

## **HOUSE 2 - COUNTER CITY: a wood frame 240 square metre public installation in Zurich, collaboratively built by EPFL's ALICE laboratory**

HOUSE 2 - COUNTER CITY ([www.countercity.ch](http://www.countercity.ch)) is a 240 square metre public architectural installation situated next to the Toni-Areal in Zurich. The project is based on an experimental format for collaborative design and construction conceived by ALICE (Atelier de la Conception de l'Espace) — a laboratory of EPFL led by Dieter Dietz.

Erected in less than 10 days, the project involved 200 first-year students, who prefabricated all the built elements of the installation in Lausanne and transported them across Switzerland in six shipping containers to Zurich, where they unloaded and re-assembled them as a full-size ephemeral structure. **Devoted to social and cultural events, the public installation is not a homogenous architecture, but rather, the result of various different contributions. Each offers an approach to spatial appropriation by many voices, in a dialogical process that questions the quality of public life in view of growing cities around the globe.** In reference to Richard Sennett's recent book *"Together"*, strong emphasis is given to the notion of collectivity and the negotiation of space of social difference. The project works as a pedagogical tool that materializes these topics in the design-build process, and in its physical and spatial parameters.

The previous year's experiment, HOUSE 1, was the configuration of an archetypal house collectively built as an in-vitro condition: an on-campus installation in Lausanne, by students for students. The rooms of HOUSE 1 were engaged primarily in forming a series of interior relations: **HOUSE 2 has evolved from this premise, turning outwards, setting itself in relation to the city, and becoming a common place of activity and urban participation.**

In order to foster civic engagement, ALICE, in close collaboration with the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), has jointly programmed a series of events for summer 2017 to take place in the context of the installation, between May 31st and June 15th. These include guided tours, theatre and music performances, a sound installation, symposia, student critiques and exhibitions, and an open-air cinema.

To quote Dieter Dietz, *"through these activities, HOUSE 2 expands the practice of collaboration into the public sphere of the city. As a forum installation, it provides a space for active exchange, debate and discussion involving the entire community."*

From Zurich West, HOUSE 2 will travel on to Lausanne, where it will take on a new form and new programme during the summer of 2017. In autumn, the structure will be disassembled and the wood preserved to be reconfigured into HOUSE 3 for 2018.

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