

Value of Transformations

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The urban framework of today's Seoul has rooted in the rapid urban expansion. Standardization of design due to quantitative expansion seemed to bring homogeneity into urban landscape, however if one tries to walk around the streets of Seoul, he can find more of diversity than homogeneity. The diversity comes from the residents. For the purpose of securing even one more square meter, buildings keep equipping themselves with new architectural solutions and end up exhibiting a new design different from the original, usually defined by laws, institutions and economic feasibility. This extension process crossing the line between legal and illegal would worsen the living environment, but could add the qualitative value, a storytelling of people on the quantitative frameworks.

The 36 architects' works embodied this transformation into each architects' own design language. Because most of them are small sized multi-family housings or rental commercial buildings, there are not so fancy or glamorous. But based upon the efficiency and economic feasibility, they are attempting to find extra spaces containing the storytelling of people's lives. Balconies, rooftops and attics which were reinterpreted by the residents of mass-produced housing units, have now transformed and appeared as more practical, aesthetical and integrated beings by the architects. Feeding on efforts to gain some more living spaces within a private premise, those extra spaces help to build residents communities and enrich urban streetscapes by giving more depth to the boundaries between architecture and city. They are containing the DNA of existing mass-produced buildings in our cities, abundant narratives of the lives of residents and, at the same time, architecture's obligations and responsibilities for city and society.

A city in which all sorts of people are living together always shows different faces. And when architectures and cities, even though they are built upon principles prioritizing quantitative values or systems, start to display scenes of daily life, and when we come to experience them, we will see each section of their spaces disclosing its own face. The 36 works is capturing such diversity and reproducing it in a refined form in city. However, these outcomes will be translated again into another form by residents, and then architects will continue to develop new solutions under the given circumstances. After all, architectural creativity comes out of such mutual interactions.