

Est-ce ainsi

When I was first introduced to the work of “Est-ce ainsi”, I was struck by its poignancy but mainly by the fact that it seemed to be so pertinent to our world today. One thing is for sure, the work is anthropocentric. At the time when architectural investigations that are based on the performance of new software and the invention of new, difficult to describe forms, the work stands out in its stark simplicity. And, even though digital work that is challenging and complex seems to be satisfied by its own existence and it relies on visual stimulation without focusing on the human subject, the work we are talking about is humble, simple, inexpensive by design and, most of all, it has to be used, it has to be lived, it is intended to be part of the lebenswelt.

The minute we consider the superminimum relative to our contemporary culture, it is evident that the word itself implies a resistance to our dominant culture and values. I imagine the word itself as a program for architectural interventions and the work presented by Est-ce ainsi as a response to this program.

It is oppositional to the dominant late capitalist penchant for bigness, large gestures, wealth and especially aestheticized wealth, complacency and the larger tendency to naturalize these conditions. Instead, we witness a concern for the quotidian, the everyday, a concern for an architecture that addresses the individual in a way that respects the agency and wishes of the client. And so it is that we can identify how this work is related to the processes and practices of processes and practices an architectural avant-garde.

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