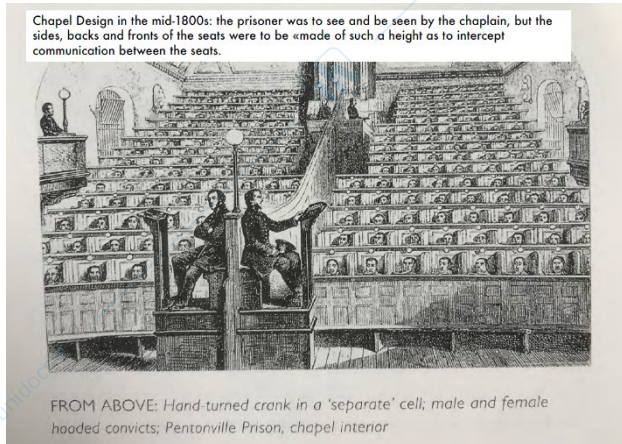


00_PRISONERS_PART B

07:30 Conditions of imprisonment (Reflections of these conditions from different perspectives)

Summarizing last week's lecture (main focus/points):



In this picture of the Chapel interior of the 19th century people is celebrating a mass. Well-ordered and strange devices for keeping everyone individually separated from the others in these kinds of "prisons" can be seen. This picture reminds us the path explained in the previous lesson, starting from the wonderful but also awful pictures by Piranesi "Imaginary prisons" in which Piranesi depicted these vast and huge spaces where the human being was overwhelmed by these gigantic

architecture (a sort of gigantic interior landscape which was overwhelming prisoners and people. Not only the body but at the same time the mind and soul of the human being).

The importance of this actions is located not in a precise message but rather in the atmosphere that these settings suggest. Piranesi makes us think about the relationship between the human scale and architecture; between a room, a space, architectural elements such as walls and stairs and our perception, both mental and physical.

After Piranesi (whose work is source of inspiration to other many artists in the following centuries after the 18th), we talked about a great change in the theoretical as well as practical conception of prisons (places in which people is segregated or is taken away from society after the commitment of some violence or crime of whatever kind). We saw a great shift from chaos to order in the conception of these places (their interiors). There was an exterior style, façade which was designed according to the so-called *architecture terrible* which was intended to scare people from committing violence and crimes. Behind this façade we could approach a sort of chaos, an anarchy of behaviour. People was acting without precise rules except for the ones of prison but with a sort of microsocial chaos within this prison with inhumane conditions of living inside.

Our shift brought us a bit further with new conceptions of these kind of institutions; not only the institution of prison but also other institutions like schools or hospitals we had seen thanks to the work of Michel Foucault (who was a great philosopher and thinker who wrote "Discipline and Punish" which is an in-depth analysis of some of the structures of the societies. On it, he talks about the change from the chaos to the conception of punishing people in public and other kinds of punishment and their visibility or invisibility. He analyses the work of Jeremy Bentham (well-known panopticon) in which we have a geometrical order in the inside and in our conception of interior spaces as well as the whole structure.

We have a sort of shift from the punishment of the body (visible punishment of the body in public) to the control of mind and soul in the prison. The panopticon made that shift, from status of punishment on the body towards a state that Foucault calls "conscious and permanent visibility assured the automatic functioning of power". This was a great shift also in relationship between architecture and the practice of power.

Later we saw the interpretation advanced by the writer Anthony Blunt, who somehow mixed the interpretation of Piranesi and Jeremy Bentham. Thanks to his work, we can make a jump into

the 20th century. One of his texts reads like this: "Seen from the air, the concentration camp of Belsen is said to have looked like an atomic research station or a well-designed motion picture studio." Talking about prisons, discipline and punish, and Piranesi, he showed this kind of parallelism between the request for order in the design of concentration camps and order that we can find in other facilities like atomic research stations or scientific facilities or even well-designed motion picture studios (in completely different typologies).



and scientific. Seen from the air, Belsen is said to have looked like an atomic research station or a well-designed motion picture studio.

This picture is quite tough because it shows an aerial view of the Birkenau Extermination Complex. We can see and somehow touch the extreme ligation (?) of logic that supports this kind of complex. We can make a parallelism between this plan which is a sort of geometric grid with the logic and approach of 1920s urbanism and architectural culture in the planning of residential neighbourhoods (residential areas).

This is a starting point that drives us to a question: would you design a prison? Could you in our practice (working activity) design a place in which people are deprived of freedom?



The architects, draftsmen, and construction managers of the Auschwitz Central Construction Management gathered on the porch of their office, 1943. These men deliberately designed the Auschwitz gas chambers and crematoria as factories of death. Courtesy Archive-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, Oswiecim.

This is an impacting picture of the Auschwitz Central Construction Management. They are gathered in the porch of their office in 1943. The caption says that these men designed the Auschwitz gas chambers and the crematoria as factories of death. This is another extreme of our reflections upon prisons, this is probably more than prisons because Auschwitz was not a place in which people was supposed to leave for some months or years but for a precise period. It was rather a place where people finally eventually found

death. It was like a well-planned complex for exterminating people.



To plan the crematoria, Ertl led a meeting in August 1942, where he euphemistically described the crematoria as "bathing establishments for special events" in the minutes of the meeting)

<https://www.dobonline.de/2011/12/01/tiefpunkt-der-architekturgeschichte/>

ACCUSED OF WAR CRIMES: Austrian architects Walter Dejaco (left) and Fritz Ertl (right) went on trial yesterday in Vienna on charges of murder. The indictment accuses them of drafting plans for four gas chambers at Auschwitz in which 3,000,000 Jews were killed. They have entered pleas of not guilty, saying they were acting under orders. (UPI Telephoto)

These were two architects that were involved in this design and planning activities for the concentration plans:

Austrian architect Fritz Ertl on the right side, who studied at the Bauhaus, received a very high training by some of the best masters in Germany and hole Europe at that time. Quite surprisingly, he joined the SS (Nazi party) and started practising for the Nazi regime. He was also involved in the design and production of places like Auschwitz.

Like the caption says, the indictment in this trial against these architects accused them of drafting plans for 4 gas chambers at Auschwitz where 3.000.000 Jews were killed. They have entered pleas of not guilty, saying they were acting under orders.

This sort of dilemma/contradiction is quite famous (the one of saying "I was acting under orders") and so "Am I guilty or not?". This is where the relationship between ethics and profession comes in.

It was said that in a meeting in August 1942 this same architect (Fritz Ertl) euphemistically described the crematoria as "bathing establishment for special events". This was not a delicate way of describing places like the crematoria, so he was totally involved in this activity.

What is quite strange is that probably for many of us knowing the history of Bauhaus is to find this connection between the heritage (legacy) of the Bauhaus and such a criminal working activity. Usually when we think about Bauhaus we have in mind a place for freedom, a place where people can come from over the wall, with many problems and contradictions but also a place where many women were studying and working with many limitations. It is quite strange to think at the Bauhaus and make connections with the Nazi regime in this perspective. We know that in 1943, the last chapter of Bauhaus, it was in a factory in Berlin and the Nazi tried in every way to stop its activity and so to close their doors. This sort of political attitude that Miles van der Rohe tried to take away from the Bauhaus to focus more on design and architecture in particular.

If Fritz Ertl was on purpose involved in the planning of this kind of buildings and facilities, it was quite different for another former Bauhaus student which was Franz Ehrlich.



An SS officer's living room, designed by the former Bauhaus student Franz Ehrlich (Buchenwald Archive)

This is one of his drawings for the living room of a SS officer, with a quite ordered, domestic and comfortable environment. An interior with the use of minimalist shapes and furniture but also with the use of German wood and of course a giant swastika in the fireplace. It has to be pointed out the parallel dimension that we can find between designing in the same time a domestic space for a SS army officer and on the same drawing table the design of places for mass destruction or extermination of people.

This is a struggle between practice and ethics, two poles such as domestic normality and being involved in such a a tough design.

The case of Franz Ehrlich was quite different because it was impossible to understand to what extent he was a collaborator of the Nazi or rather a victim. He was arrested because of being a communist and arrived to the camp of Birkenau when it was quite new (had just some temporary structures); he was immediately forced to make really hard labours but in a couple of weeks tried and succeeded in joining the office that was in charge of designing all the structure of this camp. He told the officers he worked in Walter Gropius' offices in Berlin, so that he had a great training in one of the best offices for that period and he started designing things for the camp.

30/09/2020

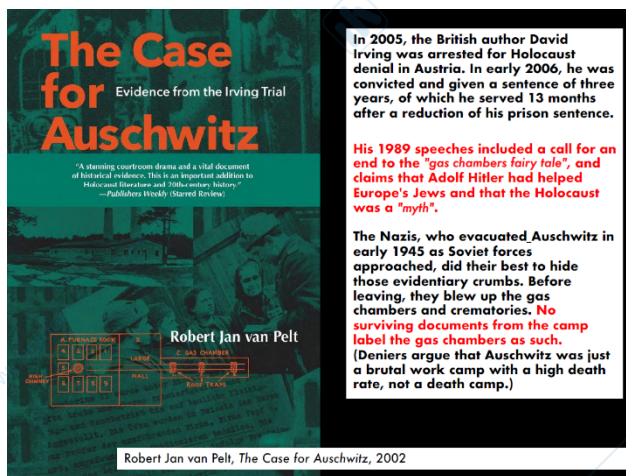
02 LESSON

One of the most famous is this iron decoration for a gate which says *Jedem das seine* as "To each his own". This invokes the individual's right to enjoy what is his. It is a sentence that you could read in different ways. One thing that can be underlined is the use of a sans serif lettering which reflected his training under the Bauhaus typography master Joost Schmidt. So, you can find Bauhaus lettering and approach to typography in a place which was to some extent a complete contradiction of the main ideals of the Bauhaus.

Here the perspective and hypothetical judgement is a bit blurred because we can determine the degree of personal involvement of Franz Ehrlich in the construction of these kind of environments. In fact, he was not allowed to work on structures where high security was required.

In 1940 he was asked to create a zoological garden for forest animals which were separated from the camp. The SS officer enjoyed this zoological garden and put some strict orders as to be framed of anything that could not be good for the animals. Prisoners could stare at the well protected creatures through the wire barrier. This meant designing a zoological garden joined to an extermination camp, which are two parallel but facing dimensions; not fitting very well each other.

This is a reflection of the way and role of ourselves as designers in always thinking what we are designing.



This leads us to another paragraph of this lecture, which is important to underline: this is The Case for Auschwitz, which was an exhibition and before a long and in-depth investigation carried out by a professor from the Netherlands, Robert Jan van Pelt, who wrote a book after his investigations about the sort of forensic analysis of Auschwitz in order to prove that this place was on purpose intended to be a place for massive extermination. He did it because he was asked to do that with regards to the Irving Trial, where David Irving was arrested for Holocaust

denial in Austria. A long before, he included a call for an end of what he calls "gas chambers fairy tale" and claimed that Adolf Hitler helped Europe's Jews and that the Holocaust was a "myth".

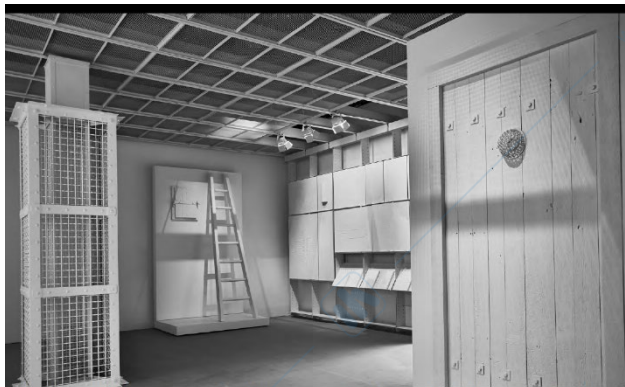
There were many oppositions to this "negationist theory" and so Robert Jan van Pelt was asked to prove with evidence that these places were created with the precise purpose of exterminating people. The main difficulty to prove it was that the Nazis at the beginning of 1945, when Soviet forces were approaching Germany, they did their best to hide any kind of evidence about the practice of exterminating people through gas chambers. So, they blew up all the gas chambers and crematories and so we do not have surviving documents from the camps where these chambers are labelled as gas chambers. That is why deniers argued how could these brutal work camps have a high death rate but not a death camp.

Instead Robert Jan van Pelt, thanks to his researches, proved that the deniers were wrong and so actually that there were evidences of these functions. These evidences can be read and seen in the very design of these interiors; from some precise-designed furniture and architectural elements which show the deliberate use of these places as gas chambers (death rooms).

[Video: Biennale Architettura 2016 – The Evidence Room]

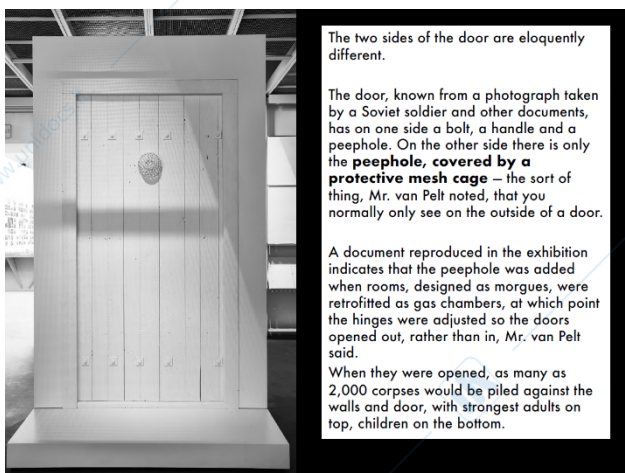
“This chamber project’s details were the greatest crime committed by architects” He tells us that there was a lack of ethics in practising the profession of design or architecture, because you should always ask yourself what are the limitations in your practice. What is good? What is bad? What is right and what wrong when designing something? This is an extreme of what someone can warn in the importance of the use of critical eye in ethics in our work as designers.

An interviewer asked Robert Jan van Pelt: “It was easy to recognise a figure like Josef Mengele as evil because he violated medicine’s moral code in the experiments he conducted at Auschwitz. But there is no code for architects, so where does the grounding of the discipline you talk about start?” Professor suggests if we should have also a moral code in architecture, what is the ethics for a designer, for someone designing places and other typologies?



Robert Jan van Pelt, Anne Bordeleau, Sascha Hastings and Donald McKay *The Evidence Room*, Biennale Venezia 2016 It presented a series of casts and full-scale replicas of Auschwitz’s homicidal gas chambers and huge incinerators.

<https://evidenceroomfoundation.com> DIGITAL VIEW



The two sides of the door are eloquently different.

The door, known from a photograph taken by a Soviet soldier and other documents, has on one side a bolt, a handle and a peephole. On the other side there is only the **peephole, covered by a protective mesh cage** – the sort of thing, Mr. van Pelt noted, that you normally only see on the outside of a door.

A document reproduced in the exhibition indicates that the peephole was added when rooms, designed as morgues, were retrofitted as gas chambers, at which point the hinges were adjusted so the doors opened out, rather than in, Mr. van Pelt said.

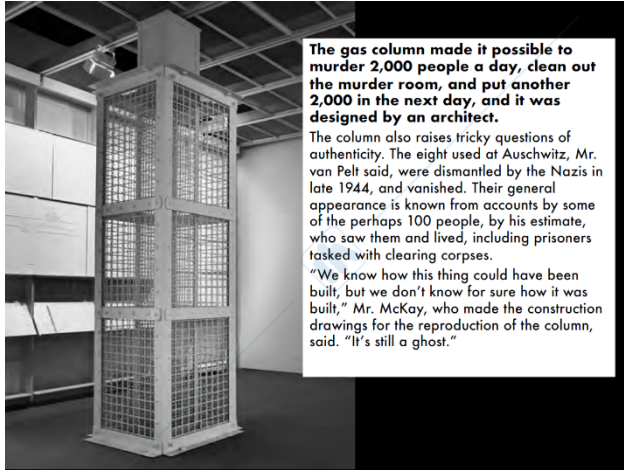
When they were opened, as many as 2,000 corpses would be piled against the walls and door, with strongest adults on top, children on the bottom.

It had the handle just on one side because it was not supposed to be opened from the inside). Another detail was the position of the hinges, which were put outside (special design for a door), so that the door was opened to the inside (it could not be opened inwards due to the 2.000 bodies that there were).

This is a picture of the so-called Evidence Room installation in Venice in 2016. The first evidence is for instance the door. Another quotation by Robert Jan van Pelt is “This is evidence of the worst crime ever committed by an architect. This is the worst thing an architect has ever done. It is the baseline of evil in architecture.” How could he proof that these chambers were actually built and designed on purpose for the extermination through this poisonous gas?

First evidence: the door, because the two sides of it weren't the same; one side had a bolt, a handle and a peephole while the other one only had a peephole, covered by a protective mesh cage. This last thing because prisoners tried to destroy this peephole to find a way to scape or find a way to make more difficult the awful process of exterminating them through the gas.





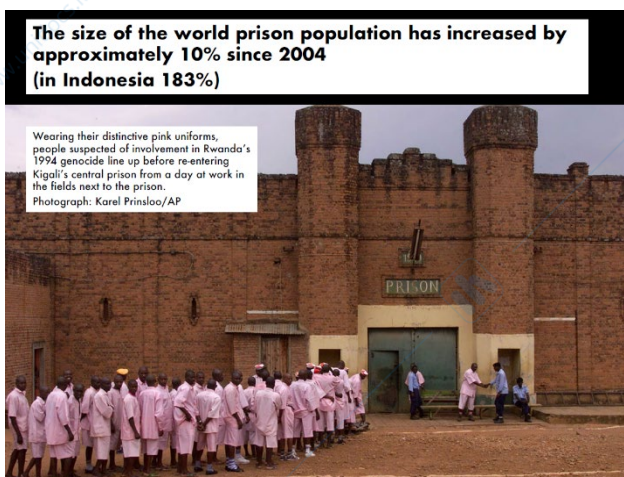
Second evidence: the gas column which made possible to murder 2.000 people a day, clean out the murder room and start again. This are two metal cages protecting the inner column in which the gas was lowered into the chamber provoking the death of the entire population of this place.



Third evidence: the gas hatch used in Auschwitz which is quite small. Someone found it so there was real evidence of it.

PRISONS TODAY

Prisons today are different, they can be declined and seen in many different kinds and interpretations of the categories of discipline and punish. It is a strong issue in contemporary times, and we couldn't understand at all the reasons and design of these institutions without knowing at least some of the previous things.



Looking at this picture, we can somehow feel some of the features of designing prisons (the conception of these places), what presides beyond these walls (and in the theoretical approach, buildings).

The size of the world prison population has increased by approximately 10% since 2004 (in many countries much more, like in Indonesia 183%).

Old structure design prisons are still surviving with an old conception as the one of place where people are segregated from the outer world.

Why is it important to consider design when thinking about prisons? Because design also matters in the consideration of such places, and also in the way we approach the human being and how people leaves in these places.

These people are not necessarily hard and clean enough, around a third of prisoners globally have not been found in guilty or they are in pre-trial detention. It is a perspective that changes our approach towards these places.



Wearing The women's wing of Pule-Charkhi prison on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan. Women are imprisoned for murder, child trafficking, drug smuggling and running away from home. Photograph: Sean Smith/The Guardian

This is the women's wing of a prison in the outskirts of Kabul, in Afghanistan. Women were imprisoned for murder, child traffic, drug smuggling but also running away from home. This are all very different crimes and situations, often also with the necessity of taking care of children in these places.



Some of the worst prisons in the world are for instance in El Salvador where often the density of imprisoned inmates is very high. Density of population in terms of what is the convenient space for each inmate? Is it enough?

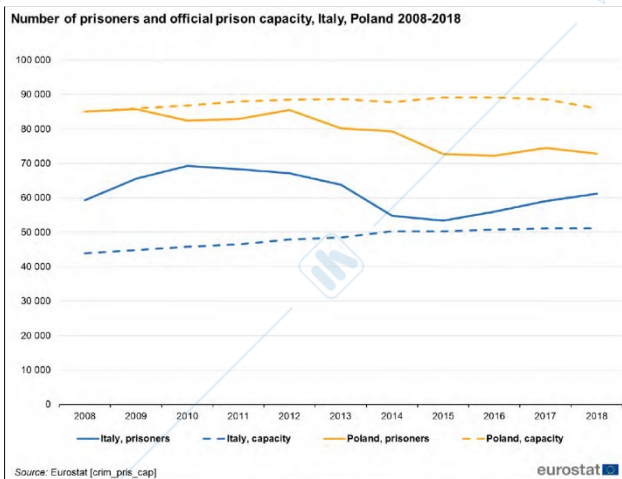
This image was taking in a pre-COVID era.



Inmates are lined up during a security operation under the watch of police at Izalco prison in San Salvador, El Salvador, on April 25, 2020. © 2020 El Salvador presidential press office via AP

This image was taken in April 2020 (COVID-era). Is quite astonishing, awful. Hundreds of inmates almost naked but with mask (for sanitary reasons) are sit down and stuck one back of their close inmates. This scene is quite impressive for us and also as designers reflecting on the relationship between space, architecture, design and people.

30/09/2020

02 LESSON

This is not only something limited to some particular countries but as we can see from this chart showing the prisoners and the official prison capacity in Italy (blue lines), they show how the number of prisoners is much higher than the real capacity of these places. Again, another point to be always considered.

From prisons to what has been called the “most humane prison in the world”



Halden Prison, in Norway, is one of the most famous prisons in the world in terms of “humanity”. The legal system in Norway is quite progressive and forward looking, [article of the New York Times in the readings section of Beep] Norway banned capital punishment for civilians in 1902, and life sentences were abolished in 1981. There is like a long way of improving this idea of punishment and also to improve the design of conditions of the inmates within prison.



This is the prison. It has nothing to do with the previous ones. We are not approaching the monumental structure but rather a more fragmented and articulated complex, made of different pavilions; one in wood, another one made of concrete, etc. We are approaching the space which is totally somehow shalowed by the nature (beautiful place in terms of natural surroundings, not stuck in a desert but rather in a peaceful and quiet environment). It is a community taken away from the outer world but with a

completely different approach compared to other contemporary prisons.

[Professor suggests us to see the documentary “Cathedrals of culture”]

“Completed in 2010, Halden is a high-security facility that houses 250 of Norway’s toughest criminals. It was designed by Erik Møller Architects and HLM Architects after an invited architectural competition initiated by the Norwegian Department of Justice and Statsbygg, the government agency responsible for real estate.” So, this project is not an exception but part of a

wider reflection upon the role and so the shape (aspect, structure) of prison in recovering the human being (to mend something within the human being).

“A central tenet of the design brief was the rehabilitation of prisoners in order to decrease recidivism, and this is reflected in the plan, interior design, and external landscaping. Long vertical windows maximize the light that enters the cells, and the green surroundings are easily viewed through generous fenestration in common areas. The architects state that, “Nature is actively involved as a social rehabilitative factor in the architecture... the opportunity to follow seasonal changes helps to clarify the passage of time for the inmates.”



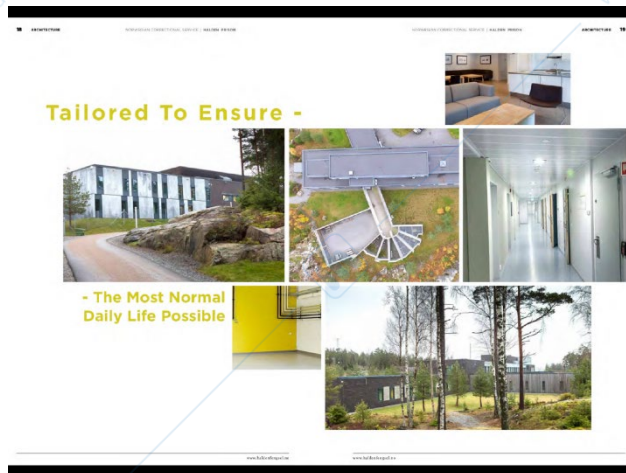
As already said, it is not a unique building but more like a composition made out of different blocks. Explicitly this is something conceived in order to avoid that relationship of overwhelming the human being (inmates) having a scale of such a huge complex over the human scale. (Instead of having a long homogeneous block with a certain uniformity in its design, materials and architecture, the architect decided to have a more articulated complex).



This is an aerial view showing the idea of not having a single building, but rather different blocks spread in this natural environment.



This is a detail of some individual open cells (outdoor spaces) in which it can be seen a small legacy from the Panopticon with the radial system of cells. At the same time, we have something quite different because there is not a single guard watching all the people, instead we have a different system for these spaces. We also have a very open perspective towards the exterior (obviously there is a concrete wall facing these spaces but also a sort of openness on the top of your head and in front of you).



This are some concepts at the base of this project such as “tailored to ensure”, “the most normal daily life possible”. It could be pointed out that there is a sort of proximity inwards, kind of advertisement as it could be for other facilities such as hospitals or residences for aged people.

Some other text taken from the architects and prison's statement:

“In terms of location, design and interior, Halden Prison has been designed to reflect life outside its walls as an important tool during inmates' sentences. Halden Prison is built on the crest of a hill surrounded by woods. Typical of the site are the three elongated hills running north to south.” This is like the description of a resort in some touristic place.

“The middle hill divides the site into two main levels with a difference in height of approx. 8-10 metres. The site is characterised by its existing pine woods with smooth rocks and heather forming its base. This was considered a valuable starting point for the development of a prison facility, alongside the requirements and limitations that apply to such a facility.” There is a thought at the beginning of this project that starts with the selection of a right place, not in the outskirts of some town or city, but rather in the middle of an existing pine woods.

“Integrating the original elements. The goal throughout the process has been to preserve and integrate the original landscape and vegetation into the prison facility. It is not a massive building, but rather something that can integrate, splitting in different parts within this topography and vegetation.

Topography and existing vegetation therefore form the basis for the location of the buildings and design of outdoor spaces. The landscape – natural and processed – is incorporated as an important part of daily life in the prison. The overall objectives are: to preserve the existing vegetation and terrain, to use local materials, etc.” So, language is really important; the starting point for design is also within this language with its thoughts about the idea of creating a positive environment for inmates.

“Good meeting places. The outdoor spaces are designed to create good meeting places and outdoor living areas, as well as creating the necessary distance and barriers for unwanted communications and visibility.” There is always this balance between privacy (individual dimension) and security rules/needs that must be respected.

“Trees and terrain shape their own spaces within the facility and are important as natural contrasts to the large volume of buildings.” There is a contrast between a lot of square meters and something else, the nature.

“The trees also perform an important function as vertical elements in an environment otherwise dominated by the horizontal lineage of the prison wall.” Again, this is a subtle reflection about the horizontality of the wall, which actually is like the main element that reminds you that you are in a prison. It is like the boundary between this inner community and normal life. And so, in

order to smooth this perception trees which are vertical elements function as a contrast (positive element) going against this geometrical remind.

"The large natural area in the centre is, with one exception, untouched by all forms of technical intervention. The natural landscape around the buildings change with the seasons and creates awareness of the passing of time. The natural forest vegetation is supplemented with some smaller planted areas containing bushes and perennials chosen to emphasize the changing of the season through foliage, flowering and autumn colours." They paid great attention at the design and selection of the right species of plants, flowers and trees in order to feel this idea of finding a rhythm for the passing of time (dialogue between the human being and architecture in a wider sense).

"Hard and soft. The project's intention and main initiative is based on two mutually dependent contradictions: hard and soft. Hard represents the deprivation of freedom that occurs during a sentence, while the soft represents the goal of rehabilitation." Here it is declared a clear attempt to find the balance between two mutually dependent contradictions: hard and soft. Hard is the deprivation, while soft is the rehabilitation.

"This is reflected in the main initiative and the position of the buildings. The division of the site in two has provided guidance for the facility's main focus and architectural differentiation. The bulk of the institution, the administrative functions and the highest-security units are gathered together in one system connected to the main gate and sports park on the lower, marshy level." So, each single position is studied with precise relation to the rest of the complex. It is a project studied in depth in terms of relationship between verticality and horizontality, between hard and soft, between nature and buildings, between security and freedom, and between individuality and community.

Going back to the statement written by the architects which says: *"The facility is an institution for some of society's most difficult members, an institution defined by security, both physical and technological, yet organized and designed to be humane. Halden Prison represents the Norwegian state's will to respect human rights. In all aspects of the project security has provided a fundamental framework, from site selection through to completion on site. Running parallel to security has been an emphasis on promoting and inspiring new living patterns amongst the prisoners. The facility is defined by the idea that high quality surroundings, connected to nature, can help build self-esteem and respect."* It is clear the search for this relationship between architecture in a wider sense (design of a landscape, towards also the design of all the interiors; common spaces, cells...) and a inner process (mental) carried out by every inmate. There is a search for a direct "effect"/consequences on the inmates thanks to architecture.

"The project is organized by simple volumes placed within a beautiful woodland landscape. We have placed an emphasis on using high quality materials, generous dimensions, openness and light to create an environment that goes against traditional prison design, providing a new perspective on prison architecture. The functions of each building are distinguished by their material selection and connection with the surrounding landscape." The choice of material declares its function. There is not a unique block, a homogeneous shape for this building but rather split in different shapes and materials. It is interesting to look at the way architecture splits. It is different to have a look at a building like the Newgate prison in the *architecture terrible* style, which it was meant mainly to say "Pay attention, I'm watching you. Don't do bad things, otherwise you will be swallowed by this institution" but it rather was like an architectural language to express a warning. Instead, here architecture is taking another language; a language that pays attention to the dialogue in the two directions (a sort of exchange between the prisoner and the building). Like "I am giving you something, you look at me and don't see only a warning but rather what I am supposed to do". Also, a language with the landscape through architecture, because it is the frame to which I can dialogue.

"The aim of the prison is to provide a facility that is not only focused on detention but also on the re-habilitation of prisoners, into a life of non-criminal behaviour. The facility has been designed for both men and women, where prisoners participate in leisure, cultural, religious, educational and work based activities." This does not only happen in this prison but in many others, where they organize activities to stimulate and encourage people thinking to be integrated and about a life beyond, after the prison in a sort of process of rehabilitation.

"Although the facility has strict security, aided by its design and organization, prisoners have a degree of freedom which they can progress through." This comes from analysing the balance between freedom and security. How can you design a place where your freedom is deprived but at the same time your freedom is somehow guaranteed? It is a really hard task, it can be stimulating and demanding but in such a project you have to deal with the complexity of our society and the complexity of looking at people like criminals. In order get the whole picture and not only limit yourself to design a nice bed or whatever, you must collaborate with psychologists and many other disciplines.

"The project is designed with clear parallels to society outside the facility. The organization of the sleeping blocks is separated from leisure and work activities within the prison, aimed to represent the routines of "normal life". How to mirror "normal life" but in the same place? How to separate daily activities from sleeping blocks in a kind of microorganism in which you have to think about not only the aspect and shape of the single room, but also a more complex psychology of the way we live our world. You could connect this reflection to (enormous jump) the way we were stuck at home in the last spring's lockdown, in which we were working and eating (doing different activities) in the same place. We could also think of the psychological effects of our lockdown in terms of the gap of distance and contact with the outside (freedom), but also due to a sort of compressed daily life within the same space.

[Video: The Norden – Nordic prisons (excerpt)]

It underlines some good points of different perspectives and approaches towards the design and the idea of the institution of prison. In particular, the parallelism between Halden prison in Norway and in USA. It caused a great impact to the person that was visiting the Norwegian prison, certain ideas and architectural structures for such a place didn't get along.

[Video: Prison Project: Little Scandinavia (extended trailer) until minute 08:27]

It is an experiment of taking some of the ideas which are not only experimented but claimed in Norway bringing them to the USA (how to convert these ideas). It is interesting to see the gaps and differences between them.

This is a short text written by an inmate:

"Although simple, the interior furnishings are modern and inviting; safety glass is used so bars can be avoided;" Again, how can I design a window in such place, such a prison? In our comic-like/cartoon-like way of thinking about prisons, many of the windows have bars at the window so you don't have a free perspective but bars like cutting your view and your relationship with the exterior. In this case, they avoided the use of bars using safety glass. This is a big shift in terms of design (using a technology), without underlining every single moment the permanence within this cell remaining you that you are in jail. This can change your perception; also, of how you are considered by the state (you are considered like someone that will be trusted in the future in order to go beyond this experience). Since you cannot stay in Norway in prison forever whatever is your guilt, there is a life beyond the prison and so they try to prepare you for that life.

Another reading chunk by Michael Madsen about his film (Cathedrals of culture):

"Architecture is psychology of space. Nowhere is this more prominent than in the social engineering of prisons - that is, the question of whether citizens are removed for the satisfaction of the surrounding society - as revenge - or for re-socialisation. A prison represents the underside of society. It is a state-sponsored fortress meant to contain that which is judged unacceptable." It is to take away the unacceptable from our view. Remember the gap between that idea of putting on show the punishment like it was in the previous century before the great shift in prison design and conception.

"A prison is where tolerance ends and society struggles for survival by simply taking away individuals whose actions - sometimes only hypothetically - threaten the security of people, their moral values, or even the state itself." There are many different situations inside prison, in which for example some of them have not yet been proven guilty.

"A prison, in other words, is a vessel for preserving - or even creating - a certain type of humans, a certain type of culture." This is true. Through the way we conceive and design, we shape somehow our image in a certain time of humans and culture.

In conclusion, professor reads another text written by John K., who is an inmate of the Halden prison in Norway. [essay uploaded on Beep and called "Humanity Rather than Materialism – A Short Essay About the Prison Environment"]

"Describing how buildings, colours, designs and furnishings can affect people is beyond my understanding. I know that a lot of research has been done into how institutions should be built and designed, but I have never concerned myself with this and must say that giving more weight to these materialistic aspects than to human relationships amazes me. You can guess from my opening statement where I stand in respect to this topic. I will attempt to explain my point of view, and my conclusions will surely surprise scientists, architects and interior designers. But this is what I believe, and the following reflects my perception of reality." He is saying that doesn't care so much about the way these spaces are designed, even if this is the main focus of many people around the conception of contemporary prisons.

"Location. I served several years of a long sentence in Halden Prison. These were difficult years for me and I look back on them with pain and bitterness. Halden Prison is Norway's newest, and possibly one of the most talked about prisons in the world. That at least is what we inmates were told. "Welcome to Europe's most humane" prison. Considering the rest of the world's attitude to imprisonment, you may well assume they meant that Halden is the world's most humane prison."

Halden Prison was completed in 2010 and was built in the middle of nowhere near a small town called Halden in the county of Ostfold. This is off the beaten track and far from civilization. The world's "most humane prison" was built here, away from the town, so as not to annoy the few people who, by their own choice, have settled in this small town. Halden is really just the gateway to the Swedish town of Svinesund where Norwegians cross the border to buy cheap meat.

The prison was built far from man and beast. It was built out here in the woods and, as a modern prison, it was constructed so that nature could be preserved within the walls. Halden Prison was to be built on a different plan to all other prisons in the country. Several buildings were erected in an area with lots of woods and wild Norwegian nature. The trees were to be preserved and function as green "lungs" for the great pleasure and recreation of the inmates. (I could not help slipping in that bit of typical Norwegian irony).

When I arrived at Halden Prison, I was in shock. I had just confessed my crime and struggled hard to accept what I had done. I was seeking human contact, I cried and I had difficulty getting through each day. I asked for help, I asked for a psychologist, but no help was available. The prison did not have the capacity to give me an appointment with a psychologist. I was locked up with cruel thoughts, deep remorse and a fierce desire to escape from my situation. I did not want to

30/09/2020

02 LESSON

escape from prison, but to escape from my own body, leaving all those I had failed and would continue to fail by being absent for many years.

So, here I sit in Halden Prison. Beautiful nature! Trees outside my window! A peace and quiet I simply was not used to. I am an Oslo lad, a "townie", and will remain so until this lonely body gasps its last breath. The fact that so-called experts have decided that Norwegian nature, trees and silence will be good for me makes me more angry than you can imagine. I was not aware of my surroundings at first. How could I be? My mind bubbled, my brain was working overtime, my emotions tore my heart into pieces and I missed those I loved. This caused me so much internal noise that I could not find comfort in those bloody trees outside my window. The silence was more of a torment than a consolation. If noises were to influence my mental state, what I needed was what was normal for me: the sound of traffic, stress, people, the noise of the city and the smell of asphalt and exhaust! Peace and quiet may sound inviting to a researcher... but for me it was totally meaningless.

Colours. The colours in Halden Prison are, I am told, intended to be calming and soothing. I am a man, an honest man used to speaking my mind. It is possible that research has proven that different colours elicit different moods in humans. But it does not make sense to me in my situation. Choice of colours seems a trifling irrelevance when I am locked up in a place without the help I need to deal with my internal demons. That is just how it is with me. I was suffering so much that I was not aware of the colours around me and they had no meaning. I did not see anything clearly, not colour, not the future, not the present... everything was just full of pain. Looking back, I was living the life of a zombie. In some periods I was an outgoing windbag, in others I could be silent and detached. It was my mood that decided who I was and who I socialized with. That is what really mattered: who I met, how I behaved and how I related to other inmates. I always try to be polite and if I like the person I am talking to, I can joke and be open.

Interior. Interior...if interior means furniture, then I admit to being more aware of fixtures and fittings than of colours as I like to have things neat and tidy around me. As I managed to put some of the pain behind me, I actually began to notice that the furniture in Halden Prison was totally neutral in form, without any distinctive design. All departments were alike: grey sofas; square, beech coffee tables; white dining tables and white/steel kitchen furnishings. The cells were all furnished in beech: a bed, a desk, a chair, a cupboard. Everything is neutral - as though taken from an absurd catalogue of minimalist cell-furniture where Halden Prison was the finest model on display!

On several occasions, I have been told to my face: "The prisoners in Halden have even got their own bathrooms - with tiles on the walls." My response to this is: Yes, we all had our own bathroom. A bathroom that can be compared to one in the cheapest cabin on an overnight ferry. I accept that prisoners are not entitled to a private bathroom, but the point of this article is to comment on how inmates are influenced by the prison environment. In this respect, I would point out that these bathrooms are only just sufficient for a grown man to maintain a basic level of personal hygiene. White tiles and a shower do not impress me. I am not saying this because I was dissatisfied, but because, again, they seem totally unimportant to the pain I was still bearing. A tiled bathroom is not a substitute for a hug from someone who wishes you well. A tiled bathroom could not remove the sense of desolation. A tiled bathroom does not make you happy." He gives us a quite moving and tough response to all the efforts made by researchers to find out the best way for welcoming in these places. He is saying in some situations these things are useless because there is a further perspective; there is an environment around you but also an inner dimension which is more psychological. He needed help from psychologists, but he could not find them. We should also listen to this sort of request for some help which is not provided only through minimalist shapes, furniture etc. but to look at the whole picture to understand our role

and all the way through which we can contribute in helping in a good and ethical way the world that is around us.

