

Technical University "Gh. Asachi" Iasi
"G.M.Cantacuzino" Faculty of Architecture



Technical University
"Gheorghe Asachi" of Iasi



BLENDING INTENSIVE PROGRAM

25-29 SEPTEMBER 2023

LIMINAL SPACES OF LIVING / INHABITING LIMINALITY

Cities are organisms that ebb and flow, and their processes of cyclical growth and regression produce urban fractures with strong, ambivalent connotations and potential.

Terrains vagues and urban voids can be seen as a subversive version of Henri Lefebvre's "spaces of representation": intricate, intimate, and multilayered spaces that allow to scrutinize the deficiencies of "representations of space," or designed and planned spaces, while also providing a temporary respite from dominant "spatial practices," or ingrained behaviors that reinforce spatial norms. As counter-spaces, these sites contain fragmented shared histories, shedding light on the imperfect process of recalling and reconstructing the past.

In "Le droit à la ville", Henri Lefebvre argued that the pursuit of an ideal community could only be achieved through the study of everyday life in urban settings, which he called "experimental utopia." Lefebvre believed that the dreams of today could be used to build the city of tomorrow, but this would require architects and urban planners to appreciate the significance of the lived experiences of those who inhabit the real world. Lefebvre saw everyday life as a space with the potential for transformation: everydayness is not inherently bleak and unchanging, he argued, but rather full of unrealized possibilities. His proposal implied that there is a world to be discovered and appreciated within the existing context.

Starting from Thierry Paquot's definition of the city as "a happy combination of three qualities, urbanity, diversity, and alterity (and if one of these qualities were to lack, the spirit of cities would collapse)", this BIP is interested in discussing the varied panoply of interactions between the "I" and the "Other" from their anthropologic, sociologic and urban perspective.

"INHABITING LIMINALITY" BIP asks in what way is architecture able to operate in terrains vagues without becoming a forceful tool of authority and theoretical reasoning. The answer lies in paying heed to continuity - not the continuity of the organized, productive, and authorized city, but rather the continuity of the movements, the forces, the cadences created by the passage of time and the relinquishing of boundaries.

LECTURES/ PANELS TOPICS:

- Liminality and transformation: exploring the transformative potential of urban voids, terrain vagues, interstitial spaces, non-places.
- Reimagining urban narratives: challenging the dominant narratives of the city.
- Collaborative design processes, collective action, revitalization/ reinvigoration of spaces through common / collective usage, urban gardening, housing/ artistic squats etc.
- Urban ecology strategies.
- Crossing urban thresholds: the significance of urban thresholds as transitional spaces that mediate between different environments, cultures, and experiences.
- Decent housing solutions for the homeless.

WORKSHOP TOPICS:

The architecture of thresholds. Interventions in the public space: students will be invited to explore the transformative potential of in-between spaces; looking at ways in which undefined spaces can serve as catalysts for change, enabling the emergence of new identities, narratives, and forms of urban life.

Reimagining Urban voids: discovering the hidden potential of the terrain vague: through creative exercises and storytelling techniques, participants will explore alternative narratives and will reimagine the potential of urban voids, urban thresholds, terrain vague and non-places in shaping urban discourse.

Collaborative design processes: while emphasizing the importance of collaborative design processes in unlocking the potential of these spaces, participants will learn about participatory methodologies, co-design approaches, and inclusive practices that engage diverse stakeholders in the reimagining and transformation of urban voids.

Crossing urban thresholds: the theme explores the significance of urban thresholds as transitional spaces that mediate between different environments, cultures, and experiences. Participants will examine the ways in which liminal spaces can be transformed into vibrant connectors, bridging diverse communities and fostering a sense of belonging.

PROGRAM

Day 1: TERRAIN VAGUE

9:30 to 10:00 Welcome and opening lectures
11:00 to 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 to 12:30 Lectures
13:00 to 14:00 Lunch
14:30 to 16:30 Workshops
16:30 to 17:00 Coffee break
17:00 to 19:00 Workshops
20:00 Welcome dinner

Day 2: VAGUE URBAIN

09:30 to 11:30 Lectures
11:30 to 12:00 Coffee break
12:00 to 13:00 Lectures
13:00 to 14:00 Lunch
14:30 to 16:30 Workshops
16:30 to 17:00 Coffee break
17:00 to 19:00 Workshops

Day 3: NO MAN'S LAND / ALL MEN'S LAND

09:30 to 11:00 Workshops
11:00 to 11:30 Coffee break
11:30 to 13:30 Workshops conclusions
13:30 to 14:30 Lunch
15:00 to 16:30 Lectures
16:30 to 19:00 Guided city tour

Day 4: DAYTRIP TO CLUJ

09:00 Trip to Cluj. Visits on the way.

Day 5: APPROPRIATION, TRANSGRESSION, INTERVENTION

09:00 to 12:30 Visits
12:30 to 14:00 Lunch
14:00 to 18:00 Final workshop and closure
15:00 to 15:30 Coffee Break