

RECIPROCAL HISTORIES (AND PRACTICES) OF URBAN DESIGN



TOM AVERMAETE

ETH Zürich

The architecture of cities is composed of many resources, some inherited, such as water and land; others material, such as brick and glass; and yet others immaterial, such as knowledge and craft. These resources are precious and often even scarce.

For a long time, architects and urban designers have pretended, willingly or unwillingly, that all resources to build the city were readily and plentifully available. Architectural histories have been complicit to this viewpoint by portraying urban design as primarily focused on abstract concepts, suggesting that the essential resources would effortlessly accompany this conceptual framework.

This talk argues that it is time to change this attitude and to narrate histories that account for the complex intertwinement of resources in our cities. Such a viewpoint will not only change the ways we look upon the past but also affect the way that we understand the future of city and the role of architecture and architects within it.

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Keplerstrasse 11
70178 Stuttgart

