



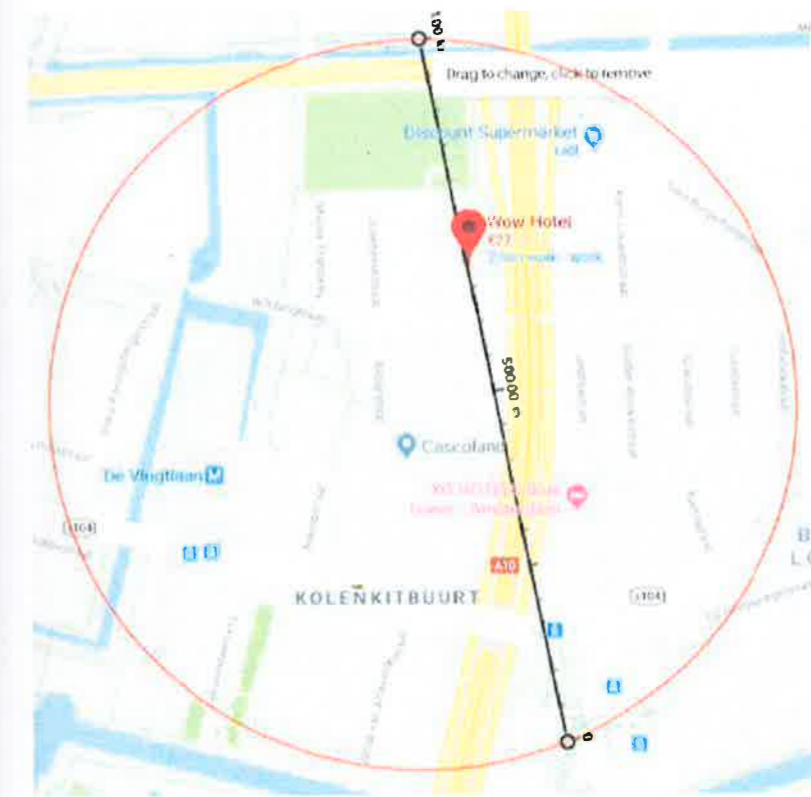
Materiality

Ignacio Subías Albert



The research document explores the field research performed in the Kolenkit neighborhood, located in the in West of Amsterdam, in a strict circular area with half a kilometer of that spans between Vlugtlaan metro station and the Admiraal de Ruijter street and during a period of two weeks in March of 2019.

With the pretension of acquiring objective data about the urban environment of the area, the neighborhood was documented and analyzed under the topic of materiality and this publication compiles and reorganizes the results.



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Chapter 1: Materiality
 Chapter 2: The Importance of the Materiality of the Cité
 Chapter 3: The Cité's Techniques
 3.1: Archive
 Chapter 4: Proposal : Merging layers

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Chapter 1:
Materiality

“The french language fist came to sort out the city using two words: cité and ville.
[...] ville referred to the overall city.
[...] cité came to mean the character of life in a neighbourhood.
The feelings people harboured about the neighbours, strangers and attachment to places.”

Sennet, R. 2016. Building and Dwelling :
Ethics for the city. New York City. FSG. P. 1.



Chapter 1: Materiality
Chapter 2: The Importance of the Materiality of the Cité
Chapter 3: The Cité's Techniques
3.1: Archive
Chapter 4: Proposal: Merging layers

When observing the topic of materiality in the Kolenkitbuurt neighborhood, I took a natural step towards observing those parts of materiality that have a stronger level of visual information, those materials that explicitly say something about the non-material activity of the area. The area is covered in graffiti, tags, some sculptures, stickers, decorative tiles, commemorative plaques and unique elements to the area such as fabrics woven through balconies' bars or parabolic antennas sticking out from the windows.

Whilst analysing all my initial interests from a distance, I quickly noticed that they all have a high visual impact in common, something out of the ordinary. However, when editing and grouping them, I also came to the realisation that many of these material gestures were improvised and a direct extension of the citizen, like painting a graffiti, placing a sticker or an object in your car.



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I had read Building and Dwelling : Ethics for the city by Richard Sennet, quoted in this chapter. The author points to a historical distinction of vocabulary where two different words developed to refer to different ways of thinking about a city. Whilst ville referred to the physical and literal, such as buildings and materials, urban planning, the mayor; the term cité in opposition defined the subjective and figurative, the citizens, the life within, the thoughts and behaviours.

This inspiring notion lead me to start approaching the materiality in the area from the same duality. I defined that there are two types of materiality: the materiality of the ville and the materiality of the cité, and that they both coexist in the same urban space yet they share a defined tension visually and in their message.



Materiality of the ville is used in the research to refer to materials that are placed in the neighbourhood from the outside of the circle. They are put there by someone who is many times not developing their daily life in the area, like a town hall delegate, an architect, etc. Materiality of the ville comprises buildings materials, their shapes, decorations, public sculptures, street names, urban planning. Because of their exterior origin and their a priori nature, they are not necessarily an accurate representation of the area's citizens. In the context of scarcity and abundant -the theme of this Man & Leisure semester- these actions are abundant. Bricks cover the urban visual landscape, for example. They are backed up by the institutions in terms of being acceptable, and they most of the times have complex forms and motives behind them. (see page 54) In terms of visual language, they can be roughly described as ninety degrees, clean, structured and rationally organised.



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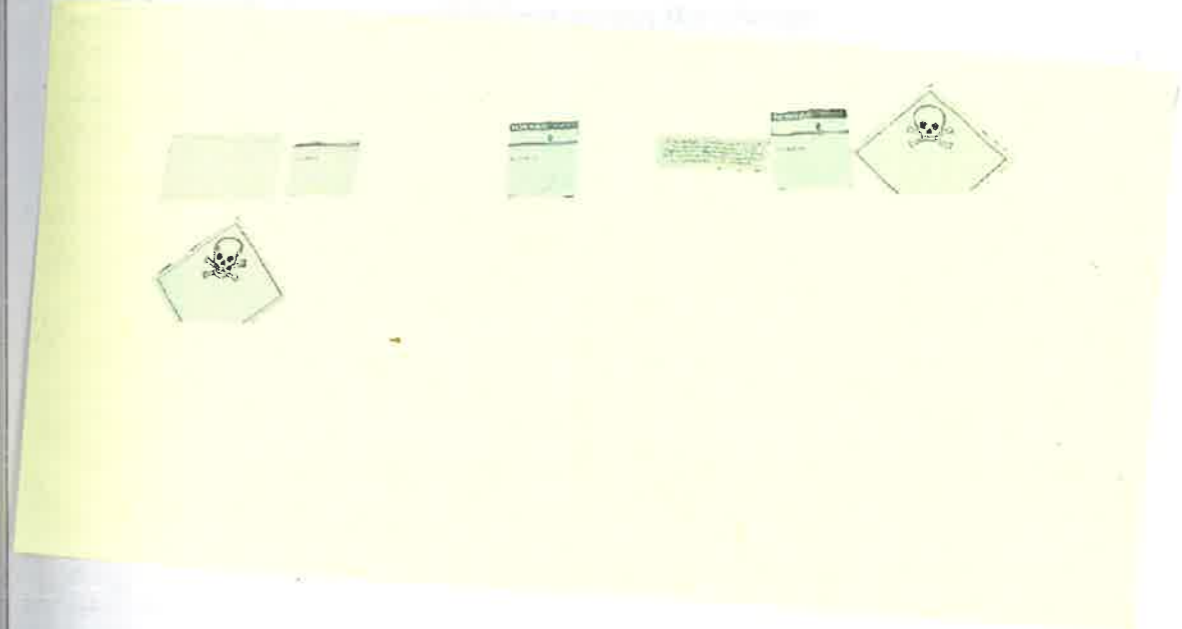
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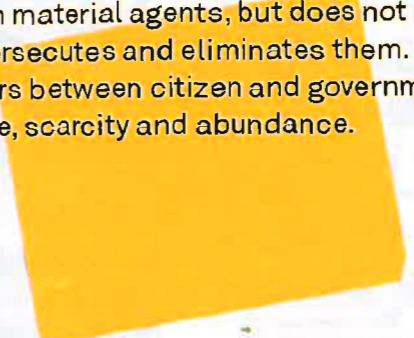
The materiality of the cité refers to the opposite gestures: materials placed in the neighbourhood by its citizens, they come from the inside. Graffiti, stickers, objects and interiors you can see through the window, cars, fabrics. Their message and intent has to many times do with expressing a personal identity, decoration, expressing thoughts, etc. It is matter that deals with the expression of the self. These actions are more scarce, as they are not backed up by the systems in terms of being acceptable and are many times deemed of vandalism. Their form is simple and understandable, and their spontaneous nature makes them have a different agenda and program than that of the materiality of the ville, behaving like a simpler extension of the citizen's will. In terms of visual language, they are rough, crooked, improvised, intuitive and spontaneously placed.



The relationship between the two types of materiality is one of tension, influence, and slight hostility. This relationship can be understood as the same as in between the agents that these materialities represent: citizens and government.

In terms of formal relations, the materiality of the cité is usually arising on a surface that belongs to the ville. The ville is many times the canvas over which the cité realises. The ville actively tries to combat these forms of expression, these "weeds" that grow in their garden, in the form of, for example, municipal employees who erase graffiti, "clean" streets, or regulations like the one imposed by the Commissie Ruimtelijke Kwaliteit (Commission of Spatial Quality), a governmental committee which establishes regulations on what is acceptable and what is not in terms of visual impact of the urban landscape.

Together, they form the actual tissue of the urban space. It is a story of a norm that is trying to be changed by certain material agents, but does not accept the change and persecutes and eliminates them. It is dissonance in layers between citizen and government, inside and outside, scarcity and abundance.



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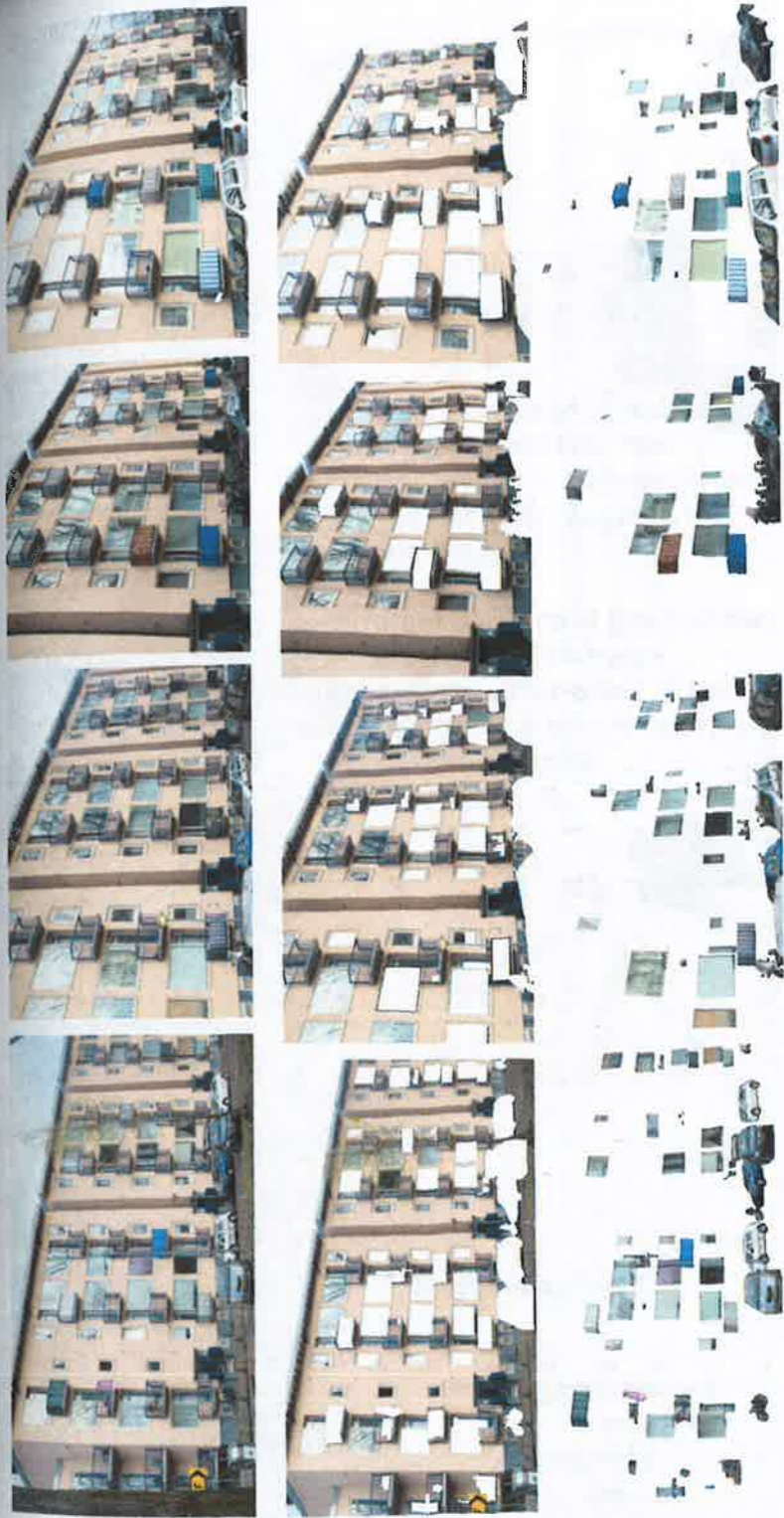
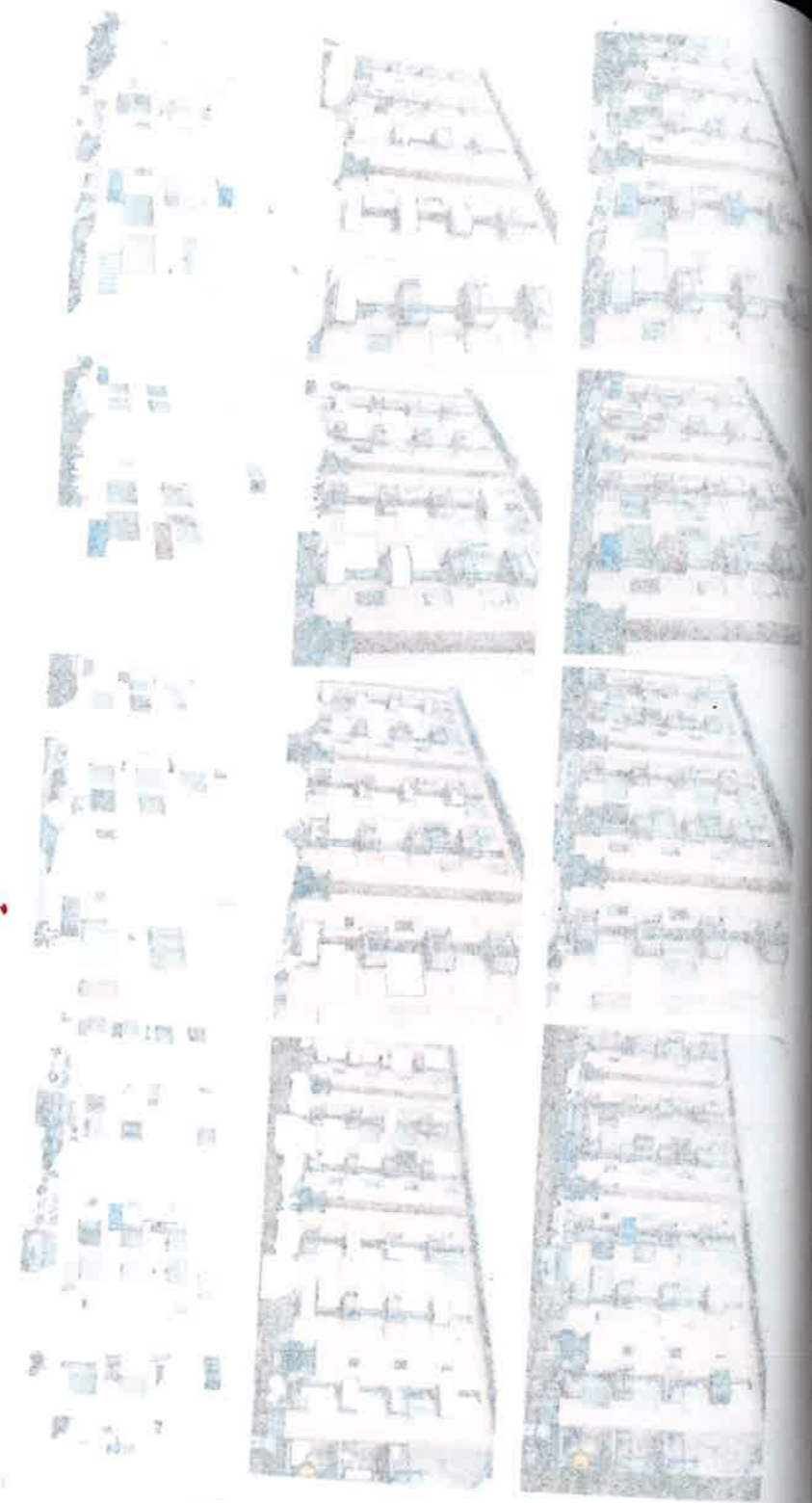
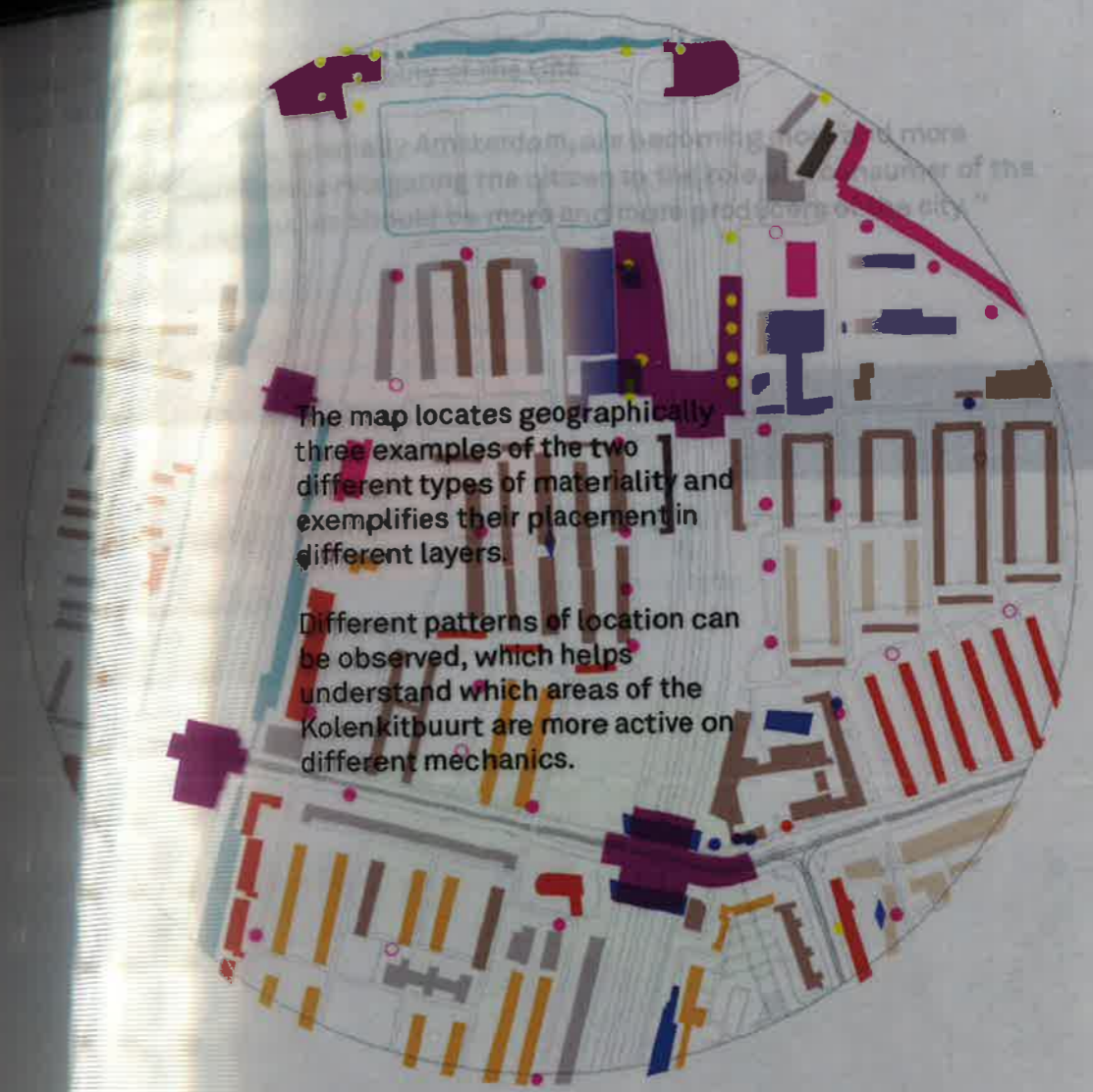


fig.1 fig.2 fig.3

Sarah Burgerstraat
 1. View
 2. Materiality of the ville
 3. Materiality of the cité



Maximizing density
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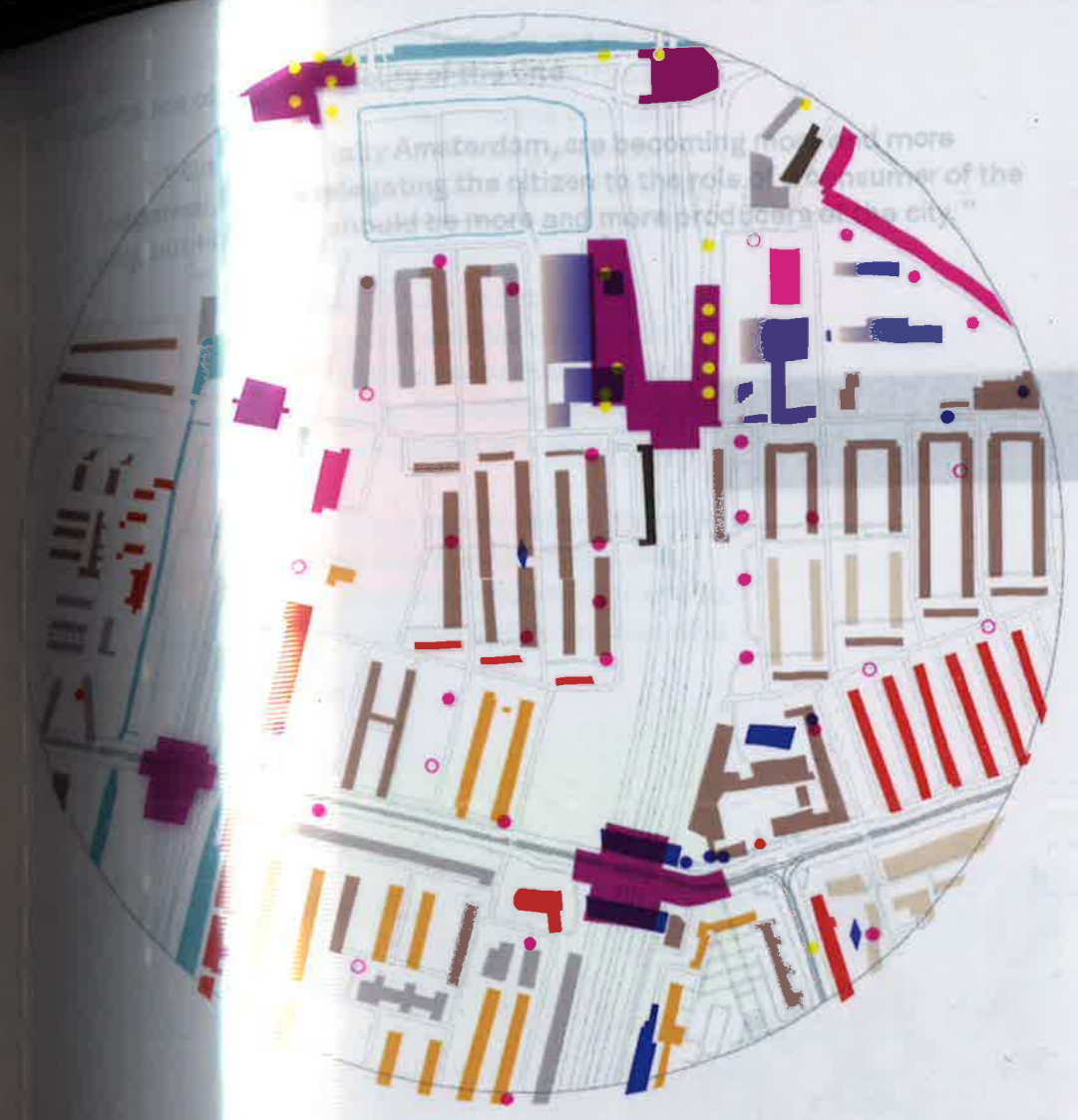


...the city of Amsterdam, and becoming more and more
 ...the citizens to the role of the summer of the
 ...more and more producers of the city."

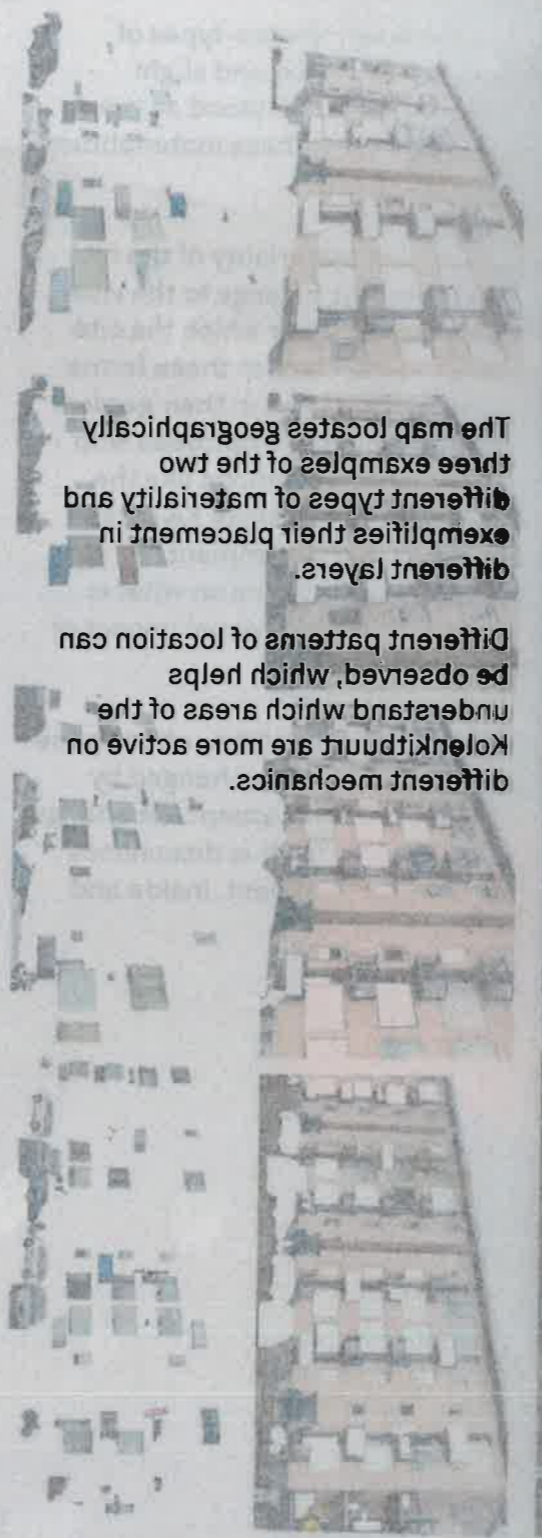
The map locates geographically three examples of the two different types of materiality and exemplifies their placement in different layers.

Different patterns of location can be observed, which helps understand which areas of the Kolenkitbuurt are more active on different mechanics.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beige Bricks Brown Bricks Yellow Bricks Red Bricks Faded Red Bricks Glass, Metal Concrete, Plaster, Marble | <p>Wednesday Night</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objects around container No objects around container Stranded furniture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High density of painting Graffiti "Stone" Graffiti "Ralph" Graffiti "Bean" |
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- Beige Bricks
 - Brown Bricks
 - Yellow Bricks
 - Red Bricks
 - Faded Red Bricks
 - Glass, Metal
 - Concrete, Plaster, Marble
- Wednesday Night
- Objects around container
 - No objects around container
 - ◆ Stranded furniture
- High density of painting
 - Graffiti "Stone"
 - Graffiti "Ralph"
 - Graffiti "Bean"



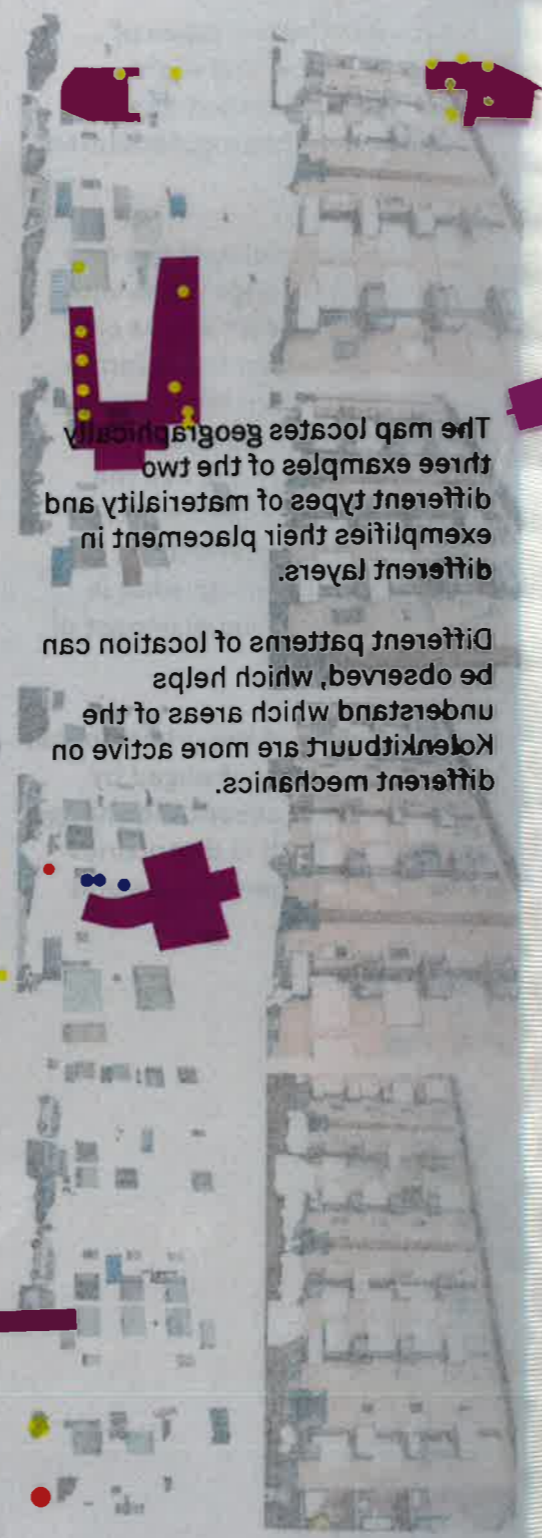
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1. Materiality of the city
2. Materiality of the city
3. Materiality of the city

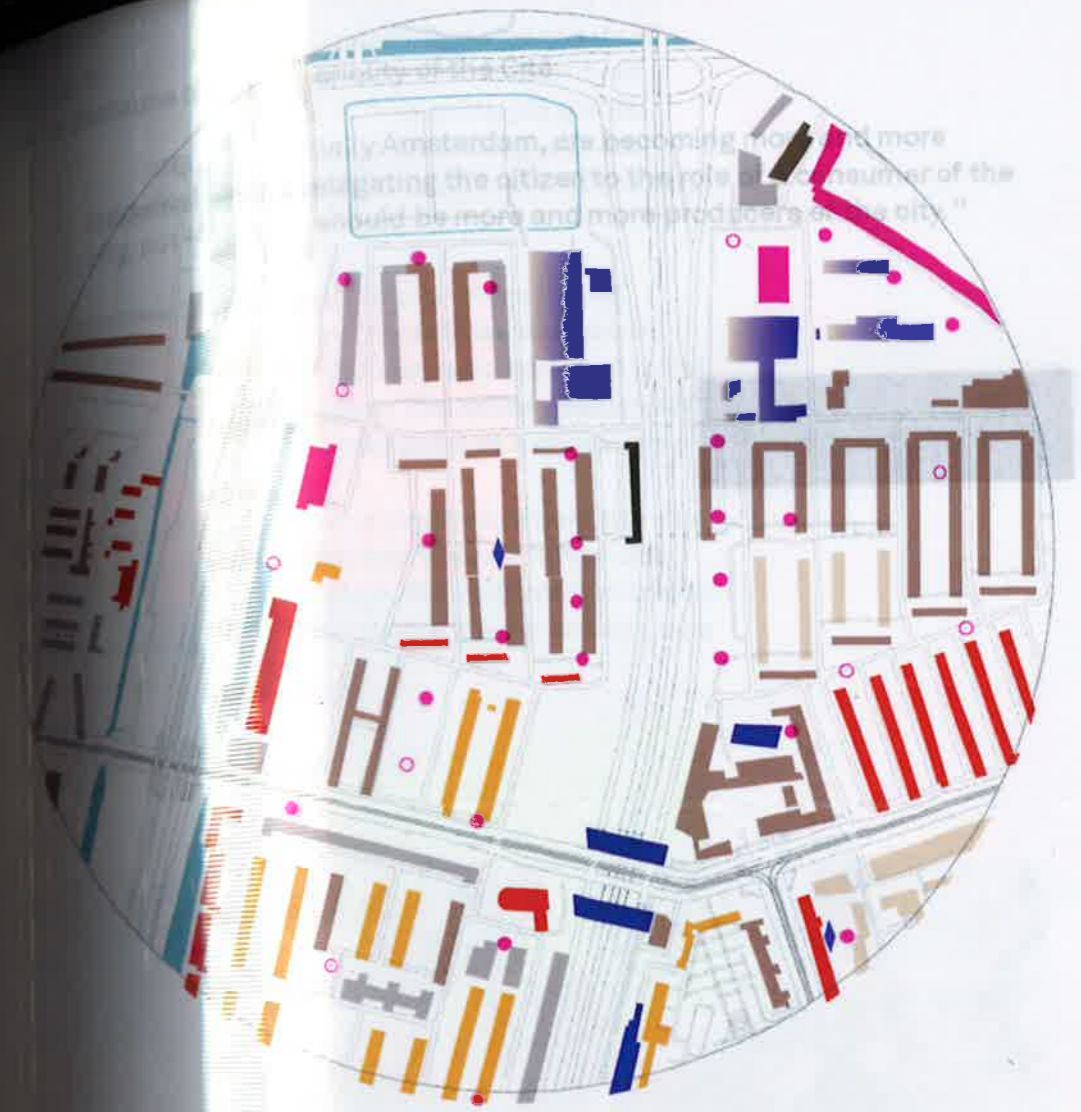
High density of painting

- Graffiti "Bean"
- Graffiti "Ralph"
- Graffiti "Stone"
- Graffiti



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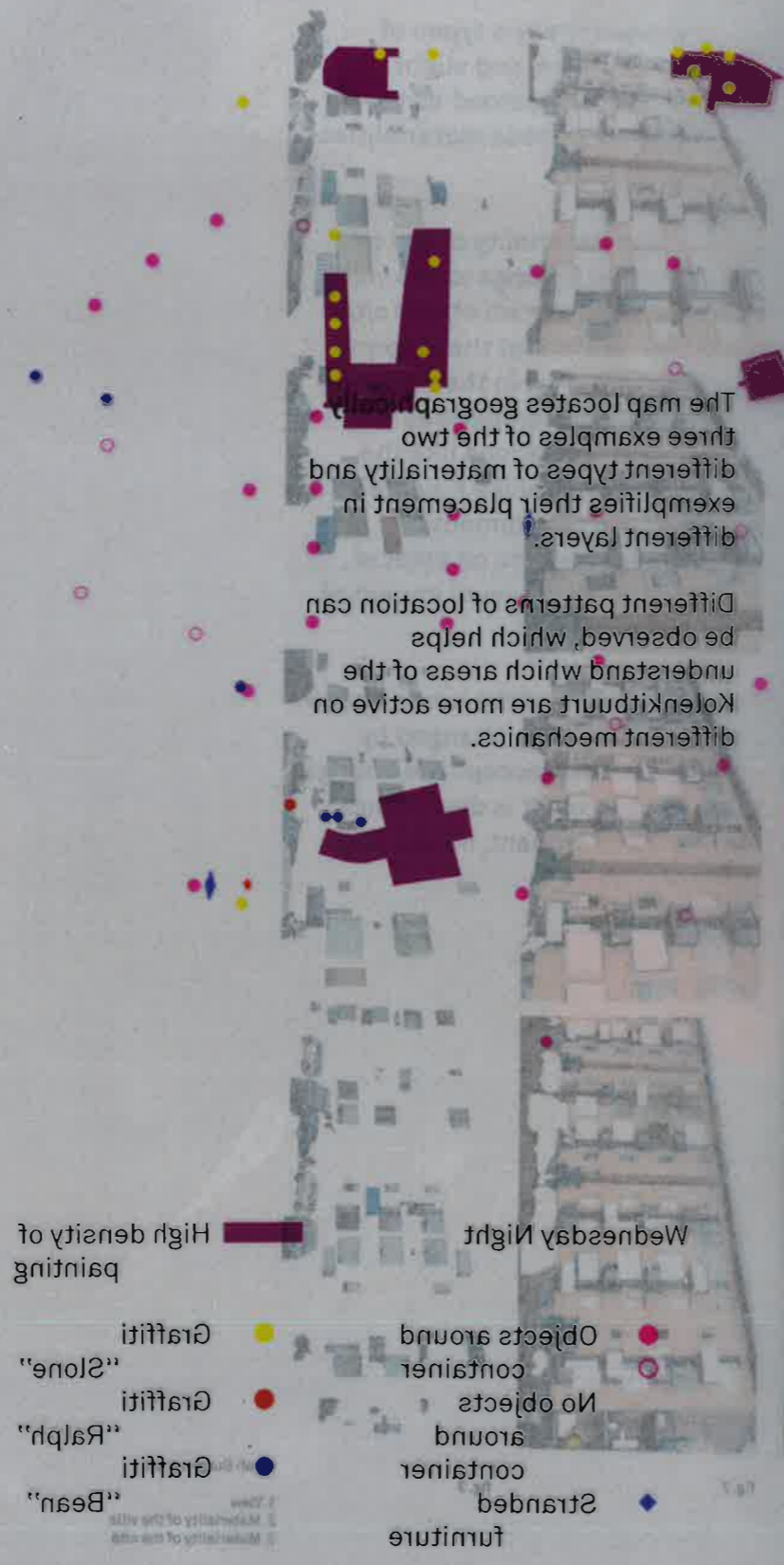


- Beige Bricks
- Brown Bricks
- Yellow Bricks
- Red Bricks
- Faded Red Bricks
- Glass, Metal
- Concrete, Plaster, Marble

Wednesday Night

- Objects around container
- No objects around container
- ◆ Stranded furniture

...ly Amsterdam, are becoming more and more...
 ...the citizen to the role of...
 ...would be more and more productive...



- Beige Bricks
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High density of painting

Wednesday Night

Objects around container

No objects around container

Stranded furniture

Graffiti "Stone"

Graffiti "Ralph"

Graffiti "Bean"

Marble

Plaster

Concrete

Glass, Metal

Bricks

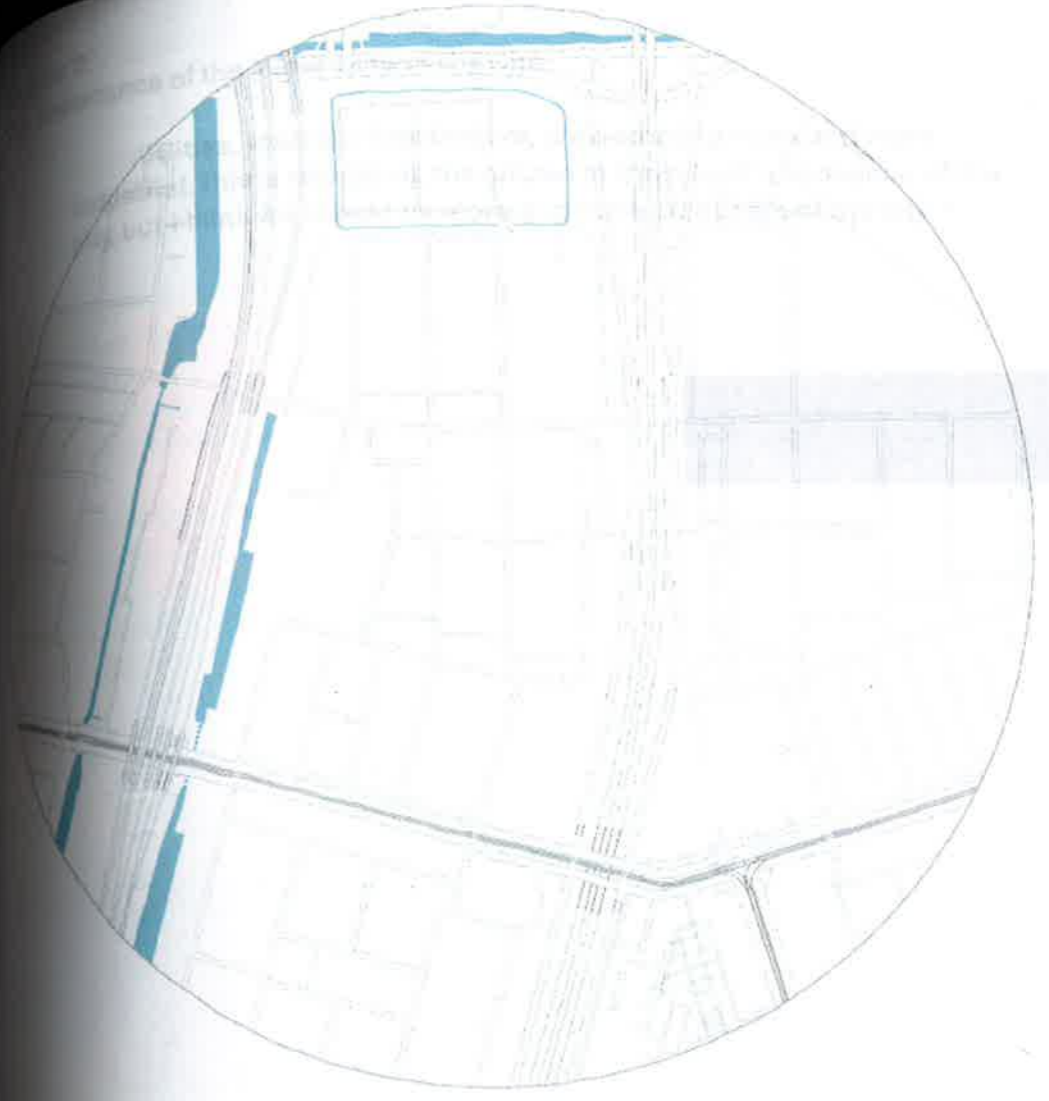
Faded Red

Red Bricks

Yellow Bricks

Brown Bricks

Large Bricks



"Citizens, especially Amsterdam, are becoming more and more industrial. This is relegating the citizen to the role of a consumer of the city, but I think we should be more and more producers of the city."

The need for the citizen to feel and see itself represented as an integral part of the materiality of the urban context is essential. This principle places the citizen in the middle of the city-making process, transforming him/her/them from a consumer of the city to a producer.

Seeing ourselves represented in your surrounding makes us feel represented by the entities who are in charge, in this case, the institutions who take part in the development of the urban tissue. The citizen becomes the corner stone instead of that who looks at a cornerstone.

However, today the mechanic is inverted, where the ville actively tries to remove direct expressions of the cité, which has the opposite effect on the citizen's perception of what the consideration for them is by the entities who direct the ville.



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...of what the consideration for them is by the entities who
...contact the villa.



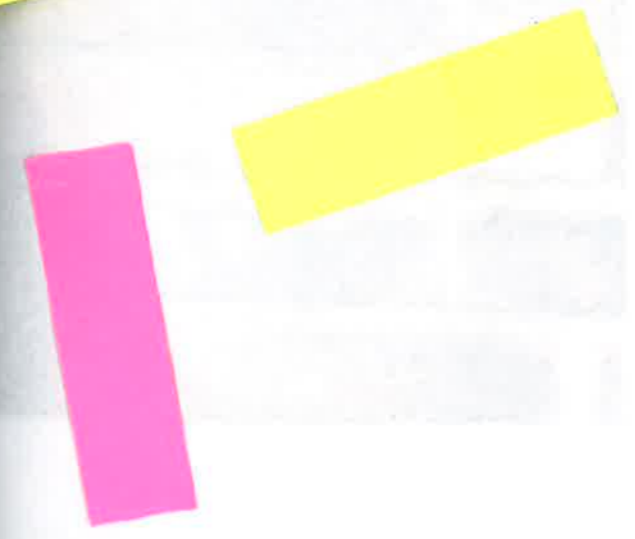


The debate between whether the human shapes the tool or the tool shapes the human is universal. When we think of craft and materiality in general, it has been crafted and given shape by a certain individual.

It is interesting to think of the inverse principle and consider how materiality might reflect or affect the relationship among the citizens, and the relationship between the citizen (cit ) and the government (ville).

The materiality around us starts to affect us. For example, pink interiors have been found to have calming effects, which is why they are many times implemented in imprisonment cells. Specific industrial sectors that produce the materiality that surround us today base their principles on the fact that the materiality affects the human, that is, materiality comes a priori. Fashion is one of these sectors who base their marketing point largely on how materials affect people. For example, claiming the empowerment we might feel when wearing a suit (power suit) or the different perception one would have of him, her or themselves when wearing garments which reveal a lot of skin.

Looking at materiality through this principle of affecting the citizen heightens the importance of the materiality of the cit  in the urban context as both a symbol and herald of integration and democracy. This gains specific relevance in the case of the Kolenkitbuurt, an area which is covered with manifestations of the cit , which express a need, an outcry of a message, a non-conformity.





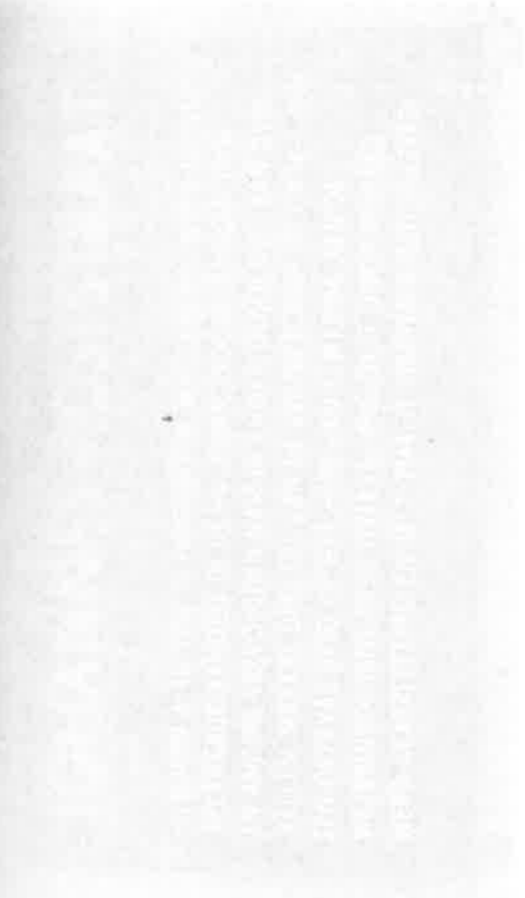
Chapter 3:
The Cité's Techniques

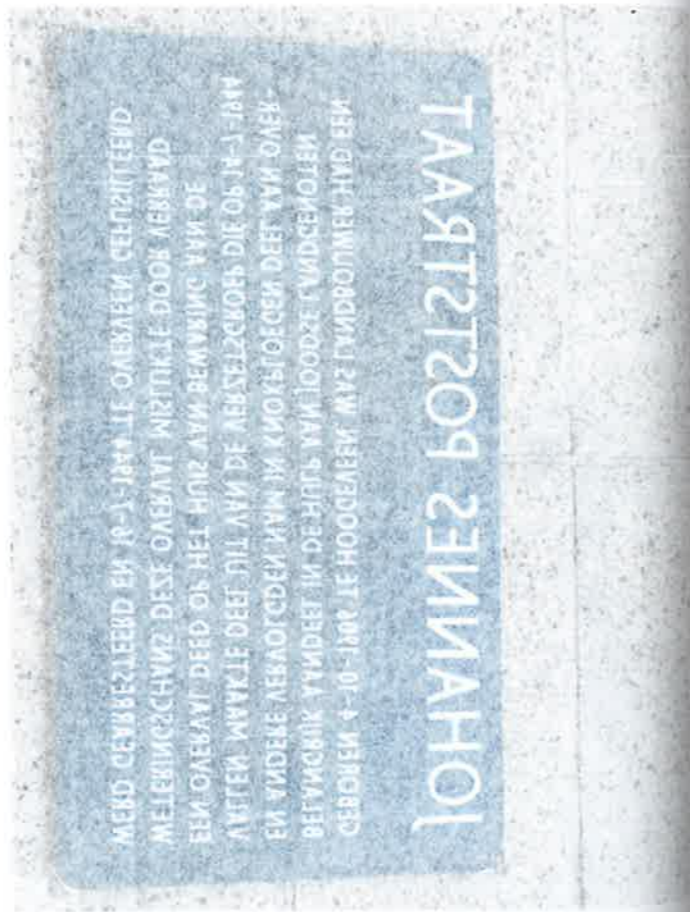
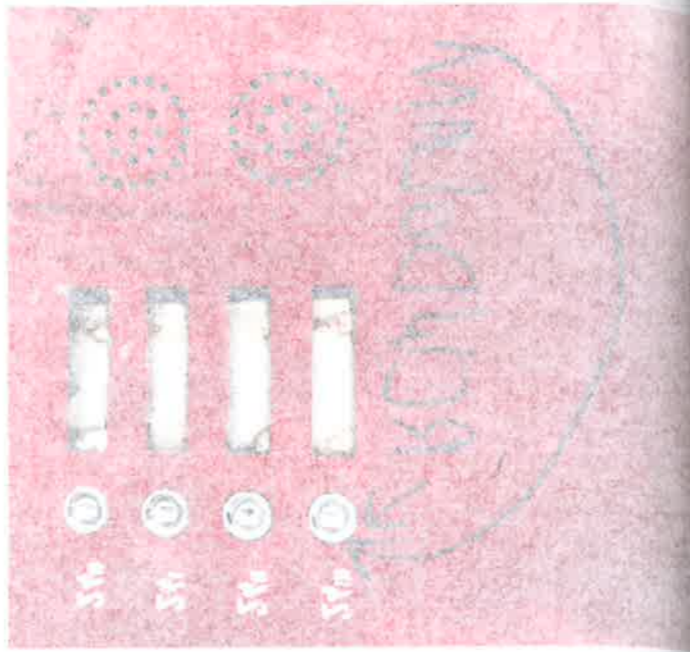
"[...] so-called experimental photographers.
[...] They are in fact consciously attempting to create unpredictable
information
[...] to release themselves from the camera, to place within the image
something that is not in its program."

Flusser, V. 1983. Towards a Philosophy of
Photography. Essay

“[...] so-called experimental photographers [...] They are in fact consciously attempting to create unpredictable information [...] to release themselves from the camera, to place within the image something that is not in its program.”

The *cités* techniques of choice to act upon the urban tissue go hand in hand with the nature of the action: spontaneous, intuitive, quick. Stickers, paint cans, brushes, pencils, ready made objects and fabrics. This simplicity of the tool contrasts with the complex forms the *ville* constructs urban tissue, through complicated building, urban developments plans, etc.





On one of my favourite essays, Towards the Philosophy of Photography, Vilém Flusser explains through the context of the photographic camera the importance of understanding the tool.

He establishes a difference between technical and traditional images. Traditional images started with cave painting. Because of the simplicity of the tool, in this case, fingers or a brush, the intention of the human is directly transmitted to the form. The human becomes the medium.

With the invention of the camera, technical images started to arise, and the complexity of the "black box", which was and still is just believe to produce an accurate representation of reality, relegated the human to an operator of the apparatus. This is because the complete understanding of the tool disappears, and the human succumbs to the program of the camera. The image maker goes from being a producer to a consumer of images, just like it's happening in the city.



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Claude Monet's Water Lilies
 A painting of his garden in Giverny.
 Tool: Paintbrush.



A photograph of Monet's garden in Giverny
 Tool: Photographic Camera



Clude Lorraine's Stone Bridge
A painting of the Garden of Giverny
Jocelyn Fontaine



A painting of a pond in Giverny
Jocelyn Fontaine

The understanding and simplicity of the tool or procedure through which something is executed is therefore essential to convey an accurate message of expression. The simplicity of the techniques the ville uses to exert its materiality converts it into a direct extension of the citizen.

In opposition, a building its built by a network of complex elements, its formal qualities and location all comprise a more complicated program, which is what relegates the human from a producer to a consumer of the urban tissue. The complexity eliminates the capacity for the human to understand, comprehend and therefore own the building instead of being owned by it.



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After observing these techniques and tools of the
 materiality of the cité, I have reduced it to four categories:

Painting and drawing includes handwriting,
 tagging, pigments, graffiti and decorative drawing.
 Painting and drawing introduces a new message that
 infiltrates the existing surface. These two clash in visual
 language due to the nature of the writing usually being
 very rough and hand. Painting and drawing is many times
 linked to tagging and leaving an imprint of your identity.
 you stamp the ville with yourself.



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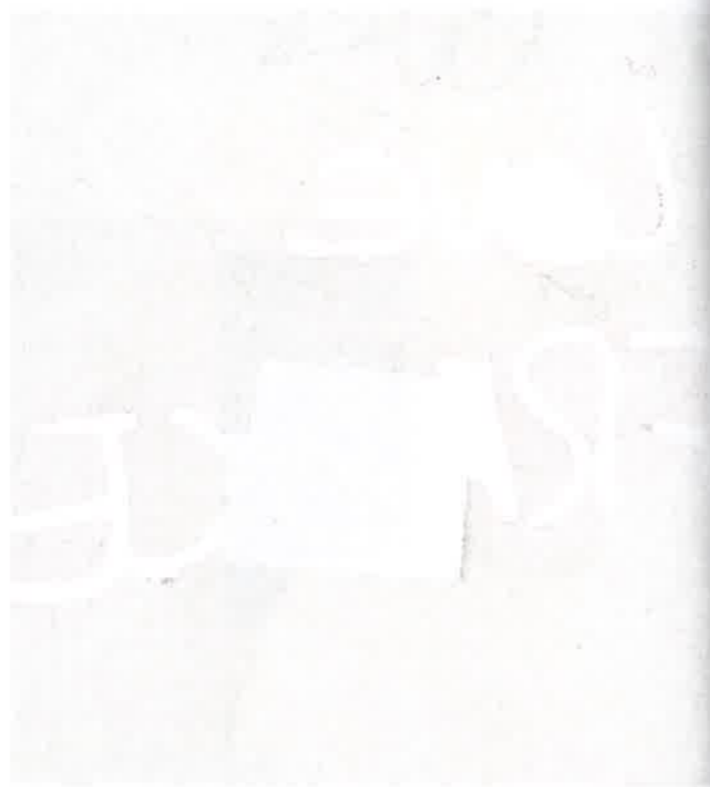
2005



LOVE
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Printed material encompasses stickers, posters, informative print-work, etc. It implies substitution. The superposition implies that there is a certain part that was showing and now wants to be hidden and replaced, implying substitution.

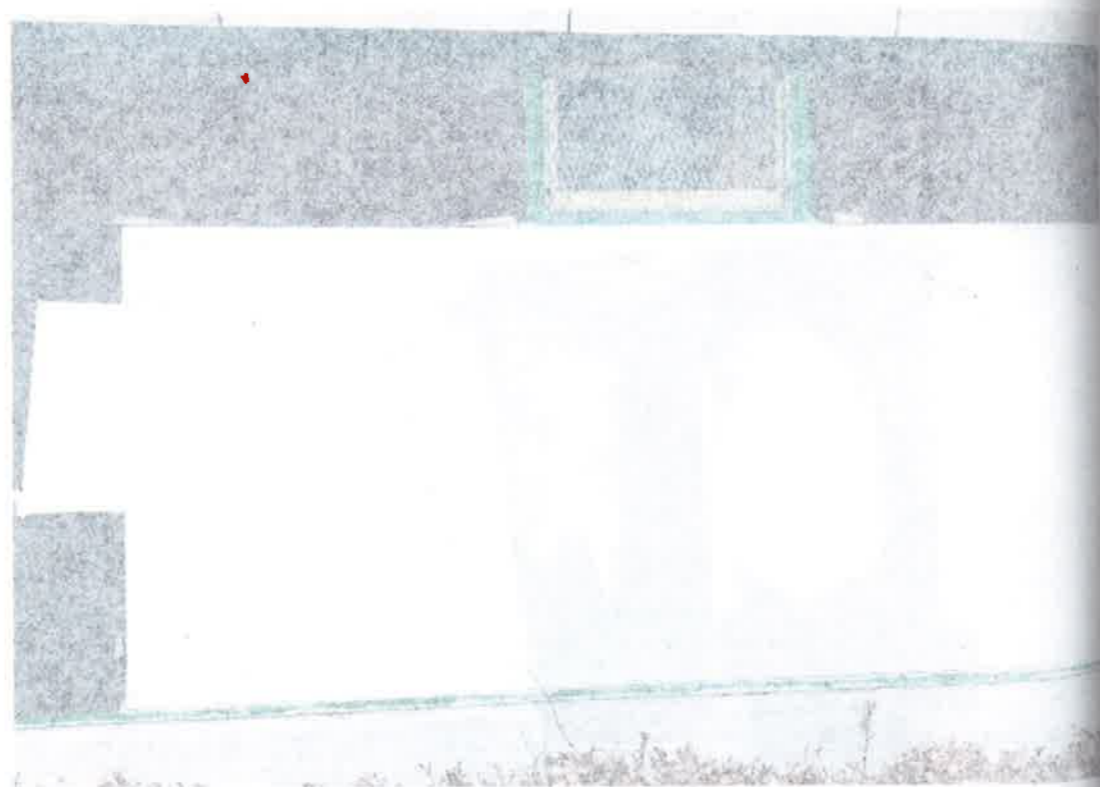


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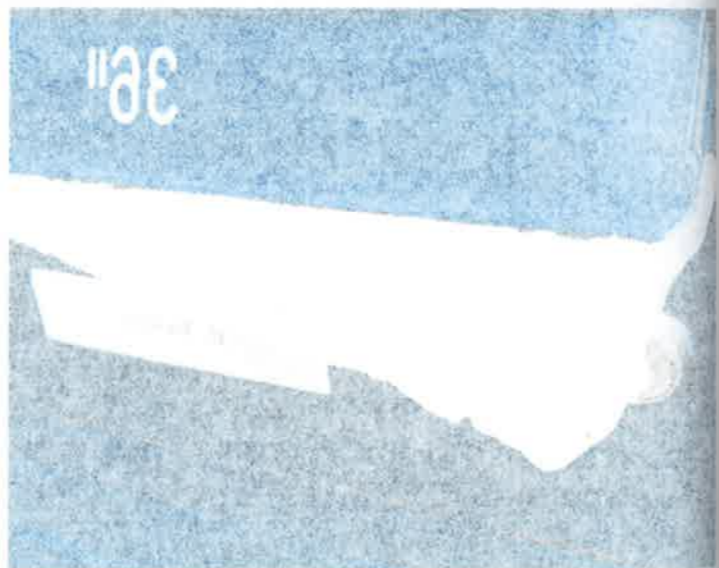




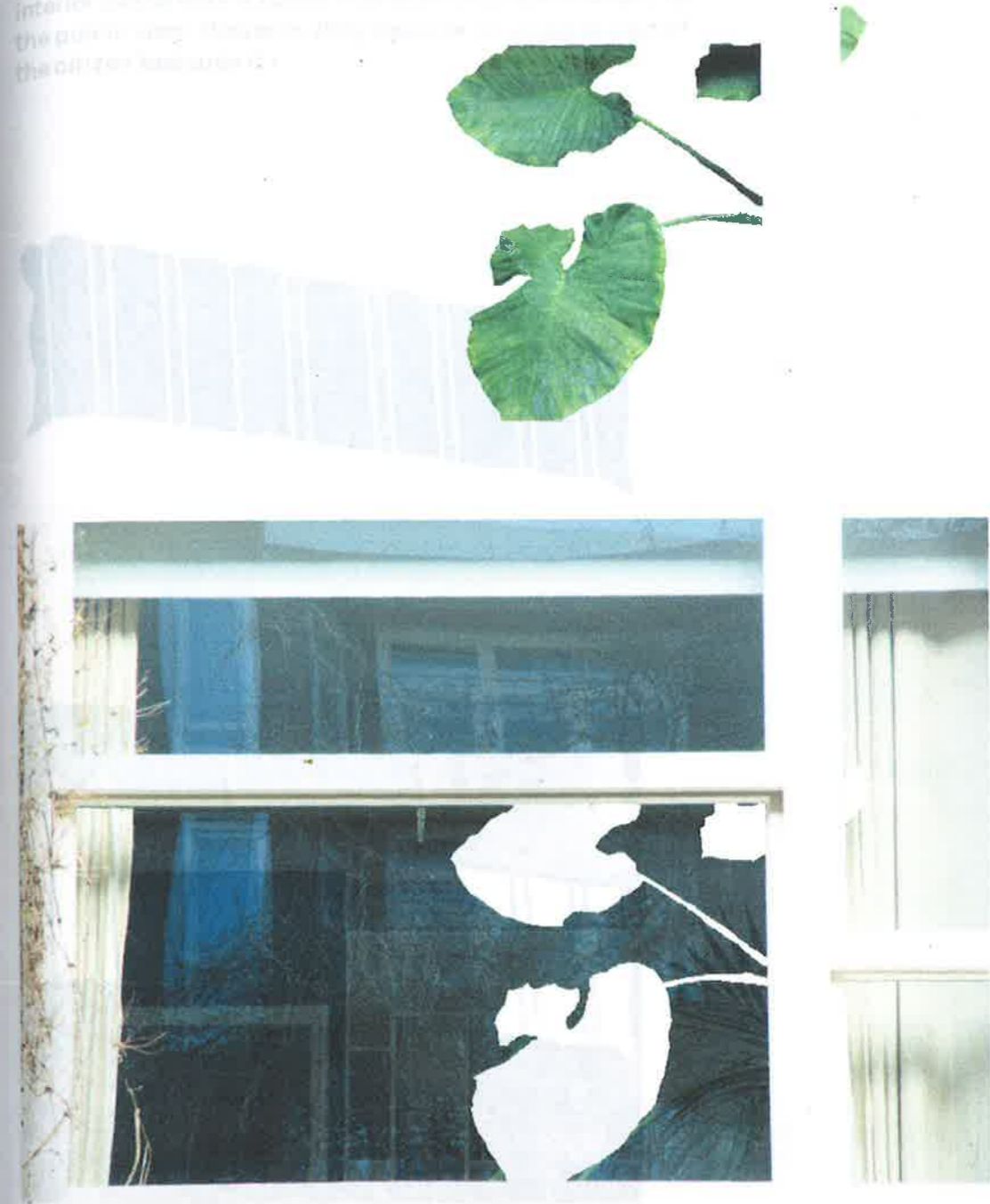
Ready made as a category spans objects that are usually visible through the window, balcony decorations, decorations inside cars, lost objects and trash. The use and arrangement of these forms of materiality is many times related to an idea of decoration. "Self-expression is defined by the way we arrange things." However, in some cases, the idea of function can be observed as a motive for this phenomenon, such as storing things outside on the balcony.

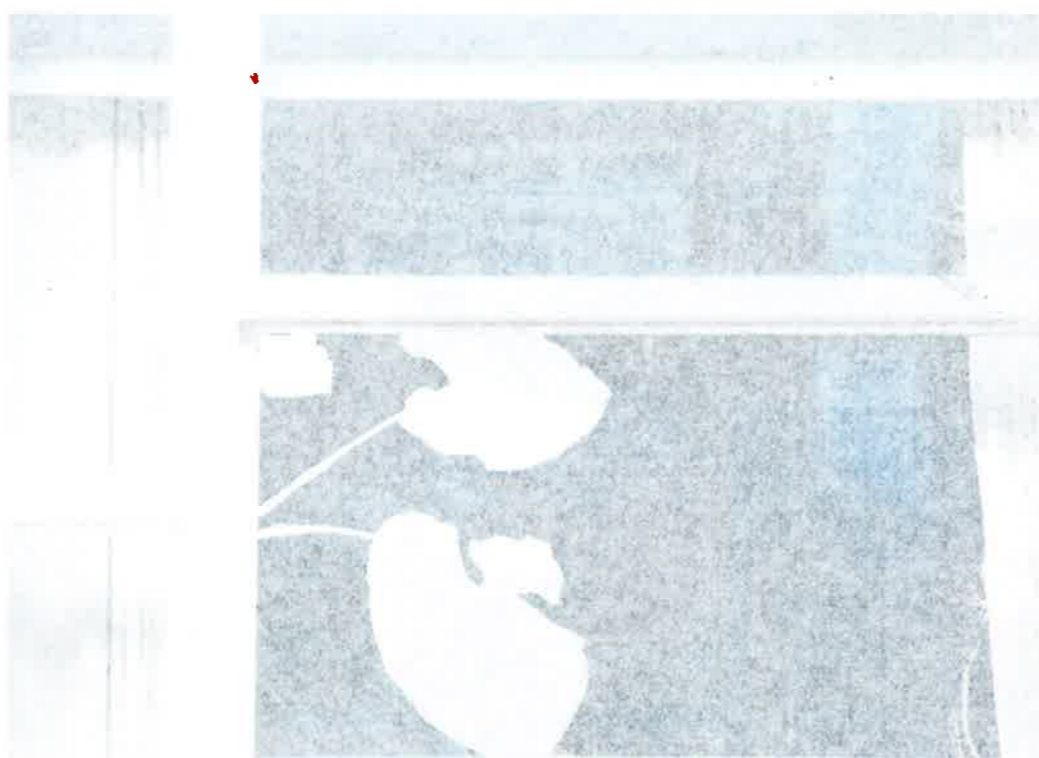


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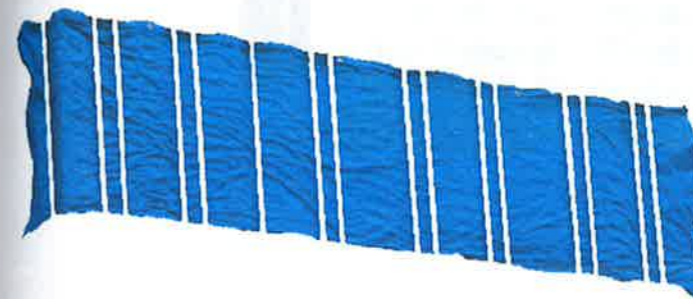


unique... balcony... decorations... window... balcony... decorations... inside cars... lost objects and trash... use and arrangement of these forms of materiality... idea of decoration... self-expression... function... observed as a motive for this phenomenon... storing things outside on the balcony.

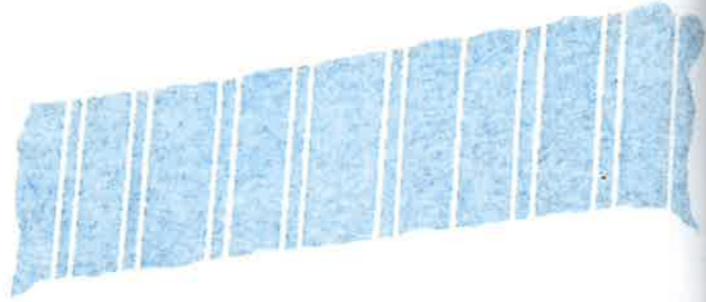




Fabrics became a category of its own due to the unique uses of flexible material within the Kolenkit, like balcony covering, curtains or drying clothing. These uses of fabrics are normally related to a practical reason. In the case of curtains or the fabrics woven through the balconies' metal bars, it is a matter of privacy, and a principle occurs by which you choose to cover a certain interior scene with a fabric that acts as a new scenery for the public view. However, they become an integral part of the citizen because it i



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As stated previously, the materiality of the cité is observed through the looking glass of a expressive impact, an extension of the self-expression of the citizen.

However, there are certain mechanisms put there by the ville whose sole purpose is to affect the visual landscape and identity of the neighbourhood. For example, public commissioned sculptures, wall decorations in tunnels and passages, or street names and commemorative plaques attached to these. I find a lot of potential on these techniques the ville chooses to use for this purpose, as they become institutionalised forms (forms protected by the ville's norm) of self-expression, yet, their message is foreign, a priori, and many times unrelated to the actual cité of the area.



As stated previously, the materiality of the site is observed through the looking glass of a expressive impact, an extension of the self-expression of the citizen. However, there are certain mechanisms put there by the villa whose sole purpose is to affect the visual landscape and identity of the neighbourhood. For example, public commissioned sculptures, wall decorations in tunnels and passages, or street names and commemorative plaques attached to these. I find a lot of potential on these techniques the villa chooses to use for the purpose, as they become institutionalised forms (forms protected by the villa's norm) of self-expression. Yet, their message is foreign, a priori, and many times unrelated to the actual site of the area.

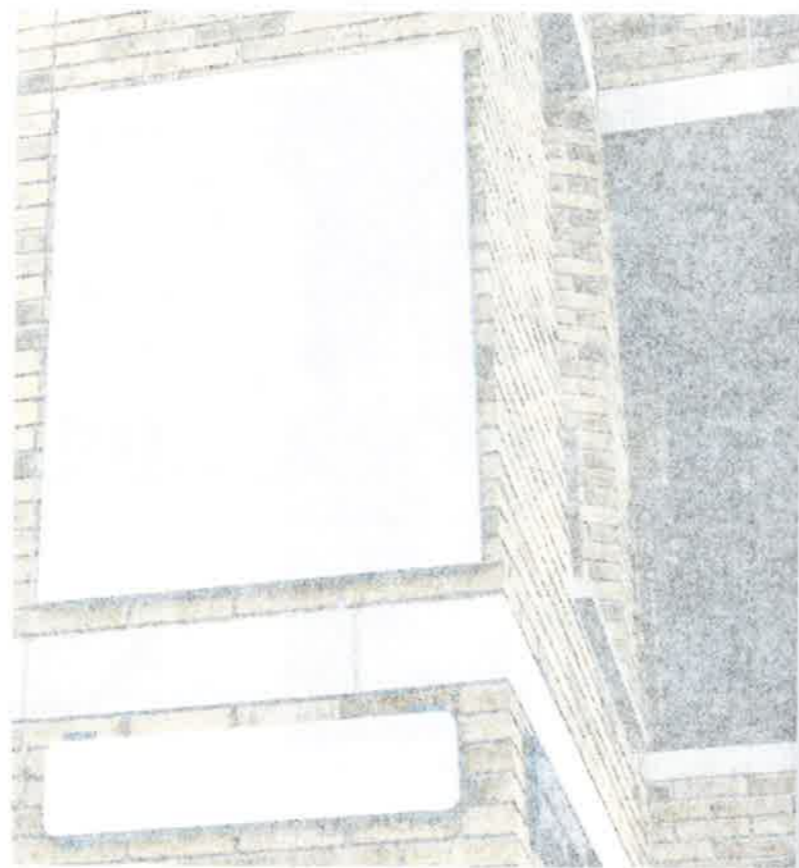


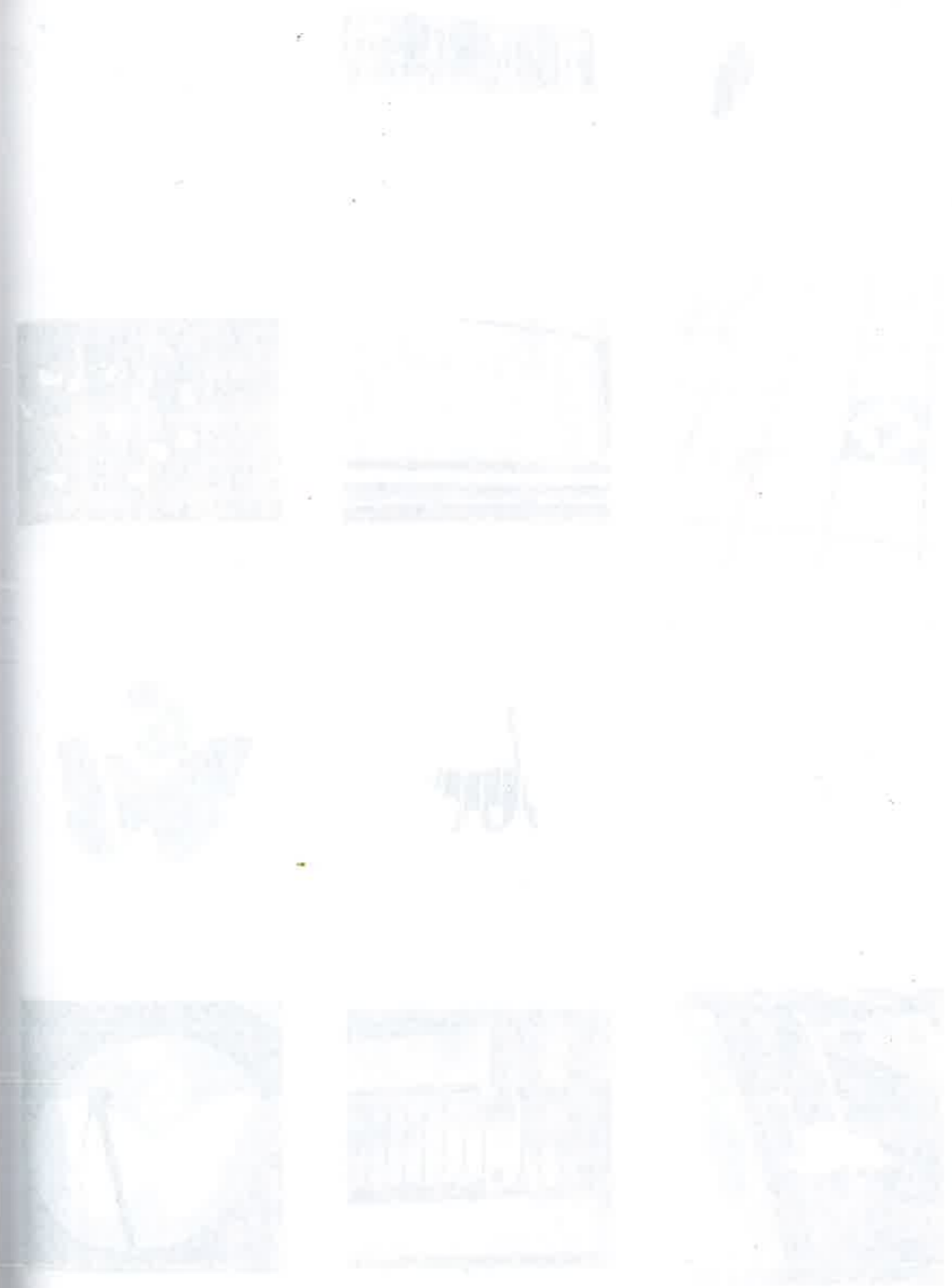
BLAUWVOETSTRAAT
BOS EN LOMMER



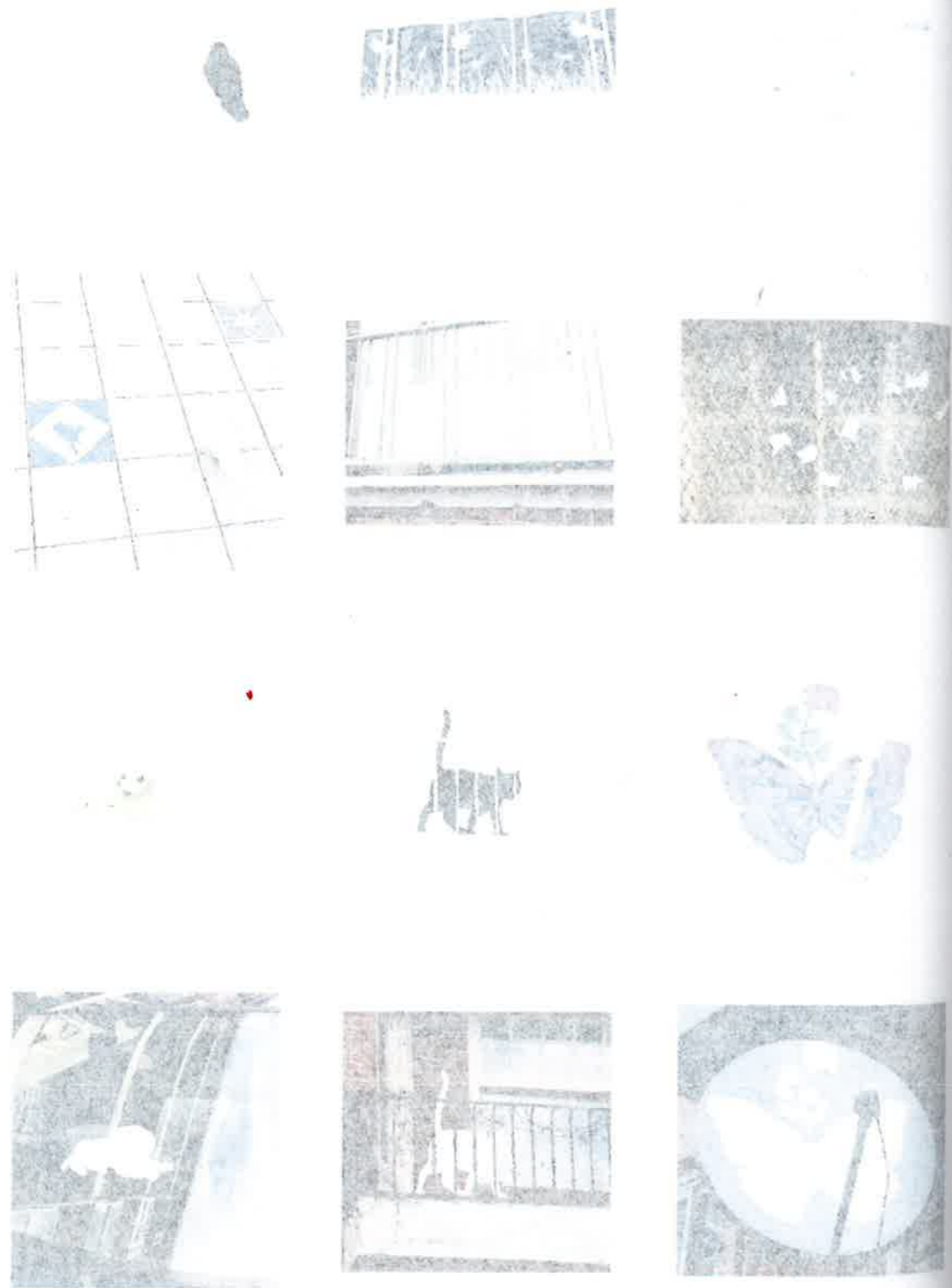


BLAUWVOETSTRAAT
BOZEN TOMMER





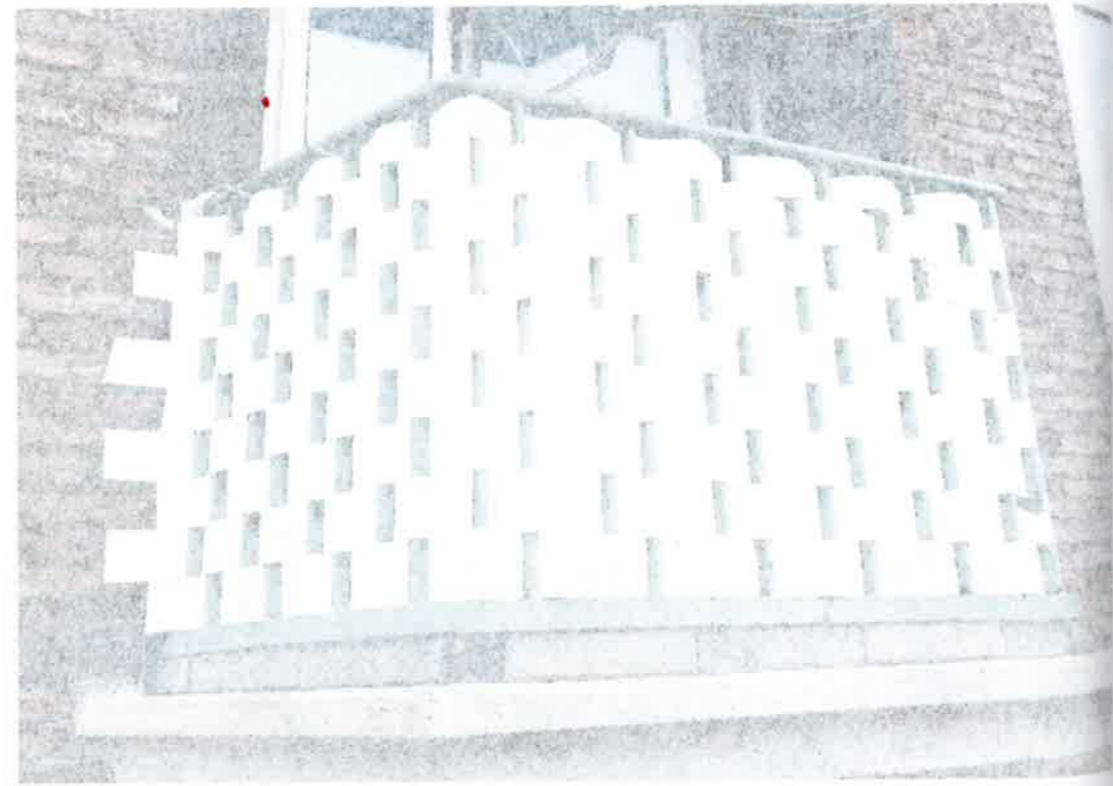


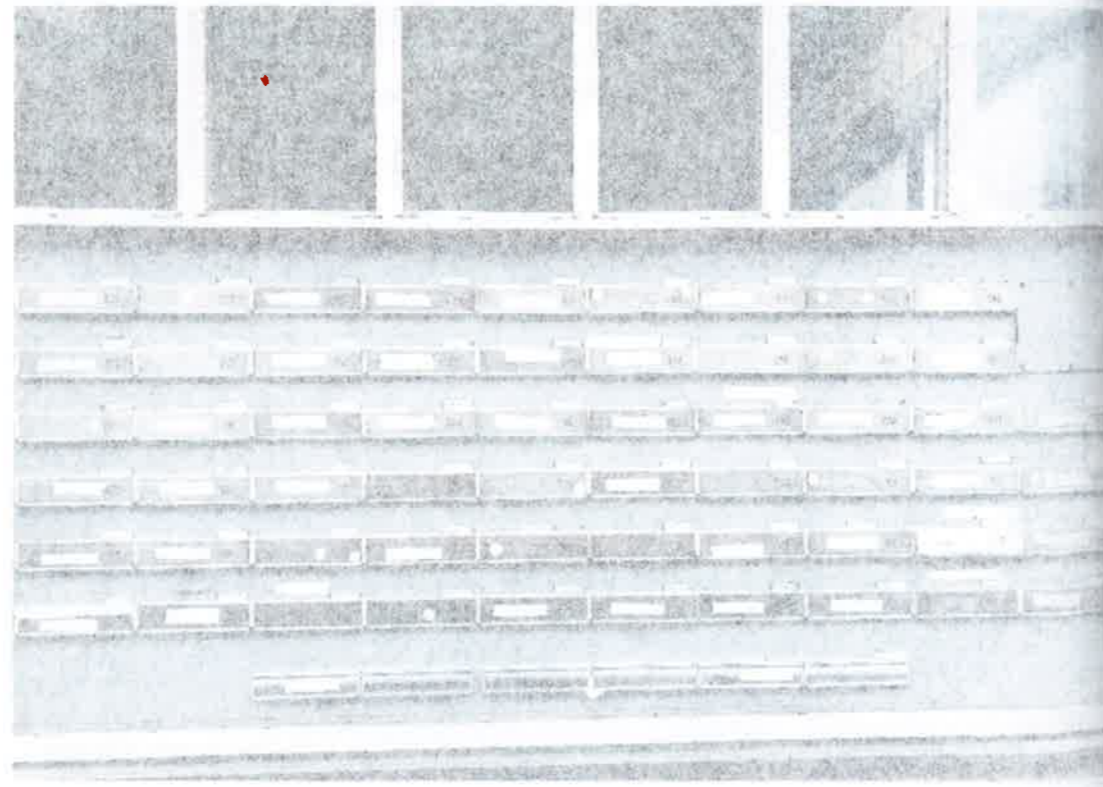




FSI
love







"All the wealth of the patrimony is in its palimpsest. It is these successive layers that are not planned in advance, that are provided by life. It is because life settles that the palimpsest is realised."

Bouchain, P. 2018. Baudoin, E., Les Matins du Samedi. Interview

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Thinking of the previous research of materiality in terms of formal qualities of design, the two different materialities can be defined as having two different forms: one is clean, 90°, rational and analytic; and the other is rough, misaligned and spontaneous. Both forms carry in their messages different interests: the interest of the ville is to create an environment where the citizen will behave, to control the citizen (Le Corbusier model), while the message of the cité is to be an extension of the citizen's expression and identity and have that imprinted in the urban tissue. Together combined, they compose the actual concept of the tissue: a negotiation between personal interests and the mission of the government.

While the messages are interesting yet disjointed, the ville's position of power in looking for the general welfare allows it to persecute and punish the form the cité uses to express its messages. The message of the ville prevails because it uses an institutionalised formal language, because they themselves are at the same time the institution as well as one of the parties. In a way, the ville reunites the judicial and executive powers in their materiality.

As stated in chapter 2, this constant persecution is seen in the form of municipal workers, who renovate and are sent on missions to clean out traces of the cité: erase graffiti, remove stickers, and fine those who do not adapt to the rules of the Commission of Spatial Quality, commission which rules for an apparent general well-being, - yet in their statement for what the rules are when it comes to what is allowed and what is not to be placed in the urban tissue, they many times refer to 'on judgement by the commission', making it an individualised decision.- It could be said that is, the materiality is not democratic, provoking the same effect is the situation it surrounds or being a reflection of the current times.

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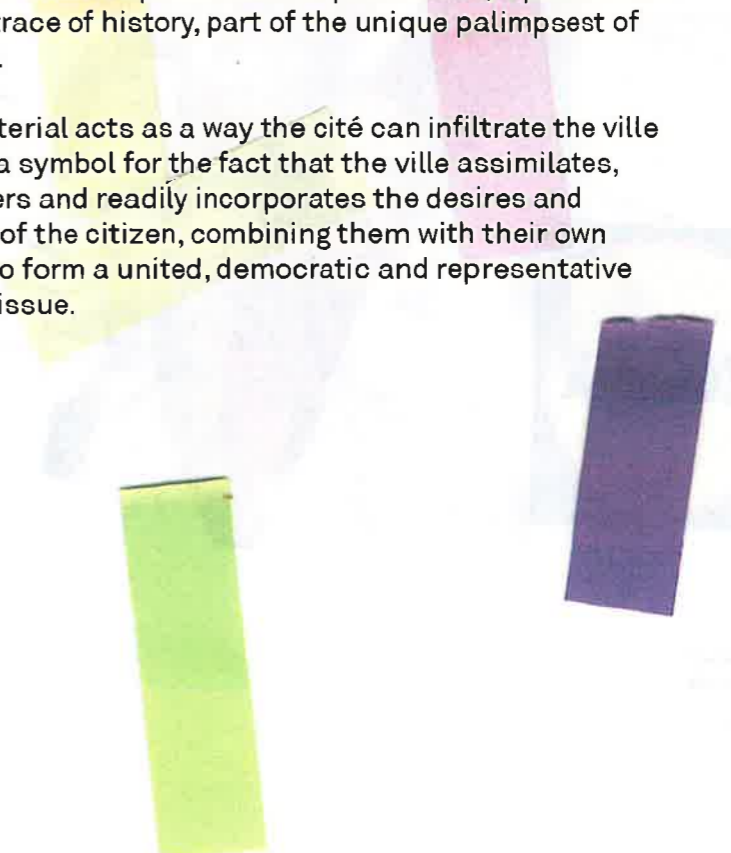
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In my project, I want to tackle the aforementioned needs of the cité to be addressed in their materiality, becoming makers of the city and for their expression to become a cornerstone of the city.

In order to do so, I want to play with and address the conflict of forms between both parties. The current rough forms the cité chooses are not institutionalised, therefore punished. It is literally the role of a designed -vormgever- to address the formal aspect of a matter. In fact, I want to intervene as less as possible and just tweak the form for the message to pull through and convey a different message. A merge of both materialities would represent a symbol for the democratic model, where the citizens (materiality of the cité) are directly represented in the government (materiality of the ville). By changing the form of the city's message to one of the ville, the expression of the cité becomes protected and permanent, a part of the ville, a trace of history, part of the unique palimpsest of the city.

The material acts as a way the cité can infiltrate the ville and as a symbol for the fact that the ville assimilates, considers and readily incorporates the desires and wishes of the citizen, combining them with their own needs to form a united, democratic and representative urban tissue.



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The bag acts as a symbol for the ville: a given preset of expression.



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The content of the bag sprouts from personal circumstances and preferences unique to the individual that comes and goes.



1999年10月，在瑞士日内瓦，世界贸易组织（WTO）部长级会议通过了《贸易便利化协定》。该协定旨在通过简化贸易程序、减少贸易壁垒，促进全球贸易的便利化和自由化。



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