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SWITCHING TRAJECTORIES: A VISION FOR THE RHINE DELTA

Matanya Sack, Liesl Vanautgaerden

Switching Trajectories is about actively preparing the territory for the future switching of the river in a place and a time where it can no longer happen in a natural way. While giving the water a new path and, more importantly, space, the project aims to address the flooding risks and sedimentation problems of the Rhine River Delta area. This objective was taken as an opportunity to think of a new vision for the Rhine Delta, which also suffers from development pressures that threaten to deplete and diminish its resources. The site analysis determined a set of intentions, questions, and issues that needed to be considered when approaching the design. For example, while planning the future water trajectory, height levels were weighed against the suitability of neighboring parcels for use in agriculture and further urbanization possibilities. These investigations distilled into a potential gradient of areas, which collided with different considerations and design aspirations, like the unfolding of the canal section to address the landscape's larger scale, intentions to sustain the nature reserve, thoughts on movement through the site, as well as required infrastructure, program, connections and views. Through the integration of these existing and proposed parameters, a cellular pattern emerged.

This pattern can be seen as a way of characterizing local aspects, values, and challenges and integrating them in the design process in order to create a system in which environmental and experiential inputs can fully develop. Different types of thinking about landscape are stimulated, where the existing is enriched and diversified in small and large time jumps and in different scales. In this reshuffling, a generic system arises out of local parameters.

The parametric cells narrate an approach rather than offering a finite design: they function like a spectrum, hinting at possibilities for preservation and development at the same time. The result is a vision for the site as a whole, planned threefold. One plan defines the future relationship of water to land through the topography layer. Changing with time, the future trajectory is prepared to handle the water from low to extremely high levels and spatially through the transformation of the trajectory's section. A second plan reveals a continuous but diversified landscape resonating from the trajectory. It records the envisioned, gradually changing platforms of activity: settlement, agriculture, water, infrastructure and recreation. Complementary to this perspective, a third plan articulates the vision in a flexible perspective, which incorporates

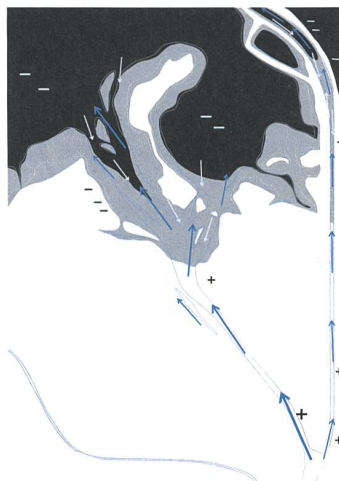
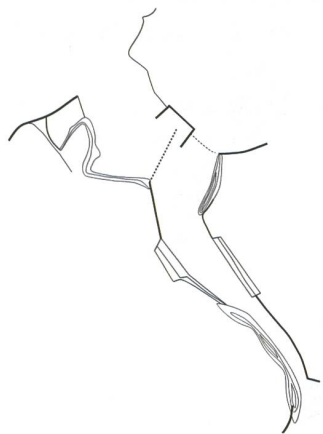
actions in different scales that transform the landscape over time.

In this manner, the cells define the landscape with transparent qualities. They detect and create opportunities and can adapt to changes according to what happens through space and time. Different aspects of the design task and the approach between cells, their formation and realization, are made apparent through the continuous plane of changing patterns.

The Rhine Delta is characterized by a vastness that is emphasized by long visibility lines and openness. The perception of distance is an inherent quality of the site. We believe that by filling the vast, flat open landscape with these cell inputs, the poetic dimension of this distance can come to light.

lakeshore section through trajectory

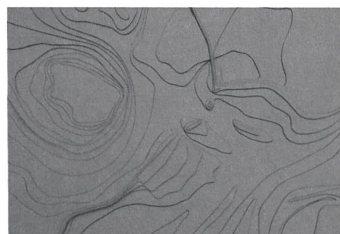




trajectory layers: cell structure, edge definition, sediment deposition, water movement



topographical model



sketch of the relationship
between program and topography



inland section through trajectory



perspective of lakeshore dike at high
water levels



perspective of orchard cell