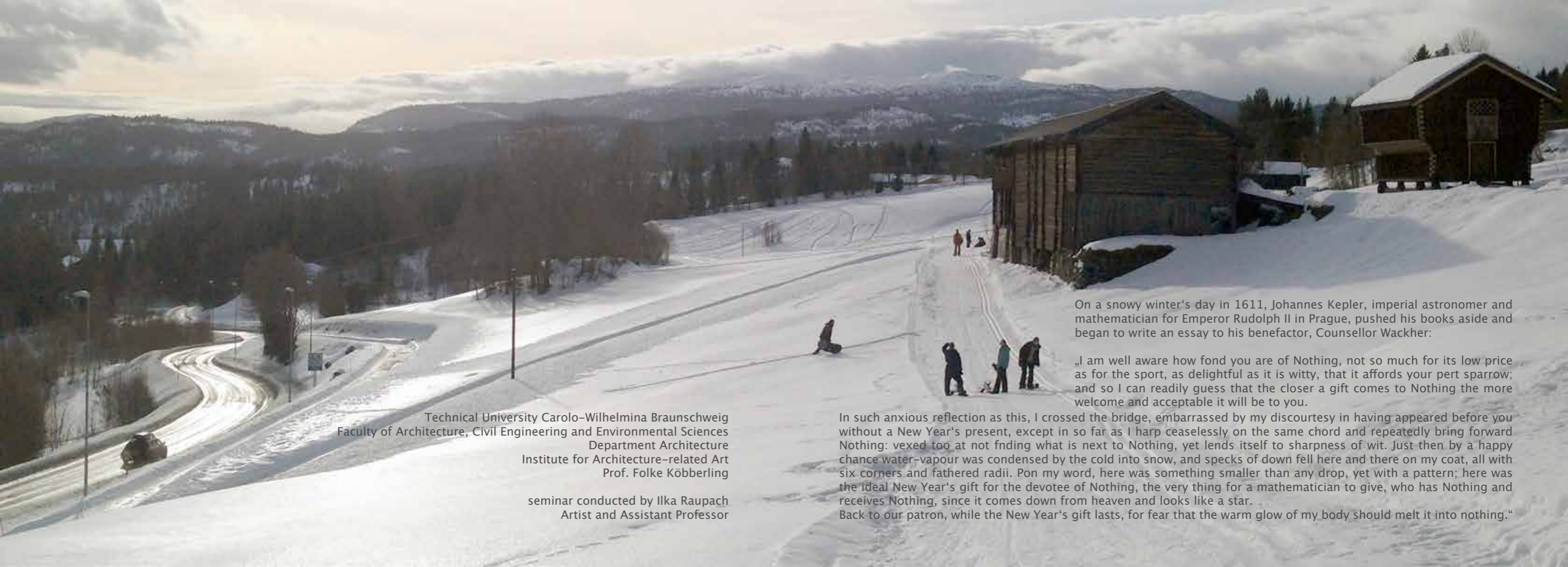




NIX

VINJE SNØFORMING 2019



Technical University Carolo-Wilhelmina Braunschweig
Faculty of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Environmental Sciences
Department Architecture
Institute for Architecture-related Art
Prof. Folke Köbberling

seminar conducted by Ilka Raupach
Artist and Assistant Professor

On a snowy winter's day in 1611, Johannes Kepler, imperial astronomer and mathematician for Emperor Rudolph II in Prague, pushed his books aside and began to write an essay to his benefactor, Counsellor Wackher:

„I am well aware how fond you are of Nothing, not so much for its low price as for the sport, as delightful as it is witty, that it affords your pert sparrow; and so I can readily guess that the closer a gift comes to Nothing the more welcome and acceptable it will be to you.

In such anxious reflection as this, I crossed the bridge, embarrassed by my discourtesy in having appeared before you without a New Year's present, except in so far as I harp ceaselessly on the same chord and repeatedly bring forward Nothing: vexed too at not finding what is next to Nothing, yet lends itself to sharpness of wit. Just then by a happy chance water-vapour was condensed by the cold into snow, and specks of down fell here and there on my coat, all with six corners and fathered radii. Pon my word, here was something smaller than any drop, yet with a pattern; here was the ideal New Year's gift for the devotee of Nothing, the very thing for a mathematician to give, who has Nothing and receives Nothing, since it comes down from heaven and looks like a star. Back to our patron, while the New Year's gift lasts, for fear that the warm glow of my body should melt it into nothing.“



In naming his essay, Kepler consciously played with words and made a pun with the word nix: In Latin, the language in which he composed the essay, the word means „snowflake,“ but in Low German, Kepler’s native tongue, it means „nothing.“ The entire passage opens Kepler’s wonderful essay on forms of transient snow crystals and he called it „A New Year’s Gift, or On the six-cornered Snowflake“. At its core, the essay functions as a meditation on the nature of substance: if a snowflake, crafted of water vapor, melts momentarily, is it anything at all?

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International Snow Festival in Vinje, Norway 2019

Like Kepler, we feel inspired to form something out of nothing that disappears again into nothingness and thus remains in motion. During the best winter weather and with great effort, we move 220 tons of snow and press them into cube shapes made of wooden framework. With the beginning of our sculpturing process, extremely thawing weather conditions turn us into observers of the rapid transformation process. With a twinkle in our eyes, we have to accept the situation as it is, suiting too well to our seminar topic of this year – the NOTHING. In the spirit of Kepler, it seems like a symbol to his work.

The fallen snow lies over the landscape, like a huge soft white blanket. It covers and hides the things and spaces underneath, protects them from the cold. It turns them into secrets, only the daring ones can still make a guess. Or these things appear more clearly, by reducing the form and color, making them more visible.

In our sculptural work NIX, we combine the phenomena of snow and folding. Similar to snow, folds are transitions with no clear inside and outside, formed and reformed within their adventures over the time. The folded space is highly complex and in motion. Due to this transformative aspect the folds and the snow become diverse and unique.

We build a gigantic folded blanket of snow. The shape fits into the surrounding tectonics of the landscape, hilly mountain landscape with round-edged hilltops shaped through the ice age. The folding describes an inner cavity, that can be passed by several bodies or is partially visible. Due to the bending of the object, the empty space is only completely understood within the traversing of it.

Eight architecture students from the Technical University in Braunschweig, Germany participated in the *International Snow Festival in Vinje*, Norway from the 10th to the 18th of February 2019. For the eighth time students from Braunschweig had the chance to explore the transient materiality of the snow under the guidance of Ilka Raupach, Artist and Assistant Professor at the Institute for Architecture-related Art with Prof. Folke Köbberling. – Ilka Raupach

Packed in thick winter jackets, with heavy snow boots, big backpacks and bags full of gloves, caps and thermal underwear we are standing at the airport in Oslo in the morning hours, while outside the snow is melting due to the temperature. We followed the call to attend the snow festival in Vinje in the Telemark, about a 4 hour bus ride away from Oslo in the directions of Bergen, into the beautiful snow landscape of Norway.

There are nine of us, a mixed group of Bachelor and Master students and Ilka Raupach, a sculptor, our seminar leader and a real snow expert. For the eighth time Ilka is going to Vinje to build snow sculptures and still she is full of enthusiasm for Norway, for this excursion and for snow as a sculpting material.

The closer we get to our destination, the more sparsely the area is populated, the more snow there is and the colder it gets, even if, as we later learn, it is much too warm for Norwegian conditions and the snow depth is much too low. We, the Germans, who are used to brown, muddy snow colored by dirt and exhaust fumes, are impressed by the white winter landscape. Once there we live at the camp site in small, cosy cabins, each with a fireplace. One hut is our meeting point for cooking and eating together, but also to discuss how to build the snow sculpture, how to rethink it from the small clay model into the material of snow.

In Braunschweig, where we all study architecture at the Technical University of Braunschweig, we met once a week to design the shape of our sculpture. Nothing. That was and is the motto for our work. In preparation we studied various artists and their sculptures. We learned from Johannes Kepler how snow crystals function and experienced their incredible diversity. After making many drafts for our topic we agreed on a form – it lies like a cloth with many folds across the landscape. This shape creates spaces in between the folds, which create a tremendous amount of intensity, even though they are actually „nothing“. From three massive snow cubes placed one behind the other, we create a cloth of snow that seems to fold easily, and floats more than it lies, thus taking the heaviness out of the wet snow and making it appear light.

The sculptures at the Snow Festival in Vinje, are usually made of 3 m x 3 m x 3 m snow cubes. Us students create, build and fix these cubes within two days before the event starts. This is not a simple task; it requires a lot of strength and results in wet clothing. The force of the snow, when it is pressed against a frame and compressed is remarkable. Therefore the frame must be secured well, to prevent the mass of snow to break it. To prepare the cubes for our sculpture and those of the other participants, we processed a total amount of 220 tons of snow, compressing it and scraping it out again. While staying in Vinje, we had the chance to visit the stave church in Eidsborg, a traditional Norwegian wooden building – a must see for future architects. The secret of success behind our trip was a well-balanced program: building the snow cubes, tobogganing to relax and finally the highlight was to create the sculpture. We were given a very warm welcome in Vinje. Snow is an incredibly versatile material. We had to pile it up, compress it and then again scrape it, shovel it and hollow it out in order to create „nothing“ and also to realize that nothing is not nothing after all. At the end of our trip we visited another Norwegian architectural highlight, the opera in Oslo. After one week of snow and ice in Vinje, the icy opera roof was no problem for us and offered us a beautiful view over the city.

Unfortunately, this was the last time Ilka conducted a seminar in Norway as part of her work at the TU Braunschweig. To us, this trip was a unique experience and needs to be held up. – Veit Auch





To me the changeability and the level of detail of snow very surprising. Snow as a building material is incredibly versatile and can be used well if the temperatures are right. – Jana Asmus

To create something so big out of nothing, with just a few shovels and many busy hands, is something special that I will remember for a long time to come.
– Tilman Schumacher

„Snow is my friend“

I grew up in a family that loved to ski. Thus, I had to become a friend of this cold, white and sometimes unpleasant material, because we used to be outside in the snow many times, with sleds, skis or just to play.

Snow is fascinating. Wet, sticky, powdery, heavy, light, hard, soft.

It has infinite conditions.

Sometimes it holds together like concrete, sometimes it falls apart like flour.

I like every type of snow. Even in springtime, when it disappears from the mountains and I have to jump from snow spot to snow spot.

It is a last rebellion against the inevitable summer.

When it snows outside, I must go out.

Dancing in the rain may sound romantic, but it is definitely more fun to do in the snow. – Veit Auch

The week in Norway was interesting and instructive to me in many ways. On the one hand it was very interesting to immerse into a new culture, to get to know the local people, their views and ways of working, and to see how the buildings fit into the landscape. Due to the topography and the loose arrangement, the buildings in Norway that are located outside of the big cities have enough space to make an impression. The original and modified wooden constructions, which are still widespread, were very inspiring. Moreover it was a rewarding experience to get to know snow as a new building material and to see how our team created a large-scale construction based on the small clay model. Therefore it was fascinating to see, how the idea of the amorph folding developed in the clay model could be translated into the snow sculpture and became accessible architecture. – Elena Bernstein





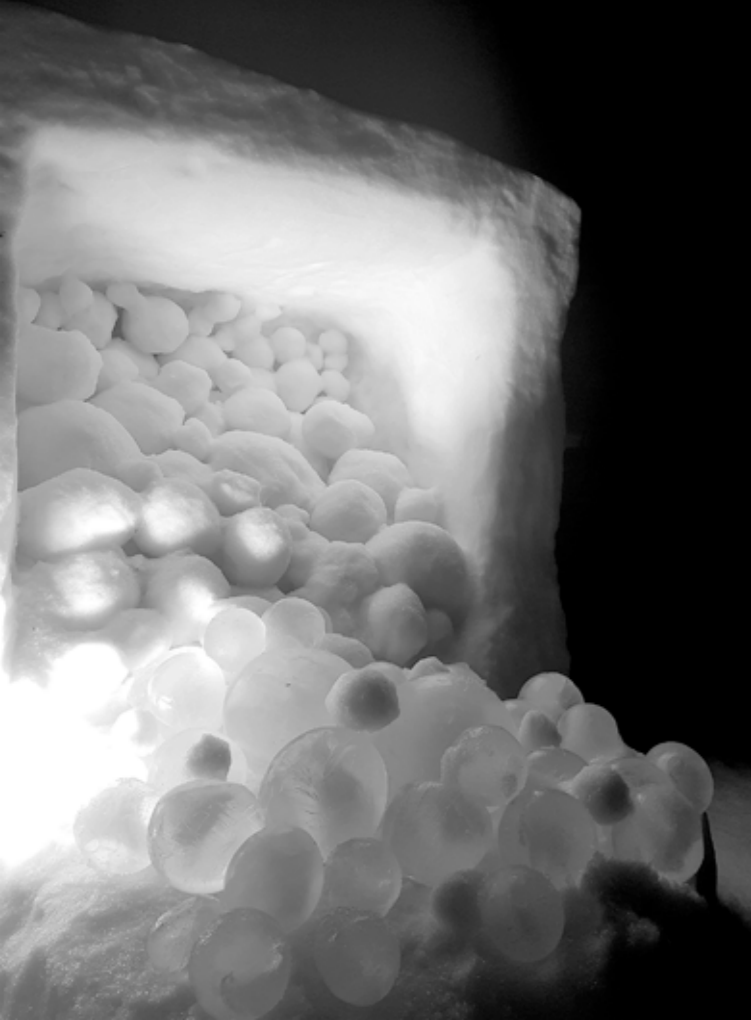
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Nils Aschemann
Jana Asmus
Veit Auch
Elena Bernstein
Beatrix Heider
Ilka Raupach
Tim Schönborn
Kristin Schöning
Tilman Schumacher

Snow, it hides and makes visible.
Snow, it covers and reveals.
Snow, it slows down and offers silence.

The allure of snow
Snow can be light, ephemeral heavy,
temporarily lasting
Depending on the circumstances,
depending on how one works with the snow.
Working with snow can flow easily, if one is
working out the details, but also can turn out
to be heavy, if it falls on one in a large body.
Snow is changeable and it changes.
From the beautiful, soft, powdery snow to the
dirty, old snow you find on the roadside
From Nothing to a folding.
The snow seems so light, but in its mass, it is
so very heavy.
The floating lightness in the air evaporates
within the landing on earth.
How can we capture this lightness?
Translate it sculptural? – Kristin Schöning





TIP OF THE WINTER

Mike Danielsen
Lasse Gissel
Jannik Nielsen
Lasse Kjær Poulsen

OBS!!! RAS!!

Guro H. Hommo
Margit Kostveit

DUPLO

Liv Randi Groven
Margit Groven
Live Kaasa





YOU MAKE ME MELT

Anne Haga
Mikkel Mio Vesaas Harstad
Kristine Myklestad
Knut Strand
Sigrid Marie Kittelsaa Vesaas



TENKER BJØRN

Amanda Bekker
Dawied Bekker
Martiens Bekker



TUSEN TAKK!

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