

## UBIQUITOUS SPORTING

Urban Materiality, Body Cultures and Terrain

Emma Nilsson

Architects have been criticised for having a vague notion of the concept of body and how this relates to the design of architecture. If there exists at all an awareness of the body it is at a general and self-identical manner, alternatively through the standardised measurements prescribed by different building regulations. Although architects may have a simplified relationship to the concept of the body, their architecture does not necessarily reflect it. The spatial and material qualities of architecture set boundaries and create conditions for how we inhabit our environment. Our use is also shaped by our bodily configurations and architecture is part and present of the production of different corporal meanings, whether or not they are thought of.

In following the actions of *parkour*, characterised by well-articulated bodily movements, the question of the materiality of architecture is paired with the question of body materiality and its relation to body technique. Departing from actor-network-theory I have constructed two concepts: *terrain* and its individual-based counterpart *corporality*. Corporality and terrain are two analytic concepts that describe and interlink many different bodily appropriations. The concept of corporality recognises that a body is dependent on the situations it is made active by, and the dependency on spatial relations in order for different bodies to be put into motion. The concept of terrain describes the encounter between corporality and a surrounding environment and assemble the qualities in that environment that a certain activity is dependent on.

Certain bodies and body cultures can more successfully than other secure the production of a terrain. Architecture is a mean for producing and stabilising different terrains and thus terrain highlights a political dimension of architecture and the influence architecture has on the presence of certain bodies and the absence of others. Even though architects do not create terrains, they establish the prerequisites for them. The concept of terrain is a way of grouping an architectural brief in a different way than is traditionally done by the concept of user, and thus with different ways of articulating events. This meaning that both corporality and terrain can be developed further by researching how architecture, and the practice of architecture produces certain bodies.