

Uncharted Waters

Navigating the journey of coming out as queer later in life can evoke a debilitating balancing act between diverse societal norms and personal authenticity. It is vital to recognize the choice to come out or remain closeted is deeply personal and equally valid. Not all cultures consider coming out a common goal, and sexual desire does not necessarily constitute a significant or static aspect of one's identity. In the film *Twilight's Kiss* (Ray Yeung, 2019) the protagonists Pak and Hoi decide to maintain secrecy about their sexuality. Despite having long suppressed their sexual desires, they take pride in the families they've built, and they value the mutual support and dependency of their nuclear family structure. Coming out is often mistaken as a permanent circumstance in life, yet it is much more a fluid evolution of degrees and variations to whom and for how long one is out of the closet. Regardless of the path one chooses, what matters most is that individuals have access to supportive resources that prioritize their mental, physical, and sexual health.

To provide for the whole spectrum of "coming out", part of the Parkhaus Pfingstweid is transformed. The typology of the conventional hotel, of which there are many in the area, is adapted and queered to accommodate different temporalities that emerge when coming out as queer in later life. Rooms can be rented for any duration, ranging from spontaneous flings to long-term shared living. The ambiguity of the rooms is achieved through joker rooms, which can be connected to the standard rooms as required. The bathrooms and kitchenettes are made versatile through open pipe fittings which can be easily adapted. The water pipeline is installed exposed along the internal corridor, through which one can access the rooms discreetly. They end in a drinking fountain in the winter garden. The ramp space serves the communal infrastructure such as shared kitchen and laundry.

The public facilities of the hotel are in the lightweight extension on the roof. This intervention evokes memories of the *Tente Rouge*, an aphrodisiac boudoir that was an interim use on the roof of the Parkhaus Pfingstweid between 2005 and 2008. The extension permits a liberation from the confining existing structure. Here one finds the reception for the hotel and bathing house, relaxation and massage rooms, a sun bathing terrace and a restaurant. Flexible gathering spaces can be appropriated for political and social gatherings. Rain water is collected from the roof and stored in attached water towers. It is then transported into the building for uses such as toilet flushing and laundry.

A queer bathing house submerged beneath the surface of the Parkhaus Pfingstweid complements the program of the hotel. The bathing house is an infrastructure seeped with tradition, ranging from places for cleansing rituals to a mode of daily social interaction to a place of sexual encounters. The bathing house facilitates relations among elderly queer individuals - as a place of self-care and rejuvenation, as well as a refuge where intricate spatial configurations allow cruising to unfold. Cruising as intimate encounters, but also as a political appropriation of space by those who feel excluded and undesired in existing facilities. The schedule designates specific times for different gender identities and sexual orientations.

Anonymous access for those who are closeted is maintained through the remaining decks of public parking and an additional elevator to the south, that functions as the connecting element between the reception and facilities on the roof and the bathing house below. External water pipes on the north facade also subtly suggest an interconnection between the roof and the underground.

The parking and the hotel function as a double trojan horse for the general public, veiling the naked truth of the transformed inner life of the Parkhaus Pfingstweid.