

Voices

Studio SOL

QUESTIONNAIRE

‘How to live?’ reads like an existential question, one that aims to inquire into the nature of life—life on earth, in the universe; as a human, as a living being. What does it mean to live today? Marking an investigation that, by nature in turn, is said to refuse to be answered in a too quick or simple way. And yes, we agree with that. On the other side, ‘how to live?’ can also be read colloquially as a very casual inquiry, one more naturally expressed on the everyday—How is life? How are you doing today? And yes, we see a quality in that too. In fact, for us knowing ‘how to live’ is an aim never completely resolvable, opened by the possibility space of this duality—sensible and intelligible. VOICES shall be motivated by this entanglement, a mix that we, together with you, hope to make fertile in this series of talks—short interviews in the spectrum of professional and civic view.

Doing so we seek to follow two broader objectives. First—to explore possibilities of how we as architects, generally speaking, can establish a rich relationship with the abstract topics of our time. And second—to foster inquiry and collaboration on generous forms of living under today’s sun.

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»SUN«

The Sun accounts for 99.86% of the mass in the solar system, it was believed to be pulled in a chariot across the sky each day and both of us remember very well how unearthly silent it was when we experienced its eclipse in the summer of 1999.

What was your last thought or discovery about the Sun?

(In line with the radiant nature of this star the question literally points in every direction, however our interest here would be in something that caught your attention lately, for the first or second time, and in best case still fascinates and/or puzzles you.)

»OBSERVATION«

Research in architecture, and a majority of arts and sciences alike, was in the last years mainly conducted in two kinds of set-up—in laboratories or in the field. Speaking abstractly, laboratories operate placeless by cutting out their object of study; the field research operates inversely by immersing oneself in the environment of one's interest. And a third set-up, mediating between both, fell somehow from view—the observatory, acting from a relative-placelessness, observing stars, climates, cultures and more, outside and inside at once.

How do you approach the themes of your interest, and what role does observation play in that?

»CHANCE«

Night counts as the time of the unknown, of unlimited possibilities and imagination—the shadow part of the day, in which you hardly see anything yet everything at once and where you have to follow your intuition not to get lost. Additionally, it is said that only if something sees the light of day it starts to exist—becomes known or graspable. Things caused by luck or happening by accident are often seen in contrast to things that count as sophisticated. And thinking of architecture and chance intuitively opens a similar space of incompatibility, yet in time, it can be said as well, it is light and shadow that render its buildings alive.

Which moments of the day do you cherish in the built environment, and which spaces could you see as being inhabited by chance?

»THINGS«

As entity, object, body or creature—things are ubiquitous and literally every-thing can be named as such. And architecture, other than giving things a place, can itself be seen as a mixture of those. A rack, a wall, a branch; a tv, a podest, a roof. A togetherness of things hosting other things; like an act, a discussion or a matter, on fantasy, anger, training, and splendour, or any other possible aspects of a vivid space opened by things.

Which aspects, from your point of view, are important to open a contemporary 'living space', and to which activities could they relate to?

»LIFE«

Elevated by information, information technology and the sciences dealing with it, we experience today not just how it is again living, superseding working, that is becoming more central in our built environment, but moreover how it is also information that challenges the very act of living in our built environment. ‚How to live?‘, a question inviting many other questions to follow.

How to live, and –insert derivative question here– ?

(Closing the interview we want to end-without-conclusion with one of such questions. A question you ask yourself, or one that informs or motivates your doings. And if you can name it, how so.)

VOICES

A Series of Talks on
»How to live?«

ABOUT

Studio SOL is a design studio run by Georg Fassel in partnership with Indrè Umbrasaitè.

It is based at the Department for Architecture Theory and Philosophy of Technics at the Vienna University of Technology.

More here:
www.s-o-l.studio