

A Place for Play

Play is a way to learn about the world. Never in the entire life do we get to know so much about the world as in the first years by play. Play is a valuable physical exercise. Play allows children to develop communication skills. Play can be different. It depends on the personality and the abilities. Children like to create and explore, to destroy, to take risks, to challenge themselves. They use imagination to transform the reality and set their own rules.

Adults must facilitate the play. It is what they are actually doing. If we look around, we might see all of those facilities designed for play: toys, games, visual content, and physical equipment. No matter how exciting they are initially, some of them turn out to cause boredom one day, meaning that the play comes to an end. Limiting opportunities for play is not necessarily intentional – it can be fear or simply a poor understanding of the nature of play.

My interest lies within designing play spaces. Historically, the play used to happen outdoors due to the lack of indoor space. Nowadays the outdoor play is about sharing common goods within the city, not to mention its benefits for the healthy development. In Russia we call a plain land plot with pieces of fixed play equipment a playground. However, in Moscow more inspiring playgrounds started to appear attracting numerous visitors, both local and guests. This gives me as an architect hope for a bigger public demand for qualitative play spaces.

There's no ideal place for play. Can it though become as play friendly as possible? Yes, of course. As one way to achieve this goal I see kids and young people taking the design initiative while adults assisting the creative process. Let the playful ones be encouraged!