

EXPLORATIONS

Teaching, Design, Research

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Architectural Research: Explorations of Sociotechnical Boundaries

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Architecture is an inherent part of every society. It is an indicator of political, economic, technological and cultural conditions, as well as their change. The sphere of function and the professional image of the architect undergo regular reinterpretations in rhythm with these transformations of context, as is currently manifest in very different places.

The Swiss Pavilion thematizes essential points of architectural reflection by bringing into focus the conflict and the permeation of spatial, organizational, and production-technical dynamics. These phenomena already occupied architectural research and production in the past, but today the architectural gaze is becoming less fixed on the built object and is dedicating itself to the investigation of processes and interactions. Architecture is making use of experimentation, augmenting it with widely divergent inventories of knowledge, crossing disciplinary boundaries and exploring new terrains.

How can research be grasped semantically in a design-oriented, creative-technical discipline? What contribution can be made through treating instruction as an apparatus of research, in the manner of the works exhibited here? First and foremost, the Swiss Pavilion demonstrates how unproductive the otherwise customary differentiation between basic and applied research is in the context of the architectural drawing. In place of this differentiation, it presents the concepts of methodology, networks, didactics, and technology. Architectural research derives its potential not by limiting itself to a concise statement of the problem, but by associating fields of knowledge in a way that does not follow any academic convention. Science and the humanities are thus brought into contact with practice-oriented, heuristic-creative approaches, and they experience their compression and expansion in the design process. Design thus becomes an instrument of research that amalgamates what ordinarily remains separate.

The works exhibited here permit a critical questioning of the idiosyncrasies and potentials of architectural research, so that positions can be formed or accentuated. They invite an opening up of fields of discussion and a widening of perspectives, in order to demarcate the possibilities and limitations of this particular mode of encountering the world.

Translation: Elizabeth Tucker
