

warmth gathers us

The construction of a furnace picks up on various aspects of confrontation with a specific site. This site is a field in Rannersdorf Schwechat, which is about 21 km away from Vienna, Austria.

To make a fire on an open field picks up on various aspects from basal hominization to site specific cultivation. The very field in the immediate vicinity of Vienna, has been part of the city's granary – part of a now vacant and half demolished agriculture, forced to give way to newly built housing projects with questionable quality. The field and the ruin provide material for their own reactivation. The fire will be our tool, force and means. Consuming the field's straw it will transform the loamy soil into concrete objects and a furnace by Tabea Marschall and Anna Paul. In September 2021 it will be built and open in a public opening.

The field is about four hectares in size, there plants grain, hemp, lavender and roses, processed to oils and prospectively bread. The place provides „a solid foundation to build upon“- in Kant's words.¹ It informs the project on several levels. Clay, stone, bricks are foundations of architectural elements and have provided forms of symbolic communication.² Some of the first writing surfaces were made from clay and stone, the very materials used for the construction of the build environment we inhabit, whose facades communicate back to ourselves, crammed with kinetic energy and historicity.³ Cities were formed from the materials the surrounding landscape provided. Today materials travel the globe analogically creating indistinguishable architectures.

Making do with the existing is an opportunity to make a more sustainable plan and to create with the given.⁴ Building with materials from the surrounding can offer the joy of unpredictability and is a purely intuitive process of creation. A world of shapes opens up and allows a natural construction to emerge. It can grow and develop independently through the environment. Hands will reach for and gradually shape the wet clay. The fingers simply receive information from the clay reciprocally between crafted and the crafter.⁵

Finally, the construction process requires energy inputs in order to work. In order to use the furnace fire is needed, red, orange, white, blue flames. The relation between human beings and fire has been a productive and violent one dating back many millennia. It has something very primal and misty.

The fire offers a place to gather, to warm up, to come close to each other, to communicate, to cook, to tell stories and to conceive. It represents human (social) evolution, emergence of culture, but also human intervention in nature and the resulting dangers thereof. The origin of civilization – the fireplace – has disintegrated into different discrete devices, rendering its charms obsolete. The disappearance of the promethean technology can consequently be seen as another ruin utilized, fueling our action, informing and transforming the found materials, and thus creating place.

The approach of working with the found and given, provides formats and content in equal measure. New knowledge can arise from intuitive working, interacting, learning within the process, from collaborating, from groping in the dark. We want to turn on the light with simple means. We are hoping for the soil to be fired, transformed into ceramic. Our objective is to develop the firing, to expand the primal pit, by shaping the soil into the structure of a furnace. Openness is the common ground from which we sketch a place in its making. Our built interventions should be read as an invitation to get together. Working on the field, we leave familiar grounds behind and a new view opens up. It is an attempt to understand while still groping in the dark.

1 Frichot, Hélène: *Dirty Theory: Troubling Architecture*, pg. 12

2 Mattern, Shannon: *Code, Clay, Data, Dirt*, pg. 39

3 *ibid.*

4 Ruby, Ilka and Andreas: *The Materials Book* pg. 20

5 Malafouris, Lambors: *At the Potter's Wheel: An Argument for Material Agency*, pg.19