

URBAN DESIGN LAB GYUMRI

Initiative

AKOS and the City Research Center of Gyumri invited Jan Doms (LEF city dynamics, office for spatial research and design | NL) for a residency in Armenia.

There were two options. One option was to create an architectural glass sculpture in a public building or public space in Gyumri.

The other option was to organize a so called Urban Design Laboratory in Gyumri for students and jong professionals in the field of architecture and/or arts.

After a first visit to Gyumri in September 2015 we decided to create the Urban Design Lab Gyumri.

Participants

National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia, Yerevan

Emma Sargsyan, Miqayel Yeghoyan, Davit Ohanyan, Lilit Tadevosyan, Vahagn Fereshetyan.

Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts | Gyumri Branch

Aleksey Manukyan, Ani Khachatryan, Nush Petrosyan, Suzan Ghazar, Tamara Kaghzvantsyan, Vache Azatyan, Yunona Kirakosyan, Ofelya Militosyan, Jeny Gevorgyan.

Emili Aregak Center Gyumri

Eduard Toroyan, Grigor Sultashyan, Sasha Boyagchyan, Aleksey Manukyan.

Assistance

AKOS NGO | artists residencies

Mikrtich Tonoyan (director), Hrach Vardanyan, Avetik Vardanyan.

City Research Center Gyumri

Ashot Mirzoyan (director) and staff, Alina Antonyan.

Emili Aregak Center Gyumri

Tigranui Akopyan (director) and staff, Aleksey Manukyan.

Work location

Emili Aregak Center Gyumri, architect: Richard Nikolussi (AT)



INTRODUCTION

Two years ago Jan Doms met a deputation of AKOS during the Mallorca Trans Local Meeting in Spain.

Among them was Mikrtich Tonoyan from Yerevan and Hrach Vardanyan and his brother Avetik both from Gyumri.

All participants of this meeting took part in the joint exhibition at the cultural

center 'Can Gelabert' in Benissalem. That's how they get to know each other.

Besides of that Jan Doms also created a rather huge architectural glass sculpture in the beautiful sculpture garden of the Juan Miró Museum in Palma in collaboration with architect

Olga Doreva from Sofia, Bulgaria. In this case the very simple but very effective technique glass with steel wire was used.

This technique appeared at least resistant to wind force 8 from the sea.

So when the decision was made to create an urban design laboratory for Gyumri, the choise was made to create the architectural models out of glass and steel wire.



THE PROCESS

Students Yerevan

1. Visit to Gyumri
2. Visit to research area
3. First Introduction of the idea
4. Decision to participate
5. Detailed introduction design lab
6. Second visit to research area
Story Karen Barseghyan on the spot
7. Hands on creating models for 5 days
8. Collaboration creating urban maquette
9. Presentation results at working space

Students Gyumri

1. First Introduction of the idea at Art Academy
2. Decision to participate
3. Detailed introduction design lab
4. First visit to research area
Story Karen Barseghyan on the spot
5. Hands on creating models for 5 days
6. Collaboration creating urban maquette
7. Presentation results at working space

Pupils Emilli Aregak Center

1. First Introduction of the idea at Emili Aregak Center
2. Decision to participate
3. Detailed introduction design lab
4. Environment as research area
Story Aleksey Manukyan on the spot
5. Hands on creating models for 5 days
6. Collaboration creating urban maquette
7. Presentation results at working space



THE IDEA

Urban Design Lab Gyumri

Jan Doms developed the idea of creating an urban design laboratory about 9 years ago for his residency in the city of Kyoto in Japan.

He wanted to involve the people of this city in a more democratic manner in the further urban development of Kyoto by giving the opportunity to create models - modeling using the technique of the combination of glass and steel wire.

Because of the sudden death of his wife he had to cancel all but the idea kept playing in his head.

Some years ago he was asked to organize a design workshop for students architecture in his home town. He decided to do that according his idea of the urban design lab.

For his residency in Armenia he made the choice to create this urban laboratory in Gyumri because this city is still in a phase of reconstruction after the earthquake of 1988.



RESEARCH AREA



Dream of Karen Barseghyan

Before creating the urban design lab Jan Doms walked through the city of Gyumri to look for a research area.

With the help of Ashot Mirzoyan and his team and Hrach Vardanyan he was introduced to Karen Barseghyan. Karen was living and working as an artist in the area aside the turn of Ozanyan street and Kars Highway, more or less in the small valley in front of the Russian Black Fortress. A green city landscape with an interesting space for new development.

The dream of Karen Barseghyan is to create a place for creative people to live and to work and become a kind of new additional center of the city of Gyumri.

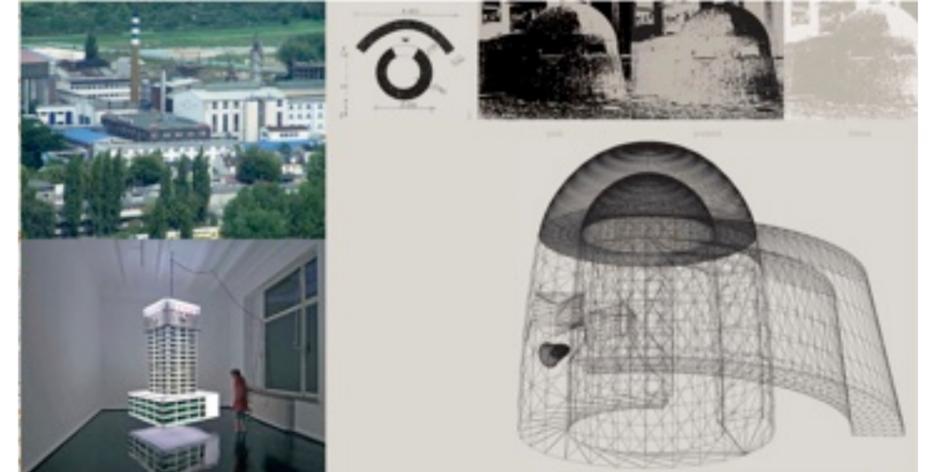
A vibrant vivit city is considered to be pluralistic (multiform) as principle.



SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

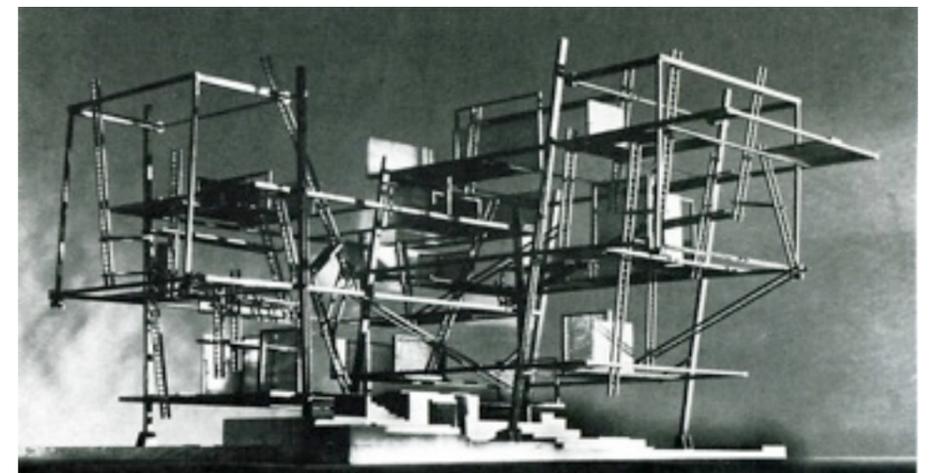
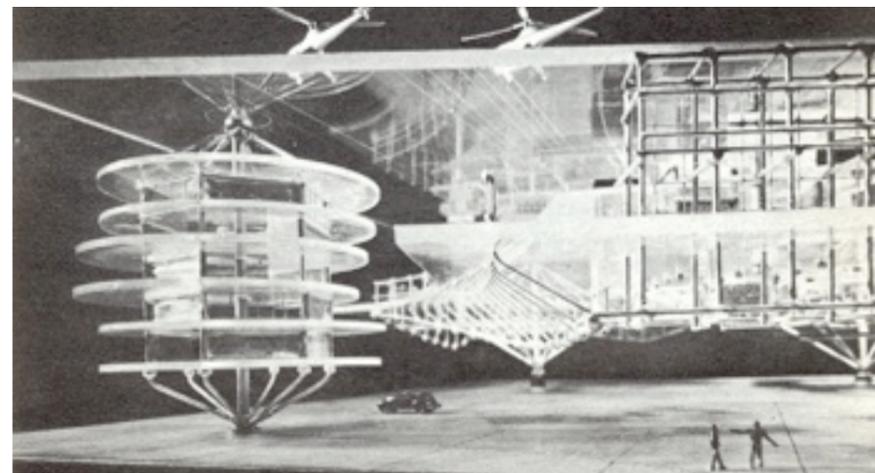
Urbanistic works Jan Doms

Examples like the design of a production tower in an inner-city industrial area in Eindhoven (NL), the development of a cultural strategy for Lublin (P) and the redevelopment of Huize Assisi (NL), an area of 64 hectares with 24 building complexes where a new spatial, cultural and social future is created.



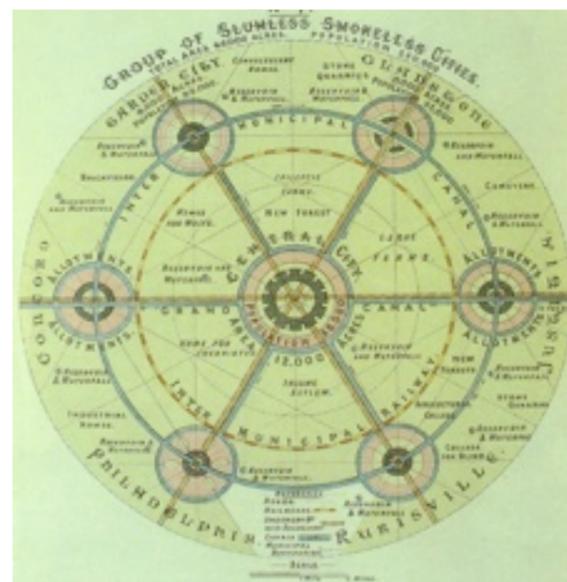
New Babylon

Constant Nieuwenhuys (1920 - 2005 NL) was engaged in spatial experiments and architecture and build models of his ideal city 'New Babylon'.



Garden City

Ebenezer Howard (1850 - 1928 GB) developed the idea of Garden City.



Modern architecture Gyumri

Garegin Yeghoyan designed the modern building next to the monumental church on Azututyan Square.

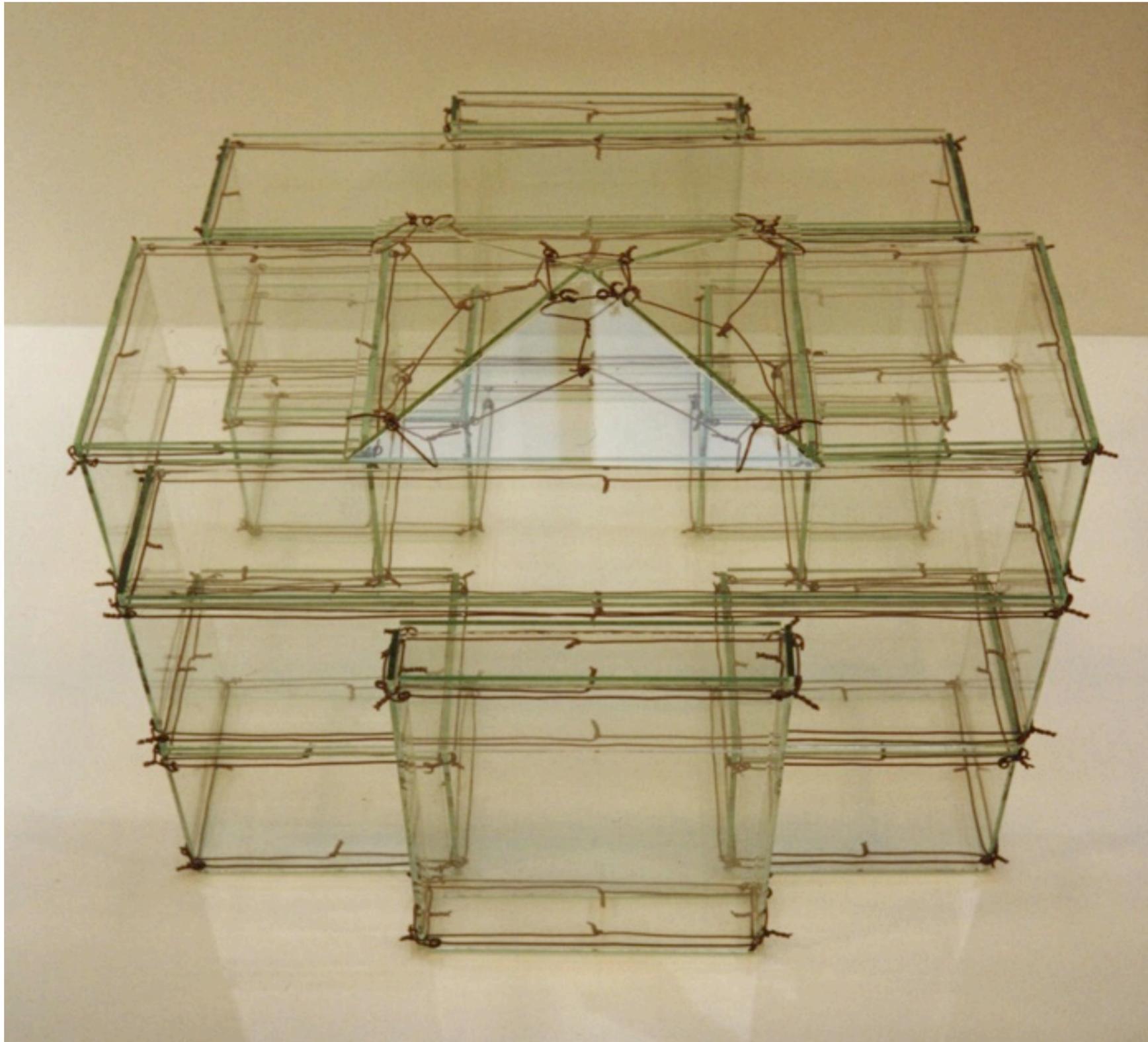


Straw House Gyumri

Karen Manukyan build up a house of straw and clay in the 58 District.



GLASS AND STEEL WIRE



Creating model of glass and steel wire

Jan Doms made in 2000 a study of the villas of Dresden. That was the first city in Europe which created urban plans for the realization of urban villas as apartment buildings.

He discovered that during his stay in Dresden because of his exposition and project execution (performances) in the Franziskanerklosterkirche Stadtmuseum Meissen.

By bicycle he visited 224 of these special villas in Dresden in about three weeks time and incorporated his experiences into a model (model) of glass and steel wire. That was the first time he used this simple and transparent technique.

Later on he discovered - by putting another model of glass and steel wire next to it - that then in one way or another there arises a form of visual communication between the two objects.

That is a very good characteristic - in particular also the transparency - for creating an coherent urban model.

EMILI AREGAT CENTER



Independent place for urban planning

There were many places to choose in order to go to work on the urban design lab.

But the best place which we could find in Gyumri was the Emili Aregat Center, designed by the Austrian architect Richard Nikolussi.

It is a very beautiful brand-new building which represents the main principles of the urban design lab. It is in all ways a very transparent building which is open to society (outside) and open for team and pupils who are learning and working there everyday in that building (inside).

Modern urbanism is gaining in value for society when the process can be based on independence, transparency and open communication with all participants.

Besides all these qualities it is also important to be inspired by the beauty and efficiency of the architecture itself. Every detail in this building is well designed and constructed. It was a pleasure for everyone to be there every working day - a true privilege !

DESIGNING MODELS



Students University for Architecture

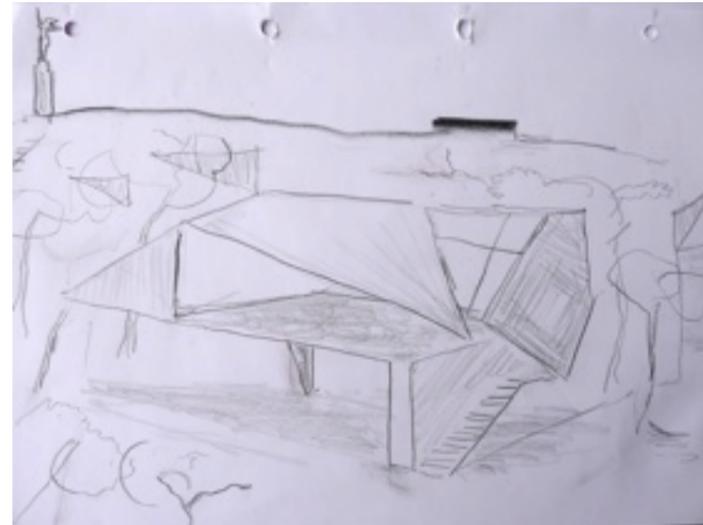
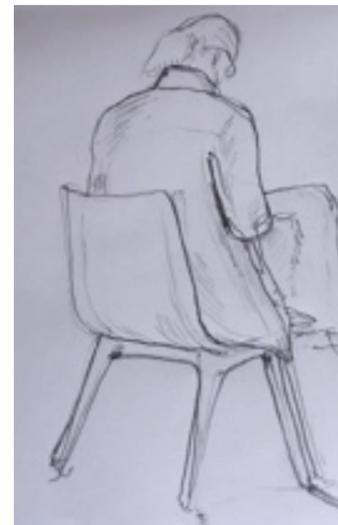
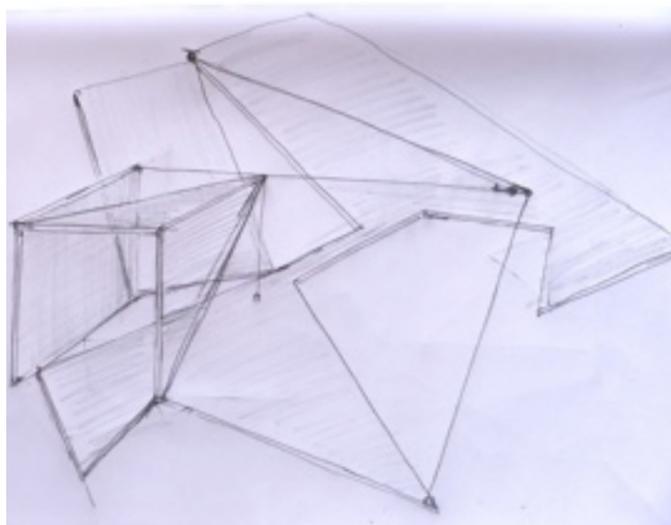
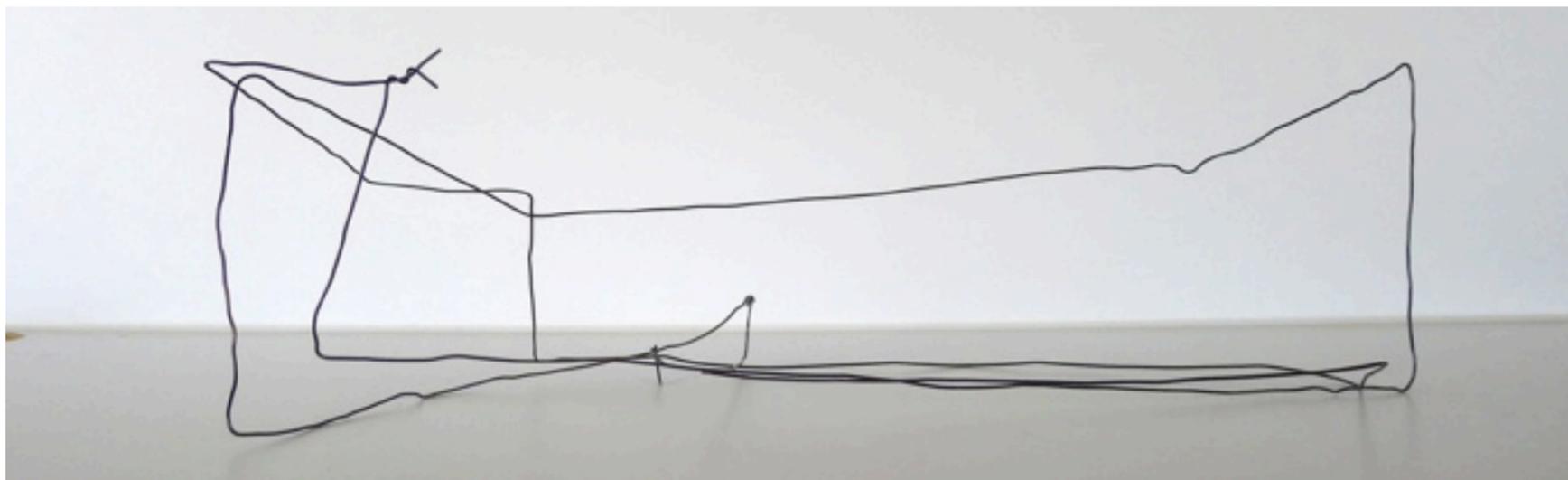
From the start it was clear that the students of the University for Architecture and Construction Yerevan needed some more research. Thinking by doing - the motto of the design lab - was not yet in their genes.

So most of them began to think deeply and sometimes this resulted in making drawings and creating wireframes. Also no wrong way as it turned out later in the process.

Sometimes it seemed as if the conventional model building they know from their training obstructed their creativity.

That goes the same for the more or less rounded picture they have formed during their studies what architecture should include and what planning method is commonly applied in urban planning.

But step by step they are freed from all conventions that characterizes urban planning in Armenia but also in other countries and found their way to an open and interactive way of urban planning.



CREATING MODELS



Students Gyumri Art Academy

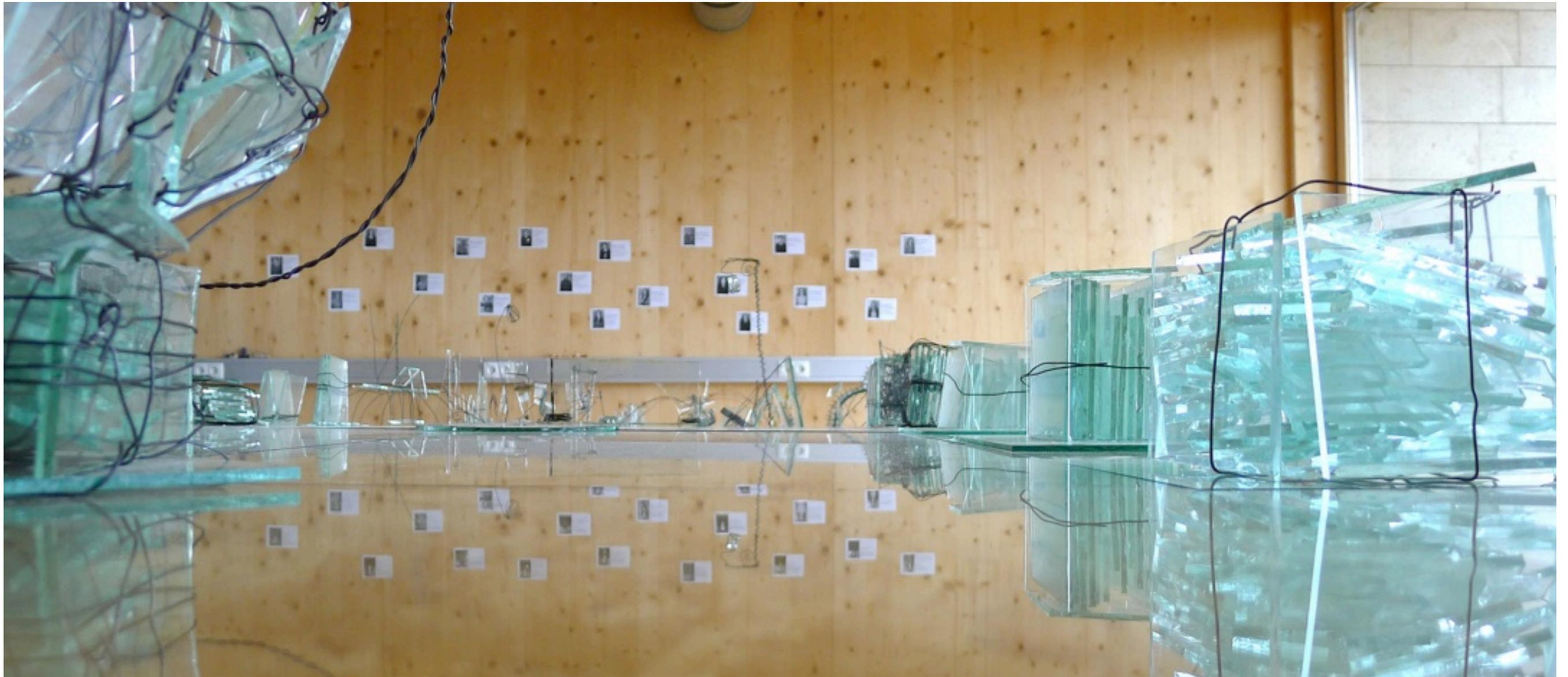
In general the students of the Gyumri Art Academy did not have much experience with creating of 3 dimensional art work. So for them the idea to create models for architecture and to develop urban planning was totally new.

But from the beginning they had no difficulty to start creating objects made out of glass and steel wire. Thinking by doing seemed to be very natural for them. And that appeared to be a good quality which enriched the whole urban plan.

At first the students were more or less focused on just creating objects like a kind of sculpture of talking people, a, swing, a bike, an electrical car and all kind of other symbols which represent important elements of modern urban life. Benefits for the future inhabitants of the research area.

The students expressed also a good feeling for architecture and the urban landscape. So the first buiding-models for the urban plan were created.

CREATIVE URBAN PLACE



New city 'center' for creative people

The aim of this urban laboratory is to find a way to unite and attract creative people who want to live and work in an inspiring environment. Gyumri is able to host such kind of new urban communities in the heart of the city.

Creative people are not only artists in all disciplines like visual art, sculpture, music, theatre, dance, architecture, design, but also people who invent new ways of producing (like 3D-printing) or develop new craftsmanship.

Creative people are first of all active in the field of (new) economy, culture, service, network and community. They are for sure a benefit for the development of Gyumri in order to attract more citizens and tourists to the city.

FRESH IDEA CITY CENTER



Beating hearts of Gyumri

During the excursions through the city of Gyumri we discovered various places which can be considered als city centers. For us it became clear that the centers are places where people come together to meet, to share, to celebrate and to express their sense for humanity, culture and community.

No doubt the market is such a place. But the capacity of the market place is far bigger than nowadays is used for commerce. Looking at the empty market pavilions indicates probably that Gyumri had far more inhabitants in the days before the earthquake in 1988.

The mission for Gyumri is to grow in terms of number of inhabitants by making the city more vibrant and attractive. New economy can be more based on initiative by motivated inhabitants themselves. It is up to the local government to help the citizens by creating good conditions in terms of serving privat initiatives and by rewarding those ones who actually take the initiative.



Emili Aregat Center - beating heart

A great example how to create a beating heart in Gyumri is no doubt the Emili Aregat Center. In the frame work of their workshops the urban design laboratory became possible.

It was very inspiring to see how the students architecture and arts and the teachers worked together with the pupils of the care center. Together they formed a real representative intimate and at the same time caring society.



CREATION OF URBAN PLAN

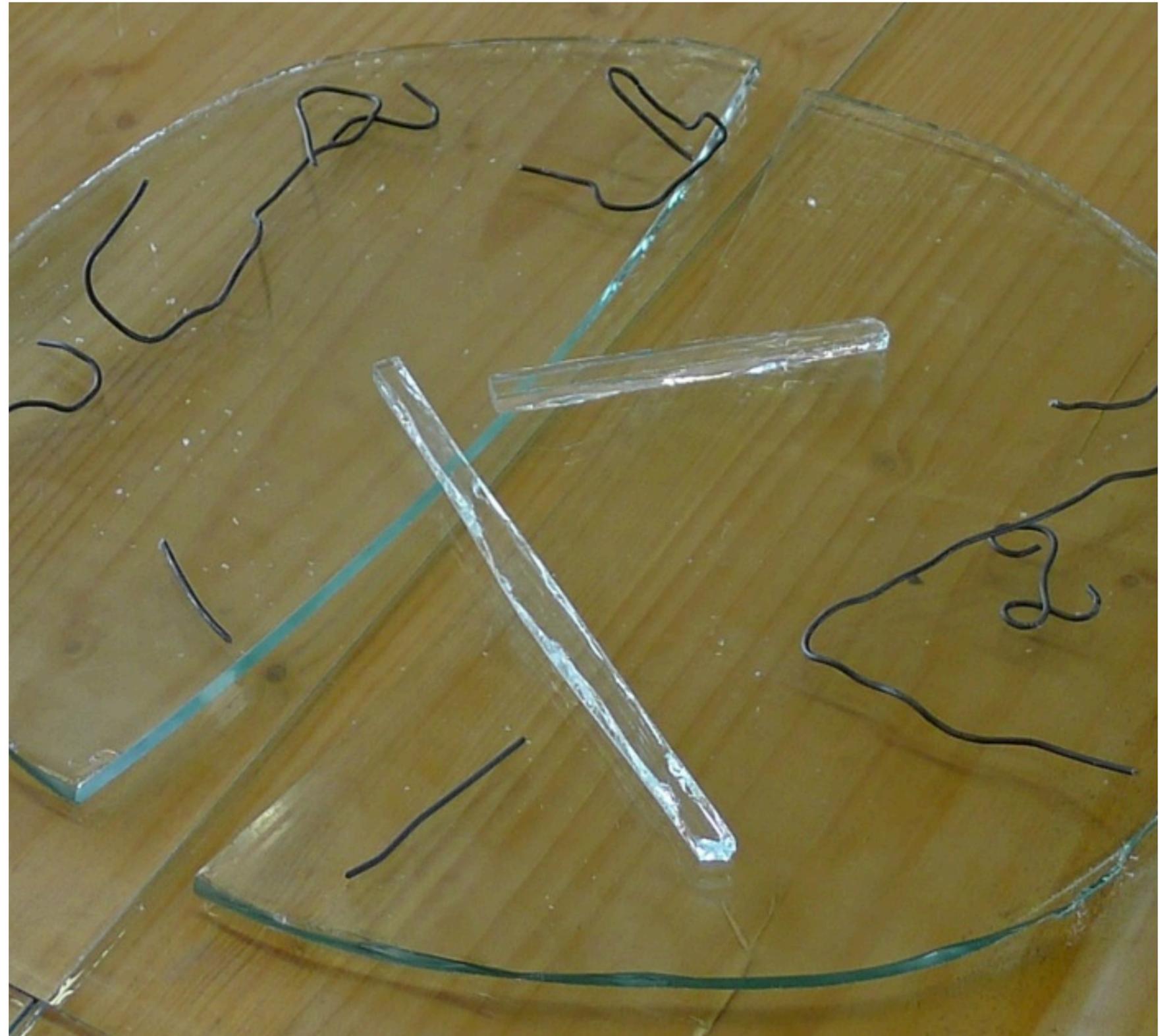
Broken time

The start of the creation of the urban plan for the research area was inspired by the the concept of time and space.

One of the pupils of the Emili Aregat Center made this clock. It can be considered as a symbol of 'broken time'.

When you would like to stay somewhere in a nice place than time stands still as it were.

This kind of environment the students wanted to create in a pluralistic way. So they started to create a type of zones with various qualities for living, working and recreation.



INTERACTIVE PLANNING



RESULTS URBAN DESIGN

Experiment alternative way of planning

First of all there is the value doing an experiment in urban planning from the basic (at individual level) towards the common (shared level).

It appears that it is worth working with people who have different educational background and experience.

It has also become clear that individual expressions connect with one another when working from a certain limitation of materials and construction methods.

This also provides the basis to achieve a proper organization of space and functions to serve an attractive urban landscape where one (inhabitants and visitors) can stay in a pleasant way.

Expressive forms that refer to nature go hand in hand with mathematical forms (modernism).

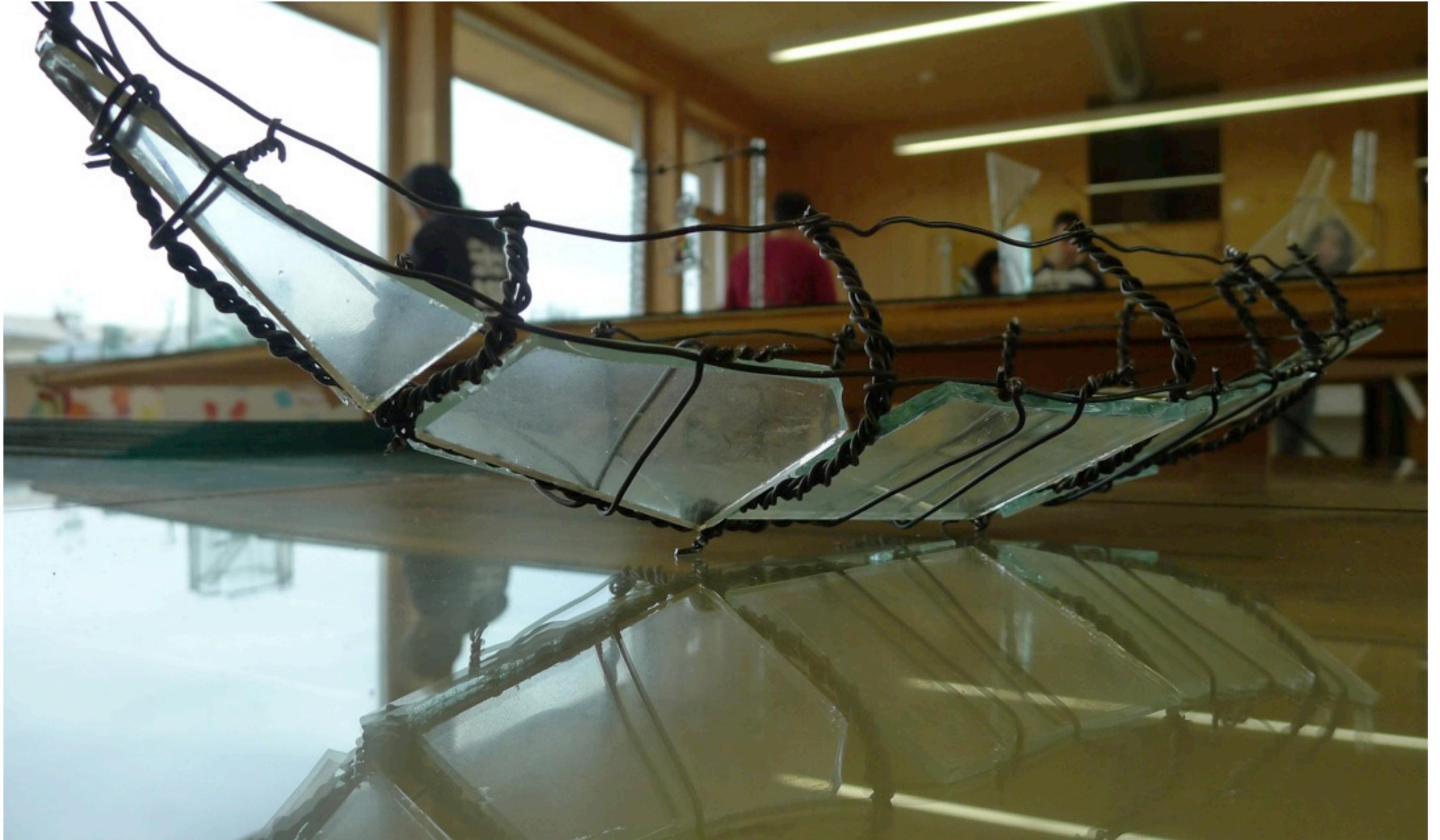
Sometimes it's good to forget the history of architecture and to focus more on landscape motifs that houses in the city of Gyumri.



THE ART OF ARCHITECTURE



THE ARCHITECTURE OF ART



FOR ME URBANISM IS

beauty | the new city view through old constructive layers | a dynamic process | a way to move forward | to have more progress | to be more developed in the way of thinking | the city construction | the formation of the city from the skeleton | a new experience to improve the city life | the way to change people's way of thinking | a glance to the future | to be more creative and transfer the old buildings to the coming future | a curiosity towards the city | the whole view of the city and not just the separate buildings | the organization of the landscape which should correspond to the people's activities and to be functional and esthetically appealing | an artistic way of changing the existing urban and natural landscape | the arrangement of buildings and objects in the urban landscape which are in harmony with each other | to create an environment for people to live and work in convenience | what people want to change in the city life | imagination x human condition | to make a better life for people so they do not leave their cities as hometown for all is important | to make the city cleaner and more beautiful | an ongoing challenge to replace the bad with the good and the good with the

best..... THANK YOU ALL!