

PROJECT ABSTRACT

As an introduction to this project its core is hereafter highlighted. The project aims to design a public condenser. This public condenser should focus on the Commons and therefore has to be designed for a community, providing collective resources needed in their society.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Defining the focus group or community is an essential element in the setup of the project. Through observation and interviews of people in the three various neighbourhoods, one specific neighbourhood, Andreasviertel, proved to be more in need of a public intervention. From the three, this neighbourhood had the most residents with the widest 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 configurated in such a way it hides green pockets and open spaces in between them. Andreasviertel is a large community lacking affiliation.

The second step in the setup of the project comprises the problem statement, more specifically defining the Commons. By conducting interviews one specific problem

emerged. In spite of having such a large community, there is a clear lack of meeting spaces. Places people can meet with their friends and family, places to bring together different members of the community. This lack of social encountering could also be felt in the built environment of Andreasviertel, where informal meetings in the public realm were much less occurring and encouraged compared to the other neighbourhoods.

Deducted from the two previous steps, a specific perspective on the Commons arises. The neighbourhood 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-Morales¹. 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)².

RESEARCH QUESTION

The public condenser aims to encourage encounters, 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. Due to the fact that the design would include different interventions on various scales that could be applied in numerous areas, it could be considered as prototypical. Furthermore, the informal use of in-between space in the building creates opportunities for the functions to change over time.

METHOD

As mentioned before the methods used to state the problem and define the focus group comprised

observation and interviews. 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.

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

2 Manuel de Sola Morales, *A matter of things* (Rotterdam: nai010 publishers, 2008)

3 Zhang Yimeng, "Rethinking the Dimension In Urban Acupuncture" (Master thesis, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, 2015)

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