

Sex & the commons - Chantal Besteman 4679881

Problem statement:

Sex is a decisive and polarizing element in contemporary societies, whether we look at the me-too movement or the reinforcement of anti-abortion laws we can see how political sex can be when it comes to self-realization, individual will & education. Religions and patriarchal systems have ensured that sex is dominated by the standard heterosexual script and is used as a tool to suppress mainly women and queer people. Changing the standard heterosexual script requires a questioning of traditional sexual gender roles at the societal level, which ultimately responds to the need for social change (Döring & Mohseni, 2022). As a society, we need to redefine our common values about sex. The current platform; media & politics, is very polarised and is a very top-down method, while real change comes from within a community. We should have a physical place for the community to debate these matters. To speak openly about our sexuality can be completely healing and empowering. It can heal us collectively together, bringing up the taboos so we can support each other in this journey towards embracing our sexuality. The new urban lounge is the ideal place to start the conversation about our sexuality.

Research question:

How can architecture be used to create an experience that disrupts normative coding of sex, desire and gender in the context of Berlin?

1. What program is needed to support the conversation and awareness about our sexuality?
2. How does the atmosphere (size, organisation, acoustics, etc) of a space influence our ability to talk about sex?
3. How can the five senses stimulate us to talk about sex?
4. What role does anonymity play in the conversation about sex in Friedrichshain and how can an architect translate this into architectural choices?
5. How is the interior translated into the exterior of the building, making it attractive & accessible for everyone to visit within the context of Friedrichshain?

Methodology:

The problem statement is based on several interviews conducted with people from Friedrichshain, Berlin. More qualitative research will be conducted by interviewing different user groups and sexual health professionals/institutions. This research will be combined with quantitative data about the social economic situation and demographic of the population in Friedrichshain and Berlin. Also secondary research will be included as a method.

Architectural sources such as *The Eyes Of The Skin: Architecture And The Senses* from Pallasmaa (2005) and *Sex and Buildings* from Williams (2013) will be used to answer the research question. Other examples are listed in the bibliography. For this research several case-studies will be analysed, for example the Baker House, designed by Adolf Loos and Oikema', a 'house of pleasure', designed by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux.

Notes:

Döring, N., & Mohseni, M. R. (2022). *Der Gender Orgasm Gap. Ein kritischer Forschungsüberblick zu Geschlechterdifferenzen in der Orgasmus-Häufigkeit beim Heterosex*. Zeitschrift für Sexualforschung (Stuttgart, Germany), 35(02), 73–87.

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<https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/loos-and-baker-a-house-for-josephine>

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