Denkraum #2
Exactitude — Building character

Exactitude. An attitude orienting choices towards decisiveness, a posture in which everything is weighed, measured, examined and determined. In architecture, it means contemplating space and its constituent parts with sharpness, to build a controlled, highly intentional image, a precise and complex discourse through spatial interventions.

After a semester focusing on the way architecture can optimistically represent a collective endeavour working towards a political and ideological redefinition, we will now look at a distant and yet analogous pole, one that revolves around the architectural representation of the singular individual. How can a space be a personality, how can it incarnate and express immaterial personal features? How to organize architectonic, ornamental, and functional languages, how to design specific spatial devices to develop a highly personal spatial story?

Characters, in all their fascinating complexity, will constitute the base of this semester's exercise. Literature offers the opportunity to dive deep within the interiority of a (fictional) individual, to understand all the layers making up the self, the turmoil and the serenity, the aspirations or the desires, the masks and the naked truths. Those emanations of a writer's mind, invisible individuals that live only in language, will serve as irreducible briefs, full of facets and intricate features which will be projected into spaces. Not spaces *for* the characters, but rather spaces that *are* those characters.

Reading spaces and writing characters. At the start of the semester, on the occasion of a trip to Milan, each student will look in depth at one space, to study it, research it, draw it, rebuild it and write it, to understand what it means, what has been poured into it by its designer and commissioner. Those spaces will then be collected to constitute a collective catalogue of references to be used as a resource by all throughout the semester.

Reading characters and writing spaces. Each student will then read a novel and work on one of its characters to conceive a space or a sequence of spaces representing their personality. By working on spatial and material language, expression and *mise-en-scène*, style and registers as well as on the meaning of architectural elements, a spatial portrait of a fictional personality will be put together.
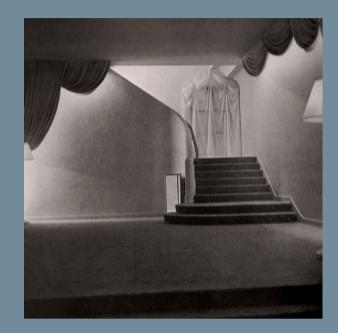
From reading to writing, from language to space, we will navigate 18 spaces, 18 characters, 18 personal ways of being to build a collective understanding of the possible architectural representation of the individual. We will learn from writers, from their exactitude, from the patient, gradual and precise construction of their characters, to in turn investigate how we architects can apply similar strategies to our spatial practice. This semester, together, we will be building character(s).

Denkraum
Making architecture demands a constant and dynamic reading of given contexts under the angle of specific briefs and questions, allowing to unveil explicit and implicit relationships stemming from past actions and present dynamics. We will investigate different ways to read, and from there we will proceed to place findings in a framework, to structure them and create our own hierarchies, to situate ourselves in relationship to it. Within the studio, the multiplicity of individual tracks will be united under the common theme, in a common space of thinking: a Denkraum.

The Denkraum is a space of presence. A place where the work is on constant display and grows organically in time, concentrating questions, tensions and proposed solutions, developing a common design endeavour and discourse, a joined output based on associative thinking and reflection by analogy. A place where reading and writing reality happens all at once. A place to discuss together and with guests coming from different backgrounds, regions and disciplines, guests who will talk to us and think along.

Introduction 20 February 2017, 10am, HIP C1
Study trip to Milan 27-28 February — additional cost 150 CHF
Professor An Fonteyne — Assistants Pablo Donet, Thomas Klement, Galaad Van Daele

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