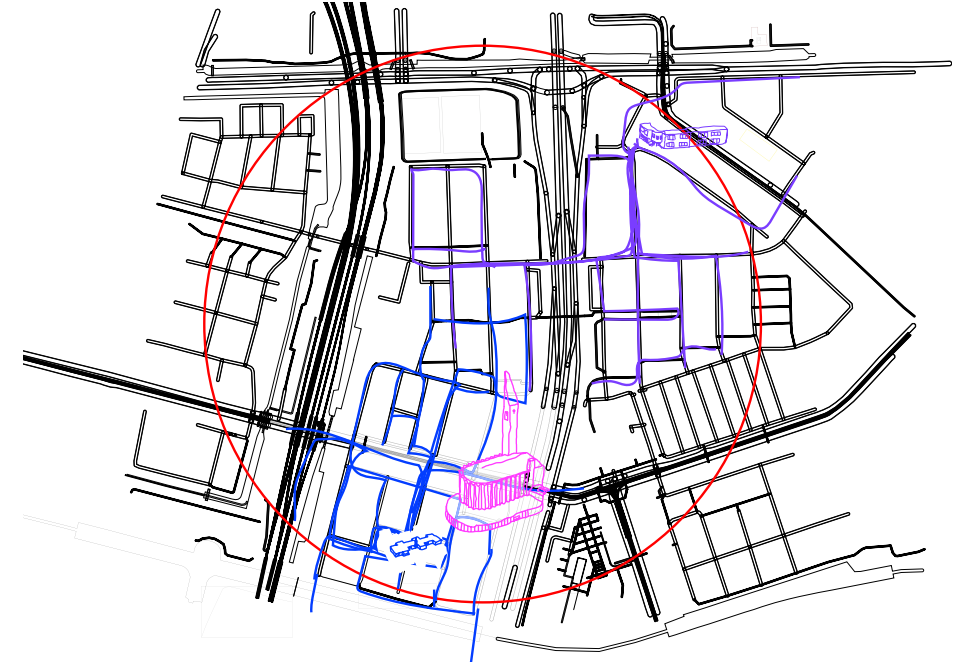


"Gott ist tot" (God is dead)
Nietzsche

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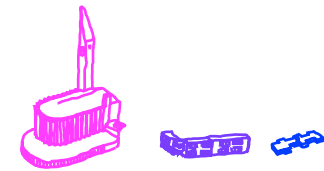
Aur lie Defez
City Circle Amsterdam
Design Academy Eindhoven
2019



Flow of people during holy day

- Mevlana mosque
- Badr mosque
- Kolenkit church

Size and shapes of of the
worship buildings



Gott ist tot

RELIGION

According to Émile Durkheim: a religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things; for example things set apart and forbidden — beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community, all those who adhere to them. In fact, a belief is defined by the acceptance that something exists or is true without proof. Following this definition, anything that involves a truth without proof is a belief. Thus atheism, defined as the absence or rejection of the faith in a god, or any divine supremacy, becomes also a belief. An atheist believes in the non-belief. That said, until now there is no evidence that life after death does not exist, or of a superior entity (although science and history have shown that the creation of human being is the fruit of a long evolution). Atheism thus becomes also a belief - since no proof is brought. But atheism is not a religion.

Religion goes beyond a (dis)belief. This is a practice. It is something taught, and transmitted from a generation to the next generation. Whereas atheism cannot be learned, it is an arbitrary choice; it is not a system, but actually the rejection of

2

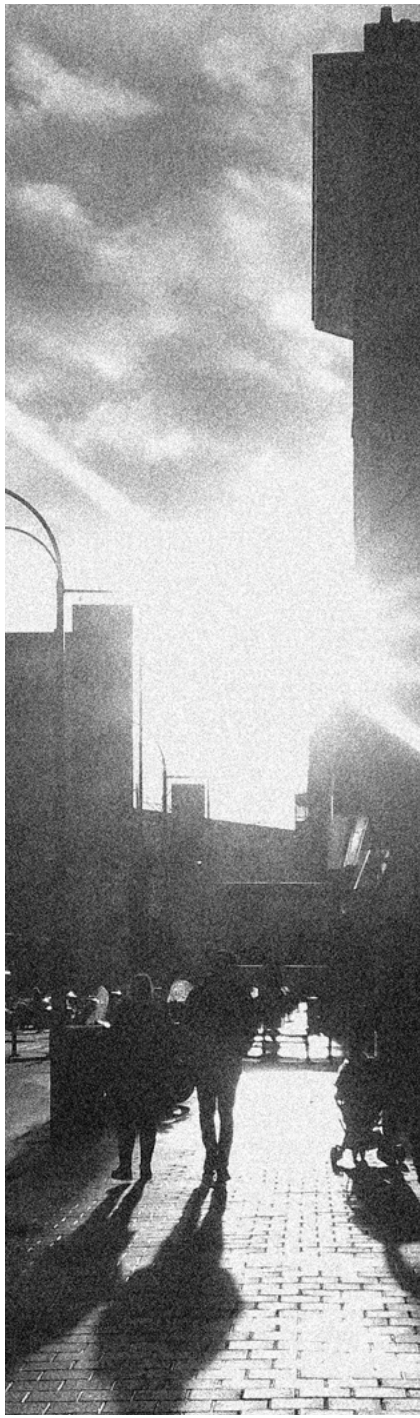
one (from Greek *atheos*, from a- 'without' + *theos* 'god'). As for religion, it involves specific codes, which have been written transmitted over time.

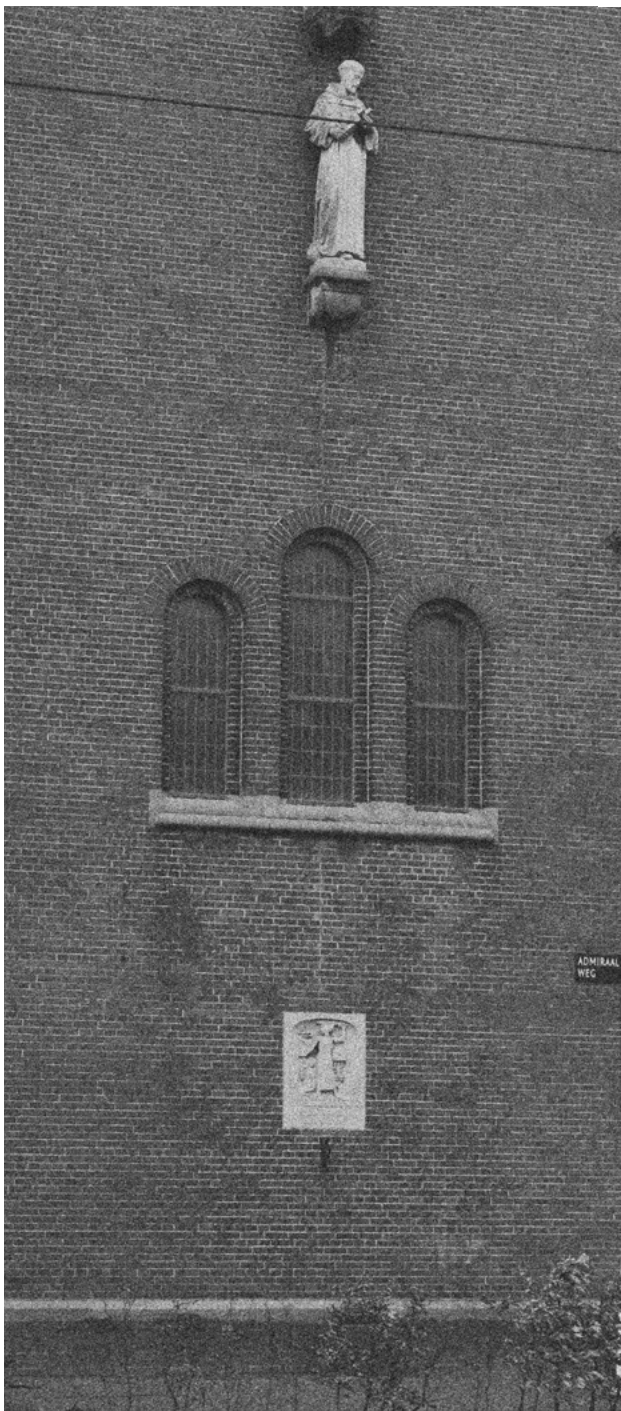
Religion in practice act as a transmitter. An institution which educates people to a certain belief and state of mind, by the mean of rituals, habits, and ceremonies. It creates small communities in the neighbourhoods of cities, which bring people together with the same values.

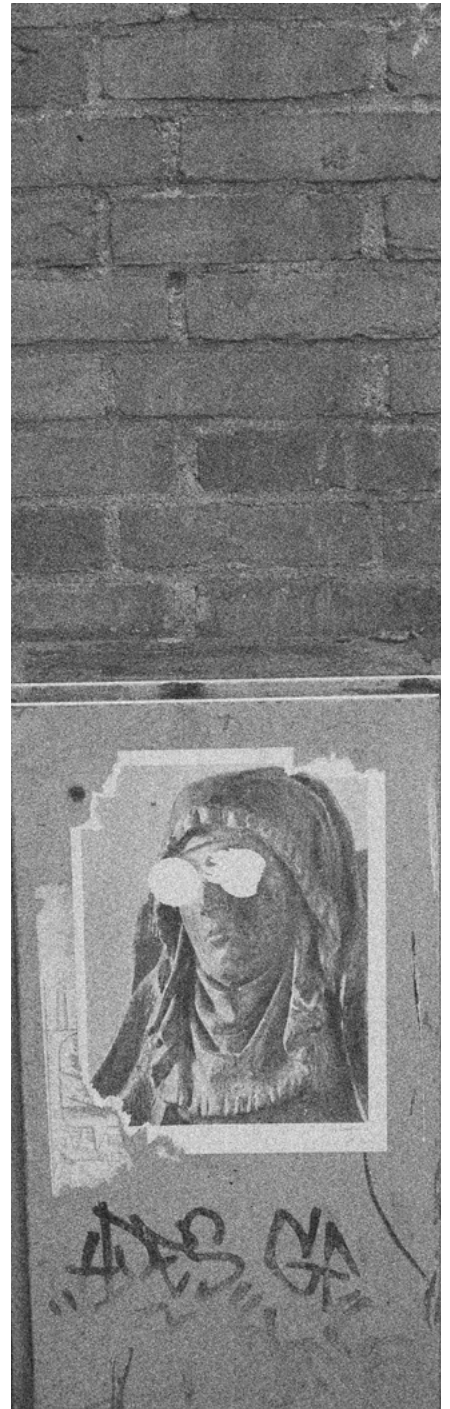
What is our relation to religion nowadays? In Europe many countries became secular after the enlightenment and philosophers, such as Nietzsche developed the idea that a human beings are able to accomplish themselves without the necessity of religion. Secularisation refers to the historical process in which religion loses social and cultural significance. As a result of secularisation the role of religion in modern societies becomes restricted. In secularised society's faith lacks cultural authority, and religious organisations have less social power.

3

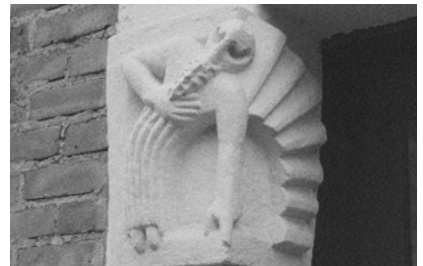
The idea of that research is to understand in practice how does a belief system works. How is religion transmitted especially through the practice of worship? Did secularised Europe really create a non-religious civilisation? And particularly, is there really an incompatibility between religion and the secularised society? During the past years, religion has become a very sensitive and delicate topic; because of extremist attacks; radicalisation, and the war in Israel/Palestine that keeps dividing people. It is more and more complicated to talk about that topic. It is massively used by extreme political parties. Moreover to understand a system of belief the project also has the purpose to offer a view on the current situation and society.

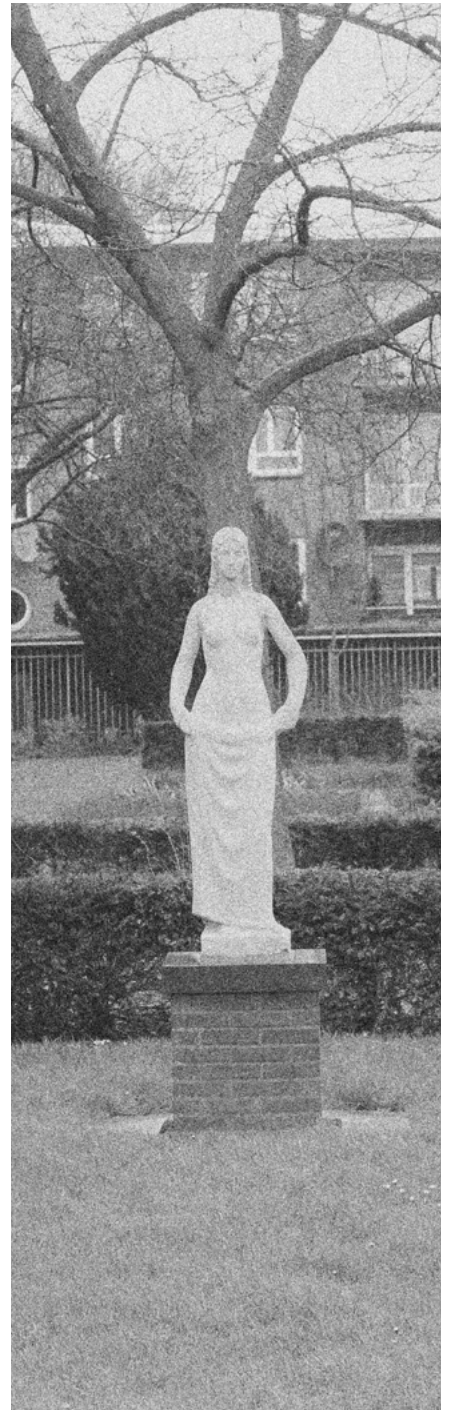












The following part focuses on the three worship places in the Kolenkitbuurt; in order to give deeper information about the way of thinking of believers in this area. In Kolenkitbuurt, the religion is an essential element to understand the way of living. The majority of people believes in a religion. The most present in term of space would be Christian, as the church is extremely visible; despite that fact the most practice one is Islam. In a Circle of 1km, it is possible to find three worship buildings. If we extend this circle of a few more meters it is already four. This is the evidence that this area is regulated by belief systems.

Religion touches very sensitive and existential values for believers.

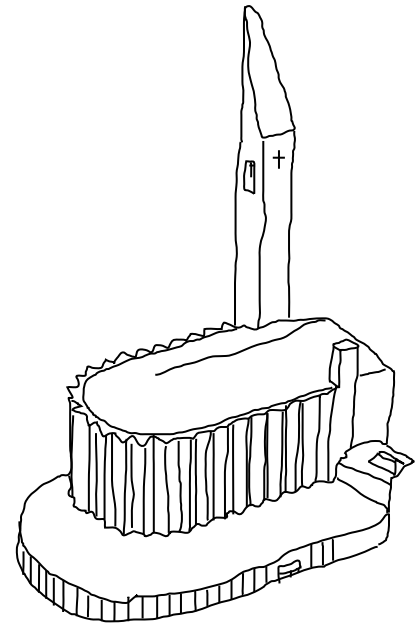
The latters have built their life on a certain system of thought and talking about it can easily become very confronting. No one wants to give up on their own idea and it feels it is complicated to re-question anything.

Kolenkitbuurt





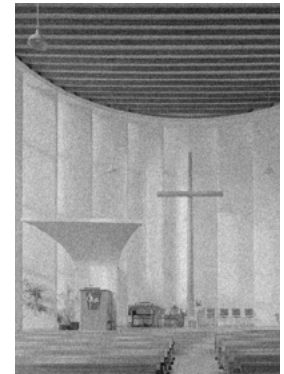




The Kolenkit Church was built during the 50's, in a very modern style by the architect Marius Duintjer. However the Christian community is very small in that part of the city that the main worship room is exclusively used for big events such as Christmas or Easter. That is the reason why normally people would gather in the basement, a way smaller room, that consumes less energy.



The regular community is about 30 people. They all know each other very well and when an 'outsider' comes they are very welcoming. The service is mainly cadenced by Gospels. People would sing to the glory of god. In about an hour time, only 20 minutes are actually reserved for the study of the bible. The priest would choose to talk about some current events and try to link them to the bible; following that logic, it shows that there is something to understand and see from every events. Every single element or event becomes meaningful, and have a link to god.

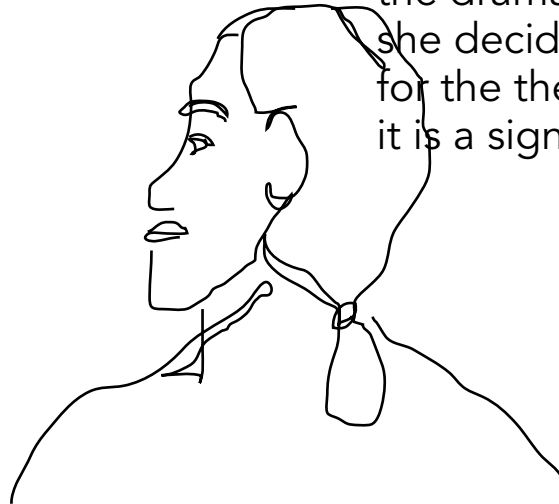


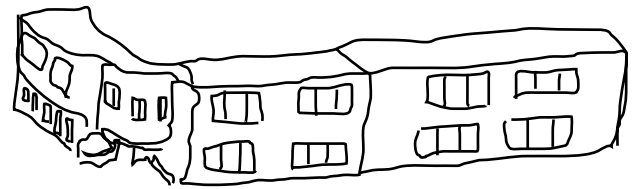
Claudia is a young Lady about 27 years old. She's going to the church every Sunday with her boyfriend. Sometimes her mother comes with her and they would get a family lunch after that. They are very happy to welcome a new person whoever it is. Try to show the light of god.

Claudia used to study dramatic arts, especially theatre. She always loved to act when she was young and it was for her natural to follow that direction for her studies. However, her studies became more difficult

"This is a sign of god. Some people might say it's because of the people in the acting school who didn't looked at my application carefully enough. But I think god chose to make this people not paying attention or blind even for a second to show me the way."

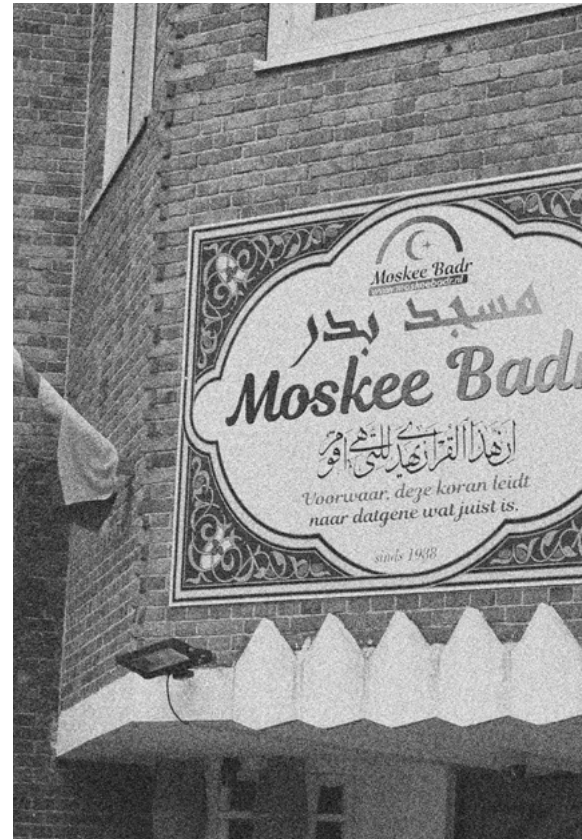
over time, and she felt a gap between her practice and what was expected from her. Teachers would push her to get more extreme in her practice. She finished her bachelor and wanted to continue still. But apparently she couldn't apply for the next degree in the school she wanted in Utrecht. Aside from that she applied to the same level of study but about theology. She felt also to try to understand more religion, as a way for her to dedicate her life to this system. For some reason she couldn't apply for the dramaturgy degree that she decided to go completely for the theological one. For her it is a sign from God.







The Badr mosque is the biggest worship place in the district. However, it was not built as a mosque. It used to be a hospital, then a school, then a gym and since the 80's it is used as a mosque. It testifies that Muslim people took over some places to practice their religion, but it has never been planned to be this way. The main community coming is from North Africa, particularly Morocco. There are always people inside, either to pray, or to hang out inside the café. It is mainly a male community. Women have their own space, but because they are too many men coming compared to women, they split the space into two parts to let more believers coming. Moreover, every Friday 2 or 3 policemen are helping to regulate the traffic, and people to park. It is about 500 people coming in an hour time. Furthermore nowadays Islam, and religion is general is becoming more and more sensitive



because of the radicalisation and the terrorist attacks happening. That way the police is also making sure there won't be any unhappy event happening. We should not forget that policemen are working for the state which implies the responsibility for them to be present during taut moment.

"But every body believes. Look if something happen, some people are like "oh my god oh my god" ... So he's shouting at god but he doesn't realise.

Only the problem is, you have to study

[...]

There is one simple question

Why are we on this earth?

Do you have an answer to that?

Sure, we're only here on this world to pray to god.

[...]

It's not normal if you sleep, get up, go to work, and eat and die. That's not normal. You are like an animal.

[...]

For me this world is nothing, because I also believe in the other world.

When you are dying it's not over.

[...]

For example, I did a lot of bad things. Nobody knows. If you believe that; this is between you and god, he can forgive you. Between you and him.

For example, I steal his phone, you saw me. And you know you are afraid to tell him. The punishment will come to me.

The day of the judgment you can't say no. This is gonna speak.

Only for what? to go to heaven.

[...]

In Islam, we say "our religion is the best". I give you one example. Our book is know 1440 years; it never changed. it's the same book for 1440 till today. And that's not the same with the bible and other books.

34

That's why the people are returning to Islam.

[...]

What a lot of people do... Like you, you are still studying. **You are listening to me but you will not take it all 100%. You will research. Learn.**

Maybe it costs you 10 years, maybe 2 years, maybe 1 day, maybe 5 years. **But you have to do research.**

And you will tell "hey this guy told me thing".

There is something. There is something.

[...]

The most important thing in this world, is "why I am here in this world, why?" That's the biggest question.

What scares me, is that today you got a lot of people around you, but the day of the judgement you are alone.

[...]

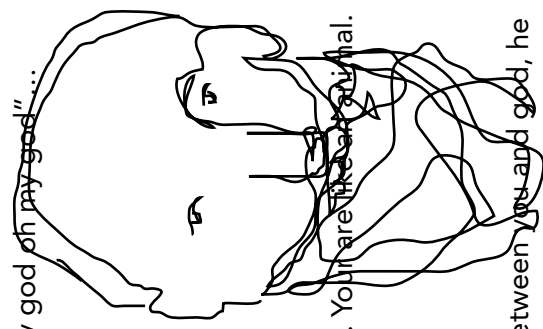
It's not possible that you gonna die and that's it. You for example, you come here or you come to the church, it doesn't matter. And you kill innocent people, you gonna die. For example, he, as a police officer, he kills a guy. And that's it? No, no. They punish everybody. What you did wrong, you will be punish for it.

[...]

If I have the power to come, I'll come. Sometimes I don't come, but mostly if I have the power I'd come. This is my medicine."

Interview Farid

35



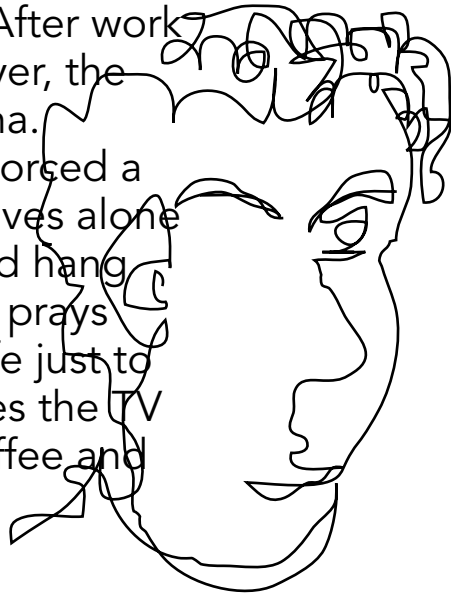
March 2019		Jumada II 1440	Fajr	Shuruq	Dohr	Asr	Maghreb	Isha
Fr	1	24	05:47	07:25	12:54	15:43	18:22	19:54
Sa	2	25	05:45	07:23	12:54	15:45	18:23	19:56
Su	3	26	05:42	07:21	12:54	15:46	18:25	19:58
Mo	4	27	05:40	07:19	12:54	15:47	18:27	20:00
Tu	5	28	05:38	07:16	12:54	15:48	18:29	20:01
We	6	29	05:36	07:14	12:53	15:50	18:31	20:03
Th	7	1 Rajab	05:34	07:12	12:53	15:51	18:33	20:05



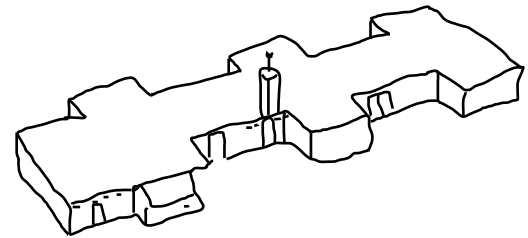
Two important points of the religion are the rituals, and the regulated rhythm of worship. In Islam people would have to pray 5 times a day. Such a presence of religion in someone's life cannot be skipped. When something takes so much importance. However, many people would go to the mosque on Friday. In the Badr Mosque the community is so big that sometimes people would have to pray outside.

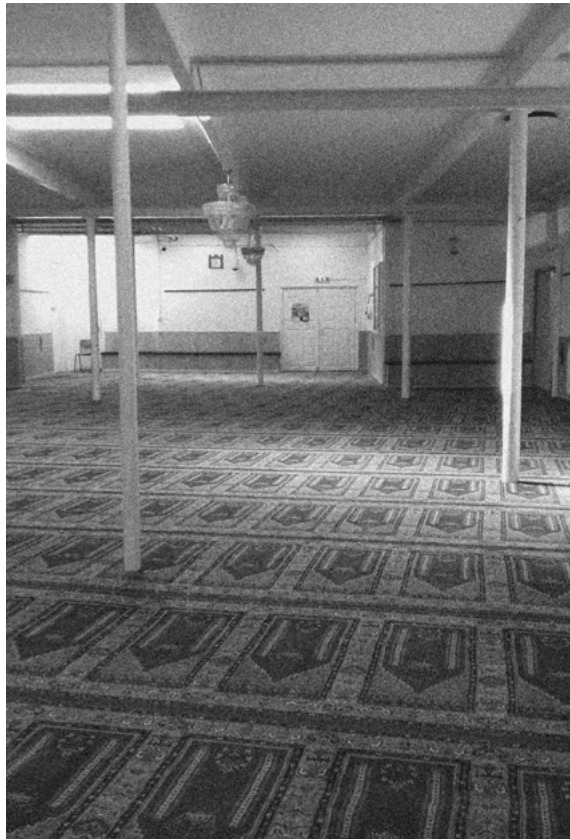


Mustafah is about 60 years old. He grew up in Morocco, where he received a religious education. Morocco is not a secular country. The state is officially Muslim. In Morocco the Adhan resounds five times a day; which is not the case in Amsterdam. Even though the Badr Mosque, in which Mustafah goes every day is equipped for it. Despite the fact there is no call the mosque is full and he goes there as much as possible. At least twice a day when he is working, and more during weekends. After work he goes to the prayer, the Magreb and the Isha. Because he got divorced a few years ago, he lives alone and therefore would hang out in between the prayers in the mosque's cafe just to kill time. He watches the TV while drinking a coffee and



discussing with other Muslim believers there. He has children, but his ex-wife is taking care of them. Mustafah is working for the Gemeente. He will get retired in a few years. He doesn't seem to like his job particularly, but it's near where he lives, so it is comfortable for him. Now he does not expect any development regarding his profession; he just waits to be retired. After that he will most probably go more often to the mosque, meet some friends there. And spend the rest of his life trying to get closer to his god.





The Mevlana mosque is situated near the Kolenkit church. However, it is very hidden. In the middle of a playground the building is used as a mosque, as well as a market, a sport gym, a hairdresser and a café. Apart from the sport gym, the other functions are mainly used by the Turkish Muslim community of the district. The mosque is composed of a big room for the men and aside rooms for women, which are

also used as classroom for the children. During those classes the children would learn about the history of Islam, the Quran and Arabic language. The classes are divided between men and women. Many people go to the mosque and the shops around are gathering the community. More than praying to God they would also do some events such as dinner or celebration in this area.

Bechir probably have the cleaner haircut of the entire district. He had a perfect gradient from shaved to not shaved hair. His moustache was perfectly cut. Everything was at the right place. It was so neat, that it needs to be mentionned.

Despite the fact he is seemingly taking a great care about the way he looks he was also very open to discussion and to show the mosque, all around, explained what was meant for what, the difference between the rooms and the organisation of the building. However and as many believers he also tried to convince me about the existence of God. But it was surprising he first ask about

"People who don't have faith are nothing for me"



my own vision of life. Even though he had his own opinion about the meaning of life, he asked to know more about my case and the way I handle such a thing if I do not believe. After that he tried to convince me about the existence of God. He showed a video about a guy, a humorist, who chose Islam as a religion. At first I find nice that this person could also find some humour into Islam, and even if it is one (if not THE) important thing in his life that he could still take some distance regarding the place of the religion inside the society. It is the last religious person I talked to during the two weeks and he is the person who could take the bigger distance regarding his. I would say he was about 26/27 years old.

1 There is a gap between the way religions teach and educate people, the value they are conveying, and the current ones in a secular State; which in the end results into segregation and the separation of different cultural groups which are not mixing.

2 Moreover the religion is creating a strong feeling of community for people; Which on the one hand help them to feel safe surrounded by people who share the same values. But on the other hand reinforces the division between the different groups.

3 The last point showed by the size of the worship building is that Islam has never been part of the urban planning for almost 50 years now. The state is secular not the society. How to combine both?

46

47

4 The system of a religion uses the rituals and celebration to also educate, and teach believers the 'right' way to think. It is through the practice that the knowledge is transmitted. So any symbols or objects are becoming the communication tool of the religion (prayer beads, holy books, Sajada, etc.)

5 Beliefs or non beliefs represents an existential topic for people, who build their lives over what they think what true. It becomes thus very hard to discuss.

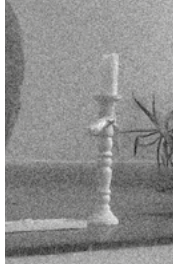
WORSHIP



Prayer beads



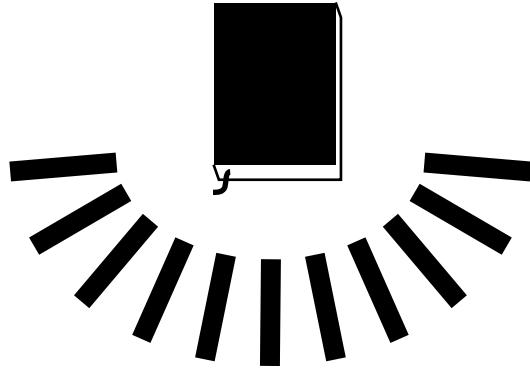
Holy book *Cross*



Candle *Kameez*



Sajada *Plant*

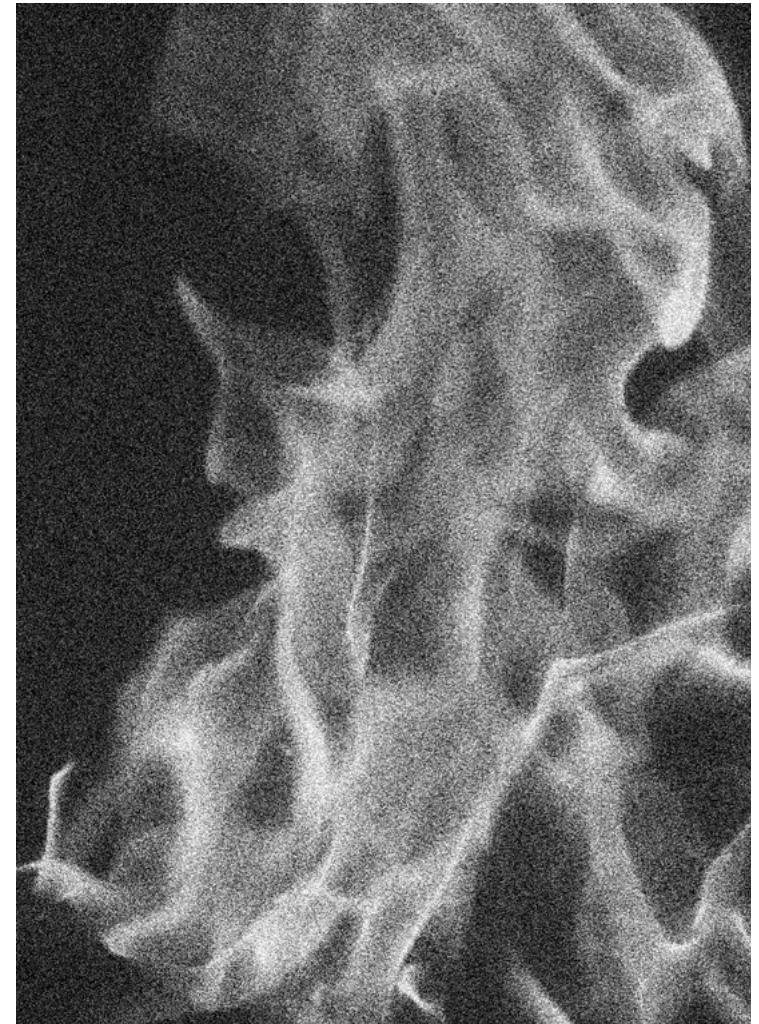


*Size of the
hand*

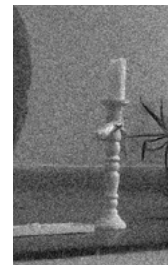
Holy book



The holy book might be the most representative and important object of Islam and Christianity. Indeed, for both it regroups the history of the prophets, which is the foundation of the two cults. It is common to buy a displayer for the sacred book.



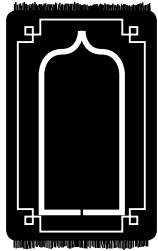
Candle



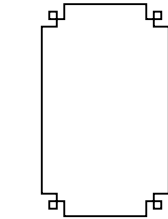
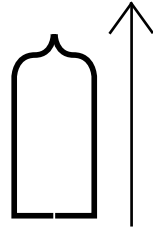
Candles are mainly used in Christianity. It is a source of light which represents the presence and the power of God in a room. It is used during mass or more important ceremonies as well as alone, which indicates a praying moment.



Mecca



Arcard

Other types of
tradictionnal
pattern

Because of the obligation for the Muslim to perform five prayers a day and to isolate themselves from the soil considered impure, prayer mats are widespread objects.

A drawing of an arcade is commonly placed in the center of the mat, testifying the orientation to the Mecca. Further than this other type of patterns can be used as soon as they do not interfere or distract during the moment of reverence.

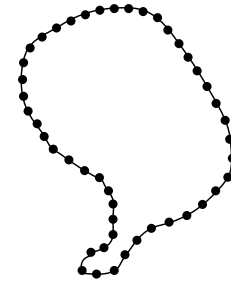
Sajada



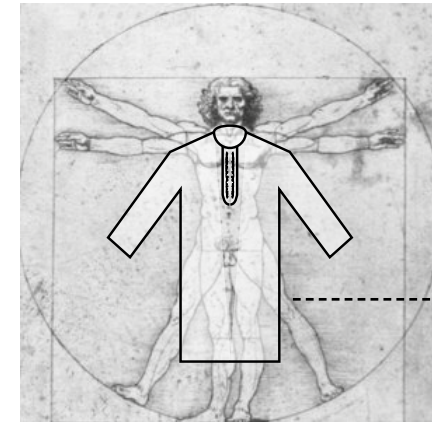
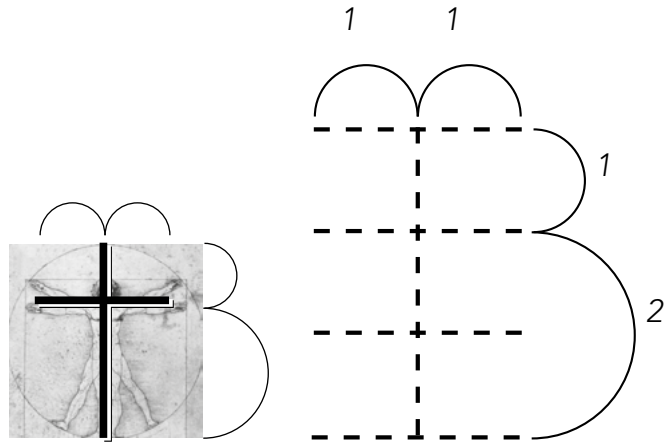
99 grains prayer beads,
for the 99 names of Allah

33 grains prayer beads
3 cycles need to be done

For Christian representing
the 33 years of Jesus
can be used by Protestant

Praying
beads

Prayer beads are objects of religious devotion consisting of grains threaded on a cord forming a circle. Used in various religions, they are used to count repetitively recited prayers by touching the grains.



*Under the
knees*

The cross

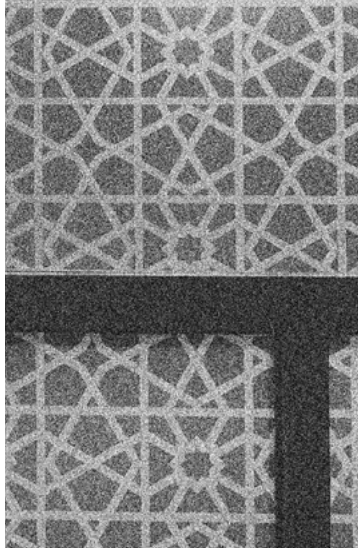


The Christian cross is the main symbol of Christianity, nowadays seen as the image of the crucifixion of Jesus. It is a very common symbol used in this religion as a representation of God (Jesus). Believers often have a neckless or a few home items using this symbol.

Kameez



The religious purpose of this garment is to cover the intimate parts of the body in order to not be ostentatious in his outfit. For that it is made in a wide and ample way.

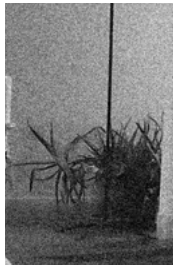


Window in the Badr Mosque

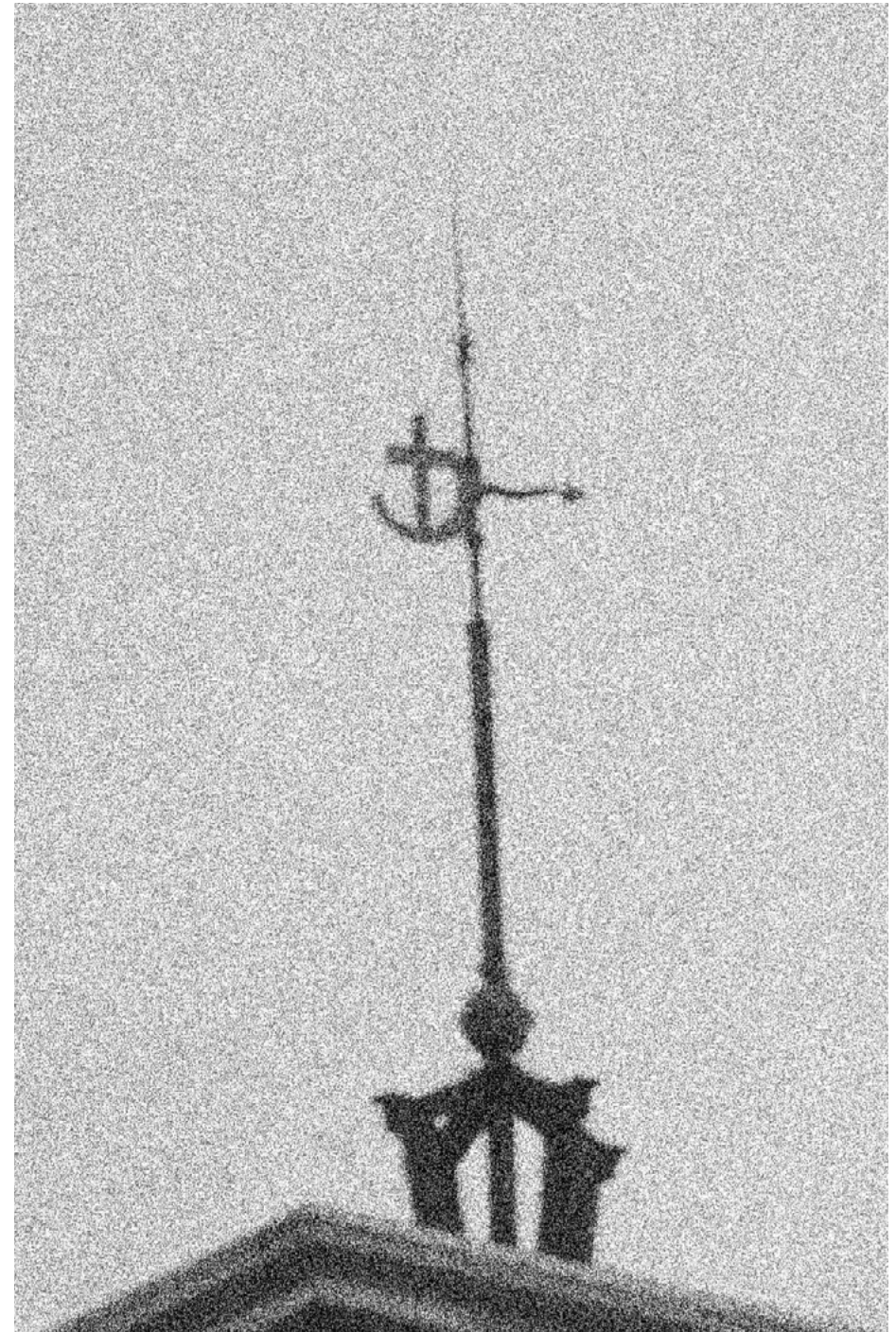


The garden of Eden

Plant



Plants are not a sacred object. However is it common to find many representations of it inside a church or a mosque, whether figurative or abstract. It is associated to the garden of Eden and attest of the presence of god in those places.



Religious symbols



Prayer beads



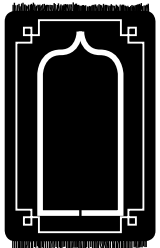
Holy book

Cross



Candle

Kameez



Sajada

Plant



Human rights



Internet

Money



Equality

Sciences



