At Home in the City

The Living Garden - Youth House Amsterdam North

Reflection P4

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The Living Garden is the result of the research Private Claims on Public Space, the analysis of Amsterdam North, and what it means an ideal home.

The research Private Claims on Public Space consisted in analyzing how the dwelling and the city benefit when there is a possibility for the inside - outside to blend. The research looked forward to identify what are the architectural elements that create the relation inside outside and how can the individual use of these architectural elements lead to the creation of an in-between space.

By analyzing different kinds of dwelling typologies in two different countries, The Netherlands and Colombia, we understand the architectural elements that lead to the creation of the “in-between”. Architectonical elements such as the public staircase, the front door related to open space, the public balcony, the private balcony, the cover, the front garden, the sliding door, terrace, the glass facade, the collective terrace. Furthermore, we identify the moments and places where the 'inside - outside' blend, the extensions of the home into communal and public spaces. The city becoming part of the home and the home part of the city.

Gardens and terraces are “ in between spaces” which are a smooth transition between inside outside that allow the dwellers to connect or isolate to the city and the collective.

In the project The Living Garden, the garden is the element of transition that creates connection between the Dwellers and the City, the Dweller and the Collective, the Dweller and his or her own Intimacy.

These connections are done by different types of gardens in different levels and scales. They are organized from public to collective, and from collective to private. On the ground floor public gardens are the spaces where the Dwellers and the citizens meet. From the Second floor on, collective gardens promote a rich relation among neighbors. Furthermore, in each individual dwelling, according to each specific typology, each dweller can isolate to his or her own intimacy.

When I visited the site for first time I was astonished by the feeling calmness due to a connection to green areas and water. Even though it is a place that has this potential natural character, through the analysis of the site it was evident that most of the green spaces are private, except for some few parks. The lack of meeting places in the zone, the direct connection to water, the natural character of the site makes it an ideal place to become part of the green structure of Amsterdam North.

Since a young population is predominant in Amsterdam North, the site responds with an attractive programme for young people with a public programme on the ground floor, open and close, and dwellings for starters and students from the second floor on. This mixed
programme of public and private, and the use of different heights, makes the building a link
between the uses of the area (commercial and dwelling) and responds to the different
heights of the surrounding buildings.

When I think in what and ideal home means to me, I think about a space with a green space,
a terrace, through the one the dweller has the possibility to connect or isolate to the city.
Even though in the Collective Dwelling the relation inside – outside can become
more limited due to high density, the dwellers of The Living Garden have the
possibility to blend with the city through the different gardens. Dwellers have
the possibility to connect to other citizens, to neighbours, or connect with his
or her own intimacy. Through the gardens, the city becomes part of the home
and the home part of the city.