FARMER WILLI GOES ALMERÍA

BEFORE THE COLLAPSE
ARCHITECTING (ECO)SYSTEMS

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Before the Collapse: Architecting (Eco)Systems

This semester we are continuing to explore the theme of cohabitation: the interplay of human and nonhuman systems in our built environment. But this time, we are focusing on a given ecosystem, as the context for our architectural proposals. Further, we are expanding our toolbox: storytelling and film continue to play an overarching role, but we are opening up the studio to other media and forms of architectural exploration.

"Europe's sea of plastic", Almería in the south of Spain, is our point of departure. It is one of the many places where our globalized and accelerated ways of life become visible and take on built form. Together, we want to explore and understand the different types of architecture that can be found on site. Dating from different times, created for different needs. A deeper understanding of the systemic relations of these local structures is essential in order to become active and to produce architectural models for the future — for Almeria and beyond.

Between Fact and Fiction

In order to approach this complex political landscape we use the tool of storytelling and introduce a fiction: the story of Willi, a farmer from Zurich, who decides to move to Almeria with his family to start anew as a farmer in Spain. What are his motives? What are the conditions and relations of his actions, coming from one of Europe's wealthiest regions, entering this very specific social and economic context? These motifs help us to formulate the brief and the requirements for the architectural design. In doing so, we are challenged to question the contexts:

- What are the relations Willi is emerging from, being in, entering?
- What are the reasons, the wishes and goals, the constraints and limitations?
- Which architecture takes active form in relation to the local and global ecosystems?
- How does an architecture materialize if we do not think of architecture as managing the environment but also architecture as being managed by the environment?

Learning Objectives

Prefigurative Architecting

The ability to think in different scales and systems, in order to determine issues and themes by observing the changing conditions of our environment. The aim is to develop an architectural position in relation to these observations and to translate it into a viable and sustainable proposal for the future of our coexistence.

Storytelling and Narrative-Design

The ability to translate factual knowledge about architecture and architectural systems into a story. These narratives function in parallel and offer other ways and speeds of communicating the design arguments besides the factual approach. In addition to time-based media such as film and episodic video formats which we call television, we will be developing additional formats with the students from this semester on.

Both learning objectives will be introduced in topic-specific lectures at the beginning of the course.

Design Studio
HS 2021 @HIL G.57
https://station.plus
grawert@arch.ethz.ch

with Severin Bärenbold, Arno Brandlhuber, Olaf Grawert, Angelika Hinterbrandner, Roberta Jurcic, Christian Posthofen, Meghan Rolvien and Christopher Roth

www.station.plus