



Class Struggle

RAUM architects

exhibition
17 06 → 26 10 2025

inaugural talk
17 06 2025, 18:30
with
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Architectures and learning situations

Architecture doesn't teach. And yet physical space can be a powerful tool for encouraging new forms of education and socialisation. The architects at RAUM, a firm based in Nantes, have experienced this first-hand. Since 2009, when designing different types of learning spaces, they have been questioning the spatial arrangements and constructive conditions necessary for knowledge sharing and experimentation.

The exhibition presents the work of the studio in the specific field of teaching, production and artistic dissemination. On the occasion of the construction of the new building for the Paris-Cergy Arts School, it raises the question of "what architecture can do" in the field of education. Models, fragments, videos and prototypes are used to explore the various relationships between architecture and other disciplines, contexts, climates and resources.

In this approach, the architects at RAUM see a double struggle. On the one hand, they see learning processes moving outside the traditional classroom. On the other, they are defending an idea of architecture as a committed practice. A courageous stance in a contemporary context where the subjectivity of opinions seems to have overwhelmed all critical space. Including that of architecture itself.

Class Struggle

RAUM
ARCHITECTS



Since 1981 arc en rêve centre d'architecture has elaborated a cultural awareness-building strategy focusing on contemporary architecture and extending into city planning, landscape design, aimed at broadening perceptions of a changing world. Its internationally recognised programme features exhibitions, lectures, public discussions, publications, workshops for children, seminars for adults, visits to buildings, city tours, and planning experiments

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A non-hierarchical accumulation of objects of diverse origins, the exhibition **Class Struggle** presents eight projects by the RAUM studio relating to the question of learning in architecture. With no real classification or chronological organisation, the installation is based on a Deleuzian idea that invites visitors to ‘begin in the middle’. This free presentation, with no beginning or end, is an opportunity for the architects to present a non-dogmatic practice that adapts to its environment and shows itself through its devices, its fragments and its relationships. Elements that invite us to rethink architecture in terms of its parts, rather than as a unifying form.



Prototype of slate concrete developed for the Avrillé auditorium competition / photo: Charles Bouchaib

Constructive systems

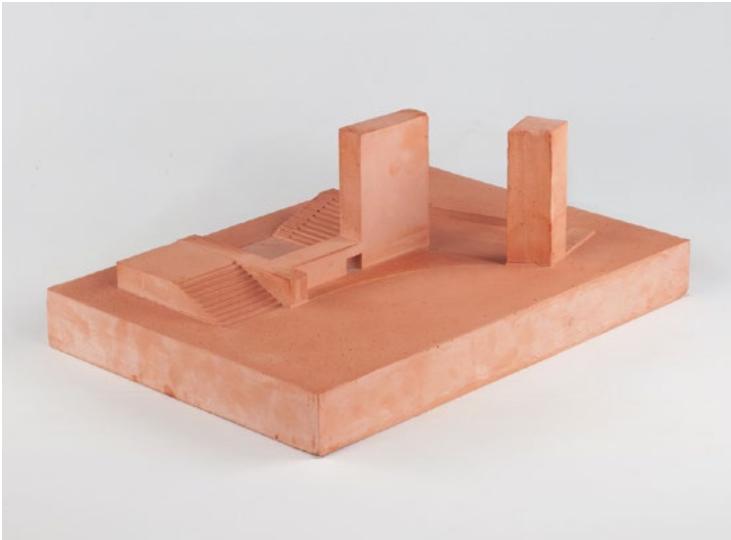
Questions relating to the use and working of materials are at the heart of RAUM's architecture. The architects develop a constructive approach that assumes a relationship between the spaces produced and the constructive conditions that made them possible. The latter are exposed through a number of devices that bear witness to singular implementations, notably on the construction site of the Paris-Cergy Arts School. By taking an interest in the built environment, the architects are questioning the conventional uses of materials in an attempt to propose new ways of working and relating them.

Cabinet of curiosities

The first room brings together works produced by the RAUM studio that have no particular connection with the issues of learning addressed by the exhibition. Models, fragments, prototypes, lost competitions and failed experiments are the elements that shape this selection of objects, which reflect on the one hand the formal world of the RAUM studio and, on the other, the tools favoured by architects.



Atelier, Nantes (Pays de la Loire), 2024 / photo: Charles Bouchaib



Stained plaster model / © RAUM

Hodology

Hodology, from the Greek *hodós* (path), was reintroduced into contemporary philosophical thought by Jean-Marc Besse in 2004. In *Carnets du paysage*, the philosopher applies this ‘science of connections in networks’ to space, proposing the idea of a landscape qualified by its paths and by the physical relationship of the body to space. This work of hybridisation between paths, circulation, artistic spaces and rest areas is transposed into thirty models representing relational devices in as many RAUM projects. These plaster objects, specially designed for the exhibition, use emptiness to express the potential of these spaces to respond to new uses.

Fragmentary models

The fragmentary nature of the models presented in this section reflects a desire to leave aside the project as a whole and focus on its individual parts: each model represents a particular constructional device, a relational situation or an experience. As design and project development tools within the studio, these fragments are attempts to objectify concrete spatial situations in three dimensions.



Cutaway model of the renovation-extension of the Saint-Méen-Le-Grand (Brittany) swimming pool, 2023 / © RAUM



Pierres Blanches cultural centre, Saint-Jean-de-Boiseau (Pays de la Loire), 2019 / photo: Audrey Cerdan

Silver photographs

Representing built architecture questions the disciplinary field in its intimate relationship with the image. The RAUM studio is as interested in the protocol of the photographs taken by Charles Bouchaib and Audrey Cerdan, reinforced by the use of the silver camera, as it is in the contribution made by the German painters of the 1930s, grouped together by the art historian Gustav Friedrich Hartlaub under the *New Objectivity* movement. In these images, the rapprochement with reality and the move away from pictorialism are reflected in the representation of relational devices in direct contact with their environment. These framings shed light on the relationship between buildings and their environment, both through the use of materials and the spatial situations they present.

Filmed living spaces

The RAUM studio sees its architecture, on the one hand, as a relational object and, on the other, as the physical support that provides the conditions for its appropriation by users. This second aspect is reflected in the exhibition by a series of films shot in each of the seven built projects of the studio and on the construction site of the Paris-Cergy Arts School new building. Users, visitors and staff are filmed in a neutral way, offering a large-format view of the inhabited spaces of each building.



Refurbishment and extension of a community swimming pool, Saint-Méen-Le-Grand (Brittany), 2023
Photo: Charles Bouchaib