Luyanda Mpahlwa | Imke Woelk | Andrei Șerbescu | Harald Baumann

NOVEMBER TALKS 2016

Think Tank Architecture

PREFACE

The TU Graz November Talks series has become not only a tradition, but a landmark event, attracting a broad audience every Monday evening in November. After five successful years—from 2011 to 2015—, the November Talks - Positions in Contemporary Architecture series closed a cycle and approached a new chapter: The 2016 November Talks opened as "Think Tank Architecture," exploring new facets of the architectural discourse and shedding light on poignant architectural issues.

Think Tank Architecture's format was similar to the previous years: a 45 minutes talk, followed by another 45 minutes of podium discussion. The four outstanding guests with utterly different backgrounds cast a new light on the architecture profession by disclosing its inherent research mechanisms. Beyond a mere presentation of their professional work, they revealed their research focus linked to the practice. A common denominator of the talks was the topic of housing and the myriad of social implications in the design of homes.

The 2016 talks started with the charming and impressive talk of Luyanda Mpahlwa. The South-African architect took the audience on a trip to his country, depicting its beauty, but also its challenges. His office has been largely engaged in addressing the harsh reality of the socially disadvantaged communities in South Africa, educating through architecture. The podium discussion, entitled here "Community Empowerment," highlights everyday challenges of the socially committed South-African architect. Our next guest, Imke Woelk from Berlin, navigated between art, writings, product design and architecture. She revealed beauty in the detail, in simplicity, austerity and texture. Her heterogeneous portfolio

reflected both her complex and sensitive personality and an incredible respect and passion for her profession. "Small, Refined Interventions" brings readers closer to her unique approach. Our next guest, Andrei Şerbescu impressed the public with his body of work as a result of his collaboration with stakeholders. He defines himself as an architect from Bucharest, deeply influenced by the city's unique context. Going against the tide of commercial architecture, he proved that daily constraints can trigger an outstanding architectural outcome. "Partnering with the Enemy" reveals Andrei celebrating little victories on the "battlefield" of his profession through his architecture. The fourth guest, Harald Baumann inspired the public through his vision and customized approach of housing for the socially doomed. He granted immigrants and homeless people dignity through the provision of homes that were tailored to the specific needs. Harald's discourse aimed at de-stigmatizing the status of immigrants. "Dignity beyond Stigma" gives further insight on this delicate topic.

Our special thanks go to Sto Foundation for the generosity that made this event possible! Think Tank Architecture could also never have happened without the support and commitment of the IAT staff members Claudia Volberg, Armin Stocker, Sorana Rādulescu and Aleksandra Pavićević.

We are looking forward to our next date with architecture. See you again in November 2017!

Roger Riewe

VORWORT

Die Vortragsreihe „November Talks" an der TU Graz ist schon zur Tradition geworden – mehr noch, zu einer Leitveranstaltung. Die Reihe ist an den Montagabenden im November Anziehungspunkt für ein breit gefächertes Publikum. Nach den fünf erfolgreichen Jahren 2011 bis 2015 hat die Serie über Positionen in zeitgenössischer Architektur nun einen Zyklus abgeschlossen und ein neues Kapitel aufgeschlagen. Mit November Talks 2016 wurde „Think Tank Architecture" eröffnet, in der aktuelle Themen und Facetten des Architekturdiskurses ausgelotet werden.

Das Format der „Think Tank Architecture" Abende ähnelte dem der Vorjahre: ein 45-minütiger Vortrag gefolgt von 45 Minuten Podiumsgespräch. Vier beeindruckende Gäste mit völlig unterschiedlichem Hintergrund beleuchteten den Beruf des Architekten, indem sie dessen inhärente Forschungsmechanismen offenlegten. Ein gemeinsamer Nenner der Gespräche war das Thema Wohnen mit all den sozialen Implikationen im Gestalten von Wohnbauten.

Der erste November Talk 2016 wurde von Luyanda Mphahlwa bestritten. In seinem beeindruckenden Vortrag nahm der Architekt aus Südafrika das begeisterte Publikum mit auf eine Reise in seine Heimat, Südafrika. Sein Architekturbüro hat sich hauptsächlich mit der harten Realität gesellschaftlich Benachteiligter beschäftigt und vermittelt durch Architektur Bildung. Die Podiumsdiskussion über Ermächtigung auf lokaler Ebene, hier unter dem Titel „Community Empowerment" zu finden, konzentrierte sich auf die täglichen Herausforderungen, denen sich der sozial engagierte südafrikanische Architekt gegenübersieht. Unser nächster Gast war Imke Woelk aus Berlin; sie navigierte zwischen Kunst, Schriften, Produktdesign und Architektur. Sie legte die Schönheit

im Detail, in der Einfachheit, Nüchternheit und Textur dar. Ihr heterogenes Portfolio spiegelt nicht nur ihre komplexe und sensible Persönlichkeit, sondern auch einen unglaublichen Respekt und Leidenschaft für ihren Beruf wider. „Small, Refined Interventions" bringt den LeserInnen ihr einzigartiges Architekturverständnis näher. Unser dritter Vortragende, Andrei Şerbescu, beeindruckte das Publikum mit seinen Arbeiten, Ergebnis der Zusammenarbeit mit Stakeholdern. Als Architekt aus Bukarest, wie er sich selbst definiert, schwimmt er gegen den Strom kommerzieller Architektur und bewies in seinem Vortrag, dass Einschränkungen ein herausragendes Architekturergebnis möglich machen. „Partnering with the Enemy" beschreibt, wie Andrei Şerbescu mit seiner Architektur kleine Siege auf dem „Schlachtfeld" seines Berufs feiert. Unser vierter Gast war Harald Baumann. Er inspirierte das Publikum mit seiner Vision und seinem maßgeschneiderten Angebot für sozial schwache Gruppen. Mit Wohnungen, die auf die individuellen Bedürfnisse abgestimmt sind, gibt er Immigranten und Obdachlosen ihre Würde zurück. Harald Baumann will Einwanderern mit seiner Architektur ihr Stigma nehmen. Lesen Sie mehr zu diesem sensiblen Thema in seinem Beitrag „Dignity beyond Stigma".

Wir bedanken uns bei der Sto Stiftung, durch deren großzügige Unterstützung diese Serie erst möglich wurde. Think Tank Architecture wäre auch nicht möglich gewesen ohne die Unterstützung und den Einsatz der MitarbeiterInnen des IAT; danke Claudia Volberg, Armin Stocker, Sorana Rădulescu und Aleksandra Pavićević.

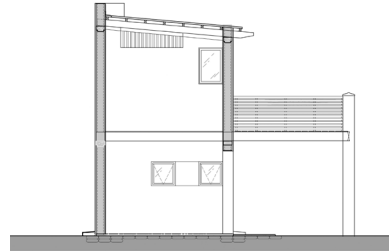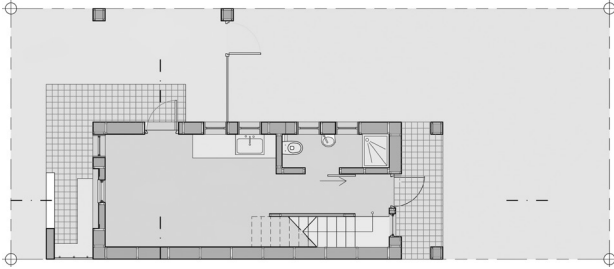Wir freuen uns schon auf unser nächstes Rendez-vous mit Architektur. Bis zum November 2017!
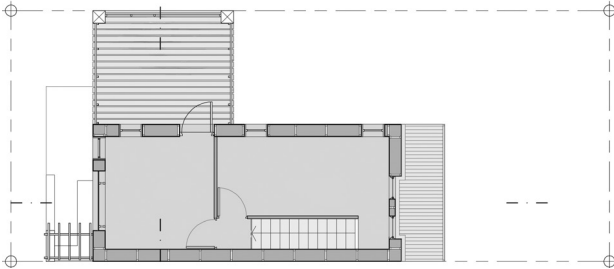
Roger Riewe

LUYANDA MPAHLWA
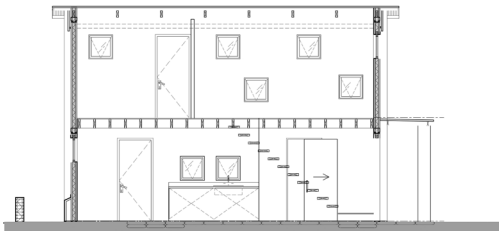
NOVEMBER 14, 2016

LECTURE_09

INTERVIEW_15

< We wanted to find a building system that is able to involve community into the building. [...] So we found a building system that made that possible. >

< People want to be involved. They want to participate. >

DESIGN INDABA 10x10 SANDBAG HOUSING | Cape Town, Africa | 2009
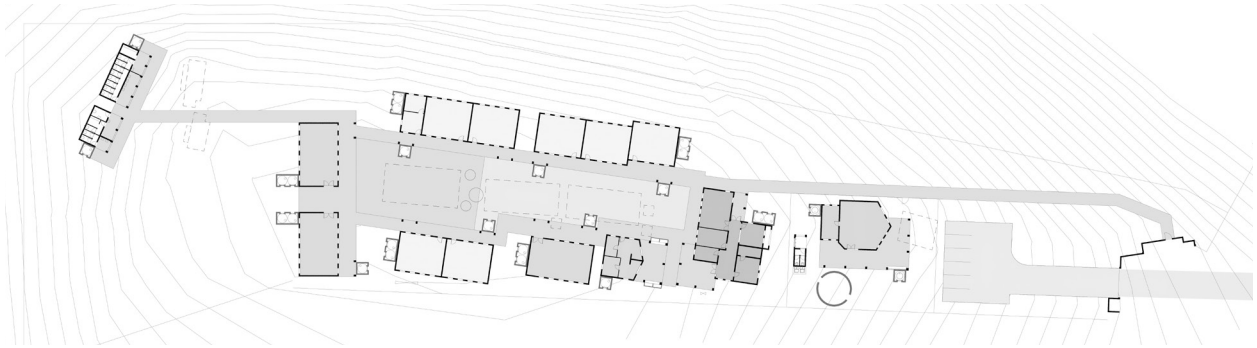
< The sites where so inaccessible that we could only do site visits using a helicopter. >

< This is the project that we felt we would like to share with the world at the Biennale. >

DBSA 50 SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE | Eastern Cape Province, Africa | 2013

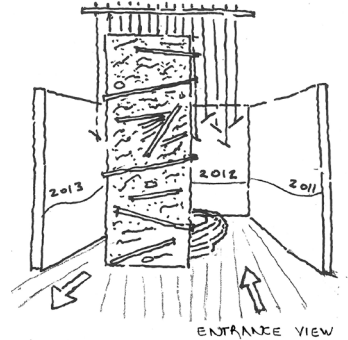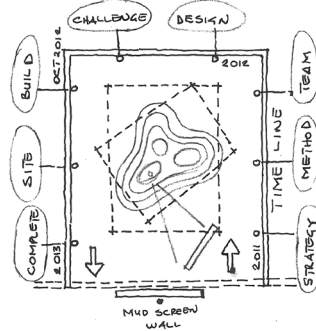THE EXHIBITION

THE ENTRANCE: WALL STRUCTURE
REPRESENTING PREVIOUS
INAPPROPRIATE MUD SCHOOLS
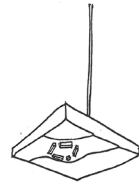
50 HANGING MODELS, 50 SCHOOLS,
ADAPTABLE KIT OF PARTS ON
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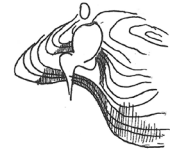
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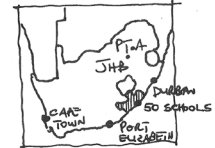
DETAILED TIMELINE & PROJECT
DESCRIPTION ON EXHIBITION
WALLS

2013   2012   2011

ENTRANCE VIEW

TEAM   TIMELINE   STRATEGY
2013   2012   2011

SECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

CHALLENGE   DESIGN

BUILD   OCT 2016   TEAM

SITE   2012   METHOD   TIME LINE

COMPLETE   2018   2011   STRATEGY

MUD SCREEN
WALL

CONCEPT PLAN

'REPORTING FROM THE FRONT' EXHIBITION PROJECT | Biennale Venice, Italy | 2016

LM_Luyanda Mpahlwa
RR_Roger Riewe
CV_Claudia Volberg

RR_ Luyanda, thank you very much! What a deeply impressive lecture you gave! Just about everybody here in this space must be thinking: 'What is our role in architecture and do we know how important we are? Which role should we really be taking?' And seeing your lecture now, there is so much work ahead of us. It's incredible; it's 100 years, 1.000 years of strong dynamics… Well, I would like to start this talk about a 'Think Tank in Architecture' with the last project you presented, which you also showed in the Biennale in Venice: 50 schools all completed in 2 only years. The thing, which I came across, was: if these schools are built in such a short time, where are all the teachers coming from? It must be a truly incredible program behind all of this and backing it up, isn't that so?

LM_ Well, first to perhaps clarify this: these were all existing schools. And they were obviously falling apart, as I showed. And the numbers ranged from schools with 150 kids to schools with 500. So, the education department did realize that parents are actually taking kids away from where their schools are to inner cities like Mthatha, which is a bigger town around there. And the idea was to say that, in the next 5-10 years, we should have created schools, which are going to enable parents to take their kids there, so to avoid this migration. Kids currently have to go to school far away from their own home area. So, the question is relevant because, as we saw when these schools were finished, some of them have challenges; the teachers are still there, they are still doing what they used to do. But the government had to ensure a new generation of teachers could be brought in, because the teachers

who were already there were not even equipped to look after a modern building. We had to reach an agreement with a company, for example, that built the washing facilities and toilets, to provide a maintenance program with the school for 2 years to make sure the teachers are assisted in the task of ensuring the toilet-system is run properly. Because if it is not run properly the problems with hygiene will continue. So these are the things we had to negotiate with the suppliers saying to them: 'Okay, you are supplying this toilet-system here, but you will not leave the school until everybody understands how it works.' Workshops with the children, especially the girls… They had to be taught how to use this particular toilet. So, all was part of the education of the teachers and the learners, because this is a rural environment. We could not build a new school and leave the old toilet-system, which was unhygienic. We had to find new ways of engaging and getting a new kind of agreement. The government has to maintain the schools, has to make sure that they are now maintained as modern buildings by the teachers. There is a system of rolling out teachers to actually get into the schools.

CV_ You said that you dealt with these 50 schools in 2 years and I'm really impressed; with all the logistics and mapping tasks, how you delivered materials to the sites and how people now use these facilities… How did you manage to do all of this from your office?

LM_A very good question! Actually, there is no way… Our studio is in Cape Town and there is no possibility

for running a project on such a scale simply from that base. And then again, the architect in me says: 'You need to collaborate.' So we set up a big team of locally based architects in the area. We set up a project office in Mthatha; I sent some of my staff there. But we did all the design and all the discussions with the client to get the designs approved in Cape Town. The client is actually in Pretoria. So we did that from the Cape Town office and then, when the project was approved, we issued tenders for contractors to construct. Then the project shifted to the Eastern Cape Mthatha and that's where it was run from. So, there was no way we could have done it from Cape Town. I would fly to Mthatha for all the inspections and take the helicopter to visit the sites. We had a team of 4 firms of architects. We had 2 teams of engineers. We had a team of social facilitators that would go from school to school to engage with the community, to engage with the parents, to make sure that they understand their role in making sure that the construction happens… It is something that has never been done in South Africa - building 50 schools in 2 years. For us, it's a major achievement to have done this. But it needed a very very well organized system of design for actually running the sites and doing the inspections and also the reporting work. We had this task to deal with because the government wanted us to make a progress report every two weeks; so we were meeting with the officials every two weeks.

RR_ You just used the term of 'architecture beyond - beyond architecture.' And this is actually what I see with the schools: it's not only designing a school but also

knowing you have to train the people before utilization takes place. On the other hand, I see the sandbag houses project – a projects driven by low technology, or a new technology method of building. Is it important for people to develop the projects themselves, with their own dynamics, and without you having to finally step in and help?

LM_I think that was the initial idea, because I really believe that architecture is a very practical discipline. It's not only theory. So, if we can get the people involved in the practice of building, we actually empower them to create their own spaces as life develops. When we found the sandbag system we thought that this would be the way to go. But the challenge we have is that there is only one supplier of sandbags in that area. If you're going to build 1.000 houses, you are going to have a problem if the people can only go to this one place to get the materials. The only shortcoming we have with the sandbag system is that our building industry does not support alternative building systems. We don't have legislation that supports it. People only want to use brick. Contractors want to build with brick. So we have quite a long way to go until we find those easily accessible materials, for people to be able to use by themselves without us being involved. This was a pilot, it was an experiment. We did it again with the soup kitchen building, but it still remains an isolated case. You will not find a bank in South Africa that finances a building built of sandbags, because it's not a conventional building system. So, there is a bit of a challenge there. But the idea was to empower people and equip them with the knowledge of building because… You see, they build their

own shacks! Whether we like the shacks or not: they build them. So, I really think that social design has to include a participatory process and we have to find ways to equip people so that they can build their own houses. Maybe the architect is not even involved. We will always be involved, because we come up with the ideas, the systems, the processes that involve building. And the sandbag house was a very good example that you can't just say that people must be left alone. Because what happens is a Kosovo [a shanty town in XXX] – unhealthy, unsafe – and we architects have the responsibility to improve living conditions.

CV_ You mentioned that you bring something into it – to develop the participation in combination with the art of the people. And then comes the moment when you, the architect, just leave them on their own to go on developing it. Then comes this process of self-developing, isn't that so? And what do you think is the role of the architect in all of this? To return there again later and to do some readjustments?

LM_ This question has preoccupied us for a while, because I don't think there is a blueprint that says: 'when you work in this environment, this is what you need to do.' Firstly, you've got to accept that, as an architect you are a facilitator. You don't have all the answers. Secondly, your design skill must take into account that people might want something else; you must understand what that is. And when the buildings are completed, the architect pulls back. Only in the case of '10by10' [XXX] we have an

ongoing engagement with the people there. Every time we come we understand how they are transforming, reusing, extending the space. So, some of those lessons we are going to use in the Kosovo project. We actually don't know what we are going to do in Kosovo, to be honest. As we sit here, it's a mega problem [laughs]… We're gonna do our best in that mess. I mean, there are 6,500 families in Kosovo. The government budget for this project is for 2,500 units. The question is what do you do for the other 4,000 families? And when we start building, do we remove the people or do we replace them? 'While we are building here, you're going to live with your friends. When we are finished, you come back.' It's an open issue, we don't know how it will turn out. But that being said it is still quite an early phase for knowing what will happen and what the outcome will be. There is an NGO known as 'Cork,' which is linked to 'Slumaid International,' that is very active in the Indian area, doing what is called an enumeration study. They are basically counting how many families live there, how many members a family has, what their incomes are, where they work… This study will be finished by the end of November – and will be handed over to us. Then, with the mapping that we've started doing, we're going to start understanding how many people of a specific age group there are, how many of them work, how many people have special preferences about the way they want to live, are some happy to live in communal apartment buildings or do they all want a house of their own… We don't know. So, for now, it's going to be a process of understanding: what is Kosovo? We went there twice, walked around and were amazed by what we found there. Despite the mess

you saw with the drains, it's very clean in the areas where the people have their houses. It's very well organized. The people know each other; they know who is doing what. This is important to understand because if you go there thinking these are criminals you will never find a solution. You'll want to clean the place and build for them. But the idea is to go in there, understand who their leaders are, create work groups because these people are also organized in societies. So you have got to understand what their communication structure is, how they operate. The unfortunate part – I must be very open – is that these are very low funded projects. This means the research work is not part of the budget. So it's a very complicated system.

RR_ Coming back to the sandbag houses which are actually upgrading a very small part of the township.

Within these concepts of upgrading, we also know this phenomenon of backyard developments. Shacks are built again next to formal buildings or houses. So the question: 'Can you imagine that a balance between the formal and the informal is necessary or needed?' Because all of us here are trained to draw a plan by the end of the day.

LM_ Yeah.

RR_ And now we noticed that drawing a plan might cause a problem — when you said the fire brigade couldn't move in. But just imagine a fire engineer drawing a plan for the township: it would look like Haussmann's plan in Paris, right?

LM_ Our client, the government, already has a road network planned for Kosovo as we speak, because planning is determined by roads. We say: 'Please, just kindly keep your roads for now. Let's first understand what the issues are!' So, we also have officials thinking that in Kosovo you just need to create new roads, the access areas and everything, and then: 'You architects, all we need you to do is to just put houses in the network and we are done!' So, the first task we have is to change the mind-set of our client. Just look at Kibera [XXX]! That's an engineering solution done in a boardroom, somewhere, and the plans were drawn and delivered to Kibera: 'Constructor, please build!' No engagement, no participation, nothing. We take a different view and, in fact, we have already been able to influence the briefing process for all people involved in the Kosovo. We might

succeed or the client might say: 'We must spend this money within the next two years. Please make sure that by 2020 we've got buildings there.' We don't know. We believe in the way we work, we believe in engaging the community and we think that we will find a way to resolve Kosovo. But it will be a very difficult process.

CV_ The communication between all those parties is essential. How do you start this dialogue? How do you tell the people and the government to go in another direction or think of other options?

LM_ This southern-corridor-program comprises a variety of slum areas to be upgraded. First we — architects and urban designers – met with the client — the government — to make our client understand that we need to have workshops before we do any design work. These workshops, where people are invited to come and speak about these alternative ways of design, about participatory processes, are happening right now. Academics who have been working in this field were invited. Four workshops will be held between August and December with the Department of Human Settlements, with the city of Cape Town, with the officials that are running the project, with the consultants, architects, engineers, urban designers… Everybody sitting in one room. That was our condition; otherwise the project would simply not work out. At least people have to listen to us, because we've already done projects like '10 by 10,' which is considered a success. We also have an international profile of a kind and we are listened to sometimes. If architects put themselves in the

position of listening to the client and getting out of their comfort zone to deal with difficult questions… We could achieve a lot. I think the architect of the 21st century has to get out of the comfort zone and think differently about the design process. You don't need a plan by the time you go to meet your client. You need to engage differently, and this is what we've started doing.

RR_It's interesting that we also have this knowledge nowadays: we cannot design new towns with a fat pencil anymore! It needs more negotiation! The thing is … [interrupted by LM]

LM_That is especially the case if you're working with communities. There is always going to be the inner city project that doesn't need all this. But in these environments, you must have an altogether different approach. It's impossible to go about it in any other way.

RR_There is an interesting coincidence that 25 years ago we had the first free elections in South Africa, the end of the Apartheid Regime. Just about the same year was also the fall of the iron curtain. So, the whole political process in Europe was similar to South Africa: setting up a new state. We have 25 years of experience now. Europe has these new challenges of refugees, migrants, strongly growing cities – ten years ago we had all these books about shrinking cities and now nothing is shrinking anymore. So everybody is like: 'Oh, what to do?' We know now that we have a problem because we were on the wrong boat. And if we compare Berlin to Cape Town – similar size, 3.5

million people – there is one big difference: Cape Town will grow in the next 10 years by 1 million inhabitants! Berlin by maybe 50-100.000, and it posts a huge problem for the city. Is there something we can learn from Cape Town, from you?

LM_Sure… The challenge that we have concerns the big disparities between the two cities, although they are the same size. Cape Town is dealing with the problem of an inner city that is hardly inhabited, everybody being in the periphery. The fragmentation created by Apartheid is still alive. Those red bubbles I showed are racial categories that we are still trying to find a way to deal with. People who live in predominantly white suburbs can't deal with people of a different racial group or culture moving in there – who would perhaps sometimes slaughter a sheep in their garden because they are performing some cultural event. They would call the SPCA and the police saying: 'Hey, someone is killing an animal here!' But for the African person that is a part of life. It happens all the time. So, we're dealing with those difficulties of how to redefine the urban experience on an inclusive city. And it's a process that we're going go through in most African cities because there is big racial tension there. Berlin, I lived there. I lived in Moabit; 10 minutes from the Uni, in a shared house… A self-managed community with a resident's council that met on the first Sunday of each month. It had shared bathrooms and showers – boys and girls… cooking together, going to the cinema together… The city had a different energy to it. The problem now is how Berlin deals with the fact that its character is changing: from

like Kosovo and the airports corridor and slum-upgrading systems. I think Cape Town, South Africa is a little bit behind. These processes are difficult in Medellin too, but Cape Town still has a long way to go before it catches up with the situation there. We are continuing to grapple with our racial issues before actually engaging with the real challenges of a society that is trying to deal with inclusivity in a big way.

CV_ Can you imagine working in a different environment than Cape Town –Johannesburg perhaps – or is your heart really there? Do you feel more connected with the people there?

LM_ Can I let Uli [his wife] answer that question? [laughs] Look, simply the nature of South Africa today means there has to be a lot of interaction. Jo'burg is where the heart of South Africa is; this is where a lot of clients are, this is where everything happens and gets societed. So over the years working as an architect, I have been in Jo'burg every week. It's a different city, but I prefer Cape Town because things are still on a smaller scale and you are still able to reach out to officials in a manner that makes them listen and accept that there are different ways of doing things. I'm quite hopeful that Cape Town will find a way of engaging with projects like these. It might fail but for now we're trying to make it work and, therefore, I will still prefer to work in Cape Town.

RR_ You showed one image of the German pavilion in the Venice Biennale, which I also thought was a really strong

the separated Eastern-Western city to becoming this 'schickimicki' city. Berlin has a totally different problem. That flair of Berlin, of Prenzlauer Berg and Pfefferberg environment, it's all being sanitized because big commerce is coming, rents are rising. Even Kreuzberg is chic these days. So this is a different problem. Cities in themselves have a very different challenge today because, while they were developing in a particular way, certain political events happened and now there's this inflight of immigrants coming into the cities… The only lesson we have learned is the fact that market conditions alone do not improve cities. There has to be another layer of engagement where we get those who are disenfranchised or those who are in the lower levels of the economy scale to become part of the decision making processes. And this is what we are trying to do in Cape Town. We are trying to institutionalize participatory processes into projects

political statement – opening a pavilion as a metaphor of an open society. Then you showed the quote 'the arrival city will be informal.' I think this has got different levels of connotation: it's not only about 'Are we able to plan how this thing will work?' but also 'there will be different cultures coming that we don't know how to deal with yet.' It's always the background; it's always the cultural aspect as well. But then you said that making one society is important to finally stabilize a nation, right?!

LM_ I'll be very honest with you. We've got a big problem. And I don't think the current systems are actually able to deal with it because the issue of people coming from a different country, different culture and different lifestyles cannot be solved by only laws; it will be solved on a vast basis by time. And as that time passes there are going to be a lot of uncomfortable situations and inconvenience for some of us. We are experiencing this inconvenience in South Africa. For example most Africans from the rest of the continent who come to South Africa don't live in the townships. They live in the city because they are not used to the townships. So, when they find a building in the city, they move in there, and they start trading their artworks and souvenirs. It's a shop during the day, in the night it's a sleeping place. This is changing the nature of the cities. It's changing the nature of Cape Town. In Cape Town today every corner has a Somalian shop. They first sell nuts, sweets and cigarettes in front of the shop. Before you know it, they are renting a little corner of the building. Then, they are renting the whole ground floor. 'Arrival City is on the ground floor.' So, this is changing the nature of

Cape Town positively. But for many it's uncomfortable because where do these people go the bathroom? Where do they find conveniences in terms of hygiene? So, we need quick solutions: 'Hey, let's have bathing areas in the city!' There is a new response to the fact that now: 'Hey, we've got these Africans living in the center of Cape Town! How do we deal with them?' And it's changing the city, how the city is using its bylaws to deal with new immigrants, new residents. I don't have an answer, to be honest with you. But I think that there are going to be uncomfortable situations that we've got to deal with, some unfortunate – like Cologne on New Year's Eve last year, where you have hundreds of males displaced in a country they don't know. These are terrible experiences but we've got to deal with them, and time is going to sort things out and solve the problems. I came to Germany without speaking a word of German or understanding the German culture. But I was associating with people who were able to convey the German lifestyle in a manner that made me able to integrate. Time, engagement, participation – not rejection – will solve the problems.

RR_ There are a lot of things to talk about in this 'Think Tank Architecture.' Luyanda, thank you very much for this wonderful evening! I think we will all go home thinking about South Africa and of the small-scale problems we have here and also about how we can rethink architecture. Thank you very much for being here with us. [applause]
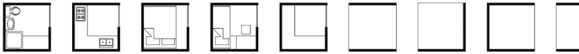
LM_ I thank you.

IMKE WOELK

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

LECTURE_27

INTERVIEW_33

< Wir, in Berlin, haben uns die Kleingärten angeschaut. […] In der Regel wird überlegt, sie einfach aufzulösen und zu bebauen. Wir haben überlegt:'Warum eigentlich? Kann man die nicht halten, aber permanent bewohnen?!' >

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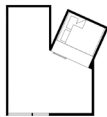
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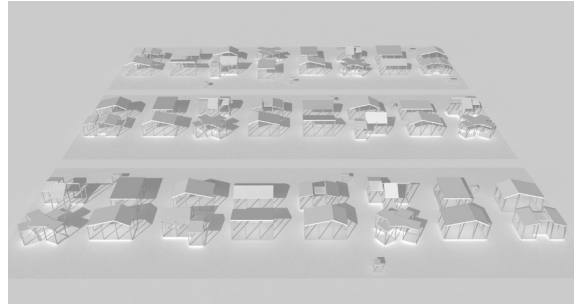
< We, in Berlin, looked at the allotments […] In most cases it is decided to dismantle them and build on. We thought:'Why? Can't you hold onto this structure but inhabit it permanently?!' >
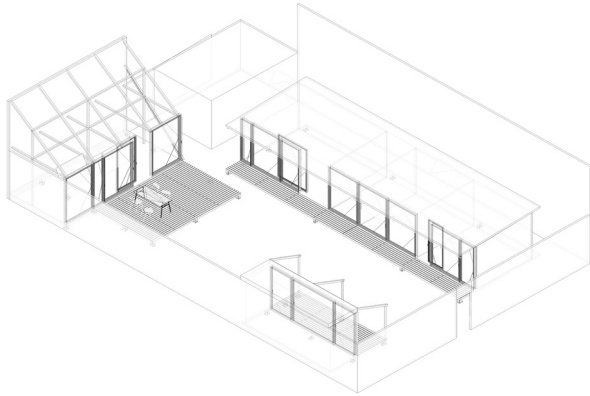
< Das Areal ist auf der einen Seite bestimmt durch Reisfelder und auf der anderen noch durch Plantagen. […] Aus diesem Grund haben wir zwei Typen, Grundtypen entwickelt. >
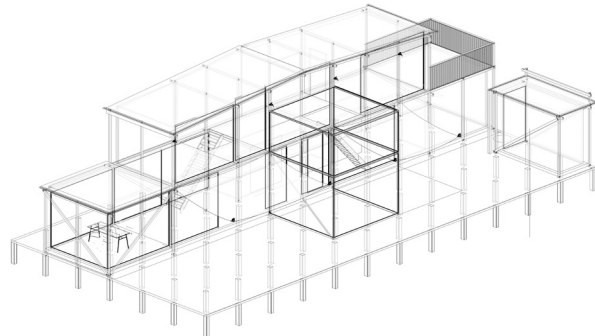
HAUS PROTOTYP R UND K | Catalonia, Spain | 2016
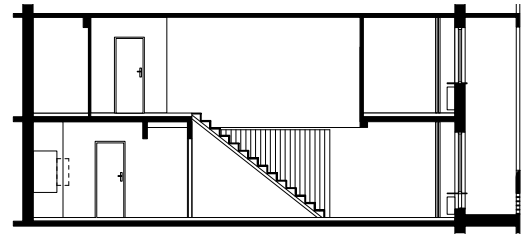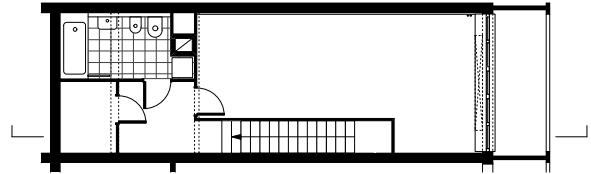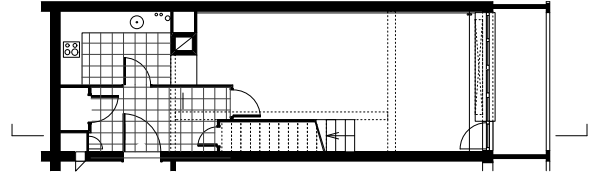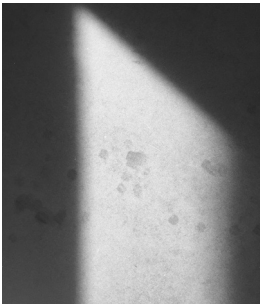
< Wir machen ganz wenig. So sieht das dann am Ende wieder aus. Es bleibt alles, Türgriffe wenn es geht, die eigenartigen Verglasungen. Alles lassen wir. >

< We only intervene a little. This is how it looks like in the end. Everything stays, doorknobs, if it is possible, the odd glazings. We leave everything as it is. >

APARTMENT IN DER UNITÉ D'HABITATION LE CORBUSIER | Berlin, Germany | 2016

IW_Imke Woelk
RR_Roger Riewe
AS_Armin Stocker

RR_ Vielen, vielen Dank, Imke Woelk, für den sehr spannenden Vortrag, die Einblicke in deine Gedankenwelt und deine Positionierung in der Berufswelt, im Alltag. Er wirft sehr viele Fragen auf. Ich glaube, wir haben so spontan wahrscheinlich ein ganzes Dutzend von Fragen und wir haben uns hier unsere Gedanken dazu gemacht. Ich mag vielleicht mal in diese Runde mit Armin einsteigen. Da ist ein Thema der Diffusität und du hast da den Begriff „architektonische Kontrolle" verwendet, die Notwendigkeit oder Sinnhaftigkeit oder die Auslotung architektonischer Kontrolle. Und wir in unserer Gesellschaft sind vielleicht geschult in diesem, sagen wir einmal technoiden, technokratischen Denken, in Denkansätzen, die unsere Schulbildung vorgibt, die in der Universität dann wiederum stattfinden und die eigentlich dazu führen, dass man sagt, man muss mit einem Ergebnis nach Hause gehen

– schlussendlich. Du kommst jetzt daher und sagst: „Nein, es ist nicht das Ergebnis, es ist der Prozess". Wie geht diese Prozesshaftigkeit eigentlich? Wie kannst du mit dieser Prozesshaftigkeit in der Argumentation und Kommunikation dann eigentlich weiter umgehen?

IW_ In der Argumentation mit Kunden eigentlich sehr gut, weil das ja die größte Angst der Kunden ist, dass wir Architekten etwas tun, was sie nicht integriert, was sie womöglich ausschließt oder ihnen etwas anbietet, was sie nicht brauchen können, was ihnen nicht gefällt. Also das entspannt unglaublich, habe ich festgestellt. Nicht nur mich, sondern auch das jeweilige Gegenüber.

AS_ Spricht das dann Kunden automatisch auf einer intuitiven Ebene, auf einer Gefühlsebene an? Wenn du es

RR_ Thank you very much, Imke Woelk, for your fascinating talk and the insights into the world of your thoughts, your position in the professional world, and in everyday life. It raises many questions. I think we probably have a good dozen questions that we could fire at you without even having heard this talk; but we have given this some thought here. I would like to begin this round with Armin. There's this theme of diffusion and you used the concept: 'Architectural control. The necessity or meaningfulness or the probing of architectural control.' And, in our society, we are perhaps trained in this, let us say technoid, technocratic thinking, these intellectual approaches that are really set out by our schooling and that later take place at university, and that lead us to say that you have to go home with a result, ultimately. And then you come along and say: 'No, it's not the result, it's the process.' How does this processuality work? Or rather, how can you go on to use this processuality in your argumentation and communication?

IW_ In my argumentation, with clients, it really works very well because the clients' biggest worry is that we, as architects, may do something that doesn't integrate them, that may exclude them, or that we may offer them something they don't need, that they don't like. So it's really relaxing, I've found. Not only for me [laughs], for the other person too.

AS_ Does it automatically speak to the customer on an intuitive level, an emotional level? When you communicate to them how you arrive at your results?

IW_ On what level?

AS_ On an emotional level. On an intuitive, deeper level. Because in the film now you talk about Freud's free association and so on. Does that go deeper with customers than when you explain this is how the floor plan works, this was my structural approach?

IW_ It always depends. With the little apartments, it is increasingly artists, or scientists and so on, who are moving in, so of course I can talk to them very differently, and it really depends on the argumentation too. I realize that, I am learning that too, I have to learn it so that I don't lose too many customers. I have to know exactly which levels I can talk to them on.

RR_ This processuality really involves developing a script or a storyboard that is relatively open-ended. So one which, let us say – which is interesting – this mixture of approaching, really feeling one's way towards a task artistically, and the aspect of technical architecture, which may be putting it simply. Is this something important for you in terms of how you position yourself or is it something that evolved and that you can subsequently deepen? This seems to be a very, very fundamental approach, above all when it comes to projects. Or in order to be able to develop processes.

IW_ Yes, well I think using your intuition is extremely helpful. There's no need to go into it when you are talking to the client, but intuitive work, that has inherent methods

so kommunizierst, wie du zu deinen Ergebnissen kommst?

IW_ Auf was für einer Ebene?

AS_ Auf einer Gefühlsebene. Auf intuitiver Ebene. Du zeigst im Film jetzt auch die freie Assoziation von Freud und so weiter. Dringt das bei den Kunden tiefer ein, als wenn man ihnen erklärt, so funktioniert der Grundriss, so bin ich strukturell herangegangen?

IW_ Kommt immer drauf an. In die kleinen Wohnungen ziehen jetzt zunehmend Künstler, auch Wissenschaftler und so weiter ein. Die kann ich natürlich ganz, ganz anders ansprechen, auch von der Argumentation ist das wirklich abhängig. Das weiß ich auch, das lerne ich auch, das muss ich auch lernen, damit ich nicht so viele Kunden verliere. Ich muss ganz genau wissen, auf welchen Ebenen ich sie ansprechen kann.

RR_ Das ist ja eigentlich in dieser Prozesshaftigkeit so etwas wie ein Skriptum oder ein Storyboard zu entwickeln mit einem relativ ungewissen Ausgang. Also eine Mischung aus dem künstlerischen Herangehen, Herantasten eigentlich, an eine Aufgabe und auch mit der technischen Architektur – dann wiederum gepaart. Ist dieses Etwas für dich in deiner Positionierung wichtig oder hat sich das entwickelt, sodass es dann weiterhin vertieft werden kann? Das scheint ja eine ganz wesentliche Herangehensweise zu sein, zu Projekten überhaupt, oder um die Prozesse entwickeln zu können.

IW_ Ja, ich glaube die Nutzung der Intuition ist extrem hilfreich. Das muss nicht im Gespräch mit dem Bauherrn thematisiert werden, aber die intuitive Arbeit, die ja auch Methodiken in sich birgt, die auch beschreibbar ist, fördert altes Wissen zu Tage. Wissen, über das wir verfügen, aber auf das wir rational keinen Zugriff haben. Das wird einfach viel vollständiger. Deshalb mache ich das immer, es ist fast wie Querbürsten. Ich mache beides. Natürlich gibt es das Programm, gibt es die Finanzen; es gibt den Ort, es gibt den Kunden, da kann man sehr, sehr lange recherchieren, kann zu sehr vielen Ergebnissen zu kommen. Aber um es wirklich, wirklich passend zu machen für den Ort und für den Gebrauch, braucht es meines Erachtens dieses Zulassen des freien Denkens.

AS_ Wir haben ja sehr viele Projekte oder Ansätze gesehen, die mit Vorhandenem arbeiten. Also Gefundenes, Vorhandenes, sei es der Ort selbst oder ein Gebäude, das schon da ist, oder Fragmente. Du versuchst zu bewahren oder gehst es an mit Bewahren und legst Schicht für Schicht frei, zum Teil in den Projekten. Wann weißt du, dass du zu einem Ergebnis kommst? Ist es die Intuition, die Rationalität? Wo ist das Spannungsfeld? Wann ist es für dich so weit zu sagen: "Ok, es bewegt sich in eine Richtung"? Sei es, ich geh damit zum Kunden oder das ist es jetzt. Hier sind wir gelandet.

IW_ Das ist eigentlich knallhart pragmatisch. Also das ist das Einschätzen, das ist der realistische Umgang. Manchmal ist es, auf die Wohnung bezogen, das kleine Budget, das der Kunde mitbringt. Wo wir einfach ganz,

and that can be described, … reveals old knowledge. Knowledge that we have but that we cannot access rationally. It just becomes much more complete. That's why I always do this, a bit like cross-brushing. Hmm, I do both. Of course there is the program, there are finances, there is the site, there is the customer, you can research for a very, very long time, you can arrive at very different results. But in order to do things just right for the place and for the intended use, I think you need to allow free thinking like this.

AS_ We have seen lots of projects or approaches that work with existing elements. Found, existing elements. Be it the place itself or a building that is already there, or fragments. Hmm, you try to preserve or you approach it with preservation, uncovering layer by layer. To some extent in the projects. When do you know you are reaching a result? Is it intuition, rationality, where is the dynamics? When does the point come when you can say: 'OK, things are heading in a particular direction.' Either when you take it to the customer or when you say, this is it. This is where we've ended up.

IW_ In fact it's all brutally pragmatic. It's all about assessing, realistic handling. So sometimes, in terms of the apartment, it's the tight budget that the customer has available. When we just think matter-of-factly, for goodness sake don't go and buy something that looks more or less like this or that, and then suggest it or apply it. Where we say: 'Let's look at what we've got here.' And the qualities – including aesthetic ones and functional ones,

are often already there. You just don't see them, and you think you've got to put so much into it. Maybe you have different ideas in your mind about what something ought to look like, what would be appropriate or what would be style, and if you free yourself of all that, it's really at your feet and I don't have to think about how deep I need to go. Instead, it's the particular solution in each case. In Sarajevo, for example. Of course this kind of funding is not guaranteed, absurd in such a situation. So naturally you take it in stages, the steps you go through are just very, very pragmatic.

RR_ It is this way of working, this methodology, it is this searching, tracking down, pursuing, re-evaluating what is already there. Identifying parameters and then recombining them, whether that's in the realm of architecture or art, in the way you go about drawing.

ganz nüchtern denken, um Gottes Willen, jetzt nicht da irgendetwas kaufen, was so halbwegs nach Diesem oder Jenem ausschaut und das dann einbringen oder aufbringen. Wo wir sagen: „Schauen wir, was da ist". Die Qualitäten, auch die ästhetischen, auch die funktionalen, sind oft da. Man sieht sie nur nicht, man meint so viel einbringen zu müssen. Man hat andere Bilder im Kopf vielleicht, wie etwas ausschauen müsste, was sich gehörte oder was Stil wäre und wenn man sich davon frei macht, liegt es eigentlich vor den Füßen und ich muss da gar nicht überlegen, wie tief gehe ich. Es ist dann jeweils die entsprechende Lösung. Meinetwegen in Sarajevo. Natürlich ist so eine Finanzierung nicht gesichert, was in so einer Situation absurd ist. Klar, dass man da in Stufen geht; die Schritte, die man da durchläuft, sind einfach ganz, ganz pragmatisch gesetzt.

RR_ Es ist ja in dieser Arbeitsweise, in dieser Methodik, dieses Suchen, Aufspüren, Nachgehen, das Vorhandene nochmal zu evaluieren, Parameter zu erheben und die dann nochmal neu zu kombinieren – ob im Bereich der Architektur oder im Künstlerischen, in der zeichnerischen Herangehensweise. Das Wort „parametrisch" haben wir ja schon verwendet. Es gibt ja auch andere Haltungen, die Parametriker, die dann diese Dinge verwenden. Sie sagen, sie bauen alles in einem bestimmten Programmzusammen und dann wird etwas ausgespuckt und dann sagen sie:„Ich kann nichts dafür, dass das halt jetzt hinten so rausgekommen ist". Für mich stellt sich die Frage: Der Anspruch bei dir ist ja auch ein Qualitätsanspruch. Wo findet dann, was Armin schon

angedeutet hat, statt? Das Nachjustieren im letzten Moment, damit das, was dann entsteht, der qualitätsvolle Raum tatsächlich darstellt. Wie geht denn das? Da wollen die Parametriker dann einfach aufhören und sagen: „Mein Programm liefert mir jetzt nichts mehr und ich bin jetzt zu faul, ich mag nicht mehr weitermachen".

IW_ Also, ich weiß auch nicht. Ich empfinde das als ganz einfach. Ich entscheide da ganz intuitiv. Also ich sehe, da stehen drei Gläser und der Tisch und ich überlege, was wollen wir hier machen? Wie könnte das ausschauen, was haben die miteinander zu tun? Die Gläser zu und untereinander und sie zu uns. Und was fehlt vielleicht?

RR_ Das heißt der Wink mit dem Zaunpfahl.

IW_ Was fehlt vielleicht, genau? Das stellt sich doch einfach ein, wenn man ganz locker ist, da merkt man doch, Mensch da fehlt die Geste, da fehlt jetzt der Inhalt, da brauchen wir noch mehr dazu. Wasser alleine reicht nicht. Das ist doch ganz leicht. In ganz lebenspraktischen Situationen ist es nicht anders als im Gestalterischen. Auch da spürt man, das Material müsste man noch verstärken, die Farbe, die einen vielleicht erschreckt … Wenn man sich länger damit beschäftigt, ist auch eine Ästhetik lesbar. Da gibt es auch eine andere Farbe, die man dazu kombinieren kann, die das in der Aufgabe entsprechendes Spannungsverhältnis setzt. Das tue ich einfach und das klappt immer.

AS_ Wie gehen dann so Geschichten wie mit den

We've already used to term parametric. There are other approaches, the parametrists who use these things. They say they put everything together, in some program or other, and then something gets spit out, and they say: 'It's not my fault that this is what came out.' So the question for me is, the standard that you go by is equally a standard of quality. As Armin suggested, where does this adjustment at the last moment take place, to make sure that what is being built actually represents high-quality space. How does that work? That's when the parametrists just stop and say: 'My program isn't giving me anything else and I'm too lazy, I don't want to carry on.'

IW_ Well, I don't know. It all seems quite easy to me. In fact, I go, … I make my decisions very intuitively. I see three glasses and the table there and I think what shall we do here. What might it look like, what have they got to do with each other. The glasses with each other and with us. And what may be missing?

RR_ That's what you call a strong hint.

IW_ What may be missing, exactly? [laughter, RR pours water] … And it just falls into place if you're relaxed, you can tell, hey, the gesture is missing, the content is missing, we need something else besides. Water alone is not enough. [laughter] It's really very easy, it's no different in very practical situations, I think, than when it comes to designing things. You can sense that you need to strengthen the material, the color, that may startle you, … if you occupy yourself with it for long enough, you can

start to make out an aesthetic. There's a different color that you can combine with it, that creates a tension that fits the task. That's just what I do, and it always works. [laughs]

AS_ And how do things like the allotments work out? How do you get out of something like this? There's the idea of leaving things as they are, with a certain densification that is possible based on Federal Gardens and Allotments legislation and that doesn't interfere with building law. Is that a kind of research work that stops there or does it continue?

IW_ In fact that really was advance work. We haven't tackled it yet. Arno Brandlhuber is different in that respect, he just goes off and knocks on the door and says: 'Hey guys, there's only one piece of legislation in this case, just one line, and you can just delete not and then Permanent Residence is possible.' And that's really a great stimulus to do things. I'll try that, thanks. Because you can easily imagine it working, because, as I said, the infrastructure is really there. Of course it's all smaller and a bit more Spartan, but it's quite conceivable as coexistence. Plots are always becoming vacant, you could start there without causing any harm to the current occupants. And something could grow out of this dialogue that is perhaps very realistic and close to realization.

AS_ If allotment holders don't see things differently, that is, I suppose?

IW_I don't know. Well, that needs to be clarified. I've got a

Kleingärten aus? Wie kann man sich das Rauskommen aus der Geschichte dann vorstellen? Es gibt die Idee des Belassens, es gibt eine gewisse Nachverdichtung, die über das Bundesgarten,- Kleingartengesetz möglich ist und eben nicht in das Baugesetz eingreift. Ist das eine Forschungsarbeit, die stehen bleibt oder geht es weiter?

IW_ Das war eigentlich wirklich eine Vorschussarbeit. Wir haben uns noch nicht darangemacht. Da ist ja Arno Brandlhuber anders, der geht dann wirklich los und klingelt und sagt: „Mensch, Jungs, hier gibt's nur einen Gesetzestext, nur eine Zeile und da könnt ihr nicht streichen und dann ist hier permanentes Wohnen möglich". Das ist eigentlich eine tolle Anregung zu tun. Das probier ich, danke. Es ist gut vorstellbar, dass das funktioniert, weil die Infrastruktur eigentlich da ist. Natürlich ist alles kleiner und ein bisschen spartanischer, aber es

ist auch als Koexistenz wunderbar vorstellbar. Es werden immer wieder Parzellen frei, man könnte da beginnen, ohne den jetzigen Nutzern Schaden zuzufügen. Und es würde im Dialog etwas wachsen können, was vielleicht tatsächlich ganz realistisch und nah an der Umsetzung ist.

AS_ Wenn es nicht Kleingartennutzer anders sehen, oder?

IW_ Ich weiß es nicht. Das ist zu klären. Ich selbst habe auch eine Datscha und habe immer gedacht, das wäre immer unmöglich so etwas zu haben, allein schon wegen den Nachbarn und der ganzen Manikürarbeit, die da erwartet werden würde – und überhaupt, wer hat denn so was? Und ich mache ganz andere Erfahrungen. Ich werde so genommen, wie ich bin, man fragt überhaupt nicht, wer ich bin. Es geht um Praktisches. Man hilft sich da aus, man bastelt da zusammen; das ist einfach schön. Und auch über Veränderungen spricht man und das ist ganz anders. Man ist da unwahrscheinlich privat. Das ist gar nicht wie im Amt, wenn man über Architektur spricht und verhandelt. Man ist so privat, man hat irgendwo immer etwas zu Trinken dabei und da lässt sich ganz viel machen und eben auch selber machen. Das macht viel Freude, das merke ich auch bei meinen Nachbarn. Sicher man muss es versuchen, vielleicht gibt es Feinde. Aber ich werde erstmal ganz ruhig. Ich hatte auch versucht, zu zeigen, dass es ganz sanft hineingehen kann. Also dass nichts Fremdes, Bösartiges, Stacheliges, Lärmendes da hineinkommt als Architektur, sondern etwas, was eigentlich fast abgeleitet ist, was dem Kontext entspricht und gleichzeitig einen ganz neuen Kontext aufspannen kann.

dacha myself, and I always thought it would be impossible to have something like that. Because of the neighbors alone and all that grooming they expect you to do, and anyway, who has something like that? And my experience is very different, very different. They accept me the way I am, no one even asks who I am. And it's about practical things. We help each other, and we make things together, it's just nice. But we also talk about changes and that's very different. People are incredibly private there. It's not at all like at the authorities when you are talking and negotiating about architecture. You are so private, there's always something to drink, and you can achieve a great deal. And you can do things yourself. It's very enjoyable, it see that with my neighbors too. Sure, you have to try things, maybe there are enemies. But I take a very calm approach to begin with. I also tried to show that you can get into something quite gently. So that nothing foreign, evil, prickly, noisy gets into it as architecture. Rather, something that is really almost derived, that really fits the context and that can also open up a completely new context.

RR_ Well, that sounds like you are ready to implant a virus in these allotments. This virus can get out of hand at some point. How far do you go as an architect or as a designer?

IW_ What loss of control are you worried about?

RR_I'm not worried, [laughs] I was just wondering whether there might be something coming there. Where do you see yourself with your very personal position?

IW_I hope something is coming. It's great that the houses may be small, but the gardens are enormous. So it's really the classical villa ratio. Proportionally, the ratio between the house and garden, like in Berlin Grunewald, is the same as with a villa. That's something incredibly beautiful, for example, all the things you can do with that, all the healthy stuff you can plant, there's no harm in that getting out of hand. I don't see any danger in that. On the contrary. Quite the opposite, I think that we can discover ways of life there that we can live as townies, that we miss. And I am convinced that there are lots of us who would like to take this risk. Very much so.

RR_ You also write a lot or publish a lot. People are always demanding that we architects write something too. So the project is finished, now write a piece about it, and then you force yourself to. Or on the other hand, they say it goes

RR_ Das hört sich dann eher so an, dass du bereit bist einen Virus in diese Kleingartenanlage zu implantieren. Das kann ja dann irgendwann mit diesem Virus außer Kontrolle geraten. Wie weit gehst du dann als Architektin oder als Gestalterin?

IW_ Vor welchem Kontrollverlust hast du denn Angst?

RR_ Ich habe keine Angst, ich wollte das jetzt nur hinterfragen, ob da nicht dann doch irgendwo etwas kommt. Wo siehst du dich dann mit deiner ureigenen Position?

IW_ Ich hoffe, dass da was kommt. Was ja toll ist, ist, dass die Häuser zwar klein sind, aber die Gärten dagegen enorm groß. Also eigentlich ist es das klassische Villenverhältnis. Also proportional gesehen ist das Verhältnis von Haus zu Garten, wie in Berlin Grunewald die Villa. Das ist ja zum Beispiel was unglaublich Schönes, was man da alles tun kann, was man sich da Gesundes anbauen kann; das soll ruhig außer Kontrolle kommen. Da sehe ich keine Gefahr. Im Gegenteil. Ganz im Gegenteil glaube ich, dass wir da Lebensformen entdecken können, die wir auch als Städter leben können, die wir vermissen. Und ich bin überzeugt, dass es eine ganze Reihe von uns gibt, die dieses Wagnis sehr gern auf sich nehmen mögen.

RR_ Du schreibst auch viel oder publizierst auch viel. Es wird ja immer wieder von uns Architekten verlangt, man müsste auch noch einen Text schreiben. Und das Projekt ist fertig. Jetzt hier noch einen Text schreiben und dann quält man sich ab. Auf der anderen Seite heißt es, es ist doch selbstverständlich, dass Architekten auch schreiben können müssen. Welche Bedeutung hat denn das Schreiben oder das Dokumentieren für dich in deinen Arbeiten?

IW_ Das ist genau der Punkt, den du triffst. Das sind immer andere, die das wollen. Ich bin ja Architektin, weil ich nicht schreiben kann, eigentlich. Ich schreibe ja mit meiner Architektur. Ich finde das auch immer sehr schwierig. Zwischen Postrationalisierung… Ja, also, es ist nicht ohne und es gefällt mir immer sehr, wenn ich da ganz präzise bei den Fakten bleiben kann. Das ist unkompliziert. Aber alles, was darüber hinaus geht, da sind wir auch gar nicht so gut ausgebildet als Architekten. Das gibt oft fürchterliches Deutsch. Das sind ganz komische Sätze, die nur in kleinsten Kreisen überhaupt annähernd verstanden werden. Das ist oft grotesk. Ich will da nicht dazu kommen, also auch noch eine sein. Eine Freundin von mir ist Architekturtheoretikerin, die ist hier in Wien an der Akademie Professorin, und die hat mir das um die Ohren gehauen. Weil ich mich sowieso schon so geschämt habe über meinen kümmerlichen Text, habe ich ihn ihr dann geschickt zur Korrektur, und sie hat das zerrissen in der Luft – und zu Recht. Ich bin besser geworden, sicher, aber Schreiben, ich weiß nicht ob das nötig ist, ob wir das brauchen als Architekten, das zu übersetzen in Text, in Sprache. Wir haben ja über das Visuelle, über die Modelle, über die Zeichnung so viel Sprache eigentlich.

without saying that architects need to be able to write too. What role does writing or documenting play for you in your projects?

IW_ You've hit the nail on the head there. It's always other people who want you to. I'm an architect because I cannot write, really. I write with my architecture. I always find that very difficult. Between post-rationalization, … Well, it's challenging and I always really like it when I can stick very accurately to the facts. This! This is uncomplicated. But for anything beyond that, we really aren't that well trained as architects. It often results in awful German. Really strange sentences that only very small circles can begin to understand. It's often grotesque. And I don't want to be a part of that, another one of them. A friend of mine is an architectural theorist, she's a professor at the Academy here in Vienna, and she took me to task about it. Because I was already ashamed of my pitiful text, I sent it to her for proof-reading and she tore it to pieces, and rightly so. I have improved, certainly, but writing, I don't know whether it's necessary, whether we need it as architects, to translate things into text, into language. We've already got so much language in visuals, models, drawing.

AS_ Documentation doesn't only work with text. When you look at your website, many different areas of your work are documented there. Including products, exhibition design, which you also taught, drawings, research and so on. What I would like to know is, firstly, is there a big overarching link between everything, like with the products that are documented? Is it also about things you find, that

you carry on uncovering or modifying until you get to a point where you can pragmatically say, this is it. Or is that another part of your occupation?

IW_ It's really just a different scale. I think that it's one and the same thing. I do things, too, I develop things too. (looks at the screen). Oh, they've been on all the time, I'd forgotten all about them. (Speaks to the audience.) So you may have seen, there's ceramics, for example. Also, I think that the little physical objects have an effect on us. We live with them just as we live with clothes, with space, it's just a different scale. We touch them, we perceive them, and we use them. We represent ourselves with them. And there's really no difference. The principles are the same, I often look for very simple solutions. Ones that result from the context too. Well this pottery, it comes from an encounter with a potter who does a lot of stuff for the tourists in Spain, a lot of roof tiles and owls that you put candles in. And things like that. And in one corner, a dusty corner, I saw what he used to do when people still needed it. Apparently plates, great containers, beautiful basins and the like, and I just started talking to him and I realized how much energy I was releasing, and he started working right away with my drawings while we were talking. He made hundreds of cups for me and he really came into his own. They are right at the front of his workshop, and they go fast. So he sells a lot of them, he's proud of them, and I get them in a very different context. So,… because the ceramic material is really cheap. There are lots of very coarse grains of sand in it. He says they are really not good enough for utility pottery, but that's the nice thing

AS_ Dokumentieren funktioniert ja nicht nur über Text, sondern wenn man sich deine Homepage anschaut, sind ja viele verschiedene Bereiche deines Werkes oder deines Schaffens dokumentiert. Unter anderem auch Produkte, eben Ausstellungsdesign, das du auch unterrichtet hast, Zeichnungen, Forschung und so weiter. Was mich interessieren würde, ist erstens: Gibt es einen großen Bogen, der sich über alles darüber spannt, wie jetzt auch bei den Produkten, die dokumentiert sind? Geht es da auch um Vorgefundenes, das man so lange freilegt oder so lange modifiziert, bis man dort ankommt, wo du pragmatisch sagst, das ist es jetzt? Oder ist das ein anderer Teil deiner Beschäftigung?

IW_ Das ist eigentlich nur ein anderer Maßstab. Ich bin der Meinung, dass das ein und dasselbe ist. Ich mache ja, ich entwickle auch. Also es gibt Keramik zum Beispiel. Ich

glaube auch, dass die kleinen physischen Gegenstände auf uns wirken. Wir leben mit ihnen genauso wie mit Kleidung, wie mit Raum, das ist nur ein anderer Maßstab. Wir berühren sie, wir nehmen sie wahr und wir gebrauchen sie. Wir repräsentieren uns damit. Und da ist eigentlich kein Unterschied. Die Prinzipien sind dieselben, ich suche oft nach ganz einfachen Lösungen, die sich eben auch aus dem Kontext ergeben. Also diese Töpferware, das ist eine Begegnung mit einem Töpfer, der viel, viel für die Touristen in Spanien macht, viele Dachziegel und Eulen, in die man Kerzen stellt und dergleichen mehr. Ich habe in einer staubigen Ecke gesehen, was er früher gemacht hat, als das noch gebraucht wurde: Teller, tolle Gefäße, wunderschöne Becken und dergleichen. Ich habe mit dem einfach angefangen zu reden und ich merkte, wie viel Energie ich freisetze, und der hat dann mit meinen Zeichnungen und im Gespräch angefangen sofort zu arbeiten. Der hat mir Hunderte von Bechern gemacht und ist aufgeblüht und die stehen auch ganz vorne in seiner Werkstatt und gehen auch gut weg. Er kriegt sie gut weg, er ist stolz auf sie und ich krieg sie auch in einem ganz anderen Kontext. Diese Keramik ist eine ganz billige. Da sind viele, ganz grobe Sandkörner mit drinnen. Eigentlich, meint er, sind die zu schlecht, quasi Gebrauchskeramik, aber das ist halt das Schöne; wenn man die anfasst, spürt man das richtig. Und wenn da Tee drinnen ist, ist das warm. Die Intellektuellen, die am Computer sitzen, in dieser Linoleumwelt, die haben das in der Hand und es geht ihnen gut. Das hat sich einfach so entwickelt. Einfach, weil ich gemerkt habe, da ist Energie. Das ist einfach, das ist da, das Material, und ich hatte intuitiv den Eindruck,

about it, when you touch them, you can really feel it. And when you've got tea in them, it's warm. And then there are the intellectuals [laughs], sitting at their computers, in this linoleum world; they've got one in their hand and they feel good. It's something that just evolved. Just because I realized there's energy in it. It's simple, it's there, the material. And my intuitive impression was that people could use it, and that's exactly what happened.

RR_ If you look back at your talk once more. Armin mentioned that we could look at your website again too. There's a certain style, a certain design, underlying the whole thing. What role does aesthetics play for you then?

IW_ Yes, because we architects create physical space, we always create an actual object with a physically perceptible aesthetic. We can experience it straight away with our senses. Everyone in his or her own way. That's why it is extremely interesting for me, of course, and extremely important. I can feel it physically. So personally I react very, very strongly to these formal aesthetic solutions. Even to the point of nausea. There are spaces, there are places, there are surfaces, there are spatial constellations, spatial layouts, that choke you – it isn't just the aesthetic of course that defines them – but that choke you so strongly that I develop very clear images, very clear emotions about them and …, that's why I know that it's a sphere that you have to watch very closely and that I control very carefully, always.

RR_ That almost sounds like closing remarks. But we

would like to carry on discussing. In our third part, next door, over a glass of wine and perhaps a few snacks. Imke Woelk, thank you for this talk, for this great discussion. And I can only congratulate you on still allowing yourself this free space for thought – in a world in which we are influenced by all manner of parameters, where we are rushed all the time – so that you can make such beautiful work. Thank you very much!

IW_ Thank you.

RR_ And this wonderful evening was possible and will go on of course with the support of the STO Foundation, who have generously helped us develop this series and make this evening such a successful one. Thank you very much!

das könnte gebraucht werden, und tatsächlich ist es so dann gewesen.

RR_ Lassen wir jetzt deinen Vortrag noch einmal Revue passieren, auch die Website nochmal so anschauen. Da ist eine bestimme Handschrift, eine bestimmte Gestaltung, die dem Ganzen unterlegt ist. Welche Rolle spielt jetzt Ästhetik für dich?

IW_ Dadurch, dass wir Architekten physisch Raum schaffen, schaffen wir immer sofort ein Objekt auch der physisch wahrnehmbaren Ästhetik. Mit unseren Sinnen erleben wir das sofort, jeder auf seine Art. Deswegen ist das für mich natürlich extrem interessant und extrem wichtig. Ich spüre das körperlich. Also ich selbst reagiere sehr, sehr stark auf diese formal-ästhetische Lösungen. Das geht bis zur Übelkeit. Es gibt Räume, es gibt Orte, es gibt Oberflächen, es gibt Raumkonstellationen, Raumzuschnitte, die so stark würgen, dass ich ganz klare Bilder, ganz klare Gefühle dazu entwickle. Es ist nicht alleine die Ästhetik natürlich, die sie bestimmt, deswegen weiß ich, dass es ein Bereich ist, den man sehr genau beobachten muss und den ich immer auch sehr genau kontrolliere.

RR_ Das hört sich jetzt schon fast wie ein Schlusswort an. Imke Woelk, herzlichen Dank für diesen Vortrag, für diese sehr feine Diskussion. Und ich kann nur gratulieren, dass du dir diese Freiräume des Denkens nach wie vor gönnst, in einer Welt, wo wir von allen möglichen Parametern beeinflusst werden und nur noch gehetzt werden, wodurch

hier, also bei dir, eine wunderschöne Arbeit entsteht. Herzlichen Dank!

IW_ Danke.

RR_ Und dieser wunderschöne Abend konnte auch entstehen und wird auch noch weiterhin bestehen durch die Unterstützung der STO Stiftung, die hier großzügig mithilft, dass diese Reihe überhaupt entwickelt werden konnte und auch dieser Abend, dieser Erfolg, dann auch sein konnte. Dankeschön!
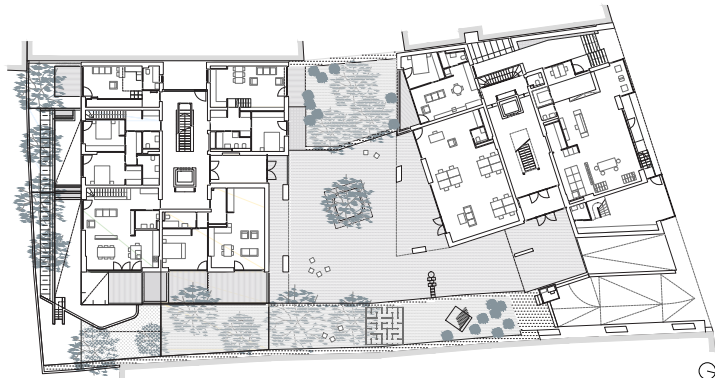
ANDREI ŞERBESCU

NOVEMBER 28, 2016

LECTURE_49

INTERVIEW_55

< Out of 72 apartments there are not two identical ones. […] There was a need for a personal way of dealing with the space. Both us and the developer wanted to enable the future inhabitants to personalize their space. >

DOGARILOR - HOUSING | Bucharest, Romania | 2014
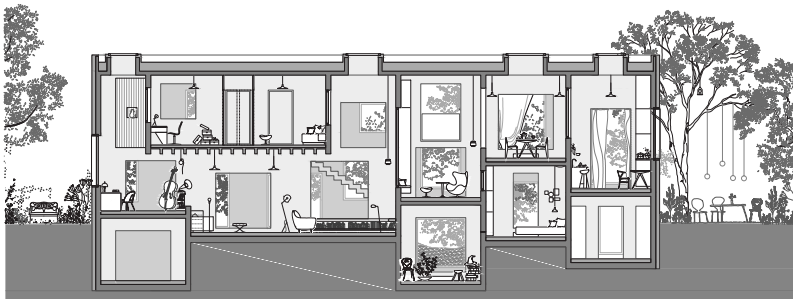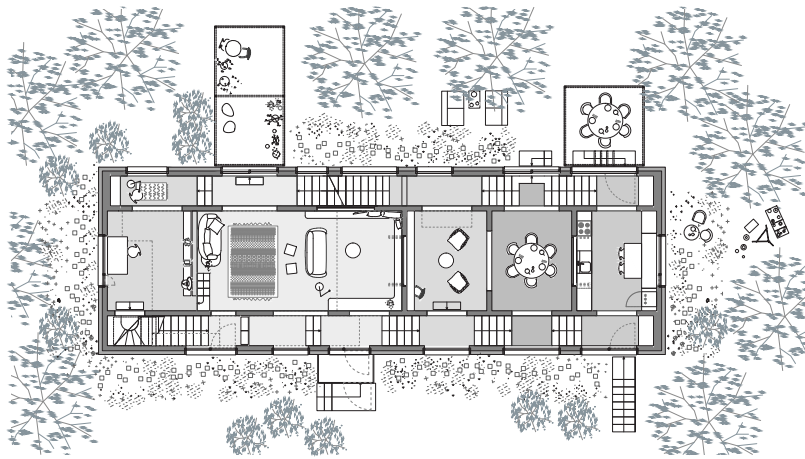
< From outside, it's a simple box. […] Inside, with the help of the structure—it will be built out of concrete—we worked with this complex, continuous space in the section and with the connection of different types of rooms, which are all connected by stairs. >

HOUSE IN DUMBRAVA VLÃSIEI | Bucharest, Romania | ongoing

< We presented here four of our projects. […] The city that we put inside of the model is actually not real. The streets, the buildings are from Bucharest, but we rearranged them. So, it's a small small world of our own. >

'REPORTING FROM THE FRONT' EXHIBITION PROJECT | Biennale Venice, Italy | 2016

AȘ_Andrei Șerbescu
RR_Roger Riewe
SR_Sorana Rădulescu

RR_Okay Andrei, thank you very much for this fantastic lecture. Sorana will join our discussion and I'm sure we will have quite a few questions coming up. I would like to start this evening with a short anecdote about housing, it concerns a project we did many years ago. Some time later long after completion I visited this project with a group of architects and one of the persons living there came out of the building and she recognized me. She said: 'Oh, Mr. Architect, great you are here! I have to tell you something!' and remember the whole group were architects. What she said was 'Ah, to be honest, I don't really like the building you made. Actually, I dislike it. But when I'm inside my apartment and I look out of the window, all I see are beautiful projects.' [laughs] So this was actually a turning point in our way of working, of thinking, and that reminded me of what you were talking about. At the same time I think it comes from a responsibility we have in designing apartments. And you were talking a lot about that issue. I would start off with a question: how do you actually work on, or imagine the realm of individual housing or the people who in these apartments? Do you draw up scenarios of some kind, or is it like research work? I'm quite sure that you are hitting the right point about the inhabitation of these projects.

AȘ_No, we are never sure. [Laughs] We don't actually do research. It may be that we can call some of what we do research, because we've been working on several projects and we've also been working together with students and research is in fact some of what we do together with them. In the second and third years of studies we did a lot of housing projects, and these projects were innovative and

different and they involved research. So, from this point of view, yes, we did research. But now, when we work on projects, we don't actually go out and carry out this sort of research. I think that many times we just imagine it ourselves and I also think that probably most of the times a good project is also about you yourself. So, yes, that's a delicate matter when talking about housing projects, because they are meant for somebody else to live in. But I think that, at least project design on this scale—not big housing schemes, these are pretty small—it's important for you to really feel that you are doing the right thing and I think once you really feel as though you will be living there yourself and you will enjoy doing so, then it will probably be good for others too. Of course, a project can never be to the taste of everyone, that's not possible. I think the project will not benefit if you seek to please all tastes. It won't be as good if you try to make it please everyone.

SR_ I noticed that every project in Bucharest is named after the street where it is located, so it's very obvious that you are very rooted in the context. And it's also very clear that you have this almost romantic vision of how a project is going to be inhabited after completion—each apartment that you do is a part of this vision. On the other hand, you have a very pragmatic matrix of decision parameters. When do you know how to stop designing and leave the free space to the future inhabitant that you actually don't know? You don't know who is going to end up there. And what is the flexibility you allow him in order to adapt his own living environment?

AȘ_ Well, this is actually one of the in-between relations I tried to describe earlier. Because yes, these projects are very pragmatic. They need to respond to a lot of criteria and efficiency requirements, many parameters are involved At the same time, yes, we also try to somehow bring in something else through a pragmatic request. I don't know when the moment at which we stop occurs. Probably it is also a sort of flexibility which is required from us most of the time. Because we are supposed to think of these apartments as having the possibility to be changed. This is a part of the brief, most of the times. So, I would say that we don't leave too much space for the future inhabitants. If it would be up to us, we would do it all. Some of the apartments I have shown were exactly like that. We designed everything, including the furniture. Those were apartments which were meant to be rented, not bought. Yes, but this is probably a different sort of project which could work with this adaptability in a different manner.

RR_ Actually, in the early seventies, Lucien Kroll made a student dormitory in Belgium. It was at that time when a new university campus was founded, Louvain-la-Neuve. Here Lucien Kroll made a tower residence building for students. He had originally intended to design, I think, five or six tower blocks. He only designed one. And every apartment in this tower was different. And he expected students to change the apartments—make them bigger, smaller and so on. So finally these apartments became incredibly successful, but there were always queues for specific apartments. And they never changed the

apartments because they really liked them and they wanted to move into the 'tower apartment' or the 'big, long apartment' and so on. The university stopped Lucien Kroll from planning apartments, because they were worried that the students would become too liberal and start a demonstration at the university. So it was also a political issue. Did you actually revisit the apartments you made?

AȘ_ Some of them yes, because we made friends with some of the people moving in there. This also meant I had the opportunity is to go back and visit them. The apartments always look different. Many things changed and I have to say, that it's a pity we don't get the chance to photograph them later. Because, most of the time they look much better. [laughs] Yes, it's true. They are full of life—unlike these very cold pictures, which I don't particularly like. The inside is different when people are living there. Yes, many times they make changes, but I think that's normal. On the other hand, getting back to your question, what I noticed is that both the developer himself and the future client have a much better understanding of the space and of what we are trying to do there, once they get the chance to see more. So, if we get the chance to go further into the design, everyone gets a better picture. This is why I somehow try to push things further.

SR_ This leads me to the next question. In your Biennale project you mentioned the 'unclear, diffuse enemy' that is the real estate developer—in your case actually your client. So, how do you manage to convince him to break the

standardization, to break the general image that housing in Bucharest has had over the past few years?... This being your client and being led by financial interest. You mentioned small victories that you achieved through small decisions. How can you impose yourself in this lobby of real estate speculators?

AȘ_ Well, in the first place, we did not write that. It was Aravena's statement, which we found very interesting. It was then when we understood why he invited us to his exhibition. It was a part of the battles which he uncovered with the rest of the participants. So it was his personal understanding of our fight and our projects. On the other hand, to answer your question, it's most of the time about people. So, we probably were lucky to find people who we were able to address in a different manner. These projects involve a lot of effort, also from their side. These

people who are able to understand, to develop and built these projects are also some very special persons. It was our luck to meet them. Furthermore, we try to keep things pushing and we don't make it every time. It's not a success each time we try. [laughs]

RR_ We know from developers' briefs that there is always a certain percentage of tiny apartments, then medium sized apartments, then only a small percentage of larger ones—maybe of around 91m2—and that's about it. Most apartments are 60m2 in size. The claim is that these are always bought and that the public needs them. But the other side of the story is that you make most money with exactly 60m2 apartments. This size the easiest for calculation. Some developers force the architects into this thing. So I thought your approach was very interesting: to have very different apartments—in one over the first project you showed—and finally to say—in one of the last project you showed— that it's about space and structure. That is a different methodology of designing an apartment. But now, how does the client deal with the very different, non-standardized apartments? Or would it be also the Lucien Kroll thing, that there will be also lines of people wanting to have exactly one specific kind of apartment?

AȘ_ You talk about the final client, the buyer?

RR_ Yes.

AȘ_ For example the first project I showed [Dogarilor housing] started 2011, in the middle of the financial crisis

in Bucharest, when apartments were really difficult to sell. So the developers wanted this sort of flexibility… Because they didn't know what to expect. They didn't know what they could sell best. They were open to the requests of the future residents. That implied a lot of changes during construction. The projects really changed, and changed and changed, even during the construction. But we noticed that people didn't have the same sort of requests. There were some clients—families—who wanted certain things and their type of apartment was already there. While others had a different set of requests and they had a different apartment, already there in the scheme. It seems paradox, but it was easier for everyone to find something appropriate in this very different and diverse scheme of apartments. But again, this is not something which we would do all over again, because it was very difficult.

RR_ Continuing your line of thought, which I agree with, we don't know how people live and how people would inhabit an apartment. Actually, we also don't know ourselves how we will be living in five years' time, in which time I may have changed my apartment and rebuilt it five times already… And it's a process that is still not finished. But then, wouldn't this lead to the apartments being as abstract as possible? Because the people moving in will be so different, so they will inhabit the spaces individually and always in a very different way.

AȘ_ I think that's a different project. Maybe, on a different scale, things could happen like that. I'm not saying the project is less valuable; you can get a great project out of that too. Just let the people make anything they want out of their really abstract spaces. You know, the places of our projects are very different from each other. The sites, the plots, they have different shapes, different neighbours, different buildings next to them. Everything is changing constantly. So, you try to adapt, and you cannot offer the same things to the person living next to a border or next to a tall building. It's always different. So, probably it's this context of the city and this sort of neighbourhoods that made us try things differently.

SR_ One thing that is definitely different, at least for the Romanian landscape, is the focus on community spaces. This is culturally not very much known so far. How was your experience with that? I believe that you have an idea of how these common areas are being used now. Do you hope for a new model of community living, for sharing spaces?

AS_ This is probably something we, architects, are quite familiar with. We always talk and think of common spaces, of sharing spaces but it does not always work. [laughs] And I found that out, at least in Romania, in Bucharest, this way of re-learning how to use common spaces after so much time of individuality is difficult. People need to learn it and they need time. Yes, the cafeteria, which I showed is working very well. Some of the people living there—not all of them—they created a small club and meet there, have dinners. So it's really, really working. On the other hand, those terraces—people are not very fond of using them. I think that this is a very thin, very delicate and fragile borderline, especially in a society like ours. People need to have their private space and then, maybe, they get tempted to share something. But their own private space comes first and I think this is a big difference to western cultures.

SR_ But do you think this approach can be educated? Or can it be imposed through architectural decisions?

AȘ_I don't think it can be imposed. It can be educated, but it is always uncertain if it will work or not.

RR_I'll take you to the ground floor with this topic; you showed one project with a very specific, more public ground floor. Developers always claim the ground floor is the most important one because they want to make the most money there. They'll either have a shop or they'll

have this strange idea of their clientele having a lot of kids who need an 8m2 garden, right? Something right in front of their doors. How do you deal with that in convincing clients there is something more to this interface between the public and the private in the context of the ground floor?

AȘ_ We don't always manage to convince them. We try to. [Laughs] In Bucharest, the ground floor usually does not work the way you are presenting it. The developers usually don't want to make commercial spaces. They consider these will be difficult to sell, or they will not stay leased. They want to get rid of the property as soon as possible, so they usually ask for apartments… The ground floor is most of the times difficult to use, especially when it's facing the street. So what I was showing there was actually another small victory, because we managed to convince them and then they were happy afterwards with this space, which works as an interface—as you were saying—with the street. So people can come inside. It's a different way of life in there. The garden is also important. It's a good selling tool. And many people actually want a garden. Maybe they would like to have a house, but they cannot afford one. So this sort of units, which have a private garden and look a little bit like houses, can work as an in-between-solution for people who prefer to live in the city, in downtown.

SR_ You definitely have a very eclectic portfolio, but one thing that is common is housing, and the size of these dwellings. It's a medium size. Do you find this an appropriate approach of densification for Bucharest? And for, let's say, the old part of Bucharest, the city centre?

AȘ_ The city centre cannot afford many large scale projects, because there aren't many sites available. Most of the old factories I talked about earlier have been demolished and replaced by housing projects. Some of them are pretty big. We do work on larger projects, but they are not in the centre of the city. Because the urban fabric cannot allow that. But there are a lot of different scales. There are a lot of new projects with a very high density and on a big scale in Bucharest. I think that for at least some parts of Bucharest medium size projects can be a very good way of densifying the existing urban fabric and I think there is an obvious need for that. On the other hand, density is often seen as an open door for doing anything. I see a lot of projects which bring density, but without any sort of respect for what's already there. This is very common for contemporary Bucharest.

RR_ There also is a direct relation between densification and the utilization of public space. And this was an issue in your lecture as well: you want to make public space work in a certain way. What are your criteria when designing this part, the outside of the building?

AȘ_ Public space in Bucharest is, again, different from most of western Europe. We don't have squares; we don't have pedestrian areas… There are some, but they don't work the way we are used to seeing them work here. All through the history of Bucharest the public space has

always been the street and the sidewalk. People just got out of their gardens, their courtyards and used the street and the small intersections as public space. So, it's difficult to talk about public space, when designing projects of this kind. This is what I meant by small victories: when you're able to give back at least a small part of the plot to the street, to make the sidewalk have a small enlargement. I think that's great. If you are referring to what happens inside—because that's also public space for the people living there—I think that's a different thing. They actually use it quite a lot and… Yes, it's great for kids.

SR_So, in order to evade this prison of standardization, we saw that you bring in a lot of different elements. What about technical solutions, construction wise? Do you also try to bring in innovation? Can you deal with it, having to face the very harsh real estate market that requires standard solutions?

AȘ_Yes, we try to do that. Again, it's not easy and I suppose it isn't easy anywhere—not only in Romania, but also here. It is very difficult to come up with something which is not standardized in this real estate world. We tried to work with different and new solutions, both for the façade and also for the interiors. I wouldn't call them innovations, because there's nothing new involved. It's just trying to look at things differently and trying to convince people to accept that. These things have already been done in Europe. They are maybe new for Bucharest, or for Romania. But, yeah, we try to make more out of each project, than the brief or the client would expect at the

beginning.

RR_Something which came up quite often in your lecture was the term 'in-between.' The 'in-between- scale' or the 'in-between-situation.' Now, this is obviously something you use as a methodology in communicating your ideas. What do you think is the potential and the strength of the 'in-betweeness?'

AȘ_Before being a strength, it's a reality. This is our reality. This is our condition, both in terms of urban situations, but also in terms of professional approach to design. As I said in the presentation, we don't have—and it's difficult to have—a very clear type of research, because things change from one project to another. You always have to adapt, and this continuous adaptation puts you—the architect—into an in-between state. At the same time, there is probably something good in this in-between position. I'm not sure if it is a strength, but it's something that defines us. It's not something we desire or look for. This is the way we grew up. This is the city we live in, this in-between-condition. We said that in our text for the Biennale in Venice, it's a sort of eastern legacy. Because the city has powerful eastern legacy. But it has also always looked towards west, towards Europe, towards Paris. It's a borderline—a very fragile borderline—in between these worlds. And nowadays, after the European integration, all these changes don't always work the way one would expect them to. It's a new kind of in-between. I think it's completely different from working here, where there already are norms. People know—at least I suppose—how

things are done. In Bucharest, things are created 'live.'
[Laughs] Norms are created as we work.

SR_ But regarding this in-between space again: before,
all these in-between spaces were anonymous—no one's
spaces. But you design them; you think of how they are
going to be used. Do you think that, if you thematise the
in-between spaces, you encourage their appropriation?

AȘ_ This is what we hope, at least. [Laughs]

SR_ What's the experience of seeing how these projects
are inhabited?

AȘ_ Well, they have been appropriated. But these are
small spaces and in the context of the scale of the city,
this is nothing. What happens is that projects of this sort—
unexpectedly for both us and the developers—found a
very good market. For example, we did an open gates
event in that cafeteria during the Romanian design week,
and we had 400 or 600 hundred people coming. People
wanted to come there because they had heard about this
project. They felt, they knew something was different there
and they all came in. People have a desire for this different
sort of public space—and this was a public space at that
moment. But these are very small gestures compared
to the scale of the city. Much more is needed in terms of
public space appropriation.

RR_ Bucharest is a fascinating city because there is an
incredible mixture of the huge scale and the small scale—

the non-democratic built-up areas, the socialist period and
individual private housing. It's an incredible mixture. We
had a master studio in Bucharest. We took our students
to Bucharest and they were fascinated by the scales in
the city. We started off by wondering how students from
Graz will react to the city. The interesting thing was that
they made huge projects—great big projects. We also
asked for this, but still, it was always bigness, the large
scales that took their attention. So I'm thinking that scale
is something the brief itself should define and call for say
—1 000m2 instead of 100 000m2? How would you react
if a client would say: 'You are fantastic architects, can you
design a building of 100 000m2?' In Bucharest.

AȘ_ Well, that's something we need to discover. It hasn't
happened yet, but the situation for such a project would
be different from the start. You cannot do such a project in

neighbourhoods of this sort. So, the context would have to be different. The idea of having so many square meters would mean the place itself is different… a periphery, I don't know. We actually deal with that at the moment; we try to find an answer to such a request. I can't tell you yet. [Laughs] It's something we need to find out for ourselves, because it's a completely different project. These medium/small size projects, they can come to live in a different way. But such a thing… It starts from a different, completely different approach.

SR_ You started by saying 'I come from Bucharest.' There is a pride in this. You obviously are an architect from Bucharest, in Bucharest. What do you think—from an architect's point of view—is an appropriate evolution of Bucharest in the next years? Let's not talk about those enormous interventions. Can it be about these smaller interventions? Do they have the power to change the city, to bring in the necessary public effervescence?

AȘ_ No, I don't think they have. Unfortunately, the effect of these projects on the city is, I would say, too small. At the same time, there are so many huge changes going on right now. This sort of projects… They cannot make a change on the level of a city. What they can do is bring change in that specific place. I think that's very important for the people living there, in a very small area, neighbourhood, street or corner. And this is what we try to look at. I mean, this is what this sort of projects can do.

SR_ But an accumulation of these smaller interventions?

AȘ_ That would be a change, yes. That could make things different. This has always been specific for Bucharest—really small fragments, small corners, unexpected places—and it can be taken further with an accumulation of projects, in places like these.

RR_ Those who were able to visit the Biennale in Venice came across the model you exhibited; the big model with the small scale inside, with this petite, beautiful furniture. I'm very happy to have the background knowledge now, a scenario of your way of thinking as you actually tried to express it in this model—juxtaposing, a kind of collage city inside. It's a very intricate, complex way of thinking. Andrei, thank you for making this a very special evening.

AȘ_ Thank you very much.

HARALD BAUMANN

DECEMBER 05, 2016
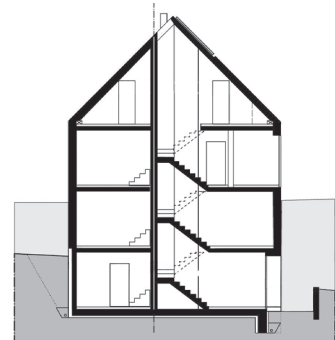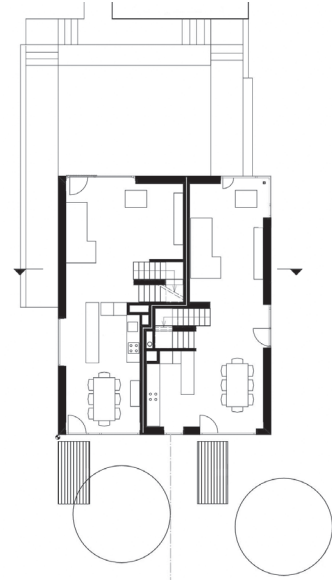
LECTURE_67

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< Wir waren der Meinung, daß ein Doppelhaus an der Stelle nicht so aussehen darf wie ein Doppelhaus, sondern wie ein Einfamilienhaus. **>**

< We agreed that a semi-detached house in that area couldn't look like a semidetached house, but like a single-family house instead. **>**

**<** Wir haben ein Konzept entwickelt, wonach diese zwei Wohnungen vertikal geteilt sind. **>**

**<** We developed a concept that would divide these two houses vertically. **>**

LECTURE
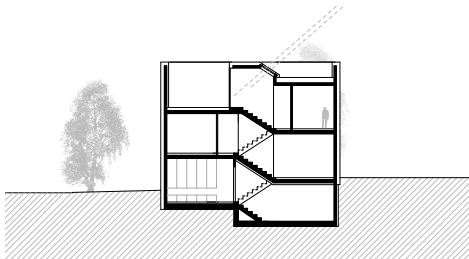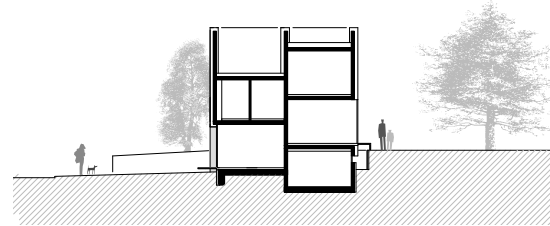**EIN ZWEIFAMILIENHAUS** | Stuttgart, Germany | 2012

< Wir haben uns für einen Split-Level entschieden, weil es auf dem kleinen Grundstück die beste Möglichkeit war, die Erfordernis an die Umgebung zu erfüllen. >

< We decided for a split-level, because it was the best way to tackle the requirements imposed by the neighborhood on such a small plot. >
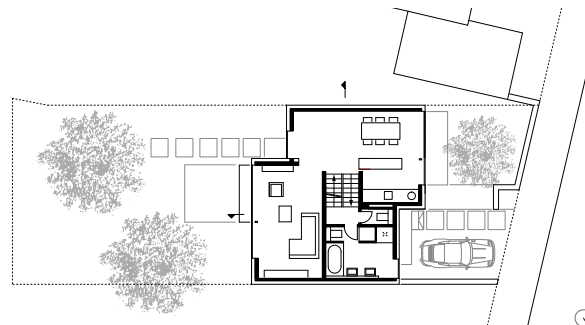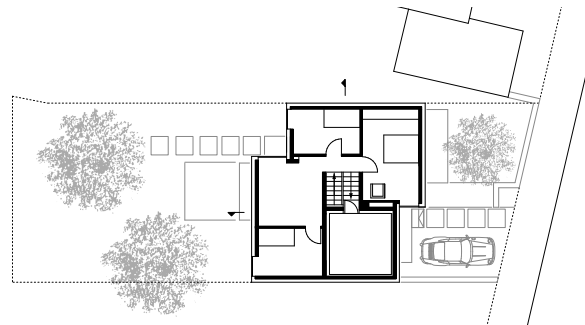
SPLIT-LEVEL-HAUS | Stuttgart, Germany | 2008

< It was the social workers who recognized the potential to accommodate and manage these dwellings differently, because the people living there have different life-cycles. >
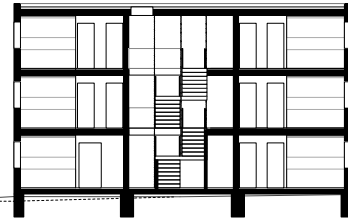
< Es waren die Sozialarbeiter, die das Potential gesehen haben, […] dass diese Häuser unterschiedlich belegt werden können und auch separat betreut werden können, weil es unterschiedliche Lebesläufe von den Leuten gibt, die dort wohnen. >
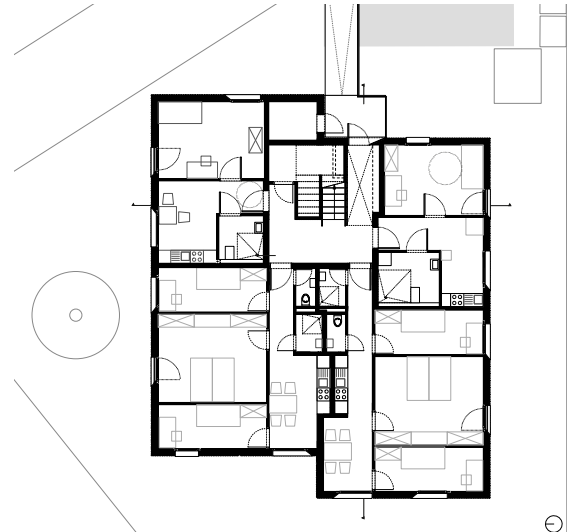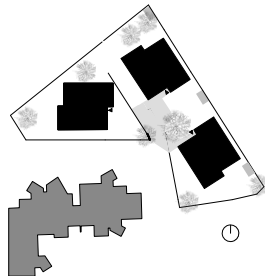
SOZIALWOHNUNGEN OSTFILDERN | Stuttgart, Germany | 2013

INTERVIEW
Dignity beyond Stigma

HB_ Harald Baumann
RR_ Roger Riewe
AP_ Aleksandra Pavićević

RR_ Harald, vielen Dank für den sehr feinen, gut zugeschnittenen Vortrag mit den interessanten Themenstellungen, über die wir heute Abend ausführlich diskutieren können! Ich glaube auch, dass das Gespräch über bestimmte Bereiche heute Abend nach der Wahl gestern etwas entspannter sein wird. [Bundespräsidentenwahl Österreich zu Gunsten der Grünen entschieden]. So, dass man sagt: Glück gehabt! Jetzt sind wir wieder auf der guten Seite dieser Welt angekommen. Wir können jetzt schon fast als Vorreiter für Europa dienen. Wir wissen jetzt, wie das geht und können wieder den Ton angeben. So bin ich schon bei dem Thema, das du jetzt zum Schluss angesprochen hast: Architektur für Flüchtlinge und Obdachlose, Architektur im Low budget-Bereich. Das ist gewissermaßen auch politisch vorgegeben. Als Architekt hat man vielleicht nicht

den ganz großen Handlungsspielraum. Wenn man jetzt Wohnungsbau macht, behaupten 90% der Architekten, dass sie ganz genau wissen, wie das geht – wie man wohnt –, und die Genossenschaften wissen zu 100%, wie man wohnt. Jetzt aber seid ihr mit einer Nutzergruppe beschäftigt, wo man das nicht so genau weiß. Inwiefern lassen sich daraus Grundrisskonfigurationen ableiten?

HB_ Also, wenn man dieses gebaute Beispiel der Obdachlosen- und Flüchtlingsunterkunft sieht, zeigt sich, dass diese Gedanken mit der flexiblen Teilung gut funktionieren. Zur Raumkonfiguration: Ich kann nicht genau sagen, ob die jetzt für alle geeignet ist. Man hat aber schon das Gefühl, dass jeder der derzeitigen Bewohner – Obdachlose und Flüchtlinge – gut damit zurechtkommt und vor allem auch diesen Rückzugsraum

RR_ Harald, thank you very much for the brilliant and very fitting talk. I'm looking forward to discussing theinteresting topics in detail this evening! I also think that it will be possible to talk about certain areas in a more relaxed way this evening, after the election yesterday [the Green Party won the election for the Austrian Federal Presidency]. We can say, 'that was lucky, we've now arrived at the good side of the world again. Now we can almost act as an example for Europe. We now know how that works and can set the tone again.' And now I'm already at the topic that you discussed at the end: architecture for refugees and homeless persons, architecture in a low-budget area... which is, to an extent, stipulated by politics. As an architect you might not have that much room to maneuver. If you build housing, 90% of the architects will claim that they know exactly how that works – how people live – and the cooperative societies 100% know how people live. Now you're focusing on a user group where you don't know that as exactly. To what extent is it possible to derive ground plan configurations from this starting point?

HB_ Well, when you're looking at the example of accommodation for homeless persons and refugees, you can see that the ideas about flexible division work well. The spatial configuration... it's hard for me to say whether that's suitable for everyone. But you do have the sense that all of the current inhabitants – homeless persons as well as refugees – are managing well and, above all, that they need this space to themselves. If you think about their history, what they experienced before coming to Germany... I think the most important thing is

that they have this secure space. I don't think that they really consider other dwelling forms much. At the moment they're just happy and thankful to even have a roof over their heads.

AP_ But did you want to make any concrete changes or did you find out anything that you wanted to implement in the second project [residential new building in Maybachstraße Ostfildern-Nellingen], which was commissioned on the basis of the first project [housing for refugees and homeless persons, Ostfildern]? Or do you more say, 'that worked well, we'll continue using the same principles'?

HB_ The second project is more or less classic social housing, which was also designed as such. The only difference is that we can allow less space for parking, as refugees don't yet have cars. The standard is based on social housing. Raw surfaces, like OSB [was used for the internal finishing of the accommodation for homeless persons and refugees], just weren't possible here. The architectonic requirements were different. In Germany, you are quickly confronted with a particular standard that needs to be complied with, which isn't always easy. For example – because the cost situation was a bit tense – we suggested involving the first refugees who would move in. We suggested that, for example, they could paint the walls in the flats. We know that this has already been done in Germany. And working together also has a positive effect. You see the accommodation as something you've helped to create. But the clients moved away from these

braucht. Wenn man bedenkt, mit welcher Geschichte, ja mit welchem Lebenslauf die nach Deutschland gekommen sind…Ich glaube, das Allerwichtigste ist diesen geschützten Raum zu haben. Ich glaube nicht, dass die sich groß über andere Wohnformen Gedanken machen. Sie sind zunächst glücklich und dankbar, dass sie überhaupt ein Dach über dem Kopf haben.

AP_ Aber gab es für das zweite Projekt [Neubau Wohnunterkünfte Maybachstraße Ostfildern-Nellingen], das als Folgebeauftragung aus dem ersten [Wohnungen für Flüchtlinge und Obdachlose, Ostfildern] hervorgegangen ist, konkrete Änderungen oder Erkenntnisse? Oder sagt ihr: Das hat gut funktioniert und wir übernehmen die gleichen Prinzipien?

HB_ Das zweite Projekt ist ein mehr oder weniger klassischer sozialer Wohnungsbau, der auch als solcher konzipiert wurde. Der einzige Unterschied ist letztlich, dass wir weniger Stellplätze bauen dürfen, weil Flüchtlinge noch kein Auto haben. Der Standard orientiert sich am sozialen Wohnungsbau. Solche rohen Oberflächen wie die OSB-Platten [wurden im Innenausbau der Flüchtlings- und Obdachlosenunterkunft verwendet] waren da einfach nicht möglich. Rein architektonisch war der Anspruch ein anderer. In Deutschland kommt man gleich auf einen gewissen Standard, den man einhalten muss, was auch nicht immer einfach ist. Wir hatten zum Beispiel – weil die Kostensituation da auch ein bisschen angespannt war – vorgeschlagen, die Flüchtlinge, die da als erste einziehen, zu beteiligen. Dass sie zum Beispiel die

Wohnungen streichen. Aus unserer Erfahrung heraus wurde es in Deutschland schon gemacht. Es hat auch einen positiven Effekt, wenn man miteinander arbeitet. Dass man das als Etwas sieht, zu dem man beigetragen hat. Von solchen Diskussionen haben sich aber die Auftraggeber sehr schnell entfernt, weil ihnen das doch zu viel Organisation war oder weil versicherungstechnische Gefahren dahinterstanden. Diese Standard-Diskussion ist ganz wesentlich beim zweiten Projekt gewesen: Was kann ich den Leuten zumuten? Letztendlich kam dann doch ein Projekt heraus, das fertiggestellt wird, schlüsselfertig, und dann kommt jemand und zieht ein. Also ganz klassisch. Wir als Architekten hätten uns ein bisschen mehr Mut gewünscht, da etwas zu verändern.

RR_ Es gibt ja eine sehr feine Abhandlung von Minoritäten im nationalen Kontext. Ich glaube, es war Kapuscinski, der darüber geschrieben und recherchiert und dann ganz interessante Ergebnisse hervorgebracht hat. Überall dort, wo Minoritäten gewissermaßen politisch eingeengt oder bedrängt werden, ist die Identität stark und dort, wo die Minoritäten integriert wurden, ist die Identität aufgehoben. Jetzt geht es ja – ob das nun Flüchtlinge sind oder Migranten – immer um das Thema der Integration. Gleichzeitig spielen Identifikation und Identität eine Rolle. Wie geht ihr eigentlich mit diesem Themenkomplex um? Es ist ja schlussendlich eine sozio-politische wie auch eine architektonische Haltung.

HB_ Ja, ich glaube, die Architekten können Einfluss darauf nehmen, aber nur zu einem gewissen, ganz beschränkten

sorts of discussions very quickly because there was too much organization involved or because there were problems with the insurance. 'What can I expect of people' was a standard discussion that was very important in the second project. And in the end it became a turnkey project after all, one that is completed, then someone comes and moves in. So, very classic. As architects we would have liked to have seen a bit more courage in terms of changing things.

RR_ Minorities have been well analyzed in a national context. I think it was Kapuscinski who wrote about and researched the topic, and then came to pretty interesting conclusions. Everywhere where minorities are, to an extent, limited in terms of politics or under pressure, there is a strong sense of identity. And where minorities have been integrated, this identity has been put aside. Whether we're talking about refugees or migrants, the important topic is always integration. But, at the same time, identification and identity do still play a role. How do you deal with this topic? After all, it is a socio-political and an architectonic stance.

HB_ I think that architects can have an impact, but only to a specific and very limited extent. With both of these two projects, we did not want the building to differ from surrounding developments. So that there wouldn't be any immediate stigmatization of the refugees because everyone knew that people living in a particular building were refugees or homeless persons. I think that integration works better this way – when the architecture suits the

context, the urban framework. In Stuttgart, the same refugee accommodation is currently being built in seven or eight locations. They are all designed with a central corridor and are long, two-storey buildings. It's almost become a symbol and means they're unmistakable. I don't want to vilify it; there are other reasons why Stuttgart is doing this: because the city administration doesn't have its own sites for constructing buildings that can be used in the long term. But the city still invested a great deal of money to create solid buildings that might be demolished after five years. And so I do question whether that is the right path to take, creating this type of architecture, even for a time period of only five years. Where everyone knows that the people who live there are refugees and always have been refugees. And when the children one day speak the local Swabian dialect, they are still refugees because they live there. This is something that architecture should

Teil. Was jetzt diese zwei Projekte anbelangt, war uns in beiden Fällen wichtig, dass sich das Gebäude nicht von der Umgebungsbebauung unterscheidet, damit von vornherein keine Stigmatisierung der Flüchtlinge stattfindet. Jeder weiß ja, wer dort wohnt, ist Flüchtling oder Obdachloser. Dann, glaube ich, funktioniert auch Integration besser – wenn die Architektur in den Kontext, den städtebaulichen Rahmen dazu passt. In Stuttgart entstehen momentan an sieben oder acht Standorten ein und dieselben Flüchtlingsunterkünfte, die eben diese Mittelflur-Konzeption haben und zweigeschossige, lange Gebäude sind. Das ist quasi schon ein Markenzeichen, das sie unverwechselbar macht. Ich möchte es jetzt nicht verteufeln, es hat auch andere Gründe, warum die Stadt Stuttgart das macht: Weil sie eben keine eigenen Grundstücke hat, um Gebäude auf lange Sicht zu bauen. Allerdings hat sie trotzdem mit einem sehr großen finanziellen Aufwand Massivbauten hingestellt, die vielleicht nach fünf Jahren wieder abgebrochen werden. Und da frage ich mich schon, ob es der richtige Weg ist, solche Architektur zu errichten -wenn auch nur für den Zeitraum von fünf Jahren. Wo dann jeder weiß, wer dort wohnt, ist Flüchtling und schon immer Flüchtling gewesen. Und wenn die Kinder irgendwann ‚schwäbisch schwätzet', dann sind sie immer noch Flüchtlinge, weil sie dort wohnen. Also, so etwas sollte die Architektur nach Möglichkeit vermeiden.

AP_ Zur Identität: Ich würde gern nochmal auf die Thesen zurückgehen, die Doug Saunders formuliert hat und auch Bestandteil des deutschen Pavillons waren. Unter

anderem ist dort formuliert: ‚Die Arrival City' ist eine Stadt in der Stadt. Du hast bei der Beschreibung des Projektes kurz erwähnt, dass das städtebaulich am Ausgang – oder sagen wir auch Eingang – zu der Stadt loziert ist. Da wüsste ich gerne, wie du diese Thematik siehst. Ist es eine Stadt in der Stadt und wenn ja, wie sind die Ränder dieser Stadt ausgebildet? Ich finde an dem Dreihaus-Konzept sehr gelungen, dass es die verschiedenen Abstufungen der Privatheit gibt. Es gibt die Wohngemeinschaften innerhalb jedes Hauses, es gibt das gesamte Haus, es gibt aber auch die drei Häuser zusammen mit dem Platzraum dazwischen. Schafft dieses Konzept dann auch, oder muss es, oder wie sehr soll es den Kontext zu der umgebenden Bebauung schaffen? Wie wichtig ist es das abzugrenzen, um den Flüchtlingen oder den Neuankömmlingen ein erstes Netzwerk unter Gleichen zu bieten, aber sie auch zu integrieren ohne die Identität zu rauben? Kann man das alles verpacken und wenn ja, wie?

HB_ Diese drei Häuser für 39 Personen – zur Hälfte Obdachlose – bieten grundsätzlich wenig Möglichkeit zur Bildung eines Netzwerkes. Aber was ich im Vortrag vorhin am Beispiel der drei Pakistanis zeigen wollte: Die sind nicht zusammen gekommen, sondern die Stadt hat entschieden eine der Wohnungen umzubauen, damit die drei Pakistanis zusammen in einer WG wohnen können. Das heißt, die Ethnien werden schon ein Stück weit so zusammengeführt, dass sie auch zusammenpassen. Da ist einfach Konfliktpotential. Das weiß die Stadt Ostfildern und sie versucht es zu vermeiden, indem sie die Flexibilität der Häuser hinsichtlich der Raumaufteilung auch

avoid... as far as possible.

AP_ About identity... I'd like to go back to the theses formulated by Doug Saunders, which were also part of the German Pavilion. They include the following: the 'arrival city' is a city in the city. When you described the project, you briefly mentioned that its urban location is the exit from – or let's say entrance to – the city. I'd like to know how you see this topic? Is it a city in the city and, if so, how are the borders of this city designed? I think that the three-house concept has been very successful in creating different levels of privacy. There are the flat shares within each building, there is the entire building, and there are the three buildings together with the space between them. Does this concept achieve this too, or does it need to, or to what extent does it need to create context in terms of the surrounding area? And, or, how important is it to create a boundary, so that refugees or the new arrivals can have an initial network with people in the same situation, while at the same time integrating them without taking away their identity – is it possible to combine all of this and if yes, how?

HB_ Yes, well, these three buildings that can provide accommodation for 39 people – the half of them being homeless persons – here, the possibility of creating a network is of course pretty low... in general. In the talk, what I wanted to show with the example of the three Pakistanis; they didn't arrive together, the city administration decided to renovate one of the flats so that these three Pakistanis could live together in a flat share.

Meaning that ethnic groups are brought together in such a way that it works. The potential for conflict does exist, Ostfildern City Administration knows this and they try to avoid it by making use of the flexibility of the buildings in terms of the room layout. These possibilities don't always exist – particularly not if I have a central corridor and a shared kitchen.

RR_ An interesting project is supposed to be being built on Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin next year. It is by architect Francis Kéré, who was commissioned by Chris Dercon. There is to be a temporary theatre in front of Hangar 5, so where the refugee accommodation is. It's designed in such a way that this temporary theatre can be built by the refugees living there. So it's an exciting mixture and a politically complex story. Particularly because the refugees now have work to do; that's always the problem, that they can't really access work. Is there, would there be the possibility to think about these projects in a different way, to say that if there are people there, they could continue with the build themselves, or is that not possible?

HB_ No, this isn't really intended. Although, the homeless people who live there – and I have to say that there is only a small difference between being homeless and being a refugee – they all have their responsibilities and jobs somewhere that they take up within this structure. These are all unemployed people who would not find accommodation anywhere else. If they had work they could afford something different. Anyway, one gardens, one takes care of the post and so on. So every person

nutzt. Eben diese Möglichkeiten habe ich nicht immer und vor allem nicht, wenn ich einen Mittelflur und eine Gemeinschaftsküche habe.

RR_ In Berlin soll im nächsten Jahr am Tempelhofer Feld ein interessantes Projekt des Architekten Francis Kéré im Auftrag von Chris Dercon entstehen: ein temporäres Theater, vor dem Hangar 5, wo die Flüchtlingsunterkünfte sind. Konzipiert ist es in einer Art und Weise, dass dieses temporäre Theater von den dort wohnenden Flüchtlingen gebaut werden kann. Eine ganz spannende Mischung also, und auch politisch eine ganz komplexe Geschichte. Vor allem, dass die Flüchtlinge jetzt etwas zum Arbeiten haben, was ja immer das Problem ist, dass sie nie so richtig an die Arbeit drankommen können. Gibt es, oder wäre es bei euch eine Möglichkeit, diese Projekte dann auch weiter zu denken, zu sagen, wenn da jetzt welche dort sind, dass sie auch selbst diese Dinge weiterbauen können oder ist das gänzlich ausgeschlossen?

HB_ Nein, das ist eigentlich nicht vorgesehen. Allerdings zeigt sich bei den Obdachlosen, die dort wohnen – und man muss ja sagen, die Obdachlosigkeit unterscheidet sich ja von der Situation, in der sich die Flüchtlinge befinden, eigentlich nur marginal – die haben alle irgendwo ihre Verantwortlichkeiten und ihre Jobs, die sie innerhalb dieser Struktur aufnehmen. Das sind alles Arbeitslose, die keine andere Unterkunft finden. Wenn sie Arbeit hätten, könnten sie sich etwas anders leisten. Aber der eine ist Gärtner, der andere kümmert sich um die Post und so weiter. Da hat schon jeder seine Aufgabe.

Die Flüchtlinge sind meistens gar nicht so lange in dieser Einrichtung, weil sie dann wieder in andere Einrichtungen geschickt werden oder vielleicht auch hier nicht akzeptiert und dann wieder heimgeschickt werden.

AP_ Ich habe eine Frage zu dem Thema der Projekte, Unterkünfte für sozial Schwache, was euch jetzt sehr stark begleitet hat. Auch ein bisschen durch Zufälle, ein bisschen durch Glück – da hat Verschiedenes zusammengespielt. Wie sehr soll das für euch ein Schwerpunkt in eurer Arbeit bleiben? Wie sehr ist das aus der Überzeugung entstanden, dass man aus jedem Projekt etwas machen kann und wie sehr wird euch das auch in der Zukunft prägen? Geht ihr in die Richtung weiter?

HB_ Wir haben dieses Projekt natürlich nicht

does have a task. With the refugees, at least there, they often don't stay in the accommodation for very long because they are sent to different accommodation, or maybe because they aren't accepted here and are sent home again.

AP_ I've got a question about the topic of the projects, accommodation for socially vulnerable groups, which you have been very much focused on. Also, as you said, a bit by chance, a bit through luck – different things came together here. To what extent do you want to continue focusing on this topic in your work? To what extent did this emerge from a conviction that you can make something out of every project, as you said at the end, and to what extent will this also continue to shape you in the future? Do you want to continue in this direction?

HB_ Firstly, we of course didn't accept this project because we only wanted to do social housing. We entered competitions for all sorts of things; we want to cover all sorts of bases, also in the future. But of course, after all this discussion, this topic has grown on us – the topic of social housing. Primarily because, over the last year, the increase in the number of refugees has shown that social housing in Germany has been neglected for years and that there is a lot to do here. And if we have the chance or possibility to continue working in this direction, we would be more than happy to do so. Nataly [Nataly Granados, office partner u3ba] focused on this topic in her master's thesis. Her background meant that social housing was a topic close to her heart. While she was doing her master's

in Columbia, she probably never would have dreamt that this would now become a reality here in Germany. But some things just come together well and if we have the opportunity, we'd be more than happy to.

AP_ I'd like to ask a question that links back to the first project that was presented – as you said, you unfortunately lost the competition with the observation tower [kniebis competition, 2nd prize]. I very much sensed that it pains you that it wasn't realized. Why was that exactly? Is it the material, the type of construction – timber construction in this case – is it this type of architecture that you're passionate about, or were there...?

HB_ Well, we were so passionate about this project because there are projects where you hand in a submission and you already have the feeling that nothing will come of it. But this was a project that we all believed in. Where we were very positive because we had a very good idea, very good construction. Hmm, but there is the advantage that this project can also be built in other locations, at 970m. Meaning that we can maybe build it somewhere else after all [laughs].

AP_ Schlossberg isn't high enough for it [laughs].

RR_ Wherever accommodation for refugees is to be built – and a lot is to be built – you hear the term 'modular building system' again and again. And suddenly we're back in the 60s. It's pretty terrifying really, how quickly that happens?! That everything that we learned in the

angenommen, weil wir jetzt zwangsläufig Sozialwohnungsbau machen wollten. Wir haben für alles Mögliche Wettbewerbe gemacht und wollen uns da auch letztendlich relativ breit aufstellen - auch in Zukunft. Aber natürlich ist uns durch diese ganze Diskussion das Thema auch ans Herz gewachsen – das Thema sozialer Wohnungsbau. Vor allem auch, weil sich im letzten Jahr, angefeuert durch diesen Flüchtlingszustrom, gezeigt hat, dass der soziale Wohnungsbau in Deutschland über Jahre hinweg vernachlässigt wurde und dass da viel Handlungsbedarf ist. Wenn wir die Chance oder die Möglichkeit haben, in der Richtung weiterzuarbeiten, dann tun wir das sehr gerne. Nataly [Nataly Granados, Büropartnerin u3ba] hatte das Thema in ihrer Master-Thesis bearbeitet, ihr lag das sozialer Wohnungsbau schon alleine durch ihre Herkunft am Herzen. Dass das hier in Deutschland jetzt Realität wird, hätte sie sich wahrscheinlich damals, als sie ihren Master in Kolumbien gemacht hat, auch nicht träumen lassen. Aber da passen manche Dinge schon ganz gut zusammen und wenn wir die Chance haben, dann sehr gerne.

AP_ Um kurz die Brücke zu dem zuerst vorgestellten Projekt zu schlagen, dem leider verlorenen Wettbewerb, mit dem Aussichtsturm [Wettbewerb kniebis, II Preis]: Ich empfand das als sehr eindrücklich, dass es euch schmerzt, dass es nicht realisiert wurde. Woran genau hing das? Ist es das Material, ist es die Art von Konstruktion – der Holzbau in dem Fall – ist es diese Art von Architektur, die euch da am Herzen liegt?

HB_ Gut, das lag uns einfach deshalb am Herzen, weil es ja Wettbewerbe gibt, da gibt man ab und ahnt schon, dass es vielleicht doch nichts wird. Das aber war ein Projekt, das uns alle sehr überzeugt hat, wo wir auch sehr guter Dinge waren, weil wir eine sehr gute Idee und eine sehr gute Konstruktion hatten. Vielleicht ist ja der Vorteil, dass dieses Projekt auch an anderen Standorten stehen kann, auf 970m. Das heißt, vielleicht können wir es doch noch woanders bauen.

AP_ Der Schlossberg ist nicht hoch genug dafür.

RR_ Immer wieder kursiert ja dort, wo diese Flüchtlingsunterkünfte gebaut werden sollen – und es sollen ja sehr viele gebaut werden – das Schlagwort ,Modulbauweise' und plötzlich sind wir zurück in den 1960ern gelandet. Eigentlich ist es erschreckend, wie schnell so etwas passiert. Dass all das, was man in der Zwischenzeit dazugelernt hat, schon wieder in Vergessenheit gerät. Du hast es ja auch beschrieben: Mittelgang, Zimmer links, Zimmer rechts und schon ist eine Flüchtlingsunterkunft fertig. Ist das eigentlich bei euch Zufall, dass die Häuser aus Holz konstruiert sind?

HB_ Ich muss gestehen, zum Holzbau sind wir eigentlich erst mit dem zweiten Wohnprojekt gekommen. Unser eigenes Haus, das Split-Level-Haus, das ist noch in Massivbauweise. Das liegt vielleicht daran, dass man im städtischen Kontext oftmals einfach spontan an Massivbau denkt. Die Holzbauweise hat sich jetzt ein bisschen weiterentwickelt und hat in die Zukunft

meanwhile is forgotten again. You described it too, with this 'middle corridor, room on the left, room on the right, and the refugee accommodation is finished.' Is it a coincidence that your buildings are constructed out of wood?

HB_ Well, I have to admit that we didn't use timber construction until the second housing project. Our first building, the split-level building, is still solid construction. Maybe this is because you often immediately think of solid construction in an urban context. Now, timber construction has developed a bit and I think it holds a great deal of potential for the future. I was at a timber construction conference last week: what is now being realized with timber, it's not just simple housing, but also special structures, congress halls, multi-storey administration buildings... In terms of resources I also think that it is a topic that we'll increasingly be focusing on in the future. And prefabrication and on-site assembly was of course a topic that was relevant during these two refugee projects. Everything needed to happen quickly; while I am applying concrete for the bottom slab on site, I can be having the modules made in the factory.

AP_ You can take two different approaches here: either to go back and see what we have used in construction for years, decades – centuries maybe – and draw from that? Developing it further, thinking things further, rethinking and maybe also giving it a new identity? Giving it a new quality in its usage and another context – or do you focus on the development of new materials, products, construction

methods and similar? Where do you maybe see more potential or sense, or which direction would you think in?

HB_ Well, in general, looking at the last few years, I have the feeling that there has been an increasing return to old technologies – when I look at wind turbines or hydropower, or heating with wood. Earlier, coal ovens were torn out of the flats in Stuttgart and ten years later they were replaced with wood-burning stoves. We live in very transient times, but I think that the topic of energy will prompt a lot of changes in this direction, also because of the topic of resources. We are also talking more and more about embodied energy... The figures for reinforced concrete are very very poor here and I think that this aspect will mean that the way architects and engineers think and build will inevitably have to change a great deal in the end.

RR_ So you believe that, hmm, how should I put this, that energy-conscious design could replace material-conscious design?

HB_I can well imagine it yes. It does mean that I need to select better materials from the start and not try to use more energy to make a material that is per se not energy efficient provide an appropriate level of insulation – like reinforced concrete.

RR_ And when the decision has been made about the energetic evaluation, will there then be material-conscious constructing – alongside the designing?

betrachtet, wie ich finde, unglaubliches Potential. Ich war letzte Woche auf einer Holzbautagung; was da mit Holz inzwischen realisiert wird, das sind eben nicht nur einfache Wohngebäude, sondern auch Sonderbauten, Kongresssäle, mehrgeschossige Verwaltungsgebäude etc. Auch unter dem Ressourcen-Aspekt, denke ich, ist es ein Thema, das uns in der nächsten Zeit immer mehr beschäftigen wird. Und dieses Vorfertigen und Aufstellen auf der Baustelle war natürlich bei diesen zwei Flüchtlings-Projekten ein Thema. Es musste eben schnell gehen. Während ich auf der Baustelle die Bodenplatte betoniere, kann ich eben schon die Module im Werk fertigen.

AP_ Da kann man ja zwei unterschiedliche Haltungen haben: Geht man zurück und prüft, was haben wir für Mittel seit Jahren, Jahrzenten, Jahrhunderten vielleichtschon zum Bauen verwendet, und bezieht sich

darauf? Entwickelt man die weiter, denkt man die weiter, denkt man die neu und gibt ihnen dadurch vielleicht auch eine neue Identität? Weist man dem Ganzen vielleicht eine neue Qualität zu in der Verwendung und einen anderen Kontext oder fokussiert man sich auf die Entwicklung neuer Materialien, Produkte, Bauweisen und Ähnlichem? Wo siehst du vielleicht mehr Potential oder Sinn oder in welche Richtung würdest du gehen, gedanklich?

HB_ Also generell, wenn man so die letzten Jahre betrachtet, habe ich das Gefühl, dass die Rückbesinnung auf alte Technologien grundsätzlich immer stärker wird – wenn ich die Windkraftanlagen anschaue, oder Wasserkraft, auch Holzheizungen. Früher hat man irgendwelche Kohleöfen aus den Wohnungen in Stuttgart rausgerissen, um zehn Jahre später den Holzofen wieder einzubauen. Unsere Zeit ist sehr kurzlebig, aber ich glaube, durch die Energiethematik wird sich da sehr viel in diese Richtung verändern, auch durch die Thematik der Ressourcen. Wir reden immer mehr auch über graue Energie: Da hat Stahlbeton einen sehr, sehr schlechten Wert und ich glaube einfach, dass sich unter diesem Aspekt zwangsläufig auch das Denken und die Konstruktionsweise bei Architekten und Ingenieure deutlich verändern werden müssen.

RR_ Also du glaubst, dass energiegerechtes Entwerfen ein materialgerechtes Entwerfen ablösen könnte?

HB_ Das kann ich mir gut vorstellen. Das heißt ja letztlich, dass ich von vorneweg die richtigeren Materialien wähle

HB_I believe so. The constructing, the material-conscious constructing, will always remain central. With wood in particular that's even more important than with reinforced concrete.

AP_ But when you say 'selecting the right materials from the start,' this basically implies that you can create any spatial quality or atmosphere? Although maybe the word quality is again too judgmental... Aren't there perhaps differences? If we leave out the energetic aspect for now – is there a 'right material'? Are we not too much in danger of sliding into monotony here?

HB_ You always have to talk about the extent to which particular materials are used. Hmm, at this talk on timber construction last week, they gave the example of a congress hall in Geneva. It was built using timber construction and free cantilevering over 35m. Of course, a large part of this was made of steel, but many of the load-bearing wall elements were still made out of wood and together it was – I think anyway – material-conscious constructing. If I want to have a particular span or certain constructions, then I have to construct in such a way that I use steel, the qualities of steel, together with wood. So there will always be mixed constructions and it also won't be the case that I can't use particular materials anymore.

RR_I think that is a very important point! When was that, 20 years ago, 25 years ago – one of Marcel Meili's first projects was built here in Styria, together with Jürg Conzett: a wooden bridge. A beautiful bridge, where

fundamental elements were made of steel, but you didn't see that. Only the trained eye would notice that it had to work in a different way. Or, if you take a more recent project, the Parasol by Jürgen Mayer H. in Seville. This massive construction out of wood is also strengthened with steel. It was that much of a political issue, the wood issue, that these steel parts were built in at night – so no one would see – and then covered with wood again. This is the topic of perception, which is also pretty important?

HB_ Hmm, yes, true. You feel a bit bad about combining wood and steel. But, after all, if cement doesn't work without steel, why should wood?

RR_ Yes...

AP_ And while we're thinking about the 'trained eye,' or

und nicht versuche, einen Werkstoff, der per se nicht energieeffizient ist, mit noch mehr Energieeinsatz dann wärmetechnisch vernünftig hinzubekommen – also Stahlbeton.

RR_ Und wenn jetzt diese Entscheidung über die energetische Evaluierung getroffen ist, wird es dann ein materialgerechtes Konstruieren geben, neben dem Entwerfen?

HB_ Das glaube ich schon. Das Konstruieren, das materialgerechte Konstruieren, wird immer zentral bleiben. Speziell bei Holz, da ist es noch viel wichtiger als bei Stahlbeton.

AP_ Wenn du aber sagst, ‚von vornherein die richtigen Materialien wählen', bedeutet das dann, dass man jedwede Raumqualität oder Atmosphäre – vielleicht ist Qualität schon wieder zu wertend – erzeugen kann? Gibt es da nicht doch Unterschiede? Den energetischen Aspekt ausklammernd: Gibt es ein richtiges Material? Drohen wir da nicht zu sehr in Eintönigkeit abzurutschen?

HB_ Man muss immer über das Maß des Einsatzes von gewissen Materialien reden. Bei dem Holzbauvortrag letzte Woche gab es das Beispiel eines Kongresssaals in Holzbauweise in Genf, der über 35m frei auskragend ist. Das war natürlich zu einem großen Teil in Stahl, aber dennoch war ein großer Teil dieser tragenden Wandelemente aus Holz und insgesamt war das – aus meiner Sicht natürlich – ein materialgerechtes

Konstruieren. Wenn ich gewisse Spannweiten oder gewisse Konstruktionen haben will, dann muss ich eben so konstruieren, dass ich Stahl, die Qualitäten von Stahl, mit Holz zusammenbringe. Insofern wird es immer Mischkonstruktionen geben und es wird auch nicht so sein, dass ich irgendwelche Materialien gar nicht mehr verwenden kann.

RR_ Ich glaube, das ist ein ganz entscheidender Punkt. Vor 20, 25 Jahren wurde eines der ersten Projekte von Marcel Meili hier in der Steiermark gebaut: eine Holzbrücke, mit Jürg Conzett zusammen. Eine wunderschöne Brücke mit ganz wesentlichen Elementen in Stahl, die man aber nicht sieht. Nur das geschulte Auge merkt, irgendwie muss das ja anders funktionieren. Oder vielleicht ein aktuelleres Projekt: der Parasol von Jürgen Mayer H. in Sevilla. Eine Riesenkonstruktion aus Holz, aber eben auch mit Stahl verstärkt. Das war ein derartiges Politikum, also ein Holzpolitikum, dass diese Stahlteile nachts eingebaut worden sind, damit das ja keiner sieht, und dann wieder mit Holz verkleidet. Das ist ja auch das eigentlich ganz wichtige Thema der Wahrnehmung.

HB_ Richtig. Man hat ein leicht schlechtes Gefühl, wenn Holz und Stahl zusammenkommen. Aber ich sage jetzt, wenn der Beton ohne den Stahl nicht funktioniert, warum sollte Holz dann ohne Stahl funktionieren?

RR: Ja.

AP_ Wo wir jetzt bei dem geschulten Auge sind und du

what you mentioned before, that, from the architects' point of view, a type of architecture can definitely develop here that is attractive. Let's go back to the minds of the people who aren't architects, but who perhaps play a significant role here. If you think about the neighborhood, about the concerns that are raised and then maybe again lead to stigmatization or iconography. How should you react here? How do you sensitize people to a language of architecture – to the single-pitch roof or the outside staircase or OSB, etc. Will time do its job, can the buildings just be built and one day people will be convinced or is it necessary to do a lot more, verbally, working to convince people and explaining, so that the untrained user, resident, neighbor is no longer afraid of the unknown?

HB_ Well, with the example in Ostfildern it quickly became clear that basically everyone, laypeople too, came to the conclusion that it did have quality. There was an open day when the buildings were finished and already inhabited. A lot of people just aren't able to picture a space when they look at a plan. But when the building is constructed, they are able to see that the result is a good one – or they didn't find it bad.

RR_ This accommodation prompted a very intense discussion in a particular area in terms of standards. Where, in Central Europe – at least in Germany, Austria, Switzerland –, we are operating at a very high level. There are no draughts anymore and you need practically no heating, just the breathing needs to be somehow generated, so nothing, almost nothing, can go wrong there

anymore. Now, suddenly everything has to happen quicker and all of a sudden you can imagine that you can also downgrade. There is a lot to discuss here – also whether we are maybe 'too good.' What do you think about this?

HB_I think that we are definitely operating at too high a level. For example, if in an inner city, existing context in Germany a building is demolished and is to be rebuilt, it can't be built as it was previously because the distances between buildings aren't the same anymore and aren't complied with. Even though it'll probably be constructed with materials that are much better than those that the half-timbered houses from 1750 are made of. I think there's a very important architectonic and urban aspect to this – when these sorts of regulations create situations in existing town centers where you have to put up smaller buildings, or you can't build there at all because you simply can't provide the required distance between buildings. And looking at another area, there's also the topic of thermal insulation. I think the heated surface area per person in Germany is growing all the time. Meaning that the energy that we're using to save energy is offset by the fact that everyone is heating a larger area. At the end, it's a zero-sum game. Maybe people need to think about things in a different way – do I have to keep the whole house at 20° or are there other options?

AP_ Would you then take that further to the thesis – also formulated by Douglas Saunders – that the 'arrival city' is informal. Meaning that it can make sense to tolerate practices that aren't quite legal. That this might be a more

auch vorhin erwähnt hast, dass aus Architektensicht hier durchaus eine Architektur entstehen kann, die ansprechend ist: Zurück in die Köpfe der Leute, die keine Architekten sind, aber vielleicht maßgeblich sind in diesem Augenblick. Zu der Nachbarschaft, zu den Bedenken, die geäußert werden und dann vielleicht wieder zu einer Stigmatisierung oder Ikonografie führen. Wie geht man dagegen an? Wie sensibilisiert man für eine Architektursprache das Pultdach oder das außenliegende Treppenhaus oder die OSB-Platte usw.? Tut die Zeit das ihrige? Können die Gebäude so hingestellt werden und irgendwann überzeugen oder muss man da noch viel mehr, auch verbal, Überzeugungsarbeit leisten und aufklären, um dem nicht geschulten Benutzer, Bewohner, Nachbar die Angst zu nehmen vor dem Unbekannten?

HB_ Bei dem Beispiel in Ostfildern hat sich eigentlich sehr schnell gezeigt – es gab einen Tag der offenen Tür, als die Häuser fertig waren und schon bewohnt – dass eigentlich alle, auch die Laien, festgestellt haben, dass es eine gewisse Qualität hat. Bei vielen fehlt einfach nur das Vorstellungsvermögen eines Raumes, wenn sie einen Plan sehen. Aber im gebauten Zustand können sie doch beurteilen, dass das Ergebnis gut geworden ist oder aus ihrer Sicht nicht schlecht.

RR_ Durch diese Unterkünfte ist ja in einem bestimmten Bereich eine sehr starke Diskussion losgetreten worden und das betrifft die Standards. Wo wir ja im mitteleuropäischen Bereich, also in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz, auf einem extrem hohen

Niveau unterwegs sind. Es zieht nicht mehr und heizen braucht man auch fast nicht mehr, nur noch das Atmen muss irgendwie schlussendlich generiert werden, also da kann nichts, fast nichts mehr schiefgehen. So, und jetzt muss plötzlich alles schneller gehen und auf einmal kann man sich vorstellen, man kann auch downgraden. Das gibt in vielerlei Hinsicht Anlass zur Diskussion – auch, ob wir nicht vielleicht etwas zu gut unterwegs sind. Wie würdest du das sehen?

HB_ Wir sind absolut auf einem zu hohen Niveau unterwegs, aus meiner Sicht. Wenn beispielsweise in einem innerstädtischen, bestehenden Kontext in Deutschland ein Gebäude abgebrochen und neu gebaut werden soll, dann darf es so nicht mehr gebaut werden wie damals, weil die Abstandsflächen nicht mehr die gleichen sind und nicht eingehalten werden, obwohl das wahrscheinlich mit Materialien hergestellt wird, die deutlich besser sind als die des Fachwerkhauses von 1750. Da sehe ich eben eine ganz wichtige architektonische und städtebauliche Dimension: Wenn solche Vorschriften Situationen in bestehenden Ortskernen schaffen, in denen zwangsläufig kleiner gebaut werden muss oder nicht mehr gebaut werden kann, weil einfach die Abstandsflächen nicht einzuhalten sind. Und im anderen Bereich ist es auch das Thema des Wärmeschutzes. Ich glaube, die beheizte Fläche pro Kopf in Deutschland steigt stetig. Das heißt, die Energie, die wir ausgeben, um Energie einzusparen, wird dadurch kompensiert, dass jeder mehr Fläche beheizt. Am Ende ist es ein Nullsummenspiel. Vielleicht muss einfach ein Umdenken in den Köpfen stattfinden: Muss ich das

productive way of approaching the building process?

HB_I think it was exactly this question that our federal minister for building was answering at the Biennale when she said that she could imagine lowering certain standards – for example the fire safety requirements – which caused quite a bit of outrage. I think that we need a certain framework in our society that provides security. But the question is whether the topic of fire safety – I think 50 people die in fires in Germany per year – always has to have absolute top priority in social housing, as it does in other areas. Of course we need to prevent fire fatalities, but I think that, with some topics, priorities just aren't quite right somewhere. And that makes building very very difficult today.

RR_ What would that look like then, implying or implementing that? In our planning process, the participation processes are usually very strong and are getting stronger. Meaning that you come to the big topic of 'change management' – I have an idea, now I have to explain that to the others and convince them that it is better. How would that work?

HB_ If I could answer that now, then I'd have, I think [laughs], then I wouldn't need to do much else... but it's a difficult question, one that I can't answer.

RR_ Let's leave that one open then [laughs]. Hmm, and I think that it's also important that we can't answer all of each other's questions – there has to be something left

that, hmm, that it'll be interesting to discover in the future. And we're going to hear a great deal about your office in the future – that I'm certain about. Thank you very much for this great talk and the interesting discussion.

ganze Haus ständig auf 20° temperieren oder gibt es auch andere Möglichkeiten?

AP_Würdest du dann das vielleicht, auf die – auch von Douglas Saunders formulierte – These ausweiten, dass die Arrival City informell ist? Also, dass die Tolerierung nicht gänzlich rechtskonformer Praktiken sinnvoll sein kann und dass das, auf den Bauprozess angewendet, vielleicht manchmal zielführender wäre?

HB_ Also genau auf diese Frage hin hat, glaube ich, unsere Bundesbauministerin auf der Biennale gesagt, dass sie sich vorstellen könnte, dass man gewisse Standards senkt, zum Beispiel die Brandschutzanforderungen. Danach kam auch ein bisschen diese Empörung. Ich glaube, dass es gewisse Rahmen braucht in unserer Gesellschaft, die irgendwo auch eine gewisse Sicherheit bieten. Aber die Frage ist, ob das Thema Brandschutz – ich glaube, in Deutschland sterben pro Jahr 50 Menschen an Bränden – immer diese absolut oberste Priorität haben muss im Sozialwohnungsbau wie auch in anderen Bereichen. Natürlich muss man vermeiden, dass es Brandtote gibt, aber ich glaube, die Wertigkeit mancher Themen ist einfach irgendwo nicht ganz in Ordnung, was das Bauen heutzutage sehr, sehr schwer macht.

RR_ Wie würde so etwas denn aussehen, also das zu implizieren oder zu implementieren? In unserem Planungsprozess sind ja in der Regel diese Mitspracheprozesse sehr stark und werden immer stärker.

Das heißt, man kommt zu dem großen Thema ‚Change Management': Ich habe eine Idee, jetzt muss ich das den Anderen aber noch erklären und die davon überzeugen, dass das besser ist. Wie geht denn das?

HB_ Wenn ich das jetzt beantworten könnte, dann müsste ich nicht mehr viele andere Dinge tun, aber es ist eine schwierige Frage, die ich nicht beantworten kann.

RR_ Lassen wir das so stehen. Ich glaube, das ist eben auch wichtig, dass wir uns nicht alle Fragen gegenseitig beantworten können. Es muss ja noch etwas geben, das in der Zukunft noch interessant sein wird herauszufinden. Und wir werden in der Zukunft noch sehr viel von eurem Büro hören – ich bin da absolut zuversichtlich. Ich darf mich recht herzlich bedanken für diesen sehr tollen Vortrag und die gute Diskussion.

Luyanda Mpahlwa_Cape Town

Dr. Luyanda Mpahlwa is the Director of Luyanda Mpahlwa DesignSpaceAfrica, the architecture and design firm he founded in 2009. He graduated from the Technical University of Berlin, Germany (1997). His studies in South Africa were interrupted in 1981 when he was imprisoned on Robben Island as a political prisoner. After his release in 1986, he left for exile in Germany where he spent 15 years. He relocated back to South Africa in 2000 where he established the Cape Town Studio of MMA Architects. Luyanda has created DesignSpaceAfrica as a platform for dynamic design exploration, with a team which collaborates on developing contemporary design which seeks to create sustainable environments, defined by a passionate vision for Architecture and Technology, within a global design culture. The firm strives to promote a design culture which promotes Architecture from a social dimension and through critical design dialogue, showing the difference design can make in the lives of people and in society.

www.designspaceafrica.com

Imke Woelk_Berlin

IMKEWOELK + Partner is and architectural practice in Berlin founded 1997 by Imke Woelk. It brings together architecture and art, planning praxis and research. "We regard the world as a force field between urbanization and nature, ecology and material, flexibility and individuality". Each of their projects is a nodal point of relationships that can be understood as a whole or in terms of its various dimensions: as idea, as art, as technical solution, as social field. They therefore conceive large as well as small projects: urban development planning, utility studies, individual buildings, exhibition architecture, design objects, research projects, and publications. Central to their work is a confrontation with open space. Not as a neutral surface, but instead as an ambiguous space that must be understood simultaneously as abstract idea and concrete materialization.

www.iw-up.com

Andrei Șerbescu_Bucharest

ADNBA was established in 2003 in Bucharest, by Andrei Serbescu and Adrian Untaru, later joined by Bogdan Bradateanu. The work of their practice is characterised by their attempt to search for the right balance between experiment and experience in the complex and delicate landscape of contemporary life. While they believe in architecture as a creative gesture, with cultural value and social responsibility, they also acknowledge the sometimes hazardous and always subjective distinction between such attributes, in a rapidly changing environment as nowadays Romania and the whole of Eastern Europe. In their projects, they strive for a wider and wiser understanding of the city and its evolution. But upon this, the specific situation which each project and place bring to them, together with its fragile ties to the people, the neighbourhoods and their stories, is what interests them most.

www.adnba.ro

Harald Baumann_ Stuttgart

Harald Baumann established u3ba as an architecture partnership with Andrea Baumann, Nataly Granados and Camillo Hernandez in 2013. u3ba approaches every project of architecture and urbanism, regardless its size or status - from small to large scale - aiming to obtain a unique character for each task. The architectural language of the team is characterized by disciplined design focusing the essential. Their proposals based on constructions derived from the material and apparently simple details - therefore lasting - generate buildings full of life, aesthetic and power. The philosophy of u3ba is to create contemporary but also timeless architecture which can perform through time, providing the adaptation for individual user requirements and local dispositions. Hereby, identification of the inhabitants for their environment is generated. With a social and ecological approach they design space for people in a healthy environment.

www.u3ba.de

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