



(re) *Search*

Bjørgvin Ecopark & Research Station

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Index

p. 3	Introduction
p. 4	Description
p. 10	Process
p. 12	Material
p. 14	Project structure
p. 16	Curriculum vitae

Introduction

The project investigate, speculate and propose the question: How can a parking space in Bergen City be used in a possible future shift where re-naturalization of the city structure occurs?

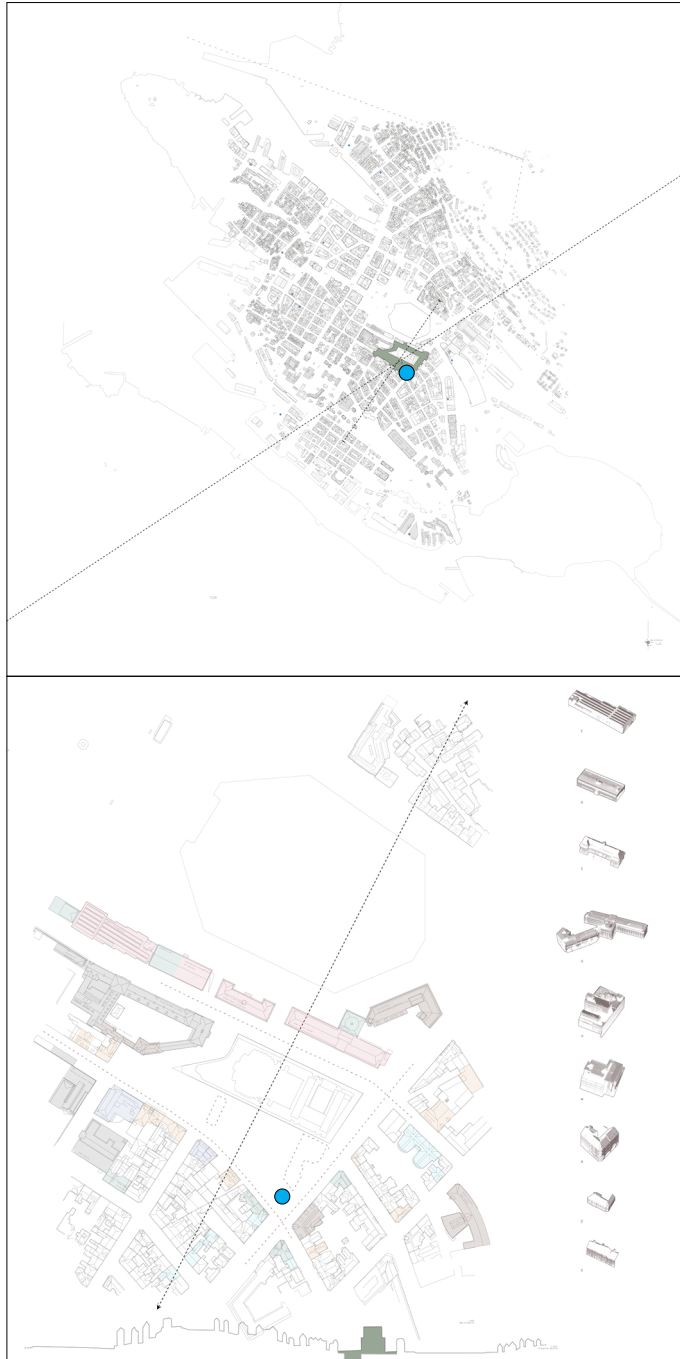
By looking at a future where selfdriving cars and car sharing might be the norm (yr. 2050-2100) the project portraits a possibility of researching new ecologies in urban areas in a nordic climate while functioning as an active public space of experience.

Description

The city of Bergen is situated in a valley with "The Seven Mountains" encircling it and is Norway's second biggest city with about 280 000 people usually referred to as the capital of the west-coast of Norway. The city itself is quite dense as it is pressed together by the surrounding topography and could be comparable in urban density to European cities today with structures from the middle-ages. (The density of people is not necessarily that high)

Looking at cities today where in many countries there is an exponential growth, projecting that about 68% of the world's population will live in cities within the next 30 years^[1], we recognise that there is much to be gained by considering urban environments differently. Bergen in this context might be viewed as an isolated and small city not too much affected by these projections, but it might still be viewed as a manageable scale regarding different urban experiments in the Nordic cities.

^[1] United Nations, "68% of the world population projected to live in urban areas by 2050." 16.05.2018. <https://bit.ly/2sR9H9l>.



Our speculation lies in the fact that amongst other things carmanufacturers focus on the development of self-driving cars and the possibility of carsharing. We also see that there is a transition in, at least Norwegian society, that owning a car is becoming less and less important with the emergence of carsharing platforms, especially in urban areas. Parking space is a very ineffective use of space as it uses a lot of landmass and is primarily used for one thing; namely storing cars. If carsharing is adopted by all people you could use your digital device to fetch a car whenever the need arises and we would subsequently reduce the need for parking space in urban areas by about 97%^[1]. The cars would be moving around most of the day and the roads become an active parking space.

We choose to work with a square and the parking space underneath connected to Bergens main music venue, Grieghallen as a result of our investigations.

The public space outside Grieghallen is a stone square measuring ca. 5900m² and is mostly unused by the public except as a way to move between parts of the city. The parking space underneath consists of an area about 12900m² partitioned over 3 floors

totalling at about 18800m² of mostly unused space in the city center, not only in the future, but also present day. There seems to be a somewhat lack of diversity in public spaces in Bergen, especially in central areas.



Griegplassen, the square outside Grieghallen.

Bergen already has a lot of stone squares, but are in need of green spaces in the city center and outside spaces that can be used when it rains instead of the shopping malls as these represent a more commercialized and non-democratic space. The green spaces would become not only purely aesthetic, but functional in regards to handling large amounts of water amongst other things.





Bergen is also home to the University of Bergen with about 17 000 students which functions both as a place of study and research institution connected globally^[1]. Our site is in close proximity to one of their main campuses and, especially interesting, the biological faculty and research center in Solheimsviken. We see the potential for a interconnection where research and public space becomes a way of re-naturalizing and re-using a part of the city center while possibly giving us information about new urban ecologies.

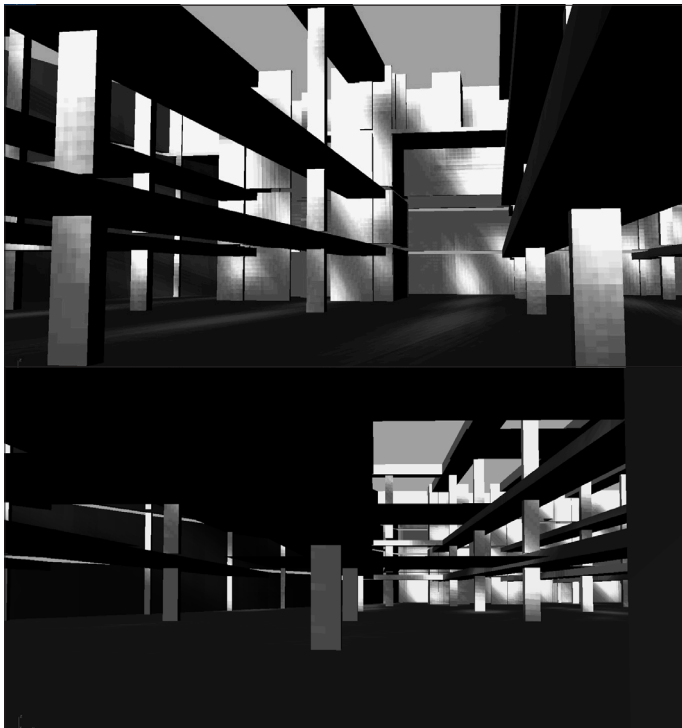
We alter the structure and adjacent spaces to accommodate the possibility for new activities brought by the public and researchers based on the qualities found within the space. Exposing qualities and creating a frame which the people can use as they see fit in a democratic and non-hierarchical way together with controlled urban experiments.

We deconstruct the space into smaller pieces that is carefully moved into new positions while keeping the main bearing structure of it to create platforms and a small hillside that opens towards sun while enclosing the underground and keeping it in its natural, or rather, cultural darkness.

^[1] University of Bergen, "Om UiB." Read 11.06.2019. <https://bit.ly/2FOEMNF>.

Creating a framework for activities, program and experiences in darkness and light, earth and sky for both public and research purposes.

Hopefully, regardless of the speculative nature of the project, it can contribute to an ongoing dialogue regarding resource use, our relation to nature and how space is designed today and used in the future both in the urban and architectural discourse.



Process

Glossary: Defining of central terminology and concepts becoming a startingpoint of our investigations. We continue to expand the glossary as we go on to reflect on our findings.

Texts: Defining questions that emerge through production of glossary and other materials which we then investigate through essays and texts to further expand and focus the research and concepts.

Framework: Making suggestions or a hypothesis based on our investigations, leading to a concrete theory that specifically inform our actions.

Action: Creating a concrete and contextualized intervention in relation to the site which includes analysis, investigation and reaction in-situ.



Giovanni Battista Piranesi, "Carceri d'invenzione"

Our process have resulted in a project that we think fit the situation and context with input from the various stages of our journey there.

We have come some way off the original outset which was to look at how the digital sphere interacts with architectural practice, but it is in some way still part of our project if one looks closely.

We decided early that we were going to work with, or around a public space in the city of Bergen, which has been our guiding light along the way and something to always return to when we stray too far. We started with writing essays looking into street art and digital culture to gain knowledge of how to potentially read the mirage-like nature of cities and people. From that we started to collect some of our information in our glossary to explain certain phenomena and starting to connect some dots, which again led to more questions, writings and starting to physically model and make things.

We did not want to choose a site early on as we saw the project as a potentially political one and saw the site choice as a very important decision to make not to be taken lightly. As a result we produced models of Zürich, Switzerland which has similar

traits to Bergen, but still disconnects us enough from it to be free in our investigations.



Plastercast model of a small square in Zürich, Switzerland.

After a while we saw the need to try and find comparable ground and broaden our search into the more physical realm, hence our search for a place to travel. We weighed different choices that could be beneficial to us and decided to go to Barcelona, Spain and Copenhagen, Denmark.

We decided what to try and look at, but if something points us in a different direction we follow. In Barcelona we visited parks and spaces that are quite unique (Gaudi, Miralles, Superblock) which has informed our process in many ways, but probably most in terms of scale, both in the close, body scale and monumental, "larger than life"-scale.

We started picking random places to sit and contemplate, leaving traces behind, acting as ghosts in the city trying and grasp and show the situations through actions leading to a series of reflections in specific spaces.

In Denmark we looked mostly at how, even if the country is close to Norway in culture, there is quite some differences and the spaces and use of space reflect this, showing us that small alterations in culture still can have big effects. The food and bicycle culture in Denmark makes the street come alive even though they are quite "barren". We see



Chairs in Barcelona with the reflection "FR - EE" in the footsteps.

bicycles parked everywhere, creating a landscape on its own and corners of buildings always have life around the diners and cafes, similar to Barcelona.

In Barcelona they move carparking underneath the plazas creating space for activity, in Bergen that only seems to create empty spaces where the car earlier acted similar to the bicycles in Copenhagen.

After returning we had many ideas which were conceived on the road of how to relate it to Bergen city, but we did still not have a site, so we continued our way of investigation in our city of choice resulting in our site, which moved us away from the most politically laden spaces in Bergen, but still re-

flects a significant and important discussion in the city and in an international context.

Looking at what we were into at that moment we saw trash and death as unused resources in society and had some suggestions as how to utilize these. The choice of site made it possible to contemplate a graveyard, but we were still trying to connect it to the digital sphere, which proved difficult. In the end we suggested a digital graveyard where one would get the option to delete all online information about one self and bury the information in this space in the form of a digitally encoded seed containing said information and it would grow into a plant that people could come and read out the information after you had passed through the plant.

This reflects how we view the role of architects as moral, ethical beings and how to see unlikely connections to create new spaces and experiences. We see technologies emerging that question some of the roles of the architect, but AI and computers today at least, seem to be unable to make these connections easily. The DNA-storage technology can also be used to store other types of information like books, music and so on which in turn could have huge ramifications when talking about situa-

tions like how to use a library. It could take us into a naturalized way of viewing information that could break down typologies as you could store all the worlds data in a box of seeds using this technology. Making libraries and archives into forests, freeing space from datacenters and lessening the energyconsumption of said centers is just some of the possibilities which impacts architectural practice in a global perspective.



We started planting as part of our process, keeping a diary.

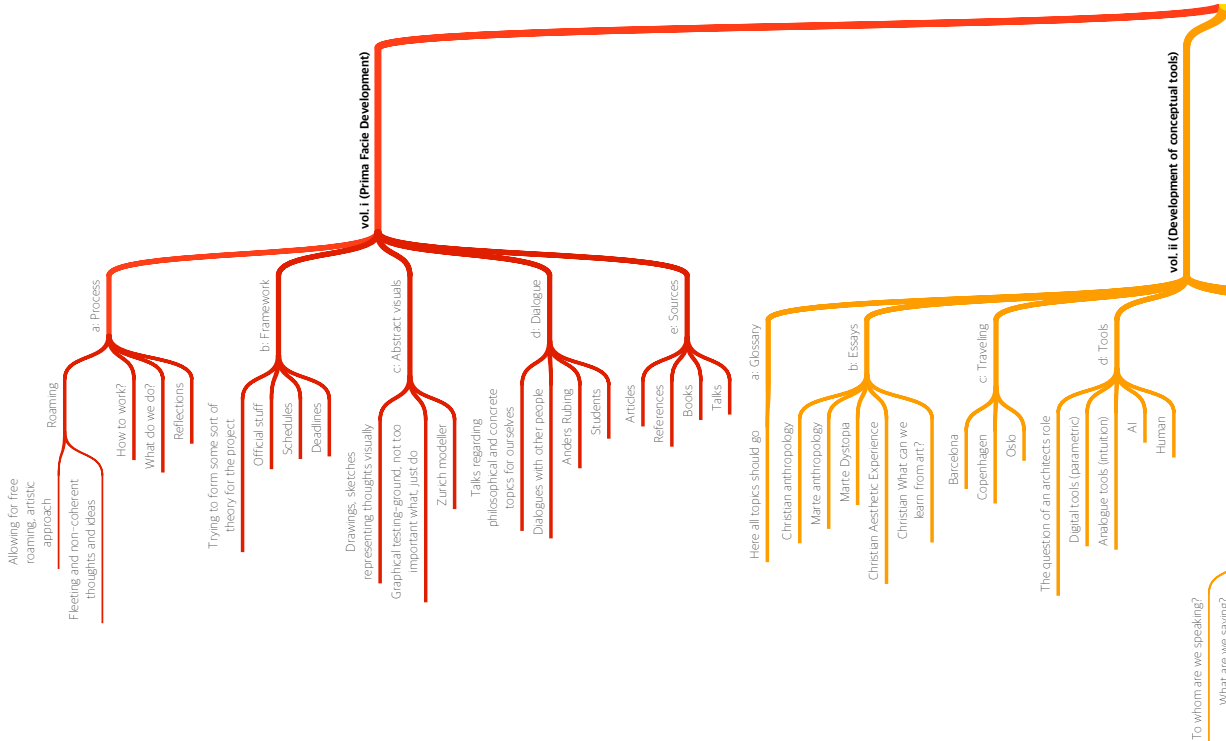
The site we chose however did not combine well with either of the options, there seemed to be issues every time we tried to combine the ideas with our site and we decided to let the digital seeds go. It might still be something that researchers can investigate in the space we create as mutations of DNA might be interesting to look at for the molecularbiologists at the university.

We decided to look into the ecology of these unused places instead, creating an outpost for the study of it as these spaces might become more and more important in the future. It reflects much of our thoughts and ideas even though it seems quite far from our initial questions. It is a result of wanting to investigate other possibilities and following a path that is not necessarily straight. As a result we have accumulated information that can be further developed in our architectural careers to act as architects with different and critical perspectives. We see the architect as a highly moral and ethically responsible person making important decisions with social impact when practicing the profession.



Our workspace which has been cleaned many times and gotten equally messy quite fast again as a result of our investigations.

Project structure





Material

In general we produce texts and writings to research and explain concepts creating diagrams, drawings, illustrations, etc. to inform and create guidelines for a designprocess.

Creating a specific set of tools contextualized to the site in Bergen specifying the scale of the project from 1:1 and up to the scale of the Bergen city area.

Producing architectural drawings, diagrams, illustrations, collages and so on representing our intervention and interaction with the site.



Concept collage

Curriculum vitae

Master Courses, Bergen School of Architecture:

Unproductive Landscapes, 2017:

"Forus XO"

Spaces for Work, 2018:

Christian: "Neo-Zanzibar"

Marte: "Meta - speculating about a future post-work"

Architectural History, 2018:

Christian: "North and East - The spaces Torgallmenningen and Naqsh-e-Jahan"

Marte: "Allmenning - The role of the Commons in Bergen Throughout History"

Complex Context, 2018:

"Heart Suburbia - I'm Lovin' It"

Christian Helliksen Schiøtz:

Bachelor Philosophy, University of Bergen (2018-2020)

Trestykker built project Majorstua, Oslo (-2015)

Marte Berge Fjeldsbø:

Design art studies at Australian Academy of Design
(2012-2013)

High school, IB diploma, Mahindra United World Collage
of India (2009-2011)

Internship Planning and Urbanism, Asplan Viak, Bergen
(2017)

Study Quality Committee Member and Vara, Bergen
School of Architecture (2014-2018)

Thank you!