Shaping Spaces, Creating Spatial Relations

On the socio-spatial aesthetics of an architectural formation of space.

Keywords: space-formation, aesthetic theory, design theory, functionalism, structuralism

Architecture Department (Architecture and Dwelling)

Area of Research: Architecture / Design & History

Research Summary: The research deals with architecture as a building art, oriented around the fundamental socio-spatial purpose of architecture to materialise a social organisation of space. Accordingly, the focus of the research lies on the part of spatial design that comprises the immediate forming and structuring of physically defined spaces, which is the formation of space.

As a startingpoint the research takes the argument that, in particular at a space-forming level, architecture has the potential to make its socio-spatial purpose aesthetically effective. It is from this basis that space-formation, in turn, acquires its fundamental architecture-artistic significance. This argument, completed by a corresponding artistic concept of space-formation, is placed in the context of architectural history and leads to an analysis and critical discussion of the following architecture-theoretical assessments of spatial design: a) various art-scientific concepts of space-formation at the beginning of the 20th century (August Schmarsow a.o.), b) three approaches towards spatial design within early functionalism and Dutch structuralism (Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier and Aldo van Eyck) and c) two more recent contributions to the subject (Christoph Feldtkeller, Christa Kamleithner).

Research Methodology: The research mainly comprises an examination of theoretical concepts and approaches by the means of a qualitative text analysis, completed by the study of secondary literature. In the case of Gropius, Le Corbusier and Van Eyck empirical case studies (housing) are additionally used as a means of illustration and to provide independent results.