

Das 4. Kleinstadtsymposion in Grieskirchen



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The unintended town – comments on the public space, between relinquishment and added value.

The added value of “the well-built” is emerging quietly. Most likely this happens unconsciously where historic architecture and artful town construction took place. Often the perception of spaces like these (that also counts for landscapes) are mistaken with idyllic pictures that have nothing to do with the real cause of this perception. The idealisation of this “frame” and the adjournment of “picking up the space” by the people is the consequence. Pictures – and just so plans – only show the constituents of what makes the added value: the space as the reciprocal reality of the visual but the scene of what happened. The question remains: what else is happening?

To cover the (necessary) walks often is the last remaining pretext to be in the town area. The amplified radius of our actions always let us visit new, but similarly structured areas. Besides the collective consent – dealing with such “every day areas” can be taken for granted – the individual perception of those areas is that of transition. Individual space is “attached” to the visitor like in private possession, as of in a sort of “stand by”, in a state of “correspondence”, of “transition”, relieved of any ties or obligations leaving open all chances for everything unintended and unexpected.

The impression of “town” often is arising, where it never has been intended, but as something that was planned as the way into the town. Wherever the look onto the conventional town will not exceed the meaning of the scene itself, the “unintended town” will remain unnoticed and the towns added value will remain unexploited.

Camillo Sitte once wrote in his “Town Construction According to the Principles of Art” about an integrated view of space, about being free of the “in between”, the obsessive viewing of facades, and about the elementary experience of space itself.

The “sense of homeland” emerges from life experience but not from the experience of pictures. This sort of architecture is not in need of repetitions but of the space that starts quietly and inviting to be in the “now and here”. Memory will remain, of what has been happening there.

The full text continues with four case studies of town development to be exemplified in the seminar on Friday.