



Your Berlin

Materially, the ground that Berlin (Cölln and Berlin) is founded on is located at the narrowest point of the Berlin-Warsaw glacial valley, set between the plateaus of Barnim and Teltow. The landscape of Berlin was formed during the last ice age by the erosional forces of a moving glacier. After having been covered by hundreds of meters of ice of the Scandinavian ice plate, the ground of Berlin and its surrounding landscape of rivers and lakes emerged as a result of the melting of this ice cap: the river Havel for example is a glacial furrow that widens into water landscapes such as the Tegler See or the Große Wannsee; the ground of Berlin is made up of material deposits that are typically found at the bottom of a glacial valleys or furrows such as sand and silt. Hans Scharoun's plan for Berlin has a city-landscape related Berlin to its geological formation.

6. New Civic Building for Berlin

In search for an architecture that is socially and experientially relevant, you are asked to develop the design for new civic building for one of the two proposed sites in Berlin, utilising the tools developed in term 1 and taking lost or projected programmes of your sites as a starting point.

In the context of a re-unified Berlin, the site of the Schloßplatz has seen an abundance of proposals and much lime light, whereas the site of Kulturforum has been overshadowed by the development of Potsdamer Platz. Both sites reflect very specific manifestos of the idea of a city centre, shaped by different social ideals and visions for societies. Implemented only in parts, reworked, revised, thrown out, destroyed and reconstructed, both sites are still awaiting completion and with it a new beginning. Any building proposal here, has to be embedded into a larger social and urban vision.

a. Concrete Geometries

In this brief, your developed geometric systems is being subjected to the specific conditions of a site, programme and the aspirations of your manifesto. Organisational orders and relationships need to be re-considered, tested and questioned, options explored through modelling and analysing. Focusing on boolean operations, we would like you to explore volumetric ways of working, using union, intersection, cutting and separating as modes of evolving these geometries ultimately into sets of spaces.

Shifting from the geometrical to the spatial, new questions arise. While complex geometries might easily provide structures, they do not necessarily produce meaningful spaces. Within this phase, you are asked to critically assess the relevance of your form production as articulating relationships between physical formations and human processes. What are the relationships set up between geometry and social organisation? How can these geometries become spaces that are socially active or experientially relevant?



Young People's Forum, Palace of the Republic

Step 1: Morphology

Using your crystalline geometry, you are asked to re-configure your site in Berlin. To do this successfully, several tests are necessary.

As your generative / crystal system has its own rules, it will transform the physical / urban morphology of the site. How is the site affected by your system? Vice versa, how could the system be affected by the site? Set up a mutual feed back process that allows you to make adjustments both to the rules of your system as well as re-working the physical site. Explore how the forces of the site and its particular morphology might re-shape and re-fine your system.

Experiment with your system on several scales and in various articulations, allow it to morph and develop. It will allow you to produce enclosure(s) as well as terrain. Run through various options. Judge the scale of your intervention.

Position your project both literally (where it intervenes) and conceptually (how it intervenes). Just as crystals develop depending on the environment in which they grow, your proposal will articulate in relation to the environmental conditions it encounters.

Consider this step primarily as a formal test – you are dealing with morphologies only, the morphology of the site and the morphology of your generative / crystal system. Consider these articulations as a continuum and instigate a close relationship between the two.

Your Output:

3 Options:

Using 3d modelling, develop 3 different options or articulations. Present these in comparable serial external views at various distances, from detail to totality, from close-up to birds eye view investigating grounding, urbanity and integration / autonomy. Please use simple line drawing only.

1 Section:

Considering the relationship between your proposal and the ground, exterior environments and interior spaces, monolithic structural space and inhabitational opportunities.

Step 2: Organisation:

Public buildings are conglomerates of spaces of various sizes and degrees of 'publicness'. Their briefs, programmatic and spatial organisations have radically transformed in the recent past.

Starting from lost or projected programmes of your sites, and based on the morphological system you have developed in Step 1, progress with the programmatic and organisational order of your 'palace for the people'. Use a diagrammatic representation that has the capability to explore spatial, programmatic or other organisational structures to do so. Explain orders, relationships and organisational principles. How are spaces, activities and programmes structured in relation to each other and embedded in the site?

Your Output:

3-dimensional organisational diagram

"My architecture is not conceived in plans, but in spaces (cubes). I do not design floor plans, facades, sections. I design spaces. For me, there is no ground floor, first floor etc.... For me, there are only contiguous, continual spaces, rooms, anterooms, terraces etc. Storeys merge and spaces relate to each other. Every space requires a different height: To join these spaces in such a way that the rise and fall are not only unobservable but also practical, in this I see what is for others the great secret, although it is for me a great matter of course."

Adolf Loos, Shorthand record of a conversation in Pilsen, 1930

