

Organizing Spaces of Creativity and Reflection (OSCAR) : The University and Sustainable Regional Development

Project Leaders

Christoph Michels, Dr. oec. HSG Dipl. Arch. ETH University of Liechtenstein

Dalal Elarji, MSc. Arch. University of Liechtenstein

University Partners

Prof. Peter A. Staub, Dipl. AA MSc LSE University of Liechtenstein

Prof. Anne Brandl, Dr. sc. ETH Dipl.-Ing. University of Liechtenstein

Dr. Roman Banzer University of Liechtenstein

External Reflective Partners

Prof. Chris Steyaert and the Research Institute for Organizational Psychology, University of St. Gallen

Prof. Martin Müller, Assistant professor SNFS, Institute of Geography and Sustainability, University of Lausanne

Prof. Timon Beyes, Professor of Sociology of Organisation and Culture, Leuphana University, Lüneburg

Type and Planned Duration

FFF-Förderprojekt, January 2018 until July 2020

Field of Research

Architectural Design Theory

Publications & Conferences

Peer-reviewed journal papers:

Elarji, D., & Michels, C. (2020). Same but different: The Floating University Berlin (FUB) and the making of another university. Themed issue in Architecture and Culture.

Michels, C., Hindley, C., Knowles, D., & Ruth, D. (2020). Re-Imagining the Learning Space: The Dérive in Management Education. Management Learning.

Elarji, D., & Michels, C. (in process of submission). Spatial Modes and Moods in Higher Education. Frontiers of Architectural Research.

Book chapters:

Michels, C., & Elarji, D. (2020). Gemischte Gefühle: Affektive Atmosphären von Hochschularchitekturen. In B. Wolf, C. Julmi (Hrsg.), Die Macht der Atmosphären, Freiburg i. Br.:Verlag Alber

Michels, C., & Steyaert, C. (2018). Atmosphäre. In T. Beyes & J. Metelmann (Hrsg.), Der Kreativitätskomplex: Ein Vademecum der Gegenwartsgesellschaft (S. 44–49). Bielefeld: Transcript.

Michels, C., & Steyaert, C. (2018). Creative Cities. In T. Beyes & J. Metelmann (Eds.), Der Kreativitätskomplex: Ein Vademecum der Gegenwartsgesellschaft (pp. 70-75). Bielefeld: Transcript.

Conferences:

Elarji, D., & Michels, C. (2018). Sensory Methodologies for Researching Affective Atmospheres in Higher Education Institutions. Paper presented at the "Unspoken, Unseen, Unheard of Unexplored Realities in Qualitative Research" conference, St. Gallen.

Michels, C., & Elarji, D. (2018). The other university: unsettling spaces of higher education. Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Geographies of Education, Loughborough.

Other:

von Hunnius, Y. (2018, June). Für eine neue Beziehung zwischen Gesellschaft und Universität. Denkraum : Das Wissenmagazin Der Universität Liechtenstein, (n° 08), 21–23.

Abstract

The research project addressed the role of universities in the context of a changing society. Specifically, it explores the processes through which universities participate in the unfolding of the social, economic and cultural life in an increasingly urban, creative and entrepreneurial society. Tracing existing practices of university development through ethnographic case studies, the project sought to understand, systematize and reflect established and emerging interspaces between university and society. Drawing on the concepts of affective atmospheres the research seeks to understand how creativity and reflexivity emerge from encounters on and off campus. The project has published its findings in both the context of the academic discourse and within the local practical context of the University of Liechtenstein. It thus sought to inform the future practices of universities in general and the University of Liechtenstein, the Principality of Liechtenstein and its citizens in particular.

Current research on the relationship between university and (urban) society has distinguished various ways in which universities contribute to the economic and cultural life of contemporary western societies. Apart from pointing out and quantifying the universities' rather obvious roles as places of education and consumption, the project underlines how universities serve society as places of encounter, critical reflection and creativity. In this sense the project contributes to an understanding of Universities as "third spaces", "laboratories" and "heterotopias" and contributed to this emerging and interdisciplinary stream of research that by developing a decidedly processual and spatio-aesthetic perspective.

Following an ethnographic research approach informed by the Science and Technology Studies (STS), the project examined narratives, practices and spaces that participate in the generation of encounters between universities and their environments. In form of four case studies the project follows the everyday practices of university life and traces how they intermingle with the in- and outsides of university space. In particular, the research focused on exploring new and experimental ways of creating encounters between the university and its economic, cultural and societal context.

The research project was closely related to and sought to inform the current development of the University of Liechtenstein. By directing the analytical focus towards other (peer) institutions and their respective practices and spaces, the project sought to reflect on the potential developments of the university and its effects on the Principality of Liechtenstein. Apart from presenting and publishing our research findings and methodological insights in the context of international academic discourses, the project equally aimed at continuously informing the process of the spatial development of the University of Liechtenstein.

Keywords

Architecture, higher education, third mission, ethnographic research, affective atmospheres

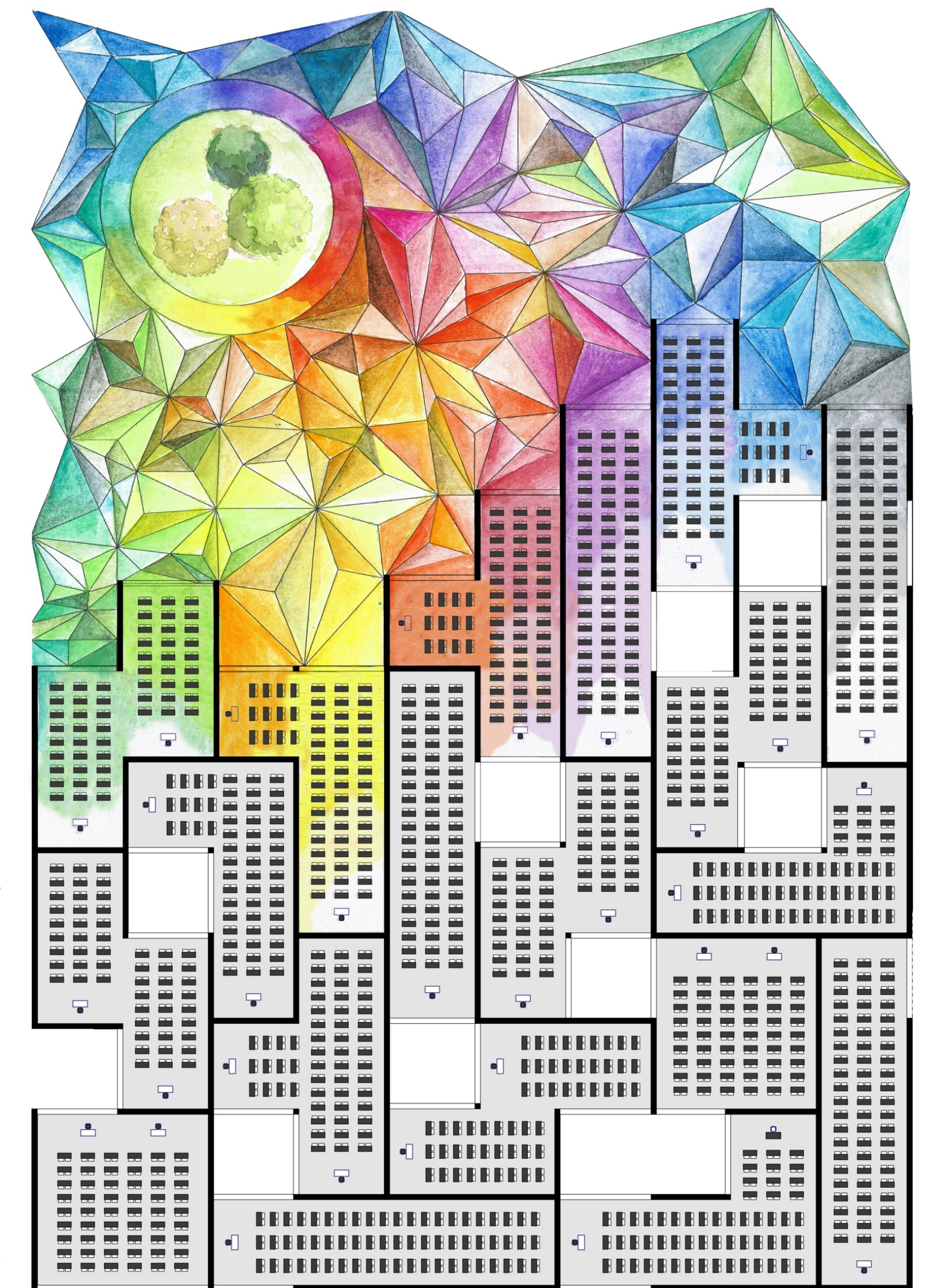


fig. 2
Heterotopien am Rande der Gesellschaft by Alina Sone



fig. 1
Entrance to the Floating University Berlin, Foto by Dalal Elarji