



WORKSHOP 2 / architecture as the art of building communities

CONTENT / In 1982 the English-Swedish architect Ralph Erskine, opened his lecture reflecting on the definition of *Architecture as the Art of Building Communities*. Thirty-four years later the Urban age Conference held in 2016 in Venice opened up a series of reflections inviting experts from all over the globe, sharing ideas on the future of our cities. What is the role of the Architects? How can architecture respond to social challenges and environmental daily problems? Which are the limits of the design in facing the human condition scale and nature? It is more and more evident that nowadays the Architect does not stay within the boundaries of building construction but also seeks to building communities. An infinity of possibilities, both here and now.

Infinite places are pioneering places that explore and experiment with collective processes for dwelling in the world and for building community. These are open places, possible places, unfinished ones that establish spaces of freedom and the search for alternatives. These places exist by virtue of their determination to engage in experiment. Almost all of them started with an abandoned building, or a neglected site. Here architecture finds its means of expression through the confrontation of pre-existing spatial qualities with an organic process of transformation, whose meanings depend on common needs and the aspirations of those who commit themselves to it with courage and determination (Encore Hereux)¹.

The concept for “Infinite Places – Building or Making Places?”, developed by the *Encore Heureux* team in the Architecture Biennale of 2018, presents places produced by new and inventive processes that generate architectural processes of value. This exhibition project, which considers the territory as a whole, highlights initiatives on the part of civil society and communities that embody a certain free spirit of experimentation and the *infinite* possibilities opened up by architecture.

This 2-week workshop aims to build a reflection in between territories, nations, regions, cities, places, and their own inhabitants, on the topic of the role of the Architecture in the society: each group of tutors/students will identify an “infinite place” in their own nation. These are not meant to serve as sites for the development of a project, but as sources for the elaboration of our own a trans-national/scalar/disciplinary community starting from the local context, culture and society, and going beyond borders, languages, national regulations.

We will discuss and go from our “Infinite Places” to building an “Imaginary Land” where the architecture can re-conquer its function in “revealing” the relationship between the humans and the world. (Dorfles 1968)².

The workshop will include short talks between tutors from different universities.

AIMS / To unpack the city based on your own experience of the places in which you live at the moment. To find opportunities in neglected and forgotten area/buildings. To identify an “Infinite place”. To work with the imagination in defining new rules for a our collective “Imaginary Land” as a different idea for a trans-national/scalar/disciplinary community. To learn how to contribute to group work and exchange as a small experiment for a learning society.

¹ Encore Hereux, *Infinite Places (Lieux Infinis) - Constructing Buildings Or Places?*, Publisher Editions B42, 2018.

² G.DORFLES, 1968 “Artificio e Natura” Einaudi, Torino - pag. 20-21

METHOD /

Phase 1. SEMINARS / **Reflecting** on the role of "Architecture as the art of building communities" and its relationship with the society, through talks with tutors and other experts. Reflecting on the notion of ecological design thinking. "How will we live together" in the future city?

Phase 2. EXERCICES / **Unpacking** the urban fabric. Reading the city, identifying the *Infinite Places*, understanding and communicating (exchanging) the spatial and social dimension and qualities of the communities around the globe.

Phase 2. OUTPUT / **Communicating** the idea/strategy through the production of Collages (one for each group of students) that will define one or more "Imaginary Lands" - different media will be considered -. The Imaginary Lands will be displayed through an online exhibition/showcase.

1st day: Introduce yourself presenting an image of your *Infinite Place*.

2nd day: Group work according to your common interests. Build your *Imaginary Land!*

3rd day: Online Showcase + Final crit.

SCHEDULE / 2-Week Workshop. Weekly 4-hour class arranged with the students:

Monday 5-Oct-2020: 9.00/10.00

Friday 9-Oct 2020: 9.00 /12.00

Monday 12-Oct-2020: 9.00/10.00

Friday 16-Oct-2020: 9.00 /12.00

(to be confirmed)

EVALUATION / The evaluation will be based on the following Expected Learning Outcomes:

After these two weeks workshop the student will be able to:

Apply methods for quantitative and qualitative mapping, through the description of a city.

Identify a potential for the reuse or reactivation of an area of the city. Explain the consequences of various urban development strategies and its relation to architecture and society.

Bibliography / Encore Hereux, *Infinite Places (Lieux Infinis) - Constructing Buildings Or Places?*, Publisher Editions B42, 2018.

Umeå University (Sweden) / Maria Luna Nobile (maria.nobile@umu.se) + Marie Kraft (marie.kraft@umu.se)