

Part 1: Spaces of Labour



Almost no other profession than the work of an architect allows insights into the living habits and working environment of such a variety of people. This studio is centered around the familiarization and the investigation of different work and life conditions, not as a social or political study, but as the basis for developing and connecting architectural spaces. Only a thorough, basic and descriptive understanding of the backgrounds and conditions of a program, only a critical questioning of concrete tasks as so often brought forward to architects by investors and politicians in a filtered way, opens up possibilities for redefining architectural design conventions. Design as we understand it is neither the expression of an autonomous artistic practice nor is it a sheer service. The architectural design is a mean of criticism, a mean to understand the world around us and using this understanding in order to reshape it.

This semester we will explore all spatial variations for contemporary concepts of labor. Each student will start with a specific type of work - ranging from office work to manufacturing - and a scale - ranging from one employee to 10'000 employees.

The first phase of the semester is reserved for finding actual working fields within every combination of scale and type and investigating what role they play in our contemporary society and what impact they have on our territory. A thorough research on state of the art work flows within each field will provide the basis for a well informed and critical design for architectural spaces that are able to challenge current images of a working space. The analysis of typical locations for each working field in question should reveal the mechanisms behind „Wirtschaftsstandort Schweiz“ in order to criticize it through an architectural design project.

The investigation will last throughout the whole semester and will help to produce detailed designs that architecturally engage with the question of how we work today as will speculate on how and where we want to work in the future. The main working tool of this semester will be digital multimedia presentations that should build a narrative around the investigation as well as bridge the gap between research and architectural design.