



Designing for Outsiders: Understanding the Effects of Intended and Unintended Design

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WHY DO WE HAVE OUTSIDERS?

How tolerant are we of people outside our community? Our ingrained instincts drive us as humans to seek positive interactions, to feel accepted and appreciated, to find purpose to help us thrive as individuals and as a collective. While positive instincts drive us to purpose, so does fear pull us into a defensive state, to protect ourselves and our own against the alien and unknown [5]. This duality, this push and pull, is center stage in regards to interpreting new peoples and cultures and attempting to find a balance between the two is a hard task.

Throughout history there has always been turbulence between people we associate with and people we disassociate with. We tend to compare ourselves to others and point out their differences; and deem if those differences will be an asset (positive) to the group or a liability (negative) and disassociate ourselves from them.

It is from these perceptions and assumptions, spun from humans, that they have made an impact on the physical world. The way they portray and execute their ideas and perceptions of one another influences how they create solutions that emulate their proposal for the tangible and intangible future. Their perception of one another, whether it is consciously benefiting one or many, has intentional and unintentional forms of inclusion and exclusion, that change how they interact with one another.

UNDERSTANDING BIOLOGICAL, SOCIETAL AND CULTURAL ASPECT OF OUTSIDERS:

All human thought and intent stems from survival, is reinforced through society and is influenced and perceived by culture. To fully interpret the intent behind human actions one must recognize how their biological factors, sociological factors and cultural factors play apart in their psyche and how they perceive and interact with the physical world. From these perceptions and influences one is able to conclude how design manipulates the physical world to reinforce the conscious and unconscious intent of the designer.



UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BIOLOGICAL PSYCHE:

Every brain is made of two hemispheres, the left and right, which control the logical and creative components respectively. These well developed and relatively "newer" parts of the brain help humans to navigate the world and find unique takes on situations from varying viewpoints. The fight or flight response is triggered within the Amygdala, , located in a more ancient part of the brain. It is only through deep thought and activation of other parts of the brain like the pre-frontal cortex that we can make more logical and long-lasting choices, reacting to data rather than fear.

SURVIVAL AND BIOLOGICAL INSTINCTS:

At their essence, the intent of human thought and action is survival. Survival can be described as the act of continuing to live. Survival thinking can be broken up into two thought processes, instinctual and perceivable thought. They are wired to quickly make decisions revolving around themselves. They were and still are focused on creating an environment for themselves that is safe and predictable and it was from their biological instincts that humans were able to set up the basis and became the strongest way of perceiving the world. Humans have created a generalized notion of what is okay and what is not. They have found patterns in the unknown world that allowed them to in an instance determine if something, somewhere, or someone was an asset or a liability to their survival, with varying degrees of success.

REINFORCED BY SOCIETY

When humans started out in smaller clans, they were driven by the demands of their collective society, a homogeneous mix of their needs and wants. If one person succeeded, they tended to all succeed. These smaller societies had less intra-clan conflict. They understood one another better and shared common goals and ideas. As time progressed and their population grew, society shifted from acting as a mouthpiece for the many to the mouthpiece of the few. Large societies originated with individuals or groups of like-minded people having and using the ability to unite and control smaller or weaker groups for their own benefit, and large societies have basically served this purpose ever since for kings, the wealthy and powerful, intellectuals, and so on. Initiated by the goal of survival, created by the intent of efficacy, but governed by the idea of greed, society had become focused on success and power at the cost of others. The higher ups in these larger societies are in control of the group and dictated what was acceptable. They governed what behaviors, ideas, and actions were allowed, who was able to do what job, where people could live, and what was to be believed. As time progresses, humans are constantly fine tuning these ideas to find the best way to control those living in their societies.

JUSTIFIED BY CULTURE:

Culture can be described as the values, beliefs, language, communication, and practices that are shared by a group of people. Culture is not a controlling force in society, it is an informing force. It is something that is learned and influenced by people of a group and is ultimately shaped by the intentions of the society at large. It is the actions, symbols, and ideas that are used to express meaning, thoughts, and concepts. Culture provides reason and purpose and helps shape a common identity. It is important for shaping social relationships, maintaining and challenging social order, determining how to make sense of the world and one's place in it, and in shaping everyday actions and experiences in society. Culture gives a sense of normality, a sense of familiarity, a sense of being safe. It allows people to emotionally connect with one another to fill their biological needs and it offers a way to perceive the world.

FORMULATION OF
PROBLEM;

DOCUMENTATION METHOD USED:

The interpretation of human psyche through the description of biological needs and influences on our perception of society, culture and in turn others, were used to help interpret how humans approach and perceive the physical world and other beings. An analysis of these physiological concepts were then applied to architectural elements to understand the intent behind the design solution and action. This analysis helped determine the situation, problem, and the intentional design concept. From there parallels were able to be drawn from the design's context, culture, and intent that were used to understand the full impact of intended design, the consequences of unintended design, and how they mitigate the concept of insiders and outsiders.

DESIGN AS A LANGUAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE:

Design is an intended solution to a problem. it is the language that conveys thoughts and ideas in an efficient, beautiful, and uplifting form. It is a physical, engineered aesthetic and experience that speaks louder than words. Within architecture our design intent is to create an aesthetically pleasing space that will act as a safe comfortable shelter and resource for its intended purpose for an intended group or idea. Designed architecture is a physical response generated from our interactions with the world, it can be used as a tool to manipulate the emotions and perceptions of its onlookers. It is through perception that the design can speak to its intended and unintended viewer. This association or dissociation with the space and the intent of the design is what physically influences the notion of insiders and outsiders.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

Design in its essence can be broken up into two categories, intended or intentional design (the response) and unintended or unintentional design (the reverberation). Intended design is the concept, idea, or solution that the designer is proposing in response to the design problem. All design emulates the designers goals for the situation and is thought out and tailored specifically for the situation it is reacting to. It is the unintended design that is the unperceived response to the intended design. Many designs are very one sided due to their attention being fixated on the problem at hand, it is because of this they are not able to perceive their solution from multiple angles and determine how the design may be fully perceived.

INTENDED DESIGN:

When designing we do so for a specific cause, tailoring the solution and aesthetic for a specific purpose and group and in so doing we create an in crowd and an out crowd, The "in" being our intended targets and the "out" being everyone else. The connotation of in or out is brought on by the interpretation of the physical design. The user draws conclusions that result in a positive or negative feeling and or association with the design solution, forcing you to perceive that space in a specific way (a connected association with the space or a disjointed association with the space).

UNINTENTIONAL DESIGN:

When it comes to the physical world, humans have created solutions that work specifically for the immediate future, seeking to solve an immediate pressing problem. The designers become so fixated on that specific problem and how it will influence the intended community of today that they tend not to really look into the physical, sociological, and physiological effects that it can bring to those in the minority (the unintended) and the reaction of the future community.

INTENTIONAL SEPARATION

Architecture is a physical response to our perception of the world. We create solutions that represent and emphasize our thoughts and feelings that reflect our own idea of how society should be. We use architecture to manipulate the impressions and perceptions that others have of the physical world. It is an individual focused concept that is presented as something that is benefiting the greater good, explaining your concepts by stating: "I thought, I want, I design". Using your own personalized notions of what would be beneficial to the community at large by appealing to the moral, ethical, or social heartstrings of the intended audience. It is how we present our architectural solutions and designs and how they are interpreted that creates barriers between people, intentionally or otherwise.

INTENTIONAL CULTURAL SEPARATION

Architecture and design is fueled by culture. The designer should always be aware of cultural ideas and beliefs of the intended users and know how to effectively communicate the significance of these ideas and beliefs through architecture. The ability to recognize and conform to these cultural ideas is a way of controlling the perception of the environment and users. The designer is reflecting their views and values onto the perceivers by drawing connections to them culturally.

What makes an intended design successful culturally, is the understanding between the designer and cultural aspect. Designers use specific elements that reflect the cultural beliefs and values of the intended users. The physical aspects call to the nurtured perception of the world that we have learned through our culture, i.e. pink is feminine, blue is masculine. This is a way for the designer to get an emotional or spiritual response from their intended audience and build a connection with the space. It is the lack of understanding and commonality between one's culture from another's culture that causes the existence of outsiders and it is the designed physical world that helps reinforce this concept.

INTENTIONAL SOCIAL SEPARATION

Intentional design should manipulate the environment so that it can accommodate the intended users and reflect the purpose of the design solution. One way is by creating a physical separation between groups of people. The designers do this with the intent of protecting the users and in turn the space through visual barriers between the intended and unintended. These physical architectural features are a reminder that this space is only for the intended, that you must be one of them to be welcomed and use it. They harp on the idea that the intended users need to feel safe and protected in their space. They need to know that they have control over who is allowed to be in the space and who is not.

UNINTENTIONAL SEPARATION

Architecture can speak louder than words. It is our interpretation of the physical space that adds to the overall atmosphere of the situation. Through architecture it is possible to establish a divide between insiders and outsiders by means of nonverbal cues that welcome and shun people away. Architects tend to design for one group, the average attendee, working on the best solution that will positively impact the experience for them and their ideas, however, it is in doing so that they are unaware of how their intentions and ideas will affect the atypical and unintended. This unawareness or unintentional design creates subtle cues that represent acceptance and rejection.

UNINTENTIONAL CULTURAL SEPARATION

The built world is littered with the effects of unintentional design. Examples can be drawn from urban planning where there has been a loss of control of an intention for a unified master plan as we continue to grow our built landscape. Historically humans had specific groups that determined your place within society. This was a form of control that dictated who were the shepherds and who were the sheep. How every today, in western culture, the groups created and are influenced by the need to create a familiar environment. Today these groups are representation of different races and income brackets, that have formed partly due to the need to "make the area better" and partly due to their isolation due to economic and cultural influences. Closed off from the rest of society, they present themselves as alien communities that have been viewed as attractions or unsafe spaces to the rest of society, instead of being perceived as comfortable safe residences within an existing community.

Most of these types of design involves changing the identity an area because the design intent is to eliminate the bad and replace it with the good. However, it is this misunderstanding of what is good and what is bad that causes this segregation. While the intent of this type of architecture is to boost the economy and the positive perception of the area, this approach often drives the original inhabitants out. By bringing more people in and changing the economy as well as the identity of the space, the designers are essentially telling the original inhabitants that they were never and never will be good enough to live here.

UNINTENTIONAL SOCIAL SEPARATION

Many spaces today are meant to speak to a wide variety of people, relaying the message that everyone is welcome here. Unfortunately it is this connotation of making a space universal, that causes the unintended reaction of separation and segregation. This lack of understanding between the designers and users is expressed through elements such as accessibility and movement through the space. This contributes to how people perceive their acceptance within the space. To them, the space feels elite or as if there is a hierarchy, because they are not able to navigate through it the same way others do, or that certain spaces are emphasized and focused on more than others. The users of the space may perceive the space as if they were an afterthought, or not thought about at all. While the designer's intention was to make the space accessible and welcoming to everyone, it is not perceived that way.

CASE STUDIES

Jardín de Infancia en Almacelles. E-038

Typology: Nursery School

Location: Almacelles, Spain

Design Elements:

Organization of Spaces:

- Child Oriented
- Age Oriented
- Adult Oriented
- Public and Private

Material and Color:

- Neutral materials with splashes of color
- Contrast between light and shadows
- Vertical and horizontal lines.

Contextual Design:

- Modern interpretation of the area
- Response to the aired and dry climate

Intended Design:

Security and Protection:

Physical Separation of public space and educational space.

Visual Separation in to the Educational space.

Age Appropriate Spaces Conducive for Learning:

Separation of Classrooms
Implication of Adult Only Space

Unintended Design:

Separation of Cultures:

Creation and emphasis of spaces and cultures that are made / meant for specific age groups. (Hierarchy of Spaces)

Creation and emphasis of different cultures and spaces between adults and children. (Creating spaces of taboo)

Emphasizing the idea of school as a culture and an institute. (Learning Starts and stops at the gate)

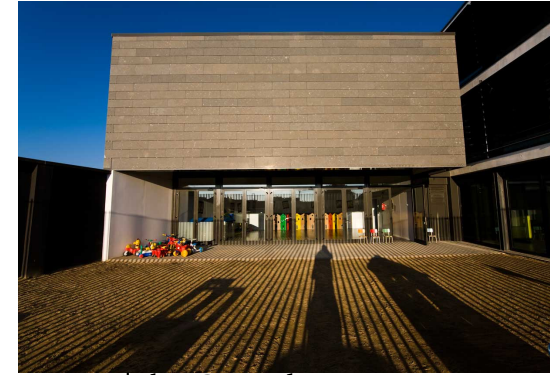


Figure 2|Play Ground

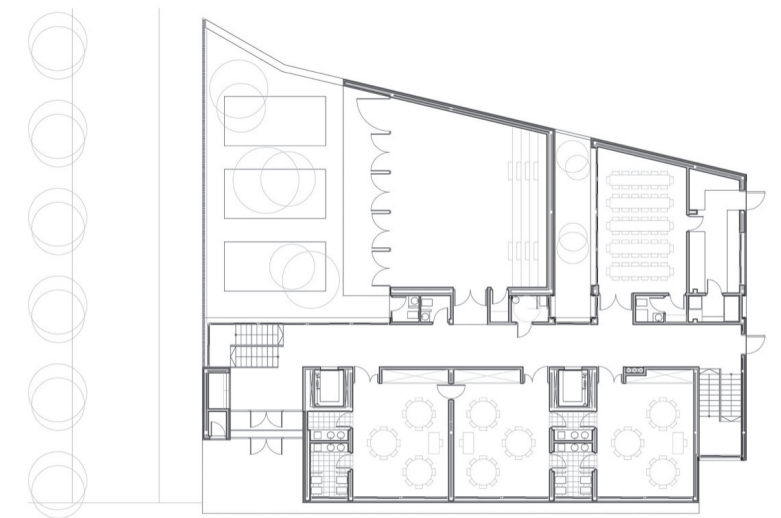


Figure 4|Ground Floor Plan

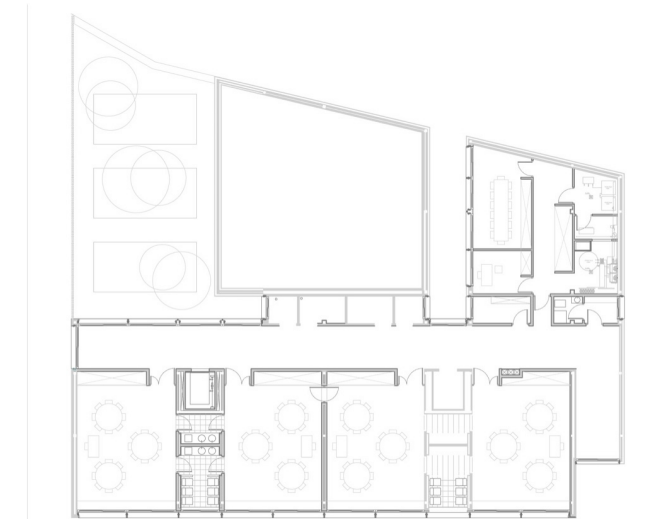


Figure 5|Second Floor Plan

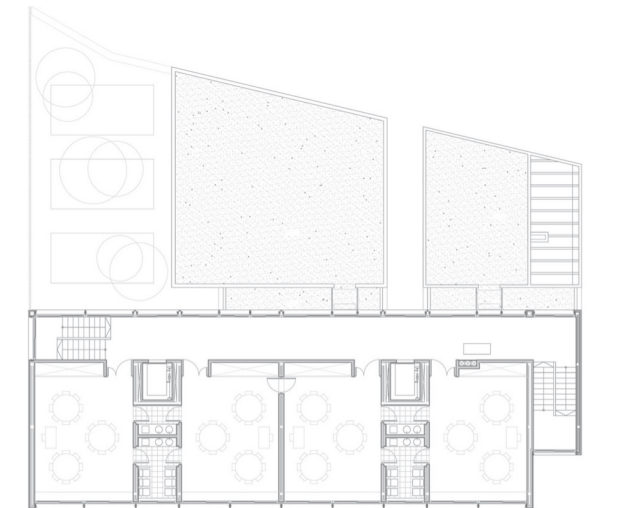


Figure 6|Third Floor Plan

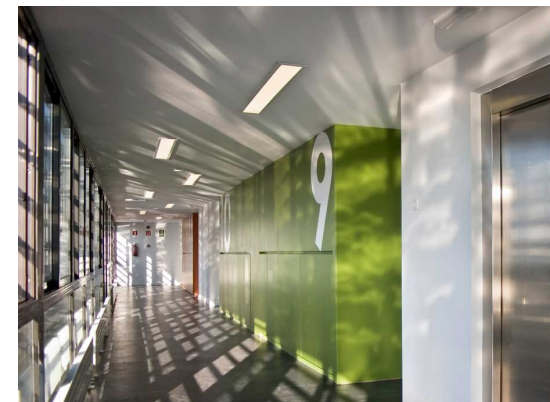


Figure 3|Hall Way



Figure 7|Section



Figure 1|Jardin De Infacia E-038.

Hostile / Defensive Architecture

Typology: Nursery School

Design Elements:

Security:
Control of who is allowed here and who is not

Material and Color:

Neutral materials that tend to blend in and not stand out from the space

Contextual Design:
These architectural elements should fit in with the design and context of the space. They should be seen and speak to those who they are intended for, but should be unseen for those who they are not intended for.



Figure 11 | Eluveitie.

Intended Design:

Security and Protection:

Control who can and who cannot be in the space at all times.

Make an unappealing experience for people who aren't using the space for what the space/ object is intended for.

Positive and Welcoming Aesthetic:

Don't let these objects stand out or seem out of place

Unintended Design:

Create a Scene Paranoia:

The space could be interpreted as not safe due to the visual security.

The communal space does not enforce a culture of community.

Stereo types and a Scene of Hierarchy:

These architectural features are targeting specific people, which intern forces people to associate a negative perception and create stereotypes of those people.



Figure 8 | Hemlos



Figure 12 | Inclusion

Mixed Signals



Figure 10 | THE PUBLIC HOUSING MAZE

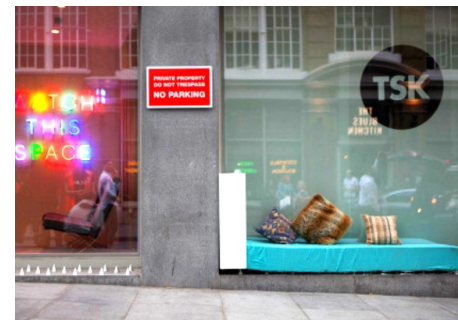


Figure 17 | Anti Homeless Spikes.



Figure 9 | Its a Moot Point

Over all Atmosphere



Figure 16 | Defense for the Birds

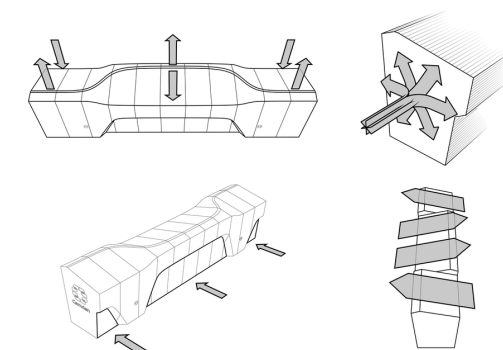


Figure 15 | Instant Bench Shelters



Figure 13 | Camden Bench: Segregation by Design. Product Design Intent

Figure 14 | Waiting Area



Loft Office

Typology: Office

Location: Rotterdam, Netherlands

Design Elements:

Organization of Spaces:

Open Concept Layout

Material and Color:

Neutral
Modern
Clean

Contextual Design:

Modern and Professional Work Environment

Intended Design:

Collaborative Work Environment:

Separating spaces though the objects with in the space.

Unique Private Spaces:

Transparent "walls" that physically separate people but may not visually or audibly separate the spaces.

Unintended Design:

Lack of Privacy:

Due to the loose terms between private and public spaces.

Hierarchy of Status can be created though the feeling that someone is always watching you.

Detractions become more apparent



Figure 19| Interior



Figure 23|Inside Looking Out

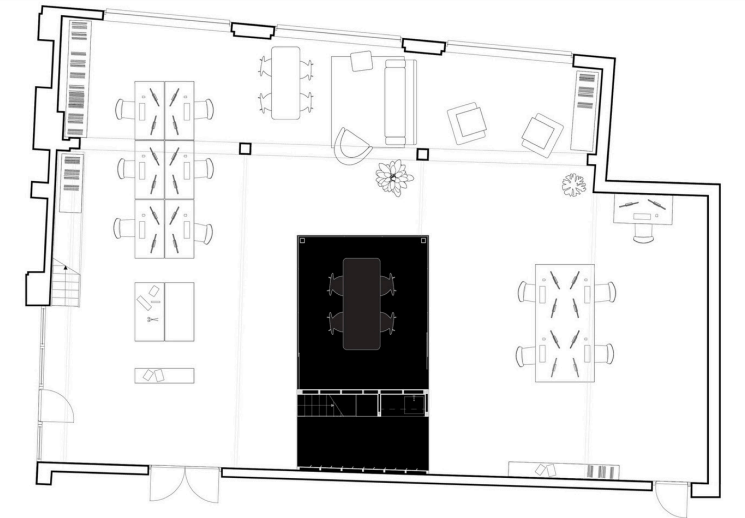


Figure 20|Ground Floor

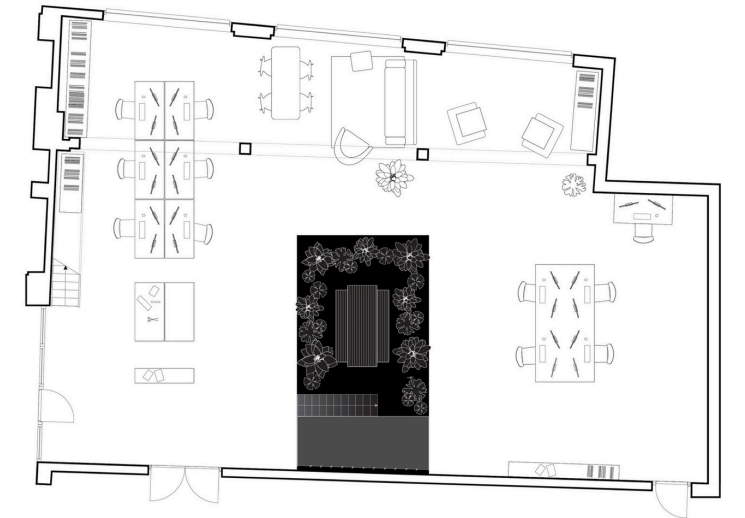


Figure 21|Second Floor

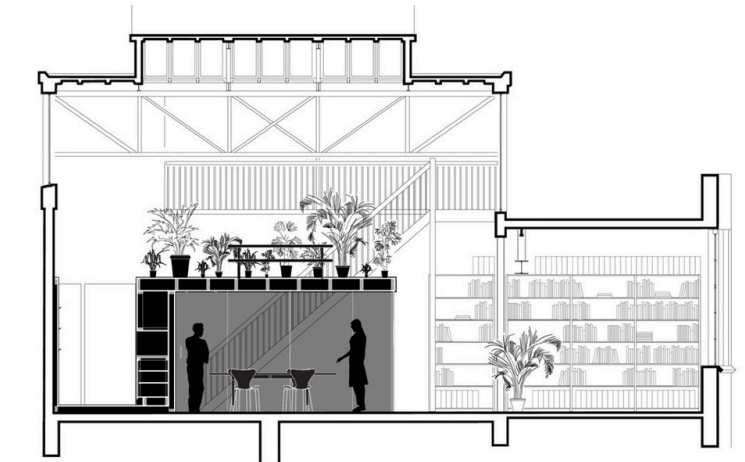


Figure 22|Section

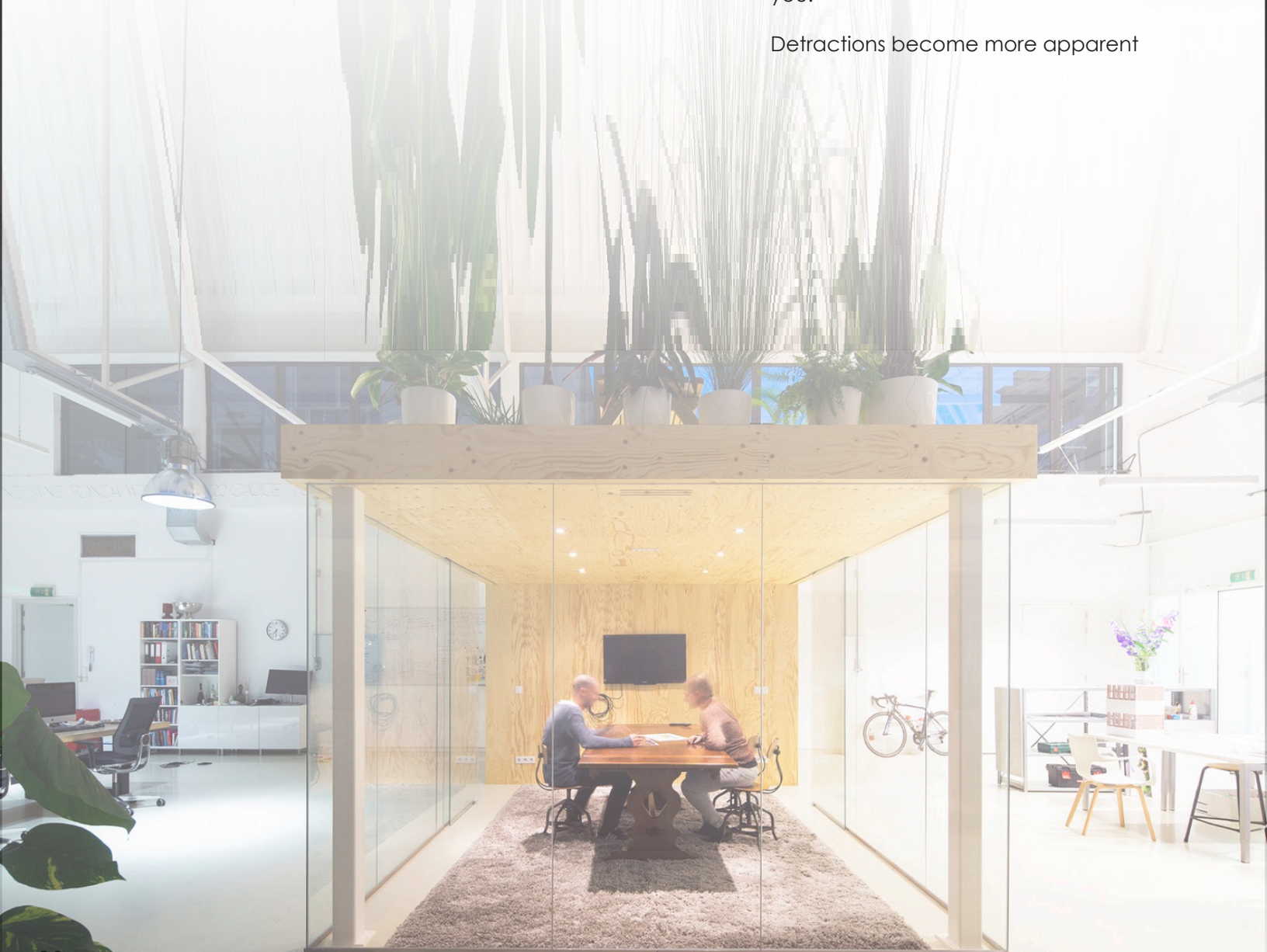


Figure 18| Loft Office

APPENDIX

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