

## **Place, Programme and Form**

### **An architectural journey**

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The present paper is regarded as part of a personal journey through Harry Gugger studio's architectural working methodology, based in Basel, highlighting the thematic variety and methodological intakes used in his design process.

The personal involvement in different scales and nature projects allowed me to identify a set of languages and systems developed in the Studio. These systems approach design issues and references in a consistent and meaningful way.

All through the design narrative of Harry Gugger, shaped by means of his pluralistic education, we have been able to recognize a language associated with a methodology, which arises from the several pedagogies acquired throughout his training. This working methodology simultaneously shares and confronts the two main teaching pedagogies present at ETH-Z between 1960s and 1980s.

The Zurich School suffered several curriculum reforms, along its growth. The teaching models carried out over nearly two centuries, held by the participation of some iconic figures, which we can highlight Gottfried Semper, Karl Moser, and from the 50s, Bernhard Hoesli and Aldo Rossi who's teaching pedagogies were clearly divergent. This distinction was based, not only by the dissimilarity found between the ideological bases that influenced their interpretations of architecture, but also how these two figures have teamed up and joined the Zurich School, as a result of the architectural panorama lived in each of these teaching periods.

Born in Gretzenbach, a Swiss commune located in Canton Sill in 1956, Harry Gugger is one of the names, associated to H & de M, that guided the last twenty years the Swiss architecture, participation in representative works of experimentation that characterizes contemporary architecture.

Throughout his training, guided by the search for a profession that would give him a intellectual restlessness/satisfaction, he held several courses, including two, university/technical degrees, architecture will be his disciplinary area of chose.

Harry Gugger believes that his academic career, led to a gradual approach to architecture, as if it was a revelation. Over his training years, he experienced many crafts, motivated by its diversified interests in various areas of study. However, these proved to be reductive, "with one goal," and in which he did not feel fully realized. The extensive knowledge associated with architecture that brings together various interests and skills, enabled thus directing their valences to a single professional area.

Recognizing this atelier demand for knowledge sharing and transfer, as evident in the pedagogies of Bernhard Hoesli and Aldo Rossi, Harry Gugger reflected in the way this transmission of knowledge can delegate a design vision, and embraces an academic career.

The architecture combines an informed discourse by its actions, which define the complications faced thru a proposal, and the final works are, therefore, the "expression" of these decisions, which reflect the beliefs of an architect.

The search for a concept that can be used as a design guideline revealed concerns regarding the programmatic implementation, so it is necessary to examine the workshop's working methods according to the design themes found. This process, which I call the line of thought, marks a methodology that focuses on the search for the relationship between design and the city.

Thus, it is possible to understand this approach to the theme PLACE with the hunt for assimilation and perception of its atmospheres and urban principles, without reinterpret them. The city is therefore a means, rather than an end to the project design, and so is studied exhaustively, so that the proposed action/project does not cause any change to its meaning or understanding.

Harry Gugger's interpretation on the development and design of the urban fabric subtly approaches the ideologies advocated by the pedagogy of Bernhard Hoesli. Although we can not verify the rejection of the city's essence and its elements, his work isn't intended to fuse permanently with the metropolis, but mark its own identity and characterization of the architectural object.

The site study starts by the reading and interpretation of photographs and historical maps, as well as references from influential icons in the design and image of the city, carrying out an urban study where it is possible to identify the evolution of the urban area according to the inclusion and growth of existing architectural forms.

The study of the city typologies allows us to place programmatic localization issues improving the positioning of the accesses and functions as well as to collect information associated with characteristics that can be improved with their proper distribution.

Through the interpretation of the geometric configurations of the land and the regulations established for each of the parcels put up working hypotheses that act as a driver and / or design of the script together with the demand for a general principle of intervention.

The identification of the city elements creates a bridge between the themes PROGRAM and PLACE, allowing us to read the reality and pointing a strategy driven by the needs of the site and its social context. The significance of the program is interpreted parallel to place, in order to decipher and clarify project rules. Through this study it is possible to summarize and represent the design conditions to be observed during the process. The program doesn't describe the shape or design of space, but provides the problem which the form must respond, presenting the functional spaces required. It should be established in a hierarchical and abstract form, identifying the synesthesia between functions and clarifying the program requirements, reducing and optimizing the search for answers, simplifying and approaching an optimized solution.

It is from these synergies and its interpretation that we verify a scheme, which consolidate the locations of these program units and their relations with the intervention area.

From this point on, it is established a general principle of intervention where the programmatic blocks break up and acquire a form, which requires a reinterpretation of the program and drawing of the desired spaces. The general principle of intervention is presented as a whole and is the architectural expression of the proposal.

The third and last moment is described by the study of the FORM, adopting a projectual direction produced by the assumptions established in the previous phases and determining a language or architectural expression. Matching the representation of existing, the form is determined by a three-dimensional tool which requires a scale and limits in accordance with the principles previously established by the place and program. The reading of the model allows us to understand the relationship between the total land area vs. total area requested, and quickly and schematically identify the programmatic distribution problems, narrowing the search for an idea / design concept, through the technical design.

The study of form reveals the obvious concern on relating the premises of the place and the program, which is a thruster proposal for to the adoption of a principle, through communication, handling and perception of project forms. These close relations between the study of program and shape are also evident across multiple design alternatives of the elevations, which aim to enhance the plan design, markedly verifying the programmatic and formal differences.

The form is thus the result of an extensive and systematic analysis, which seeks to find a careful answer to each particular situation, as a dialogue between the design of the program and the significance of the place, always framed in principle or general strategy implemented.

Hence, we can state that Harry Gugger's architectural thought, framed by ETH-Z pedagogies, has deepened his professional practice according to the rational principles discovered during his formal training. His journey brings out an association between a formal harmony of the place and its cultural heritage reflected by a delicate equilibrium between reason and emotion – a permanent dichotomy.