

## Cornered Rooms

How do you corner a room? What defines a room? A corner? What happens when a person is trapped or cornered into a corner? These questions within the context of anxiety are of interest for the exhibition project entitled "Cornered Rooms". The project is about an awkward feeling of walls caving in. What happens at this point of intersection of two converging lines? How is time and space experienced? The situation concerns an individual between two ninety-degree angles while inside a room of a building. How does he or she confront the possibility of no escape?

Juxtapose a situation of no escape against contemporary architecture's preoccupation with 'exit situations'. Rather than welcoming 'entry situations', exit spaces and escape routes have since 9/11 and the competition for Ground Zero become increasingly important.<sup>1</sup> Buildings codes of escape route codifications predominating corridors arise after catastrophes.<sup>2</sup> 'Exit architecture' as defined by Stephan Trüby in his book "Exit – Architecture Design Between War and Peace", 2008 is a key text for this project. The book provides a backdrop to work from. Stephan Trüby asks, "What is the best way to leave architecture behind you?"<sup>3</sup> 'Exit architecture' is not a roof of safety but a building construction to flee from. If the new normal is insecurity a culture marked by risk and fear, the corner is claustrophobic and provides no means for escape. The corner may serve as a metaphor for our social condition. This could offer one possible starting point for this project. If buildings transform and shape us, where and how does the corner position us? How can the cornering of a room trigger transformation? What could happen next using experimentation and intuition? Can this particular space of experience create a positive exchange for reflection?

The exhibition project "Cornered Rooms" structured as a process will result in an exhibition in London. The project begins with an email invitation to selected artists. A critical exchange of ideas through texts and images will begin. During the first phase of the project, artists are invited to submit a proposal regardless of limitations such as budget, time schedule, or physical confinements. Each invited artist can forward the invitation to only one other artist, if they wish. As the project develops, artists will be informed of the project's progression. The ideal situation begins the project. An ideal exhibition space for the project is either of multiple rooms or temporary walls, which create corners for display creating a labyrinth structure. Each room or corner will display an individual work. Thus, corners provide not only the content of the work but also provide the exhibition architecture. The works on display will interconnect to produce in-between creative spaces depending on their positioning.

The second phase of the project is marked with limitations where the production of "Cornered Rooms" materializes. The location and budget for the project are determined. During this phase of the project, some proposals may no longer function within the real exhibition space within a limited budget, and some works may no longer relate within the context of the other works. Therefore, while the beginning marks a period of inclusion the later of the project later will be marked by exclusion by means of selection based on the above criteria. "Cornered Rooms" seeks to cross-reference disciplines among discursive levels. The project asks how can we occupy space in new and abstract ways? How can we return to the 'corner' formerly known as the corner of refuge and of prized immobility?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Stephan Trüby, *Exit – Architecture Design Between War and Peace*, trans. Robert Payne, (Wien: Springer, 2008), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Gaston Bachelard, 'Corners', in *The Poetics of Space. The Classical Look at How we Experience Intimate Places*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. trans. Maria Jolas, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), p. 137.