



S+

*HOUSING THE
NON-HUMAN 02
A (SHOW)CASE*

Look around you! [1] and you will realize that the built environment has changed our ecosystem forever. What is being discussed in various disciplines as the consequences of the Anthropocene, has long arrived in the architectural discourse as well. Because we, as architects, contribute significantly to these changes by designing our built, and therefore shaping the unbuilt environment. Consequently, the question we have to ask ourselves today is: How can architecture actively help the environment and involve other species as equal agents? Or, how can we design an architecture of multi-species co-habitation?

An architecture that enables and supports co-habitation follows fundamentally different rules, patterns and logics than those we rely on. Growth and limits, waste and resources, space and time – they all mean something different to humans than to non-humans. Consequently, the parameters of any architectural project must first be updated – in dialogue with non-human agents, for whom we, as architects, must play a proxy role. Only this change of perspective allows us to understand what kind of architecture we have to think and design in order to (re) integrate the man-made system into the greater whole: because there is only one Spaceship Earth [2], we must operate together!

So, what can we do about this? Not much, because there is no alternative but to politicize this cause. A lot, because so far only a few talk about it and show how the idea of co-habitation possibly translates into architecture. [3] Therefore, the second semester of housing the non-human will create a (show)case to popularize the debate on co-habitation and campaign for the inclusion of nature in our built environment, by means of architectural design.

(SHOW)CASE

Fifty years ago, the Central Animal Laboratories of the „Freie Universität Berlin“ designed by Gerd & Magdalena Hänska opened. Like a stranded (space) ship, the brutalist concrete structure soon gained fame, not only for its appearance but also for its use. At that time, the „Mäusebunker“ (english: Mouse Bunker) was one of Europe’s biggest animal testing

Additional cost
75 CHF

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Important
The studio will be held in english and it will follow a mixed form, half online and half classroom teaching. The core teaching team will be present in Zürich every second or third week for more intense and extended sessions.

Elective courses
We highly recommend our students to join the elective courses: *Storytelling in Architecture* by Christopher Roth held in english and *Theorie und Praxis* by Christian Posthofen held in german.

facilities, reflecting the common understanding at that time of human–non-human relations. Its use left the building inaccessible to the public and created a certain myth of what was happening behind the walls, tubes and holes of the animal laboratory. Soon after its opening, the first protests against the institution and its practices began to form, but it took a long time before it was finally closed in 2020. The planned demolition of the building was supposed to end the unloved story, but architects and supporters joined forces and started a campaign [4] to save the brutalist structure.

This specific building, will be the starting point for our design studio. On the one hand, historically, and on the other hand, structurally. As part of a interdisciplinary research project, we want to work on the existing substance by means of architectural interventions and open the building for human–non-human encounter. Together we will try to develop specific architectural solutions, in different scales and complexities, which will be tested and refined using the example of the Mäusebunker. At the same time, these solutions will always be evaluated for their systemic effect and viability on a larger scale. Therefore, the building will be a showcase, rather than a study case, for plausible options of multi-species co-habitation.

CONTEXT

Our tool is TV: episodic videos will be our medium. But for the first time altered with another technique: model making. Besides the weekly technical classes on video editing and animation, the integrated seminar week will be a five-day long model workshop with Berlin based architect and set-designer Jacob Michael Birn [5]. Students will learn how to build miniature sets and sectional models as backdrops for their architectural storytelling.

In addition to these practical inputs, the studio will offer weekly online-lectures and inputs by practitioners from different fields both on the general topic of co-habitation and the Mäusebunker itself. By doing so, we will continue the first semester of housing the non-human (SS20) [6], building a history of relations between non-human and human agents.

[1] <https://youtu.be/FBaVwwuErmU>

[2] Fuller, Buckminster (1963). Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.

[3] vgl. Ngo, Anh-Linh (2020). S.2 in Arch+ Politics of Space and Data. Berlin: Arch+ Verlag

[4] <http://mausebunker.de>

[5] <http://jmbirn.de>

[6] <https://station.plus>