THE WHY FACTORY AT CTU PRAGUE

Winy Maas, the founder of the Why Factory and MVRDV, will be visiting professor at the Faculty of Architecture of CTU in Prague, during two semesters within the academic year 22/23 with The Why Factory, the think-tank he directs at TU Delft in the Netherlands.
Together with a team of 3 teachers and one assistant (Javier Arpa Fernandez, Adrien Ravon, Lex te Loo and Simon Knettig), Winy Maas will share the Why Factory's methodology of research by design throughout both the Winter and Spring semesters.

The Why Factory wants to research and visualize the city of the future. It does this through studios and publications. It engages itself in a public debate on architecture and urbanism, and therefore The Why Factory's findings are communicated to a broad public in a variety of ways, including exhibitions, publications, workshops, and panel discussions.

On that score, students are invited to participate in collective research aiming at producing a spatial installation in the atriums of the faculty building at the end of each semester. Each installation is understood as a call for action to design professionals, policy makers and the public. The Why Factory calls thus for students interested in conceptualising, narrating, scripting, visualising, presenting, and making -collectively- better future cities and environments.

At the core of The Why Factory's campaign is a series of books —the 'Future Cities Series'— where the results of both design studios will be published.

The studios will dream about the future World and the future CZ.

During the Winter semester (*Next Planet* design studio), The Why Factory will look at the current planetary urgencies and to possible interventions to construct alternative futures for our planet For further details, see description below. In the Spring semester (*Czech Checks* design studio), the focus will be put in the analysis of the Czech Republic's situation and the proposal of a myriad interventions aimed at triggering a discussion around the country's future. This will be done together with many institutions in the Czech Republic. The description of this studio will follow shortly.

Introductory public lectures will be organized at the start of the studios as well as conclusive public debates at the end at the openings of the exhibitions and the launch of the publications afterwards.

NEXT PLANET
Winter Semester 22/23.

Earth is our home; Earth supports us and contains all known life in the universe. But our home is threatened: climate breakdown, population growth, deforestation, pollution, income disparities – just to name just a few – are accelerating tremendously. These urgencies demand action and -more than ever- imagination from all of us, from citizens to designers to policy makers.

It is obvious that it is time to begin thinking about our planet in completely new ways. Both the built and the non-built environment have become fundamentally different in many aspects, but we are still trying to physically define it in the same way as before. And we are almost paralyzed in what seems to be a splintered and contradictory reality. On the one hand cities and communities are highly individualistic and increasingly based on the individual unit, and on the other hand global connectivity and awareness is proliferating in almost all our daily activities. There is a need to find ways of bringing together these two extremities – the individual and the collective – from both ends and both conceptually and practically, into possible constructions.

Next Planet is an invitation to pursue collective aspirations instead of cultivating individual dreams by elaborating a new common, global, agenda and formulating hypothetical planetary scenarios for the future. During the design studio at CTU, students will explore a myriad of issues (from the smallest to the largest scale) -one by one-, trying to reveal how the planet will change in technical, social, or economical terms when looking at one variable at a time.

Can we make a planet that can cool down instead of warming up? Can we make a truly green world by reforesting the deserts and covering our cities in vegetation?

How does a scenario of overall equality, freedom or self-sufficiency materialize on our planet? How do automation, nanomaterials, robotics, or biotechnology contribute to the production of a healthier world? If the dense, diverse, and intense city is the one that best responds to the collective need of saving resources and limiting global warming, how can it fulfil our individual desires at the same time?

What urban forms might appear from those scenarios? What architecture, what landscape, what urban design could support such urbanity? What ecosystems, transport networks or infrastructure would emerge?...
Can we imagine a world with no hunger by changing agricultural methods?

Students will produce a collection of interventions on the Planet - from the very small (XXS) to the very large scale (XXL) -. We will study their impact at the planetary scale and produce the corresponding calculations. All these interventions will be placed on a common section of the Earth's Crust developed jointly by the whole group and we will study their implementation and development throughout time.

The final step will be to deepen that section (a 2D tool) and transform it into a 3D installation aimed at occupying the main atrium of the Faculty of Architecture: a sort of hanging *Next Planet,* a mini ball where plants, stairs, pipes, steam, water or tiny houses cohabit, representing a truly new cosmology meant to be a call for action to all members of the CTU community and, hopefully, way beyond.