



URBAN INTERIOR

Inter 4 opens a new chapter into its research of introverted growth, or evolution within culturally and physically dense conditions. This year's agenda aims to further bridge holistic associative design processes with new forms of architecture, informed by perceptive and experiential considerations. The unit will bring the cultural, historical and social considerations into spatial and ornamental opportunities emerging through technological advancement in modeling and manufacturing.

Specifically, we will investigate the purposefully coined notion of *urban interior* as a way to question both varied design approaches in relation to scale and more broadly considering the urban through the detail - the city's spatial and behavioural accident through the user's experience rather than master planning. In face of the abundance and constant motion of urban living, we will question the balance between order and chance in generating development and various eras of the urban space. Where the quantity and variety of information inherently disqualifies planning, we claim a new encompassing and comprehensive design approach. We will question where, within the harsh narrative of reality, can the designer situate himself by iteratively resolving the large through the small?

Through a staged investigation of multi-scale typologies and equal attention to urban diversity, we will be looking at inserting coherent spatial arrangements within a physically and stylistically heterogeneous city structure. From the outset, our simultaneous consideration of different scales will aim to illustrate how hierarchical preconception might be inverted to envisage the large through the minutia of the detail. Proposals, stemming from individual agenda, will suggest strategies for new typological hybrids simultaneously interior and metropolitan. Colliding a deep contextual and environmental comprehension within the scale of the interior.

DENSE SETTINGS, THE EUROPEAN OVERLOAD

Continuing our quest into the growth of grown grounds, our fields of exploration will be the historical European city, enduring metropolises and geopolitical territorial pieces, which display evolving constraints conflicting with physical restrictions. Beyond these iconic differences, they are test grounds for the implacable accumulation inherent to urban settings. A testament to the enduring generative qualities of density - be it political or physical - maintaining continuous appeal in a manner somewhat absent from current burgeoning conditions. Our lab-cities have long been in self-imposed overload and in mastered a constant need for reinvention.

The "old" metropolis will therefore serve as metaphor for current and future pressing needs where unquestioned growth and widespread developments will confront scarcity and inevitably mutate. As emptiness and wild-grounds are only the exception, the unit will dwell over demanding situations, where contemporary development is always questioned against multifaceted considerations.

Beyond the city as the whole, individual research will look at particular situations in quest for the definition of urban rooms, which partial enclave, partial node, display the unique balance of minute design control and constant, but seemingly arbitrary, usage and evolution. Put simply, can we find urban settings displaying the qualities of interiors while displaying the specificity of urbanity?

URBAN

As epitomical example of regulated fabric, Paris will be a preliminary setting displaying examples of an urban puzzle locally defined and coherently diverse. Introduced within an initial discussion on perception, the city will inform our move from pictorial representation to semiotic architectonics. The promenade into urban rooms of various scales will then lead us to the geopolitical oddity of the Vatican. As an urban condition, the country shrunk to a city block with rooms scaled up as streets, allows to comprehend the slow built coherence of architectural excess stretched into a city, a country. We will study the play of scale and along the way learn from spatial, compositional and pictorial mastery displayed throughout. These examples will form part of a unit-large collection of worldwide iconic urban conditions, later informing individual choices of site for proposals.

Providing the ambition to link human perception and large-scale developments, these examples will help constitute our catalogue of urban settings through the lower scale, the detail forming the whole, but also question interiority when exposed in the public realm; Interiority beyond enclosure.

Through interiority we will be defining our perception of space beyond the predefined reality of walls, rooms, and building. Where is the limit of definition when perceived for its physical qualities but also its inherent cultural and social reading? Can we define space outside of the accepted references? Where does an interior end?

INTERIOR

The unit's definition of interiority will be approached through the question of perception and how space is read and represented. This investigation will go beyond the common acceptance in defining interiority, to prospectively reach new generative modes for the public realm. Using the individual's perception as the basic component of an ascending hierarchy of spaces, we accept space as container but equally as the support of social and cultural representation. Following both the slow erosion of form and its excess, we will bring a new approach encompassing multiple scales and narratives.

This inversion of perceptive scale, defining the private sphere as urban, will be matched by an inversion in physical scale and design processes.

Linked with typological research this question references the possibility of nested scales - not as finite and isolated articulation, but as a truly transversal coherence between the urban and the private. Object and city are symbiotic in essence against or without modernist divide. As per equally modern precedents, the detail can be the building, which can be the city.

The inverted scale functions as adaptive architectonics - the ornamental feature, the lower order of scales, if we use classical terminology - that defines the overall perception. A new coherence is inserted by the articulation of local and sometimes minute elements forming the overall organization from the small-scale up. As an opportunity to suggest a non-linear process, we proposing the inversion and nesting of scales as generator of an outcome exceeding the preconceived role of the scale of the detail. Most importantly the bottom up approach may entail the generation of a new type of overall coherence - an organizational composition.

The insertion of a performative approach associated with perceptive qualities is proposed as a mean to engender a new type of density.

GENERATIVE CHANCE

Contemporary processes allow for simulation and unpredictability but nonetheless are limited by the extent of the data set. Reality exceeds computing, but emerging procedures can however offer ways for defining without controlling. We will endeavor mixing the performative with experience and transform technological potential into accessible and augmented environments through cognitive recognition. It that instance converging the highly defined design and the randomness of individual decisions.

Looking at the careful assimilation of environmental factors and a fluid adjustment to the discontinuous city condition, we will aim to propose design as the mediation of accumulated local constraints; a negotiation of contextual information resolved by hierarchic exploitations of scale. Rather than a top-down compositional approach, we will harness the sum of punctual or iterative adjustments balancing environmental constraints and functional needs.

The conceptual juxtaposition of private and public aiming at suggesting new qualitative densities will be achieved through a deep comprehension of form, effect and materiality. Between the generic vision of urban forms and individual perception, the proposals will emerge in intersecting sequences, from objective to subjective, urban scale to detail. The urban assertions will be a hands-on approach to making, gradually affecting the large through precise diagrammatic techniques and representational exploration.

METHOD

Can process engender meaning? The Unit's attitude towards the use of parameterised methodological and design approaches enables the branching of architectural design into multiple terrains and therefore heightens the proposal's richness. It offers the potential to define layers, from narrative to environmental optimisation, without affecting its ability to respond and generate shifts in existing conditions.

Pursuing our particular interest in architectural representation, our process-based research will be our advanced tool to fulfil this year's ambitions.

Inherent to our design process and methodology will be the development of individual modes of representation of form and data. For this year's research we will use scales to engage the unit's appetite for codified drawings and diagrammatic models.

Proposals will embed links between graphic notation and spatial conditions as a way to propose a generative form of information.

This iterative and rigorous knowledge building process will accompany the development of tools in relation to individual and unit wide researches. We will differentiate between skills and knowledge, and as such acquiring techniques will take place within a broader comprehension of their use and conceptual ramifications.

Individual research and unit conversations will be recorded and compiled as both part of the personal portfolio and unit database, and editing will be encouraged along the year to articulate these records.

Throughout the year, workshops and collaborative design phases will be enriched by unit conversations to advance collective examination and cultural analysis. Additionally, we will organise an array of external interventions for lectures and workshops related to the topics discussed. This will be supplemented by specialized and technical expertise in accordance to developing projects' interests throughout the year.

PROGRAM

This year's work will be articulated around the idea of individual proposals emerging from collaborative approaches, using the unit as a medium to refine and exchange through design. A sequence of tasks will be closely associated with dedicated specialised workshops and unit discussions. The seminars and workshops are scheduled to improve the students' knowledge of contemporary techniques of modelling, fabrication and representation whilst the discussions will help refine a broader theoretical agenda. The year will be divided into a series of briefs gradually exploring notions of both scale and perception through consideration of geometry and materiality.

TERM 1

Considering Antonio Criminisi's research, our departing point will be the exploration of perspectival drawings with the aim to investigate their reciprocal influence on understanding interiority. Exploring representational tools, we will illustrate a systemic understanding of the variables at play in view of translating and manipulating these through parametric modelling providing us with tools to question perception vs reality.

Form reverse spatial engineering, we will subsequently venture into the Parisian urbanity and endeavour to generate hybrid proposals linking the interior realm and the city, while illustrating the relation between form and social organisation. These observations will be materialized through the unit's three-dimensional diagramming techniques.

The term will establish a clear individual stance towards an understanding of scales of interiority and their use as tools for urban intervention - providing form and an effect that will inform the technical study.

TERM 2

The second term will be centred on individual proposals for urban interiors extending our understanding of contextual urban reading and materiality. Along with our unit-large catalogue search into specific urban conditions, seminars such as Lara Belkind's emergence of XIX's century Parisian urbanity, questioning the notions of scale - from ornament to street, from room to square will prepare us for our unit trip.

The introduction of detailed material studies will further challenge the traditional reading of urban form by considering the scale of the material as departure point. Students will enrich their proposition on new urban interiors as adaptive responses to a specific and finite set of resources, while forming their personal vocabulary of forms, types and texture, through the abstraction of their chosen physical context.

In this dual exercise of research and design, we will be looking at context combined with architectonic detail and materials for their ability to generate differentiation of space, specifically considering issues of the private and the public. Within their chosen site, questioning the insertion of new urbanity, students will reinterpret the scale of the interior, as a three-dimensional field with differentiated usages of geometry, material, proportions etc. which will respond to both a static and dynamic context.

TERM 3

Aiming to reach an open-ended synthesis, the third term will extract a generic approach from the proposed new urban interior - looking into the potential for typological inventions to become a broader strategy for thinking the city and designing from the small scale up. Outcomes will take the form of novel urban rooms actively metropolitan and private.

To conclude the year, we will be looking at how the proposed organisations transfer through different scales into the general structure of a city. Questioning notions of controlled unpredictability, individual arguments and design proposals will be re-evaluated for their potential to enrich the urban system with a new generic input - an adaptive system.

Individual work will be enriched by unit conversations, matured through the year's work, and a series of encounters with graphic designers and editors to prepare a refined portfolio and sophisticated presentation.