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USING ARCHITECTURE TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Designing activity space to encourage Sweden's most sedentary, with a special focus on high school girls



MATTER SPACE STRUCTURE

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In modern society we have, through technology and the built environment, removed almost all daily habits of being physical active. Sweden's population is far from being active enough and the same issue can be seen in many other countries. It is as if we have forgotten that activity is a crucial part of life, it is in the nature of our bodies.

"Only 14% of girls in upper secondary school reach the recommended level, of 60 minutes, of physical activity per day..."
- Generation Pep, 2020

Why the average teenage girl is especially low-active has several reasons. The girls tend to drop out of organized sport before entering high school, and it has been shown that existing places for self-organized activity are mainly used among young boys. In addition, many of Sweden's existing activity spaces are out-dated. Architecture cannot be the solution itself, rather it can create a framework that supports everyday life situations. Hence, the purpose of this master's thesis is to explore how architecture can support and inspire physical activity.

Emphasis will be on how to invite or re-invite a low-active person to be more active,

in the best case, being active together. To work with the high school girls, is a strategic starting point to lowering the threshold for other sedentary groups.

In order to attract young girls to be active, a well-designed and welcoming facility is essential. It is beneficial if the setting supports an open and social culture around the activity, where one can meet friends and have fun together. Additionally, a close relationship with nature tends to be perceived as less competitive and therefore attractive to a wider range of age groups and users.

The ambition is to define design strategies for sport and recreation areas, focusing on transformation and extension of outdoor spaces in Sweden. Furthermore, to summarize current research, to analyse innovative reference projects, to explore methods for realization and to exemplify potential solutions via speculative design. Can we solve this issue through the transformation of existing sites?

Keywords : Physical activity, activity space, sport & recreation, health promotion, user perspective, safety, transformation