

CENTRALA
Krakowskie Przedmieście 20-22/10
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Evaluation of BA program of the Kharkiv School of Architecture

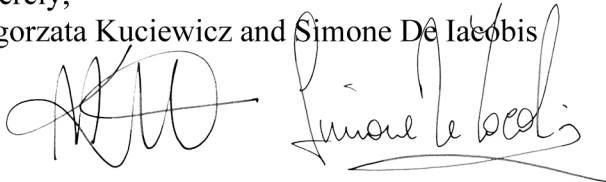
CENTRALA (Małgorzata Kuciewicz and Simone De Iacobis) is a Warsaw-based architecture and research studio that works with reinterpretations and spatial interventions aimed at renewing the language of architecture. In their architecture research practice, they examine the relationship between architecture and natural phenomena. They conceive of architecture as a process, considering gravity, water circulation, and atmospheric and astronomical events its building materials. Furthermore they deals with urban wetlands, artisanal microclimates, multi-species urbanism, chronobiological architecture, enhancing the sense of being part of the seasons. Interested in memory and materiality of architecture, CENTRALA stimulates public debate on the protection of the post-war architectural heritage. Learning from the legacy of Warsaw designers (such as Zofia and Oskar Hansen, Viola and Jacek Damięcki, or Alina Scholz), they restore forgotten architectural expertise: the grammar of the 1950s and 1960s Polish exhibition designs, the shared vocabulary of post-war modernism, or the use of hydrobotany in architecture.

CENTRALA tutors students at the Kharkiv School of Architecture from its foundation having had the first workshop already in the fall of 2018. Since then we conducted week long workshops, recurring each semester based on the *Amplifying Nature* concept, so to introduce students, already from the first steps of their educational career, to a planetary imagination of architecture. The school offered to us the unique opportunity of exploring innovative methods in architecture education: Instead of designing to achieve a pre-established visual effect, the workshops encourage students to actively observe, experiment and design processes instead of objects. Natural phenomena such as gravity, wind, light oscillation, or water circulation inform the projects as actual matter of architecture, thus defining their ultimate outlook. The school grants to students the rare chance to have a first hand experience with materials and construction techniques through the availability of a fully equipped workshop, but most importantly it makes possible for them to work together with their hands and minds in a safe environment. In the span of just few years we could already observe the positive outcome of such methods with the participants achieving advanced results. Being part of the technical block they can seamlessly apply nature based observations to their design at different scales, as the cyclical structure of our teachings allows for an accumulation of knowledge. Teamwork is the foundation of a training process which fosters horizontal working practices, towards an understanding of entanglement between architecture and other

disciplines. The schools encourages exchanges with different point of views and perspectives also thanks to the dense international network of professionals participating in the programme. Furthermore we deeply value the Kharkiv School's effort in organizing study visits taking students and tutors on field trips to specific localities or objects connected to Ukraine's heritage. It's crucial for the scope of our workshop that the students survey traditional building construction techniques, and simultaneously get familiar to local climate conditions and physical geographies. In the arc of the past four years students demonstrated a fervent and continuous interest in the experimental learning process tested during our workshops, they excelled in problem solving when confronted with non conventional tasks, they exhibited proactivity and will of being guided by material qualities rather than pre-conceptually established goals. In the first semester of 2022 CENTRALA's workshop centered its scope around the subject of *Artisanal Microclimates*, in a timely effort to address the ever more pressing environmental issues which the discipline of architecture is called upon confronting nowadays. From the observation of natural phenomena taken separately, the workshops evolved in an ever more complex direction, where elements are considered inseparable. Students have been made familiar with conversations around wetlands and their key role in mitigation of increasingly common weather extremes; moreover they demonstrated great sensibility when introducing concepts such as cohabitation with non-human dwellers and multispecies urbanism.

Sincerely,

Małgorzata Kuciewicz and Simone De Iacobis

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is for Małgorzata Kuciewicz, featuring a stylized 'MK' monogram. The signature on the right is for Simone De Iacobis, written in a cursive script.

10/09/2022