MASTER

Explorations
from poetry and prose to space and back

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Explorations
From Poetry and Prose to Spaces and back

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Summary

Architecture and literature both aim in creating an emotional bond with its users and readers. Texts convey meaning and depth beyond mere words, just as architecture is not just a simple summation of materials. Yet when architecture and literature work collaboratively there are innumerable ways in which a creative bond is achieved. The relationship is constantly dynamic, unremitting, fluid and variable.

It starts by perceiving the city as a book where energy levels rise and fall on different streets as if they were pages in a book. A book is never one level of energy, it pulsates, changes and rips into our minds. This energy of the city shapes the site, gives back the corner of Fifteenth and Champa in downtown Denver and creates ambiguously defined plazas that yield a plethora of functions in literature.

Literature is the main inspiration of the architecture. It stars by influencing the function: a bookstore, coffee shop and offices for a literary company, through the main two fields of literature: poetry and prose. The idiosyncrasies of each field are used to create spatial plans. The dynamic nature of prose is used as inspiration for the offices, whereas the depth and mystery behind poetry gives the bookstore and coffee shop its raison d'etre.
The massive scope of prose makes the choice for one work a necessity. Inspiration is a very personal choice: Moby Dick. Moby Dick is set apart from other books by the sudden change in perspective. It is this second perspective that makes it dynamic and puts the book in a class of its own. The second perspective in the offices is achieved through an allegorical spatial transformation of pierced Cor-Ten steel. The steel constantly changes, it is Moby Dick to the extreme. Every second is different, whether in sun or snow, light or darkness. This nature invites exploration, drawing people nearer to the skin. The exploration that is necessary to create an emotional bond.

Poetry characterizes itself by being able to choose one's own way through it, which is translated spatially by a matrix. Freedom to make one's own story in the building. The matrix follows the analyzed energy levels of the city through the placement of pods that contain exclusively presented books. Darkness rules in the lowest energy part and sunlight floods the high energy reading area.

Looking beyond the mere words and sentence is where poetry evinces. Depth is its power. The darkness of the matrix hides its structure, as words hide meaning. Dents in the steel cannot be perceived at first sight but invite exploration upon closer approach.

As one explores the spaces and the texts a transcending effect comes up. The short texts, the depth and the darkness of the bookstore and the dynamic second perspective and clearly marked paths of the offices invite explorations. These explorations make the user go above and beyond. It means giving up something personal, whether it be time and effort, or love and passion, and getting something back from texts and buildings immediately. The emotional bond has been formed forever.
Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
   Life is but an empty dream
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
   And things are not what they seem.

Psalm of Life - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
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Part I: Introduction
1.1 Passion for Literature and Architecture.
Tell me not in Mournful Numbers

Longfellow starts his 'Psalm of Life' with the words: "The soul is dead that slumbers." Literature and architecture both aim to not let this slumber manifest itself. Words themselves are never merely two dimensional entities but create images in our minds and imaginations, in the same way that buildings make thoughts and feelings visible through materials.

I believe there is a lot to learn from literature when making architecture and that this field is largely overlooked for fashionable contemporary contexts. Basically saying that hundreds of years of brilliant minds thinking and working at an incredibly high level has not been worthwhile for architecture. I find this way of reasoning to be a painful lack of insight. The inspiration of literature in modern day society has not waned to a stuttering little flame. It burns still passionately in the hearts of millions, as Robert Hinske shows in his favourite poem project.*

Trotting carefully in this field, the research bases itself upon a brief I created specifically for this project aiming to create a project that does not let the soul slumber: The soul must never be dead. We have to guard ourselves against that. This guard is researched through the reciprocal relationship between architecture and literature with the aim to form a synergy between both fields.

* See Page 80.
1.2 Gilchrist - Thomas convertor to mass produce oxidated steel.
Steel

Historically steel dates back longer than is widely recognized. It was made architecturally famous when skyscrapers started to change the skylines of big cities and when architects started using the material for what it could really do while maximizing its functional use.

Steel has been used since medieval times, yet ineffectively. On a grand scale it is a bit like the Eiffel Tower standing tall over Paris upside down. It's not all steel can do. Steel became architecturally important when the process of oxidation was made a mass production process by the invention of the Gilchrist - Thomas Convertor. The process of oxidation had long been practiced all over the world on a household-scale to create steel without impurities. By blowing air through the hot molten steel it heats up even further and creates a reaction that creates gasses, slag and steel without these unwanted impurities.

In 1851, Sydney Gilchrist Thomas invented the convertor that made this process from a small-scale operation to a mass production line of work. That being said and done steel was still used in traditional ways, as if steel was a stone, with large foundations growing smaller into the heights, as the Eiffel Tower so eloquently shows. No matter how glorious the building is, it is almost screaming out all the time: I am upside down.

Experiments led to new uses, to higher and sleeker buildings. Making the impossible possible. Steel, like no other material before it, sparked a wave of innovation and of liberation. Steel embodies the freedom that makes literature special. For that reason steel is the material of choice in order to speak the language literature does.
Architecture meet Literature

Accepting the premise that architecture can never exist by itself is the starting point of defining the tension field of architecture and literature. This project does not favour tradition; rather, it breaks from it. If ever there was a field in which the impossible becomes possible, it is in writing. Writing is a field that offers incredible possibilities, impulses and inspiration for architecture, yet it is highly underestimated and dismissed all too easily by most architects.

Numerous, if not all, architects write stories about their own work, the work of other architects, or subjects they feel closely affiliated to. Literature and philosophic writing in return has inspired architecture too. Kierkegaard, Deleuze and Heidegger, amongst others, have helped form design philosophies for architects of esteem.

Where mainstream contexts have become the bread and butter of architecture, the large field of literature has been sorely forgotten by most architects. It is almost a first meet (though it certainly isn’t) between the two. Literature knows Architecture all too well, no story goes untold without describing a certain city, neighbourhood or building. It knows it through the many words architects deem necessary to describe their latest concoctions.

Architecture does not know Literature well. So Architecture, it is time, meet Literature...
1.2 Denver skyline at night.
Denver, Co

Denver has always been a contextual idiosyncrasy - a city doing things differently from the standard. It is the largest city in the USA that has not been strategically founded near a large mass of water, or near the crossroads of a railroad or transport system. The Pikes Peak gold rush made Denver into a settlement. Amazingly, simply by word of mouth and in a short period of time, 100,000 people flocked into the city in search of gold.\(^{(2)}\)

Strict grid lines generated by the straightforward north-south and east-west layout are confronted by a new context in the downtown area. The grid is tilted by 45 degrees heeding to the local weather. Intense snowfall, throughout the long harsh winters does not actually deter the Denver natives from exploring their world but it does bring traffic to a near standstill and leaved the roads mashed up once the sun has again overcome the layers of snow and ice. Henry Brown conceived the idea of placing the grid off the standard context, where sunlight is allowed to enter all streets, melting the snow not just on the north to south streets, but all.\(^{(3)}\)

The close proximity of the mountains, access to one of the 205 national parks, and the crisp fresh air all make for an outdoor life that is unrivalled by other major US cities. Despite the high altitude and the breathing problems that come with it, Coloradans are fervent hikers. Every street in the city becomes an outdoor theatre where people enjoy themselves. Life is not lived indoors here. It is striking then that the public spaces in downtown do not comply with this way of life. Denver is screaming out for a public space that supports the Denver native’s fervency for the outdoors.
Part II : Analysis
'Mars – the red planet – has two companions, Phobos and Deimos, the steeds of Mars.

Why use Phobos – the Martian Moon – to represent a theoretical position in architecture?

I'm looking for an object that conveys a literal, physical beauty

and also carries a complex poetic, even mythic meaning.'

Eric Owen Moss, Buildings and Projects V3
Phobos. By Eric Owen Moss

There is no one more enigmatic than Eric Owen Moss. He gives us a filtered insight into his thoughts yet keeps some (who is to say not all?) to himself. Saying: "If I tell everything, I have nothing left to tell." These insights are more like poetic guidelines rather than exact explanations of architecture. For Moss that means he can say that architecture is like Phobos(4).

Truth is only valid in the field in which it functions. Physics too, has no validity that transcends other sciences. Phobos does not comply with science. Phobos is a moon on Mars, it is one of only two, the other being Deimos. Aptly named Phobos, after the Greek God of fear. Phobos seems to be orbiting around Mars in the wrong direction. Yet it doesn't. It is an optical illusion.

The frightful speed of the orbit is responsible for the optical illusion. Space bodies 'naturally' rotate from east to west yet Phobos seems to do the opposite. Even more so, its speed is combined with a synchronization height that is too low and that eventually will bring the planet of fear to an end through obliteration. Technically Phobos does move in the right direction but our perspective convinces us otherwise. It becomes mythical, perhaps untrue even to perceive Phobos. The complexity is staggering and cannot be explained but poetically. Exactly that is what Moss wants: to use this as a premise for architecture. To create something of mythical proportions by keeping things mysterious. In order to 'solve' Moss, one has to go and research him himself, Moss will not hand the answer on a silver plate.
We want architecture that has more. Architecture that bleeds, that exhausts, that whirls and even breaks. Architecture that lights up, stings, rips and tears under stress. Architecture has to be cavernous, fiery, smooth, hard, angular, brutal, round, delicate, colorful, obscene, lustful, dreamy, attracting, repelling, wet, dry, and throbbing. Alive or dead.

If cold, then cold as a block of ice.

If hot, then hot as a blazing wing.

Architecture must burn

Coop Himmelblau, Get off of my Cloud

2.2 Open House, the epitome of open architecture. Open architecture requires an open mind. Everything open.
Blazing. By Coop Himmelb(l)au

Swiczinsky and Prix, the rock stars of architecture, carefully constructed an image that feeds through each aspect of their firm. Sketching with eyes closed, playing the Rolling Stones music on the phone, mustering a quick snappy fragment of writing or creating architecture that is completely "out-there" leaves huge amounts of vagueness for the reader. In this vagueness, viewers are able to take ownership of the space in which they abide.\(^5\)

The most famous materialization of this image is the text Architecture Must Blaze. At one point the experimental space was literally ablaze with fire. A blazing wing was suspended and fire was fed through its construction. The subsequent work became more sophisticated and challenged this aspect of "blazing" differently. It became 'open architecture'. Open architecture is a two way street, it means freedom for the designers and it means freedom for the users. Swiczinsky and Prix say: 'open architecture means open mind'. By leaving spaces empty, it gives users an opportunity to take ownership of it. Once open to taking this responsibility and the amazing forms of their designed freedom, the spaces and texts captivate and inspire. Coop Himmelb(l)au invite this taking ownership with open arms, yet they realize it is each and everyone's own will and responsibility to do so.
‘What interests me (…) the implication that richness and multiplicity emanate from the things themselves, we observe them attentively and give them their due’.

‘Works or objects of art that move us are multifaceted, they have numerous and perhaps endless layers of meaning that overlap and interweave and that change as we change our angle of observation’.

Peter Zumthor, Thinking Architecture

2.3 Bruder Klaus Kapelle. Burned away wood leaves the concrete exposed. The depth behind these walls is multi-layered.
"Humankind has lost itself," writes Heidegger in 'Sein und Zeit'- Time and Being -. To right this wrong Heidegger reinvents new terms for being. It is through these new terms that Heidegger asserts that mankind regains his roots on earth. The most important of these terms is an individuals' self-definition, accomplished in relationship to the physical context in which he or she stands at that time. "I live in Denver." "I enjoy the smell of the outdoors and enjoy the warmth of the sun's rays." We have to define ourselves through our environments to root us on our planet.

"Living among things is the basic essence of human existence," says Zumthor; "Meaning it is never an abstract world but rather a world composed of material elements, even while we perform the endless art of thinking.

For Zumthor, Heidegger is the justification of phenomenology in architecture. He designs buildings while simultaneously reading the works of Heidegger. Zumthor exposes "the very essence of materials, which is beyond any culturally conveyed meaning." Materials surrounding us define us. What we see, hear, touch, and smell becomes us.

The essence Zumthor addresses is a transformational depth. This is evidenced in the Thermen in Vals where the sun-heated stone wall, is at one time a leaning wall for human bodies to absorb heat and at another time transforms into a canvas displaying a damp silhouette impression of those human bodies that stood against it a moment ago. By using materials and words in this manner, Zumthor entices visitors to emotionally connect and take root within his building and his texts.
The necessity to develop and articulate one's position, a set of core values which would give substance to our work.

(writing) is an opportunity to interrogate themes that are influencing the current work of the practice and to reveal debt to other architects and the history of architecture.

Caruso St. John, The Feeling of Things

2.4 Brick house in London. Each brick weighed, saying what Caruso St. John want them to say.
Intellect. By Caruso st. John

In the introduction of their book 'The Feeling of Things' Caruso and St. John illustrate the importance and reverence they place on their written words. In their writing, they discuss at length over what word to use. They weigh down each option carefully, dissecting and respecting each word and so emphasizing that what they say, can only be said in this way. 

This way of writing creates an intelligent platform. A tactic they also use in their architecture weighing each brick until it says what they want it to say. It puts an incredible responsibility on the reader and visitor to accept this way of working. If you accept the challenge each word, each brick, window still or beam gains meaning. When that happens, the building and texts open themselves and bind the person by making him or her grow through new and renewed experiences.
From the dream of the novel turned to stone, to the acknowledgement of public space. By Wim Cuyvers

That, however, still leaves the question of why space so seldom transmutes into architecture (...) There is no convincing reason to be found for why architecture should not make full use of the means at its disposal: spaces that intensify confrontations, spaces that simultaneously offer contradictory insights and overviews, spaces that are reflective and encourage reflection, spaces that throw light on realities, spaces that impel and oppress, chasms and menace. (...) There are various possibilities that I see, and with which I have also personally worked, in order to establish bridges from literature to architecture. Making transcriptions of a novel in a manner comparable with the 'circumscription' of the novel in a film, in a way in which a scenario is written for films was, and is, hardly different from the scenario that architects distilled from a book. In projects like this it did not seem strange to very literally 'stage' architecture: attempts were made to transpose the often explicit personalities of a novel's character into spaces supposed to capture these character traits, relationships between different spaces were borrowed from the book. These were the means of pursuing a heightened confrontation in order to break through the economically driven logic.
Another method entailed constructing spaces that were described in novels. Instead of inventing the space, the architecture simply visualised the space suggested by the other, striving to capture the atmosphere and the light, to imagine the materials. In short, the architect attempted to reconstruct everything the writer had already imagined it in three dimensions, and thus demonstrate that the space described by the writer was not an unfeasible spatial fantasy but a space that could be simply and self-evidently built. It is remarkable that one of the first steps towards renouncing design, shaking of the mouth of authorship, were taken in architecture. It was a questioning of the belief in the originality of one's personal project and a small but absolutely necessary step towards the abandonment of planning and away from therapeutisation. It should be clear that whoever wants to address the existential planning, give up the opposition of planning, and will have no option to accept fate: Amor Fati.
A third method was the transmogrification of themes and fragments from novels into actual construction projects. With or without a client’s knowledge, situations from the novel were projected into the structure. The brief was embroidered with demands and requirements posited by the novel. The attractive thing about this was that the spatially generated insights, situations and findings were fixed in a space where an ordinary life would be pursued, so that the confrontations with the insights already advanced in the book occurs in the midst of the most banal activities and not in the exceptional situation of a short visit to a museum or an arts festival, where architecture has always enjoyed an eminent position; a better position than the visual arts. However, herein lie the hidden pitfalls of many of the projects tackled in this way: they were insufficiently reserved, far too explicit, made the space scream out the message and were overly preachy, and whoever had to endure that violence during their daily routine soon found it ridiculous - and justifiably, too. The CD with the same joke does not retain its amusement value for ever. Hannah Arendt had already stated that expressionist art is a contradiction in terms (...). What we were looking for now were precisely those exceptional cases where architecture is art. These confronted the architect with personal expertise and skill seemed to fall short when it came to materialising the wretched, compelling and questioning spaces that were so precisely described in the novel. Misshapen by their medium, architects were unable to achieve the translation. Because it was too glaringly obvious and stood there moralising incessantly, the space became too melodramatic, or, if it was highly restrained, became completely incomprehensible in its abstraction: the space was rendered mute, no longer spoke, and architecture had returned to the very place it was trying to escape.
Conclusion

The four architects cited above, despite their deep insights and inspiring philosophies, offer merely a small glimpse into how architects address literature in architecture. However, together with Cuyvers' article, the articles that Moss, Coop Himmelb(l)au, Zumthor and Caruso St. John wrote give a good insight into the tension field upon which this project is based, on how the world of architecture addresses literature, and on how sporadically architecture uses the world of literature. Moss' confusion, Himmelb(l)au's invitation to research, Zumthor's emotional depth, and Caruso St John's intellectual platform all have legitimate grounds on how they tiptoe onto the tightrope that balances between the fields of architecture and literature. The scope of possibilities is unlimited, and it would be impossible to list all architects who engage in this tiptoeing. Therefore, I chose to incorporate in this project, these four architects that I admire most.

My research focuses on the goal to invite investigation and to create an emotional bond with the building and texts and continuing the poem of Longfellow: 'to not let the soul slumber.' This emotional bond is to be found in explorations, by giving up something of oneself and getting something back in the same process. Explorations holds in it an invitation to investigate, but also the responsibility to do so made by each individual himself.
Dividing the building into two parts, the coffee shop/bookstore and the office spaces, offers people an opportunity to explore each building within its own right. It also allows each person to create their own relationships with literature. The office space lends itself to be linked with prose and its dynamics. The book store and coffee shop on the other hand will be designed from within the field of poetry where depth of phenomena play a leading role.

Reciprocally, this report is inspired by the architecture. With the goal to invite exploration and to leave something great to the imagination, the topics are researched from the standpoint that it serves to broaden one's horizon by going beyond what is familiar. Special care has been given to these topics and their relationship to architecture. Exploring the relations and meanings that lay beneath the given information, with the rewarding interplay between both architecture and literature, ensures the goal has been met.
Part III : Concept
Fifteenth and Champa

Denver is one of those cities that reward you when you explore it. Idiosyncratic streets pierce downtown's masses of buildings. Chameleon-like Champa changes almost every block. The hustle and bustle around 16th fades out towards 15th where store fronts still provide liveliness. Then it picks up again where new developments shoot high-rises so high, they can only be greeted with amazement. Across from the site stands a government building that looks unfriendly, and turns out to be an intricate maze inside.

Fifteenth is more of an awkward street since 16th has stolen its thunder. Fifteenth has little left behind but the occasional parking lot and the blind backside of the Denver Pavilions shopping centre.

Also part of the site is one of Denver's forgotten and hidden gems: the alley. Few people frequent and explore these parts of town, choosing instead the main paths laid out by commerce. Yet the alleys harbour intriguing phenomena. Poles of solid wooden trunks, that vibrate under the energy exuded from the power lines above. Their texture is rugged, yet strangely comfortable after the sun's rays have beaten down on it. Once aware of this phenomena it becomes an almost automatic to greet the poles with the palm of the hand. One can find perhaps the only true wild nature in the city in the alleys, here plants still grow wildly, or as cars and pedestrians allow them to do so.

Champa, Fifteenth and the alley set the framework in which architecture and literature will interplay.
3.1 Skyline dominates over the parking lot now on 15th and Champa.

3.2 Champa and 15th in bird eye view.
3.3 Champa street towards site. Site in box.

3.4 Fifteenth across from site.

3.5 Fifteenth towards site. Site in box.
Teotl

Nothing ever really stands still; a premise especially true for major cities. Ancient civilizations put a far higher emphasis on this than we do in this time and age. Aztec philosophy recognizes that things are shaped and created based on energy: Teotl. An ever flowing and ever changing energy - in-motion - not a discrete, static entity. Teotl is a singly, dynamic, vivifying eternally self-generating sacred power; energy and force, the literal translation means spirit, or the concentration of power as a sacred and impersonal force. It is the reason we are balanced on earth and do not fall over. It is why and where things move. It is everything.

Since everything changes in terms of energy, everyone also changes. There is a reciprocal effect of change between people and the environment. Champa and 15th would not be what it is, without the energy put into it by people, cars and buildings and even the weather. As the Aztec philosophy says: Teotl generates and regenerates, as well as permeates, encompasses, and shapes the cosmos, as a part of its endless process of self-generation and regeneration. Compare it to a book, where energy levels fluctuate. Nothing is always the same in a book, there are loud pages, and pages of solemn silence. The site is treated like a book, where the buildings find their way through the energy that already exists.

Where the energy levels are high, the ground floor remains open. Spaces differentiated merely by floating boxes, lowering along when the energy tells it to. A bookstore and the supports for the floating office boxes are the only concrete elements that touch ground, so creating an open spatial lay out. The corner is given back to the people, as their energy demands it. A great outdoor open space forms 3 plazas, low energy writing, mid energy reading, and high energy performing. The building merges around these energies, but abides the state it was in before.
3.6 The energy of the site above the complex.
A singly, dynamic, vivifying eternally self-generating sacred power, energy and force
3.7 Site with building and energy levels superimposed on them.
3.8 Energy is everyone and everything. Energy dictated path to be where it needed to be.
3.9 Three main subjects with all leading to explorations.
Prose

Moby Dick
Second Perspective
First Perspective

Poetry

Choice
Mystery
Depth of Meaning

Office Space
Pierced Cor-Ten Steel
Defined Paths

Book Store | Coffee Shop
Matrix
Dented Walls
Black Powder coated Steel

Literary Complex
Denver, Co

Literary report

Explorations

3.10 Schematic representation of process.
Explorations

Life is not an empty dream; things are not what they seem. Longfellow's Psalm of Life puts in words a way of living that goes beyond the superficial. Things are never what they seem, there is more behind everything, behind words, behind materials, behind spaces. This is guaranteeing that life is but an empty dream. This 'more', depth if you want, is what creates a bond with those who are open for it. In that perspective, it doesn't come for free. It is this bond that is the nexus of the triangle Architecture - Literature - Person.

The strongest bond is formed then when giving up something of oneself and immediately getting something back in the same process. The giving up and gaining something is found in exploration. To explore, to go above and beyond a subject, to delve into a subject matter is a step one has to make for himself. So let us then be up and doing, with a heart for every fate ends the Psalm of Life, and take this step.

Part of the building becomes part of the person. And the person leaves part of himself behind in the spaces. It works likewise with literature. Texts should not tell all, far from it. Texts have to open up topics, facts and feelings so that the reader can make out himself to go beyond what is on offer. The triangle of person - space - text connects on these topics, texts about the building give new meaning to it. Whereas the building invites exploration through how it creates a bond with its users, which in turn is given again in the book.

Exploration ensures that things don't end after a visit or a reading, but respects the visitor or reader to make that step when he is ready. Ready to keep achieving and keep pursuing.
Part IV: Prose
Dustbowl

Dustbowl. Menace captured in one word, one of those words where it is hard to associate positives with. Dustbowl. Almost as if those tiny grains of sand, sped forward by gales find themselves hitting the skin of your face, hands, forearms, legs, basically anything you cannot cover quickly enough. Dustbowl. Even the image of that cloud makes it way to the brain, dark, grim, menacing, slowly moving forward as if pushed by an invisible force, taking everything in its stride.

It happened in the early 30's, years of deep ploughing and no crop rotation, eroded the ground. Combine that with a drought of several months, and you can see the dark clouds gather. Black Sunday saw a black blizzard of 24 hours of dust storms with visibility not more than a few feet. People were forced to flee, the barren ground not feeding the people, banks foreclosed houses and farms, and people were forced to move west. The Okies, since most hailed from Oklahoma, found themselves in California in search of hope and wealth, picking crops for little money.

Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck\(^{(10)}\) tells of this story of dustbowl victims heading west. Prose gains more meaning, the story being not just a story when it did more. It gave hope to readers, informed them of the predicament of fellow countrymen. We owe a great debt to enlightened writers like John Steinbeck for doing so, to alleviate problems and inspire millions. It kind of puts a silver lining to the word, although it will always be menacing.

Dustbowl.
4.1 Dust clouds sweeping over Stratford Texas, in 1935.
Moby Dick, arguably, the greatest piece of writing is an epic story about the quest to catch a whale. Perhaps it is the setting, the romantic idea of the open and boundless ocean. Perhaps it is the whale itself. Everyone who has seen whales in close proximity will understand the gentle nature of these large water mammals. There is a serene beauty in whales piercing through the surface as they come up to breathe every 8 to 9 minutes in this vast endless wilderness of water. Perhaps it is the extensive research and knowledge portrayed by Melville. There are details about whales, whaling and whaling history. Perhaps its Melville's use of language, from which quotes abound quickly in the notebook of the ardent reader.

Whatever makes this an epic novel; the story cannot be accused of boredom. Despite the fact that the main setting of the story takes place in the confines of a boat that could quickly become just that, a story in a boat. Ishmael shares thoughts and conversations that he cannot possibly access. It is a second perspective, a stroke of genius, balancing our thoughts, questions, and even our answers; it keeps us on our toes. Melville inspires the office blocks that are floating high above the plazas. The infused dynamics in Moby Dick translates well into architecture. The office spaces have the second perspective made extreme; it is allegorical. Infused not at some pages, but at all pages, everywhere. The weather plays with the new 'eyes' changing it at almost every moment. Moving through the pathways changes this perspective fluently, and when one sits down to work, the close proximity to the rusted steel is examined up close. Here too nothing is what it seems, the steel looks harsh, grainy, and even tough in the battering rain. The sun transforms it into a shining red glare, warm and comforting. The constantly changing space makes you realize that you are the one solid that everything else leans on.
"At such times, under an abated sun; afloat all day upon smooth, slow heaving swells; seated in his boat, light as a birch canoe; and so sociably mixing with the soft waves themselves, that like hearth-stone cats they purr against the gunwale; these are the times of dreamy quietude, when beholding the tranquil beauty and brilliancy of the ocean's skin, one forgets the tiger heart that pants beneath it; and would not willingly remember, that this velvet paw but conceals a remorseless fang."

_**Moby Dick - Herman Melville**_
Lewis and Clark

To create an allegorical second perspective, a primary one has to be established with knowledge of what the second perspective will be. Everything is connected. The allegorical pierced metal changes the space, showing the world through the metal. The first perspective cannot be everywhere, as that would thwart the second perspective. There has to be a balance, a contrast, after all 'There is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself.' wrote Herman Melville. The second perspective needs a clearly defined path. The path is defined by the construction elements, a mere visual reference. Spatially, both the offices and the path respect the second perspective.

A pathway as such, is reminiscent of the many trails in Colorado where hikers go out and explore nature. As with the path in the buildings, the clear definition of these trails is of huge importance. Had Clark and Lewis not made clear notes of their path on their expedition westward, it would many more years before others could have followed their lead.

In 1803 an expedition set out to discover the west, commissioned by the then president Thomas Jefferson. They made it west, meeting challenging weather, mountain ranges, and native tribes along the way. The notebooks they carried carefully drew up the paths and wrote about the different adventures. Without these notes, the journey would not have become the epic story told today in many schools. Lewis and Clark paved the path West, much like the path paves the way to a second perspective.
4.2 Pathway through office block, the second perspective is everywhere.
4.3 Third floors. Pathways highlighted in all three office blocks. Scale 1:300.
4.4 First floors. Patio of coffee shop is also used as a spill out for the offices. The whole complex interconnects.
Scale 1:400.

1. Coffee Shop
2. Storage
3. Rest rooms
4. Entrance
5. Pathway
6. Office Space
7. Coffee Shop Patio
8. Winter garden
9. Elevator
4.5 Section BB. Pathway to the right, offices to the left. Scale 1:200.
4.6 The upper floor and roof are constructed of steel to bend under weight and boxes of displays.
4.7 Model showing the dramatic overhang of the offices. The plazas are separated ambiguously.
4.8 Detail III: Gantry construction set off from windows. The space between the steel and the window makes the allegorical second perspective more powerful. Scale 1:20.
4.9 Detail IV: Console attached to the ground floor slab connects to the gantry construction. Black T-profiles bring contrast to the Cor-Ten plates. Scale 1:20
4.10 Mid-day sun reflecting on second skin. Sunlight constantly changes the perspective leaving it a constant subject for exploration.
Morning sun rays transform the space.
4.12 Outdoor conditions are also altered by the sun through reflections on the rest of the site.
4.13 Reading plaza under main office box.
4.14 Building as seen from fifteenth and Champa crossing.
Part V : Poetry
Reverend Michael Haynes, Roxbury, Ma

For some reason the importance of poetry has always been incredibly underestimated. Furthermore poetry is seen as an unattainable hobby for intellectuals. Robert Pinske, in his function of Poet Laureate, created 'My Favourite Poem' (12): an organization that collects testimonies of thousands of Americans, no matter where from or what background to share their favourite poems. Pinske not only sought to give everyone a voice about poetry, but also created a platform that inspires and educates. Poetry thrives in America.

One such testimony comes, aptly, from Reverend Michael Haynes who reads Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's A Psalm of Life.

Service minister of 12th Baptist church in Boston, Ma. I was born in Roxbury crossing, on the threshold of great depression. My parents were Afro Caribbean immigrants from the island of Barbados the great depression brought difficult times into our family. Exposed us to public welfare, poverty, fear and a lot of other things. My father's hopes of gold in American sort of became depressed and became a part of oppression of racism and other things that could oppose themselves upon a man of colour at time in history. So I grew up poor but I grew up seeking for some faith and hope. In junior high school an Irish teacher kept on quoting verses of Longfellow: 'be not like dumb driven cattle, be a hero in the strive'. At that time I didn't understand all that it was saying, but I learned it and it stayed in my mind. Later on feeling called to the Christian Ministry, as a theological student the psalm of life began to take on real meaning for me in my personal struggles in life and as I looked back
and reflected upon my childhood and the experiences of my parents. Often times West Indian immigrants with their foreign accents and their foreign ways were sort of stereotyped and ridiculed and laughed at. So I don’t think me or my brothers made a big fuzz about having parents come from a foreign land and spoke foreign accents and often times might have been called monkey chasers or banana eaters all of these negative stereotypical things. My mother was about 19 when she left and after she reached her 65th birthday she stated that she would like to visit her home one time before she died. Someone had to take her to Barbados and I ended up being that person.

To come to this hill called mount Tabor and to see this church my father sung in the choir; he was tenor soloist. My mother was very active in this church, and I developed a new interest and a new pride in what Barbados represented in its independence in terms of its culture, in terms of its religious faith and became very proud of what they say here a son of the soil.

Coming to this place makes me think of all of the names that tie in with my family. My mother was a baskament of Selies then she married a Payne. My father’s were Haynes’, Nichols’ and Howards’. They are all here. ‘Life is real life is earnest and the grave is not the goal. Dust thou art dust returnest was not talking about the soul’. This is the very real significance of what Christian Faith is all about, it gives you an hope that goes beyond the grave for the essence of who you are, That the soul can live eternally in a better existence, and if you didn’t have that hope life becomes a sort of dead end street and becomes futile and you have a right to go to the cemetery and give up hope.

Whenever I read Longfellow’s Psalm of Life, I am challenged for living.
Psalm of Life

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real—life is earnest—
And the grave is not its goal:
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destin’d end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Find us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world’s broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe’er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act—act in the glorious Present!
Heart within, and God o’er head!
Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that, perhaps another;
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwreck'd brother;
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.
Matrix

Downtown areas all over the US are commercially defined valleys that tunnel all sight into endless lines of forward motion, reminiscent of ancient building layouts. Paths leave little choice but to follow them, whereas poetry invites us to explore. Traditional pathways would not fulfil this ambition.

Poetry gives the possibility to choose and to find depth when we search for it. We read parts only to start three quarters in. Spatially this effect is achieved by the matrix. Movement is no longer bound by constraints of pathways; each individual creates his/her own movement, and writes a different story inside the building.

The parts that make up the matrix find their place based on energy and darkness, the lower energy parts being the most mysterious. 'In order to think clearly, the sharpness of vision has to be suppressed, for thoughts travel with an absent minded and unfocused regard' as Pallasmaa writes. Hidden in the darkness, the matrix opens up towards a study area, where giant windows flood the space with sunlight.

All walls of the matrix systems are activated by openings that display books. Books for what they are, pieces of art, exclusive, away from the bulk presentations so often found in modern day bookstores, where selling is more important than treasuring. For centuries poetry has treasured the books in which it is kept, so too now, the bookstore.
5.1 The pathway is deserted for the freedom to create one’s own story; the matrix.

5.2 Matrix lined out on energy levels of site.
Champa Street

5.3 Darkness based on energy levels through the matrix in ground floor. Scale 1:400.
5.4 Section through Matrix of Bookstore. Coffee shop plaza on second floor. Scale 1:400.

5.5 Section through model. Ambiguously bordered plazas on the left under office block. Darkness in matrix becomes visible to the right on the ground floor.
Augie Wren

Poetry is depth. It is this depth that sets it apart from other writings, thoughts and other experiences. Depth is found in phenomena. There is this scene in the movie Smoke that symbolizes poetic depth beautifully. Augie Wren, the main character is showing his life work to his friend Paul. Without fail, Augie has shot a photo of his store, same time, same angle, and exact same spot every day. Paul opens one of the books of these photographs and leafs through it with the speed of light, shallowly remarking that they are all the same. This obviously annoys Augie who urges him to actually look at each of the photographs. In doing so, Paul starts seeing the pictures, not just looking at them: “hey I remember that day…” Paul continues opening up the depth behind the apparent sameness, revealing the mystery and poetic meaning behind each and every difference.

Black steel forces mystery upon the façade of the bookstore. Indentations in the plates can only be discovered upon closer inspection in the dimly lit space. The indentations invite touch, stroking the smooth surface that bulges in and out, almost possible to hug with the palm of the hand. The most intimate of touches. Only now does the depth reveal itself, and changes the meaning of the space, façade, the experience and the moment, and like with the second perspective, the realization that the only solid is yourself. Here too, things are not what they seem.

Poetic depth is a choice, the same way Paul chose to see it in Augie’s photographs the visitor chooses to find the truth behind the steel.
5.6 Augie. Same time, same spot, same angle. Yet always different.
5.8 Ground floor. Scale 1:400.
5.9 Presentation displays foreground. Main reading area in background.

5.10 Books presented exclusively. View from reading area towards matrix.
5.11 Heightened ceiling in reading area conforms to the higher energy level of the site.
Cash register in centre.
5.12 Detail 1: gaps between the powder coated black plates filled up with black kit. Walls form one uniform black wall as no rim breaks the horizontal line at the top. There is a dialogue between sky and wall. Scale 1:20.
5.13 Detail II: window plane set slightly back from wall. Steel water-frame painted black to conform to black wall. Scale 1:20.
Part VI : Conclusion
It doesn't end here...

What both architecture and literature try to conceive is an emotional bond with its subjects. A bond that can be formed through words that stir up meaning or the materiality that makes a feeling tangible in a spatial way. It is this bond that connects both fields. To create the feeling to want to grab the book, the building has to give up something from itself and demand something back from the visitors, reciprocally the same occurs in literature. This game of give and take materializes itself through explorations.

The city of Denver is perceived a book with heightened energies and places of quiet solitude. The context is linked to literature instead of standards such as building heights and styles. Instead of altering the energy, the building aids and abides it. The corner of Fifteenth and Champa is opened up to let energy flow; only a bookstore in the low energy part touches the ground floor. Dramatic offices jolt out over the squares and give an ambiguous boundary between different areas.

Taking its cue from the world of American literature, the complex is divided into two parts: office space and a bookstore annex coffee shop, inspired respectively by prose and poetry. Prose for inspiration requires narrowing down of this massive field, a personal choice therefore surfaces: Moby Dick. Melville’s masterpiece is an epic in literary history and sets itself apart through the use of a second perspective. This second perspective makes the novel gain momentum. Momentum is translated architecturally into an allegorical Cor-Ten steel skin that is pierced over the whole surface. Small openings show the world through the steel’s eyes, filter sunlight, and make the office space an ever-changing space. The first perspective of pathways aids the second perspective.
In stark contrast stands poetry, the mystical meaning whose power in modern society is gravely underestimated and has certain very discernible characteristics. Mystique and depth for its meaning and the possibility to not have to read a whole book make poetry what it is. Spatially this is conceived as a matrix where free choice of movement to create one's own story is encouraged. Once moving through the spaces the depth that makes poetry special is found in the mystical black powder-coated steel. Dents over its surface become apparent as one explores further. The book store | coffee shop gain meaning through this depth, the exploration of its surface and the exclusive presentation of books in the walls and form the necessary emotional bond through poetic meaning.

The report lends itself to exploration too. Describing a project tile for tile and brick for brick leaves little imaginative freedom. Texts, however, have to describe the topic differently, open up new ways of looking and seeing. Parallel to the topics to explain the building the texts focus on American history and tradition to give insight beyond what is on offer.

And so where most projects end at the end of the report or the presentation, this project knows not of such an end. Explorations continue wherever and whenever an individual wants. The responsibility and freedom to do so rest solely on his shoulders. When this responsibility is taken, building and report give up part of themselves in the same way the person does. It is now that Life is not an empty dream, and the soul is not dead in numbers. It is well and truly alive.
It Does Not End For Me Here Either

What I enjoyed most during the year in which this project ran was the freedom to set it up completely myself. This offered me the chance to make something completely different from the standard and dive into the world of literature. It was a dive I felt ready for. Looking back I think the concept of explorations worked out into materials and texts works well. Even though it is near impossible to read everything available I tried to make the best choices in what to read and what to work with. I know full well that this leaves room for improvement.

The two things I take from this project are the architectural clarity that I need to put into my thinking, and the knowledge I gained in both architecture and literature. Clarity is an important commodity to be communicated to peers, teachers and clients in order to be able to open up a good discussion about ideas. I believe I have gained a lot of knowledge in this aspect thanks to continued questioning from my tutors. Though I feel this has improved mightily, I know this is something I will keep working on.

The latter aspect, the insight in literature and architecture has come with a massive amount of research. Though not everything has worked as a salvation for the soul, it has always made me look at things anew. Taking something from the positive and the negative examples I researched, visited and read, has given me a greater understanding and appreciation for architects and writers. The vast amount of knowledge that I have found in texts and buildings alike will be a source of inspiration and research for a long time to come. It has, like reverend Haynes said: challenged me in living.
A Road Less Travelled

It was the first thing that came to mind when looking back on the process: A road less travelled. I can vaguely remember it being something famous, but only the quote has stuck to my mind. It was a strange road, with moves left and right, bumps on the surface and smooth bits in between. The project does not lend itself to be understood straightforward, it is an amalgamation from what is standard. Perhaps it is my personal view of things, to not want to be standard. I have always found it difficult to go with the proverbial flow. But standing back now, and looking at this road, the bumps are there and can be avoided in future projects.

One such bump is the fact that I have always been impressed by many different architects and designs. To the point that what I see and learn I want to put into my work immediately. No rest, no wait, but immediately. This has caused at times that my work became eclectic pieces where ideas run faster than the whole. It also made for changes to be made instantly. Longfellow's psalm of life has become a leading premise in this project, and its last words hold the most meaning for my process: learn to labour, and learn to wait. Waiting to put things in, let ideas simmer in the mind first instead of implementing on site, and learn to labour into a more structural process.

I do intend to improve my process further so that in the future it will be completely under my command, though I do not think I will ever be making straightforward things. Yet I will strive to learn to labour and learn to wait.
References

It is impossible to list all references that helped form this project. Every book brings something onto the reader. Whether he takes it with him consciously or unconsciously, it stays with him forever. The list is a mere overview of the books that were closest to making this project to what it is.

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p. 13    Bessemer Convertor, Routledge, R., Discoveries & Inventions of the Nineteenth Century, (1900)

p. 16    Denver at night

p. 20    Phobos, Mars et Phobos par Celestia 1.3.2 (2005)


p. 26    www.carusostjohn.com, (2011), Brick House, Caruso St John,


P.53    Dustbowl, Historic C&GS Collection (2011)

P.79    www.listal.com (2011), Augie Wren
Part VII : Index
### Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Weight Density</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Total Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete floor slab</td>
<td>24 KN/m³</td>
<td>24 * (4.25 * 6 * 0.6)</td>
<td>345.6 KN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>78 KN/m³</td>
<td>78 * (4 * 8 * 0.15)</td>
<td>34.95 KN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass wall</td>
<td>1 KN/mm²</td>
<td>1 * (4 * 8)</td>
<td>32 KN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The construction is not symmetrical. For this reason 2/3's of the concrete slab and 1 1/3 of the second construction elements falls on the dimensioned steel construction.

\[ PB = (34.95 + 32) \times 1 1/3 + 345.6 \times 2/3 = 319.7 \text{ KN} \]

#### Temporal Special Forces

\[ Q_e = 2.5 \text{ KN/m}^2 \text{ (from NEN 6702)} \]

Weighed over 4 meters, \[ 2.5 \times 4 \times 1 1/3 = 13.3 \text{ KN} \]

\[ 13.3 \times 16 \text{ (span)} = 79.8 \text{ KN} \]

#### Extreme Forces

\[ Q_m = 0.5 \times 2.5 = 1.25 \text{ KN/m}^2 \text{ (from NEN 6702)} \]

\[ 1.25 \times 4 \times 1 1/3 \times 6 \text{ (span)} = 39.6 \]
Tension Combinations

7.1 Tension on construction

Tension (Dutch: U.G.T.)

Combination I  \( F_1 = 160 \text{ KN} \quad F_2 = 359.6 \text{ KN} \quad F_3 = 359.6 \text{ KN} \quad F_4 = 179.8 \text{ KN} \)

Combination II \( F_1 = 179.8 \text{ KN} \quad F_2 = 359.6 \text{ KN} \quad F_3 = 379.2 \text{ KN} \quad F_4 = 169.4 \text{ KN} \)

Lateral deformation of members under compression (Dutch: B.G.T.)

Combination III  \( F_1 = 221.7 \text{ KN} \quad F_2 = 443.4 \text{ KN} \quad F_3 = 472.8 \text{ KN} \quad F_4 = 251.1 \text{ KN} \)

Combination IV \( F_1 = 216 \text{ KN} \quad F_2 = 432 \text{ KN} \quad F_3 = 432 \text{ KN} \quad F_4 = 216 \text{ KN} \)
Pull Tension

Calculation of Stress Combination I, which is the determining combination in this construction.

\[ N_{t;s;d} = 1631 \text{ KN (from Cremona)} \]

\[ N_{z;u;d} = A \times F_{y;d} = A \times 510 \]

\[ N_{t;s;d} > N_{z;u;d} \implies A > 3.20 \]

IPE 220 with \( A = 3340 \)

\[ 3340 \times 510 = 1642 \text{ KN} \]

\( 1631/1642 = 0.99 \) being smaller than 1 means IPE 220 suffices.

Push Tension

\[ N_{c;s;d} = 2138 \text{ KN (from Cremona)} \]

\[ N_{p;l;d} = A \times F_{y;d} \implies 355 \times 3340 = 1185.7 \text{ KN} \]

\[ Fe = \{ (3.14)2 \times 210 \times 103 \times 2772 \times 104 \} / (4000)2 = 3587 \text{ KN} \]

\[ Labdarel = ( N_{p;l} / Fe )^{1/2} = 0.57 \] From which follows \( wbuc = 0.9 \)

\[ N_{c;s;d} / ( Wbuc \times N_{p;l;d} ) = 2138 / (0.9 \times 3340) = 0.71 \) being smaller than 1, IPE 220 Suffices.
7.2 Stress on construction through combination I.

Ra = 1156 KN
Ra = 216 KN
Hb = -Hb = 2138 KN
Tension Rod (Pull) 5 = 1631 KN
Tension Rod (Push) 11 = 2138 KN
Lateral deformation of members under compression

Calculation of Stress Combination II, which is the determining combination in this construction.

Calculated with the Energy Method, the displacement of a point is the accumulation of all deformations.

\[ E \cdot A = 210 \cdot 103 \cdot 3224 \cdot 104 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rod</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Force (Cremona)</th>
<th>Integral ( N_i / (EA) \cdot dN/dF \cdot dx )</th>
<th>Vertical Displacement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1538 KN</td>
<td>2.365.444 / EA</td>
<td>34,9 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>680 KN</td>
<td>462.400 / EA</td>
<td>6,8 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-5</td>
<td>L (2)(^{1/2})</td>
<td>1213 KN</td>
<td>2.059.916 / EA</td>
<td>30,4 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+6</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>512 KN</td>
<td>262.144 / EA</td>
<td>3,8 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-7</td>
<td>L (2)(^{1/2})</td>
<td>735 KN</td>
<td>767.717 / EA</td>
<td>11,3 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+8</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>160 KN</td>
<td>25.600 / EA</td>
<td>0,4 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-9</td>
<td>L (2)(^{1/2})</td>
<td>226 KN</td>
<td>72.232 / EA</td>
<td>1,1 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+11</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1538 KN</td>
<td>2.365.444 / EA</td>
<td>34,9 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+12</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>680 KN</td>
<td>462.400 / EA</td>
<td>6,8 mm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+13</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>160 KN</td>
<td>25.600 / EA</td>
<td>0,4 mm.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(- Denotes pull tension rod, + denotes push tension rod)

Vertical Displacement of Point where rods 9, 10 and 13 meet is 38,2 mm.

Maximum allowed displacement equal or less than \( 0,004 \cdot L \gg 0,004 \cdot 12.000 = 48 \text{ mm.} \)

Therefore IPE 220 suffices for this construction type.
7.4 Stress on construction through combination III.

7.5 Cremona Diagram for combination III.

Ra = 858 KN
Rb = 201 KN
Ha = -Hb = 1537 KN
Tension Rod (Pull) 5 = 1213 KN
Tension Rod (Push) 11 = 1537 KN
Concrete

Calculation to test if the size of the concrete blocks suffices.

Forces working on Concrete

\[ N_d = 1372 \text{ KN} \]
\[ M_d = 940 \times 2 = 1880 \text{ KN} \]

Concrete B25; Steel FeB500

\[ \frac{N'_d}{(f'_b \times A_b)} = \frac{1372.000}{(15 \times 2000 \times 4000)} = 0.011 \]
\[ \frac{M_d}{N'_d} = \frac{1372}{1880} = 0.739 \text{ m} = 739 \text{ mm} = e_t \]

\[ \frac{N'_d}{(f'_b \times A_b)} \times e_t / h = 0.011 \times (0.739 / 2) = 0.030 \]

With a given \( a / h \) of 0.15 GTB regulations give \( r = 2.0 \).

Concrete B25 has a beta of 1.0, which leads to:
\[ w_{\alpha \beta} = 2.0 \times 1.0 = 2.0 \]
\[ A_{\alpha} = 2.0 \times 2 \times 4 \times 104 = 160.000 \text{ mm}^2 \] of reinforced steel. This in turn is 80.000 mm² per side.
which is 255 FeB rods of 20 mm diameter.
Explore...