Can architecture in sports facilities promote children's democratic formation?

Jens-Ole Jensen
Research and Development Centre for Child and Youth Culture
Play the Game, 28-31 October 2013
Sports hall
Built for adults – used by children
What’s going on in the gym?

- Sports disciplines
- Activities directed by adults
- Narrow perceptions of correct movements
- Surveillance
### The child perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture for children</td>
<td>Children as spectators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture with children</td>
<td>Children as participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture by children</td>
<td>Physical play defined by children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first sports hall for children in Denmark

Our vision for the gymnastics and motor skills gym was to create a unique movement landscape for children aged 3-10 years. A creative landscape for children where motor skill development and training of basic gymnastics interact with fun and experiences.
Three dimensions
The sports hall - progression
Spontaneous activities
• Narratives

• It’s a jungle in there
• Three dimensions
• Use the possibilities
• Surprises
Scenography
More scenography
Fantasy - Kindergarten
Public school - scenography
Opportunities of the place
Principles for interior

• Spontaneous activities
• Progression
• Three dimensions
• Scenography and narratives
• Loops and routes
• Opportunities of the place
• ”Space as the third pedagogue”
• Affordance and power
• Can architecture in sports facilities promote children's democratic formation?
Affordance

Physical environment

Cultural norms

Individual habits
Facts about Aarhus Motor Skills Hall

• 1200 square meters
• 20 millions Dkr. (app. 2,7 millions €)
• Founded by the local gymnastics club, the municipality of Aarhus and The Danish Foundation for Culture and Sports Facilities.
• Opened May 2010
Thanks for your attention

-and I’m looking forward to welcome you in our gym this evening…