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well paid for this. In Holland, architects' working techniques are much more hybrid. Many traditional areas of work have been taken away from them, some have been given up by the architects of their own accord, and yet other fields have been discovered totally anew. For this reason the combination of conceptual, seemingly Utopian planning, theory and design is not only programmatically motivated in Holland today, but also a business management strategy used for maintaining and developing a practice. This research model, as pursued in Holland, was not the aim of our studio in Basel. Probably the special context of our work and our Swiss origins come together in our model. We would like to exploit the privilege of being in academic conditions to be able to work more analytically, more calmly and perhaps even more cold-bloodedly, to dig deeper, reveal several layers, and to keep the marketing efforts down which are necessary to make this work economically viable. If a commercial figure were to be put on the work that our students do, then enormous sums of money would have to be invested. And this urge to look at things as precisely as possible would probably be scarcely sustainable on the open market, even with good organization. Incidentally, that was something that always used to fascinate us about Rossi: the fact that he was an intellectual of extraordinary poetic force who also observed extremely precisely without that mak-

ing him a technocrat or even an "academic".

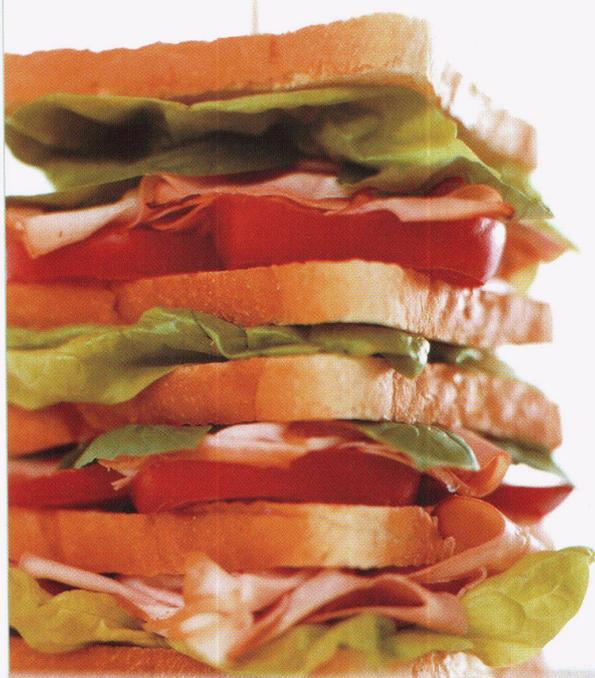
**Herzog:** And we are also trying to establish a contrast with the typical way in which an architectural practice works, we would like to have a more open and a more heterogeneous structure. Also, we think that contemporary urban research cannot be done only by architects. The internally heterogeneous nature of the approach and of the people involved is a basic condition for new insights. For this reason, geographers, photographers and video artists work in Studio Basel, as well as architects and town planners. Of course that brings with it the additional problem of having to co-ordinate all these different forces within a single working project; and not all working cultures can be combined with one another. But nevertheless we feel the urge to integrate approaches which are almost opposite to ours to get rid of the formalist logic that is so firmly anchored in Swiss architecture. The point is that we would like to discover something that is not immediately obvious. This inverted view is actually the central point of the research for me.

**wbw:** The majority of the architectural research centres that exist at present are primarily concerned with aspects of design, of form or also of new construction techniques (Columbia, Bartlett, AA, UCLA), and so they are essentially directed at the architectural object. But in the case of Studio Basel the city is quite clearly the central

point of interest. Can this focus be explained solely with biographical reasons and the Rossi renaissance, or does it also articulate a criticism of those other research centres?

**Meili:** Of course our individual interest in the city is one reason for the themes addressed by the Studio. But we are also quite consciously trying to intervene in the international debate. We are looking for a way of linking things together that carries both affirmative and confrontative traits, not least because of the self-satisfied and isolationist aspects which are obvious both in Switzerland as a whole and its architecture. Seen in this way, we are expressly interested in taking a look at some approaches with quite different shapes to them as well. I would probably draw the line of demarcation with confrontation at the point where these projects take on demiurgic traits. When a delight in creating the world starts to distort the perception of reality, then it is becoming difficult for us to join in the dialogue. Naturally, our capacity for discussion is not unconditioned. We need a dialogue partner who also thinks on the basis of a perception and wants to work on what is already there. On this level it is interesting to talk to Winy Maas, for example, because behind his comic-like fun there is sometimes a pretty profound analytical provocation that is reminiscent of Superstudio. In the same way there are a number of projects in Europe at the moment that are examining the

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