

D'ARCHITECTURI PREMIÈRE ANNÉE 2024/2025 SEMESTRES 1+2

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RESONANCE: TRANSFORMING DESIGN PRACTICES EPFL-ENAC-ALICE: RESONANCE: FOUNDATIONS-PLANES-ROOMS (2022-26)

We live in a time when fundamental ecosystem disturbance announces its proximity through ecological precarity: abnormal climatic occurrences, pollution and extinction (Tsing, 2018). It is essential that architecture adapts to this change and recognizes its complicity by questioning the foundational lessons inherited from our teachers, from history, and our practices as professionals. By questioning if these foundations are adequate. How should we learn from the incredibly rich and abundant environments built up by the many cultures of this planet, both human and nonhuman? We have a choice in how we listen to the world, understand it, reread it. We have a choice as to which values we keep and which we are willing to replace.

The ALICE Year One (Y1) program approaches this challenge to architectural practice in two ways. The first is its processual nature. Architecture does not belong to an abstract world conceived as a series of coherent problems, a world where architecture would form objects to solve those predefined problems. Rather, architecture is always entangled in questions directly linked to how we understand our existence and therefore emergent in nature. As gestures and inventions, architecture has both cultural and technical meaning. These two aspects of architecture cannot be separated as they are of one and the same nature. The things that we invent and produce to act upon the space that we live in are extensions of our body. They are never static, but are in constant transformation. situated in relation to us as living individuals and societal beings, and in relation to the environment that is itself an evolving eco-system of other living organisms. Being alive, we—humans. plants, other species, our languages, our arts, our society-are intertwined in perpetually evolving relationships. Architecture is therefore both an expression and concretization of the relationships that we build with all life

The second aspect that we stress in The most important aspect in the ALICE Y1 is architecture's collective ALICE series is however not the final nature. Architecture is never made alone; form of the end-of-year construction, but it is a means of communicating in rather the explorative processes of its society and with the environment. The contributors, and the capacity of an collective languages by which we articulated mise-en-espace to support the search for new forms of living discuss architecture play a fundamental role in how we conceive of architecture together: through architecture, we learn. As such, the ALICE series becomes a itself. Gestures - the making and the significations that emerge through research agenda through which we not making - form a cultural and technical only build, but learn, architecture. language that we craft together. We think, speak, and make architecture together, ALICE Y1 emphasizes the collaborative nature of architecture by making projects as individuals, in pairs, as small groups, as collectives, and as one large group of people collaborations within the ALICE team and with many public partnerships

Lessons of collective practice require regular periods of reflection: what have we learned—about architecture, about community needs. and the local environment—as we produce architectural projects collectively? How do we integrate this knowledge-for pedagogy, for students and teachers alike -into the next cycle to constantly improve our ways of practicing? After the single-year cycles of the 'BECOMING' program, we have adjusted the program to allow for a more of their lives. It assumes that the attentive, continuous, acquisition of knowledge. RESONANCE is, for the first time, a multi-year pedagogical cycle based on the annual stages of FOUNDATIONS (2022-23), PLANES (2023-24), and ROOMS (2024-26). In May 2023, FOUNDATIONS were constructed that responded to the site and territory; in May 2024, PLANES will after they are complete. The projects consideration how these FOUNDATIONS have weathered and been used. We will repair maintain, or unbuild these FOUNDATIONS in the process. In Fall 2024, ALICE will begin a two-year collaboration with the Service de l'urbanisme at the Ville de Lausanne to investigate the significance of the Place de la Riponne. Over the next two years, we will adopt our lessons from FOUNDATIONS and PLANES to create ROOMS RIPONNE, This partnership will form a further conversation with sites in the region; learning with the people. animals, and plants that have already begun to adapt to those places, and with the resources in the region that were used to make these architectures.

The term RESONANCE therefore articulates a search for a more respectful elationship with our natural world. including a more thoughtful use of natural materials, of knowing where they come from and who and what was implicated in their production. It strives for a generous, and more mutuallybeneficial, connection with the places where we build, more consideration for proportion relate our bodies how our structures are always temporary and must return to the planet at the end environment is not a neutral context that by designing and building 1:1 we act upon, but a living world that can also teach us about its needs if we listen carefully enough to it (Robin Wall-Kimmerer, 2021). While, pedagogically, the emphasis is on the process of designing and constructing, the resulting architectural proposal for a 'room' projects also take on a life of their own around the Riponne. We end the semester with a workshop. respond to these foundations taking into become places inhabited, changed, and AFFORDANCES, whereby we search adapted by the people who gather there. for overlapping themes emerging from After the students and teachers leave, 300 individual ROOMS. they become spaces re-built and unbuilt by many.

intended to help constitute a

In CONSTELLATIONS, collectives The terms that we have introduced to structure our first-year program are of students propose a constellation of crafted around a simple idea: they are group projects from the individual rooms proposed at the end of the first conception of the world, to engage with semester. Affinities between individual it, and to situate ourselves in it, both as projects become the catalyst from an individual and as collectives. The first which collective projects emerge. In phase, MEASURES, is an examination ROOMS (IN THE CITY), students will of how scalar correlation and infinite work with engineers and craftspeople to develop their collective rooms and to simultaneously to environments and to negotiate amongst one another to drawings, how we situate ourselves in a create a common project for the place with the living. In ELEMENTS, we Riponne. The final phase, RIPONNE ROOMS, emerges as a continuation of begin our first collective constructions this process through collective building fragments on site that translate our on site with our institutional and gestures into built form. With ROOMS, community partners. students work individually to synthesise the findings of prior findings into an

To scaffold these ways of designing, we lean on several collaboration with ALICE's Research and Design Research teams. The first solvers. They have the potential to that has emerged is that of protostructure, simultaneously concretized as a physically proportionate coordinate system that relates the site to the paper as well as ground; how to situate ideas and a conceptual support that organizes the ideas of the larger collective. For the notion of having to scale from the world to the drawing studio. Protostructure is at times made explicit through matrices and at times manifests itself graphicallyprojecting the site(s) of exploration onto the tables and walls of the ateliers. A second concept to have emerged over the years is that of protofigure. If protostructure implicitly recognizes sites as the physical, political, and economic realities in which we situate architectures. protofigure becomes a conceptual support as we search for the affordances uncovered through acting within our environment. It recognizes that by acting, by architect-ing, we discover and co-create places that hold significance. Materiality is emerging as another concept for the ALICE investigations, understanding our constructions as temporary manifestations of earthly materials that have been moved from, and have required labour in, places beyond the sites upon which we build.

Through this pedagogical approach, we hope and believe that concepts that have been developed in such an architecture can shift values. Architects are not only problemrelocate values - from economic profit to an ecology of space and of contribution. We continue to learn how to relate architecture to the spatial constructs, not only in society. but also in relation to life in general, to architecture students, it makes explicit our resources on this planet; how to root architecture, how we let it live. how we let it relate. It is in the spirit of ecological and social urgency that we propose to work on values other than efficiency, profitability, typology, or expertise. We initiate architecture as a process - architect-ing - and not a thing. Architecting would be the thinking and making of space according to intrinsic principles of contributing and caring. These acts imply values that change, that are based on both the individual and collective desire of experts and nonexperts alike.

It is here that such architectures may embark upon other routes. They may emerge not as rigidly ordinated and easily legible objects, packaged in eloquent speech, or used as functional machines in view of a pre-determined purpose. Spaces may rather take on a strange form that resemble organisms like whole cities, with their many imperfections and inconsistencies. They may become constructs embodying collective histories of deliberation, rather than embodiments of the architectural canon. They may, at times, sound like symphonies - loud reverberations in the streets followed by quiet whispers in the night. They may be uncomfortably polyphonic (Tsing, 2018). Grounds plants, structures, rhythms, details, and materials may all evolve into new forms in the interplay with many, and in continual, ongoing deliberation. It is the open field of potential that draws out new collective ideas to be brought into material life through open operations, intrinsically coordinated.

Such an architecture is again immersive: it will respond to the experiential comprehension of the places within which we live. Such an architecture is also a political practice: the way we design space reconfigures matter, places, people, and biological life. To act upon space is a collective esponsibility. We must therefore, first and foremost, question the individual values that exercise control in these actions and look for ways to allow collective values to emerge.

Dieter Dietz and Laila Seewang Zurich, August 2024

beyond the university. To emphasize the

hypothesized, and succeeded, in

authors, as the culmination of the

academic vear

importance of the collective act, we have

thinking, designing, and building projects

with 250 people, all authors and co-