

Refraction as Architecture - TILDE(~)

Reflection

Studio Public Building - Border Conditions in Bucharest

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Function:

Forensic Research Institute; Inverted observatorium of architectural phenomena (Oligopticon).

Location:

A parking lot site - Pasajul Galeriile Blanduziei, neighboring streets and urban blocks of Strada Doamnei, Strada Eugeniu Carada, Strada Academiei.

- The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

Studio Border Conditions is interested in researching new approaches towards existing architectural/theoretical methodology. By this regard it inspires to investigate how built environment can become a tool for a design. In this paradigm the theme of mapping becomes an specific “modus operandi”, which leads into unknown venture. Various types of mapping allows to get specific insights into anomalies or phenomenon that doesn't normally occur while designing. This, I find, is interesting narrative that reflects in a “doubling” theme: how architecture is represented and how the object of representation is perceived. This is a topic, on architecture, that is quite present in Bucharest. The “Backstage” is often exposed without a further thought about it's appearance. This happens in many cases of the city, thus becoming the “Front Facade”. The topic leads into further investigation of a dialectical phenomenon that occurs in the city - how the city itself is it perceived, constructed and how this social construct can be expressed in a design.

- The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

The studio's methodology is a process and experimentation oriented, focusing on a development of new architectural tools derived from the research. My investigation is based on the documentation of the phenomena about the 'backstage' in the city of Bucharest which is later on analysed through dialectical mapping. During the next stage, emerging understanding of spatial conditions is being translated and reinterpreted in experimental drawings. The drawings are specific to the city and it's meta-narrative via the multiple ways you of reading. Which are later used to produce 2.5D and assemblage models. The aim of this methodology is to gradually move away from the context in order to achieve new insights and develop new tools for architectural design. This process is also supported by substantial literature studies on the issues of spatial perception and architecture being observed, that are concluded as an essay providing a theoretical framework. The results of overall research suggest a program and necessary conditions for the choice of a site where the newly developed tools constitute an architectural design.

- The relationship between research and design

Design approach derives from the mapping done beforehand and its main theme - visual dialectics of perception. Within this domain the project aims to create a unique public experience by contextualising data from mappings and models using various visual phenomena that can be created using a specific "materia". In more detail the use of transparent materials and their physical characteristics to refract, reflect, transmit, manipulate light (view) form a design toolbox. Using the idea of arrangements from the Assemblage theory they are later on combined in various spatial compositions ranging from exteriority relationships to interiority relationships; from public to private, from panorama to detail. The guiding principles very strongly depend on the source of light, viewing lines and visual connections.

- The relationship between the project and the wider social context

The proposed program of Forensic Research Institute adds another level to this type of architectural research. It is based on the narrative the building can generate towards wider social context.

On one hand it reflects an image of a how do the specialists carry out their forensic type of work: The perception of a case study from an overview; detail investigation of evidence; and conclusion. The building operates in a similar way in a visual level, thus representing a direct meta-link to program.

On the other hand the specificity of the program requires a certain conditions for the work, so different sub-themes for spaces arise. This works in vis-a-vis as the ways to create previously mentioned composition can be extracted from a specific way of operating on an architectural level: inscribing, peeling, decomposing, exposing the structure. An homage of its own making.

On a different footnote, the use of these materials can help to realise how to specifically they can help in an unconventional settings, breaking away from conventionalistic use in industrial free market. Or how to use them in a very efficient way.

- Personal reflection

Studio Border Conditions has offered a very intellectually challenging narrative for a design studio. As it operates from very theoretical framework to a specific design methodology it's inevitable to experiment with various tools and techniques. The insights and headlines achieved using this type of research and designing method teach very specific type of knowledge, that can be hardly emancipated in another way. The complexity of such an approach encourages to get lost and be saturated with new challenges that takes persistence to solve. At the same time it teaches how to address difficult to comprehend topics and quickly learn with your own personal constraints. By such a strong border conditioning one can gain a strong personal position on a very specific topic of architecture, which can also be applied in many other study fields. Thus gaining invaluable perspective how to use specific information and how to work with complexities.