

AR-402(c)

Studio MA2 (Geers)

Geers Kersten

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture	MA2	Obl.
Mob. AR	E	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	13
Withdrawal	Unauthorized
Session	Summer
Semester	Spring
Exam	During the semester
Workload	390h
Weeks	14
Hours	6 weekly
Courses	2 weekly
Project	4 weekly
Number of positions	30

It is not allowed to withdraw from this subject after the registration deadline.

Remark

Inscription faite par la section

Summary

The Commons - part 2 will tackle the urgent issue of rebuilding the shared infrastructure of the European territory, with the periphery of Milan as its case-study.

Content

After a full year of research into *Metropolitan Architecture*, this time *Architecture without Content* will tackle *the Commons*. In the wake of Brexit and the current soul searching inside the European continent about both the amplitude of its territory and the essence of its shared culture, this issue appears even more urgent than ever.

Of all possible cases we decided to focus our attention this year on Italy, because exactly there for a certain period of time public architecture has been a constitutional part of its civilization; i.e. the Roman machine. During a few centuries the standard urban infrastructure of any given Roman city (the theatre, the market, the agora, the baths, the temples, the basilica, the markets, the schools, the legion's headquarters and so forth) was in fact the essential spine of public life. This architecture thus allowed the very existence of the cities the way we got to know them. Since then, *the Commons* experienced ups and downs, were boosted by the pride of the city bourgeois in the Gothic cities, and were even carefully planned by the newly developed modern states. In the last century, both the totalitarian state and the welfare state, used *the Commons* to fulfill their own particular agenda thus producing the final incarnation of *the Commons* as a solid architectural apparatus for the cities.

Since the eighties however, post Thatcher politics (i.e. the Empire) has been eroding *the Commons*. Today, *the Commons* we have left in our western society has a heavily transformed profile. In certain nations, as Italy, the phenomenon was particularly evident, as the investments on welfare had been drastically cut. No more social housing, no more schools, no more post offices, no more civic centers: the desert. In the far depths of the Even Covered Field, the suburban mall surreptitiously replaced some of the functions, as such becoming the only possible stage for twisted remnants of anything public.

The reoccurring crisis of the current world-order asks urgently for a way out. Can architecture - common expression of power - enable such a rupture, or at least bring a contribution towards another equilibrium? We believe a possibility lays (again) in the formalization of *the Commons*. This year we want to investigate if *the Commons* can still be made and how they can be effective again. We will design where the problem is more evident, in the endless extension of the Roman periphery, a nasty by-product of failed utopias and criminal real estate investments, and in the northern periphery of Milan where the planned city morphs into the informal accumulation of wildly individual choices. In Rome, during first semester, we will unfold a possible narrative following the lines of the Appia, a remarkable axis radiating from the city centre and pointing towards what is left of the Roman countryside. In the second semester we hope to repeat this 'trick' in Milan, using the Northern axis of Corso Sempione.

In the tradition of the Modern, we will locate and design schools, post offices, civic centers, police stations and more, expecting to be surprised by the students even at the level of the program. Success is not guaranteed, but the stakes are too high to be ignored.

Keywords

Form, difficult whole, the even covering of the field, Roman Architecture, Metropolitan Architecture, condensed urbanity, territory, technological optimism, public architecture, the commons.

Learning Prerequisites

Required courses

UE L : Art et architecture: construire l'image I (Philipp Schaerer).
De la structure à l'ornement (Picon).
Visions et Utopies (Braghieri).

Recommended courses

UE N : Art et architecture: construire l'image II (Philipp Schaerer)
Architecture autonome (Lampariello)
Architecture et construction de la ville I et II (Gilot)
Caractères architecturaux et urbanismes de l'Islam (Gachet)
Histoire de l'architecture VII (Gargiani)
Urbanisme en Asie (Ruzicka / Ferrari)
Urbanisme et territoires (Ruzicka).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Develop independently a consistent architectural project with a critical mindset and a precise cultural foundation.
- Produce drawings, models, perspectives that are able to communicate the idea of the project.
- Conduct a research of historical architectural types.
- Elaborate on the Even Covered Field and other themes that are discussed in the atelier FORM.

Assessment methods

Intermediate sessions (35 %). Final sessions (65%).

Supervision

Office hours	Yes
Assistants	Yes

Resources

Websites

- <http://form.epfl.ch>