



Press

Exhibition: Flores & Prats – Meeting at the Building

Where is social housing construction headed? How can you build communities that people will want to both live and meet in? A new exhibition shows the results of a number of workshops held in collaboration between the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture and the Spanish architectural firm Flores & Prats, inviting debate about meaningful social housing development and architecture that is so appealing you want to eat it.



Flores & Prats: Meeting at the Building can be experienced at Holmen, Copenhagen

6 September through 25 October 2013

Opening hours: Every day 11 am – 6 pm, admission free

The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation

The Exhibition Hall, Danneskiold-Samsøes Allé 51, Holmen, Copenhagen

Social and public housing calls for political as well as architectural attention in the city and housing scale. Although offering vital and qualitative answers to needs for housing in the welfare society, and including important shares of the cultural heritage ongoing transformations these years, the image is not only positive but also attached to segregation, social and functional problems. Needs for maintenance, care and coordination of political attention, resources and planning competences from public and private actors are raised. However, the limited dimensions and the close community of neighbours may yet regain their value and be considered a gift and an obvious way of building bridges between people. This is the message conveyed by an exhibition in which 20 Danish students and teachers of architecture have examined social housing in Barcelona and Copenhagen in collaboration with architects and visiting lecturers Ricardo Flores & Eva Prats.

The Spanish architectural firm Flores & Prats and the School of Architecture's Study Department 2 have been collaborating since 2003. In 2013, this led to a double workshop under the title *Social*

Community that looked at social aspects of public construction in Barcelona and Copenhagen. The result is a series of studies of how social housing can bring people together in times of crisis.

“The topic of social housing – and collaboration between people as a way of re-establishing trust in each other in a society that is marked by recession – should benefit from architects’ full attention right now. By drawing attention to the different levels at which architects can and should have influence, and by comparing Spanish and Danish examples, we want to show the future potential of social housing and demonstrate the importance of working with architecture as well as with people, where the building can serve as a bridge between the home and the city,” Flores & Prats explain.

Room for exchange and welfare debate in social housing

The exhibition has been produced for the academy’s large exhibition hall at Holmen in Copenhagen. In addition to study works, documentaries and video interviews with residents, it also includes a partial installation on a 1:1 scale of Flores & Prats’ *Building 111* in Barcelona – a social housing complex with 111 residential units, which the students have studied in great detail. Here, the public is invited into a small piece of Barcelona, into the models and into the processes that affect residential architecture and life in the buildings. The objective is to launch a debate about the role of architecture in the welfare society and to demonstrate that social housing has a future welfare potential, in which green, healthy and creative growth and quality of life can be improved in both vulnerable and non-vulnerable urban areas, so that the city becomes a whole – both physically and socially.

“By learning from the Spanish culture, a bit of everyday life in Barcelona, documented and commented on by architectural students through models and artistic short films, we can find inspiration to challenge and revitalise the social housing programme in Denmark, to develop architecture that focuses on people, and to link sustainability and architecture by focusing on social life across cultural organisations, forms and expressions,” says Peder Duelund Mortensen, Associate Professor, the School of Architecture.

The exhibition’s different zones highlight *Building 111*’s basic architectural elements, social values, scales and development process: the communal open square, the load-bearing concrete facade, a typical home. Some 100 metres of the process material – original hand drawings and working models – are on display with comments by the Danish students via models and short films. Interviews and documentation are at the centre, demonstrating that user understanding and involvement are the key to renewal of residential housing, and that, more than anything, social housing is a key action area of great immediate importance.

Double exhibition: Barcelona stretching across Copenhagen

Another part of the exhibition is taking place at Leth & Gori, a combined architectural office and exhibition place at the heart of Copenhagen, at Absalonsgade 21B. Here, the School of Architecture exhibition is supplemented by a number of projects that were designed prior to *Building 111* and which have contributed to its development. “When we discovered that the facade of the architectural office was a former bakery, we came up with the idea of producing cakes in shapes taken from the exhibited projects. The British artist Soraya Smithson has designed the cakes, which will be served at the opening.”

“Our interest in working with social dimensions in architecture is demonstrated in this double exhibition, which links the School of Architecture to the city and also links architecture to food. This is the type of projects that is right up our street: an exhibition that facilitates interaction between people from the city and the School of Architecture, and the possibility of celebrating architecture by visiting the exhibition, while at the same time you eat it.”

Thanks to the Ramon Llull Institute and the Spanish Embassy in Copenhagen for their support for the exhibition.

Further information available from:

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Press kit: [KADK flickr](#) (rightclick and download high resolution images)

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LETH & GORI