

WASTEOLGY / Potential for the wasteful space in architecture in the future

Diploma Thesis: Haruka Kajiura,
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In his thesis, Haruka Kajiura discovers a new method of interacting with the residual spaces in big cities and brings more questions than answers. The presented concept reflects on a different typological approach to fusion between individual and shared housing and its spread in found urban situations that waste their valuable space.

We tend to refer to this principle as participative, although this terminological definition would probably need much more space than the assessment of the graduate's work and his approach formulated into architectonized objects. These are on the border between proto-architecture, installation, small architecture and architecture itself and could best be described as materialization of Haruka's thinking about the meaning of physical interface between him and the contemporary world in which he moves and aspires to become its architect.

For now, the role of an architect (regarding the graduate's current state) is pushed before the act of building. Haruka (probably subconsciously) balances on the edge, just before moving into the real world and its spatially defined boundaries. It is difficult to say whether it is caused by fear of stepping into the void or whether it is a deliberate (elaborated) capture of the moment of realizing one's transformation from a careful observer into a creator. Capturing of a blasé incomprehensibility or remaining in fear due to uncertainty about how to take that step further. If I speak from the heart, I must say that as an opponent I got interested in this balance with all the endless views in different directions that the captured moment contains. However, rationally thinking, I would expect a slightly stronger message "what he sees in front of him" in the submitted work.

The project reflects on waste of space in urbanized zones in a contemporary Japanese city and turns the original disadvantage into an advantage by activating these spaces, using a method of a fragmented "apartment house", divided into the basic elements of its individual components. These are scattered in the structure of a selected city block and in its "wasteful" volumes defined and remaining between the houses as unfilled parts in a 3D equivalent of the Tetris game. The project does not use "shaking down" and reorganization of the entire block into a more logical assembly, nor does it aim to rearrange its spatial urbanism in the form of "defragmentation". On the contrary, he adds another layer to the current conglomerate consisting of separate parts of the usual apartment or house (rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, etc.) and then adds these functions to the uninhabited remaining places of the block, giving them a new value. The value for the users is freedom of movement between these parts of the "apartment" through the external public space and (apparently also) the meetings of individual participants of this process and the external public.

The potential of the project's feasibility is both a strength and a weakness. The problem is not whether the project is well designed or functional. It lies in the method of presentation. And as an opponent I have to state a slight doubt regarding imbalance between ambition and the design.

The project is stronger in its intention than in fulfilling, as the presented forms seem rather vague and sketchy and fail to get me (or a potential investor, donor) excited about the topic so that I would consider its implementation. Even despite being aware of the intentional use of minimalistic language and a reductive approach to designing. From this I deduce a slight disproportion between the effort and the result of the thesis. I therefore see its potential in an installation that could show that the presented ideas are viable. Which might probably be the real strength of the project, considering the value of the sites he suggests building on.

When assessing specifically the success of accomplishment of the assigned task, I rate the project as very good (not excellent), because I see shortcomings in the explanation of the project and its transfer on the viewer. I miss a stronger expression of the space from the viewer's point of view (either from the horizon or in other angles of view, for example upwards towards the magnetism of the light entering the space at one of the parts). I'm also sad that the project isn't presented in a more authentic way, and in that regard, it feels kind of cold and interchangeable. Without the author's explanation, the project loses its message and can be easily overlooked in today's fast-paced world.

Overall, I propose classification of C and accepting the thesis. All this with the aim of supporting the graduate on his future journey, with a certain benevolence that this evaluation entails. To explain this decision, I consciously declare the trust I place in the graduate's future professional and life path with regard to the personal impact he left on me during the personal presentation. Everyone is responsible for the steps that will further guide them through life from the position they are at the moment. I am convinced that Haruka's steps that will follow his graduation will be guided honestly, so there is a great chance they might enrich our world. And I consider this to be one of the most important predispositions in architects. Whether he will actually achieve that is another story. Good luck !



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