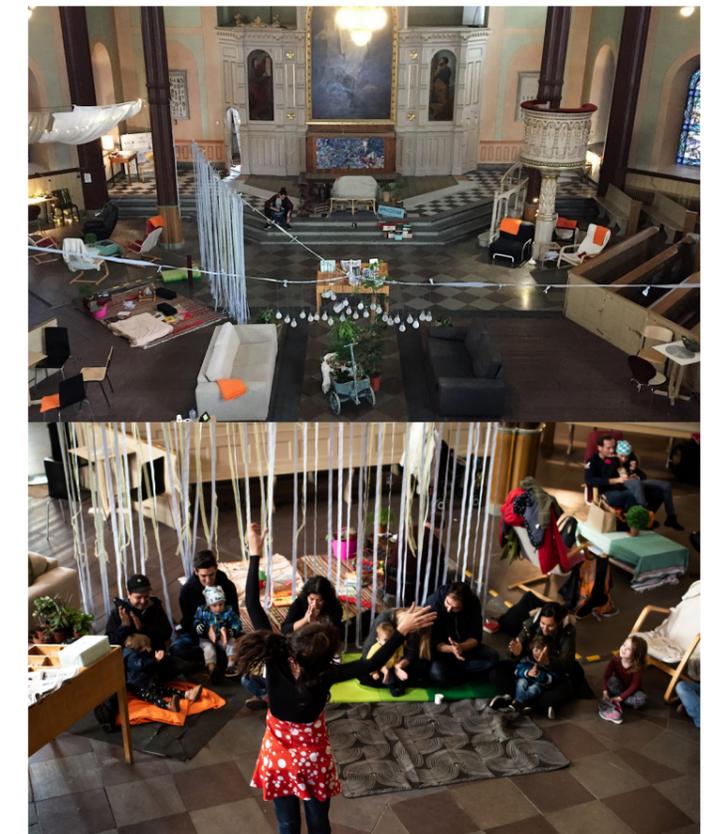


CAROLI PARK

an “indoor park”
7-30 September 2018
Malmö, Sweden

3604 visitors
194 hours of being open



The Caroli Park project was a prototype to test the indoor park in a former church - and it was an exploration of what a former church can become in the city of the future. We - Ezana and Fernanda, the founders of the non-profit association Urbana Frirum - studied Urban Studies and our first joint project in 2017 was to search for serenity - in the form of a distance to the pressures of consumption and performance - in the contemporary city. We simultaneously investigated the case of the desacralized and unused Caroli church in the center of Malmö, Sweden, and uncovered the potential of synthesizing the notion of Urban Sanctuaries and Cultural Heritage. This synthesis was developed within a university course on project and process management and resulted in a Pre-Study. That is how the idea of an indoor park prototype, and how to materialize it, was fully conceptualized.

Why the Indoor Park?

Creating a public park within a building holds great benefits. Pleasant indoor environments can be accessed without an entrance fee and without the need to belong to a specific group or to consume something. The visitor is not dependent on the weather to use it, and it is possible to enjoy the atmosphere and qualities of the building that the park is in. Finally, it is a great way to secure health-promoting urban space within cities whilst they are becoming denser.

Why Caroli Church?

The Caroli Park project aimed to address the need for non-commercial indoor public space (especially in the winter months), while acknowledging the reality that we have pre-existing centrally located historic community sites fit for that purpose but are currently falling out of public use. The Caroli Church is owned by a real-estate company which also owns a mall next door. They occasionally rent out the church for private events. However, the company doesn't maintain the church and has not been planning to do so before settling a profit-creating use. As they search for the right concept and/or tenant, the church stays closed and inaccessible.

How did we get there?

We put the social dimension in the forefront of the process and had a lot of faith in the public of Malmö. We searched for volunteers and contributors through posters and social media and received an enthusiastic response that formed a group of more than 40 participants. This allowed us to create different working groups - transformation, internal processes, research and marketing. As planned, all of the interior design was borrowed and donated from organizations, companies and the neighborhood, as well as upcycled from reclaimed material by our team members. By working in this way, and seeking to create a sense of community and ownership around Caroli Park.

Challenges

We started without resources, so we began with contacting the potential collaborators and the stakeholders and funding opportunities that we had mapped. However, it became evident that our way of conceptualizing usage and the values that were attached to it was hard to get their institutional support for. Neither the municipality - the Cultural Department, the City Planning Office, Traffic and Property Management - nor Malmö University or ISU (Institute for Sustainable Urban Development), had capacity or the foresight to get involved.

Caroli Park was realized through openness and collaboration. For three weeks, between 10:00 - 19:00, the doors stood open and welcomed visitors from all over the city. Tourists, parents, children, neighbors, senior citizens, students all shared this one open church space to read, nap, do acro yoga, meditate, fika, hold spontaneous speeches, discuss, and share stories and memories. Caroli Park showed that the desacralized Caroli Church is more than just that. It has importance and houses great potential as a public indoor space. Market orientation fails to capture or galvanize this importance. The visitors really cared once they got to see and experience the atmosphere that was repurposed through a inclusive social process. This process gave the space new meaning(s) and functions by inviting people to reimagine it together. This potential is one of Caroli Church's values as a heritage site. During these weeks we also gathered a collection of empirical material that will be analyzed and presented in a report that will be available early next year.

carolipark.se
urbanafrirum.se
situatingserenity.wordpress.com

