

@M

E.A.N. @M - Experiment on Architecture and Nature [at] Mäusebunker

Studio Brandlhuber (FS21)
On Housing the Non-Human 03

[Mäusebunker](#), the former animal testing laboratory in Berlin, survived its almost inevitable demolition, thanks to the joined forces of architects, politicians and citizens. Now that the building got a second chance the question is: What is the future of Mäusebunker?

Together we will answer this question by proposing an architectural design for re-using the iconic brutalist building.

MÄUSEBUNKER:

The sixties were a decade of technological thriving – first man on Moon versus gloomy scientific achievement which had been used in the Vietnam War. The social and environmental implications of these novel technologies were still unknown at that time.

The estrangement of people from technological progress and change, led a group of artists and engineers to establish an organization: [E.A.T.](#) (Experiments on Art and Technology). They aimed at facilitating the direct collaboration between artists and engineers, set within the industrial environment, in which the technology was being developed. Together, they were speculating about the impact of such collaborations on industries, technology and individuals itself.

At the same time, the Mäusebunker, one of Europe's biggest animal testing facilities was designed and built and reflected the common understanding of human–non-human relations at that time. Its high hygiene and security standards made the building inaccessible to the public, which created a certain myth of what was happening behind closed walls, doors, holes and tubes. Soon after its opening, the first protests against the institution began to form, but it took a long time before it eventually closed in 2020 and was declared to be demolished.

Why? Because a re-use of the typology seemed both uneconomical and unrealistic. Thus, the city did not want to impose the high costs on its citizens. Alternatively to its intended demolition, we will transform the building architecturally and ideologically. Therefore, we will develop a spatial strategy for the existing building to become a laboratory for architecture, art and research on multi-species cohabitation.

Contact

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Important

The studio will be held in english and it will take place online, every Tuesday and Wednesday from approx. 10:00-18:00

Thematic focus

Architecture, structure, building systems and landscape.

Presentation dates

Midterms 1:

30.03-01.04

Midterms 2:

04-05.05

Finals Rehearsal:

25-26.5

Finals:

01-02.06

COHABITATION:

Today, the current environmental and biodiversity crisis has transformed our ecosystem fundamentally. The collaboration between humans and non-humans is the only alternative for all of us – planetary – to survive: we must not only co-exist but co-operate. This is what we mean by cohabitation, an idea that has been explored in the previous design studios:

‘Housing the Non-Human 01’ focused on decentering humans from the design process, and developing new design strategies of spatial production for multi-species cohabitation.

‘Housing the Non-Human 02’ pushed the topic further, rethinking the balance between the built and the natural environment by intervening on an existing built structure in order to allow for multi-species cohabitation.

‘On Housing the Non-Human 03’ will go beyond scenarios and speculations. For our architectural design we want to recapture the spirit – interdisciplinary & collaboratively – of E.A.T. and develop an architectural project for our fictional cultural organization: E.A.N. @M (Experiments on Architecture and Nature [at] Mäusebunker).

SEMESTER STRUCTURE:

1. Gathering all building data regarding structure, building systems and biotope by establishing recurring meetings with our collaborators, working in three groups:

- Chair of Structural Design ([Prof. Schwartz](#))

- Climate Engineering ([Transsolar](#))

- Landscape and Nature ([Sandra Bartoli](#))

The output of this phase will result in a ‘Mäusebunker Atlas’ with three layers.

2. Consolidating the research to define a pre-scheme that brings together and translates the data during a collective workshop. The output of this phase will result in a common ‘Mäusebunker Master-plan’.

3. Individually designing the different zones of the pre-scheme, implementing the spatial and programmatic requirements of our users (E.A.N. @M).

Communicating the design and arguments through video, based on the accompanying seminar *Access to Tools*. Using techniques from scenography and film-making, such as green screen, model to film, etc. This will help us communicate the designs to the broader audience in a compressed and self-explanatory manner.

The semester will conclude with the final reviews. Each presentation will include a one-minute video pitching the proposal and will be streamed on our TV channel [station+](#).

Integrated disciplines

We offer the possibility of a voluntary integrated discipline in cooperation with the Chair of Structural Design Prof. Schwartz.

Elective courses

We recommend our students to join the elective course *Theorie und Praxis* by Christian Posthofen held in german.