



PEDAGOGICAL AMBITION

Lecture by Josep Lluís Mateo

We try to teach how to design, how to produce, how to think and make buildings happen. For me, this is closely connected to the dialectic between concept (abstract conditions) and matter (physical conditions). This kind of synthetic duality is the starting point of our profession, in which an idea is immediately connected or contaminated by the reality of the facts. Concept without matter is like a shadowy phantom, and matter without a concept is also a ghost: pure ornamentation, pure expression of sensuality with no sound, no content or depth. My pedagogical ambition is not to teach how or what to do; it is not stylistically driven? what a window should be like, for instance. I aim to teach students how to think. Our studio could be the first time in your education that you are alone. You will have a great deal of responsibility and freedom?two very closely connected factors?to decide and, eventually, to fail or to succeed. We will be around you, setting limits, pushing or letting you go, but we will only provide the questions; you, the students, will provide the answers. The decision as to what to do is connected to your responsibility, to the moment when you have to make the leap. Failing is important, too, because learning is about trying, about discovering something new that you didn't know before. What I hate when teaching is the mere repetition of common sense?the things we already know. I am more interested in the creative than the formative part of the design. For me, a semester project is a kind of experiment: we set a problem but we don't know the answer, and you have to come up with possible solutions. This moment of discovery is something to encourage and generate. Perhaps it is necessary to lose your way to be able to invent / produce something new.

We will be looking at a series of elements that connect the conceptual and the physical. From the very start, it is important to think about the structure and the materials of your building. We also insist on learning to use a series of tools that you will need in order to express yourself and, ultimately, to generate works. These tools are the plans that we regard not just as technique, but as descriptions of a new reality that you invent and propose. We rely on images to bring to life this new, imagined reality. We promise that this fiction, in our hands, will become a daily scenario for our outer world, for other people. We will examine and study different types of models that enable us to analyse volume and space, and we will train ourselves to appreciate their possibilities, scale and consistency. These tools will target aspects of our professional, practical mission, which is connected to action, to facts. Architecture is not isolated in the fog; it is an active, productive discipline. Ultimately, the instruments we use are connected to production, and in this sense we are productive machines; we may be more or less successful, but we must be able to produce.

Notes by Florian Sauter