Architecture of perpetual instability

by ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Research on prospects for long-term design thinking in times of multidimensional crisis and its contribution to democracy to counterbalance short-term politics and market forces

OBJECTIVE

I am an architect interested in large-scale spatial interventions, which become almost a landscape due to their proportions and interconnectivity. Having been born in post-Soviet Ukraine, with its frequently and radically changing political regimes, I naturally perceive architecture within a broad geographical and socio-political context. I see my future work as reflecting on socially relevant issues. My designs will explore a broad palette of spatial experiences, providing for agonistic interactions and new architectural typologies.[1]

During the talent development year, I will research the opportunities that arise in the interlocking fields of politics and architecture. I wish to develop my knowledge in this domain by exploring the influence of long-term design thinking on democracy in contrast to the prevailing short-term thinking that dominates politics and markets. Therefore, I will investigate problems in, and possibilities for, the evolution of a network of political institutions, thereby proposing alternative functional and spatial organizations for decision-making entities. This research will interrogate the contemporary governmental building's political, architectural, urban and institutional form and thereby engender new architectural projects.

During the development year, I aim to establish myself as an independent architect working in collaborations. The talent development grant would enable me to solidify my position within my field and develop my unique qualities into a distinct artistic signature by extending my working methodologies and honing my design language. My main ambition is to take initiative in formulating assignments, working experimentally and in a multidisciplinary fashion with a research by design approach. I hope to apply architectural specificity to improve crisis situations in places of perpetual instability. In the process, I aim to build a strong network of professionals from various fields, as well as global organisations with shared ideals, with whom I could also have future collaborations.

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1 - For example, my project ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮' explored the role architecture can play in addressing how our increasingly divided societies can absorb conflict — with the intention not necessarily to reach a final agreement but to live and act meaningfully within the context of disagreement in he global arena. The building is a site-specific application that transforms the typology of the chamber-based political institution into a corridor-only model. The corridor, an infamous domain of informal but real decision making, becomes a gateway between the Eastern and Western worlds.

RELEVANCE

With global power structures in transition, the role of international organizations in shaping societies has become crucial. History shows that crises such as wars, famines and pandemics have been associated with seismic political changes. Decision making institutions are currently compelled to reinvent themselves to cope with issues of multilateralism and simultaneous fragmentation in the global political arena. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres has noted, this "is the greatest test that we have faced since the formation of the United Nations".

There is a fundamental contradiction between crisis phenomena that 'know' no borders and a political system that reifies borders for defence. During the current pandemic, for example, migrants have been caught up in strained relations between municipal and national government. This highlights the need for deinstitutionalisation, informal decision-making and a greater variety of decision-making institutions. More than ever, citizens now want to understand and participate in governmental and parliamentary decision-making because many of the decisions affect them concretely and personally. I see this as an opportunity to radically enhance democracy, as many citizens feel disconnected from national and international – including EU – politics.

Emergence of data-based surveillance systems and other mechanisms to control COVID-19 are influencing the work of political structures and organizations. For the first time in history, an 'invisible', fear-based global power structure is growing beyond the control of political entities.

Since the founding of the League of Nations in 1920, it has often been noted that the functioning of such international institutions is jeopardised by the heterogeneity of their component parts. During the development year, I will therefore attempt to examine prospects for evolution of a network of international institutions such as NATO, the European Parliament, the EU Court of Justice and the European Central Bank.

Currently, buildings of international institutions seem to be perceived merely as containers for politics. Recently, NATO moved its headquarters to Brussels. Although the institution has an enormous impact on city and regional dynamics, its architecture and contextual integration were not the subject of a broad-based open discussion. Here, there is a key role for design thinking to mediate between political forces and the social realm. In my graduation thesis ███████████ ███████████, the positioning in Crimea of a counterpart to the UN headquarters was intended to help influence the territory's status and also mitigate tensions within the whole Black Sea region, creating new collaborative possibilities. I can utilise the skills I gained during my research on the Crimean Peninsula – a conflict zone in trans-regional contexts – to navigating in this age of crisis.

One of the buildings of The European Parliament in Brussels was transformed into a hospital for the Covid-19 emergency.

The New World Summit by Jonas Staal. It holds large-scale summits and develops embassies for stateless states.

The focus of my development year will be on the three foundations, or phases, on which I build my work: research, speculative thinking and provocative design. During these phases I will work with advisors who could enrich my project. I will also engage with other creative disciplines in developing innovative approaches to, and spatial expressions of, the design challenges.

Guiding questions for development of my project include:

What is the role of the designer/architect in times of global transformation of political agendas?

How can politics be presented to citizens more playfully and understandably, so that it becomes part of their daily life rather than something to be avoided as a difficult subject?

How do we maintain and develop democracy if there is no encounter with 'the other'?

How could we improve democracy through design thinking and how could it be applied in countries in conflict such as Ukraine?

*What role does architecture play in the context of international institutions and vice versa?*

What is the role of international decision-making institutions in a perpetually unstable context, and what does that mean for their current 'rigid' structures in light of the need to comply with new realities?

How do new technologies impact the architecture of political institutions?

How could urban conditions be improved by strategically positioning political institutions?
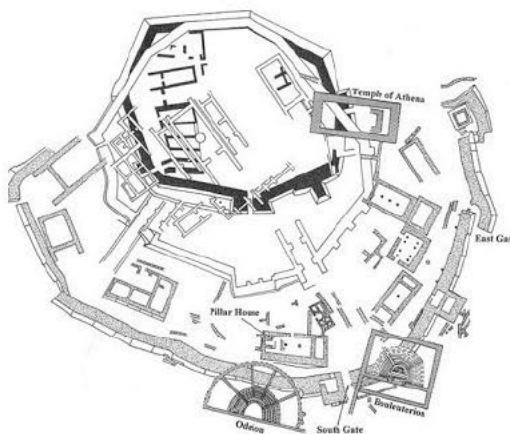
City of Troja. Metaphor for the current multilayered crisis manifested into the replacement of functions/deinstitutionalization of institutions.
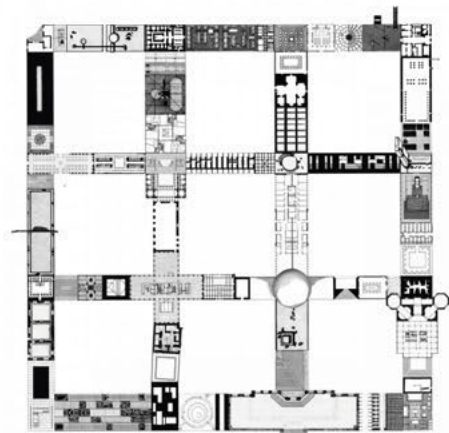
Grid formed by diverse typologies. The metaphor of the need for diverse forms of political institutions in order to maintain democracy.

Professionalisation

In order to get a 'rocket boost' I set the following goals:

Clear and engaging communication: oral presentation and writing coaching.
Unconventional presentation techniques: expanding my knowledge of speculative movie making in collaborations with artists (*see Section 2: 'Speculation'*). I will also take a course in motion graphics and the visual effects software Adobe After Effects.
Extended design skills: collaboration with a social designer on alternative methods of working with materials (*see Section 3: 'Design'*).
Artistic and business strategy advice: consultancy from ███████████[2] or similar.

During this phase I will research theory, problem evaluation and locations, gathering theoretical knowledge and learning about working methodologies from practitioners at the interface between politics and architecture. This gathered knowledge will provide the basis for development of my project during the year and be discussed with critics/advisors. Preferred advisors are my former mentor ████████████, who has a broad overview of the interrelationships of politics and architecture, ████████████, who works on political/governmental buildings and gave advice on the organisation of courts in Ukraine, and ████████████, who initiates and develops projects at the intersection of architecture and human rights in conflict and post-conflict areas.

1.1 Gaining theoretical knowledge by interviewing and researching:

I will conduct interviews to gather important knowledge and broaden my connections, to whom I could reach out during the development year. I aim to video-record the interviews for inclusion in my final presentation. If face-to-face interviews prove difficult, I will conduct them online.
The practicing designers working at the intersection of politics and architecture whom I intend to interview include: ██
████████████████████████████████.

Additionally, I will pose questions regarding the professionalisation of my practice, for example: What are their working methodologies and business strategies? What would be their advice on developing the field? What is their experience in taking initiative in formulating assignments and working in an experimental and multidisciplinary fashion?

I also anticipate interviewing political structure theorists on prospects for improving democracy through architecture, such as: ██
████████████████████████████.

As media plays a crucial role in restructuring political roles and powers, I will also speak with media and architecture experts including ████████████ (████████████████████████ who focuses on political theory, design of experiences and social dreaming) and ████████ (who explores the emerging architectures of automated labour).

1.2 Visit to formal and informal political institutions:

I will analyse legal and spatial organisations of various political institutions, as well as the interrelationships between them. I plan to visit ████████████████████████████████████
████████████████████████. I am currently scheduling visits to political organisations in Ukraine during the trip to Kiev for my exhibition at ████████ Festival . I hope to collaborate in my research with the National Democratic Institute, which works to increase the effectiveness of democratic institutions and has ongoing programmes in Ukraine. If there are no travel restrictions, I will visit some of the following institutions: ██
████████████████n.

I will also learn more about informal political organisations, for example by contacting ████████[10], who works on alternative political structures for unrepresented peoples.

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SPECULATION

I will formulate several hypotheses through informed extrapolations of intriguing directions found during my research. I will speculate on near-future political institutions and possible architectural tools/interventions and prototypes for improvement of democracy.

2.1 Workshops and collaboration:
I will work with large-scale observations and small-scale experiments in collaboration with ██████ ███████████████████████████████ and invite critiques from the external advisors whom I plan to interview in the first phase.

2.2 Receiving artistic guidance from / collaborating with a social designer:
On speculative storytelling and unconventional presentation techniques, I plan to invite commentary from ████████████ (mentioned above) and ██████████ (█████████████████████████ ███████████████████████████████████). The result will be a movie or hypothetical drawings to be included in my final presentation.

2.3 Receiving feedback from potential clients:
In addition to receiving a critique from my advisory board, I wish to establish connections with potential clients, collaborations and organisations and invite them to give feedback on my work. I anticipate contacting ████████████████████████████████████ and global organisations working on improvement of democracy.
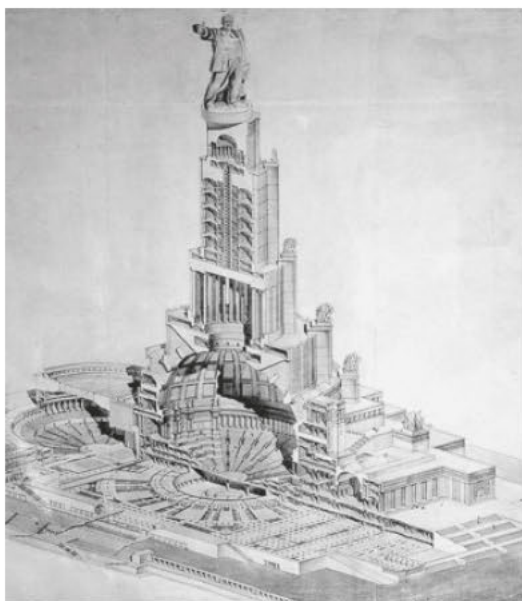
Moscow Palace of Soviets. Building would have become the symbol of the victory of socialism.
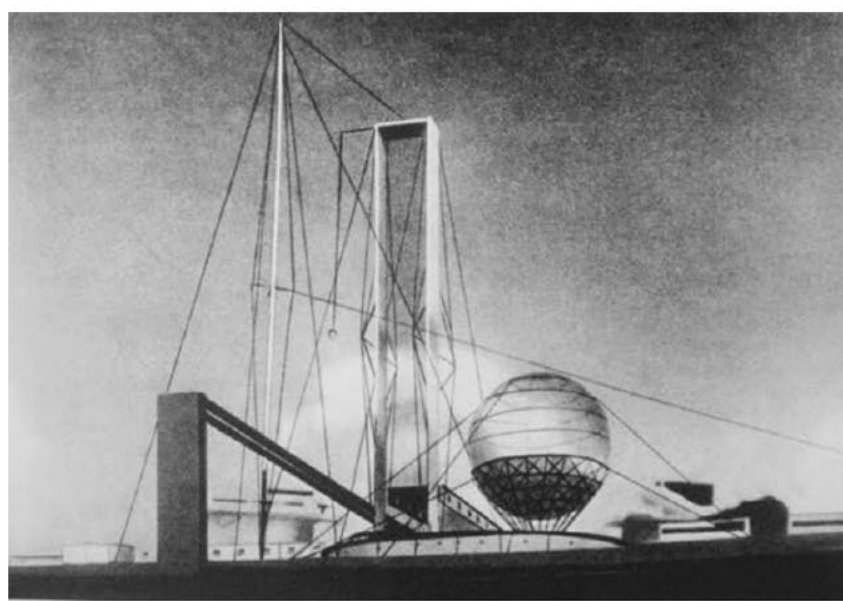
Reflections of Russian avant-gardists. The Lenin Institute for Librarianship by Ivan Leonidov.

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DESIGN

May 2021 - July 2021

During this phase, I will choose one of the researched directions on alternative typologies and transform it into the design. The result will be a physical or virtual model of the new proposal.

3.1 Working in collaboration with an artist:

In order to enrich my design skills and methodologies I plan to collaborate with a social designer interested in alternative material expressions, for example ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. As I intend to examine materials from a political viewpoint, I hope to be advised by ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, who explores the political dimension of material practices, and ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, whom I already know. She was a curator of ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮: a building that renders the image for a city', identified as the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Most Powerful Architectural Statement. To conclude this phase, I will create a movie in collaboration with a movie-maker, for example ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, which is specialised in futuristic design thinking and its digital presentation.

Image making. Inspiration for collaboration with designers of materials. The mix between digital and material worlds.
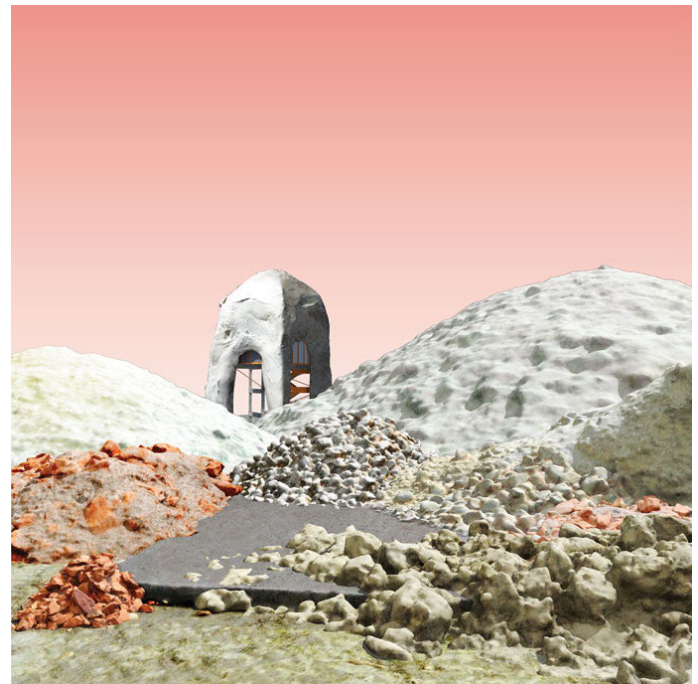
Model making. Inspiration for collaboration with designers of materials.

Presentation

With my presentation I aim to rise a discussion involving political representatives, developers and ordinary citizens in an informal way. Depending on the circumstances, I anticipate one of the following outcomes:

A: An installation of scale model of the design on the square of the political building in the Hague or Brussels. My research and speculations will be presented as video material.

B: If visits to public buildings/events are restricted, I will create a film, reflecting on my visits to institutions, research, speculations and final design. Models would be available for viewing in VR space.

I plan to present the research outcome/film at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and at other events/exhibitions and festivals related to the architects role in the formation of the future image of nations. For example ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ I would also like to give a presentation at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ which has ongoing programmes in Ukraine.

13 - ▮▮▮▮ is a design lab of multidisciplinary designers with a shared fascination for experimental material research.

PLANNING

Activity	Phase A: RESEARCH			Phase B: SPECULATION					Phase C: DESIGN			Presentation		
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct

expo | Kyiv

vacations (Dec–Jan)

vacations (Aug)

Activities

- Research interviews
- Visits to institutions
- Individual research /documentation
- Visit to critics | advisors

- Collaborative work/workshop
- Research | models | writing
- Speculative drawing/modeling
- Movie making in collab.
- Visit to critics | advisors
- Feedback from potential clients

- Work with an artist | designer
- Individual work
- Visit to critics | advisors
- Drawing conclusions

- Research | preparation
- Production
- Preparations for publication

Professionalisations :
- Adobe After Effects coaching
- Writing course
- Website design assistance
- Business strategy advice

BUDGET

Activity	Number	Unit	Price	Total	Implementer
Research and production:					
Documentation of visits to institutions	5	visit	200	1000	Own material plus collab. with a cameraman, ▉ *(made several films together)*
Documentation of interviews	5	interview	200	1000	Own material plus collab. with a cameraman, ▉, *(made several films together)*
Travel costs				1000	
Reserve for presenation or travels *				7000	
Materials for model making / design				1000	
Anticipated official advisors:	15	meeting	200	3000	
Research		meeting	200	600	▉
Speculation		meeting	200	600	▉
Design / presentation		meeting	200	600	▉
Process advice	6	meeting	200	1200	▉
				14000	

Activity	Number	Unit	Price	Total	Implementer
Professionalisation:					
Writing coaching	10	hour	100	1000	*Guidance of* ▉
Collab. in speculative film-making *(Adobe After Effects)*	10	session	150	1500	*Course or* ▉.
Collaborations with designers	5	day	250	1000	▉ *or alternative*
Artistic and Strategy advice				1500	▉ *or alternative*
				5000	

Activity	Number	Unit	Price	Total	Implementer
Presentation (Option A):					
Materials for construction				2000	
Construction of an installation *(as a part of course at AvB)*				2000	▉
Editing of digital material	4	day	250	1000	*Coach or* ▉.
				5000	

Activity	Number	Unit	Price	Total	Implementer
Presentation (Option B):					
Video making (a film)	12	day	250	3000	*Collab with* ▉
Filmmaker consultancy	5	session	200	1000	▉ *youn*
IT Consultancy				1000	
				5000	

* During the year I will work three days a week for an office. This will ensure a financial ground allowing me to fully devote two days a week to my personal development. It will also create an extra budget for my project since my side job will cover the working hours spent on my own development. At the office, I will focus on learning how to carry and develop design business. Moreover, I believe working on different projects will as well provide me with unexpected perspectives on the subject of my research.
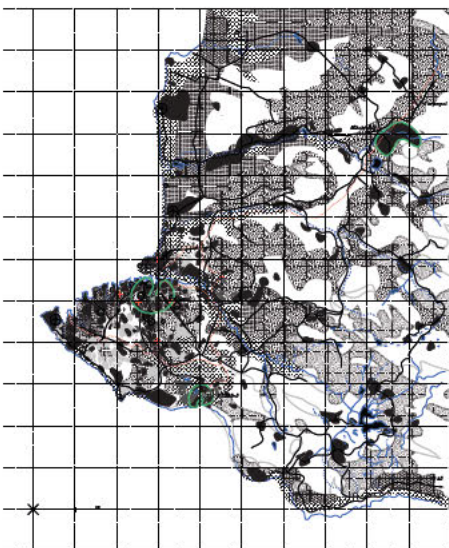
PORTFOLIO

While working at ███████ next to leading projects in the competition as well as realisation phases, I also took an active part in critical discussions about architecture as well as giving lectures to foreign delegations.
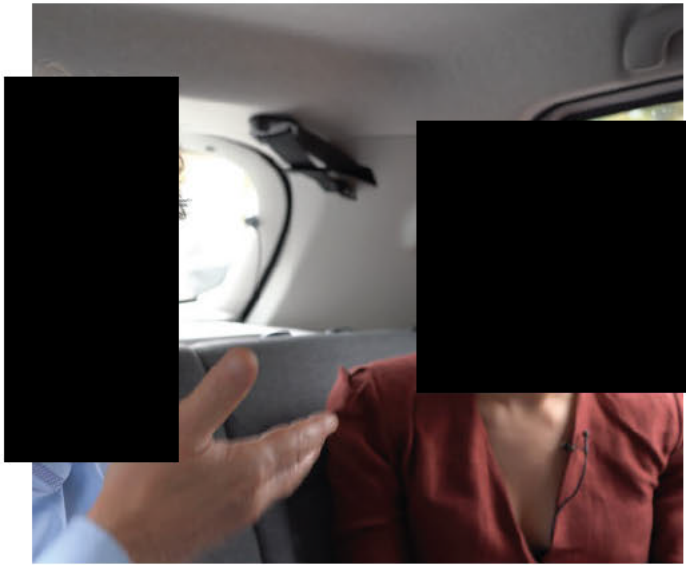
Interview with ████████████ on politics and architecture.
link: ████████████████

Presenting ███████ to the international delegation.

Extract from the research on border conditions ████████

██████████

Neutral ground for the discourse on the morality of opposing political systems.

It's a corridor only model so there is no meeting room.

Project presentation: ████████████

The storyline unravels around The Crimean Peninsula, annexed from Ukraine by The Russian Federation.

The research undertaken in the project ████████████ ████████ examines the new opportunities emerging within the interlocking realms of politics and architecture. The author explores the role of architecture in absorbing the conflict situation and fostering its fruitfulness within the divided society.

████████████
██████

One of the assignments I worked on during my experience at ████ was to design a comprehensive memorial, museum, and public realm to honor and preserve the legacy of the 49 killed and all those affected by the 2016 Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, US.
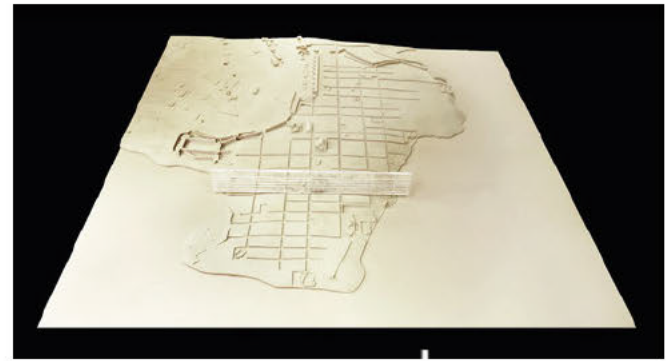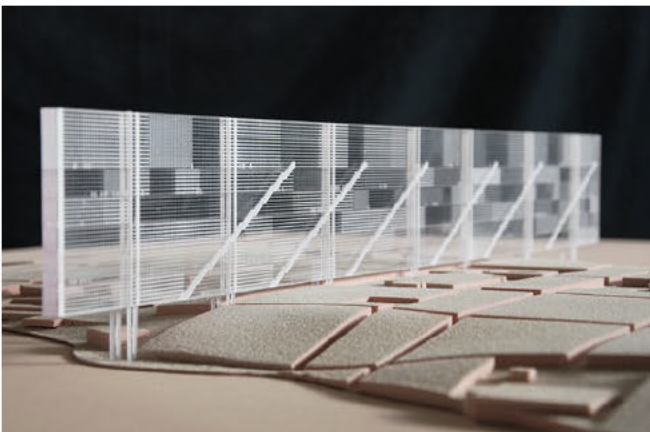
* ████████████████ *"Design thinking, a methodology that provides a solution-based approach to tackling complex problems, is used to relate design with politics. It is a strong project that intelligently tackles the agency of architecture on politics. The project is placed in a historical perspective and goes beyond actuality. The project is convincing in terms of scale and relationship with the landscape, ranging in scope and scale from global politics to a 1:1 facade detail. This is a mature and critical project."*

████████████ *(Chief Government Architect, mentor) about graduation* ████████████ *"This too is a radical and surprising approach and once more she manages, against all odds, to cultivate the prospect in a very convincing way."*
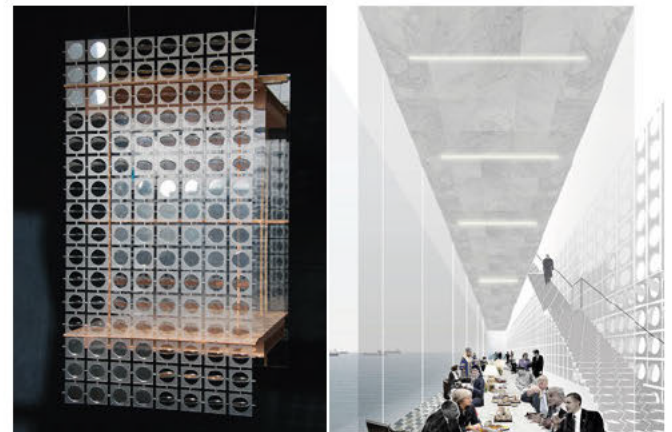
Object design for DDW

"████████████████████████
informal decision-making space.

For t████████████ I designed an object related to her graduation project. The object was placed on top of one of the taxis, which bring visitors to locations across the Dutch Design Week. Complementary to the object, I decided to turn the taxi itself into the debate-space, creating a Debate-Ride.