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Core Program Master-Thesis SS 2024 ENOUGH

Cooperation Partner 1: VOLUPTAS, Prof. François Charbonnet, Prof. Patrick Heiz

Cooperation Partner 2: Chair for Architecture and Building Process, Prof. Sacha Menz

LESS IS LESS

subtraction as a modus operandi

For decades, 'less is more' has served as an architectural mantra, embodying a paradoxical ethos of reduction in the pursuit of more. In the face of the environmental crisis, such a mindset is no longer sustainable: less, is less. Instead of seeking increased sustainability through strategies of addition and multiplication—to layer, to add, to thicken, to regulate more—we advocate for design strategies of reduction at different scales, usages, and latitudes. Subtraction is thus presented as a modus operandi to attain a more sustainable environment through architectural and spatial proposals that embrace less as a quality and as a positive feature.

In the upcoming spring semester of 2024, Voluptas will collaborate with the Chair for Architecture and Building Process, renewing the focus on redundancies and addressing them through the exploration of diverse subtraction strategies. At the semester's outset, students will engage with existing situations, formulating appropriate hypotheses and consequential design approaches. These will be explored in projects spanning various scales, programs, and latitudes, serving as case studies to champion the ethos of less.

By shifting the focus from quantitative outcomes to quantitative means, this diploma studio proposes to work at the intersection of theory and practice. The goal is to foreground the contingency of the current paradigm in durability, spurring critical thinking about how we might pursue a sustainable future without renouncing radical architectural ideas.

FORMAT AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

In accordance with the new Master Thesis program, the semester is jointly led by two chairs and divided in two different parts. While both chairs are involved in the whole process, each is responsible for one part. Phase one of the course, is taught in close collaboration with the Chair of Prof. Sacha Menz. Phase two, lasting twelve weeks, is mainly supervised by Prof. François Charbonnet, Prof. Patrick Heiz and Marina Montresor.

The work is to be carried out individually in both phases. Every week the students will meet the assistants from both chairs to discuss their progress. On set dates, there will be intermediate reviews with the professors (one in the preparation phase and three in the elaboration phase). During the elaboration phase, the students will receive tutorials on drawing, image making and video editing.

PHASE ONE

At the beginning of phase one, each student is asked to analyze an existing situation and address it through its redundancies. These range from spatial to programmatic, legislative, environmental, material issues. The students then spend the following weeks reading and reflecting on the conception and design of a project that focuses on addressing these issues by subtraction. During this process, the students are expected to acquire in-depth knowledge of the formal, tectonic, material, technological, and programmatic characteristics of the situation they have selected, as well as to explore and identify issues relative to the planning, site, management, maintenance, use patterns and critical reception.

At the end of phase one, the students will hand-in a report of all the relevant spreadsheets, diagrams, assessments that reflect their critical stance towards the present conditions of the chosen site.

PHASE TWO

Following the first analytical phase, each student should design and update the issue identified in the preparation phase. This update can differ in approach and method (this may be an entirely new construction, alterations of scale, of use, of program, of occupancy rate, building technique, densification, new legislations and so on). Every aspect and criteria need to be argued for and should be coherently developed starting from the conceptual premises.

Each student is expected to represent the project through appropriate architectural means, testing different tools and techniques. Cross-disciplinary sources and methods are encouraged as well as an experimental attitude questioning conventional media.

RATIO OF GRADING

Preparation Phase

Percentage designer(s): 20%

Percentage theory: 80%

Elaboration phase:

Percentage designer(s): 80%

Percentage theory: 20%

CONTACTS

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