EUROPAN 17 THEMATICAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE SITES

Developed by the Scientific and Technical Committees of Europan

LET THE BIRDS SING!
Reimagining Public Space as a Biodiverse Landscape

Imagine public space as a biodiverse landscape. Imagine public space as the touching ground, the proof that YES, WE CAN –through design– address challenges caused by the crisis due to climate change, in terms of social and environmental issues. Imagine public space as the agent for inclusion of difference both in terms of humans and non-humans, as a mediator between new interdependencies. Imagine soils, water bodies, shores and eco-corridors as the main actors to guide complex transformation processes.
On the following sites, public space is seen as the area where the topic of Living Cities is performed.

1 DEALING WITH WATER ISSUES IN VULNERABLE MILIEUS

These sites have a close proximity to water: coastlines, rivers or blue infrastructures, lake shores, fjords and canals. They are all facing, today or in a close future, the problematics of climate change and the extreme variations of eco-rhythms. The risks of water rising and flooding are at stakes here and it becomes a major problematic for the sites' transformation. How to turn these critical risks into a creative problematic for the sites' transformation processes? Which new relations and proximities to imagine with nature in our urban milieus? How to face the challenge in an innovative way?

1.1 Reclaiming Blue-Green Corridors

Rivers and blue corridors are now considered as precious living ecosystems in the new paradigm of our topic – a major resource to take care of in the transformation of our living milieus. Grenoble Alpes Métropole (FR), Métropole Rouen Normandie (FR) and Chiva (ES) are all dealing with the reclaiming of neglected rivers and blue corridors crossing urban environments. In fact, these urban-natural infrastructures have often been considered in modernity as the backyards of urban life, only appearing as important in times of cyclical flooding. How to bring back these major resources in front of the urban scene and to reveal their qualities in order to better manage the increasing risks? What can the transformative potential of these green and blue corridors be for the city?

Chiva (ES) - Grenoble Alpes Métropole (FR) - Métropole Rouen Normandie (FR)

1.2 Reimagining Vulnerable Shores

Coastlines and lake shores have always been considered as places of opportunities. Yet, beautiful natural settings are often suffering from an overuse due to massive tourism and exploitation, reinforcing the economical, ecological and social problematics related to eco-rhythms and seasonality. In addition, they are now facing the imminent issues of rising water, placing them into an extremely vulnerable situation. Le Palais (FR), Helsinki (FI) and Lochau (AT) are directly concerned by this problematic. How to imagine new ways of caring for these vulnerable sites? Which new relations and respectful uses to explore with nature through them? How to find new balances and co-living opportunities between seasonal activities and the related various populations that use these sites? What if we consider the eco-rhythms as a transformative strength to reimagine the future of the sites?

Helsinki (FI) - Le Palais, Belle-Ile-en-Mer (FR) - Lochau (AT)

2 DESIGNING COLLECTIVE STAGES AS BIODIVERSE LANDSCAPES

These sites are dealing with the restructuration of public and collective spaces as a drive force to improve the living conditions in residential districts and urban cores. They are trying to set up new public stages for inclusive and innovative interactions between human and non-human, between

local and territorial, or between social and commercial uses. Some are trying to re-use and transform disqualified and fragmented pieces of existing open spaces; others are facing the deep transformation of existing heavy infrastructures to achieve this goal. These new urban stages for public life can also be understood as new infrastructures for inclusive and various publicness. What role could nature play in their emergence? What could be considered as a social and ecological infrastructure in the new paradigms of Living Cities?

2.1 Fertile Grounds: Renewing Collective Spaces as Biodiverse Landscapes

Open spaces are more than ever considered as urban resources to design the living city. Building more is not the privileged answer for urban redynamisation anymore. Neglected urban spaces can become the ground for an inner and creative intensification of our cities. Also, leftover places can be turned into a collective staging ground to experiment a better social inclusiveness and to activate a deeper ecological metabolism. People are raising their voices against cars, the need of spontaneous nature is pushing out asphalt and some sites are calling for a deartificialisation now. Other sites are expecting a better structuration through the existing natural assets. The goal remains the same: How to set up these new collective stages? What role could inhabitants play in the process? Which potential is there for soil recovery in these urban environments?

- **Intensifying residential districts**
  Barcelona (ES) - Groenewoud (NL) - Regensburg (DE)
- **Regenerating urban cores**
  Åkrahamn (NO) - Guérande (FR) - Makarska (HR)

2.2 Missing Links: Rethinking Infrastructures as Natural Connectors

Modernist infrastructures are everywhere in our cities. They also have to be considered as a legacy and as an existing resource to work within the multiple shifts towards the living city. Infrastructures in Torrelavega (ES), Marseille (FR) and Ingolstadt (DE) are responsible of multiple fragmentations of urban spaces, of isolations of some populations. Connections and reliances are to be improved here, despite the heavy infrastructures. How to transform these sites and how long could it take? Which inhabitants are suffering from this fragmentation and how to include them in the transformation process? How and where to begin? What can be considered as a social and ecological infrastructure in the new paradigms of the Living Cities?

Ingolstadt (DE) - Larvik (NO) - Marseille (FR) - Torrelavega (ES)

IMAGINE A SECOND LIFE!
Transforming Neighbourhoods and Buildings towards an Inclusive Milieu

A Second Life! is a metamorphosis of a situation. The challenge is to regenerate and to support spaces in need of transformation from a new perspective towards the pre-existences and the hidden treasures that are already there. A new revalorization of all kind of resources – natural, heritage, energy, flows, economy, social… It means to reconsider uses and new proximities linking ecological and social dynamics. How to be attentive and welcoming to differences and vulnerabilities nourished by inhabited milieus facing climate change?

1 THE EXPANDED FIELDS OF RE-USING

A Second Life! questions the possible becoming of existing buildings. Some are located in the core city centre, and others at the margins of urban settlements; some look like mono-functional island, isolated from urban surroundings, and others are spread in a delimited area, forming a built-up archipelago. How to reuse these vacant (or very soon to-be) buildings? The built-up frame will remain (partly or in totality), but what kind of new uses and new programs will it host? Even more, in a caring perspective of urban transformation, it is about challenging the practices of re-using: how to expand them beyond the building itself? How can these practices generate new relations with adjacent urban spaces but also with the surrounded social and ecological dynamics? *A Second Life!* invites to think the expanded practices, scales and re-using temporalities afresh.

1.1 Re-using Inhabited Spaces

Re-using practices engages transformation processes for a new balance between the built heritage and the natural infrastructures – the river, the lake, the countryside or the existing ecosystem of trees and parks. How to trigger a transformation from monofunctional islands into mix-used interfaces on sites like:

- urban health facilities, as in
  Nantes (FR) - Rennes (FR) - Växjö (SE)
- or obsolete inhabited areas, as in
  Courcy-Grand Reims (FR) - Grensen (NO)

1.2 Re-using Industrial and Commercial Heritage

Re-using practices engages transformation processes for a new balance between living and working, inviting to reconsider connections with the unbuilt environment and enlarged surroundings. How to trigger a transformation from obsolete built-up assembles into new milieus of proximity on sites like:

- big commercial boxes, as in
  Etten-Leur (NL) - München (DE)
- or post-industrial buildings, as in
  Eibar (ES) - Fleurance (FR)

2 THE ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES OF REGENERATION

A Second Life! calls for paying attention to how specific representations have shaped the existing territorial and urban areas. These kinds of representations have organized and structured urban territories for many years, but now they appear to be outdated. Regenerating such territories means altering their past representations, opening up new social and ecological transitions. Both natural and cultural, a double narrative of heritage is here at stake…
These representations can be:

2.1 Dominant Eco-Productive Representations, linked to

- Mining and coal exploitations, as in
  Bernay Terres de Normandie (FR) - Nalón (ES)
- Spa-tourism, as in
  Bad Lobenstein (DE) - Borkum (DE)

2.2 Social Real-Estate Representations, like the one that shaped many residential areas around cities, as in:
Leipzig (DE) - Schorsmolen (NL)

2.3 Repesentations Linked to Carbon, like the one that shaped many car-based cities, as in:
Graz (AT) - Madrid (ES)

Alternative Classification
- Water as Ecological Driver -
How can the water landscapes reshape a new local economy?
Bad Lobenstein (DE) - Bernay Terres de Normandie (FR) - Borkum (DE) - Nalón (ES)

- Soil as Ecological Driver -
How can the renaturalization of public spaces act as a backbone for social inclusion?
Graz (AT) - Leipzig (DE) - Madrid (ES) - Schorsmolen (NL)

THINK TABULA NON-RASA!
Designing New Habitats as a Holistic Environment.

Some nature reserves around the world are deserts –hot or cold–, but they host all kinds of animals and microorganisms hiding in the cracks and crevices, under the rocks.
Some of our sites look empty, vacant, but they are not. They are full of life: in the soil, in the air, in the breeze. They are part of a larger balance of natural forces and processes.
On these sites, substantial new volumes of programme are required.
Think of these sites as the opportunity to multiply the number of life forms, think of the request to build new habitats as an opportunity to design a holistic environment. Think tabula non-rasa!

1 Building on a Garden
Some sites involve finding space amongst greenery, fields, trees, water, complex ecosystems that could be considered as gardens. How to introduce the constructions of the people without reducing the number of life forms?
Kenniskwartier (NL) - Østmarka (NO) - Vaasa (FI)

2 Building on a Farm
Some sites are rich in agriculture, whether it is extensive cereal fields, Mediterranean fruit trees, or fertile kitchen gardens. How to build the necessary programs while taking into consideration the high ecological value of the soil, the water cycles, and the animal life?
Eivissa (ES) - El Prat de Llobregat (ES) - Kassel (DE) - Wien (AT)

3 Building on Infrastructures
On some sites, the landscape is hard, with embankments for infrastructure, foundations of former industrial buildings, a car park, asphalt. Can this 'hard nature' be of any value? How to avoid the expense of breaking those hard surfaces? How to design while taking the carbon footprint of earth works into consideration?
Berlin (DE) - Krøgenes (NO) - Nyköping (SE) - Piteå (SE) - Skellefteå (SE) - 'T Zoet (NL) - Waalwijk (NL)

The Challenge
The volumes, the programs, the kind of project required on each of these sites can be very different, but we can establish a set of guidelines to introduce these new elements within the principles of circular economy and regenerative urbanism:

- Understand the socio-ecological structural unit in which the area to develop is inserted. It may be a larger area than the reflection area (marked in red) and it is certainly a much larger area than the project area (marked in yellow). Understand that the whole structural unit will undergo changes with the intervention.
- Redefine the cycles of water, energy and waste in the structural unit resulting after the proposal, avoiding externalities that could be detrimental to the territory/system.
- Respect/rebalance fertile soil, wildlife, water cycles and networks, respect the energy cost of moving earth, respect the energy value of materials, respect the topography, respect complexity. Introduce variability, introduce diversity, introduce resilience, introduce biodiversity. Analyse the life cycle of the set of materials that are used.
- Rethink and rebalance the metabolism and activity of the territory as a system by means of the project.