

The Assembler

Making (a) space for Bergen Assembly

Semester: Spring 2024

Teachers in charge: Andrea Spreafico / Espen Folgerø

Course Content:

Due to the time-consuming nature of processes commonly involved when making or transforming a building, architecture usually puts constraints on processes of change and transformation. Most of the time for good reason as democratic processes takes time. But this means that at any given time, there are large areas and vacant buildings that find themselves in an in-between state where they are not being used or even accessible. How can we as architects go into this landscape and these slots in time and use architecture as an actual tool for change, without setting the democratic processes aside?

The master course will focus on **the design** of a gathering place for the Bergen Assembly in 2025 with a strong focus **on re-use**. The school wishes to follow up the master course with a summer school or a mini-master in autumn 2024 to build the space and have it ready for 2025.

The idea is to tailor an architectural design around an ad-hoc program that will set the basis for the "curatorial" decisions that the school will take together with its co-conveners in sight of Bergen Assembly 2025.

Learning Outcome:

The first two month of the course will focus on learning to decide and articulate a program for the building: What will be its function and what are the spaces that it will need? What and how many rooms do such spaces need? What is the potential performance of different sorts of rooms? What makes a room sustainable from a programmatic point of view (i.e. what are the characteristics that allow more flexibility of use on the long term?)

The last three months the students will focus on the design of the space with a strong focus on re use of local material. Can we reduce to a minimum the acquisition of material to build our project, where can these material be found?

We will work with real clients: the Bergen Assembly obviously, as well as the owners of the sites. A third important partner in the course will be all the other conveners. The master course will organise meetings, where the students will have to discuss with the rest of the school and the external conveners their decision and adjust them to the feedback received. There's a responsibility towards the rest of the conveners involved in the master course and to cope with this responsibility will be probably the most important learning outcome.

The room program of such a space (hosting different events during the Assembly and having a life after the assembly) has to be open and the range of this openness will be defined during the course. The fact that the room-program will have to be variable – influenced by what the conveners decide to bring and by the way the different city-collaborators will change their position towards the projects – will invite the students to think of possibilities, rather than solutions: design a space that can be inhabited by different forms of creativity and creativity is often unpredictable.

Given the actual situations that you will engage with there we will have to reach a certain level of professionalism in the process and in the result. The meaning of this term, professionalism, will have to be addressed in various ways with the aim to both use it as a point of departure for talks around our ever-changing profession and to investigate the role of spatial and programmatic explorations within the framework of a 1:1 project. This professionalism as a topic will occur as we deal with the strategic dimension of the project, during the design phase and more directly in the detail-oriented phase as our aim for the outcome is to reach a high level of construction details. The course aims to both be explorative and to enable the students to make the transition from strategies and spatial design to articulated details.

An important learning experience for the students will be also the distribution of tasks of design in a team of 5-7 people. In order to facilitate the understanding the choices of these tasks there will be regular focus meeting, that will guarantee a shared overview of who is doing what.

Working and learning activities:

The course will be divided in three phases:

I. Explorations (one month)

What the space can

Study trip to Belgium and survey of spaces in Bergen whose result will be diagrams of gathering spaces for creativity.

Meeting with assembly and see the archives of activities there.

This phase will be done in individual work and will create a common archive of sketchy slips having a plan, a section, an activity diagram and a photograph of each gathering space for creativity.

II. Proposals (one month)

What the space will

In group of two or three the students will propose a program for the Assembly Assembler.

Then these programs will have to translate into room programs.

A school / assembly gathering will assess the final program. The jury should be an assembly-lunch kind of jury: who come has the right/duty to engage.

III. Design (three months)

How the space will be

One program will be defined by the school and it will be implemented by the whole class.

Working in group everyone will be in charge of an aspect of the design.

Throughout the course there will be focus meetings once a week, to inform what everyone is doing and what needs to be changed in the schedule of the course. The agenda of these meetings will be set by one class representative on Friday afternoons and shared with the class.

Throughout the course different gatherings will be organised in order to test gatherings' performativity in a 1:1 scale. The final presentation and the mid-term review will be two of them. Another will be an ad-hoc event to discuss with the conveners and the school which direction the design of the building could take. These gatherings (assemblies) will take different forms and will be an opportunity to increase the archive of gathering spaces for creativity that will be fundamental for the design process.

Andrea and Espen will be the main teachers and will follow the students throughout the course.

Training and tutoring section will be done by different architects from the office AgWa (Brussels), André Fontes, Charlotte Eckrath, Berenice Donzselmann, Cristian Stefanescu and Vilde Kjærdsalen.

Experts in building physics will host workshops where detailing

Requirements:

Each student will be assessed on the basis of submissions, performance and participation in the studio.

The master course impact on the school activity in the next two years demand a high level of engagement: students will be required to be present at the tutoring and work in group in a responsible manner. **A max of 10 days of absence on the days with teachers will be allowed in order to avoid automatic fail.**

Reading list /References:

No reading list ahead of the course, just read, it is good for your education.

The following is to be included in all course descriptions:

Specific conditions

A master course is considered a formal exam at BAS. The only grading is Pass /Fail.

An external examiner will be present during the final review, and participate on the final grading of the student in collaboration with the teacher(s) in charge on the course.

If a student lacks the minimum level and attendance in order to be evaluated for the exam, the student shall receive written notice of this as soon as possible, and at the latest 2 weeks before the final review. Then this student will have failed the course. As a master course is based on the effort and work during a whole semester, this will be the basis for the approval for the exam.

Written notice/warning can be given throughout the semester if a candidate does not have the required progress or attendance. Then it is the student's responsibility to put in the extra effort and resources.

Even though a student does not receive a warning/notice from the teachers, the final result will be depending on an evaluation also by an external assessor, and the result can therefore not be guaranteed.

If a student has special needs and will need facilitation during the master course, the student must contact BAS before the course starts and inform the school about this. It is required to have documentation of a diagnosis in order to have facilitation. If you have had a process with this earlier in your study, you nevertheless have to contact adm. to inform and agree upon the specific needs for facilitation for the upcoming semester.

The final assessment

will be made by the teacher(s) in charge of the course plus an external examiner during the final review, and will be based on:

1. The individual submission for the different stages of the project.
2. The level of participation and contribution to the collective/group work.
3. The assessment of the work/project as presented at the final review.

After the final review one will receive either a pass or fail. If there are minor weaknesses that could improve the project in order to pass, a candidate may be given supplementary work that is to be completed within 2 weeks after the final review. The supplementary work will be evaluated to either a pass or a fail by the teacher(s) in charge. If the weaknesses are not possible to overcome by doing supplementary work, the grade will be fail. This decision of giving supplementary work is solely up to the teacher and the external examiner.

Specific requirements for design and build courses:

For design and build courses it is very important that the student participates on the collective work, as well reflect on one's own effort and learning outcome.

The final decision as to the performance of each student will be taken by the external examiner (senior) on the basis of

- a) both group performance,
- b) the report on individual participation done by the teachers,
- c) and a portfolio made by the student showing the extent of individual and collective contributions to the studio.

Portfolio

a student is expected to make a portfolio of all 3 master courses before diploma. This is to be submitted at the beginning of the diploma semester.