

LEIRELABORATORIET

CLAY LAB

Jakob Håkon Larsen
Diplom 2021
BAS

Table of content

Introduction - *page 4*

Situation - *page 6*

The process - *page 9*

Abstract essay - *page 11*

Reflection - *page 13*

CV - *page 18*

Timeline - *page 19*



INTRODUCTION

Sandnes is a City at the west coast of Norway close to fjords, mountains, grasslands and beaches. The landscape all clearly testifies to the powerful natural forces that occurred during the Ice age. The heavy ice masses grounded down the mountains, dug the fjords and transported the masses. From the great mountains came the microscopic clay particles that created the landscape of Sandnes. This clay also became the main resource and factor in the creation of Sandnes as a City. The clay was transformed to a big spectrum of brickworks and potteries.

The site, Altona is one of few traces of the once important clay related industries. A bowl shaped formation in the landscape testifies to the excavation of clay. A leveled area in connection to the sea, is where the industry buildings were placed. From here the clay products were shipped on boats, transported by sea.

At this historical site I am suggesting a clay lab, a proposal that aims to restart the “machinery” of working with clay; excavating, processing, forming, drying and burning. It will not be the rebirth of an industrial mass production, but a laboratory where the cultural values and integration in an urban context is in focus. In my project I aim to convey the history of an important past as well as facilitating experimentation and possibilities to explore potential for the future use of clay.

The architecture and facilities will through the site follow the processing of clay. The journey from clay to brickworks, ceramic utensils and ceramic art. It aims to give an insight into the versatile activities connected to the clay related work, to both inform and include the general public in the participation of the clay lab. As a working space, the clay lab seeks to be an interdisciplinary hub where professions connected to clay in different ways can benefit from each other's knowledge.

The versatile properties of clay have been used for construction, art and utensils for thousands of years. What also is unique with clay is that it may provide some important qualities before becoming a finished product. The plastic properties of clay give a unique possibility for both professionals and amateurs to express oneself by forming, manipulating and reshaping. It is also a

sensible experience where the hands are the main tools, and the “brain-hand-center” is stimulated. The activity of working with clay provides some universal values that can be of interest not only for the professionals but also for the general public that can contribute to a broad involvement and keeping the area active both within and without working hours.

The activity of creating with clay does not only have a benefit for the person doing the work. Furthermore, I believe that this activity also can have a positive influence on the people watching the activity and the social dimension of visible craftsmanship in an urban setting can be a strategy to create a lively public space. The clay lab is also a tool for shaping the site in a way that facilitates a wide range of different activities in the public interest.

How the future clay activities link to some cultural, historical and geological roots of the city is an essential part of the project. But it is also a strategy for a sustainable project. The combination of reuse and new production in different scales is an important element of the clay lab; on the area scale, building scale, on the building component scale and on a thematic scale. How the combination of reuse and new production can benefit from each other and provide both social and environmental sustainability. The goal is a project where the passing of knowledge and cultural crafting traditions represents both a valuable social function and a tool for reuse and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, In addition to the environmental perspective, reuse can also be a source of inspiration, creativity as well as a point back to the rich industrial, historical and geological past of sandnes.

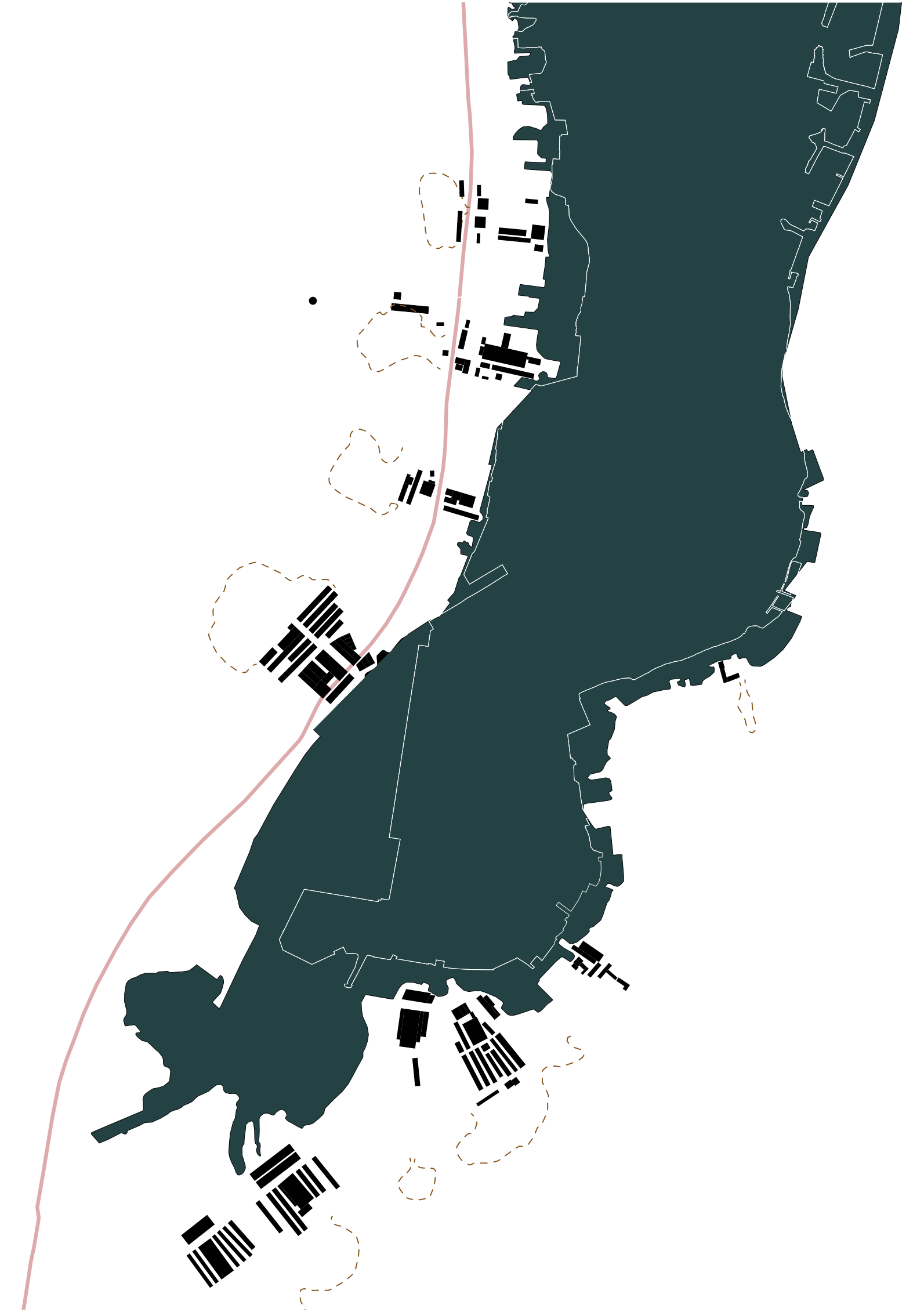


SANDNES

A city built on clay

SITE

My site is in Sandnes. A city literally and figuratively built on clay. There are few traces of the once big clay related industry. The industry buildings are torn down. Today the main traces are to be found in the landscape. A characteristic bowl shape in a hill testifies to the excavation of clay. A leveled area where the buildings of processing once was is situated in connection to the seafront where the finished clay products were loaded onto boats. The seabed is covered by dumped clay products that were defective.



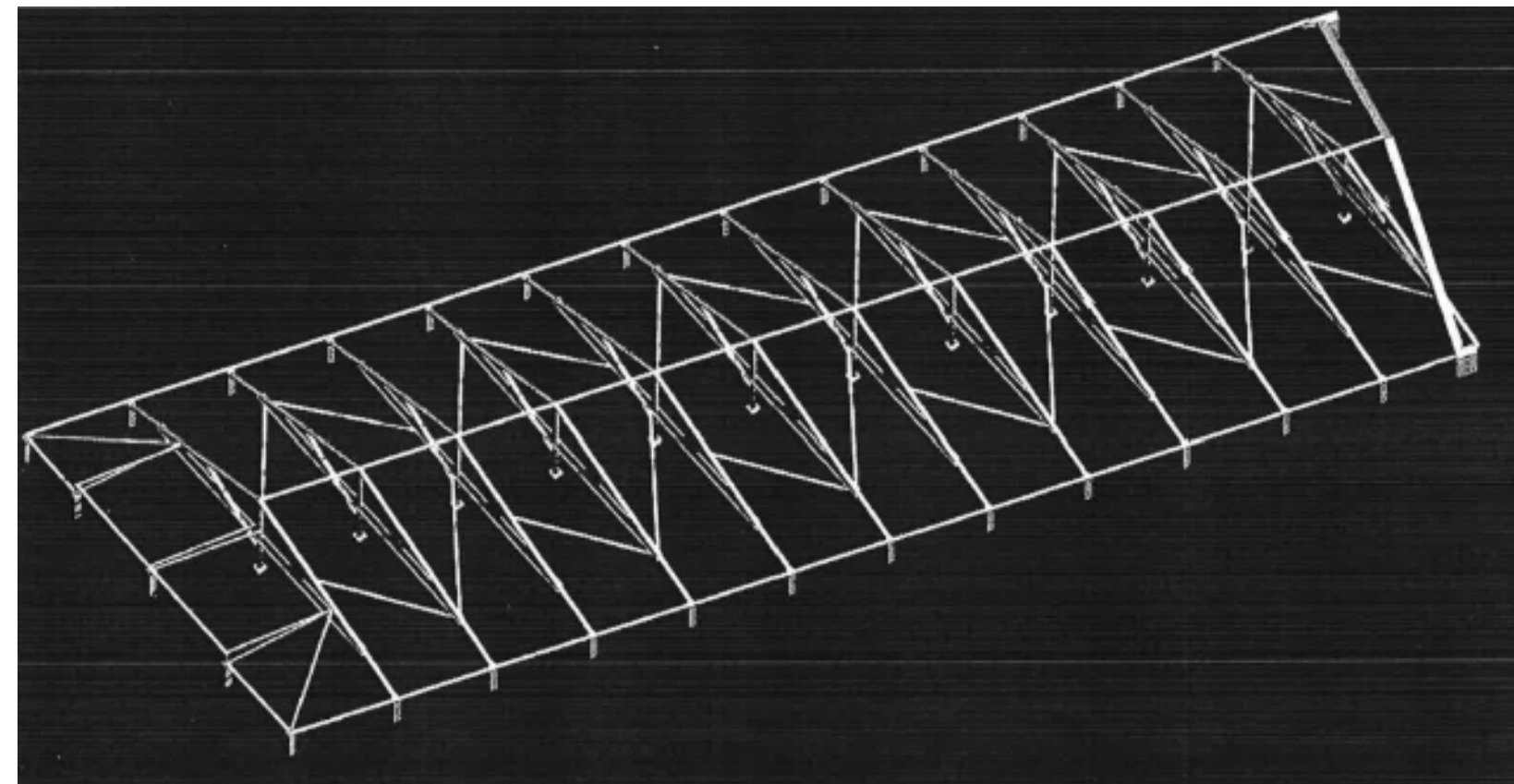
TWO REMAINS

Two of the most significant remains of the clay related industries is found in the landscape and in an existing warehouse. These are components that have played an important part in the shaping of the project.



Altona

Altonaverket is the site where the traces from the industry in the landscape are best preserved. It is an area that has been regulated as a park the last 70 years. The upper part of the site with its characteristic bowlshape is functioning as a park with a playground and a basketball field. The lower, flat part of the site have served as a industrial storage place. The two differnt parts is divided by a road, a trainline and some singular family houses with gardens.



Warehouse 4b Gann Graveren

This building is the last of its kind from the clay related industries in Sandnes. Rest of the many buildings are torn down and destroyed. This building is also taken down, but it is stored in another warehouse. And before destroyed, the architectural firm Trodahl Arkitekter did a registration of the building. The placement of the building was a different from Altona, but due to the program of my project I see it is a perfect posiibility to reuse the historical building.

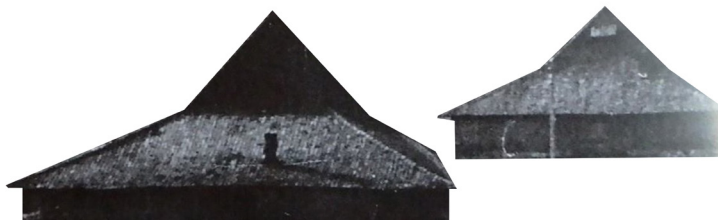
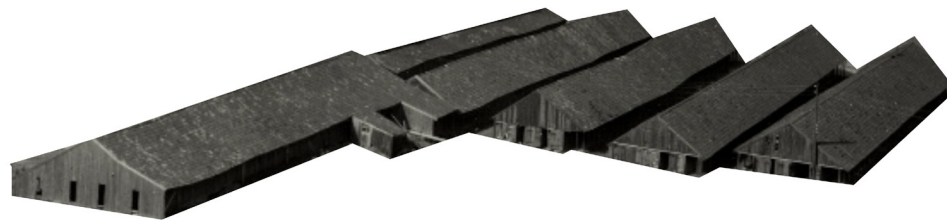


In my diploma I want to make a place for interaction with clay. A laboratory where people, both professionals and others, can experiment and get to know the raw material and the processes of transformation, from a plastic raw material to a static result of human interaction.

In my diploma I'm interested in the stories the material is telling on different levels and scales. A lot of inspiration can be found from the site I have chosen, a pre-industrial production site for bricks situated, at the shoreline, in the city center Sandes, a city literally and figuratively speaking built on clay. I'm interested in the stories the production site tells but also those found in a brick building, utensils or art objects – from the origin of the material in nature, the processing, the logic of assembling, wear and tear and degradation from climate. Stories that I hope my clay lab can be enriched from and also contribute to continue these stories that can give an experience of place and an atmosphere.

THE PROCESS

The historical clay process is a huge source of inspiration, from the harvesting to burning the activities shapes the typologies of the buildings, the tools, machines and techniques. Its a process that utalizes natural laws of gravitation, water and fire on the journey from raw clay to finished brick ceramics and art objects.



Harvesting



Processing




Fomring



Drying



Burning



During my project I have been through my all of the steps of the clay process in my own way. From harvesting in Sandnes, processing, and in colaboration with an art student we formed and experimented with the clay. We went throught different glazing experimentation and burning processes. In my exhibition I showcase the result of these tests. Through this process I have gotten to know clay and its properties better, I have also teste out an interdiciplinary colaboration where we learnt a lot from each others competences. It has also given me a greater picture on how the clay lab im suggesting could function by testing it in a smaller scale. Also I have learnt about a lot of the facilities needed for the clay process, it has given me some valuable insight while shaping the buildings and plan solution.

Hymns of the city

My essay starts with a question about impersonal places. What makes a place feel impersonal? And on the other hand, what makes a place feel meaningful. These questions come up in a present art exhibition at the Hordaland kunstsenter. It raises critique to modern art education, and the new art school in Bergen. According to the project, the school lacks some important qualities, like a common kitchen where students can make food and workplaces where the students can work without the disturbance from others. The system of the school and the architecture is rigid in a way that weakens some important human needs. The students don't feel connected to the other students, the school administration and the building. They say it's impersonal.

Further in my essay I'm also discussing this topic within an urban scale. As an introduction I go through some important sociological theories that are concerned with the topic of the impersonal city, theories that have made much of the foundation for modern urban anthropology today. Like the theory of Tönnie in his book Community and Society talking about how capitalist society is by its nature characterized by impersonal relations and cultural bonds. And the theory of Louis Worth, "Urbanism as a way of life", where he writes about the city as a specific social institution with distinctive attributes which he describes.

My essay compares different approaches on how to analyse and understand places and the relation between humans and physical surroundings. I use approaches both within social anthropology and architectural theories.

I first looked into the book of Marchand "the masons of Djenne". Marchand occupies a role within a society, as a mason. By getting integrated into the society, his descriptions of the daily work, life and happenings tells a lot about how the locals relate to the buildings in Djenne. The great mosque of djenne is the social glue of the community, here people go to pray every week,

and there is a festival thrown every year in order to maintain the building. Secondly I look into the phenomenological architectural theory of Juhani Pallasma. He is more concerned with how the architecture relates to our senses and different architectural tools that affect our experience of the built. The architecture, he says, gives meaning when it relates to our multisensory abilities as humans. He criticizes the modernistic way of building which he claims is too focused on the eyes and the visual aspects of the architecture.

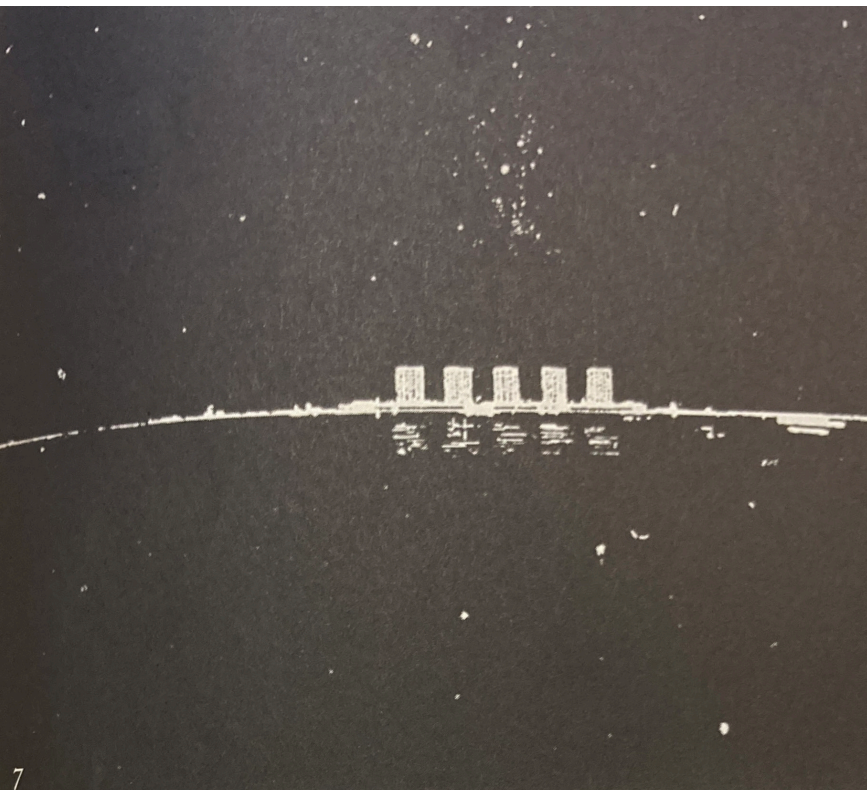
I also include an essay of Eli Støa which compares important Anthropological approaches and the architectural theory of Christian Norberg-Schulz. The findings of Støa gives a picture of two distinctive ways of understanding the meaning of a place. She claims that Schulz bases his theories mainly on his own intuition and mainly based on visual facts. Bordieu on the other hand, takes into account not only the spatial "system", but just as much action within space.

The approaches I have looked into are both similar and very different. They are all concerned with how humans experience the built, and what meaning places can provide. They are also very different in the way of investigating and answering these questions. I have described some approaches that are concerned with how our senses experience a place and other approaches that seek to understand the built through observations of activities related to places.

In my diploma I want to work with a city where the clay related industries once was very apparent in the urban situation. I believe the material, the production and the buildings were factors that together constituted a meaning for the inhabitants of the city. This is something I want to achieve with my project. I believe the approaches I have investigated in my essay can, also much because of the differences, give me inspiration for a broad investigation of my site from different angles.



"The tactile city is a city characterized by proximity and holiness."



"The modern city is the city of the vision, characterized by the distance and the outside face."



"Hymns from the Kitchen" - Hordaland Kunstsenter



PROGRAM

To watch someone create



One theme I want to look more into during my project, is how this activity of working with clay can impact a social urban situation. Not only for the people that is working, but also for those watching.

There is something liberating about seeing people do work, improve something, express themselves, experiment, with their hands, create something physical. A material gets a meaning, a story. Can a productive activities also provide some attachment to the place itself?

A construction site is more than a workplace. Not even the fences manages to prevent a kind of fascination and attachment to the place. You can see workers performing a craft, each with their own skills, working together on a joint project. Observing this activity gives a sense of place as a project. A project in development, which every day looks different. Something is improved.

Human and material.

Passing of knowledge

Instead of appealing to sight and hearing only, an interactive museum will focus on introducing people to materiality in a way that allows one to gather information and stories in several ways. An interactive museum will stimulate more senses, and activate both body and mind. The main point is that body and mind work together, and one learns best through being fed with several different sensory impressions. Another point is that it is more engaging and inviting than just listening / watching someone / something telling.



The hand and the mind

Aristoteles

“we learn with our hands, the hands remember”

“The hands are the instrument of the instruments”

There is a difference between feel and feeling. You feel a material and the brain processes it, and stores it in a memory bank of feelings. This enables you to get a feeling related to a material, without touching it, just by watching it, the brain will recognize it and give a feeling if it's a soft material, heavy, cold, warm, etc.

There is a general concern amongst scientists that the hands have lost its relevance in today's society. Accordingly we live in the era of the eyes. We are overstimulated of impressions experienced with the eyes, and understimulated of experiences through our hands. Within science of neurology, it is common to talk about the “cortical body map”. It concerns the connection between our body and brain. A major amount of these connections are preserved for the hands, both in the motoric and sensory part. The eyes on the other hand, does not have the same capacity to produce experiences on a sensory and emotional level as the hands.

Scientists claim we live in the era of the eyes.

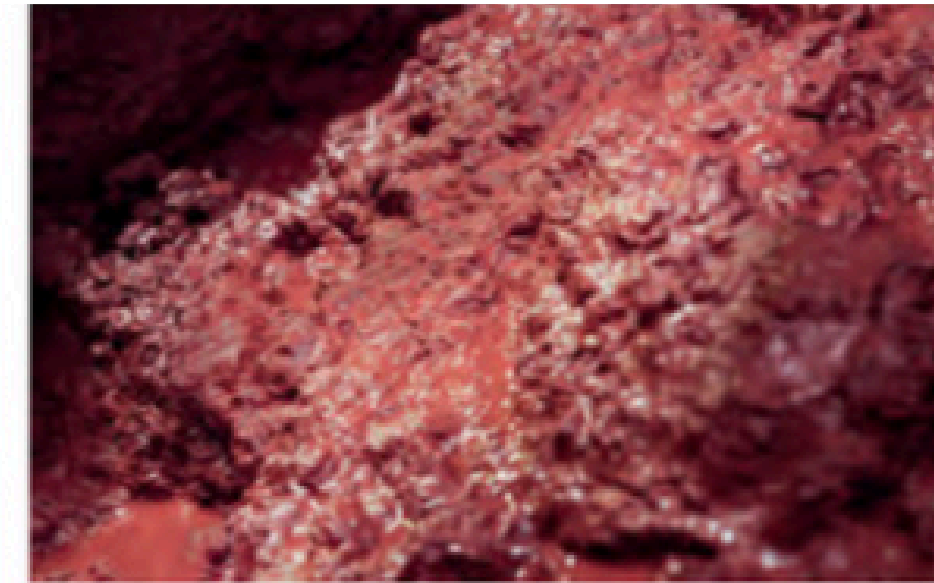


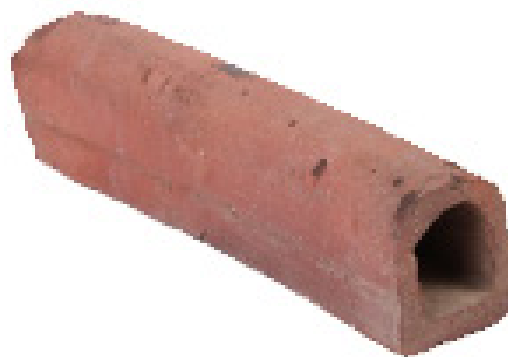
somatosensorisk homunculus

motorisk homunculus

Unknown possibilities / unknown material

To know what possibilities lies in a material, one must know a material. There is a limit to how well you can get to know a material through pictures in a catalog. You can learn a lot about the qualities and possibilities of a material by reflecting on the physical environment. But even more you can learn if you work with your hands and experiment with a material.







JAKOB HÅKON LARSEN
20.09.1990
Zetlitzgt.12, Bergen
+47 95424459
jakobhaakon@gmail.com

Education

- 2020 - 2021 Bergen school of architecture
MA Architecture
- 2020 Chalmers University of Technology
MA Architecture
- 2019 - 2020 Universita di Sapienza
MA Architecture
- 2018 University of Bergen
Art and architecture history
- 2015 - 2018 Bergen School of Architecture
BA Architecture
- 2014 - 2015 Instituto Superior de Arte Cubano
Music
- 2013 - 2014 Universidad de la Habana
Spanish
- 2009 - 2013 Bergen University College
Civil Ingeneer

Work

- 2019 BARK
Architectural firm, Stavanger

Mastercourses

- 2020 Bergen School of Architecture
- Complex Contex
- 2020 Chalmers University of Technolog
- Public building
- History Theory and Method
- System design
- 2019 Universita di Sapienza
- Tools and methods for
historical research
- Theory and practice
of conservation
- Architectural survey
- Structural engineering of
ancient and modern
buildings

TIMELINE

	PROGRESS	TASKS	SCHOOL PLAN	APPOINTMENTS	NOTES
week 6 / feb 8 - 14	INVESTIGATE	working with clay		9 ceramist Simon pottemaker 10 ceramicist Kjell Johannesen 10 - 12 corss c. OK kontor	
week 7 / feb 15 - 21		maps registration site models site			
week 8 / feb 22 - 28	DEFINE	writings site		26 site visit, study trip	
week 9 / march 1 - 7			PRESENTATION 2		
week 10 / march 8 - 14		consept model			8 march - shaping phase
week 11 / march 15 - 21	SHAPING	different models and drawings of options			
week 12 / march 22 - 28		from outside to inside models			
week 13 / march 29 - april 4					
week 14 / april 5 - 11					
week 15 / april 12 - 18					

TIMELINE

Week 16 / april 19 - 25		REFLECTING	PRESENTATION 3
week 17 / april 26 - may 2			30 april - showing phase
week 18 / may 3 - 9			
week 19 / may 10 -16		SHOWING	
week 20 / may 17 - 23			
week 21 / may 24 - 30			EXTERNAL REVIEW FINAL REVIEW
week 22 / may 31 - june 6			EXHIBITION
week 23 / june 7 - 13		BUILDING	
week 24 / june 14 - 20			exhibition preview
week 25 / june 21 - 27			
week 26 / june 28 - july 4			EXAM