Introduction

Village Texture is the seventh in a series of projects developed jointly by several different architecture faculties at the same time. In each case one faculty prepares the relevant theme, for which the starting point is a symposium that takes place over a number of days. The intermediate and final crits are carried out by exchanging teaching staff between the different architecture faculties. The results are presented jointly in an exhibition by the faculty responsible for the program and are compiled in a catalogue.

The first project in this series was Archivio Jodice in 2010 in Naples in which around 300 students and teachers gathered at a single place, bringing with them the most different kinds of didactic models. It is precisely these models and their different approaches that create confrontations which significantly widen the students’ examination of architecture. This perception of architectural content is also determined by the mobility of the students that extends far beyond the borders of their own faculty and does not confine the spectrum of architecture within local boundaries.

This exemplary European teaching model for the projects Archivio Jodice and Village Textures was made possible by the support, both material and in terms of content, kindly provided by Wienerberger AG, Tondach Gleinstätten, and the Verband Österreichischer Ziegelwerke. These businesses make visiting professors, lectures and publication possible, in this way providing the basis for close collaboration between numerous architecture faculties.

The affinity of the building material brick for design work should be seen not only within the context of regional building traditions but also in terms of active collaboration with the businesses mentioned. In the project Village Textures the qualities of brick as a building material become an important part of the design process.

The culture office of the State of Burgenland also supported this initiative by its committed efforts in providing historic source material and by subsidies for a publication.

As a theme Village Textures starts from the sprawling development that continues to destroy a cultivated landscape originally shaped by agriculture. The pressure on rural settlement areas around city cores is growing constantly, while at the same time a yearning for landscape is making the qualitative reorganization of spaces an increasingly pressing theme. The balance that once existed between the cultivated landscape and the settlement area of small towns is now mutating into an state that is entirely undifferentiated.

To address population growth in a way that makes economic use of resources architectural concepts for increasing the density of settlement areas must be developed. Such concepts, however, centre around questions about scale and the effects of this form of densification on the existing settlement structure and the appearance of the landscape.

For the Burgenland Architecture Prize 2006 I spent three days traversing this region in all directions with Dipl. Ing. Schatovich from the site planning office of the Burgerland state government, and ever since then I have probably tended to believe that the notion of Village Textures is my own invention, which of course is not the case at all, he alone is to be thanked for this theme.