ANNA KRASSUSKI

METAMORPHOSIS OF A RIVER

- Exploring the educational dialogue between anthropogenic and natural landscapes -

RURBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

Supervisor: Shea Hagy & Marco Adelfio
Examiner: Nils Björling
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With the beginning of the Anthropocene, the relationship between human and nature in cities has changed essentially. The increasing expansion and densification of urban developments has led to a disconnection of anthropogenic and natural landscapes with severe consequences for human activities and ecosystem-dependent processes. While natural environments become less accessible within the urban fabric and climate-related risks an increasing threat for the urban population, the future generation faces decreased opportunities to connect and learn about natural processes. In the context of Gothenburg, Sweden, this continuous transition is particularly challenging urban-water-interfaces. In the researched case of the river Säveån, the disconnection of landscapes emerges to an ever greater conflict about space. A conflict, where a river system demands space for its natural processes, and a city, that asks to grow and provide safe public spaces for its future inhabitants.

This Master's Thesis aims to create a dialogue between anthropogenic and natural landscapes through education. By investigating the perspective of both representative actors, the river and children, the following research question is approached: How can we design an educational and recreational river space with its site specific natural potentials to promote a resilient rurban life?

The unpredictable future in times of climate change, crowded spaces and Nature-Deficit-Disorders are current threats that often come into collision with the developmental needs of children (Louv, 2008, p.36). Simultaneously, threats like the rising sea level, increased precipitation and land erosion endanger many river systems and their processual needs (Prominski et al, 2012, p.21). This results in a necessity for an inclusive landscape design that bridges the gap between the children's and river's spatial demands.

Based on the evolving adaptation strategies from the river's and the child's perspective, the out coming design proposal for the chosen site of Gamlestaden in Gothenburg, Sweden tackles climate-related risks and enhances site-specific natural potentials. The design strives to nurture environmental education in children within a nature-driven learning landscape. By unwrapping the complexity of human-nature interdependencies the learning landscape aspires to make a contribution to social and ecological resilience.

Keywords : Children, River Space Design, Climate Adaptivity, Environmental Education