Blocks Building Bridges: the ambiguous in-between space
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Design: City
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Blocks Building Bridges

Introduction

Amsterdam-West

Kolenkitbuurt
Introduction
Some of the problems the Kolenkitbuurt is facing:

A strict separation of the public and private domains.

Rigid transitions between different levels - city, neighborhood and dwelling.
Storage units on the ground floor

The New Kit
Problem statement:

Because the Kolenkitbuurt is facing numerous socioeconomic problems and could use some restructuring several attempts have been made to further develop and improve the neighborhood. Unfortunately recent developments solely take place on a single level -the level of dwellings. In this way the deep and structural problems the neighborhood is facing are still not being resolved. Precisely the rigid and strict transitions that exist between different levels -city, neighborhood and dwelling- at the moment and that result in a separation of these levels should be addressed and tackled. Using in-between space as an instrument of mediation to make more structured and subtle transitions between levels could be a solution to create more interaction between and a connection of these levels in the neighborhood. By using in-between space as an instrument ambiguous zones are designed that can be used and interpreted in a number of ways. When developments and improvements occur at only one level no permanent and structural solutions are going to be found for the socio-economic problems the Kolenkitbuurt is facing and a connection of levels through more subtle transitions also remains missing.
Problem statement:

Because the Kolenkitbuurt is facing numerous socioeconomic problems and could use some restructuring several attempts have been made to further develop and improve the neighborhood. Unfortunately recent developments solely take place on a single level—the level of dwellings. In this way the deep and structural problems the neighborhood is facing are still not being resolved. Precisely the rigid and strict transitions that exist between different levels—city, neighborhood and dwelling—at the moment and that result in a separation of these levels should be addressed and tackled. Using in-between space as an instrument of mediation to make more structured and subtle transitions between levels could be a solution to create more interaction between and a connection of these levels in the neighborhood. By using in-between space as an instrument ambiguous zones are designed that can be used and interpreted in a number of ways. When developments and improvements occur at only one level no permanent and structural solutions are going to be found for the socio-economic problems the Kolenkitbuurt is facing and a connection of levels through more subtle transitions also remains missing.
Definition:

‘In-between space is an ambiguous space that is both part of one and the other -for example the inside and the outside- at the same time and as such forms a continuum between the two’.

[Definition is inspired on the thoughts and ideas of such architects as Aldo van Eyck and Herman Hertzberger]
**1970s/1980s**

- Gradual transitions
- Ambiguous space

Bleijenhoek, Dordrecht
Carel Weeber (1973-1979)

**Last 20 years**

- Sharp and clearly defined boundaries
- No ambiguous space

St-Josephhof, Nijmegen
Mecanoo (2006-2008)
Goal:

Goal of my approach is the integral development of the site on three different levels - city, neighborhood and dwelling - in order to create a revived living environment in the Kolenkitbuurt. In the context of densification - in which the in-between space has become more restricted than ever before - more is expected from the way in which this space is constructed and the challenge is to turn the in-between space into a meaningful place.
Research question:

How can in-between spaces function as an instrument to generate subtle transitions between levels in the Kolenkitbuurt in the context of densification?
Design:
City
Blocks Building Bridges

Site:
Jan van Schaffelaarplantsoen
Traffic noise
Connecting the two levels by my design.
Mass-spring-mass system
Design:

Neighborhood
Quote:

“a house is like a small city [...] -a city like a large house”.

House N
Oita, Japan
Sou Fujimoto Architects

Blocks Building Bridges
Western red cedar perforated façade panel
Horizontal and vertical wooden rails
Windproof vapor wood-fibre board
Glass wool insulating material
Air tight vapor checked wooden plate
Air space
Plaster boards
Western red cedar perforated façade panel
Horizontal and vertical wooden rails
Windproof vapor wood-fibre board
Glass wool insulating material
Air tight vapor checked wooden plate
Air space
Plaster boards
Plate construction

Floor span

Stability by means of the floors, the stairs and lifts

Self-supporting membrane
Natural ventilation
Mechanical exhaust shafts
Floor heating
Design:

Dwelling
House in Buzen
Buzen, Japan
Suppose Design Office

House like Village
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Marc Koehler Architects

Moriyama House
Tokyo, Japan
Ryue Nishizawa
Maisonette
Apartment
Conclusion:

City Neighborhood Dwelling