The Hidden Spaces
of Everyday Life

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This abstract proposes to explore the — continued — relevance of everyday life to architecture in general and architectural education in particular. We want to discuss overlooked, plain, ordinary and pragmatically organised spaces, structures and events. We want to focus on how these spaces and events outside, in the margins of, or even in opposition to, architectural awareness and intentions provide a continuous source of architectural discovery and learning.

The topic of the architecturally overlooked or undiscovered everyday life is of course far from new. Architects from Le Corbusier, the Smithsons, Alexander, Tschumi, Koolhaas to name but a few have all explored different aspects of this topic. The topic of everyday life in this sense is well-known, but the drive to discover and include what is not part of architecture might still be considered as a hidden aspect of architectural education. It might be straightforward to encourage the curiosity of students and ask them to look for new ways to understand and reformulate architectural relevance and programs, but it is far more challenging to create space for the unpredictable outcomes of this curiosity in an architectural curriculum. It might happen through particular studios or electives driven by inspired and motivated supervisors, or it might arise as bottom-up initiatives from students that criticise a perceived lack of relevance of their architectural education. It might happen through meticulous observation of the surroundings or by engaging the dreams and desires of users. In any case, the hidden aspect of architectural education relates precisely to the need for constant discovery and critic of existing ways of understanding architecture.

The paper will not make any claim of a method to capture everyday life to include it into an architectural curriculum. We believe that the potential of this aspect of architectural education takes place on the ever-shifting border between what is included and excluded in architectural education. Instead, we will provide several examples of how they find this focus made explicit in student's work. The author's background differs, and the cases stem from different national and geographical contexts. They take their outset in very different educational systems and across levels of education from Bachelor and Master levels to PhD studies. We will group diverse aspects of the projects according to common topics across the projects. The groupings are under development and provisional, but so far they include:

Mappings of everyday life will look for examples of how mapping is used to expose and form new understandings of contexts beyond the obvious. How can data science be used to map and understand urban life and hidden qualities of spaces

of the city based on geotagged social media? What does Big Data reveal about our spatial use? How can we map the hidden waterscapes of the city that might gain renewed relevance to climate change? What is in a name — what does it reveal about the history and topography of a place? How can we follow the traces of networks to understand urban dynamics as garbage collection, car parking, water supply, entertainment etc?

Narratives of everyday life will look for examples of how architecture can uncover the hidden, forgotten, imagined, dreamed up stories of social relations and spatial patterns. What is revealed by reading the city through the literature of a famous author? How can we manipulate and expose the lived life and hidden stories of abandoned buildings on the verge of being torn down? How can we write onto the city to construct new layers of meaning? Can a performance — dancing in the street — provoke and change the social interactions of an urbane space?

The aim is that these themes, and possibly more, will provide a fertile ground for discussing the role of everyday life in architectural education through inspiring and meaningful juxtapositions and comparisons of diverse projects. We do not want to provide recipes or fixed formulas for how to maintain this significant 'hidden school' in future architectural education. But we aim to discuss how studies of everyday life can open a way to question the role of the architect and goals of architectural education. The most relevant architectural response to everyday life space might not always be the design of new buildings. It might lead to other forms of expressions, different outcomes as alternative forms of solutions to an architectural approach to urban problems. Maybe it is better to destruct in meaningful ways than building? Maybe the design of an app that helps ease life in a rapidly growing metropolis is more relevant. Perhaps there are insights to be gained from concepts and approaches from other fields outside of architecture like art, literature, politics, activism or performance?

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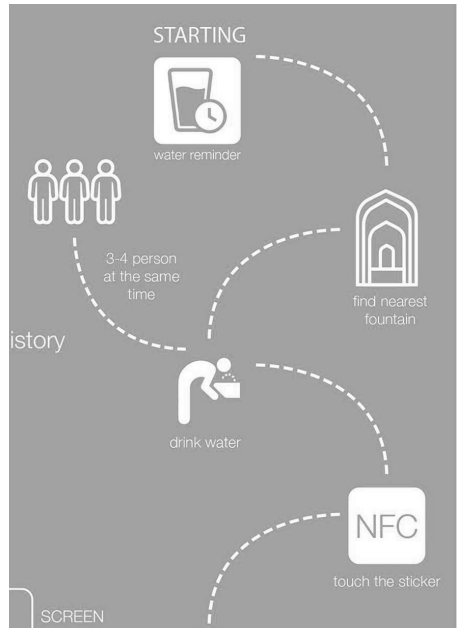
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