

Symposium in Lanzhou New Area

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Abstract

How to think about a place not yet

The project *How to think about a place not yet* concerns the mechanisms and attitudes adopted by the professional designer in an urban design process – i.e. how intuitive and affective response in a design process delimit the range of plausible designs. The *affordances* of the environment are suited to the particular acting space of an individual and communicate the possibilities and capacities for an individual to act and, by extension in this work, to distinguish options for design. The consequence of accumulated possibilities inevitably involves inconsistency and contradiction, and the perception of numerous possibilities often entails the possibility of conflict as there is seldom merely one imaginable solution to a complex situation or design. Action potential, perception, experience and preferences in form of feelings and emotions can delimit distinguishable room for maneuver and steer design. I have in this work used the concept of affordance in relation to a design process and let the notion of *affect* put limitations to, and help explain, how we intuitively delimit the possibilities apparent to us. For the investigation of an ongoing design process I study the planning and pre-construction phase of two major research facilities and neighborhood that are currently being planned and under construction in the outskirts of Lund, Sweden. In this exemplification of a strong vision of urban development the planning relates to future implications on the science community on a world scale, but also to the scale of immediate vicinity in form of local neighborhoods. In the project I test methods of working with, and problematizing, parts of the creative design process. This is done mainly through intervention on site and through teaching within design education. By recognizing openings in the planning process a possibility for visualization and development of artistic research methods is taken advantage of. Through the formulated methods the intrinsic potential of creative design processes and the site itself are investigated. The planning rhetoric is studied, and how various stakeholders' arguments are formulated. A problematization of the variety of scales used at various critical moments is formulated and enacted through on-site intervention. Questionnaire-based investigations together with sound simulation are used where professional designers, already active on site and non-professionals have been invited. As part of the project and as a collaboration with the artist group Learning Site *Audible Dwelling* – a dwelling that also functions as a stereo system - has been used and worked as a test bed for the investigations. My aim with this work is to explore the interplay between actors engaged in formulating urban design, and together with a problematization of the same process, formulate some answers in order to help the professional creative design process progress as a conscious and self-reflecting course of action.