

# ARTEFAK TE DES ENT WERFENS

Skizzieren, Zeichnen, Skripten,  
Modellieren

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# Drawing & Writing Care

*Social agendas of transformation and renovation projects place new demands on architects' work to engage questions of site-bound use. To this matter, I demonstrate architectural ways of knowing users' appreciation and care in the context of three Scandinavian large-scale housing estates from 1960-70s. This essay specifically concerns architectural drawing and writing techniques that are speculatively combined to reinterpret relationships between material and people's daily life.<sup>1</sup>*

## Necessary Contradictions

Catalogue no L.3.2 – LÅS / LOCK: "No, I don't lock [the front door] during daytime. They [the housing association] have started to lock [the street door...], because they had a lot of people inside the tower block. Drug users and other people who smoked, and there were burglaries and things like that. So, they have locked the doors. The problem is that they have just locked. Then what happens? The children stand outside screaming, 'Mamma', at the seventh floor. If you have a magnet or such thing to push, 'Mamma, can you open?' Nothing like that. They just lock... So, my house is now toilet for all the children... They run to me

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank: Netzwerk Architekturwissenschaft's editors and exhibition team for valuable reading and editing advice; residents for their engagement, Angela Spencer (assisting CAD-drawing and survey), Elle Hagar Lörinc, Eva Nordberg, Mikael Stenström and Josephine Howard (assisting transcription and translation), Dreyers Fond, Arkitektforeningen and Clara Lachmanns Stiftelse (funding).



and pee. I don't mind, they can pee at my place, all the children".<sup>2</sup> Mrs N describes how she changed one of her family's most private spaces, the bathroom, into a common facility for some of the children at Lindängen, a Swedish *Million Programme* housing estate on the outskirts of Malmö. By inviting the children to freely walk in and out of her ground floor flat, Mrs N creatively blends the boundaries of architectural spaces that are otherwise characteristic of the Nordic welfare states' separation of private and public space.

In the context of ongoing transformation and renovation of post WW2 large-scale housing estates, there continue to be needs and demands to deepen knowledge of how to better link bottom-up adaptations and re-production of space over time such as Mrs N's and the contradictory top-down production of space by planning professionals. The great achievements of the 20th century welfare states' planning and architecture, e.g. the development of industrialised and standardised housing for all, partly came about due to the era's major systematisation of the building industry. However, these technocratic practices and systems operate in a closed circuit that does not include residents' varied and site-bound contributions to the production of space. Instead, this essay speculatively demonstrates ethnographic-architectural ways of knowing aligned both to residents' site-bound and unpredictable creation of lived space and to the profession's technocratic frameworks.<sup>3</sup> I embrace these necessary contradictions by inscribing ethnographic information into architectural drawing and writing.

2 Interview with Mrs N and her family in 2011. Quote published in author's PhD dissertation. Heidi Svenningsen Kajita: *Fragile Potentials in the Big Plans – Spatial and material dimensions of Post WW2 large-scale housing in use*. The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation, Copenhagen 2016. Chapter 9, p. 50 (author's translation). Author's PhD project was funded by Interreg IV-A Sound Settlements and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation. The research was carried out in partnership with

Lund's University, ISU Malmö University, SBI Aalborg University and Albertslund, Helsingborg and Malmö local authorities.

3 See frameworks for architectural practice, e.g. *Danskeark Service Descriptions/ Ydelsesbeskrivelse: byggeri og planlægning* 2018, <https://www.danskeark.dk/content/ydelsesbeskrivelse-byggeri-og-planlaegning>; 'bips'- specification tools: <https://molio.dk/bips/>; and *RIBA Plan of Work*, 2013: [www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/Practice/RIBA-PlanofWork2013Overview.pdf](http://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/Practice/RIBA-PlanofWork2013Overview.pdf). (January 2019).



## Three Estates, Twelve Households and Six Courtyards

The interpretative method presented here was employed in a case-study of three Scandinavian large-scale housing estates: Albertslund Syd (DK), Drottninghög (SE) and Lindängen (SE).<sup>4</sup> Built in the 1960-70s, these estates formed part of the Öresund region's functional city planning. In short, the three estates exemplify different housing typologies of low-, medium-, and high-rise housing as well as different large-scale concrete panel building technologies of the time. As exemplars of the Swedish *Million Programme* and the Danish *Montagecirkulære* (legislation for prefabricated housing), these estates were designed to offer spacious flats; easy access to public transport; shops; schools; libraries; recreational areas etc.

In Scandinavia, these estates were originally envisioned as affordable rented accommodation for middle-class families. Over time the demographics have changed and today the international population (as a resident inspiringly termed new Swedes) still includes nuclear middle-class families, but more so a large number of elderly people many of whom have lived in the estates since they were first built; as well as a high percentage of single women/men with or without children.<sup>5</sup>

### Material Situations

The empirical material for this study was generated during ethnography inspired fieldwork across the three estates carried out between 2010–2015. I conducted personal, semi-structured interviews with twelve residents in their homes and on walks in the estates. The informants were selected to represent the demographic makeup described above and for their active engagement

4 This research was first presented in author's PhD dissertation. Kajita 2016 (note 2).

5 Demographic information refers to specific surveys of the three estates and overall surveys of social housing in Denmark and Sweden; e.g. Ellen Højgaard Jensen: *Historien om de udsatte boligområder*. In: *Byplan 3* (2011), pp. 5–7.

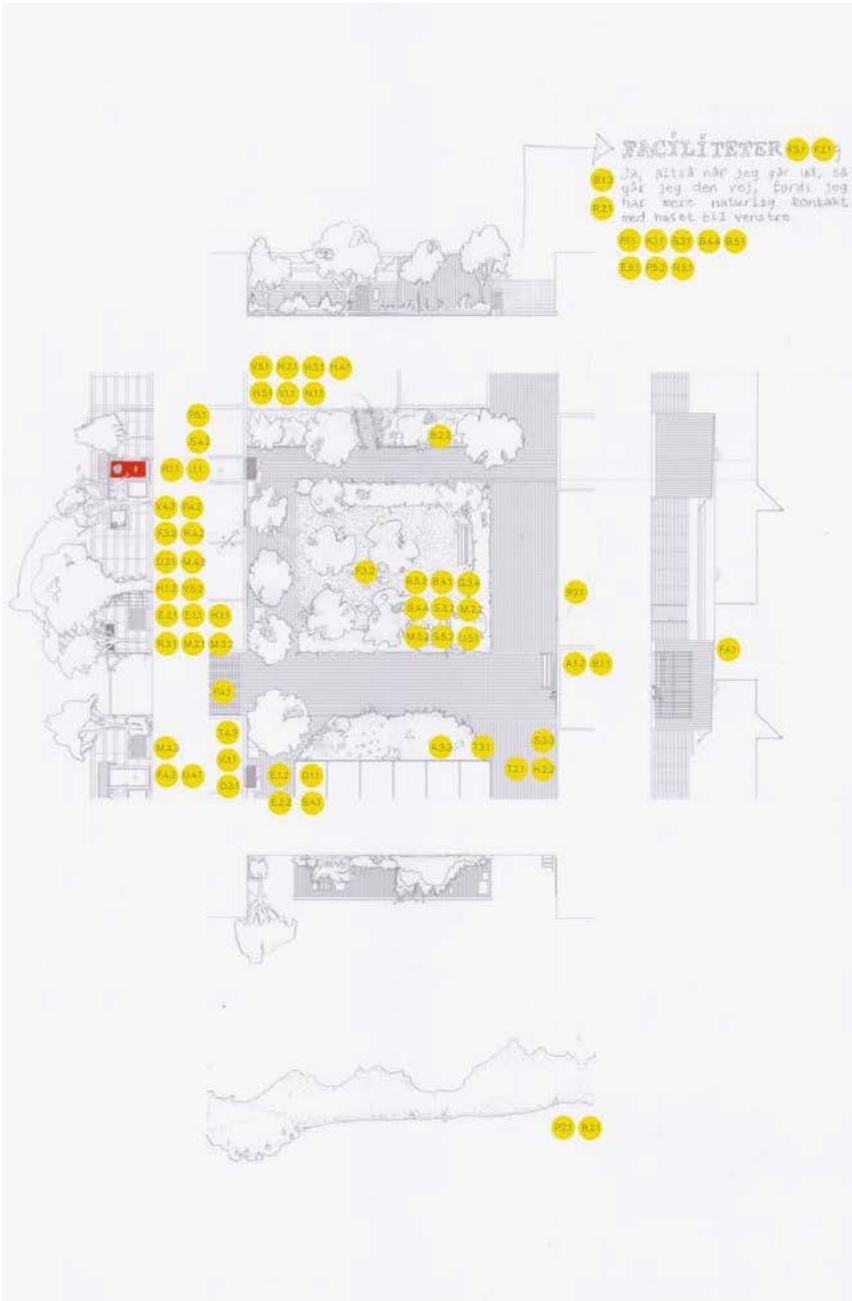


in resident associations or other community work. Other fieldwork activities both on and off the sites included participant observation in planners' workshops, meetings and dialogues; archival studies; time spent on the estates using the local shops and playing in the playground with my children; walking and talking to passers-by; as well as conducting photographic and measured surveys that led to informal conversations with residents. In the interviews, I asked residents to share stories about their everyday appreciation and care for their homes and surroundings such as changes they have made to their homes, gardens, immediate surroundings and even to the estates at large over time to fit their ways of living.

Residents described tactile and intimate situations predominantly occurring along building perimeters, where interior spaces meet the open shared spaces between buildings. Following these descriptions, I conducted a drawn, formal analysis of six spaces – two in each estate (Fig. 1.1–1.6). The material situations that I found – say flowers planted in front gardens that both keep nosy neighbours at a distance and invite playful light-fingered children up close, or enclosed balconies that are used as spare bedrooms – are not typically played out in canonical representations of these housing estates. Rather, the typical helicopter view tends to result in depictions of monotonous spaces at the most signified by functions such as sport, play or shopping. Instead, I chose to frame these spaces as clearly delimited courtyard spaces, specifically using techniques that invite investigations of detailed material articulations.

### The Creative User and Care Ethics in Architectural Practice

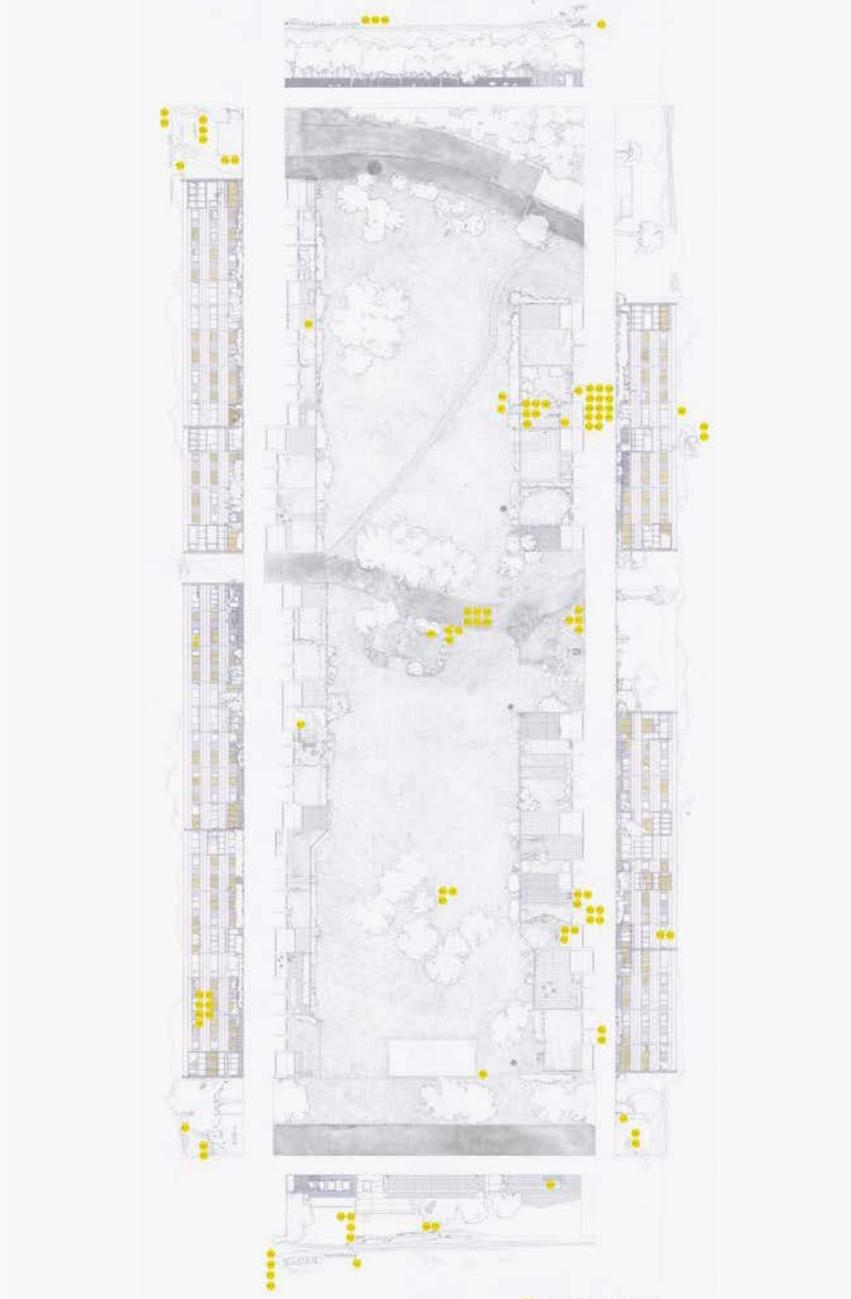
The residents rent their flats and have limited rights to use. Because of this, I asked into forms of appropriation that do not only concern invasive constructional or physical adaptation, but also adaptations that come about from bodily, mental or conceptual use. These varied forms of use refer to architectural theoretician Jonathan Hill's concept of 'creative use', that may be



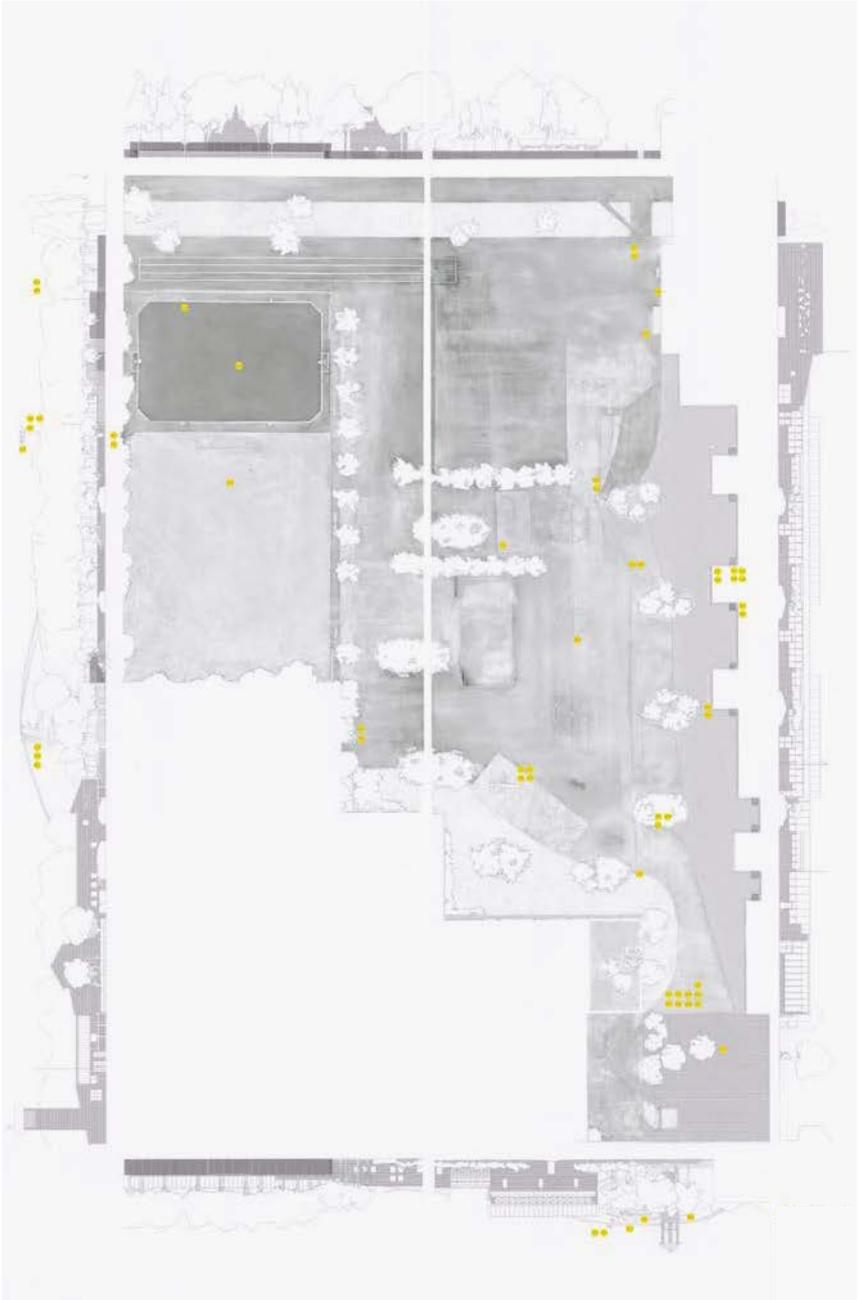
● Fig. 1.1: Adams' place, Albertslund Syd: Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, 2016



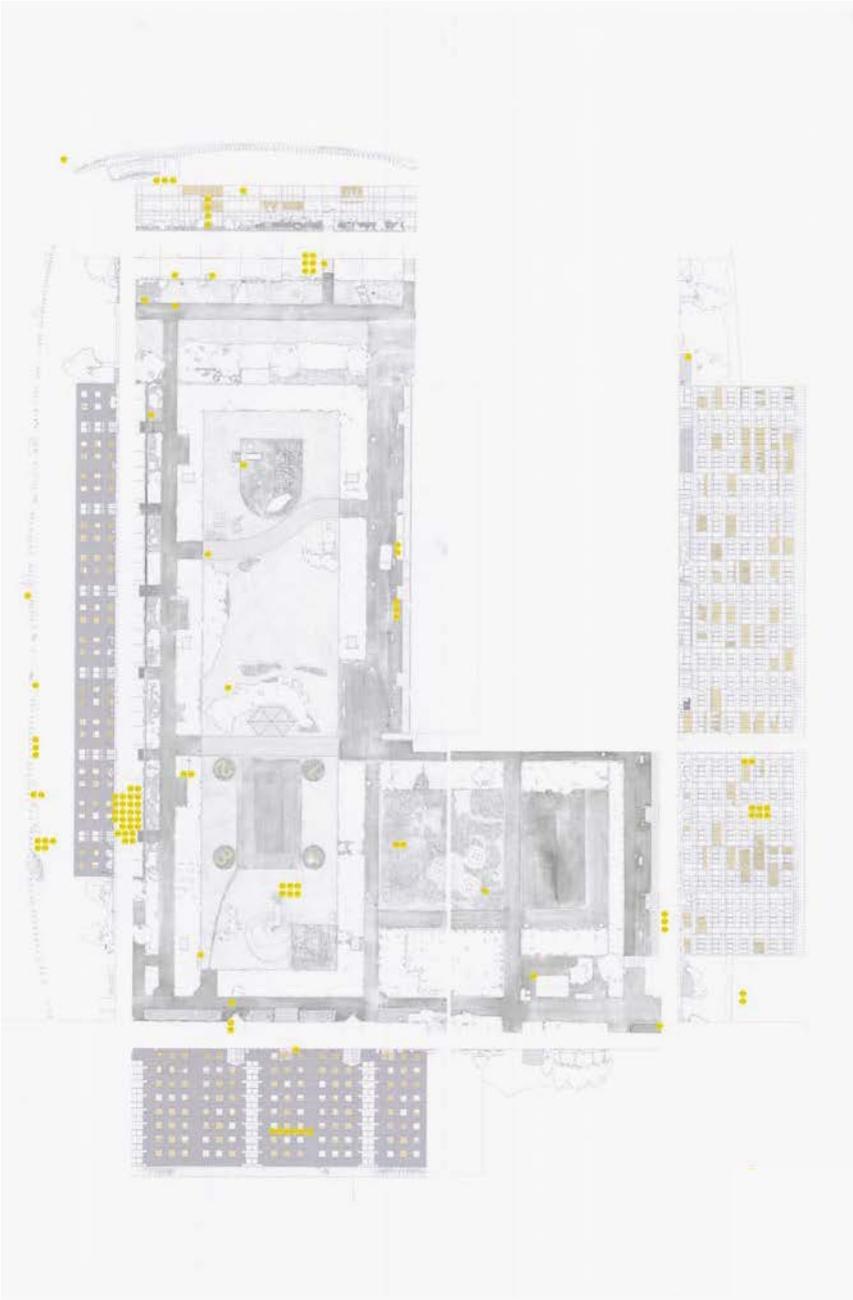
● Fig. 1.2: Recycling station, Albertslund Syd: Heidi Svenningsen Kajjita, 2016



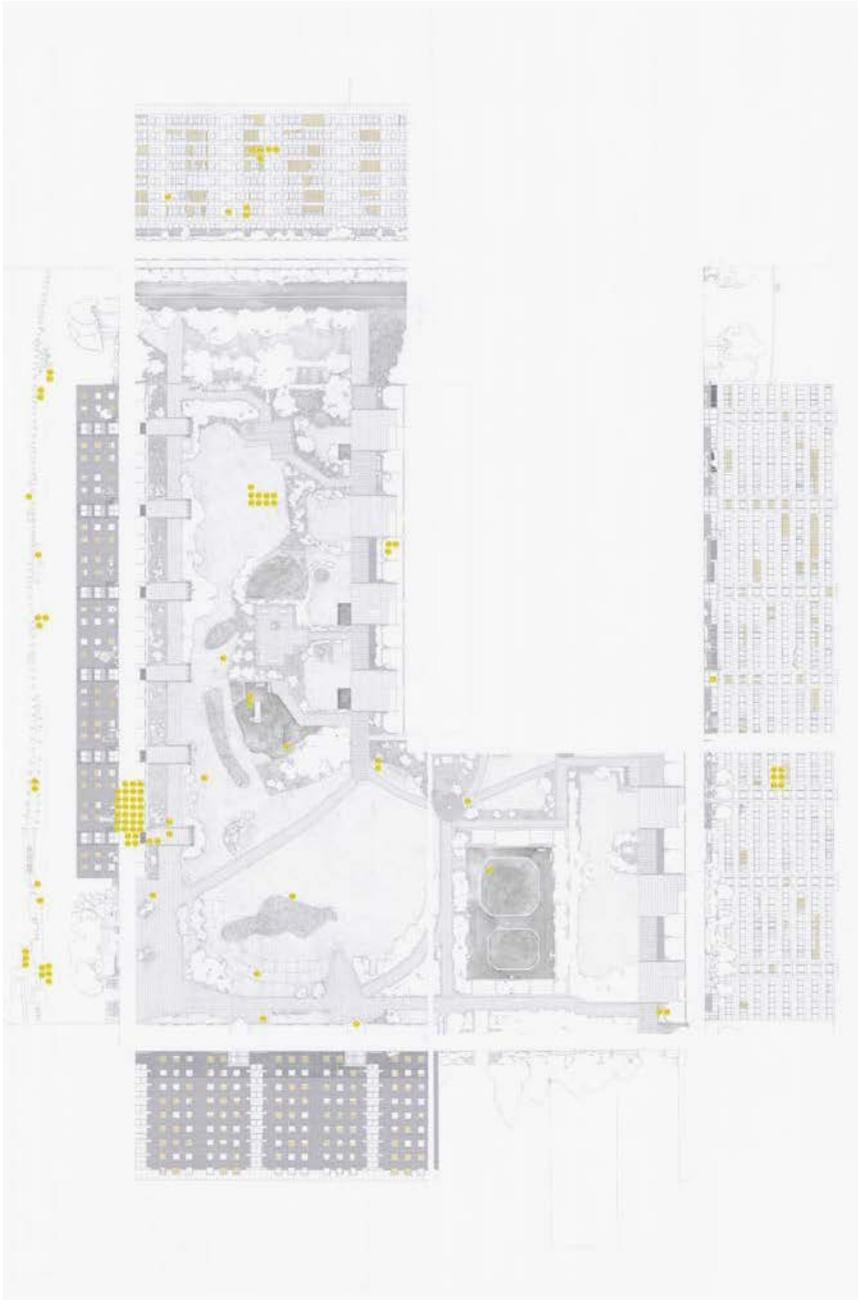
● Fig. 1.3: Residential courtyard, Drottninghög: Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, 2016



● Fig. 1.4: Schoolyard, Drottninghög: Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, 2016



● Fig. 1.5: Residential courtyard, Stena, Lindängen: Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, 2016



● Fig. 1.6: Residential courtyard, Wilhem, Lindängen: Heidi Svenningsen Kajita, 2016



described as a form of critical agency challenging the architect's authority in line with Henri Lefebvre's writings on the production of space.<sup>6</sup> Hill defines the five categories of creative use as follows: "1. Mental; a change in understanding, such as renaming a space or associating it with a particular memory; 2. bodily, a movement or series of movements, independent of or in juxtaposition to a space, such as a picnic in a bathroom; 3. physical, a rearrangement of a space or the objects within it, such as locking a door; 4. constructional, a fabrication of a new space or a physical modification of an existing form, space or object, such as removing the lock from a door; 5. conceptual, a use, form, space or object intended to be constructed, such as a door".<sup>7</sup>

Whilst creative use may involve destructive intentions, I set out to search for potentials to inform better futures in the midst of an opportunistic team of planners, developers, politicians etc. That being the case, I underpin the investigations of creative use with the notion of 'care'. I borrow this from feminist ethic theory<sup>8</sup> that has shown relational and caring acts to "maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' not to provide tabula-rasa ideal alternatives, but rather with the purpose of dynamically re-configuring a world that we can live in as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to

6 Jonathan Hill: *Actions of Architecture: Architects and Creative Users*. London 2003. See also: Kenny Cupers: *Use Matters: An Alternative History of Architecture*. London 2013; Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till: *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*. London 2011; Henri Lefebvre: *The Production of Space*. Malden, Mass. 2012; Henri Lefebvre, Robert Bononno, Neil Smith: *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis, Minn. 2003; Mary McLeod: *Everyday and 'Other' Spaces in Architecture and Feminism*, Debra Coleman, Elizabeth Danze and Carol Henderson (eds.): *Architecture and Feminism*. New York 1996, pp. 1–37.

7 Hill 2003 (note 6), p. 88.

8 Carol Gilligan: *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, Mass. 1996. See also: Selma Sevenhuijsen: *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care: Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality, and Politics*. London 1998; Kim Trogal: *Affective Urban Practices*. Mphil Upgrade Paper, Sheffield 2009 and: *Caring: Making commons, making connections*. In: Doina Petrescu, Kim Trogal (eds.): *The Social (Re) Production of Architecture. Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*. London 2017, pp. 159–174.; Joan C. Tronto: *Who Cares? How to reshape a democratic politics*. Ithaca 2015; Joan C. Tronto: *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York 1993 and: *An ethic of care*. In: Ann E. Cudd, Robin O. Andreasen (eds.): *Feminist theory: a philosophical anthology*. Massachusetts 2005, pp. 251–263.



interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web”.<sup>9</sup> So, my proposal for a caring methodology is not an alternative model, but concerns instead knowledge that contributes to strengthen architects’ possibilities to include users’ caring and create wants and desires in their mainstream practice.

The architect is a user of normative design manuals, drawing templates, specifications, local development plans, architectural specifications, time schedules, building regulations and so forth, and through these formats s/he conforms to the ethos of certainty that dominate construction industry today. But norms and standards also limit her/ his gaze accordingly. To expand this gaze to include caring creative use, I employ Joan C. Tronto’s and Bernice Fisher’s relational care ethics defined as phases of attentiveness, competence, responsibility and responsiveness<sup>10</sup> to architects’ line of operations. Tronto’s introduction of a fifth phase, namely “caring with”, imagines “the entire polity of citizens engaged in a lifetime of commitment to and benefiting from these principles”.<sup>11</sup> In line herewith, my proposal for ‘caring with creative use’ is a new democratic ideal; I question ways for the architectural profession to include caring acts; not as external parameters in designated participatory work stages or reception studies, but integral to its core operational modes of practice.

To sum up, 1. I bring attention to caring, creative use in the production of space – that is users’ bottom-up acts for re-configuring space; simply by appreciating it and/or changing its’ meaning or enhancing it, say through maintenance, repair or decoration; and 2. for the purpose of an architectural interpretation of this caring creative use, I employ care ethics to architectural operations, namely drawing and writing, explained further in the following.

9 Tronto 1993 (note 8), p. 103.

10 Tronto 2015 (note 8), p. 7-9.

11 Ebd. (note 8), p. 14.



## Drawing and Writing Care

The housing sector has historically been a major player in advancing agile and efficient design processes. Architects' tools are developed and refined predominantly for ease of collaboration within the construction industry. It is through formats such as the material specification and drawings that architects work out the many prescriptions that form basis for construction: continuity of insulation, sustainability engineering, airtightness, cost management etc. These tools hold architects legally and ethically responsible. But, while a number of long-term parameters may be accounted for in such systems engineered for calculable matters – including needs and functions – the spontaneous, imaginative and caring aspects of use are under-appreciated (if included at all). Just the same, I put my trust in this under-appreciated but necessary contradiction between architects' care for users and places and the certain ethos of architectural tools.

Firstly, the shown architectural drawings measure up to 180 x 230 cm at scale 1:100. Their role in the study was to explore geometry, techniques, measurements, textures and other material parameters of objects, elements, surfaces, volumes and vegetation. These registrations are not exhaustive. That would be impossible. For example, 'garden' and 'curtains' have been registered fully in the case of Drottninghög and Lindängen but not in Albertslund Syd. The objective has been to bring about attentiveness to subtle and nuanced material situations articulated through what people see, sense, do and imagine in reference to the specification document (marked on the drawings by the yellow notes). Through the specific competences of architectural drawing and writing we can delimit the responsibilities that are to be met in each situation.

The drawings employ 'the Developed Surface' technique as termed by architectural historian Robin Evans.<sup>12</sup> The main promise of this late 18th century drawing technique, where elevations are

<sup>12</sup> Robin Evans: *Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays*. London 2003.



folded out from the plan, is that it directs the draughts person to focus on the exposed walls, floors and ceilings. Whilst this framing, steers the eye away from e.g. the depth of space, it lays out room on the paper for detailing surfaces. In Evans words: “Drapes, furnishings, fittings, wall coverings, plasterwork, floor and carpet all beg to be drawn. They are not extra to be added after the essential architectural shell has been constructed, not foreign items to be imported into a readymade cavity. They are the things that the developed surface invites the draughtsman to describe”.<sup>13</sup>

The point in adopting the developed surface as interpretative technique is in this case to focus on the differentiations of these otherwise equal spaces between buildings. When drawing, my attention was guided to the courtyards’ edges that many residents had highlighted as places they had cared for and socialised in. In the process, I was quite literally listening to and transcribing the recorded interviews, then drawing and setting out dimensions, notating vegetation and furniture, rendering surfaces and so forth, then transcribing, then drawing, writing, drawing etc. Architectural drawing is by normative definitions tied to static and measurable architectural space.<sup>14</sup> The hybrid act of drawing and writing demonstrated here surpass this definition by charging the drawn lines beyond their formalist value and by recollecting the ‘invisible’ information of appreciation and care uncovered through the interviews.<sup>15</sup>

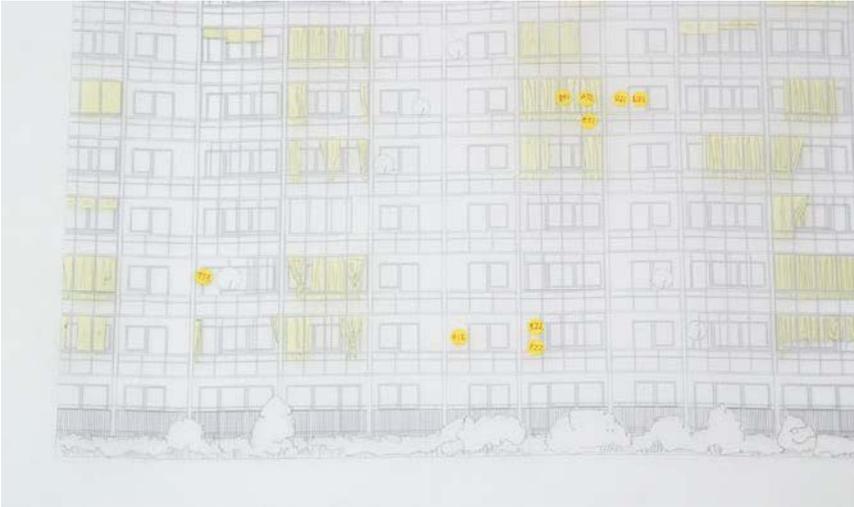
Secondly, the architectural specification has over centuries been used to specify processes, performance, visual intent, products and species etc. for the prescription of building works.<sup>16</sup> In some

13 Ibid., p. 209.

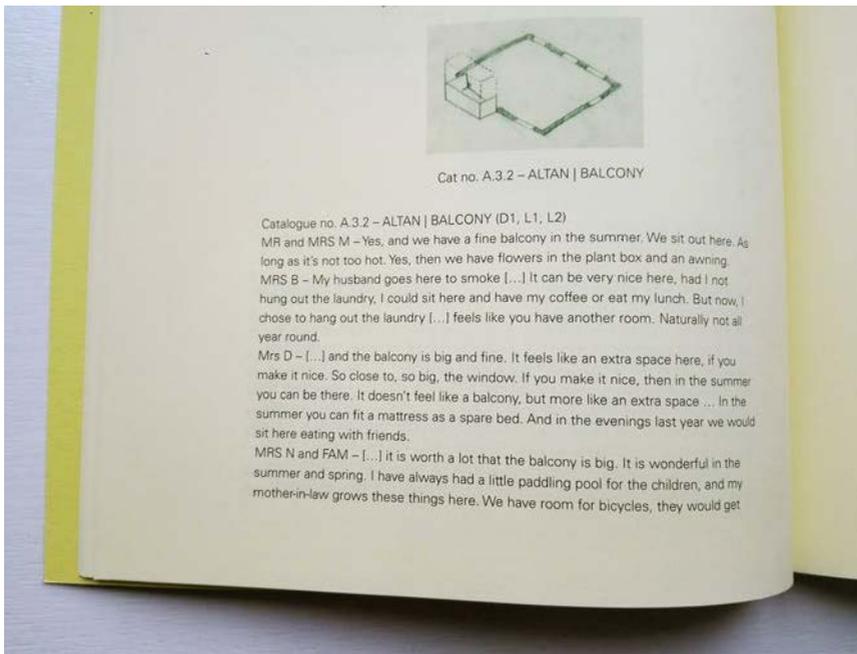
14 For an excellent critique of normative technocratic drawing see: Kathrine Shonfield: *Walls Have Feelings*. London 2000.

15 This essay reiterates my argument for architectural tactics as means for situated knowledge in Heidi Svenningsen Kajita: *Use Matters in Architectural Production*. In: Katrine Lotz et al. (eds.): *Forming Welfare*. Copenhagen 2017, pp. 308–322.

16 Katie Lloyd Thomas: “Of Their Several Kinds”: Forms of Clause in the Architectural Specification. In: *ARQ* 16 (2012), pp. 229–237. And Katie Lloyd Thomas, Tilo Amhoff: *Writing Work: Changing Practices of Architectural Specification*. In: Peggy Deamer (ed.): *The Architect as Worker. Immaterial Labor, the Creative Class, and the Politics of Design*. London, New York 2015, pp. 121–143.



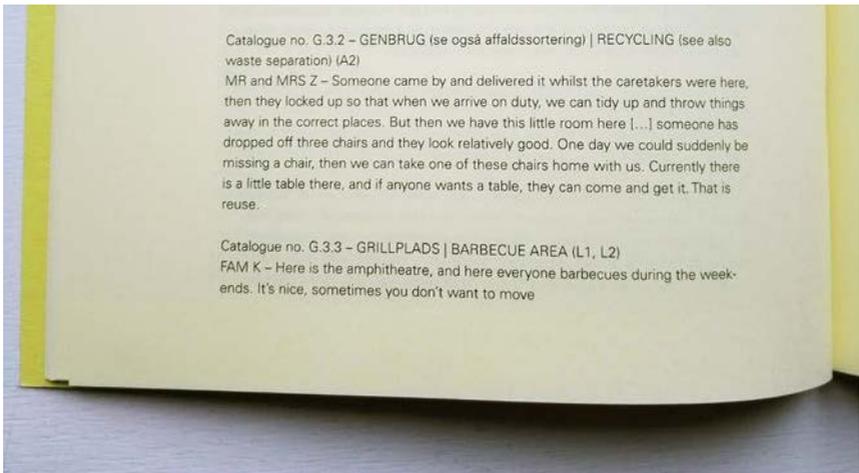
● Fig. 2.a: Drawn balcony



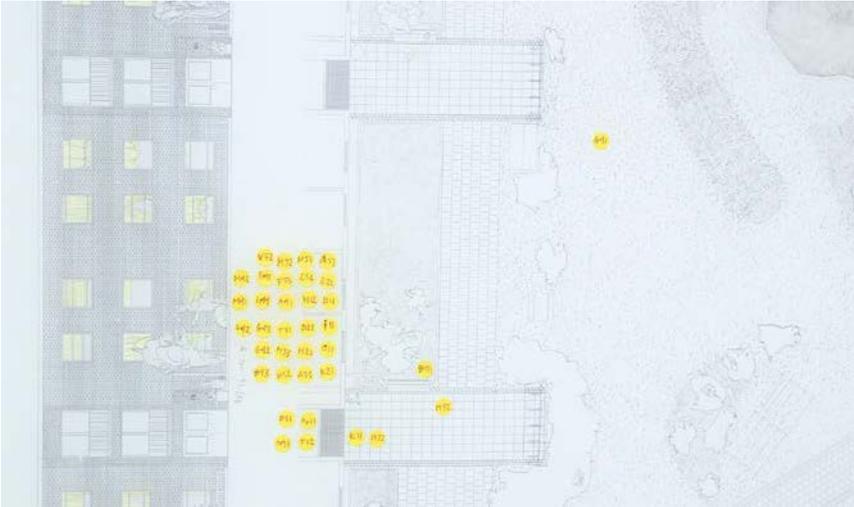
● Fig. 2.b: Specified balcony



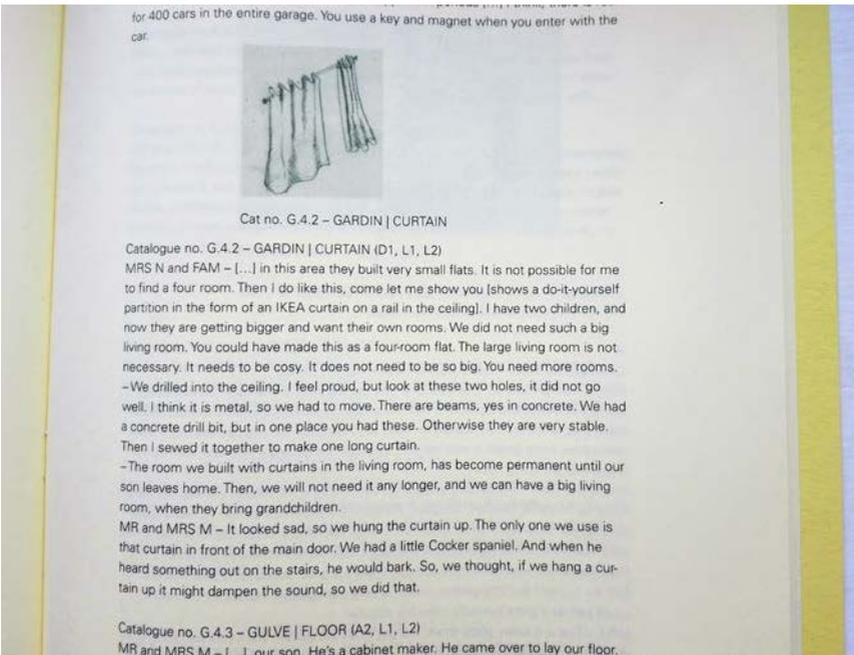
● Fig. 3.a: Drawn re-use



● Fig. 3.b: Specified re-use



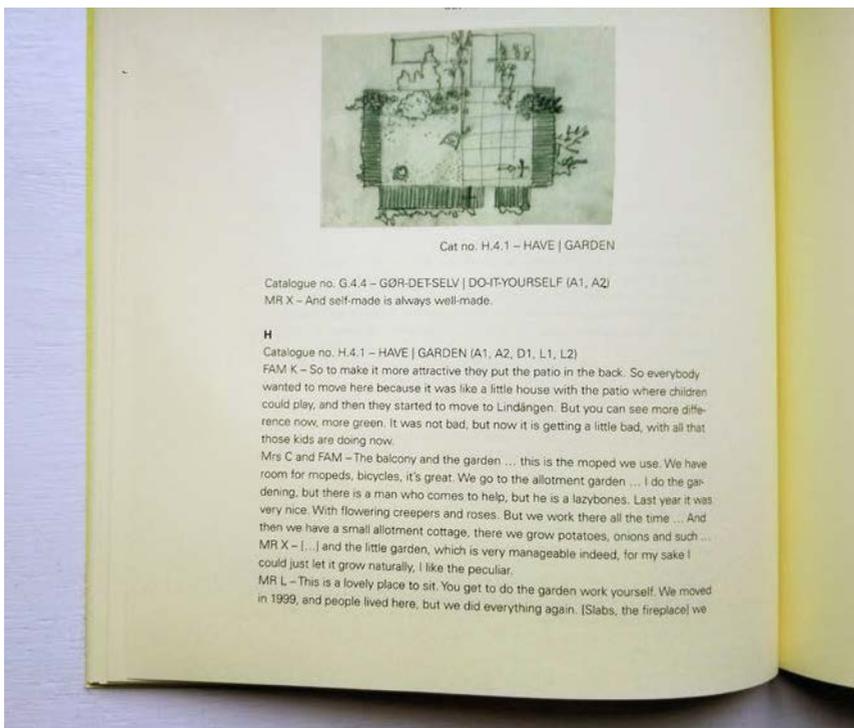
● Fig. 4.a: Drawn curtain



● Fig. 4.b: Specified curtain



● Fig. 5.a: Drawn garden



● Fig. 5.b: Specified garden



(rare) instances, this includes specifying for use or in reference to use e.g. when including re-used elements or D.I.Y. processes in design. Learning from these exceptions, I speculatively translated quotes from interviews into the confined format of the architectural specification in the document entitled *Material Specification of Big Plans in Use*<sup>17</sup> (see Fig. 2.1.a–2.4.b). Instead of filing entries according to the work by trade as the norm prescribes,<sup>18</sup> this document is structured according to Hill's creative use categories asserting the user as a co-producer of space. Descriptions of processes of use, that are carefully comprised from the lengthy interviews into intense snap shots, can in this format pragmatically be cross-referenced to drawings. As such, notions of appreciation and care are considered integral concerns to building parts and material. I do not mean to reduce the depth and complexity of the ethnographic gaze by inserting specific, nuanced and site-bound information into the generic mode of architectural operations (as such this method is not to be seen in isolation of the broader fieldwork research). Instead, I see the particular extracted information as means to trigger room for care in the current normative standards for specifications. And, I see possibilities in ethnographic information taking on a new role as specification notes for future plans.

The introduction of care and appreciation into this technical framework triggers a material thinking that is not limited to technological guaranties but cares for bodily, imaginative and relational making of space by users over time. As the illustrations exemplify, I discover numerous personally charged situations that through attentiveness, competence, responsibility and responsiveness may strengthen the already established social and physical realms. Caring creative practices, such as Mrs N's, may be seen as a subtle form of activism that has potential to inflict systemic change from below. In turn caring architectural practice can respond to such meaningful material situations by means of (radical speculative) drawings and specifications that reveal formal,

17 This version is an abbreviated and translated version of Chapter 9 in: Kajita 2016 (note 2).

18 [Http://bips.dk/artikel/hvordan-er-en-arbejdsbeskrivelse-opbygget](http://bips.dk/artikel/hvordan-er-en-arbejdsbeskrivelse-opbygget) (September 2017).



spatial and visual characteristics and social encounters, that in Evans words “do not entail the destruction or domination of the one by the other”.<sup>19</sup>

### Conclusive Remarks

To include care in architectural operations is a relational practice of negotiation and risk taking. And in that sense, it is quite contrary to the frameworks of certainty that guards architects' professional services and tools today. However, when architects engage in differentiated and heterogeneous matters of cities and buildings, it seems crucial to overcome the technocratic schema that separate the social from the technical. The ethnographic-architectural ways of knowing presented here contributes to the difficult meeting of lived experience and architectural space by pushing boundaries of technocratic operations whilst maintaining their purpose. As such, I see this research into residents' appreciation and care as an opportunity to question, destabilise and activate normative architectural operations for the purpose of democratic and caring production of space. Architects configure spatial and material dimensions by means of overview, fragmentation and scale, but this certain ability to act does not per se exclude the uncertainty of appreciation and care.

<sup>19</sup> Evans 2003 (note 12), p. 198. Evans' argument concerns the architectural drawing – not specifications.



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Der Tagungsband versammelt Beiträge des 4. Forums Architekturwissenschaft zum architektonischen Entwerfen und seinen Artefakten. Die vom Netzwerk Architekturwissenschaft ausgerichtete Konferenz hat im November 2017 an der TU Berlin stattgefunden. Die Beitragenden zur vorliegenden Publikation fragen nach den epistemischen Potentialen von Skizzen, Renderings, Modellen, Fotografien und Zeichnungen beim Entwerfen von Architektur. Sie folgen allesamt der These, dass Medien im Entwurf nicht nur abbilden, sondern ihrerseits Grundlage weiterer Wissenshandlungen sind. Anhand von Fallbeispielen, die vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart reichen, zeichnen die Texte den besonderen qualitativen Einfluss nach, den ‚das Machen‘ eines Entwurfs am und mit dem Artefakt für diesen Entwurf hat. Strukturgebend sowohl für die Tagung als auch diese Publikation war der Versuch, theoretische Positionen und die Ergebnisse praktischen Arbeitens – Artefakte – zusammenzubringen: Die Tagung war verbunden mit einer Ausstellung am Architekturmuseum der TU Berlin, im vorliegenden Band wechseln sich Theoriebeiträge mit text-bildlichen Beschreibungen der gezeigten Artefakte ab.

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