

scopio **MAGAZINE**

ARCHITECTURE, ART AND IMAGE

UTOPIA VOL.1

Editor-in-chief

Pedro Leão Neto

Managing editor

María Neto

Editors:

David Leite

Fátima Vieira

Gabriel Hernández

Isa Clara Neves

José Carneiro

María Neto

Mário Mesquita

Miguel Leal

Pedro Leão Neto

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Introduction

Towards a collaborative notion of Utopia

Pedro Leão Neto

scopio Architecture, Art and Image publication benefits from a renewed international Editorial Team and Scientific Committee and is now focused on disseminating the themes of Architecture, Art and Image (AAI). The publication is also online in a dynamic OJS platform with the collaboration of the Contrast project. Despite these changes, both the print and the online publications ensure the continuity of scopio's original graphic identity and brand.

This open-access, annual, and research-orientated publication aims to offer critical, explorative and informative text targeting an interdisciplinary audience and providing a new critical space for discussion around the universe of AAI. It seeks, in particular, to debate / (re) think Architecture, Art and Image in our times.

scopio AAI will be organised annually around a central theme and the focus of the first issue is Utopia. We want to challenge the ordinary understanding of this concept by exploring new ways of looking at Utopian thinking within today's complex societies.

scopio AAI explores the notion of Utopia based on the idea that we need to have ambitious visions for the future and propose operational paths, creatively and collaboratively, towards transforming our society. We present works of authors who believe that Utopia can be a source of inspiration and a tool to create a better world. As advocated by Ernst Bloch eight decades ago in *The Principle of Hope*¹, because utopias offer visions of a better future world, they should be seen as part of our current reality and not be excluded from it. In this sense, utopias are inspiring images that guide us towards real possibilities and help us forge true social transformation².

We were interested in authors capable of highlighting the potential of Image as a medium that crosses borders and dislocates boundaries across different Architectural and Artistic subject areas. We called, in particular, for works by multidisciplinary teams inspired by broad notions of creativity, innovation and cybernetics as drivers of social and institutional co-evolution processes, exploring the potential of the world of Utopia and Image to inventively question and address cross-cutting problems affecting Architecture, Art and Image.

1. Bloch, Ernst, 1885–1977. *The Principle of Hope*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995.

2. Jovchelovitch, S. &. (2018). Utopias and World-Making: Time, Transformation and the Collective Imagination. In: C. e. Saint-Laurent, *Imagining collective futures. Perspectives from social, cultural and political psychology*. Publisher: Palgrave Macmillan Editors: C. de Saint-Laurent, S. Obradovic, K. Carriere, pp. 133–5.

We wanted to publish projects that explored the idea of Utopia as a mental tool for architectural design³, breaking with the standardised patterns of thinking and creating possibilities for innovative and poetical idealisations of space. We were looking for forward-looking visions in the utopian creation process that materialise the impossible and make us want to improve reality. We were, thus, propounding Utopia as a source of inspiration – never as a dream impossible to achieve nor as an imposed totalitarian ideal.

We were interested in projects from the AAI universe capable of making imaginative questions on space appropriation, cybernetics and digital media, urban perception and socio-cultural diversity, and image thinking. They should address transversal problems within interdisciplinary debates on how Architecture and Public Space define our Cities, how cities define Territories, and how all this can be explored and communicated through images. To be capable of thinking how technology and digital media are actively present in all these processes, and how all this is interconnected and capable of inspiring more Innovative, Sustainable and Inclusive built environments and enhancing the participation of all society along the process.

We were also interested in works that critically reflected on the modernist ideals that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century – namely in the sphere of architecture and urban planning – and that inspired utopian visions and proposals, such as the *Ville Radieuse* by Le Corbusier, or the Garden City by Ebenezer Howard⁴, and that are still influential in today's societies. Even if, in many cases, the worlds idealised by modernists did not become realities, or even if they resulted in the construction of slightly dystopian spaces and architectures⁵, they did contribute to many positive achievements. Particularly after the Second World War, the modern movement designed urban planning and architecture that tried and succeeded in solving many problems related to the lack of primary housing conditions and good-quality public spaces in many European and North American cities.

On the other hand, we wanted to amplify and rethink the Utopian thought process within the complex concept of modern democracies. As Daniel Innerarity sustains in *DEMOCRACY IN EUROPE*, we need to invest in Utopian thinking congruous with the complex world we live in; we need democratic institutions to be able to actively influence a change for more sustainable development and a better world, more equitable and just.

3. Many authors have published on the relationship between architecture and Utopia. Nathaniel Coleman, for example, conducted research and has written extensively about these matters. See Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2005), 1.

4. Fishman, R 1996, «Urban Utopias: Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier», in S Campbell & S Fainstein (eds), *Readings in Planning Theory*, Blackwell Press, Cambridge, pp. 19–67.

5. Jacobs, Jane. 1993. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Within this context, we believe that one of the challenges lies in promoting a utopian vision that leans towards a more democratic outcome, as discussed by Crane Brinton in *UTOPIA AND DEMOCRACY*. This idea entails exploring utopian ideals that tend to align more with democratic principles and less with authoritarian or non-democratic methods, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat, discreet or overt technocratic governance, cultural engineering and planning, as exemplified by utopists such as Robert Owen, H.G. Wells or Etienne Cabet.

As Innerarity argues⁶, ours is a time of post-politics; the unbalance between what citizens can prevent and what they can shape has led to a depoliticisation of our public spaces, where populists and technocrats insensitive to democratic reasons ignore what is politically possible. The only way to politicise our democracies is by exploring their limitations and protecting them against themselves. Therefore, we must break away from thinking Utopia as an ideal crystallised into a perfect state and foster a more contemporary notion of Utopia capable of giving us ambitious visions for the future and triggering operational paths to reform society creatively and collaboratively. To make this happen, we need to bridge the gap between the utopian and the reforming paths: We need practical utopias. Moreover, as Fernando Birri said, "We need not to stop walking", i.e., we need to reform constantly⁷.

We have a revitalised Editorial Board coordinating this periodical publication shared between the I&D research centre CEAU/FAUP and other national and international I&D units. This renewed scopio publication will integrate universities and departments related to or connected to the worlds of architecture, art, and image at the national and international levels. In doing all this, we are securing interdisciplinarity, enriching the space for the editorial content of the diverse categories and sections of the publication, and giving more freedom and responsibility to their Editors to create increased synergies. Published with a revitalised Scientific Committee, the publication has an Editor-in-Chief and Main Editors responsible for each edition, Guest Editors responsible for organising the different categories and sections, and the Editors around the central theme.

Finally, looking back on the past year, we would like to thank all those who have contributed to this 1st Volume of scopio Magazine AAI-Utopia publication. Thank you, editors, authors, reviewers, and readers of scopio.

6. Innerarity, Daniel. «Democracy without Politics: Why Democracy Can Seriously Harm Democracy». *Studies in Media and Communication*, vol. 5, n.º2 (2017), p. 76–84. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297227864_Democracy_without_Politics_Why_Democracy_Can_Seriously_Harm_Democracy

7. Raffaella Baccolini, «Dystopia Matters: On the Use of Dystopia and Utopia», *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal*, nr. 3, Autumn/Winter 2006, pp. 1–4 <<http://ler.letras.up.pt>> ISSN 1646–4729. <https://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/3056.pdf>

About the published content on each section: integrating and reevaluating utopian ideas within different fields of study

Pedro Leão Neto and Maria Neto

The inaugural theme of *scopio Magazine AAI – Vol. 1* is centered around Utopia exploring this concept from various angles and perspectives in each section, which involved integrating and reevaluating utopian ideas within different fields of study.

The separate sections in *scopio* allowed for investigating broader societal concerns, encouraging interdisciplinary discussions across realms such as Architecture, Art, Public Space, Cities, Territories, Digital Media, Sustainable and Inclusive Environments, and Civic Engagement.

Diving into the 'Visual Spaces of Change' section, we encounter James Smith's "Temporal Dislocation", a visual essay that masterfully navigates through the complex dialogue between destruction and renewal in our landscapes, both contemporary and historical, and the intricacies of activities evident within constructed environments. The photography series highlights the cyclicity of the natural world after human intervention and is driven by a significant phenomenological intent that bridges the gap between the photographer's deliberate framing and the casual viewer's passive encounter with these constructed landscapes. The photograph becomes a subtle language inviting viewers to reevaluate the ostensibly banal and ubiquitous.

In the same section, Lorenzo Lannizzotto presents us with "Urban Wilderness: A Journey through Lisbon Terrain Vague", a Visual Essay that embraces the fragmentary and uncertain nature of the spaces known as "Terrain Vague" or "Urban Voids". The author uses photography as a means of urban exploration to gain insight into and describe these areas, and his visual essay depicts these spaces in a haphazard and fragmentary manner, respecting in this way their inherent characteristics. In doing so, the work reveals the hidden beauty of those spaces and highlights the substantial potential they hold for the city.

Rafaela Lima's visual essay, "The Earth from Above: from Below," in the 'Image, Space, and Cinematics' section, looks into the evolution of aerial imagery and its impact on surveillance and cartography. Initially, aerial perspective offered limited insight, but wartime needs and aeronautical advancements soon made it a pivotal reconnaissance and mapping tool. This shift not only enhanced terrain understanding but also spurred innovations in camouflage techniques, notably during World War II, as captured in Harun Farocki's film "Images of the World and the Inscription of War." The Pratt Institute of Art further advanced visual strategies by transforming aerial photos into three-dimensional concealment models.

Today, advanced technologies enable comprehensive global surveillance, marking a profound transformation in how we visually and conceptually grasp the Earth from above. Lima's series articulates this dramatic change, reflecting on our relationship with landscapes, from uncharted territories to meticulously surveilled environments.

The 'Contemporary Archeology' section presents an intriguing article "Techniques of Discovery: Cryptography and Design" by Roberto Bottazzi, which explores the link between cryptography's historical methods and modern design practices, particularly in the digital and Machine Learning (ML) realms. The author suggests that cryptography's principles of encoding and decoding offer a conceptual framework for design, enhancing data abstraction and interpretation. Bottazzi draws parallels between historical cryptographic techniques, like Alberti's and Bacon's cyphers, and ML's ability to decipher patterns from extensive datasets, emphasizing the shift in design thinking from form creation to strategic computational tool application. This essay positions ML models as contemporary embodiments of cryptographic logic, framing them as instrumental in navigating design complexities, thus pushing the boundaries of speculative design and innovation.

In the section 'Landscapes of Care', Inês Osório writes the paper "Sense of Place: How Should We Think About Urban Planning Practices Today?" which forwards a comprehensive analysis into the evolution of urban planning in response to socio-technological and cultural shifts. The article challenges the architectural hegemony in urban space creation and urges reconsidering diverse spatial practices. Proposing a collision path between architecture and contemporary art, it views this nexus as crucial to redefining public space and urban territory. The paper advocates for a Bauhausian approach, integrating architecture, art, and design as a symbiotic urban design triad to foster a pluralistic dialogue and reimagine urban landscapes. The author suggests transcending conventional methodologies and encouraging an artistic contribution to urban regeneration, thereby enriching the experiential quality of urban environments.

'Invisibility' is brought to light through Chloé Darmon and Gabriela Manfredini's "Rite of the Waters: procession through the Campanhã Washhouses", a paper that addresses the hidden aspects of women's work, particularly the undervaluation of domestic labour and the neglect of public washhouses as historical spaces for women. The research combines insights into the history of Porto's washhouses, the connection between domestic labour and performance art, and multidisciplinary work in fine arts and architecture. The Des/oriente project unites these areas, leading to a performance in three washhouses that revitalized these spaces, exploring narratives around domestic work and restoring them as communal meeting places.

In the 'Architecture, Urbanism and Technology' section David Viana, Telma Ribeiro and Jorge Maia write the article "SI3 for urban resilience: a human-nature driven paradigm shift" that introduces the concept of SI3 (Social, Environmental, and Technological Inclusive and Innovative Solutions) for enhancing urban resilience. The article emphasizes the urgent need for a paradigm shift in our relations with each other and the built environment due to environmental challenges and climate change. On the one hand, it is pointed out that this shift requires immediate action to reduce the impact of daily activities on the planet's resources and adapt to the accelerating changes in natural systems. On the other hand, working with existing urban environments to build resilience involves active community engagement, co-creation, and data-driven approaches. The article underscores the importance of connecting SI3 with everyday places and activities to ensure the sustainable operation of the "spaceship Earth" for future generations, making it a tangible and achievable goal.

The 'Utopia' section, enriched by Inês Nascimento's "Exploring Radical Pedagogies: Utopia (H)As The Future In Architectural Education", encourages us to reevaluate the role of Utopian thought in shaping future educational paradigms, pointing out how architectural education finds itself at a crucial crossroads, requiring innovative approaches to adapt to evolving sociocultural contexts. The article explores the nexus between radicalism and Utopia in architectural education, considering the pioneering experiments of the 1960s and 1970s. These experiments, marked by their critical, revolutionary, reformist, and transgressive nature, often had Utopia at their core, and this study seeks to revive these concepts, emphasizing their relevance and potential. The study introduces the idea of a "Utopian Lens" to categorize and analyze a range of case studies, identifying Utopia as a driving force manifesting in diverse forms and principles within radical pedagogical approaches. The research provides valuable insights into the interplay of radicalism and Utopia, shedding light on recurring patterns and contributing to ongoing research.

Jose Carlos Mota and Alexandra Ataíde's "Civic Innovation in Portugal: The potential and limitations of citizen labs to experiment new urban futures" in the 'Rethinking Civic Engagement' section invites a reflection on the transformative potential of citizen participation, addressing democracy challenges in Portugal, including Citizens' disengagement from decision-making and declining trust in politics. They point out that despite low voter turnout and increased radicalization, there is a growing interest in participatory initiatives. The research underscores the potential of collaborative efforts between citizens and communities, serving as valuable platforms for resource mapping, knowledge integration, and low-risk social transformations. Their bottom-linked approach shows promise in civic labs' governance models compared to top-down institutional or bottom-up community-based approaches.

The 'Research' section, through Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro's article, "From address to outcome, a proposal for discussing research in the art academia towards the idea of a critical landscape", urges us to consider the dynamic interplay between landscape, knowledge, and art, exploring the involvement of students in actions related to landscape and knowledge, generating research processes. Landscape is approached dynamically and critically, transcending limited rural or urban descriptions and knowledge is seen as a collective process, empowering students in research and analysis. While not aiming to provide definitive answers, the text raises questions about evolving practices in art and academia, like trans or post-medial practices. It questions how academic research in the art field can navigate these contradictions and differentiate between practice-based and practice-led research. Ultimately, it ponders whether academia remains a space for utopian aspirations.

In the 'Pedagogy' section, Sofia Marques da Silva writes, "The built environment and public spaces informing teaching and learning", which investigates how contemporary education extends beyond traditional settings, encompassing diverse learning environments, including digital networks, social media, and urban landscapes. The author points out that this shift prompts us to explore what constitutes education beyond the classroom and reminds us how Gert Biesta highlighted that educational places can have explicit purposes and intentions manifest in non-traditional contexts through situated learning. This shift gives force to the idea that public spaces and the built environment offer students unique learning opportunities. The article aligns with critical pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of everyday experiences and questioning institutional power, examining how students engage with and reshape these spaces, and emphasizing the educational significance of spatial configurations. Case studies are presented that explore cultures emerging from these interactions, spanning school spaces, urban communities, and urban artists' contributions.

In the section 'Featured texts, Research papers or Projects', Peter Bennett presents us with the series "An Ideal for Living" that explores the convergence of photography and computer-generated imagery (CGI) in portraying the future urban landscape. It closely examines London's ongoing urban redevelopment, shedding light on how architecture serves as both a visual narrative and a construction process. The image editing in this series subtly not only mirrors CGI's influence but also crafts a dystopian urban future hanging in the balance. These visuals provide a sneak peek into an unsettling time and space that already envelops us. They convey the unspoiled freshness of new buildings while hinting at the inevitable impact of time. "An Ideal for Living" aims to archive a simulated memory of the city's evolution.

Alexander García Düttmann's critical review "Stonehenge UFO", featured in the 'Exhibitions /Reviews' section, offers a unique perspective on James Smith's work, highlighting the transformative power of photographic angles and the enigma of time. Düttmann points out, besides other things, how the distinctive images of Smith are not solely defined by the objects captured but by the angle's transformative power, where time and space intertwine, blurring past and future, and the photography becomes evidence of the impossible. This enigmatic testimony retains art's essence.

In our cultural agenda section 'Flash', Gabriel Hernández presents us with two insightful reviews about exhibitions that are taking place at the international level, which not only reflect contemporary artistic practices but also interrogate the socio-cultural underpinnings of our built environment: *The Head, The Heart & The House: Migration and Modernism in King-lui Wu's Domestic Architecture and Tatiana Bilbao Estudio – Architecture for the Community*. Flash also provides the ground for curators to offer additional insights into recent curatorial projects involving architecture, media and art. Thus, *Building a Collective Archive: A Yale Traveler's Mnemosyne* is presented, inviting readers into a thought-provoking journey through the Yale School of Architecture's latest curatorial endeavour.

Finally, it can be said that across all sections, a common thread of utopian ideals weaves through various fields and perspectives, each offering a unique lens to explore and redefine the notion of utopia itself. Utopia, often depicted as an idyllic and unattainable dream, takes on diverse forms and meanings within these sections. Then, we can also perceive how the overarching theme of change unites these sections. Whether through visual transformations, reevaluating women's roles, embracing technological shifts, reimagining education, or fostering civic engagement, change is a constant. Utopia and change together represent an enduring human quest for a better, more harmonious future, expressed in various forms across these sections, each offering a distinctive perspective on the intersection of utopian ideals and the ever-evolving landscapes of our world.

Categories

VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE – Editors José Carneiro, Pedro Leão Neto

This section focuses on visual communication strategies based on the development of contemporary photography projects that reflect upon architecture and the different dynamics of urban change. We are especially interested in projects that are conceived as “visual narratives” that intentionally interfere with architecture and public spaces in a self-reflexive representation of their own process of use and change, reducing the distance between the objects of investigation (landscapes, architectures, places, public spaces) and their representations. Projects that explore the potential of photography to question imaginatively and address issues that are transversal to the interdisciplinary debate on architecture, art, city and territory.

IMAGE, SPACE AND CINEMATICS – Editor Miguel Leal

This section focuses on the relationships between image, time and space. Attention will be paid to how the realm of the image and the movement-image change our perception – real, political or symbolic – of time and space. Based on a topological understanding of the media, it will be a section that will try to cross the field of mediation with art, landscape, urban space or architecture, both nowadays and in a more historical or archaeological perspective.

CONTEMPORARY ARCHEOLOGY – Editor Isa Neves

This section aims to share findings related to the construction of digital culture in architecture, as it is a review of the best material that brought us to an emerging maturity of digital design.

It will address the way in which past technological contexts, digital or pre-digital, offered us tools to think about these connections between art, image and architecture. It is, therefore, an archaeological vision of a future past, many times already obsolete, but clearly operative to think about the transformation processes of this field of action. In this section, further historical reviews will be presented, rereading constructions, projects, visual objects, experimental processes, networks, concepts or archives, amongst others, always with the intention of projecting them in the present time and in current practices.

LANDSCAPES OF CARE – Editor Maria Neto

This section will be publishing projects and theories which challenge our understanding on how architecture, art, image and technology can be explored to enrich our already comprehensive understanding of the rich multifaceted complex socioeconomic, political, historical and technical dimensions of the world that emerges as a result of relationships of care. The challenge is to think how we can respond to current and urgent issues (environmental critical changes, pandemics, political, social, economic and health inequalities, disruptive globalization influences, critical working conditions, etc.) and their impact on humans and society.

INVISIBILITY – Editor Mário Mesquita

This section comes from a set of ongoing investigations that give us thickness and context to understand what “is not seen” and that is decisive in the consolidation of urban life. In this sense, it is a space of pedagogical innovation that intends to study the dialectics between the “invisible city” and the “visible city”, considering process, project and work in the public space (infrastructure, socialization and urbanization) of the large field of “city and territory” to reflect, question, debate and understand the processes of contemporary transformation of the “urban being”. From the invisibilities of the urban space, it is expected to constitute a visual and written forum for the production of critical thinking and a platform for connecting communities in the broad context of civil society, inserting itself in the logics and dynamics of the University's Social Involvement, exploring the dynamics of its 3rd mission.

ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM AND TECHNOLOGY – Editor David Viana

This section focuses on the matter concerning the need to increase the semantic length for technological development in architecture and urbanism. Digital advances in artistic fields and the architecture sector led to the exploration of innovative features based on the potentiality of new digital tools and technological processes, introducing novel effects in architectonic shapes and artistic production. Nevertheless, some advances in these areas reveal a lack of semantics, being almost merely an opportunity to exhibit “complex” spaces, volumes, and artifacts. The need to bring meaning to technological approaches in architecture, art, and image implies boosting the discussion about the substance of those approaches and their relationship to architecture and urbanism. As such, this section will highlight research on conscious innovation targeting inclusive participation in space appropriation and collaborative digital immersion in architecture and the built environment – by using computational processes that enable the formalization of new architectural “languages” and the consolidation of behavioral changes concerning hybrid living spaces (between its virtual and physical dimensions). Technological engagement in architecture – supported by a behavior shift in the environment and the object/user – can promote an augmented and holistic reality, fostering feedback between buildings, people, milieu, and machines and higher co-creation performance towards the future of architecture and the built environment. Within this framework, we are interested in research and/or projects that tackle the notion of meaningful digital contexts (real and/or virtual ones).

UTOPIA – Editor Fátima Vieira

This section focuses on how the notions of utopia and of a visionary future can turn into collaborative tools for the transformation of our society. We are interested in authors and works which amplify and reanalyse the Utopian thinking within the complex concept of nowadays democracies and who also believe that utopia can be both a source of inspiration and a tool to create better worlds. Utopias can be wishful images directing us towards real possibilities and

helping us forge a path towards social transformation, thus we are interested in works that point out the potential of Image as a medium capable of crossing borders and dislocating boundaries between different Architectural and Artistic areas, encouraging the creation of multidisciplinary teams to address cross-cutting problems affecting Architecture, Cities and Territories.

RETHINKING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT – Editors Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto

This section focuses on projects and theories which aim to develop innovative and inclusive methodologies and theories for urban design policies and practices that empower the transformational potential of civic engagement in the planning and design process. A dynamic knowledge of the landscape that allows to rethink urban design policies able to integrate transformative practices, utopian visions, and progressive transition theories supporting civic engagement and community involvement initiatives as: community engagement, service and volunteerism and educational initiatives that promote involvement.

RESEARCH – Editors Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto

In this section we are interested in presenting research work coming from Architecture and Art worlds comprising either prospective theoretical readings or pilot-projects currently under development at I&D centres on art, architecture and technology, which in some way are connected to the construction of perspectives and proposals for architectural city and territorial environments that will portray a conscious innovation and inclusive participation in built environment.

PEDAGOGY – Editors Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto

In this section we are interested in exploring teaching-learning experiences within the universe of Architecture and Art, based on collaborative and dynamic environments. Pedagogical processes where interaction between teachers, researchers and students is ensured, leading to a dynamic of discovery built collectively, establishing relationships and connections between people, institutions of academia involved and society. We have a special interest in integrative pedagogical strategies capable of developing, operationalizing and refining a set of practices and teaching methods that ensure a learning process close to Schön's "reflection in action".

FEATURED TEXTS, RESEARCH PAPERS OR PROJECTS – Editors Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto

Research papers, position papers, analytical or critical essays, interviews, articles, perusal or projects commissioned by one of the Section Editors or Editorial Committee: presenting unpublished research work, critique or scientific activities in the fields of architecture, art and image. The section Editors will open the section with a brief editor's note or introduction dealing with the subject of the work being published in the section.

EXHIBITIONS / REVIEWS | COMMISSIONED – Editors Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto

Critical reviews of publications, exhibitions and conferences in the field of architecture and image, written by a third person.

FLASH / REVIEWS AND CURATORIAL PROJECTS – Editor Gabriel Hernández

Flash, the cultural agenda section of our journal, operates as a dynamic forum for exploring the confluence of creative disciplines. Structured in two segments, the initial one presents in-depth critiques of global exhibitions, while the subsequent segment allows curators to share their perspectives on recent projects that blend the realms of architecture, media, and the visual arts. Collectively, these segments highlight Flash's dedication to nurturing a critical dialogue that balances intellectual depth with visual allure, providing a comprehensive investigation into how creative practices reflect and influence the essence of human experiences.

DRAWING AND PHOTOGRAPHY INTERNATIONAL CONTEST (DPIC) – ARCHITECTURE, ART AND IMAGE – UTOPIA 500

The AAI scopic publication integrates the International Contest Drawing and Photography International Contest (DPIC) – Architecture, Art and Image – UTOPIA 500, which interconnects the universes of Architecture, Art and Image with the Utopian desire for a better world and for spaces that provide a better quality of life. Important ideas present in the DPIC are opening the Universities to the Civil Society through diverse submitted projects, showcasing the multifaceted richness of activities, experiences and architectures. The coordination of the contest is the responsibility of the Center for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism of the Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto (CEAU/FAUP) through its research group AAI and the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), the Transdisciplinary Research Centre «Culture, Space and Memory» I&D research unit (CITCEM / FLUP) and the Research Institute in Art, Design and Society (I2ADS / FBAUP).

NEXT EDITION

This section announces the annual theme that informs scopic AAI's next edition

NEXT INTERNATIONAL DPIC CONTEST CALL

This section announces the next call for the International DPIC contest.

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Visual Essays on Urbanity: A Photographic Journey through Architectural Transformations

José Carneiro and Pedro Leão Neto

'The Visual Spaces of Change' (VSC) section emphasises the role of photography and various visual representation methods as pivotal in researching, documenting, and analysing the transformational aspects of architecture, urbanity, and territorial landscapes. This section acknowledges the intricate link between societal transformations and alterations in the spaces we inhabit, with recent historical events underscoring the swiftness of these spatial changes. The radical nature of these transformations has necessitated a consistent and urgent documentation of the impermanent nature of places. Places, inherently uncertain, are captured visually to preserve and understand their essence. Contemporary societal shifts, such as urban gentrification or health-related crises, have brought about significant changes in life patterns, leading to the creation of photographs that were once unimaginable. The VSC resides here, in documentary artistic projects that explore the expanded field of architecture, from its tangible manifestation to the experiences it fosters. It investigates various scales, new spatial configurations, architectural vernaculars, and urban vistas, while also probing into the discursive spaces that intersect with larger frameworks, including socio-cultural, political, historical, and technical realms.

By treating images as a form of visual language that is disseminated and interpreted across different global points¹, this section extends its dialogue. It opens up to incorporate diverse cultural viewpoints from various regions, places, and countries, using the specificities of each location to enhance our understanding of society and the territorial landscape. The strategy's objective is to promote the use of images in constructing artistic projects that offer critical reflections on the transformation of architecture and urban landscapes, influenced by the diverse ways they are perceived and experienced. Ultimately, the section seeks to utilise the contemporary significance of imagery, particularly photography, as a means to broaden knowledge. Photography is esteemed as a prime medium for interpreting architecture and for crafting imaginative narratives, navigating between reality and fiction, replication and alteration, and the amalgamation of analogue and digital visual forms, thus traversing various disciplines and blurring artistic demarcations.

The section commences with James Smith's visual essay "Temporal Dislocation", which explores the contrasting interplay between destruction and regeneration in our interactions with landscapes. Smith's photographic series highlights the recurring patterns of the natural world following human interference, driven by a profound phenomenological perspective. The series bridges the intentional composition by the photographer and the incidental engagement of the viewer with these reconfigured landscapes, positioning the photograph as a subtle form of communication that invites reevaluation of the common and omnipresent.

"Urban Wilderness: A Journey through Lisbon Terrain Vague" by Lorenzo Iannizzotto focuses on the piecemeal and indeterminate nature of the so-called "Terrain Vague" or "Urban Voids" in Lisbon. Iannizzotto employs photography as a means to explore and articulate these spaces, presenting them in a fragmented and sporadic fashion that honours their intrinsic features. His work uncovers the latent charm of these spaces, highlighting their considerable potential for urban development.

¹ Nathan Jurgenson - *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media*, Verso, 2019. p.13-14

Temporal Dislocation

James Smith

Abstract:

This body of work navigates the dialectical tension between the destruction and renewal of our relationship with landscapes, both contemporary and historical, and the intricacies of activities evident within constructed environments. These quasi-sculptural forms serve as poignant markers of power, class, and labor embedded in the English landscape.

The work probes the fragile equilibrium between stability and impermanence, highlighting the cyclicity of the natural world after human intervention. It seeks to illuminate how form naturally follows function, unveiling the innate aesthetics within ordinary "found" objects. These forms offer an enduring narrative of their utilitarian evolution, underscoring the beauty inherent in utilitarian simplicity.

At its core, this work is driven by phenomenological intent, bridging the gap between the photographer's deliberate framing and the casual viewer's passive encounter with these constructed landscapes. The photograph becomes a subtle language inviting viewers to reevaluate the ostensibly banal and ubiquitous.

Keywords: destruction, renewal, landscape, photography, brutalism

James Smith, after completion (2012) of the MA Photography programme at the Royal College of Art, has since gone on to be shown in both solo and group exhibitions. Solo exhibitions include Memorability as an Image, NN Contemporary Art, Northampton 2017, Temporal Dislocation, Photofusion, London 2012, and the ACE funded London Overspill commission of four exhibitions; London Overspill, UH Galleries, Hatfield, 2012, Luton Overlay, Departure Lounge 2012/13, Estate, Gibberd Gallery, Harlow 2014 and Parkway, Peterborough Museum, Peterborough 2014. Group exhibitions include Open16, Brighton Photo Fringe 2016, Speaking Space, Day+Gluckman 2014, Worcester Open 2013, Territory, Liverpool Biennial Fringe 2012, Guest & Host, NN Contemporary Art, Northampton 2012/13 and Document, Peninsula Arts, Plymouth 2013. Features of Smith's work have appeared in the Saatchi Gallery magazine Art and Music (issue 20) 2012, Seeing For Others, Black Dog Publishing (Includes essay by Alexander Garcia Duttman) 2012, ICON (issue 119) 2013 and reviews by Roy Exley on Photomonitor.co.uk, 2012, British Journal of Photography, article Feb edition, 2014, C20 Journal, issue3, 2014 by Elain Harwood. Smith has also co-authored the book Continuity, with Dr Christine Garwood, published by University of Hertfordshire Press, 2014.

The dialectic presented in this body of work oscillates between the destruction and renewal of our contemporary and historical relationship with landscape, and the nuances of activity that are made manifest by edifices and constructions within it. These dislocated forms of quasi 'sculpture' are evidential signs of power, class and labour positioned in the English landscape.

The work explores the precarious tipping point between stability and impermanence, and the inexorably cyclical nature of the physical environment after human intervention. A primary intent of the work is to expose how form follows function in order to reveal the inherent aesthetics and resonances contained within the seemingly effortless gestures of 'the found'. The forms offer a continual loop of their functional evolution; pragmatically laying bare the beauty of utilitarian banality provides a structural rhetoric through verification, confirmation and comparison.

The indication of function is predominantly revealed by its aesthetics and therefore colour is not an expressive value here. Rather, the forms' nakedness is revealed through a considered, dispassionate scrutiny, which results in formalising their evidential residue.

Underpinning the work is a phenomenological motivation¹ which aims to bridge the divide between the photographer's explicit framing of the constructed landscape and the casual viewer's benign, unknowing or unconscious dismissal of its functions, resonances and attributes. The image therefore situates itself as a meeting point, a catalytic conduit between the viewer and the photographer – a potent interface arising from the indifferent gaze of the viewer being counteracted by the experiential nature of the observer, i.e., photographer.

The photograph becomes an understated language aiming to lure the viewer into re-examining what is too readily dismissed as banal, functional or ubiquitous. In this way the works function as 'mirrors' held up to the viewer. The viewer is aware of the stance of the photographer and the topographical standing of the subject.

By choosing to shoot at an angle that offers two faces of a given form, the viewer is made aware of a distortion and is invited to engage with the work by viewing 'around' the subject and beyond its 'face value'. This work aims to allure and provoke a reflective experience of unrecognised recollections or logic.

The methodology of this body of work tests the nuances between literal fact and objectivity, in the process referencing and testing a more scientific approach. The deliberate exploitation of angles intrinsic in the work also offers a specific examination of the subject, drawing on the language of the survey^{2/3}.

1. James J. Gibson, 1986, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Psychology Press, New York.

2. Delegation for Territorial Planning and Regional Action (DATAR), 1984–1989, *La Mission Photographique de la DATAR*, Government of the French Republic, (since *Temporal Dislocation* all information on DATAR has been collated into this website, 2013) <<https://missionphotodatar.anct.gouv.fr/mission>>

3. Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA), Universal Archive, *The condition of the Document and the Modern Photographic Utopia*, 2008, <<https://www.macba.cat/en/exhibitions-activities/exhibitions/universal-archive>>

VISUAL SPACES OF CHANGE

This body of work is informed by the photographer's own empirical data relating to theories of brutalism⁴ and an ongoing interpretation of human responses to the utilitarian environment through its cycles, narratives and evolutions.

4. Reyner Banham, 2011, *The New Brutalism*, *October*, (136), pages 19–28



Temporal Dislocation 001 Watchtower



Temporal Dislocation 003 Spiral Structure



Temporal Dislocation 004 Wooden Crates



Temporal Dislocation 005 Scaffolding



Temporal Dislocation 006 Antenna



Temporal Dislocation 007 Haystack



Temporal Dislocation 008 Portacabin

Urban Wilderness: A Journey through Lisbon Terrain Vague

Lorenzo Stefano Iannizzotto

Abstract:

The new urban condition has generated ambiguous spaces within it: Terrain Vague or Urban Voids are spaces within the city, nameless and without clear boundaries, difficult to define. They are unpaved and vegetated spaces that are neither public spaces, nor gardens, nor agricultural fields, lying in a state of abandonment, suspension, and invisibility. With no specific function and temporarily outside the logic of the market, these spaces are appropriated and used daily by people and nature.

Indeed, they eschew traditional cartographic representation, where they are often represented as mere white spaces, or spaces with future destinations. For this reason, walking as a common action becomes the fundamental tool for approaching, getting to know, and studying these spaces, while photography and other visual media become not only a means of representation, but also of studying and understanding the dynamic reality of these spaces and the different realities that inhabit them.

With this visual essay, I do not aim to provide an unambiguous representation or definition of these spaces, far from it. Going along with the fragmentary and uncertain nature of these places, I have used photography as a means of urban research to understand and describe these places, and as a personal travelogue within these spaces, as if to take notes. Having chosen Lisbon as the privileged terrain of my research, this visual essay has the sole purpose of trying to represent these spaces in a disorderly and fragmentary way, following their nature, and in doing so, trying to unveil a hidden beauty and reveal their enormous potential for the city.

Keywords. Terrain Vague, Urban Voids, Lisbon, Photography, Urban

Lorenzo Stefano Iannizzotto is PhD student in the doctoral program Architecture of Contemporary Metropolitan Territories at ISCTE-IUL (Lisbon), a researcher at at DINÂMIA'CET-Iscte and a visiting researcher/scholar at University of Westminster, with a Doctoral Grant funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) for the Research Project "The Cartography of the In-Between: Rethinking Urban Voids Approach for New Urban Challenges", with the reference 2022.11783.BD. He completed a master's degree in architecture at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Florence in 2021. In 2018 and 2021, he worked as architect at Ventura Trindade Arquitectos (Lisbon). In 2021 he won an honourable mention in the competition *Un-locking cities. Nuovi scenari per l'abitare (Un-locking cities. New scenarios for living)*, organized by the University of Florence and in 2022 he worked in the project "SizaATLAS. Filling the Gaps for World Heritage".

"The man only noticed the reality when he represented it."¹

The ever-increasing expansion of the city, very often without design and planning, has generated areas between the city and the countryside, areas in which the urban, wild, and rural dimensions mix, hybridize and overlap without clear boundaries.

This new urban condition has generated ambiguous spaces within it: Terrain Vague² or Urban Voids³ are spaces within the city, nameless and without clear boundaries, difficult to define. They are unpaved and vegetated spaces that are neither public spaces, nor gardens, nor agricultural fields, lying in a state of abandonment, suspension, and invisibility. With no specific function and temporarily outside the logic of the market, these spaces are appropriated and used daily by people and nature. Due to their state of abandonment, neglect, and absence of control these spaces are often used for informal or unaccepted uses in the increasingly controlled and institutionalized public spaces⁴. Furthermore, despite the state of neglect, or perhaps precisely because of this, these spaces are the refuge of plant and animal species that are not allowed or do not exist in other spaces. The presence of all these factors makes these spaces particularly unpredictable, dynamic, and open to new encounters and experiments⁵. Because of their uncertain, ephemeral, and ambiguous character, these spaces are difficult to study and represent. Indeed, they eschew traditional cartographic representation, where they are often represented as mere white spaces, or spaces with future destinations. For this reason, walking as a common action becomes the fundamental tool for approaching, getting to know, and studying these spaces⁶, while photography and other visual media become not only a means of representation, but also of studying and understanding the dynamic reality of these spaces and the different realities that inhabit them.

In the first definition of Terrain Vague⁷, the propensity of these spaces to be represented through photography is already present, as is the mutual interest of photographers from the 1960s and 1970s onwards; for example, the work of Manolo Laguillo⁸ is mentioned. Together with photography, since the second half of the 20th century, these territories have been privileged

1. Pier Paolo Pasolini, "Affabulazione," in *Teatro* (Milano: Garzanti, 1988).

2. Ignasi de Solà-Morales, "Terrain Vague," in *Anyplace, Anyone*, ed. Cynthia Davidson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 118–23.

3. Sergio Lopez-Pineiro, *A Glossary of Urban Voids* (Berlin: Jovis, 2020).

4. K. Kamvasinou and Marion Roberts, "Interim Spaces: Vacant Land, Creativity and Innovation in the Context of Uncertainty," in *Terrain Vague: Interstices at the Edge of the Pale*, ed. Manuela Mariani and Patrick Barron (New York: Routledge, 2014), 187–200.

5. Gilles Clément, *Manifesto of the Third Landscape* (Trans Europe Halles, 2022).

6. Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes. Camminare Come Pratica Estetica* (Milano: Einaudi, 2006).

7. Solà-Morales, "Terrain Vague."

8. Manolo Laguillo, *Barcelona 1978–1997. Manolo Laguillo* (Impreso, 2007), <https://www.macba.cat/es/aprender-investigar/publicaciones/barcelona-1978-1997-manolo-laguillo>.

spaces for cinematic representation. Directors such as Pier Paolo Pasolini⁹, Michelangelo Antonioni¹⁰, Paulo Rocha and Wim Wenders shot some of their greatest masterpieces in these spaces between the countryside and the city, between the empty and the built, between wild nature and human traces, such as *Mamma Roma* (1962), *Uccellacci e Uccellini* (1966), *Deserto Rosso* (1964) *Os Verdes Anos* (1963), *Wings of Desire* (1987).

However, the photographers and projects that have most influenced my approach are undoubtedly Gabriele Basilico's (1944 – 2013) perpetual search for unpublished urban spaces, recently published in *Territori Intermedi*¹¹ and the project *cittainattesa*¹² ("In Italian, the title *cittainattesa* conceals a pun between 'in attesa', in wait, and 'inattesa', unexpected"¹³) by Giovanni Hanninen (1976). The photographic project reveals an unseen, unexpected, waiting, often invisible Milan, revealing that "Negligence, failures, financial and political issues, projects aborted before even being completed; numerous are the causes that made these buildings invisible, and often, refuge of the invisibles."¹⁴

With this visual essay, I do not aim to provide an unambiguous representation or definition of these spaces, far from it. Going along with the fragmentary and uncertain nature of these places, I have used photography as a means of urban research to understand and describe these places, and as a personal travelogue within these spaces, as if to take notes. Having chosen Lisbon as the privileged terrain of my research, this visual essay has the sole purpose of trying to represent these spaces in a disorderly and fragmentary way, following their nature, and in doing so, trying to unveil a hidden beauty and reveal their enormous potential for the city. Armed with a camera and a willingness to walk, I went into these spaces, within the city and often in central areas, but with a very particular reality. In these spaces, sheep may graze next to cars, cultivated fields lie next to dumps, children play ball next to abandoned objects, domestic animals meet wild animals, rare species of plants and insects may feed on plants that are illegal or non-existent in the city.

9. Manuela Mariani and Patrick Barron, "Cinematic Space in Rome's Disabitato: Between Metropolis and Terrain Vague in the Films of Fellini, Antonioni, and Pasolini," *Modernism – Modernity* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2011.0048>.

10. Matthew Gandy, "Landscapes of Delinquency in Michelangelo Antonioni's Red Desert," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 2 (2003): 218–37, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-5661.00088>.

11. Gabriele Basilico, *Basilico. Territori Intermedi: Territori Intermedi / In-between Territories*, ed. Giovanna Calvenzi, Filippo Maggia, and Luca Molinari (Milano: Skira, 2021).

12. Alberto Amoretti, "A City in Waiting," *Domus*, 2013, https://www.domusweb.it/en/photo-essays/2013/04/24/a_city_in_waiting.html.

13. Giovanni Hanninen and Alberto Amoretti, "Cittainattesa," 2015, <https://hanninen.it/cittainattesa/>.

14. Hanninen and Amoretti.

These spaces are full of spontaneous appropriations, informal and alternative uses, innate encounters, but they are also changeable, undefined, with blurred boundaries. For these reasons, my photographic series is not simply a document or record of the moments and activities that take place in these spaces, but above all re-interprets and uncovers a new understanding of those spaces which are the artistic object and study of my work. Almost like an incomplete or undefined object, photography can reveal and make clear the nature of the object, but above all it can re-interpret, fill it with new meanings or create connections with collective memory. Thus, photography and representation is not a passive action, a mere register of events, but rather a continuous process between unveiling reality and reinventing it.

Through photographs, it is perhaps possible to represent this heterogeneous universe, so rich in life and unpredictability, and if you pay attention, you can see a great social and natural potential, as well as a great wealth: diversity.

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38°44'16"N 9°06'38"W, 2023



38°44'05"N 9°06'41"W, 2023

38°48'13"N 9°06'27"W, 2023



38°47'23"N 9°09'24"W, 2023



38°45'17"N 9°07'24"W, 2023

38°47'46"N 9°05'46"W, 2023

38°44'07"N 9°06'34"W, 2023

38°44'15"N 9°06'20"W, 2023

The earth from above: from below

Rafaela Lima

Abstract:

The essay "The Earth from Above: From Below" explores the evolution of aerial photography and its significant role in military strategy, mainly through the lens of camouflage during the Second World War. It delves into how the advent of aviation and photography revolutionized the understanding and interpretation of the Earth's surface from an aerial perspective. The necessity for precise ground mapping and the effectiveness of air missions propelled the development of aerial photography, transforming it into a crucial tool for military intelligence and camouflage techniques.

The narrative draws on Harun Farocki's film "Images of the World and the Inscription of War" (1988) to illustrate the ingenious camouflage strategies employed by German troops, showcasing the deliberate alteration of landscapes to mislead enemy forces. The article further discusses the educational efforts at the Pratt Institute of Art in the USA, where aerial photographs were used to teach and refine building concealment techniques on three-dimensional models, subsequently documented by Marjory Collins in 1943. This iterative process of capturing, modelling, and re-photographing is a testament to the intricate relationship between two-dimensional imagery and three-dimensional reality, highlighting the complexities of interpreting aerial images.

In a broader context, the piece reflects on the contemporary experience of viewing the Earth through digital maps and satellite images, noting the profound shift in perception and interaction with geographical space. It invokes Gaston Bachelard's philosophical musings on scale and distance, suggesting that the abstract nature of aerial imagery both distances and miniaturizes, altering our fundamental understanding of space and place.

By tracing the historical progression from manual aerial surveillance to the omnipresent digital eye of today's satellite technology, the article underscores the transformative impact of aerial perspective on both military strategy and civilian perception. It challenges the viewer to discern reality from simulation, ultimately questioning the authenticity and accuracy of what we perceive from above.

Keywords: Verticality; Aerial view; Image; Scale; Camouflage

Rafaela Lima (Oliveira de Azeméis, 1999) is a visual artist based in Porto, Portugal. Rafaela holds a MA in Fine Arts – Intermedia – from the Faculty of Fine Arts of University of Porto (PT). It is through theoretical-practical research that Rafaela has been developing her studies on image making processes and its role on collective imagery. Since 2019 she has worked and participated in multiple exhibition projects such as O Bueiro (Porto) and Laboratorre (V. N. Gaia).

At the beginning of the last century, the ability to recognise the patterns of buildings, cars, rivers and fields from an aerial perspective was far from what it is today. As aeronautical activities intensified, the need to match the figures and volumes organised on the earth's surface to their original nature arose. This period was marked not only by the growth of aeronautics but also by the strong presence of war, which fueled the evermore urgent need to continue studying visibility on a vertical axis with the globe.

Alongside the growing developments in aviation, photography emerged as the tool of choice for decoding soils, ground mapping and monitoring air missions. In the absence of technology capable of real-time ground survey, the photographic record captured on board military aeroplanes confirmed the effectiveness of air missions. The archives dating back to that time were flooded with aerial photographs, and the careful observation of these aerial images led to valuable conclusions in the study of camouflage during the Second World War.

In the film *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1988), by the director Harun Farocki, we are presented with examples of camouflage strategies adopted by the German troops, captured through aerial photographs: the top of buildings painted in an attempt to mimic the landscape around them, large geometric shapes – roads, airstrips, watercourses – "transported" to unoccupied land, disorienting the enemy forces and avoiding damage to populated urban areas. The triangular design of the Nordholz air base, east of Hamburg (Germany), which is easily recognisable from an aerial perspective, appears reproduced in full scale on a distant site, with more defined contours. Observing it from above, at a high speed, one would not be able to see it for what it is: the product of a strategy for visual deceit.

Elsewhere on the globe, during camouflage classes at the Pratt Institute of Art (USA), the aerial images resulting from this ground mapping were transferred to three-dimensional models on a reduced scale. Building concealment techniques were rehearsed on these small models. Marjory Collins documented this work process in March 1943. In the photograph's description shown in page 49, Collins states that once the camouflage techniques had been projected onto the model, photographs were taken of these replicas, ultimately obtaining an image of the final results. The exercise went from the three-dimensional earth's surface to two-dimensional printing in aerial photographs, back to three-dimensionality as models, and finally moved to the two dimensions of the final photographs.

Identifying the ground involved stitching all these aerial images into one, like a big patchwork quilt. Step by step, the photographic record of lines and volumes was matched to real entities, thus creating an aerial survey of the earth's surface. Today, however, a big eye captures and registers the globe with precision, almost in real-time; it brings all the planes and reliefs into a two-dimensional plane in a single image that can be enlarged with the synchronised movement of the thumb and forefinger. Through this eye, we can consult the world's great map where the once uncharted white spaces have been revealed. Sitting on the other side of the screen, we fly over the world's four corners, anaesthetised by the inherent absence of scale of these images.

In his chapter on the miniature, Gaston Bachelard says that *the distant forges miniatures at every point on the horizon* (Bachelard 2000, 178)¹. Here, the distance, pointing in a downward orientation, is the earth's surface. *The geometer sees the exact same thing in two similar figures drawn at different scales*² (Bachelard 2000, 157–158). These images, devoid of any element of scale that might reveal them, are inscribed by the imagination in vastly different dimensions. We recognise the elevations of a building's facade far more quickly than we ever would the contours of its roof from an aerial perspective. We had to learn to see from above. To associate shapes and constructions with their corresponding real entities. These images transport us to an altitude of complete indefiniteness above the earth's surface.

From the perspective of someone who has never been in high altitudes, the more I look at these images, the less concrete they seem to me. Thinking about decoding the aerial perspective, but from an earthly perspective, leads me to associate the large geometric shapes organised on the surface of the earth with signs at my scale. A repetition of shapes and patterns is inscribed in the distant scales observed. These images could be captured at ten thousand feet or one metre off the ground. They concentrate on the details of buildings that don't fit within the horizon of our field of vision. They are small dots and constellations of figures, which could easily be a handful of grains of sand or a cluster of houses. As the product of giant scantlings, airstrips inscribe more or less geometric shapes onto the earth's surface. The simplest ones consist of just one straight line. Sometimes two, forming an intersection. As the runways increase in length, they tend to create a more complex composition of lines while allowing for more landings, take-offs and stationed aircraft at once.

A compositional exercise led me to organise them by shape in a physical archive. Earth From Above brings hundreds of aerial images of airstrips sorted and grouped according to visual similarities. Along these photographs, camouflaged amid the archive pages, are also registerings of fictionalised runways. These runways are reduced to the models' scale and captured with the feet on the ground. They simulate the earth's surface, the texture of the terrain, the shapes of the airstrips, and the photograph's grain. During the recording of this simulation, I flew over a little of every state in the USA; some of the states recorded are north-west Nevada (*Sky Ranch Aircraft; Basecamp Airfield*), south-east Arizona (*Rittenhouse Air Force Auxiliary Field*) and central Georgia (*Thomasville Airport*). Mixed in with the remaining images, the viewer is now presented with the challenge of identifying them.

¹ Free translation

² Idem

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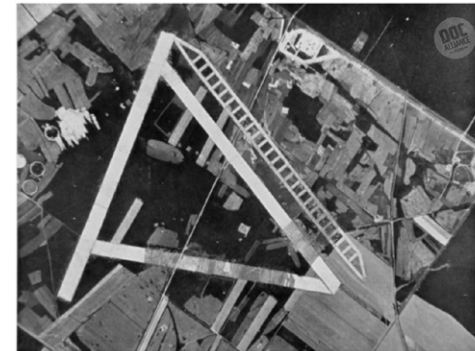
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The Earth from above: from below

Still from the movie Images of The World and Inscription of War (1988) Harun Farocki. 57 min.



Still from the movie Images of The World and Inscription of War (1988) Harun Farocki. 1h 1 min.

Still from the movie Images of The World and Inscription of War (1988) Harun Farocki. 59 min 50 s.

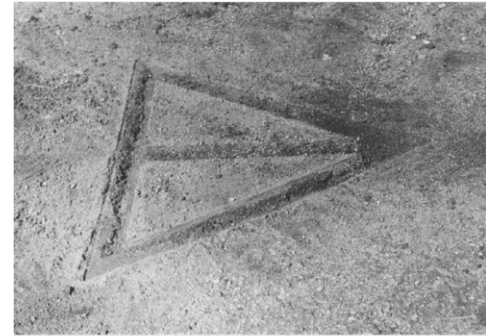
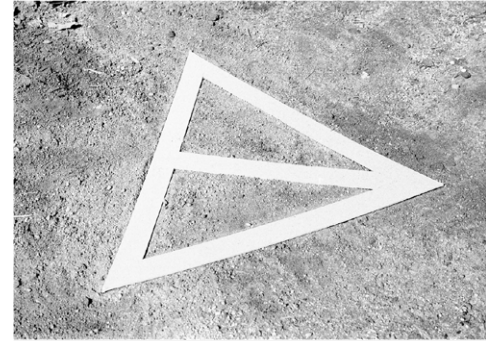


repeated the exercises from the camouflage lessons:

Collins, Marjory. 1943. "Camouflage class in New York University, where men and women are preparing for jobs in the Army or in industry, New York, N.Y. They make models from aerial photographs, re-photograph them, then work out a camouflage scheme and make a final photograph." Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2017878858/>.



from the bidimensionality
(the collection of aerial images)



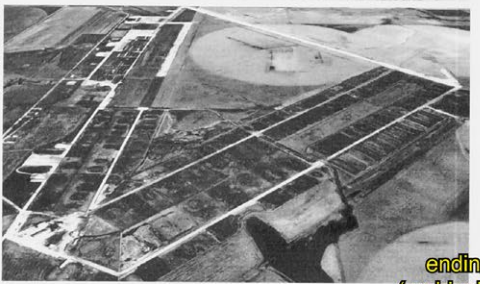
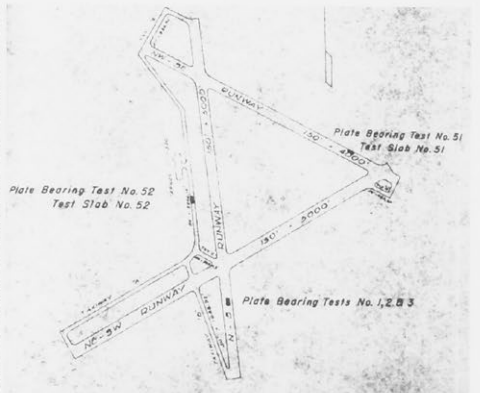
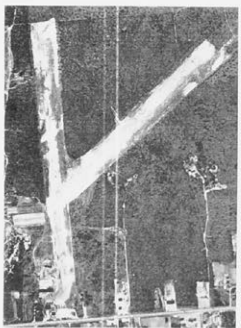
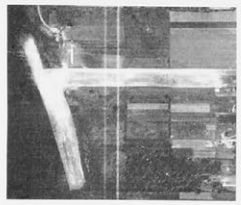
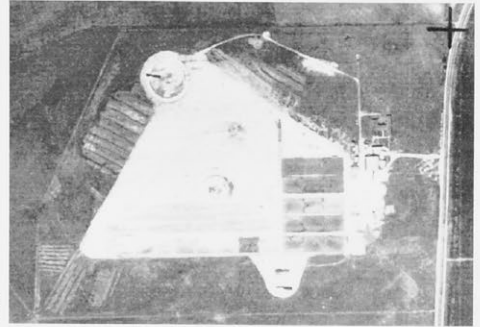
to three-dimensionality (models),
back to bidimensionality (forget image)

Rafaela Lima. Untitled. Black and white photograph, 2022-2023

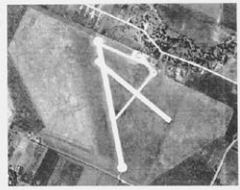
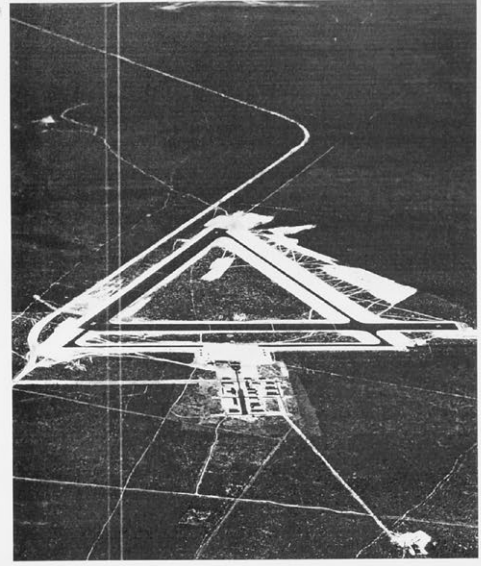


to three-dimensionality (printed archive)

Rafaela Lima. Untitled. Black and white photograph, 2022-2023



ending in bidimensionality
(archive's photographic record).



Techniques of Discovery: Cryptography and Design

Roberto Bottazzi

Abstract:

Among the core technologies forming the rich archaeology of computation, cryptography is perhaps a subject that has received little attention in architectural studies thus far. However, there are fruitful considerations to draw from a closer inspection of the vast repertoire of techniques that cryptography has developed over a period of about seven centuries. First of all, a deeper historical perspective will help frame cryptography as a technology for discovery rather than solely protecting military and diplomatic secrets. Secondly, these considerations can be of relevance to design as they offer thoughts for both conceptual reflections and practical applications. At a conceptual level, the symbolic, discrete computation accompanying the evolution of cryptographic methods – such as Alberti's one in 1467 – marked a radical departure from the iconic semiotics of analogue machines. The non-mimetic nature of symbolic computation provided the technological means to significantly widen its range of applications and enhanced speculative thinking. Understood along these lines, cryptography found more general applications beyond concealing diplomatic secrets to provide a rigorous method for inquiry into unknown domains in order to make 'noisy data' intelligible. Finally, symbolic computation also provided more advanced techniques for abstraction that were also instrumental for constructing notational drawings, whose emergence coincided with the introduction of more advanced mathematical instruments in the renaissance.

The essay will discuss the key paradigmatic moments in the history of cryptography such as the polyalphabetic techniques proposed by L. B. Alberti in 1467 and the use of binary cryptography by Francis Bacon in 1605. Despite their distance from the present, these experiments provide a useful segue into a discussion on how the notion of cypher as a conceptual instrument accompanying the introduction of Machine Learning models in architectural and urban design.

Keywords: Cryptography, Methods, Architecture, Symbolic Computation, Machine Learning

Roberto Bottazzi is an architect, researcher, and educator based in London. He studied at University of Florence, Italy and University of British Columbia, Canada before moving to London. His research analyses the impact of digital technologies on architecture and urbanism. Roberto has lectured and exhibited internationally and is the author of *Digital Architecture Beyond Computers* (Bloomsbury Visual, 2018, 2021). He was Visiting Professor at the Politecnico of Milan and Visiting tutor at the Innovation Design Engineering [IDE] at the Royal College of Art. He is Programme Director of the MArch Urban Design at the Bartlett School of Architecture.

This essay surveys the archaeology of the digital to tease out references, techniques, and concepts that resonate with and help us think through the rapid and disruptive introduction of Machine Learning (ML) models in design. Rather than focusing on pragmatic applications or ethical conundrums, the essay will concentrate on design processes – the set of techniques tasked with the translation of ideas into actionable instructions – and how machine learning will impact them. Design techniques simultaneously constrain our imagination ("nothing gets built that isn't transposable onto AutoCad", in Alejandro Zaera-Polo's words¹) and can be exploited to give rise to original approaches and languages. For instance, mathematical perspective produced Pienza's central square and paintings such as *The Ideal City*, whereas the early seventeenth century saw improvement in the field of optics that played a decisive factor in the formation of Baroque aesthetics.

ML models introduce several new representational techniques to encode space which dislodge established notions opening up a theoretical void. Notions such as latent space, training models, or the organisation of spatial data through statistical tools are examples of such novel techniques which mark a discontinuity with previous technologies of spatial representation. What all these new techniques have in common is that they are computational in nature. We can distinguish between the digital and the computational domain by indicating with the former digital devices in general (microprocessors, screens, etc.), while the latter is concerned with the actual operations of calculus. Computation denotes a method, a particular way to encode/decode information, it is a technology to 'reckon with' according to the original meaning of the Latin expression *computare*.² Though a subset of the digital, computation is a more fundamental component of any digital device as it is tasked with the manipulation, transformation, and generation of ideas and knowledge. By placing the challenges posed by ML models on the side of computational problems, we want to foreground that the introduction of ML models in design is primarily an issue concerning the organisation and instrumentalisation of knowledge and, only successively, the invention of novel forms. In short, the issues and opportunities engendered by applying ML models to design are strategic before being formal.

How should designers think of new notions such as statistical distribution and inductive training when designing? At a basic level, ML models are implemented to seek out patterns and correlations in very large and variegated datasets. Clustering algorithms – a particular branch of ML – categorises data to extract functions to then be used for generative purposes. The designer tasks the algorithmic procedures to probe the input datasets, to seek for patterns to

1. Quoted in Bernard Cache. "Towards a Non-Standard Mode of Production". In *Projectiles* (London: Architectural Association, 2011), p.61.

2. *Online Etymology Dictionary*. "Compute". Accessed 6 February, 2024. Available from: <https://cse.buffalo.edu/~rapaport/584/computetymology.html#:~:text=The%20word%20compute%20comes%20from,arithmetic%2C%20accounting%2C%20reckoning%22>.

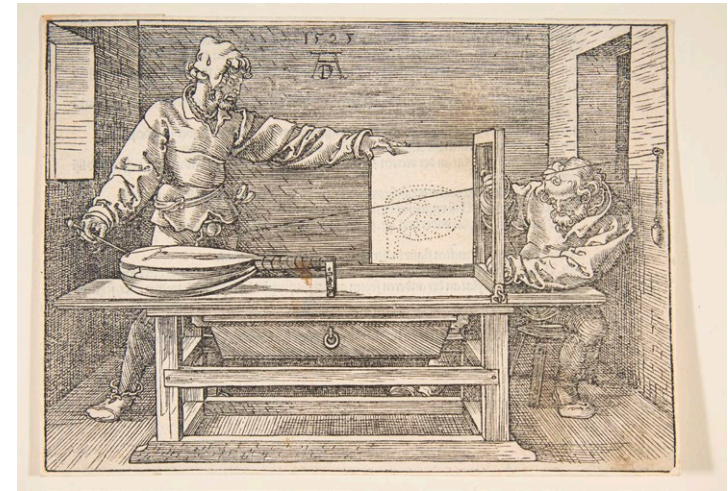
compress it. 'Noisy' input data are ordered to give rise to intelligible and meaningful outputs. By sifting through the potentially endless sequences of trivial or spurious correlations, designers seek for original, counter-intuitive, perhaps overlooked patterns that can be lifted out from the algorithmic process to guide the design investigation. The abstract nature of data provides a technology for quantification that can encompass many aspects of objects, well beyond the ones we can perceive. Out of the archaeology of the digital, cryptography represents a fundamental subject of computation that can offer a useful analogy to conceptualise the use of ML models in design. Cryptography, in fact, offers a vast repertoire of rigorous methods to access and manipulate objects beyond their phenomenal qualities, to negotiate between noise, randomness and intelligibility; all conditions that also characterise the exploration and organisation of input data by ML models. The specific element tasked with establishing a bridge between noisy and intelligible data is the cypher; an artificial code designed to connect cypher and plain texts. In some cases the analogy with cryptography can be quite literal: autoencoders – a class of ML algorithms – in fact learn an optimal function to encrypt and decrypt the input dataset. In other words, they seek to extract a cypher, a 'key' through which noisy and intelligible representations of input data can communicate.³

Despite the deep and rich repertoire of techniques that animated the history of cryptography, this core aspect of computation has received little attention from architects. The traditional domain of application of cryptography is not space or spatial representation, but rather that of diplomacy and military secrets. The first move is to disentangle cryptographic methods from such readings to highlight the role that they had in organising knowledge and providing accountable methods for discovery. To better grasp how different computational logics organise information and engender different kinds of creative operations, we will first review how analogue and discrete computation each work.

Analogue and Discrete computation

Different modes of computing engender different types of operations for designers to perform. This is due to the material and semiotic logic underpinning each type of computational approach. On the one hand, analogue computation makes use of materials and contraptions that can only compute continuous quantities: lengths, angles, volumes of liquids are some of the physical properties exploited. Semiotically, the parts of analogue computers establish an iconic relationship with the processes they embody. The construction of an analogue computing machine implies a process of reification of the very theory it will embody. If we take as an example the perspective machines that were so popular in the renaissance (all based on analogue computation), we can see that each material chosen and the arrangement of the different parts was a reification of the theory of vision that mathematical perspective had codified (Fig. 1).

3. 'Autoencoders'. *Wikipedia*. Available from : <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autoencoder>.



As iconic signs are in principle subjected to material debasement, perspective machines would perform incorrectly or not at all, if the material properties of their components worn out or parts broke down. More importantly, because of their inherent connection to material logic, analogue computers always have a visual quality that elevate the eye as the most effective sense to appreciate their functioning. In so doing, analogue computing acquires pedagogical qualities: if one is familiar with the theory computed (e.g. mathematical perspective, in the example we have been using), they will be able to 'see' it in action as materialised by the various parts of the machine. Perhaps, it is for this reason that Bill Phillips based his MONIAC (Monetary National Income Analogue Computer) on analogue computation.⁴ Built in 1949, the purpose of this computer was to visualise the working of a large, complex economy such as that one of a nation. As water was poured in a container placed at the top of the machine, gravity, a system of interconnected pipes and gates would visualise the flow of water/capital according to varying levels of taxation and interest rates. Water not only made MONIAC an analogue computer, but it also gave the whole system visual and pedagogical qualities that made it deliberately direct

4. *Wikipedia*. "Phillips Machine". January 4, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phillips_Machine. Several videos showing the computer in action can be found online.

Fig. 1 – Albrecht Dürer, The Draughtsman of the Lute.

and uncryptic. These considerations directly affect the type of operations analogue computers allow. The analogue computer is so inherently linked to material properties that its design can only be tasked to compute a specific problem first and, only successively, be applied to other cases in order to test its transferability. The process of generalisation of analogue computation is always one that moves from the specific to the general. On the contrary, discrete computation is always first and foremost posed as an universal method that can be applied to specific tasks. Semiotically, in fact, discrete computation establishes arbitrary relations between signs and things.⁵ Such arbitrary relation does not initially rely on any specific material property (e.g. the Turing Machine was a thought experiment) as discrete computation is a 'portable' method; that is, it is independent of the task it is applied to and is loosely related to the material logic that embodies it. Contrary to analogue, discrete computation shares with cryptography the search for not mimetic semiotic systems. In cryptography, in fact, one seeks to maximise the gap between signs and things in order to make decryption as difficult as possible.

Anthony Wilden captures well the implications that materiality has on the type of computation performed when he states that: "The analog computer cannot represent nothing (no-thing) because it is directly or indirectly related to 'things', whereas the 'language' of the digital computer is essentially autonomous and arbitrary in relation to 'things' (except in so far as all the information requires matter-energy in the form of markers for its transmission). The analog computer is an icon or an image of something 'real', whereas the digital computer's relationship to 'reality' is rudimentarily similar to language itself."⁶

Finally, discrete computation is an extremely economic system as it only requires two signs in order to compute. As we shall see, though binary numeration had been long known in the West, it was within the field of cryptography and, more precisely with the work of Francis Bacon, that a system consisting of only two characters (bilateral cypher) was developed to encode all types of messages. We should note the importance of cryptography in the development of the philosophy of computing as an early example and application of binary coding emerged from this field. As we will also discuss in relation to creativity, the gap between signs and phenomena that is inherent in discrete computation should not be seen as a lack, a deficiency limiting the descriptive potential of system devised. Rather, it is precisely this gap that constitutes the conceptual space in which speculation and creativity can be articulated.

5. The characterisation of code as a disembodied concept is not entirely precise as it only accounts for how code is conceived. At its conception code is a pure abstraction which does not strictly need to exist in reality; however, computers are physical devices which require code to be inscribed onto a material support. The gates of a digital computer are the physical equivalent of the 'disembodied' 0s and 1s of Boolean logic and so are the perforated cards controlling the weaving patterns of a Jacquard loom. As Aden Evens suggests, it follows that at their very core digital computers are still analogue machines: 0s and 1s are arbitrarily assigned to, for instance, fluctuations in voltage whose variation is continuous, not discrete.

6. Anthony Wilden. *System and Structure*. (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), pp. 162-163.

Finally, we observe a property of discrete computation: the ability to negate. Analogue computation rests on the existence of a physical property (length, voltage, etc.) which is replicated in the analogue computing device. Analogue computation necessarily establishes a positive relation between signs and phenomena. An analogue computer cannot say 'not-A'⁷; however, it can assign a zero value to one of its variables, which marks a conceptual difference between the notion of zero and that of negation. On the contrary, the denotative, arbitrary semiotics of discrete signs has the possibility to negate an object (this is 'not-A') and, therefore, to play with the disjunction between representation (code) and phenomena. As we have seen, this is a fundamental property of symbolic sign systems which are in fact nothing but a system to mark oppositions, or, better, differences from which more structured strings emerge.

From the vast archaeology of cryptographic studies, we will dwell on Leon Battista Alberti's and Francis Bacon's methods. Both experiments mark important moments in the definition of non-mimetic languages which introduced either technical innovation (the extensive use of mathematics in Alberti) or the speculative application of cryptography to investigate domains well beyond that of military secrets (Bacon).

Beyond mimesis, mathematics: Alberti's cipher

The cryptographic method introduced by Leon Battista Alberti in his *De componendi cifris* (1466 ca.) represents an important watershed in non-mimetic thinking in cryptography and computation (Fig. 2). Alberti bases his system on polyalphabetic encryption which relies on multiple cyphers to change numerous times throughout the encoding/decoding process. Two independently-rotating wheels can be aligned in order to match letters in the plain text with corresponding ones in the cypher text. By changing the alignment of the wheels repeatedly, decoding by frequency analysis becomes impossible as characters often repeated in the cypher text no longer correspond to characters frequently used in natural language.



7. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Fig. 2 – Leon Battista Alberti, Cypher Disk, 1467.

Any possibility to rely on visual clues for decryption is eliminated and so are indexical traces to connect cypher and plain text. Whilst some of these considerations were already understood by the cryptographers of the time, the polyalphabetic nature of Alberti's invention also meant that the size of the space of all possible combinations exponentially grew each time the cypher would change. More abstract and complex methods are needed and mathematics is therefore designated as the instrument able to handle abstraction, navigate domains beyond sensible or even intelligible outcomes (such as the enormous space of all combinations) and act as communication systems tasked with the translation of string of 'meaningless' signs (cypher text) into intelligible ones (plain text). Two elements are important to foreground in this discussion. The introduction of non-mimetic notational systems is an important step towards the notion of 'portability' of discrete computation we mentioned in the previous paragraph. A symbolic, arbitrary system of signs that does not relies on material properties is more suitable to be applied universally. Secondly, Alberti's method elevates mathematics to the only technology able to provide guidance in the face of ever larger quantities of information. Mathematical instruments inform and guide discovery. This point, that will also be discussed in the section on Bacon, is also central in the use of ML models in design processes. Statistical analysis are also at work in the operations of ML models which avail of mathematics to analyse, compress, and categorise input data. In other words, they guide designers through the immense space of data and allow them to speculate on and create with them.

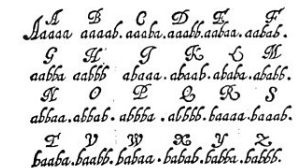
An important development to the polyalphabetic method is provided by Gottfried Leibniz's own cryptography machine. Though Leibniz' machine was never built, the descriptions we have illustrate an automated mechanism constituted by a keyboard and different rotating drums that combined to automatically translate plain text in to cypher text. Beside removing error-prone complicated operations by hand, the machine completely removes the possibility of decryption by frequency analysis as the encrypting cypher can change at varying intervals. Both principles would still underpin cryptographic methods in use in the first part of the 20th century.

Omnia per Omnia: Francis Bacon's biliteral cypher

If Alberti's polyalphabetic encryption mainly concentrates on technical improvements by assigning to mathematical techniques the role of guiding navigation through the massive combinatorial space generated, Francis Bacon's approach to cryptography innovates on both technical and conceptual levels. In his *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), Bacon identifies the perfect cypher as the one that would translate any message into any other message: "Omnia per omnia" in his words.⁸ Beside Bacon's ill-considered confidence that such cypher 'is undoubtedly

8. For ciphers, they are commonly in letters or alphabets, but may be in words...But the virtues of them, whereby they are to be preferred, are three; that they be not laborious to write and read; that they be impossible to decipher; and, in some cases, that they be without suspicion. The highest degree whereof is to write omnia per omnia: which is undoubtedly possible, with a proportion quintuple at most of the writing infolding to the writing infolded, and no other restraint whatsoever." Francis. Bacon. *The Advancement of Learning* [1605] (Oxford : at the Clarendon Press, 1869) p.161.

possible",⁹ his biliteral cypher perhaps best approximates the quest for an universal systems of signals for encryption and decryption. Technically a steganographic method operating by substitution, Bacon's cypher most noticeable novelty consists in conflating plain and cypher text; that is, hiding secrets in plain sight. The presence of an encrypted message is disguised through a simple difference in the text: two distinct typefaces are used (e.g. standard and bold typeface). To decode the message, only the characters in one of the two typefaces are singled out and translated by using Bacon's cypher. Such cypher takes each letter and transforms it into a 5-digit binary code formed by the letters 'a' and 'b' only (Fig. 3). Finally, the same process is reversed to turn the binary code back into natural language. The use of two typefaces is the material expression of a more fundamental principle underpinning the logic of this system: that of difference. Bacon maintains that any system "capable of a twofold difference onely: as by Bells, By Trumpets, by Lights and Torches, by the report of Muskets, and any instrument of like nature"¹⁰ would meet the material requirements of his cryptographic method. Among the range of technologies that could be capable of establishing clear and unequivocal differences between members of their set are also numbers. 0s and 1s could replace the letters 'a' and 'b' and be used as cyphers. At the time of Bacon's writing, binary numeration was already a known technology, but the innovation introduced by his biliteral cypher is to establish difference as a sufficient requirement of a computing system to work. Sound, light, and, of course, numbers all happen to be technologies that can satisfy this requirement.



Previous considerations on the abstract and speculative qualities of discrete computation now acquire a clearer meaning as we can see them applied to a specific method. The gap between coded representation and things is here as wide and abstracted as possible; a condition, we argued, that is essential for speculative thinking. Such intuition did not go unnoticed and plays a central role in later experiments that are considered decisive for the construction of the modern computer. Both the idea that semiotic difference precedes the emergence of complex statements (rather than resulting from them) and that signalling system does not need to be grounded in empirical phenomena or a-priori reality also inform Hegel's logic. The abstraction of this approach is not bound to a specific application. In Hegel's words: "With this..(

9. *Ibid.*, p.161.
 10. Francis Bacon. *The Dignity and Advancement of Learning*. Latin edition, 1623, chapter 1.

Fig. 3 – Francis Bacon, Biliteral Cypher, 1605.

indeterminateness and vacuity of conception, it is indifferent whether this abstraction is called space, pure intuiting, or pure thinking".¹¹ Difference (between 0 and 1) is also the foundation of George Boole's logic which infuses clear meaning into each term: "the symbol 0 represents Nothing," whereas the symbol 1 represents "'the Universe' since this is the only class in which are found *all* the individuals that exist in *any* class."¹² Boole's approach had already been prognosticated by Leibniz famous motto "*Omnibus ex nihilo ducendis sufficit unum*" (To draw all things out of nothing, one thing is sufficient) which posited that thought could be encoded into two integers only.¹³ In 1936, Turing's thought experiment on computation also availed itself of only two numbers: 0 and 1. Finally, Ferdinand Saussure's observation that language is only constituted by "negative facts"¹⁴ also places differences between signs as the pre-requisite for the emergence of statements. Saussure's reference to the negative qualities of language remind us of the possibility to use discrete computation speculatively because of its ability to articulate negative conditions.

Beside the innovations that emerged as a result of the technologies utilised, Bacon's approach to cryptography also presents conceptual novelties that are useful to discuss in regards to ML models and speculative and creative thinking. Beyond the more practical applications to conceal secrets, Bacon thinks of cryptography as a method to penetrate the secrets of nature. Nature, in his view, does not speak in the same language as God or man: God plays an ontological role to 'write' nature (which thus appears concealed), whereas humans need to develop instruments to 'read' it to gain knowledge (epistemology). The gap between how things are created and how they can be accessed demands the invention of a vicarious language governing communication: in other words, a cypher. Such language can only be non-mimetic: "no longer metronomically intertwine as part of the divine microcosm, the language of God, man, and thing begin to pull apart".¹⁵ The core preoccupation of Bacon's "new science" is therefore to devise such scientific instruments to gain access to the encrypted ('noisy' in computational parlance) secrets of nature. Cryptography is here understood as an instrument for discovery; its mathematical and combinatorial qualities can penetrate beyond the phenomenal appearance of objects, into their

11. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. *Science of Logic [1812–31]*. Translated by A. V. Miller. (London, NJ: Allen & Unwin, 1990). Quoted in David Link. *Archaeology of Algorithmic Artefacts*. (Minneapolis: Univocal Publishing, 2016), p. 16.

12. George Boole. *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought, on which are founded the mathematical theories of logic and probabilities*. (London: Walton & Maberly, 1854).

13. Letter to the Duke Rudolph August of Brunswick, December 1696. Quoted in Lloyd Strickland and Harry R. Lewis. *Leibniz on Binary: The Invention of the Computer Arithmetic* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2022), p. 99.

14. In Saussure's own words: "...in language there are only differences *without positive terms*". Ferdinand Saussure. *Course of General Linguistics*. Edited by C. Bally and A. Sechehay, with the collaboration of A. Riedlinger; translated and annotated by W. Basking. 1st ed. 1916. (London: Duckworth, 1959), p. 120. Quoted in Paolo Virno, *Saggio sulla Negazione: Per una Antropologia Linguistica* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2013), p. 28.

15. Michael C. Clody. "Deciphering the Language of Nature: Cryptography, Secrecy, and Alterity in Francis Bacon". *Configurations*, Volume 19, Number 1 (Winter 2011), p. 127.

"as-yet unheard potential".¹⁶ It is the speculative quality of the Bacon's cypher that perhaps best resonates with earlier considerations on the introduction of ML models in design processes. The automatic analysis and categorisation of data produced by ML algorithms is accurate and yet impenetrable to human faculties; mathematics plays both a rigorous and experimental role in discovering new untapped connections and providing an "'outside' representation from within".¹⁷

Conclusions

By surveying some key examples from the vast archaeology of cryptography, we aimed at foregrounding how computational thinking re-organises our existing knowledge, and provides a rigorous instrument for discovery. In so doing, the aim was to furnish theoretical instruments that may guide design with ML models and move the discussion beyond either functional applications or general ethical concerns. To study the relation between machine learning and design through the lenses of cryptography offers rich ideas to develop. First, it establishes the centrality of non-mimetic notational systems and mathematics as the key technologies for manipulation and creative exploitation of signs. These operations possess speculative and playful qualities that are not only shared with some cryptographic methods, but also remind us that design is a creative (poietic) endeavour rather than an analytical one. The abstraction of phenomena through data and their algorithmic manipulation involves both ontological and epistemological processes. Algorithms write the world in mathematical and statistical language as well as allow us to read it. ML models conflate the two operations in ways that broadly match those that cryptographers have been developing and perfecting for centuries: that is, to develop instruments to venture into as yet-known domains.

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

Sense of place: How should we think about urban planning practices today?

Inês Osório

Abstract

Considering the recent socio-technological, psychosocial, political, and economic developments, will the urban planning practices (in the systemic sense of its exercise) be able to adapt to a growing, changing urban culture?

Noting the diverse variety of contemporary spatial practices in which methods, concepts, and discourses tend to be sealed off from one another, this reflection calls for a reevaluation of the plurality dimensions and layers in the construction of the urban reality, questioning in this process, the predictable hegemony regarding the supremacy of Architecture in shaping modern and current urban imagery.

This essay seeks to foster a reflection on new contemporary paradigms of Western urban life, tracing a retrospective view that allows us to look systemically at what we have built. In this process, the aim is to stimulate a future collision path, a conceptual and operational dialogue between the creative disciplines of Architecture and Contemporary Art on the current urbanization courses, proposing this possible relationship as an inseparable disciplinary set in the process of producing public space and urban territory.

Putting forth the hypothesis of reassessing the established models of contemporary urban planning, the goal is to explore the possible operability of the *bauhausian* canon in its historical disciplinary triad (architecture/art/design) while, in a process of symbiotic interaction, considering them as complementary tools in urban design concept, promoting a pluralistic and *expanded* dialogue between the processes of designing, requalifying, and resignifying the future *places*.

keywords: sense of place, urban regeneration, systemic urbanism, Site-specific art, critical spatial practice, transdisciplinarity

Inês Osório (1984), is an artist and designer residing between Porto and Brussels. She is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Porto, focusing on urban dynamics and forms, specifically how contemporary art influences urban design. Her research, funded by FCT since 2022, examines the interplay between art and architecture in urban planning, emphasizing the role of site-specific sculpture in shaping urban spaces. Osório holds a Master's in Sculpture from the Porto Academy of Fine Arts (2009), exploring systemic interdependence through large-scale, context-sensitive sculptures. She completed Postgraduate Studies in Furniture Design at ESMAD-IPP (2014) and graduated in Fine Arts Sculpture from the University of Barcelona and University of Porto (2002/07), receiving a Merit Student award in 2007. Osório, a recipient of the 1st Prize at the Cerveira Biennial International Art Competition (2011) and other accolades, balances her career between art and design, operating a studio in Porto since 2007.

Sense of place, urban regeneration, systemic urbanism, site-specific art, critical spatial practice, transdisciplinarity

A political society is a community of actors, of citizens who act together, and not a simple aggregate of individuals who live next to each other and share among themselves a good that they assume to be common.

Daniel Innerarity¹

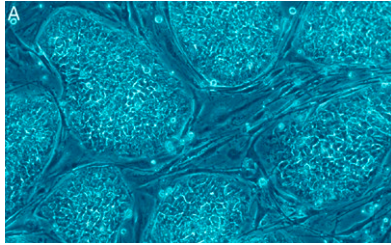
From what we understand about the production of the urban environment, we can summarize that several factors interact for its definition, functionality, and enjoyment, and which, over the years and centuries, have been renewed and transformed along with our human evolution.

As we know, the urban image is not a hermetically sealed-off product, but rather a phenomenon in a permanent state of *becoming* that materializes physically, visually and symbolically in multiple expressions.

Space is, by nature, a socially defined polysemic concept (Lefebvre, 1974) wherein *public space*, as a stage, is understood as a continuum (Carmona, 2014) because it is part of an evolving logic, that results from our social/technological/cultural progress and that depends on phenomena that are as complex as they are, sometimes, contradictory – similar to a living dynamic system, urban environment development is also made up of natural (biological) factors that are transversal to the entire animal kingdom. A few authors have studied this approach to analyzing urban society, not so much from a social sciences perspective, but rather from a natural sciences perspective. This is the case in “General System Theory” (Bertalanffy, 1966), which proposes a systemic interpretation of the human condition – which can be extrapolated, by extension, to the urban condition (Mongin, 2005), which is then understood as a polyphonic organism, resulting from a complex whole, an organized and eminently interdependent structure.

In this context, our urban production can be understood under this structured logic of *subsystems within other systems* (Simon, 1981): human civilization, as biophysical organism (Spencer, 1896), develops itself in a set of verifiable responses, such as *growth, self-organization, adaptation, multiplication, differentiation, natural selection and evolution* (Lande, 1983) – abilities from which we can draw certain analogies and equivalencies, both on the macro and micro scales of the Universe.

1. Daniel Innerarity, *O Novo Espaço Público: Que Significado Pode Ter Hoje Uma Cultura Pública Comum*, Editorial Teorema, SA, (2010), 17.

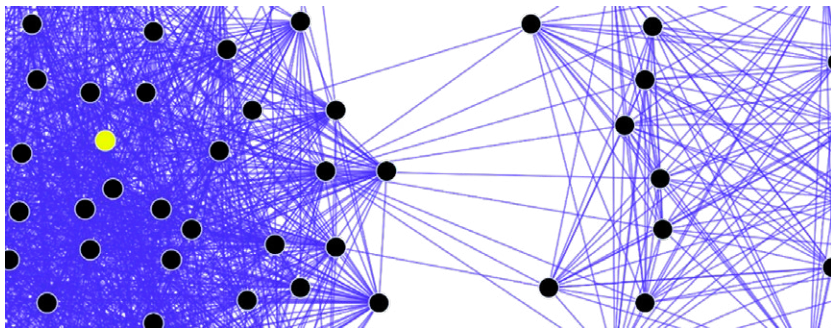


Stem cells (microscopic representation).
Appear in the human organism before birth,
as undifferentiated cells.



City of Chicago (aerial view)
The organization of human settlements is recognizable
both in the urban planning of large cities or in the
construction of small communities.

This theoretical approach has led to developments in many fields of human knowledge (such as anthropology, sociology, and psychology), resonating most of all in interdisciplinary studies in the social sciences. The awareness that we are part of a complex systemic structure (Bertalanffy, 1966) allows us to understand that, beyond our condition in relation to other species, our process of human/social/civilizational evolution and the subsequent process of urbanization, results from a biophysical ability for adaptive response. This ability for adaptive response reveals itself culturally, socially and psychologically in multiple local and global connections, in a *phenomenon of organized complexity* (Weaver, 1948) which, seems to be growing exponentially at this point in our evolution.



Fictional social network diagram.

Since the end of the 20th century, the world has been adapting to a quickly expanding digital reality, revealing an *interconnectivity* that has been developing daily (Castells, 1996) – with the recent pandemic crisis, this tendency has only solidified. If we focus on these recent socio-technological phenomena, we can understand the organization of human society as a *non-linear system* (Castellani, 2009) with added layers of complexity, while maintaining its self-regulation. It would seem we are living at the height of what is known as *liquid modernity*, as predicted by Bauman (2000).

Many of these dynamics directly affect the quality of our relationship with the Other, defining our *collective conscience* (Durkheim, 1985), which comprises several referencing layers. Today, we are moving around in this growing abstraction and complex spectrum of symbolic stimuli: a multi-referential framework of events that implies that contexts and experiences are not repeated, preventing us from acting according to a formula.

Nevertheless is the design of today's cities based on this notion?

How is the urban landscape produced *today*?

The concept of urban landscape can be deconstructed into two approaches: one with a physical, tangible, natural dimension; and another with an abstract, symbolic, and complex dimension (Morin, 1990). Urban reality is constructed through a dialogue between the natural and the built environment, acquiring meaning from the interaction of agents, *habitus* and contributions (Bourdieu, 2020) which, as *structuring structures*, generate an ordered social behavior and consequent ways of being/living in each *field*. Thus, *Urban place is defined by the subject's experience*, awareness and perception of certain concepts and symbols (Tuan, 1975). It is precisely our innate ability for abstract thought (introducing meaning beyond the visible) that distinguishes us from other animals. Based on this dimension of symbolic domain, it is possible to achieve the level of abstraction of urban society, in which its evolutionary success is mainly due to this perceptive dimension of constructed reality, moving toward a meaningful and enriching experience.

The complexity of human evolution seems to hold ever more strata and layers of influence, however: does the evolution of our cities keep pace with all these transformations?

The goal of this reflection is to frame the processes of place production and *urban territory* as representative dimensions of human civilization, understanding them based on abstract operations, which have materialized throughout history in spatial formulations resulting from a given multi-level systemic conjuncture (geographical, physical, infrastructural, environmental, biophysical, cultural, social, political, economic, technological) and, as such, the one that structures the development processes of the Western urban landscape.

However how should we think/draw the public spaces *today*? Moreover, *who* should come together for this process?

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Public space (*agora*), as an interactive place for the evolution of human civilization (*polis*), establishes itself as a territorial phenomenon based on a common organization (*res publica*), although it is locally defined by a variety of factors. Beyond the contingencies mentioned above, urban development is also structured in a political order which, although sometimes imperceptible, is decisive in defining the *socio-spatial dialectic* in which we operate (Soja, 1989).

Systemically, this order reveals itself in a bidirectional relationship, since both social relations are politically projected onto the spatial domain of the urban, and likewise, the built space itself has a political impact on the relationships and dynamics that are established in the social sphere (Lefebvre, 1974).

This rhizomatic dimension² of our reality (Deleuze and Guattari, 1995), if understood in light of the design and materialization of urban process, allows us to question the use of predetermined plans, which begin to reveal themselves as generalist proposals and, as such, as being out of touch with the particular needs of each context.

This perspective advocates for a certain urgency in interpreting the urban territory as a systemic and interdependent whole, foreseeing the lack of responsive and adaptive solutions facing the accelerated transformations of contemporary Western society.

Reading urban society as a reactive *networked organism* (Castells, 1996), allows us to understand its elasticity and volatility and highlights the relevance of considering the city in its highest spatial potential. This consideration covers various urban project domains – formal, functional, environmental, territorial, symbolic and artistic – increasing the urgency of encountering the experiential dimension in producing an “existential space” (Norberg-Schulz, 1971), therefore intended to be more *humanized*.

Which brings us to the question: How have urban planning practices evolved to improve the quality of the contemporary *built environment*?

The urban landscape derives from the set of places it establishes, each one built with a specific function and purpose. The arising of *place* happens when we think about the user located “in relation to an environment” – space becomes symbolized, inscribed with meaning (Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

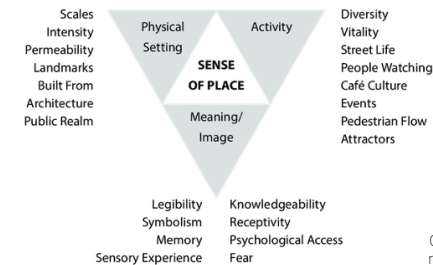
The urban space as a “practiced place”, as a product of social relations and a result of the construction of codes with their own logic (Certeau, 1980), leads us to Marc Augé’s anthropological

2. A rhizome works like a map: “[...] the map does not reproduce a closed unconscious, it defines it [...]. The map is open, connectable in all its dimensions, dismountable, reversible, susceptible to constant modifications. It can be torn up, reversed, adapted to assemblies of any kind, prepared by an individual, a group, a social organization [...]. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entrances” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mil platôs*, vol. 1: *capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, ed. São Paulo: Editora 34 (1995), 22–22.pp.22
 “...any point in a rhizome can be connected to any other and it should be” Deleuze and Guattari, *Mil platôs*, vol. 1: *capitalismo e esquizofrenia*, pp.15

approach of the concept of *place* (Augé, 1992): this approach understands the particularity of the built environment beyond its functionality and appearance, establishing its symbolic perception as fundamental, generated over time within a given collective.

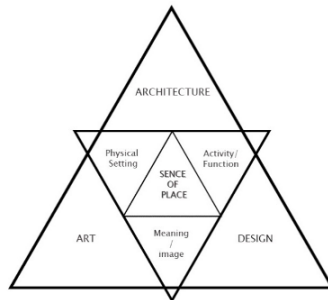
In this way, each place can distinguish itself in its visible representation of certain icons of intangible value, that are locally and globally identifiable. In this sense, the urban society—as a socio-cultural organism—continually evolves, based on the *meaning/significance* we attribute to the artificial reality. As such, the urban landscape, as regards its qualities (visual, tangible, identifiable, unique, and unrepeatable), should not be diminished in its highly symbolic dimension, in which cultural artistic production plays a decisive role.

If we want to understand the combination of factors that contribute to the construction of the urban landscape, we can rely on the diagram designed by John Punter (1991) and later revisited by John Montgomery (1998), which summarizes the *Sense of Place* as a tripartite field of influences, bringing together the Physical Aspect, Activity and Meaning of a *place*:



Sense of Place Dimension: Three Components of Place Identity. Conceptualized by John Punter in 1991, modified by John Montgomery in 1998.

The identity of each built environment can be defined in this triangular combination suggested by Punter and Montgomery: a process of relations that create the imagery development of each urban landscape, which as a whole, results in the set and quality of its places (Punter, 1991 e Montgomery, 1998). Based on the conceptual framework of these two authors, this reflection proposes an understanding of the inhabited place beyond these components, analyzing them from the disciplinary operative fields that allow each environment to materialize into something tangible and experiential. Therefore, the following proposal is an attempt to cross and match the disciplinary fields that create the physical/functional/symbolic characteristics of the urban environment, considering those that operate in the different scales/dimensions of the urban landscape (with the aim of mapping the disciplinary practices that allow us to broaden the perceptual experience of the urban place, whether in its cultural, historical, conceptual, environmental, functional, physical or visual domain).



Proposal of conceptual framework for understanding place production processes (based on the conceptualization of Punter, 1991 and Montgomery, 1998). It suggests that a space gains a sense of place when, in addition to its physical appearance and functionality, it acquires an identity and meaning, as a result of the operative and disciplinary interaction between Architecture, Art and Design.

The disciplines of Architecture, Art and Design are the three artistic areas that project the urban environment creatively and symbolically in its physical and spatial domain, thus allowing us to materialize the visual dimension of the urban environment. However, in a phenomenon diametrically opposed to the systemic dimension of our reality, this interdisciplinarity (once widely explored during other periods in our history) is currently devalued in urban planning processes. Often these three practices act in *fragmented* and diachronic ways in urban regeneration programs, to such an extent, that what we frequently see are autonomous disciplinary interventions that *overlap* in the urban fabric (Corboz, 2004), usually without connection or prior communication between them for a possible unified development of solutions in urban regeneration and design processes.

This type of departure between these creative disciplines in urban design's process and planning has fueled a *modus operandi* that, ironically, seems disconnected from human reality in what is its structural, systemic and *interconnected condition* (McLoughlin, 1969). If analyzed under this triangulation of creative potential, the reflection put forth herein questions the current urban environment as a result that is highly focused on the dichotomous formula constituted between the *Physical Setting* and the *Functional Activity*, consequently downgrading the third *Symbolic Meaning* component in the urban design process.

Although we are witnessing a growing disciplinary crossover that is currently recognized in the operability of Design in architectural urbanistic practices (in recent concepts such as *public design, architectural design, generative design...*), we continue conceiving spatial urban environments that hardly push beyond their architectural dimension and infrastructural functionality.

From the "death and life of big cities" (Jacobs, 1961), social scientists have realized that public spaces located *between* buildings promote social influence on the quality of urban and human connections, thus shaping neighborhood ties (Rogers, 2017). The *symbolic dimension* of the built environment – the third component in Punter's triad – enlightens us about what goes beyond the *physical aspect* and *functionality* of a given space. We understand that this third component is essential for the construction of the anthropological dimension of a *Sense of Place*, raising the question of whether artistic production in public space should be understood as the third elementary vertex in the process of designing and regenerating the urban environment.

In this framework, if the landscape dimension defines *territorial identity* based on the artistic and cultural production of a nation, context, time and space; if today we tend to (re)construct urban environments where the *meaning/artistic* component of the place seems to be secondary or inexistent; we must ask:

What positive influence can Art have during the urban design process?

Where are the contemporary artists when we are defining the morphology of the public spaces in our cities?

At what point does the artist's conceptual vision come into play during the design and re-signification of the urban place?

This possible disciplinary collaboration reaffirms the historical Western relationship between Art and Architecture: from Mesopotamia to the Renaissance, this link was a constant, however, greatest number of the interventions of art in architecture had decorative, ornamental, religious, or commemorative purposes.

The Modernist movement called for a different creative vision, led by the maxim "form follows function"³. Modern functionalism claimed to be a break with the past, but its vigorous search for rationality and formal purity brought with it a radical interpretation, leading the various artistic disciplines to become divorced from one another. Subsequently, in the perceived need return to a certain balance, various leading figures, not only in art, but also in architecture, called for an "integration of the arts" in the mid-20th century: from architect Josep Lluís Sert⁴ to sculptor

3. Here, returning to the famous expression of the architect Louis Sullivan, associated with the practice of architecture and design at the beginning of the 20th century, established as a basic principle of modern functionalist design, in which Adolf Loos would be his faithful follower when launching the ironic theory that every 'ornament is crime'. Adolf Loos, «Ornament and Crime.» *Les Cahiers d'aujourd'hui* (1913), Original «Ornement et Crime».

4. Josep Lluís Sert (1902-1983), one of the most influential architects and urban planners of the 20th century, was one of the greatest advocates of the intrinsic relationship of the arts in the process of conception modern architecture and cities: he developed several projects with the participation of renowned artists and his theories were widely disseminated in conferences, texts and books such as "Can our cities survive?", which brings together his avant-garde urban thinking based on some of the principles of CIAM IV (1933, Athens).

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Jorge Oteiza⁵, several authors advocated for recapturing the connection and experimentation of (in and between) artistic expressions – from which they sought a mutual incorporation, without giving up the autonomy of each.⁶ The development of urban thinking in the mid–20th century reflected this search for a *new monumentality* (Giedion et al,1958), an avant-garde theory presented in some of the most important modernist manifestos⁷. One of the privileged vehicles for expressing this trend was among them: MOMA⁸ in New York. It dedicated part of its programming to lectures with guests who reflected on the possible connection between the arts and the places where they could be integrated into the modern city. Communicating their utopian ideals through numerous essential theoretical contributions to the architectural and urbanistic avant-garde, these thinkers proposed that the city, as a common sharing scene and democratic construction space, should be produced from the old concept of 'all-embracing art form', *gesamtkunstwerk* (Wagner, 1897).

Despite this ancestral relationship between artistic and architectural production in the evolution of human civilization, we can see that in the West (from the second half of the last century until today), the practices of artistic disciplines have gradually moved away from each other. This trend has led sculpture practice to be contemporarily considered a secondary or even extrinsic production to the urban conception and design process.

5. This integration of art and architecture had been widely defended by Oteiza not only over the years in his sculptural practice, but also in his reflections on the production of the urban, such as his lecture "The city as a work of art", developed in 1958 for the Conference "Art, Architecture and Urbanism" in Valencia, where the author reflects on the operative, political and existential function of art in the transformation and evolution of the city. in Ana Arnaiz and Iskandar Rementería, "Saber de escultor entre el arte y la ciudad," *Art&Sensorium – Revista Interdisciplinaria Internacional de Artes Visuales da UNESPAR/ EMBAP* 1, no. 01 (2014).

6. "The architect Jose Lluís Sert outlined three possibilities for combining painting and sculpture with architecture: the integral approach, in which the architect assumes the role of the artist (...). In a second possible combination, the arts would be applied to buildings as decorative only to enhance the architectural composition. In this case, the artist's visual language is preordained by the architecture. Collaboration of this kind, which treats art as ornament, requires the architect's hand to dictate the style and content of the work (...). the third possibility, that of mutual independence, would be the most promising. Respecting the different visual tendencies, it would be a reciprocal cooperation sympathetic to the arts and architecture, in which personal ideals would be preserved within an overall framework." Free translation. Magda M Melo, "Síntese das artes na arquitetura de Oscar Niemeyer," *Semina: Ciências Sociais e Humanas* 24, no. 1 (2003).

7. An example is the 1943 text, "Nine Points on Monumentality", by J. L. Sert, F. Leger and S. Giedion, which presents the ideal of urban production as a process that unifies the arts. According to this manifest, urban production was not reflecting the spirit of modern times, so these authors therefore declared the need for a new architectural practice that would place the concept of the *monument* as a link and "integration of the work of the architect, the painter, the sculptor and the urban planner", leading to "an intimate collaboration between them all". Sigfried Giedion, *Architecture, you and me: The diary of a development* (Harvard University Press, 1958).

8. MOMA, the Museum of Modern Art, had organized several meetings to debate this issue, especially in the symposiums organized by the American architect and curator Philip Johnson, including topics such as 'How To Combine Art and Architecture' in 1949; 'Relation of Painting and Sculpture to Architecture' in 1951; or 'Why We Want Our Cities Ugly' in 1968. source "MOMA Archive", <https://www.moma.org/research/archives/finding-aids/PJohnsonPapersb.html>, consulted at 11.01.2024.

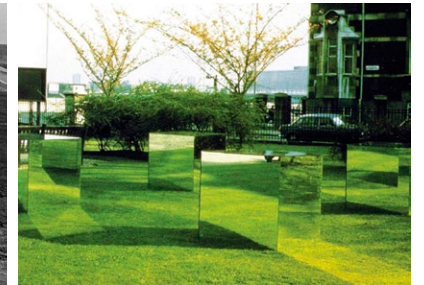
On the other hand, in a diametrically opposite direction, it is curious to note that, precisely since the middle of the 20th century, modern artistic production and, more specifically, contemporary sculptural practice, has been concerned with *space* (city and the landscape or environmental dimension) in their productions, theories and reflections.

It is therefore interesting to realize that the current debate on context-oriented urban methodologies and practices (named "*place-making*", "*place oriented*", "*place focused*", "*place-based planning*" (Kruger, 2007)), seems to refocus the importance of a growing attention on the particularities of the context and the latent intersubjectivity in the interrogation of the *place/non-place* duality (Augé, 1992). At the same time, it also reaffirms the relevance of rethinking certain operating patterns in urban design and regeneration processes or methodologies.

These recent practices seem to reestablish, as common denominator, the *modus operandi* of the sculptural practices of the 60s, with its conceptual production aligned to the context and local characteristics, definitively transforming the lived experience of place.



"Walking a Line in Peru", 1972 by Richard Long



"Untitled (Mirrored Boxes)", 1965 by Robert Morris

Since that decade, a wide range of artists have developed conceptual projects known as *site-specific*⁹ artworks (Kwon, 1997), a moment when sculptural practice "abandons its pedestal", involving all physical and real spaces—*expanding* itself (Krauss, 1979). Robert Smithson, Robert Morris, Michael Heizer, Richard Serra, Christo were some of the artists who, in this period,

9. About this concept, Miwon Kwon would clarify: "Whether inside the white cube or out in the Nevada desert, whether architectural or landscape-oriented, site-specific art initially took the "site" as an actual location, a tangible reality, its identity composed of a unique combination of constitutive physical elements: length, depth, height, texture, and shape of walls and rooms; scale and proportion of plazas, buildings, or parks; existing conditions of lighting, ventilation, traffic patterns; distinctive topographical features.", Miwon Kwon, "One place after another: Notes on site specificity," *October* 80 (1997).

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began a tridimensional artistic production that interfered spatially beyond the human scale¹⁰, influencing both the urban and landscape dimension, as well as the experience of time and space in that environment. This type of sculptural work, launched into space, uses the context and surroundings to produce the work's meaning, thus introducing new possibilities into contemporary spatial production.

In addition to the *expansion* of the sculptural field, these works propose a conceptual possibility that reveals latent exploration in the classical methodologies of urban space design.



"The Gates" by Christo, 1979–2005. Project drawing, 2003. Installation in Central Park, New York City, 2005."



Works of this nature suggest a new *spatiality* of art and place, altering our experience of them both in terms of (perceptual) field and (lived) time. From the moment the artist begins to dialogue with the same *reference spaces* and *activity scales* as the architect, this type of artistic production not only expands sculpture's field of action, but also seems to embrace the scale of the *architectural model* (Boudon, 2002)¹¹.

In this process, Art begins to actively intervene in spatial and experiential transformations. In these ephemeral contexts of production, the role of photography is therefore unavoidable,

10. Thus emerged the terms *environmental sculpture* and *land art*. By a spatial imposing on their size and extent, these monumental artworks demanded a journey, a displacement, an experience on the part of the user. This type of intervention in architectural or natural space, carried out through the lens of the modern sculptor, would promote a new artistic production that would change forever the scope of sculptural practice.

11. If we think of spatial production as a complex whole made up of different scales and layers, we can consider that contemporary sculpture embraces certain levels of specific interference from the field of architecture, physically and conceptually reaching the so-called "architectural scales" (symbolic-formal, symbolic-dimensional, functional, technical, human and geographical scales). Philippe Boudon, *Echelle(s): l'architecture comme travail d'épistémologie* (Paris: Anthropos, 2002).

as a privileged medium of recording and sharing the work and its future repercussions on contemporary spatial theory and production. However, contemporary art in its *expansion* to a site-specific dimension, confirms its potential intervention not only in place re-signification but also in the spatial and experiential domain of the environment. Affirming itself as a practice that rejects its accessory function (of ornament, evocation, or spatially delimited landmark), the sculptural work in an *expanded field* comes to define itself as a *spatial experience* capable of reformulating the characteristics of the surroundings, as well as of transforming the way we perceive, feel and use a given *place*.

This sculptural practice, commonly framed under the *expanded field* concept proposed by Rosalind Krauss in 1979, was later appropriated in "Architecture's expanded field" by Anthony Vidler in 2004, reaffirming the significance of considering the critical, dreamlike, conceptual and symbolic dimensions of artistic practice for the contemporary production of the built environment, thus announcing the potential for a new interdisciplinary dynamic. The spatial approach brought about in the 1960s by *expanded field sculpture*, therefore appears to acquire greater relevance today, as it opens itself up to the new contingencies of human nature's growing systemic complexity.

Although widely explored autonomously by artists in numerous parts of the world, these sculptural practices have been occurring in isolation as independent, ephemeral, external interventions, far away from or even out of step with current urban practice. Which leads to the question:

As a device for interpreting reality, can Art, promote new visions or methodologies for urban design and planning, from ground zero of a regeneration project?

Is the contemporary sculptural practice a potential catalyst in the construction of the symbolic dimension in the process of place production?

Can site-specific art, as a spatial intervention practice, be the engine for a renewed concept of urbanity?

The various contributions in contemporary spatial thinking have led to a recent rapprochement between artistic and architectural practices, which seem to cyclically and mutually attract each other, generating a hybrid practice that has come to be called *critical spatial practice* (Rendell, 2006).

Perhaps, diametrically opposed to Adorno's idea that "the function of art is to have no function" (Adorno, 1970), the artistic production's critical thinking, in proposing new ways of living/thinking about reality, could have the potential to stimulate our real experience through the domain of "sharing the sensible" (Rancière, 2000). This leads us to consider that the disciplinary role of Art – if understood as a participative/active agent in this process of producing the spatiality of the place – can promote new ways of creating the *built environment* and, therefore, new ways of *city* production.

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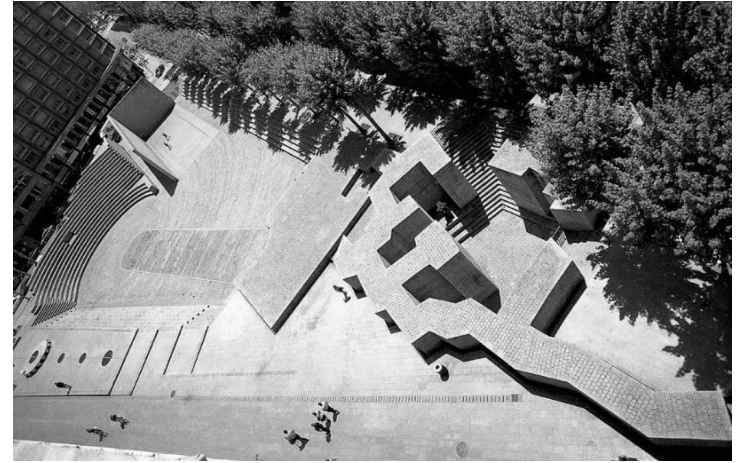
This type of artistic spatial intervention, specifically in the urban domain, expands the political dimension of the production of public space but also of the artistic practice: distinct from architecture, artistic practice proposes itself as a different vision of reality and, as such, enhances *divergences* in the socio-cultural fabric by introducing new tensions, fictions, *dissents* (Mouffe, 2005), generating other ways of (re)configuring the way we experience reality. According to Chantal Mouffe, if public space is more developed the more it is the result of *conflicting visions*, then we can consider that the production of the urban environment must nurture this broad and *agonistic vision* (Mouffe, 2013). For it is precisely in this confrontation of ideas and in the *tension* created between distinct disciplines, that we can construct increasingly conscious and democratic cities.

Examples of this transdisciplinary creative approach includes the Spanish urban regeneration projects that brought together the architect Luis Peña and the sculptor Eduardo Chillida. Such is the case in the design process for the public work "Peine del Viento" in 1977, which became one of the city's most emblematic landmarks — now a cultural heritage site in the Basque Country.



"Peine del Viento XV", 1979, San Sebastian. Urban revitalization work by Eduardo Chillida and Luis Peña.

Another compelling case by this duo of authors was the redesign of the Spanish "Plaza de los Fueros" in Vitoria-Gasteiz, which opened in 1981. As a monument-square, it features a peculiar place comprising a labyrinth inspired by the silhouette of the region's map. This new place includes an embedded semi-circular elevation with bleachers that extends spatially into a large triangular area for hosting cultural and sporting activities. After some controversy surrounding this urban transformation, it has finally become a prime place for the community to enjoy, meet and relax, as well as a symbol and touristic point of interest.



"Plaza de los Fueros", Vitoria-Gasteiz. Designed in 1979 by Eduardo Chillida and Luis Peña Ganchegui.

Another recent example of collaboration in co-authored urban projects, is the Superkilen Park in Copenhagen. Inaugurated in 2012, its design brought together architects, artists and landscape architects and comprises an urban arrangement that is divided into three color-coded zones, where different objects from different origins, cultures and nationalities can be explored¹² along 750 meters of pedestrian pathways.

The symbiotic collaboration of contemporary art with architecture in the process of urban conception/design, although not well explored, seems to open space for new creative freedoms¹³ and other spatial design methodologies, thereby increasing the spectrum of

12. Superkilen Park brings a new way of thinking the urban environment and place production, by connecting various creative fields in the process of conception and, with it, unfolding multiple conceptual possibilities from several cultural references: "Rather than plastering the urban area with Danish designs we decided to gather the local intelligence and global experience to create a display of global urban best practice comprising the best that each of the 60 different cultures and countries have to offer when it comes to urban furniture," said BIG project leader Nanna Gylholm Møller." source <https://www.dezeen.com/2012/10/24/superkilen-park-by-big-topotek1-and-superflex/>, accessed at 10.01.2024.

13. Take the example in Portugal of a co-authored urban project: in 2012, "Praça do Toural" brought together architect Maria Manuel Oliveira and artist Ana Jotta to conceive the revitalization of one of the central squares in the city of Guimarães, during the European Capital of Culture.

aesthetic, symbolic and conceptual possibilities in the urban design process itself, *expanding* it to other contingencies¹⁴.

Within this systemic proposition, the current urban planning practice, operating in an increasingly dynamic and multifaceted reality, seems to be based on an outdated and anachronistic methodological (non-)strategy: if on the one hand today's society demands a complete and integrated vision of humanity in all its multiple meanings, on the other hand, urban planning still seems to maintain the disciplinary hegemony of Architecture as a praxis by perpetuating a disciplinary hierarchy in the creative process of thinking about the spatiality of the urban place. This epicentral perspective on traditional urbanistic project, contrasts with the complexity of the urban (and human) condition when it is carried out by a society that claims to be eminently democratic, integrative, free and plural (Innerarity, 2010).

That classical approach to urban planning can thus be understood to be a reductive process for the contemporary spatial production potential. At the same time, it contrasts with a certain divergent recent trend wherein architecture studios are presenting a growing interest in the integrated participation of artists in architectural projects, with both creative areas working in close collaboration.¹⁵

Given the relevance of the systemic dimension of urban planning in its broad spectrum of intervention, the hypothesis proposed herein could rescue the *bauhausian* vision with a conceptual, operative and functional relationship between the disciplinary areas of Architecture, Design and Art – using this collaborative methodology in designing/regenerating *urban form*.

This hypothesis calls for bringing back the sense of place to the process, by considering and thinking about the built environment based on greater artistic contributions, thus reducing the recent boundary established between creatives in urban regeneration projects. In this context,

14. A studio under research is the Warehouse: "Warehouse is an architecture and art collective founded in 2013. In our search for what architecture is nowadays and what role the architects play, (...) Warehouse develops participatory architecture projects in the cultural and social scope. These processes lead to results with greater impact in the emerging urban landscape." Warehouse, source <http://warehouse.pt/about/>, accessed on 12.01.2024.

15. Other national examples under our attention are the KWY studio: "a multidisciplinary platform investigating the nature of collaboration within the context of specific projects. (...) Recent collaborators include artists, writers, curators, educators, designers and other architects. With few initial preconceptions, (...) this process-oriented methodology often leads to diverse thoughts that are otherwise unexpected and unimaginable." KWY, source <https://www.k-w-y.org/about>, accessed on 12.01.2024.

In recent years, we can also find some architectural practices with the occasional participation of artists, such as the architect João Mendes Ribeiro (with the participation of the sculptor Rui Chafes); or the various architectural projects by the architect Nuno Valentim, who often works in close collaboration with the artist/designer Gémeo Luis, which intervening conceptually throughout all project.

Other Portuguese examples of transdisciplinary architectural practices include the architectural studio Atelier do Corvo and internationally: the MUF architecture/art studio, ENSAMBLE STUDIO, ZK/U Berlin – Center for Art and Urbanistic, among other cases still under study.

site-specific artistic and sculptural production presents itself as a starting point for rethinking certain patterns of action: one of the axes for transforming the operational methodologies of urban planning practices might incorporate Art as a disciplinary creative tool capable of interpreting, conceptualizing and spatially reflecting on (and for) the ongoing complex urban reality.

To achieve this goal, it will be essential to inspire urban planning practices that move beyond their innate multi and interdisciplinary dimension (Berger, 1972), thus introducing a transdisciplinary methodological framework (Piaget, 1972). This methodology would call for integrating a heterogeneous body of knowledge into their design teams, in a common creative process which, in addition to the exchange of ideas, would promote cooperation between knowledge fields (Palmade, 1979), interconnecting professionals with different lexicons within a collaborative systemic conceptual process – potentially creating new meanings, new solutions and innovative dimensions of present and future urban imagery.

We can therefore conclude that the paradigms imposed today are vast, deep and complex, escaping the norms established in conventional urban planning practices, and are beyond the possibilities of an autonomous response from each of the disciplines involved in the production of *public space*. The hypotheses brought forth in this work, call for epistemological reformulations in the process of thinking/designing urban environments, thus to this end, it seems inappropriate to continue using the procedures traditionally established in urban planning – since the exchange of visions and methodologies between different creative disciplines seems indispensable to responding to the contingencies of an effervescent contemporary society.

Recent social and psychosocial changes (cognitive and intellectual) have not yet had a direct impact on our urban fabric and its public spaces. However, it is imperative that we encourage reflections on these new contemporary paradigms, outlining critical and attentive visions that allows us to look *systematically* at what we are as humanity, what we have become as a society and, above all, where we are heading as a species.

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Rite of the Waters: procession through the Campanhã Washhouses

Chloé Darmon, Gabriela Manfredini

Abstract:

This article aims to reflect on the invisibility of women's work. We focus on two interconnected themes: the devaluation of domestic work as a de facto job; and the neglect of public washhouses, which were spaces for women to meet and work in the past.

Initially, Chloé's research discussed the public wash houses in Porto in order to cover their history, their impact on women's lives and their current state of deterioration. Gabriela's research reflected on the relationships and developments between domestic labour and performance art in an amalgam of repetitions, deviations and accumulation.

As a result of the Des/oriente project, there was a combination of these two areas of knowledge that gave rise to new multidisciplinary research carried out in two distinct areas: fine arts and architecture. The project in question aimed to realise narratives in the public space in the parish of Campanhã in Porto with activations by local artists.

In practical terms, the research materialised in a performance held in three washhouses where we were able to reactivate these spaces in an artistic way while also exploring different narratives about domestic work. It was possible to once again create a place for meeting and sharing in these spaces.

Keywords: architecture, performance art, domestic work, wash-houses, women

Chloé Darmon born in 1997 in the suburbs of Paris, is a French architect and researcher with a degree in Architecture from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris Belleville (Ensapb) and an integrated master's degree from the University of Porto (MIARQ/FAUP), Portugal, which she completed in December 2020, with the thesis "Inhabiting water, the public washhouses of Porto: an experience of women in the modern city". She has been a member of the pedagogical innovation community Porto: Territories and Networks of Invisibility (PTRI) since 2018, where she does research in the field of architecture and urbanism with an interest in feminist and interdisciplinary studies. Since 2020 she has been part of the editorial team of the journal *Lina : Feminist Perspectives on Architecture and Urbanism*.

Gabriela Manfredini (1994) is a Brazilian artist based in Porto. Her artistic practice is multidisciplinary, but in the past three years she has been working mostly with drawing and performance. She is interested in addressing themes such as feminism and Anthropocene and has recently focused on investigating the relations of contemporary work culture, body and productivity to create performances. In 2021, she completed her master's degree in art and design for public space in the Fine Arts Faculty at the University of Porto. In 2018, she presented her first exhibition at Instituto Adelina in São Paulo and since then has participated in shows, exhibitions and artistic residencies in Brazil and Portugal.

Introduction

Women are largely responsible for domestic and care work. They do almost twice as much housework as men on a daily basis for unpaid work¹. During the pandemic, it was noticeable that it was mostly women who took care of the laundry and the house in general. Walking around Campanhã carefully, it was also possible to find some abandoned washhouses with no water. Based on the rhythm of everyday life as a source of research and artistic expression, we intend to reflect on the invisible spaces of the wash-houses and the invisible, undervalued labour.

We began by approaching domestic work from the transition from feudal rule to capitalism, where it ended up becoming "women's labour" and over time was devalued to the detriment of waged labour. This transition redefined the role of labour and women in society in general. We also see that even with the inclusion of women in the labour market, gender disparities are still clear and evident.

Public washhouses, which used to be vibrant spaces of community life, ended up being erased both physically (architecturally) and in terms of the historical erasure of women in the public space of cities.

The construction of the narrative contemplates and follows the water: leaving the River Douro and arriving at the River Torto, passing through three washhouses along the way. Rite of Water arises from this desire to ritualise these spaces, women and nature.

Ritual is also intrinsically connected to performance art. However, performance repeats acts, ritualising them and modifying their meaning. Schechner calls this characteristic *restored behaviour*: "The practitioners of all these arts, rites, and healings assume that some behaviours – organised sequences of events... – exist separate from the performers who "do" these behaviours".²

This essay delves into the invisibility, unearthing the silent, uncelebrated work of women, both within the walls of the home and in the communal washhouses.

Domestic work: the invisible labour

Both the domestic work³ and the care work made in times gone by in the laundries fall under the heading of unpaid labour when practised in the context of households.

This work is directly linked to gender differences. With the fall of feudalism and the beginning of enclosure policies and wage labour, women found it much harder to support themselves and

when they did manage to work, they earned much less than men. The philosopher and teacher Silvia Federici explains the difference between feudal and capitalist system:

Women worked in the fields, in addition to raising children, cooking, washing, spinning, and keeping an herb garden; their domestic activities were not devalued and did not involve different social relations from those of men, as they would later, in a money-economy, when housework would cease to be viewed as real work.⁴

These historical changes meant that the work done at home has become invisible to those who enjoy it without having to do anything.

However, domestic labour is tireless and endless and even today the gender gap survives. Simone de Beauvoir even compared it to myth of Sisyphus when she said "There are few tasks that resemble the ordeal of Sisyphus more than those of a housewife: day after day, you have to wash the dishes, dust the furniture, mend the clothes, which will be dirty, dusty and torn again the next day"⁵.

Women are still largely responsible for domestic and care work. A study carried out in Portugal by CESIS (2016) reveals that unpaid work entails a daily time of 4 hours and 23 minutes for women, and 2 hours and 38 minutes for men: 1 hour and 45 minutes less. The work done by women represents 70% of the total. One curiosity that this research points out is that the value of unpaid care and domestic work in Portugal will represent at least around €40 billion each year. And if this figure were taken into account when calculating GDP, it would represent 20 per cent of the total.

This accumulation of work on women sometimes ends up affecting them mentally and physically. And when they have children, their work and careers are often affected too. Claudia Goldin, who recently received the Nobel Prize in Economics for her research on women in the labour market. She argues that in the past, wage differences were due to different educational levels between men and women. Today, the most decisive factor in these differences is the arrival of the first child and the interruption in work that motherhood causes.

In the field of art, Mierle Laderman Ukeles is the biggest reference. After her artistic work took a back seat to motherhood, Ukeles decided to turn her routine as a housewife into her artistic endeavour through what she called maintenance art. In her 1969 Manifesto For Maintenance Art, she wrote her utmost phrase: "The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?"⁶.

1. Perista, Cardoso, 2016

2. Schechner, 1985, p.36

3. Domestic work can be defined as tasks related to food, the upkeep of linen and clothing, childcare, housework, other household chores (gardening, repairs, care of adults, etc.) and various errands. INSEE, 1974

4. Federici, 2004, p.25

5. Beauvoir, 1975, p.200

6. Ukeles, 1969

During her residency at the New York Department of Sanitation, she shook hands with the 8500 cleaning staff and thanked them for their work in maintaining the city. She also worked closely with the maintenance workers at the Whitney Museum of American Art and even her children were research subjects in her artwork.

Washhouses: invisible places

Washhouses are places where domestic work takes place in the public space, and are places of living memory. After a major process of industrialisation, they became invisible and the community life associated with them gradually disappeared.

The invisibility of the washhouses is symbolic of the erasure of women's history in the public space, and in particular of women's work in the public space. To understand the invisibility of the washhouses, we need to understand how they fit into the landscape and the fabric of the city. Like temples or fragments of a bygone era, they tell us about the history of water, but are frozen in time. More than ruined architectural elements, their presence in the public space is a phantasmagorical one, giving way to the creation of an incomplete history that we have to reconstruct, or fabricate, as in "critical fabulation", a methodological concept from the author Saidiya Hartman, in the essay *Venus in Two Acts* she says,

The task of writing the impossible, (not the fanciful or the utopian but "histories rendered unreal and fantastic"), has as its prerequisites the embrace of likely failure and the readiness to accept the ongoing, unfinished and provisional character of this effort, particularly when the arrangements of power occlude the very object that we desire to rescue.⁷

This story begins with the hygienist movement, which took shape in 19th-century Europe and which can be likened to a triumphant return to the control of women and their bodies, a control materialised by architectural structures, the washhouses.

Hygienists' discourse was based on the family, which meant that it was essentially based on women, with the image of the Mother at its centre. Because cleaning up the family also meant cleaning up the population. All their efforts will therefore be focused on regulating, according to their standards, this most important function in their eyes: motherhood. [...] The real aim of hygienists and eugenicists is to set up a network to control the population.⁸

There is a contemporary misconception that women did not have a significant presence in the construction of the city and also in public space: this commonplace is a widespread thought in studies of urban planning and the city. However, it is an erroneous commonplace that portrays

the invisibilisation of the experiences of working-class women and domestic workers, so important in the functioning of the modern city of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those women were part of the everyday panorama of the city, but as everyday spaces linked to domestic tasks were devalued throughout the 19th century, the reproductive sphere became invisible, as did the spaces associated with it in public space:

For the working class woman, the house was where she slept and ate, but the street was a means of subsistence: the fountains where she fetched water, the public wash houses, the stairway, etc. Almost all daily needs implied a displacement or use of public space.⁹

If washhouses are the embodiment of the invisible work of women, who once populated the streets, markets, squares and fountains, the domestication of women's work has contributed to the slow, long disappearance of public washhouses. The history of hygiene, which is often associated with women because of their role in household chores, is intimately linked to the history of water in the city. In *Proliferations*, Anna L. Tsing says that first tried in the colonies in the 19th century, the public vs. private hygiene dichotomy is directly linked to the condition of women and the control over their bodies:

Re-imported into the metropolis, this public and private hygiene loaded class dichotomies [...]. Vulnerable upper-class women became the angels of the house; poor women were accused of being the agents of infection.¹⁰

It could even be said that you can't tell the story of the city and the progressive urbanisation of its territories without telling the story of water, and the story of water is the story of women and the story of care. This interweaving of different histories represents the different layers in the stratification of the construction of the urban environment, as Michelle Perrot says: "The wash-house, a place of sociability for women, which became the means of their socialisation, constitutes a privileged observatory of the modes of urban hospitality."¹¹

The gradual, slow disappearance of washhouses is accompanied by the gradual disappearance of women's voices, songs and words, and of the fabric of daily life, as Martine Segalen in *Women and power in rural society*, says about the big seasonal laundries as feminine encounters:

Together, women talk, criticise, denounce, revile, slander, weave family histories, deepen rivalries, and in so doing, they ensure that the whole of social relations is carried out through violent and slanderous speech, of which they seem to have a monopoly.¹²

9. Collectiu Punt 6, 2019, p.76

10. Tsing, 2022, p.101-102

11. Perrot, 1997, p. 160

12. Segalen, 1980, 126

7. Hartman, 2008, p.14

8. Clédat, Louis, 1979, p.55

INVISIBILITY

The silence that surrounds washhouses makes them invisible in the public space. Often found in isolated/disadvantaged areas, near streams and springs, washhouses are spaces of silence in the contemporary city. Women's voices have faded to the point of disappearing, their stories have gradually dissipated into the interstices of the home, and little by little the water has stopped flowing in the basins, washhouses, fountains and so on.

The transformation of washhouses into urban ruins is fragmented by their "uselessness" and the disappearance of their associated function. This multi-speed transformation is taking place all over Europe, leaving these memorial sites in complete disuse. A projectual and architectural vision of these spaces will want to re-signify them at all costs, through design and rehabilitation, through heritage enhancement and construction, will want to give them a new use and a new function, but perhaps none of this will bring them out of the invisibility and silence into which they have gradually fallen. For the project vision is a technocratic one, seeing water as a resource to be exploited. The extractivism of resources through architecture is already a reality, and even with a discourse on renewable development, in vogue at the moment, this position of constant exploitation gets us nowhere in the case of the washhouses, it is an utopia – very unaware and critical of the environment/context, and far removed from the practices, uses and emotional charge conveyed by the washhouses.

Water, both used and exploited for washing clothes, also made it possible to render the unspeakable invisible – washing away the blood stains of an abortion, the menstrual periods of young girls, or the violence experienced the day before – the washhouse is a memorial space in the town. You could compare it to a cemetery, a tomb or a mausoleum that cannot be desecrated. As Michelle Perrot says,

The wash-house appears to be an ambivalent place. It is the centre of a real female solidarity – material, emotional, cultural. The wash-house is also a means of educating the space-time of the housewife, which the [hygienist] urban planners consider excessively fragmented, fluid and irrational.¹³

This is also perhaps why all the attempts to make washhouses visible, whether folkloric or technocratic, fail to make them appear on the public stage as innovative, new, rediscovered spaces, with the potential of a great urban plan for the city.

Invisibility in the city is an exception or an inevitability, in an age of hypervigilance and exacerbation of urban control over bodies and voices, especially those of women. Invisibility is fertile ground for the creation of utopias, and in the case of the washhouses it can be argued that the hyper-visibility of their existence and location can potentially destroy the ecosystems and communities that have grown up around them. Non-human ecosystems, such as the proliferation of plants and nature, or communities on the margins of society, against the tide,

13. Perrot, 1997, 159

who use invisible places to live, sleep, wash, live and hide for a few... The duality between the visible and the invisible, in the case of the washhouses, leaves us with an ethical question about the compulsive projectual practices of architects, town planners and technocrats, and the potential damage that can be caused to this heritage of common – public – good.

In short, reclaiming these spaces requires careful work to make them visible, between personal archives, public archives, the valorisation of (proletarian) women's work and their contribution to the making of the city, through domestic work, whose invisibility is still undeniable today, and cuts across all spheres of daily life, both public and private.

Des/oriente

Des/oriente¹⁴ was a collective exhibition project that was presented along public art routes in the parish of Campanhã in the city of Porto. The multidisciplinary artistic production was developed collectively with residents of the parish through Laboratories that served as meetings to recognise the territory, reflect on and discuss the space, and then to develop the personal projects of each artist.

From the many walks and the identification of the space, it was clear how many washhouses there are in Campanhã. There are seven in total and only one is still in operation. Because it is a space whose invisibility and sacredness offer a whole range of possibilities for narrative and poetic intervention, art enters into the unknown part of the equation: what should we do with washhouses? And art's answer is that this ancient women's space, linked to water in the city, is perhaps not destined to have any other function than the one for which it was designed. The invisible space of the washhouse allows us to create on the fringes of a hegemony, a mainstream; in short, invisibility and the fringes allow us to encounter a multiplicity of voices on the washhouses. As Rebecca Solnit wrote in the text "Abandonment", in *A Field Guide To Getting Lost*:

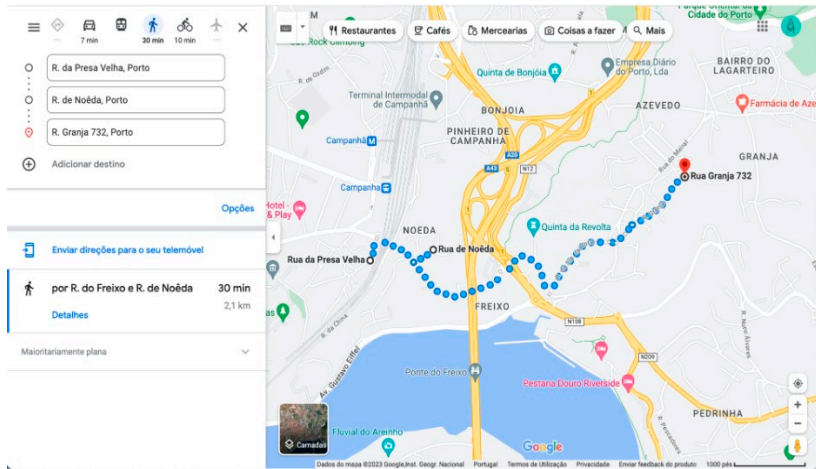
"Ruins become the unconscious of a city, its memory, its unknown, its darkness, its lost lands, and in this way make it truly come alive. [...] An urban ruin is a place that has fallen outside the economic life of the city, and it is in a way an ideal home for art that also falls outside the ordinary production and consumption of the city."¹⁵

The first step was to decide which washhouse we were going to go to and determine a route between them. We also decided to reverse the historical route taken from the countryside to working in the textile industry in the city. Another important fact to mention is that the "maintenance work" actually began two days before the performance took place, as it required a thorough clean-up of these neglected spaces with a large accumulation of rubbish and dirt.

14. Project funded by Plaka Porto's Criatório support. <https://desoriente.net/>

15. Solnit, 2017, 89-90

INVISIBILITY



Act I – Presa Velha: clothes and clotheslines

The procession begins at the Presa Velha washhouse. This washhouse has three levels. The ground floor which has access to the street, the basement where the covered tanks are and the top floor where the clotheslines are. We were dressed in typical Portuguese housewives' aprons and crocs.

When the public arrives, we start hanging clothes on the clotheslines. There are a total of 80 garments in the colours red, orange and pink. We hang one garment on top of the other in a slow process. In the background, you could hear the ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) sound of scrubbing and washing clothes by hand. ASMR is an acronym given to pleasurable sensory stimuli that brings a feeling of relaxation and even makes some people sleep. This sound, together with the slow, repetitive movement of the clothes being ironed, brought a meditative air to the action.

The performance takes place from a deviation in the activity of hanging clothes on the clothesline. The performative action is based on the rhetorical operation *adiectio* – addition – which refers to adding, repeating and accumulating. There is thus a transfer of scale and weight.

Procession route, Google Maps



For art historian Sven Lütticken, "cleaning and caring would be the most common forms of general performance if they were not forced to be invisible and socially denigrated as rote routine".¹⁶ The invisible act of caring for the clothes is then emphasised through their growth and volume throughout the washhouse.

Act II – Noêda: buckets and tanks

The second part begins at the Noêda washhouse, the only one still in operation in the parish of Campanhã. Here, we decided to remember the past and the women who used these washhouses.

The action is based on five large translucent fabrics, each of which contains an old photograph of the washhouses and some of the women who used to go there. These photographs belong to the Águas do Porto Municipal Archive and were taken in the 1940s.

16. Lütticken, 2012

Rite of the Waters: procession through the Campanhã Washhouses, Act I, Presa Velha, 2023. Photo: Katana Studio



We soap, scrub, wash, squeeze and hang these fabrics in the tanks with great commitment and dedication. You could hear the voices of old ladies telling stories about the work of washing clothes. One of those voices is of an old woman from a Lisbon washhouse who has continued her work as a washerwoman, finds herself quite alone with all her laundry, which she washes for the local residents. She remembers the old days, and how the gesture allowed women to speak freely. Her voice occupies the space of Noêda's washhouse, while, paradoxically, we wash the clothes in silence.



We washed the past with the *sabão rosa* – pink soap – , bringing back childhood memories for some in the audience. The metaphor of washing clothes by washing the archives takes us back to the past lives of the women in these photos, unknown to us and whom we were trying to rediscover. A kind of link was created between us as we washed the images of these women washing their clothes in the 1940s, as we tried to create our own living-memory in the washhouse.



Rite of the Waters: procession through the Campanhã Washhouses, Act III, Granja, 2023. Photo: Aline Cavalcante.

Act III – Granja: planting the feast

The procession walked for almost 30 minutes until it reached Rua da Granja, an idyllic-looking street with vegetable gardens, lots of trees and the sound of the Torto river running through it. The rubbish dump had a lot of rubbish and was used to feed some of the cats that live on the street.

The performative action aimed to transform this space into a place of fertility, abundance and beauty in harmony with its surroundings. The water tanks were replaced by soil, and the soil was sown with a variety of seedlings. As gardening is an activity incorporated into household chores, domestic work invites itself into the public space. The act of planting and creating a place for a banquet, with very bright colours, contrasts with the brutalist character of the Granja washhouse.

At the end, the spectators are invited to take part in the banquet served on planks above the washhouse. A banquet in the middle of nature evokes the image of Alice in Wonderland, where the space becomes timeless, almost magical, but it's also a way of re-signifying the socialising power of the washhouse as a space for sharing our stories and experiences of everyday life.

Conclusion

Using everyday life as a starting point, we have succeeded in reinventing the possibilities of the washhouse spaces: "The activation evokes the past in order to question the fate of these spaces in the present and speculate on potential futures sustained by collective encounters and experiences".¹⁷

These utopian speculations are based on everyday life and domestic work, supported by women and their gestures, handed down from generation to generation. And the exploration of the dichotomy between the visible and the invisible, what needs to be shown, let be seen and what needs to be hidden, has become a procession in the neighbourhood of Campanhã, between the rural world in transformation and the city. In short, our work aims to highlight the link between the history of women and water in the public space, between oral and official history, the unspeakable and the invisible. *Rite of Waters* is a moment of exchange and communion, at the intersection between art, urban planning and architecture.

The invisible gradually becomes visible, and from the combination of our personal experiences and our theoretical work, a space for creation emerges, based on everyday domestic work, where gesture and repetition become a pretext for telling stories, our stories, and enhancing the value of everyday spaces, so present and important in the lives of the majority of women. *Rite of Waters* also reconnects us with the waterways and rural spaces of the city, opening up new paths for a drift to the margins of the global city.

17. França, Merlino, 2023

In conclusion, these margins are prolific for the creation of a fragmented history, between performance and critical reflection on domestic work, and the condition of the body in movement in the public space. It is through these possibilities, between utopia and potentiality, that we are constantly building new practices in the city, making visible the invisible work of women and the spaces associated with it.

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SI3 for urban resilience: a human–nature driven paradigm shift

David Leite Viana, Telma Ribeiro, Jorge Maia,

Abstract

In a world increasingly marked by environmental challenges and climate uncertainties, the urgency for a paradigm shift in our relationship with the planet Earth has never been more evident. The increasing awareness of time running out underscores the immediacy of action necessary to alleviate the impact of human activities on the planet's resources and to address the pervasive effects of environmental issues and climate change. Moreover, as these adjustments unfold, there arises a need to reconsider the foundations of a shared future that is socially, environmentally, and technologically viable, and, consequently, it is necessary to rethink our connections with one another and the broader built environment – encompassing individuals, communities, and societies. This paper contends that the ongoing and forthcoming transformations necessitate a continuous re-evaluation of our common ground to ensure a more sustainable and resilient future for all. Therefore, this research advocates for the implementation of the SI3 framework as a catalyst for this paradigm shift – a framework that integrates inclusive, innovative, and intelligent solutions to foster urban resilience in the face of an evolving world. The imperative need for a transformative change in the way we perceive and interact with our built environment is also addressed through the NBC (nature-based cities) and GIM (green information modeling) models. Likewise, the challenges of dealing with the existing built environment are explored within the SI3 scope, emphasizing the importance of collecting and analyzing data related to space appropriation, daily flows, public space usage, social–spatial dynamics of buildings, and building energy consumption. By synthesizing and understanding this sort of data, the paper argues that cities can be better equipped to adapt, evolve, and thrive in the face of ongoing and future challenges, contributing to a more resilient and sustainable urban future.

Keywords: Paradigm Shift, Urban Resilience, Sustainable Development, Nature-Based Solutions, Green Information Modeling

David Leite Viana has a post-doc. in Urban Morphology/Civil Engineering (FEUP); a PhD in Urban and Spatial Planning (IUU–UVa); a DEA in Modern City and Architecture (UVa); and a Dipl. Arch. (ESAP). He is head of the Urban Planning Division at Matosinhos Municipality, professor at DAMG–UPT, coordinator of the research area in Urbanism at CIAUD–UPT, PhD supervisor in the doctorate programme on Architecture for the Contemporary Metropolitan Territories (Iscte), and research partner at ENGAGE Network (CAUGH–NTU). He is co-founder and co-chair of the International Symposium Formal Methods in Architecture (FMA Symposia), PNUM Scientific Councillor and editorial board member of the journal *Revista de Morfologia Urbana* (RMU), and member of Sophia Journal scientific board (CEAU/AAI–FAUP). He is co-editor of the books *Formal Methods in Architecture: 6FMA Symposium*, and *Formal Methods in Architecture: 5FMA Symposium* (both published by Springer); and of the books *Emerging Perspectives on Teaching Architecture and Urbanism and Formal Methods in Architecture and Urbanism*, volumes I and II (all published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing); co-editor of the Special Issue *Digital Citizenship Mediating Planning Participation and Space Appropriation* and the Special Issue *Formalizing Urban Methodologies* (both by Urban Science Journal). He is the author of the book *Maputo: (auto)organização e forma-dinâmica urbana* (published by the University of Porto Press). He was a professor in the Master Programme on Geographic Information Systems Applied to Spatial Planning, Urbanism and Landscape at UPV, external reviewer at Chalmers University of Technology (Architecture and Urban Design Programme), visiting fellow in the Architecture & City Group at TU Delft (Theories of Architecture Fellowship Program), and CEAUP director–secretary. He was a professor and MIAU coordinator at ESG and a professor and deputy director of the Architecture Programme at ESAP.

Telma Ribeiro has a PhD in Conservation Sciences (2021) from Nova University of Lisbon, in partnership with the University of Minho, with a specialisation in earthen heritage; a Diploma of specialisation (2012) in conservation of stone materials, by the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń (Poland); a Master's degree in Conservation and Restoration (2008) from Nova University of Lisbon with a specialisation in stone heritage; and a Bachelor in Conservation and Restoration (2006) from Nova University of Lisbon. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the Department of Architecture and Multimedia Gallaecia of Portucalense University (DAMG–UPT), teaching the curricular subjects of Materials and Constructive Analysis, Urban Heritage, Legislation and Heritage Protection, and Diagnosis and Technologies of Conservation and Restoration. She collaborates, in the same institution,

with the Clinic of Conservation and Restoration as a conservator–restorer in different projects of conservation and restoration of built heritage and museum objects. Previously, she worked as a conservator–restorer participating in the preparation, diagnosis, elaboration, execution, and supervision of different conservation and restoration interventions in various national monuments. She is the author of several national and international scientific communications and publications on stone and earthen heritage. She is a founding partner of the Portuguese group of the international association INTBAU (International Network for Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism) which promotes traditional architecture in Portugal. The main lines of research are related to monumental heritage, vernacular heritage, and earthen heritage, in the areas of conservation, diagnosis, maintenance, sustainability, and intervention. Keywords: conservation, restoration, diagnosis, urban heritage, monumental heritage, vernacular heritage, earthen heritage, sustainability.

Jorge Maia is a landscape architect, who graduated from the University of Évora in 1991. He held a position as a municipal technician at the Famalicão Municipality and coordinated the Project Department, focusing on public space intervention. In 2018, he moved to the Planning Division at Porto Municipality, where he contributed to the revision of the Municipal Master Plan and helped develop the Municipal Ecological Structure. Since the beginning of 2022, he joined the Planning Division at Matosinhos Municipality, balancing the revision of the Municipal Ecological Structure and the development of the Municipal Green Structure with public space projects. He collaborates regularly with various architects on the design of public and private green spaces and in interventions in public spaces as a freelance landscape architect. Some projects in public space intervention include Vila Flor Cultural Center, in Guimarães; Plataforma das Artes, in Guimarães; Urban Park surrounding D. Afonso Henriques' Stadium, in Guimarães; Camões Parking Lot, in Guimarães; Bétulas Urbanization, in Famalicão; Casa de Esmeriz, in Famalicão; D. Jorge Ortiga Square, in Famalicão; Ladário Leisure Park, in Cinfães.

I. Introducing SI3 for urban resilience

Once upon a time, there was a *spaceship called Earth*¹, that became nonoperating... This dystopian way to introduce this article underlines how urgent a paradigm shift is needed regarding the relations (or lack thereof) we establish among each other and between ourselves and the overall built environment (as individuals, communities, and societies). It is being accepted, recognizable mainly by younger generations, that – most probably – time is running out to address the needed paradigm shift concerning the path we will have to go through to achieve a more balanced tomorrow². There's an increasing perception that immediate action is mandatory to reduce the impact of our daily lives on the planet's resources^{3,4} and to mitigate the effects that environmental issues and climate changes are bringing to everyday life all around the globe⁵. It has been noticed that performance deviations in natural systems are being accelerated and they demand adjustments to those new metabolic behaviors. These adjustments are to be felt in the different scales of our lives – from domestic habits to collective liveable patterns. Additionally, the ongoing (or forthcoming) adjustments will lead to the need to think again (and again) about how to set a proper common ground in which we all share a more suitable future – socially, environmentally, and technologically⁶.

I.1. Imagining a human–nature–driven paradigm shift

Suppose one imagines a paradigm shift in how individuals, communities, and societies live between themselves and the built environment, toward a better–balanced relation between artificial (infra)structures and natural systems. In that case, it will be acceptable that the paradigm shift will also be expandable to the way cities must embody the challenges brought by this paradigm shift. Cities, as the common ground of people's everyday lives, but also as one of the human inventions that bring more stress to the planet's natural systems⁷, need to accommodate solutions that won't address the referred paradigm shift as "business as usual". These are solutions to boost resilience within the built environment – concerning the growing scarcity of natural resources, and the increasingly extreme weather events (shaping

1. Buckminster Fuller. *Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth* – 1st edition in 1969 (Lars Muller Publishers, 2008).

2. Ozge Yalciner Ercoskun, *A Paradigm Shift towards Urban Resilience* (IGI Global, 2014).

3. Peter Newman, Timothy Beatley and Heather Boyer, *Resilient Cities: Overcoming Fossil Fuel Dependence* (Island Press, 2017).

4. Ingemar Elander, Brendan Gleeson, Rolf Lidskog and Nicholas Low, *Consuming Cities: The Urban Environment in the Global Economy after Rio* (Routledge, 2000).

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6. Simon Bibri, *Advances in the Leading Paradigms of Urbanism and their Amalgamation: Compact Cities, Eco–Cities, and Data–Driven Smart Cities* (Springer, 2020).

7. United Nations, *Report on the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* (United Nations, 1972), <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972>

more devastating natural hazards) – and to address a wide range of environmental risks affecting people's urban life. It is commonly accepted that urban resilience⁸ is a key factor within the paradigm shift process. In this article, this idea is attached to a stronger bond between urban resilience and the different levels involving everyday life, technological advances, and public urban policies⁹. Everyday life because the paradigm shift demands a new living culture (meaning, a less selfish culture) – with a new consumption culture (e.g., circular economy; consumption with less waste; longer life–cycles for dairy products and utilities; the 3R strategy (to reduce; to reuse; to recycle), a new mobility culture, etc.). Technological advances set on comprehensive and contextual data and digital immersion can suppress the short range of cities' "smartification" (mostly based on a simplistic and technocratic "sensorization" of the cities¹⁰ that, instead of "smartness"¹¹, bring intelligence to everyday life – i.e., meaningful technology¹². Public urban policies, because the paradigm shift stands for the collective construction of the built environment, i.e., urban resilience is not due to ad hoc solutions. Instead, it demands the creation of an inclusive common ground, structured on collaborative planning approaches that will drive the urbanization process to a point where the built environment and its (infra) structures converge in a synergetic way with the natural green system and blue system¹³.

A human–nature–driven paradigm shift must pursue inclusive, innovative, and intelligent solutions (socially, environmentally, and technologically) for urban resilience – which, in this article, will be called SI3 for urban resilience.

II. The contribution of NBC and GIM towards the human–nature–driven paradigm shift

The title of this article tends to suggest that its focus is on urban resilience. However, the main goal is not to discuss what urban resilience is about because, as Meerow, Newell, and Stults (2016) mentioned, the concept of urban resilience is still to be set in a very clear framework¹⁴.

As such, the sort of "yet–to–be set" definition of urban resilience needs to be grounded in the advocated paradigm shift referred to until this moment, i.e., a paradigm shift stepping away from what can be called as "ego–urbanism" and, instead, tracking inclusive, innovative, and intelligent solutions. Therefore, the purpose of the human–nature–driven paradigm shift, set on SI3, is to contribute to achieving urban resilience with higher standards rooted in nature–based cities (NBC)¹⁵.

One can say urban resilience is often attached to a certain degree of complexity concerning the relations between the context, scale, configuration, and the systems of the built environment^{16,17,18}, set on the idea that the urban system should behave as a complex adaptive system^{19,20}, framed by social, ecological, metabolic²¹, and circularity perspectives. In addition, it is also possible to associate urban resilience with the equilibrium between the urban systems and the natural systems (blue system; green system; biodiversity; etc.), alongside adaptation and permanent readjustment of all systems to changes in time and scale. When targeting the notion of complexity and adaptation¹⁵, the layers addressing both should include *i*) governance networks, *ii*) networked material and energy flows, *iii*) urban infrastructure and urban form, as well as *iv*) socioeconomic dynamics. In this article, it is proposed to add three more topics: *v*) retrofitted innovation, *vi*) synergetic collaboration, and *vii*) meaningful intelligence. The correlation between these seven topics can contribute to achieving higher resilience standards, for instance, regarding local resources management, minimum water usage, energy efficiency, waste reduction, and life cycle equilibrium (either natural or artificial ones), putting architecture and urban planning under a systemic perspective highlighting metabolic processes associated to ways of living and its spaces, buildings, and cities. It is important to recognize the importance of eco–friendly design propositions based on zero–carbon approaches²² and passive systems for urban resilience. Paving the way for NBC is to follow a track where urban resilience comes from testing context–based knowledge²³.

8. Octavio Castillo, Valentina Antonucci, Enrique Márquez, Margarita Najera, Alberto Valdiviezo and Mariana Castro, *Urban Resilience: Methodologies, Tools and Evaluation – Theory and Practice* (Springer, 2022).

9. Zaheer Allam, Didier Chabaud, Catherine Gall, Florent Pratlong and Carlos Moreno, *Resilient and Sustainable Cities: Research, Policy and Practice* (Elsevier, 2022).

10. Mary Thornbush and Oleg Golubchikov, *Sustainable Urbanism in Digital Transitions: From Low Carbon to Smart Sustainable Cities* (Springer, 2020).

11. Simon Marvin, Andrés Luque–Ayala and Colin Mcfarlane. *Smart Urbanism: Utopian Vision or False Dawn?* (Routledge, 2015).

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14. Sara Meerow, Johua Newell and Melissa Stults, "Defining Urban Resilience: A Review", *Landscape and Urban Planning* 147 (Elsevier, 2016): 38–49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2015.11.011>

15. Timon McPhearson, Nadja Kabisch and Niki Frantzeskaki. *Nature-Based Solutions for Cities* (Elgar, 2023).

16. Michael Batty, "The Size, Scale, and Shape of Cities", *Science* Vol. 319, Issue 5864 (February 2008): 769–771. DOI: 10.1126/science.1151419

17. Peter Allen, *Cities and Regions as Self-Organizing Systems Models of Complexity* (Routledge, 1997).

18. Michael Batty and Y. Xie, "From Cells to Cities". *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design*, 21, 7, (1994): 531–548, <https://doi.org/10.1068/b215031>

19. Ombretta Romice, Sergio Porta and Alessandra Feliciotti, *Masterplanning for Change: Designing the Resilient City* (Routledge, 2020).

20. Nikos Salingaros, *Principles of Urban Structure* (Vajra Books, 2014).

21. Nektarios Chrysoulakis, Eduardo Castro and Eddy Moors. *Understanding Urban Metabolism: A Tool for Urban Planning* (Routledge, 2015).

22. Deborah Heinen, *Climate Governance and Urban Planning Implementing Low-Carbon Development Patterns* (Routledge, 2022).

23. Aly Abdel Razeq Galaby and Amal Adel Abdrabo. *Handbook of Research on Creative Cities and Advanced Models for Knowledge-Based Urban Development* (IGI Global, 2020).

Context-based-based knowledge is a) to know environmental conditions, b) to engage with territorial systems, c) to manage landscape resources, d) to structure integrated urban forms, e) to assemble contextual typologies, f) to use local materials and building techniques, and g) to create embodied living spaces. The path between empirical experience and adaptive pragmatic know-how, grounded in a synergetic methodology, demands formalizing traditions of everyday social practices to shape architecture and urbanism based on mining contextual data and its records through time and space (climate, resources, comfort standards, population, socio-economic performance, etc.) and aggregating it as useful information towards urban resilience. This comprehensive approach to urban resilience also needs to boost what can be called “green data” – nourishing a kind of “green information modeling” (GIM). The relevance of what is known as greening the cities²⁴ (see figures 1 and 2) in the context of environmental crisis and climate changes will force spatial planning and urban planning focusing on the diversity of the built environment²⁵, in which monitoring and evaluation of “green data”²⁶ will increase awareness and attention towards the environment, ecology, and Nature²⁷. This aim, if not based on constant data verification from different sources and continuously monitored, will hardly have processing scope over the diversity of cross-information to be considered within the GIM framework. To this end, the relevant role that data can play in this correlation is increasingly evident, revealing how useful deepening GIM can be. The integrated, systemic, and incremental (re)construction of the “green” in the urbanization process²⁸ is as important as that of buildings, infrastructures/streets, inclusive public spaces, equipment, and public services. SI3 are set on the diversity of NBC and the vitality of GIM, mediated by human-nature-driven urban resilience.

III. SI3 addresses metabolic urban spaces in the existing built environment

So, can historical buildings or old urban areas be inclusive, innovative, and intelligent? From a practical perspective, implementing SI3 can represent a challenge when dealing with the existing built environment. Charters, recommendations, and laws have been executed to protect historical sites and landscapes guaranteeing their future to the next generations²⁹. For instance, historic centers or heritage buildings represent the human capacity for evolution

24. Jurgen Breuste, Martina Artmann, Cristian Ioja and Salman Qureshi. *Making Green Cities: Concepts, Challenges and Practice* (Springer, 2023).

25. Giuliano Dall’O, Alessandro Zichi, and Marco Torri, “Green BIM and CIM: Sustainable planning using Building Information Modelling”, in *Green Planning for Cities and Communities*, ed. Giuliano Dall’O (Springer, 2020), 383-409.

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Fig.1 Leça River Ecovia, in Matosinhos

Fig. 2 Continuation of Leça Green Corridor construction, in Matosinhos, with the requalification and natural consolidation of the Leça River banks, and extension of the Ecovia.

and adaptation throughout history. Heritage is a mutable concept in constant change and adjustment to the geographical context, the cultural base, and the contemporary paradigm (likewise, it can be considered that urban resilience is a mutable concept). It is also a broad idea that comprehends not only the material, the structure, or the shape, but also the know-how, the vernacular practices, and the cultural background. In the last decades, UNESCO has enhanced the intangible values of heritage, highlighting the importance of social principles, traditions, and local knowledge. This constant dialogue, between past and present – when imagining a resilient future³⁰ – requires a flexible, multi-layer, and inter/transdisciplinary approach where strategic and responsible urban rehabilitation and adaptive reuse play a significant role.

Culture is a crucial tool for promoting diversity and creativity in a society³¹. Heritage conservation policies, in which traditional knowledge is emphasized, create a sense of belonging and respect towards different communities³². Linking individuals and heritage through digital tools is an emerging practice. It is also a powerful source of information. Digital technology allows different interactions between both and engages higher participation levels from individuals and communities. The way cities or historical centers are lived or understood has changed. There is a lack of belonging, resulting in a less attached society to its past or cultural values. Now, more than ever, switching the mindset to a less self-centered society and a more cooperative community is vital. A humanized urban space, where participatory approaches are the core of the decision-making processes, and the respect for heritage as something to learn from and to intelligently evolve, can increase comprehensive and contextual urban resilience stages. Meaningful technology and retrofitted innovative tools, associated with tangible and intangible heritage³³ in a synergetic methodology, can bridge people and the existing built environment.

Working on the existing built environment, to boost its urban resilience through SI3, is to address higher metabolic standards in the cities, related to its urban densification, urban rehabilitation, urban activities, urban social-spatial dynamics, urban form, and natural systems. This approach implies strengthening overall eco-urban qualities. For this, it is necessary to suppress myopic

and selfish perspectives about urbanism^{34, 35}. Instead, structured human-nature-driven data is mandatory (water management and self-sufficiency of cities, energy management, and decarbonization, food production, reduction of the city's carbon footprint and self-sufficiency, urban acupuncture, the continuous landscape (i.e., the natural *continuum*), etc.). For instance, about urban rehabilitation, the collection and analysis of data concerning space appropriation, daily flows, types of use of public spaces, social-spatial dynamics of the building, building energy consumption, etc., configure a broad set of holistic knowledge that puts in evidence how cities "pulse" and what makes its urban life move.

As for buildings, and the sort of urban life they provide, technological/digital advances (in terms of surveying, monitoring, and evaluation) open up the possibility of moving forward with interventions that improve energy performance, and expand/change their uses³⁶ without jeopardizing their heritage value – reinforcing the 3R strategy and promoting the circular economy.

IV. Closing remarks on operating a metabolic-built environment

Working with and on the existent built environment, to consolidate its urban resilience, means working with local individuals and communities. Social/community engagement requires a wide range of inclusive and innovative approaches and methods, in which the contribution of co-creation data and procedures, based on meaningful intelligence approaches, are relevant in collaborative processes for human-nature-driven ways of life and its metabolic everyday places, with renewed and representative meanings. Active and plural citizen participation – set on the empowerment of diverse individuals and the engagement of communities, with, for instance, in-person methods, artistic manifestations, story-telling initiatives, tactical endeavors, collaborative mapping approaches with mobile digital devices (with technological platforms with real-time online access and shared editing) – makes urban resilience better grounded on people's needs.

When addressing the problem of humanizing the city³⁷, one of the most discussed issues is the need to make urban spaces more user-friendly, inclusive, and representative. Advancing towards the intelligent humanization of the built environment requires the integrated

30. UNESCO. *Urban Heritage for Resilience: Consolidated Results of the Implementation of the 2011 Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (UNESCO, 2023).

31. Muhammad Kamran, "Role of Cultural Heritage in Promoting the Resilience of Linear/Critical Infrastructure System with the Enhancement of Economic Dimension of Resilience: A Critical Review". *International Journal of Construction Management*, 22:7 (2020): 1345–1354, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15623599.2020.1711493>

32. Katia Fabbricatti, Lucie Boissenin and Michele Citoni, "Community Resilience: Towards New Approaches for Urban Resilience and Sustainability". *City Territ Archit* 7, 17 (Springer Open, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40410-020-00126-7>

33. Morato et al., "Traditional Knowledge and Intangible Cultural Heritage for Climate Change Adaptation", in *Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge for Urban Resilience*, eds. J. Morato, C. Arias, and F. Trabanino (Springer, 2020), *Resilient Cities*, Vol. 2.

34. Shomon Shamsuddin, "Urban in Question: Recovering the Concept of Urban in Urban Resilience", *Sustainability* 15, 15907 (2023): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152215907>.

35. Gisela Oliveira, Diogo Guedes Vidal and Maria Pia Ferraz, "Urban Lifestyles and Consumption Patterns", in *Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Sustainable Cities and Communities*, ed. Walter Leal Filho, Pinar Gökçin Özyayar, Anabela Marisa Azul, Luciana Brandli and Tony Wall (Springer, 2019), 851–860.

36. Remoy Hilde, *Building Urban Resilience through Change of Use* (John Wiley, 2018).

37. Baharash Bagherian, *Human Centric Urban Innovations* (URB Books, 2023).

articulation of different urban and natural systems and knowing how to embrace the ongoing transformations in the currently practiced ways of life (e.g., both in terms of family structures and their domestic spaces, as well as work contexts between the physical and digital).

To deliver metabolic urban spaces (set on nature-based solutions (NBS)³⁸ in the existing built environment (performing it as an NBC) demands that the GIM must be intrinsically linked and interconnected with everyday places (urban and natural ones) and with human activities – where inclusive, innovative, and intelligent solutions (SI3) can play a relevant role in the urban resilience of the “spaceship Earth”¹¹ – keeping it operating for future generations. It is up to us this won't be a utopia.

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Exploring Radical Pedagogies: Utopia (H)As The Future In Architectural Education

Inês Nascimento

Abstract:

For architects, mere spatial visualization has ceased to suffice. They are now mandated to formulate fresh narratives pertaining to pioneering modes of engagement within novel sociocultural contexts. In turn, Architectural education, responsible for training the future builders of the world, plays a significant role in response to these demands and in creating a more sustainable, equitable, and fair built environment. However, mismatches between existing educational structures and evolving needs signal the necessity for reevaluating teaching practices.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the proximity between the concepts *radical* and *utopia* to Architectural education led to pioneering pedagogical experiments, representing a significant innovation in the field. The importance of their revival has found resonance in recent theories, sowing the seeds of future pedagogical ecologies at a time when the future of pedagogical radicalism faces new challenges. Thus, and at a time when Architectural education faces a significant crisis, this article strives to (re)unite the concepts of radical and utopia, which have drifted apart from the academic realm, underscoring the necessity of their rooting in Architectural training and practice by understanding and validating their potential.

When delving into the topic of radical pedagogies in Architectural education, by superficially analysing the process behind their construction, a cohesive framework of criteria that underpin these initiatives can be inferred: their critical, revolutionary, reformist, and transgressive nature as well as the nearly symbiotic presence — varying in degrees of intensity and with rare exceptions — of utopia at their core. In this context, the present study reveals the definition of a qualitative “Utopian Lens” towards the production of a taxonomy, built from a comprehensive review of published case studies.

This reflection, with a specific focus on eagle-eye the presence of utopia at their core, highlights fundamental elements within the structure of these approaches, allowing a categorized reading of the corpus of analysis, showcasing recurring patterns within the scope of the ongoing research. This process provided a collection that shows that utopia can be conveyed through radical pedagogies as a (1) Drive, across various types of (2) Thought, taking on multiple (3) Forms while embracing a wide array of diverse yet complementary (4) Principles.

Keywords: Utopia; Utopian Imagination; Radical Pedagogies; Architectural Education; Analytical Lens.

Inês Nascimento is an architect, hailing from Lisbon, where she was born and raised. She completed her master's degree in Architecture at ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon, culminating in a thesis exploring the interconnection of Utopia, Architecture and the city, more specifically Lisbon. Presently, Nascimento is a PhD candidate in the Doctoral Programme in Architecture of Contemporary Metropolitan Territories at ISCTE-IUL. She is as a researcher at DINÂMIA'CET and has participated as a member of the COST Action “European Middle Class Mass Housing”. Nascimento's primary research centers on Architectural Education, primarily within the Portuguese context. Her focus delves into the potential of Radical Pedagogies and the implementation of Utopia as a method.

1. Crisis in Architectural Education : Proximity Between Radical and Utopia, a Possible Answer?

"(...) yesterday's problems are still today's problems, with one significant difference: in the 1970s, there was hope, there was a sense of future (...)."¹

Contemporary Academia is seeking for innovative students and architects capable of reshaping the future of the profession.² Yet, Architecture is clinged to traditional, static methods, mirroring market-driven practices while restricting exploration.³ Consequently, especially in an era marred by crises, Architecture loses critical relevance, emphasizing utopia as a method to assess the present and shape the future.⁴ Within this context, true reform requires upending conventional notions of Architecture, fostering an "utopian drive" that challenges teaching practices⁵ by empowering radical and utopian imagination in creating subversive spaces of collective study. The need for experimentation and innovation in Architectural education must be (re)considered,⁶ and radical pedagogies, dormant yet powerful, await a resurgence.⁷

During the 1960s and 1970s, Architectural education underwent a revolutionary shift where protest and revolt were a pedagogical tool, bridging the gap between academia and practice.⁸ This era saw the proximity between the concepts *radical* and *utopia* to Architectural education, sparking groundbreaking pedagogical experiments that marked a significant innovation in the field. However, similar to the fate of Architectural utopias, radical pedagogical experiences stagnated post-1970s, fading from both Architectural education and practice.⁹ Despite their apparent separation today, the reemergence of their proximity has proven itself valuable, suitable, and crucially necessary.

1. Pedro Bandeira and Nuno Faria, *Escola Do Porto : Lado B. 1968–1978 (Uma História Oral)*, ed. Nuno Faria, 1st ed. (Porto: A Oficina, CIPRL & Sistema Solar (Documenta), 2014), 193.

2. Kirill Jedenov and Filipe Afonso, "Crisis as the New Normal: Preparing Architecture Students for Uncertainty in Social, Economic and Ecological Dynamics.," *Charrette* 4, no. 1 (2017): 40–57.

3. Mark Côté, Richard Day, and Greig de Peuter, "Utopian Pedagogy: Creating Radical Alternatives in the Neoliberal Age 1.," *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29, no. 4 (2007): 317–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714410701291129>; Jana Culek, "Utopia as a Critical Method," *Archined*, 2020.

4. Culek.

5. Gadanho, "Back to Life, Back to Reality: The 'New Normal'".

6. Harriet Harriss and Daisy Froud, *Radical Pedagogies : Architectural Education And The British Tradition*, ed. Harriet Harriss and Daisy Froud, 1st ed. (Newcastle: RIBA Publishing, 2015).

7. Beatriz Colomina et al., "Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education." *The Architectural Review – Thinkpiece*, September 2012.

8. Beatriz Colomina et al., *Radical Pedagogies*, ed. Beatriz Colomina et al. (MIT Press, 2022).

9. Culek ; Colomina et al., "Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education."

While debated in recent decades, utopia hasn't shed all its negative connotations. There's a cautious acceptance of utopian thinking, with some advocating for a balanced approach to avoid being labeled as "unrealistic" idealism.¹⁰ Conversely, others strongly leverage utopia's potential, seeing it as a powerful tool in Architectural practice and education, empowering students to break free from conventional thinking and innovate solutions for real-world issues.¹¹ Similarly, the concept of radical is reemerging as a valuable pedagogical tool,¹² and radical pedagogies of the 1960s and 1970s – blending sciences, arts, and humanities –, are being reconsidered as a remedy for contemporary challenges in Architectural education.¹³ This return serves as a reminder of the impact of bold pedagogy, provoking a call to action in today's more risk-averse educational settings.

This resurgence in educational discourse highlights that utopia, much like radical pedagogies, challenges the status quo, which is in direct need of an active challenge.¹⁴ Within radical pedagogies, utopia challenges the notion that Architecture is solely meant to serve capital by encouraging a more innovative and interdisciplinary approach in Architectural education, questioning established structures, and exploring new possibilities.¹⁵ Academia needs to rekindle its desire for utopias¹⁶ by raising students' awareness "so that the possibility of alternatives – beyond novel form making – can be imagined as real".¹⁷ Failing to do so might confine students to merely mirror the status quo.

Radical pedagogies underscore the need for a drastic overhaul of the education system and teaching practices, considering pedagogical measures and solutions as means for achieving this transformation.¹⁸ Although these radical approaches already aspire to challenge dominant

10. Darren Webb, "Where's the Vision? The Concept of Utopia in Contemporary Educational Theory," *Oxford Review of Education* 35, no. 6 (December 2009): 743–60, 744, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980903371179>.

11. Nathaniel Coleman, "Utopian Pedagogies: Alternatives to Degenerate Architecture.," *Utopian Studies* 23, no. 2 (2012): 314–54, <https://doi.org/10.5325/utopianstudies.23.2.0314>; Tim Waterman, "Making Meaning: Utopian Method for Minds, Bodies, and Media in Architectural Design.," *Open Library of Humanities* 4, no. 1 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.109>; Selay Yurtkuran, Gözde Kırılı, and Yavuz Taneli, "An Innovative Approach in Architectural Education: Designing a Utopia.," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 89 (2013): 821–29, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.939>.

12. Danah Abdulla, "Radicalise Me.," in *Modes of Criticism 4. Radical Pedagogy*, ed. Francisco Laranjo, 1st ed. (Porto: Onomatopée, 2019), 5–11.

13. Harriss and Froud; Colomina et al., *Radical Pedagogies*; Ayşe Zeynep Aydemir, "Experiments, Practices and Positions in Architectural Design Studio" (PhD, Istanbul Technical University, 2017).

14. Webb.

15. Coleman; Culek ; Côté, Day, and de Peuter.

16. Rogério Bianchi Araújo, "Os Estudos Sobre a Utopia Como Referência Para Os Estudos Sobre a Sociedade.," in *Pensar o Futuro, Preparar a Mudança. Livro de Atas Do 1.º Encontro de Prospetiva*. (Évora: CICS. NOVA. UEVORA, 2017), 193.

17. Nathaniel Coleman, "Cities and Buildings: Educating Utopia.," in *Concrete Utopias: An Education of Desire*, ed. Nathaniel Coleman and Amy Butt, vol. 1 (The Leverhulm Trust, 2017), 12.

18. Olga Fedotova and Elena Nikolaeva, "Radical Pedagogy: Theoretical Concept and/or Alternative Practice?," *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences* 186 (2015): 785–89, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.010>.

paradigms as well as empower individuals by primarily emphasize interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodologies/research to tackle complex problems or challenges – which included spatial investigations, critical thinking, social, cultural, and political engagement¹⁹ –, the inclusion of utopian imagination introduces a visionary element to them, grounded in the present but future oriented, inspiring not only new modes of thinking but also acting.

However, not all pedagogies inherently embody utopia within their DNA, being distinguished by their (en)vision of the future. Pedagogies fueled by utopian imagination aim for societal transformations across socio-political, ideological, and economic dimensions, challenging norms and exploring possibilities.²⁰ Conversely, those lacking utopian imagination emphasize critical analysis within the current framework, focusing on present reconstruction rather than envisioning or idealizing.²¹ In this regard, and with utopia considered “a key concept within radical pedagogy”, albeit “elusive”²², this study aims to subjectively identify fundamental pedagogical and methodological values shared by these experiments within their coexistence with utopian imagination.

2. Utopia or Utopian Imagination, a Boundless Concept

“Radical utopianism confronts ‘realism’ with possibility. (...)

The role of the teaching of desire is to make change conceivable, while the role of educated hope is to believe that it is possible.”²³

2.1. Utopia (H)as Hope, Desire and Imagination

Utopia, or is it hope? Utopia presents a vision where potential alternative futures are seen as seeds of hope, deeply rooted in the present and capable of transforming reality through imagination and the potential for change.²⁴ They exist within imagination and the future, as an integral part of reality rather than outside it.²⁵ Their potential gains strength through planning and practical application, being empowered by realization which depends on “scientific and imaginative study”.²⁶ Thus, utopia isn’t an optimistic notion, but a critical and political one,

19. Aydemir.

20. Webb.

21. John Storey, *Radical Utopianism and Cultural Studies: On Refusing to Be Realistic*, 1st ed. (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019.; Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315201580>; Coté, Day, and de Peuter.

22. Webb.

23. Storey, *Radical Utopianism and Cultural Studies: On Refusing to Be Realistic*, 1–5.

24. Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 Vols. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986); David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Craig A. Hammond, *Hope, Utopia and Creativity in Higher Education. Pedagogical Tactics for Alternative Futures*, *Education Review*, 1st ed., vol. 26 (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019).

25. Bloch.

26. Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à La Ville*, ed. Anthropos (Paris, 1968), 127.

as it involves analysis of the present, seeking to address fundamental societal problems by imagining and constructing possible alternatives.²⁷

Utopia has been associated with the education of desire, emphasizing that imagining a different society involves envisioning a different version of ourselves.²⁸ However, architects seem to have abandoned this idea, suggesting that “utopia must remain estranged from Architecture” until reconciled with desire.²⁹ Hence, within the realm of Architectural education, there must be a distinction between Architectural “vision” and “desire”, utopian “program” and “impulse”.³⁰ Once the second one challenges traditional Architectural education, paving the way for a more socially conscious, context-sensitive, innovative, and interdisciplinary education delivery.

Reintroducing utopia into Architectural education as both a subject and an object can disrupt prevailing neoliberal discourse and empower Architecture with new capacities, activating architects’ utopian aspirations while fostering connections that can bring transformative changes to the world.³¹ Nevertheless, this isn’t a panacea for solving all problems as it doesn’t provide ready-made solutions, but rather a space for reflection and dialogue about what is possible and desirable in Architecture. Therefore, anchoring utopia in a comprehensive understanding is crucial for its viability and relevance. Architects must acknowledge that utopia empowers them to shape the future and impact society through Architecture, responding to the profound social desire it embodies – the driving force behind utopia. Our profession should wholeheartedly embrace utopia as a powerful tool to build a fairer and significantly better future for all, without exceptions.

2.2. Utopia (H)as Project, Method and Pedagogy

Utopia is integral to the creative process in both Architectural training and the profession. It involves imagination, planning, and radical exploration, stirring awareness, prompting action, and fueling discussions. Realizing utopia’s possibilities demands an Architectural framework, as both utopia and Architecture revolve around “how individuals and groups appropriate space”.³² So, transitioning from Architecture as “utopia” to “utopian” offers a conceptual depiction of utopian ideals within a project rather than attempting their physical creation.³³ Thus, utopia becomes an Architectural expression encompassing institutional and ontological aspects, envisioning, and constructing a better world.³⁴

Moreover, while all Architecture speculates and aims for a better future, utopian projects go further by proposing potential futures through societal structural changes.³⁵ These multi-layered counter projects incorporate new technologies, societal shifts, and scientific discoveries to shape space and investigate on their consequences, merging “fact and fiction, past and future,

the possible and the impossible".³⁶ They employ "the full creative potential of Architectural discipline" to envision novel prospects,³⁷ representing the closest contemporary Architecture can be to utopia as a method.³⁸

In the context of education, utopia takes on the role of a transformative methodological approach capable of shifting paradigms. This approach aims to create a safe space for students to explore their own horizons of possibility and question the prevailing "'there is no alternative' mindset".³⁹ When employed as so, it "takes the process of questioning, participation and dialogue as an end, not as a means".⁴⁰ Suitably, it can be effectively incorporated within the studio environment – which includes utilizing utopia as an opportunity of exploration to foster creative thinking skills – as well as a conceptualization by exploring their relationship with Architecture – examining their potential impact on Architectural practice and discourse.

At Uludağ University, Selay Yurtkurana, Gözde Kırılı, and Yavuz Taneli use utopias as educational resources to nurture creativity and multidimensional thinking, engaging students with the creation of utopian scenarios, enhancing collaborative and leadership skills, cultivating open-minded individuals.⁴¹ Likewise, at Newcastle University, Nathaniel Coleman's utopian pedagogy embraces the radical potential of utopian thought to challenge the architect's role in capitalist spatial practices by encouraging students to imagine alternatives beyond present limitations, fostering "radical, reformist, or utopian" rather than "conformist, conciliatory, or complicit" works.⁴²

3. Radical Pedagogy, a Bound-breaking Experiment

Jolene: "I'm gonna be a radical."

Beth: "Didn't know that was a career choice."

Jolene: "It will be."⁴³

Radical pedagogies provocatively challenged the established norms across various scales, persistently scrutinized educational institutions, probed presuppositions inherent to Architectural practices, and endeavoured to perturb Architecture's relationship with societal dynamics. These

36. Culek.

37. Culek.

38. Nathaniel Coleman, "Project Brief: Rhythmanalysis of Concrete Utopias," in *Concrete Utopias: An Education of Desire*, ed. Nathaniel Coleman and Amy Butt, vol. 1 (The Lerverhulm Trust, 2017), 84–87, 87.

39. Coleman, 344.

40. Webb, 753.

41. Yurtkuran, Kırılı, and Taneli, 821.

42. Coleman, 87.

43. Scott Frank, *The Queen's Gambit (Episode 7)* (United States: Netflix, 2020).

radical approaches collectively recognized that a novel *modus operandi* within the discipline necessitated the interrogation, destabilization, or even elimination of existing traditions.⁴⁴ In turn, urgent concerns precipitated radical disruptions within academic establishments, while forward-looking pedagogical initiatives engendered alternative paradigms for the discipline. Radical pedagogies, as experimental of engaged learning involving protest against inert ideas, provided a platform for students to cultivate a positive and unique way of thinking, designing, and living by methodologically employing a problem-posing approach, challenging concepts that may have become ingrained, practices that may have solidified, or ideas that may have been considered unquestionable.⁴⁵ Therefore, education positioned itself as a vehicle for subversive actions and the promotion of new alternative visions to be generated through progressive pedagogical initiatives.⁴⁶

These educational movements sought to change the institutions they were part of. The 1968 protests at Unité Pédagogique No 6 in Paris and the burning of Yale School of Art and Architecture in 1969 reflected dissatisfaction with traditional teaching methods. Similar movements occurred globally, like in Valparaíso, Chile, due to blurred lines between learning, work, and life. The Architectural community reconsidered teaching through events like the 1972 'The Universitas Project' symposium at MoMA. New approaches to education, such as Giancarlo De Carlo's decentralized university and Cedric Price's innovative academic designs, aimed to reshape learning environments, while experiments like Global Tools challenged established structures.

Amid this change, Architecture itself was questioned. Architects like the Texas Rangers and John Hejduk focused on the artistic language of Architecture. At the University of Essex, Joseph Rykwert and Dalibor Vesely explored new philosophical ideas, impacting the global Architectural community. Fresh methods, like linguistics, became tools for Architectural ideas, and sociology found its way into design studios, as seen in teachings by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Charles Moore at Yale.

These groundbreaking approaches went beyond Architecture, affecting politics, economics, and technology. Buckminster Fuller's workshops addressed global issues, and institutions like the Architectural Association in London became hubs for innovation. The Eames introduced design programs in India for industrial growth. Technological advancements, like MIT's Architecture Machine Group experimenting with cybernetics, emerged. Institutions like the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm combined various disciplines. Meanwhile, places like the College of

44. Colomina et al., "Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education."

45. Sérgio Xavier, "Radical Education: A Pathway for New Utopias and Reimagining European Democracies.," in *Youth Partnership*, 2022, 20.

46. Colomina et al.

Environmental Design at Berkeley empowered architects as societal influencers, aligning with Giancarlo De Carlo's view of Architectural education as a form of activism emphasizing ethics and socio-political awareness.

4. Utopia within Radical or Radical Within Utopia?

"The concept (utopia as radical) is built upon reformist ideas of making change from the roots up".⁴⁷

Contemporary utopianism is often seen as realistic, involving radical experimentation, and rooted in participatory processes. This radical experimentation, "idealistic in the dream (radical), but pragmatic in the action (in experimentation)", may be the reason why today's utopia is "committed to experimenting, in 'real time,' the emancipatory ideas it carries".⁴⁸ Thus, the current functioning of utopianism relies on a collective discussion process that leads to its experimentation, followed by an evaluation of its outcomes, generating needed knowledge for defining new and future horizons.⁴⁹

Similarly, radical pedagogical experiments opened the path to architects and educators explore the city as a learning resource and a transgressive place of discussion, while giving importance to imagination and experimentation with the empowering potential of education.⁵⁰ By reconnecting with the real world, architects and future architects faced their responsibility towards society, fostering innovative relations between architects, students, political entities, and the people, reshaping the understanding of the Architectural discipline until today.

In this context, radical pedagogy aligns with utopia by embracing experimentation and realistic methods to bring gradual changes within the current system. They comprise a dynamic and transformational process that blends visionary ambitions with tangible reforms to effect significant societal change, bridging idealism with pragmatic solutions. These transgressive bottom-up processes engage students' voices and experiences, mobilizing practical visions grounded in real-life situations, imagination, and desire to uncover hidden utopian aspirations. But although radical and utopian approaches are complementary in transforming society by working together within the existing structures/institutions to bring about change, they differ in their approach.

47. Coleman, 87.

48. Fátima Vieira, "Utopias Realistas Para a Construção Social Europeia," in *Utopias Europeias: O Poder Da Imaginação e Os Imperativos Do Futuro* (Porto: Serralves, 2021), 41–53, 46.

49. Vieira.

50. Isabelle Doucet, "Learning in the 'Real' World: Encounters with Radical Architectures (1960s–1970s)," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 49, no. 1 (2017): 7–21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2017.1252735>.

Utopian realism accepts the present circumstances, whereas radical pedagogy critiques "neoliberal hegemony", relying on utopian ideals for opposition and possessing a well-defined understanding of what constitutes utopia: "a design, plan, image or model of a different way of living".⁵¹ Utopia inspires imagining a better future and offers guidelines for what could be possible, while reformist ideals within radical pedagogies offer the necessary space for these experiments to flourish, focusing on making incremental changes within the existing system by addressing immediate issues to move towards the utopian vision. Together, they create a dynamic and transformative process in Architectural education that can lead to meaningful societal change. This dynamic holds the potential for a pedagogy that is relevant to local and global communities, fostering spaces for resistance, transgression, dream, desire, experimentation, reconstruction, (r)evolution and, above all, hope.

5. Root of Utopia in Radical Pedagogies : Analytical Lens Towards a Taxonomic Reflection

"Utopia must be considered experimentally, studying its implications and consequences in practice. That might come as a surprise."⁵²

Giroux asserted that "radical pedagogy needs a vision — one that celebrates not what is but what could be, that looks beyond the immediate to the future and links struggle to a new set of human possibilities".⁵³ Perhaps, being radical today, within the context of contemporary Architectural practice and education, means going back to the roots of the experiences from the 60s and 70s. And at its root lies utopia.

To find utopia within radical pedagogical practices, and by qualitatively analysing the case studies featured in *Radical Pedagogies* (2022)⁵⁴, it proved fitting to separate the study according to two different lenses— Panoramic Lens and Utopian Lens (Fig.1) —, as it allows to gain an overview of their general features, and an isolated perspective of their utopian components. This reflection allowed a categorized reading of the corpus of analysis, showcasing recurring patterns shared by these radical pedagogical experiments within the coexistence of utopian imagination. Due to the focal theme of this publication's issue, this article will focus solely on the content and definition of the Utopian Lens.

51. Webb, 751.

52. Lefebvre, *Le Droit à La Ville*, 109–110.

53. Henry Giroux, *Theory and resistance in education* (London: Heinemann, 1983), 242, quoted in Darren Webb, *Where's the vision? The concept of utopia in contemporary educational theory* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, Ltd, 2009), 753.

54. *Radical Pedagogies* is a multi-year collaborative research project led by Beatriz Colomina with a team of PhD students at the School of Architecture of Princeton University.

5.1. Utopian Lens

As described above, the underlying reflection within this study alerts to the importance and need of facing the potentiality of the utopia. In the context of this study, it turned imperative to grasp that utopia can be conveyed through radical pedagogies as a (1) Drive, across various types of (2) Thought, taking on multiple (3) Forms while embracing a wide array of diverse yet complementary (4) Principles.

The concept of utopia can manifest itself as an utopian (1) Drive, not only for its transformative power and ability to promote hope, empower desire or foster imagination through an Action or Movement, but also when faced as a project, method, or pedagogy – Project, Process or Programme.

Utopia can also be taught through four modes of (2) Thought, namely Prospective – which encourages imagination and action, where the future becomes an object of desire and gives meaning to the present –, Critical – when hypotheses undergo validation processes, requiring an analysis of their impartiality, substance, accuracy of data, relevance, and only then can the result assume the status of truth –, Holistic – with an awareness based on the systemic functioning of societies, testing hypotheses within this framework –, and Creative – by promoting the consideration of alternatives, testing multiple hypotheses, and thus escaping the mere replication of knowledge.⁵⁵ In the realm of education, the concept of Complex thought is also highly relevant, once it serves to fulfil the reconnection of knowledge by embracing various types of thinking.⁵⁶ In pedagogical contexts, this approach enhances Interdisciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity, Supradisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity, being rooted in the categories of Complexity, Planetarity and Sustainability, demanding the practice of Transversality.⁵⁷

Utopia can also be manifested in various (3) Forms, displaying a versatile nature adaptable to pedagogical needs. These definitions provide distinct paths to stimulate students' creativity and critical thinking, emerging as Concrete – focusing on anticipatory notions, avoiding unrealistic ideals, promoting innovation, and collective efforts for tangible advancements in the present, aiming to surpass current limitations through human imagination –,⁵⁸ Realistic – grounded in practicality, striving for feasible, progressive changes within existing structures, devising realistic strategies for a fairer society, even if not perfect –,⁵⁹ Critical – which serves as a framework

capturing innovative aspects of utopian imagination, shaping utopian ideals, revealing traits of an envisioned society, and challenging conventional narratives to explore multiple plausible futures –.⁶⁰ Dialectical – offers radical analysis across space and time, recognizing flaws in current systems, advocating continuous questioning, and seeking alternatives addressing injustices –,⁶¹ Experimental – employs controlled imagination to create practical, innovative concepts, referencing real-world issues, avoiding empirical oversights, and encouraging a more creative approach to envision alternative futures –,⁶² and Pragmatic – promotes sustainability and harmonious human coexistence with the natural world, bridging utopian ideals with practical reality while balancing pragmatism and idealism.⁶³

Lastly, four clusters of main (4) Principles that embrace the coexistence of utopia within radical approaches where defined, including Vision – which encompasses approaches involving Idealization as a Conceptual Base, Futuristic Vision, Imaginative Exploration and Creative Expression, or Manifestos and Visionary Goals –, Responsibility – covering concerns that include the broad recognition of commitments, namely Historical and Cultural Care, as well as Critique, Reflection and Reform, or Viability and Pragmatism –, Consciousness – focusing on dynamics, exchanges and actions taken to achieve Social Transformation, Inclusion and Diversity, or Sustainability Exploration and Global Awareness –, and Connection – when addressing subjects on a multi-level dimension through Participation, Engagement and Empowerment for Action, Cross-Disciplinary Communication, Collaboration and Co-Creation, or Experimentation and Innovation.

5.2. SAAL Process : A Portuguese Case Study

The Local Mobile Support Service (SAAL) in Porto was a response to the Housing Crisis post the April 1974 Carnation Revolution, offering a new framework and a feasible solution involving various stakeholders. This utopian endeavor expanded into a radical pedagogical process, defining Architecture's role in politics, society, and the city. SAAL aligned public policy with funding, fostering social Architecture, engaging students as mediators between local organizations and Architecture. Dialogue among school, architects, and residents was crucial to impart knowledge and understanding of spatial function. SAAL's ideals reshaped ESBAP (School of Fine Arts of Porto) students led by Álvaro Siza Vieira, perceptions of architects' roles, encouraging collaboration and a real approach to Architectural practice, marking a pivotal moment where Portuguese Architecture met evolving social paradigms through Academic involvement.

55. Fátima Vieira, "The Four Modes of Thinking Framed by Utopian Discursivity. Or Why We Need Utopia.," in *Utopias: Worlds and Frontiers of the Imaginary* (London: CRC Press, 2016), 27–33.

56. Edgar Morin, *Introdução Ao Pensamento Complexo*, ed. Luis Gomes, 5th ed. (Editora Sulina, 2005).

57. Araújo.

58. Bloch.

59. Erik Olin Wright, "Guidelines for Envisioning Real Utopias," *Soundings* 36, no. 36 (2007): 26–39, <https://doi.org/10.3898/136266207820465778>.

60. Tom Moylan, *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination* (Methuen, 1986).

61. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*.

62. Lefebvre.

63. Davidya Kasperzyk, "Pragmatic Utopias: Planning With Nature," *Living Together. Sustainable Community Development* 29 (1991): 44; Bjarke Ingels, *BIG. Yes Is More: An Archicomic on Architectural Evolution*. TASCHEN GmbH, 2009., ed. Taschen, 2009.



Fig. 1 Diagram of Analytical Lenses and Parameters (Source: Author).

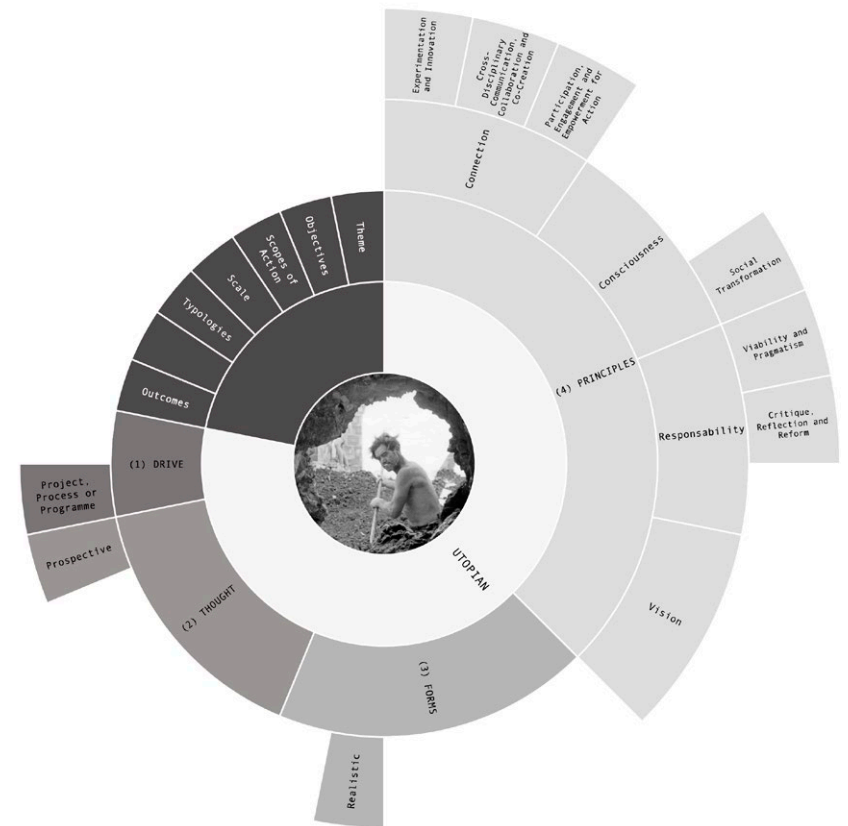


Fig. 2 Diagram of the SAAL case study through the Utopian Lens (Source: Author).

6. Final Considerations: Empowering Oxymorons (H)as the Answer

*"I don't think you can teach Architecture. You can only inspire people."*⁶⁴

The cry for a profound transformation echoes loudly. In a time where the foundations of Architectural practice and education need re-evaluation to address contemporary challenges and raise new questions, radical pedagogies and utopia as a method emerge as a viable answer, since they aim to blur the frontiers between disciplines and expand the horizon of Architecture. However, architects, accustomed at translating conceptual ideas into tangible forms, "became frustrated by the near comic certainty that the closer utopian achievement seems, the more

certain it is that it will forever remain just out of reach"⁶⁵ However, utopia – an oxymoron by nature – surfaces emancipatory aspirations that require realization in the present,⁶⁶ while radical pedagogy, also an oxymoron, can be perceived as a transitional phase that needs renovation.⁶⁷ Much like utopia, radical pedagogies are always putting the horizon line one step further.

Concerning the presence of utopian imagination within radical pedagogical experiments (Fig.1 and Fig.2), this study highlights fundamental elements in the construction of these approaches, allowing a categorized reading of the corpus of analysis, showcasing recurring patterns within the scope of the ongoing research.

64. Alain Elkann, "Zaha Hadid at the Royal Academy of Arts," Alain Elkann Interviews, February 25, 2015.

65. Coleman, "Modern Architecture and the Peculiar Adventure of Utopia," 106.

66. Vieira, "Utopias Realistas Para a Construção Social Europeia."

67. Beatriz Colomina, "Towards a Radical Pedagogy Lecture" (Moscow: Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design, September 12, 2014).



This process, which provided the collection of the overall parameters shared by relevant case studies, make it now possible to create a new pedagogical matrix that could embrace not just a sample of scattered elements, but its whole. This new structure can contemplate utopia as a (1) Drive – an Action or Movement as well as a Project, Process or Programme –, different types of (2) Thought – Prospective, Critical, Holistic, Creative and Complex –, multiple (3) Forms – embodying the potential of Concrete, Realistic, Critical, Dialectical, Experimental and Pragmatic Utopias –, and complementary (4) Principles – embracing the need of a Vision, Responsibility, Consciousness and Connection in the process. In another words, a new pedagogical body may have room to develop within Academia where utopia has its roots and radical power manifests itself.

In summary, this exploratory investigation provides an insight into how utopian thinking and radical pedagogies can bring about real change, contributing to the rekindling of the often-forgotten social and political promise made by architects and Architecture. Thus, the proximity between *radical* and *utopia* to Architectural education holds the potential to provide the much-needed answers that Academia seeks. By contemplating utopia, architects can expand the horizon of Architectural education and practice, unlocking their capacity to explore the potential it offers for conveying and contributing to improved ways of existence,⁶⁸ while the reformist nature of radical pedagogies can effectively navigate them through the intricacies of the present moment effectively.

68. Butt, 2.

Creation of models for project presentation to the community (Source: Alexandre Alves Costa Archive).

When I was born, over thirty years ago, utopia was declared “moribund”.⁶⁹ Today, utopia still lies on the horizon, and the horizon beckons realization.⁷⁰ The urgent search for mechanisms to be adopted in Architectural education to respond to the current concerns arises as a possible incorporation of “realistic utopias” within “radical experiments” in the curriculum of Architectural courses, driven by the contemporary radical utopians need to “experience the future in the present”.⁷¹

In conclusion, the practice of radical pedagogies carries the seed of utopia, nurturing the possibility of cultivating a new paradigm in Architectural education qualified to shape a new generation of architects capable of changing the world.

69. Webb, 743.

70. Lefebvre, 125.

71. Vieira, 46.

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Civic Innovation in Portugal: The potential and limitations of citizen labs to experiment new urban futures

José Carlos Mota, Alexandra Ataíde

Abstract:

Portugal's democracy faces challenges from limited awareness of decision-making processes, unmet quality of life expectations, and dwindling trust in politics, leading to low electoral participation and public radicalisation. Nonetheless, a shift towards participatory dynamics and solidarity is emerging. This article explores citizen innovation in Portugal, detailing civic laboratory models and their impact based on a literature review and analysis of four initiatives. It highlights the role of civic labs in fostering structural change and civic innovation, underscoring the value of collaborative action between citizens and communities, especially in geographically specific contexts. Civic labs offer a platform for resource mapping, knowledge sharing, and low-risk social experiments. The bottom-linked governance model shows promise for facilitating meaningful engagement despite its limitations compared to other approaches.

Keywords: civic laboratories; civic innovation; bottom-linked; collective intelligence; communities of practice.

José Carlos Mota completed his Master's degree in Planning and Urban Design in 1998 from the University of Porto Faculty of Engineering and his PhD in Social Sciences in 2014 from the University of Aveiro. He has published several articles in specialized journals and book chapters in national and international publications. He organized dozens of scientific and professional events. He participated, as a guest speaker, in more than 100 conferences and lectures. He is supervising or co-supervising five doctoral theses. Supervised almost 30 master's theses. Participates and/or participated as a researcher in more than 20 projects. He was director of the master's degree in Regional and Urban Planning at UA and responsible for the UA Bicycle Technological Platform. It energizes various civic groups at the city and neighborhood level. He has regular interventions in national and local media. Works in the areas of Social Sciences with an emphasis on Urban Studies.

Alexandra Ataíde is a researcher at LABIC Aveiro – Intercultural Citizenship Laboratory, a project funded by Portugal Inovação Social. Social entrepreneur and manager of social innovation projects (Ground_up (2018) and Cidadania Lab (2020)). A PhD student in Education, Educational Psychology, she is a member of the research team at CIDTFF, University of Aveiro, and is finalising an action research project with teachers for the collaborative resolution of complex problems in the educational community. She is a trainer in behavioural areas such as Leadership and Collaborative Problem Solving, Non-Violent Communication and Conflict Resolution, Public Speaking and Presentation Skills. She is currently a member of Vizinhos de Aveiro, IES-SBS, ESLIDER and Agora Aveiro.

1. Introduction

This article explores how civic innovation can effectively contribute to solving societal challenges. It discusses the potential and limitations of civic labs as well as increasing citizen involvement and shaping new urban futures. The research carried out a literature review and analysed four recent initiatives in Portugal. It is structured in three parts. First, a civic innovation conceptual framework. Second, the discussion of Civic Labs as settings for experimenting structural changes. Third, analysis of four civic labs projects, namely *Lab Cívico de Santiago*, *Cidadania Lab*, *Aveiro Intercultural Civic Lab*, and *Maia Inclusion Civic Lab*.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of innovative initiatives were introduced in cities around the world, particularly in Europe, aimed at experimenting in various areas such as social isolation, mobility, public space utilization, and the repurposing of vacant buildings¹. These rapid, cost-effective, and highly visible interventions were a way to test and evaluate desired futures, exploring possible permanent transformations that may be replicated in other places, neighbourhoods or cities. Through these efforts, cities were effectively transformed into open and dynamic laboratories where critical challenges such as climate change, urban mobility, migration integration, population ageing, and social diversity were tackled.

Local authorities, national governments, and the European Commission are working together to address pressing urban challenges. Recent initiatives, namely the *New European Bauhaus* and the *EU Mission: Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities* both promoted by the European Commission, the *Proximity City* project in Paris and Milan, the *Superblocks* concept in Barcelona, and the implementation of *Low Traffic Neighbourhoods* in London, stand out as noteworthy examples of these endeavours. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that enacting meaningful actions and driving significant changes through a collective strategy is a process that requires time, adequate mediation, and significant (knowledge, relational and financial) resources that may be discovered in the community.

During the pandemic lockdown, communities organised themselves quickly and effectively to meet the pressing needs of vulnerable individuals². In Portugal, several neighbourhood groups emerged to support citizens during this period, especially the most vulnerable. As time progressed, some of these communities grew into more intricate collaborative initiatives that focused on envisioning and collectively shaping their future (e.g., Vizinhos de Aveiro).

1. Nel-Ío, Oriol; Blanco, Ismael, & Gomà, Ricard (Eds.) (2022). *El apoyo mutuo en tiempos de crisis. La solidaridad ciudadana durante la pandemia COVID-19*. CLACSO & Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; 420pp.

2. Nel-Ío, Oriol; Blanco, Ismael, & Gomà, Ricard (Eds.) (2022). *El apoyo mutuo en tiempos de crisis. La solidaridad ciudadana durante la pandemia COVID-19*. CLACSO & Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona; 420pp.

Promoting change is not an easy task. In a recent public intervention, Daniel Innerarity stated that "the possibilities of continuity are always slightly greater than those of change. The only thing that can change this relationship of opportunities is the type of learning we do".

Although there is a desire for a healthier lifestyle and for decreased sedentary behaviour, the context of mobility between home and work or school is still heavily motorised. Concern for the environment and climate is prevalent (as evidenced by the Greta Thunberg phenomenon and global climate strikes), but this has not yet translated into significant changes in eating, consumption, or mobility habits, nor political action. Despite the collective wish to have a better society, civic engagement is hindered by a lack of adequate conditions for participation. Territories and cities reflect these paradoxes, as they exhibit concerning levels of motorised mobility, disparities in urban quality between central and peripheral areas, challenges in accessing housing, public transport, and green spaces, and a significant spatial invisibility of various social groups, particularly those who are in vulnerable conditions.

To lead change, it is vital to incorporate spatial planning into climate change discussions, and empower local power leaderships to drive profound and politically rewarding transformations. Changing to this new context requires recognizing that the experience with planning tools, project, initiatives, and public policies aimed at addressing social, economic, and territorial transformations highlights the imperative of concentrating efforts on three pivotal domain strategies: firstly, the establishment of participatory processes at the local level to engage citizens in identifying and experimenting with actions fostering a just transition towards environmentally responsible forms of mobility, consumption, and food practices; secondly, the integration of a spatial dimension, emphasising urban and regional planning, within the climate change discourse, recognizing that our ability to achieve desired outcomes hinges on how we design and organise our cities and territories; and thirdly, the vital role of local governance in propelling change, ambitious transformations are not only possible, but are also politically rewarding.

2. Civic Innovation

Cooperation is a natural part of human nature, dating back to the dawn of humanity when people worked together to accomplish tasks that were beyond their individual abilities. The early stages of group hunting efforts, the formation of armies for protection and defence, and finally the collective participation in activities like sports showed this collaborative spirit³. Cooperation has its limitations and may not be enough to respond to collective challenges. Collaboration is a way to generate more intense and integrated interactions where partners share objectives and resources to achieve a common goal.

3. Sennett, R. (2012) *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*. Yale University Press.

In view of citizens' social needs, which governments, public policies, and the market cannot fully meet, namely with regard to the "promotion of social inclusion or the training of agents at risk of social exclusion/marginalisation"⁴⁵, a set of new organisations and ideas (products, services and models), called social innovation, are emerging and aiming to test new responses to problems associated with a new way of conceiving and implementing, with a more experimental and desirably collaborative nature.

The emergence of many social entrepreneurship projects, supported by bottom-linked organisations⁶, by public investment, and co-financed by social investors, has been creating an ecosystem of social innovation with increasingly strong and frequent interconnections between the various actors. This environment has been favouring the creation of networks and synergies, and encouraging the emergence of new projects, aligning resources and needs.

When observing social innovation initiatives, there is no guarantee that citizen participation and collaboration will be inherent. In many cases, project beneficiaries are invited to take on a passive role as recipients rather than active participants. This is a significant matter. Citizens can have greater autonomy and leadership in their own life projects when empowered with social innovation practices. By using co-creation methodologies, a deeper citizen engagement with the mobilisation of available resources and the alignment around common objectives can be attained⁷⁸.

In recent years, new forms of collective action have also emerged, particularly at the community level. In some cases, they become formal institutions, e.g., NGOs, while in others they are organic and self-organised. If the former is known as non-governmental organizations, the latter, the self-organized collaborative communities, reveal "spontaneous appearance of order or organisation, with 'global order' and 'local action'"⁹. This potential was well illustrated by the civic movements created during the pandemic.

4. Moolaert F, MacCallum D, Mehmood A, et al. (2013) *The International Handbook on Social Innovation: Collective Action, Social Learning and Transdisciplinary Research*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

5. Mulgan, G. (2006). The process of social innovation. *Innovations: technology, governance, globalization*, 1(2), 145-162. www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/itgg.2006.1.2.145

6. Moolaert, F., MacCallum, D., Van den Broeck, P., & Garcia, M. (2019). Bottom-linked governance and socially innovative political transformation. In *Atlas of social innovation. Second volume: A world of new practices* (pp. 62-65). Oekoem Verlag; München

7. Mota, J.C. (2013). "Planeamento do Território: Metodologias, Actores e Participação". Tese de Doutoramento, Universidade de Aveiro.

8. Watson V. 2014. "Co-Production and Collaboration in Planning – The Difference." *Planning Theory & Practice* 15 (1): 62-76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2013.866266>

9. Heylighen, F. (1999) *The Science of Self-Organization and Adaptivity*. In L.D. Kiel (Ed.), *Knowledge Management, Organizational Intelligence and Learning, and Complexity*. Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems. Oxford, UK: Eolss Publishers Co.

Self-organised communities at the neighbourhood or city level become crucial in strengthening their cohesion, enhancing their sense of identity, and belonging, and engaging in solidarity. These are groups with strong relational intensity, both internally (with the ecosystem) and externally (with local authorities), capable of generating collaborative actions and deliberative processes in response to complex challenges, namely "the transformation of public spaces within the city, the creation of products and services that address local and global challenges while fostering a strong sense of connection to the local territory, and actively engaging in urban regeneration with a focus on environmental sustainability, ecological transition, and social inclusion"¹⁰. These civic groups are making efforts to break silos, to bridge and connect with others, assuring community building efforts and empathetic action.

Collective intelligence refers to as the ability to choose, reason, learn, create, solve problems, and make decisions, can be demonstrated through these practices¹¹. For this to happen, communities have to have "groups with common action with interactions some degree of intensity"¹² "aggregation capacity, that is a mechanism that joins the individual contributions in a group judgment (which may occur in a deliberate or spontaneous way)" and form of intelligence, namely reason, learning, creation, problem solving, and group decision making.

Ezio Manzini synthesises well the above-mentioned characteristics with the notion of civic innovation, referring to "bottom-up innovation initiatives developed by individuals or groups of people who can imagine, create and manage something new, beyond the standard ways of thinking and doing"¹².

Public innovation and social innovation work together as a reference framework for improving functioning in public administration and society, capable of directly stimulating the promotion of civic innovation. Offering a greater permeability to new activities and organisational models, public and social innovation can favour experimentation and institutional learning, generating a new way of designing and implementing public policies and new responses to citizens' problems.

Democracy is living uncertain times. The difficulty in understanding the nature, criteria, and consequences of decision-making processes, the disillusionment with the results in quality of life and progress, a growing context of citizens' lack of confidence in policy makers, are factors that have weakened democracy. Citizens' low electoral participation and the radicalisation of public arenas are two signs of disenchantment. Civic innovation is crucial in supporting the reconciliation of citizens with democratic practices.

10. Moro, A. (2023). Design oriented Communities Conference. <https://www.dastu.polimi.it/design-oriented-communities/>

11. Rey A. A. (2022). *El libro de la inteligencia colectiva : ¿qué ocurre cuando hacemos cosas juntos?* Almuzara.

12. Manzini, E. (2015). Social innovation and design – Enabling, replicating and synergizing. In Stebbing,

3. Civic Labs as contexts for experimenting structural change

Civic labs emerged in a context of social and cultural innovation as places and opportunities to promote civic innovation and experimental culture. Several events, projects, and social movements can be identified as milestones of this new paradigm of institutional and social organisation.

In a recent collaborative mapping activity developed during the Ibero-American Citizen Laboratories Meeting held in Nuevo León, Mexico, a genealogical survey of the different branches of civic laboratories in Ibero-American countries was produced¹³.

The importance of the social movements related to free software and free-culture was referred to in the first place, as were musical scene inspired experimentations involving technology and the arts, and also the creation of a new culture of collaboration. The creation of spaces like Media Lab MIT (1985) was intended to develop technology design and foster cooperation among citizens.

Another aspect was a concern with a more inclusive and accessible digital access. As an example, in the 1990's, the term "citizen networks" was introduced, referring to "a group of people who have a common interest and willingness to work as a team with the aim of creating new knowledge". The human face of the internet was the moto of the "*Congreso Mundial de Redes Ciudadanas, Global CN 2000*", organised in Barcelona in 2000. The need to offer spaces to the hacker community encouraged the creation of the FabLabs, i.e., collaborative hands-on projects to address specific demands. Another contribution to a more inclusive and free digital access was possible due to the free-knowledge culture, which relies on free software and hardware. The development of organisations and open-source digital platforms led to the creation of Wikipedia (2001), a collaborative, open, and accessible digital encyclopaedia, as well as Arduino (2005) an open-source platform for electronic creations.

The concerns with open government gave a context of institutional openness and change focusing on transparency, citizen participation, and efficiency of government administration in the digital context, with two relevant milestones: the Electronic Government Declaration (OECD) in 2003 and the Open Government Partnership launched in 2011.

Citizen Science provided an additional essential contribution to civic empowerment and the democratization of access and production of scientific knowledge by improving 'scientific citizenship'¹⁴.

13. <https://shorturl.at/grBL6>

14. Irwin A. (1995). Citizen science: a study of people expertise and sustainable development. Routledge.

RETHINKING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Finally, the importance of the work of Elinor Ostrom regarding the commons stressed a new perspective towards "community-based solutions and to cooperation and collective action among collective resource users"¹⁵.

Civic labs emerged in this particularly dynamic context of public, social and civic innovation in various European and Ibero-American cities answering to the challenges of participatory democracy and to stimulate the involvement of citizens in experimenting collaboratively developed solutions to their everyday problems.

In the last 20 years, several civic spaces have been promoted. *Medialab Madrid* (from 2002 to 2006 as a traditional cultural centre and from 2007 to 2021 as a civic lab) was the pioneer that sparked the creation several other civic labs. *Platoniq* (2004), *City Lab Barcelona* (2007), *Laboratório Procomum* in Santos, Brazil (2007), *Urban Lab Spain* (2008), and the recent *Lab Nuevo León* in Monterrey are also lighthouse projects. Two major elements emerged from their work. The contribution to enforce citizen science and to map civic initiatives.

In 2014, the Ibero-American General Secretary (SEGIB) initiated the Citizen Innovation Laboratory project (LABIC), that are spaces created "to systematize and accelerate spontaneous innovations that arise from citizenship, in communities, in neighbourhoods, that transform realities and have the potential to replicate in other cities"¹⁶. A year later, SEGIB developed and implemented the Citizen Innovation Residences as well. In these intensive immersion innovative programs, although they have a short duration (usually three days in a row), the citizen laboratories methodology is employed.

Several authors clarify the role of civic labs. They serve as "collaborative spaces for prototyping solutions, experimenting within controlled settings, engaging ordinary citizens, administrators, and experts in mediated work". They function as "informal arenas for listening to collective needs and aspirations, facilitating the convergence of diverse knowledge and skills, and operating as a testing ground for projects and policies, simultaneously functioning as a community incubator"^{17,18,19,20}.

The concept of civic laboratories and the concept of common good are interconnected, and if mismanaged, the latter paradigm will suffer a tragic fate. In order to prevent this, it is essential to create places where information can be collected and compared to make informed decisions. The survival of a common good is dependent on collaborative thinking by all within the logic of a citizen laboratory²¹.

A recent article²² underlines a civic dimension considering labs as places where "citizenship can meet, organize, have access to the infrastructures, tools and necessary information that allows the exchange of knowledge and diverse knowledge with the aim of addressing common problems through the production of prototypes".

These spaces aim to "generate knowledge, enhance local governance through guided experimentation and mobilisation of local stakeholders, and subsequently replicate methodologies based on the insights gained"²³. But they should go further and build narratives of change that question the social, economic, and territorial models on how to make and produce policies and projects, promote a culture of proximity, and inspire the possibility of change, against a setting of TINA – There is No Alternative. To stimulate other communities, it is vital to share methods and outcomes with communities, to enable a wider transformation.

One of the most notable European initiatives was the "*Experimenta Distrito*" project, led by Medialab-Prado in several districts of Madrid, "based on more than a decade of work focused mainly on the technological community in the city centre, rooted in a perspective of citizen experimentation, mixing cultural and playful elements to improve community life and promote collective actions"^{24,25}. This decentralised model had the distinctive vision of rehearsing an approach that promotes and uses the places where communities and citizens meet or live, i.e., in various types of institutions such as social centres, libraries, schools, and health units, among other places. In other words, this model rehearses an openness and a transformation of organisations.

15. Ostrom T. L. E. (2015). *Governing the commons*. Cambridge Univ Press.

16. SEGIB/UE/AECID (2022) Soluciones ciudadanas que funcionan El método de los Laboratorios de Innovación Ciudadana

17. Lafuente, A. (2015). Laboratorios Ciudadanos: Conocimiento expandido, ciencia colateral y política experimental. https://www.academia.edu/14149450/Laboratorios_ciudadanos_conocimiento_expandido_ciencia_colateral_y_politica_experimental

18. Lafuente, A. (2018). Laboratorios Ciudadanos y nueva institucionalidad. *Agenda Cultural Alma Máter*. <https://revistas.udea.edu.co/index.php/almamater/article/view/334573/20790423>

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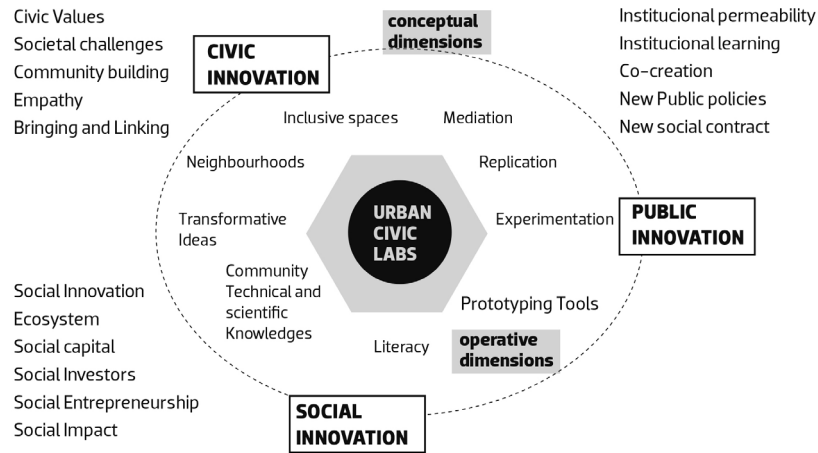
21. Lafuente A. (2022). *Itinerarios comunes laboratorios ciudadanos y cultura experimental*. Ned Ediciones. Retrieved January 11 2024 from <https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=29920105>.

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24. Mota, J.C., Fernandes, A., Moreira, G. (2022 a). Los retos de la innovación ciudadana por parte de las ciudades. El caso del Laboratorio Cívico de Santiago en Aveiro. In : Rubén Camilo Lois González, José Alberto Rio Fernandes e Maria Encarnação Beltrão Sposito (eds.) *El Mundo Visto de las Ciudades*, pp. 815–824 Tirant lo Blanch

25. García, M. (2020). Laboratorios ciudadanos y políticas públicas. *Cultura, Ciudadanía y Pensamiento*. <https://culturayciudadania.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:f11906d9-4750-4c0a-b309-321218fcc8aa/marcos-garcia.pdf>



Citizen laboratories employ a method of collaborative prototyping for projects that come from open calls, using qualified and specialised mediation. So that the calls reflect the common needs of the community where the laboratory is focused, there is a previous collaborative diagnosis that mediation teams develop, seeking to map existing resources and creating bridges with civic, public, and private organisations, and potential proponents and collaborators. To ensure the maturation and strengthening of the civic innovation ecosystem, this relationship-building work is crucial.

The characteristics of the space where the laboratory is developed are very important. The focus is not on the equipment, but on the user's accessibility and appropriateness, resulting in a proper home of participation. Antonio Lafuente suggests these "spaces can be found in empty buildings in the city centre, on the periphery, or in shared spaces with other functions; they should not be "finished" but "built" by participants and should be adaptable to the needs of the community, embracing their idiosyncrasies"²⁶.

26. Lafuente, A. (2015). Laboratorios Ciudadanos: Conocimiento expandido, ciencia colateral y política experimental. https://www.academia.edu/14149450/Laboratorios_ciudadanos_conocimiento_expandido_ciencia_colateral_y_politica_experimental

Fig. 1 The conceptual and operative dimensions of the Urban Civic Labs

The aim of calls is to generate experimental transformative ideas for complex challenges that can be solved with limited resources. A second call for collaborators seeking to combine diverse technical and scientific knowledge communities supports the call for projects focused on mobilising themes.

Citizens in general, i.e., anyone, may take part in a civic lab, including citizens with specialised knowledge such as artists, scientists, technicians, technologists, etc. Civic laboratories have an open format with a collective learning community logic, where citizens find the opportunity of working and living together, learning to listen, being affected by the diversity of perspectives, and unlearning²⁷. A particularly relevant concern with increasing literacy in new domains is crucial to avoid risks of misunderstanding.

Several prototyping tools will be used, namely workshops with specialists, design thinking and co-creation events, with the purpose of testing the idea generated and experimenting it in real life. Possible continuation and replication, after evaluation, is fundamental to assure that the societal transformation can be boosted.

In the pursuit of successful civic laboratories, it is crucial to avoid common pitfalls, such as "rushing expectations (e.g., expecting results in just 6 months), to allot sufficient time for listening to the community, to build trust and overcome resistance, to exercise caution with language and effective communication, not to shy away from addressing and managing conflicts, to establish working agreements with institutions, embrace a culture of trial and error, and steer clear of creating additional bureaucratic institutions"²⁸.

After observing governance standards, three types of civic labs were identified. At first, the top-down model that involves an institutional initiative promoted by the political-administrative sector, which will be then implemented by experts working within government institutions. A second type are the grassroots initiatives developed bottom-up, i.e., promoted by self-organized citizen collectives. Lastly, a third type, the bottom-linked model as an initiative conducted by an intermediate sector, which is independent from the political-administrative sector and the community, aiming to promote understanding and a better dialogue between governments and citizens.

27. Lafuente A. (2022). *Itinerarios comunes laboratorios ciudadanos y cultura experimental*. Ned Ediciones. Retrieved January 11 2024 from

28. Mota, J.C., Fernandes, A., Moreira, G. (2022 a). Los retos de la innovación ciudadana por parte de las ciudades. El caso del Laboratorio Cívico de Santiago en Aveiro. In : Rubén Camilo Lois González, José Alberto Río Fernandes e Maria Encarnação Beltrão Sposito (eds.) *El Mundo Visto de las Ciudades*, pp. 815-824 Tirant lo Blanch

Table 1. The governance models in civic laboratories

Typology of Governance in Civic Labs	Main Characteristics
Top-down	Institutional Led Mainly Permanent Institutional competence Public funds Create new institutions Formal building
Bottom-up	Community Led Social need Mainly Time-framed Several types of funding Proximity
Bottom-linked	Public-common-private Interface Led Mainly Time-framed Flexibility Independence and Transdisciplinary Knowledges, Languages, and Dialogue Styles

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Following the different nature of the civic labs' promoters, the three governance models of civic labs reveal some characteristics that stand out as distinctive: institutional competence, financial resources, and human resources (characteristics of the first model); social need and proximity (second model); and independence, flexibility, transdisciplinarity, and the integration of diverse knowledges, languages, and dialogue styles (third model).

4. Civic Labs in Portugal

Civic Innovation is a particularly recent concern in Portugal. Celebrating 50 years of democracy, citizen participation is still struggling to be recognised as a central issue in public policy activity. Most of the recent efforts are focused on low intensity participative activities, with an information or consultation purpose²⁹, lacking a wider perspective, with the recognition of community resources and the alignment of collective action³⁰.

29. Falanga, R. (2018) Participatory processes for whom? A critical look at Portugal in times of austerity *Lo Squaderno*, 47, pp.37-41Online

30. Mota, J.C. (2013). "Planeamento do Território: Metodologias, Actores e Participação". Tese de Doutoramento, Universidade de Aveiro.

Nevertheless, several public policies were created to help social innovation organizations at the national level (*Portugal Inovação Social* was launched 2013) and local level (*BIP ZIP* in Lisbon and *Programa Bairros Saudáveis*), and financing active citizenship projects (*Programa Cidadania Ativa e Cidadãos Ativos* from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation).

Building upon the inspirational work of the citizen laboratory Medialab-Prado, several experiments with citizen labs have emerged in Portugal in recent years. Four initiatives were promoted stemming from the context of strong civic activism in Aveiro and in parallel with the efforts of researchers at the University of Aveiro. These include three laboratories in Aveiro – *Lab Cívico de Santiago* (Fig. 2), *Cidadania Lab* (Fig.3), and *LABIC Aveiro* (Fig. 4), an intercultural citizen laboratory – and one in Maia, specifically *LABIC Maia*, a citizen laboratory focused on inclusion (Fig.5).



Fig.s 2, 3 and 4 Lab Cívico de Santiago, Cidadania Lab, and LABIC Aveiro

Fig. 5 LABIC Maia, a citizen lab focused on inclusion

RETHINKING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The temporal, territorial, and social context in which these citizen laboratories were developed varied significantly. Through tactical actions and civic protest, *Lab Cívico de Santiago* was born in 2019, testing out different and more profound levels of civic engagement. During the pandemic in 2020/21, *Cidadania Lab* was created inside the collective *Vizinhas de Aveiro* and implemented by a group of approximately 20 citizens in a shared governance model, *i.e.*, in collaboration with the municipality team and with a cooperative responsible by the operational work. Focused on social innovation, *LABIC Aveiro* was developed in 2022/23, in the post-pandemic period, with a partnership between the University of Aveiro (UA), Aga Khan Foundation, Association Mon na Mon, AIDA – International Chamber of Commerce, and with a social investor Prifer Group. Furthermore, also in 2022/23, *LABIC Maia* was designed and implemented as part of the *MaiaInclui* project.

Table 2. Four case studies – The characterization of civic labs

No.	Labs	Year	Duration	Territory and Target-group
1	Lab Cívico de Santiago 2018		4 months	Citizens from Santiago's Neighbourhood in Aveiro
2	Cidadania Lab	2020/21	9 months	Citizens from Aveiro Municipality
3	LABIC Aveiro	2022/23	1 year	African students from the university of Aveiro
4	LABIC Maia	2022/23	6 months	Roma Community from Anta Neighbourhood in Maia Municipality

Source: Authors' Elaboration

In these high-intensity exercises, participants play an active role in clarifying the initial problem, identifying potential solutions, and prototyping and experimenting with them due to its insufficient human and financial resources support.

Different funding models were experimented with these four civic labs, and all proved to achieve the identified goals. The first was initiated as a civic endeavour with a volunteer framework. The second was also initiated by a collective of citizens but received municipal funding through a participatory budget. The third was established through an impact partnership, involving multiple organisations and supported by the Portugal Social Innovation Program. The fourth was supported by the Municipality of Maia (Table 2). UA researchers were the initiators of the first two initiatives, while the University of Aveiro was formally involved in the last two initiatives. The funding models that were tested in these four cases were distinct, ranging from national to local public funding. Although the volunteer-based model can be used occasionally, it is not the most suitable option.

The objectives can be achieved by applying these citizen lab methodologies to different contexts and group targets. These goals include enhancing the quality of life within a neighbourhood

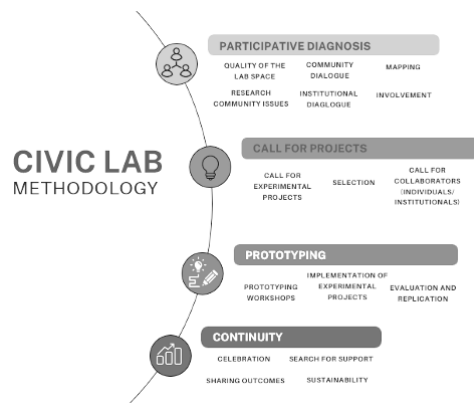
community, collectively creating solutions, and collaboratively shaping local public policies with citizens. The two most recent labs were specifically dedicated to foster the social, cultural, academic, and professional integration of Portuguese-speaking African students in Aveiro, and to promote/facilitate the social inclusion of Romany communities.

Table 3. Methodological models of the four civic laboratories

No.	Labs	Promotor and coordinator	Goal	Funding
1	Lab Cívico de Santiago	A group of citizens – activists, researchers, and social workers (promoters and coordinators)	· Sharing ideas, knowledge and wishes in a climate of respect and tolerance and contributing to the improvement of the community's quality of life	· Volunteer project · No budget · 5,000 euros in donations/crowdfunding
2	Cidadania Lab	Civic collective – "Vizinhas de Aveiro": activists, researchers, students (promoters) NGO (coordinator)	· Facilitate Citizen Participation in community life in the creation of collective solutions and in the decision-making process,	· Application for OPAD (Participatory Budgeting) · Budget: 22,550 €
3	LABIC Aveiro	Institutional Partners: University of Aveiro, AIDA – Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Aveiro, Mon na Mon, Aga Khan Foundation (promoters and coordinators)	· Contribute to the social, cultural, academic, and professional integration of Portuguese-speaking African students in Aveiro,	· Impact Partnerships program – Portugal Social Innovation – 30,000€ from social investor (Grupo Prifer) · Budget: 100,000€
4	LABIC Maia	Institutional Partners: Maia Municipality; Espaço Municipal; Santa Casa da Misericórdia University of Aveiro (coordinator)	· Inclusion	· Program Maia Inclui · Budget: 40.000€

Source: Authors' Elaboration

In the first three cases, despite invitations sent to the local authority to engage in the projects, responses have been marked by either a lack of commitment or no answer at all, indicating a prevailing lack of awareness and trust from local governments in civic innovation processes. This hesitancy is influenced by the political personalised style of local government in Portugal, the resistance to power sharing, and the constraints of lobbies and vested interests. Additionally, there's a fear of embracing co-creation and experimentation with citizens in the development of public policies, as a result of which, participation levels will not increase. The fourth case promoted with a municipality showed the potential of a strong commitment and public alignment with the project, supporting actions, and articulating structural policies to sustain the transformation.



In exploring methodologies for fostering common ground and distinctive traits, similar models were employed such as participatory meetings, collaborative diagnosis, and experimental actions. To generate ideas collectively, diverse approaches were embraced, including an ideas contest at *Lab Cívico de Santiago*, idea generation meetings, and prototyping/project creation at *Cidadania Lab*, as well as PIC (Community Innovation Projects) at LABIC. Creating opportunities for citizen learning involves collaborative efforts, such as meetings with social organisations (#Colabora), learning from international examples, experiencing a day in the shoes of a politician or administrator, meetings between generations, and engaging in LABIC Talks. Addressing the aspect of mediation, we consider involvement from citizens on a voluntary basis, an organisation recruited by the municipality which partnered with a group of citizens, and a collaborative partnership involving two full-time and two part-time individuals.

Table 4. Civic Labs in numbers

Labs		Number of mediators	Number of proponents and collaborators	Participants	Projects implemented
1	Lab Cívico de Santiago	10	10+40	600	10
2	Cidadania Lab	3	6+20	400	6
3	LABIC Aveiro	8	40+	1.000	6
4	LABIC Maia	4	20	60	6

Source: Authors' Elaboration

In comparison, Lab 1 stands out for its larger team of mediators and greater involvement of proponents, collaborators, and participants. Lab 2 and 3 are similar in terms of the number of projects implemented and participant engagement, but Lab 3 had a larger mediator team. Lab 4 is notable for having a smaller scale but still achieving the implementation of six projects.

Fig. 6 The Civic Lab (general) Methodology

All actions were successful in realising a comparable number of projects (six), despite their differences in scale and engagement.

In the first three cases, the number of participants in these processes was high, with an intense involvement process. Despite the project contexts/themes (inclusion – elderly and migrants, public space/sustainability), the impacts were significant, both in the increased sense of belonging (at the neighbourhood or city scale) and in the activation of institutional ties, even when the municipality was not present, demonstrating that citizens do care and do want to participate, and that participation goes beyond just protest. Nevertheless, Lab 4 with a target group in the most vulnerable conditions, stood out for engaging all families from the Romany community.

The implemented projects represent real instances of citizen laboratory projects, each with different scales of mediation, community involvement, and project outcomes. The data suggests a diversity of approaches, with some actions involving larger teams and more participants, while others focus on specific project themes.

The four initiatives cover a wide range of themes, from community-building and social activities to environmental sustainability and cultural projects.

Community building was the main concern of citizens when co-creating projects in the *Lab Cívico de Santiago*, a neighbourhood laboratory. In the *Cidadania Lab*, which operates at the municipal level and began during the pandemic, the participants were mostly dedicated to environmental challenges. The African student community was the target-group of *LABIC Aveiro*. The students placed significant emphasis on social support as the central issue. In *LABIC Maia*, which was developed with the Romany community, citizens focused on improving public spaces as the primary goal.

Table 5. Typology of projects

Themes	Lab Cívico de Santiago	Cidadania Lab	LABIC Aveiro	LABIC Maia	Ranking of Themes
Community building	3	1	1		5
Environment	1	3		1	5
Arts	2	1	1	1	4
Food	2		1		3
Public Space		1		2	3
Social support	1		2	1	3
Tech	1				1
Business			1		1
	10	6	6	6	28

Source: Authors' Elaboration

RETHINKING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

While each case reveals distinct characteristics, there are common themes across all laboratories. Firstly, all initiatives emphasise community engagement, whether through promoter cohesion, municipal openness, youth involvement, or Romany community empowerment. Secondly, they highlight the importance of breaking down barriers and fostering inclusivity, whether by breaking invisible walls, promoting civic innovation, addressing the challenges of African students, or empowering socially marginalised communities like the Romany.

Table 6. Main Outcomes

No.	Labs	Major outcomes
1	Lab Cívico de Santiago	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Ensured the cohesion of its promoters through a strong group spirit and intensive monitoring of projects · Mobilised over 60 employees and 800 participants during the months of the initiative, managing to raise more than 5,000 euros in community support for the implementation of the projects · Strengthened neighbourly relations between different community groups and trained some of its members to new organisational forms (residents' association) · Activated the neighbourhood organisations, strengthening their relationship with their users · Left positive memories and the visible work done by the school students · Broke down invisible walls and took the neighbourhood to the centre of the city
2	Cidadania Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Constructed a collaborative diagnosis in each parish · Helped the Municipality's openness to civic innovation practices (OPAD) · Strengthened the collaborative potential of remote work during the pandemic · Mobilised dormant citizen activism · Offered a municipal scale and scope to several actions · Brought together Public Institutions of Social Solidarity · Generated knowledge about similar initiatives worldwide
3	LABIC Aveiro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Involved African young people in problem identification, solution creation, and response development · Offered New answers (digital skills courses seminars on politics, cinema, and literature welcoming sessions small gastronomy businesses) · Created new contact networks (students – partners students – students) · Increased the visibility and understanding of the challenges faced by African students
4	LABIC Maia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Built upon mature and structured public policy · Broke the ice and walls of Romany neighbourhood · Experimented micro-projects which generated deep satisfaction and brought a new capital of trust in public institutions · Empowered the Romany community to become protagonists · Showed women as leaders in a male-dominated society · Valued skills and desires (education, dignified work, play) · Transformed public space (cleaned and painted) · Accelerated public responses (new houses and a new project for the neighbourhood) · Mobilised existing resources for collective action (paint for the walls)

Source: Authors' Elaboration

Furthermore, the initiatives demonstrated the power of collaboration and knowledge-sharing, creation of new networks, and exchange of ideas globally. They also underscored the transformative impact of small-scale projects, fostering satisfaction, trust, and positive significative memories among participants.

Each initiative responds to specific needs, such as strengthening neighbourhood relations, addressing challenges faced by African students, or empowering marginalised communities. Lastly, they share a commitment to leveraging existing resources for collective action, whether it's community support, municipal resources, or mobilising the potential of citizen activism.

In summary, while each case is unique, as a whole they collectively highlight the significance of community engagement, breaking barriers, collaboration, and leveraging resources for positive social impact.

5. Conclusions

It is important to note that these civic labs are not permanent but rather have a pre-defined duration. They occur at a specific moment and in a particular location. They can be understood as a project, event, or process based on the methodology of laboratories.

The collective action promoted collaboratively by citizens and communities, with adequate mediation and on a defined territorial basis – city or neighbourhoods – has a huge potential for societal transformation, especially in response to the complex challenges we face currently, although these means are often forgotten, overlooked and therefore unused. Citizen laboratories are special spaces where resources can be mapped, knowledge can be combined, and social transformation can occur with limited risk.

Effective citizen involvement is necessary for change to occur. The communities of practice and learning that are formed in a laboratory are essential for change to happen at various levels: perceptions and beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, learning and awareness, skills and abilities^{31,32}.

Although they are not as effective as top-down (institutional) or bottom-up (community), the governance model of these bottom-linked laboratories, as an alternative to top-down (institutional) or bottom-up (community), still provides strong proximity, intermediation, independence, flexibility and effectiveness.

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As previously identified³³, three major conclusions can be observed. Firstly, the importance of establishing common ground by identifying motivations in both formal and informal organisations and finding suitable spaces to mobilise citizens for collective contributions to the common good. Secondly, these experiences bring attention to the potential of neighbourhood communities as valuable yet often overlooked and underestimated resources. Collaboratively and experimentally tapping into these resources is crucial for the community's benefit and to improve residents' daily life. Lastly, these experiences highlight the significance of creating opportunities for experimentation, fostering knowledge-sharing, and involving individuals from various backgrounds, even if it involves some degree of risk, albeit minimal. Additionally, they underscore the need for thorough impact measurement, facilitating continuation and/or subsequent replication in different contexts.

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From address to outcome, a proposal for discussing research in the art academia towards the idea of a critical landscape

Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro

Abstract:

This text aims to discuss forms of teaching/learning that allow for the understanding of the involvement of students in carrying out actions that pertain to two major areas of intervention: landscape and knowledge, and how research processes may be generated by those actions. Landscape is intended to be approached from a dynamic and critical point of view, beyond its multiple senses and descriptive characters, such as, for example, rural or urban considered as limited descriptions. Knowledge is considered horizontally as a collectively generated process focused on providing tools for research and analysis based on student-centred actions. As a brief open-ended exercise, this text does not aim to respond to a set of challenges involved in the definition of the practices that it will attempt to discuss, such as, firstly, the contradictions inherent in the definitions of trans or post-medial practices, in constant change and often contested from current theory and art itself; and second, the danger of enclosing ourselves in definitive terminologies to describe the practices that occupy us and that often operate precisely in opposition to the propensity to find and stabilise definitions, which is the aspiration of the academia. How is research in the art academia to deal with these contradictions and how to distinguish between practice based and practice led research, will be questions that the text will try to address critically. Is the space of the academia the last space for utopia?

Keywords: · research, teaching and learning, art academia, critical landscape

Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro. Artist, curator and researcher. Graduated in Sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, holds a PhD by project from Chelsea College, London. Key Visiting Tutor at Central St. Martins College of Art & Design, in London, between 1998 and 2006. Her interests include artistic practice, art teaching, and also critical research and writing. Her artistic work reflects on identity and contextual issues, as a way of interrogating the very notion of the individual, between personal and social narratives. Curatorial work include exhibitions with several institutional collections and also in alternative exhibition contexts, having been responsible for the Art and Architecture Program of Guimarães 2012, European Capital of Culture. Has regular editorial activity, which includes some artist publications. Since 2004, she has been teaching at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto, where she is an Integrated Member of i2ADS, Research Institute in Art, Design and Society.

The dynamic approach to the idea of landscape supposes interventions that, taking the idea of context in both material and immaterial ways, can intervene in urban or rural environments, they may also act through digital or postal media, thinking about the notion of *transferability and connectivity*. In the case of interventions that favour participatory modes and forms of return, communities – we will see ways to avoid levelling this idea – , communities are called upon to creative processes through workshops and residencies, methodological aspects through which students can work on scenarios outside the academy and actively engage in collective moments of knowledge production and creative experiences.

Transforming places, transforming minds, thus become the two key expressions of educational activities that aim to dynamically develop awareness-raising processes for critical issues in urban or rural landscapes today, without forgetting the intangible spaces, namely cultural and digital, in which social processes take shape. These are activities that can encompass processes that can be converted both into artistic interventions *in situ* and into works of art for exhibition space, addressing social issues, ecological or sustainability issues, mediation and media coverage of the contemporary landscape, heritage issues linked to issues of identity, among others. The notion of critical landscape is important as a way of ensuring that the transmission of knowledge itself takes place through the establishment of a platform of free will and stimulation of the ability to identify, select and deeply advance the information found and shared. We will talk later about procedures that can contribute to this.

Thus, the aspect that concerns knowledge (I'm talking about the production of knowledge rather than simple transmission) takes place not only in the academic environment but also in the social environment, producing a beneficial exchange for both the academy and society. Active involvement through workshops, seminars, lectures, and, mainly, conversations, which promote the discussion of practices linked to landscape and landscape intervention in their multiple aspects, allow students to move to settings outside the academy, getting involved with contexts and communities, enabling them to produce shared aesthetic experiences and implement landscape interventions, urban or rural, relational or individual, designed towards a critical positioning.

Implicit in this approach is the awareness that sustainability in a strictly economic or social sense may not be achieved within the deadlines that academia imposes (or may not be achieved at all, since that should not be the objective). Working with communities and contexts requires investment, in time and also financial, that the academic context rarely offers. However, projects and interventions in a social context often demonstrate that, although the measurement and evaluation of their impact may require a period of time typical of the socio-economic evaluation, such time and resources need to be much larger than those that the academic context offers. Nevertheless, the awareness that 'art does something' to the forms

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and experiences of spaces and situations, socially or individually is there. This experiential dimension, this 'doing something' is what students can pass on to anyone who comes into contact or gets involved with their work. But working just to induce an experience, even if this induction can provoke a few special moments outside the everyday experiential routines, seems insufficient. Undoubtedly, new values are added to less remembered places, new meanings can be discovered in forgotten social practices, some strangeness can be revealed in banal daily routines that begin to acquire the value of a shared and transmitted practice, and this is truly the meaning of heritage, relational or material, becoming something that is created, preserved, transmitted and relocated into a new meaning. But this idea of heritage, which is produced from what I could call critical interventions in context, only makes sense if understood in a conscious dimension of the entire planetary ecosystem, from climate justice to social justice.

As stated above, the impact of this type of intervention is difficult to measure, but its social effects are reflected in several ways. Students can evaluate and incorporate this impact into their projects, by collecting stories and impressions from those who participate or come into contact with their work, sometimes managing to force previously closed institutions to open the doors of their space, and producing platforms for critical debate. This may also be a responsibility of the academy: to intervene in an educational way with institutions that are external to it. There is a necessary symbiosis between social structures – for example local authorities, associations or even museums – and academia, for these processes to be carried out.

From the point of view of the modes of production, it is important to analyse how the intermedia dimension serves these interventions. These are typically approaches in which a plurality of media, from more traditional forms of artistic practice to theatrical and performative forms, seek to express the diversity of encounters. In fact, at first, it is less important to think about the strategies leading to results (that is, to define which materials, which language or visual languages, which forms the artistic work will take) but, in principle, it is more important to think about the challenge, the approach, the initial call to participation, that is, the gesture that calls and touches upon the other(s).

Thus, the work produced can take the form of an event, situation or performance, but it can also be translated into objects that often fulfil an ambiguous function between documentary and work of art, positioning themselves, sometimes and for this very reason, also ambiguously in the art system itself. These forms of activation in specific contexts imply connection with institutions outside the art and the academia systems, such as associations or local power structures. For this reason, educational responsibility expands. Let's see, it is known that participatory art places the observer at the centre of the performances, dismantling the hierarchical position of the artist as the sole creator. In this sense, how can social expectations be incorporated

without compromising the aesthetic experiential function? Post-autonomous art lives well with this ambiguity as long as, first, it remains protected from possible instrumentalisation by the social agencies involved (which frequently represents a burden on artists), and, second, it is able of avoiding romanticising the communities in cause, preventing them from being attributed a fixed and predetermined character in time and space. This assumes a plural and dynamic approach to the idea of community to which it is possible to bring a positive critical meaning, as opposed to the idea of carrying out a social service that generally has a *status quo* of a *do-gooder*, paternalistic, overbearing or imposing nature. A Post-Autonomy aesthetic would imply provoking discursive and thought forms while criticising the hierarchical conditions of art production, the production of history from a colonial, capitalist and neoliberal position, seeking to dismantle these conditions towards a new experiential space.

From the point of view of generating historical and critical knowledge, primarily approached and developed in lecture and workshop environments, it simultaneously presupposes inclusive methodological strategies based on the dismantling of previous models of vertical transmission of knowledge. The main educational strategy is oriented towards the development of research tools, followed by the analytical tool with the primary objective of reaching the critical tool. I will explain in more detail below.

We know that knowledge currently resides on multiple platforms whose access and generative ability are becoming more widespread and rapid every day. Between the library and the search engine (increasingly intelligent and faster, as we know) it is important to generate the capacity for discernment, identification and cataloguing of information in order to, in fact, generate knowledge. It is therefore important to insist on the process of navigating information within a sense of critical awareness mentioned above, and insist on the production of knowledge more than on its pure memorisation, in other words it is important to insist on the development of the ability to compare various pieces of information in order to generate a critical positioning in the face of historical events, social memory and technical knowledge. Memory (particularly in understanding the individual and collective implications for the development of history) is able to emerge much stronger when it is established from that position. We live in times when the anguish that the overcoming of the human by the machine could compromise our own freedom of thought. And in this scenario, how can we guarantee autonomy and free will if not through tools that promote critical consciousness? And we can then ask in what ways can artistic practices contribute to that awareness, whilst still ensuring that they remain outside the limits of pamphleteering? Because it is not art that is 'politics', and, obviously, 'politics' will never be art. What is 'political' is the awareness that art always has social consequences, even more so when it chooses to intervene in context.

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By extension, we become aware of the political dimension of education. Wes Hill in the text for the exhibition catalogue *Shapes of Knowledge*¹ asks: "What does it mean for art to be pedagogical?" He continues: " Since the early 2000s, a number of terms such as 'artist educator', 'artist activist', 'socially engaged artist', 'artist researcher' and 'curator artist' have emerged to signal a shift in the direction of critical art practice, revolving around the common question: 'How are we shaped by what we know?'"

From my point of view, it seems important to state that it is not art that is pedagogical or it would quickly become a purely disciplinary exercise. It is rather interesting to think about art as a producer of knowledge and how artistic practice can use educational strategies that are intended to encourage critical tools and the production of aesthetic experiences. And knowledge is produced actively, through confrontations and feedback, through gestures that are performative at their origin and (eventually but not only) discursive at their point of arrival. It is therefore interesting to think about the notion of the performative both in its feminist meaning, which determines that actions (gestures and languages/discourses) form identities, and also in its durational meaning, which assumes time and temporality as dimensions imbued in all activities. In this sense, it is culture, as a dynamic process in constant manufacture, that produces identity and not strictly its opposite, as essentialist cultural currents would have us believe. Each moment generates cultural advancement because each gesture changes who makes it and who is affected by it. For Bruno Latour², this affectation is the key to cultural and social processes: the body (individual and social) is affected and affects, changes and is changed, is transformed and transforms its surroundings.

In a broad concept of artistic practices that intervene in context, we seek to define modes of production that can combine traditional sculptural or drawing practices, for example, with performative reading and interpretation processes and/or what is commonly called *new media*, in central multidisciplinary approaches central to the exercise of creative proposals that can reveal a transformative dimension. The work may take more traditional forms of site-specific practice, but ultimately it creates conditions for the development of what may be called contextual practice, an important achievement that takes the concept of site-specificity forward, as Miwon Kwon³ envisions in her *One place after another* (2002), incorporating the idea of context, the idea of flow between contexts, the notion of a dynamic place within a networked notion of place, the production of knowledge in the process of mediated and shared experience.

1. Hill, Wes, "Education through participation: the contemporary terrain of socio-pedagogic art" in *Shapes of Knowledge: Monash University Museum of Art*, Melbourne 9 February – 13 April 2019, pp.15–31, Monash University Museum of Art and Perimeter Editions, 2019.

2. Latour, Bruno (2005) *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford: Oxford UP

3. Kwon, Miwon, *One place after another, Site-specific art and locational identity*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, 2002

Due to the nature of the scenario of these practices, often dependent on different partners, it is not always easy to implement the necessary proximity strategies. Distance and the logistics of mobility are sometimes difficult to overcome, especially when you want to work in contexts far from urban centres. Furthermore, the academic environment is linked to a very specific time, which is very different from social seasonality, the temporal fixation of work or the availability for leisure. Therefore, navigating this asynchronicity must become part of the approach of working in a context that, ultimately, must also contemplate its own disappearance and/or incorporate the possibility of its eventual failure, even if the objectives have been formulated in a closed manner. Isn't art a place of open possibilities? Isn't it in art that we can transform error into advancement?

Higher education institutions need to be encouraged to take responsibility for providing student exchange opportunities with diverse institutional partners, many of which may not be academic institutions. This allows us to say that working with students is not restricted to the academic environment, on the contrary, it allows students to come into contact with the world of professional artistic practices, and also with social realities with which they may not have had contact, in short, with the real world. This fulfils another very important aspect of our contribution, both as artists and as academics: the connection to the world outside the academy. It assumes that team and collective work is considered a priority.

A collective production of knowledge is fundamental in today's world, a world in which the notion of authorship as an individual achievement no longer seems adequate. Thus, collective participation, both in artistic production and in critical discussion, updates the debates on the conditions of contemporary authorship. Questions of identity, as seen above, are approached not from an angle of confinement and pre-definition of terms, but from the understanding that identity and culture are in a permanent process of formation and transformation, therefore they are never considered completed or predefined, but that the preconditions on which they are based, often weakened by secular processes of incorporation and acculturation, deserve a dedicated and respectful look. This gives the work openness and revelation. Unveiling, because at each stage it reveals a new moment for understanding the found conditions of identity and culture; openness, because it inevitably leaves open a space for a new rearrangement of meaning to take place and be carried forward. Fluidity is thus an operative concept that demonstrates that a dynamic mode of culture and identity will bring a truer sense of a collective experience. Temporary interventions fulfil that sense of fluidity, they give shape, in the practices carried out, to critical questions that have a profound meaning for their own objectives and that are tested and addressed in all the different phases of the practices and experiences produced. We can (we should always) ask how these practices, much of which are participatory in nature, benefit not only those involved, but also students, young artists and artistic communities. Their sense of incompleteness prevents them from becoming an attribute of social change, which

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is the responsibility of social structures to produce. Students or artists are not responsible for eradicating poverty, for example, or solving the climate crisis, but they can both operate in a place of knowledge production that contributes to the advancement of awareness and the transformation of the world, even if on the minimum scale we can aim for.

By challenging the allegedly passive conventional role of spectators, as well as their identity demarcation (male, white and Western), the very role of art, its modernist elitism and social distance, its mercantile link, are reconfigured. By repositioning the idea of an institution – artistic, academic and social – its functions are reformulated, politicising its practices in a sense of citizenship, crucial in the times of social and climatic imbalance that we live in. I reaffirm that art, and consequently education, are not ways of doing politics, but that they can reveal a critical position in the world through the production of what I called in this text a *critical landscape*, a place where a plural humanity can be fulfilled and can advance.

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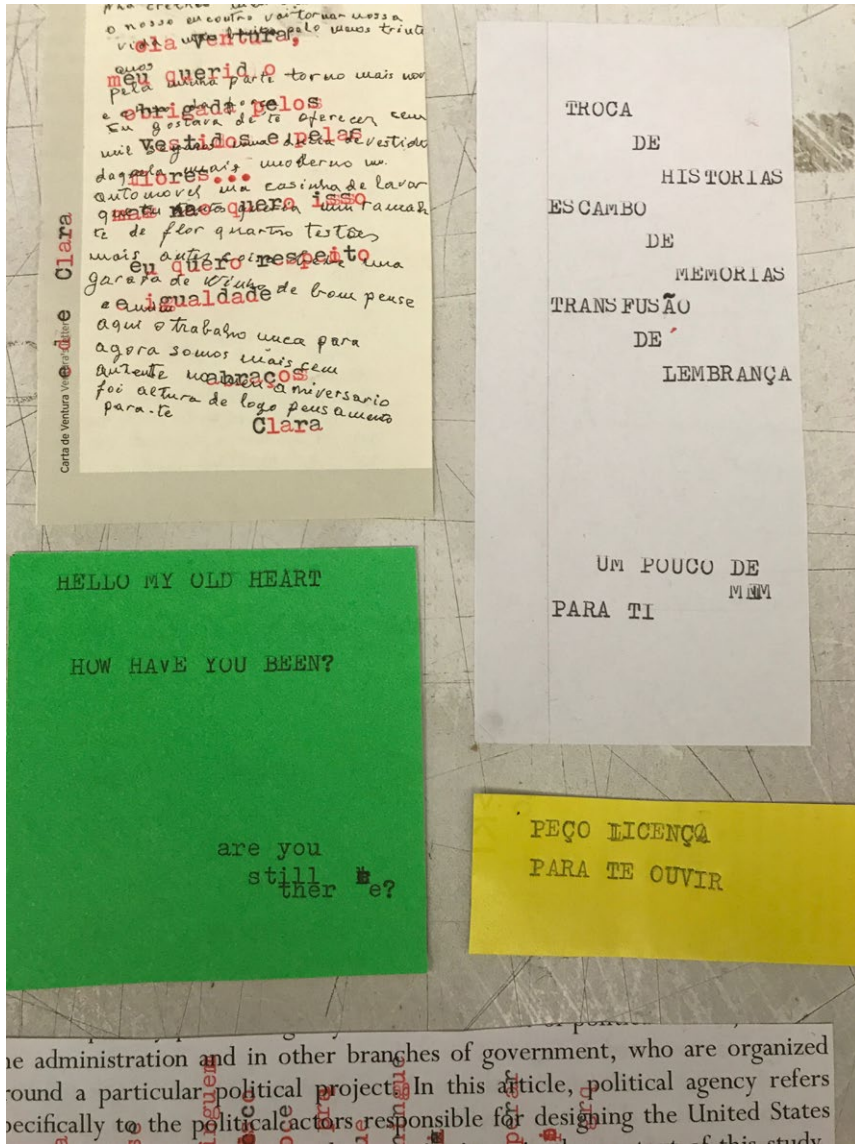
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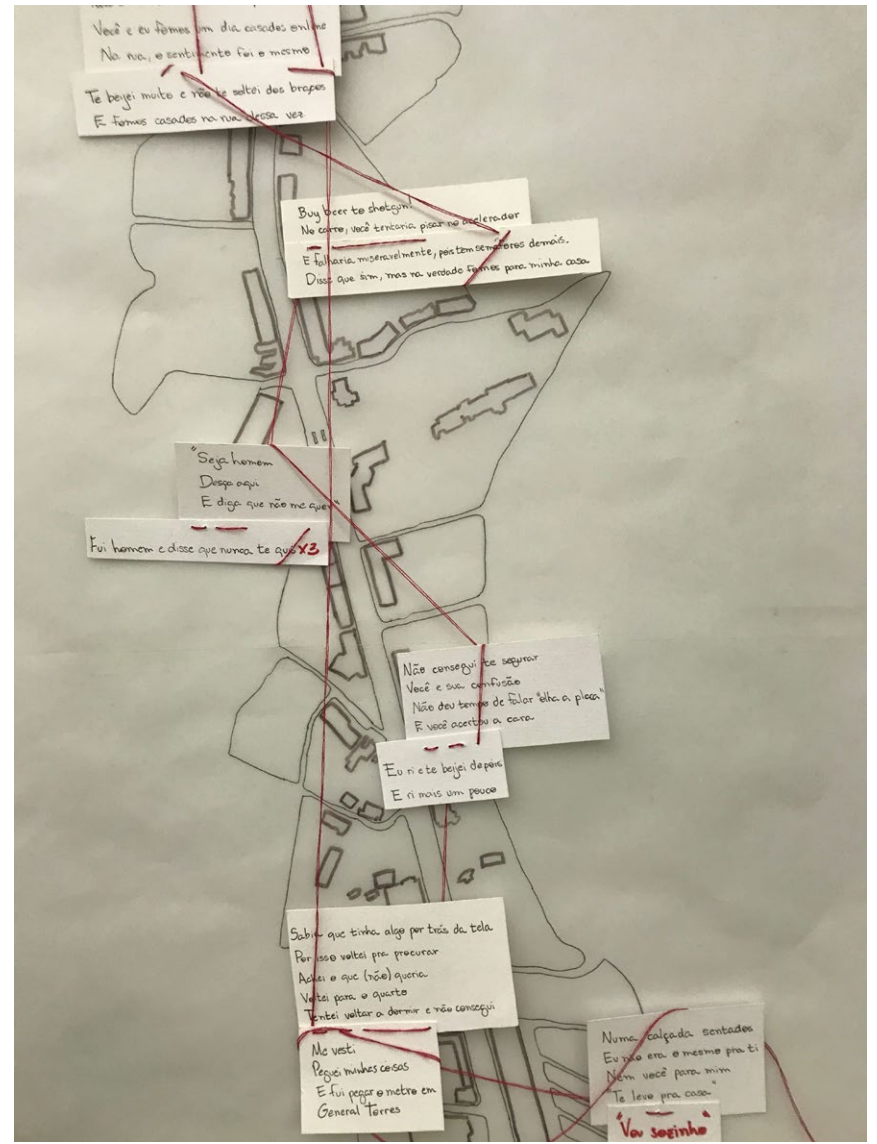
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Filipe Garcia, What's happening, Participative performance with chalk, Avenida dos Aliados, 2010



Fernanda Zotovici, Troca de memórias, Memory swap. Collecting and exchanging memories. 2019



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Participative action in the open land of the old canned fish factory. 2009

The built environment and public spaces informing teaching and learning

Sofia Marques da Silva

Abstract:

Schools now encompass a variety of learning environments, including digital networks, social media, and urban landscapes. Not all these contexts serve as educational spaces. According to Biesta, educational places have a clear purpose and intentionality. Education can extend beyond traditional settings, leading to situated learning through real-world experiences. Interaction with public spaces and the built environment offers students opportunities for spatial engagement.

This text explores what constitutes education in various contexts, aligning with critical pedagogy's aim to highlight everyday experiences and unveil institutional power. The term "built environment" encompasses cities, parks, houses, streets, buildings, and public/private spaces, emphasizing education's occurrence beyond traditional classrooms. In education research, urban public spaces and the built environment often provide valuable learning contexts, fostering experiential learning and research. These spaces enable students to develop research competencies, including sharpening observation skills to analyze and unravel familiar experiences.

Case studies examine cultures formed by students reshaping school spaces, urban populations and small communities where interaction shapes unique educational experiences, and cultures produced by urban artists. These studies center on the educational significance arising from the relationships between spatial configurations and the individuals or communities inhabiting these spaces.

Keywords: built environment, public spaces, informing teaching and learning, pedagogies, non-traditional contexts

Sofia Marques da Silva is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto and full member of the Centre for Research and Intervention in Education (CIE). As part of CIE's Directive Board, she coordinates the research community of practice Youth, Education, Diversity, and Innovation (JEDI). Internationally, she was Portugal's representative on the European committee transitioning from H2020 to Horizon Europe, focusing on inclusive and innovative societies. She has contributed to NESET II and has played a pivotal role in the European Educational Research Association (EERA), including chairing the ECER conference in 2014. As Editor-in-chief of *Ethnography & Education* until 2023 and, since 2021 of the journal *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, her research spans education, youth cultures, and rural education, emphasizing social and spatial justice.

Schools are increasingly becoming part of a broader spectrum of learning environments, alongside learning networks, social media, communities, urban landscapes, among others. However, it is important to note that not all these environments serve as educational places. According to Biesta,¹ the distinguishing factors of an educational place include having a clear purpose, an intentionality. In this sense, we are aware that education can take place in non-traditional contexts and can be specifically promoted, for example through real educational experiences that lead to situated learning. Direct interaction with public space and the built environment can provide students with various forms of spatial appropriation and participation.

The question of what is educational in a building, a city, a street or a wall is posed within the framework of a critical pedagogy that aims to pay attention to everyday experiences and to uncover institutional power and dominant ideologies.² In this orientation, when we use the term built environment to discuss it as an educational "tool", we mean "cities, parks, houses, streets, buildings, public and private spaces".³ This positioning assumes that education takes place beyond classrooms, traditional or otherwise, and suggests paying attention to the affordances of the built environment in an urban context.

In the realm of a course on research methods in education for graduate students and the supervision of master's and PhD thesis in education, urban public spaces and the built environment have frequently served as a pivotal context capable of offering valuable educational experiences. Notably, undergraduate and postgraduate students can engage in experiential learning and research, delving into the interplay between political and pedagogical rationalities that define approaches to cities, spaces and buildings.⁴ Moreover, the exploration extends beyond physical structures to encompass the space between buildings and practices that shape these contexts.

Urban spaces and built environments are not only suitable for integrating different dimensions of education across different scales, but also serve as instrumental places for learning. In this scenario, students engage with authentic contexts, fostering the development of competences in research practices. This includes sharpening observation skills that enable students to "overcome the veil of familiarity and self-evidence that surrounds the experience of seeing, and to turn it into a problem for analysis, a mystery to be unravelled."⁵

1. Gert Biesta, "Philosophy of Education for the Public Good: Five Challenges and an Agenda," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 44, no. 6 (August 2012): 581–593.

2. Henry Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A Pedagogy for the Opposition* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1983).

3. Aase Eriksen, and Katharine Kriebel, "Learning through the Built Environment," *Art Education* 33, no. 6 (October 1980): 20.

4. Anna Kristin Sigurðardóttir, Torfi Hjartarson, and Aðalsteinn Snorrason, "Pedagogical Walks through Open and Sheltered Spaces: A Post-Occupancy Evaluation of an Innovative Learning Environment," *Buildings* 11, no. 11 (2021): 503.

5. William Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture* 1, no. 2 (2002): 166.

The three selected case studies are concerned with the study of cultures either created by young people in school spaces where they actively reshape and appropriate the built environment or produced by urban populations and small communities where interaction shapes unique educational experiences, or cultures produced by urban artists who contribute to the multifaceted cultural landscape. At the centre of these studies is the question of the educational significance that lies in the relationships between spatial configurations and the individuals or communities that inhabit these spaces.⁶

Educational experiences in urban spaces: three examples

By encouraging students to explore the urban environment as a learning space, they can become aware of different levels of observation to be part of a shared learning environment and discuss how we can all be less spectators and more participants. In this sense, experiential learning sounds like a basis for understanding education as a process that involves “transactions between the person and the environment”.⁷

We were interested in developing a critical mind in relation to everyday events and recognising public spaces as producers of knowledge. Furthermore, these educational experiences are premised on the understanding that knowledge exists in real contexts.

Study 1 – Young people as everyday producers of the school's built environment⁸

The first case study is an ethnographic and participatory investigation focusing on the active appropriation of school spaces by young people. This engagement involves the reimagining of traditional learning spaces, transforming them into spaces where new educational opportunities are fostered, and cultures of resistance take root. The overarching aim of this study was to explore the complex interplay between spatial dynamics and the formation of subjectivities. It aimed to shed light on how the constant interaction between space and individuals contributes to the cultivation of subjectivities. Ultimately, the study aimed to empower young people to develop an awareness of their agency as active contributors in a built environment whose impact spans social, cultural, and educational domains.^{9,10}

6. Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989).

7. David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

8. Ana Rute Costa developed this study for her PhD in Sciences of Education at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto. I was the supervisor with Professor Barata Fernandes.

9. Ana Rute Costa, Sofia Marques da Silva and Francisco Barata, “Education and architecture. Young people's perspectives and dialogues for a better understanding of built environment,” *ARCC Conference Repository* (August 2011).

10. Ana Rute Costa, Sofia Marques da Silva, and Francisco Barata, “O Envolvimento de Jovens no Ambiente Construído da Escola: Do Espaço Físico ao Espaço Educativo”, *Educação, Sociedade & Culturas*, no. 44 (February 2015): 67–85.

Using the built environment as an analytical framework, this study illuminates the intricate process by which young people construct meaningful environments, often within limited or constrained spaces where opportunities are inherently limited due to prior allocation for other purposes. Central to this research is the conceptualisation of appropriation as an interactive and purposeful endeavour. Despite the spatial constraints and the limited power and resources that individuals possess, they consciously transform the physical environment into spaces that give them personal meaning. Through this act of appropriation, individuals engage in a process of resistance, not only reshaping physical space, but also undergoing a personal transformation in the pursuit of meaning-making within a constrained environment.¹¹

School buildings are a reservoir of public places in the urban or rural environment. Moreover, the school is also an architecture of experience that influences the rhythms of the surrounding spaces and the society that still shares these rhythms. As Ciaffi, Saporito and Vassallo¹² mention:

The school itself has changed its local role, becoming a territorial actor for urban regeneration: very often, educational institutions step outside their boundaries in order to take over public space — i.e., gardens, parks, libraries, museums, cycle workshops — pursuing different kinds of educational projects at different levels, and building alliances with other local community actors.

The centrality of school buildings as an object of analysis serves as a critical lens for understanding educational goals. School infrastructures, including their physical structures and locations, serve as a portrait of social disparities, interconnected networks and patterns of movement. They embody an educational legacy and represent priorities and societal efforts to address systemic problems and societal needs. Furthermore, the architectural embodiment of school buildings goes beyond the purely physical and becomes a subject of educational research.

Study 2. The city as a place of education¹³

The study of educational sites in an urban setting requires a comprehensive investigation of spatial practices, community dynamics and individual interactions in the built environment, focusing on the spaces in between —the public space. This project-based learning experience was included within the course research methodologies in education: qualitative methods

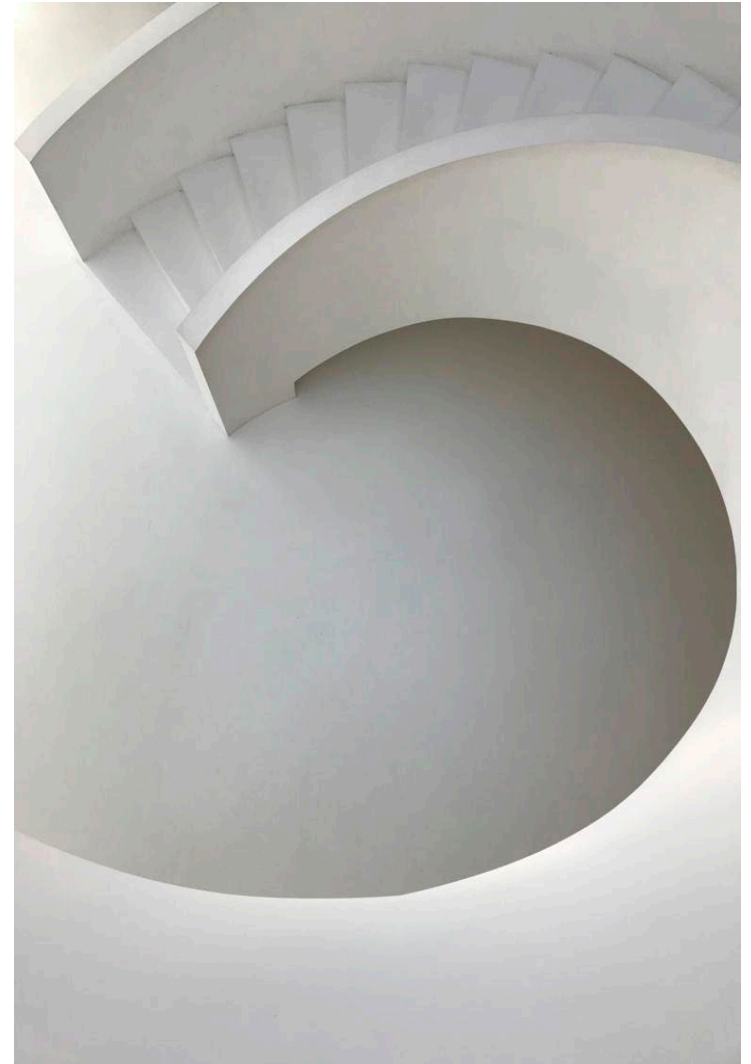
11. Roberta M. Feldman, and Susan Stall, “The Politics of Space Appropriation,” in *Women and the Environment: Human Behavior and Environment*, ed. Arza Churchman and Irwin Altman (Boston, MA: Springer, 1994), vol. 13.

12. Daniela Ciaffi, Emanuela Saporito, and Ianira Vassallo, “From Social Infrastructure to the Civic Center. The School as Laboratory of Collaborative Governance Models,” *Les Cahiers de la Recherche Architecturale Urbaine et Paysagère*, no. 16 (2022): 2.

13. This study was developed collaboratively by a class of around 25 undergraduate students in 2017 in the context of a Course I teach on Research Methodologies in Education: Qualitative Methodologies Laboratory. This course is part of the graduation in Educational Sciences at the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto.



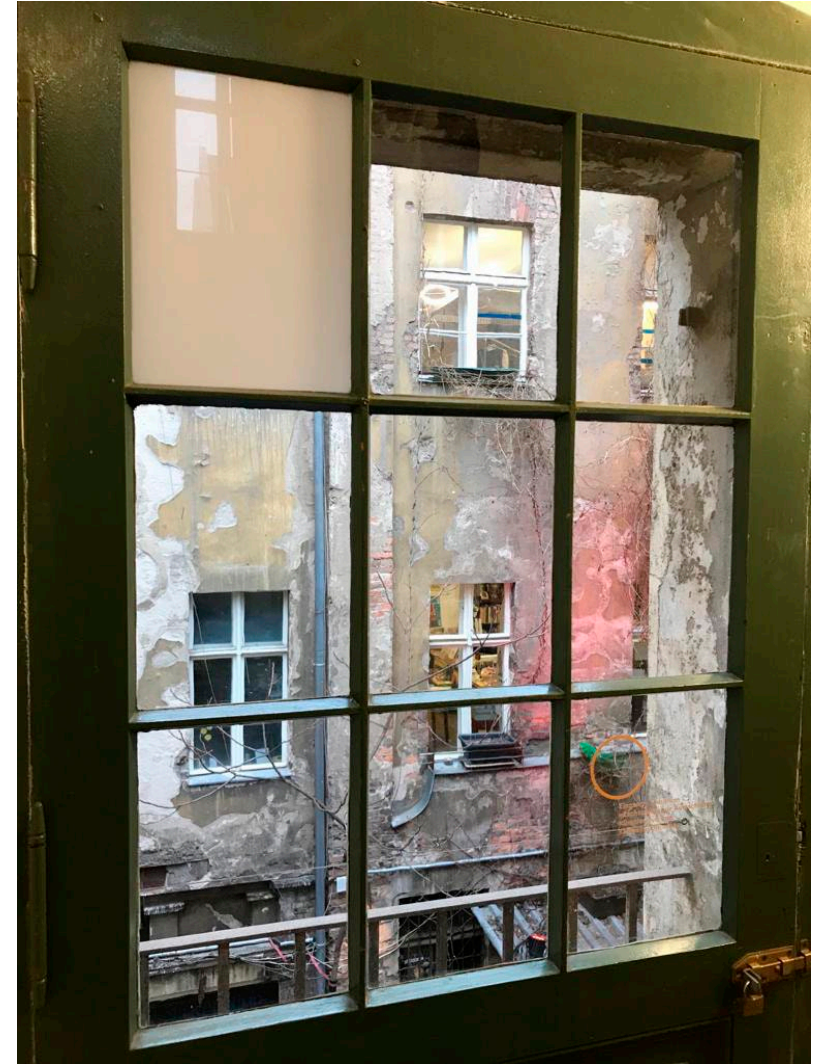
Meeting generations, Barcelona, 2014



Meeting cultures, Centro de Artes de Águeda, 2019



Green lights, move forward, Porto, 2019



These are not old walls, Berlin, 2018

laboratory, on the topic of Educating Cities. In addition to selecting appropriate research methods and techniques, the purpose of this student project was to cultivate the ability to critically observe familiar localities and routines. The central aim was to recognize and understand the educational processes involved in the use of a space and to interpret the meaning it has for its users, as well as the meanings attributed to it. Students developed participant observation and wrote field notes accounting for groups, communities and individuals using and performing space. Contacting, for example, with processes such as sharing public goods or acknowledge collective meaning-making contributed to understand the social construction of a place and the sense of belonging to it. Ethnographic conversations with seniors playing cards, young people in gardens or tourists in historical sites allowed a deep understanding about different appropriations of public spaces and a discussion about how a city may become an educational context.

Students involved in this project engaged not only with the traditional educational sites typically found in urban environments, particularly historic landmarks such as public libraries, schools, and museums, but also with observing and analysing the use of various outdoor spaces. This careful observation went beyond the expected places of education and focused on how these outdoor spaces are intertwined with both individual and collective identities and ultimately influence the sense of belonging within communities.

This research made it possible to understand the role of shared spaces in creating opportunities for new forms of micro-public encounters in terms of urban citizenship and fairness.¹⁴ On the other hand, it also enabled the discussion of how urban development can limit the appropriation of shared space or create new opportunities.

Study 3. Learning from walls and urban art¹⁵

This research project, based on ethnographic and visual methods^{16,17}, examines the urban landscape as a civic arena in which socially engaged artists¹⁸ assert themselves through the articulation of objects of ideological contestation. At the same time, these artists catalyse the occupation of private building walls, effectively expanding public space. Through their work, a dialogue between the artist and the viewer is fostered, extending the boundaries of public discourse beyond conventional spaces and encouraging a critical engagement with the urban environment.

14. Gill Valentine, "Living with Difference: Reflections on Geographies of Encounters," *Progress in Human Geography* 32, no. 3 (2008): 323–337.

15. Sarha Pawlak is developing this study for her Master in Educational Sciences at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto. I am the supervisor of this thesis.

16. Sarha Pawlak, and Sofia M. Silva, "Pixo Not Dead! A Arte Subversiva Jovem como Forma de Expressão," at GROW UP, Porto, Portugal, June 8–9, 2022.

17. Sarha Pawlak, and Sofia M. Silva, "O que as Paredes nos Ensinam? A Arte de Rua e o Desenvolvimento da Educação Política, Crítica e Cívica," III Encontro Internacional Lusófono Todas as Artes | Todos os Nomes, Porto, Portugal, June 21–23, 2023.

18. David Darts, "Visual Culture Jam: Art, Pedagogy, and Creative Resistance," *Studies in Art Education* 45, no. 4 (2004): 313–327.

In the midst of a pronounced phase of urban gentrification and the gradual erosion of public spaces intended for simple communal use, the architectural landscape takes on the role of a canvas. As part of this transformation, the buildings serve as expressive platforms that express, among other things, the repercussions of urban metamorphosis on daily life in the city. Far beyond their aesthetic appeal, these expressive endeavours, prominently showcased in visible public space, forge alternative narratives. These narratives serve as potential educational conduits that promote social awareness and advocacy for social justice. This process blurs the dichotomy between culture and politics, offering citizen-initiated interventions that transform into "pedagogic practices of resistance."¹⁹

The built environment serves as a canvas for social criticism and active engagement by social actors who articulate direct messages about contemporary living conditions. These expressions often manifest on accessible surfaces such as walls, avoiding conventional urban billboards or other non-sanctioned locations designated for commissioned urban art. The public's engagement with art in public space represents an important 'moments of learning'²⁰ and provides a unique educational experience.

However, the action embedded in public art installations in urban space aims to cultivate a critical perspective on urban priorities and basic rights. This includes the reclamation of public space, the challenges of housing and a critique of consumer behaviour.

Final considerations

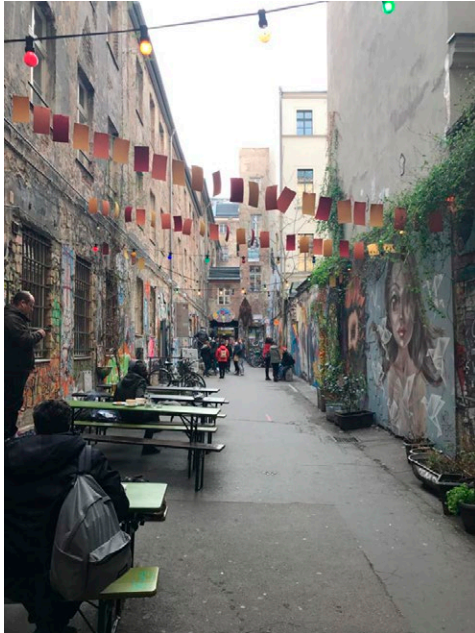
The use of urban space, the built environment and public space as an educational resource creates a rich interdisciplinary opportunity to develop research competences and skills and to reflect on educational practices and places of learning. The immersive experience in urban space equips students with theoretical and methodological tools to approach social life and develop specific modes of engagement and awareness that consolidate their worldview and place as citizens and future professionals in shaping inclusive and equitable societies.

These three project examples, viewed through three different analytical lenses, represent not only the transformation of the built environment and public space in the city of Porto, but also a diversity of actors that not only influence change, but also the role of civil society in this transformation and the search for public solutions.

The use of the city as a learning space is integrated into an educational approach that aims to deconstruct and question.

19. Henry Giroux, "Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 1, no. 1 (2004): 65.

20. Nick Schuermans, Maarten P. J. Loopmans, and Joke Vandenabeele, "Public Space, Public Art and Public Pedagogy," *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012): 678.



Art outside school walls, Leça da Palmeira, 2011

Street art, Rosenthaler Street, Berlin, 2018

These walls are meant for people, Barcelona, 2019

Educational experiences are not limited or fixed to university classrooms or direct educational environments. The connection between the university and the city provides an educational ecosystem and the opportunity to develop specific competences:

- Learn how to participate in public discussions about common interests and goods.
- Learn how to navigate and benefit from experiences in less institutionalised learning contexts.
- Learn to recognise how local knowledge circulates.
- Understand how people interact with non-people as you develop spatial practices.
- Learn to document what you observe through field notes, interviews, photography or film.

Through the experience of supervising these projects, which were developed in urban settings, it became apparent that as they developed research competencies, they learned to integrate what they were learning, observing and analysing into a broader interpretive landscape that allowed them to be able to see "things that matter educationally."²¹ Education and educational actors are not limited to schools and exposure to the different spaces of the built environment enables experiential learning.^{22,23}

Students' interactions with communities of practice serve as important learning opportunities, albeit within what Lave and Wenger²⁴ term 'legitimate peripheral participation'. Although these three cases illustrate peripheral participation, meaning that the students were not full members of these communities, they did engage in a form of participatory learning described by Lave and Wenger. The concept of periphery, as explained by these authors, is not negative per se. Instead, peripherality, when enabled, suggests an openness and a possibility of access to sources of understanding through gradual participation.

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23. David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning*.

24. Jean Lave, and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1991), 37.

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An Ideal for Living

Peter Bennett

Abstract:

'An Ideal for Living' explores the intersection of photography and computer-generated imagery (CGI) in depicting the future of urban life. It specifically examines London's ongoing urban redevelopment, highlighting how architecture is shaped as both a visual story and a construction process. This project blurs the lines between CGI and traditional photography, capturing the city's transformation during this period of change. The resulting images draw from architectural and advertising photography, combining reality with simulation, preserving the present while projecting future aspirations. They convey the pristine novelty of new buildings while hinting at the inevitable effects of time. 'An Ideal for Living' seeks to archive a simulated memory of the city's evolving landscape.

Keywords: Photography, CGI (Computer-Generated Imagery), Urban Transformation, Architectural Aesthetics, Future Urban Life

Peter Bennett is a photographic artist and academic. He studied Photographic Studies at the University of Derby before going on to obtain an MA in Photography from the University of Brighton and an MPhil, also from Brighton, which examined ideas of Loss, Forgetting and Erasure. He has taught at a variety of different institutions, including most recently the University of Brighton and the University of West London, where he is currently the course leader for BA (Hons) Photography. He has exhibited and given talks in the UK and abroad. Previous projects have examined the book and the sea, as well as urban landscapes and the materiality of the photograph itself, as metaphoric and material repositories of memory in relation to ideas of place. His images often reflect upon the processes of forgetting and erasure in relation to the hastening structures of temporality that have accompanied the rise of modernity.

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An Ideal for Living #1

Statement

An Ideal for Living is a body of photographic work which examines how photography and computer-generated imagery (CGI) can be used to depict future aspirational urban life. It considers how the modern architectural environment becomes a geography of representation in the form of a construct for the camera, both in the process of its design and in its mediation to public audiences. It does so by focusing on the ubiquitous areas of redevelopment around London that are transforming urban space and, at the same time, erasing the memory of the past.

The work refers to the new aesthetic of CGI whilst also creating a record of the shifting appearances of the city in this significant period of change. By mimicking the conventions of CGI, these 'real' photographs can exist somewhere between a detached documentary aesthetic and the simulated form of this new kind of imaging. As Melhuish, Degen and Rose have observed, "The urban fabric of global cities is constantly changing. And in the past few years, a new form of visualizing those changes has become commonplace. On the billboards of almost every building site, a new kind of image is appearing: a digital visualization of what that site will look like when the construction work has finished."¹ The images in *An Ideal for Living* possess their own particular aesthetic that is influenced largely from the conventions of architectural and advertising photography. It is always sunny in CGI visualizations and the vantage points from which they are constructed are often ones that it would not be possible to photograph in reality. The people who populate these CGI images portray a particular demographic. They are mainly about 25–35, active professionals, usually relaxing, having a meal as a couple, enjoying the newly constructed 'natural' spaces between buildings. It seems that this is not just about the construction of the built environment but the construction of a way of living.

On the one hand the photographs in *An Ideal for Living* refer to conventions of realism associated with aspects of the documentary genre, but on the other, they are making reference to, and taking on the appearance of, a CGI simulation. One acts as a form of archiving the present to later be remembered and the other aims to project a set of social aspirations and desires for the future.

These photographs, in part project a sense of pristine newness, and yet these areas of redevelopment, during the transformational period of construction, also take on an appearance of ruination. The freshness and perfectness of these new buildings, that still resemble the imprint of the CGI from which they have been conceived, we know will start to become tarnished as time transforms their surfaces. These are yet-to-be places suspending in time, in an aesthetic discontinuity between simulation and becoming. *An Ideal for Living* is an attempt to create an archive of a simulated future memory of the city.

1. *Looking at Digital Visualizations of Urban Development Projects: Dimming the Scintillating Glow of Unwork*, in *Cities Interrupted: Visual Culture and Urban Space* Clare Melhuish, Monica Degen, Gillian Rose. P105.





An Ideal for Living #3



An Ideal for Living #22



An Ideal for Living #18



An Ideal for Living #25

Stonehenge UFO

Alexander García Düttmann

Abstract:

What embodies an artist's imperceptible tentacles and psychic antennae? How does the intangible materialize, and how does one reveal their innate ability to sense and intuit? For photographer James Smith, the answer lies in the choice of angle. His distinctive images aren't solely defined by the objects captured but by the angle's transformative power. Placed on flat fields, lawns, or derelict terrains, they confront wintry weather, save for one—a Guggenheim-like structure. Smith's angles imbue the images with both representation and orientation. They hint at secret locations on an eccentric map known to the artist alone. Time and space intertwine, blurring past and future. Smith's photography is evidence of the impossible, an enigmatic testimony that retains art's essence.

Alexander Garcia Düttmann has lived, since 1992, in San Francisco, New York, Melbourne, and London, and he has taught at Stanford University, The University of Essex, Monash University, New York University, Middlesex University, Goldsmiths College, and the Royal College of Art. Düttmann is an author with several seminal publications, e.g. "Participation: Awareness of Semblance" (Konstanz University Press, 2011) or "Naive Art: An Essay on Happiness" (August Verlag, 2012) and has translated some of Derrida's works into German, and Benjamin's essay on Julien Green into French. He has also edited "Theory and Practice", an unpublished seminar by Jacques Derrida on Marx (Editions Galilée, 2017). *What is Contemporary Art? On Political Ideology* (Konstanz University Press) appeared in 2017, *Love Machine. The Origin of the Work of Art* (Konstanz University Press) in 2018.

Next page

James Smith, Temporal-Dislocation-002-Concrete Foundation

What is the visible embodiment of the artist's imperceptible tentacles? Of his psychic antennae? How does his feel for something materialise? How can he reveal his animal ability to sense, or to intuit, what is coming and what needs to be done? In the case of the photographer, the embodiment, the materialisation, the revelation must lie in his choice of angle. It is not so much the objects he captures, the objects built by an architect or arranged so as to create an architectural effect, that are distinctive of James Smith's images, though they do belong together, form a series on the grounds of a certain grey-brownish bulkiness. They are all firmly placed on the flat surface of a field, a lawn or a derelict industrial terrain. And they are all exposed to the wintry weather, with the exception of one object that looks like an abandoned Guggenheim. The coiling ramp of a multi-storey car-park is seen from within as it encircles an open, no less bleak space. A stony and grassy ring traced on the soil appears to be a sort of inner landing spot for vehicles gone astray. Yet rather than the objects themselves, what distinguishes Smith's images is the fact that because of the angle he chooses, whether focusing the camera on an object or displaying the photographs next to each other on a wall, they seem both to represent and to serve as devices of orientation. Perhaps Smith even turns the objects and the images into monuments of a former secret location, a location on a crazy map known to the artist alone. But the time is out of joint, as usual. The spatial coordinates are traversed by a temporal dislocation because it is impossible to decide whether the present moment, the seasonal and yet eternal now of the image, refers to a past buried in the artist's memory or to a future to be exhumed from times immemorial. When did, when will, the chariots of the gods land? Here, with a humour that is all the more eccentric the more its matter-of-factness proves unassailable, or the more it launches the empiricism of the dirt into the quirky turbulences of the skies, is the artist's visual evidence of the impossible. Will they really touch down in the middle? James Smith gives an answer to the old and exhausting question of what it is that makes photography an art form. For if art must always retain an enigmaticalness that can only be resolved at the cost of art coming to an end, an enigmaticalness factually established and not intentionally sought, then art is always addressed to the gods, not as an appeal or a message but rather as a testimony of what is the case in the world, as a photograph. The naive aspect of science fiction or fantasy consists in that it wants to photograph the addressees themselves. Each time the addressee is identified, art capitulates and becomes science fiction or fantasy, regardless of the genre attributed to a specific work. It is such ingenuousness that Smith refuses. His photographic landscape is entirely contained within itself and thereby unlocked, sensitive, alive.



Reviews

Gabriel Hernández

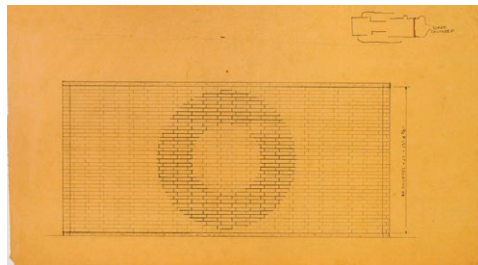
Title: *The Head, The Heart & The House: Migration and Modernism in King-Lui Wu's Domestic Architecture*

Location: North Gallery, Yale School of Architecture, CT (United States)

On view: February – March 2024

This exhibition provides extensive documentation to explore the work of Chinese-born architect King-Lui Wu in collaboration with Josef Albers in Connecticut during the mid-20th century. Wu, an active and influential member of the Modernist movement in the United States, was educated under Walter Gropius at Harvard's GSD and became a faculty at Yale for more than four decades. The curators Haewon Ma and Huirong Ye highlight that Wu envisioned American Modernism as a movement defined by 'tolerance, sincerity, and moral' courage, which he believed could facilitate harmonious living environments.

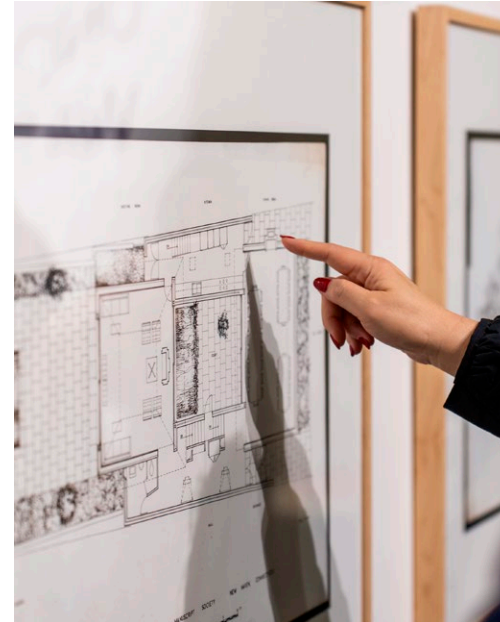
Combining his pedagogical role at the Architecture Department at Yale and his collaborations with Albers – founder and head of the Design Department, he sought to combine Chinese literature philosophy to seek a 'sense of adventure' through the irregularity, concealment and surprise, which the Rouse, Dupont and Manuscripts houses are examples of. The exhibition is richly composed of loans from Harvard Library's Special Collections and Yale University Library. The claims Wu's narrative can serve as a critical lens to examine Asian immigration to the US and to spotlight Asian immigrants to the US who shaped the Modernist movement.



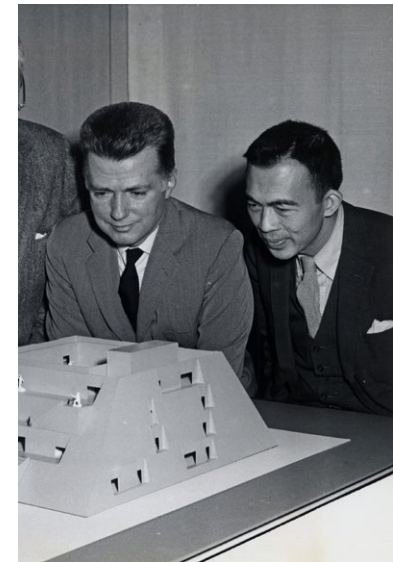
Sketch of Manuscript Building Facade, King-Lui Wu, 1961, Yale University, Manuscripts and Archives, King-Lui Wu Papers



The Head, The Heart and The House. Migration and Modernism in King-Lui Wu's Domestic Architecture exhibition view
© courtesy of YSoA



The Head, The Heart and The House. Migration and Modernism in King-Lui Wu's Domestic Architecture exhibition view
© courtesy of YSoA



Paul Rudolph and King-Lui Wu examine a Model at Yale, c.1960, Yale University, Manuscripts and Archives, King-Lui Wu Papers

FLASH

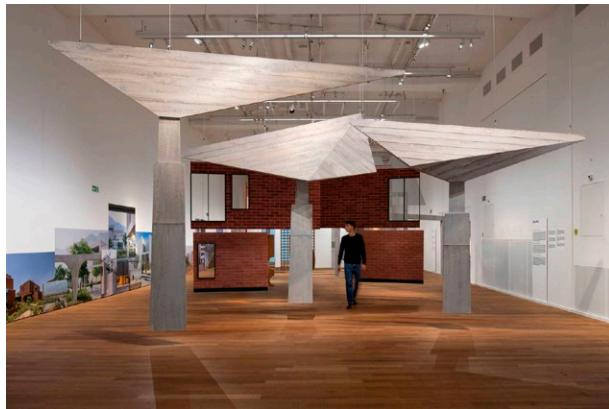
Title: *Tatiana Bilbao Estudio – Architecture for the Community*

Location: Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich (Switzerland)

On view: February – June 2024

For the Mexican architecture practice Tatiana Bilbao Estudio, each exhibition of their work provides a framework for experimentation. This recently inaugurated exhibition has all the ingredients for a perfect combination: on one side, Tatiana Bilbao Studio's visual communication techniques, and on the other, one of the leading museums in Europe for design and visual communication. By questioning how people live together, Tatiana Bilbao acknowledges how this aspect is crucial in architecture and urban planning by describing her own view through a selection of projects from her firm's last two decades of work. Combining site-specific installations, models, plans, drawings and collages, we can quickly identify mastery of architectural visual language that has been made explicit since her early work and can be seen recently in the Great Aquarium of Mazatlán in Mexico.

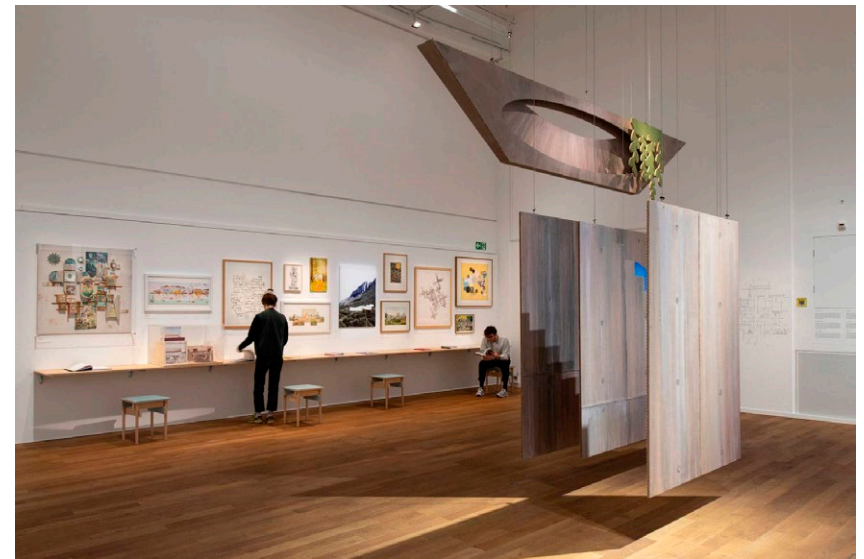
The exhibition focuses on the process of making and communicating architecture while dealing with the social aspects of architecture and the collaboration with different parties at play. The exhibition's layout is conceived as a spatial collage showcasing architecture that considers people and natural resources. In the last decade, Tatiana Bilbao Estudio has been designing and curating its exhibitions and focusing on them as another opportunity to explore architectural communication, paving the ground for its international acclamation and recognition for its work of visual and spatial experiments in architecture.



Tatiana Bilbao Estudio – Architecture for the Community Exhibition view
© Regula Bearth ZHdK



Tatiana Bilbao Estudio – Architecture for the Community
Exhibition view
© Regula Bearth ZHdK



Tatiana Bilbao Estudio – Architecture for the Community
Exhibition view
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Curatorial statement

Building a Collective Archive: A Yale Traveler's Mnemosyne

This segment provides the ground for curators to offer additional insights into recent curatorial projects involving architecture, media and art. *Building a Collective Archive: A Yale Traveler's Mnemosyne* is a curatorial project exploring the role of images, media, and individual references in the construction of a collective imaginario at an institutional level. Curated by architects Gabriel Hernández (Fulbright Visiting Fellow at Yale'23) and Alberto Martínez (Yale MED'24), the exhibition was on display between August and October 2023 at the North Gallery space at Yale School of Architecture (YSoA), located at the iconic Rudolph Hall in New Haven (CT, United States) and was supported by General Consulate of Spain New York, SPAIN Arts & Culture.

Mnemosyne, the Greek goddess of memory who enlightened cultural scientist Aby Warburg's unfinished *Atlas Mnemosyne*, provides a symbolic reference for conceiving a collective archive that represents the YSoA's community by collecting images that exemplify its heterogeneity and global scope. Another aspect was inspired by the italo-brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi's archival practice and devotion towards collecting, which characterises a particular relationship to the act of collecting and its role in constructing memories and design references related to travel and change of location, as most of Yale member's experience.

When Bo Bardi migrated from Italy to Brazil in 1946, she carried her personal references through several items collected over decades. Once in her new homeland, her fascination with local traditions and vernacular culture drove her to acquire new objects, expanding her imaginario and her archival references and sources. As a result, Bo Bardi's porous and mutable archive and unique collection were continuously updated, blending the stories of migration, travel, curiosity, and memory.

In the same spirit, *Building a Collective Archive: A Yale Traveler's Mnemosyne* invited a selection of 18 participants – students, staff, and professors – from within the widely diverse YSoA community to reflect on their act of collecting memories through archival items, paying attention to how travels inform, creates, and expands their imaginario. Each participant was assigned an empty wooden case on display at the exhibition to occupy with their collections and archival items.

Lastly, to explore the potential of building a collective YSoA Archive based on the participant's archives, all items on display were digitised to create video installations that examine the item's connections through images, such as Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne*. The curators worked with video artist Daedalus Li to develop a set of projections that combined and connected images, exploring the wide range of grouping possibilities. The video work is projected on both sides of three screens inspired by Lina Bo Bardi's plinths for MASP, creating a non-linear and non-hierarchical promenade through the North Gallery space. On the frontal view, the *Yale Traveller's*

Mnemosyne through video mapping processes that grouped by object type, print references and sites. On the rearview, the *Building a Collective Archive* produced three media landscapes based on the archival items' commonalities. From the private to the collective, each personal reference becomes planetary when confronted with others by expanding the limits of visual culture and generating collaborative cartography through images.



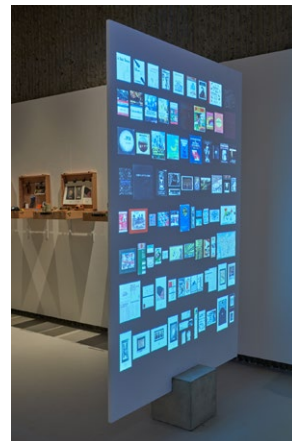
Exhibition participants: Anthony Acciaviatti, AJ Artemel, Norma Barbacci, Juliana Biancardine, Dominic Court, Jacob Koch, Nadine Koobatian, Izzy Kornblatt–Stier, Amelia Lin, Mae–Ling Lokko, Reem Nassour, Dominique O'Connell, Nwando Onochie, Eeva–Liisa Pelkonen, Pablo Perezalonso, Samarth Vachhrajani, Jill Siegel, Wenbo Xiang.

Sponsors and Supporters: General Consulate of Spain New York, SPAIN Arts & Culture, The US – Spain Fulbright Commission, Yale School of Architecture Exhibitions: the Robert A.M. Stern Fund, the Pickard Chilton Dean's Resource Fund, the Nitkin Family Dean's Discretionary Fund in Architecture, the Fred Koetter Exhibitions Fund, the Kibel Foundation Fund, and the James Wilder Green Dean's Resource Fund.

Building a Collective Archive, Exhibition entrance at the Yale's North Gallery, at Rudolph Hall © courtesy of YSoA



Building a Collective Archive, Exhibition rear view
 © courtesy of YSoA



Building a Collective Archive, Gallery Coffee Talk
 @ courtesy of YSoA



Building a Collective Archive, exhibition views
 © courtesy of YSoA



Drawing and photography international contest (DPIC) – Next Edition

Pedro Leão Neto, Fátima Vieira

The first edition of the DPIC international contest, Architecture, Art and Image – Utopia 500, was held in 2016 and was aimed at 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cycle students and young researchers from any higher education or research institution. Since its first edition, DPIC has shown an enormous capacity to capture the interest of a significant number of students from different countries and fields of study as a result of the collaboration between the Centre for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism of U.Porto's Faculty of Architecture (CEAU/ FAUP) and the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of U.Porto's Faculty of Arts and Humanities (CETAPS/FLUP).

At present, the *scopio Magazine AAI publication* integrates the International Drawing and Photography Contest (DPIC) – Architecture, Art and Image – UTOPIA, interconnecting the universes of Architecture, Art and Image with the Utopian desire for a better world and for spaces that provide a better quality of life. Important ideas present in the DPIC are opening the Universities to the Civil Society through diverse submitted projects, showcasing the multifaceted richness of activities, experiences and architectures.

The DPIC call focuses on the theme of "Utopia" and invites participants from the realms of Architecture, Art, and Image to submit two distinctive images: one portraying a critical representation of an existing space and another presenting an idealized, utopian vision of the same space. The objective is to provide innovative solutions to the issues identified in the initial depiction.

The highlight of the call is the identity of university spaces, encompassing teaching and work environments and their connection with the surrounding cities. This call was open to academic communities, both domestically in Portugal and internationally, and while individual applications were accepted, the contest strongly encouraged the formation of multidisciplinary teams.

The participants were invited to creatively explore the potentials of Drawing and Photography, individually or as a team, and share their critical views and utopian visions of the spaces (and respective dynamics) that characterise the institution concerned, by exposing facets that were, until now, invisible or forgotten. We expected to receive strong utopian visions of these educational spaces; in these forward-looking works, drawing and photography should be understood as tools of imagination and critical thinking used to materialise ideas of Architecture, as well as the experiences they may provide¹.

1. See Neto, Pedro Leão; Vieira, Fátima. "The universes of Architecture, Art and Image and Utopia". In *DPIC: ARCHITECTURE, ART AND IMAGE – UTOPIA 500*, 7–10. Porto, Portugal: scopio Editions, 2019.

The aim was to encourage participants to challenge standardised thinking patterns and idealise novel educational institutions spaces and advance forward-looking visions able to materialise the impossible and make us want to perfect reality². We were also open to utopian visions that could interact and create tensions with the critical view of a dystopian and contemporary reality. This disruptive, but also constructive encounter between the two visions may create a new perception of reality that is able to fuel a discourse and propose operational paths towards the transformation of the represented spaces.

The *scopio Magazine Architecture, Art and Image (AAI)*, which integrates this contest in partnership with the UTOPIA 500 project, plays a vital role as a platform for disseminating, discussing, and reflecting upon Architecture, Art, and Image through the lens of Utopia³. The project promotes initiatives that disseminate and encourage critical and global analysis of the practices and disciplines of Art and Architecture, with a greater focus on the world of Image, while maintaining a dialogue between these three universes. This contest is one of those initiatives, encouraging participants to explore photography and drawing as means of crossing borders and dislocating boundaries, and propose Utopian visions of a given reality that scrutinise different problems and subject areas, namely in the universe of Architecture and Art. The contest, thus, promotes a comprehensive understanding of Architecture as a practice that operates, on the one hand, in real spaces, exploring new spatial codes and forms and influencing our perception, and, on the other hand, within more comprehensive systems, such as artistic, sociocultural, technical, political and historical spheres.

The DPIC Contest promotes an understanding of image, drawing and photography as analytical and critical thinking tools that can be used to represent and understand architecture, its transformations, and the way it embodies different identities and cultural cosmoses. The challenge is to use Image as an artistic tool to explore new project ideas and simulate space. The contest invites the authors to use Image, and their imagination, to express critical views and forward-looking visions of urban spaces and architectures beyond their physical limitations.

The highlight of DPIC's call for 2024 continues to be on the Identity of University spaces, encompassing teaching and work environments, and their connection with the surrounding cities. This call is open to academic communities, both domestically in Portugal and internationally.

2. See besides, others Colomina, Beatriz, Esther Choi, Ignacio González Galán, and Anna-Maria Meister. "Radical Pedagogies in Architectural Education." *The Architectural Review – Thinkpiece.*, September 2012. <https://www.architectural-review.com/today/radical-pedagogies-in-architectural-education>

3. Many authors could be called upon for writing about architecture and utopia, just to make a case in point, Nathaniel Coleman conducted research and written extensively about these matters: Nathaniel Coleman, *Utopias and Architecture*, 1st ed. (Londres: Routledge, 2005), 1.

About the jury's evaluation

Pedro Leão Neto

The collective decision of the Jury, after voting all the submissions, was to give the first prize to "Appropriation of Time" and two honourable mentions to "A Wake-Up Call" and "Oasis of Education".

In overall terms, it can be observed that the submissions that obtained the highest scores share a harmonious equilibrium among three key dimensions: the originality of the project's concept (idea), the cogency of its rationale (written explanation), and the effectiveness of its visual presentation (imagery).

However, it's worth noting that the Jury members held differing perspectives when it came to identifying projects that masterfully balanced these three dimensions. This diversity of opinions prompted critical reflection on contemporary concerns within our societies and academic institutions. On one hand, some works raised questions about whether modern universities are suitable environments for learning, collaboration, and a sense of belonging. On the other hand, other projects highlighted environmental issues and the resulting decline in the quality of life and education within university settings.

Hence, among the submissions, the work titled "Appropriation of Time" by Ana de Sousa, Carla Almeida, José Pedro Mendonça, Sofia Gameiro, Tatiana Monteiro, and Tatiana Mota emerged with the highest score. Interestingly, some members of the Jury noted that despite its outward simplicity, this piece stood out as the most nuanced, well-rounded, and conceptually audacious. This assessment held true across various aspects, and it also factored in what can be described as a utopian element.

Inês Nascimento's "A Wake-Up Call" was the next highest score and was awarded a Honourable mention, jointly with the next scored "Oasis of Education" by Jerónimo Pérez Salazar Ruano, Imara Lidgett and Daniel Fernando Chica Estrella.

The project titled "A Wake-Up Call" exhibits a distinct conceptual essence in the manner the author approaches photography through diptychs. It captures a series of university spaces and structures in a dystopian light, illustrating them as a threat to these educational environments. This portrayal effectively mirrors the inherent restlessness that contrasts with utopian ideals. The author expresses this perspective by stating, "I boldly put forth this dystopian outlook on the current factual reality, which could have infiltrated academia. The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled us, utopian thinkers, to face it head-on. Architecture education must either evolve from its utopian ideals or be compelled to change due to isolation. Utopia is not a choice—it is an urgent necessity, and awakening to it is crucial." As observed by certain jury

members, this project reflects a profound commitment to the societal role of art. It looks into educational, political, and social matters from a speculative standpoint, adding intricate layers of interpretation to our reality.

"The project 'Oasis of Education' explores alternative approaches to educational spaces that students directly engage with. It envisions a transformation of school environments, seeking to create more immersive, dynamic, and enjoyable settings for studying and learning, all while prioritizing sustainability and a strong connection to nature. In this diptych, the initial portrayal presents an already pleasing space designed for architecture students, characterized by its lofty ceilings, abundant natural light, and a collaborative ambiance. However, it takes a step further by reimagining an enhanced version of this space, emphasizing a deeper relationship with the outdoors and nature as potential enhancements. As underscored by select members of the Jury, this project highlights the significance of integrating nature and the external environment into educational structures, ultimately enhancing the emotional and communal aspects of these spaces. Additionally, the project's chosen methodologies and formal outcomes effectively communicate the proposal, providing a clear depiction of the newly envisioned spatial arrangements. This mirrors the project's exploration of utopia as a tool capable of reimagining educational spaces to serve as catalysts for architectural critique."

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for all the valuable contribution to DPIC's Call, being the 1st Prize and Honourable mentions published in full spreads and collective image of all entries in one spread.

Jury awards

The jury was composed by 5 people, 3 of whom are Editors of *scopio Magazine* AAI, a student representing AEFAUP & COLETIVO PARTE, and the Guest Jury who is a Professor, Researcher, as well as an Artist and Curator expert in the field of arts.

The Jury of DPIC for 2023:

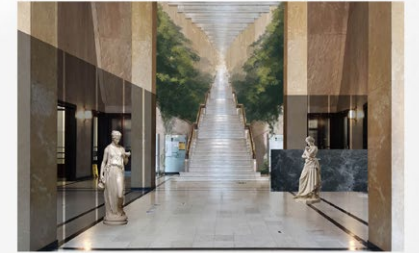
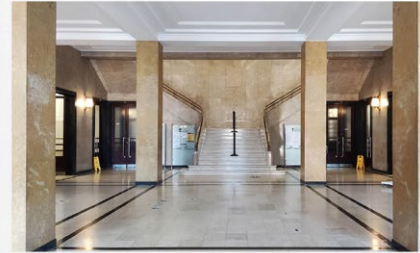
- Fátima Viera (Editor / FLUP / CETAPS)
- Maria Neto (Editor / CEAU / FAUP – UBI)
- José Carneiro (Editor / FBAUP / ID+ / i2ADS)
- Pedro Maia (Guest Jury / ULP / FCAATI / Arq.ID)
- AEFAUP & COLETIVO PARTE

The jury awarded the following prizes and honourable mentions:

1st Prize

· "Appropriation of Time" by Ana de Sousa, Carla Almeida, José Pedro Mendonça, Sofia Gameiro, Tatiana Monteiro, and Tatiana Mota

Honourable Mentions



First prize (2023) to "Space and Identity" by Ana de Sousa, Carla Almeida, José Pedro Mendonça, Sofia Gameiro, Tatiana Monteiro, and Tatiana Mota



Honourable mention (2023) to "A Wake-Up Call" by Inês Nascimento



Honourable mention (2023) "Oasis of Education" by Jerónimo Pérez Salazar Ruano, Imara Lidgett and Daniel Fernando Chica Estrella

· "A Wake-Up Call" by Inês Nascimento

· "Oasis of Education" by Jerónimo Pérez Salazar Ruano, Imara Lidgett and Daniel Fernando Chica Estrella

Jury Ranking

"Appropriation of Time"	Ana de Sousa, Carla Almeida, José Pedro Mendonça, Sofia Gameiro, Tatiana Monteiro, and Tatiana Mota	78
"A Wake-Up Call"	Inês Nascimento	77
"Oasis of Education"	Jerónimo Pérez Salazar Ruano, Imara Lidgett and Daniel Fernando Chica Estrella	76
"Verdant Future"	Carolina Cunha, Duarte Amaral, Guilherme Ferreira, Matilde Oliveira, Mariana Afonso, Pedro Martins	75
"The Towers of Madness"	Ana Beatriz Oliveira, Inês Juliana Moura, Ivan Santos Ferreira, Matilde Vinagre, Océane Ribeiro, Augusto Savioli	75
"Per.me.ável"	Ana Lima Torres Matos Andrade, Jéssica Filipa Pinto Teixeira, Rui Alexandre de Mendonça Rodrigues Salgado Ramos, Sofia Monteiro Santos	72
"Underground Architecture"	Afonso Mendes, Barbara Nunes, Catarina Reis, Catarina Reis, Laura Nunes	72
"Hirade"	Ana Pontes, Ana Sofia Miranda, Bruna Pires, Daniel Figueiras, Maria Eduarda Hirade and Rodrigo Ferreira	72
"Cages"	António Leite, Carolina Andrade, Duarte Sousa, Luís Bouça e Raquel Guedes	72
"Towers over the Douro"	António Freitas, Camila Silva, Maria Barbosa, Sara Mesquita e Tiago Correia	68
"Playground"	António Ramalho, Rodrigo Encarnação, Simão Alves	68

Jury Statements

Fátima Vieira

Three works, in particular, drew my attention. The first was *Oasis of Education* – a most needed utopia and the proof that architecture may solve many of our problems. How different it must be to study, research and create in an environment where electric wiring and air conditioning are replaced by natural lighting and the shade of the leaves! The second work was *The Towers of Madness*. Although utopia is about thinking of solutions for real problems, it will definitely benefit from some delirium in the creative process. Resorting to Ana Aragão's critical representation of the world was an ingenious idea. I also particularly enjoyed *Space and Identity*, namely the endless possibilities it evokes and how it shows art's potential to tell stories and contextualize spaces.

José Carneiro

The classification awarded took into account the relevance of the proposal submitted, opting for more speculative projects and which better reflect a commitment to social issues, such as the preservation and/or expansion of green areas, biodiversity, sustainability, as well as the improvement of emotional spaces and collective sharing. On the other hand, methodologies and methodologies and formal results that best convey the proposal and accurately elucidate other configurations of space were also valued.

Maria Neto

Overall, the projects showcase a profound commitment to the social role of art, addressing social issues from a speculative standpoint. The selected projects go beyond mere images as aesthetic exercises or closed representations and present themselves as diptychs that challenge the viewer on issues of environmental preservation, sustainability of institutional spaces, and (inter)human experiences, adding further layers of interpretation to the reality. It should be noted that the selection also considered the ability to execute the idea, as well as the degree of exploration of utopia as a tool capable of rethinking educational spaces as beacons of social awareness and architectural critique.

Pedro Maia

Bearing in mind that, in analysing and evaluating the works in the competition, it seems important to me that there is coherence and effectiveness between the original concept of the project (idea), its rationale (writing) and the result achieved in visual terms (image) – also taking into account the dichotomy between the two images that are placed in dialogue, a before and after, what a given space could become – I believe that Tatiana Monteiro's *Space and Identity* is, despite its apparent simplicity, the most subtle, balanced and daring work conceptually in the various aspects mentioned, also taking into account what can be defined as utopia. I think that *The Towers of Madness* (collective) should be given an honourable mention for its imagination,

fantasy and graphic expression and that *A Wake-up Call* by Inês Nascimento should also be given an honourable mention for its speculative and post-diluvian character.

AEFAUP & Coletivo Parte

The voting resulted of a decision taken by the AEFAUP as a body. All the works seem positive to us, but we would like to highlight the works that set themselves apart in their search for a utopia and not only in their practical intervention. Due to the strength of the idea and the critical sense, combined with an equally strong and coherent graphic image, we have selected the "CAGES" proposal as the one that best responds to the statement.

Organization

Research group AAI (FAUP) integrated in the I&D centre of FAUP (CEAU) and the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), i2ADS – Institute of Research in Art, Design and Society is a R&D unit based at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP), Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture [ID+] and the Institute Architecture and Development (Arq.ID) based at University Lusófona of Porto, counting with the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate and in partnership with AEFAUP, counting with the support of other Student Associations of U.Porto.

Partnerships

UTOPIA 500, and AEFAUP, with the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate.

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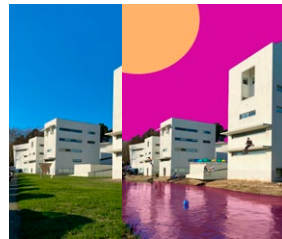
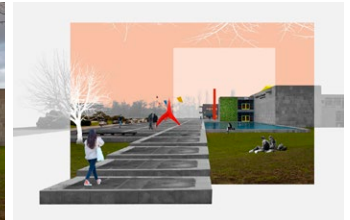
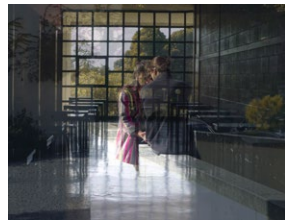
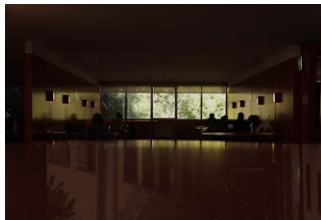
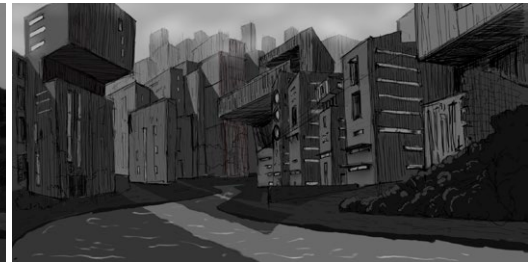
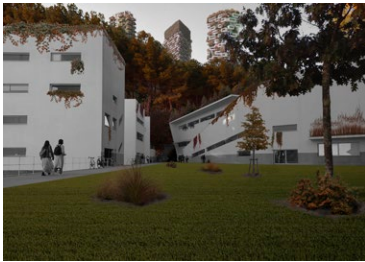
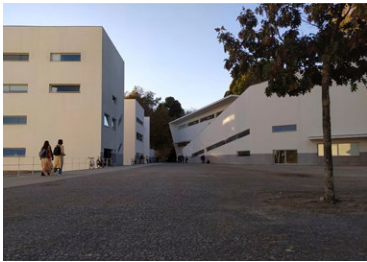
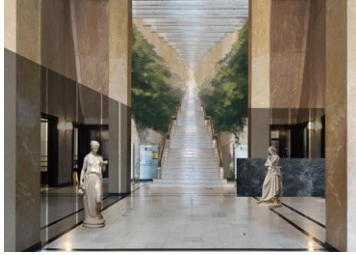
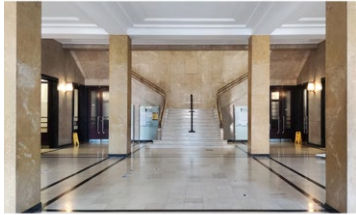
Contacts: AAI / CEAU / FAUP

Universidade do Porto

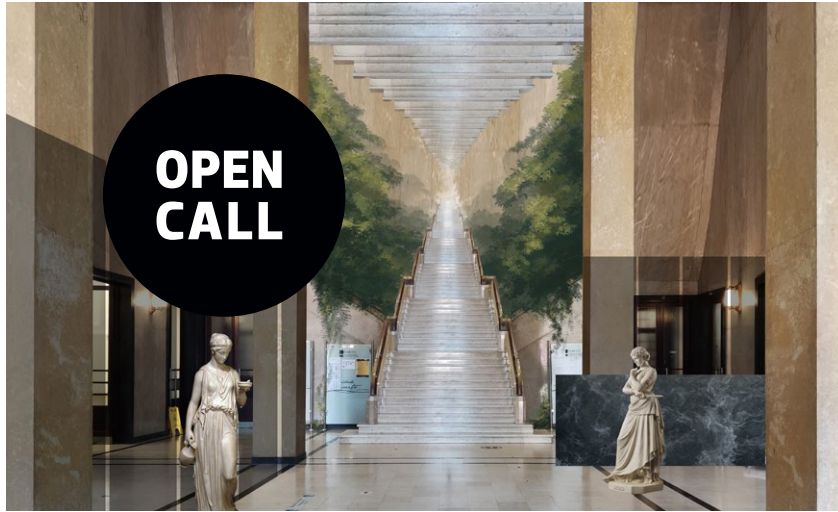
Via Panorâmica s/n 4150-564 Porto

dpic.vsc@arq.up.pt

All Selected Submissions



Open Call – International Drawing and Photography Contest (DPIC) **Utopia 500 | Space and Identity of the Universities**



We are currently in the third edition (2024) of the International Drawing and Photography Contest (DPIC), a competition integrated in scopio Magazine Architecture, Art and Image publication being directed towards the Identity of Universities spaces of teaching experience and work and open to all academic communities, both in Portugal and abroad.

The contest has the joint coordination of the Center for Studies in Architecture and Urbanism (CEAU), the R&D Center of Architecture School of the University of Porto (FAUP), the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), i2ADS – Institute of Research in Art, Design and Society is a R&D unit based at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP) and Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture [ID+] and the Institute Architecture and Development (Arq.ID) based at University Lusófona of Porto. It also has the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate and in partnership with AEFAUP, counting with the support of other Student Associations of U.Porto.

The main ideas present in the contest Drawing and Photography Contest (DPIC) integrated in – Architecture, Art and Image – UTOPIA is to open the Universities to the Civil Society through Drawing and Photography projects, showcasing the multifaceted richness of activities, experiences and architectures related to the Learning institutions and its diverse spaces of experience and work.

Deadline for the submission of projects: 31 of July, 2024

Organizing Committee:

Research group AAI (FAUP) integrated in the I&D centre of FAUP (CEAU) and the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), i2ADS – Institute of Research in Art, Design and Society is a R&D unit based at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP), Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture [ID+] and the Institute Architecture and Development (Arq.ID) based at University Lusófona of Porto, counting with the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate and in partnership with AEFAUP, counting with the support of other Student Associations of U.Porto.

Partnerships: UTOPIA 500, and AEFAUP, with the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate.

Organization

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Maria Neto

Pedro Maia

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Pedro Maia (coordinator)

Luís Espinheira

Contacts: AAI / CEAU / FAUP

Universidade do Porto

Via Panorâmica s/n 4150-564 Porto

dpic.vsc@arq.up.pt

Exploring Contemporary Realities

Pedro Leão Neto, Maria Neto, José Carneiro

With this Open Call "Exploring Contemporary Realities", we launch the annual major theme of interest for scopio Magazine AAI – Exploring Contemporary Realities, Volume 2, and initiate a new collaboration with the project Contrast: Multidisciplinary network of artistic initiatives in Art, Architecture, Design and Photography through SCOPIO & CONTRAST International Conference.

The call will have as responsible Editors academics / artists coming from both scopio Magazine AAI and the Contrast project. This editorial team will ensure the necessary peer review work through the U. Porto OJS platform.

scopio Magazine AAI will be, in this way, the official publishing academic periodical for International Conference SCOPIO & CONTRAST and the submissions are both for the Conference and its 2nd volume in partnership with Contrast addressing the theme Exploring Contemporary Realities.

This academic periodical transitioning to continuous publication to better align with the dynamics of Open Access electronic publishing, moving away from the constraints of its previous model geared towards traditional print formats. This shift aims to expedite the dissemination of research to the community, offering immediate benefits to both readers and authors by ensuring quicker access to new findings. The adoption of a continuous publication strategy enhances the open review process by reducing the time from submission to publication and by boosting the visibility of individual contributions, thus fostering greater engagement and dissemination within the scholarly community.

The present call aims to explore the use of photography and other means of visual representation as forms of artistic research, documentation, and analysis of different configurations on the transformation of the physical environment and how it is understood and shaped by a diverse field of study, practices and cultures. This means, besides other things, to better understand through photography and film the relationship between culture and space and explore how culture, beliefs, behaviours, and practices, interacts with and shape the physical environment of different territories and their architectures, cities and landscapes, as well as to acknowledge contemporary discourses and usages of landscape concepts¹.

1. See the discussion of key conceptions of landscape circulating as part of the recent discourse i.e. landscape as a fundamental building block, a communicative medium, and a realm of imaginative constructs." Vera Vicenzotti. "The Landscape of Landscape Urbanism." *Landscape Journal* 36, no. 1 (2018): 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.3368/lj.36.1.75>. <https://lj.uwpress.org/content/wplj/36/1/75.full.pdf>.



Social transformations are linked to changes in the inhabited place, and recent history has revealed the speed with which space changes. These transformations have been so radical that regular documentation about the impermanence of the place has become urgent. In fact, places are uncertain spaces and to represent them visually is to preserve their understanding, recent life experiences such as the gentrification of large cities or the health crisis have imposed profound changes on contemporary life models and, consequently, allowed the creation of previously unthinkable photographs. This is where the "Exploring contemporary realities" is located, artistic projects and documentary projects that operate from the expanded field of architecture, art and design from its actual materialization to the experiences of the place; exploring different levels of privacy, scales and urban landscapes. Focusing also on the exploration of the discursive space that operates in broader systems: sociocultural, political, historical and even technical.

If we accept the image as a kind of visual language², disseminated and received in different geographic points, this call extends this dialogue, opening up to the integration of different looks of cultural identities from other regions, places and countries; the specificity of the place as a way to increase our understanding of society and the territory. The objective is to encourage the use of images for the construction of artistic projects that promote critical views on the transformation of the physical environment as a result of the way they are perceived and experienced in their multiple facets. In summary, the aim is to take advantage of the current

2. Nathan Jurgenson – *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media*, Verso, 2019, p. 13–14

role of the image as a way of expanding knowledge with a particular focus on photography, recognized as a privileged means of expression and research for the understanding of architecture and urban landscapes and for the construction of the imaginary; between document and fiction; reproduction and manipulation; analogue and digital visual representation as a means of crossing different disciplines, blurring artistic boundaries.

The call is interested in the construction of artistic projects and theoretical essays using photography and film as a way of communicating the experience of space, questioning how people live and work, as well as architectural practices and urban landscapes. We want to encourage students and researchers to develop projects that are not limited to documenting and describing reality, but to deepen knowledge that enhance the construction of more effective and meaningful ways of understanding our relationships with the territory, even anticipating a possible future. It is intended to develop visual essays based on conceptually and artistically strong photographic artistic practices.

We are open to submissions that explore photographic representation as an artistic research tool, both in theoretical work and in field work, in all its possible and complex artistic visions. We want to awaken the interest of authors in the areas of architecture, art and design encouraging the creation of photographic series that explore new frontier paradigms, which can contribute to the critical analysis of the dynamics of physical and social transformation, understanding architecture and urban landscape as living and inclusive organisms.

The organization of the international conference will integrate members coming from scopio Magazine AAI Editorial team and the Contrast project, reinforcing in this way the network of multidisciplinary artistic initiatives in Art, Architecture, Design and Photography.

Abstracts for conference presentation will be published in the e-book of abstracts of the SCOPIO & CONTRAST International Conference, which will have also the program and will be accessible and free to download through scopio Magazine AAI and Contrast platforms at the time of the event.

Subsequent publication of the most relevant (expanded – full manuscripts) contributions will be published in section Exploring Contemporary Realities | Open Call of scopio Magazine AAI], Volume 2.

Organizing committee

scopio Magazine AAI

Research group AAI (FAUP) integrated in the I&D centre of FAUP (CEAU) and the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies of the Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto (CETAPS/FLUP), i2ADS – Institute of Research in Art, Design and Society is a R&D

unit based at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP), Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture [ID+] and the Institute Architecture and Development (Arq.ID) based at University Lusófona of Porto, counting with the institutional support of U.Porto's Rectorate and in partnership with AEFAUP, counting with the support of other Student Associations of U.Porto.

Contrast project

The team of this project counts on the solid experience of eleven higher education institutions – ARCO, DARQ, DCAM, EA.UC, ESAP, ESMAD, FAUP, FBAUL, FBAUP and IPT – that through several projects, research and initiatives, ensure a strong integrated and complementary strategy of teaching, research and communication.

The project has a joint coordination in partnership with the Cultural Association Cityscopio, ESMAD-uniMAD and FBAUP – i2ADS, and is led by FAUP through the research group Architecture, Art and Image (AAI) integrated in the Centre for the Study of Architecture and Urbanism (CEAU), being funded by DGARTES contest to support projects of creation and edition, through the Cultural Association Cityscopio.

Integrated program to conference

The Contrast RC Exhibition “Exploring Contemporary Realities”

The exhibition is the result of a selection of photographic works by students and emerging authors made in the context of teaching at the various institutions involved in the project, “while at the same time allowing students to explain their projects, as well as observe their photographic works both in book format and on the online platforms of Contrast and of Society of Artistic Research Research Catalog (RC)”, using a Mobile Projector for projecting the exhibition in diverse rooms and auditoriums.

The RC allowed to create custom designed webpages used for the exhibition containing many types of media including: text, video, images, and audio recordings. The way in which these materials are presented was customizable by the authors and curators exploring the possibilities of collaboration with multiple authors on the development of the exhibition.

The exhibition aims to contribute to the dissemination of photography in its interaction with Art, Architecture and Design. This contribution will be developed at national and international level through the sharing of experiences and knowledge between schools, groups and non-academic associations, bringing together the interest of different audiences in these themes from a transversal and holistic perspective.

The contents of the exhibition will also be online and the exhibition experience is registered purely for research purposes, being analysed in the context of the ongoing Contrast project.

Author Guidelines

Submissions of abstracts for conference

Login or Register to make a submission.

Instructions

To submit your abstract proposal, please send a 400 – 500 words text (including title, references and a maximum of five images) and a short bio for author's (up to 70 words each) and name, title, affiliation, pronouns, email, phone, and address until 1st of May 2024.

Selected authors will be notified by the 15th of May 2024 and will benefit from Editorial orientation and instructions in order to deliver a first draft of manuscript by the 1 of July 2024 and their final conference presentation in pdf or powerpoint / keynote format by the 10 of September 2024.

All presentations must be in English and should take no more than 15 minutes to present. Please indicate the number of panellists to participate in your presentation.

Abstracts for conference presentation will be published in the e-book of abstracts of the SCOPIO & CONTRAST International Conference, which will have also the program and will be accessible and free to download through scopio Magazine AAI and Contrast platforms at the time of the event.

Abstracts and manuscript drafts of the entries considered most relevant (expanded – full manuscripts) contributions will be invited to published in scopio Magazine AAI – Exploring contemporary realities, Volume 2 and for that purpose will be further reviewed to deliver a 2nd final manuscript until 5 of October 2024

Publication date (tbc): by December 2024

Some issues of interest that can be taken on board when answering this call are the following:

- How photography and film can be used for communicating contemporary realities and the way architecture, landscape and city forms relate with public spaces and their contemporary appropriation;
- What photography and film tell us about the world we inhabit and can be used as a creative process that brings to light new ways of understanding architecture and landscape realities in contemporary urban space, as well as document their cultural significance and heritage values;

- How photography and film can be used to confront present architectural programs, planning and public spaces;

- How photography and film may set forward the idea of a new understanding of architecture, changing our on-site perception and even turning it into a projected vision in space

- The uses of photography and film in identifying, recording and 'unlocking' sites of transformation – i.e. buildings, landscapes, and places, which are undergoing, or will undergo, a process of renewal

- Photographic and filmic series that focus on the perceptive, sensorial and affective experience of architecture and landscape in the urban and rural context.

Accepted submissions engage with the issues above in the form of full papers, short papers or visual essays.

Biographies

David Leite Viana has a post-doc. in Urban Morphology/Civil Engineering (FEUP); a PhD in Urban and Spatial Planning (IUU-UVa); a DEA in Modern City and Architecture (UVa); and a Dipl. Arch. (ESAP). He is head of the Urban Planning Division at Matosinhos Municipality, professor at DAMG-UPT, coordinator of the research area in Urbanism at CIAUD-UPT, PhD supervisor in the doctorate programme on Architecture for the Contemporary Metropolitan Territories (Iscte), and research partner at ENGAGE Network (CAUGH-NTU). He is co-founder and co-chair of the International Symposium Formal Methods in Architecture (FMA Symposia), PNUM Scientific Councillor and editorial board member of the journal *Revista de Morfologia Urbana* (RMU), and member of Sophia Journal scientific board (CEAU/AAI-FAUP). He is co-editor of the books *Formal Methods in Architecture: 6FMA Symposium*, and *Formal Methods in Architecture: 5FMA Symposium* (both published by Springer); and of the books *Emerging Perspectives on Teaching Architecture and Urbanism* and *Formal Methods in Architecture and Urbanism*, volumes I and II (all published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing); co-editor of the Special Issue *Digital Citizenship Mediating Planning Participation and Space Appropriation* and the Special Issue *Formalizing Urban Methodologies* (both by *Urban Science Journal*). He is the author of the book *Maputo: (auto)organização e forma-dinâmica urbana* (published by the University of Porto Press). He was a professor in the Master Programme on Geographic Information Systems Applied to Spatial Planning, Urbanism and Landscape at UPV, external reviewer at Chalmers University of Technology (Architecture and Urban Design Programme), visiting fellow in the Architecture & City Group at TU Delft (Theories of Architecture Fellowship Program), and CEAUP director-secretary. He was a professor and MIAU coordinator at ESG and a professor and deputy director of the Architecture Programme at ESAP.

Fátima Vieira is Vice-Rector for Culture of the University of Porto and Associate Professor (with "Agregação") at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. She was the Chair of the Utopian Studies Society / Europe from 2006 to 2016, and the recipient of the Larry E. Hough Distinguished Service Award of the American and Canadian Society for Utopian Studies. She is the Coordinator of the Porto University's branch of CETAPS – the Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies, where she is the leader of the research project "Mapping Utopianisms". She has also collaborated with ILC – The Institute for Comparative Literature Margarida Losa since 2000, where she has coordinated research projects on Portuguese utopianism. Fátima Vieira is also the director of the collection *Nova Biblioteca das Utopias*, of the Portuguese publishing house *Afrontamento*, and she is Book Review Editor for the North-American Journal *Utopian Studies* and belongs to the Editorial board of several international academic journals.

Gabriel Hernández, (Canary Islands, Spain) is an Adjunct Professor at the Architecture School of the Polytechnic University of Madrid (ETSAM-UPM). As an architect and educator, his work pivots around mapping design processes, archival and curatorial research, and the role of media in the intersections of architecture, art and the environment.

He has been a Fulbright Research Fellow at Yale School of Architecture and MIT's History, Theory and Criticism of Art and Architecture group, the founding Head of Education and Research at the Norman Foster Foundation and Art Project Coordinator at Ivorypress Gallery. Gabriel has taught and lectured internationally, including at Manchester University, Architecture Association, RCC Harvard, Yale University, MIT, Architecture Sarasota and IE University, and collaborates in research ventures with Yale Constructs, Docomomo US, FAUP's Scopio Network, and the New European Bauhaus.

Isabel Clara Neves, born in Porto in 1980, is a distinguished architect and academic with an impressive educational background, including a degree in Architecture from Faculdade de Arquitectura da Universidade do Porto (2004), a Master's in Modern and Contemporary Architectural Culture from Universidade de Lisboa (2009), and a PhD in Theory and History of Architecture (2015). Her research, since her Master's, focuses on the intersection of technology and modern architecture, particularly the role of computational practices. Currently, she is engaged in postdoctoral research at Pennsylvania State University, Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra, and CEAU/FAUP, examining the computational perspective in Portuguese architecture, supported by a Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia fellowship.

Neves has contributed significantly to architectural discourse, founding "NEXUS," a research magazine, and publishing extensively in various prestigious outlets. She has presented at international conferences and served as a guest speaker at numerous events, showcasing her expertise in digital architecture. Her professional experience includes working with Eduardo Souto Moura and teaching roles at Instituto Politécnico do Cávado e do Ave and Rome University of Fine Arts, among others. Recognized for her academic contributions, Neves won the 13th Fernando Távora Prize in 2018 for her research on computational technology in architecture. She also played a pivotal role as a curator for the Porto Design Biennale 2019, emphasizing the impact of digital culture on design and architecture.

José Carneiro is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP). Member of the Executive Board of the FBAUP. Director of the MA in Image Design (FBAUP). Director of the Centre for Studies in Design and Art (FBAUP). He has a PhD in Art and Design from the FBAUP in 2014. He is a researcher at the ID+ Institute for Research in Design, Media and Culture and collaborates with i2ADS – Institute for Research in Art, Design and Society. He is the author of several scientific articles and has participated regularly in national and international conferences. He develops artistic and communication design work and is responsible for the Records & Photographs project and the Clube da Esquina radio programme.

Maria Neto, architect, invited assistant professor at DECA–UBI, and researcher at CEAU–FAUP and ICHaB–ETSAM. PhD in Architecture (EA–UAH+ICHaB–ETSAM, 2022) with an individual research scholarship from FTC, worthy of nomination for the Prémio Extraordinário UAH, holds post-graduation in Development of Human Settlements in the Third World (ICHaB/ETSAM) and professional practice in Humanitarian Shelter Coordination (IFRC/UNCHR/Oxford Brookes University). She has collaborated with the UNHCR and the BRC supporting refugees in Kenya and the UK. She was the recipient of the Fernando Távora Award, a guest speaker representing Portugal at the 17th International Exhibition of Architecture from the Venice Biennale and selected for the anthology of the Lisbon University Triennial Award. In addition to teaching at DECA–UBI and practising in her architectural studio with Jorge Marum, she has collaborated with IHRU on the program “Da Habitação ao Habitat” within the framework of the New Generation of Housing Policies.

Mário João Freitas Mesquita completed his PhD in the PhD Program in Architecture on 12/16/2015 from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, the Master's Degree in Urban Environment Planning and Design on 11/20/1998 from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto and the Degree in Architecture on 15/07/1995 from the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto. He is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, an Integrated Researcher at the Institute for Research in Art, Design and Society (FBAUP/University of Porto), a Collaborating Researcher at the Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Culture, Space and Memory (FLUP/University of Porto), a researcher at R3IAP and principal investigator at Águas e Energia do Porto. He is an architect in a liberal professional regime and a consultant for the area of Heritage at Águas e Energia do Porto, E.M and Museu do Porto, an extension of Romanticism.

Miguel Leal is a visual artist and Associate Professor at the University of Porto's Faculty of Fine Arts, where he's contributed since 2001. With academic credentials spanning a PhD in Painting, a Postgraduate Diploma in Communication and Language, and a Master's in Art History, Leal's extensive educational background underpins his rich artistic and academic career. His work, showcased internationally, navigates the intersections of Visual Arts, Media Art, Cinema, and the nuanced relationship between art and technology. Leal's influence extends beyond his home institution, having taught across prestigious schools and engaged in notable projects like YUCUNET and SHS, addressing contemporary issues from geopolitics to the Anthropocene. Leal's artistic journey began in the late '80s, gaining prominence for his diverse media use and significant internet presence since 1996, particularly through Virose.pt. His contributions are not limited to his visual art; he has significantly impacted art theory and practice through publications, exhibitions, and workshops, including recent works like “Teorías del Arte y la imagen contemporánea” and “Uccellacci e uccellini.” These endeavors highlight his commitment to exploring art's role in knowledge production and societal discourse, further enriching his teaching and research activities.

Pedro Leão Neto is a researcher and professor at FAUP since 2007 in the area of Architecture Communication and Photography, he is the head of the courses “Computer Architecture Aided Design and Photography” (CAAD) and “Photography of Architecture, City and Territory” (FACT). He is the coordinator of the research group Architecture, Art and Image (AAI) integrated in FAUP's R&D Centre, director of the cultural association Cityscopio and the founder and editorial coordinator of scopio Editions and its open platform scopionetwork, being these AAI's research-based editorial projects focused on Contemporary Photography related with Architecture, City and Territory. He has curated several architectural photography exhibitions in Portugal and abroad, workshops and international debates and seminars around the universe of Architecture, Art and Image, being coordinator of 8 international conferences with blind peer review of papers and published proceedings. He is an author and editor of more than 40 books and the coordinator and / or Principal Investigator (PI) of several national and international projects publicly funded. He is currently a researcher of the project SizaATLAS. Filling the Gaps for World Heritage, PI of “Visual spaces of Change” and Coordinator of CONTRAST, all financed by Portuguese public agencies, namely FCT and DGARTES.

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Porto (Matosinhos), Portugal
info@cityscopio.com
www.cityscopio.com

Editorial Team

Editor-in-chief
Pedro Leão Neto

Managing editor
Maria Neto

Editors

David Viana
Fátima Vieira
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Isa Clara Neves
José Carneiro
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David Viana
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Research group AAI integrated in R&D of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto (FAUP) called Centro de Estudos de Arquitectura e Urbanismo (CEAU)

Via Panorâmica S/N, 4150-755 Porto, Portugal info.
aai@arq.up.pt
tel: +351 226057100 | fax: +351 226057199

Texts of Invited Authors and Submissions

Alexander García Düttmann
Chloé Darmon, Gabriela Manfredini
David Leite Viana, Jorge Maia, Telma Ribeiro
Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro
Inês Nascimento
Inês Osório
James Smith
José Carlos Mota, Alexandra Ataíde
Lorenzo Stefano Iannizzotto
Peter Bennett
Rafaela Lima
Roberto Bottazzi, UCL
Sofia Marques da Silva

Introduction and Editors texts

Maria Neto (CEAU / FAUP - UBI)
Pedro Leão Neto (FAUP/CEAU)

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Creative Director

Né Santelmo

Design Collaborator

Artur Leão

Cover

José Maças de Carvalho

Printing

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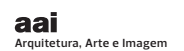
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Authors

Alexander García Düttmann

Alexandra Ataíde

Chloé Darmon

David Leite Viana

Gabriela Manfredini

Gabriela Vaz-Pinheiro

Inês Nascimento

Inês Osório

James Smith

Jorge Maia

José Carlos Mota

Lorenzo Stefano Iannizzotto

Peter Bennett

Rafaela Lima

Roberto Bottazzi, UCL

Sofia Marques da Silva

Telma Ribeiro