Project Archaeology

Christopher Dell and Dominique Peck, 2018

COLUMN A

> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdomEmYiw8g
> Start the video at 1:14:41 to hear Jacques Herzog talk about how the architectural office Herzog & de Meuron is working on the documentation of the megaproject Elbphilharmonie. Jacques Herzog and Peter Eisenman, moderated by Carson Chan Milstein Hall, Cornell University, College of Architecture, Art and Planning September 11, 2013

The teaching and research program Urban Design engaged through its project University of Neighbourhoods (UoN) with the question what it means to work as a university on urban development. One of Herzog & de Meuron's employees, Philipp Löper, who worked on the megaproject Elbphilharmonie organized the tree house workshops together with the UoN team as an intercultural practice seminar format. The seminar's documentation forms the basis for the Round Table Redesign "What is urban Design to do in the Age of uncertainty?" with Christopher Dell, Bernd Kniess and Philipp Löper. The Round Table Re-design is part of the publication Tom Paints the Fence. The short excerpt here is intended to illustrate how aspects of the production of a project archaeology are part of the activities that the actors are engaged with anyway in the design of urban form in project work.

Bernd Kniess: When it comes to the question which actors are involved in a process such as dealing with indeterminacy, we are dealing with a question that Phillip Löper also experienced in the Elbphilharmonie megaproject. We know from the press that there were numerous conflicts and difficult situations. In a conversation with Peter Eisenmann, Jacques Herzog even talks about the fact that the architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron actually experienced economic difficulties. How can actors in complex situations learn from and during processes and restructure them accordingly?

Philip Löper: These are stuck situations. Someone makes an accusation that has to be legally refuted on the other side without allowing new accusations to emerge. In doing so, we proceed in the belief that a compromise is a defeat, for we are no longer concerned with the matter in question. In the beginning, it is incredibly difficult to understand these processes.

Christopher Dell: The University of Neighbourhoods is a comparatively small project. But if we want to address this concern in the curriculum, city planners, architects, cultural and social scientists and probably a few more, can practice learning processes here in order to be able to upscale the process in whatever follows – in interaction with what you definitely need to know and be able to do in a disciplinary manner. They should run in parallel, the disciplinary level and the learning of reading process.

ABOUT COLUMN A

https://podcampus.de/nodes/wgyel/res0720.mp4
Römer, Alexander and Marko Mijatovic. 2016. "Notations on site." Basics: Project Management in Urban Design. Hamburg. CC BY-SA 4.0.)

https://podcampus.de/nodes/pmgyl/res0720.mp4
Dell, Christopher and Marko Mijatovic. 2016. "Notations on site." Basics: Project Management in Urban Design. Hamburg. CC BY-SA 4.0.)

The term "project archaeology" for us describes a technique for reading structural traces of projective processes and thereby multiplying the directions of a project's time (and content) vectors. It is clear that a documented process is a temporal entity that happened in the past. It thus seems to be a closed entity although in its becoming it was an open one. A crucial dilemma appears when process is read as closed entity and thus the potentialities of the process itself get lost. In order to open up the process again and to regain its immanent potentialities, we consequently work with a diagrammatic approach of serial fragmentation, de- and re-assembling, cataloguing and indexing of the process structures. Rather than looking for representational effects, we look in the document archive for traces that incorporate new beginnings and for structural entities that can be re-assembled.

https://podcampus.de/nodes/RoXBz/res0720.mp4
Dell, Christopher and Marko Mijatovic. 2016. "Project Archaeology." Basics: Project Management in Urban Design. Hamburg. CC BY-SA 4.0.)