ABSTRACT. Architecture as a cultural technique possesses a repertoire of interior material and structure that only during a cultural event – in a situation of use - develops real character. The aim for openness shows the capability to produce diversity and simultaneity only during this performative act. This leads to a relation between substance and contingency, which relates to the openness of the process, the action of experiencing space and the structure of events in relation to their spatial coherence. This aspect of architectural space, essential to the current architectural debate, will be applied to the scale and the (an-)architectural structures of urban landscape. Performative urbanism trusts in urban architecture, in the designing competence of the profession and in the power of architecture to create spaces of openness and performative experience by conciseness

KEYWORDS: urban landscape - performative urbanism - situative urbanism

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Townscape and cultural landscape should be defined in a new way, have to be treated in a new manner today, as their traditional pattern and balance of city and landscape are a matter of past. The typologies of both categories of spaces have changed fundamentally. Yet, the political and cultural goals of societies concerning this process are articulated entirely deficiently. Today the autonomy of the individual has a very high value, societies are obliged to let people do their things: drive cars, build houses, chose locations with sea and sun, live their private life. Privacy is something increasingly appreciated as a field which demands protection. So far, we recognise patterns of social behaviour, which are reflected by political patterns quite directly. The new patterns of settlements and cultural landscapes, which are a product of this process, are in the centre of professional debate among urbanists; the political scene seems not yet to be alarmed.

Even in our own professional debate we are lacking theories. We have been discussing some of the related topics for decades, applying different terms like postsuburbia, urban village, megalopolis, outtown, slurb, exurb, burbs, edge city, technoburb, Metapolis, network city, Zwischenstadt, new urbanity, city a la carte, patchwork city, sprawl, spread city, nonplace urban field, polynucleated city, etc. We describe and analyse the phenomena of these spatial structures. Some hopes and dreams are resulting upon the awareness that these structures may have a potential of openness and freedom of meaning.

Yet, we do not have a sufficient state of theory, concerning a repertoire of action, governance and long term spatial sustainability. Since sustainability in social, ecological and economical terms is defined politically, architecture and urbanism are in charge of adding the spatial aspect. Everybody knows, this does not imply the creation of new spaces, which never change, but to create spaces, which have the capacity to embed the difference of functions and social habits, which occur through time.

In the current discourse, diffuse terms are serving to define strategies related to the handling of urban landscapes, formulating the need for action abstractly: qualification, multiple codification, revaluation: this state demands for a reintroduction of the repertoire and key competence of architecture - to create space as a productive discipline of the urban discourse. Architecture is the art to articulate space.´ (Eco 1972). A comprehensive understanding of architecture implies an understanding of landscape as well as of urban space as built and non-built architectural spaces and ensembles of different scales. Where space is not-existent per se, architecture is capable of creating a cultural situation beyond the demand for functional space.

We do not focus on scale or subject. The total environment - from threshold to mountains - may be interpreted in an architectural sense. Architecture is cultural articulated, designed space. This can not be reduced to the organization of space, to zoning, in a functional manner. It addresses articulated space concerning and embedding processes of life of individuals and social bodies. Today, in times, where space is moving back into focus as a central category in philosophical terms, succeeding time as the core category in modernism, architecture may increase its cultural relevance as well. The big art exhibitions of the last years may act as an indicator for this tendency, where artists seem to concentrate on urbanistic topics and sujets.

Immaterial social space materializes in architecture through the production of space as a complex societal text that not only mirrors society on a non-discursive level, but reflexively unfolds its impact. To degenerate this view from its classical
association with the European city by also applying it to urbanized areas, where spatial expression is a coincidental result of other forces, is one of the future tasks of urbanism. With this in mind, here two research topics, we are focussing on at the chair of ‘urban design and regional planning’ at TU Munich, within the research field urban land scape.

**Conciseness and scope - the capacity of architecture as a precondition for urban quality**

Do we currently find openness within urban landscapes? Sometimes we may even find this characteristic in the centres of those cities which are in states of permanent transformation. Mostly it has something to do with a lack of control, shifting of meanings, tolerance in temporary situations, situations of low economic force on the site. Based on these terms and conditions, situations are developing which may be characterized as heterotopian, spaces of experiment in certain islands of time. Fixed structures versus structures of openness have barely any relation with traditional or contemporary formal spatial organisation. Openness seems to happen where change happens and is tolerated where change has to be tolerated. When becoming socially obsolete and economically worthless, even historical structures can incorporate new functions and new meanings. This transformation relies on their spatial capacity to do so.

We think that openness is rather achieved by architecturally articulated space than by indifferent spaces. Openness is a character of successful architecture in general and of successful cityscape in particular. When within this openness we do not see arbitrariness, but a cultural claim for an exerted life and make this to the objective of a complex urban design, we have to act formatively.

Urban spaces as spatial intersection points of individual behaviour and as an expression of collective attitude must be capable of accommodating constant shifts. The balance between permanent and open developments has been a standard topic in urbanism ever since the ideology of functional specificity and neutral flexibility shipwrecked. Nonetheless, spatial development today is still shaped by these two factors. It seems that more than ever, transport structures, public buildings and infrastructure are complying to predominant, one-dimensional demands.

Semantic capacity (Norberg-Schulz 1968, Schneider 1971) defines the potential of architecture to give the everyday a practical meaning although exposed to temporal alterations. Introduced by semiotics, the idea of capacity does not only relate to aspects of text and meaning. All characteristics that can be ascribed to architecture are subject to the tension between substance and contingency. This suspensive relationship defines the idiosyncratic, it defines capacity. The functional capacity of architecture is defined by the interplay between a concise spatial situation and an openness for varying use. As space extends itself in form and character, it serves as a ‘condensator’ - capable of producing experiential shifts in functional use.

**Urban body – performance of urban space**

Space is not something exterior to the individual, but a (centred) medium based around it. Collective society generates space/spaces as a social product. Besides focussing on the social aspect, we are defining space in an anthropological sense, as an extension of the human body, or as body oriented interpretation of world. Lefèbvre speaks of l’espace vecu (Lefèbvre 1992), other authors speak of gelebter
Raum (Duerkheim 1932), newsworthy the version body as brain (Eliasson 2007). The current Venice biennale is running the headline ‘pensa con sensi’.

„Wir tasten das organische Raumgefüge nicht nur mit dem Auge, – das es in Bilder zerlegt – sondern durch die Bewegung mit unserer ganzen Körperlichkeit ab. Dadurch leben wir in dem Organismus, wir werden gleichsam ein Teil von ihm. Es sind doppelte sinnliche Eindrücke, die wir erleben, eine bereichernde Verbindung, die in dieser Art nur der Architektur eigen ist.“

‘We experience organic spatial constellation not only with our eye, which deconstructs the seen into images, but through our body movement. Thereby we live within the organism; we become a part of it.’ Fritz Schuhmacher clarifies a specificity of architecture whereupon our actions and our movement are indispensably embedded within architectural reality. Within architectural theory, this assessment has been reconfirmed consistently by August Schmarsow, Rudolf Schwarz, Hans van der Laan and Kenneth Frampton among others. Newly, Peter Sloterdijk has resumed this thought in his sphere triology, applying the term immersion.

This understanding does not only apply to the practical application, but to all forms of practical and ideal associations of space. This dovetail connection of material composition and subjective association is however the basis for any conceptualization of architecture. The differing building patterns according to which apartments, houses and every other kind of architecture is constructed are never solely formally or technically motivated, but are to be understood as configurations of movement and interaction within space, i.e. as models of housing. Architectural history embraces a rich repertoire of such configurations of spatial formation and exertion.

An understanding of architecture as a mere engineering discipline for the construction of technical objects, containers made to function, yet awaiting to be filled, fail the architectonic. However, the subjective association with space is not only incorporated in architecture via the concept such as habitation in the sense of inhabitability. Much more so, it defines architectural reality in an amplified way through the performative operation of architectural practice itself. The spatial constellation of an apartment, a street, or a city is structured differently according to its occupant’s personal architectural experience. This differentiation can not be fully anticipated in the planning phase. The real building, through its correlation of materiality and specific patterns of action representing a characteristic conception, gives the specific processing of space a tangible direction, a typical condition. The individual level of experience of architectural reality remains left to the respective performative appropriation.

Architecture as a cultural technique possesses a repertoire of interior material and structure that only during a cultural event – in a situation of use - develops real character. The aim for openness shows the capability to produce diversity and simultaneity only during this performative act. This leads to a relation between substance and contingency, which, in this research context relates to the openness of the process, the action of experiencing space and the structure of events in relation to their spatial coherence. Scenic space according to Baudrillard is a predominant factor when deploying architecture. ‘Without scenic space, buildings would only be construction and cities only agglomerations.’ (Baudrillard 1999). This aspect of architectural space essential to the current architectural debate will be applied to the scale and the (an-)architectural structures of urban land scape.

Performative urbanism concentrates on entirely different subjects and is not at all comparable to performance in everyday speech. We are aware, that designing a
city scape is highly affected by economical forces to create spectacles and public performances. Cities are involved in this global competition for attention; they are forced to create spectacles in a cultural and political sense. Yet, this article does not concentrate on this aspect.

On the contrary, the term performance is applied as introduced by linguistics and semiotics. Performative urbanism refers to the theoretical topics explicated above: the entire character of architectural and urban space to create a full reality only while being used in a complex sense of meaning. Situative urbanism may refer to a similar approach, including cultural practises of urban behaviour and governance, referring historically to the situationist movement and its urban practises. When we are discussing density in this connection, for example, we are discussing city as layers of occurrences. We are criticising urban land scape in behalf of the lack of spatially embedded activities. Though we are familiar with the discussion about urban voids and sometimes even apply it productively, we doubt whether it can fulfil the hopes and deliver to the expectations connected to this term. Opposed to this, performative urbanism trusts in urban architecture, in the designing competence of the profession and in the power of architecture to create spaces of openness and performative experience by conciseness.

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