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The aac Autumn Workshop 2023 presents innovative ideas for the conversion of department stores

Located at central locations in many inner cities, they were the epitome of our consumer culture of the last centuries, but now often stand empty: department stores. But the method of procuring all kinds of things has changed drastically – not least due to the Internet – with the result that even larger branches are facing closure because of a lack of demand. At the same time, space at attractive locations is scarce, expensive, and much in demand – so how can these giant redundant shopping facilities be put to good use in a sensible and resource-efficient way? During the autumn workshop “High Street Alive. Placing vibrant spaces inside former city centre magnets” from 6 to 29 September 2023, the scholarship students of the aac focused on the development and design of shared-use scenarios for these buildings.

As an example, the Galeria an der Mönckebergstraße, officially called “Gebäude Mö”, was selected for the aac design workshop. The owner was in agreement and provided the necessary documents and background information, which made it possible to develop hypothetical solutions for changing the use of large inner city department stores.

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The workshop, which was led by Dipl.-Ing Architect Nikolaus Goetze, Dipl.-Ing. Architect Stephan Schütz, and Dipl.-Ing. Architect Nicolas Pomränke, started in Hamburg with two input days, during which the scholarship students visited the department store at Mönckebergstrasse and the inner city neighborhood in order to familiarize themselves with the site and location and assess its design potential. During the next three-and-a-half weeks, the students – who had been allocated to four international groups – worked hard to produce one solution for each group. The comprehensive curriculum further included lectures and critique sessions with Nicolas Pomränke and Jan Stolte of architects von Gerkan, Marg and Partners (gmp), Annekathrin Bake of the Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband Hamburg, and Caroline Nachtigall-Marten of DUPLEX Architects, Prof. Petra Riegler-Floors from Trier University, Guido Roth of ADEPT, and Prof. Anne-Julchen Bernhardt of BeL Sozietät for Architecture.

The designs of the four groups, which included 4 participants each, clearly shared a common approach: the use of the building for a single shopping facility was broken up to make space for a range of uses that would serve the community. The four groups produced proposals that very clearly tried to establish an exchange and connection with the buildings and city culture of the location, thus promoting the idea of „relational architecture“. For example, one design created a „sight-seeing path“ that – along a winding path through the building – offered views of places of interest in the neighborhood. Another idea was to detach building fabric from the facade to create „avenues of connection“, through which it would be possible enhance the regeneration of city spaces with landscaping, light, and circulation. Another design, from the third group, focused on emphasizing and making use of the roof. Lastly, a group pursued the approach of a “market place of atmospheres”; here the different functions were grouped together according to their atmospheres, which could then be accommodated in three characteristic building blocks, thus providing new diversity in harmony with the inner city. All results can be viewed until October 27, 2023 at an exhibition in the studios of the aac at the Rainvilleterrasse Campus.

Open until October 27, 2023

Opening hours Monday to Friday, 10.00 to 16.00 hours

Workshop leaders Dipl.-Ing. Architect Nikolaus Goetze, Dipl.-Ing. Architect Stephan Schütz with Dipl.-Ing. Architect Nicolas Pomränke

aac Team Enno N. Maass, Annika Göttle, Anja Meding, Gabriela Hopf

Tutors (in alphabetic order) Fabian Faerber, Walter Gebhardt, Prof. Philipp Kamps, Sona Kazemi, Anja Meding

Scholarship students (in alphabetic order) Isil Alimoglu, Fabian Alster, Andrés Santiago Navor Blanco, Alexander Blumentritt, Selma Gulden, Karyna Al Iafi, Lucia Ieroianni, Anna-Christin Kaiser, Yiran Liu, Jana Lohr, Nancy Margaret Marshall Marrs, Christian Ferreira de Oliveira, Álvaro Pozo Pérez, Ekaterina Pestriakova, Ebrahim Rahmani, Saverio Simoncini

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Academy for Architectural Culture (aac)

The aac is a private and not-for-profit institution located in Hamburg, which was founded in 2008 by the architects von Gerkan, Marg and Partners (gmp). Its teaching approach is based on the many years of professional and teaching experience of its founders and sponsors. Its curriculum is based on the understanding that architecture is creative art with a social obligation and application; it is designed to prepare architects for their holistic role in a globalized world. The aac practices dialog across disciplines and cultural boundaries. In its courses, it combines teaching, research, and the practice of architectural culture. The design tasks are based on real scenarios, with topics covering current socially relevant issues in architecture and urban design, for which designs are produced as examples of a solution. The aac has its main premises at the historic Navigation School at Rainvilleterrasse in Hamburg. This historic monument, with its classic Moderne style, was renovated and carefully modernized in 2012 by the gmp Foundation in order to revive it as a place for education and culture; today it is the Rainvilleterrasse Campus.

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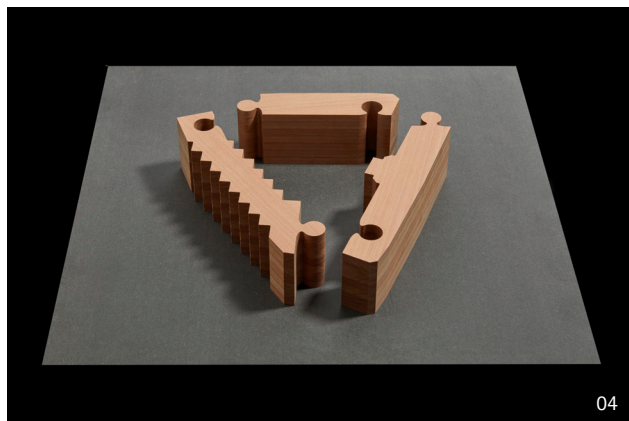
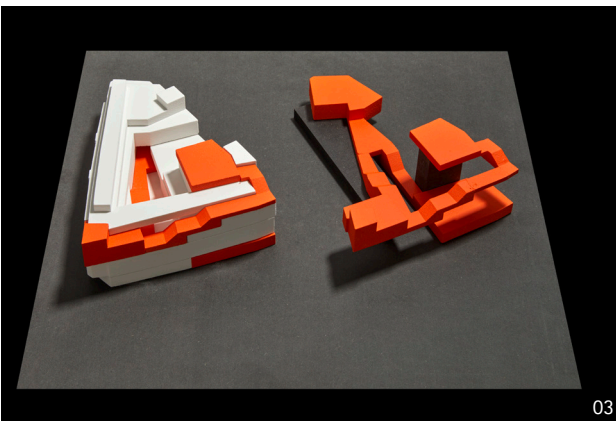
Enno N. Maass

Director of Programme

Managing Director



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01 Group 2 - Perspective

02 Group 3 - Perspective

03 Group 1 - Photo of the model

04 Group 4 - Photo of the model

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