

Immaterial Lab: Body Politics of the Pandemic

MIGUEL BRACELI

FA Platform

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It is an interdisciplinary course on ephemeral architecture and social practices in the public space. The exercise seeks to approach the place from a critical perspective facing the social, political, and health challenges of the present. The emphasis will be on embracing and understanding the complex nature of public space in the context of the pandemic. With the appearance of the covid-19 the ways in which we relate and inhabit the public space have changed dramatically. This project seeks to rethink strategies for collective actions in the transition to a new normality. These strategies can be translated into modest design operations for the creation of devices, spaces, models, systems, and any forms of haptic interactions. We will investigate materials, methods, and concepts that serve as the foundation for restoring the encounter in public space for the sensitive aspects of our human condition.

From a base methodology, students will generate their own works in specific places, working in groups and dealing with the challenges of social distancing as a subject and a problem to solve. Collaborative practices are a fundamental part of the experience and a first step in this research about the body politics in public space. The students will use the city, the university campus, and their own bodies as a case of studies. The goal of this project is to understand the relationships between body, site and place in its most intimate scale within the context of a worldwide paradigm shift. As the world heads for a transition to the virtual, we will turn our senses to the real. This course is

an approach to reality in terms of its tangible dimension; and to reality in its true existence, as the inescapable challenges of a global crisis. The course culminates with a several collective works, an ephemeral interventions in the city developed through people participation. The interventions will be light structures, small devices or simple gestures to restore human interactions In public space. The interventions will be a repertoire of project strategies that enhance human interactions in public space. Learning Outcomes. As a result of completing the course, students will be able to:

- Understand and apply methodologies in the analysis and development of site-specific projects, in terms of activism and community engagement.
- Demonstrate a familiarity with an array of contemporary art related to social practices, installation, performance, ephemeral architecture and participatory art.
- Demonstrate skills in critical thinking about the social-political contents of public space.
- Demonstrate skills in making ephemeral architecture.
- Demonstrate skills in collaboration in order to develop a sense of community, citizenship, and social engagement.

The length of the workshop will be created according of the Institutions demands.



Workshop Process Imagine

Introduction

The introduction consists of the definition of the problem and the place to work during the entire project. This stage aims to select a sense, an strategies and a site to work with, arguing the selection in the social, political and health variables to enhance human interactions in public space.

Sense. Study the context of the city where you live. Through haptic researches, students will approach possible senses to focus on, selecting some properties of that senses and they it works through people interactions.

Strategie. Present possible strategies to work through. After a preliminary research, students will present possible strategies to related with some sensorial experience; explaining their relevance, characteristics, and ways of manifestation in the public space. These strategies should be develop with a main material.

Site. Present possible places to work in. After field research, students will present possible places to address the challenges in their community. These places could be public spaces like squares, parks, common areas, abandoned areas, and institutional buildings, among others. This place would be the site to develop an installation, performance, or other project. The selection of this place should be guided by its ability to engage with the subject matter. How does this place relate to the strategie and sense?

Mapping. Mapping the challenge in public space. This task seeks to represent the dynamics of the chosen challenge through a two-dimensional medium: drawing, collage, photography, video and digital media in general. These dynamics will work as infographics of your project. Your data will become the subject for modeling in the next stage.

Shaping. Shaping the challenge. This task seeks to create three-dimensional models that can generate possible responses to the topic under study in infographics: the translation of the mapping to space. For this, it is possible to use any three-dimensional medium like installation, performance or sculpture. The proposals and models can be developed in any space as an object and space exploration. In this phase it is not necessary to work directly on the place.

Building. Building the challenge in public space. This task seeks to work directly on public space, translating the ongoing exploration in the selected place. That means: executing the performance, constructing the installation, or any other particular response of each project. This stage consists of the final development of the research carried out through mapping and shaping of the place studied. The documentation of the work would be the final product.

Miguel Braceli, a Venezuelan artist and architect, has developed his practice in many fields, including landart, performance, and relational art. He has presented his work in institutional spaces and art biennials throughout Latin America and Europe. He currently resides in the United States and is a Fulbright fellow and graduate student at the Maryland Institute College of Arts.

Learning from Films

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DORIANA MUSAJ

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After the age of architecture-sculpture we are now in the time of cinematographic factitiousness: literally as well as figuratively, from now on architecture is only a movie.

Paul Virilio, Aesthetics of Disappearance

Brief

Filmic mapping as an experimental design methodology to (re)compose existing architectures in Tirana

Motivation and basic premise

Nowadays, it seems like architecture does not keep up with the constantly changing visual culture characterised by an increased density of visual information. It is possible to assume that there is a deficiency in the contemporary theory of architecture.

The basic premise of the proposal for the Tirana Architecture Week is to consider alternative actions in the field of architecture. This process can be developed arguing on the importance of methods and constructs that have not been considered as significant devices from the common academic discipline. The ambition of the workshop proposal Learning from Films is to encourage architecture students to test instruments by combining them with those of another profession, specifically with filmmaking. Exploring the productive relations that can be established between architecture and filmmaking, the workshop stimulates students to investigate experimental methods of architectural analysis and design in order to cultivate innovative

instruments for the development of their work. With the goal to reveal the explorative power of filmmaking, the proposal focuses on new modes of perceiving, representing, and conceiving architecture.

Topics of the five-day workshop

In his book, *The Vision Machine* (1984) Paul Virilio introduced the concept of “logistics of perception” to criticise technological systems that connect distant locations. Subverting the common knowledge of distances and dimensions, the proliferation of visual prostheses and the consequent ubiquity of images have affected the human capacity to perceive an object, as he argued. This “tele-topological phenomenon” indicates the reality of a site as viewed from a distance while the “topographical system”, a cinematographic method, reorient the viewer through recognisable distances, dimensions and objects.

During a film screening, the viewer generates its own mental maps that localise his/her position in the represented filmic space. This is the case of the single set films that are perceived as entirely shot in a single building, such as *Last Year at Marienbad* (Alain Resnais, 1961) and *High-Rise* (Ben Wheatley, 2015). The former takes place in a baroque hotel, which is, in fact, an imaginary building created by editing scenes shot in several locations, namely three royal palaces in Munich and a film studio in Paris. The latter is situated in a brutalist-styled tower that consists of a monumental garden and a leisure centre in Bangor, a ferry terminal in Belfast and a 3D model for the

exterior. In these cases, the filmic space can be considered as a “Frankenstein” location, a mix of different buildings, which appears to the spectator as one. It is a re-composition of various building fragments. When the entire film is located in a single spot, the architecture becomes autonomous from the plot and the camera movements.

Methodology and assignments

The design workshop aims to cinematically re-compose the spatial fragments of the existing and analysed buildings. Based on the construction of an imaginary building, this approach establishes an alternative method of spatial analysis.

By introducing the filmic mapping, the workshop aims to help students to get familiar with multiple aspects and knowledge that characterise the first phases of a design process, such as diving into architectural history, working with references, studying the distributive space of a building and developing three-dimensional visualisations. Within working groups of three or four, students are invited to design a “Frankenstein” building selecting one of the following options: hotel/hostel, office/factory, museum/school, market/supermarket, apartment block/villa, place of worship, and cinema/theatre. Within the end of the workshop, students are requested to deliver and present four A3 panels with floor plan(s), section(s), perspective(s) of the interior, 3D view(s) of the exterior and a three-minute short film. Conceived as a continuous sequence of the interiors, the short film will verify the composition of the “imaginary” building. In order to facilitate the shooting activity, this practical task will be held in Tirana within built and public architectures selected by students.

Objectives

The proposal explores the possibility to define an alternative field of research and the transgression of disciplinary borders between architecture and filmmaking. Rather than a study on typology, the workshop reflects on topological connections of the architectures in Tirana. The innovation of the workshop proposal lies not only in the transdisciplinary approach but also in the way students can use and manipulate architectural space in order to translate this into multiple visual forms, breaking free of pre-established conventions in architecture. Deconstructing and reconstructing the architectural space depicted in their film, engages the students in an active process of discovery.

Renzo Sgolacchia is an architect and urban researcher active in Rotterdam and PhD fellow at the IUAV, University of Venice. Filmmaking has always played a crucial role in his activities. He is the founder of Cinema Architecture, a project combining research and film screenings, which investigates architectural space through cinema.

Daily Monoliths

EDUARDO CORALES

MOB Projects Director

JOANA DHIAMANDI

POLIS University

ERIDA CURRAJ

POLIS University

“We know that only the technical means of artistic achievement can be taught, not art itself. The function of art has in the past been given a formal importance which has served it from our daily life; but art is always present when a people lives sincerely and healthily.”

*Walter Gropius
Bauhaus prospectus*

This workshop is a project exercise that uses furniture design as a critical tool and as a possibility of experimental tectonic exploration called Daily Monoliths. Through the use of a material in particular and its diverse compositional variations, this instance aims to establish links between an object and the context in which it is inserted, being contemporary architecture in Tirana our focus of attention and study field.

Political and economic changes in Albania in the 1990s have dramatically influenced the architecture and urban development turned Tirana into a giant canvas where different artists and architects from all over the world could display their talents. Maybe could be a good chance to take a look into this thirty years of contemporary architecture through an exercise that confronts a building with an interpretation of it. Using the monolith enigma and its multiple interpretations, we'll look for relationships between an architectural work interpretations and its consequent materialization in a particular object, which concentrates a critical discourse both of the reading of a building and as a curious reflection on employment of the technique

for its execution. We will seek to accommodate a concept and interpretation of a place through the liberties and experimentation of a hand scale such as furniture design, which at the same time will be a domestic approach to the construction problem and the complexities that it presents in the relationship between architecture and design. Daily Monoliths is about the deliberate use of furniture to establish a conversation between the architecture of the city and the architecture of objects.

The course aims to provide critical tools on product design and the relationship between architecture and furniture. Science and the city are connected in infinite ways, the scales of the devices being a common field of research and experimentation for architects and designers. Knowing how to interpret the built environment keys ideas and putting this into functional and conceptually strong elements will be one of the objectives of this workshop. Experimental dimensions of a specific material, testing its possibilities and limitations through an imposition-free exercise. Daily Monoliths is a project and critical exercise that uses furniture design as a common field of research between architecture and construction, through experimentation on new concepts for architectural materials and alternative design methodologies. The main tasks of the workshop are made up of three main phases:

Theoretical framework. A presentation will be made with the main topics of the workshop, field of study, methodology and objectives for the students, at which time the case studies



Workshop Outcomes



to be considered and the main axes of production of a furniture object will be announced.

Technical framework. Based on a series of construction procedures, techniques and protocols, the constructive possibilities of an object and the expressive limits of a specific material will be studied. Through a series of artistic and architectural references, we will testing the limits and the experimental universe of construction.

Communicative framework. A fundamental part of the transmission of knowledge is its communicative dimension, for which various presentation strategies of the results obtained from the workshop will be studied, with the aim of materializing an exercise and presenting its results clearly and uniformly. There will be three talks / presentations by the workshop tutor that will serve as guides for each tasks to be carried out, being a reference to operate in a short period of time and seeking to achieve objectives in a executive way. Each task will have associated a daily specific student work development, which will be compiled in a final fanzine including texts, images and photographs of each action. The final product of the workshop will be a piece of furniture built by each group from a specific material, considering its interaction with the chosen building/ public space (as its critical aspect) as well as its constructive dimension (technical and experimental aspect of the same)

Eduardo Corrales Eduardo Corales Architect Universidad Católica de Chile Architect at National Monuments Council in charge of interventions in heritage areas and historical monuments after which begins its independent practice. He has participated in conferences at the Goethe Institut in Santiago de Chile and in the Master program of Cultural Heritage at the Universidad Católica de Chile. Teaching at UNIACC Arch. School in Studio of industrial architecture with heritage value. Since 2014 he worked in a series of projects with a special attention in their preexisting elements and the exploration of new possibilities of use, centered in concepts like austerity, economy and authenticity, understanding the built context and its heritage value as key analysis elements in the development process of the city and the territory. Since 2018 he works on POWERPOINT: audiovisual and graphic survey of portuguese large dams with EDP Foundation and DG Artes support. Actually he works in Lisbon and Santiago de Chile.

Tirana, I Love You: Open Architecture and Everydayness in a Contemporary City

SONJA LAKIĆ

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EMEL PETERCI

POLIS University

ETLEVA DOBJANI

POLIS University

This workshop makes an original scientific contribution to understanding of the city of Tirana and, more precisely, the fabric of the everyday life that unfolds in the form of the intimate and individual experiences of residential space through the perspective of the “open architecture” (Akcan, 2018). The open architecture, by its definition, stands for the plurality of meanings of architectural design (such as flexibility) and is all about democracy and social citizenship. Here, it is the inhabitant, or, more precisely, “the resident architect” that has the final say: he/she acts as a subject who inscribes space with his/her personal values, assigning a dwelling with a new meaning, different than what the architect originally designed and prescribed. Participants will join on (an autobiographical) endeavor of observing the relationship between the resident and a (wo)man-made built environment by focusing on rather specific architectural elements – i.e. self-glazed balconies, to begin with – and, moreover, contribute to understanding the new paradigm, that is, the era of the do-it-yourself architecture, and narrate the contemporary Tirana by adopting (auto)biographical approach and doing the storytelling through in-depth explorations of personal housing histories. The workshop is all about seeing, reading and writing the everydayness from a micro-level perspective, painting the love story between the inhabitants and the city while contemplating architecture and authorship.

Outcomes of the workshop will be publically presented and discussed at POLIS University and compiled into a simple and cheap do-it-yourself informal booklet. The workshop will begin with an introductory lecture on the open architecture that will simultaneously bring to light the phenomenon of the do-it-yourself apartment modifications in the Western Balkans region, as well as the examples of research conducted in a similar manner. Prior or after the lecture, the students participating in the workshop will take on the role of organizer and leader of the urban exploration walk of Tirana, choosing the urban flaneur path in accordance with their own preferences. This will be time to reflect on the city and do storytelling by making drawings and photographs. In the following days, students shall narrate the everydayness of Tirana using drawings of dwellings as well as photographs of intimate interiors, compiling them into a simple booklet.

Sonja Lakić is a researcher with a PhD in Urban Studies, formally trained as an architect, urban designer and planner, with her work evolving around the everydayness of contemporary cities and architecture. Sonja nurtures a particular interest in anthropological and sociological aspects of architectural design and the built environment and, most of all, lived forms of buildings.

Architecture on the Move

DIEGO SOLOGUREN

FA Platform

BRAD DOWNEY

FA Platform

STEFANO ROMANO

POLIS University

GREGOR ANDONI

POLIS University

The purpose of the workshop I propose is to explore the urban potentialities of a set of spots of the city of Tirana through the conception of architectural interventions which share a common feature: movement.

Movement has been the essence not only of the architecture settling process but also of the creation of the notion of urbanity, culture, civilisation and place. It is through moving that the space of chaos has been explored, discovered and inhabited. Conceiving devices that contain in its definition the notion of movement, may go from site specific projects which solve a particular cinematic situation, to the construction of moveable artifacts which can apply to different spots or the conception of a dematerialised strategy which can add a non visible layer to the complexity of communication in the physical space. As a way of making these strategies possible and coherent, I envision to carry them out in a specific context of the city of Tirana, as a means of defining a common narrative. From a particular neighbourhood which has some specific demographic or physical characteristics, to an iconic street which offers a variety of urban typological residual spaces, or a random condition such as acting in bus stations, or having a time frame intervention plan (Rush hour, religious moment...), these actions could be programmed under a common strategy but leaving space to students to be creative and explore the environment.

Diego Sologuren is an architectural intervention aiming to encourage a porous ecological interdependence between architecture and its environment, through the installation of an experimental liminal ecosystem. A parallel proposal from this project work, exploring the same intentions within another architecture, is also being installed in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Brad Downey is an American artist who was born in 1980. Numerous key galleries and museums such as Krobath, Vienna have featured Brad Downey's work in the past. The maker's first piece to be offered at auction was "4 Works: Doyumsuz" at Bukowskis, Stockholm in 2017. Brad Downey has been featured in articles for Hyperallergic, JUXTA-POZ and The Guardian.



Photos during Workshop

Parallel T

MATILDE IGUAL

FA Platform

LUIS HILTI

FA Platform

Parallel T is conceived as a 5 day theory and practice workshop. Parallel T will be an open investigation on scientific spatial systems imposed upon territories. The geographic coordinate system binds together earth and organizes us into time zones, degree latitudes and longitudes. It was a brainchild by Eratosthenes of Cyrene over two millenia ago and has been refined ever since by ever more powerful scientific devices and mapping technologies. Instead of subordinating architecture to this abstract space, we use it as a tool of research and design. Investigating a straight line through Tirana (fig 1.) by walking will give a new insight into the city, the system once invented to simplify the world will reveal its complexity. The research along a straight line will lead us to unforeseeable spaces and urban conditions, cutting through walls, and running on roofs. Based on this research we will engage in speculative designs along the investigated line. The workshop challenges the ever more immersive systems that channel the way we move and orient ourselves in space. We will defy google by ignoring it, and take the abstract systems at face value, seeing where they lead us. During the workshop the participants will discuss How does our everyday world and life intersect with specialized knowledge(s) from natural sciences to technology and economy? And how can these entanglements be interrogated through architectural design?

Parallel T is a parallel line to The Line (fig.2) and part of the emerging coordinate system initiated by the Institute for Linear Research.

The outcomes of the course

The workshop will encourage discussion and thoughtful reflection on the science/everyday world entanglements as they spatially manifest within the city. The participants will analyze through different perspectives a segment of the city and will represent their insights employing cartographical tools. The insights gathered will be the starting point for a speculative design in which participants will have to collaborate with others, transfer the knowledge they acquired through their personal mappings and find ways to represent and communicate the architectures they imagined.

The content of the course

Tirana's cityscapes are undergoing rapid transformations. Critically mapping today's contemporary landscapes through walking offers insights that include not only the predictable but also the surprises, that take into account the visible and the hidden, what is and what could be. The method developed during the workshop brings architects to rethink the multiple relationships among science, technology and social processes within the urban fabric through individual documentation.

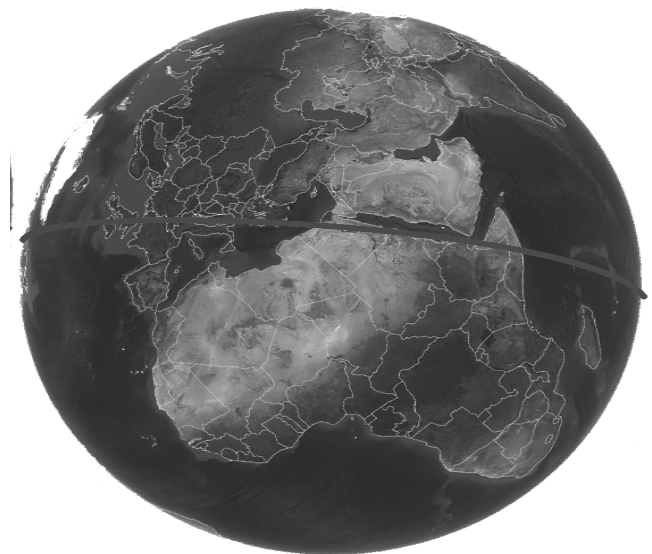
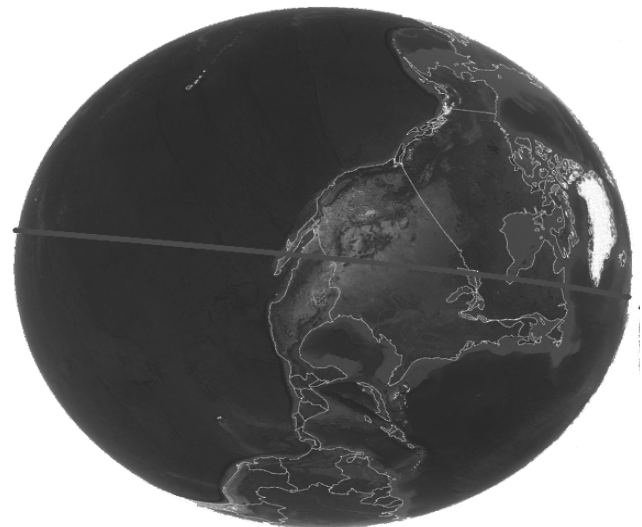
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Parallel T across Tirana



The Line across the world

Luis Hilti (Schaan, Liechtenstein) Architect (ETH). He has his own architecture practice in Liechtenstein and develops participatory processes. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Liechtenstein under Prof. Anne Brandl.

Matilde Igual (Valencia, Spain) Architect (ETSA Valencia). She has a MA in Art & Science from the University of Applied Arts Vienna and is currently a PhD candidate at the Academy of Fine Arts of Vienna under Prof. Elke Krasny.

Let's Talk About Shame and Avant-garde

FABIO CIARAVELLA

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XHOANA KRISTO

POLIS University

REMIJON PRONJA

POLIS University

Workshop will involve students, the University community and Tirana professionals/citizens from different disciplines into a “group psychoanalytic session” on the topic: Shame and Avant-garde Architecture. The topic will be developed in between traces of the past and results/ambitions of recent/ brand new architectures. What are the failed examples of avant-garde and innovative architecture of the past in Tirana? Which one of them has been considered a failure/ ashaming architecture for a while and today can be re-considered as a resource? What are the key points of Tirana new architecture? Why could it fail tomorrow? What are the mistakes that would transform best innovative ideas into sources of public shame?

Shame will be a tool to analyze critically the strongest beliefs that drive architectures, to remember mistakes of the past, and keep in mind the regenerative potential of time. The general frame of the workshop can be placed into the “architecture and socio-political debate” field; Target Audience. The workshop should trigger a Urban dialogue involving students as well as citizens and professional (to be decided with TAW team). The ambition is to involve an audience as different as possible in terms of cultural backgrounds and perspectives on architecture. Process.

The workshop will be divided in five steps:

Remote/On line: (ten days before) Students and participants will be invited to fill a form where they will select and motivate a “place of shame” for the past and a “place of shame” for the present/ future. (An introduction on the way we suggest to look at “shame” will be sent as a workshop presentation); Some

proposals (from 5 to 10) will be selected to compose a “Tirana tour of shame”.

In situ (first day): Participants will run the “Tirana tour of shame”. In Each stop participant who proposed the place/architecture will be the guide will present the case study. In each stop we will engage a quick debate: what is ashaming here, what shouldn't be considered ashaming at all? (for instance places of shame could be Popular houses blocks; socialist monumental architectures; abandoned buildings; oversized new buildings etc etc).

In situ: (from second to fourth day) Researches: Images and videos from archives or as part of documentation process; Interviews to “shame stakeholders” about selected places (citizens, professionals, politicians etc etc);

In situ Overview (fifth day): a public meeting to debate topics emerged during the workshop (stage of the meeting should be organized with daybeds). An exhibition will present materials collected.

Off line Publication (10 days later) Materials will be collected in a booklet (for printing and/or for PDFing) The relationship between Shame and Architecture can be a resource for critical thinking about contemporary ideas, and a tool for better understanding the past. Whatever we believe in a period, insofar as it seem the best belief, it can fail. History has been teaching the weakness of certain ideas we were thinking as the best, and to the other side demonstrated, ironically, the progressist value of others we considered secondary for long time. When we say that a certain architecture is “shameful” and some others are not, we create a frame that draws our culture. But..



Workshop Photo

what if times change and we understand to be wrong? Shame is changing time by time, place by place, so what about architecture and shame in Tirana in 2020? Science is one of the most meaningful ideals of our time. We trust in it, and we leave to the science perspectives to change and shape our way to see, design and perform the city and its architectures. In the past other ideals had the same power: religion, political ideology, war. The way we consider today this strong factors of historical changes is filled of doubts, and Europe is full of “architecture of shame” driven by by them. Why this should be different now? It is quite impossible that we are absolutely right, as well is non plausible that the past has been producing only mistakes. The way today we can face architecture of the recent past, is somehow what we are. The workshop main aim is to activate a critical discussion that uses shame, the most social among feelings, to understand architecture, the most social among arts. One week to talk about shame, Tirana and Avant gard. A public dialogue on social and political ideas about past, present and future best architectures in the city. An invitation to find new ways to see what we consider shame, and to doubt about what we consider proud in architecture today.

Fabio Ciaravella Architect, artist (founder of the Studio ++ collective) and International PhD in Architecture and Urban Phenomenology (UniBas), former Fellow 2013/2014 at the Art, Culture and Technology of MIT in Boston and part of the Urban Sociology group City Lab of the 'University of Florence. I deal with the new relationships between art and architecture for the public space in terms of analysis methodologies and contaminations in the project.