

Dense Cities

Architecture for Living Closer Together

The eighth issue of **GAM**, entitled “Dense Cities,” focuses on an array of topics connected to “urban density” and its relevance to architectural production. In all probability, the habitat of the 21st century will be the city. Since 2008, more than half of the world’s population has been living in cities, and according to forecasts by the UN, the total percentage of the urban population will reach seventy percent by 2050. While most of this development is taking place in the megacities and mega-urban areas that have evolved at breakneck speed mainly in Asia and South America in recent decades, the open development of medium-sized cities, which still refer to the centrally oriented historical city, open the discussion for new approaches to design and planning in architecture. If we see cities as urban areas with a certain density in the process of historical development, then design approaches to “densification” and “infill development” can launch new perspectives for their transformation on all scales. **GAM.08 Dense Cities** focuses on the architectural connection between processes of urbanization and the development of compact urban forms.

There is no doubt that turning away from unbridled land consumption and wasting resources in view of the threat of climate change, but also in the sense of an increasing awareness of sustainable lifestyles, must be the preconditions for sensible future planning. The necessity of encouraging more compact forms of settlement is therefore widely acknowledged and has led to the development of numerous concepts such as the Compact City, as can be found in development programs carried out by the UN (Agenda 21) and the European Commission (Green Paper of Urban Environment). **GAM.08** proclaims that it is by no means unimportant in what form the “city” phenomenon expresses itself, and therefore arguing for designing compact urban forms in connection with pioneering strategies on the way to a sustainable city. While the management

of settlement areas and infrastructural issues are focal topics in the discussion of sustainable spatial development policy, the extent to which this issue is connected with the density of the city is given less attention. But if we are to discuss stopping land consumption with any gravity, then scenarios of urban densification should be discussed at all levels of scale: the density of (different) infrastructures, larger building density coefficients, the density of different uses, the density of residential and working facilities, density in the sense of developing compact building and envelope forms to meet energy-related requirements, but also density as a question of the limits of social compatibility when people live “on top of each other.” In this respect, quantitative density always has a qualitative aspect, too, which, as the “perceived density” of compact urban forms, is responsible for the expression of an urban life-world. With regard to this question, **GAM.08** negotiates and redrafts the possibilities and scopes for producing architecture. For example, the development and realization of intelligent building typologies is a prerequisite for compacting space at the micro-level, which interacts with the reproduction of spatial qualities in urban space, with the development of new typologies and the transformation and extension of existing uses. These issues always refer to a city’s existing buildings, which architects adapt and continue to build with an eye to historical developmental processes as regards to the demands of tomorrow.

GAM.08 asks what the architect’s active role should be in developing “Dense Cities.” The declared aim is to define architectural instruments so as to offer the various social groups a high-quality, diversified and adaptable urban environment. The range of questions covers all levels of scale, from the urban landscape and agglomeration and the district to the block and individual building, and goes from developing

new building typologies and concrete interventions in the urban setting to analyzing the transformation of urban density. **GAM.08** invites you to submit an abstract (max. 500 words) on the question of a reappraisal of “urban density” by **April 30, 2011**. The deadline for full papers is **August 12, 2011**.

GAM.08, the next issue of the Graz Architecture Magazine, will be published in spring 2012. **GAM** is the official publication of the Faculty of Architecture at Graz University of Technology. The main section of each issue of **GAM** is not, however, dedicated to the promotion of our faculty, but is instead given over to open international discourse on a specific topic. The theme of the next issue will be “Dense Cities.” **GAM** aims to be a stage on which controversial viewpoints that are the subject of current architectural debate are presented at a high level, thereby fostering serious discussion on architecture reaching beyond cultural borders and indeed the boundaries of the discipline itself.

Authors’ contributions may consist of texts (in German or English), images and plans. Our editorial board of international experts will support the editors in the peer-review process to ensure **GAM**’s high level of quality.

For information on layout, submission, and copyright regulations, see <http://gam.tugraz.at>

<http://gam.tugraz.at>