

Öz

İyi mimarlığın ana şartı yaşamı, onu oluşturan eylemler ve kurdukları mekânlar aracılığı ile hassaslıkla gözlemektir. Yaşamı yorumlayanlar, mekânı keşfederler. Yerleşimlerin özgül değerlerini keşfetmek, barındırdıkları gündelik yaşamın derinliklerini okumak ve yorumlamak öğretileridir ve mimari tasarım atölyelerinde bireysel yaratıcılığın araçları olarak kullanılmalıdır. Atölye çalışmalarında farklı ölçeklerde gerçekleştirilen bilişsel harita ve maket çalışmaları, fenomenolojik geziler ve tasarım bölgesi ile bölümlerine yönelik betimleyici bireysel öykülerin üretilmesi üzerinden öğrenciler gündelik yaşamın fiziksel ve sosyal özelliklerini kavrayabilir, bireysel tasarımları için stratejik yerler keşfetme ve programlar önerme becerisi kazanabilirler. Bu makalede bir tasarım atölyesinin süreç ve sonuçlarına odaklanılmıştır. Tasarım atölyesi öğrencilerin mekânsal bütünlük kavramına ait olgusalıkları (iç-diş/ hâkimiyet/ bilinmeyene giriş/ başkalaşım, dönüşüm/ geçiş/ sınır/ sihirli düzlemler) fenomenolojik olarak deneyimlemeleri amacıyla kurgulanmıştır. Öğrencilerin bedenleri ve zihinleri arasında ilişki kurmaları, gündelik yaşamın şiirliğini duyumsamaları ve gizli tasarım güdülerini keşfetmeleri bu tasarım atölyesinin ana konuları olmuştur.

Abstract

The primary requirement for an architect to become a good designer is to be able to sensitively observe the acts and physical conditions which constitute the life functions of the space. The ability to discover and interpret the uniqueness of each settlement and to reach the deeper dimensions of everyday life constitutes the creativity which can be learned and taught in architectural design studios. Cognitive map study, models in various scales, phenomenological excursions and invention of descriptive stories about the settlement and its parts will help the students to become sensitive about the wholeness of the area and embrace the life it harbors. This article focuses on the process and outcomes of an architectural workshop. At this workshop the students have experienced some concepts of spatial wholeness (inside-outside/ domination/ entry to the unknown/ metamorphosis, transformation/ transition/ border) on the phenomenological level. Creating a connection between the body and mind, establishing consciousness for the poetry of reality and discovering the hidden design intentions of the students have been the key issues at this workshop.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Gündelik Yaşam, Yaratıcı Analiz Araçları, Bilişsellik, Fenomenoloji,

Keywords:

Everyday Life, Cognitive Science, Creative Analyses Tools, Phenomenology.

Architectural Education and the Poetry of Reality

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1. Architecture: The Story of Space and its Transformation to a Home

1.1. The Interpretation of Everyday Life or the Story of Space

The primary requirement for an architect to become a good designer is to be able to sensitively observe and interpret the everyday life; the acts and physical conditions which constitute a story of space. Discovery and interpretation of the space constitute the creative design process. Those who can interpret life, discover the space. Space can be defined as the interaction of acts involving life and the physical environment. In areas that have authentic spatial values a sense of wholeness is experienced. Through the change of space the beginning or ending of wholeness is noticed. When physical environment changes (buildings and nature) the acts also change. Just like cities, districts of the cities and neighborhoods of the districts also are holistic spaces with different identities. When we add villages, towns and countries into this mosaic, we can make sense of the delight that curious travelers and readers of travel books feel

when they experience new environs (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 82-142).

Within the influential area of holistic spaces, there might be subsections with their own spatial integrity. Parks located among buildings, ghettos that are different from the structural and operational texture of the surrounding areas and certain buildings are examples of such subsections (Lynch 2011, 51-87). If buildings that differ in their physical attributes from the overall texture, also serve the larger community (places of worship, culture, sports and history) they augment their influence particularly during moments of use (stations, market places etc). Subsections that come to life through the amplification of sound and smell (traffic, market places) exist in relation to time and are temporal "subspaces" (Dalton and Zimring 2003). Questioning the concept of spatial wholeness exposes concepts such as Inside-Outside/Domination / Entry to the Unknown/Metamorphosis-Transformation/Transition/Border. The awareness of wholeness, the sense of rootedness and belonging appear and exist along borders where differentiation is seen and felt. All transitional areas

between holistic spaces and holistic subsections should be viewed as special places of design, in terms of providing opportunities for recognizing the physical attributes of a region and as they clarify consciousness for the change of social patterns (Portugali 2011; Tversky 2000).

It was Simmel who first pointed out the modern cities, as to how they give rise to the individual with its inner and outer history having its role in the cultural society. According to Simmel the modern city offers excellent opportunities for observing the development of social circumstances (Simmel 1903, 185-206). Not only the modern cities but actually all living spaces be it districts, neighborhoods, suburbs or satellite cities, towns and villages, which have distinct attributes in terms of holistic spaces and holistic subsections are treasures for sociologists, philosophers, psychologists, architects, students, citizens and visitors.

1.2. To Feel at Home: Loving a Space of Wholeness

Spatial differences form borders. The borders appear between spaces that constitute a whole in terms of quality and quantity (Lynch 2011, 54-80; Jacobs 2011, 286, 390-396).

Getting to know a space is to know its qualitative and quantitative values.

Quantity is used in order to provide numerical values about space, such as the area of space, the number of users or the number of buildings for specific functions. The life functions and physical attributes constitute the qualitative values of the space. Getting to know a space involves discovering its borders and its subsections, recognizing its natural and topographical values, learning its history and following the traces of that history, learning about its citizens and experiencing its daily rhythm.

A place is embraced, taken ownership of and loved, through getting to know about it (Bachelard 1971, 7-14). When people know about the geographical and historical attributes of a region they direct the administrating bodies as citizens taking ownership of the space they live in.

Different than Toynbee's bored and alienated citizens who, as a result of living in the mechanical environment of modern cities, are not able to bring standard human feelings of love and loyalty to their environment (Paquot 2011, 103); these citizens can influence the municipalities and district administrations, forming the power that sets the agenda. They not only participate in exhibitions, conferences and competitions, but also organize these events. In time, citizen responsibility and neighborhood consciousness develop and grow stronger. These phenomena as factors forming and enhancing the quality of life, need to be paid attention to in the spatial design of settlements and buildings.

Heidegger's (1960, 56-92) concepts of dwelling and being at home mean something more than activities; they point to fundamental aspects of human existence in terms of staying connected to the truth of life, which is also significant for every creative work of art.

The architecture as art of space integrates these concepts of home, existence, truth which all should be considered and discussed in architectural education (Bachelard 1992, 60-90). The study of the interrelationships of human mind and behavior with the physical environment may be referred to as environmental psychology, where psychological acts (behavior/thoughts/emotions), built and natural environments in which people live are, affecting each other bi-directionally

(Ittelson 1973, 75-92; Montello 2007, 27).

Integrated to architectural workshops the space syntax and the environmental psychology will help architecture students to discover new dimensions in the design process (Dalton-Zimring 2003; Dara-Abrams 2006; Montello 2007).

1.3. Architectural Education and the Poetry of Reality¹

The ability to interpret life and discovering the space develops as a result of a human sensitivity which can be learned and taught. Having an interest in learning about social, political, psychological and natural dimensions of everyday life is essential in acquiring the ability to interpret. Educators in particular have an important mission in spurring an interest for everyday life because the profession of architecture requires, beyond proficiency in building forms and technical knowledge, a sensitivity for the poetry of reality (Lawson 2005, 17-31). Architectural design studios offered by institutions providing professional architectural education form the backbone of this education as they develop and synthesize the knowledge and ability to reach deeper dimensions of life that good architecture requires (Jenson 2007, 62). Even though the implementation of project lessons differ with respect to institutions and project directors, the benefit of implementation through workshops cannot be denied.

In design studios spaces incorporating life rather than an area highlighting qualitative factors should be chosen as the subject of study, in order to learn about ways of contacting everyday life (Tschumi 2000). In addition to study methods for understanding the impact of the physical elements of a chosen district on its citizens and visitors

(Lynch 2011, 159-180), it is also very important that the designers become sensitive about the wholeness of the space and its parts, understand and embrace them and the everyday life they harbor and make use of their own senses and trust them. Strolling in different environs has a positive impact on touching the secrets of everyday life and reading the story of space (Breton 2000). An actualization of Baudelaire's concept of the modern flâneur (*stroller*) as an urban explorer can support the bodily experience in the design process as another essential factor to the processes of observing, thinking and interpreting as factors of understanding the logic of everyday life and the wholeness of the space and its parts.

Pointing out the phenomenological qualities of spaces (*textures, colors, smells etc.*) which can be grasped with the use of five bodily senses can be integrated to design studios through excursions enriched with assignments supporting the use of mixed media (Pallasmaa 2011, 50-88). To experience the phenomenological qualities of existing spaces is important for understanding the "genius loci" of natural and built environments (Norberg-Schulz 1980). The phenomenological understanding as developed by Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty etc. sets as a main rule the direct relation of the subject to the chosen phenomena, where the senses of the subject are activated. The variable and uncertain nature of the senses causes the chosen phenomena to be received differently by each observing subject, thus opening a wide door to creativity. Similarly every description of an environment or anything that have a form is based on a perception of a specific observer (Ellmer 2007, 45-50). Even a description or an observation of a person changes through time. This nature

¹ "Poetry of reality" is a term proposed by the author.

of perception offers to be a very useful tool for improving the individualization process and the design act of students.

To be foreign to the design area chosen for the workshop has a positive impact on the design process since a fresh look of a foreigner not only is energized by curiosity but also shares similar characteristics with an “*aletheic gaze*”, which can be described as an “*undogmatic, democratic, integrated and opened way of looking*” that concentrates the phenomenological experiment and connects with the hermeneutical truth (Levin 1988, 395-410). In “*Invisible Cities*”, Marco Polo describes to Kublai Khan many fantastic places, cities, countries and citizens with different habits and perceptions of life (Calvino 1992). The imaginative power in these creative stories encourages the readers to look at the spaces not only in foreign places but also in their real environ and describe them on their own. This imaginary potential of living spaces like cities or any kind of settlements can be experienced not only on a literary level but also in its real space directly. The phenomenological reality usually hides a phantasm and magical world behind itself (Sansot 1971, 49-51). The opening of reality makes a transition to this imaginary world possible, which can be experienced in every settlement.

1.4. A Workshop for the Students of Architecture

A workshop lead by the author of this paper was organized in three steps such as map and model study, excursions, and inventing stories. Through this three-step program, it was primarily aimed that the students experience the poetry of reality namely the integrated process of understanding a district in its quantities and

embracing its phenomenological qualities such as the life it harbors and that they gain the crucial ability to discover places and programs of strategic importance inside it. Whereas through the cognitive maps and models mainly the mind and through discovering the unique spatial characteristics in excursions mainly the bodily senses are activated; stories and descriptions written by students can activate the unique perception of each student thereby revealing the secrets of the environment and allowing it to be grasped spiritually.

2. The Three Steps of an Architectural Workshop

2.1. The Cognitive Dimension of Understanding: Map study and models

The introduction to the region begins with a map study with different scales where various questions might come to mind. The region whose borders have been determined is first a quantitative whole; in which several textures are discovered if proper questions are asked. What are the differences between the avenues? What is here? What kind of a place is this? How does this street end? What is this? Why are regional textures different? What can we infer from the names of the avenues? (*when the avenue was built, traces of special information about the region etc.*) In this stage, it is more important that questions are asked, rather than answered. Different textures lead to the idea that the region should be divided into subsections.

The only way to examine the wholeness of these main sections and the attributes of the terrain in detail is to move the region to the workshop through models. The dimensions of the common workshop model should cover the wholeness of the design region and its borders. Through

map study, excursion impressions and discussions while making the model the number of main sections that have different attributes are determined. In order to provide an opportunity to exchange detailed knowledge on the qualities of the main sections, the scale of the common model is set usually as 1/500. The main sections of a region that can be covered only in the 1/1000 scaled should be shown in separate models with 1/500 scale so that they can be examined in detail. While the model is being built, the main sections as parts of the spatial wholeness of the region are determined in terms of their life functions and physical attributes and included in the common model in a way that will show their differences. The effort spent for building the common model and the accumulated knowledge from maps about the main sections lead to respect and care for the whole region.

2.2. The Phenomenological Dimension of Understanding: Excursions

The region, evoked by questions that have or have not been answered, invites the participants to an excursion to discover the region. The assumptions that were formed during discussions in front of the maps and the common model in the workshop overlap or collide with reality during the excursion. The region with its main and sub-sections, which were thought to be well known by the participants through map study and model study, surprise them differently when they observe their real size, length and height and walk through real spaces with textures, colors, smells etc.

Through the map study, common model and analyses of the main sections in excursions the whole design region is

examined enabling the participants to know the region in terms of nature/topography/history/inhabitants and different life functions (*housing/commerce/public institutions/services*), in short terms of life in the region. The students form groups and choose the main sections they are interested in and would like to work on for their projects. They learn the names of avenues, streets and squares in their main sections. Dividing the main sections into subsections with different qualities the students discover strategic places in and between the subsections. Through the designing and programming of these strategic places not only the main sections but the whole general design area will profit.

2.3. The Spiritual Dimension of Understanding: Inventing Stories

The places of design are magical points and lines in main sections and in border areas between them. Through designing and programming of these magical points and lines, the main sections as well as the whole settlement will profit. The project area of each student is a strategic place with a proper program suggestion. Respecting the borders of the holistic spaces the project areas are examined in three categories: Strategic lines between main sections and subsections; Strategic points (*special squares or buildings*); Strategic areas (*spaces of nature, parks, empty spaces*). For the discovery of these magical places in three categories as design areas in a region and in order to formulate a proper program for them, it is almost always necessary to analyze the region and then to embrace it as a designer.

Yet there are some special places in certain environments for whose discovery as a magical design area a deep analysis of

the region is not needed. But even in this case due to the response of a designer to the regional values it may sometimes be difficult to find out the proper program and the situating of the design in this special design area. Themselves as factors of creativity they both may function as keys opening the creative way for spatial details of the design. Known as the syndrome of “staying in front of the white page” the act of creation usually closes itself at the beginning to the designer. Just like an analysis of the region, a personal description of a special place and the daily life in it can be a helpful tool for dispersing the fog and enlightening the way of creative thinking for the designer. Through forming the personal perception in a descriptive story about a real place chosen in an analyzed environment many feelings, observations, attentions about the region and the design place buried in the subconscious of each designer can come to the consciousness and can then be transformed into spatial values.

2.4. Case Study: A Two-stage Workshop for the Students of Architecture

The first part of the workshop (Fall 2010-11) was organized for 20 students (3rd semester). The center of Şile, which through its natural values has become an important touristic summer village of Istanbul, was chosen as a project area. Responding to the identity of Şile, each student brought through creative thinking their own contribution to the studio and developed design concepts through choosing their own design site and program. The second part of the workshop (Spring 2011) was organized for 15 students (4th semester). The center of Eyüp, a district in Istanbul was chosen as a project area. A special district within a metropolis has opened other dimensions; to understand and integrate



those into the design process proper tools had to be developed so that an enriching third step was added to the design process of previous semester; the spiritual dimension through the invention of stories.

Figure: 1

The three main sections: The Lighthouse Area (pink), the Central Area (yellow) and the Harbor Area (blue).

3. Grasping the Environment in Mind : Searching for Design Areas through Maps and Models

3.1. Istanbul's Suburb for Summer: Şile

Through map studies with different types of scales and model making students are introduced to Şile's town center. The 1/500 scaled model of Şile's town center has surprised through its significant topography. The topographic structure of Şile's ground, which flows in many different directions, seems to be almost dancing

Figure: 2

The model of Şile's town center scaled in 1/500 and the 3 main sections.

The Lighthouse Area (pink): a mostly residential area with historical adobe and wooden buildings.

The Central Area (violet): commerce/service sector/public offices/residences.

The Harbor Area (blue): coast/port/buildings for tourism purposes/sport areas and parks/forest.

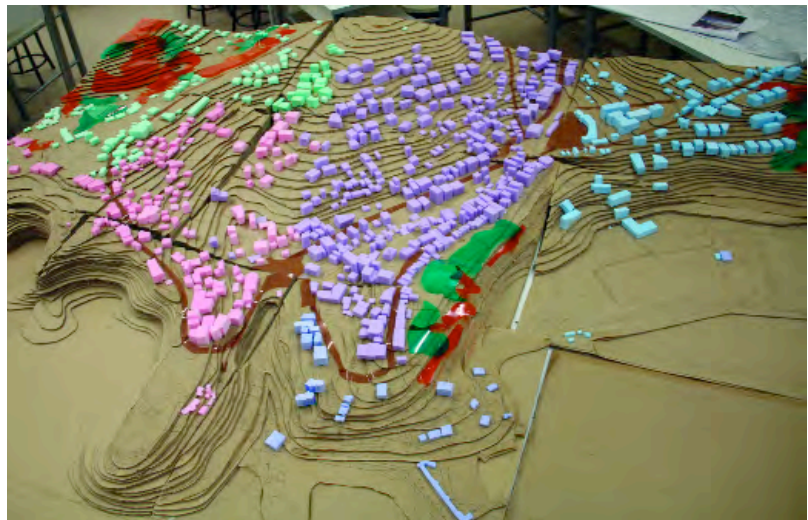
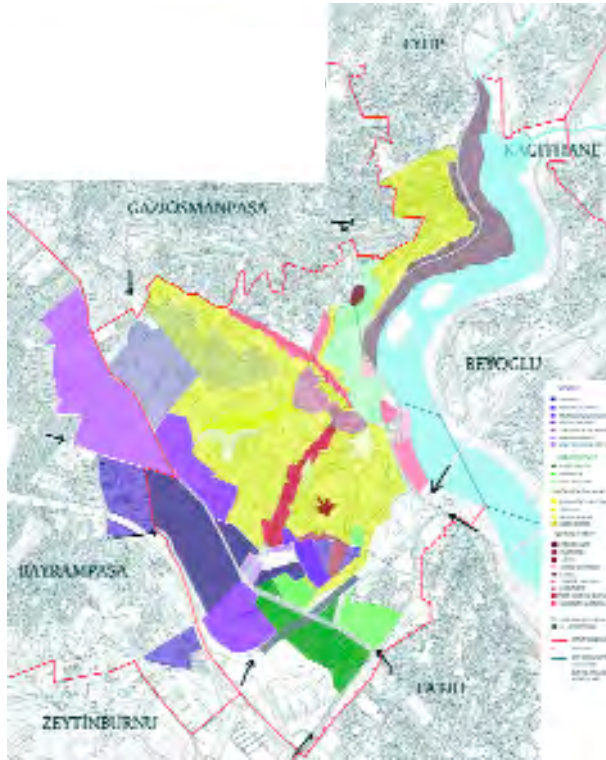


Figure: 3.
A general map analysis
of Eyüp's town center
in 1/5000



(Figures 1-2). According to the spatial wholeness (textures and borders) the students are subdividing the center area into 3 main sections which further through discovering the environment on excursions, are divided into holistic subsections².

3.2. A Special District of Istanbul: Eyüp

The district Eyüp, which takes its name from the saintly person Prophet Eyyub, who was a close follower of Prophet Muhammad, is the fourth most visited religious center of the Muslim world. Like in Şile through map studies and model making students are introduced to Eyüp's town center. The 1/1000 scaled model of Eyüp's town center also surprises through its significant topography with many hills and the dense urbanization (Figures 3-4). According to the spatial wholeness (textures

Figure: 4
The model of Eyüp's
town center in 1/1000
scale (green: mosques,
tombs, schools for
religious education;
pink: commercial
buildings;
brown: 3-4 storey
historical
wooden and stone
residential
buildings;
white: 5-6 storey
residential
buildings from the late
20th century;
blue: social buildings at
Golden Horn;
green on transparent
folios: gravestones at
the cemetery on the
hill).



²"Holistic subsection" is a term proposed by the author.



Figure: 5
The Green Hill Area in 1/500.

Figure: 6
The Zalpaşa Area around Zalpaşa Mosque at the bottom of the green hill (model scale: 1/500).



Figure: 6

and borders) the students have chosen three main design areas (*The Green Hill Area, The Zalpaşa Area, The Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area*) in Eyüp's town center (*Figures 5-6*).

4. Discovering the Body of the Environment in One's Own Body: Phenomenological Excursions

4.1. Discovering the Subsections

The students who make many new obser-

ventions during walking tours on phenomenological excursions have divided the three main sections of Şile's and Eyüp's town center into holistic subsections due to fractures, transitions and transformations -the change of the user profile/acts/programs/the physical environment: building texture-natural input (*Figures 8-13*).



Figure: 7
The Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area around the Prophet Eyyub SULTAN Mosque and it's square (model scale: 1/500).

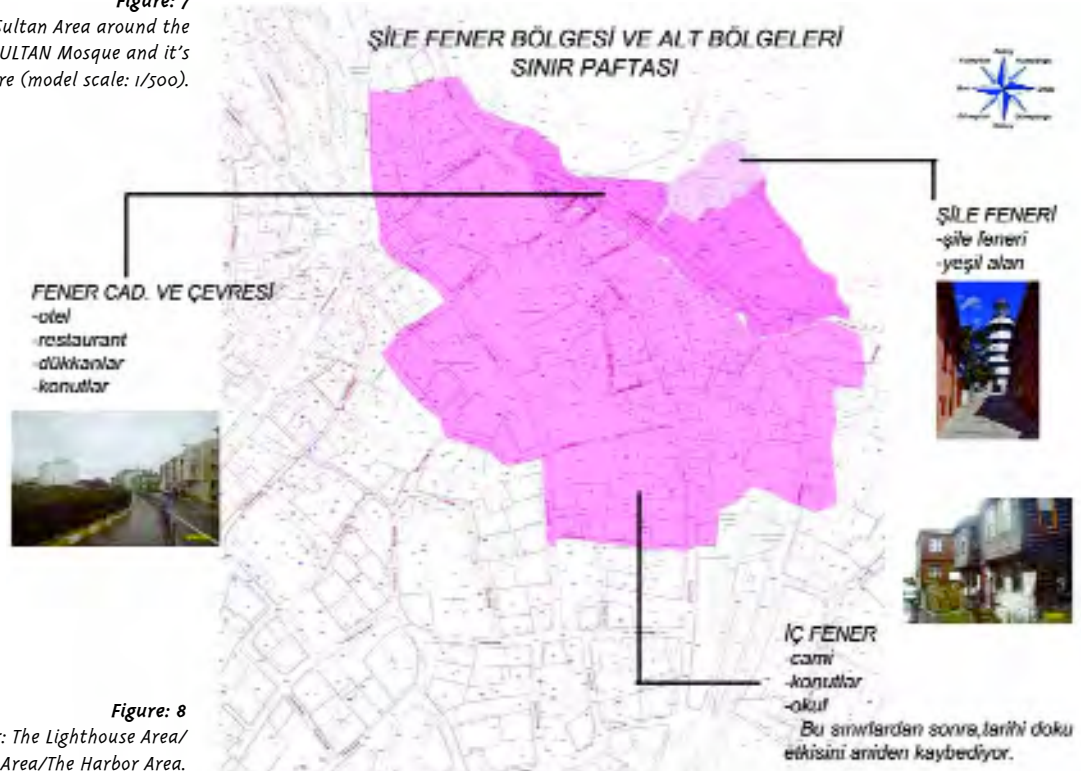


Figure: 8
Şile's town center: The Lighthouse Area/ The Central Area/The Harbor Area.



Figure: 9

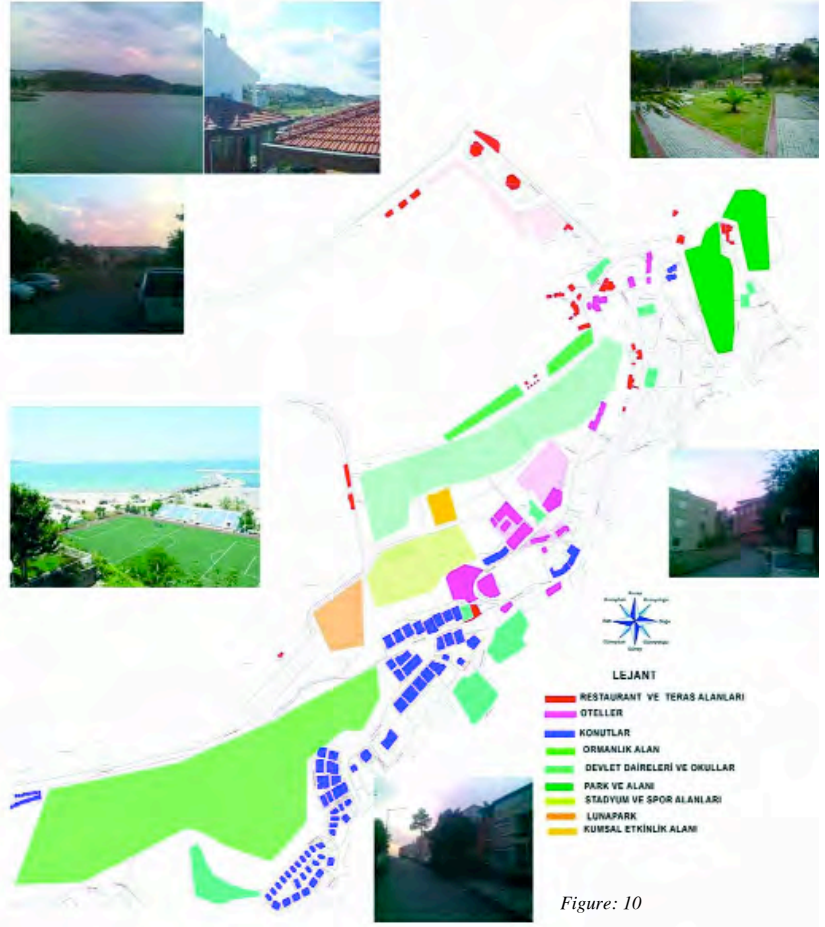


Figure: 10

4.2. Designs Inspired by Regional Resources

At the beginning the students understood the very important issue of choosing proper places for their designs merely as a matter of finding an empty place with a proper size for a suggested program. Considering the local qualities like the natural, social, historical and architectural values in main and subsections of Şile's and Eyüp's town center they learned to enjoy interpreting the everyday life; reading the texts of space. In and between the main sections and subsections the students have discovered strategic sites, lines and points which they called magical places. Inspired by the genius loci of these magical places (*magical levels and authentic elements of space*) the students found out that a correctly chosen design place carries within as a seed its proper program and

the essence of their design.

a. Magical Levels

In Şile's town center there are magical levels existing on transitional areas (*border lines and sites*) between holistic subsections. three types of magical levels³ have been discovered in the subsections of Şile's town center.

Magical Levels Historical Type

Magical levels historical type can be discovered between the subsections where changes at the physical environment according to the historical background, structure and material of buildings are noticed. Around the lighthouse area in Şile, the students discovered magical levels historical type. Creating a link

Figure: 9-10
Şile's town center: The Lighthouse Area/The Central Area/The Harbor Area.

³ Inspired by Sansot (1971) "magical level" is a term proposed by the author.



Figure: 11

Figure: 12

Figure: 11-13
Eyüp's town center:
The Green Hill Area/
The Zalpaşa Area/
The Prophet Eyyub
Sultan Area.

Figure: 14-16
The Lighthouse Area in
Şile: Creating a link
between an old narrow
street and the historical
lighthouse
(G. Atlı-S. Terlemez).



Figure: 13



Figure: 14



Figure: 15

between an old narrow street and the historical light house, they designed a new entrance and a new square for the lighthouse, new spaces for public use (a flee market, library, shops, cinemas) and short stay apartments (Figures 14-16).

Magical Levels Social Type

Magical levels social type can be discovered between the subsections where changes at the user profile, acts, programs and the features of physical environment are noticed. Around the central area in Şile, the students have discovered magical levels social type. A student designed a bridge that connects two streets on different levels and created a green space for public use (Figures 17-18). Near

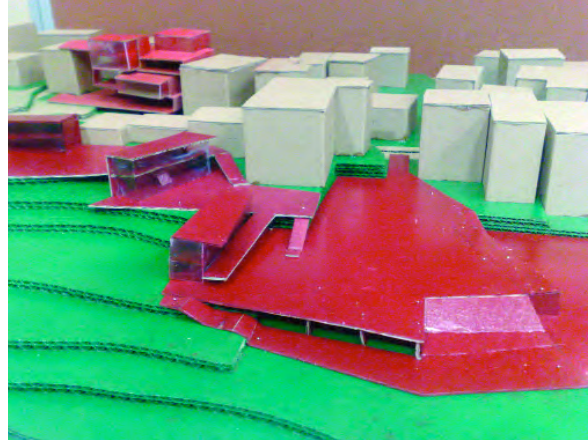


Figure: 16

programs for daily needs (shops, cafes and other service units) the student proposed a library, studios for artists and a dorm for students of the university in Şile Center.

Magical Levels Historical and Natural Type

Magical levels historical and natural type can be discovered where sensitive interfaces between the built and natural environments are noticed. Around the lighthouse area in Şile the students have discovered magical levels historical and natural type. Transforming the courtyards of adobe and wooden buildings to social squares the students discovered the green valley. Inspired by the natural input the students designed new public spaces (festival, concert and sport areas) which will liven

Figure: 17-18

The Central Area: Connecting two streets on different levels through a bridge and creating a park in between the Central Area and of Şile. (E.Yilmaz).

Figure: 19-21

The Lighthouse Area in Şile: A sensitive interface between the built and natural environments (E. Temizsoy- A. Demircioğlu).



Figure: 17



Figure: 18

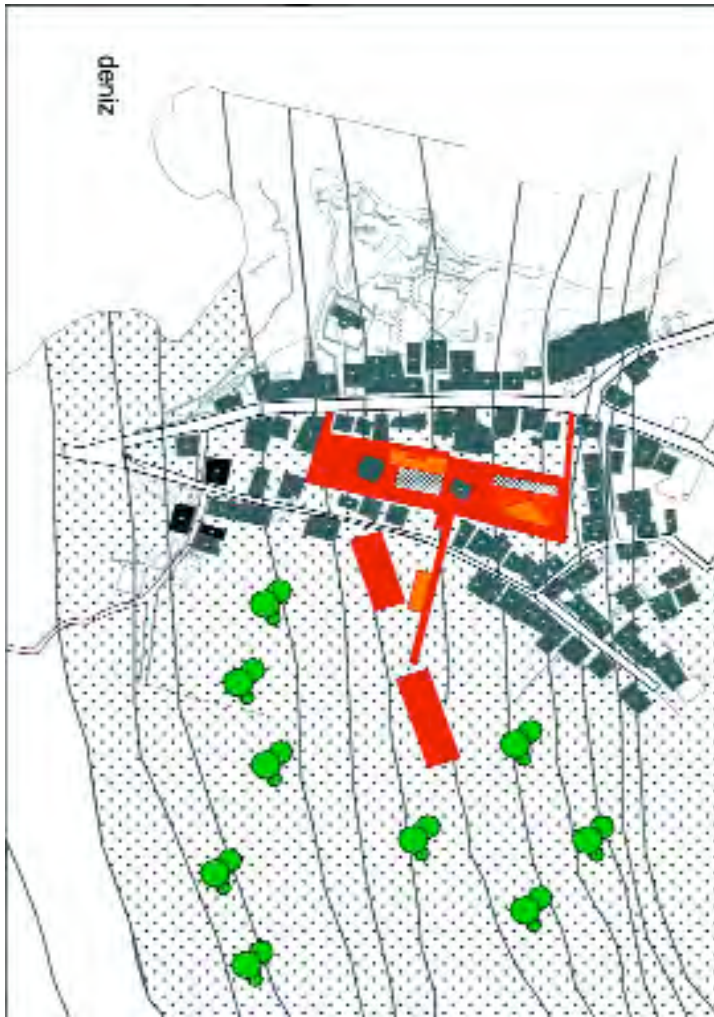


Figure: 19

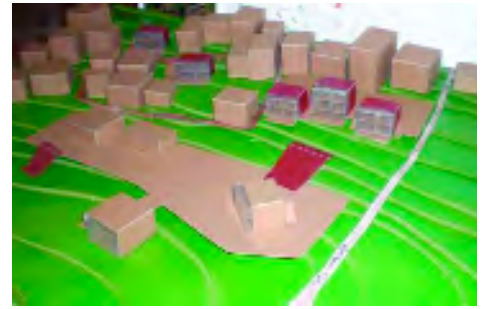


Figure 21

up the village life (Figure 19-21).

b. Authentic Elements of Space

On phenomenological excursions the students discovered authentic architectural elements in the subsections of Şile's and Eyüp's town center. Inspired by these regional elements (*stairs, intervals, courtyards, existing squares, potential places as new squares and something very special like a historical building or a natural element*) the students have chosen their individual design places and suggested mixed-use programs.

Stairs

In the central area of Şile's town center the students discovered stairs typical for sloping regions (Figures 22-23). A student



Figure: 20



Figure: 22

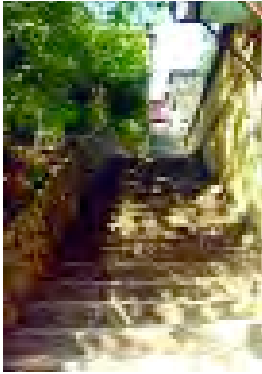


Figure: 23

proposed the re-use of these authentic elements and designed a new square on the level of the mosque and a new park with programs for public use (an art gallery, a library, shops, cafes) and short stay apartments (Figure 24).



Figure: 24



Figure: 25



Figure: 26

Intervals

Between the central area and the harbor area in Şile's town center the students discovered intervals providing unexpected sea view (Figures 25-26). A student has integrated these authentic elements of the region to his design. In this design the small square of the mosque grows out to the sea as the new social square of the village. A library, spaces for social and cultural activities, shops and cafes on terraces, short stay apartments for artists and visitors will liven up the village life (Figure 27).



Figure: 27

Figures: 22-23

The Central Area in Şile's town center: Typical stairs as authentic elements.

Figure: 24

The re-use of stairs as an entrance to a new square on the level of the mosque and to a new park (M. Tokmak).

Figures: 25-26

Typical intervals between the Central Area and the Harbor Area in Şile's town center.

Figures: 27

A small square of a mosque grows out to the sea as a new social square (F. Çevik).

Figures: 28-29

Transforming the empty courtyards in the Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area into peaceful gardens (K. F. Bayram).



Figure: 28



Figure: 29



Courtyards

The students discovered the empty courtyards typical for the Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area in Eyüp's town center. Connecting them through passages and bridges to the urban fabric the students transformed the courtyards into peaceful gardens where visitors from all over the world can rest (Figure 28-29).

Figure: 30

Opening the terminal square in Şile center to the sea (S. Incesakal).

Figure: 31

Connecting the terminal square to the renewed market place (B. Çaçar).

Existing Squares

As the most crowded and well known urban space of Şile the existing terminal

square doesn't offer a vivid public life. Enlarging and opening it to the sea through eliminating the old houses with private gardens and vivifying it with cinemas, a theater, art galleries, markets, shops, cafés, a gym and short stay apartments, the student transformed the existing terminal square into the central public square Şile's (Figure 30). Another student proposed a spatial connection between the terminal square and the market place. The design offers a center for cultural activities, ateliers and a library (Figure 31).



Figure 30

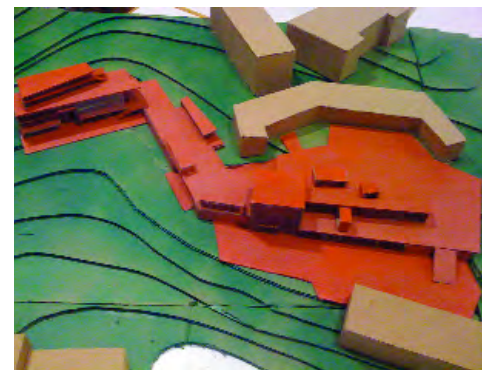


Figure 31



Figure: 32

Potential Places as New Squares

In Şile and Eyüp the students have discovered underestimated places which they transformed into center squares. Including a library, a museum and new social venues, these new squares will be serving to the dwellers and visitors. Offering residences for students and seniors the project in Şile creates a new user profile in the border areas of Şile center (Figure 32). The underestimated place discovered on the slope of the green hill in the Zalpaşa Area in Eyüp was transformed to a center square with cinemas, shops, hostels, a library and sport areas for the citizen of Eyüp (Figure 33).

Something Very Special:

A Historical Building

The project near the historical bath in the Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area in Eyüp offers new bathing units, prayer rooms and gardens to meditate.

5. Touching the Spirit of Environment and Oneself: Discovery of the Own Design Interest Through Inventing Stories

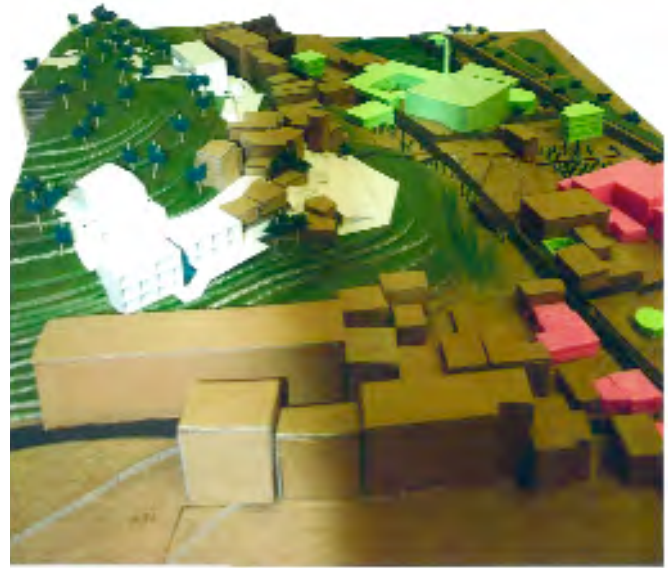


Figure: 33

Something Very Special: A Natural Element

There are five hills in Eyüp's town center. One of them is serving as a cemetery and covered with trees and white grave stones. At its bottom there is the Mosque of Prophet Eyyub Sultan build at 1500's framing the tree near which the body of Prophet Eyyub Sultan was buried. The other three hills of Eyüp, which were green at old times, are now covered with concrete 5-6 storey residential buildings from the late 20th century. The 5th hill which the students call as 'the green hill

Figure: 32

Between the Central Area and the Harbour Area in Şile's town center: Transforming of an underestimated place to a center square of the village (H. Şavlı).

Figure: 33

The Zalpaşa Area in Eyüp's town center: Discovering a space on the slope of the green hill and its potential for becoming the center square of the area (D. Bayraktar).

Figure: 34

Touching a historical bath in the Prophet Eyyub Sultan Area (Ş. Eminoğlu).



Figure 34



Figure: 35

The awareness of the historical residential area: Market place and shops for daily needs, a library, sport and play areas, green spaces on the green top of the hill (B. Aşık).

of Eyüp is partly covered with 3-4 storey historical wooden and stone buildings as residences built by local people. The green ground left at the top of the hill we owe to a special association which bought and protected it. From this green top of the hill a wonderful view opens to Golden Horn, to the town center Eyüp's, to the Prophet Eyyub Sultan Mosque and many other mosques and cemeteries. This green part of the hill and its slopes at the district side is selected as a design area by four students.

Each design is a result of a special perception by a student, which only could come to the consciousness through a personal description (*in this case in form of a writing*) of the chosen design area inside the already analyzed and embraced town center of Eyüp. The end location of each design on this green hill with a special program and their spatial details are based on one or more writings of each student and their interpretation during discussions at the studio, which were necessary for discovering the *hidden intention*⁴ and improving it.

5.1. The Awareness of the Historical Residential Area (B. Aşık)

In her writing about the area around Eyüp's 5th hill the student primarily describes "*the winding and upwards*

sloping streets covered with small cobblestones and their connections to still and empty but beautiful spaces rather than to lively squares", "*the mescid's (little mosques) and türbe's (tombs of sufi masters or famous citizens- hidden in secret gardens)*" and "*the old wooden and stone houses built by locals at early times*" of the historical residential area. Although she describes in her text the hill from all the different perspectives, we intuit that she specially gave her attention primarily to the green top which is almost at the same level with the historical residential area rather than the slopes at the district part of the hill. Does she want to see the green top of the hill as a spatial continuation of the historical residential area? Should the green top belong primarily to the owner of these residences? During the discussions, we became aware that she wants to create a connection between the green top of the hill and the residential area and design a new square for its locals of all ages with the aim to serve them. It should contain a pharmacy, cafes, tailor, market, kiosk and a library with a media section. The design has to be formed as an entrance to the green ground of the hill top which should contain parks, play grounds and sport areas with a wonderful city view (*Figure 35*).

5.2. The Discovery of the Self at the Green Top of Eyüp's 5th Hill (S. Tekşen)

To find "*his Eyüp*" the student follows Mr. Eyüp; the hero of his own story who discovers Eyüp's secrets during a three day trip in form of three stories. At the rainy last day of his journey Mr. Eyüp finds himself "*at a green top of one hill*" looking at the mosque of Prophet Eyyub without knowing how and when he got there. Not he but the hill itself should have called him there he thought. Looking at other mosques, mescid's and türbe's below and

⁴ Inspired by Bachelard (1992) "*hidden intention*" is a term proposed by the author.

at the graves which are very often met in this district, Mr. Eyüp thought about the mysteries of life, about Prophet Eyyub and the big sufis and about the lack of joy in his personal life. Suddenly he saw a small white paper on the muddy ground. He read loudly the words on it: “*In Eyüp you’ll find yourself*”. “*Now I intend to share a truth that I experienced here on my own with others*” he said and encouraged for tomorrow he took his way back home.

Through his own stories the student begun to imagine a program and its spatial details. He suggests half buried spaces for praying, reading about the sufi masters and listening music. Located only on the green ground of the hill top, these units shouldn’t be seen easily from the environ. Each of these semi hidden units provides a special view when the visitors climb the stairs upwards while they leave them. One is oriented to Prophet Eyyub Sultan Mosque, another to the view of Istanbul and Golden Horn and another only to the trees and towards the sky and another again to the Kaaba at Mecca. If someone doesn’t want to look at anything but only meditate or rest, he can sit or lay down on the wooden steps and can look at the changing ornaments of lights above the entrances of each units. To discover the way of these hidden units of contemplation the visitors should let themselves called and oriented by the green top of the hill just like Mr. Eyüp did or they will hear about their being from another, who already has done the way before (Figure 36).

5.3. An Invitation for All the Citizens of the World: A Museum of World’s Religions (A. Kalbur)

Differing from the description above, when describing the hill and the area around it the student uses no words about



Figure: 36
The discovery of the self at the green top of Eyüp’s 5th hill (S. Tekşen).

the historical residential area as if it doesn’t exist for him. In following discussions in the workshop, he became aware of this and argued that he felt himself always very squeezed in this residential area. He describes the green slope of the hill from the district side below and the view to city and the Golden Horn from the green top of the hill. The hill has much value for him to belong to this old residential area and should serve primarily to the citizens and tourists from all over the world. He therefore has chosen the district side of the hill as his design location which is opening to the city and distanced itself from the residential area.

As expected he offers an universal program such as a museum for the world’s religions. For an effective view for the visitors of the museum at the bottom of the hill he uses towers as inviting design elements at the green top of the hill. The openings of these towers don’t have any thermic borders such as windows or doors so that the music of different religions spread out of them and invite the visitors as well as birds, rain and wind. There is also a closed space of praying at each of these towers and a closed museum space under the ground (Figure 37).

5.4. From a Lonely Hill to a Garden with a Stairway to Heaven (S. Yıldız)

The story begins in a bus on the bridge

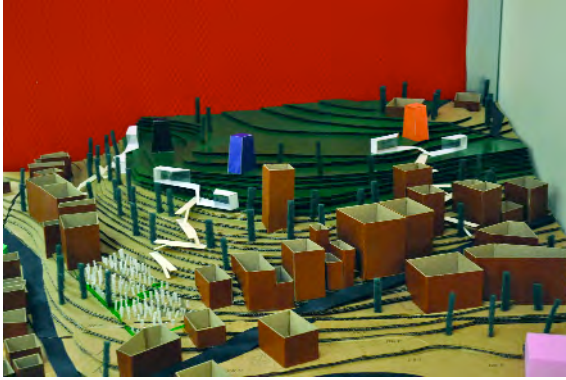


Figure: 37

Figure: 37
An invitation for all the citizens of the world: The world's museum of religions (A. Kalbur).

Figure: 38
From a lonely hill to a garden with a stairway to heaven for observing the daily life and meditation about it: Cafes, shops and flower gardens (S. Yıldız).



Figure: 38

over Golden Horn at night from where the student describes the green hill as “a black hole” in between the lights of the city. Lonely and abandoned probably nobody is aware of its existence.”*Even the locals of the historical residential area don't know how to get to the green top of the hill. The hero of the story decides to climb to it at a sunny afternoon, after he saw it the night before from the bus. “On its green ground he sat and looked to the lively district below, then to the mosques and at last to the hill covered with white gravestones and trees growing through them, giving an impression of a snowy day. Isn't it a summary of life, he asks himself. Am I a baby, sitting innocently on this green grounded top of this silent hill where the birds are singing and some colorful flowers sending their perfumes? And below is the life of youth; a city with its noisy and quick energy. And then the years bring a question to the conciseness: Why all this? The man left his youth behind begins to search for answers. He visits mosques and masters. And where is his next station if not the snowed hill across?”*

At the following stories the student improved the idea to find an encouraging answer to the hill across. At the district side on the slope of the hill, he offers social programs for the city life such as library, cafes, shops, art galleries. If the visitors climb up to the green hilltop, they reach colorful gardens hanged in different levels of a big steel frame. This frame will be lightened up at its certain points at night, so that pink stars will visit the hill as its new friends. Visitors wanting to contemplate in between the hanged gar-

dens can also climb a stairway and look to a city life and the hill across and think about innocence, youth and life, about mortality and about immortality (Figure 38).

6. Conclusion

Discovering “magical levels” and “authentic elements” on excursions the students become aware of the poetry of everyday life and suggested programs for activating the social life, which can be classified as:

a. Activities Inspired by Regional Resources:

Programs that will be suggested by the designer through making use of natural resources (*festivals/sport areas/rehabilitation centers/...*) and inspired by the economic activities of the local people (*agriculture/livestock breeding/textile manufacturing/...*) will provide an opportunity to connect the city dwellers and visitors (*alternative tourism*) with different aspects of life. Four studies from the design studio can be given as samples.

- A historical residential area and a natural environment: Market place and shops for daily needs, a library, sport and play areas, green spaces (Figure 35).

- A historical residential area and a natural environment: Transforming the courtyards of adobe and wooden buildings to social squares and discovering its border to a green valley for new uses like festivals and concerts (Figure 19-21).

- A natural element in the city: A flower garden with a stairway to heaven for observing the daily life and meditation about it on the green top of the hill (Figure 38).
- A natural element in the city: A sport center for the health of citizens (Figure 33).

b. For Suggesting Programs, needed for a full scale social service two studies from the design studio can be given as samples.

- Peaceful gardens for resting with touristic facilities for the visitors from all over the world (Figures 28-29).
- A new center square with cinema/shops/ hostels and library (Figure 33).

c. Creating a Special User Profile:

To create or to strengthen a user profile like students through new or already existing schools, artists through offering new performance spaces and/or ateliers for educating the citizen in art etc., children through new kinder gardens, animals through farms and zoos etc. will help attract to social life of a region. Two studies from the design studio can be given as samples.

- A dorm for students of a new established university (Figure 17-18).
- Residences for students and seniors (Figure 32).

The earth and living spaces on it are sources of inspiration for designers and artists due to their authentic natural (including the topographical qualities) and social values. Spaces that have been designed in a way that promote the awareness of the contact between the built environment and the earth not only increase the quality of life but also lead the inhabitants to know the region better, thus inducing them to take interest in and love the region. In

living spaces where there is an awareness of the earth, architecture and nature unite while acts and physical features constituting the living space acquire more variety. While designing spaces regional resources like cultural and natural richness should be given special attention to. The history of the region, the local peoples and their activities might provide designers and students with inspiration. The already invented and always new to be invented methods, through which the mental and emotional grasping of a region as a quantitative and qualitative whole can be reached, will encourage the students to read the poetic details in daily life, help them gain the ability to discover places and programs of strategic importance for the settlement and to interpret them through their own individual design●

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