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THESIS PROPOSAL

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NORWEGIAN UNIVERSITY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY FOR ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ART

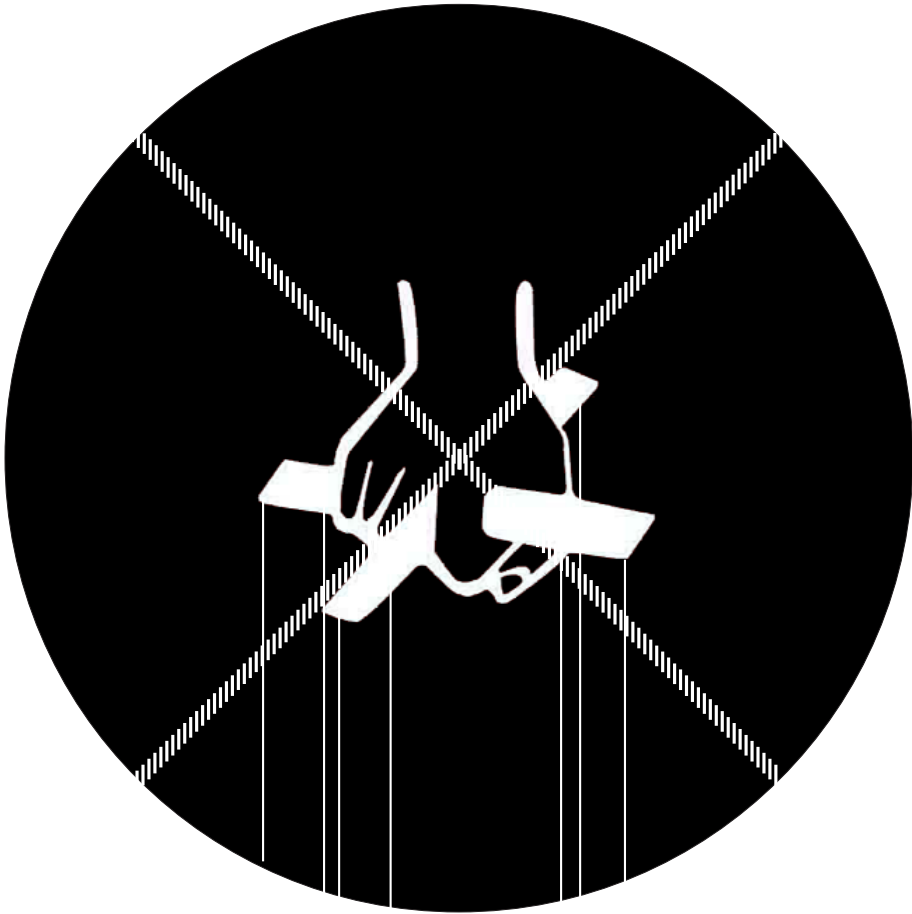


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ABSTRACT

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The motivation behind my thesis is to participate in the relevant discussion about the placement of a museum proposed by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, on the waterfront of Eteläsatama in the heart of Helsinki city. There are mixed opinions concerning if this is the right way of regenerating the harbour. As an opposition to the design competition launched by Guggenheim, another party organises a “counter competition” by name Next Helsinki. The aim is to create a platform for discussion; alternative proposals for the South Harbour - which I as a part of my thesis participate and contribute to.

How to renew the South Harbour area of Eteläsatama for future benefit for the city of Helsinki? The scope of my thesis is connected to topics related to both the site, the South Harbour as a whole, and strategies connected to cost and investment. What else could there be? The possibilities given by the capital which the city is willing to invest in Guggenheim can be transformed into something completely different. My thesis is an exploration towards what this alternative could be, and how it could reintroduce lost value and create new means to the South Harbour.

The approach towards the topic is driven by examining the situation and considering and evaluating the investment into Guggenheim contra an alternative, through analytical and diagrammatic means - resulting into a strategy. The next phase focuses on concretisation the strategy into built form, and creating a feasibility study for the future.



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WHAT?



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RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT COULD BE THE ALTERNATIVE TO GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HARBOUR AREA OF ETELÄSATAMA?

HOW TO RENEW THE SOUTH HARBOUR AREA OF ETELÄSATAMA FOR FUTURE BENEFIT FOR THE CITY OF HELSINKI?

Through my thesis I want to focus on the harbour development in Helsinki, answering to the question of how to develop for the future benefit for the city of Helsinki and it's inhabitants. My aim is to create a discussion around Guggenheim Foundation's proposal for a new museum - is this what the city needs?

Through studies on the role and qualities within the site, I want to use my thesis as an exploration towards architectural answers to how a building or intervention can influence human processes and vice versa. By looking into how human interact with their surrounding, I want to reflect upon how a museum functions and seek for possibilities for architecture which interacts and respond to the city's and the inhabitants' processes.



BACKGROUND

The Guggenheim Foundation has launched a design competition on one of Helsinki's most valuable and interesting sites, for a new Guggenheim museum. The general aim for the area is to generate transformation and new activity; a call for the "miracle" in Spain - the Bilbao-effect - that might turn the situation around. The competition is by today one of the biggest, with 1715 registered proposals.

With this a debate arises: Is this the right place for such a museum? Eteläsatama is located right South for the city center, and today welcoming several boats and ships daily, with both historical and scenic values of the Southern waterfront. But what does the city actually need? To create another display case of too familiar media of traditional art production? Or is there a way in which Helsinki and its South Harbour can

be transformed for the maximum benefit of the city; aiming towards the people who use it and the future problems they will encounter? A counter competition by name Next Helsinki is been launched parallel to the Guggenheim's, and asks for alternative proposal. Another competition for an urban renewal plan of the area of Eteläsatama was also completed three years ago, without giving any big results.

As an important and symbolic valuable entrance to the city of Helsinki, the South Harbour is highly debated and asks for a well thought and careful additions and renewal. What kind of interventions could further activate the waterfront? How could the city and its inhabitants benefit from this?



Suvelathi//Helsinki



EASA 2012//Workshop //Strange Nature

PERSONAL ENGAGEMENT

The summer of 2012 I participated in a workshop through EASA (European Architecture Student Assembly), situated in Helsinki at the former industrial area of Suvilathi. The theme of that year's EASA was Wastelands, and the workshops were related to different aspects connected to the question of how to deal with such spaces that are left over; now without use and cause.

For me the relationship between the inhabitants, the industry and the waterfront was then especially interesting. How to make space for all three; enabling the city to meet the water and the people to interact with industry and production, as well as enjoying the spaces along the waterfront?

My personal engagement is also attached to the question of how architecture becomes a costly art object itself, a signal of wealth, commercialization and purely a magnet for tourism. Through my alternative proposal I want to aim towards the people of Helsinki - the users - and their processes. I want to bring the process of creating, evolving and changing into a structure or spatial intervention that reacts and responds to the needs of the users - and vice versa.



WHY?



COMPETITION: NEXT HELSINKI

"The city is the greatest collective work of art ever conceived and Helsinki is one of the most exquisite. We are seeking projects that infuse urban life with meanings that attach artistry to every aspect of the everyday. Emanating from this spectacular waterside site, we hope to find new ideas about dissemination, participation, and collaboration, not simply the anachronism of another conventional containment vessel for yet more of the too familiar media of traditional art production."

(Michael Sorkin, Chair of the Jury)

'Next Helsinki' is a counter "competition" to the Guggenheim foundation's suggestion to place a new museum in the South harbour area of Helsinki.

The commissioners asks for a discussion - by calling upon architects, urbanists, landscape architects, artists, environmentalists, students, activists and poets; they wish for suggestions in which way Helsinki and its area of Eteläsatama can be transformed for benefit of the city. The focus is to create a forum and attention toward an alternative means of development.

The head driver of this open call for ideas is

formulated by Checkpoint Helsinki, a new art organisation that commissions and produces artworks by emerging international artists, developed in discussions of artists, curators and other art professionals.

I want to use this call for ideas and their theme in my thesis. I want to participate in the discussion, by analysing, reflecting and suggesting spatial solution for Eteläsatama. I will use the deadline of the competition as a kick start to formulate spatial strategies and concepts developed by exploration of possibilities to solve and add new qualities in the city of Helsinki.



THE CITY, THE PEOPLE, THE FUTURE

Helsinki offers a variety of natural and cultivated places, laying beautifully alongside of the water. Although as a city, similar to others, it got real problems and needs; housing shortage; approaching sustainability with means of less energy consumption; mobility and effective transportation; and density. The trends of the future asks for a need for careful planning and development of the city structure. To constantly be aware of asking what the city needs, and to look at a long time perspective should be the fundamental interest of an architect. What if we look at regeneration of areas such as Eteläsatama as a opportunity to solve and relief the tensions, weaknesses and problems within the urban context? Could we look at city as an organism, that with small interventions within the city structure could cause a

bigger "stress release"? Similar to how the body reacts to acupuncture -is there a way to cause "Archipuncture"?

Museum as a medium has its own propose. But is there possibilities of asking more from a building? Can we aim to create a inventive platforms, where both experiencing and producing art, creating culture and communities, responding to the inhabitants' wishes and ambitions. As 'Next Helsinki' puts it, as a opportunity to "...highlight the city's singularity, and its residents' appetite for social, environmental and cultural justice."

Instead of tourism and branding of the city being the main (economical) aim, the site of Eteläsatama can have a much bigger role to play for Helsinki's inhabitants and their future.



HARBOUR RENEWAL

The city of Helsinki has been undergoing a huge development in the last decades, and the city is still striving for further ambitions and renewal. The question of the vast harbour area is, as in many other cities, put on debate. How to utilize these spaces, that before used to be docks, storage, and industry - which are now without use, function or connection? The potential to make a bridge between the city and the water is highly valuable - but how? Helsinki asks the same question, and I want to participate in discovering the answer.

In 2011, an open international ideas competition was organized about the larger harbour area. Information about the Kirjava Satama competition, renewal of the South Harbour, can be found at <http://www.kirjavasatama.fi>. However, the results were not very useful. Today there are several ongoing

renewal developments of different harbour areas in Helsinki, as the new harbour in Vuosaari outside Helsinki liberate the old harbours for new use. The area of Kalasatama, Kruunuvuorenranta and Länsisatama are all being planned to be covered by housing and new working places.

It is a question of how to handle these inbetween spaces; how to develop these areas that ensure greater availability of the waterfront, that gives possibilities for activities that connects the city to the water? What kind of strategy is needed, and how could the city benefit from planning in a smart way?

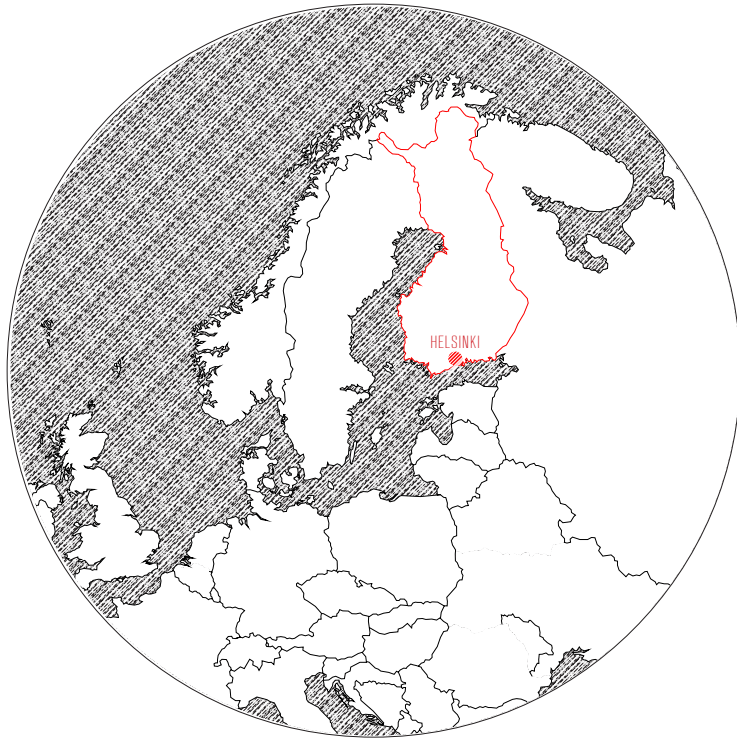
My project aims to solve a concrete situation, as well as looking at a bigger picture and relating to issues that are being addressed on a global scale.



WHERE?



LOCATION



Seen from continental Europe, Finland looks like an island, separated by the Baltic Sea, which extends to the East as the Gulf of Finland. Big passenger boats leaving Helsinki and arriving from Stockholm every day are a

visual bridge to the rest of Europe. The city insists on keeping these boats right in the old, centrally located South Harbour even if a new port has been built for freight ships on the outskirts of the city.



THE SITE

The site is at walking distance to the symbolic centre of the city, the Market Place, which is flanked by the City Hall, Embassy of Sweden, the Presidential Palace and the newly renovated Market Hall. The back of the site, across the street, is the Observatory Hill with a nice park and a neoclassical observatory building.

The location is in other words very central, and is historically the main port of Helsinki, welcoming several cruise ships daily. After the opening of links to Estonia, passengers on fast boats to Tallinn used to embark where the present Guggenheim competition site is now. In recent years the traffic to Tallinn has grown so much that it was moved to West Harbour. The biggest cruise ships are too tall to sail to South Harbour, and they have their own docks in the West

Harbour, too. Although the Olympia terminal receive daily Silja Line cruise ships from Stockholm, with 1.5 millions passengers annually. And the Katajanokka Terminal still receives boats from both Stockholm and Tallinn.

Two islands visually makes the South harbour more enclosed space. The island of Valkosaari has been used as a boat yard, a military hospital and a quarantine station for cholera - but now housing one restaurant.

As the main entrance for the water to meet the city, the area can play a big role of how to create new qualities and spaces in Helsinki.

Observatory hill

Olympia Terminal

Makasiini Terminal

*Covered food
market*

Market square



Palace

Old terminal
(removed)

Congress centre

Katajanokan Terminal

Helsinki Cathedral

Uspenski Cathedral



Photo taken from South, showing the port of Eteläsatama with the city skyline in the backdrop.



PREMISES AND POSSIBILITIES

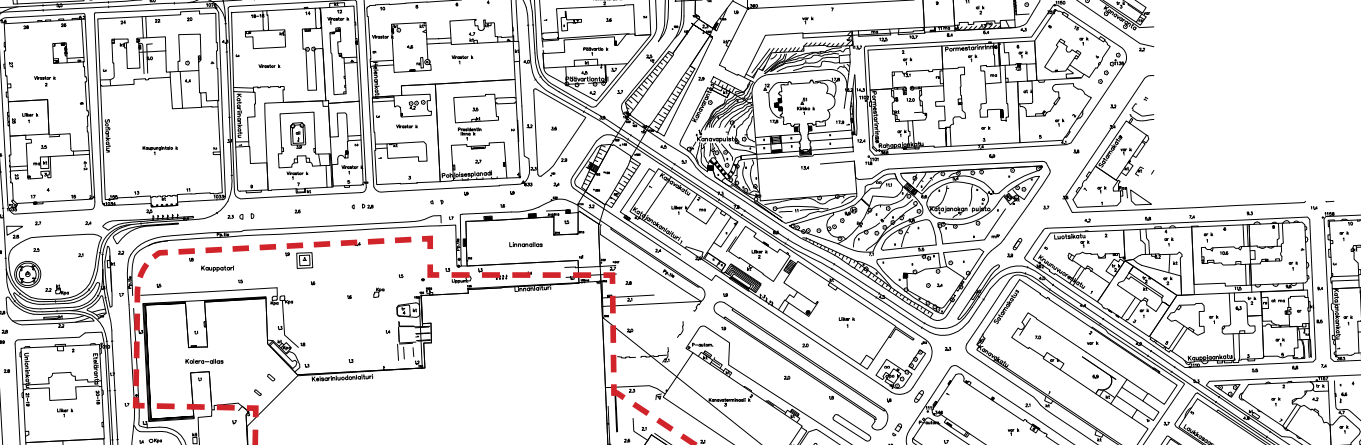
What makes the site both interesting and complex are several different aspects: The symbolic and scenic value of the southern waterfront of the city. The massive car and truck traffic to and from the Sweden boats takes a lot of the space out of necessity and security reasons.

The situation of Eteläsatama seems to be quite undefined and vast, with big terminal and storage buildings blocking the public access to the water. The city being just in the backdrop, there is a sudden transition in scale: From dense city blocks to the big proportions of a cruise ship, standing in the openness of the harbour.

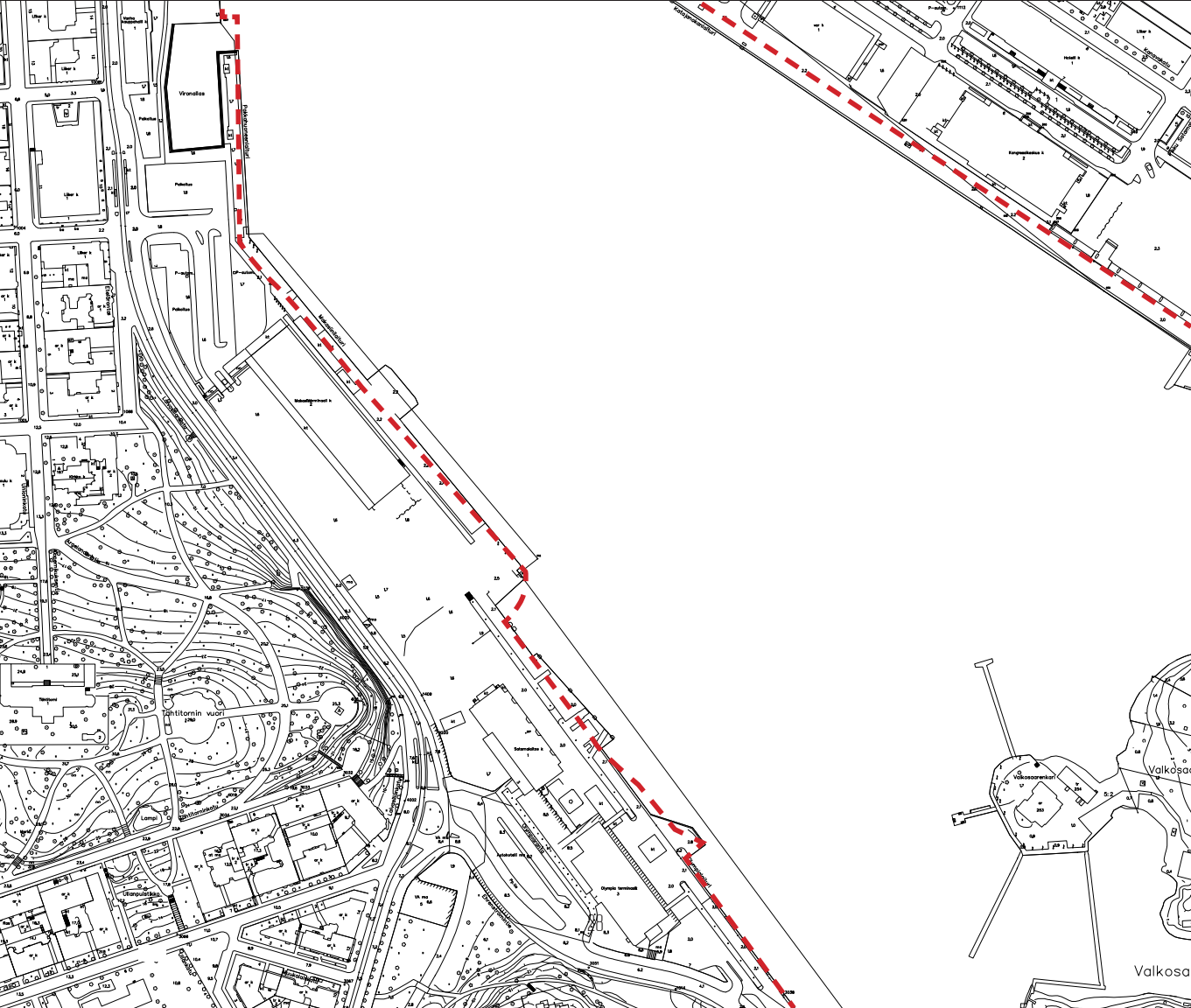
However - as the terminals and ships take

up a lot of the space and view - it is also a big quality to Helsinki's city centre. As historically the main port of the city, the visual aspects and connection to the boats seems to be enriching the life and activity, creating a hub for the visitors, inhabitants and XXX. Kauppatori - the Market Square - is the proof of the existing activity, placed in front of the Palace showcasing the historical roots of the harbour.

As a premise for my own, I want to investigate how the existing activity can stay, eventually improved, as well as giving space for new functions ensuring new type of activity and accessibility to the waterfront.



HOW ?



STRUCTURE

Analytic pt. 1

Get to know the city and its inhabitants

- First hand experience; Interaction with the spaces, pictures, sound, environment, atmosphere.
- Reactions; Who are the inhabitants of Helsinki? Talk, interact and question the people. What are the general opinions about Eteläsatama and placement of Guggenheim? What would they want/need in the city of Helsinki?

Analytic pt. 2

Analysis based on maps and data

- City structure, circulation, built environment, functions, public spaces, identity,

Competition pt. 1

Green face- mock up ideas by conclusions created from the analysis.

- Zoom Out/Zoom in; transform strategies into spatial designs, and creating schemes

- Usage of collages/visualizations to illustrate idea and develop one concept

Competition pt. 2

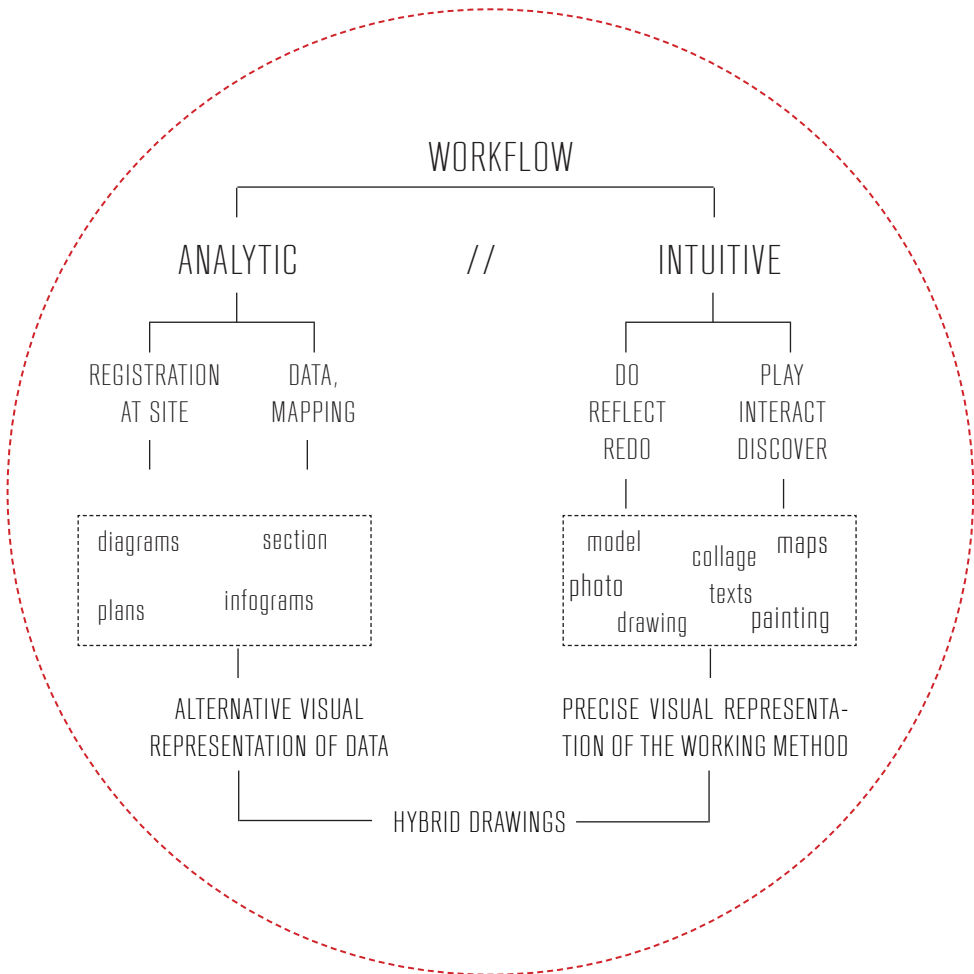
- Evolve the formulated concepts into plans, sections and axonometric drawings in various scales.
- Working with unconventional visual presentation to showcase the idea in the best manner
- Delivering my entry

Project development

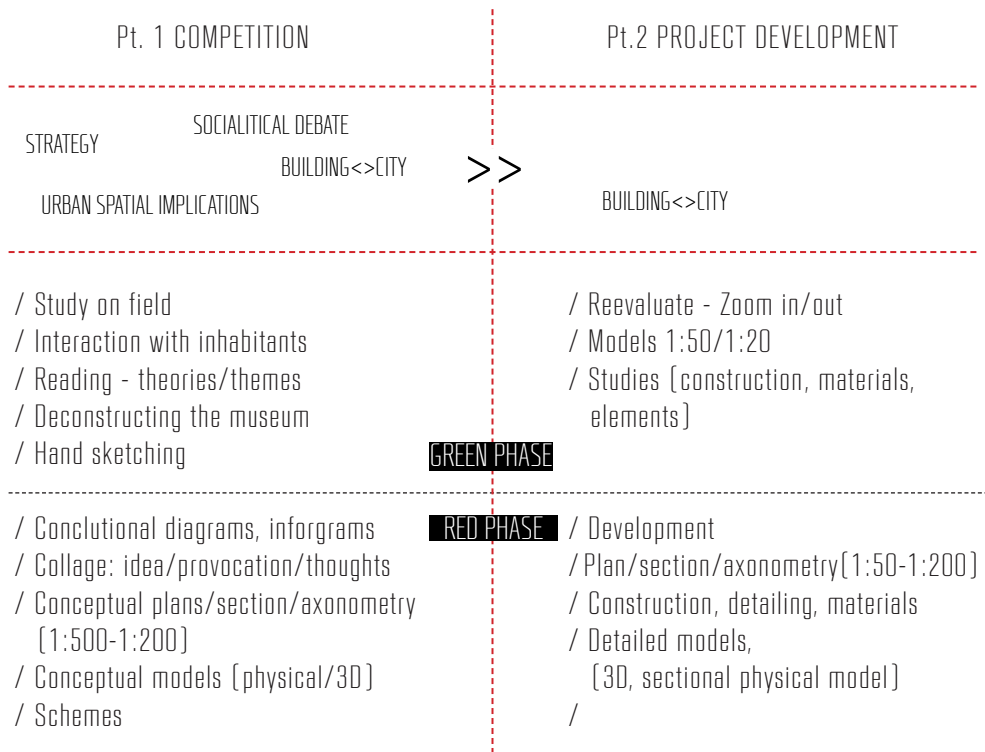
- Reflection; Stepping back and questioning my actions; reevaluation
- Zoom in - model studies, construction and materials
- Detailing, materials

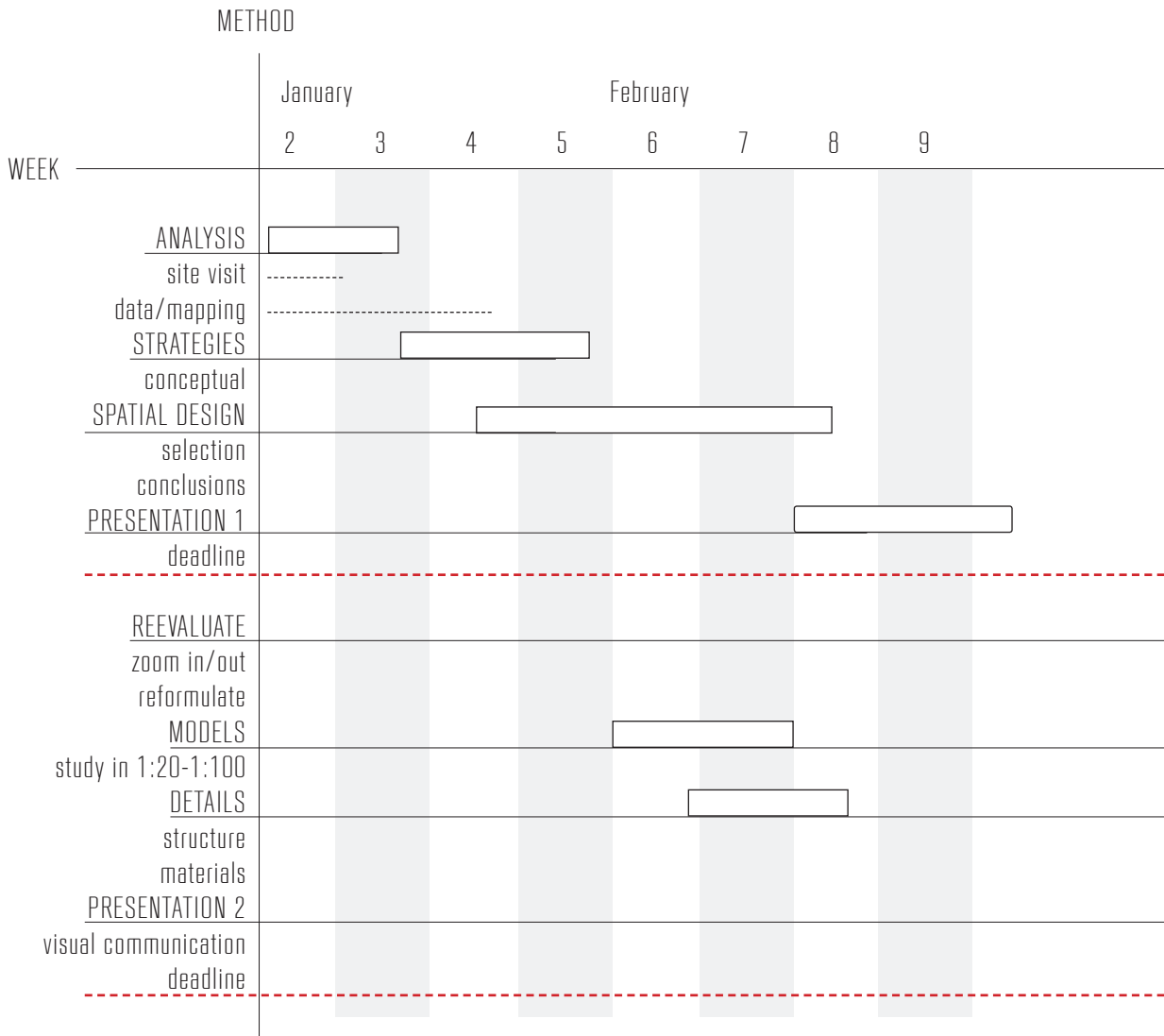
Presentation

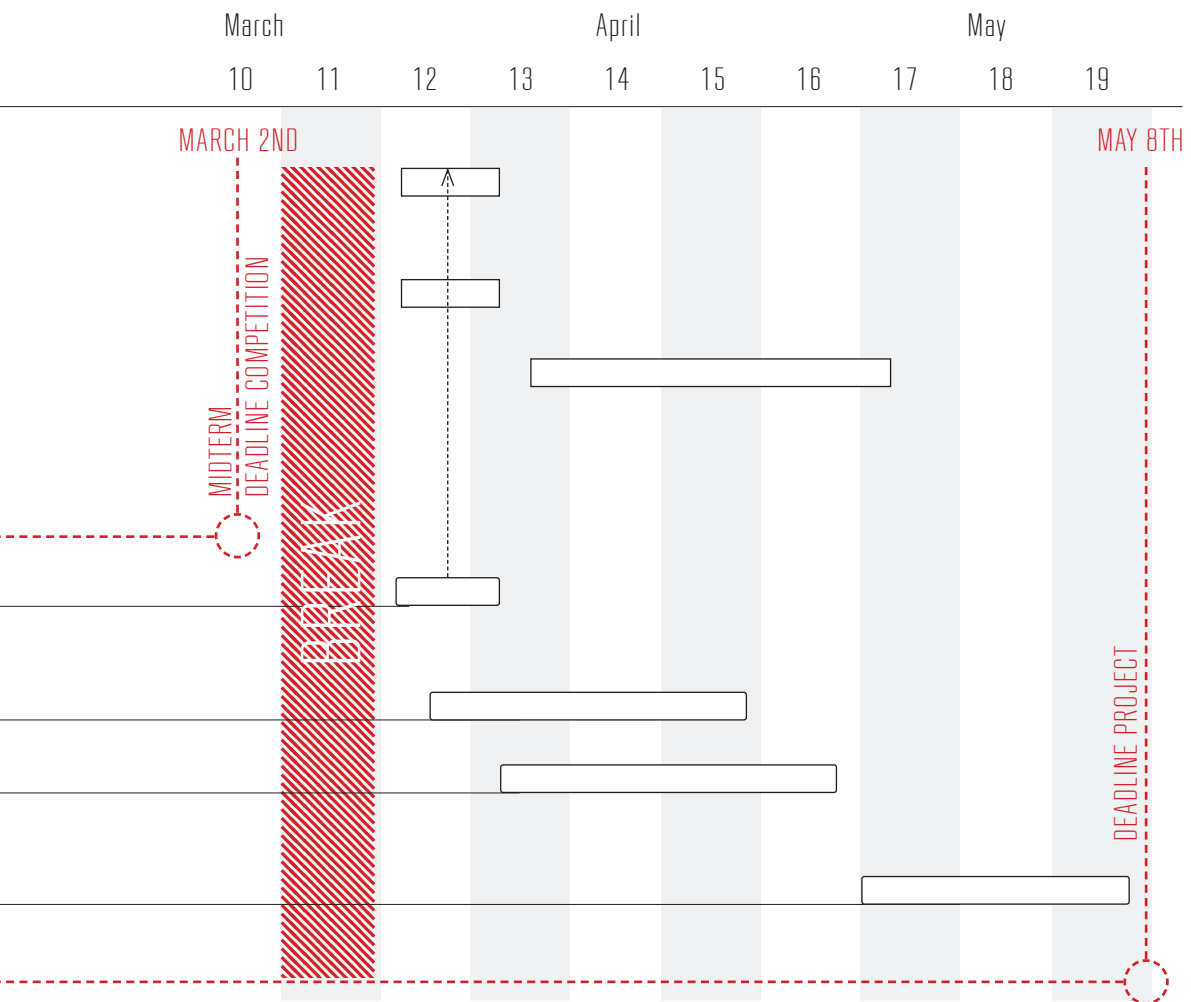
- Exploration and execution of different visual means to present my final work.



PHASES







LITERATURE LIST

'Museum of the Future' - Christina Bechtler & Dora Imhof [eds.], 2014, JRP Ringier

'Real Estates; Life Without Debt' - Edited by Fulcrum, 2014, Bedford Press

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