



MergeCity_ZurichWest

Semester Project Type: **O**

"A city that does not change and reinvent itself is a dead city....The paradox is that the city changes all the time, so it would have to be ... in permanent mutation; it could not be a frozen term."

excerpt from Cedric Price (author of the Fun Palace) in conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist

Zürich-West is today in a state of complete transformation and flux as extensive conversions of its industrial zones, old buildings and spaces are perpetuating entirely new neighborhoods, office space, housing, restaurants, clubs and public infrastructure. The development of Zürich-West, which is becoming a city unto itself, parallels the rapidly growing municipalities surrounding it with their characteristic affordable housing, industrial complexes, large retail outlets, diverse population and extensive transportation infrastructures.

As these areas expand and merge into and with each other, there exist numerous potentials for the development and configurations of new urban density and architecture. MergeCity_ZurichWest is an investigation of potential architectures that act as catalysts and protagonists for these new territories and city space, confronting traditional downtown/old-town city models with new notions of urbanism that address contemporary conditions of economically driven cultural growth. Within this spectrum of possibilities explorations of programs that promote new venues for art production and display, scenarios for concert halls, new types of theaters, cinemas and cinema production facilities, and so on.

MergeCity_ZurichWest will take its inspirational queue from the concept of culture machinery as set forth by Cedric Price in his works and particularly his proposal for the Fun Palace:

"... to build a 'laboratory of fun' with facilities for dancing, music, drama and fireworks. Central to Price's practice was the belief that through the correct use of new technology the public could have unprecedented control over their environment, resulting in a building which could be responsive to visitors' needs and the many activities intended to take place there."

Design Museum London

Within the programmatic and urban strategies described above, the following methodologies will be deployed to guide the design process:

(i) Formal Investigation Formal experiments and investigations will serve as a catalyst to question and inspire program, site strategies and serve as a starting point of the design process.

(ii) Programmatic Innovation The program will be understood as a fluid set of activities, informed by each project, which is to be investigated, transformed and extended. Its relationship to form as well as its impact on the cultural and urban context will be given a main focus.

(iii) Digital Technology The studio will be using digital tools such as 3D modeling software, CNC, 2D laser cutter and rapid prototyping as conceptual design tools. 3D digital modeling skills are strongly recommended!

The studio language is English. We will meet for the studio introduction on Tuesday, 25th of October, at 14:00. Meeting place will be posted online under www.arch.ethz/rashid.

Hani Rashid, Visiting Professor in Architectural Design, ETH-Zurich Guest Critics and Advisors: Thomas Sevcik (CEO Artesia), Hans Ulrich Obrist (curator) Assistants: Philippe Luc Barman, Alex Hurst, Suzanne Song