

Health promoting Architecture

Based on participating research (observation and interaction), there can be stated that there is a need to improve the health conditions of the city and the well-being of the individual in Berlin. On the well-being scale of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Berlin scores 4.8/10 points on the scale of life satisfaction, 6.7/10 on health, 6.9/10 on civic engagement and 4.8/10 on environment. (OECD, n.d.). There is a low amount of social interaction between residents and there is not that much communal activities. Within the site area (Andreasviertel - Weberwiese - Wriezener Bahnhof) we cannot see any specific designed places or buildings based on improving the health conditions of the people in the city. People generally are not being stimulated to social interaction, physical activities or being exposed to nature, except from small green parks.

An architect should not only design spaces and functions, but he or she can bring architecture to another level whereby the architecture itself can influence the environment and their people, such as health conditions, (safety) feelings, behaviour and productivity. Within the contemporary architecture, buildings are mostly designed for our visuals. “We have allowed two of our sensory domains— sight and sound—to dominate our design imagination. In fact, when it comes to the culture of architecture and design, we create and produce almost exclusively for one sense—the visual.” (Mau, 2018, p. 20). Our experience of space, as of anything else, is much more multisensory than most people realize. (Spence, 2020). Designing in a way that all senses will be touched gives the opportunity to influence human well-being and health-conditions, and create a community out of all the individuals. *“Environmental multisensory stimulation can potentially affect us at the social, emotional, and cognitive levels.” (Spence, 2020).*

A public condenser, a place for all people, no matter which culture, age, gender and interests, is a perfect place to improve people’s well-being and the health of the city. Stimulating people to improve their well-being by creating certain ‘Atmospheres’ - places that you can read, becoming involved with and that manages to move people. (Zumthor, 2006). – using multisensory design techniques. “The quality of a space or place is not merely a visual perceptual quality as is usually assumed. The judgement of environmental character is a complex multi-sensory fusion of countless factors, which are immediately and synthetically grasped as an overall atmosphere, feeling, mood or ambiance.” (Pallasmaa, 2014).

The main question within this research is: ‘How to create atmospheres based on multisensory design, that stimulate people to improve their well-being, physically and mentally?’

The goal of this research is to investigate and experience how Atmospheres – that stimulates people to improve their well-being (physically and mentally) with interactive experiences - should be designed, based on touching all human senses in a sustainable, hybrid and resilient way. This research will be based on literature studies and the ‘research by design’ approach.

This design of a public condenser could be a prototype. The concepts of how to create atmospheres that stimulate people improving their well-being using multisensory design can contribute to the larger architectural discipline. The techniques and arguments of this project can be used in other designs as well.

References

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