

IN YOUR STUDIO PROJECT, WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM DUTCH DESIGN?

Short remarks by all studio participants

“The Dutch have a long history of design, perhaps as a way to make something out of nothing, much as they have created land where there once was water. The Dutch use design to give simple materials new value. They focus on the simple and the functional as well as the whimsical to create objects of beauty and utility. Architecturally, Dutch design is often successful because it focuses on the entire urban condition: not just the buildings, but the spaces between buildings and particularly the spaces between building and street, the semi-public zone. The interpenetrations in this zone broaden the threshold between public and private and create spaces for social activity. These spaces are not large since a walkable neighborhood is usually a collection of many buildings close together. The most walkable neighborhoods have a broad mix of uses: shopping, residential units, offices, restaurants, entertainment, etc., in a fairly short distance. Traditionally, streets have often been a community ‘living room,’ a place for the entire neighborhood to interact. Many ideas of Dutch design are just good design and could be applied anywhere. This would include the use of simple materials combined with design applied to local typologies to create new buildings that fit with the city’s past; the careful design of semi-public spaces to encourage pedestrian activity; and attention to even apparently insignificant details.”

Elizabeth Hager

“From Dutch Design, we can transpose the idea that the public and private are not as mutually exclusive as we treat them here in the United States. There exists a medium between the two polemics: a type of semipublic that is a shared space between a limited set of individuals. A semipublic space can iterate at multiple scales, meaning that it can act at the local scale, as in the scale of the individual housing unit, or on a large scale: with space that is shared between the users of two buildings. The typologies of Dutch Design, particularly of housing, create semi-public through the aggregation of smaller individually owned property, some of which is shared for a common good. This center in some ways is an opposite of aggregation in that it takes the whole, not the piece, as the given. The whole is broken down into smaller divisions of space that can be used for a variety of community purposes. The second Dutch strategy to create semipublic space is the presence of shared amenities in building complexes. For example, in the center of Spangen is a laundry unit and heat unit that only the residents of that housing unit can use. This Civic center borrows the most from this strategy. This civic center is not an icon, but a community center that benefits its local population more than the public at large. Its primary strategy is to provide amenities, such as childcare and public restrooms, specifically to the residents of the local neighborhoods. In doing so, the center can serve as a destination for these populations on a regular basis.”

Lauren Vasey

“Dutch design informed my idea of semi-public space and its ability to encourage chance encounters, which was evidenced in my research of Wozoco and Silodam. Furthermore, the mixing of social backgrounds and cultures in dense spaces, whether it be housing or living streets, creates energetic places. Second, Dutch design taught me that architecture is not merely an act in form. Architecture exists as a material, physical object and the expression of this can be that upon which the Architecture anchors. People experience buildings tactilely. Textures and surfaces can be simple yet produce astonishing architectural affects. In addition, design for thermal comfort, as evidenced by Wiel Arets, illustrated the importance of designing local micro-climates. Third, Dutch design made me realize that architecture can be playful. Appropriate use of simple geometries can enliven spaces. Last, the Dutch taught me *Slimbouwen*, a design process that means both ‘slim’ and ‘intelligent.’ Under this idea, the design of the building uses thin wall construction to maximize floor space while also being adaptable for future uses. The concept of ‘dis-integration’ of mechanical systems also changed the way I think of building technology. Overall, Dutch design is progressive, sensible, energetic, and worthy of continued study.”

Branden Clements

“In observing Dutch design, a sharp contrast is seen between the architecture of Holland and the architecture of the Midwestern United States. While many of the design techniques used in each are a product of the social scene, there are still several key components that can be shared between the two. In Dutch design, the use of material conveys a sense of quality, use, and sophistication to the design intent of a project. While in America, decisions regarding material are considered more commonly on cost of the material rather than seeking what might perform the best for any given function. Not that an overspending on construction materials should be embraced, but rather that materials should be more carefully considered, as gypsum board and EIFS may not always be the best suited choice for any given use. The way in which we consider materials informs the design and visa versa.”

Jordan Whitted

“Dutch culture creates all different kinds of Dutch architecture. Dutch window or Dutch door is the result of this transparent culture. What matters is the attitude of not being inside while being inside. The large Dutch windows and the two-pieced doors are not just architectural details. They operate the functionality of the space and the conversation between the inside and the outside. Windows are sacred in this culture and they are designed in thousands of styles. Their role is not to just ventilate the air or bring the sun light in. they are big enough to allow continuity of the stories in each house.”

Razieh Ghorbani

“The investigation into Dutch Design and the importance of the semi-public space played a vital role in designing Holland’s Civic Center and the surrounding landscape. Resident interaction is encouraged through high density low rise living and is supported through close by amenities. Park areas were offered close to the housing for play and recreational space. In many instances these were also used for circulation throughout the area. Aldo Van Eyck’s playground design of simple clean spaces to encourage imagination in children was also an influence for the 2 block park created adjacent to the civic center.”

Sarah Nowaczyk

“A Dutch concept of street design has alternate modes of movement and inhabitation of the street, which in Dutch Sidewalk Street creates varies spaces. Sidewalk in Dutch design was like a ‘shared space,’ rather than just as a boundary between public and private. Sidewalk itself function as not only as a path but allows people to use it as social space: as a park, patio, parking. Also, its engagement with its urban scape allows sidewalk to become endless promenade.”

Yun Tae Kim

“Dutch design, to me, is all about hierarchy of space, be it inside or out. Courtyards behind buildings, for example, offer an oasis away from the busy street. These courtyards are more than the private places we are used to in the United States. The spaces between buildings in Holland contain street furniture appropriately arranged for casual meetings of small groups of people. Main spaces of the buildings are quite visible from street level, creating an active edge that enlivens the area. The Dutch people are not afraid of interactions. From the scale of the street down to the meeting of friends and a semipublic courtyard, the Dutch understand hierarchy of space.”

Matthew Mohr

“The Civic Center learns from Dutch design through an appreciation of well designed detail-scaled ideas applied to a larger form. This building utilizes the brick as a pixel, to be applied and seen as a collection of a gradient of textures and extruded distances from the building’s skin. Similarly, the southern glass facade is subdivided into a pattern that reflects the form of the interior branching structure from which it is hung. The branching structure also indicates its function through a massing indication of the members which are carrying the most weight, making the interior concourse visually exiting in addition to telling the story of the building. Many great Dutch buildings succeed due to their honesty of materials and construction logic, and this Civic center harnesses those intentions to create a new public building which is truly adaptable to a wide range of municipal applications.”

Joshua Hendershot

“Upon first visiting the site in Holland, I was immediately drawn to the adjacencies. The current site of the Civic Center in Holland is immediately adjacent to a thriving, yet intermittent and seasonal, farmers market; this pairing presents a unique opportunity to create an exceptionally public space. As a result, a goal to integrate the farmers market with the civic center to create a type of ‘civic field’ condition emerged. The concept of my project revolves around attempting to hybridize the two types, civic center and public market, and in doing so, introduce a greater programmatic balance between the incredibly ‘unprogrammed’ farmers market (which currently sits as a vast, empty parking lot 5 to 6 days a week) and more programmed civic center with the

end goal of further activating the site and connecting the site to downtown and the future ‘Western Gateway’ project.

The stimulus for the project was two-fold. First, I was interested in learning from how the Dutch treat and designate public and semi-public space as a means to further activate the roll of the street as a vital public space in the city. More specifically, I drew inspiration from how the Dutch treat and vary surfaces across a larger space to further ‘program’ these spaces and articulate their rolls. Furthermore, I was interested in how balcony/terrace space in Holland is integral to creating a sectional relationship to the street and further connect private spaces to the public street spaces. While these Dutch notions of the public and semi-public space certainly laid the groundwork for approaching the problem, I also found inspiration from traditional public market typologies, particularly precedent cases where public markets were paired with public assembly space. These precedent cases, together with responding to the site and local climate conditions, became the groundwork for the arrangement of the relationships between public, semi-public, and programmed spaces and for generating the form. The building’s form emerged as two primary components, market canopies and civic scale sheds. The canopies provide sheltered space for market activities, undulate in section to provide gathering and access points, and plug in directly to the civic sheds as a means to provide a continuation of the market into the assembly space(and vice versa), as well as provide infrastructure to nodes of retail space in the market that would have more long term tenants. The result is not a civic center, but instead, a civic field condition.”

Tartleon Long