

Emergency Design – a theory and research project initiated by Yana Milev

summary

The 1. International Symposium "Emergency Design: crisis-based architecture and design strategies in spatial systems" dealt with strategies of action in shifting, insecure conditions. At the beginning of the year 2006 the HGK Zürich set the inter-disciplinary podium for the event, in which 30 speakers from the areas of business, philosophy, military, biology, extreme sports, architecture and urbanism delivered talks on their view of the networked crisis subject.

The Initiator:

Initiator and organizer of the 1. International Symposium "Emergency Design" was the Berlin artist and curator Yana Milev. For many years this multi-faceted performer has addressed the term of crisis in relation to architectural aspects. Shifting spatial forms and situations that emanate from the body and its perception are subjects of her experiments and urban interventions. As a guest professor and lecturer at the Hochschule für Gestaltung Karlsruhe (HfG) Milev advanced the research of space and its formation. She is presently working on her doctorate on "Performative Architecture" with Peter Sloterdijk, the Rektor of the HfG Karlsruhe. As a performance and media artist, Milev doesn't necessarily speak the same language as designers and architects, her concept for the Zürich event and its contents promised to offer important impulses for design research. The symposium was a kick-off for the ED-Research Panel, which was also initiated by Yana Milev. It is made up of an inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural partner board, an issue-management and research program curriculum and a think tank.

Phenomena and Definition:

The "Emergency Design" concept in theory and research is a reaction to the perception of a constantly shifting, dangerously complex environment. For Milev these have become models of her analysis since the political changes in Germany and the Eastern European Block since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Up until now a holistic approach and theory were missing where "temporary architecture" and "mobile housing" represented the aesthetic expression of this field of tension. In her PhD „Diaspora + Emergency Design“, supervised by Peter Sloterdijk, she develops (since 2004) the terminology for ED. Here she founded ED as a new theory of design phenomena of complex social design management in de-located, anarchic and shifting movements.

Her theory of ED is based on the foundation of emergence philosophy, the "cultural philosophy of emergence" by Peter Sloterdijk, the "State of Emergency" terminology by Giorgio Agamben, the activities of Paul Virilio such as the founding of the Catastrophe Institute and the Museum of Catastrophe in France, as well as the new discourse in spatial sociology introduced by Martina Löw.

In ED Yana Milev defines consequences and causal relationships between the capitalization, privatization, and control of social spaces. The permanent shifting dynamics of movement and counter-movement of spatial production and spatial destruction create new work markets, new currencies, new scenes, new wars, new subcultures, new distribution of poverty and wealth, new laws and new values as well as new forms of transport for knowledge and information through a new journalistic model like we first saw in CNN's Gulf War.

Here the slogan "life spaces are crisis spaces" is a plea for inconsistency and insecurity of spaces, histories, laws and values as well as a demand for new social, psychological and strategic spatial competence of knowledge and design.

The State of Emergency is a psychological and social basic condition in crisis spaces, as in the case of precarious spaces that are characterized by selection pressure. The State of Emergency reinforces the willingness to act and take risks in the battle for spatial superiority and usually influences an extremely creative brand management of subcultures and outcast elites. This brand management is precarious spaces, is life management and is labeled ED by YM.