La Vita è Bella examines architecture as an active process to increase quality of life. We analyse our immediate environment and intervene on-site in the urban reality.

Through sketching, walking, talking and building we acquire knowledge and uncover new potentials and perspectives, which are directly tested in practice through the 1:1 prototype.

TEAM
Lovis Caputo
Sarah Kueng
Michelle Geilinger
Nicolas Rothenbühler

WORKSHOP
Susanne Kaelin

GUEST CRITICS
Gian Trachsler
Li Tavor
Our actual world is surrounded by an infinity of other possible worlds.¹

La Vita è Bella is the collective attempt to explore design processes. We face the discomfort of the unknown by asking what if questions. Based on our desires we map out a possible future. To carry out this research, we build 1:1 prototypes, walk through the city, and visit our homes. We observe and question the reality, test ideas, and challenge the limits.

¹ 3. Lubomir Dolezel, Heterocosmica, Fiction and Possible Worlds
This studio engages with the question of how people appropriate their surroundings in the private and public sphere. How do we adopt and intervene in this world? By means of built interventions and collective activities, we investigate space in its proportions and dimensions.
We think and design in 1:1. Only the scale of reality exists. The potential of these prototypes lies in the immediate experience of a physical concept. Thinking in the 1:1 prototype as an idea calls for a spontaneous, detailed approach.
The 1:1 prototypes are the built fragment of a possible future and the realistic argument of the project. They are proof that we can change the way we think about the future. From imaginative speculation to constructive details, we shape and define the reality to come.
By experiencing a space through our body and senses, we create a spatial argument that becomes the foundation of our discussions. To sharpen this arguments and our vocabulary of space, we need to repeat this process again and again.
During the semester, we develop a collective memory. Walking is more than just relocating ourselves, it is a tool to start a dialogue within the group and to create an alternative understanding of the urban territories we live in. The studio investigates the idea of collective learning and questioning as a design process.
The collision of different interests creates a versatile and shared memory. Through the receptivity of learning from others and the erasure of personal authorship, unforseeable, surprising and unexpectedly rare things are possible.
The field of interventions spans from your intimate bedroom to the public square. First, we test our arguments in 1:1 prototypes in a private room and explore possible implications in real life. By analysing the 1:1 draft collectively, we question what is common perception and what is individual assumption.
In a next step, the 1:1 intervention moves from the room to the city. The relocation of a spatial idea from the intimate living space to the urban context questions boundaries between private and public space. It gives rise to social and spatial questions in an inevitable but playful way. Urban initiatives organised by students for students highlight collective interests in the city and landscape.

THE CITY

Self-managed Parko Navarinou, Exarchia Athens, 2008
The former parking lot was occupied by the neighborhood and transformed into public green space.

Parko Navarinou, Exarchia Athens, 2008

1:1 Intervention, Exercise Relocation, Diana Nabky, HS20

Nanda Vigo, Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, 1970
1 Total Space
   Museum für Gestaltung Zürich
   2020

2 Anyway Part of It
   EPDM Granules, Steel
   2016

3 Sand Chair
   Pigment colored sand-mortel mixture
   2018

4 Fendi Furniture
   Bricks, Leather
   Miami 2019

5 Corner Tables
   Cast hydraulic bound gypsum,
   pigments, tartan
   2017

6 To hard to be true
   Diverse marble
   2014

7 In the Middle of Nowhere
   Plywood Slats, Plastic Belts
   2015
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
The Room: You will build a 1:1 intervention in your bedroom.
Sleep Over Week: During one week, each student sleeps in the room of a fellow student.
You will work alone and in groups of two up to five.

KEYWORDS
Collective Activities, Building, Urban Appropriation, 1:1, Walking, Discussing, Approving

LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the course, the student will be able to:
- Analyse the immediate environment through walking research and develop techniques to record and map the experiences
- Develop a consistent architectural concept
- Design in 1:1 scale. Various techniques for a fast-paced design process
- Develop a thesis based on the students’ own desire
- Develop strategies to moderate a discussion and cultivate a dialogue

TEACHING METHODS
Research, Analysis, Concept, Draft, Implementation
- Question the common architectural design process
- Process-oriented
- Working with proportions
- Test design through actual experience
- Visualize concept three-dimensionally
- Appropriation of new methods through repetition

ASSESSMENT METHODS
Discussion within collective
Weekly meetings
Intermediate critics
Individual and collective assessment depending on the task

LITERATURE
- Voyage Autour de ma Chambre, Xavier de Maistre, 1795
- In Praise of Shadows, Junichiro Tanizaki, 1977
- Living in Motion: Design and Architecture for Flexible Dwelling, Vitra Design Museum, 2002
- Nomadic Furniture, James Hennessey, 1973
- Ettore Sottsass - Adesso però, Ettore Sottsass, Hatje Verlag, 1993