



Carla Juaçaba | Jan Kinsbergen | Piet Eckert | Lara Almarcegui

NOVEMBER TALKS 2019

Think Tank Architecture

PREFACE

Once again, we had the pleasure of welcoming thoroughly exciting guests to the ninth November Talks in Graz.

This year highlighted the different approaches our outstanding speakers bring to design. Artist Lara Almarcegui from Rotterdam demonstrated how she meticulously analyzed, dismantled and granulated buildings by components, effectively elevating our built environment to a completely new level of abstraction.

Jan Kinsbergen from Zurich succeeded in demonstrating how the two elementary components of architecture, the pillar and the slab, can be masterfully applied in all their abstraction for every application, from a small house to urban planning. Carla Juaçaba from Rio de Janeiro presented her projects with a convincing casualness of a design between architecture and art, and Piet Eckert from Zurich demonstrated how a meticulous tracking of needs can lead to well-thought-out, rationalistic projects.

Each 45-minute lecture was followed by in-depth 45-minute interviews, allowing for questions on the attitudes of the speakers and a deeper understanding of the matter. In this brochure, we have now transcribed and summarized these interviews.

Selecting and supporting the guests, organizing the respective lecture evenings in November and post-processing the entire evening, transcribing the interviews, editing the resulting texts, and ultimately compiling this publication involved a great deal of work. It is for this

reason that I would like to thank my team at the Institute of Architecture Technology, especially Christoph Haidacher and Jörg Schröder.

Furthermore, I am eager to thank our speakers for their wonderful presentations and inspiring discussions. Next, I would also like to thank the audience, which has now grown into what can only be described as a large family that is curious, critical and supportive at one and the same time.

And last but not least, I would like to thank the Sto - Foundation for their financial support, without which evenings like these, a lecture series like the November Talks, would not have been possible. Thank you very much!

And now for our all-important readers, I hope you enjoy these articles. You are in for a treat!

Roger Riewe

VORWORT

Auch im neunten Jahr der November Talks war es uns eine Freude, wieder ungemein spannende Gäste in Graz begrüßen zu können.

Unterschiedliche Herangehensweisen in der Entwurfsfindung der geladenen Vortragenden konnten zudem in diesem Jahr durch die Künstlerin Lara Almarcegui aus Rotterdam akzentuiert werden, die dargelegt hat, wie sie Bauwerke akribisch analysiert, zerlegt und sortenrein granuliert, wodurch unsere gebaute Umwelt auf eine völlig neue Ebene der Abstraktion geführt wird.

Jan Kinsbergen aus Zürich gelang es darzulegen, wie elementare Elemente der Architektur, die Stütze und die Scheibe, in ihrer Abstraktion von dem kleinen Haus bis hin zum Städtebau meisterhaft angewendet werden können. Carla Juaçaba aus Rio de Janeiro konnte eine Verortung ihrer Projekte zwischen Architektur und Kunst mit einer überzeugenden Selbstverständlichkeit präsentieren, ebenso wie Piet Eckert aus Zürich darlegen konnte, wie eine Spurensuche zu wohldurchdachten, rationalistisch geprägten Projekten führen kann.

In jeweils 45-minütigen Vorträgen konnten die Haltungen der Vortragenden in anschließenden 45-minütigen Diskussionen hinterfragt und vertieft werden. Die Diskussionen haben wir transkribiert und in dieser Broschüre zusammengefasst.

Die Auswahl der Gäste und deren Betreuung, die Organisation der jeweiligen Vortragsabende im November und die gesamte Nachbearbeitung, die Transkriptionen der Diskussionen, das Redigieren von Texten bis hin zur Erstellung dieser Publikation ist viel Arbeit. Deshalb möchte ich mich bei meinem Team am Institut für Architekturtechnologie, insbesondere bei Christoph Haidacher und Jörg Schröder herzlich bedanken.

Ich möchte mich auch bei unseren Vortragenden für ihre wunderbaren Referate und die inspirierenden Diskussionen bedanken.

Bedanken möchte ich mich auch beim Publikum, das zu einer großen Familie gewachsen ist – neugierig, kritisch und unterstützend zugleich.

Und last but not least darf ich mich bei der Sto-Stiftung für ihre finanzielle Unterstützung bedanken, ohne die Abende wie diese, eine Reihe wie die November Talks, nicht möglich gewesen wären. Herzlichen Dank!

Und jetzt, sehr geehrte Leserinnen und Leser, wünsche ich Ihnen viel Freude beim Lesen der nachfolgenden Texte. Sie sind spannend!



CARLA JUAÇABA
Carla Juaçaba Studio



JAN KINSBERGEN
Jan Kinsbergen Architekt



PIET ECKERT
E2A



LARA ALMARCEGUI
Artist



CARLA JUAÇABA

NOVEMBER 04, 2019

LECTURE_09

INTERVIEW_15



<The decision was to make a house cutting the terrain in two and a skylight that emphasizes this cut in a way. And the light is there as the most important element of the house – I think more than the house itself. >

LECTURE**VARANDA HOUSE** | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | 2007 - 2008

<There is only one newspaper in Rio and this one newspaper was against this building. So, this building was under construction. No one knew about what was there, what would happen. There was complete silence. Only at the end did they announce that it was open to the public.>

<It was also like a really open structure, that people had to walk through this windy place, sunny place. It was like placing people in a very fragile condition there.>



HUMANIDADE PAVILION | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil | 2012

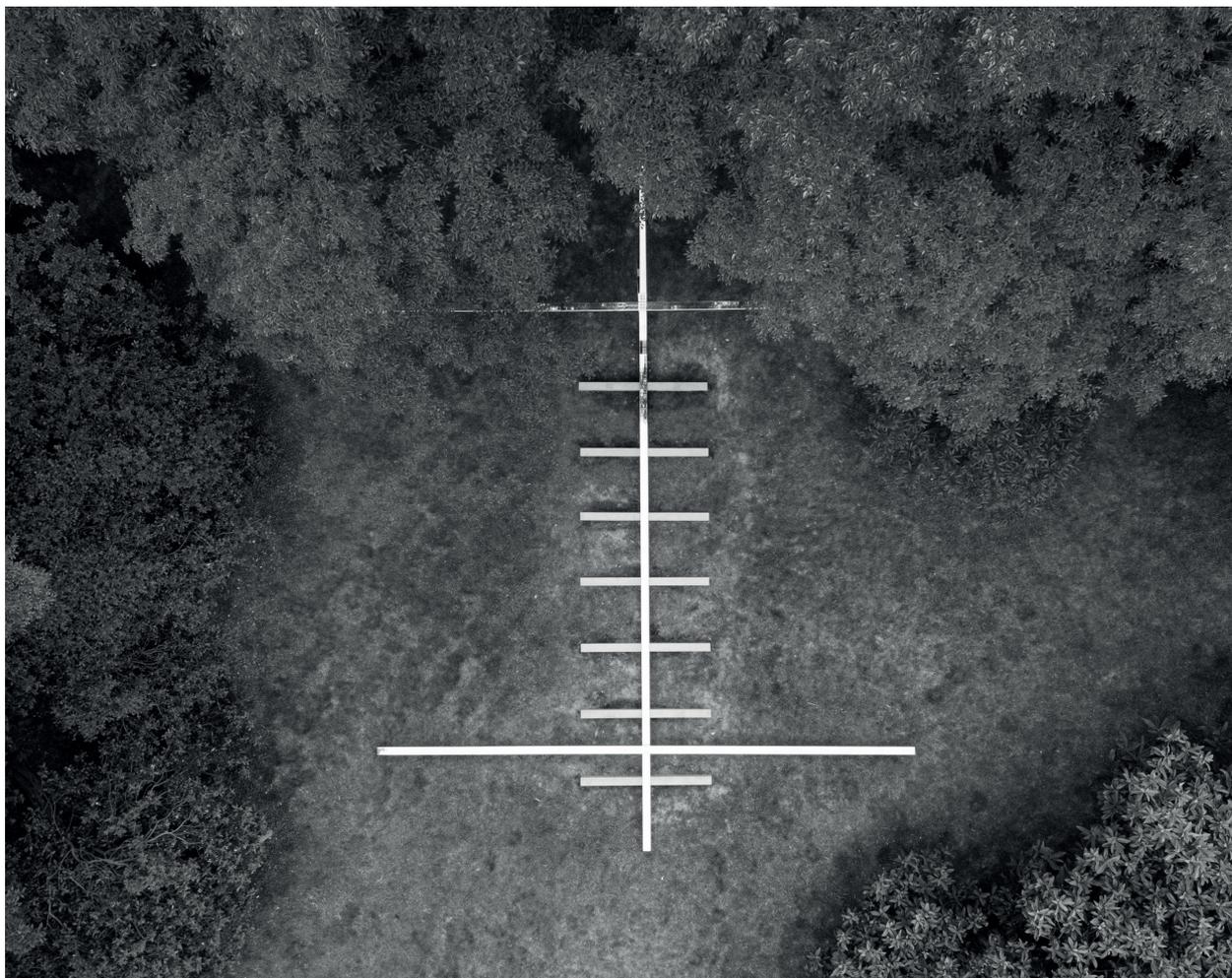




<The idea was to make an object that reflects nature and also that the nature completes the object. There is a dome between these trees, there is a dome over the chapel.>

<It was supposed to disappear in a way. And I think it's a synthesis of a really old program. You go to the chapel and sit to look at the suffering that is a cross.>

VATICAN CHAPEL, PAVILION OF THE HOLY SEE AT THE VENICE BIENNALE | Venice, Italy | 2018



INTERVIEW

Carla Juaçaba

CJ_ Carla Juaçaba
RR_ Roger Riewe
CH_ Christoph Haidacher



RR_ Carla, thank you very much for this very intriguing lecture – beautiful projects. Christoph and I will now try to figure out some of the stories behind these projects. You’ve designed projects, which, if we are attempting a classification and are prepared to put it boldly, are actually somewhere between art and architecture – and even that is somewhat difficult. When taking a closer look at these projects, what is striking is that they are very reduced, very modest, very minimal. How do you feel about the term minimalism? Is this something which has special significance for you, or is it something that just happens?

CJ_ Yes, I have problems with the term minimalism because I think minimalism as we know it is the form, the pure form itself. I showed the theater of Peter Brook before. I think his work is minimal. But there is a

symbolism behind his work – it is not form for form’s sake or for pure form’s sake, but rather because there is, in his case, a symbolic meaning behind every gesture. For the theater ... I mean, for the gesture, you see a cross, and for this he simply moves two bamboo sticks and you recognize that they are a cross. And then he moves them again and it’s a forest. This is not minimalism. I don’t think it’s minimalism. I think it is full of symbolism, so I would make a distinction here.

CH_ Would you say that your work is abstract, if not minimal, and that the quality of the abstract is that you can load it with symbolism? Would you consider that as valid?

CJ_ Yes, abstract is good. [laughs]

CH_Abstract is good? Okay. [laughs]

CJ_Take the example of the chapel. The idea here is that you sit on the cross, look at the cross, and not only that; the cross is an object that is presented as a metaphor for life, because it either exists or doesn't exist depending on the light. I think this involves at least an intention of giving meaning. And in the case of minimalism, I don't hate minimalism, I think the minimalist art of the Americans is fantastic. I see it as fantastic, but I don't want to have an association with this purity of minimalism.

CH_What I find interesting, looking at the chapel, is that you are not forcing a sense or a meaning. You're not aggressive with the expression. Christianity may have a history of being missionary, but the chapel is not missionary at all. It is a work open for interpretation, even while its abstract symbolism simultaneously presents Christianity. That is possibly not a question. [laughs] Well, anyhow, I think your work is very refreshing. In many of your projects I observe a kind of a light monumentality. So it's never a heavy manifestation. At the same time there is an enormous presence in these works. I think it's poetic and produces intense spaces. I was wondering how you start a project. It looks as if you always start with architecture once again from the beginning, always approaching it afresh. I think that is a lively attitude and I was wondering if this is how you see it yourself. And how do you arrive at those essential questions behind a project?

CJ_Well, the projects are all very different from each other, and the approach to them is as you say. I think the first step is the observation of where you are, for example in Copacabana. Bia Lessa said: 'You are the third architect trying to come up with a design.' And I said to her: 'Bia, it's already there!' By 'already', I mean the scaffold is there. It was really about taking out something and trying to continue with it and to communicate that. If the subject is sustainability, then try to communicate this through your choice of materials, through your action, because construction is an action. And this takes a lot of energy. So, for all of this energy in order to make sense, it was important to communicate the idea of sustainability through this choice of materials. Since it was there, it is something that is a continuity. I think the chapel too. The site was there and I saw a video and a view of the area and I didn't go there to do the project. And I got the feeling that it was in Venice, but it was behind Venice. It was inside this beautiful site and the dome was already there, because it is nature – yes ... I don't know.

CH_I've seen some lecture presentations of yours and in one of them you said you prefer to find a project. Is it easier for you to work on a project you found rather than inventing one or making one from scratch?

CJ_Yes, the illusion that the Copacabana project was already there is a comfortable one, because you don't need a design. It's already there. So, in a way, there is a search for an absence of design. It doesn't exist. I know

this because it simply doesn't exist. But when there was no way to do something in Brasilia, the only way forward was to use a ready-made object. What I mean is, the object is the same as Niemeyer's, the same size, the same height, the same ... absolutely not interfering with anything in the design, because all attempts to do so would look absurd and ridiculous.

CH_To fit in this context?

CJ_To fit in this context of Oscar Niemeyer. In a way, I was looking for an absence of a design which doesn't exist.

RR_I think this is an issue that is quite striking in your projects. Looking at the chapel in Venice or at the pavilion in Rio, they are both designed to be temporary. Your single-family houses, which are obviously physical, appear to be temporary as well. What is actually the issue for you when designing these projects – the issue of temporality?

CJ_They appear to be temporal because of the fragility ... or what?

RR_The houses could also be more physical, but they are not. You can actually dissect them. You can see them as interventions, as pieces of art, and you can take them apart again. So, they appear to be very fragile, just the same as the temporary pavilion in Rio.

CJ_Yes, maybe. This is something that only exists in a theater or in a temporary building, the fact that

something just disappears. It's fantastic, an architecture that disappears. I was so happy when this building was dismantled, this Copacabana building, because at the same time it's absurd to be there – in this view. It's good that it is temporary although there were a lot of people who wanted it to stay there. I think it was not meant to stay there. It would not have made sense for it to stay there. I was happy with it being temporary. Maybe the houses also ... If I could dismantle this house of stone, I would, because it's a ... I was too young and I didn't know that the stones ... like that, the water just goes inside the house, and I'm still friends with the owner. I don't know how, because it was a nightmare to fix this. I would love to see this house dismantled and do another one. In a way it was simply an experiment.

RR_And you also see these houses, the stone house and the other one. They are so reduced in design because you only got certain structures like stone walls. And somehow you can also imagine that they could work without the windows or without the glass. It would be nice to have them just completely open.

CJ_Yes that would be nice [laughs] – raining inside.

RR_And then, finally, it's something like a sculpture again – an artistic attitude.

CJ_Once I showed this house of Rio Bonito to Kenneth Frampton, who was there. He said there was a problem of junction, how one material finds another.

CH_A tectonic problem?

CJ_ Yes, there was a tectonic problem he said. It took me years to understand what he was saying, and what I would do if I could construct it today. I know what I would do today. I wouldn't do a beautiful detail. This box of concrete that is inside the stone wall for example, I would blast this concrete on both sides, and I do mean blast the thing ... very badly made. That would be the junction that I would show to Frampton today. Not something delicate, to show a junction.

CH_ But I actually like the junction the way it is. [laughs]

CJ_ [Laughs] You like it the way it is?

CH_ Yes, I don't want you to change it. Don't renovate it. [laughs]

CJ_ No, I don't like it anymore, because I understand that the box of concrete is there. This is a terrible detail. You have a box, because you have stones of 40 by 40. But at this point, you have these little thin plates of stone that I attached with glue there. So this is not nice.

CH_ Another thing: this theme of dematerialization, this idea of less presence in your architecture. Some time ago, I heard you say when you were talking about the Veranda House project that you didn't want to interfere with this location. And you would have preferred for

the house almost not to be there. I think you have this idea or intention of less presence in many projects. I was wondering where this idea came from. Why less presence?

CJ_ Yes, for example the Veranda House, I think as a house, as a design, it is really nothing special. It has four porticos and is suspended because the terrain gets really wet with the rains. This is nothing new as a design, I mean really, it is so simple. The roof projects by one and a half meters, which is something specific to tropical regions. And there is a light that makes the house exist. But it is a light that cuts the house in two. It is the presence of the light, not the house – the intention I mean – the idea So the most important presence is this light that is projected on all the walls.

RR_ But this operating with an understatement is obviously also a very strong move, in my view. As you say, it has been done before, there are no details. But finally, we really get a very close look. In each house, there is possibly just one detail which is fundamentally important, isn't that the case? Coming back to the chapel project, which is so reduced or so abstract. In this project, it's the material and the joint that get important, the question of how to connect these two elements. We can ask the same question in the case of the chapel: Would you have made it in concrete?

CJ_ No, no, because the idea was to be thin, to be like this, reflecting the surroundings ... not to exist. What I

mean here is that the idea was that the shadow of the cross would be more present than the object itself. But it didn't happen. Of course, you see a lot. The shadows of the trees have failed to achieve what I am saying, but the intention was there.

RR_ Yes, there is obviously always one special reason for choosing a material or choosing a detail. Another question for this chapel concerns the level or the height of the cross bar which would be higher in an actual cross, but in your project, it is low, as if it were an upside down cross.

CJ_ Yes, it is an inverted cross, Saint Peter's cross. But I didn't know that it was a Saint Peter's cross. Someone told me that later. It is the inverted cross, the cross of humility. It was nice to discover that. But the intention was to give it a measure. If it were too high, it would not be a measure for us to configure the space. If it were too high, you would never feel like being inside something. So, it is lower because, together with the concrete items, it gives an 8 by 8 by 8 metric to this object.

CH_ It even establishes a horizon. It produces kind of an outer room. It is interesting how all the other architects who participated were making rooms, cutting space out of the environment. And you did the opposite. One could say, you even took a step back. You are making a place that you mark with the symbol of the cross, with these two crosses and the benches that are actually in the ground. I think it is a very sublime and a modest manifestation of belief. And I was wondering whether this chapel actually

corresponds to your own belief or your idea of the divine, or whether there is a correspondence?

CJ_ I am not a Catholic, but I do have a feeling of religiosity. I don't deny this. I think I am possibly a sympathizer of Buddhism. But I was there to do a chapel for the Catholic Church. It was about religion in general, simply a place to be and a place for reflection.

RR_ The chapel, I think, presents us with a very intriguing play on space making and place creating, right? You actually start with the space which you find there and, due to this intervention in particular, it becomes something like a connotation of symbolism, of meaning, and through this actually becomes a place, is that right? Even though it is a non-physical building. There is no building, as you said before. When I connect this or put this in the context of the pavilion in Rio, I think we have something here that is very similar, right? Due to it being a temporary structure and one that is used by the public, it finally becomes a place. And isn't it actually easier to design or work on a temporary structure like this, possibly because criticism would have been stronger if it had been said it would be there for 50 years. Was this also an important issue?

CJ_ I don't understand the question.

[...]

RR_ Coming from another side: Developing a project in architecture is always about a manifestation, I would say,

of power. So, whenever we build something, there will be criticism. It is always against power and in how far we deal with this power because there is always something built, something physical. And as soon as it is a temporary building, there is not this kind of criticism anymore, because you can always say: It will be gone again. You don't have to worry.

CJ_ It will be gone again, yes.

RR_ So, in terms of strategy, is this something important for you?

CJ_ I don't know if I am conscious of this.

RR_ When you take the pavilion of Rio and you say: Okay, you go to Brasilia with a very similar idea, and it's a temporary structure again, taking up the same proportion of the ministries which you have there. Because also this could ultimately have been a physical building, a physical structure.

CJ_ This could be, yes.

CH_ Both projects, the Rio pavilion and the chapel, are actually ephemeral structures. Both are intended to appear and disappear ... but in the end, the chapel became a permanent fixture simply because it was so well accepted.

CJ_ The chapel was supposed to be removed.



CH_ Exactly. I was wondering whether this ephemeral architecture ... What is the quality in general of an ephemeral architecture like the Humanidade Pavilion? You say that the continuation of these projects will be in Brasilia and maybe somewhere else as well.

CJ_ Somewhere else ... in São Paulo, there was a similar idea.

CH_ So, what is the quality of the ephemeral?

CJ_ Because it stays in our imagination in a way.

CH_ Because it's an event that happened?

CJ_ Yes.

CH_ That's an interesting thought. So, it stays ...

CJ_ Because for example, Peter Brook's gesture ... it is a gesture but it stays for many generations. It's just a gesture, it just ended ... It was so important for the history of theater. It's there, it's in everyone's imagination.

CH_ Do you think that your chapel should disappear again?

CJ_ It will disappear one day.

CH_ You want it to disappear again?

CJ_ No, I think Venice will disappear because of the rising sea level.

CH_ [Laughs] I see. A totally different question actually. Now we are already in Brazil. There is a huge legacy for architects who grew up and were educated in Brazil. You have the legacy, especially when you are from Rio, of Oscar Niemeyer. You have Mendes da Rocha and Vilanova Artigas, Lina Bo Bardi and so on. In your case I don't really see these roots. I was wondering, first of all, how did you grow out of these strong references?

CJ_ I don't know.

CH_ What stayed? Or what thoughts, ideas, are still part of your thinking?

CJ_ I don't know. But I always had a feeling since I graduated that I was not going to do architecture. I thought architecture was not for me ... The projects just appear and I do them and I continue working, because there is again a project to do [...]. So, there is a fight with architecture. There was a time a few years ago when I was not doing anything in architecture. I was working for someone at the theater in Rio. So it was a way to try to give up. But I returned again, so ...

RR_ Brazil is actually a place we often imagine as a kind of paradise, kind of in a cliché, imagine it being like a paradise, like a tropical country: the beach, Copacabana, everything easy-go-lucky. Is it easy to work as an architect in Brazil at the moment?

CJ_ It is not easy. It is really difficult. São Paulo is better than Rio because it has more economic growth, it is richer. But if you see the work the architects are doing, it is mainly housing projects. And the scale of these houses, 3,000-4,000 square meters, this happens a lot in Brazil, it is extreme. I would hate to be doing these houses and this kind of architecture. So this is something I don't really look for. Maybe that is why it's hard for me, because I closed this door. I don't want that. It doesn't make sense. It is hard, it is really hard in Brazil, because there is no competition.

CH_ Do you think it is a problem that you as an architect and other young architects are not participating? The

result is that you are not building the environments for this generation. And if it is not you, who is building these environments then?

CJ_ That's the problem.

CH_ These are huge, massive environments that are getting built. If no architects are involved, I doubt these areas will become meaningful or produce sense.

CJ_ But I don't think those architects are doing public buildings. They are working for the elite in the country. There is no competition, no tender for projects of this kind. It is very difficult. In São Paulo, there is a little more work, but even for Paulo Mendes da Rocha, if you see what he has done, you realize he has not had very much work throughout his entire career. He has spent the past twelve years building one SESC that just opened last year. It took him twelve years to do a refurbishment of this building. It's really hard for him. He should win one more Pritzker, because it's so hard to work in Brazil.

RR_ Is there actually any public money involved in architecture? Do the state or the municipalities invest in projects or are the projects mainly developer-driven?

CJ_ Most of them are private. There is this one kind of projects that are going on, like for example the SESC in São Paulo, the one he [Paulo Mendes da Rocha] was engaged in for twelve years. It's one program, a public program. There is no competition, no invitation for the

architects, but it's a program, a public program. That is very nice. It takes a long time, but it is very nice. But it's not common, that is the problem. We don't know the architects. If you ask them who did this, you don't know, you just don't know.

CH_ I am going to make a slight change of direction now. I was very curious about this one project you did, this bench [project Ballast, Architectural Biennale Venice 2018], that didn't work out in the end. You just built one third, like mock-ups, prototypes actually. It looks like a very strong work. But then, at the same time, it turns out to be a kind of failure, one hasn't accomplished what one wanted to do. I think it is brave that you are not ashamed to show this work that obviously failed a little bit in the end. I was wondering, what do you think about failure in your work? I just think it is interesting that you show this, although it is not a finished work. Normally architects show finished works, projects that worked out successfully. This made me curious to find out what your thoughts are on failure?

CJ_ About this experimental project?

CH_ About this one specifically, but also in general.

CJ_ If you find someone willing to do it. [laughs] Doing a pavilion like this and a house of this type in stone is crazy. It is an experiment and it is also a problem. I mean this house is a problem and the pavilion was not a problem, but it could have been a problem. It was an experiment.

There were no rules for the scaffold. It is dangerous to build something where you cannot ...

RR_ Well, building something in Venice is always a problem anyway, always a challenge, right?

CJ_ Yes, it is always a challenge. There is always something new. That is true, however, for every construction.

RR_ The issue of not being able to have a foundation or stabilize things is also grueling. Even Calatrava had these problems with his bridge at the railway station. It was moving and the supporting groundwork used as foundations simply didn't work. Whenever you meet people at the Biennale, they always say the same thing: If you ever try to do anything in Venice, you can be certain it will be the biggest of challenges, like fighting a continuous battle against an endless stream of forces which you had previously neither encountered nor imagined. This is what makes the way you were able to deal with this situation so very intriguing. Coming to this topic of detailing and structure – the detail, the structure and the material. I think they always go together in your projects. The moment you actually start designing, there are always the thoughts about the details, how to develop a detail, going along with the material as well. Is this something, you actually work on due to your education, being trained as an architect?

CJ_ Do you mean whether this is part of my education [thinks], this lack of details? [laughs]

RR_ Well, I wouldn't say that. I think this is an understatement. I don't think there is a lack of detail. There is a very strong connotation in the detail, because it has to be very precise in order to be as abstract as it is. I think it's not something that appears by pure coincidence. It is always you as an architect behind it. Pushing the boundaries, because even for the single-family houses, you would say these houses don't really have details, but if, say, only the local workers will receive the model and say: 'Ok, let's try to make this house', the house would look completely different in the end, wouldn't it?

CJ_ Yes, totally. Yes, I think, if there is no detail, if there is no drawing, I'm there to say what it is. I was not there while the chapel was being built, and it was a battle to do these detailing parts, to not see the bolt, how it should be done. And then you see the detail they wanted to do. It was terrible. It was really a process to convince. It is so simple that if it is not this, it is not good. If it is not so well done, it is not good.

RR_ Yes, but finally the detail is part of the context of the whole project. And then it doesn't have the importance anymore. But if the detail is not well developed, then suddenly it becomes very important while the projects themselves become weaker. So, I think the details play a very powerful role in your projects. In fact, the same

attitude is always present in all your projects. In the case of the house you showed with the skylight [Veranda House], there again you have this topic of one detail. I think this is actually the detail, which is so important ...

CJ_The brick house?

RR_I mean the one with the glass walls on both sides and the top light within the house. The skylight which actually illuminates the walls on both sides. The striking thing about it is that basically there is so much daylight coming inside, you don't need the skylight. So this is, I think, the most important detail in this whole house. Suddenly, so much light comes into the space that it gives an entirely different quality to the space inside, right?

CJ_Yes, because the light in Brazil in the summer is like this. ... It has a presence. This never happens here, I think. I don't know for sure, but I think it is never like that.

RR_It is different.

CJ_It is a part of the house to be almost alive with this light. There is a lot of light, sure. But I think the light that comes from the roof gives much more light than if you open up everything.

CH_Yes.

CH_There is another house, too. I think it was your first house – the Rio Bonito House. There is this story that you

didn't have any details for it, or at least you didn't have them drawn. So, you only communicated by telephone. Or did you call these people?

CJ_I was on site for most of the time.

CH_Just talking?

CJ_In this case, I was on the construction site for most of the time.

CH_Aha, you were there.

CJ_Yes, I was there.

CH_You were controlling things?

CJ_Yes, because of the size of the stone, because ...

CH_I see. It reminds me of this architectural classic: Eupalinos [Paul Valéry: Eupalinos or The Architect]. It is only numbers and orders. I think it is nice to say that this house was built only with numbers and orders, a work without a plan. So my question would be: Living as we now do in the digitalization age with all its hyper-realistic means of presenting images and depicting architecture, how do you use these means or how important are they in your work?

CJ_I think each material tells you how to draw. I mean for the Posse House the drawing was made in millimeters

because the material told me to do it in millimeters. And the house of stone, there were only measures, as you said. There is twelve meters of beam, it goes one meter inside the stone and that's it. It was coordinated by measures. The other one was designed in millimeters because the material is so precise. It has to be millimetric. So, it is about the material that tells you how to draw. There was no drawing for the pavilion. It was exactly like the Rio Bonito house, but it was nine thousand square meters. It was only a coordination of measures ... There was no detail because the junction was there. It was somehow concluding while the construction was growing, and the project was progressing.

CH_What I find striking in your projects, especially in the small houses, is that you build in a very traditional way, with traditional means and materials. You use high-tech materials like steel only for very special points. Most of all, it is this precise order that you put into these very natural materials you build with. This has a modern and archaic aspect. I think this is one of the qualities of these buildings. How do you see the relation with the traditional ways and means of constructing?

CJ_Related to what?

CH_Related to you. Do you rely on it? Or how do you cope with this tradition? There are a lot of traditional building techniques in Brazil, many different ways to build. I think Lina Bo Bardi did research on this and even built

a few buildings in this way. She adopted some traditional methods of constructing.

CJ_Even with concrete, we could say it is already a tradition. What I mean is, concrete has its own tradition in Brazil with the modernists, 50 years already, more than 50 years.

RR_If Brazil was not so far away, Christoph, we would certainly take our students there and visit Carla's projects and find out about these secret details, this kind of understatement details in the context of your projects. Because I think this is one of the very special issues in your work, as far as it has been built now. So, Carla thank you very much for your lecture, for telling us about your architecture, which is so modest, so calm and, as you say yourself, abstract. Thank you very much for coming.

CH_Thank you very much.

CJ_Thank you so much.



JAN KINSBERGEN

NOVEMBER 11, 2019

LECTURE_29

INTERVIEW_35



<Zwei Stützen oder drei Stützen sind eigentlich zu viele. Eine würde reichen. Und dann haben wir gedacht: ‚Nein, eine ist auch zu viel. Eine halbe wäre noch besser‘, und das heißt jetzt ‚das Haus mit einer halben Stütze‘.>

<Two or three pillars are actually too much. One would be enough. And then we thought: ‘No, one would also be too much. Half would even be better’, and that is now called ‘the house with half a pillar’.>

LECTURE
HAUS FLORA | Seelisberg, Switzerland | 2016

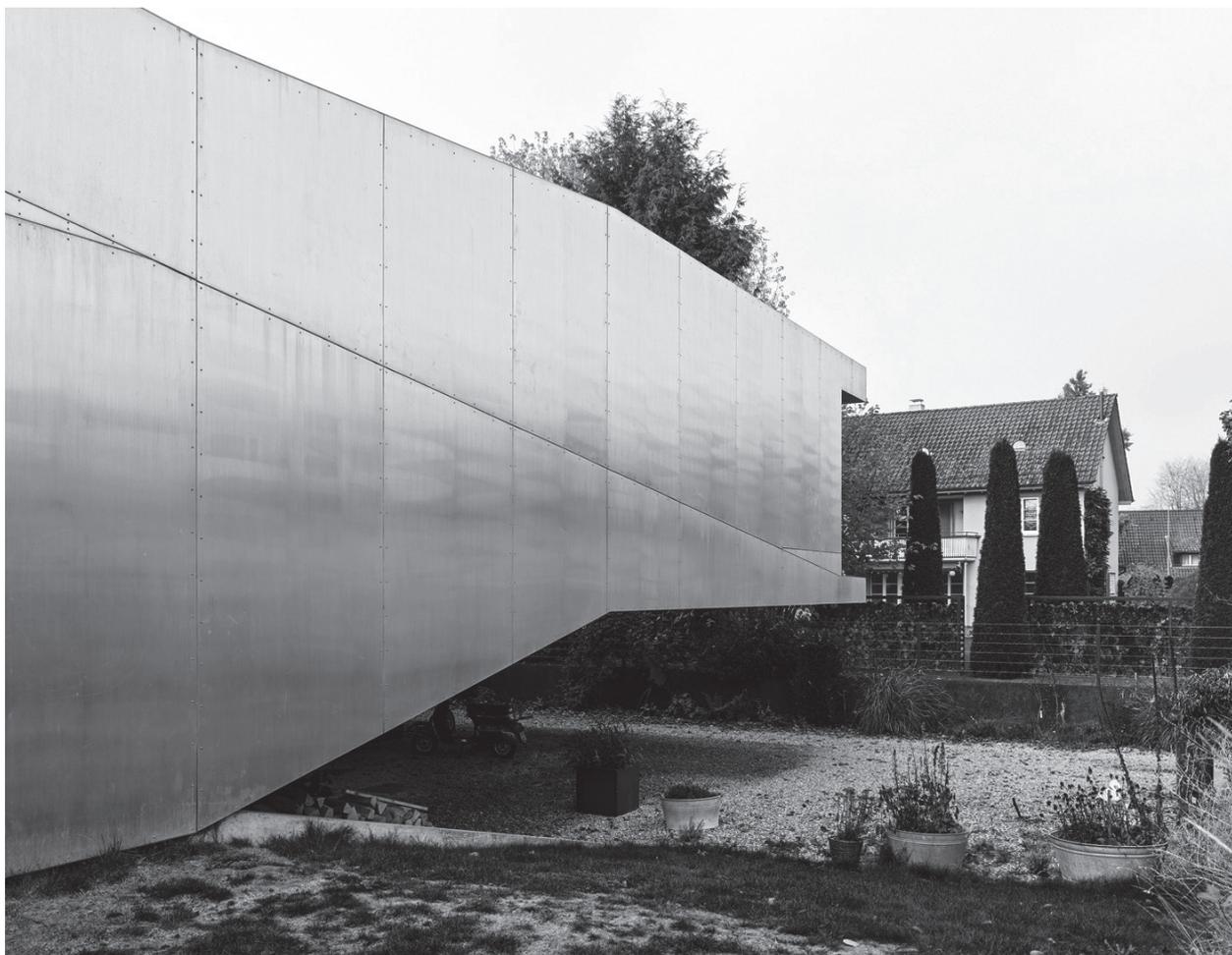


<Dieser Raum, der ist relativ einfach. Der ist einfach ein Rechteck. Aber dadurch, dass er unten eben offen ist, und dass er oben offen ist, und dass er rundum verglast ist, ist er je nach Tageslicht, je nach Stimmung des Tages, ein ganz unterschiedlicher Raum. Man sieht gar nicht, wo die Grenzen sind. Der hat wirklich so eine Art Zentrumscharakter bekommen, wo sich die Familie auch da rundherum aufhält. >

<This room, it is relatively simple. It is simply a rectangle. But because it is open at the bottom and at the top and because it is glazed all around, it is a very different room depending on the daylight, depending on the mood of the day. You can't even see where the boundaries are. It has really taken on a kind of hub character, with the family also living around it. >



HAUS FÜR EINE FAMILIE | Langenthal, Switzerland | 2009





<Diese Röhre hat auch [...] einen Wassertank. Sie hat aber mehr als nur einen Wassertank. Sie hat auch Nistplätze für Mauersegler. Das ist ganz wichtig in Zürich. Es gibt viel zu wenig Nistplätze für Vögel. Weil die Fassaden alle so flach sind und es keine Überstände mehr gibt, finden die Vögel keine Nistplätze mehr. Deshalb haben wir in diese sustainability tube diese Nistplätze eingebaut. >

<This tube also has [...] a water tank. But it has more than just a water tank. It also has nesting places for swifts. This is very important in Zurich. There are far too few nesting places for birds. Because the façades are all so flat and there are no more overhangs, the birds cannot find any more nesting places. That's why we have built these nesting places into this sustainability tube. >

SCHULHAUS BORRWEG | Zurich, Switzerland | 2019

INTERVIEW

Jan Kinsbergen

JK_ Jan Kinsbergen
RR_ Roger Riewe
MV_ Marisol Vidal



RR_ Lieber Jan, das war ein wunderbarer Vortrag mit unglaublich spannenden Projekten. Wir könnten sagen, modellhaft-abstrakt, da ist eigentlich fast nichts dran. Also, entweder es gibt jetzt fast nichts, über das wir diskutieren können, oder wir werden jetzt stundenlang reden können. Ich schlage die zweite Variante vor. Aber wir machen das in 45 Minuten und dann gehen wir nach nebenan, um dort bei ein paar Drinks und einem Imbiss weiterzureden. Das Gebäude als Infrastruktur ist ein spannender Ansatz. Da muss es zunächst eine kongeniale Zusammenarbeit mit dem Tragwerksplaner geben. Wie sieht bei dir diese Zusammenarbeit aus? Wo beginnt das Projekt, mit welchen Initialen, mit welchen ersten Gedanken startet man in ein Projekt – der Architekt, der Tragwerksplaner?

JK_ Ich habe es immer so gemacht: Ich habe angefangen, Sachen zu machen, wo ich wusste, dass der Ingenieur zunächst einmal sagt: ‚Das geht nicht.‘ Immer dann, wenn er gesagt hat: ‚Es geht nicht‘, war ich zufrieden, denn dann haben wir natürlich im Verlauf des Gesprächs nach einer Lösung gesucht, wo man dann sagen konnte: ‚Doch, jetzt geht es.‘ Dieser Prozess, zuerst das Unmögliche, das Nicht-Machbare vorzuschlagen, um dann zum Machbaren vorzugehen, braucht natürlich auch einen Ingenieur, der Interesse hat, den Bogen weit zu spannen und sich nicht mit irgendwelchen naheliegenden Lösungen zufriedenzugeben. Ich glaube, mit Joseph Schwartz habe ich so jemanden, der selbst extreme Freude an Dingen hat, die eben nicht offensichtlich sind. Was mich oft interessiert oder was ich gemerkt habe, ist, dass die Aufgabenstellung dann immer war: Mit wie wenig geht

RR_Jan, that was a wonderful presentation of some incredibly exciting projects, exemplary and abstract, so actually there is nothing missing. So, either there is almost nothing we can talk about now, or we will be talking about these projects for hours on end. I think the second option is the more likely one, but we will stick to 45 minutes limit and after that we will go next door to continue talking over a few drinks and a snack. A building as infrastructure is an exciting approach. So there has to be a congenial collaboration per se with the structural engineer. How does such a cooperation work for you – especially in terms of: Where does the project begin, with which initials, with which initial thoughts do you start a project – the architect, the structural engineer?

JK_Yes, well, I always did it that way: In fact, I originally did things in such a way that I started where I knew the engineer would first say: 'That won't work.' And whenever he said: 'That won't work', I was satisfied, because then of course we would be looking for a workable solution in the course of our conversations, all the way through to a point where we could finally say: 'Yes, now it works.' This process of first suggesting the impossible, something that is altogether not feasible, and then proceeding to strip it down to the feasible, naturally also requires an engineer who is willing to go the extra mile and who is not satisfied with any obvious solutions. And I think with Joseph Schwartz, I have someone who is thoroughly happy and at home with things that are not obvious. What I am often interested in or what I noticed is that the task was then always: 'With how little is it going to work?' When I went ahead and said: 'I have two or three pillars', and

we then said: 'No, half a pillar is enough', the process, the consideration, is: How do we want to make this space and what's the minimum amount of elements to get that? That means: The elements must be designed as intelligently as possible so that as few of them as possible will be required. And what you don't want is that, in the end, you will have to accomplish this feat with every single thing becoming complicated. What the result ought to be instead of this is to have the greatest possible return while keeping resource consumption as low as possible. So, we somehow find ourselves returning to this sustainability debate that says we can create fantastic spaces with very few resources, if we are prepared to use materials intelligently.

RR_Yes, I once visited a large hall with Klaus Bollinger, also a well-known structural engineer, and he said: 'You know, as a structural engineer, things only begin to become interesting once you no longer understand the thing, or why it's stable at all.' And we were standing in the middle of this hall and beginning to wonder how it actually worked. It was a very exciting conversation. Marisol, who is now joining us in this discussion and who is an absolute concrete expert not least due to her doctoral thesis, must certainly have some questions in this regard, especially in this area of structural engineering and infrastructure.

MV_Indeed, it is striking how frequently concrete shows up in these projects. Concrete appears again and again with this double-use, on the one hand as a supporting structure and as a surface on the other, and then again sometimes also being responsible for atmosphere or

es? Als ich gegangen bin und gesagt habe: ‚Ich habe da zwei oder drei Stützen‘, und wir dann meinten: ‚Nein, eine halbe reicht‘, war der Prozess und war die Überlegung: Wir wollen diesen Raum machen, und mit wie wenig Elementen geht es? Das bedeutet: Die Elemente müssen möglichst intelligent gemacht sein, so dass es möglichst wenige von ihnen braucht. Nicht, dass man zum Schluss in einem Kraftakt alles kompliziert macht, sondern es muss dann so sein, dass es mit möglichst wenig Einsatz der Mittel, mit möglichst wenig Ressourcenverbrauch, den größtmöglichen Ertrag ergibt. So schließt sich der Kreis zu der Nachhaltigkeitsdebatte: Mit möglichst wenig Ressourcen, mit möglichst wenig Materialeinsatz, intelligent eingesetzt, können wir fantastische Räume machen.

RR_ Ich habe einmal mit Klaus Bollinger, auch ein namhafter Tragwerkplaner, eine große Halle besichtigt, und er hat gesagt: ‚Weißt du, als Tragwerksplaner wird es erst dann interessant, wenn du das Ding nicht mehr verstehst, warum es überhaupt hält.‘ Wir standen mitten in dieser Halle, und da sind uns schon langsam die Gedanken gekommen, wie das eigentlich funktioniert. Es war dann ein ganz spannendes Gespräch. Marisol, die uns jetzt in der Diskussion begleitet und nicht nur durch ihre Dissertation als absolute Betonexpertin gilt, wird bestimmt hier, gerade in diesem Bereich der Tragwerksplanung und der Infrastruktur, glaube ich, einige Fragen haben.

MV_ Ja, es ist auffällig, dass Beton ziemlich oft bei diesen Projekten vorkommt: Beton, mit dieser doppelten Fähigkeit, einerseits als Tragwerk, andererseits als Oberfläche, aber auch für die Atmosphäre oder die Materialität zuständig, kommt immer wieder vor. Wie ist dein Bezug zu diesem Material, mit seinen Tücken und seinen Schwierigkeiten, diese vier Felder gleichzeitig abzudecken?

JK_ Ich weiß nicht. Ich habe keine Beziehung zum Material. Ich habe keine Beziehung zu Blumen und ich habe keine Beziehung zu Material. Ich habe keine Beziehung zu Farben. Ich finde einfach, bei den Materialien ist es so, dass sie mir am besten gefallen, wenn sie einfach sind, wie sie sind. Auch Plastik ist in Ordnung, wenn es einfach Plastik ist, oder auch Aluminium oder Holz. Ich habe eigentlich keine Materialvorlieben. Beton ist ein Material, das auf Zug und auf Druck beansprucht werden kann und das in Bezug auf das Raumklima eine enorme Kraft hat, weil es sehr viel Masse hat. Es speichert Masse, es kann abgeben, es ist wie ein Stein, oder? Deshalb ist es als Baumaterial interessant. Allerdings ist es ein bisschen schwer. Mich hat der Beton als vorgespannte Konstruktion eigentlich immer am meisten interessiert. Ich fand schlaff armierten Beton in seiner Dimension und auch in seiner Ausprägung immer ein bisschen klobig. Ich finde, Beton hat, wenn er vorgespannt ist, eine viel elegantere Erscheinung. Er ist schlanker, er ist irgendwie nicht hängend, sondern eher ein bisschen nach oben gewölbt. Das hat mir am Beton am besten gefallen. Ich hatte aber noch nie so ein Projekt gemacht, wo es darum ging: Schalungsbild so,

materiality. What is your relation to this material, with its pitfalls and difficulties, for covering these four fields at the same time?

JK_ I don't know. I have no relation to material. I have no relation to flowers and I have no relation to material. I have no relation to colors. So, the way I think about the materials is that I like them best when they are used simply as they come. Plastic is fine too, if it's just plastic, and the same goes for aluminum or wood. I don't really have any material preferences in that sense. Concrete is just a material that can be subjected to tension and pressure and that has an enormous power in terms of the indoor climate, because it has a lot of mass. It stores mass and can release mass, it's like stone, isn't it? And that's why it's interesting as a building material. However, I find it a bit heavy. Actually, I was always most interested in concrete as a prestressed structure. So, I always found loose reinforced concrete a bit chunky in its dimensions and also in its form. I think concrete has a much more elegant appearance when it is prestressed. It is slimmer, somehow not hanging, but rather arched upwards slightly. That's what I like best about concrete. But I had never done a project in this way before, which was aiming for formwork like this, formwork like that. Often, I simply said to the master-builder: 'You do it the way that works best for you, because there's no money for anything else anyway.' It turned out that this approach often worked out very well because he simply went ahead and did it in his way, and I think it's reasonable to expect that when you build something you do it in a way that it is somehow practical. When a farmer builds his farm, he tries to set about it in

such a way that it simply works well. And he doesn't try to make it as pretty as possible for, let's say, the animals that are grazing there. It is about realizing the sensibility of the building structure so as to not abuse the material just so that it looks a little nicer. That's how I see it with concrete too.

MV_ There are of course also very high-quality specifications for concrete use in Switzerland. You can see that in the photographs. It is above the European average, one could say, and that is why you can probably leave many of these decisions to the construction process and still be sure that a good result will be delivered. How was it at the time? You spent ten years, I think, in the United States, in New York, and you worked and also taught there. This is of course a completely different context, especially in terms of construction techniques and execution. Looking at your projects now, it is not really possible to recognize an influence from the New York era at first glance. What influences are still there from that time, or what did you keep and bring with you when you returned to Switzerland?

JK_ Yeah, so I think the only thing would be the relationship to the work, this seriousness when dealing with the profession. It was the kind of office where you worked 18 hours a day and you were more like a small family and in essence constantly at work. And that's actually what's remained, the notion that working as an architect is not something that you simply do and finish, but rather it's a part of how you deal with time. Yes, you can read a newspaper or a book, but the instructive

Schalungsbild so. Ich habe dem Baumeister oft einfach gesagt: ‚Du, mach es so, wie es für dich am besten geht, denn Geld gibt es sowieso nicht.‘ Dann hat es sich herausgestellt, dass es oft sehr gut herausgekommen ist, weil er es einfach gemacht hat, wie es für ihn sinnvoll erschien, und das, finde ich, ist auch vernünftig – etwas zu bauen, wie es irgendwie praktisch zu machen wäre. Wenn ein Bauer seinen Hof baut, dann schaut er, macht er es auch so, dass es einfach gut funktioniert. Er schaut nicht, dass es möglichst schön für die Tiere ist, die da am Grasen sind. Es geht darum, die Sinnfälligkeit der Baukonstruktion auch umzusetzen, um das Material nicht zu vergewaltigen, nur damit es ein bisschen schöner aussieht. So sehe ich das mit dem Beton.

MV_Es gibt in der Schweiz natürlich auch eine sehr hohe Qualität bei der Ausführung von Beton. Das kann man in den Bildern sehen. Es ist über dem europäischen Durchschnitt, könnte man sagen, und deswegen kann man wahrscheinlich viele solcher Entscheidungen der Bauausführung überlassen und sich trotzdem sicher sein, dass ein gutes Ergebnis geliefert wird. Wie war es in der Zeit? Du warst zehn Jahre, glaube ich, in den USA, in New York, du hast dort gearbeitet und auch unterrichtet. Das ist natürlich ein ganz anderer Kontext, vor allem in Bezug auf Bautechniken und Ausführung. Wenn man deine Projekte jetzt sieht, würde man nicht wirklich auf den ersten Blick einen Einfluss aus der New Yorker Zeit wiedererkennen. Was ist doch aus dieser Zeit da eingeflossen, oder was hast du nach deiner Rückkehr in die Schweiz davon behalten?

JK_Ich glaube, das Einzige war die Beziehung zu der Arbeit, die Art und Weise der Ernsthaftigkeit der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Beruf. Das war so ein Büro, wo man 18 Stunden am Tag gearbeitet hat, man eigentlich wie eine kleine Familie war und eigentlich nur noch das gemacht hat. Es ist mir geblieben, dass eben die Arbeit als Architektin oder als Architekt nicht etwas ist, das man einfach einmal abgeschlossen hat, sondern es ein Teil des Umgangs mit der Zeit ist. Man kann eine Zeitung oder ein Buch lesen, aber ich beschäftige mich am liebsten mit meinen Projekten, weil ich dadurch am meisten lerne. Ich versuche die Projekte so zu machen, dass sie mit unserer Zeit, mit der Zeit, wo ich das Gefühl habe, ich lebe darin, zu tun haben. Und das habe ich eigentlich mitbekommen. Ich glaube, stilistisch ist nicht viel hängen geblieben. Wir hatten damals vor allem Räume gemacht, die eigentlich mit der Tragstruktur nicht wirklich zu tun hatten, man kann auch Gipskartonarchitektur dazu sagen, oder? Ein bisschen Struktur hier und dort, und dann alles mit Gipskarton, Verputz und so, verkleiden. Das mache ich ja heute nicht. Aber die Art und Weise der Auseinandersetzung – das ist mir geblieben.

RR_Und dennoch ist das Büro, wo du gearbeitet hast, doch relativ untypisch für die USA.

JK_Ja, ein bisschen europäischer als alle anderen.

RR_Ja, irgendwie schon, denn eigentlich kennt man von den Amerikanern entweder die ganz kleinen Mini-Mini-Ein- oder Zwei-Mann-Büros oder Halbzeitarchitekten oder Teilzeitarchitekten, und auf der anderen Seite die

process I prefer is simply working on my projects, because that it is where I learn the most. And I try to design the projects so that they have to do with our time, with the time I feel I live in. And this has stayed with me. I don't think much has remained with me in terms of style. Back then, we were designing spaces that really had no relation to the supporting structure, you could also call it plasterboard architecture, right? A bit of structure here and there, and then covering everything with cardboard and plaster and so on. I don't do that these days. But the general method of dealing with things has stayed with me.

RR_ And yet the office where you worked is relatively untypical for the United States.

JK_ Yes, a little more European than everyone else.



RR_ Yes, somewhat, because usually the Americans are known for having either these very small mini-one or two-man offices or part-time architects, or these mega enterprises with thousands of employees, where there is a staircase department, a railings department, and a roof department, so you can work your way through these offices. But as I see it, what stayed with you from there is actually dealing with architecture or confronting what the architect actually is. And even if it's plasterboard, it can be seen in a wider context, the issue of space, which is omnipresent there. And that leads me to your house with the pillar. Why the pillar and not the slab? Is it a question of space? It's not just a structural question, right?

JK_ I think it's the anthropomorphic dimension. The pillar is simply closest to the human body and therefore has the most power to honor the space effectively. And the support is not a closure either. The slab is like a separation between one side and another. The slab tends to be rather exclusive, while the pillar is somehow inclusive. With a pillar, you can walk around it, the pillar is like a counterpart and right now it's closest to me as a component, simply because I think it is the least abstract. It is the most concrete component for me as a sensation. But that is something I didn't actually think about. I just noticed that the pillar was chasing me and preoccupied me, and this was more or less a retrospective observation. And then I realized: My first house, it had no pillars at all and then I made it a subject matter again, why not? There were pillars now and an aspect that is simply important for me is that the pillar is not just any component that is placed somewhere in a corner and

Megastrukturen mit tausenden Mitarbeitern, wo es dann eine Abteilung Treppe gibt, eine Abteilung Geländer und eine Abteilung Dach, und man sich durch diese Büros dann durcharbeiten kann. Aber ich verstehe schon: Bei dir ist dort eigentlich der Umgang mit der Architektur und das, was es bedeutet, Architekt zu sein, hängen geblieben. Auch wenn es mit Gipskarton gewesen sein mag, es ist ja doch im größeren Kontext zu sehen, die Raumfrage, die immer im Raum stand. Das führt mich zu deinem Haus mit der Stütze. Warum die Stütze und nicht die Scheibe? Ist das eine Raumfrage? Das ist ja nicht nur eine Tragwerksfrage, oder?

JK Es ist, glaube ich, die anthropomorphe Dimension. Die Stütze ist einfach dem menschlichen Körper am nächsten und hat deshalb auch am meisten eine Kraft, den Raum eben wirksam zu ehren. Die Stütze ist auch kein Abschluss. Die Scheibe ist wie eine Trennung zwischen der einen Seite und der anderen. Sie ist eher exklusiv und die Stütze ist irgendwie inklusiv. Die Stütze kann man umlaufen, sie ist wie ein Gegenüber. Mir ist im Moment die Stütze als Bauteil am nächsten, einfach, weil sie, glaube ich, am wenigsten abstrakt ist. Sie ist das konkreteste Bauteil für mich als Empfindung. Aber ich habe darüber eigentlich nicht nachgedacht. Ich habe einfach gemerkt, dass mich die Stütze verfolgt und beschäftigt hat, ich habe das dann eigentlich eher in der Retrospektive gemerkt. Ich habe dann gemerkt: Mein erstes Haus, das hatte gar keine Stütze. Dann habe ich daraus wieder ein Thema gemacht, wieso nicht? Dann hat es Stützen gegeben, und was einfach wichtig ist, ist, dass die Stütze nicht einfach irgendein Bauteil ist, das man irgendwo in eine Ecke

stellt und das einfach noch da sein muss, weil eben die Decke noch getragen werden muss, sondern die Stütze hat eine Berechtigung und ist ein wichtiger Teil in der Modellhaftigkeit des Raumes. Ich verstecke die Stütze nicht in irgendeiner Wand, oder sie steht nicht einfach an einer Fassade, sondern sie ist Teil der raumbildenden Elemente. Letztendlich ist es, glaube ich, egal, welches Bauteil es ist. Ich glaube, dass gute Architektur nur dann möglich ist, wenn jedem Element, das verwendet wurde, auch die gebührende Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wird. Das ist wieder eine Analogie zu der Gesellschaft oder zu der Familie. Es kann nicht sein, dass irgendjemand nur zugunsten von jemand anderem vernachlässigt wird. Diese Gleichberechtigung der Elemente hat mich immer interessiert. Das ist ein leichter Widerspruch, aber ich habe vorhin gesagt, dass mich andere Kunstrichtungen nicht interessieren, weil sie nicht mit Architektur zu tun haben. Ich finde zum Beispiel die Gleichberechtigung der Elemente, wie sie Schönberg begriffen hat, wichtig, also die Zwölftonmusik, wo jeder Ton seine gleich große Berechtigung wie sein Nachbarton hat und es kein tonales Zentrum gibt. Dieses Konzept von Berechtigung der einzelnen Elemente ist mir in der Architektur sehr wichtig. Es gibt keine weniger wichtigen Elemente.

MV Man merkt, dass diese Elemente eine ganz besondere Rolle spielen, auch, weil weniger vorhanden sind als vielleicht in herkömmlichen Projekten. Die eine Stütze, die halbe Stütze sogar, oder wie bei dem anderen Haus waren diese vier Stützen nicht an den Ecken, sondern in der Mitte der Wände. Wenn man die Modelle sieht, sind sie fast identisch mit dem Rohbau, und das

simply has to be there because the ceiling must be supported, but rather the support is autonomous and an important part of the space. I don't hide the pillar in a wall or along a façade, but rather it is part of the space-forming elements. Ultimately, I think it doesn't matter which component it is. It's just that I think good architecture is only possible if every element that has been used is given due diligence. Again, it is an analogy for society or family. These are contexts where it can't be that someone is being neglected in favor of someone else. So, I was always interested in this equality of elements. This is a bit of a contradiction, but I said beforehand that I am not interested in other art movements because they have nothing to do with architecture. I find the equality of the elements, as Schönberg understood it, very important – 12-tone music for example, where every tone has the same right as its neighbor, and there is no tonal center, but rather each tone has its own value. This concept of the individual elements' right is very important to me in architecture. There are no inferior elements.

MV_ These elements play a very special role, also because fewer of them are present, compared to maybe conventional projects. One pillar, half a pillar, or, as in the other house, these four supports not in the corners, but in the center of the walls. If you look at the models, they are almost identical to the shell construction and the finished house. The only thing added is a certain level of materiality. A very mundane question in this context: It's often the case, and not just with the first house, that the environment is completely different with very conventional neighboring houses. Have there been any problems on

the part of the neighborhood regarding the construction or this very unusual aspect of the four houses? Or does Switzerland have in any case a progressive attitude towards modern architecture and the house was thus readily accepted in the neighborhood?

JK_No, that is something that I have often been accused of – this kind of an acontextual way of working. But interestingly, it was always this discussion: 'Oh, you with your stuff and things.' Then, strangely we won this competition in Lucerne, which is an urban development project. It really was about urban issues because it's such a big project. It has a connection, it is a public space and so on. And I believe that even this urban development design is actually not contextual in the conventional sense. It is coherent in itself and so are my buildings. What I am looking for in my work is not necessarily a relation to the existing, but coherence within the project. The problem with existing buildings is that when I go somewhere, it often happens that I cannot relate to the environment simply because there is no relation to be found. So, I thought to myself: Alright, just because something is already there does not mean that it is good and that you should continue in this manner. It is never too late for a new start and I think contrasts and opposites are important because they also show what different thinking models there are and also that these different thinking models are also justified. It cannot be that you have to keep accepting a subordinate role just because someone was there before you. That would be somehow frustrating in other aspects of thinking and life, if you are a child and your parents always only tell you: 'You know, we decided to do

fertige Haus ist ebenso fast identisch. Da kommt einfach nur diese Materialitätsebene dazu. Eine ganz banale Frage in diesem Zusammenhang: Man hat öfters gesehen, dass die Umgebung nicht nur bei dem ersten Haus eine ganz andere Bauweise aufweist, mit sehr konventionellen Häusern als Nachbarn. Gab es irgendwelche Probleme seitens der Nachbarschaft wegen der Errichtung oder aufgrund dieses sehr ungewöhnlichen Aspekts der vier Häuser? Oder gibt es in der Schweiz sowieso einen anderen Bezug zur modernen Architektur, so dass diese ohne weiteres in der Nachbarschaft aufgenommen wurden?

JK_Nein. Das ist sicher etwas, das mir auch oft vorgeworfen wurde und wird, diese sozusagen akontextuelle Arbeitsweise. Interessanterweise war es immer diese Diskussion: ‚Ja, du mit deinen Sachen und so.‘ Dann haben wir komischerweise diesen Wettbewerb in Luzern gewonnen, und das ist eigentlich ein städtebauliches Projekt. Dort ging es dann um städtebauliche Fragen, denn es ist ein großes Ding. Es hat einen Zusammenhang, es ist ein öffentlicher Raum und so weiter und so fort. Ich glaube, auch dieser städtebauliche Entwurf ist eigentlich nicht kontextuell. Er ist vielmehr in sich schlüssig, und so sind es auch die Gebäude. Was ich in meiner Arbeit suche, ist nicht unbedingt der Bezug zum Bestehenden, sondern die Schlüssigkeit innerhalb der Aufgabenstellung. Das Problem von Bestehendem ist einfach so, dass ich oft, wenn ich irgendwo hinkomme, gar keinen Bezug zur Umgebung herstellen kann, weil es den nicht gibt. Ich habe für mich gedacht: ‚Ja gut, nur weil etwas schon da ist, heißt es noch lange nicht, dass es gut

ist und dass man in der Art weitermachen soll, nur weil es schon so ist. Es ist nie zu spät für einen Neuanfang.‘ Ich finde, Kontraste und Gegensätze sind wichtig, weil sie auch aufzeigen, welche unterschiedlichen Denkmodelle es gibt. Diese unterschiedlichen Denkmodelle haben auch ihre Berechtigung. Es kann nicht sein, dass man sich ständig unterordnen muss, nur, weil jemand schon früher da war. Das wäre ja im Gedankengut oder im sonstigen Leben auch irgendwie frustrierend, wenn man als Kind auf die Welt kommt und einem die Eltern immer nur sagen: ‚Weißt du, wir haben es so gedacht, jetzt denkst du es auch so.‘ Das ist doch keine tolle Jugend, oder? Eine tolle Jugend ist, wenn man auf die Welt kommt und findet, man kann etwas beitragen und die Eltern lassen einem diese Freiheit dazu.

RR_Wenn man die Grundrissentwicklung, die städtebauliche Entwicklung vom Campus in Lausanne betrachtet, dann gibt es ja auch eine gewisse Analogie zu den einzelnen Häusern, die ja sehr markant oder frappierend ist. Ich glaube, da steckt einiges in diesem Thema drinnen: Die Relation der Elemente untereinander ist eher von Bedeutung als der Kontext zur Umgebung. Diese Relation der Elemente zueinander kann eigentlich nur entstehen, wenn ein gleichberechtigter Wettstreit stattfinden kann, also wenn keine Hierarchie oder so gut wie keine Hierarchie da ist. Gerhard Rühm hat zum Beispiel gesagt, für ihn sind alle Buchstaben gleich, deshalb werden sie alle kleingeschrieben, damit sie erst einmal in Wettstreit miteinander treten können. Sobald man nämlich einen Großbuchstaben irgendwo hinschreibt, geht das schon nicht mehr, weil der größer und wichtiger

it that way, now you also have to do it that way, too.' Not a great childhood, right? A great childhood is when you are born and discover that you can contribute in your own and that your parents give you this freedom.

RR_ Looking at the development of the floor plan, the urban development of the campus in Lausanne, there is also a certain striking analogy to the individual houses. I think there is a lot to this line of thought that the relation of the elements to each other is more important than the context of the environment, right? And this relation of the elements to each other can actually only arise if an equal competition can take place between them, in other words if there is either no hierarchy or almost no hierarchy. For example, Gerhard Rühm said that all letters are equal for him, which is why they should all be written in lowercase so that they can compete with each other first. Because as soon as you write a letter in uppercase somewhere, this equal ranking isn't possible anymore, because uppercase is bigger and more important and so on. It simply occupies a place or a space. So, he always writes all letters in lowercase. This is why they also have a value because each letter can be viewed individually, or in your case because each element individually has a purpose, whether it is a pillar, a panel or a slab. Every now and then, there are slabs that are not supports, but then there are support cables in there. Now, one element that we have to talk about, since it's the most interesting and fascinating, is that your buildings almost look like their model, it is the shell construction that interests us. And if I can speak for all of us as architects, we prefer to check out a shell construction, because later it doesn't get any better. So,

what meaning is there in the façade? How do you deal with the façade?

JK_ I must say, I have a hard time with façades, that's definitely true. Because façades ... I have to rethink them, I have to continue working on how to deal with façades. But I noticed that the façade, as a formal element, is actually unsatisfactory. I noticed in other projects that if I managed to view the façades as an independent element and not just as the final cover-up of the shell, there would probably be room for improvement there, too. I have now started to design façades that are multi-layered, not these double-skin façades, but façades that are multi-skinned as a system. The sun protection, the sun protection rail, the fastening of the sun protection rail, the opening behavior of the windows, the fittings and the ventilation slots, etc. all become a single system that has a certain coherence in itself, regardless of the rest. I'm on to this now, but I haven't gotten that far yet and of course it's true, I neglected the façade for a long time, although we actually have great façade architects in Switzerland, right? I only need to look a little to the north, to the east, and there are many good examples of façades. But the reason why I was never really interested in the façade is actually because I always started from the interior and considered the façade as an end to this interior, and never actually looked at the building from the outside. And that's possibly a bit of a weakness of mine, the fact that I also have trouble with representation. Representation is something I struggle with. For me, representative architecture is an abomination, and the façade has to do with representation. I am this house, I represent it –

ist etc. Er besetzt einfach einen Ort oder einen Platz. So sind bei ihm alle Buchstaben immer klein. Deshalb bekommen sie auch eine Wertigkeit, weil jeder Buchstabe einzeln betrachtet werden kann, oder wie bei dir, weil jedes Element einzeln eine Bedeutung bekommt, ob es jetzt die Stütze, die Platte oder die Scheibe ist. Ab und zu sind es ja doch Scheiben, wo dann diese Stützen nicht sind, wo dann aber Tragseile da drin sind. Ein Element aber, über das wir reden sollten, wo die Faszination oder das Interesse da ist, wenn die Gebäude, die du gemacht hast, fast so aussehen wie das Modell, das ist der Rohbau. Wenn ich uns alle als Architekten nehme, so gehen wir am liebsten Rohbau schauen, denn später wird es ja nicht mehr besser. Welche Bedeutung hat nun die Fassade? Wie gehst du mit der Fassade um?

JK Ich muss sagen, ich tue mich schwer mit Fassaden, das ist schon so. Weil, Fassaden ... also ich muss mir das noch einmal überlegen, ich muss daran weiterarbeiten, wie ich mit der Fassade umgehen soll. Ich habe gemerkt, dass eigentlich die Fassade als, sagen wir, formales Element unbefriedigend ist. Ich habe allerdings in anderen Projekten gemerkt, dass, wenn ich es schaffe, die Fassade auch als eigenständiges Element zu betrachten und nicht nur als abschließende Hülle des Rohbaus, es wahrscheinlich auch dort eine Verbesserung geben könnte. Ich habe jetzt angefangen, Fassaden zu entwerfen, die mehrschichtig sind, also nicht diese Doppelhautfassaden, sondern Fassaden, die als System mehrschichtig sind. Der Sonnenschutz, die Sonnenschutzschiene, die Befestigung der Sonnenschutzschiene, das Öffnungsverhalten der Fenster,

die Beschläge und die Lüftungsschlitze usw. werden so zu einem System, das in sich wieder eine gewisse Schlüssigkeit hat, unabhängig vom Rest. Da bin ich jetzt dran, aber ich bin noch nicht so weit vorgedrungen und es stimmt natürlich, dass ich die Fassade lange Zeit etwas vernachlässigt habe, obschon wir eigentlich super Fassaden-Architekten in der Schweiz hätten, oder? Ich könnte ja nur ein bisschen nach Norden, nach Osten schauen, dann wären da viele gute Beispiele, wie man Fassaden machen kann. Aber der Grund, wieso mich die Fassade nie so wirklich interessiert hat, ist eigentlich, dass ich immer vom Innenraum ausgegangen bin und die Fassade wie einen Abschluss dieses Innenraums dargestellt habe, statt das Gebäude von außen zu betrachten. Es ist eine kleine Schwäche von mir, dass ich auch Mühe mit Repräsentation habe. Etwas, das mir gar nicht liegt, ist Repräsentation. Repräsentative Architektur ist für mich ein Gräuel, und Fassade hat mit Darstellung zu tun. Ich bin dieses Haus, ich stelle das dar – repräsentativ. Ich stelle etwas dar. Ich möchte eben Fassaden entwerfen, die einfach Fassaden sind und nichts darstellen. Da bin ich dran, aber ich bin, ehrlich gesagt, noch nicht weit gekommen. Ich muss noch ein bisschen daran arbeiten, aber ja, das ist ein Thema, das sicher wichtig für die Zukunft ist.

RR Ehe du aber dann zu der eigentlichen Fassade kommst, ist es vielleicht doch konsequenter, wie du es so mitziehst, dass die Fassade eigentlich gar nicht wichtig ist. Denn eigentlich, ja, das ist auch der historische Diskurs schon über die Fassade, braucht das Gebäude keine Fassade. Noch schlimmer ist, wenn in der Fassade auch

representatively. I represent something. All I want to do is to design façades that are simply that – façades – and not representative of anything. That's what I am working on, but frankly I haven't gotten all that far yet. I still have to work on it a bit, but yes, this is an issue that is certainly important for the future.

RR_ But before you get to the actual façade, perhaps it would be more consistent to stick with the façade not actually being important, because that is also the historical discourse about the façade, the building doesn't need a façade. And it gets even worse if there is also a window in the façade, or a door. It becomes very difficult to solve these things. Then to continue with the atrium, where you turn away from the neighbors and the context. Heinz Bienefeld, one of the ingenious Rhineland architects, who's unfortunately passed already, designed three or four houses, all atrium houses. Because he always said: The environment is so terrible that he can't expect anyone to look out at it. So, you basically have to design introvertedly. Finally, this results in the question: How is the environment reacting to this now?

JK_ The thing is simply that my brother is an extremely nice person, very well connected in the neighborhood, and he is very generous and has made and paid for all the boundaries and all, and the paving for the one and the gateway for the other, and this and that. His house is always open, so there are always a lot of people, parties and the like. So, I think the house has been well received. Sure, there are people who think it is kind of a foreign object. But when they are inside, they also notice

the meditative calm that the space radiates. And that is because it is somewhat protected from the outside. You don't actually see this space from the outside. And that privacy within such a crowded neighborhood was very important, because there is no view where you are not looking at someone, and this space simply has such a meaning. But of course, I mean, you make something and you put it into the world and there will always be people who don't like it, that's just the way it is. And I think if there had just been glass all around, people would have complained that you always have to see the other people while they are showering and so on. So, there are also problems. It's not good if you open up too much, and it's not good if you open up too little. I can't build on this type of settlement structure. That makes no sense. So yes, it's a foreign object. The only alternative is to simply do nothing. That would be the only way to escape this dilemma.

MV_ No matter the context: In this example, the first house, your brother was the client. So naturally there is a special relationship between the client and the architect – which probably has its advantages and also disadvantages due to this close relationship. How was it with the other three houses, to what extent were the clients involved? We heard the story of the swimming pool in the roof area. But how was it with the other houses? Were the occupants known from the start or were the houses and apartments intended to be sold or rented later? Was it easy to convince end users of the concept? Or how was that interaction?

noch das Fenster oder auch noch die Türe ist. Dann wird es ganz schwierig, diese Dinge zu lösen. Weitergehend kommen wir dann zum Atriumhaus, wo du dich dann von den Nachbarn und dem Kontext abwendest. Heinz Bienefeld, einer der genialen rheinischen Architekten, leider schon verstorben, hat drei oder vier Häuser gemacht, die immer Atriumhäuser waren, weil er immer gesagt hat: Die Umgebung ist so schrecklich, er kann keinem zumuten, dass man dort hinschaut. Man muss dann praktisch introvertiert arbeiten. Schlussendlich aber fragt man sich: Wie reagiert jetzt die Umgebung darauf?

JK_Das Ding ist einfach, mein Bruder ist ein extrem netter Mensch und er ist wirklich sehr gut verbunden in dem Quartier. Er ist sehr großzügig und hat allen die Grenzen noch gemacht und bezahlt und so, und die Pflasterung von dem, die Einfahrt von dem anderen und dies und das. Er hat auch ein offenes Haus, es kommen sehr viele Leute und es gibt immer riesige Partys und so. Ich glaube, das Haus ist gut aufgenommen worden. Klar gibt es Leute, die finden, dass das irgendwie ein Fremdkörper ist. Aber wenn sie drinnen sind, dann merken sie auch diese meditative Ruhe, die dieser Raum hat. Er hat sie halt dadurch, dass er etwas von außen geschützt ist. Man sieht diesen Raum von außen eigentlich nicht. Diese Privatsphäre innerhalb von einem so dicht gewachsenen Quartier war sehr wichtig, weil es keine Aussicht gibt, wo man nicht allein ist, und dieser Raum hat einfach diese Bedeutung. Ich meine, man stellt etwas her und setzt es in die Welt, und es wird immer Leute geben, denen das nicht gefällt, das ist einfach so. Das liegt in der Natur der Sache. Wenn man einfach eine Verglasung rundherum gemacht

hätte, dann hätten sich die Leute darüber beklagt, dass man den anderen immer beim Duschen sieht und so. Es gibt ja auch Probleme. Wenn man sich zu stark öffnet, ist es nicht gut, und zu wenig ist auch nicht gut. Diese Art von Siedlungsstruktur, die kann ich nicht weiterbauen, das macht keinen Sinn. Deshalb ist es klarerweise ein Fremdkörper. Die einzige Alternative ist, einfach gar nichts zu machen. Das wäre die einzige Möglichkeit, um diesem Dilemma zu entfliehen.

MV_Unabhängig vom Kontext: In diesem Fall, in dem ersten Haus, ist dein Bruder der Bauherr gewesen. Da gibt es natürlich eine besondere Beziehung zwischen Auftraggeber und Architekt, mit Vor- und vielleicht auch mit Nachteilen aufgrund dieser Nähe. Wie war es dann bei den anderen drei Häusern? Inwiefern waren da die Auftraggeber eingebunden? Wir haben die Geschichte mit dem Schwimmbad im Bereich des Daches gehört. Wie aber war das bei den restlichen Häusern? Waren die Nutzer schon von Anfang an bestimmt oder waren die Häuser und Wohnungen dazu gedacht, nachträglich verkauft oder vermietet zu werden? Waren die Endnutzer leicht vom Konzept zu überzeugen oder wie war da die Interaktion?

JK_Ja, es ist eine interessante Frage, und ich muss ehrlich sagen, es ist eine traurige Geschichte. Ich habe wirklich sehr viele Fehler gemacht. Dort habe ich aber, glaube ich, am meisten gelernt, von Fehlern, die mir passiert sind – nicht nur bei den Projekten, die ich gezeigt habe. Aber es gibt auch andere Beispiele, wo gewisse Mechanismen in der Projektierung entstanden sind, wo ich

JK_ Yes, that's an interesting question and I honestly have to say it's a sad story. Because I really made a lot of mistakes. I think I learned the most from mistakes that I made there, not only in the projects that I showed, but there are other examples where certain mechanisms were created in the project, where I have noticed for myself that I just don't do that anymore.

MV_ For example?

JK_ [Laughs] I'm getting there. That made me fail. I have to admit that. That house in Wollerau, it didn't end well. Which is why there are only these pictures here. This not only has to do with the client's situation, but also with me. I was simply not consistent enough. Now I know, after all these experiences, that there is only one solution, that if someone wants to work with us, I have to insist from the beginning: 'Ok, I'm in, but there are rules, and rule number one is: I decide what the house or the buildings look like, from A to Z. You can tell me how much it can cost. You can tell me how many rooms you need, how the functional processes have to be, all the stuff you need. You have to tell me the whole story. But I decide what the place will look like, from A to Z. And I also decide on site supervision.' And I simply didn't do these two things as I should have. What happened was: The site supervisor was someone else. And the site supervisor worked against me. I didn't say: 'I decide what it looks like.' Instead we had a collaborative relationship and that meant that in the end, with many examples, everyone was dissatisfied. Everyone. I was dissatisfied, the client was dissatisfied, the site supervisor was dissatisfied, simply because all three

parties ultimately made compromises to the extent that it was no longer right for anyone. So, everyone got maybe a third of what they wanted. That means two thirds are not what they would have liked. That is a real loss. For me it is a loss, for the client, for all of us. And that's why I stick only to this one possibility and I think it works. It works because at the beginning of a project, everyone has good intentions. At the beginning, everyone is happy, everything is cool. The problems come later. But if you only put your foot down later and say: 'Well actually, I am the architect, I am the one who should decide how it works', then it's too late. But if you make it a condition for working together right from the start, then the client can still say: 'Ok, I don't want to work with you, I want to do it with an architect who does what I want him to.' And I just see it this way: Why do people pay a lot of money to hire an architect only to then decide themselves what the building should look like? It's totally absurd. It makes no sense at all. I always said: 'You don't go to a gallery and tell them: Yes, I'd like this picture, but I would prefer a little more blue down here.' [all laugh] Nobody does that, right? I once said that to a client, and it really was true. I mean, it just can't be, can it? I only noticed that now, and it seems so logical to me that it is the only way for things to work out. But I had to turn 50 to even begin to understand this. [laughs, all laugh] And that's a little late.

RR_ Yes, to come back to Heinz Bienefeld again, he said exactly the same thing. He only had one addition: He said he decided when it would be finished.

für mich selbst gemerkt habe, so mache ich das einfach nicht mehr.

MV_ Zum Beispiel?

JK_[Lacht] Ich komme noch dazu. Das hat dazu geführt, dass ich auch gescheitert bin, das muss ich zugeben. Das Haus in Wollerau ist nicht gut zu Ende gekommen. Deshalb gibt es da auch nur diese Bilder. Das hat nicht nur mit der Situation des Bauherrn zu tun, sondern es hat auch mit mir zu tun. Ich war einfach viel zu wenig konsequent. Ich habe mir jetzt, nach all diesen Erfahrungen, gesagt: ‚Es gibt nur eine Lösung und diese besteht darin, dass, wenn jemand den Wunsch hat, etwas mit uns zu machen, ich dann von Anfang sagen muss: Ok, ich bin dabei, aber es gibt Regeln. Und die Regel Nummer eins ist: Wie das Haus oder wie die Gebäude aussehen, das bestimme ich, und zwar von A bis Z. Ihr könnt sagen, wieviel es kostet. Ihr könnt sagen, wie viele Räume ihr braucht, wie die funktionalen Abläufe sein müssen, was ihr alles benötigt. Alles müsst ihr mir sagen. Aber wie es aussieht, bestimme ich, und zwar von A bis Z. Die Bauleitung bestimme auch ich.‘ Genau das habe ich eben nicht gemacht. Es war so: Die Bauleitung war jemand anderes. Die Bauleitung hat gegen mich gearbeitet. Ich habe nicht gesagt: ‚Der, der bestimmt, wie es aussieht, bin ich.‘ Wir hatten ein Miteinander, das dazu geführt hat, dass am Schluss, bei mehreren Beispielen, alle unzufrieden waren – alle. Ich war unzufrieden, die Bauherrenschaft war unzufrieden und die Bauleitung war unzufrieden, weil wir schlussendlich für alle drei Parteien Kompromisse zu dem Extent gemacht haben, dass es für alle nicht mehr gestimmt hat. Jeder

hat vielleicht ein Drittel bekommen. Das heißt, zwei Drittel sind nicht so, wie jeder es gerne gehabt hätte, sondern nur ein Drittel. Das ist ein Verlust. Für mich ist es ein Verlust, für die Bauherrenschaft, für alle. Deshalb gibt es nur diese Möglichkeit, und ich glaube, es funktioniert. Es funktioniert, weil am Anfang von einem Projekt alle sicher noch gut gesinnt sind. Am Anfang sind alle noch happy, alles cool und so. Die Probleme kommen erst später. Wenn man aber erst später damit kommt und sagt: ‚Ja, eigentlich bin ja ich der Architekt und eigentlich bin ich der, der sagen sollte, wie es geht‘, dann ist es zu spät. Wenn man es von Anfang an sagt und es eine Bedingung ist, dass man überhaupt zusammenarbeitet, dann kann der Bauherr oder die Bauherrin immer noch sagen: ‚Okay, mit dir will ich nicht arbeiten, ich will es mit einem Architekten machen, dem ich sagen kann, was ich will.‘ Ich sehe es einfach so: Wieso bezahlen Leute teures Geld, um einen Architekten zu heuern und dann selbst zu entscheiden, wie es sein soll? Das ist doch total absurd. Es macht überhaupt keinen Sinn. Ich habe dann immer gesagt: ‚Sie gehen ja auch nicht in eine Galerie und sagen: Ja, dieses Bild gefällt mir eigentlich, aber ich hätte gerne unten noch etwas mehr blau.‘ [alle lachen] Das macht ja niemand, oder? Das habe ich einem Bauherrn einmal gesagt, und es war wirklich so. Ich meine, das kann doch einfach nicht sein, oder? Das habe ich aber erst jetzt gemerkt, und mir scheint es logisch, dass es nur so funktionieren kann. Ich musste allerdings 50 werden, um es überhaupt zu begreifen. [lacht, alle lachen] Das ist ein bisschen spät.

RR_ Um noch einmal auf Heinz Bienefeld zurückzukommen, der ja genau das Gleiche gesagt

JK_ Well, no, I wouldn't go that far. [all laugh] No, I would say costs and deadlines, I have to stick to those. Yes, I would say that now: costs, deadlines, space allocation plan, I have to be able to guarantee that somehow. The school has to work. The school has to have the rooms it needs. The school has a budget, the client, the state has a budget. You have to stick to that. The students who want to move in, you have to somehow stick to that. That's as far as I would go. But not what it looks like and how it's done, so long as it's within budget and time frame. And I always say that with everything – from the smallest to the largest projects. And of course, it has to work, the indoor temperature should naturally never be 50 degrees in summer.

MV_ We saw four houses at the beginning, all relatively similar in size, and then three larger projects: campus, gymnasium and school. What changes in your way of working, or in your role as an architect and how you approach projects through this change in scale? Do you approach the big projects the same way you approached the houses, or does this size imply a different approach?

JK_ No, I think it's something else, mostly due to technology. The technical requirements are simply on a completely different scale. Also, more people are involved of course ... For example, we once did a competition with a building services company, a building services engineer. And the building services engineer simply says: 'Yes, the ventilation works this way, and we do the acoustics like this, and the heating like this, and it looks like this and like that.' Then you are left with something that everyone thinks

is ugly. Then he says: 'There is only this one solution and you can only do it that way. I've already done it four times and now I'm doing it for the fifth time.' So as an architect, the main thing then is to think: 'It cannot be. There has to be another solution.' And then it's about looking for other technical solutions, making other suggestions, how you could do it differently, etc. And I think that's a difference compared to the small projects, where there are simply no acoustic, no technical requirements. It's actually a super simple thing. It only takes a little bit of air and exhaust air. But that's actually all invisible. In school buildings or auditoriums, building services engineering is key, especially if you cannot incorporate it in the shell construction for cost or sustainability reasons, which we have already discussed. You have to separate them somehow. That means they are more or less visible in some way, and you have to deal with that. I think with such a challenge it is not easy to avoid ending up in a



hat. Er hat nur eine Ergänzung gehabt: Er hat gesagt, er bestimmt, wann es fertig wird.

JK_ Gut, so weit würde ich nicht gehen, nein. [alle lachen] Ich würde sagen, Kosten und Termine, daran muss ich mich halten. Kosten, Termine, Raumprogramm, das muss ich irgendwie gewährleisten können. Die Schule muss funktionieren. Die Schule muss die Räume haben, die sie braucht. Die Schule, die Bauherrenschaft und der Staat haben ein Budget. Daran muss man sich halten. Die Schülerinnen und Schüler, die wollen einziehen, daran muss man sich halten. So weit würde ich gehen. Aber wie es aussieht und wie es gemacht ist, innerhalb des Budgets und innerhalb der Zeit, das nicht. Ich sage das bei allem – bei den Kleinsten und bei den Großen – immer so. Und es muss natürlich funktionieren. Es darf natürlich auch nicht 50° heiß werden im Sommer.

MV_ Wir haben am Anfang vier Häuser gesehen, die alle von der Größe her relativ ähnlich sind, und dann drei größere Projekte: Campus, Sporthalle und Schule. Was verändert sich in deiner Arbeitsweise oder in deiner Rolle als Architekt, oder wie du an die Projekte herangehst, durch diese Maßstabsänderung? Gehst du an die großen Projekte gleich heran, wie du an die Häuser herangegangen bist, oder impliziert diese Größe auch eine andere Herangehensweise?

JK_ Ich glaube, es ist etwas anderes und es hat mit der Technik zu tun. Die technischen Anforderungen sind einfach in einem ganz anderen Maßstab. Es sind natürlich auch mehrere Leute, die daran beteiligt

sind und es geht vor allem auch darum ... Zum Beispiel haben wir einmal einen Wettbewerb mit einer Haustechnikfirma, einem Haustechnikingenieur, gemacht. Der Haustechnikingenieur, der sagt dann einfach: ‚Ja, die Lüftung funktioniert so, und das mit der Akustik machen wir so und das mit der Heizung so und so, und das sieht dann so und so aus.‘ Dann hast du ein Produkt auf dem Tisch, das eigentlich alle hässlich finden. Und dann sagt er: ‚Aber ja, nein, es gibt nur diese Lösung und man kann es nur so machen. Das habe ich jetzt schon viermal so gemacht und jetzt mache ich es beim fünften Mal auch so.‘ Da geht es eigentlich vor allem darum, sich als Architekt zu überlegen: ‚Das kann nicht sein, es muss eine andere Lösung geben.‘ Man muss andere technische Lösungen suchen, andere Vorschläge bringen, wie man es auch noch anders machen könnte und so weiter und so fort. Ich glaube, es ist ein Unterschied zu den kleinen Projekten, wo es einfach keine akustischen und keine technischen Anforderungen gibt. Es ist eigentlich ein super simples Ding. Es braucht ein bisschen Luft und Abluft. Aber das alles ist unsichtbar. Bei Schulgebäuden oder Auditorien spielt die Haustechnik eine Rolle, gerade wenn man sie nicht im Rohbau einlassen kann – aus Kostengründen oder Nachhaltigkeitsgründen, was wir vorher schon besprochen haben. Man muss sie dann voneinander trennen. Das heißt, sie sind in irgendeiner Form sichtbar, mehr oder weniger, und damit muss man umgehen. Ich glaube, diese Herausforderung ist gar nicht so einfach, dass man nicht letztendlich in einem total generischen Sumpf irgendwelcher technischen Stationen landet. Dass einfach die Büroräume weltweit gleich aussehen, alle die gleichen Decken haben und

totally generic swamp of whatever technical stations. The simple fact that offices all over the world all look the same, all have the same ceilings and the same lamps and the same functions, is certainly another challenge. But I think it just takes a little courage to come up with unconventional solutions or, at the end of the day, in an emergency you have to simply say: 'So, there are five or ten ventilation pipes going through the room, so what.' But this idea of how to deal with these problems is certainly a bigger challenge.

RR_ You also developed the thinking of the 'building as a machine' for larger projects – with primary, secondary, and tertiary elements. And I'm going to agree with you on the subject of building service engineering: It doesn't always look good when everything comes from off the table. Although now, practically the reverse is the case: If you categorize it in such a way and say that the building services should be separated, would they then also have to be designed by you as the leader for architecture and design, right?

JK_ Yes, definitely. I definitely believe that we have to help to design it. But that means that you also deal with it in the technical sense. So you can't just tell the in-house technician or the engineer: 'I don't like that, come up with something else.' You have to develop your own understanding of the technical possibilities that exist and propose alternatives.

RR_ Now, these secondary and tertiary elements, as we have also seen in the projects, are made visible or brought

into the visible area. One topic, or rather one aspect that really interests me is what you mentioned and showed us: A pipe articulated like this is almost a quantum leap for the houses. There is certainly less technology. But wherever everything could be hidden in the structures, electrical wiring or water pipes or whatever, this element is now visible on the outside. Why? Why couldn't this be an integral part of the building once again?

JK_ This has to do with what we discussed this afternoon. This issue of sustainability concerns me and I don't want to be passive about it. I would like to elaborate on resource-saving and intelligent use of resources, and somehow find some time and space for these issues – to express them. I want to utilize them not simply as something that would be 'nice to have', but to give them a certain sculptural dimension. This idea of this huge water tank hanging on the façade comes from my fascination with industrial history, power plants, and dams for all of these infrastructure buildings, which actually exert a certain power over the landscape because they have to hold back tons of water, and you can see how the elements are somehow in tension with the building. For me, it's just the beginning. This pipe was just an attempt to give expression to this confrontation with the meteor-water storage similar to the water towers in New York or these containers that were so beautifully captured by the German photographers [Bernd and Hilla Becher]. The tanks containing liquids, coal or whatever, the hoisting machines, have this actually quite tremendous and spatial potential and you can gain a spatial benefit from them. I mean, you could also just bury the tank underground

die gleichen Lampen und die gleichen Dinge, ist sicher eine andere Herausforderung. Ich glaube, da braucht es einfach ein bisschen Mut zu unkonventionellen Lösungen oder im Notfall einfach: Ja gut, dann gibt es hier einfach fünf oder zehn Lüftungsrohre, die durch den Raum gehen, so what? Die Idee, wie man damit umgeht, das ist aber sicher eine größere Herausforderung.

RR_Bei den größeren Projekten hast du ja auch das Thema entwickelt: ‚das Gebäude als Maschine‘ mit den primären, den sekundären und den tertiären Elementen. Ich gehe d'accord mit dir bei dem Thema der Haustechnik, wenn das alles vom Tisch ist, dass es dann nicht immer ansehnlich aussieht. Im Umkehrschluss ist es praktisch aber doch so: Wenn du das in dieser Art und Weise kategorisierst und sagst, dass es zu trennen wäre, dass diese ja dann von dir als architekturleitende, entwurfsleitende Person mitentworfen werden müsste, oder?

JK_Ja, auf jeden Fall, das glaube ich auf jeden Fall, dass wir das mitentwerfen müssen. Das heißt aber, dass man sich auch technisch damit befasst. Man kann ja nicht dem Haustechniker oder dem Ingenieur einfach sagen: ‚Mir gefällt das nicht, komm mit etwas anderem.‘ Sondern man muss ja selbst ein Verständnis für die technischen Möglichkeiten entwickeln, die es gibt, um Alternativen vorzuschlagen.

RR_Jetzt werden diese sekundären und tertiären Elemente sichtbar oder in den sichtbaren Bereich geholt, wie wir ja auch bei den Projekten gesehen haben. Ein

Thema oder ein Aspekt, der mich wirklich interessiert, ist das, was du angesprochen und gezeigt hast, dass die Röhre, die jetzt so artikuliert ist, fast ein Quantensprung zu den Häusern ist. Da ist sicherlich weniger Technik. Aber wo immer alles in den Strukturen sein konnte, ob es die Elektroleitung ist, die Wasserleitung oder was auch immer, jetzt ist dieses Element sichtbar außen. Warum könnte nicht dieser Teil wieder ein integraler Bestandteil des Gebäudes sein?

JK_Das hat mit dem zu tun, was wir heute Mittag besprochen haben. Das Thema der Nachhaltigkeit beschäftigt mich und ich möchte dem nicht passiv gegenüberstehen. Ich möchte dem Thema des ressourcenschonenden und des intelligenten Einsatzes von Ressourcen irgendwie Raum verleihen, einen Ausdruck geben. Ich möchte das verwenden, um das nicht einfach nur als ‚Nice-to-have‘ zu haben, sondern um dem eine gewisse skulpturale Dimension zu geben. Diese Idee, dieser riesige Wasserbehälter, der dann an der Fassade hängt, die kommt auch ein bisschen von der Faszination für Industriegeschichte, Kraftwerke, Staudämme, von diesen ganzen Infrastrukturbauten, die eigentlich dadurch, dass sie Unmengen von Wasser zurückhalten müssen, in der Landschaft eine Kraft entfalten, wo man sieht, wie die Elemente mit dem Gebauten in Spannung stehen. Für mich ist das nur der Anfang. Die Röhre, das war einfach ein Versuch, um dieser Auseinandersetzung mit diesem Meteorwasserspeicher einen Ausdruck zu geben, vergleichsweise mit den Wassertürmen in New York oder mit diesen Behältern, die von den deutschen Fotografen [Bernd und Hilla

and say: 'The water goes there and comes back up to the toilet through invisible pipes.' You can do that, too. But in the plaster model, in Switzerland we always make these beautiful plaster models for competitions, in the plaster model, I have to say, it looked nice, it looked good [laughs], this pipe there. I'm not finished with this formal repertoire, I hope. I would like to develop this further, and that was just a start.

MV_You taught at Columbia University and ETH Zurich. We have a lot of architecture students with us right here. If you could give them one tip for their future working lives as architects, what would that be?

JK_Well, it's probably a cliché, but I think the only thing that matters is: Be true to yourself. I think you have to trust what you think, what you feel, what you want to do. And you have to be serious about what you intend to do. And you have to feed back what it means what you do, what you thought. And it takes incredible honesty to be true to yourself and keep asking: Yes, I seriously meant this, I wanted it that way. It went wrong. Why did it go wrong? What will I do better next time? And really drive this learning process. I think this learning process can only work if you are honest with yourself. If you are honest with yourself and then you screw up, you can at least say: 'I wanted it that way and I have to change something, I have to do better.' But if you are not honest with yourself and what you are doing is not done with full conviction, then you don't even know what to do better the next time. Because you don't even know what you wanted to do.

And this is in fact the only thing that I find important when studying. Nothing else matters.

RR_A wonderful finish, almost a summation. Jan, thank you very much for your contribution today, both your lecture and the discussion. And I think you have made a very valuable contribution to the 'Think Tank Architecture' for us. Thank you very much.

JK_Thank you.

Becher] so schön festgehalten wurden. Diese Behälter von Flüssigkeiten, von Kohle, von was auch immer, diese Fördermaschinen haben eigentlich ein ungeheures, auch räumliches Potenzial, und dem kann man einen räumlichen Nutzen abgewinnen. Man könnte den Tank ja einfach auch in der Erde verbuddeln und sagen: ‚Das Wasser geht dahin und mit unsichtbaren Röhren geht es dann irgendwie zu den Toilettenanlagen.‘ Das kann man auch. Aber im Gipsmodell, in der Schweiz macht man immer so schöne Gipsmodelle bei den Wettbewerben, im Gipsmodell, muss ich sagen, sah es schön aus [lacht], sah sie gut aus. Ich bin noch nicht am Ende mit diesem formalen Repertoire, hoffe ich. Ich möchte gerne das noch weiterentwickeln, und das war jetzt einfach einmal so ein Start.

MV_Du hast an der Columbia University und an der ETH Zürich unterrichtet. Wir haben lauter Architekturstudierende hier. Wenn du ihnen einen Tipp geben könntest für ihr zukünftiges Leben als Architektinnen und Architekten, was wäre das?

JK_Es ist wahrscheinlich ein Klischee, aber ich glaube das einzige, was zählt, ist: Be true to yourself. Ich glaube, man muss dem, was man denkt, was man fühlt, was man gerne machen möchte, trauen. Und es muss ernst gemeint sein, was man zu machen gedenkt. Man muss rückkoppeln, was es bedeutet, was man macht, was man gedacht hat. Und es braucht diese Ehrlichkeit zu sich selbst, immer wieder zu fragen: ‚Ja, ich habe es ernst gemeint, ich wollte es so. Es ist in die Hosen gegangen. Wieso ist es in die Hosen gegangen? Was mache ich

beim nächsten Mal besser?‘, und diesen Lernprozess wirklich auch anzutreiben. Ich glaube, dieser Lernprozess funktioniert nur, wenn man ehrlich zu sich selbst ist. Wenn man ehrlich zu sich selbst ist und dann einen Scheiß baut, dann kann man zumindest sagen: ‚Ich wollte es so, und ich muss etwas ändern, ich muss es besser machen.‘ Aber wenn man nicht ehrlich zu sich ist und es nicht aus voller Überzeugung macht, dann weiß man gar nicht, was man beim nächsten Mal korrigieren soll, weil man gar nicht weiß, was man eigentlich machen wollte. Und das ist eigentlich das Einzige, was ich im Studium wichtig finde. Alles andere ist egal.

RR_Ein wunderbares Schlusswort, fast ein Schlussplädoyer. Jan, vielen Dank für deinen Beitrag hier, als Vortrag und auch in der Diskussion. Ich glaube, das war für uns ein ganz wertvoller Beitrag zum ‚Think Tank Architecture‘. Vielen Dank.

JK_Danke.



PIETER ECKERT

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

LECTURE_59

INTERVIEW_65



<Ich habe zwar immer das gleiche Element, aber ich habe immer ein anders Programm. [...] Und somit entstehen aus der Rigidität dieses Gebäudes wie so eine Art Verschiebungsthemen, wie so eine Art Störung des Bildes, das uns gefallen hat, weil das eigentlich der Einfluss ist, der dahinter liegt. >

<I always have the same element, but I always have a different program. [...] And so the rigidity of this building gives rise to a kind of shifting themes, a kind of disturbance of the image that we liked, because that is actually the influence that lies behind it. >

<Was uns dabei eigentlich interessiert hat, ist die Tatsache, wie arbeite ich eine Architektur aus, die eigentlich quasi nicht mehr relevant auf das Programm sich abstützen kann. Weil das Programm kann alles sein. >

<What we were actually interested in was how do I develop an architecture that is no longer relevant for the program. Because the program can be everything. >



LECTURE
BETHANIEN | Zürich, Switzerland | 2011 - 2017



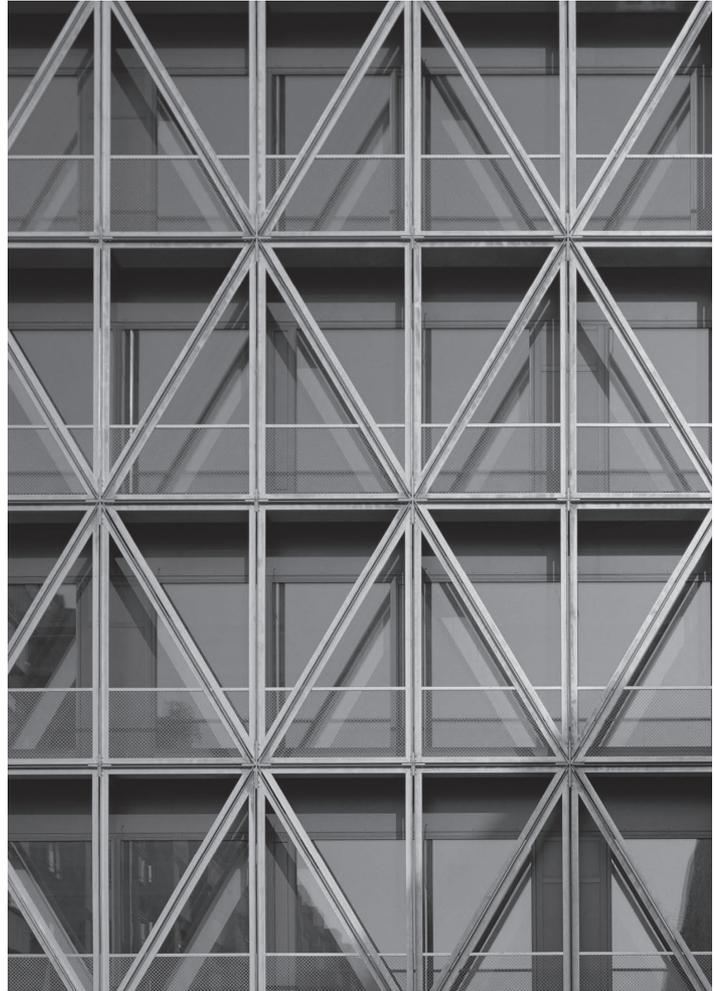


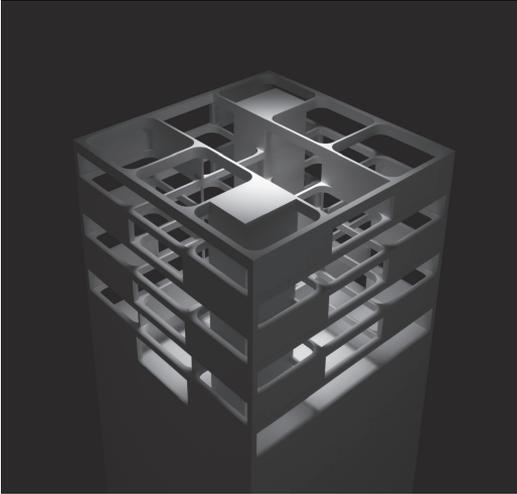
TAZ NEUBAU | Berlin, Germany | 2015 - 2018



<Die Fassade folgt diesen tanzenden Stützen ganz fein. Sie ist, aufgrund des galvanisierten, d.h. verzinkten Stahls und der präzisen Fügung, eigentlich sehr robust. Auch hier zeigt man eigentlich wieder, wie Dinge zusammenkommen, wie sie kontrolliert werden. Aber man macht das nicht an der Wertigkeit des Materials, sondern an der Technik der Fügung fest.>

<The façade follows these dancing pillars very finely. It is actually very robust, due to the galvanized steel and the precise joining. Here, too, one shows how things come together, how they are controlled. But this is not determined by the value of the material, but by the joining technique.>





<Man sieht eigentlich, wie dieses Prinzip der Struktur, wie dieses Fixieren des Korridors und das Freispielen der Klassenzimmer quasi eine nach außen abbildbare architektonische Gestalt ergibt, dieses turmartige Setzen in dieser landschaftlich dominierten Situation.>

<You can actually see how this principle of structure, how this fixing of the corridor and the opening up of the classrooms results in an architectural shape that can be depicted from the outside, this tower-like setting in this landscape-dominated situation.>

<Das Raumregime im Inneren erlebt man über eine sehr dominierende Wendeltreppe, die die jeweils um 90° rotierenden Korridore architektonisch zusammenfasst.>

<The spatial regime inside is experienced through a very dominant spiral staircase, which architecturally combines the corridors, each rotated by 90°.>



CAMPUS MOOS | Rüşchlikon, Switzerland | 2012 - 2016



INTERVIEW

Piet Eckert



PE_ Piet Eckert

RR_ Roger Riewe

JS_ Jörg Schröder

RR_ Piet, herzlichen Dank für dieses Powerplay an Projekten und an Themen – hoch interessant, wo du uns durchgeführst hast. Es ist wahrscheinlich nur ein Teil der Arbeiten eures Büros, aber es ist exemplarisch sehr gut verbildlicht, wie ihr eure Projekte implementiert und zu welchen Ergebnissen das führt. Das sind Ergebnisse, die wir dann gewissermaßen sehen, oder teilweise waren es ja dann auch nicht gebaute Projekte. Aber diese Themen, die jetzt dort eingeflochten worden sind, die du dort auch dargestellt hast ... Wie ist das jetzt im Entwurfsprozess? Werden beim Generieren eines Entwurfes die Themen, die für euch immer da sind, vorselektiert? Wann kommen die ins Spiel? Wie geht ihr eigentlich, vereinfacht gesagt, an eine Entwurfsaufgabe heran?

PE_ Wir versuchen quasi wie ein Fährten- oder wie ein Spurensucher die Programme, die Beschreibungen und die Auseinandersetzungen mit jemandem wie einem Bauherren oder einem Auftraggeber so zu analysieren, dass wir eigentlich genau diese Widersprüchlichkeit an den Tag legen können. Was passt, was passt nicht? Genau und eigentlich zentral an den Widersprüchen versuchen wir unseren Entwurf aufzuhängen. Anstatt zu sagen: ‚Ich lasse weg, was nicht passt‘, benutzen wir genau das, um das Projekt spezifisch zu interpretieren. Deswegen habe ich am Anfang gesagt: ‚Wir suchen danach, was verbindet, oder wie steht etwas im Verhältnis zu etwas anderem, oder?‘ Das hat meistens auch damit zu tun, dass wir natürlich ein Interesse an räumlichen Typologien haben. Das Interesse ist so zu verstehen, dass, wenn ich beginne, solche typologischen Räume

RR_ Thank you Piet for this powerful display of projects and topics – very interesting, the places you took us to. They probably represent only a fraction of the work done by your office, but they exemplify very well how you implement your projects and what the results are. These are results which we can see to a certain extent and in some cases they are in projects that were not built. But referring to these topics that have been included and that you have also presented there ... How about the design process? Are the topics that are always there for you pre-selected when generating a draft? When do they come into play? How do you actually approach a design task in simplified terms?

PE_ We try to analyze the programs, the descriptions and the discussions with people like the client or the building contractor like a tracker or a scout does, in order to reveal precisely any contradiction inherent to them. What fits and what doesn't? We attempt to hoist this draft, or our draft, precisely centered to the contradictions. And instead of saying: 'I'll leave out what doesn't fit', we use this method for specifically interpreting the project. That is why I said at the beginning: 'We are searching for what connects something or how something is related to something else, right?' This mostly has something to do with the fact that we are naturally interested in spatial typologies. This interest should be understood in such a way that when I start to connect typological spaces of this kind with each other, this generally creates added value, doesn't it? The purpose of this search is that the connection does more than simply add together two elements, for example, or

several elements for that matter. Since this is a focus for our interest, we are always actively searching for it, so to speak. And the older I get, or rather the more often we do this, the more the impression is strengthened that these contradictions never end. This is a position in total contrast to the attitude that everything is right. In actual fact nothing is ever absolutely right, isn't it? And it is why I said at the beginning: 'We may also be a new and different generation of Swiss architects. We are no longer people working in a some-what isolated manner, who have been anchored in the Alpine region and who are trying to bring cohesion to practically everything they do.' I've never managed to make it through a project like this and I've never had the opportunity to work that way. It emerged under other spatial and economic conditions and ultimately also from cultural differences. That's why I said there was a lot of interest in Germany, because everything we find in Germany will come to Switzerland five years later, right? And that's roughly how it works. [laughs]

RR_ Jörg joined us at the IAT via Aachen and Dresden. A new member. I can imagine that you're already dying to ask some questions.

JS_ Yes, first of all thank you for the lecture. I found it very impressive to see this abundance of projects in this way. You just said: 'We're searching for solutions.' And when I was looking at the projects in preparation, I thought that you actually start strongly with principles. That was my impression.

miteinander zu verbinden, ein Mehrwert entsteht, oder? Darin besteht diese Suche, dass diese Verbindung zum Beispiel mehr leistet als die Addition dieser zwei oder mehrerer Elemente. Und da das eigentlich unser Interesse ist, gehen wir aktiv auf die Suche danach. Je älter ich werde und je länger wir das machen, desto mehr haben wir den Eindruck, dass es an Widersprüchlichkeiten nicht ausgeht – im Gegensatz zu dem Thema, dass da hier alles stimmt. Es stimmt eigentlich gar nichts, oder? Deswegen habe ich am Anfang gesagt: ‚Wir sind vielleicht auch eine andere Generation Schweizer Architekten. Wir sind nicht mehr diese eher isolatorisch arbeitenden, in der Alpenregion verhafteten Menschen, die versuchen, eine Kohäsion über alles zu bringen.‘ Ich weiß nicht, ich habe noch nie so ein Projekt durchgestanden und ich habe noch nie die Opportunität gewissermaßen gehabt, so zu arbeiten. Es ist aus anderen räumlichen, ökonomischen und letztlich auch kulturellen Unterschieden entstanden. Deswegen habe ich gesagt, war auch das Interesse an Deutschland groß. Alles, was wir in Deutschland an Widerständen entdecken, kommt in fünf Jahren in die Schweiz, oder? So ungefähr funktioniert das. [lacht]

RR_Jörg ist über Aachen und Dresden zu uns, zum IAT, gestoßen. Du bist ein neues Mitglied. Ich kann mir vorstellen, dass jetzt schon einige Fragen unter deinen Nägeln brennen.

JS_Ja, erstmal vielen Dank für den Vortrag. Ich fand das ja total beeindruckend, auch die Fülle der Projekte so zu sehen. Du hast gerade gesagt: ‚Wir suchen nach

Lösungen.‘ In der Vorbereitung oder als ich die Projekte im Vorfeld schon mal so ein bisschen angeschaut habe, dachte ich, ihr beginnt eigentlich sehr stark mit Prinzipien. Das war so mein Eindruck.

PE_Ja.

JS_Mit Strukturprinzipien, mit konstruktiven Prinzipien. Wo ist da dieses Suchmoment? Kannst du das noch einmal ein wenig herausarbeiten?

PE_Ja, also ein Prinzip ist schon eine erste Antwort, oder? Eine Antwort auf etwas, wie man damit umgehen kann. Eine Regel ist eine enorme Hilfe, wenn es darum geht, möglichst unterschiedliche Dinge anzuordnen, oder? Ausnahmen sind dann eben nicht mehr ausgeklammert, sondern sie werden zu besonderen Momenten, die die Regel sozusagen informieren. Das ist eigentlich eine resultatoffene Methode, sozusagen. Es ist nicht so, dass man an einer Art Ästhetik oder an einer Art Gleichheit des Resultates interessiert ist, sondern es ist mehr ein methodisches Prinzip. Vielleicht hat das auch etwas damit zu tun, dass wir alle unterrichten, oder? Als Lehrer ist man letztlich auch einer Methode verpflichtet, und ich finde das immer wichtig. Man kann das jetzt nicht seinen Studierenden predigen und dann selbst nicht machen, oder? Das geht ja nicht. Man riskiert seine Glaubhaftigkeit. Deswegen ist das methodische Interesse extrem wichtig, oder? Ein System ist bereits etwas, an das ich Dinge anbinden kann, und das ist bereits eine Auseinandersetzung. Wenn man das ‚Bethanien‘-Projekt anschaut, kann

PE_Yes.

JS_ With structural principles, with constructive principles. Where is that moment of searching? Can you clarify that a bit?

PE_Yes, so a principle is a first answer, right? Something on how to deal with it. A rule is a huge help when it comes to arranging things that are different to each other. And then exceptions are no longer excluded, but become special moments that inform the rule, right? And that's actually a somewhat open-ended method. It is not like you're interested in a specific aesthetic or in a kind of equality from the result, but rather a methodological principle. Maybe it has something to do with the fact that we all teach, right? So as a teacher, you are ultimately committed to a method and I always find that important. You can't preach that to your students and then not follow your own line yourself, isn't it? That wouldn't be right, would it? You would lose credibility. That's why the methodological interest is extremely important. And a system is already something I can connect things to, which is already an examination process. So if you look at the Bethanien-project, a grid or a grid system can be the beginning, the start of an idea, for tying those elements to it that cannot create space. That may be a possible answer, but you could also find another one.

JS_What I understand as pervading all projects, at least in my perception, is this change between a strong commitment from the start and then moving ahead and

breaking free from the commitment, which is also a structuralist approach. That's how I understood it. And then I read Aldo Rossi who says: 'The rationalist wants the greatest possible ability for adapting the building to a variety of needs.' And I thought that this quote fits your work very well.

PE_Yes, very nice.

JS_Then I asked myself, would you call yourself a rationalist? Or does that make you feel pigeon-holed?

PE_I'd simply say: 'We try to develop our architecture analytically and not from the hip, or rather from the repertoire or something, because that would make me nervous.' If this is the case, then I can't control it. You are damned to contemplate a building from the base to the roof with everything on an equal footing. I cannot develop this value system if it happens on a purely intuitive basis. I need a governing principle that enables me to think about priorities, right? Or to determine what is important to us and what is not, right? ... This analytical understanding has something to do with being a rationalist. But ultimately you want to develop something to enable certain sensualities. And you said it very nicely earlier, it's about defining things or spaces but also about breaking free ... And that's why I also called it an eye-opener, that you can be incredibly precise and incredibly open with it. And experiencing, just like occupying or something, has its own dynamics. It also has something to do with sensuality. How a structure is used in order to have always something

auch ein Raster oder das System eines Rasters der Beginn einer Idee sein, eben die Dinge daran anzubinden, die nicht raumbildend sein können. Das ist dann eine mögliche Antwort, aber man könnte auch eine andere formulieren.

JS_ Was ich verstanden habe, was ja eigentlich alle Projekte durchzieht, zumindest in meiner Wahrnehmung, ist dieser Wechsel zwischen einer starken Festlegung von Beginn an und dem Freispielen durch die Festlegung, was ja auch ein strukturalistischer Ansatz ist. Das habe ich verstanden. Bei Aldo Rossi habe ich dann gelesen: ‚Der Rationalist möchte die größtmögliche Fähigkeit zur Anpassung des Gebäudes an eine Vielfalt von Bedürfnissen.‘ Dieses Zitat, dachte ich mir, passt sehr genau auf eure Arbeit.

PE_ Ja, sehr schön.

JS_ Dann habe ich mich gefragt, würdest du dich jetzt als Rationalist bezeichnen? Oder wirst du da in eine Schublade gesteckt?

PE_ Ich sage einfach: ‚Wir versuchen unsere Architektur analytisch zu entwickeln und nicht aus dem Ellenbogen oder aus dem Repertoire oder so etwas, weil mich das nervös macht.‘ Ich kann es dann nämlich nicht steuern, weil man verdammt wird, ein Gebäude von dem Sockel bis zur Dachkante immer gleichwertig durchzudenken. Ich kann also nicht dieses Wertesystem entwickeln, wenn das rein intuitiv geschieht. Ich brauche ein Steuerungsprinzip,

das mich befähigt, über Prioritäten nachdenken zu können oder zu sagen, was ist uns wichtig und was nicht, oder? ... Dieses analytische Verständnis hat etwas damit zu tun, ein Rationalist zu sein. Letztlich möchte man aber das entwickeln, um auch gewisse Sinnlichkeiten zu ermöglichen. Du hast das vorher sehr schön gesagt, es geht darum, Sachen oder auch Räume zu definieren, aber auch Freiheiten freizuspüren ... Deswegen habe ich auch gesagt, das sei ein Eye-opener, dass man damit unglaublich präzise sein kann und unglaublich offen auch. Das Erleben wie auch das Thema der Okkupation, des Besetzens oder so etwas, hat eigene Dynamiken. Das hat auch etwas mit Sinnlichkeit zu tun. Wie eine Struktur quasi benutzt wird, um immer etwas anderes daran festzumachen, oder wie der Dritte quasi unsere Räume nutzt, das ist ein Thema, das immer stärker an uns herangetragen wird. Wenn große Projekte entwickelt werden, wird das partizipatorische Element immer wichtiger. Wir sind nicht mehr eine Gesellschaft, die autokratisch entscheidet oder einem autokratischen oder paternalen Entscheidungsprozess unterliegt, wo es noch den Bauherren gibt. Das gibt es alles nicht mehr. Die sind ja immer mehr am Tisch als wir. Von dem her besteht auch diese Unsicherheit als Autor, vielen gegenüber zu sein, finde ich. Das braucht eine Art ... Rationalität, um da überhaupt bestehen zu können, oder?

RR_ Gleichzeitig, glaube ich, braucht es aber auch ein gewisses Maß an Verspieltheit, dass etwas so losgelassen werden kann. Bei der ‚Böll-Stiftung‘ hast du ja gezeigt, dass ihr euch der Montagetechnik beholfen habt und zwei

new tied to it, or how a third party uses our spaces, is a topic that is actually increasingly brought up with us. When large projects are developed, the participatory element becomes more and more important. We are no longer a society that decides on things pretty much in an autocratic way, or is subject to an autocratic decision-making process, or a paternal one or a situation where we still have the client. All of this no longer exists. There's always more of them than us at the table. And from this perspective of uncertainty about many things as an author, I find that it requires a kind of rationality to be able to exist at all, right?

RR_ But, I think, at the same time, a certain degree of playfulness is necessary, in order to let something go. At the Böll Foundation, you showed that you made use of the assembly technology and assembled two Mies projects. Why Mies? Why? Why do you think of Mies and why not, for example, a project by Corbu or similar contemporaries? What's the meaning behind Mies? In hindsight, when you see the projects, sure, but at the beginning?

PE_ I think that has something to do with chronology. There was always a fascination with Mies because Mies is ultimately the only architect who could use the same solution for every building task. You simply can't do better than that in my opinion. It is the reason why he is a god to us, right? Yes [laughs], because he did what we never can. That was the origin of our fascination with Mies, to actually show in all seriousness that I can make a museum in the same way that I can make a residential building. That's

really tough, isn't it? In a sense it's pretty insane. And what evolved out of this fascination was subordinating one's own spatial speculations on this topic almost as a form of respect, because otherwise we are simply left with a game of volume. This is why we started working with Mies, specifically in this matter, so we can think about shifts in scale, or about constellations or connections of volume. And we used it as a proxy at the beginning. As if we were saying: 'I don't want to have to deal with the façade at all.' And it has now turned into something like an instrument. Of course this has also had an impact on the immersion, if only because it became an instrument. It is more of a chronological thing than a decision-making process in which you say: 'No, we're going to do Corbu or someone.' I also believe that this clarity of Mies would be difficult to incorporate into an assembly principle with the work of Corbu, because it already consists of so many elements that this would be incredibly complicated. But perhaps this will be an occasion for us to try it. [laughs] Mies always fascinated me more than Corbusier.

JS_ Koolhaas fuses Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, for example in the Kunsthal in Rotterdam.

PE_ Yes, yes? [thinking]

JS_ Is this a similar working principle to yours?

PE_ Yes? [thinking]

Mies-Projekte montiert habt. Wieso Mies? Warum? Wie kommt ihr auf Mies, und warum kann es nicht zum Beispiel ein Corbu gewesen sein oder ähnliche Zeitgenossen? Warum die Bedeutung Mies? Im Nachhinein natürlich, wenn man die Projekte sieht, ja klar, aber am Anfang?

PE_Ja, ich glaube, das hat etwas mit dem Chronologischen zu tun. Es hat immer eine Faszination für Mies gegeben, weil Mies letztlich der einzige Architekt ist, der für jede Bauaufgabe die gleiche Lösung bringen konnte. Man kann es meiner Meinung nach nicht besser machen, oder? Deswegen ist er ein Gott für uns, oder? [lacht] Er hat das geschafft, was wir nie schaffen, oder? Es war die ursprüngliche Faszination von uns für Mies, zu sehen, dass ich knallhart ein Museum gleich wie ein Wohngebäude machen kann. Das muss man zuerst einmal schaffen, oder? Das ist schon wahnsinnig. Aus dieser Faszination heraus ist es quasi wie eine Form des Respektes, seine eigenen räumlichen Spekulationen diesem Thema unterzuordnen, weil es sonst nur Volumenspiel bleibt. Deswegen haben wir mit Mies, eben mit diesem Material, angefangen zu arbeiten, um über Maßstabssprünge, Konstellationen oder Verbindungen von Volumen nachzudenken. Und wir haben das am Anfang wie stellvertretend eingesetzt, sozusagen, um zu sagen: ‚Ich möchte mich gar nicht mit der Fassade befassen müssen.‘ Damit ist es wie zu einem Instrument geworden. Das hat aber natürlich auch einen Impact in der eigentlichen Vertiefung, weil es Instrument wurde. Es ist dann eher chronologisch bedingt, als dass man sagt: ‚Ne, wir machen jetzt Corbu oder so.‘ Ich glaube auch,

dass es schwierig wäre, diese Klarheit von Mies in dieses Montageprinzip mit der Arbeit von Corbu einzuarbeiten, weil das schon in sich aus so vielen Elementen besteht. Vielleicht aber gibt das einmal Anlass zu einem Versuch. [lacht] Mich hat Mies immer mehr fasziniert als Corbusier.

JS_Koolhaas verschleißt doch zum Beispiel bei der Kunsthalle in Rotterdam Mies van der Rohe mit Corbusier.

PE_Ja, ja? [denkt nach]

JS_Ist das ein ähnliches Arbeitsprinzip wie bei euch?

PE_Ja? [denkt nach]

JS_Also, das war der Beginn, den du gezeigt hast. Da habe ich mich gefragt, ob das eine ähnliche Strategie ist.

PE_Ja, ich bin mir da nicht sicher. Ich glaube, bei der Kunsthalle damals war das Raummodell entscheidender, wie man einen Durchgang und eine Kontinuität der Platte machen kann – also dieses Helix-Thema, das dann montageartig belegt wurde. Rem hat immer gesagt, dass er der schlechteste Architekt für Fassaden ist, oder? Er hat ja immer eine Phobie vor der Fassade. Deswegen durften wir auch keine Fassaden zeichnen. Die einzige Möglichkeit dieses Dilemma zu umgehen war, sie zu belegen. Wir haben also wie Reliefe montiert, und damit wurde die Collage zur Technik, sich dieser Last, dieser Phobie der Fassade, zu entledigen. Meiner Meinung nach ist das eine andere Motivation ... Aber es ist vielleicht vergleichbar zu

JS_ That was a kind of the beginning for what you showcased. I wondered if that was a similar strategy.

PE_ Yeah, I'm not sure about that. I think for the Kunsthal back then, the spatial model was more of a deciding reason, how to create a run-through and continuity of the slab – and thus this theme of a helix, which was then covered in a kind of assembly. Rem always said he was the worst architect when it comes to façades, right? He has always had a façade phobia. And that's why we weren't allowed to draw façades. The only way to avoid this dilemma was to clad it. So we assembled something like reliefs and thus the collage became the technique we used to get rid of this burden, this phobia of the façade. So that's another motivation in my opinion. But it is perhaps comparable to say: 'With Mies I'm going to avoid a certain thing.' This is certainly a comparable issue, as you say, which of course has left its mark.

RR_ Did the phase at OMA really leave its mark on you?

PE_ Yes, I think so. At least it shaped me to a very great extent. In fact, it shaped me far more than my teachers at ETH did, because it was an incredibly intense time. For me it was also waking up to a European dimension. I was from this small self-satisfied country when I came to Rotterdam with its many problems ... in a dynamic process with the European Union, which was gaining more and more ground. That was all an extreme shake-up process for me. And all this in a context where one thing was always clear, the fact that there was never any money

available at OMA. They could never do projects and draw on unlimited resources. This was quite out of the question. The Kunsthal, which you mentioned earlier, was built for less than 2,000 euros. So this meant it was built somehow for only 1,600 euros a square meter while Zumthor was building in Bregenz for 10,000 euros at the same time. But in the end, I was not interested in that any more. I said to myself: 'Anyone could build that for 10,000 Swiss francs or 20,000 Swiss francs, it's just about choosing the most expensive.' I was extremely enthusiastic about how amazingly exciting spaces were being developed under the constraints of a tight budget. As a result, we decided that this upscaling was important to us. And we were able to try this out for the first time with the Böll Foundation. But that was the European context. We wouldn't have done it in Switzerland. Because in Switzerland, the project would have had a 35 million Swiss franc budget. You wouldn't even have had to come up with the idea of developing a concept for creating freedom economically. That would not have been necessary ... It [collaboration at OMA] had its impact, but it should not be misunderstood in a sense that it would remain a kind of stepfather or that it would remain sort of an architecture of the eternal polycarbonate or something like this. It would not be necessary then.

JS_ We are now talking about your biography. Koolhaas was mentioned as a term, or as a name. It was where you worked. With regard to the ETH you showed us Hans Kollhoff. There is also an interesting connection between these two through Ungers in America. Perhaps you could tell us a little about these two figures. How did

sagen: ‚Ich nehme Mies, um mich einer gewissen Sache zu entledigen.‘ Das ist sicherlich eine Anleihe, die, wie du sagst, vergleichbar wäre, die natürlich seine Spuren hinterlassen hat.

RR_ Hat eigentlich die Phase bei OMA bei euch so richtig Spuren hinterlassen?

PE_ Ja, ich finde schon. Mich hat das sehr, sehr geprägt, viel stärker als meine Lehrer an der ETH eigentlich, weil das eine wahnsinnig intensive Zeit war. Für mich war es auch ein Aufwachen in einer europäischen Dimension. Ich kam aus diesem kleinen, zufriedenen Land und bin dann nach Rotterdam gekommen, mit so vielen Problemen und ... in einem dynamischen Prozess dieser Europäischen Union, die immer mehr Fuß gefasst hatte. Das hat mich extrem wachgerüttelt – und das dann in einem Kontext, in dem eines immer klar war: Es gab nie Geld bei OMA. Die konnten nie Projekte machen und aus dem Vollen schöpfen. Das gab es nicht. Die Kunsthalle, weil du sie vorher angesprochen hast, die wurde für unter 2.000 Euro gebaut, die wurde irgendwie mit 1.600 Euro pro Quadratmeter gebaut, und zeitgleich hat Zumthor für 10.000 in Bregenz gebaut. Das hat mich am Schluss überhaupt nicht interessiert. Ich habe gesagt: ‚Das kann jeder, das kann eigentlich jeder für 10.000 oder 20.000 Franken, einfach das Teuerste.‘ Es hat mich extrem begeistert, wie man unter der Last eines engen Budgets enorm spannende Räume entwickeln kann. Also haben wir gesagt, dieses Upscaling ist für uns wichtig. Wir konnten das bei der ‚Böll-Stiftung‘ zum ersten Mal ausprobieren.

Das war aber der europäische Kontext. In der Schweiz hätten wir das gar nicht gemacht, weil dort das Haus ein Budget von 35 Millionen Schweizer Franken gehabt hätte. Da käme man gar nicht auf die Idee, eine Art Konzept zu entwickeln, wie man ökonomische Freiheiten schafft. Das wäre ja gar nicht notwendig gewesen ... Es [Mitarbeit bei OMA] hat seinen Impact gehabt, aber es ist nicht so zu verstehen, dass das dann immer so eine Art Stiefvater oder eine Art Architektur des ewigen Polykarbonats oder so wäre. Das bräuchte es dann nicht.



JS_ Ja, wir sind gerade bei der Biografie. Koolhaas fiel als Begriff oder als Name. Da hast du gearbeitet. Im Zusammenhang mit der ETH hast du auch den Hans Kollhoff gezeigt. Es gibt diese Verbindung auch zwischen den beiden über Ungers in Amerika. Das sind so Figuren

they shape you? Is it possible even, that you distanced yourself critically from them in some way? I would be very interested to hear about that.

PE_ Well, that was a while ago, but ...

JS_ Is Ungers an issue for you, too?

PE_ Yes, of course. Ungers always inspired us, especially when we started teaching. Ungers was incredibly important as a teacher, but maybe not as important as an architect. I found his architecture soulless. But what he ultimately said was incredibly inspiring. For me, that was a contradiction. So that's why Ungers is a discovery for us as a teacher but not so much as an architect.

JS_ I can understand that.

PE_ And I think you have to take it that way. Kollhoff was an extremely explosive time because Piraeus [Piraeus Building, KNSM Island, Amsterdam] was almost finished. And I still have the feeling that KNSM Borneo is the best building that was built in the Netherlands during this period. Perhaps Roger Diener's building on the opposite site, might come near to it and I would also consider it to be absolutely top-notch, so incredibly simple, precise but very sensual, this change in retro style, so to speak, that you barely noticed as a student. That was Kollhoff's Berlin period, which then formally started to interest me less. But he was always extremely strong in terms of urban planning, right? So for Kollhoff it's more of a controversial

relationship. We mostly argued. So that was the way it was, when you resisted certain issues.

JS_ What were the points of contention?

PE_ Well, the question of architectural formalization, possibly denying bourgeois architecture or something like that. Simultaneously the fascination with how confidently he could handle urban space. Basically you were in a constant state of conflict, a situation which is not fruitless – for a teacher especially, because this is something you have to deal with all the time. The result was a very productive time for me. But it was not a time when I was able to sort my formulas and references properly, as I see again and again today. The younger people at ETH are more conservative than we are. They believe everything their teachers say and apply it accordingly, so everyone is happy, or achieves a similar state of satisfaction. This was by no means the case back then. The discussion with Rem was more on a programmatic, typological level.

RR_ I also believe that there is more of a closeness to Rem, if you want to define that at all. Or there is also this negation of the image which is actually not there at all. It is actually the structure that is formative. Now we move on to the taz building, which is very strongly influenced by its structure – whether we are talking about the static construction or the spatial structure. But the façade is also a major topic, and you indicated that with these 60 centimeters. That was practically your sovereign territory. And the interior is then left to the taz in this one assembly.

... Vielleicht sagst du einfach noch mal ein bisschen was dazu. Wie haben die dich geprägt? Hast du auch vielleicht kritische Distanz dazu genommen, auf eine bestimmte Art und Weise? Das würde mich noch interessieren.

PE_Ja, das ist eine Weile her, aber ...

JS_Ist Ungers da auch für dich ein Thema?

PE_Ja, ja klar. Ungers hat uns immer, vor allem, als wir angefangen haben zu unterrichten, begeistert. Ich glaube, Ungers war als Lehrer unglaublich wichtig, vielleicht nicht so wichtig als Architekt. Ich habe seine Architektur als sehr entseelt empfunden. Aber das, was er letztlich gesagt hat, war unglaublich inspirierend. Das hat für mich nie zusammengepasst. Deswegen ist Ungers für uns eine Entdeckung als Lehrer und nicht eine Entdeckung als Architekt.

JS_Das kann ich verstehen.

PE_Und ich glaube, man muss ihn dann auch so nehmen. Kollhoff war eine extrem brisante Zeit, weil ‚Piräus‘ [Piräus-Gebäude, KNSM Insel, Amsterdam] damals fast fertig war. Ich habe immer noch das Gefühl, dieses ‚KNSM Borneo‘ ist das beste Gebäude, das man in diesem Zeitraum in den Niederlanden gebaut hat, vielleicht noch das Gebäude von Roger Diener, das gleich gegenüber steht – auch absolut Weltklasse für mich – unheimlich einfach, präzise, aber sehr sinnlich, diese Veränderung der Retro-Schiene sozusagen, was

man als Student nur am Rande mitgekriegt hat. Das war dann die Berliner Zeit von Kollhoff, die mich formal weniger zu interessieren begonnen hat. Städtebaulich war er allerdings immer extrem stark, oder? Mein Verhältnis zu Kollhoff ist eher zwiespältig. Wir haben auch mehrheitlich gestritten. Das war so, wenn man sich gewissen Themen widersetzt hat.

JS_Was waren da Streitpunkte?

PE_Die Frage der architektonischen Formalisierung, vielleicht das Verweigern einer bürgerlichen Architektur oder so, bei gleichzeitiger Faszination, wie sicher er im Stadtraum umgehen konnte. Man ist quasi im ständigen Streit gewesen, was nicht unergiebig ist – in der Rolle eines Lehrers erst recht, weil man sich ständig damit auseinandersetzen muss. Für mich war das eine sehr produktive Zeit, aber es war nicht eine Zeit, in der ich dann meine Rezepturen und meine Referenzen alle schön sortieren konnte, so wie ich das heute immer wieder erlebe, dass die Jüngeren der ETH konservativer als wir sind. Die glauben, was die Lehrer sagen, und die applizieren es, und alle sind zufrieden. Das war damals nicht die Zeit. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Rem war dann eher auf der programmatischen, typologischen Ebene.

RR_Ich glaube auch, dass da eher diese Nähe zu Rem ist, wenn man überhaupt schubladisieren möchte. Oder es gibt in euren Arbeiten diese Negierung des Bildes, das eigentlich überhaupt nicht da ist. Es ist eigentlich die Struktur, die da prägend ist. Kommen wir jetzt zu

But there are also surfaces and there is an expression involved. How would you classify that?

PE_ Well, the limitation is always that only what was actually functionally necessary was used in this in-between space. So we had ribbed ceilings. Of course, they were indispensable, because it was a supporting structure that dominated the room. And then we designed some kind of integrated acoustics and these come somewhere in-between. This all gives the room a somewhat industrial look. Grating was used, with a lining behind. And to top things off, we then used that Pirelli floor, which for us was the kind of floor we'd see when traveling. Well, I don't know, I've always felt that way about it. Zurich Terminal B, as it was called at the time, always had Pirelli. And when you saw it you would know for a fact: I'm traveling now because I'm walking on a Pirelli floor. And I really liked this image, of actually choosing a floor that instead of aesthetizing and saying: 'We're now also doing terrazzo or something of the kind', is rather kind of a floor where you can hear the knobs when something rolls over it. This is rather like saying: 'Hey, you taz people, you are now traveling. But you are going to have to find yourselves first.' It interested us more on a sort of scenic level. For example we provided a red carpet on the stairs. But I would also have to say in this context that the stairs themselves were implemented very modestly. They provided enough space for a red carpet, for a runner on it and that was then the gathering area. So it was a scenario like preparing a house at the point immediately before it is filled with all sort of extraordinarily colorful stuff, right? And because of that,

when the first people walked through the taz, they said: 'It's all so gray and everything is so cold here.' And we told them: 'Yes, of course, this is a space still being filled, right?' And I think that's what you actually experience. Everything is represented, even kitsch, right?

RR_ Yes, the contrast is also exciting, isn't it? These bare concrete surfaces in the interior and then, as you explained nicely, this almost pictorial or metaphorical flooring, which seems almost to be from quite another period, or from the airports. It is also interesting that a lot of airports had this type of floor and have now mostly all torn it out and replaced due to the development and the invention of the trolley, because this now made them too loud. These floors fell victim to this development, although in actual fact they are very versatile. But to return to the subject of this façade: How would you interpret it – this balcony with a kind of trellis in front that traces the lines of the construction? Is the façade, are these 60 centimeters, a part of the building or a part of the city? How would you categorize it?

PE_ Well, it's the interaction of the two, isn't it? Functionally speaking, we wanted to develop an open house, so this was extremely important. Our aim was to develop a network to the city that almost diffuses between the inner processes and the outer spaces. Another point here is that many taz people are still smokers, so you need a smoking balcony for them. That was effectively an issue in the program. They are working with an orientation to the outside. Therefore this balcony has also become

dem ‚taz‘-Gebäude, das sehr stark von seiner Struktur geprägt ist – ob es die statische Konstruktion oder auch die Raumstruktur ist. Ein weiteres großes Thema ist die Fassade, und das hast du ja auch angedeutet, mit diesen 60 Zentimetern. Das war praktisch euer Hoheitsbereich. Der Innenraum ist dann auch in dieser einen Montage der taz überlassen. Aber so ganz ist es ja nicht, denn es gibt ja auch Oberflächen. Da gibt es ja auch einen Ausdruck. Wie würdest du das einordnen?

PE_Ja, die Grenze ist eigentlich immer, dass in diesem Zwischenraum nur das eigentlich funktional Notwendige eingesetzt wurde. Wir hatten die Rippendecken. Die waren natürlich nicht wegzudenken, denn das war ein Spannwerk, das den Raum dominierte. Dann haben wir eine Art integrierte Akustik vorgesehen. Die ist dazwischen. Das macht die etwas industrielle Anmutung des Raumes aus. Das waren Gitterroste, die hinterlegt wurden. Dann haben wir diesen ‚Pirelli‘-Boden eingesetzt, der für uns so ein Boden war, wenn man auf Reisen ist. Ich habe das immer so wahrgenommen. Der ehemalige Züricher Terminal B hatte immer ‚Pirelli‘. Wenn man kam, wusste man: ‚Ich bin eigentlich auf Reisen, weil ich über den Pirelli laufe.‘ Dieses Bild hat mir sehr gefallen, nämlich einen Boden zu wählen, der wieder nicht ästhetisierend sagt: ‚Wir machen jetzt auch Terrazzo oder sowas‘, sondern es ist ein Boden, bei dem man die Noppen hört, wenn jemand darüber rollt. Und das ist so wie: ‚Hey, ihr Tazler, ihr seid ja auf Reisen! Ihr müsst euch zuerst selbst finden!‘ Es war mehr eine Art szenische Ebene, die uns interessierte. Auf der Treppe zum Beispiel haben

wir ihnen den roten Teppich gegeben. Die Treppe war allerdings sehr bescheiden materialisiert. Es hat für einen roten Teppich, für einen Läufer darauf, gereicht, und das war die Begegnungszone. Es hat eher etwas, das man als Szenario beschreiben könnte, um eigentlich ein Haus vorzubereiten, ehe das extrem kunterbunt gefüllt wird, oder? Als die ersten durch die taz liefen, haben die gesagt: ‚Hier ist alles so grau und alles so kalt bei euch.‘ Wir haben gesagt: ‚Ja klar, hey, das wird ja erst noch gefüllt.‘ Und das, finde ich, ist das, was man eigentlich heute erlebt. Bis zum Kitsch ist eigentlich alles vertreten, oder?

RR_Ja, auch der Kontrast ist spannend. Diese nackten Betonoberflächen im Innenraum und dann, wie von dir auch schön erklärt, dieser fast bildhafte oder sprechende Bodenbelag, der wie aus einer anderen Zeit oder aus den Flughäfen ist. Es ist ja auch interessant, dass ihn sehr viele Flughäfen gehabt haben und durch die Entwicklung, die Erfindung des Trolleys, der Bodenbelag herausgerissen wurde, weil es zu laut geworden ist. Er ist dem zum Opfer gefallen, obwohl er eigentlich alles kann. Nun zum Thema dieser Fassade: Wie würdest du sie, mit diesem Balkon und dem Spalier davor, die die Konstruktion nachzeichnen, deuten? Ist diese Fassade, sind diese 60 Zentimeter Teil des Gebäudes oder Teil der Stadt? Wo würdest du sie einordnen?

PE_Sie steht für die Interaktion zwischen den beiden, oder? Funktional gesprochen wollten wir ein offenes Haus entwickeln. Das war extrem wichtig. Wir wollten ein Netz

a manifesto space. It is where you hang a poster, where the demos happen, it is the place where you ask things like: 'What exactly do we stand for?' And these are issues that are actually anchored to these balustrades or to this balcony issue. Of course you also have a mission to provide emergency escape routes and so on, because you are left with somehow creating the inside of the house in compliance with all these insane German evacuation regulations. So in this context, we also gained a small benefit. But that was not the original idea, which was our intention of establishing this network ... If you only work in this zone, you always work with the subject of the image, right? What you ultimately develop is very much like a picture. And this network was still an interesting topic for us, because these taz people have such very flat structures that if you look at a network structurally, there's no element you can take out, otherwise the whole thing would collapse, wouldn't it? This is an interesting thing, right? It is a structural principle that works completely homogeneously, but simply will not allow you to take out a single element of the composite parts or anything, otherwise the whole thing will not work any more. And this fact again was an extremely interesting symbolism for an organization like the taz, which works so cooperatively with an extraordinarily broad user base deciding on all the participation issues, right? This is also a principle familiar to us because in Switzerland, we also do things this way with direct democracy and the cooperatives, as with the housing issue in Zurich. It was clear to us that we would need to broaden this, because this method is in actual fact the total antithesis of how anything is decided in Germany,

right? As a picture this was a unique selling point. And it was a matter of pure luck for us to hit that point. Because in a competition everything is done monologically, you can never guarantee these things. Here it worked.

JS_What interests me in my own search: When I looked through your projects at home, I had a book by Hans Scharoun on my desk and I looked at it with regard to your work. This is a completely different way of thinking and of approaching architecture, I'd say. And then I asked myself when I saw your project ... You must help me with the name, the big linear building with 500 windows.

PE_The Diakonie.

JS_The Diakonie project. The same principle is at work again here: the disclosure of the space, the multi-layered appropriation capacity of the space. And so I asked myself: Is it possible to follow this principle for every building task? How do you see that? I am not sure if I have phrased the question very well.

PE_No, no. Yes, I understand the question. I don't think you can.

JS_I mentioned Scharoun, because with him the specific is very much in the foreground. I tackle a task by first searching for its essence, still having no principle in mind. I try to find one first. And then I develop something out of this consideration. Does that work for every task with this topic of the openness of the spaces and the interpretability

zur Stadt entwickeln, das gleichsam diffundiert zwischen den inneren Vorgängen und den äußeren Räumen – auch, weil die Tazler nach wie vor häufig Raucher sind. Hier braucht es den Raucherbalkon. Das war auch tatsächlich ein Thema im Programm, dass die alle rausarbeiten, also dass der Balkon auch ein Manifestraum ist. Dort hängst du den Poster auf, dort fährst du Demos, dort sagst du: ‚Wir stehen für was denn?‘ Das sind lauter so Themen, die quasi an diesen Balustraden oder an diesem Balkonthema festgemacht sind. Natürlich hat man auch noch einen Fluchtauftrag, weil man dann im Inneren das Haus von diesen ganzen wahnsinnigen deutschen Fluchtvorschriften freischaufelte. Das hatte noch so einen kleinen Benefit, aber das war nicht die Idee. Wir wollten dieses Netz machen ... Wenn du nur in dieser Zone arbeitest, arbeitest du ja auch immer mit dem Thema des Bildes, oder? Das ist wie ein Bild, das du letztlich entwickelst. Für uns war dieses Netz eigentlich noch ein interessantes Thema, weil die Tazler so flach strukturiert sind, dass du, wenn du ein Netz strukturell betrachtest, keinen Stab herausnehmen kannst. Dann kollabiert es, oder? Das ist das Interessante, oder? Das ist also eigentlich ein Strukturprinzip, das komplett homogen funktioniert. Aber du kannst nicht einzelne Teile herausnehmen, sonst funktioniert es nicht mehr. Und das wiederum war eine extrem interessante Sinnbildlichkeit für eine Organisation wie die taz, die genossenschaftlich arbeitet, mit einer extrem breit aufgestellten Nutzerschaft, die quasi über Partizipation entscheidet, oder? Also, wir kennen das, weil wir auch in der Schweiz mit der direkten Demokratie und den Genossenschaften arbeiten, oder auch in der

Züricher Wohnfrage. Wir kennen das. Für uns war es klar, dass man das thematisieren muss. In Deutschland ist das ja die volle Antithese, wie überhaupt irgendetwas entschieden wird, oder? Das hat dann als Bild wieder ein Alleinstellungsmerkmal. Es war halt dann Glück, dass du das triffst. In einem Wettbewerb machst du das nämlich monologisch, du kannst das nicht absichern, und das hat es dann halt getroffen.

JS_ Was mich selbst in meinem eigenen Suchen interessiert: Ich hatte mir, als ich eure Projekte zu Hause angeschaut habe, auf den Schreibtisch ein Buch von Hans Scharoun gelegt und noch einmal ein bisschen geguckt. Das ist ja eine ganz andere Herangehensweise an die Architektur. Und da habe ich mich dann gefragt, als ich euer Projekt gesehen habe ... Du musst mir jetzt helfen, vom Namen her, dieser große Riegel mit den 500 Fenstern.

PE_ Die ‚Diakonie‘.

JS_ Das ‚Diakonie‘-Projekt. Das ist ja auch das gleiche Prinzip: die Offenlegung des Raumes, die vielschichtige Aneignungsfähigkeit des Raumes. Da habe ich mich gefragt: Ist es eigentlich für jede Bauaufgabe möglich, dieses Prinzip anzuwenden? Wie würdest du das sehen? Ich weiß nicht, ob ich die Frage gut formuliert habe.

PE_ Nein, nein, doch, ich verstehe die Frage. Ich glaube nicht.

of the space? That was my question when I saw the linear building [Diakonie project].



PE_ This is difficult to say because it was not developed to work for every program. It could certainly work for any program that is of no great importance. That would in fact be an exploration of building a house that is no longer based on the program. Compare this to a school and you have a diametrically different model, in which the program of this school, meaning the performance the school must provide, the rooms are so diametrical and so specific that you can't simply bulldoze it by a generic interpretation of the task. You have to be much more specific for a task like this. But if the program loses its importance, it might well work, wouldn't it? Here is a little anecdote in the context of this question: I was recently lecturing in the

Ruhr region and I came into a hall that had originally been a canteen, with a very thin bearing structure. I was swept off my feet. That was the department of architecture. They all worked on the ground floor and upstairs everything was for events and exams and such, all with curtains and stuff, and I said: 'My God, who made this?' When was this made? In the 1960s. Downstairs there had formerly been a car repair workshop. The department of architecture has now taken over here. That was such an interesting time in the German educational reform, when they started building these temporary structures – built not for eternity, but simply to satisfy the temporary needs of the university course programs. Today, these buildings are incredibly exciting, so very much better than all the other stuff that was built everywhere with the objective of institutional representation. And this could well move in the same direction. But, in my opinion, you need to be sure that a program doesn't bring in the demand for specific components from the space. And then you will have the chance to develop the kind of generic principle that will be preserved through its design.

RR_ There was a time in Germany, especially at the beginning of the Cold War, when in the course of the post-war reconstruction phase, there was the intention to design some schools in such a way that they could be used for other purposes in an emergency. As a result, there are a number of schools that have been designed as emergency hospitals. This is an exciting discovery, because you can see from the floor plan that the school design is somewhat off track, with a little too much depth,

JS_Scharoun habe ich erwähnt, weil da dieses Spezifische sehr stark im Vordergrund steht. Ich gehe an eine Aufgabe heran und suche erst einmal die Wesenhaftigkeit in dieser Aufgabe, ich habe noch kein Prinzip und suche erst einmal nach einem Prinzip. Dann entwickle ich sozusagen etwas aus dieser Überlegung heraus. Geht das für jede Aufgabe, dieses Thema der Offenheit der Räume, die Interpretierbarkeit des Raumes? Das war, als ich das Scheibenprojekt gesehen habe, meine Frage.

PE_Schwierig zu sagen, weil es nicht mit dem Anspruch entwickelt wurde, ob es für jedes Programm funktionieren wird. Es könnte sicher für jedes Programm funktionieren, das keine Wichtigkeit hat. Das ist ja die Auseinandersetzung: ein Haus zu bauen, das sich nicht mehr auf das Programm stützt. Wenn du das mit einer Schule vergleichst, das ist das diametral andere Modell gewesen, in dem das Programm dieser Schule, also auch die Performance, was die Schule leisten muss, die Räume, so diametral, so spezifisch sind, dass du das eben nicht in einer fast generischen Interpretation ‚erschlagen‘ kannst. Du musst da viel spezifischer rein. Aber wenn das Programm seine Wichtigkeit verliert, könnte es dahingehend sein, oder? Kleine Episode zu dieser Frage: Ich war erst letztes im Ruhrpott und habe dort auch einen Vortrag gehalten und bin dort in eine Halle hineingekommen, die ursprünglich eine Mensa mit einem ganz dünnen Stabwerk war. Ich war wie von den Socken. Das war die Architekturabteilung, und im Erdgeschoß

haben die da alle gearbeitet und oben war alles Event und Prüfung, alles nur mit Vorhängen und so, und ich habe gesagt: ‚Mein Gott, wer hat das gemacht? Wann ist das gemacht worden?‘ In den 60er Jahren. Sie haben unten eine Schlosserei für Autos, eine Reparaturwerkstatt, hineingebaut. Jetzt hat die Architektur das übernommen. Das ist eine ganz interessante Zeit in dieser deutschen Bildungsreform, wo die angefangen haben, Provisorien zu bauen – nicht für alle Ewigkeit, sondern einfach, um dem Programm der Universität temporär zu genügen. Heute sind diese Gebäude unglaublich gut, also spannend, viel besser, als was sonst überall mit institutioneller Repräsentanz dann drangebaut wurde. Das geht vielleicht in diese Richtung. Aber du musst meiner Meinung nach die Sicherheit haben, dass ein Programm dem Raum keine spezifische Komponente abverlangt. Dann hast du eine Chance, eine Art Generik, ein generisches Prinzip zu entwickeln, das durch seine Machart Bestand bekommt.

RR_Es gab ja in Deutschland gerade am Anfang des Kalten Krieges eine Phase, die Wiederaufbauphase, in der ein Anteil von Schulen so konzipiert wurde, dass sie im Notfall auch etwas anderes leisten können. Es gibt eine ganze Reihe von Schulen, die als Notkrankenhäuser konzipiert wurden und Schulen sind. Das ist spannend, weil die Schule, wie man am Grundriss sieht, etwas falsch ist, etwas zu tief, und dann können plötzlich ganz spannende Nutzungen daraus entwickelt werden. Das sieht man auch an eurer Schule, die eigentlich etwas anderes ist. Klar, das Programm ist extrem vorgegeben, was ein Klassenraum und so weiter ist, aber gerade

and so, suddenly, you find you can develop very exciting uses for the building. You can also see that with your school, which is actually something other than what it claims to be. It is certainly true that the program is a very predetermined one in terms of what a classroom should be like etc. But simply by bringing in this tiny little twist, an all but unnoticeable little mistake, you can practically induce a multi-layered use allocation.

PE_Yes, that's a very nice example because it's all about what percentage of substance can sabotage this system, isn't it? And since we have a direct confrontation with it, a specific interpretation is made possible, and that is rather exciting from an architectural perspective. You could also ask: Is it possible to design architecture that is 90 percent absolutely generic repetition, but the remaining ten percent, for example, really make the building? These are extraordinarily highly charged topics. Naturally, this is always very exciting for us, because if you then find out what these ten percent are, then you have a very strong starting point for architecture, very controlled, but this control is not needed everywhere. In my opinion this is very exiting and far better than just having the intention to be special, because then you don't know where to start or where to end.

RR_Yes, that is the interplay between the determined and the undetermined areas in a project. And the more you really don't know the precise details about the program, what follows on from it and the use allocation, the more this factor really comes into play. And this is where I'd

like to come back to your question: Can this principle be applied for all buildings? It can certainly be used whenever the program is not outlined with total and inflexible clarity and thus giving a practical effect to abstraction and then all the various possible or potential use allocations can take their place.

PE_Yes, I would absolutely subscribe to that. But to return to Rossi. Rossi says: 'A typology doesn't need a program.' All you need to do is to find it. What type do you use for it? You can then turn a hospital into a school of architecture or into a car body shop. And then you have truly dealt with this confrontation. Unless the problem or the complexity demands a full confrontation with the program and then you won't be able to get it with the type alone, right?

RR_And that would take the pressure off the subject of housing.

PE_Right. Every time I try to present a residential project, I have to put that in quotes somehow. I find it so difficult. I mean, I have so many colleagues in Zurich who only design living spaces and all work cooperatively and the like. Busloads of people then come and look at the houses. But I find it incredibly boring, because I really can't see any debate has taken place in this work. It is all basically so conservative, the way these apartments are developed is almost conservatism itself. They always bring in these little peculiarities, of course – like putting the washing machines up on the roof, for example. [all laugh] So everyone is doing their washing together. [all laugh]

diesen ganz kleinen Twist hineinzubringen, den ganz kleinen Fehler hineinzubringen, ermöglicht es, praktisch eine mehrschichtige Nutzungsbelegung zu induzieren.

PE_Ja, das ist ein sehr schönes Beispiel, weil es genau darum geht, wieviel Prozent oder welche Anzahl an Substanz dieses System sabotiert, oder? Weil es da ist, macht es eine spezifische Interpretation möglich, und das ist eigentlich architektonisch hoch brisant. Man könnte auch fragen: ‚Schaff ich es, eine Architektur zu machen, die mit 90 Prozent absolut generischer Allerweltswiederholung die Ausgangslage bildet, aber zu zehn Prozent, zum Beispiel, dieses Haus bestimmt?‘ Das sind sehr, sehr brisante Themen und für uns natürlich immer wieder extrem spannend. Weil, wenn du das herausfindest, was diese zehn Prozent sind, dann ist das eine starke Ausgangslage, um Architektur sehr kontrolliert, aber doch nicht überall kontrolliert zu machen, oder eben dieses Ergänzende oder dieses Besondere dort hineinzusetzen. Und das, finde ich, ist etwas vom Spannendsten und besser, als nur besonders zu sein, weil man dann nicht weiß, wo man anfängt und aufhört.

RR_Ja, das ist ja auch das Wechselspiel zwischen den determinierten Bereichen und den nichtdeterminierten Bereichen in einem Projekt. Je mehr man eigentlich nicht genau über das Programm, das spätere Programm oder die Nutzungsbelegung weiß, desto stärker kommt das dann zum Tragen. Da komme ich auf deine Frage zurück: Kann das auf alle Gebäude angewendet werden? Eigentlich überall dort, wo dieses Programm nicht so

klar umrissen ist, so dass die Abstraktion dann praktisch greifen muss, damit überhaupt diese verschiedenen eventuellen, potentiellen Nutzungsbelegungen stattfinden können.

PE_Ja, das würde ich absolut unterschreiben. Und um dann auf Rossi zurückzukommen. Rossi sagt ja: ‚Eine Typologie braucht kein Programm.‘ Du musst sie dann halt finden. Was ist dann der Typus, den man dafür einsetzt? Dann kann ein Spital zu einer Architekturschule oder zu einer KFZ-Karosserieschmiede werden. Dann hat man tatsächlich diese Auseinandersetzung gemacht. Es sei denn, die Problemstellung oder die Komplexität fordert quasi eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Programm. Dann schafft man es nicht nur mit dem Typus, oder?

RR_Ja, Das würde auch den Druck aus dem Thema Wohnen herausnehmen.

PE_Ja, jedes Mal, wenn ich ein Wohnprojekt vorzustellen versuche, muss ich es irgendwie in Anführungszeichen setzen. Ich finde das schwierig. Ich habe so viele Kollegen in Zürich, die dann Wohnen machen, und alle machen kooperativ. Da kommen dann ganze Busreisen und gucken sich die Häuser an. Aber ich finde das wahnsinnig langweilig, weil ich keine Auseinandersetzung damit sehe. Es ist ganz konservativ oder fast ein Konservatismus, wie die Wohnungen entwickelt werden. Das wird immer an irgendwelchen kleinen Sonderheiten festgemacht. Die Waschmaschinen sind dann alle auf dem Dach oben, zum Beispiel. [alle lachen] Man wäscht dann

But I can only say: The gambler who is building a high-rise for the rich also builds a fitness center on the top floor. It boils down to about the same thing on the same level. And that's why I say, we do not challenge the apartment itself, i.e. the dwelling. We are still surprisingly conventional with these hierarchical models. A four-room-apartment is a four and a three-room-apartment is a three and so on. Everyone wants this and that, or doesn't want it, and you are progressive but also not really so. It's almost a dilemma. I'd say that it fell almost victim to success. We design cooperative living according to building rights and that's how it works and then the rents are cheap and all that. So there is no compulsion to really take this problem or this change in society as an opportunity to formulate other models. And whether they are cheap or not, that's a question of the briefing, right? But that's why I'm in a sense bored with this topic, and it's still strangely accompanied by this all-encompassing architectural dominance, right? Architects dominate everything there – right down to the door handle. They are still bound to design the house, even if it's just a plaster façade. They design a window detail or door details, or dado details, or space layouts. It is all consistent and that is why there is no cooperative phenomenon in the space. And that's the biggest mystery of all for me. It's as if there was too much complacency or something of the kind in it all.

RR_Housing is actually one of the most diffuse architectural terms anyway, isn't it? Unfortunately, it's always quickly misunderstood because many of our colleagues all the way through to the investor, know

exactly what it is all about ... I know how cooking or how sleeping works, but dwelling? That is altogether something very strange. And then I agree with you there, you are quite right. There is really far too little space devoted to this issue in contemporary housing, which could allow anything to develop there.

PE_Yes, I'd say there is a lack of courage. All the stakeholders would work together. I just don't find that very inspiring. That's why we always try to resolve any one of these paradigms in these projects, don't we? Just to say: I only make the bathrooms. I only do the bathroom and the kitchen. Because I know in a high-rise building you can't do the kitchen on one floor here and somewhere else on the next floor. And the same goes for you wanting a bathroom here and the neighbor below definitely not wanting it in that place. You would never come to the end of all this, would you? It simply wouldn't work that way, would it? Hence at the time, this idea to say: 'The things that you simply shouldn't move must be kept firmly anchored in place, right?' I think that we need more challenges. I always have the feeling that the people who are to move in are taken for complete idiots, whereas in actual fact their ideas about how to live extend far beyond anything we as architects are prepared to admit them. They'd rather tell us how they live, than have us tell them how they should live all the time. I find that a bit bothering.

JS_Something else has crossed my mind now that you are talking about this: the question of meaning in architecture. How do you think your architecture creates

gemeinsam. [alle lachen] Aber ich sage nur: ‚Der totale Spekulant, der ein Hochhaus für die Reichen baut, der baut auch im obersten Geschoß das Fitnesszentrum.‘ Es ist ungefähr die gleiche Ebene. Deswegen meine ich, die Auseinandersetzung mit der Wohnung selbst, mit der Behausung, findet überhaupt nicht bei uns statt. Wir sind immer noch überraschend konventionalistisch unterwegs zwischen diesen hierarchischen Modellen. Und eine Vierzimmerwohnung ist eine Vierzimmerwohnung und eine Dreizimmerwohnung ist eine Dreizimmerwohnung etc. Jeder will, und dann aber doch nicht, und man ist ja progressiv, aber eigentlich nicht. Also, es ist fast ein Dilemma. Ich hatte gesagt, das ist fast das Opfer des Erfolges. Wir machen kooperatives Wohnen, und mit den Baurechten und so funktioniert das, und dann sind die Mieten günstig. Es gibt keinen Zwang, dieses Problem oder diese Veränderung einer Gesellschaft zum Anlass zu nehmen, andere Modelle zu formulieren. Ob sie dann günstig sind oder nicht, das ist dann eine Frage des Briefings, oder? Ich bin deswegen in einem gewissen Sinn gelangweilt von diesem Thema, und es ist immer noch komischerweise begleitet von dieser allumfassenden Architekturdominanz, oder? Die Architekten dominieren alles da drin – bis zum Doorhandle. Sie sind immer noch verhaftet, das Haus zu machen, auch wenn es nur eine Putzfassade ist. Sie machen ein Fensterdetail oder die Türdetails, die Sockeldetails, die Raumzuschnitte. Das ist alles gesamthaft, und es gibt eigentlich eben gerade kein kooperatives Phänomen in dem Raum. Das ist für mich das größte Rätsel. Das ist wie zu viel Selbstzufriedenheit oder so etwas.

RR_ Das Wohnen ist ja eigentlich sowieso einer der diffusesten Architekturbegriffe schlechthin. Das wird aber leider immer dann schnell missverstanden, weil sehr, sehr viele unserer Kollegen und Kolleginnen bis hin zum Investor genau wissen, wie es geht. Ich weiß, wie Kochen geht und ich weiß, wie Schlafen geht, aber Wohnen, das ist etwas ganz Merkwürdiges. Da gebe ich dir Recht. Dafür ist eigentlich viel zu wenig Raum im zeitgenössischen Wohnungsbau, dass sich da irgendetwas entwickeln kann.

PE_ Ja, es fehlt an Mut, meiner Meinung nach. Also wären es dann alle Akteure, die zusammenwirken. Ich finde das einfach nicht sehr inspirierend. Deswegen versuchen wir in diesen Projekten immer, wenn es geht, irgendeines dieser Paradigmen aufzulösen, oder? Eben zu sagen: ‚Ich mache nur die Badezimmer. Ich mache nur die Badezimmer und die Küche.‘ Weil ich weiß, in einem Hochhaus kannst du die Küche nicht hier bauen und im nächsten Geschoß dort, oder wenn man im nächsten Geschoß hier ein Badezimmer haben will, und der untere Nachbar will es sicherlich nicht da, sondern dort. So wirst du nie an das Ende kommen, oder? Das wird nicht gehen, oder? Deswegen diese Idee damals, zu sagen: ‚Die Dinge, die man einfach nicht verrücken soll oder darf, die fixieren wir, oder?‘ Ich glaube, wir brauchen da mehr Challenges. Ich habe immer das Gefühl, man verkauft die Menschen, die dann einziehen, für dumm. Die können viel mehr als das, was wir uns als Architekten überhaupt zugestehen. Die können viel mehr sagen, wie sie wohnen, als dass wir

meaning for the people who live in it? Or, can architecture only contribute something of minor importance to this question?

PE_No, I think the task should be that what we create becomes a starting point, an ignition flame. If we succeed, then that would be most rewarding. That is why it was an eye-opener for me to be able to say that someone has taken hold of something from a room and has succeeded in using it to do cool things or to activate extreme things. This is a very nice reward for the space or for us.

JS_When is it activated by a person?

PE_Yes. When you see that you create something as a basis, and it becomes independent. I find that extremely rewarding, more than seeing that everyone is living according to your idea, for example, which doesn't happen anyway, right? I think this is one of the things that concern us the most right now. And that doesn't just concern housing either. We are now working on a laboratory building for the Inselspital. The issue here is really about how to bring yourself out of all these insane circumstances. The main aim is simply to step away and not try to tell the researchers how a laboratory building works. You can only lose. There are so many issues in architecture where you can say to yourself: 'Well, if I have no influence here, then what on earth am I doing?' And this is the point where you are left with these ten percent. And this is what I find ever more exciting.

RR_When presenting one of the projects, you almost casually mentioned: 'This is one of our white models.'

PE_Yes.

RR_What is the deal with these white models?

PE_Yes, that's a good story. [laughs] Basically, we use these models like a strategy, exploring in terms of design or space. What we don't do is actually use the model as a simulation of the final version. So, it isn't the dollhouse or a simulator for showing what it should look like, but rather a set of basic instructions for a possible subsequent implementation. The materialization, the actual implementation, we work that out with other techniques. We work a lot more with real materials, or compositionally. That's why it's more an instrument for us to think about this prioritization than it is a simulation of the final version. That's about the change, isn't it? Both are used a lot today, to represent the model in such a way that you can photograph it and ultimately you can no longer tell whether you are dealing with a model or reality, right? That also has a relevance and is exciting. But what we're trying to do is actually more to secure what is important to us in terms of design. You could also say that this is the basic principle for us between definition and tolerance. So what I don't represent is within the tolerance range. What I represent absolutely meticulously will be defined absolutely. So the models aren't representative of the final version, but more like a kind of fractal or they literally illustrate an idea that we attempt to implement.

ihnen die ganze Zeit vorhalten, wie sie wohnen sollen. Ich finde das ein bisschen bemühend.

JS_ Vielleicht noch etwas, das mir jetzt, wo Du so erzählst, durch den Kopf geht: die Frage der Bedeutung in der Architektur. Wie, denkst du, entsteht durch eure Architektur Bedeutung für den Menschen, der darin wohnt? Oder kann die Architektur nur etwas Kleines dazu leisten?

PE_ Nein, ich glaube, die Aufgabe müsste sein, dass das, was wir machen, als Ausgangspunkt dafür gilt, etwas zu entfachen. Wenn uns das gelingt, dann werden wir dafür sehr belohnt. Deswegen war es für mich ein Eye-opener, zu sagen, dass jemand etwas von einem Raum zum Anlass nimmt, coole Sachen zu machen oder extreme Dinge zu aktivieren. Das ist eigentlich eine sehr schöne Belohnung für den Raum oder für uns.

JS_ Wenn der Mensch es aktiviert?

PE_ Ja. Wenn du siehst, dass du etwas als Grundlage schaffst und es sich verselbstständigt. Das finde ich extrem belohnend und besser, als wenn du siehst, dass zum Beispiel alle nach deiner Linie leben, was ja sowieso nicht stattfindet, oder? Ich glaube, das ist etwas, das uns im Moment am meisten beschäftigt. Das braucht nicht beim Thema Wohnen zu bleiben. Wir machen jetzt ein Laborgebäude für das ‚Inselhospital‘. Da geht es eigentlich nur darum, wie man sich aus dieser ganzen Wahnsinnsübung herausnimmt. Es geht nur um: Bloß raus, nicht den Forschern sagen zu müssen, wie ein

Laborgebäude funktioniert. Da kannst du nur verlieren. Man kann sich in vielen Themen der Architektur überlegen: ‚Ja, wenn du da keinen Einfluss hast, was machst du dann?‘ Dann bist du bei den zehn Prozent. Und das reizt mich immer mehr.

RR_ Bei der Darstellung oder Vorstellung eines der Projekte hast du fast in einem Nebensatz beiläufig gesagt: ‚Das ist eines unserer weißen Modelle.‘

PE_ Ja.

RR_ Was hat es mit den weißen Modellen auf sich?

PE_ Ja, das ist gut. [lacht] Wir benutzen diese Modelle, um die Strategie, die wir verfolgen, gestalterisch oder als Raum überhaupt einmal entdecken zu können, oder? Was wir nicht machen, ist, dass wir das Modell als Simulation des Endzustandes benutzen, also nicht die Puppenkiste oder so etwas, oder das Absimulieren – so muss das ungefähr aussehen, sondern es ist quasi die Handlungsanweisung, es nachher umsetzen zu können. Die Materialisierung, die eigentliche Umsetzung, die arbeiten wir mit anderen Techniken aus. Wir arbeiten viel stärker mit echten Materialien oder kompositorisch. Deswegen ist es für uns mehr ein Instrument, über diese Priorisierung nachzudenken, als dass es ein Simulationsthema des Endzustandes ist. Das ist der Wechsel, oder? Beides wird ja auch heute sehr viel benutzt, also das Modell so darzustellen, dass man es fotografiert und es dann nicht mehr erkennen kann, ob

JS_ If I've understood you correctly, this means there is also a relatively high level of abstraction in the model. Which then, like your architecture, demands interpretation, so to speak.

PE_ Yes, exactly. The architecture is not anticipated. Rather it can then be developed within this scope of work. A little anecdote might be useful in this context: The Böll Foundation didn't believe it would be possible to make 4.80 meter post and beams in one piece. 2006 was a difficult time in Germany with the glass industry gutted and everything rationalized away. The only Europeans who could still make glass were the French: pretty much only Saint-Gobain, right? And they all didn't believe it was possible. So we invited them to Zurich. When they landed at the airport, which is a work by Marc Angelil, Terminal E was just finished and the first thing the foundation president said about what she saw was: 'Oh, they really are bigger than 4.80 meters.' [all laugh] So the fact of the matter is, you first have to know where you are going to use 4.80 meters and not all the rest, instead of having everything fixed either in the model or in that kind of perception. The thing to do is to deal with the problem in performance or otherwise you end up with this dependency.

RR_ Well, I think there'll be more exciting topics coming up in our discussion. But I would like to leave it at this for the time being, so that we can continue to talk over drinks and snacks next door. I'm assuming that many here in the audience have questions as well. We will pester you with

them. Piet, thank you very much for this evening, for this insight into your architecture and how you actually create architecture. Thank you very much.

PE_ Thank you.

es eigentlich ein Modell oder Realität ist, oder? Das hat auch seine Bewandnis. Das ist auch spannend. Aber das, was wir versuchen, ist eigentlich mehr, uns abzusichern, was uns dort gestalterisch wichtig ist. Du könntest auch sagen, das ist das Urprinzip bei uns zwischen Definition und Toleranz. Was ich nicht darstelle, liegt im Toleranzbereich. Was ich absolut akribisch darstelle, wird absolut definiert. So sprechen die Modelle keine Sprache des Endzustandes, sondern sind wie eine Art Fraktal, oder sie beleuchten quasi eine Idee, die wir versuchen so umzusetzen.

JS_ Das heißt, wenn ich es gut verstanden habe, gibt es im Modell auch einen relativ hohen Abstraktionsgrad, der auch wieder wie eure Architektur Interpretationsleistung fordert.

PE_ Ja, genau. Diese Architektur ist nicht vorweggenommen, sondern sie kann mit diesem Leistungsumfang entwickelt werden. Vielleicht eine kleine Episode dazu: Bei der ‚Böll-Stiftung‘ damals haben sie nicht geglaubt, dass du 4,8 Meter-Pfostenriegel am Stück machen kannst, weil 2006 eine schwierige Zeit war. In Deutschland war die Glasindustrie am Boden, alles wegrationalisiert. Die einzigen Europäer, die noch Gläser bauen konnten, das waren die Franzosen: Saint-Gobain ... ist doch so, oder? Sie haben das alle nicht geglaubt. Dann haben wir sie nach Zürich eingeladen und dann sind sie am Flughafen gelandet, der von Marc Angelil war. Der E-Terminal war gerade fertig. Sie sind dort gelandet, und das erste, was die Stiftungspräsidentin gesagt hat, war:

‚Ach, ist doch mehr als 4,80 Meter.‘ [alle lachen] Ich sage nur einfach: ‚Du musst zuerst wissen, wo du 4,80 Meter einsetzt und den Rest dafür nicht, anstatt dass im Modell oder in dieser Wahrnehmung schon alles fertig ist. Das muss mit Performance geregelt werden oder in diese Abhängigkeit geraten.‘

RR_ Ja, da kommen, glaube ich, jetzt immer mehr spannende Themen in unserer Diskussion, in unserem Gespräch, auf. Aber ich würde das gerne erstmal hier in dieser Runde so belassen, um dann nebenan bei Drinks und Snacks gerne weiter zu diskutieren. Ich schätze, dass hier im Publikum auch viele Fragen gestellt werden. Wir werden dich dann löffeln. Piet, herzlichen Dank für diesen Abend, für die Insights in euer Architekturschaffen und wie ihr eigentlich Architektur kreiert. Vielen Dank.

PE_ Danke.



LARA ALMARCEGUI

NOVEMBER 25, 2019

LECTURE_93

INTERVIEW_99



<Again we calculated the construction materials. [...] Then we put them inside the Vienna Secession. This time, instead of the new materials as we have seen in the water tower, I got them as demolition material.>

<Well obviously, if we have an origin of a building, this is the end.>

LECTURE
EXHIBITION MAIN HALL VIENNA SECESSION | Vienna, Austria | 2010



CONSTRUCTION RUBBLE OF SPANISH PAVILION, 55TH VENICE BIENNALE | Venice, Italy | 2013



<When I was invited to the Venice Biennale, [for exhibiting in] the Spanish pavilion, we also made a list with all the construction materials used to build the pavilion. And then we brought them inside in the form of rubble. This was an enormous rubble mountain of over 600 cubic meters, that filled most of the main center space of the pavilion. The smaller rooms [around the centre] stayed rather empty. There were some smaller heaps, raised by separating the iron, the glass and the wood. The big mountain contains the brick, the concrete, the tar, the cement and the plaster. This is waste material from demolitions in Venice, which was not separated over there. >

HAUS LANGE BAUMATERIALEN | Krefeld, Germany | 2015



<Sometimes they don't allow me to put the materials inside the building, for example if the building is a monument, like the house by Mies van der Rohe [Haus Lange, Krefeld]. Haus Lange is a villa designed by him. So, then I do a much lighter project [...]. I just present a list of the construction materials. So, this list is a comment on the past of the building and at the same time on its future. What I like about this list is, that when you are [looking at] it in the house Lange, when it is presented, you are [looking at] the material the [house is made of]. So, you are looking at the wooden floor. The wood is somewhere on the list and the glass of the window is on the list.>

<I had a show here in Graz in the context of Steirischer Herbst [festival for contemporary art] in 2015. It was a show that presented a lot of projects on geology. We presented the Norwegian mineral rights because I just got them. The show was in October and I got them in April. Then we decided to look at the Graz situation, just to see if it is as difficult to have mineral rights in Austria as it is in Germany. [...] So, we decided to look at the mineral law in Austria. It was not easy to find out how to apply for mineral rights in Austria. [...] They are exclusive. They are blocked. >

MINING RIGHTS IN AUSTRIA | Thal bei Graz, Austria | 2015



INTERVIEW

Lara Almarcegui



LA_ Lara Almarcegui

RR_ Roger Riewe

MB_ Martin Boles

RR_ Dear Lara, thank you very much for this lecture with all its so very interesting and intriguing projects and surprises – especially the last part about your mining ambitions and your interest in iron ore – exploiting and conserving these places in Norway and in Austria – what a big surprise. I think there are a lot of questions on Martin's and my mind. Where to dig and where to actually get started? Perhaps we should start by rolling up from back to front, and let's say: A good place to start is the issue of mining, how you were actually given exploitation rights and also your commitment to conservation. Is this all a real physical model for making a living? Or rather, what is your ultimate goal and what do you intend to demonstrate with this idea of getting these exploitation rights?

LA_ I think my main goal is to have the public understand how ground is owned and split up for extraction, how an entire territory is controlled and used, understanding the system underneath, which is mysterious. [laughs] I think that is my main goal. And for me to have the mineral rights is a way of underlining this very clearly. The iron deposits are protected of course. But they are not going to be protected forever. I mean, at some point in time I will either have to start mining or I have to give the concessions back. So, this action is not really very efficient from the overall conservationist perspective, since it applies merely for a limited period of time. But I hope it helps us to underline what is below the ground and how it is being extracted.

RR_ For how long do you have these mineral rights?

LA_ In Norway for seven years, but I can apply for two more extra years. In Austria for four years and I can have five more extra years. So, I am going to have to start working on all of that [all laugh] – for the new application. And then of course I can start either with extraction or with other applications.

MB_ Yesterday I was walking with you in Buchkogel in your art mining rights. We were talking about art and how we can go there. I was just thinking that you are always talking about this freedom. I had the feeling about all your projects that they are always ultimately about freedom. And yesterday I also had this freedom that I can walk in the art a little bit. What is this freedom for you? You are always talking about it, but what does it mean for you?

LA_ It's like a place ... [thinking] Yesterday was a pleasant walk, because it was so very foggy, as it is every day here. [laughs] The sun was almost setting, so it was already almost dark and this was clearly in a place that escapes any control. What I like is how this location has its own narratives about minerals and also about nature. I am in Graz now because you invited me. But I could very well not be here and the place itself would still be there – it has a development and existence of its own, completely independent of me. It's free even of me. So even if it's my project, there was no billboard proclaiming the fact, or anything else like that. You told me spontaneously you would like to show me architecture in the city and I said:

'No, I want to go to the iron deposit site'. As an alternative to inspecting architecture, I said: 'If you want to come to the iron deposit with me, you are welcome.' But this was not planned. I don't do or even organize guided tours of the mines. The iron ore is there on its own account, completely independent of me or the public and I like that.

MB_ You were also talking about humor yesterday and how you enjoyed the humor in art. I found your storytelling about this very amusing. Can you talk a little about your reflections on this humor?

LA_ It is difficult to elaborate, but I think it has to do with the fact that from the start I might as well fail. This notion is already present from the beginning of my work. I was renovating a building that was going to be demolished [Lara's project for a new façade paint for a market hall schedule to be demolished in Spain]. This is not a silly joke. I am really serious. I love this building and I am very angry about the market hall and with the developers behind the demolition plan. I really want to protect this building with its iron work, and I am serious about it. But I also know my own limits. I exercise some kind of self-criticism and it is my hope that I am not too arrogant in my approach. This is also the case for me when I am looking at art. It may not always be the case, but I often have a sense of whether the artist has the sense of humor to criticize himself or herself, or whether this sense is altogether lacking. I hope I have some of this humor. Some works are more serious than others. Even the guides to wastelands are rather serious. But nevertheless, they are

still constantly being developed. So, when I wrote about this guide, these wastelands, and when we produced the guide, we already knew we would not be preserving them. There is this knowledge in our own limit, even in the construction material calculations. A lot of people asked me about the mistakes in the calculations, although we do them with the greatest of care. But of course I know there are things that can't be calculated. There is a limit to calculation, and I think that's really very interesting. If I said it's perfect, then I would not be telling the truth. I like that in the arts. But I haven't thought very seriously about it. When I see a work by another artist who does not have a sense of humor, I find myself thinking how very boring it is.

RR_ The wastelands project you showed is actually somewhere between the mining project, which was the last project you presented, and, let's say, the urban mining of your first one. The wastelands are also picking up on a kind of an architectural topic: the void. Much has been written and said about it and it is very often that architects say: 'There is a void here and I can do something with it, because it is empty.' But ultimately, there is no such thing as a void. There is always something in it, something that has a real existence. When you say there is nothing here, that is a purely nihilistic approach, because there is always something. And that's actually your wasteland project as well. I think you manage to show very clearly that there is something there. That is a potential that it has, isn't it?

LA_ Yes, I like the wastelands, because of their potential, because of their possibilities. I am not willing to close this possibility. I think they are amazing, because there is freedom in them, because there is no design. I would never attempt to impose a design on them. I have sometimes been invited [to work on a project] because of these ideas and what I have been doing in some empty lot projects. But there is a moment, when there is a pressure on me to do something, even if it is temporary. And I really don't want this. I have to be very clear, if I don't want to insert any design. I should do nothing. But then of course, you could tell me, as people often do, to protect the wasteland. It might be a design. It is true that in the case of my wasteland projects in Saragossa or in Rotterdam, you can make the case that I am simply framing it. And possibly this is true, these locations are being framed. But at the same time, when I compare what I have done with most of the architectural wasteland projects I have encountered, I am certainly designing less than anyone else I know. At least what I do is silent.

RR_ But isn't it also an issue, if you say, for example, you have got wasteland and you say you don't want to do anything, you actually start protecting it? But it's the same also with buildings or cities or historical cities or whatever. You say it should not be changed. The moment you say this, then you have to change everything except the thing you don't want to change. So, everything around this one particular item must be changed so that you can protect it.



LA_ Is it?

RR_ Yes.

LA_ Like that?

RR_ Possibly.

LA_ Maybe. Of course, because of the contrast. No? Of course, a wasteland has more value when everything around is being developed. Yes, could be.

MB_ You were talking at the beginning about a wasteland, where you made the exploration in the cities and you are choosing the best from the lots. What does that mean: the best wasteland? What is the best for you?

LA_ There are lots of criteria. When I hear about wastelands and where the wastelands are, I go to visit all of them to make my decision. There are various different ones. But the best of the best are the ones that are threatened. They are going to disappear very soon. So, there is an urgency about seeing them.

MB_ So the question of temporality?

LA_ I think that makes them more special. Because you know it's the last chance to see them. And then again, if they are going to disappear for an interesting, or an enormous project like for example the Olympic Games or a welfare development, these have their relevance and meaning for wastelands. You should look at what is going on in each city to decide on what is the more interesting course. I would say, a big development project makes them interesting. But also, for example, many of my guides review wastelands along the course of a river. A specific geographical issue like a river provides meaning and sense for an entire area. That also makes it very interesting. The London and the Rome wastelands in the guide all have this river proximity and the Olympics threat in common. In addition to this, I must also say we all love the wastelands by the water. [laughs] They are the best of the best. That is generalizing, of course, but they certainly have that extra something. And then the ones that are threatened. Yes, that would be my choice.

MB_ These guides [travel guides] have usually points on the map. It's also marked with 1, 2, 3 and explained what you can see there. What can you see in wastelands? What are these points?

LA_ When I started making them, I had a very bad text. I was very subjective. I would go to a wasteland with a sheet of paper and take notes. It was about listening to the plains and the plants. Now I am becoming more focused. I launched a research project on each wasteland. We find out what used to be there, why it was demolished and basically what was going on now, who is the owner. And then the trickiest part, really the trickiest by far, is to inquire the plans for the future including issues like what is the plan and why is it not happening. That's really the tricky part. For example, in London, the designers of the whole Olympic area were forbidden to speak to anyone, because there were a great many secretive issues for many different reasons. So, we had to find things out from local architects with lots of knowledge. The question about the future, that's a really interesting question. The discussion on what is going on now, I think that tells a lot about the city. It tells you a lot about what the city doesn't want you to know. I think that is really interesting.

RR_ Maybe there is a problem with the term of wasteland finally. Because the wasteland is actually something very valuable. Starting with the project in London: Since the British are not allowed to hunt foxes with horses and hounds anymore, they now shoot foxes, and the foxes are escaping into the city along the railway tracks and entering

this wasteland. And this must be protected because the foxes must be protected as well. Entirely new values have been attached to this as a result. The most valuable land we have in the city has thus also taken on a kind of environmental specificity, right?

LA_ That makes a lot of sense to me. Because in the wastelands you encounter everything or everyone that isn't allowed anywhere else. So, this could include foxes, although I have never heard about the arrival of the foxes. It could also be cats, crazy ladies feeding the cats, building sheds for the cats, people flying kites, whatever. There is no place for those things in the city, foxes included.

MB_ You work a lot around the world, not always in one place. The site-specific is really important in your art. What role does the identity of these places play for you? Do you come into contact with the locals?

LA_ Yes, I am. But this is a difficult question. Because from the beginning of my work, I have been trying to do work that is site-specific. But then I also asked myself how I could do to get to know places. It's not so easy to know a place, especially if you are a foreigner. One of the things I do is, I work with local people all the time. I don't have a team traveling with me from Rotterdam or Spain, but I work with locals. I often get help from architects or city planners. Already from my first visit in a city I meet local people that explain me what's going on from the map and I go to visit. But, when I launch a research, I do it with people that are

active in the city. Depending on the project, these people could be geologists or architects or different people, or sometimes botanists – it depends on the project. So, I work with local people. That would be my tool to approach a location as a foreigner. I mean, this is truly complicated, because everything is different in each project and I always have a different team. So, when I have someone wonderful working with me on a certain project, I know that regrettably I will not be working with the same person or people on the next project. That's undoubtedly a difficulty. The whole idea of the artist and the studio is not applicable for me. But at the same time, this is a very tricky issue, because I can see that this is a weak point. Well, I don't know if it's weak. But you know, the artists that are born in the city and work within this city and in the neighborhood forever, I also respect that a lot. That's real activism for me. I am not doing that, because I tried to have mineral rights in Spain, in the area where I come from. I really tried very hard. It didn't work. I tried it in another way and then I ended up in Norway. I didn't want to go to Norway, but I want to do what I do, even if I have to change the country, so I changed it.

RR_ Some time ago, I spoke to an architect who was in charge of making drawings for demolition work. In terms of architecture, these drawings are always done with yellow lines. Her job was to always make drawings with yellow lines. Then she said that this is a psychological problem because she makes these drawings as an architect. And when it is done, there is nothing left. And we as architects, make drawings and there is a building [as a

result]. Every time she does a drawing, she knows it will be destroyed or demolished again. I think this is an interesting psychological momentum in terms of demolition. Why do you think there has been this very specific criticism of your Rubble Mountain from demolishing a building? Why are people upset by it?

LA_ The Rubble Mountain was in a public space in Belgium. Normally, works that are in a public space are more problematic. People who hate art don't go to an art center, but if art is in a public space, this is a context where it is forced on them and they hate it even more – and this is the case with the Rubble Mountain. In Belgium, they call it the Puinhoop [from the Dutch 'mess'], which basically means the rubble, the garbage heap. But it is also a word they use to say when something is a mess. Actually, it was a kind of journalistic discussion against art. I don't know if it was a very interesting discussion, but it was very strong. I think the problem of the Rubble Mountain in Belgium was that it was in a city without contemporary art, with no art center and no art events. And then they do a big exhibition in summer, in a city where you normally don't have any art – very ambitious. Then they do a lot of publicity for it. And then they presented this art. And what the art haters got was the Garbage Mountain. [laughs] Some people got very angry. Then the press, the yellow press pushed the whole thing as a popular issue and the result was that we then had a messy situation. There was a public confrontation between two brothers, one loves the mountain and the other hates it. That kind of thing and all of it is certainly a little heavy.

RR_ But do you think that people are worried, that they will be the next victims? For example, if they would find themselves the owners of houses where nobody lives and that you might appear and say: 'Oh, we can demolish this, we can make a work of art.' [Lara laughs] So they all get really worried about what is going to happen next.

LA_ Actually, this would be a much more interesting conversation. [Roger laughs] I am afraid that ... No, I think there is something in my work that happens generally provocative. One result is that people also begin to talk generally about the place, the future and what the cities are doing to their area. This is really a very interesting discussion in my view and I really like to provoke discussions of this kind. But I am afraid that the public debate that was generated in Belgium and also in a village in France was not very interesting. It was simply a publicity scandal. But anyway, I would really like to see the drawings. Those demolishing drawings must be amazing. [all laugh]

MB_ I wanted to ask you about this. Because in Venice [Art Biennale] and the Secession in Vienna [art exhibition hall], you showed these interior spaces with rubble and material. What kind of a role does its form ultimately play? You were talking about the architects as developers and about politicians occupying space. And for me it is also like occupying interior space when you set the borders for visitors. To me this is something very similar to giving form or defining the space.

LA_ Yes, I know what you mean. These works are tough. They are tough for the audience. But part of the intention is that they should be tough in a way so that they can show you what construction work is really like. At the same time, it is hard to show you how things are proceeding. I must say the form was a technical issue, it was about how to calculate the volume of the mountains. It was my first time doing an installation like that inside a building. So, everything was calculated very carefully. The Secession is also a building we all love. We didn't want to do something very messy there. Everything was very carefully organized, and the position of the mountains was thought through very carefully in advance, in a very structured way. So later, for example in Venice, it was a much rougher building and rougher material. Everything could be a bit rougher. But in Vienna we were really careful. But we also didn't have the experience. It was the first time we put rubble mountains inside a building. So, we calculated everything in millimeters. But I'm now a bit more free with other places. [laughs]

RR_ When you see the images of your exhibition at the Secession in Vienna, it looks like a mess. But funnily, I also think it looks really beautiful, because it looks like a market or a bazar, where you can buy different spices. So, it becomes really delicate, as though you were combining the ingredients for a new meal or a dish you would like to make. And I think this is something really intriguing. But coming back to your intervention in the Spanish pavilion in Venice, which is actually kind of a one-to-one, not a

replica, but a redo in a different scale. You just took the rubble of, actually, the Spanish pavilion ... I have two questions about this. One is: Why do you move into a building with this concept? The other would be: Couldn't you actually claim that you can demolish the Spanish pavilion and then rebuild it again after the exhibition?

LA_ [Laughs] Demolish the pavilion and then have the mountain instead of the pavilion – resulting in an open-area work and a messy situation with the Spanish minister? [laughs]

RR_ I mean the King of Spain will go wild, but ... [laughs, all laugh]

LA_ Yes, it would have been difficult. [laughs] The idea of causing a building to be demolished, yes. That's really challenging. But it's a nice idea. [laughs] The good thing about the pavilions is that they are built as hollow objects, so they can be very simple. They have very little provided inside them and if they are given to just one artist, you can do basically everything you want. So, in a way, your idea makes sense. But to really go so far and to demolish it, well yes, you need a big budget. But it is true that if there is a big show with a big budget, it's Venice. Maybe you can do a better pavilion after. It is a nice idea. [all laugh] But every time I have done works with demolitions, as in Belgium, I thought it was better to first find a building that was in any case scheduled for demolition. [all laugh]. I did a project with demolition, one I didn't show, let me tell you about it really quickly now. I found a house that

was going to be demolished and we made a hole in the same spot and then put the materials inside and closed it. But then again, I found a house that was scheduled to be demolished. Should I demolish it myself? I wasn't sure.

MB_ But I think you did something similar in the Secession. You didn't show it, but I know you were working with floors. Can you tell us about this?

LA_ Yes. In the Secession they have three different spaces. One is located underneath in the cellar, another one which they call The Big Hall and then there is the so-called Grafisches Kabinett, a little room with a parquet floor, traditionally used for smaller format works. There is a project I had been working on for years. Imagine ... like this room with a parquet floor. [Lara points to the Aula Alte Technik] I arrived on the exhibition about two weeks before my show and then removed the whole floor with the help of a company to make sure we didn't destroy it, to see what was underneath and then we rebuilt it all again. We documented the whole thing and then the whole floor looked fine in my exhibition. There is also a slide projection of the whole process, which basically shows the company removing the parquet, taking it out and then putting it back again. It is a way to explore the place, but it is also a way to tell the audience: 'You came too late. We made this big exploration, but not for you. I did it because I am curious.' [laughs] This was very much about myself. It's not very generously dimensioned and it's an old work I tried to do after the high school, but no one allowed me to do so until many years later. But this work fits with all the other

works on the construction materials, on the knowledge of how things are built, or on the list of materials. They are all works about understanding construction.

RR_ I think, this is also the really interesting part for the public – the opportunity of being able to observe how or out of what materials things are finally built or constructed. And ultimately looking at the piles in the Venice pavilion or Vienna, things become very small in scale. This is because there is no air, or just about no air. Because the pavilion itself is big, with a lot of air. Then, you just crumble everything together and there is just rubble. It is very small, finally. In terms of an urban scale, you can demonstrate how totally efficient you could be by densifying things. A very contemporary topic of micro-densification to illustrate that there are so many possibilities available for densifying parts of our built environment. Would you then be able to, or even think of working on a project like this? Because you notice you observe a city in a very specific way or try to show the local people what their city is comprised of. By the same means you could also show what you still might be able to do with a city.

LA_ This is true. Starting with this list of construction materials, they could all be very easily converted into volumes. That's a very simple modeling task to take in hand for imagining the total volume of the city, and I certainly think it is interesting. If we put together all the volume of the materials of a city, with the modeling or something, you can also imagine the volume that has been extracted geologically to build that city. So you

can understand the scale of construction and extraction subsequently and from then, you could move on into trying different scenarios as the densification idea you suggest.

RR_ No, but the other idea is interesting as well. Because I always think when you see cities or historical cities made out of stone, especially because this is easier to understand, somewhere in the environment there must be huge holes, huge quarries.

LA_ There are, yes. I mean, every lake, or at least most of the lakes you see around Europe. Wherever you see a lake, unless it is a glacial lake high up in the mountains, it is very often the result of extraction. Well, I say everywhere in Europe. But admittedly I am not certain about the situation in every country. In Austria this is less common, but it is certainly true in Germany and the Netherlands. [laughs] Most of the ponds we have around us result from big extraction works – sand, gravel etc. It's amazing. In Rotterdam you have the new lakes from the new neighborhoods. [laughs]

MB_ We are back to the mineral rights topic. You said you also have obligations to explore the materials. How are you doing this?

LA_ I talk a lot with geologists about this and I follow a bit of their advice. And then the magnetometer machine is very interesting. It is a machine that measures the iron content in substances.

RR_ Do you have one of these machines yourself?

LA_ No, I borrow it. I was unable to find anyone I could borrow one from in Austria. So, I hired one from a company in the UK and they sent it to me in Holland. I find this is a really attractive machine, because it allows you to visualize the iron quantity it measures. So you can really make maps of the iron and imagine whether there is a lot of it.

MB_ Is it easy to use this machine?

LA_ The one I just spoke about is very easy to use. I first had to find a geologist who lent one to me and then we agreed to meet, and I asked him to explain me how it works. And then I was able to use it. And when I returned it, I had to ask him what I do with all the data it produced, because you can use it for graphics and then for representation. I knew nothing about how to do this and I had been afraid to tell him in advance, because this would have made him realize that I knew nothing about the subject and I was not sure if he would then have been willing to lend me the machine.

Anyway, I was taught how to use it. This was followed by practical experience when I was in Graz and it was all very interesting. You work like an archaeologist. So, you monitor your entire concession with this machine. Basically it is a machine that operates with and tells you about magnetism. You establish averages for non-ferrous

materials far away from your car, far away from any iron. Imagine that you have an area of 40,000 [square meters]. And then you establish the most common [materials that are present]. Then you enter the iron deposit area and the machine gives you feedback on where the deposits are highest as you move around. You need to work methodically like an archeologist. You make a 1x1 meter grid, and then you really measure every point. This involves a lot of work. You can then make a drawing to map all of this data. It is referred to as a magnetic anomaly and the anomaly meant is the iron below the ground. This is a good result and I can improve it by also taking samples and sending them to the labs for analysis. But this is not very attractive, since the result is only a letter from the lab defying a percentage of iron in the sample. For me as an artist that is not really something I would show, it's simply too boring.

MB_ You said you don't want to take samples. You don't have a hammer to take samples like a geologist. You are afraid to destroy what is there and to interfere with this natural freedom, is that correct?

LA_ I don't want to destroy anything by drilling. Drilling is a very heavy and intensive intrusion. But I think taking a hammer along might be a good idea, even though I have never taken one along with me. It would be good for taking samples because you can be sure of getting a good sample [...]. Without this approach you will probably not be getting the right resource. Minerals get weathered by rain and for thousands of years, and this means that using

a hammer on the solid rock will provide you with a better quality and a higher percentage of mineral than you can get if it's loose.

MB_You are starting up as a mining company then. [all laugh]

LA_[Laughs] Yes, yes. I must think about what to do on that issue.

RR_You are the owner of the mineral rights on some land in Thal, a small village near Graz. This village is well known to the people of Graz as the Schwarzenegger Village and it has the major attraction of a movie star. I think it even has a small museum or something. Where are you heading then now? Will this be a new attraction for Thal? What are you developing with your mineral rights in Thal?

LA_You mean in terms of the public? I am not getting or aiming for much publicity with this.

RR_But if people know all about the background, they will still be attracted to Thal. [laughs]

LA_Well yes, but there is nothing out of the ordinary about the site in Thal. It's just behind a church. There is a little park near the church and after this comes a small hill, very overgrown and open. The land is owned by the municipality of Thal. And yes, I have the mineral rights. You can walk to the spot through the trees. This was a mine shaft that collapsed. I showed some photos of the Thal

mine at the end of my presentations. But in fact, I hold mineral rights in two different sites in Graz, Buchkogel and Thal. Buchkogel is very interesting. The Buchkogel hill is used as a military training area. The land is owned by the Austrian military authorities and it is also crossed by a highway tunnel traversing at certain points. So, there is a lot going on. [laughs]

RR_But from which depths do you actually own the mineral rights?

LA_They are unlimited in terms of depth.

RR_I mean, the depths from zero, from minus one meter or two meters or something?

LA_Yes, that's a question architects very often ask me. [laughs]

RR_Yes, because, I mean, if I were a property owner there and had a basement, you would own my basement.

LA_Well, you are right in a sense. But the rights here are not about cadastral limitations, but about the resources. If there is iron and it comes to the surface, then it is mine. If what comes up are potatoes, then they are yours. [all laugh] So, I own the iron and I am not one hundred percent sure, but I might possibly own or I have the priority right to any other mineral that might be there.

But certainly not the potatoes, or the roots or the foundations or the cellars and the tunnels and so on and so forth. Only the mineral rights on minerals. It is tricky and also a very strange concept.

RR_It's worrying.

LA_Yes, certainly it is worrying, yes, sure. The minerals are divided into different mineral groups. In Germany they use the terms 'frei' and 'nicht frei' a lot, meaning the free minerals or the non-free minerals. The minerals are free and the stones or the sand are non-free, and these tend to be owned by the landowner. Well ... actually, they are not even minerals. So, this brings in some changes. In addition, oil and gas are in another category. So, the resources are separated into three big groups.

RR_Interesting.

LA_Yes, it's tricky.

MB_We were talking yesterday also about how I can buy your art, for example this work in Buchkogel, if I have the money. In general: How do artists sell this kind of art? What is important for you, from us architects or from other people? I mean when we visit your exhibition. Or what else can we do for you? [all laugh]

LA_The interest in art for me is making it and how to make it in the same way as getting mineral rights. What I need from other people, is the help of some geologists

in Graz. [laughs] So for me it is really making the work, what I'm more interested in. Selling a work is, in fact at the very end of the process, at a time when I have already forgotten about the work. It might be sold then, but this is not something I ever think or care about it. The galleries do all of that and the really important thing for me is what I do, why I do it and also what I want to do next and how I can get to know about a future project. There is of course a lot of knowledge that architects have, which is very interesting for me. Architects help me with the research I do when I start on a new work, for example with input on questions about the city. I think the interesting aspect of art is the excitement in making the things and helping them to happen or getting to know them or making things yourself. This is by far the most interesting part. Anyway you should buy. [laughs]

MB_Well this means then that we can't buy your mineral rights in Graz at your gallery for, let's say, a million euros or whatever the price might be. [laughs]

LA_This could also be a strategy. If I attempt to have my contract extended and I fail, then perhaps you could apply for it instead. [all laugh]

MB_And then end up getting it all for only sixteen euros [referring to the actual price of the mineral rights in Austria]? [laughs]

LA_Yes, yes, that would be an idea. [laughs] At the start of the mineral rights project I simply couldn't get mineral



rights. Neither the German nor the Spanish government were willing to let me have them. Then someone told me I could possibly get a lease from a mining company. Mining companies have a lot of mineral rights and it is very easy for these companies to get hold of them. With these mineral rights, they can mine and extract minerals in a great many places. So meanwhile they extract here [pointing on a spot as an example], they explore this to see where to move when this ends. And very often this proves not interesting. But they still hold on to the mineral rights for a couple of years. And my second chance came, when I realized how difficult it was to get mineral rights and that I might well have more success in getting a lease from these mining companies. The government also has to approve the lease. This means a government has to provide a stamp of approval even if a mining company is prepared to lease their mineral rights. And it happened

that the governments would not allow me to have mineral rights. That was the case in both Spain and in Germany. So, in the end it still proved to be a difficult procedure.

RR_ I can see that you are a real expert in mining already. Have you ever heard of the Erzberg in Styria the [iron ore mountain], which you could say is quite close to Graz?

LA_ Yes, yes, yes. It's an amazing place, wonderful. [laughs] Iron ore is still being extracted from this ancient site and dynamiting takes place almost daily. It is all hugely interesting.

RR_ I believe the government is the owner of that mountain.

LA_ They own it?

RR_ I think so. Coming back to the exhibition in the Secession, where you have brought together all these different piles of materials, which have been used in a building: Was one of your intentions here to show the public how much or what types of material are really used in a building?

LA_ Yes, there is this didactic part: understanding what the building is made from and the quantities that are essential for the work. This is the primary task of presenting the material.

RR_This is really very different to the exhibition in Venice where you used rubble.

LA_No, no, it is not. Rubble was also used in the Secession, but it was all so clean. In the Secession it was rubble ... [thinks] Bauschutt. The facts of the matter are, however, that in Austria everything is separated well after demolition and looks like beautiful powder. But it only looks like powder because it has been reduced to rubble. So, this is all demolition material. It is a mountain of brick the way it appears after demolition. I visited the plant where all of this is done, and I saw it for myself. Here, you have big demolition pieces of different sizes with the mortar still adhering to the bricks, and they put this through a machine that cleans and washes it. And the next step, I guess, is that they separate it all so that the mortar comes out looking like very clean earth, while the brick is reduced to a very red powder material and everything is so very clean. After demolition, the recycling of any wood, all of the remnant material is processed to perfection in special plants. They have the same procedure in Venice, but the difference is that everything comes out in a very rough state, while in Vienna this work is all done to perfection down to the smallest details. I also did a similar work in the Netherlands. Demolition material separation is also done there, but not as thoroughly as it is in Austria. The mortar and the bricks are not separated. This is amazing. Everything was demolition material [there].

MB_All of your art, or most of it, is very temporary. What remains of it all in the end? What do you exhibit? When you have a solo exhibition, how do you present your mineral rights in galleries?

LA_This depends on the individual circumstances. In some exhibitions I show raw materials. Not always, but I do so if it is at all possible. It is always an interesting approach. And if I have an exhibition on mineral rights, I have a projection, like a video on the site, together with explaining how wonderful the place and the mineral are – just in a few words. Or I show some drawings of the magnetometer. There are many things I could show. All of those guides to wastelands are produced for exhibitions. If I have an exhibition like the one in London at the Barbican, which you mentioned, the guide is produced with the help of the gallery and also with their budget. When you arrive there on a visit, you will see a table with a lot of books and a slide projection. The slides show the wastelands and the book is for free. That is typical for a show of mine – the guides to the city wastelands are provided free of charge.

RR_I wonder if it was purely coincidental that you showed different rubble or material grains in, let's say, Vienna and in Venice. Because there is an industry for recycling and the materials it produces can be bought and sold almost anywhere. Switzerland is rated as the best country in the world for this business, because the recycled material is so clean, and they can always demand the highest prices. I think Austria is in third or fourth position. Germany is

not so bad. I think Italy is a little behind in this business because everything it produces here is still more or less a mess. Spain is quite far back in the ranking, too. There is no real idea in place for a common standard in the separating of materials. I think this is a very contemporary aspect which we have also seen presented in your exhibitions.

LA_ Well, I haven't really made a comparison in these terms. I guess there are some regulations in place. But I haven't really gone through them all yet. I have seen various demolition practices. For example, 15 years ago, a demolition technique in France was to set the building on fire. So, all the wood burned. This I still remember. I guess some of you as well. This is the most extreme [demolition technique] I have seen. And then, you know, all that work of separating the wood, which involves a lot of work, is easily solved. So it changes. There will be more and more rules that unify it. But in general, no one gets money for the rubble. You pay more to get rid of it in France, I think.

RR_ There are a great many regulations for recycling, but these also need stringent controls possibly similar to those in Switzerland and Germany, where people love controlling each other, and where you need something like a police to make sure you are doing everything correctly. On the other hand, you could have the same regulations in Spain or Italy, but nobody gives a damn. They just throw everything into the same bucket, and it's done.

LA_ The guide we did for Basel was very interesting, because we had the situation of three different countries in fairly close proximity to each other. Then it changes enormously, what you do with an open pit. Everything changes totally from one country to another or from one decade to the next. It is a pretty interesting guide to read, because it illustrates stories and shows how different the scene is in France and Germany for example.

MB_ Is there anything like an environmental or an ecological and sustainability approach behind all of this? For example, burning is the perfect way to get rid of wood and you could make good use of the heat that is generated. Do you have anything in mind about this sustainability issue? It is something we discuss very often in architecture.

LA_ My work certainly has environmental concerns. For example, in defending no-design and no-construction, I am clearly also defending nature. That said, I am not fond of becoming involved in the morality or ethics of these issues or of making direct statements about them. My preference is to have people understand these things themselves. I can put across the stand I have taken against construction. Criticising it, demolishing it, breaking it down in pieces, defending untouched land from building development. My stand is a clearly environmental position. But I don't go into the details such as a cleaner project or a less clean project. What I am saying in fact, is ... [thinks] that every project is not merely about these issues since

it extends equally to such things as being against control of space and also to design. This is almost an existential position against construction. The environmental issue is very important, but I would say that I generally regard it from a different perspective. It has always been a part of my attitude, but I also find talking about these things rather strange because I started my work in the nineties in Spain. And at that time and place, as you know, the construction principle was a nonstop hysteria of building, building, building. It is not by mere chance that I came up with this existential answer against construction in the Spain of the nineteen nineties.

MB_ There are two ways of seeing this art. It can be truly beautiful, for example in the Secession project, or the one at the Venice Biennale. But it can also anchor you to the environmental question behind it all. I think it is very strong. I just would like to know if this is part of it.

LA_ Yes, I think this is definitely there. It doesn't leave you with many solutions, because ... I think the difference between me and an architect or architects of my generation, who are doing projects that are socially engaged, is that I am not creating models. I don't say: 'Do this or do that.' My work is telling you something, and it is possibly even provoking you. But I am not telling you what to do or how to do it. All I say is: 'I am against construction, you are controlling my life, don't build.' What I don't say is: 'Build with wood!' My message is: 'Don't control my life, I am fed up with your control.' And now, what can you do with it constructively? I don't know and

I don't care, because I am not a builder. So, I will just set off to see the iron deposits tomorrow. I will not be building anything with them. I am not giving you the solution. I am not providing models. I am not a moralist. What I hope for is that I am simply handing you a problem.

RR_ There are no solutions, and you are just pointing out actual problems. I think this is a really important element in your work – in particular, demonstrating issues and opening the eyes of the public, the audience, the user, or the residents of a city. It was extraordinarily interesting and also important to have had the point you have made and the position you have taken presented to what has been more or less an architectural audience. Lara, thank you very much. We will continue discussing and talking next door over some drinks and snacks. Thanks a lot for having been with us this evening.

Carla Juaçaba_Rio de Janeiro

Since 2000, Carla Juaçaba developed her independent practice of architecture and research based in Rio de Janeiro. Her office is currently engaged in both cultural programs and private projects. After her graduation she worked on the Atelier House, Rio Bonito House, Varanda House, Santa Teresa House, and a couple of exhibition designs. The ephemeral Pavilion Humanidade 2012 for Rio+20 was conceived with the theater director Bia Lessa. Carla Juaçaba is constantly part of the academic and teaching realms, as well as research studies and Lectures Harvard GSD; Columbia University GSAPP; Academia di Architettura Mendrisio. Workshop at IUAV di Venezia 2014; Jury at BIAU Biental Ibero Americana in Madrid 2012 and 2019. She won the first edition of the international prize ArcVision Women and Architecture 2013 in Italy. She was invited to Venice Architecture Biennale 2018 with the project BALLAST, and also built one of the Vatican Chapels for the Holy See Pavilion.

carlajuacaba.com.br

Jan Kinsbergen_Zürich

Jan Kinsbergen was born 1967 in Biel/ Bienne Switzerland. After studying architecture at the ETH Zürich with diploma by Professor Hans Kollhoff he worked from 1993 till 1999 with Steven Holl Architects in New York City. From 1999 till 2001 he was leading his own architecture office in New York. During this time he was teaching architecture as a visiting faculty member at Columbia GSAPP University in New York. From 2002 till 2008 he was a faculty member at the ETH Zürich. Since the year 2002 he is leading the office Jan Kinsbergen Architekt in Zürich.

jankinsbergen.ch

Piet Eckert_Zürich

Piet Eckert was born in 1968 in Mumbai (Bombay). Following his studies at the Columbia Graduate School of Architecture in New York and the ETH Zurich (Diploma 1994), he collaborated with OMA in Rotterdam from 1995 to 1997. In 2001 Piet Eckert established E2A with his brother Wim Eckert. Their methodology of work confronts idealism with an inventory of realities. Out of this confrontation, a sense of irony arises, a pleasure and a strategic contradiction to reassess an omnipresent burden of context and program. From 2009 to 2011, Piet Eckert was a visiting Professor for Architecture and Sustainable Building at the HCU HafenCity University of Hamburg. Since 2014, Piet Eckert is a guest professor at the USI - Università dell Svizzera Italiana at Mendrisio.

e2a.ch

Lara Almarcegui_Rotterdam

Rotterdam-based Spanish artist Lara Almarcegui often explores neglected sites, carefully cataloguing and highlighting each location's tendency towards entropy. As Spain's representative to the 55th Venice Biennial, she filled the pavilion with massive piles of building rubble similar to that used for its construction. Working at a time of widespread urban renewal in Europe, she has remained a champion of forgotten sites – creating guides for the cities' wastelands and even instigating their legal protection. Recently, with the intention of reflecting upon the region's histories, specifically built histories, the artist has been working towards the acquisition of Mineral Rights on iron ore deposits in order to prevent extraction. Recent solo exhibitions include *Agras Vulcano: Mineral rights*, IVAM, Valencia; *Lara Almarcegui Deep Inside Out*, Graphische Sammlung ETH, Zurich; *Argela, Parra y Romero, Ibiza*; *Beton, CAIRN, Digne* (2019). *Gravel*, Ellen de Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam (2018). Almarcegui is represented by Gallery Ellen de Bruijne Projects in Amsterdam; Parra y Romero, Madrid and Mor Charpentier, Paris.

REVIEW

Since the preface is usually written at the end of a project like this, when almost everything has been brought to a conclusion, the transcriptions have been made and the editing completed, as is the case this time, we now have the opportunity of adding some reflecting remarks to the preface.

The November Talks 2019 concluded the lecture series November Talks at Graz University of Technology. The current coronavirus pandemic has sadly robbed us of the opportunity for a grand finale, a last hurrah. We had developed our own lecture format for the November Talks in order to get even better acquainted with the attitudes, backgrounds, considerations and motivations of our guest architects, artists and engineers. The requirement was a 45-minute lecture followed by a 45-minute interview with the speakers on their specialty topics and lectures.

In 9 years, we were honored to welcome 35 guests from Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia at Graz University of Technology. For their contributions and for their sometimes surprising openness in the interviews, allowing us to explore new paths and ways of thinking, I would like to personally thank:

Boštjan Vuga (Ljubljana), Xiaodu Liu (Shenzhen), Angela Parades (Madrid), David Adjaye (London), Bernard Khoury (Beirut), Brigitte Shim & Howard Sutcliffe (Toronto), Jonathon Sergison (London), Dorte Mandrup (Copenhagen), Go Hasegawa (Tokyo), Špela Videčnik (Ljubljana), Jordi Badia (Barcelona), Felix Claus (Amsterdam), Sofia von Ellrichshausen & Mauricio Pezo (Concepcion/Chile), Arno

Brandlhuber (Berlin), Carme Pigem Barceló (Olot), Saša Randić (Zagreb), Walter Angonese (Kaltern), Krešimir Rogina (Zagreb), Christoph Gantenbein (Basel), Luyanda Mpahlwa (Cape Town), Imke Woelk (Berlin), Andrei Serbescu (Bucharest), Harald Baumann (Stuttgart), Mette Lange (Copenhagen), Peter Cachola Schmal (Frankfurt am Main), Francisco Mangado (Pamplona), Peter St John (London), Jürg Conzett (Chur), José Morales & Sara de Giles (Sevilla), Tatiana Bilbao (Mexico City), Wojciech Kotecki (Warsaw), Carla Juaçaba (Rio de Janeiro), Jan Kinsbergen (Zurich), Piet Eckert (Zurich) and Lara Almarcegui (Rotterdam).

Our guests did not present an ostensibly global architecture but focused rather on a local positioning of the respective speakers in an international context. We were witnesses to incredibly high-quality projects generated from a subtle, creative and innovative approach to location and space.

I am delighted that the November Talks have created a community that has used these events to meet, exchange ideas and to use the opportunity of participating in the international architecture discourse.

May the November Talks be fondly remembered. I would be delighted if the resulting nine brochures, which are now available and which impressively document each year of the November Talks, would find their way onto your library bookshelves, at home or in the office, always at hand for reference or for a quick memory refresher.

Roger Riewe

RÜCKBLICK

Da das Vorwort in der Regel immer zum Schluss verfasst wird, dann, wenn fast alles fertig ist, die Transkriptionen gemacht worden sind, das Redigieren bereits erfolgt ist, wie auch dieses Mal, ergibt sich die Möglichkeit, dem Vorwort auch einen Rückblick beizufügen.

Mit den November Talks 2019 wird die Reihe der November Talks an der TU Graz abgeschlossen. Eine finale Runde als krönender Abschluss sollte es, nicht nur Corona-bedingt, nicht mehr geben.

Für die November Talks haben wir ein eigenes Format entwickelt, um noch besser an die Haltungen, Hintergründe, Überlegungen und Motivationen der Architektinnen und Architekten, Künstlerinnen und Ingenieure heranzukommen. 45 Minuten Vortrag lautete die Vorgabe, um danach 45 Minuten mit den Vortragenden themen- und vortragsbezogen zu diskutieren.

Wir haben in 9 Jahren 35 Gäste aus Europa, Nord- und Südamerika, Afrika und Asien bei uns in Graz an der TU willkommen heißen können. Für ihre Beiträge und für ihre teils überraschende Offenheit in den Diskussionen, die uns ermöglichte, neues Terrain zu erkunden, möchte ich mich persönlich herzlich bedanken bei:

Boštjan Vuga (Ljubljana), Xiaodu Liu (Shenzhen), Angela Parades (Madrid), David Adjaye (London), Bernard Khoury (Beirut), Brigitte Shim & Howard Sutcliffe (Toronto), Jonathon Sergison (London), Dorte Mandrup (Kopenhagen), Go Hasegawa (Tokyo), Špela Videčnik (Ljubljana), Jordi Badia (Barcelona), Felix Claus (Amsterdam), Sofia von Ellrichshausen & Mauricio Pezo

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Nicht eine vordergründig globale Architektur wurde von unseren Gästen dargeboten, vielmehr konnten wir Zeuge einer lokalen Positionierung in einem internationalen Kontext der jeweiligen Vortragenden werden. Uns wurden unglaublich qualitätsvolle Projekte gezeigt, die aus einem subtil-kreativen und innovativen Umgang mit Ort und Raum generiert werden konnten.

Es freut mich sehr, dass sich durch die November Talks eine Community gebildet hat, die diese Events genutzt hat, sich zu treffen, sich auszutauschen und die die Gelegenheit genutzt hat, an einem internationalen Architekturdiskurs teilzunehmen.

Mögen die November Talks in guter Erinnerung bleiben. Es würde mich sehr freuen, wenn die nun vorliegenden neun Broschüren, die die jährlichen November Talks eindrücklich dokumentieren, den Weg in Ihre Bücherregale in den Bibliotheken, zuhause oder im Büro finden, immer griffbereit zum Nachschlagen oder um Erinnerungen aufzufrischen.

Roger Riewe

Image references

page 05|07
page 05|27
page 05|57
page 05|91
page 08|09
page 10|11
page 12|13
page 15|20|35|40|50
page 28|29|30|31
page 32|33
page 58|59
page 60
page 61
page 62|63
page 65|73|80|99|102|111
page 92|93
page 94
page 95
page 97

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