

Instances of Urban practice

Instances of Urban Practice, an instillation by raumlaborberlin in the Venice Biennale di Architettura "How will we live together?" opening May 23rd 2021

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Instances of urban practice is about shifting the perspective in architecture: from the built object to architectural practice, from thing or final outcome to a qualified process – architecture as an action that takes a societal position.

With instances of urban practice raumlabor presents two environments that are currently in the process of being negotiated on site. Two environments where raumlabor is involved within a diverse network of collaborators as initiator, negotiator, space-creator, mediator and caretaker. The Floating University and Haus der Statistik. Both are located in Berlin, adjacent to outstanding places: Floating University neighboring the former Tempelhof airport, and Haus der Statistik just off Alexanderplatz. They have very different characteristics and physical appearances but are both built on the same philosophy. Both share their origin in an artistic claim and initiative, growing into complex forms of self-organization and public-civic or scientific-artistic-civic cooperations. We love to see them as learning spaces. Learning in the sense of how to re-learn ways of another city making, that is aware of the pressing questions of our tomorrows: the relationships of us as humans to the planetary dimension and the question of the right to the city. This includes talking care of dynamic processes of acquiring knowledges, adopting, and reacting towards the evolution of the spatial and social forms.

Our installation in Arsenale consists of a scaffolding structure and a bubble room, referencing the architecture of the Floating University in 2018. In the exhibit, the scaffolding becomes the frame for pictures and graphics from both contexts: one side tells the story of the Floating, the other side that of the Haus der Statistik. The key graphic on each side is a timeline, that shows the cooperation, networks and events and thus gives the snapshots above in the installation a context.

Our instillation shows two examples of collaborative approaches to create common spaces of experimentation and exploration towards unknown futures. The openness of both projects allows for individuals and groups to join and engage on their own terms, enriching the collective sphere with their perspectives and expertise. Both are evolving into non-disciplinary environments, challenging experience from all fields to find modes of translating their knowledges into the ongoing dynamics of the process. Both projects offer complex forms for supporting emerging communities to co-create the future city.

Responding to the question how will we live together? ... in emerging communities - We believe it is through extending architecture as a discipline into fields of contemporary societal struggles. By taking collective efforts in making a better city. By being part of a community where proposals for common possible futures are developed in dialogue and in resonance with the evolving situation on site. By understanding and engaging with urban transformation, reading power structures, understanding the driving interests of a multiplicity of stakeholders and placing an own agenda within that. We believe the urban practitioner cannot stay neutral. By getting involved the practitioner becomes a navigator of complex fields of possible futures.
