The design studio will examine the programmatic and spatial organization of a school building on the site of the zoological garden in Berlin by using typological studies of selected buildings. The research should expand the field of possibilities and lead to a new hybrid typology.

Content

CAGE STUDY

The complex structure of the city is composed of different fragments that are spatially adjacent, or even spatially superimposed. There are certainly developments which is to be subjected as a procedure for producing something new typologies. Due to their individual character they offer a richness of urban textures and make possible new social behaviours and interactions while working as functional additions to the urban tissue. Following this idea, we will deal this semester with the analysis of school typologies and animal-housing units in zoological gardens.

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one’s education depends from three instructors: nature, men and things. The inner growth of our organs and faculties corresponds to nature; the use we learn to make of this growth is the education of men; and what we gain by experience what surrounds us is the education of things.

In the urban context, nature is a scarce resource existing only as an artificially created oasis. Nevertheless, the density and the urban qualities of a city allow a never ending of new situation. For this reason, and provoked by the ideas of Rousseau, we consider the city as a laboratory to develop new typologies and to combine existing resources in order to create a new definition of learning in and with nature.

Based on the observation of artificial nature, the research will propose new spatial configurations of learning units and explore potentially new school typologies. Above all, it is about linking two existing typological models – school and animal-housing units – in the zoological garden, and address a new hybrid learning landscape.

Phase 1
The zoo as an artificial nature to study natural phenomena

Phase 2
The school as a condensed place for learning in the sense of a cell of learning and community in the urban context.

Phase 3
The school in the site of the zoological garden, or the zoological garden in the school?

The central theme of the studio will be the design of a school building within the existing complex of Berlin’s zoological garden. In order to create a consistent architectural project, we will focus on different degrees of precision, scales and atmospheres with a range extending from large public spaces to intimate private ones. To approach this complex task, we will start the semester by developing and establishing a collective database that will serve us throughout the following design process.
We will begin the project with a field trip to the site in Berlin. Attendance is obligatory. The main pedagogical goal of the course will be to address the issue of complex planning and programmatic organization while dealing with a built structure almost the size of an entire neighbourhood. While the project during the autumn semester will deal with complex assemblage of programs at an urban scale, we will transfer the same issues to the design of a learning unit during the second semester, which will result in a built 1:1 project.

In the period during the semester break (February) a self-organised study trip is intended. The place and the topic are jointly discussed at the beginning of the course.

Keywords

Learning Outcomes
By the end of the course, the student must be able to:
- analyse a site, its context and a given/ existing building structure.
- research and apply different adequate typologies.
- create spatial and tactile atmospheres.
- develop independently a consistent architectural project.
- explain a design concept and its theoretical framework.
- Analyze a site, its context and an existing building structure.
- Generate and integrate new functions; compare, research and apply different adequate typologies.
- Create spatial and tactile atmospheres.
- Develop independently a consistent architectural project.
- Explain a design concept and its theoretical framework.
- Present a project in an adequate and clear manner using various means of presentation.

Teaching methods
Group work, individual work, lectures, studio work, round table discussions, study trip, intermediate review and final review with guest critics.

Expected student activities
Studio work, team work, participation in various pedagogic activities, analysis of the site, development of a program, presentation of the project by means of drawings, visualizations, oral presentations and models ranging from 1:1000 to 1:1 scale, practical and manual skills.

Assessment methods
Evolution of the project through studio work, table critics, participation in pedagogic activities (15%), Intermediate critics (25%), Final jury (60%).

Resources
Websites
- http://east.epfl.ch