

Sew for life

Seminar Week Spring 2023



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North District Brussels

Subject: Seminarweek
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Dear student,

In 1958 Brussels hosted the first major World Expo since WWII. That same year, the decision was taken to establish the European institutions in the city, triggering a lasting surge in corporate optimism and international metropolitan ambitions in the Belgian capital.

It is in this context that in 1967 a group of developers proposed a master plan called the “Plan Manhattan” to the City of Brussels: a business district made up of towers and urban motorways meant to replace an existing, diverse and mainly residential neighbourhood built in the nineteenth century.

We invite you to a trip that explores the recent transformations of this neighbourhood in flux. We do this together with Ftouma Laayoune, a couturier and designer who initiated the non-profit organization Sew for Life. Sew for Life is located in the heart of the North District and has the ambition to empower female asylum-seekers by training them on techniques and design skills they need as professional seamstresses. Sew for Life is a.o. involved in the redevelopment of the WTC towers and will create curtains for the new ZIN building.

During the week we will work with Ftouma and explore the neighbourhood in a personal, sensible and more intimate way. In the evenings or afternoons we will activate a more outside oriented perspective by entering into dialogue with recent examples of hybrid district development, engage with the political discussion around large scale transformation projects and dive into the vibrant architectural scene of Brussels.

We are looking forward to embarque on this adventure with you,
Your NEWROPE Team

 Sylvie De Blauw

 Frank Perren