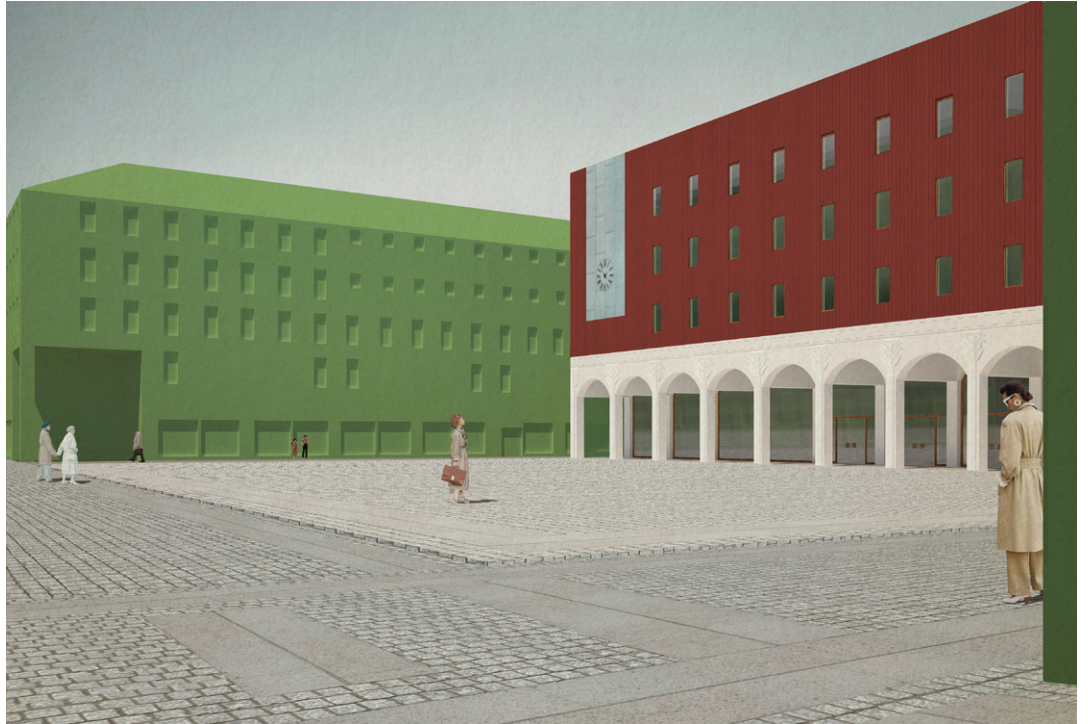


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DESIRE FOR DEMOCRACY

- or an exploration of the city hall, acting as a catalyst for democracy and active citizenship



CRITICAL SPATIAL PERSPECTIVES

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Cities are central in the current world, a chain of systems for functions in modern life, and the principal platform for the creation and reformation of politics, as well as the main public informer of it. This indicates that it is also a major influence on human life—health, views, behaviour, identity, economy, etc. The architectural facade and public space acting as one in a system of representation, constructing a stage and backdrop for life, is a translation of political and social power into a physical environment, affecting interpretation and response in the urban landscape.

Architecture as a social object, interpreted through a chain of symbolisation, can easily become a mechanism of political adaptation. The current uniform legal ownership and totalitarian appropriation of urban space is an instrument for neoliberal localisation, treating the city as a product and thereby stripping the public space of democratic functions—which are dependant on the diverse applications of space. These systematic transformations have replaced social places of culture and politics for places of consumption, turning citizens into consumers.

To use a city hall as a tool for democracy, as a symbolic platform and object of democratic desire and aspiration, would be to claim the space of commerce for a place of conversation. For a change in the image and effect of the urban landscape, I want to work with the presence of the city hall to materialise democratic power, creating a place for inclusion and political participation.

Civic buildings and its architecture represent a societal tradition. Conveying their customary function, content and subject through symbolisation, means that they need to supply public life with representation of a current society. Representation in this case would be a way of including groups which are and were previously excluded from the political arena, to ensure inclusion and justice in equal participation for the molding of future societies.

Keywords : urban architecture, social influence, democracy, symbolic language