

Curiosity – Campus Explorations

It's important to take this whole question [of sustainability] back out of the realm of quantification (...) into the realm of the human and the social. To ask what it all means, what it's all for. To consider the axioms we are agreeing to live by. To acknowledge the reality of other people, and of the planet itself. To see other people's faces. To walk outdoors and look around.

after Kim Stanley Robinson, The Ministry for the Future

Curiosity. A visceral wish to learn about something, a radical interest that takes root in the exertion of cura: of deep, selfless care and attention. This semester, we will allow ourselves to be guided by curiosity, by the desire to find out more about what we think we know so well.

Real Estate. In an ongoing collaboration with ETH Real Estate, we will focus on the Hönggerberg Campus, a modernist utopia built on the edge of town, sprawled on top of a hill. Masterplan after masterplan, the ETH continues to expand an already opulent real estate portfolio. Rather than building more, we will pause to reflect on the campus as it stands and engage with the users who occupy it. Through an understanding of neighbourhood, architecture, comfort and social interaction, we will explore incentives to make better use of the spaces we already have.

Campus. To maintain its position in world university rankings, the ETH strongly relies on the quality of its infrastructure and buildings, and on the abundance of space it can offer to its staff and students. Meanwhile, the recently launched ETH Net Zero programme positions ETH Zurich as a pioneer and role model for decarbonisation and sustainability, where the climate neutrality of university operations becomes a shared responsibility of all ETH members. Within this top-down and bottom-up bind, we ask: how can we define our shared ideals and create meaningful incentives for everyone to get involved, to trust in the space we have instead of ceaselessly adding new square meters?

Moving in. Together, we will move into HCP, the stepped building at the southern edge of campus. From there, we seek to engage users across ETH Hönggerberg. We will investigate architectural scenarios beyond the current quantity-oriented attitude. Large scale architectural models will become our tools to engage with different users and with ETH Real Estate, for architectural quality to become the incentive to give up redundant square meters and collectively work on spatial sustainability. This semester we will be making space for architecture within real estate, advocating a cultural shift beyond the masterplan, and an attitude that affirms that "the next big thing will be a lot of small things".

Introduction 17 September 2024, 9:30am, HCP

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Denkraum

Making architecture demands a constant and dynamic reading of given contexts under the angle of specific briefs and questions, allowing to unveil explicit and implicit relationships stemming from past actions and present dynamics. We will investigate different ways to read, and from there we will proceed to place findings in a framework, to structure them and create our own hierarchies, to situate ourselves in relationship to it. Within the studio, the multiplicity of individual tracks will be united under the common theme, in a common space of thinking: a Denkraum.

The Denkraum is a space of presence. A place where the work is on constant display and grows organically in time, concentrating questions, tensions and proposed solutions, developing a common design endeavour and discourse, a joined output based on associative thinking and reflection by analogy. A place where reading and writing reality happens all at once. A place to discuss together and with guests coming from different backgrounds, regions and disciplines, guests who will talk to us and think along.



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