

ABSTRACT – proposal for a paper
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SPATIAL PLASTICITY - a reading of a selection of existing projects for living as the foundation of an architectural research work.

The intention of the paper is to elaborate the importance of a reconsideration of the space for living in stacked housing, the flat.

KEYWORDS : SPATIAL PLASTICITY, ARCHITECTURAL RESEARCH WORK, HABITATION, FORMED SPACE, SPATIAL POSSIBILITIES BECAUSE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.

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The term *spatial plasticity* frames the research question in the architectural research work presented here. The notion both defines the main ‘problematique’ of the work, moreover represents the process of the delimitation of the term the on going reflective practice. The delimitation of the term involves developing knowledge through an overlapping and interweaving production of drawings | models | text | photos | collages which seek to produce a resonance within the contemporary discussion of the space for living.

The term *spatial plasticity* occurred on an early stage of the project by a wish to ‘collect’ distinctive qualities of particular projects in one single word (in Danish : Rumplastik).

The notion comprised the criteria in the following more focused selection of projects constituting the foundation of the research project – subsequently has the term been dissected into parts consisting of a field of words and notions to describe the diverse levels/characters/atmospheres of the understanding of *spatial plasticity* in the field of architecture.

The collection of projects is called the ‘Collection of Examples’ to avoid the classical analytic procedure around case studies¹. The analytic approach to the examples is rather ‘undemocratic’ as the projects have been chosen on behalf of either their overall spatial qualities or because of rather bound qualities within a ‘local’ overlapping of spaces, furnitures and/or materials – the reading of each project is mirroring the objective and intuitive reason of the selection. The collection consists of around fifty projects for living, built as well as unbuilt. The projects span from the renaissance till today.

Some readings consist of a model, others of drawings and model, others again of a collage etc. A text is connected to every one of them.

Common to the selected works in the Collection of Examples is that they work with ways of organising the space for living, based on a flow of/or connection between a difference in rooms, each defined on their own. Furthermore, a lot of the houses/flats work with, or in, the section ; three-dimensionally.

The plans try to release or free themselves from or maybe even take distance not only to the ortogonality dominating the building structure since the modern movement, but mostly the classic plan characterised by hierarchy and axiality.

The spatial qualities of the Collection of Examples have a relevance mainly because of the following two reasons :

1 They fulfil a fundamental point of the project wanting to argue for the value of rooms with character and shape of their own. This refers to a belief in the qualities in an articulated space and the potential richness in beeing able to move through rooms of different characters.

The project seeks rooms with changing relations to each other by interacting together, overlapping each other and by that defining a sequence of rooms, which in their interrelated affiliation define a flow with different possibilities of inhabitation.

2 The last two decades the building industry has been revolutionized by the introduction of digital technology, and thereby radically changed the discipline of architecture. Not only has the approach but also the understanding of architecture as a consequence of this undertaken an immense shift.

The essential change in the fabrication of building elements makes everything possible, both what concerns which and how materials are used, but also what concerns the outlines of a specific architectural act.

However, the possibility of being able to insist on almost any shape also in the scale of a building seem to have generated a focus which far too often is reduced to the concerns and ideas of the outer form.

This fact seems dispensable as the newest technology makes it imagineable to think of another complexity in the configuration of the interweaving of both the inside and the outside of a building and plan and section.

Another important reason to the subject of the research is the fact of the changes in the structures for living in the contemporary western society.

The many interpretations of family structure are mirrored in a diverse combination of people and their interrelationship – the society is no longer built on families comprised of father, mother and child – the definition is more fluid than previously. One could therefore claim that needs of a certain group or a family changes the requirements to the layout and the size of the housing.

Though a great number of people live with a family, or have one, the structure of how we live together has changed a lot. Many people live alone, by way of contrast, the cultural differences in our society are also manifested in bigger families because some people wish to live together across many generations.

It is now time to bring a focus on the problems and possibilities of our time and reconsider the configuration of the space for living.

The architectural research work should therefore be understood as a work positioning itself within a particular architectural approach to a space, as a reaction to a technological development and as a work seeking an answer to the - in my opinion - problematic lack of decision to space established in the light of the new digital technologies in the building industry.

With the foundation in the developed knowledge made in the work with the Collection of Examples, spatial experiments will take place.

It is the intention that the spatial experiments naturally will release proposals for rooms of certain shapes and characters to form the basis of proposals for stacked housing where the spaces interact with each other, though embracing different functions/places.

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1 | The three important figures within architectural analysis found the schools to the many approaches of how to make an analysis or a case-study within architecture: Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), August Schmarzow (1853 – 1936) and Alois Riegl (1858 – 1905). They all have different approaches but common to their models of analysis is a clear structure of going through all elements of a building, therefore the term 'classical'.