

Denkraum #12

Pleasure – Dwelling on Patterns

Study is what you do with other people. It's talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three, held under the name of speculative practice... The point of calling it 'study' is to mark that the incessant and irreversible intellectuality of these activities is already present.

Stefano Harney & Fred Moten, The Undercommons, 2013

Dwelling. What does it mean to dwell in space? Do we dwell only where we live? Do we feel at home where we dwell? Can we dwell in movement? To think about dwelling, we will continue using a methodology familiar to our Chair, one of inhabitation, one of spending time in the spaces we are curious about. We will continue to visit, build, and draw some of Zurich's protagonists of dwelling culture. Through visiting them together, we become users, conceiving of the spaces through the eyes of an inhabitant. We acquire an attitude close to that of any other person, experiencing the house, the domestic order and the life it contains.

Patterns. We will also continue to work in the company of a book. Books make us notice things that often pass unseen. They bring consolation. They offer support. This semester we will turn to A Pattern Language, an iconic 1977 book by Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein. In it, they define architecture and communities as language, composed of patterns. Their method, boiled down, was participatory, emotional and adaptive, ending up somewhere between science and religion. We recognise that patterns change according to times, conditions, behaviors. We will critically study many of the 253 patterns the book defines, projecting and testing them to ultimately re-write them and come to terms with their usefulness in our times and context.

Pleasure. Defined as a feeling of happy satisfaction or enjoyment, our interest lies in consciously approaching study as something that can produce this feeling. Pleasure is often regarded as suspicious in an academic context. Together with you, we want to explore its potential as an active posture, we want to create a studio as a repository of pleasure.

The pleasure of order - of ordering thoughts, of ordering things, of ordering words, of ordering spaces.
The pleasure of writing - of noting, scripting, reflecting, projecting.
The pleasure of talking - together, critically exchanging, challenging and growing ideas.
The pleasure of service - of developing a useful organisation of spaces for dwelling.
The pleasure of walking - of spending the necessary time outside and in movement.
The pleasure of reading - on your own, or in a group, loudly, softly.
The pleasure of making - of seeing ideas manifest, of speaking through space.
The pleasure of drawing - of developing your personal visual handwriting.
The pleasure of method - of revisiting the surprise, the curiosity, the wonder of knowledge production.
The pleasure of dwelling - of finding out through design, how we love to live.
The pleasure of patterns - of finding rhythms that affect our lives.
The pleasure of pressure - of getting on with it, and valuing the process.
The pleasure of empathy - of discovering the power of identifying the needs of others with others.
The pleasure of rehearsal - of accumulating knowledge and expertise through trying over and over again.
The pleasure of exchange - of finding out different modes to exchange ideas, to open up each other's minds.
The pleasure of speculation - of imagining and envisioning alternative worlds.
The pleasure of collaboration - of discovering ways to act together.

Introduction 21 February 2023, 9:30am, ONA

An Fonteyne, Khensani Jurczok-de Klerk, Ties Linders, Camiel Van Noten

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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.



Chair of Affective Architectures

ETH Zürich – FS23