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INTIMAC(IT)Y

Participant info

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Project info

People create environments and change them according to their goals, but how can public spaces influence intimate experiences of its users? INTIMAC(IT)Y investigates the influence of our built environment on people's feeling of intimacy.

A conducted master-thesis, consisted out of two parts, functions as base for un-derstanding the ambiguous concept of intimacy. The first part outlines a theoretical framework in order to define the interrelationship between 'intimacy' and 'public spaces'. It is argued that intimacy is not a relational, but a situational concept (Schutz, 1964). The second part summarizes an ethnographical research study of churches and underground facilities in both London and Brussels. These results show the impact of visible and non-visible boundaries regarding intimacy and their influence on both users and the architecture of public spaces.

The master-project illustrates a graphical design analysis on the topic. It finds itself within the canal zone of Brussels, in the middle of the 'Vergotedok'. The project, seemingly unconnected to anything else, creates a city within the city. The hidden entrance functions as a moment of escape from the hectic daily life, to get people in the mood for something undiscovered. Every major city in Europe has one or more public open air pools, but the capital of Europe has none. INTIMAC(IT)Y houses water-recreation facilities and the first open air swimming pool of Brussels. This large-scale sculpture rep-resents our metropolitan region, which now has be-come the functional unit in our environment (Lynch, 1960). Experimenting with public bathing allow us to put ourselves in a position in which we cannot hide. As Erving Goffman (1990) argued, we continuously try to impact what impression we give to others, not least through the kind of situa-tion we allow ourselves to be encountered in. Going naked touches on different boundaries, on a physical, sociocultural and psychological level.

