

The ProDoc Program
«The Dynamics of Transcultural Management and Governance in Latin America» *
invites you to the public lecture of

Prof. Hubert Klumpner

Chair of Architecture and Urban Design Brillembourg & Klumpner at ETH Zurich, Director of U-TT
Urban-Think Tank

Torre David: Informal Vertical Communities

Friday, November 31st, 2012, 4:15 pm.
University of Bern, F005 UniTobler, Lerchenweg 36



The third tallest building in Venezuela has been under construction for over twenty-one years. While Centro Financiero Confinanzas (known as La Torre de David) stands at an impressive 45 floor building in the heart of Caracas' central business district, it seems unlikely that the tower will be finished any time soon. After the developer, David Brillembourg, passed away and the financing bank went bankrupt in 1994, the half-completed, office tower was abandoned and became a prime destination for squatters. Today, it is the improvised home of over 600 self-organized families living in what one could call an informal vertical barrio. The Tower of David is teeming with contradictory and potent forces, as former slum dwellers reside in the ruins of a neoliberal failure. The squatters' appropriation of this space has begun to attract the ire, admiration and attention of people around the world. The international press widely reported on the Tower of David, and interpretations of the squatting range from declaring it to be sheer anarchy to accounts that emphasize the creation of a new community, which can be a rich testing ground of sociological research.

Hubert Klumpner is professor at the Chair of Architecture and Urban Design at the ETH Zurich. In 1998 Klumpner joined Alfredo Brillembourg as director of U-TT Urban Think Tank in Caracas, Venezuela. In 2007, he became guest professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, where he co-founded S.L.U.M. Lab—the Sustainable Living Urban Model Laboratory. Urban-Think Tank's work is centered on developing a methodology for a new, supportive architecture that focuses on the empowerment of the marginal communities in the global south's emerging cities, and also promotes sustainable development in informal settlements. Brillembourg & Klumpner were honored with the 2010 Ralph Erskine Award, the 2011 Gold Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction in Latin American, and the Golden Lion for Best Project at the 13th International Architecture Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, 2012.

* The ProDoc is a program initiated by Prof. Dr. Yvette Sánchez and Prof. Corinne A. Pernet, Ph.D. (University of St. Gallen), Prof. Dr. Marc Hufty (IHEID), PD Dr. Stephan Rist (University of Bern), and Prof. Dr. Aline Helg (University of Geneva). It is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation. See: <http://www.cls.unisg.ch/es-ES/ProDoc.aspx>

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