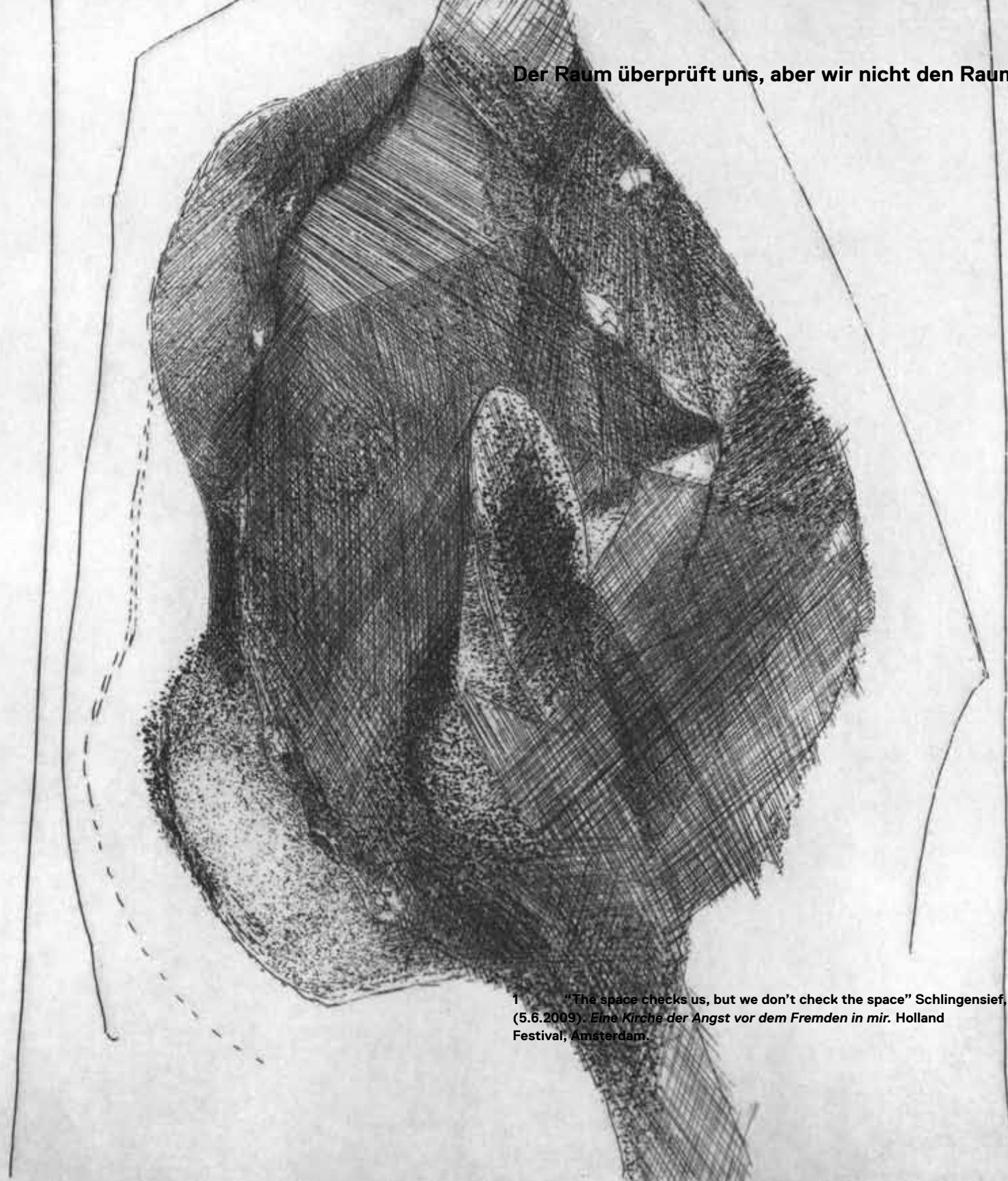# Architectural anxiety

The perfect safe zone

Der Raum überprüft uns, aber wir nicht den Raum[1]

1   "The space checks us, but we don't check the space" Schlingensief, C. (5.6.2009). *Eine Kirche der Angst vor dem Fremden in mir*. Holland Festival, Amsterdam.

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Introduction

and comfortable. The different solutions can serve as inspiration for a design of the perfect safe space. Absolute security is not what I imagine when I try to envision the perfect safe space. Absolute security can only be guarantied in airtight bulletproof, closed space with rubber furniture (= solitary confinement). For me solutions have to be safe and inspiring and guarantee freedom. In looking for solutions, sometimes I will choose to sacrifice optimal safety in exchange for more freedom. It's not my goal to completely ban all anxiety; a certain level of anxiety can be fruitful and spark creativity. Because architects tend to optimize spaces and suppress situations of fear rather than to make it explicitly visible in the design, I do not chose for standard architectural solutions. Nor do architects play with elements of fear. Fear has to disappear in the design.[2]

I have figured out a couple of guidelines for the design of fearfree spaces in my thesis. These guidelines involve architectural concepts like shielding and view, shadow and light, flexibility versus rigidity. They can be used as practical help for building and planning.

Note
26.12.1998, Stuttgart
Es gibt keinen Ort mehr, wo ich mich ganz sicher fühle.

Where can I hide? How far is it to the door? Is there a possibility to leave the space unobserved? Are there lines of sight? Can I escape? How do I get from one end of the city to the other? These are questions that influence decisions in my daily life. I'm hyper aware of my living environment. The characteristics of spaces such as size, transparency, exits, tend to have a strong impact on my senses. If these characteristics are of a certain order anxiety can arise. I call it architectural anxiety because it is triggered by the design of space that surrounds me.

Anxiety is generally described as a natural response to external danger. Primitive man is surrounded by a menacing chaos, which constantly endangers his survival. The original state is one of fear, one of phobic reflexes. The biological function of fear is to warn and protect. Fear stimulates fighting, fleeing or hiding in order to survive. Our mind is in a constant state of readiness to take up a defensive position against the real or imagined causes of the threat. However, what is considered as external danger is very subjective. I can have phobic reactions in objectively perfectly safe situations, such as sitting in a riding train, crossing long bridges. This anxiety limits my freedom.

In this thesis I will investigate the possibilities of restoring freedom. I describe situations where I suffer from architectural anxiety, analyse these situations and sometimes find practical solutions for architectural safety. These solutions are based on my own fear experiences but also intended to help others to overcome their (similar) fears, get relaxed

2   **Exception: Daniel Libeskind built a classical fearspace: The enclosed outside void in the Jewish Museum in Berlin**

Method

My method of investigation consists mainly of observations, experiences and experiments in public and private space between 1998 and 2010. As I am very sensitive to anxiety amplifying spaces, I chose to take myself as measuring tool for judging the described fear spaces. To confirm my own judgements, I quote sources from literature, mainly in the field of history of architecture and art. There are very few publications that deal with this specific subject: the architectural aspects of agoraphobia. Anthony Vidler is one of the few who gives a profound and complete overview, so I mostly used his publications. As opposed to architects, many artists do deal with fearspaces. Art projects often hit the sore point better than architectural projects. I describe some of these art works.

My observations and experiences are partially recorded in notes and drawings, partially reconstructed from memory and presented in this thesis in excerpts. In contrast to the notes, which represent an exact snapshot taken at the moment of the experience or observation, the remembered observations are frequently blurred and contain errors. The physical space, however, helps in the remembering of a particular event. Thinking about a space triggers the memory of names and objects and events that took place in that space. Besides, memory, even if it contains errors, often gives better access to the essential than precise notes.

Structure

The chapters of this thesis consist of examples of fearspaces. The fearspaces are ordered and classified, beginning with the very largest, the urban structures:
The modern city, The transparent city, Enclosed village,
then working down through transit/means of transport:
Train, Tram, Airplane, Motorway, Crossing the city on foot,
arrangement of buildings:
Narrow passages,
specific functions of buildings:
Restaurant, Hairdresser, Cinema, Shops, The home,
characteristics of buildings:
Lines of sight, Unclear space, Dark space, Minimal space, Height,
constructional elements of buildings:
Niches, Dead ends, Elevators,
ending with interior elements:
Lightning.

The last chapter describes the use of alternative design methods to arrive at fearfree architecture.

The chapters all have the same structure:
First the fearspace is introduced, with the help of note excerpts, memory reconstructions, quotes from literature, sketches or photos. Dilemmas of the relationship between fear and space are then outlined and clarified, with the help of sources from literature and/or art projects, which deal with the respective fear space. If I have a solution, I end up the chapter with suggestions for alternative use of the space, alternative design or likewise.

The modern city

Still from the film 'Play Time', Jaques Tati, 1967

Memory
Dezember 2004, Intercity Delft – Amsterdam, ausgestie-
gen in Leiden.
Ich bin aus dem Zug ausgestiegen, weil er zu voll war und
ich Angst bekommen habe. Jetzt stehe ich am Bahnsteig
und lasse alle einfahrenden Züge Richtung Amsterdam
vorbeifahren. Ich traue mich nicht, wieder einzusteigen,
denn die Züge sind alle voll. Ich will mich irgendwo ausru-
hen, um wieder zu mir zu kommen, bevor ich weiterfahre
nach Hause. Ich weiß nicht, wo ich hin soll, eigentlich will
ich nur noch nach Hause. Der Bahnhof ist voller Warten-
den, totales hektisches und lautes Chaos. Auch bin ich
ziemlich durchgefroren vom langen Rumstehen am Bahn-
steig. Ich gehe durch die Bahnhofshalle in Richtung Stadt,
weiter auf der Suche nach einem Ort, an dem ich kurz
verweilen kann, ich würde gerne sitzen, denn ich bin sehr
erschöpft. Aus dem Bahnhofsgebäude hinauslaufend kom-
me ich in eine breite Fußgängerzone, alle Läden sind zu,
weiter gibt es in dieser Strasse nichts. In ein Café traue ich
mich nicht rein, ich will weder sprechen, noch essen noch
trinken. Mein Orientierungssinn lässt mich völlig im Stich,
meine Augen sehen schlecht, wegen der Angst. Ich erken-
ne die Gegend nicht, die Strassen sind mir völlig fremd. Ich
habe Angst, mich zu verlaufen und kehre letztlich wieder
zurück zum Bahnhof. Ich fühle mich vollkommen verloren,
der mir zur Verfügung stehende öffentliche Raum bietet
mir keine Zuflucht.

In 'The Uncanny' (1919) Freud reports the disturbing feelings provoked by his being lost in an unfamiliar Italian town. Not only is he lost, but also he finds himself time after time in the part of the town frequented by prostitutes, where his conspicuousness, as a Viennese bourgeois was beginning to excite attention. His anxiety rises as he repeatedly returns to the place he most wishes to avoid.[3]

The quickly growing European cities at the end of the nineteenth century and the development of the metropolis caused new diseases, which were directly attributed to the spatial conditions of the new city.[4] The Frankfurt School of Social Research, specifically Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Kracauer and Georg Simmel marked out the modern city as peculiarly anxiety-inducing. New kinds of neurotic symptoms were being codified, produced by modern life: agoraphobia, paralysing anxiety produced in urban space. Particularly the cities' new forms and spaces, such as transit and commerce, the shopping arcades, waiting rooms and hotel lobbies were productive of new and neurotic forms of behaviour.[5] Kracauer compared the modern hotel lobby to the traditional church; the one a shelter for the transient and disconnected, the other for the community of the faithful.

> "The modern urban dweller could only rely on spaces like that of the hotel lobby. Detached from everyday life, individual atoms with no connection save their absolute anonymity, the hotel guests were scattered like atoms in a void, stranded in their armchairs,…"[6]

The Viennese architect Camillo Sitte complained in 1899 against the spatial emptiness of the new Ringstrasse, contrasting its apparently limitless and infinite expanses to the compositional qualities and smaller scale of traditional squares and streets.

> "Recently a unique nervous disorder has been diagnosed – 'agoraphobia'. Numerous people are said to suffer from it, always experiencing a certain anxiety or discomfort, whenever they have to walk across a vast empty place. One naturally feels very cosy in small, old plazas. On our modern, gigantic plazas, with their yawning emptiness, the inhabitants of snug old towns suffer attacks of this fashionable agoraphobia. The universal trend of the time is the fear of open spaces."[7]

The architectural components of the fear were mainly the dimensions of the new spaces, which were beyond human scale, combined with the loss of visual boundaries (such as the old city walls). Identification with

these new spaces was impossible. Spaces were considered as anonymous and impersonal. The French doctor Henri Legrand du Saulle cites in 1878:

> "The patient finds himself isolated from the entire world at the sight of the void that is presented to him and frightens him immeasurably."[8]

To the fear of empty and open space was added that of crowded and populated places and the fear of being enclosed. In 1879 the first case of 'claustrophobia' has been cited: A young soldier with a panic fear of being alone on a closed space, a sensation of being in a passage getting narrower and narrower to the point of being able to go neither forward or back, an intolerable terror.[9] Other patients panicked while climbing the stairs of high towers. A patient of doctor Jean-Martin Charcot described his symptoms that occurred at night in an enclosed railway carriage:

> "I was frightened, because I had the sense of being closed in. I don't like to stay in a narrow space, I feel ill."[10]

The symptoms were palpitations, sensations of heat, blushing, trembling, fear of dying, petrifying shyness, cold sweats, growing pale, hypochondriac preoccupations… The Berlin psychologist Carl Otto Westphal recounted in 1871 the first cases of agoraphobia:

> "A commercial traveller who experienced rapid heartbeats on entering a public square, or when passing by long walls, or through a street with closed shops, at the theatre or in church; a shopkeeper who found it impossible to cross squares or streets when the shops were closed and could not travel on the omnibus or attend the theatre, concert, or any gathering of people without feeling a strange anxiety, accompanied by rapid heart palpitation. A patient stated that he felt less anxiety in a large space not surrounded by houses than in a space of the same size in a city: open nature was refreshing, the city was terrifying."[11]

Agoraphobia was by definition a spatial disease, but equally an urban disease, the effect of life in the modern city. Doctors identified agoraphobia and claustrophobia as predominantly bourgeois phenomena, and vagabondage as illness of the working classes.[12]

My anxiety is partly a problem of the modern time, a fear of the rapidly moving and crowded metropolis. This has for a large part to do with

3   Freud, cited in: Richard J. Williams, *The Anxious city*. p. 8
4   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 25
5   Richard J. Williams, *The Anxious city*. p. 9
6   Krakauer, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 73
7   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 26

8   idem, p. 30
9   Benjamin Ball, 1879, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 32
10   Charcot, 1888, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 33
11   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 29
12   idem p. 26

transit. I was often a nomad, traversing great distances between work and home and other destinations. Being 'somewhere' for a big part of the day, I get to feel disconnected from my base. I have never gotten used to being under way, and often I'm unable to relax when I know I still have to overcome a geographical distance before I can be 'safe' at home. Its difficult to find a public space that can provide shelter, when you are far from home and have no access to other private places.

An option to find shelter while staying away from home is the church. In hospitals, I used the hospital chapel a couple of times as a space to sit, be undisturbed and to relax. Agoraphobia is also relieved by companionship. The presence of a friend or companion – even a small child - always helps.[13]

13   See also: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 29

The transparent city

To some modernist architects, such as Le Corbusier, 'transparency' was the solution to all "diseases" of the old medieval cities. Modernists dreamt of the picture of a glass city, its buildings invisible, penetrated from all sides by light and air. The resulting space would be open, infinitely extended, and thereby cleansed of all mental and physical disturbances: the site of healthy and aerobically perfect bodies.[14] Siegfried Gideon wrote in 1928:

> "The houses of Le Corbusier define themselves neither by space nor by forms: the air passes right through them! The air becomes a constitutive factor. There is only one single, indivisible space. The separations between interior and exterior fall."[15]

Whereas for Le Corbusier, the modern city represented the liberation from the closed and infected Balzacian quarters of the nineteenth-century city, Benjamin stated that the modern city was the substitution of the void for the home and therefore especially the reason of the new anxieties.[16]

The transparency of the city is still a mayor aim in recent city planning to prevent and exclude fear. From the point of view of criminologists, the geography of fear correlates directly with the geography of crime. Anxiety and feelings of uncertainty in specific places, such as in badly lighted alleys, are directly related to the presence of crime or to

14   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 29
15   Siegfried Gideon, Bauen in Frankreich 1928, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 78
16   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 78

circulation of information about crime in those places. Architects and urban planners therefore assume that anxiety can be planned away by improving street lighting or by installing security cameras.[17] Sociologists and anthropologists concentrate more on the social relations within a neighbourhood than on the physical aspects of the space. According to them, insecurity and anxiety correlate with a deteriorating bond with the neighbourhood, the decline of social control.[18] Geographer David Sibley states that space is being planned in such a way that it makes encounters with other people less likely.

> "People are living more in cocoons. They do not really want to come into contact. But this lack of interaction and contact only strengthens the anxiety." [19]

The entire issue 'Fear' (Angst) of Agora, magazine for social spatial issues, addresses the question: Feelings of anxiety are often linked to spatial structures. What emotions do sites evoke and where do the roots of these feelings lie? This issue is about the social and cultural construction of space, the building of a comfort zone and the fear of entering the outside world. Mentioned as associations with anxiety and space are such concepts as borders, walls, fences, barriers, shielding, inner worlds, outside world. Further it deals with collective fears, including fear of viruses, crime, prostitutes, drug dealers, foreigners, black neighbourhoods. .... It's the typical preconceptions about fear that is being addressed in this issue. The spaces that, according to the authors, cause fear are not described in any architectural terms, there are no drawings available so it remains unclear how they are constructed or designed. Similarly, there are no alternatives offered to improve the areas that cause fear, except the standard solutions such as increased CCTV, improved street lighting and greater social integration and interaction.

What interests me is the architectural design of spaces that cause feelings of fear. How can architecture help combat the fear?

Architect-writer Bert de Muynck explains the problems of the transparent city in his article "The Prosthetic Paradox" in a more differentiated way:

> "Fear is the driving force behind the (re-)organization of the public and private space. Fear is a factor that, due to its destabilizing influence, is expelled and excluded from society. Technological prostheses installed in strategic locations keep the collective fear under control. The modern architectural and urban project has been characterized since 1950 by a shift from freedom to control. The expulsion of fear from our space has been manifested in different forms and organizations: in the past kept out by crude architectural and technological means (ramparts, forts and canons), now prevented by sophisticated architectural and technological means. (security cameras, alarm systems, voice and motion detectors,…). Insecurity, the unexpected, freedom and chance are spatially delimited – no longer by a wall, but by infrared."[20]

> "Western Society is terrorised by fear, be it national security, road safety or public health. The task of the government consists in guaranteeing security. Every form of risk has to be spread, covered or eliminated. This obsession with safety and security is leaving increasingly visible traces in public space: Speed ramps, smoke-free zones and surveillance cameras. The security utopia prescribes a sterile, transparent and neutral environment where being normal is the norm and being exceptional is a threat."[21]

I think that the described means of guaranteeing security and surveillance lead again to fear, namely the fear of being monitored. Everyone's need for privacy is compromised. Is the need for security satisfied by the placement of security cameras? Does one suffer less anxiety when everything is controlled than when nothing was controlled? All of the analysis covers the collective fear of becoming the victim of a crime, this group psychological state, but do not take into account that there may be other fears, which are greater than the fear of being victim of a crime. There is no room for deviating individual experiences. How do individual anxieties feel and manifest themselves in people?

Not only western society deals with fearspaces. The art historian Wilhelm Worringer cites the fear of space, which is clearly manifested in Egyptian architecture.

> "Es sei in diesem Zusammenhang an die Raumscheu erinnert, die sich in der ägyptischen Architektur deutlich manifestiert. Durch unzählige Säulen, denen keine konstruktive Funktion zukommt, suchte man den Eindruck des freien Raumes zu zerstören und dem hilflosen Blick durch die Säulen Stützversicherungen zu geben."[22]

The void, the huge space without dimensions and borders is apparently even frightening for Egyptians than for inhabitants of the western cities. The placing of countless non-constructional columns to help the view feeling less infinite and to provide shielding is a beautiful solution for this anxiety.

17   Sarah Meys, Nick Schuermans, Bruno Meeus, "Angst, identiteit en de ruimte," *AGORA* 4, Angst (2009). p. 4
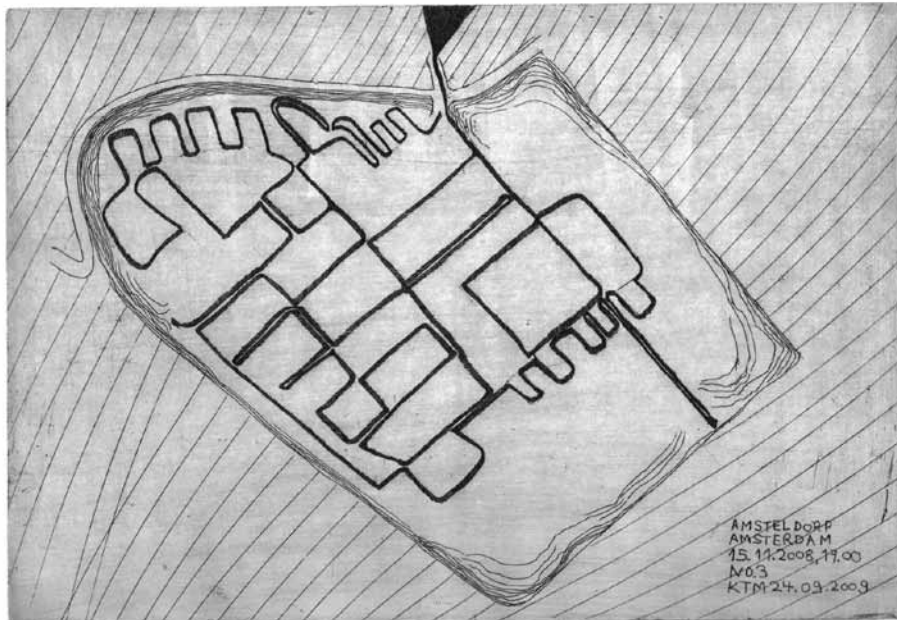18   idem p. 4
19   David Sibley, "David Sibley over angst," *AGORA* 4, Angst (2009). p. 9

20   Bert de Muynck, "The Prosthetic Paradox," in *Angst & Ruimte*. pp. 8-15
21   Urban Affairs, *Angst & Ruimte*. p. 6
22   Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung* (1911). p. 17

Enclosed village

Amsteldorp, Kristin Maurer, 2009

Note
15.11.2008, Amsteldorp, Amsterdam
Tuindorp, Einfamilienhäuser, alles ist sichtbar, konform,
gleichförmig. Alles aussergewöhnliche fällt auf. Nichts
liegt auf der Strasse. Ein Ausgang. Abgeschlossenes Dorf.
Freie Sicht entlang der Häuserreihen. Wohnsiedlung, keine
Läden. Dorf im Tal. Beklemmung, möglichst nicht auffallen
wollen, wieder raus wollen. Dorf mit Begrenzung. Einge-
sperrtsein wegen Begrenzung/Kessel. Wie komm ich hier
wieder raus?

Amsteldorp, a garden city in the east of Amsterdam, built in 1947/48,
is like an opposite to the anxiety-inducing wide-open public voids as
described in the previous chapters. Amsteldorp lies in a valley and has
one single sloped exit, which makes it hard to get in or out. It has many
elements of a gated community, the gate being represented by the in-
habitants of the home of the elderly, which is situated at the 'entrance'
of the valley. Surveillance takes place through a strong social control.
Neighbours replace cameras. To me, Amsteldorp is a failed urban design.

Train

S-Bahn Stetten-Beinstein - Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof, 1.12.2009
photo: Kristin Maurer

Note
19.7.2000, Regionalbahn Bad Säckingen – Singen
Beim Einsteigen ist Zug voll, ich setze mich auf den letzten
freien Platz, mir gegenüber 2 Frauen, die nett aussehen.
Die Angst wird gleich groß, weil Zug voll ist und Leute
auch im Gang stehen. Dann wird Angst noch größer, bei
Waldshut, nach ca. 20 min. Horrorgedanken, „ich werde
verrückt", Ich warte ab. Immer wieder blitzen die Horror-
gedanken auf (Notbremse ziehen/ Gedanke an Panikat-
tacke und kein Arzt da, der mir eine Beruhigungsspritze
gibt). Gedanke, dass ich fast ohnmächtig werde, ich mich
nicht mehr spüre, alles pelzig wird. Leute im Zug mir helfen
müssen. In Erzingen steigen viele aus. Ich setze mich um,
auf freie Sitzgruppe. In Erzingen geht Angst runter, weil
Zug leerer ist, ich schnaufe etwas durch. In Schaffhausen
steigt Schulklasse lärmend ein und setzt sich um mich
herum, wieder ist jeder Platz besetzt. Angst bei 10. Ich
setze mich auf einen anderen leeren Platz neben einer
Frau, die lernt. Ich versuche, ab und zu in ihr Schulbuch zu
schauen, dann wird die Angst kurz weniger. Irgendwann
komme ich an. Umsteigen in Singen. Warte am Bahnsteig,
der sich immer mehr füllt. Zug fährt ein. Angst bei 9. Ich
fühle mich einsam. Glücklicherweise steigen nicht so viele
Leute ein, ich habe eine Doppelsitzgruppe für mich, etwas
unbeobachtet. Angst wird etwas weniger, weniger Horror-
gedanken. Zug ist recht leer, ich dämmere vor mich hin.
In Waldshut lärmen Leute hinter mir und ich werde wieder
wachsamer. Angst steigt sofort und bleibt, bis ich ankom-
me (ca. 20 min). Meine Wahrnehmung ist aber noch ok.

I have not learned to get used to frequent travel, modern means of transportation (sound and airtight), fast cars and fast trains travelling over great distances. If I'm in a space where I can't escape, where I'm closed in, anxiety arises. I don't feel in control anymore because I can't leave the place. In public transport this effect is very strong, mainly during the ride when the doors are locked. Faster trains stop less often and therefore have longer time intervals between stops. This makes it more difficult to get out, increasing the fear. Because I don't want to avoid using public transport, I investigate what is possible within the given circumstances. My main problem lies in the arrangement of the seats.

Hermann Hertzberger thinks that the increasing individualism as expressed in the arrangement of seats in trains is a loss and propagates an arrangement that is more focused to each other.

> "In treinen heb je bankjes voor 2 of 3 personen in de dwarsrichting, vroeger meestal paarsgewijs naar elkaar toegekeerd, respectievelijk van elkaar afgekeerd en tegenwoordig hoe langer hoe meer in dezelfde richting, zoals in vliegtuigen. De compartimenten van de klassieke D-treinen zijn eigenlijk een lange reeks kleine kamertjes zoals ze langs het smalle gangpad liggen waarvan ze met schuifdeuren toegankelijk zijn en waardoor je naar binnen kunt kijken op zoek naar een vrije plaats of wellicht niet al te onsympathiek reisgezelschap. De moderne treinen en bussen hebben evenals vliegtuigen se zetels als schoolbanken achter elkaar, en behalve eventueel met je buurman heb je met niemand meer iets te maken."[23]

Hermann Hertzberger assumes that one would want to have contact with other travellers in public transport. However, if you compare train or bus passengers in western and southern or oriental countries, it is striking that in western countries most travellers choose empty benches or seating groups, possibly far removed from others, whereas elsewhere, people generally tend to sit more close to each other even if the transport is relatively empty in order to chat or otherwise have contact.

I tend for seat arrangements in public transport in such a way that you can have as much privacy as possible and yet, when needed, still have contact with others. However, in the course of time, privacy in the train is increasingly difficult to achieve. In old trains there were only compartment cars in which the view from the corridor could be blocked by a curtain. Even the light could be completely dimmed. Inside the compartment one had complete privacy (together with ones fellow travellers). Now more and more trains are of the one-room model, the so-called "Grossraumwagen". This new type of train no longer offers a possibility to retreat inside the train. This is a clear decline in train design. The one-room car is more anonymous and at the same time you are much more exposed to the glances of others, a double worsening. Also

modern metro's, trams and trains are often fully glazed: seeing through the whole length of the train becomes possible. This means abandoning privacy in favour of security. Another factor of feeling enclosed is that it's no longer possible to open the windows like you could in old trains. This is a consequence of the increased speed of modern trains.

There are some methods I investigated to achieve privacy in trains:

You can deviate from lines of sight. Depending on the layout of the seats one can escape the lines of sight, in order to get enough privacy and not be seen by others. If necessary one has to relocate a number of times during the journey.
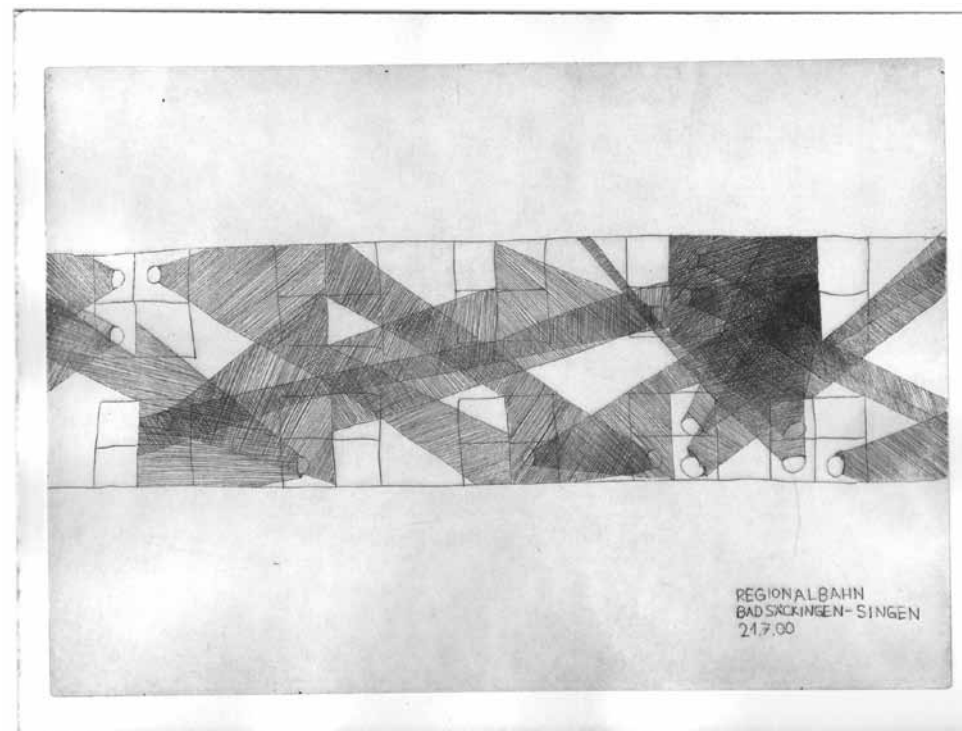
Scheme of lines of sight in train, Kristin Maurer, 2009

Another option is locking the view with a box. You can build a foldable box from cardboard and install it around you, possibly with little windows, to have private space during the journey.[24]

Another very simple method is to reserve a compartment for yourself by blocking access. I installed a little tent in the compartment to block the entrance so nobody else could enter.

Zugexperiment No.1, Kristin Maurer, 2009

Zugexperiment No.3, Kristin Maurer, 2009

A more simple method than constructing a box from cardboard is using a blanket cover.

Note
23.2.2009, ICE Frankfurt - Amsterdam
Zelt aus undurchsichtiger Wolldecke = Gemütlichkeit im Zelt. Niemand sieht mich. Es ist aber heiß und stickig.

Sketch on location

Or, if you can afford it, you buy a first class ticket. Independent from the seat arrangement the amount of individual space per train passenger is important. In the train you pay for your space. First class tickets are more expensive than second class tickets, for this you get more room. Enough space in a train means freedom and relaxation. In Dutch trains a ticket only guarantees transportation and no seat, but even in crowded trains there is usually more room and free seats in the first class compartment then elsewhere in the train.

Tram

Note
4.5.2009, tram 9 Amsterdam Central Station,
direction Diemen
Tram rijden, zittend naast conducteur op kinderwagen-
plaatsen. Totaal drukke tram, mensen kleven tegen elkaar
aan. Mijn dochter Ireen op mijn schoot. Ik kijk uit het raam.
Lichte paniek, licht misselijk, benauwd. Opgesloten in tram.
In de drukte creëer ik een zone voor mezelf. Vanaf Ireen op
mijn schoot tot aan het raam. Haar zone is safe.

Sketch on location

Airplane

*Martha Rosler, In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer, p. 138
Minneapolis to New York, 1986*

Memory
Eingesperrt im luftdichten Raum. Stabiles Gehäuse aus
Metall, ich kann nicht raus. Möglicherweise werde ich
verrückt bei dem Gedanken, nicht raus zu können.

Planes are not comparable with the train or the ocean liner, where one can walk around, recreate, have communal spaces. In terms of travel comfort and freedom of movement, planes can be compared to long-distances busses. However, in the plane there is no getting off, no physical escape for the duration, no emergency brake. And for this reason the plane is the worst of all means of public transport. If it is not possible to avoid airplanes, buying a first class ticket is an option to feel less enclosed. First class has more privileges in terms of personal space, such as more leg and arm room, blocked lines of sight, wider aisles, fewer fellow travellers, quicker boarding and deplaning, bathrooms are close by.

Martha Rosler's photographs show the "latent, and always suppressed, anxiety that anticipates the event of the flight itself, a phobic tension, somewhere between the claustrophobia of the tunnel and the agoraphobia of the take-off".[25] Once through the seemingly endlessly repeated curving tubes of the terminal's ramps, the fixed one-point perspective of the photographs seems to press the passenger toward the entrance of the plane through the telescopic gate.[26]

25   Martha Rosler, *In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer*. p. 16
26   idem p. 20

The dignity of both passenger and attendant is left at the gate. Confined in spaces so small no one in control of their circumstances would willingly endure them, passengers are pacified by 'special treatment' (such as food, drink, movies, music, shopping...).[27]

Martha Rosler, In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer, p. 99
Templeton, St. Louis, 1992

Martha Rosler, In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer, p. 163
Aeroflot, Moscow 1992

27   Martha Rosler, *In the Place of the Public: Observations of a Frequent Flyer.* p. 37

Tunnel Fellbach, 26.11.2009, photo: Peter Wassink

Motorway

Note
17.6.2000
Fahrt nach Zürich auf der Autobahn. Die ganze Fahrt über starke Unruhe, in einem langen Autobahntunnel Panikattacke, immer wieder kleine Tunnel.

30.7.2000
Autobahn Stuttgart - Singen. Auto selbst gefahren, Tunnel mit Angst und Kribbeln, dann, kurz nach Tunnel Panikattacke, angehalten (rechts rausgefahren) und nicht mehr weitergefahren.

31.7.2000
Landstrasse Richtung Waldshut, immer wieder kleine Panikattacken, mit allergrösster Mühe konnte ich mich teilweise auf die Strasse konzentrieren, teilweise nicht. Schlimmer wird es, wenn ich schnell fahre (außerhalb der Ortschaften), wenn rechts kein Platz zum Anhalten ist oder wenn jemand hinter mir fährt.

10.10.2000
Fahrt nach Freiburg auf Landstrasse. Leicht pelziges Gefühl im rechten Fuß bis zum Knie. Der Gedanke: ich bin so weit weg von zuhause, ganz allein, dadurch das Gefühl, den Boden unter den Füssen zu verlieren.

21.10.2000
Fahrt über Schnellstrassen, Tunnels und Baustellen. Verspannte Beine und Arme, Panikattacke mit Lähmungsgefühl im Oberkörper und Kopf bis zur Taubheit. Sicherheitsfaktor

Martha Rosler, Rights of Passage, 1995-1998

ist meine Mutter im Auto vor mir. Ich kann jederzeit halten, mit Warnblinklicht.

23.10.2000
Autobahn nach Sulz am Neckar, in Böblingen bei erster Ausfahrt rausgefahren, dann wieder rein. Zurück von Sulz nach Gärtringen, dann über Landstrasse nach Stuttgart, mit 2 Baustellen. Ohnmachtsgefühl, Gefühl, die Kontrolle zu verlieren, Übelkeit. Magenschmerzen, Magenkrämpfe, Stechen, totale Erschöpfung, Kontrollverlust, keine Kraft mehr, Schwindelgefühl, keine Konzentration auf Strasse mehr möglich. Trotz der starken Angst konnte ich noch fahren. Gedanke: Ich schaffe es nicht mehr bis zur nächsten Ausfahrt, kurze Pause bringt aber Erholung.

19.10.2000
Stuttgart. Eingesperrt im Stau. Ich kann mein Auto nicht verlassen, das Auto nicht alleine lassen, mit dem Auto die Strasse nicht verlassen.

1.11.2000
Fahrt 60 km über Autobahn, die ersten 10 km ohne Seiten-streifen, es wird immer anstrengender, dann 1 km Baustelle, da geht nichts mehr. Taubheit in Händen, kein Gefühl mehr. Rausgefahren.

Anxiety on the motorway can have two triggers. One is loosing way. Cha-otic diversions, motorway entrances and exits can cause loosing direction. The other is the problem of getting out. The anxiety is not about being enclosed in the car as such, but about the impossibility to get out of the car at any moment. What to do when the road has no hardshoulders, that is, no possibility to stop or to escape the stream of traffic by driving at the far right side of the road. With the high speeds on the motorway it is too dangerous to simply stop in the middle of the road. As soon as the tempo on the motorway increases, a feeling of leaving the ground and loosing control of the car comes up. This in turn induces a feeling of weakness and being delivered, handed over, to the other traffic. Not being able to exert any influence or control the speed on your own. Most claustropho-bic are tunnels and roadworks on the motorway with only one narrow lane without hardshoulders. It is difficult to escape from the rules of the mo-torway. You either adapt to the tempo of the other traffic and surrender the control, or you try and keep the control and drive slow but in doing so become a dangerous obstacle.

Martha Rosler's photographs from the series "Rights of Passage" deal with disorientation in modern means of transport. All freedom of move-ment, real or conceptual, is blocked: by traffic, by the endless process of roadwork, by deteriorating surfaces and margins. Temporary concrete lane dividers, lined up to constrict the flow into single lanes, which all leads to a loss of orientation.[28]

28   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. pp. 173, 174

Crossing the city on foot

Google image search: 'parkour'

"It occurred to me that whenever you walk through a city you always walk a path that has been thought out. As if the architecture and streets force their choreography upon us. I was wondering what our own freedom is in this path and how I could influence the paths of others. My work is about the tension between the obtaining and letting go of control. So I thought out a scene in which people on a busy street are directed by me without them being aware of it."[29]

Predetermined city paths are can lead to paralysis and thus to fear. One possibility to escape the predestined routes and paths dictated by the city plan, is the 'derivé'. This is a strategic device for urban wandering. The theory of the 'derivé' of Guy Debord is defined as a mode of experimental behaviour linked to the conditions of urban society: A technique of transient passage through varied ambiances. The derive is a means of urban wandering without a clear destination but not without purpose. The deriveur returns home having noted the ways in which the areas traversed resonate with particular moods and ambiences.[30]

Another method to avoid standard paths and to free oneself from the urban plan is 'parkour' (l'art du déplacement). It is the physical discipline of training to overcome any obstacle within one's path by adapting one's movements to the environment. It is a non-competitive, physical discipline of French origin in which participants run along a route, attempting to negotiate obstacles in the most efficient way possible, as if moving in an emergency situation.[31]

29   *Kalverstraat*, 3 min, directed by Sema Bekirovic, 2009
30   Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*. pp. 93-96
31   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parkour, january 2010
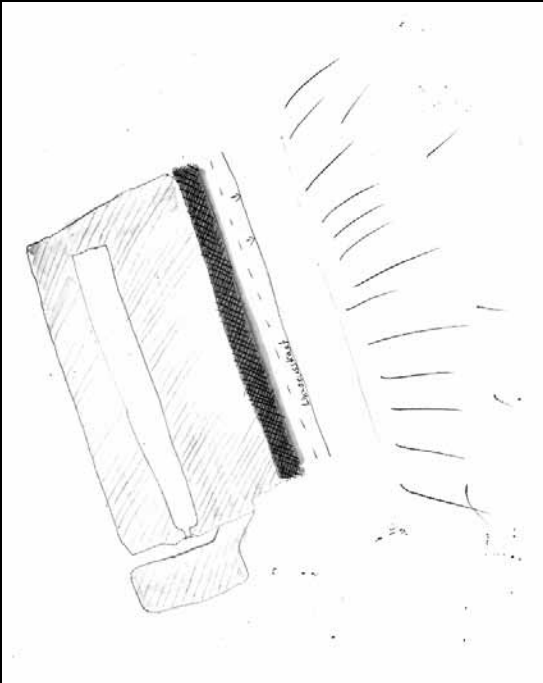
Linneausstraat, sketch on location

Narrow passages

Memory
September 2009, Linneausstraat, Amsterdam
Auf der rechten Seite gibt es eine ununterbrochene Häu-
serwand, bei der es kein Entkommen gibt. Ich laufe immer
auf der linken Seite die Linneausstraat hinunter. Links sind
Baulücken, als Zuflucht.

Narrow streets lead to claustrophobia, especially when continuous
building walls surround the streets. Even Le Corbusier hated narrow
streets that made him sick:

> "The street… raising straight up from it are walls of houses…
> The sky is a remote hope far, far above it. The street is no more
> than a trench, a deep cleft, a narrow passage. And although we
> have been accustomed to it for more than a thousand years, our
> hearts are always oppressed by the constriction of its enclosing
> walls."[32]

32   Le Corbusier, "La rue" 1929, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*.
pp. 60, 61

Restaurants

Note
15.6.2000, Bad Säckingen
Terrasse des Restaurants ‚Schwarzer Walfisch'
Im Walfisch habe ich erst Bedenken und keinen Hunger,
bestelle nichts zu essen, weil wir mit ca. 6 Leuten zusam-
men am Tisch sitzen, mittendrin. Angst und Uebelkeit
wegen der vielen Leute um mich herum.

Memory
2005, Hamburg
Voll besetztes Thai-Restaurant in Hamburg. Wir sitzen zu
sechst -lauter Freunde- an einem Tisch am Durchgang zur
Küche, im hinteren Teil des Restaurants. Ich habe Angst,
mir ist schlecht, ich lasse mir aber nichts anmerken. Stän-
dig laufen Kellner dicht an mir vorbei. Im Restaurant habe
ich Angst, vor allem, wenn Essen bestellt wird, und ich
denke, ich kann deshalb nicht sofort aufstehen und gehen,
weil das Essen ja bezahlt werden muss. In Kneipen gibt
es eher die Möglichkeit, sofort zu gehen. Unterwerfe ich
mich der Konvention dieses Ortes: Essen bestellen, lange
aufs Essen warten (weil es voll ist), aufessen (obwohl mir
schlecht ist), Rechnung verlangen, bezahlen, gehen? Ich
bestelle Trinken, um das Übelkeitsgefühl runterzuschlu-
cken. Schließlich vermutlich eine Vorspeise oder ein kleines
Gericht, das nicht teuer ist und auf das ich nicht lange
warten muss. Ein Kompromiss. Das Gefühl, ich muss mich
normgerecht verhalten, beobachtet zu werden. Keine
Chance, einfach wegzurennen, ohne mit Fragen oder
Unverständnis konfrontiert zu werden. Alle amüsieren

Still from the film 'Play Time', Jaques Tati, 1967

sich, außer mir, für mich ist es eine Qual. Ich warte, bis alle endlich fertig gegessen und getrunken haben, damit man nach Hause gehen kann. Ich schaue ständig auf die Uhr, und hoffe, dass Die Zeit schnell vergeht. Ich hoffe, dass möglichst wenig Leute kommen. Ich hoffe, dass sich niemand mit mir unterhält. Ich habe keine Appetit und keine Lust auf Alkohol (= weitere Verlust der Körperkontrolle). Ich höre auf zu reden, aus Angst, es könnte auffallen, dass ich unsicher bin.

One can create freedom in the restaurant from the dictated spatial and social arrangements through a different use of the space than was planned by the restaurant owner and breaking rules of behaviour in an unobtrusive way.

— One stands instead of sitting down.
— One orders nothing (at first) but is simply there. One orders only then when one feels like it.
— One pays upon ordering.
— One leaves the restaurant before eating/ before finishing.

In films one often sees an unconventional spontaneous use of the restaurant space: things are being tossed from the table, guests behave erratic, run without paying while the food is still before them.

Next to an alternative behaviour, an alternative design of the restaurant helps overcome anxiety.

— Tables with chairs interchanged with spaces where you can stand.
— Enough distance between tables for sufficient privacy.
— Sufficient circulation space so that exit and toilet are clearly visible and reachable. A certain noise level even when the restaurant is empty (so that personal conversations or sounds will not be heard by others).
— Flexibility in the arrangement of furniture (rigidity=fear)

Hairdresser, Beauty parlour

Note
23.6.2000, Bad Säckingen, Kosmetikerin
Leicht einsetzende Panik wegen der Unmöglichkeit, zu
gehen (Augen sind geschlossen unter Creme, die einwirken
muss). Die Panik geht erst gegen Ende der Behandlung
wieder weg.

Beauty parlours or hairdresser shops are examples of places with forced
retention. When one is undergoing a haircut, leaving the situation is
practically impossible. Although the room itself may not be confined, its
function practically forces one to remain there because of the initiated
treatment. The resulting effect is very similar to being locked in physi-
cally. To relieve possible tension arising from the intimate treatment, the
hairdresser or beautician can provide treatments in separate rooms or
leave the customer alone from time to time to offer relief from his/her
constant proximity.

Cinema/Theatre/Concert hall

Being surrounded by crowds in the cinema, theatre, concert hall or other gatherings of people in buildings the only solution is to occupy a corner seat to have some more spatial freedom and/ or to sit next to the exit in order be able to escape easily.

The French doctor Legrand du Saulle noted in 1878 that his patients suffered from fear of space, not only in the street but also in the theatres, in church, on an upper floor, in an omnibus, a ferry or on a bridge.[33]

33   Legrand du Saulle, 1878, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 30

Shops

Memory
Kaufhaus, erster Stock. Neonbeleuchtet, alles ist voller
Kleiderständer. Kein Ausgang in diesem Stockwerk. Keine
Orientierung wegen der vielen Waren.

Amsterdam
Grosser Supermarkt, Schlange an der Kasse vor mir
Meine Waren liegen bereits auf dem Band und ich muss
warten, bis ich an der Reihe bin mit bezahlen. Vor und
hinter mir stehen viele Leute mit Einkaufswagen, an denen
ich nicht vorbeikomme. Nachdem ich die Waren einmal
aufs Band gelegt habe, kann ich nicht mehr flüchten, denn
ich muss erst bezahlen.

A wider pathway between the cashiers makes it possible to pass the
other customers and their shopping cars. In shopping malls, it's desir-
able to have a spacious setup of pathways providing better overview
and orientation and clear exit options. In malls the phenomenon of shop
facade walls (shop next to shop) create corridors from which the only
escape is to enter one. Niches or alleys between adjacent shops should
be created. A patient of Freud, a thirty-eight-year old woman suffered
from agoraphobia, her first attack occurring on a shopping expedition.[34]

34   Freud, 1895, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 37

The home

Memory
1998, Berlin, Husemannstrasse 24
Besuch in meiner Wohnung zum Abendessen. Sometimes
I feel safer outside in public space then at home. Inside
my own house it sometimes feels like a prison. Then the
walls are like prison walls from within no one can see or
hear me. The walls isolate me from the world and prevent
thoughts from being relativized by seeing the "normal"
world outside. Ich kann nicht weglaufen, wohin auch, denn
es ist ja meine eigene Wohnung.

Lines of sight

Note
25.11.2008, Amsterdam, Vijzelstraat 72, Mediamatic
exhibition space
Säulen verhindern freie Sicht. Wenig ungestörte Sichtasse.
Überall passiert etwas. Jeder beschäftigt sich mit etwas,
mittlerer Geräuschpegel, viele Aktionen im Raum. Trotz
sehr vieler anwesender Leute nicht beobachtet gefühlt,
wegen der Architektur des Raumes. Ich kann machen, was
ich will. Nix fällt auf, weil jeder mit etwas beschäftigt ist =
Kreatives Chaos gibt gute Atmosphäre. Es gibt inhaltlich
wichtigeres als nur Leute zu beobachten. Keine Massen,
immer Platz um einen herum.
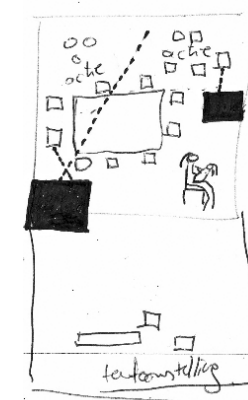
Sketch on location
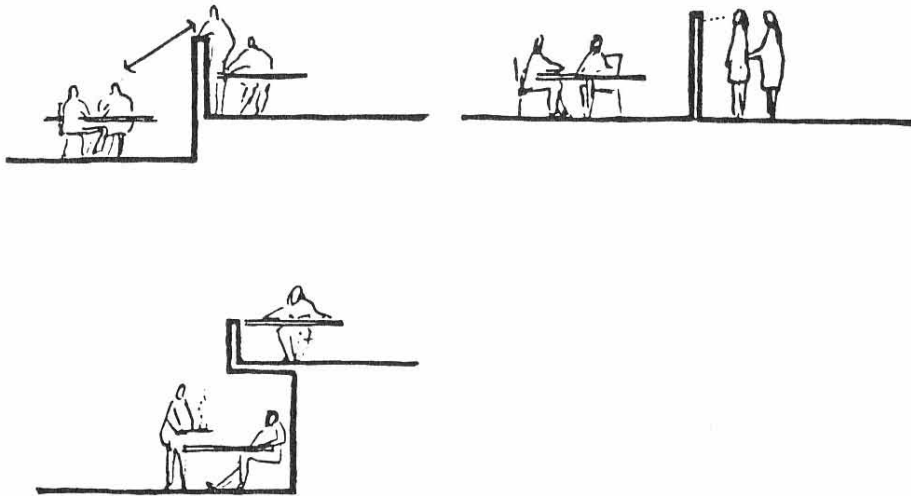
Lines of sight provide a space with better overview. A large space in which one is seen from all angles, is too transparent to provide comfort and creates anxiety. Lines of sight in combination with elements that block the view, such as columns and shielded spaces make a space more interesting and comfortable.

Hertzberger was very much concerned about a balanced amount of lines of sight in buildings.

> "We must keep looking for the right balance between view and shielding, that is to say; for the spatial organization that facilitates anyone to occupy any desired position in relation to others in any situation. With this you can regulate the desired contact in any given situation in such a manner that on the one hand privacy is protected if so desired while on the other hand the view on the other is not limited too much."[35]

Benjamin criticises the architecture of lines of sight in the Paris of Haussmann.

> "In the broad open vistas of Haussmann, the development was sustained with all the inexorable logic of modern spatialization: from claustrophobia to agoraphobia. It remained only for the project of modernist transparency to complete the process."[36]

Hermann Hertzberger, Uitnodigende Vorm. p. 43

35 **Hermann Hertzberger, *Uitnodigende Vorm*. p. 43**
36 **Benjamin, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 77**

Unclear space

Note
6.5.2009, Amsterdam, Artis, Jungle by night
Donkere, zwak verlichte ruimte, met smalle paden om
erop te lopen. Onzichtbaar glas, erachter rare (nacht-)
dieren. Overal bewegt iets. De ruimte is onoverzichtelijk,
waar eindigt de ruimte? Overal vreemde geluiden (niet
duidelijk waar ze vandaan komen). Freaky sfeer. Hartklop-
pen, angst om erdoorheen te lopen. Geen overzicht over
afmetingen ruimte => onrustig makend.

When I don't understand a space in its division and cannot see its borders, that is, cannot oversee its size, I loose orientation and become insecure. A certain amount of understanding of the space is needed in order for me to feel secure in it. I have to know where the exits are and understand how the interior is organized. Space needs to be clear.

Sketch on location
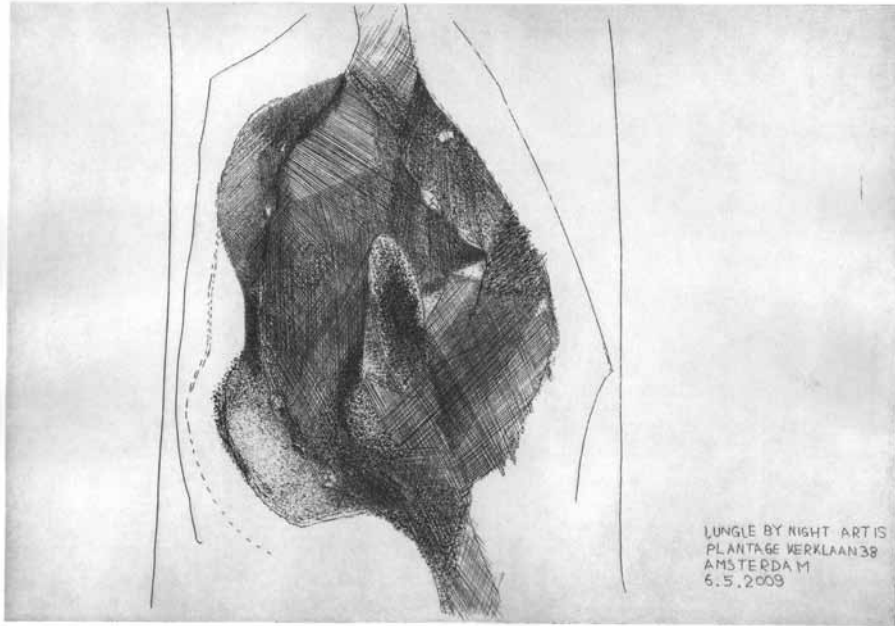
Jungle by night, Kristin Maurer, 2009

Dark space

Note
19.10.00, Stuttgart
Nacht alleine. Derealisation beim Telefonieren. Je dunkler es wird, desto unsicherer werde ich.

Dark space is comparable to unclear space in its impact on the sense of orientation and the anxiety that is triggered by the loss of orientation.

Antony Vidler describes the double vision of dark space.

"Theorists and historians trying to elaborate the complex history of modern space have concentrated on the role of transparent space – a paradigm of total control, later called 'hygienic space' by modernists led by Le Corbusier. Transparency, it was thought, would eradicate the domain of myth, suspicion, tyranny, and above all the irrational. This was constructed out of an initial fear, the fear of Enlightenment in the face of darkened spaces, which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths. It was this very fear of the dark that led, in the late eighteen century, to the fascination with those same shadowy areas, the fantasy-world of stone walls, darkness, hideouts and dungeons – the precise negative of the transparency and visibility which is aimed to establish."[37]

The architect Etienne-Louis Boulee was equally obsessed with the visual and sensational powers of 'absolute light' and with 'absolute darkness' as

37   Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*. p. 168

the most powerful instrument to induce a state of fundamental terror.[38]
Out of his experiences, he developed an architecture of shadows:

> "One must, as I have tried in funerary moments, present the
> skeleton of architecture by means of an absolutely naked wall,
> presenting the image of buried architecture by employing only
> low and compressed proportions, sinking into the earth, forming,
> finally, by means of materials absorbent to the light, the black
> picture of an architecture of shadows depicted by the effect of
> even blacker shadows."[39]

A dark space has also positive sides: I can experience freedom, at least
visual surveillance is hardly possible. Through shadows i remain unde-
tected.

38   Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny.* p. 169
39   idem p. 170

Minimal space
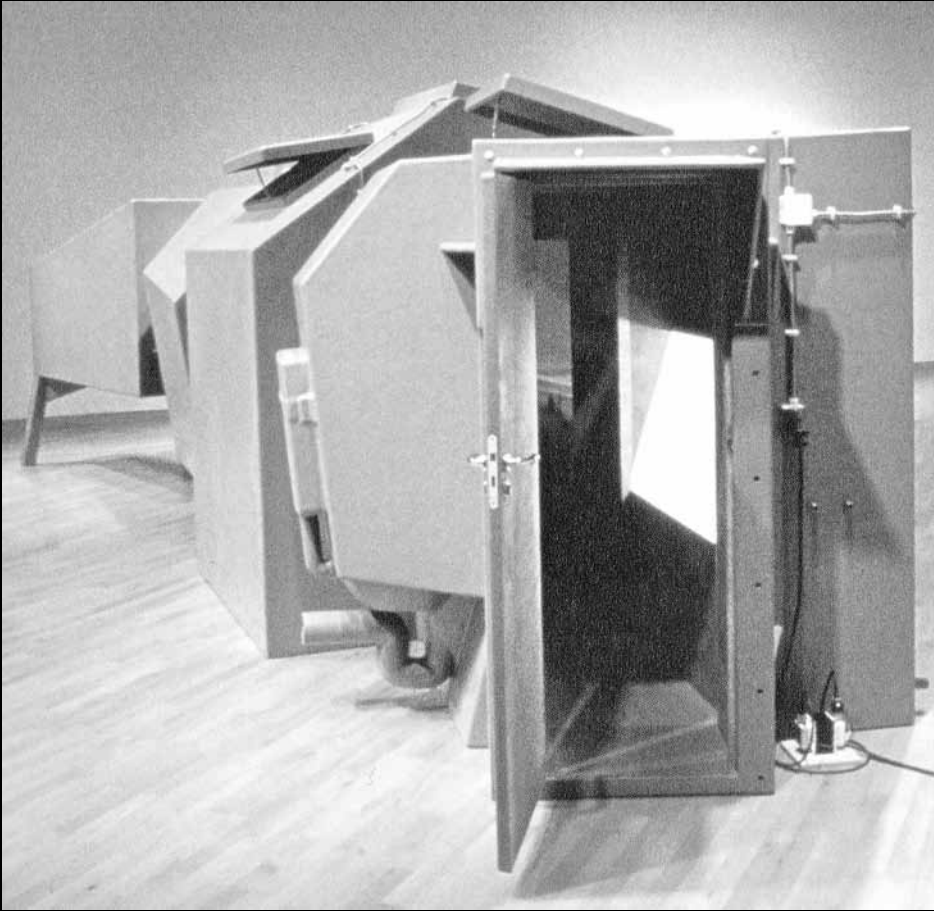
Tampaskull, Atelier van Lieshout, 1998

In minimal space, there is no social threat because there is no room for others. You have all control because you are the only one there.

> "Tampa Skull is a claustrophobic living unit. Its dimensions were determined by the absolute minimum amount of space that a human body needs in order to move from one section to another and use its facilities: a toilet, a bathroom, a kitchen with a deep frying pan, an office, a living room and a bedroom. Compact yet complete."[40]

40   Atelier Van Lieshout, *Atelier Van Lieshout*. p. 63

Height

Leap into the Void, Yves Klein, 1960

Memory
6.11.2000, Endersbach
Meine Mutter will in den Keller gehen. Ich kann nicht
alleine im 4. Stock bleiben, aus Angst, dass ich mich aus
dem Fenster oder von der Terrasse stuerze. Ich gehe mit
hinunter in den Keller.

Acrophobia (fear of heights) is a classical spatial fear. Most people that suffer from this fear are afraid to look down when they are high up. In the irregular towns of the Middle Ages, the houses adapted themselves to the natural configuration of the ground, they squatted close to the ground like frightened animals, the result was a bizarrely irregular pattern of streets, pleasing to the eye in its variety.[41] The proximity to a lethal height can produce a mortal agony and can result in the impulse to jump down.
Anxiety about throwing oneself out of the window is based on a case recountered by Freud of a young married woman who is seized with an obsessional impulse to throw herself out of the window or from the balcony.[42]

41   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 271
42   Freud, 1894, cited in: Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 38
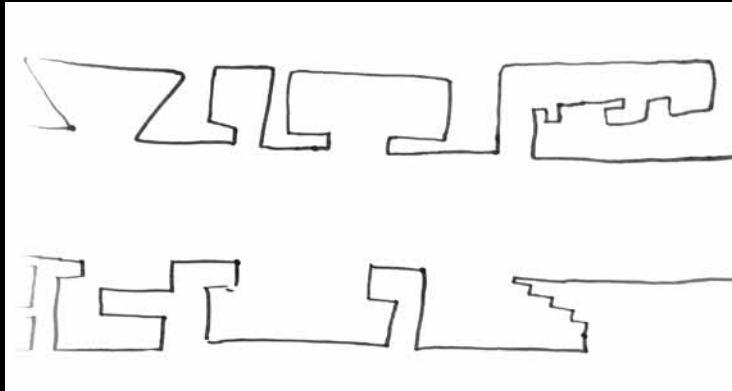
Drawing optimal forms of niches, Kristin Maurer, 2009

Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language, p.560

Niches
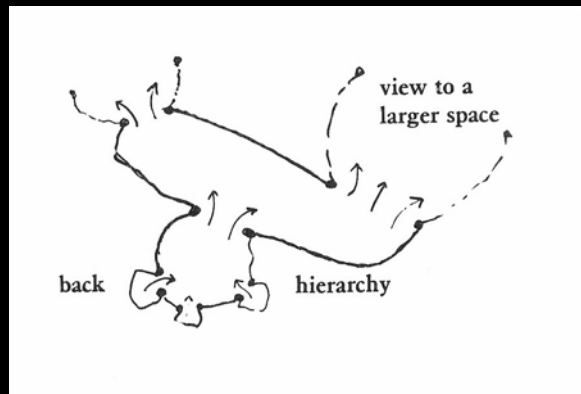
Memory
2008, Amsterdam, Stadsschouwburg
Pause während eines Stückes. Ich suche einen Ort, wo ich
unbeobachtet bin. Recht luxuriöse Toilette. Wo kann ich
mich verstecken? Letztendlich finde ich keinen geeigneten
Raum. Ich gehe in eine Nische.

In the niches one is out of the 'firing line', the line of sight. There are different gradations of niches. What form do the secure niches have? They should always offer the possibility to distance oneself spatially from the other present people (if only one meter). Safest are niches that also turn around the corner, where passing public does not directly see one. In niches it's about the possibility of not being visually exposed to the others present, but to be able to decide who will see you and who will not. One has control over the degree of exposure. Niches can be abandoned quickly at any time to be back in full view, if you would like to.

Christopher Alexander describes this phenomenon in: 'A Pattern Language':

> „People always try to find a spot where they can have their backs protected, looking out toward some larger opening, beyond the space immediately in front of them. When shaping a space, he advises to make at least one smaller space, which looks into it and forms a natural back for it."[43]

43   Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language*. p. 560

Niche Ijburg, photo: Kristin Maurer, 2010

Also Hertzberger considers it important to include niches in the design.

> "You need the possibility to connect or to stay alone, to be seen or to remain in the background, to meet or to avoid."[44]

In his building Muziekcentrum Vredenburg, Utrecht one experiences the interchange of introverted spaces in which one can more or less retreat with places where the whole can be overseen.
In the corridors of most theatres niches with chairs or benches are built mainly for the purpose of resting, to have a little chat and to observe the passing public.

Many old and new bridges have small niches built into the parapet, where a small bench is located. Sitting there protects one from being seen, and only when passers by pass directly in front of you.

44   Hermann Hertzberger, *Uitnodigende Vorm*. p. 50

Dead ends

Memory
2004, Intercity, Den Haag – Amsterdam
Dead end am Ende des Zuges, hinter 1. Klasse. Dort kommt
niemand mehr vorbei, hier geht es nicht weiter. Hier ruht
sich der Getränkewagenmann aus, wenn er seine Runde
durch den Zug gedreht hat und auf den nächsten Halt
wartet. Im Dead end stört man niemanden.

By designing dead ends in public or private space, you achieve visual
and acoustic privacy. The space must be located at the extremities of
the house or place, at the end of the 'intimacy gradient'.[45]

Christopher Alexander, A Pattern Language, p. 671
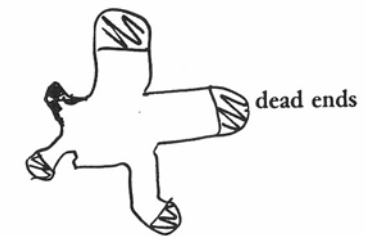
45   **Christopher Alexander, *A Pattern Language*. p. 670**

Elevator

Hidden observatory, Kristin Maurer, 2008
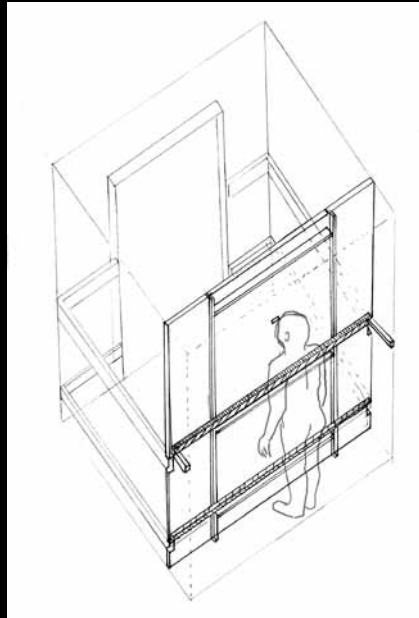
The Elevator is a fearspace because there is no escape, the elevator box is usually very small and windowless. The old paternosters are less frightening in a claustrophobic sense, as there are no closed walls surrounding the passenger. New elevators with glass walls enable you to look outside, which distracts from the fact of being enclosed. When travelling with other passengers, the private space is generally very tiny. To create real private space inside an elevator, I built an invisible second wall with a little slit in the elevator of the PostCS Building in Amsterdam and hid behind. I felt unthreatened because the lines of sight were one way and I had a private space even though I was confined together with people in the cage of the elevator.[46]

46   *Hidden observatory*, watch the movie on www.kristinmaurer.com/
installations

Lightning

Note
23.2.09, ICE Frankfurt – Amsterdam
Gleichmäßige Neonbeleuchtung = der Raum wird ebenmä-
ßig sehr hell ausgeleuchtet. Das Licht kann nicht individuell
reguliert werden. Alles ist sichtbar, kein Verstecken mög-
lich. Stühle sind eng aufeinander, wenig Platz zwischen
den Stühlen zum Vordermann.

23.2.09, ICE Stuttgart – Frankfurt, Coupe Panorama-
lounge
Ruhig, kein Geruch. Durch die Halogenspots entsteht
variierendes Licht, cosy, es gibt dunkle, unsichtbare und
hellere Flecken im Raum, insgesamt ist es leicht abge-
dunkelt ohne düster zu sein. Trotz Dunkelheit ist die Sicht
durchs Fenster nach draußen gut weil es innen nicht so
hell ist. Sicht nach draußen macht Raum weniger klaust-
rophobisch.

Alternative design methods to arrive at fearless architecture

Various approaches are possible:

Emotional design of Councillor Krespel

Instead of functional, rational or other established standards that make unhappy and create anxiety the heart decides, where a piece of furniture is positioned, where the wall is placed, how wide the door is. Emotional aesthetics determine the design.

The tale of 'Councillor Krespel' ('Rat Krespel')[47] describes a very eccentric and irrational (emotional) way of the building of a house, setting out a relationship between intuition and architecture.

„Having bought and assembled all the building materials, stacked and cut the sones, mixed the lime, and sifted the sand, the Councillor had proceeded to amaze the neighbours by refusing all architectural help, directly employing a master mason, journeymen, and apprentices on the work. What was more extraordinary, he had neither commissioned nor drawn up a plan for the house, but had simply excavated a perfectly square foundation for the four walls. These, following his instructions, were built up by the masons, without windows or doors, just as high as the Councillor indicated. Despite the evident madness of this procedure, the builders seemed happy enough, plentifully supplied with food and drink. One day Krespel shouted „Stop!" and the walls were complete. Then the Councillor began a most strange activity, pacing up and down the garden, moving toward the house in every direction, until, by means

47   Hoffmann, E.T.A. "Rat Krespel", in *Die Serapionsbrüder, Poetische Werke*, Vol. 6, (1958). Quotations are from: Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*. pp. 29-33

Saul Steinberg, cover of the New Yorker, 1976
'The World As Seen From New York's 9th Avenue'

of this complex triangulation, he 'found' the right place for the door and ordered it cut in the stone:

„Make way"! cried Krespel, who ran to one end of the garden and paced slowly toward his square building. When he came close to the wall, he shook his head in dissatisfaction, ran to the other end of the garden and again paced toward the wall with the same result. He repeated this tactic several times, until finally, running his hard nose against the wall, he cried: „Come here, come here men. Make me a door right here."
Similarly, walking into the house, he performed the same method to determine each window and partition, deciding, seemingly spontaneously, their position and size.

The house was then finished. To celebrate his new home, Krespel invited the builders and their families, but no friends, to a feast at which he played the violin. The result of his maneuvers was a home presenting a most unusual appearance from the outside – no two windows being alike and so on – but whose interior arrangements aroused a very special feeling of ease."[48]

His crazy house was a therapeutic instrument, a mirror of his soul, created with 'mad' gestures and 'irrational' leaps, as external expressions of his spirit.[49]

Mental mapping

Since the sixties the method of „Mental Mapping" is a much-applied method in human geography and environmental psychology to map the mental aspects of space. A mental or cognitive map is usually seen as a symbolic representation of the surroundings, the way it exist in the mind of the people, and its does not correspond one on one with a conventional map or ground plan.

During the creation of these maps processes of distortion and bias are initiated. They are really narrative maps. Through the maps an insight is obtained in the human spatial experience and they help to bring out associations, stories and experiences that would otherwise be much less accessible ".[50]

> „De Troelstralaan is voor mij zwart gebied. Het is letterlijk zwart gebied en figuurlijk zwart gebied, want daar durf ik dus niet langs."[51]

48   Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny.* pp. 29-30
49   idem pp. 31-32
50   Leeke Reinders, "In het hoofd en op papier," *AGORA* 4, Imaginaire stad (2008). pp. 22-25.
51   Reactie van bewoonster Celia over het ontstaan van het 'zwarte gebied' op haar kaart, in: Leeke Reinders, "In het hoofd en op papier," *AGORA* 4, Imaginaire stad (2008). pp. 24, 25

Gevoelsplattegrond

Educational Complex, Mike Kelley, 1995

"De kaarten brengen in kaart welke gebieden als positief en negatief, veilig en onveilig, of mooi en lelijk worden beoordeeld. De kaarten zijn bovendien gevuld met lege plekken, waardoor bewoners bijvoorbeeld refereren aan plekken, die, wegens sloop en nieuwbouw in de afgelopen jaren, niet meer fysiek bestaan, maar slechts in herinneringen voortleven. De kaarten zijn in die zin niet alleen in ruimte maar ook in tijd gelaagd."[52]

Drawing from memory

In his work 'Educational Complex', Mike Kelley attempted to recover the memory of buildings in which he has been educated and to map these memories on their existing plans in order to produce complex models. With a loss of space and thereby of space of up to (in his estimate) eighty per cent of the structure, these lost spaces were modelled as solid blocks. ... These models, then, emerging as a memory map of the ‚geography' of his education, were also notations of the failure of memory, the irretrievability of past occupations in space.[53]

In modelling the 'Educational Complex', memory is given primacy over reality, which produced a completely unusable interior architecture. It is also seen as an exercise in reconstructing Mike Kelley's architectural unconscious.[54]

52   Leeke Reinders, "In het hoofd en op papier," *AGORA* 4, Imaginaire stad (2008). p. 25.
53   Anthony Vidler, "Mike Kelley's Educational Complex," in *Mike Kelley*. pp. 96-105.
54   Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*. p. 167

Conclusion

In this thesis I have researched which environments or architectural elements can make a space feel more safe. Through describing fearspaces and recalling memories of experiences I tried to filter out the anxiety-triggering elements. Sometimes, this worked very well and a direct correlation between the architecture and a certain anxiety could be identified by analyzing. One of the most striking patterns that emerged throughout all the different categories concerns the relationship between fear and exits of a space. This element appears clearly in all descriptions and sketches. Some of the analyses I could translate directly into practical solutions by transforming or completely removing the architectural element that caused the anxiety. To help achieve a fearless architecture I have formulated the following guidelines:

- Always offer a possibility for escape.
- Don't produce too many lines of sight.
- Design dead ends.
- Create a balance between light and shadows in the room
- The interior should be flexible and fluid. Hardening/immobility leads to fear.
- Provide enough shielding through (non-)constructional elements.
- Organize the space so that its nature is clear, offer overview.

However there are also fearspaces for which analysis offers no solution, for instance spaces in the category "means of transport". These spaces are most difficult to turn into a safe zone because of the inherent unsafeness that modern transport embodies. My conclusion here is to avoid the worst means of transport, such as airplanes and long-distance busses.

Sometimes it is simply not possible to pinpoint through analysis the exact cause of anxiety, because fear is sometimes illogical. My proposal for unclear or unanalyzable situations is to use your intuition for making design choices like the tale of counselor Krespel shows. In creating architecture you sometimes need to break the established rules regarding the intended use or function and design in the spirit of the event.

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