

How Are You?

Bruther

Hello, How are you? How did you sleep last night? Did you dream of me all night?

What would happen if we wanted to collect an architectural collection identical to a collection of paintings? Would it be possible to align the references, by reproducing them at their right scale and walking around within this "spatial gallery", contemplating the works as if they were in a museum? Something is already happening. These works are not just assemblies of materials or constructive lines. They are also spaces that spread beyond their rights-of-way. Each of these works creates a form of "magnetic field" around it that affects their surroundings. In fact, to want to bring these iconic works together in proximity is to produce contagion effects, or even to take the risk of a certain spatial interference. But let's take this risk! We can even bet that it will prove to be productive.

When we think about our references in the housing programme, we do not think about the simple parameter of domestic organization. It is not only a question of articulating typologies to, for example, create a "building-villas" or a "collage to live in".

Let's assume the idea of the collection to the end. And let us affirm the differences in scale between our references. Our architectural models are based on inspired design, resolving complex spatial and constructive issues, from a simple line to a simple assembly. This gesture, this momentum, we perceive it as well in the settings of a house-prototype as in the profile of a structural detail. We have verified it in a collage, or rather a simple superposition: the plan of Saint-Charles aux Quatre Fontaines by Borromini (1680) is part of the profiled outline of a pillar of the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome (1626). The same virtuosity of the play of curves and counter-curves is at work in a baroque church plan and the profile of a structural element. Like a fractal, the quality of the drawing is reflected at all scales. The detail and the whole thing are formally answered.

Our architectural appetites often push us towards "machine buildings", each piece of which is part of a general mechanics, even going so far as to give the impression that the building "breathes" and can come out of its immobility (cf. Pierre Chareau's La Maison de Verre in 1931 or John Lautner's Chemosphere in 1960). How, then, to make this attention perceptible: to demand the same attention on objects of different size

and utility. A collection of architectures must share this paradox. Rather than seeking unification, it is necessary to make these leaps of scale visible, but also to have fun making them practicable. A Dogon fireplace, Paul Nelson's suspended house (1938) or a post by Mies van der Rohe are equally worth seeing and even practising as such by the visitor.

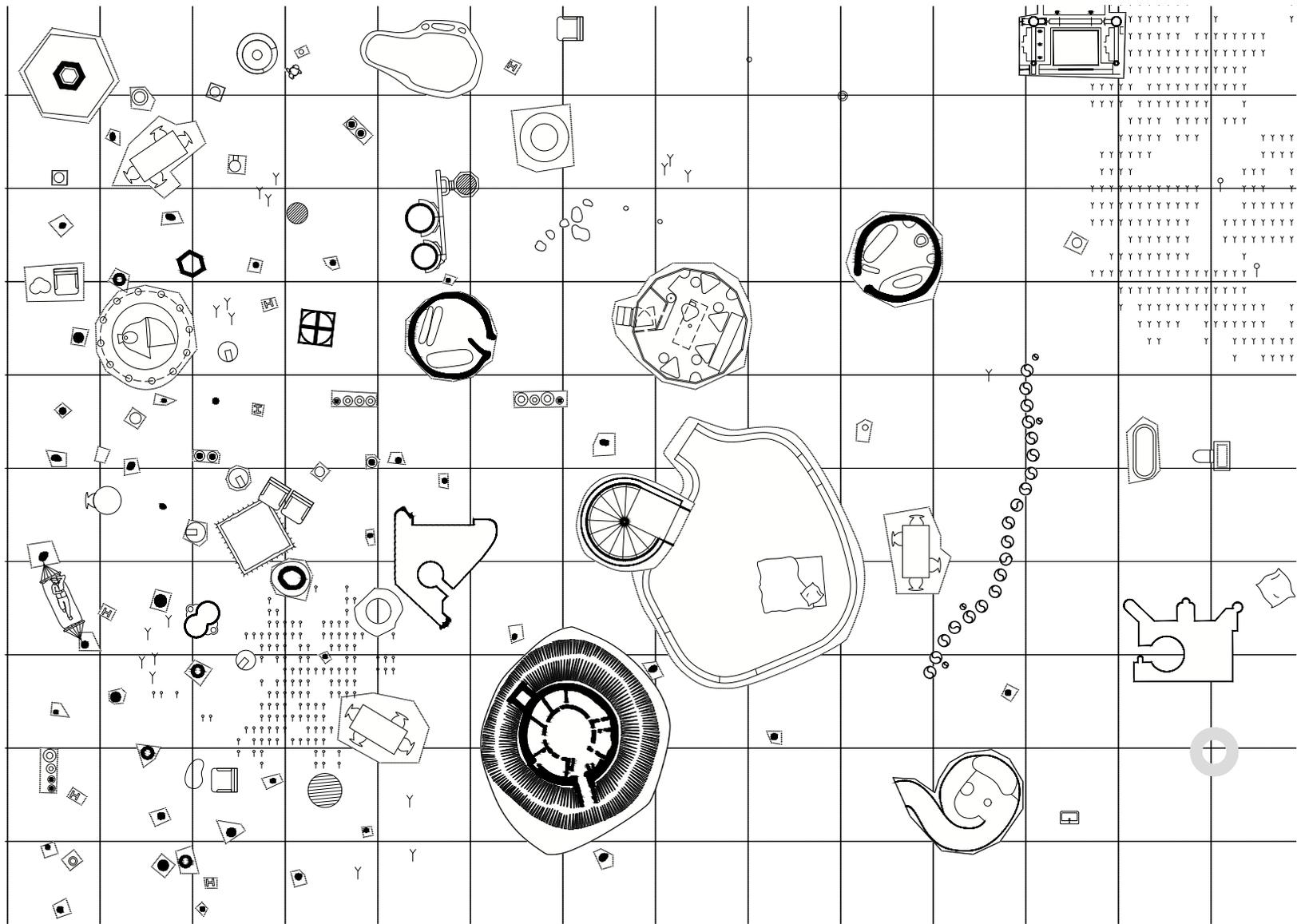
This is why we have made another challenge, as to the general organization of our "exhibition". Rather than seeking a reasoned articulation, which would lead our different references to the manner of a spatial chain (or even a rebus), we assume an almost wild juxtaposition of the elements in relation to each other. Rather than an overall plan, we propose a topological structure, based on two references that are a priori very distant from each other.

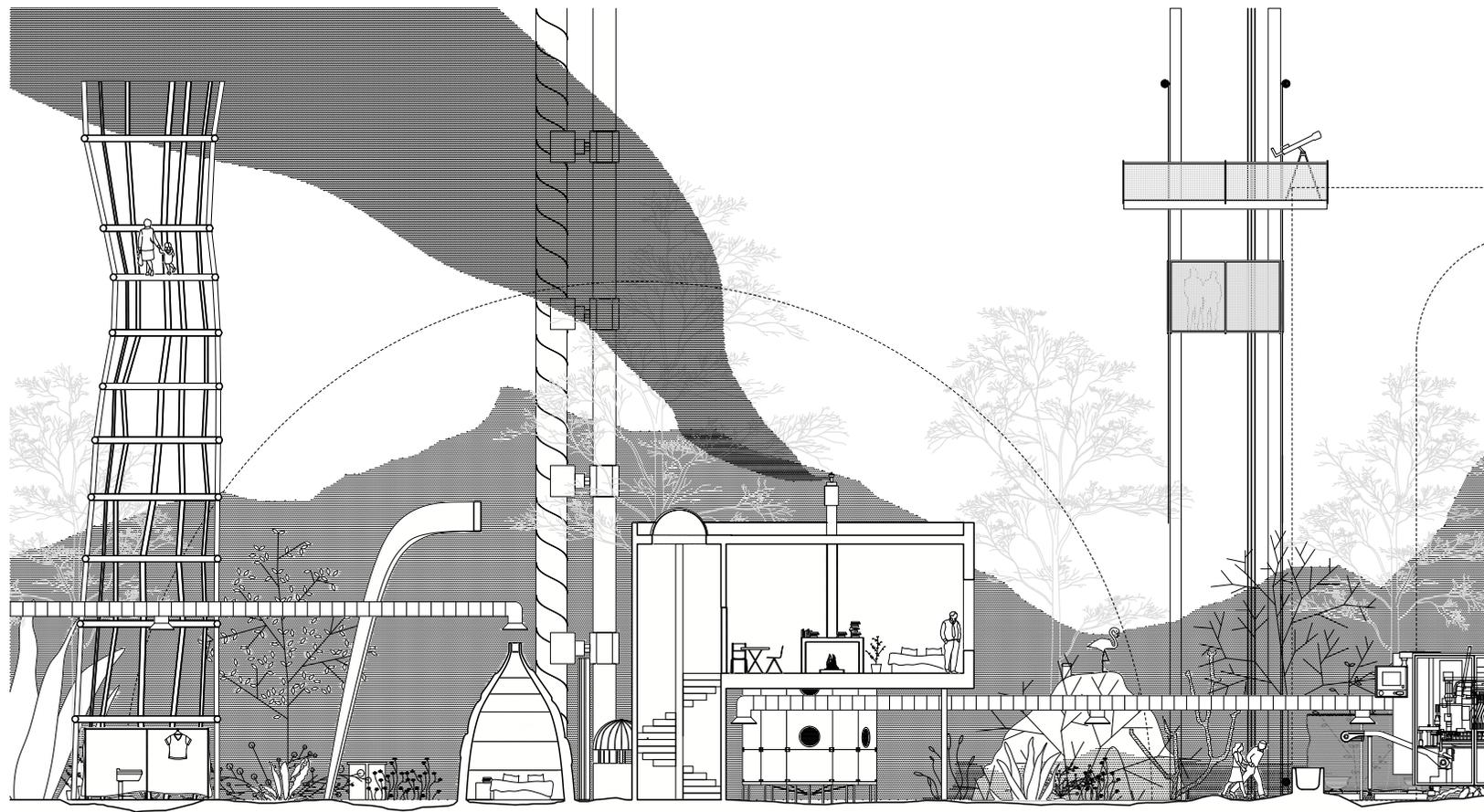
The first is a re-reading of an ancestral form of socialization. The model of the Musgum village in Cameroon inspires us without being taken literally. Is its circular shape the prefiguration of a "cluster urbanism"? Rather, we prefer to see it as a fractal structure, where the central public space is experienced as a social lung and the inside of the peripheral case-obuses as a "cell" of the overall plane.

The second reference is that of utopian plans, Archizoom's "paper urbanism", plans deliberately without scale, related to some malicious graphic games. It is precisely the playful dimension of the approach and the vagueness of its application that stimulate us. Moreover, these plans mainly draw an impulse. The strength of their lines and the sharpness of their graphics go beyond the limits of their own plans. It is an open structure that takes the opposite of counted surfaces and restricted perimeters. We also adopt it as a real thumbnail to the constraints of housing architecture where every square centimetre is measured.

Our overall plan is a moving constellation, marked by several circular elements. So many points of different thicknesses, which involve the visitor's body in different ways: grazing a gallery of poles, snuggling in a Dogon box, or entering a Toyo Ito tubular sheath, and looking up to see the sky as if through a virtual telescope.

In this respect, our architectural collection reflects our identity, that of a taste for the assembly of materials that, each time, reinvents the relationship of the parts to the whole, but going beyond the mere logic of the building. By allowing us to reaffirm architecture as a vehicle for a sensitive relationship between man and the world







Founded in 2007 by Stéphanie Bru and Alexandre Theriot, Bruther works in the fields of architecture, research, education, urbanism and landscape.