



The monumental was once about representation. An awe inspiring cathedral, an overbearing prison, and a pompous palace can all exhibit different qualities of monumentality. Monumental buildings do not have to be enormous, but they have an unusually strong physical presence given by their construction and more often by the image of their architecture. In the best instances, monumental structures do not only represent the ambitions and attributes of their makers but lend a structure and a purpose to their part of the city. One thinks of Palladio's Basilica in Vicenza which single-handedly organises three outstanding urban spaces through its size and position. One also thinks of Schinkel's open urbanism at the centre of Berlin, a monumental set of spaces made by the energy between loosely gathered buildings. A more contemporary kind of monumentality is found in the Torre Velasca by BBRP in Milan. It is a modern mixed use building that rises above the urban datum of the city to make connections back to the Duomo and to be a clear marker within the post war reconstruction of the city. This project's monumentality is less reliant on signification and more on an identification and reflection of its position in the city. This more open and picturesque version of the monumental is the one we wish to explore.

There is still quite a demand for buildings to be representational and to exert their presence within the city. But somehow, glass buildings with unusual profiles and plan shapes have become an equally valid expression for office buildings, museums, and opera houses. These buildings are being built at an ever larger scale, but they rarely achieve any of the qualities of monumentality. Their presence comes from their weirdness, and instead of acting positively on the spaces around them to bring specific qualities to their quarter, they are autistic and stand alone and isolated from their surroundings. This semester we will try to resurrect the role that the monumental can play in giving structure and character to developing parts of the city.

Many European cities are currently in a phase of densification. There are shortages in housing and office accommodation and the global flow of capital means that wealthy investors need to invest ever further from their base. Former industrial areas are being restructured to make new city quarters, and the density of some suburban areas is rising to become more like the city centre. We will work in such an area in transition, where the urban fabric is not, and may never be, sufficiently coherent to have the qualities and diversity of the city centre. We will explore whether the idea of monumentality can compensate in these places and bring qualities of complexity and stability where the city fabric is weak and incoherent. We are not sure what the essential ingredients of a monumental building are. It has something to do with scale, with density and with a clear attitude towards architectural convention. We are quite sure that the sort of intensity that is given by a monumental building has little to do with its programme, which in most cases is too vulnerable and fleeting to rely on. The buildings we are interested in developing are somewhere between the infrastructure and the fabric of the city. They are a reflection of their sites at the same time as being significant figures in their transformation.

The studio will be working on a site in Winterthur and will engage with current development strategies in the city. We will be leading a short excursion to Milan on the 8th and 9th of March. This trip is strongly recommended for the members of the studio and will cost approximately CHF 250.

The studio will be led by Adam Caruso and Peter St John in collaboration with Daniel Bosshard and Meritxell Vaquer. The assistant will be Oliver Lütjens. Adam or Peter will be in the studio at least one full day per week, and the other three members of the team will be present for both studio days.

Introduction: 19th February 2008, 10 am, HIQ C 1
Exercise Type: P/e



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