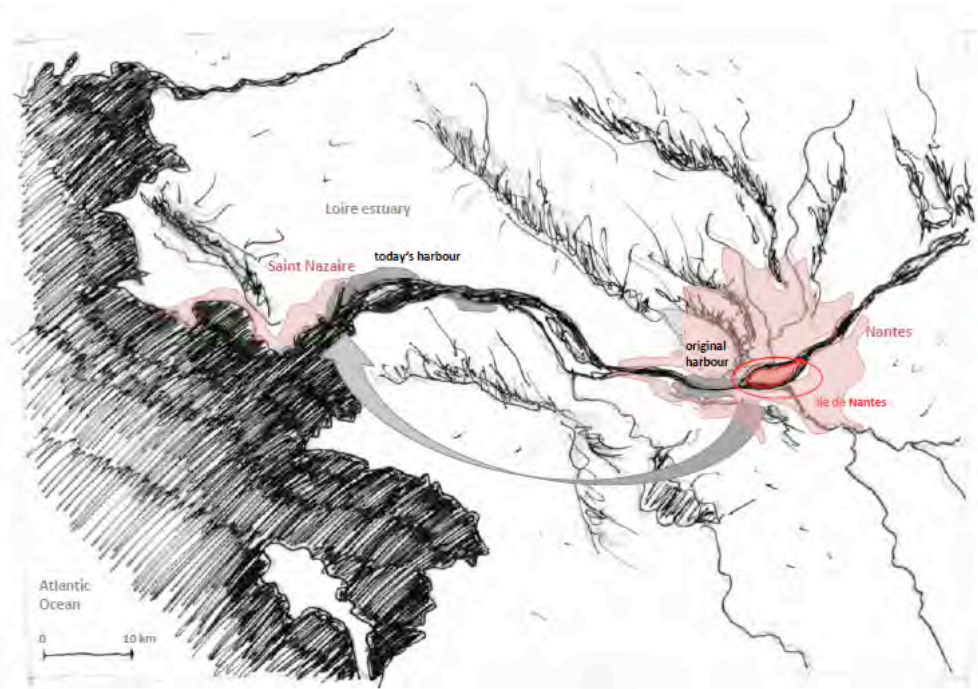
Fig. a Harbour development within the topography of the Nantes-Saint Nazaire metropolitan region (sketch: L. Diedrich)

The idea of a metropolitan region along the estuary was communicated through cultural events and the creation of new public sites of interest. A main driver for bringing the river into the minds of the people has been the Estuaire art festival. During the first festival, which occurred in 2007, artworks appeared on the riverbanks, from Nantes all the way to Saint Nazaire, and boat trips and land excursions were organised to entice people to discover their river landscape, thus far unknown to most of them. Two more Estuaire festivals were organised in 2009 and 2012, inscribing on-site exploration of the cities' larger landscape into people's customs (Gravelaine 2009b, Masboungi 2010).

At the same time, the metropolitan administration was reorganised, and they updated their territorial planning scheme (SCOT, schéma de cohérence territoriale) on the basis of the idea of a common estuary metropolis. This idea came about in response to the French state's call for projects on 'ecocities' — the Nantes Saint Nazaire urban community was awarded the ecocity label in 2009 for its strategy of 'constructing the city along the river'. In the ten-year period from 2000 to 2010 the redevelopment was conducted under the auspices of Chemetoff and the Atelier de l'Île de Nantes, on the side of the designers, and Théry and the SAMOA, on the side of the public developer, while Ayrault continued to be the mayor of Nantes — altogether, a group of people who worked in confidence with each other. A similar continuity of professionals can be observed during this period in Saint Nazaire. Because of this favourable constellation, probably historically unique, an urban planning discourse was established through continuous and univocal communication while allowing a maximum of freedom and many spontaneous decisions within the concrete projects and interventions through which the concept materialises on site over time.

This case study only considers the design work and developments of the ten years from 2000 to 2010. In 2010, both Chemetoff and Théry resigned from their jobs. In 2012, Ayrault was appointed prime minister under France's new president, François Hollande. The Estuaire art festival, which occurred three times, is now over. In 2010, the SAMOA appointed a new head, Jean-Luc Charles, and a competition brought together a new team of designers under Belgian urban planner Marcel Smets and the office uapS, who have been commissioned for a period of six years, from 2010 to 2016 (SAMOA 2010).

Fig. b. Map of the eco-metropolis Nantes-Saint Nazaire (source: Métropole Nantes-Saint Nazaire 2009)

Fig. c. Map of Île de Nantes 'position with the city of Nantes and its region (source: SAMOA 2007)

Fig. d-f. View onto river Loire from various spots on the Île de Nantes, 2010-12 (photos: L. Diedrich)

DESIGN PROJECT

This design proposal differs considerably from the one for Marseille, in not offering the usual range of design documents such as a masterplan, an overview perspective and impressions of concrete spatial situations. The designers of the Île de Nantes project refused to show any overall finished concept of their project and submitted only a ground plan to the competition in 2009. At first glance this ground plan looks like a common masterplan, but upon closer inspection, it is something quite different. The designers suggest a 'Plan & Guide Map' ('plan guide'), a design tool made of two superimposed ground plans, of which the first is a fine-grained site inventory and the second a redevelopment plan. With this tool the designers propose a method of working in which they will update the Plan & Guide Map every three months by incorporating all changes that have occurred on site since the previous survey, thus developing the next set of design interventions from this update. Each survey map is the result of comprehensive on-site observation. Each design idea originates from these observations. The inventory map shifts into a design document and back into an inventory in an ongoing oscillating movement. The Plan & Guide Map uses a colour code: tones of red distinguish the nature and the state of transformation of the plots and the buildings, tones of beige and green denote public and green spaces. This plan is not self-explanatory; one has to learn to read it.

Instead of drawing an overall image of the project, when the project began, the designers formulated a list of main objectives, or game rules: to respect as much as possible what is there; to intervene wherever possible in the public space as a prime instrument to reconnect disparate adjacent elements, which themselves can stay mostly untouched; to create unity through diversity; and finally to open up to the river the enclosed industrial plots of Île de Nantes wherever possible. These guidelines lent a vision to the project without predefining it through imagery, and encouraged creative action from everything found on site (Chemetoff 2010, Chemetoff 2010a).

Rather than providing any overall image of their work, the designers instead promote the immediate experience of their work on site. They invite clients, workers, the community and the press to establish a dialogue with the site itself instead of studying a mediated version of it (Chemetoff 2009).

Over the ten years since the the Île de Nantes project began, the designers have documented single spaces they designed for it. They present them with a photo of the plot 'as found' and with a photo of it after design intervention. This before–after comparison shows the subtlety of their interventions. Chemetoff promotes an 'economy of means', supporting 'a complete change without changing everything' ('changer tout sans tout changer'; Chemetoff 2010).

Fig. g-h. Plan & Guide Map for the Île de Nantes submitted as competition entry in 2009 (drawings: Atelier Chemetoff)

Fig. i-k. Chemetoff and interview partner Sébastien
Marot on site (source: Chemetoff 2009)

Name of operation
Île-de-Nantes
Location
Nantes, France
Contracting Authority
SAMOA société d'aménagement de la métropole ouest atlantique
Prime Contractors
Alexandre Chemetoff/ Atelier de l'Île de Nantes
Area
330 ha
Competition
1999
Construction
2001-2010

Fig. l. Quai des Antilles before and after transformation (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. m. Les Chantiers before and after transformation (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. n. Quai François Mitterrand in front of the new Tribunal before and after transformation (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. o. Quai François Mitterrand before and after transformation (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

Over the past centuries, Nantes grew into a rich bourgeois harbour city through overseas trade, especially the slave trade of the 18th century, resulting in the outstanding architectural heritage of Nantes' city centre. The port of Nantes moved its main facilities coastward to Saint Nazaire in the 19th century. While Nantes remained a shipbuilding town until the 1980s, its port industry was much smaller than other European cities, such as Marseille, and was never characterised by the same mixture of bourgeois and multiethnic working class people as the bigger harbour cities. Today, Nantes builds upon its bourgeois tradition, developing culture on various levels. In France, it is known as the city where young well-educated families with children from Paris move to, attracted by its two-hour high-speed train connection to Paris, its lower living costs, and its quality of life, combining a variety of cultural activities with proximity to the beaches of the Atlantic Ocean.

My first contact with Nantes was in the 1990s, when the city had been among the first in Europe to build a new tramway line and had redesigned the open urban spaces along it, such as the Cours des Cinquante Otages, widely published in professional media at that time. Since then, Nantes has continued to be a pioneer of urban design and contemporary urban culture, leaving behind its reputation as a provincial town in the west of France. With the Estuaire art festival in the early years of the 21st century, Nantes began to play the card of its bigger landscape, beyond the Atlantic beaches: the soft water landscape of the Loire estuary was performed by artists and invited to be discovered by the citizens.

At the same time, the Île de Nantes harbour transformation project, along with the discussions by professionals in architecture, urban design and landscape architecture, made its way into the media — for its design work, on the one hand, and for its clever project management and political anchoring on the other. Indeed, the forces behind the Île de Nantes project have not been statal and imposed, as in Marseille, but are rather generated by local actors and tied together through horizontal negotiation, at least in the ten-year period from 2000 to 2010. This political and planning culture does not exist everywhere. It proved to be a fertile ground in which experimentation in urban development could grow, such as the uncommon design approach of the Île de Nantes project.

Fig. p-q. States of urban renovation at Quai François Mitterrand and next to the Alstom site on the Île de Nantes, 2010-12 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. r-s. The walking Elephant of the Machines de l' Île workshop at the Chantiers site; temporary use of the Alstom hangars, 2010-12 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. t-u. Reuse of floor materials at the Chantiers site and in front of the new Tribunal, 2010-12 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

MATERIALS

In this project the designers focus on the material continuity of the site's elements. What they read on site initially is what they find in terms of material. They consider the whole island as the on-site material to work with: a heterogeneous conglomerate of fragments of various origins, accepted as such by the designers regardless of when and why and for what purpose they first appeared. The materials are there, so they are valued as a resource. They range from the island in the river as a whole to architectural elements such as slipways, cranes, warehouses, hangars, the working-class districts of the old wharfs and naval industries, the more recent commercial and residential buildings, down to a whole palette of materials like pavement, asphalt, rails and railings, street furniture, trees, and vegetation and stone, metal, rubble and earth. The design documents include inventories of these materials, acknowledging the designers' awareness for the documented elements as valuable resources. The designers read these materials strictly from their site of intervention within its property lines and in its present state, i.e., the area of control in its present time frame.

Documents extracted from the design process and on-site observations show clearly that the designers pay particular attention to every material found on site, be it at the scale of geography, of architecture or of mere building and soil material. There is no hierarchy; everything is equally important if materially present. Therefore the choice of materials is abundant, and the site is not taken as a constraint but as a resource offering plenty of discoveries which can orient the design, as Chemetoff puts it (Gravelaine 2009a: 24). Chemetoff writes, 'Images must not come too quickly. They are said to be reassuring. I find them disturbing because they freeze the development of a process and prevent reality from appearing. Early images are an obstacle to the proper perception of a place's reality. In fact, getting to know a place requires practice, experiments and considering the space of the project as time for possible discoveries. The contract between a client and a project manager does not rely on the realisation of an image but on the answer to a question, on an exchange and a demand' (Chemetoff 2009: 6).

The designers closely associate the material reality of a site with its evolution over time and the common search for its possible future, which cannot be answered by the designers through an image. The designers therefore defined guidelines that lend a vision to the project without predefining it through imagery (keep as much as possible, reconnect the city with the river, intervene in public space first). They encourage creative action from every possible material found on site. The guidelines also link the reading of materials proper with the ways they are used by the many possible actors on site. This leads us to study in the following section how the designers read site practices.

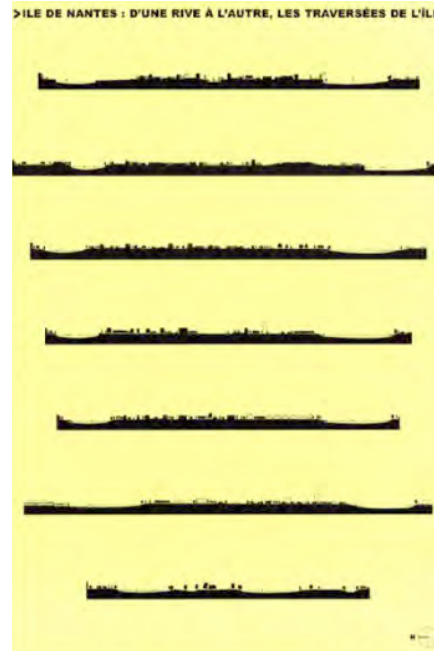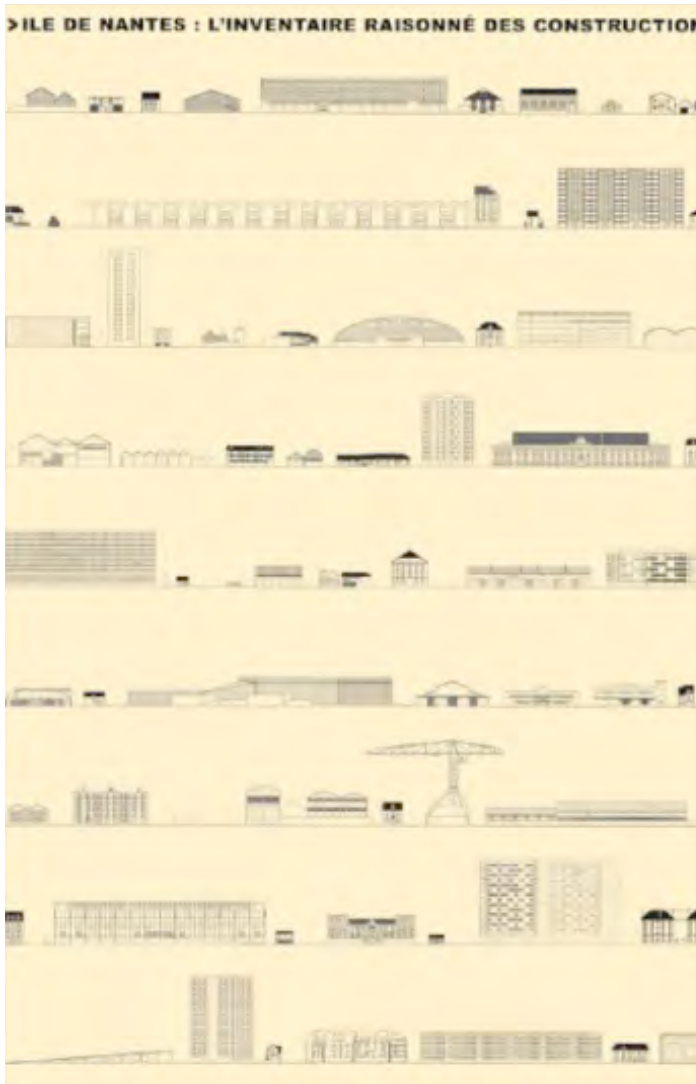Fig. 1. Ile de Nantes as found in an aerial photo taken from the west (source : SAMOA 2007)

Fig.2. Sections across the island of Ile de Nantes (source : conference Chemetoff 2010)

On a geographical scale, the designers read the Île de Nantes island itself as a material to work with.

> ILE DE NANTES : L'INVENTAIRE RAISONNÉ DES CONSTRUCTION

THE DESIGNERS READ:
BUILDINGS OF ALL KINDS AS
ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL

Fig. 3. Inventory of the buildings of Île de Nantes (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

On the scale of architecture, the designers acknowledge existing buildings as a material to use in their project, as this inventory of architectural objevcts proves. But these objects are also made of various building materials, such as iron, stone, concrete, wood. These are considered a resource as well.

In the case of the Nefs, a huge hangar on the Chantiers site, the designers selected the 19th-century metal structure as their prime material to work with while taking apart the infill and cladding materials. The overall architectural shape is therefore recognisable even if the interior has changed.

Fig. 4-5. The Nefs at the Chantiers site as found and under construction, showing its basic metal structure (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

Fig. 6-7. The Nefs as transformed in 2009 and 2011 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE NEFS AS ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL

In the case of the Banana Hangar on the Quai des Antilles, the designers chose the early 20th century concrete structure of this old cooling facility as their main material. Again the overall architectural form has been conserved. The spontaneous vegetation has been completed and remains at the same place. The quays have conserved their rails and parts of their paving and remain an open space at the river.

THE BANANA HANGAR AS ARCHITECTURAL MATERIAL

Fig. 8-9. The Banana Hangar site as found and under construction, showing its basic concrete structure (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

Fig. 10. The Banana hangar as transformed in 2010 (photo: L. Diedrich)

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On the scale of architecture, the designers do not value old industrial buildings more than more recent constructions, as proved by the preservation of the Beaulieu shopping centre, a relic of the urbanisation of the Île de Nantes in the '60s and '70s. The designers intervened first in the open urban space to connect the shopping centre with its surroundings, then initiated a renovation project (architect: P. Bouchain) that gave a new envelope to the basic material structure and opened it up at one angle to the boulevard. The public space is the prime intervention area of the designers — here they change a lot of material in order to alter the perception of and access to the adjacent buildings, which then do not need to change so much themselves.

Fig. 11. The Beaulieu shopping centre site as found (top image) and as transformed (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

Even if the designers alter many of the material aspects of the open urban space, records from the construction site and my own observation prove that they are still directed by the wish to take over as much as possible of the existing ground cover and vegetation. There are no inventories of them in the visual design documents as there are for the buildings. However, Gravelaine (2009a) explains the designers' work with ground materials: they rescued layers of granite paving found in the ground to reuse it, and they preserved the variety of slope gradients of the existing surface materials which obliged the contractors to map out every single centimetre, an uncommon practice for public space builders but accomplished with success.

GROUND COVERS AS
MERE MATERIALS

Fig. 12-13. Grounds at the Île de Nantes as observed in 2011 (photos : L. Diedrich)

The designers could easily have retrieved resources from maps, historical records and other sources that present the site's materials in a mediated version, but they chose not to. Nor do they value the historical material the site is also made of: the isles and islets in the once meandering river, the skyline of vessels and masts of the ships once built in the workshops, the grounds and vegetation that once must have existed on the soft river banks of the former archipelago and still exist today on the south-ern riverbank, opposite the Île de Nantes.

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ: HISTORICAL STATES OF THE SITE, VEGETATION OF THE FORMER ARCHIPELAGO

Fig. 15. Map of Nantes' river islands in 1665 (source: Pétré-Grenouilleau 2008)

Fig. 16. Map of Nantes' river islands in 1888 (source: Gravelaine 2009b)

Fig. 14. Soft southern banks of river Loire, opposite of the Ile de Nantes, in 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 17. Port of Nantes in 1974, in the back the shipyards of what is today the Île de Nantes (source: Gravelaine 2010)

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PRACTICES

What kind of life, what practices do the designers read at the Île de Nantes? The project's chief designer, Chemetoff, explains that 'The material of architecture is time that flows, from the first discussions with a client to their moving into the place and to the following years – those of utilisation. (...) Wearing, sheen, and the way in which things pass through time: all of this interests me. I like houses to be lived in, gardens to be cultivated and streets to be busy. I like it crowded and alive' (Chemetoff 2009: 6).

There are two interventions that exemplify very clearly how the refusal of the designers to produce finite images and to invent future practices has enabled them to observe practices established over time and to conceive the design project on this basis: the Alstom production site and the Nefs hangar, a big structure at the old Chantiers shipyard.

When discussions of the Île de Nantes project first began, the Alstom company, occupying six hectares in the very centre of the Île de Nantes, wanted to downsize their production spaces and therefore leave the site. The designers of the Atelier de l'Île, after inspection of the area in question, launched the idea of persuading the company to remain in an office building and some of the production halls on the site, all ceased to an investor under conditions defined by the urban community, and to sell the majority of the site to the urban community to develop public projects. At the very start of the urban operation, not many investors were ready to take the risk, but the public developer SAMOA found a local one, Bernard Brémond. On the publicly purchased area the SAMOA decided to plan and build a 'Creative District', comprising the Art Academy, the

School of Books, and the arts department of a high school. Because the complex programme definition and negotiation with future users was going to take some time, SAMOA, instead of leaving the old and quite run-down halls and buildings vacant, decided to rent them out to various small 'creative' initiatives and companies, at a low price. Among these initiatives were the artists François Delarozière and Pierre Oréfice, who build the 'Machines', gigantic mobile structures for street art festivals. Having installed themselves in the Alstom hall, they constructed the Elephant, a mechanical structure that walks about and upon which people can ride, now a main attraction of the Île de Nantes. According to Théry, director of the SAMOA, all these transitional companies, who started networking on projects with each other and on site, developed the programme for this site from within (Gravelaine 2009a: 26–29; Masboungi 2010: 16–17). The process of building up this district is still underway, far from being complete as of the writing of this thesis. The evolution of practices is obvious on site — some old buildings have been renovated, some new ones inserted for permanent uses, and they easily coexist, enriched by the various temporary practices that enliven the old Alstom halls.

One of the practices that contributed to developing a programme from the site itself was the construction and move of the Elephant to the former Chantiers shipyard. Nantes' mayor, Jean-Marc Ayrault, had first imagined erecting something there like the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao but as early as 2002, started to think of a more transitory use. The designers had classified the site as a 'Park of Memories', without assigning to it a more precise usage. Negotiations with various potential users brought the SAMOA into

touch with the Machines builders, who had finished the construction of their Elephant in the Alstom halls and now needed a storage space for him. Together they evolved a project involving much more than storage alone — they discovered that the Nefs of the Chantiers site had the space to also host the entire Machines workshop. The old hangars were renovated by the architect Patrick Bouchain, with their basic structure preserved. When the Machines are all built, some time in the future, the workshop might move out and the site be reused for something else again — there is no definite plan. In the meantime, the Elephant tours every weekend. The grounds around the Nefs proved to offer the necessary expanse and have been accommodated accordingly by the designers (Gravelaine 2009a: 47–48). The Elephant continues to attract crowds of visitors and has become the emblematic figure of Nantes. The once fenced-off, useless Chantiers site hosts practices which could not have been developed without closely observing and negotiating what best fits this site and what was already there, in the Alstom halls.

The two examples of the Alstom site and the Nefs at the Île de Nantes illustrate clearly how, in this project, practices precede design: the design evolves from practices observed on site. If the designers do not distinguish any practices, the project initiators provide the necessary temporal, spatial and administrative framework to allow local practices to install themselves. This requires a close collaboration of designers, clients and administrative bodies in an intensity that is far beyond current planning practice. The Île de Nantes is an experiment in this respect.

The series of photos from the site shows the evolving state of usage of the Alstom site. Old production halls host initiatives and companies on a temporary basis, and the new buildings on the site host more permanent programmes. The usages depicted here are subject to change over the coming years as the redevelopment of the Alstom site continues; it is meant to accommodate a new art school and other facilities. The designers, with the public developer SAMOA, proposed that the programme for this central piece of the Île de Nantes needs time to be defined, to profit from the productive uncertainty that leaves opportunities open for actors who might propose initiatives that fit just as much as the Machines did in the Nefs.

Fig. 18-21. Alstom site in 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

The structure of the Nefs, a fragile metal construction on unstable ground, couldn't accommodate practices in need of a weighty architectural envelope and insertions. The Elephant and the Machines workshop, however, needed little more than an umbrella to protect them and some extra spaces that could be erected independently from the fragile metal structure. The existing material proved to be suitable for exactly this use — a combination discovered during the discussions with actors from site.

PRACTICES AT THE NEFS

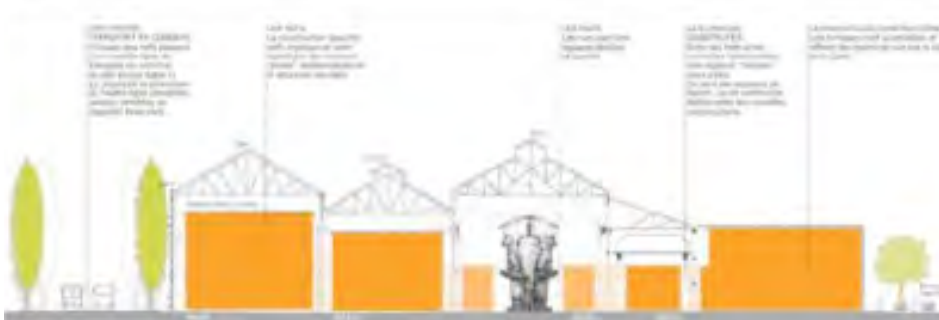Fig. 22-23. The Machines workshop at the Nefs (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

Fig. 24. Sketch of the Elephant's storage space and Machines installations at the Nefs (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

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DISCOURSES

When they founded their project on practices, the designers were supporting the practice-based urban planning approach of the local authorities of the Loire estuary. The authorities agreed to establish a common policy striving at building up their cities along the common river and communicating this idea by proposing river discoveries through cultural events and the creation of new public sites of interest.

The designers inscribed their project completely into the discourse of discovery. In 2005 they had redesigned most of the riverbanks of the Île de Nantes, creating a collective discovery walk around the island ('faire le tour de l'île', organised by the local newspaper Ouest France). In 2007, the designers rehabilitated the western tip of the island at Quai des Antilles. It was inaugurated during the first edition of the Estuaire art festival. The discovery walk and the first festival were the two events that changed the collective consciousness and the everyday practice of people at the Île de Nantes. Since 2007, Quai des Antilles offers bars and cultural facilities in the refurbished Banana Hangar, complete with a generous riverbank promenade and an artwork installed on its railings, commissioned from artist Daniel Buren by the first Estuaire festival: a series of huge rings, each framing a view of the downstream landscape. It is today an emblematic installation symbolising the changed view of the citizens onto their river.

Fig. 25. Map of the eco-metropolis Nantes Saint Nazaire (source: Metropole Nantes Saint Nazaire 2009)

Fig. 26. Map of Ile de Nantes' position within the city of Nantes and its region (source: SAMOA 2007)

THE DESIGNERS READ:
URBAN PLANNING DISCOURSE
BASED ON RIVER PRACTICES

Fig. 27-30. The big yellow crane at Quai des Antilles; the rings of Daniel Buren at Quai des Antilles; a slip-off slope; view coastward from the Western tip of the Ile de Nantes (photos: L. Diedrich)

ATMOSPHERES

One might ask how the designers chose which of the abundant materials to develop further in their design. The main principles (keep as much as possible, reconnect the city with the river, intervene in public space first) do not suffice as selection criteria. The nature or status of materials does not guide the selection either, as it does not matter to the designers if materials are more or less noble, more or less historic, more or less industrial. But whatever they are, they produce an atmosphere, provided there is a subject to perceive it. In industrial times, no perceiving subject would have been identified, as only production logics counted, while in the post-industrial era of the city, there is always a perceiving subject: aesthetics are an important part of the urban realm.
In the Île de Nantes design project, atmospheres are the most important aesthetic drivers. The designers' before and after design documents make this much clear, as do my own on-site observation which I double-checked against historic images: the designers have selected everything found on site on the basis of atmospheric quality. They value the openness of large paved quays under the maritime sky that announce the closeness of the sea, and they appreciate the roughness of the mounded banks that attest to the presence of the river in the city.

While many designers develop a personal style, an imprint, a signature, a canon of recognisable forms and materials, the designers of the Atelier de l'Île de Nantes repudiate such a formal aesthetic profile; they claim to be able to take into their design forms and materials 'as found', with the least possible alteration. Their aesthetic orientation resides in their sensitivity to select atmospheres. Chemetoff puts it this way: 'What I say cannot be separated

from an aesthetic choice, a journey from image to image. I spend my time choosing atmospheres, details, situations that consequently enter my imaginary museum. I take pictures of the world around me as you would take notes to develop a project. Projects thus find their origins in this search for the specific characteristics of each place. Each photograph is a manner of picking from the surroundings what may become my vocabulary' (Chemetoff 2009: 26).

The comparison of before and after shows more than how closely both situations are related in material terms. The designers also read the atmospheres of their site as an important value in guiding their design work.

Fig. 31. Quai des Antilles (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. 32. Quai François Mitterrand (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

STRUCTURES

By comparing the Plan & Guide Map with
on-site observations, it becomes clear that
the designers read the site's main structure
as a post-industrial urban island, confined
by its artificial riverbanks, embedded into
the overall urban structure by bridges and
main traffic arteries. There is no provision
for imagining the old islands of the once
meandering river, which the designers
could have easily detected from historical
cartography, in the way the designers of the
Marseille project acknowledged the Aygalades
catchment.

The evolving Plan & Guide Map reports the
progress of structures taking shape on the
site. The main principles of the design (keep
as much as possible, connect the spaces
on the island with the river, take action
through public space) manifest themselves
as structuring physical elements that
become apparent on the map the more the
transformation advances on site.

THE DESIGNERS READ:
A POST-INDUSTRIAL ISLAND IS THE
MAIN STRUCTURE

Fig. 33. Aerial photo of the Île de Nantes (source:
SAMOA 2007)

The aerial photo reveals the
nature of the Île de Nantes as an
urban island shaped by industry.

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THE MAIN STRUCTURE UNFOLDS
PRINCIPLES THAT ARE TRANSLATED
INTO SPACE OVER TIME

Fig. 34-35. The Plan & Guide Map as of 2003 (survey) and 2008 (project)
(source: Atelier Chemetoff)

The map of 2003, from the beginning of the design project, depicts the traces of industrialisation on the island and illustrates the many inaccessible strips along the riverbanks and plots lacking connection with the surrounding urban fabric. The map of 2008, at an advanced state in the project, clearly reveals the structures read by the designers: the riverbanks are almost completely accessible and help identify the site as an island, the island itself has been covered with new public spaces that connect with the riverbanks and lead to the water and sometimes across towards the surrounding city. On-site photos exhibit how this structure is perceived by users.

Fig. 36-38. New street cut through the formerly closed-off Alstom site towards the river; redeveloped riverbanks at Quai François Mitterrand, in 2012 (photos : L. Diedrich)

PROCESSES

Processes as they can be observed today support the designers' project. As an island the Île de Nantes is affected by the tidal waters of the river Loire. On-site photos demonstrate how the designers have redefined the existing artificial riverbanks: they conserved their form of consolidated slopes or solid concrete framework structures; they added walkways from which to observe the moving water and the riverbank constructions themselves; and they installed river bus pontoons that move up and down with the tides to give access to the water. The designers preserved the existing slipways of the old shipyard to let the tidal waters invade them. At some places this exposure to the water has generated a ripisylvian vegetation, which the designers have made accessible through catwalks and platforms.

In addition to the tidal river waters, the designers also read all kind of processes of decay and succession on the site, as my on-site observation demonstrates. Chemetoff describes what catches his eye: 'Wearing, sheen, and the way in which things pass through time: all of this interests me' (Chemetoff 2009: 6).

THE DESIGNERS READ:
TIDAL WATERS ON THE RIVERBANK

Fig. 39-43. On-site observation of the processes of tidal water in 2009, 2011 and 2012: concrete structure of the riverbanks at Quai des Antilles; moving pontoons in front of the Chantiers site; two slipways with ripisylvian vegetation (photos: L. Diedrich)

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Fig. 44-48. On-site observation of the processes of weathering and succession in 2009, 2011 and 2012: cracking concrete surfaces; fading colours on asphalt; grasses growing in the joints of stone pavement; spontaneous vegetation in gravel beds (photos: L. Diedrich)

I have understood the designers' reading of processes through my observation of the realised design work on site; no explicit visual design documents testify to it. When comparing the site before and after design intervention, I discovered that the designers preserved and enhanced the effects of existing processes: they kept the built-up structure of the riverbanks and let the water move the pontoons. They continue to invite the ripisylvian vegetation to invade the slip-off slopes where possible. Grass has always grown among the granite paving stones, so the designers allow it grow in their open spaces. Paint on asphalt has always faded out, so the designers count on new paint to weather similarly. Concrete has always cracked and needs to be repaired periodically, so the designers include plots where this process will continue.

MEMORIES

In this project, the designers do not read the vast collective memory of the area, even though various sources demonstrate that the Île de Nantes has a long history from which memories are documented, such as of the time when the site was an archipelago in the meanders of the river Loire.

Instead, the designers address affective and personal memories that consequently stem from the more recent history of the industrialised island, experienced by people still living today. The designers reveal memories from the smallest object found on site, worth preserving for a commemorative reason. They report that here and there the construction work uncovered things from the ground of which they ignored the raison d'être — but working closely with historians and an association of former shipyard workers, they researched the memories of such discoveries and incorporated the respective material traces into their design (Gravelaine 2009a: 25).

But they also accredit memories the other way round; slight changes modify the existent without erasing it. 'The Nefs are not the same as before,' explains Chemetoff. 'The brickwork of the walls has been demolished, the roof is translucid now and got a new truss — this transformation allows everybody to appropriate the heritage, to reactivate his or her own memories' (Gravelaine 2009a: 25).

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ: COLLECTIVE MEMORIES OF THE ARCHIPELAGO

Fig. 49. The former archipelago of the Île de Nantes, in a drawing of 1665 (source: Pétré-Grenouilleau 2008)

Fig. 50. The Nefs before and after intervention (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. 51. Stone pylon at Quai François Mitterrand, 2012 (photo: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS SEARCH FOR
PERSONAL MEMORIES

The designers invite the citizens to reveal memories from their own experience by which they know the Île de Nantes as an active industrial part of town and so are able to compare the before and after of its transformation, while activating their personal memories. Buildings such as the Nefs offer this opportunity. At other places, the designers found objects like the stone pylon in front of Quai François Mitterrand, of which former shipyard workers disclosed the origin and function: research revealed the pylon's value, so it was given a particular place in the design.

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SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

When looking at the Île de Nantes design project through the 'reading filters' of our interpretation tool, we notice that the designers construe their project with a strong accent on the existing materials and practices found on site. The industrial, ship-building river island is closely linked to the river Loire, the river's estuary at the Atlantic ocean and the city of Saint Nazaire situated at its mouth — the 'estuary metropolis' addressed in current urban development discourses. Within this first level of site thinking, the designers acknowledge atmospheres and processes. Structures and memories support the aspects of their first level of reading. With their Plan & Guide Map, the designers provide a survey tool that easily shifts into a design tool. In constantly mirroring the site, the map enhances the closeness between the designers' reading and editing.

The designers consider the whole island as the on-site **MATERIAL** to work with: a heterogeneous conglomerate of fragments of various origins, accepted as such, regardless of when and why and for what purpose they were installed and valued for their aesthetic, material, functional and structural qualities. They range from slipways, cranes, warehouses, hangars, working-class districts of the old wharfs and naval industries to more recent commercial and residential buildings, down to all types of existing vegetation and a whole palette of materials, from man-made ones, such as pavement, asphalt, rails and railings and street furniture, to naturally occurring ones, stone, metal, rubble and earth.

PRACTICES the designers encountered on the site encompass uses of structures that have long existed and are still found today, such as living (dwellings), working (offices), shopping (shopping centres) and conducting business (wholesalers). They also read recently established practices, often spontaneous and temporary uses only detectable from site exploration, such as car parks, workshops and markets, and finally those which are vanishing and need to be replaced by others, like the production activities of the old ship building workshops or the Alstom industries.

The experience-oriented design method of the Île de Nantes project relates to practices that have been revealing the urban development **DISCOURSE** of the estuary metropolis of Nantes-Saint Nazaire since 2007: the Estuaire art festival. Artworks have been installed all the way from Nantes to Saint Nazaire on the Loire riverbanks, and boat trips and land excursions have been organised to entice people to discover the river landscape. Opening up both cities to the river and its estuary therefore became essential, and so Nantes' authorities initiated the conversion of the Île de Nantes as this city's main river project. The designers' decision to read the industrial site as a river island, with continuous access to the riverbanks and with particular river atmospheres, anchors the design project in the city's discourse.

ATMOSPHERES can only be experienced on site; there are no traces of the designers' reading in the design drawings. However, the photos taken prior to the design intervention compared with observations from site visits during and after the intervention make it clear that the designers have evaluated everything found on site on the basis of atmospheric quality, be it the openness of a large asphalt void, the expansiveness of the view on the westernmost quays, the roughness of the mounted banks or the enclosure of a slipway.

The competition drawings and on-site observation show that the designers read the site's main **STRUCTURE** as a post-industrial urban island, confined by its artificial riverbanks, provided with bridges, crossed by main traffic arteries, all this being part of the major structural axis, the river Loire itself. There is no way of imagining the islands of the meandering river in former centuries, which the designers could have easily detected from historical cartography (as designers did for the catchment area in the Marseille project).

PROCESSES, as they can be observed today, support the design: processes of decline and succession, as well as the flow of tidal waters of the river which move pontoons up and down and fill and empty slipways.

The designers do not read **MEMORIES** collectively, even if various sources testify to collective memories (as they also do in the Marseille case). Here, the designers address affective and personal memories that seem related to the smallest object found on site, worth preserving for some commemorative reason that can almost only be guessed. The drawings do not disclose anything about the designers' reading of memories. Publications of the project, however, explain the designers' on-site work with memories, bearing witness to the role of memories in the project.

The analysis of the designers' reading parameters leads me to formulate the narrative of the Île de Nantes project as the ever-evolving process of transformation of the island's existing conglomerate of fragments. This transformative flow is held together by a fine-meshed grid of infrastructure, the static element of the project, translated into public spaces, together with the overarching structure of the river Loire, the dynamic element, with ever-changing physical states over time, from a meandering river in the past into a channelled and dredged river today, towards a metropolitan waterway of a still unknown future. Within this ongoing flow, the designers, together with their client, a public developer, position themselves as close observers of site, like ethnographers in the field, who strive to detect spaces for practices that can emerge from an interaction of people and site. As these practices are impossible to plan, they identify a continuous site survey as their main tool for intervention from and within the flow — positing that site reading is a process of knowledge creation that has to be updated as the site develops.

The designers' drawings differ from those we are accustomed to seeing these days, including those from the Marseille project. The drawings do not prefigure their intended work with the usual range of design documents, such as a masterplan, an overview perspective and impressions of concrete spatial situations. Chemetoff is aware of this difference: 'Affirming the right to be different poses a risk — a difference not to be displayed as a banner but to be cultivated from the qualities of the places in which projects are rooted. I am talking about a risk because I am aware that such research sometimes leads us away from accepted codes, to the point of not being recognised by our peers. This is a risk that I take with support from our clients and from the people I deal with, who take praise of difference as a celebration of their own identity' (Chemetoff 2009: 18). The designers refuse to show any overall image of their project in a finished state before they have realised it — they acknowledge it as ever-evolving and appreciate the states of evolution, recordable through snapshots from the site itself. If there

were no need to communicate a design project to clients, developers, construction workers, other designers, the community or the press, they would probably not have produced any design documents but would have imagined, built and displayed everything immediately on site. As this need exists, we can look at the documents the designers do produce – not a single document in fact but a series of editions – to understand how they record and communicate their design interventions carried out at the Île de Nantes.

With their Plan & Guide Map the designers proposed a work mode in which they would produce such a twofold map every three months. This map would update the site survey with all changes since the previous one, and would also develop a new set of design interventions from it. Chemetoff explains how he views the role of drawings: 'What do drawings represent? They are tools to convey the level of understanding of a project at a given time, to say: "Here is where we are at this point of the work in progress." Displaying plans, details and drawings that are actually used to build and develop, as a way of sharing the project' (Chemetoff 2009: 6). The Plan & Guide Map is not a finite image of an end-scenario to reach after completion of work; it is an evolutionary drawing, in flux like the design project itself.

The designers legitimate the narrative behind their design method by an immediate apprehension of the site, for which the Plan & Guide Map delivers the appropriate recording tool (survey drawing) that then shifts into a design tool (project drawing). This tool testifies to the designers' belief that the site can deliver the currents for its becoming — they only need to be identified and enhanced. How exactly they conceive this observation-transformation is investigated in the following section through the 'editing filters' of the interpretation tool.

The designers present their project through the single spaces they have designed, in each instance with a photo of the place 'as found' and with a photo of the place after design intervention. The before–after comparison reveals the subtlety of their interventions.

The designers suggest a Plan & Guide Map ('plan guide'), a design tool made of two superimposed ground plans of which the first is a detailed inventory and the second a transformation plan. Each survey is the result of comprehensive on-site observation and mapping. Each design idea originates from these observations — deduced from the site as it was experienced. The survey shifts into design, of which the drawing tool is a constitutive part.

The Plan & Guide Map also holds the multitude of small-scale observations and interventions together. It allows for overview. However, it is not graspable from visual intuition only, and it is not self-explanatory; one has to learn to read its codes. For example, the colours: tones of red distinguish the nature and transformative state of buildings, tones of beige and green denote public and green spaces. A legend completes the drawing.

Fig. 52. Quai des Antilles in 2006 and 2007 (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)
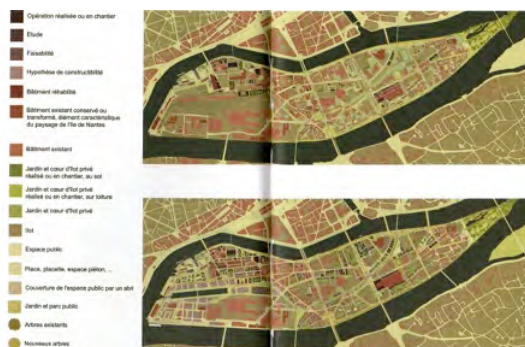
DESIGN DISPLAYED AS EVOLUTIONARY

Fig. 53. A diptych of the Plan & Guide Map, the top image showing the site survey, the bottom image the design interventions, complete with a legend and colour code (source: Chemetoff 2010a)

Fig. 54-55. The Banana Hangar site as found and under construction, showing its basic concrete structure (source: conference Chemetoff 2010)

Fig. 56. The Banana Hangar site after transformation (photo: L. Diedrich)

The designers' narrative is based on the reading of **MATERIALS AS** found on site, in all scales, ranging from geography to building materials.

THE DESIGNERS READ PRACTICES AS FOUND
AND AS DEVELOPPING ON SITE

Fig. 57-59. Developing practices at the Alstom and Chantiers sites (photos: L. Diedrich)

Materials are transformed in order to interact with **PRACTICES** found or developed on site.

THE DESIGNERS READ DISCOURSES:
THE RIVER AS URBAN STRUCTURE AND PRACTICE

Fig. 60-61. Eco-metropolis Nantes-Saint Nazaire; Quai des Antilles (sources: Métropole Nantes-Saint Nazaire 2009; L. Diedrich)

Nantes and Saint Nazaire aim at creating a metropolis along the river Loire — this urban planning **DISCOURSE** builds on a rediscovery of the river which the designers support by their design project.

Fig. 62. Quai des Antilles (top photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa; bottom photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

THE DESIGNERS READ
PROCESSES AS FOUND:
WEATHERING MATERIALS,
GROWING VEGETATION

ATMOSPHERES, since they can be discovered on the site any time, drive the design. The designers tend to preserve atmospheres as found even if they change the site's practices or materials. They acknowledge atmospheres as produced by materials and also by PROCESSES — the coming and going of the tidal water, of materials that weather, of new materials that are superimposed on old ones, of vegetation that changes with the seasons.

Fig. 63-67. On-site observation of the processes of weathering and succession in 2009, 2011 and 2012: cracking concrete surfaces, fading colours on asphalt, grasses growing in the joints of stone pavement, spontaneous vegetation in gravel beds (photos: L. Diedrich)

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Fig. 69. Plan & Guide Map (drawing: team Chemetoff)

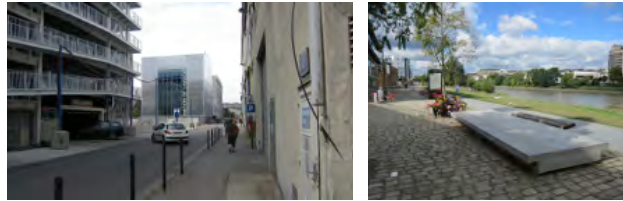Fig. 68. Aerial photo of the Île de Nantes (source: SAMOA 2007)

Fig. 70-71. Street connecting with the riverbanks; riverbanks at Quai François Mitterrand in 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE POST-INDUSTRIAL
URBAN ISLAND AS A
FOUND STRUCTURE

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ:
COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE
ARCHIPELAGO

The main **STRUCTURE**, the post-industrial urban island, provides the designers with design principles that translate this structure over time: keep as much as possible, connect the spaces on the island with the river, take action through public space.

Fig. 72. The former archipelago of the Île de Nantes, in a drawing of 1665 (source: Pétré-Grenouilleau 2008)

Fig. 73. The Nefs before and after intervention (top photo: Duboys Fresney; bottom photo: Jacques)

MEMORIES are not read as collective memory. Instead, the designers address affective and personal memories that stem from the more recent history of the industrialised island, as experienced by those still living today.

THE DESIGNERS READ:
PERSONAL MEMORIES OF
THE PORT INDUSTRY

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

FOREIGNISATION

If we examine the Île de Nantes project in terms of the translation of materials we can identify a strong tendency for foreignisation. The designers' credo of maintaining what is already on site as much as possible, to accredit the existent 'as found', indicates their wish to translate the industrialised island in its state of foreignness to an audience of today. They want to offer immersion into an environment that differs considerably from what is considered a normal urban context — the expanded industrial areas, the rough materials, the curious mixture of buildings, the brutal urbanism of the 1960s and 1970s.

Chemetoff speaks of 'adoption' in this respect, alluding to the fact that something foreign is included as such into the familiar realm: 'Learning to love today's world is to adopt other people's bad taste as a way of making happiness available to everyone. Urban planning and architecture serve the purpose of revisiting the past years' production — not to bring it in line with contemporary taste, but to find a place for each thing in today's city' (Chemetoff 2009: 14).

In the realm of translation a foreignised text invites the audience to leave behind for a while their own familiar environment, to dive into the unfamiliar context and in so doing, understanding something of the unfamiliar. At the same time, through the resulting distance from the usual environment, the audience discovers the familiar through other eyes, to better understand or also question it. Chemetoff puts it this way: 'If the project does not affect the material conditions of lifestyle and only accompanies the same manners of inhabiting, working, shopping and having fun, then architecture is merely the aesthetic

packaging of programmes that nobody ever questions any more. I rebel against standardisation, which projects the aesthetics and standards of a few onto everyone' (Chemetoff 2009: 22).

The designers translate through foreignisation the main entities of their site, such as the built-up riverbanks, the Chantiers site, the Alstom site and the Beaulieu district. In these pictures, the Quai François Mitterrand displays how its composition as a whole has been translated and continues to be transformed in a subtle foreignising way.

Fig. 74. Quai François Mitterrand before intervention (photo: Arnauld Duboys Fresney for Samoa)

Fig. 75. Quai François Mitterrand after initial interventions (photo: Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

Fig. 76-77. Quai François Mitterrand after further interventions in 2011 and 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 78. Plan & Guide Map project 2008 (source: Atelier Chemetoff, highlighting by L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE THE BUILT-UP RIVERBANK AS FOUND

DOMESTICATION

Even if foreignisation is the main transfer mode of the Île de Nantes project, applied as much as possible to what is found on site, we can observe a domesticating translation in two situations where the old industrial areas are not preserved in their strange foreignness but transformed to 'talk the language' of the new urban site. One such situation is in the establishment of some domesticated fragments, such single buildings as the new architecture school, new office buildings, a new parking garage and other new infills. A second situation is the opening up of the whole island through public space, a domestication through the installation of a detailed infrastructure covering the whole terrain, and through the materialisation of this infrastructure into a series of clearly defined physical elements — the vocabulary of public space. Where new streets had to be created, the designers used this vocabulary. Where old streets, pathways and surfaces had to be reused, they combined them with the materials and elements found on site.

The designers' laboratory for defining their public space vocabulary began with the former State Railway Station (Gare de l'Etat), which was to become the Trade Union's House (Maison des Syndicats). This first public-space project of the Atelier de l'Île de Nantes was carried out as early as 2000-2001, right after the start of their mission on the Île de Nantes. The square in front of the building gave them the opportunity to transform their idea of the public space of the Île de Nantes into surface materials, street furniture, plantations and lightning. They used this early vocabulary with its clearly defined physical elements everywhere. It belongs to the realm of today's urban amenities, and is therefore an element of domestication. However, the simplicity and sparse implementation of these new elements

of public space — only when really necessary — prevents them from dominating the site, where public space is perceived as the foundation from which to discover the more foreign elements of the Île de Nantes.

The Île de Nantes consists of a multitude of fragments, and the designers translated some of those fragments through domestication, as single architectural infills.

The Île de Nantes is covered by infrastructure of a fine scale, which the designers also translated in a domesticating way into public spaces with its own new vocabulary.

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Fig. 79. Place Francois I before transformation (source: Gravelaine 2010)

Fig. 80-83 (left column). New buildings inserted into the urban fabric 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 84-85 (right column). New public spaces 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

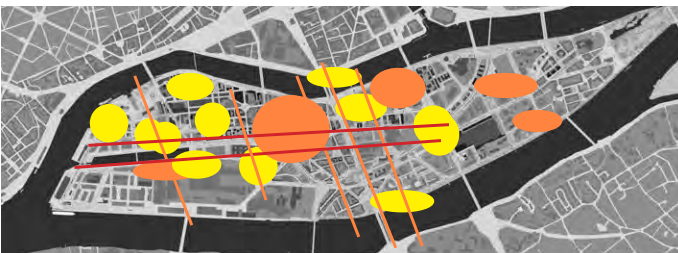Fig. 86. Square of the former State Railway Station in 2001 (photo: Atelier Chemetoff)

Fig. 87. Plan & Guide Map project 2008 (source: Atelier Chemetoff, highlighting by L. Diedrich)

APPROPRIATION

How do the designers of the Île de Nantes construe the transfer of their site? What are their main transfer instruments? Unlike the Marseille project, it is central here how the designers anticipate that people will take over areas of the project. We have learnt from the designers' readings that they begin their editing from the site's materials, and from those practices these materials have enticed or can entice. The interaction of people and site is the main concern in this process. The designers, together with the public developer, observe, investigate and record the evolving interaction on site. The site without interacting people is not enough in this understanding of design. The site needs appropriation. Appropriation is the condition for development and steers all design activities.

The designers monitor and further develop the site with the help of their Plan & Guide Map, which differs from common design tools in its fluid nature and allows continuous adaptation to an evolving *status quo*. With this sequential, reflexive and relational method the designers are able to treat the site as a continuously transforming environment, conceived by many more actors than the designers themselves. Its stages of change can be recorded regularly to define sets of interventions based on the results of the previous ones. Chemetoff writes: 'Every situation should be considered in its context, in a wider environment. I try to understand where we are, whom I am addressing, where I am speaking from. Beyond the often frozen contents of the programme questions arise from the contradiction between a programme and the site' (Chemetoff 2009: 10). Without an end-scenario in mind, but with the flexible editing tool of the Plan & Guide Map in their

hands, the designers ensure their project has a high potential for appropriation.

Flux in this case is inherent not only in the fluctuating parameters of processes and practices; it is understood as integral to the nature of the whole design project. Transfer is not imagined as the transition from one state to another but as a continuous evolution of states without endpoint. Consequently, no predefined programme or architectural shape has been agreed upon before the design work begins. When the design work does begin, other people than the designers work with the site on site, appropriating it and proposing programme ideas and architectural shapes. These results of appropriation are then further developed by the designers.

Fig. 88-92. Evolving practices and buildings at the Chantiers site 2010-2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 93. Four stages of the Plan & Guide Map (source : Grave-laine 2010)

APPROPRIATION
PROPELS THE DESIGN

In the evolution of single plots in the Plan & Guide Map, the disposition and nature of the built volumes change. This change is caused by actors who have appropriated these plots and pushed programmatic ideas and architectural forms further. These ideas are incorporated into the Plan & Guide Map, a document that is nothing more than a mirror for the development on site.

CONNECTIVITY

Connectivity is the condition for appropriation. As the Plan & Guide Map shows, the designers developed a street pattern so that the spaces created by their transformative action can be connected. This network of connecting public spaces is the physical device that allows appropriation to happen.

Single, secluded fragments of the post-industrial island are connected by public spaces, both with each other and with their urban context, creating in turn a spatial, functional and sensuous continuum out of the formerly segmented and closed-off port and industrial areas. The single object is far less important for the designers than the relationships of all kinds of components, so the proposed transformation involves at the same time both an overview of and detailed work on connections — a pointillism of transformative action, taken where needed, within an overarching framework of relationships. Chemetoff summarises this double-reflex by the formula of 'the aviator and the construction worker', calling for two successive or concomitant points of view when transforming the city, one from above and, to verify that view from above, one intervening within that which exists. 'Public space is not the accomplishment of the project but its premise', writes Chemetoff; 'this is why we wanted to start with the public space' (Chemetoff 2010a: 27–28).

Since public space is the main connecting element that stitches together what was once disconnected, the designers push their stitching enterprise further by taking design action wherever they want to enhance relationships. The design's connective interventions can involve many facets. They include additions, such as entire new buildings, or new functions completing spaces or programmes such as the new architecture school; subtractions, like cutting through built-up volumes to insert a street and give access to the Alstom site; and consolidating temporary installations to create solid programmes, as with the Machines in the Nefs. The interventions can also be the intentional neglect of, for instance, areas of pioneer vegetation or entire plots that might be transformed and linked at a later stage. The enhancement of sensual connections to the larger geographical systems of the site is another type of intervention, such as the Buren art project, whose rings installed on the westernmost quay frame views of the broad horizon of downstream Loire, where the Estuaire festival has lined up other art projects towards Saint Nazaire, demarcating in situ the terrain of which the politically promoted metropolis of the Loire estuary might one day become reality.

Fig. 94. Illustration the building worker shown by Chemetoff (conference Chemetoff 2010)

Fig. 95. Illustration of the aviator shown by Chemetoff (conference Chemetoff 2010)

CONNECTIVITY IS THEIR PREREQ-
UISITE FOR APPROPRIATIVE DESIGN

Fig. 96-99. Elements of public space 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 100. Four successive stages of the Plan & Guide Map (source : Gravelaine 2010)

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SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

Scrutinising the Île de Nantes design project through the 'editing filters' of our interpretation tool, we can capture some of the translation and intervention the designers use. In terms of translation they interpret the ensemble of their project through foreignisation, while single bits within the whole are transferred through domestication. In terms of intervention, appropriation is the main driver of the design because the project is perceived as constantly in a flow of use, a flow whose spontaneity by various actors the designers are eager to integrate. Connectivity is the transfer tool with which the designers establish the street pattern as the physical device to entice and frame the appropriative flow.

The designers' credo of maintaining what is already on site as much as possible, to accredit the existent 'as found', indicates their wish to translate the industrialised island, in its state that is foreign to today's urban audience, to that urban audience of today; translation is founded on **FOREIGNISATION**. It makes an entire part of the town, once ignored, tangible in its originality to the citizens: riverbank slopes, pontoons, rails, extended asphalt surfaces, hangars and all kind of buildings of various functions and epochs.

Within this overall transfer principle of foreignisation, the designers use **DOMESTICATION** to crosslink the whole island through public space and make it accessible, a basic condition for tangibility. Access and familiarity is provided in two ways, first through the installation of infrastructure that connects the whole terrain, and second through the materialisation of this infrastructure into physical elements — the vocabulary of public space.

These translation choices point at the designers' **MODES OF TRANSLATION**: The designers decide to read their site as an industrialised city district, thus as an old active part of town combining working and living. They propose to update it into yet another active part of town combining working and living, a post-industrial district. In terms of translation, they understand these two realms, industrial and post-industrial, as two languages and implicitly assume the translatability from the one into the other. Their translation mode is therefore a move from one semiotic system into another, as if translating from one natural language into another. This is interesting insofar as they simply do not address port, shipyards, workshops — the industrial realm — as comprising different matter than the urban realm, even if originated by different logics. Stating that the industrial logics are obsolete allows them to consider the site as part of the same matter of expression. It makes it translatable in a very direct way — translated instead of erased and rewritten. The site as found is not suppressed because of its strangeness; it is recounted as a story that can simply been told again in a foreign language — and which is worth the translation. As we have seen, the designers do not propose a change of matter when moving from one semiotic system into another. However, this transfer implies a noticeable change of substance — translating 'industrial' into 'post-industrial' within the urban realm produces the same substantial differences as when playing a melody written for flute on a synthesizer. The project as a whole reveals the designers' decision to handle their transformation as an intersystemic interpretation with substance change: this is translation proper.

However, when looking closer into parts of the project, it becomes clear that the designers have decided to use another translation mode here and there. When it comes to translating the

Nefs of the old shipyards into the Machines workshop, the interpretive freedom of translation is at least on the level of translating poetry, or translation as adaptation. When it comes to translating the Alstom site into a new creative district, and when parts of the old site are cleared to host brand new buildings like the architecture school, the degree of interpretation moves up to an adaptation as a new work. The guiding principle, however, is still the one of translation proper.

APPROPRIATION stands central in this translation enterprise. It is obvious that the project drawings rely on a meticulous survey of the site as found — every single square centimetre, every transient activity must have been reported, evaluated and fed into planning documents that differ from common project drawings, allowing for continuous interaction with and adaptation to an evolving status quo. That is why the plans contain a high potential for appropriation. The plans are published as the Plan & Guide Map ('plan guide'), a sequence of drawings: first a meticulous site survey, mapping the existent, then a proposal for where to intervene. Only after completion of the intervention and close monitoring of the effects of appropriation by the community does the next drawing propose the next set of interventions, of which the result is again reported, evaluated and so on. With this sequential, reflexive and relational method the designers are able to treat the site as a continuously transforming environment, conceived by many more actors than the designers themselves, its stages of change monitored regularly to define the next set of intermittent interventions based on the results of the previous ones.

CONNECTIVITY is the intervention tool with which the designers recompose the single fragments of the post-industrial island, connecting them both with each other and with their urban context. The purpose of these connections is to create a spatial, functional and sensuous continuum out of the formerly segmented and closed-off harbour and industrial areas. If the single object is far less important for the designers than the relationships of all kinds of components, then the proposed transformation involves detailed work on connections. The designers take action only if it enhances relationships. The whole set of transformative action forms a continuous 'stitching together'. Very often, the designers' interventions concern public space. However, they can also involve many other forms of intervention, such as additions and subtractions to buildings and built ensembles, consolidation of temporary uses, intentional neglect of areas that develop from their own forces, enhancement of sensual impressions, given that these actions help establish relationships where these were missing.

From the above we can deduce that the **INTERVENTION MODE** the designers have selected is an evolutionary one, going with the flow, intervening step by step, in bigger and smaller fragments, to transform the island not as a whole all at once but in bits and pieces, one after the other. The site is seen as a plurality of sites that coexist in different states of transformation during the whole process. The process of shaping is an experience in itself that offers to citizens a city that is fascinating because of its ever-changing constellations. Yesterday, the asphalt in front of the Nefs was an open expanse, today it hosts a newly built carrousel for the Machines workshop and a floating restaurant is anchored at the riverbank. The Alstom hangars open up to an improvised parking lot now, but soon they will face a new office building. Unlike the Marseille project, these evolving transfer operations cannot be sketched as a stable single figure. The flow is the appropriate formula of the Île de Nantes project's intervention mode.

Fig. 101-108. Before-after photos of some of the ensembles of the Île de Nantes (photos: Arnauld Duboys Fresney and Vincent Jacques for Samoa)

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ISLAND THROUGH FOREIGNISATION OF ITS MAIN ENSEMBLES

The designers interpret the main entities of their site, such as the riverbanks and built-up districts, through **FOREIGNISATION**. Together they form the post-industrial urban river island composed of a multitude of fragments, and the designers further translate some fragments through domestication. Because the fragments need to be linked, the designers install a fine-grained mesh of public space, another act of domestication.
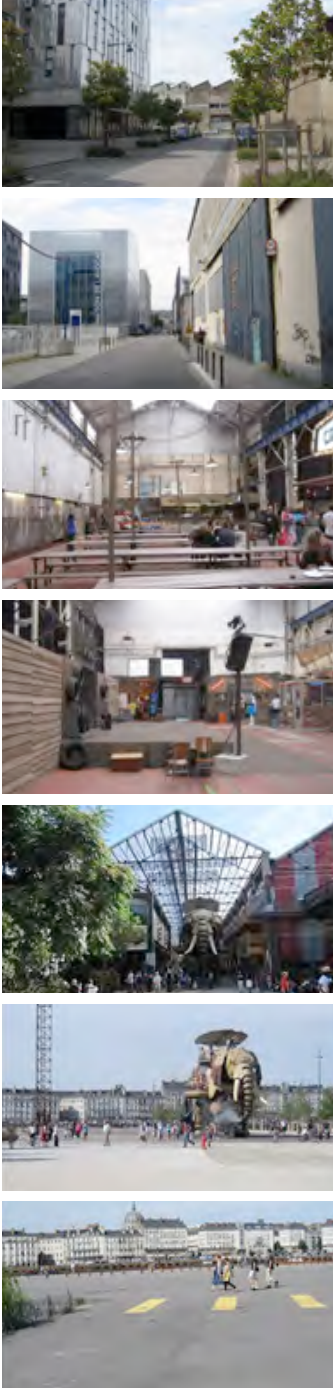
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Fig. 116. Four successive stages of the Plan & Guide Map (source: Gravelaine 2010)

THE DESIGNERS DRIVE THEIR
PROJECT THROUGH CONTINUOUS
READING OF PRACTICES AND
ONGOING APPROPRIATION

APPROPRIATION drives the designers' interventions. The interaction of people and site is the main concern in this ever-ongoing process. Starting from a meticulous site survey, the designers build their design on the site's existing materials and the practices these materials bring to the site. They observe, investigate, record and further develop interactions on site.

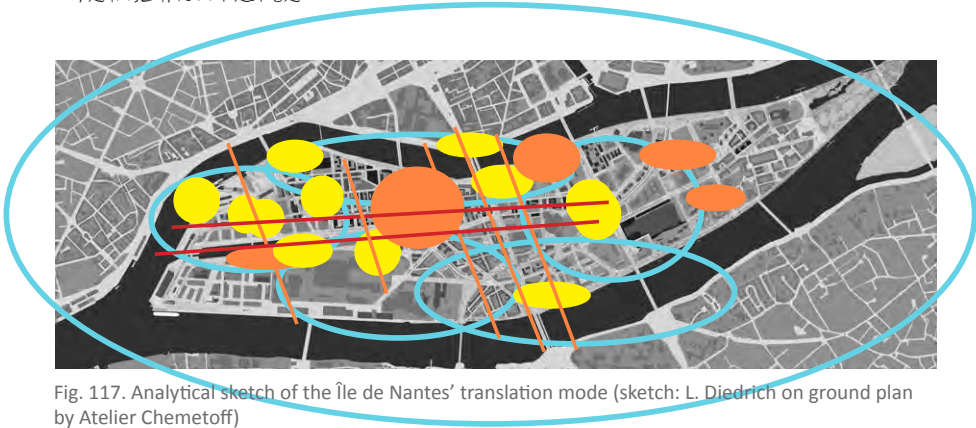Fig. 109-115. Evolving practices and buildings on site 2009-2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

Fig. 117. Analytical sketch of the Île de Nantes' translation mode (sketch: L. Diedrich on ground plan by Atelier Chemetoff)

INTERVENTION FLOW:
SMALLER AND BIGGER INTER-
VENTIONS DEPENDING ON
CHANGES OVER TIME

TRANSLATION PROPER is the designers' main translation mode at the Île de Nantes. It affects the main entities of their site within which other forms of translation occur periodically and successively. Their interventions do not make up a static figure but rather a **FLOW OF INTERVENTIONS**, constantly adapting to the site as it changes.
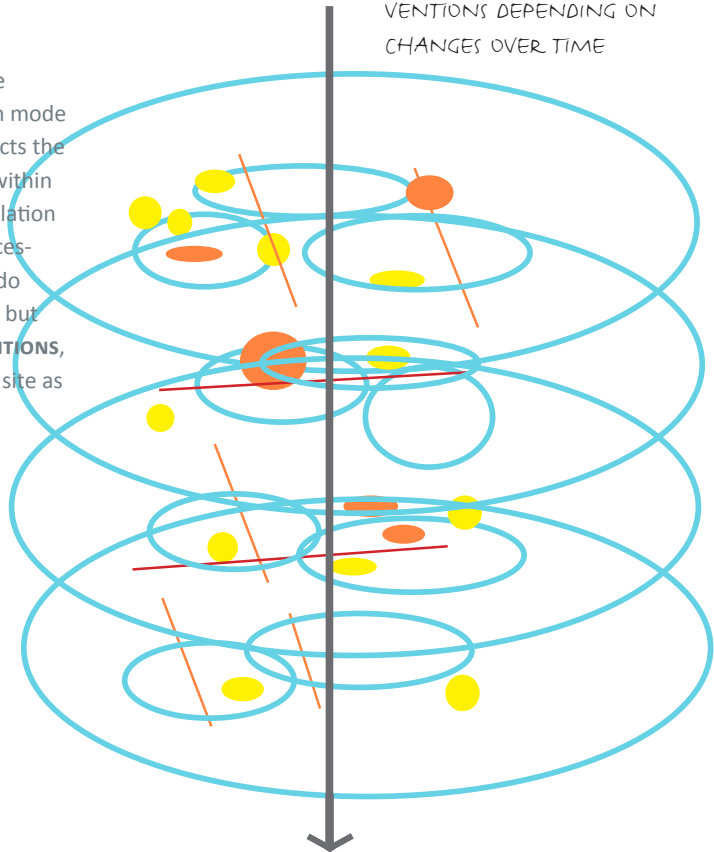

Fig. 118. Analytical sketch of Île de Nantes' intervention mode (sketch: L. Diedrich)
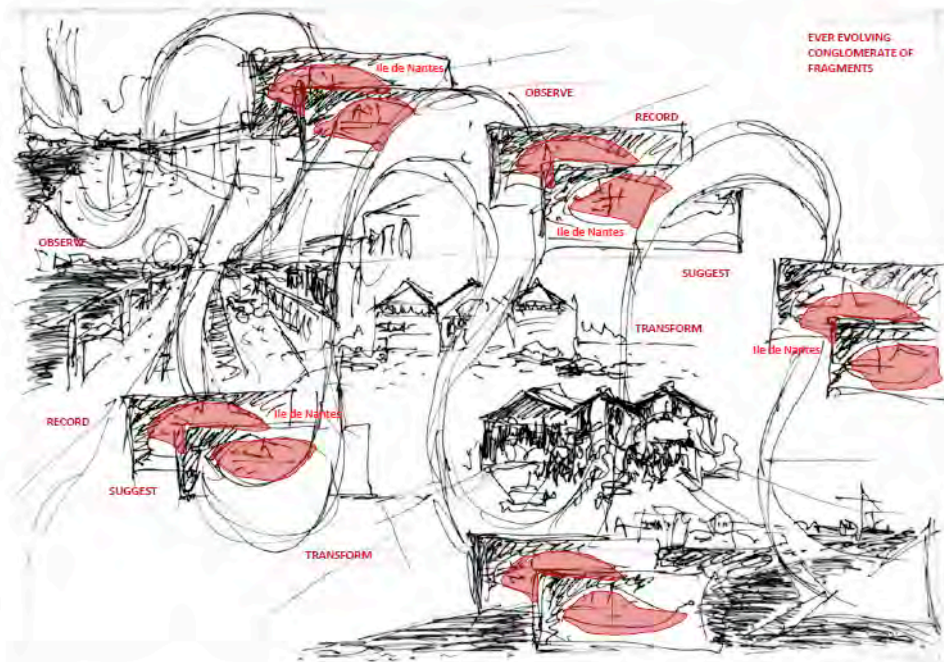
Fig. 119. Analytical sketch of Île de Nantes' site specificity (sketch: L. Diedrich)

The design **OSCILLATES** between the flow of the ever-evolving conglomerate of fragments, on the one hand, and the stable figure of the urban island, with its grid of public spaces, on the other. From this place-bound layer begins an open-ended process of change. The designers capture this change on the site through a meticulous survey updated in close intervals. Instead of an end-scenario, they suggest interventions after each survey, supporting an immediate and unmediated development of the site. Time plays a crucial role in this design, creating space for unpredictable evolution, for weathering and growth, and allowing a perception of the site in motion.

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

What is site specificity made of in the case of the Île de Nantes? The analysis shows that this design project can be called site-specific — it shows evidence of close links between the reading and the editing while embracing place-bound as well as transient aspects in an oscillating relationship. How does the narrative that binds together the analysed parameters contribute to the oscillation? Are there time aspects involved as a sign for radicantity?

The project's narrative values everything found on site as a material to work with. The material presence of things invites a design process. The results of this design process are not fixed in any predefined images but rather develop from the observation of how things are used and reused, how practices evolve, and what physical transformation they propel. The resulting ideas are introduced into the design project. Atmospheres perceived on site are taken into account and enhanced through the design. In short, materials, combined with practices, discourses and atmospheres, serve the designers as an aesthetic foundation (aesthetic in the basic sense as defined by Böhme) by which to construe their project. Structures, processes and memories, identified as exhibiting again close links between the designers' reading and editing, support the narrative but are less constitutive of it.

The narrative is taken up again in the designers' idea of the island as an ever-evolving conglomerate of fragments, hold together by an infrastructure of new public spaces. This public infrastructure constitutes the stable pole of the project. Another stable, place-bound aspect is the Île de Nantes' geographical nature as a river island, always embraced by the river Loire, even if subject to the tidal changes of the river. Within the interstices of the island's open-space grid, the island's built-up conglomerate of different elements evolves. The evolution of practices continually produces new elements which become place-bound because they have developed in close interaction with the site, and the place-bound itself becomes a transient category. The Elephant, for example, and the Machines project from which it emerged, are probably now as place-bound as the former shipyards and workshops that host them. No one in Nantes would be surprised to see other activities emerging from the shipyards in the future. The place-bound is therefore embedded in the overarching evolutionary flow of the project. We can detect an **OSCILLATION** between the two poles of site specificity just as in the Marseille project. However, where the Marseille project is primarily construed by the designers as a static, place-bound figure, the Nantes one is meant to be an ever-evolving flow.

This flow can almost only be captured on site, through a meticulous survey that is updated in close intervals, using the tool of the Plan & Guide Map. It helps to record these updates for a short moment, before the next update. Instead of 'maps', however, we could call them 'mappings', in the present progressive tense, as they communicate this exactly: the progressive present state of the site. The designers heavily legitimate their narrative from on-site observation over time, demonstrating an immediate and unmediated approach to the site. This on-site observation enables them to imagine the site's evolution from the possibilities of change that are already detectable on site. Consequently, they encourage people to engage in these

possibilities — appropriation is the main editing tool. In taking all the industrial elements and atmospheres found on site as materials to work with, the designers propose them as matter for expression in the building of the post-industrial city. They translate them through foreignisation; they confront the citizens with these unmediated elements which they have made accessible through direct contact and immersion into their foreignness. Without a change of matter, their project translates from one semiotic system into another, from the industrial to the post-industrial, as if from one natural language into another — translation proper.

The particularities of this project's site specificity show that it is predominantly driven by a close on-site observation of what exists. The designers act as ethnographers in the field, from a standpoint of participant observation (in the sense of Clifford, as quoted by Kwon 2000: 74). Their observations are followed by the imagination of what the existent could become, a strictly dynamic 'as found' approach. The objective is to detect and work with all manner of the site's immediate and possible qualities. Immediate perception is the main driver for a monitoring method that is capable of steering the transformation process: open-ended, infinite and lacking a defined end-scenario towards which the transformation should be conducted. The designers do not put forward any other visions than valuing, to the largest possible extent, the ever-evolving fluid nature of the site, considered as the main feature for cultivating the differences and adapting to whatever developments and desires might arise in the course of time. This vision rejects any predefined spatial image. The designers' drawings act as a mirroring tool rather than a projection tool, allowing for continuous on-site observation, aesthetisation and evaluation, as they report site qualities in regular intervals from an immersive, everyday perspective. Unlike the Marseille project, it does not matter here what Île de Nantes will look like in the future as long as its development is driven by close site monitoring. On-site exploration is the warrant for site specificity.

The transient predominates over the place-bound, immediate site exploration overbalances a mediated one, and the design rejects any end-scenario. Unlike the Marseille project, the Île de Nantes one proves to be a prototypical case for illustrating the other pole of site specificity: transience, immediacy and open-endedness. Unpredictable changes are monitored and fully integrated into the design; they can even drive it to a major extent. In this respect time is a factor that heavily shapes the project, creating spaces of possibilities for unpredictable evolution, as an agent giving form, colour or texture to materials, as a way of perceiving things in motion. The origin of materials, their roots, are not important — as long as the materials are taken into the design, allowing the designers and other site actors to entice new roots to grow in the course of the project. Therefore the Île de Nantes project can also be considered a prototypical case for RADICANT design.

This project has value in terms of emerging tendencies within the profession of design, in particular the ability of the profession to adapt to the precarious conditions of the globalised 21st century. Chemetoff has made that connection: 'Anybody can talk endlessly about the city, architecture, landscape... Architects are rather prolific in this field, without necessarily making links with their own production and the situations they encounter on a daily basis. In order to avoid similar drifting, I have always tried to match points of view with concrete courses of action and to base my opinion on experience. The value of visits lies in that they connect words to time

and place. Exchanged words vary depending on the visitor, the season, the progress achieved on the project and many other factors. The visit is full of unexpectedness and surprises; it shows projects as parts of a journey through the city and the landscape. I like to practice architecture on location, without knowing in advance if it is going to be rainy or sunny. I am always amazed that the relationship architecture has with the world is so under-developed' (Chemetoff 2009: 22).

What Chemetoff sketches out here is a relational, situated form of physical intervention that builds upon site experience. This experience creates site knowledge which in turn is used to develop the site and offer it to experience again. The Plan & Map Guide is the respective monitoring and implementation tool. However, a pictorial instrument is still lacking by which the project could be grasped in more than one moment only and from more than one single point of view. The profession is still anchored in a deeply rationalist world view, inherited from the time of Renaissance. The vanishing point of the central perspective is still our main pictorial tool, putting us always at a distance from the things we are construing and constructing, static observers in front of a static world. Time is not part of this construction. To bring it into design projects we would rather need a movie to figure out our designs, or, if we stick to the two dimensions of paper as a medium, we should experiment with completely new forms of visuals that are more evocative, less technical, but on the same level of visual communication as the common perspective computer rendering of today. James Corner's and Alex MacLean's 'measures across the American landscape' of 1992 are early experiments that point in the right direction, mixing up ground plans, sections, axonometric views and photos in a two-dimensional document. Anuradha Mathur's and Dilip da Cunha's photo sections, line drawings, terrain plots, photo walk projects, and perspectives for projects like 'Soak — Mumbai in an estuary' of 2009 are very promising topical explorations of how to design with new imaging tools that take time and complexity into consideration and that 'image' (as a verb!) design projects without proposing 'images' (as a noun) as technical or static distant representations.

Connecting words to situations, to visits — Chemetoff's ambition — makes sense. However, it is unsatisfactory to read dozens of pages transcribed from a half-day conversation during a site visit Chemetoff undertook with an interview partner, but without the reader. Revealed to the reader word by word and step by step through a printed text with a picture line to the side is a very immediate form of taking the reader onto the site and into the conversation. But it doesn't work. The transcription doesn't achieve the same result as the site visit itself; this mediated immediacy fails. The supposedly exact repetition of steps stepped and words uttered through printed snapshots and edited texts does not disclose the same insight that Chemetoff and his partners have gathered on site. As in translation, exactitude is not a criterion for faithfulness. To replace immediacy, transcription is probably not the right transfer mode; translation, in its endless possibilities of mediation, seems much more adequate, less for what it is than for what is does — in this case disclosing site knowledge which is linked to the ever-evolving site, in a condensed and graspable form. Here we would wish new pictorial-literary forms to emerge, as experiments of translation. Translation can then be understood not only as a work mode for the design project itself but also as a transfer mode for thoughts about sites and projects, to make not only design but also reflection on design, as a radicant action.

TAGUS CYCLE TRACK, LISBON

INTRODUCTION

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

The natural conditions of the River Tagus have for centuries favoured the establishment of harbour sites. At the river's estuary on the Atlantic coast, the city of Lisbon emerged on the hills north of the narrow embankment, stretching out over the centuries along the river with the advancement of Portuguese maritime exploration, colonisation and overseas trade. In the 19th century the narrow strip of the port along the north bank of the river was paralleled first by railways, then by roads, cutting the port off from the urban fabric. Container terminals have been added since the 1960s. In the 1970s decolonisation and Portugal's orientation towards the European continent eventually weakened the maritime business, and many of Lisbon's harbour areas fell into decline.

The first ideas for redevelopment arose in the 1980s, within the wave of urban waterfront projects developing around all the Western port cities. However, negotiations between Lisbon and its port on concrete projects and the respective ground transfers have always been contentious. Despite this imbroglio, Expo '98 was built as a tabula rasa development in the eastern port areas at the end of 20th century, but further plans at the same time of the same spirit for the western port areas have been overthrown due to lack of public consensus. Redevelopment has since been carried out in bits and pieces, frequently interrupted by the flaring up of conflicts, leaving Lisbon with a fractured riverbank of active and derelict port areas and transformed and undefined urban zones, with neither continuity nor connection, still cut off from the city by road and rail, frozen in their status because of unclear development perspectives and the pending state of negotiations on ground ownership (Rêgo Cabral 2011; interview Alexandre 2012).

The Tagus Cycle Track project evolved from a city councillor's idea for a bicycle trail for the whole of Lisbon, including a strip along the river, an amenity for a city of 550 000 inhabitants (metropolitan region 3 million inhabitants). As the port authorities (traffic 12 million tonnes per year) continue to ponder business scenarios, the property status of the riverbank remains complicated, and port and city agreed eventually on a temporary cycle track on the shore between Belém tower to the west and Cais do Sodré train station in the centre of Lisbon. The project was commissioned from a team of landscape architects and graphic designers, Global Arquitectura Paisagista and P06. It was carried out in 2009 as a minimalist intervention with the least possible material change on site but with maximal accessibility and great popularity (Global 2011; interview Alexandre 2012).

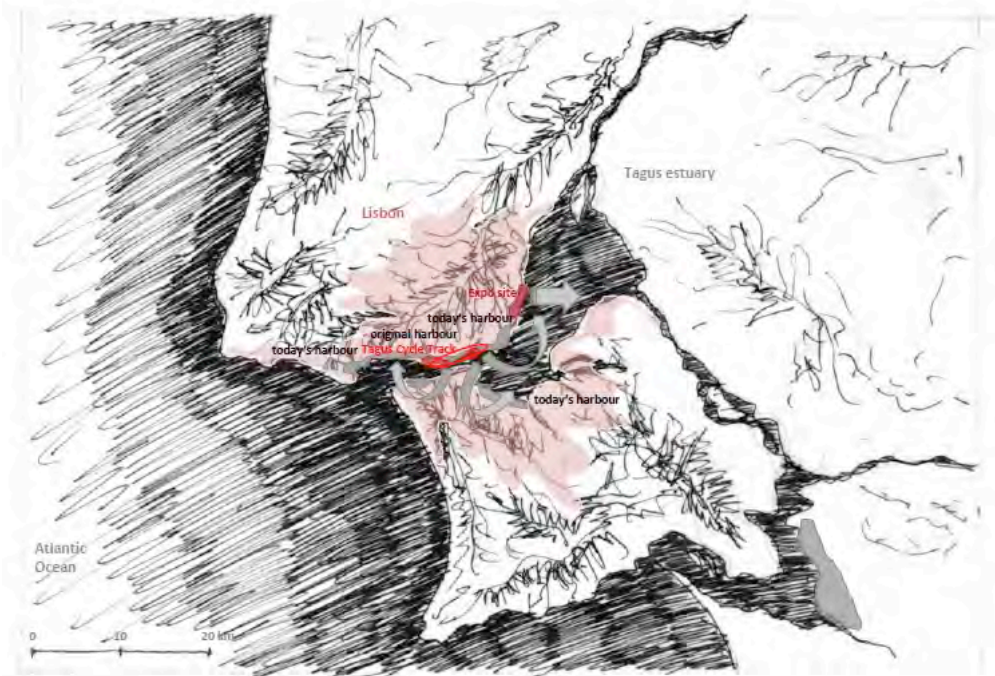Fig. a. Harbour and city development within the topography of the Lisbon metropolitan region (sketch: L. Diedrich)
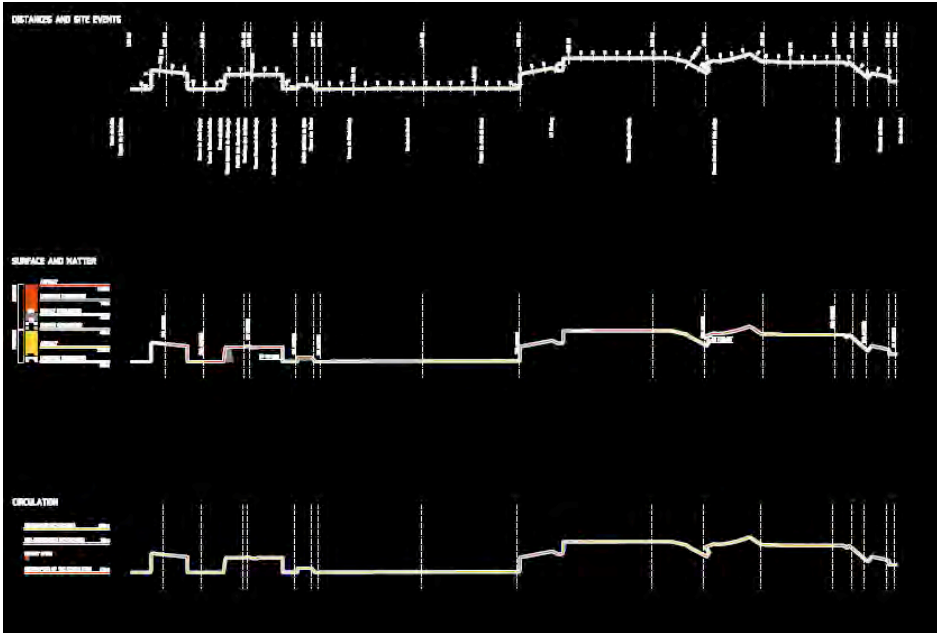
Fig. b. Itinerary of the Tagus Cycle Track specifying distances to site events, surface materials, circulation obstacles (drawing: Global/ P06)

Fig. c. The Tagus Cycle Track passing under the 25 April bridge and across an abandoned harbour area (photos: Joao Delgado da Silveria Ramos)

Name of operation
Tagus Cycle Track
Location
Lisbon, Portugal
Contracting Authority
Lisbon Port Administration APL, Municipality of Lisbon and EDP
Prime Contractors
Global Arquitectura Paisagista (João Gomes da Silva) and P06
 (Nuno Gusmão, designer)
Area
6,3 ha
Design
2008-2009
Construction
2009

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

When looking at the Tagus Cycle Track design project through the 'reading filters' of our interpretation tool, we identify the designers' focus on existing **MATERIALS** first of all. They were asked to realise a temporary project while leaving intact almost everything that already existed on the site, and they turned this restriction into an exploration. The design consists of a continous line of existing materials such as granite pavement and asphalt, complete with such minimal additions as a new concrete kerbstone, sometimes new asphalt, incrustations of asphalt and metal, and paint — all taken from the canon of materials that are used on the port site already, and all removable. The designers combined the reading of materials with the reading of **PRACTICES** along the bike track — capturing the discoveries and sensations they experienced themselves during the on-site project conception. From viewing a monument to being exposed to particular sounds, or accessing a place where something is happening — these readings were reported through painted or embedded signs at the respective locations. Their third level of reading very explicitly involves **MEMORIES**. The designers refer to sensations and reflections about the Tagus riverbank, as found in literature. They print relevant quotes from literature at the spots of their site that might once have inspired the writers. The designers acknowledge that they integrated the contentious development **DISCOURSE** into the project: 'There are conflicts because of the presence and characteristics of so many different surfaces associated with so many contexts which, on the other hand, have an important role in the construction of the city's image and memory and its relation to the river. This acknowledgment took us to pursue a careful study of the successive layers and covers which were accumulated on the riverbank in order to find a common ground and to produce a clearer and more intense image' (Global website, accessed 15-3-2012).

The 'common ground' is the experience of the immediate — and transient — qualities of the site, the reading of the site as a tangible moment with tangible materials, practices and memories in the centuries-old history of the riverbank. The experience of the moment binds all aspects together and underscores the narrative of the project being a supplementary transient layer, actually not more than an 'image', i.e., immaterial in its essence, laid out over the very material presence of the site to enhance it, to 'make the image clearer and more intense' — initiating, as we shall see, the discovery of the site as found for those biking through. The designers are close observers of the site's physicality as a ground not to be altered but to be performed upon, and close observers of performances on site, be they climatic, like wind and sun; functional, like fishing or strolling; or communicative and collective, like recollecting poetry or memories. The designers act as performers rather than as classical designers, a factor that pushes us to investigate their way of editing the site.

THE DESIGNERS READ PRACTICES:
BRIDGE TRAFFIC, STROLLING, FISHING
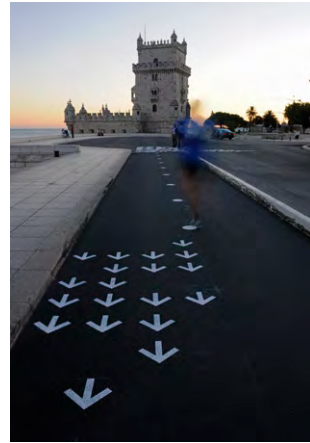
THEY READ MEMORIES:
 COLLECTIVE HISTORY, POETRY

THEY READ MATERIALS:
 BRICKS, ASPHALT, GRANITE, PAVEMENT

Fig. 1-10. Impressions of the
bicycle track after realisation in
2009 (photos: Joao Delgado da
Silveria Ramos/ P06)

The Tagus is more beautiful than the river which flows through my village,
But the Tagus is not more beautiful than the river which flows through my village
Because the Tagus is not the river which flows through my village.

The Tagus has enormous ships,
And for those who see in everything that which isn't there
Its waters are still sailed
By the memory of the carracks.

The Tagus descends from Spain
And crosses Portugal to pour into the sea.
Everyone knows this.
But few know what the river of my village is called
And where it goes to
And where it comes from.
And so, because it belongs to fewer people,
The river of my village is freer and larger.

The Tagus leads to the world.
Beyond the Tagus there is America
And the fortune of those who find it.
No one ever thought about what's beyond
The river of my village.

The river of my village doesn't make one think of anything.
Whoever is next to it is simply next to it.

The designers READ the site's materials as a ground not to be altered but to be performed upon. Performances exist on site, according to their reading: climatic performances of wind and sun, functional ones, of fishing or strolling, communicative and collective ones, in recollecting poetry or memories. From this reading the designers prepare the site as a score for further performances, such as biking and reading poetry.

THE DESIGNERS PREPARE A SCORE

Fig. 11. Poem 'The Tagus' by Alberto Caeiro, inscribed on grounds and walls on site (translation by Richard Zenith)
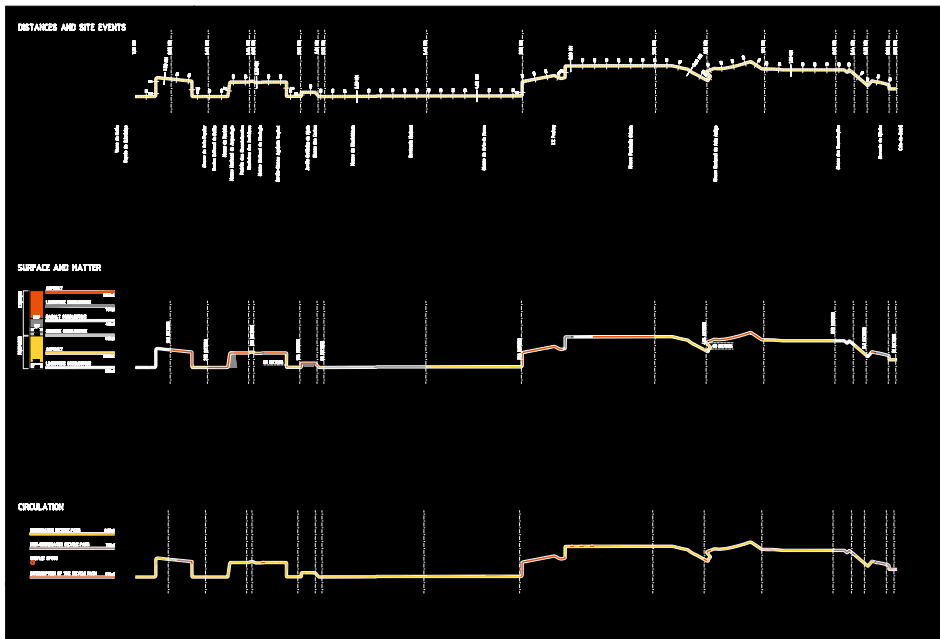

Fig. 12. Survey drawing of the site's events, materials and circulation grounds (drawing: Global/ P06)

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THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

The editing filters of the interpretation tool reveal that the designers of the Tagus Bicycle Track project transfer their readings in an almost immaterial way onto the site. The requirement of a temporary design prevented substantial alteration to property status or materials, and therefore didn't allow for a translation from one into another semiotic system, such as from one natural language into another (which would involve substance change), or from one medium into another, as from literature into film (which would involve matter change). The designers could work with neither a change of substance nor a change of matter; they were not allowed to translate at all, to use other words or different matters of expression. Therefore, they could not do anything else than act within the same semiotic system, respecting the status of port and urban grounds respectively, simply performing upon the heterogeneous port-city puzzle — as if keeping the score of a given piece of music and playing it differently, with an orchestra, for example, instead of just a few classical instruments.

The designers translate their site through **FOREIGNISATION**. They leave the riverbank as it is and give the people access via a bike lane, which is like rearranging the score of a piece of music that nevertheless retains its form. To advise the musicians on how to play the foreign piece, the designers **DOMESTICATE** the score by annotating it, adding such directions as 'adagio', 'molto presto', or 'con moderazione'. In the design project, these annotations correspond to the orientation signs on the bike track, words like 'attention' or 'stop', pictograms to signal a crossing, a danger, a direction, or the white concrete kerbstone marking the way. The design work, however, is not such signage alone but the space both created by the signage as well as experienced by the bikers — just as the piece of music is not the amended score but the performance of it by the musicians. The **TRANSLATION MODE** of the Tagus Cycle Track is performance, and we shall see how its form can therefore be considered as a journey-form.

This project clearly illustrates the ambiguity of performance, belonging to the realm of intrasystemic interpretation on the one hand but already prefiguring an intersystemic one, as would the translation from port grounds into city grounds. The Tagus Cycle Track is a performance as such, keeping the port as port, and the city as city, but it can also become the beginning for a transformation project in the course of which usage and property of the port might be changed into city. The site shows indications that the users of the Tagus Cycle Track have already got the message. When I visited the central strip of the riverbank's old port grounds on a sunny Sunday morning in January 2012 with the designers, they were themselves amazed at the crowds of people who biked, jogged, fished, canoed and sunbathed. They were also surprised at the improvised cafés, bars, sports facilities and night clubs that had popped up all around, and they noted the fences that had come down and others put up around a new construction site, indicating that further change was underway. Considering the long history of contentious debate between port and city, the port authority's boss Natércia Rêgo Cabral has advised that the transformation of port grounds be 'absorbed' into Lisbon's urban planning practice as 'another category of urban space' (Rêgo Cabral 2001: 245): no longer a port, nor classical city either, but a category apart. The Tagus Cycle Track materialises this idea through concrete qualities of practices and forms.

The Sunday morning site experience also testifies to the degree of **APPROPRIATION** that has already occurred. The designers have almost underestimated to what extent appropriation could be the driver of their project that was initially aiming at **CONNECTIVITY**. However, the use of the site as a bicycle track being temporary, the aesthetics of the track is uncertain and the whole project open for ideas from whomever wants to join. Among the people who have discovered the spaces along the bike track were some who are trying out new uses, establishing them on a temporary base and will eventually root them deeper: from sports clubs to night bars. This is how programmes evolve from the site and for the site, how the designers' editing is taken over by other actors' editing. The initial connective structure becomes eventually established as stable expanding one. The **INTERVENTION MODE** of the designers is linear, almost immaterial, and transient, but it prefigures another intervention mode which is a line that is becoming broader, making it much more material and longer lasting.

Fig. 13. Plan of the Tagus Cycle Track (drawing: Global/P06)

THE DESIGNERS DOMESTICATE THE
SITE THROUGH SIGNAGE

Fig. 14. Elements of communication on the bike track's surface (drawing: Global)

Fig. 15-17. Cycle track under construction (photos: Leonor Cardoso)

THE DESIGNERS PERFORM THE SITE IN
ALL ITS FOREIGNNESS

Fig. 18-21. Cycle track as appropriated in 2012: joggers, fishermen, construction of a new event place, sailing clubs installed in old hangars (photos: L. Diedrich)

APPROPRIATION
IS THE DESIGNERS' MAIN
EDITING TOOL

The **EDITING** of the site does not only imply the transfer of the amended score onto the physical grounds but also the performance of the site itself: when constructing the bike track, when biking through, and finally all the unplanned performances that prolong the initial design project into an expanded space and time frame.

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

The narrative of the Tagus Cycle Track project consists of a site understood as a physical ground which is to be performed almost immaterially, involving an **OSCILLATION** between the place-bound aspects of the material ground and the transient ones of the performance. Asphalt and granite pavement surfaces, concrete kerbstones, metal orientation signs, paint on asphalt, are all materials the designers have read on site and then edited to become the particular physical vocabulary of this bicycle track. Being performers on the site themselves, earlier than the cyclists who use the track, the designers have brought their own experiences to the site, as have the experiences of poets or people's collective memory: the sounds of cars moving over the 25 April bridge have been transcribed through painted letters onto the square underneath the bridge, and the words of Alberto Caeiro about the Tagus have been inscribed onto ground and wall.

The Tagus Cycle Track is site-specific because it doesn't simply impose the universal orientation signs of common bicycle tracks onto the port-city puzzle along Lisbon's riverbank; rather, the signs become incorporated into a site-specific vocabulary. At the same time, the designers acknowledge the particularities of the port-city puzzle their bicycle track traverses. They pay special attention to the site's transient qualities, such as practices and memories. They translate them into onomatopoetic signs or recollect them through literature quotes – now inscribed temporarily on walls and grounds to complete the practical orientation signs.

This new layer of painted and built signs, ambiguous in its oscillation between practical orientation for moving people and reflective communication to set minds in motion, performative in its nature as a removable project, makes up the particularity of the Tagus Cycle Track. Ambiguity and performance will probably live longer than the physical project, as they can always be derived anew from the site's immediate appreciation. This project's site specificity relies on the designers' immediate observation of the site. Even if materially weak and fading, this bicycle track seems consolidated and strong because of the growing solidarity and collective consensus about its existence, and it continues propelling multiple practices. The people who bring these practices to the site are eager to formulate perspectives of development for the riverbank's future.

The industrial driving forces that made the site into a harbour do not really matter, because there are new urban driving forces slowly emerging on site, cultivated by the citizens of Lisbon taking root on the site by performing it anew and reshaping it, with and through their urban practices, over time. The Tagus Cycle Track can be seen as a journey-form that evolves into a bigger harbour transformation project. With their subtle design interventions oscillating between materiality and immateriality, the designers provide us with an example of the aesthetics of the transitory. Their project can be considered as an impetus for **RADICANT DESIGN**.

THE PORT'S VISUAL QUALITY PROGRAMME, ROTTERDAM

INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

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INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

Initially a herring fishers' village in the delta of Maas, Scheldt and Rhine, Rotterdam now has 620 000 inhabitants. The port of Rotterdam, which was The Netherland's largest for many years, then eventually Europe's, and at one time the world's, developed since the 'Golden Age' of Dutch exploration in 17th century, and during the following centuries of colonisation and overseas trade. The opening of the Nieuwe Waterweg in 19th century considerably improved the accessibility of the port from the North Sea and made it an important hub of transhipment business for the industrial regions along river Rhine in Germany. Devastated by Nazi attacks in World War II, the city reconstructed its port since the 1950s and has been extending it towards the North Sea with such petrochemical, logistics and container terminals as Botlek, Europoort and Maasvlakte. The expansion culminated in the construction of Maasvlakte 2 as a bridgehead in the North Sea, made of reclaimed land. While the growing economy of the Far East has engendered ports in Asia that surpass Rotterdam's claim as the world's largest, the port of Rotterdam remains Europe's leading port (cargo traffic of 333 million tonnes per year) and occupies an area much larger than the city itself, stretching out over 40 kilometres between the city and the sea, along the river Maas. With Maasvlakte 2 almost complete at the time of writing, Rotterdam counts among those rare ports that possess a container terminal that can accommodate the next generation of containerships of increased size and draught (Meyer 1999; Hooydonk E. et al 2007; Laar et al. 2007; Rousseau et al. 2009).

As the port of Rotterdam grows to the west, it releases areas in the east, closer to Rotterdam's city centre, which are no longer suitable for up-to-date port business. The area of Kop van Zuid, linked by the iconic Erasmus bridge (architect: UN Studio) to the city centre, has been undergoing urban transformation since the 1990s. It presents an almost completed new city district with converted old port buildings, such as the famous Hotel New York, once the headquarters of the Holland America Line, and new constructions, such as the World Port Centre, home of the Port of Rotterdam, a tower designed by Norman Foster. Redevelopment continues in the adjacent area of Katendrecht and around the Waalhaven and Eemhaven. In total, the old port areas slated for redevelopment, called 'Stadshavens', comprise 1600 hectares — an impressive size that makes it easy to imagine how difficult and slow the harbour transformation moves under the current conditions of scarce public resources and unstable economy (Meyer 1999; Hooydonk et al. 2007; Laar et al. 2007; Rousseau et al 2009).

In need of specialised manpower and depending on public acceptance, the port of Rotterdam has started to play an active role in harbour transformation, contributing to the city's development. In the vast Stadshavens area, the port has become itself a developer. It has initiated the transformation of run-down port areas into new urban districts with port-related businesses and better connections to adjacent parts of the town, like Sluisjesdijk, investing in the renovation and reuse of old port facilities and workers' settlements, like the RDM site and the Heijplaat district, and in new office complexes, like the Port City complex at the southern tip of Waalhaven. Committed to re-establishing the beach coastline which had to make room
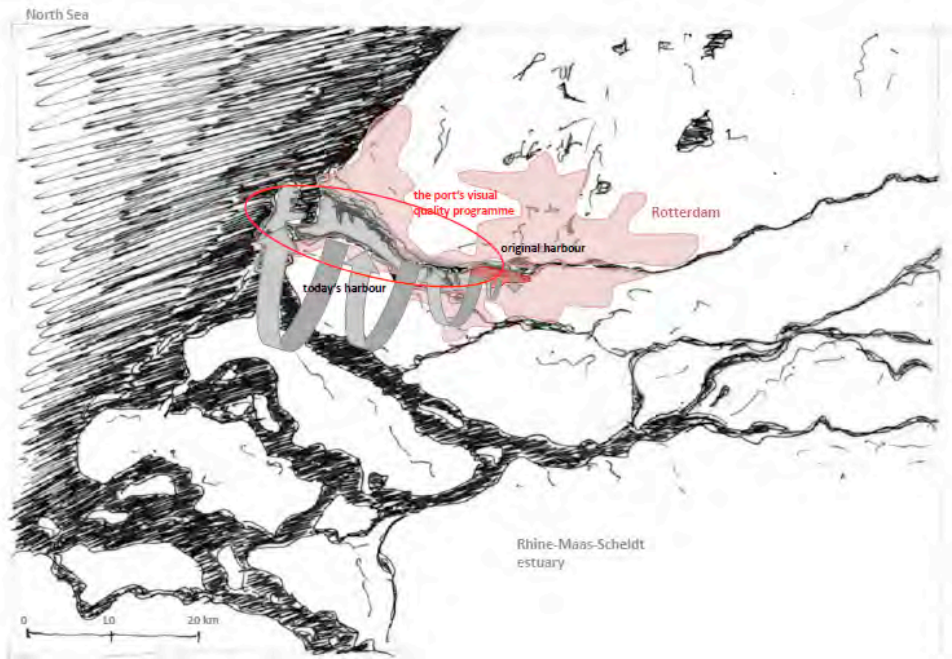
Fig. a. Harbour and city development within the topography of the Rotterdam metropolitan region (sketch: L. Diedrich)

for the Maasvlakte 2 landfill, the port authority commissioned landscape architects H+N+S to recreate a dune and beach landscape as a habitat and leisure zone on the landfill's shore.

Finally, to remediate the negative image of the active port area as a faceless industrial zone of no interest for the people of Rotterdam or the whole metropolitan region (1,3 million inhabitants), the port initiated a Visual Quality Programme in 2007. The programme is led by port director Hans Smits, who had formerly run Schiphol airport and turned it into a spatially well-organised and publicly accepted mega-transport hub. From the competition of six design teams, the urban design and landscape architecture office West 8 was chosen to elaborate the port of Rotterdam's Visual Quality Programme, to be implemented over the coming years over all the port grounds. West 8's work is not a classical spatial design project but rather a handbook of design guidelines.

Name of operation
Port of Rotterdam's Visual Quality Programme
Location
Rotterdam, The Netherlands
Contracting Authority
Port of Rotterdam
Prime Contractors
West 8 Urban Design and Landscape Architecture b.v.
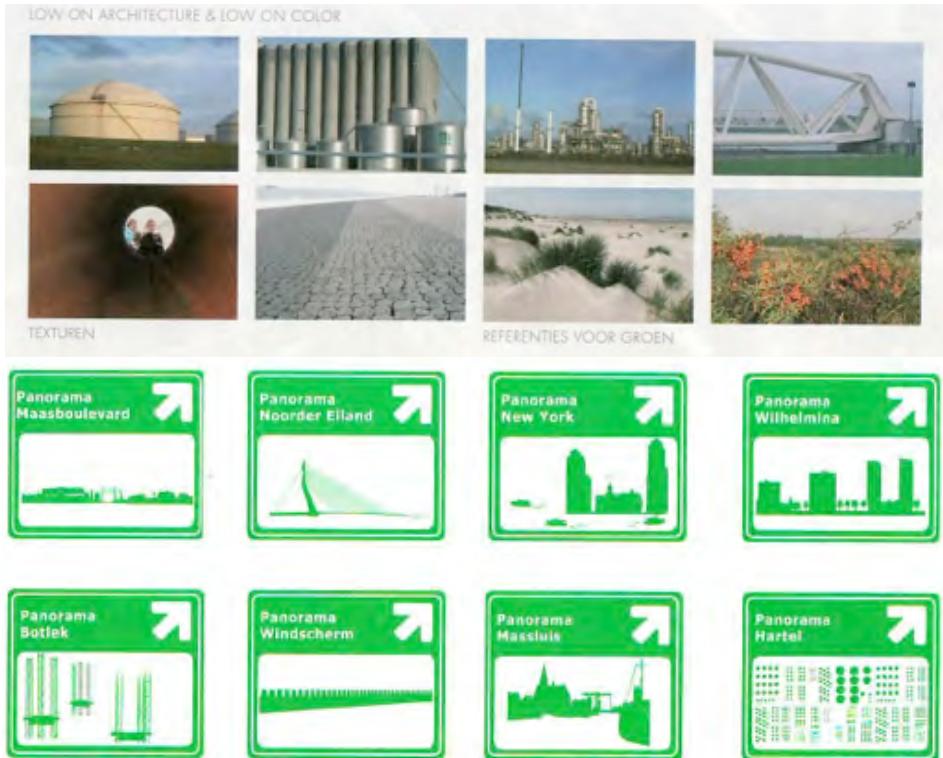Design
2007-2012
Construction
starting 2013

Fig. b. Pages of the 'Havenzicht' competition entry with strategies for upgrading the spatial appearance of the port of Rotterdam (source: Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2007)
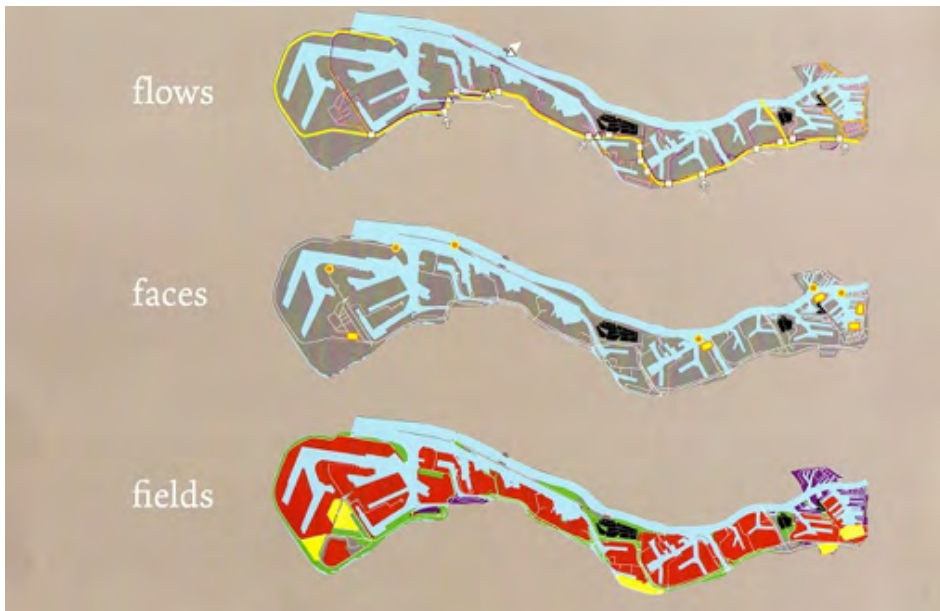

Fig. c. Drawing of the three different port areas in the brochure 'Spatial vision – design guidelines or open space' (Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2010)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

The 'reading filter' of our interpretation tool reveals that the designers of the Visual Quality Programme project first read of all the **MATERIALS** comprising their site. They describe it as a 40-kilometre-long industrial ribbon along the Maas river and the A15 motorway. It has no tangible structure, and its unpretentious and scale-less technical buildings and ensembles are in a continuous process of change. At the western end are the most up-to-date technological facilities, while on the eastern end are abandoned harbour installations, all situated in a landscape whose materiality shows considerable contrasts: the harbour is dominated by hard and edgy materials like concrete, metal, asphalt, stone, while the delta is characterised by soft materials like earth, sand and dune vegetation. According to the designers' reading, harbour **PRACTICES** — 300 000 jobs provided by the port authority and other companies — are the forces driving the material appearance of this harbour landscape, based on pragmatic, functional and cost-based decisions. Materials and practices have created the particular **ATMOSPHERE** of the port of Rotterdam, perceived by the designers, after close site observation and related studies, as a fascinating high-tech mega-business area within a cool, coastal landscape. They acknowledge, however, that the Rotterdam residents and other users of the port have a contrary reading of the port's atmosphere, because they generally or never visit the port or gain deeper insight into the port's functioning. The atmosphere read by this public is probably influenced by the late 20th century techno-critical discourse, in which big industrial installations are polluting, dangerous and inhuman (Port of Rotterdam/West 8 2007: 8–11). The designers' reading, however, mirrors the **DISCOURSE** put forward by the Port of Rotterdam, which presents itself as a world-class port that should look the part as well: 'The port area combines industrial economic activity with international allure and maritime magnificence, entrepreneurship with innovation and sustainability. The Port Authority is convinced that the port can profile this image further and better' (Port of Rotterdam 2012: 1).

The narrative arising from these considerations is the 'image', read by the designers from materials, practices, atmospheres and discourse, and its 'profiling'. They consider that their site, an industrial port, has already changed, from a dangerous polluting machine into a domesticated servile robot, and that this needs to be communicated to a broader audience in spatial terms.

Fig. 1. The four aspects of image quality, formulated by the designers: big-scale bright buildings, cool delta landscape, leisure places, nightscape (source: Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2007)
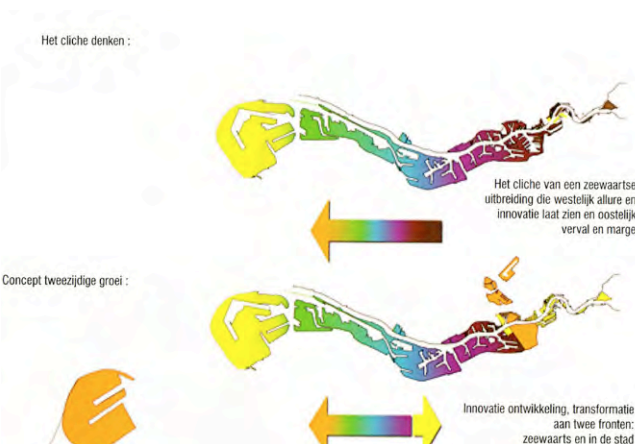
THE DESIGNERS READ:
MATERIALS AND PRACTICES
AS PRODUCERS OF A POSITIVE
PORT ATMOSPHERE

THE DESIGNERS READ:
THE SEAWARD PORT DEVELOPMENT AS
A NEGATIVE, MONODIRECTIONAL FORCE,
IN NEED OF A COMPLEMENTARY MOVE-
MENT TOWARDS THE CITY

Fig. 2. Port development cliché and recommended concept (drawing: West 8)

THE DESIGNERS READ THE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE
PORT AS AN IMAGE TO BE FURTHER PROFILED

The designers **READ** the site's
materials and practices as
generators of a high-tech
mega-business area within a
cool coastal landscape. They
also acknowledge the popular
reading of the site as a pollut-
ing, dangerous and faceless
industrial ribbon, based on
both an outdated image of
dirty industry as well as the
appearance of the abandoned
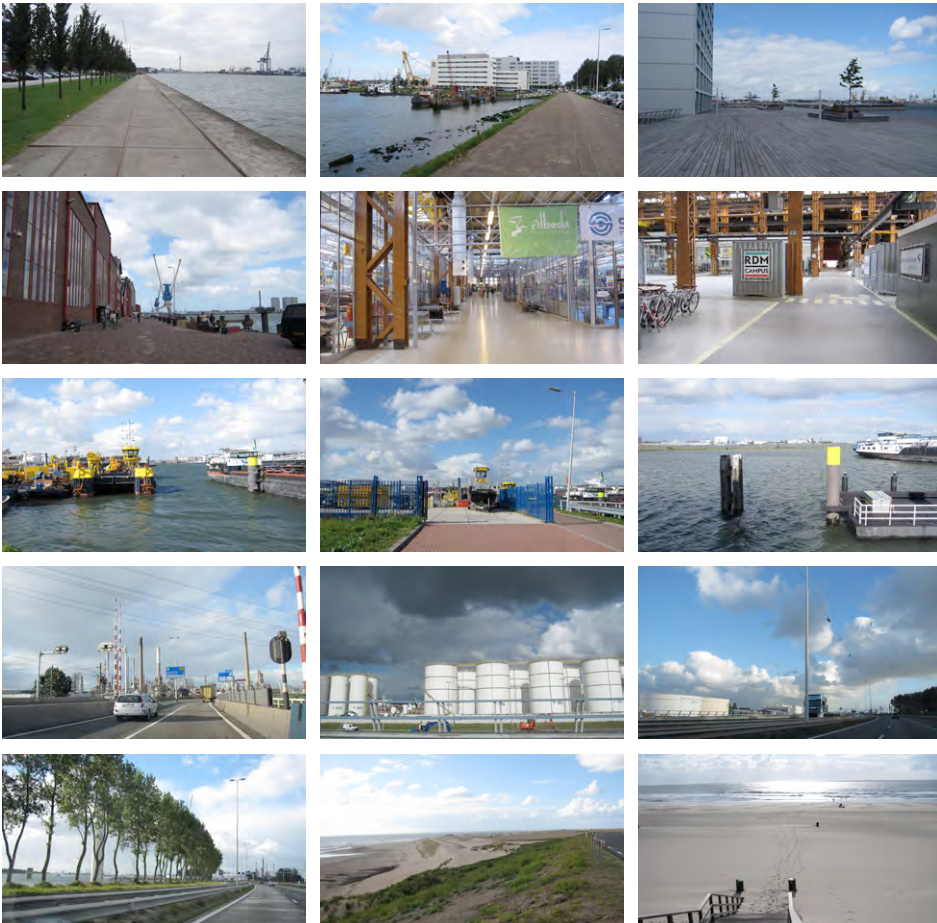port areas close to the city.

Fig. 3-17. Impressions of the 40 km long port ribbon from Waalhaven to Maasvlakte 2 in 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

The narrative of the designers' reading seems to support a simple corporate identity project. The designers go further in their thinking about the site, however. In an essay about the ambitions of the Port of Rotterdam, architectural historian Wouter Vanstiphout expresses his first thought: 'Lipstick for a gorilla!' He then explicates another understanding of visual appearance, not one of superficial cosmetics whose purpose is to obscure the body underneath, but of the self-acknowledgment and aesthetic expression of this body, the port's 'slow coming-out as a communicative and humanised' being (Vanstiphout 2007: 28). Accordingly, when scrutinising the designers' project for the Port's Visual Quality Programme through the editing filters of our interpretation tool, we recognise first of all a clear tendency of **DOMESTICATION** in translating the image of the site from an old to a new port, based on the atmospheres read by the designers: a fascinating high-tech mega-working place. However, this domestication of the site's image takes place through a **FOREIGNISING** translation of the site's spaces. Carefully chosen locations within the harbour landscape are altered to support the overall appreciation and preservation of the materials and practices found on site. This foreignisation attracts the audience into the harbour and makes them take a fresh look at what they once found strange and repelling: big-scale, unpretentious and almost uncoloured buildings, an intermittent green delta landscape, hidden places of interest in the chaotic harbour landscape, the blinking and blurring of the port at night. In their proposal 'The harbour's face' ('Het gezicht van de haven'), the designers advise enhancing these observed characteristics across the whole of the port, as follows: 'maintain a low profile in architecture and colour' (i.e., no extravagances, but a palette of white, grey and silver), 'cluster vegetation on the port's borders and in particular plots inside' (i.e., no decorative green, no buffers), 'discover the panoramas' (accompanied by a signage system), 'accentuate landmarks at night' (Port of Rotterdam/West 8 2007). In short: let the port use more clearly its port language of today.

The project for the Visual Quality Programme does not support an intersystemic change for such a goal, as translation from port to city would, or like the translation from one natural language into another. The project is also not intended to 'play city' on port grounds, like the Lisbon project does. This project implies an intrasystemic change within the semiotic system of the port. To help make the port aware that its formal expression corresponds to a story of old that is no longer understood, the project invites telling the story anew. This is not quite translation — it is, rather, rewriting. Or in terms of music, it is playing the same piece a third higher: the **TRANSLATION MODE** is a key change.

The **INTERVENTION MODE** is structural. As **CONNECTIVITY** is not a problem, the port being completely accessible except for the company areas and special terminals, the proposed interventions aim at **APPROPRIATION**. The overall themes of architecture, green space, discovery and nightscape are first of all turned into a spatial vision for the public open spaces of the port, the public space being considered the realm where appropriation can take place most effectively. In their spatial vision the designers differentiate between three port areas — the coastal ports, the inland ports and the city ports — and further between three public open

space structures — flows (infrastructural elements), faces (panoramas, port buildings and prominent development locations), and fields (company, industrial, distribution and leisure areas). This structure for intervention is laid out in the first volume of their brochure 'Spatial vision – guidelines for open space' ('Ruimtelijke visie – ontwerprichtlijnen buitenruimte') (Port of Rotterdam/West 8 2010). The second volume 'Handbook – guidelines for open space' ('Handboek – ontwerprichtlijnen buitenruimte') details the inventory of spatial elements and materials that should be compulsory, optional or avoided, depending on their implementation in one of the different port areas (Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2012). In total, the design proposal formulates precise guidelines for spatial alterations on site but not the alterations themselves. It sketches out a structure of intervention, but not the interventions themselves, because they cannot all be planned in detail for such a complex site developing over time.
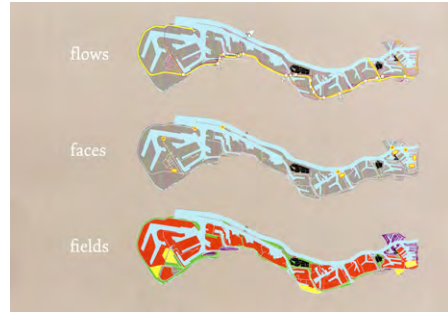
flows

ontwerpelementen		Maasvlakte 1 & 2	Europoort	Botlek en Vondelingenplaat	Waal- Eemhaven en Vierhavens
		buiten bebouwde kom			binnen bebouwde kom
Kruisingen	Stroomweg < > Gebiedsontsluiting	1	1	1	1
	Gebiedsontsluiting < > Gebiedsontsluiting	2	2	2	3
Verhardingen	Stroomwegen	4	4		
	Gebiedsontsluiting	6	6	6	5
	Industriewegen	8	8	8	7
	Fietspaden+ oversteken	9	9	9	9
	Voetpaden	10	10	10	10
Opsluitingen/ afwatering	Conventionele trottoirband	11	11	11	11
	Rotterdamse havenband				12
	Afgeronde RWS band	13	13	13	13
	Leicon band	14	14	14	14
Parkeren	Langs gebiedsontsluiting	15	15	15	15
	Langs industriewegen	16	16	16	16
Meubilair	Afgerond schampblok	17	17	17	17
	Verlichtingsmasten, armatuur	18	18	18	18
	Reclame type A en B	19	19	19	19
	Bebording bedrijven	20	20	20	20
	Bebording superpanorama's	21	21	21	21
	Bebording fietsroutes	22	22	22	22
	Zitbanken	23	23	23	23
	Afvalbakken	24	24	24	24
	Bedrijfsafvalcontainers	25	25	25	25
	Kleine elementen infrabundel	26	26	26	26
Groen	Bomen	27	27	27	27
standaard	Beplantingen	28	28	28	28
kan afwijken	Hagen	29	29	29	29
niet van toepassing	Gras en Bloemrijk grasland	30	30	30	30
	Kabel- en leidingentracés	31	31	31	31

Fig. 18-20. Structure of the design guidelines: three different port areas; three types of public open space; design elements and materials organised according to port area and space type by a colour code distinguishing compulsory, optional and avoidable elements (source: Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2010)

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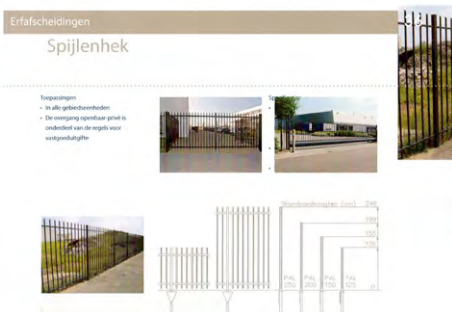
THE DESIGNERS DOMESTICATE
THE IMAGE OF THE PORT

Fig. 21-25. Design elements of the handbook: special kerbstones to form a continuous 'harbour ribbon' ('Havenband'), to be implemented on prominent locations; signage for panoramas; standardised fences; standardised tree planting; model of a new port bench (source: Port of Rotterdam/ West 8 2012)

The designers **EDIT** their site in translating an old image of the port of Rotterdam to a new one, based on the atmospheres they read. The designers propose to preserve most of the materials and practices found on site and alter the harbour landscape only punctually at carefully chosen locations. They invite the port to update its spatial language to make their audience take a fresh look at what they once found strange and repelling.

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THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

On the basis of their narrative, which profiles the image of the port, the designers decided to develop, together with the port authority, a port language, i.e., a spatial vocabulary and grammar for the port, a structure. Instead of composing an overall port design project, and instead of writing the complete port story, they offer a handbook of rules, like a dictionary and grammar book with whose help the port story can be written by many authors over time. This also means that the designers impose a structure onto a site which they think is lacking one. Applying such a structure onto a site always bears the risk of making it uniform, but the designers claim the opposite: they want to edit the harbour site in making use of its **OSCILLATION** between those place-bound characteristics they have observed now, in the present moment, and the fluidity of change they have detected in the port's history and that they expect to also shape its future. The designers try to prevent uniformity by creating various categories of port areas, space types and material uses. Their lexicon therefore becomes complex, supporting a language that is difficult to learn. This complexity relies on a deep and thorough knowledge of the site, and this is exactly what makes this project site-specific.

Having a lexicon at one's disposal means to possess a definition of the language that profiles the port image. The disadvantage is that the site is then bound to this definition. Divergent forms of expression are excluded, even if the site changes and requires a review of its image. The Nantes project's designers, on the contrary, neither use a dictionary nor propose to draw up the spatial transformation of the whole site. Instead of proposing a prescriptive tool to guarantee an editing of the site that corresponds to the reading of it, the Nantes designers work with an observation tool that updates the reading each time they need to take decisions on the editing. The Port of Rotterdam's Visual Quality Programme could benefit from a similar instance of revision, allowing for a continuous site reading. As of now, its particular site specificity derives from the moment of the designers' reading in 2007, which might be outdated one day in the future. Only with such a revision instrument will this project become **RADICANT.**

THE RIGHT BANK, BORDEAUX

INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

In the first century AD, when the Roman conquerors developed winegrowing in their Aquitanian province, they established a small port at Burdigala, today Bordeaux, on the left bank of the river Garonne. Protected from the rough waters of the Atlantic Ocean by the buffering estuary of the river Gironde, into which the Garonne flows, the site is a sea port with direct maritime access. Wine production and maritime trade increased considerably after 1153, when Bordeaux came under British rule. The port was established along the concave left bank of the river Garonne, which offered a slightly raised terrain whose banks were easy to consolidate. From the river's crescent shape here came the port's name: 'Port de la lune', the moon's port. From the 12th to the 19th centuries the slip-off slope on the right bank, with its lower-lying sludgy grounds, was not part of the city, being exposed to the tidal influence of the ocean and the river's periodical floods. Over the centuries the right bank was cultivated by religious institutions, built up with manors for the bourgeoisie of Bordeaux and transformed into a rural counterpart of the city, accessible to the left bank by boat (Coustet 2009).

When Bordeaux was returned to French rule, after 1453, its pro-English position initially hindered its development, but since the beginning of 18th century the port has been expanding into a continuous ribbon of specialised embankments, shipyards and warehouses lining up over five kilometres in front of the city on the left bank. During this 'Golden Age' of the 18th century the left bank received its emblematic facade of French classicist architecture. The right bank developed only after the construction of the first two bridges over the river Garonne, namely the Pont de Pierre in 1822, and a railway bridge in 1851. The area eventually changed from a rural district to a dense industrial one, with rail and port facilities, and since 1865, is administratively part of the city, known as the Bastide quarter (Coustet 2009).

In the 1990s the city of Bordeaux, whose inhabitants numbered 240 000 in a metropolitan area of 840 000 people, started to think about the urban reconquest of its two port-invested river banks, as the port (cargo traffic of 8,5 million tonnes per year) was moving its activities to better suited terminals in the Gironde estuary. When mayor Alain Juppé assumed power in 1995, a huge urban transformation programme was initiated that would change the metropolitan structure of the city, and included the construction of a city-wide tramway, the renovation of the historic city centre, the removal of the fenced-in port ribbon from the left bank to create prominent open spaces by the water, and the upgrading of the run-down industrial Bastide district on the right bank into a mixed-use university district. During the first decade of the 21st century many projects have been completed, such as the creation of open spaces on the left bank, designed by landscape architect Michel Corajoud. On the right bank, transformation continues. Here the overarching idea arises from the Bordeaux landscape charter, which is now the landscape plan for the Garonne Right Bank, which in turn materialises through the project of the Parc aux Angéliques. These plans, from the first decade of the 21st century, are the project of landscape architect Michel Desvigne and the subject of this case study (City of Bordeaux 2012; AIVP 2011; Coustet 2009).
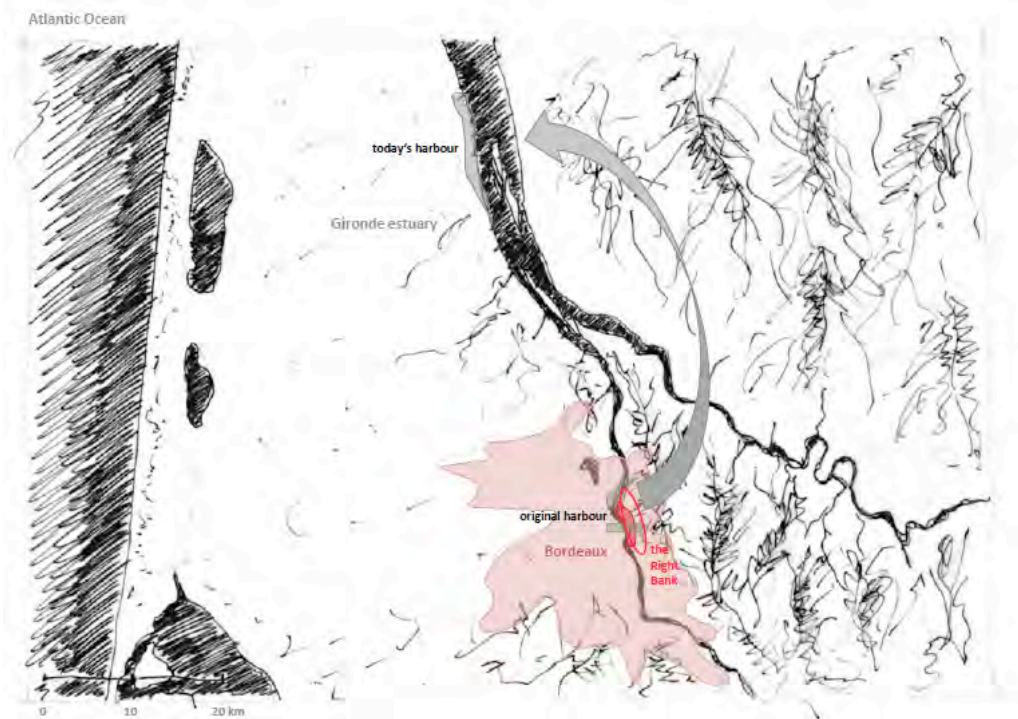
Fig. a. Harbour and city development within the topography of the Bordeaux metropolitan region (sketch: L. Diedrich)

Name of operation
Charte des Paysages de la Ville de Bordeaux
Location
Bordeaux, France
Contracting Authority
City of Bordeaux
Prime Contractors
Michel Desvigne Paysagiste (project responsible: Sophie Mourthé;
assistants: Luc Chignier, Nam Le Toan, Ana Marti-Baron)
Design
2002

Name of operation
Bordeaux Right Bank
Location
Bordeaux, France
Contracting Authority
Communauté Urbaine de Bordeaux (CUB)
Prime Contractors
Landscape architects Michel Desvigne, Sophie Mourthé, Luc Chignier,
Nam Le Toan, Ana Marti-Baron/ urban planner Bruno Fortier
Area
49 km2
Design
2000-2004

Name of operation
Parc aux Angéliques, Bordeaux Right Bank
Location
Bordeaux, France
Contracting Authority
City of Bordeaux, DGST
Prime Contractors
Michel Desvigne Paysagiste, Sophie Mourthé, Valeria Pagani
Area
75 ha
Design
2000-2004-2010
Construction
2010-2017

Fig. b. Masterplan of the Parc aux Angéliques (source: Desvigne 2009)

Fig. c-d. Southern part of the Parc aux Angéliques in 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

The designers' site thinking for the Right Bank project is based on **STRUCTURES**, as the 'reading filters' of our interpretation tool make clear. The designers describe the right bank of the river Garonne, exemplified by the Angéliques site, as a vacant industrial wasteland, freed from most of the old buildings but still characterised by the industrial grid: elongated plots of land stretching out in a right angle from the river, accessed by parallel streets. Along the river bend, the designers focus on the gentle slip-off slope with its varying water levels, which have given rise to a continous ribbon of ripisylvian vegetation with an impressive volume of trees and scrubs, so substantial that the designers read it as a main structure within the larger geography of the site. In their Bordeaux landscape charter they draw the Right Bank as a green spine along the river within the regional green grid, like the spine of a skeleton. In their vision for the Right Bank they propose this spine with radiating plots and lines of newly planted trees to prefigure the urban fabric in the becoming.

Their conception of the regional vegetation as main structure, visible on maps, allows the designers to identify the trees and other plants of the narrow fluvial strip as constitutive **MATERIALS** of their site. They propose creating a riverbank park by using these materials, even though on-site observation proves that, today, relics of port and industry and many other hard materials predominate on the site. The designers only keep their traces by planting rows of trees that reformulate the old industrial street pattern. Desvigne, the lead designer, writes: 'The very large park takes its materials and its shape from the land — its reliefs and its river' (Tiberghien et al. 2009: 55). Just as in the Marseille project, the designers extend their site by selecting a much larger area of influence, which is also seen as an area of effect in terms of ecological quality. Cartographic material and drawings support this choice.

The designers' reading of the site's structure is paralleled by their reading of the site's **PROCESSES**. Vegetation, with its growth and seasonal changes, is treated as a material in evolution. The designers appreciate the unfinished, still-developing landscapes, and, as scholar James Corner says about Desvigne's work, such landscapes never attain 'an ideal state at any one moment in time, there is (...) an excited sense of anticipation of things yet to come, especially with young landscapes where a palpable sense of growth and change is most pronounced over relatively short timeframes' (Tiberghien et al. 2009: 9).

The designers do not restrict their reading of change to natural processes; people's **PRACTICES** are of equal importance. As they understand from studying the site's history in archives, the Right Bank has evolved not only through the forces of the river but also to a great a extent through human cultivation, industrialisation and now urban redevelopment. Desvigne writes: 'We draw inspiration and sustenance in the traces of society's activities. Above all, we aim to help this society envision other ways of occupying and constituting the area' (Tiberghien et al. 2009: 13). The designers consequently consider transformative practices when elaborating Bordeaux's landscape charter, which involved close collaboration with the city's 'practitioners', the technical services of the city. A strip of the Right Bank, among other sites in town, became a

landscape laboratory where materials, species and project procedures are being experimented in a life-view mode. The narrative of this 'intermediate nature', this 'rough, temporary architecture under development' (Desvigne in Tiberghien et al 2009: 12) is the growing green grid, materialised on the traces of the old industrial Bastide pattern and integrated into the regional vegetation structure.

Fig. 1-3. Map of existing green spaces; map of enhanced green spaces; proposed green structure (source: Desvigne 2006)

THE DESIGNERS READ
THE STRUCTURE OF THE
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT:
PARALLEL PLOTS

THE DESIGNERS READ
THE REGIONAL STRUCTURE'S
MATERIAL: VEGETATION

THE DESIGNERS READ
THE PROCESSES OF THE
REGIONAL STRUCTURE:
GROWTH AND DECAY
OF VEGETATION

Fig. 4-5. Aerial photo of the status quo of the right bank; aerial photo with proposed park (source: Desvigne 2009)
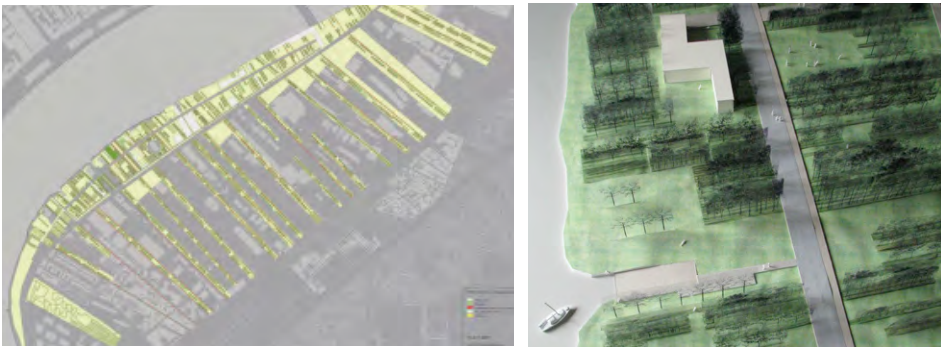
Fig. 6-7. Schematic drawing and model of the Parc aux Angéliques (source: Desvigne 2009)

The designers **READ** the site's structure as part of the regional green network. Consequently, they read the narrow fluvial tree ribbon as the spine of this structure and propose to reinforce it in their Angéliques riverbank park. The park's materials are rows of trees that reformulate the old industrial street pattern. These materials are never stable, but are constantly evolving through the growth of the trees and the transformative action on site. The designers' reading of the growing green grid legitimates their erasure of the existing industrial materials on the Angéliques site.

Fig. 8-15. The fluvial tree ribbon seen from the right bank and from the Angéliques site, parallel paths and streets on the Right Bank, young trees in the recently realized part of the Angéliques Park, transformation underway in the adjacent district 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS DO NOT READ THE ANGÉLIQUES SITE'S STRUCTURE AND MATERIALS

Fig. 16. Aerial photo of the Angéliques site with its harbour wasteland on the riverbank (outlined) and the adjacent industrial plots, 2009 (source: Desvigne 2009)

Fig. 17-18. Existing buildings on the riverbank, 2012 (photos: L. Diedrich)

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THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

The 'editing filters' of our interpretation tool reveal that the designers edit with one **FOREIGNISING** interpretation and two **DOMESTICATING** ones. The designers do not touch the existing rough and informal ripisylvian vegetation along the right bank but retain it in their design, supporting their reading of it as the green spine of the regional landscape structure. They offer it to their audience as a foreign body of vegetation within the formalised mineral city, a view particularly comprehensible across the river from the historical left bank, with its refined classical architecture and ornamental vegetation. On the other hand, the designers domesticate the industrial wasteland of the Bastide district, along the fluvial tree ribbon. This wasteland consists of a large riverbank with port installations that are disappearing, and of a pattern of stretched plots sitting at right angles to this riverbank, partly hosting old industrial facilities, partly rails, partly cleared, partly redeveloped. The designers domesticate the riverbank with its disused port installations by extending the parallel structure of the stretched industrial plots into it and materialising it through rows of planted trees. These tree strips become the main architectural building blocks of the Angéliques park. Furthermore, the designers domesticate the stretched industrial plots by having their park branch outward extensively, through similar rows of planted trees that reach into the streets. Desvigne himself calls his transfer operations 'transpositions' (conference Desvigne 2011). In the terminology of our analytical framework, we can describe them as follows: The designers' site reading results in the narrative of the growing green grid, and consequently their site editing involves the translation of the Right Bank's abandoned port and industrial facilities to a park and a green urban district that is part of this green grid. In terms of translation the fluvial tree ribbon is preserved as such (no change of the semiotic system), the pattern of the industrial plots is preserved and reused to accommodate urban ensembles (substance change), and the wasteland on the riverbank is replaced by a tree architecture to become the Angéliques park (matter change). To sum up, the translation mode of the fluvial tree ribbon is a key change, an intrasystemic interpretation of non-intentional vegetation strip into an intentional one, namely the spine of the green grid along the river. However, the main transfer operation takes place when the green river spine branches outward into the Angéliques park and further into the district. Here, the designers resort to broader interpretive freedom; they translate a ripisylvian tree strip into an urban district, an intersystemic interpretation at the level of a poem which is adapted to another language, sometimes even reformulated: translation as adaptation is the Right Bank's main **TRANSLATION MODE**.

In their wish to incorporate the city's green grid into the larger regional vegetation structure, the designers base their editing on **CONNECTIVITY**, a structural transfer instrument that materialises in a static figure to be inscribed into the site's ground. At the same time they are very aware of the flux of the design project. Due to its large scale and complex negotiations with ground owners and developers, it will evolve over a long time span, easily 30 years, which reduces the commanding power of the designers to a precarious level. Therefore the designers agreed to assist the public client in his position to conceive and implement the project over time — the Bordeaux landscape charter plays an important role not only as a document forwarding the

narrative of the growing green grid, complete with a catalogue of situations and materials, but also through on-site landscape laboratories that enable designers and city technicians to develop a common design and building culture and verify on site how the test landscape is appropriated before building larger parts of it. The designers' ten-year-long involvement as consultants to the city targets this **APPROPRIATION**. Public client and designers generate site knowledge together. In this collaborative work mode, development and management are blurred: 'The role of management of the works is quite unusual', states Desvigne, 'and its missions, defined gradually and in constant dialogue with the City and its departments, are multiple, complex, and sensitive. Because of the size of the project and the time necessary for its completion, only a public structure could ensure completion' (Tiberghien et al. 2009: 57). The **INTERVENTION MODE** in this project is twofold: the green grid forms an intervention figure, of which the growth is defined through an intervention flow, established through continuous collaboration of the public client and the designers, inter alia in the landscape laboratories.

INTERVENTION FIGURE :

GREEN GRID
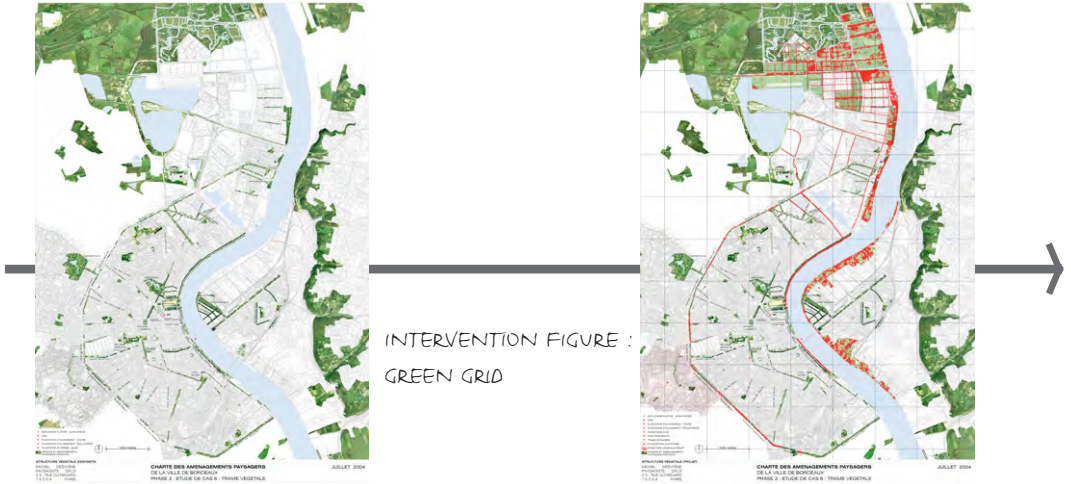
Fig. 19-20. Existing urban vegetation structure, proposed urban vegetation structure as anchored in the Bordeaux landscape charter (source: City of Bordeaux/ Desvigne 2006)

THE DESIGNERS TRANSLATE, THROUGH DO-
MESTICATION, THE STREET PATTERN INTO
THE PARK, AND THE PARK VEGETATION
INTO THE STREETS

INTERVENTION FLOW :

GROWING GRID
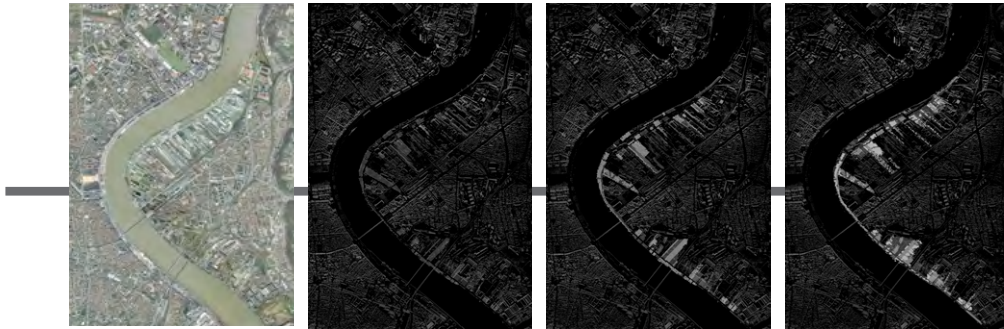
Fig. 21-24. Aerial photo of the existing right bank; three stages of evolution of the vegetation structure (source: Desvigne 2009)
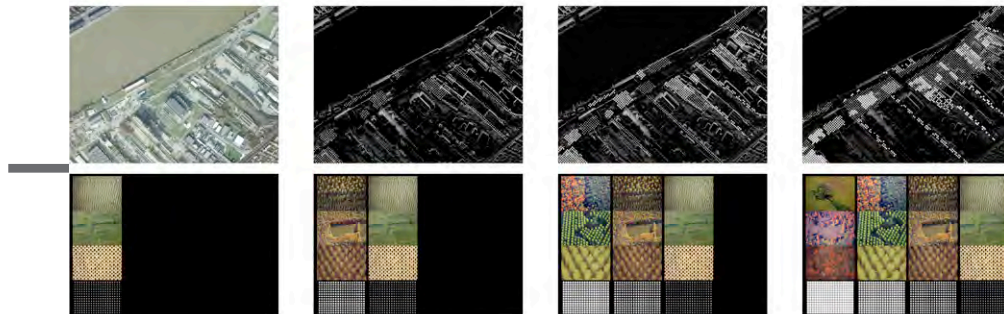
Fig. 25-28. Aerial photo of a part of the Parc aux Angéliques; evolution of the tree architecture in successive stage of maturity and density (source: Desvigne 2009)

Fig. 29-30. Prototypes experimented in the landscape laboratories for the Bordeaux landscape charter (source: City of Bordaux/ Desvigne 2006)

THE LANDSCAPE LABORATORIES
ARE TOOLS OF APPROPRIATION

The designers **EDIT** the fluvial tree ribbon in a foreignising translation, integrating it into the design in its role as the green spine of the regional green grid. The ribbon of trees along the river is successively enlarged by building up the Parc aux Angéliques through its branches of new tree plantings that reach out into the former industrial Bastide district, transforming it into a contemporary city district. The Bastide street pattern is domesticating the park, and the park's tree architecture is domesticating the streets. The interventions are successively producing but also altering the structural figure. Intervention procedures and materials are tested in on-site laboratories.

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

It is easy to detect the **OSCILIATION** between a place-bound and a transient pole in the designers' narrative of the growing green grid. The green structure is rooted in the geography of the region, but its material, the vegetation, is subject to natural processes of growth and decay, and is therefore transient. The structure's practices — the building up and testing out of the structure — is subject to human practices, and is therefore in the flow of decisions, developing competences and convictions. Undoubtedly, we can call this project site-specific.

Its particularity resides in the conception and communication of the green grid as a structure that is stable as an abstract figure, and malleable when being turned into concrete spaces. These spaces, like the Angéliques park on the Right Bank, are conceived again with an intentional oscillation between abstract ideas and concrete materialisation. Instead of a project drawing that depicts realistic design interventions, the designers propose somewhat abstract drawings that indicate guidelines for the upcoming materialisation, such as the geometry of the park's composition, the textures and density of plantings and tree species for different locations. The question of how to depict the stages of this materialisation over time remains a question within the design profession of landscape architecture. Desvigne, when talking about his 'intermediate natures', himself: 'How can this be shown? I think it is important to hold out against clichés, to play with the multitude, with the succession. There is no "beautiful" image' (Tiberghien et al. 2009: 13). Just as Chemetoff does with his monitoring-design instrument of the Plan & Guide Map, Desvigne makes a start in proposing blurred drawings and models that intentionally lack sharpness and instead invite continuous sharpening. They depict textures of the work instead of the work itself. We could even take it as a postulate that the work is replaced by textures, in an understanding of the work as open work (Eco), or the work as text (Barthes). In actual fact the continuous sharpening does not take place in drawings but on site — through experiments in the landscape laboratories and in collaboration with the site's public actors over longer time spans. Desvigne describes his involvement as precarious (successive short assistance contracts, no big project commission) and claims that precisely this precariousness makes the project perennial ('Thématiques générales'), allowing the effects of time to be part of the design. We can therefore understand this project as **RADICANT**.

BJØRVIKA'S OPEN SPACES, OSLO

INTRODUCTION
SITE AND DESIGN

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING
SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING
SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY
CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

INTRODUCTION

SITE AND DESIGN

Oslo is situated at the northern tip of the Oslo Fjord, which reaches some 100 kilometres northwards into the Scandinavian landmass from the Skagerak, the water body connecting the North Sea with the Baltic Sea. The city began as a Viking settlement around the year 1000, on the eastern shore of Bjørvika Bay at the foot of Ekeberg Hill. The settlement became a trade hub between sea and land transport lines in the Middle Ages, and in 1299, was fortified by the construction of Akershus Fortress on the promontory framing Bjørvika Bay on the western shore. The port developed on this shore, especially since the 15th century when timber export became a major economic asset of the city. Sawmills were established along the river Akerselva, which flows into Bjørvika Bay. Over the centuries, it carried mud and sawdust down the river and deposited them in front of the river mouth, where they were eventually consolidated by landfill to create storage platforms for timber — and a new coastline. After the devastating fire of 1624, King Christian IV rebuilt the city on the western side of the fortress, at Pipervika Bay. This laid the foundation for industrial and port facilities to occupy the bay from the mid-19th century onward. A first railway line, opened in 1854, cut off the quays from the hinterland. Since 1860 Bjørvika's coastline has been gradually built up with quays and piers, beginning with the shipyard and engineering workshops for Nylands Mekaniske Verkstad, and various companies and industries have settled in the area up until the 20th century. In the 1950s and 1960s, the area's industrial production declined, and exports from the port decreased. However, the port successively turned into a facility for consumer goods importation and passenger ferry traffic (cargo traffic of 6 million tonnes per year), occupying the whole of the northern shore of the Oslo Fjord, which also received a massive port feeder road system (Oslo Havn KF 2011).

In 1988 the city of Oslo decided to concentrate port activities on a few locations to the south and west of the city and to redevelop the central areas of Pipervika and Bjørvika into fully fledged urban districts. Transformation began in the more centrally located Pipervika Bay in the early 1990s, with projects like Akers Brygge. The decision, in 1999, to locate the new opera house at Bjørvika paved the way for redeveloping the rest of the central bay area. In 2003, the urban development plan was voted in. Part of the plan was to build a tunnel to replace the massive roads separating the quays from the city, and to build new cultural institutions, such as Deichmanns Library, the Munch Museum, and the Bar Code, a high-rise office complex next to the central station. Because many functions and the respective stakeholders were to operate together in an area of 70 hectares, the city decided to pull the project together with an overarching plan for open urban spaces, defined through a competition in 2004. The competition was won by SLA and Gehl architects. As of the writing of this thesis, the opera house and tunnel have been built, and the Bar Code and a first open urban space are under construction. A comprehensive vision, the Fjord City Plan, was eventually formulated in 2008 for the urban development of the booming city (610 000 inhabitants) and its metropolitan region (1,9 million inhabitants) (City of Oslo/ Agency for Planning and Building Services 2008a/ 2008b).
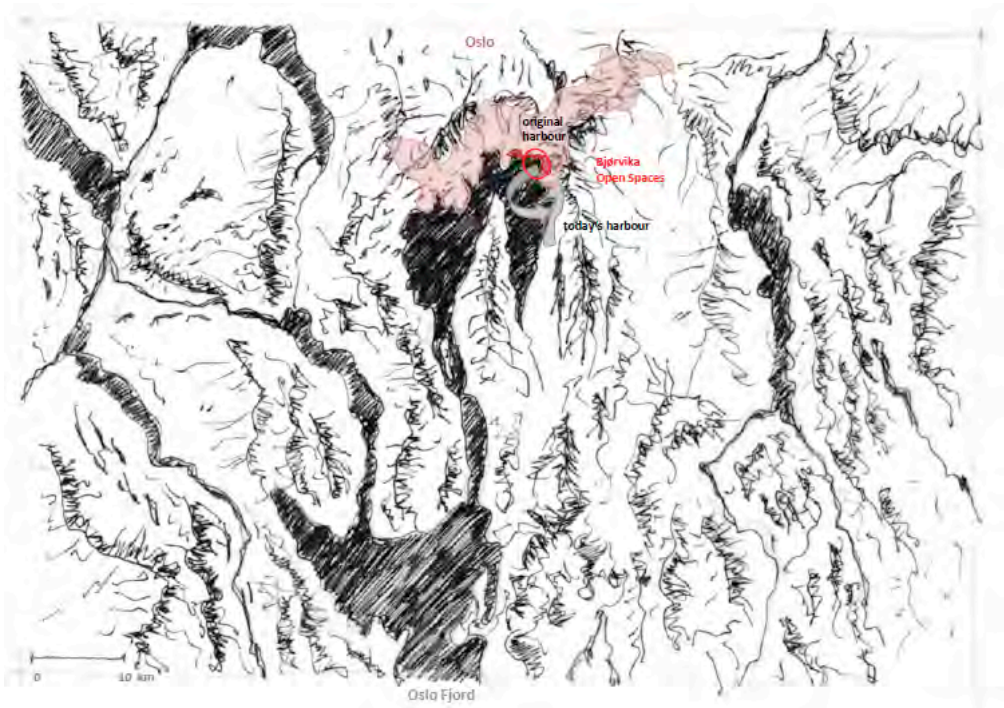
Fig. a. Harbour and city development within the topography of the Oslo metropolitan region (sketch: L. Diedrich)

Fig. b. Ground plan of the open urban spaces at Bjørvika Bay (drawing: SLA and Gehl architects)
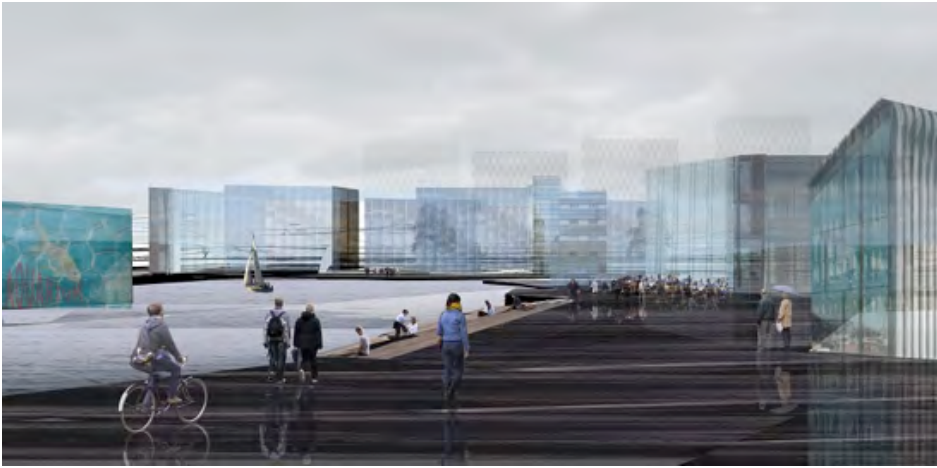
Fig. c. Perspective rendering of the harbour promenade after rainfall (drawing: SLA and Gehl architects)

Bjørvika's Open Spaces
Location
Oslo, Norway
Contracting Authority
Bjørvika Infrastruktur
Prime Contractors
SLA with Gehl Architects
Area
18 ha
Design
2004
Construction
2011 ongoing

THE DESIGNERS' SITE READING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S NARRATIVE

Central to the designers' site thinking about Bjørvika's open space design project are the **AT-MOSPHERES** of the site, which the 'reading filters' of our interpretation tool make evident. The competition of 2004 asked the designers to conceive a series of open spaces, called commons, along the waterfront that would frame and irrigate the new central district and anchor it in the surrounding urban fabric. Knowing that almost everything of the old port and road installations was to disappear and that none of the new urban buildings, except the Opera House, was yet defined, the designers built their project upon close observation of the existing site's atmospheres, as we can see when comparing the drawings of the competition with my own on-site experiences. The drawings do not depict a definitive scenario for the site, even though perspective renderings use photo-realistic elements and ground plans demonstrate a basic open space vocabulary. In both cases, elements are blended rather than assembled, stylised rather than developed. Together these elements produce the same kind of blurred or abstract images requiring later detailing as seen in Desvigne's drawings for Bordeaux. Unlike the Bordeaux project, however, these drawings define very precisely local atmospheres based on observed states of water: the spray of the turbulent river at Akerselva's mouth, the shimmering dark harbour promenade after rainfall, the cloud reflecting water mirror of the Opera Common. 'Atmosphere is everything', writes Stig Andersson, the lead designer of SLA. 'It is about the perception of local conditions such as wind and weather. Of the light, the plants and the spatial changes. (...) The experience of a here and now. The starting point is the everyday and the concrete and physical, which is observable' (Andersson 2010).

In this respect **MATERIALS** are read as atmosphere-producing elements, water first of all, but also surface materials. The dark asphalt of the existing port at Bjørvika and its road landscape can be recognised in the overall dark surface of the proposed open spaces, defined as black basalt in the competition documents. In an interview, Andersson says that his team suggested basalt to fit the client's **DISCOURSE** about quality in the competition, hoping that for cost reasons the basalt could be changed to asphalt during the project elaboration, which it was. The designers respond to the dominant discourse and later escape from it for the sake of their on-site reading. In addition, the observed atmospheres count more than the observed materials — in case the latter can be replaced. The designers also read the continuum of the harbour and road landscape's ground cover material, incorporated into the existing grounds as a continuous black surface. In another drawing it is cut out from the plan and stands as an indented black ribbon on a white background, as if independent from its frame. This black ribbon can indeed adapt to any frame as long as its material continuum persists.

The other atmosphere producing elements are **PROCESSES**. The designers do not acknowledge materials as stable but see in them shifting appearances affected by wind, sun and water. The blurred and abstract drawings, the representation of the dark quay surface after a rainfall, of facades reflecting a cloudy sky, can be understood as an attempt to portray the materials' changeability under local processes and to escape from images that, like snapshots, would freeze their changing appearance. Andersson writes, 'It is not one moment, one split second that is the correct expression' (Andersson in Rafn Thomsen et al. 2007: 284). The narrative of this project is the continuous but malleable ground as a bearer of atmospheres.

Fig. 1-3. Perspective renderings of the harbour promenade after rainfall; of the Opera Square; of Akerselva riverbanks (drawings: SLA and Gehl architects)

THE DESIGNERS READ:
ATMOSPHERES PRODUCED BY LOCAL
MATERIALS AND PROCESSES
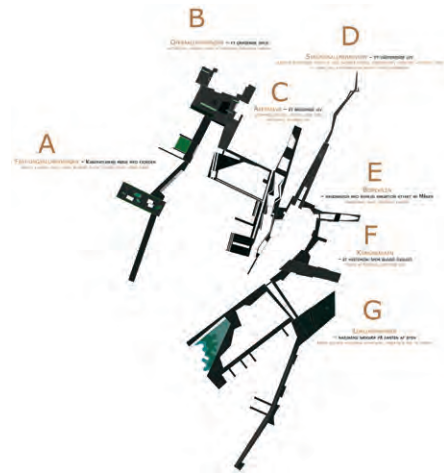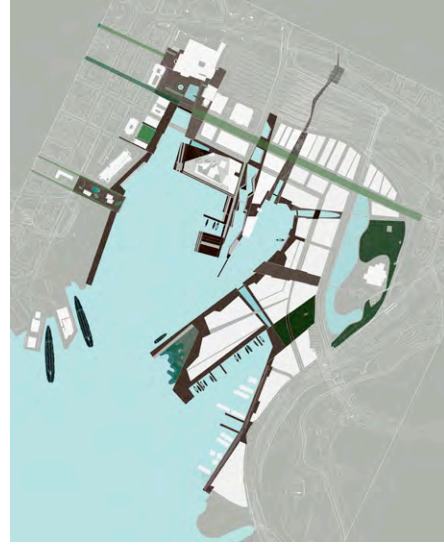
Fig. 4-5. Ground plan of Bjørvika Bay's open spaces in their urban context; ground plan of Bjørvika Bay's ribbon of open spaces with programme proposals (drawings: SLA and Gehl architects)

THE DESIGNERS READ:
THE MATERIAL OF A TARMAC
SURFACE AS AN OPEN SPACE
CONTINUUM

RAMMEN -OM RUMMETS AFGRÆNSNING OG DEFINITION
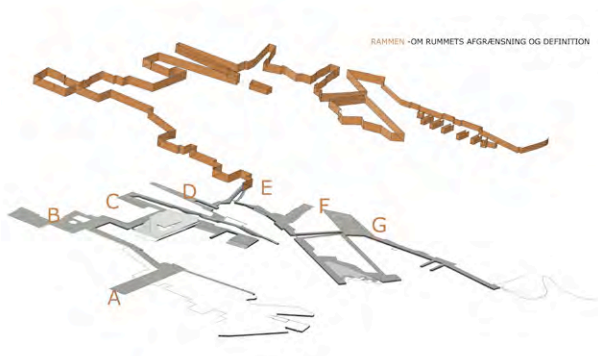
Fig. 6. Axonometric view of Bjørvika Bay's open spaces and a possible frame of facades of the district in the becoming (drawings: SLA and Gehl architects)

The designers build their project on the **READING** of the site's atmospheres, because almost everything of the old port and road installations was to disappear and none of the new urban buildings, except the Opera House, was yet defined at the moment of the competition, in 2004. They translate the existing tarmac surfaces into a black continuum of open spaces that will adapt to the buildings to come and celebrate the changing states of water and weather at the specific places of the waterfront.

ATMOSPHERES
OBSERVED ON SITE TODAY
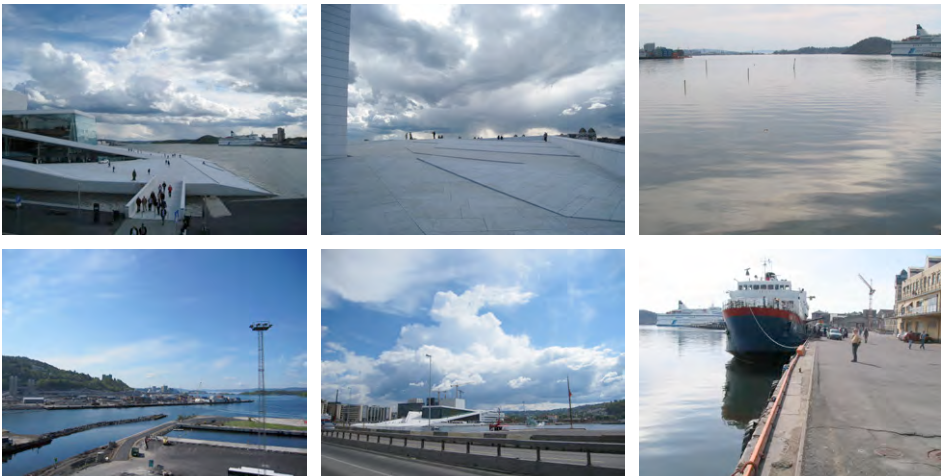
Fig. 7-12. The waterfront as experienced on site in 2009 and 2010 (photos: L. Diedrich)

THE DESIGNERS' SITE EDITING

SYNTHESIS: THE PROJECT'S TRANSLATION AND INTERVENTION MODES

Atmospheres need observers. To attract observers, the ribbon of tarmac the designers seized upon at the existing site was edited into a continuum of public spaces where observers would gather — a **DOMESTICATING** translation of the Bjørvika harbour and road landscape. Beyond the designers' reading of the site's atmospheres, materials and processes, the competition drawings show their editing of the site through imagined practices. A programmatic sketch of the public space ribbon indicates people's movements along it and their activities per season at seven distinguished locations. In a post-competition programme study (Gehl Architects 2008) the designers detailed people's usage of single public spaces and their adjacent buildings, without, however, substantiating the complete physical design for these spaces, which is to be elaborated as the construction of the district progresses. The first actual public space, partly finished in 2012, at the time of writing, is the Stasjonsallmenningen in the Bar Code complex, linking a completed bridge over the railway with the as yet unbuilt waterfront. Here the designers edited the abstract dark surface of the ribbon into a concrete space: they turned the surface into a honeycomb pattern of natural stone and folded it into a glacier-like ramp sloping down from the bridge to the quay level, producing staggered terraces, planting beds for spruce, benches and retention walls in front of the Bar Code buildings. Water nozzles under the trees will spray mist to cool the narrow space between the buildings in the summer, reproducing the atmosphere of a foggy day at the harbour. Andersson writes that designers 'organise physical matter within a spatial context, to create a world in itself among many other worlds, a world of different independent systems, all organised in a giant patchwork' (Lee 2007: 9). He also refers to the spiritual exercises of Ignatius de Loyola in which imagination is the means by which to contemplate an object in its relationship to the self (Rafn Thomsen 2007: 284). Recording and imagination (the reading and the editing) take place in Andersson's sketchbooks, in pocket format, always at hand, archived when full. In them he makes notes and draws, includes photos and quotes, and leaves blank pages that he will come back to later and elaborate on those first recordings and ideas that begin to autonomise themselves in the process (interview, Andersson 2012). A researcher of landscape architecture, Malene Hauxner, calls Andersson's method supergraphic and superlogical: 'The situation is assessed, the design comes about through process and construction. Solutions that try to respond to the known and the unknown problems of the client are examined with a view to their consequences. The point is not invention, design or beautification' (Hauxner 2002: 83).

The designers' method demonstrates that editing can acquire extreme interpretive freedom, can almost emancipate itself from the reading. The translation of the Oslo site from port into city centre implies a shift from one semiotic system into another with a considerable change in substance. The replacement of most of the port's facilities with new urban buildings also involves a considerable change of matter, so that the designers had to reformulate the site's spaces with another matter of expression, in the way a movie is conceived upon the basis of a novel. The **TRANSLATION MODE** of this project is adaptation.

The purpose of the Bjørvika competition, to extend the city centre into the formerly cut off bay and port area and to tie the various single buildings and plots of the new district together, turned this project into a **CONNECTIVITY** task par excellence. However, the connective structure, the street pattern, was prescribed by the implantation of the buildings plots in the Bjørvika zoning plan. The designers propose to intervene within this given structure through detailing activities and atmospheres at seven specific places, which would enhance their attractiveness. A precise prospective of people's usage complements the design proposal with which the designers intend to help city life unfold along the new ribbon of open spaces. Andersson writes, 'we design the framework, but people create their own situations' (Andersson 2008), which can be interpreted as the designers excluding people from contributing to the design of the framework. In this respect, **APPROPRIATION** is not part of the editing process, but rather, the editing process aims at spaces that entice appropriation when they are already finished. The Stasjonsallmenningen testifies to this interpretation. We could however imagine another interpretation, where people's creative interventions take place in a proposed framework and where detailed design arises from this interaction. This would imply a period of observation of people's usage at spaces in a pending state of development, as in the Lisbon project. So far there are not many accessible wastelands at Bjørvika, given that Oslo's boom economy powers a classical urban development: immediately after a port or road facility is removed, a construction site for a new building is opened. Considering that it took eight years, since the competition in 2004, before the designers were able to realise their first open space, one can imagine that the implementation of the whole of the project will be time consuming, maybe offering here or there the possibility for appropriation to enter the design process. This would enhance the **INTERVENTION MODE** as purely insertive, incorporating design interventions into a given spatial, temporal and usage structure.

THE DESIGNERS DOMESTICATE THE
PORT AND ROAD LANDSCAPE INTO
A SEQUENCE OF PUBLIC SPACES

INTERPRETATION MODE:
ADAPTATION
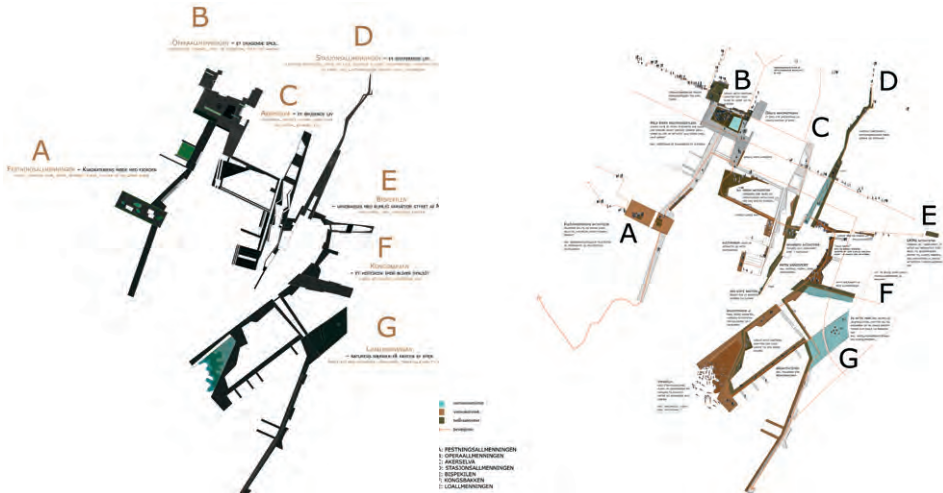
Fig. 13-14. Ground plan of Bjørvika Bay's ribbon of open spaces; ground plan with proposal for movements and activities (drawings: SLA and Gehl architects)
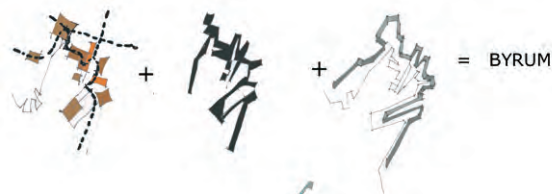
THE DESIGNERS MATERIALISE AND
ACTIVATE A GIVEN CONNECTIVE
STRUCTURE

INTERVENTION AS INSERTION:
THE DESIGNERS INCORPORATE THE
GROUND INTO THE GIVEN SITE

Fig. 15. Integration of the open spaces into the context
(drawing: SLA and Gehl architects)

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Fig. 16. Bjørvika Bay's waterfront with the
construction site of the Bar Code, 2010
(photo: L. Diedrich)
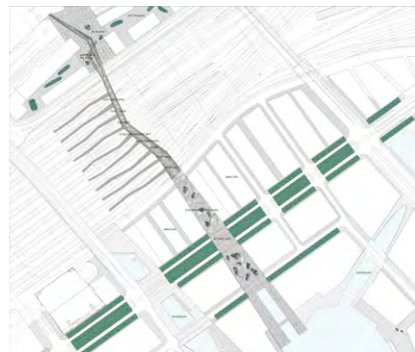
Fig. 17-20. Built Stasjonsallmenningen in
May 2012; frontal view; section; ground plan
(photo: SLA, drawings: SLA and Gehl architects)

The designers **EDIT** the site on
the basis of imagined practices
taking place on the black ribbon
of open space. A programmatic
sketch shows people's move-
ments and activities per season
at seven distinct locations, and
the first edited space, Stasjon-
sallmenningen, shows how these
programmatic ideas are materi-
alised. In the conversion of the
old port district into a central
urban quarter, massive changes
of matter are involved, and so the
designers translate the site with
extreme interpretive freedom, as
if directing a movie on the basis
of a novel.

THE PROJECT'S SITE SPECIFICITY

CONCLUSION: THE PROJECT'S OSCILLATION AND RADICANTITY

With its narrative ascribing a foundational role to atmospheres, this project **OSCILLATES** between, on the one hand, those atmospheres' place-bound nature as originating from both the material and the history of specific places, and on the other, their very transient nature as phenomena, produced by specific observers through the experiences of these specific places. This project's warrant for site specificity, and also its particularity, is the perception of the observers, exemplified through the designer, who consequently obtains the role of a director — in the medium of film we could speak of him mastering the transfer of a novel into a movie. The design documents of the competition, with their precisely rendered atmospheres yet blurred expression of concrete spaces, equal the script of this movie, guaranteeing consistency while allowing for adaptation to whatever conditions might arise during production. Over the extended time span of Bjørvika's open space implementation, the experiences of the designer-observer will probably change, and other observers, such as the successively arriving users of the new district, will change the site and therefore its experiences once again. To avoid the translation of outdated atmospheres, the design project should develop methods to register and transport updated ones into its long process of realisation. Only then would the design be **RADICANT**.

PART 3/ DISCUSSION: INSIGHT

In the first part of this thesis, we studied theories that can provide us with a definition of site specificity and lay the foundation for an interpretation tool capable of grasping site-specific aspects in harbour transformation projects. In the second part of this thesis, the case study, we applied this tool to six European design projects. In this last part, we will present and discuss the insight gained.

We will first answer the research question and evaluate the performance of our method. The interpretation tool has not only allowed us to detect site-specific aspects in the design projects under consideration but also to grasp nuances of site specificity, in particular through the interpretation tool's translation filters. Instead of situating the harbour projects between the two poles of site specificity, we can now look at their modes of translation and at their degree of interpretive freedom and thus understand the nuances of site specificity.

We will then evaluate the outcome of the case study by pointing out patterns observed throughout the projects studied. From these patterns we derive a set of game rules for site-specific harbour transformation. We propose these rules as the foundational logic underpinning decisions taken by actors of concrete transformation projects; these rules should foster the mindset and framework necessary to encourage site-specific design. We judge it impossible to propose a universal recipe for site-specific design itself.

Finally, we will evaluate the appropriateness of site specificity as the founding theory for the study of harbour transformation projects. We challenge the definition adopted in this thesis, bound by the term's dualistic idea of an oscillation between the place-bound and the transient, developed in recent art theory. One of the results of this study is our conclusion that site specificity should be understood as being less tied to dualistic thinking. Since the concept of translation, as applied in the present study, has helped us describe nuances of designers' work, we will conclude on an invitation to further explore related theories to enrich the debate about design for derelict harbour areas and other post-industrial landscapes.

NUANCES OF SITE SPECIFICITY

In this chapter we will evaluate the analytical framework that allowed us to scrutinise our set of six harbour transformation projects in Europe. The interpretation tool we used proves to be capable of disclosing site specificity in a nuanced way. Discovering the distinction between the designers' site reading and their site editing appears as the main tactic for capturing spatial changes — when we reveal this distinction we overcome the limitations of a conventional analysis of architecture and can thus propose that an analysis of transformation is a more appropriate method for the evaluation of harbour and other transformation projects. While our method has proven capable of grasping the variety of site-specific design approaches, it does not measure site-specific aspects in a quantifiable way nor does it evaluate anything beyond design approaches, such as planning decisions under consideration by cities. Within our interpretation tool, the dynamic filters and translation filters have provided us with particularly valuable insights into the ways in which designers think and operate. The translation filters have proven to be the main instrument with which to understand how subtly or freely the designers interpret their sites when transferring them from the existent to a new state of being. With these filters we can capture the designers' modes of translation; we now have a tool to describe nuances of site specificity.

ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Our case study first answers the two sub-questions of this research: 'What aspects do designers identify as existing qualities of harbour sites?' (the designers' reading), and 'How do they elaborate them in their design?' (the designers' editing). If the answers were that the designers do not read any qualities, i.e., have no appreciation of the existent, or that they read qualities but they do not consider them in their editing, i.e., demonstrate no link between their reading and editing, the design projects studied here could not be qualified as 'site-specific'. But our scrutiny delivers positive answers: it enables us to distinguish a rich variety of site qualities, and we can detect links between these qualities and the proposed design ideas, as well as oscillations between place-bound and transient aspects of the design. [fig. 1] We can therefore declare the design projects in this thesis as 'site-specific'.

For this reason we now also have a positive answer to the main research question, 'Can contemporary large-scale harbour transformation areas in Europe be developed site-specifically with the help of designers?'

The six projects analysed here provide initial examples of site-specific design approaches for large-scale harbour areas as viewed from an overarching perspective of landscape architecture. More precisely, in this thesis, landscape is understood both as an activity, to landscape, and as the result of this activity, a man-made system of spaces on the surface of the earth. The categories of 'natural' and 'artificial' must be abandoned and positivistic and essentialist positions overcome, in favour of a pragmatic point of view (cf. 'introduction').

The analytical framework we have applied proves to be effective in disclosing site specificity in its astonishing variety, whose composition and constituents we can now understand. We can detect site specificity in large-scale harbour areas with all of the filters of the interpretation tool

OSCILLATION

	between place-bound...	...and transient
Euroméditerranée 2, Marseille	A static ladder whose beams comprise...	... fluid elements: water and traffic

PROTOTYPE PLACE-BOUND

Île de Nantes, Nantes	Fragments found on site interact with...	... continuously evolving practices

PROTOTYPE TRANSIENT

Tagus Cycle Track, Lisbon	The material ground is subject to...	... performances
The Port's Visual Quality Programme, Rotterdam	The port as a traditional working place expresses...	...the changing nature and image of its business
The Right Bank, Bordeaux	The regional green structure is composed by vegetation...	...that develops according to natural processes and human practices
Bjørvika Open Spaces, Oslo	Atmospheres originate from specific places...	...as ephemeral experiences

Fig. 1. The harbour transformation projects studied in this thesis display an oscillation between the place-bound and the transient poles of site specificity.

our analytical framework has provided us with. However, we assume that the chosen set of filters is not absolute. While it seems indispensable to maintain the structure of this set of filters, because to learn about a project's site specificity we must look separately into the designers' reading and the designers' editing, the filters themselves can be complemented and altered, adapted to different situations of inquiry.

ANALYSING TRANSFORMATION

Instead of the conventional analysis of work normally used in landscape architecture or architecture, the interpretation tool of this thesis proffers a new method: transformation analysis, which evaluates the change of space instead of the state of space. This is possible through the twofold analytical operation by which the designers' site reading is distinguished from their site editing. This operation allows the researcher both to unravel those aspects that the designers use to link together, the before and the after of a transformation process, and at the same time to discover the designers' translation modes.

The filters of the interpretation tool provide a fine-grained analytical grid, on the one hand, and room for interpretation, on the other. For the scrutiny of the designers' reading of a site, three sets of filters have been established, addressing the physical, dynamic and immaterial aspects. The physical filters encompass structures and materials; the dynamic filters encompass nature's processes and people's practices; and the immaterial filters encompass discourses, memories and atmospheres. In the case study each set of categories shed light on various site-specific aspects, and gradually revealed how multifaceted and diverse the reading of harbour areas should be, which in turn should lay the ground for an equally multifaceted and diverse editing. Two sets of filters support the study of the designers' editing, providing us with insight into their translation and interventions modes. The translation filters investigate foreignising and domesticating approaches; the intervention filters probe the implications of appropriation and connectivity to discover and define design principles. The case study highlights how all these aspects appear on various scales and how they should be synthesised in a narrative, the leading concept of the transformation process.

CAPTURING QUALITIES

Our interpretation tool does not deliver a quantitative rating of site specificity. It is not meant to answer the question of how much a project is site-specific through a ranking from a lowest to a highest number. Neither does it aim at deducing the degree of site specificity from the number of parameters involved, or that the more parameters involved, the more site-specific the project would be. Instead, the interpretation tool only discloses site specificity as such (a 'yes' or 'no' judgment) and elucidates what site specificity comprises in each project scrutinised. The tool's scope is to detect not degrees of site specificity but rather a combination of site qualities.

The interpretation tool also cannot evaluate a project's site specificity from the perspective of a particular port city's urban development. This would require a different analytical framework, one that corresponds to a 'cities approach', cities being understood as the products and processes of city planning and policy. In fact, our inquiry begins from an overarching perspective of landscape architecture. From this landscape perspective, when we look into the 'design appro-

TRANSLATION

semiotic systems	translation mode	grade of interpretive freedom
harbour districts, urban districts		**low**

REFORMULATING THE HARBOUR The Port's Visual Quality Programme, Rotterdam	intrasystemic interpretation	**KEY CHANGE**
PERFORMING THE HARBOUR Tagus Cycle Track, Lisbon	between intra- and inter-systemic interpretation	**PERFORMANCE**

TRANSLATING FROM INDUSTRIALISED TO DEINDUSTRIALISED HARBOUR CITY Ile de Nantes, Nantes	intersystemic interpretation with substance change	**TRANSLATION**

TRANSLATING BETWEEN RIVER AND HARBOUR LANDSCAPE The Right Bank, Bordeaux	intersystemic interpretation with substance change	**TRANSLATION AS ADAPTATION**
RECREATING THE HARBOUR IN THE CITY Bjørvika Open Spaces, Oslo	intersystemic interpretation with matter change	**ADAPTATION**
REINVENTING A RIVER PARK IN A VALLEY AND A COASTAL PROMENADE ALONG THE HARBOUR Euroméditerranée 2, Marseille	intersystemic interpretation with matter change	**ADAPTATION AS NEW WORK**

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		high

Fig. 2. Translation modes of the six harbour transformation projects on a scale ranging from low to high interpretive freedom.

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aches' of harbour transformation projects (cf. 'introduction'), we are proceeding with the understanding of site as construction, design as transformation and site specificity as double-play (cf. 'part 1 theories'). This means that if we were to apply the interpretation tool of this thesis on London's Canary Wharf, for example, this project would fail for its tabula rasa practices and its lack of site-specific design, even though an analysis under a 'cities approach' would perfectly explain the logics and successes of this development. In this respect, the interpretation tool of this thesis formulates an academic method for the scrutiny of artistic work (Hauxner 2010) and allows for qualitative judgments from a defined point of view within the design disciplines, acknowledging harbour transformation projects in the light of their designers' apprehension of local particularities.

HIGHLIGHTING FLUX AND TRANSLATION

Two sets of the interpretation tool's filters prove to deliver particularly elucidating insight into the projects studied as well as into their site specificity. The filters for the scrutiny of dynamics enable us to distinguish between the designers' reading of a site's fluctuating elements (natural processes, people's practices) and their editing of a site through dynamic or evolutionary design action — through an open-ended design process, as opposed to an end-scenario design. In our case study, the Marseille-Euroméditerranée 2 project illustrates how fluid elements, namely water and traffic, are incorporated into a static structure proposed as an end-scenario, and the Nantes-Île de Nantes project displays how a continuous site scrutiny and an evolutionary design make a public space structure evolve into an open-ended urban development. These observations show that it is crucial to question what is really dynamic in a project: only some of its elements or the whole of the design process?

With the second set of filters we dive into modes of translation. We have defined site specificity along the links between the designers' reading and editing, and along the oscillation of a design between place-bound and transient aspects. Our translation filters allow us to zoom into the making of these links, so that we can understand how subtly or freely the designers interpret their sites when transferring them from the existent into a new state of being. From this inquiry we can distinguish those translation modes the designers apply (cf. 'translation' in 'part 1 theories'). Depicted on a scale ranging from more to less interpretive freedom, the modes of translation found in the scrutinised design projects allow us to grasp nuances of site specificity. [fig. 2] In such a nuanced understanding, site-specific design offers a broad range of creative possibilities: it might not need more than a key change, as in Rotterdam; it can involve translation proper and its substantial changes, as in Nantes; and it might use more interpretive freedom and result in adaptive new works with changes of substance and matter, as in Marseille. We have chosen foreignising and domesticating approaches as translation filters. Translation theories, however, could easily provide more or other filters. In total, translation filters enable us to measure the degree of interpretive freedom designers use in a transformation process, through their personal version of how design is translation of the existent. It is promising to envision an account of more versions than delivered by this case study, in view of understanding how rich and fascinating design as translation can be — maybe even richer and more fascinating than design from scratch.

GAME RULES

The study of design projects stands central in this thesis. This chapter relies on a comparative evaluation of the central case study, synthetically displayed in a table. [fig. 3] During our analysis we observed a variety of design approaches to harbour transformation, organised along their modes of translation in the previous chapter. [fig. 2] Furthermore, we disclosed certain commonalities throughout the cases: conditions and driving forces that appear systematically as patterns. While it is inappropriate to advertise a universal design approach for alternative harbour transformation — this would be opposed to our search for solutions that derive from ever differing locales — an underlying logic for site-specific design turns out to be retrievable from the observed patterns of the case study. Let us formulate the essentials of these patterns as game rules and forward them to the various stakeholders involved in harbour transformation as an invitation to set up site-specific development as a strategic 'game'.

CREATE SITE KNOWLEDGE

All of the six European harbour transformation cases involve on-site exploration to a great extent. The designers place heavy emphasis on apprehending their sites with immediacy, complemented by the study of cartography and other diagrams, contemporary discourses, popular habits, historic archives, literature and other forms of local artistic expression. How they read and edit sites varies, however, depending on if the designers value on-site observation highest or if their complementary 'non-site' studies deliver the main reasons for their design decisions. In the Nantes case, on-site observation leads the design process, making transient aspects preponderate over place-bound ones, whereas in the Marseille case, diagrammatic investigation is the basis for the shape of design and permits static aspects to outweigh the fluid ones.

In all cases the designers adopt a positive attitude towards what they find on site. Their engagement with what is found is high and their tendency to impose generic solutions onto their sites is low. When the Nantes developer decided to install a big university hospital onto the Île de Nantes, Alexandre Chemetoff's design team quit the project. The Marseille designers are the only ones we suspect to have promoted in their proposal new insertions over the existent: to erase a popular low-income market area in favour of a standard office and shopping complex at the northernmost tip of the Euroméditerranée 2 site. In all other cases the respect for the existent, raised through experiential and intellectual scrutiny, is the driver for the designs.

This observation matches those of contemporary scholars: 'If a specific locale provides the material ground for design action, only the intellectual and experiential apprehension turns a locale into a site in design terms. An urban site is a relational construct that acquires meaning and value through situational interaction and exchange' (Burns and Kahn 2005: xv). Site exploration generates site knowledge as a particularly design-oriented form of knowledge, not generic but specific, situated, contextual, temporary and aiming at action. The act of raising site knowledge is an integral part of the design act and not a separate analytical precedent. Site survey and problem formulation are part of the design process (Tietjen 2011; Seggern 2008; Prominski 2004; Meyer 2005; Corner 1999).

The game rule for working with the site, then, is this: Engage with site, and instead of importing generic knowledge, create site knowledge.

WORK ACROSS SCALES

The designers of the projects studied in this thesis approach their sites across all scales, from geographical conditions, overarching development discourses, the port's international traffic, and regional vegetation corridors down to the smallest scale of a harbour, including a district's local stories, the atmosphere of an old hangar, a quay wall's pylon recalling shipbuilding practices of old, and the growth and decay of mosses in the joints of a seasonally flooded slip-off slope. The designers address all this despite the clearly defined boundaries of their given project site. They manage to do so through interventions within this area of control which they link up with forces stemming from various areas of influence and with forces active in various areas of effect (Burns and Kahn 2005).

In all six projects the large scale of the areas of control invited the designers to strategically choose where and when to intervene, because the sheer size and the often complicated property status of their project areas makes it impossible to act on everything at once. These strategic choices require precise site knowledge to detect those forces to connect with on larger and smaller scales, or across the time frames of past, present and future. In practice, the designers are constantly expanding and shrinking their sites (Diedrich 2011). For example, in Oslo, the narrow open space (the area of control) is 'enlarged' by the atmospheric forces of the bay's wind and water, the people's dynamic movement across town and their experience of today's industrial port and tomorrow's extended city centre (the areas of influence and partly of effect). Then the space is narrowed down to sheer surfaces with connectivity, micro-topography, textures and atmospheres (another area of influence). By doing so, those seemingly separate issues detected on site, such as Oslo's functional traffic lines and atmospheric qualities, are tackled in a design that moves across the scales of these issues and thus integrates them.

The game rule in considering scale, then, is this: Understand site as the entanglement of areas of influence, effect and control. Instead of cutting the site and the problem down to a single scale, work across scales.

COMPOSE COMPLEX CONSTELLATIONS

Working across scales of influence, effect and control involves a deep intellectual engagement with a multitude of site parameters. The projects studied display innumerable possibilities of combining and interpreting findings from site, and innumerable options of intervention — and they also disclose that the designers make choices, always resulting in complex combinations of the chosen aspects. Through close site exploration, the designers select aspects to combine; they interpret them with more or less freedom, through foreignisation or domestication; and they propose interventions that reach from stable figures and performative scores to fluid processes. The table in figure 3 lists these choices in a synthetic way. The actual combination of aspects retrieved from a site is much more complex than the table depicts, however. The table only highlights the most important parameters, those that drive others. The existence of such prime parameters indicates that the designers' combination is built upon hierarchies and motivated by strategic choices.

When the designers abstain from drawing up an end-scenario and involve other site actors in transformation over time, as in Rotterdam, Lisbon, Nantes and partly Bordeaux, they are lending

the highest value to appropriation. These projects involve a foreignising approach to translate their harbour areas, which means that matter and sometimes substance remain unchanged. Consequently, existing materials rank highest in driving other site forces. With such projects, designers operate with a lower interpretive freedom and propose their sites as points of departure without a predefined destination.

Moving up the scale of interpretive freedom, we find the cases of Bordeaux (in part), Oslo and Marseille, which feature projects with a fixed address, and more or less clearly depicted end-scenarios. They operate domesticating translations, which means that both substance and matter are changed, sometimes heavily, to adapt the old port areas to urban customs and to link them with the urban fabric. Consequently, connectivity ranks highest, and it is mostly structures that drive other site forces.

The game rule with complex design, then, is this: Understand site as a rich and evolutionary universe — instead of fixing it once forever, begin to compose complex constellations.

NEGOTIATE NARRATIVES

In all the projects analysed here, the designers advanced an element of synthesis, relating the above-mentioned aspects to one another, creating a dominant narrative. We can list the narratives on a scale ranging from low to high interpretive freedom, from Rotterdam's port as a servile domesticated robot to Marseille's repaired metropolitan metabolism. [fig. 3] Cases with low interpretive freedom formulate narratives for rather open-ended transformation processes, and those with high interpretive freedom tend to define narratives for end-scenarios.

Like plots or story boards, the narratives of the cases are foundational for the design projects. They bear the trajectory of a long-term transformation process and remain immutable even if the project evolves according to its ever-changing context. The narratives address smaller and larger scales and involve multiple site agents and site actors. Throughout all six projects, the existence of these narratives proves that the designers do not randomly address single, unrelated parameters but rather cleverly select and combine them. The designers use their narratives as keyboards from which a melody can arise through elaborate execution. The narratives are the basic design instruments guiding all aspects and actions of the transformation process. To a great extent, they out-perform other standard planning instruments.

Throughout all the projects, the guiding narratives are also meant to legitimise the main design concept of the transformation. Legitimation is generally drawn from common societal horizons of understanding and value systems, detectable in the current local discourses — which have been part of the designers' reading in all the cases. The ecological soundness of regional hydraulic or vegetation systems is one such discourse, addressed by the designers in the Marseille and the Bordeaux project. The economy of resources and recycling delivers a strong framework in the Nantes project. The citizens' wish for the urban reconquest of the Tagus riverfront drives the Lisbon project. The narrative contains the reasons for some of the main decisions taken by the designers, and strictly adheres to those discourses.

Contemporary scholars point out that the importance of developing arguments that legitimate

urban transformation is currently increasing because the setting of a brief, i.e., a programme for a site, has become an integral part of many urban transformation projects (Braae and Diedrich 2012; Alemany-Bruttomesso 2011; Tietjen 2011; Braae 2007; Sieverts 2008; Seggern 2008). From its very beginning, a transformation project has to tackle the questions of how a left-over site can be used and for what purpose. An encompassing narrative can frame the answer and outline the site's future, and it can evolve from the negotiation inherent in the designers' reading and editing of the site. This negotiation process comes to an end when sufficient correspondence is reached between the findings of the designers — the results of reading a site — and the founding of the site — the strong narrative formulated for the establishment of the new design. The verbs 'to find' and 'to found' are close in their meaning, linguistically linked through a tense shift if we consider that the activity of 'finding' (present progressive of 'to find') ends with the acknowledgment of something 'found' (past perfect of 'to find') and turns into the activity of 'founding' (present progressive of 'to found' retrieved from the past perfect of 'to find'). This elucidates that in site-specific design the founding of a design is inseparable from the findings on a site.

The game rule for framing the nature of a site is this: Instead of applying universal instruments, negotiate a strong narrative.

CO-CREATE

The six projects show that the role of designers in alternative harbour transformation is crucial, but also far different from their conventional roles; they are instead positioned in the midst of a multitude of other players. In the Rotterdam project, the designers appear as poets who deliver a story board but leave the story's enactment to other actors. In the Lisbon case, they play the role of jamming musicians who start to perform a musical piece anew but count on others to perform it further. In the Nantes case, the designers act as ethnographers in the field who, among other fieldworkers, suggest action from the position of participant observation. In the Bordeaux project, they take the role of explorers who raise knowledge and test it in situ with other site actors to define the concrete design actions conjointly. In the Oslo project, the designers behave as artistic directors who suggest the translation of a source work and elaborate on it in collaboration with other site actors. In the Marseille project, the designers, like archaeologists, dig the field and the archives to take on the role of advisors to the authorities on urban restoration matters.

On our translation scale, we notice that the role of the designers is more unstable in the cases with the lowest interpretive freedom, while their role is more consolidated when their interpretive freedom is high. Harbour transformation certainly counts among the large-scale, long-term urban planning tasks that require a shift in the understanding of the designers' authorship. Since the Renaissance, the prevailing understanding of a designer's role has been as sole creator with high interpretive freedom and a consolidated leadership, a role confirmed over and over again in the modern era. This is a comfortable position, but one that does not suit the conditions of every epoch. The 21st century, with its more unpredictable economy, at least in Europe, seems to be in need of designer personalities that make do with lower interpretive freedom and more changeable roles.

The projects studied in this thesis are evidence that redefinition is underway — instead of sole creators, the designers act as co-creators. For the most part, they consider their works as open-source systems and themselves as co-authors working together. Their stylistic imprint tends to be reduced, sometimes almost to invisibility, as in the case of Nantes, where the site is edited so subtly that the designers' architectural language is of no relevance next to their strategic input of detecting and restoring, relating and connecting.

The designers' tasks, as they become apparent in this thesis, exceed the conventional professional profile that is formalised in corporative descriptions, supported by educative curricula and traded by administrative procedures. We therefore suspect that all these habits need to be revisited, because it is now accepted that the urban reconquest of derelict industrial areas requires new roles which in turn require new frameworks.

The game rule for creating, then, is this: Instead of offering sites to sole creators, entangle and co-create.

MANAGE TRANSFORMATION

The projects studied in this thesis present innovative ideas, potentially serving as inspiration for whoever wants to set up new frameworks for alternative ways of harbour transformation. All the projects overcome conventional development procedures. They allow experimentation with new roles for the involved actors (Rotterdam), with unconventional interventions (Lisbon), with tailor-made units that drive change (Nantes), with the merging of development and management (Bordeaux), with new tools for orientation (Oslo), and with new power players (Marseille). Those projects with low interpretive freedom involve more experimental innovations, while those with high interpretive freedom rely on more established and authoritative methods.

These elements and their combination are sketched out here only roughly. They merit a closer study to achieve deeper insight into new models for setting up design processes, adapting project management and renewing urban planning procedures for large-scale, long-term harbour and other urban-industrial transformation projects. Under the conditions of 21st-century Europe, how do the designers work out and communicate their ideas among other actors? How is a project set up and managed? Is it integrated into communal services or run by a separate project office? Driven as a national or private enterprise, or both? Linked to regional or supra-regional events or programmes? How are designers contracted, their tasks and responsibilities defined, their involvement organised? Which instruments and instances help steer the transformation process?

The game rule for implementing changes is this: Instead of conducting development from tabula rasa to end product, manage transformation.

FAVOUR OPEN SPACE

Urban space that is open to all users is a prime instrument to drive transformation in all the projects studied. In Rotterdam, open space is the main instrument to entice appropriation. In Lisbon it is the main driver for overcoming property conflicts between public and private stakeholders. In Nantes open space is the main connecting agent of formerly separated industrial plots. In Bordeaux it is the main building block of an evolving ecological structure. In Oslo open

space provides the main orientation frame of separately developing urban fragments. In Marseille it constitutes the main material to epitomise the transformation of a larger geographical traffic and hydrological structure.

In all six projects, the designers propose open spaces as the main connector between areas of control, influence and effect. Open spaces in an urban setting establish relationships by giving physical access to those former industrial areas that have so far been closed off, without connection, or of conflicting use. These spaces are not necessarily transformed in themselves, and they may preserve their 'otherness' that evolved from the obsolete rationales that created them in former times. In all the projects, however, open spaces are subject to material changes and building activities. In the projects where designers had low interpretive freedom, such changes are light and small, sometimes transitory, while in cases with higher interpretive freedom they tend to be massive and irreversible.

Open spaces are the main drivers for installing new programmes through appropriation — a crucial quality in urban transformation.

The game rule for using space, then, is this: Discover the strategic forces of the open space. Instead of beginning urban transformation with solitary architectural highlights or big commercial premises, focus on the open space.

PROMOTE THE AESTHETICS OF THE TRANSITORY

Throughout the projects analysed, we observe the emergence of a new expression of aesthetics, what may be called a 'journey-form', to borrow from Bourriaud (2009). In this new aesthetics, spatial forms include a strong temporal aspect and bear a new formal and material canon: less polished, more rough, almost trashy, seeking beauty in the transitory aspects of space and material. Journey-forms are not finite but evolutionary and include such transient elements as formalisation of the becoming — the expression of the unfinished in conceptual and physical terms. If we apply Eco's semiotic formulation, (1962), journey-forms can be understood as ambiguous sign systems. They include variable temporal phenomena and come close to such forms of expression as the performing arts — playing music (Dell 2011), for example — or the whole range of rejuvenated heritage (Kolen 2006).

Our cases show how this new aesthetic emerges from transformative practice and challenges conventional ideas of urban beauty, in the sense of appreciating both the beauty of former industrial areas and of their continuous evolution during the process of transformation. It is interesting to note that the projects with low interpretive freedom invite looking at an industrial environment, in all its foreignness, with new eyes to discover its particular beauty. This requires a shift of perception from the audience, mostly without material intervention on the site. Those projects with high interpretive freedom tend to transform industrial spaces into a new form of urban beauty, which can involve heavy spatial and material changes on the site. This redefinition of beauty for the sake of the otherness of harbour areas can only develop over time, through role models and with the support of stakeholders.

The game rule for the appearance of a project is this: Promote the aesthetics of the transitory.

PERSPECTIVES

The game rules developed here form an initial outline of a 'game' that favours site-specific design, to be played by all those involved in harbour transformation: municipalities, developers, designers, residents and other stakeholders. As it stands, this outline is a piece of academic formulation, and is far from being ready to move into professional practice. To become operative, the issues mentioned need to be explored and illustrated more comprehensively than is possible in this thesis, and they need to be transferred from the academic level into the field and the language of those involved in harbour transformation. Let us also bear in mind that the case study from which these rules are retrieved calls for continuous updating, just as the game and its rules require continuous evolution.

In the context of this thesis we have only detected site-specific design approaches on harbour sites. It would be worth extending this study to other post-industrial sites, and even to all sites in general. By so doing, the range of design alternatives to modernistic principles would be widened and the game rules for site-specific design refined. Meanwhile, if we want to provide authorities, design professionals and design students with basic knowledge about site specificity, the game rules formulated can be transferred to other post-industrial sites, and even to sites in general.

**GAME RULES OF
SITE SPECIFICITY**

	CREATE SITE KNOWLEDGE	WORK ACROSS SCALES	COMPOSE COMPLEX CONSTELLATIONS
low interpretive freedom			combine...
REFORMULATING THE HARBOUR The Port's Visual Quality Programme, Rotterdam	On-site exploration	From global port business to the port as a local developer	Materials + Practices + Atmospheres
PERFORMING THE HARBOUR Tagus Cycle Track, Lisbon	On-site exploration Literature study	From river memories to kerbstone detailing	Materials + Practices + Memories
TRANSLATING FROM INDUSTRIALISED TO DEINDUSTRIALISED HARBOUR CITY Ile de Nantes, Nantes	On-site exploration Plan & Guide Map	From the river metropolis to the railing of a slip-off slope	Materials + Practices + Discourses
TRANSLATING BETWEEN RIVER AND HARBOUR LANDSCAPE The Right Bank, Bordeaux	On-site observation Cartographic studies Test landscapes on site	From the regional green structure to the life cycle of a tree	Structures + Materials + Processes
RECREATING THE HARBOUR IN THE CITY Bjørvika Open Spaces, Oslo	On-site observation Pedestrian flow studies	From wind, water and light effects to the detailing of surface materials	Atmospheres + Materials + Discourse
REINVENTING A RIVER PARK IN A VALLEY AND A COASTAL PROMENADE ALONG THE HARBOUR Euroméditerranée 2, Marseille	On-site impressions Cartographic studies	From metropolitan infrastructure to single open spaces	Structures + Discourses + Processes
high interpretive freedom			

Fig. 3. Games rules for site specificity, a synthesis of the patterns observed in the six design projects of this thesis

		NEGOTIATE NARRATIVES	CO-CREATE
...interpret...	...intervene		
Foreignisation	Appropriation	Port renews itself as a domesticated servile robot for the city	Designers play the role of poets who capture and redraft the port story
Foreignisation	Appropriation	Harbour site as a physical ground to be performed by the citizens	Designers play the role of musicians in a jam session, improvising on an existing piece of music
Foreignisation	Appropriation	Ever-evolving transformation of the island's existing conglomerate of fragments	Designers play the role of ethnographers in the field, suggesting actions from participant observation
Domestication	Connectivity Appropriation	Growing green grid takes shape over time on the traces of the old fluvial and industrial patterns	Designers play the role of explorers and of prototype developers
Domestication	Connectivity	Disappearing harbour landscape delivers the pre-defined atmospheres of the emerging urban district	Designers play the role of an artistic director, transferring a novel into a movie
Domestication	Connectivity	Dysfunctional mechanism of metropolitan structure to be reinstalled according to a predefined end-scenario	Designers play the role of archaeologists, finding the lost geographical structure

MANAGE TRANSFORMATION	FAVOUR OPEN SPACE	PROMOTE THE AESTHETICS OF THE TRANSITORY
New roles: The port as a developer of run-down port districts	Open space as main appropriation tool of the harbour landscape	Industrial architecture, cluster vegetation, bustling harbour panoramas, blinking nightscapes
Unconventional actions: port and city agree on temporary installation	Temporary open space as main driver of change	Fading paint on asphalt, improvised practices with variable forms
Tailor-made drivers: Authorities create a public developer, designers install their office on site	Open space as the main agent for 'stitching together' formerly separated fragments	Wastelands with unexpected uses, areas with construction sites, juxtaposition of old and new
Merger of development and management: city and designers collaborate along new forms of contracts	Open space as the main building block of a larger geographical structure	Unfinished spaces, developing young vegetation
New directive tool: public space plan	Open space as the main agent to hold the developing district together	Ever changing expressions of wind, water, light
New powers: EPAEM as a national developer on a local level, the event 'Cultural Capital of Europe' as catalyst	Open space as the main instrument to repair the metropolitan structure	Contrasting landscapes, the industrial harbour vs. the Provencal park

TOWARDS TRANSLATION?

The concept of site specificity is the theoretical foundation of our case study and is central to this thesis. Having explored the concept in our case study, this last chapter therefore revisits the definition we adopted in the theories part of this thesis. We have already challenged it through strands of thinking that anticipate a changing understanding of it, and indeed the case study confirms the rising importance of dynamic and transient aspects within site-specific design approaches. The concept itself is in fact in flux. Even if we have answered the main research question with 'yes', we will now look again at our answer with the assumption that its foundation is changing, and propose to add an 'if': Yes, harbour sites can be developed site-specifically with the help of designers, but only if we accept that our definition of site specificity is a momentary idea of a design approach that might be referred to, defined and practised differently tomorrow. We will discuss what we have been looking for through the 'narrow window' of the current definition of site specificity, while also disclosing our initial intuitive understanding of it, how it has changed in the course of this research and what that definition of site specificity tends to support at the close of this research. Motivated by the outcome of the case study, in which the concept of translation has proved beneficial, we propose to move away from the dualistic foundation of site specificity (Kwon 2002) and encourage learning further lessons for alternative harbour transformation from more process-oriented concepts, such as radicantity and translation (Bourriaud 2009), which describe creative acts along the principles of reuse.

CHALLENGING THE DUALISTIC FIGURE

In addition to identifying how existing site qualities are linked to the proposed site interventions, we have defined site specificity as an oscillation between its place-bound and transient poles, based on Kwon's theoretical exploration (2002). The cases analysed display oscillations on various scales and of various types, with each of the two prototypical cases illustrating a clear tendency to one of the poles. In the Marseille-Euroméditerranée 2 project, the designers rely on the static, place-bound figure of a ladder and propose to repair the metropolitan hydrology and infrastructure while creating local spaces through new water features and new human practices, yet inscribing these fluid aspects into in the overall static structure. In the Nantes-Île de Nantes project, the designers propose establishing an ever-evolving flow of transformative actions emerging from the materials and practices detected on site, within a predefined but evolutionary grid of open urban spaces that lend an open-ended and transient quality to the urban development process as a whole. Between these two extremes, the figure and the flow, the six projects display various differences. [fig. 1]

Across all the projects of our case study, we furthermore identify an oscillation between structural and experiential aspects. Even though structural and phenomenological approaches are considered incompatible in the philosophy of knowledge, our case study shows that the combination of these approaches forms a foundation for site-specificity in design practice. In the Marseille case, the designers build their ladder structure on experiences from the site. The idea for one of the ladder's beams, the floodable park, stems from the on-site discovery of the Aygalades river course and its valley with remnants of Provencal vegetation, verified through structural cartographic material and historic sources. The idea for the other beam, the coastal promenade, is motivated by the experience of the coastal cliff with its heavy traffic roads and its

astonishing views over the port landscape, both experiences verified by structural topographical and historic maps. In the designers' proposal, the phenomenological and structural qualities are tied together. In the Nantes case, despite its absolute focus on immediate perception and on-site transformation, structural aspects play a guiding role. When the designers require that every new street cut through the old industrial plots opens up the view onto the riverbank, the river itself, or the larger urban landscape, the focus is the area's structure of a river island in the middle of the city and as part of the Loire estuary. Structure and experience condition each other equally here.

Finally, throughout the projects of our case study, we find numerous examples for 'as found' approaches, involving an oscillation between pure aesthetic perception and pure poetic invention, or between the act of finding and the act of creating. The designers of the six projects merge perception (*aistesis*) and production (*poiesis*) together while sometimes offering new apprehensions of a port landscape, sometimes creating new urban elements within the former industrial landscape, sometimes doing both within the same creative act of selecting and reusing and appreciating the process of this transfer as an intrinsic dynamic quality of their design. A good part of the projects' site-specific qualities originate from this oscillation.

However, let us challenge the principle of oscillation by acknowledging the flux of ongoing theory production. When initially defining site specificity as an oscillation between place-bound and transient poles, we pointed at the particular historic moment of post-modernism when this understanding was formulated. We assumed that it might undergo change, an anticipation supported by theoretical reflections on the current threshold situation in which a new mindset would better counteract the rapidly emerging practices that characterise the era after post-modernism (cf. part 1 'theories').

Because our analytical tool enabled us to detect site specificity throughout the projects studied, we are able to answer positively the main research question, Can harbour sites be developed site specifically with the help of designers? However, let us consider this answer for a moment in the light of the theories that helped us define site specificity. From this position we must restrict our answer as valid for a short moment only and within the limited space of our initial definitions. We must acknowledge two things. First, the notion of site specificity, as we have adopted it here, still 'smells' of the post-modernistic rejection of modernistic tabula rasa approaches, and it is informed by the historic moment in which static locational identity was most important and the dynamics of time less constitutive to its understanding. And second, we must acknowledge that this understanding may shift towards a more time-based idea to fit with the circumstances of the globalising world at the start of 21st century, a world that increasingly proffers transient identities, so that it might soon be more appropriate to speak of time specificity.

Site specificity as a double-play, involving an oscillation between its two poles, relies on a dualistic figure of thought, corresponding precisely to the same dualism that engenders the standard development answers to harbour transformation, namely tabula rasa and museification, to which we want to propose alternatives. In this respect, the notion of site specificity might need revision, both as a concept and as a term.

To scholars of landscape architecture, this sounds familiar. The term and concept of 'landscape

' is equally in need of amendment, because it is deeply impregnated by an idea of scenery established during former centuries and relying on a Romantic understanding. Just as the word 'landscape' persists in common language, so too does the concept of scenery in popular understanding, even though it does not fit the contemporary physical environment. Unfortunately, this motivates the common judgment that something is wrong with the physical environment but not with the concept. To counteract this confusion several scholars have proposed new words to replace 'landscape', which would also introduce new mental attitudes: J.B. Jackson's 'Landscape Three', André Corboz's 'territory', Thomas Sieverts' 'in-between-city', Rem Koolhaas' and his Harvard students' 'scape'. So far, none of these terms has made its way into common parlance; as German scholar Martin Prominski assumes, we may have to wait until a better word emerges or until the meaning of the old one finally shifts (Prominski 2004: 62–72).

PROPOSING REUSE

Site specificity seems to engage a similar track: Having probed the six projects in this thesis based on the concept of site specificity, with a side glance to radicanty, a notion that according to Nicolas Bourriaud (2009) promotes time specificity, we are able to state that most of the design projects display evidence for radicant practices and seem to support the respective concept — maybe more than the concept of site specificity. This means that site specificity as defined here does not completely manage to describe our new epoch's works and work modes. This is understandable because the term stems from the declining epoch of modernism and post-modernism and is built on dualistic figures of thought. Let us therefore open the door to a promising investigation, which we cannot fully engage here: Might the concept of radicantity and its vocabulary fit the analysis of harbour and other post-industrial transformation areas better?

Instead of the oscillation between two poles, radicantity proposes a continuous circular movement of reuse — 'translation', in Bourriaud's terminology: 'What if twenty-first century culture were reinvented with those works that set themselves the task of effacing their origin in favour of a multitude of simultaneous or successive enrootings?' (Bourriaud 2009b: 22). The aesthetical expression of this concept is the journey-form. If we consider that the conditions of the 20th century have brought about the notion of site specificity as a way of negotiating between the poles of place-bound and transience, between museification and total make-over, we might speculate that the concept of radicantity is currently rising to help us tackle the precarious conditions of 21st-century Europe; continuous enrootings are being negotiated within the ongoing process of 'translation'. The integrative potential of Bourriaud's idea of translation can help us overcome the dualism of site specificity.

In this respect, translation theories, which have informed the translation filters of our interpretation tool, gain in importance. As we have seen in the discussion of our case study, modes of translation allow us to describe contemporary design approaches on a much finer-grained scale than the idea of oscillation between the two poles of site specificity could ever do. Furthermore, translation, understood in Bourriaud's sense as a continuous movement of reuse, invites us to abandon the idea of design as starting from scratch and proceeding to a finished work. Considering design works as journey-forms, instead of as fixed forms, turns out to be particularly fruitful for the description and evaluation of large-scale harbour transformation projects, because we are encouraged to look into the processes and steps of their becoming while abandoning the in-

terest in the end product of this becoming. When we acknowledge the six design projects of this thesis as journey-forms, we can judge their qualities in the light of change and not of momentary status: Nantes' Île de Nantes appears as an urban island with a well-managed emergence, Lisbon's bike track shows the richness of its performances, Rotterdam's port invites a discovery of its evolution as both a company and a part of town, Bordeaux's Right Bank performs the growing green spine of the regional ecological structure, Oslo's open spaces in Bjørvika allow an experience of the translation of the port atmosphere into the emerging city district. The concept of site specificity, defined along the principles of oscillation, seems to fade out in favour of the concept of translation, defined along the principles of radicantity, which embraces the activity of continuous enrooting over any claim for roots. This is particularly interesting in the light of the globalising world, in which harbour cities have long acted as focal points in space. Within the accelerated phase of globalisation at the start of 21st century, the concept of translation suggests that the forces of globalisation do not necessarily produce universal spatial developments of harbour areas all over the globe; on the contrary such forces are capable of engendering a multiplicity of locally differing spatial answers. Within the concept of translation, existing site qualities do not need to be erased to renew a harbour site, but rather they are the capital for distinctive spatial transformation within a global network of harbour and city spaces. Let us conclude this research, therefore, with an invitation to further explore translation as a foundational theory for the study of alternative harbour transformation.

This is also the moment to re-examine the intuitive idea of site-specific harbour transformation that has motivated this thesis. It is now clear that this research began from an initial understanding of site specificity which unfairly favoured ideas of place-bound over ideas of transience. The harbour transformation in Marseille, with its work on the topographical and hydrological features of the site addressed as catchment area, best reveals that idea of site specificity. Over the course of the work on this thesis, and with growing insight into theories and projects, this assumption has shifted towards the appreciation of the project of the Île de Nantes, with its method capable of apprehending and developing a site with all its facets in an evolutionary way. At the conclusion of this thesis, a more nuanced understanding of site specificity has emerged, and it focuses on aspects of transience. This is where a new question arises, then: How to design time-specifically?
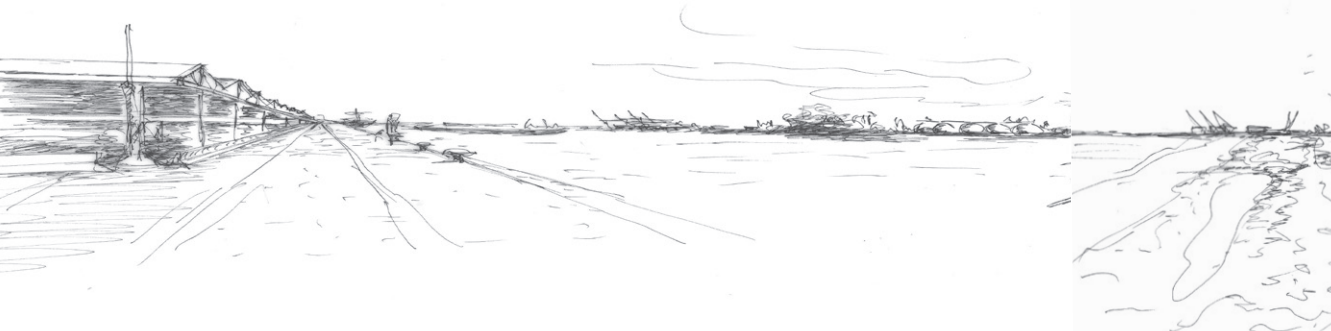
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GENERAL SOURCES

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Lisa Diedrich

Translating Harbourscapes. Site-specific Design Approaches in Contemporary European Harbour Transformation

Translating Harbourscapes investigates site-specific design approaches in contemporary harbour transformation. The integration into the urban fabric of disused harbour areas, those spatial leftovers of late 19th- and 20th-century heavy industry, is a major task of contemporary urban planning. Common solutions for these areas feature generic office complexes, luxury housing, shopping centres and leisure facilities, built on the tabula rasa of the former harbours, only preserving the occasional old object from a harbour for folkloristic reasons.

This thesis explores more site-specific ways to transform harbours, where certain design approaches integrate the site into the urban fabric by making use of that which already exists on a harbour site. The current understanding of site, design and site specificity is discussed and updated to define the analytical framework for the thesis's case study. Six European design projects are scrutinised for their site specificity, namely the Euromediterranée 2 project in Marseille, the Ile de Nantes project in Nantes, the Tagus Cycle Track through Lisbon's harbour, the Port's Visual Quality Programme in Rotterdam, the Right Bank redevelopment in Bordeaux, and the open space plan for Bjørvika Bay in Oslo.

The nuances of site-specific design emerge from examining the designs, as does a panorama of possible approaches ranging from low to high interpretive freedom. A universal recipe for how to treat disused harbour areas is impossible to generate; rather, game rules for site-specific design are proposed for all actors involved in harbour transformation. The study ends with an invitation to further investigate translation as a powerful metaphor for the way existing qualities of a site can be transformed, rather than erased or rewritten, and to explore how this metaphor can foster new design ideas for old harbours and other post-industrial areas.