

Gallery

The Gallery is owned by Cavegn Immobilien, and is situated on the end of the Thurgauerstrasse. It is a post-modern building with a large atrium that is now filled with tables but does not serve a specific function. Once the lobbies were a glamorous part of the corporate travelling businessman’s ideal, but now remain completely empty. As the Thurgauerstrasse is filled with these fallow spaces that offer a great potential, it gives the opportunity to explore what one can do here. The costs of cleaning, using and occupying them are included in the rent of different tenants. This is the case in the Gallery building, which has a few different occupants. One can therefore make it a space attractive not only for the workers, that can have their café break there, but take advantage of the rent situation.

The intervention shows its potential with a vanilla plantation that goes into the height of the building. The producers therefore rent a small backspace for storage and labs, but the production part is situated in the atrium. If they were to pay a rent for this space, it would be reduced, because the room does not adhere to certain standards, such as temperature, light, the absence of toilets etc. The rent for such high-ceilinged spaces in the centre of the city would normally be astronomically high, but here, due to the already low cost of the area and the situation of the room, it would be affordable. Urban production is being talked a lot about lately, because many cities have seen the slow decay of their agrarian land and their green belt. However, food production is, and should not be, situated in the city, because it is linked to a fragile and balanced ecosystem that simply cannot exist in the urban area. Intelligent urban production should therefore be reserved for educational purposes and special species that would otherwise not thrive. This is the case for the vanilla plant. The vanilla is one of the most expensive spices and is imported from far away. Moreover, there is a high demand for the beans, as there is only a limited amount of production, and we heavily rely on the artificial paste, as bees pollinate enough for themselves but not for human consumption, which means we have to fertilise the flowers by hand. The plants require a constant temperature from 15-32°C all year long and a shady environment. In the middle of the plantation, which provides enough vanilla for Zürich, there is a shared space and café, where workers and visitors can admire and relax amongst the plants.

