

Problems as potentials to negotiate

The setting of tasks refers explicitly to existing problems in the entrance situation of KW. As public building in the city and as cultural institution KW connect different contents and uses. The requirements and expectations resulting from it produce overlays and fuzziness referring to the constituted demands on the entrance zone. A more exact view on this space reveals further contradictions and conflicts. It must be a problematic place.

According to their impetus and their programmatical approach KW are a place of mediation and dispute. As a space of cultural production KW carry social conflicts right into the institution, articulate cultural contradictions and make attentive to current problem fields. Therefore the demand of one of the most important cultural institutions in Berlin should maintain ground in this neuralgic place of the building.

In this context Architecture is confronted with the question about the negotiation of this complex problem constellation. What would be, if architecture does not solve the existing problems in the entrance and does not organize it in terms of a functional or semiotic assignment, but stresses existing problems and enforces the conflict in this place? There is a need of an architectural policy, which does not promise straight to adjust existing problems of different meanings and dimensions but creates a practise to handle problems in an open and discursive way.

Appropriate measures

For the intervention in the entrance of KW the project implements a set of temporary, reversible measures. From the sidewalk of the Auguststrasse up to the passable garden installation in the courtyard a series of threshold areas and transitory situations negotiates the access to KW.

Wall

A receipt wall on the sidewalk is established into the urban fabric in front of the entrance. Essentially it serves two tasks. On the one hand the wall reminding to concrete bollards produces an additional, protected area in front of passage of KW. On the other hand it welcomes rhetorically the visitors directly in the street and replaces the existing representative applications of the street facade. As furniture in the public space the wall manufactured in concrete block asks for numerous possibilities of appropriation such as sitting, leaning, fixing posters, fastening sun screens or flags. Sufficiently the area for the delivery and the access of the fire-brigade remains guaranteed.

In-between-space

For the disclosure of the problem potentials by restructuring existing space qualities the installation of a new threshold area is crucial in the front range of the entrance to KW. By removing the existing entrance doors the entrance situation shifts inside the passage. The open zone resulting from it refers to the street intervention and can become a street corner or a public shelter without suggesting it concretely.

The new inward shifted in-between-space consists of a black-painted steel frame construction with square profiles and high-grade steel lattices. Its strongly de-materialized appearance intensifies the given views like for example into the garden installation. This area is consciously open in function, it is useless and thereby in its approach as a problem oriented intervention strengthening the existing conditions and possible appropriations in the entrance area. By its specific proportions and its technical-constructional configuration the new threshold area can take over different tasks and produce different transitory-situations like a wind catch, a security gate, a room, a cage, a wardrobe, a box office, or an inhabitant and service entrance. The allocation and the construction of the doors in the front and in the rear part of this spatial construction support the ambiguous character.

The doors facing the street are to be opened all the time. The area is accessible day and night. The entrances to the courtyard of KW are lockable and ensure security for inhabitants and the institution. In case of emergency all doors can be opened and the passage is obstacle-free passable. The side walls in the front part of the passage are adapted to the existing base edge. The ground markings are grinded off and the stairway and the passage are uniformly painted light-grey.

Garden Room

The rear zone of the passage to the yard, the café, the offices and the exhibition spaces is confirmed in its character formed by the open wood stairway by adjusting measures (see isometry EA.1). The spatial re-orientation and the shifting of the ramp into the temporary garden installation, affirm the residence character of this access area. It is equipped with information on the history of the house as well as with a flexible information tablet for program announcements. Here the visitor informs himself about events and exhibitions in KW before entering the institution.

Complication

The contradictory relationship between the different requirements of use and conceptions, between culture and politics, everyday life and event, public approach and security needs, between exclusivity and popularity as well as between living, working and the reception of art is made spatially comprehensible. By consciously complicating the entrance the potential of these conflicts is to be picked up and put into negotiation. The already existing quality of blur and complexity, caused by the different patterns of use and desire, is received and strengthened. The suggested conception, takes up the potential of a productively problematic situation and intends to unfold architecturally its reality and the promises referred to it, in order to produce fields of appropriation.