The Fragmentary Demand
On Designerly Searches for Plural Imaginings of Society

IDA SANDSTRÖM
Architect, PhD student
Department of Architecture and the Built Environment, Lund University
Lund, Sweden
ida.sandstrom@arkitektur.lth.se

Abstract

“The fragmentary demand” was first used as a term by the French writer and philosopher Maurice Blanchot to describe the writings of Nietzsche as the result of a thinking that refuses all attempts to be comprised into a greater whole (James 2005). This paper makes the expression an entry to a discussion on contemporary makings of public space, defined by an experimental hands-on (or better designerly) take on heterogeneity.

The paper evolves around ‘Superkilen’, a recent public space project in Copenhagen, in addition it introduces ‘Die Grosse Weltausstellung’ an installation at the former airfield Tempelhof, Berlin. Although different in terms of temporality, one being a temporary installation and the other a permanent design, both projects are heavily influenced by relational artistic approaches in their various ways of
playing with post- and transnational formations. The way they collect objects and atmospheres from near and afar make them locus of accumulated entities, reminiscent of the museum or the archive. The need to move beyond the tradition, within western thinking, of considering sameness a pre-requisite for community has predominantly been voiced within political science and sociology (Brighenti 2014). In architectural projects community has often been understood as shared concerns, i.e. built on what have in common. The two projects addressed here display alternative imaginings of community where the making of public spaces is no longer seen as a counter-act to societal fragmentation, but considered a chance to acknowledge and promote heterogeneity. Drawing on Superkilen it is suggested that the usage of designed fragmentation implies a move from notions of community based on similarity and unity, to a search for forms of co-existence established through difference and multiplicity. By developing a perspective that combines the analysis of this designerly search for multiple identities with inquiries on mundane practises of attachment and touch this paper seeks to move beyond the conception of fragmentation as sole separation. Drawing primarily on Jean-Luc Nancy’s notions of being-in-common (2000), it is finally suggested that the response to the fragmentary demand is to be found beyond representation.

**Keywords:** Archival Space, Designed Fragmentation, Jean Luc Nancy, Being-in-common.

**Key references**


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