

Individual Reflection / Positioning

Having dived into Asplund's oeuvre, I believe that his work is very much comprehended through the experience of using it, since it is an architecture that calls for all senses. I would go as far as to say that other typical themes on which he worked on, such as the attention paid to the entrance, the connection to the sky and the – at times – unexpected visual connections, all amount to the experience. To me, it is not a coincidence that it was only when I visited some of the buildings (and sites, in the case of the Stockholm cemetery) that I was able to truly comprehend them. Through the purposeful use of light, colors and sight lines, in combination to the great use of symbolisms, he managed to activate the spiritual, using the appropriate means each time.

Personally, my encounter with Asplund's work as well as with the eight precedent libraries that we investigated as a group, reinforced my interest regarding the spatial organization of public buildings and public space in general that I had before the beginning of this studio. It is in the public sphere where people meet and, therefore, where architecture plays a significant role. How do people use open public spaces within the city and how can architecture response to this? How do people enter and move through a public building, what are the spatial means that can facilitate their being together? Highly related and equally significant elements are the use of light, the sight lines and the relation to the outside. Furthermore, I do believe that in public spaces there should be room for the individual and the more intimate, together with a consideration on providing the feeling of togetherness and belonging.

The above-mentioned thoughts and problematizations apply to the architecture of libraries as well. Only, this time, there are additional aspects to consider deriving from the given function and site. What is the role of a public library in Stockholm today? Historically, libraries are related to knowledge but knowledge can be obtained either by reading books, either by doing physical activities, either by getting together with people and sharing experiences, memories, knowledge etc. Thus, the relation between books and people is important to be established. How much emphasis is given to books and how is the relation between people and books realized? During the investigation of the precedent libraries, we have seen several ways of dealing with this. Eventually, if a library is more than books, what additional functions should be incorporated into the program and how? How can all these forms of knowledge be manifested into the physical space?

Apart from the above, I am personally interested in sustainable practices regarding architecture. The reuse of existing buildings, the capacity of a building or site to be adapted in future conditions and the thoughtful selection of building materials are only a few aspects that I would like to investigate through my design in the context of the studio.