

AR-678

**Harmony and Conflicts**

Korbi Marson

Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture and Sciences of the City		Obl.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	2
Session	
Exam	Oral presentation
Workload	60h
<b>Hours</b>	<b>36</b>
Lecture	14
Exercises	12
Practical work	10
<b>Number of positions</b>	<b>15</b>

**Frequency**

Only this year

**Remark**

To enroll, interested doctoral students are required to submit an abstract (max. 150 words), introducing their case study and its hypothetical context, by March 30, 2024 to Marson Korbi.

**Summary**

This is a methodological PhD course focused on the history and description of one case study (building, drawing or projects) and the construction of its historical broader context.

**Content****Harmony and Conflicts****A course on the histories of buildings, drawings, and projects**

Architecture as a discipline offers a plethora of topics, but very seldom do these topics get exposed as problems. Problematizing a subject involves historicizing it and situating it within a larger context or dialectic with structural phenomena and other histories. Understanding the origins of a topic and tracing its genealogies may help to extract it from the self-referentiality of personal preference and position it within a critical discourse, framing it as an issue with implications that span a large spectrum of interests. In recent years, a general crisis among scholars has emerged, evident in large number of topics circulating daily, where even the search for the "original", a core value in academic evaluations, seems impossible, with the evident result that "everything is considered architecture".

The main goal of this course is the contextualization of works of art and their dialectical relationships with major forces and parallel developments. Can a building, drawing or a project episode, unveil general political, economic or social problems? Is therefore possible to answer not only a personal research question, but tackle other ranges of issues? By suggesting a close reading of a specific example, PhD students are asked to present a case study and contextualize it within a larger spectrum that may include governmental reforms, political decisions, or ideologies of a certain historical period. Through this exercise, the seminar series seeks to offer a more inclusive reading of the actors, architects, and other figures that stand behind the decision of a project: not one history, but parallel ones.

As a prologue to the course's theme, it is important to note that, since its existence, there has been a general consensus within the architectural profession, which limits the definition of a project to the pursuit of beauty, form, aesthetics and harmony. Beauty and the creation of harmony (when directed both to a social good or to an aesthetic purpose) remain two of the main criteria determining the study and the design of buildings and consequently shaping the discourse on architecture. What is often left aside is that which enables the realization of a project. For example, a baroque masterpiece like the Chiesa del Gesu in Rome was the result of economical and ideological compromises between two seemingly allied parties-the Pope, his nephew, and the Order of the Jesuits. This occurred within a very specific historical context of transformations that affected Rome and Europe in general. Similarly, Palladian Villas, the most harmonic and

idyllic artefacts in architecture history, would have been unconceivable without the heretical and profane backgrounds of their patrons, coupled with the decisive shift from lagoon trade to agriculture in the terraferma of Veneto. More recently, university campuses and office parks, so successful in the US., initially faced resistance when introduced to Europe, an aspect that influenced also the conflictual climate of the 1960-70s. Finally, in the era of administration, a project like OMA's Très Grande Bibliothèque was shaped not only by the work of the architect (whose role has been downgraded almost to that of a logistic worker since the 1990s), but also by extensive administrative efforts within the office linked to the complex bureaucratic system of contemporary city governments.

In other words, as Manfredo Tafuri would put it: while architecture is harmony, the context has to do with the conflicts: the field where opposing forces are confronted. However, unlike buildings, drawing or projects, which are visible and tangible productions, the context is something intangible, almost an artificial artefact that must be reconstructed and recreated by the work of the scholar or the historian. As Marc Bloch has pointed out in his beautiful book *The Historian's Craft*, it is the task of the scholar to draw the context by finding possible interweavings and connections between events and their immediate outcomes. This is not much as a matter of cause and effect, but involves outlining important parallels or points of contact between, for example, a building and a politician, or, the realization of a park and the representative of an interest group. For this reason, it is essential not only to propose a close reading of the architectural object, but also to comprehend the mentalities of its time, the interests of the involved actors, the laws, bulls or decisions, but also the reactions of the public. In certain cases, a cultural system or an administrative strategy predates a building, but it could also be the opposite.

### Objectives

The course is designed to broaden the list of the above-mentioned examples, by including additional situations. Its main goal is to discuss buildings, drawings, and projects and the possible contexts that were hypothetically relevant for the chosen case studies to be presented. PhD candidates are asked to choose and interpret one specific topic or case study from their research and present it in a critical manner, by exposing the issues at stake and the historical motivations behind the project.

### Requirements

The registration and the attendance of the course is open to all doctoral students of EDAR. 2 credits will be assigned to the registered doctoral candidates that will present their work and participate in all the discussions of the colleagues in all the sessions. A first introductory lecture (organized in the form of a meeting with the registered students) will be dedicated to the introduction of the methods and the goals of the course, followed by a short discussion around the topics that will be presented by the doctoral students in the following sessions.

**To enrol in the course, interested doctoral students are required to submit an abstract of a maximum of 150 words, introducing their case study and its hypothetical context, by the 30th of March 2024 to Marson Korbi.**

The format of this series of lectures and presentations takes Christophe Van Gerrewey's course *Theory and architectural culture: exercises*, as an important source and reference model, by trying to expand within the EDAR doctoral program and by insisting on the main methodological concerns typical of a PhD thesis.

### Program (to be confirmed)

#### Introductory Session

**08/05/2024, 15:00 - 16:30**

- Marson Korbi

*Notes on dialectics, on microhistory and the context*

#### Session 1

**22/05/2024, 15:00 - 18:00**

- Marson Korbi

*Ratio Studiorum: Jesuit colleges and Counter-Reformation*

- Presentations by PhD students

#### Session 2

**29/05/2024, 15:00-18:00**

- Lecture by Maria Shéhérazade Giudici

- Presentations by PhD students

#### Session 3

**12/06/2024, 15:00-18:00**

- Lecture by Sara Galletti
- Presentations by PhD students

#### Session 4

19/06/2024, 15:00 - 18:00

- Marson Korbi

*Hey Joe: The Campus and the Barricade*

- Presentations by PhD students

#### Keywords

building, drawing, project, history, politics, microhistory

#### Learning Prerequisites

##### Important concepts to start the course

Knowledge on various case studies of architecture, and their historical context. Methodological exercise on how to describe a building and contextualize historical vicissitudes.

#### Learning Outcomes

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

- Construct the context through historical and bibliographical sources
- Trace connections between a case study and the main events of its own period

#### Resources

##### Bibliography

##### Bibliography

##### On History and the context

Michel Foucault, *I, Pierre Rivière, Having Slaughtered My Mother, My Sister, and My Brother: A Case of Parricide in the 19th Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

Carlo Ginzburg, "Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It," in *Critical Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (1993): 10-35.

Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Architecture and Abstraction* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2023).

Gyorgy Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness; Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971).

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (London: Penguin Classics, 2014).

Rolf Schönberger, *La Scolastica Medievale: Cenni per una definizione* (Milano: Vita e Pensiero 1997).

Georges Teyssot, translated by Marson Korbi, "Heterotopias and the History of" in *Burning Farm*, February 2024.

Manfredo Tafuri, "L'architecture dans le boudoir: The Language of Criticism and the Criticism of language" in *Oppositions*, n. 3 (1974): 37-62.

##### On specific case studies

Angela Windholz, Carla Mazzarelli, Mirko Moizi, and Daniela Mondini. *Quale gotico per Milano?: i materiali della giuria per il concorso della facciata del Duomo (1886-1888)* (Mendrisio: Mendrisio Academy Press, 2023).

Pier Vittorio Aureli, "Architecture and Counterrevolution: OMA and the Politics of the Grands," in *OASE* 94, (2015): 44-52.

Pier Vittorio Aureli, Marson Korbi, "Base and Superstructure: A Vulgar Survey of Western Architecture," in *e-flux*, 02/2023.

<https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/chronograms/519511/base-and-superstructure-a-vulgar-survey-of-western-architecture>

Sara Galletti, "Architecture and Ceremonial at the Courts of Henri IV and Maria de' Medici, 1600-1631, in Krista De Jonge and Pieter Martens eds., *Court Residences as Places of Exchange in Late Mediaeval and Early Modern Europe, 1400-1700*, (Belgium: Brepols, 2024), 77-111.

Christophe van Gerwey, *Higher knowledge: SANAA's Rolex Learning Center at EPFL since 2010* (Lausanne: EPFL Press, 2021).

Christophe van Gerwey, "The Depot Effect" in *Log* 55, (2022): 38-47.

Boris Hamzeian, *The Live Centre of Information: From Pompidou to Beaubourg, 1968-1971* (New York: Actar Publishers, 2022).

Marson Korbi, "The Return of the Piazza: Tirana, and the Politics of Urban Reinassance#", in *OASE* 115, (2023): 108-124.

Erwin Panofsky, *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of St. Denis and Its Art Treasures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

Tibor Pataky, *OMA's Kunsthal in Rotterdam: Rem Koolhaas and the New Europe* (Zurich: Park Books, 2023).

Francis Strauven, *Pastoor van Ars Church, The Hague: A Timeless Sacral Space by Aldo van Eyck* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther und Franz Koenig, 2022).

Holger Schurk, *Project without Form: OMA, Rem Koolhaas, and the Laboratory of 1989* (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2022).

Stephanie Savio, "The City of Janus a Close Reading of Hannes Meyer's Freidorf", in *Burning Farm*, October 2023.

Maria Shéhérazade Giudici, "Government and the Emergence of Architecture D'accompagnement" in Pier Vittorio Aureli ed., *The City as a Project* (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2013), 150-160.

Manfredo Tafuri and Antonio Foscari, *L'armonia e i conflitti: la Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna nella Venezia del '500* (Torino: Einaudi, 1983).

Manfredo Tafuri, *Interpreting the Renaissance: Princes, Cities, Architects* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 59-97.

#### Moodle Link

- <https://go.epfl.ch/AR-678>