Malongen

A mimic of a rock

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When you are walking down along Renstiernasgata you are framed by the mountain on each side of the road. You will pass many old buildings placed upon the rock that can bring your memories back to another time. Then you enter Malangenparken with two new buildings. From a distance it almost looks like they also are placed on a rock, but with a closer look you realize it's just an artificial rock with very sharp edges in regular intervals. You enter the building in one of this edges, through a thick concrete wall that has a curved rusticated exterior and a very sharp smooth interior wall in. When you walk in to the gallery you will again be experienced by something familiar to the mountain that you passed on your way down the street. But in another expression again. It is a wooden pillar that has a shape of a rock but in the building works as a pillar that holds the floor together. One floor up, you will reach 4 different apartments where each residential have their own figure of the woodimitating rock. This project has investigated how you can create a contemporary building that refer to a historical site and keep telling a story about time.
Background

The rocks is clear and visible examples of how Stockholms cultural environment is formed on the basis of geological and topographical conditions. The cultural environment of the city has been shaped by the nature of the landscape. The ridges and mountains of the archipelago landscape have been guiding when the city has been expanded. It has both been about handle the terrain and how to use the mountains qualities.

At Södermalm there is a variety of visible rock cuts preserved. During the development of the city, large parts of the rock cuts have taken place. A rock cut is when a street has blown up through the mountain. The topography and the rock formations contribute strongly to Stockholms distinctive character and identity.

The mountain at Renstiernas gata, which was blown up in 1930, is both a mountain that acts as a city building element, but also a rock cut along the street. It is visible on each side of the street, through Vita bergen. It clearly describe the historical spread of the mountain. The two rock bodies provide together an understanding of how the topography of the place has been seen before the implementation of the street regulation. In that way, the site; Malongenparken, which I have been workingh with, speaks a story about Stockholms history.

The rock that was once blown up and created the rock cut on Renstiernasgata has now been copied into a new form with the purpose of investigating how we can shape a building with contemporary expressions. And at the same time a clear connection to the history of the site and provide a visual story of the time: we live in now, where the design of this project is a result of the technology.

The project Malongen consist of 2 volumes containing housing, gallery, art-recidence and a restaurant. The buildings works to explore the tension between the historical mountain cut and an design interaction. By an digital imitation of the rock are the buildings in Malongen mimic the the surrounding area. The unregular base on the building, that comes from a digital scan of the exploded mountain, work as a steady base for the woodconstruction, but it is also ask the question about what a contemporary expression is? Is it the outcome of the technology that creates the expression? In the same way as architect Sam Jacobs have I tried to create a copy with 3D scanning of an existing object, with an aim to get a new expression in a new material that can be read as a new object but still refer to the rock that was previously there. vad har han använt för begrepp. Vad har han gjort och vad har jag gjort. Begrepp!
The neighborhood around Malongenparken has a diversity of architecture. The housing area north of the plot consists of small-scale and freely planned wood and stone buildings. The area is characterized by terrain-adapt low-rise buildings along small-scale roads. The simple wooden buildings are built directly on the rock as a visible base.
The site is currently in a process for a new housing project. There have been many discussions back and forth about building on this site. Stockholm’s beauty council had a clear guidelines for what rules of conduct they believe the site requires. The Beauty Council describes the place cultural historical value in equal value with Stockholm’s castle.

The council was founded in 1919 by politician Fredrik Ström after Anna Lindhagen. She was the one who raised the issue to preserve older poor homes in Södermalm. Building that was described as “the city’s most crappy houses” by the August Strindberg. Lindhagen meant that a demolition of them would be to erase some of the city’s history. The buildings are today classified as blue-labeled, which means they are property with cultural historical value, corresponds to the requirements for the building memories of the cultural heritage act. The main focus of the council is to take care of existing values and give rise to new values in the city.

I started my thesis by making an interview with Henrik Nerlund, who is the president of the council, to be able to work on the project in both an investigative way but also in a reality-based way.

This was gain an understanding of how we think architects should work with the design of a new building on a cultural-historical site in Sweden. The council believes that housing projects should work to blend with the surrounding area, as a everyday architecture. While public buildings can be designed with more expression and with investigative architecture. In this way, has the architects in Sweden more freedom in the design of an public building. The council’s views on the development of the Malongenparken have primarily concerned with the old wooden houses that were chosen to be preserved. The thesis project has played with the design of the simple cottage on a mountain. And also played with the expression of a public building vs housing by designing a building that can operate in both ways.
Method

The digital tools have served as a helping hand in my design process from the first day of my thesis. After I visited the site, I realized that the base will have a significant role in the project. Whether the buildings around Malougen are on a part of the mountain or not, they are all characterized by their clearly designed base. By making an image trace of some selected bases, and then creating a shape from a digital file, was I able to create 3 new models of each base and read them with a new expression. By working with this method in my process have I created my own library to make decisions. The digital tools cannot make the decision for you but you can learn how you take or not take control over the result.
Heightfield drawing
Digital reading of buildings around the plot
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Heightfield drawing
Digital reading of buildings around the plot
Sketchmodels of element from site
The design language of the base on the buildings in Malongen comes from the digital scan of the rock around 30 meters north of the plot. It consisting of 6x4 meter concrete blocks that acts as a solid heel for the simple glulam construction to rest on. It also poses the question of what a contemporary expression is? Is it the result of the technology I used to create in the expression? The digital tools have served as a helping hand in my design process from the first day of my thesis. And by stepping out from a digital file and creating something analytic of it, you always find new qualities that you would not find if you didn't went this way. One example of this, is the vertical edges on the concrete blocks that comes from the file when I created the mold. That gives the material tactility that I didn't expected from the beginning but then could play with in different scale and so on.

I made a copy of the rock, but with an quest to get a new expression in a new material that can refer to the stone. An expression of the heavy base in concrete and another for the cnc-milled glulam pillar, which both serves as a bearing element but also as a spatial quality for each apartment. The two forms come from the same file but have been handled in different ways and therefore speak different languages. The rock, that is the historical imprint of the place is now translated into building elements with the result of my manipulation of the file.
Image of rock

Photogrammetry model of the image
The woodcopy

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Pinewood glued together

Cnc milling of woodblock
The wood-copy
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Isometric sketch of apartment