Architectural design In Dialogue with dis-Ability Theoretical and methodological exploration of a multi-sensorial design approach in architecture

From 2008-05-01 to 2013-10-31, closed project

Objective

This research project is based on the notion that, because of their specific interaction with space, people with particular dis-abilities are able to appreciate spatial qualities or detect misfits in the environment that most architects—or other designers—are not even aware of. This notion holds for sensory dis-abilities such as blindness or visual impairment, but also for mental dis-abilities like autism or Alzheimer’s dementia. The experiences and subsequent insights of these dis-abled people, so it is argued, represent a considerable knowledge resource that would complement and enrich the professional expertise of architects and designers in general. This argument forms the basis for a methodological and theoretical exploration of a multi-sensorial design approach in architecture. On the one hand, a series of retrospective case studies will be conducted to identify and describe the motives and elements that trigger or stimulate architects’ attention for the multi-sensorial spatial experiences of people with dis-abilities when designing spaces. On the other hand, the research project will investigate experimentally in real time to what extent design processes and products in architecture can be enriched by establishing a dialogue between the multi-sensorial ‘knowing-in-action’ of people with dis-abilities and the expertise of professional architects/designers. In this way, the research project aims to develop a more profound understanding of how the concept of Design for All can be realised in architectural practice. At least as important, however, is its contribution to innovation in architecture tout court. The research results are expected to give a powerful impulse to quality improvement of the built environment by stimulating and supporting the development of innovative design concepts.

Related information

**Result In Brief**

Engaging disabled people in improving architectural design

**Report Summaries**

Final Report Summary - AIDA (Architectural design In Dialogue with dis-Ability Theoretical and methodological exploration of a multi-sensorial design approach in architecture)
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**Subjects**

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Last updated on 2017-05-29  
Retrieved on 2019-06-29


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