Changing architectural education:

Towards human-centered architecture.

P5 Reflection
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**Relationship between research and design.**

The research addressed the issue of the significant difference in preferences and understanding of architecture between architects and laypeople.

How big is this discrepancy of opinions? Do architects know better what beautiful and good in reference to architecture mean? Is their judgement more valuable, or is it as important as the one offered by non-architects?

The research concluded, that architects have a distinct taste, however, one cannot claim, that their aesthetical and stylistic preferences towards buildings are more valuable than the ones of the rest of society. Everyone should be granted the possibility to live in a built environment that they find interesting, understandable and aesthetically appealing.

The research asked one more crucial question: How, and when is the distinct taste of architects, so different than the rest of society, created? The answer to this question was that schools of architecture contribute greatly to the creation of the distinct preferences towards architecture. Since the problem is created already during the education process of a future architect, than, at least to some extent, it might be fixed through changes in the curriculum, as well as the design of an Architecture Faculty.

For that reason a school of architecture was chosen as a design subject. The project is incorporating the main points of the research- it is focused on sparking a mutually profitable relationship between the school and the community. Such an approach provides students with numerous opportunities to get to know the points of view, preferences and ways of perceiving space and architecture exhibited by non-architects. Moreover by interacting with non-architects students improve their interpersonal skills, communicativeness and the ability to perceive the built environment through another person’s eyes.

Two issues, that could not be solved by the research, had to be addressed during the design process of an ‘extraverted Faculty of Architecture’:

1. How to encourage non-architects to enter the building of the school and feel equally comfortable in it as any student or employee? How to make the relationship between the school and the neighborhood mutually profitable?

2. How to ensure good functioning of the school and convenient conditions for the education activities in a building that is supposed to be visited by a significant number of people who are not directly related to the education process?

The design is answering those questions by separating the public functions from the educational ones in the building.
**Relationship between the project and a wider social context.**

In the recent years a number of studies, reports, and essays, that declared, that architecture both as a profession and as the product of the practice is in the state of crises have accumulated.

The belief, that other professionals in the construction industry are more willing to provide what the client asked for is becoming more and more frequent. At the same time the construction technology is getting more and more complex, therefore the design and execution of a building require a growing number of specialists, consultants, and subcontractors. The impact that architects have on the design and execution of a piece of architecture, and the construction industry in general, is diminishing.

Obviously, the current state of architecture is a function of many factors, most of them reaching far beyond the scope and the time frame of a Master Thesis. For that reason the project is focusing only one aspect- the inability of architects and their designs to relate to a wider public. Addressing and improving it will improve the image of architects that is held in the society by creating a new kind of professional, who is easier to communicate and collaborate with, who understands better the needs of his/her clients, who is more eager to provide them with ‘good’ architecture, that the client finds interesting and aesthetically pleasing.

**The relationship between the theme of the studio and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework.**

Explore Lab is a studio that gathers students who want to investigate their special interest, not covered by any other studios. The topic (how and why does the taste of architects differ from the taste of laypeople) was chosen because of a long-time interest in this subject and a belief, that architects hold a special kind if responsibility towards the society.

**The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework.**

Explore Lab does not follow any certain methodical line. Students choose a method, that fits their subject the best. The research was done mainly based on studies of literature. The project follows the conclusions of the research. Because the impact that the building has on its users was a crucial part of the project, the design was made simultaneously in two scales- urban scale (‘from outside in’) and room scale (‘from inside out’). In the urban scale the relationship of the building with its context and its possibility to improve the functioning of its surroundings was investigated by means of analysis, literature study, and artistic methods (collages). The room scale was solved based on literature studies and is enhanced by a number of case studies and short interviews with architecture students.