



Perspective

get involved

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architectural & built environment education for young people
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Desire versus consensus

Atmosphere as Design Strategy

How can young people be involved influencing their future architecture?

For me the most obvious: to start getting to know their dreams, their **“secret” desires** for their environment.

However, How can people **communicate** their dreams, their desires?

The great advantage of working with Atmosphere as a design tool is that it gives space for **uncertainties**. Might sound strange at first ... but:

The **vagueness of atmosphere**, the fact that you cannot quite grab it, brings **contingencies** into the communication and design process, which offers opportunities...

... there are ambiguous and complex conditions a participation process can throw up.

And: These are exactly the **conditions** we need to work **creatively** with the user and ultimately as the architect.

(if we want to get a sensation for the various desires to be able to develop a **common ground** for the later design)

However in the daily routine of our work we still experience quite some suspicion regarding participation:

Usually it's the building authorities or architect colleagues who can't quite see how the user can contribute valid knowledge to the design process. But sometimes the client him- or herself does not trust in the worthiness of their own expertise as user!

The participation process can mean that the architect has to surrender part of his or her control of the design (and construction) process,

that's risky, but it does not have to mean that **originality and creativity** are limited

Participation does not mean:

The architect is then only the person carrying out the technical implementation of the users' ideas.

The architect still takes the creative part, he is the **creative link**



What "people" know about the demands and desires they have for the use and experience of spaces is a **potential social resource**,

which must be taken into account in architecture if a stronger identification of the users with their buildings is to be achieved, which in turn supports social acceptance of the architectural design.



Sociologist Helga Nowotny speaks of **socially robust knowledge**.

We can draw the conclusion from our various projects that communication about **the sensory experience**

is **crucial** for the interaction between architects and users.

It is based on their **mutual knowledge** of the atmospheric spatial effect.

Depending on the ages, the social and cultural backgrounds we develop individual models of participation. The essential components are conceptual and artistic stimuli, which have to be specifically sought outside the school context.

Communication about atmosphere will circumvent the **fixed code of the plan** and make it easier to express even complex, but often unconscious, needs and ideas that are often difficult to articulate. Both children and adults can playfully articulate the worlds they desire.

Collages of found images, painted pictures, models, but also the results of targeted planning games, interviews, storytelling, or film and its spatial projection, can serve as such a medium. Architects have the opportunity to develop models of atmosphere from the requirements thus formulated,

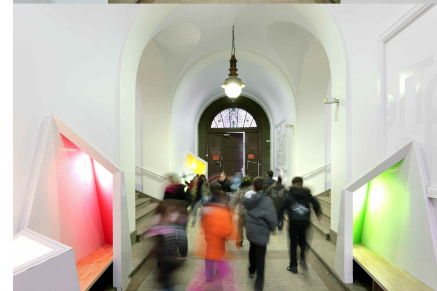
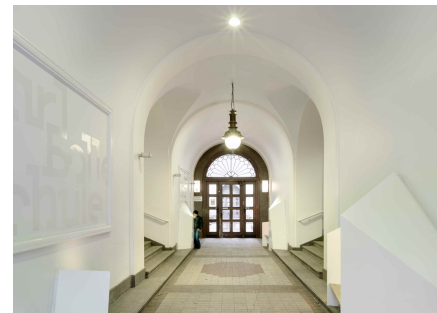
in which the users for their part can imagine themselves and thus experience them directly.

This is the start of a **dialectical procedure** in which both children and adults can clearly articulate and also **nominate sensory stimuli** that are important for the environment they live in.

Form follow (kids') fiction

... our slogan, **fiction = common ground**

In a 40m long hallway, scientific phenomena can be explored, learning by discovering, kids learn about reflections and complementary colours and at the same time determine the atmosphere of the space through this colourful reflections





School of the International Building Exhibition in Berlin by the Italian architect Gino Valle, architecturally hardly any space for interventions, we recommended to spend the money on acoustics and some insulated alcoves instead...

Production of Particularity

The participation process cannot **be developed in a prescribed manner**: it must be built up in a way that corresponds to the age and the composition of the user group. The young students in a **secondary School** for example, worked with Baupiloten, after studies on atmosphere, to develop furniture-like "body extensions"

as a stimulus for new "learning islands", on a scale of 1:1, in their school.

No participation process is the same:

Example 1: Jugendhaus – house for the youngsters to meet and retreat for the Montessori Secondary School, Berlin

Secondary school of **socially deprived teenagers**, often they experience for the first time:

Appreciation
Self-respect
Self-efficacy

Here again we got to know the pupils and their desires by constructing and testing with them first ideas:

Each group of students developed together with the pupils their specific idea of a pavillon.

And only later the students work out the strength and weakness of each project and gradually work out one design.

Example 2: Evangelical Secondary School, Berlin

We have devised a very own participation and interaction model for the hip youngsters in the newly founded private Secondary School in the centre of Berlin.

The plan was for a forum with a stage to be created that could also be used alternatively as a school hall or school canteen. Die Baupiloten set up a studio within the school to work together with about one hundred young people, their parents, and their teachers on the design of their school building.

In an extremely intense process the students and kids developed **thirteen light fictions**. These allowed new spaces to appear in and around the prefabricated concrete building and provided a sensory starting point for the transformation of the school.

The gym became the "Contact Space",

The space under a tree became the "Rendezvous Theatre",

The atmosphere of the newly created spaces then became the starting point for the architectural work by die Baupiloten,

Again it was wonderful to watch how immersed the school kids were in the newly devised worlds, how well they could articulate the spaces and desires regarding their built environment.

The participation process was very special,

it owes very much to the fact that the Baupiloten is a live project programme. There existed a **perceptible intimacy** between the kids and the students ...

Partnership of schools & city as motor of a socially integrative city

Example 3: Social Club Wedding

We also tested to work with our 70 Bachelor students and 2 schools to develop architectural interventions which would serve as the school and the deprived neighbourhood at the same time. (to be more specific: Socially difficult district in Berlin on the edge of hip Berlin-Mitte ...)

After an initial creative joint workshop the students as well as the kids of the secondary school started to work on specific projects.

Sometimes students and pupils would meet to discuss and criticize their respective ideas.

The students developed their ideas in exchange with the school kids but also other people of the neighbourhood.

They worked on programmes like the KIEZBATTLE (which translates to neighbourhood battle) – an arena and stage places on top of the gym hall, seen in the whole neighbourhood where young people can compete for their own 15 min of fame.

All projects were presented into the neighbourhood for discussion.

Example 4: Agents & Accomplices

For certain projects we find it very helpful to devise a game to get into discussion with the stakeholders.

For another socially deprived area of Berlin-Neukölln we developed a locally specific planning tool "agents and accomplices". We were asked to find or develop synergies between schools and neighbourhood.

With the help of the game we detected hidden potentials ...



Conclusion: student architects working with youngsters:

As **trainee architects** the status of the students is very similar to that of the user; they are even close to the children in terms of age. Their impartiality and curiosity and not least their constant critical assessment of their own position, make for an **inspiring collaboration**.

Who is afraid of participation?

www.baupiloten.com