

Personal information

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Studio

Name/Theme Public Building Graduation Studio: Public Condenser

Main mentor Paul Kuitenbrouwer Project Design
 Second mentor Florian Eckhardt Technical Building Design
 Third mentor Stefano Corbo Research

Argumentation of choice of the studio Public space plays an important role in society as well as in urban planning. It indicates how people interact with each other in the public realm and shows the way in which people live together. Public architecture has the ability to shape a community and provides services that are not, or are less, available in private architecture. Naturally, there are various forms and levels of public architecture. A better knowledge of multiplicity and hybridity in public architecture can be obtained by researching and designing a public condenser.

This notion of multiplicity in public architecture can only be comprehended correctly in relation to the Commons. As mentioned in the syllabus the Commons is the overarching condition that defines a community. By overcoming rooted categories like the domestic vs. the foreign, the public vs. the private and engaging with certain tensions in architecture such as the formal vs. the informal, planning vs. appropriation, the Commons entails a new method of approaching the concept of public architecture.

Graduation project

Title of the graduation project The Invisible Magnet: Unlocking discovery, encounter and interaction.

Goal

Location Friedrichshain, Berlin Lange Str.

The posed problem Gentrification is a broad phenomenon, expressed in various ways in various places all around the world. One of the consequences of gentrification that can be found in the Public Building graduation project is the domination of one function above others, resulting in the monofunctionality of a neighbourhood. This dominating function is in many cases one of dwelling. The effect of the imbalance of dwelling in an area can be seen in the occurrence of public spaces. Since dwelling is the most important function in a neighbourhood the attention to common spaces, meeting spaces, and spaces representing more than living is forgotten. The quality of public space and as a result public architecture in a neighbourhood is essential in counteracting loneliness, isolation and social segregation created by gentrification.

The district of Friedrichshain is located East of Berlin-Mitte and consists of three different neighbourhoods, more specifically, Andreasviertel, Weberwiese and Wriezener Bahnhof. Where Wriezener Bahnhof houses for the majority business, trade and industry functions, the main function in Andreasviertel and Weberwiese is residential. The population of these neighbourhoods amounts to approximately 1150

for Wriezener Bahnhof, 10 760 for Weberwiese and 12 520 for Andreasviertel. Not only does Andreasviertel have the most residents, but it also houses a community with the biggest age range. Although it has a dense community the built environment does not reflect this. The urban context consists mainly of high and narrow residential buildings that are configured in such a way it hides green pockets and open spaces in between them.

By conducting interviews and research, one specific void emerged. In spite of having such a large community, there is a clear lack of meeting spaces. This lack of meeting space proves to be an important issue in Andreasviertel especially. When looking at the quantitative data of the neighbourhood a large variety of residents can be seen. As mentioned before, the neighbourhood has the biggest range of ages among its residents of which 42% have a migration background. A sense of community and belonging is virtually non-existent due to the absence of spontaneous encounters and interactions between the residents in their own neighbourhood. This is also reflected in the well-being of the children living in the neighbourhood. The district office of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg von Berlin states that the social well-being of the children living in Andreasviertel is below average. Together with this, the large number of elderly people in the neighbourhood and the lack of places for them to interact with the younger residents in this rapidly gentrifying area, could also lead to a high grade of solitude due to the feeling of social isolation.

Research questions

The project will investigate how architecture, not only intended as a building but as a series of spatial interventions, can help trigger and encourage social interaction.

- How can urban acupuncture as a strategy of intervention initiate discovery in an existing context?
- In what way can discovery lead to encounters with one's own community and the neighborhood itself?
- In what manner can the multiplicity of the public condenser result in the merging of people and counteracting segregation?

Design assignment in which these result

The neighbourhood of Andreasviertel is in need of a public condenser that encourages encounters on different scales. Although the scale of the building is still necessary and relevant, small-scale interventions in the public realm are of high importance as well. This theory of urban acupuncture was first introduced by the Barcelona architect Manuel de Solà-Morales. The Dutch architecture critic Hans Ibelings (2008) describes his methods as "... interventions at points where there is little energy, if any at all. His interventions unleash a heightened potential: the possibility of urbanity" (p11).

The public condenser aims to stimulate interaction and engagement, to use the space in between the buildings as well as the in-between space in the actual building, which would reflect the configuration of the built environment of the area, to stimulate informal and unplanned meetings or activities. This project will research in what way urban acupuncture in combination with

a building can initiate and encourage encounters between the residents. Together with this, the smaller-scale urban interventions could show a hint of the public condenser that is hidden in between the existing buildings for the community of Andreasviertel to discover and encounter. Furthermore, the informal use of in-between space in the building creates opportunities for the functions to change over time.

The public condenser will not only initiate meetings through its shape and design of discovery but also through its multiplicity of functions. All the elective functions revolve around encounter, whether this is with each other or knowledge and art. The public condenser will entail a bar/café where people can meet each other outside their private residence in a relaxing way, an art gallery where art from and for the residents can be displayed and a community library where not only will be places to read and work but readings (given by people from the neighbourhood) and events can take place. These readings session can be a way to connect the elderly to the children in the neighbourhood. The community library and art gallery will be active and lively functions that weave through the building.

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Method description

As mentioned before the methods used to state the problem and define the focus group consist both of quantitative and qualitative data. The qualitative research used to formulate the problem statement comprised of observations, interviews and case studies that explore different concepts and theories. The quantitative research

revolved around numbers and data regarding the neighbourhood and its residents. To answer the formulated research question, literature and cases will be analysed and studied to understand the significance and operation of urban acupuncture and how this theory could lead to encounters.

Together with this the core to the development of the public building graduation studio consist of **Research-by-Design**. The design of the project starts with conceptual framework showing the design intentions and ambitions of each student. Through various assignments early in the process, using different research-by-design methods, an individual Design Manifesto based on one's specific ambitions will be formulated. Combining theoretical research and design-based research results in various design loops, iterations and intersections, in a multiplicity of ideas and concepts.

Literature and general practical preference

Literature

Adam Parsons . "URBAN ACUPUNCTURE: MANUEL DE SOLA-MORALES." Last modified on December 4, 2010, <http://adamparsonsdessignthesis.blogspot.com/2010/12/urban-acupuncture-manuel-de-sola.html>.

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Case studies:

Mæ - Sands End Arts and Community Centre
(London, England) - 2020

RCKA – TNG Youth and Community Centre
(London, England) – 2013

Leku Studio - Superblock of Sant Antoni
(Barcelona, Spain) - 2019

Department of Architecture - The Commons
Thonglor (Bangkok, Thailand) – 2016

Aldo Van Eyck – Pastoor van Arskerk (Dan Haag,
Netherlands) - 1960s

Herman Hertzberger – Montessorischool
(Amsterdam, Netherlands) – 1981

Tony Fretton Architects - The Lisson Gallery
(London, United Kingdom) – 1986

Aires Mateus – House in Estrela (Lisbon,
Portugal) – 2017

Lina Bo Bardi - SESC Pompeia (Sao Pualo, Brazil)
- 1986

Lina Bo Bardi - São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP)
(São Paulo, Brazil) – 1968

Aldo Van Eyck – Pastoor van Arskerk (Dan Haag,
Netherlands) - 1960s

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The master track of TU Delft encourages its students to develop creative and innovative building projects that use design as a means to deal with the technical, social and spatial challenges encountered in the built environment. The previously followed MSc1 studio of Urban Architecture (Back to School) focuses on designing a new addition to an already existing site. More specifically restructuring a particular urban site with the design of a new building, whilst maintaining selected parts of an existing building. Whilst this studio mainly emphasized the built environment, the MSc2 studio of Veldacademie revolves around the relation of the built environment to the wellbeing of people. The studio topic of Public Building focuses on the Commons as an overall condition that defines a community. More specifically in architecture, this idea of the Commons resulted in a deeper importance of whom to design for and what the impact of the design could be not only on the built environment but on the human environment too. The overarching aspect of the architecture master track that Public Building focuses on is designing for a multiplicity of people, for a specific community. The design answering the set of questions the studio poses will revolve around bringing people together in an informal manner. The discovery of the project in the built environment of their own neighbourhood through the design of micro-moments will result in encounters and meetings between people of the community of Andreasviertel.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

The project revolves around counteracting loneliness and improving the social well-being of a community living in a rapidly gentrifying area. The consequences of gentrification, whether they are negative or positive, are not something unique to the district of Friedrichshain or Berlin in its totality. Gentrification is a broad phenomenon, expressed in various ways in various places all around the world. Therefore, this project could provide a possible answer to how several interventions on different scales could encourage interactions and encounters in a neighbourhood afflicted by loneliness and separation. It could illustrate a system of micro-moments carefully placed in an existing environment that results in the uplifting of a community. The relevance of this graduation project is the importance of not only looking at the building or structure itself and the effect it could have on the built and human environment but looking at a neighbourhood as a whole. Small interventions throughout the urban fabric prepare the community for a new addition to their neighbourhood and in the future could link a whole area and multiplicity of inhabitants to spaces designed to encourage interaction.

Time Planning P2: schematic design

Phase 1: *After the P2 presentation (week 3.1)*

Phase 1 will consist of revising and reflecting on the feedback received during P2. This step will be essential in further understanding the next steps in the design process and will clarify the strategies that can be used to elevate the schematic design to an actual design proposal. This phase of revising should not take longer than a week and therefore should be finished in week 3.1.

Phase 2: *From schematic design to an architectural design proposal (week 3.2 – P3)*

This phase will consist of converting the schematic design proposal of P2 to an actual architectural design proposal. The different design elements of the project will be researched and designed on more detailed scales. However, to keep overview of the project as a whole, it will be necessary to occasionally zoom out again. The outcome of this phase should include floor plans, sections and elevations that are designed on a more detailed level. Together with this the technical aspects of the building will be explored and introduced.

P3: *design proposal*

Phase 3: Detailing and finalising the design proposal

The technical aspects of architecture will play an important role in this part of the process. The aspect of sustainability, materialisation, climate and structure will be used to design the technical definition of the project. In this phase the project will be designed on a more technical level.

P4: *FINAL design proposal*

Phase 4: *from P4 to P5*

Last modifications to the materials and models while preparing the final presentation.