

# Denkraum #9

## Trust – Building Values

*Real estate is a tricky business. We rent and buy and sell and inherit it, but we also knock it down.*

*Deborah Levy, Real Estate, 2021*

**Trust.** A firm belief in the reliability, truth, or capacity of someone or something. A belief in the self, but also in the other. A state in which one might be seen as naïve and credulous, often leading to disappointments and failure, but that can equally be read as mature and looking for opportunities. Can one trust in something one does not yet fully understand? Can trust lead to following unexpected paths, not being afraid of encountering new ways of thinking and seeing?

**Building value.** Extensive new developments continue to happen across Zurich and its periphery, with Ersatzneubauten still presented as the most desirable option. Even when a significant built substance exists, revenue-driven development patterns usually end up prescribing its demolition and replacement. A gesture erasing existing users and uses at the same time, as those are rarely given a place in the planned developments. So how can we trust in the value of what is there? How can we learn from the existing to propose models for the future, a future capable of accommodating all the lives that can exist in the city, including the less profitable ones?

**Regensdorf.** This semester, after exploring Zurich and its surroundings twice by means of walking, we will inhabit a Dorf longing to be a Stadt. Next to the Regensdorf station, a real estate operation called ZWHATT plans 1000 new housing units, developed by Pensimo and designed by offices including Peter Märkli, Roger Boltshauser and Lütjens Padmanabhan. We will take a complementary and alternative look at the area. In collaboration with the diploma students reflecting on the new development, including its business plan and the types that it proposes, the studio will focus on an existing conglomerate of four buildings, investigating it as a potential candidate for re-use. Our discussions will focus on alternative typologies, architectural re-appropriation, economic models, and facade concepts. Together, those research tracks will take over the existing building, using it as a fertile ground for a polyphonic and grounded reflection on the future of Regensdorf.

**Inhabitation.** Your studio will be located on the empty fourth floor of an existing office building: 400 m<sup>2</sup> at the very center of the future development. Moving in will allow us to engage with the day to day life of the buildings. It will make us complicit to what we design, to get close and personal, to potentially find presences and qualities that are often overlooked and only surface in the slowness of being-in-it-together. This will allow us to become a critical audience reflecting on the decision making strategies behind large scale developments in the Zurich agglomeration. With our concrete and situated knowledge gained by actively being there, we will reflect on alternative futures for the four existing buildings, challenging the tabula rasa approach, and the accompanying architectural interventions and strategies.

**The Dept. of the Ongoing.** The Dept. of the Ongoing will move in with us to install an open research room, host the lecture series You're Not My Type and surprise us with other ghostly modes of exchange and interaction.

**Building Out Loud.** During an integrated seminar week, we will take it a notch up and use our building as a test site, producing 1:1 interventions, guided by the skilled carpenters of B4 Moebel and the practice of scenographer Jozef Wouters and his Brussels based Decoratelier.

Introduction 21 September 2021, 9am, ONA G23. Cost: max. CHF250, excl. seminar week

Integrated seminar week Building Out Loud!

With the support of Pensimo Management AG

Team: An Fonteyne, Pablo Donet, Khensani de Klerk, Serafina Eipert, Els Silvrants-Barclay, Galaad Van Daele

### Denkraum

Making architecture demands a constant reading and writing of reality, unveiling relationships that stem from past decisions, present dynamics and future needs. We architects are thus in constant need of specific ways of approaching the spatial questions we are confronted with. The Denkraum is thought of as an environment for collective reflection, a place to take a step aside and reflect on architecture from another perspective. By looking at politics, literature, economy, art, sociology, by walking or inhabiting spaces, by discussing these ideas with guests coming from different backgrounds, regions or disciplines, we try to understand alternative potentials for architecture.

Inside the Denkraum, the reading and writing of reality happen at the same time, and the students' work – while following individual trajectories – enter a dialogue, concentrating questions, tensions and proposed solutions to develop a common reflection and discourse.

### The Dept. of the Ongoing

The Department of the Ongoing (Dept.) is the shadow department that we created at our chair.

The Dept. will foster and incubate new regimes and understandings for a built environment that seeks to include subjectivities and bodies often unacknowledged or overlooked by mainstream architectural production. The Dept. will produce alternative imageries and spatial scenarios that attempt to stretch and reimagine the ontology of architecture both in architectural education as in its wider field, asserting that such a reinvented field of architecture can be a much-needed agent for spatial justice. The Dept. will be a suspended space of reflection and experimentation, a kind of undercommons to the existing field of architecture, a shadow department in an ongoing process of becoming and becomming.

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